

JBSA LEGACY

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JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO

JULY 23, 2021



JASON W. EDWARDS

Army Lt. Gen. Ronald J. Place, director of the Defense Health Agency, unfurls the DHA flag as Air Force Brig. Gen. Jeannine M. Ryder, 59th Medical Wing commander and San Antonio Market director, unveils the new San Antonio Market flag during the market establishment ceremony at Brooke Army Medical Center, Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston July 16. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Michael L. Gragg, Defense Health Agency senior enlisted leader, and Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Marc Schoellkopf assist in unveiling the flags.

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TRICARE and marriage: What to do when getting married

By TRICARE Communications

It's a big moment when you say "I do." It's also important for your family health coverage. Spouses of service members are eligible for TRICARE coverage. And getting married is a TRICARE Qualifying Life Event, or QLE. So, what does this mean and what steps do you need to take?

"Getting married gives you an opportunity to look at your current health coverage, add a newly eligible family member, or make a change to the existing coverage if you choose," said Valerie Palmer, management and program analyst with the Policy and Programs Section of the TRICARE Health Plan at the Defense Health Agency. "With TRICARE, you have several excellent plan options to choose from depending on which TRICARE plan best meets your family's health care needs."

How is getting married a QLE?

Getting married is one of TRICARE's QLEs, like giving birth, moving, or retiring. These life changes may mean different health plans are available to you and your family. And they allow you to make eligible enrollment changes outside of TRICARE Open Season.

As outlined in the TRICARE Qualifying Life Events Fact Sheet, you can stay in the same plan, change plans, or enroll in a plan after a QLE. These rules apply to TRICARE Prime and TRICARE Select. If you use TRICARE For Life, marriage would be a QLE for your spouse if they're under age 65. And keep in mind that premium-based plans (TRICARE Reserve Select, TRICARE Retired Reserve, TRICARE Young Adult, and the Continued Health Care Benefit Program) offer continuous open enrollment throughout the year.

You can read the TRICARE Plans Overview or use the TRICARE Plan Finder to learn about your family's plan eligibility and options. Remember that different family members may be eligible for different plans.

What actions do I need to take after getting married?

After getting married, your spouse's options will depend on your military status and where you live. Eligible children may also gain TRICARE coverage.



MILITARY HEALTH SYSTEM

Spouses of service members are eligible for TRICARE coverage. What does this mean and what steps do you need to take?

First, register your new spouse in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS), so they're eligible to get TRICARE benefits. You must update DEERS before contacting your TRICARE contractor to make any changes to your or your family member's health care coverage. To add your spouse to DEERS, you'll need to visit an ID card office. Bring the original or certified copies of the following documents:

- ▶▶ Marriage certificate
- ▶▶ Spouse's birth certificate
- ▶▶ Spouse's Social Security card
- ▶▶ Spouse's photo ID

You may also register eligible children as dependents until age 21 (or up to age 23 if in college) the same way. This includes unmarried biological children, stepchildren, and adopted or court-placed children. At age 21 or 23, they may qualify to purchase TRICARE Young Adult. Bring their documents to your appointment as well:

- ▶▶ Birth certificate
- ▶▶ Social Security card
- ▶▶ Marriage certificate (for stepchild)

Finally, follow the steps to enroll in a plan. You can do this online, by phone, or by mail. If you have questions, call your regional contractor. Remember that the effective date of coverage will be the date of

your QLE. In this case, this will be the date of the marriage. Your health plan coverage will continue unless you lose eligibility or disenroll from the plan.

Do QLEs impact other eligibility?

When you gain access to TRICARE health coverage, you gain access to TRICARE pharmacy and vision benefits. The TRICARE Dental Program is offered to family members of active duty service members and National Guard and Reserve members. Some TRICARE beneficiaries can also enroll in dental and vision plans through the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program.

How long does a new spouse have to enroll in TRICARE?

You have 90 days from the date of your marriage to change health plans or enroll any new eligible family members if you choose. If you miss this window of opportunity that the marriage QLE provides, you'll have to wait until open season or another QLE to seek coverage. Once you're back from your honeymoon, act quickly.

Learn more about your TRICARE health plan options after you get married, and take command of your health with TRICARE.

JBSA LEGACY

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Feedback Fridays

Brig. Gen. Caroline M. Miller

502D AIR BASE WING AND JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO COMMANDER

Feedback Fridays is a weekly forum that aims to connect the 502d Air Base Wing with members of the Joint Base San Antonio community.

Questions are collected during commander's calls, town hall meetings and throughout the week.

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

Q: I work on Security Hill and am concerned with speeding traffic along Hall Boulevard. The speed limit along Hall Boulevard is posted 20 mph.

In the last few months, traffic along this stretch has been increasingly speeding with many folks doing at least double the speed limit. There is a lot of pedestrian foot traffic on this stretch of road also.

It is a matter of time before someone is possibly hit and seriously hurt. Is it possible to



COURTESY GRAPHIC

get aggressive speed enforcement in this area?

A: Thank you for bringing this safety matter to my attention and helping Security Forces spot these situations as we only have so many patrol cars and speed carts to cover

our installations.

When you see this, please try to get a vehicle description with license plate information and notify the respective installation Base Defense Operations Center at JBSA-Lackland at 210-671-2018, JBSA-Randolph at 210-652-5700 and

at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston/JBSA-Camp Bullis at 210-221-2244.

Q: My unit has recently started up PT. We work out behind the Gillum Gym on Security Hill.

The running trails behind the gym are extremely overgrown and the path has become a safety hazard (ankles, knees, hips). The path is very uneven and a lot of vegetation is coming through the path.

Is there any plan to revamp the path or at least make it safe for runners? The area is great for runs with no traffic, good hills, and plenty of open area. Thank you for your consideration.

A: Thank you for bringing this to our attention.

The path you are citing has an old golf course golf cart path that is periodically been used by joggers and walkers. Our 502d Civil Engineers will access the path for vegetation control and safety risks and develop a plan to mitigate.

Consumer Fraud Alert: Tips for avoiding VA home loan scams

By Patrick Brick, Carolyn Hahn and Alberto Planas

CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION BUREAU

People with VA home loans have been receiving fraudulent calls and mailers from companies who claim to be affiliated with the government, the Department of Veterans Affairs, or your home-loan servicer.

These calls or mailers often try to sway you to refinance your home, agree to a loan modification, or pay your loan via purchased money orders. They may also try to convince you that your home is facing foreclosure.

Be wary of any individual or lender that contacts you and:

- ▶ Asks you to pay fees upfront before receiving any services
- ▶ Tells you to cancel your mortgage

payment and resend the funds elsewhere

- ▶ Asks you to make your mortgage payment via money order or gift cards
- ▶ Tells you to make mortgage payments to someone other than your current loan servicer
- ▶ Asks you to stop making mortgage payments altogether
- ▶ Represents that they're calling on behalf of the VA or another agency of the U.S. government
- ▶ Guarantees to get you a loan modification or stop the foreclosure process
- ▶ Asks you to sign over the title to your property
- ▶ Pressures you to sign papers you haven't had a chance to read thoroughly or that you don't understand

▶ Or other unusual offers or requests

Never give out personal information to a lender or servicer who contacts you out of the blue. Scammers can spoof phone numbers, so you can't rely on caller identification. If you're unsure, it's always safer to hang up and call your loan servicer directly at the number on your mortgage statement.

If you are a victim of or spot a scam, you should first file a complaint with your state attorney general's office. You should also report it to the Federal Trade Commission at ftc.gov/complaint.

In response to concerns raised by VA officials about potentially unlawful advertising in the mortgage lending market, the CFPB recently conducted a sweep of investigations of multiple

mortgage companies that used deceptive mailers to advertise VA-guaranteed mortgages. More than \$4.4 million was obtained in civil money penalties as a result of this sweep. These investigations reflect a commitment to enforcing the laws to ensure the financial marketplace is fair and consumers are protected from deceptive practices, including service members, veterans and surviving spouses whom VA-guaranteed mortgages are designed to benefit.

If you can't pay your mortgage or are worried about missing a mortgage payment, you have options. Use our checklist for more information on how to avoid foreclosure.

People can also visit the VA website or call a VA Regional Loan Center at 1-877-872-3702 for more information.

Air Force accelerates innovation into action with Project Holodeck

Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

In his transformative guidance to the force, “Accelerate Change or Lose,” Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. CQ Brown Jr. provided the strategic imperative to improve innovation pipelines and speed up the service’s decision-making process.

As innovation continues apace across the Air Force, service leaders are focused on doing just that — empowering Airmen and accelerating the fielding and implementation of innovative ideas into tangible results.

“We are a service that believes in the power of ideas and the power of the innovators who generate those ideas,” said Air Force Vice Chief of Staff Gen. David W. Allvin. “Initially, innovators harnessed airpower as a means to overcome the challenges of terrestrial and seafaring battles, and today’s innovators continue that legacy as battlefield lines morph in new and unexpected ways. To the maximum extent possible, we will continue to foster that innovative spirit by aligning Airmen with the resources and support necessary to bring forward game-changing ideas that sharpen our competitive edge.”

To provide this level of backing, the Office of the Vice Chief of Staff recently partnered with Productable Inc. to develop an innovation management platform that allows the Air Force to align the right people, processes and funding to drive innovation at scale.

The platform, which leverages a Software as a Service interface, elevates ideas and avoids innovation shortfalls by properly aligning



The Office of the Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force recently partnered with Productable Inc. to develop an innovation management platform that allows the Air Force to align the right people, processes and funding to drive innovation at scale.

COURTESY GRAPHIC

people and resources, clarifying value proposition and design, linking innovators with experts, and directing time and money efficiently throughout the innovation process.

“The key to leveraging the power of these ideas is an environment that fosters a culture of willingness to take and support risk along with having the resources needed to move from problem identification to a solution that can be scaled enterprise-wide,” said Wm. Brou Gautier, director of Continuous Improvement and Innovation and Spark Tank capability lead for the Air Force. “The chief of staff’s message is clear. It’s time for all Airmen to pick up the pace and Project Holodeck will allow us to manage that pace for efficient leadership decision-making.”

During the first phase of the partnership, Headquarters Air Force will employ Project Holodeck’s transformation

methodology to build a customized innovation program with the ultimate goal of scaling the process across the service.

The partnership with Productable Inc. includes two phases: (1) a prototyping contract with AF CyberWorx, and (2) a development and pilot phase, known as Project Holodeck, funded by the Small Business Innovation Research program and SAF/MG, the department responsible for developing and implementing Air Force business transformation initiatives.

“Our goal in this partnership with the Air Force is to set intrapreneurs up with the right innovation process to scale solutions successfully while giving them access to the funding they need to move quickly,” said Rachel Kuhr Conn, founder and chief executive officer of Productable Inc. “We’re thrilled to be working with the U.S. Air Force in the name of national security and are

confident that our innovation platform can accelerate the change it needs to win.”

The platform seeks to:

▶ **Apply Innovation Intelligence** by identifying best practices for solutions in development, analyzing performance data and ensuring money is applied to achieve the best portfolio outcome.

▶ **Accelerate Decision-Making** by guiding Airmen through development phases more efficiently, guiding experimental activities, generating status reports and making funding recommendations along the way.

▶ **Develop Problem-Solvers** by moving Airmen to quickly develop and test ideas based on Air Force priorities, leveraging innovation best practices, guiding them with the right process and recommending the right team for each project.

▶ **Stretch Taxpayer Dollars** with transparency and

enterprise-wide visibility to ensure money and resources are applied to the most promising ideas that have sustainable support.

“More than 70 executive-level projects within Project Holodeck are now leveraging a methodology that drives deliberate maturation of concepts from ideation to fielded warfighter capability,” Gautier said. “More impressively, we’re able to provide Air Force leaders with the tools needed to address systemic barriers to innovation that hold back our ability to innovate at the speed and scale necessary to meet combat and competition requirements.”

Allvin said the platform provides a centralized project database that increases transparency for innovators and leadership to track the status of numerous initiatives during the various phases of consideration, development and execution.

“Intentionally, innovation is decentralized across the Air Force and intertwined throughout all of our units. Airmen are the service’s greatest resource and are empowered to develop solutions to a wide spectrum of problems,” Allvin said. “However, our decentralized models sometimes create unintentional barriers to success. Project Holodeck will provide the transparency and accountability needed to overcome those roadblocks and move innovative ideas forward.”

The Air Force will continue to highlight Airmen who are driving innovation and accelerating change. Over the next few months, check in on the Empowered Airmen page to see the impact innovators are having across the Air Force.

JBSA First Sergeant Diamond Sharp Awards

Joint Base San Antonio First Sergeants Council

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



Staff Sgt. Eric S. Bartleson

Unit: 57th Intelligence Squadron
Duty Title: United States Electromagnetic Systems Team Lead
Time in service: 11 years
Hometown: Atlanta, Georgia

Staff Sgt. Eric S. Bartleson recently coordinated his squadron's change of command by managing five points of contact, 37 personnel involved and assembling all required resources and venues. His dedication to this event led to a successful execution with no deviations. Bartleson was also recognized as a flight top performer for overseeing the completion of 68 data reviews for his five-member team. He was able to accomplish this while training a new deputy flight commander in the data review process.



Staff Sgt. Randy T. Sayer

Unit: 59th Surgical Operations Squadron
Duty title: Shift Supervisor, Physical Medicine
Time in service: 6 years
Hometown: Pinetop, Arizona

Staff Sgt. Randy T. Sayer arrived at JBSA-Lackland at a time where the Physical Therapy clinic had all NCOs/SNCOs deployed supporting COVID-19 vaccinations. He quickly proved his ability to lead as NCOIC, where he led four Airmen to complete their upgrade training, implemented five environment of care process improvements, created daily accountability, and enforced a culture of safety across the SAMHS market. He also remains focused on his bachelor's degree, taking four classes, prepping for his application to the Army-Baylor Doctor of Physical Therapy program.



Staff Sgt. Andrew C. Taylor

Unit: 59th Training Support Squadron Medical Logistics
Flight
Duty title: NCOIC, Medical Logistics
Time in service: 16.5 years
Hometown: Hopatcong, New Jersey

Staff Sgt. Andrew C. Taylor played a key role in the June Ground Surgical Team Assemblage implementation for the Air Force, obtaining 3,200 supplies worth \$1.2 million. He established a real-time inventory of supplies for more than 550 line items amounting to \$400,000. Taylor eliminated \$1.6 million in budget waste and donated \$1.2 million in assets to three different Army units. He decreased time, established accountability, and safety for shipment deliveries. His improvements have elevated the performance and capabilities of the Air Force Medical Readiness Training Center.



Airman 1st Class Juan C. Resendiz

Unit: 59th Medical Specialty Squadron
Duty title: Aerospace Medical Technician
Time in service: 22 months
Hometown: Brownsville, Texas

Airman 1st Class Juan C. Resendiz is an aerospace medical technician in the Sleep Clinic at Wilford Hall Ambulatory Surgical Center at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland. He has led 295 polysomnography studies, supporting eight providers in 1,500 monthly appointments. Resendiz updated the Squadron's Electronic Records Management program by creating a roster for seven flights and coordinating approval of 15 accounts, proving vital to the 59th Medical Wing's "Highly Effective" rating. Resendiz served as a Spanish interpreter and contributed to the inoculation of 96,000 civilians while deployed in support of COVID-19.

FORT SAM HOUSTON

San Antonio Market to standardize, optimize local healthcare

By Elaine Sanchez

BROOKE ARMY MEDICAL CENTER
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

After years of collaboration, San Antonio's military treatment facilities officially unified as a market with the Defense Health Agency during a ceremony at Brooke Army Medical Center at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston July 16.

The newly designated San Antonio Market will work together to optimize personnel and resources and improve access to care for more than 250,000 military beneficiaries across the region, explained Lt. Gen. Ronald Place, DHA director.

"The San Antonio Market has always been one of the largest and most influential multi-service markets in the Military Health System," said Place during the ceremony. "For decades, the men and women of the San Antonio Market have been leaders in showing the rest of the Military Health System what effective joint operations can look like."

The San Antonio Market is sprawled across the region, encompassing Brooke Army Medical Center, Wilford Hall Ambulatory Surgical Center, 10 stand-alone military treatment facilities, and more than 100 specialty services — staffed by about 11,000 Army, Navy, Air Force, civilian and contract personnel.

As the Department of Defense's only Level I Trauma Center, the market partners with the community's trauma system to administer critical care to civilian emergency patients across 22 counties in Southwest Texas. Additionally, all military medical enlisted forces train at the Medical Education Training Campus on



PHOTO BY JASON W. EDWARDS

Army Lt. Gen. Ronald J. Place, director of the Defense Health Agency, unfurls the DHA flag as Air Force Brig. Gen. Jeannine M. Ryder, 59th Medical Wing commander and San Antonio Market director, unveils the new San Antonio Market flag during the market establishment ceremony at Brooke Army Medical Center, Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston July 16. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Michael L. Gragg, Defense Health Agency senior enlisted leader, and Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Marc Schoellkopf assist in unveiling the flags.

JBSA-Fort Sam Houston.

"The San Antonio Market is a big deal," said Place, also citing the market's cutting-edge research, clinical and specialty care. "It's a diverse military community with profound responsibility for our nation's defense; a community that's proud of its tradition in delivering the full spectrum of services our forces demand."

While formally established July 16, the market has been fostering cooperative efforts for nearly a decade as an enhanced multi-service market, or eMSM, noted Brig. Gen. Jeannine Ryder, San Antonio Market director and commander, 59th Medical Wing. As an eMSM, the 59th Medical Wing and Brooke Army Medical Center, a flagship of military medicine,

have collaborated to deliver safe, quality health care to more than 250,000 beneficiaries since 2013.

"There is no doubt we are better together," she said. "I cannot express the pride I feel, being part of an outstanding and cohesive market team working toward the purpose of unified effort for an integrated health system."

The market's cooperative efforts have never been more apparent than over the past 18 months, Ryder noted.

"Faced with a global public health crisis, we seamlessly worked together and alongside our military and community partners to combat the pandemic through patient care, diagnostic testing, vaccinations, research efforts and more," she

said. "The initiatives were here in San Antonio as well as across the nation ... our medics met the call when needed."

Ryder also thanked all of the market's community partners for their support. The San Antonio market has always benefited from a strong relationship with our community partners," she said.

Moving forward as a market, "we will leverage the best of our capabilities and expertise to optimize the continuity, standardization and access to care for our patients ... because they deserve nothing less," she said.

Place agreed. "This is why we standardize and integrate our health services — to improve the care we provide, and to be prepared to provide it in



Army Lt. Gen. Ronald J. Place, Director, Defense Health Agency, speaks at the San Antonio Market establishment ceremony at Brooke Army Medical Center, Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston July 16.

combat," he said. "As our beneficiaries seek care throughout this community, they'll see more and more common processes, a common health record, and a simplified means to access care; whether that's in a military or civilian setting."

The San Antonio Market is the seventh market to stand up over the past year. DHA assumed administration and management responsibilities of military hospitals and clinics from the Army, Navy and Air Force on Oct. 1, 2019. Since then, these facilities have gradually transitioned from being supported by the military medical departments to the DHA through the stand up of medical markets.

The collaboration you demonstrated to get to this moment was extraordinary and not a 'given,'" Place said. "Today is an acknowledgment of this team; line leaders, medical leaders, staff, our federal colleagues and private sector partners; and the commitment they made to the health of the military community."

Army South hosts Colombian Army senior enlisted leaders

By Staff Sgt. Ashley Dotson
U.S. ARMY SOUTH PUBLIC AFFAIRS

U.S. Army South hosted Colombian Army senior enlisted leaders for the 15th iteration of the semi-annual military-to-military engagement, “Programa Integral para Suboficiales de Alta Jerarquía,” or PISAJ, from June 14-19 at Fort Benning, Georgia, and June 20-25 at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida.

“We are here to enhance essential leadership skills of the Colombian senior non-commissioned officers,” said U.S. Army South Command Sgt. Maj. Trevor Walker. “We are fully committed to assisting our partners in the areas that reinforce Colombia’s commitment and goal to professionalize their NCO Corps.”

PISAJ is a U.S. Army South-hosted engagement between the U.S. and Colombian armies. This year, senior enlisted service members from the Colombian Navy, Peru and México were invited to

participate.

“The NCO Corps is an integral part of what has made the U.S. Army so successful throughout 246 years of service to our nation,” Walker said. “NCOs conduct the daily operations of the Army; they are the vanguard for leading, developing and training Soldiers. Because we have been successful in this aspect, our partner nations, such as Colombia, want to bring their NCO Corps to that same level.

“This program helps them to see how we operate and gives us a venue to share ideas and lessons learned so one they don’t make the same mistakes we did and helps on areas so that they can further develop their NCO Corps,” Walker added. “It also helps us strengthen our partnership in the process.”

During the two weeks of PISAJ, the senior enlisted leaders focused on human resource reform, human rights, NCO development, gender integration and operations. The Colombian Army determined NCO development as one of the pillars of their current transformation necessary to

develop into a strategic combined arms force capable of deploying alongside the U.S. Army worldwide.

“PISAJ is very important for our NCOs and, as the leader for the 32,000 NCOs in our military, I can tell you this is very important for strengthening and developing the professionalism of our NCO Corps,” said Sgt. Maj. William Cuellar Duarte, sergeant major of the Colombian Army. “To come here and experience this training is very gratifying for our NCOs and it contributes to developing and strengthening their capabilities as the next sergeants major and to serve as future senior enlisted advisors.”

U.S. Southern Command Sgt. Maj. Benjamin Jones discussed traveling with his enlisted leader team last month to observe the Colombian Army, Navy, Marines, and Air Force non-commissioned officer and petty officer academies and identify their current capabilities and areas in which they may need assistance. He said he hopes that the Colombian military will continue to work through the PISAJ program and with the

state partnership program to further attend training and have additional mobile training teams to provide additional education.

“These types of bilateral senior enlisted leader engagements strengthen the bilateral defense relationship and establish a way forward between senior enlisted leaders in support of the Colombian’s ongoing effort to further professionalize its force,” Jones said. “Thus becoming the gold standard for professional military forces across Latin America, especially in the senior enlisted leader level.”

Walker revealed his vision of what the future of the PISAJ program can hold for other partner nation militaries.

“I see the PISAJ program growing because a lot of our other partner nations are seeing the progress of the Colombian military and more want a similar program for their country,” Walker said. “Hopefully we can help develop a program for the whole Western Hemisphere but it will take time to see how we can work it to meet the needs of each country. They are all at

different stages in their NCO development and need different levels of courses. The ultimate goal is to work myself out of job and maybe ARSOUTH can reach that.”

Walker briefed that one of the objectives for the next iteration of PISAJ will discuss the progress of the Colombian Sergeant Major Academy and their transformation based off of the courses from the previous PISAJ iterations.

“Like our Sergeant Major Academy, we did not get there in just a few weeks,” Walker said. “It took us years to get us to where we are today.

ARSOUTH in conjunction with the NCO Leadership of Excellence/USASMA, gave them some tools and the Colombian military made some progress with their objectives and course map but they still have some work to do before they can show us their progress.”

Walker and Cuellar concluded by announcing the next iteration of PISAJ will focus on the U.S. Army’s operations sergeants major and will be held in spring of next year.

ARSOUTH KICKS OFF MAIN PLANNING CONFERENCE FOR EXERCISE SOUTHERN VANGUARD 22



Brazilian Army planners were at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston July 12 to discuss the Exercise Southern Vanguard 22 during the main planning conference to prepare for the exercise, which will be held in Brazil with forces from the 101st Airborne Division in December. Exercise Southern Vanguard 22 is an opportunity to increase collaboration, enhance interoperability, and assist in building the capacity of the Brazilian and U.S. armies.

Innovation working group strives to enhance METC training

By Lisa Braun

MEDICAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING CAMPUS PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Experienced instructors, state-of-the-art classrooms and laboratories, and degree pathway programs are some of the many features that give the Medical Education and Training Campus at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston an edge in producing highly trained military allied health professionals.

Introducing innovative technology into the training curriculum provides an additional force multiplier.

Thanks to the men and women who volunteer with the Alamo Spark, an innovation working group with the 59th Training Group at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas, technology progression in the schoolhouse is becoming a reality.

The team, made up of mostly METC instructors, operates four main lines of effort to progress curriculum and instructional delivery that will allow METC students and other trainees to gain exposure to a variety of technological aids that augment the learning environment. These four lines of effort are virtual/augmented reality, 3D printing, video/podcast production, and machine learning/artificial intelligence.

"We are a group of volunteers with a passion for innovation and technology that emphasizes a grassroots approach to solving problems around the TRG," said Air Force Master Sgt. Brian Hermes, an instructor in the METC Radiologic Technologist program and the Alamo Spark lead.

According to Hermes, there are currently 47 Spark Cells around the Air Force. Hermes' group chartered their own team at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston in order to work with students, staff, and other Department of Defense agencies to accelerate innovative changes.

Although the total size of the team is always increasing, they currently have about 20 individuals from three military branches as well as civilian Department of Defense employees that contribute to the mission.

"Each of our lines of effort has produced some incredible things that directly affect METC, training, and the morale and welfare of Airmen, Soldiers and Sailors," Hermes said.

Virtual/Augmented Reality

Working closely with the Air Force Medical Modeling and Simulation Test team, Alamo Spark team member Air Force Staff Sgt. Austin Jur, an instructor in the METC Biomedical Equipment Technician program, has been engaging with a small technology business that develops virtual medical equipment.

Using virtual reality technology allows students to



LISA BRAUN

Airman Lisa Sylvestri, a Medical Education and Training Campus radiologic technologist student, tries out a virtual reality device designed for Biomedical Equipment Technician training during an Alamo Spark cell meeting.

train with the equipment they normally wouldn't see at METC, either due to scarcity, implicit dangers, or expense to maintain. Additionally, a project is underway to apply gaming elements to the training curriculum utilizing the VR environment to help students understand complex material easier, quicker, and more efficiently.

3D Printing

According to Hermes, the Alamo Spark team was asked by the Air Force Surgeon General to manufacture an ear for combat acupuncture training.

Air Force Tech. Sgts. Timothy Billbrey and Malarie Eagle, instructors in the METC BMET program, and leads for the 3D printing line of effort, designed the ear and worked with the JBSA-Randolph dental laboratory to make it more lifelike.

The product was successfully developed and will be shared across all Air Force medical treatment facilities. The file will also be shared with Spark labs across the Air Force, and potentially other services,

so organizations can print the ear on their own. The cost savings is another benefit; the simulated ear can be purchased on Amazon for anywhere from \$25 and up, whereas Alamo Spark can print it for 46 cents.

Media Production

This line of effort serves to accelerate distance and blended learning through multimedia. Leading the way is Air Force Tech. Sgt. Justin Thorpe, another BMET program instructor at METC. Thorpe worked with some METC programs to create video lectures for students placed on a 14-day restriction of movement following their return from holiday leave to mitigate COVID-19 risk. This method of instruction delivery enabled training to continue with zero delays and, in doing so, saved more than \$100K.

Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning

BMET program instructor Air Force Tech. Sgt. Daniel Hauversburk is behind the effort to deliver Robotic Process Automation by "training" computers to perform tasks autonomously. These robots can grab information from online, place them in spreadsheets, format information, send emails, and perform thousands of other tasks in seconds.

This administrative innovation promises to free up time for instructors and mitigates human error that occurs when dealing with a plethora of information. Some DOD and federal agencies are implementing RPA at an entry-level capacity.

These technologies and others like it will enhance the training students receive at METC and elsewhere by supplementing the lectures and providing realistic alternatives to actual experiences.

An example of technology currently being used at METC is the anatomage table, a 3D anatomy visualization system. The anatomage table enables students to observe and study actual muscle, bones and organs in a digital setting without having to visit a cadaver lab.

Virtual dissection can be performed and students can isolate the different systems and organs of the human anatomy. This provides the students a more accurate perspective of the location and size of human anatomy than being obtained from computer models or textbooks.

Many of METC's training programs require students to study anatomy. According to Hermes, two more anatomage tables on the way in addition to one already in use by the Radiological Technologist program, and another that was placed in the Air Force student dormitory. The goal, he said, is to place one inside each of the medical instructional

METC continues on 10

Don't stop short: Completing vaccinations vital to slowing COVID-19

Lori A. Bultman
502ND AIR BASE WING
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Bexar County, Texas, boasts a growing population of more than 1 ½ million residents age 12 and up, and more than 1,241,000 of those residents have been vaccinated with at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.

Surprisingly though, only 1,028,077 residents, or 61.9%, are fully vaccinated, according to San Antonio's Metropolitan Health District as of July 13.

This means approximately 10% of those who received one dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine series did not go back for their second dose.

The new public health director at Metro Health, Claude A. Jacob, said they are constantly monitoring the situation.

Vaccination rates in Bexar County are keeping up with national averages, but one in 10 people have not returned for their second dose in the county, he said.

U.S. Air Force Col. Heather C. Yun, deputy commander for Medical Services at Brooke Army Medical Center, is also concerned about those with incomplete vaccinations.

"The bottom line is that protection against COVID-19 isn't as good with only one dose of a two-dose vaccine," she said. "The immune response has been shown to be strengthened after the second dose, and the ability to prevent COVID-19 increases from the 60 to 80% range to over 90%."

Yun also said fully vaccinated people are far less likely to become seriously ill or to die from the disease.

"They are also much less likely to transmit the infection to their families and communities," she said. "It's



BURRELL FARMER

Lt. Cmdr. Allen Cordova, an officer production recruiter assigned to Navy Talent Acquisition Group San Antonio, receives the initial dose of the COVID-19 vaccine from Air Force Capt. Sarah Gilbert, a registered nurse, assigned to the Same Day Surgery Unit at Wilford Hall Ambulatory Surgical Center.

only after the second dose of an mRNA, two-dose, vaccine that a person can be considered fully vaccinated, so if only one dose has been accomplished, then the individual should continue to wear masks until two weeks following that second dose.

"It's especially important now, with numbers increasing again in the community and the local emergence of the variant virus, to make sure we take advantage of the full protection that these vaccines can offer," Yun said.

Another concern for local health officials is the number of "long haulers" who continue to need care for conditions caused by COVID-19.

"Although most people with

COVID-19 get better within weeks of illness, some people experience post-COVID-19 conditions," according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"Post-COVID conditions are a wide range of new, returning, or ongoing health problems the people can experience four or more weeks after first being infected with the virus that causes COVID-19. Even people who did not have COVID-19 symptoms in the days or weeks after they were infected can have post-COVID conditions. These conditions can have different types and combinations of health problems for different lengths of time."

As cases in Bexar County continue to rise, officials are

urging those who are not fully vaccinated to schedule their second dose, and those who are not vaccinated to strongly consider doing so.

"We have been running this race for a long time. Don't stop just before the finish line," Yun said with urgency. "The great news is that even if you are overdue for a second dose, you do not need to restart the series. Schedule your second dose, or your first, today."

Dr. Bryan Alsip, chief medical officer at University Health System, said during the city's COVID-19 press conference July 14 that nationally, of inpatients with COVID-19, 99% of them are unvaccinated, and 95% of current COVID-19 inpatients at University Health are not

fully vaccinated. He also stated hospitalizations in Bexar County have increased more than 57% in the last week.

In addition to getting or completing the COVID-19 vaccine, Alsip said there are other ways community members can continue to do their part to prevent the spread of the disease within the community.

Utilizing layers of protection, getting vaccinated, wearing masks, washing your hands and maintaining distance are all factors in helping prevent the spread of COVID-19, he said, noting these measures are vital to those with compromised immune systems who may not have a full defense against the disease even with the vaccine as well as children who are too young to be vaccinated.

After more than a year of quarantines, teleworking, homeschooling, and extensive illnesses across the country, it is important to remember it is not over until it's over, and, according to San Antonio Metro Health, COVID-19 is far from being over.

As of July 14, the moving 7-day average of new cases in Bexar County was 265, and there were 258 patients hospitalized with COVID-19, with 81 of those in intensive care units.

Of note in San Antonio's July 14 reporting was a positivity rate of 11.2%, as well as six new deaths within the previous week.

Beating COVID-19 is dependent on everyone, Jacob said, and he is counting on the citizens of Bexar County to make that happen.

"I truly believe it takes a village to raise a healthy community," he said. "Do it for you, do it for your family, do it for SA."

ARNORTH CELEBRATES 103RD ARMY WARRANT OFFICER CORPS BIRTHDAY



SPC. ASHLIND HOUSE

(From left) Retired Chief Warrant Officer Raymond Bell, U.S. Army North Deputy Commanding General-Operations; Maj. Gen Robert Whittle Jr.; and Warrant Officer 1 Jose Guterrez, cut the cake at the 103rd Warrant Officer birthday celebration at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston July 9. Since 1918, warrant officers have served with great distinction, as leaders, mentors, advisors, and technical experts.

METC

From page 8

facilities so METC students in different programs can use it.

The team is also looking to empower METC students to become part of the innovation process by implementing a program that relies on their participation. The program, called Airman Accelerators, will allow students the opportunity to volunteer with the Alamo Spark cell and contribute valuable feedback about how technology could improve their training experience. Additionally, students who are interested in any of the lines of effort can receive training in those or other projects that interest them.

“We’re looking for students to come in with talent and a fresh perspective on things to tell us what we’re doing wrong and to help us figure out how to do it right,” Jur said. “If training is lagging in technology, we want them to tell us so we can start moving it in the right direction to bring us into the future, so we’re depending on them to do that.”

The Alamo Sparks team is planning to introduce more technology that not only helps students with their training during class time but also provides them with the tools to access training material outside of training.

“We created a series of 360-degree videos of all the laboratory practices that can be accessed in the dorm with use of a computer, smartphone, or a VR headset,” Hermes said. “Students would literally be in their dorm room looking around the lab again, reviewing the procedures they learned that day to enhance their understanding or prepare for the next lab assignment in advance.”

The use of technology such as VR in the training environment is a concept that Air Force Airman Lisa Sylvestri, a student in the METC Radiologic Technologist program, feels would be well received by her and her fellow trainees.

“I think it would be great because I know that a lot of people, especially in our generation, are very hands-on,” she said, adding that it’s hard to practice labs when reading what to do from a book. “Hands-on would just be better, especially for the labs.”

LACKLAND

AFCEC strategy leverages Air Force buying power to support CE enterprise

By Mark Kinkade

AIR FORCE INSTALLATION AND
MISSION SUPPORT CENTER
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

An Air Force Civil Engineer Center program to streamline contract acquisition is putting the federal government's bulk buying power in the hands of civil engineers to keep their installations mission ready.

AFCEC's Strategic Acquisition and Category Management program gives engineers a "toolbox" of contract options they can tap to procure facilities and construction services, said program director Dennis Guadarrama. His team acts as strategic advisors to steer engineers to contracts and acquisition approaches.

"Our vision is to choose the right strategy with the right tool, at the right time to build it right," he said. "We develop acquisition strategies based on Air Force needs and ensure contract tools are available in one place for the CE enterprise."

Working in partnership with the Air Force Installation Contracting Center, the AFCEC strategic acquisition team links customers with contracts and contract capacity under the Air Force's broader category management strategy. As the Department of the Air Force category manager for facilities and construction, AFCEC oversees \$7.7 billion in spending, and is also the category lead for furnishings and fire and rescue equipment, Guadarrama said.

The AFCEC program draws on a suite of master contracts to fill engineer needs, and has



COURTESY GRAPHIC

The Air Force Civil Engineer Center, in partnership with the Air Force Installation Contracting Center, is streamlining contract acquisition, putting the federal government's bulk buying power in the hands of civil engineers.

helped deliver \$43 million in contract awards for services like architectural and engineering designs, roofing, personal protective equipment, facilities furnishings, carpeting and other installation needs since October 2020, said corporate program manager Monica Engler.

The result is more than savings, such as value and efficiency, while eliminating contract redundancies, she said.

"Each base has its own needs, and we see them from an enterprise perspective,"

Engler said. "We can link those unique needs to find an effective, efficient solution."

The Strategic Acquisition and Category Management toolbox is available to other U.S. military services and federal agencies, she said.

For example, AFCEC administers the Air Force Roofing Contract, a series of 66 small business contracts with \$325 million capacity for maintenance, repair and replacement. Since establishing the contract, agencies like the U.S. Navy, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration,

the Department of Agriculture, and others have inquired about using the vehicle.

Engler is one of five corporate program managers on the Facilities & Construction team supporting this endeavor worldwide.

AFCEC is also launching AE Next, a design and construction services capability with a capacity for \$2.5 billion in contract awards over 10 years, Guadarrama said. Air Force engineers and agencies across the federal government can use the vehicle for airfield

infrastructure, facilities, general infrastructure and airfield pavement design expertise.

In addition to its facilities and construction focus, the team recently expanded the category management applications in areas such as energy, environmental and task order management.

"We have recently completed an initial inventory of all AFCEC task orders and associated man-hours spent in their management," Guadarrama said. "We believe we can reduce man-hours invested and re-invest this time to other critical projects. The lessons learned can easily be applied across the Air Force."

The AFCEC Category Management and Strategic Acquisition Directorate staff can also provide consulting services such as spending, market, data and gap analysis, strategy development, and acting as the installation's liaison and agent when procuring services.

By centralizing facilities and construction procurement strategies and capability in one program, AFCEC is using category management to address the specific needs of each installation, Guadarrama said.

"AFCEC is focusing on the broad Air Force-wide strategy, one installation at a time," he said.

AFCEC's installation contract portfolio is available at <https://portal.afcec.hedc.af.mil/CLA/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx>. This is a Common Access Card-enabled site.

433rd Airlift Wing welcomes new command chief

By Staff Sgt. Monet Villacorte

433RD AIRLIFT WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The 433rd Airlift Wing welcomed Chief Master Sgt. Takesha S. Williams as the new 433rd AW command chief July 10 at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland.

Preceding her position here, Williams also served in the same capacity at the 93rd Air Refueling Wing at McConnell Air Force Base, Kansas. As the command chief, her role is to provide support and guidance to enlisted Airmen through observation of the health, morale and utilization across the wing.

"I provide leadership in reference to the enlisted force to the commander and staff as well as ensure the well-being of the entire enlisted force here at the 433rd," Williams said.

Williams was previously stationed at JBSA-Lackland in

2017 as the 433rd AW functional administration manager, so when the opportunity arose for her to come back as the command chief, she quickly applied for the position.

"I had been here before," Williams said. "I love the weather and fell in love with the wing and the people. So of course this was my number choice. I'm definitely glad to be here."

When asked what she would like to achieve while here, Williams expressed that she has one main objective she would like to accomplish.

"I just want to leave it better than I found it; if that's helping one person get to where they want to be in their career or making sure that we, from an enlisted force, understand processes and procedures better than we did before I arrived on station, that's a win," she said.

Just as Williams is looking forward to improving the wing with her leadership and support for Airmen, she is also excited to work on some of her own personal and professional goals.

"I'm an outdoors person and running is my jam, so I feel like I have some great running opportunities to improve my fitness level," Williams said. "At some point, I'd like to be in a triathlon. Professionally, I just want to be a better version of myself. I want to be able to share whatever growth I obtained here with the masses as I continue to lean forward in my Air Force career."

As she reminisced on the journey of her military career, Williams had some sound advice for others that may want to step into the role of command chief or pursue any other professional goal.

"Always be true to yourself, stay positive, operate in



STAFF SGT. MONET VILLACORTE

Chief Master Sgt. Takesha Williams, 433rd Airlift Wing Command Chief, stands in front of the 433rd AW headquarters building on July 10 at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland.

transparency and lean forward," Williams said. "I think the sky's the limit and we can be anything we want to if we truly believe in ourselves."

Williams also emphasized the importance of getting involved in organizations, networking and having alternate plans if one is unsuccessful.

Overall, Williams conveyed that she is delighted to be back at the 433rd AW and is anticipating building lifelong friendships and contacts.

"I'm glad to be back," Williams said. "I'm looking forward to making connections and relationships that last a lifetime beyond the wear of this uniform."



SENIOR AIRMAN RYAN MANCUSO

149TH FIGHTER WING CIVIL ENGINEERS MAKE FLIGHT LINE REPAIRS

Second Lt. Ryan McGoldrick, 149th Civil Engineer Squadron environmental manager, jackhammers a section of concrete loose from the flight line at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland June 29. Members of the 149th CES were out at JBSA-Lackland that day to repair sections of the flight line. These routine flight line repairs are done as preventative maintenance when cracks or faults appear as a way to reduce potential damage to aircraft.

San Antonio Innovation Summit open for registration

By Shannon Carabaja
AIR FORCE INSTALLATION AND
MISSION SUPPORT CENTER
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Registration is now open for the inaugural San Antonio Innovation Summit. With the theme of Accelerate Change, the summit takes place Aug. 3-4 at the Henry B. González Convention Center.

The event — a partnership between the Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center, Air Force Civil Engineer Center, Air Force Security Forces Center, Air Force Services Center, Air Force Personnel Center, Air Education and Training Command and AFWERX — will bring innovation collaboration opportunities to an expanded installation and mission support audience.

Registration is free and the summit is open to everyone including military, civilians,

community members and industry.

“We’re excited to work with our local partners to bring leading government and industry innovation experts together in San Antonio,” said Marc Vandevener, AFIMSC chief innovation officer. “The more we educate and train our innovative Airmen how to connect to the innovation ecosystem and bring their ideas to life, the more we empower them to succeed.”

The summit will include speakers and breakout sessions highlighting successes, failures, lessons learned and paths taken to successfully implement innovative projects across the Department of the Air Force and Department of Defense. Functional experts in civil engineering, services, security forces, personnel and contracting will share their vision about the future of innovation and help innovators

pave a path toward sustainment.

Guest speakers include experts from Air Force Ventures, AFWERX, Platform One, Tech Port San Antonio, National Security Innovation Network, Defense Innovation Unit, Air Force Gaming, and Business and Enterprise Systems Product Innovation office.

Innovation panels will

include presentations and question and answer sessions on topics ranging from artificial intelligence, machine learning, small unmanned aerial systems, augmented and extended reality, to autonomous mowers, robotic process automation and next-generation gaming.

“In order to maintain our competitive advantage across the air and space domain, we need every Airman and



COURTESY GRAPHIC

Guardian to make change a priority. The San Antonio Innovation Summit will give them the tools they need to innovate and, more importantly, implement that innovation at the speed of relevance,” Vandevener said.

The summit will also feature a vendor exposition highlighting successful projects currently in progress with many Air Force and DOD partners including Microsoft, UiPath, Booz-Allen-Hamilton, Mobilize, Aerial Applications, Athenium, 3rd Insight, Clarity, Oddball and Renu Robotics.

Registrants will receive the full agenda. Event organizers are also planning a virtual stream for those unable to attend in person. More details will be provided as they become available.

To register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/afpc-afimsc-innovation-collaboration-tickets-160681489661>.

182nd Fighter Squadron instructors train F-16 pilots

By Tech. Sgt. Agustin Salazar
149TH FIGHTER WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The 182nd Fighter Squadron, part of the 149th Fighter Wing at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, stands as one of the premier fighter training units in the nation.

The job of its instructor pilots is to take inexperienced fighter pilots and teach them how to employ the F-16 to defend the country.

The F-16 Fighting Falcon is a compact, multi-role fighter aircraft. It is highly maneuverable and has proven itself in air-to-air combat and air-to-surface attack. It provides a relatively low-cost, high-performance weapon system for the United States and allied nations.

The 149th FW maintains a mobility commitment in many support areas including security forces, medical, civil engineering, services, transportation and military personnel.



First Lt. James Demkowicz, a student pilot assigned to the 149th Fighter Wing, Air National Guard, conducts preflight checks prior to launch during Coronet Cactus, Feb. 28, 2020, at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona. The annual training event deploys members of the 149th Fighter Wing, headquartered at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, to another environment in order to familiarize them with accomplishing mission objectives in an unfamiliar location.

STAFF SGT. DEREK DAVIS

Trespassing at Combat Arms Firing Complex is illegal, dangerous

Tech. Sgt. Robert A. Allore
37TH TRAINING SUPPORT SQUADRON

**“DANGER, WEAPONS
FIRING IN PROGRESS,
KEEP OUT.”**

The Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland Combat Arms Firing Complex at 900 Patrol Road, building 950, just off Medina Base Road, is classified as a “non-contained” range, or impact range.

The display of a red flag and/or a rotating red beacon is located at each range entry point at the JBSA-Lackland Medina Annex range. The rotating red beacon is used during night firing. This flag or beacon indicates the range complex is in operation and firing is scheduled.

The perimeter of the Combat Arms Firing Complex is marked with signs displaying:

This signifies that people should not pass the fence.

Upon entering the range complex, there are signs which display the warning:

**“DANGER, DANGER
FIRING IN PROGRESS
WHEN RED FLAG
IS FLYING.”**

Entrance downrange of the range complex is unauthorized and trespassing is illegal, as well as dangerous, due to gunfire. People requiring access downrange of the firing ranges can coordinate with range operations at 210-671-2349 for authorization.



The display of a red flag and/or a rotating red beacon is located at each range entry point at the JBSA-Lackland Medina Annex range. The rotating red beacon is used during night firing. This flag or beacon indicates the range complex is in operation and firing is scheduled.

TECH. SGT. ALEXANDER D. SCOTT

433rd Airlift Wing resumes fitness testing

Tech. Sgt. Samantha Mathison

433RD AIRLIFT WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The 433rd Airlift Wing at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland resumed Air Force fitness testing July 10 after assessments were suspended for more than a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Airmen were tested on the push-ups and sit-ups portion of the fitness assessment, but the 1.5-mile run was waived due to safety considerations.

According to Capt. Mark Bohling, 433rd Force Support Squadron Sustainment Services Flight commander, the run was excluded due to the base's current Health Protection Condition BRAVO PLUS status.

Each Airman had their own mat and shared a portable sit-up bar with a partner, to help limit contact. Those not actively exercising or participating in the assessment were encouraged to practice social distancing and wear a mask.

"We know it's not required if you've been vaccinated, which most of us are, but we want people to feel comfortable coming here and to be able to focus on their assessment. It's already stressful enough for them," Bohling said.

The Air Force fitness program underwent a lot of changes during the pandemic and there are more to come, Bohling added.

Not only did waist measurements get removed, but also alternative testing options for segments of the assessment are slated to be included in 2022.

Master Sgt. Kimberlee Aquino, 433rd FSS Wing fitness manager, said it's been challenging for the services team to adjust to all of the changes.

"In a lot of ways this is our trial run," Aquino said. "We're getting our feet wet again and getting back into the groove of getting everybody tested."

According to Aquino, this month they focused on high-priority testers, but over



TECH. SGT. SAMANTHA MATHISON

433rd Airlift Wing members take part in the first fitness test in the wing July 10 Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

the course of the next year they plan to get everyone caught up on their assessments.

"It's truly been a team effort to make the required adjustments and make this

happen," Aquino said. "There are a lot of moving parts, so we're asking everyone to have a little patience, but overall, we're here to support people and get them taken care of."

For questions and concerns regarding the 433rd AW Fitness Program, common access cardholders are invited to visit the virtual force support squadron SharePoint site.

3rd Audiovisual Squadron welcomes new leader

By Senior Airman Candace Smith

3RD AUDIOVISUAL SQUADRON
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Darrick Lee relinquished command of the 3rd Audiovisual Squadron to Maj. Karl Wiest during a change of command ceremony at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland July 9.

Air Force Lt. Col. Greg Hignite, Air Force Public Affairs Agency commander, was the presiding officer of the ceremony.

"During my short two years as part of your team, I've grown increasingly proud of how each of you has fulfilled your duties as professional

communicators, and how you've brought honor to the squadron through your work and how you repeatedly sacrificed for the benefit of our Air Force," Lee said. "There were challenges, of course, but those challenges were more than overcome by our successes."

Following the passing of the guidon, Wiest received his first salute as the 3rd AVS commander and began the next chapter for the squadron.

"Whether you're in uniform or a civilian teammate, please know I'm grateful for your service especially in these dynamic times," Wiest said. "Today, conflict is no longer

contained on the traditional battlefield. Our nation's rivals are exploiting and weaponizing the information environment, and using information and imagery in the warfighting domain at the speed of relevance.

Wiest was most recently a student at Naval War College at Newport, Rhode Island. He previously served at Headquarters U.S. Africa Command, Stuttgart, Germany, from August 2019 to July 2020 as the public affairs strategy and plans branch chief. Weist was the first-ever public affairs officer for Provincial Reconstruction Team Farah, Afghanistan.

Wiest was commissioned in



SENIOR AIRMAN CANDACE SMITH

Air Force Lt. Col. Greg Hignite (left), Air Force Public Affairs Agency commander, passes the colors for the 3rd Audiovisual Squadron to Maj. Karl Wiest (right) during a change of command ceremony at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland July 9. Wiest takes over for Lt. Col. Darrick Lee.

2008 as a graduate of the Reserve Officer Training Corps program at Syracuse University, where he received his bachelor of arts in

international relations.

Lee is headed to the Department of the Air Force Entertainment Liaison Office in Hollywood, California.

RANDOLPH

340th FTG names 'On the Spot Award' winner

By Tim Gantner

340TH FLYING TRAINING GROUP
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Tech. Sgt. Kyle Gossen is like a storm rolling over the plains. He attacks various duties from all directions, and all there is to do is to down what you can and hope he doesn't take the roof off.

In other words, Gossen attacks and dominates every mission in his sight.

In March, Gossen arrived in a new role at the 340th Flying Training Group front-loaded with a master's level savvy to resolve issues. His cool disregard for pressure and his iron-clad work ethic provided solutions to hard-to-fix problems following the mandatory unit training assembly in May.

During the MUTA, Airmen completed mandatory annual training. Gossen's responsibility was to update information in the system, but a mini-roadblock blocked his path. Without a search function in the application, he manually updated



TIM GANTNER

Tech. Sgt. Kyle Gossen, a non-commissioned officer in charge of education and training, was named the 340th Flying Training Group's "On the Spot Award" winner for June 2021.

personnel on MUTA briefed training activities.

"I had to sort through every member of the Air Force, well over 800,000 individuals," Gossen said. "So, roughly about 20 extra hours were spent on reducing overdue training by 50%."

Next, the battle-tested former Reserve MTI hit the front-line trenches

to nail down a qualified person to teach CPR, which is mission-critical for unit fitness program managers.

This wasn't an easy task, but Gossen, armed to the teeth with a plan to find his instructor put it to use immediately.

"It's mandatory to network in this position; without the connections I have made over the past few months, I doubt I would have been able to find a provider for the class. Often, it's all about who you know," Gossen said.

Gossen completed the mission and found Tech. Sgt. Constance Cole with the 359th Medical Support Squadron to provide CPR training for fitness managers.

The bottom line is, Gossen secured a solution for the group's points-of-contact to complete critical components in performing their training.

Gossen displayed patience to complete his next mission in crunch time: to transfer personalists' training records. Gossen moved records to a new system, but it didn't work. This sudden and unforeseen blow forced him to

spend countless hours aligning training records with members.

"It was necessary to build each individual in a system called Training Business Area from scratch and transfer all their tasks from one program to the other for 19 individuals with 34 core tasks and many more non-core tasks," Gossen said.

Gossen says he's happy to be acknowledged. Still, his biggest achievement is filling the group's NCOIC of education and training manager position. "The faster you sometimes move, the harder it is to see how you have an impact. It's terrific to be a part of an organization that recognizes hard work," Gossen added.

The "On the Spot Award" is presented to highlight exceptional performance. Gossen fulfilled the day-to-day necessities of his role and impacted 340th FTG readiness. With a stoic demeanor and an A-level masterfulness, his contributions in the new role have been noticed in four short months, and he's being recognized for his contributions to the 340th FTG team.

AETC podcast: Guests return to BMT graduation

Air Education and Training Command Public Affairs

In episode 53 of The Air Force Starts Here podcast, we discuss the decision to open Air Force basic military training graduation to guests starting July 22.

Col. Jeffrey Pixley, commander of the 737th Training Group, joins Jennifer Gonzalez, AETC public affairs, and speaks about balancing the risk to mission, force and community.

"We often get asked if BMT will return to normal. The answer is no, we are 'returning to better,'" Pixley said. "While we can't wait to see family and friends fill the stands of our Pflingston Reception Center again, we have to do this in a

methodical, safe manner in order to secure the safety of our training pipeline."

In March 2020, the Air Force suspended attendance at mass gatherings, which included BMT graduations. This was done to combat the coronavirus and protect the basic military training pipeline, as Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland is the sole site for Air Force BMT.

Current entry requirements to access BMT graduation include:

- ▶▶ Each graduating trainee will be allowed to invite two guests only (infants and children are considered a guest).
- ▶▶ All visitors must be fully vaccinated (last shot plus 14 days) according to current CDC guidelines, and must show proof of their vaccination (i.e.,

the vaccine card); photos or copies will not be accepted.

▶▶ All guests of trainees — including Department of Defense ID cardholders — MUST be on the visitor list to enter the ceremony. No exceptions will be made. Trainees will provide their guests the required information to access the installation and ceremony.

Graduates will have the opportunity for on, or possibly off-installation, liberty following the ceremony to spend time with their guests. In order to mitigate risk to other trainees and cadre, trainees will be required to be fully vaccinated to participate in off-installation liberty. All other trainees will be able to spend that same time with their

families on JBSA-Lackland.

BMT graduations are scheduled for every Thursday at 9 a.m. Central time. Opening day is subject to change if local conditions and COVID-19 protocols change.

For continual updates follow USAFBMT on Facebook or visit their website at www.basictraining.af.mil.

If you cannot attend the graduation, remember it streams live on Facebook for free. If you do get the chance to go, be sure to wear a hat, sunscreen, bring sunglasses, and wear comfortable shoes.

COVID-19 protocols outlined will be adhered to in order to maintain a culture of safety and to mitigate risk to the force, the mission and the community. Leaders at the 37th Training

Wing, along with their mission partners, continuously evaluate conditions and adjust COVID policy as conditions improve or degrade. Information will be updated if/when conditions change.

All Air Force Basic Military Training is conducted at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, known as the Gateway to the Air Force.

The Air Force Starts Here podcast is a professional development podcast designed to help communicate and inform Total Force Airmen across the globe. The podcast can be listened to on the government network on the AETC website, DVIDS, or via mobile application as well as on Apple Podcasts, Spotify and Google Play.

Living with PTSD: Family Style

By Shannon Hall

AIR FORCE WOUNDED WARRIOR PROGRAM

Many people have heard of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, or PTSD, and associate it with a tragic car wreck, military combat or sexual assault.

Although those events can cause PTSD, there are hundreds of other events that can cause and trigger PTSD as well, and the symptoms can last a life time. Many do not realize how simple life tasks like driving, cleaning or being outside can trigger a memory and take a person back to a horrific moment in time.

Retired Master Sgt. Jonathan Session, Air Force Wounded Warrior Ambassador, did not experience combat or a tragic car accident but did face death, loss and hurt during his time in the Air Force. Due to the events he witnessed as a young Airman, non-commissioned officer and again as a first sergeant, Jonathan was diagnosed with PTSD in 2018. Even though he receives therapy and is equipped with resources to help cope, he still has tough days.

"Every day may not be a good day, but it is a day that you have a chance and choice to be better than you were the day before," Jonathan said.

The events that Jonathan witnessed that caused his PTSD, are moments that he will never be able to forget and affect him on a daily basis. One of the simplest tasks, being a daddy and husband, can be overwhelming and challenging when battling PTSD symptoms. Those who suffer from this disorder never know when they will have a good day, bad day, flashbacks or triggers while trying to live a normal life.

"Being a father and husband with PTSD has been challenging and one of my biggest struggles is knowing what my triggers are,"



Retired Master Sgt. Jonathan Session tells his story of resiliency to the 7th Security Forces Squadron at Dyess Air Force Base June 8.

SHANNON HALL

Jonathan said. "I try not to just avoid them, but know how to face them and maintain my father and husband traits that will make my wife and children be comfortable around me."

Children have a tendency to be loud, run through the house, walk up behind you and have never ending questions for their parents. Spouses need help taking care of the home, the children, handling finances, their own personal space and attention from their partner. All of these things, although seem simple and normal, can become added stressors to those with PTSD and make home life difficult to manage.

Trying to cope and understand PTSD is hard on the person diagnosed, and spirals to their significant others as well. If they already struggle to understand their



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Retired Master Sgt. Jonathan Session stands with his wife, Shevina Session.

symptoms and triggers, how can they affectively teach their family when to notice

something is off? It is a major adjustment for everyone involved, but there is hope in

getting to a new normal way of living.

"To my family I can come off instantly aggravated sometimes and I don't even realize it. My wife is amazing at reeling me in, reminding me everyone in the house loves me and that it's okay to take a break to readjust," Jonathan said. "I have also reached out to get the help I need to deal with the illness versus suffering in silence. That's one of the best things I've done for myself."

Seeking mental help is one of the best resources for individuals suffering. Not only can they help people recognize their triggers, they also help come up with ways to divert that anxiety, anger, or stress and channel it into something positive. It is not an easy process, but it is well worth it.

"When I find that I am being triggered or in a place of high frustration, I am better now at giving myself permission to take a step back and give myself the timeout that I need," Jonathan said. "One of the biggest things that helps me is working in my yard. It may not be yard of the month, but cutting my grass and getting my yard in order gives me a sense of calm and gratification that takes me to a happy place."

Learning, coping and living with PTSD is hard on the person diagnosed and their family, but with the right resources and tools, conversations and understanding it can still be an amazing life. Remember to reach out when help is needed, to take a step back and never forget that you are loved and cherished.

"My children and wife help me get through hard moments by continuing to love me unconditionally, being patient with me and allowing me to have the time and space I need to calm down," Jonathan said. "All wounds are not visible and getting help early will cause you to heal sooner."