

JBSA

LEGACY

WWW.JBSA.MIL

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO

JANUARY 8, 2021



SARAYUTH PINTHONG

Firefighters with Joint Base San Antonio extinguish an isolated fire during live fire Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting training Nov. 20.

JBSA firefighters conduct semi-annual aircraft rescue, firefighting training

Page 13



BAMC program helps COVID-19 patients recover at home

Page 8



AFRS innovates, saves time, money

Page 22

Air Force releases findings of racial disparity review

By Secretary of the Air Force
Public Affairs

The Air Force released its report Dec. 22 on the findings of an Air Force Inspector General independent review into racial disparity. The secretary of the Air Force and the Air and Space Force service chiefs ordered the review June 2.

The measure formalized a step that former Chief of Staff of the Air Force Gen. David Goldfein raised in an official note to commanders and other senior leaders on June 1 addressing an "apparent inequity in our application of military justice" among other issues. He stated, "We will not shy away from this; as leaders and as airmen, we will own our part, and confront it head-on."

In a June 3 open letter to all airmen and space professionals signed by the Air Force Secretary and the two service chiefs, the leadership team highlighted the department's self-initiated review and wrote, "We are listening, and we are taking action."

The inspector general's review focused specifically on assessing racial disparity in military discipline processes and personnel development and career opportunities as they pertain to Black/African American airmen and space professionals.

According to Air Force IG officials, the narrow focus related to Black/African American airmen and space professionals was necessary to enable a prompt, yet thorough, assessment, but the subsequent efforts to be undertaken as a result of the review will not be exclusive to a single minority group.

"Although the release of this report took longer than we originally planned, we're confident that the lessons we will learn and the plans in development to further examine disparities will provide benefit to all of our airmen and space professionals," Lt. Gen. Sami Said, Air Force Inspector General, said.

Additionally, Said explained that it is important to underscore that the review was focused on assessing racial disparity within the Air Force and was not chartered to determine whether or not racial bias or discrimination is present. Such an examination would require a much deeper study and a broader look at American society in general, which was outside the defined scope of the review,



STANLEY WARD
Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Charles Q. Brown, Jr. addresses students from Air War College and Air Command and Staff College at Air University.

according to Said.

The IG review also did not focus on root cause analyses for any racial disparities found during the review due to the considerable time this would have added to complete the report. Instead, the intent was that root cause analyses would follow the completion of the review, as necessary.

IG Review Findings

The review's methodology included an empirical examination of Air Force military justice data dating back to 2012; career development and opportunity data involving civilian, enlisted and officer ranks; and a review of all pertinent personnel and legal Air Force instructions and related publications.

Additionally, the IG analyzed individual perspectives from a departmentwide IG racial disparity survey that garnered more than 123,000 responses, including more than 27,000 pages of feedback from members; conducted formal interviews of senior leaders, subject matter experts and service members; held 138 in-person "boots-on-the-ground" listening sessions with more than 1,300 airmen and space professionals from across all major commands; and interviewed command teams at 20 installations. Finally, the IG team reexamined 23 past studies and reports involving race and demographics in the military.

The review confirmed that racial disparity exists for Black/African American Airmen and space professionals in the areas of military discipline and career development opportunities. Specifically, varying degrees of disparity

were identified in apprehensions, criminal investigations, military justice, administrative separations, placement into occupational career fields, certain promotion rates, officer and civilian professional military educational development and some leadership opportunities.

According to the report, the data do not address why racial disparities exist in these areas, and that while the data shows race is a correlating factor, it does not necessarily indicate causality.

The review also found that no racial disparities appear to exist within the areas of accessions, retention, or enlisted professional military education, and there were no inherent, systemic or procedural biases found in Air Force personnel and legal guidance pertaining to discipline.

The IG report defines racial disparity as "existing when the proportion of a racial/ethnic group within the subset of the population is different from the proportion of such groups in the general population." It goes on to state that while the presence of a disparity alone is not evidence of racism, discrimination, or disparate treatment, it presents a concern that requires more in-depth analysis. Key stakeholders within the Air Force and Space Force have now been tasked to identify the root causes of these disparities.

Air Force Secretary Barbara Barrett applauded those who took time to contribute to the in-depth review and emphasized that work remains to be done.

"Thank you to the tens of thousands of Air and Space Force members who related their personal experiences, both favorable and unfavorable," Barrett said. "The IG review identified racial disparities within military justice and developmental programs. Now, we're analyzing root causes and taking appropriate actions to address these causes. These actions will include evaluating potential barriers to inclusion, expanding mentorship programs, and exploring ways to inspire and attract diverse youth to join the Air Force and Space Force."

Although the review's primary focus was on identifying the degree to which racial disparity is present, the IG team conducting the review received a large volume of firsthand accounts of

JBSA LEGACY

Joint Base San Antonio
Editorial Staff

502nd Air Base Wing
and JBSA Commander
BRIG. GEN.
CAROLINE M. MILLER

502nd ABW/JBSA
Public Affairs Director
MAJ. KIM BENDER

Editor
STEVE ELLIOTT

Staff
LORI BULTMAN
DAVID DEKUNDER
RACHEL KERSEY
AIRMAN 1ST CLASS
TYLER MCQUISTON
SABRINA FINE

JBSA LEGACY
ADVERTISEMENT OFFICE
EN COMMUNITIES
P.O. BOX 2171
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78297
210-250-2052

This Department of Defense newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the DoD. Contents of the JBSA Legacy are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the DoD, or the U.S. Air Force.

Published by EN Communities a private firm in no way connected with the U.S. Air Force under exclusive written contract with the 502d Air Base Wing and Joint Base San Antonio. The editorial content of this publication is the responsibility of the 502d Air Base Wing Public Affairs Office.

Everything advertised in this publication will be made available for purchase, use, or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation or any non-merit factor of the purchaser, user, or patron.

AIR FORCE continues on 7

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. My question is, why do Airmen in our squadron here at JBSA-Lackland always get tasked for deployment? We have Airmen who arrive at the squadron and are deployed less than six months later.

In my section, I only had five military and three were deployed at the same time. They returned in October, and now, the other two will be leaving in January.

Do you think the problem is that people at the top of our chain are not fighting to keep the 502nd Logistics Readiness Squadron Airmen from deploying so much?

A. This is a great question and one that is on the minds of 502d ABW leadership and all military members assigned to JBSA.

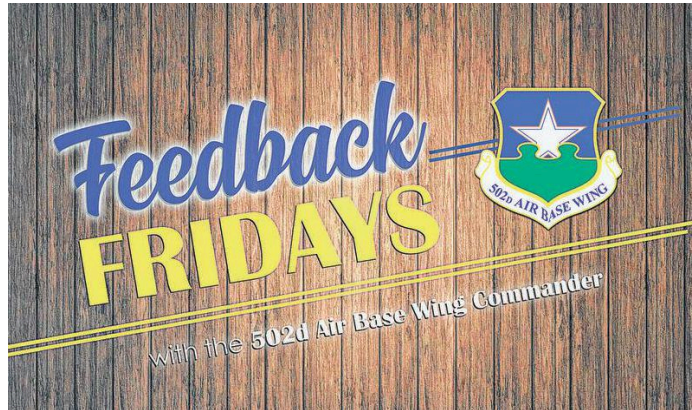
Deployments for Air Education and Training Command are forecasted two years in advance. Military members assigned to units in 502d Air Base Wing are assigned to either Air Expeditionary Force (AEF) 2 or AEF 5.

Upon in-processing our unit, members are assigned to an AEF deployment band based on the date of return from their last deployment, but assigned personnel must also be evenly distributed between the AEF bands.

By Air Force Instruction, members arriving to a unit are coded (meaning not available to deploy) for 45 days in order to stabilize family and personal needs. Short tour returnees are coded for 180 days. After the 45 days or 180 days, members are deployable.

AETC levies deployment taskings upon units with personnel and capabilities assigned to the applicable AEF. Tasked units must either fill the tasking or submit a shortfall/reclaima or waiver request when it doesn't possess the capability or doesn't have a qualified, deployable member to fill the tasking.

Lastly, deployment-to-dwell ratios are designated for each Air Force Specialty Code. For example, a 2T3X1 is on a 1:2



COURTESY GRAPHIC

deployment to dwell ratio. This means that members with this AFSC who deploy for 180 days are usually not eligible to deploy again until one year from the date of return from their last deployment.

Q. I looked through all of the COVID guidance that I could find, but I was unable to locate anything saying that there's a limit on social gatherings. We are trying to do a socially distant gathering. It would be outdoors at JBSA-Lackland, but we want to ensure that we are not violating a policy that I just can't

seem to find. Please advise.

A. Thank you for the great question. Unit-level events are discouraged. If held, events must be 10 people or less.

We recommend against dining indoors with any people outside one's household. Respiratory droplets occasionally travel beyond 6 feet. Correct and consistent masking, which mitigates this risk, is not possible while eating or drinking.

We recommend using restaurant take-out service or dining-in restaurant outdoor seating areas. To read the full memo, please visit <https://go.usa.gov/xA3RF>.

Joint Base San Antonio transitions to HPCON Charlie

By 502nd Air Base Wing Public Affairs

To better posture Joint Base San Antonio and help reduce community spread of COVID-19, JBSA increased the Health Protection Condition to CHARLIE, or HPCON C, effective Jan. 4.

Below are key highlights of services that will be maintained or modified. For the most up-to-date information, reference the JBSA's COVID-19 website at <http://www.jbsa.mil/coronavirus> and follow JBSA on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/JoinBaseSanAntonio>.

- » Child Development Centers and Youth Center-School Age Care program will remain open to mission essential and critical personnel. However, there will be no open recreation or youth sports activities.
- » Fitness centers and aquatic centers/pools will remain open to active duty, Reserve, Guard and Department of Defense civilian mission-essential and critical personnel only.
- » The golf courses, bowling centers, outdoor recreation, clubs, community centers, Student Activity Center, auto hobby center, and modified chapel services

will remain open with the current physical distancing protocols and limited capacity in place. Visit <https://www.JBSAToday.com> for details.

» The JBSA-Canyon Lake Recreation Area will remain open with current physical distancing protocol and limited capacity in place.

For up-to-date information on medical service and care provided, visit: <https://www.bamc.health.mil/articles/covid19/> and <https://www.59mdw.af.mil/>.

Effective Jan. 9, JBSA will start enforcing a 100 percent DOD and Uniform Services identification card checks for all vehicle occupants aged 17 and older entering the installation.

Reduced installation access and vetting procedures will be the same as previous HPCON CHARLIE procedures. Full installation gate openings and hours are available at <http://www.jbsa.mil/gate-hours/>.

As before when operating in HPCON C, all military, dependents, civilians, contractors, Veteran Health ID Card, or VHIC, holders, retirees and others currently in possession of authorized access credentials or with existing valid visitor passes may enter the installation.

In addition:

- » Commercial service providers in commercial vehicles will be allowed access to continue providing goods and services.
- » ID card-carrying patients going to BAMC through their gate may bring and escort no more than two passengers in the same vehicle to assist with medical appointments.
- » All other visitors without credentials authorizing installation entry must follow the process to obtain a "HPCON C Unescorted Access Request" signed by the hosting commander.
- » The HPCON C Unescorted Access Request form is available at <https://www.jbsa.mil/Gate-Hours/> and scroll down to the "Entering JBSA" section.

JBSA personnel should continue to minimize the spread of COVID-19 and implement public health recommendations, which include social distancing, wearing face masks, practicing good hand washing and taking appropriate actions if feeling sick.

The latest information on JBSA's COVID-19 response and prevention can be found at <https://www.jbsa.mil/coronavirus>.

JBSA accepting Volunteer of the Year award nominations until March 15

By David DeKunder
502ND AIR BASE WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Joint Base San Antonio Military & Family Readiness Centers is accepting nominations for annual awards that recognize the contributions of outstanding volunteers within the JBSA community.

Nominations of individuals or groups can be submitted for the JBSA Volunteer of the Year Awards, the JBSA Volunteer Excellence Award and the President's Volunteer Service Award. Information on the awards and award nomination instructions and forms will be posted at <https://www.jbsa.mil/Resources/Military-Family-Readiness/Volunteer-Resources/>.

Anyone, whether they are a JBSA commander, supervisor or member or a civilian, can nominate an individual or group affiliated with JBSA for an award. Nomination forms should be submitted to usaf.jbsa.502-abw.mbx.502-fss-volunteer@mail.mil. Deadline to submit an awards nomination is March 15.

The Volunteer of the Year Awards identify and recognize individuals who contributed their time and service to JBSA units and volunteer organizations in 2020, to include all branches of service, and who made a significant positive impact on the lives of others. Individuals who are eligible for these awards are active-duty, military family members, military retirees, Department of Defense civilians, contractors and non-military affiliated volunteers.

There are eight Volunteer of the Year Awards categories in which nominations can be submitted: active-duty, military family member, youth, retiree, civilian, small group (50 members or less), large group (50 plus members) and volunteer family of the year.

The Volunteer Excellence Award honors federal



COURTESY GRAPHIC

civilians, military family members, military retirees and federal retirees of all service branches who have dedicated a lifetime to community service. Four of these awards will be given out.

President's Volunteer Service Award recognizes individuals whose service positively impacts communities in every corner of the nation and inspires people around them to volunteer as well. JBSA members can nominate themselves for the President's Volunteer Service Award.

Each JBSA military unit and tenant organization, down to the battalion/squadron level, and community volunteer organizations are allowed to submit one nomination per category, except for youth, the Volunteer Excellence Award and the President's Volunteer Service Award in which unlimited nominations are accepted.

Award winners will be honored at the 2021 JBSA Volunteer Awards Ceremony April 21 at the

JBSA-Fort Sam Houston Military & Family Readiness Center, 3060 Stanley Road, building 2797. The ceremony, which will be virtual, starts at 3 p.m.

Workshops on writing nominations for the volunteer awards are being offered virtually through Military & Family Readiness Centers at JBSA locations, including JBSA-Fort Sam Houston, JBSA-Lackland and JBSA-Randolph. The workshops cover how to review awards criteria and nomination forms and how to write an effective nomination package.

Workshops will be held by JBSA-Fort Sam Houston M&FRC, Jan. 25, Feb. 15 and March 1, 11 a.m. to noon; JBSA-Lackland M&FRC, Jan. 26 and Feb. 13, 2 to 3 p.m.; and JBSA-Randolph M&FRC, Jan. 22 and Feb. 5, 9 to 10 a.m.

Dina Castro, JBSA-Fort Sam Houston M&FRC Volunteer Program director, said the writing nomination workshops help guide participants through the nomination form process and give them the skills needed to write a well-written nomination package that will be noticed by judges looking over the applications.

"They can fill out an application as they are taking a class," Castro said. "We can answer questions live as they are doing it so they can submit it right away and get the information and resources immediately as they are doing an application."

Castro said the virtual classes will have shared screens for instructors and participants and breakout rooms for participants who need help on filling out specific nomination forms.

For details about and to reserve a spot for any of the workshops and for information on the JBSA Volunteer Awards, contact M&FRC volunteer offices at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston, 210-221-2705; JBSA-Lackland, 210-671-3722; or JBSA-Randolph, 210-652-5321.

Air Force restores leave charged during restriction of movement

By Secretary of the Air Force
Public Affairs

Effective Nov. 20, 2020, the Department of the Air Force announced the ability to restore leave charged to members during a required restriction of movement after Aug. 6.

The Department of the Air Force's change was based on the release of "Force Health Protection Guidance - Supplement 12," which is the Defense Department's guidance for personnel traveling during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 pandemic. The guidance states the location of the restriction of movement will be considered an official duty location.

All regular leave days taken outside of a restriction of movement will count as chargeable leave.

To restore leave charged during a restriction of movement, the member will require a memorandum from the squadron or unit commander for processing by the financial management flight at their local comptroller squadron. The memorandum must include the member's name, rank, original leave number, original leave dates and restriction of movement dates.

The restoration of leave does not authorize personnel transportation, lodging allowances, or per diem while in restriction of movement, quarantine, or self-isolation. Personnel are not authorized hardship duty pay for time in restriction of movement away from the duty station in conjunction with personal leave.

More information can be located on MyPers through the Air Force Portal.



Military, civilians to repay tax deferments through December 2021

By Thomas Brading

ARMY NEWS SERVICE

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service is planning to extend payroll collections for military members and Department of Defense civilians through December 2021 to reimburse a tax deferment designed to support personnel during the COVID-19 pandemic, officials said.

A presidential memorandum signed in August temporarily paused a portion of Social Security, called Old Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance, or OASDI, tax currently set at 6.2 percent of an individual's base pay from Sept. 1 to Dec. 31.

The payroll tax deferral was intended to provide financial relief to both civilian employees who make less than \$4,000 per pay period and service members with a monthly basic pay of less than \$8,666.66, according to DFAS.

"This is a two-phase approach," said Larry Lock, chief of compensation and entitlements with the Army's G-1 office. "The first phase focused on advising that taxes would be deferred. Now, we're going into the second phase, which is focusing on the collection of money and advising members on how we will proceed with collecting it."

To recoup funds, service members and civilians will pay the deferred 2020 Social Security tax as well as the normal 6.2 percent Social Security tax withholdings, said Michelle O. Francois, acting chief of the G-1's Civilian Personnel Benefits and Compensation Division.

Military members and civilians were unable to opt-out of the original deferral, and will be unable to opt-into any payment plan other than what is in motion, Lock said.

To account for the additional taxes, he urges members to plan now by calculating the amount of Social Security taxes deferred during this calendar year. To determine the amount owed, personnel should:

Log into the myPay website and navigate to the final 2020 leave and earning statement.

Multiply 6.2 percent times the amount of basic pay received from September through December 2020.

"We are counting on military members to take the responsibility of looking at their LES," he said.

Once 2020 W-2s post in January, only



COURTESY GRAPHIC

the total FICA taxes currently collected will be available. However, once the back taxes are repaid, personnel should expect a W-2c, the Corrected Wages and Tax Statement, which will include the collection of the owed amount. This will not change the deadlines established by the Internal Revenue Service for filing income tax returns next year.

The automated payback system isn't "one-size-fits-all," said Lock, adding that the amount owed could fluctuate for recently separated or retired personnel.

All members will still be required to repay their deferred tax amount in full. Under this circumstance, the government will reimburse the taxes to the IRS on their behalf, Lock said.

If the taxes are not subtracted from their last check, the member "will receive a debt notice with instructions on repayment information" from DFAS, he added.

Under these circumstances, the collection will happen through a debt management process and a letter will be sent to the individual's address of record and posted through the myPay website in January.

The letter will outline instructions for repayment to be made via Pay.gov.

According to Lock, individuals who entered military service during the deferred period will end up repaying for less, depending on their entry date. The total amount will still be spread evenly through the next calendar year.

"If there are any future changes, we will have to take a look at it and respond accordingly," Francois said.

Active duty military members, DOD civilians and retired military members should visit <https://www.dfas.mil/taxes/Social-Security-Deferral> for the latest information.

Space Force leader becomes eighth member of the DOD's Joint Chiefs of Staff

By Jim Garamone
DOD NEWS

The Joint Chiefs of Staff grew by one member when Space Force Gen. John “Jay” Raymond joined the highest-ranking military, deliberative body in the Defense Department Dec. 20.

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Army Gen. Mark Milley inducted Raymond, the chief of space operations, into the Joint Chiefs of Staff at a ceremony Dec. 11. He became an official member of the body on the same day the Space Force celebrated its first anniversary as an official service branch.

The law stated that the chief of space operations would become a member of the Joint Chiefs a year after it was signed. “But under your leadership and under [the] leadership [of] the vice chairman, you said ‘We’re not going to wait!’ and you’ve treated me like a member ever since [the law was signed],” Raymond said during the ceremony at the Pentagon. “I can’t thank you enough. I can’t thank my teammates enough. It’s a real privilege to sit at this table.”

The Joint Chiefs of Staff grew by one member when Space Force Gen. John “Jay” Raymond joined the highest-ranking military, deliberative body in the Defense Department Dec. 20.

Membership on the Joint Chiefs of Staff is set by law. The members are the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the vice chairman, the Army chief of staff, the commandant of the Marine Corps, the chief of naval operations, the Air Force chief of staff, the chief of the National Guard Bureau and, now, the chief of space operations.

The body has grown and



PETTY OFFICER 1ST CLASS CARLOS M. VAZQUEZ II

Members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff are photographed in the Joint Chiefs of Staff conference room, more commonly referred to as “The Tank,” in the Pentagon, Dec. 11, 2020. From left are Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Air Force Gen. John E. Hyten, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Army Gen. Mark A. Milley, Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. James C. McConville, Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. David H. Berger, Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Michael M. Gilday, Chief of Staff of the Air Force Gen. Charles Q. Brown, Jr., Chief of the National Guard Bureau Army Gen. Daniel R. Hokanson and Chief of Space Operations Gen. John W. Raymond.

changed since it was formed out of the destruction of World War II. When formed, the Joint Chiefs were the chairman, the Army chief of staff, the chief of naval operations and the Air Force chief. The commandant of the Marine Corps was included when issues pertaining to the Marine Corps were discussed by the chiefs but he was not a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said David Crist, Joint Staff historian.

Through the Berlin blockade, the Korean War, the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962, the Vietnam War and its aftermath, the body remained the same. The first

personnel change came in 1978 when the Marine Corps commandant became a full-fledged member of the body.

In 1986, came the Goldwater-Nichols Act. It would be hard to understate the legislation’s effects on the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The legislation increased the visibility, responsibilities and reach of the chairman and added the office of the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It changed the way the Joint Staff was manned and stressed the importance of joint duty for military officers and personnel.

The next change in the

make-up of the body was the inclusion of the chief of the National Guard Bureau in 2012.

Each chairman uses the body a bit differently, Crist said. The most recent three chairmen — Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, Marine Corps Gen. Joe Dunford and current chairman Army Gen. Mark A. Milley — convened the chiefs regularly for deliberations on many issues, Crist said.

This is not to say the Joint Chiefs is a consensus organization. The chairman decides what the best military advice is for the defense secretary, president and the rest of the National Security Council. Still, the chairman

can — and does — pass along dissenting opinions from the other members of the Joint Chiefs when appropriate.

The Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force and Space Force members of the joint chiefs are responsible for manning, training and equipping forces. But when they enter “the Tank” — the room in the Pentagon where they convene — they are expected to think and act for the good of the joint force. Their experience as a Soldier, Marine, Sailor or Airman may color their perspective, but as members of the JCS, they are expected to embrace the larger military culture, Crist said.

AIR FORCE

From page 2

experiences with bias, as well as individual acts of racism. According to the report, while it is impossible to validate experiences reported during feedback sessions or within the survey, the themes that emerged from the feedback make it reasonable to conclude that individual acts of racism have occurred in the Air Force.

Additionally, the review highlighted feedback from a significant number of Black Airmen who voiced distrust in their chain of command to address racism, bias and unequal opportunities within the Air Force. The majority of Black survey respondents also felt that Black/African American Airmen are not given the benefit of the doubt by their chain of command when it comes to military discipline.

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr. acknowledged the critical feedback and the need to build

and maintain trust between our airmen and space professionals and their chain of command.

“The IG’s survey and interviews are noteworthy in that they empowered airmen and space professionals to provide their unfiltered personal perspectives and experiences, and they delivered loud and clear,” Brown said. “Racial disparity isn’t an easy topic and something we don’t traditionally talk about much throughout our levels of command. This report and the many engagements with airmen and space professionals have increased chain of command awareness and an opportunity to build trust. Now, we must all move forward with the meaningful, lasting and sustainable change to do so.”

Next Steps

Notably, at Barrett’s request, the IG’s review provides a preliminary road map for addressing racial disparity. In accordance with the report’s recommendations, the department has begun root

cause analyses and will provide updated action plans, as appropriate, to the Secretary and Air and Space Force service chiefs.

The Air Force Inspector General will conduct a progress report six months after the report’s initial publication, followed by an annual review. Both of these assessments will be publicly released and provided to all airmen and space professionals, according to the report.

Chief of Space Operations Gen. John “Jay” Raymond underscored the importance of diversity and the need for leaders at every echelon to do their part to ensure all airmen and space professionals feel included and empowered to maximize their talents.

“Accountability begins with us, and we have the opportunity to create a culture that inherently values diversity and inclusion,” Raymond said. “Leaders at all levels must commit to having tough conversations, learning about racial disparities and

identifying their part in creating an environment where all people have the same opportunities for success, an environment where every person is heard, every person is seen and every person is valued.”

Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives

Concurrent with the IG’s review, Air Force senior leaders conducted multiple listening sessions with Air Force and Space Force members to gain additional insight and perspectives.

Additionally, the department instituted a task force to comprehensively address the issue of racial, ethnic, gender and other demographic differences and their impact on the Air and Space Forces.

Since June, the task force has facilitated additional tracking of administrative discipline data, to include demographics; increased ROTC scholarships at historically Black colleges and universities; revised dress and appearance regulations;

acceptance of a SuperScore combination for the Air Force Officer Qualifying Test, which gives the applicant the opportunity to use his or her highest score from each part of the test; created partnerships with African American fraternities and sororities and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute; established a sixth team as part of the Barrier Analysis Working group (Asian-American/Pacific Islander); and will initiate the Department’s new “GO Inspire” program in January designed to increase Air and Space Force general officer outreach to youth to increase diversity in operational career fields and the broader force.

In October, the task force transitioned into the Diversity and Inclusion Office, which will report directly to the Secretary of the Air Force. The IG’s report recommends that this office also review the report’s findings and assess applicability to broader diversity and inclusion initiatives.

FORT SAM HOUSTON

Program enables COVID-19 patients to recover at home

By Elaine Sanchez

BROOKE ARMY MEDICAL CENTER
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Kathlyn Chassey was shocked when she was diagnosed with COVID-19 after experiencing a low-grade fever and a bad headache.

A former lung transplant recipient, Chassey had been staying close to home for months to avoid the respiratory risks associated with the virus. She figured she had an infection or the flu when she arrived at Brooke Army Medical Center's Emergency Department.

"When the doctor told me I had COVID, I had a panic attack because I'm extremely high risk and I know what COVID can do," said Chassey, who had undergone a lung transplant in December 2016.

Fortunately, the 28-year-old had a mild case of COVID and was ready to be discharged after a day in the hospital. However, due to her medical history, her medical team didn't want to send her home empty-handed.

Chassey became one of the first BAMC patients to be enrolled in the new COVID-19 Remote Monitoring Program, a joint effort of the Virtual Medical Center and BAMC. The program equips COVID-19 patients needing additional monitoring with a home healthcare kit and 24/7 oversight from registered nurses to ensure a higher level of post-hospital care.

"This is an exciting and unique new capability," said Army Maj. Daniel Yourk, deputy director for operations, Virtual Medical Center. "We are able to move our patients from an inpatient to a home setting with round-the-clock monitoring and reach-back care."



ELAINE SANCHEZ

Mike Lavers (left), sleep technician, and Sgt. 1st Class Annabelyn Verdeflor (right), noncommissioned officer in charge of the Pulmonary Clinic, look over the components of a home healthcare kit as part of the COVID-19 Remote Monitoring Program, a joint effort of the Virtual Medical Center and Brooke Army Medical Center, Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston Dec. 18.

Through the use of the home kit and self-assessments, healthcare professionals are able to provide continuous monitoring of a patient's temperature, respiratory rate, heart rate, and oxygen saturation with intermittent monitoring of blood pressure and spirometry, which measures the movement of air into and out of the lungs. The system also enables secure video consultations.

In effect, the program "bridges the continuum of care" from inpatient to outpatient, said Army Lt. Col. Robert Walter, the program's clinical lead and BAMC's chief of pulmonary and critical care medicine. "We are offering an additional level of safety, support and monitoring."

The pilot concept, first

developed by the Virtual Medical Center and BAMC, now spans the services and the nation.

The process starts in the hospital inpatient unit or emergency department prior to discharge and in consultation with designated providers at each MTF. If the patient qualifies for enrollment, they are equipped with the FDA-approved home monitoring kit and detailed verbal and printed instructions. The kit contains a tablet, a network hub that operates independently of Wi-Fi, and an armband containing a coin-sized monitor.

The system also pairs with a blood pressure cuff, a temperature patch and a spirometer. Patients fill out customized questionnaires daily

to report how they are feeling. Together, the system enables continuous bio-physiologic and symptom-based monitoring.

"Real-time data is compiled into a single dashboard where we can review all patients, grouped by risk," Walter explained.

A team of teleworking nurses, located in the San Antonio, Texas area, monitor patients across the eight participating MTFs. Additionally, each site has on-call medical staff in case of an alert or patient concern. Each tablet has a button for assistance that initiates nurse engagement and, if needed, a HIPAA-compliant connection for face-to-face video evaluation with a nurse or on-call physician.

"I felt secure knowing the nurses were keeping an eye on me," Chassey said. "One night I was having a nightmare. They texted me because my heart rate had increased and wanted to know if I was OK. It's like being in the hospital, but in the comfort of your own home."

After a patient no longer needs monitoring or requires a higher level of inpatient care, the patient receives prepaid shipping boxes to pack up the equipment and calls a courier for a contactless pickup. The company then sanitizes, services and repackages the kit for mailing back to the MTF.

The idea for the program was spurred by lessons learned in New York last spring during the initial COVID wave, Walter explained. "The hospitals were so busy; they were having to move patients through the continuum of care, from inpatient to outpatient, at a more rapid pace to accommodate incoming COVID-19 patients."

Some of these patients were still symptomatic or had higher

oxygen requirements, he said, but with new patients flowing in, the care teams were faced with tough decisions. To mitigate risk, some hospital systems established a program in which paramedics would check on patients in their homes to ensure they weren't declining or needing readmission.

"Reflecting on these experiences, we began to explore the idea of leveraging virtual health in the event we are faced with a COVID surge in the hospital and need to move patients more quickly through the facility," Walter said. "If that happens, it becomes vital to retain capacity without compromising the safety or quality of care for our patients."

With a global vs. local program in mind, Walter and Yourk approached the Defense Health Agency, which assisted in obtaining and funding 200 home kits that could satisfy the requirement of a "high fidelity of monitoring in an outpatient environment," Walter said.

"It is truly incredible how the clinical leads from each military treatment facility and the Virtual Medical Center came together to take this pilot from a concept to reality in under six months to support beneficiaries from the East to West coast," Yourk added.

With the ongoing threat of the pandemic and to preserve bed capacity, the program is mainly intended for COVID-19 patients at this time, but there is a much broader application potential, Walter noted.

"We are exploring the long-term benefit for a number of conditions that often require frequent admissions, such as congestive heart failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, cystic fibrosis and asthma," he said.

BAMC ICU nurse receives first COVID-19 vaccine

By Elaine Sanchez

BROOKE ARMY MEDICAL CENTER
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The first Brooke Army Medical Center staff member to receive a COVID-19 vaccine said she was “excited and relieved” to receive the shot Dec. 17.

Army Capt. Rebecca Parrish, an Army nurse who has been serving on the frontlines of healthcare since the pandemic began, was among a small group of frontline medical professionals who received the first Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccines at BAMC Dec. 17.

“I’m ready to eradicate this virus,” said Parrish, a COVID-19 intensive care unit nurse.

After Senior Airman Marisol Salgado administered Parrish’s shot, a round of applause broke out in the room.

“This is a historic moment for BAMC,” said Army Col. Michael Wirt, deputy commanding officer. “We are excited to launch this program today, focusing on our frontline staff, and look forward to expanding it to additional BAMC clinical and support teams in the days ahead.”

As for the shot itself, “The flu shot hurts way more than that did,” Parrish said with a smile. “I didn’t even feel the needle go in.”

Air Force Col. Heather Yun, deputy commander for medical services and an infectious disease physician, said she was “grateful and quite honestly thrilled to see this moment in history arrive.”

“We have a vaccine that by all the data represents an incredibly effective and safe solution that exceeded all of our initial expectations, performing well in all ages, all demographic groups tested, and with 95 percent efficacy,” Yun said. “This is the turning point that we have all been waiting for, and I am so ready to take this necessary step to

putting the pandemic in the past. When it’s my turn, you will find me in that line with my sleeve rolled up.”

The Food and Drug Administration issued an emergency use authorization, or EUA, for the Pfizer BioNTech COVID vaccine last week for U.S. citizens ages 16 and older on a voluntary basis.

The San Antonio Military Health System, to include BAMC and Wilford Hall Ambulatory Surgical Center, is among the handful of Department of Defense sites to receive doses of the vaccine.

As the distribution hub, WHASC began vaccinating earlier this week, while BAMC received its first allocation of the vaccines Dec. 17 after a thorough review of the receipt, distribution and administration process.

“The fact that we are among the first DOD sites to receive the vaccine is a testament to this team and their ability to carry out this important mission,” said BAMC Commanding General Brig. Gen. Shan Bagby. “This process took a tremendous concerted effort from our logistics, administrative and clinical personnel.”

The DOD’s COVID Task Force selected initial distribution sites based on capabilities, to include the ability to accommodate ultra-cold, bulk storage; population of priority personnel; and sufficient medical personnel to administer and track vaccine recipients.

BAMC will distribute the vaccine in a phased process, based on guidance from the Department of Defense and CDC. The first phase includes inpatient and outpatient healthcare and support personnel, emergency services and public safety personnel.

At BAMC, the group vaccinated Dec. 17 comprised intensive care unit and Emergency Department staff



COREY TOYE

Senior Airman Marisol Salgado (right), medical technician, administers a Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine to Army Capt. Rebecca Parrish, a COVID-19 intensive care unit nurse Dec. 17 at Brooke Army Medical Center at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston.

involved in direct patient care.

“After we validate the vaccination flow, we will begin to vaccinate in larger numbers and expand the recipient population, based on supply and the prioritization plan,” said Bagby, noting more information regarding local prioritization of staff and patients will be available soon.

“We know there will be questions regarding this program and we will do our best to address all concerns,” he added. “We want to ensure our patients, service members, staff and families fully understand the process as we distribute and administer the vaccine in the days ahead, starting with the prioritized groups.”

As the program ramps up, healthcare leaders are encouraging people to take the vaccine when offered to protect their health as well as the

health of their family and community.

Yun acknowledged the uncertainty the public may feel about COVID vaccines and their safety, and stressed the importance of education and information to allay concerns.

“The vaccine approval process may seem swift, but I want to assure everyone that the review process has been incredibly comprehensive with all the data made available to peer-review, to an independent working group, and to the Food and Drug Administration. The process has been open to the public, transparent, and reassuringly highly rigorous.”

“With approximately 70,000 subjects enrolled between the Pfizer and Moderna trials, which use the same technology, the symptom profile has been similar to what is seen with other routine vaccines, and most people did not have any

symptoms beyond a sore arm,” she added.

Post-vaccination symptoms are normal and, in fact, a positive sign, Yun explained. “Vaccines fight disease by producing an immune response within the body. Sometimes that means flu-like symptoms, such as aches and pains, headache and a low-grade fever may occur after being vaccinated. This is normal and a sign that your body is creating an immune response to protect you from COVID-19.”

Every person who steps up to take the vaccine when it’s their turn is another step toward ending the pandemic, Yun noted, stressing the importance of having a large proportion of the population who are immune to SARS-CoV-2.

“This is our pathway to ending this pandemic safely; to contemplating a future without anxiety about transmitting COVID-19 to our loved ones; to ending the otherwise endless news reports on the climbing numbers of deaths; to being able to plan dinners out, concerts, weekends and holidays, vacations and college and nursing home visits; to attend births, graduations, promotions, weddings, and all the important milestones of life” she said. “This, just like wearing masks and washing hands, will be a step that we can take to protect not only ourselves but also our families, our communities and our country.”

“It’s incredibly exciting to be involved in this historic national effort to stop the spread of COVID-19,” Bagby added. “We are truly at the tip of the spear in this fight against this virus.”

For information on the DoD’s COVID-19 efforts and distribution plan, visit <https://health.mil/Military-Health-Topics/Combat-Support/Public-Health/Coronavirus/COVID-19-Vaccine-Efforts>.

Army South hosts DOD-wide personnel recovery reintegration working group

By Leanne Thomas
U.S. ARMY SOUTH PUBLIC AFFAIRS

U.S. Army South hosted the annual Personnel Recovery Reintegration Working Group at Evans Auditorium Dec. 1-3 at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, part of the command's role to facilitate the personnel recovery reintegration process.

Reintegration is the process carried out for recovered Department of Defense personnel immediately following an isolating event to debrief, decompress, provide for their physical and mental health and return them to duty as quickly as possible.

"The Reintegration Working Group is our main event where we identify, train and assign personnel to key mission positions in order to conduct reintegration on short no-notice deployments," said Michael P. Moccia, U.S. Army South Personnel Recovery Officer.

"Something else the working group does is that it allows us to coordinate our efforts with Joint Base San Antonio and our inter-agency mission partners."

Attending the training were personnel from multiple government agencies and other military branches who have a role in Army South's reintegration mission.

The training includes family assistance teams, medical personnel, public affairs officers, security specialists, chaplains, attorneys, logisticians, finance, Federal Bureau Investigation agents, State Department representatives, government contractors, Department of Defense civilians and joint military personnel from JBSA-Lackland, JBSA-Fort Sam Houston and Brooke Army Medical Center.

"Army South provides one of the major hubs for reintegration



COURTESY PHOTO

Personnel from U.S. Army South, Joint Base San Antonio and mission partners conduct debriefing rehearsals at the Army South Debriefing Facility Dec. 2 during the annual Personnel Recovery Reintegration Working Group.

and also multiple venues to practice those critical skills, and the Working Group is one of the key yearly events that bring all entities together to work through the entire process," said U.S. Navy Cmdr. Michael Margolius, U.S. Navy Joint Personnel Recovery Agency J3.

In 2002, Army South established a personnel recovery office, which coincided with real-world missions.

The Army South Personnel Recovery Coordination Cell, or PRCC, staff executed its first reintegration operation in August 2007, when an Army contractor in Ethiopia was released after nearly three months in captivity.

The second time was in 2008, when Army contractors Marc Gonsalves, Thomas Howes and Keith Stansell were returned from captivity in Colombia after being held for more than five years.

"This was a high-profile mission that really defined who we are and what we do because

we trained relentlessly for that mission up until 2008 when the contractors were finally released," Moccia said.

Due to the command's success in the personnel recovery process, in 2011, the Department of the Army named it as a best practice program during the Army Protection Program Assessment.

"The 'Personnel Recovery world' looks at Army South as the Gold Standard for reintegration, their continuous preparation and drills along with the support from leadership provides for a truly solid team that is always willing to jump in when needed," Margolius said.

Currently, Army South is U.S. Southern Command's designated command to conduct phase one and phase two reintegration for all Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and DOD civilians and contractors in the SOUTHCOM area of responsibility. Additionally, Army South

conducts Army service-level phase three reintegration for all Soldiers and DA civilians and contractors worldwide. Army South also has a memorandum of understanding with the other services to support service phase three reintegration at JBSA.

Reintegration is accomplished in three phases; Phase one is conducted near the point of recovery when the Army South Reintegration Team accepts the individual from the recovery team. Phase one focuses on immediate medical care, emotional support, debriefing, and preparing the individual for movement to JBSA for phase two if needed.

At the phase two location, a medical care plan is established, emotional decompression continues, initial debriefing is started, and the families of recovered individuals are being prepared to move to JBSA to reunite with their loved ones.

In addition, JBSA serves as

the phase three location for additional medical care, emotional support and debriefing as required. This phase includes the "Yellow Ribbon" event when the family and recovered individuals are at last reunited and can begin the journey back to life as it was before captivity.

"When these Soldiers or service members put their lives on the line and go out and do these things away from their family, there will be somebody to take care of you when you come back. And knowing there is something at the end to help you get through this definitely has an impact on captivity," said Sgt. 1st Class Craig Chambers, U.S. Army South PRCC noncommissioned officer in charge.

In addition to leading reintegration efforts for DoD personnel, Army South also supports special requests to perform Post Isolation Support Activities, or PISA, for American citizens, most recently for Michael White, an American citizen held captive in Iran for two years.

The impact of serving in personnel recovery missions has given Steve Holland, Army South Personnel Recovery Specialist, a unique perspective in helping his fellow Americans restore their lives after being held captive.

"Working as a personnel recovery specialist at Army South is rewarding and good for me full-circle because I've actually recovered people before in my former professional military life, and I really never understood what happened to them after they were recovered," Holland said.

"From a personal standpoint to see the circle come all the way back around, it's a very good environment for myself to work and operate in. It's a no-fail mission."

ARNORTH oversees California COVID-19 response

By U.S. Army North Public Affairs

Approximately 75 U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force military medical personnel have deployed to California as part of a Department of Defense COVID-19 response operation.

U.S. Army North, the Joint Force Land Component Command of U.S. Northern Command, will oversee the military operation in support of federal and state efforts.

"We are committed to supporting the whole-of-America response to the COVID-19 pandemic," said Lt. Gen. Laura J. Richardson, ARNORTH and JFLCC commander. "Our military medical personnel provided strong support to the state of California during the summer and I know they will bring much needed relief to their civilian healthcare partners now."

This week, approximately 65 U.S. Air Force military personnel, including doctors, nurses and others from the 60th Medical Group, Travis Air Force Base, California, part of COVID Theater Hospital 1, and 10 U.S. Army nurses from the 627th Hospital Center, Fort Carson, Colorado, part of Urban



SPC. DEANDRE PIERCE

U.S. Air Force medical providers receive a brief on how to utilize their Joint All-Domain Command and Control devices at the David Grant U.S. Air Force Medical Center, Travis Air Force Base, Fairfield, California, Dec. 27.

Augmentation Medical Task Force 627, will begin providing support to four hospitals in California: Dameron Hospital in Stockton, Adventist Health Lodi Memorial Hospital in Lodi, Arrowhead Regional Medical Center in

Colton and Community Regional Medical Center in Fresno.

Task Force 51, ARNORTH's scalable, deployable command post, deployed to California to set the conditions for the arrival of the U.S. Army and U.S. Air

Force personnel. Elements of the task force previously deployed Dec. 11 to Farmington, New Mexico, to set the conditions for the arrival of U.S. Navy Rural Rapid Response Teams in support of the Navajo Nation.

This mobile headquarters will provide command and control of all military medical personnel in California and Navajo Nation.

Additionally, elements of the U.S. Army Reserve's 377th Theater Sustainment Command from New Orleans, Louisiana, and the 4th Expeditionary Sustainment Command from JBAS-Fort Sam Houston, along with elements of the 1st Infantry Division's Sustainment Brigade from Fort Riley, Kansas, will provide multi-component sustainment services to the military medical personnel.

In addition to this support to California, approximately 100 military medical personnel are currently working alongside civilian healthcare providers, helping treat COVID-19 patients in North Dakota, Wisconsin and in the Navajo Nation as part of the whole-of-America response to the pandemic.

NMFSC Sailor receives Navy Medicine award

By Petty Officer 1st Class
David Kolmel

NAVAL MEDICAL FORCES SUPPORT COMMAND
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Lt. Jonathan Gomez-Rivera, assigned to Naval Medical Forces Support Command at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, received Navy Medicine's 2020 Health Facility Planning and Project Officer of the Year award.

The recognition is part of the Medical Service Corps Officers of the Year, the awards are presented annually and Gomez-Rivera was one of 40 officers selected.

Gomez-Rivera's dedication to the Navy Medicine team led to his receiving the award.

"This award endorses my contributions, hard work, and dedication while confirming each one of us can strengthen and expand the power of Naval Medicine around the globe," Gomez-Rivera said.

NMFSC leadership provided Gomez-Rivera the tools he needed to

succeed and recognized his efforts through his nomination.

"Leadership within NMFSC has not only provided a platform filled with opportunity, but most importantly the command continues to allow and encourage my participation in providing value to the Health Facility Planning and Project Officer sub-specialty, Medical Service Corps Career Development Board Strategic Goal Group, and command operational planning teams," Gomez-Rivera said. "In my opinion, this directly enables my sub-specialty to showcase its ability to strengthen Naval Medicine and provides the opportunity to expand my skill set outside of my expertise."

Rear Adm. Timothy H. Weber, head of Medical Service Corps (MSC), complemented the awardees for their hard work.

"This award is a testament to your specialty expertise, professional acumen, impressive leadership, and inspirational contributions to your specific mission and those around you," Weber said. "As Navy Medicine

evolves, we continue to gain strength and agility in each specialty across NMRTCs, labs, operational and headquarter units. Your specific contributions have directly added to this strength and you have expanded the power of Naval Medicine around the globe."

The awards represent not only his hard work but the efforts of his NMFSC co-workers.

"More importantly I want to personally thank my family, friends, leaders, and colleagues that have directly assisted me in getting to this point in my career," Gomez-Rivera said. "Without any of them and their support, it would be impossible to achieve any of these accomplishments. Also, winning this award is bittersweet for me as many of my fellow Health Facility Planning and Project Officers deserve this award as well."

Gomez-Rivera led several projects such as the space reutilization at NMFSC headquarters; planned, developed, and led the award of over \$10 million in regional projects; and



PETTY OFFICER 1ST CLASS DAVID KOLMEL

Lt. Jonathan Gomez-Rivera, assigned to Naval Medical Forces Support Command, received Navy Medicine's 2020 Health Facility Planning and Project Officer of the Year award.

was instrumental in leadership roles for not only fellow officers but enlisted Sailors at NMFSC headquarters.

JBSA toy drive brings gifts, cheer to military children

By Rachel Kersey

502ND AIR BASE WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The Child and Youth Education Services Program at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston distributed toys to military families Dec. 15-18.

The community-wide toy drive was initiated by the School Liaison Office at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston with support from neighboring installations.

"I noticed that we had families in our military community having a hard time providing Christmas gifts for their children," said Nita Ford-Hightower, JBSA CYES school liaison officer. "Military and Family Readiness was doing an Angel Tree [and] I noticed that we still had a lot of angels on the tree no one had selected."

Ford-Hightower called community partners and joined hands with them to find out how to get toy donations. In order to make sure they were serving children across JBSA, she worked with school liaison officers at Randolph and Lackland to cover those respective bases as well.

Boxes were set up in a variety of places so toys could be donated at different times depending on operational hours. Toys were primarily donated by people who live and work on each installation, and the drive had special help from organizations such as Operation Home Front and the Fort Sam Houston Spouses Club.

Toys were distributed by appointment in accordance with COVID-19 physical distancing guidelines. Toys went to children of active duty, reserve and guard service members as well as retirees.

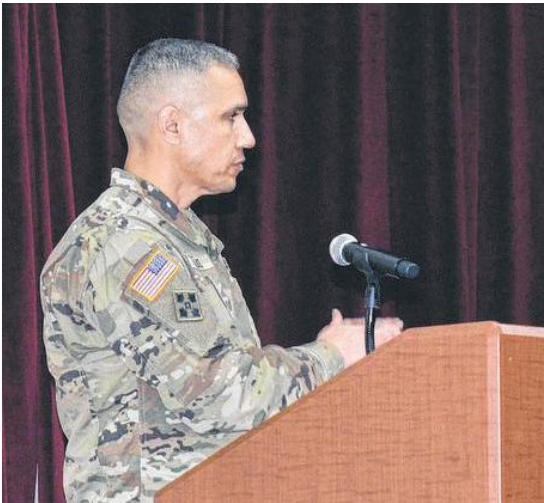
The drive brought toys to approximately 300 children at JBSA installations, 53 children through Brooke Army Medical Center's Angel Tree, 400 children at a local elementary school and 500 children across the three battalions of the 470th Military Intelligence Brigade.

"Seeing the need of community children motivated me to host this toy drive," said Ford-Hightower. "I used this event to give back. Next year when people donate, I want them to know that we are taking care of kids in the community."



JOSE A. TORRES JR.

Nita Ford-Hightower, Child Youth Education Services, arranges toys and games donated from members of the community for the School Liaison Toy Drive Dec. 17 at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston.



DANIELLE AVINGTON

Incoming Command Sgt. Maj. Jose M. Salas, 5th Brigade, U.S. Army Cadet Command, addresses the audience during the change of responsibility ceremony at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston Dec. 18.

5th Brigade, U.S. Army Cadet Command welcomes new command sergeant major

By Danielle Avington

5TH BRIGADE, UNITED STATES ARMY CADET
COMMAND MARKETING AND ADVERTISING

Command Sgt. Major Jose M. Salas took over responsibility from Command Sgt. Maj. George B. Bunn during the 5th Brigade, U.S. Army Cadet Command's change of responsibility ceremony at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston Dec. 18.

"A distinguished field artilleryman, Bunn brought a wealth of experience from operational and training assignments to 5th Brigade since taking the colors in 2018," said Col. Mark A. Olsen, 5th Brigade commander. "His tactical and technical competence, level-headed judgement and insight have been central to the brigade's success over the last 2-1/2 years."

Olsen also highlighted how the COVID-19 pandemic has brought unexpected challenges to the brigade, but with Bunn's leadership, the brigade has weathered the challenge with flying colors.

As 5th Brigade marks Bunn's final assignment before retirement from the U.S. Army, Olsen also took a moment to thank him for his three decades of military service to the nation, saying "Sergeant Major, you have left the Army better than you found it, thank you for all you've done."

Bunn recognized key mentors who helped him learn and grow, and become a better leader. He went on to thank his family for being his rock and also thanked Soldiers, cadre and staff who he served with.

"I'm truly blessed," Bunn said. "I can honestly say it has been a great honor to serve this nation for almost 30 years and I wouldn't change a thing. I see nothing but success for the Apache Brigade."

Salas expressed his thankfulness for being able to continue to serve the nation. "Team Salas is looking forward to serving alongside everyone and the Brigade Team. People first, winning matters, victory starts here, leadership and excellence — 5th Brigade is my squad."

LACKLAND

JBSA firefighters conduct semi-annual aircraft rescue, firefighting training

By Alex Delgado
502ND AIR BASE WING
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The 902nd Civil Engineer Squadron Fire Department conducted semi-annual

aircraft live-fire training Nov. 18 and 19 at the Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland fire training grounds.

The training event included firefighters from JBSA-Fort Sam Houston and helped



PHOTOS BY SARAYUTH PINTHONG

Andrew Sanchez and Eric Flores, Joint Base San Antonio firefighters, douse a live fire during Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting training Nov. 20 at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland Kelly Field Annex.

ensure all members maintain Airport Firefighter Certification through the Department of Defense Firefighter Certification Program and the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress.

"Our members must be ready to provide first-class emergency services delivery for the pilots and passengers that frequent JBSA-Kelly Field Annex," said Michael Guzman, Joint Base San Antonio Fire Emergency Services deputy chief. "We have a five-minute response time for an unannounced inflight aircraft emergency and a one-minute response time for an announced inflight aircraft emergency. These firefighting professionals are ready at a moment's notice."

The training satisfies requirements outlined in the Air Force Fire Emergency Services Training Program

and the National Fire Protection Association 1403 Standard on Live Fire Training Evolutions.

Training staff members created realistic scenarios allowing firefighters to sharpen their skills combating aircraft fires using bumper and roof turrets to simulate creating a blanket of foam to suffocate the fire. Trainees operate attack lines to fight ground fires, engine fires and interior fires in the flight deck and cargo bay.

The training also allowed responding firefighters to put the Aircraft Pre-Fire Plan into practice, bringing Mutual Aid Agreement partners together to maximize combined effectiveness, further enhancing response capabilities.

"It is imperative that we are able to work seamlessly with our community partners, Boeing Aerospace, Bexar

County and City of San Antonio, so that we're on the same page if we're called to respond to an aircraft emergency on or off the installation," Guzman said. "It is important that our incident commanders coordinate and practice effective tactics, strategy and communication."

Training with agencies from the surrounding community is conducted annually in the form of table top and live field exercises.

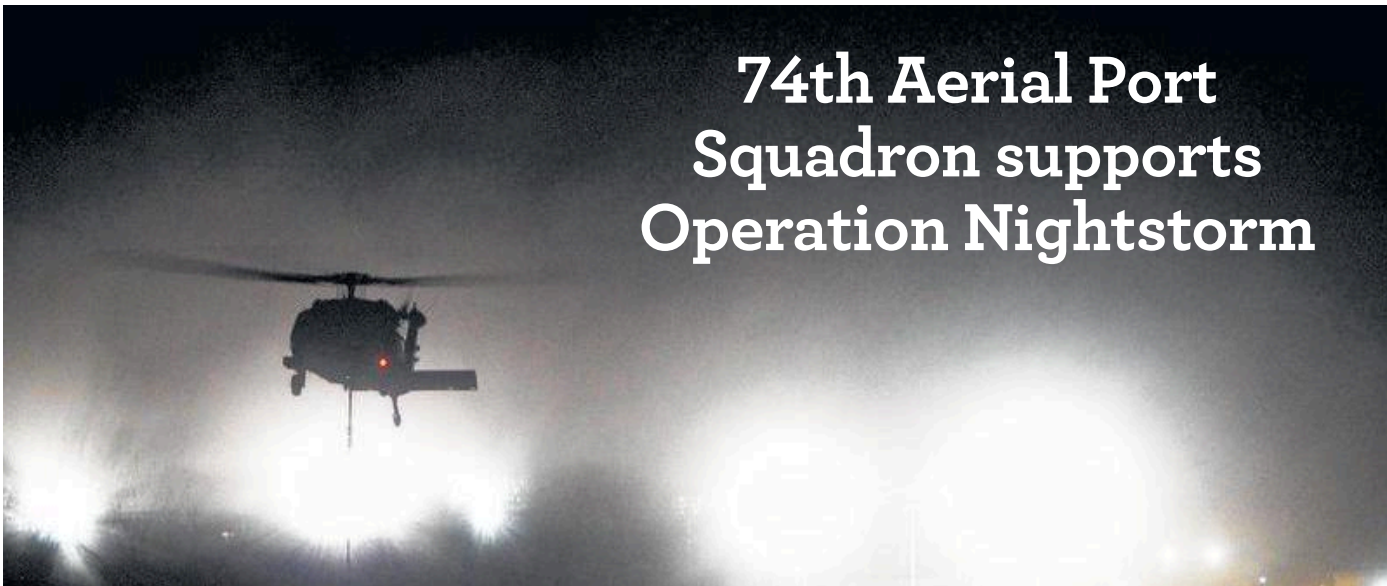
This year's training was conducted using a Mobile Aircraft Fire Training facility because the Aircraft Fire Training Facility at the JBSA-Lackland Kelly Field Annex is currently undergoing repair and maintenance.

"The show must go on!" Guzman said. "The MAFT does a great job of providing realism to our aircraft rescue firefighting training."



Firefighters with Joint Base San Antonio extinguish an isolated fire during live fire Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting training Nov. 20.

74th Aerial Port Squadron supports Operation Nightstorm



TECH. SGT. SAMANTHA MATHISON

A UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter lowers sling loaded cargo onto the ground during Operation Nightstorm Dec. 15, 2020, at Joint Base San Antonio-Chapman Training Annex.

Joint service training takes place about six times a year to prepare military members to work around in-flight helicopters

By Tech. Sgt. Samantha Mathison

433RD AIRLIFT WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Eight Reserve Citizen Airmen with the 74th Aerial Port Squadron at the 433rd Airlift Wing at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland participated in a joint-service training exercise dubbed Operation Nightstorm Dec. 14-15, learning how to sling load cargo onto in-flight helicopters.

Once the prepared cargo is secured to a pallet by the ground crew and attached to a hovering helicopter, the team runs clear while the load is airlifted to another location. Once the load is placed on the ground, the aircrew inside disconnects the load from the helo.

The exercise coordinator, known as the Pathfinder, Col. Kjäll Gopaul, Air Education

and Training Command, said this was a joint effort between the Air Force, Army, and the Texas Army National Guard.

"This is ultimately readiness training for both the Texas Army National Guard and for the ground crews," Gopaul said. "The National Guard has a proficiency requirement to conduct sling loads or external load missions, and the 74th APS aerial transporters also have aerial delivery proficiency requirements."

According to Gopaul, these joint service training operations take place about six times a year to prepare military members to work around in-flight helicopters, which can be daunting for newcomers.

"For first-timers, today's exercise takes away the newness and uncertainty of working around live aircraft so

that they can focus on their core tasks," he said. "Now, these Airmen and Soldiers are better prepared to execute their wartime duties while deployed overseas, or to provide peacetime support for the state of Texas."

The Texas Army National Guard provided three UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters and aircrews from the 2nd Battalion, 149th Aviation Regiment, at Martindale Army Air Field in San Antonio, Texas, and 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation Regiment, from Austin, Texas.

Ground crew members consisted of reservists from the 74th APS, eight active-duty Airmen from the 343rd Training Squadron and Air Force Special Warfare Training Support Squadron at JBSA-Lackland, and five active-duty Army medics from JBSA-Camp Bullis Training Support Company.

The cargo was made up of four separate loads consisting of one 1,000-pound load of water barrels, two 2,000

-pound loads of water barrels, and a 6,600-pound high-mobility multi-purpose wheeled vehicle, also known as a Humvee.

Tech. Sgt. Rebecca Martinez, 74th APS air terminal operations center information controller, was the team leader who assisted Gopaul with implementing the exercise successfully.

"My main job was to take these different groups, who've never worked together before, and have them effectively set-up the cargo and landing area, perform the mission, then tear-down and pack-up afterward," Martinez said.

Martinez was also responsible for transporting the equipment, cargo and personnel to and from the landing zone.

According to Martinez, the biggest challenge was accomplishing all the required tasks with a limited amount of ground crew personnel while rotating them through the different roles needed to optimize their training and

experience.

"There were times where I thought, 'Oh, man, I need more people out here,'" she said. "There was a point where I got worried that some of my team members wouldn't be able to fly because I absolutely needed them on the ground. They missed their flight, but, luckily, we were able to get them on another one a little while later."

It took more than a week's worth of preparations, culminating in a full day of flight sorties that began Dec. 15 at noon and continued past sunset, resulting in participants receiving experience in nighttime sling load operations, as well.

"I think it's gone very well today," Gopaul said. "We had at least 40 sorties take place, and we expeditiously transported over 100,000 pounds of cargo and personnel. Everyone had an opportunity to perform in different roles and responsibilities while conducting safe and valuable training."

Cutting-edge technology takes flight at Career Enlisted Aviator Center of Excellence

By Agnes Koterba
37TH TRAINING WING
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

A new virtual training course is blazing trails at the 344th Training Squadron, Career Enlisted Aviator Center of Excellence. Distinguished guests and aviators came together at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland Dec. 11 for the Virtual Reality Laboratory ribbon-cutting ceremony to witness an innovative training frontier.

What started as a simple concept developed into something more when a group of Career Enlisted Aviator (CEA) instructors joined forces to change the traditional approach to teaching. Previous squadron leadership — Lt. Col. O.C. Chavez and Chief Master Sgt. Jim Hessick — began by forming a team to address modernizing teaching methods. Master Sgt. Kyle Anderson, loadmaster; retired Master Sgt. Khristine Farmer, flight attendant; and Master Sgt. Justin Nissen, special missions aviator, worked collectively to bring ingenuity to the forefront of aviation training.

As a result, Project Icarus took shape, lending its name from Greek mythology as inspiration for what lay ahead.

“Today is a great day for our Air Force,” said Maj. Jordan B. Clark, who became the 344th TRS commander in July 2019. “What began as an idea by a single CEA to improve localized training has matured into an effort that transformed how all current and future enlisted aviators are developed. ITP delivers a true paradigm shift that provides enhanced familiarization for students before they ever see their first operational aircraft.”

Farmer recalled roadblocks and opposition were not uncommon, but this did not



AGNES KOTERBA

Two Career Enlisted Aviator candidates try out the new virtual lab at the Career Enlisted Aviator Center of Excellence, 344th Training Squadron, at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland Dec. 11.

stop her from making Icarus a simple possibility to a realized reality. Though receiving approval was not an easy road, Farmer faced the challenges with her teammates and persevered.

“Obviously, Icarus didn’t survive but our Icarus did and grew exponentially,” Farmer said.

With the help of John Brooks and his team at Mass Virtual Incorporated and the Air

Education and Training Command Force Development Division, spearheaded by Col. Raymond Platt, Masoud Rasti, and Richard Robledo, the virtual reality platform soon gained ground and Icarus became the Integrated Technologies Platform. Masoud made it clear that virtual reality allows career enlisted aviators to apply their “... proficiency and exercise as often as possible even though the aircraft

availability might not be there.”

Farmer finds that the benefit of using virtual training allows students to learn “... with virtual aircraft where students can get familiar and make mistakes in a virtual environment. That way when they get on the aircraft they are now familiar and do not make the same mistakes.”

Master Sgt. Andrew J. Gajkowski, Section Chief, Special Programs, said the VR modules bring great value to the

“Today is a great day for our Air Force. What began as an idea by a single CEA to improve localized training has matured into an effort that transformed how all current and future enlisted aviators are developed.”

Maj. Jordan B. Clark, 344th Training Squadron commander

student’s learning environment and the Center of Excellence.

“The VR Modules allow us to instruct so much more than the basic facts and terms in a modern way,” he added.

Career enlisted aviators will now have the advantage to grow, learn, and train in multiple capacities without restriction to time and place.

“This technology is vital in bridging the gap between yesterday’s PowerPoint and study guides, to tomorrow’s learning environments,” Master Sgt. Antonio Hallums said during the ceremony. “We find ourselves with new capabilities as instructors, armed to teach guided lessons within the virtual realm, enabling our students to learn faster, apply better, and remember longer.”

Alamo Wing Top 3, Wish for Our Heroes provide holiday meals

By Master Sgt.
Kristian Carter

433RD AIRLIFT WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The Alamo Wing Top 3 and Wish for Our Heroes joined to provide 150 holiday meals to enlisted military members here and at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston Dec. 18.

The Feed a Family program collects food donated by local businesses, and then assembles and distributes the meals.

Senior Master Sgt. David Delgado, Top 3 president and 433rd Operations Group chief of loadmaster standardization and evaluation, said the Alamo Wing Top 3 is helping this event by providing manpower to assemble and distribute the meal packages.

In addition to the meals, families were able to pick up stocking stuffers while volunteers prepared the meal bags.

The first two years of Feed a

Family were limited to wounded warriors and their families. Since then, the organization has opened eligibility to all actively serving enlisted military members.

"The mission of Wish for Our Heroes is about helping our heroes against hardship," said Brad Tobler, Wish for Our Heroes South Texas chapter director.

Wish for Our Heroes also runs the Wish Patrol, a program to collect and deliver gifts to military families that need assistance during the holidays. They have modified the deliveries this year to accommodate COVID-19 distancing protocols. This year, they are working on packages for 17 families in the San Antonio area.

"After spending 20 years in the Air Force, I saw how families can suffer, need help, and struggle," said Charlie O'Connors, Wish for Our Heroes military liaison. "I want to do whatever I can to help resolve that."



MASTER SGT. KRISTIAN CARTER

433rd Airlift Wing members assemble holiday meal boxes during a Wish for Our Heroes Feed a Family program event Dec. 18 at the 433rd AW at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland.

Lieutenants at DLIELC first women pilots in Chadian air force

By Annette Crawford
37TH TRAINING WING
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

A journey begins with a single step, but for two lieutenants from the Republic of Chad air force, that first step was more than 7,100 miles from home.

While students from Chad have been attending the Defense Language Institute English Language Center for several years, 2nd Lts. Ahmat Sadie and Hissein Haoua are the first women in the Chad air force to become pilots. They're presently assigned to the General English Training, or GET, course at DLIELC at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, which concludes in January. After that, they'll attend the Oral Proficiency Skills for Aviation, or OPSAV, course and in July, it's off to Spartan

Aviation in Tulsa, Oklahoma, to learn to fly.

Sadie is 26 and Haoua is 20. They are both following family military traditions as their fathers served in the Chad army and are now retired.

"Our families are so proud of us," Haoua said. "They told us to work strong and do our best."

"The U.S. is the best country in the world for pilot training," Sadie said. She has been in the air force five years. "I tried to become a pilot even before I joined the military, but was always told no. I kept trying. Then I finally got a call in January 2020: 'Are you still interested in becoming a pilot or have you given up?' I did not give up."

While COVID-19 delayed their travel and school plans by nearly six months, it hasn't dimmed the enthusiasm of the

two lieutenants.

Becoming a pilot "was my dream when I was a child, and it's still my dream until it's true," Haoua said.

The two women left Chad in September. They are both from N'Djamena, the capital, but didn't meet until they were in the air force. Chad is a landlocked country in north-central Africa. The country's official languages are Arabic and French, and it has a population of nearly 14 million.

One of the biggest environmental differences the women have noted between Texas and Chad is the weather.

"Here, every hour the weather changes," Sadie said. "About the coldest it gets in Chad is 7 Celsius [44 degrees Fahrenheit]. We have lots of deserts and mountains. In our country, we don't have a lot of



PHOTOS BY ANNETTE CRAWFORD

Second Lt. Ahmat Sadie (left) and Second Lt. Hissein Haoua (right) of the Republic of Chad air force are the first two women in that service to become pilots. Both are now attending General English Training at the Defense Language Institute English Language Center, Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland.

natural catastrophes — no earthquakes, tornados, hurricanes or floods."

Since arriving at JBSA-Lackland, the two women have used every available opportunity to enjoy the local area, visiting La Cantera, the historic missions and Sea World. Sadie particularly enjoyed pumpkin carving at Halloween, a

cultural event that was totally new to her.

Both officers want to make a career of the air force. They spoke of younger siblings and cousins they have inspired to follow in their footsteps.

"We want to serve our country," Haoua said. "There are very few women pilots in our country, mostly men. We need to open the door."

M&FRC, senior NCOs spread holiday cheer at JBSA-Lackland

By Erinn Burgess
502ND AIR BASE WING
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Caring messages brought warmth to a cold winter morning as senior NCOs from across Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland lined the streets holding signs to spread holiday cheer Dec. 18.

The event, organized by the installation's Military and Family Readiness Center and the JBSA-Lackland Top 3, aimed to provide encouragement and positivity to motorists entering the installation.

"Our hope is that if there is somebody who may need some extra assistance, they see this as a sign and they know they are not alone," said Master Sgt. Ashley Mckerlie, JBSA-Lackland M&FRC superintendent.

with financial counseling, employment assistance, connecting with a Military and Family Life Counselor or finding out about other resources that will help them, the M&FRC offers services to help them," she said.

Mckerlie, who also serves as the JBSA-Lackland Top 3 treasurer, said the M&FRC teamed up with the Top 3 to reach a larger audience and bring awareness about programs offered. "As a senior NCO, it's our job to take care of people and a big piece of that is knowing what programs we have in place to support the installation," she said.

Master Sgt. Nomer Evangelista, JBSA-Lackland Top 3 outreach chair, said the goal was to showcase a message to the total force that they are important and have support.

"It is very important for us



SARAYUTH PINTHONG

U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Jermaine Wilson, Security Forces Center, holds a sign to spread holiday cheer for drivers to see Dec. 18 at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland.

to spread holiday cheer to simply say thanks to all our personnel and their families for their hard work, sacrifices and resilience throughout the

year," Evangelista said.

"We're on your team, we're in this fight together — that's the intent behind this," added Master Sgt. Jermaine Wilson,

JBSA-Lackland Top 3 president. "We understand what our service members and customers are going through this year, and we just want to let them know that we're in this fight with them."

The signs displayed a variety of messages, ranging from "Life is tough, so are you!" to "Hey, you've got this!" to "Today is your day to shine." Motorists honked and waved as they passed the signs.

"Whether you're active duty, reserve, dependent or civilian, you are part of the JBSA family," Mckerlie said.

The goal of the M&FRC is to provide support and services that contribute to the readiness of the total force.

JBSA-Lackland M&FRC is providing a full menu of virtual services and support. For more information, call 210-671-3722 or email 802fss.fsfr@us.af.mil.

502nd Logistics Readiness Squadron, USO help ensure JBSA military students enjoy holidays

By Lori A. Bultman
502ND AIR BASE WING
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

This holiday season, COVID-19 restrictions may have prevented many of Joint Base San Antonio's military students from traveling home to be with family and friends, but whether staying in town or traveling, the students could depend on the 502nd Logistics Readiness Squadron to ensure they arrived where they needed to be.

For the students able to go home for the holidays, the 502nd LRS's Ground Transportation teamed with the 502nd Force Support Squadron Information, Tickets and Tours, and the 37th Training Wing, as well as sister-service technical training units across JBSA, to schedule transportation bus support for thousands of technical training students to San Antonio International Airport during Exodus 2020, said William Cope, 502nd LRS bus contract supervisor.

"The ITT office sold tickets to the students and provided ground transportation with the numbers needing transport, along with travel dates and times, allowing us to build a schedule to provide a safe and orderly departure," Cope said.

To help ensure students staying behind still had a joyful holiday, 502nd LRS Ground Transportation supported the 502nd FSS and USO San Antonio by providing entertainment options, such as trips to amusement parks, event venues, and landmarks, as well as several on-base events.

"This allowed students to celebrate and enjoy the holidays in San Antonio, while also enjoying some critical social interaction with others," Cope said.

"Alleviating social isolation plays a big part in mental and emotional health during the



COURTESY PHOTO

To help ensure military students remaining at Joint Base San Antonio still had a joyful holiday, the 502nd Logistics Readiness Squadron Ground Transportation supported the 502nd Force Support Squadron and USO San Antonio by providing transportation to several locations, such as amusement parks, event venues, and landmarks, as well as several on-base events.

trying times of not being able to celebrate with family during the special moments of the holiday season," said Heather Krauss, executive director of USO San Antonio.

"The USO is dedicated to providing programming in order to enhance resiliency by creating impactful moments of holiday joy for those who cannot travel this year and will be spending the holidays with their military family, battle buddies and fellow service members," she said.

"USO Countdown to Christmas is a traditional USO San Antonio program offered annually for those students remaining here during the holiday block leave," she said. "This programming is focused on days full of fun events to keep trainees connected,

engaged, and feeling appreciated in order to best celebrate the holiday season."

Each day provides trainees with not only activities, but meals, holiday treats, goodies, giveaways, and most importantly, camaraderie, Krauss said.

This year's activities included private events in which the student population could enjoy activities together in an environment that kept them safe throughout the evolving safety regulations of COVID, Krauss said.

"We have learned how to pivot and sift in a moment's notice in order to continue to provide direct service for those that need it," she said.

One especially popular event this year was the day at the movies, which included private

double-features in an actual theater.

There was also a Christmas eve brunch with Santa and gingerbread house decorating contests, Christmas Day at SeaWorld, bowling, laser tag, and gaming events, a rollercoaster day, a bingo and game tournament day, and a scavenger hunt and burger burn on New Year's Day.

"This year all of our events were carefully planned in order to follow all CDC, local, and installation guidelines to keep our service members safe through this unprecedented time," Krauss said. "No one likes being away from family, friends, and traditions for major holidays, and we are happy to serve the mission of the USO, strengthening America's military service

"Alleviating social isolation plays a big part in mental and emotional health during the trying times of not being able to celebrate with family during the special moments of the holiday season."

Heather Krauss, executive director of USO San Antonio

members by keeping them connected to family, home and country, throughout their service to the nation, and especially during the holidays."

Throughout this year's USO activities, 502nd LRS kept extra busy ensuring the safety of the students as well.

"Moving large groups of passengers in the middle of a pandemic presented several challenges," said Todd Deane, JBSA Ground Transportation manager, said. "However, we implemented proven safety precautions, such as routine sanitization of the buses, to reduce risk and ensure the safety of everyone involved."

Deane hopes America's newest military members had a fun and safe holiday.

"The 502nd Logistics Readiness Squadron takes great pride in providing support to our multi-service students, who celebrated the holidays away from their family and friends," he said.

Editor's note: The mention of non-federal organizations is simply informational and not intended to imply endorsement by the U.S. Government, the DOD, or the U.S. Air Force.

RANDOLPH

Advisors look to continue momentum of officers' course

By Robert Goetz
502ND AIR BASE WING
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Joint Base San Antonio career assistance advisors, or CAAs, are looking ahead to the first quarter of the new year for the second session of a new professional development initiative for officers following a successful rollout last month.

The First Term Officer's Onboarding Course, presented virtually Dec. 1 to 3, was already filled to its 80-student limit in the first two hours it was advertised, said Senior Master Sgt. Jermaine King, JBSA-Randolph CAA.

"I would say the First Term Officer's Onboarding Course really caught me by surprise," he said. "I did not expect the resounding support I have received from the students in the course, but also from the leaders in Joint Base San Antonio."

King said one student told him that Brig. Gen. Caroline Miller, 502nd Air Base Wing and JBSA commander, and Command Chief Master Sgt. Wendell Snider set the tone for the three-day session by opening up the course.

Master Sgt. Dylan Bowman, JBSA-Fort Sam Houston CAA, was also pleased with the rollout of the course, which was developed for all officers in their first term of service, regardless of rank.

"We had a huge turnout with excellent and meaningful dialogue and fantastic briefers," he said. "We also received a significant amount of positive feedback stating this course was much needed and that members learned a



COURTESY GRAPHIC

lot from the course." The FTOOC was developed by a team consisting of JBSA's career assistance advisors, officers, senior NCOs and junior NCOs to fill a gap in deliberate professional development between the time an officer is assigned to JBSA and is chosen to attend Officer Professional Military Education.

The course gives new officers the tools and information to be successful leaders, Bowman said.

"In the JBSA environment, there are many first-term officers who join at ranks between O-1 and O-5, depending on their Air Force Specialty Code and work experience, but for many this is their first experience in the military and we expect them to lead immediately," he said.

"The FTOOC serves as a bridge between initial officer training and their next professional development course, which is approximately four years after being in the service," Bowman added. "Deliberately

developing their skills and knowledge of enlisted/officer evaluation systems, base programs, Air Force processes, information systems, and general leadership skills prepare these first-term officers with little to no military experience to be successful in their new leadership roles within the Air Force."

The initial FTOOC session underscored the need to fill that gap, King said.

"What I have learned about many of the officers in the program is that they really want to be able to better support and guide their subordinates," he said. "The course really helped them learn personnel systems and documents. One individual pointed out how in-depth the instructors went and gave the impression that they really cared about what was being instructed."

Subject-matter experts not only gave students useful information, but also provided them with first-hand knowledge of issues officers

were experiencing, King said.

First Lt. Rachel Dale, 59th Medical Operations Squadron clinical social work resident, said the course benefited her with its breadth of topics — from being a better leader to tuition assistance.

"I was surprised by the range of topics covered in the three-day course," she said. "The presenters were all very knowledgeable of the topics they presented. It is a course I recommend to every first-term officer."

As a first-term officer — and one new to the military — Dale said she saw FTOOC as an opportunity to learn about the different resources available to her as a service member.

King noted the virtual platform for the course worked "very well."

"While enforcing health protection conditions, the platform allowed students to go into breakout sessions," he said. "This fostered better discussion on topics."

The ability of officers to dress in business casual attire

"In the JBSA environment there are many first-term officers who join at ranks between O1 and O5 depending on their Air Force Specialty Code and work experience, but for many this is their first experience in the military and we expect them to lead immediately."

Master Sgt. Dylan Bowman
Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston career assistance advisor

also enhanced the course, King said.

"The focus of the course was not on the rank of the individuals, but rather understanding the content of the curriculum," he said. "Throughout the course, the students did not hold back on our facilitators and this was exactly what the facilitators was looking to cultivate. There was great dialogue throughout the course."

The JBSA CAAs plan to meet with Miller and Snider soon to discuss the future of the course, King said.

"There is currently no decision made by our senior leaders to make the course permanent," he said. "However, the goal is to be able to speak to all Air Force senior leaders to provide this course at every Air Force installation."

The CAAs are also working to improve the course based on leaders' recommendations and student feedback, and looking to offer the second session sometime in the first quarter of 2021, King said.

Space history ties to Randolph Air Force Base

Air Education and Training Command Public Affairs

In episode 41 of "The Air Force Starts Here" podcast, it is a look back in history at the Air Force's role in space here with AETC History and Museums Program Director Gary Boyd and AETC historian Rudy Purificato.

Randolph Air Force Base has a history steeped in space innovation, which all occurred in building 661. Building 661 was home to the U.S. Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine and inaugurated the world's first Department of Space Medicine in 1949.

While there, many space firsts occurred like the first simulated flight to the moon, training of the first primates to go into sub-orbit and orbit, as

well as the development of pressurized and heat resistant space suits.

Enlisted contributions to space also started in Building 661 in 1958, with Airman Donald Farrell, who volunteered to be sequestered inside a research chamber nicknamed "Terrella 1" for a simulated flight to the moon. "Terrella 1" can be seen first-hand, free of charge, at the Airman Heritage Museum at Joint Base San Antonio Lackland.

The U.S. Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine, which started at Brooks Air Force Base and moved to Randolph, moved back to Brooks in 1959, where it resided until 2011 when Brooks closed and the school moved to Wright-Patterson Air Force

Base, Ohio. However, according to Boyd, the pioneering work that started and Randolph Air Force Base laid the foundation of what we know of Space today.

Space history continues in Texas with the first seven enlisted Guardians to graduate from Basic Military Training at JBASA-Lackland on Dec. 10, 2020, which is conducted through Air Education and Training Command. AETC provides world-class training and education for our Airmen and Space Professionals to prepare them to adapt, decide, and act at the speed necessary for current competition and future combat. Airmen who are properly trained, educated and developed will accelerate change and out-think and out-perform adversaries.

Airman Donald Farrell sits inside a low pressure chamber dubbed "Terrella 1," the world's first space cabin simulator invented by USAF School of Aviation Medicine scientists at Randolph Air Force Base in 1952.



COURTESY PHOTO /

Reserve instructor pilot earns AETC safety award

By 340th Flying Training Group Public Affairs

A Reserve instructor pilot from the 39th Flying Training Squadron at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph was selected as the Air Education and Training Command Aviation Safety Well Done Award winner for 2020.

Maj. Patrick Stewart earned the award through his exceptional skill and ingenuity while performing duties as an Introduction to Fighter Fundamentals Instructor Pilot during a student syllabus sortie Feb. 27.

Stewart's calm, focused response to a potentially life-threatening situation (described in the medal citation, below) earned him kudos and recognition from leaders and peers.



DEBBIE GILDEA

Maj. Patrick Stewart, 39th Flying Training Squadron, earned Air Education and Training Command's 2020 Aviation Safety Well Done Award.

The citations reads as follows:

"While flying in the rear cockpit of a T-38C, Maj. Patrick Stewart displayed outstanding aircraft control, systems knowledge, and crew resource management during an incident in which part of the wingtip liberated from the aircraft while under high-G maneuvering, causing an immediate and violent roll.

Stewart took control of the aircraft from the student and recovered from the dangerous and disorienting situation, then directed his flight lead to support as a chase aircraft while they worked to accomplish multiple extensive checklist procedures to determine if

the aircraft was suitable to continue to fly, and most importantly, land.

After working through all of the checklists and confirming with the JBASA-Randolph Supervisor of Flying that there was a runway in the area that was suitable for the damaged T-38C to safely land, Stewart flew a flawless approach and touchdown to nearby JBASA-Kelly Field Annex at JBASA-Lackland.

Because of his exceptional skill and composure under duress, Stewart expertly handled an extremely serious and rare emergency and allowed for the safe return of the T-38C with both pilots on board."

Air Force recruiting innovates to save time, money

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

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Air Force recruiters have continuously found innovative ways to keep the flow of recruits ready for Basic Military Training, and one new alternative to recruit processing may prove to be a huge resource saving idea.

A team of ground-breaking recruiters was able to process two people into the delayed entry program without ever stepping a foot into a Military Entrance Processing Station or military treatment facility. This proof of concept serves as a MEPS alternative, and was a recommendation from the Fiscal 20 National Defense Authorization Act, which uses civilian doctors in the medical-clearance process, and has the potential to save considerable man-hours and money for the Air Force.

Daniel Kim and Tyler Yarrish were the first two of a 20-person proof of concept. The idea has been floated around Air Force Recruiting Service for years but had never happened.

"I am continually impressed with the innovative thinking that comes from our Total Force recruiting team," said Maj. Gen. Ed Thomas, AFRS commander. "They are working tirelessly to adapt and overcome the challenges presented by COVID-19. With ideas like the MEPS alternative, we continue to find and in-process the best and brightest to join our U.S. Air and Space Forces. I'm encouraged by the proof of concept and ready to see this on a larger scale."

Poff shared Thomas' excitement to see this program develop.

"We have always felt like this was a viable option, but the idea seemed to meet some resistance. Oftentimes, we do things the same way for so



MASTER SGT. CHANCE BABIN

Chief Master Sgt. David Poff (left), 369th Recruiting Squadron superintendent, and Lt. Col. Charles Barton (right), 369th RCS commander, celebrate the swearing-in of Daniel Kim and Tyler Yarrish into the Air Force Delayed Enlistment Program. Barton administered the oath to Kim and Yarrish who were the first two of a 20-person proof of concept to process and ship to Basic Military Training without ever visiting Military Entrance Processing Station or military facility.

long that we just assume it cannot be done any other way," said Chief Master Sgt. David Poff, 369th Recruiting Squadron superintendent, located in Encino, California. "In the late summer of 2019, a rumor was floating around that Congress thought the Department of Defense should seek alternatives to centralized accession physicals at MEPS. As soon as Master Sgt. Ernest Coleman (the former flight chief for the 369th RCS H Flight) and I heard about that, we started discussing how we could actually make something like that happen."

The United States Military Entrance Processing Command operates 65 MEPS located throughout the 50 States and Puerto Rico. Applicants must travel to the closest MEPS to receive physical examinations. They are often driven by a military recruiter and they receive lodging at a nearby hotel that is paid for by that service. In 2015, USMEPCOM reported that 473,000 applicants from

the military and other agencies processed through the 65 MEPS, which equates to 931,000 MEPS visits.

After the FY20 NDAA was released, Poff and his team's idea started to take form. In the FY20 NDAA, it stated: "It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of Defense should explore alternatives to centralized accession physicals at MEPS, including conducting physicals through community healthcare providers, in order to reduce transportation costs, increase efficiency in processing times and free recruiters to focus on the core of the recruiting mission."

Poff and his team knew their idea could now be a reality and they immediately came up with a problem statement — How can the Air Force process and ship applicants to BMT with a high success rate, while simultaneously reducing costs and time for both the applicant and the recruiter?

"We had some failed efforts along the way with some local healthcare providers. We were

not willing to sacrifice the integrity of the medical evaluation," Poff said. "Ultimately, we teamed up with a company called Concorde Inc. This is the same company that the Department of Defense Medical Examination Review Board (DODMERB) utilizes to find healthcare providers to complete the accession physical for all ROTC and Service Academy applicants nationwide."

Poff pitched his idea to AFRS leadership in a video teleconference call June 2, 2020. According to Poff, leadership loved the idea and his team was given a thumbs up to move forward with the concept.

From there, Poff and his team started working directly with leaders in the AFRS Operations and Accession Medical Waiver Divisions. Capt. Jeffrey Rueben, the AFRS chief of physical standards in the Accession Medical Waiver Division, and two subject matter experts, Master Sgt. Jon Rice, 369th Recruiting Squadron, Pacific Operations Recruiting Program Manager, at Kadena Air Base, Japan, and Tech. Sgt. Adam Ranney, MEPS Liaison, 369th Recruiting Squadron, Los Angeles, California, worked many hours to ensure they delivered all necessary requirements of the medical exam.

"This was not as easy as we originally thought because the DODMERB and MEPS medical physical requirements are very different," Poff said. "The last item we had to work out was how to fund this. It isn't as easy as swiping a card. After three months of back and forth with contracting, we received a green light to proceed."

The average cost for bringing a recruit to MEPS — including transportation, lodging, cost of the medical examination and meals — is

\$1,461, according to Poff. His proof of concept cuts that cost to \$281.95.

"In addition to the cost savings, the most valuable savings this concept may be able to reduce is our recruiter's time," Poff said. "Many recruiters must provide applicant transportation. As an enlisted recruiter, I was in Iowa City, Iowa. It was an over four-hour round trip for me to take an applicant to MEPS. I would then have to drive back the next day to pick the person up. This took two days away from me that I could have focused on lead prospecting, school visits or appointments."

For the recruiting flight conducting the test, recruiters in Orange County have to drive four to six hours round trip each time they provide transportation to MEPS. Recruiters need three to four processors a month just to meet their mission objectives.

Tech. Sgt. Elliot Butler, the flight chief with the 369th RCS H Flight, gave an example of how much time is spent during a month with MEPS trips alone.

"There are 31 days in January. When you take off weekends and holidays, there are only 19 days," Butler said. "If a recruiter has to take four people to the MEPS and come back and pick them up the next day, with a four- to six-hour round trip drive, that takes up almost eight workdays. That really only leaves 11 days in the month to focus on the core of recruiting, which is to find future Airmen, go to schools and prepare these applicants for BMT."

While this could help save recruiters significant time on the road, it also has the same benefits for the applicant.

"We also have areas where this would help the applicants as well," Poff said. "There are locations where applicants have to get on a plane to fly to a MEPS to see if they are qualified."