

# JBSA LEGACY

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JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO

AUGUST 20, 2021

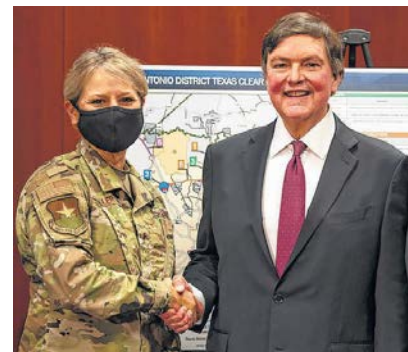


PFC JOSHUA TAECKENS

*U.S. Army and Colombian joint military paratroopers land July 25 at Tolemaida Air Base, Colombia. The jump was part of a six-day Dynamic Force Employment airborne exercise, also known as Exercise Hidra II, between the U.S. Army and Colombian joint military.*

## U.S., Colombian paratroopers conclude DFE bilateral exercise

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## JBSA, TxDOT reach agreement

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## MTI dons uniform for the last time

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# Tough conversation: 'The Things We Carry' resiliency campaign

By 2nd Lt. Katelin Robinson  
502ND AIR BASE WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Brig. Gen. Caroline Miller, 502nd Air Base Wing and Joint Base San Antonio commander, and Chief Master Sgt. Luke Lucas, 502nd Civil Engineer Group Senior Enlisted Leader, sat down with 10 members from the wing for their "Tough Conversation" series on the topic of "The Things We Carry" resiliency video campaign Aug. 10 at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston.

The icebreaker started with around the room introductions and Miller opened the discussion by asking "Has anyone had a chance to review one of the campaign videos or have you heard about this campaign?"

"I actually have seen the videos and find them very inspiring," one member responded. "Serving as a Defender and single parent, I started to get in trouble early on in my career. I lost rank and it was a dark and depressing time."

"My supervisor did not seem that concerned about me but a friend of mine approached me one day and asked the tough question," the member added. "I went to inpatient care and my commander asked if I needed to get out of the military or PCS to get a fresh start."

She discussed how she PCS'd, continued to get the help she needed, got her stripe back and did not feel any negative impacts moving forward in her career.

"Have you seen a shift in leadership now?", Miller then asked.

One individual said that he sees some of the things still happening in leadership, but that the individuals coming into the military now are more vocal about their needs and mental health.

"A culture shift still needs to happen to prevent stigma in seeking helping services," he added. Miller echoed his sentiment, "It is up to us in leadership positions to say it's okay to get help."

Another member provided an example of his personal struggle.

"It is hard to reach out for help when you're the one who is supposed to have it all together," he said. "I wasn't sleeping well, it was wearing me down and I knew I needed to get help. I went to the VA and they have been great."

Teleworking has also caused a strain on leadership's ability to check in and have that touchpoint with their personnel to identify when something is amiss.

"Whether you are brand new to the military or supervising, leading in these times is challenging. Supervising is not a

teleworking task and you need to be there to teach them," Lucas noted.

"It is incumbent on us to reach out and ensure everyone is doing okay," Miller added.

Lucas shared his story of resilience after returning from a deployment in 2011.

"I was pretty broken and needed to see someone. I tried Military OneSource but had trouble finding a provider that I was compatible with," he said. "Eventually, I found a provider in mental health who helped me tremendously."

"All of this is to say, there's a lot of resources out there, if you're trying to find help and hitting a wall, don't give up," Lucas added.

Examples of stories the campaign may highlight are dealing with loss, financial difficulties, domestic violence, divorce, deployments, substance abuse or dependency, professional struggles, suicide, and sexual assault survivors, to name a few.

This is a chance for members to share their experiences and how they have persevered. If you would like to share your story, email [jbsapublicaffairs@gmail.com](mailto:jbsapublicaffairs@gmail.com) subject line //TTWC//. You can check out the videos online at: <https://www.jbsa.mil/Resources/Resiliency/The-Things-We-Carry/>.



Brig. Gen. Caroline Miller (center), 502nd Air Base Wing and Joint Base San Antonio commander, along with Chief Master Sgt. Luke Lucas, 502nd Civil Engineer Group Senior Enlisted Leader, host their "Tough Conversation" series Aug. 10 at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston.

## JBSA LEGACY

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# Feedback Fridays

**Brig. Gen. Caroline M. Miller**  
502D AIR BASE WING AND JOINT BASE  
SAN ANTONIO COMMANDER

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

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

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

**Q: My issue is in regards to parking behind the new JBSA-Fort Sam Houston Exchange at the entrance to Pharmacy Services.**

**On two recent visits to the pharmacy, the parking area behind the Exchange was full, yet there**

**were only three to four patrons waiting for prescriptions, indicating those parked were at the Exchange versus the pharmacy.**

**Could a portion of the lot closest to the pharmacy be designated — with accompanying signage — for pharmacy patrons only? A significant number of the pharmacy customer base is elderly and/or disabled, and the severe lack of parking can be an issue for some.**

**Ongoing construction in front of the Exchange suggests that the existing parking lot there will soon be extended and is sorely needed. This could possibly mitigate some of the issues at the pharmacy parking area, but I believe designated pharmacy parking would be more beneficial for pharmacy patrons. Thank you!**

**A: Thank you for your question.**

Great news! We are in the final phases of completing the project for

the new main store which is expected to be completed within the next few months, resulting in 800 spaces.

In the meantime, we realize parking will temporarily be a challenge for pharmacy customers, and patrons during higher traffic times.

With the current limited parking, to include the north parking lot, we are designating the five front spaces at the curb next to the handicap spaces specifically for pharmacy customers from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday as a temporary solution. Thank you.

**Q: There have been more than seven members (new hires) in my squadron who have had pay issues since they started working here. I feel that the issue is occurring when members are being onboarded.**

**Members' pay documents are not being uploaded into their profiles and this leads to the member having a delay in pay. Is there anyone that I can address these issues with at Finance or Human Resources? Thank you in advance for your time.**

**A: Thank you for your question.**

The 502nd Comptroller Squadron's Civilian Pay Liaison Office's (CPLO, which is different than FSS Civilian Personnel Office) customer service representatives, or CSRs, are expected to respond to all inquiries within seven business days of submission. This means that the technician might not be able to resolve the inquiry but will provide an initial response to the customer, acknowledging receipt of the query.

Priority is given to inquiries related to zero-paycheck issues, new-hire documents, ATAAPS access requests, RITA/Travel Debts, PCS vouchers, Defense Health Agency members and Table 30 builds, as these directly affect employees' pay. All Air Force users will use the Comptroller Services Portal, or CSP, for all pay inquiries found here: <https://usaf.dps.mil/teams/SAFFM CSP /portal/SitePages/Home.aspx>.

Defense Health Agency users can submit inquiries to 502CPTS.FMF.CivilianPay@us.af.mil and Army network users will send inquiries to [usaf.bsa.502-abw.mbx.502-cpts-civilian-pay-air-force@mail.mil](mailto:usaf.bsa.502-abw.mbx.502-cpts-civilian-pay-air-force@mail.mil).

## See something, say something: Army observes Antiterrorism Awareness Month

**By Devon L. Suits**  
ARMY NEWS SERVICE

Terrorism continues to be a persistent threat, as violent extremist organizations and individuals with radicalized ideologies are still a known danger to Army installations and personnel, an antiterrorism expert said Tuesday.

August is Antiterrorism Awareness Month and an opportunity for all Soldiers, civilians, and family members to increase their understanding of extremism, terrorism, insider threats, and cybersecurity vulnerabilities, said James Crumley, the antiterrorism deputy division chief for the Office of the Provost Marshal General.

"Each member of the Army community should be actively involved in combatting against these threats through sustained vigilance and prevention," Crumley said. "These efforts support the Army's top priorities of people and readiness."

The threat to national security is becoming increasingly more dynamic and complex, Secretary of the Army Christine E. Wormuth wrote in a letter to the force to highlight the 12th annual

monthlong observance and call to action.

The Army's protection efforts and personnel must evolve to match the ever-changing threat, Wormuth added.

Army leaders must commit to eradicating extremist activity across the force and apply deterrence efforts, all while empowering personnel to speak up and report a potential risk, Crumley said.

"Lessons learned from past terrorist and extremist attacks revealed at least one bystander that had observed a pre-attack indicator failed to report. If you see something, say something," Crumley added.

Crumley said that timely reporting is critical to the investigation process and allows military and civilian law enforcement a chance to verify a potential threat.

"An actively involved community is key to preventing a terrorist or extremist attack or an insider threat," the secretary wrote. "Please take time during Antiterrorism Awareness Month to review your protection plans and empower your communities. Every person is a sensor in our protective network."

Cyber threats are constantly changing in both complexity and scale. Adversaries continue to develop and employ a range of methods to try and bypass cybersecurity systems to gain access to the Army's networks, Crumley said.

To stem this growing risk, the Army has implemented an array of cybersecurity measures, coupled with proper and sufficient training, to thwart off attacks on the Army's networks, he added.

While online, personnel should be watchful and avoid links or attachments from unknown or unsolicited sources. Individuals should only use trusted websites and inspect all web addresses before selecting them on their internet browser, he said.

Adversaries also employ various tactics through social media and other websites to try to misinform or disinform the Army community, he added. Individuals are reminded to check the facts and sources of all materials and verify information with multiple legitimate sources when possible.

Insider threats pose a risk to the Army's resources and personnel.

Actions by an individual or a group could include espionage, terrorism, unauthorized disclosure of information, and the loss or degradation of assets and capabilities.

Early identification and intervention measures help protect the Army's people, information and critical assets, Crumley said. Personnel who have any information about an insider threat should report it immediately to their chain of command or law enforcement officials.

Terrorism, extremism, or insider threat reporting can be completed through the Army's iSALUTE, iWATCH, or Criminal Investigation Command websites.

The Army's iWATCH program includes antiterrorism awareness resources to help service members and their families identify and report potential activity. The iSALUTE site allows personnel to report threat incidents, extremist behavioral indicators, and other counterintelligence matters.

Individuals can also report a crime or submit a crime tip through the Army CID website, or on a smartphone using the CID Crime Tips mobile application.

# Texas military installations collaborate with TxDOT to strengthen economy, infrastructure

By Ciara Gosier

502ND AIR BASE WING  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Joint Base San Antonio officials met with local city and state representatives at the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce Aug. 16 to commemorate the passing of House Bill 3399.

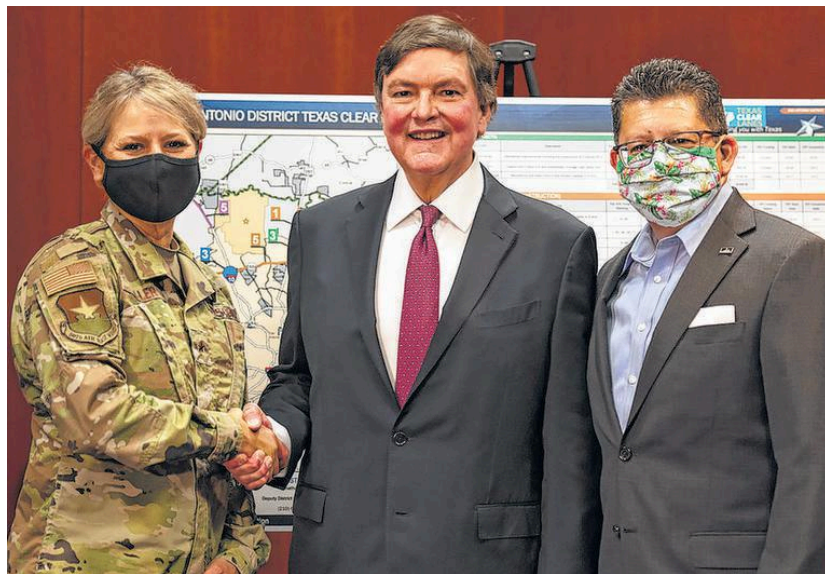
The bill, signed by Gov. Greg Abbott, May 28, allows agreements between the Texas Department of Transportation, the Department of Defense, and other federal entities to assist with the provision of road maintenance, improvement, relocation, or extension of services for military installations, is effective Sept. 1.

Efforts to pass this law has been in the works for numerous years, according to Richard Perez, President and Chief Executive Officer of the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce,

“Enhancing the base’s transportation network within the fence line makes sense on many levels,” Perez said. “This law demonstrates the vital partnerships our state has with military missions throughout Texas and with Joint Base San Antonio, the largest joint base in the Department of Defense.”

This enterprise opportunity between TxDOT and JBSA will deliver additional benefits for both the military and civilian communities, including safety, economic competitiveness, environmental sustainability, innovative project delivery, and the ability to employ TxDOT skills and resources.

“TxDOT looks forward to this new partnership with the DoD that further supports our mission of ‘Connecting You With Texas,’” said J. Bruce Bugg, Jr., Chairman of the Texas Transportation Commission. “This new



PHOTOS BY CIARA GOSIER

From left: U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Caroline Miller, 502nd Air Base Wing and Joint Base San Antonio commander; J. Bruce Bugg, Jr., Chairman of the Texas Transportation Commission; and Richard Perez, President and Chief Executive Officer of the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce, meet for a press conference in San Antonio Aug. 16.

chapter will benefit the civilian and military communities across our great state.”

Under the new legislation, JBSA and other military installations in the state will have the ability to establish Intergovernmental Support Agreements, or IGSAs.

“We have a long and successful track record of partnership activity at JBSA,” said U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Caroline Miller, 502nd Air Base Wing and JBSA commander. “This is a testament to the support from our local communities and the state.”

With the leveraging of regional road service capabilities and IGSAs, the potential to save funding and demonstrating installations being better stewards of taxpayer dollars is presented.

“Allowing TxDOT to apply their resources and skills to projects that support our military missions is huge,” Miller added. “The benefits associated with the economy of scale, buying power and savings in time is paramount to military installations across Texas.”

As federal funding for military missions decreases, partnerships are key in ensuring service members and their families continue to obtain services vital in keeping the mission steadily growing.

“I’ve come to greatly appreciate Texas’ culture and the kindness of the members of this incredible community,” Miller said. “I deeply value the strength of the partnerships we have within the San Antonio region and throughout the state.”

**“We have a long and successful track record of partnership activity at JBSA. This is a testament to the support from our local communities and the state.”**

U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Caroline Miller, 502nd Air Base Wing and Joint Base San Antonio commander



U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Caroline Miller, 502nd Air Base Wing and Joint Base San Antonio commander, gives remarks during a press conference at the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce, in San Antonio, Aug. 16.



TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

*Because as Spouses, you Transition Too*

COURTESY GRAPHIC

The TAP Too workshop is affiliated with the Transition Assistance Program, or TAP, which provides counseling and job assistance to service members who are preparing to leave the military.

## JBSA-Fort Sam Houston M&FRC to host 'TAP Too' workshop Aug. 24-25

By David DeKunder

502ND AIR BASE WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Spouses of transitioning servicemembers will learn about resources that will help them as they re-enter civilian life during the 'TAP Too' workshop at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston Military & Family Readiness Center Aug. 24-25.

The two-day workshop will be held from 8 a.m. to noon and focuses on a variety of topics and issues impacting spouses of transitioning service members — including finances, employment assistance, personal wellness, mental health and TRICARE — which will be covered by subject matter experts from programs and organizations throughout JBSA and the local community.

Because of COVID-19 restrictions, seating is limited for the workshop. In addition, the workshop will be shown on Zoom. JBSA members who want to reserve a seat at the workshop or want to view it on Zoom can call the JBSA-Fort Sam Houston M&FRC at 210-221-2705 or register at <https://e.afit.edu/H8GVYYqr>.

For those attending in-person, masks or face coverings will be required and social distancing guidelines will be followed. The JBSA-Fort Sam Houston Military & Family Readiness Center is located at 3060 Stanley Road, Building 2797.

The recent change in HPCON status at JBSA could impact how the workshop is conducted.

The TAP Too workshop is affiliated with the Transition Assistance Program, or TAP, which provides counseling and job assistance to service members who are preparing to leave the military.

Hazel Wong, JBSA-Fort Sam Houston M&FRC Employment Readiness Program consultant, said the workshop helps connect spouses of transitioning servicemembers to resources, programs and services they can utilize during and after their transition, to subject matter experts who can help them and to other spouses of transitioning service members who can provide support and encouragement.

"We want to let the spouses know we realize they served just like their servicemember did," Wong said. "We know when the service member transitions out, so does our spouse; it's going to be a big change for them as well. They have to look at life outside of the military."

Wong said representatives from programs such as TRICARE, Survivor Benefits Program and the Veterans Administration will be available to answer questions from spouses in person and through Zoom on what benefits they are eligible for once they make their transition.

Representatives from JBSA-Fort Sam Houston Legal Office will be at the workshop to provide information on legal services they can provide to spouses of transitioning service members.

Also, members of the JBSA-Fort Sam Houston M&FRC Employment Readiness Program will be present to help spouses connect to potential career and job opportunities, including helping and providing tips for developing their resumes, and connecting them with M&FRCs, Army Community Services, Fleet and Family Support Centers, or Marine Corps Community Services at other installations.



# FORT SAM HOUSTON

## U.S., Colombian army paratroopers successfully conclude DFE bilateral exercise

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

U.S. and Colombian army paratroopers concluded a bilateral airborne training exercise July 30 with a demonstration of the tactical capabilities of the Colombian Army's elite special forces unit, the Lanceros, at Tolemaida Air Base in Colombia.

The six-day U.S. Southern Command and U.S. Army South bilateral Dynamic Force Employment exercise allowed for the rapid deployment of U.S. troops within the SOUTHCOM area of responsibility to respond to crises and support partner nations in the Western Hemisphere.

Over the course of the week, the two armies collectively trained on day and night airborne operations, a tactical field training exercise, medical evacuation procedures, a combat water survival course and engaged in an obstacle course at the Lancero School.

The Lancero School was established by U.S. Army Ranger, and recent Medal of Honor recipient, then-Capt. Ralph Puckett, who earned gallantry for his combat during the Korean War.

Brig. Gen. William L. Thigpen, U.S. Army South commanding general, and Gen. Eduardo Enrique Zapateiro, Colombian army commander, observed the paratroopers take part in the combined airborne jump on the first day of the exercise.

"Gen. Thigpen and I are in the field today, working hard to develop this training and be completely interoperable,"



PFC. JOSHUA TAECKENS

*U.S. Army and Colombian joint military paratroopers land July 25 at Tolemaida Air Base, Colombia. The jump was part of a six-day Dynamic Force Employment airborne exercise, also known as Exercise Hidra II, between the U.S. Army and Colombian joint military.*

Zapateiro said. "We are going to put in practice all the distinct skills and capabilities that make a great soldier."

The trip to Colombia marked Thigpen's first to an Army South partner nation since his assumption of command June 30 and provided him an opportunity to see firsthand the operational and tactical

capabilities of the Colombian army.

"We want to thank both Gen. Zapateiro and the Colombian Army for hosting us," Thigpen said. "This Dynamic Force Employment is critical in demonstrating readiness with the U.S. and Colombian Army."

As SOUTHCOM's Joint Forces Land Component

Command, Army South conducts security cooperation operations and activities with partner nation Armies in the SOUTHCOM area of responsibility in order to strengthen regional security and counter threats in support of a networked defense of the homeland. Through previous agreements at the conclusion of staff talks between the two

armies, Army South staff planned, coordinated, synchronized and executed the DFE; with the 82nd Airborne Division serving as the operational unit of the exercise.

U.S. Army jumpmaster and platoon sergeant for Company C, 2nd Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Capen reflected on the efficiency of the Colombian paratroopers with whom he trained and jumped.

"One of my favorite things to see was how similar their military and our military operate," Capen said. "Another thing was, from a technological standpoint, is they don't utilize the newest and most advanced equipment, but they are still very proficient in how they operate tactically. It was neat to see."

The positive impression of the Colombian military echoed throughout the ranks of U.S. paratroopers who took part in the exercise, as they were impacted by the various training events and cultural exchanges during the week.

At the closing ceremony, Lt. Col. David Webb, 2-501st Battalion commander, expressed his gratitude and respect for the military participants from the Colombian army who took part in the Dynamic Force Employment exercise.

"The Colombian military is the best partner force that I've worked with in 18 years," Webb said. "I pray for peace, but I'm always ready for war. If I do have to fight a war, I would be proud to serve with each and every one of you."

# ARNORTH Best Warrior leads Soldiers in becoming winners

By **Spc. Ashlind House**  
U.S. ARMY NORTH PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The second line of the NCO Creed states "I am a Noncommissioned officer, a leader of Soldiers."

Staff Sgt. Corey Walton, a musician with the 323rd Army Band "Fort Sam's Own," takes this line to heart, having won the Best Warrior Competitions and NCO of the Year at both U.S. Army North and U.S. Army Futures Command.

Walton, the reigning Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston NCO of the year, strives to motivate, mentor, and adapt to all of his Soldiers' needs.

"For me, what keeps me driven — I know it is going to sound corny — but it's the opportunity to lead Soldiers," Walton said. "Where I am in my career now, the knowledge that I have, and my ability to help shape someone's career in the Army is what keeps me going in this part of my time in the Army."

Over the last couple of years, Walton has been honing his leadership skills and deciding what type of leader he wants to be. Originally from Valdosta, Georgia, Walton said throughout his career as an NCO, he has encountered many different types of personalities. He actively works to adjust his leadership style to fit the needs of his Soldiers, so they in turn can grow to be strong leaders.

"The biggest challenge for me for Best Warrior was just having to get those warrior tasks and drills back in my head," Walton stated. "It's a lot of information that I haven't used since basic training and Advanced Individual Training. I had to get that stuff back in my head, so I can actually check each block when we came to those tasks."

Soldier readiness is something taught throughout the U.S. Army and Walton believes that leading by

example is one of the ways to lead his Soldiers.

"One of my goals in competing was to motivate my Soldiers to compete in the quarterly Best Warrior competitions," Walton said. "It was also an opportunity for my unit to show Army musicians are Soldiers first and there are tasks that we must know to be well-rounded Soldiers."

When he initially joined the U.S. Army, Walton didn't know being a part of the U.S. Army band would be an option. But now he believes it was the best career for him and set him on the path of success. Walton auditioned for the band 15 years ago and now he is a part of U.S. Army North's "Fort Sam's Own."

The Army Band's motto is to promote the Army, our nation's interests, and help ensure its readiness to conduct operations in peacetime conflict and war. While Walton is a member of "Fort Sam's Own," he also encourages younger Soldiers, future Best Warrior competitors, and those thinking about enlisting to focus on physical fitness and soldier readiness.

"Physical fitness is a must," he said. "If there are things physically you have challenges with or personal goals, start working on that now. It will definitely set you behind your peers if you allow that part of your Soldiering to lack, but it also prepares you for everything else the Army is building you to do."

As the Creed states, every NCO is a member of a time-honored Corps who devotes their career to be a leader to all Soldiers. In addition to preparing for the next level of the Best Warrior competition, Walton ensures his Soldiers are taken care of and he is a leader first.

Walton will represent U.S. Army North and Army Futures Command at the U.S. Army Best Warrior Competition Oct. 4-15 at Fort Knox, Kentucky.

**"One of my goals in competing was to motivate my Soldiers to compete in the quarterly Best Warrior competitions. It was also an opportunity for my unit to show Army musicians are Soldiers first and there are tasks that we must know to be well-rounded Soldiers."**

Staff Sgt. Corey Walton, a musician with the 323rd Army Band



SPC. DEANDRE PIERCE

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Corey J. Walton, a member of U.S. Army North's 323rd Army Band, "Fort Sam's Own," plays the tuba at Fiesta Fiesta in San Antonio June 17.





*Members of the 555th Forward Surgical Team rush a simulated trauma patient to surgery during training with the Strategic Trauma Readiness Center of San Antonio at Brooke Army Medical Center at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, May 28, 2020.*

JASON W. EDWARDS

## BAMC takes on additional trauma patients to ease COVID-19 burden

By Elaine Sanchez

BAMC PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Brooke Army Medical Center is taking on additional trauma patients to help ease the rapidly increasing burden on the local healthcare system.

In coordination with the city's trauma system, BAMC is now receiving all inter-facility transfers of injured patients who require a higher level of care from across the trauma region, which encompasses 22 counties across Southwest Texas.

Similar to last summer and earlier this year, by taking on additional trauma patients, BAMC, a Level I trauma center, is freeing up community hospital beds for critically ill COVID-19 patients, explained Air Force Col. Patrick Osborn, BAMC's deputy commander for surgical services.

"Unfortunately, traumatic injuries and other emergent medical conditions do not stop during a pandemic, so these baseline requirements for patient care remain," Osborn said. "Our increased role helps ensure the regional trauma system remains intact despite the increasing stress caused by the current surge."

With the highly contagious Delta variant on the rise, COVID-19 cases have been climbing across the nation, including the San Antonio area. While the community has experienced similar increases in the past, the local healthcare system faces additional stress as mask mandates have eased and vaccination rates have slowed, Osborn noted.

"This is an important step in preserving healthcare resources in what could be a far greater increase in COVID-19 cases than we have seen to date," Osborn said. "We hope that BAMC's ability to take on more of the region's requirements will ease the stress on this vital trauma system."

This marks the third time BAMC has taken on a higher percentage of trauma patients since the pandemic started. As with each occasion, the redistribution of high-level trauma care is being accomplished seamlessly due to the history of collaboration between the region's two Level I facilities and the Southwest Texas Regional Advisory Council, which manages the local trauma system, noted Dr. Timothy Nunez, BAMC's chief for Trauma and Surgical Critical Care.

"We have an active and long-standing partnership with STRAC and our Level I partner, University Hospital, which enables us to act as a cohesive, efficient system in times of crisis," he said.

Alongside University Hospital, BAMC provides lifesaving care to more than 6,000 emergency patients each year.

The collaboration of this region's medical community is "truly remarkable," noted Brig. Gen. Clinton Murray, BAMC commanding general.

"We are grateful to have longstanding partnerships and honored to serve our community during this incredibly challenging time for our nation," Murray said.



# Lt. Gen. Laura J. Richardson: U.S. must remain 'Partner of Choice' in Western Hemisphere

By Terri Moon Cronk  
DOD NEWS

The nominee for the commander post at U.S. Southern Command told Congress she would build upon her predecessor's efforts and work diligently with U.S. partners to ensure SOUTHCOM fully accounts for the defense challenges and opportunities in Central and South America and the Caribbean.

Army Lt. Gen. Laura J. Richardson testified in her nomination hearing for promotion to general and assuming command of SOUTHCOM before the Senate Armed Forces Committee. Currently serving as the commander of U.S. Army North at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas, Richardson would replace outgoing SOUTHCOM commander Navy Adm. Craig S. Faller.

In this era of long-term strategic competition, the United States must remain the partner of choice throughout the Western Hemisphere, Richardson told the committee.

"The Southern Command region is of strategic importance to U.S. vital interests, and, if confirmed, I will synchronize our approach to security cooperation, working across all combatant commands to narrow the gaps and seams our competitors are exploiting," she said.

Today, many of the United States' closest partners in the region are still fighting bravely against the COVID-19 pandemic, she said.

"We are all too familiar with the devastation caused by this deadly pandemic, and I empathize with those who have felt its horrific impacts. More than a humanitarian crisis, this devastation is changing the geopolitical landscape," Richardson said. "Authoritarian



COURTESY PHOTO

Army Lt. Gen. Laura J. Richardson, commander of U.S. Army North, speaks to the Soldiers of Company D, 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) at a mobile surveillance camera site in Del Rio, Texas, Dec. 24, 2019.

regimes and transnational criminal organizations enabled by China and encouraged by Russia are attempting to consolidate power in the region, and free societies are being directly challenged."

While U.S. competitors are attempting to profit from our partners' vulnerable circumstances, Richardson said she stands ready to support the coordinated and prioritized whole-of-government effort in support of partner nations on vaccine distribution.

Richardson said she will focus on rebuilding regional resilience by expanding U.S. security cooperation efforts and multilateral exercises,

increasing international military education and training exchanges, and working with the Defense Department and Congress on innovative methods to increase levels of interoperability and global integration.

"Through a comprehensive and multilateral approach, we can strengthen regional resilience by denying freedom of movement to transnational criminal organizations," she said. "And by reducing exposure to the corrosive efforts of external state actors in our shared hemisphere, we thereby improve the security of our southern border," Richardson added.

The United States draws upon the strength of the Western Hemisphere from partner nations that share U.S. values of freedom, democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law, Richardson said, adding the U.S. cannot take these relationships for granted or let its guard down as competitors vie for influence.

"We must hasten to pick up the pieces left by the pandemic and transform our relationships to meet 21st-century security challenges. Put simply, winning together with our allies and partners matters," she noted.

Richardson said if she is

confirmed, she would look forward to continuing to serve the American people by leading the "great team" at SOUTHCOM. Just as she has worked with numerous agencies within U.S. borders, Richardson said she would work with U.S. interagency partners abroad.

"Whether [working] against COVID-19, transnational criminal organizations, the predatory actions of China, the malign influence of Russia, or natural disasters, there's nothing we cannot overcome or achieve through an integrated response with our interagency allies and partners," Richardson said.

# BAMC emergency medicine doctors ready to deploy

By John T. Franklin

BROOKE ARMY MEDICAL CENTER  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Sixteen Emergency Medicine physicians recently completed their training at Brooke Army Medical Center and are now headed to their new duty assignments at units across the globe.

Although some will be assigned to facilities similar to BAMC, many will be deployed to locations where state-of-the-art care is not available. During their last months of residency, the doctors trained in combat-related trauma casualties in BAMC's Emergency Department and participated in the Tactical Combat Medical Course taught by the U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence.

"This course is more tailored to medical personnel who may be about to deploy," explained Army Maj. Darren Hyams, one of the BAMC Emergency Medicine doctors managing the training.

During the five-day TCMC course, the physicians learned what medics face in providing care on the battlefield.

Physician assistants, who

have had multiple deployments in combat areas overseas, taught the course. During the training, instructors shared their years of practical experience with the students.

In the final week of training, the doctors "deployed" to JBSC-Camp Bullis for some hands-on experience with emergency medicine in an austere environment. Army MEDCoE and Critical Care Air Transport staff provided support to assist the ER physicians using simulations to ensure the doctors understood the process from a casualty's point of injury to the movement out of the field and into a well-equipped facility. Many experienced trauma doctors, including retired military doctors, came out to volunteer their help to coach their fellow trauma doctors.

In one scenario, a medic played the role of a seriously wounded Soldier being sent to surgery. As the surgeon and EM doctor discussed what kind of care the casualty could receive at a forward location, the medic role player asked the two doctors what he could



PHOTOS BY JOHN T. FRANKLIN III

*Students in the Combat Casualty Medical Care Course at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston experience aiding simulated injured soldiers in the field compared to in a medical facility.*

do in the same situation. After getting some coaching from the more experienced doctors, the medic resumed his roleplay as the very seriously injured patient.

In addition to getting training on care for human patients, this year, the doctors learned about how to help Soldiers' four-legged partners.

"What is the first thing you do for a wounded military working dog?" asked Army Capt. Elizabeth Pungner, a doctor with the Army Veterinary Corps. "Make sure the muzzle is on," she told them. "They really like to bite. The dogs get a strong endorphin release when they score a full mouth bite."

Pungner brought "Diesel Dog" to the training. "Diesel Dog" is a robotic K-9 Military Working Dog simulator that weighs as much as a real MWD.

**"What is the first thing you do for a wounded military working dog?"**

**Make sure the muzzle is on.**

**They really like to bite. The dogs get a strong endorphin release when they score a full mouth bite."**

**Army Capt. Elizabeth Pungner,  
a doctor with the Army Veterinary Corps**

As part of the exercise, the doctors received training on how to handle an MWD with a gunshot wound. During the training, Pungner provided the doctors with an added layer of realism with Diesel Dog's growls, yelps, and whines. The simulated dog, with Pungner's control, also changed its breathing rhythms during treatment to provide a more realistic scenario.

Throughout their time at BAMC, the Emergency Medicine Department staff worked to ensure the graduating doctors receive the most comprehensive combat casualty care possible. The overarching goal is to train emergency medicine physicians to provide world-class emergency medical care for deployed military personnel.



*Physicians completing their Emergency Medicine internship at BAMC experience the challenge of examining a robotic K-9 Military Working Dog simulator that may have been injured along with its human handler. During this exercise, physicians gain experience with K-9 patients, not their normal clientele.*



# MEDCoE's Stimson Library operates in a time of COVID-19

## MEDCoE Stimson Library

In March 2020, the U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence's Stimson Library at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston closed its doors to protect the health and safety of MEDCoE students and faculty from COVID-19.

But the Stimson Library never stopped providing interlibrary loans, document delivery services and reference services to students and staff. Library staff were monitoring the library inbox and filling article requests as they came in and all online resources remained available with remote access.

The Stimson Library supports more than 30,000 students and many more permanent party assigned to the U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence, or MEDCoE. MEDCoE is the Army's proponent responsible for training and educating the medical force.

Shortly after the library closed its doors, the Stimson Library began migrating all of its records to TRADOC's new Army University Library System, or AULS.

Jodi Quesnell has been the director of Stimson Library since January 2019.

"While this had been planned for many months, our staff worked closely with AULS staff to ensure the move to AULS was as smooth as possible and had minimal impact on student access to our online EBook and eJournal subscriptions," Quesnell said.

The new AULS came at the right time because it gave students the ability to reserve print books online and then pick up the books outside the library.

As new MEDCoE classes



JOSE E. RODRIGUEZ

*Students in the U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence Army Graduate Program in Anesthesia Nursing study at the Stimson Library.*

started, the library provided virtual orientations and assisted students with their research projects using the new Teams technology.

Quesnell said document delivery and interlibrary loan services continued.

"We continued to purchase new books which were processed and added to the new AULS online catalog so they could be easily found and requested for checkout," she explained.

By October of 2020, safety protocols, including Plexiglas and cleaning stations, were in place, and Stimson Library was able to reopen for MEDCoE personnel to use library computers.

"Our entire Stimson

Library staff received both of their COVID-19 vaccines and were able to work without masks," Quesnell said. As Health Protection Condition, or HPCON, levels gradually improved, Stimson Library opened to allow students to study in the library, and we eventually allowed students to study in groups. Things were returning to 'normal,'" Quesnell added.

By July 2021, the Delta variant began spreading in the local area and JBSA moved the HPCON level from Bravo to Bravo Plus.

"Once again, everyone is required to wear masks, regardless of vaccine status, and social distance," Quesnell said.

Cleaning protocols implemented in October of 2020 remain in place to minimize the chance of COVID-19 spreading within the library.

To make it easier to maintain distance within the library, the lower level of the library opened Aug. 2. Ten additional computers, as well as quiet space to study, are available on the lower level and can be reserved using the new AULS.

"I encourage students looking for a good place to study to come to Stimson Library," Quesnell said.

The library is expanding hours back to pre-COVID-19

hours of 6:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday to Thursday, and 6:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Fridays. She hopes the new hours, which go into effect Sept. 7, will increase the availability of Stimson Library services and provide a place for students to study, either alone or in a group.

"The Stimson Library remains focused on supporting MEDCoE students and faculty," Quesnell said. "If you have any ideas or suggestions for services or resources Stimson Library should provide, stop by and let us know."

For more information about MEDCoE's Stimson Library, visit <https://medcoe.army.mil/stimson-library>.



## LACKLAND

# Military training instructor dons uniform for last time

By Sarayuth Pinthong

502ND AIR BASE WING

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

In December 1965, R. Thomas Coons left Chesterfield County, Virginia, to join the U.S. Air Force. He didn't know a career as a military training instructor would be his calling.

Coons had no idea he would lead Airmen, create programs for future instructors and would instruct not only enlisted Airmen, but officers as well. Most of all, Coons didn't know the great love he would have for being an MTI in the Air Force as he donned his uniform for the last time July 30.

"I wanted to put the uniform somewhere where others could see it," Coons said. "I talked to my son about giving it to him. He said, 'Dad, what am I going to do with it?' I said, 'Yeah, what are you going to do with it?'"

Ultimately, Coons decided upon the perfect place to lay his uniform to rest — the Air Force Airman Heritage Museum at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland. With a phone call to Tracy English, 37th Training Wing historian, plans were made.

"For Coons, the emphasis was knowing his story will be recorded and remembered for future generations," English said. "The Airman Heritage Museum only takes a limited number of uniform donations. It's the unusual items and very specific pieces of paraphernalia that interest us."

Coons started his career after basic military training with an administration job in Amarillo, Texas. The Air Force then sent him to Wiesbaden Air Base, Germany. A few years later, he returned to the former Lackland Air Force Base and became an MTI.

An MTI's campaign hat is



SARAYUTH PINTHONG

U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Andrew Rothstein (left), 737th Training Support Squadron transition flight instructor, and Staff Sgt. Amanda Stepp (right), 737th TRS Military Training Instructor Schoolhouse instructor, gather for a photo with retired Senior Master Sgt. Thomas Coons (center) during a visit Aug. 30 at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland.

different from all others used in the Air Force, awarded after completing the MTI program. Coons' hat is when and where it all began for him.

"It's where it all started, at Lackland," Coons said. "I learned to enjoy being in the Air Force and learned how good it feels to do what I do."

Some of Coons' noteworthy accomplishments were creating the first student study guide used by trainees, developing a reception center location, and helping organize the Thanksgiving dinner program for trainees in basic during the holidays.

Coons' assignments took him from Lackland to Germany, Southeast Asia, Alabama, and back to Texas at the former

Randolph Air Force Base. No matter the location, Coons applied the skills he learned as an MTI. He instructed officers and developed a major command inspector general team while stationed at the Air University in Montgomery, Alabama.

He retired as a senior master sergeant in 1989 and admits there were hard times during his career. But one thing always drove him forward, enlistment after enlistment — his love for the job.

"If you can whistle when you come to work and whistle at the end of the day when you go home — reenlist. If you can't, get out," he said.

Being an MTI not only taught Coons about how to get trainees

through basic training; he also learned much more, professionally, and as a person.

"You learn people," he said. "You get to see different kinds of people and we're all alike, as far as I'm concerned."

What Coons learned while being an MTI carried him throughout his career. He didn't view it as a job given to him. He regarded it as a profession — one of the most honorable things he could do.

"I'm doing something for these young folks that's going to carry them for the rest of their lives," Coons said. "It's not a short-term thing."

However, being an MTI wasn't easy. "You've got to want to do it. If you don't want to do it, don't come down, don't even

apply. It's probably going to be one of the hardest things — physically and mentally — you're going to do in your Air Force career."

Coons said he feels the same way today as he did when he was pushing flights.

"I told them then and I would tell them today ... you're not going to come into my Air Force unless you get through me. You get through me, we'll send you on," he said. "I don't regret a minute of it. As hard as it got sometimes, you still did what you had to do to make them become a member of the United States Air Force."

"You see the recruits when they get off the bus, and about 40 days later, you see them shipping out and they are as sharp as a tack," Coons said. "You know you had something to do with it. You can't buy that feeling."

The Airman Heritage Museum is open to the public and all military ID cardholders, within base access requirements. The museum includes displays about the history of Lackland, enlisted heritage, the Air Force uniform, and basic training from 1933-present.

The museum is located at 2051 George Ave, building 5206. Admission is free. Museum hours are Wednesday and Friday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.; Thursday, 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The museum is closed Sunday through Tuesday.

Information about the Airman Heritage Museum and the Airman Heritage Training Complex is at [www.airmenheritage.com](http://www.airmenheritage.com). To schedule a tour of the museum or make an appointment to view the archival collections, contact the museum at 210-671-3055 or [aetc.ho.ol-ho@us.af.mil](mailto:aetc.ho.ol-ho@us.af.mil).



## 59TH MEDICAL WING PREPARES FOR MHS GENESIS

Members of the 59th Medical Wing team who are leading information technology preparations for MHS GENESIS gather at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland Aug. 2.

The 59th MDW is currently training personnel and preparing the infrastructure to deploy the Military Health System's new, modernized electronic health record - MHS GENESIS. MHS GENESIS supports the availability of electronic health records for more than 9.5 million Department of Defense beneficiaries and approximately 205,000 Military Health System personnel globally. MHS GENESIS improves data access and sharing of health information across the spectrum of military operations, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and civilian health care organizations and will become available to JBSA beneficiaries in January 2022.



TECH. SGT. TORY PATTERSON



## CMSAF VISITS AFIMSC, RECOGNIZES AIRMEN

Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force JoAnne S. Bass (center) and leaders and members of the Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center team gather for a photo outside AFIMSC headquarters at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland at the conclusion of the chief's visit Aug. 10. She and several senior enlisted leaders spent an afternoon discussing Airmen and family quality of life programs the AFIMSC team executes across the Air Force enterprise. During her visit, Bass also recognized several members of the AFIMSC team for their contributions to those programs.

MALCOLM MCCLENDON

# AFIMSC tests installation events app

By Shannon Carabajal

AIR FORCE INSTALLATION AND MISSION  
SUPPORT CENTER PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center is testing an installation community events mobile app aimed at building a sense of connectedness and camaraderie among Airmen.

Called What's Up, the app serves as a centralized bulletin board for an installation or organization. After launching at Yokota Air Base, Japan, in June, AFIMSC began testing the app internally in July.

"It's very intuitive and easy to use," said Maj. Victoria Villa, logistics readiness officer functional area manager and AFIMSC Round Table president.

The AFIMSC Round Table sponsors and hosts a variety of morale, professional development and community engagement events for Airmen and families throughout the year. Villa, also a member of the AFIMSC Connectedness Committee, is eager to use the app to advertise all AFIMSC events in one location.

"We want to have all our events listed in one spot," Villa said. "With this app, AFIMSC Airmen and families won't have to search emails or monitor multiple Facebook groups to stay connected and engaged."

Anyone within a group or organization that hosts an event can become an event creator in the app, said Emilie Miller, an innovation program analyst with AFIMSC Ventures. The goal is for What's Up to be the one-stop-shop for installation events, she said.

What's Up allows users to view and RSVP to an in-person or virtual event without having to log into an account. Users select their base when they download the app in order to see events relevant to them. Other app features include:

Admins can create events and assign user roles.

Creators can create and host events, and monitor the number of attendees.



*The Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center is testing an installation community events mobile app aimed at building a sense of connectedness and camaraderie among Airmen.*

Shareable event links are available via email, text or share tray on device.

Event flyers created in .PDF format and shareable via email, text or share tray on device.

At the installation level, force support squadron community event coordinators can use the app to advertise base-wide events and assign admin or creator roles to others outside the FSS who support installation and community events, Miller said.

At Yokota, AFIMSC is working with the Yokota Spark Cell, or YokoWERX, to test the app. So far, YokoWERX has received a lot of positive feedback about the concept and they're working to garner more participation from the base community, said Master Sgt. Brett Kiser, a member of the Yokota Spark Cell.

"If the whole base used this platform, we would cut down on email traffic and not be tethered to our work emails," he said.

The original idea for the app was awarded first place and \$250,000 during the first AFIMSC Innovation Rodeo in early 2019. AFIMSC partnered with the Air Force's Business and Enterprise Systems Product Innovation Office, or BESPIN, and Big Nerd Ranch, a web and mobile app developing agency on development.

"This is our first Innovation Rodeo winner," Miller said. "It took a little bit of time to be ready for release, but it is exciting to see it rolling out to the Air Force. We love what we have been able to learn with BESPIN and Big Nerd Ranch, and for their amazing efforts to bring this idea to life."

Developers focused on delivering an app that would be helpful to users and aligned with senior leader goals and priorities.

"We worked very hard to get our target audience to test and help design the app. We also connected with the AFIMSC leadership and their connectedness goals, and

## What's Up App

(USAF, awarded on 10/10/2021)

The What's Up App makes finding, promoting, and attending in-person and virtual events.

- No login needed.
- Swipe right to RSVP
- Swipe left to hide events
- Shareable links to events
- Register by email to create and host events
- Add emojis, URLs and category tags
- Share events via text and flyer
- Alert messaging
- Easy Admin management
- Swipe to delete events



GRAPHIC BY JIM MARTINEZ

discussed needs with the team for some features that would enhance value from their perspective," Miller said. "Those features are coming soon, including event feedback for our admins and event creators. We are still learning and still gathering feedback to further refine the app."

The team also worked diligently to keep the app secure, running it through security reviews and vulnerability assessments before testing, Miller said.

The app is currently only available on Apple devices. Users can find the app by searching for "What's up app USAF" in the app store. An Android version is in development and will be released as soon as it's ready.

"We are excited to share this simple, easy app to support our community events. If anyone has feedback, please reach out and let us know, we are happy to listen and incorporate what we learn," she said.

For more information, contact AFIMSC Ventures at [AFIMSC.Innovation@us.af.mil](mailto:AFIMSC.Innovation@us.af.mil).



# Work begins on AFIMSC 'Office of Future'

By Shannon Carabajal

AIR FORCE INSTALLATION AND MISSION  
SUPPORT CENTER  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center is building and benchmarking a radically new way of working called the Office of the Future, or O2F.

The center began remodeling headquarters space in San Antonio on July 26 to create an office environment that enables flexibility, fosters innovation and collaboration, and improves the quality of life and mission effectiveness.

After proving the mission can be done from a mostly telework environment during the COVID-19 pandemic - and realizing the benefits that come from working at home - the center set out to redesign the future of work for the organization, said Col. Kevin Mantovani, AFIMSC vice commander.

"O2F is born out of innovation and lessons learned throughout the pandemic," he said. "We're combining the good that comes from teleworking with the good that comes from collaborating in-person to build O2F."

Over the next few months, contractors will replace about 100 cubicles in two bays of the headquarters — a total of 10,500 square feet — with modern work and collaborative spaces, including multiple team rooms for in-person and virtually supported meetings.

When finished, the areas will feature open, café-style seating where employees can meet and work with coworkers. Sections of cubicles that remain will be turned into hoteling stations, allowing employees greater flexibility and control over where they work to more effectively use the office space while decreasing the footprint of fixed cubicle rows.

"I'm looking forward to the Office of the Future and the flexibility to work from home or the office," said Salvador Orozpe, official mail and postal program manager with the AFIMSC Installation Support Directorate. "It will be great to have more open space in the bay, a relaxed atmosphere and a work environment that's closer to how many private organizations are set up now."

Starting in early September, or when local health protection conditions allow,



SHANNON CARABAJAL

*Contractors take apart and remove cubicles in the Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center headquarters building July 29 at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland.*

AFIMSC employees based in San Antonio will be able to reserve work and collaboration space with hoteling software available through a mobile app, web browser and, eventually, on-site kiosks and displays. When not in the building to collaborate, most employees will be teleworking.

The center's leadership believes redefining the notion around teleworking begins as a cultural shift that emphasizes accomplishments and outcomes over how work is getting done, said Lt. Col. Craig Svanberg, O2F project leader and special projects officer with the AFIMSC Directorate of Staff.

"Our AFIMSC workforce can be effective no matter their location," he said.

Along with furniture remodels and adjusted floor plans, AFIMSC is investing in smart technology systems and cloud-based platforms to facilitate a work-from-anywhere model.

"We've proven that our work can be done anywhere," Orozpe said. "We

actually have better access now, thanks to technology, and I'm able to collaborate with my team and connect with our overseas customers more easily than I ever could before we shifted to working from home during the pandemic."

A better work-life balance is another benefit of O2F.

"I think my quality of life has improved. Without a long commute, I get to see my family more often because I'm not fighting bumper-to-bumper traffic," he said. "I can get up and running in about 10 minutes every morning, so that's less stress and more time for work and family."

As O2F is implemented, AFIMSC will gather information and data to establish a business case highlighting how the flexibility associated with the hybrid model has saved AFIMSC in time, money and resources and improved the overall employee experience. Leaders will also use data and lessons learned to improve O2F in real-time and shape future rollouts, including other areas in

AFIMSC headquarters and offices outside of San Antonio.

"Wherever you're working within the AFIMSC enterprise, O2F applies to you too," Mantovani said. "We're working with our detachments and primary subordinate units to make similar changes as budgets and the buildings allow."

In the long run, Mantovani believes O2F will serve as a benchmark across the Air Force as organizations consider permanently moving away from the old model of working five days a week in an office.

"We are the Air Force's installation and mission support experts. We want to experiment inside our own house first but then, very shortly and quickly, we want to scale this across Air Force Materiel Command and the entire Air Force to any organization that wants to build an office of the future like us," he said. "As Airmen come back into buildings after the pandemic, what will that future look like? We believe O2F will be that future."

# RANDOLPH

## The Initial Perception: Recovery Care Coordinators assist with Wounded Warrior Program

By Shannon Hall

AIR FORCE WOUNDED WARRIOR  
PROGRAM

There are many common sayings that go along with how important the first impression you leave on someone is. No matter the circumstances for someone's behavior, on any particular day, there is no way to reverse that initial interaction, conversation, attitude, etc. For this reason, and many more, the Air Force Wounded Warrior Program, or AFW2, puts some of their best people as the first stop our warriors interact with.

Recovery Care Coordinators, or RCCs, are usually the first people that warriors come in contact with, either before or during their enrollment process. They are responsible for making contact with the warrior within the first 72 hours of them being enrolled in the program and conducting an initial assessment of the Airman or Guardian, and their families' needs within the first week. They then take this information and coordinate those needs with the service member's care management team, their leadership, the Airman & Family Readiness Center, a Family Liaison Officer and any other person(s) who need to be involved with the service member during their recovery process.

"I spend my day providing information, support and guidance for our wounded, ill and injured Airmen and Guardians," said Ivette Bohannon-Bagnato, AFW2 Recovery Care Coordinator. "I do this by working with multiple entities and programs to ensure the warrior, and their family, are well informed and empowered to meet the challenges ahead."

Some RCCs cover one base,

while others cover multiple bases, depending on their location. They have office hours to allow for warriors and caregivers to come to visit and talk. They also brief wing leadership on their cases, how to best help Airmen and Guardians enrolled in the program and the benefits available to service members and their leadership.

In this job position, RCCs have every opportunity to influence young Airmen and Guardians, wing leadership and family members. No one asks to be enrolled in AFW2, but every warrior enrolled needs a circle of support.

"Unfortunately, things don't

always go according to the rule book and that's where we can step in and advocate for the warrior and impact is the main reason I continue down this career path," said Joseph LoFria, AFW2 Recovery Care Coordinator. "Appreciating the impact that I can make on a warrior's life is the biggest reward for me. Whether it be the service member returning to duty to complete their career or ensuring they obtain maximum benefits with a smooth transition plan to avoid stumbling blocks along the way if they are no longer fit for duty."

No matter the outcome of the warrior's career, AFW2 has a

ton of resources to help the Airmen, Guardians and their families conquer their new normal and the RCCs usually help make the first contact. Some of these resources include Building Homes for Heroes, HEROES, Schedule A, OWF internships, Veteran's Service Officers, Veteran's Assistance and a ton of local organizations that can be found through AFW2 Community Programs.

"Every day I choose to devote myself to a career that strives for being solution-driven on an individual level. This has been one of the most rewarding and fulfilling careers and I am blessed and honored to support

and serve our Airmen and Guardians," Bohannon-Bagnato said. "Never be afraid to effect change if it's for the better or greater good."

The Air Force Wounded Warrior Program has so much to offer service members who are enrolled, but they do not know that unless they are paired up with someone knowledgeable and willing to go above and beyond. That is what AFW2 RCCs do each and every day for the warriors and their families.

To learn more about the AFW2 program and how to contact them, or to enroll an Airman or Guardian, visit [www.woundedwarrior.af.mil](http://www.woundedwarrior.af.mil).



GRAPHIC BY SHAWN SPRAYBERRY