

TAKING THE

PLUNGE

A U.S. Army Alaska Soldier creates an emergency flotation device out of his uniform trousers at Buckner Physical Fitness Center on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Aug. 6 during water survival training. Trousers, while not airtight, will hold enough air to help a Soldier stay afloat in an emergency. (U.S. Air Force photos/Justin Connahey)

Soldiers assigned to U.S. Army Alaska conduct water survival training at Buckner Physical Fitness Center Aug. 6. Water survival training builds Soldiers' confidence for operations in and around water, as well as teaching them to participate safely in other aquatic training environments. Lessons learned in the training are also applicable to emergencies such as boating accidents – potentially saving lives during off-duty activities.



What lies beneath: JBER upgrades water supply lines

Much of prior infrastructure was installed in WWII era

By David Bedard
JBER Public Affairs

With heritage comes an understanding of where we come from and who we are. With heritage comes a feeling of community and intergenerational continuity. But, unfortunately, with heritage often comes metallic corrosion and leaky pipe joints.

Built in 1953 at a factory in Anniston, Alabama, a fire hydrant stood vigil near a Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson shoppette through the Cold War, the fall of the Iron Curtain, and the War on Terror.

With tired rubber seals and worn brass fittings, it was finally time for contracted tradesmen to replace the unit as part of a

larger project – upgrading aging water-supply infrastructure on base.

“The nature of this project is to upgrade the base water system to bring cleaner potable water to the facilities on base – both domestic and for the water for the fire distribution sprinkler systems,” said Steven Sawyer, 673d Civil Engineer Squadron Contract Management construction manager.

Currently, contractors are working on Sijan Avenue and Slammer Avenue in the vicinity of 3rd Wing headquarters.

Sawyer said some of the water mains at JBER were laid during the World War II era and were in great need of replacement.

“[The legacy plumbing] had exceeded its lifecycle,” he said. “It was originally put in when the base was built.”

Because the old water mains were routed under roads, Sawyer said the street pavement needed to be replaced, too, along with much of the curbing and other supporting infrastructure.

The joints between cement pipes began to erode and leak. Old valves wouldn’t completely shut, requiring tradesmen to shut off two or more valves in order to service a building. The process required more than the target building to lose water service during repairs.

New fittings will eliminate any unnecessary inconveniences associated with service visits.

“We’re able to put in valves where we want them and where we need them,” Sawyer said. “So whenever we need to do maintenance, we can do it with the smallest disruption possible to the user.”

The process took a lot of planning and interagency coordination. Months before breaking ground, Sawyer completed an initial site visit to determine the scope of the project and the sequence of events necessary to efficiently complete the job. He coordinated with affected facility managers to ensure they could work around road closures.

On daily site visits, Sawyer knows tradesmen by name. He wears a smile with his hardhat and orange safety vest, but he is thorough in ensuring contractors meet code and the base’s specified requirements.

The job calls for a wide variety of trade disciplines including surveyors, pipe fitters, heavy-equipment operators, electricians and road-construction tradesmen.

Sawyer said surveyors are especially

critical in a job like this because of the risk of damaging underlying infrastructure. With accurately laid survey marks, severance of electrical lines is avoided during digging operations.

Crews are replacing cement pipe with high-density polyethylene. Sections of the HDPE piping are joined in a process called heat fusion where the adjoining ends of two sections are shaved to make them square for a precise fit. They are then heated and bonded, making the joint as strong as the pipe.

Sawyer said all of the planning, the work and the traffic delays will be worth the results of improved water mains, valves and fittings.

“The benefit will be better, more consistent water service,” he said.

A new fire hydrant replaced the 1953 unit, both new and old sharing a design that hasn’t changed much in more than 80 years. But the new one isn’t connected to a grid of cement pipes like the Anniston unit. It’s connected to HDPE piping Sawyer said will last for hundreds of years.

Along with the new infrastructure comes a heritage of long-term sustainability for generations.



Nepali troops attend WLC at JBER

By Sachel S. Harris
USARAK Public Affairs

For some Soldiers, the trip to the Sergeant First Class Christopher R. Brevard Noncommissioned Officer Academy is only a few minutes from home. For those stationed at Fort Wainwright, it's a couple of hours. But for six soldiers currently enrolled, the trip was more than 11 hours.

Through the Regional Partnership Program, six noncommissioned officers from the Nepal Army traveled across the Pacific to the United States to attend the Warrior Leadership Course, a month-long rigorous training course that develops leadership skills within Soldiers.

"I think this partnership has a major benefit for this region just for the simple fact that we are showing both our flexibility and professionalism," said Staff Sgt. Jeremiah Mark Haight, a small-group leader.

"Having the opportunity to work side-by-side with another nation's army is always a great thing," said Staff Sgt. Kandom Michael Moore, also a small-group leader.

The course allows both Nepalese and American troops to identify both their strengths and weaknesses, benefitting from each other while cultivating invaluable relationships.

"When I first learned I was coming to America, I was shocked," said Nepalese Army Capt. Paras Tathapa, battalion training

officer and acting operations officer. "But since being here, we have all learned things we can't learn at home that will prepare us for unique situations that could come our way."

However, the unique training environment isn't without its challenges.

To prepare for the main challenge, the language barrier, each Nepalese soldier is partnered with an American, creating an environment where everyone has the opportunity to learn something new.

The students have homework, take quizzes and maintain physical training. For both the instructors and students, their hard work is paying off.

"When I see the Nepalese soldiers learn something new, understand how it's done and perform it to standard, it is very rewarding," Moore said.

Though the Nepalese are attending the course in order to learn how to become better soldiers, it has also been a learning experience for the instructors.

"We have had a couple of classes geared to talking about cultural differences, so it gave them an opportunity to share with the class," Haight said. "It has encouraged me to continue learning about their military."

Once the Nepalese soldiers complete WLC, they will continue their training through the Foundation Instructor Facilitator Course.

This week-long course teaches students basic facilitation and instruction techniques through interactive multimedia instruction and lessons given in U.S. Army schools.

"Their eagerness to learn about our Army has motivated my partner and me," Haight said. "We have learned a great deal about their culture and I am sure we will learn a lot more as the cycle winds down to a close."

The troops graduated from the course on Thursday.



TOP: A Nepalese Army Ranger works with a U.S. Army Soldier during the Situational Training Exercise Aug. 11. (U.S. Air Force photos/Justin Connaher)

ABOVE: Nepalese Army Rangers work with U.S. Army Soldiers during the Situational Training Exercise portion of the Warrior Leader Course on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Aug. 11. The Warrior Leader Course, formerly called the Primary Leadership Development Course, is the first leadership course U.S. Army Soldiers attend.

LEFT: A Nepalese soldier fights alongside a U.S. Army Alaska specialist during an exercise during the Warrior Leader Course Aug. 12. The WLC, hosted at the Sergeant First Class Christopher R. Brevard Noncommissioned Officer Academy on JBER, is a month-long, hard-hitting and intensive course that teaches the basic skills to lead small groups of Soldiers and advance to the rank of sergeant. The student exchange is an ongoing part of USARAK's collaboration with Nepal as part of the Regional Partnership Program, which is designed to enhance interoperability for a variety mission sets across the Pacific theater.



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The Airmen of Wake Island never sleep

By Staff Sgt. Alexander W. Riedel
36th Wing Public Affairs

ANDERSEN AIR FORCE BASE, Guam — About 1,500 miles east of Guam, in the middle of nowhere in the Mid-Pacific, lies the small coral limestone atoll of Wake Island.

Ahead of Guam by about two hours, a select group of four Airmen stationed here are the first Americans to turn the calendar page every day.

The team comprises a fuels, infrastructure, acquisitions and contracting specialist. Working with civilian contractors, they ensure the airfield is run properly and all organizations using the island have all mission-essential resources.

The Wake Island mission

Seemingly lost at sea, this tiny island paradise may just be one of the Air Force’s best-kept assignment secrets.

The calm on the airfield, however, may be misleading.

From the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, numerous organizations use the island as research ground or waypoint at certain points of the year.

“We are essentially an airbridge for the Pacific,” said Master Sgt. Yusef Saad, lead contracting officer representative with Detachment 1, Pacific Regional Support Center.

“We have numerous transports that travel through Wake Island and we serve as a hub location for in-flight emergencies, when aircraft need to divert. We are strategically positioned nearly perfectly in the middle of the Pacific. It’s a perfect location for this mission.”

But their job description is only the core of what the Airmen are tasked to handle.

The remote location, hours away from any support agencies,

requires the island teams to be largely self-sufficient.

“Every day is a challenge and brings something new that you were either ready for or not,” Saad said. “It is challenging at times, because I don’t think a lot of people know we are here. Sometimes we have military flights coming in and the aircrew meets us as we process their arrival – and they’ll be surprised and ask us whether we actually live here.”

The demanding mission and self-reliance is part of the mission for the select few who are chosen for duty on Wake.

“Our mission is unique in the Air Force,” said Tech. Sgt. Joshua Reitz, Det. 1 civil engineering contracting officer. “Yes, we work our normal days in the office, but we also stand ready 24/7. If there is an issue that arises on the island, we’re the ones to get the call and we have to take care of it.

“Even if we have no experience with it, we automatically have to get experienced and take care of it, because nobody is going to do it for us,” Reitz continued. “I have to have at least a working knowledge of all aspects of my and other career fields. Every day brings something different, and I enjoy that challenge.”

For the commander of the team, Maj. Ronald Dion, an acquisitions officer by trade, taking care of the mission is only part of the work on Wake.

“I fill a logistics officer position, but it is so much more than that,” Dion said. “In a way (the Air Force team) is the security on the island, we’re peace officers and we even occasionally host distinguished visitors among other duties. There is a lot that we do that goes beyond our normal career fields.”

Even far beyond the horizon of the next Air Force base, the military routine for the Airmen continues of the ocean – including meetings, physical fitness and even

promotion testing.

There are regular inspections, and tele-conferences with their home station at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson and other entities with a footprint on the island.

To keep time, the team works from Tuesday to Saturday, which matches the West Coast’s regular work week.

“We get up in the morning, work out, then put on the uniform and get to work,” Saad said. “At the office, plenty of emails are usually waiting for us to respond to, because our morning here is already the evening for the West Coast.”

Personal challenges

To some, an assignment to quiet Wake Island may seem like a lottery win.

A pristine, turquoise lagoon stretches along the flightline and opens to the hushed reef break in the distance.

Aside from the military footprint, the island is nearly unchanged from decades ago. There is no traffic, no pollution, and no line at the grocery store.

Only, there is no grocery store at all – only a small company store that opens a few times a week, carrying assorted snacks, drinks and toiletries.

And a souvenir shop occasionally opens when aircrews leave the airfield, allowing buyers to prove their visit to this unlikely duty station.

To spend their off-duty time, the Airmen fish, scuba dive and comb the beach for historic items, marine life and the occasional swept-up curiosities.

When necessary, they also have to use some of their time to battle the nearly unrestrained rat population on the 2.9-square-mile island.

According to a recent survey, 2.5 million rats are currently roaming the atoll as a result of the eradication of a feral cat population in 2006.

“It’s pretty remote around here,” Dion said. “There isn’t much entertainment, no base exchange, commissary or other services. It can be a challenge.”

Mail only arrives about twice a month on rotator flights, and for their personal use, island workers rely on a slow dial-up Internet connection reminiscent of the early days of the Internet.

Internet phone calls are thus nearly impossible and even emails are slow to send.

With a wife and three daughters back home, Reitz said this makes it sometimes difficult to man an island thousands of miles away from home – but family support keeps morale up and the Airman motivated.

“I’ve been on a number of temporary duty assignments and deployments during my career, so my wife is pretty much a pro at this,” he said. “When I’m gone, she picks up the work and totally takes care of everything. And when the assignment is over, we’ll get back to real life.”

The days without aircraft visits or projects to coordinate can be slow, however, turning some days into a personal challenge of a different kind.

“Wake Island defined to a point ... it’s groundhog day,” said Saad, who is closing in on the end of his year-long tour. “People see the pictures and wish they were here. And in the first few days after arriving here, you’re excited. But you’re very isolated from the world.

“You don’t know some of the things you take for granted until you’re away for a while,” he said.

On the shores of history

While Wake Island now is a quiet ocean paradise with languidly rolling waves touching its shores, during World War II, it was far different – it was fiercely fought over as a strategic waypoint for air power in the Pacific.

To this day, unexploded ord-

nance is sometimes found along the atoll’s shores, a dangerous reminder of the atoll’s history.

In the face of the Americans regaining control of the island in 1943, the Japanese commander gave the order to kill 98 American civilian workers who had been held prisoner on Wake since the Japanese forces landed on the island’s beaches.

Today, an almost unchanged number of American and Thai civilian contractors again work to maintain and operate the island’s airfield.

“We’re a part of history,” Saad said. “This island and base have a lot of history. Knowing we are part of that history is special. We’re assigned to Wake Island and not a lot of people can say that.”

For major holidays, Airmen and contractors gather at “Drifter’s Reef,” the only gastronomy establishment other than the dining facility.

People bring food to the bar and share in highly anticipated bingo nights.

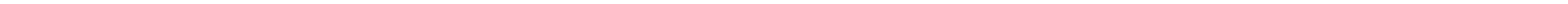
Sharing life with those braving the isolation of Wake Island, Saad said, will be one of his favorite memories of this special assignment.

“We’re family,” Saad said. “Even though everybody kind of has their group, we stick together. This is our home.”

Until their tour is over, the Airmen wake up on Wake Island, ready to bridge the empty vastness of the Pacific Ocean during emergencies and contingencies.

When the time comes, they are the closest refueling and repair station for more than a thousand miles in either direction.

“It’s a once-in-a-lifetime experience, because travel to the island is extremely restricted,” Reitz said. “Only few have even heard of Wake, and only a select few who really know what it’s like to be here. It’s an awesome feeling to experience that.”



VA secretary visits JBER, lauds 673d medical personnel

By Tech. Sgt. Robert Barnett
JBER Public Affairs

Robert McDonald, secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs visited the 673rd Medical Group Aug. 11 to provide his insight and explain the future of veterans’ benefits.

“I’m used to going around the world,” McDonald said. “I’ve developed an eye for what to notice about an operation, just little things. For example, in the restroom, is the area around the sink filled with water; are people cleaning up the restroom when they’re done?

“Do people walk by litter on the floor? Are there boards in the hallway showing how they’re using technology to improve the operation? I was very impressed by what I saw [at the 673d MDG],” McDonald said.

The secretary described the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson hospital as clean and well-lit, with engaging personnel.

“There were people caring for patients, veterans were engaged—I just thought it was a really great operation,” he said.

“What impressed me more than anything else was the way you couldn’t tell the difference between the active-duty people and the VA people. They were both working hand-in-hand; it was incredibly hard to tell them apart. They were both committed to the mission. I was very impressed.”



Air Force Col. Teresa Bisnett, 673d Medical Group commander, and Air Force Maj. Suzanne Green, 673d Medical Group Emergency Department Flight commander, speak with Robert McDonald, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, as part of a tour around the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson hospital Aug. 11. (U.S. Air Force photo/Airman Christopher R. Morales)

During his visit, McDonald said he was committed to engaging with elected officials to codify a long-term funding solution for all joint-venture hospitals.

“Nationally we’ve conducted seven million more completed appointments in the last year than in the previous year,” he said.

“Of that, four and a half million were outside the VA, ‘care in the community’ as we call it. The two-and-a-half-million balance was

inside VA. The Alaska health care system has completed more than 106,000 health care appointments from June 2014 to June 2015.

“Nationally, 97 percent of our appointments are within 30 days of the [veteran’s] desired date... here in Alaska, that number’s 98 percent,” he said.

Among the various topics discussed, the secretary also emphasized the VA’s use of telehealth services, which use health infor-

mation, disease management and other technologies to target care and case management to improve access to care, improving the health of veterans.

Telehealth allows patients to receive clinical care from their homes.

“We are, I would argue, global leaders in telehealth nationally,” McDonald said. “Here, we are on the cutting edge of using telehealth to reach veterans in rural areas.

We do that three ways: we have home telehealth, which allows veterans to take regular readings like blood pressure so we can catch issues that arise as they self-manage chronic diseases.

“A second is what we call store-and-forward, that enables us to capture and store images from patients to specialists without having to come into a clinic. This becomes very important for something like dermatology, for example, where in the private sector it could take six to nine months to make an appointment, but with digital photography the way it is today, you can use broadband to transfer that image and have a specialist look at it from afar.

“The third way is clinical video telehealth, where someone in a clinic can communicate with a veteran in the comfort of his home. Having the veteran [at home] is a big plus for something like mental health care where coming to a clinic could be an anxiety-ridden situation.”

An Army veteran, McDonald served in multiple units including the 82nd Airborne Division.

He is described as being personally committed to values-based leadership and to improving the lives of others.

This is the first time he has visited Alaska since his Arctic training in the 1970s, he said.

“I was much happier landing in the airplane than jumping out of it,” he said.

There’s an active shooter in the building – what now?

By William Hilton
USARAK Protection program manager

One of the greatest threats to our community’s safety is an active shooter incident, as these types of attacks are very unpredictable and most come with little to no warning.

There may be almost no reaction time, so you must protect yourself any way you can.

All of us have heard “know your surroundings,” but how many of us truly practice this in our incredibly busy lives?

Practicing this “situational awareness” pays dividends in everything we do, including reacting to various types of criminal and life-threatening situations, where quick, informed decision-making may save the day.

There are some immediate actions you can rely upon during an active shooter incident – evacuate, hide out, and take action.

The first and most important action is to attempt to leave the scene or building, as quickly and safely, as possible.

Evacuating the scene may not be easy to accomplish; however, the idea during an active shooter situation is to remove yourself from the incident site, if at all possible.

Don’t stop to pick up personal belongings, lock doors or treat the wounded. Get to safety as quickly as possible.

When escape is not possible, the second action to take is to hide – anywhere which provides the best protection. Lock yourself in an office and hide under a desk or behind filing cabinets.



Marines assigned to Delta Company, 4th Law Enforcement Battalion, search for an active shooter threat while conducting high-risk response training at the Exchange on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson May 15. Pacific Air Forces High-Risk Response Training is a project that provides security forces personnel with an intensive course based in real-life scenarios emphasizing effective tactics to eliminate active shooters and other threats. (U.S. Air Force photo/Alejandro Pena)

Stay low and avoid standing behind doors or walls if at all possible, as active shooters will shoot through them, especially if they are looking for specific targets, as seen during the recent Fort Hood shooting,

when Sgt. Danny Ferguson barricaded the door.

The third and least-recommended action is to attack the assailant. This is extremely dangerous and should only be attempted as

a last resort. If you feel you have no chance to escape or hide, attacking may be your only option.

When individuals come to the point of being an active shooter, in most cases they are not afraid of death – and may have no feelings for those people they are shooting.

They are normally motivated by anger, being an outcast or seeking revenge.

In some cases, they are motivated and are supported by terrorists or extremist views, but in almost all cases they cannot be stopped unless they are stopped by law enforcement or suicide.

At the end of the day, you play a critical role in promoting our communities safety.

By applying the iWATCH phrase “See Something, Say Something” and reporting suspicious activities and behaviors to your supervisor or local law enforcement office, you may one day prevent such an incident from happening.

With that said, you may do everything right and still be faced with an active-shooter incident like that at Fort Hood, requiring you to take action by following the “evacuate, hide out, take action” principle.

For more information and training resources, contact your unit or installation antiterrorism officer.

If you see something suspicious, contact law enforcement, call iWatch Army at 384-0823 or 384-0824, or Air Force Eagle Eyes at 552-2256 or 552-4444.

On Fort Wainwright, call 353-7710.

Munitions inventory

The 3rd Munitions Squadron will be conducting a semiannual inventory of the munitions stockpile Sept. 3 through 12. All munitions users must schedule requests for munitions issue or turn-ins around the inventory.

During the inventory, only emergency requests will be processed, after written approval by the group commander or equivalent. For information, contact Munitions Operations at 552-3098 or jber.fv5000@elmendorf.af.mil.

Pharmacy renovations

The JBER hospital pharmacy in the main building is undergoing renovations through November.

There will be three functioning windows and a slight reduction in waiting area; wait times will increase slightly, especially during lunchtime and other peak hours.

When renovations are complete, there will be six windows, 100 percent more waiting area, and an expanded inpatient pharmacy.

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 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 covers loan pre-qualifications, offers and acceptance, inspections, title searches, types of loans, and the closure process to prospective home owners.

For information or to sign up, 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-Richard-

son 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.

The Equipment Management Solutions Program provides networked multifunctional devices that print, scan, copy and fax.

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.

It is open 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 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.

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 is eligible for a maximum of two years from the date of the PCS orders and is in the program for one year. Spouses who have never filled a federal position can now register for PPP.

Register at the Civilian Personnel Office at JBER-Elmendorf or the personnel office at JBER-Richardson.

For information, call 552-9203.

Utilities upgrades

As part of Doyon Utilities’ improvement of 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. Doyon is working during off-peak periods. If an outage occurs, crews will act quickly to restore service.

Article 139 claims

A Uniform Code of Military Justice Article 139 claim is a claim against any service member for willfully damaging or wrongfully taking property while the service member is not on duty.

Claimants are eligible to file an Article 139 claim whether they are civilian or military, a business, a charity, a state or local government. Claims covered by Article 139 are:

- Claims for damage to property inflicted intentionally, know-

ingly, purposefully, and without a justifiable excuse.

- Claims for property wrongfully taken. A wrongful taking in an unauthorized taking or withholding of property not involving a breach of a fiduciary or contractual relationship, with the intent to deprive the owner of the property temporarily or permanently. Claims not covered by Article 139 are:

- Claims resulting from negligent acts such as normal “fender-benders” or other such accidents;
- Claims for personal injury or death;
- Claims resulting from acts or omissions of military personnel acting within the scope of their employment (these may be payable as a tort claim);
- Claims resulting from the conduct of Reserve Component personnel who are not subject to the UCMJ at the time of the offense;
- Subrogation claims. That is a claim where your insurance company pays you and then seeks reimbursement; and
- Claims for theft of services.
- Claimants should submit claims within 90 days of the incident from which the claim arose unless there is good cause for the delay. Your claim must be presented either orally or in writing. If presented orally, the claim must be reduced to a signed writing within 10 days after oral presentation.

Claims should be filed by branch of service. For claims against Army members, contact the Army claims office in Bldg. 600, Suite 313, at 384-0330. For claims against Air Force members, contact the Air Force claims office in the People Center, Suite 330 at 552-3048.

Claims relating to members of any other branch may be made at the Army claims office and will be forwarded to the proper service.

Richardson Thrift Shop

The JBER-Richardson Thrift Shop, 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 information, call 384-7000.



Attendees of an ODR fat tire mountain bike trip pose for a candid photo at Kincaid Park in Anchorage June 24. (U.S. Air Force photo/Airman Christopher R. Morales)

Commentary by Airman Christopher R. Morales
JBER Public Affairs

I was nervous. Not only had I never mountain biked before, but I was also carrying expensive government equipment.

Halfway through the trail, exhaustion hit me like a truck. I was trying to take my time and not make any more mistakes. But before I knew it, there came a sharp left turn and I went straight downhill.

Then I totally crashed.

One hour earlier: a group of cyclists, including new riders (me), seasoned and everyone in between were preparing to ride “Middle Earth,” an intermediate-difficulty trail in Kincaid Park with Dave Mazur and Karl Lavtar from the Outdoor Recreation Center as our guides.

I had a GoPro on my helmet and a camera in my bag. As a public affairs specialist doing a story about outdoor activities, my mission was to take photos – almost out of the question while I’m biking.

Luckily, the guides gave me several occasions to travel

ahead and “camp” for photo opportunities.

We began on a paved trail to test our gears, which was quite relaxing. It felt like there were no worries in the world, just feeling the wind flowing and passing perfectly curved turns.

However, from then on out I knew it was not smooth sailing. Call me Airman Ahab, because when the rubber of my fat-tire bike hit the roots and rocks it felt as if I was being flung at sea in an epic bout with Moby Dick.

Waves of earth took their toll; I had to get a grip if I didn’t want to fall behind ... or down.

But alas, my efforts were in vain.

I ate dirt a total of three times that day but, more importantly, I swallowed my fear ... fear of seriously injuring myself and more than \$5,000 worth of camera equipment. I only got a couple of scrapes and dust in my bag; no biggie.

As a photojournalist, my job is to get out there and catch the story; a wild beast that needs to be tamed for the general public’s viewing.

Photo shoots like this, where I have to keep up with the group

and take photos on the side, are difficult because it’s a beast that comfortably travels great distances on treacherous terrain and I still have to take perfectly exposed, composed and timed photos.

As a hermit, my comfort zone is a well-known environment – whether it is my room, my desk or my favorite café.

But getting outside and enjoying Alaska for what its summer has to offer provides a sense of adventure and wonder not normally obtained in my everyday life.

Sure, I go out on photo shoots with aircraft, wildfires and even explosives, but none of them have tested me like the ORC did on our trips mountain biking, rock climbing and stand-up paddle boarding.

The ORC’s trips are geared for challenge levels ranging from no experience to experts, everything is challenge-by-choice and the goal is to have fun, Mazur said.

As summer slowly escapes us we need to prepare ourselves because winter is coming.

I can’t wait to challenge myself against the freezing cold and heavy snowfall – and maybe break my previous record with a triple front-flip down a slope.



Airman Morales attempts to climb one of the simplest of two rock surfaces at Boy Scout Rock in McHugh Creek July 9. (Courtesy photo/Aleesha Baxter)



Morales takes photos while other participants listen to the rock climbing guides at Boy Scout Rock in McHugh Creek July 9. The guided rock climbing trip is one of the many adventures the Outdoor Recreation Center offers and one of the few adventures Morales has participated in. (Courtesy photo/Aleesha Baxter)



Rock climbers are treated to panoramic views of Turnagain Arm after reaching the top of Boy Scout Rock in McHugh Creek State Recreation Area of Chugach State Park July 9. (U.S. Air Force photo/Airman Christopher R. Morales)

It’s back-to-school time, so be aware and help children be safe

Commentary by David Sharrow
ASD safety specialist

It’s hard to believe school is starting already.

We’ve enjoyed having our children home for the summer but it’s time to send them off to learn.

Classes begin Wednesday, and the Anchorage School District wants to remind you just getting to and from school can be hazardous.

We need to work together to ensure every student stays safe and healthy so they can get the most out of their education, recreation and life in general.

Walking to and from the bus stop, or the school itself, can be dangerous.

Distracted drivers, lack of visibility and poor weather conditions all lead to potential safety hazards.

As a parent, you can help by outfitting them in light-colored outerwear and investing in reflective tape so they will be seen as they stand or walk alongside the road.

As a driver, you can help by being aware of pedestrians and remembering that children believe you will always stop, no matter what.

You have the ultimate responsibility for keeping your speed down in neighborhoods, around bus stops and school zones.

Please watch out for children suddenly appearing in the roadway.

Also, remember to ensure your child isn’t carrying a backpack that is too heavy.

Pediatricians recommend a backpack or book bag should not weigh more than 10 to 20 percent of the child’s total weight.

For more safety tips, visit ASD’s website at www.asd.k12.org/parents/safety.

I simply want to remind you that as the carefree days of summer are coming to an end, students’ health and safety remain our top priority.

Let’s join together to make some minor adjustments in our schedules and alert levels to make a safer environment for our children.



Children around Anchorage and on JBER return to school Wednesday – so be careful while driving in residential areas and near schools. JBER Security Forces strictly enforce speeding policies in school zones. (Courtesy photo)

Some walking and biking tips:

Most schools are designed to allow children within one and a half miles to walk.

In Alaska, children will walk to school in the dark for several months of the school year.

- Choose a school route and practice walking it with your child.
- Have your child wear reflector tape on their coats and backpacks.
- Encourage students to travel in groups.
- Teach children to recognize traffic signals and pavement markings.
- A walk signal does not always mean it is safe to cross; they still need to look both

ways before crossing.

- Follow instructions provided by school crossing guards.

For those who drive:

Frequently, parents unknowingly create traffic hazards as they drop off or pick up their children.

By making simple changes, the danger can be reduced.

Try not to arrive at the school prior to the final bell at the end of the day.

- Have your vehicle seats clear so your child can easily enter the vehicle.
- Make sure a car seat is installed prop-

erly before arriving at the school.

- Drop your child off as close to the school as possible so they do not have to cross streets.
- Ensure children enter and leave the vehicle on the curb side.
- Try to get out of fire lane as quickly as possible. Try to hold conversations in the parking lot or elsewhere.
- Avoid using handicapped parking spaces to pick up your child unless you have a designated permit.
- Do not double park or stop on crosswalks.
- Carpool when possible.

Overcoming unhealthy fear through truth, love

Commentary by Air Force Chaplain (Capt.) James Hendrick JBER Staff Chaplain

I think we'd all agree fear is powerful. I also think we'd all agree it can powerfully motivate, albeit from a negative emotional standpoint.

Another aspect of fear, sometimes unknown, is it comes in two forms – healthy and unhealthy.

Healthy fear is what we feel when we're hiking a trail and see a large agitated bear running our way in a purposeful manner.

This type of fear can save our life. It's grounded in truth.

The unhealthy fear I have in mind is the incorrect conclusions we sometimes draw about ourselves, due to difficult situations, which exercise a negative control over us, our relationships, and our potential.

Typically this form of fear is known by a self-defeating and self-condemning "thought life" that finds expression in our outlook, attitude, and behavior.

Unhealthy fear is ruthless in that can destroy many aspects of our lives while lacking objective evidence to support its claims.

I see this occasionally, for example, in marital counseling when a spouse is battling depression due to experiencing relational infidelity.

Although there are always two sides to a story, typically the wounded spouse will begin wrestling with his personal value or worth due to drawing wrong conclusions about himself. "Why am I not enough?" "What's wrong with me?"

Over time, these conclusions, without the confrontation of truth, can exercise a mental



Seek out the truth about yourself, and that truth will set you free. (Courtesy graphic)

"reality" moving us further and further away from a correct healthy self-assessment to an incorrect unhealthy one.

The grief from this mindset is twofold (conflicted): the loss of relational quality and the perceived loss of personal value. Together, the pain can become very intrusive and poignant.

What are we to do? From my pastoral perspective I offer the following:

First, feed your mind with truth. Jesus Christ said, "You shall know the truth and the truth will set you free." I believe this

life principle to have huge psychological implications and impact that can improve all life categories.

Feeding our thought-life with truth does much to replace the dominating flames of unhealthy fear with the comforting waves of healthy peace. In short, we must eat, but we must eat correctly.

Second, apply the power of love. In the Bible, the apostle John recorded in 1 John 4:18 that "perfect love expels all fear." What a provocative statement.

Can it be true? I believe it is. Like many

Christians, I believe my fear is reduced to the degree that it's replaced with infinite love (God's love) in my heart. I also believe active love has the power to exercise control over all forms of fear.

We see this with mothers who stand between their children and an attacking dog. We also see this when military members place themselves in harm's way to protect their battle-buddy.

Love is powerful and overcomes fear. Done enough, active love conditions fear's power out of our minds.

What do we frequently feed our minds, especially during hardship and crisis – evidential facts grounded in reality or subjective conclusions grounded in insecurities? This is so important. Truth is vitally essential for all aspects of life, especially our psychology.

What do we do when the dark clouds of unhealthy fear cover us?

Do we remain stagnant and passive or do we look for creative ways to act compassionately, regardless of feelings, especially to those who stand in genuine need?

It truly is "more blessed to give than to receive."

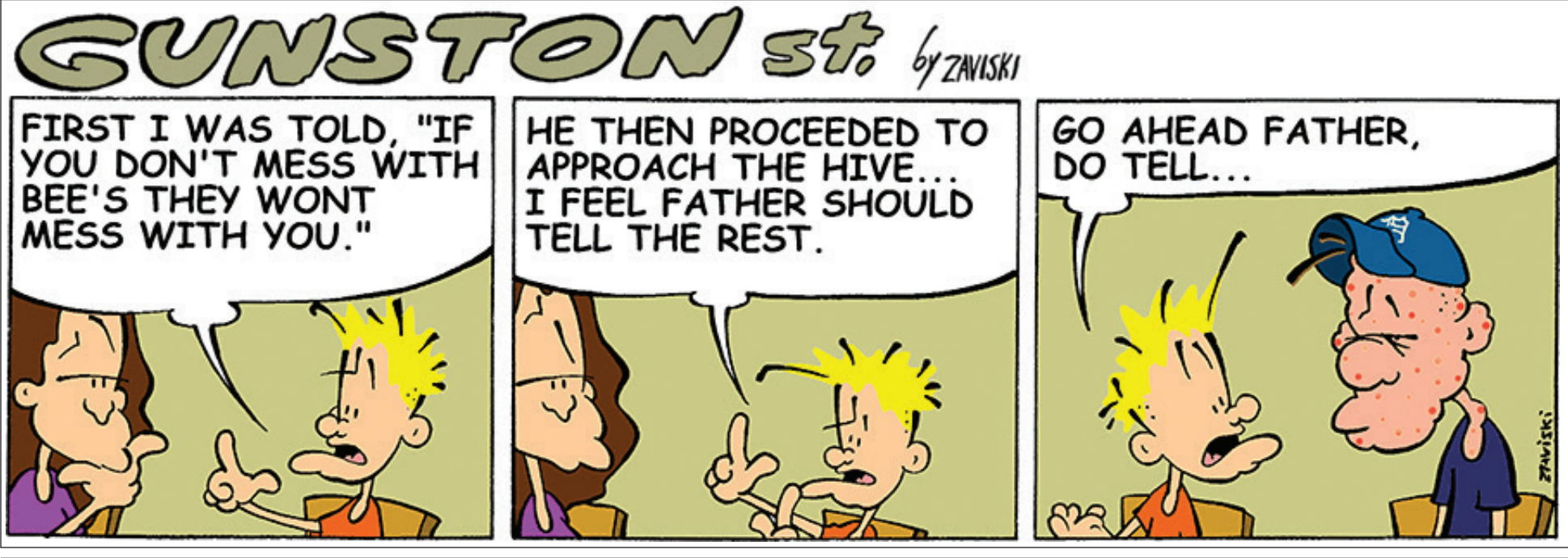
Again, our love-in-action will work powerfully to condition unhealthy fear out of our hearts.

I think we'd all agree fear is powerful and can powerfully motivate. But have we considered that healthy fear will protect your life whereas unhealthy fear will rob you of life?

If you're wrestling with unhealthy fear, may you confront it with truth and love.

Why truth and love? Unhealthy fear cannot cohabitate with these attributes.

May we all be blessed to that end.



Community Happenings

August 14, 2015

ARCTIC WARRIOR

B-3

THROUGH AUG. 16 Big Wild Life running

Out-and-back courses start in downtown Anchorage and wend through the wooded greenbelt. There are several races to choose from — a 49K ultra-marathon, a Boston Marathon qualifier, a marathon walk, a 5K, kids' runs and more.

For information, visit bigwild-liferuns.org.

THROUGH AUG. 31 Gold Rush Inn closure

The Gold Rush Inn will be closed for business through August 31 to accommodate an Army Field Training Exercise.

Both the Wilderness Inn and the Iditarod dining facilities will continue with normal operations and hours and will be able to meet customer demand.

For information, call 384-2793

FRIDAY Intro to raft/hunting trips

Join the JBER Outdoor Recreation Center staff for an introduction to the ins and outs of hunting trips from a raft.

This free class at the the JBER-Elmendorf ORC from 5 to 7 p.m. will cover trip planning, search and rescue reports and raft rigging for multi-day trips.

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

Youth movie night

Youths ages 9 to 12, come enjoy a free movie night from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Two Rivers Youth Center. A current G or PG movie will be shown in the computer lab.

For information, call 384-1508.

FRIDAY AND SATURDAY Mountain Bike camp

The Alyeska Resort hosts mountain bike skills camps for youths age 10 to 18. Certified mountain-bike coaches teach everything from the basics to advanced skills.

For information, visit alyseskaresort.com.

SATURDAY RecOn kayak trip

Paddle along the northern shore of Portage Lake 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sign up at JBER-Elmendorf Outdoor Recreation Center.

This course is part of the RecOn program which provides discounted trips and services to service and family members.

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

Eagle River Challenge run

The Eagle River Nature Center hosts these 5K and 10K races on the Dew Mound and Crow Pass trails. Bib pick-up starts at 9 a.m.; for information, visit enrc.org.

WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY AND AUG. 22 Blood drives

The Blood Bank of Alaska will be accepting donations in their LIFEmobile the following dates, times and locations: Wednesday; 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the JBER Hospital; Thursday; 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at 20th Street and Pease Avenue, and August 22, 11:00 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the JBER Military Mall parking lot.

To make an appointment, visit <http://tiny.cc/qq3lvx> or call 222-5630.

AUG. 26 Richardson spouse's club

RSC Super Sign up guarantees a super 2015-16 year.

Richardson Spouses Club super sign up event takes place at the Hoonah Community Center starting at 6:30 p.m. All spouses, all branches, all ranks, active-duty and retirees are welcome to this free event with free child care.

Bring a friend and receive half-off yearly membership.

For more information visit www.richardsonspousesclub.com.

THROUGH AUG. 27 Zoo animals

Staff from the Alaska Zoo bring a live animal to the Old Federal Building Thursdays for a discussion of biology. The event is free; bring photo ID for entry.

For information, visit alaska-centers.gov/zoo.cfm.

ONGOING Anchorage museum tours

Visit the Anchorage Museum for a guided tour with a docent. Learn about the history of Alaska and Anchorage, the indigenous people, and art.

These 45-minute tours are free with admission.

For information, visit anchorage-museum.org.

Alaska Outdoors hikes

The Alaska Outdoors group hosts easy hikes for beginners and families with small children Monday evenings, and moderate hikes Thursdays, year-round. Hikes start at 6:30 p.m.

For locations and information, visit alaska-outdoors.org.

Market and Festival

The largest outdoor market in Alaska happens every weekend through Sept. 6 at 3rd Ave. and E St.

More than 300 vendor booths, food, and entertainment are a good reason to get out from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturdays and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sundays.

For information, visit anchorage-markets.com.

Guided nature walks

Join a docent at the Eagle River Nature Center at 1:30 p.m. Wednesdays through Sundays for a 3/4-mile walk around Rodak Loop. Learn about the history and flora and fauna of the Eagle River Valley.

For information, visit ernc.org.

Golf clinic

New to the game of golf or want to brush up on your skills?

The Moose Run Golf Course offers golf clinics for adult beginners through advanced players every Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

For information, call 428-0056.

Single Airman Program

Single service members, are you interested in getting out and enjoying all that Alaska has to offer? Take a trip with the JBER Single Airman Program.

Many outings are offered at deep discounts such as guided halibut and river fishing charters, mountain biking, white-water rafting, and rock climbing.

For more information, call 552-8529 or stop by the Arctic Oasis.

Family golf

Every Tuesday after 3 p.m. is Family Golf at the Moose Run Golf Course.

Get a free bucket of balls, hot dog, chips and fountain drink with each purchase of a 9-hole round.

For information, call 428-0056.

Quidditch scrimmage

Muggles 12 and up are invited for a scrimmage at the Park Strip at the corner of 10th Ave. and G St. every Wednesday from 7:30 to 9 p.m. throughout August. Bring your own broom.

For information, visit facebook.com/AlaskaQuidditch.

FSS summer jobs

Looking to earn some extra cash to fuel your summer adventures?

The JBER Force Support

Squadron has multiple positions open to get you started.

Visit naffjobs.org to search for current openings.

Family golf clinic

Learn another way to enjoy Alaska's midnight sun. Bring your family out to Moose Run Golf Course every Tuesday from 6 to 7 p.m. for a free golf clinic.

Open to ages 6 and up; golf clubs will be provided.

To sign up, call 428-0056.

Keystone meeting for teens

Keystone Club is a leadership development experience providing community service opportunities for young people ages 14 to 18.

Meetings take place every Wednesday at 5 p.m. at the Two Rivers Youth Center.

For information, call 384-1508.

Hour of prayer power

The 176th Wing Chaplain's Office invites all to blend spiritual resiliency with fitness at the JBER-Elmendorf Fitness Center outdoor track.

The chaplain prays for units and meets with unit members from 6 to 7 a.m. Aug. 17 through 20, and Aug. 24 through September 4.

For information, call 551-0268.

Financial counseling

Does more than 25 percent of your pay go to bills? Are you making only minimum payments, or taking out new loans to pay off old ones? Are you arguing over money? Do you really need that new TV, watch or cup of fancy coffee?

Financial counseling is available through Army Community Service or Army Emergency Relief, at 384-7478.

Neon bowling

All military E-4 and below receive a 10 percent discount every Friday night 11 p.m. to 1 a.m. at the Polar Bowl.

Gather your friends and bowl in the neon lights while enjoying today's top music hits.

For information, call 753-7467.

Model railroading

The Military Society of Model Railroad Engineers meets at 7 p.m. Tuesday and 1 p.m. Saturday in the basement of Matanuska Hall, Room 35.

Anyone interested in model railroading is invited.

For information, call 552-4353, or visit trainweb.org/msmre.

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)
Next service Sept. 4
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.

Eat and play weekdays

What goes great with lunch? A free game of bowling. Present your receipt at the front counter totaling more than \$5 from Ten Pins or Topios (located inside the Polar Bowl) between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., Mon., Thurs., or Fri. and receive one free game.

For information, call 753-7467.

673d FORCE SUPPORT SQUADRON

ELMENDORF FITNESS CENTER
BLDG. 9510 • 552.5353



17 MILE BIKE RACE

FACEBOOK.COM/JBERFITNESS BLDG. 9510

AUGUST 14 // 12 P.M.

CALL US FOR MORE INFO FOR AGES 13 & OVER //552.5353

MEMBERS MUST PROVIDE OWN BIKE & HELMET (HELMETS MANDATORY)
PRIZES FOR 1ST & 2ND PLACE
MALE & FEMALE
T-SHIRTS FOR FIRST 30 PARTICIPANTS

Centers for Child Development



Fitness Fun Day!

August 14 • 3 - 5 p.m.
Parents are invited to participate in our fun filled day, as we teach our children the importance of being active and healthy.

Contact your center for more details.



Denali 552.8304 | Sitka 552.6403 | Katmai 552.2697 | Kodiak 384.1510 | Talkeetna 384.0686

Portage Lake Kayak Trip
August 15 • 8 - 5 p.m. • \$25
To sign up, call 552.4599/2023/3812



REC-ON
FEEDBACK RUSH



Back to School Special

August 15 • Noon - 5 p.m.
\$5.99 for 1 hr per person or \$2.99 games + \$3.29 shoes.
FREE game of bowling to use on a future visit!



Social Hour Specials:

Thursdays • 5 - 7 p.m.
Domestic Beer: \$2.75 pint • \$8 pitcher



Mini Golf
August 17 & 18

Come on over for **FREE** Mini Golf before school starts!

Arctic Oasis COMMUNITY CENTER
Bldg. 9497 • 552.8529

Eklutna Lake ATV Trip
August 16 • 9 - 5 p.m.
SPECIAL PRICE - ONLY \$59!



For more info or to sign up, call 552.4599/2023



Stop by and see us!
www.facebook.com/JBERLIFE
www.jberlife.com



FSS/MWR events & activities

Chaplains valued for their service as moral compass

By Kari Hawkins
USAG Redstone Public Affairs

REDSTONE ARSENAL — Speaking from an Army leader’s point of view, retired Lt. Gen. Jim Pillsbury told a group of Army Materiel Command chaplains on August 5 that they must be the moral compass for their units, and lead the way for Soldiers in the spirit of acceptance and inclusion.

During the AMC Unit Ministry Teams training event at AMC headquarters, Pillsbury addressed the question “From your experience, how can chaplains help build moral leadership training within the command and within the workforce?”

With 38 years as an Army officer, three deployments leading Soldiers, and assignments as the commander of the Aviation and Missile Command from 2003 to 2007 and then as AMC’s deputy chief of staff and deputy commander, Pillsbury said that he understood the need for military commanders to demand a homogenous unit with no controversy and no personal disagreements.

But that’s not how life works, and that’s not how a unit of Soldiers representing a cross section of society works, he said.

It’s a unit’s chaplain and chaplain assistant who can tune a leader into the issues that can cause a unit to splinter, lack team cohesiveness and create low morale.

“I spent 16 years with infantry divisions, 12 of those at Fort Campbell, and I saw a lot of chaplains do their thing. Ninety-seven percent of them were outstanding.

“They could tell their commander what was going on in the motor pool, in the barracks, on the staff. They could give their commander a hint of the unethical issues within the organization,” Pillsbury said.

“Chaplains helped me as an individual and as a commander. Across the board, they help commanders with ethical issues.”

Pillsbury said effective chaplains set times to meet with their commander informally to provide information about issues within the unit.

“By providing that information, they can make their com-



Retired Lt. Gen. Jim Pillsbury, who commanded the Aviation and Missile Command from 2003 to 2007 before serving as deputy chief of staff and then deputy commander of the Army Materiel Command, speaks to chaplains about their responsibilities to Army commanders during their unit ministry team training Aug. 5 at AMC headquarters at Redstone Arsenal. (U.S. Army photo/Kari Hawkins)

mander be a better commander,” he said.

Within a unit, it is the chaplain who can make a difference before a potentially unethical situation becomes an illegal action.

As a commander, when unethical accusations were made, Pillsbury said he would ask himself, “Why didn’t I see it coming? Could my chaplain see it? Could a chaplain from another unit see it?”

“As a chaplain, your eyes and ears are a lot more than pastoral. You help keep the commander from being blindsided.”

Throughout the military, when unethical situations have occurred – such as Abu Ghraib, where U.S. prisoners of war were abused during the first years of war in Iraq, and My Lai, Vietnam, in 1968, when upwards of 500 civilians

were slain by U.S. Soldiers – the question is often, “Where was the chaplain? Where was the moral compass?”

Pillsbury said. “You must be the ones who lead morally.”

A commander must be able to trust his chaplain to provide guidance and chaplains must be able to provide guidance even when it isn’t favorable to the commander, he said.

“For that reason, you have to police your own,” he said. “You must hold yourself and each other at a higher standard than any Soldier.

“You are on a pedestal, whether you like it or not. You need to stay on that pedestal. You must maintain your highest standards ever.”

Pillsbury called for peer reviews among the Army’s chaplaincy. “It is through peer reviews

that leadership gets a true picture of the value and effectiveness of its chaplains,” he said.

While most chaplains have a positive impact on Soldiers, Pillsbury said that, as a whole, the Army’s Chaplain Corps has not been a leader of change.

In the 1950s, when the Army began integrating segregated black Soldiers into its units, and throughout the 1960s and 1970s as integration was fully realized, chaplains did not take lead in making that happen, he said.

In the 1970s and 1980s, as the Army integrated women into its ranks, chaplains were again not at the forefront of change.

And, now, as the Army works to include gays and other gender differences, the Chaplain Corps has been silent, he said.

“Two things you have to wrestle with, and that is, your Army oath and your strong beliefs,” Pillsbury said.

The retired three-star general went on to describe the sanctuary at his church where his pastor has two chairs and one table near the pulpit.

The two chairs represent opposites – black and white, Republican and Democrat, boy and girl, peacemaker and warrior, straight and gay – and the table represents inclusiveness.

“Do you have room in your heart for those who are different from what your beliefs are?”

“I firmly believe the intention of our Lord is for us to read the Bible and interpret the Bible based on our relationship with the Lord.

“The word is not black and white. That is why Jesus told parables,” Pillsbury said.

“You can make room at the table or you can get out. I know all of you have wrestled with that.”

Pillsbury said the U.S. was built on controversy, inclusion and the principles of acceptance.

“Jesus was one for inclusion. I hate to see our nation split, and if our military splits, our nation splits because our military is the rock for our ethics,” he said.

“I believe God made everybody for a reason, and there are two things we should do: Love the Lord and love our neighbors.”

“You must hold yourself and each other at a higher standard than any Soldier.”

Summer’s not over, paddle on



ABOVE: Participants in a stand-up paddle boarding class traverse the shallow end of Otter Lake at JBER July 22. Due to the rising popularity of stand-up paddle boarding, the Outdoor Recreation Program provides the class for another sport available during the summer, like kayaking and boating. (U.S. Air Force photos/Airman Christopher R. Morales)

RIGHT: Trevor Bird, paddle board instructor at the Otter Lake Lodge, finishes a lap around Otter Lake July 22. Paddle boarding can be done competitively or for relaxation by the whole family.



BOTTOM: Participants in a stand-up paddle boarding class traverse the center of Otter Lake July 22. After the essentials are taught in a classroom setting, the students are taken to the water to become more familiar with the board and the water. For more information about how you, too, can take advantage of the many sports available through ODR, call 552-2023 or the Otter Lake Lodge at 384-6245.



WWII vets talk tenacity, even in the darkest times

By Jacqueline M. Hames
Defense Media Activity

MANASSAS, Virginia — A woman in a neon yellow safety vest and dark sunglasses warned the chattering crowd of what was about to happen: smoke and noise. Hold on to your hats and cameras, she advised, because the engines will create a serious backdraft. Propellers roared to life. People clutched hats to their heads and coughed on oily smoke as the vintage military planes warmed up for their test flight.

The Manassas Regional Airport in Virginia hosted four World War II-era bombers as part of the Arsenal of Democracy flyover test flight, May 7, in preparation for a flight over Washington, D.C., the following day to commemorate the 70th anniversary of Victory in Europe, or V-E Day. Veterans and their family members, as well as members of the public, were invited to view the test flight. A few lucky people were even allowed to ride in the planes for the flight.

Urban Rahoi, a 96-year-old pilot from Alaska, was one of the lucky few. That’s right, Rahoi is still a working pilot, but flying in one of the old bombers was a treat for the former Army captain, who flew with the Army Air Corps’ 15th Air Force, 463rd Bomb Group in 1944.

Rahoi, spry and enthusiastic, was all smiles as he answered questions before the test flight. He flew five missions while stationed in Italy, and claims he was never afraid.

“Let’s look at it this way: If I live, I’ll live. If I’m meant to die, I’ll die. So I just went out and never was scared or anything,” Rahoi said.

Rahoi was stationed overseas for a year and half, at the request of a general, who wanted him to help keep the other pilots in order. After V-E Day, Rahoi was in Italy for about six more months.

“We took the B-17s and converted them to passenger planes and hauled people from Italy over to Casablanca. And so part of my job was to keep the pilots straight,” he said.

Rahoi said he believes having the flyover is great, because it shows that people still remember what happened during World War II, and why the Soldiers were fighting.

Four planes were exhibited

during the test flight: a B-24 Liberator, two B-17 Flying Fortresses, and one B-29 Superfortress, the last B-29 still actively flying.

Guests were allowed to explore inside the planes after the test flight and subsequent cool down.

Superfortress

“I’m excited [about the flyover] because I feel that it’s important that we keep alive that we fought a great war to save democracy,” another veteran, Bob Vaucher, told a crowd of reporters on the flight line while awaiting takeoff.

Vaucher wore a black ball cap sporting the word “Superfortress” to keep the relentless sun out of his eyes. A retired lieutenant colonel, Vaucher flew B-29s – four-propeller heavy bombers – during his service with the Army Air Corps during World War. His very first mission, June 5, 1944, in the skies over Japan, was just a day before D-Day in Europe.

“I led the largest inland bombing mission in World War II over Yokohama,” Vaucher said. “And in one mission we wiped out [the city]. We had 452 B-29s on that mission, and you might wonder how we felt when the atomic bomb was dropped. Two days after we all got pictures of what happened at Hiroshima, we looked the pictures and we couldn’t believe that one airplane had done all the damage that we did with 450 airplanes.”

Vaucher’s mission to Yokohama destroyed seven square miles, using hundreds of planes and bombs, while the atom bomb destroyed four square miles in one fell swoop, he recalled. “It was almost unbelievable that this happened.”

Vaucher flew 117 missions total, but one was particularly harrowing. He was leading a bomb group to a target and took on heavy anti-aircraft fire, making his plane shake heavily while several other planes in the group were shot down. Once they landed at Iwo Jima, after the Marines had taken it, Vaucher and his crew counted 400 bullet holes before they gave up counting all together.

“I hope [the Japanese] understand what happened and that it will never happen again if we live like we’re living now,” and continue to communicate with one another, Vaucher said.

Rangoon disaster

Of course, some of the most

dangerous missions veterans experienced didn’t always end with landing safely in a friendly area. Karnig Thomasian, an animated 91 year-old formerly with the 20th Air Force in the China-Burma-India theater, was a gunner on an early version of the B-29. He flew three missions, and the third, which he refers to as the “Rangoon Disaster,” would be the most traumatic.

The mission began poorly. “The bombardiers found out there was a mixed load of 500 to 1,000 pound bombs with no fuses. No fuses because in order to bomb a bridge you have to have the bomb burst on impact, and 1,000 pounders were the only armament that would destroy the bridge. The 500s were useless,” Thomasian explained. “Our commander, after hearing the complaints from the head bombardier, told him you either go on the mission or you’re court-martialed. So we went.”

Originally, Thomasian and his crew were supposed to bomb a bridge in Thailand, but had to move to a second target because of cloud cover interference. They moved on to target railway yards in Rangoon, Burma.

“[We] dropped the bombs ... moments later, everything turned red,” he said. “Our plane flipped; what had happened was that the bombs hit each other in the air, as the bombardiers knew would happen, and blew the whole formation up, to the point that four planes went down directly on the target, including us, and one was destroyed immediately.”

Only one plane from that group was able to return to base.

Thomasian and several others from the front of the plane were able to parachute out of the firestorm. Thomasian was the only person from the rear of the plane to make it out. The pilot stayed with the plane as it crashed, in attempt to stabilize their descent and give as many crewmembers a chance to escape as possible.

“But he couldn’t do anything, everything was shot up. Three engines [failing], the bomb bay was on fire,” Thomasian recalled.

Thomasian and the other escapees were able to land safely just a little way outside the city, but their safety was short-lived. Japanese soldiers came by soon after they landed and took them prisoner.

“They interrogated us, they beat us ... and finally after three days [the plane’s crew]] met each



Retired Lt. Col. Bob Vaucher, who served as a U.S. Army Air Corps pilot from 1940 to 1946, speaks with reporters at the Arsenal of Democracy flyover test flight at Manassas Regional Airport in Virgina, May 7. Vaucher, 96 years old, flew 117 missions during World War II and led the largest inland bombing mission in the Pacific Theater. (Department of Defense photo/Jacqueline M. Hames)

other and found out who survived, who didn’t,” Thomasian said.

The prisoners were then moved to a former British prison with 12-foot concrete walls, where the “flyboys” were put in solitary confinement for almost two months. A Chinese prisoner, who used to feed the men in solitary, would dole out an extra scoop of rice when the Japanese guards weren’t looking. “He had a soul about him that was so compassionate,” Thomasian said.

The prisoners were transferred to the regular compound around February 1945. The Japanese eventually announced they would be moving the prisoners to a different location. Those who couldn’t walk were given the option to stay behind. Thomasian, who had developed gangrene in a sore on his leg, opted to stay at the compound, because he knew if he could not keep up, he would be killed. Shortly after the Japanese left, British Gurkha soldiers liberated the prison.

“The first white man to come was a British newsman. Tall guy ... healthy as hell, rosy cheeks, and we looked so pale and awful, it was the first time I noticed our deterioration,” Thomasian recalled. After that, British soldiers arrived in force.

They painted notice on the roof of the prison to let friendly bombers know the Japanese had left, but Thomasian said the first wave of planes bombed the prison anyway.

“Fortunately, [they] missed us and hit the outer wall. So quickly [the British] got up on the next roof and [wrote] ‘extract digit,’ I said what the hell is extract digit?

They waved their wings, they understood it: Take [your] finger out of your butt,” he said. The British planes then came back with parachute drops of food and supplies until they could extract the prisoners.

When Thomasian and the other prisoners were brought to Calcutta over the river, they were encouraged to eat handfuls of vitamins to aid their recovery.

He said maintaining a positive attitude and a sense of humor kept him and his fellow survivors alive.

“In all these crazy moments, there are moments where you have to laugh. Which really keeps you going,” Thomasian said. “And to survive in prison, I think one of the chief things is that you have to decide whether you’re going to capitulate and just go back into yourself and die, or you’re going to say ‘Hey, I’m living, I’m breathing, I’m going to go on and succeed, and I’m getting out of here.’”

Fearless in life

Every veteran has a story to tell, and remembering the things that they have been through is important on personal as well as historic levels.

The Arsenal of Democracy flyover event and the test flight bring those stories to the forefront of the public’s mind.

Rahoi, Vaucher and Thomasian all shared one message: Tenacity. Having a positive attitude, even in the darkest of times, will help get you through life.

“You have to take note of what your situation is,” Thomasian said, “And you have to say, ‘Hey look, I can cope with this.’”