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JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO

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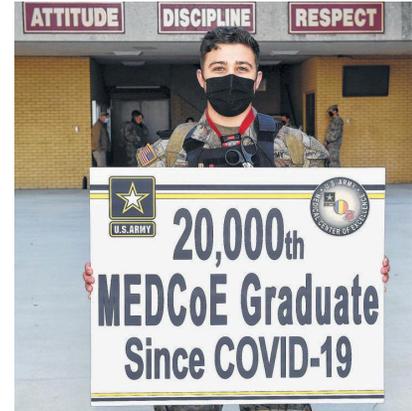


PHOTO BY AGNES KOTERBA

*Tech. Sgt. Cameron Ashe and Staff Sgt. Barbara Walker demonstrate correct positioning and shooting techniques at Joint Base San Antonio-Chapman Training Annex March 12.*

## Female CATM instructors bring expertise, drive

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# Army Combat Fitness Test 3.0: Exploring a more inclusive scoring assessment, planks stay

By Thomas Brading  
ARMY NEWS SERVICE

The latest version of the Army Combat Fitness Test, or ACFT 3.0, is exploring the potential use of a performance tier program that accounts for the physiological differences between the genders, Maj. Gen. Lonnie G. Hibbard, head of U.S. Army Center for Initial Military Training, recently said.

The new evaluation system may have five performance categories divided and updated yearly based on Soldier performance, Hibbard said.

Another change also adds the plank as a fully graded substitute for the leg tuck. Soldiers can now select either the leg tuck or plank test as their abdominal core assessment portion of the fitness test. The plank will be scored on a 100-point scale, like the other events.

The announcement is in line with the Army's previous guidance, which has been to make data-informed decisions to improve the Army's cultural fitness, Hibbard said. There are no other changes in the six-event physical fitness test and current changes were informed by compiled information, including Soldier feedback.

"Army senior leaders are listening to what our Soldiers are saying about the ACFT," the general said, adding that the updates address many of their concerns.

## New scoring assessment

The potential new evaluation system may have five performance categories: green, bronze, silver, gold, and platinum. The categories will be developed based on ACFT performance by male and female Soldiers.

For example, Soldiers in the platinum category may represent the top 1% of all scores, while Soldiers in the green band may represent the lowest 50% of the total force. The scoring averages for male and female Soldiers may vary, but the minimum standard will remain gender-neutral.

"Nobody wants to be in the bottom half of the Army," Hibbard said. "They want to be in the bronze, or above the top 50% of the total force."

In the future, the evaluation system, normalized across gender, could allow Soldiers to compete against each other,

respectively, since Soldiers are naturally competitive, he said. These numbers would also give Army officials a yearly snapshot that gauges the overall fitness of the force.

Officials may rack and stack ACFT scores by gender, from 360 to 600. The ACFT raw cut scores for green, bronze and the others could be based on the percentage of Soldiers in each distribution.

If 1% of male Soldiers receive a raw ACFT score of 585 or higher the prior year, then 585 could be the brass ring for all male Soldiers to reach if they want to be in the platinum category. Females would have their own respective 1% cut score to achieve a platinum grade.

The new performance categories are expected to evaluate individual levels of fitness by helping Soldiers understand how their fitness level compares to their gender peers. It could also allow the application of scores for future administrative uses for all genders.

Although the scoring system may eventually open the door for Soldiers to measure their fitness among gender peers, for now, performance will not be used administratively, good or bad, as the data collection period remains ongoing. The Army believes full implementation of the ACFT may start as early as March 2022, but full implementation will only be executed when sufficient data exists for Army leaders to make fully informed decisions.

## Plank alternate event

By making the plank a fully scored option for the leg tuck, CIMT officials expect an uptick in scores.

Before, Soldiers who were unsuccessful on the leg tuck could perform the plank and only receive 60 points for passing the event. Now the plank can be chosen in place of the leg tuck for up to 100 points.

This change also helps officials collect more data on how the performance categories will be divided, Hibbard said.

Part of the justification for the plank resulted from some Soldiers, many years into their careers, who were not asked by the Army to build their upper body strength until recently. By opting out of the leg tuck, the plank will give them time to adapt their physical

readiness training to the changing culture of fitness, CIMT officials said.

The leg tuck will still be the primary test of core strength, officials say, because it is a better correlation between the fitness requirements needed for warrior tasks and battle drills.

"Every Soldier should strive to lift themselves, but the plank allows Soldiers the time they need to train on this skill," they said.

## Reducing injuries, maintaining readiness

In 2003, officials began noticing Soldiers who served in Iraq and Afghanistan were unable to conduct basic drills, like firing their weapons, moving to cover, or performing first aid. The Army then developed the warrior tasks and battle drills, a series of basic Soldier skills for all to train on.

By 2009, officials recognized the Army's physical readiness training, or PRT, lacked the tools needed to prepare Soldiers for combat. Thus, the physical readiness training manual, known today as Field Manual 7-22 Holistic Health and Fitness, was unveiled.

But there was a disconnect between the new PRT strategies and the three-event Army Physical Fitness Test. Soldiers were told they needed to develop more muscular strength and power, but all they needed to be considered physically fit was perform well on pushups, situps and the 2-mile run. This made it difficult to change the Army's physical fitness culture based on the new physical training manual. In contrast, the ACFT measures a Soldier's physical ability to execute combat-related tasks and is intended to validate the Soldier and unit's physical readiness training.

## 'Take the test'

One of the biggest hurdles CIMT has faced has been testing anxiety often caused by online misinformation, Hibbard said. The simplest way Soldiers can overcome this is to just take the test.

"The more you take the ACFT, the more you understand your strengths and weaknesses and how to train for it," he said. By taking it now, it helps enable

ACFT 3.0 continues on 3

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. The exit gate at the JBSA-Lackland Security Hill entry control point has been closed during normal operating hours over the past week without any explanation to the tenants here at Security Hill.**

**We have enough gates which have already been closed at JBSA-Lackland, which makes base access significantly difficult now.**

**It takes me almost 11 additional minutes to drive completely around the base just to exit JBSA-Lackland. Both the inlet and exit gates at Security Hill need to open and close concurrently.**

**The arrangement by Security Forces to close the exit gate at Security Hill during normal gate operational hours is completely unacceptable.**

**A.** Thank you for your email and concern about the Security Hill gate.

During Winter Storm Uri, the Security Hill gate came off its drive chain, most likely due to the elements, which caused the gate to malfunction.

When this occurred, our partners in civil engineering and contracting attempted to source a specialized contractor to conduct repairs, but no one was available until early to mid-March.

Currently, our civil engineering team is task saturated with emergency work orders to repair damage stemming from the winter storm. We expect the gate to be repaired shortly.

Until that time, Security Forces has coordinated a traffic plan with Sixteenth Air Force's Force Protection office to have the inbound gate switch to outbound-only from 3-6 p.m. to reduce the drive time for those exiting Security Hill. Thank you for your feedback and patience.

**Q. This is something I've wondered about for a while.**

**I like to look at the horses at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston used by the U.S. Army North Caisson Platoon during parades. I especially like to watch them when they are walking around their pasture and eating their hay.**

**It is evident they are well taken care of by the Army and their Soldier handlers. I have heard that the Army sells some of them from time to time, due to various reasons.**

**Are steps taken to prevent them from being sold to buyers who will send them to slaughterhouses to make fast money? What are the procedures the Army follows to ensure humane treatment of these animals after they are sold?**

**These horses serve JBSA-Fort**

**Sam Houston very well and are a living link to the Army's Cavalry heritage. Thank you for your informative weekly column.**

**A.** We appreciate you reaching out to us about our horses, as they are definitely part of our JBSA-Fort Sam Houston family!

We do not sell any of our horses after they retire, but we do have a process for them to be adopted by families who are carefully screened to be able to take care of them.

We also noticed you highlighted the link between our horses to the Army's heritage. Did you know that the Caisson horses link to the U.S. Army Artillery, as caissons were originally used to bring artillery to the battlefield? Also, the Army song, titled "The Army Goes Rolling Along," traces its lineage back to the caissons as well, as it was originally titled "As the Caissons Go Rolling Along."

For more information, please follow U.S. Army North on social media (Facebook/Twitter: @USArmyNorth and on Instagram at @usarnorth) for updates and photos of the U.S. Army North Caisson Platoon.

## ACFT 3.0

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them to be successful.

"Take the test," said Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael A. Grinston. "If we do that, I believe we'll see fewer injuries across the force, and we'll have an Army that is fit and ready for wherever we're asked to deploy, fight, win, and return home."

Overall, Hibbard said there is currently an 85% pass rate among the Soldiers who have taken the test. Army leaders expect the pass rate on the leg tuck test event to increase between 30-40 percent by adding the plank as a core abdominal substitute for the leg tuck.

Many of the changes being explored in the tier program were inspired by what foreign allies are doing, Hibbard said. Most times, when allies have overhauled their fitness tests, which took roughly five years to complete, the positive results were apparent.

As allied troops began training, and testing more frequently, their leaders noticed them building muscle

memory. The results were consistently improved overall test scores, Hibbard said, adding that is CIMT's goal for the Army.

"We expect performance tiers will change the culture of fitness, because as the scores improve we believe the bands will get a little tougher," he said.

Grinston hopes the tactic will help inspire change in the Army's fitness culture.

"We are going to make policy decisions informed by the data collected through implementation," Grinston said. "Currently, less than 25% of the total Army has taken the test. And most of that is from our [Army Forces Command] units.

"What's more is only 7% of the Army has taken it twice," he added. "So, we aren't able to see the impacts of these decisions."

Regardless of the iteration, whether it is 2.0, 3.0 or 4.0, one aspect of the ACFT has not changed: it is here to stay and all decisions have been made to reduce injuries and empower Soldiers' abilities to perform the basic tasks required of them, Hibbard said.

## Army extends timeline for postpartum Soldiers to meet body fat standards

By Army Public Affairs

The U.S. Army announced an exception to policy March 19 that extends the timeline from 180 days to 365 days for postpartum Soldiers to meet body fat standards in accordance with Army Regulation 600-9, The Army Body Composition Program, or ABCP.

Soldiers will not be entered into the Army Body Composition Program or face adverse administrative actions during this timeframe. In addition, Soldiers who are between 181 to 365 days postpartum and were flagged and entered into the ABCP after their pregnancy ended will have their flag removed and they will be removed from the ABCP program.

"I encourage all leaders to proactively provide education and resources to

these Soldiers to help them regain their individual readiness," said Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael A. Grinston.

Dr. James A. Helis, Director of the Army Resilience Directorate, said "leaders should ensure nutrition counseling, weight management and behavior modification resources are available to the Soldier."

Army Wellness Centers and medical treatment facilities offer a range of advice and assistance, including informal body fat assessments and education, to help Soldiers maintain optimal body composition through healthy eating, sleep and physical fitness activities.

This exception to policy applies to the Regular Army and the U.S. Army Reserve.

# Honor brave survivors on Gold Star Spouses Day

By Rachel Kersey  
502ND AIR BASE WING  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

April 5 is Gold Star Spouses Day, a day which honors spouses who lost their military significant other in the line of duty or because of their military service, according to Joint Base San Antonio Survivor Outreach Services. Kathryn Hopkins is one such Gold Star Spouse who calls San Antonio home.

Kathryn remembers her husband, Sgt. Ryan J. Hopkins, for his bravery and other great character traits.

"The best thing about Ryan was his personality," she said. "He was outgoing, charismatic and optimistic," she said. "He had a joking and humorous manner much of the time and knew to be serious when he had to be."

The couple met at Fort Carson, Colorado, when the battery in Kathryn's first car died in the middle of winter. After Ryan, a motor transportation operator in the U.S. Army, jump-started her car, they became friends and the friendship blossomed into romance.

Everything was rosy for the couple until Oct. 4, 2007.

"My journey into hardship and grief began when my husband was injured in a refueling accident while we were deployed to the Green Zone in Baghdad, Iraq," Kathryn, who was also an active-duty military member, said. "We were dual military, originally from the same unit, same platoon, and with the same occupation, and were – in a sense – the unit couple."

She recalled the joy of sharing a chew, or portable room, and not needing a battle buddy to go places on the forward-operating base, because she and her husband could walk around the base together. When their schedules overlapped, they would eat and



COURTESY PHOTO

*Kathryn Hopkins, Gold Star spouse, remembers her husband, Sgt. Ryan J. Hopkins, for his bravery and other great character traits. April 5 is Gold Star Spouses Day, a day which honors spouses who lost their military significant other in the line of duty or because of their military service.*

go for runs around the base.

"Deployment was a difficult experience in itself, but it was made easier because I had Ryan so close to share my experiences," she said.

But then, the accident happened.

It had been a normal day, and Kathryn was planning to have dinner with Ryan. Suddenly, there was a loud pounding on her door. It was Ryan's squad leader, in a panicked state.

"He said to me, 'I need you to come with me. There's been an accident, and Ryan's been hurt!'" she recalled. "I immediately grabbed my weapon, my keys, and I don't even think I locked the door."

There had been an explosion of fuel while Ryan was refueling the MRAP, or mine-resistant ambush-protected vehicle, which caused second- and third-degree burns over 55% of his body, from his thighs

to his head.

When Kathryn arrived at the scene, Ryan was on the ground wrapped in a medical fire blanket. Other soldiers were clustered, some crying. One of the medics handed Kathryn a hand-pumped air bag and told her to keep him talking. She did. It was the first of many days of being by Ryan's side during his recovery.

She flew with him to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, and then to Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio. A devoted wife and battle buddy, she helped him through the stages of burn care.

"Ryan was in a medically-induced coma for months, and when he awoke, he had to learn to breathe, talk, stand, and eventually walk, again," she said. "I witnessed the highs and lows of his injury, and through it all, it never fully entered my mind

that I could lose him."

But on Jan. 8, 2010, Kathryn got a call at 7:11 in the morning. After a routine reconstructive surgery and plans for Ryan's discharge, the nurses found Ryan inexplicably unresponsive. The medical team tried to get air into his lungs and were successful, but they were never able to restart his heart.

By the time Kathryn arrived at the hospital, he was gone.

When she was finally allowed into his room, she had one final moment with him.

"He looked like he was sleeping," she said. "He, of course, still had all his bandages on his face from the surgery. I proceeded to talk to him like normal and held his hand. I apologized for not calling to check in on him and that he had passed. I explained that I tried to get there as fast as I could."

Kathryn had Ryan buried in his hometown of Livermore,

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**"My journey into hardship and grief began when my husband was injured in a refueling accident while we were deployed to the Green Zone in Baghdad, Iraq."**

**Kathryn Hopkins,  
Gold Star Spouse**

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California, near his parents' house. She also designed his headstone.

Since then, Kathryn has found solace by participating in the groups and events sponsored by Joint Base San Antonio's Survivor Outreach Services. She has also used art and community bonding to process her pain.

"Grief and hardship are a journey that everyone experiences at some point in their life," she said. "As a widow, it is a loss of a part of your heart, your stability, an anchor, a guide, and the person you're most intimately connected to."

Throughout it all, Kathryn said she feels she has gained much strength, which has helped her carry on and keep everything in perspective. Now, she looks forward to helping others build these same skills as they cope with their own personal losses.

Learn more about JBSA Survivor Outreach Services at [www.facebook.com/FortSamSOS](http://www.facebook.com/FortSamSOS).



**Brig. Gen. Caroline Miller, 502nd Air Base Wing and Joint Base San Antonio commander adds her signature to the 2021 Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month Proclamation at the 502nd ABW headquarters at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston March 29.**

ANGELINA M. CASAREZ

## SAAPM: Ensuring positive support system for assault victims

**By Sayama Turner**

JBSA SAPR STUDENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM DIRECTOR

April is nationally recognized as Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month, or SAAPM, which is designed to raise public awareness about sexual assault and to educate communities on how to prevent sexual violence.

Despite our world being affected by a pandemic – which has led to individuals having to practice social distancing or being quarantined – the most recent Department of Defense Fiscal Year Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military shows that reports have slightly increased by three percent.

It is important to have a positive social support system amid a pandemic. Studies show when an individual has this, they are likely to reach out to someone for advocacy services and emotional support.

Positive support systems play a profound role in seeking formal services for someone who has experienced a sexual assault. It is vital that we understand how powerful the role we play in an individual's life who has experienced an assault.

We can make a difference in an individual's life and can encourage them to seek services, or discourage them, depending on how we respond to the traumatic event they experienced.

The role of a positive social support system has also been identified in research studies in helping to foster recovery, healing and resiliency after an

individual has experienced a sexual assault.

Providing a positive social support system means not only being there for another individual for emotional support after experiencing a sexual assault, but also being able to provide resources when requested and needed.

Two valuable resources are the Joint Base San Antonio Sexual Assault Hotline at 210-808-7272, as well as the DOD Safe Helpline at 1-877-995-5247. People can also live chat with the DOD Safe Helpline at [safehelpline.org](https://safehelpline.org).

Both programs provide support, resources and crisis prevention for members of our military community who have experienced sexual assault. These resources are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Their services are confidential, anonymous and secure.

During April, we will have some amazing events to bring awareness and education throughout JBSA, such as sexual assault training for leaders, bystander intervention training, a poetry slam for JBSA military students and trainees, a virtual 5K/10K fun run/ walk, an improv comedy resiliency workshop, as well as a survivor testimony.

To ensure that you will not miss these amazing events, make sure to stay tuned for the announcements. There is no better time than now to learn more about how to help one another on the topic of sexual assault. We can help one another, so let's learn together this SAAPM and make a difference in the lives of those within our local military community on JBSA.

# FORT SAM HOUSTON

## MEDCoE graduates 20,000th Soldier under COVID-19 conditions

By Tish Williamson

U.S. ARMY MEDICAL CENTER OF EXCELLENCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Just short of one full year of training under COVID-19 mitigation measures, the U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence, or MEDCoE, at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston graduated their 20,000th trainee on March 19, 2021.

Col. Skip Gill, MEDCoE Deputy Commandant, said in the last 52 weeks since COVID-19-related travel restrictions were put in place at the MEDCoE, the training and education organization has executed 93 percent of their training portfolio, or 841 of 907 classes from more than 257 training and education courses.

All of the Army's medical professionals receive training at the MEDCoE at some point in their career, either during initial entry or professional military education courses. Trainees include over 47 medical military specialties, including nurses, doctors, physician assistants, respiratory specialists, medical laboratory specialists and combat medics.

Sgt. Carter McCall, Company C, 2nd Battalion Security Force Assistance Brigade, Joint Base Lewis McChord, Washington, is a 68W Combat Medic who attended MEDCoE's Tactical Combat Medical Care, or TCMC, course for a deployment requirement.

"I just found out that I am the 20,000th graduate from the MEDCoE," McCall said between battalion aid station and trauma lane scenarios the day prior to the official TCMC graduation conducted at Joint

Base San Antonio-Camp Bullis March 19.

McCall remarked how surprised he was that the graduate number was so high in just one year despite the challenges in travel and the additional safety measures that were added to the course after the onset of COVID-19.

"It is a testament to the MEDCoE to be able to continue to put on this high-quality training for medical providers, people on the front lines," he added.

McCall, who also graduated Advanced Individual Training, or AIT, at MEDCoE in March 2017, said much that he learned in the course was priceless as the training will be put to use to save lives.

"It's better to make mistakes on plastic with a bunch of people around you on the training pad here at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston than to do it when you are on your own in the woods or out in the desert," McCall said.

He said the most impactful part of the training was being trained by highly experienced TCMC cadre who are retired nurses and physician assistants and getting to work on a team with fellow students, many of whom were flight surgeons, nurses and physician assistants as well.

"Having a provider's point of view, and the wealth of knowledge that comes from a provider, really helped me out as a combat medic," McCall said.

He believes that this course is vital for any unit that has a Role 1 medical treatment responsibility which includes providing initial triage, medical



JOSE E. RODRIGUEZ  
Sgt. Carter McCall holds a sign that signifies him as the 20,000th U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence graduate since COVID-19.

treatment, and evacuation when needed.

"If you're going to be a treatment NCO or higher, even a senior line medic, this is a great course," McCall said. "Anyone higher than your sergeant on the line needs to come to this course to get all of the latest and greatest information coming out of the schoolhouse."

"The biggest impact that COVID-19 had on our program was the significant decrement in our student throughput, specifically, the 14-day quarantine that students had to execute prior to our 5-day course," said Maj. Charisse

Gonzalez, a 65D Physician Assistant serving as the TCMC Branch Chief and Program Director.

Gill explained that there was minimal COVID-19 impact to inbound trainees for courses like AIT since AIT Soldiers are moved from Basic Combat Training to Fort Sam Houston in highly controlled transports. Smaller courses like TCMC saw a decrease in attendance, especially early on in the pandemic when the DoD issued a stop movement.

"The fill percentage was dramatically lower during COVID-19 compared to the previous year," Gill said.

He believes the lower fill rate was most likely driven by travel restrictions and restriction of movement, or ROM, and quarantine requirements.

"Since this course lasts only five days, it was one of the hardest hit by the 14-day ROM requirement as many units opted not to pay three weeks of TDY for five days of training," he added.

Despite the lower fill rates, Gill believes TCMC is one of the success stories during the pandemic.

"This course truly embodied the Commanding General's guidance of keeping the training doors open throughout the pandemic for any and all who were able to attend while meeting all necessary safety precautions," Gill said. "This was especially important given the highly rigorous and realistic battlefield trauma training conducted in this pre-deployment course."

Gonzalez credited the professionalism, commitment and competence of TCMC instructors for the overall course success during COVID-19. She also commended the great support she received at every level from MEDCoE leadership to TCMC support staff.

"We have succeeded in this vital mission due to our staff's resilience, passion for the mission, as well as their innovation," Gonzalez said. "It is important that we could continue to train during COVID-19 because we prepare and train these Soldiers for deployment, especially in austere environments, as well as providing them individual critical task list training."

# USAISR Soldiers on frontline at JBSA-FSH

By Dr. Steven Galvan

U.S. ARMY INSTITUTE OF SURGICAL RESEARCH PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Soldiers from the U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston are on the frontline of the nationwide COVID-19 vaccination effort.

Four USAISR Soldiers are currently supporting the Brooke Army Medical Center expanded COVID-19 vaccination site at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston at the Training Support Center, Building 410, 2536 Garden Avenue - up the road from the Capt. Jennifer Moreno Clinic. This location is staffed by Soldiers and civilians from several units on post.

The larger facility is scheduled to increase the vaccination capability for all U.S. Department of Defense beneficiaries in San Antonio, which includes active duty service members and their families, retirees, as well as civilian and contract employees.

"It's a combined effort. Subordinate units with their great leaders and Soldiers should provide support wherever possible," said Sgt. Maj. Jennifer Redding, USAISR Senior Enlisted Leader. "Taking care of people is the right thing to do and this mission does exactly that. The USAISR will always answer our nation's call."

Staff Sgt. Rachel Hammill is one of the first USAISR Soldiers to augment the vaccination effort.

"I am very excited to be a part of this effort to vaccinate Americans," she said. "I feel many American people look at Soldiers as strictly warfighters, but it's



DR. STEVEN GALVAN

*Staff Sgt. Rachel Hammill from the U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston prepares to administer a COVID-19 vaccine at the JBSA-Fort Sam Houston vaccination site.*

not always true and it's a great feeling to be able to help out on the home front. I also would like to go back to a world where masks are no longer necessary."

The four USAISR Soldiers will rotate every two months after required training is completed. Their duties will include screening and escorting vaccine recipients, as well as preparing and administering the vaccines.

Hammill's duties include ensuring individuals are

healthy enough to receive the vaccine, delivering the vaccination itself, and then monitoring the status of all patients for 15 minutes to ensure they do not experience adverse reactions.

"I am also tasked to pick up the vaccines from cold storage and make sure we have enough pulled up and constituted for enough doses for the people who come in," Hammill added. "If we draw up too many, we have to try and find people who want the vaccine, because it will expire six hours after it is drawn up."

Sgt. Alfredo Ramirez, a medical laboratory specialist at the USAISR, is also among the first four Soldiers to assist in the vaccination effort.

"As part of the core team for the COVID-19 vaccination tasker, I am grateful to be working towards ensuring our American citizens are safe from this awful virus," Ramirez said. "This feeling is only heightened by the fact that every individual who receives the vaccine is very grateful and enthusiastically be the next line of defense towards herd immunity."

The USAISR will rotate Soldiers every two months until the vaccination facility is no longer needed. Until then, they will continue working to do their part to vaccinate everyone who wants the vaccine.

"Despite the hours being long, I feel accomplishment, knowing I am improving the welfare of service members and their dependents, and DOD civilians and contractors," Ramirez said. "Additionally, I am urging anyone who has not made an appointment to receive the vaccine to make one as it is doing your part for the rest of the population."

## MEDCoE Soldiers assist BAMC administering COVID-19 vaccines

By Jose E. Rodriguez

U.S. ARMY MEDICAL CENTER OF EXCELLENCE  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Soldiers with the U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence are assisting Brooke Army Medical Center in administering COVID-19 vaccines at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston.

BAMC has been booking appointments for high-risk beneficiaries ages 16 to 64 and is administering the vaccine to high-risk beneficiaries ages 16-64 and beneficiaries 65 and older, Phase 1a and 1b military and civilian personnel (Department of Defense healthcare, national security and frontline essential personnel).

This has taken place at its JBSA-Fort Sam Houston vaccination site at the Training Support Center, located in building 410 at 2536 Garden Ave. This location is up the road from the Capt. Jennifer Moreno Clinic and BAMC repurposed this site to offer

**To schedule a vaccine appointment, beneficiaries can visit the TRICARE Online Patient Portal at <https://www.tricareonline.com>, call 210-916-9900 or 1-800-443-2262, Option 8, Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m**

beneficiaries better vaccine access and safety.

Students in the 68C Advanced Individual Training Practical Nursing Specialist course, assigned to the 264th Medical Battalion, 32nd Medical Brigade, along with MEDCoE Headquarters Support Company cadre, are assisting BAMC in this effort.

This effort helps expand vaccine capability, while also leveraging Army Medicine assets in the fight against the pandemic. For the 68C Nursing Specialists who have completed Phase I of their AIT, assisting BAMC lets them

utilize learned skills while they await to complete Phase II of their training at the William Beaumont Army Medical Center at Fort Bliss, Texas.

The efforts of the U.S. Army and Department of Defense in administering COVID-19 vaccines, along with the use of masks, hand washing, and maintaining social distancing are helping the federal government in acting swiftly and aggressively against the pandemic.

To schedule a vaccine appointment, beneficiaries can visit the TRICARE Online Patient Portal at <https://www.tricareonline.com>, call 210-916-9900 or 1-800-443-2262, Option 8, Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

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Keep in mind that hold times may be longer than usual and up to 15 minutes, and it's recommended to use the TRICARE Online Patient Portal. Whether booking online or on the phone, high-risk beneficiaries will be asked to identify their medical condition for documentation purposes. They will not need to bring documentation to their appointment. The DOD uses CDC guidance to determine which conditions place people at increased risk for severe illness.

For patients outside of the TRICARE network, COVID-19 vaccines are available at most hospitals, clinics, pharmacies and other vaccination locations. To find a location, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/reporting/vaccinefinder/about.html>.

# 'Tough Conversations' forum discusses women in the military

By 2nd Lt. Robert H. Dabbs

502ND AIR BASE WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Brig. Gen. Caroline M. Miller, 502d Air Base Wing and Joint Base San Antonio commander, and Command Chief Master Sgt. Wendell Snider hosted their "Tough Conversations" forum at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston March 23 on the topic of women in the military in recognition of Women's History Month.

The command team took the time to discuss what it means to be a woman in the military today and how it has changed throughout history.

Since joining the military in 1993, Miller said the changes she has seen include the ability for women to serve in combat roles, the uniform alterations for pregnant service members, properly fitted body armor, and hair standards changes.

"Cultivating an inclusive environment built on dignity and respect is a significant part of our lines of effort here in the 502d Air Base Wing," Miller said. "As your command

team, we want to ensure we are tracking any potential concerns about equality and inclusion for our female population."

One Airman said her gender caused her to approach her military career from a different angle.

"It didn't stop me from reaching the end goal," the Airman said. "The way I got there was just different. I had female bosses in my civilian and military career, and it has been beneficial to learn what they went through and how we continue to grow and lead other women."

"A man's job is seen as more important than his wife's," said one individual who spoke about his wife, who left the service after 13 years feeling undervalued compared to her husband. He noted instances where his command prioritized his work schedule over hers when it came to taking care of family matters.

Another member asked what the goal of the command team was when it comes to shining a light on diversity and what an ideal

organization would look like.

"Mine is an organization that treats everybody with dignity and respect. I want people to feel comfortable, like they belong in their career field, whether it's one they selected, or the Air Force selected for them," Miller said in response.

The conversation shifted to what changes would need to happen in order for the organization to be more inclusive.

"I don't think the conversation is being had; maybe it's not being brought up enough," said one participant.

"Sometimes we focus so much on effectiveness and efficiency that we lose focus on the human element," said another participant who prioritized personal relationships in his position.

Several members in the discussion agreed that communication between junior enlisted service members and leadership needed to happen more often.

"It's hard to get a younger Airman to understand that an open-door policy is

a real thing," said an attendee who wanted Airmen to feel more comfortable speaking up when necessary.

"As we continue to grow, we need to continue to think outside the box," said Snider, reiterating the importance of Airmen being creative when it comes to finding solutions to these issues.

Miller emphasized the need for input, and encouraged the focus group to reach out to the command team with ideas for improving the command, and she expressed her gratitude for their time and input on the topic.

"I want people to feel like they don't have to change who they are as a person when they go in to work," Miller said.

The "Tough Conversations" Roundtable is a monthly series focused on important, challenging and impactful topics which affect the Air Force and Department of Defense. This series fosters an open and candid dialogue between 502d Air Base Wing senior leaders, service members and civilians, of all ranks and backgrounds.

# U.S. Army South, Central American partners hold first-ever Central American Working Group Meeting of Principals

By Leanne Thomas

U.S. ARMY SOUTH PUBLIC AFFAIRS

U.S. Army South hosted the first-ever Central American Working Group Meeting of Principals March 22-23 at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston for army commanders representing El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and the U.S. to plan cooperation activities for the next five years.

Maj. Gen. Daniel R. Walrath, U.S. Army South commanding general, represented the U.S. Army, and representatives from other partner nations were Col. Mario Adalberto Figueroa Carcamo, El Salvador chief of the general staff of the Army of El Salvador; Guatemalan Army Maj. Gen. Walfre Omar Carranza Espana, chief of the national defense staff; and Brig. Gen. Manuel de Jesus Aguilera, Honduran Army commander.

“On behalf of the Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, I am honored and proud to be here today to work with you and your armies during the first-time ever Central American Working Group,” Walrath said. “Our armies continue to serve as beacons of hope and stability during difficult times. Today, an accelerating spiral of instability gripping this hemisphere as the pandemic has increased pressure on all of our countries. That is why this Central American Working Group is so important. It will enable our armies to better coordinate our activities to address the many shared challenges that are before us.”

The Central American Working Group idea emerged during the Conference of American Armies in the Dominican Republic of 2019. In August of last year, partner nation armies came together during the Central American Working Group Subordinates Meeting to identify areas for further cooperation. It is during the principals meeting when senior leaders from each partner nation army confirm the opportunities for regional collaboration.

“The guidance I gave to my staff was that the activities we agree upon should focus on strengthening our partnerships by building measurable interoperability and readiness for our Armies; enhancing our combined ability to operate against mutual threats and respond to a crisis,



(From left) Brig. Gen. Alcides V. Faria, Jr., U.S. Army South deputy commanding general for interoperability; Maj. Gen. Daniel R. Walrath, U.S. Army South commanding general; and Command Sgt. Major Trevor C. Walker, U.S. Army South senior enlisted advisor; attend the first Central American Working Group Meeting of Principals March 23, virtually, at U.S. Army South headquarters, Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston.

PFC. JOSHUA TAECKENS

and posturing ourselves to sustain our major bilateral activities,” Walrath said.

During the forum, Walrath held key leader engagements with all three partner nation army commanders, and the leaders agreed to bilateral activities and to explore the possibility of conducting a combined multilateral exercise in the tri-border region focusing on counter-threat network operations.

“Many things have happened this year that we could have never anticipated, and here we are today, our partnerships remain strong, enduring ... and this gives us the strength to stand and face these shared challenges together,” Walrath said. “As we continue to look forward and build upon these successes, our efforts should shape a clear, shared vision. I look forward to continuing to strengthen our relationship by focusing on stronger security partnerships, and regional stability and security.”

# RCA W3 course improves patient care by identifying causes of errors

By Jacob Moore

MILITARY HEALTH SYSTEM

How do we make – and keep – our military medical treatment facilities safer?

Facilitated by Air Force Lt. Col. (Dr.) Renée Matos, assistant dean of Quality Improvement and Patient Safety at San Antonio Uniformed Services Health Education Consortium, the RCA W3 course was developed to ensure and improve quality care and reduce negative outcomes at MTFs. COVID-19 pandemic restrictions led to an expanded virtual format this year with an unexpected, positive outcome – even greater participation.

“Medical errors impact healthcare safety, quality, costs and the overall well-being of our healthcare team members. When patient safety events occur, all of those things are affected, including how team members feel about that event,” Matos said. “The idea is to give the medical system an objective way to look at those events so that they can prevent them from happening in the future.”

Borrowing lessons from other industries, a root cause analysis, or RCA, is considered the health care industry’s best method to move away from focusing on human error (often termed “blame and shame”) and move toward focusing on systemic issues or oversights that can lead to error, Matos explained. The latter approach also results in creating a more transparent environment across the organization in which individuals feel safer to participate in the identification of potential sources of error.

At its base, an RCA is taking a patient safety event or mishap, looking at it from all angles and figuring out the root, or main, cause of the event or where it originated.

The W3 in the course title stands for:

- » What happened?
- » Why did it happen?
- » What are you going to do about it?

The general idea, Matos said, is to avoid the tendency to blame individuals. While instances of overt negligence do occur and should be appropriately addressed, they are rare. The vast majority of medical errors are due to systemic problems.

For health care workers, placing blame on individuals can lead to burnout, low morale, less transparency, and the potential for more errors in the future.

“We understand that humans are fallible, and we make mistakes. We can’t expect humans to be perfect, but what we can do is generate a list of recommended actions that are not targeted at the one person who made a mistake,” Matos said. “The idea is to address the system and make the system stronger.”

Matos explained that the idea behind an RCA is to develop strong corrective action plans.

“How do you get to the root cause, where you’re not saying a person failed to do something but asking why they failed to do it,” she said.

For recipients of military healthcare, this ultimately results in making MTFs safer by preventing further adverse events. The RCA W3 course, now in its third iteration, was developed with health care workers’ often-busy schedule in mind.

“Most root cause analysis courses last a full week and are less likely to be attended by those who need them most, the busy clinicians,” Matos said. “To do the job right, an RCA team needs knowledgeable clinicians on board and ready.”

The goal of the one-day RCA



JASON W. EDWARDS

*Military medicine active duty and civilian volunteers participate in the RCA W3 course at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston Jan. 14, 2020.*

course, said Matos, is to instill knowledge and confidence about patient safety and the RCA process to this audience.

“Its format is more conducive to graduate medical education physician trainees and faculty, and also our nurses, allied health, and support staff who don’t typically have the ability to take a full week off,” said Matos.

Beginning in December 2018, the San Antonio Uniformed Services Health Education Consortium, located at Brooke Army Medical Center at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, offered its first RCA W3 course using a flipped-classroom approach, which is a method that allows students to complete readings at home and use class time to work on live problem-solving.

The courses are comprised of voluntary civilian and active-duty participants from throughout military medicine with an interest in patient safety, including graduate medical education residents and faculty, nurses, pharmacists, therapists, and

administrators.

“In December of 2018, we began with 75 participants and by January 2020 we had 95 participants,” Matos said. “There’s a lot of administrative work that goes into putting something like that together, but they were wildly successful.”

Those first two courses, she said, created the demand for more. For this year’s course, the COVID-19 pandemic created a unique problem — the inability to put over 100 people in a room together – which required a unique solution.

“We had more than 150 people interested in attending the course,” Matos said. “We established a virtual platform and created three smaller courses, capping it at around 50 students per course. We completed a course in January, another in March and we have our last course for this year scheduled for May.”

An added benefit of these courses being conducted virtually is that it has opened participation from outside of the San Antonio area, including

attendees from California and Germany.

Matos said that the feedback so far has been extremely positive, and the courses seem to be doing exactly what they were intended to do.

“People have felt that their confidence in participating in, interviewing people, and actually leading people in an RCA have all improved as a result of this course,” Matos said.

A better understanding of the process, she said, leads to these individuals becoming RCA team members at their facilities with the requisite tools and knowledge at their disposal. This, in turn, leads to stronger corrective action plans and greater prevention of future patient safety issues.

“We know trainees practice what they learn, and those practices persist years after they graduate,” Matos said. “In the military, we hire 100% of our graduates into our own system, the MHS, so I feel we have a moral obligation to train them and teach them about patient safety and why it matters.”

# LACKLAND

## Female CATM instructors bring expertise, drive to 37th Training Support Squadron

By Agnes Koterba  
37TH TRAINING WING  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Courage and resiliency are part of day-to-day operations at Joint Base San Antonio-Chapman Training Annex, so a strong mentality is nothing new for five female security forces specialists assigned to the 37th Training Support Squadron Combat Weapons Flight.

Jessie Ramirez, Tech. Sgt. Cameron Ashe, Staff Sgt. Barbara Walker, Staff Sgt. Chloe Lamb, and Staff Sgt. Jessica Biroscak bring expertise and drive to a predominantly male career field and demanding environment.

"I think it is just as important for the young men coming through to see that women are just as capable of doing a job that is usually done by men," stated Ramirez, a Combat Arms Training and Maintenance Instructor. "I do not take the opportunity of being the first impression of a woman in a male-dominated career field lightly."

Whether training or deploying Airmen or accounting for weapons and rounds, the five women ensure that fellow Airmen and mission partners are ready for combat.

Ashe, the armory's noncommissioned officer in charge, adjusts to each situation in stride.

"In my role, I have learned to trust my instincts and to be assertive in any decisions that I make. Things are not always going to go as I would like, therefore it's important to go with the flow and roll with the punches," Ashe said.



*Tech. Sgt. Cameron Ashe and Staff Sgt. Barbara Walker demonstrate correct positioning and shooting techniques at Joint Base San Antonio-Chapman Training Annex March 12.*

As CATM instructors, these Airmen train an average of 46,000 members a year.

Daily inventories for over 1,000 weapons, supporting training for six wings and seven higher headquarters missions, and servicing more than 6,000 weapons is only a small part of what they do, explained Walker, CATM Instructor and Armorer.

With the largest armory available steps away, ensuring training weapons are ready to be fired requires diligence and proficiency.

"Know the nitty-gritty of your job, because you're going

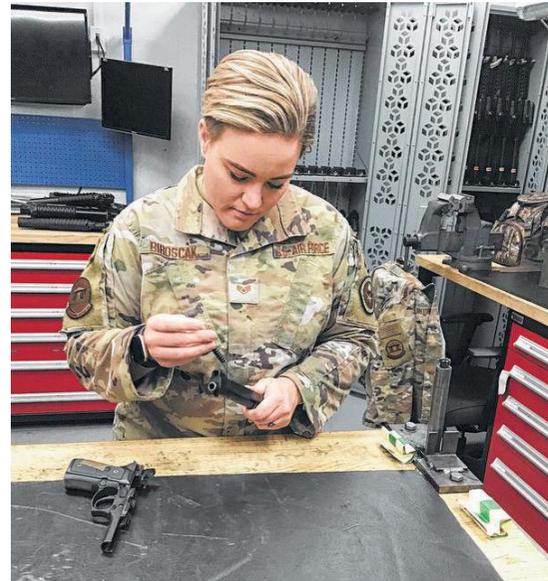
to need it," Walker said.

Teaching and training Airmen to use weapons gave Lamb a greater understanding of what it means to be a teacher, further developing her skill set.

"I have learned how to train and coach all different types of students with all different learning styles," Lamb said.

Even with a strong foundation in combat arms, being a woman in the career field brings its challenges.

"The key to success is being strong-willed and capable. Don't fall into the stereotypes and then cry about it after,"



*Staff Sgt. Jessica Biroscak cleans and assembles an M9 pistol at Joint Base San Antonio-Chapman Training Annex March 12.*

said Biroscak, CATM instructor and NCOIC of standardization-evaluation and unit deployment manager.

Sometimes there are assumptions that females are not mechanically savvy, able to pull their weight, or handle the physical workload, Ramirez said. However, these misconceptions do not hinder her ability to move forward.

"I take it as a personal challenge to always be better, to strive to exceed standards, to work harder, to take the initiative to always gain more knowledge," Ramirez stated.

Having a personal life is just

as important as the job and making time for activities outside of work.

"It can be hard not to allow yourself to get consumed with work or to bring homework-related issues. However, it is crucial that they are separate. I had to realize my kids and family deserved all of me. Having a healthy balance and enforcing boundaries is important," Ramirez said. "Prioritizing self-care and time to de-stress is important not only for yourself and family but also for

CATM continues on 15

PHOTOS BY AGNES KOTERBA

# Students compete with passion, pride during first 345th TRS Port Dawg Rodeo

By Agnes Koterba

37TH TRAINING WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Passion, pride, and community are what many organizations strive for and few achieve. The 345th Training Squadron at Fort Lee, Virginia, demonstrated these values and more Feb. 26 during the schoolhouse's first Port Dawg Rodeo.

"The rodeo was a great event which enabled us to showcase the competitive nature of our career field but still build the Port Dawg pride that the career field embodies," said Staff Sgt. Tyler Champion, 345th TRS Instructor Supervisor for the Air Transportation Apprentice Course.

Not only is this the first rodeo for the training squadron, but it also is the first time the rodeo has taken place within the schoolhouse environment. Typically, the rodeo is designated for Airmen and NCOs with greater levels of experience and expertise.

"The participants impressed us with their knowledge, skills and positive attitudes throughout the competition, regardless of the tasks presented. There seemed no undertaking too large nor too small for them to take head-on, whether they were in their second week of training or had recently graduated from technical training," said Chief Master Sgt. William Villarreal, Air Transportation Career Field Manager. "We were thoroughly impressed the Airmen were not only able to complete basic tasks, but those more advanced, such as computing tie-down restraint criteria to build a chain bridle ... something I never knew how to do until my third year in service."

The 345th TRS falls under the



COURTESY PHOTO

*Airmen stand together at the 345th Training Squadron's first Port Dawg Rodeo, where they competed for Top Dawg on their respective teams at Fort Lee, Virginia, Feb. 26.*

37th Training Group at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland and moved to Fort Lee in 2010. The squadron trains, develops and educates technical training students into skilled graduates in the Services, Air Transportation, Hazardous Material Transportation School and Traffic Management Office career fields.

With seven five-member teams, the 345th TRS Airmen applied their physical and mental finesse learned during training. Instructors judged time, accuracy, safety and general concept principles to determine the Top Dawg.

"The Port Dawg Rodeo was an awesome opportunity to apply what we learned in class in a fun and competitive environment," remarked Airman 1st Class Alan Vance, an Air Transportation apprentice assigned to the California Air National Guard's 129th Logistics Readiness Squadron.

Vance used skills of the trade for added team value.

"Additionally, learning these

skills as a team taught us to understand that seemingly simple tasks are intricate processes that can quickly and easily be accomplished when the team understands what comes next," Vance said. "Coupled with our competitive nature we were able to develop effective plans to accomplish the tasks of the rodeo."

Good-natured competition added excitement to the day. Most importantly, instructors and military training leaders wanted to keep "spirits high ... through trying times," said Andrea Taylor, Air Transportation Instructor Supervisor.

The Port Dawg Rodeo goes beyond being another contest, helping bring Airmen together as "family without the actual bloodlines to prove it," Taylor said. "By taking pride in what we do and who we are, we guarantee the mission will not only be done on time without flaws but also done at the highest level possible."

Pallet build-up, vehicle

restraint, cargo deck configuration, multi-pallet train/chain bridles, center of balance, spotting, and a relay race comprised the event list.

Many felt the pallet build-up was a tough test, as Airmen had to recall numerous steps and collaborate as a team soon after learning the fundamentals. The cargo deck configurations came in a close second for the most challenging event. Team members needed to closely review any disparities ensuring everything was accounted for within time.

"It was a privilege and a treat to share in such a significant piece of the Port Dawg culture and history and I was super proud of our team for kicking it back off! I loved how the Port Dawgs invited everyone (students, faculty, sister schoolhouses) into their culture and I don't think there was a single person at the event that was not blown away and inspired by their rich heritage and technical aptitude. I (a force support officer) even got the

chance to practice my tie-down skills and learn a thing or two courtesy from the instructors," wrote Capt. Teresa Baksh, 345th TRS commander.

With a long history, the rodeo is admired for bringing Airmen together while testing mission-essential expertise.

"I remember watching my first Port Dawg Rodeo as a lieutenant. Over the course of time, this extremely competitive event grew into something extraordinary. Born from necessity, the Rodeo is far more than just a competition. It instills in our Airmen honor, pride and respect, further building a team and community that will outlive our time in uniform," said Col. Joyce Storm, 37th TRG commander. "I admire the will, expert knowledge, and strength of our Airmen who go to remarkable lengths in order to be prepared to complete the mission."

The 345th TRS plans to hold a rodeo annually encouraging students to develop and embrace the Port Dawg way.

# Women's History Month: Honoring the legacy of the 'Kelly Katies'

By Samantha Mathison

433RD AIRLIFT WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Before the 433rd Airlift Wing arrived at Kelly Field in 1960, a major shift in workforce demographics had already taken place on the flight line.

World War II and the Korean War forced people on a national level to reconsider women's capabilities in what used to be regarded as "men's work."

Initially, the United States was reluctant to enter into World War II, which began in 1939. However, the threat of war caused President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Congress to initiate the first peacetime military draft in September 1940.

The surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, by Japan on Dec. 7, 1941, changed American sentiment. The next day, President Roosevelt asked Congress to declare war, which passed with only one dissenting vote.

Three days later, Germany and Italy declared war on the U.S. The nation was now at war with three formidable adversaries and needed to be prepared to fight on two distant fronts; Europe and the Pacific.

This demand's immediacy resulted in the U.S. government requesting cooperation and contributions from all Americans, including women and minorities.

The U.S. had to quickly raise, train and outfit a military force and find a way to supply itself and its allies with war materials, resources and labor. America's military had grown to 2.2 million personnel and consisted of men and women drawn from civilian life.

With so many, mostly men, being called off to war, there was still a need for hands to turn wrenches, build engines and fix aircraft on the home front. War production drove the need to recruit women.



COURTESY PHOTO

*"Kelly Katies" perform de-sealing work in a B-36 Peacemaker fuel tank at Kelly Field, Texas, during the Korean War. Many women returned to work when the war started to support the country's needs on a national level.*

In the 1940s, the United States government began a publicity campaign to encourage women to sign up for non-traditional jobs using "Rosie the Riveter" as a symbol. At Kelly Field in San Antonio, the women who worked these jobs were known as "Kelly Katies."

By 1945, more than 10,000 "Kelly Katies" worked alongside men, consisting of 40 percent of the workforce and providing support for aircraft such as the P-51 Mustang fighter and the B-29 Superfortress bomber.

With these women's help, Kelly Field became the world's largest air depot by the end of World War II, and women worked in almost every shop there.

Not only did the "Kelly Katies" face discrimination and defy stereotypes, but they also had to deal with the worry of their loved ones

fighting in the war.

Examples of their grit can be found in an article by Air Force News published in 1999:

▶ "Julia Macha worked in the maintenance shops. She received a telegram at 10 p.m. one evening notifying her that her son was missing in action. Julia still came to work the next morning."

▶ "Pearl Murphy worked for the supply division. She was one of the few African American women employed at Kelly at the time. Before coming to Kelly, she earned \$51 per month as a 'domestic.' Her government job paid \$128 a month. With that salary, she was able to put her son through medical school."

▶ "Estella Davis, 68, celebrated 27 years at Kelly. Stella was the first woman to come to work at Kelly Field in December 1917. She retired in September 1945, but only after she was sure she was no longer needed to

support the war effort."

After World War II ended in 1945, most women went back to their pre-war roles, relinquishing their jobs to returning veterans. However, the nation's perspective on women's capabilities continued to change.

For instance, the impact of women's contributions during World War II resulted in the Army requesting them full permanent military status. On June 12, 1948, President Harry S. Truman signed the Women's Armed Services Integration Act. This authorized women to serve permanently in all military branches, including the newly formed U.S. Air Force.

So when the Korean War began in 1950, it was easier for "Kelly Katies" to return to Kelly Field to overhaul B-29 Superfortress bombers and B-36 Peacemaker engines. Maintenance crews also

labored to overhaul other aircraft recalled from storage, such as P-51 Mustang fighters, Curtis C-46 Commando transports, T-11 Vampire jet fighter trainers and various helicopters, not to mention the hundreds of radios, propellers, airframe parts and engine accessories the Kelly Field shops repaired and manufactured.

When the 433rd AW moved to Kelly Field in 1960, women already had boots on the ground and paved the way for future generations.

Currently, it is not so uncommon to see a woman working or leading in the maintenance and industrial fields out on the flight line. They're embedded as civilians and as members of the military. While equal pay and treatment are still topics of discussion, the "Kelly Katies" helped dissolve gender roles and advance the women's liberation movement in the 1960s.

The 433rd AW, also known as the "Alamo Wing," is an Air Force Reserve unit with approximately 2,400 members. The wing headquarters and 20 subordinate units are tenants at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas.

The wing is the first Air Force Reserve Command unit to fly its own C-5 Galaxy aircraft, the world's second-largest aircraft. The C-5 is designed to provide a massive strategic airlift for deployment and supply of combat and support forces worldwide. It's capable of carrying vast and heavy cargo at intercontinental ranges and jet speeds.

As a C-5 wing, the Alamo Wing's mission is to provide combat-ready Reserve Citizen Airmen anywhere and anytime. The wing stands ready to perform airlift and other types of operations around the globe at a moment's notice.

# 37th Training Wing Rising VI council hosts first immersion tour

By Annette Crawford

37TH TRAINING WING  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The 37th Training Wing Rising VI Council has an ambitious agenda, despite being formed less than a year ago. Several of its members and other base personnel participated in the council's first immersion tour March 18 in the hopes of being able to network with all mission partners.

According to Staff Sgt. Brandon Vazquez, Rising VI sergeant at arms, the council is comprised of enlisted Airmen with shared goals of improving the enlisted experience across the 37th TRW.

"The purpose of the 37th TRW Rising VI is to offer career development, mentorship, community involvement and leadership training, all in a one-stop-shop," said Vazquez, who is assigned to the 323rd Training Squadron. "Our goal is to establish a closer link between mission partners throughout the wing."



VANESSA R. ADAME

Master Sgt. Ricardo Alonso, 837th Training Group, talks to members of the 37th Training Wing Rising VI immersion tour about improvised explosive devices at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland March 18.

Other organization officers are Tech. Sgt. Cameron Figueroa, 737th Training Group, president; Tech. Sgt. Gabriel Mier, 321st TRS, vice president; Tech. Sgt. Autumn

Murphy, 344th TRS, treasurer; and Tech. Sgt. Chaunte Thompson, 321st TRS, secretary.

Vazquez said the immersion tours will help the council

members get a clearer understanding of the 37th TRW mission and vision statement.

"I think the overall tour was a success," Figueroa added. "The future of our group is to

create more opportunities for Airmen assigned to the 37th TRW whether that be motivational speakers or fostering more mentoring sessions. What we realized is that in order for events like this to take place and grow a successful organization it takes a full unity of effort to rally behind a cause."

Stops along the tour included a 37th TRW briefing, attending a Basic Military Training graduation, tour a BMT dormitory, the 344th TRS, Defense Language Institute English Learning Center, and the Inter-American Air Forces Academy. During lunch, they were able to ask questions of a leadership panel that included:

Lt. Col. Clifford Anderson, 637th International Support Squadron; Lt. Col. Carlos Hernandez, IAAFA; Lt. Col. Matthew Kowalski, 341st TRS; Lt. Col. John Marx, 331st TRS; Lt. Col. Jeffrey Simmons, 37th TRW; and Lt. Col. Raymundo Vann, 323rd TRS.

For more information about Rising VI, contact any of the organization officers.

Jessie Ramirez practices her shooting skills as Staff Sgt. Chloe Lamb evaluates Ramirez's marksmanship at Joint Base San Antonio-Chapman Training Annex March 12.



AGNES KOTERBA

## CATM

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your work environment."

Birosca echoed Ramirez's comments.

"It's all about give and take. And don't expect it to happen all at once. There's an art in time management that doesn't come easily. It's a practiced skill," Biroscak said.

The five female Airmen also leave room for professional development.

"Because it is a male-dominated career field it is important for the few of us women that are around to stick together," Ramirez said. "I am not perfect and there is always

room to grow, from my own experience it is more rewarding when you're helping others grow as well."

The accomplishments of these women have not gone unnoticed.

"Strength is not in numbers but in mind, passion, and work ethic. Seeing these five women today in a field that is both highly competitive and challenging allows all members to recognize the sacrifices of our female Airmen," said Col. Joyce Storm, 37th Training Group commander. "I'm honored to have these women serving by our side every day and inspiring those who will one day follow in their footsteps."

# RANDOLPH

## First graduates of undergraduate pilot training 2.5 make history

By Benjamin Faske

12TH FLYING TRAINING WING  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

History was made March 19 as 10 new Air Force pilots received their wings after graduating from the first Undergraduate Pilot Training 2.5 program at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph.

Instructors from the 559th Flying Training Squadron implemented training for Air Education and Training Command's first UPT 2.5 class, which began in July 2020. Using the T-6 aircraft as the primary trainer aircraft, the first class completed training in only seven months.

Graduates of Class 21-06 came from a wide range of Air Force talent, from second lieutenants with only initial flight training skills to seasoned Air Force captains with remotely piloted aircraft and cyber warfare experience.

"It feels amazing having graduated, the best feeling in the world," said 2nd Lt. Nathaniel Welch, a graduate pilot who is now headed to Det. 24 at JBSA-Randolph, where he will next learn fighter fundamentals.

"We completed a very difficult program and I am honored to have been on the ground floor of UPT 2.5 and pilot training transformation," said 1st Lt. Adam Pauley, Class 21-06 graduate.

UPT 2.5 is one of the initiatives that make up Pilot Training Transformation.

"Taking lessons learned from Pilot Training Next, the goal, to produce the same caliber of pilots and enable them to enter formal training



SEAN WORRELL

Graduates from the first undergraduate pilot training 2.5 class gather for a group photo with 12th Flying Training Wing leadership and Order of the Daedalians foundation chairman retired Maj. Gen. Jerry Allen (center) March 19 at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph.

earlier and with an increased skill set," said Col. Robert Moschella, 12th Operations Group commander. "In practice, the students in Class 21-06 received more instructional time through a combination of flight and simulator hours than students in the current UPT program.

"I'm very proud of the team at the 12th Flying Training Wing who worked hard to transform an idea into a world-class pilot training program," said Maj. Gen. Craig Wills, 19th Air Force commander. "Our instructor cadre answered the call to innovate and through their hard work, we've been able to

put in place the first pieces of the pilot training system of the future. Their efforts will set the stage for continued transformation across our entire Air Force. Our students have performed very well and have also played an important role in helping us implement new concepts and validate our ideas. Our entire Air Force should be proud of these new graduates!"

A vital key to the success of the first UPT 2.5 class was their use of a synchronized cloud-based user experience. This allowed students early access to information and increased their use of remote learning, through virtual

instruction and the use of immersive training devices. ITDs offered the students better visualizations of tasks during flying formation, and it offered the opportunity to practice the associated tasks with increased cognitive repetitions.

Lt. Col. Ronald Knight, 559th Flying Training Squadron commander, attributed the class's success to changing how student pilots were taught.

"Changing our mindset from 'instructor-student' to 'coach-athlete' might be one of the most important changes we make in this transition," he said. "Transitioning to a

student-centered learning culture takes time, but is already showing incredible results."

With four UPT 2.5 classes remaining in the training pipeline, instructors at the 559th FTS continue to train Air Force instructor pilots, while also executing a new mission in UPT 2.5 instruction.

"One of the biggest challenges has been managing the increased operations tempo for UPT 2.5 while maintaining our pilot instructor training throughput," Wills said. "The Billy Goats and the 12th Flying Training Wing have absolutely crushed this challenge. I truly appreciate their efforts."



PHOTOS BY BENJAMIN FASKE

Second Lt. Jeff Gerlica (left) receives the 2020 U.S. Air Force Academy Cadet of the Year award from the Chief of Staff of the Air Force Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr. via a virtual ceremony at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph March 23.

# U.S. Air Force Academy names 558th FTS student Cadet of Year

By Maj. Richard Smith  
12TH FLYING TRAINING WING  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The Air Force announced the winner of the 2020 U.S. Air Force Academy Cadet of the Year earlier this year, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the award ceremony was postponed.

Currently, a remotely piloted aircraft student pilot at the 558th Flying Training Squadron, 2nd Lt. Jeff Gerlica excelled in various roles while at the Air Force Academy.

From being a four-year baseball letter-winner and Cadet Wing Vice Commander to his academic excellence and having his research paper published, Gerlica said, "It was a great honor just to be in the conversation for this award, but to be selected is something that

I will forever be grateful for."

In virtual attendance for the ceremony were Gen. Charles Q. Brown, Jr., the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, and Dr. The Honorable Gilbert Greenall, Commodore of Great Britain's Royal Air Squadron. Presenting the award in person was Lt. Col. Corey Hogue, 558th FTS commander.

In his remarks upon receiving the award, Gerlica spoke about the support from his family and friends and how he was able to foster new connections that were key to his success at the Air Force Academy.

"I was fortunate enough to build relationships with mentors that pushed me to lead and better the people around me," he said.

Some of the people who were instrumental in his



Lt. Col. Corey Hogue (left), 558th Flying Training Squadron commander, presents the 2020 U.S. Air Force Academy Cadet of the Year award to 2nd Lt. Jeff Gerlica (right) at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph March 23.

development included his then-Air Officer Commanding at the Academy, Lt. Col. Justin Brockhoff, as well as his Air Force Falcons baseball coach Mike Kazlauskas for always challenging him and helping to develop as a player and an

exemplary Airman.

He also noted his time working for Maj. Gen. Michele Edmondson, USAFA Commandant of Cadets, during which he was influential in crafting the cadet wing's response to COVID-19, in

addition to advising with the Academy's graduation plan.

When asked about his motivation to achieve all that he had accomplished, Gerlica said, "It's because I have a lot of drive and a desire to compete. I want to know that I gave it everything I was capable of."

Having been awarded Cadet of the Year, he's prepared to move on to bigger and better things.

"As great as this award is, my focus is on the future," he said. "The job is not finished. We have the opportunity to directly affect the mission of our nation's defense and contribute to something bigger than ourselves."

Upon completing his training at JBSA-Randolph, Gerlica will attend graduate flight training at Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico.

# IAAFA hosts meeting with AETC Director of Intelligence

By Vanessa R. Adame

37TH TRAINING WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Inter-American Air Forces Academy leaders at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland met with the Air Education and Training Command Director of Intelligence during his first visit to IAAFA March 4.

Col. José Jiménez, Jr., IAAFA Commandant, and 837th Training Squadron leaders discussed the academy's capabilities and resources with Col. Robert Ramirez, AETC Director of Intelligence. The meeting provided Ramirez an opportunity to get a closer look at the squadron's Intel, Cyber and International Professional Military Education programs at IAAFA, while also hearing about some of its challenges to continue producing new courses to enhance instruction.

"The visit went well," said

Lt. Col. Oscar Martinez, 837th Training Squadron commander. "It now provides our A2/6 and 9L functionals a better understanding of what this organization does and potential areas they can assist to continue to provide the best training to our partner nations in this area of responsibility."

Accompanying Ramirez on the visit were Lt. Col. Catherine Hoard, AETC/A2, and Chief Master Sgt. Daniel Shibilski, AETC/A2 Chief Enlisted Manager.

Capt. Marissa Gaytan, Information Warfare Training Flight Commander and Tech. Sgt. Salvador Chavez, Information Systems Instructor, led a briefing to discuss the curriculum and course content for Cyber Network and Cyber Security courses in support of the National Defense Strategy.



VANESSA R. ADAME

Col. Robert Ramirez, Air Education and Training Command Director of Intelligence, talks to members of the 837th Training Squadron during a visit to the Inter-American Air Forces Academy at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland March 4.

Ramirez also heard how IAAFA continues to provide training and opportunities to meet partner nation

requirements and recent successes such as providing virtual learning courses in support of mission

requirements during COVID-19 and being named U.S. Air Force EPME Center of the Year in 2020.

# AETC's Real Talk focuses on Asian American, Pacific Islander disparity

JENNIFER GONZALEZ

Gen. Brad Webb, commander of Air Education and Training Command, hosts the sixth episode of AETC Real Talk: Race and Diversity in the Air Force April 22 at 3 p.m. on AETC's Facebook page. With Webb, for this episode, will be Maj. Carl Chen, AETC budget analyst. The discussion will be on Asian American and Pacific Islander disparity in the military and current country climate.

By Air Education and Training Command Public Affairs

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"In line with the Air Force's broadening of the racial disparity review, we are broadening our conversation on race and diversity in the Air Force with this AETC Real Talk," Webb said. "Asian American and Pacific Islanders in our nation have faced

discrimination, racism and harassment, especially throughout the last year, and it's important we seek to understand."

Chen is a 2006 graduate of the United States Air Force Academy. He has held a variety of positions throughout his career as both a weapon systems officer and pilot. He has served on staffs at the numbered Air Force and major command levels and he has deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Freedom's Sentinel.

AETC Real Talk is part of The First Command's priority to cultivate an environment of excellence for all Airmen. To watch all five episodes of AETC Real Talks visit <https://www.dvidshub.net/feature/AETCDiversityandInclusion>.