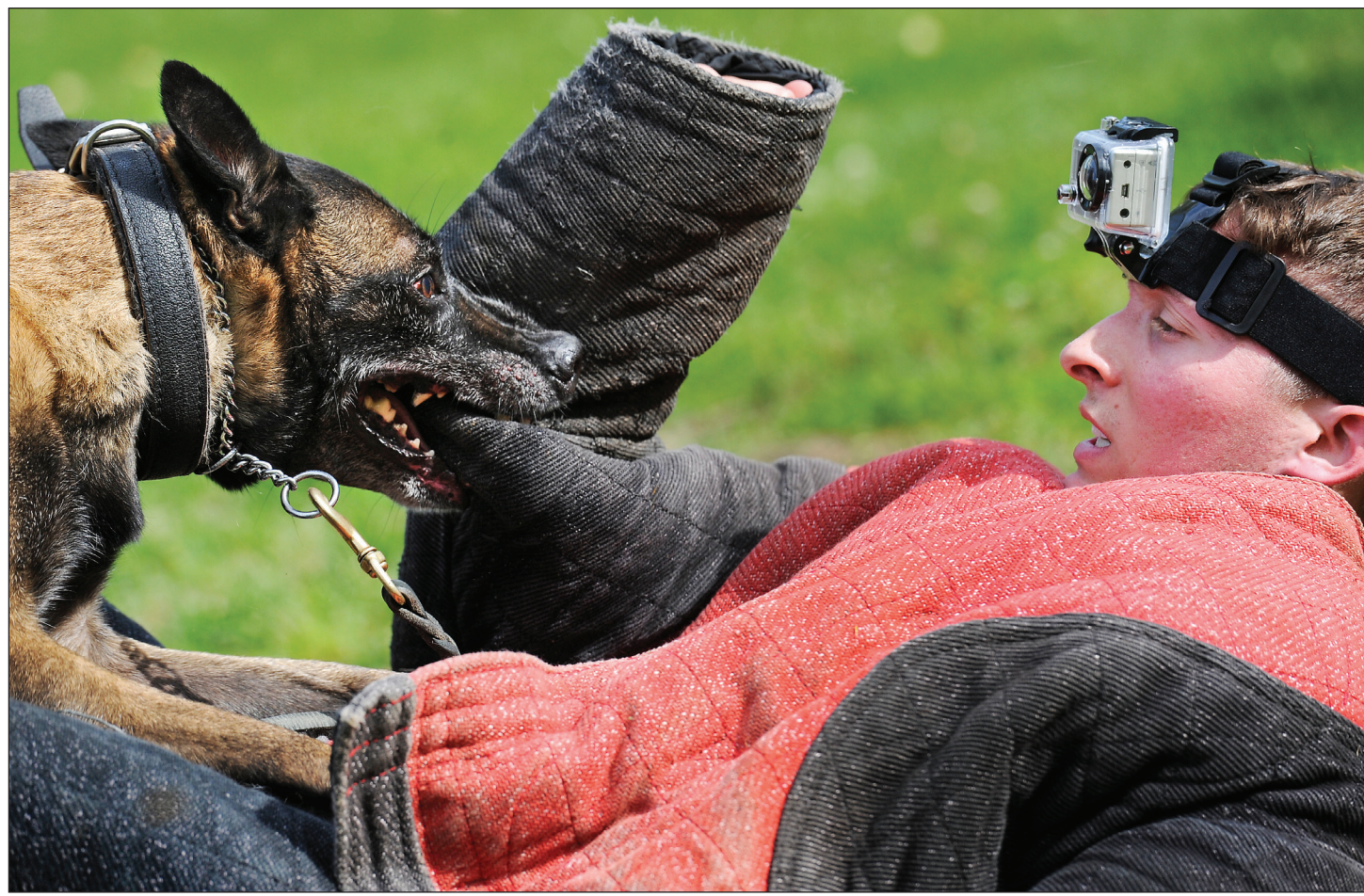


ARCTIC WARRIOR

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Senior Airman Shawn Witcher, assigned to the 673rd Security Forces Squadron, a native of Mesquite, Texas, locks eyes with Kimba, a Belgian Malinois military working dog, during a training session on JBER, Aug. 26. (U.S. Air Force photos/Justin Connaher)



Clinic to offer flu vaccine at JBER-Elmendorf Gym

JBER Public Affairs staff report

The 673d Medical Group on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson is offering flu vaccines to active-duty Air Force members at the JBER-Elmendorf Gym from 6:30 a.m. until 6:00 p.m., Sept. 16 and 18.

This outreach is designed to make getting the vaccine more convenient, base officials said. The flu vaccine is mandatory for all active-duty Airmen.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend everyone older than the age of six months get a flu vaccine annually to avoid potentially dangerous complications from the flu.

Department of Defense civilian employees, dependents and retirees will have access to vaccines in the near future. Stay tuned to the JBER Facebook page, newspaper and website for more information regarding when and where they will be available.

BITE BIGGER THAN HER BARK

Military working dogs sharpen their skills at JBER

By Air Force 2nd Lt. Michael Trent Harrington
JBER Public Affairs

THE SUN HUNG LOW OVER the morning horizon. The rumble of traffic melted into a muffled rustle of grass, damp and short, then of footfalls rushing closer and faster, faster, faster. The jangle of brass clinked in the chill air, punctuation marks for panted breaths. A single bark echoed, then another, pushed before the quickening paces like a sound wave of compressed air as it leaves a muzzle – here not a rifle but the slobbery, snarling muzzle of a dog.

A third bark was swallowed in a growl, the unmistakable, guttural vibration of a dog nearing its prey. The animal leapt and, ferocious and inescapable, closed the final yards in the air.

The target toppled to the ground in a flurry of sharp white canine teeth and sleek brown canine fur. He flailed and struggled. The dog remained clamped, jaw shaking, eyes widened, as loyal to the task at hand as to his keeper. He ripped and pulled until a shouted “OUT” rang out. The dog obeyed on cue and instantly released its grip. The animal sat on its back haunches and waited patiently, tail wagging, tongue hanging to one side.

Dog handlers with the 673d Security Forces Squadron volunteer for a particularly ruff – rough, even – line of work. The road to becoming a military working dog handler is lengthy. Airmen must possess three years

of experience in security forces and must be accepted for work with canines. Yet the road for the dogs themselves is nothing to wag a tail at, either.

A military working dog starts its Air Force life just like any other basic recruit, as a bouncy, helpless puppy at sunny Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. There, the 341st Training Squadron administers the Department of Defense Military Working Dog Program, raising German Shepherds and Belgian Malinois breeds. Before being paired with a handler, the puppies are given to foster families who help the animal adjust to various social settings. Then they are monitored through various stages of readiness and training.

The initial period for a dog-and-handler team on base, known as the rapport phase, essentially involves military working dogs re-learning their most fundamental talent, and the one oftentimes most critical downrange – serving as (air-) man’s best friend.

“The first phase involves taking the dogs around, playing with them, then working up towards mission-oriented tasks like explosive detection and building searches,” said Senior Airman Shawn Witcher, 673d SFS MWD handler. “Everything we do starts – has to start, really – with mutual trust.”

All the repetition and shared time helps

mesh the two personalities. A well-trained dog can smell, hear and see better than any human under most circumstances. Teaching the dog to detect specific stimuli and communicate that information to a handler is equal parts art and psychology.

The threats facing them are as varied as the dogs themselves. Some are playful and loud, others more reserved.

Witcher’s military working dog, Ajax, is a curious seven-year-old German Shepherd, and has been on station at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson for five years. But even dogs as social as Ajax share an uncommonly large responsibility for the safety of their teams. Early every morning, a handler runs his or her dog through a series of obedience tasks, obstacles and scenarios.

“One of the most rewarding things is to take a brand-new dog and watch them develop and improve,” said Air Force Staff Sgt. Stacy Glass, 673d SFS MWD handler.

In a combat or crisis scenario, a handler must be able to trust his or her dog from the very first moment. Indeed, dogs tend to deploy frequently precisely because they can do what even the most sophisticated technology often cannot in terms of explosive detection, tracking and threat mitigation. The



► See DOGS, A-3



Ajax, a German shepherd military working dog assigned to the 673d SFS, leaps over a hurdle during a training session on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Aug. 26. Security Forces Airmen continually train with their K9 counterparts to keep their teams flexible to respond to law enforcement emergencies, and for overseas deployments. (U.S. Air Force photo/Justin Connaher)



The Belgian Malinois is a short-coated variety of the Belgian shepherd dog, distinguished by their yellowish-brown color and black-mask face. Known as a “protection breed,” the Malinois, along with the German shepherd and other MWD breeds, is well suited for police dog duties, including narcotics and explosives detection, criminal deterrence, and working closely with a military handler.

Air Force TA changes on the horizon

By Air Force Staff Sgt. William Banton
JBER Public Affairs

Changes to the Air Force’s Military Tuition Assistance program will affect Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Airmen beginning Oct. 1.

The new changes to TA include changes to eligibility requirements, supervisory oversight and how TA is approved. Because of these changes, the application window for classes starting on or after Oct. 1, will start Sept. 9.

“Air Force leaders worked very hard to develop a TA program that provides the best opportunities for Airmen and meets Air Force needs,” said Kimberly Yates, Air Force Voluntary Education chief, in an Air Force news release. “Higher education continues to be a cornerstone of Airmen’s development at all levels.”

The modifications to the TA program are designed to guarantee that the limitations from a projected smaller Department of Defense budget will not affect TA benefits.

“First off, I think it’s important to establish that TA [benefits] has not changed,” said Joseph O’Neil, 673d Force Support Squadron chief of education and training. “It’s still 100 percent [funded] up to \$250 a semester hour [up to \$4,500 annually]. What’s changed is eligibility.”

Military TA will now automatically be denied for Airmen with unfavorable information files, failed physical fitness tests, referral enlisted performance reports or those who have been placed on a control roster.

“As of right now, if you were to apply for TA, as soon as you hit that submit button it would electronically come to us in the education office and we would have to approve it,” O’Neil said. “That’s going to change; it’s going to be the supervisor now [whom] the application is e-mailed to.”

Airmen will still need to work with the education office to determine if the courses being taken are appropriate for the indi-

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Duffy talks reduction in force

The JBER and 673d Air Base Wing commander, as well as JBER officials work to reduce impact, Page A-2



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Civilian RIF at JBER

Duffy, JBER officials work to minimize RIF impact

Editorial by Air Force Col. Brian Duffy
JBER and 673d ABW commander

Arctic Warriors, on May 5, I provided you an update on direction I gave our Civilian Personnel Office to initiate a civilian reduction-in-force action based on authority provided to installation commanders by Headquarters, Air Force. This RIF was enacted to complete civilian end strength realignments driven by the release of Resource Management Decision 703 more than two years ago.

As you may recall, RMD 703 directed the reduction of some 289 civilian authorizations at JBER. Additionally, restructuring of the Defense Environmental Restoration Account program affected a number of other related civilian positions here. In both cases, these actions dictated affected positions needed to be off our manning document by Sept. 30.

Initially, we received authorization to retain otherwise adversely affected civilian employees in an overhire capacity as the Air Force had not granted RIF authority.

With the announcement of budget reductions in Fiscal Year 2013 stemming from the Budget Control Act of 2011, in mid-April of this year, Voluntary Early Retirement Authority/Voluntary Separation Incentive Pay opportunities were made available to elements of our civilian workforce who were either displaced by RMD 703 reductions or to other civilian employees who, by their voluntary separation, created a vacancy where an otherwise displaced employee could be placed.

This action saw 63 total applications;

however, only a few met criteria and were subsequently forwarded to the Air Force Personnel Center for consideration.

Finally, in late April, the Air Force provided RIF authority to installations to ensure remaining civilian employees adversely affected by RMD 703 were either placed into authorized positions or released.

With the completion of our RIF action on Aug. 23, we are on target to close Fiscal Year 2013 with our RMD 703-affected civilian personnel properly aligned against authorized positions. With the help of our Civilian Personnel Office and experts at the Air Force Personnel Center, we minimized the potential adverse actions associated with a RIF.

Specifically in this RIF action, there were zero employees separated, 14 transferred to the Air Force Civil Engineer Center, 20 reassigned to an equivalent graded position, and only two reassigned to a position in a lower grade. The employees who were reassigned to a lower grade will remain on retained pay as long as they meet basic eligibility requirements.

While these actions have been underway, we are also working through the effects of multiple hiring freezes, monetary award suspensions and the most recent furlough, all of which have placed great strains on our professional and dedicated civilian workforce and exacerbated our ability to recruit and retain new personnel.

We realize this has been a challenging period for our civilian teammates, and we remain dedicated to providing as much notification on potential future impacts as possible.

Discussions continue on Capitol Hill concerning our proposed Fiscal Year 2014 budget and how the impacts of sequestration under the Budget Control Act of 2011 may affect our future civilian end strength. As the results of those discussions are made public, we will work to ensure you receive timely notification.

As always, I remain grateful for the leadership and dedication shown by our tremendous civilian teammates and am humbled by your accomplishments in support of the many missions and people of JBER.

Solving suicide together

Editorial by Army Maj. Gen. Michael Shields
USARAK commanding general

The Army has dedicated tremendous time, effort and resources to prevent suicide and to limit the profound impact suicides have on our formations. I want to express my appreciation to everyone who has devoted so much to this cause through training, education and simply looking after and caring for others. Thank you for your focus and energy to one day help the Army eliminate the problem of suicide in our ranks.

In 2012, the Army lost more Soldiers to suicide than to combat. Sadly, one of those Soldiers was an Arctic Warrior. This year is

shaping up to be even worse with one confirmed suicide in the command and two suspected suicide cases.

Almost every week, I am briefed about one or more of our Soldiers being hospitalized or referred to behavioral health for suicidal thoughts or actions. Though the frequency of these occurrences is disturbing, it is evident many of our at-risk Soldiers are seeking and receiving help.

As professionals who live the Army Values, we must share a commitment to take action and reduce suicide together. I expect each of you to be vigilant in safeguarding your battle buddies and those you lead. We must collectively focus on prevention, but

our junior leaders especially need to focus on the matter.

Platoon sergeants, section sergeants, squad leaders and team leaders interact with Soldiers more than anyone. They have more opportunity to recognize the red flags and indicators of suicidal intentions than any other leader. These junior leaders are the first line of defense in protecting our Soldiers against suicide.

Ultimately, the goal of prevention is developing healthy, resilient Soldiers to the point suicide is not an option. Soldier resiliency is reinforced by a strong connection with friends and family, a sense of belonging to the unit and the inner strength to face adversity. It is also important Soldiers embrace a posi-

tive self-image.

We must establish a culture that encourages Soldiers to seek help, and we must eliminate the cultural stigma that seeking help for suicidal thoughts is something to be ashamed of. Leadership at every level is the key to making this cultural change. Leaders must emphasize openly and publicly, just as I am here, that seeking help is a sign of strength, self-awareness and courage.

Mentoring and professional development are the lifeblood of our Army. Leaders have the opportunity to interact with their Soldiers on a daily basis, and they must be focused on helping Soldiers understand just how important and valuable they are to the team.

This trust and camaraderie will help them recognize Soldiers who require intervention.

Intervention is vital to preventing suicide. A successful intervention may be as simple as listening, showing empathy and being ready to escort a Soldier to the chain of command, behavioral health or the chaplain. Any Soldier can do this with very little training. When it comes down to it, simply showing you care may be enough.

There are no easy answers to the problem of suicide. This will take consistent effort and attention at every level to solve. I am committed to the effort, and I expect every Soldier in this command to be as well.

Arctic Warrior! Arctic Tough!

Coast Guard commandant continues Arctic outreach

By Cmdr. Rick Wester
Coast Guard Public Affairs

Despite snowfall in the North Slope of Alaska last month and cooler than average temperatures all summer, Arctic sea ice extent tracked well below average again this year. This ongoing transformation of the Arctic Ocean from a solid expanse of inaccessible ice fields into an emerging maritime frontier is attracting increased human activity in U.S. Arctic waters which demands an effective, capable U.S. Coast Guard presence.

Shortly following the release of the National Strategy for the Arctic Region this past May, the Coast Guard, under the leadership of the Department of Homeland Security, became the first U.S. federal agency to release and begin implementing its own Arctic strategy. One key objective of the Coast Guard Arctic Strategy and Coast Guard Operation Arctic Shield 2013 is broadening partnerships.

Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Bob Papp spent a week in Alaska, underscoring the importance of establishing and maintaining a range of Arctic partnerships.

"We cannot do this alone," the Commandant said. "It requires a collaborative network of domestic and international partners, drawing upon their cumulative authorities, capabilities and experience."

Kathryn Sullivan, Ph.D., acting National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration administrator, joined the Commandant in Alaska.

"This was an outstanding opportunity to see first hand how



Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Bob Papp met with Mayor Denise Michels and other city officials in Nome, Alaska, Aug. 20, 2013. (U.S. Coast Guard photo/Petty Officer 2nd Class Annie R. B. Elis)

the changing climate is affecting Arctic communities and to explore how NOAA and the Coast Guard can address issues together," Sullivan said.

The Coast Guard and NOAA signed a Cooperative Maritime Strategy this year.

Also joining the Commandant was Julia Gourley of the U.S. State Department. Gourley is the U.S. senior Arctic official and representative to the Arctic Council. The Arctic Council is an intergovernmental forum of the eight Arctic countries that addresses dynamic and evolving change in the Arctic.

It convened the Arctic countries to conclude international agreements on search and rescue as well as oil spill preparedness and response operations.

"Meeting with local leadership in Barrow, Dutch Harbor and Homer has given me additional insights, which will help to ensure the U.S. makes informed decisions when we assume chairmanship of the Arctic Council in 2015," Gourley said.

The commandant and U.S. senators Lisa Murkowski and Mark Begich discussed Coast Guard Arctic infrastructure and capabilities

issues along with Rear Adm. Tom Ostebo. Ostebo, who as the 17th Coast Guard District commander responsible for all Coast Guard Operations throughout Alaska, has a dedicated tribal liaison on staff who actively engages with Arctic tribal leaders and local governments to ensure Coast Guard operations do not conflict with tribal rights, interests or subsistence activities.

While demands for Coast Guard services in Alaska are expanding, budgets are not. Just as collaborative solutions are required for Arctic operations, so too are

they required for supporting infrastructure improvements. For example, in a unique partnership with the State of Alaska, a new wing that is being built onto their National Guard headquarters will be leased to Coast Guard Sector Anchorage. Moving into this new state-of-the-art facility will provide better capabilities and closer inter-agency coordination for a fraction of the cost of their current under-sized building. The Commandant personally thanked Gov. Sean Parnell and Alaska Army National Guard Maj. Gen. Thomas Katkus for their efforts as they toured the nearly-completed wing.

Partnerships in the Arctic help the Coast Guard to build knowledge, capacity and resilience, and run the spectrum from senators to everyday citizens. Coast Guard Marine Safety Detachment Dutch Harbor is an important hub for deployed Coast Guard cutters and is the only permanent Coast Guard unit in the Aleutian Island chain. Helping this seven-person isolated duty detachment to conduct their maritime response and oversight mission is private citizen and neighbor Mary Lekanoff. Known as "Coast Guard Mary," she has volunteered her time for nearly three decades to assist Coast Guardsmen stationed there or passing through, helping them to feel at home even if it is thousands of miles away.

"We are an Arctic nation, not a nation with an Arctic state," said the Commandant. "The cross-cutting nature of Arctic issues requires a whole-of-government approach, fully informed by Native Alaskans and other Arctic stakeholders with unique Arctic insights."

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Slow down, look, listen: Maintaining traffic discipline

By Tech Sgt. Vernon Cunningham
JBER Public Affairs

When driving on base it's important to remember some basic rules of the road. Do not use a cell phone without a hands-free system while driving. Do not change lanes without a turn signal. Always look for an emergency vehicle when sirens are in the air. However, drivers must maintain the discipline necessary to actually follow these rules and avoid the risk of an accident.

Tech Sgt. Lakeithia Harding, 673d Security Forces Squadron operations support assistant noncommissioned officer in charge, said most accidents on JBER involve privately owned vehicles hitting other POVs or private and government-owned vehicles hitting stationary objects.

JBER drivers need to observe proper vehicle distance at high-traffic areas, observe and heed all yield and stop signs and ensure they are aware of the on-base-specific rules and regulation for operating a motor vehicle.

Harding said some accidents are due to distractions, such as wildlife, unfamiliarity with locations and watching airborne aircraft. But, most accidents occur solely due to drivers not following the rules.

"This calendar year there have been a total of 263 reported vehicle accidents on JBER," Harding said. "More than 90 percent of these accidents occur in parking lots due to speed and inattentive driving. Personnel should always utilize extreme caution when driving through parking lots, especially highly-populated areas such as the base exchange."

Joseph Fischer, Army and Air Force Exchange main service store, manager said his customers include dependents and small children. Those customers are who make up the pedestrian traffic going to and through the BX parking lot depends on vigilant drivers to keep them safe.

"The big thing is to slow down and follow the lines and flow of traffic in the parking lot," Fischer said.

Harding said she agreed.

"Drivers in the base exchange parking lot should never assume they have the right of way or that other drivers see them," Harding said. "If you aren't certain a driver can see you, it is best to stop and let that vehicle pass. And, for those who cut through the parking lots outside of normal flow of traffic, I say don't do it. How much time are you really saving? Not only are you endangering yourself, you are endangering others. Drivers will be cited for such violations."

For a full list of base driving rules, refer to Air Force Instruction 91-207.



ABOVE: A truck turns past a stop sign into the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Joint Military Mall parking lot, Wednesday. There have been a total of 263 reported vehicle accidents on JBER this year. More than 90 percent of these accidents occur in parking lots due to speeding and inattentive driving. When driving across parking lots, pay attention to signs and yield the right of way to pedestrians and other traffic. (U.S. Air Force photos/Staff Sgt. William Banton)



RIGHT: A minivan passes a stop light on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. Distracted driving is dangerous and can stem from talking on a cell phone, texting, eating or anything competing for the attention of the driver.



▼ From **DOGS**, A-1

dogs do it all with an acute awareness of their surroundings and an anxious desire to protect their handlers that computerized equipment has not yet been able to replicate. Recently, a Belgian Malinois dog became the first military working dog to be awarded a medal for valor after she subdued a would-be

ambusher in Afghanistan, despite receiving several bullet wounds at close range.

"The dogs themselves serve as a psychological deterrent, at the gate, around base, and while out on missions," Witcher said.

Thus, the dogs are oftentimes better at detecting potential hazards than, say, an electronic explosives "sniffer" and more likely to deter

an incident from occurring in the first place.

Military working dogs and their handlers play hard and train harder. The four-legged guardians of the base community embody the best in all service members—loyalty, dedication, determination—and do it all without a paycheck.

Few would say no, however, to the occasional tennis ball.



ABOVE: Kimba, a Belgian Malinois military working dog assigned to the 673rd Air Base Wing Security Forces Squadron, runs toward an aggressor during a training session on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, Aug. 26, 2013. Security Forces Airmen continually train with their K9 counterparts to keep their teams flexible to respond to law enforcement emergencies, and for overseas deployments. (U.S. Air Force photo/Justin Connaher)

▼ From **TA**, A-1

vidual's degree plan.

According to guidance provided by the office of the Secretary of the Air Force, the intent of this change is to provide leaders opportunities to mentor Airmen and ensure their educational goals are

being met without impacting the mission.

"Supervisors will have some parameters they will have to work in," O'Neil said. "The intent is not that they can arbitrarily say yes or no. They have to have some justification if they disapprove that TA request."

In order for a supervisor to deny a request, an Airman has to be in upgrade training, be going on a temporary duty assignment or permanent change of station during the academic term, be enrolled in a professional military education course or for any factors that would impede the Airman's ability to

complete the course.

"If Airmen want to try to make this process go a lot smoother, I think it's important that they establish an understanding with their supervisor," O'Neil said.

O'Neil recommends Airmen take the time to talk to their superiors about their goals for furthering

their education and to try to find out if the supervisor is aware of any issues, which would prevent them from meeting their educational goals.

For more information on the current TA policies and guidelines, contact the JBER-Elmendorf education office at 552-3164.

Spartan Sprint Triathlon

The brigade will conduct the Spartan Sprint Triathlon Saturday starting at 9 a.m. Registration will begin at Buckner Physical Fitness Center at 6 a.m. The triathlon will feature a 300-yard swim in the Buckner pool, followed by a 12-mile bike route, and a 5K run. The pool is reserved exclusively for triathlon competitors until mid afternoon. The bike route will include sections of 6th Street, Arctic Valley Road, Richardson Drive-Davis Highway, and Talley Avenue on JBER-Elmendorf. Roads will remain open, but motorists are asked to use caution and yield to bike traffic during the competition.

Great Skill Program

The Great Skill Program recruiter will present a classified information brief Wednesday at JBER's main video teleconference center, Building 1, from 10 to 11:30 a.m., and 1 to 2:30 p.m., to provide opportunities for interested Soldiers.

The Great Skill Program identifies, selects, trains and retains personnel conducting sensitive and complex operations in one of five career tracks for the Army, Department of Defense and national agencies.

Soldiers attending the briefings must have current secret clearances. Soldiers may hold any military occupational specialty with no grade restrictions to attend. The target audience for recruitment is junior noncommissioned officers, branch-qualified captains and junior majors.

Legal education program

The Army Judge Advocate General's Corps is accepting applications for the Army Funded Legal Education Program, which sends active-duty commissioned officers to law school at government expense.

Officers remain on active duty while attending school.

Officers second lieutenant to captain are eligible for FLEP, and further eligibility requirements are outlined in Army Regulation 27-1.

Applicants must submit their application through the chain of

command to their basic branch at Army Human Resources Command, with a suspense to AHRC by Nov. 1.

Interested officers should immediately contact the U.S. Army Alaska Office of the Staff Judge Advocate at 384-0420 or 384-0313 for further information and to schedule an interview.

Fill station limitations

Until further notice mid-grade and premium-grade fuel will be unavailable at the AAFES Joint Mall Express gas station.

Please see the JBER-Elmendorf Express for premium fuel or the JBER-Richardson Express for mid-grade and premium fuel needs.

Please address questions and concerns to AAFES Joint Mall Express at 753-0323.

Richardson Thrift Shop

The JBER-Richardson Thrift Shop, located in building 724, Quartermaster Drive, is open Tuesdays and Thursday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Wednesdays from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.; and first and third Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

For more information, call the Thrift Shop at 384-7000.

JBER's Attic

Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson's Attic, located in building 8515 off of 20th Street, is open on Tuesdays for paygrades E-1 to E-4 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.; Wednesdays for paygrades E-1 to E-6 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and the first Saturday of the month for all paygrades from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

For more information, call the Attic at 552-5878.

Priority placement

The Priority Placement Program and Executive Order 13473 provide non-competitive appointment for spouses of active duty service members, including full-time National Guard and Reservists, who are relocating to accompany their service member during a permanent change of station.

The program allows spouses to register for Department of Defense positions and to be considered for

jobs offered internally. Spouses are matched against potential positions, which meet their qualifications and preferences.

Job placement will vary with each individual. The spouse remains eligible for a maximum of two years from the date of the PCS orders and are in the program for one year.

Military spouses who have never filled a federal position can now register for PPP. This program had previously been limited to spouses on a current federal appointment or had a former federal position in the past.

Military spouses can register at the Civilian Personnel Office at JBER-Elmendorf or the personnel office at JBER-Richardson. The JBER point of contact is Brenda Yaw at 552-9203.

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 2011.

Patients can 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.

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 process.

Rental Partnership

The Rental Partnership Program at JBER 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 applicable.

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.

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

At JBER-Richardson, visit the Housing Management Office, Building 600, Richardson Drive, or call at 384-3088 or 384-7632.

Hazard communication

All workplace supervisors should be aware of the new, base-wide, changes to the hazard communication program for hazardous materials, which is effective immediately. These changes have been introduced through various multimedia presentations sent out by both the 673d Aeromedical Squadron Public Health, and bioenvironmental engineering flights.

Each industrial work area, Army or Air Force, is required to have an individual HAZMAT/

HAZCOM program established per Air Force Instruction 90-821, Hazard Communication and Occupational Safety.

Training presentations have been emailed to all shop/flight supervision; which detail the numerous changes to be made. Compliance with these changes is mandated at a federal level by 29 Code of Federal Regulations 1910.1200, Occupational Safety and Health Standards.

For an additional copy of the mentioned training, or for a more detailed explanation of all changes, call the Bio-environmental Flight at 384-0482.

Furnishing Management

The Furnishings Management Office offers 90-day loaner furniture. Appliances may be issued for the duration of the service member's tour.

FMO typically delivers items as far as Peters Creek or Rabbit Creek. Service members must make special arrangements beyond these areas.

When requesting furniture, service members must provide a copy of their reporting orders.

For JBER-Elmendorf, visit the Capital Asset Management Office at Building 6436, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., or call 552-2740.

For JBER-Richardson, visit the Housing Management Office at Building 600, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., or call 384-2576.

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 matters of interest to a prospective home owner.

Please contact the JBER-Elmendorf office at 552-4439 or the JBER-Richardson office at 384-3088 for specific times to be included in the sign-up roster.

Holiday

suicide isn't the answer



There's nothing wrong with asking for help when you need it

Commentary by Chris McCann
JBER Public Affairs

Eighteen hours. It's the length of the average American's waking day. It's also how often a service member takes his own life.

That's not counting veterans. Almost a third of young veterans (those who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan) have thought about suicide and nearly half know someone who has made an attempt.

Every day, about 22 veterans die by suicide.

In 2012, the Army recorded 325 suicides. The Air Force and Marine Corps have also seen spikes in suicide rates.

While prevention efforts like stand-down days, hotlines and training have been having some effect, military and Veterans' Affairs leaders are still concerned.

"This is something we can't just look at in one month," said Vice Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. John Campbell Tuesday. "It has to be a 365-day mission to make sure we can provide our Soldiers with the tools they need to deal with the stressors of everyday life, and help them understand that seeking help is a sign of strength not weakness."

Army Staff Sgt. Michael Houpp, a behavioral health specialist who works at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson's Troop Medical Clinic, emphasized the military's efforts to spread that message.

"We're trying to destigmatize getting care," Houpp said. "that's one of the biggest barriers to receiving treatment. 'What will it do to me professionally?' is a question. But that's what we're here for," he said.

Self-referring for care will not negatively influence security clearances. In most cases, the chain of command never needs to know.

There's no one factor that indicates a person is contemplating suicide – the only way to know is to know the people you interact with.

Family, friends, battle buddies, co-workers – they may give warning that something's not right.

Army Lt. Col. Kevin Willis, manager of the XVIII Airborne Corps Suicide Prevention Program at Fort Bragg, explained that at its most basic level, intervention may simply be listening, showing empathy, and escorting a person to a helping agency – something that can be done by any Soldier, family member or civilian.

It might take more than an offhanded "you can always talk to me." It might take going out for a short walk and talking about the time your wife told you your kid had a car accident and how powerless you felt, deployed halfway around the world and unable to help.

It might only take an assurance that talking to someone at Behavioral Health isn't going to ruin that specialist's chance for promotion or make everyone in the company think he's "crazy," because eight other Soldiers are going to the clinic on a regular basis.

Handing out cards and attending the check-the-block training isn't enough; when a person is in trouble, much like in combat, it's seldom like the briefings.

If you don't know your people, you won't know whether that Airman is joking about death just because he's got a morbid sense of humor, or whether he's steeling himself for what he's decided to do later this evening while his roommate is at the gym.

There are signs – usually mentioned in retrospect: the flawless military record for 12 years and a sudden Article 15; withdrawing from other people; giving away

possessions; trouble at home.

We've all seen the lists and probably have them in our wallets.

But it takes someone noticing those signs and being willing to step up and say something, to put a hand on someone's shoulder and ask if they're OK.

Chaplains can offer faith-based counseling; Behavioral Health can offer a more clinical approach. Both offer excellent ideas for coping strategies and a way to network with other people who are struggling.

MilitaryOneSource.com also offers opportunities for service and family members to seek free non-medical counseling from a non-military counselor.

At this point, there are so many resources someone fighting with depression or post-traumatic stress disorder has an almost dizzying array of options.

Last year, after a long battle with drugs and alcohol, my younger brother killed himself.

My father, newly remarried by only a couple of weeks, was shattered. My sister, who was closer than I to my brother in age, has struggled with the fallout of it. My mother had just lost her best friend to alcohol the week before and had difficulty facing another funeral.

My family had tried to get my brother the assistance he needed, but he was not willing to go to therapy, stop drinking, or only take drugs his doctor prescribed.

Our fellow service members continue to kill themselves because they feel desperate and alone. Depression is insidious. It can make suicide seem logical and even honorable – it isn't. It's devastating to families, friends and units.

Ways to build coping skills

- Attend life skills or related training.
- Seek out a mentor in whom to confide.
- Actively and frequently participate in unit activities.
- Join social support groups, faith-based organizations, and self-help groups.
- Recognize, accept, and face fears.
- Nurture good relationships with family and close friends which may include counseling.
- Learn to regulate your emotions and avoid impulsive behavior.
- Maintain realistic optimism, and, believe in your ability to survive and function as a Soldier.
- Recognize that no one has the resources to manage all personal problems alone. Practice help seeking behavior as a sign of strength.
- Commit to practices that maintain physical and behavioral health.
- Avoid isolation when faced with stressors.
- Develop and maintain spiritual fitness.

WHERE TO GO

- Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness programs
- Wellness programs, family programs and family assistance centers
- Army Substance Abuse Program, Yellow Ribbon Program/deployment cycle support
- Prevention relationship enhancement program for couples and singles
- Army Emergency Relief fund
- Warrior Transition units

Resources

On JBER:
Emergency: 911
Chaplain and Family Life Center (in the old AlaskaUSA building on JBER-R): 384-LIFE
Troop Medical Clinic: 384-0600
Chaplain Center: 522-4422; after duty hours, 552-3000
Soldiers' Chapel: 384-1461; after duty hours, 384-6666
JBER Hospital Behavioral Health: 580-2181

Off JBER:
Emergency: 911
Military One Source: *militaryonesource.com* or for information, (800) 342-9647; Crisis Line: (800) 273-8255 (press 1)
Veterans' Crisis Line: (800) 273-8255
Wounded Soldier and Family Hotline: (800) 984-8523
MakeTheConnection.net

Suicide is often spoken about as if one person is affected, but only the individuals left behind truly understand the full impact of that decision. (U.S. Air Force graphic/ Airman 1st Class Joshua Green)

Ask your buddy

- Have the courage to ask the question, but stay calm
- Ask the question directly, e.g., "Are you thinking of killing yourself?"

Care for your buddy

- Remove any means that could be used for self-injury
- Calmly control the situation; do not use force
- Actively listen to produce relief

Escort your buddy

- Never leave your buddy alone
- Escort to the chain of command, a Chaplain, a behavioral health professional, or a primary care provider

USACHPPM
http://chppm-www.dga.army.mil
G1A 12-01-003 May 2008



SUICIDE AFFECTS



ONE



MORE THAN



Prayer can be a form of psychological therapy too

Commentary by Cindy Sena-Martinez
JBER Religious Education Director

Prior to shifting my career five years ago to support and promote ongoing religious education and spiritual development, I spent the previous 15 years as a mental health counselor working with victims of human trafficking, first-time offenders, and homeless individuals with mental health challenges.

In my current position, as a director of religious education, I have recognized certain aspects of my current position intertwined with my previous occupation.

One area particularly relevant in my mind as the perfect cross-over discussion, from mental health professional to religious education director, is prayer.

I have known of the therapeutic effects of prayer for most of my life but it was not until I was asked to give a talk about prayer the common themes emerged for me.

In my research, I came across an article in the New York Times entitled "God As Therapist" and it was this article along with other readings that gave me the corroboration I needed to tie prayer to a form of therapy.

The article described parallels to prayer and cognitive behavioral therapy.

We know talking to another person is therapeutic – a friend, a pastor, a counselor, a therapist and for many believers, to God.



(Courtesy photo)

Prayer, for any Christian is first, a practice of support. It is a way theistic people communicate with God; we listen and we speak to God through prayer.

Prayer allows an individual the opportunity to articulate their concerns, wants, desires, hardships, difficulties, and so on to God without judgment.

In the quiet waiting, the individual is given an opportunity to reflect on what is occurring in his life and the events contributing

to his situation.

People I have spoken with about prayer have all discussed a peace or calmness that descends upon them at times. Others have stated they are freed to release emotion and still others feel the need to continue their prayer by reading scripture or saying rote prayers in which they find comfort and solace.

A religious person in need of emotional or spiritual support will either pray alone or

ask God for assistance, thereby "unloading/downloading," their burdens on God.

I have witnessed the freedom people experience when they are able to verbally share a burden or hurt with another.

This is the first step in healing – to identify the problem and name it. Many people who believe in God find this healing process begins with prayer.

Some individuals described desperate times when they would even plead or negotiate with God.

It is not unusual to pray alone; even while being physically alone in prayer, a believer knows he is in the presence of God.

There are times when being physically alone is challenging and these are times when it is appropriate and even necessary to ask others to pray for us or with us.

These are all healthy ways of carrying on with everyday life situations.

Prayer is a form of therapy. It can be verbal, silent, meditative, contemplative, or filled with praise.

Through our mental processes, in the quiet moments, we are able to silence our minds and relax our breathing to the point so thinking can become clearer and we are able to resolve certain problems.

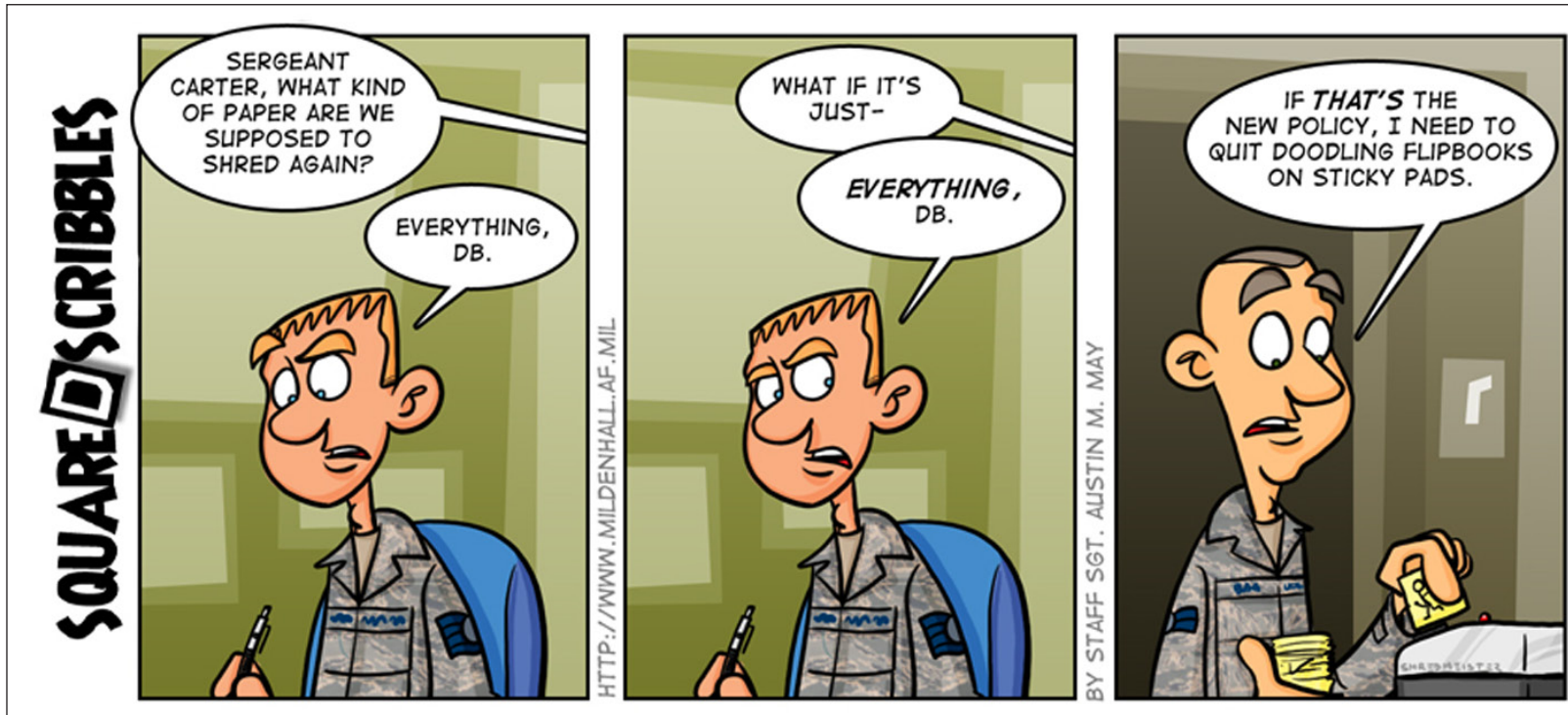
Even those who do not believe use this process – being in the silence working through issues seeking solutions or resolutions, basically problem-solving.

The non-religious person does this alone or perhaps with a therapist.

There are countless benefits spiritually, emotionally and physically which come from prayer.

When I asked people to name one benefit of prayer, the most common response was – knowing they were not alone and knowing God is always there to listen to them, always loving them.

As a Catholic-Christian woman, whether I pray publicly or privately, it is comforting to know I am never alone because God will always be near me, to hear me, to lead me, and to guide me through every moment of my life. Now that is a freedom money cannot buy.



FORCE SUPPORT SQUADRON

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IT'S FOOTBALL SEASON!

SEPTEMBER 8
FIRST KICK OFF - 9 A.M.

SEPTEMBER 9
FIRST KICK OFF - 3 P.M.

SEPTEMBER 12
KICK OFF - 4:25 P.M.

DOOR OPEN 30 MINUTES PRIOR TO GAME TIME!

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SIGN UP FOR THE GRAND PRIZE DURING MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL

FREE BREAKFAST FOR MEMBERS ON SUNDAY MORNING!

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BLDG 655 384-7619

<http://www.elmendorf-richardson.com>

f Did you know....

You can view the JBER673FSS facebook page even if you don't have a facebook account? Stop by and see us! www.facebook.com/JBER673FSS

Whittier Kayak Trip
Paddle Prince William Sound
September 7
8 a.m. - 6 p.m.
\$90

Jim Creek ATV Trips
September 14
8 a.m. - 6 p.m.
\$150 Drivers (18 + yrs.)
\$50 Riders (8 + yrs.)

Indoor Rock Climbing Wall
Sept. 9 - 25 Open Climb
Noon - 6 p.m. FREE
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Dress for Alaska's Weather!

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552-4599

www.elmendorf-richardson.com
www.facebook.com/OAP673FSS

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Donations accepted
Now - October 1
• Bldg. 600
• Military & Family Support Center
• Participating CDCs & School Age Programs
• Joint Military Mall

Distribution
September 17 - October 15
• Bldg. 600
• Arctic Oasis Community Center
• National Guard Armory

Call 384-1517/552-4943 for more information

Donate gently used coats. All sizes needed!

FRIDAY

Taste of Mardi Gras

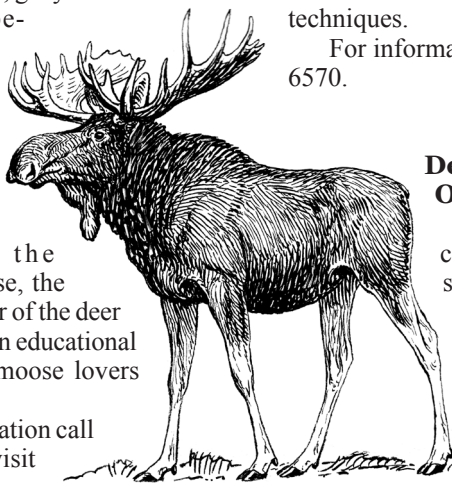
The 9th annual celebration recreating Bourbon Street brings Cajun cuisine, live music, street performers and more from 5 to 10 p.m.

If you can't get to New Orleans for Mardi Gras, get your fix in Anchorage between K and L streets.

**SATURDAY
Moose Madness at the zoo**

Explore the world of moose, the largest member of the deer family, with fun educational activities for moose lovers of all ages.

For information call 341-6463 or visit alaskazoo.org.



WEDNESDAY

9/11 Remembrance Day

The Alaska Fallen Firefighter Memorial at 5th Avenue and A Street hosts this memorial for fallen firefighters and September 11, 2001.

The downtown ceremony begins at 6 p.m.

For information, visit anchoragemuseum.org.

SEPT. 14

Annual Air Force Ball

The Air Force invites service members to celebrate their 66th Anniversary with the Air Force Birthday Ball beginning at 6 p.m. at the Dena'ina Center.

For more information, call 551-6508 or 552-7485, contact your unit representative or first sergeant, or visit jberafb.com.

Vertical Challenge

The 6th Annual North Face Climb-a-thon is an endurance event – contestants walk, run, and hike up the steep North Face Trail of Mount Alyeska and ride the tram down as many times as possible from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Top competitors climb more than 20,000 vertical feet – like climbing Denali – in only 10 hours.

For information, visit alyseskaresort.com.

SEPT. 14 AND 15

Great Alaska Quilt Show

Join quilters at the ConocoPhillips Alaska Atrium each day from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day, and peruse all kinds of quilts, as well as quilted garments. A silent auction takes place on Sept. 15, and demonstrations of quilting techniques.

For information call 360-6570.

**SEPT. 15
Dena'ina Opening**

The Anchorage Museum opens its first comprehensive Dena'ina exhibit with dance performances, hands-on activities and much more from 1 to 3 p.m.

For information, call 929-9200 or visit anchoragemuseum.org.

SEPT. 21

Whole Life Festival

Alaska's premier holistic spiritual event features spiritual consultants, aura photos, handwriting analysis, jewelry and more. Workshops are also on tap. Events run from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Coast International Inn.

For information, call (817) 894-5208.

Blues Train

Ride the rails and enjoy local blues by the Veronica Page Band. Departing at 1 p.m. from Anchorage, the train goes to Seward for a barbecue and more blues. Tickets include round-trip rail tickets, lunch, appetizers, barbecue, and a single-night hotel stay in Seward.

For information, call (800) 544-0552 or visit alaskarailroad.com.

SEPT. 27 THROUGH 29

Alaska Womens' Show

Vendors celebrate everything that makes Alaska women unique at the Sullivan Arena.

The show features financial seminars, fashion shows, jewelry, health care information and more.

For more information, call 562-9911.

SEPT. 28

National Public Lands Day

Registration is 8:30 a.m. at Bureau of Land Management's Campbell Creek Science Center.

Outdoor projects start at 9 a.m. Wear warm clothes, boots and gloves. BLM will provide tools, equipment, and free pizza luncheon for all volunteers.

The annual Science Center open house follows from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. with educational games, live music, and free copies of the Science Center's new poster calendar.

Call the Science Center at 267-1247 for information.

OCT. 3

Night at the Fights

Boxing matches happen every Thursday night at the William A. Egan Civic Center.

Get your boxing fix; doors open at 6:30 p.m. and fights start at 7:30. For information, visit thursday-nightfights.com.

If being ringside isn't enough, email jimpatton@gci.net to fight in a "grudge match."

OCT. 4 AND 5

Oktoberfest

The German Club of Anchorage hosts Oktoberfest at the William A. Egan Civic Center, featuring traditional German food, beverages, and entertainment.

Get your lederhosen and dirndl and join the fun.

For information, visit the German Club of Anchorage on Facebook.

ONGOING

Anchorage Market

The summertime farmer's market kicks off at the 3rd Avenue and E Street parking lot downtown Saturdays.

Seven acres of vendors offer produce, exotic goods, Alaska souvenirs, local meat and so much more.

For information, call 272-5634.

Potter Marsh Bird Walk

This guided tour on the Potter Marsh boardwalk is a family-friendly event for birdwatchers of any skill level.

Plan for rain or shine. Binoculars and guide books are available for loan.

Meet at the entrance kiosk at

Potter Marsh; tours are Saturdays from 8 to 10 a.m. or Tuesdays from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

For information, call 267-2281.

AER scholarships

Army Emergency Relief is taking applications for scholarships.

Scholarships are available for children or spouses of active duty, retired and deceased Soldiers.

Applications and instructions are available at aerhq.org.

For information, call 384-7478.

Protestant Women of the Chapel meetings

Women are invited to meet with Protestant Women of the Chapel. Fall Bible study happens Tuesdays at 9:30 a.m. at Soldiers' Chapel on JBER-Richardson.

For more information, email jber.ak.pwoc@gmail.com or call 384-1461.

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 about meetings, work days, and shows, call 952-4353, visit their site at www.trainweb.org/msmre or email bjorgan@alaska.net.

Borealis Toastmasters

Conquer your fear of public speaking with Toastmasters.

This safe, friendly club helps build confidence through speeches, presentations, feedback and listening in a supportive environment. The club meets every Thursday in Room 146 of the BP building from 7 to 8 p.m.

For information, call 575-7470.

Wired Cafe for Airmen

The Wired Cafe is located at 7076 Fighter Drive, between Polaris and Yukla dormitories, and provides a "home away from home" atmosphere.

The cafe has wireless Internet and programs throughout the week for single Airmen living in the dorms. There are also free home-style meals Fridays at 6 p.m.

For information, call 552-4422.

Chapel services

Catholic Mass

Sunday

9 a.m. – Soldiers' Chapel
10:30 a.m. – Elmendorf Chapel I

Monday through Friday

11:40 a.m. – Soldiers' Chapel
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday
11:30 a.m. – Elmendorf Chapel Center

Thursday

11:30 a.m. – Hospital Chapel

Confession

30 minutes before Mass at the chapel in which Mass is being celebrated, or anytime by appointment. Call 552-4422 or 384-5907

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

Sing-along at the zoo

Pre-school-aged children can sing along or play with rhythm-band instruments, beginning 10:30 a.m. Mondays at the coffee shop greenhouse.

For information email klarson@alaskazoo.org.

JBER Library Hours

The library on JBER-Richardson is once again open from Mondays through Fridays from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., and on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For more information, call 384-1788.

events & activities



Check out the September Alaskan Adventurer

552-3821

EAGLELEEN ALASKA

You must use your PIN# to make Tee Times.
TT system: 384-6675 option 3
If you do not have a PIN#, please contact the golf shop.

CUSTOMER APPRECIATION

September 19, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

FREE GREEN FEE FOR ALL OUR GUESTS!
Cart fees apply if you choose to ride.
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Closest to the Pin & Long Drive games.
FREE club fitting, swing analysis & tips!
Brandon Kaiser will be available from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. for a 10 min. "quick tip" to help improve your game.
FREE HOTDOGS, BURGERS & SODAS at the "Driving Range" 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Annual September Sale
All items in stock minimum 10% OFF • Close out items up to 50% OFF
All golf bags 15-30% OFF • Golf shoes 20-40% OFF

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FOR FAMILIES AND SINGLE AIRMEN
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Arctic Valley Road
428-0056
mooserungolfcourse.com
or visit us on facebook!

Hill & Creek Courses at MOOSE RUN GOLF COURSE - ALASKA

Customer Appreciation Day
September 11
Come by the Hill and Creek Courses!

Buckner Fitness Center

MEMORIAL 5K PATRIOT RUN
SEPTEMBER 11
5 P.M.

Across from Buckner parking lot on bike trail.
Sign up starts September 2 until day of run.

Elmendorf Fitness Center

TEXAS HOLD'EM FUN RUN 5K

SEPT 13 Noon
Sign up 11 a.m.

Prizes! **Free shirt** for the first 30 who sign up!

Cards will be given at the beginning of the race, and several places on the course. The runner with the best poker hand wins.



<http://www.elmendorf-richardson.com>

Geronimo paratroopers hike 26-mile Crow Pass

By Army Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Smith
4-25th ABCT Public Affairs

Cool temperatures and light precipitation made for tolerable conditions as paratroopers with the 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division, took a 26-mile hike along a section of the Historic Iditarod Trail Aug. 21.

Connecting the Alaska towns of Eagle River and Girdwood, the stretch of trail named Crow Pass, led paratroopers on a scenic hike over mountain passes, and across rivers, woods, and valleys.

Rocky terrain, protruding roots, and steep slopes made for challenging conditions as they moved through the wilderness. The Geronimo paratroopers maintained motivation and strength by stopping to rest at 13 checkpoints along the 12-hour journey.

Mountain trekking, river crossings, and wildlife sightings were highlights of the trip for most of the Soldiers.

Spc. Aaron Kizer, from Atlanta, an infantryman with Comanche Company, 1-501st, said his knees were sore, but the hike was not that bad.

"It was cool because we got to do

something outside of base in civilian clothes," said Kizer. "The water at the river crossing was freezing!"

"I always like telling friends and family about things like this," Kizer said.

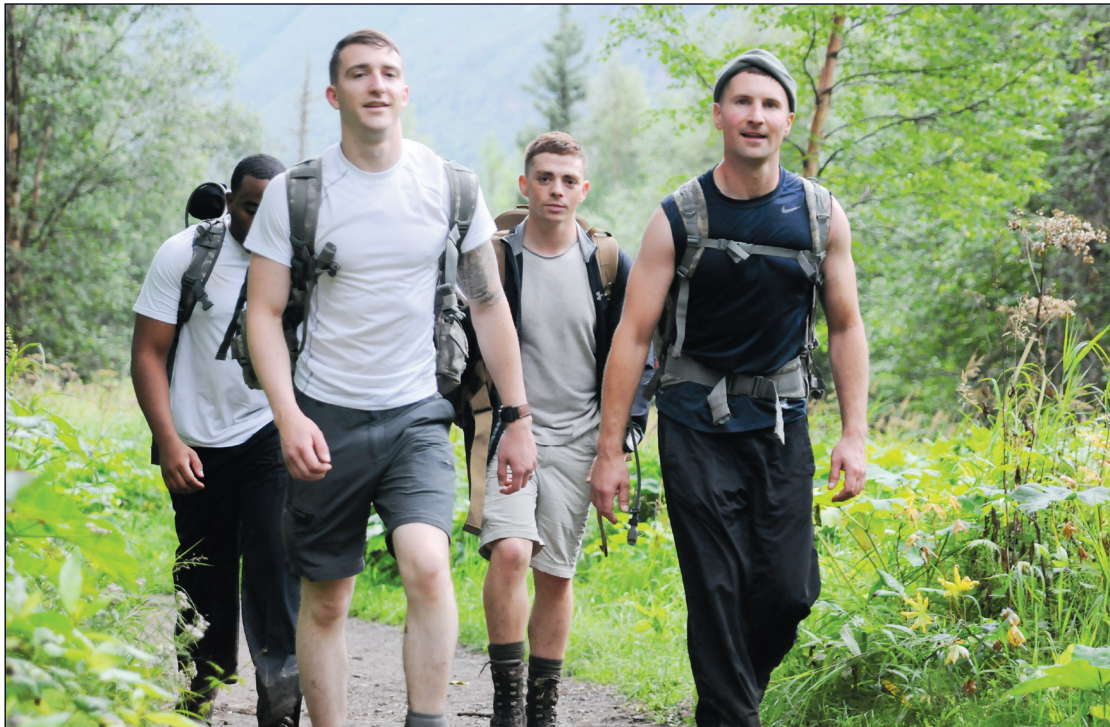
Sgt. 1st Class Richard Moore, the platoon sergeant for 2nd Platoon, Comanche Co., from Highpoint, N.C., said it was a great way to get away from the day-to-day schedule and enjoy the outdoors.

"The river was some really cold water, but we made it fun," said Moore. "We saw a moose and a goat!"

The best part, said Moore, "thirty-six guys came out here with me, and 36 guys finished it. It was a good march. It was good for the morale of the troops."

Army Staff Sgt. Lorenzo Souza, Easy Co.'s maintenance platoon sergeant, from Tracy, Calif., was thankful for the two medics he had assigned to his platoon for the hike.

"The medics have been taking really good care of the guys," Souza said. "Our guys have had a few blisters here and there, and the medics patched them up and got them on their way. They made sure our guys were good to go. I attribute a lot of our success today to them."



Paratroopers with the 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division, hike along a section of the Iditarod Historic Trail Aug. 21 near Eagle River. The paratroopers hiked Crow Pass, a 26-mile trail connecting Eagle River with Girdwood. (U.S. Army photo/Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Smith)

"The most challenging part was the beginning when we were climbing the mountain and going down the mountain," Souza said. "But the scenery helped us kind of forget about the pain, and we drove on."

For energy, the paratroopers carried Meals Ready to Eat. In addition to assigned medics and satellite phones, the 501st had support elements stationed along the route for medical concerns, communication issues, and to replenish water supplies.

'Street Smart' program visits JBER to promote safety

Airmen, Soldiers get up close with first responders' presentation

Staff report
JBER Public Affairs

A group of teenagers is riding in a car on their way to a party. The couple in the back begins to get intimate, as young couples often do.

The young man is too busy to be bothered by the restraint of a seatbelt. Suddenly, they are struck from behind by another car and are thrust into the car ahead of them. Everyone in the car is either killed or seriously injured.

When the paramedics arrive on the scene, they determine the cause of much of the destruction was not just the vehicles, but the flailing body of the young, smitten man who was not wearing his seatbelt.

This scene was part of a video shown by two Miami-Dade, Fla.-based paramedics who came to

Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Aug. 28 to emphasize to Airmen and Soldiers the importance of driving safely by graphically displaying the possible ramifications of poor choices.

As part of the Stay Alive From Education program, Ralph Jimenez and Vincent Easevoli, co-founders of S.A.F.E., conducted four separate 'Street Smart' training sessions at JBER's Talketna Theater.

"The organization's goal is to keep people safe and alive with the injury prevention education we provide," Jimenez said.

Throughout the presentation, the two men, who are also paramedics and firefighters in the Miami area, demonstrated what could happen when driving is mixed with alcohol, text messaging and other distractions.

"The program was originally designed to reach high school and university students," Jimenez said. "It is now a part of NFL rookie symposiums and military safety briefings, and reaches thousands of troops around the world."

Senior Airman Gerald Curtis, 673d Communications Squadron cyber surety technician, participated in the majority of the demonstration as a "crash victim."

Curtis played the role of an individual who, after a night of drinking, decided to drive while under the influence of alcohol.



Senior Airman Gerald Curtis, a 673d Communications Squadron cyber surety technician, plays the role of a crash victim during the Street Smart presentation on JBER Aug. 28. Street Smart was designed by Miami-Dade area paramedics to provide individuals with the necessary tools to prevent motor-vehicle accidents. (U.S. Air Force photo/Airman Ty-Rico Lea)

Step by step, Easevoli explained to the audience what was happening from when Curtis picked up his first drink to when he crashed and was rushed to the hospital.

"The presentation was a real eye-opener for me," Curtis said. "The photos got my attention,

but what had the most impact for me was seeing the wrecks from the emergency responders' point of view.

"There are a lot of things that go on in a crash that you really don't think about – like a driver not only endangering himself in a crash but also everyone else that's

in the vehicle."

The four separate sessions were aimed at accommodating as many JBER personnel as possible as well as any high school student who wanted to attend.

The S.A.F.E. program has visited 46 military installations since April.

