

JBSA LEGACY

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JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO

MARCH 26, 2021



PHOTO BY TECH. SGT. IRAM CARMONA

Airmen from the 433rd Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron respond to a simulated patient emergency during a KC-46A Pegasus local flight from Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland March 10.

First 433rd AES crew trains on KC-46A Pegasus

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Women in Flight: From cook to pilot

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Nutrition therapists train at METC

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JBSA First Sergeant Diamond Sharp Awards

By the Joint Base San Antonio First Sergeants Council

The Diamond Sharp Award is sponsored by the Joint Base San Antonio First Sergeants Council and recognizes outstanding Airmen who continually exceed the standard to meet the Air Force mission.

Tech. Sgt. Heather M. Britten

Unit: Air Force Life Cycle Management Center Det. 6, Cryptologic Cyber Systems Division

Duty Title: NCOIC, Signal Intelligence Radio Element

On Jan. 29, Tech. Sgt. Heather M. Britten



Tech. Sgt.
Heather M. Britten

swiftly responded to cries for help from outside her San Antonio home. She discovered her distraught neighbor, whose husband had collapsed and was unresponsive. Britten's training immediately kicked in and after assessing the scene and discovering the man was not breathing, she quickly began administering CPR. She continued her lifesaving efforts until paramedics arrived and transported the fallen man to a nearby hospital. On Feb. 3, Britten answered a knock at her door and was relieved to find her grateful neighbor, whose life she had saved, waiting to thank her.

Tech. Sgt. Justin K. Garay

Unit: 833rd Cyberspace Operations Squadron

Duty Title: Cyber Warfare Operator

Tech. Sgt. Justin K. Garay takes charge of any program handed to him. He has taken



Tech. Sgt.
Justin K. Garay

the reins for managing the squadron's network and host flights Persistent Cyber Training Environment content creation. He troubleshoots numerous operators account creation and set-up issues. Garay scheduled six Persistent Cyber Training Environment

squadron's fitness program in preparation for the resumption of fitness testing. His fitness trackers assist all flights in holding individuals accountable and he's personally led physical training for multiple flights.

Staff Sgt. Daniel A. Carney

Unit: 502nd Security Forces Squadron

Duty Title: Base Defense Operations Controller

Staff Sgt. Daniel A. Carney has demonstrated impeccable leadership, integrity and loyalty within the unit. His knowledge and professionalism supersedes



Staff Sgt.
Daniel A. Carney

his peers, making him the "go-to guy." Carney dedicated 28 hours developing a comprehensive job knowledge study guide, covering changes to his squadron's duty performance evaluations, thus bolstering job knowledge by 60 percent. Carney also volunteered to drive Airmen to and from work during the recent winter storm. Carney's selfless efforts positively impacted the mission and guaranteed multiple Airmen were able to return home safe to their families.

Staff Sgt. Joshua D. Chretien

Unit: Joint Personal Property Shipping Office

Duty Title: Shipment Distribution Technician

Staff Sgt. Joshua D. Chretien is a hardworking NCO who has been irreplaceable to the Joint Personal Property



Staff Sgt.
Joshua D. Chretien

Shipping Office and was essential during the recent Texas winter storms. Chretien led the Direct Procured Method team, consisting of two civilians, while also supporting the Shipment Distribution Coded section, booking 54 shipments. Additionally, He expertly routed eight local and 11 student baggage moves. In addition, Chretien processed 13 date changes, realigning timelines, ensuring on-time

pickups and saving the Department of Defense \$4,600 in attempted pick-up fees.

Senior Airman Dalton C. Burns

Unit: 802nd Security Forces Squadron

Duty Title: Installation Patrolman

Senior Airman Dalton C. Burns has shown himself as a well-rounded



Senior Airman
Dalton C. Burns

Airman, not only excelling in his assigned duties, but setting an example for his peers by taking part in the community. Selected as the primary usher for the 502nd Air Base Wing Annual Awards Ceremony, he escorted 65 nominees as well as senior JBSA leadership, five organizations and 50 attendees. Additionally, during the recent statewide power outage, Burns emerged as a servant-leader by distributing more than 100 coffee beverages to the on-duty Security Forces flight, while checking on their overall health and welfare during the frigid temperatures.

Senior Airman Adrienne Rogers

Unit: 59th Dental Training Squadron

Duty Title: Maxillofacial Prosthodontics Assistant

Senior Airman Adrienne Rogers is an enormous asset to her flight and a leader among peers. She was hand-selected to



Senior Airman
Adrienne Rogers

an E-5 position as maxillofacial prosthodontics NCOIC by the program director. She immediately teamed six clinics across three installations to provide \$8,700 of life-changing treatment for 24 Wounded Warriors and cancer patients. She improved clinic operations by standardizing treatment rooms and the logistics process. Additionally, Rogers was a key member of the base "Give Kids a Smile" event, providing treatment to 89 kids. Finally, she received the 59th Dental Group "Top Performer" award for her dedication to mission.

JBSA LEGACY

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502nd Air Base Wing
and JBSA Commander

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Feedback Fridays

Brig. Gen. Caroline M. Miller

502D AIR BASE WING AND JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO COMMANDER

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

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

Q. A service members' permanent change of station time should be a time of celebration and excitement as we move on to our new assignments, looking forward to new jobs, new sites, and new people.

However, this inevitable time in our careers almost consistently becomes bittersweet. The lack of communication, coordination and efficiency from multiple support offices often leaves Airmen ready to pull their hair out.

It is sad for me to say that JBSA-Lackland has not been the exception to this rule. Packing up your family and life, and moving into an unknown place is stressful enough without getting the

run-around and dealing with ineffective processes.

From setting up our "smooth move" briefing all the way up to our "final out-processing," we encountered myriad obstacles, some of which were brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic but others that seem to stem from just plain miscommunication.

How can you help to minimize, if not fully remove all of the frustrating obstacles inherent in the PCS system?

A. Thank you for reaching out! We apologize the out-processing experience did not meet the standard of customer service that the 802nd Force Support Squadron strives to provide.

Some of the agencies listed on the checklist do not "auto-clear" their portion of the checklist. Our military personnel team works with those respective agencies (for example: Mental Health, Dental, etc.) to ensure these have been completed.

We have made updates to our checklist to include the removal of the Security/Line Badge item as it is no longer a requirement; however, this item will still be on previous checklists until all old checklists are exhausted from the system.



COURTESY GRAPHIC

We appreciate your valuable feedback, as it allows us in the 802nd FSS to continue to make every effort within our portions of the out-processing actions to work toward providing a great customer experience to all we serve.

If you have any additional questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call our Military Personnel Flight Commander at 210-837-0366. Thank you!

Q. What is the status of legal services for retirees at Joint Base San Antonio now?

A. Thank you for your question. Each JBSA Legal Assistance Office has its own policy for legal assistance.

Currently, the JBSA-Fort Sam Houston legal office is seeing retirees and all eligible clients from all branches of the military. To book an appointment, visit <https://fortsamlegal.setmore.com/>

or call 210-808-0169.

At JBSA-Randolph, all eligible beneficiaries may obtain a notary service and/or power of attorney and may have a phone consultation with an attorney on a general legal issue, but the office is not making appointments for wills at this time for retirees. The main phone line is 210-652-6781.

The JBSA-Lackland legal office is now scheduling appointments for retirees on Wednesday mornings for general legal assistance and wills. Powers of attorney/notary services are available on a walk-in basis. The phone number to that office is 210-671-3362.

Additionally, for finding open/available services at each JBSA location during HPCON Bravo Plus, please visit <https://www.jbsa.mil/coronavirus/>. On the right side of the page, you will see "Facilities and Services Statutes."

Air Force offers 1,300-plus summer job opportunities

By Toni Whaley

AIR FORCE'S PERSONNEL CENTER
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

More than 1,300 students will get an opportunity to develop and hone their skills under the Department of the Air Force's flagship summer hire program.

The 2021 Summer Hire Employment Program provides students in high school, college, trade school, vocational school, and other qualifying educational programs with opportunities to work in federal departments and agencies and explore federal careers while still in school, said Tracy Wise, Civilian Recruitment and Placement branch chief at the Air Force's Personnel Center at Joint Base

San Antonio-Randolph.

In past years and pre-COVID-19, the program, which runs from May through September, would have upwards of 2,000 available positions. This year, the Air Force's Personnel Center received 1,318 requests from participating stateside and overseas bases.

"In order to ensure the safety of the participants and be in compliance with public health guidance, the number of available positions was reduced," Wise said. "We have to keep this and associated programs like the Pathways Internship program active to supply the civilian force pipeline with highly qualified and skilled talent."

Local civilian personnel sections will

manage the recruitment process for their respective summer hire programs for clerical, recreation aid, laborers and general engineering fields. AFPC will recruit and hire the lifeguard positions.

In addition to summer hire opportunities, students can also apply for internships through the Pathways Internship program.

"An intern can be appointed to a position at any grade level for which he or she is qualified, which offers employment opportunities for eligible participants," Wise said. "If an intern does well, they could be non-competitively converted to an appointment within the Pathways Internship program such as PALACE Acquire, Copper Cap and others."

Students may be employed for appropriated funded positions in the grades of GS-1 to GS-5, as long as the job totals no more than 40 hours per week. Summer hire students should only be on board for the duration of the summer hire program.

Interested candidates can learn more about the available positions by searching using the word "summer hire" or "student" and apply following the directions shown on the announcement or public notice at <https://usastaffing.gov>. For additional information on the Pathways Internship program and other civilian career opportunities in the Department of the Air Force, visit afciviliancareers.com.

San Antonio-Electromagnetic Defense collaborative marks two-year anniversary

By Lori A. Bultman

502ND AIR BASE WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The San Antonio-Electromagnetic Defense collaborative marked its two-year anniversary at a quarterly meeting March 19 when they welcomed Dr. George H. Baker, former senior science advisor to the National Security Council and senior advisor to the Congressional Electromagnetic Pulse, or EMP, Commission, as keynote speaker.

The SA-EMD was created by the Joint Base San Antonio-Electromagnetic Defense Initiative and has grown from a concept to a vibrant coalition of nearly 400 subject matter experts, community leaders, researchers, educators and many more, said Lt. Col. Eddie Stamper, JBSA-EDI project officer.

"To mark our two-year anniversary, we have one of the leading and most influential minds in the nation as our featured speaker," he said.

Updates on current and future work were also presented by each of SA-EMD's four work groups during the virtual meeting.

Brig. Gen. Caroline M. Miller, 502d Air Base Wing and JBSA commander, welcomed attendees and thanked SA-EMD partners for their hard work and dedication over the past two years.

"We are proud to have become a key focal point for the national effort to understand and counter electromagnetic threats to the power grid and other critical infrastructure," Miller said.

"The winter storm that impacted all of Texas last month drove home the importance of the work this group is doing. What was theoretical to some, became a reality for many who faced rolling blackouts, loss of water, and struggled to stay warm for nearly a week of below freezing temperatures," she said.

"The public/private partnerships you have established have served as a superlative model for other community-wide resilience programs, programs occurring in the Carolinas, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and elsewhere."

Dr. George H. Baker,

Former senior science advisor to the National Security Council and senior advisor to the Congressional Electromagnetic Pulse Commission



COURTESY GRAPHIC

"Armed with this experience fresh in our minds, we are determined to continue pressing forward to achieve our goal of a resilient critical infrastructure in which we can depend on to power our missions, support national security, and stabilize our quality of life," Miller said.

During his remarks, Baker, who has spent most of his professional career helping protect the U.S. military from the nuclear electromagnetic pulse, discussed the progress which has been made on EMP defense in response to the Executive Order 13865, Coordinating National Resilience to Electromagnetic Pulses, which establishes resilience and security standards for U.S. critical infrastructure as a national priority initiative.

"Over the last few years, under the executive order, major progress has included a number of things," Baker said. "We have established national EMP benchmarks and have included EMP requirements in our national essential function and continuity of government site requirements under a new national mission resilience strategy. We have new insights into EMP susceptibility and protection requirements for critical systems, and we have specified and are improving our EMP hardening methods. We have also gained major insights into EMP protection costs."

"This is not an easy problem, and it is one that is going to require major cooperation - but it is occurring," Baker said, lauding the country's

"We are proud to have become a key focal point for the national effort to understand and counter electromagnetic threats to the power grid and other critical infrastructure."

Brig. Gen. Caroline M. Miller,
502d Air Base Wing and
Joint Base San Antonio commander

departments who are cooperating to address the significant challenges associated with national EMP preparedness.

At the top of the list is the electrical power grid and its supporting infrastructure, he said.

"The electric power grid is our most critical infrastructure, but it is also the infrastructure that is most vulnerable to EMP and GMD (geomagnetic disturbance)," Baker said. "This is one of the main reasons we absolutely cannot ignore EMP/GMD problems."

Baker then congratulated JBSA on their accomplishments through JBSA-EDI.

"Leading the charge on this is the pilot demonstration program at Joint Base San Antonio," Baker said. "Your demonstration efforts have been central to progress on the executive order."

"The esprit de corps and cooperation you have achieved is setting the example for all national EMP efforts," he said. "You have achieved cooperation among a diverse set of players."

He also noted that JBSA's numerous partnerships will be key to successfully defending against an EMP.

"The public/private partnerships you have established have served as a superlative model for other community-wide resilience programs, programs occurring in the Carolinas, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and elsewhere," he said. "You have managed to get people working together with a common vision, which is very difficult to achieve. There is no way we can do EMP and GMD defense without that kind of cooperation."

FORT SAM HOUSTON

New JBSA-Fort Sam Houston Exchange opens first stores, restaurants

By David DeKunder

502ND AIR BASE WING
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service has opened the first stores and restaurants to customers at its new Exchange shopping center at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston.

On March 15, three restaurants — Starbucks, Arby's and Qdoba — started serving customers in the Exchange's food court, and most of the stores opened their doors in the shopping center's mall area.

The JBSA-Fort Sam Houston Community Pharmacy was the first to open its doors at the Exchange center Feb. 1, followed by a dental clinic March 9.

The new 210,000-square-foot Exchange center, located on Funston Road, will include the main exchange, which is scheduled for a ribbon-cutting opening April 15. Because of COVID-19 restrictions, the ribbon-cutting will be limited to JBSA leaders and AAFES representatives.

With phased openings, eight restaurants will be housed in the food court and the mall area will consist of seven specialty stores, a beauty shop, barbershop, pharmacy, dental clinic and optical and optometry stores. The optical and optometry stores, which will be moving from their current location at the former commissary building, will open March 29.

Several kiosks will be located in the mall area, including permanent ones for Enterprise Rent-A-Car, jewelry and watch repair, and a gyro food kiosk next to the food court.



THOMAS CONEY

The new 210,000-square-foot Exchange center, located on Funston Road, includes a main exchange and is scheduled for a ribbon-cutting opening April 15.

In addition, the current PXtra store, located at the intersection of Winfield Scott Road and Wilson Street will open in the new Exchange shopping center April 15.

The new \$54 million Exchange shopping center replaces the former Exchange building, located at Henry Allen and Winfield Scott roads, which was built in 1971. The old Exchange center will be demolished to make room for an additional 800 parking spaces for the new Exchange shopping center.

Eddie Devlin, South Texas Area Exchange general manager, said the new Exchange center will provide a better shopping experience for customers.

"It's a much bigger space and much more wide open than

what we currently have," said Devlin, referring to the space at the old Exchange center building, which is 133,000 square feet. "The space and layout are more conducive, and it will have a better flow.

"If you have been to (the old) Exchange," he added, "you notice it's sort of like a maze, and it has little cubby holes and sections that seem like they are set off from the regular sales floor. You are not going to have that in this store. Everything is part of the regular sales floor. The entire floor is viewable from the entryway."

Customers will have more food options in the expanded food court at the new Exchange. Newer restaurants include Starbucks, Arby's, Qdoba, Slim Chickens, Freshens and Sarku Japan. Two other food brands,

Charley's and Subway, are relocating their operations from the old Exchange center.

The new Exchange will also have more energy-efficient upgrades, including LED lighting and skylights throughout the entire building.

A cistern has been placed on the north side of the building to collect rainwater and water from runoff, which will be used for irrigation of landscaping around the building, Devlin said. Gray water piped in will also be used for irrigation and landscaping.

Customers and employees at the new Exchange are expected to follow COVID-19 guidelines, including wearing masks and social distancing. Social distancing decals are located on floors where lines form and there are clear shields at points

of sale and at cash registers. Additionally, sanitation stations are available at the entrance of the Exchange and throughout the building.

The new Exchange shopping center will provide jobs for approximately 500 employees, permanent and temporary.

Devlin said he is excited that the new Exchange is finally opened to the JBSA community.

"It is long overdue for our community," he said. "It is nothing but a win-win situation for the JBSA-Fort Sam Houston community and for the Exchange overall."

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

Women's History Month: A Soldier's challenge, triumph

By Pfc. Joshua Taeckens
U.S. ARMY SOUTH PUBLIC AFFAIRS

U.S. Army Capt. Heather A. Meier, a physician assistant at the U.S. Army South Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, slings her stethoscope around her neck and cracks a joke as a patient enters the office. They share a familiar chuckle and a smile as Meier begins with a medical check-up.

Meier is one of the brave, valiant women who have played vital roles in our Army since the Revolutionary War. During the month of March, Women's History Month, the U.S. Army celebrates the important contributions of women to our nation, both historically and today.

"I was always interested in medicine," Meier said.

It was in high school when a teacher encouraged her to take a first responder medical class that Meier fell in love with medicine.

"It prepared me to sit for the emergency medical technician exam once I turned 18," Meier said.

Meier worked as an EMT while she studied at Winona State University. After she graduated in 2011, she direct commissioned into the Army as a registered nurse.

While stationed at Fort Hood, Texas, she experienced an event that changed her life.

On April 2, 2014, an active shooter on Fort Hood killed three people and injured 14 others before committing suicide. Meier was working late in the operating room at the hospital on base and cared for a patient who was shot in the neck.

"I felt helpless and wanted to do more," Meier said.

This prompted Meier's resignation from active duty service to transition into the U.S. Army Reserve while she



PFC. JOSHUA TAECKENS

U.S. Army Capt. Heather A. Meier (right), physician assistant at U.S. Army South Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, uses her stethoscope on Sgt. Jessenia J. Flores at U.S. Army South Headquarters on Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston March 8.

pursued her Masters of Science in Physician Assistant Studies. However, before she could graduate, in July 2018, she was deployed to the Middle East where she spent time in Qatar, Kuwait and Jordan.

Keeping up with her studies while deployed was challenging, but she ultimately completed her graduation requirements and clinical rotations while working at the U.S. Army hospital at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

"I was incredibly lucky to attend a college that was military friendly and to have amazingly supportive leadership at my unit," Meier said. "After I came back, I passed my board exam and direct commissioned as a physician assistant."

Meier's exemplary display of resiliency is much like that of

the women who came before her in the Army. Women who previously served have paved the way for what is possible today for women in military service.

Today, women serve in every career field in the Army and are critical members of the Army team. As gender roles in the military expand, Meier says it's important to see Soldiers as equals no matter their gender.

The Army has trained more than 1,400 female Soldiers into Infantry, Armor, and field artillery occupations and 38 women have graduated Ranger School.

Even though women's roles have expanded, Meier believes progress still needs to be made. She finds negative comments about female service members

on some social media threads discouraging.

"It's just that maybe some men haven't actually worked with women who can do the job, or they have their idea of a woman's role, and this isn't it," said Meier. "There's nothing wrong with that, but not every woman is going to be your traditional woman at home."

Although Meier doesn't have a problem with traditional ideals, she does have a problem with people insulting the brave women who serve this country.

"I know there's always going to be issues with change and that's just how it goes," she said with a shrug. "But you don't need to be rude to people who don't fit your idea of a traditional person."

Soldiers, regardless of gender,

"I think having more women out there, proving that they can do it, will ultimately change the mindset of some people that women can't do these jobs, because we can, and we are doing it."

U.S. Army Capt. Heather A. Meier, U.S. Army South Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion physician assistant

complete the same training and must pass the same requirements to be awarded a Military Occupational Specialty in any career field.

Meier says although it may be difficult to change a person's fundamental beliefs, the Equal Opportunity program of the Army, coupled with a generational shift in ideas around traditional gender roles, makes her feel optimistic about the future.

"I think as the younger generations have been brought up differently, you'll see a generational change," Meier said. "I think having more women out there, proving that they can do it, will ultimately change the mindset of some people that women can't do these jobs, because we can, and we are doing it."

Women's History Month stands as a reminder of the strength the Army has gained, and will gain, through having a high-quality, diverse all-volunteer force.

National Nutrition Month: Nutrition therapists train at METC

By Lisa Braun

MEDICAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING
CAMPUS PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Good nutrition is the mainstay of health. It is well known that eating the right foods can oftentimes make a big impact on our physical – and mental – well-being.

A healthy diet could help fight off illness and control diseases, improve our mood and mental health and prevent obesity. In fact, the benefits of healthful eating are so well established that medical practitioners employ nutrition therapy to treat certain diseases and chronic conditions.

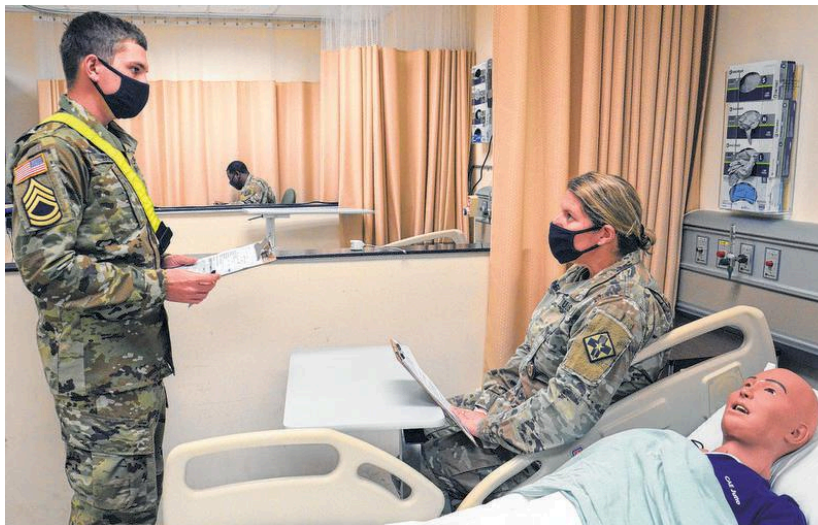
National Nutrition Month, observed during the month of March, focuses attention on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating habits along with physical activity. Being that health and fitness are synonymous with force readiness, it's no surprise that nutrition plays an important role in the military.

The Nutrition and Diet Therapy program at the Medical Education and Training Campus, or METC, located at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, trains students to become Army nutrition care specialists or Air Force diet therapy apprentices.

The eight-week-long course prepares students to function as entry-level dietetic technicians in medical treatment facilities and deployed settings.

Students are taught to perform patient nutrition screenings and assessments, basic medical nutrition therapy, menu and food modification for therapeutic use, how to operate and clean food service equipment, and participate in the procurement, storing and administration of dietetic foods and supplies.

Students also learn how to prepare an individually-tailored meal based on a nutrition plan designed by a dietician and serve



PHOTOS BY LISA BRAUN

Army Pvt. Tobin Roche (left) conducts a simulated nutrition screening during a practical exercise in the Nutrition and Diet Therapy program at the Medical Education and Training Campus at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston.

it to a patient.

According to Maj. Stephanie Gasper, METC Nutrition and Diet Therapy program director, the diversity of the career field covers a wide range of areas that promote and maintain nutrition, health, and readiness within the force.

"Military nutrition technicians can work in foodservice operations and medical field feeding, sports nutrition to optimize performance and support the warfighter, nutrition for general health and wellness or disease prevention, or perform patient care through medical nutrition therapy for diseases or other conditions in both a hospital and inpatient or ambulatory settings," Gasper explained.

"I think there are so many opportunities for Soldiers and Airmen in the nutrition career field today compared to several years ago, so I'm excited for what



Master Sgt. Jorge Nikolas, an Air Force student in the Nutrition and Diet Therapy program at the Medical Education and Training Campus at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, prepares a tray of steaks in the kitchen training laboratory.

"I think there are so many opportunities for Soldiers and Airmen in the nutrition career field today compared to several years ago, so I'm excited for what lies ahead of them once they leave here."

Maj. Stephanie Gasper, METC Nutrition and Diet Therapy program director

lies ahead of them once they leave here. The majority of our students are excited and ready to take what they learn here to improve the health of our force," Gasper added.

Master Sgt. Jorge Nikolas, an Air Force student in the program, said that nutrition and diet therapy is his dream career field.

"The military allowed me to get this training so that I can make a positive impact on the long-term health of my fellow Airmen and Soldiers," Nikolas said. "With a large aging population, the country needs more skilled diet therapists to help our currently serving and retired military customers."

The importance of good nutrition cannot be over-emphasized.

Everyone has to eat, and what we eat and how much we eat can have a real impact on our physical and mental wellbeing," Gasper added.

BAMC Soldier Recovery Unit: Perseverance is new normal

By Robert Whetstone

BROOKE ARMY MEDICAL CENTER
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The COVID-19 pandemic introduced changes and challenges that continue to affect the way of life for everyone. Through perseverance, the Army is using innovative ways to deal with the “new normal.”

One group, in particular, that is making the adjustment are wounded, ill, and injured service members in Soldier Recovery Units across the Army. The month of March typically finds some of them preparing to gather at Fort Bliss, Texas, to participate in the Army Trials. However, this year the Army Recovery Care Program, keeping safety paramount for participants and staff, executed the Trials virtually.

For Soldiers like Staff Sgt. Gene Calantoc, the pandemic added an extra challenge to an already daunting one. Calantoc, assigned to the Brooke Army Medical Center SRU, is approaching the one-year anniversary of an accident that changed his life.

One of his hobbies is riding a motorcycle. “My accident happened on March 29, 2020 at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri,” Calantoc said. “I set up a group ride that day with my motorcycle organization called the ‘Ruff Ryders.’ Six of us went for a ride that day. I was the road captain and leading our group when we approached a route that had a very steep hill where I got hit by a truck.”

This led to an above-the-knee amputation of his left leg.

Born in the Philippines, his family moved to Hawaii and then to San Diego when he was 13 years old. Joining the Army was a life-long dream of his because of the influence of his uncle who served in the Philippine military.

“I’ve been in the Army for nine years as a 12N



ROBERT WHETSTONE

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Gene Calantoc and Master Sgt. Mary Jackson, Soldier Recovery Unit, Brooke Army Medical Center, shoot for record during the Virtual Army Trials air rifle event at Cole High School at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston March 4.

(Horizontal Heavy Equipment Operator),” Calantoc said. “I chose to be an engineer because that MOS (Military Occupational Specialty) interested me.”

Calantoc said he likes staying busy, and he has proved that by participating in every event the Trials have to offer.

“I heard about the Warrior Games at the CFI (Center for the Intrepid),” he explained. The CFI is where Calantoc was fitted for his prosthetic and is currently undergoing rehab. “I have always been an

active person and I love to compete. My motivation to participate (in the Army Trials) was knowing that this is a good opportunity to get my foot in the competition.”

Competing in the Army Trials is tough enough, but when you have to do it virtually, it adds a new dimension of change. Athletes do not physically meet with the other competitors and develop a “team camaraderie,” which is an extremely motivating factor they use to push themselves to their limits.

For Calantoc, a first-time Trials competitor, his focus has been on something different; something Soldiers, particularly noncommissioned officers are used to.

“The challenging aspect of competing virtually is not receiving enough training before the trials,” he explained.

The ARCP looks at their overall mission to help those assigned in SRUs to recover and overcome barriers, and aids them either back to their unit, or to transition into civilian life.

“Adaptive reconditioning and sports have helped me with overall rehab by keeping myself busy physically and mentally to prevent myself from feeling any pain.”

Staff Sgt. Gene Calantoc,
U.S. Army Soldier

“Adaptive reconditioning and sports have helped me with overall rehab by keeping myself busy physically and mentally to prevent myself from feeling any pain,” Calantoc added. “Participating in the Virtual Trials helps me overcome some of my pains during the day. My goal is to make it to the Army team.”

There are countless examples of wounded, ill, and injured Soldiers and veterans who have participated in the Army Trials who found themselves in a more positive place. Adaptive reconditioning and sports, to include these types of events, can be life-changing. This can be priceless in times of an ongoing pandemic.

“What I would say to the person who might be considering adaptive reconditioning or participating in the Army Trials is to have fun and enjoy the opportunity to participate in the trials,” he said.

Commander, Navy Recruiting Command visits NTAG San Antonio Sailors

By Burrell Parmer

NAVY TALENT ACQUISITION GROUP
SAN ANTONIO PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Rear Adm. Dennis Velez, commander, Navy Recruiting Command, visited Sailors and support personnel assigned to Navy Talent Acquisition Group San Antonio March 9-11 to oversee mission accomplishment and to check on the welfare of Sailors under his command.

Velez, joined by Navy Recruiting Command Master Chief Rick Moreyra and Master Chief Navy Counselor Heather Charara, National Chief Recruiter, traveled to "Military City USA" and visited with personnel at NTAG San Antonio headquarters, Navy Recruiting Stations Southeast San Antonio, Northeast San Antonio, De Zavala, Hollywood Park, and Navy Officer Recruiting Station San Antonio.

"It's always amazing to come out and visit the Sailors out in the field," Velez said. "Our best ideas come from the recruiters for they are the ones doing the work."

According to Velez, NTAG San Antonio is the 18th NTAG visited by the NRC leadership team and he wanted to thank the Sailors for their hard work and maintain relationships with the communities where recruiting stations are located.

"I am really proud of what NTAG San Antonio has accomplished," Velez said. "The Sailors are out there working hard and under very difficult conditions. When the going gets tough, the tough get going, and the Sailors here are the best in Region West."

Petty Officer 1st Class Molly DaCosta, a division-leading petty officer assigned to Talent Acquisition Onboarding Center Alamo City, was



PHOTOS BY BURRELL PARMER

Petty Officer 2nd Class Brandon Rodriguez, a talent scout assigned to Navy Talent Onboarding Center Alamo City, was presented with a thank you letter from the Secretary of Defense by Rear Adm. Dennis Velez, commander, Navy Recruiting Command at Navy Recruiting Station Southeast San Antonio March 9.

"It's always amazing to come out and visit the Sailors out in the field. Our best ideas come from the recruiters for they are the ones doing the work."

Rear Adm. Dennis Velez, commander, Navy Recruiting Command

appreciative of the admiral's visit.

"The visit from NRC went well," said DaCosta, NTAG San Antonio's Fiscal Year 2020 Senior Sailor of the Year. "It was great that they took time out to honor two of my Sailors."

While visiting NRS Southeast San Antonio, March 9, Velez presented Petty Officer 2nd Class Brandon Rodriguez and Petty Officer 2nd Class Robert Davis with letters of thanks from the Secretary of Defense for providing vital medical care to a gunshot victim near one of their assigned high schools Nov. 5, 2020.

"It was great to meet with them and be able to ask questions and get their feedback," DaCosta continued.

Part of NRC leadership's journey was to the Rio Grande Valley to visit recruiting stations in Harlingen and McAllen.

"For recruiters to have a chance to meet the admiral and the national chief recruiter is a rare opportunity," said Chief Cortney Lewis, a division-leading chief petty officer assigned to TAOC Alamo City. "Each recruiter thoroughly enjoyed the feedback and open dialog of



Rear Adm. Dennis Velez (left), commander, Navy Recruiting Command, is joined by Command Master Chief Rick Moreyra and National Chief Recruiter Master Chief Navy Counselor Heather Charara, during a video conference to more than 220 Sailors and support personnel assigned to Navy Talent Acquisition Group San Antonio during an All Hands Call at NTAG headquarters.

the conversation. There were a lot of things that my team learned in regards to future plans and policies that NRC is trying to implement."

While in South Texas, Velez also met with Maj. Gen. Edward Thomas Jr., Air Force Recruiting Service commander, at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph Air Force Base, members of NTAG San Antonio's Recruiting Assistance Council, and executives from the University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley in McAllen.

Since summer 2016, Navy Recruiting Command has been in the process of

transforming how it operates to remain sustainable and successful with a focus on improving the customer experience to the fleet, Sailors, and applicants, resulting in better customer experience and recruiter effectiveness and satisfaction.

NRC consists of a command headquarters, three Navy Recruiting Regions, 26 NTAGs and 64 TAOCs that serve more than 1,000 recruiting stations around the world. Their mission is to attract the highest quality candidates to assure the ongoing success of America's Navy.



PHOTOS BY JOSE A. TORRES JR.

Members of the Fort Sam Houston Memorial Services Detachment, along with Robert C. (Bob) Winkler and Graham L. Wright III, assistant directors of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery, pose for a photo at the Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in San Antonio March 15.

Fort Sam Houston Memorial Services Detachment reaches major milestone

By David DeKunder

502ND AIR BASE WING
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

During a span of nearly 30 years, the Fort Sam Houston Memorial Services Detachment has provided full military honors at funeral services for thousands of deceased veterans and their families.

The detachment reached a significant milestone March 15 at the Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery when it set the mark of providing honors at 40,000 funerals.

Joe Lopez, a World War II veteran who passed away Jan. 17 at the age of 98, was the veteran honored that day, in a ceremony attended by his family.

The Fort Sam Houston Memorial Services Detachment is made up of volunteers — veterans and military retirees — who provide full military burial honors for other veterans and military retirees when military resources are not available.

"If it wasn't for the Memorial Services Detachment, those veterans would be interred without military honors," said Manny



Members of the Fort Sam Houston Memorial Services Detachment proceed to a funeral service at the Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in San Antonio March 15.

Mendoza, Fort Sam Houston Memorial Services Detachment commander. "It's something that we, as veterans, feel needs to be done. If we have the time to give, then we do it."

The detachment has 107 volunteers and is a nonprofit organization. Honors for services are conducted only at the Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery.

The voluntary honor guard is needed because, under a 1979 Department of Defense directive, the first priority for providing full military honors is for active duty and Medal of Honor recipients, Mendoza said.

Full military honors are only rendered for veterans and military retirees when military resources are available. Otherwise, the military

provides two flag holders at funeral services.

The Fort Sam Houston Memorial Services Detachment, formed in 1991 by members of the Veterans of Greater San Antonio Area, renders full military honors, including rifle volleys, folding and presenting of the flag to the family, and the playing of "Taps" with a live bugler.

Today, the Memorial Services Detachment consists of five squads who render military honors at funerals five days a week.

Mendoza said the detachment averages eight to nine funerals a day and provides honors regardless of weather conditions. The detachment even rendered honors at funerals during the snowstorm in February.

He said the volunteers in the Fort Sam Houston Memorial Services Detachment are men and women who served their country for 20-plus years and were deployed or fought in conflicts, to include the Korean War, Vietnam War, Gulf War, and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The average age of detachment members is 72, with the oldest member being 92 and the youngest being 41.

Mendoza said the volunteers want to continue their service to their country.

"It means everything to us, and that's why we do it," he said. "The families sacrifice just like we did when we were in the military. The families support us in what we do, and it's just an honor, a dedication to duty for us. It's an honor and a privilege to give the family the final tribute that every veteran should get."

After the service marking 40,000 funerals that the detachment has rendered full military honors for, the Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery staff members presented a plaque to Mendoza commemorating the event.

Aubrey David, Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery director, said the members of the detachment are patriots who provide selfless service to veterans and military retirees.

"I think to hit 40,000 services for honors rendered in less than 30 years just shows the dedication they have to continue serving veterans for our community," David said. "For them to continue to do that, day in and day out, it's inspiring and it's very humbling."

LACKLAND

First 433rd AES crew trains on KC-46A Pegasus

By Tech. Sgt. Iram Carmona

433RD AIRLIFT WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Reserve Citizen Airmen in the 433rd Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland trained for the first time aboard a KC-46A Pegasus March 8-10, learning and practicing their aeromedical skills on the new aircraft.

The training mission was a collaboration with the 931st Air Refueling Wing, aeromedical evacuation personnel and KC-46A technical specialists from other locations, and the Alamo Wing, where more than 20 medical personnel conducted training in a variety of emergency scenarios on the ground and in flight.

According to Lt. Col. Terrence McGee, 4th Air Force KC-46A pilot, this training will help provide a more ready and deployable force from the reserve component.

"For 1st Air Force Reserve Command, as far as the number of people, one of the largest mission sets is aeromedical evacuations," McGee said. "So the mission today is to support aeromedical evacuation personnel getting an initial qualification on the KC-46A. The quicker we can get them indoctrinated and familiar with the equipment, the sooner we can employ it."

As a multifunctional aircraft, the KC-46A can refuel military aircraft in flight and airlift various loads, including passengers, medical patients and cargo.

Tech. Sgt. Tristan Thorland, a 433rd AES technician, said that some of the things they trained on were the different capabilities the KC-46A offered.

"In comparing this aircraft



TECH. SGT. IRAM CARMONA

Reserve Citizen Airmen with the 433rd Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron prepare to carry a simulated patient on a litter into a KC-46A Pegasus during initial qualification training at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland March 9.



Medics from the 433rd Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron receive simulated patients onboard a KC-46A Pegasus during initial qualification training March 9 at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland.

to other aircraft, it's very comfortable, we don't have sudden temperature changes and it has all the amenities we need," Thorland said. "It's not as big as a C-17 [Globemaster III], but it's a good aircraft and we'll probably be using it a lot."

The training included a day familiarization with the aircraft and two days of in-flight training for medical personnel. They practiced the loading and offloading of aeromedical equipment, gear and supplies, while also simulating caring for incapacitated patients.

Once the aircraft was in flight, medical technicians practiced responding to patient medical emergencies, such as in-flight sicknesses, seizures and falls. They also simulated scenarios involving cabin decompression and an emergency landing.

Lt. Col. Ronald A. Deregla, 433rd AES chief nurse, said that adding the KC-46A to the aeromedical evacuation aircraft inventory will provide more capabilities to transport medical patients.

"It's a great experience for all of us to learn this, because now we have a greater platform to air medivac," Deregla said. "We normally use the C-130s [Hercules], KC-135s [Stratotanker], C-5s [Super Galaxy] or C-17s, and now we have an addition to give us an opportunity to move more patients."

The 433rd AES mission is to fill the need when events like natural disasters, war or routine medical transportation by air is required.

The KC-46A is a multi-service aircraft that provides next-generation aerial refueling support and is multi-mission capable.

DLIELC state-of-the-art labs give international students authentic experience

By Defense Language Institute English Language Center Public Affairs

Three Chadian Air Force personnel are the first Defense Language Institute English Language Center students to take advantage of the newest curriculum at DLIELC.

This curriculum, pairing the latest virtual reality and artificial intelligence technology, aims to familiarize international students with English communications during aviation scenarios. While the technology immerses the students into various situations, users are able to practice collaborating with one another solely in English.

The three students experienced a sequence of standard pre-flight briefings in February at the Watkins Aviation Language Preparation Room and Sirois Aviation Simulation Laboratory with English Skills for Communications instructors Stan Philbrook and Quentin Murphy. During the flight commander's in-brief, Kathleen Smith, a fellow instructor, led the students through a review of the day's flight plan followed by a flight planning familiarization briefing.

"It was a pleasure working with the three aviation students from Chad," Philbrook noted. "Even though they had no flight hours, they worked very hard and were prepared for the Aviation Sim Lab experience. They seemed to enjoy working with the flight controls and making the necessary radio calls. They felt better prepared for FOT [Folt on Training] at Tulsa International Airport in



PHOTOS BY SPENCER BERRY

Instructor Kathleen Smith (center) demonstrates to a student how to use the flight simulator at the Defense Language Institute English Language Center, Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland.

Oklahoma and at Little Rock Air Force Base, Arkansas, where they will fly the C-130J Hercules. This course will be a great training enhancement for experienced and non-experienced students in the future."

The students also completed a crew mission and safety briefing and began their first flight using DLI's new state-of-the-art software and equipment interface. This herculean effort to have the new sim lab up and running during COVID was mainly due to DLIELC's aviation subject matter expert Terry Harsh and software/curriculum

specialist Charles Rich.

Both the Watkins Room and Sirois Laboratory were dedicated in November 2020. It was the first step in a long-term plan by DLIELC to renovate the facility into a world-class aviation language training center.

The Watkins Room serves as the "hangar" bay, with an area for student-led learning, formal language instruction, an instructor pilot briefing table, and other task-based training.

The Sirois Laboratory is considered the "flight line" by creating a fully immersive language training experience. Students are able to learn and experience situations that closely will match the operational and training world.

"We are glad to provide such valuable training to the security cooperation enterprise," stated Col. Kouji Gillis, DLIELC commandant. "We hope that what is learned here will be used throughout the students' careers as they move on to make great changes in their respective countries and around the world."

For more information on the Watkins Room and Sirois Laboratory dedication, please see the previously published article at <https://www.37trw.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/2408764/dlielc-un-veils-new-aviation-language-training-center/>.

For more information on two of the Chadian students that participated in the aforementioned curriculum, please see the published article at <https://www.37trw.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/2457605/lieutenants-at-dlielc-first-women-in-chadian-air-force-to-become-pilots/>.



Students partake in a flight planning meeting prior to entering the flight simulator at the Defense Language Institute English Language Center, Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland.

Air Force Installation Contracting Center delivers innovative virtual reality suicide prevention training to save lives

By Debbie Aragon

AIR FORCE INSTALLATION AND
MISSION SUPPORT CENTER
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

With a rise in suicides across the service, the Air Force Installation Contracting Center is helping leaders fast-track a pilot program at Air Mobility Command to help save lives.

The virtual reality suicide training being tested at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, and Travis Air Force Base, California, offers a new, more effective way to train Airmen on suicide prevention, said Kaitlyn Woodruff, the AFICC contracting officer assigned to the training.

"Moth+Flame and Air Mobility Command pitched its innovative solution to the Air Force under an open topic and was awarded a contract through the Small Business Innovation Research Program to invest in the idea," Woodruff said.

The SBIR program enables small businesses to explore their technological potential and provides an incentive to profit from commercialization.

Under the contract, the company provided the Air Force with four training scenarios and 50 headsets for the tests at Scott and Travis Air Force Bases and provides real-time positive and negative feedback from users about the VR content to AMC program managers.

For the suicide prevention training, Woodruff and contract specialist Jena Bowman, both with AFICC's 763rd Enterprise Sourcing Squadron, expedited the SBIR process — from contract build to award — in less than 60 days.

"Our unit built and awarded the contract that allowed this amazing technology to be developed and distributed for Air Force use as soon as possible," Woodruff said. "We received the requirement in August of 2020 and had it

awarded by the end of September. Normally acquisitions of this magnitude take at least a year."

"There is no greater prevention need right now than getting at suicide prevention in the Air Force," said Victor Jones, AMC suicide prevention program manager and VR suicide prevention contract owner.

Currently, AMC is testing only one training scenario, Airman-to-Airman, but three more will be included at the two installations soon. The training scenarios come with different risk factors, giving Airmen, leaders and spouses the knowledge and tools they need to help someone, Woodruff said.

"The goal of this training experience is to provide Airmen, at all levels, the tools that will enable them to recognize a distressed Airman, have a difficult conversation and guide that Airman to safety," Jones said. "From my past experiences facilitating suicide prevention training, I have always wondered if the trainees would be able to apply the soft skills that were being taught in the classroom into a real-world situation."

The reality, he said, is traditional classroom training often falls short in preparing Airmen to engage in what is likely the most difficult conversation they could ever have with a fellow distressed Wingman.

"The need for this work was so obvious," Jones said. "We wanted to provide a training experience unlike anything ever encountered ... a realistic conversational interaction in a simulated environment that would have unparalleled realism in having these difficult, uncomfortable but necessary conversations."

A unique part of the training is having to say things out loud that you may have never said



NICHOLAS PILCH

Lt. Col. Glenn Cameron, 60th Civil Engineer Squadron commander, participates in a virtual reality suicide prevention training pilot program, at Travis Air Force Base, California, Feb. 18.

before, said Master Sgt. Shawn Dougherty, Travis Air Force Base's VR training facilitator and one of the pilot participants. Those things include questions such as "Do you have a gun in the house?" and "Are you thinking about harming yourself?"

"The (Airman-to-Airman module) gives you an opportunity to be face-to-face with another Airman, in an Airman's perspective with someone in distress," Dougherty said. "You're trying to talk him down, resolve the situation, figure out what is going on with him and find out the best scenario to get him to safety."

Being immersed in the VR experience with dialogue-based training makes the conversation feel real, he added.

"Actually going through the process of talking to someone with thoughts of suicide is much different than sitting through a PowerPoint presentation," Woodruff said. "It impacts you emotionally and takes the fear out of talking to someone thinking about suicide."

Helping the Air Force find a way to tackle rising suicide numbers in its ranks and

mental health issues is personally important to both Bowman and Woodruff.

"As someone who has personally battled mental health issues and who knows of countless others who have as well, the importance of this contract for VR suicide prevention training cannot be overstated," Bowman said.

"I believe it is important that the Air Force is acknowledging the suicide prevention training historically provided is not as effective as it once was, which is further proven by the unfortunate increase in suicide rates the last couple of years," Bowman said. "This contract shows the Air Force is committed to its Airmen and combatting the suicide epidemic."

"This issue is important to me personally," Woodruff added, "so I truly believe this new training will have a very positive, widespread impact on the Air Force as a whole."

During the Scott Air Force Base VR training leadership rollout, Woodruff and Bowman went through the VR training experience.

"It was a great moment having the contract team, which were so instrumental in

awarding this project's contract, actually partaking in the VR experience," Jones said.

"Kaitlyn and Jena were so helpful during this process and I have learned so much about contracting in general from them," he said. "Overall, my experience has provided me with a greater appreciation for all the strong work our contracting teams provide on a daily basis."

While many people may not realize contracting professionals' level of importance and the intricate nature of their role as force enablers, they are vital in making sure missions are executed, Bowman said.

The job of contracting experts is to find a way to "yes," within laws and regulations to support mission execution for their mission partners, while trying to secure the fairest and reasonable price for the government, she added.

"It is an incredibly humbling feeling to know that I had such an important role in potentially helping avoid and reduce the number of Airmen suicides," Bowman said. "This is by far one of the most important professional and personal efforts I have ever had the pleasure of working on and I sincerely believe this contract will better prepare Airmen in handling the important issue of suicide prevention ... I am eager to see how this contract evolves over time and for the positive impacts to come to fruition."

If determined beneficial for Airmen and Guardians, the VR training has the potential to be used Air Force and Space Force-wide, Woodruff said.

For more on the pilot test at Travis Air Force Base, go to <https://www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/2510658/dod-tests-vr-suicide-prevention-training-at-scott-travis-afbs/>. For more information about the SBIR process, visit <https://www.afsbirsttr.af.mil/>.

RANDOLPH

Women in Flight: From cook to pilot, a 12th TRS flight commander's story

By Benjamin Faske

12TH FLYING TRAINING WING
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

In 1987, Congress passed Public Law 100-9, which designated the month of March as "Women's History Month."

Since then, each president has issued a proclamation to celebrate the contributions women have made in the United States. The 12th Flying Training Wing is highlighting one female pilot each week by having them answer a series of questions about their Air Force careers.

This week highlights Capt. Ilma Vallee, 12th Training Squadron flight commander, a 2013 U.S. Air Force Academy graduate who immigrated from Lithuania with her mother when she was 11 years old. She is a former enlisted cook and KC-135 pilot who also serves as an instructor at the 558th Flying Training Squadron.

Where are you from originally?

I was born and raised in Eastern Europe in a small country called Lithuania. I immigrated to the United States when I was 11 with my mother. She wanted a better life and opportunity for both of us.

Any interesting stories to share growing up?

My grandparents didn't have running water or a bathroom. When I stayed with them in the summer, we used an outhouse and newspaper for toilet paper. We also had to heat water over the fireplace to use for bathing.

What piqued your interest in the Air Force and how did you become a cook?

My step-dad had been enlisted in the Air Force when he was younger and told me about the opportunities and the



Capt. Ilma Vallee, 12th Training Squadron flight commander, delivers a brief to a class of second lieutenants Oct. 21, 2020, at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph.

BENJAMIN FASKE

G.I. Bill. I enlisted to get on my feet and get out of the house after high school. I had strict parents, no phone, no car and no money for college. I worked as a bagger at a grocery store, so I knew I wanted a better life. The plan was to enlist for four years and use my G.I. Bill. After basic training at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, I started my services Air Force Specialty Code at Travis Air Force Base, California, and worked midnight chow as a cook.

How did you get to the Air Force Academy?

My commander suggested I put in paperwork to attend the Air Force Academy through the Leaders Encouraging Airman Development, or LEAD, program. I attended the Air Force Academy Preparatory School for a year and then went to the Academy. I completed three boot camps in three

summers in a row. I was encouraged to apply for a rated pilot slot, not thinking I would get one because of my class ranking. I graduated and got my slot and headed off to Del Rio, Texas, for undergraduate pilot training. I went on to fly KC-135's at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida.

What were some challenges you had to overcome to be an Air Force pilot?

The biggest challenge for me was confidence. As a female and having English as my second language, I doubted myself and did not think that I belonged in the community. I felt very out of place because I looked, spoke and carried myself differently. Also, in my culture, we were raised to be small and showing confidence was looked down upon. As a pilot, I had to learn to find my

own confidence. My unique background has allowed me to be a better officer and view problems with a different perspective.

Any cool hobbies we should know about?

At the Academy, I ran on the marathon team and got into hiking, climbing and snowboarding. I recently finished my master's degree in video editing, so I love to film and edit my adventures. I also run, swim and bike for triathlon preparation. I've run 12 marathons, including the Air Force half-marathon and represented Air Education and Training Command for the major command challenge in 2018 and 2019.

What are your future plans?

This summer I am planning to hike Mount Denali; it's the highest peak in North America

at 20,310 feet. For my next assignment, I hope to fly the newest tanker, the KC-46.

You want to hike Mount Denali?

I was big into hiking 14'ers (14,000-foot mountains) in Colorado, but I wanted to do something more challenging. Mountaineering is a physical, mental and spiritual journey. It has tested me and challenged me in many ways and has allowed me to use the leadership skills I learned in the Air Force. To date, I have topped Mont Blanc, France (15,000 feet); Pico de Orizaba, Mexico (18,000 feet); and Chimborazo, Ecuador (20,000 feet).

Where do you think your "can-do" attitude comes from?

I grew up dreaming about a better life, traveling, and having better opportunities. All of us in Lithuania dreamed about being the people we see on American television shows, magazines and commercials. I watched my mom learn English, move us to America, and go to the University of Southern California and earn her degree with honors. Her hard work ethic has helped me grind through USAFA and UPT and take every opportunity given to me. Sitting on a couch and dreaming about a better life is not an option for me. Everything I dreamed about, is right here in front of me ... from being an athlete, to a pilot, to making films, to coaching, teaching, giving speeches, to climbing mountains. I hear David Goggins' telling me to do better every day. To keep growing. To be the best version of yourself. To be excellent. AIM HIGH Airmen!

Informal dispute resolution process explained for privatized housing

By 502nd Air Base Wing
Public Affairs

The Air Force recognizes the importance of establishing a standardized formal dispute resolution process to ensure the prompt and fair resolution of disputes between the owners of privatized housing, referred to as “Landlords” and their military tenants, referred to as “Tenants.”

Independent of a formal dispute resolution process, Tenants and Landlords should always attempt to expeditiously resolve any dispute informally by mutual agreement at the lowest level.

With that important goal in mind, Tenants need to have a clear understanding of the resources at their disposal to assist them in the informal dispute resolution process, including direct engagement with the local military housing office, or MHO, Resident Advocates, and the legal assistance office. If a Tenant has an issue with the Landlord's performance of responsibilities under their lease, it is important for the Tenant to immediately notify the Landlord of the issue.

Informal Dispute Resolution Process

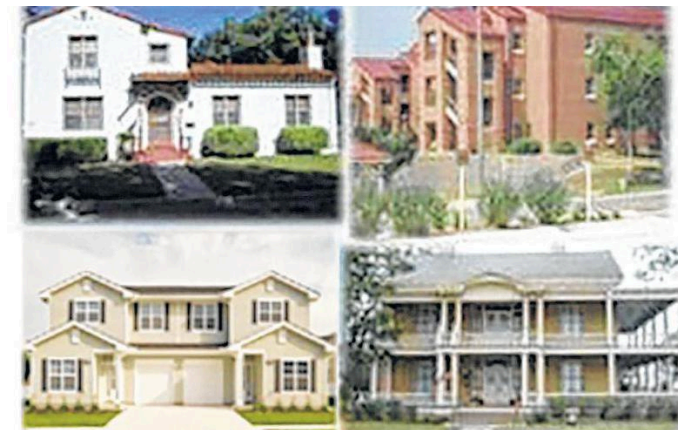
If a Tenant discovers a problem with their home, the Tenant shall first communicate the issue directly to the Landlord.

For example, if a Tenant discovers that an appliance is not functioning correctly, the Tenant should submit a work order request to the Landlord, in the manner that is required by the tenant lease agreement. If the initial communication or request does not result in action to resolve the issue, the steps outlined below should be followed:

Follow-up with the Landlord's property management staff

- ▶ If the Landlord has not resolved the issue after the initial communication or request, the Tenant shall follow-up with the local property management staff:
- ▶ Depending on the circumstances, the Tenant may also communicate the issue to the MHO for their awareness (and direct engagement, if necessary).

Direct engagement with MHO staff to



COURTESY GRAPHIC

assist with resolution

- ▶ If the issue isn't resolved by the Landlord, the Tenant may seek assistance from their MHO, including sharing details on previous efforts to resolve the matter directly with the Landlord:
- ▶ The MHO staff can then engage directly with the Landlord's local property management staff to resolve the issue. If further engagement with the local staff is not successful:
- ▶ MHO can elevate the issue within the Landlord's management structure, as necessary, and:
- ▶ MHO can elevate the issue within the chain of command, up to the first O-5 or civilian equivalent in the chain, depending on the nature of the issue (e.g., life/health/safety).

Members should also use their chain of command or the installation chain of command to try to resolve housing issues if they feel their issues are not

being resolved — the chain of command is a good resource for members when they need assistance and other informal sources are not working

If the Tenant does not believe the issue can be resolved at the local level, the Tenant may contact the Air Force Housing Call Center (1-800-482-6431) to assist with the resolution of their issue.

Resident Advocate

Every Air Force Base with privatized housing has a Resident Advocate. The Resident Advocate assists military members and their families residing in privatized housing in developing solutions to unresolved problems, concerns and needs.

They will provide consultation on landlord/tenant disputes and take a proactive approach to ensure the concerns of military members and their families regarding privatized housing are

addressed and elevated to the appropriate levels within the chain of command. The Tenant may seek the assistance of the Resident Advocate at any point during the informal dispute resolution process that is described in Attachment 1.

Medical

If a Tenant believes they have a health issue related to conditions in housing, they can contact the MHO who will refer the tenant to a Primary Care Manager, or PCM, for evaluation. A Tenant who is not satisfied with the support provided by the PCM, may contact the U.S. Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine Environmental, Safety, and Occupational Health (ESOH) Service Center at 1-888-232-ESOH (3764).

If the PCM confirms the Tenant has a mold-related illness and the Tenant believes there is an unremediated condition in the home that is aggravating the condition, the PCM can engage the Installation Occupational and Environmental Medicine Consultant, or IOEMC, to initiate an evaluation of the home and determine appropriate follow-up actions together with the Bioenvironmental Engineering Flight and the MHO.

Legal

The Legal Assistance Office is also available to provide legal advice on landlord/tenant rights and assist in resolving disputes with the Landlord short of actual litigation. The scope of legal services that can be provided by the Legal Assistance Office is further detailed in AFI 51-304 (Legal Assistance, Notary, Preventive Law, and Tax Programs). In addition, the Tenant always has the option to independently hire private legal counsel to provide legal advice on their dispute with the Landlord.

Air Force marks ongoing commitment to rated diversity with newly released strategy

By Capt. Kenya Pettway
AIR EDUCATION AND TRAINING
COMMAND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Air Force leaders officially released the service's Rated Diversity Improvement Strategy March 17, marking the force's ongoing commitment to attract, recruit, develop and retain a diverse rated corps.

Acting Secretary of the Air Force John P. Roth, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr. and Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Joanne S. Bass signed the newly released RDI Strategy, co-sponsored by Air Education and Training Command's Rated Diversity Improvement team headquartered at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas.

The RDI Strategy is the Air Force's flight plan to strengthen diversity within rated career fields through three overarching goals:

- » Attract and recruit the best talent from diverse backgrounds to cultivate a high-performing and innovative Air Force reflective of the best of our nation.
- » Develop and retain the Air Force's best-rated aircrew by harnessing diversity as a force-multiplier and fostering a culture of inclusion.
- » Optimize diversity advancement efforts by leveraging data-driven approaches.

Rated Air Force career fields consist of pilots (manned and unmanned aircraft), air battle managers and combat systems officers.

"Our aviation community remains one of the very least diverse in our Air Force," Brown said. "In order to change this, we need to do a better job of providing young people from diverse backgrounds exposure to aviation career fields much earlier. I've always believed

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Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Joanne S. Bass



RDI GOALS

- Optimize diversity advancement efforts by leveraging data driven approaches.
- Attract & recruit the best talent from diverse backgrounds to cultivate a high performing & innovative Air Force reflective of the best of our nation.
- Develop & retain the Air Force's best rated aircrew by harnessing diversity as a force multiplier & fostering a culture of inclusion.

"Our aviation community remains one of the very least diverse in our Air Force. In order to change this, we need to do a better job of providing young people from diverse backgrounds an exposure to aviation career fields much earlier. I've always believed young people only aspire to be what they can see."

Gen. Charles Q. Brown, Jr.
Air Force Chief of Staff

U.S. Air Force Rated Diversity Improvement Strategy
March 2021

COURTESY GRAPHIC

young people only aspire to be what they can see."

The RDI Strategy is a collaborative effort with the Total Force recruiting enterprise, aerial demonstration teams, affinity groups and other community organizations to increase awareness and cultivate engagement among qualified Airmen and youth, with a focus on those of underrepresented groups — the outcome being an agile and diverse workforce that approaches challenges

from varying perspectives.

"The RDI Strategy is part of the Air Force's broader initiative to improve diversity and inclusion across the entirety of the force," Bass said. "We will continue to take action in ensuring diversity, inclusion and equal opportunity for all service members, generations to come."

While RDI is part of an Air Force-wide initiative, AETC plays a key role in its success, as AETC leadership is responsible for integrating,

synchronizing and ensuring implementation of the RDI Strategy across the force.

"AETC is focused on accelerating the Department of the Air Force efforts to improve the diversity of our rated career fields," said Lt. Gen. Brad Webb, AETC commander. "We will consider success when diversity and inclusion are fully ingrained throughout the force, and every Airman and family are supported and empowered to reach their full potential."

Air Force Policy Directive

36-70 defines diversity as "a composite of individual characteristics, experiences and abilities consistent with the Air Force Core Values and the Air Force mission. Air Force diversity includes, but is not limited to: personal life experiences, geographic and socioeconomic backgrounds, cultural knowledge, educational background, work experience, language abilities, physical abilities, philosophical and spiritual perspectives, age, race, ethnicity and gender."

502nd SFG civilian receives visionary leadership award

By Airman 1st Class

Tyler McQuiston

502ND AIR BASE WING

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Jenny Ng-Del Campo, a 502nd Security Forces Group standardization evaluation assessor, was recognized as Air Education and Training Command's Brig. Gen. Wilma Vaught Visionary Leadership Award recipient Feb. 1. She was presented a coin by her leadership Feb. 11 during a wing staff meeting at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph.

Ng-Del Campo received the award after exhibiting similar qualities to those retired Brig. Gen. Wilma Vaught is known for.

"I was very humbled and honored; truthfully, because I don't see what I do as award-winning," Ng-Del Campo said. "I do what I do to make the security forces members better at JBSA."

The award was created and named in honor of Vaught's outstanding service and dedication to the Air Force and nation, both during her career and after her retirement. It is presented to officers O-6 and below, enlisted Airmen E-9 and below, and civilians GS-15 and below, from any career field or occupation. Individuals must exhibit innovation, commitment, a selfless spirit of service for others and personal efforts to improve the integration and opportunities for women in the Air Force.

Ng-Del Campo was nominated by her supervisor Master Sgt. Melissa Jackson, a 502nd SFG standardization evaluation superintendent.

"Ng-Del Campo is a remarkable female civilian who has dedicated over 20 years of outstanding service, thus far, to the Air Force, and continually strives to significantly improve the



ALEJANDRA ZIER

Jenny Ng-Del Campo

integration and opportunities for women while inspiring others," Jackson said.

The nomination for the award included an endorsement memorandum listing Ng-Del Campo's accomplishments, an Air Force Form 1206 describing Ng-Del Campo's innovation, commitment, and selfless spirit

of service, a signed public release statement and an official photograph.

Ng-Del Campo said much of her passion comes from the female influences she grew up having in her life. Her mother worked unconventional jobs and taught her that gender inequality social norms involving job opportunities were something she did not have to adhere to.

"My mother worked as a lineman for our local power company in Vermont during the 80s and early 90s and she was the only female," Ng-Del Campo said. "After I got married, I was further exposed to an amazing woman when I learned that my mother-in-law, Marcella, was the first African-American woman pilot in the armed forces."

In November 1979, then-2nd Lt. Marcella A. Hayes became the first African American woman in the U.S. military to

earn her aviator wings when she completed helicopter flight training at the U.S. Army Aviation Center, Fort Rucker, Alabama, according to the Army Women's Foundation. She was just 23 years old.

"To the world, these two women were breaking barriers and carving out a path for women, but to me they were mom," said Ng-Del Campo, who does her job with passion and heart, and feels that if she can do it, anyone can.

Jackson said Ng-Del Campo's personal and innovative efforts have inspired positive changes that significantly improved women's inclusion in the Air Force.

"Her impact and benefit of visionary leadership for women's issues in the Air Force were, and will continue to be, instrumental in furthering the role of women," she said.

First Airmen graduate from 'Accelerated Path to Wings' program

By Benjamin Faske

12TH FLYING TRAINING WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Seven Airmen made history as the first "Accelerated Path to Wings" program graduates and transitioned from students to Air Force pilots during a ceremony at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph March 12.

Nicknamed the "XPW" program, the course is part of Air Education and Training Command's current pilot training transformation efforts and consists of students completing an undergraduate pilot training curriculum that only utilizes one airframe, the T-1 Jayhawk.

"We had students from various backgrounds, including five who had completed their initial flight training and two who had earned their private pilot's license," said Lt. Col. Eric Peterson, 99th Flying Training Squadron commander, "This is a great program for students who want to go fly heavy aircraft in Air Mobility Command or fly certain aircraft in special operations or in Air Combat Command."

Traditional UPT is a three-phase

program that produces pilots in 12 months. The XPW program is done in two phases and graduates students in about seven months.

The first phase in XPW includes preflight academics where students learn general aviation terminology, after which students go directly to the T-1 aircraft, skipping the traditional route of flying the T-6 Texan II.

At the 12th Training Squadron's simulator branch, the students developed extensive training profiles, allowing them to practice and be certified as proficient in the aircraft. Once students make it through the required simulator training, they go on to fly in the T-1 under the guidance of the 99th FTS team.

After receiving their diplomas, the new pilots followed a tradition called breaking of the wings, which originated decades ago when the Army Air Corps first started issuing pilot wings to young graduating aviators.

Graduation day was filled with excitement for 2nd Lt. Kassandra Fochtman, who is headed to McConnell Air Force Base, Kansas, to fly the KC-135 Stratotanker,



SEAN WORRELL

Graduates from the first-ever Accelerated Path to Wings class gather in front of a T-1 Jayhawk aircraft after receiving their pilot wings March 12 at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph.

"It feels amazing to have endured the last seven months of pilot training to reach this point, it's all been worth it, I'm extremely proud," Fochtman said. "I can't wait to begin flying around the world."

One freshly minted pilot stood out from amongst his peers as he received the Top Stick award, Distinguished Graduate and the AETC Commanders Trophy.

"Graduating from the first XPW class is pretty special," said 2nd Lt. Andrew Button, who is slated to go fly the C-17

Globemaster III at Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina. "I want to give credit to my family and the world-class instructor pilots at the 99th FTS."

Col. Robert Moschella, 12th Operations Group commander, served as the guest speaker. "The XPW program is a great way to capitalize on T-1 capacity to produce high-quality pilots for the Air Force. These students had a great attitude throughout the program and showed an unrelenting willingness to learn and earn their wings."