

JBSA

LEGACY

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JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO

NOVEMBER 13, 2020



JOSE E. RODRIGUEZ

Sgt. 1st Class Garrett Rogers, Movement Noncommissioned Officer in Charge for the 32nd Medical Brigade, directs Soldiers standing in formation inside a hangar at Joint Base San Antonio-Kelly Field Annex during a layover as they travelled from Fort Jackson, Mississippi, to Fort Huachuca, Arizona. These Soldiers were on a chartered flight along with Soldiers that also departed Fort Jackson to begin training at the U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence.

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Air Force updates travel screening process for EFMP family members

By Traci Howells

AIR FORCE PERSONNEL CENTER
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The Department of the Air Force has implemented an automated travel screening process to simplify required medical screening before a permanent change of station.

Members selected for an assignment will automatically receive an email with the link to MyVector to begin the screening process. Medical clearance is required for all Exceptional Family Member Program families preparing to PCS, and for those members selected for an overseas assignment.

"A PCS can be challenging enough without the additional steps required for medical screening," said Tamera Nelson, transformation leader for Headquarters Air Force Manpower and Personnel Services. "This is especially the case with our EFMP families, who may have had to get clearance from multiple doctors in the past."

The new initial travel screening questionnaire is electronic and automated, and will give members immediate feedback for clearance or additional necessary actions. One of the most important actions is to ensure the phone number on file is updated in

the event a follow up is required.

EFMP members and those traveling overseas with dependents will be directed to Q-base, the DAF Special Needs Screening website, and instructed to provide information and upload the required documentation for medical and educational clearance.

Nelson explained this automation streamlines a lengthy process into a faster initial screening and, in most cases, may result in an easier clearance. The process allows the member to answer each question and be properly directed to the next applicable

item, only answering questions that apply to their situation.

Another feature of the new process was updated based on feedback from members that found it very difficult to leave EFMP if there was a change in medical or administrative status for a family member. The system now allows for the application for disenrollment from the program as part of the travel screening process.

"The intent of the new system is to move things faster, and it also gives us better tracking," Nelson said. "Everything we are doing in EFMP is about trying to make it easier for families; that's our focus."

New monthly premiums for TRICARE Young Adult Plans in 2021

From TRICARE.mil

Beginning on Jan. 1, 2021, premiums for TRICARE Young Adult, or TYA, coverage will increase. TYA Select will increase by 12.7 percent and TYA Prime by 22 percent. These changes reflect the increase in TYA program costs for calendar year 2021.

TYA is a premium-based plan available for purchase by qualified dependent children under the age of 26. Young adults who are 21 (or age 23 if a fulltime student) lose regular TRICARE coverage, but may be eligible to purchase TYA coverage.

If you're a sponsor or TYA enrollee, here's what you need to know:

- ▶ TYA Select premiums increased from \$228 to \$257 per month.
- ▶ TYA Prime premiums



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increased from \$376 to \$459 per month.

These increases go into effect next year. If you want to switch between TYA Prime and TYA Select, you can do so at any time. Your sponsor's status and your geographic location determine whether you can

purchase either TYA Prime or TYA Select. Be sure to contact your TRICARE contractor if you have questions.

TRICARE understands the impact these changes may have on TYA enrollees and their sponsors. Adult-age, dependent children are

encouraged to evaluate all health care coverage options after aging out of TRICARE.

While you may qualify to purchase TYA coverage, it may not be your only health care coverage option. You may want to explore other health plan options available through the Health Insurance Marketplace before purchasing TYA coverage. Visit www.healthcare.gov to learn more.

For more on TYA, go to the TRICARE Young Adult page and download the TRICARE Young Adult Program Fact Sheet. For TRICARE costs details, visit the TRICARE Costs page.

At the time of posting, this information is current. For the most recent information, contact your TRICARE contractor or local military hospital or clinic.

JBSA LEGACY

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Feedback Fridays

Brig. Gen. Caroline M. Miller
502D AIR BASE WING AND
JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO COMMANDER

Feedback Fridays is a weekly forum that aims to connect the 502d Air Base Wing with members of the Joint Base San Antonio community. Questions are collected during commander's calls, town hall meetings and throughout the week.

If you have a question or concern, please send an email to jbsapublicaffairs@gmail.com using the subject line "Feedback Fridays." Questions will be further researched and published as information becomes available.

Q. There have been quite a few occasions lately on the South Ramp crossing from JBSA-Randolph to the golf course and vice versa where support vehicles and aircraft being towed to and from the West Ramp are having to slow down or stop because people are not waiting for them to pass.

The signs on both ends say "Please stop here for all crossing aircraft and vehicles."

Is there a way to get it out to personnel who frequently visit the golf course and the South Gate area that personnel who work on the ramp have the right of way at that crossing? It's not just a stop sign for actual taxiing aircraft; it's a stop for support vehicles as well.

A. Great question! We would like to remind drivers to follow the new metal and concrete-painted signage posted this June. Additionally, visitor sponsors have a responsibility to inform their drivers of the same as well as ensure their drivers know how to get to their final destination.

Here are the rules for driving past the South Gate entrance:
1.) Stop at the stop sign heading northwest on South Cross, which is (Golf Road) paralleling Taxiway



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Fox/South Ramp
2.) Look East — (South Ramp) and West — (Fox/Echo Taxiways) prior to crossing South Cross for moving aircraft and government vehicles

Note: Do not cut off traffic from the South Ramp and Taxiway Fox/Echo
3.) When all is clear of flight line traffic — you are cleared to proceed straight to the North end of South Cross (Golf road) — do not turn.

For more information, refer to this JBSA news story: <https://www.jbsa.mil/News/News/Article/2225946/operation-echo-seeks-reduction-of-airfield-intrusions-at-jbsa-randolph/>.

Q. Hello, Brig. Gen. Miller, please post the answers to the following in the JBSA Legacy, because myself and others have dealt with this and if they are moving all civilian pay to JBSA-Lackland, I think all civilians should know.

I am writing this with a heavy heart because it has caused me sleepless nights.

Problem #1: I have been trying to get a certifier to be able to sign my timecards, leave requests, etc., in ATAAPs since October 2019. I have the trail of emails to show for it.

Since I received no reply, I was given the name of the Section Chief, Unique Missions and their

group inbox which you get when you call the JBSA-Randolph number. This trail of emails started in August 2020. I received no replies to those emails.

Today, Oct. 9, is the last day that we're supposed to be able to submit timecards prior to the holiday. The section chief, sent me a "correct 577" to use. I don't see a difference in the forms but I would have been sent this back, had I not been ignored.

The problem is, my certifier is on leave today so she can't sign it. I'm almost sure I'll get paid, because I have lots of leave and when not certified, I'll get

FEEDBACK FRIDAYS continues on 5

Developmental Special Duty assignments position Airmen for career growth

By Rachel Kersey

502ND AIR BASE WING
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

When Tech. Sgt. William Gabel was given a developmental special duty assignment, it was an opportunity for him to step away from his career in maintenance, broaden his leadership experiences and see the Air Force from a different perspective.

Gabel is currently serving as flight chief of the 382nd Training Squadron, 59th Training Group. He arrived at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston in August 2017, and expects to move to his next assignment in August 2021.

"I have never had an opportunity like this before in my career. To get completely out of my maintenance career field and mold future leaders has been amazing," he said.

A developmental special duty assignment can be in any of 10 specialties outside of an Airman's normal career field. They include career assistance advisor, military training instructor, military training leader, U.S. Air Force Academy military training instructor, Airman and Family Readiness noncommissioned officer, first sergeant, U.S. Air Force Honor Guard noncommissioned officer, recruiter, and professional military education instructor.

Gabel, who was an electronic warfare technician stationed at Aviano Air Base, Italy, was selected to become a military training leader at the training group where he mentors young Airmen straight out of Air Force Basic Military Training. He helps the young Airmen refine their knowledge of military standards and discipline, and leads them to become the best versions of themselves, he said.



THOMAS CONEY

Tech. Sgt. William Gabel, 382nd Training Squadron flight chief in 59th Training Group, He was given a developmental special duty assignment, and saw it as an opportunity for him to step away from his career in maintenance, broaden his leadership experiences and see the Air Force from a different perspective.

As flight chief, Gabel leads five other military training leaders, shepherding approximately 300 Airmen at any given time, he said, noting that his days are difficult and unpredictable.

Tech. Sgt. Samantha Taylor, assistant flight chief at the 383rd Training Squadron, concurs.

"The daily life as an MTL can never be planned," she said. "No matter how much you think you have everything under control, a new situation will always arise and put your quick thinking and leadership abilities to the test."

Every day the MTLs might

do anything from helping Airmen vote to ensuring they have all of their paperwork to get married, or guiding them through the darkness of suicidal ideation, Gabel said.

He said the assignment has definitely stretched in his capacities as a leader, but if he could sum up his experience in one word, it would be "growth."

"Coming into this assignment, I was a relatively shy and introverted person," Gabel said. "However, through this developmental special duty assignment, I have worked with MTLs from backgrounds such as medical,

security forces, civil engineering, personnel and more.

"Working with all these personalities in a medical environment has opened my mind up tremendously with how to attack a problem," he said.

Taylor said one good quality she has seen in Gabel has been his ability to empathize with others.

"Being in the military, we are basically taught not to show or share our emotions with others at our job," she said. "I have seen him become a more caring and compassionate person with the

Airmen in training."

Being around high-achieving leaders has also meant that Gabel is surrounded by people who push him to become the best version of himself, he said.

Gabel previously earned an associate's degree from the Community College of the Air Force in avionic systems technology, but he said working with other MTLs at this assignment led him to complete a second CCAF degree in education and training management.

He is currently working on a bachelor of science in administration and management, and, after seeing his fellow MTLs apply for and gain admittance into Officer Training School, Gabel is working on that application, too.

"The perspective and confidence I have within myself has been a 180-degree change since when I arrived three years ago," Gabel said.

His passion is aircraft and avionics, so, Gabel said if he is accepted to officer training school, he hopes to become either a remotely piloted aircraft pilot, flying drones from remote locations, or an air battle manager, monitoring aircraft and strategizing for successful offense.

Gabel said this assignment has challenged him to learn more and take on more responsibilities, in part due to the people who were placed around him. And, when his current assignment concludes, he wants to help others to aim higher as well.

"I plan use a more philosophical leadership approach in the future, rather than simply telling people what to do," he said. "I want to inspire those around me to believe in themselves, and encourage them to achieve all their goals."

FEEDBACK FRIDAYS

From page 3

charged leave. This is my pay and they are not concerned. Can you get them to explain why a finance customer service organization won't answer emails?

Problem #2: I went to Building 399 and was told by a military person that I need to put in a request or work-order; I tried but I have screenshots where the site was not found, using Google Chrome & Internet Explorer.

The thing that's most frustrating is that I was told that there is no more Civilian Pay at JBSA-Randolph and there won't be a Civilian Pay at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston. All will be at JBSA-Lackland.

If that is true, please explain why, because there is such a large civilian presence at all locations. I know human contact/customer

service is almost non-existent these days and that's not with Finance only and it's not just because of COVID-19 either, but why is that so?

A. First, we apologize for the difficulties you have been having in trying to get this matter addressed. The ATAAPS Timekeeper/Certifier Access process has been a difficult process to maintain and streamline.

Guidance and updated forms have been sent across JBSA to designated unit timekeepers.

It is imperative that each unit has multiple people designated as ATAAPS certifiers. This ensures that if someone is on leave, each employee's timesheet can still be certified. Our Comptroller Squadron, CPTS, is using the Comptroller Services Portal at <https://usaf.dps.mil/teams/SAFFMCSP/portal/SitePages/Home.aspx> to track all customer inquiries, keep track of conversations and increase customer

response consistency.

There you can also read knowledge articles where we guide members with required documents and templates to submit inquiries that are immediately actionable by CPTS.

Our CPTS civilian payroll office has also put in place a step-by-step process explaining how to properly fill out the DD Form 577 and DAO 101 training from start to finish so that when the forms are submitted we can quickly verify the information provided. These forms will be readily available on the Comptroller Services Portal Homepage under the Civilian Pay category in early November.

Not only will the forms be made available but instructions for each role will be provided to ensure these forms are not being rejected and delaying this process even further. Our goal is to be able to assign the proper rights for requested role within three business days.

I do want to clarify, while the 502nd CPTS has consolidated the Budget & Accounting Flight at JBSA-Lackland and we've had quite a bit of turnover recently, all JBSA locations have a Financial Operations Flight office to assist our military or civilian customers during walk-in hours for pay related questions.

I've now clarified with all CPTS personnel to ensure my team understands how to serve customers regardless of the uniform they wear to work. All CPTS locations are open for walk-in customer service from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Mondays through Fridays.

We'll gladly assist customers (military and civilian) with submitting Comptroller Service Portal (CSP) inquiries and answering any other concerns or inability to access, particularly DHA customers or those without Air Force Network access. I hope this answered your concerns.

FORT SAM HOUSTON

SAMHS seeks volunteers for COVID-19 vaccine trial

By Elaine Sanchez

BROOKE ARMY MEDICAL CENTER PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Two San Antonio Military Health System facilities are seeking volunteers from among the military beneficiary population to participate in a COVID-19 vaccine trial.

The trial is part of Operation Warp Speed, a national initiative to accelerate the development, production and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics.

Brooke Army Medical Center and Wilford Hall Ambulatory Surgical Center are among the Department of Defense locations taking part in the Phase III trial to evaluate the vaccine under development by AstraZeneca. The other sites are Naval Medical Center San Diego; Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland; and Fort Belvoir Community Hospital in Virginia.

“The San Antonio Military Health System is proud to answer the call to help serve the needs of our nation in these unprecedented times,” said Air Force Maj. Gen. John DeGoes, SAMHS market director and 59th Medical Wing commander. “We are proud to be selected as a partner in the effort to accelerate development of COVID-19 vaccines.”

“We are honored to be among those sites selected in support of this whole-of government effort to ensure safe, effective medical products are provided at a critical time to the American people,” added Brig. Gen. Shan Bagby, BAMC commanding general. “SAMHS has the existing research infrastructure and experience to make a significant contribution to this important effort.”

The Trial

The AstraZeneca vaccine trial is one of many national trials being conducted through Operation Warp Speed, and the first to encompass the DOD. With more than 80 sites in communities nationwide, the trial has an overall target enrollment of 30,000 participants. Military sites are looking to draw 3,000 of those volunteers, according to a DOD release.

The AstraZeneca vaccine trial kicked back off this week after a voluntary pause last month to investigate a single event of an unexplained illness in one of the UK participants. After a review of an independent committee’s recommendations, health authorities across the world, to include the FDA, have concluded the trials are safe to resume.

“Everyone involved in this trial is deeply committed to the safety of our participants and to maintaining the highest standards of conduct across all our clinical trials,” said Col. Jason Okulicz, principal investigator and an infectious disease physician. “We have



JASON W. EDWARDS

Marcy Edwards, a Military Health System beneficiary, signs up for Operation Warp Speed Nov. 2. Operation Warp Speed is a national initiative to accelerate the development, production and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics.

numerous strict safety procedures in place to monitor the health of our participants and are committed to conducting this trial with safety first and foremost in mind.”

The Criteria

DOD sites, to include BAMC and WHASC, are open on a voluntary basis to Military Health System beneficiaries — active duty, retirees and family members 18 years of age and older.

Beneficiaries are welcome to sign up for consideration now by reaching out to either site:

Wilford Hall Ambulatory Surgical Center (Site Code: WHASC)

- ▶▶ Recruitment Phone Number: 253-341-6170
- ▶▶ Email: covidwhasc@genevausa.org

Brooke Army Medical Center (Site Code: BAMC)

- ▶▶ Recruitment Phone Number: 253-924-9458
 - ▶▶ Email: covidbamc@genevausa.org
- Alternatively, volunteers can also visit www.CoronavirusPreventionNetwork.org, click on “Volunteer Now” and complete the survey. When requested, volunteers should enter the appropriate site code, which is BAMC or WHASC, depending on their preference and geographic location.

Once the survey is completed, local study site coordinators will screen volunteers and contact those participants in their area who may be a good match for the study. Volunteers should consult with the study coordinator if they’re scheduled to move, change their

duty station or deploy within 12 months of beginning participation.

According to the DOD release, the study is looking for people who are at an increased risk of SARS-CoV-2 infection which may include:

- ▶▶ Working in an essential job, such as healthcare professions, emergency response personnel, grocery workers, meat-packing plants, restaurant staff, public transit, etc.
- ▶▶ Living in densely populated residential environments
- ▶▶ Living or working in congregated living facilities, such as nursing homes
- ▶▶ A member of a community that has been hardest hit by this pandemic, such as older people, individuals with underlying health conditions, and racial/ethnic groups such as African Americans, Latino, and Native American populations.

The Study

Volunteers selected to participate will be enrolled into the study. Once the local sites are active, participants will be called in to receive two doses of the vaccine or placebo about a month apart.

Along with scheduled visits, participants will be asked to come in if they have symptoms throughout the year to be tested for COVID-19. Study participants will be followed for two years to determine the vaccine’s efficacy, while being compensated for their participation.

“We are all hoping for a vaccine that’s effective in preventing the virus,” Okulicz said. “However, we will also explore its efficacy in lessening the severity of symptoms and hospitalizations.”

The Sites

Both BAMC and WHASC are conducting operations from temporary structures in areas near the main hospital buildings.

“Our intent is to take every precaution to prevent increased foot traffic within the hospital,” Okulicz explained, “while also securing a safe space that’s convenient for our participants.”

About 20 contract personnel, to include research coordinators, providers, nurses, pharmacists, technicians and administrative support, will staff the two sites.

As for participants, Okulicz believes there will be many active duty, retirees and family members willing to raise their hand to serve once more.

“We are very fortunate to have an incredible military population here who often steps up for these studies,” Okulicz said. “There’s a sense of willingness among this group to contribute to something greater that’s unparalleled.”

Improvements to Soldier movement ensure MEDCoE training continues

By Jose E. Rodriguez

U.S. ARMY MEDICAL CENTER OF EXCELLENCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS

U.S. Army Soldiers continue to train at the U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence, or MEDCoE, at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, despite the added challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

How they arrive and later depart, however, has changed.

One late afternoon on a Friday in April, MEDCoE planners received an order to begin controlled movements of all inbound Advanced Individual Training Soldiers from U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, or TRADOC.

The mission, a proof of principle concept, was to conduct controlled air and ground movements to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 while the pipeline of trainees remained open; the pilot program would begin the following Tuesday.

“We quickly implemented processes and procedures to support this effort as part of our response to the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Capt. Cotrena Brown-Johnson, the medical logistics officer responsible for coordinating the movements in the MEDCoE G-3 Emergency Operations Cell, or EOC.

She recalls that masks were not even mandatory upon receipt of the initial controlled movement mission.

“We didn’t know a lot about the disease yet, but we knew that having Soldiers travel with the general population was not possible if we wanted to keep the training population safe.”

Brown-Johnson, who is also the MEDCoE Chief of Plans and Training, or G-3/7, estimates that since the first official controlled movement on April 7, 2020, the command

has executed at least five dozen inbound movements and 11 dozen outbound movements, that include both air and ground transportation.

“These movements, using the most controlled and isolated methods possible, have been crucial to maintaining the readiness of the operational and generating force follow-on units our Soldiers are going to,” Brown-Johnson said.

For nearly seven months, Soldiers continued to arrive from Basic Combat Training, or BCT, and later depart after completing Advanced Individual Training, or AIT, mainly on chartered flights at JBSA-Kelly Field Annex, Port San Antonio, or contracted buses directly from JBSA-Fort Sam Houston.

Traveling Soldiers are carefully screened for signs of fever and other COVID-19 symptoms before departing BCT, when arriving in San Antonio, all throughout their training at the MEDCoE, and then again when departing to their first unit of assignment. Masks are worn, hands are washed, surfaces are sanitized, and social distance is observed following Army and Centers for Disease Control guidelines. Nothing is left to chance in these tightly controlled movements; even bus drivers and aircrews are screened. The rigorous precautions have paid dividends.

“We have been extremely successful in keeping the training pipeline open because of these controlled movements, with outstanding safety results while conducting movements both CONUS and OCONUS,” Brown-Johnson said.

In the last 32 weeks since dealing with the pandemic, MEDCoE has graduated nearly 13 thousand students in more than 600 courses while safely



JOSE E. RODRIGUEZ

A Soldier has his temperature checked after arriving at Joint Base San Antonio-Kelly Field Annex from Fort Jackson, Mississippi, on a chartered flight.

moving over seven thousand AIT Soldiers of varying medical military occupational specialties in and out of the training pipeline in a combination of over three hundred eighty air and ground movements. All this occurred without a single instance of sending a COVID-19 positive student to a follow-on unit of assignment.

“The Brigade Movement Cell was created in response to the pandemic, and a lot of things are brand new,” said 2nd Lt. Francisco Bautista, Movement Officer in Charge for the 32nd Medical Brigade, MEDCoE’s training brigade. He has also been coordinating and executing Soldier movements since last April and has seen how the process evolved.

“Our shop, in conjunction with the EOC, created many new processes that are being used TRADOC and

Army-wide.”

As a result of the new processes, standards and mitigation measures implemented, MEDCoE controlled movements continue to be successful with exemplary safety results

“We continue to follow the guidelines prescribed by MEDCoE, TRADOC and the Army when bringing these Soldiers in and sending them out,” said Sgt. 1st Class Garrett Rogers, Movement Noncommissioned Officer in Charge for the 32nd Medical Brigade.

“We’re being strict about it, not leaving any room for error,” Rogers said. “The process is ever changing and improving, looking back to where we started.”

He said the organization is continuing to improve communication and coordination with the BCTs,

which have improved and refined the process.

“In the beginning, we were averaging forty days of time on ground after AIT graduation; now we’re averaging three to four,” Rogers said. “We think we can bring that down even further to twenty-four to forty-eight hours.”

With downtime cut and other improvements to the movement mission, MEDCoE continues to train AIT Soldiers in nearly the same amount of time as before the pandemic.

MEDCoE is prepared to continue controlled movements as long as they are needed to keep the AIT training pipeline and MEDCoE cadre and staff safe from COVID.

“We’re almost approaching a new normal, keeping Soldiers on track,” Bautista said. “We are prepared to do it as long as is needed.”

Fort Sam Houston ISD schools awarded Purple Star, Randolph also awarded designation

From Fort Sam Houston
Independent School District Public Affairs

The Texas Education Agency, or TEA, announced Oct. 29 that both Fort Sam Houston Elementary School and Robert G. Cole Middle and High School have been awarded the Purple Star Designation for their support and commitment to meeting the unique needs of their military-connected students. Randolph Middle and High Schools were also identified as Purple Star schools.

Created by the 86th Texas Legislature, this special honor was awarded to 106 schools for the first time this year. A special seal was created by the TEA for campuses receiving the Purple Star Designation.

The Fort Sam Houston Independent School District was created as a special purpose district in 1951 and is located entirely at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston. FSHISD is a Texas public school district that operates one elementary school and one middle/high school.

“We exist to serve the military child,” said Dr. Gary Bates, superintendent of schools. “It is an honor to support our students and families in all ways possible.”

To qualify for the award, each campus had to meet



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specific standards documenting ways campus-based personnel support students and their families through special programs, transition supports and services, training for staff, webpage supports on registration,

enrollment, academic planning, and counseling services as well as the establishment of programs with student leaders or ambassadors.

Fort Sam Houston Elementary School serves students in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade.

“Faculty and staff offer a variety of programs and activities that support our military-connected students,” said Linda Reed, campus military-liaison team member and counselor. “We layer the support through Student Ambassador and the Elementary Student2Student programs, hosting family events, and sharing our pride with Month of the Military activities.”

TEA announced that campuses receiving the recognition are eligible to recertify the designation every two years.

“Cole students and faculty were among the first in the nation to launch a Student2Student program to support the transition of military-connected students,” said Cristina DeHoyos, Cole campus military-liaison team member and student services coordinator. “The campus also supports a New Kids Camp and after school activities to connect students with their new community.”

Robert G. Cole Middle and High School serves students in sixth through twelfth grade.



DONALD SPARKS

Military officers from Brazil, Colombia and Peru conduct mission analysis as part of the Planning in Crisis exercise Oct. 28 hosted by U.S. Army South and held at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston Oct. 26-30. The exercise allowed partner nations from the Western Hemisphere to plan and develop an operation order with component commands in preparation for the U.S. Southern Command PANAMAX exercise.

ARSOUTH, multinational planners prepare for PANAMAX with Planning in Crisis event

By Donald Sparks
U.S. ARMY SOUTH PUBLIC AFFAIRS

On the road leading up to PANAMAX, the major capstone training exercise for U.S. Army South, military officers from Brazil, Colombia and Peru arrived to Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston to take part in the Multinational Forces South, or MNFS, Planning in Crisis, or PIC, event Oct. 26-30.

PANAMAX is an annual U.S. Southern Command-sponsored multinational exercise series that focuses on ensuring the defense of the Panama Canal. Originally scheduled for this year, the exercise was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic; however, it will be taking place in February 2021.

As the land component to U.S. Southern Command, Army South works closely with partner nation militaries from

Central, South America and the Caribbean to strengthen and build capability. The PIC portion of the exercise offers the staff a chance to practice the Joint Planning Process and achieve designated planning tasks that are part of the Army South mission essential task list.

“The key objective of the PIC is to develop an approved course of action and information necessary to develop the MNFS operation order and annexes to achieve desired results as directed by U.S. Southern Command,” said James Murphy, Army South training and exercises director. “It also give ARSOUTH the opportunity to work with the other components and partner nations to increase everyone’s planning interoperability and develop positive relationships.”

Murphy explained the PICs are critical events for the

training of the Army South staff, the partner nations and joint partners for several reasons, to include practicing the skills necessary to be joint task force ready if called upon.

“If ARSOUTH is designated the MNFS in a real-world scenario, it would be in command of multiple units, components and possible units from other partner nations; so it is necessary for the command to help build interoperability and determine planning gaps in exercises and training events,” Murphy said.

In an effort to maximize training opportunities, key leadership roles and responsibilities within the exercise change annually. Leading the Combined Forces Land Component Command, or CFLCC, element for PANAMAX will be the Brazilian Army.

Serving as the CFLCC Joint

Operations Office Director, Col. Angelo Brait Jr., Brazilian Army, viewed the training opportunity as a venue to help the participating nations synchronize their planning processes, exercise multinational standard operating procedures, establish command and control procedures, and conduct sustainment in support of multinational operations.

“This effort is necessary to bring all the countries together to build and develop interoperability together,” Brait said. “When we come here to the United States and start planning, we can talk with each other and make sure that different parts can work together.”

“The training allows the partner nations to perform better, but most importantly, it allows the United States to have trust in us to conduct these

type of operations together,” Brait said. “I have learned a lot here because the U.S. military have more experience in these types of operations, and I plan to return to Brazil with many lessons learned here.”

The next step for the MNFS staff was to finalize the operation order and annexes and then brief those products at the Component PIC, in Miami, Nov 13-20. At that event, the different components developed their plan to execute the command post exercise, which will take place during Feb. 17-26, 2021. At that time, the multiple staffs will be able to achieve their training objectives to conduct the planning process in preparation of the execution phase.

“I hope in February we can put all of this in practice. I know it’s simulation, but I’m ready to see if our plan can work,” Brait said.

BAMC combat medic earns U.S. citizenship

By Daniel J. Calderón

BROOKE ARMY MEDICAL CENTER
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

For most people, waking up as an American citizen is just a given — a circumstance of birth. For one Soldier at Brooke Army Medical Center, the right to be an American took more than a decade to earn.

Spc. Diego Timoteo, an Army combat medic, was born in Brazil and came to the United States in 2005. He recently earned his citizenship. Timoteo played high school tennis and received a scholarship to play tennis in college.

In the years between 2005 and 2019, his parents came to the U.S., opened a business and received their green cards. Timoteo earned a bachelor's degree in biology and one in psychology. In 2019, when he received his residency status, Timoteo also realized one of his other longtime goals.

"I've always wanted to join the military," he said. "My father was in the army in



DANIEL J. CALDERÓN

Spec. Diego Timoteo, an Army Combat Medic at Brooke Army Medical Center, Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, checks an incoming patient at BAMC's drive-through COVID-19 testing area. Timoteo, a native of Brazil, recently earned his American citizenship.

Brazil. He was a captain, a doctor. I've always liked the discipline of the Army. Since the time I decided I wanted to live in the United States and become a citizen, I've wanted to join the military because of the similarity to the athlete mentality — how disciplined you have to be, how you have to listen to the people above you, and the work ethic that the Army has. I've always thought

that is the correct place — the right place for me."

In 2019, Timoteo joined the Army and went to basic training and advanced individual training where he earned his 68W — Combat Medic — credentials. He reported to BAMC at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston later that year where he started working in the emergency department.

He later swapped places and took a position in the pediatrics department. When BAMC began putting together the team for the COVID-19 testing area, Timoteo received an invitation to join. For the last several months, he has been working in BAMC's drive-through COVID-19 screening area to help test and screen beneficiaries.

"He is a hard worker," said Air Force Staff Sgt. Gabrielle Kaufman, an orthopedic technician at BAMC, who currently serves as the supply non-commissioned officer in charge for the screening area. "He is definitely one of our star people here. He is always willing to help out the other members of our team."

"It's one of the best things that's happened to me so far," Timoteo said about his time working with the testing and screening team. "I completely enjoy being out there on the front lines with the people on my team. We all come from different parts of the hospital,

but the mission is the same. We work for the good of the unit."

It was while working in his current role that Timoteo finally received the news he had been waiting to hear for so long.

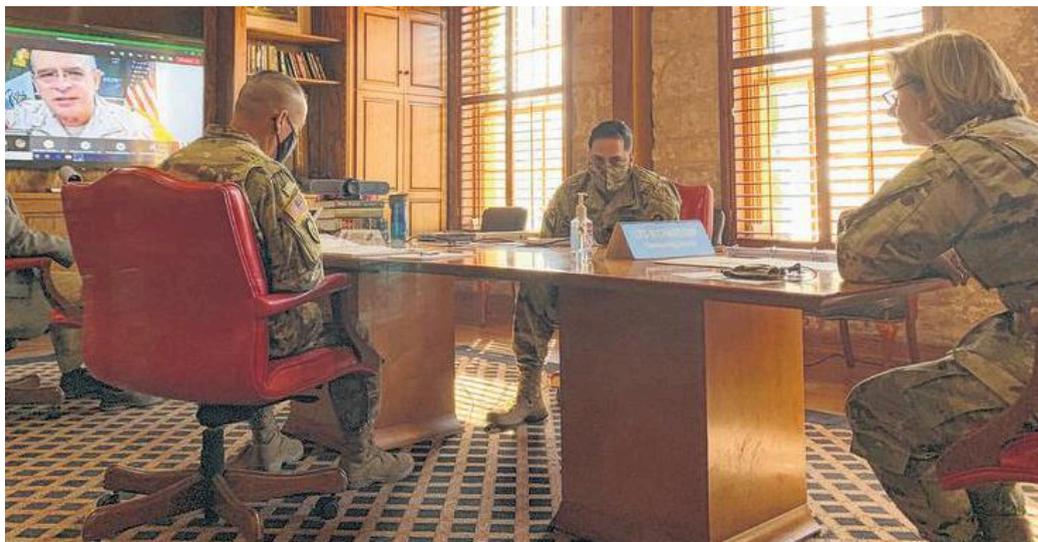
"I just got my citizenship this month (October)," he said. "It's something that I always wanted to be — to be an American citizen, and serve in the Army, so I'm very excited."

Since receiving his citizenship, Timoteo is moving forward on one of his major goals — becoming an Army officer. Timoteo said he is putting together a package to be commissioned as an officer and he plans to pursue further education in Psychology. He said his passion is to help others with their mental health issues. The new U.S. citizen and Soldier said he is proud of his accomplishments and looks forward to a long career.

"I'm here for the long haul," Timoteo said. "I would like to stay in for the whole 20 years. Or, if possible, I'd like to stay longer."

ARNORTH KICKS OFF EXERCISE FUERZAS AMIGAS

Lt. Gen. Laura J. Richardson (right), commanding general U. S. Army North (Fifth Army), and Command Sgt. Maj. Phil K. Barretto, ARNORTH senior enlisted leader, conduct a video teleconference Nov. 2 with Lt. Gen. Celestino Ávila Astudillo, Secretaria de la Defensa Nacional, Military Region II commander, to kick off Exercise Fuerzas Amigas. Fuerzas Amigas is an annual Theater Security Cooperation exercise, focused on disaster response to foster and build a military-to-military partnership between U.S. Army North and the Mexican military.



COURTESY PHOTO

LACKLAND

Blue Rope of the Year extols rewards of MTI career

By Annette Crawford
37TH TRAINING WING
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

When 20-year-old Holly Vaught walked into an Air Force recruiter's office in the summer of 2003, she was by her own account, emotionally lost with \$2 and a half tank of gas to her name. She admitted her motive to join the Air Force was selfish: "I needed something to save me from me."

Not only did she find that "something," she went on to excel in a position that she says gives back to "something bigger than myself, something that had saved and given me my life." Now a master sergeant, Vaught is a Master Military Training Instructor and the training superintendent with the 326th Training Squadron. She was recently named the 2020 Blue Rope of the Year.

Vaught credits the Air Force with turning her life around.

"When I walked into the recruiter's office, Master Sgt. Rapp — I'll never forget him — looked at me and knew I needed help. He got me a job at their family fried chicken shop/gas station, and gave me study material to pass the ASVAB, which took me three times," she said.

"But he never gave up on me. Even in the months leading up to leaving for basic I had people who didn't believe that I would commit. That was the type of person I was, untrustworthy. I lacked character. I was lost. Feb. 10, 2004, was the day my life started," Vaught said.

BMT was a blur for the young trainee.

"I remember being very quiet. I was a chapel guide. I remember struggling with PT,

but what I remember most about it was how fast it went by," she said. The thought of becoming an MTI "never, not even once," entered her mind.

Vaught went into security forces and thought she'd found the career she'd do her entire Air Force career. But the Air Force had other plans.

"My command chief at the time had a last-minute tasker to vector one female tech sergeant in our wing and he vectored me," she said. "I wasn't happy, but after talking to him about the decision he explained how he had to vector his best female tech sergeant and he knew I would be made for this."

She proved him right after she started leading her first flight.

"So many rewards come with this job. First and foremost is the obvious: watching a civilian step foot on Lackland and over a short period of time watching them grow into this confident and committed Airman,"

Vaught said. "As an MTI, you in reality become the very first impression of what a professional is and should be. When I meet parents for the first time and hear them ask, 'How did you do it? How did you change my son/daughter in a matter of seven weeks?' They look and act so different in a good way," is something I will always remember."

Vaught added that another reward is the relationship the MTIs develop with each other.

"This enterprise brings so many of us together from all walks of the Air Force. When you hear an MTI call each other 'Brother' or 'Sister' that's real!" she said. "We are a family and just as much as the trainees grow into phenomenal Airmen, our MTIs are growing



COURTESY PHOTO

Master Sgt. Holly Vaught (right), 326th Training Squadron, stands with her commander, Lt. Col. Sean Fellows, at the Military Training Instructor Monument at the JBSA-Lackland parade field Oct. 16. Vaught is a Master Military Training Instructor, also known as a "Blue Rope." She was recently named 2020 Blue Rope of the Year.

into phenomenal NCOs, senior NCOs and leaders."

Some of Vaught's accomplishments this past year include developing and standardizing 23 COVID-19 safety measures that resulted in zero mission degradation. She developed a new system and buying plan for the BMT

linen program, saving the Air Force \$133,000. Vaught also served as the MTI Week project officer, chaired the BMT Lean event, and is the Blue Rope Association president

Vaught is "the epitome of everything that is right with our senior NCO corps," according to her commander,

Lt. Col. Sean Fellows.

"Her ability to seamlessly weave her commitment to our mission and her passion for our people sets her apart," Fellows said. "In a sign of true leadership, Master Sgt. Vaught motivates, trains and inspires her peers as they forge the world's greatest weapon system — the American Airman!"

The Airmen whose lives Vaught has impacted number over 1,000. And while she never dreamed of becoming an MTI, her advice to anyone who may be thinking of it is "Do it!"

"Not only are you changing lives, you are adding so much to your leadership toolbox. This journey will take you through 15 different waves of emotions, but knowing that you had a hand in creating the future of our Air Force is something that only a small percentage of the Air Force can say they have done," Vaught said. "The relationships you gain with one another is a bond that will be greater than any other bond you will create in the Air Force. Some of my very best friends that I call family have been the ones I developed here in BMT."

"For 45 years we've been recognizing the top 10% of our of our MTI corps as Blue Ropes — Master Military Training Instructors. They represent the very best that BMT has to offer. For Master Sgt. Vaught to be named Blue Rope of the Year shows that the legacy continues," said Col. Michael Newsom, 3737th Training Group commander. "She is truly a 'waterfall' that continues to pour into building ready and lethal Airmen and mentoring other Airmen to be better. I am very proud of Master Sgt. Vaught and all her accomplishments."

688th CW opens The Oasis Room in support of Airmen resilience

By Sharon Singleton
688TH CYBERSPACE WING
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Members of the 688th Cyberspace Wing came together to celebrate the opening of their new resiliency room with a ribbon-cutting ceremony performed by Col. Steven Anderson, 688th CW commander, at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland Oct. 13.

The resiliency room, formally named The Oasis Room, was envisioned first by the Airmen, executed by the chaplain, and supported by wing leadership is stocked with seating, books, a massage

chair, a television, games and free resources for the wing's Airmen.

"The goal was to create a place where all Airmen can retreat and refresh," said Capt. Amy O'Connell, 688th Cyberspace Wing chaplain. "The room offers everyone a chance to step back and take a break, even if only for a couple minutes."

The goal of The Oasis Room aligns with the 688th Cyberspace Wing line of effort to develop resilient Airmen and the Air Force Chaplain Corps' vision; to care for Airmen more than anyone thinks possible.

The 688th Cyberspace Wing, headquartered at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, is aligned under Sixteenth Air Force (Air Forces Cyber), Air Combat Command. The wing is the Air Force's premier cyberspace warfighting organization dedicated to delivering actionable intelligence and tactics, techniques, and procedures, deployable warfighter communications, engineering and installation capabilities, defensive cyber operations, and network security operations across the Air Force Information Network enterprise.



CAPT. ERIC NEVINS

Col. Steven Anderson (left), 688th Cyberspace Wing commander, and Capt. Amy O'Connell, 688th Cyberspace Wing chaplain, cut the ribbon during a ceremony for the opening of The Oasis resiliency room at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland Oct. 13.

Joint Outpatient Experience Survey feedback the path to change

By Staff Sgt.
Amanda Stanford

59TH MEDICAL WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

During an appointment, whether a patient is scheduled with their primary care manager or they stop at the emergency room, they may have a variety of experiences. The Joint Outpatient Experience Survey, or JOES, plays a critical role in enabling patients to communicate their experiences.

The 59th Medical Wing Family Emergency Center considers rankings from JOES as areas of improvement. The goal, to be number one ranked emergency room in each category each month.

While this may seem like a lofty goal, the FEC continues to work toward it with high quality patient care as the goal.

"The Family Emergency Center shares the same ethos as any other emergency room in the Air Force; we get the job done," said Lt. Col. Michael Edging, 59th Medical Operations Squadron



STAFF SGT. AMANDA STANFORD

Senior Airman Raeann Espinoza, 59th Medical Operations Squadron Family Emergency Center medical technician, prepares a syringe Oct. 29 at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland.

Emergency Services flight commander. "No one gets turned away here. We do

everything we can to help you."

The FEC was rated number

nine out of 10 emergency rooms in the Air Force at the beginning of the year. After

continuing to make improvements from patient feedback from the JOES, the FEC reached number one in four of the five categories and number one overall in recent months.

It's important to keep in mind the FEC at Wilford Hall Ambulatory Surgical Center is free standing, but it's being compared to fully functioning ERs, meaning the emergency center is connected to a clinic rather than a hospital.

"Since this is the busiest emergency room in the Air Force, our team is used to being busy," said Maj. Andrew Gausepohl, 59th Medical Operations Squadron FEC medical director. "COVID-19 wasn't a shock to the system like it was many other emergency rooms. Our crews were and always are ready to respond."

Even through this pandemic, the FEC is striving for the highest quality patient care. The only path to change is through feedback. Achieving that begins with the patient.

Call for Innovation Rodeo ideas nears Dec. 1 deadline

By Shannon Carabajal

AIR FORCE INSTALLATION AND MISSION
SUPPORT CENTER PUBLIC AFFAIRS

With less than a month to go in their annual call-for-topics campaign, the Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center is still looking for innovative ideas with potential to change the Air Force.

“If you have an idea that will help the Air Force deliver installation and mission support capabilities, improve our installations, or support our families in a better, faster or smarter way, we want to hear from you,” said Col. Lance Clark, director of the AFIMSC Expeditionary Support and Innovation Directorate.

The campaign, open through Dec. 1, gives military and civilian members of mission support groups around the world a chance to compete for part of at least \$1 million in funding and resources to pursue their ideas. Airmen with the top ideas will learn from leading innovators and pitch their ideas to a panel of Air Force leaders during the AFIMSC Innovation Rodeo

“If you have an idea that will help the Air Force deliver installation and mission support capabilities, improve our installations, or support our families in a better, faster or smarter way, we want to hear from you.”

Col. Lance Clark

Director of the AFIMSC Expeditionary Support and Innovation Directorate

competition Feb. 5.

The theme of this year’s Innovation Rodeo is Base of the Future, a broad topic with endless mission support-centric possibilities. Through the competition, Airmen can help shape how installations can look and function in the future.

AFIMSC can be a powerful ally for anyone with an idea that can improve installation and mission support operations, said Dustin Dickens, an innovation program analyst with the center.

“Since standing up an innovation office two years ago, we’ve landed more

than \$65 million in Air Force and venture capital funding for I&MS initiatives,” he said. “We’ve been very successful at connecting brilliant Airmen with Air Force and industry partners to bring their ideas to life.”

The competition calls for Airmen to submit their ideas through the online Ideascale platform at <https://usaf.ideascale.gov/a/campaign-home/i&i>.

Past Innovation Rodeo winners include:

▶▶ Mobile apps to make life easier for Airmen and their families, including one to centralize and streamline the subletting of short-term slots at

military child development centers; one for base announcements and community events; and one to share feedback about customer experiences.

▶▶ An idea to replace the current manual mapping of underground cabling and wiring with the use of augmented reality;

▶▶ A project to leverage Geospatial Information Systems and aerial imagery for facility roof inspections;

▶▶ A proposal to use autonomous robotic lawn mowers to cut the grass in and around airfields at night to reduce aircraft bird-strike hazards.

AFIMSC’s innovation team has also partnered with rapid acquisition leaders to convert Airmen’s innovative ideas into reality at record pace. As such, winning projects are now in various stages of development, including an idea from the inaugural event in 2019 — an app now called the Wing Feedback App — that is currently in beta testing at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas.

For more information about the AFIMSC Innovation Rodeo, email AFIMSC.Innovation@us.af.mil.

AFIMSC executes record \$8.2 billion in FY 2020 during pandemic

By Steve Warns

AIR FORCE INSTALLATION AND MISSION
SUPPORT CENTER PUBLIC AFFAIRS

A global pandemic couldn't stop the Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center's Resources Management team from closing out a record \$8.2 billion of execution during fiscal 2020.

With the Air Force's second largest operations and maintenance account, AFIMSC's end-of-year closeout success was the culmination of strong processes, great relationships and strategy implemented from the first day of the fiscal year, said Col. Laurie Lanpher, AFIMSC budget director.

What the team members couldn't have anticipated was the challenge COVID-19 brought. Yet they overcame the challenge by thriving in a virtual working environment, Lanpher said.

"The team adjusted incredibly well," she said. "There were a lot of people who were quite simply anxious about how it was going to work, but it ended up being really smooth and not terribly complicated because we had folks

'manning' the virtual war room. If any of our teammates across the world had an issue, they could sign in and ask for assistance."

Of the \$8.2 billion allocated for installation and mission support requirements, \$4.6 billion covered every Installation Commander's must-pay bill and their top priority unfunded requirement.

Since 2017, budget analysts representing every Air Force major command gathered at the war room established at AFIMSC headquarters in San Antonio. This year, the team successfully gathered virtually to validate end-of-year closeout activities. The virtual environment enabled the team to effectively multitask and complete a greater volume of work.

"What was really great about it is for everyone who was working up to 20 hours a day, which is the norm during closeout, we didn't have to worry about them driving home," Lanpher said.

"That was a huge benefit that added a level of safety.

"It also kept the detachment financial managers from having to fly in. That

represents a whole section of our team that didn't have their lives disrupted by the requirement to go TDY for closeout. We are also the only Air Force organization that touches every single installation, so our analysts who support U.S. Air Forces in Europe and Pacific Air Forces were more able to support folks on the other side of the world."

Perhaps the best example of AFIMSC's agility and expertise during the closeout was the response to a natural disaster at Hurlburt Field, Florida.

Hurricane Sally hit Hurlburt Field Sept. 16. Maj. Lisa Kempker, commander of the 1st Special Operations Comptroller Squadron, drove the installation and assessed damages with Col. Bill Hunter, 1st Special Operations Mission Support Group commander. The 1st Special Operations Civil Engineer Squadron discovered almost 50 line items worth of damage ranging from the marina to minor facility and dorm damages.

"The CE Squadron pulled together rough estimates and we met with the 1st Special Operations Contracting Squadron on Sept. 18 to discuss which of

the projects were in the realm of feasible considering how close to the end of the fiscal year we were," Kempker said. "The CE Squadron believed they could rapidly develop statements of work to repair the damage.

"The contracting squadron stated they needed those SOWs and \$1.2 million no later than Sept. 21 to even have a chance to pull off contracts for those projects before fiscal year end. I sent AFIMSC a spreadsheet of storm damage estimates on Sept. 19, and by 2 p.m. Sept. 21, AFIMSC sent the funds. The wing did not have the flexibility that late in the year to cash flow those projects, and AFIMSC funding those projects within the timeline we articulated was absolutely critical."

AFIMSC's end-of-year closeout continues to tie in the center's strategic lines of effort: increase lethality and readiness, and take care of Airmen and families, said Chris Underwood, AFIMSC budget office technical director for financial analysis.

"We're actively engaged in tying our funding to lethality and readiness at installations," Underwood said.

RANDOLPH

For Cubs fan, Nov. 2 now holds two indelible memories

By Robert Goetz
502ND AIR BASE WING
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Nov. 2 is a date that will always hold a special place in the heart of Peggy Gast, an Air Force Life Cycle Management Center information technology specialist at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph whose civil service career spans five decades.

On that date four years ago, Gast's beloved Chicago Cubs won their first World Series title in 108 years.

On that date this year — chosen specifically for its significance in Cubs history to fans like Gast — the longtime civil servant found another reason to always remember Nov. 2.

Surrounded by friends and her colleagues from the AFLCMC Business and Enterprise Systems' Human Resources Systems Division, including those on hand virtually for the occasion, Gast received a pin and certificate of service representing 50 years as a civil servant from Ronnie Carter, division director.

"It was very special," Gast said after the ceremony. "I was uncertain about having a ceremony during a pandemic, but my anniversary was perfect."

Gast's supervisor, Maj. Cory Steinbrecher, the division's Enterprise Integration Branch chief, called her "one of the pillars of the organization."

"I have learned many things from her and about her over the past few years," he said. "When asked to be part of the ceremony, I leapt at the occasion. It's not every day you have the opportunity to honor someone for 50 years of



AIRMAN 1ST CLASS TYLER MCQUINSTON

Ronnie Carter (left), director of the Human Resources Division, Air Force Program Executive Office for Business and Enterprise Systems, presents a 50 Years of Federal Service certificate to Peggy Gast (right), an Air Force Life Cycle Management Center employee, Nov. 2 at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph.

federal service."

Gast's Air Force journey began in July 1970 when she took a Greyhound bus from her home in Kentucky to Ohio for training as a computer programmer at Headquarters Air Force Logistics Center, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

Her first day of training was July 15, her mother's birthday.

"I joined civil service because I was having trouble finding a job," she said. "At the time, there weren't as many jobs open to women. One of the few opportunities was being a teacher. I didn't want to be a teacher."

Gast found that a civil service job fit her mother's advice to a T.

"My mother told me to get a steady job and hang onto it, so

that's what I've done," she said.

During her stay at Wright-Patterson, Gast was given a temporary duty assignment that set her sights westward.

"I was sent TDY to Kelly Air Force Base here in San Antonio," she said. "February in Ohio is winter; February in San Antonio was spring. I loved this area and wanted to move here."

However, Gast had to place that dream on hold for the time being.

A massive reduction in force due to the demise of the Advanced Logistics System forced her to move to St. Louis to work for the Army. After she saw the Mississippi River freeze solid, she sought a warmer climate and secured employment at Fort McPherson near Atlanta.

"The first time I saw the Taj (the iconic main building at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph) in May 1980, I thought it was the most beautiful building I had ever seen and that I would stay here forever. So far, I have."

Peggy Gast, Air Force Life Cycle Management Center information technology specialist at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph

A few years later, Gast got a job at Oakland Army Base. She headed to California and lived in Alameda.

Living in California proved to be too expensive, so Gast secured a position at Yuma Proving Ground, but as she was preparing to move to Arizona, a job offer from Randolph came her way, and she wasted no time getting there.

"The first time I saw the Taj (the iconic main building at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph) in May 1980, I thought it was the most beautiful building I had ever seen and that I would stay here forever," she said. "So far, I have."

Gast's four decades at JBSA-Randolph have been filled with accomplishments, but she points to four in particular.

"Programming a T-38 flight simulator was probably my greatest contribution to the Air Force mission since it involved pilot training," she said.

Gast also called that her hardest assignment since she knew nothing about aircraft when she started working with pilots on the project. She successfully simulated the manual diverter valve on a T-38 and later learned that one of the pilots had been told that simulating the manual diverter

valve could not be done.

"I also made contributions by programming the accounting system for Morale, Welfare and Recreational activities, including the clubs; programming occupational measurement surveys for Air Education and Training Command; and working as the Privacy Act monitor, safety monitor, and security monitor for my unit."

Gast's current primary responsibility is implementing configuration status accounting for the organization's more than 15 HR systems, Steinbrecher said.

"This configuration management role includes the process of recording and reporting configuration item descriptions and all departures from the baseline," he said. "Largely, in this quality-based role, she is responsible for validating that the proper documents are complete and accurate, and any deviations are quickly addressed."

Steinbrecher said he's never met anyone "more tenacious and dedicated than Peggy."

"When set on a task, she not only owns it, but she assures it's complete and accurate," he said. "These attributes are the cornerstone to how well she handles her day-to-day responsibilities."

South Korean immigrant finds future in Air Force

By Master Sgt. Chance Babin
AIR FORCE RECRUITING SERVICE
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

When Jay Park was 8 years old, his parents immigrated from South Korea to the United States in hopes of building a better life for Jay and his older brother. His parents didn't know it at the time, but, for Jay, that better life would mean serving in the Air Force.

"Most Asian families push the standard, typical white-collar careers — doctors, lawyers, dentists, etc.," said now-Maj. Jay Park, director of operations for Air Force Recruiting Service's Det. 1. "It was always understood in my family that I had to make something of myself, which meant I should pursue one of those standard, white-collar jobs."

Park instead found his future in a blue-collar job ... Air Force blue that is.

"Even though my parents were both college graduates and had good paying jobs, the chances for my brother and me to do well in Korea were low for many reasons," he said. "Looking back on the decision to immigrate, I realize how difficult it must have been for my parents to leave everything — family, friends, jobs and community — and move to a foreign country where they had no job lined up and didn't speak any English. They sacrificed everything just to have an opportunity to make my life better. At the time, I was too young to fully grasp the sacrifices they made. I was just happy to get on an airplane and move to America."

The Parks settled in Oklahoma, just a few miles from Tinker Air Force Base. And while the young Park constantly saw airplanes flying over his city, he could never picture himself piloting one of the mighty jets that roared overhead.

"I went to a few airshows at Tinker, but it never really

dawned on me that I could be one of the pilots," he said. "Did I want to? Probably. But, internally, it seemed too far of a stretch for me. No one ever said to me directly that I couldn't be one, but I also never heard someone tell me I could be one, nor did I ever see anyone like me flying one of those awesome jets."

While Park said he was glad his family decided to make the move to the United States, life was not all roses for young Jay, his brothers and his parents.

"I grew up in a broken home," he said. "My father was bi-polar, schizophrenic and physically abusive toward my mother. She worked two jobs. During the day, she worked at a salon and during the evenings our whole family would clean office buildings from 5 to 10 p.m. She did it all with many nights of tears and many nights fearing for her life. I wanted to help her, but I also wanted to run away."

He said, deep down, he knew the best way he could help his mom was to stay out of trouble.

"After all she had sacrificed, I did not and could not burden her more with my selfishness," he said. "She was also very religious and so strong in her faith. It led me to see the strength she found in God and it helped me find my faith in God as well."

After graduating high school, Park almost enlisted in the Army.

"I wanted desperately to help my mom so I thought the best thing I could do was to become self-sufficient," he said. "Thankfully, my best friend's father convinced me to go to college and join the military as an officer. I had no idea what that meant, but, somehow, I found ways to get grants to help pay for in-state tuition, which allowed me to put the military on hold."

Even though his tuition was covered, Park found out during his freshman year of college that he still needed an income to cover living expenses. He



Maj. Jay Park, director of operations for Air Force Recruiting Service's Det. 1, and his wife, Anna, and their children. Park's parents immigrated to the U.S. when he was 8 years old.

worked part-time jobs, but soon realized he would need more money if he was to stay focused on finishing college.

"I started looking into ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) scholarships because I became friends with some of the Air Force ROTC cadets in my intro to engineering class," he said. "One of them became a close friend of mine who helped me get in touch with the detachments on campus. By the grace of God, I ended up with AFROTC Det. 675."

After college, Park said his plan was to do four years in the Air Force, thank the military for helping him pay for his education and giving him a job, and then quickly transition to life in the civilian sector.

"What I failed to realize was that the Air Force began to shape me and mold me into a leader," he said. "It taught me many lessons and allowed me to experience so many wonderful things. It forced me to become more responsible, taught me to manage tasks well, but also to be a leader among my peers. It also didn't hurt that the ladies in my life loved the uniform."

It was at this time that Park said he started thinking about becoming an aviator.

"I still remember to this day sitting inside the big auditorium, sweaty and hot at field training in the middle of the Texas

summer heat, watching a clip of a B-1B Weapon Systems Officer talking about how cool his job was and thinking, 'I want to do that!'" Park said.

He set his sights on becoming an Air Force WSO.

"Training to become an F-15 Strike Eagle WSO was long and challenging to say the least," he said. "But, it was definitely rewarding and the sense of accomplishment was amazing. I would be lying if I told you there weren't times when I wished I had gone an easier route — same rank, same basic pay, regardless of your job in the military. But, in the end, it was being part of a community, belonging to a group of highly skilled fighter pilots and leaders that drew me in."

While Park was definitely in the minority as an Asian aviator, he said he never had any issues related to his background.

"Discrimination exists in some form or fashion, no matter where you go," he said. "But, I never once felt or experienced outright discrimination based on my Asian heritage. The discrimination you felt in the squadron was mostly based on your performance in the jet and your commitment to the organization and fellow aviators."

Park said he struggled to fit in mostly because he did not understand the dynamics of the

squadron, which felt and functioned like a fraternity.

"You have to earn your way in, nothing is given," he said. "I didn't understand the importance of camaraderie and teamwork. I thought if I just came to work and did my job that was good enough. I got by on that for the first few years, but began to realize I was falling behind."

He also began to notice the culture here in America was vastly different from what he had internalized as a Korean American.

"Never in a setting of Koreans would someone younger talk directly to an elder and give him feedback," Park said. "I was shocked at how young captains would talk to majors or even lieutenant colonels during briefs and debriefs. So from the beginning, I went into the squadron with the wrong mentality. I was humble and ready to learn, but maybe too humble. I did not know how to speak my mind. I didn't know how to fight for myself and just did whatever they asked me to do. I was passive."

The major said he eventually learned how to better integrate within a squadron and speak up for himself. More importantly, he hopes his successful Air Force career will encourage more Asians to consider a career in military aviation.

"A lot of Asian parents don't realize the vast number of amazing opportunities the military provides to a young person," he said. "Those unique and insane opportunities build character and maturity and provide a chance to be a leader among your peers. Opportunities to see and experience the world help challenge and shape your view of things. You can't pay for that type of education and hands-on experience. No amount of college classes will teach you those lessons."

Now that Park is part of Det.

39th FTS Cobras take over San Antonio skies

By Janis El Shabazz

340TH FLYING TRAINING GROUP
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The 39th Flying Training Squadron Reserve Citizen Airmen took command of San Antonio military airspace to execute a training and readiness exercise called “Cobras in the Clouds” Oct. 29 at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph.

The exercise gave 39th FTS members a chance to practice their wartime mission of taking control of the training mission of the 12th Operations Group. In the event that a real-world situation would result in all active duty pilots being recalled to their major weapons systems, Reserve pilots would take over the training mission to keep the pilot pipeline flowing.

The 2020 execution of this annual training exercise was also a chance to real-world test the fruits of the new Undergraduate Pilot Training 2.5 syllabus implemented at JBSA-Randolph about a month and a half ago to train student pilots, improve pilot training efficiency and throughput. UPT 2.5 takes advantage of newer technology such as virtual reality and artificial



DEBBIE GILDEA

Crew chief Ryan Garcia monitors a T-38 aircrew prior to a training flight during the 39th Flying Training Squadron mandatory unit training assembly held Oct. 29-30 at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph.

intelligence, as well as increased simulator time, to allow students to progress at their own pace.

“During this year’s exercise we had a chance to showcase the success of the application of UPT 2.5 here and reiterate to the active duty members that we can do this mission if called upon,” said Lt. Col. Thomas Lessner, 39th Flying

Training Squadron commander. “While UPT 2.5 allows students to train in ways they cannot in the cockpit, we realize there’s no substitute for in-the cockpit flying, therefore we strike a balance between actual flying time and simulator flying time.”

“This exercise is just an acknowledgement of what

happens every day — Cobras work hand-in-hand, seamlessly, with the active duty units of the 12th Operations Group to build the foundation of the Airmen who will be the next generation of aviators for the Air Force,” he said.

Reservists are embedded in Total Force Integration roles throughout the 559th FTS and 12th TRS. Roles most recently

taken on by Cobras include assistant operations directors, flight commanders, directors of transportation, scheduling, chief of innovation and more. On the morning of the exercise every training flight, operations desk, supervisor position, and flight control tower was manned by a member of the 39th FTS.

“When an Airmen flies with someone in a 12th OG airplane, they don’t know or care if it’s a Reservist or an active duty member. What they want is the absolute best instruction and that is what they get,” Lessner said.

Annually, the active duty and Reserve members of the 12th OG help the 12th Flying Training Wing produce more than 850 instructor pilots and 350 combat systems officers.

The day of training was capped off when the last aircraft landed at 1 pm, culminating the “fini-flight” for Lt. Col. Brian Sciantarelli, T-1 instructor pilot, who retired later that day after decades of service, including 20-plus years flying the T-1. The fini flight is a long standing Air Force tradition steeped in aviation history. The fini is an aviator’s final flight in their Air Force career.

IMMIGRANT

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1, he has an opportunity to give back and help mentor young people. The mission of Air Force Recruiting Service’s Det. 1 is to inform, influence and inspire our nation’s youth and their influencers. Its goal is to get in front of every demographic group in America and show them someone in a flight suit who looks like them—hopefully spurring interest in a future rated career in the Air Force.

“I strongly believe kids and teens are desperate for mentorship and relationships with people they can look up

to,” Park said. “Knowing that someone cares about them creates a huge impact on their lives. Having studied a little bit on human relations during my Master’s degree program, I know how critical it is for the youth to have a real life mentor.”

For the Det. 1 commander, having Park on her staff brings an outlook of what it’s like to be an immigrant and the challenges they face.

“He continually educates me on the struggles from an immigration standpoint, from a minority in America standpoint, and it truly highlights how a person’s pathway in life can be so heavily influenced by just one person or one conversation,”

said Lt. Col. Annie Driscoll, Det. 1 commander. “The first portion of his story that hit me is the sacrifice his parents made in order for he and his brother to have a better life. It really compels me as an Air Force member to make sure that immigrant youth, like Park, know and understand the opportunities that the Air Force can provide.”

Driscoll believes Park’s story will resonate with youth and his story is in many ways typical for kids who have never seen someone who looks like them in a role such as an Air Force pilot.

“The part of Park’s story that really resonates with me is how he didn’t consider applying to

be a pilot because he assumed that he couldn’t do it,” Driscoll said. “He hadn’t seen someone like him do it before and therefore the thought hadn’t actively occurred to him. I want to break this chain. I want every youth out there to see someone or hear someone’s story they can identify with, so they can know and believe that they too can do it. I love how this directly feeds into the mission of ‘Inform, Influence and Inspire’ for AFRS Det. 1.”

Now that Park is part of Det. 1 he is ready to do his part to work on rated diversity one day at a time.

“The best thing I can do for Det. 1 is to be available and be

present daily, tackling the tasks at hand,” he said. “Det. 1 exists to solve the rated diversity issue for our Air Force. That’s an enormous task. I think of it as a marathon, but as the saying goes, it’s about taking it one step at a time. It’s going to be hard to measure return on investment at this moment because it takes years and years before we’ll see any real results. But I tell you what, the people that we work with and partner with on a daily basis to tackle our diversity issue are so passionate, I just believe that things will get better.”

Anyone interested in a rated position with the U.S. Air Force can visit airforce.com for details.