

# ARCTIC WARRIOR

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AFTER 25 YEARS,  
PARARESCUEMAN  
STILL FEELS A

CALLING TO SERVE

By Staff Sgt. Edward Eagerton  
176th Wing Public Affairs

To look at him, you wouldn't know he was a decorated combat veteran or that he had just retired after serving 25 years of his military career in the rescue community.

At a cursory observation, he could be anybody.

Senior Master Sgt. Doug Widener, a pararescueman, or PJ, who retired from the 212th Rescue Squadron April 1, sat at a coffee-shop table eating his lunch, dressed in everyday clothes on a warm, spring afternoon and recounted the years that led him from New Orleans to the Alaska Air National Guard, with whom he deployed four times to Afghanistan, and finally to a new endeavor – a second career with the Anchorage Fire Department.

#### A humble start

Selfless service was in his blood. His family had a history of service to the country, and after graduating from high school in 1990, he worked briefly as a civilian before he decided to answer the calling in his heart.

"I got out of high school and worked downtown there for about a year and then decided that I wanted to look for something more," Widener said. "I knew service was something I wanted to do, just in what capacity, I wasn't sure."

Joking about the movie "Top Gun" and its influence in the late 1980s, Widener said he wanted to be a fighter pilot. After an unsuccessful attempt to get into a service academy, he tried to figure out how he could become a pilot. This was when he spoke with a recruiter.

"The recruiter said, 'Oh, you want to be a pilot? Well we can start you off in the enlisted force and then if you want to transition, you can get your degree,' and that's how it all started," Widener said.

"I started off humbly as an aircraft mechanic, and ironically enough, I started off working on helicopters."

The Lord has a way of guiding you to the right place, he explained.

"After going through avionics training, my first assignment was with the 66th Rescue Squadron out of Las Vegas," he said.

There, he worked on HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopters.

"That was when Pave Hawks were brand new," Widener said. "They had that new-plane smell and very low hours and very few maintenance issues at all. That was just after the first Gulf War, give or take, and they didn't have half the wear and tear on them that they do now."

It was this initial assignment that exposed Widener to the rescue



Senior Master Sgt. Doug Widener (standing), a pararescueman with the 212th Rescue Squadron, pulls security while his teammate treats a simulated casualty during Exercise Mojave Viper at Twentynine Palms, Calif., in 2012. (U.S. Air Force photo/Staff Sgt. Cynthia Spalding)

community, where he soon found his true calling.

#### That others may live

"I was pretty dead set that I was going to be a mechanic and then go to the academy and become a pilot," he said, reminiscing. "But then flash forward, and there I am in Las Vegas, working as a mechanic, getting exposed to the rescue mission and the rescue environment. What I saw with this group of guys, the PJs, I was very attracted to the way they took care of each other, the way they related to each other, their mentality and their attitude on life. It looked like a really admirable way to serve your country. I started looking into that, and then after one deployment to Kuwait, I applied to cross train in 1993 to become a PJ."

At the time, he was 23 years old. He would emerge from the training pipeline two and a half years later – a PJ.

"It started with the selection course down in Texas," he elaborated, "then on to dive school, airborne school, survival school up in Washington, water survival down in Florida, freefall parachuting – which is now in Yuma, but then it was at Fort Bragg – but the majority of [the PJ training] was at Kirtland Air Force Base."

The training pipeline for the pararescue community is said to be one of the toughest in the military, with a reported washout rate of more than 75 percent.

Mindset was everything. "No matter how bad it gets, you're not going to tap out and quit, you're not going to let your discomfort level get the best of

you," he said. "One of things that is really remarkable ... I've found is the majority of people that I've had the pleasure to work with, they're extraordinary in their desire to do extraordinary things. They're not necessarily the most extraordinary athletes or thinkers, we're just normal people, but we have this immense desire to be successful."

"Not everybody in this career field looks like Captain America.

We come in all shapes and sizes. We all bring something to the table; the common thread is everybody has the extraordinary desire to help people, to sacrifice and pay whatever price is necessary," he said.

After graduating from the pipeline, his first assignment as a PJ was with the 23rd Special Tactics Squadron out of Hurlburt

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Senior Master Sgt. Doug Widener, a pararescueman with the 212th Rescue Squadron, Alaska Air National Guard, embraces his daughter after receiving a Distinguished Flying Cross with Valor on JBER in 2012. (U.S. Air Force photo/Capt. Bernie Kale)



Senior Master Sgt. Doug Widener, a pararescueman from the 212th Rescue Squadron, Alaska Air National Guard, climbs the Karstens Ridge during a joint National Park Service/Alaska Air National Guard mountain patrol in the Denali Range of Alaska, in July 2005. Widener retired April 1 after 25 years in the Air Force, but plans to continue serving – with a new career in the Anchorage Fire Department. (Courtesy photo/Chris Roberts)



## USARAK Soldier found dead at home

U.S. Army Alaska PAO  
News release

A U.S. Army Alaska Soldier died early Saturday morning at his home in Anchorage.

Pvt. David Herl Leap, 25, an unmanned aerial system operator from D Company, 6th Brigade Engineer Battalion, died of an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound at about 1:30 a.m. April 11 outside his home.

The circumstances surrounding his death are under investigation by the Anchorage Police Department and special agents from the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command.

Leap, from Marysville, Washington, joined the Army in May 2011. He attended training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, Fort Huachuca, Arizona, and Fort Benning, Georgia, and arrived in Alaska in March 2012.

Leap deployed to Afghanistan with the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division from July through October 2012.

## JBER man saves local dog

By John Budnik  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Her strength dwindled with every second while holding her body out of the freezing water. The spring walk alongside a local river seemed to be her last.

Scooby, a boxer-breed dog, fell through thawing ice on Eagle River April 18, leading her frantic owner to call for help. Luckily, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Alaska District employee Mike MacMillan was home to answer the call from his neighbor in distress.

Fueled by adrenaline, he sprang into action.

"I grabbed some safety rope and loaded my canoe on the top of my car," MacMillan said. "I called my buddy to see if he could meet me at the river to help carry it."

The two met at the South Fork Eagle River Trailhead and hiked about halfway with the boat, but ditched the craft in favor of a ride on a passerby's all-terrain vehicle to the dog still a quarter-mile away.

Upon reaching the area, MacMillan noticed the dog was a relatively shallow area of open water with no current. After testing the ice, he slid on his belly to disperse his weight and started toward Scooby as the owner kept an eye out for trouble.

Eventually, MacMillan was able to pull the boxer out of the water by her collar.

She had been in the icy river for more than an hour and was hypothermic and stiff, but still could walk on her own, MacMillan said.

The owner helped warm the dog's core temperature by running back to the truck with her in tow. After 24 hours of warmth and close watching, Scooby has made a full recovery.

It was a reminder frozen bodies of water can be dangerous, said Keith Wilson, a ranger at Chugach State Park.

"Ultimately, Scooby needed to be rescued," MacMillan said. "I assessed the risk and determined it was safe for me to make an attempt. I am glad that it worked out for everyone."

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Living memory

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Field, Florida. It was while he was there he first heard about the 212th Rescue Squadron in Alaska.

“We did a deployment for the Bosnian conflict,” Widener said.

“A couple of guys from Alaska came down to augment the team. I was asking questions about what Alaska was like, and they started telling me about the unit and the mission. The Alaskan team has a certain mystique among the rescue community. There’s an understanding about the guys on the team up here; it’s a very pure form of being a PJ here, because you get exposed to all the different disciplines.”

Widener explained that with the size, terrain and varying weather conditions of Alaska, the civil alert commitment of the Alaska Air Guard’s rescue community requires them to often put to use the many specialized skillsets they train for, including mountaineering, parachuting, and land and water survival.

“That operational reality of being asked to do your job and needing to rely on your training on any given day is very unique and very special among the rescue community,” he said. “That’s what drew me up here, that mystique. Some people have called it PJ heaven up here.”

After just two and a half years in Florida, he and his wife packed up their truck, drove across the country to Washington, and began their move to Okinawa, Japan, where he was assigned to the 33rd Rescue Squadron.

When he was nearing the end of his contract in Japan, Widener decided that he wanted to explore the option of switching to the Air National Guard in Alaska. After hearing about some job openings in the 212th RQS, he conferred with his wife about the possibility of the move.

Neither of them had ever been to Alaska at that point.

“My wife was pretty surprised about the idea, but she was really supportive of it,” he said. “So, after four years in Japan, I separated from the Air Force and enlisted in the Air National Guard. That was in 2001.”

Widener was barely into his new house on Sept. 11, 2001.

“We had just moved here, no furniture in the house, things still in boxes and then BANG!” he said while making a loud clap with his hands, “the whole world changed.”

One step at a time

Throughout the next 14 years, Widener’s operation tempo never slowed down. He would go on to deploy in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan four times – 2003, 2008, 2010 and 2012.

But even between deployments, the mission continued.



Senior Master Sgt. Doug Widener, a pararescueman with the 212th Rescue Squadron, and his teammate hoist a simulated casualty into an HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopter from the 210th Rescue Squadron during Exercise Mojave Viper at Twentynine Palms, Calif., March 2012. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Cynthia Spalding)

“Up here, even in our day-to-day, when you’re in between deployments, it’s as if you’re always deployed with our mission,” he said.

Widener recounted the deployments and the Alaska rescue missions with one consistent element – everything to him was an opportunity.

His eyes scanned the light through the coffee shop window as he replayed the memories of his career.

“I was part of an expedition team on Denali in 2005,” he reminisced. “We spent two and a half weeks and had an amazing rescue above 17,000 feet. The next year, I had the opportunity to go back on Denali as part of a four-person climbing patrol. We got to walk in from Wonder Lake; it was just an exceptional experience.

“I remember getting out of the Suburban at Wonder Lake, getting to the ranger station and thinking ‘Wow, how do you start that journey?’ You just take that one step at a time.”

In 2012, Widener was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross with Valor for his actions while deployed to Afghanistan in 2010.

In the span of five days, he conducted more than 20 missions that ultimately saved 19 lives while under enemy fire.

He then mulled over a rescue mission from 2011 on Mount Hayes.

“These guys were stuck at 11,000 feet,” he recalled. “The weather is coming in on them, their tent is gone and they’re in a snow cave. It really brought to light again that it’s always the teamwork factor in how these missions are executed. Even though I had the opportunity to be the guy on the

end of rope, went out and got these guys and brought them back to the helicopter, the pilots did this hover/forward flight because the winds were coming off the nose above 40-50 knots,” he said.

“We’re on this ridgeline, and Brian Kile just perched the helicopter on this knife-edge ridge. John Romsper’s got me on this belay, and I run out on this ridge, and there’s thousands of feet on either side, and I snatched these two guys up and brought them back inside.”

He then recalled one of his career highlights as being the senior enlisted PJ during his last deployment to Camp Bastion in Afghanistan in 2012.

“From start to finish, I just couldn’t have been prouder of the way everybody performed, the mentality, the professionalism and operational success that everybody had,” he said. “Over a four-month period, it was something like 305 saves and 280 missions. It was a very busy, high-intensity, fast-paced time in the Helmund province. That whole deployment was one of the highlights of my career.”

From the mountains of Afghanistan, to the mountains of Alaska, the meaning of his life was measured in his work – work that he felt was his purpose in life, guided always by his faith in the Lord.

“In my experience, God gave me these abilities,” he said somberly. “I’ve had immense peace with knowing that I’m doing what he designed me to do. How do you deal with the more unpleasant or ugly side of what we get to see; how do you carry that weight and not let the horrible things that you endure and not let it permeate in your life? It’s my trust in the Lord.

And knowing him, I don’t have any fear. It’s not living your life with reckless abandon; it’s a knowing that because you have purpose, you live your life with an open hand, instead of living dominated by fear and what could happen, and instead, trying to live each day to the fullest.”

Despite his faith, however, the human body is a finite vessel.

Considering all of the things he’s done throughout his career, he explained, he feels fortunate that he is still in one piece.

“That I’m sitting here now after all of this, still healthy, still functional, it’s an amazing blessing,” he said smiling. “After all the parachute jumps, scuba dives, helicopter hours, it’s what I’m most thankful for. I’ve had great people taking care of me and made sure that I’ve gotten to go home to my family when the job is done.”

Since moving to Alaska, Widener and his wife brought two daughters into the world, he said.

Despite the dangers of his line of work, he never felt that he should stop pursuing his commitment to service.

“The questions I’ve often been asked,” he explained, “is, ‘How can you do what you do and be a father? Aren’t you scared of something happening to you, and now that you have kids, shouldn’t you tone it down a bit?’ My response to that has always been, no. Period.

“My daughters would want me to live my life to the fullest. In order for me to be a great husband and father, I have to live to my fullest potential. For me to back away from that out of fear or out of reservations, that’s not fulfilling the potential of my life.”

But after 25 years, Widener felt it was time to retire from life in the military.

Although this chapter is ending, he recently began pursuing another career with the Anchorage Fire Department.

Still, as anybody who has spent more than half their life devoted to a single cause would, he feels he’s going to miss the community he leaves behind.

“I’ve had an amazing career and had some unbelievable opportunities that I’ve been able to take advantage of,” he said. “I’m extremely thankful for every moment, even the tough ones, because even the difficult times over the past couple of decades helped forge me into the man I am today. It all contributes to your strength. It’s about the organization, the people, the experiences that I’ve been able to have and the people I’ve been able to have those experiences with. It’s not just the PJs.

“It’s everybody involved, from the aircraft maintenance technicians, pilots, fuels technicians, the supply technicians and the people in medical,” he said.

“We may be the ones that touch the person at the very end of the mission, but it takes all of those people to make it happen.”



ABOVE: Park Ranger Joe Reichert and Soldiers from D Company, 1st Battalion, 52nd Aviation Regiment unpack and inventory equipment at the Kahiltna Glacier base camp on Mount McKinley Monday. Soldiers and Chinooks from the D/1-52d “Sugar Bears” made short work of delivering several thousand pounds of equipment to base camps at 7,000 and 14,000 feet for the 2015 climbing season, saving money and time for the National Park Service and gaining invaluable experience operating at altitudes and in terrain not available for training missions outside Alaska. (Army photos/John Pennell)  
RIGHT: Mountains of the Alaska Range dwarf a CH-47F Chinook helicopter from D Company, 1st Battalion, 52nd Aviation Regiment as it carries equipment and supplies from Talkeetna to the Kahiltna Glacier base camp.

# SUGAR BEAR SUPPLY RUN



# Assistance program now provides counseling for GS employees

By Joanne Perkins  
Kirtland Air Force Base

KIRTLAND AIR FORCE BASE, N.M. — Personal and family problems can diminish a person’s happiness, health and ability to be their best, whether at home or at work.

With help from the Employee Assistance Program, employees of authorized federal agencies can resolve these matters and become happier, healthier and more effective.

According to Ed Thomas, an EAP field consultant, “Working at a military installation can involve

stressors that are not present in off-base workplaces.

“When an individual’s work is the security and defense of our nation, that increases the amount of daily stress for that person,” he said.

These stressors can often be compounded because employees are reluctant to visit their agency’s human resource department.

“They are concerned that negative information might be included in their employee file,” Thomas said. “We assure them that our contact is confidential. Our duty to report is only in the case of harming oneself, or matters of national

security. Our counseling sessions are solution-focused, and either the supervisor or employee can make contact with us.”

Thomas said GS employees and their immediate family members are entitled to six counseling sessions each year, for any issue causing stress in their life which may impact their work performance.

Counseling beyond the six free sessions can include accessing the nationwide network of more than 17,000 affiliates to serve civilian employees, and often engages the employee’s behavioral-health insurance benefits.

“Staff members are experts in behavioral health and work-related issues,” Thomas said. “When we need to engage financial or legal help for an employee, we use the services of these professionals, such as attorneys and financial advisors.”

Available financial services include family and college budgeting, buying or leasing a vehicle, debt consolidation, savings and investment strategies, buying a home and retirement planning.

In addition to providing help on an individual basis, covered agencies are entitled to four one-hour presentations per year.

“We have 50 presentations available on topics such as conflict resolution, balancing work and life, time and stress management and civility in the workplace,” Thomas said.

Ultimately, he said, EAP is about empowering employees to do their best on the job.

“Our mission is to address any stress in a person’s life that affects their work performance,” Thomas said. “We want people to be happy in their job – and we are here to help make that happen.”

For more information on the EAP, call (800) 222-0364 or visit the website.

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# GRACE UNDER FIRE



ABOVE: Pvt. Ty Gilbert, a native of Tyler, Texas, assigned to Comanche Company, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 501st Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), U.S. Army Alaska, high-crawls to a fighting position where his M249 Squad Automatic Weapon is stationed at Grezelka range on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson April 23. Crawling was just one part of the stress-shoot training the Soldiers conducted. (U.S. Air Force photos/Justin Connaheer)  
LEFT: Gilbert pulls a simulated casualty away from his fighting position. Stress-fire exercises involve Soldiers running, crawling, and performing other battle tasks to increase their heart rates and mental stress, before manning a weapon and shooting accurately. The training mimics combat situations, so when troops are in a combat situation, they are already familiar with the mental and physical drain – and can perform well despite the challenges. Noncommissioned officers mentor younger troops while pushing them to their limits.



ABOVE: Sgt. Dusty Peevey, a native of Scotland, Texas, watches Pvt. Garrett Evans, a native of Williamsport, Pa., fire an M249 Squad Automatic Weapon at Grezelka range on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson April 23. Both paratroopers are assigned to Comanche Company, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 501st Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), U.S. Army Alaska. LEFT: A 1-501st Infantry paratrooper performs a stress shoot with the M249. USARAK is home to the Army's only Pacific airborne brigade combat team, and maintains the only airborne rapid-response capacity within the Pacific Command.



# Times and faces may change, but the standards don't

By Airman 1st Class Kyle Johnson  
JBER Public Affairs

According to the Air Force Basic Military Training website, approximately 35,000 new enlisted Airmen come into the Air Force each year.

They replace those who are retiring or separating, taking with them their skills and experience and leaving a void.

The task of filling that void of professionalism rests on the shoulders of the men and women who serve at the Professional Military Education Center.

“The end goal is mission effectiveness,” said Tech. Sgt. Wesley Walker, conventional maintenance production supervisor at the 354th Maintenance Squadron at Eielson Air Force Base.

“The PME teaches us to be more proficient leaders,” said Tech. Sgt. Steven Walker, noncommissioned officer in charge of the network control center at 354th Communications Squadron, also at Eielson. “Whether it’s through communication or managerial knowledge, it helps us perform at a higher level.”

Steven originally wanted to earn his living working on his family’s ranch, but around the time he graduated from high school, that fell through and he enlisted in the Air Force.

His cousin Wesley went to work in the soda ash mines in their hometown of Lyman, Wyoming.

“In Lyman, if you didn’t work in the mines, your father probably did,” Wesley said.

After his summer contract at the mines expired, Wesley had the opportunity to watch Steve graduate Basic Military Training.

“It showed me the camaraderie of the military, and the professionalism was awe-inspiring,” Wesley said. “That was something I wanted to be a part of.”

The same professionalism which inspired Wesley in 2003 is now being groomed in him and his cousin Steven, 12 years later as they both attend the Noncommissioned Officer Academy at the same time, in the same location.

However, long before being accepted into NCOA, Steve and Wesley had to complete the first step of the PME ladder, Airman Leadership School.

“ALS is the individual’s first experience with the professional military education environment,” said Tech. Sgt. Jared Wilgus, an instructor at the PME Center on JBER.

It is mandatory for a senior airman or staff sergeant to go through ALS before acting in a supervisory role with subordinate Airmen, said Senior Master Sgt. Joshua Buck, the director of education at the PMEC on JBER.

It is not uncommon for Airmen to be assigned subordinates as early as the first day back from ALS, said Tech. Sgt. Callie Lewis, an instructor at the JBER PMEC



**Tech. Sgt. Wesley Walker, a conventional maintenance production supervisor at the 354th Maintenance Squadron at Eielson Air Force Base, and his cousin Tech. Sgt. Steven Walker, noncommissioned officer in charge of the network control center at 354th Communications Squadron, also at Eielson, practice as part of the honor guard April 14 for their class at the noncommissioned officer academy at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.. Participation in regular ceremonies is one of the many ways the professional military education center preserves professionalism in the force. (U.S. Air Force photo/Airman 1st Class Kyle Johnson)**

who had six Airmen to supervise her first day back.

“ALS gives you a bunch of things to do and you have to manage your time to deal with it,” Steven said. “In ALS, somebody’s handing you a bunch of stuff, but here, [at NCOA] you have to figure it out yourself.”

The different classes offered by the PME are built like a pyramid, Buck said. They build on one another, imparting new skills and responsibilities, polishing the skills the previous class taught along the way.

“ALS is big on time management,” Wesley said. “Once you get to NCOA, it may touch on that a little bit as a refresher, but we are supposed to have those kinds of skills already.”

Steven and Wesley are both currently stationed at Eielson Air Force Base after serving together at Hill Air Force Base, Utah.

Since Eielson does not have it’s own NCOA, they attend their residency at JBER.

“There are 10 NCOAs across the Air Force. Many have an ALS and an NCOA, but they operate separately,” Lewis said.

“Here, all our instructors are dual-qualified.”

A dual-qualified instructor can teach both NCOA and ALS, often at the same time – a unique opportunity the PME instructors here make sure to take advantage of.

“The instructor gets to see the Airman’s perspective,” Lewis said. “Then, we can take that perspective into the NCO classroom.”

By listening to Airman feedback, NCOs are becoming increasingly aware there is no single correct way to deal with every Airman.

An NCO’s toolkit needs to be as diverse as his subordinates, Wesley said.

“If the only tool you have is a hammer, then that’s the only tool you’re going to use,” Wesley explained. “PME gives me two types of screwdrivers and a wrench. Why use a hammer when a wrench would work better?”

The PMEC provides these tools and teaches students how to use them successfully, Buck said.

“We teach them to think more strategically,” Buck said. “To think about the bigger picture.”

Part of that bigger picture is the joint mentality.

The PME teaches service members how

to work with sister services to accomplish the joint mission, Buck said.

ALS begins exposing Airmen to this with two hours of class on joint operations, and each step in the system offers increasingly more exposure, Lewis said.

As a joint base, JBER offers a unique opportunity for Airmen to be exposed to the joint environment earlier in their career than normal, Buck said.

The PMEC capitalizes on this by allowing Soldiers to come to ALS, and the Army offers the same courtesy, enrolling Airmen in the Army’s Warrior Leader Course.

This free exchange provides a better understanding to enlisted members of how sister services work, Buck said.

“Not every joint base does this, it’s a locally driven program,” Buck said. “It’s not just about the Air Force, it’s about the Department of Defense.”

Buck emphasized the lessons they are teaching service members at the PMEC are not military lessons, but life lessons.

As senior service members take these life lessons and move on to work outside the military, or toward retirement, new Airmen come in, bringing with them new experiences, new skills, and a new flavor of Air Force.

“Your Airmen have different skillsets and experience than you do,” Steven said. “PME fills that void to make sure everyone has the same toolset to work from.

“What you do after that is up to you.”



**Gold Rush Inn closure**

The Gold Rush Inn dining facility will be closed until June 15, due to USARAK block leave. Dining facilities will consolidate support at the Wilderness Inn.

**Road closures**

The west end of Sijan Avenue will be closed for a water line upgrade from Wednesday until June 8. Detours will be marked. For information, call 982-4433.

**JBER recreational access**

The Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson recreational permit fee costs \$10 for active duty, military-affiliated and civilian personnel. Senior citizens 60 years of age and older, and those disabled 50 percent or more as documented by the Department of Veterans Affairs, will see a \$5 rate per year.

Users must sign in and sign out using the iSportsman system, using computers, kiosks at the visitors centers, or by phone.

For more information, visit the website or call 552-2439 or 384-6224.

**Home buying seminar**

Volunteer realtors and mortgage lenders present an hour-long home buying seminar every Wednesday at either the JBER-Elmendorf or JBER-Richardson Housing Management Offices from 1 to 2 p.m. These seminars are intended to support those interested in purchasing a home by explaining the buying and selling process in the Anchorage and Mat-Su areas. The seminar will cover home loan pre-qualifications, offers and acceptances, inspections, title searches, types of loans available and the closure process as well as many other points of interest to prospective home owners.

For more information or to sign up for the seminars, contact the management office. For the JBER-Elmendorf HMO, call 552-4312, or visit Bldg. 6346 Arctic Warrior Drive.

For the JBER-Richardson office, call 552-3088, or visit Bldg. 600, Room 104.

**Special victim counselor**

Victims of sexual assault are

entitled to legal assistance services.

Communication is protected by attorney-client privilege. The SVC ensures the victim’s rights, as outlined in the Crimes Victim Act, are protected.

Those rights include being treated with fairness and respect; being reasonably protected from the accused offender; being notified of court proceedings; being present at all public court proceedings related to the offense; being able to confer with the prosecutor; receiving available restitution; and receiving information about the conviction, sentencing, imprisonment, and release of the offender.

Eligible clients include all active duty military of all branches of service, mobilized Reserve Component members, retirees (and the dependents of these sponsors) who make a restricted or unrestricted report for sexual assault.

For more information, call 353-6507.

**Rental Partnership Program**

The Rental Partnership Program provides active-duty personnel with affordable off-base housing and consists of two options.

The first, RPP Plus, includes utilities and sometimes cable costs providing an easier budget with a set rental payment year round.

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

Both options are available with no deposits or fees with the exclusion of pet fees as may apply. An allotment must be executed through a Housing Management Office under either option of the RPP for the rental payments.

Visit the JBER-Elmendorf HMO, Bldg. 6346, or call 552-4328. Or visit the JBER-Richardson HMO in Bldg. 600, Room 104 or call 384-3088.

**DLA Document Services**

Defense Logistics Agency Document Services duplicates and prints documents.

Document Services documents including black and white, color, large format, photographic prints,

engineering drawings, sensitive materials, technical manuals and training materials. They also handle the design, printing and distribution of business cards, letterhead, invitations and programs.

Document Services’ Equipment Management Solutions Program provides networked multi-functional devices that print, scan, copy and fax. Production facilities offer scanning and conversion services for all types of documents.

They also offer Document Automation and Content Services, a service for building digital libraries of content with online access.

Hours of operation are 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

For information, visit *www.documentservices.dla.mil*, visit the office at 984 Warehouse Street, or call 384-2901.

**U-Fix-It Store**

The JBER U-Fix-it Stores are open to all Aurora Military Housing tenants. Assorted items for maintaining your home may be issued from the U-Fix-It Store.

Availability is subject to change and limits; some may have a cost.

There are also American flag kits and fire extinguishers available. U-Fix-It work includes all home maintenance activities, allowing occupants to make minor improvements and repairs to their home and cut down on the number of service orders.

There are two stores on base. The JBER-Elmendorf location is 6350 Arctic Warrior Drive and is open 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday through Friday, closed from 1 to 1:30 p.m. for lunch, and Saturday, 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m. (closed for lunch noon to 1 p.m.).

The JBER-Richardson location is at 338 Hoonah Ave., open from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, and closed from 1 to 1:30 p.m. for lunch.

A blind-cleaning machine is available at the JBER-E location. A “reservation required to use” policy is in place with the priority going to military members PCS-ing. For more information, call 375-5540.

**JBER Bargain Shop**

The JBER-Elmendorf Bargain

Shop, located in building 8515 Saville off of 20th Street, is open Tuesday and Wednesday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and the first Saturday of the month 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Consignments are accepted Wednesdays 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

For information, call 753-6134.

**Richardson Thrift Shop**

The JBER-Richardson Thrift Shop, located in building 724, Quartermaster Drive, is open Monday through Thursday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and first and third Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Consignments are accepted Tuesdays and Thursdays.

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

**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 be considered for jobs offered internally.

Spouses are matched with positions based on their qualifications and preferences. 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.

Spouses can register at the Civilian Personnel Office at JBER-Elmendorf or the personnel office at JBER-Richardson.

For information, call 552-9203.

**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 delivers 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.

**Provider Drive closure**

Civil engineers are repaving Provider Drive between the Exchange and JBER hospital through Aug. 15.

Housing will have one-lane access to Wilkins Ave. The detour uses Westover Avenue, Grady Highway and Zeamer Avenue.

**JBER MyBaseGuide**

Stay informed on where to find schools, places of worship, places to live, local services, day-care providers, auto mechanics, veterinarians and more. Browse a wide range of area services, get phone numbers, and download the mobile application for iOS or Android at *http://tinyurl.com/ltsywzr*.

**Quartermaster Laundry**

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

**Utilities upgrades**

As part of Doyon Utilities’ continuing effort to improve the utility infrastructure, the organization is engaged in a multi-year project to upgrade the JBER-Richardson electrical system to improve efficiency, reduce interruptions, and improve personnel safety. Doyon regrets any inconvenience, and is working to avoid unnecessary interruptions. Work is expected to continue through 2016. When work is completed, the installation will see an improvement in overall system reliability.

To minimize impacts, Doyon is working to schedule work that could potentially result in an outage for completion during off-peak periods.

If an outage does occur, utilities electrical crews will act quickly to restore service.



# A climb to remember

## Kodiak rescue swimmers tackle McKinley summit to honor fallen

By Matt Clark  
Coast Guard Foundation

Two Alaska-based Coast Guard rescue swimmers are about to embark on a challenging climb of Mount McKinley as a way to honor the memories of Coast Guard heroes who have been lost in the line of duty.

On April 28, Petty Officers Jon Houlberg and Jason McGrath, rescue swimmers stationed at Air Station Kodiak, are going to ‘Climb to Remember,’ raising money for the Coast Guard Foundation’s Fallen Heroes Fund along the way. So far the two have raised almost \$3,000. Their goal is \$6,505 – the total represents the call sign of the helicopter crew of CG-6505, which crashed in 2008 off the coast of Hawaii, resulting in the loss of four Coast Guard aviators.

Houlberg and McGrath are experienced climbers and have been training for the past several months in preparation of their climb, the idea for which has been percolating for more than a year.



**ABOVE:** Petty Officer 1st Class Jon Houlberg trains on Pyramid Mountain in preparation for his climb on Mt. McKinley, the highest peak in North America. **BELOW:** Petty Officer 1st Class Jason McGrath trains for the climb. (U.S. Coast Guard photos)

“Our biggest motivation is doing something in our own way to honor people who were not just shipmates of ours, but people who were friends of ours,” Houlberg said.

The Coast Guard family is so tight-knit, especially among aviators that, when tragedy strikes, it sends ripples throughout the community. Houlberg and McGrath

knew or worked with several aviators who have died in recent years, including Fernando Jorge, who was killed in the crash of Coast Guard helicopter 6535 in Mobile, Alabama, as well as Brett Banks, who was lost in La Push, Washington, when Coast Guard helicopter 6017 went down.

“Regardless if it’s your friends, it’s already a close community,”

said Houlberg, who has been in the Coast Guard for 16 years.

Mount McKinley, also known as Denali, is the highest peak in North America and is recognized as one of the most difficult mountains in the world to summit. Houlberg, who said he’s “more excited than nervous” for the climb, is looking forward to the challenge of McKinley. He and McGrath, who

has been a rescue swimmer for 18 years, have wanted to climb the peak for a long time.

Houlberg said their Coast Guard training makes for perfect preparation to undertake the climb. Trust between climbers is essential and, since McGrath and Houlberg have gone through the crucible of Coast Guard search and rescue flights, they know they can trust each other, make difficult decisions on the fly, and carefully evaluate risk.

The two climbers have a Facebook page where they’ll update their progress regularly using a satellite device. Houlberg said his wife and kids will be rooting him on from the ground. McGrath and Houlberg are prepared to spend three weeks on the climb, since the weather on the mountain can be unpredictable.

The Fallen Heroes Fund provides funds for emergency assistance to the families of those who have died in the line of duty including the cost of college for children. Houlberg said knowing the Coast Guard Foundation is there to provide for the men and women who wear the uniform is a great comfort.

“It means a lot,” Houlberg said.



# Pausing to ‘keep the memory alive’

## JBER observes Holocaust Remembrance Day

By Air Force Staff Sgt. Sheila deVera  
JBER Public Affairs

In honor of Holocaust Remembrance Day, service members reflected on the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camps during a commemoration ceremony held at the Talkeetna Theater on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson April 24.

The U.S. Congress established the Days of Remembrance as the nation’s annual commemoration of the Holocaust, and created the U.S. National Holocaust Memorial Museum as the permanent living memorial to the victims.

During the opening remarks, Air Force Capt. Darold Foremning, 673d Mission Support Group, said the Department of Defense theme for this year’s Holocaust Observance is “Keep the Memory Alive.”

“Days of remembrance were established to memorialize the six millions Jews murdered in the Holocaust, as well as the millions of non-Jewish victims, of Nazi persecution,” Foremning said.

“Days of remembrance raise awareness that democratic institution and values are not simply sustained, but need to be appreciated, nurtured and protected.”

“It also clearly illustrates the roots and ramifications of prejudice, racism and stereotyping in any society.”

Alaska Jewish Museum Curator and guest speaker, Leslie Fried, explained why it was important to never forget the memory of the millions of people killed during the Holocaust, as well as the survivors, Soldiers and the resistance movements that bore witness to these events.



**Alaska Jewish Museum Curator and guest speaker, Leslie Fried, explains why it is important to never forget the memory of the millions of people killed during the Holocaust, as well as the survivors, Soldiers and resistance who bore witness to these events during the Holocaust Remembrance Day at the Talkeetna Theater on JBER April 24. The days of remembrance were established to memorialize the six millions Jews murdered in the Holocaust of Nazi persecutions. It is to raise awareness that democratic institutions and values are not simply sustained, but need to be appreciated, nurtured and protected. (U.S. Air Force photo/Staff Sgt. Sheila deVera)**

According to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Holocaust was the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored prosecution and murder of six million Jews

by the Nazi regime and its collaborators.

Holocaust is a word of Greek origin meaning ‘sacrifice by fire.’

The Nazis, who came to power in Ger-

many in January 1933, believed that Germans were ‘racially superior’ and that the Jews, deemed ‘inferior,’ were an alien threat to the so-called German racial community.



Becoming a person who can ‘stand firm’

Commentary by Air Force Chaplain  
(Major) Roland Reitz  
673rd ABW Chaplain

Some of the passages in Scripture most enjoyable for military men and women to read are the passages that describe King David’s “mighty men” (II Samuel 23). There were thirty in all, and a top three. Some warriors are described who did not make the top three – but what they did was also amazing. There is a repeated theme of taking your stand in this passage. Scripture mirrors this theme in the famous Ephesians 6, the “armor of God” passage. It seems to be a common practice for all the mighty men. In this observation, we have a personal lesson we can take from these men of old; the order given to us is to “stand firm.”

Standing firm does not happen overnight; it takes discipline and multiple daily small choices that bend in the direction of strength. In our fast-paced, “get it now” society, delayed gratification is not a value. Immediate gratification shows in our relationships, the way we save money, our eating, and the way we pursue physical exercise.

The words verbalized by a person can show publicly the discipline or lack thereof

in the use of the tongue. We often blindly believe the talented, rich, strong, and dynamic all were born that way and automatically got to a place they wanted to go.

On occasion we see one of these seeming role models fall into despair and self-destruction because in moments of personal crisis they lost their way and forgot the basic disciplines that got them to success. Sometimes, a single success or a series of them help one to self deception and “wrong way” thinking. Furthermore, one may not seriously consider the guidance of the phrase, “not think more highly of oneself than one ought; but think so as to have sound judgment” (Romans 12:3).

So how does one stand firm? We can glean the following from the mighty men.

A person who “stands firm” makes multiple correct choices. By themselves they may seem small and trivial, but over time they accomplish a greater goal. A physical training test is not thought about, executed and passed with 100-percent results on the same day. A retirement savings is not thought about on the day you retire. An educational degree is

not handed to you on the day of graduation without hours of academic measurement.

A person who stands firm is committed to the task. Eleazar stood alone on the battlefield and the warriors to his left and right fell back, only to return to help strip the dead. Eleazar’s hand was frozen to his sword (II Samuel 23:9-10). He was committed to the fight. A committed person is not swayed by a few setbacks.

A person who stands firm does not stand alone. He often has an inner circle and a history of significant people who poured the best of themselves into his life. Examples are David’s mighty men, Jesus and his disciples with the inner circle of Peter, James, and John.

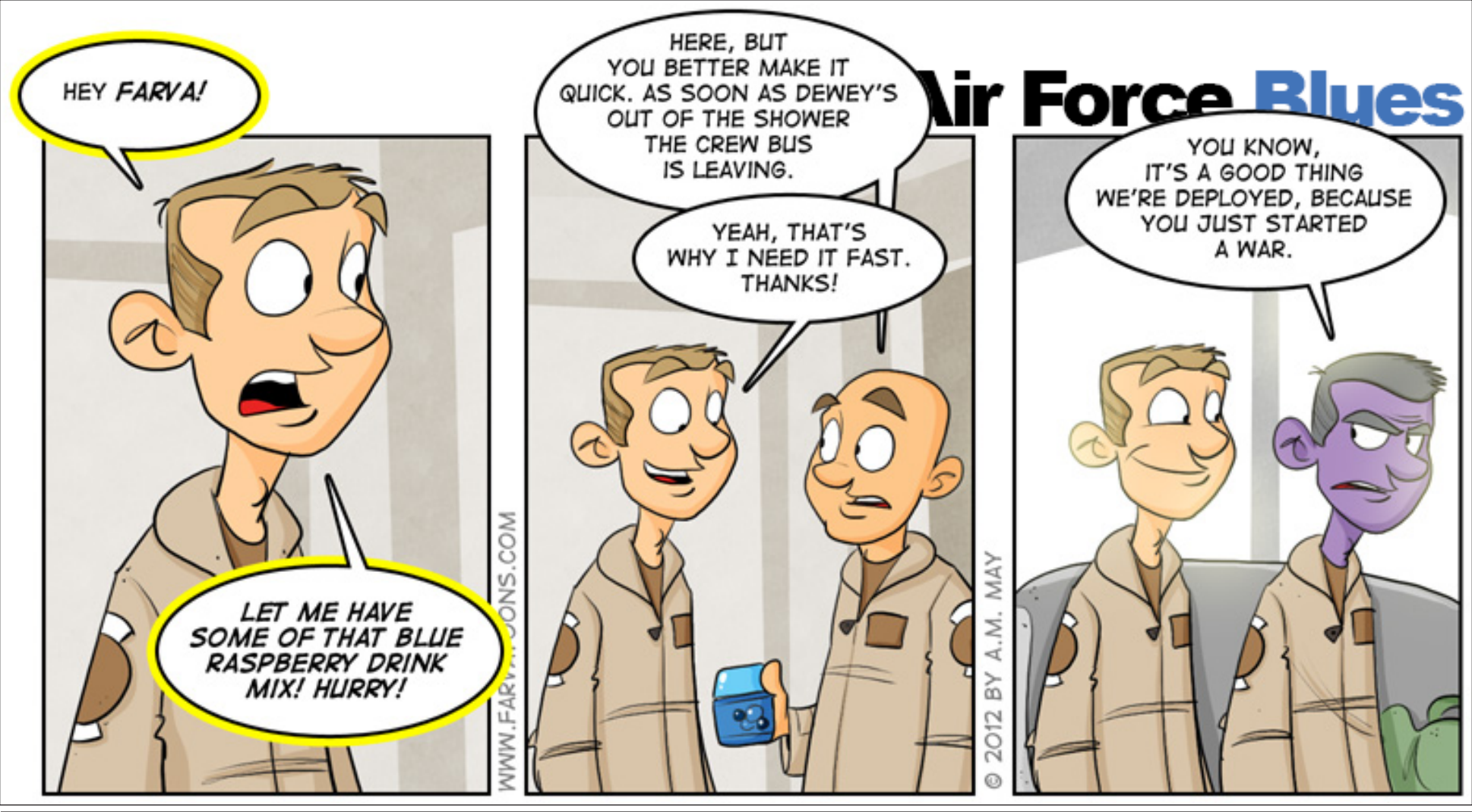
There are the inner circles of military accountability and there are the inner circles of unconditional love among family and brothers or sisters in the profession of arms. These trusted relationships bring strength and long term success. They are wells of water that bring refreshment before or after

life’s challenges.

A person who stands firm surrounds himself with the strength he desires to have. If you want a strong marriage, surround yourself with marriages that reflect the high values of exclusiveness. If you want to control your tongue, surround yourself with those who control their tongues. If you are weak in mathematics, surround yourself with those who are strong in mathematics. “Iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another” (Proverbs 27:17).

A person who stands firm gives credit to others and to God. This is a person who can see objectively. Those who think they have done their accomplishments without anyone else are not seeing life correctly. Self-delusion will soon follow. Above all things, there is a God who sees absolutely everything (Hebrews 4:13). All victories are to be attributed to God almighty.

Stand firm, Soldiers and Airmen. “Stand firm” is the call to those who live in faith before God. This is our spiritual fighting stance. “Faith does not operate in the realm of the possible,” said George Muller. “There is no glory for God in that which is humanly possible. Faith begins where man’s power ends.”





FRIDAY

Gold Rush Inn closure

In support of current USARAK training exercises and block leave, the dining facilities on JBER-Richardson will consolidate support to the Wilderness Inn until June 15.

Princess and Pirate party

Head to the JBER Library to celebrate the Princess and Pirates party for children ages 3 to 12 from 6 to 8 p.m. Save the princess or walk the plank. All family members are invited and costumes are encouraged.

For information, call 384-1640.

Life jacket safety seminar

Learn how to properly don and employ one of the most important safety devices available on or near the water. The seminar takes place at the Buckner Physical Fitness Center from 6:30 to 7 p.m. There are a total of 60 class slots available, registration required.

For information, call 384-1301.

SATURDAY

Exit Glacier hike

Single service members, grab your battle buddy or wingman for an invigorating hike to Exit Glacier. This free trip sponsored by the BOSS program departs from the Warrior Zone at 7 a.m. Be sure to bring plenty of water, money for lunch and comfortable clothing and footwear.

For information, call 384-9023.

Pet fun run

Bring your favorite pet out for a pet fun run at the Elmendorf Fitness Center. Sign-ups begin at 8 a.m. with the run starting at 9 a.m.

Free for ages 13 and older and their pets. T-shirts will be provided for the first 30 participants. There will be door prizes and a pet look-alike contest. All pets must be leashed.

For information, call 552-5353.

OAP open house

Join the staff at the Outdoor Adventure Program from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. for an open house at the JBER-Elmendorf Outdoor Recreation Center. Check out what they have to offer for summer programs and rentals. Give-aways and door prizes will be handed out.

For information, call 552-4599.

SUNDAY

Softball tournament

Sunday is the roster deadline for the JBER pre-season softball tournament. Rosters should be

turned in at the Buckner Physical Fitness Center. An organizational meeting will take place Thursday at 1 p.m. The tourney will take place at the JBER ball fields May 8 through 10.

For information, call 384-1312.

Intramural softball

Get your team together for the JBER intramural softball season. Letters of intent are due to the Buckner Physical Fitness Center by Sunday. An organizational meeting will take place Thursday at 1 p.m. Season runs May 11 through August 21.

For information, call 384-1312.

Spring recital

Showcase your child's talent and cheer on your friends as they perform ballet, hip-hop and cheer at the spring recital. This event, hosted by the JBER Instructional Youth Program will take place at 2 p.m. in the the Frontier Theater on JBER-Richardson.

For information, call 384-1508.

MONDAY

Polar Bowl summer hours

Beginning Monday, summer hours will take effect at the Polar Bowl. Closed Monday through Wednesday; open Thursday, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Friday, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.; Saturday, noon to 1 a.m.; Sunday, 1 to 8 p.m.

For information, call 753-7467.

TUESDAY

Cinco de Mayo celebration

Take a break from your usual lunch plans, head to the Iditarod Dining Facility and celebrate Cinco de Mayo with a themed meal from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

For information, call 552-3114.

Parents' Night Out

Parents, need a date night? Let the professional staff at the Juneau Child Development Center care for your children from 6 to 10 p.m. Open to all active-duty families.

For more information, call central registration at 384-7330.

THURSDAY

Captain's class

Thinking about renting a boat from JBER Outdoor Recreation? This class, taking place from 5 to 7 p.m. at the JBER-Elmendorf Outdoor Recreation Center along with completion of the Alaska Boater Safety Education Course (available free online from [boatus.org](http://boatus.org)) is required to rent boats that will be used on the ocean. The online

course is required to rent all other motorized rental craft.

For more information call, 552-4599, 552-2023 or 552-3812.

MAY 8

Spouse appreciation day

In celebration of military spouses, the JBER Force Support Squadron says thank you. As a token of our appreciation, we invite you to join us at the Joint Military Mall for give-aways and cookies.

For more info, call 552-4943 or 384-1517

Kayak safety training

Interested in kayaking the Alaska wilderness? The Buckner Physical Fitness Center hosts a kayak safety course (required to rent kayaks from ODR) from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Open to ages eight and older. There are only 20 slots available, register early.

To register or for more information, call 384-1301.

MAY 9

Jim Creek ATV trip

Head to Jim Creek on a guided ATV tour from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sign up at JBER-Elmendorf Outdoor Recreation Center. Helmet and transportation will be provided; bring weather appropriate clothing and lunch.

To sign up or for more information, call 552-4599 or 552-2023.

Patriot Pet contest

Bring your pets to the Joint Military Mall from noon to 3 p.m. for a chance to fetch prizes in the Patriot Pet contest.

There will be prizes for the best-dressed pet, pet-and-owner look alike, and best trick.

For information, call 552-4222.

MAY 10

Mother's golf shop specials

Does your mom golf? Swing in to the Moose Run golf shop from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. where she can receive 10 percent off on gear to help tee her up for the season.

For information, call 428-0056.

Mother's Day bowling

Having trouble deciding what to do for Mother's Day? Take Mom bowling at the Polar Bowl from 1 to 8 p.m. for 10 percent off bowling and a special gift just for her.

For information, call 753-7467.

Mom and Me ceramics

Take advantage of 25 percent savings on pick-and-paint ceramics activities with mom from 10

a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Polar Express Arts and Crafts Center.

For information, call 384-3717.

Bear Aware at the Zoo

Bears are waking up, and just like anyone, they're cranky and hungry. Join the Alaska Zoo to learn about what attracts bears and how to thwart their attempts for your trash through hands-on activities and games. Moms visit free in honor of Mothers' Day.

For information, visit [alaska-zoo.org](http://alaska-zoo.org) or call 341-6463.

MAY 16

Retiree appreciation day

In honor of military retirees, the 29th Annual Retiree Appreciation Day will kick off at 10 a.m. at the Frontier Theater on JBER-Richardson. Events throughout the day will include an opening ceremony, questions for the commander, lunch at the Wilderness Inn, a health and wellness fair, I.D. card renewal, a vintage firearms shoot and dinner at the Wilderness Inn.

For more information and a detailed event schedule, visit [jber.af.mil/akretiree/](http://jber.af.mil/akretiree/).

MAY 26 THROUGH 29

Vacation Bible School

From May 26 at 9 a.m. to noon and for the remainder of the week, the JBER Chapel hosts Vacation Bible School for kids in kindergarten through sixth grade at the Arctic Warrior Chapel.

This year's theme, 'Everest: Conquering Challenges with God's Mighty Power' promises to be mountains of fun. To register a child or to volunteer, visit <http://tiny.cc/cajjxx>.

For more information, call 552-5762.

ONGOING

Help for homebuyers

JBER Volunteer Realtors and Mortgage Lenders present an hour-long home buying seminar every Wednesday alternating between the JBER-Elmendorf or JBER-Richardson Housing Management Offices from 1300 to 1400.

These seminars are intended to support service members interested in purchasing a home by explaining the buying and selling process in the Anchorage, Eagle River and Wasilla/Palmer areas.

For more information or to sign up, contact either HMO office; JBER-Elmendorf at 552-4312 or

## Chapel services

Catholic Mass

Sunday

8:30 a.m. – Arctic Warrior Chapel

11:30 a.m. – Midnight Sun Chapel

Monday and Wednesday

11:40 a.m. – Arctic Warrior Chapel

Tuesday and Friday

11:30 a.m. – Midnight Sun Chapel

Thursday

12:00 p.m. – Hospital Chapel

Confession

Confessions are available anytime by appointment. Call 552-5762.

Protestant Sunday Services

Liturgical Service

9 a.m. – Heritage Chapel

Gospel Service

9:30 a.m. – Midnight Sun Chapel

Community Service

10:30 a.m. – Heritage Chapel

Collective Service

11 a.m. – Arctic Warrior Chapel

Chapel Next

5 p.m. – Chaplain Family Life Center

Jewish Services

Erev Shabbat Service

(First Friday of each month)

5 p.m. – Heritage Chapel

Call 384-0456 or 552-5762

Religious Education

For religious education schedules, please call the Religious Operations Center at 552-5762 or 384-1461.

JBER-Richardson at 384-3088.

Torch meeting for youth

Torch Club is a leadership development experience providing community service opportunities and character development for youths ages 11 to 13.

Meetings take place every Monday at 4:15 p.m. at the Two Rivers Youth Center.

For information, call 384-1508.

## 673d FORCE SUPPORT SQUADRON



Princess & Pirates Party

JBER Library • Bldg. 7 • 384-1640

May 1

6-8 p.m.



Elmendorf Fitness Center

Pet Fun Run

Bldg. 9510 • 552.5353

May 2

9 a.m.

FREE Event

Sign ups begin at 8 a.m.

For ages 13 yrs. & older + pets

T-shirts for first 30 participants

Door prizes & pet look alike contest!

Pets must be on a leash!

Call for more information



OAP OPEN HOUSE

COME CHECK IT OUT!

At the JBER Elmendorf ORC, Bldg. 7301. 552-2023

MAY 2

11 A.M. - 3 P.M.



SPRING RECITAL

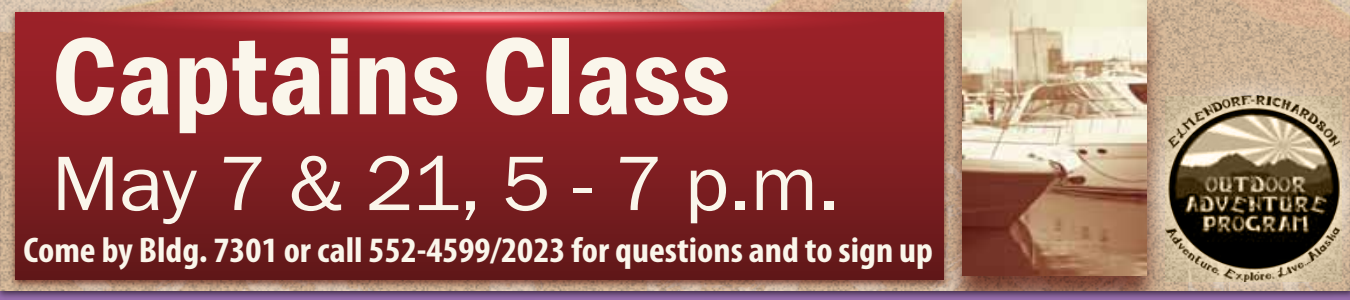
HELD AT THE FRONTIER THEATER

MAY 3 • 2 P.M.

BALLET, HIP HOP & CHEER

IYP

Instructional Youth Programs



Captains Class

May 7 & 21, 5 - 7 p.m.

Come by Bldg. 7301 or call 552-4599/2023 for questions and to sign up

## MARKETING TidBits

### REC★ON

FEED YOUR RUSH

Did you know that we offer discounted trips for families? Through the RecOn program, families are entitled to discounted rates. The RecOn program is designed to address the challenges faced by our deploying service members and their families. By providing "high adrenaline" supervised outdoor recreation programs, we provide families with opportunities to reintegrate into regular social networks, family life, and local communities!

Join us in the month of May as we ride ATV's the Jim Creek and Eklutna Lake Trail, climb and traverse the Matanuska Glacier, and learn the basics of kayaking! Call 552-4599/2023 to book your trip today!

Trips can only be booked 30 days prior. This program is open to all service members and dependents.



Curious on what other trips we have to offer? Check out our Outdoor Adventure Program Booklet! Our booklet provides a rundown of all the trips we offer from May to October, as well as the various items you can rent through our Outdoor Recreation Centers.

Discover the Alaskan experience with us as we help you plan your next adventure! Join us as we scale the rocks along the Seward Highway, kayak along the northern shore of Portage Lake, or create a custom trip with your friends and family! We can help you have an unforgettable summer! Check out our Outdoor Adventure Program booklet today! [elmendorf-richardson.com/fun/outdoor-recreation/oap/](http://elmendorf-richardson.com/fun/outdoor-recreation/oap/)

Trips can only be booked 30 days prior. Minimum and Maximum sign up numbers apply to all trips. Must meet required age limits to participate. For more information call 552-4599/2023.

For information on all FSS events and activities, check out our website at: [www.elmendorf-richardson.com](http://www.elmendorf-richardson.com).



Stop by and see us!

[www.facebook.com/JBER673FSS](http://www.facebook.com/JBER673FSS)

[www.elmendorf-richardson.com](http://www.elmendorf-richardson.com)



## FSS/MWR events & activities



# Toe shoes, a tutu and a willing heart

## Students learn ballet at the Illa School Age Program



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Noemia Howell, Youth Instructional Program ballet instructor, performs plié with Allie Akers, 8 (left) and Audreena Smith, 7 (right) at the Illa School Age Program on JBER April 16. Akers and Smith are practicing for a recital May 3. Akers is the daughter of Lt. Col. James Akers, 90th Fighter Squadron commander, and Smith is the daughter of Master Sgt. Thomas Smith, 673d Civil Engineer Squadron first sergeant. (U.S. Air Force photos/Airman 1st Class Tammie Ramsouer)

Allie Akers, 8, poses during a ballet rehearsal while attending an instructional class at the Illa School Age Program on JBER April 16. The ballet students will perform their first recital on May 3. Akers is the daughter of Lt. Col. James Akers, 90th Fighter Squadron commander.

A ballet student performs a plié with her feet in thirds at the Illa School Age Program on JBER April 16.

From left to right, Audreena Smith, 7; Allie Akers, 8; and Alexis Norman, 8, perform a barre isyk during a ballet class at the Illa School Age Program on JBER April 16. The class provides children the opportunity to practice balance and grace. Ballet is one of many after-school classes available to children on JBER. Smith is the daughter of Master Sgt. Thomas Smith, 673d Civil Engineer Squadron first sergeant; Akers is the daughter of Lt. Col. James Akers, 90th Fighter Squadron commander, and Norman is the daughter of Senior Airman Randy Norman, 525th Aircraft Maintenance Unit dedicated crew chief.





# Career-ending injury leads Airman to new calling

By Kevin Gaddie  
Eglin Public Affairs

EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE, Florida — When a career-ending injury halted then-Staff Sgt. Daniel Crane’s promising military career, he almost gave in to the anger and depression that threatened to overtake him.

In 2012, Crane, assigned to the 736th Security Forces Squadron in Guam, had just completed a three-day security mission. The night after, he spent some off-duty time at a friend’s house and was leaving when a life-altering incident occurred.

“I was in my car when I was approached by a local resident with a shotgun,” the now-retired law enforcer said. “He shot me in my upper right arm, which pretty much destroyed everything in my bicep – nerves, bone, arteries, veins, everything.”

Crane said it was the most helpless feeling he’d ever had.

“I didn’t even have the chance to defend myself,” he said.

Through several surgeries part of his arm was saved, but his hand no longer worked. He would later have it removed below the elbow.

Crane, who joined the Air Force in 2006, was retired after just six years. The experience left him deeply depressed, angry and disillusioned.

“I didn’t like that my military



**Daniel Crane, an Air Force Wounded Warrior athlete, swims laps during the fourth day of an introductory adaptive sports and rehabilitation camp at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, April 16. The DoD’s military adaptive sports program enhances warrior recovery by engaging wounded, ill and injured service members in ongoing, daily adaptive activities, based on their interest and ability. (U.S. Air Force photos/ Samuel King Jr.)**

career was over,” said Crane, originally from San Angelo, Texas. “I had planned to have a 20-plus year career in the Air Force, like my father, who served for 30 years. After everything I worked so hard for was taken away from me, I felt like I had nothing to hold on to.”

During his recovery and rehabilitation, Crane was approached with the idea of participating in the military adaptive sports program.

“I said no, several times. I was still dealing with what happened to me,” he said. “Finally, I decided to attend my first adaptive sports camp.”

He said his experience at the 2014 Air Force Trials in Las Vegas was the first step towards emerging from his despair.

“I saw numerous people, who had arm amputations and other injuries worse than mine,” the former Airman said. “I saw they were still doing everything, even with their prosthetics. That started my recovery. That helped me make the decision to have my hand amputated.”

At the trials, Crane discovered interests in archery and shooting. “Those events got me hooked,” he said. “That’s when I started

embracing the adaptive sports.”

He hasn’t looked back since.

He competed at the 2014 Warrior Games at Colorado Springs, Colorado, and the first Invictus Games, hosted in London. Those games saw more than 400 active duty and veterans from 13 nations compete across nine adaptive sports.

There, Crane met Prince Harry of Wales at the archery event. During this meeting, he found a new purpose for living and a new way to serve his country.

“Me and a handful of other Wounded Warriors participated in an archery demonstration for Prince Harry,” he said. “At the time, we didn’t know we were going to get the Inspirational Award, presented by Prince Harry himself. Receiving that award changed my entire perspective from having a lot of hate, to starting my own recovery. It started the mending of

my broken heart.”

From a Wounded Warrior mentor-athlete perspective, Crane said he’s seen the introductory adaptive sports camps become more organized, overall. The new Wounded Warriors coming in are putting forth more effort and better coaches and people are now participating, he added.

However, the biggest change Crane has seen is within himself.

He said the military adaptive sports program has given him a new reason for living.

The former Air Force protector is now motivated to encourage and inspire other wounded warriors. In turn, he draws inspiration from them.

“These games have given me a new purpose in my life,” Crane said. “Through the games, I still get to serve my fellow wounded warriors.”

“Helping them in their journey to recovery also helps me. The people I help are now my priority. It may not have been my true calling before, but I feel it is now.”

Crane plans to compete in archery and shooting at this year’s Warrior Games in June.



**Crane releases the discus at a track and field session during the third day of the Warrior Games training camp April 20. Crane, who survived a shotgun injury, first participated in the military adaptive sports program in 2014. He will compete in the archery and shooting events at the DoD Warrior Games June 19 through 28 at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va.**



# Force Support Squadron takes Lemay award

By Tech. Sgt. Raymond Mills  
JBER Public Affairs

The 673d Air Base Wing Force Support Squadron earned the Air Force Curtis E. Lemay award for best large-installation-level FSS of the year in the Air Force for 2014.

The award recognizes FSS leadership, customer service, support and quality-of-life programs provided to joint military members and their families.

The accolade is split into two categories; large bases, with more than 6,000 military and civilian personnel, and small bases, which have fewer than 6,000 personnel. Competition was stiff, with 80 squadrons competing Air Force-wide for the title “best large installation” FSS.

“It’s truly an honor for the FSS to win

this award,” said Lt. Col. Christopher Busque, 673d Air Base Wing FSS commander.

The FSS is a diverse squadron with members who work hard to manage a multifaceted mission that includes providing lodging, child care, recreation, mortuary affairs, and much more to JBER personnel and their families.

Busque said executing the FSS’s mission is a great achievement and couldn’t be accomplished without the Airmen and civilians dedicated to running daily operations.

“It takes a special kind of person who is willing to be that frontline service provider, whether that’s in the child development center taking care of kids or in the dining facility serving food,” he said.

Senior Airman Kevin Brown, 673d FSS

career development technician, exhibits the qualities and characteristics that are representative of the FSS team.

Brown was recognized as FSS Airman of the Year at squadron, Pacific Air Force, and Air Force levels.

“It was a team effort,” said Brown. “Leadership provided the opportunities and the team took advantage of them. It’s a great feeling to be recognized, and it shows that all our hard work and determination paid off in the end.”

Busque said the FSS motto is ‘Proud to serve,’ and his squadron clearly delivers by way of exceptional services.

Although the FSS team members achieved a high honor and are proud of their accomplishments, they continue to enhance support to JBER.

“We truly are able to do great things and

will continue to do great things,” Busque said. “This is not the destination, this is still the journey. We are still looking for things to do and how to improve so as to better support the men and women of JBER.”

Busque said the FSS is always looking for feedback from the community in an effort to expand services and provide customers with what they need. Feedback can be provided through interactive customer evaluations, or simply by speaking to an FSS member.

“I would like to say that I am so proud to be part of this team, and it’s important to note that I got here midway through the award period and this award is not about me, it’s about the men and women of the FSS,” said Busque. “It’s a great honor to be associated with this great team and I would like to thank them for all the hard work they do on a daily basis.”



**CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:** Robert Fowlkes, 673d FSS food service chef, prepares a dish for the dinner meal at the Iditarod Dining Facility on JBER March 18. (U.S. Air Force photo/Airman 1st Class Tammie Ramsouer)

Airman 1st Class Cortny Pelton, a native of Wyoming, Mich., assigned to 673d FSS, prepares food for the lunch meal at the Iditarod Dining Facility April 23. (U.S. Air Force photo/Justin Connaher)

Tesha Mulkey, 673d Force Support Squadron library technician, reads to children at the Consolidated Library on March 3. (Air Force photo/Airman Christopher R. Morales)

