



Newest Army vehicle arrives at Fort Bliss ■ 4A



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Senior leaders: Army fast-tracked for modernization success

By Thomas Brading | Army News Service

WASHINGTON – Even amidst the shuffle of senior leadership within the Army, the service has seen the positive results of revamping its once sluggish acquisition process, said acting Army Secretary Ryan D. McCarthy.

With the establishment of its six modernization priorities and eight cross-functional teams, the Army has already moved faster to acquire next-generation combat vehicles and advanced capabilities to deliver to formations, he said.

Speaking at the 2019 Defense News conference, McCarthy and Army Chief of Staff Gen. James C. McConville lauded the success of the CFTs, which brought acquisitions experts, logisticians, and finance specialists into one group.

The establishment of Army Futures Command, which reached full operational capability in July, has helped further streamline the process for future acquisitions. The Army's presence in incubator hubs in downtown Austin will help connect the service with "non-traditional" industry and some of the best innovators in technology, McConville said.

The service has scheduled more testing of hypersonics weaponry, next-generation combat vehicles and next-generation combat weapons on the horizon.

First-hand testing

In July, McCarthy tested some next-generation combat weapons, including the M249 Squad Automatic Weapon and the M4 carbine.

The former Army ranger marveled at the precision at which the weapons could strike targets.

"I was hitting targets at 400 meters," McCarthy said. "I hadn't picked up a SAW in 15 years. It is remarkable the work that's being done."

Both McCarthy and McConville had the opportunity to use the Integrated Visual Augmentation System, a battlefield heads-up display that uses augmented reality to help Soldiers train. The synthetic training environment, provides the platform for Soldiers to use their actual combat weapons to train in realistic training scenarios. It will also help prepare Soldiers to fight in a multi-domain environment.

"It's going to be transformational for our ground Soldiers," McConville said.

Last spring the Long Range Precision Fires CFT tested the extended-range cannon at the Naval Air Weapons Station in China Lake, California.

"These capabilities are being tested within a year to 18 months, just within the establishment of these things," McCarthy said. "And if you look at the data that's coming ... the data points are showing that the prototypes being developed are putting us on a path to develop these systems."

The new technologies could help increase Soldier readiness, one of McConville's priorities that he announced after taking over as chief of staff last month. The next phase of the Army's multi-domain task force pilot is scheduled for this fall. The first phase sent a field artillery brigade to travel to the Pacific for an exercise. Earlier this year, the Army sent 1,500 Soldiers from Fort Bliss to Germany to simulate a rapid deployment at a moment's notice.

McConville also cited the service will focus on the competition phase, or warfare operations that fall below the level of armed conflict.

"The multi-domain task force will have intelligence, information, cyber, electronic

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>> 'IRON BRIGADE' SIGHTS SET ON NTC

Capt. Lindsay Roman / 2nd ABCT, 1st AD

Pfc. Steve R. Shivers II of the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division pulls guard during an early morning stand-to during exercise Iron Focus, at Orogrande Range Camp, N.M., June 10. Iron Focus provides the commanding general a realistic platform to assess the readiness of the brigades, ensuring they are fully trained and prepared to conduct worldwide contingency operations. For more on this story, see page 3A.

'Home away from home'

'Biggest and baddest air defense brigade' welcomes new commander

By David Burge | Special to the Fort Bliss Bugle

The new commander of Fort Bliss' 11th Air Defense Artillery Brigade is thrilled to be back at his "home away from home."

Col. John Dawber, a 47-year-old from Copperas Cove, Texas, took over as commander of the Army's largest air defense artillery brigade July 26.

Most recently, he spent a year as the deputy commander for the 32nd Army Air and Missile Defense Command at Fort Bliss before taking over at the "Imperial Brigade."

This is Dawber's third tour at Fort Bliss. He and his family had been waiting 15 years to return to El Paso and Fort Bliss.

"My wife (Jennifer) and I wondered if we would ever find our way back to the Imperial Bri-



David Burge / Special to the Fort Bliss Bugle

Col. John Dawber is the new commander of the Army's largest air defense artillery brigade, the 11th Air Defense Artillery Brigade at Fort Bliss. This is the third tour for Dawber at Fort Bliss.

gade," Dawber said. "As a young officer, I cut my teeth here and learned so much. I am loyal to every unit I have belonged to, but have never found what I experienced here in the 11th Brigade."

Dawber attended the officer basic course at Fort Bliss as a young second lieutenant back in 1995.

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FORT BLISS

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Are you prepared: September is National Pre- paredness Month

By Dr. David Folk | Army Materiel Command

FORT RUCKER, Ala. – While in the Boy Scouts at a young age, I remember our scoutmaster telling us to always be prepared. “For what,” I would ask. “For anything,” he’d respond.

As I grew older and a little wiser, I began to see the logic in the Boy Scout motto. Years ago, I had moved to Florida for work and had my first experience with hurricanes. Yes, plural hurricanes. Three hurricanes passed through the area I was living over the summer. The first time, I was totally unprepared and learned a great lesson the hard way. Being raised in Ohio, I had experienced tornadoes, but nothing like this. We had no electricity for nine days, the roadways were blocked and homes were destroyed. Instead of the mile-wide path of destruction you might see from a tornado, this destruction was miles across. There was no driving to a nearby town to get supplies because adjacent municipalities were also destroyed.

When I bring up the topic of disaster preparation, many people call me a survivalist and doomsday prepper, to name just a few. To me, it makes good sense to take some basic precautions and ensure your family is protected and prepared in the event of an emergency. My approach to preparing for a natural disaster is broken into categories so I can ensure I address all my possible needs. Some of the most important human reactions, and hardest to control, are panic and fear. When all methods of communication are lost – no television, radio or cell-phone coverage – your emergency action plan must kick in so you can focus on survival.

Safe haven

The remainder of the precautions will matter little if you do not have a safe room, basement or other location strong enough to resist the forces of nature. An interior room in the home may work for an EF1 or EF2 tornado, but if the twister makes a direct hit on the structure, your safety may be in jeopardy. Tornadoes EF3 and higher will destroy homes even if they do not directly hit them. The winds generated by these storms can leave nothing behind but debris and bare concrete slabs.

Your first order of business should be to find your safe haven – a space or building that is structurally sound. This structure must be able to endure the forces of wind and strong enough to protect individuals inside from windblown debris traveling at high speeds. Storm bunkers can be installed under your garage and offer good protection when there is a need to get below ground level.

You may have a basement under your home, which can offer good protection against flying debris. The key to safety when hunkering in a basement is to stay away from chimneys and try to find something structurally sound to get under in the event debris falls into the basement. As a child, my parents always told me to go to the southwestern side of the basement and get under something. It’s a good idea to take a sleeping bag or blanket with you just in case you end up staying the night down there.

The third type of shelter is a storm bunker not attached to the home. A downside to this type of shelter is they are constructed at a distance away from the home. This requires the users to be exposed to inclement weather as



Graphic courtesy USACRC

they move from the home to the shelter. This shelter offers the maximum level of protection because, in addition to getting the occupants below ground, it also reduces the potential for home debris to fall and block safe operation of the door.

If having a storm shelter put in, plan to use only licensed companies with experience installing them. Ensure your shelter door has a locking device on the inside to prevent accidental opening during high-wind situations. We’ve all seen the beginning of the movie “Twister” when the door was sucked open. Once inside the shelter, lock the door and move away from the entrance.

Water

After you’ve worked out your safe shelter, water needs to be No. 2 on your survival list. Anticipate a need to store a minimum of three-to-five days of drinking water per person in the shelter. Add an additional five gallons for meal preparation and sanitation.

Many survivalists use bottled water or large plastic containers to store drinking water in the safe haven. The type of container is a personal choice. However, after my adventure in Florida with no electricity, I’ve taken some additional precautions in the event it becomes evident it will be a long time before drinking water becomes available from the tap. At little cost, I built a water filtration system by using stones, sand and activated filtration charcoal to purify collected water and convert it to drinking water. These units can purify hundreds of gallons of water taken from the rain, streams or ponds.

If interested, there are good instructional videos available on building water filtration systems on YouTube. The Mayo Clinic recommends 15.5 cups of water a day for a male and 11.5 cups for a female. Temperature, activity, your gender and body structure are just a few of the factors used when calculating your needed water intake. The easiest way to plan for a drinking water storage is to place at least one gallon per day for each individual in the safe haven.

Weather radio/radio

After water, it is imperative you make connection to the outside world to determine what is going on in your area. Have at least one radio with several extra packs of batteries. You will have no outside communication during the time when electrical systems are down, and alerts and advisories from the local radio stations could be essential to your survival.

Try to purchase a survival radio with a hand-charging feature in the event your battery supply becomes exhausted. The American Red Cross offers an emergency radio system that can recharge by either solar cells or hand cranking. The radio costs about \$60 and also provides a port to recharge a cell phone. For more information, see the American Red Cross website.

Food

When stocking your shelter, in addition to items, such as power bars and granola-type snacks, take into consideration the food group categories when planning. Three-to-five days of eating these products can provide sufficient nutrition to keep you alive, but offer little additional extra calories. Unheated cans of soup, pasta products and dried meat can help fill in the gaps. Attempt to stay away from canned food products containing high levels of sodium.

Canned fruit and vegetables will also help ensure you’re receiving a stable diet during the event. My emergency food supply not only includes items in the meat, vegetable and fruit categories, but also some purchased packaged food items from survival food suppliers. Many of these products do require that water be added, but the meal offers nutrients and vitamins needed to keep the body functioning.

Sanitation

This is one area where I am currently researching to upgrade in my shelter. One person I know has a five-gallon bucket in his shelter and just inserts a plastic trash bag in it for his sanitation needs. Another option is a marine chemical type of toilet that is commonly used on a boat. During my research, I even found a disposable cardboard type of toilet device that uses disposable bags. When the emergency event is over, you properly dispose of the toilet and used bags. The internet offers several options to address your shelter’s sanitation needs. Take the time to review them all and select what best fits your situation and the number of individuals staying in your safe haven.

Emergency lighting

Some safe havens have windows or skylights that will offer illumination during daylight hours, but planning needs to be in place for evening hours. Small LED lanterns powered by batteries are a better choice over petroleum-based powered lanterns, which produce carbon monoxide and could present a fire hazard. Ensure your safe haven has at least two handheld flashlights along with several packs of new batteries. If kerosene lamps and petroleum-based lanterns are used, make sure there is adequate air movement in the safe haven space. An incoming fresh air duct, along with a strategically located exhaust duct, is very important when these carbon monoxide-producing devices are used in enclosed spaces. Included are propane or petroleum-based cook stoves, which also put off carbon monoxide. No matter what device is used, ensure the air within the space remains safe.

Each September, National Preparedness Month encourages and reminds Americans to be prepared for disasters or emergencies in their homes, businesses and communities. Homeowners, families, communities and businesses can use this opportunity to find ways or help others understand more about preparing

command. That is our baseline philosophy.”

To do that, you need trained and ready Soldiers who are prepared to do their wartime mission, ready and well-maintained equipment and resilient families who support their Soldiers, Dawber said.

Dawber said he is inspired each day when he gets up, goes to work and is around his Soldiers. “You read things that say leaders are supposed to inspire Soldiers, but every day they inspire me,” he said. “The sergeant major (Command Sgt. Maj. James R. Brazill) and I get out there for PT and it sets the tone for the rest of the day.”

Serving as the commander of the 11th Brigade with all its history and tradition is also a humbling but exciting role, Dawber said.

“The legacy of this brigade is incredible,” Dawber said. “It is the biggest and baddest air defense brigade on the planet. It is humbling to command a formation that size and even more humbling to know the footsteps I follow in and legacy of this great brigade.”

MODERNIZATION *Continued from Page 1A*

warfare and space capability that will allow us to conduct operations that are actually below the level of armed conflict,” he said. “We’re also bringing into the force long-range precision fires from hypersonics to precision strike missiles which is going to give us a lethal capability that will allow us to deter [an] adversary.”

The CFTs have not only streamlined the acquisitions process but have bought cohesion and teamwork among their members.

It is amazing what has been unleashed,” McConville said. “CFT members are aggressively working together toward a common goal and getting programs developed at the speed of relevance, because they want to win. We are really seeing the value of their focused teamwork.”

For example, the Network CFT, based at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, has paired Maj. Gen. David Bassett, program executive officer for Command, Control, and Communications-Tactical, known as PEO C3T, and Maj. Gen. Peter Gallagher, director of the Network CFT. The generals are neighbors and McCarthy said their children and spouses have gotten to know each other.

Along with CFT members and industry partners, they have worked together to develop greater interoperability across the Army network, McCarthy said.

“We formalized the relationship between stakeholders, requirements, acquisitions, sustainment, finance, legal and it all worked together as a team,” he said.

for disasters and reducing risks to health and the environment.

People survive disasters by putting forth the effort to plan for and prepare before the event strikes. As demonstrated in other national disasters, until resources can be mobilized and assembled in your area, you are on your own to care for your family and neighbors. Will you be prepared when it strikes? For more information, visit <https://www.ready.gov/>

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He returned a year later and served at Fort Bliss until 2003.

That second assignment at Fort Bliss included attending the officer advanced course and serving in the 11th Brigade in various roles. During that time, he commanded Alpha Battery, 5th Battalion, 52nd Air Defense Artillery Regiment and later served as the deputy operations officer for the brigade during Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003.

During that second tour, the Dawbers’ son Ethan – now 19 – was born at William Beaumont Army Medical Center. It all adds up to give Dawber and his family a strong connection to both the Imperial Brigade and Fort Bliss.

“As you grow up and move out in the Army, it seemed less-and-less likely we would come back,” Dawber said. “It was a true blessing to come back here. My wife and I couldn’t be more excited.”

Professionally, Dawber is back home with the Imperial Brigade. It is the Army’s largest unit of

its kind with 2,700 Soldiers, four Patriot battalions and four THAAD batteries.

The brigade is known for being a high-octane unit with units constantly deployed.

The 1st Battalion, 43rd Air Defense Artillery Regiment recently returned from a deployment to the Middle East. That means all four of the brigade’s Patriot battalions are at home at Fort Bliss, marking a rarity for the Imperial Brigade, Dawber said.

While the 1-43 ADA is reintegrating back into the Fort Bliss community, the brigade’s other units continue to train and prepare for any future deployments.

Adding a different wrinkle, the brigade’s 3-43 ADA is taking part in a wide-ranging test and modernization mission and will emerge out of it in several years as the most modern air defense artillery unit in the Army, Dawber said.

Like the rest of the Army, Dawber said his brigade’s No. 1 priority is readiness.

“Our identity in the brigade is to be ready now and be ready always,” Dawber said. “That is the fundamental identity I have put out in the

UNIT NEWS

Training is the oil that keeps the engine of our Army running



USASMA celebrates Cohort 4 fellowship graduation ■ 6A



653rd RSG partners with Child Crisis Center of El Paso ■ 9A



'Super Bowl' of training 2nd ABCT Soldiers head to NTC

By David Burge | Special to the Fort Bliss Bugle

For the past eight months, Fort Bliss' 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team has been out in the field, practicing its Soldier skills and getting ready for the Army's supreme training challenge.

About 4,000 Soldiers from the "Iron Brigade" will be going to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California, for a month-long training rotation from late September to late October.

They will practice deploying about 800 miles with all their personnel and equipment. They will assemble, move their equipment out into the training area at NTC and face perhaps the toughest opposing force in the world in Fort Irwin's 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment.

NTC has often been called the Super Bowl of Army training.

"It is a crucible," said Maj. Cole Pinheiro, 2nd Brigade's executive officer.

"At NTC, it is the highest level of training you can get in the U.S. Army in preparation for whatever mission the nation gives us," said Pinheiro, from Tehachapi, California.

There, they will go force-on-force against a thinking, adaptable opponent in the 11th ACR and then do live fire operations, all in preparation for whatever mission the nation decides to give them in the future, Pinheiro said.

"We are going to go out there, and we will learn a lot about ourselves," Pinheiro said. "In the end, success for the brigade is our ability to learn those lessons, and continue to improve our systems and processes."

The 2nd Brigade has been busy training on-and-off since January, going through a traditional gated-training strategy – training from the individual to platoon, company, battalion,

and finally, the brigade level.

The brigade and its Soldiers were tested during the battalion-level "Strike Focus" in April and then during the brigade-level "Iron Focus" in June.

In addition, two of the brigade's battalions – 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment and 1st Battalion, 35th Armored Regiment – took part in an emergency deployment readiness exercise in March and April, and rapidly deployed with other elements of the brigade to Poland to take part in a series of exercises there.

After all that, the brigade is now ready to take on the challenge of NTC, Pinheiro said.

"I think Iron Focus is the best home station training I have experienced in my entire career for brigade-level staffs and battalions for maneuver operations, combined arms operations," Pinheiro said.

Adding to the challenge, 2nd Brigade will be meeting up and joining forces with about 1,000 enablers or specialized Soldiers from across the Army.

Joining them at NTC will be elements from Fort Bliss' 1st Armored Division Sustainment Brigade and a platoon from the 591st Military Police Company, 93rd Military Police Battalion.

The aviation task force will be the 2nd Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment from Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

"We are looking to refine and sharp-tune some of our tactical and operational processes for potential follow-on missions," Pinheiro said.

Sgt. Maj. Jeremy Prickette, the brigade's operations sergeant major, said they have had a great train-up and are ready for whatever NTC throws their way.



Capt. Lindsay Roman / 2nd ABCT, 1st AD

Opposition Forces from the 1st Battalion, 37th Armored Regiment, 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division stand ready to defend the small mock city known as "Zamania" during exercise Iron Focus, at Orogrande Range Camp, N.M., June 10. Iron Focus is one of the largest exercises conducted on Fort Bliss as part of the 1st AD commander's combat training center certification program.

"All the stepping stones we need to make the organization effective, I think we have achieved them," said Prickette, from Clintonville, Wisconsin.

"There is still plenty of room to improve and we will continue to identify those things and work on them," Prickette said. "We have done some amazing training over the past few months. NTC will give us a good sense of where we are mentally, physically and tactically across the board on all things."

Having the brigade go to NTC is also good practice for families too, and they will get experience on what it is like to have their Soldiers pack up their gear and leave on a mis-

sion, he added.

Maj. Andrew Boyd, the operations officer for the brigade, said NTC will be a great learning experience.

"Units that come here to win, they end up failing," said Boyd, from Chuluota, Florida. "Units that come here to learn, they do just that – they end up learning and being more successful as a unit."

The last time 2nd Brigade went to NTC was August 2017, prior to the brigade deploying to Kuwait and other places in the Middle East from October 2017 to July 2018.

30th ABCT combat medics practice medevacs

By Lt. Col. Cynthia King | 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team

Combat medic Soldiers in the 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team joined a medical evacuation crew from 5th Armored Brigade, First Army Division West, to train on patient loading onto a UH-60 Black Hawk, Sept. 3, in the vicinity of Fort Bliss.

More than 50 combat medics from the North Carolina, South Carolina, Ohio and West Virginia Army National Guards, who comprise the 30th ABCT, practiced loading a teammate on a gurney using what is called a hot-load method, which means the helicopter rotors were turning when they approached it, as opposed to a cold-load – when the helicopter engines are shutdown.

Sgt. 1st Class Meredith Kiser, 30th ABCT medical operations noncommissioned officer-in-charge said the exercise trained combat medics on performing triage, treatment, and transport to a higher level of care. Kiser, who has deployed twice to Iraq, added that they strive to train with Army aviation as much as possible, because

when troops are spread out, rotary-wing assets are the fastest method to get critically-injured Soldiers to treatment.

"Using a [Field Litter Ambulance] is fine for shorter distances, but for major injuries, it is better to transport with Army aviation," said Kiser.

First Sgt. Alicia Faulk, a critical care nurse serving as an Observer/Controller Trainer with 5th Armored Brigade, said safety is their No. 1 concern.

"They must be focused on safety when putting a patient on a litter, for example, using the proper straps," said Faulk. "My role is to watch the interventions placed on the casualty and see if they are doing it properly and if there are things they need to work on, talk about, or improve."

The combat medics rotated in teams, approaching the medevac helicopter as the rotors turned, stirring up rocks and dust. Some of the medics were able to test the hoist attached to the helicopter, which is used for rescues and extractions.

Second Lt. Alisa Stoddard, 30th ABCT medical operations officer, said the overall goal was to synchronize the skills of the combat medics who serve in different battalions in their respective National Guard states that encompass the 30th ABCT.

"Everybody brings something with different backgrounds and experiences," said Stoddard. "It was great getting the medics together and on the same page, especially as we move forward as one big team."

The 30th ABCT is mobilized for approximately a year to support Operation Spartan Shield in the Middle East.



Photos by Sgt. Devin Lewis / 30th ABCT



(Top left) Army Combat Medic Soldiers in the 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team, conduct cold and hot-load training on a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter from 5th Armored Brigade, First Army Division West, near Fort Bliss, Sept. 3. The Soldiers from the North Carolina, South Carolina, Ohio and West Virginia National Guards, who comprise the 30th ABCT, are preparing for their deployment to support Operation Spartan Shield in the Middle East.

(Left) Combat medic Soldiers in the 30th ABCT joined a medical evacuation crew from 5th Armored Brigade, First Army Division West, to train on patient loading onto a UH-60 Black Hawk, Sept. 3.



First Lt. Lauren Hill, a nurse at William Beaumont Army Medical Center, receives instruction from Capt. Aaron Brockshus, an internal medicine resident, on how to use an ultrasound to help ensure she places the catheter in the correct vein during a new familiarization and validation program at the Fort Bliss Medical Simulation Center.



Photos by Capt. Olivia Cobiskey / William Beaumont Army Medical Center
Army medical providers at William Beaumont Army Medical Center received instruction on how to suture a row of stitches to hold the edges of a wound together during a new familiarization and validation program at the Fort Bliss Medical Simulation Center.

WBAMC develops, trains medical personnel for battlefield medicine

By Capt. Olivia Cobiskey | William Beaumont Army Medical Center

William Beaumont Army Medical Center is taking a page from Army line units by developing an Individual Critical Task List for health care professionals that promotes and measures readiness to deploy.

“A medic is never going to do a chest tube or a central line stateside, but down range, in a field setting, they need to be able to step in if needed,” said Lt. Col. Maria Molina, chief of the Simulation Center at Fort Sam Houston, while observing the innovative training. “If you’ve done this training, you should be able to step in when needed if there are not enough general surgeons available to treat casualties – whether it’s down range or even a mass casualty event stateside.”

The ICTL training – 27 tasks that are common in seven main military occupational specialties – will not only help leadership measure the clinical readiness of health care providers to better support battlefield medicine, it will be used to validate medical personnel for future deployments, added Molina.

“This is a big change, a big step for the Army,” she said Molina. “There’s never been a checklist for medical professionals that measure competencies to go downrange and that’s what this training fulfills.”

More versatile providers equal more lives saved

The scenarios took more than a year to develop; they also offer health care professionals the opportunity to earn continuing medical education credits while learning to work effectively on a team, said Maj. Janice Martinez, staff officer for education and training at WBAMC, who helped build the simulation program.

“We have five-person teams. So let’s say, the medic doesn’t get to intubate the patient; he has the opportunity in the other two scenarios to do that,” said Martinez. “They’re rotating the team members and the roles, so everybody can get hands-on [training]. Everyone gets credit, because they’ll get that familiarization training, regardless. The more we can maximize everybody actually doing these tasks, the better.”

Train as you fight, fight as you train

In August, participants rotated through seven stations at the Fort Bliss Medical Simulation Training Center, which included three trauma scenarios — two with an emphasis on currently-available, forward-thinking capabilities to train health care staff in practices different from normal operations.

After leading his team through a simulated burn casualty scenario at WBAMC’s Simulation Center, Lt. Col. David Escobedo said the last time he did this type of training was before his deployment to Baghdad, Iraq, in 2008.

“As a family physician I’m not going to see a lot of burn victims,” said Escobedo. “But, if I deploy, this type of training only reinforces what I already know and it will help me hit the ground running. It’s like muscle memory.”

Sgt. Olena Solomnikova, a respiratory therapist, said she was inspired to change her military career path after watching her unit’s physician assistant save their supply clerk after a roadside bomb nearly severed her femoral artery in Afghanistan in 2013.

“She would have died if it weren’t for him.

I want to do more, see the bigger picture. This training gives me the practical skills – it’s real-life, exposure to combat,” said Solomnikova, who has applied for the Interservice Physician Assistant Program. “You never know, you might lose someone, or you might not have a doctor and you will have to be able to do those interventions.”

Boots on the ground

After the training, WBAMC will analyze the feedback to determine gaps and resource requirements to refine and establish a set of ICTL validation scenarios for future training events at military treatment facilities across the country.

“We essentially created a product that can be replicated very easily,” said Maj. Chris Bell, a trauma and critical care surgeon at WBAMC. “We can do it as a single-day event, three-day event, or 10-day event. We can tailor it to different MOSs or we can have the scenarios be very general, and bring all of the MOSs together.”

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David Crozier / USASMA Command Communications

The NCO Leadership Center of Excellence and the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy celebrated the graduation of Cohort 4 of the USASMA Fellowship Program during ceremonies held Aug. 27, in the Cooper Lecture Center. The graduates spent the last year working on their master's degrees in adult education and lifelong learning from the Pennsylvania State University's World Campus.

USASMA celebrates Cohort 4 fellowship graduation

By David Crozier | Command Communications

The NCO Leadership Center of Excellence celebrated the achievements of the fourth iteration of the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy Fellowship Program as 20 students were awarded their master's degrees in lifelong learning and adult education from the Pennsylvania State University World Campus Aug. 27, during ceremonies held in the center's Cooper Lecture Center.

Command Sgt. Maj. David Lee, director of USASMA, lauded the student's achievements and thanked all who supported the program.

"Today we celebrate the awesome, awesome achievement of our fellows," Lee said. "Their efforts are in keeping with their inspired legacy of outstanding performance and exceptionalism by our Army's finest senior noncommissioned officers."

Completing his comments, Lee introduced the guest speaker for the event, Renata S. Engel, Ph.D., vice provost for online education at the Pennsylvania State University. Engel began her remarks by acknowledging all present and thanked them for their support to the graduates.

"I always talk about the story between the lines," she said. "You have worked many hours, written many papers, read probably more than you thought you could read in that one-year period. You did quite a bit, but when it comes to your professional or academic record, you have one line – you have a master's in education."

Engel said that one line becomes the all. Sure, it says that you obtained your bachelor's degree, and some of you may go on to your Ph.D, but it is a marker. I like to read about the story between the markers.

Engel told the story of Eric, one of her former students, his background, his story – about being an exceptional learner, a dedicated learner, father, husband and so on. How he affected the other students and the institution itself during his time as a student. She then urged the graduates to tell their story.

"You never know what someone will hear

when you tell your story," she said. "[Your story] matters because it influences the way we all think and the way we make decisions. So, tell your story, tell them how you got here."

Engel concluded her remarks congratulating the fellows on their achievement.


"You have amazing lines ahead of you. You have more lines to create in your record, whether it be professional or personal," she said. "You have more stories to create and stories to tell. I wish you all the very best as you educate more of the enlisted men and women in this remarkable institution."

The members of the NCOL CoE Cohort 4 Fellowship Program are: Sgts. Maj. Deitra Alam, John Alam, Charles Burrow, Rhonda Byrd, James Campbell, Roland Ellis, Kevin French, Trinket Gack, Sean Horval, Anson Jordan, Cindy Lisbon, Randy McCoin, Scott Schomaker, Riley Seau, Armando Smith, Aaron Stone, Cody Thomas, Tania Toney, James Walters and Teela Washington.

The USASMA Fellowship Program is a merit-based scholarship program where select sergeants major will compete for up to 20 scholarships per year for a master's degree in adult education through Pennsylvania State University, or beginning with Cohort 5, a master's degree in instructional design, development and evaluation from Syracuse University.

While most programs require students to attend the physical campus, this program is conducted predominantly online and the selected applicants perform their studies at the Sergeants Major Academy. The students have one year to complete the degree as their only duties and then they will perform two-to-three years as an instructor in the Sergeants Major Course after their degree completion. Most other programs the fellow requires two moves to complete the fellowship requirements. The USASMA fellowship requires only one move.

Additional photos from the ceremony can be found at www.flickr.com/photos/sgmacademy/albums



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1-178 INF trains at Fort Bliss

By Staff Sgt. Timothy Gray | 5th Armored Brigade

Soldiers assigned to 1st Battalion, 178th Infantry Regiment, Illinois National Guard trained with cadre assigned to 5th Armored Brigade, First Army Division West at McGregor Range Complex, New Mexico, Aug. 21-28.

Observer-coach-trainers from 5th Armored Brigade train and validate Army Reserve and National Guard units as they prepare to deploy to a wide variety of missions throughout the world. Since 9/11, 5th Armored Brigade and units throughout First Army have mobilized, trained and deployed more than 1.2 million reserve-component troops.

While 1-178 INF is similar to other units that have deployed from Fort Bliss, a Mobilization Force Generation Installation, the training they’ve received from 5th AR has been as unique as its mission set. During their rotation, 1-178 INF honed their skills in Counter-Unmanned Aerial Surveillance operations, force protection, aerial transportation to advisement missions and ground patrols.

“We try to coach and mentor them to be better units for their missions in theater, whatever they may be,” said Capt. Nicholas Knepp, officer-in-charge for Team 4 assigned to 1st Bn., 360th Inf. Regt., 5th Arm. Bde. “Sometimes it’s security forces, sometimes it’s guardian angel or quick reaction force. Whatever those missions are, we try to provide training that makes them better before they go downrange.”

Soldiers with 1-178 INF received notice of their upcoming mission last winter, and this will be the first deployment for some. Despite their knowledge of the impending deployment and steadfast training, it is difficult to make a substitute for experience.

“I have to learn as I go,” said Spc. James Camisa, an M249 light machine gunner assigned to 2nd Platoon, C Company, 1-178 INF. “It’s all new to me – learning the new standard operating procedures, new training, what we’re actually doing over there.”

Using their wealth of knowledge and experience, as well as working with subject-matter experts currently serving in the locations deploying units will go, 5th AR provides relevant training across all six of the warfighting functions. The scenarios that units work through during their pre-deployment training is constantly being updated to address changes they will encounter in the theater they’ll deploy to.

“I have outstanding non-commissioned officers on my team,” says Knepp. “We’re doing this probably every other month. Twenty-six out of every 52 weeks we’re doing [cumulative] training.”

Knepp’s team is part of just one of 5th AR’s 13 training battalions.

(Top right) Sgt. Jordin Katzenberger, right, a squad leader assigned to 1st Platoon, D Company, 1st Battalion, 178th Infantry Regiment of the Illinois National Guard conducts pre-combat checks with Spc. Michael Ventura before a fly-to-advise training mission at McGregor Range Complex, N.M., Aug. 24. Noncommissioned officer functions like these will be critically important during 1-178th’s upcoming deployment to the Middle East.

(Right) Capt. Chadwick Buckner, left, commander of C Co., 1st Bn., 178th Inf. Regt. of the Illinois National Guard, discusses best practices for providing security during a fly-to-advise training mission with Capt. Daryl Body, observer coach trainer team chief assigned to 1st Bn., 360 Inf. Regt., 5th Arm. Bde., First Army Division West at McGregor Range Complex, N.M., Aug. 24. Post-mobilization training for National Guard and Reserve Soldiers has been a responsibility of 5th Arm. Bde. and First Army since World War I.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Timothy Gray / 5th Armored Brigade



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Army Advanced Individual Training students perform leg tucks during an Army Combat Fitness Test at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va., June 28. Leg tucks are the fifth event in the ACFT as it is a test of endurance that requires Soldiers to complete as many repetitions as possible in two minutes.

Army public health experts offer advice for reducing training injuries

By Douglas Holl | USAPHC

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. – One of the challenges facing Army leadership as they transition to the new Army Combat Fitness Test, which will be fully implemented by October 2020, is preventing musculoskeletal training injuries.

Physical training is necessary to develop and maintain the fitness required to accomplish military missions, but is also known to cause injury. According to Army Public Health Center experts, MSK injuries and related conditions led to an average of 37 limited-duty days per injury. This translates to 2 million medical encounters across the Army annually and an estimated 10 million lost training days due to limited duty.

“Seventy percent of all limited-duty profiles are for MSK injuries,” said Dr. Michelle Chervak, acting manager for the APHC Injury Prevention Program, which identifies causes and risk factors for Army training-related injuries. “We can show that greater amounts of training (for example, running or road marching) result in more injuries. Civilian data shows us that there are levels of training above which injury rates increase, but fitness does not improve – two signs of overtraining.”

Dr. Bruce Jones, senior scientist, APHC Clinical Public Health and Epidemiology Directorate, explained further that part of the problem for the Army is that the thresholds of training above which, injury rates increase and fitness does not, have not been established. However, commanders have the information necessary to make decisions about the thresholds – they know the amount of training, physical fitness of their Soldiers, and the number of Soldiers on profile.

“What we need to provide commanders are the general principles of training-injury prevention; and an understanding of the relationships between training, fitness, and injuries,” said Jones. “They have to determine the risk of injury they are willing to accept.”

APHC Injury Prevention is working on updating financial and readiness costs to the Army due to MSK injuries.

“At this time, the only formal cost estimate that we have comes from a National Safety Council report for the Secretary of Defense,” said Chervak. “That report stated the annual costs ranged from \$12-20 billion (2001 data). Roughly 40 percent of all injuries across the Department of Defense occur to Army personnel, so the Army costs are approximately \$4.8-8 billion.”

The 2018 Health of the Force report highlights a previous Army success in reducing injury by changing its approach to fitness training.

In 2003, the Army evaluated a new standardized physical training program designed to enhance fitness while minimizing injuries through avoidance of overtraining. An evaluation group implemented the new standardized program and a comparison group conducted traditional PT (running, calisthenics, push-ups, and sit-ups). After nine weeks of basic combat training, the evaluation group had fewer injuries and a higher APFT pass rate.

The modified program reduced the total miles run by trainees, conducted distance runs by ability groups, added speed drills, executed warm-up exercises instead of pre-exercise stretching, progressed training amount and intensity gradually, and provided a wider variety

of exercises.

In 2004, the new standardized PT program based on this evaluated program was mandated for all BCT units across the Army. It was also incorporated into Army physical training doctrine. From 2003 to 2013, a 46 percent decrease in all injuries and a 54 percent decrease in lower extremity overuse injuries among Army trainees was observed.

Jones recommends a five-step public health approach as the most effective construct for Army public health to organize and build an injury prevention program. Steps include surveillance to define the magnitude of the problem, research and field investigations to identify causes and risk factors, intervention trials and systematic reviews to determine what works to address leading risk factors, program and policy implementation to execute prevention, and program evaluation to assess effectiveness.

Jones also notes that both overweight and underweight Soldiers, who are the least physically fit, are at the highest risk for injury compared to their most-fit peers.

“The highest risks occur among the most underweight (leanest), least-physically fit (slowest run times) men and women in basic training,” said Jones. “This is probably because underweight Soldiers lack the muscle mass necessary to perform Soldiers tasks and withstand the vigorous physical activity required.”

Injury risks are also 20 to 50 percent higher for Soldiers who smoke cigarettes.

“A variety of hypotheses explain this relationship; the most feasible is that smokers have a reduced ability to heal following injury,” said Chervak. “Overuse injuries result from an inability to repair damage due to daily training; smokers repair that cumulative microtrauma less rapidly.”

APHC is currently piloting a program through the Army Wellness Center at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, focused on identifying Soldiers at highest-injury risk based on APFT run time, the leading predictor of active-duty Army injury risk.

APHC is working with specific units and the Fort Campbell Community Ready and Resilient Council to identify Soldiers who meet the criteria for referral (men: run time slower than 15 minutes; women: run time slower than 19 minutes), said Chervak. These Soldiers are offered AWC fitness assessments to assist with improving aerobic fitness, physical activity, sleep, and body composition.

“AWC education efforts focus on physical activity, sleep, nutrition (weight loss), and tobacco cessation; all factors that influence injury risk,” said Chervak. “There is a natural partnership with APHC’s Health Promotion and Wellness directorate. Key avenues of influence are Performance Triad-related communications and referral of high-risk Soldiers to the AWCs.”

Jones said the most important step forward is for leadership to recognize that training-related injuries are a problem and they can be prevented.

“Commanders need to recognize that there are no magic bullets,” said Jones. “Training causes injuries and modifications of training will prevent injuries. Commanders have the information to monitor injuries and fitness, and modify training to prevent injuries. We still need to determine the thresholds of training by unit at which injuries increase, but fitness does not improve.”

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Photos by Capt. Joselyn Sydnor / 653rd RSG

From left to right: 1st Sgt. James L. Chavea, Command Sgt. Maj. Denise A. Lagana, Enrique Davila, Melissa Cordero, Col. Chandra M. Roberts, and Capt. John Brimley complete a tour of the Child Crisis Center of El Paso, Aug. 21. The 653rd RSG, which is mobilized as the Fort Bliss Mobilization Brigade, collected and donated much-needed child care items to the Child Crisis Center of El Paso.

653rd Regional Support Group partners with Child Crisis Center of El Paso

By Capt. Joselyn Sydnor | 653rd Regional Support Group

Soldiers of the 653rd Regional Support Group delivered child care items to the Child Crisis Center of El Paso Aug. 21 as part of an initiative developed over the past decade by unit member Capt. Jerald Bodden.

"Years ago, when I was stationed here on [Fort] Bliss, there was a Soldier and his wife who passed away," said Bodden. "The kids were taken in by the Child Crisis Center, while we were trying to gain donations to bring the grandparents into town to take care of the kids."

Being unfamiliar with the Child Crisis Center at the time, Bodden researched the program and saw they supported — and were supported by — the community of El Paso.

Enrique Davila, director of administration and compliance for the Child Crisis Center, and Melissa Cordero, military program director, welcomed Col. Chandra M. Roberts, commander of the 653rd RSG and Command Sgt. Maj. Denise A. Lagana, to the center and explained their mission and programs.

"The mission of the Child Crisis Center is to prevent child abuse and neglect of children in the community of El Paso," said Davila. "Needless to say, all of our goals and all our objectives lead in that direction."

The Child Crisis Center is an emergency shelter for children, from newborns to 13-year-olds. It offers numerous programs, such as respite for parents, temporary placement through child protective services, flex-funding to help stabilize a family's immediate needs, and hosts a food pantry.

The center also has a number of programs to specifically help with veteran and military families and their unique needs.

Bodden makes it a point in each new unit

he's assigned to introduce them to the center and get the Soldiers involved in holding diaper drives, volunteer work, and generally doing what they can to help with the crisis center's mission.

"Soldiers are so diverse — especially in the Reserve and National Guard — because they have a career outside of the Army," said Bodden. "They bring an array of talent to the table."

Last year Bodden and the 210th RSG painted the children's bedrooms and completed minor repairs. This year, the focus has shifted to the outside play areas for the children.

The first venture with the 653rd RSG and the Child Crisis Center was a diaper drive. Future projects include installing shade triangles

over the play area for the older children, and sponsoring the installment of soft, synthetic grass for the babies.

"I think it's an amazing way to give back to the community," said Roberts. "It is wonderful being able to do something for both the military community and the El Paso community."

Both Cordero and Davila are certain that after these projects are completed, the next question from Bodden is going to be, "What else?"

"It takes one person (Bodden) to enable us to reach out to many," said Davila.

The Child Crisis Center is holding a Golf Tournament Oct. 25 at the Underwood Golf Club on Fort Bliss to raise funds to purchase a minivan with a working air conditioner for the children, as well as general repairs for their aging building.

For volunteer opportunities with the Child Crisis Center of El Paso, call Enrique Davila at 562-7955 ext. 116 or visit <http://www.childcrisiselp.org/volunteer-program/>

"I think it's an amazing way to give back to the community. It is wonderful being able to do something for both the military community and the El Paso community."

>> Col. Chandra M. Roberts

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Over the line – of duty

By 1st Lt. Joe Strzempko | Fort Bliss Legal Assistance Office
A Soldier’s life is hard.

Soldiers endure intense physical and mental hardships in the course of basic training, difficult specialty schools, and, for many, multiple deployments. Moreover, all Soldiers spend substantial time away from their families and settle for pay lower than that which they could get in the private sector. A significant number of Soldiers are willing to bear these hardships in part because they believe that, should anything happen to them, considerable benefits will be provided to their families and loved ones. However, this does not always turn out to be the case.

When the service of a Soldier is interrupted by injury, disease, or death, the Army often conducts an official Line-of-Duty investigation.

The ultimate findings of this investigation will have one of three outcomes: In the Line of Duty (ILD), Not in the Line of Duty – Not Due to Own Misconduct, and Not in the Line of Duty – Due to Own Misconduct.

The outcome of this investigation will have a tremendous impact on the possible benefits that a Soldier, or his or her family, may receive.

Generally speaking, incidents of injury, disease, or death are presumed ILD unless overcome by substantial evidence. Incidents that result from enemy action or accidents in passenger commercial common carriers, for instance, are presumed ILD and require no investigation.

By contrast, injury, disease, or death directly caused by the individual’s miscon-

duct or willful negligence is not ILD. Along a similar vein, incidents which occur while a Soldier is on pass or leave will generally be considered ILD absent other misconduct, while those incidents which occur while the Soldier is away without leave will not be considered ILD.

As mentioned before, the outcome of a Line-of-Duty investigation will have an immense effect on the benefits a Soldier, or his or her survivors, will be entitled to receive. The areas affected by this determination, include enlistment extension for the Soldier, the length for pay or retirement, and the Soldier’s possible forfeiture of pay.

The effects of a Line-of-Duty investigation on a Soldier’s family are especially important. Should a Line-of-Duty investigation determine that a Soldier’s death was Not in the Line of Duty – Due to Own Misconduct, that Soldier’s survivors can lose out on benefits, such as continued basic allowance for housing, transition assistance, and income replacement in the form of a Survivor’s Benefit Plan.

The Line-of-Duty investigation will not, however, affect the following regardless of the outcome: hospital benefits, pensions and other compensation, SGLI or death gratuity, as well as disability, retirement, and severance pay.

American Soldiers are heroes who deserve the greatest respect and admiration. With that respect and admiration comes responsibility. To ensure they, and their loved ones, receive the maximum benefits to which their hard work and sacrifice should entitle them, Soldiers must ensure that they stay out of negligent or irresponsible situations, which could result in an unfavorable finding for a Line-of-Duty investigation. In other words, Soldiers should make sure not to cross the line into misconduct, which would deprive them, or their family, of well-earned benefits.

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STK# 90025 MSRP 42240 SUPPLIER PRICE-39931.35 CONSUMER CASH-2250 GM INCREMENTAL CASH-3000 CHEVROLET BONUS CASH-1250 MISSION SAVINGS-4432.35 = \$28,999 +TTL

2019 DOUBLE CAB



\$28,999
+TT&L

STK# 90562 MSRP 42260 SUPPLIER PRICE-39887.45 CONSUMER CASH-2000 GM BONUS CASH-2500 GM INCREMENTAL CASH-3000 CHEVROLET BONUS CASH-750 MISSION SAVINGS-2638.45 = \$28999 +TTL

2019 EQUINOX



\$21,999
+TT&L
WITH CONQUEST **\$19,999** +TT&L

STK# 91057 MSRP 27160 SUPPLIER PRICE-26210.95 CONSUMER CASH-1500 CHEVROLET BONUS CASH-1250 MISSION SAVINGS-1461.95 = \$21999 +TTL WITH CONQUEST-2000 = \$19999 +TTL

2019 TRAVERSE



\$27,999
+TT&L
WITH CONQUEST **\$25,999** +TT&L

STK# 91359 TRAVERSE MSRP 34095 SUPPLIER PRICE-32815.80 CONSUMER CASH-2000 SELECT MARKET BONUS CASH-750 MISSION SAVINGS-2066.80 = \$27999 +TTL WITH CONQUEST-2000 = \$25999 +TTL

2019 TRAX



\$16,499
+TT&L

STK# 90296 MSRP 22435 CONSUMER CASH-1000 SELECT MARKET BONUS CASH-750 CHEVROLET BONUS CASH-2500 MISSION SAVINGS-1666 = \$16499 +TTL

2019 TAHOE



\$40,999
+TT&L

STK# 91234 MSRP 49295 SUPPLIER PRICE-46811 CONSUMER CASH-2000 MISSION SAVINGS-3812 = \$40999 +TTL

2019 CHEVY SPARK



\$11,999
+TT&L

STOCK # 90750, MSRP 15410.00, CONSUMER CASH -750, CHEVY BONUS CASH -1250, MISSION SAVINGS -1411, 11,999 + TTL

2019 CHEVY CRUZE



\$16,999
+TT&L

STOCK # 90215, MSRP 20685, CONSUMER CASH -1000, CHEVY BONUS CASH -1250, MISSION SAVINGS -1436, 16,999 + TTL

2019 CHEVY MALIBU



\$19,999
+TT&L

STOCK # 90508, MSRP 24,270, CONSUMER CASH -1250, CHEVY BONUS CASH -1000, MISSION SAVINGS -2021, 19,999 + TTL

2019 CHEVY CAMARO AUTOMATIC



\$24,466
+TT&L
WITH CONQUEST **\$22,466** +TT&L

STOCK # 90185, AUTOMATIC, MSRP 27990, CONSUMER CASH -500, MARKET CASH -1000, MISSION SAVINGS -2024, 24,466 + TTL OR 22,466 + TTL W/ CONQUEST CASH -2000, MUST PROVE OWNERSHIP OF A FORD MUSTANG

MISSION CHEVROLET PRE-OWNED SUPER CENTER

2019 CHEVY EQUINOX PREMIER



STK#
\$26,855
+TT&L



2015 CHEVROLET SONIC
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2016 CHEVROLET MALIBU
STK# 5311, LT PKG
\$14,999 + TTL



2015 CHEVROLET CAMARO
STK# 5308, ONLY 48K MILES
\$15,964 + TTL



2017 CHEVY TRAX
STK#
\$15,999 + TTL



2016 CHEVY MALIBU
STK# 5189A, LT
\$16,999 + TTL



2017 CHEVROLET TRAVERSE
STK# 91377A
\$18,765 + TTL



STK# 90977A,
CREW CAB
\$26,999
+TT&L



2017 CHEVROLET EQUINOX
STK# 5312, LT PKG ONLY 11K MILES
\$18,966 + TTL



2011 CHEVROLET SILVERADO
STK# 91480A, CREW CAB 10 7-71 42A
\$22,869 + TTL



2019 CHEVROLET IMPALA
STK# 5314, PREMIER PKG
\$23,865 + TTL



2017 GMC ACADIA
STK# 5301, ONLY 20K MILES V6
\$24,999 + TTL



2017 GMC ACADIA
STK# 5287, SLT AWD
\$28,686 + TTL



2018 CHEVROLET SILVERADO
STK# 5294A, V6 CREW CAB
\$31,866 + TTL



2016 CHEVY TRAVERSE LS
STK# 5246
\$20,999 + TTL



2018 BUICK REGAL
\$21,388 + TTL



2017 CHEVY SILVERADO
STK# 81121A, REG CAB
\$21,999 + TTL



2019 CHEVROLET TRAVERSE
STK# 5316, 3LT NAV/LEATHER TOP OF LINE
\$36,999 + TTL



2018 JEEP WRANGLER
STK #81444B,
SPORT ONLY 3K MILES
\$34,826 + TTL

2016 FORD F-250
STK #91511A, 2500
\$38,453 + TTL

10K & UNDER



2014 CHRYSLER 200
STK# 81791A, ONLY 65K MILES
\$7,699 + TTL



2013 NISSAN SENTRA
STK# 9085A, SL, LOW MILEAGE, 59K MILES
\$7,996 + TTL



2011 NISSAN SENTRA
STK# 5170A
\$8,996 + TTL



2014 FORD ESCAPE
STK# 5104A
\$9,988 + TTL



2015 CHEVY EQUINOX
STK# 91082A, LT, SUNROOF
\$10,999 + TTL



2015 CHEVY TRAX
STK# 5270A
\$11,999 + TTL

BARGAIN CENTER



2010 DODGE CHARGER
STK# 72289B, R/T
\$11,966 + TTL



2015 VW PASSAT
STK# 91410A, ONLY 33K MILES
\$11,999 + TTL



2015 NISSAN ALTIMA
STK# 91484A
\$11,999 + TTL



2014 CHEVROLET CAMARO
STK#
\$12,999 + TTL



2016 MUSTANG
STK# 91195A
\$13,988 + TTL



2015 NISSAN ALTIMA
STK# 81327A-2
\$13,996 + TTL



2013 DODGE CHARGER
STK# 90885A, 75K MILES
\$14,999 + TTL



2016 NISSAN PATHFINDER
STK# 91191A
\$16,899 + TTL



2019 KIA SOUL
STK# 90761A-2, ONLY 3K MILES
\$16,999 + TTL



2016 DODGE JOURNEY
STK# 5206A
\$17,856 + TTL



2016 JEEP CHEROKEE
STK# 90807A
\$17,996 + TTL



2017 NISSAN ROGUE
STK# 80811C, SPORT
\$18,999 + TTL



2018 DODGE CARAVAN
STK# 5256
\$19,355 + TTL



2015 KIA SEDONA
STK# 90805A, SX PKG TOP OF LINE
\$19,688 + TTL



2015 TOYOTA SIENNA
STK# 90957B
\$19,798 + TTL



2019 HYUNDAI KONA
STK# 81078A
\$20,788 + TTL



2019 NISSAN FRONTIER
STK# 5320, SV
\$22,688 + TTL



2014 JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE
STK# 90204B
\$22,895 + TTL



2012 CHEVROLET SUBURBAN
STK# 90909A, LTZ
\$22,966 + TTL



2015 CHEVROLET SILVERADO
STK# 51311A, CREW CAB, 64K MILES
\$23,996 + TTL



2016 FORD MUSTANG
STK# 90605A
\$25,788 + TTL



2018 FORD F-150
STK# 5317, CREW CAB
\$26,999 + TTL



VW ATLAS
STK# 2018
\$27,965 + TTL



2016 FORD EXPEDITION
STK# 90608A
\$27,984 + TTL



2018 TOYOTA HIGHLANDER
STK# 80920A-2, ONLY 27K MILES
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2019 JEEP CHEROKEE LATITUDE FWD

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SPORT 4X4



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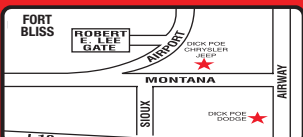
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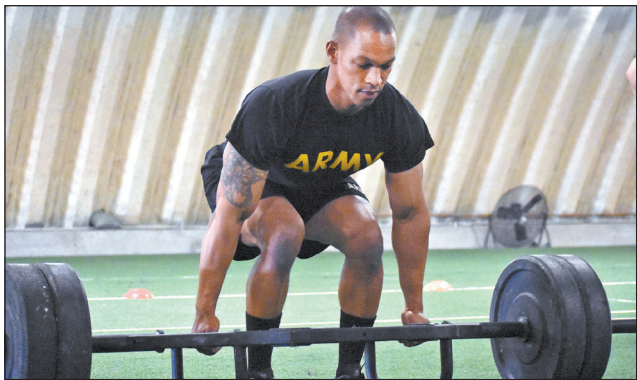
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Fort Bliss is El Paso and
El Paso is Fort Bliss.



U-Pick Mesilla Valley Apples:
In-cider information ■ 2B

I'm good,
but...
September is
National Suicide
Prevention Month
■ 4B



1st AD CAB conducts
NCO Professional Development Session ■ 5B

Things to do:

BOSS Bash coming to Biggs: Single Soldiers, this is your day to have fun! Come out to Biggs Park for this year's BOSS Bash. There'll be games, chances to win great prizes, food trucks, a mechanical bull, inflatables, music, and drinks will be available for purchase. Free food will be available to the first 1,000 Soldiers who attend BOSS Bash. Friday. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. East Fort Bliss. Free. 892-5195

El Paso Black Expo: The inaugural weeklong celebration "Celebrating Our Multicultural Heritage," concludes with an expo 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Saturday, at the El Paso Convention Center. It will feature small business owners, authors, entertainers, service professionals, organizations, and more, as well as panel discussions, seminars, workshops, live entertainment, kids' corner and health zone. Cost: \$10 (free for kids 5 and younger). Workshops are additional \$15 each; panel discussions free with expo admission. 345-1661, elpasoblackexpo@gmail.com or elpasoblackexpo.com

Legend of La Llorona: Lost Paranormal's 3rd annual "Evening with the Wailing Woman" is 6 p.m. Friday in the San Carlos Building, 501 Texas Ave. Performing and visual artists share their works related to La Llorona, such as dance, art, poetry, multimedia, music and more. Costumes encouraged. Also planned is a ghost tour. Free. 503-8960, lostelpasoparanormal@gmail.com

Farmer's Market: The 18th annual market hours are 7:30 a.m. to noon Saturdays at Ardovino's Desert Crossing, 1 Ardovino Drive in Sunland Park, N.M. Game Garden offers bocce ball, horseshoes, cornhole and washer toss. Yoga is 9-10 a.m. Yoga cost: \$10; bring a mat. (575) 589-0653, ardovinos.com

Mesilla Valley Corn Maze: The labyrinth and pumpkin patch at the Mesilla Valley Corn Maze at Lyles Family Farms is open 11 a.m.-7 p.m., Sept. 28-Oct. 27 at 3855 W. Picacho, Las Cruces, N.M. Food and beverage concessions available. Cost: \$12 (\$10 children under 12; free children under 2) \$2 discount for military with ID (not to be used with other discounts). Activities include corn maze, pumpkin patch, hayrides until 6:30 p.m., giant slides, face painting, pedal carts, gem mining, picnic grounds, playgrounds. (575) 526-1919, mesillavalleymaze.com

Alfresco! Fridays: At Convention Center Plaza. These free outdoor summer concerts are presented by ElPasoLive. No outside food or beverages, or pets allowed. 534-0600

'Right Arm night': It's fiesta time at Right Arm Night, Friday, 4-9 p.m. at Pershing Pub on East Fort Bliss. There will be live mariachi music, food, drink specials, prizes and a piñata filled with goodies. 781-6809

Downtown Farmers Market: The City of El Paso Museums and Cultural Affairs Department's market for area artists and regionally-grown agricultural products happens weekly. Saturdays 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Union Plaza, along Anthony St. 212-1780 or www.elpasoartsandculture.org

El Paso County Fair: The El Paso County Fair runs Sept. 19-21, at the El Paso County Coliseum. The fair will feature expanded programming all around with live music, livestock on display, and an open auction for the public to attend. epca.org

St. Clair Vineyards WineFest: St. Clair Vineyards will host its annual WineFest noon-8 p.m. Sept. 28 and noon-6 p.m. Sept. 29, at 1325 DeBaca Road in Deming, with family activities, live music, arts and more. Cost: \$5 (includes souvenir glass); free admission for active duty military and law enforcement with ID. 1-866-336-7357 or stclairwinery.com

Painting the town red, saving green

Operation Deploy Your Dress builds community through gowns during military ball season, beyond

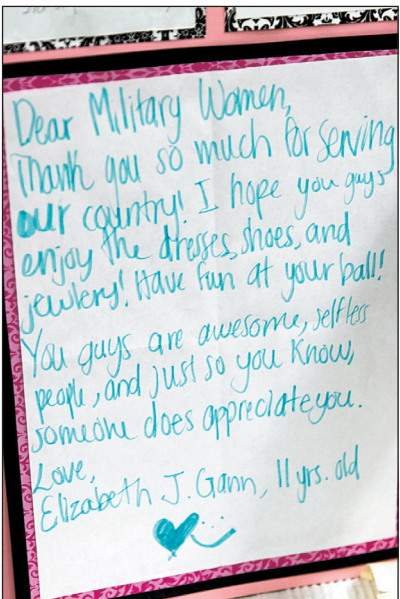


Photos by David Poe / USAG Fort Bliss

A guest checks out one of the almost 2,500 dresses available at the Operation Deploy Your Dress shop at Fort Bliss Aug. 29. Soldiers and military spouses are able to select one dress and one accessory per calendar year at no charge to offset the cost of dressing up for traditional military balls.



In an effort to offset the cost of attending military balls, non-profit Operation Deploy Your Dress collects gently-used and new formal attire to distribute free to military and dependent ID cardholders. Soldiers and military spouses can come to the shop on West Fort Bliss and select one dress and one accessory per year.



By David Poe | USAG Fort Bliss

Inside the old commissary on West Fort Bliss, notes hang; some scribbled on notepad, some printed on frilly, embossed paper, all heart-felt.

"I wore this dress to my daughter's wedding. I felt so beautiful wearing it, I hope another woman has the same feeling."

Beyond the notes in their unassuming frame, a cordoned-off section of the building, which may have been the old commissary's back office, now resides a special, makeshift boutique. Four volunteers are aproned up and ready to serve the growing line of military spouses and Soldiers queuing up just outside the doors on a Thursday afternoon. Everyone is surrounded by racks and racks of gowns, almost 2,500 in all, seemingly of every color, cut and size. Although no money is changing hands, the space looks part consignment shop and part department store liquidation sale.

This is the frontline of Operation Deploy Your Dress.

"Four years ago, it started with a regular dress swap," said Melinda Garcia, an active-duty Army spouse with 24 years of service and the manager of the ODYD shop at Fort Bliss.

One phone call in 2015 and two donated dresses later, soon spurred on by an El Paso television news story on the effort, now almost 25 dresses change hands every week during military ball season. Yesterday's simple dress swap has grown into a burgeoning nonprofit that has spread to seven Army installations.

"Because [of the cost of] tickets, child care, the dress, the shoes, and accessories, some have never been able to attend a military ball. To take \$200 off of that cost, they leave here in tears because they are so excited to be going to their first ball," Garcia said. "The spouses leave here emotional."

ODYD collects gently-used and new formal attire to distribute free to military and dependent ID cardholders. Soldiers and military spouses can come to the shop and select one dress and one accessory per year.

"I have been following the group since it started and I'm so happy to see the positive effect it's had. Thank you for all you do."

With the success of the program, due to the transient nature of the military, Garcia said it hasn't come without work.

"We lose volunteers due to PCSs," Garcia said as she signed in guests Aug. 29, managing to keep her focus on the tasks at hand as military kids frantically milled around her in the receiving area while moms took a moment to attack the racks, "but I never leave here thinking 'why did I come today?' I always leave feeling better than when I came."

"I hope this dress can be worn again by someone who loves it as much as I do."

Beyond saving money during military ball season, ODYD has taken on a life of its own. Started as a grassroots idea, it's become a common ground for Soldiers and spouses to find their designs within the fabric of the military community and accessorize them with confidence.

"This is the longest [my family] has ever lived anywhere," said Garcia, who has been at Bliss for just over five years. She said the best thing about helping build the nonprofit has been the chance to bolster spouses' pocketbooks, as well as their hearts.

"It's about making them feel a part of the military community, because sometimes I feel that spouses get lost in the shuffle," she said. "This brings everyone back together. They're looking for dresses together and supporting each other, and they're excited to 'do it up' for a night."

The boutique built on benevolence will be on the move this fall due to the old commissary being converted into a mission-essential facility. Look for ODYD at 801 Custer Rd. later this year, where they will share a space with the Fort Bliss Thrift Shop, which is run by the Fort Bliss Spouses Association.

For more details on ODYD and to learn how you can be a part of this program to benefit military families in a special way, visit www.operationdeployyourdress.org.

(Far left) "It's about making them feel a part of the military community, because sometimes I feel that spouses get lost in the shuffle," said Melinda Garcia, an Army spouse and manager of the Operation Deploy Your Dress shop at Fort Bliss.

(Left) "Because [of the cost of] tickets, child care, the dress, the shoes, and accessories, some have never been able to attend a military ball," said Melinda Garcia, an Army spouse and manager of the Operation Deploy Your Dress shop at Fort Bliss. "To take \$200 off of that cost, they leave here in tears because they are so excited to be going to their first ball. The spouses leave here emotional."

U-Pick Mesilla Valley Apples: In-cider information

Local apple orchard offers inexpensive fall fun

By Michelle L. Gordon | USAG Fort Bliss Public Affairs

It's hard to imagine a lush, green orchard growing and thriving in the desert, but straight down I-10 west in Las Cruces, New Mexico, sits U-Pick Mesilla Valley Apples – a family-owned and operated orchard.

The more than 400 apple trees were planted in the mid-1970s by Las Cruces native, Francis M. Burke. He was inspired by his great-great uncle, Thomas Casad, who had an orchard in Mesilla, New Mexico, in the 1800s. During that time, apples were the main agricultural product of the then territory of New Mexico, and apples from Casad's farm placed second at the 1899 World's Fair in Paris.

Today, U-Pick Mesilla Valley Apples is owned and operated by LuAnne Burke, Francis M. Burke's daughter. She inherited the orchard after her father's death in 2014 and she vowed to continue the family business – turning the once-commercial apple farm into a "U-Pick Farm" for families to harvest their own apples.

Currently in her fourth year as owner, Burke said she is pleased with the apple crop available this season. She currently grows three types of apples across the two orchards on the property: Jonathan Apples, which Burke recommends for baking pies, Red Delicious Apples, and what Burke believes are Common Delicious Apples.

Despite their name, Common Delicious Apples are anything but common. In fact, they are quite rare. Burke said there is only one other orchard in the U.S. that offers the variety, and they are trying to save them from extinction. She added that although she does not have a certificate stating her apples are in fact, Common Delicious, it is what her family called them over the years, and she hopes to have them genetically tested in the near future.

"One thing I do know for sure is that those apples are not the same as Red Delicious," Burke said. "This year I purchased pollen that was specifically-engineered for Red Delicious Apples and it did not affect apple growth in



Photos by Michelle L. Gordon / USAG Fort Bliss Public Affairs

LuAnne Burke, right, explains the different bag-size options for picking apples. Burke inherited the orchard after her father's death in 2014 and she vowed to continue the family business – turning the once-commercial apple farm into a "U-Pick Farm" for families to harvest their own apples.

the 'Common Delicious' orchard. Whereas, this year the Red Delicious orchard apples are much larger than in previous years."

Burke considers herself an "apple student" rather than an apple farmer, because she is always learning about her business. For instance, during the growing season earlier this year, she watered the trees later than usual, which caused the trees to become stressed.

"When an apple tree is stressed out it thinks it is going to die, so it puts all of its energy into producing fruit," she said. "If there is fruit, then of course there are seeds, which means there will be new trees."

The stressed trees produced so many blossoms that Burke brought in extra bees to pollinate the orchards. She also recruited volunteers to paint the blossoms with pollen last spring, to ensure they would all produce apples. The results speak for themselves, Burke's orchard is bursting with apples this season.

She said apple production varies year-to-year – some years her crop yields 40,000 pounds of apples and others, only 2,000

pounds. She expected the 2019 season to be an "off year," but the abundance of blooms exceeded her expectations. Now with two orchards filled with apples, Burke wants families to come out and enjoy the fruits of her labor.

U-Pick Mesilla Valley Apples is open most days, but Burke encourages visitors to check her Facebook page prior to planning a trip, <https://www.facebook.com/FarmFreshApplePie/>

There is no entry fee for the orchard, and apples are sold in quarter-peck bags for \$6 each, or four bags for \$4 each. She also has larger bags, which hold a whole peck, and they are \$16 each, or two bags for \$30. She accepts both cash and credit cards.

For those who can't afford to pay, Burke offers "Volunteer Fridays." Volunteers pick up dropped apples from the ground and gather them for local pig farmers. In exchange, volunteers receive a bag they can fill with picked apples.

Apple season is quick, so act fast. This year Burke opened the orchards to the public Labor



Fruit pickers are available to reach the highest apples, but be careful because they can puncture the skin. Burke said the proper way to pick apples is to grasp it, twist it and gently pull it from the tree.

Day weekend and she'll keep them open until the last week of September, possible early October, adding that the end of the season really depends on how long the apples remain on the trees.

Regardless of season length though, for Burke, one thing is certain, apples are a family tradition.

"We have such a great harvest and I would much rather people take the apples home and enjoy them, than for them to fall on the ground," she said. "New Mexico was so well-known for its apples in the early 1800s, and we grow such outstanding apples now. I want families to be able to come out, enjoy the orchards, and do something fun and inexpensive together."

U-Pick Mesilla Apple Valley is located about five miles from downtown Las Cruces, New Mexico, and can be reached at (575) 524-7437.

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When did I become funny to my kids?

By Lisa Smith Molinari | www.themeatandpotatoesoflife.com

I was sitting at our kitchen island with a lukewarm cup of coffee, silently minding my own business. My 19-year-old daughter, Lilly, had just come home from her nearby college classes to grab some lunch, and while she sipped spoonfuls of chicken noodle soup beside me, I reviewed my afternoon “To Do” list and quietly muttered to myself.

Then I heard Lilly giggling. “Hnn, hnn, hnn, hnn, hnn,” she snorted softly through her nose between slurps and swallows.

“What’s so funny?” I asked, hoping she’d let me in on the joke. But instead of responding, she just smiled at me, and her giggle escalated to a chuckle. Then, she dropped her spoon into the soup bowl, opened her mouth and threw her head back into a legit belly laugh.

“What is it?!” I demanded.

“You!” she finally said between gasps for breath. My brows furrowed with confusion, and Lilly only laughed harder. Exasperated, I rubbed my eyes and sighed, which was apparently so hilarious, Lilly’s laughter went completely silent. With her mouth in a toothy, wide-open grin and her eyelids squeezed tightly shut, she rocked back-and-forth as if she was experiencing some kind of intolerable fit.

I wondered, “What could be so funny about me sitting here, at our kitchen island, with a cup of coffee, going over my To Do list like I’ve done every single day of my adult life?”

Lilly’s fit of hilarity slowly subsided, descending through each stage of laughter — from silent convulsing, to gasping guffaws, to rapid-fire chuckles, to snorting giggles — until she was able to resume soup sipping. Having regained her composure, she tried

to explain what made her laugh in the first place.

“You’re just, I don’t know, funny ... that look on your face,” she said, and the giggling started all over again.

After all the years of unsuccessfully trying to make my kids laugh, why was I suddenly so funny, without even trying? Was my daughter making fun of me? Should I have been offended? Should I have told her to stop being disrespectful?

I remembered when my mother suddenly seemed hilarious to me, too, during my high school days. Throughout my earlier adolescence, everything she said and did was annoying, irritating, corny, old-fashioned, or just plain stupid. My ocular muscles were finely tuned from all the eye-rolling I directed at my mother in my early teens.

But then, out of the blue, I started to notice little things — the way my mother said “Whadidyou say?” every 10 minutes; the droopiness of her wrists; the goofy sashay in her walk; the way her southern drawl added extra syllables to words like day-own (down) and wi-yund (wind); her tendency to excitedly point out every cattail, bird, and meandering stream. Once my brother and I became conscious of my mother’s comical tendencies, all she needed to do was point a finger from her droopy wrist and say, “Look! Over they-er! It’s an egret!” and we would dissolve into convulsive laughter.

I remember my mother’s confusion at our hysteria. I’m sure she felt some uneasiness with being made fun of. She didn’t stop us, however, because she was relieved that my brother and I weren’t fighting. My mother may have worried that my brother and I were being disrespectful, but our amusement was merely a sign of our changing perspectives. As children grow and gain independence, the roles of mother and child adapt and change. It’s a good sign when teenagers find their parents funny, because they are finally transitioning from the intolerant, eye-rolling phase of childhood into an era of appreciation.

While giggling uncontrollably at a parents’ every move, comment and facial expression may not seem very appreciative, it is, arguably, a step in the right direction. Identifying my mother’s humorous qualities when I was a teenager opened my eyes as an adult to her intelligence, creativity, work ethic and selflessness. Lilly can laugh at me all she wants, because I know that, in her own juvenile way, she appreciates me.

And dare I say that, one day, she might even respect me, too. A mom can dream, can’t she?

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September may be National Suicide Prevention Month, but I believe every month is suicide prevention awareness month. Last Friday, more than 300 personnel from my unit participated in a suicide prevention



While at this event, I had the opportunity to share with a few folks an experience I had that shaped how I approach my interactions with people. A few years ago, when I was preparing a suicide prevention training, I found a short video clip entitled, “I’m Good.” In the video, many interviewees keep declaring “I’m good” with bright smiles appearing on their faces. When I returned to work the next day, I asked a Soldier how she was doing and she responded with a smile, “I’m good.” Immediately, a memory from that video clip hit my mind and I kept the conversation going. As we continued speaking, a very different picture began to emerge. She was going through a serious issue in her life and was looking for someone who would listen.

The first letter in the acronym, “A” stands for “Ask.” It means taking the time to ask your buddy, even though it feels awkward, to ask the question directly, “Are you thinking of suicide?” Research shows it works. If they’re not thinking about suicide, the one asking is relieved. Additionally, the one answering now knows a person, who is not afraid to talk about suicide, is with them.

If you are reading this article and need help, don't hesitate to step forward to the caregivers. They are always available and keep an open door for you. You are not alone.



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Sports Briefs

Mud volleyball fundraiser: Big Brothers / Big Sisters Mountain Region will host its 10th annual mud volleyball fundraiser 8 a.m.-6:30 p.m. Saturday, at Grapevine Event Plaza and Picacho Peak Brewery, 3900 W. Picacho, in Las Cruces, N.M. Teams of eight to 12 participants compete in pool play in the morning, guaranteed at least three matches, and teams advance to championship games in the mid-afternoon. Cost: \$500; \$450 returning teams; spectator admission is free. (575) 449-4748. Forms online at lcmudd.org

Knights in Action 5K: Knights in Action Fabens Council #15799 hosts its 5K run/walk and 1-mile walk benefiting St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital 8 a.m. Saturday, at Album Park, 3110 Parkwood. Packet pick up will be noon-6 p.m. Friday, at both Up and Running locations at 3233 N. Mesa Street, Suite 2015, or 1475 George Dieter Drive, Suite 0, and 7-7:45 a.m. at the start line on race day. Cost: \$25 through Sept. 12; \$30 Friday-Saturday. 478-5663 or raceadventuresunlimited.com

WSNR Freedom Triathlon: The 10K run, 40K bike and 400-meter swim will get underway 7:30 a.m. Saturday, at White Sands Missile Range, near Alamogordo, N.M. Packet pick up is 6-7 a.m. Cost: \$65. Team fee: \$75. Military discounts offered at itsyourrace.com

NMSU Football: Up the road in Las Cruces, N.M., the New Mexico State University Aggies will play their home opener against San Diego State University, Saturday, 6 p.m. Cost: \$10-30 from Ticketmaster. (575) 646-1420 or nmstatesports.com

Run for the Mountain: LCMC Foundation's 3rd annual 5K run/walk is 8 a.m. Saturday, at Ruidoso Links Walking Path, 685 Hull in Ruidoso, N.M. raceadventuresunlimited.com

El Paso Walk to End Lupus: Lupus Foundation of America's Lone Star Chapter will host the 5K and 1-mile walk at 6 p.m., Saturday, at Ascarate Park, 6900 Delta Drive. Check-in at 4:30 p.m. and ceremony at 7 p.m. Cost: Free; fundraising is encouraged. (866) 205-2369, adrienne@lupuslonestar.org or elpasolupuswalk.org

McKelligon Canyon Challenge: El Paso On the Move's 5K run/walk and 1-mile fun walk will be at 8 a.m. Sunday, at McKelligon Canyon Amphitheater, beginning in the courtyard. Packet pick up will be 11 a.m.-8 p.m. Sept. 12 at Central SDA Church, 1801 McRae, and 7-7:45 a.m. on race day (gates close at 7:45 a.m.) Cost: \$35 (no race-day registration for teams). (909) 528-0394 or Raceadventuresunlimited.com

Borderland Roller Derby: The derby's next bout is 6 p.m. Sunday, at El Paso County Coliseum's Judging Arena, 4100 E. Paisano, featuring Chulas, and vs. Diablas. Cost: \$10; (\$7 with valid military ID; \$1 for ages 10 and younger; or \$8 each for pack of six) at brownpapertickets.com or borderlandrollerderby.com

'Running of the Chihuahuas': The 7th annual Running of the Chihuahuas event is 4-7 p.m. Sept. 21, at the Animal Rescue League of El Paso, 7256 La Junta, in Canutillo. Races for Chihuahua/Chihuahua mixes, under 20 pound category and a costume contest for all dogs. Cost: \$20 in advance per dog (limit two per family); includes t-shirt and goodie bag. The event will also feature music, vendors, a raffle and more. 877-5002, arlep.org

Gun show: The Paso Del Norte Gun Collectors Spring Gun Show is 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday and 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday, at the El Maida Shrine Temple, 6331 Alabama Street. Cost: \$6, \$4 for under 18. Free admission for wounded warriors. 564-0904 or pasodelnorteguncollectors.com

WWE Live: The WWE Live professional wrestling event is 7:30 p.m. Sept. 27, at UTEP's Don Haskins Center. Cost: \$15-\$75. Events include Street Fight with Seth Rollins vs. Baron Corbin, and a RAW Women's Champion Triple Threat match with Natalya vs. Nikki Cross vs. Becky Lynch. Also appearing are Braun Strowman, the Lucha House Party, Ricochet, United States champion AJ Styles, Lacey Evans and more.

Mexico U-20 v Rhinos: Mexico's national U-20 junior ice hockey team will take on the national Western States Hockey League Thorne Cup Champion El Paso Rhinos with a two-game exhibition series at 7 p.m. Sept. 28 and 4:30 p.m. Sept. 29, at El Paso County Coliseum Events Center, next to the Coliseum, 4100 E. Paisano. Cost: \$5 (Ticketmaster).

Miner Dash and Family Fitness Fiesta: The 10th annual Miner Dash and Family Fitness Fiesta kicks off UTEP's Homecoming festivities Sept. 29, at UTEP's Centennial Plaza. The 5K run and 3K walk begin at 8 a.m., plus a 5K wheelchair race. Cost: \$25 through Sept. 17; \$30 Sept. 18-26. The UTEP Fitness Fiesta is 8-11 a.m., and offers a variety of physical activities and health screenings including a jumping balloon, inflatable obstacle course, zumba, yoga and more. Cost: \$5. Register minerdash.utep.edu or 747-7245.

Quesadilla Run: Ngage's 5K run and 1-mile Quesadilla family fun run benefiting Ngage New Mexico is 8 a.m. Sept. 29, on the historic Mesilla, N.M. plaza. Refreshments and quesadillas at the finish line. Race day packet pick up is 7-7:45 a.m. at the race site. Cost: \$25 through Sept. 26. Registration at runsignup.com.

Miners Hockey Club: UTEP's hockey team and 2018-2019 TCHC Champions' opens its regular season home games 3:30 p.m. Sept. 21, and 10 a.m. Sept. 22, against Texas State at El Paso County Coliseum Events Center, 4100 E. Paisano. Cost: \$7. 491-7879, info@minershockey.com or minershockey.com

DEPLOYED, DEVELOPED LEADERS

Desert Knights conduct ACFT professional development session

By Sgt. Ashton Hofmeister | 1st Armored Division, Combat Aviation Brigade

The 1st Armored Division, Combat Aviation Brigade's Task Force Desert Knights conducted a Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development session on the incoming Army Combat Fitness Test in Afghanistan.

Leading the session was 1st Sgt. Adam Trammell, who taught Soldiers how to perform the exercises in the new fitness test. Trammell wanted to educate leaders on how to not only conduct the new test, but be knowledgeable on how to set up and grade the test.

"We covered movement standards for each event, as well as grading procedures," Trammell said. "We also talked through ways to train for each event using little or no equipment."

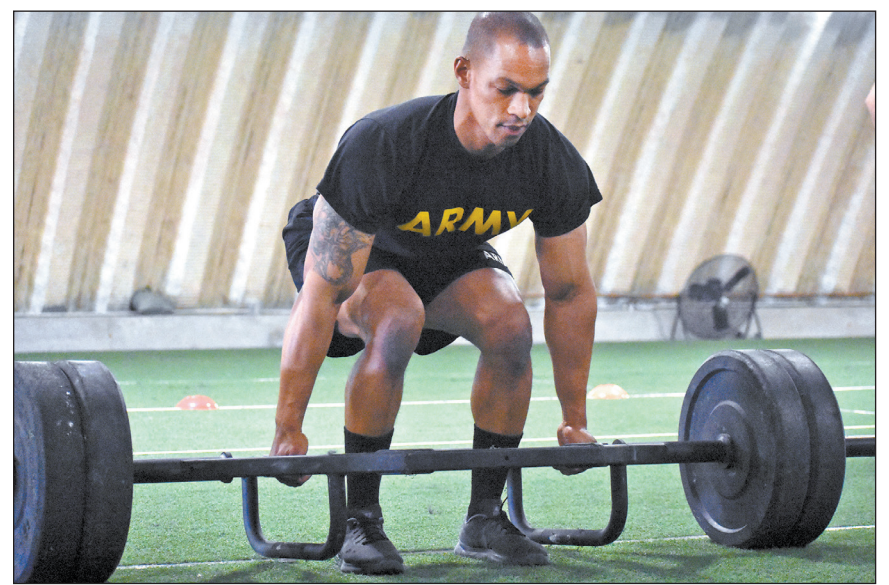
Trammell, who has served in the Army for the past 16 years, said he thinks the new test gives a more improved assessment on Soldier fitness.

Task Force Desert Knight Soldier Sgt. Chris McKenzie was an active participant in the NCOPD. McKenzie provided demonstrations of the exercises, while also learning about the new test.

"I felt like it was a good platform to educate leaders at all levels on how to set up and conduct the events that will be a part of the upcoming Army Combat Fitness Test," said McKenzie. "They covered movement standards for each event as well as grading procedures."

Training Soldiers doesn't stop because they are deployed. The NCOPD keeps Soldiers at optimum readiness for any future changes, but also offers other benefits.

"It is important because it will allow Soldiers to maintain a high-level of training during the deployment," said McKenzie. "Also, it takes us away from the norm of just working and going back to the barracks and doing it all over again tomorrow. It will give us a reason to maintain a healthy relationship outside of work as a team."



Photos by Sgt. Ashton Hofmeister / 1st AD, CAB

Sgt. Chris McKenzie performs the strength deadlift from the ACFT in Afghanistan. The strength deadlift event is designed to test lower body muscular strength, coordination, and balance.

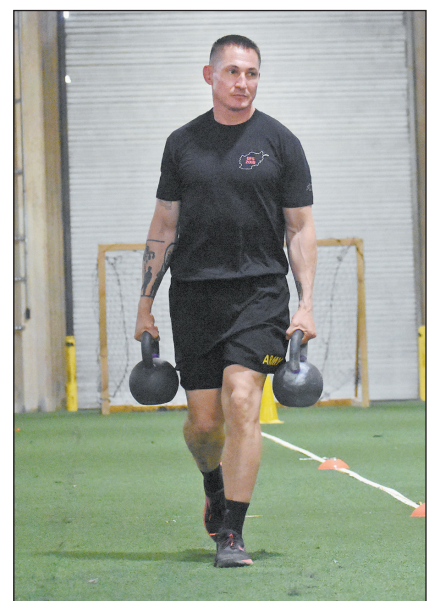
tionship outside of work as a team."

While the ACFT requires vigorous training and will provide commanders with a more detailed understanding of their Soldiers' physical readiness, Trammell said he enjoys doing the sprint-drag-carry.

"To be honest, it's just fun to do," Trammell said. "You get to push yourself as hard as you can across multiple movements in a short time."

The ACFT will improve movement lethality, transform the Army's physical-fitness culture, reduce preventable injuries, and associated attrition, while enhancing Soldier mental toughness and stamina.

First Sgt. Ada Trammell performs the sprint-drag-carry from the ACFT in Afghanistan. The sprint-drag-carry event is designed to replicate moving a casualty to safety, moving supplies or moving under fire.



SKIES Unlimited hosts successful open house

By Michelle L. Gordon | USAG Fort Bliss Public Affairs

Fort Bliss Family and MWR hosted an open house Aug. 24 to showcase the many programs and activities offered by the Fort Bliss SKIES Unlimited program.

The annual event allowed children to participate in classes free-of-charge to determine their interests. Fort Bliss FMWR currently offers more than 50 SKIES Unlimited classes on a monthly basis. Classes range from beginner-to-advanced levels in art, piano, dance, gymnastics, music, Judo, fencing, cheerleading, swimming, drivers education, automotive maintenance, and more.

Program manager Joy Clickener said more than 200 children attended the open house. She was pleased with the turnout, adding that if families missed the open house, children are always welcome to try a class for free before committing.

Class length depends on the activity, but they typically run around 55 minutes each. The majority of SKIES classes are held in building 3508 in the Logan Heights area of Fort Bliss. All classes are conducted on a monthly basis. Registration opens the 20th of the prior month and closes the seventh of the current month.

To see a list of all SKIES classes, visit the Fort Bliss FMWR website. To view pictures from the open house visit them on Flickr, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/blissmwr/> albums.



Photo by Fort Bliss MWR Marketing

OFF DUTY >>

Off Duty is a compilation of military-affiliated information and events focused on the Soldier, their family members and veterans. Information should be 100 words or fewer and contain no editorializing. An informational brief that is not time-specific will not run for more than four weeks. Submissions are due no later than Friday for publication in the following week's paper. To learn more, call 568-4088.

Bliss Briefs

Free military parent legal clinic: Military and family law attorneys and representatives from the attorney general's office will discuss questions and concerns about: child support, custody, visitation, paternity, and more. Child care provided at Main CDC for event attendees. Children must be registered with CYS. Tuesday. 2-4 p.m. ACS Building. McGregor Room. 2494 Ricker Rd. 568-7141

Power outage: Rio Grande Electric will reset substation breakers Sept. 29 at 6 a.m. A power outage may occur due to this work and is expected to last no longer than 2 minutes. The outage will affect Old Fort Bliss, Lower Beaumont, and the northwest training area; traffic lights in these areas could be affected as well.

McGregor/FBTX ammo point closings: The McGregor Range/FBTX Ammunition Supply Point will be closed next week. Issue documents can be submitted through TAMIS during the closures. 569- 9528

WBAMC eye exams: Optometry Services at Mendoza and SFMC Clinics are open for routine eye exams for dependents and retirees enrolled in TRICARE Prime and Tricare For Life. If you have had a routine eye exam on the economy through TRICARE or other health insurance in the past year, please do not book an appointment until it is time for your next exam. If you would like to schedule an eye exam, call the Mendoza Optometry clinic at 742-2229 or SFMC at 742-2390.

Wednesday bible study: Join the Fort Bliss chaplain community for a weekly bible study. Free food served at 5:30 p.m. Bldg. 449-451 on Pershing Rd. West Fort Bliss. 568-4334

Face-to-face TARP training: Fort Bliss offers Threat Awareness Reporting Program training at two locations monthly. Get your learn on at the Soldier Activity Center on East Fort Bliss on the second Tuesday of the month, or at Stayton Theater on West Fort Bliss on the third Thursday of the month. 568-4604

Let your voice be heard: Log on to the Interactive Customer Evaluation program to provide feedback for a wide array of services at Bliss. Submitters can remain anonymous or include their contact information for follow-up. https://ice.disa.mil/index.cfm?fa=site&site_id=435

Lower Beaumont traffic disruptions expected: According to Bliss DPW, work trucks may cause disruptions at lower Beaumont, to include noise and dust, but no road closures, until late November. Work will occur Mondays -Saturdays between 6:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m.

FMWR

Make a mini garden: Join Mickelsen Community Library for this continuing series. This month they will be making a rock garden. Supplies are provided, but guests are welcome to bring their own as well. Open to DoD ID card holders 8+. Saturday. 11 a.m.-1 p.m. 2 Sheridan Rd. Free. 568-6156

Crochet with the Golden Girls: The Art and Hobby shop will be watching the classic sitcom and knitting it up. Basic supplies provided, but feel free to bring your own needles. Registration recommended and can be done at the neighboring Auto Crafts shop. Open to DoD ID card holders. Wednesdays 11:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m. 820 Marshall Rd. 568-5563

Free books for deploying troops: The Mickelsen Community Library offering a unit book kit. The book kits contain a selection of popular fiction and non-fiction paperback items. 2 Sheridan Rd (under NCOA). 568-1902

ANNOUNCEMENT

Debt collection notice:

This is a debt collection notice for **Sgt. 1st Class Wavie G. Shumate, Jr.** All services under Shumate's name should be put on hold. All those with debts to be collected under the name of Shumate, or for information regarding collections, call Capt. Joshua Anderson at 741-0536.

This is a debt collection notice for **Spc. Benjamin Vasquez.** All services under Vasquez's name should be put on hold. All those with debts to be collected under the name of Vasquez, or for information regarding collections, call 2nd Lt. Micah Brown at (845) 521-6937.

Go Youth

Story Time: Stop by the Mickelsen Library every Tuesday from 10:15-11 a.m. or 11-11:45 a.m. as children ages 2-5 listen to stories read aloud. There will also be crafts, activities and refreshments available. 568-6156

CYS In-home child care: Family Child Care offers in-home providers for CYS-registered kids. For care information, or to receive an updated list of FCC providers. Reservations required. Cost: \$5 an hour with a \$10 deposit. 568-4198 or 3503 Story Rd.

Community

Free TxDOT car seat safety checks: TxDOT Traffic Safety is partnering with Whataburger and the El Paso Police Department to offer car seat checks at Whataburger, 1300 Airway Blvd., Sept. 21. Bring your children and their seats for installation pointers and other car seat safety tips.

El Paso Strong Tour: Magoffin Home State Historic Site, 1117 and 1120 Magoffin Ave., hosts free tours 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday. The tour will cover topics of cultural diversity, religious acceptance, and historic solutions during El Paso tragedies. Free. 533- 5147

Fiesta San Elceario: San Elizario's annual fiesta is Friday-Sunday at Veterans Memorial Placita in front of San Elceario Catholic Church, 1556 San Elizario Road, with food and game booths, carnival rides, folklorico and mata-chines dancers. 851-2333

Shakespeare on-the-Rocks: Shakespeare on-the-Rocks' 31st season runs through Sept. 22, at El Paso Community College's Transmountain Campus Forum Theatre. This Friday-Sunday: "Julius Caesar," directed by Vanessa Keyser. Showtime is 8 p.m. Fridays-Saturdays, and 2:30 p.m. Sundays. Cost: \$10 (\$8 for students with valid ID, seniors 65 and older, active military available in advance online or at the EPCC Valle Verde Campus. 540-3813, shakespeare-ontherocks.com

Elephant Butte Balloon Regatta: The 39th annual regatta begins at 7:15 a.m. Friday-Sunday at Lions Beach, Elephant Butte Lake State Park. (575) 744-5923, ebb.org or on Facebook. Tethered balloon rides start at 7:30 a.m. Cost: \$30 (\$20 age 12 and younger).

Diez y Seis de Septiembre Fiesta: The annual fiesta is noon-10 p.m. Saturday and 12:7:30 p.m., Sunday, at the Mesilla Plaza, with vendor booths offering art, crafts, games, drinks and food. There will also be a greased pole climb and piñatas for kids. No alcohol, smoking or pets allowed on the plaza. The Fiesta Parade begins at 10 a.m., Saturday along Avenida de Mesilla, beginning at Four Points Gin and ending at the Mesilla Town Hall. (575) 524-3262, ext. 116

Full Moon Nights: White Sands National Monument, 15 miles southwest of Alamogordo, N.M., on U.S. 70, hosts a performance by acoustic trio Los Soneros del Valle Bajo, which specializes in Son Jarocho, for its full moon event at 7:30 p.m., Saturday. Programs are free with regular park admission fees. White Sands entrance fees \$10 per person; \$20 per vehicle; and \$15 per motorcycle. The final full moon program of the season is 6:30 p.m., Oct. 13, with Native American flutist Randy Granger. (575) 479-6124, ext. 236 or (575) 679-2599, ext. 232; or go to nps.gov/whsa

Gila River Festival: The Gila Conservation Coalition's 15th annual festival "Our River, Our Future," is Sept. 19-22, at various locations in Silver City, N.M. Events feature presentations and hands-on activities designed to foster a deeper intimacy with the Gila River, such as river outings, expert-led hikes and field trips, presentations, panel discussions, music, community art projects, and more. The Gila River Extravaganza is Sept. 21, featuring Fort Sill Apache Fire Dancers. (575) 538-8078 or gilariverfestival.org

Beer Bites and Beats: KISS FM and Deadbeach Brewery host the new Craft Beer Festival 3 p.m.-midnight Sept. 21, at Deadbeach Brewery and other locations throughout El Paso. Free. beerbitesandbeats.com. A Hops and Holes Golf Tournament is 3-7 p.m., Sept. 19 at Butterfield Trail Golf Club, 1858 Cottonwoods. Cost: \$75.

National Alpaca Farm Days: Mesa Vista Wine Tasting Room, 3200 Hwy 28 in Anthony, N.M., offers guests a chance to meet some of the "long-necked teddy bears" noon-6 p.m., Sept. 28-29, and see items that are made from their fiber including woven rugs, hand-spun yarns, dryer balls, wet-felted soaps and more. Live music and Wiseman's Garden Creations canned goods and dips on site Sept. 29. 494-7248 or NationalAlpacaFarmDay.com

Chihuahuan Desert Fiesta: Texas Parks and Wildlife will host its 15th annual fiesta celebrating Franklin Mountains State Park's 40th anniversary, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Sept. 28, at Franklin Mountains State Park's Tom Mays Section (off of Transmountain Road on the west slope), with educational exhibits, guided hikes, demonstrations and outdoor activities. 566-6441 or chihuahuandesert.org

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