

# JBSA

# LEGACY

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JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO

DECEMBER 10, 2021



MASTER SGT. KRISTIAN CARTER

Jake Spalding and Leonard Gerlich, 902nd Civil Engineer Squadron firefighters, ascend stairs leading to a C-5M Super Galaxy flight deck to check for simulated incapacitated aircrew members during an exercise Nov. 18 at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland.

## 433rd AW Airmen, JBSA firefighters practice emergency procedures

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## BAMC interns march to honor fallen service members

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## Tuskegee Airman celebrates 102nd birthday at 12 Flying Training Wing

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# Army implements new suicide prevention initiative

By U.S. Army Public Affairs

The Army is implementing a public health approach to suicide based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suicide prevention efforts.

The new, comprehensive and integrated policies, which focus on prevention, rather than intervention, are outlined in the forthcoming Army Suicide Prevention Program regulation scheduled to be published in the first quarter of 2022.

Gen. Joseph M. Martin, U.S. Army Vice Chief of Staff, led a chain to teach initiative that will soon reach the most junior leaders in teams and squads to ensure consistent implementation of the Army Suicide Prevention Program across the force. The intent of this chain teach is for in-person training of every leader in the Army. The active duty Army will complete the chain teach by March 1, 2022, while reserve components will finish by Sept. 1, 2022.

"Suicide is a societal issue, and the U.S. Army is not immune. Our formations comprise Soldiers that reflect the nation they've sworn to defend," Martin said. "We, as leaders, owe it to each Soldier to educate their leaders at every echelon on how to recognize signs of mental health challenges, where to seek the appropriate resources and the importance of ensuring individuals feel connected to others."

Ultimately, through this initiative, Martin wants Soldiers to know they matter.

"It is essential that suicide prevention is a continual focus and chain teach is one of the current Army suicide prevention initiatives," Martin said. "I'm personally initiating



JOE LACDAN

*Sgt. Rebecca Landry and Spc. Asia Jones, 529th Support Battalion Soldiers, help spread a powerful message to reduce suicides within the Army.*

the first session because there's nothing more important than our people."

While leaders will have the discretion to tailor the discussions with their Soldiers, the suicide prevention training must, at a minimum, address the following topics: leader visibility tools and processes for recognizing risk and protective factors, identifying available resources, engaging in targeted prevention, implementing early intervention strategies, and accomplishing post prevention actions. Leaders are also required to discuss stigma reduction methods and the Army's efforts to foster cohesive and inclusive teams.

To support this initiative, the Army provided commanders

with briefing slides and a script to generate the discussion with their Soldiers and copies of the Army's new Senior Commander and Unit Commander Implementation Handbooks.

"The chain teach event is to strengthen the Army's focus on prevention," said Lt. Gen. Gary A. Brito, Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1. "This initiative will enable a shared understanding of the importance of fostering healthy unit and community cultures and developing a sense of connection among all members of the Army family. We will do this by building cohesive teams, enhancing resilience, and addressing individual challenges early, before they become crises."

Sergeant Major of the Army

Michael A. Grinston said this initiative is one aspect of the Army's suicide prevention efforts and is designed to empower Soldiers and augment leaders' continuous focus on this issue.

"Our intent is to get upstream of suicide by ensuring Soldiers have a comprehensive understanding of what resources are available and how to use them," Grinston said.

For more information about the Army's Suicide Prevention Program, contact the Army G-1 public affairs officer Maj. Angel L. Tomko at [angel.l.tomko.mil@army.mil](mailto:angel.l.tomko.mil@army.mil) or the OCPA Personnel Team PAO Lt. Col. Gabriel J. Ramirez at [gabriel.j.ramirez2.mil@army.mil](mailto:gabriel.j.ramirez2.mil@army.mil).

## 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: Can you please include a question for me about wills for retirees? Thank you.**

As a retiree, I am somewhat frustrated after attempting to get an appointment at the JBSA-Randolph Legal Office for six months. After following the procedure indicated on their website to obtain a ticket number for a will, I then phoned to get an appointment.

Then, I was told that all appointments are full for the next two months. I then asked to get an appointment at some future time



COURTESY GRAPHIC

when appointments become available anytime during the next six months, but I was informed they could not do this and that I would need to request another ticket to get a future appointment.

I have already requested three tickets, but I have yet to get an appointment. I realize that COVID-19 is making things difficult during these unusual times, and I understand some delays.

**Is there a simpler way to get a future appointment? I am willing to wait my turn, but it seems that after I get a ticket number, I should be able to get an appointment at some future point without having to start all over again multiple times.**

**The current process seems to be a vicious circle, so I don't know what to do except to ask for your help.**

**A:** The process for obtaining a will is to

first go to the Air Force Legal Assistance website ([aflegalassistance.law.af.mil](http://aflegalassistance.law.af.mil)) to complete a will worksheet. Once a client has a ticket number for a will worksheet, the client needs to call the legal office to schedule an appointment.

Due to the demand for legal assistance appointments, we do not schedule appointments more than 30 days out.

In order to provide as many will appointments as possible, the JBSA-Randolph legal office has a retiree will day, usually on the first Friday of each month. We begin scheduling appointments for the upcoming First Friday around the 15th of the preceding month. Our next available retiree will day is scheduled for Feb. 4, 2022, and appointments will be available Jan. 18, 2022 (after the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday).

The JBSA-Fort Sam Houston and JBSA-Lackland legal offices also offer will services for retirees. Clients may use a ticket number for a will worksheet generated from the Air Force Legal Assistance website to obtain a will at any of the three legal offices in Joint Base San Antonio.

Please reach out with any questions. Thank you!

## Electromagnetic spectrum superiority vital to security

**By David Vergun**

DOD NEWS

For decades, the United States has had electromagnetic spectrum superiority over adversaries in all domains. But that superiority can no longer be taken for granted, said a Defense Department official.

China and Russia have invested heavily in ground-, air- and space-based technologies to use spectrum for themselves and deny it to others, Kelly Fletcher, performing the duties of DOD's chief information officer, told attendees of the Association of Old Crows 58th Annual Symposium and Convention in Washington. For instance, China has invested in sensors and jammers, and Russia is modernizing its

spectrum-related equipment.

"Our adversaries know how important this technology is to us," she said. "We know we have some vulnerabilities, and our adversaries know about them, and they're going to try to take advantage of them. What really makes me concerned most, frankly, is that there are probably vulnerabilities that we don't know about and that our adversaries are trying to find."

Fletcher said that retaining electromagnetic superiority requires a whole-of-nation approach. That includes:

- ▶ Partnering with industry and academia, as well as with allies and partners.
- ▶ Partnering with other government agencies, such as the Federal

Communications Commission and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration.

▶ Engaging with international bodies, such as the International Telecommunications Union and the World Radiocommunication Conference.

▶ Working with the commercial sector to enable a 5G network, including spectrum sharing.

▶ Breaking down barriers between spectrum managers, communicators and electronic warfare practitioners, then unifying these activities under a broad banner of electromagnetic spectrum operations.

▶ Developing superior electromagnetic spectrum capabilities by investing in research and development for systems that sense,

assess, share, maneuver, survive in complex spectrum environments, interoperate with other platforms and are easily upgraded.

▶ Building robust electromagnetic battle management capabilities to monitor, assess, plan and direct spectrum operations, including disruptive technologies.

▶ Integrating spectrum into operations and plans and providing robust testing through rigorous exercises.

▶ Recruiting, training and retaining a highly skilled military and civilian workforce.

▶ Increasing total force readiness by ensuring all DOD personnel are at least somewhat familiar with the department's Electromagnetic Spectrum Superiority Strategy, which is unclassified and can be found online.

# NORAD ready to track Santa's flight for 66th year

North American Aerospace Defense Command Public Affairs

The North American Aerospace Defense Command is celebrating the 66th anniversary of tracking Santa's yuletide journey around the globe.

The NORAD Tracks Santa website at [www.noradsanta.org](http://www.noradsanta.org) launched Dec. 1 and features Santa's North Pole Village, which includes a holiday countdown, games, movie theater, holiday music, webstore and more. The website is available in eight languages: English, French, Spanish, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, and Chinese.

The official NORAD Tracks Santa app is also in the Apple App and Google Play stores, so parents and children can count down the days until Santa's launch on their smartphones and tablets. Tracking opportunities are also offered through social media on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram, as well as on partner platforms Bing, Amazon Alexa and OnStar.

Starting at 4 a.m. Eastern Standard Time Dec. 24, website visitors can see updates as Santa makes preparations for his flight. Then, at 6 a.m. EST, trackers worldwide can call to inquire as to Santa's whereabouts by dialing the toll-free number 1-877-Hi-NORAD (1-877-446-6723) where they will either speak with a live phone operator or



THOMAS PAUL

hear a recorded update.

Due to COVID-19 concerns, the NORAD Tracks Santa Operations Center will have fewer phone operators, so callers who do not reach a volunteer will hear a regularly updated recording as to Santa's current location.

Anytime on Dec. 24, Amazon Alexa users can ask for Santa's location through the NORAD Tracks Santa skill for Amazon Alexa, and OnStar subscribers can press the OnStar button in their vehicles to locate Santa. Santa Trackers can also use the Bing

search engine to learn of Santa's location.

Tracking Santa has been a tradition since 1955 when a local newspaper advertisement informed children they could call Santa directly — only the contact number was misprinted. Instead of reaching Santa, the phone rang through to the crew commander on duty, U.S. Air Force Col. Harry Shoup, at the Continental Air Defense Command Operations Center, the predecessor to NORAD.

Shoup was quick to realize a mistake had been made and assured the child

he was Santa. Shoup then assigned a duty officer to continue answering calls. Thus, a holiday tradition was born, which NORAD has carried on since it was created in 1958. Each year since, NORAD has reported Santa's location on Dec. 24 to millions of children and families around the world.

NORAD Tracks Santa is truly a global experience, delighting generations of families everywhere. This is due, in large part, to the efforts and services of numerous program contributors.

## DOD looks at ways to improve child care access

By C. Todd Lopez

DOD NEWS

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the challenges faced by service members and their families in getting child care demonstrated just how important child care is to the military mission. And now the department is working hard to find new ways to ensure that those who need child care can get it, the deputy assistant secretary of defense for military community and family policy said.

"What the pandemic did, and what it showed us was that child care is not just a 'nice to have,'" said Patricia Barron, who spoke on Tuesday as part of the Association of the U.S. Army's "Thought Leaders" seminar. "You've got to have it. If you're going

to go to work, you've got to have your child care in place."

Deputy Defense Secretary Kathleen H. Hicks has challenged the department, and MC&FP to uncover new and innovative ways to expand access to quality affordable child care for military families, Barron said.

"We've been working really hard on what that could look like," she said. "And we've had a couple of things that I'm very, very proud of."

Earlier this year, Barron said, the department kicked off a pilot program that allows military families to seek in-home child care providers, and the department will help pay for the cost.

"Now you can hire someone that comes into your home. They still need to be vetted, and still kind of have to go through the process that we would

if we were to hire anybody to work in our centers. But you hire someone that comes into your home. And we will provide you with fee assistance to help pay for their salary," Barron said, adding she hopes the program will be expanded next year.

Barron also highlighted the DOD's "Military Child Care in your Neighborhood +" effort, which aims to get more child care providers eligible for fee assistance by the DOD. Right now that effort is underway in Maryland and Virginia, but Barron said the program is expanding into other states as well.

"That'll provide more opportunities for access to fee assistance," she said.

For parents needing short-term child care — such as a babysitter — Barron said the DOD has partnered

with "Sittercity."

"If you go on to Military OneSource, we have waived the registration fee," she said. "You can go right into the portal there and you can put in your information and a list of people will come up — and of course it's up to you to talk to them and vet them and all of that. But they've had their background checks done."

Barron said both the DOD and the services are working hard to improve access to child care for military service members and their families.

"There's just never enough child care because we have a young force," she said. "You know, we're always going to have young people coming in, we're always going to have babies ... and children."

# Christmas tree fires can ruin holiday

By Jessie R. Moreno

902ND CIVIL ENGINEER SQUADRON FIRE EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Christmas season can be the most joyous of times but also deadly. Approximately 400 fires occur annually that involve Christmas trees, according to the National Fire Protection Association, or NFPA.

This results in more than a dozen deaths, injuries, damage, and more than \$10 million in property loss. Short-circuiting tree lights are cited as the leading cause.

Joint Base San Antonio Fire Emergency Services officials offer these safety tips for choosing and preparing Christmas trees for decoration that will minimize the risk of fire and injuries.

## Picking the tree

- » Choose a tree with fresh, green needles that do not fall off when touched.

## Placing the tree

- » Before placing the tree in the stand, cut two inches from the base of the trunk.
- » Make sure the tree is at least three feet away from any heat source, like fireplaces, radiators, candles, heat vents or lights.
- » Make sure the tree is not blocking an exit.
- » Add water to the tree stand. Be sure to add water daily.

## Lighting the tree

- » Use lights that are listed by a qualified testing laboratory. Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use.
- » Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Read the manufacturer's instructions for the number of light strands to connect.
- » Never use lit candles to decorate the tree.
- » Always turn off Christmas tree lights before leaving home or going to bed.

## After Christmas

- » Get rid of the tree after Christmas or when it is dry. Dried-out trees are a fire danger and should not be left in the home or garage, or placed outside against the home.
- » Check with your local community to



COURTESY PHOTO

*Approximately 400 fires occur annually involving Christmas trees according to the National Fire Protection Association, or NFPA, resulting in more than a dozen deaths and injuries and more than \$10 million in property loss and damage. Short-circuiting tree lights are cited as the leading cause.*

find a recycling program.

- » Bring outdoor electrical lights inside after the holidays to prevent hazards and make them last longer.

## Fast facts

- » Nearly one of every three home Christmas tree fires are caused by electrical problems.
- » A heat source too close to the tree causes roughly one in every four of the fires.

For more information about Christmas tree safety, visit the National Fire Prevention Association website at [www.nfpa.org/education](http://www.nfpa.org/education) or contact our Fire Prevention Offices at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston at 210- 221-2727, JBSA-Lackland at 210-671-2921 or JBSA-Randolph at 210-652-6915.



# FORT SAM HOUSTON

## A Thanksgiving tradition resumes at MEDCoE

By Jose Rodriguez

U.S. ARMY MEDICAL CENTER OF EXCELLENCE  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Maj. Gen. Dennis P. LeMaster and Command Sgt. Maj. Clark J. Charpentier, the U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence Command Team, were all smiles as they had the pleasure of serving a special meal for Advanced Individual Training, or AIT, Soldiers.

In what has become an Army tradition, senior leaders served Thanksgiving meals to Soldiers at the Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston dining facilities, or DFACs, on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 25, 2021.

Dozens of leaders and drill sergeants throughout MEDCoE joined LeMaster and Charpentier to take part in the tradition of serving their troops, making the DFACs feel like home.

"I think it is important for Soldiers to know that they have leadership present, that leadership is involved and cares for them," LeMaster said between meals. "It sends a message: Hey, we want to be with you."

LeMaster and Charpentier's spouses also helped serve. LeMaster said that being with Soldiers to kick off their own Thanksgiving has become a tradition for their family. "Traudi and I have done this for a number of years, everywhere we have been stationed together, and we both look forward to this."

JBSA DFACs are used to serving thousands of meals per day and are instrumental in meeting mission readiness and lifting spirits, whether during the challenges of COVID-19 in the last couple of years or over the holidays. DFAC staff took special care to make Thanksgiving special for Soldiers by providing an impressive feast that consisted of healthy servings of turkey, ham, stuffing, potatoes, yams, macaroni and cheese, vegetables, yeast rolls and many cakes and pies. More than 1,400 MEDCoE trainees were served at Slagle DFAC and more than 1,600 at Rocco DFAC. Staff also decorated the facilities with inviting seasonal displays, including an ice sculpture.

"This is our Super Bowl for the year," James Brooks, the Installation Food



JOSE RODRIGUEZ

*Maj. Gen. Dennis P. LeMaster asks AIT Soldiers what they would like to eat as he serves Thanksgiving meals at the Slagle Dining Facility at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston Nov. 25.*

Service Manager at Fort Sam Houston, JBSA, said. "We go all out for the military members to make sure they get a good meal and feel at home."

Charpentier said going to all of the extra efforts for the meal is important for Soldiers.

"For the majority of Soldiers, not only is this the first time they have been away from home," Charpentier explained, "For many of them, this is the first holiday that they had to be away from home."

While Soldiers are committed to their training and understand the sacrifice of their service, for some it can be lonely being away.

Pvt. Drew Burton of West Virginia said he was having a particularly hard time with the separation since he is in a more restrictive phase of his 68W Combat Medic training. He and his battle buddy, Spc. Matthew Burgess of Virginia believes their spirits will be lifted once they get off-post privileges for their AIT class assigned to Company B, 232d Medical Training Battalion, 32d Medical Brigade.

Burgess, who came to MEDCoE after attending college at James Madison University, said it is not his first time

away from home; it is his first holiday away.

"It is a little difficult," Burgess said. "But I am thankful for the things we can control and am grateful to be here."

Though the 32nd Medical Brigade is hosting dozens of Thanksgiving-themed events throughout the weekend, Burgess planned to spend his free time FaceTiming with friends and family, hanging out with his battle buddies, and venturing off base later that weekend when day passes were granted in the next phase of training.

LeMaster agrees that some Soldiers have a harder time over the holidays than others but believes unit cohesion and camaraderie can help to ease the hardship. "It's tough, but the Army becomes a family unto itself," he said.

Charpentier believes that accepting that this could be the first of many holidays spent with their units sharing a holiday meal during their time in service is important for the young Soldiers just entering a life of service.

"As they move forward, the importance of being and bonding with that military family really builds ties," Charpentier explained. "Shared hardships and shared meals are

generally the two ways we bond together best as Soldiers."

This year, the tradition seemed more meaningful after a temporary suspension in 2020 due to health concerns over the COVID-19 pandemic and widespread rates of transmissions. While leaders joined Soldiers at the DFACs, they could not serve the meals.

In recent months, the military and the nation have seen improved COVID-19 conditions with the use of masks and other health measures, along with the effective implementation of COVID-19 vaccines among military personnel, civilian employees, and defense contractors. These gains allowed Joint Base San Antonio to lower the health protection condition, or HPCON, to Bravo. Once again, senior leaders could show their appreciation to their troops by serving the annual holiday meal.

Mission Green Tab, as it is called due to the green markings leaders used to wear on their uniforms, is just one of the Thanksgiving traditions at MEDCoE, collectively known as Operation Thanksgiving.

Other traditions, in which Soldiers are invited to the homes of the local community or attend a holiday meal hosted by Valero Energy Corporation, were canceled for a second year in a row amid concerns of community spread of COVID-19. During Mission Green Tab, leaders were able to pass out hundreds of gift cards donated by Valero to grateful Soldiers.

Pvt. Xiomara Cesareo from Florida said it felt surreal when asked about having senior leaders serving her meal.

"It gives a feeling that we're all humans in this, that we're all connected," Cesareo said. "This is my first Thanksgiving away from home, and it's hard thinking about what it means to be away. It's a nice moment being with our battalion today."

Charpentier believes the Soldiers will always remember how they have treated their first Thanksgiving away from home. "For many of them, it may be the first time they were served a meal by their leadership," Charpentier said. "But hopefully it will not be their last."

# MEDCoE celebrates its history with centennial anniversary book launch

By Tish Williamson

U.S. ARMY MEDICAL CENTER OF EXCELLENCE  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence conducted a ceremony Nov. 30 to unveil a book dedicated to its Centennial Anniversary. The event was hosted by Maj. Gen. Dennis P. LeMaster, MEDCoE commanding general, at the Army Medical Department Museum vehicle pergola at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston.

"Though COVID-19, another historic event, put a pause on much of the formal centennial events we had planned last year, we are happy to gather here today to celebrate the launch of the MEDCoE Centennial Book," said Maj. Michael Forslund, narrator for the ceremony.

LeMaster agreed, noting how the challenges associated with the pandemic significantly delayed the book production and the feasibility of holding a large ceremony with community participation before COVID-19 conditions began to improve locally.

"I want to thank everyone involved with crafting, codifying and remembering our 100-year story," he said. "We should have discussed it last year, but we had something that got in the way of that."

The book is titled "Army Medicine Starts Here: the U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence and Its Origins," and is a pictorial history of the first 100 years of the medical education and training institution, from 1920 through 2020.

The Medical Field Service School, from where the MEDCoE traces its origin, received official approval for establishment by the Department of the Army May 15, 1920, after a formal request was made by Maj. Gen. Merritte Ireland, the Surgeon General of the Army at the time.

The school began its first class in July 1921 at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. When the facilities at Carlisle proved to be too small for the breadth and depth of the mission, the school moved to Fort Sam Houston in February 1946.

Nolan Andy Watson, Army Medical



FRANCES TRACHTA

*The U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence conducted a ceremony to unveil a book dedicated to their Centennial Anniversary Nov. 30. The event was hosted by Maj. Gen. Dennis P. LeMaster (second from right), MEDCoE commanding general, at the Army Medical Department Museum vehicle pergola at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston and was attended by more than 100 military and community guests.*

Department Center for History Heritage director and co-author of the MEDCoE Centennial Book, was the special guest speaker for the event.

The part of the book covering the first 90 years of the training institution was written by former MEDCoE historian Adrian Askins Neidinger under the direction of retired Maj. Gen. David Rubenstein, the MEDCoE commanding general at the time.

"I am a co-author," Watson explained. "Neidinger set the foundation for this book and I followed on with an equally impressive team."

Watson encouraged people to read the lengthy acknowledgments section in the 287-page book. He also pointed out that he feels the true authors of the MEDCoE story are the hundreds of thousands of former and current MEDCoE Soldiers, civilians and leaders.

"As a historian, I will always be a co-author, as it is the Soldiers of the

Army who create the story," he concluded.

The MEDCoE has more than 1,500 faculty and staff who train and educate nearly 34,000 students annually in 257 courses or programs. The average daily student load of 4,600 Soldiers includes more than 3,300 on Joint Base San Antonio and another 1,300 students at 246 clinical sites across the Department of Defense. The MEDCoE currently offers four master's and nine doctoral degree programs.

"As we celebrate the past today with our centennial book, I think we will all agree that these are historic times," LeMaster said. "Even without the pandemic, our history is now. No one truly fathoms that they are a part of history while they are making it."

"Over the last year and a half, while dealing with the added pressure of the largest pandemic the world has seen in more than 100 years, we boldly and safely kept the Army's pipeline of

trained and ready medical professionals securely open," LeMaster added.

Through all of the mitigation measures carried out by engaged leaders, LeMaster recalled how MEDCoE ensured all Soldiers sent from Advanced Individual Training at the MEDCoE to their first unit of assignment were free of COVID-19.

"What the Medical Center of Excellence has accomplished will resonate now, and well into the future, to ensure we have a trained, educated and resourced medical force," LeMaster said. "That is our legacy; this is the history which we are making. Our mission and future history begin and end with Soldiers. Everything else is secondary."

All ceremony attendees received a copy of the MEDCoE Centennial Book courtesy of MEDCoE's Borden Institute. During the ceremony, personalized copies of the book were presented to the youngest Soldier, Pvt. Bright Odura, a 17-year-old 68W Combat Medic in training; as well as James Murray, the civilian employee with the most years in service; and Joseph Bray, the Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army, Texas (South).

Five trainees assigned to the 264th Medical Battalion, 32nd Medical Brigade, provided a living display of historical uniforms. Pvts. Salvador Mendez, Christopher Arana, Bhumika Kharkiv, Isaiah Green and Kaitlyn Thompson donned period costumes, provided by Robert Ampula, AMEDD Center of History and Heritage, that spanned the last 100 years.

The ceremony concluded with a traditional cake cutting and the Army song played by the "After Five" jazz combo from "Fort Sam's Own" 323rd Army Band. Attendees were invited to stay for a reception and get their books signed by key leaders after the ceremony.

"For those of you who are new to the Medical Center of Excellence, though your book has yet to be written, be proud of the knowledge that 'we,' which includes all of you, are setting Army Medicine on an upward trajectory that is sure to last well into the next 100 years," LeMaster concluded.



# BAMC Behavioral Health interns march to honor fallen service members

By Lori Newman

BROOKE ARMY MEDICAL CENTER  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

A group of Soldiers from Brooke Army Medical Center honored some of their fallen colleagues by holding a pre-dawn 2-mile memorial road march on Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston Nov. 19.

BAMC psychology and social work interns, residents, and behavioral health faculty members participated in the 2nd Annual Memorial March honoring Army Lt. Col. David Cabrera, a clinical social worker, and Staff Sgt. Christopher Newman, a behavioral health technician, along with 20 other service members who died:

- » Army Sgt. Travis Ronalle Williams
- » Army 2nd Lt. Darryn D. Andrews
- » Army Capt. Kenneth A. Bailey
- » Army Brig. Gen. Terrence Hildner
- » Army Spc. Keith Campbell
- » Army Capt. Andrew F. Caswell
- » Army Cpl. Jacob Fleischer
- » Navy Petty Officer Galen Gene Dornbusch
- » Army Pfc. Tyler H. Gorentz
- » Army Sgt. Christopher J. Henze
- » Army Sgt. Ryan J. Hopkins
- » Army Staff Sgt. Ryan Knauss
- » Army Capt. Darrell Lewis
- » Army Sgt. Wesley J. Rice
- » Army Sgt. Steve L. Talamantez
- » Army Spc. Mark Wittig
- » Air Force Senior Airman Tony Melchor
- » Army Sgt. 1st Class David James Todd, Jr.
- » Army Sgt. 1st Class Javier Jaguar Gutierrez
- » Army Pfc. Oscar Sanchez

Cabrera is believed to be the first social work officer killed in action. Both Cabrera and Newman died Oct. 29, 2011, after a detonation of a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device.

During the event, the Soldiers marched along the parade field, stopping at points along the way to read aloud the stories of the fallen service members.

This year, they were joined by Kathryn Hopkins, a Gold Star spouse, who lost her husband, Army Sgt. Ryan Hopkins. She spoke to the group about her experience after her husband was



LORI NEWMAN

*Army Capt. Leanne Bishara, clinical psychology intern, reads the biography of a fallen service member during a memorial march at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston Nov. 19.*

injured and died.

"Ryan and I were a dual military couple," Hopkins said. "We were fortunate to be together on a 15-month deployment to the same (forward operating base) in the Green Zone. The day of the accident, I was able to assist with his wound care, and remain by his side."

Hopkins said she remembers the sense of urgency among the nurses and doctors all along the MEDEVAC route.

"We arrived at BAMC in the morning, Ryan was 'packaged' and wrapped to a point where I could only see part of his face under his safety goggles," Hopkins explained. "I was met by a liaison and a team of doctors that sat me at a conference table to discuss his care. He was burned full and partial thickness over 55 percent of his body from his thighs to his head."

Sgt. Ryan Hopkins survived his golden hour in Baghdad, his stay in ICU, coma and multiple surgeries. He passed away a year and a half later, in January 2010, after reconstructive surgery.

"I thought it would be a routine day

following one of Ryan's reconstructive surgeries, however, I was awakened by a phone call that would forever change the path of my life," she said. "In hindsight, it was the experiences of the military, deployment, my husband's injury and death that shaped who I am today."

"I am thankful to have met many caring individuals that have supported and helped me transition with and without my husband," Hopkins concluded. "Thank you BAMC staff, Soldiers, and medical trainees for the willingness to put forth yourselves to help others, you may not realize your actions do make a difference. On behalf of Ryan and myself, we say thank you."

Many of the psychology and social work interns expressed their gratitude after participating in the memorial march.

"This is an important reminder of our work here in the behavioral health department and what it means to serve and those who we are serving," said Army Capt. Leanne Bishara, clinical psychology intern and official in charge of the event. "We just hope to continue

the mission and we hope that this march continues every year."

"I just really enjoy coming together with everybody and memorializing, remembering, honoring those who have served before us and those who have served with us," said Army 1st Lt. Amy Hall, social work intern. "It's always a great experience, and I always cry every single year, but it was really great and I love it."

The memorial march began last year after Army Maj. Raymond Beckman, BAMC Psychology Internship program director, received an email from a friend and former colleague who happened to mention the event which had taken place at Schofield Barracks for several years.

"It struck me that they had done this," Beckman said. "One of the things I value in teaching the interns and residents here is to appreciate the culture they have joined. In the military, some of the people who you know and love can get deployed and get injured or killed. What better way to join in solidarity and experience than to honor our fallen."

Army 1st Lt. Jonathan Mills, social work intern, agrees.

"This event is a good opportunity for the people who have just directly commissioned in to understand what they are becoming a part of and to remind some of us saltier people why we do this and help us remember some of those we serve with," Mills said.

Beckman says he feels the march is cathartic for those who participate.

"In behavioral health, we talk about provider resiliency and preventing burnout, but we don't spend a lot of time really honoring the fact that we put ourselves through an awful lot of trauma in our treatment and support of Soldiers who go through trauma," Beckman said.

"This is something that's important to me because it's both personal and professional," said Army Capt. Lisa Rodriguez, social work intern. "I have lost family members and it was important for me today to memorialize the legacy of my family and fallen Soldiers in a way that I know how to best. That's through mental health and bringing awareness."



# Army South engineer capabilities on display for Brazilian Army

By Donald Sparks

U.S. ARMY SOUTH PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations are often engineer-intensive. In such cases, U.S. Army South and its partners in the Western Hemisphere may opt to provide extensive military engineer support to civilian authorities. It is critical to establish theater security cooperation in the area of military engineering to enable this assistance.

As part of army-to-army staff talks agreements with the Brazilian Army, the Army South Engineer Directorate facilitated a key leader engagement at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, on Nov. 18, promoting technical interoperability between the two armies. Gen. Julio Cesar de Arruda, Brazilian head of the Department of Engineering and Construction, served as the lead of the Brazilian Army delegation.

Hosted by Lt. Gen. Scott Spellmon, commanding general of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the engagement included senior military and government officials from PEO Combat Support and Combat Service Support, the New York National Guard (Brazil's State Partner), U.S. Army Reserve, and U.S. Army South.

The event coordinator Maj. Dexter Buchanan, Army South engineer country planner, said "that USACE and ARSOUTH will collaborate with partners to provide assistance through specially trained teams who rapidly



MAJ. GRACE GEIGER

*Brazilian Army Gen. Julio Cesar de Arruda, Chief of the Department of Engineering and Construction, climbs into a high-mobility engineer excavator during an engineer capabilities demonstration Nov. 18 at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.*

respond to floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, or other disasters, whenever DOD is tasked to assist in disaster response within the region."

The military side of engineering includes keeping traffic routes open, which may include float-bridge assets.

The major highlight of the engagement saw the 299th Multi-Role Bridge Company (Army Reserve) transport, assemble and operate ribbon rafts as a float bridge during a river-crossing operation.

"Reserve capabilities to construct

temporary bridges opens roadways for emergency and medical traffic as well as other transportation assets supporting points of distribution for food, water, and medical supplies," said Maj. Scott Sparrow, from Army South's Army Reserve Engagement Cell.

Earlier this year, rivers in the Brazilian Amazon region rose to near-record levels after heavy rains, flooding small towns while forcing Brazil's military to conduct rescue and supply operations in those areas. The demonstration reinforced the importance of having the right engineer capabilities to support the evacuation of seriously ill or injured patients to locations where hospital care or outpatient services are available.

"We have learned a lot through this visit," Arruda said. "It was very productive and very important for the Brazilian Army."

In the end, Army South engineers recognized the event as a model for multilateral cooperation that leads to engineered solutions for our shared risk from disasters. Col. Frank Hopkins, Army South engineer director, summarized the engagement as another commitment between the U.S. and Brazilian engineers.

"Together we achieve more," Hopkins said. "We are winning together; we expect to remain great partners for both technical and tactical engineering endeavors with the Brazilian Army well into the future."

## BAMC's Department of Nursing seeks dog teams

Brooke Army Medical Center  
Public Affairs

The Department of Nursing at Brooke Army Medical Center is looking for very qualified and dynamic dog teams to aid in the department's healthcare mission.

Specifically, dog teams will therapeutically interact with patients, family members and staff assigned to the wards.

Interested owners must be able to present all necessary certification documents at the time of the interview.

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

information, no exceptions:

- » Picture identification of animal/animals and owner
- » Name of owner and animal/animals
- » Expiration date
- » Temperament Standard
- » Name of the organization issuing the certification document
- » Name and telephone number of AAA/AAT supervisor
- » Determination of animal/owner team status (AAA or AAT)
- » DD Form 2209 Veterinary Health Certificate with updated immunization record or commensurate certified documentation issued by the state, etc.
- » A statement that the animal/animals is/are at least one year old and that the owner has had the animal/animals for

over a year

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

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

Interested owners/teams should contact BAMC's Nursing Operations at 210-916-5881 to set up an in-person interview. Pet team requirements and availability will be discussed.

Applicants need to bring the animal/animals and all necessary documentation to the interview.



COURTESY GRAPHIC

# LACKLAND

## 433rd AW Airmen, JBSA firefighters practice C-5M emergency procedures

By Master Sgt. Kristian Carter  
433RD AIRLIFT WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Nearly 50 firefighters with the 902nd Civil Engineer Squadron and five 68th Airlift Squadron Reserve Citizen Airmen practiced emergency procedures for an aircraft fire and aircrew evacuation during two total force training sessions at Joint Base San Antonio-Kelly Field Nov. 15 and Nov. 18.

In a simulated scenario, firefighters responded to the 433rd Airlift Wing parking ramp to extinguish a fire at a C-5M Super Galaxy aircraft's main landing gear. Simultaneously, they entered the aircraft to assist trapped crewmembers with their egress, extinguished flames inside the cargo compartment and searched for additional personnel.

The firefighters have multiple objectives in these events. They assess the situation, search the aircraft for and assist people with evacuation and work to save the aircraft.

The crew chief for one of the response vehicles, Samario Davis, 902nd CES lead firefighter and former Air Force firefighter with 26 years experience, said they approach and engage the situation carefully in order to meet their first objective.

"Our objective is to extinguish exterior fires, then when it is safe to enter the aircraft, we shut down the engines and look for victims while extinguishing fires along the way," he said. "Our main priority is to put the fire out. Once we get rid of that hazard, it's one fewer thing to worry about when searching for and removing victims."

Davis said the firefighters have monthly training events, which periodically include working with the C-5M, the Air Force's largest aircraft.

One of the exercise planners, Lt. Col. Marc D. Mulkey, 433rd AW chief of safety, said the significance of these joint training scenarios is to

familiarize everyone with the process.

"The importance of having the fire department train with our assets is it gives them hands-on training to get familiar with the aircraft and the aircrews, in the event of a rescue-type situation," he said.

This training allows the firefighters and crews to practice and refine their skills.

"When this many personnel and trucks surround the aircraft with the goal of saving lives and the aircraft, it takes a lot of orchestration," said on-scene incident commander, Cliff D. Martinez, 902nd CES Lackland A-shift on-duty assistant fire chief. "We have to train until we are a well-oiled machine. Everyone needs to know expectations, perform according to protocols and be able to adapt when something out of the ordinary occurs."

Martinez said the exercise provided familiarization for their new personnel as well as refresher training for the more seasoned firefighters.

"We have many duties here at JBSA-Lackland, with a heavy aircraft rescue and firefighting mission with the C-5s and F-16s, as well as the transient aircraft here and at Port San Antonio," he said. "It is very important that we train on a regular basis, so it becomes second nature."

According to Martinez, in addition to airfield emergencies, structural firefighting and technical, water, vehicle and machine rescue are among the many skills firefighters need to know how to perform at this type of installation.

Mulkey said in addition to training for the crews, the exercise also strengthened ties between organizations with different missions.

"We are a part of Joint Base San Antonio and this training is a win-win," said Mulkey. "While the fire department is getting their valuable egress training, our crews are also getting trained on egress procedures."



PHOTOS BY MASTER SGT. KRISTIAN CARTER

A 902nd Civil Engineer Squadron firefighter gets into position to fight a simulated brake fire on a C-5M Super Galaxy cargo aircraft during a total force exercise Nov. 15 at Joint Base San Antonio-Kelly Field.



Firefighters from the 902nd Civil Engineer Squadron return their equipment to a ready-state following a total force training exercise with the 433rd Airlift Wing Nov. 15 at Joint Base San Antonio-Kelly Field.



# Military Training Leader of the Year inspired by family, colleagues

By Agnes Koterba

37TH TRAINING WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Inspired by a deeply rooted military household with a history of service and self-sacrifice, Tech. Sgt. Austin Meier grew up unwaveringly willing to serve. It wasn't just one parent in Meier's family who committed to defending our nation. His parents, grandfathers, and an uncle served in the Air Force.

This alone played a large part in his decision to follow in their footsteps.

Meier, who is now the assistant flight chief of the 344th Training Squadron Military Training Flight, did not join the Air Force right after high school and instead went to college. After a year of studies, he decided to pursue his true calling.

"The way we as an Air Force treat each other, defend the freedoms of our country, and the powerful sense of community is what drew me into it," Meier said.

He began his military career in fire protection where he worked as a firefighter, dispatcher, station captain, and noncommissioned officer in charge of the Emergency Communications Center.

"My time in all of these positions provided me a good amount of experience with extinguishing fires, mitigating hazards, providing medical care, and working with many different types of people," Meier explained.

"It was a rocky road at times, as I had to deal with deaths and suicides of strangers and co-workers. Those experiences taught me a great deal about the importance of relationships and good health. I make it my intention to see the person behind the uniform with each encounter I have now," he added.

As he progressed in his military journey, Meier was selected as a Military Training Leader where he helps support, guide, and mentor Airmen in technical training. His dedication paid off when he was recently selected as the 37th Training Group MTL of the Year.

Whether it's personal or professional, MTLs address everything from family concerns to training delays, along with managing dormitories and coordinating permanent change of station requirements.



COURTESY PHOTO

*Tech. Sgt. Austin Meier (far left), 344th TRS Military Training Flight, Assistant Flight Chief, gathers with his Military Training Leader team at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland. He was recently named the 37th Training Group MTL of the Year.*

Being an MTL is no easy task and has taught Meier the importance of being a leader, wingman and teammate.

"It takes teamwork to make the mission work wherever you are," Meier said. "I try to lead by example and show the Airmen what kind of leaders we need in the Air Force. Doing my best to display the Air Force core values in all that I do, and taking care of my fellow Airmen around me, is my ultimate goal."

Meier hopes to continue inspiring Airmen.

"Touching the lives of people around me on a day-to-day basis in a positive manner is a goal of mine. If I can do that

personally by caring about people's needs or professionally by developing or assisting my fellow Airmen, then I will find satisfaction in that," Meier said.

At the end of the day, he attributed much of his success to positive teamwork.

"The honor of being named MTL of the Year is a testament to the amazing team I work with. My fellow MTLs, instructors at my squadron, squadron leadership, all the way up to the 37th TRG MTLs, and 37th TRG leadership have all played a key role in this achievement. I couldn't have done it without these great people," Meier said.

Being at the core of Airmen's lives is a

meaningful responsibility.

"Our MTL corps is very diverse in the 37th TRG. However, one thing they all have in common is that they care about our Airmen. From the time our Airmen wake up until they go to bed, our MTLs are there. They are the Airmen's supervisor, life coach and mentor while they navigate the Air Force during their technical training experience," said Col. Joyce Storm, 37th TRG commander.

"I'm so grateful for the dedication each and every one of them shows our Airmen in training," Storm added. "Tech. Sgt. Meier's dedication to our Airmen speaks for itself and this award only attests to his phenomenal work!"

# 14th Annual Defender Ruck honors fallen Airmen

By Agnes Koterba

37TH TRAINING WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Beads of sweat rolled down many Airmen's brows as familiar tunes echoed throughout vast and varied terrain. Marching over four miles to the beat of jodies, approximately 1,500 Airmen and guests participated in the 14th Annual Defender Ruck at Joint Base San Antonio-Camp Bullis Nov. 12.

Camaraderie, determination and respect were evident as attendees paid tribute to fallen Defenders.

"Our Defenders have laid down their lives fighting in wars abroad and here at home," said Staff Sgt. Mark Johnson, 343rd Training Squadron technical training instructor, during the commemoration. "Today, we pay special tribute to these 186 Defenders who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to the United States Air Force and this country."

Going back to 2008, the 343rd TRS holds the annual march to memorialize and pay tribute to those who gave all.

"Why we do this tradition, why we



AGNES KOTERBA

*Airmen from the 343rd Training Squadron participate in the 14th Annual Defender Ruck at Joint Base San Antonio-Camp Bullis Nov. 12.*

do this job, and why we ruck for our fallen is because we are honoring those who can't be with us," said Tech. Sgt. Crystal Davis, 343rd TRS technical training instructor.

Guest speaker Christine Herwick, mother of Staff Sgt. Travis Griffin, honored her son's sacrifice at this year's ruck. Griffin was killed by a roadside bomb while on patrol in Baghdad during his seventh deployment.

"He died doing what he loved," Herwick recalled.

Events like these also help establish a connection for younger generations.

Master Sgt. Kevin Hillman, 343rd TRS non-commissioned officer in charge for the Security Officers Course, lost two friends and colleagues. He noted the importance of passing on the stories of all those who have fallen and keeping their memory alive.

"It's the one time of year that we all come together and we all honor our fallen brothers," Hillman said.

Helping build morale and team participation, attendees can choose to

either compete or march in groups. Those who competed rucked with at least 35 pounds, while non-competing participants carried 20 to 25 pounds.

"I was very impressed with the overall performance and display by the 343rd TRS. Having attended multiple Defender Rucks, this was by far the best I've seen executed, honoring our fallen Defenders," said Master Sgt. Brandon Spears, 343rd TRS course manager.

Chief Master Sgt. Brady L. McCoy, senior enlisted leader of the U.S. Air Force Security Forces Academy, 343rd TRS, said he often reflects on a quote by retired Air Force Col. Karen Dorman when he participates in events such as Defender Ruck.

"I wear the uniform of my country because of its history, its heritage, its service to America, its representation of my people, and because of my desire to live in a free land. Hopefully, I wear this uniform in peace," Dorman said. "But, America's enemies must know that I will also stand fearlessly in war as those before me have stood. I pray only that I do not stand alone."



# Blend of science, technology, art prove a 'game changer' for injured Soldier

By Tech. Sgt. Tory Patterson

59TH MEDICAL WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

In January 2021, Army Sgt. 1st Class Randolph Adams was on leave in Chicago, Illinois, before departing for his next duty assignment. The next chapter of Adams' career was set to take place at the 2nd Cavalry Regiment in Germany, and this visit to Chicago was a chance to reconnect with family before relocating more than 4,000 miles away.

Adams left the city after enlisting in the Army after multiple visits to a Military Entrance Processing Station, or MEPS, there.

"Chicago was a rough place for me growing up," shared Adams. "My family struggled — we'd been evicted, I'd moved from place to place, I'd been homeless several times throughout my life. I was homeless when I joined the Army."

At MEPS, he spoke with recruiters from each branch. Anxious to leave Chicago, he enlisted into the Army after discovering it was his quickest path to starting a new life. Now, close to 16 years after joining, Adams was back in Chicago and visiting with family as many service members do before a permanent change of station.

Neither Adams nor his loved ones had a way of predicting his vacation would end with him waking up at Brooke Army Medical Center at Joint Base San Antonio Fort Sam Houston, Texas, with no recollection of how he got there.

"I was leaving a relative's house one evening and on the way to my car when two men approached me," Adams said. "I was assaulted. I was beaten pretty badly and lost a lot of blood."

After the attack, Adams sought medical treatment at a local emergency room.

"I had really bad lacerations under my left eye and bruising and swelling around my face," he said. "The medical providers gave me stitches and pain killers and sent me home."

The last thing Adam remembers was going back to his mother's house and laying down to rest. Everything he now knows about that fateful night was told to him by people who were there.

Adams' mother went in to check on him later that night, he was unresponsive. His face was blue and his



PHOTOS BY TECH. SGT. TORY PATTERSON

*U.S. Army Major (Dr.) Steven Handel (right), maxillofacial prosthodontist, photographs Sgt. 1st Class Randolph Adams' compression mask and facial prosthetic at the Air Force Postgraduate Dental School at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland Sept. 2.*

fingerprints had turned purple. His mother called 911 and he was transported to a second Chicago hospital.

"They had me hooked up to a lot of machines and one thing I do remember is going in and out of consciousness and seeing bright lights and scrubs around me," he said. "Honestly, I thought I had transitioned to the next life."

The care he received at this second hospital was vital in stabilizing him.

"They actually saved my life," he says. "They stabilized me and got my organs working again."

During this time, the Army had Adams transferred to BAMC for continuum of care where he regained consciousness after being in a coma for nearly a month. While unconscious he experienced multiple organ failures to include that of his heart, kidneys, and lungs in addition to contracting an infection which spread throughout his entire body causing significant trauma to his facial features.

Since the attack, Adams has received extensive treatments from surgeons, speech therapists, psychologists, ophthalmologists and more to improve his quality of life.

With a blend of science, technology,



*William Vance, 59th Medical Wing medical illustrator, applies paint to a compression mask at Wilford Hall Ambulatory Surgical Center at Joint Base San Antonio Lackland.*

and art, multiple contributors from within the San Antonio Military Healthcare System were able to craft a facial prosthetic that, according to Adams, is a "game-changer" for him.

In September, Adams visited the Air Force Post Graduate Dental School for an appointment with U.S. Army Maj. (Dr.) Steven Handel, maxillofacial prosthodontist, who fits Adams with his new facial prosthetic that, according to Adams, is a "game-changer."

"Pressure masks are commonly used to reduce edema, or swelling, in burn

patients," Handel said. "For Adams, we added facial contours to make it anatomical."

Adams has received several compression masks throughout his treatment plan, each one more closely resembling his pre-surgical anatomy and who he is.

While many things have changed for him since that January night, one thing remains the same — his love for being a Soldier.

"Right now, I'm focused on returning to duty," said Adams.

# RANDOLPH

## Tuskegee Airman celebrates 102nd birthday at 12th FTW

Lori A. Bultman

502ND AIR BASE WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

In the coming year, Joint Base San Antonio will hold numerous events to celebrate the U.S. Air Force's 75th anniversary, and as part of the celebration, this week the 12th Flying Training Wing helped a Tuskegee Airman, retired Brig. Gen. Charles E. McGee, celebrate his 102nd birthday.

McGee, and several members of his family, visited JBSA-Randolph Dec. 6 and were treated to a heritage tour of the 99th Flying Training Squadron, where they also saw a T-1A Jayhawk aircraft on the nearby flightline with his name painted on the side.

Lt. Col. Cory Henwood, commander of the 99th FTS, expressed his gratitude and appreciation to McGee for his service and for allowing the 99th FTS to join him in the celebration and presented McGee with a bottle of cola to honor the tradition of shooting down an enemy aircraft.

Following the tour, the general took questions from members of the media and from 99th Flying Training Squadron pilots and he spoke to them about his illustrious career.

The visiting group, which included three of McGee's children, then visited a flight simulator facility where they participated in a training mission in a T-1A aircraft simulator. The visit concluded with lunch, the presentation of a gift of a model T-7A Red Hawk aircraft, and a celebratory serenade by squadron members as a cake was placed in front of McGee.

The T-7 Red Hawk, the Air Forces' newest trainer aircraft, honors the tradition of the Tuskegee Airmen and the P-51 Mustang "Red Tail" aircraft that the Tuskegee Airmen, including McGee, piloted during World War II.

McGee's military career spanned nearly three decades, and as a result of his distinguished service and continued mentorship, he was promoted to brigadier general at the age of 100. During his career, he also received the Distinguished Flying Cross with two oak leaf clusters and a Bronze Star Medal.

Born in Cleveland, Ohio, on Dec. 7,



SEAN M. WORRELL

*Retired U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Charles McGee, documented Tuskegee Airman, signs a P-51 Mustang model during his visit to the 99th Flying Training Squadron Dec. 6 at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph. In celebration of the U.S. Air Force's 75th anniversary, McGee was treated to a heritage tour of the 99th FTS and participated in a training mission in a T-1A aircraft simulator.*

1919, McGee thrived as a leader from an early age, becoming a distinguished Eagle Scout. He continued to lead throughout his military career after enlisting in the U.S. Army as a pilot Oct. 26, 1942.

McGee earned his pilot's wings June 30, 1943. By February 1944, he was stationed in Italy with the 301st Fighter Squadron of the 332d Fighter Group, flying his first mission on Valentine's Day.

During World War II, McGee flew the Bell P-39Q Airacobra, Republic P-47D Thunderbolt and North American P-51 Mustang fighter aircraft, escorting Consolidated B-24 Liberator and Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress bombers over Germany, Austria and the Balkans.

By the time he was promoted to captain, McGee had flown 137 combat missions. He returned to the U.S. in December 1944 and became an instructor for the North American B-25 Mitchell bombers, remaining at Tuskegee Army

Air Field until 1946, when the base was closed.

After the war, McGee was sent to Lockbourne Air Field in Columbus, Ohio, to become the base operation and training officer, then he was sent to an aircraft maintenance technical course and was assigned to an air refueling unit.

When the Korean War began, McGee flew P-51 Mustangs again in the 67th Fighter Bomber Squadron, completing 100 missions and was promoted to the rank of major.

He continued his service in the Department of Defense's new aviation branch, the U.S. Air Force, where he continued to be a fighter pilot.

During the Vietnam War, then-Lt. Col.

McGee flew 172 combat missions in a McDonnell RF-4 photoreconnaissance aircraft. This topped off his 30-year active service career in which he accumulated 409 fighter combat missions.

McGee's daughter, Yvonne McGee,

was thankful to see her father revisit his military roots.

"It is an honor for him, but I know that when he travels, he does it to represent everybody who can't be here and that is why he is still going at 102," she said, noting that her father wishes to represent all Tuskegee Airmen and the history they represent. "There are so many of his comrades who are not able to do what he does, so he keeps showing up to represent them."

Nearly 50 years after his military retirement, McGee is still proud of his military service and encourages today's service members to do their best to protect and defend the nation, regardless of their occupation.

"Eighty years ago, I was in training," he said. "At my first flight, I was hooked. I just loved flying."

"For the Tuskegee Airmen, the very first were mechanics, expected to fail, but they didn't," he said. That led to the Air Force building an airfield for pilot training, he said, adamant that this be noted in the squadron's history.

Col. Scott Rowe, 12th FTW commander, expressed his gratitude to McGee for visiting the wing to celebrate his birthday.

"Hosting Brig. Gen. McGee and his family for his 102nd birthday is a great honor for the 12th Flying Training Wing," he said. "We always talk about how important it is to remember our heritage and the trailblazers who went before us — having him share his experiences with our pilots is truly an opportunity of a lifetime."

"With the Air Force's 75th Anniversary right around the corner, what better way to remember our founding than to celebrate an Airman who broke the barriers and accelerated the changes we still see today," he said.

The U.S. Air Force will continue to celebrate the Tuskegee Airmen and many of the service's other incredible heroes who have contributed to securing the nation and the world during its 75th anniversary between now and Sept. 18, 2022. Look for more Air Force anniversary events service-wide, as we commemorate — "Innovate, Accelerate, Thrive...the Air Force at 75."



# JBSA-Randolph youth learn about Native American foods, culture during cooking class

By David DeKunder

502ND AIR BASE WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Members of the Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph Youth Center learned about and participated in a hands-on cooking class on Native American food during an event in observance of American Indian Heritage Month Nov. 18.

The cooking demonstration was led by Ed Blauvelt, chair of the JBSA-Randolph American Indian Heritage Committee. Blauvelt, with the help of the youths, prepared two different Native American dishes in the center's cooking area, including Northern wild rice with cranberries and poyha, a type of meatloaf, made with ground chicken and cornmeal.

This was the fifth year the JBSA-Randolph American Indian Heritage Committee has held a cooking class at the JBSA-Randolph Youth Center.

Angela Davis, JBSA-Randolph Youth Programs child and youth assistant, said 11 children participated in the cooking class and helped out by cutting up onions and bell peppers for the recipes they got to taste.

"The kids enjoyed it," Davis said. "They asked questions and they were engaged. I was glad he (Blauvelt) came by and shared his Native American cuisine and culture."

Blauvelt said the youth were very interested in learning about the American Indian people and their lives.

"The interactions between me and the youth is always a fun time," Blauvelt said. "I have known some of these kids for several years and to see them return each year is awesome. We have a great time together working on the meal and discussing foods used by American Indians and how these American foods make up the mainstay of our foods today.

"The youth were each responsible for a portion of the meal," Blauvelt added. "Some chopped, some cooked, some measured, others read the directions; it was a complete team effort, just as American Indian



COURTESY PHOTO

*Ed Blauvelt (left), chair of the Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph American Indian Heritage Committee, prepares Northern wild rice with cranberries for youth during a cooking class focusing on Native American recipes at the JBSA-Randolph Youth Center Nov. 18.*

families do."

Despite their activities being limited this year because of COVID-19, the JBSA-Randolph American Indian Heritage Committee is still helping and giving back to their local community. The committee recently held a food drive for a local church, donating \$400 in food and over \$200 in back-to-school supplies. Committee members also helped out with the city of Schertz food distribution program for those in need.

The committee continues to educate the surrounding communities on the contributions

Native Americans have made to the local area. Members of the committee gave a presentation to the city of New Braunfels Newcomer Committee on the Tonkawa people that once lived in their area.

For the past 11 years, the JBSA-Randolph American Indian Heritage Committee has sponsored a scholarship essay contest with local high schools, which has resulted in the committee giving out \$9,000 in scholarships. In addition, the committee has held an art contest at Randolph High School and the JBSA-Randolph Youth Center, where the contest winners have submitted

their work in the Boys and Girls Club statewide art contest, with some of them winning at the state level.

Since 1990, American Indian Heritage Month has been observed in November. It was created to honor the contributions of Native Americans to our nation's history and culture, including those who have served in the armed forces. It's also referred to as American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month.

For more information about and to join the JBSA-Randolph American Indian Heritage Committee, call 210-652-8529.