

Bassett ACH midwife and nurses exceed expectations

Brandy Ostanik-Thornton
Medical Department Activity –
Alaska Public Affairs

Pregnancy can be an anxiety-filled time for many women, especially when going through pregnancy alone. This is where Alyssa Roland found herself in this exact situation; pregnant, alone and anxious. Roland’s husband, Sgt. Byron Roland with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, was deployed and she could not forget the complications she experienced during the birth of their first child at a different hospital. Roland began her prenatal care with Bassett Army Community Hospital certified nurse midwife, Maj. Lena Fabian where she felt a sense of support and comfort. “What struck me originally about Maj. Fabian is she just kind of knew what I was going through and how I felt without me having to tell her,” said Roland. “She was so reassuring.” Mental well-being was always a part of Roland’s appointments with Fabian.

Alyssa Roland (left), her newborn daughter Luci, and Bassett Army Community Hospital certified nurse midwife Maj. Lena Fabian, stop for a picture on the maternal newborn unit April 19. Roland was impressed with the care she received both physically and emotionally during her pregnancy and birth. (Angela Rushing, Bassett ACH registered nurse)

“She hit those uncomfortable areas where you don’t want to ask the question, but she engaged and highlighted these areas, went into detail and assured me everything would be fine,” said Roland. “She always made me feel good about being pregnant. Some days you are just tired and don’t want anyone around, but when I left my appointments I was always happy and felt super optimistic about everything.” Roland had more reason to be optimistic when her husband came home from deployment early. “He got back right before all the craziness with COVID started and he was able to go to two appointments with me,” said Roland. Then the change to visitor policies due to COVID-19, and the closure of schools requiring her husband to stay home with their oldest daughter, kept her husband from attending appointments.

Like her prenatal care in women’s health, Roland was not disappointed with the support and care given to her and her family on the maternal newborn unit when she gave birth April 18. “There was a great team of staff in the MNU including Ms. Angela, Ms. Rayna and other nurses who went above and beyond to assist me with every single thing I requested,” said Roland. “Dr. Alison Grajkowski was great too, genuinely just a kind human being.” According to Roland, Fabian arrived just in time for their daughter Luci to be born. “It could not have worked out any better,” said Roland. “It was like Luci was waiting for Maj. Fabian to get there before she decided to show up. The MNU staff made me feel like I was more than just a patient. Through their compassionate care, I truly felt like one of their own.”



From left to right: Josean, Hope and Justin Galicia pose for a photo in honor of “Purple Up Day,” a virtual celebration of military families worldwide during the Month of the Military Child. Since April 1986, the Army has observed MOMC to recognize and honor the commitment, contributions and sacrifices military children make to our nation through the strength they provide our Soldiers and Families. (Courtesy Photo)



U.S. Army Garrison Alaska, Fort Greely Child Development Center employee Joann Amarone poses with her nephew Kieran Amarone for “Purple Up Day,” a virtual celebration of military families worldwide during the Month of the Military Child. Since April 1986, the Army has observed MOMC to recognize and honor the commitment, contributions and sacrifices military children make to our nation through the strength they provide our Soldiers and Families. (Courtesy Photo)

Fort Greely celebrates Month of the Military Child

Angela J. Glass
U.S. Army Garrison Alaska, Fort Greely Public Affairs

U.S. Army Garrison Alaska, Fort Greely celebrated the Month of the Military Child in April to honor the sacrifices made by military families and to recognize the important role military children play in our community. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic,

in-person festivities were cancelled, but that didn’t prevent Fort Greely Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation from celebrating through virtual means. This year’s MOMC theme, “Overcoming Challenges: Adapting Today for a Stronger Tomorrow,” remains extremely relevant to the challenges families are facing during these uncertain times.

In support of social distancing, FMWR utilized social media outlets to creatively interact with children and families who were spending more time at home due to the pandemic. By implementing online activities such as children’s photo, drawing and chef contests gave families something to look forward to and a way to celebrate this year’s MOMC observance.

Even a virtual “Purple Up Day” was celebrated via Facebook April 16 where children and families wore purple attire to acknowledge the sacrifices and contributions made by military families. FMWR Marketing Manager, Irmgard Melecio, handles the program’s social media pages and is extremely impressed with the virtual reach of the activities. “En-

tire families signing up to be a part of the activities and contests confirms how amazingly resilient they are, especially the children,” said Melecio. “Children and Families are the force behind the force, supporting Soldiers as they focus on their mission in serving the nation, and recognizing their contributions through virtual means displays

our commitment to military Families and children, and thanks them for the support and contributions they make on behalf of their Soldiers,” said Fort Greely Garrison Commander, Lt. Col. Joel Johnson. If you would like to stay virtually connected with Fort Greely Family and MWR on social media outlets, follow @GreelyMWR on both Facebook and Instagram.

WEEKEND WEATHER			IN BRIEF
Friday Mostly sunny. High: 49F.	Saturday Sunny. High: 52F.	Sunday Sunday. High: 52F.	On a daily basis, staff at Fort Wainwright Public Health perform a variety of jobs to support the overall health of the Fort Wainwright community. Monitoring drinking water, hearing protection and tracking communicable diseases to determine the health of the force are just some of the services they provide every day. Read more on page 7.

Nutrition Corner: Myth Busters

Should grains be avoided when trying to lose weight? Definitely not. Foods containing grains often get a bad reputation for making people gain weight but the truth is many grains provide great nutritional benefits. Whole grains still contain the grain kernel- the bran, germ and endosperm, which naturally provide fiber, B vitamins like thiamin and folate and iron. Include whole grains as part of a balanced diet to help reduce risk of heart disease and to help prevent constipation. Some examples of whole grains are both nutritious

and delicious are rolled oats, barley, popcorn, brown rice, millet, quinoa, farro, and whole wheat bread and pastas. Refined grains do not contain the bran or germ, which results in a finer texture and improved shelf life. Unfortunately, it removed dietary fiber, iron and B vitamins. Many times they are fortified back in to refined grain products but not always. As refined grains are replaced with whole grains, be mindful of your portion sizes. Whole grains are naturally healthier, but there are just as many calories in them as

their refined counterparts.

Recipe Spotlight: Farro and asparagus salad

Ingredients:
 • 2 cups farro
 • One bunch asparagus, trimmed
 • 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
 • ½ cup chopped walnuts
 • ¾ cup dried cranberries
 • ½ cup chopped fresh parsley
 • ½ cup chopped green onions

• ¼ cup balsamic vinaigrette
 • ¾ cup shaved parmesan cheese

Preparation:
 • Prepare farro according to package instructions
 • Fill a large pot with salted water and bring to a boil over high heat. Once the water is boiling, stir in the faro and return to a boil. Reduce heat to medium, then cook the faro uncovered, stirring occasionally for 20 minutes. Reduce heat to low, cover and continue simmering until tender, about 30 more

minutes. Drain and allow to cool
 • Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Add the asparagus, and cook until tender, about three minutes. Drain and immerse in ice water. Once asparagus is cold, drain and chop. Set aside.
 • Place faro, asparagus, tomatoes, walnuts, cranberries, parsley and green onions in a large bowl. Drizzle balsamic vinaigrette over and sprinkle about ¾ cups parmesan cheese, then toss. Top with the remaining ¼ cup parmesan cheese. Serve.

Help available for Soldiers locked into lease agreements

Devon Suits
 Army News Service

Soldiers and families locked into untenable lease agreements due to the COVID-19 stop-movement order can access legal support to reduce their financial obligation.

Under the Service Member Civil Relief Act, or SCRA, Soldiers can terminate their lease agreement with permanent-change-of-station or deployment orders that exceed 90 days, according to Army G-1 officials.

Some families might have entered a new lease agreement prior to a PCS, said Melissa Halsey, legal assistance policy division chief for the Office of the Judge Advocate General. When the stop-movement order nullified a Soldier's PCS orders, they may now be forced to maintain multiple households, and the recourse is unclear.

Individuals caught in a leasing dispute should first reach out to their landlord or property management office to try and resolve the issue at the lowest, Halsey said. If that doesn't work, Soldiers should notify their chain of command and consult with a Legal Assistance attorney.

"We are suggesting service members contact their landlords directly and explain their situation," Halsey said. "They should then ask the landlord to end their lease voluntarily."

Army G-1 recently released an all-Army activities message to provide impacted personnel with guidance, Halsey said. Within the ALARACT, Soldiers have access to example letters to help them cancel a lease agreement or pause rent obligations.

Individuals can also look into any state-specific laws or federal relief

to provide support. For example, the Federal Housing Finance Agency is offering mortgage relief to borrowers impacted by COVID-19. At any point, Soldiers can contact their installation legal assistance office for further guidance or support, she added.

If personnel cannot reach a termination agreement with their landlord, they can work with their chain of command and legal office to obtain new orders, which will allow them to cancel their rent or lease contract under the SCRA.

Current lease

While under the stop-movement order, Soldiers should try to maintain their lease with their current property manager until they are authorized to PCS since there is no legal requirement for a landlord to re-lease a property to an existing tenant, Halsey said.

Soldiers should notify their chain of command if they terminated their lease in preparation for a move and if their landlord refuses to let them continue to occupy the property, Halsey said.

Personnel may be authorized a short-distance move with their household goods due to the involuntary tour extension, she said.

The Department of Justice, which enforces the SCRA, has been actively monitoring the COVID-19 situation, Halsey said.

"Since COVID-19 has come to our shores, active-duty service members and members of the National Guard and Reserve have shouldered new burdens as they work to protect our country," said Eric S. Dreiband, the assistant attorney general with the civil rights division.

See LEASE on page 6

History Snapshot: May is Historic Preservation Month – Fort Wainwright's first power plant



The original plan for Ladd Field included a large, four-story power plant that was located adjacent to the current Building 1562. The coal-fired plant generated power for the entire post initially and relied heavily on civilian staffing for its operations and maintenance. Richard Frank, a young man who came from Rampart to work at Ladd Field in early 1945, remembered working long days at the Ladd power plant. Frank's job was to help fire the boilers. He recalled, "It was busy shift work, [we]d work eight hour shifts...I enjoyed it. I didn't mind the pay; I don't remember how much I made. But it was work, and it was something that I felt that I was making a contribution."

The North Post power plant remained in use, even after another power plant was built elsewhere on post, until around 1977 when it was fired for the very last time. It remained vacant for several years until it was demolished in 1985. (Photo courtesy National Archives)



Goodbye Birch Hill Ski and Snowboard Area lodge

The ski lodge at Birch Hill on Fort Wainwright was demolished April 25-26 to make way for a new facility with more amenities. Construction on the new project is expected to begin once the debris has been cleared from the site. (Photo by me Eve Baker, U.S. Army Garrison Alaska, Fort Wainwright Public Affairs)

MEDDAC Minute

Important Phone Numbers

Emergency: 911
24 Hour Nurse Advice Line: 1-800-874-2273 Opt. 1
Appointment Line: 361-4000
Behavioral Health: 361-6059
Benefits Advisor: 361-5656
Immunizations: 361-5456
Information Desk: 361-5172
Patient Advocate: 361-5291
Pharmacy Refills: 361-5803
Tricare On-Line: www.tricare-online.com
Health Net: www.tricare-west.com, 1-844-8676-9378

Phase One Reopening

Medical Department Activity – Alaska will begin slowing reopening some services on a small scale beginning May 4. Please watch our Facebook page for an updated service tracker with the status of all medical and dental services. <https://www.facebook.com/BassettACH>

Cloth Face Coverings

Everyone entering the facility, with the exception of children under the age of two, are required to wear a cloth face covering when in a MEDDAC-AK facility, even when social distancing is possible.

Blocked Calls

Healthcare finders from our referral office are teleworking.

During this time, they are using personal cell phones. For their own privacy, they are calling from blocked numbers. We encourage those with, or waiting for, a referral to have voicemails set up for messages or to not automatically deny a blocked number.

TVC Changes

TRICARE Prime enrollees will need a referral for care at Tanana Valley Clinic First Care and not receive a point of service charge. To request a referral, call the Nurse Advice Line at 1-800-TRICARE, option 1.

Virtual AWC

The Army Wellness Center has openings for phone appointments. Manage stress, work on health goals, and estimate caloric needs. For more information, call 907-361-2234.

Patient Praise

My wife and I were blown away with the professionalism and kindness of the entire maternity ward staff the last few days as we had our baby. The care provided leading up to and after birth was phenomenal. The nurses (especially Brittany and Margaret) were awesome, the anesthesiologist was funny and terrific. Doctors Pemberthy and Stevens were caring.

ALASKA POST

The Interior Military News Connection

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May 1, 2020

The Chaplain’s Corner

Chaplain Paul Fritts
U.S. Army Garrison
Alaska, Fort Greely

A dear friend’s mother recently died of natural causes. Given the current travel restrictions due to the pandemic, the best I could do was make a video call to express my condolences and send flowers. This friend and I were college roommates for three years, even though his family lived locally in the same city where we attended school. Frequent visits to his family’s home over the course of our education meant that his mom became something of a mother figure for me. Her passing is the most recent in a rather grim string of deaths to impact me over the last year. Having tallied up all the losses, I sudden-

ly realized that twelve years had passed since my own parents’ death. Where has the time gone?

On a separate but related note, I have previously written about the pride I feel in how my daughter and her husband are raising my grandson who, because he was born quite prematurely, has multiple medical and developmental challenges. Their latest parental test precipitated a recent, melancholy post by my daughter that originated from a Facebook memory made eleven years ago. My teenaged daughter in 2009 was excited about going out but lamented the burden of what she perceived as omnipresent parental supervision. My adult daughter in 2020, reflecting on her own challenges as a

parent, now laments the lack of supervision she once found so oppressive. Part of me eagerly anticipates completing my tour of duty at Fort Greely and moving closer to our daughter and her family. Another part of me recognizes the humor of adult children becoming parents and receive all the grief children have always given their parents. Where has the time gone?

I cherish memories of long talks with my dad where he would frequently say, “The only thing that never really changes is change itself.” In the years since his passing I have come to understand a similar concept of “change without change.” Think about a circle. If you put a finger in the center and rotate it with your

other hand, no matter how much you turn it the circle remains a circle. Turning the circle changes it, but the essential shape endures. It is changed without change. Similarly, the circle of life both changes and endures. Beloved parents and grandparents die. Our children have children. Life brings change, and yet its essence endures without change.

This will be my final Chaplain’s Corner column. Karen and I have begun to shift our focus toward preparing for a permanent change of station to Virginia sometime this summer. It has been my highest privilege to share weekly snapshots of my thinking and learning. I am profoundly grateful for the time we have had to walk this journey



together. Thank you. A new Fort Greely Chaplain will take my place and continue serving the community. It is change, without change. Where has the time gone?

“Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever” (Psalm 136:1).
For God and Coun-

try! The Fort Greely Chapel community is a traditional, protestant Army chapel service meeting on Sundays at 10 a.m. with a weekly Communion observance. Interested? Please call 907-873-4397 or “Like” our chapel Facebook page at www.facebook.com/FGAChapel.

DOD providing leave leniency due to COVID-19 travel restrictions

David Vergun
Defense.gov

Travel restrictions made necessary by the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in the Defense Department providing leave leniency for service members who accrue too much leave and might otherwise lose it.

Each year, active-duty service members are granted 30 days of leave, but at the end of each fiscal year, they normally lose any unused leave exceeding 60 days. With the leniency granted due to the pandemic travel restrictions, service members can now accrue a leave balance of up to 120 days until Sept. 30, 2023.

Matthew Donovan, undersecretary of personnel and readiness, signed the authorization for that change April 16.

DOD encourages service members to take leave whenever possible; however, it's not always possible due to deployments and operational commitments, Pentagon officials said, though some extensions have

An infographic titled "Department of Defense Travel Restriction" with a "UPDATE APRIL 20, 2020" and "NEW END DATE: June 30, 2020 (renewed every 15 days)" banner. It details travel restriction orders, leave balance rules, exemptions for various personnel, and a "Military OnSource" logo at the bottom.

(Illustration by U.S. Army)

been granted due to long deployments.

The COVID-19 pandemic has hit service members particularly hard because many are not allowed to travel to see friends and loved ones who live many miles away — a big incentive for taking leave, Donovan said. Therefore, he continued, the restriction on the leave

balance ceiling was relaxed.

"The department's actions to stem the spread of COVID-19 have significantly limited the ability of service members to take leave during this national emergency, and we know that leave is vital to the health and welfare of our force," Donovan stated in his memo-

randum.

For DOD's Civilian workforce, Office of Personnel Management policy already makes allowances for leave accrual under exigent circumstances, such as COVID-19. All restored annual leave must be scheduled and used not later than the end of the leave year ending two years from the year the annual leave was earned after the termination of the current emergency. The normal leave balance service members may carry over each year is 240 hours. However, more hours may be carried over during the current emergency.

Defense Secretary

Dr. Mark T. Esper signed a memorandum today restricting all DOD uniformed and Civilian personnel and their families from traveling to, from or through places identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's travel health notices as Level 3 COVID locations.

The memo is in effect until June 30, though that could change because reviews are taking place every 15 days based on CDC guidance.

The travel restrictions include permanent changes of station and all other official travel, as well as personal leave. Also, flights

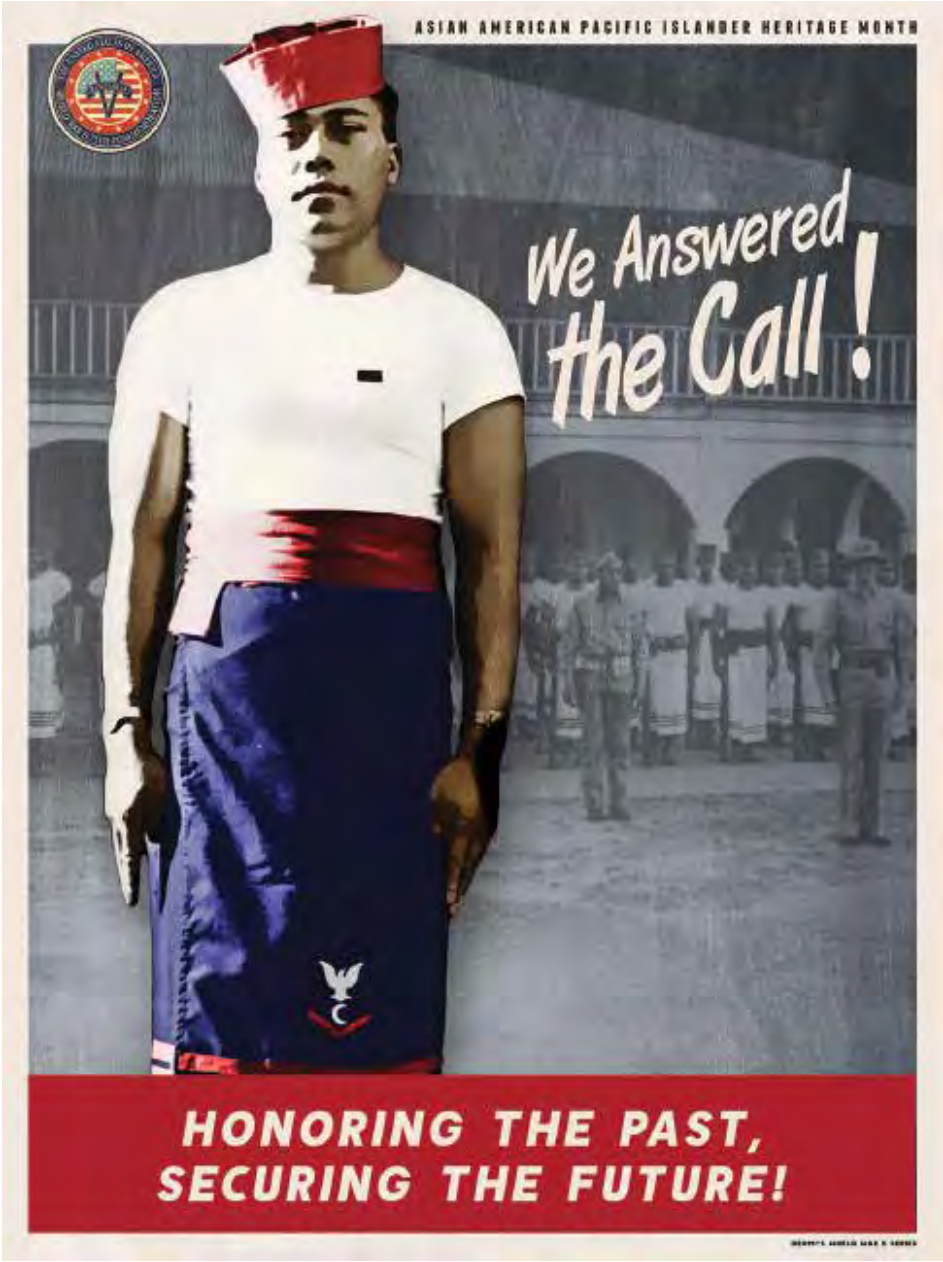
to or from non-Level 3 countries cannot transit through Level 3 nations.

As of today, the CDC website listed Germany, Italy, Qatar, Afghanistan, South Korea and Japan — countries where large numbers of service members are stationed — as Level 3 locations. Many other countries also are at Level 3.

Numerous exceptions to the travel ban have been made on a case-by-case basis, Donovan said at an April 18 Pentagon news conference, citing exemptions for medical treatment, personal hardship, separation and retirement.

"The coronavirus disease continues to present significant risk to our forces as the DOD considers domestic and overseas personnel travel," Esper stated in his memorandum. "These movements present the threat of spreading COVID-19 within our ranks and communities. My priorities remain protecting our service members, DOD Civilians and Families; safeguarding our national security capabilities; and supporting the whole-of-nation response."

This is not the first time extensions have been granted, officials noted. Special leave accrual of up to 75 days was granted during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, due to long or multiple deployments.



Redditors revive interest in 1960s Army emergency ventilator invention

U.S. Army CCDC Army Research Laboratory Public Affairs

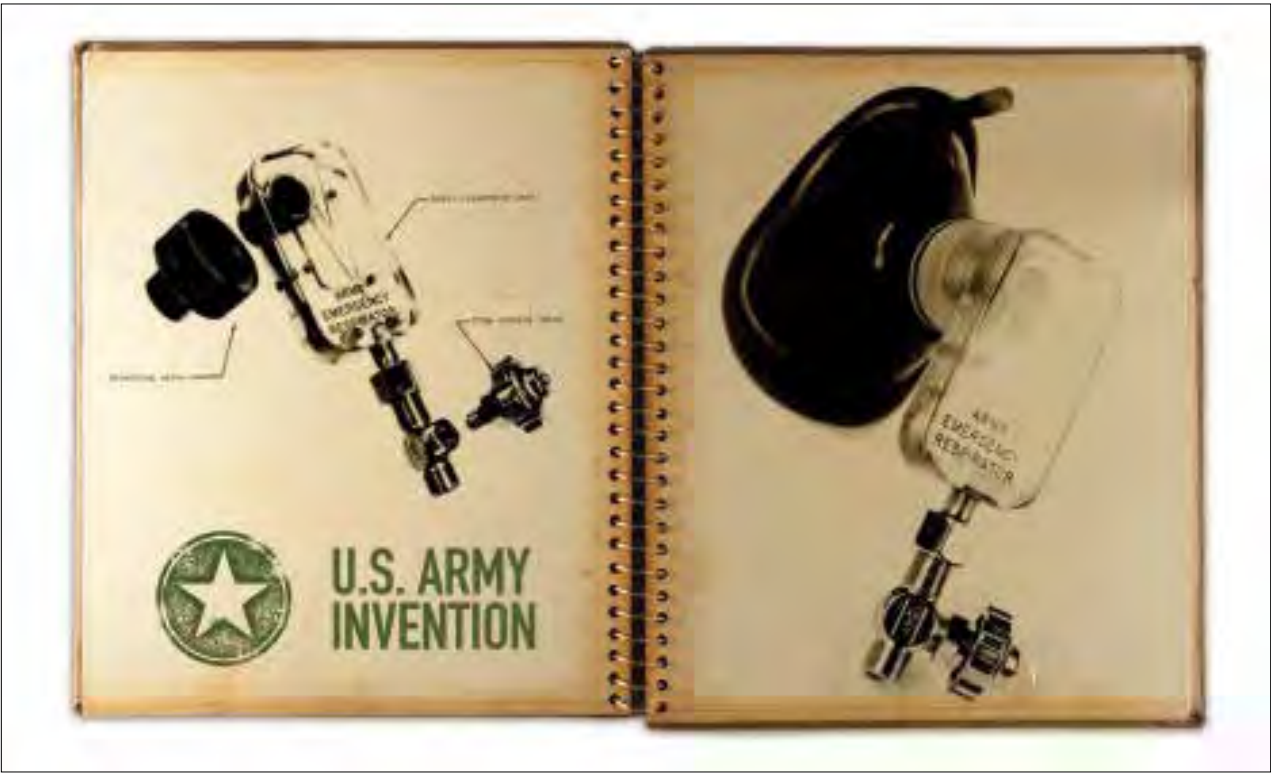
As the world confronts the shortage of essential medical equipment caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the internet buzzes with efforts to build make-shift ventilators, some based on the idea of a respirator invented by U.S. Army researchers more than five decades ago.

When the coronavirus epidemic began to strain the supply of life-saving medical equipment like ventilators, online communities of technologists banded together to help small companies and even everyday people create their own emergency medical equipment.

Among the many ideas and personal projects shared on internet forums, many people got excited over the design of a unique ventilator known as the Army Emergency Respirator. What caught their attention about this technology was that this particular apparatus could perform complex breathing-supporting functions without the need for any moving parts.

The Army Emergency Respirator has two configurations; a respirator with a moving bellows that takes over the intubated and sedated patients breathing, and a simple breathing assist device to help the patient breathe easier through pressure augmentation.

Army engineer Henrik H. Straub invented



The 1960s-era Army Emergency Respirator functions as a fluidic pressure-cycled respirator that doesn't require any moving parts to operate. (U.S. Army - Shutterstock)

the device in 1964 while he worked at the Harry Diamond Laboratories, one of the seven facilities that merged to form the Army Research Laboratory in 1992.

The respirator represents one of the many important scientific milestones in the history of the U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command's Army Research Laboratory, officials said. It uses the principles of fluidics to assist or control the ventilation of the patient.

Based on the theoretical foundation of fluid dynamics, fluidics allows a system to operate under a control comprised of pipes and other pneumatic or hydraulic components. Much like how electronic circuit boards use wires and electronic

valves to direct the movement of electrons and govern the system's functions, fluidic devices use small jet streams that travel along a circuit board-like structure to perform analog and digital operations. Depending on how a fluid circuit is arranged, engineers can create a variety of machines controlled entirely by the flow of liquid or gas traveling down carefully designed paths.

At the time, Harry Diamond Laboratories received a great amount of attention for pioneering the study of modern fluidics with the invention of the fluid amplifier in 1957, a device that forces a stream to follow a designated path and amplifies its power.

The apparatus named at the time the Army Emergency

Respirator emerged as just one of many applications of this new breakthrough in fluidics. The device was developed by Straub and his collaborators at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research to mainly function as an inexpensive yet reliable pressure-cycled respirator for when supplies run low.

The breathing assist device connects to a breathing mask and automatically helps the patient inhale and exhale with a feedback loop that takes advantage of the changing pressures inside of the mask.

When the air pressure inside the breathing mask is lower than outside the mask, the apparatus pulls in air from outside through a nozzle and carries ox-

ygen into the patient's lungs. Then, once the pressure inside the mask increases to a pre-set point, the apparatus automatically adjusts to help the patient to exhale, sending the air out through a different nozzle.

As a fluidic device, Straub's invention didn't require any moving parts. In fact, the laboratory's prototype was only slightly larger than a pack of playing cards and consisted of a Lucite block with a system of intricate channels carved inside. However, its relatively simple design meant that it serviced as a low-cost disposable tool for routine use at hospitals and clinics.

While Straub successfully tested his pressure-cycled respirator on dogs and human

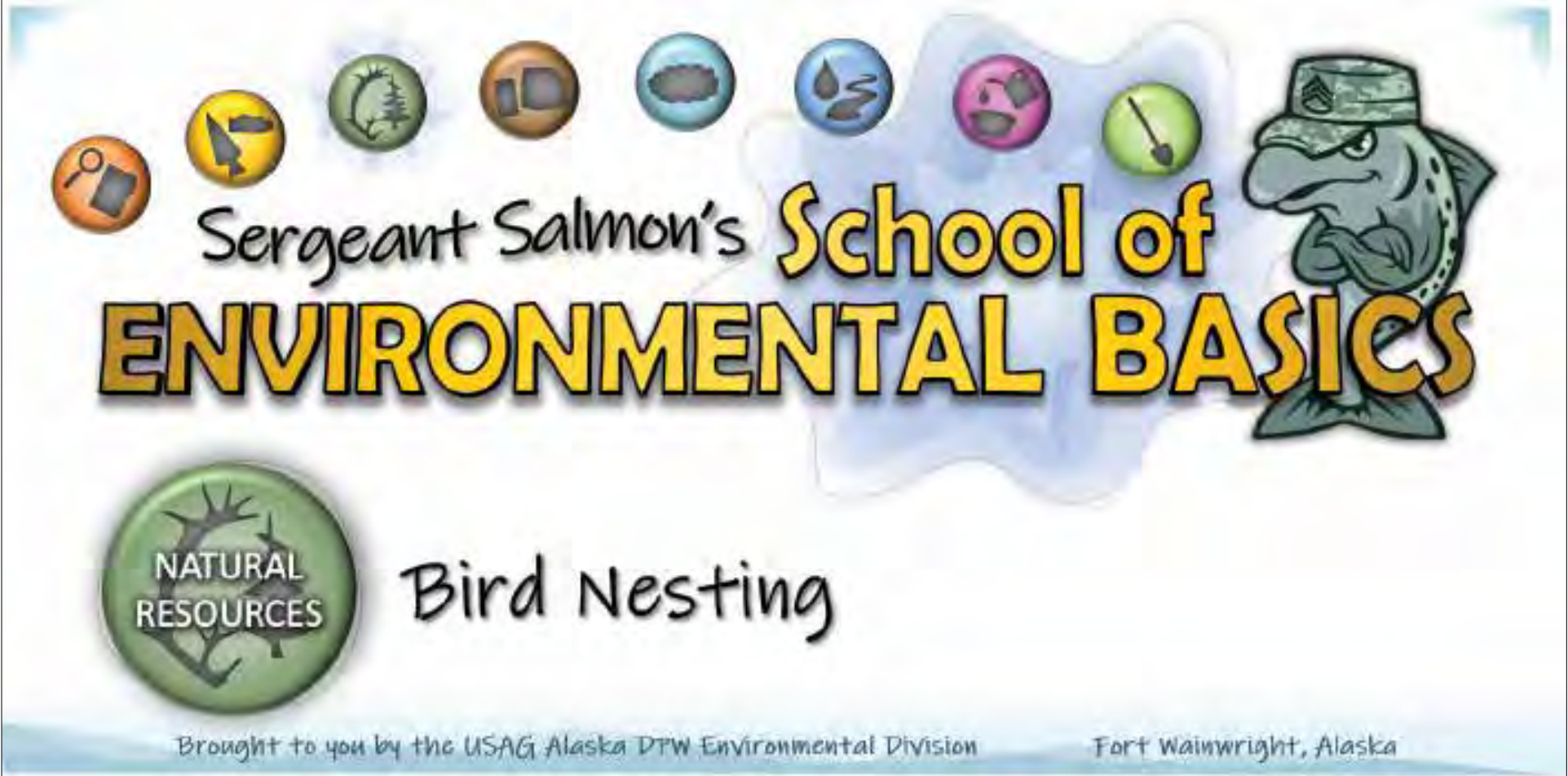
patients, the device remained in development as a working prototype and was never fully fielded by the U.S. Army. A similar model called the Fluidic Breathing Assistor was patented by the Bowles Fluidic Corporation in 1971, but Army research into the apparatus discontinued by the 1980s.

Despite having been confined to history for over 50 years, the renewed public attention surrounding Straub's invention gained momentum in last few weeks as independent technologists realized its potential – and discussed it on the internet – during this time of pandemic.

One engineer has already constructed an updated version of the 1965 ventilator and shared a video of the finished product on the social media website Reddit, prompting other users to look into the design as well.

The longevity of this one invention demonstrates how foundational knowledge created within the Army laboratories can lead to an impact that extends far beyond its originally envisioned applications, and over multiple decades, officials said.

Disclaimer: The U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command's Army Research Laboratory does not approve nor recommend any medical devices and has no position on any proposed applications of the Army Emergency Respirator for any purposes.



Sergeant Salmon's School of Environmental Basics: Bird Nesting

U.S. Army Garrison Alaska
Department of Public Works
Environmental Division

The migratory birds are coming, and they want to nest on your roof, eave, stairwell, connex or Stryker. They are also going to poop...everywhere. There are some simple steps you can take to help ward off our friendly flying friends from nesting, and pooping, in inconvenient places.

- Inspect and monitor potential problem areas before they start to build nests
- Improve your building by adding 45° flashing to the eaves
- Put up "iridescent flash

tape" (look it up on the internet!)
•Remove nests before eggs are laid (see photo!). Yes, you can remove a nest if there is no egg in the nest
Remember, if an egg is laid in the nest, it is a federal offence (Migratory Bird Treaty Act) to remove the nest. If a nest with an egg needs to be removed, contact the Environmental Office 907-361-9684 and will try to procure a permit.
However, the best solution is prevention. By continuing to follow the four prevention steps the above, less birds will nest in inconvenient places.



Burning operations planned on Donnelly Training Area to reduce wildfire threat near Delta Junction

Beth Ipsen
Bureau of Land Management Alaska Fire Service

Starting as early as Saturday, the Bureau of Land Management Alaska Fire Service (BLM AFS), in cooperation with the U.S. Army Alaska, will implement prescribed fires in the Donnelly Training Area to reduce the likelihood of a large wildfire on military training lands this summer. The areas identified for the prescribed burning are east of the Delta River three to 15 miles south of Delta Junction and west of

the Delta River about 15 miles southwest of Delta Junction. The prescribed burning may continue through May 31, as weather conditions allow. Prescribed burns are fires that are intentionally set under controlled conditions to remove dry and dead grass and lower the risk of wildfires that could impact nearby communities. Removing the hazardous vegetation in the spring under more moderate conditions allows for the greatest degree of control and the lowest risk for negative impacts, such

as smoke. Taking these preventative measures now decreases the fire risk around military training targets used during the summer when conditions are hotter, the surrounding woods are dry and more receptive to burning, and firefighting resources may be limited. Fires will be ignited only when favorable weather conditions are present and forecasted. An approved burn plan is in place that includes authorization from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation Division of

Air Quality. Smoke may be visible during burning operations from Delta Junction, the Richardson Highway, the Alaska Highway, and from within the Donnelly Training Area. The BLM AFS and USARAK are working with ADEC and the National Weather Service to monitor smoke conditions and to ensure compliance with local, state, and federal air quality regulations. There are also procedures in place to halt ignitions if conditions become unfavorable. Trained personnel will monitor the prescribed

fire areas until the fires are out. In addressing this priority work, all agencies will limit COVID-19 and other health and safety risks to firefighters and the public using established Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, state and local guidelines, and prescribed fire procedures. This includes potential smoke effects on people. For more information contact Fire Information at (907) 356-5510 or the Upper Yukon-Tanana Dispatch Center at (907) 356-5554.

Growth in DOD telework capability may outlive Coronavirus pandemic

C. Todd Lopez
Defense.gov

To keep business on track during the fight against coronavirus, the Defense Department has greatly expanded its telework capability with a variety of tools. Once the coronavirus threat has receded, some of those enhancements for telework may continue on in some capacity, DOD's chief information officer said. "We are creating a much more robust enhanced teleworking capability, [and] we've obviously always had one. What we've now done is we've just put a multiplier effect into the quantity, the types of services, the collaboration tools, etc.," Dana Deasy told reporters today at a Pentagon news conference. "So there will be some permanency to

what we have here. ... There is going to be an enhanced teleworking capability that will be sustained at the end of COVID-19." The telework capability that might outlive the pandemic will be related to enhanced network capability, and will also include a larger base of teleworking equipment, Deasy said, but it's not just limited to technology. "We've also just developed some new tactics and techniques that allow us to ramp up quite quickly," he said, adding that the department had "significant help" from industry partners to support the large numbers of Defense Department employees who are working offsite due to social distancing and stay-at-home orders. Air Force Lt. Gen. B.J. Shwedo, the Joint Staff's director for

command, control, communications, and computers/cyber and chief information officer, said as many as 4 million DOD military and civilian workers are now teleworking. The Army, he said, has about 800,000 telework-enabled members on Defense Department networks, and the demand is increasing daily. The Navy, he said, had 100,000 remote workers on its networks before the coronavirus pandemic, and that has more than doubled to 250,000 workers. "Planned improvements in the next two to three weeks will bring the total to 500,000 remote users," Shwedo said. The Navy's use of Outlook Web Access, he said, was at about 10,000 users before the pandemic, and usage may climb to some 300,000 users by the

end of the month. The Marine Corps, he said, expects its OWA users to increase from about 70,000 to more than 105,000. The Air Force, he added, has increased virtual private network capability from 10,000 to more 100,000 today, with an expectation to go to 200,000 in coming weeks. "They're now using a tool that is going to bring this capability to over 400,000 users," Shwedo said. The many telework-enabling tools now available to Department employees are explained at <http://public.cyber.mil>, Deasy said. One of those, he said, is the "commercial virtual remote" environment that provides collaboration capabilities including video, voice and text. "CVR was created to support the department during the cur-

rent large-scale teleworking environment due to the COVID-19 national emergency," he said. "The tool is just one of several tools available to the workforce and provides remote workers with enhanced collaboration capabilities." The rollout for CVR began March 27, and it already has more than 900,000 activated user accounts, Deasy said. "At one point last week, we added over 250,000 accounts in a single day," he said. "This is the largest rollout ever implemented in this short amount of time." The recently stood-up COVID-19 Telework Readiness Task Force has spearheaded much of the effort to get employees online from home to keep doing their jobs, Deasy said. The task force, he said, focuses on

areas such as equipment needs, network capacity, operational readiness, information technology personnel, contracting readiness, supply chain, finance requirements and cybersecurity. "We meet daily for about two hours to review and address various technical issues and requests as they arise," he said. Deasy also said efforts during the coronavirus pandemic are not just related to getting employees online for telework. DOD also is helping on the front lines of the coronavirus fight as well. In New Orleans, he said, the department provided two field hospitals with a one-gigabyte internet connection, [internet protocol] phones, connectivity between locations and switches to connect it all together.

LEASE: Help available

Continued from page 2

"We owe it to them to ensure that COVID-19 does not jeopardize their economic livelihood," Dreiband said in a news release.

Lowered interest rate

Soldiers should also be aware of the six

percent interest-rate reduction on all pre-service financial obligations under the SCRA, Halsey said. This applies to automobile loans, credit card debt, student loans and other forms of credit. Soldiers called up to active duty to support COVID-19 efforts can also receive a reduced interest-rate benefit,

Halsey added. For mortgages, trust deeds, or other mortgage-related securities, the interest rate reduction to six percent extends for up to one year after their military service duration, officials said. For all other credit obligations, the interest rate reduction to six percent will remain in

place until the Soldier leaves military service. Individuals can apply for the interest-rate reduction at any point during their military careers, she added. When a valid interest rate reduction request is provided to a creditor, the credit must

forgive all amounts charged over six percent from the point the Soldier entered military service, which could include retroactively forgiving any amount charged over the lowered rate. "National Guard and Reserve members

called up to support COVID-19 efforts should contact their lenders and inquire about the interest-rate reduction," she added. "Legal Assistance attorneys are available to help Soldiers draft valid interest rate reductions."

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Attention Fort Wainwright Families with graduating seniors!

Fort Wainwright would like to honor our 2020 graduates in the post newspaper and on social media since they won't have a traditional graduation this year.

If you would like for your senior to be featured, please email Eve Baker at eve.a.baker.civ@mail.mil.



Sponsored by Fort Wainwright Public Affairs Office, School Liaison officer and North Haven

Public Health, the driving force behind pandemic preparation

Brandy Ostan-ik-Thornton
Medical Department Activity – Alaska Public Affairs

On a daily basis, staff at Fort Wainwright Public Health perform a variety of jobs to support the overall health of the Fort Wainwright community. Monitoring drinking water, hearing protection and tracking communicable diseases to determine the health of the force are just some of the services they provide every day.

In times of wide-spread disease such as COVID-19, Fort Wainwright Public Health comes to the forefront of installation preparation and planning.

“Our department is the driving force behind preparing for a pandemic, or any other community hazard,” said Lt. Col Kyndra Jackson, Fort Wainwright Public Health chief.

While the public health team is always in a planning and preparedness posture for an emergency response, deliberate and focused planning for a COVID-19 response started back in late December 2019.

“We began paying attention to COVID-19 surveillance, Centers for Disease and Prevention guidance being put out,” said Jackson. “We pulled out department and installation plans, validated our role in supporting the installation and our capabilities to make sure we have the needed personnel and resources to respond.”

Collaboration with civilian and other military agencies has been an important piece of a public health response to COVID-19. Regular contact with Fairbanks Public Health provides the opportunity to talk about joint resourcing, info sharing and response. A daily awareness of federal, state and local medical capabilities, staffing, open hospital beds, ventilators available and testing number are necessary to ensure a coordinated response.

According to Jackson, the collaborations is invaluable, but it can also be a challenge. Being a federal agency and working with civilian agencies for a synchronized COVID-19 response requires taking into consideration rules, regulations for both the military and civilian organization.

“As part of the community we have a responsibility to make sure we are able to support and assist each other within these boundaries,” said Jackson. We are truly all in this together and we cannot accomplish this mission in our own silos.”

Within Fort Wainwright Public Health, three sections took on the majority of the COVID-19 workload based on their expertise; public health nursing, industrial hygiene and environmental health.

Public Health Nursing

With a team of three nurses, public health nursing is



Maj. April Wilkins, Fort Wainwright Army Public Health Nursing chief, conducts a public health briefing to over 200 1st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, 25th Aviation Regiment, 25th Combat Aviation Brigade, Soldiers March 26, 2020. Public health nursing was on hand to conduct COVID-19 training brief and screening. (Beth Hughes, public health nurse)

responsible for the tracking and monitoring of all communicable diseases, carrying a large part of the COVID-19 response.

The first few weeks of the response were challenging due to the fluid nature of the situation and the large amount of information coming from many different sources.

“The team was working to put out the most accurate information in a timely manner,” said Jackson. “Many times, though, within an hour the information was outdated. It was frustrating for us and for the community to try and keep up with all the changes”

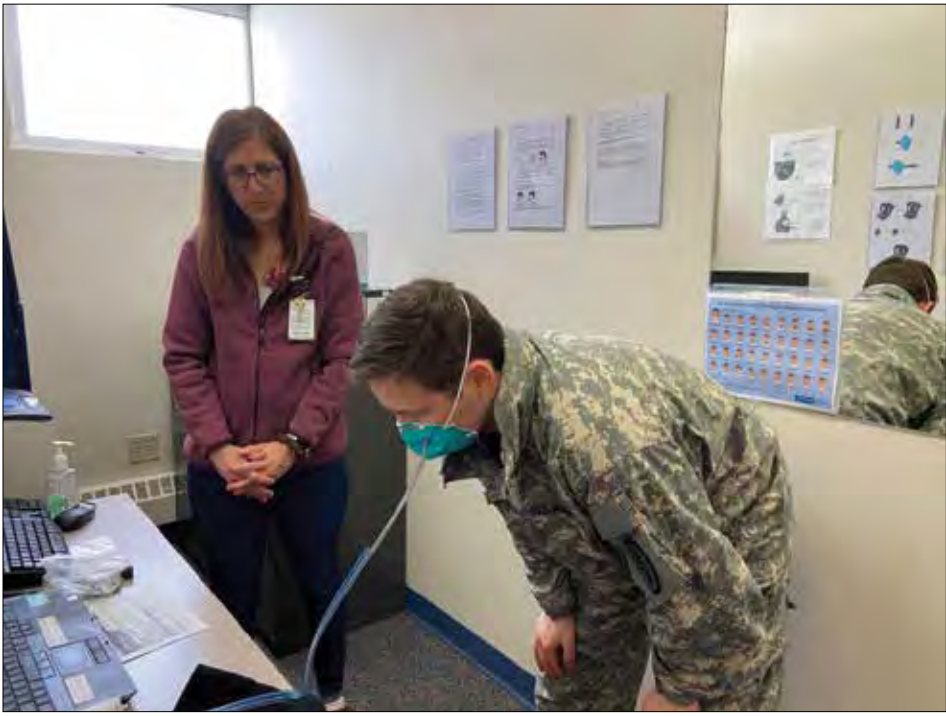
One of the first needs to be recognized was that of a call center to help direct beneficiaries as well as DOD Civilians and contractors to the right plan of care. March 17, 24 hours after recognizing the need, the team developed the process and took their first calls. According to Jackson, the majority of calls were to report recent travel, discussing symptoms or look for guidance. In the past six weeks the call center, which operates 24 hours a day, has taken just under 875 calls.

With travel restrictions put in place, the public health nursing team began overseeing those placed in quarantine. As of April 27, that number totaled 964. Upon entering quarantine, patients received education to help them reduce the risk of exposing family in the home and then called daily to discuss and record their symptoms. This lasted the duration of their 14-day quarantine.

Some patients were thankful for the calls while others felt they were an inconvenience, said Jackson.

“It was a mixed bag of reactions to the calls,” said Jackson. “Some hung up on us, others never answered, but others looked forward to the calls and were chatty.”

While Fort Wainwright has had no confirmed cases of COVID-19, Fort Greely did have a



Sheila Gwizdak, Medical Department Activity – Alaska industrial hygiene chief performs a personal protective equipment fit test in this undated photo with Maj. James Leale from Kamish Dental Clinic. Because PPE only works properly if it fits the person wearing it, industrial hygiene meets with each person individually to find the right respirator. (Robin Ramos, public health)

one. This set into action yet another responsibility for the team; contact tracing. Through telephone interviews, the patient who tested positive was asked to retrace their steps from two days before they noticed symptoms to the day they went into quarantine.

“It is an extremely hard, time-intensive process for the individual to recall where they were, who they were with and for how long,” said Jackson. “We do the best we can with the information provided and then we begin the notification process for anyone they had close contact with.”

Industrial Hygiene

Responsible for identifying potential mechanical hazards in facilities throughout Fort Wainwright, industrial hygiene provided expertise for the potential expansion in the event additional space was needed to care for COVID-19 patients.

As Bassett Army Community Hospital facilities team prepared to set up a COVID-19 screening tent and an expansion of rooms to the multi-service unit to take care of positive COVID-19 patients, industrial hygiene provided guidance. They ensured the plans included proper ventilation to convert some rooms to negative pressure and the construction of tem-

porary walls did not cause a detriment to other areas in terms of ventilation.

On a more individual level, industrial hygiene works to protect healthcare workers and Soldiers by performing fit testing for Personal protective equipment. The process starts with a medical evaluation from occupational health to ensure the individual is healthy enough to wear a respirator. Industrial hygiene then meets with each person individually to ensure the PPE fits correctly. Because PPE only works properly if it fits the person wearing it, industrial hygiene meets with each person individually to find the right respirator.

“Each fitting takes between 10 to 15 minutes,” said Jackson. “There are several different types of respirators and the team makes sure they are wearing the right one to provide a seal for maximum protection.”

Environmental Health

Throughout the year, the environmental health team works to help provide a safe environment where people work, live and plan on Fort Wainwright. While the task has not changed for the COVID-19 response, the purpose and recommendations to protect essential personnel while working have.

provides staff training on how to implement and enforce social distancing, proper cleaning procedures and putting mitigation strategies into place so patrons can still use facilities with the least amount of risk to themselves and the staff.

As Fort Wainwright begins reopening services, environmental health inspections provide guidance to managers and staff in order to open for patrons in a safe manner by operating in a social distancing environment.

The team looks at the space in each facility, and based on that space, determines what looks right.

“How to place chairs, organize waiting lines and the frequency of cleaning equipment and supplies are all looked at,” says Jackson. Additionally the space may not be conducive to waiting lines, so the team helps determine a way forward, such as requiring appointments to eliminate walk-ins and control the number of people in the space.

Ultimately, the team is helping to put mitigation strategies into place so patrons can use facilities with the least amount of risk to themselves and the staff providing services.

These three sections within Fort Wainwright Public Health may be on the forefront of the COVID-19 response, but Jackson is quick to recognize they did not operate alone.

“The flexibility of our entire staff at public health and across MEDDAC-AK has been essential to our success,” said Jackson. “We may be small, but we are a mighty team and we understand the importance of working together to support our mission.”