



Iditarod

The star on the mountain goes off when last musher finishes. More photos, Page B-1

Families

Covenant signing

JBER leaders commit to providing the best possible quality of life, Page A-2

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ARCTIC WARRIOR

Volume 3, No. 11

Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson

March 16, 2012

Afghanistan shootings won't change U.S. course, Army says

By Jim Garamone
Army News Service

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, Gen. Martin Dempsey, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and International Security Assistance Force leaders all condemned a shooting incident in southern Afghanistan, and pledged to work with Afghan authorities in fully investigating the incident.

“This incident is tragic and shocking, and does not represent the exceptional character of our military and the respect that the United States has for the people of Afghanistan,” Obama said in a statement released by the White House.

Panetta spoke with Afghan President Hamid Karzai to offer his deepest condolences and profound regret for the tragic incident. The incident resulted in the loss of life and injuries to Afghan civilians, including women and children.

ISAF Commander Marine Corps Gen. John R. Allen, who is here to testify this week, issued a statement today saying he was “shocked and saddened” to hear of the shooting incident.

“I offer my profound regret and deepest condolences to the victims and their families,” Allen said in his statement.

In a Facebook post, Dempsey offered his condolences to the victims and their families.

“I’m confident that General Allen and his staff are taking the appropriate steps to quickly and thoroughly investigate the circumstances of this incident,” he said.

Allegedly, an American service member left his base in Kandahar province, entered homes in the area and shot the inhabitants. Karzai said in a statement that the service member had killed 16 and wounded at least five others.

“I condemn such violence and am shocked and saddened that a U.S. service member is alleged to be involved, clearly acting outside his chain of command,” Panetta said. “I told President Karzai that the American people share the outrage felt by President Karzai and his fellow citizens. This tragic incident does not reflect the commitment of the U.S. military to protect the Afghan people and help build a strong and stable Afghanistan.”

“I cannot explain the motivation behind such callous acts, but they were in no way part of authorized ISAF military activity,” said British Lt. Gen. Adrian J. Bradshaw, deputy ISAF commander.

The service member has been moved to a facility outside Afghanistan as ISAF and Afghans conduct an investigation, Allen said. Those wounded in the incident are receiving care from ISAF medics.

“I am absolutely dedicated to making sure that anyone who is found to have committed wrongdoing is held fully accountable,” Allen said. Panetta assured Karzai U.S. officials will bring those responsible to justice.

Green light, go! Solar storm brings powerful aurora



The Aurora Borealis is seen in the night sky over Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson March 8 above a 34-foot-tower used by United States Army Alaska paratroopers to practice exiting an aircraft during a parachute assault. For more northern lights photos from JBER Facebook friends, see page B-4. (U.S. Air Force photo/Justin Connahey)

JBER inspection garners high marks across wings

‘Well done,’ Evans tells base personnel

By Air Force Staff Sgt. Zachary Wolf
JBER Public Affairs

Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson hosted members of the Pacific Air Force Inspector General from March 4 through 10 for a Comprehensive Unit Inspection.

A CUI ensures a base is mission-ready and fully compliant with applicable guidance and regulations.

The 3rd Wing entered the CUI slightly more than a year after their

previous inspection.

“With this more in-depth look, the IG was very helpful in identifying areas that we can continually improve upon despite the difficult challenges that we face every day,” said Air Force Col. Dirk Smith, 3rd Wing commander.

The 3rd Wing earned an “excellent” overall rating.

“Preparing for the CUI was really stressful and time-consuming because not only do you have your normal duties, you have extra duties you have to attend to because you have suspense to meet,” said Senior Airman Derrick Garcia, 3rd Wing.

See Inspection, page A-3

JBER ratings for 2012 CUI

673d Air Base Wing: Excellent

3rd Wing: Excellent

176th Wing: Satisfactory



Guardsmen keep commanders informed from the sky

By Army Staff Sgt. Jack Carlson III
Task Force ODIN Public Affairs

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — High above the ground in the clear blue skies of eastern Afghanistan, Staff Sgt. Eric Maschmeier, an Alaska Army National Guardsman from Anchorage, moves his full-motion video sensor onto a compound coalition forces are surrounding.

The radio crackles in his headset – the ground force commander is giving the green light to enter the objective and seek a known insurgent in this province.

Maschmeier has been able to provide the commander with detailed intelligence about the compound prior to the unit’s arrival, thus allowing the unit to have up-to-date information about the situation on the ground.

Maschmeier is among 20 aerial sensor operators currently deployed with B Company, 306th Aerial Exploitation Battalion, Task Force Observe, Detect, Identify, and Neutralize - Afghanistan. Together with the 30 pilots who fly and ensure the safety of the crew and the modified King Air 300 platform, these Soldiers make up the only Army National Guard



Staff Sgt. Eric Maschmeier, Aerial Sensor Operator, Bravo Company, 306th Aerial Exploitation Battalion, Task Force Observe, Detect, Identify, and Neutralize - Afghanistan, and resident of Anchorage, checks the equipment onboard the King Air 300 prior to flight March 8th. The enlisted Soldiers of Company B operate and maintain the collection equipment onboard the aircraft throughout their 12-month deployment, accruing hundreds of flight hours over Afghanistan. (U.S. Army photo/Staff Sgt. Jack Carlson III)

company within the battalion.

According to the Task Force commander, Lt. Col. Paul Rogers, ODIN-A is the largest single aerial

Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance unit ever deployed. Represented by 11 state flight detachments, the Soldiers of the

company have a vast pool of experience. There are 10 Soldiers

See Guardsmen, page A-3

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Be Energy Aware

Turn off lights when not in use
Use our plentiful natural daylight
Turn down your water heater to 120 F or less
Close blinds at night to conserve heat
Turn off computer monitors at night or when not in use

A COMMITMENT TO

STRONG ARMY BONDS

Leaders

re-sign

Army

Family

Covenant

Editorial by Army
Maj. Gen. Raymond P. Palumbo
USARAK commander

This week, Command Sgt. Maj. David Turnbull and I were joined by Air Force Col. Robert Evans and Chief Master Sgt. Lisa Kuehn to re-sign the Army Family Covenant at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.

The Army Family Covenant was originally unveiled Oct. 8, 2007, to represent the Army’s commitment to providing Soldiers and their families with a quality of life commensurate with their service and sacrifice.

The Army Family Covenant is a contract between the Army and the community. It represents something tangible for our

Soldiers and families.

This covenant recognizes the sacrifices of our Army families and that the strength of our Soldiers comes from strong families.

Last fall, the Army’s top leadership renewed the Army Family Covenant with a signing ceremony by Secretary of the Army John McHugh, Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Raymond Odierno and Sgt. Maj. of the Army Raymond Chandler III at the Association of the United States Army annual conference.

The Army’s goal is to create conditions in our communities which foster growth and self-reliance for every family while reducing stress. I truly believe the Army Family Covenant does just that.

We all watch the news and read the headlines and in doing so, we cannot help but have concern for how defense budget cuts may affect the programs and services we have become accustomed to as part of the Army Family Covenant.

Many of you may be wonder-



Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson and 673d Air Base Wing Chief Master Sgt. Lisa Kuehn signs the Army Family Covenant on JBER, Wednesday. (U.S. Air Force photo/Justin Connaher)

ing whether or not the Army will be able to keep its promises.

In light of these concerns, I believe it’s important for all of us to acknowledge that we will likely face budgetary challenges, but the Army’s commitment to its Soldiers and their families will endure.

While our entire military works to adjust to a new fiscal reality, we reaffirm our commitment to provide Soldiers and families with quality programs and services to support your daily lives and sustain your well-being.

Thank you for the sacrifices you make for our country each day.

We will continue to face our share of challenges, but I am absolutely confident that we will meet these challenges and remain as resilient as ever.

Arctic Warriors!

CUI

From Page A-1

Wing commander’s support staff.

The Laredo, Texas native also gave advice to others preparing for an inspection.

“The main thing is paying attention to detail and maintain your programs monthly in order to not stress and feel overwhelmed,” Garcia said.

Following those the guidelines, Garcia helped update and maintain more than 13 programs in the 3rd Wing Command Section and earned an “excellent” rating for that section.

“Once again, congratulations and thanks for your world-class performance,” Smith said in a congratulatory message sent to the entire wing.

The 176th Wing finished a triple inspection from its higher headquarters March 12 with an overall satisfactory grade, indicating the wing is effective and competent.

“Our job is to train toward our federal mission and stand ready to support Alaska’s communities in an emergency,” said Air Force Col. Donald Wenke, 176th Wing commander. “We have to maintain integrity and build faith and confidence in Alaskans. Compliance inspection results show we are good stewards of their tax dollars.”

Even though the inspection was coming, the 176th’s mission didn’t stop.

“In the past 12 months, we’ve picked up a wing, moved, had two major deployments and prepared seven and a half months, all without cessation of flying,” said Capt. Luke Davis, the logistics operations officer from the 176 Logistics Readiness Squadron, commenting in an article by the 176th Wing about the logistics squadron’s challenges.

Preparations for the inspection took many forms.

“We had done over 120 internal self-inspections before they came,” said Air Force Lt. Col. Sharolyn Lange, the chief of nursing services for the 176 Medical Group, in a article from the 176th Wing.

The 212th Rescue Squadron, which falls under the 176th Wing earned an “outstanding,” which is the highest rating possible.

“I would like to say thank you to the members of this wing,” Wenke said. “Thank you for the hard work each of you put in to make this a success. I am extremely proud of everyone’s professionalism and teamwork.”

JBER’s wing commander had similar sentiments.

“I would like to thank the inspector general team for coming out to Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson and the opportunity to show how well JBER works as a joint base,” said Air Force Col. Robert Evans, JBER and 673d Air Base Wing commander.

Part of the inspection was a test of JBER’s emergency response actions, with an exercise that simulated an active shooter on base.

It started as a credible, but non-specific threat to the installation which brought the base to Force Protection Condition Charlie, in which an incident occurs or intelligence is received indicating some form of terrorist action against personnel and facilities is imminent.

This was implemented to increase JBER’s vigilance and posture the installation to defend against a possible terrorist attack.

In the scenario, a group of Soldiers and Airmen were attending a pre-deployment briefing in the JBER-Elmendorf theater and significant injuries were suffered by those in the front rows of seating when a bomb went off near the stage.

As others tried to exit the theater, a man seated in the back stood up and opened

Air Force committed to JBER families

Editorial by Air Force
Col. Robert Evans
JBER and 673d ABW
commander

In 2007, the first local Army Family Covenant was signed in the Fort Richardson Post Theater, which was a promise to support Soldiers and their families.

As we have become Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, this commitment is no less.

We stand side by side with Army Maj. Gen. Raymond Palumbo and Command Sgt. Maj. David Turnbull to fulfill those promises to provide Soldiers and their families with a quality of life equal to their service and sacrifice.

We are a nation which has been at war for more than a decade, with Arctic Warriors on the front lines sacrificing to serve



Lily Davis, 4, daughter of Army Sgt. Daniel Davis of 56th Engineer Company, 6th Engineer Battalion, enjoys a piece of cake after the Army Family Covenant signing Wednesday. (U.S. Air Force photo/Justin Connaher)

fire. Security Forces defenders entered the theater and engaged the gunman, who was neutralized.

“I want to thank all of you for your patience and your participation today,” Evans said. “If we are faced with a dire emergency, as we practiced today, we will be ready. I count on you, and you can count on your JBER team.”

The 673d Air Base Wing, including all subordinate organizations, had zero critical deficiencies.

The Base Historian’s office is one of those subordinate organizations that

earned an “excellent” rating.

The main mission of the 673d Air Base Wing History Office is to record and write the accomplishments of the 673d Air Base Wing, 3rd Wing, Eleventh Air Force, Alaskan Command and the Alaskan North American Aerospace Defense Command Region.

They also respond to a large number of inquiries from commanders, service personnel, and the public-at-large regarding the history of JBER and the units assigned here, both current and historically.

They also maintain an

extensive archive of historical documents and photographs including histories of units going back to their earliest days.

In addition to their duties at JBER, as civilians, they deploy with the Air Force in support of contingency operations, said Douglas Beckstead, wing historian.

“In preparation for the CUI, we simply continued to provide the highest level of service to the JBER community,” Beckstead said.

The inspectors also identified eight functions that they described as the “best seen to date” and eight pro-

grams that will be forwarded to the command as potential “best practices.”

The 673d Air Base Wing scored an “excellent” rating on their portion of the CUI.

“While we can all be proud of these inspection results, we must not be satisfied; we must always strive for perfection and excellence in all we do,” Evans said.

“The report identifies many areas that require our continued attention and focus. I know each of you will do your part to ensure we remain Arctic Tough, Mission Ready and Family Strong,” Evans said.

**Alaskan Command/
11th Air Force
Commanding General**
Lt. Gen. Stephen Hoog (USAF)

**U.S. Army Alaska
Commanding General**
Maj. Gen. Raymond P. Palumbo (USA)

**Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson/
673d Air Base Wing Commander**
Col. Robert D. Evans (USAF)

**Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson/
673d Air Base Wing Vice Commander**
Col. Timothy R. Prior (USA)

ARCTIC WARRIOR

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Engineers move supplies to Fairbanks

By Spc. Juana M. Nesbitt
2d Engineer Brigade Public Affairs

Black ice, blowing snow, fog, treacherous hills and freezing temperatures are just some of the conditions the Soldiers of the 109th Transportation Company face each week to get cargo and supplies from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson to Fort Wainwright.

Since October, the Soldiers have been connecting U.S. Army Alaska assets at the two installations and Fort Greeley with a weekly supply run they call Operation Polar Express.

The mission gives USARAK’s 2d Engineer Brigade an opportunity to conduct logistical proficiency training for its subordinate units while providing cargo movement capabilities for USARAK units, according to USARAK Logistics Officer Maj. Donna Johnson.

The day of the run begins early for the 109th.

Sgt. Shasta Miller, a driver, arrives ready to face the road ahead of her. Her vehicle, an M915 A3 freight tractor with an M872 semi-trailer attached, carries a shipping container of computers, needed at Fort Wainwright in support of a lateral transfer.

Later that morning, she’ll be a part of a three-vehicle convoy.

She performs all the necessary preventive maintenance checks and procedures and ensures the load on her trailer is secure.

The convoy consists of convoy commander Staff Sgt. Matthew Lewis and driver Spc. Kevin Wilson and Miller. In the recovery vehicle are driver Sgt. Gilman “Shane” Bieto and mechanic Spc. Billy Harlin. Weather conditions and safety are the primary concerns as Lewis briefs his team.

It’s time to go. Miller loads up, checks her mirrors and shifts into drive. Closely watching the wheels of the trailer, she rolls out.

They aren’t moving and the trailer is dragging. Miller stops and puts the truck back into park.

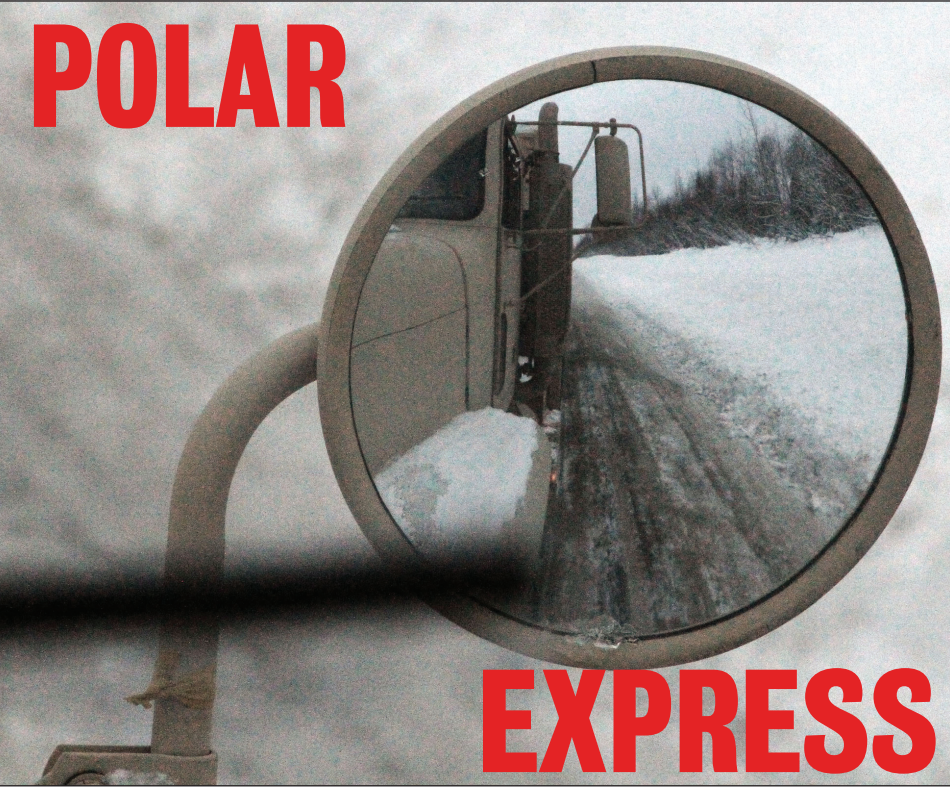
In the truck next to her, Lewis quickly notices the problem and directs her to keep moving back and forth in attempts to loosen the tire brakes which periodically freeze in the frigid temperatures.

It works and off they go.

As the journey continues, Miller keeps a close watch and ensures the truck and the



ABOVE: Sgt. Gilman Beito helps his teammates tie down a load near Fairbanks before heading back to Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson during the weekly Operation Polar Express run Feb. 21.
BELOW: A 109th Transportation Company convoy heads to Fort Wainwright. (U.S. Army photos/Spc. Juana Nesbitt)



trailer move along safely. She says she’s a little nervous, since this is her first time driving up to Fort Wainwright. Her experience from her recent deployment to Afghanistan,

however, is obvious as she maneuvers through the icy hills and bridges with ease.

They arrive at Talkeetna, their first stop, for a restroom break and to stretch their legs.

Ten minutes is all they get before mounting up again.

But the trailer is stuck – again. The wheels won’t turn, and Miller’s attempts to roll them free aren’t working.

“You got a hammer?” Beito asks her.

He later explains that “the part that freezes is where the brake shoe meets the brake drum. That’s the part that always freezes. When it freezes it won’t allow the wheels to turn.”

Beito crawls under the trailer and gently taps on the brake drum to set it free. It works and they’re off again.

They arrive at Fort Wainwright safely and without any further delays, fuel up, change their load and are ready to head back the next morning.

Beito got his commercial driver’s license when he was 16 years old and has more than 10 years of experience driving for the Army.

“Oh, I love it,” he says. “I’ve had a lot of jobs, but I’ve always come back to driving.”

So for Operation Polar Express has seen 15 missions, which can range from three to 30 trucks, usually running to and from Fort Wainwright, Fort Greeley, and the port of Valdez.

Although the road for Operation Polar Express may still have a few bumps in it, they will stay busy keeping USARAK moving in the weeks to come.

Guardsmen

From Page A-1

deployed from Detachment 54, Alaska Army National Guard.

Flying more than 100 combat flight hours a month in Afghanistan, the Soldiers of the company become subject-matter experts on their respective duties.

“These are the best of the best Soldiers at the top of their game, I affectionately refer to our aircrew as ‘Jedi Knights’ because of the combined 130,000 flight hours of experience our pilots brought with them to this deployment,” said Maj. Jerry Brennan, B Company commander, 306th Aerial Exploitation Battalion, TF ODIN-A.

Pilots of the commercially-available and heavily-modified aircraft have a unique mission set here.

On-board enlisted Soldiers operating collection equipment give them appropriate altitudes vector them in to position.

This represents a shift from standard Army aviation missions where pilots are flying the aircraft and the enlisted personnel are supporting the crew through maintenance and load support.

“Our sensor operators have really stepped up to the responsibility of being part of the crew,” said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Steve Henslee, a King Air 300 pilot and resident of Anchorage, Alaska, Detachment 54, Alaska Army National Guard.

“Making the coordination between pilots and operators when arriving on station and maneuvering over very difficult terrain is essential.

“These Soldiers meet the task every day,” he said.

The sensor operators on board the King Air 300 not only operate the various collection equipment, often times in stressful situations, but also serve as a conduit for information flow.

Throughout many missions the aerial sensor operator in the back of the aircraft can be called upon to relay information to ground commanders, Joint Tactical Air Controllers, or other aircraft.

“As an ASO, we have a very big responsibility to the supported units to provide relevant timely information,” said Maschmeier.

“That can be stressful when Soldiers are taking fire, but the relief we hear from the Soldiers on the ground when we are able to call

BELOW: A King Air 300 from B Company, 306th Aerial Exploitation Battalion, Task Force Observe, Detect, Identify, and Neutralize - Afghanistan, sits on the ramp during sunset on Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan. INSET: Chief Warrant Officer 2 Clint Brown, a King Air 300 pilot with B Company, 306th Aerial Exploitation Battalion, Task Force Observe, Detect, Identify, and Neutralize - Afghanistan, and a resident of Anchorage, poses with the one of the aircraft he pilots on a daily basis. (U.S. Army photos/Staff Sgt. Jack Carlson III)



out things they cannot see makes all the stress bearable.”

Capitalizing on the crews combined knowledge; the pilots safely maneuver and position the aircraft within heavily-crowded airspace.

Many times on missions there may be numerous aircraft operating above the same point all within hundreds of feet of each other, called “the stack.”

Pilots and ASOs are both trained in airspace de-confliction and management to ensure safe practices while working in such close proximity.

Working with the JTACs from various services and support elements positioned around the country, crews ensure the objective area is covered with the appropriate sensor and the information collected is processed and distributed in a

timely manner.

Maschmeier pushes his video feed to the ground commander who sees the very same information that the ASO in the plane can see.

While ground units converge on the compound, Maschmeier does a scan around the village to confirm or deny the presence of any potentially hostile individuals.

With the word passed through radio traffic, Maschmeier informs the pilots that the ground crew will be exiting the village.

Pilots flying the King Air 300 manage the airspace they’re currently working in while maintaining situational awareness of the other aircraft in the stack.

“While the ASO is working to get sensor coverage to the supported unit, the pilots are ensuring safe operation and maintaining

awareness of the often-times very crowded and challenging airspace,” said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Clint Brown, a King Air Pilot and resident of Anchorage, Det. 54, Alaska Army National Guard.

Maschmeier continues his scan of the village and the proposed exit route back to the nearby Forward Operating Base.

When he sees activity that may meet set criteria for reporting, Maschmeier relays that information back to the ground through many different communications methods.

The flow of information is seamless and helps to minimize the risk to our deployed service members.

“Having come from the medical evacuation community, I witnessed up-close the devastating

impact IEDs can have on our Soldiers,” Brennan said.

“Being a part of Task Force ODIN allows us to have a meaningful and proactive impact on the prevention of these events from happening in the first place. Serving in this role and saving lives is extremely rewarding for all of us,” Brennan said.

The mission draws to a close with insurgents captured, weapons confiscated, and the ground unit safely back at the FOB.

Maschmeier reports to higher headquarters the end of a successful mission.

Just as they turn to head back to Bagram Airfield, Maschmeier hears another Task Force ODIN-manned aircraft reporting they’re wheels-up to support a different operation in a nearby province.

Briefs and Announcements

Tax centers open

Volunteers at both Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson tax centers are trained to prepare 1040 EZ and 1040 tax returns and will do so until April 17.

The JBER-Elmendorf Tax Center is in Building 8124 and is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Wednesday from 8 a.m. to noon.

The JBER-Richardson Tax Center is in Building 600, Room A305, and is open from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Wednesday and Friday, and 1 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Thursday. Walk-in service is available.

Appointments can be made by calling 551-1175 for JBER-E; for JBER-R call 384-1040.

STAP termination

Due to Air Force reductions in funding and manpower, the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Education Center will no longer provide administrative support of the Air Force Aid Society's Spouse Tuition Assistance Program for JBER spouses after July.

In response, the Air Force Aid Society has looked at possible solutions to keep STAP operational. However, the software development costs and the time necessary to develop and implement a solution for the following academic year were not feasible.

Therefore, in an effort to maintain some support of spouses for the 2012-2013 academic year, the society has decided to discontinue STAP at the conclusion of the program year, which ends July 31, and to immediately expand eligibility requirements of the Gen. Henry H. Arnold Education Grant Program to include spouses at overseas locations.

The Arnold Grant Program is limited to full-time undergraduates only, though awards are generally higher than STAP.

Deadline for application to the Arnold Grant Program is March 31 for academic year 2012-2013. To access the application, visit <http://tiny.cc/agihf>.

Call the Education Center at

384-0970 for more information.

Utility allowance changes

The utility allowance has been adjusted for all Phase I (Sunflower – those units on Fairchild Ave., Dallas, Silver Run and Chugach housing areas) metered housing units to reflect decreases or increases in electricity and natural gas rates Aurora pays.

Aurora will continue to read utility meters monthly and provide a statement reflecting actual consumption, quarterly allowance amount and the resulting balance of customer accounts.

As is currently the case, when the credit balance of accounts exceed \$250, Aurora will issue a refund check.

If an account reflects a debit balance in excess of \$250, customers are required to make payment to Aurora in the amount of the account balance.

In addition, each account is annually reconciled and adjusted to zero at the end June.

This means during July, customers will either be refunded any accumulated credit or invoiced for any amount owed, regardless of the dollar amount.

For any questions regarding the Utility Program or further information, please contact the Aurora Utility Staff at 375-0508 or Aurora Housing Office at 753-1023.

Snowmachine orientation

Snowmachine orientation is required for all personnel intending on riding the Elmendorf side of Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.

The orientation is hosted every Thursday at 5 p.m. at Building 7210.

For more information, call 552-2023.

Furnishings management

The Furnishings Management Office offers 90-day loaner furniture for Airmen arriving at or leaving JBER-Elmendorf.

The FMO also has appliances for Airmen residing off base, for longterm use.

Delivery and pick-up is pro-

vided for 90-day loaner furniture and appliances. The FMO also has longterm furniture for ranks E-1 through E-5.

These items are available on a first-come, first-served basis. The service member is responsible for transporting these furnishings. Airmen should take a copy of PCS orders to the Government Housing Office at 6346 Arctic Warrior Drive to schedule delivery. Call 552-2740 for any questions regarding the FMO program. Hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Soldiers can call 384-0092 for the JBER-Richardson FMO.

Otter Lake fishing

The sport fishery on Otter Lake has been liberalized to allow harvest of 10 rainbow trout per day, 10 in possession, effective until Oct. 1.

There continues to be no bag, possession or size limits for northern pike.

Additionally, the legal gear for ice fishing on Otter Lake is increased to five lines with up to two hooks per line as long as both hooks are attached to the same single piece of bait.

For more information call 267-2153.

Rental Partnership

The Rental Partnership Program is available to all eligible active-duty members and consists of two options. The first option, RPP Plus, includes utilities and sometimes cable costs providing an easier budget with a set rental payment year round.

The other option, RPP 5 Percent Below Market, saves the member five percent off the rental fee that other tenants pay however utilities are paid for by the tenant.

Both options are made available with no deposits or fees to the member with the exclusion of pet fees as it may apply.

This program is designed to provide active-duty military personnel, enlisted and officers, accompanied and unaccompanied with affordable off-base housing.

An allotment must be executed under either option of the RPP for the rental payments which is made directly to the landlord resulting in a more trouble free transactions.

See RPP officials at the Capital Asset Management Office, Building 6346, Arctic Warrior Dr., or call at 552-4328 or 552-4374 for further information and assistance regarding this program.

Home buyer's seminar

The 673d Civil Engineer Squadron Capital Asset Management Office offers a first-time home buyer's seminar two times each month through the Volunteer Realtor Program.

The seminar covers home loan prequalification, negotiations, offer acceptance, inspection, title search, available types of loans, and the closure process as well as many other aspects of interest to a prospective home owner.

If interested in becoming a home owner and wish to attend, please call 552-4439 to be included on the sign-up sheet.

Quartermaster Laundry

The Quartermaster Laundry, located at 726 Quartermaster Road, cleans TA-50 gear for free and is open Monday to Friday 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

MiCare registration

MiCare, the online personal health record and secure messaging application, has been available to patients and medical group staff at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson since December.

More than 2,400 patients have already signed up to take advantage of the ability to communicate with their primary care clinicians online. Registered patients also have access to electronic records, allowing them to view and maintain their health records.

The 673d Medical Group is the first Air Force site to test this system.

Once registered, patients have the ability to participate in the study by completing a short series

of surveys during the course of the next year. This provides an opportunity for all active-duty, retired and dependent patients to have an impact on shaping the future of Air Force health services.

To register, visit the Military Treatment Facility, where enrollment specialists are available in each primary care clinic.

All beneficiaries who are enrolled in the family health, pediatrics, flight medicine and internal medicine clinics are eligible to participate. Patients need to show a military identification card and provide information, including name, social security number, birthday and email address.

The enrollment specialist will enter the information and patients will receive an email which contains a link and instructions for completing the registration process.

The project team is monitoring results in order to develop future implementation plans.

The Air Force is also interested in understanding how this new technology impacts the quality of health care provided to patients, as well as the overall well being of the patient population.

A research team is conducting a study in conjunction with this pilot program.

Find housing

Visit the Automated Housing Referral Network at www.ahrn.com to find housing before packing up. Sponsored by the Department of Defense, the website listings include available community rentals, military housing, shared rentals, temporary lodging and military for sale by owner listings.

Listings include property descriptions, pictures, maps, links to local schools, and contact information.

Service members who would like to rent their homes, sell their homes, or are looking for another service member as a roommate in their current homes, may post an ad free of charge on the site.

For more information, call 552-4439.

www.jber.af.mil/news

COMMUNITY

Volume 3, No. 11

Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson

March 16, 2012

Anchorage goes to the dogs on the first Saturday in March



The first Saturday in March is a big day in Anchorage as mushers and fans turn out for the ceremonial start of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. Mushers and their dog teams made a quick jaunt March 2 down 4th Avenue, along Cordova Street and on to Kincaid Park in the ceremonial start. The race officially began March 3 in Willow.

ABOVE: A race dog waits impatiently in its kennel for a chance to hit the trail.

ABOVE RIGHT: Musher Aliy Zirkle drives her team down 4th Avenue March 2 at the ceremonial start of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. Zirkle and her dogs made it to the finish line in Nome Wednesday evening, claiming second place in the race with a time of 9 days, 5 hours, 29 minutes and 10 seconds. Dallas Seavey was the first competitor to mush his team into Nome this year, becoming the youngest ever Iditarod winner. According to www.iditarod.com, Seavey's team traveled up the Iditarod Trail in 9 days, 4 hours, 29 minutes and 26 seconds. The record is still held by 2011 champion John Baker with a time of 8 days, 18 hours, 46 minutes and 39 seconds.

RIGHT: Race fans line 4th Avenue to watch the teams under the watchful eyes of the statue honoring the Alaska Territorial Guard, or Eskimo Scouts. The statue is one of eight located around the state. (U.S. Air Force photos/Steve White)



Space-A travel opens doors to the world

By Air Force 1st Lt Bernard Patenaude
732nd AMS

Space-Available or "Space-A" travel is a privilege and a valued benefit which many eligible Department of Defense personnel never use.

The Space-A travel program allows military personnel from all branches of service, their families and eligible civilians within the Department of Defense to fly Space-A on DoD-owned or contracted aircraft provided there is no impediment to mission requirements and the aircraft is not fully loaded with cargo or booked with passengers traveling under orders.

The Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson community has members that fit all of the categories listed above.

The prospect of flying from one destination to another for free motivates many Space-A travelers. There are, however, strict guidelines when flying Space-A.

Active-duty military members may only take advantage of this benefit while on leave or pass status for the duration of their trip. A member cannot use the program in conjunction with service-required travel and Space-A travel cannot be used for financial gain or in connection with private business initiatives or employment.

The process to travel on Space-A flights is different from booking a seat on a commercial airline and flying out of a local or international airport.

Before flying Space-A, individuals must sign up or register for travel by email, fax, regular snail mail, or in person up to 60 days before desired travel.

Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson Passenger Terminal 72 Hour Flight Schedule			
Departing To	Roll Call	Seats	
YOKOTA AB, JAPAN	0245 TUE 13 MAR	54T	
EIELSON AFB, AK	0740 TUE 13 MAR	6T	
YOKOTA AB, JAPAN OSAN AB, KOREA KADENA AB, JAPAN	1240 TUE 13 MAR	47T	
WARNER ROBINS AFB, GA	1855 TUE 13 MAR	66T	
OSAN AB, KOREA	0325 WED 14 MAR	54T	
TWENTY-NINE PALMS, CA	0555 WED 14 MAR	54T	
SHEMYA, AK	0925 WED 14 MAR	15T	
MCGUIRE AFB, NJ	0210 THU 15 MAR	54T	
T = Tentative Seat Release / F = Firm Seat Release TBD = To Be Determined ALL FLIGHTS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE			

A sample flight schedule shows seats available on aircraft heading to Japan, Georgia, Korea, New Jersey and California, as well as to Shemya, Alaska. Schedules are available on the JBER Passenger Terminal's Facebook page. (Courtesy graphic)

Active duty military do not need to be on leave status to sign up or register, but must be on leave status while traveling Space-A.

Once signed up, the person is placed on the Space-A backlog.

Category of travel coupled with sign-up date determines the traveler's placement on the Space-A backlog.

The category of travel is based on current status (emergency leave, environmental

morale leave, ordinary leave, house-hunting, unaccompanied environmental leave, unaccompanied dependent travel, permissive temporary duty, retired, Reserves, National Guard, etc.) and authorizes the priority of movement for that person or group.

On the day of desired travel and if seats are available, then the AMC passenger service agent will conduct a roll call, select personnel to travel based on the Space-A

backlog, and issue a boarding pass.

Finally, passengers and baggage will process through security and board the plane.

While this process is different from the commercial experience, passenger service agents here at JBER and throughout the Air Mobility Command system are dedicated professionals, committed to providing you with the best possible service. These agents are the best avenues for answers to questions and concerns.

This travel is an outstanding benefit, and travelers' frustrations can be reduced if they are mindful of the fact that Space-A travel is based on mission requirements and the availability of seats.

It is not uncommon for travelers to wait patiently for a Space-A flight and to be removed due to mission requirements. In short, there are no guaranteed seats for Space-A travelers.

If you would like to learn more or have questions concerning Space-A travel, feel free to visit the AMC Passenger Service Terminal, located in Building 10364 on the Elmendorf side of the base.

The terminal is open between 4 a.m. and 10 p.m. Personnel can park in the short-term parking lot, walk in and talk to one of the passenger service agents at the counter.

The passenger service terminal can also be contacted at 552-3781.

Flight information can be found on the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Passenger Terminal Facebook page at www.facebook.com/pages/Joint-Base-Elmendorf-Richardson-Passenger-Terminal/204965679537720 or travelers can call 552-4616 for a 72-hour forecast of potential flights.

Survey shows keys to successful military marriages

By Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Robert K. Glasgow
U.S. Army Alaska

During my seminary studies I worked one afternoon a week at Camp Hill State Prison, a maximum security facility just south of Harrisburg, Pa.

I met a few inmates intent on changing their lives for the better.

One inmate in particular stood out: A young man, 19 years of age, who was serving a five-year sentence for robbery.

He had the good fortune of working in the prison furniture factory. Workers were paid all of 15 cents an hour. All the money he earned – all of it – he contributed to a victim’s restitution fund.

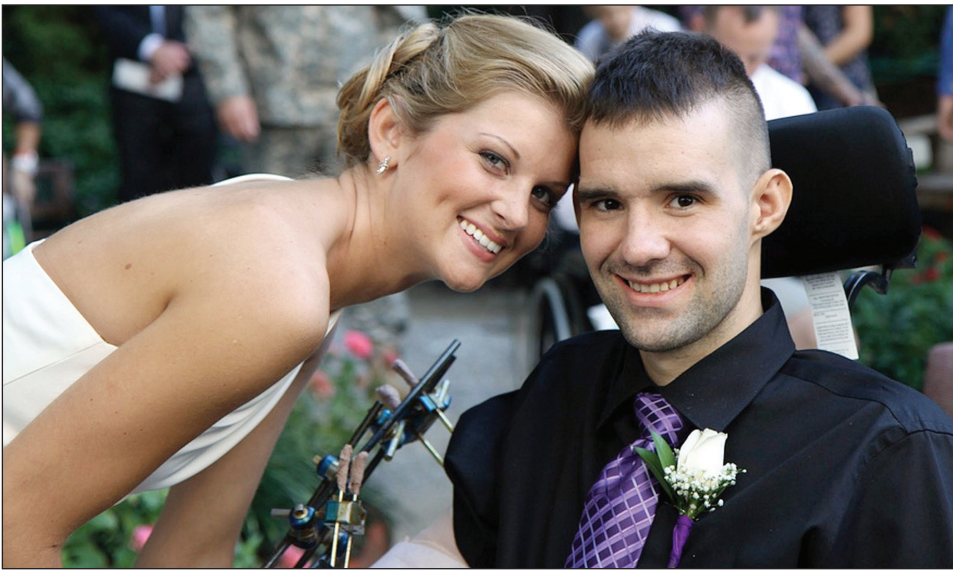
Was he required to do so? No. Did he believe he had to? Yes!

There are many “laws of human behavior,” I’ll mention two:

First, behaviors have consequences.

Some behaviors are positive, some are not. Wisdom is knowing which contribute to helping us grow in virtue, and which do not; which contribute to healthy and wholesome relationships, and which do not.

For example, according to a recent study,



Sgt. Davin Dumar, an infantryman with the 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, poses with his wife Dana at their Oct. 8, 2011, wedding at Walter Reed Medical Center. A study on marriages in the military found the single best predictor of marital success was whether the husband and wife had an undying commitment to the marriage and to each other. (Courtesy photo)

of the top three indicators of successful marriages in the military, the resolve of husband and wife to work together to make the best of any situation ranks second.

Second, values do not predict behavior. That is, we may say one thing and

do something else. Integrity is the virtue whereby we endeavor to live the values we profess.

The same study on marriages in the military found the single best predictor of marital success was whether husband and wife had an undying commitment to the marriage and to each other. Without commitment, little else is possible.

The inmate mentioned above was motivated by a newfound faith in God.

He was resolved, by the grace of God, to reform his life. That required making amends.

He told me: “I cannot do this by halves. I’m either going to be a saint or not.”

Saint Paul aptly describes this sort of determination: “faith working through love” (Gal 5:6). I remember recalling the old saying: “Saints are not odd, just rare.”

The study of marriages in the military, incidentally, found the third most significant predictor of successful marriages was church attendance.

This apparently surprised the study authors. It is good now and then to remind ourselves that God is the source of all blessings, all that is good.

JBER Housing Office offers help finding off-post homes

Courtesy of JBER Housing

Military families know it can be difficult to find good housing from across the nation or sometimes from across town.

It’s an old story that has a new ending: The Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Housing Welcome Centers remind service members there is an internet-based housing referral system, called the Automated Housing Referral Network (*AHRN.com*) to overcome that problem.

AHRN.com is a nationwide, joint-service, DoD-sponsored website that offers a 24/7 single source of available housing to incoming military and their families 365 days a year.

AHRN.com directly connects service members with local property managers via the internet, often facilitating a door-to-door move that saves time, expenses and headaches.

“This housing referral network is a quantum leap forward from the process we use in our office and the word-of-mouth referral method,” said Richard Watson, JBER housing management support chief.

With the Internet, incoming military and families are able to

reach out from anywhere and get an updated list of available housing from a much larger pool of diverse properties that will be available upon their arrival.

The idea behind *AHRN.com* is simple: local property managers, homeowners and military register their available properties on the site, free of charge, often several months before the property will be available.

These properties are then easily visible to incoming personnel when they search the site for available housing.

JBER Housing Welcome Center personnel are looking forward to expanding the *AHRN.com* program by encouraging local property managers to register in the system.

To make registering properties a worry-free proposition, *AHRN.com* incorporates several layers of privacy protection.

In return for registering their properties, *AHRN.com* provides property owners with a consistent resource of quality tenants.

“It’s a win-win for everyone who uses the site,” Watson said.

In addition to AHRN, JBER Housing Welcome Centers provide programs to assist service mem-



bers in finding a place to live once they PCS to their installations.

The JBER Rental Partnership Program provides active-duty military personnel, both enlisted and officers, accompanied and unaccompanied with information about affordable off-base housing to include corporate apartment complexes, single family homes, townhomes and condos.

The benefits of this program are discounts and no deposits or fees with the exception of pet deposits.

Rental payments for all programs are made directly to the landlord through allotments set up by both housing offices resulting in more trouble free transactions.

For more information: stop by JBER-Elmendorf Housing Office at 6346 Arctic Warrior Dr. or call 552-4328/4374 or stop by the JBER-Richardson Housing Office in Building 600 Richardson or call 384-3088/7632.

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LUCKY LOTTO NO-TAP TOURNAMENT
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RACES • MUSIC • FOOD • BEER GARDEN
RACES OPEN TO AGES 13 YRS AND OLDER
MINORS NEED WAIVER SIGNED BY PARENTS
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• BIG AIR COMPETITION, 4 P.M.
MARCH 18
• TUBING TEAM RELAY RACE, 11 A.M.
• DUCT TAPE & CARDBOARD SLED RACE, 1 P.M.
• SLUSH CUP, 4 P.M.
HILLBERG SKI AREA • 552-4838



TO ALL JBER RESIDENTS & PERSONNEL:
ARAMARK is conducting a survey to better understand your dining needs and preferences. By sharing your thoughts, they will gain valuable insight that will help improve your overall dining experience. The survey will take 5 to 8 minutes and your responses are completely confidential. Scan the code or type in the link below to begin the survey:
zoomerang.com/survey/web22eu8pw7jze
© 2012 ARAMARK. All rights reserved. This survey contains information confidential and proprietary to ARAMARK. Such information may not be disclosed or used without ARAMARK's prior written consent.



Community happenings

MONDAY
‘Frozen Planet’ screening
The Discovery Channel presents two episodes of this miniseries about the Earth’s polar regions and their flora and fauna, including Alaskan seabirds, polar bears, orcas and narwhals.
The Anchorage Museum hosts this screening from 7 to 8 p.m.
For information visit www.discovery.com/frozen-planet.

MARCH 23 THROUGH 25
Pirate Tales
Storytellers and balladeers bring to life the world’s favorite pirates – like Blackbeard and Captain Hook.
With songs like the Sloop John B, this is a show for the family at Alaska Pacific University.
For information call 677-7529.

Mat-Su Outdoorsman show
Seminars, demonstrations, a laser shooting range, and more than 142 vendors make this an outstanding sportsman’s show.
Visit the the Menard Sports Center outside Wasilla. March 23 from noon to 7 p.m., 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. March 24, and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. March 25.
For more information visit www.chinookshows.com.

MARCH 24
NSAA Ski Train to Curry
Eating, polka music, and skiing make the Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage’s trip to Curry. Ski, visit historic Curry, or snowshoe from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.
For information visit www.anchoragenordicski.com or email meese@anchorage.net.

MARCH 29 THROUGH APRIL 1
The Great Alaska Sportsman Show
The largest annual sports and outdoors show offers everything for the outdoor enthusiast with demonstrations, clinics, a kids fishing pond, laser rifle range and much more at the Sullivan and Ben Boeke arenas.
For information visit greatalaskasportsmanshow.com.

MARCH 30 THROUGH APRIL 7
The Sound of Music
This beloved musical is produced in Alaska for the first time since 1965 by the Anchorage Opera.

Take a trip to World War II Austria with this heartwarming classic.
For information visit www.anchorageopera.com.

MARCH 31
Lily Tomlin
The incomparable Tomlin brings many classic characters to life in this one-woman show.
One of America’s foremost comediennes, Tomlin may be best known for her roles on Rowan and Martin’s Laugh-In.
She appears at 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. at the Alaska Center for the Performing Arts.
For information email meese@anchorage.net.

MARCH 31 THROUGH APRIL 1
Asian Cherry Blossom Celebration
A double-feature of live theater inspired by stories from Japan and China.
The Chinese Monkey King whisks us away to adventure, and A Thousand Cranes is a lyrical reminder of the desire for peace.
The fun starts daily at 2 p.m. at the Alaska Center for the Performing Arts.
For information call 263-2787.

APRIL 3
Carolina Chocolate Drops
The 2011 Grammy-winning group for traditional folk music, the Carolina Chocolate Drops bring black string-band and jug-band music of the 1920s and 1930s with a joyful vengeance.
Dirt-floor dance electricity starts at 7 p.m. at the Wendy Williamson Auditorium.
For information email meese@anchorage.net.

APRIL 6
Rage City Rollergirls
Anchorage’s own roller-derby girls battle it out at the Dena’ina Center. As usual, wheels roll from 7 to 10 p.m. For information visit www.ragecityrollergirls.com.

APRIL 12
The Conquest of McKinley
100 years ago a group of adventurers including Belmore Browne and Hershhal Parker tried to become the first to summit Mount McKinley.
They got heartbreakingly close; just 300 feet from the summit, they were thwarted by a

violent storm.
Denali guide Brian Okonek tells this epic story of camaraderie, sportsmanship and perseverance at the Anchorage Museum starting at 7 p.m.
For information visit www.anchagemuseum.org.

APRIL 13
Arctic Man Classic
In this extreme race, skiers take a lone descent before grasping their snowmobile partner’s tow rope for a climb at 70 to 90 mph.
A final plummet to the finish line marks the end of the course at Summit Lake.
Races start at 1 p.m. For information visit www.arcticman.com.

APRIL 14
Anchorage Symphony season finale
This bittersweet performance of Brahm’s Double Concerto features superstar cellist Zuill Bailey as well as Sitka Music Festival founder and violinist Paul Rosenthal.
Celebrate the last of the season at 8 p.m. at the Alaska Center for the Performing Arts.
For information visit www.anchoragesymphony.org.

APRIL 21
Kids Day at the Museum
Free general admission for children 12 and younger to celebrate the citywide Kids Day.
For information visit www.anchoragemuseum.org.

Chris Botti concert
Multiple-platinum jazz artist Chris Botti brings his acclaimed instrumental jazz to the Alaska Center for the Performing Arts. since his 2004 CD When I Fall In Love, Botti’s work has crossed boundaries.
Concert starts at 7:30 p.m. For information, visit www.anchorageconcerts.org/_events.

APRIL 20 THROUGH 22
Alyeska Slush Cup
Celebrate the coming of spring with a last blast of snowy fun at the Alyeska Resort’s spring carnival and slush cup.
Costumed competitors brave a chillingly cold pond of water on skis at the signature event.
For information visit www.alyeskaresort.com.

APRIL 28 AND 29
Whole Life Festival
A holistic spiritual event featuring free lectures and drawings, plus stones, jewelry, aura photos, healing oils, books, bodyworkers and more.
Both days from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Coast International Inn.
For information visit www.drglennkey.com.

Bettye Lavette concert
Detroit’s Bettye Lavette brings soul stylings to songs by Rosanne Cash, Fiona Apple and others. Hailed by Rolling Stone magazine, she tears it up Aretha-Franklin style at the Alaska Center for the Performing Arts starting at 7:30.
For information, call 257-2304 or email meese@anchorage.net.

ONGOING
Sing-a-long at the zoo
Pre-school aged kids can explore the world of animals through music with musician Annie Reeves. Children can sing along with the guitar, or play with the musical instruments for kids. Sing-a-longs are held at 10:30 a.m. Mondays at the coffee shop greenhouse.
For information email klarson@alaskazoo.org.

Chapel seeks contractor
The JBER chapel is accepting bids for the Young Adult Ministry Coordinator contract. Bids, resumes and references will be accepted until March 12. For information or to get a statement of work, call Chaplain (Capt.) Savell at 552-4422.

Wired Cafe for Airmen
The Wired Cafe is located at 7076 Fighter Dr., between Polaris and Yukla dormitories.
The cafe has wireless Internet and programs throughout the week for single Airmen living in the dorms. There are free meals Thursdays at 6:30 p.m.
For information, call 552-4422.

Model railroading
The Military Society of Model Railroad Engineers meets at 7 p.m. Tuesdays and 1 p.m. Saturdays in basement Room 35 of Matanuska Hall, 7153 Fighter Drive. Anyone interested in model railroading is invited.
For information, call 552-5234, visit www.trainweb.org/msmrr or

Chapel services

Catholic Mass
Sunday
9 a.m. – Soldiers’ Chapel
10:30 a.m. – Elmendorf Chapel 1

Monday through Friday
11:40 a.m. – Soldiers’ Chapel
Monday, Wednesday and Friday
11:30 a.m. – Elmendorf Chapel Center
Thursday
11:30 a.m. – Hospital Chapel

Confession
Sunday
4:30 p.m. – Soldiers’ Chapel
Monday though Friday
Before/after 11:40 Mass – Soldiers’ Chapel

Protestant Sunday Services
Joint Liturgical Service
9 a.m. – Elmendorf Chapel 2
Traditional Service
9 a.m. – Elmendorf Chapel 1
Contemporary Protestant Service
11 a.m. – Soldiers’ Chapel
Gospel Service
Noon – Elmendorf Chapel 1
Contemporary Protestant Service
5 p.m. – Elmendorf Chapel 1

Buddhist
Soka Gakkai Goshu
7 p.m., first Friday of the month – Chapel Center (10427 Kuter Ave.)

email bjorgan@alaska.net.
Road Warriors running
Want to get out and run?
Military and civilian alike are welcome to train regularly with the group and get involved with monthly running, biking and swimming events with the Road Warriors.
For more information, check the Road Warriors (Alaska) Facebook page or call 384-7733 or 552-1361.

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MARCH 20 - 22 • 9 A.M. - 4 P.M. • FREE
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JFAP OFFICE • 384-1513



JBER JOB FAIR
MARCH 22 • 10 A.M. - 3 P.M. • FREE
OPEN TO ALL JBER PERSONNEL
NG ARMORY, JBER RICHARDSON 552-4943



INTRO TO SHRIMPING
MARCH 22 • 6 - 8 P.M. • FREE
JBER ELMENDORF OAP • BLDG. 7301 552-4599



HANDGUN RELOADING CLASS
MARCH 23 • 5:30 P.M. • \$5
MUST SIGN-UP IN ADVANCE
OUTDOOR RECREATION ELMENDORF 552-2023



INDOOR ROCK CLIMBING CLINIC
MARCH 29 • 6 - 8 P.M. • \$25
CLIMBING WALL IS LOCATED AT JBER ELMENDORF
OUTDOOR RECREATION CENTER, BLDG 7301.
OUTDOOR RECREATION RICHARDSON 384-1475

more jber fun at elmendorf-richardson.com





Northern night lights

Aurora photographers were treated to a brilliant display of the Northern Lights last week around Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, and were pleased to share their best shots. The photographers and locations from CLOCKWISE above were: Corine Comstock, Chugiak; Danielle Segui, Otter Lake; Damian Smith, Skyline Road in Eagle River; Jacob Dalzell, Otter Lake Road; Felecia Aegarter, Moose Crossing; Patrice Chandler, Knik River; Kris Coons, Moose Haven; and Becca and Jason Allen, Skyline Drive.



Texas boy becomes an Alaska Soldier for a day

By Staff Sgt. Matthew E. Winstead
U.S. Army Alaska PAO

It was a day in the life of an Alaska Soldier.

After a quick meal at the Warrior’s Inn Dining Facility, the schedule was going to include riding in a Black Hawk helicopter, firing simulated weapons at a high-tech shooting range, simulated convoy training with cutting-edge motion- and sensory-simulation technology, airborne sustainment training, jumping from a 34-foot tower and a private meeting with the commanding general of U.S. Army Alaska.

While this could plausibly pass for the daily routine of a USARAK Arctic Warrior, it was the chain of events planned for Nathan Rothe, a 9-year-old boy with muscular dystrophy from Dallas, Texas, visiting Alaska to experience a full-blown arctic winter with his family with the help of the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

In addition to his mother and father, Nathan was also joined by Collin Prokasy, his hometown friend, who was allowed to accompany him under the rules of the Make-A-Wish Foundation, because Nathan is an only child.

While Nathan’s wish wasn’t to become a Soldier for a day, his family’s military past led them to an invitation to spend the day visiting Army units during their stay in Alaska, according to Mary Rall, U.S. Army Alaska community relations chief.

“The Soldiers participating in the event



Nathan Rothe and Collin Prokasy are invited by Maj. Gen. Raymond Palumbo, U.S. Army Alaska Commander, to sign the official USARAK visitor’s book, recording them as honored guests to the command and marking Nathan’s time as a Soldier for a day. Nathan, who has muscular dystrophy and lives in Dallas, is visiting Alaska to experience an arctic winter.

seemed to have gotten as much out of the experience as the Rothe family,” Rall said. “I genuinely think it was something everybody involved felt privileged to be a part of.”

After some minor schedule shuffling, the Rothe family and Make-A-Wish were able to dedicate some time between attending the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race and visiting the Anchorage Zoo to visit the installation and see how arctic Soldiers live and work.

Units from across the Army side of JBER opened their doors to welcome the Rothe family to show them what it’s like to be a Soldier.

Their visit started with lunch at an on-post dining facility to eat what Soldiers eat, where Soldiers eat.

“This is a lot cooler than our school cafeteria,” Collin said, as he watched the Soldiers eating at their tables.

“Yeah, we don’t have moose heads on our walls,” Nathan agreed.

After a healthy lunch they were escorted to Bryant Army Air Field where Capt. Brett Haker, maintenance officer for the 1st Battalion, 207th Aviation Regiment of the Alaska Army National Guard, brought the family into a hangar filled with UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters and whispered something into the boy’s ears.

The two boys then shouted “Fall in!” and the National Guard Soldiers all responded by getting into a crisp formation before the smiling boys.

Haker presented the boys with honorary certificates and wings and donated, kid-sized Army aviator hats and jackets complete with unit patches and name tapes.

The special guests also had a chance to sit in the cockpit of a Black Hawk and try out the aircraft’s communications system.

At the end of the hangar tour, the family met with the Adjutant General of the Alaska National Guard, Maj. Gen. Thomas Katkus.

At the Battle Command Training Center the boys tried their hands at the engagement skills trainer, a complex system of integrated lasers and projected images on a screen attached to air compressors and inert M-4 and M-16 rifles.

After some instruction on the system, the boys had a chance to shoot at digital turkeys scurrying across a projected background.

“Oh, they love this,” Jessica Rothe, Nathan’s mother, said. “They’re both carrying on like it’s a big video game.”

After a few rounds of the digital turkey shoot the visitors experienced another simulated training event with the reconfigurable vehicle tactical trainer, a large stationary simulation of a military style Humvee



Nathan Rothe, a 9 year old with muscular dystrophy visiting the installation to experience the life of a Soldier for a day, operates the turret of a simulated military vehicle inside the reconfigurable vehicle tactical trainer at the Mission Training Complex on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. (Photos by Staff Sgt. Matthew E. Winstead/U.S. Army Alaska Public Affairs)

surrounded by digital projected landscape which reacts to the crew’s actions.

The system replicates the feel of actually driving a military convoy through hostile terrain.

The family laughed and watched as the boys excitedly took turns driving and operating the simulated M240-B machine gun mounted on the turret of the vehicle and maneuvered the harsh terrain and navigated narrow alleys looking for their digital enemy.

“This is so cool!” Collin said, as he drove the vehicle.

“This thing is really loud!” Nathan said, as he pulled the trigger of the machine gun and it recoiled with compressed air just like a real weapon.

At the Airborne Sustainment Training Area paratroopers from the 4th Brigade (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division Rear Detachment showed the family what goes into airborne operations.

Maj. Daniel Enslin, rear detachment commander, greeted them and introduced them to his demonstrators who showed them the workings of a T-10 Delta parachute and reserve.

They rigged up a demonstrator and yanked the parachute out to show how it functioned before taking a knee and showing how the reserve parachute can rapidly deploy it in the event of an emergency.

The entire family had the opportunity, if they so chose, to jump from the 34-foot

tower, a military paratrooper training apparatus used to refine the skill of a novice jumper and help new paratroopers overcome their initial fear of heights.

Collin and Ted Rothe, Nathan’s father, opted to rig into the harnesses and exit the tower as their friends and family cheered them on.

“I’m not going to do that, that’s crazy!” Nathan said.

There was one last event awaiting the Rothe family as they departed the ASTA.

The guests dropped by USARAK headquarters to meet USARAK Commanding General Maj. Gen. Raymond Palumbo, who warmly greeted them and had some special gifts for the boys before they left.

Palumbo presented the boys with a gift bag filled with items emblazoned with the USARAK logo and helped them put on black and gold football-style jerseys wearing the number 49 for the 49th state as he talked sports with them and showed them some of the donated hockey jerseys that had been given to USARAK over the years.

As the family filed out of the commander’s office to continue their Alaska visit, Nathan seemed to have one question lingering on his mind.

“You guys have football up here?” Nathan asked.

“We have all kinds of sports up here,” Palumbo answered, getting chuckles from Nathan’s mother and father.

