

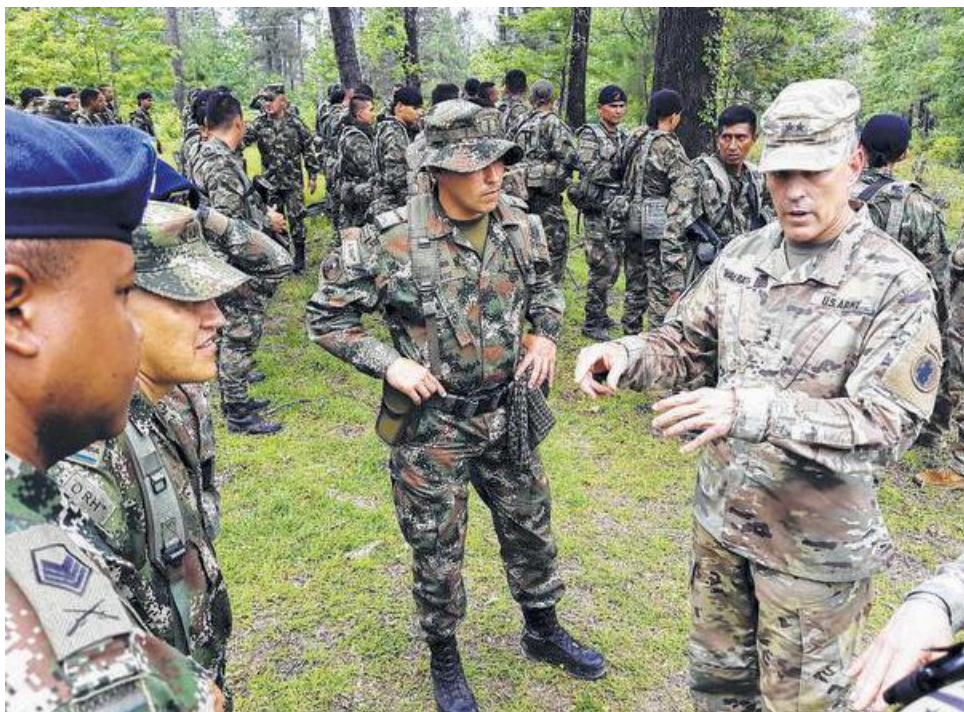
JBSA

LEGACY

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JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO

JULY 2, 2021



Maj. Gen. Daniel R. Walrath (right), U.S. Army South commanding general, greets Colombian soldiers during a visit to the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, Louisiana, June 9.

DONALD SPARKS

Colombian Army meets with ARSOUTH, trains at JRTC

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COVID-19 vaccine available to BMT trainees at JBSA

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PTSD & Me: A warrior's journey living with invisible wounds

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DOD official details efforts to improve housing, climate resilience, energy efficiency

By David Vergun
DOD NEWS

Military installations are a vital aspect of readiness. They afford the Department of Defense important power projection capabilities, especially in today's world where the U.S. is no longer a sanctuary, said the official performing the duties of the assistant secretary of defense for sustainment.

"Therefore, we must ensure that our installations are not only postured to support the joint force, but they are resilient against the full range of manmade and natural threats," Paul D. Cramer said, testifying June 22 at a Senate Appropriations Committee hearing on the fiscal year 2022 military construction/family housing budget request.

"The budget request supports efforts to address mission requirements, ensure service members and their families have a safe and resilient place to live and work and also begins to address resiliency challenges," he added.

Spotlight: FY 2022 Defense Budget

The department is requesting \$26.1 billion in funding for military construction, sustainment, restoration and modernization to address critical mission requirements and life, health and safety concerns, Cramer said.

Cramer explained that this "funding will be used to replace, repair and modernize facilities to enhance their resilience to climate events and promote the elimination of excess or obsolete facilities," he said.

"Extreme weather events are already costing billions of dollars, and those costs are likely to increase," Cramer said.

In response to Executive Order 14008 of Jan. 2, which



COURTESY PHOTO

places the climate crisis at the forefront of foreign policy and national security planning, the department has been developing the DOD Climate Adaptation Plan, which will be finalized soon, he said.

Spotlight: Tackling the Climate Crisis

The plan identifies five key lines of effort, he said.

- ▶ Develop a climate-informed decision making process.
- ▶ Train, test and equip a climate ready force.
- ▶ Build a natural infrastructure.
- ▶ Promote supply chain resilience and innovation.
- ▶ Enhance adaptation and resilience through collaboration.

"We are also committed to protecting the quality of life for our personnel and families. Our

primary focus here is ensuring access to safe, high quality, affordable family and unaccompanied housing," he said.

As such, the budget includes \$1.4 billion to fund construction, operation, and maintenance of the DOD's worldwide non-privatized family housing inventory, which includes more than 34,000 government-owned and 5,800 leased units, he said.

Spotlight: Military Family Support

This request also includes \$477 million for eight unaccompanied housing construction projects, Cramer added.

Cramer stated that, "The department continues to prioritize Military Housing Privatization Initiative reform actions that will improve the

tenant experience and rebuild tenant trust," to include full implementation of the Tenant Bill of Rights at all privatized housing projects.

Cramer also stated that the department is moving forward on implementing energy resilience and efficiency efforts. The budget contains \$4.4 billion in energy investments. That includes approximately \$287 million for the Energy Resilience and Conservation Investment Program.

The ERCIP is a subset of the defense-wide military construction program that funds projects to increase resilience, save energy or water, produce energy or reduce the cost of energy. It also supports the construction of new, high-efficiency energy systems and the modernization of existing ones.

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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. I have a Feedback Friday question, which is more of a comment. Hosting a "Proud Week" for JBAS which involves cleaning up trash, while it is also nationally Pride month celebrating and honoring LGBTQ people, is a bit of a misstep. I suggest rebranding if this event is planned for future years as well.

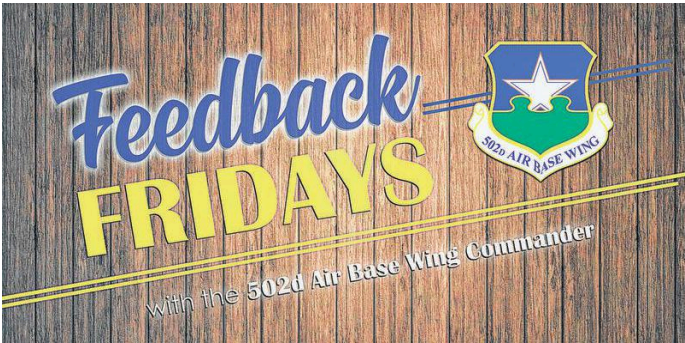
A. Thank you for your observation and comment. Setting June 14-18 as JBAS Proud Week without considering June as Pride Month was an oversight by the event planner. Proud Week is normally held in early spring and mid-fall, so we would normally not run into this issue.

Going forward, JBAS Proud Week will be held earlier than the month of June and consideration is being given to renaming the clean-up effort.

Q. What can be done about all the trash in the Brooke Army Medical Center garage? People throw dirty masks, empty their ashtrays and leave food and beverage packaging on the ground.

I realize there is nothing you can do about the slobos who make the mess, but something needs to be done about the cleanliness of the garage.

In addition, the parking lines in the garage need to be repainted. Is there a plan to complete that in the very near future? The lines are so faint that people park in



COURTESY GRAPHIC

the "red zones."

A. Thank you for bringing this to my teams' attention. Our civil engineers have a contract for trash collection and disposal for the garages and ensure the contractor performs the required services. However, some patrons do not always act responsibly in disposing of their trash in the garage's receptacles, and the trash ends up on the ground.

Both BAMC and our civil engineers regularly check the garage for

cleanliness and perform trash pickup when it is needed.

We would like to remind BAMC patrons to help keep the garage clean and safe. We ask that all BAMC patrons do their part in that effort and when things aren't right, bring them to our attention, the same as you have done, so we can make it right.

Our engineers will confer with the BAMC Facilities Department to assess when to refresh the parking space lines and when they can be programmed and scheduled.

Fireworks: Leave it to the experts!

By Darrin S. Tannert
902ND CIVIL ENGINEER SQUADRON ASSISTANT
CHIEF FOR FIRE PREVENTION

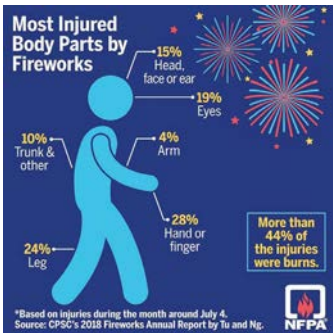
Fireworks have been a part of the Fourth of July celebration tradition ever since the country's beginning, with the founding fathers themselves seeing fireworks fit to mark the birth of their nation.

The message each year is simple: be safe. If you want to see fireworks, go to a public show put on by experts. In addition, keep a close eye on children at events where fireworks are used.

While you are enjoying family time, grilling and fireworks, take the time to remind your kids what this holiday is about. Use this opportunity as a teaching tool; share with them the lyrics of the Star-Spangled Banner and explain the reason we have fireworks.

Safety should be your main concern, so please be safe if your family tradition includes fireworks.

Listed here are 10 fireworks safety tips for parents to use and teach to their kids if they do decide to light off



COURTESY NFPA

their own fireworks:

- ▶ Make sure fireworks are legal in your area before buying or using them.
- ▶ Fireworks packaged in brown paper are made for professional displays – avoid buying.
- ▶ Always have an adult supervise fireworks activities, especially with sparklers.
- ▶ Back up to a safe distance

immediately after lighting fireworks.

- ▶ Never point or throw fireworks at another person.
- ▶ Keep a bucket of water or a garden hose handy in case of fire and to douse used fireworks before discarding them in the trash.
- ▶ Never allow young children to play or ignite fireworks.
- ▶ Never carry fireworks in a pocket or shoot them off in metal or glass containers.
- ▶ Never try to re-light or pick up fireworks that have not fully ignited.
- ▶ Never place a part of your body directly over a firework device when lighting.

The use of fireworks is not permitted at any Joint Base San Antonio installation in accordance with AFMAN 91-201, dated 28 May 2020. It states: "Active duty Air Force personnel (on- or off-duty) and on-duty Air Force civilian personnel will not take part in the transportation, storage, set up or functioning of commercial fireworks for on-base fireworks displays."

According to the NFPA, fireworks

started an estimated 19,500 fires in 2018, including 1,900 structure fires, 500 vehicle fires, and 17,100 outside and other fires. These fires caused five deaths, 46 civilian injuries, and \$105 million in direct property damage.

In 2018, U.S. hospital emergency rooms treated an estimated 9,100 people for fireworks-related injuries. Children younger than 15 years of age accounted for more than one-third (36%) of the estimated 2018 injuries. These injury estimates were obtained or derived from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's 2018 Fireworks Annual Report.

There are no fireworks events planned at any of the JBAS installations, but many controlled firework events are scheduled throughout San Antonio.

For more information, visit the National Fire Prevention Association, or NFPA, website at <http://www.nfpa.org/education>, or the Fire Prevention Offices at JBAS-Fort Sam Houston at 210- 221-2727, at JBAS-Lackland at 210-671-2921, or at JBAS-Randolph at 210-652-6915.

Safety First: Be alert to summer health hazards

By Greg Chadwick

AIR FORCE MATERIEL COMMAND HEALTH & WELLNESS TEAM

Summer's here, and with it comes backyard barbecues, days at the beach, and time spent outdoors. Some of the things that make summer so much fun — swimming, hiking, and longer days — also present plenty of health risks.

Don't let a health emergency ruin your activities. Knowing common summer health hazards can help you and your family take the right steps to keep your summer safe and fun.

Outdoor grilling

A grill placed too close to anything that can burn is a fire hazard. Grills can be very hot, causing burn injuries. Check the gas tank hose for leaks by applying a light soap and water solution to the hose. A propane leak will release bubbles. Have the grill serviced by a professional before using it again.

» Propane and charcoal BBQ grills should only be used outdoors.

» The grill should be placed well away from the home, deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.

» Always make sure the gas grill lid is open before lightening it.

» Clean the grill after each use to remove grease that can start a fire.

In and around water

It's important to know how to be safe while you're in the water, whether it's at the pool or the beach.

» Learn how to swim. Always swim with a buddy; do not allow anyone to swim alone.

» Swim in designated areas supervised by lifeguards. Stay within your swimming capabilities.

» Understand water currents. Natural waters have currents that are moving water. Some currents are easy to see, like waves in oceans and lakes. Other currents are difficult to see or not visible at all. Rip currents in oceans or lakes look calm on the surface but are moving fast underneath.

» If caught in a rip current: don't swim against the current. Swim out of the current, then to shore

Lightning strikes

No place outside is safe when a thunderstorm is in the area. If you can hear thunder, lightning is close enough to pose an immediate threat.

» Check the weather forecast before participating in outdoor activities.

» When thunder roars, go indoors. Stop all activities and seek shelter in a substantial building or hard-topped vehicle.

» To reduce your risk of being struck by lightning while indoors, do not shower, bathe, wash dishes or have any contact with water during a thunderstorm because lightning can travel through a building's plumbing.

» Avoid using electronic equipment connected to an electrical outlet when indoors during a thunderstorm.



CIVILIAN HEALTH PROMOTION SERVICES

Flip-flops

» Flip-flops should only be worn for short-term use, like at the beach, around swimming pools, or in showers and locker rooms at the fitness center.

» This flat-soled footwear offers little in the way of arch or heel support and can cause the wearer injuries including stress fractures, muscle pains, tendonitis, arch pain, and heel pain.

» Flip-flops offer little protection against stubbed toes, abrasions, cuts, or puncture wounds.

» Sandals are a better "open-air" shoe choice because most have a sturdy sole with some arch support.

Ticks

» Ticks live tall grasses and weeds, wooded areas, and leaf litter. Ticks can't jump or fly, so they just wait for an animal to brush up against whatever they're perched on.

» To protect against ticks, avoid exposure in wooded, overgrown areas.

» Stay in the middle of marked trails when hiking.

» Wear protective clothing with long sleeves, long pants tucked into socks, and shoes.

» Use EPA-registered insect repellents containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535, or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus.

» Shower and check your body for ticks after being outdoors.

Chiggers

Also known as red bugs and harvest mites, chiggers are so small that they're hard to see with the naked eye. Chiggers are found in moist, grassy areas like lawns, fields, and forests. Chigger bites produce itchy, red bumps on the skin.

» To protect against chiggers, perform regular mowing of lawns with cutting of tall vegetation, pruning of bushes, trees, and shrubs.

» Use EPA-registered insect repellents containing

DEET, spray on both skin and clothing.

» Showering immediately after coming indoors to remove unattached chiggers.

Lawnmower safety

» Before mowing, remove debris from the lawn such as rocks, sticks, or other potential flying object hazards.

» Always wear protective eyewear, hearing protection, and closed-toe shoes while operating the mower.

» Fill the fuel tank before starting the engine to cut the lawn. Never refuel the mower when it is running or while the engine is hot.

» If the lawn slopes, mow across the slope with a walk-behind rotary mower, never up and down. With a riding lawn mower, drive up and down the slope, not across it to avoid tipping over.

» Do not allow children to play in the vicinity of an operating mower. Never allow young children to ride with an adult on a mower.

For more information on summer health hazards, visit USAFWellness.com or contact your local Civilian Health Promotion Services team. Comprehensive information on summer health hazards can be found on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at CDC.gov.

Article resources:

Grilling: https://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/grilling_fire_safety_flyer.pdf
Water Hazards: https://www.weather.gov/media/safety/rip/Rip_Currents_Sign420.pdf

Lightning: <https://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/202003/thunderstorminformationsheet.pdf>

Ticks: https://www.cdc.gov/lyme/resources/toolkit/factsheets/Hooks_TicksandLymeDiseases08.pdf

General Information: <https://www.cdc.gov/>

Air Force approves official Maintenance Duty Uniform, adds immediate wear of tactical OCP caps

By Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

Air Force commanders of units with aircraft maintenance, industrial and other labor-intensive Air Force Specialty Codes will have the option to authorize wear of a standardized, maintenance duty uniform, also referred to as coveralls, which may be worn on a day-to-day basis upon publication of the updated AFI 36-2903 anticipated for August 2021.

The career fields authorized to wear the MDU are 2A, 2F, 2G, 2M, 2P, 2S, 2T, 2W, 3E, 3D, 1P.

“The MDU idea was presented to the 101st uniform board in November 2020 as a way to help increase readiness and

timeliness from the work center to the flight line,” said Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force JoAnne S. Bass. “We are hoping this change will instill a sense of culture and inclusivity for our maintainers who work to keep the mission going 24/7.”

When authorized by commanders, the sage MDU will be unit funded and members will wear the basic configuration consisting of a nametape, service tapes and rank along with the higher headquarters patch on the left sleeve and a subdued U.S. flag and organizational patch on the right sleeve.

The coyote brown t-shirt, OCP patrol or tactical cap, coyote brown or green socks, and coyote brown boots, are worn with the uniform. The MDU will not be utilized for

office work environments, non-industrial or non-labor tasking, but is authorized for wear when transiting from home to duty location and all locations on installations. It must be worn in serviceable condition. Local coverall variants are still authorized but only in work centers and on the flight line.

Tactical OCP Cap

Additionally, immediate wear of some tactical OCP caps is authorized while the Air Force continues the acquisition process to complete this new uniform item. These are not yet available through AAFES.

Current tactical OCP caps may be worn if they are made entirely of OCP material or OCP material with a coyote brown mesh back. No other

colors or combinations are authorized. The Velcro or sew-on spice brown name tape will be worn centered on the back of the caps. The only item authorized for wear on the front of the cap is rank for officers.

Officers will wear either pinned, sewn or Velcro spice brown rank insignia centered ½ inch on the front of the cap on an OCP background. Air Force first lieutenants and lieutenant colonels will wear black rank. Velcro on the hat should not exceed the size of the insignia. Chaplains may wear the chaplain occupational badge sewn-on and centered ½ inch above the visor.

Enlisted members will not wear rank insignia or a subdued flag on the cap, only a name tape on the back of

the cap is authorized. The front of the cap must not have any Velcro or other items.

In addition, females are authorized to pull their bun or ponytail through the back of the tactical OCP cap.

Once the acquisition process is complete for the new uniform item, which is expected to take approximately a year, all other caps will be unauthorized.

At this time, Guardians will adhere to the uniform standards of the U.S. Air Force until the U.S. Space Force develops its own policy.

Editor's note: Theater commanders prescribe the dress and personal appearance standards in the theater of operations.

FORT SAM HOUSTON

Colombian Army meets with ARSOUTH, trains at JRTC

By Donald Sparks

U.S. ARMY SOUTH PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The U.S. Army can trace its history training with the Colombian Army, or COLAR, to more than 60 years ago, when U.S. Army Ranger officers developed the Lancero training program for the COLAR in the mid-1950s.

Since that time, the initiative has resulted in one of the longest one-on-one professional military relationships, with U.S. Army South taking the lead in maintaining the long-lasting partnership.

This culminated with the first time a COLAR unit recently conducted bilateral training at the Joint Readiness Training Center, or JRTC, at Fort Polk, Louisiana; followed by bilateral staff talks between the two armies at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston.

Having arrived at Louisiana in early May, a platoon element of the COLAR's elite Counternarcotics Brigade integrated with the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, South Carolina Army National Guard, as part of rotation 21-08 to conduct tactical infantry operations, exercise interoperability, and strengthen their ability to plan and execute complex maneuver operations.

"JRTC is a crucible environment and is the culmination of a brigade's training — it requires units who are qualified and capable to go into combat after training at one of the Army's premier combat training centers," said Maj. Gen. Daniel R. Walrath, Army South commanding general, during a visit June 8-10 to JRTC with senior Colombian Army leaders.

"Army South has many partners in the region, and the Colombian Army is one of the best," the general added. "We're very proud and happy for their participation, and we hope to continue to have these types of training events as a continued effort in strengthening our relationship with Colombia."

Highlighting the professionalism of the Colombians during their first 48 hours in the training area known as "the box," Sgt. 1st Class Edwin Perez, JRTC observer-controller-trainer, praised the soldiers for their high level of discipline



DONALD SPARKS

Maj. Gen. Daniel R. Walrath (right), U.S. Army South commanding general, greets Colombian soldiers during a visit to the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, Louisiana, June 9.

and initiative.

"They start moving, get in position, and are engaged and attuned to what they have to do — when it's go-time, it's go-time for them," Perez said. "This platoon is very aggressive and gets after the enemy in the attack. Our U.S. Army soldiers are observing how disciplined they are and tapping into their tactical knowledge."

Training with the Colombian Army is nothing new for the 1-18th Infantry Regiment, as the unit went to Tolemaida, Colombia, in 2019 as part of Exercise Together Forward. The exercise allowed the two armies to exchange infantry doctrine while performing squad and platoon situational training scenarios.

The South Carolina National Guard and The Republic of Colombia have

participated in the State Partnership Program together since 2012, which supports U.S. military security cooperation activities with Colombia.

"My guys have looked forward to training with the Colombians again. It's been an enjoyable experience for both of us," said Command Sgt. Maj. Greg Billings. "We paired them with our Alpha Company, and they loved working together. They have performed exceptionally well, and we're glad to have them in our formations."

The unit was able to bridge the language barrier by having Spanish-speaking soldiers in its ranks, which also allowed the two armies to integrate seamlessly.

"The Colombians bring a different perspective on varying operations and a

fresh look on how to conduct different tactics," Billings said. "They've spent a lot more time in the jungle than we have, and they've been a valuable asset to helping us in that regard."

The trip to JRTC was the first for Maj. Gen. German Lopez, Colombian Army chief of staff for Force Generation, and he viewed his troops' training with American soldiers as a reflection of their capability and commitment to the partnership with the U.S. Army.

"This is very important for our army to observe, train and learn a lot in order to improve the quality of our units," Lopez said. "Additionally, with us being here, we want to show the world whose side we're on. This is the path we want to be on globally and put our army on

ARSOUTH continues on 8

ARNORTH ends COVID-19 vaccination mission, leaders look back on effort

By Thomas Brading
ARMY NEWS SERVICE

With more than 5 million vaccinations administered, the Army has concluded its COVID-19 support mission, which found Soldiers helping others and building trust within some of the nation's hardest-hit communities, Army leaders recently said.

At the request of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA, U.S. Army North, the U.S. Northern Command's Joint Force Land Component Command, completed its COVID-19 vaccination response June 22 after medical personnel departed the New Jersey Institute of Technology Naimoli Family Recreational Facility in Newark.

"We end our COVID-19 support mission, where it began, in the Northeast," said Lt. Gen. Laura J. Richardson, ARNORTH and JFLCC commander, in a news release. "As demand for federal military support for pandemic response declines, so too can our presence as we reset for potential, future all-hazards response and homeland defense missions directed by the Department of Defense."

In February, Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin called on active duty troops to assist with federal vaccination efforts. Since then, ARNORTH has led more than 5,100 military medical and support personnel across the DOD to 25 states and one territory as part of the overall government response to the pandemic, the release said.

The withdrawal comes following months of vaccine distribution, and in addition to helping communities, it has given Soldiers an insight into how to prepare for future responses regarding hazards and homeland defense, said Lt.



STAFF SGT. CAMERIN BASSETT

Col. Andrew L. Olson, the 299th Brigade Engineer Battalion commander, who spent roughly 60 days in East Los Angeles during a vaccine distribution mission.

There, roughly 500 service members worked from dawn to sundown, including members of the California National Guard and 220 Soldiers from the engineer battalion, which falls under 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division.

Troops administered roughly 6,000 vaccinations a day at California State University on the Los Angeles campus. By April, they administered more than 300,000 vaccinations over a 60-day period.

Olson, who has served 20 years in the Army, and his family are no strangers to short notice missions, like the one to Los Angeles. When he got word of the response mission, his wife replied, "OK, we'll see you later," in a connotation that suggested to "expect the unexpected," he said.

With less than a week to prepare, "the immediate concerns the sergeant major and I was how it can impact the training plans we've got the next few months and things like that," he told reporters during an Army Current Operations Engagement Tour.

Once that was out of the way, the first objective was building the right team. To start, they identified which Soldiers wanted to go. Many California natives were already within their ranks, eager to give back to their community, Olson said.

"I think that was great because it came through in the way the Soldiers performed on the ground," he said, regarding the California natives on the mission.

Once they were on the ground, a combination of nurses, pharmacy technicians, and one pharmacist were dropped in to round out the team, which bridged the gap for Soldiers unqualified to administer vaccines but who still served in other capacities,

he said.

Every day during the mission, leaders observed Soldiers display compassion by going out of their way to give extra attention to those who were emotionally distressed or mobility impaired, Olson said.

It was going the extra mile that proved to be a testament to their professionalism, and helped "connect and comfort those who were having a hard time for whatever reason," the commander added. "I was just taken back by it."

In addition, many California locals left vaccination sites surprised "Army people could be so nice," said Command Sgt. Maj. Nathaniel Atkinson Jr., the battalion's senior enlisted leader. "To me, that was a validation of building trust in the community."

From the outset of the COVID-19 response, more than 10,000 active duty service members have gone to hospitals across the country, where they have worked alongside civil authorities and medical

Senior Airman Anabell Salcedo, assigned to the 628th Healthcare Operations Squadron at Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina, administers a COVID-19 vaccine to a local community member at the Community Vaccination Center in St. Paul, Minnesota, June 7.

professionals on the front lines of the pandemic effort.

During this time, ARNORTH was in constant coordination with FEMA, as well as state and local officials to meet the National Preparedness Goal, he said.

The campus location was co-operated by FEMA and the State of California through the Governor's Office of Emergency Services. However, once the Army and other federal agencies left, the city of Los Angeles claimed control of the location.

"I am incredibly proud of all the active duty service members deployed under United States Northern Command who have contributed so much in the fight against COVID-19," said Air Force Gen. Glen D. VanHerck, commander of North American Aerospace Defense Command and USNORTHCOM.

"Through every challenge faced during this pandemic, we have worked alongside and supported the civil authorities and amazing medical professionals across our country who have been on the front lines of this effort," the general added in a news release.

Although Olson said he hopes no other pandemics sweep the nation, acquiring the experience and serving others were both critical to Army preparedness, whether in East Los Angeles or the other side of the globe, he said.

"This has been a unique chance to serve the American people directly," Olson said. "I think it's a matter of just sharing the message that we stand ready to answer the nation's call, whether that's defense support to civil authorities here in the homeland or whether that's abroad."

ARSOUTH

From page 6

another level with other armies around the world as one of the best.”

As part of improving interoperability and identifying future training opportunities with their Colombian counterparts, Army South held staff talks aimed at providing the COLAR insights concerning specific U.S. Army programs, areas of mutual interest and areas of modernization or reform.

Held in a hybrid manner, the staff talks featured a COLAR delegation led by Lopez at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston and the U.S. Army represented by a delegation led by Col. Jeffrey Lopez, Army South Security Cooperation Directorate chief, in Bogota, Colombia. Prior to the executive meeting from June 8-10, the COLAR and ARSOUTH staffs conducted virtual and in-person working groups to develop a five-year bilateral plan for the calendar years 2021-2025.

The five-year plan highlights major objectives of the U.S. and Colombian armies, with Lopez agreeing for COLAR to participate in a JRTC rotation in 2023, as well as hosting or

participating in future Southern Vanguard Exercises throughout the region. U.S. Army South and the Colombian Army remained poised to confront the threats of today and continue to develop capabilities and interoperability to address future challenges.

“Our staffs, as part of the staff talks, are working on a long-term plan, and we are proposing that a larger force, a company-size formation, comes back to JRTC in 2023,” Walrath said, addressing Lopez. “We believe that participation in these types of training exercises is the next step in strengthening our partnership with your army. Your soldiers and leaders make us stronger, and we learn from you as well.”

For Perez, learning from the Colombians provides U.S. Army soldiers a chance to up the ante on being the best army in the world.

“One of the takeaways is that if we, the United States Army, are going to call ourselves the best, we have to train hard because other countries are training hard too,” Perez said. “If we’re going to partner with them (Colombians), we want to make sure we bring our best each time we train together.”



Tom Ball, a volunteer in the U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research Burn Center's therapeutic dog teams program at Brooke Army Medical Center, poses with his dog, Thomas. The dog teams will therapeutically interact with patients, family members and staff members assigned to the center.

COURTESY PHOTO

USAISR Burn Center seeks therapy dog teams

By Dr. Steven Galvan

U.S. ARMY INSTITUTE OF SURGICAL RESEARCH
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research Burn Center at Brooke Army Medical Center is looking for very qualified and dynamic dog teams to aid in the burn center's health care mission.

The dog teams will therapeutically interact with patients, family members and staff members assigned to the center. Interested owners must be able to present all necessary certification documents at the time of the interview.

The team's certification must be issued by a licensed evaluator applying a nationally recognized curriculum and must include the following information:

- » Picture identification of animal/animals and owner.
- » Name of owner and animal/animals.
- » Expiration date.
- » Temperament Standard.
- » Name of the organization issuing the certification document.
- » Name and telephone number of

AAA/AAT supervisor.

- » Determination of animal/owner team status (AAA or AAT).
- » DD Form 2209 Veterinary Health Certificate with updated immunization record or commensurate certified documentation issued by the State, etc.
- » A statement that the animal/animals is/are at least one year old and that the owner has had the animal/animals for more than a year.

During the interview process, teams must demonstrate the animal's ability to respond to the owner's commands, such as “Come,” “Down,” “Sit,” “Stay” and “Leave It,” etc.

Owners/animals with a temperament not suited to an unpredictable, complex environment (e.g. children, crowds, etc.) will not be selected.

Interested owners/teams can call 210-645-5003 to set up the required in-person interview to discuss the pet team requirements and availability with those interested. The animal/animals and all necessary documentation must be brought to the interview.

Hunt Military Communities assumes housing management at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston

**U.S. Army North (Fifth Army)
Public Affairs**

Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston welcomed the Hunt Military Communities announcement on June 22 that it will assume asset and property management at the historic U.S. Army post.

“Fort Sam Houston is the oldest Joint Base San Antonio installation and one of the oldest posts in the U.S. Army,” said Lt. Gen. Laura J. Richardson, U.S. Army North (Fifth Army) commander and JBSA-FSH senior Army element commander. “We welcome the announcement today by Hunt Military Communities, who are committed to putting our people first and ensuring a seamless transition for residents, employees and partners, and committed to preserving the fort’s extraordinary legacy here.”

HMC acquired the assets and property from Lincoln Military Housing.

As part of the acquirement, HMC will assume a partnership interest with the U.S. Army on the asset and property management of the 925 homes within eight neighborhoods at the base.

The Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Energy and Environment approved the transfer of LMH’s interest to HMC on June 15. U.S. Army Installation Management Command’s Army Support Activity Fort Sam Houston will oversee the partnership.

“This is good for the Army because Hunt Military Communities, the Department of Defense’s largest private housing partner with more than 165,000 residents in approximately 52,000 homes at 41 installations in 21 states, brings economies of scale, as well as depth and breadth of experience to its management of housing here,” said Lt. Gen. Douglas M. Gabram, IMCOM commander.

IMCOM, also located on JBSA-Fort Sam Houston, is a major subordinate command of U.S. Army Material Command, which took the lead for Army housing in 2019.

“We welcome the announcement today by Hunt Military Communities, who are committed to putting our people first and ensuring a seamless transition for residents, employees and partners, and committed to preserving the fort’s extraordinary legacy here.”

**Lt. Gen. Laura J. Richardson, U.S. Army North (Fifth Army) commander
and JBSA-FSH senior Army element commander**



A home in the Harker Heights neighborhood at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston.

COURTESY PHOTO

Since then, the Army has made numerous reforms and improvements, including command involvement, the development of a Resident Bill of Rights, quality inspections, the establishment of 24/7 housing hotlines, resident town halls, mobile apps for residents to submit and track work orders, and a revised fee structure.

Additionally, Residential Communities Initiative, which includes companies like HMC that manage housing on Army

installations, is working with the Army to significantly improve housing over the next five years with investments into major renovations and new construction.

Richardson expects the positive trend to continue and encourages resident feedback during town hall meetings and directly to HMC and ASA so that issues can be resolved, especially during the transition.

“If we don’t know about your problems, we can’t fix them,” she said, adding residents will see the same friendly faces since a majority of LMH managerial and maintenance staff will remain with HMC.

Residents can also expect HMC to work to meet the Army’s goal to implement all 18 elements of the Tenant Bill of Rights by the end of July 2021. In the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act, Congress required the Secretary of Defense, in concert with the secretaries of the military departments, to create a Tenant Bill of Rights and ensure its implementation by the private housing companies that own and manage homes on military installations.

“People are our No. 1 priority, and enacting these rights will improve the quality of life of our Soldiers and their families,” said J.E. “Jack” Surash, Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Installations, Energy and Environment), in a recent press release.

For more information on HMC, visit www.huntmilitarycommunities.com.

MICC focuses on safety measures for return to office

By Ryan Mattox

MISSION AND INSTALLATION
CONTRACTING COMMAND
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Mission and Installation Contracting Command leaders at all levels can make a difference by becoming involved and fostering a positive safety and occupational health culture. Their involvement could help enable MICC Soldiers and civilians to effectively manage their personal risk as the MICC workforce begins returning to the office after working for more than a year under COVID-19 protocols.

Last year, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Army officials modified operations around the world to include canceling a number of training operations, increasing distance learning, implementing social distancing in the workplace and maximizing telework.

Consistent with federal

guidelines for opening up our workplaces again, and as local conditions warrant, MICC leadership remains in synch with their number one priority: the health protection and wellness of the MICC workforce.

The MICC is now in the process of resuming workplace operations to the maximum extent allowable. National guidelines allow objective assessments of health status and overall preparedness at state and installation levels to follow a phased approach for MICC Soldiers, civilians, and contractors to resume operations within the workplace.

In the near term, operations will be different from how they were prior to the pandemic. These changes are in place to help protect the workforce while accomplishing the MICC mission.

"As we return to work, how

we operate will be different than what we were normally used to prior to the pandemic," said Greg Walker, the MICC commandant and safety officer. "Protection from the virus, illness, injuries and mishaps impacts the MICC's mission. We can mitigate those impacts by focusing on the fundamentals by following the protocols, providing training, ensuring discipline and enforcing the safety standards and guidelines."

Leaders across the MICC continue to focus on the command's strategy to reoccupy the workplace, as many states are transitioning to Phases 2 and 3. Command officials are closely monitoring the health protection condition adjustments and installations' re-opening processes. Personal protective equipment has been received to allow the safe return per phase, and MICC leadership has said they will continue to

measure the safe return of our workforce and remain flexible to ensure mission accomplishment.

As the command begins to increase occupancy levels in the workplace, Walker offers us a few things to keep in mind.

"For some of us driving to work has not been a regular activity during the past year," Walker said. "Focus on the task at hand, always pay attention to the road and your vehicle, expect other drivers to make mistakes, don't trust anyone but yourself, slow down and always, always, always buckle up."

The workplace itself poses a new set of hazardous that wasn't there prior to the pandemic.

"You will need to evaluate your tasks and workplaces, and address any hazards," Walker said. "The workforce will need to ensure un-needed cables, plugs, equipment, isn't sitting

around collecting dust. These items should be policed up and turn-in to the supply warehouse or the IT team. When it comes to cleaning your personal workspace it's just that personal. It's up to the individual to keep their areas clean, dusted and wiped down."

Walker suggests the first thing you need to do is determine how often to clean. Then determine if regular disinfection is needed. Also, consider the resources and equipment needed and the personal protective equipment appropriate for cleaners and disinfectants.

Walker suggests cleaning high-touch surfaces at least once a day or as often as necessary. Examples of high-touch surfaces include pens, counters, tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, stair rails, elevator buttons, desks, keyboards and phones.

IMCOM commanding general kicks off Fiesta San Antonio

By Brittany Nelson

U.S. ARMY INSTALLATION
MANAGEMENT COMMAND
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Lt. Gen. Douglas M. Gabram, commanding general of U.S. Army Installation Management Command gave remarks at the Fiesta 2021 opening ceremony at Hemisfair Park in San Antonio June 17.

Gabram served as the senior commander for the Fiesta event, representing the partnership between the Department of Defense and San Antonio, known as Military City USA®.

"I appreciate events like this which serve to remind us of the deep and meaningful links between this city and our service members," the general said.

This year's Fiesta Military Ambassadors were also introduced during the event. They include Army Sgt. 1st



AL RENDON

Lt. Gen. Douglas M. Gabram, commanding general, U.S. Army Installation Management Command, poses with the U.S. Army Drill Team at the opening ceremony of Fiesta San Antonio June 17. Gabram spoke at the opening ceremony to kick off Fiesta where he served as the senior commander for the Fiesta event, representing the partnership between the Department of Defense and San Antonio, known as Military City USA®.

Class Pedro Murillo, Army Sgt. Alejandra Valdes, Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Hector Jaramillo, Marine Corps Sgt. Rosa Soto, Navy Petty Officer 1st Class

David Rojas, Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Gabriela, Air Force Tech Sgt. Lateshia Burgess, Air Force Tech Sgt. Arturo Gomez, Coast Guard Petty Officer 3rd

Class Moriah North, and Coast Guard Petty Officer 3rd Class Cameron Robinson.

"I'm joined tonight by this year's group of Military

Ambassadors who represent the best and brightest of our military," Gabram said. "I encourage you all to interact with these Ambassadors as you see them around. Engage them and learn about what they do every day."

The night's festivities included a performance by the United States Air Force Band of the West, the United States Army Old Guard Fife & Drum Corps, the United States Army Drill Team, "Fort Sam's Own" 323d Army Band, the United States Army's Golden Knights, and the introduction of Fiesta royalty.

The first San Antonio Fiesta took place in 1891 as a one-parade event to honor the memory and heroes of the Alamo and Battle of San Jacinto. Fiesta has grown into an annual 11-day event to include celebrations of San Antonio's culture, food, fashion and more.



TISH WILLIAMSON

Soldiers with 68P Radiology Class 20-005 practice social distance and other COVID-19 mitigation measures during a closed graduation on Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston in April 2020.

MEDCoE graduations re-opening to family, friends

U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence Public Affairs

Family and friends of trainees assigned to the U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence, or MEDCoE, at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston are invited back to base for the first open graduation since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

With the local case rates increasing at the time, community attendance at MEDCoE graduations was suspended on March 13, 2020, to help prevent the spread of the virus.

“We are so pleased to welcome back Family and friends for in-person graduations,” said Maj. Gen. Dennis LeMaster, MEDCoE commanding general. “This has been a long time coming and I am proud of our Soldiers and their families, not only for their exceptional patience in the process but in their commitment to protecting

themselves and others from COVID-19.”

Reopening MEDCoE graduations will occur in a systematic manner that is not expected to be complete until July 9 at the earliest. On Monday, June 28, MEDCoE conducted a pilot, or small-scale, graduation before making the final decision on the full implementation of policies and procedures allowing open graduations. The pilot graduation consisted of 14 advanced individual training, or AIT, Soldiers graduating as 68P Radiology Specialists in front of loved ones in an outdoor ceremony.

To ensure proper and effective measures are in place to keep MEDCoE Soldiers safe, several mitigation steps will be applied:

► Only family or friends who have finished a complete vaccine series, plus two weeks, will be permitted to attend the graduation; personnel must

show the COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card for entry. Those unable to get fully vaccinated prior to the pilot graduation may also show proof of a negative COVID-19 test within 72 hours of the graduation event.

► Masks will be worn by all guests during the graduation and in unit areas, regardless of vaccine status.

► Graduating Soldiers who are not vaccinated will also wear a mask as required by current JBSA and unit policies.

► Soldiers may have up to two guests, including infants and small children. Each guest must be listed on their visitation list prior to the graduation.

MEDCoE is the Army's component for medical training and education. They run 257 courses for 26 officer medical areas of concentration and 21 enlisted medical military occupational specialties, or MOSS, annually. While

operating under COVID conditions, MEDCoE executed more than 94% of their courses and graduated nearly 30,000 students in varying specialties ranging from doctors, nurses, and physician assistants to radiologists, medical logistic specialists and animal care technicians.

If all goes well with the pilot, MEDCoE will conduct the first open 68W combat medic graduation, their largest MOS, on July 9 to mark the full implementation of open graduations.

More than 200 combat medics and their families are expected for the event that will be held at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston's MacArthur Parade Field, directly across from the MEDCoE Headquarters.

What about family visits after graduation? Families may be able to visit with their Soldiers immediately following graduation as long as it does not conflict with permanent change

of station, or PCS, travel. MEDCoE Command Sgt. Maj. Clark Charpentier believes family visits are what most of the trainees and their loved ones are most looking forward to.

“It has been at least six months since some families have seen their Soldiers in person,” Charpentier said. “We are happy to open the doors widely, as long as we are able to maintain the high standards of safety that helped us get to these milestones.”

Graduating Soldiers may request off-base passes regardless of vaccine status. Those who are not fully vaccinated must wear a mask at all times. Soldiers who remain on base may visit with their families away from the unit areas.

For more information on the pilot graduation or graduation frequently asked questions, visit the MEDCoE graduation page: www.medcoe.army.mil/graduations.

LACKLAND

BMT trainees now able to get COVID-19 vaccine

By Joe Gangemi

37TH TRAINING WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Recruits at Basic Military Training at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland now can become fully vaccinated against COVID-19 during their training.

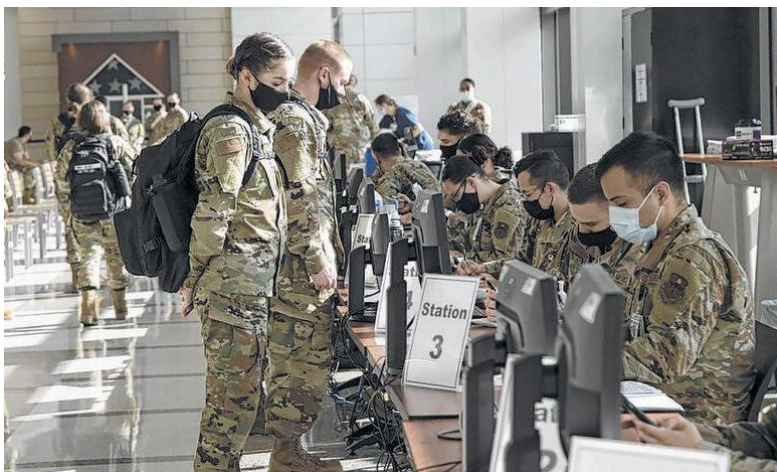
"The timing of those shots also means trainees volunteering for both vaccine dose will be fully protected by graduation, which could be important with the measured return of visitors and the return of some post-graduation liberty procedures," said William Fischer, 737th Training Group training director, Air Force Basic Military Training.

Trainees who volunteer to receive the vaccine will be administered the initial dose during week one of BMT and the second dose in the fourth week of training, 21 days later. The intent is to provide

trainees the opportunity to be fully vaccinated by their projected graduation date and ready for travel to their assigned duty station.

"More and more recruits are arriving at BMT already fully vaccinated. In addition, a greater percentage of trainees each week are volunteering to take the COVID vaccine after their arrival. These encouraging signs mean more protection for the overall training environment and individuals are taking their safety seriously," Fischer said.

"It also helps decrease the chances of a trainee's graduation being delayed because they get sick," Fischer added. "Finally, since all fully vaccinated personnel no longer have to wear masks, full vaccination can have a significant positive impact on someone's training experience."



TECH. SGT. TORY PATTERSON

A U.S. Air Force basic trainee from the 737th Training Group provides information at the processing line to receive a COVID-19 vaccine at Wilford Hall Ambulatory Surgical Center at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland May 14. The 59th Medical Wing's vaccine line hosts trainees weekly to receive the optional vaccine.

JBSA SAPR advocacy team seeks volunteer victim advocates

By Rachel Kersey

502ND AIR BASE WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The Joint Base San Antonio Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Advocacy Center is looking for compassionate active duty military personnel and Department of Defense civilian employees to serve as volunteer victim advocates.

"The SAPR program is our community's response to people affected by sexual assault," said Felicia McCollum, JBSA SAPR Advocates Program director. "Victims of sexual assault can lose faith in society and faith in people can be tremendously diminished. Volunteer victim advocates help to restore that faith."

Volunteer victim advocates, or VVAs, assist in a couple of different ways.

When a service member is sexually assaulted, VVAs provide crisis intervention, referrals and ongoing non-clinical support. They provide victims with information on available options and resources to assist them in making informed decisions about their case. VVAs continue to provide support until the victim states that support is no longer needed.

The VVAs serve on all JBSA installations. Right now, there are only 30 VVAs, and that number is



ALEJANDRA ZIER

The Joint Base San Antonio Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Advocacy Center is looking for compassionate active duty military personnel and Department of Defense civilian employees to serve as volunteer victim advocates.

always fluctuating because advocates are assigned to temporary duty, deployments, permanent change of station moves and myriad other personal life factors.

The SAPR needs 50 to 60 advocates and is currently operating at a deficit of 20 to 30 advocates.

"We are looking for caring, compassionate,

dedicated people who have a desire to provide support to people at what is likely the most difficult and vulnerable time of their lives," McCollum said.

In order to become a VVA, a volunteer must complete an application that requires supervisor- and command-level approval.

After that, a person must submit to a background check. If the background check is successful, advocates must complete a 40-hour training class to be certified by the National Organization for Victim Assistance.

Successful volunteers must commit to serving at least one year as a VVA, and every two years, they also must complete 32 hours of continuing education.

"Helping people in their hour of need is incredibly rewarding," McCollum said. "We absolutely could not accomplish our mission without VVAs!"

For more information, visit <https://www.jbsa.mil/Resources/Resiliency/Sexual-Assault-Prevention-and-Response/Victim-Advocate/> or call 210-808-8990. To complete an application, visit <https://www.jbsa.mil/Portals/102/Name-%20Application.pdf>.

Applications should be turned in at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston at 3555 Patch Road, room R212, San Antonio, Texas 78234.

Five 37th TRG instructors earn AETC master instructor designation

By Dr. Lisa Rich

37TH TRAINING SUPPORT SQUADRON FACULTY
DEVELOPMENT FLIGHT

Training squadrons rely on instructors to train the next generation of Airmen on the technical skills needed to perform in their career field specialties.

Many Airmen come to Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland as formal technical training instructors; however, few earn the designation of master instructor — the highest honor Air Education and Training Command bestows on instructors.

On May 26, Col. Joyce Storm, 37th Training Group commander, recognized five instructors for achieving master instructor status. She presented Master Sgt. Gary Cline, Master Sgt. Ryan Bradley and Tech. Sgt. Christopher Hale, 344th Training Squadron; Tech. Sgt. JericaMay Lecates, 37th TRSS; and Staff Sgt. Corey Meeks, 341st TRS, with the AETC Master Instructor badge, congratulating them for completing the designation requirements.

“Earning a master instructor badge



COURTESY PHOTOS

Five Airmen assigned to the 37th Training Group earned the designation of master instructor and were recognized in a ceremony at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland May 26. From left are Chief Master Sgt. James Allegrezza, 341st Training Squadron; Kevin Salis, 37th Training Support Squadron; Col. Joyce Storm, 37th TRG commander; Master Sgt. Ryan Bradley, 344th TRS; Master Sgt. Gary Cline, 344th TRS; Staff Sgt. Corey Meeks, 341st TRS; Tech. Sgt. JericaMay LeCates, 37th TRSS; Senior Master Sgt. Danny Hayter, 37th TRSS; and Maj. Jordan Clark, 344th TRS commander. Not present for the photo was Tech. Sgt. Christopher Hale, 344th TRS, who along with Bradley, Cline, Meeks and LeCates, earned the master instructor designation.

signifies a prestigious achievement,” said Jerry Wade, 37th TRG Master Instructor and Community College of the Air Force Instructor Certification Program Manager. “Only about 10 percent of instructors earn the designation.”

A technical training and education instructor earns master instructor designation, according to AETC’s Master Instructor Guide, by completing a minimum of 1,000 hours as primary instructor teaching, earning an excellent

or higher rating on the last three consecutive instructor evaluations, completing at least six semester hours of professional continuing education, and participation in professional curriculum development projects.

GUNFIGHTER AVIONICS TEAM KEEPS 149TH FIGHTER WING FLYING



149TH FIGHTER WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Staff Sgt. Jonathan Gutierrez, with the 149th Fighter Wing avionics team, prepares for a test of the F-16’s takeoff and landing configuration. The test, also known as a pitot check, ensures that the aircraft generates the correct altitude readings during flight allowing the pilot to accurately guide the plane during takeoff and landing.

AFIMSC accelerates change across the enterprise with Big Data

By Malcolm McClendon

AIR FORCE INSTALLATION AND
MISSION SUPPORT CENTER PUBLIC
AFFAIRS

The Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center is improving data-driven decision-making processes across the Air and Space Forces. The center hosted a Big Data Summit June 15-17 to share its data management strategy, vision and ongoing efforts with key stakeholders.

"It's no surprise that in the last two to three years, the way we use and how much we rely on data has exploded exponentially across our enterprise, so it's incumbent upon us to get together and take a look at where we are and where we want to go," said AFIMSC Commander Maj. Gen. Tom Wilcox. "By taking an enterprise approach, we can have standards to our data management and make

real-time, relevant information accessible to our Air Force and Space Force decision-makers."

The summit's namesake, Big Data, refers to processes that help interpret the large volumes of information gathered and stored in the modern-day IT environment. AFIMSC's Data and Analytics Working Group has been on the forefront of the Department of the Air Force's Big Data movement since its beginning. Eileen Vidrine, Department of Air Force Chief Data Officer, explained during her opening remarks.

"Two years ago, the Chief Data Office was brand new. We needed somebody to partner with to show the value of data and be part of this 'digital transformation,'" Vidrine said. "It was AFIMSC that had the vision and drive to make data available, accurate and actionable to every installation commander across the department."

AFIMSC was one of the first agencies to utilize the Visible, Accessible, Understandable, Linked and Trusted, or VAULT, data platform visualization tools to build its Installation Health Assessment, saving the Air Force months of work and providing consolidated data analysis to commanders about their installations' health.

"With AFIMSC's continued partnership, more than 3,000 Airmen log on daily to VAULT to use and leverage data at the speed of relevancy," Vidrine added.

Col. Ernest Vasquez, Senior Director and Chief Architect at the Secretary of the Air Force Chief Data Office, noted there is still more work to do to consolidate the large volumes of information across the Air Force and make it into usable data.

"There's lots of data out there in the form of emails, presentations, spreadsheets, reports, texts, etc.," Vasquez

said. "We're trying to get it in one place and make it available to all commanders, and we want to make sure the data is relevant and good quality, so we need to look at how we ingest data."

To achieve this, AFIMSC and the Chief Data Office are looking to industry to incorporate best practices to develop and refine Big Data platforms.

"There are tools Fortune 20 companies have been using for a while and we want to follow suit," Vasquez said. "Even with our added security protocols, we're figuring out how we can bring them on board and make sure they are safe and secure."

In addition to AFIMSC's data consolidation efforts, the summit included updates on Enterprise-IT-as-a-Service, CDO Cyberspace, Basing & Logistics Analytics Data Environment, and IT strategies from AFIMSC's primary subordinate units.

AFIMSC's Chief Information

Officer Michael Osborn shared his vision for the agency's data strategy: support DOD and Air Force data efforts, establish AFIMSC data governance structure, advocate for AFIMSC data sharing, support data-aware organizations, and provide Airmen tactical advantage through data.

The three-day summit concluded with breakout sessions including a data analytics working group, governance of civil engineering IT and the VAULT platform, data literacy and future capabilities.

"These initiatives and efforts are aligned with DOD and Air Force IT and cybersecurity strategies," said AFIMSC's Chief Innovation Officer Marc Vandever. "And now with these tools, we're ready to take the next steps to align data sources to help our action officers across the enterprise make informed and confident decisions."

16TH AIR FORCE (AIR FORCES CYBER) VICE COMMANDER PROMOTED TO MAJOR GENERAL



U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. David M. Gaedecke (right), 16th Air Force (Air Forces Cyber) vice commander recites the Oath of Office during an official promotion ceremony officiated by U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. Timothy D. Haugh (left), 16th Air Force (Air Forces Cyber) commander, Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland June 7.



COURTESY PHOTO

Ecuadorian armed forces students build a bridge during a team-building exercise during a professional development seminar April 30 in Ecuador. Members of the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation and 12th Air Force collaborated with Inter-American Air Forces Academy for the engagement to assess the professional development programs for officer and enlisted ranks across the Ecuadorian military.

IAAFA leads professional development seminar in Ecuador

By Vanessa R. Adame

37TH TRAINING WING
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

For the first time in more than a decade, members of the Inter-American Air Forces Academy recently collaborated with Ecuadorian armed forces for a professional military exchange in Ecuador.

Members of the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation and the 12th Air Force collaborated with IAAFA for the engagement to assess the professional development programs for officer and enlisted ranks across the Ecuadorian military. It was IAAFA's first visit to a partner nation since the coronavirus outbreak more

than one year ago.

"It was a great experience to be able to share knowledge and our development models for both officers and NCOs," said Master Sgt. Diego Ladino Restrepo, Professional Military Education Flight chief. "The Ecuadorian armed forces were very transparent with us, and they opened their doors to us completely."

Approximately 30 military members from the Ecuadorian army and air force participated in the engagement from April 26-30. Each military organization discussed its officer and enlisted structure, including discussions on developing its forces.

Chief Master Sgt. Emilio Avila, IAAFA superintendent,

led a presentation about NCO empowerment with officers and enlisted members. The exchange — originally set for less than an hour — engaged members in a two-hour discussion.

Avila said the Ecuadorian military proved itself a strong and disciplined force with the right educational structure for the careers of their service members.

"We went to learn what they have to offer and how we could complement what they already have," Avila said.

The collaboration helped IAAFA leaders understand how the Ecuadorian armed forces generate future officer and enlisted leaders, including within its female ranks.

Similarly, the forum provided Ecuadorian forces an opportunity to learn how the U.S. develops its military members to become future leaders.

"The purpose was to show how we're bringing them together," said Capt. Yaira Saroli, 837th Training Squadron International Professional Military Education Flight commander. "They're all about developing the officer, but we have an initiative of developing the NCO because it's lacking in Latin America. And they were open to it, which tells us they're willing to learn."

IAAFA members led team-building exercises, bringing the ranks together, to

help strengthen the relationship between officers and enlisted members.

The engagement culminated with two days of visits to Ecuadorian army and air force schoolhouses to learn more about their curriculum and professional development.

"We were very impressed with their processes," Saroli said.

While the armed forces in Ecuador work to improve the professional development of their enlisted forces, IAAFA will continue to strengthen the relationship with this partner nation.

"We don't want them to come to IAAFA only as students, but also as instructors ... we saw a lot of potential," Saroli said.

RANDOLPH

PTSD & Me: A warrior's journey

By Daria Flowers

AIR FORCE WOUNDED WARRIOR
PROGRAM

During a 2006 deployment to Afghanistan, retired Master Sgt. Adam Boccher attempted to mount a weapon on top of a Humvee when he heard a rocket launch headed in his direction.

Leaping for cover, he fell off of the vehicle. Boccher suffered a traumatic brain injury and suffers from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, or PTSD.

Upon return from his deployment, he noticed a difference in himself, both emotionally and physically. He felt he was living in a state of extreme hypervigilance when he heard noises outside his house and became more aggressive and argumentative with family, friends, and strangers. He also noticed a dramatic change in his sleep.

"I had multiple vivid deployment-related nightmares on a nightly basis which significantly impacted my daily quality of life. I woke up each morning exhausted and irritable," Boccher said. "I expected a degree of sleep disruption after I redeployed; but after a month or so of fighting nightly in my sleep, I developed a 'Why me?' attitude rather than looking for ways to improve my sleep."

He was given an ultimatum by his wife who was exhausted from dealing his behavior and lack of control over his emotions. He was told that he either seeks treatment or she would make an appointment to meet with a divorce attorney. In 2008 Boccher decided to seek treatment.

At the first appointment, Boccher only told the provider what he thought they wanted to hear in order to protect his



COURTESY PHOTO

Retired Master Sgt. Adam Boccher, Air Force Wounded Warrior Ambassador, suffered a traumatic brain injury and suffers from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder after a deployment to Afghanistan in 2006. Looking back on his recovery journey, he strongly encourages individuals who feel that they may be experiencing potential signs of an invisible wound to be proactive about their mental health by making an appointment with a provider.

clearance, arming authority, and to ensure job security.

"I was not ready to discuss my deployment related experiences or non-deployment job related traumas. I was worried about my job and being judged by peers for seeking help," Boccher said.

Looking back on that appointment, and his recovery journey, he strongly encourages individuals who feel that they may be experiencing potential signs of an invisible wound to be proactive about their mental health by making an appointment with a provider.

"I definitely was avoiding the physical and emotional pain by keeping myself occupied to the point of exhaustion," Boccher said. "It was a great way to

mask what was going on; I allowed people to see what I wanted them to see and I hid the rest."

After an alcohol related incident in 2017 that ended a career and job that he loved, Boccher learned about the Air Force Wounded Warrior, or AFW2, Program. Before joining the program, Boccher practiced unhealthy coping mechanisms such as spending excessive time at the gym and throwing himself into work. As a result, his relationship with his family suffered.

Since becoming more involved with AFW2, he has switched to healthier coping mechanisms like fitness and holistic wellness such as yoga, meditation and mindfulness

exercises. He credits several Air Force Office of Special Investigations senior leaders, his wife and caregiver Brittany, and AFW2 staff for helping him through his recovery journey.

Another avenue in which Boccher shares his recovery journey of living with invisible wounds is through his YouTube channel, PTSD & Me, and his Instagram page @officialptsd_me. With a background in investigating suicides in the Air Force, and losing a close friend to suicide, Boccher realized that he needed to use his voice to not only share his story, but create a platform to talk about difficult topics like mental health.

With no prior experience in

social media or graphic design, he utilized the internet for free courses to learn how to use YouTube and design software, as well as the help of the AFW2 Wellness and Resiliency team on suggestions for content, delivery, and messaging.

"I want those that are suffering in silence to know that they are not alone. Simply knowing someone else has/is experiencing the same physical or emotional pain eliminates the feeling of isolation. Normalizing mental health is just as important," Boccher said. "I try to eliminate the stigma of seeking mental health services through shared experiences. My hope is something I said or did resonated and inspired an individual to make positive changes in their life."

Wanting to normalize the discussion of mental health, Adam Boccher believes that the first step to doing so, is to hold conversations. For individuals who know someone that is diagnosed with PTSD or suffers from an invisible wound, he shares that a great way to show support is to provide empathy and compassion to show that they are not alone.

Throughout the month of June, AFW2 continues to display social events on Facebook to bring awareness and reduce the stigma of PTSD.

Visit the program's Facebook page to hear stories or resiliency and engage in wellness and activities hosted by Air Force Wounded Warriors. For additional information, to refer an Airman, or learn more about the program, visit www.woundedwarrior.af.mil for additional information and resources.

AFRS honors top recruiters during Operation Blue Suit

By Chrissy Cuttita

AIR FORCE RECRUITING SERVICE PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Air Force Recruiting Service rolled out the red carpet for the top recruiters of the year at their headquarters at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph June 15 to kick off Operation Blue Suit.

The top 18 Air Force recruiters, from all three Air Force components, are considered the best of more than 2,100 recruiters located in more than 1,200 recruiting offices throughout the 50 states and outlying areas, Puerto Rico, Guam, Virgin Islands, Europe and the Pacific Rim who inspire, engage and recruit the next generation of Airmen and Guardians.

"Recruiting the best quality Americans from across the nation is step one in national security," said Maj. Gen. Ed Thomas, AFRS commander. "And it takes talented, dedicated and professional Airmen and Guardian recruiters to ensure we remain the best Air and Space Forces in the world. These Guard, Reserve and Regular Air Force recruiters are the best of the best and set the bar for all others. We're grateful to have them on our team."

Throughout the week, the top Total Force recruiters are recognized in San Antonio for excelling in how they accomplished the mission during an unprecedented Fiscal 2020 where virtual recruiting ramped up due to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic.

Blue Suit Winners are:

- » Tech. Sgt. Nathaniel Hildreth, 330th Recruiting Squadron, San Antonio, Texas
- » Tech. Sgt. Bryan Sizemore, 311th RCS, Canonsburg, Pennsylvania
- » Tech. Sgt. Keenan Harry, 313th RCS, North Syracuse, New York
- » Master Sgt. Brandon Reid, 313th RCS, North Syracuse, New York
- » Tech. Sgt. Ralph Hall-Gonzalez Jr., 318th RCS, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania
- » Master Sgt. Darrell Gaudio, 331st RCS, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama

- » Tech. Sgt. Dustin Kincaid 336th RCS, Moody AFB, Georgia
- » Master Sgt. Cherelle Terry, 342nd RCS, San Antonio, Texas
- » Master Sgt. Aaron Shields, 342nd RCS, San Antonio, Texas
- » Master Sgt. Jacob Bender, 348th RCS, Clearfield, Utah
- » Tech. Sgt. Jacob Haynes, 361st RCS, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington
- » Master Sgt. Christopher Consalvo, 361st RCS, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington
- » Master Sgt. Jose Neri, 351st RCS, Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Georgia
- » Master Sgt. Albert Trombley 351st RCS, Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Georgia
- » Master Sgt. George Wyatt 352nd RCS, Fort Worth, Texas
- » Tech. Sgt. James Hokkanen, 105th Air Reserve Wing, Stewart Air National Guard Base, New York
- » Tech. Sgt. Britni Riffle, 134th Air Refueling Wing, McGhee Tyson Air National Guard Base, Knoxville, Tennessee
- » Tech. Sgt. Clark Vincent Jr., 134th Air Refueling Wing, McGhee Tyson Air National Guard Base, Knoxville, Tennessee

Of all the winners, Hildreth stood out as 2021 Air Education and Training Command Outstanding Airman of the Year/Recruiter of Year.

"I believe that this award shows what a team accomplished, not what I accomplished," Hildreth said. "It took a team for me to become a Blue Suiter. Our team recruited the right individuals for the right job. I'm proud of what we accomplished together."

He credited his squadron leadership for trusting him with a large area of responsibility, his flight chief for mentoring him, his flight mates for making him a better NCO, and his T31 primary developer for helping him understand Special Warfare and Combat Support career fields.

"It was an honor to work with this high-performance team," Hildreth said. "The balance between work and family life was significant. My wife was the glue that

held our family together when I was getting after the mission."

Operation Blue Suit had more winners this year with the expansion of Total Force recruiting.

"To be honest, I didn't even know this award existed until I was notified I was one of the winners," Hokkanen said. "After doing my own research and finding out how prestigious this award is, I was truly honored to have been in a category with the best recruiters worldwide."

Even in an unprecedented year, some recruiters just felt they were simply doing their job.

"I am very humbled and honored to be selected for such a great achievement," said Wyatt, who is an Air Force reserve recruiter. "Being able to maintain the consistency that the job demands during the COVID-19 pandemic while finding the necessary workaround to still assist individuals wanting to join and serve their country."

"Most of FY20 was filled with unexpected challenges leaving recruiters with no leads, no school attendance and no community events... time to think outside the zone," Hokkanen said. "I had to rely heavily on word-of-mouth past leads, past enlistments, and open the door to the 'Air Guard meets Social Media.' Mix all that up with online job postings to multiple virtual FaceTime enlistments and that is how the job got done."

Spouses also lauded the work of the Total Force recruiting team.

"Being part of the recruiting family means long work weeks and lots of stress, but it also means that your fellow Airmen and their families will always be there to offer a strong support system and friendly faces," said Vanessa Olivarez, spouse of Gaudio. "Being part of the recruiting family also means that I get to hear about all of the highly qualified individuals that are joining our Air Force and shaping our future. It is extremely rewarding."

Operation Blue Suit started in 1979 to recognize the Air Force's best recruiters for their efforts in recruiting a diverse, high-performing volunteer force to fill career fields critical to the Air Force.

The Air Force Starts Here: LGBTQI+ Airmen in the First Command

Air Education and Training Command
Public Affairs

On June 17, Lt. Gen. Brad Webb, commander of Air Education and Training Command, sat down with Brig. Gen. Brenda Cartier, incoming AETC director of operations and communications, to discuss the LGBTQI+ community within the Air Force.

"The commitment to service by LGBTQI+ Airmen adds to the inclusivity and rich diversity of the Air Force family," said Webb. "Diversity, when harnessed, provides an asymmetric advantage that is ultimately a warfighting imperative."

Listen to episode 52 of The Air Force Starts Here podcast or watch the live video on the Facebook page

to hear Cartier describe some of her experiences serving in the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" era, how she sees today's total force celebrating diversity and what work still remains.

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."

The original Facebook Live was part of AETC's Real Talk series highlighting The First Command's priority to cultivate an environment of excellence for all Airmen.

Listen to The Air Force Starts Here podcast wherever you stream podcasts at <https://aetc.usaf.afpims.mil/Podcast/>.