



# ARMY RESILIENCE COMMUNITYLINK

THE ARMY RESILIENCE DIRECTORATE NEWSLETTER | FEBRUARY 2022



R2 Performance Centers train Soldiers in skills that help build mental toughness, strong relationships, and character. These skills not only promote problem solving and effective communication techniques but can also improve mental agility and boost confidence.

## R2 Skills Help Focus the Mind to Optimize Physical Achievement

By Tara Davis, Army Resilience Directorate

Do you spend the same amount of time training for your job mentally as you do physically? If your answer to this question is no, you may not be performing at your best.

Although you may be aware of how your physical health can impact your mental health, your ability to focus your mind can also have the same impact on your physical capabilities.

"People really see the benefit for physical activity and physical preparation, however, I think the mental side is always lacking," said Master Resilience Trainer-Performance Expert Michael Sherman, from the R2 Performance Center at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas. R2 Performance Centers offer Soldiers, Family members and DA Civilians skills training to leverage the connection between the mind and body and improve their performance.

To many Soldiers, performance enhancement may correlate with achieving milestones such as qualifying at the range, earning

the Expert Infantryman Badge, or passing the Army Combat Fitness Test. Individuals hoping to improve upon areas of their physical performance may invest time in obstacle courses, running timed miles, or pumping iron at the gym, but overlook mental agility training or stress regulation. Performance training can be utilized as personal training for the mind, which in turn, impacts the performance of the body.

Mental agility allows Soldiers to make their thoughts and emotions work for them, not against them, during a tactical, physical, or job-related stressful event. The performance enhancement skills taught by R2 performance experts can focus your attention, build your confidence, manage your energy levels, set goals, and train your mind for a physical event even if recovering from an injury. R2 trainings that can specifically enhance mental agility at the unit level include Quality Assurance/Quality Control Resilience Training and individual mental agility skills such as avoiding thinking traps and problem

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## DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Team,

Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month will begin in April, but prevention is a year-round and ongoing commitment for the Total Army Force and the dedicated professionals at the Army Resilience Directorate and the Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention program.

Significant measures to improve the effectiveness of the SHARP program have recently been implemented based on the recommendations of the 90-Day Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military. Some "Priority Actions" already implemented include making changes to the expedited transfer policy to maximize the safety and well-being of sexual assault victims. It prioritizes their preference when making a request to be moved from their current unit or installation. This change is outlined in the publication of [All Army Activities 013-2021](#).

Another Priority Action implemented is making SHARP advocacy and support services available to all eligible sexual harassment victims. Additionally, the President signed an executive order making [sexual harassment a crime under Article 134](#) of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, effective as of January.

For more on the recent IRC changes, including additional Priority Actions to be implemented in FY2022, see the adjacent article or visit: <https://www.defense.gov/Spotlights/Independent-Review-Commission-on-Sexual-Assault-in-the-Military/>.

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## Significant Changes Ahead for the Army Based on the SECDEF's 90-Day IRC

By LeWonnie Belcher, Army Resilience Directorate

The Army is in the process of making the most significant changes to how the Service prevents and responds to sexual harassment, sexual assault, retaliation, and other harmful behaviors due to the recommendations of an independent commission established to examine current Department of Defense programs and policies.

The The DOD 90-day Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military, or IRC was established by Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III on Feb. 26, 2021. The IRC announcement occurred shortly after the Army's release of the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee's report, which called for the need for broader reviews of how the Army handles sexual harassment and sexual assault.

Led by Lynn Rosenthal, a renowned expert on sexual violence prevention and the first-ever White House Advisor on Violence Against Women, the IRC focused on four lines of effort: accountability, prevention, climate and culture, and victim support and care.

Jill Londagin, Director of the Army Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention program, and Dr. James A. Helis, Director of the Army Resilience Directorate, which oversees the SHARP program, were among several members of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1 and ARD who directly supported the IRC subcommittees along with subject matter experts from other Military Departments and the civilian sector.

Austin approved the DOD strategy implementation roadmap on Sep 22, 2021. "The implementation plan consists of tasks assigned to the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Military Departments through a tiered-approach across four tiers," said Londagin. "It includes iterative evaluations throughout the process in order to assess the effectiveness and progress of early actions to ensure intended outcomes."

Tier 1 guidance was released on Oct. 13, 2021; Tier 2 guidance on Nov. 12, 2021; and Tier 3 and 4 guidance on Dec. 15, 2021. Along with the tasks associated with each Tier release, the Military Departments were required to develop implementation plans and resource mapping by tiers.

While the IRC itself was convened for just 90 days, their recommendations, 82 in all, will result in changes that vary from immediate actions to requirements that will take several years to implement, according to Londagin, who is dual-hatted, also serving as the Army's IRC lead.

Those changes include, among other things, working with Congress to amend the Uniform Code of Military Justice to remove prosecution of sexual assault and related crimes from the military chain of command.

"We're currently immersed in Tier 1 actions," said Londagin. "These actions build upon existing foundations, infrastructure,

establishing a dedicated prevention workforce, training and leader development."

Of the Tier 1 actions, Secretary Austin assigned some of these as "Priority Actions" for execution in Fiscal Year 2022. These priority actions include:

- 1) Establish independently trained investigators for sexual harassment and mandatory initiation of involuntary separation for all substantiated complaints;
- 2) Eliminate collateral duty for Sexual Assault Response Coordinators, or SARCs, and Victim Advocates, or VAs, with exceptions for isolated installations;
- 3) Review and update all policies that unnecessarily restrict data collection on important populations of Soldiers; and
- 4) Implement the "No Wrong Door" approach to sexual harassment, sexual assault, and domestic abuse; and
- 5) Increase victim agency and control of their response process by maximizing adherence to survivor preferences in expedited transfers; and
- 6) Make sexual harassment victims eligible for sexual assault prevention and response, or SAPR, services.

"The Army has already completed four Priority Actions assigned to the Military Departments," said Londagin. "All Army Activities 013-2021, Expedited Transfer Policy, addresses the requirement for increasing victim agency and control of the response process. Additionally, the Army is the only Military Department that's already structured to provide SHARP/SAPR support to sexual harassment victims," said Londagin.

Other significant tasks assigned to the Military Services as part of Tier 1 requirements include:

- Determine the optimum full-time prevention workforce, and equip all echelons of all components;
- Increase access to and visibility of civilian community-based care; and
- Conduct a comprehensive approach to professionalizing, strengthening, and resourcing the SHARP workforce at all echelons.

Londagin noted that many of the IRC recommendations across all four tiers build upon actions that are currently underway in the Army, such as This is My Squad, the Brigade and Battalion Commander's Assessment Program, and the Behavioral Health Pulse.

"While implementation of the IRC recommendations is a long process, I'm encouraged by the way ahead," said Londagin. "As a survivor of sexual assault, I believe transformation is possible, and that's what we're doing. We're not only transforming the SHARP program; we're transforming the Army."

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THIS IS OUR ARMY.





## New Handbooks Help Leaders Implement Suicide Prevention Program

By LeWonnie Belcher, Army Resilience Directorate

Recent media coverage of a spate of high-profile suicides have brought home the reality that no one—regardless of race, gender, or economic status—is immune to the heartbreaking impacts of the sometimes-silent struggles that may lead a person to take their own life.

In support of the Service's effort to mitigate the further rise in deaths by suicide, the Army recently started rolling out its new public health approach to Suicide Prevention, which includes [two new handbooks](#) to assist senior and unit commanders in implementing the program at local levels.

According to Dr. James A. Helis, Director of the Army Resilience Directorate, which oversees the Army Suicide Prevention Program, the guidebooks are complementary to a new regulation and pamphlet, which are scheduled for publication in first quarter of calendar year 2022.

The handbooks, "[Senior Commander's Guide to Suicide Prevention: Reducing Suicide in Army Formations](#)" and "[CALL to Action—Suicide Prevention: Reducing Suicide in Army Formations, Brigade and Battalion Commander's Handbook](#)" were

produced as a result of a collaborative effort between the Army Resilience Directorate and Army Training and Doctrine Command's Center for Army Lessons Learned.

"Engaged leadership is foundational to the suicide prevention policy," said Helis. "The new regulation, pamphlet, and handbooks comprise the framework that will help leaders implement the suicide prevention program in a consistent manner across the force."

Helis noted that program improvements were required to address concerns about a lack of coherent policy, which resulted in inconsistent execution at lower echelons.

Army senior commanders and leaders throughout the Army received advanced copies of the handbooks as part of the Vice Chief of the Army-led chain teach initiative that kicked off at the end of November 2021. As part of the chain teach, senior commanders must deliver in-person suicide prevention guidance to include available resources to subordinate commanders, eventually reaching the most junior leaders. Active Component must complete the chain

teach by March 1, 2022, and Reserve Components no later than Sept. 1, 2022.

The handbooks provide leaders with insight into how the Army intends to utilize an upstream approach to build resilience, strengthen connection, encourage help-seeking behaviors, develop healthy coping strategies and intervention skills.

The Senior Commander handbook outlines leader responsibilities in executing the Army Suicide Prevention Program and guides leaders in leveraging the Commander's Ready and Resilient Council, or CR2C, capabilities across echelon to effectively prevent suicide at the unit and community level.

The Unit Commander handbook guides leaders on the components they must know and apply to implement an effective suicide prevention program.

"The handbooks are intended to be user-friendly, living documents to help leaders identify and address risk and protective factors, and significantly reduce the likelihood of these devastating decisions by those who are struggling," said Carrie Shult, Army Suicide Prevention Program Manager. "We need people to know that every life is a life worth living."

## Soldiers Conquer EIB Challenges With Mental Performance Training

By Erik Moshe, R2 Training Branch

Expert Infantryman Badge candidates stationed at Fort Stewart, Georgia, recently trained mental resilience skills to increase their confidence in preparation for warrior tasks and battle drills on their EIB test.

Master Resilience Trainer – Performance Experts, Samantha Brown and Emily Thompson, from the Fort Stewart R2 Performance Center began a series of trainings with an initial meta-cognitive challenge course. The course combined mental skills with physical workouts and incorporated sport and performance psychology training into candidates' EIB preparation.

Brown and Thompson then led four consecutive mental skills classroom sessions focused on helping candidates with challenging components of the EIB test. Skills included how to increase confidence, enhance concentration, and maintain composure in high-stress situations. Brown and Thompson provided memory strategies to sharpen memorization needed within the EIB's weapons, medical, and patrol lanes.

"We talked about mindset, how thoughts impact our behaviors, emotions, and physiology. We talked about motivation and how to maintain that motivation during the two-week period; how to maintain our attention, how to choose what we focus on, and how to eliminate distractions," Thompson said.

"A lot of what Soldiers have to do is memorization, especially within the medical lane. We talked about memory, tools and techniques for how to take information, study it, and retain it into your long-term memory rather than just memorizing it and then dumping it," she said.



Infantrymen stationed at Fort Stewart, Ga., learned mental resilience skills to prepare for their Expert Infantryman Badge test. Focus areas included building confidence, improving concentration, and stress management. The purpose of the EIB is to recognize infantrymen who have demonstrated a mastery of critical tasks. (Courtesy of Fort Stewart)

The classroom sessions concluded with an energy management workshop. Candidates assembled and disassembled various weapons systems under time limits while using energy management techniques to lower stress responses and perform well under pressure.

"We used our iPad emWave technology to test Soldiers as they performed to see if they were

applying mental skills that we'd already trained them on," Thompson said. "After either assembling or disassembling a weapons system, they'd receive real-time feedback. 'OK, how well am I managing my fight or flight system during this moment?' or 'Am I distracted, and did that impact my nervous system, my anxiety?'"

During the two weeks following the classroom train up, Brown and Thompson went to the EIB training site and provided hip-pocket training to candidates in the assessment lanes as they prepared for EIB testing.

"Our Soldiers benefited greatly from this week of training with the R2 Performance Center," said Capt. Wesley Milligan, Commander for Apache Company, 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment. "They learned skills that world-class athletes use to prepare and execute under pressure, and these skills helped them compete at peak physical and mental levels during Expert Infantryman Badge testing. I have personally used many of these skills throughout my thirteen years in the Army and am a firm believer that these skills can help Soldiers go from good to great."

"As instructors, it's rewarding for us as well, to see that motivation and drive for those individuals who really want to take in and absorb helpful information; resources for them to be successful, not just for this particular event, but for future events in their Army careers," Brown said.

To schedule training for your unit, contact your installation's R2 Performance Center: [www.armyresilience.army.mil/ard/R2/R2-Performance-center.html](http://www.armyresilience.army.mil/ard/R2/R2-Performance-center.html).



## Soldiers Who Respect Boundaries Build Stronger Teams

By Jasmine Taylor, Army Resilience Directorate

A strong unit consists of Soldiers and leaders working together to establish trust and build cohesion. It is this united atmosphere that creates an environment where teams can communicate effectively, overcome adversity, and achieve the mission. These characteristics bond Soldiers together on and off the battlefield.

"People come into the Army with different perspectives...life experiences. Army Values brings them together," said Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention Oversight Program Manager Regina Moore.

However, there is additional work to be done alongside learning the core Army Values. Each Soldier also has a responsibility to respect and honor the boundaries of others. In all relationships, establishing and respecting boundaries means setting standards for and limits on daily interactions.

"It could be setting a standard as to what happens in the common areas, sharing food, even calling someone (a) name," said Moore. "Sometimes those types of situations can lead to bad feelings, issues, fights...just because of something as simple as not asking to use something in the refrigerator...or using a nickname for someone that they don't like."

According to the University of Kentucky Violence Intervention and Prevention Center, the function of personal boundaries can be compared to a property line: "We have all seen 'No Trespassing' signs, which send a clear message that if you violate that boundary, there will be a consequence. This type of boundary is easy to picture and understand



Respecting the boundaries of others helps to create a positive command climate. A positive command climate instills a sense of trust within units. (Graphic illustration by Kevin Todd)

because you can see the sign and the border it protects. Personal boundaries can be harder to define because the lines are invisible, can change, and are unique to each individual." This is where open communication is paramount. "Start with a conversation about what your expectations are as a friend. Ask yourself what you aren't okay with. What are your expectations? Ask what crosses the line for you or your friend," said Moore.

Violation of boundaries violate respect, and as a result, break down trust. Lt. Col. Alexander Schneider, Office of the Judge Advocate General, or OTJAG, explains: "At the least severe end of (the Continuum of Harm) – there is a lack of respect or consideration from one person to another, growing in severity to

inappropriate behavior, continuing in severity to behavior that would constitute sexual harassment..."

These actions could equate to bullying, hazing, rough-housing, or gossiping.

Unit cohesion is the social bond among unit members that encourages teamwork. Once those teams fall apart, Soldiers may feel isolated. "As soon as someone has crossed the line you might ask yourself, 'Can I trust this person to have my back?'" Moore said.

When Soldiers honor each other's boundaries, it fosters a culture where everyone feels respected and an environment where everyone can feel safe. "A well-led, disciplined unit that doesn't tolerate sexual harassment or inappropriate behavior and where everyone insists upon mutual respect between members of the organization, will be an environment where sexual assault and sexual harassment are deterred," said Schneider.

Everyone should feel comfortable and safe to express when the words or actions of others crosses the line. For resources on setting personal boundaries, consider meeting with a therapist or reach out to your local chaplain. For more information about sexual harassment or sexual assault prevention, please visit <https://www.armyresilience.army.mil/sharp/>. If you don't feel safe in your unit, contact your unit Victim Advocate, brigade SARC, or the Safe Helpline at 877-995-5247 or [SafeHelpline.org/online](https://SafeHelpline.org/online).

## LAST CHANCE!

### YOUR INPUT ON ARMY POLICY IS CRITICAL

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## Decreasing Learning Curves for Recently Promoted NCOs During PME

By Peter Mikoski and Dr. Susannah Knust, WRAIR

Life in the Army is full of transitions, such as basic training, a permanent change of station, the deployment cycle, and promotions. Promotions in the Army occur progressively—a sergeant becomes a staff sergeant rather than a sergeant first class—and the Army has recognized that education is important at these transition points. Professional Military Education is an opportunity where all Soldiers who are promoted can learn about leadership and MOS-specific information in a cohort of their peers. From a Soldier life cycle perspective, PME provides an excellent opportunity to aid Soldiers in their transition to a new rank in hopes of decreasing the learning curve that a recently promoted NCO may experience.

The Army Resilience Directorate asked the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research to conduct a front-end analysis of enlisted PME to inform updates to curriculum. The evaluation was designed to determine the challenges and stressors faced throughout the Soldier life cycle as well as the critical knowledge, skills, and behaviors that NCOs at different ranks need. Two thousand sixty-six Soldiers across 14 PME sites participated in surveys and focus groups to provide a developmental snapshot across the ranks.

There is no denying that the learning curve for leadership and coaching is steep, and the expectations placed on junior NCOs are demanding. From the specialist to sergeant transition, “bro to NCO” was the predominant theme, as new sergeants learn to lead Soldiers who were recently their peers. This transition is challenging because sergeants’ military social network either shifts so they face isolation as they lead those who used to be peers, or their military social network is maintained while their professionalism as a new NCO is impacted. For the sergeant to staff sergeant transition, many of their challenges come from balancing additional leadership responsibilities (e.g., mentoring new sergeants) and personal responsibilities (e.g., growing Families). Staff sergeants feel their main responsibility is to balance being a cheerleader and a “babysitter” for their Soldiers. While there is no substitute for time and experience, the mentorship and education received in PME make gaining critical knowledge, skills, and behaviors more manageable. In particular, PME instructors should facilitate discussions related to the transition to manage expectations and train mentorship/coaching practices (e.g., fixed vs. growth mindset, control the controllables, deliberate breathing) that help these NCOs



U.S. Army National Guard Spc. Austin Thompson, assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, Task Force Iron Valor, is being promoted to sergeant at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait on December 2, 2021. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Kyle Burks)

become better leaders. These discussions and skills provide a framework so there are fewer surprises and less learning through trial and error.

Even as they gain experience in leading and coaching Soldiers directly, junior NCOs eventually reach another transition. The shift from junior NCO to senior NCO requires them to increasingly act as administrators, moving further and further away from the day-to-day life of their MOS. As Soldiers reach the rank of sergeant first class, their attention is increasingly redirected from direct, face-to-face leadership toward organizational leadership. Senior NCOs also face more competition for promotion. As a result, they may feel pressured to collaborate less and compete more. By this point, senior NCOs start to work with young officers more frequently, adding to their demands, as they try to help shape them as leaders. For master sergeants and first sergeants, responsibility continues to increase as they are required to deal with the more serious Soldier issues, causing some to feel like the “social workers of the Army.” Finally, the findings show that sergeants major and command sergeants major have shifted almost entirely to administrative work. Many struggle

to relate to their Soldiers when they have hundreds in their formation. Further, many of these NCOs are also considering how to transition out of the Army. Senior NCOs would benefit from discussions related to how to set the stage for motivation; how to provide timely mentorship and coaching for their subordinates, reinforcing skills they learned as junior NCOs; and their transition out of the Army.

Overall, it is important to recognize the interwoven nature of experience, mentorship, and training in the development of NCOs. All three are necessary to instill not only the lessons learned and culture of the Army, but also the best practices developed by subject matter experts. Most interviewees did not highlight technical or tactical challenges or stressors, but interpersonal and intrapersonal ones. This information could be a guide for the Army as they continue to emphasize leader development. PME has the capacity to decrease leaders’ learning curves throughout their military career by incorporating sequential and progressive leader development training that focuses on interpersonal and intrapersonal challenges and stressors.



# AROUND THE FORCE

- ▶ SHARP
- ▶ Suicide Prevention Program (SP2)
- ▶ Ready and Resilient
- ▶ ASAP



### ARD Leaders Brief Fort Detrick Noncommissioned Officers During Professional Development Session

FORT DETRICK, Md.—Sgt. Maj. Sharita Onugha, Senior Enlisted Advisor, U.S. Army Resilience Directorate, and Sgt. 1st Class Michael Barin, Noncommissioned Officer in Charge for Ready and Resilient recently shared updates on the Army Resilience Directorate during a Fort Detrick Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development session Dec. 16. Topics covered included ARD programs, capabilities portfolio, R2 Performance Centers, and current research and policies. During the meeting, Onugha highlighted the connection between the Unit Risk Inventory and the BH Pulse tool and confirmed it will replace the URI. She also noted how the Commanders Risk Reduction Toolkit encompasses data from URL, BH Pulse, and Azimuth Check. Onugha also discussed SHARP resources, SARCs and VAs, and the establishment of the People First Task Force that was created in response to the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee report. Barin defined the objective of the R2 Performance Centers and provided an overview of the training courses available, including how to relate prosocial behavior to prevention through the ENGAGE model, performance training, academic skills training, and current research surrounding squad leader development. Attendees were also informed of suicide prevention resources such as the chain teach initiative, [Unit Commander’s Suicide Postvention Handbook](#) and [suicide prevention drill cards](#). (Courtesy photo)



### 1st Cav Div Assembles Researchers for Suicide Prevention Seminar

FORT HOOD, Texas—Maj. Gen. John Richardson, commanding general of the 1st Cavalry Division, addresses the panel during a suicide awareness and prevention seminar at Fort Hood, Texas, Jan 20. The seminar included a panel of expert researchers in the field of suicidality who guided a conversation with leaders during the suicide prevention training event. The educational instruction and conversations focused on combating the determinants of suicide incidence rates through a critical examination of suicide—informed by evidence from the leading experts in the field. Featured speakers included Dr. Thomas Joiner, academic psychologist; Dr. Craig Bryan, researcher; Dr. Mike Anestis, clinical psychologist; Dr. Emmy Betz, researcher and professor; Col. Sam Preston, Chief Army Behavioral Health Division, Defense Health Agency, family physician and psychologist; and Dr. Eren Watkins, Prevention Specialist Manager, Ready and Resilient Integration and Training Division, Army Resilience Directorate. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Daniel Herman)



### 1st Theater Sustainment Command Operational Command Post Hosts SHARP Ambassador Program

CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait—Soldiers assigned to the 3rd Infantry Division Sustainment Brigade, 1st Theater Sustainment Command Operational Command Post, participated in a discussion during a Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention ambassador program training session at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Jan. 19. The course provides junior Soldiers with the education and skills necessary to promote a culture change within the Army. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Mary Katzenberger)



### Army Futures and Concepts Center Hosts SHARP Training

FORT EUSTIS, Va.—Tela Thomason, Futures and Concepts Center Lead Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, conducts a Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention Train the Trainer session with FCC leaders. This training ensures Soldiers and Army Civilians know and understand the Army’s SHARP Program requirements, prevention tenets, reporting options, intervention techniques, and possible consequences for committing these harmful behaviors. (Courtesy photo)



### Breathing Exercises Bring Balance to “Death Dealers”

FORT CAMPBELL, Ky.—“Death Dealers” in the 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment “Red Currahee” practiced deliberate breathing with MRT-PE Courtney Folkes in order to help balance their body systems before qualifications on the MK19 grenade machine gun. Daily deliberate breathing exercises can help Soldiers improve their performance by focusing on the present and balancing energy. The strategy can also speed up your recovery as 10-20 minutes of breathing to boost the ‘rest and digest’ response. This level of focus is critical when operating weaponry. (Photo courtesy of Fort Campbell)



### Soldiers Use Mental Games for Attention Control

FORT CARSON, Colo.—Members of the 404th Aviation Support Battalion participated in an early morning team building session focusing on attention control. Attention control enables you to bring heightened sensory awareness to what’s most relevant and to keep it there to concentrate amidst distractions. The mental game focused on different performance styles and how switching between these styles can impact achieving goals. Participants then received instruction to help redirect their attention and overcome their stuck points. (Photo courtesy of Fort Carson)





## Key Revisions to Deployment Cycle Resilience Training Enacted

By Michelle Kirk, Ph.D., and Jason Nolet, WRAIR

Resilience is a beneficial attribute when facing everyday challenges of military life, especially in times of transition and heightened adversity such as the deployment cycle. Deployment Cycle Resilience Training is a series of operational resilience training modules designed to prepare Soldiers, leaders, and Soldiers' [Circles of Support](#) for the unique challenges at each stage of the deployment cycle to include pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment reintegration. The goal of DCRT is not to deepen knowledge about resilience but to promote productive, resilient behaviors and actions throughout the deployment cycle. The practical application-based training aims to enhance resilience and well-being of Soldiers and Circle of Support members, strengthen personal relationships and unit cohesion, and increase mission effectiveness.

DCRT has been offered within the Army for over a decade but has recently undergone some key revisions. From 2018-2020, the Research Transition Office of Walter Reed Army Institute of Research conducted a Quality Improvement Evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the DCRT curriculum and implementation. In April 2020, WRAIR's RTO team began an extensive rewrite of the DCRT curriculum that was largely based upon the data and feedback collected from the QIE.

ARD rolled out the revised DCRT curriculum, DCRT v.3, in August of 2021. There are four overarching themes that underlie each revised module. First, there is greater emphasis on the deployment cycle rather than three stand-alone phases. Recognizing the interdependence of the phases can increase motivation to "control the controllables" in each phase because it will impact the next.

The second theme is a greater emphasis on growth and the positive gains from employing resilience skills and strategies. The DCRT modules encourage Soldiers and Circle of Support members to see how the deployment cycle challenges can lead to personal, professional, and relational growth for



Deployment Cycle Resilience Training prepares Soldiers, leaders, and Families for challenges at each stage of the deployment cycle. ARD enacted the revised DCRT curriculum in 2021. The training now aims to enhance resilience and well-being of Soldiers and Families by strengthening personal relationships, unit cohesion, and increasing mission effectiveness. (Photo by Spc. Hunter Garcia)

themselves and others. If Soldiers and Circle of Support members take deliberate action to utilize the skills, strategies, and support discussed in the modules, then their actions can positively impact their deployment cycle experience.

The third theme is a greater focus on practical application. Practical exercises allow participants to develop their competence and confidence in utilizing the skills and strategies. Furthermore, each module includes intentional discussions of how the participants might implement the material throughout the deployment cycle. The new material also includes supplemental handouts such as informational content and practical exercise worksheets.

The fourth overarching theme of the DCRT revisions is inclusivity, which involves being more inclusive of Soldier demographics, all types of deployments (i.e., combat, humanitarian, operational), all Army-components (i.e., Active Duty, National Guard, Reserves), and modern technologies and connectivity capabilities. An especially noteworthy change is rather than solely focusing on spouses at pre-deployment and reintegration, DCRT is now

more inclusive of the Soldier's entire Circle of Support. This includes anybody who has a vested interest in supporting the Soldier, such as parents, siblings, spouses, significant others, friends, mentors, battle buddies, and other Family members.

In accordance with AR 350-53, DCRT is a mandatory requirement for all United States Army, Army Reserve, and Army National Guard Soldiers who are deploying or have recently deployed away from their home station for 90 days or more for purposes other than training. In accordance with AR 350-53, it is mandatory that each Circle of Support module is made available during applicable phases should Circle of Support members wish to attend. DCRT is trained at the unit-level by DCRT-certified Master Resilience Trainers (MRTs). All MRTs must receive training on the new material and are encouraged to contact their local R2 Performance Center the Fort McCoy MRT Schoolhouse, or WRAIR at [jason.m.nolet.ctr@mail.mil](mailto:jason.m.nolet.ctr@mail.mil) for more information. To learn more about or schedule DCRT and other R2 Performance Center training, visit <https://www.armyresilience.army.mil/ard/R2/R2-Performance-center.html>.

## CLEAR UP STUCK POINTS

Stuck points are negative beliefs that are often shaped by trauma and are not 100% true. To overcome your stuck points, identify a belief and the emotions that drive them by:

- **Questioning the belief.**
- **Evaluating if the belief is supported by evidence, rather than based on current emotions or a habit of thinking.**
- **Identifying important information you are missing or overlooking.**



For more training on challenging stuck points, set up one-on-one sessions with an MRT-PE at your nearest R2 Performance Center: <https://www.armyresilience.army.mil/ard/R2/R2-Performance-center.html>





## R2 Strategies Help Focus the Mind *PERFORMANCE Continued from page 1*

solving and Counseling Enhancement Workshop.

Mental agility builds a person's ability to respond to stress effectively. Stress triggers thoughts in the mind and causes physical reactions in the body such as "fight or flight" and "shutdown." Soldiers can learn techniques like deliberate breathing and focusing attention, which teach participants to tap into and control these nervous system functions during extreme or challenging circumstances, or to remain calm under pressure.

Sherman also shared how one's mindset can impact self-confidence.

"...We see this with Soldiers a lot...they think they have to physically perform well in order to have confidence, however you can argue the other side...if you go into something having confidence in your abilities, in your training, before you get to when stuff gets real that has a vast impact on people's physical performance."

Additionally, enrolling in the Gaining Resilience in Training, or the GRIT Workshop, and Leader Development Course can help participants develop leadership skills such as high-stakes communication. Those who can communicate with confidence can effectively and concisely communicate with their teams and leaders.

Confidence can also allow Soldiers to reach new heights. Some of the greatest athletes convening at the 2022 Winter Olympics include Spc. Frank Del Duca, Sgt. Emily Sweeney, and Spc. Hakeem Abdul-Saboor from the Army World Class Athlete Program.

"At the level these athletes are performing at, everyone has the physical skills, they made it to the Olympics for a reason," said Sherman. "But where the difference is made is the time they put in with their sport psychologist, learning strategies like energy management or imagery ... These are skills we can teach at R2 Performance Centers."

R2 Performance Centers and MRT-PEs are readily available to help Soldiers, leaders, and units transform their performance to maintain motivation and achieve their goals.

"...The skills they learn here not only make them better Soldiers, but a better Family member and leader," Sherman said. "This is a free resource that offers training that many of the top companies in the civilian world are now offering."

There are 32 R2 Performance Centers Army wide. To learn more about how to schedule performance training visit: [www.armyresilience.army.mil/ard/R2/R2-Performance-center.html](http://www.armyresilience.army.mil/ard/R2/R2-Performance-center.html)

### Training Available at R2 Performance Centers

R2 Performance Centers provide specialized performance and resilience training enabling Soldiers to sustain personal readiness, enhance resilience, optimize performance, and build unit cohesion. Training is available Army-wide, to active duty, Reserve and National Guard Soldiers, as well as Family members and Department of the Army Civilians.

Course offerings include:

- Squad Leader Development Course
- Leader Development Course
- ACE-SI Train the Trainer
- Counseling Enhancement Workshop
- ENGAGE
- Gaining Resilience in Training (GRIT)
- Gaining Resilience in Training – Together (GRIT-T)
- Academic Performance Training (APT)
- Performance Training
- Workforce Development
- Spouse and Family Seminars

To learn more about training opportunities, please contact your nearest [R2 Performance Center](#)

## ARD Prevention Updates *DIRECTOR'S COLUMN Continued from page 2*

These concentrated prevention efforts are dedicated to achieving the goal of eliminating sexual harassment, sexual assault, and associated retaliation from our ranks.

Other longstanding ongoing prevention efforts throughout the Army include reviews of installations' SHARP programs. Last month, headquarters SHARP program personnel conducted a virtual Staff Assistance Visit in Europe. SAVs began in 2018 and were developed as part of an oversight program to help organizations throughout the Army maximize the effectiveness of their sexual assault prevention efforts. The installation reviews are conducted through an Organization Inspection Program and SAVs. During the SAVs, Army headquarters SHARP personnel focus on assessing the implementation and effectiveness of local SHARP program management, including training, response and support services, resource management, and an assessment

of command climate. Feedback provided through the oversight program helps organizations become more effective in building a culture of trust throughout the Army. Additional SAVs are scheduled in February at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, and Fort Polk, Louisiana; in March at Fort Bliss, Texas; and in April at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

**Another priority focus for the Army and ARD is suicide prevention.** Every Soldier's death by suicide is a tragedy—for the Soldier, for their Family, for their unit. Every one of these deaths hurts. Ongoing Army efforts to prevent suicide include the "chain teach" initiative, which began on Nov. 29, 2021 when Gen. Joseph M. Martin, Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, initiated an in-person training session of Commanding Generals on effective implementation of the Army Suicide Prevention Program. In turn, these leaders have trained other leaders at their installations, who are training leaders at their

units, down to every echelon from the most senior to junior leaders at the squad level. The training includes information on how to recognize signs of individuals struggling with their mental health, knowledge of available resources to seek help, and ultimately ensuring Soldiers feel connected and know they matter. In support of the Chain Teach, ARD along with the Center for Army Lessons Learned developed senior commander handbooks to serve as guides for suicide prevention. See more on the Handbooks on page 3. The active-duty force is due to complete the chain teach March 1.

I remain deeply thankful of your unwavering dedication to the Army's prevention efforts. Your work is critical to maintain the readiness of our Army and strengthening the resilience of our Soldiers.

**People First, Army Strong!**  
James A. Helis, Ph.D.





## What to Do When a Friend Expresses Suicidal Ideation on Social Media

By Jasmine Taylor, Army Resilience Directorate

Social media can often create a sense of community and closeness for Soldiers. Beyond sharing viral videos and exchanging memes, it allows individuals to connect with one another outside of face-to-face contact. These platforms may also serve as an outlet for Soldiers to express vulnerabilities.

"We know that social media platforms are commonly used for the expression of both negative expression...and positive...It could be that people who post to their group are comfortable with social media and therefore are open to communicating," said Carrie Shult, Army Suicide Prevention Program Manager.

It important to recognize the [warning signs](#) when a fellow Soldier is struggling. You can help prevent suicide by actively intervening when a battle buddy shares suicidal ideation (thinking about, considering, or planning suicide) on social media. When someone shares feelings of hopelessness, emotional pain, and self-harm on social media, take the posts seriously by acting quickly and responding compassionately. Shult recommends referencing the Defense Suicide Prevention Office's video resource [Simple Things Save Lives](#), which provides steps for intervention in social media scenarios.

Responding to concerning messages on social media should not be different than engaging with someone in person. In the video, Sgt. 1st Class Dan Caddy, of the Battle

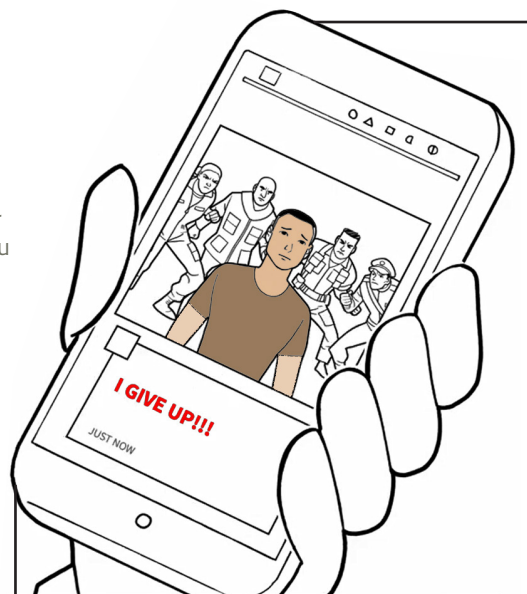
in Distress social media page, states, "A lot of these posts people put up can be vague. You don't know whether it's a big issue or a small issue (or) them just venting off steam. But you're never going to know unless you take two minutes to send them a message. And then you're able to triage based on their response...you have no way to tell unless you start that conversation."

If you see messages that seem out of character, don't ignore them. You can send your friend a text message, contact them via direct message, call them on the phone, or visit them in person if you feel comfortable doing so.

Reaching out may feel awkward but connecting could save a life. If you're unsure of what to say, consider:

- Getting your friend's backstory and listening without judgement.
- Relating to what they're saying and validating their feelings.
- Giving hope.
- Remembering [ACE](#) - Ask, Care, and Escort so that they can get the help they need.

Several social media platforms have [built-in tools and resources](#) for users to report messages that allude to distress and self-harm. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline staff intercept these messages and provide support. The Lifeline has also partnered with



(Screenshot from Simple Things Save Lives video)

platforms to develop [resources](#), tools, and scripts which may aid in navigating tough online conversations. You can also call the Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or the Military Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255, Press 1, for support if you encounter a message on social media that alludes to suicide or suicidal ideation. If you believe someone you know is in immediate danger and references access to lethal means, please take them to the nearest emergency room or call 911 and provide first responders with the location of your friend.

## Sober Buddy—The Importance of Asking for Help

By Shirley Tien, Army Resilience Directorate

What happens if you feel you've exhausted all the methods you can think of to stay sober and you're feeling overwhelmed by the temptation to drink? Finding a sober buddy could help to hold you accountable.

A sober buddy can be any responsible person you trust and who understands your struggles with substance abuse.

"Having a sober buddy can be much like having a coach. They can help reframe the distortions, change the narrative, and improve dialogue with ourselves and with others," said Richard Kohl, Community Ready and Resilient Integrator (CR2I) in the Army Substance Abuse Prevention Program at Fort Rucker, Alabama.

Essentially, a sober buddy can help you exercise healthy coping skills. Sometimes there are things we can handle ourselves and sometimes it takes a village.

"It's important to have a community of people who are also going through what you're going through. It's important to have someone to be able to go out

and do fun things with—hiking, movies, concerts, whatever that is—who's also sober with you so that you can talk about your cravings," said Heather Hayes, a licensed professional counselor with over three decades of experience in treating clients with complex mental health issues and the full spectrum of addictive disorders. Strength comes in numbers, when you realize you're not in it alone, you're stronger and better equipped to manage the issue, she said.

A sober buddy can support a Soldier in the following ways, according to Kohl:

- **Support healthy behavioral change.** Authentic and connected relationships build trust, which is an essential component to personal change and breaking down barriers to change.
- **Provide an accountability partner.** There's a process of change that takes place as you go through the process of self-actualization and sometimes we need people as accountability partners to be able to do that.
- **Change the narrative.** When someone is at a high risk for misusing a substance, their

perceptions, thoughts, and feelings may be distorted. This impacts their statements to themselves and others. A sober buddy can help shift a negative outlook by reframing thoughts or attitudes.

There may be some reservations in finding a sober buddy; shame, uncertainty, or even not knowing where to start. Kohl advises to "Evaluate the trust building process in your personal life. Building trust can feel risky, however, it is necessary and part of recovery if a substance has been used at a high-risk level."

At the end of the day what matters most is your sobriety and learning how to cope with daily challenges in a healthy way. If you need support, a sober buddy can help you put things into perspective. You may look to Family, friends, or your fellow Soldiers to help hold you accountable. You can also talk to your local chaplain or a local substance abuse support group to help designate a sober buddy for you. For more substance abuse prevention resources, please visit [www.armyresilience.army.mil/ASAP/index.html](http://www.armyresilience.army.mil/ASAP/index.html)



## DHAP Evaluates Data System to Support Soldier Deployment Health

By Samuel Duncan, Deployment Health Assessment Program

The Army's Deployment Health Assessment Program is designed to address deployment-related physical and mental health needs for Soldiers, Department of the Army Civilians, and contractors who are in the deployment cycle. The program goals are to support the Army's effort to promote well-being, reduce the number of personnel who are non-deployable, and maximize unit readiness.

The Army is assessing secondary and tertiary tracking systems which show accurate and

consistent data for deployed and re-deployed Soldiers. Representatives from DHAP, Army G1, and the Office of the Surgeon General recently met with the Operations Manager of Deployed Theater Accountability Software for a presentation on DTAS to evaluate if the system would be able to supply the Medical Protection System with deployment data. The goal of accurate tracking is to ensure Soldiers complete their Deployment Health Assessments in the required timeframe. DHAP is evaluating the system to be a possible

secondary or primary source for deployment data. The team has submitted a request to MODS to produce reminder emails to personnel that are due Deployment Health Assessments. The emails will be sent in accordance with timeline requirements for DHAs' compliance. The team is utilizing the Army G-1 Mobilization List to conduct an analysis comparing the data on the list with the data located in MEDPROS for gaps. For more on DHAP, visit: <https://www.armyresilience.army.mil/ard/R2/Deployment-Health-Assessment-Program.html>

## SHARP Training, Behavioral Health Resources Featured in Webinar Series

By David Gercken, Army Resilience Directorate

"The best thing we can do for our formations is enable our leaders to train and inspire their subordinates to actively prevent and appropriately respond to sexual harassment and sexual assault," Col. Lawrence Burns said during the December Army Resilience Directorate Outreach Webinar. Burns, the Director of the U.S. Army Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention Academy at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, discussed the importance of SHARP training, updates to the current curriculum, and provided a look at how training and education are evolving to support prevention efforts throughout the Army.

ARD's Senior Enlisted Advisor, Sgt. Maj. Sharita Onugha, served as the webinar host facilitating a wide-ranging discussion among participants, providing insights on conducting SHARP training at all levels of the Army, and honing in on the important role of squad leaders in training their

Soldiers and creating an environment of trust within their units by sharing personal examples from her career. Onugha also discussed how ARD's R2 Performance Centers offer training and services that support resilience and prevention, noting, "As we know, resilience is the fundamental baseline of getting after prosocial behaviors."

During January's webinar, Col. Samuel Preston discussed another asset that supports prevention efforts, the Army Behavioral Health System of Care. Preston, who serves as the Chief, Behavioral Health Division, and Psychiatric Advisor to the Army Surgeon General, provided participants with an overview of Army behavioral health resources to support individuals and units. He also highlighted how the Army has reduced the stigma around behavioral health by developing initiatives and programs to meet its community's needs.

This month, Col. Erica Cameron, Chief, SHARP Redesign, People First Task Force, will discuss the Sexual Harassment/Sexual Assault Fusion Directorate initiative that will enable SHARP professionals and Army leaders to test and assess ways to improve victim-centered response and the Army's SHARP program. The webinar takes place on Feb. 24 at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. ET. To participate, join via Adobe Connect: <https://connect.apan.org/rtvby76iofpj>.

ARD Outreach Webinars occur monthly. Focusing on professional development, they offer an opportunity to engage with subject matter experts, researchers, and Army leaders in the areas of SHARP, suicide prevention, substance abuse, and resilience. To sign up to receive notifications on future webinar topics, presenters, and dates, please visit <https://www.armyresilience.army.mil/ard/webinar.html>.

## SAAPM 2022 Theme Announced: Prevention Starts With You

By Antwaun J. Parrish, Army Resilience Directorate

April is Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month. This year's theme is Prevention Starts With You. The theme was selected from approximately 30 entries submitted as part of the Army's inaugural call out to the field to submit SAAPM theme and poster concept ideas.

"It is said that Soldiers and Civilians can become primary drivers of change when given the opportunity, and the request for submissions was brought about to give voice to those in the SHARP community and throughout the Army," said Jill Londagin, Director of the Army Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention program.

Entries were submitted from Oct. 27, 2021 through Nov. 26, 2021. The submissions were placed on the ARD Facebook page where Soldiers and the extended Army family were allowed to vote and decide which entry resonated with them the most. The top three submissions were then judged by a panel of ARD leaders and SHARP program managers who selected the winner. The judging criteria was focused on message, theme, and creativity.

Kelly McNally, a Sexual Assault Response Coordinator with the U.S. Army Reserve 75th Innovation Command, submitted the chosen entry.

"Bold messages don't need to be complex, a simple and powerful statement, 'Prevention starts with you!' is a daily reminder for all Soldiers, Civilians, and Family members that we all have a role and responsibility to make our Army a safe, strong, and healthy community," said McNally about the theme.

"The boldness of the image speaks to the importance of individual ownership and the seriousness of prevention efforts. The moment you walk away from something you saw that was wrong, you just set a new standard, and it stops now," McNally said about the visual concept.

"Prevention Starts With You," is featured on print and digital materials for the Army's SAAPM 2022 campaign and are available for download on the ARD products on demand site: <https://marcomcentral.app.pti.com/Ironmark/ARDMaterials>.



For more information on SAAPM 2022 visit <https://www.armyresilience.army.mil/SAAPM-2022/index.html>.

McNally, who submitted two of the top three entries, will receive a certificate of appreciation and an Army challenge coin for her winning submission. Jess Wilson, of the 1st Space Brigade, who submitted the other top entry, will also receive a certificate of appreciation and challenge coin.





# ARMY RESILIENCE

THE ARMY RESILIENCE DIRECTORATE NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2022

## HAIL AND FAREWELL

We invite the Army Resilience Directorate community to join us in welcoming new members to ARD headquarters. Congratulations to current members on taking new positions, and a fond farewell to outgoing members departing the Directorate

### Hail

- Capt. Logan Byars, Executive Officer, Army Resilience Directorate

### Farewell

- Lt. Col. Wanda I. Santiago, Executive Officer, Army Resilience Directorate

## DoD Safe Helpline

### Sexual Assault Support for the DoD Community

DoD Safe Helpline has updated the international texting number to:

**571-470-5546**

This new texting number allows OCONUS survivors to receive referrals to resources in their local community.

**CONUS text number: 55247**  
[safehelpline.org](https://safehelpline.org) | **877-995-5247**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### MARCH

#### IACP 2022 Officer Safety & Wellness Symposium

March 15-17: This symposium is for law enforcement professionals to learn from experts in the field about resources and best practices when developing comprehensive officer safety and wellness strategies.

**Location:** Atlanta, Ga. **Learn more:** <https://www.theiacp.org/OSWSymposium>

#### Anxiety and Depression Association of America

March 17-20: The theme this year is Common Psychopathology: What Can the Past Tell Us About the Future?

**Location:** Denver, Colo. **Learn more:** <https://adaa.org/conference/future-past-conferences>

#### 2022 NASPA Annual Conference

March 19-23: The conference features speakers who engage participants in thoughtful reflection on the field, hundreds of educational sessions presented by over 1,000 student affairs educators, and networking events.

**Location:** Baltimore, Md. **Learn more:** <https://conference.naspa.org/>

#### Society for Public Health Education 2022 Annual Digital Conference

March 22-25: The theme of the SOPHE 2022 Annual Digital Conference is The Arch of an Era, illustrating the public health response and the recovery among communities amid worldwide crisis.

**Location:** Virtual **Learn more:** [https://www.sophe.org/professional-development/conferences\\_events/2022-annual-conference/](https://www.sophe.org/professional-development/conferences_events/2022-annual-conference/)

### APRIL

#### End Violence Against Women International Conference

April 19-21: The annual conference focuses on sexual assault, intimate partner violence, stalking, and human trafficking.

**Location:** Hilton San Francisco Union Square **Learn more:** <https://web.cvent.com/event/e49c7e07-0275-4051-986d-aa39127f11c8/summary>

## TOP FACEBOOK POST



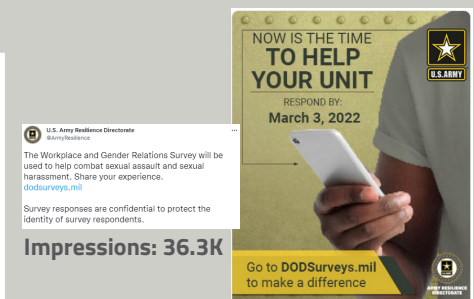
Reach:8.8K

## SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATE

### Follow @ArmyResilience

Please coordinate with your Public Affairs Office to share or retweet @ArmyResilience content on Command or Installation Facebook and Twitter platforms. Contact Mr. Chet Curtis for questions regarding ARD social media at [chester.r.curtis2.civ@army.mil](mailto:chester.r.curtis2.civ@army.mil).

## TOP TWEET



## Army Resilience Directorate

### ARD COMMUNITY LINK

February 17, 2022. Volume 6, Issue 1

The ARD Community Link newsletter is an authorized bi-monthly publication produced by the Army Resilience Directorate for the Army community. The contents of the ARD Community Link are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Army. The editorial content of the ARD Community Link is the responsibility of the Communications, Outreach & Leadership Engagement branch at ARD. For questions, or to subscribe or submit articles and photographs to ARD Community Link, please contact the editor at [antonietta.rico.ctr@mail.mil](mailto:antonietta.rico.ctr@mail.mil). This publication is available for download at: <https://www.dvidshub.net/publication/1102/r2-community-link-newsletter>

#### Director

Dr. James A. Helis

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Ms. Antonietta Rico

#### Editor

Ms. Jasmine Taylor

#### Design Editor

Ms. Liz Briones

#### Army Resilience Directorate

2530 Crystal Drive, 6th Floor

Arlington, VA 22202

[www.armyresilience.army.mil](http://www.armyresilience.army.mil)

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Contact ARD Communications & Outreach at [usarmy.pentagon.hqda-dcs-g-1.list.dape-ars-sp@army.mil](mailto:usarmy.pentagon.hqda-dcs-g-1.list.dape-ars-sp@army.mil)

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