

Fort Wainwright MSTC debuts K-9 First Responder class

Eve A. Baker
U.S. Army Garrison Alaska, Fort Wainwright Public Affairs

The Medical Simulation Training Center at Fort Wainwright recently debuted a K-9 First Responder class designed to teach those who work with military working dogs how to provide them with emergency life-saving care.

“We came up with a great one-day course to familiarize medics and non-medics on canine anatomy and life-saving interventions,” said Jonathan Choto-Helming, MSTC site manager and course coordinator. “We put our students through didactic as well as hands-on training in this course, and they go through a final culminating exercise where they practice everything they are taught in a combat-simulating environment.”

The course was developed primarily by Sgt. Erika Hemminger, an MSTC instructor, from protocols set by the Committee on Tactical Combat Casualty Care and Deployed Medicine, a program used by the Defense Health Agency. Hemminger also used input from the first class of students to refine the course.

“When we did our first class, we invited the working dog handlers and the vet techs. Without their support and their knowledge, the class would not be as successful as it is right now,” Hemminger said.

Topics covered

in the class include “muzzling, moving to cover, massive hemorrhage, airway, circulation, hypothermia and then head to tail. We do a lot of hands-on intervention,” said Staff Sgt. Heath Cox, MSTC staff noncommissioned officer in charge.

The “hands-on intervention” is primarily practiced on Diesel, an ultra-lifelike canine medical training mannequin. Despite his eerily realistic appearance, Diesel is not a real dog.

According to a product flyer from Diesel’s manufacturer, TraumaFX, “K-9 Diesel is a state of the art skills trainer that includes active breathing, audio queues and over 28 different features and medical intervention sites. All training sites are designed to replicate the look, feel and function of actual medical procedures. Interchangeable limbs and injuries provide greater flexibility to vary wound patterns.”

Students were able to feel for Diesel’s “pulse,” which Hemminger and Cox controlled with a wireless remote. They were also able to practice intubation and tracheotomy, apply pressure dressings, and pack wounds that spurted artificial blood as realistically as a live animal, among other techniques.

For practical experience on an actual, live working dog, military police officer Sgt. Jonathan McCoy brought Dasty, a 3-year-old German shepherd to assist the students. Dasty



Sgt. Jonathan McCoy of the 549th Military Working Dog Detachment keeps hold of Dasty, a 3-year-old MWD, while Cpl. Jadyn Hurr from 5th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, feels for the dog’s pulse. Students in a K-9 First Responder class at Fort Wainwright’s Medical Simulation Training Center practiced noninvasive techniques on Dasty under the close supervision of McCoy, his handler. (Photo by Eve A. Baker, U.S. Army Garrison Alaska, Fort Wainwright Public Affairs)



Using a realistic-looking dog mannequin, Sgt. Erika Hemminger and Sgt. Thomas Bowen, both instructors at Fort Wainwright’s Medical Simulation Training Center, demonstrate how to stop the bleeding of a junctional wound on a dog as part of a canine first responder class. The mannequin is a lifelike training aid nicknamed Diesel and manufactured by TraumaFX that enables students to practice invasive medical procedures. (Photo by Eve A. Baker, U.S. Army Garrison Alaska, Fort Wainwright Public Affairs)

regularly works as a patrol drug detector dog, but for the class, he graciously allowed students to feel for his pulse and practice a restraining hold on him. McCoy also pointed out unique features

of canine anatomy for the students.

Hemminger stated the class will be offered roughly quarterly throughout the year, with the next sessions occurring in March. Once they have

finished refining the course content, they will look into sharing it with other installations and agencies.

Author’s note: Only external, non-invasive procedures were performed on Dasty, the

live military working dog. He wore a muzzle to prevent accidental biting of students, and his handler was with him at all times. Diesel was a medical training mannequin named for ease of reference.

Soldier balances dual Army, NBA careers

David Vergun
Defense.gov

Elgin Baylor played basketball from 1958 to 1971 as small forward for the Minneapolis Lakers and, when the team moved to Southern California in 1960, the Los Angeles Lakers.

From 1961 to 1962, Baylor served on active duty in the Army and was stationed at Fort Lewis, Washington.

Instead of using his weekend liberty to go home or party with friends, Baylor used this time to continue playing for the LA Lakers, driving or flying to each game.

However, Army duties came first, and Baylor only managed to play 48 games during the 1961-62 season, but he scored more than 1,800 points. He averaged 38 points, 19 rebounds and five assists in each of those

48 games.

In all, Baylor appeared in eight National Basketball Association finals and helped to carry his team as a gifted shooter, rebounder and passer.

He was named NBA Rookie of the Year in 1959, and he was an 11-time NBA All-Star and a 10-time member of the All-NBA first team.

He’s known as one of basketball’s greatest players, and in 1977, he was inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. Other inductees include: Julius Erving, Larry Bird, James Worthy, Scottie Pippen, Dominique Wilkins, Rick Barry, Cheryl Miller and Sheryl Swoopes.

Unfortunately, Baylor is widely regarded as the greatest NBA player never to win a championship.

Following his time with the Lakers, Baylor served

as coach for the New Orleans Jazz in 1974 and from 1976 to 1979.

He then served as vice president of basketball operations for the LA Clippers from 1986 until he retired in 2008.

In 2006, he won the NBA Executive of the Year award.

Baylor was also a minor Hollywood star, appearing on the TV series “Rowan & Martin’s Laugh-In” in 1968, the Jackson 5’s first TV special in 1971, an episode of “Buck Rogers in the 25th Century,” and “Olympiad” in 1980.

On April 6, 2018, a large, bronze statue of Baylor was unveiled at the Staples Center in Los Angeles. He attended the ceremony along with his fellow basketball greats Jerry West, Earvin “Magic” Johnson, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Shaquille O’Neal.



Los Angeles Lakers basketball players (from left): Elgin Baylor, Jerry Chambers and Jerry West in Utah for a pre-season National Basketball Association game in 1966. (Courtesy photo by Elgin Baylor)

WEEKEND WEATHER

Friday



Sunny, with a high near 8. Low near minus 11.

Saturday



Sunny, with a high near 6. Low around minus 10.

Sunday



Mostly sunny, with a high near 7. Low around minus 10.

IN BRIEF

ICE FISHING

Feb. 20, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Youth ages 7-18 years old can join Youth Sports and Fitness for Ice Fishing! Cost per child: \$55. Face masks, snow pants, jacket, snow boots, gloves, and hat are required for this event.

Youth Sports & Fitness, Bldg 1045 Basement
Call 353-7713, registration required

Nutrition Corner: Myth Busters

Should you avoid grains when you are 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 your balanced diet to help reduce your risk of heart disease and to help prevent constipation.

Aim to make half of your grains whole grains. Some examples of whole grains to include in your diet that are both, nutritious and delicious, are rolled oats, barley, popcorn, brown rice, millet, quinoa, farro and whole wheat bread and pastas.

Refined grains have had the bran or germ removed, which results in a finer texture and improved shelf life. Unfortunately, it also removes dietary fiber, iron, and B vitamins. Many times they are fortified back in to refined grain products but not always. As you increase or you replace your refined grains with whole grains,

be mindful of your portion sizes. Whole grains are naturally better for you, 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 farro and return to a boil. Reduce heat to medium, then cook the farro 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 3 minutes. Drain and immerse in ice water. Once asparagus is cold, drain and chop. Set aside.

Place farro, 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.

Weekly Tips: Mobile Devices

Your smartphone in your pocket, your tablet, or laptop holds valuable information about you, your friends and family. Think of all the contact numbers, photos, locations, emails and other personal information on them. The number of mobile phone users around the world is projected to exceed the five billion mark by 2019. Cybercriminals are adapting and changing their methods to profit from this growing number of potential victims. Your mobile devices need to be protected. Take some security measures to give you a piece of mind.

- Secure your devices. Use strong password or touch ID features to lock your devices. These security measures can help protect your information if your devices are lost or stolen.
- Think before you download an app. Information about you, such as the games you play, your contacts, how you shop and your location has value – just like money.
- Avoid connecting to unsecure Wi-Fi hotspots. Public wireless networks and hotspots are not secure, meaning anyone can potentially see what you are doing on your mobile device while you are connect to one of these networks. Consider using a virtual private network (VPN) or a personal/mobile hotspot if you need to use a connection while on the go. To find the right VPN for your needs visit www.pcmag.com (look under “Best Picks”) or www.cnet.com/best-vpn-services-directory.
- Keep your mobile devices and apps up-to-date. Your mobile devices are just as vulnerable as your laptop. Having the most up-to-date security software, web browser, operating system and apps is the best defense against viruses, malware and other online threats.
- Consider adding security software to your mobile devices.
- Avast Antivirus & Security this app offers an impressive

range of tools, including call blocking, an app locker to pin protect private apps and Wi-Fi scanning options for improved security and speed.

- Sophos Free Antivirus and Security offers many features and scores a 100 percent detection rate for malware in real-time. Some extras include loss and theft protection, with support for wipe, lock, alarm, locate and more via SMS. There’s also a web filtering, password protection for apps, spam blocking, privacy and security advice.

- McAfee Mobile Security offers anti-theft, contacts backup and secure storage for your media files. It automatically backs up contacts, wipes your contacts if your device is stolen and a batter indicator. This app works for both Android and iPhones

- AVL is designed for malware protection. It scored a 99.8 percent detection rate in real-time.

- Alvira Mobile Security allows you to scan apps for potential trouble, and it scans new apps or updates automatically. It includes anti-theft tools to help you find your device remotely, lock it, wipe it, or trigger an alarm. There’s also an identity safeguard tool that can tell you whether your email account or the email address of your friends have been compromised. Works on both Android and iPhones

- Protecting stored data. Carefully consider what information you store on your mobile device. Precautionary steps you can take include:
 - Encrypting the data stored on the device.
 - Enable “remote wipe” to your device.
 - Select a strong password to restrict access to the keypad.
 - Change the password often.
 - Maintain security on your device.
 - Set automatic locks on mobile devices.

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
MEDDAC-AK Website: www.bassett-wainwright.tricare.mil
MHS Patient Portal: <https://myaccess.dmdc.osd.mil/HealthNet>:
Health Net: www.tricare-west.com, 1-844-8676-9378

COVID vaccination

Medical Department Activity-Alaska is following guidance from the Defense Health Agency for administering the COVID-19 vaccine. As of today, we continue to vaccinate healthcare personnel and first responders. As we open to different populations we will post information to our FB page, website and here in the MEDDAC Minute.

TRICARE covers COVID vaccine

TRICARE will cover the cost of

beneficiaries no matter where it is received. While there may be a cost based on your plan for an office visit, the vaccine itself is free. To learn more, www.tricare.mil/COVIDVaccine.

Pharmacy hours

Please note the pharmacy is now open from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday.

Patient Family Partnership Council

Are you interested in having input into the operations at MEDDAC-AK? We are looking for Soldiers, Family members and retirees who are interested in having a voice by sitting on the Patient Family Partnership Council. Applicants can call the patient advocate at 361-5291.

Patient Advocate

The MEDDAC-AK Patient Advocate acts on behalf of all patients and the commander to resolve problems and implement necessary corrections. Beneficiaries needing assistance, or who have questions about the care received at MEDDAC-AK, can contact our Patient Advocate at 361-5291.

Worship Services on Fort Wainwright

Good Shepherd Catholic Community

Mass: Sundays, 9 a.m., SLC

Holy Hour Adoration: Thursdays, 6 p.m., SLC

Catholic Women of the Chapel: Wednesdays, 9 a.m., SLC

St. George Anglican Parish

Holy Communion: Sundays, 11 a.m., SLC

Mid-Week Holy Communion: Wednesdays, noon, BACH

Cornerstone Protestant Community

Worship Service: Sundays, 11 a.m., NLC

Protestant Women of the Chapel, Wednesdays, 6 p.m., NLC

Cornerstone Youth, Sundays, 1 p.m., NLC

Congregación Protestante Piedra Angular

Servicio de adoración: Domingos, 1 p.m., SLC

Northern Lights Chapel Nov. 22, 2020

Fort Wainwright Religious Support Office, 353-6112

1051 Gaffney, Unit 10

Southern Lights Chapel (SLC), 8th St & Neely Rd.

Northern Lights Chapel (NLC), Luzon & Rhineland Avenues



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
INSTALLATION MANAGEMENT COMMAND
HEADQUARTERS, U.S. ARMY GARRISON ALASKA
1046 MARKS ROAD #6000
FORT WAINWRIGHT, ALASKA 99703-6000

IMFW-SO

FEB 0 8 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: President's Day Safety Message

1. Our nation observes President's Day every year on the third Monday of February. This year President's Day falls on Monday, 15 February 2021. President's Day is a day to pause and reflect on the history of this nation and honor past and present presidents. Specifically, we honor and celebrate George Washington and Abraham Lincoln who have birthdays during the month of February.

2. Each and every one of us will celebrate the day differently. Some may choose to go out into the back country for cross-country skiing or snow machining, while others may rest and enjoy a day inside. While these are drastically different activities they each involve risk that must be mitigated to avoid accidents and injuries.

3. Accident prevention doesn't happen by accident. It is an individual's attitude and behavior that prevent accidents. Take a moment to evaluate the level of risk you are willing to accept. If you are accepting unnecessary risk that puts yourself or others in danger, stop, take a deep breath and reset. We must all take responsibility for the safety of ourselves, Family members and friends.

4. Weather and road conditions change rapidly in the interior of Alaska. Plan ahead and watch the local weather reports. Dress appropriately for the cold weather and ensure that you have an emergency kit available if needed.

5. I wish you all and your Families a very safe and enjoyable President's Day holiday weekend.

CHRISTOPHER J. RUGA
COL, AG
Commanding

DISTRIBUTION:
A (All)

ALASKA POST

The Interior Military News Connection

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The Chaplain’s Corner: Going the extra mile

Chaplain (Maj.) Robert Hearon
1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division Chaplain

In the book “Ten Thousand Miles with a Dog Sled,” we find a first-hand account of Hudson Stuck’s missionary journeys through the Alaskan wilderness. Beginning in 1904, Hudson Stuck, the Archdeacon of the Yukon, travelled for months at a time visiting mission works between Fairbanks, Nena-na, Chena Eagle, Circle, Fort Yukon, Coldfoot and Nome.

While surviving the dangers of -50° temperatures, crossing frozen ice and camping in the wild, Stuck thrived in adversity and brought hope to Alaska Natives who suffered from various forms of disease and social injustice. He was



Chaplain (Maj.) Robert Hearon also influential in establishing a church, hospital and library in Fairbanks.

In Matthew 5:41 Jesus said, “Whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.” On the surface, this may appear to be a kind

suggestion, instead it is a difficult challenge. Although we may never hear someone actually ask us to go a mile with them (except during PT), there are many occasions in which the people all around us are crying out with inaudible yet very real voices saying, “Go a mile with me.”

These are people who are lonely, oppressed and hopeless. They often work in the same office or section with us, live on the same street, live next door or maybe even live under our roof. They are looking for someone who cares enough to help and have compassion — to go the mile. How often do we turn a blind-eye and refuse to get involved due to our busy lives and so-called “priorities” or because we feel that we are not able to provide the assistance needed? On occasion, perhaps we take

courage and go the first mile; but how often do we go the second mile? The first mile is concern; the second mile is commitment. The first mile involves recognizing a need; the second mile invests in the cause.

On 7 June 1913, Stuck and his team composed of Harry Karstens, Walter Harper and Robert Tatum became the first expedition to successfully reach the summit of Mount McKinley. He leveraged this accomplishment as an opportunity to raise awareness for Alaska Natives who had been disrespected by Gold Rushers.

In addition, he testified before Congress against salmon canning operations, which disrupted the livelihood of those living along the Yukon River, and later pleaded for Mount McKinley to be renamed to Denali in honor of the Alaska

Natives.

His devotion earned him the nickname “Big Preacher,” and nearly a century after his death, Salley Jewell, the Secretary of the Interior, restored the traditional name of Denali used by the Athabascan Natives. This name restoration is symbolic of the restoration and healing that can occur as a result of our willingness to take risks for the sake of others.

We may never see the results of our efforts, but we can rest assured that others will reap the benefits of our faithfulness and service. Pray for God to open your eyes for an opportunity to walk the extra mile today. What are some practical ways in which we can go the extra mile for others? Who has God called you to reach? Where can you make a difference? Take one step today.

Army to widen scope of legal counsel program for victims of sexual assault

Joseph Lacdan
Army News Service

The Army looks to expand its Special Victims’ Counsel program this fiscal year, as the need for legal counsel and victim representation increased at some installations.

SVCs are uniformed lawyers who serve under the Army’s Office of The Judge Advocate General who provide victims of an alleged sex-related offense with counsel throughout the legal process. SVCs advocate for victims’ rights following a sexual assault where a Soldier is the alleged perpetrator, providing clients access to legal representation that victims of non-military sexual assaults typically do not have.

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 extended the SVC program’s pool of potential clients. In accordance with the act, since Dec. 1, military services must provide legal counsel to help victims of domestic violence offenses.

The SVC program now provides legal representation to certain eligible victims of domestic abuse. The service is adding 30 full-time Special Victims’ Counsel lawyers this fiscal year to bring its total to 74 full-time SVCs. The Army will further increase SVC authorizations by an additional 17 in fiscal 2022.

As the national spotlight falls on Soldier deaths and alleged sexual assaults at Fort Hood, Texas, Col. Lance Hamilton, chief of the SVC program, reminds victims they can access the legal counsel services.

The SVC program has steadily grown since its 2013 inception, serving more than 12,000 victims while providing legal services that include advising victims on their right to protections from the accused, the right to be heard in court and the right not to be excluded from some proceed-



The Army plans to expand its Special Victims’ Counsel program this fiscal year. SVCs provide legal counsel to victims of alleged sex-related offenses. (Photo by Airman 1st Class Aspen Reid)

ings.

Prosecutors seek justice in criminal cases and their interests often align with the victims. However, in rare cases, their goals more closely converge with those of government or society than the victim. The SVCs focus solely on the victims’ interests, Hamilton said.

Providing a way forward

In the weeks following a sexual assault, a victim may find the legal proceedings difficult to follow and SVCs often act as a steady guide.

“It’s almost like a foreign language,” said Lt. Col. Elliott Johnson, SVC deputy program manager. “For you to be sitting in a courtroom and you hear a judge, defense attorney, a prosecutor speaking this legal language that is unfamiliar to you, and you kind of want to know what they’re talking about or thinking about your case.”

Upon reporting a sexual assault, Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention program, or SHARP, representatives inform victims of their rights to use SVC services. If a victim chooses to use them,

SVCs then explain the military justice processes to victims. They also make victims aware of victims’ right to confer with the prosecuting attorney with the SVC present.

Active-duty Soldiers, Army Reserve and National Guard members in an active-duty or active-duty for training status can request SVC services.

Dependents and Army civilians can also access them. The SVC program covers all Army installations, however, not every installation has a full-time, assigned SVC and some must facilitate services to victims remotely or an SVC will travel to smaller, remote installations.

SVCs also coordinate with SHARP to provide the full scope

of assistance to victims in coordination with sexual assault response coordinators and victim advocates.

“I think the SVC program is of tremendous value,” Hamilton said. “And it is extremely important to have an SVC, because it gives victims an opportunity to speak with legal specialists who are there on behalf of them.”

Hamilton said new Soldiers get briefed on the SVC program upon in-processing to their new duty station. However, many Soldiers don’t realize the importance of the services until they suffer a sexual assault themselves.

“You hear about it, but you don’t really comprehend it until sadly you become a victim,” he said. “And

at that point, the emotional trauma that goes with it may overwhelm an individual.”

Other services SVCs provide include consultation on the criminal liability of the accused, consultation and assistance

with obtaining any protections offered by civilian and military orders, and eligibility and requirements for available benefits.

To become an SVC in the Army, Soldiers must be a licensed lawyer serving as a judge advocate and certified by The Judge Advocate General of the Army. They must attend a 10-day training course where they learn to advise and counsel people who have experienced military sexual trauma or domestic violence as well as courses on victims’ legal rights.

Then they take additional courses on the military legal process including military rules of evidence. Finally, they practice how to interview a victim and take part in role-playing exercises.

Due to pandemic restrictions, students currently take the SVC training course remotely, however, Hamilton said he hopes the course will return to a classroom setting in 2021.

HISTORY SNAPSHOT

Olivia de Havilland at Yakutat, c. 1944

The United Service Organizations or USO was created in 1941 at the behest of President Roosevelt in order to lift the morale of the nation’s troops and to provide them with the spirit of home. Six entities – the Salvation Army, Young Men’s Christian Association, Young Women’s Christian Association, National Catholic Community Services, National Travelers Aid Association, and the National Jewish

Welfare Board made up the USO. During World War II, approximately 3,000 USO clubs existed around the world. Many of these clubs were new construction, but there were also USO clubs run out of barns, museums, homes, railroad sleeping cars, and churches. Clubs provided a space for troops to smoke, play games, dance, relax, and, at some locations, take

advantage of a free button-sewing service. Clubs were often overseen by a senior hostess, usually a well-respected woman from the local community, who would coordinate dances and other large-scale activities for the troops. Today the USO is probably most well-known for their high-profile, live celebrity shows. Then, as today, top performers would donate their time and talents to



Photo courtesy of Levi Ballard

entertain the troops worldwide. During World War II some of the most famous performers included Bing Crosby, Abbot and Costello, Marlene Dietrich, Cary Grant, Judy Garland, Frank Sinatra, Barbara Stanwyck, Bette Davis, Jack Benny, Fred Astaire, Milton Berle,

Mae West, Ed Sullivan, Glenn Miller, Irving Berlin, Spencer Tracy, Gene Kelly, Danny Kaye, Bob Hope, and Olivia De Havilland, to name just a few of the hundreds of entertainers who participated in the USO. Pictured here is Olivia De Havilland disembarking from a

Douglas C-47 Skytrain in Yakutat, Alaska probably sometime in 1944. De Havilland made several trips to Alaska as part of the USO. Other tours in which she performed included those at Dutch Harbor, Anchorage, Kodiak, and Amchitka Island.



Amended Notice of Availability for a Draft Environmental Impact Statement Addressing Heat and Electrical Upgrades at Fort Wainwright, Alaska

Comment Period is December 23, 2020 through February 22, 2021

The Department of the Army is issuing this Amended Notice of Availability of the continuing availability of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as part of the environmental planning process to address heat and electrical upgrades at Fort Wainwright, Alaska. The Draft EIS evaluates reasonable alternatives, potential environmental impacts, and key issues of concern. An electronic copy of the Draft EIS is available online at <https://home.army.mil/alaska/index.php/fort-wainwright/NEPA/HEU-EIS>. Copies of the Draft EIS will be available for review at the Noel Wien Library, Fairbanks, AK; Post Library, Fort Wainwright, AK; and Tri-Valley Community Library, Healy, AK if these facilities are open; and upon request. The comment period originally scheduled to end on December 8, 2020 is being reopened for an additional 60 days ending on February 22, 2021. Comments received during the 60-day comment period on the Draft EIS will be fully considered prior to the identification of the Army’s preferred alternative. This preference will be identified when the Final EIS is published.

There are several ways to provide comments during the comment period.

Email: usarmy.wainwright.id-pacific.mbx.heu-eis@mail.mil

Online Open House: <https://home.army.mil/alaska/index.php/fort-wainwright/NEPA/HEU-EIS>

Mail: Ms. Laura Sample, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Program Manager Attn: IMFW-PWE (Sample) 1046 Marks Road #4500 Fort Wainwright, AK 99703-4500

If you have questions or require additional information, please contact Grant Sattler, Public Affairs Office IMPC–FWA–PAO (Sattler), 1060 Gaffney Road #5900, Fort Wainwright, AK 99703–5900; telephone: (907) 353–6701; email: alan.g.sattler.civ@mail.mil.

The U.S. Army complies with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Individuals with disabilities who may need auxiliary aids, services, and/or special accommodations should contact Grant Sattler or TDD number 711. Requests should be made at least 5 days before the accommodation is needed to make any necessary arrangements.

Army and Air Force Exchange Service celebrates first year of patronage expansion to disabled veterans

Julie Mitchell

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service is celebrating the first anniversary of welcoming home 4.1 million service-connected disabled Veterans to their lifelong, in-store shopping benefit.

The new privilege, which launched Jan. 1, 2020, was specified in the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018, included in the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019.

“Welcoming home service-connected disabled Veterans with a lifelong Exchange benefit has been a bright spot during 2020,” said Exchange Director/CEO Tom Shull, a Vietnam-era Army Veteran. “Our Nation’s heroes fought for us and deserve this benefit—and the Exchange is privileged to take care of disabled Veterans through the in-person shopping benefit.”

In-person shopping at military exchanges, commissaries and



The Army and Air Force Exchange Service will welcome home disabled Veterans, Purple Heart recipients and certain caregivers—4.1 million Americans—with in-store shopping privileges began Jan. 1, 2020. (Courtesy photo)

morale, welfare and recreation retail facilities on U.S. military installations was expanded to:

- All Veterans with service-connected disabilities

abilities

- Purple Heart recipients
- Former prisoners of war
- Primary family caregivers for Veterans who are enrolled in

the Department of Veterans Affairs Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers

Before the expansion, only Veterans with 100 percent

service-connected disabilities could shop in person. (Active-duty service members, their dependents and military retirees also have in-store and online privileges.)

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Exchange—which many know as the PX or BX— is providing a safe, sanitized and secure shopping experience. Protecting the force and the military community is Army and Air Force Exchange Service’s top priority. Contactless shopping options, including curbside pickup and ordering at ShopMyExchange.com, are available to Veterans with service-connected disabilities. Buy online, pickup in store service and restaurant carryout are available as well.

In Exchange stores, acrylic shields have been installed at checkout, floor decals and signing remind shoppers about maintaining physical distance, hand sanitizer stations are readily available. Associates and shoppers adhere

to Department of Defense guidance on the wearing of cloth face coverings.

By shopping the Exchange, Veterans also help those who wear the uniform today. 100 percent of Exchange earnings are reinvested in the military community, including through dividends to Quality-of-Life programs such as Child, Youth and School Services; Armed Forces Recreation Centers; and more.

“Shopping with the Exchange gives service-connected disabled Veterans a chance to re-engage with their military community, allowing them to remain Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors, Marines and Coast Guard members for life,” Shull said. “The Exchange provides value to the Veteran community and offers a tangible way to thank them for their service.”

Veterans who need additional information about the in-store patronage expansion can visit the Veterans section on the Exchange’s Community Hub.

FEELIN' *Stressed?*

DISCUSS HEALTHY STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES WITH A HEALTH EDUCATOR AT YOUR LOCAL ARMY WELLNESS CENTER

Fort Wainwright
AWC
ARMY WELLNESS CENTER

907.361.2234

THE GREEN TO GOLD ACTIVE DUTY OPTION PROGRAM IS A TWO-YEAR PROGRAM THAT PROVIDES ELIGIBLE, ACTIVE DUTY ENLISTED SOLDIERS AN OPPORTUNITY TO COMPLETE A BACCALAUREATE DEGREE OR A TWO-YEAR GRADUATE DEGREE AND EARN A COMMISSION AS AN ARMY OFFICER.

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE!

INTERESTED? SEE YOUR S1

APPLICATIONS DEADLINE IS 18 FEB 2021

- OPEN TO ALL ENLISTED SOLDIERS WITH 2+ YEARS OF SERVICE
- CONTINUE TO RECEIVE THEIR CURRENT PAY AND ALLOWANCES WHILE IN THE PROGRAM (UP TO A MAXIMUM OF 24 CONSECUTIVE MONTHS)
- IF QUALIFIED, MONTGOMERY G.I. BILL / ARMY COLLEGE FUND (MGIB/ACF)
 - POST 9/11 GI BILL
 - NORMAL PCS ENTITLEMENTS
 - LEADERSHIP TRAINING
- RESPONSIBILITY AND PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE
- MENTORSHIP OF THE PMS/APMS
- CAMARADERIE

GREEN TO GOLD

Ash Wednesday Services

You are Invited to Observe the Opening of the Lenten Journey with the imposition of ashes

17 February 2021 -- Fort Wainwright, AK

0900-0930 – Southern Lights Chapel (SLC)

1200-1230 – Northern Lights Chapel (NLC)

1730-1800 – Northern Lights Chapel (NLC)

NLC

Northern Lights Chapel

Luzon and Rhineland

SLC

Southern Lights Chapel

8th Street and Neely

For more Info: Contact the Religious Support Office:
907-361-4261, 907-353-6112, 907-353-9880

Find us on Facebook: FWARSO (Fort Wainwright Religious Support Office)

*participants required to wear face covering & observe physical distancing

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Fort Wainwright Family & MWR

Weekly Events

February 13 - 20

13 **UFC - 258**
February 13
Doors open at 3 p.m.
Watch the UFC Main Event at the Warrior Zone! COVID parameters in place. Must be 18+ to enter. Must be 21+ to purchase & consume alcohol.

Warrior Zone, Bldg 3205
Call 353-1087, reservations strongly encouraged

13 **Valentine Date Night**
February 13 - 14
6 p.m. & 4:30 p.m.
Spend Valentine's weekend at the Warrior Zone for a special 3-course dinner! Must be 18+ to enter. Must be 21+ to purchase & consume alcohol.

Warrior Zone, Bldg 3205
Call 353-1087, reservations strongly encouraged

16 **Trek N Tube & Archery Tube Camp**
February 16 - 17
4:30 - 6:30 p.m.
Youth ages 7-18 years old can join Youth Sports and Fitness for fun at Birch Hill for tubing fun and adventure! Cost per child: \$50. Face masks, snow pants, jacket, snow boots, gloves, and hat are required.

Youth Sports & Fitness, Bldg 1045 Basement
Call 353-7713, registration required

18 **3 v 3 Basketball Camp**
February 18 - 19
6 - 7 p.m.
Youth Sports and Fitness is hosting a Basketball Camp! Youth ages 7-18 years old can join in on the fun at Youth Center. Cost per child: \$30. Face masks are required.

Youth Sports & Fitness, Bldg 1045 Basement
Call 353-7713, registration required

20 **Ice Fishing**
February 20
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Youth ages 7-18 years old can join Youth Sports and Fitness for Ice Fishing! Cost per child: \$55. Face masks, snow pants, jacket, snow boots, gloves, and hat are required for this event.

Youth Sports & Fitness, Bldg 1045 Basement
Call 353-7713, registration required

NUGGET LANES BOWLING CENTER
PRESENTS

Valentine's Day SPECIAL

FEBRUARY 14TH
11 A.M. - 6 P.M.

\$30 per couple
**2X GAMES, 2X SHOE RENTAL, 2X SODA
AND A HEART-SHAPED PIZZA**

RESERVATIONS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

VIRTUAL HIRING FAIR



WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 12 - 4 P.M.

Join the Family and MWR Team by joining our Virtual Hiring Fair!
For more information, go to wainwright.armymwr.com.
@WainwrightMWR #WainwrightMWR



ARMA
US ARMY MAINTENANCE APPLICATION

IS SOMETHING BROKEN?


Do you need DPW/maintenance help in your barracks?

Scan the code below with your smartphone camera
to open the Army Maintenance Application (ArMA) and submit a case.




ARMYMAINTENANCE.COM

BLACK HISTORY MONTH



**HONORING THE PAST,
SECURING THE FUTURE!**



SECURITY'S HARBOR IS HERE

Army research leads to more effective training model for robots

U.S. Army DEVCOM
Army Research
Laboratory Public
Affairs

Multi-domain operations, the Army’s future operating concept, requires autonomous agents with learning components to operate alongside the warfighter.

New Army research reduces the unpredictability of current training reinforcement learning policies so that they are more practically applicable to physical systems, especially ground robots.

These learning components will permit autonomous agents to reason and adapt to changing battlefield conditions, said Army researcher Dr. Alec Koppel from the U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command, now known as DEVCOM, Army Research Laboratory.

The underlying adaptation and re-planning mechanism consists of reinforcement learning-based policies.

Making these policies efficiently obtainable is critical to making the MDO operating concept a reality, he said.

According to Koppel, policy gradient methods in reinforcement learning are the foundation for scalable algorithms for continuous spaces, but existing techniques cannot incorporate broader decision-making goals such as risk sensitivity, safety constraints, exploration and divergence to a prior.

Designing autonomous behaviors when the relationship between dynamics and goals are complex may be addressed with reinforcement learning, which has gained attention recently for solving previously intractable tasks such as strategy games like go, chess and videogames such as Atari and Starcraft II, Koppel said.

Prevailing practice, unfortunately, demands astronomical sample complexity,



New Army research reduces the unpredictability of current training reinforcement learning policies so that they are more practically applicable to physical systems, especially ground robots. These learning components will permit autonomous agents to reason and adapt to changing battlefield conditions. (Photo illustration by U.S. Army)

such as thousands of years of simulated gameplay, he said. This sample complexity renders many common training mechanisms inapplicable to data-starved settings required by MDO context for the Next-Generation Combat Vehicle, or NGCV.

“To facilitate reinforcement learning for MDO and NGCV, training mechanisms must improve sample efficiency and reliability in continuous spaces,” Koppel said. “Through the generalization of existing policy search schemes to general utilities, we take a step towards breaking existing sample efficiency barriers of prevailing practice in reinforcement learning.”

Koppel and his research team developed new policy search schemes for general utilities, whose sample complexity is also established. They observed that the resulting policy search schemes reduce the volatility of reward accumulation, yield efficient exploration of an unknown domains and a mechanism for incorporating prior experience.

“This research contributes an augmentation of the classical Policy Gradient Theorem in reinforcement learning,” Koppel said. “It presents new policy search schemes for general utilities, whose sample complexity is also established. These innovations are impactful to the U.S. Army through their enabling of reinforcement learning objectives beyond the standard cumulative return, such as risk sensitivity, safety constraints, exploration and divergence to a prior.”

Notably, in the context of ground robots, he said, data is costly to acquire.

“Reducing the volatility of reward accumulation, ensuring one explores an unknown domain in an efficient manner, or incorporating prior experience, all contribute towards breaking existing sample efficiency barriers of prevailing practice in reinforcement learning by alleviating the amount of random sampling one requires in order to complete policy optimization,” Koppel said.

The future of

this research is very bright, and Koppel has dedicated his efforts towards making his findings applicable for innovative technology for Soldiers on the battlefield.

“I am optimistic that reinforcement-learning equipped autonomous robots will be able to assist the warfighter in exploration, reconnaissance and risk assessment on the future battlefield,” Koppel said. “That this vision is made a reality is essential

to what motivates, which research problems I dedicate my efforts.”

The next step for this research is to incorporate the broader decision-making goals enabled by general utilities in reinforcement learning into multi-agent settings and investigate how interactive settings between reinforcement learning agents give rise to synergistic and antagonistic reasoning among teams.

According to Koppel, the technology

that results from this research will be capable of reasoning under uncertainty in team scenarios.

This research, conducted in collaboration with Princeton University, University of Alberta and Google Deepmind, was a spotlight talk at NeurIPS 2020, one of the premiere conferences that fosters the exchange of neural information processing systems research in biological, technological, mathematical and theoretical aspects.

ASAP Advice: Drinking Alcohol in the Cold

Drinking alcohol opens up your blood vessels and increases your blood flow. That increase in blood flow is what makes you feel warm when drinking. The same blood that is rushing towards your skin, is fleeing from your body’s core. This can increase the risk of cold injuries, hypothermia and death, but there are some tips that can help you avoid these outcomes and stay safe.

5 COLD WEATHER SAFETY TIPS

- Wear warm clothing
- Eat high-carb foods before drinking
- Drink room-temperature drinks
- Drink a lot of water
- Keep a sober friend nearby

Source: <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/having-a-cold-one-out-in-the-cold-5-safety-tips/>

