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JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO

JUNE 4, 2021



Brig. Gen. Douglas Lowrey accepts the Mission and Installation Contracting Command organizational colors from Maj. Gen. Paul Pardew during a change of command ceremony May 27 at the Long Barracks on Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston.

DANIEL P. ELKINS

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# Army policy offering up to three-year service break

By Thomas Brading

ARMY NEWS SERVICE

A retention policy offering Soldiers a chance to take a break in service while receiving pay and benefits for up to three years is now a permanent program.

The sabbatical program, called the Career Intermission Program, or CIP, is a way for Soldiers to take a knee in service for personal or professional goals when they might have otherwise left the Army, said Rowland Heflin, a personnel policy integrator with the Army G-1.

The Army allows officers and enlisted Soldiers a chance to transition from the Regular Army and Army Reserve Active Guard Reserve, or AGR, program to the Individual Ready Reserve for a length of time not to exceed three years.

During their sabbaticals, Soldiers might use the time to start families, care for ailing parents, attend college, or whatever else they need a break for, he said.

While in the CIP program, Soldiers are given a monthly stipend of two-thirtieths of their basic pay along with the same medical benefits and commissary privileges. In addition, they can carry forward up to 60 days of leave on their return to active duty, Heflin said.

Lawmakers first allowed a version of the program as a pilot in 2009. The Army initiated the pilot program through a directive in 2014, which the new policy supersedes and makes the program permanent, Heflin said.

Under 10 U.S.C. 710 and Department of Defense Instruction 1327.07, Soldiers in the CIP program must pay



SGT. NAHJER WILLIAMS

*Soldiers and civilians stand as their degrees are conferred by their college's representative during the Fort Knox Army Education Center college graduation ceremony Oct. 17, 2019, at Fort Knox, Kentucky.*

back time away from the Army by incurring a two-for-one obligation. In other words, "for every month that they spend in the program, they incur a two-month obligation," Heflin explained.

Although Soldiers receive a fraction of their base pay, any special or incentive pay or bonus is suspended until they return to active duty. Upon their return, Soldiers will begin to receive any special or incentive pay or bonus they had before entering CIP.

While in the program, Soldiers are also entitled to travel and transportation allowances to a location in the U.S. designated as their residence, followed by the designated location of their assignment upon their return to the Army, according to a policy letter signed earlier this month by acting Secretary of the Army John Whitley.

"This is retention from a different angle," Heflin said. "The Army spends a lot of resources in training Soldiers so they can perform whatever mission they have. But, when a Soldier runs into a personal

issue or a desire to increase their civilian education they don't always find it amenable to do that on active duty."

CIP is an alternative for that. "It provides a way for them to be relieved from active duty, focus on their personal goals, and then return to active duty," Heflin added.

By investing in time away today, Heflin believes Soldiers will better themselves professionally and personally before returning to active duty with a longer service commitment. However, Soldiers who do not meet eligibility requirements on return to active duty will be subject to the repayment provisions of their pay or bonus agreement, the letter read.

Although education is cited as a major reason for entering CIP, Soldiers are not eligible for tuition assistance while in the IRR. Instead, many use their Post-9/11 G.I. Bill, Heflin said.

Eligible Soldiers include active duty officers in all competitive categories, including the Chaplain Corps,

Judge Advocate General's Corps and the Army Medical Corps, active duty warrant officers, and active duty enlisted Soldiers in the ranks of sergeant through master sergeant are eligible for the program.

In addition, Army Reserve AGR officers, warrant officers and enlisted Soldiers who have completed their initial three-year term of qualified duty may be approved, the letter read.

Now that the directive has been signed, G-1 plans to codify it into a permanent Army regulation, Heflin said.

Soldiers who are interested can be counseled on the benefits, compensation, medical care, and other obligations associated with entering the program. The counseling will be documented in writing, with a copy placed into the Soldier's Army military human resource record.

"When these applications are received at our Army Human Resources Command, the career management branch gets a chop on the decision, then there is a panel at HRC that reviews the files of applicants to make a recommendation to the [commanding general] for approval or disapproval," Heflin said.

Soldiers can go to the HRC's website or speak with their local Army career counselor, who can provide them guidance on the program along with the documents required for the application.

"We don't want to lose good Soldiers," Heflin said. "We want to be able for them to keep that balance between the things that happen in their lives along with their professional responsibilities."

## JBSA LEGACY

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# Feedback Fridays

Brig. Gen. Caroline M. Miller

502D AIR BASE WING AND JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO COMMANDER

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

If you have a question or concern, please send an email to [jbsapublicaffairs@gmail.com](mailto:jbsapublicaffairs@gmail.com) using the subject line "Feedback Fridays."

Questions will be further researched and published as information becomes available.

**Q. I want to ask why at the end of the duty day, when we have all had a long day and just want to get home, do the Security Forces close lanes to leave the base?**

**What is the point? All it does is**

**back up the traffic.**

**We go from getting off the base in two minutes to getting delayed 20 minutes. This wastes gas, pollutes the earth, and if some people don't have air conditioning, they sit in the heat.**

**A.** Thank you for your question. Installation perimeters are vital to protecting personnel, resources, and our missions.

Security Forces implements measures to ensure the perimeter is as secure as possible. Bollards on the outbound lanes are one measure we use to prevent potential gate runners and reduce the likelihood of them breaching the installation.

During peak outbound traffic hours, we try to reduce the delay of outbound



COURTESY GRAPHIC

traffic by removing bollards when the lanes are busy. However, there are times when manpower is limited and bollards cannot be removed.

We apologize for the inconvenience caused and will work diligently to

reduce wait times while ensuring the safety and security of our installations.

Thank you again for your feedback, patience, and for assisting us in protecting personnel and our critical missions.

## 502d ABW civilian forums aim for deliberate development

By Erinn Burgess

502ND AIR BASE WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Culture, People, Modernization and Partnerships are the four pillars of the 502d Air Base Wing's strategic lines of effort at Joint Base San Antonio.

To this end, the 502d ABW is hosting forums aimed at the deliberate development of the roughly 5,000-member civilian workforce, the next of which is scheduled to take place at 1 p.m. June 9 at the Inter-American Air Forces Academy Training Center Auditorium, 2432 Carswell Avenue at JBSA-Lackland.

"While 'Deliberate Development' is not a new term to the Air Force, many in the workforce may relate this effort to similar programs, such as Leadership Development or Talent Development," said Brian Hoffman, 502d ABW vice director. "The bottom line is, deliberate development takes frequent engagement and effort."

That's why Hoffman and other senior civilian leaders plan to host civilian "all-call" forums on a quarterly basis, with a focus on development topics ranging from feedback, performance appraisals, hiring processes, and education and training

### 502d Air Base Wing Civilian Forum

Date: June 9

Time: 1:00 PM

Location: IAAFA Training Center

Auditorium, JBSA-Lackland



COURTESY GRAPHIC

opportunities.

Part of the initiative's intent is to promote a culture that values development and provides a skeleton for leaders at all levels to contribute and receive knowledge and skills from the wing level down.

The forums will provide employees with direct access to leaders from across the 502d ABW and its mission partners.

"A leader and an organization that

value developing the workforce will put time and resources into that effort," Hoffman explained. "Instilling a culture of improving one's self and others is a priority at JBSA. We can educate and elevate our 502nd workforce through these development efforts."

The first civilian forum for 2021 took place March 19 at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston. The event had roughly 100 participants via Zoom and 20 others in

person. Topics focused on the civilian appraisal process and documentation of civilian employees. Attendees included civilian employees at all levels as well as military supervisors of civilians.

"Many military personnel have equity and influence in this area and can affect civilian careers directly," Hoffman said.

The forums aim to provide knowledge and experience on civilian processes in order to help military supervisors better lead the civilians they manage in their organizations.

Wing personnel will receive more details regarding the upcoming forum via email and/or through their supervisors.

Personnel are encouraged to participate in the open discussion/Q&A portion of each forum with questions or concerns they would like 502d ABW leadership to address.

"I welcome our 502d ABW team members at all levels to attend these forums," Hoffman said. "Civilian employees are a critical component of our workforce, and leadership is invested in your development and success. We look forward to seeing you there!"

# Senate committee considers Frank Kendall's nomination as 26th Air Force secretary

By Charles Pope

SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Frank Kendall told the Senate Armed Services Committee May 25 that if he is confirmed as the 26th Secretary of the Air Force he will continue reshaping the Air and Space forces to confront near-peer adversaries such as China, nurture the Space Force's successful evolution and ensure that Airmen, Guardians and their families are well served.

"If confirmed, my priorities would be straightforward and mirror precisely those articulated by Secretary of Defense (Lloyd) Austin as they apply to the Department of the Air Force – taking care of our people, mission performance, and building teams. Our military is people first and foremost," he told the committee.

"With regard to mission performance, I believe the range and severity of the threats that we face and will face, the rapid pace of technological innovation, and the need to rapidly harness that technology in new operational concepts demands a sense of urgency and a like focus on getting our choices right," he said.

An important part of that effort, Kendall said, is ensuring that the United States can operate in, and defend space, calling the still-nascent U.S. Space Force "a critical contributor to our national security. If confirmed, I'll be honored to have a role in making it a success."

Also important, he said, is fully understanding and recognizing China's rapid advances and ensuring that the Air and Space forces succeed in meeting them.

"There is general consensus that China is the pacing threat," Kendall said, using the term for defining a leading challenger to U.S. security.

Across nearly three hours of a hearing that was both polite and relaxed, SASC Chairman, Sen. Jack Reed (D-R.I.), praised Kendall for having "a wealth of experience in aerospace and defense policy spanning several decades." He also complimented Kendall for returning to public service after holding high-level positions in the Defense Department, most recently during the Obama administration.

That experience is important, Reed

said, noting that "if confirmed as Secretary of the Air Force, you will lead the service during a major transformation as we strengthen our ability to deal with near-peer competitors. In addition to balancing the size and modernization of the Air Force, you must also continue to implement guidance establishing a Space Force.

"After two decades of high operating tempo and continuous overseas deployments, readiness remains a challenge," Reed said. "The next secretary's efforts in improving the force structure and support to our Airmen will be crucial."

Kendall's session before the committee was his first formal appearance on Capitol Hill since being nominated last month by President Biden to be the Department of the Air Force's highest-ranking civilian leader. He appeared alongside two other nominees for senior Department of Defense positions – Susanna Blume to be the director of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation for the Department and Heidi Shyu to be Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering.

Kendall is hardly unknown to senators, however, having served in a number of senior positions for the Department of Defense, including as the Pentagon's No. 3 official for four years during the Obama administration.

Like Reed, the committee's ranking Republican, Sen. James Inhofe of Oklahoma, acknowledged Kendall's experience and also the scope of the challenge ahead.

"Our days of air power dominance are long gone," Inhofe said. "We've got a lot of work to do."

In his testimony and in response to questions, Kendall presented a philosophy for the job as the highest-ranking civilian leader of the Air and Space forces reflecting a mixture of well-established priorities, such as shifting focus to confront China and Russia. He also emphasized at several points during the hearing that, "the Air and Space forces aren't just equipment and concepts of operation."

"At its heart, they are the people who operate, create, and support those things. We have to do everything we can



Frank Kendall

COURTESY PHOTO

to ensure that our people have the training, the equipment, and the support they need to do their jobs, and we have to ensure that they can do those jobs in an environment that treats everyone with dignity and respect and maximizes their potential to grow and serve the nation," he said.

He pledged to look closely at the progress of existing efforts to improve base housing and to fostering a fair and independent "command climate" relating to sexual abuse. In response to a question about racial disparities across the Air and Space forces identified in a recent report from the service's inspector general, Kendall said, "It does concern me" and pledged to work hard to attack inequality.

Kendall was asked questions on topics ranging from the department's plans for nuclear modernization, how to control the costs of operating the F-35 (Lightning II) fighter and plans for addressing problems associated with the newest tanker, the KC-46 (Pegasus). Like previous nominees, Kendall was asked about the future of the A-10 (Thunderbolt II).

When asked if he would lobby for a larger budget in the next fiscal year, Kendall said he would urge a spending plan that "is adequate for meeting the requirements of the NDS." The NDS, or National Defense Strategy, is the overarching national security blueprint

issued in 2018 for protecting the nation and its interests.

He told the committee that driving down the F-35's "sustainment costs" is an important goal and one that will attract his early attention if confirmed. He likewise said similar attention will be devoted to solving development problems that have slowed the KC-46's utilization. And like other successful but older systems and planes, Kendall acknowledged the long-standing performance of the A-10 but said the Air Force must make difficult decisions to balance the use of "legacy" systems while also allowing the introduction of newer aircraft and other hardware.

He was asked about the criteria used for selecting bases to his assessment of the future of major training areas such as the Nevada Test and Training Range and the value of Alaska to the nation's defense to how the Department of the Air Force is responding to climate change, among others.

Kendall said that the Air and Space forces should understand the effect of climate change. "It should be a consideration, absolutely," he said.

Given his previous service and long history in defense issues, Kendall said he was aware of, or directly familiar with, nearly every issue raised to him by senators. His connection with military service is indeed both deep and varied.

A graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York, Kendall served 10 years on active duty in the Army, a tenure that also included a stint teaching engineering at West Point. Kendall spent time in the Pentagon as director of the tactical warfare program before moving to become assistant deputy undersecretary for strategic defense systems. Kendall also worked in the private sector in defense-related jobs, most notably as Raytheon's vice president of engineering during the mid-1990s.

In addition to graduating from West Point, Kendall earned a master's degree in aerospace engineering from The California Institute of Technology. He earned his law degree from Georgetown University Law Center as well as an MBA from C.W. Post Campus of Long Island University.



# FORT SAM HOUSTON

## MICC welcomes new commanding general

**Daniel P. Elkins**

MISSION AND INSTALLATION  
CONTRACTING COMMAND PUBLIC  
AFFAIRS OFFICE

Members of the Mission and Installation Contracting Command welcomed their new commanding general during a change of command ceremony May 27 in front of the Long Barracks at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, as well as across virtual platforms.

Brig. Gen. Douglas Lowrey assumed command of the MICC from Brig. Gen. Christine Beeler in a ceremony officiated by Maj. Gen. Paul Pardew, the commanding general for the Army Contracting Command at Redstone Arsenal, Alabama.

"It's a very proud day for me personally and professionally as I have served with both Brig. Gen. Beeler and Brig. Gen. Lowrey since approximately 2006. I can think of no better leaders to take our Army contracting into the future," Pardew said. "The MICC is a diverse and impressive organization. It is arrayed to provide contracting support across our Army's biggest commands. Many of the requirements are tough, complex, no-fail efforts that directly impact Army readiness."

The ACC commanding general went on to praise Lowrey for his leadership efforts at the battalion and brigade levels of command in developing acquisition professionals as well as his lasting impression on the establishment of contracting support for the Defender Europe series of exercises.

Lowrey comes to the MICC from Redstone Arsenal where he served as the commanding general of the U.S. Army Security Assistance Command



DANIEL P. ELKINS

*Brig. Gen. Douglas Lowrey accepts the Mission and Installation Contracting Command organizational colors from Maj. Gen. Paul Pardew during a change of command ceremony May 27 at the Long Barracks on Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston.*

since August 2020. He previously served as the director of contracting for the office of the assistant secretary of the Army for acquisition, logistics and technology in Washington.

The new commanding general thanked Pardew for the opportunity to command and his trust and confidence to lead the MICC. He next laid out three top-line challenges for the members of the MICC.

"No. 1, I want you to challenge the things we do every day. No. 2, I want you to challenge me personally and mold me into a better person, a leader and a better contracting professional. And finally No. 3, I want you to win," Lowrey said. "It's that simple. I want you to win with our partners, I want you to win with our allies."

"The chief of staff of the Army's mantra is Winning

Matters. This is especially true in our field of work. We have to execute and provide the goods and services our supported units require to accomplish their mission," he continued. "I want you to win this battle every single time. I challenge each and every one of you; when you're faced with what seems like a difficult contract situation to overcome, keep it simple and win."

Command of the MICC will mark the fourth assignment of the new commanding general to the organization. He has served as a contingency contracting officer at Fort Hood, Texas, in the MICC's legacy organization, the Army Contracting Agency, from December 2004 to December 2005.

He next served as the executive officer for the 901st Contracting Support Battalion at Fort Hood, Texas, from June

2006 to June 2008 before returning to the 901st CBN in June 2010 to serve as commander until July 2013. His operational assignments include deployments in support of Operation New Dawn, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Intrinsic Action.

Lowrey earned his commission as an Infantry Officer through the Reserve Officer Training Corps in 1994 after graduating from Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. He was promoted to brigadier general in September 2020, making the Oklahoma native of Cherokee descent the only Native American general officer on active duty.

Beeler served as the MICC senior leader since July 2019 and has guided the command through its acquisition standardization efforts with

**"It's a very proud day for me personally and professionally as I have served with both Brig. Gen. Beeler and Brig. Gen. Lowrey since approximately 2006. I can think of no better leaders to take our Army contracting into the future."**

**Maj. Gen. Paul Pardew, Army Contracting Command commanding general**

category management and forging strategic alliances with supported mission partners as well as postured contingency contracting support in the Army's response to the pandemic.

"It's been an honor to serve team MICC, to be in Military City USA," she said. "To ensure that the MICC was able to be one, the acquisition partner of choice, and two, an employer of choice in our space is really important to me. I thank you for everything you did and your unwavering support to the Soldier."

Beeler departs the organization and assumed command of ACC during a June 3 ceremony at Redstone. Prior to the MICC change of command, Beeler was presented the Legion of Merit for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services and achievements while assigned to the command.

# TRADOC hosts first People First Symposium at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston

By Tish Williamson

U.S. ARMY MEDICAL CENTER OF EXCELLENCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command conducted its first People First Symposium at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston May 17-20.

TRADOC is based out of Fort Eustis, Virginia, and is the higher headquarters for the U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence, located at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston. MEDCoE facilitated the event by providing facilities, logistics and manpower.

Attendees included dozens of hand-selected Soldiers and Civilians of varying ranks and grades from each of TRADOC's 10 Centers of Excellence, including the MEDCoE. The symposium was hosted by Lt. Gen. Theodore Martin, TRADOC deputy commanding general, and TRADOC Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Hendrex.

In December 2020, Gen. Paul Funk II, TRADOC commanding general, directed the establishment of a TRADOC People First Assessment Team, or PFAT, to evaluate how effectively TRADOC — which trains more than 750,000 Soldiers and service members annually — was executing the Army People Strategy as outlined by Gen. James McConville, the Chief of Staff of the Army.

The strategy is clear — to acquire, develop, employ, and retain the diversity of Soldier and civilian talent needed to achieve Total Army readiness. The end state will be a ready, professional, diverse and integrated Total Army Force: Active, Guard, Reserve Soldiers, civilians and contract employees.

Martin has been with TRADOC for three years and was recently announced as the next commander of the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, or CAC, one of five major subordinate headquarters of TRADOC.

The CAC has the primary mission of preparing the Army and its leaders for war. He recalled that three major events propelled the command to take the decisive action of establishing the PFAT: the murder of Vanessa Guillen, which put a spotlight on sexual harassment and assault in the Army; the murder of George Floyd, which put a spotlight on racial injustice in America; and the apparent rise in extremism during the last election cycle that culminated in the attack of the capital building on January 6.

"Whenever we find out that things are not working, we like to jump in and try to fix it," Martin said.

The Army is a values-based organization. As an American institution, however, the People First Strategy identified three major culture challenges that harm Army teams: racism and extremism, sexual harassment and assault, and suicide.

"We thought, if it's happening in America, it's happening in our Army," Martin said.

After the Fort Hood report, that detailed several missteps in the Vanessa Guillen tragedy, the



JOSE E. RODRIGUEZ

*Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Hendrex, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, presents opening remarks during the TRADOC People First Symposium hosted May 18 at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston.*

command wondered if TRADOC's policies and procedures would hold up to the scrutiny of thorough analysis.

"One of the key takeaways from the Fort Hood Report," Martin explained, "was there was a gap between what the generals and the command sergeants major thought was going on, versus what the junior leaders — like squad leaders, platoon sergeants, lieutenants and captains — thought was happening."

Sarah Bercaw, TRADOC Diversity Director and lead planner for the symposium, said Funk's primary task for her and her team was to stand up a PFAT charged with evaluating TRADOC, down to the lowest level, to identify issues across the TRADOC enterprise before they become major problems.

"Gen. Funk asked, 'what would those findings look like if someone wrote a similar report about TRADOC?'" Bercaw said.

Her team has visited each center of excellence and briefed initial findings and recommendations to unit leaders and the TRADOC command team.

"Our assessment capability provides the general a feedback loop where he can very quickly conduct his own evaluation of his command footprint and have a better feel for any major gaps and seams occurring within the command," Bercaw said.

To accomplish their task, the PFAT operated in a phased approach. In phase one, they conducted internal TRADOC Headquarters' evaluations; phase two included assessments of TRADOC subordinate units. Phase three includes the symposium, developing long-range action plans to fix deficiencies, and implementing initial changes in

areas identified for improvement.

Bercaw considers the symposium and the outcomes from the working groups to be a starting point for the plans that will be operationalized and adopted into the TRADOC Campaign Plan later this summer.

The first two days of the symposium included junior to mid-grade Soldiers and civilian attendees as the third iteration of TRADOC's Leadership, Resiliency, and Mentorship event initiative. TRADOC leaders conducted two other Leadership, Resiliency, and Mentorship events, one at Fort Eustis and one at Fort Leavenworth, each using the same successful formula.

This event kicked off with a dinner with a special guest presentation by Purple Heart recipient Justin "JP" Lane, a double amputee and medically retired Soldier who spoke of his story of resiliency. The group also participated in a "Your Voice Matters" listening session and visited the Army Medical Department Museum.

Part two of the symposium, from May 19-20, was considered a People First improvement event. Attendees included a hand-selected group of operational leaders, planners and subject matter experts tasked to collaborate in working groups to develop solutions to the major problem set identified by the PFAT team: Behavioral Health, Social Media, and the Sexual Harassment/Assault Response Program, or SHARP.

The MEDCoE representatives were Sgt. Robert McManes and Capt. Shelby Seymour. A medical service officer, Seymour is currently a company commander for the Basic Officer Leaders Course, or BOLC, and the Captains Career Course, or CCC. She has been at the MEDCoE since March 2017 and also served as a BOLC instructor and executive officer in a 68W Combat Medic training company.

Seymour said the symposium was not what she expected at all, because she had never been asked to provide feedback to a four-star level command sergeant major and a three-star general in such an informal setting.

Attendees, who were asked to wear civilian clothes, were only identified by their first and last name for the duration of the event; they were essentially asked to leave their rank at the door to promote a free flow of conversation.

"It was a privilege to attend and made me feel heard," Seymour said. "Having leaders break multiple barriers to try and understand what really happens at the user level was remarkable.

"This did not feel like a typical AAR (after-action report) when the leaders provide counter-arguments to every comment you make," Seymour said. "The business casual and informalities broke down the barriers of rank. The resulting experience was a unified front of individuals looking for ways to make our Soldiers and unit better."

# ARSOUTH hosts U.S. Amry-Peruvian army staff talks

By Donald Sparks

U.S. ARMY SOUTH PUBLIC AFFAIRS

In 1827, the United States established diplomatic relations with Peru, and nearly 200 years later, the U.S. and Peru's strategic partnership continues to enhance security across the Western Hemisphere for collectively meet complex global challenges.

During the Sixth Annual U.S.-Peruvian Army Staff Talks held virtually at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston May 20, the two armies strengthened the relationship between the two nations by agreeing to future military-to-military training opportunities.

"Events such as this are an opportunity to build on this discussion and shape future engagements to open training opportunities and strengthen our leaders through engagement while addressing our mutual strategic interest," said Maj. Gen. Daniel R. Walrath, U.S. Army South commanding general. "These staff talks are instrumental in facilitating, enhancing, and strengthening our relationship and our countries mutual



PFC. JOSHUA TAECKENS

*Maj. Gen. Daniel R. Walrath (right), U.S. Army South commanding general, and Brig. Gen. Christian Garcia (left), Peruvian military attaché, share a moment before the sixth annual U.S. Army-Peruvian Army Staff Talks held at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston May 20.*

readiness for years to come."

Later this year, the Ejército del Perú, or the Army of Peru, will celebrate its 200th bicentennial when it was officially established Aug. 18, 1821. The staff talks provided Lt. Gen. José Vizcarra Álvarez,

chief of staff of the Peruvian Army, to praise his army's transformation and modernization, and he welcomed more support from the U.S. Army in doctrine, training and exercises to enhance their multipurpose brigade and help establish a new mechanized brigade.

"It is important for us to continue to strengthen our relationship," Vizcarra said, in the context of conducting the staff talks virtually. "The importance of doing everything possible to come together to strengthen our existing relationship is the most important thing."

The Staff Talks Program seeks to promote bilateral efforts in order to develop professional partnerships and increase interaction between partner nation armies. The engagements enhance army-to-army contacts and mutual understanding, providing the partner nation armies with insights concerning specific U.S. Army programs, areas of mutual interest, and assisting partner nation armies in areas of modernization or reform.

The previous staff talks took place in Lima, Peru, and as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the agreed-to-actions from 2020 were performed virtually, postponed, rescheduled for the latter half of 2021, or canceled altogether. Despite the setbacks from the previous year, Walrath assured Vizcarra that the U.S. Army is committed to working with the Peruvian Army to achieve its transformational goals.

"The agreed-to-actions (ATAs) are focused towards the transformation and

the modernization process of the Peruvian Army; building humanitarian assistance/disaster relief capabilities, leadership development, education, enhancing intelligence capabilities, and enhancing the interoperability of our forces by strengthening doctrine and force readiness," Walrath said.

Army South staff members presented briefings on Exercise Southern Vanguard and Combat Training Center rotations as opportunities for the Peruvian Army to participate, learn, and ultimately increase collaboration and interoperability with the U.S. Army.

Additionally, the Peruvians received an overview of the Security Forces Assistance Brigade as a possible training tool offered to assist with the army's transformation initiatives.

One of Vizcarra's key priorities during the staff talks focused on disaster response stating, "We are always involved in this type of activity and increased collaboration between the U.S. Army allows us to be better prepared to support our population."

The event concluded with a ceremonial signing of the minutes to retain a record of the staff talks and the ATAs that represent the activities that will lead each Army towards mutual common goals and objectives.

"Together, we have made important and sustained contributions to regional security while also providing an example to other nations of how successful partnerships between strong democratic nations are formed," Walrath concluded.



# JBSA's EFMP provides support, builds resilience

By Lori A. Bultman

502ND AIR BASE WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

When Lt. Cmdr. Liezl Nicholas arrived at Joint Base San Antonio with her family, she was unsure where to start looking for resources for her special needs son until she contacted a coordinator at one of JBASA's Exceptional Family Member Program-Family Support offices.

The U.S. Coast Guard officer, her husband Daniel, and two children, became an EFMP family when her son was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder in December 2019.

The Exceptional Family Member Program is a partially mandatory enrollment program comprised of three pillars — Assignments, Enrollment, and Family Support. Assignments are handled by Human Resources, and Enrollment is handled by medical personnel.

The Family Support pillar is a voluntary portion of EFMP that helps military families with special needs connect with military and civilian agencies for comprehensive and coordinated community support, housing, educational, medical, and personnel services, exactly the services Nicholas and her family needed assistance with.

The busy mom said shortly after her son was diagnosed, the pandemic hit and finding services where they lived, in Washington, D.C., became a virtual task.

"He was 2 1/2 years old at diagnosis," she said. "As soon as we set up all of his required therapies, COVID-19 hit and we were left to navigate this diagnosis and the new therapies virtually for the majority of 2020."

Since the family arrived in San Antonio, EFMP staff members have been vital to getting them situated in their new community.

"Ms. Gonzalez and Ms. Dean at the EFMP office were instrumental in making me feel welcomed and in ensuring I had all the resources I needed to set my son up for success as soon as we arrived," Nicholas said.

Sally Gonzalez, JBASA-Fort Sam Houston's EFMP coordinator, said EFMP offers a wide variety of services and opportunities that can assist families of any branch of the military.

"Exceptional family members are those who require special medical



COURTESY PHOTO

*Enrollment in EFMP is mandatory for military families with special needs. It is required in order to enroll in TRICARE ECHO, or extended care health option, and ensures the family's needs are considered during the assignment process.*

services for a chronic condition such as asthma, attention deficit disorder, diabetes, multiple sclerosis, and so on," Gonzalez said. "They might also be someone who is receiving ongoing services from a medical specialist, someone with a significant behavioral health concern, or someone receiving early intervention or special education services through an individualized education program or individualized family service plan."

Nichols said she is very thankful that the JBSA EFMP-Family Support is available to her as a Coast Guard member, and appreciated their quick responses when she called on them to assist.

"I've just PCSed (permanent change of station) to San Antonio to attend graduate school at Army-Baylor for a Masters in Healthcare Administration," Nicholas said. "I received e-mail and phone responses almost immediately after contacting them as we prepared for the move. They have helped me navigate family resources, assisted in locating various accredited therapists, introduced me to the special education director at the on-post elementary school, and assisted me with navigating the waitlist for base housing."

Nicholas said EFMP staff members helped her understand the process for requesting priority consideration for on-base housing, which was a big concern for the family.

"My program is only two years long,

and the waitlist for housing was six to 12 months," she said, noting that, with EFMP assistance, they were able to acquire base housing.

"Living on post gives us proximity to my son's providers and eases the logistical challenges that come with having two kids," she said. "Additionally, the support services and activities make us feel like we can cultivate a community, even though we are not here for very long."

Gonzalez encourages all special families to utilize the services and assistance EFMP-Family Support offers and emphasizes that the program is not just for families with children.

"A family member, spouse, dependent, parent, or another person within the family unit who has a disability can qualify the military

family for the program," she said.

Enrollment in EFMP is mandatory for military families with special medical or educational needs.

According to Military OneSource, it is required to enroll in TRICARE ECHO, or Extended Care Health Option, and ensures the family's needs are considered during the assignment process.

According to the website, with the family member's special medical or education needs documented, medical and military personnel departments can work together to coordinate assignments to locations that have the resources to address those needs. While the military mission is the driving force in assignments, the family member's needs are also considered since appropriate services may be limited in some locations.

Nichols said for her family, EFMP has been vital to maintaining their resilience throughout their transition to San Antonio.

"The EFMP gives my family peace of mind. The program provides all the necessary services and links families together," she said. "They free us from the burden of feeling like we have to constantly reinvent the wheel. They have testimonials from other families that have been here before and that definitely shapes the decisions we make when choosing providers or programs for our son."

There are currently 105 full-time EFMP coordinators in the Department of the Air Force who are dedicated to improving the level of care to families at their respective installations.

To obtain a referral to EFMP, service members should contact their military health care facility.



# NTAG San Antonio visits school's Junior Cadets

By Burrell Parmer

NAVY TALENT ACQUISITION GROUP SAN ANTONIO PUBLIC AFFAIRS

To forge relationships with young students in Military City USA, leaders from the Navy Talent Acquisition Group San Antonio and members of the Central Texas Chapter of the National Naval Officers Association visited Nimitz Middle School May 20.

The school is named after Fleet Adm. Chester Nimitz, of Fredericksburg, Texas, who commanded the U.S. Pacific Fleet during World War II.

The members were provided the opportunity to address students in the Junior Cadets Program and tour the school, which is the largest middle school in the Northeast Independent School District in San Antonio.

"The students at Nimitz Middle School are the next generation of leaders," said Cmdr. Michael Files, NTAG San Antonio commanding and NNOA Central Region vice president. "We want to form a relationship with the school to provide support, encouragement and mentorship to the cadets and students."

According to retired Navy Chief Warrant Officer 3 Robert Gonzalez, Junior Cadets instructor, the program started small with an idea from a former principal of the school.

"She hired me to create the program from nonexistence," said Gonzalez, who served aboard the USS Nimitz (CVN-68) as the fire marshal from 1996 to 1998. "We started out with four classes and it grew each year until the present with seven classes boasting more than 200 students."

The program is open to all grades within the school and its primary purpose is to teach students leadership.

"Our motto is 'We Lead with Honor, Courage and Commitment,' much like the lessons we provide in the military," Gonzalez added. "These students grow before our eyes as they learn how to work as a team, irrespective of their individuality. They learn that they can be great at anything they do; they are the future of our military."

According to retired Fleet Master Chief April Beldo-Lilley, the first female and African-American fleet master chief for Manpower, Personnel, Training, and Education, the Navy can be a positive influence in cadets' decisions to possibly be a part of America's Navy.

**"We teach our students the military way. We teach them the importance of service to our country, to strive for something bigger than themselves and their own lives."**

**Navy Chief Warrant Officer 3 Robert Gonzalez, Junior Cadets instructor**

"As current and prior leaders in the Navy, the visit provided us an opportunity to give back to the community by volunteering to make a difference," Beldo-Lilley said. "By interacting with students, early on, we can plant the seed about the numerous opportunities that the Navy provides."

"Not only were our students enthralled, but the school administration, teachers, and custodians were inspired," Gonzalez said.

"We teach our students the military way," Gonzalez said. "We teach them the importance of service to our country, to strive for something bigger than themselves and their own lives. Being connected to a Naval entity brings the lesson home. They need to see our heroes live, and the visit was proof of that as they picked their own guests to give a tour."

The mission of the NNOA is to enhance Sea Service operational readiness by supporting recruiting, professional development, and retention in an effort to achieve a diverse officer corps that reflects the demographics of the nation.

"By visiting with the cadets, we may have planted the seed for a future Secretary of the Navy, Chief of Naval Operations, or Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy to include Naval Academy and Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps graduates," Files said. "The Navy may not directly benefit; however, by providing positive role models, the students may be able to take positive attributes back to their families, friends and communities."

NTAG San Antonio's area of responsibility includes two Talent Acquisition Onboarding Centers and Navy Officer Recruiting Stations spread throughout Central and South Texas.

# LACKLAND

## 37th TRW command chief 'beyond humbled' to serve with Warhawk family

By Annette Crawford

37TH TRAINING WING  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Just over 26 years ago, an 18-year-old from Berlin, Massachusetts, experienced equal parts of shock and awe when he first stepped onto Lackland Air Force Base to begin his Air Force journey. Now the command chief for the 37th Training Wing, Chief Master Sgt. Michael Morgan is well over his shock, but the awe is still there.

"It's very interesting to walk back along these buildings in a completely different kind of capacity," Morgan said. "I've heard it called hallowed ground and it really is for the enlisted force."

Morgan, who graduated from the 322nd Training Squadron in December 1994, said BMT was a mixture of good and bad memories, but one thing was for sure: he remembered his military training instructor, Senior Airman Devon Hoffman.

"He definitely made an impression on me," Morgan remembered. While it was rare for Senior Airmen to be MTIs, the chief said he didn't realize that then, and it certainly didn't matter. "To me, he was a demigod walking among men. Might as well have been Zeus."

The 37th TRW is Morgan's second command chief position. Before coming to Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, he served as the command chief at the 42nd Air Base Wing at Maxwell Air Force Base-Gunter Annex, Alabama. His experience there reinforced something he already knew about the Air Force.

"This is a team business and it takes many hands to lift the machine and keep it moving forward. Everyone has a role to play," he said.

Morgan said he was "beyond humbled" to be in his role at the 37th TRW among the Warhawks.

"It's because of the amazing job that our teammates do at the 737th Training Group and the 37th TRG in taking citizens and turning them into Airmen. Our missions at DLIELC and IAAFA are crucial to our international partnerships. I am literally in awe of what this team is accomplishing every day," the chief said.

"I want to make sure I'm doing the best I can for the team. These top-of-the-line NCOs from across the Air Force, from across multiple functional areas, who are ... building Airmen from the ground up, taking a citizen, and turning them into an Airman — I hope that I serve them well," he added.

"The first time I met Chief Morgan, he was serving as a Command Chief Mentor in the Wing Commanders Course of which I was a student. I was impressed from the very first moment I heard him speak and could tell that he was a gifted leader," said Col. Rockie K. Wilson, 37th TRW commander. "We are blessed to have him as our command chief. He has a deep respect and understanding of our mission, and his focus on serving the enlisted members of our wing comes through in everything he does."

The chief's biography is evidence of his stance on the importance of



MAXINE ABABA

Tech. Sgt. Autumn Murphy (left), Flight Attendant Instructor at the 344th Training Squadron, Career Enlisted Aviator Center of Excellence, briefs Chief Master Sgt. Michael Morgan, 37th Training Wing Command Chief, aboard the "Speckled Trout" aircraft at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland April 28.

self-improvement: the list of accomplishments under the education section number nearly 20, and includes a wide variety of professional military education courses. He graduated summa cum laude from Norwich University in Vermont with a Bachelor of Science in Strategic Studies

and Defense Analysis in 2017. He's currently enrolled at Troy University for a Master of Science in Management and Leadership Development.

"I've found my passion in helping people achieve their own goals, so that's what I'm focused on right now," Morgan said.

When he's away from work, the chief likes to relax and unwind with his family or by riding his trail bike, while listening to audiobooks.

"I definitely enjoy reading and listening to books. I'm a sci-fi guy. I'm a geek and a nerd. I enjoy playing video games with my son. He wins all the time. It's not a great challenge for him," he said.

With just over a month on the job, Morgan said he's "still kind of dumbstruck" about being here.

"I never imagined that I would be nominated, let alone selected. To be in this position in this wing is an honor," he said. When he received the call with the good news about his new position, Morgan said he immediately texted his wife: "I guess we need to get a cat." He had promised his kids they'd get a cat if they moved again.

He added that his predecessor, Chief Master Sgt. Stefan Blazier, gave him some advice that will stick with him: "Just be you. Don't walk a mile in my shoes. Walk in your own shoes."

"Chief Blaze is just phenomenal," he said. "He's very well-known and respected across the Air Force, especially in chiefs' circles."

For now, Morgan wants to focus on force development.

"What do people need as far as development? How can I help them achieve their goals both personally and professionally? So definitely force development is going to be a big thing, but also I want to take care of people," he said. "When you take care of people everything else just happens."

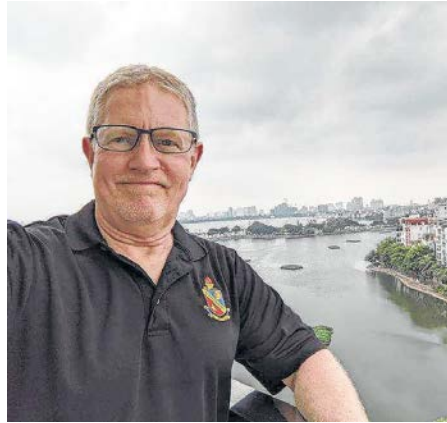
# DLIELC mobile training team support to Southeast Asia moves forward

By Defense Language Institute English Language Center Public Affairs Strategic Communications

The Defense Language Institute English Language Center re-engaged its support of the Indo-Pacific strategy in early April 2021 by deploying Mobile Training Teams to the Vietnam Ministry of National Defense Center for Student Management and Advanced Officer Training (Unit 871) in Hanoi, and the Royal Thai Military Academies and Language Institutes in Bangkok, Thailand.

The Vietnam MND Center and Unit 871 are a recurrent MTT site for DLIELC, the former returning to the United States in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The mission of the MTT is to improve English language proficiency within the Vietnam MND to affect the Vietnam People's Army, Navy and Air Defense Air Force. Currently, the two-person team is conducting intensive English Language Training, or ELT, using DLIELC's American Language Course for 30 Vietnamese officers.

Having a strong ELT program for its military personnel is a top security cooperation priority for Thailand. The Royal Thai Armed Forces and Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group Thailand are currently working to rejuvenate the country's entire military ELT program after facing setbacks resulting from the 2014 coup d'état. Positive ELT re-engagement is in full swing with the current deployment of a



COURTESY PHOTO

*Phil Reed, Defense Language Institute English Language Center instructor, is photographed at his Mobile Training Team location in Vietnam.*

four-person MTT conducting instructor-training for joint force Thai military and civilian instructors.

While most MTT missions are focused on increasing English language proficiency, this mission's emphasis is on providing teacher-training,

to include familiarization workshops for the recently adopted Non-intensive American Language Course curriculum, which will be used for instruction at the Royal Thai Military Academies, and intensive American Language Course support for the language institutes.

Due to an increase in COVID-19 cases, the Thai government implemented restrictions which resulted in the MTT not being able to teach face-to-face. However, the team continues to conduct training by providing virtual instruction of the courses.

DLIELC remains committed to executing its mission of providing worldwide ELT. Although COVID-19 continues to be a relevant factor, the pandemic has made the organization more resilient as the team has maintained focus on the objectives of the security cooperation enterprise.

The critical partnership between the United States and Indo-Pacific partner nations is essential for accomplishing the current Indo-Pacific Security Cooperation Plan and ensuring the formalization and modernization of their military forces.

Additionally, DLIELC aims to advise and assist leadership in Vietnam and Thailand on their current and future ELT goals and objectives. The overall intent is to have a robust, self-sufficient ELT program, supported by DLIELC-trained ELT instructors and managers, which will contribute immensely to our partnership with both countries and their strategic goals in the coming years.



# 502nd LRS traffic managers provide safe, reliable transportation for BMT graduates during COVID-19

By David DeKunder

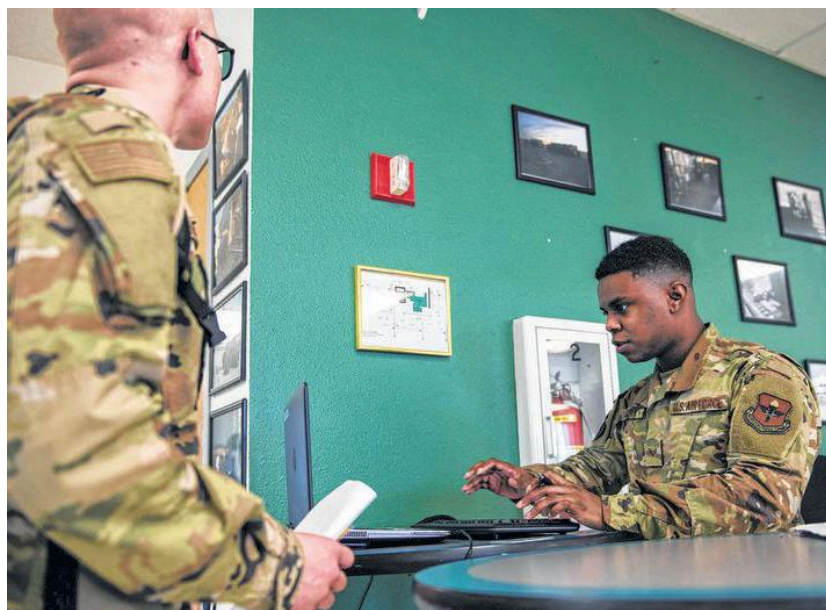
502ND AIR BASE WING  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Despite the challenges brought about by COVID-19, the 502nd Logistics Readiness Squadron's Deployment and Distribution Flight at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland is helping to provide safe and reliable transportation for Basic Military Training graduates transitioning to their technical school locations.

Since March 2020, the 502nd LRS has transported BMT graduates to their technical school destinations using the Group Operational Passenger System, or GOPAX. GOPAX is a process in which traffic managers have been able to work with the U.S. Transportation Command, or USTRANSCOM, to bid and award contracts for charter flights to transport the BMT graduates to their designated technical schools.

Before the pandemic, the graduates were transported by bus or commercial flight to the technical school they were going to. Graduates headed to technical school at Goodfellow Air Force Base, Texas, Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas, and Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi, were transported by bus.

Graduates going to technical school at Naval Air Station Pensacola, Florida; Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio; Vandenberg Air Force Base, Port Hueneme, and Monterey, California; Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri; Fort Lee and Fort Eustis, both in Virginia, or Fort Meade, Maryland, were flown by commercial flight from San Antonio International Airport to the airports near their technical school locations.



SARAYUTH PINTHONG

*U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Dominick Corbin, 502nd Logistic Readiness Squadron traffic management journeyman, processes a basic military training graduate for travel to his next duty location April 3, 2020, at Joint Base San Antonio-Kelly Field.*

Those procedures changed in March 2020, when the Air Education and Training Command decided to transport the graduates going to Sheppard and Keesler Air Force Bases by chartered planes from JBSA-Kelly Field, instead of by bus. This was done to follow safety and health protocols to reduce the number of stops during their trips, reducing the chances of a graduate getting COVID-19.

The graduates are now flown either directly to the base or to the local airport nearest the base where they will go to technical school, with a chartered bus picking them up, if required, from the aircraft so they do not have to go through the airport and possibly be exposed to COVID-19.

As for those graduates going to Vandenberg Air Force Base, Port Hueneme and Monterey, California, they are flown on a chartered flight from JBSA-Kelly Field to Vandenberg Air Force Base, where a chartered bus picks them up from the aircraft and transports them directly to the three California destinations.

A dedicated team of four traffic managers has adjusted well to the changes in transporting the graduates, ensuring the graduates get to their destinations on time and safely, said Stephen Hill, 502nd LRS JBSA supervisory transportation assistant.

"They have kept a great attitude, and they do an amazing job," Hill said. "It's great having a team like that.

We've had zero mission failures since March 2020."

The traffic managers are Paul Caviel, 502nd LRS supervisory transportation assistant at JBSA-Lackland; Raymond Griffith, 502nd LRS passenger travel assistant at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston; and Ofelia Warren and Linda McDaniel, 502nd LRS passenger transportation assistants at JBSA-Lackland.

Hill said every Thursday, 502nd LRS members through GOPAX and work with USTRANSCOM to solicit bids for charter flights to transport graduates for the following week, the day after BMT graduation.

Utilizing the GOPAX system, the 502nd LRS team has arranged commercial chartered air movement of

over 21,000 BMT graduates, along with 1.4 million tons of gear and personal belongings, to their technical school destinations, in more than 275 flights since March 2020.

Hill said the four traffic managers who work on finding transportation for graduates have learned how to use the GOPAX system effectively and set up a schedule of charter flights to pick up and transport the graduates. He said the bids which are accepted are those from airlines that are cost-efficient and meet safety and health protocols required by AETC.

"These traffic managers are helping to schedule the charter flights in addition to their regular duties of assisting processing, temporary duty, and deploying customers with their travel arrangements at the JBSA-Lackland Passenger Travel Office," Hill said. They also make arrangements to ensure the charter buses pick up the graduates once they arrive at their technical school destinations.

Hill said the dedication of the traffic managers who work on obtaining the charter flights ensures the graduates make it to their technical school destinations without delays.

"This process has been evaluated and perfected, and now moves trainees to 12 joint service military installations in a safe, secure, and cost-effective manner," Hill said.

For now, and for the foreseeable future, the four traffic managers with the 502nd LRS will continue to help provide transportation options for graduates to reach their technical school destinations in the safest, most efficient way possible.

# 960th CW hosts Mental Health and Resiliency Fair at JBSA

## 960th Cyberspace Wing Public Affairs

The 960th Cyberspace Wing kicked off National Mental Health Awareness Month by inviting service members, civilians and their families to its inaugural Mental Health and Resiliency Fair at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland May 1 with more than 800 attendees both in-person and virtually.

The fair hosted informational booths from military resource providers to educate service members of the programs available and how they can access resources.

Community providers from the local San Antonio area and nationally were also on-site to educate and market their available services.

Col. Robert Kent, 16th Air Force (Air Forces Cyber) command surgeon, attended the event and said it's important to focus on mental health and resiliency.

"The open invitation to families and the attendance by numerous resource agencies was a perfect example of how to support one another and build a resilient network of people at the 960th Cyberspace Wing," Kent said. "I hope to duplicate this event in the future at other locations for 16th Air Force."

Maj. Kathleen Ball, 854th Combat Operations Squadron deputy division chief of the Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Division, visited with 960th Cyberspace Wing key spouses, K.C. Erredge and Johanna Trelles, during the Mental Health and Resiliency Fair at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland May 1.

"I was impressed with the number of organizations that attended," Ball said. "This was a very practical and effective way to inform the wing of the tools available to us as Reserve Citizen Airmen."

During the Mental Health and Resiliency Fair, the Emmy Award-Winning HBO Documentary, "Ernie and Joe: Crisis Cops," was screened



TECH. SGT. SAMANTHA MATHISON

Maj. Kathleen Ball (left), 854th Combat Operations Squadron deputy division chief of the Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Division, visits with 960th Cyberspace Wing key spouses, K.C. Erredge and Johanna Trelles, during the Mental Health and Resiliency Fair at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland May 1.

free of charge to those in attendance.

The documentary follows two former San Antonio Police Department officers in the Mental Health Unit, Ernie Stevens and Joe Smarro, who worked to change the way police respond to mental health calls.

The film showed their daily experiences with people who experienced a mental health crisis.

The officers are nationally known as crisis interventionists, de-escalation specialists and training facilitators in police departments across the nation. Their efforts helped individuals obtain appropriate mental health treatment by diverting them away from jail, if appropriate.

Immediately following the documentary screening,

Stevens and Smarro took the stage for an in-person Q&A session with the audience.

"The Resiliency Fair was a tremendous opportunity for our Airmen to hear about a different approach to mental health crisis response," said Col. Richard Erredge, 960th CW commander. "Ernie and Joe offered their unique perspective that helped our Airmen learn some new skills when they encounter someone in a mental health crisis. I can't thank them enough for sharing their experiences with us as we continue to find ways to take care of Airmen."

Closing out the event, Lt. Gen. Timothy Haugh, 16th AF (Air Forces Cyber) commander, discussed the importance of destigmatizing mental health within the military and promoting help-seeking behaviors.

"We have an opportunity to execute leadership in a way that is different than many of our civilian counterparts," Haugh said. "We can ask people about what their day is like and, based on that response, we can stay and wait for the real answer. Once we know what the real answer is, we can work toward solutions."

Haugh further discussed with attendees the Air Force initiatives of embedded programs to maintain and strengthen the resiliency of Airmen to include mental health, chaplain services and social support systems.

According to Haugh, 99% of service members who seek mental health will not lose their security clearance.

"If it's mental health, we can take people to a resource that will help," he said. "One of our

primary objectives is to destigmatize mental health treatment. Many have security clearances, and at different times in our lives, I'm sure somebody has said, 'If you go to mental health, your career is over.' We are doing everything we can to destigmatize that because it's not true."

Frances Martinez, LCSW, 960th Cyberspace Wing director of psychological health, coordinated the event and said the importance of recognizing, destigmatizing and decriminalizing mental health is imperative to the success of the military services.

According to Martinez, suicide rates within the Air Force were on the rise in 2020, with approximately three suicides per week documented.

It is crucial that mental health awareness and support are openly discussed to help decrease suicides and foster appropriate environments to help service members seek the help they need, she said.

"There are too many times that people feel they don't have any options in a time of crisis, which can lead to detrimental outcomes," she said. "This is why we hosted this type of event, to continue to spread awareness of mental health and press forward with the destigmatizing efforts."

"I was extremely impressed by the participation; at what I believe was the largest ever event at JBSA on Mental Health Awareness and Resiliency," Kent said. "All of our 16th Air Force locations could benefit from this type of collaboration with one another and from local mental health authorities, such as the National Alliance on Mental Health."

If you or someone you know is contemplating suicide, contact the National Suicide Hotline at (800) 273-8255, option 1.



# Calling inspires lasting legacy of service in Air Force for chaplain

By Tech. Sgt. Agustin Salazar  
149th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

"Sometimes, when you volunteer, it's not about the pay; it's about what drives you from the soul."

That statement pretty much sums up retired U.S. Air Force chaplain Col. Paula Payne's life mantra. Yes, she is retired. No, she is not done serving her country. Payne's life of service began in 1981 at St. Croix in the Virgin Islands, where she was working as a secondary and adult education teacher.

"After work, I saw an Air Force member on the street in uniform and asked him if an Air Force base was on the island," Payne said. "He said there was an Air National Guard Base, and I asked, 'what is that?' because I had never heard of the Air National Guard before," Payne said. "He said, come on over, and I'll show you."

The Guardsman was a member of the 285th Combat Communications Flight, which had just established itself in May of 1980. He showed her the base and introduced her to the unit commander. The commander informed Payne, she would need to prepare for enlistment by running and exercising.

With that advice and the idea of joining the Air National Guard, Payne went home.

"I thought and prayed about it," she said. "I told my father that I was thinking about joining, and he replied, 'I hope they treat you better than they treated me,'" Payne said.

Payne's father, Sgt. Percy Howard Payne was a member of the Tuskegee Airman during World War II. He could not believe she wanted to join the Air Force. Serving at a time when the U.S. military was racially segregated, Percy Payne found himself denied leadership roles, as black Soldiers were denied entry into the officer's corps. Frustrated with a system that denied advancement based on race, Percy Payne left the military at the end of World War II. Despite knowing how her father was treated, Payne decided to join.

"There was something that was driving me," she said. "Not everybody is called to wear the uniform, but I knew that I was called."

After five years of being in the Guard, she left St. Croix and returned to the states. Payne moved to Washington, D.C., to continue her education.

She then decided to join one of the local Guard units because she still had one year left on her enlistment contract. Payne wanted to join the 13th Fighter Wing, based in Washington, D.C.

Col. Russell Davis, then 13th Fighter Wing commander, wanted to interview her.

"Col. Davis asked me why I wanted to come to the unit," Payne recalled. "I told him I was working as a teacher and that the family I was living with was in Arlington, so I was joining the unit to finish out my time. He asked, 'what is your education?' and I told him I have a master's degree."

Payne recalled how Davis sent her over to the National Guard Bureau because he felt being at his unit would hold her back. "Guess what? They put me on orders right away as an Active Guard Reserve member." Payne said.



TECH. SGT. AGUSTIN SALAZAR

*At 69 years old, Chaplain (Col.) Paula Payne serves in the Texas State Guard at the Air National Guard's 149th Fighter Wing one weekend a month.*

Payne was an administrative specialist at the ANG's Chief of Chaplains Office. She was the first enlisted person to work in the office. It was while working there that she felt called to serve as a chaplain herself.

She said the chief of the chaplain's office called her one day and said she was going to seminary school, and the Air Force would pay for it. Payne could not believe it. She was overjoyed.

After her first year in seminary school, she received her direct commission to second lieutenant.

Payne went to chaplain candidate school, then to Charles Town, West Virginia. Payne belongs to the United Methodist Church. To become a pastor in her denomination, members must first become an elder.

It took her nine years to become an elder there. Once she became an elder, she officially became an Air Force chaplain. It was 1992, and Payne was now a first lieutenant. Without knowing it, she had become the first African American female chaplain in the Air National Guard.

Payne later moved to New Hampshire to pastor a church while also earning her doctorate at a Boston University. "I was the first woman pastor in the church there and the only African American in the parish," Payne said. Despite the cultural differences, she got to know the people, and they got to know her. After some time, she felt at home there.

While pastoring in New Hampshire, 9/11 happened. She had been in the church for five years, her 13th year

as a pastor. She was drilling at Joint Base Cape Cod, Massachusetts, when the towers fell, and the Pentagon was hit. Her commander told Payne if she needed to leave to be with her church with everything that was happening, she could. "I do need to go back home," Payne told her commander. "They are going to need me." When she returned to her church, it was full of parishioners praying for the country and the attack victims. She knew that she had made the right decision.

Before long, the Air Force had issued deployment call for experienced chaplains. Payne volunteered and deployed to Ramstein, Germany. By this time, Payne was trained in polytrauma and clinical pastoral education.

"Because of my training, death and dying did not bother me," Payne said. "A lot of people can't handle it, but I could, so I felt called to deploy," She deployed back-to-back. When she was at Ramstein, she became the reintegration chaplain helping wounded warriors learn how to cope with having to leave the military and return to civilian life with a new set of challenges. From Ramstein, there was a request made for Payne to go to Iraq to be the senior chaplain at Balad Hospital.

"I do not know who put in the request, but I was the senior chaplain of Balad Hospital," she said. "It was an absolute privilege." After Iraq, she was stationed at Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, in Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operations and assigned to work with the families of the fallen.

"I found that even the doctors and nurses who were Guard and were on deployments always had a different approach to speaking to people," Payne said. "The experience as a pastor in the local church and working with families, doing funerals, and preaching at hospitals helped to polish me up before I went on deployment. When I got to my deployed duty station, it was a different approach. We are all doing the same thing. We all serve, but there is something more that you get out of working in the community and being in the Guard."

Payne retired in 2011 and moved to North Chicago, Illinois, to live with her sister. In 2014, they decided to move from North Chicago, Illinois, to San Antonio to be closer to a military community.

Today at 69 years old, Chaplain Payne serves as a colonel in the Texas State Guard at the Air National Guard's 149th Fighter Wing one weekend a month.

The 149th Fighter Wing chaplain, Maj. Victor Pagan, is very thankful that Payne decided to continue serving. "The experience she brings working with people and the good advice she gives makes her a valued part of our team," said Chaplain Pagan. "We can always count on her reliability and productivity, and everything she does is done with a sense of joy."

When she called the State Guard to volunteer her services, they asked her why she wanted to join. Payne's answer was, "because you might need me; and when you do, I'll be ready... Sometimes, when you volunteer, it's not about the pay; it's about what drives you from the soul," she said. "What drives me from the soul is serving God, country and people while having the privilege to wear this uniform."



# RANDOLPH

## Air Force recruiting seeks to broaden applicant pool

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

Air Force Recruiting Service is casting a wide net seeking out the best and brightest to become Airmen and Guardians. The goal is to reach out to underrepresented groups which will help diversify the force and tap into some areas that could pay dividends to manning and help inspire youth from all parts of America.

AFRS' top Airman uses a sports analogy to describe how recruiting is trying to build the ultimate team by broadening their reach to all corners of the country.

"At the end of the day, recruiting must be about getting the 'best athletes' on the team. Fighting and winning wars is our job and we need the best warfighters in order to do that," said Maj. Gen. Ed Thomas, AFRS commander. "But not all parts of the nation can see themselves wearing our jersey and they're not showing up for tryouts. So, recruiting for diversity is really about attracting many and then selecting the best to join our team."

An example is AFRS has traditionally been strong recruiting in the "southern smile," a reference to the southern states, with great effectiveness. While it is imperative that recruiters continue recruiting this fertile region, there are still many untapped areas of American talent. Thomas believes if we aren't tapping into these areas then AFRS isn't really getting all of the best in the country.

"Why should we accept anything less as America's Air and Space Forces?" Thomas said. "We should go after the



MASTER SGT. CHANCE BABIN

*A group of Air Force mentors attend a training session given by Air Force Recruiting Service's Detachment 1 during an Aim High outreach event at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, Nov. 15, 2019.*

best, the most talented recruits out there across America. If we're not diverse, then it's statistically improbable that we're doing that."

While the enlisted force has a healthy diversity rate that resembles the American population by in large, it's certain operational career fields and the rated career fields that are still lagging behind.

"On the enlisted side, I would say we're doing relatively well, but we still have room for improvement. We're meeting or exceeding nearly every diversity target that we have," Thomas said. "However, our officer ranks, specifically in our pilots and rated aircrew, we still have a lot of work to do."

However, while Thomas is committed to improving

diversity, he's just as passionate about maintaining high standards and combat readiness.

"There is only one path to increasing diversity and that's getting more high-quality diverse candidates that can outperform the next guy or gal in the recruiting line," Thomas said.

While the Air Force drives for increased diversity in the ranks, Pentagon leaders remain vigilant that selection processes remain focused on bringing in the most capable Airmen and Guardians.

"We want to recruit and develop a diverse Air Force and Space Force which capitalizes on our nation's strengths to meet the challenges of tomorrow," said Craig Ploessl,

Secretary of the Air Force/Military Force Management, assistant deputy, recruiting and accessions.

In a move to improve the Air Force's rated diversity, Air Force leaders officially released the service's Rated Diversity Improvement Strategy March 17, 2021, 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 part of the Air Force's broader initiative to improve diversity and inclusion across the entirety of the force," Bass said.

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.

"AETC is focused on accelerating 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."

While Air Force recruiters continue casting a wide net to secure enlisted and officer recruits, AFRS' Detachment 1 is tasked with increasing rated diversity within the Air Force.

"Our intent is for every youth to have an opportunity to connect with someone they can identify with," Thomas said. "That may be based on race or gender. It could also be where they grew up or simply finding someone who's accomplished their dream," Thomas said. "Our AFRS Det. 1 is all about creating that excitement and understanding of what we do. It's a very attractive lifestyle. But, if we don't tell people about it, if we don't show them if we don't let them taste it, then we potentially lose very high quality, often diverse, recruits."

*Editor's note: Information used in this story was obtained from Airman Magazine, Air Education and Training Command Public Affairs and Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs.*

# AETC Real Talk focuses on LGBTQI+, diversity, inclusion

## Air Education and Training Command Public Affairs

Lt. Gen. Brad Webb, commander of Air Education and Training Command, will host the seventh episode of AETC Real Talk: Race and Diversity in the Air Force at 3 p.m. June 17 on AETC's Facebook page.

The episode will focus on the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex population within the Air Force. Joining Webb for this discussion will be Brig. Gen. Brenda Cartier, incoming AETC director of operations and communications.

"The commitment to service by LGBTQI+ Airmen adds to the inclusivity and rich diversity of the Air Force family," Webb said. "I am looking

**"I am looking forward to this conversation and discussing more about the topic of belonging. Diversity, when harnessed, provides an asymmetric advantage that is ultimately a warfighting imperative."**

Lt. Gen. Brad Webb, commander of Air Education and Training Command

forward to this conversation and discussing more about the topic of belonging. Diversity, when harnessed, provides an asymmetric advantage that is ultimately a warfighting imperative."

On Dec. 22, 2010, the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" Repeal Act became law. Certification occurred in July 2011, and full implementation of the act occurred

in September 2011. This allowed lesbian, gay and bisexual military members to serve openly in the U.S. Armed Forces.

On April 28, 2014, the Pentagon released an update to the Department of Defense Human Goals Charter, which for the first time, included language related to sexual orientation in the section dealing with the military.

The charter reads, "Our nation was founded on the principle that each individual has infinite dignity and worth. The Department of Defense, which exists to keep the nation secure and at peace, must always be guided by this principle. In all that we do, we must show respect for service members, civilian employees, and family members, recognizing their individual needs, aspirations, and capabilities."

AETC Real Talk highlights The First Command's priority to cultivate an environment of excellence for all Airmen.

To watch all six episodes of AETC Real Talks, visit <https://www.dvidshub.net/feature/AETCDiversityandInclusion>.

# Air Force releases updated fitness test score breakdown

## Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

The Air Force will resume physical fitness testing July 1 with only three components: push-ups, sit-ups and the 1.5-mile run.

Without the waist measurement as a scored component, push-ups and sit-ups will increase from 10 to 20 points each, while the 1.5-mile run will remain at 60 points. Scoring will fall into five-year age groups, as opposed to the previous 10.

The waist measurement will no longer be required as part of the physical fitness test but a separate assessment of body composition, as required by DOD Instruction 1308.3, will continue starting in October. Testing for body composition may continue to use some form of waist measurement and may be administered during PT testing to reduce scheduling and administrative burdens, but body composition will not be a component of the PT test itself. Further details on the body composition program will be released at a later date.

The Air Force has also worked on alternative strength and cardiovascular testing exercise options with plans to announce them in the coming weeks. Once announced, members and fitness monitors will have approximately six months to familiarize themselves with the use and execution of the alternative testing options prior to having them available in January 2022.

Members will have a choice of which testing options they choose for their physical fitness assessment components. The six-month timeline will help ensure fitness assessment cells are prepared to train physical training leaders to administer tests using the new options.

"We are moving away from a one-size-fits-all model,"



COURTESY GRAPHIC

said Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr. "More testing options will put flexibility in the hands of our Airmen — where it belongs. We know not all Airmen maintain their fitness the same way and may excel in different areas. Alternate components provide choices while still providing a mechanism to determine overall fitness."

These changes align under the Air Force's Action Order Airmen, people-first approach.

"Physical fitness is an important part of our everyday lives, it's more than just a test — it's a way of life, our

readiness and ultimately our future success," said Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force JoAnne S. Bass. "July 1st is a chance to refocus on building a lifestyle of fitness and health, and I know our Airmen will be ready."

For additional information, Airmen can visit myPers or the Air Force's Personnel Center's fitness program page at <https://www.afpc.af.mil/Career-Management/Fitness-Program/>.

The Space Force will follow these policies until service-specific fitness policies are developed and fielded.