

JBSA

LEGACY

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JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO

SEPTEMBER 10, 2021



PFC JOSHUA TAECKENS

U.S. Army Soldiers assigned to Company B, 2nd Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, and Chilean army soldiers assigned to 3rd Mountain Division, conduct a mock-rescue operation in Portillo, Chile, Aug. 27 during the Southern Vanguard 2021 exercise between U.S. and Chilean soldiers.

U.S., Chilean armies complete Southern Vanguard exercise

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U.S. Space Force Guardians helping to shape future

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9/11 20th anniversary march pays homage to lives lost

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HHS warns against COVID-19 scams

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General is alerting the public about fraud schemes related to COVID-19.

Scammers are using telemarketing calls, text messages, social media platforms, and door-to-door visits to perpetrate COVID-19-related scams.

In one major scheme, fraudsters hack social media accounts and send direct messages to beneficiaries while posing as a friend or government employee. The impersonator claims the person is eligible for government grants (citing various reasons like COVID-19, disability, etc.) and urges them to call a phone number to collect the funds.

Upon calling, the beneficiary is asked to pay a "processing fee" (using bank account information, gift cards, bitcoin) to receive the grant money. In return, targets of this scam never receive any money, but often large sums of their money are stolen from them. These alleged grants are entirely illegitimate.


Fraudsters are also offering COVID-19 tests, HHS grants, and Medicare prescription cards in exchange for personal details, including Medicare information. However, these services are unapproved and illegitimate.

In another fraud scheme, some medical labs are targeting retirement communities claiming to offer COVID-19 tests, but they are actually drawing blood and billing federal health care programs for medically unnecessary services.

These scammers use the coronavirus pandemic to benefit themselves, and beneficiaries face potential harm. The personal information collected can be used to fraudulently bill federal health care programs and commit medical identity theft.

Protect yourself

- ▶ Do not buy fake vaccine cards, do not make your own vaccine cards, and do not fill in blank vaccination record cards with false information.
- ▶ As volunteers go door-to-door to inform communities across the country about COVID-19 vaccines, be sure to protect yourself from criminals who are seeking to commit fraud. Do not provide personal, medical, or financial details to anyone in exchange for vaccine information, and obtain vaccinations from trusted providers.
- ▶ Offers to purchase COVID-19 vaccination cards are scams. Valid proof of COVID-19 vaccination can only be provided to individuals by legitimate providers administering vaccines.
- ▶ Be cautious of COVID-19 survey scams. Do not give your personal, medical, or financial information to anyone claiming to offer money or gifts in exchange for your participation in a COVID-19 vaccine survey.
- ▶ Be mindful of how you dispose of COVID-19 materials such as syringes, vials, vial container boxes, vaccination record cards, and shipment or tracking records. Improper disposal of these items could be used by bad actors to commit fraud.
- ▶ Photos of COVID-19 vaccination cards should not be shared on social media. Posting content that includes your date of birth, health care details or other personally identifiable information can be used to steal your identity.
- ▶ Beneficiaries should be cautious of unsolicited requests for their personal, medical, and financial information. Medicare will not call beneficiaries to offer COVID-19 related products, services, or benefit reviews.



Protect Yourself

AVOID COVID-19 Vaccine Scams


As COVID-19 vaccine distribution begins, here are signs of potential scams:

- You are asked to pay out of pocket to get the vaccine.
- You are asked to pay to put your name on a vaccine waiting list or to get early access.
- Advertisements for vaccines through social media platforms, email, telephone calls, online, or from unsolicited/unknown sources.
- Marketers offering to sell or ship doses of the vaccine for payment.

✔ **Protect Yourself. Do not give out your personal information to unknown sources.**





! If you believe you have been the victim of COVID-19 fraud, immediately report it to:

- HHS-OIG Hotline: 1-800-HHS-TIPS | tips.hhs.gov
- FBI Hotline: 1-800-CALL-FBI | ic3.gov
- CMS/Medicare Hotline: 1-800-MEDICARE



For accurate, up-to-date information about COVID-19, visit:

oig.hhs.gov/coronavirus
fbi.gov/coronavirus
justice.gov/coronavirus

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

- ▶ Be suspicious of any unexpected calls or visitors offering COVID-19 tests or supplies. If you receive a suspicious call, hang up immediately.
- ▶ Do not respond to, or open hyperlinks in, text messages about COVID-19 from unknown individuals.
- ▶ Ignore offers or advertisements for COVID-19 testing or treatments on social media sites. If you make an appointment for a COVID-19 test online, make sure the location is an official testing site.
- ▶ Do not give your personal or financial information to anyone claiming to offer HHS grants related to COVID-19.
- ▶ Be aware of scammers pretending to be COVID-19 contact tracers. Legitimate contact tracers will never ask for your Medicare number, financial information, or attempt to set up a COVID-19 test for you and collect payment information for the test.

If you suspect COVID-19 health care fraud, report it immediately online or call 800-HHS-TIPS (800-447-8477).

For accurate and up-to-date information about COVID-19, visit:

- ▶ coronavirus.gov
- ▶ cdc.gov/coronavirus
- ▶ usa.gov/coronavirus
- ▶ fbi.gov/coronavirus
- ▶ justice.gov/coronavirus
- ▶ oig.hhs.gov/coronavirus

JBSA LEGACY

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Feedback Fridays

Brig. Gen. Caroline M. Miller
502D AIR BASE WING 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: The Delta variant is causing massive increases in the community spread of COVID-19.

Bexar County currently has the 22nd highest positivity rate of all 248 counties of Texas. The 7-day average of new cases is higher than the last time (Jan. 3, 2021) that Health Protection, or HPCON, Charlie was enacted.

Why are JBSA installations still in Bravo+ HPCON levels and is there no concern for the families of new Airmen visiting the city when the variant is transmissible by and still affects even vaccinated individuals?



COURTESY GRAPHIC

A: The HPCON level guidelines are one of the major risk tools that the commander considers when making decisions about the HPCON level.

Other tools that the commander uses include discussions with JBSA Public Health Emergency Officers, Installation medical authorities, vaccination status of the population,

mission partners (stakeholders), and impact to missions across the area of operation.

The HPCON level guidelines are just a guide and not a policy or regulation, thus it is a tool that commanders employ to assist them in making a decision.

Q: Will the COVID-19 vaccine be mandatory for service members soon?

I have heard rumors of the vaccine becoming mandatory for us and would not be surprised if it does become mandatory but just wanted to be ready for when it does happen.

Thank you for your time.

A: Thank you for this question as I feel that this is very important information.

On Aug. 24, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin III issued a memorandum for mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations of Department of Defense Service members.

The memo directs the secretaries of the military departments to immediately begin full vaccination of all members of the Armed Forces under Department of Defense authority on active duty or in the Reserve or Guard.

Vaccination against COVID-19 will only use vaccines that receive full licensure from the Food and Drug Administration.

Timelines to receive the vaccine will be made clear soon and your leadership will keep you informed.

September is peak household goods moving season

By 2nd Lt. Jacob Brake
and Tina Jenkins

JBSA PERSONAL PROPERTY PROCESSING OFFICE

September is the peak household goods moving season and the 502nd Logistics Readiness Squadron wants to ensure that all service members and their families receive the highest quality of customer service and have the smoothest PCS move possible.

Officials with the 502nd LRS said service members need to be flexible and not delay the scheduling of their household goods pickup.

In addition to using the Defense Personal Property System, or DPS, the Joint Base San Antonio Personal Property Processing Offices at JBSA-Lackland and JBSA-Fort Sam

Officials with the 502nd LRS said service members need to be flexible and not delay the scheduling of their household goods pickup.

Houston offer traditional briefings and JBSA-Randolph provides full DPS services for their customers.

Those getting ready to move can sign up for available sessions to receive a relocation briefing and start the move process.

At JBSA-Lackland, in-person mass briefings are given at 8 and 9 a.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, in room 118, 1561 Stewart St., building 5616. Briefings with finance and PPPO for retiring and separating members

are at 10:30 a.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays in room 118. Virtual briefings, sponsored by 802nd Force Support Squadron Military & Family Readiness Center are held via Zoom on the second and 4th Thursdays of each month.

At JBSA-Fort Sam Houston, in-person briefings for Army students and all other customers in-processing and out-processing are held on a walk-in basis from 6:30 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. Mondays through Fridays. Note

that the office closes each Wednesday at 1:15 p.m. for training. The PPPO office is located at 2400 Jessup Road, building 4023, room 207.

Once the briefing is received, people can remain in close contact with the Joint Personal Property Shipping Office throughout the process to ensure pack/pickup dates have been confirmed with a transportation service provider.

For more information, contact the customer service section at the JBSA-Lackland PPPO at 210-671-2821, at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston at 210-221-1605, and at the JBSA-Randolph PPPO at 210-652-1848. For frequent updates and for tips on a move, check the JBSA PPPO Facebook page at www.Facebook.com/JBSAPPPPO.

Home fire safety should factor in people with disabilities

By Jessie R. Moreno
Fire Protection Inspector
902ND CIVIL ENGINEER SQUADRON

Smoke alarms save lives. But a regular alarm cannot be relied upon when it comes to alerting a deaf or hard of hearing person to a fire.

People with disabilities must deal with the unique challenges that fires present. With the disadvantages this group of people may have in escaping a fire, they could also have obstacles in their residence that would hamper their safe exodus.

To avoid such a delay the need in preparing ahead of time without some sort of assistance from a caregiver, neighbor, or relative to protect yourself and your loved ones in the home is vital.

In this case, an alarm with a strobe, or flashing, lights for the deaf or hard of hearing should be used. In addition, the alarm should be tested by an independent testing laboratory. The alarms for sleeping areas with strobes are required to be of a special high intensity that can wake a sleeping person.

SAFETY TIPS INCLUDE:

- » Smoke alarms are available for people who are deaf or with profound hearing loss. These alarms use strobe lights to wake the person. Vibration notification appliances, such as pillow or bed shakers, are activated by the sound of a smoke alarm.
- » As people age, their ability to hear high-pitched sounds decreases. Research from the National Fire Protection Association Research Foundation showed that older adults are unlikely to respond to alarms with strobe lights.
- » Older adults or other people who are hard of hearing, or those with mild to severe hearing loss, can use a device that emits a mixed, low-pitched sound. In its current form, this

Home Safety for People with Disabilities

There's no place like home. It is a place to relax, share laughs with family, and enjoy home cooked meals. But did you know that the majority of fire deaths occur in the home? Help everyone in the home stay safe from fire.



device is activated by the sound of a traditional smoke alarm.

» Make sure everyone in your home understands and reacts to the signal (light, vibration, or sound) used in their situation.

» Don't forget all smoke alarms should be tested at least monthly. Replace smoke alarms and equipment for people who are deaf or hard of hearing according to the manufacturer's recommendations. If you can't reach the alarm, ask for help.

Including everyone in the home escape planning is vital, so get input from each member of the family on the best way to escape a fire.

Home fire drills are equally important and everyone should participate. Knowing where to meet outside the home, taking accountability of family members, and calling 9-1-1 should be practiced. Keep a phone by the bed to call for help in case you can't escape.

Contact your local fire department and ask them if they can review your plan and recommend any inputs. Ask if they maintain a directory of occupants in the home that may require assistance in escaping a fire in the home. If you have a service animal,

Home Fire Sprinklers

Home fire sprinklers protect lives by keeping fires small. Sprinklers allows people more time to escape in a fire. When choosing an apartment or home, look for one that has home fire sprinklers.

Smoke Alarms

- » Install smoke alarms in every sleeping room. They should also be outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home.
- » Test your smoke alarm at least once a month by pushing the test button. If you can't reach the alarm, ask for help.
- » For added safety, interconnect the smoke alarms. If one sounds, they all sound. This gives more time to escape.
- » Smoke alarms with sealed (long-life) batteries work for up to 10 years. They can be helpful for people who find it hard to change batteries.
- » Smoke alarms expire. Replace them every 10 years.

People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

- » Smoke alarms and alert devices are available for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- » Strobe lights flash when the smoke alarm sounds. The lights warn people of a possible fire.
- » When people who are deaf are asleep, a pillow or bed shaker can wake them so they can escape.
- » When people who are hard of hearing are asleep, a loud, mixed, low-pitched sound alert device can wake them. A pillow or bed shaker may be helpful. These devices are triggered by the sound of the smoke alarm.

include them in your fire escape plan during an emergency.

To learn more about smoke alarms for the hearing

impaired, visit the National Fire Protection Association's website at www.nfpa.org/education or contact the fire prevention offices at Joint Base



Escape Planning

Include everyone in home escape planning. Each person should have input about the best ways to escape. Home fire drills are important. Everyone in the home must participate in them. Keep a phone by your bed in case you can't escape and need to call for help.

Talk with someone from the fire department about your escape plan. Ask them **review your plan**. Ask if your fire department keeps a directory of people who may need extra help. If you have a **service animal**, agree on a plan to keep the animal with you during an emergency.

NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION

San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston at 210-221-1804, at JBSA-Lackland at 210-671-2921 or at JBSA-Randolph at 210-652-6915.

Texas Constitutional Carry firearms law changes do not apply on JBSA

By Steve Elliott

502ND AIR BASE WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

As of Sept. 1, Texans can now carry handguns without a license or training, after Texas Gov. Greg Abbott signed the permitless carry bill into law.

House Bill 1927, also known as the Firearm Carry Act of 2021, eliminates the requirement for Texas residents to obtain a license to carry handguns if they're not prohibited by state or federal law from possessing a gun.

However, these changes do not apply at Joint Base San Antonio.

"Federal law prohibits the carrying of firearms in federal and government facilities and all JBSA locations will continue to prohibit both open and concealed carry of privately owned firearms, or POFs, by military members and civilians," said Tim Heintzelman, Chief of Plans and Programs for the 502nd Security Forces Group at JBSA-Randolph. "This prohibition applies to all JBSA facilities both inside and outside the fence line, including leased government property."

Texas joins 19 other states with permitless or constitutional carry laws that allow Texans 21 and over to carry handguns — openly or concealed — without obtaining a state-issued license, so long they are not excluded from possessing a firearm by another federal or state law. A background check is still required for the purchase of a firearm.

"Previously, Texans who wanted to carry a pistol needed a state-issued license that required training, a proficiency exam and a background check," Heintzelman said. "Any Texan currently disqualified from possessing a firearm will still be prohibited under the new law. Lawmakers also raised the penalties for illegal weapons carried by felons and those convicted of family violence offenses."

"For residents of base housing, firearms must be registered with Security Forces," he added. "POFs within JBSA must be registered with Security Forces via Air Force Form 1314. Once registered, they may be stored in military/privatized housing if they are secured in an appropriate locked container. They must also be rendered inoperable to unauthorized users by mechanical locks or other safety devices."

Residents are given 30 days from the date of weapons purchase or move-in to submit the paperwork to the Security

Forces armory. Up to five firearms can be registered on the AF Form 1314 Firearms Registration, which must be signed by the service member's commander. In addition, members must complete the Department of Defense Form 2760 Qualification to Possess Firearms or Ammunition.

"POFs and/or ammunition shall not be stored in vehicles, barracks, unaccompanied quarters, transient quarters, dormitories, lodging rooms, temporary lodging facilities, privatized lodging, guest houses, or JBSA camping and recreational vehicle areas,"

Heintzelman said. "Residents or visitors at these facilities must immediately store any POFs in a Security Forces Armory."

Under the new Texas law, a person can carry a handgun either concealed or carried openly in a holster, but along with all federal property and government buildings, there are still certain public places where firearms are not allowed, even under constitutional carry, unless the person is a licensed peace officer.

Those include:

- » Bars and other businesses that make 51% of their receipts from alcohol
- » Schools
- » Sporting events and horse or dog races
- » Polling places
- » Airports
- » Courtrooms
- » Jails and prisons
- » Government buildings
- » Hospitals
- » National park buildings (that includes the San Antonio Missions and The Alamo)
- » Private businesses or land in which the owner has signage posted outlawing weapons

"The bottom line is that JBSA is a complex environment and allowing everyone to carry a concealed handgun will make the job of our security professionals more difficult; thus, the workforce and our families may be at risk," Heintzelman said.

For more information concerning the POF policy for JBSA-Lackland, call Security Forces Pass and Registration at 671-9162 during duty hours and the Base Defense Operations Center at 671-2017 during non-duty hours. For JBSA-Fort Sam Houston and JBSA-Camp Bullis, call Security Forces Pass and Registration at 221-0213 during duty hours and the Base Defense Operations Center at 221-2222 during non-duty hours.

FORT SAM HOUSTON

U.S., Chilean armies complete Southern Vanguard training exercise

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

Tucked high in the frigid, snow-covered Andes Mountains, U.S. Army Soldiers assigned to the 10th Mountain Division completed the 13-day Southern Vanguard training exercise Aug. 30 with the Chilean army.

In coordination with U.S. Army South, the approximately 120 10th Mountain Division Soldiers found themselves at an altitude of more than 9,200 feet, with high winds and temperatures below freezing, learning the basics of cold weather, mountain warfare, including the fundamentals of survival, movement and combat from instructors at the Chilean Army Mountain School.

"The Chilean army mountaineer is a highly trained expert in their craft and well versed in the challenges associated with conducting military operations in a cold weather, high altitude environment," said Maj. Matthew McCarty, Army South plans and operations officer in charge of Exercise Southern Vanguard 21. "It is an expertise that is being passed on to U.S. Soldiers with the 10th Mountain Division."

The exercise culminated with a two-day field training exercise including a mock-rescue operation of a downed medical aircraft with 40 Chilean soldiers and a fraternity hike where Chilean and U.S. Soldiers marched more than five miles through the snow to the Christ the Redeemer of the Andes monument on the border with Argentina.

This was the largest U.S.



PFC. JOSHUA TACKENS

U.S. Army soldiers assigned to Company B, 2nd Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, cross-country ski at the Chilean Army Mountain School in Portillo, Chile, Aug. 21 during the Southern Vanguard 2021 exercise.

Army element to conduct this training, and its purpose was to bring the 10th Mountain Division back to its historical roots and demonstrate operational readiness, regional unity, and affirm the U.S. Army's longstanding commitment to our partners in the Western Hemisphere, according to McCarty.

"U.S. Army South, the 10th Mountain Division and the Chilean army have been planning this exercise since February 2020 through multiple virtual and in-person meetings," McCarty said.

The planning by all was a

major portion of Southern Vanguard, but once on the ground, the Chilean army partners took the reins for daily execution given their familiarity with the terrain and weather conditions.

"Training in this environment makes the Soldier fight with two enemies, the enemy combatant and the environment," said Chilean Army Capt. Carlos Williams Cuevas, commander of training at the Chilean Army Mountain School. "Every day, we had a briefing at 20:00 to discuss the weather and how we need to adjust based on training and

safety requirements."

Even with all the mental work that went into planning, the physical work for the soldiers and the conditions on the ground were daunting. Despite the freezing temperatures and rough terrain, the Soldiers appeared very positive with regard to the environment.

"We've been training the last six months for this tremendous opportunity; they said it was going to be tough, and they were right," said Spc. Dustin Tschudy, an infantryman with Bravo Company 2-87. "I'm always going to remember this

experience and the training we did here, and I'll pass the lessons we learned on to other Soldiers."

Soldiers completed courses in downhill skiing, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, avalanche rescue, snow shelter construction, rappelling and medical evacuation over the course of six days before going on a two-day field training exercise.

The Chilean army instructors played an integral part in training and sharing techniques and experience with U.S. Soldiers, providing them with the basic skills to survive, move, fight and win in a high-altitude environment.

"The Chilean instructors have been nothing but professional, and they are really good at making sure we understand, at the lowest level, how to do whatever task we are completing," said Sgt. 1st Class Corey Irwin, a platoon leader assigned to Bravo Company 2-87. "With training like this, we can take soldiers with little to no experience with the snow and make them confident and competent in a winter environment."

The 10th Mountain Division originally specialized in mountain warfare dating back to World War II, but since their reactivation in 1985, the division has focused on combat operations in a variety of geographical terrains. The training provided by Southern Vanguard 21 is an opportunity to bet back to the division's roots.

"We are the mountain division, and we are evolving into the arctic division, so we

EXERCISE continues on 7

EXERCISE

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are getting back to fighting in the cold weather and the mountains,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Espeland, 2nd Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division. “We are learning a great deal here; how to live and train in the mountains from the Chilean army.”

This exercise was a direct reflection of the U.S. Army’s commitment to strengthen an enduring partnership with Chile and build combined readiness and interoperability in both planning and execution.

Maj. Matthew McCarty, Southern Vanguard 2021 lead operations manager assigned to Army South, talks on a satellite phone at the Chilean Army Mountain School in Portillo, Chile, Aug. 20.



Pvt. Hunter Bell and Pvt. Coleman Hinshaw practice casualty rescue rappel while Sgt. 1st Class Corey Irwin, platoon sergeant with Bravo Co. 2-87, observes them at the Chilean Army Mountain School in Portillo, Chile, Aug. 20.



PHOTOS PFC. JOSHUA TAECKENS

Spec. Dustin Tschudy and Pvt. Coleman Hinshaw, Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, construct a snow shelter at the Chilean Army Mountain School in Portillo, Chile, Aug. 19 during Southern Vanguard 2021.



U.S. Army Soldiers assigned to Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, and Chilean army soldiers assigned to 3rd Mountain Division, gather for a photo in front of the Christ the Redeemer of the Andes on near Cancha Pelada, Chile, Aug. 29.



Sgt. 1st Class Corey Irwin, Platoon leader assigned to Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, skis at Ski Portillo in Portillo, Chile Aug. 24 during Southern Vanguard 2021.

BAMC launches initiatives to alleviate billing concerns

By Elaine Sanchez

BROOKE ARMY MEDICAL CENTER
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Brooke Army Medical Center is launching a number of initiatives aimed at helping patients navigate the complex maze of medical billing.

From financial counseling to a revamped collections process, BAMC officials are hoping to alleviate billing concerns, particularly for civilian trauma patients.

"We want our patients to focus on their recovery, not be stressed with billing issues," said Air Force Col. Patrick Osborn, BAMC's deputy commander for surgical services.

As a military hospital, BAMC is known for its mission of caring for the nation's warfighters, retirees and family members. However, BAMC also has a unique, and perhaps lesser-known, commitment to its community. As the Department of Defense's sole Level I Trauma Center, the hospital provides complex emergency care to civilian patients in an area that encompasses 22 counties in Southwest Texas.

"We are able to care for civilians without military benefits through a special Secretary of Defense-authorized program," Osborn explained. Through the Secretariat Designee program, with approval, BAMC is permitted to provide trauma and trauma-related follow-on care to non-military beneficiaries for up to six months.

Caring for trauma patients has a two-fold benefit, Osborn noted. "It aids the community in which we work and live, while also offering our military medical professionals vital hands-on training that translates directly to battlefield care," he said.

Billing process

Military Treatment Facilities are required by federal law to bill for any care provided to civilians without military benefits. As in other medical facilities, civilian trauma patients with medical insurance rely on their private carrier for coverage.

"If the patient has insurance and we have that information on file, we file a claim with their carrier as a courtesy to our patients," explained Army Maj. Matt Slykhuis, BAMC's deputy chief financial officer. "Once a bill is

generated, we have 120 days to work with the insurance company to help facilitate a payment, whether it's payment in full or payment less a deductible or copay."

Patients are billed if an insurance company denies a claim and all appeals, if there is a balance remaining after insurance payment, or if a patient's insurance information is not on file. In the absence of payment, as a federal healthcare facility, BAMC is required by law to transfer the remaining balance to the U.S. Department of Treasury for collections.

"Military Treatment Facilities are not authorized to waive, reduce, suspend or terminate debt," Slykhuis said.

New, improved process

Until recently, once transferred to the Treasury, the debt immediately began accruing significant interest and fees, resulting in additional stress for patients, he noted.

Aware of patients' struggles with mounting debt, BAMC worked closely with the Defense Health Agency and Treasury Department to implement a new, more flexible process. Effective November 2020, rather than bill patients directly, BAMC now automatically transfers any remaining balance to the Treasury Department's Centralized Receivables Service after the 120 days of insurance processing.

Unlike BAMC, CRS has the ability to set up longer-term payment plans or to suspend collections based on demonstrated hardship. As an additional relief effort, CRS is not required to tack on the fees and penalties generated by the central Treasury department.

"This gives patients a flexibility in collections that BAMC is not permitted, by law, to provide," Slykhuis said.

Better education

Additionally, BAMC is working to better educate patients and their families throughout treatment about the financial process to help combat misinformation and confusion.

"We are in the process of bringing experienced financial counselors on board who can help patients navigate the insurance and payment process," said Army Maj. Rebecca Morrell, chief,

strategic healthcare innovation and transformation. The counselors will be assigned to the Emergency Department and inpatient wards to aid the patients and their families, she explained.

Additionally, the counselors will serve as a liaison with insurance companies, facilitating claims, and determining additional eligibility for optional enrollment in programs that offer payment assistance for specific patient populations. This includes insurance programs for patients who do not have coverage and federal, state and local grant programs.

In or out?

One of the most common areas of confusion is BAMC's status as a federal healthcare facility, Morrell noted. Since BAMC is not authorized to enter into a contract with insurance carriers, many carriers treat BAMC as an "out of network" facility. However, the law requires all insurance companies to consider federal health care facilities as "in network" for billing purposes.

"Unfortunately, insurance carriers often consider BAMC as being 'out of network' and either deny claims or reimburse at a reduced 'out of network' rate," she said. BAMC works behind the scenes to provide clarification and information to aid patients, but the delay can cause undue stress and additional financial liability for patients facing the collection process.

The counselors will also help to navigate the insurance process for patients in the event of an accident, from vehicular to workplace.

BAMC is working to bring these counselors on board in the near future. In the meantime, the hospital will continue to aid patients through initial counseling sessions and financial information forms and brochures.

Billing transparency

The billing team is also looking forward to the implementation of a new electronic health record called Genesis at BAMC in January 2022 and an updated billing system in January 2023. The new EHR and billing system have the potential to provide itemized inpatient billing for military treatment facilities, which is not an available feature with the legacy systems currently in place.

"This will enable us to be more transparent about our healthcare costs

and aid insurance companies seeking itemized information," Morrell noted.

Positive changes

Aware of the challenges, community leaders are also working to change laws to the benefit of patients. Recent state legislation outlined in Texas House Bill 2365 enables military treatment facilities to be considered as participating providers with Medicaid effective Sept. 1, 2021. This will enable BAMC to take Medicaid reimbursements as payment in full. Additionally, BAMC will be able to bill Medicaid for outpatient services, which wasn't the case prior.

"This is great news for our Medicaid patients and for our providers who will be better able to provide continuity of care," Osborn said.

Seeking assistance

As BAMC works to implement these improvements, billing experts recommend several steps patients can take to better navigate the billing process:

- Ensure BAMC has all current information, including the name of insurance carrier, mailing address and contact information, prior to hospital departure.
- Review all BAMC invoices/documents received in the mail without delay. Insured patients who receive a bill for the full amount should contact the BAMC Uniform Business Office as soon as possible to ensure that a claim was appropriately filed to their insurance carrier.
- For billing questions/concerns, contact the BAMC Uniform Business Office, or UBO, email usarmy.jbsa.medicom-bamc.mbx.msa-billing@mail.mil or call 916-8563/5772.
- Contact insurance companies directly to confirm their level of coverage and personal responsibility.

BAMC will continue to explore ways to improve the billing process for patients, Osborn noted.

"We are incredibly proud and honored to serve our community as a Level I Trauma Center, and a significant part of this commitment is ensuring our patients are treated with empathy and compassion in every aspect of their care," he said. "This extends to ensuring they receive the best possible financial counseling and education."

BAMC expands COVID-19 vaccine program to inpatients

By Elaine Sanchez

BROOKE ARMY MEDICAL CENTER
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

In an effort to protect its most vulnerable patients from illness, Brooke Army Medical Center is now offering the COVID-19 vaccine to all hospital inpatients ages 12 and older.

BAMC administered its first inpatient vaccine to a postpartum patient Sept. 1.

"We are honored to offer this lifesaving vaccination to our inpatients, to include our military beneficiaries and civilian emergency/trauma patients," said Christina Kramer, chief nurse, Department of Pediatrics.

The new program enables inpatients to either start or completes the vaccination process during their hospital stay.

"Being vaccinated against COVID-19, whether fully or

partially, increases the chances of a milder or shorter illness compared to those who are unvaccinated," Kramer explained, citing CDC data.

According to the CDC, COVID-19 vaccines have been shown to provide protection against severe illness and hospitalization among people of all ages eligible to receive them. And, in the case of COVID-19 vaccines, for maximum benefit, two doses are better than one.

Either a patient or healthcare team member can initiate the vaccine discussion. Once patients opt-in and are cleared to receive the vaccine, they are given the screening form, the Pfizer vaccine and instructions for V-Safe, the CDC's post-vaccine health checker.

"The goal is for the patient and their healthcare team to work together to determine the best care plan possible," Kramer said.



JASON W. EDWARDS

Patrinia Thomas, licensed vocational nurse, administers the COVID-19 vaccination to Genesis Crockett at Brooke Army Medical Center, Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston Sept. 2. BAMC is now offering the COVID-19 vaccine to all hospital inpatients ages 12 and older.

For outpatients, BAMC continues to offer the Pfizer vaccine to all beneficiaries ages 12 and up at its vaccination site on main post Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston. The vaccination site also offers an additional dose to patients with moderately to severely compromised immune systems.

"The COVID-19 vaccine is safe and effective," Kramer said. "Being vaccinated is a vital part of reducing the spread of the COVID-19 virus, protecting yourself, your family, and your community."

For more information on BAMC's COVID-19 vaccine program, visit <https://bamac.tricare.mil/>.

For general information on COVID-19 vaccines, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/facts.html?s_cid=11625:covid%20vaccine%20facts.sem.ga:p:RG:GM:gen:PTN.Grants:FY22.

ARMY SOUTH MEDICAL PERSONNEL CONDUCT EXCHANGE IN ECUADOR

U.S. Army South medical personnel conduct a subject matter expert exchange with Ecuadorian Army medical professionals in Quito, Ecuador, Aug. 23. During the exchange, the partner nation armies discussed urban tactics, casualty evacuations and under fire training. U.S. Army South is committed to creating opportunities that increase collaboration, enhance interoperability and assist in building partner nation capacity.



LEANNE THOMAS

METC development program caters to student success

By London Prince

MEDICAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING
CAMPUS PROTOCOL SUPPORT

The Faculty Student and Staff Development program, or FSSD, is a service tailored to the development of student success for Medical Education and Training Campus trainees who are struggling with their academics.

Created by Everett Ybarra and Lankla Ivory, FSSD is its own academic department located in the METC footprint since the campus stood up in 2010 at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston.

Alongside Ybarra and Ivory, the program consists of two academic intervention specialists, Iris Teasley and Victoria Belmares, and training instructors who are instrumental in getting students help when they fall behind or are failing classes.

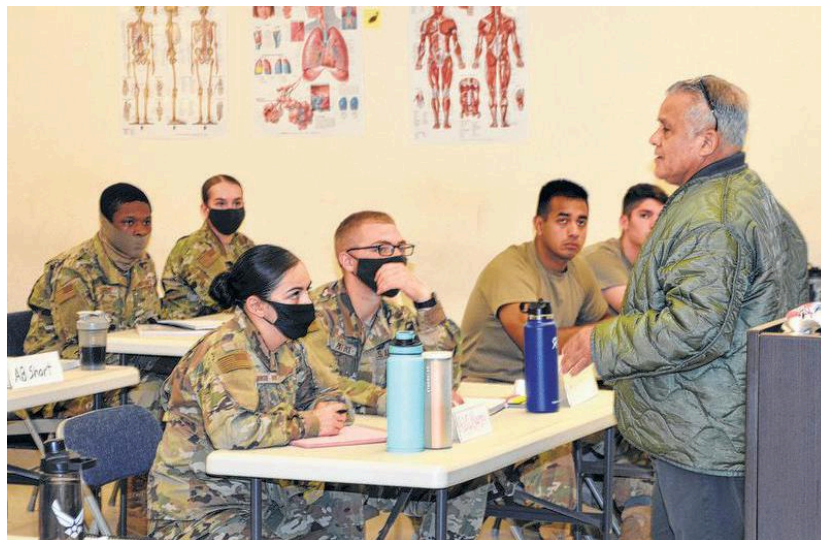
Described as an accelerated curriculum, courses at METC are not like traditional college classes.

METC offers 48 allied health programs that are fast-paced, hybrid classes that challenge students to process large amounts of material within a short timeframe.

“Learning to be an emergency medical technician in the civilian world usually takes 6 months, but students at our campus do it in 6 weeks,” Ybarra said. “To be a civilian cardiopulmonary tech it takes 1 ½ to 2 years, but our students are doing it in six months.”

Originally known as Faculty and Staff Development, the FSSD program was initially responsible for supporting instructors and staff.

Shortly after nearly all enlisted medical training co-located to METC and the



LONDON PRINCE

Everett Ybarra (right), lead for Faculty Student and Staff Development at the Medical Education and Training Campus at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, teaches the importance of “Mr. Y’s Learning System” to new METC students. The system encourages students to see, feel and hear the material that they are learning and how to study and prep for tests. (This photo was taken prior to the mask mandate recently implemented on JBSA.)

campus became fully operational, the program quickly began catering to student success.

The change came about after Ybarra received a phone call from a concerned parent whose child was in danger of being separated from the military if they did not pass their EMT exam. By referencing the Visual Audial Read/Write Kinesthetic, or VARK, questionnaire, Ybarra discovered the student’s learning style.

As a result, “Mr. Y’s Learning System” was created and is now taught to all incoming METC students. The study system encourages students to see, feel and hear the material that they are learning. The three main tools consist of highlighters, a

spiral notebook and flashcards.

“Ninety percent of our students are kinesthetic learners,” Ybarra said. “They are very smart, but arrive with poor study skills because they didn’t have to study two to three hours per day in high school. We teach the learning system, but it is their choice to use it.”

Urging students to highlight objectives in orange, bolded words in blue, definitions in yellow and testable information in pink, Mr. Y’s Learning System teaches students how to study and prep for tests.

Along with other pointers such as chucking material and rote memory, the study system teaches students to not highlight their whole book

while studying. He also recommends students create a practice test study guide and develop test questions from objectives and key materials found in the book.

Ybarra also tells students to listen closely to instructors when they mention phrases such as “you’re going to want to remember this” or “this is really important.”

Ybarra, a former public school teacher, also emphasizes success with his learning system involving second language learners and international students whose first language isn’t English.

Recently, he was able to influence a former teacher from Ghana who is now a student in the U.S. Navy Hospital Basic Corpsman program. He was failing due

“Ninety percent of our students are kinesthetic learners. They are very smart, but arrive with poor study skills because they didn’t have to study two to three hours per day in high school. We teach the learning system but it is their choice to use it.”

Everett Ybarra
Co-creator, FSSD

to gaps in his understanding of the English language.

“As I was teaching him Mr. Y’s Study System, you could tell when he ‘got it.’ He became very excited about my system and asked me if I could teach it to students in Ghana,” Ybarra said.

By retaining students who might have failed out of their training, the FSSD department has saved METC and the individual military services approximately \$36 million dollars over the past four fiscal years. Although the number is impressive, the FSSD staff is inspired by student success.

“We take pride in helping students graduate and continue their careers,” Ybarra said. “My thanks go out to my team who brings their game every day.”

470th Military Intelligence Brigade welcomes new commander

By Rochelle Naus

U.S. ARMY SOUTH PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Col. Jorge A. Arredondo assumed command of the 470th Military Intelligence Brigade during a ceremony Aug. 27 at the U.S. Army Medical Department Museum at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

Maj. Gen. William L. Thigpen, U.S. Army South commander, hosted the ceremony where he welcomed Arredondo and his family to JBSA-Fort Sam Houston and spoke of Arredondo's many accomplishments during his U.S. Army career.

"I can assure the brigade that you're in safe hands. Col. Arredondo brings vast military expertise and leadership to the unit," Thigpen said. "Jorge is no stranger to the U.S. Southern Command area of responsibility. Previously, he was assigned here when U.S. Army South was in Puerto Rico where he served as an intelligence officer."



ROCHELLE M. NAUS

Maj. Gen. William L. Thigpen (left), U.S. Army South commanding general, passes the 470th Military Intelligence Brigade colors to Col. Jorge A. Arredondo during an assumption of command ceremony Aug. 27 at the U.S. Army Medical Department Museum at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston.

Arredondo most recently served as the U.S. Special Operations Command director of intelligence at MacDill Air

Force Base, Florida. Throughout his career, he has deployed to more than 20 countries in the Northern

Command, Central Command and Southern Command areas of responsibility.

Arredondo holds two

bachelor's degrees in medical sociology and linguistics from New Mexico State University and dual masters' degrees in international relations from Troy University and strategic studies from U.S. Army War College. He is a graduate of the Infantry Officer Base and Military Intelligence Advanced Courses, Counter-Intelligence Special Agent Course and the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation at Fort Benning, Georgia.

The 470th Military Intelligence Brigade's mission is to provide multi-disciplined intelligence support to U.S. Army South and U.S. Southern Command.

The brigade also supports intelligence operations in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. Additionally, Force Protection Detachments within the brigade provide counterintelligence support and force protection for counterintelligence missions throughout the U.S. Southern Command area of responsibility.

U.S. ARMY SOUTH, CHILEAN ARMY VISIT NATIONAL TRAINING CENTER



U.S. Army South security cooperation personnel accompany delegates from the Chilean army to visit the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California, Aug. 21. During the visit, Chilean army infantry and armor officers observed Stryker formations from the 2nd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division train during Rotation 2109. Interoperability allows Soldiers and systems, and those of other countries, to operate in conjunction with each other, which is critical to bolstering an extended network of partnerships capable of decisively meeting shared challenges.

COURTESY PHOTO

JBSA members find self-care, healing through Wet Paint Project

By David DeKunder

502ND AIR BASE WING
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Joint Base San Antonio members helping survivors of sexual assault are using art as a form of self-care, healing and a way to spread awareness through a new project being conducted by the JBSA Sexual Assault Prevention and Response program.

The Wet Paint Project gives survivors of sexual assault and violence, and those professionals and volunteers helping them in the SAPR program, the opportunity to raise awareness and prevention of sexual assault by creating abstract art pieces.

Sayama Turner, JBSA SAPR Student Development Programs director, created the Wet Paint Project in May as a self-care activity in classes for those working on behalf of sexual assault survivors, including sexual assault response coordinators, program managers, Special Victims' Counsel and volunteer victim advocates.

Turner was trying to create a self-care activity for those who assist sexual assault survivors when she came up with the idea of using abstract art, an activity she has been doing for over 30 years.

"It was designed as a method to help those who are in the field of sexual assault to have a new way — a new strategy — of practicing self-care," Turner said.

Turner said it is important for advocates of sexual assault survivors to practice self-care.

After learning the concept of abstract art in SAPR self-care and resiliency classes, Turner said advocates have passed on and encouraged sexual assault survivors to take it up.

"It's providing a way for individuals who may have endured sexual assault to find a new way to recover by way of art because art is a form of therapy," Turner said. "It has been found to be very effective."

Since May, Turner said 50 members of the military community have created pieces of abstract art, with 25 of those pieces donated to the SAPR Advocacy Center at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston, which displays them on their walls.

Even with COVID-19 restrictions, Turner has been able to provide in-person instruction to the advocates, helping professionals and senior leaders on abstract art, because the classroom at the JBSA-Fort Sam Houston SAPR Advocacy Center is large enough for social distancing.

She also liquified the paint so class attendees didn't have to touch paintbrushes to create their works of art, as the canvases are designed to help people control the flow of the paint in creating designs.

Turner said the Wet Paint Project has brought members of the JBSA community together in expressing their feelings and emotions through art.

"The Wet Paint Project allows for resiliency to take place, giving people strategies, team building as they're having conversations about sexual assault," Turner said. "It

WET PAINT continues on 18



COURTESY PHOTOS

Sayama Turner, Joint Base San Antonio Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Student Development Programs director, displays pieces of abstract art she and previous Wet Paint Project class attendees created at JBSA-Lackland's Gateway Club during Commander's Call in August.



Marlo Bearden, Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston violence prevention integrator, shows the piece of abstract art she created in the JBSA Sexual Assault and Response Prevention program self-care class for sexual assault response coordinators, violence prevention integrators, Special Victims' Counsel, victim advocates and volunteer victim advocates in July.

LACKLAND

U.S. Space Force Guardians helping shape future of force

By Staff Sgt. Kirsten Brandes
AIR EDUCATION AND TRAINING
COMMAND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

When they arrive at basic training at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, the newest members of the U.S. Space Force will see one of their own wearing the distinctive headgear of a military training instructor.

Sgt. Michelle Holt is the first member of the U.S. Space Force to complete the military training instructor course at JBSA-Lackland, Texas. While other MTIs have transferred into the U.S. Space Force, Holt is the first Guardian to be selected for, and graduate from, the rigorous 35-day program from start to finish. Upon completion, her classmates unanimously voted for her to receive the class' highest honor.

"Holt is a stoic professional," said Master Sgt. Jarmeea Otten, commandant of the Military Training Instructor Schoolhouse. "Her peers chose her to receive the Commandant's Award because she earned their respect with her selfless actions, commitment to the success of the group, display of professionalism, and consistent positive attitude."

Holt, a St. Louis, Missouri, native, spent her first eight years in the Air Force as a space systems operator before transferring into the USSF in September 2020.

"I wouldn't say I felt pressure, but I did feel a lot of pride being given this opportunity," Holt said. "I wanted to be an MTI because I



COURTESY PHOTO /

Sgt. Michelle Holt (center) gathers for a photo with two fellow U.S. Space Force military training instructors on Aug. 6, 2020, at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland. Holt is the first Space Force Guardian to complete the MTI schoolhouse start to finish and garnered both the Commandant's Award for Leadership as well as a "lean mean machine" award for her excellent marching form.

knew it would challenge me."

Holt will be one of the few Guardians responsible for leading flights of both Air Force and Space Force trainees through Basic Military Training. Master Sgt. Phillip Lowery, Space Force's BMT liaison officer, says that having one of their own in charge of their training has a great impact on new Guardians.

"Identity is powerful. When you're an MTI wearing blue name tapes, the new Guardians will hang on every little word you say, because there is so much that's unknown to them about their new branch," Lowery said. "And, they'll be looking to you to guide them."

Prior to being selected as an MTI, Holt gained experience mentoring new

Airmen and Guardians as the Flight Chief for Student Administration at the 460th Operations Support Squadron at Buckley Space Force Base, Colorado.

"Before, my job was to guide Guardians and Airmen after they finished technical training, but being an MTI will give me the opportunity to help them develop at the very beginning of their

"Holt is a stoic professional. Her peers chose her to receive the Commandant's Award because she earned their respect with her selfless actions, commitment to the success of the group, display of professionalism, and consistent positive attitude."

Master Sgt. Jarmeea Otten, commandant of the Military Training Instructor Schoolhouse

career," Holt added. "I will have the chance to really instill pride and excellence in them, and be one of the first noncommissioned officers to make an impression on them."

Holt will be assigned to 433rd Training Squadron for an additional 60 days of on-the-job training before she begins leading flights at Basic Military Training here.

Departing AFIMSC command chief reflects on tenure

By Luke Allen

AFIMSC PUBLIC AFFAIRS

As he prepares to leave the position he's held since July 2019, the command chief master sergeant at the Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland reflected on the role he said he was meant to take on.

"I tell folks that I was excited to get to be the command chief at AFIMSC because I have a mission support background," said Chief Master Sgt. Edwin Ludwigsen, a career logistician, on the eve of heading to his follow-on assignment in September to become chief of the Chief's Group in the Air Force Senior Leader Management Office at the Pentagon.

"We've been lucky these last two years to have Chief Ludwigsen on the team," said AFIMSC Commander Maj. Gen. Tom Wilcox. "He's our top enlisted leader and my wingman. Every single day, he is keeping me straight. We are absolutely going to miss this teammate as he moves on to his next assignment."

Ludwigsen oversaw the health, welfare and professional development of about 3,900 Total Force personnel and helped guide an intermediate-level headquarters responsible for providing installation and mission support capabilities for 78 Air Force and Space Force installations with an annual budget of \$10 billion.

"First and foremost, taking care of Airmen and families is the most important thing we do to increase lethality and readiness," he said in describing AFIMSC's operations. "The second thing, I would say, is infrastructure. You look at what we do to not just build but sustain the Air Force and Space Force power projection platform — that's lethality and readiness. That's what we bring to the fight each



LUKE ALLEN

Chief Master Sgt. Edwin Ludwigsen, Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center command chief master sergeant, reflects on his two years of duty experiences during an exit interview with Andrew Billman, AFIMSC historian, on Aug. 19 at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland.

and every day."

For Ludwigsen, navigating COVID-19 will always be a milestone in his time at AFIMSC.

"I'll never forget packing up my things and going to work from home. I'll never forget that day in 2020 when we got the stay-at-home order at around lunchtime," he said. "I'm packing up my computer and I'm going home to try and figure out how to do this from the house. That pandemic completely reshaped how we had to do business. How remarkable it was to watch our professionals meet that challenge and never skip a beat. We never stopped and in many ways, we got busier."

During his tenure, the chief was heavily involved in several significant quality-of-life programs including officer and enlisted manpower studies, improvements in privatized

housing and child development centers, and the Air Force's new Office of the Future initiative.

"I honestly do not believe that there is a mission support challenge that IMSC cannot take care of," Ludwigsen said.

Leading the Air Force in what post-pandemic flexible office space can look like, AFIMSC will establish a new model for a telework and onsite workspace balance to optimize resources, maintain connectedness and quality of life, and improve mission effectiveness.

"I am proud of where we are going with respect to the Office of the Future," the chief said. "COVID-19 challenged us, and our Airmen responded. Who better than the Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center to set the standard for the Air Force and the DOD going forward for

what right looks like for office space? We are in the process of redesigning our facilities to reduce the amount of infrastructure and saving money. We're redefining what the office of the future looks like, and we're doing that right here at AFIMSC."

Ludwigsen said AFIMSC could not deliver on its mission to deliver globally integrated installation and mission support across the enterprise without its Airmen.

"The Air Force cannot operate without mission support Airmen," he said. "Without fuel, pilots are pedestrians. Without AFIMSC, our organizations are not able to execute.

"The most important Airman is the one that you need right now. If I'm out-processing, the most important Airman I need is over in the (military personnel flight) so I can get

"Keep in mind that, with every position and every job that you're in, you don't always see the value in it while you're doing it," he said. "It's very important that you give it your best, to execute at the highest level you can."

**Chief Master Sgt.
Edwin Ludwigsen**

out-processed. If I'm hungry and I need a meal, the most important Airman is the one in the dining facility getting ready to serve me food. That's what our Airmen do."

To the AFIMSC Airmen with whom Ludwigsen served, he leaves these words of advice.

"Keep in mind that, with every position and every job that you're in, you don't always see the value in it while you're doing it," he said. "It's very important that you give it your best, to execute at the highest level you can. Trust me, you're learning something from it that you will take away and apply somewhere else in your life and in your career.

"That is invaluable, and in time, it will reshape the way you lead and the way you take care of your Airmen and their families. Your perspective will change — and that's growth. Never lose sight of that."

RANDOLPH

20th anniversary 9/11 memorial march pays homage to lives lost

By Dreshawn Murray

502ND AIR BASE WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Sept. 11, 2021, marks the 20th anniversary of the devastating terrorist attacks that changed America forever. It was a day that will live in the memories of everyone who saw it happen. It was a day that will never be forgotten.

As the years pass by, the memories of the 2,996 individuals who lost their lives at the World Trade Center, Pentagon, and in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, continue to live on.

Maj. Jonathan Leetch, Air Education Training Command instructor pilot at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, along with members of Air Force auxiliary programs, will commemorate the tragic event by marching 100 miles from Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey, to ground zero in Manhattan, New York City.

"The idea was originally founded by the Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape instructors at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst as a way to pay homage to those lost in the 9/11 attacks," Leetch said. "It is also to show respect to the first responders and our brothers and sisters overseas."

The participants will start the march from Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in the early morning of Sept. 10, carrying an American flag that was flown in

combat over Afghanistan. The march will be 100 miles and will take approximately 30 to 35 hours for them to reach ground zero.

They will arrive at the memorial in the early evening of Sept. 11.

"Once we get to the memorial, we will present the flag to a 9/11 Memorial Museum representative," Leetch said. "The flag will be flown over the memorial Sept. 12."

For Leetch, this march has other meaningful purposes.

"Do you remember how together we were after 9/11? The worst in humanity brought out the best in our nation," he said. "It didn't matter what color you were, where you came from, what your beliefs were, we were all proud of being an American. We put petty things aside and pulled together in the same direction. We need to remember what we were capable of when we weren't so divided."

Leetch believes that this march will keep patriotism alive and help continue the stories of individuals who are not alive to tell their own.

"As Americans, we really cannot forget what happened on that day," he said. "There are too many people not here with us today that deserve to have their stories told and to have their heroic and selfless actions live on forever."



COURTESY PHOTO

Members of the 9/11 Memorial 100 Mile March arrive at the 9/11 Memorial Museum in New York, New York in 2019. This year, Maj. Jonathan Leetch, Air Education Training Command instructor pilot, along with members of Air Force auxiliary programs, will commemorate the 20th anniversary of 9/11 by marching 100 miles to ground zero from Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey.



COURTESY PHOTO

Master Sgt. Leona Guy, Headquarters Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center financial operations policy and procedures manager, works on a piece of abstract art after providing her section with their annual sexual assault training, as part of the Joint Base San Antonio Sexual Assault Prevention and Response, or SAPR, program.

WET PAINT

From page 14

provides them an opportunity to be able to build a project, not only individually, but collectively.”

Turner said JBSA members who have been able to show their art have helped spread the message of awareness and prevention of sexual assault throughout the military community, and for those who have survived sexual assault, the message of healing. She said by doing this, these JBSA members have helped to initiate conversations about sexual assault in the local community.

Master Sgt. Leona Guy, Headquarters Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center financial operations policy and procedures manager at JBSA-Lackland and volunteer victim advocate, said being able to create her own piece of art as part of her SAPR training was a calming experience for her.

“It’s not difficult at all,” Guy said. “At first I was, ‘I don’t know how to paint,’ but I was very interested in it anyway. Once I did it, it was so much fun. It’s just surprisingly refreshing.”

The work of abstract art Guy created was a blue-green color painting, which represents the clear water of the Caribbean Sea that borders her native Belize. She said the painting gave her a sense of calmness and reminded her of where she came from.

“I really like the wet painting because it keeps people grounded in the moment,” Guy said. “When you’re painting and you’re turning the canvas, you have to be in that moment. Sometimes we get so caught up with work and life that we forget to just enjoy the present.”

Petty Officer 2nd Class Matthew Bellotte, Naval Medical Training Support Center, Naval Military Training Instructor at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston and volunteer victim advocate, said learning a self-care activity such as painting reminded him about the importance of taking care of himself.

“The paint event, in my eyes, was great,” Bellotte said. “I have very little artistic creativity, but I was able to make something amazing by just following directions, which gave me a brief reprieve from the day’s stressors.”

For information on participating in the Wet Paint Project, call 210-336-3565.