

TETHERED HEARTS

Vet's service dog always has his back

By Airman 1st Class Kyle Johnson
JBER Public Affairs

When Ken Bylo arrived in Vietnam three days before the Tet Offensive, he had a notion of what he was getting into, but would soon learn ideas are a far stretch from visceral experience.

"I fell into a hell-hole and got educated real quick," said Bylo, an Army veteran who served in the 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Strike Force. "You got to get tougher or you're going to die."

Bylo didn't think of it as deploying for a tour of duty, but simply as serving his country. For Bylo and many veterans who served with him in the Vietnam war, their time in the military wasn't partitioned into deployments and stations. He had one station: Vietnam; and one mission: to kill as many Viet Cong as possible.

"The first time I killed someone, I couldn't eat for days," said Bylo, who earned a Bronze Star medal with V for valor. "I was sick to my stomach, and it felt like months."

Bylo paid a price for that education. It wasn't a toll satisfied in cash – as most educations are today – but with a check written with painful memories and years characterized by post-traumatic stress disorder.

Bylo experienced all the hate so famously projected onto veterans returning from serving their country in Vietnam, but it wasn't until years later that someone served him.

Eventually, Bylo made his way to a cabin just off the Deshka River in Southcentral Alaska, having found peace off the grid, away from the chaos of civilization, he said. That's when he met Duke.

The papers may say Bylo adopted Duke, but he'll tell anyone who asks that Duke chose him. Duke came up seasonally with a couple of police officers who owned a cabin about a mile down the river from Bylo's own, he said.

Before long, Duke started making regular trips up to Bylo's cabin.

"He'd come right through those woods barreling like a bulldozer," Bylo said. "After six or seven times, that was the end of it, he didn't want nothing to do with anyone else."

Perhaps Duke was able to understand a need or maybe it was just innocent affection; regardless how or why, it wasn't long before Duke and Bylo were inseparable.

The two police officers who owned the cabin below him recognized the bond that had developed, and offered to let Bylo keep Duke – not that Duke was going to have it any other way.

Before long, Duke was serving Bylo as a full-time service dog, and the canine added some new tricks to his resume; he was able to dampen the effects of PTSD and allow Bylo to live as uninhibited as possible.

Each veteran has different needs, so their service dogs serve each of them differently, said Cathie Griffith, Shepherds for Lost Sheep, Inc. trainer and secretary.

SLS is a non-profit organization specialized in connecting service dogs with veterans.

"They can be taught to find a spouse if they are in trouble," Griffith said. "If they even make it to a mall, the dog can be taught to find their car or the spouse in the store. The dogs also block – put themselves between the veteran and other people approaching. Or maybe the dog will sit behind them in a line at the grocery store; that's 'watch my back.'"

"It gives them more freedom for it to be like it was. It's never going to be the same, but this is the new normal for them."

"Some of the vets won't go into their own house without having the dog clear the room first," she said.

Bylo can only get to his cabin when the Deshka River is frozen enough for him to



Ken Bylo, an Army veteran who served in Vietnam during the Tet Offensive, plays with his new service dog, Cowboy. Cowboy was given to him by a nonprofit organization after losing his previous service dog. During his time in Vietnam, Bylo earned a Bronze Star Medal with V for Valor. (U.S. Air Force photo/David Bedard)

ride a snowmachine, or when it's thawed enough to travel by boat.

But when he needs medical care, he has to come to the 673d Medical Group for treatment, so the Fisher House of Alaska has served as Bylo's home away from home for those times when he needs treatment, but can't traverse the river.

"Ken has stayed at the Fisher House off and on for the last four years," said Jennifer Hall, Fisher House of Alaska manager. "Most of our guests who stay here know Ken and Duke. He's kind of a fixture around here."

Bylo doesn't have any relatives to call in times of need, or grandkids to brag about. It has always been just him and Duke. Bylo protected Duke like family too; if someone threatened Duke -- or when he tells stories about it – his entire demeanor changes.

"That's my kid," Bylo said. "I'm going to protect him."

In many ways, the Fisher House adopted him – and Duke – as family, Hall said.

Because of that relationship with him, they noticed when Duke started to slow down last winter, even if Bylo wouldn't admit it.

Duke had tumors on his neck and ears.

"As the weeks went by, I could see he was slowing down," Bylo said. "I knew it was happening. The vet gave me some pills to kind of prolong it. I knew at six months, but I wouldn't admit it."

Concerned, Hall phoned up another veteran – for privacy considerations, let's call him "Dave" – and asked him to check on Bylo and Duke the following summer, she said.

"As the weeks went by, he started getting weaker and weaker," Bylo said in a raspy whisper. "Eventually I had to pick him up to get him in my truck."

"Then he stopped eating, so I had no

choice. I pushed it right to the limit."

After offering years of companionship with a veteran who gave so much himself, Duke surrendered to his illness and passed away in July of 2015.

Dave stayed with Bylo through the process of losing Duke and the inevitable trip to the veterinarian. Then he stayed with Bylo afterward while he put Duke to rest.

"It was a really long, dragged-out process," Bylo said. "I couldn't believe how hard it was. It's hard for me to believe an animal could do that to a guy – man or woman."

Bylo wasn't doing well.

"Ice was coming on the river, and I kind of insisted that Ken come to the Fisher House," Hall said. "I don't believe, in my heart, he would have made it through the winter without Duke."

Hall said Bylo's pain was visible, so an Airman who helped him with his treatment at the hospital on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson reached out to Shepherds for Lost Sheep, Inc.

"We have two categories that we make a top priority," said Larry Griffith, SLS trainer and treasurer. "A veteran who has had a service dog and, for whatever reason, that dog can no longer work for them or a therapist tells us a veteran needs a dog so he doesn't [hurt himself]."

With support from the Airman who originally reached out to SLS, Hall and the Fisher House began working through the application process – and Bylo was accepted.

Having lost Duke, Bylo was eligible for a high-priority placement, and SLS quickly had a dog – Cowboy – trained and ready to meet Bylo; a gift with an estimated monetary value of \$30,000.

The only issue was Bylo wasn't ready to meet Cowboy.

Despite the pain of losing Duke, Bylo eventually agreed to meet the new dog, and SLS showed up with Cowboy, who immediately took to Bylo.

"We do a pretty good job of matching these things up," Larry said. "But ultimately, when the vet

See BYLO • A2



AF program aims to save money, time

By Airman 1st Class
Javier Alvarez
JBER Public Affairs

Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson-specific guidance for the Airmen Powered by Innovation program is scheduled to be released in the coming months.

API has been in existence since February 2015 and is an amalgamation of three other programs – Innovative Development through Employee Awareness, Best Practices, and Productivity Enhancing Capital Investments. API is designed to allow service members to voice innovative ideas to influence cost savings and productivity.

According to Air Force Instruction 38-402, only Air Force personnel that fall under Title X can submit their ideas through the API website, however, since JBER is a joint installation, individuals from all branches are encouraged to submit their ideas, said Army Capt. Julie Hoxha, 673d Air Base Wing executive officer.

"Anybody who touches equipment or might see it everyday might have a better understanding of how it works, or how a process might be improved ... They want to give everyone a voice, and a way they can submit their ideas," Hoxha said.

API is a four-phase program, starting with voicing the idea.

"What any [service member] can do if they have an idea is come to the Continuous Process Improvement office or the manpower office," Hoxha said.

There, personnel can review the idea and ensure it's feasible, she said. Awards for implemented ideas can be significant.

"If your idea goes up and they like it and they approve it, you get \$100," Hoxha said. "Depending on how much is saved, [service members] will be awarded up to \$10,000."

Other awards can range from days off to anything a chain of command wants to give, she said.

The 673d ABW is recognizing an Airman whose idea has saved the Air Force \$13,000.

Technical Sgt. Matt Derheim of the 673d Civil Engineer Squadron emergency management flight helped improve the Monaco Network, said Command Chief Master Sgt. Garry Berry, 673d ABW command chief.

"He worked with our contractors to identify multiple areas across the installation where we didn't have good coverage," Berry said. "He helped develop a plan to raise six of seven antennas, which helped increase coverage by about 35 percent."

For information, visit <https://my.af.mil/gcss-af/USAF/site/API>.

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Publishing
Anchorage
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Inside Spring Meltdown: B-1

AER, AFAF campaigns kick off soon.....	A-2
Bystander intervention at Fur Rondy	A-4
Matters of Faith: The year of mercy	B-2
SAPR hosts parent/child dance	B-5
Wibbly-wobbly, Timey-wimey day	B-6



Spartans to stay put

It's official: 4-25th Airborne to stay in Alaska – at least for now, says Pentagon
See Page A2

Coast Guardsmen perform ice-rescue training at Sixmile Lake

Story by PA3 Meredith Manning
17th District Coast Guard
Public Affairs

While ice rescue training is not unfamiliar to Coast Guard members in cold climates like Alaska, incorporating air rescue added a new element for these crews. Members from Air Station Kodiak, Sector Anchorage and the National Ice Rescue School in Essexville, Michigan, teamed up to perform ice rescues from an MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter and an MH-65 Dolphin helicopter at Upper Sixmile Lake on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.

For the participating members it was an experience that brought new elements into their normal training evolutions.

The aircrews from Air Station

Kodiak train for many types of search and rescue cases and the different variables they may encounter. They train for the dangers of being exposed to the frigid cold environment and for rescuing those who have been affected by these cold temperatures. But for these members, it was the first time they had participated in ice rescue training.

“I was recently involved in a case where two men became trapped in the Bering Strait on kayaks and were surrounded by ice,” said Petty Officer 2nd Class Jon Kreske, the rescue swimmer training on the Jayhawk. “The rescue was a success and we safely returned the men to shore, but I saw firsthand just how unpredictable ice can be. This training allowed us to test that unpredictability in a

controlled environment and make us more prepared when lives are at stake.”

The crews from the NIRS are the Coast Guard’s experts on ice rescue. During their stay in Alaska, the crew traveled with members of Sector Anchorage to Barrow, Point Lay, Point Hope and Kotzebue to train local fire departments on surface ice rescues.

The training at JBER was the first time the three members of the team trained with Jayhawk helicopter crews.

“This training brings a new element to ice rescue for our team,” said Petty Officer 1st Class Justin Abold, the NIRS lead instructor. “We will be able to take what we learned here and incorporate it into a Coast Guard-wide training.”

The training participants

learned how to self-rescue, tested the stability of ice and practiced different ice rescue hoist techniques. A member from the NIRS or Sector Anchorage would enter the water and hold on to the ice edge while a rescue swimmer was lowered to the ice. The crews practiced rescue techniques using slings and baskets to hoist the distressed person to safety.

“Rescuers bring hope for a person who is most likely having the worst day of their life,” said Abold. “This is why joint scenario based training is so important. We can take lessons learned and apply it to future training and operations and complete successful rescues when the call arises.”

Alaska has 44,000 miles of diverse shoreline and, in winter months, most of the water sur-

rounding the state is frozen. The sea ice is usually covered in snow and is very dynamic due to the action of winds, currents and temperature fluctuations. This leads to a wide variety of ice types and features, which creates a challenge for the aircrews that respond to search and rescue cases in the Arctic.

“To prepare our aircrews for advanced deployment and recovery responses, we strive to provide challenging training in a realistic environment,” said Senior Chief Petty Officer Joel Sayers, the aviation survival division chief at Air Station Kodiak. “Our pilots, flight mechanics and rescue swimmers are members of the most exceptional search and rescue team in the world and continue to train daily to fulfill the motto ‘So Others May Live.’”

GO/FO summit aims at strengthening partnerships, Arctic understanding

By Tech. Sgt. John Gordinier
Alaskan Command Public Affairs

Imagine a cruise ship sailing through the Northwest Passage heading to the Arctic Ocean and all of sudden it has an emergency. The ship requests help for an evacuation of 245 people. Alaska, the largest state, is mostly isolated, severe and austere. Imagine the amount of logistics, resources and time it would take to respond.

That is one example of many discussions that took place during the annual General Officer/Flag Officer summit March 15 to 18. Senior military officers and enlisted leaders, joint and bi-national, attend each year to strengthen partnerships as well as discuss current and future Arctic and Alaska challenges and joint capabilities.

“Crises and emergencies have no borders and the scenario may require a response from multiple agencies, which is why it’s important to establish relationships prior to an incident,” said Lt. Gen. Russ Handy, Alaskan NORAD Region, Alaskan Command and 11th Air Force commander. “During the GO/FO summit, we discuss joint and coalition standard operating procedures, which improves interoperability, coordination, and command and control among mission partners.”

Attendees included: U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. Russ Handy; Canadian Brig. Gen. Patrice Laroche, Alaskan NORAD Region deputy commander; U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Bryan Owens, U.S. Army Alaska commanding general; U.S. Coast Guard Rear Adm. Daniel Abel, District 17 commander; U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Laurel Hummel, The Adjutant General for the State of Alaska; Canadian Rear Adm. Gilles Couturier, Maritime Forces Pacific/Joint Task Force Pacific commander; Canadian Brig. Gen. Michael Nixon, Joint Task Force North commander; Canadian Brig. Gen. Wayne Eyre, Joint Task Force West commander; the senior enlisted leaders from most of their commands, and other unit officers.

This year’s summit focused on future challenges in the Arctic and improving holistic knowledge and understanding of this environment. The summit itinerary included a tour of the Permafrost Tunnel in Fox, Alaska, briefings on past and upcoming Alaska and Arctic exercises, wildland fire mitigation and a tour of the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex via UH-60 Black



Summit attendees explore the Permafrost Tunnel during a tour in Fox March 16. Attendees learned about the consequences of permafrost thawing and the impact it will have on infrastructure. The purpose of the annual GO/FO is to strengthen partnerships of senior military officers and enlisted leaders, joint and bi-national, as well as discuss current and future Arctic and Alaskan challenges and joint capabilities. (U.S. Air Force photo/Tech. Sgt. John Gordinier)

Hawk helicopter.

“Touring the Permafrost Tunnel gives us insight to future infrastructure challenges,” Handy said. “If we better understand the consequences of changes to parts of our environment such as Permafrost, we can identify vulnerabilities and make decisions on current and future infrastructure to ensure they continue to meet the demands of our missions.”

As the U.S. and Canadian military expand training and infrastructure in the north, it is imperative they understand permafrost terrains, said Dr. Thomas Douglas, a research geochemist with the U.S. Army Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory.

Permafrost can be dynamic, can respond to human or natural disturbance, and can be a challenge for mobility in the summer time.

Structures built in the past likely were not constructed with the most optimal thermal designs to protect the permafrost from thawing.

If infrastructure is constructed on thaw-unstable ground, the disturbance or climate warming could move the subsurface into instability.

After the Permafrost tour, attendees visited Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska, and recieved briefings on future Alaskan and Arctic exercises.

The extensive list of exercises provides insight to opportunities for joint and Canadian partners to participate. Some exercises are led by the U.S. Air Force, some by the U.S. Army and some are U.S. Coast Guard centric, but most provide opportunities to practice interoperability.

“Each exercise has a scenario that can happen or has happened in the past,” Handy said. “We want to invite our partners, joint and international, to participant whenever possible so we can learn each others’ operational tactics, techniques and procedures.”

Since many Alaska exercises take place within the JPARC, upon completion of the briefings, attendess were given an overflight

tour over part of it.

The JPARC consists of all the land, air, sea, space and cyberspace used for military training in Alaska, providing unmatched opportunities for present and future service, joint, interagency and multinational training. The JPARC encompasses approximately 65,000 square miles of available airspace, 2,490 square miles of land space with 1.5 million acres of maneuver land and 42,000 square nautical miles of sea and airspace in the Gulf of Alaska.

“The JPARC is a tremendous training resource,” Handy said. “It is the largest exercise area we have in the U.S. and parts of it are actually larger than some states. Having an expansive exercise area gives us opportunities to hone skills and practice multiple agency or multinational response with strategic partners.

“That way, if a contingency or crisis occurs and needs multiple agency coordination, we can respond with a known understanding of each others’ capabilities and resources.”

4-25 staying put: Army announces delayed conversion of Alaska airborne unit

By Troy A Rolan Sr.
Army News Service

WASHINGTON — The Army will delay the reduction of Alaska-based 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division, after determining that such a move would continue to degrade the Army’s ability to respond to new threats in a rapidly changing global security environment.

“The 4/25 is ready to rapidly deploy and conduct decisive operations in urban and mountainous environments,” explained Act-

ing Secretary of the Army Patrick J. Murphy. “Given continued Russian aggression, the nuclear provocations of North Korea, and the continued threat from ISIL, we need this capability.”

The 4-25th completed a significant training exercise last month at the Army’s Joint Readiness Training Center in Fort Polk, Louisiana.

JRTC is one of the most realistic, rigorous combat training centers in the world, making it among the most highly-trained units in the Army, officials said.

“This is one of the most trained and ready units in the United States Army,” said Gen. Mark A. Milley, the Chief of Staff of the Army.

Members of Alaska’s congressional delegation said they were pleased by the news. Milley met with Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski in February and discussed the Army’s plan to reduce forces.

Milley had already expressed



reservations about the cuts; he announced in testimony to a Senate committee Feb. 24 that he wants to delay proposed force reductions for at least a year.

“There’s a great joint strategic deployment capability with the Air Force up there. (The 4-25) can move by air; they can move by sea. We’ve got a national capability up there (in Alaska) that I think is worth keeping,” Milley said.

From **BYLO • A1**

meets the dog, the dog is the one who decides if this is going to be OK or not.”

Bylø wasn’t convinced yet, but everyone watching knew it was going to work out, Hall said.

After meeting Cowboy, Bylo will spend 10 days working with him and developing a bond. During that time, the SLS trainers guide

the process, ensuring the dog’s – and veteran’s – safety, and show Bylo what Cowboy is trained for.

Part of the process is going from store-to-store shopping, a process Bylo was a bit grumbly about.

Despite the grouching, Bylo’s actions told a different story, and he soon began to dote on Cowboy.

Bylo said he felt like it would work out when he took Cowboy out to get his ears cleaned and his

toenails trimmed.

Then, after he found himself buying Cowboy a \$100 memory foam bed, he knew he was stuck.

“I bought him the best bed I could find. It’s a big bed,” Bylo said.

Treatments for PTSD vary radically from person to person, but Bylo’s many years of success with Duke and now Cowboy may indicate a different and effective approach to handling PTSD.

“I would say about two-thirds of the guys we give dogs to would look me in the eye and say their dog saved their life,” Cathie said. “They were headed to a very dark place and were going to do something that they had no idea the ramifications of. But now they have this dog in their life.”

“That dog doesn’t eat unless they feed them. It gives them a different focus and a reason for not going there.”

The SLS will continue to maintain contact with Bylo and support his budding relationship with Cowboy going forward.

When Cowboy retires, SLS will provide Bylo with a new service animal, Cathie said.

When the ice melts, Bylo will find himself once again off the grid in the same woods, but now he has a new companion watching his back. Duke, retired nearby, can rest easy.

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ABOVE: An Alaska Air National Guardsman from the 212th Rescue Squadron, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, listens to radio communication before jumping out of a C-17 Globemaster III flown by the 249th Airlift Squadron onto the Navy's Ice Camp Sargo in the Arctic Circle in support of Ice Exercise 2016 March 15. The squadrons dropped 10 PJs, two Alaska Army National Guard Soldiers and a 9,500-pound arctic sustainment package. The joint-force exercise will assess readiness, increase operational experience in the region, develop partnerships, and advance understanding of the arctic environment. (U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman James Richardson)

BELOW: A pararescueman from the 212th Rescue Squadron watches the jumpmaster. (U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman James Richardson)

LEFT: A C-17 flies over Ice Camp Sargo. (U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman James Richardson.)

BELOW LEFT: Pararescuemen move out the door of a C-17 May 15. (U.S. Air Force photo/Staff Sgt. Wes Wright)



Occupational therapy Airmen go above and beyond

By Airman 1st Class Christopher R. Morales
JBER Public Affairs

“My finger went ba-doink,” the noncommissioned officer said as he demonstrated an unnatural bend for any digit.

Air Force Master Sgt. Robert Wagner, 773d Civil Engineer Squadron primary security manager, and a musician and athlete, lost most of his right middle finger’s mobility in an injury Oct. 23 during an intramural soccer game as a goalie with the CE team.

“It’s a big part of my job to have movement in my hands,” he said. “Who knows how I would be able to recover. Maybe I would never have had full function of my hand again – that was always a possibility.” There was hope.

The two primary occupational therapists who helped him were Air Force Lt. Col. Diana Medina, 673d Medical Operations Squadron Physical Occupational Therapy Flight commander, and Air Force Staff Sgt. Devin Rudd, 673d MDOS physical medicine technician.

“Everybody needs a balance of work, leisure and taking care of oneself,” Medina said. “For [Wagner], his stress reliever is [sports], and if you don’t have your stress reliever things can pile up. From my perspective, if I can get him back to doing this type of stuff, this will restore his quality of life.”

The first two months of Wagner’s therapy was focused on straightening his finger using numerous therapeutic practices.

“I worked with different people within the OT [clinic] ... they did a wide range of techniques like heating it up for 10 minutes then stretching it out,” Wagner said. “With their techniques, like dunking it in wax, using an ultrasound, hot towels and stuff like that, I was able to gain a little mobility.”

Throughout January and February, the technicians worked on his range of motion.

“We kept working on getting his finger straight [and, when] we got it nice and straight, then he couldn’t get full function back,” Medina said. “Flexion is usually easier to get back, so we worry about getting it straight, but he just wasn’t progressing.”

Wagner’s recovery hit a stagnant period, when he could not firmly grip anything, and could only flex his finger about halfway.

If the occupational therapists couldn’t fix his finger, the next step would be surgery. It would take even more time, and recovery would be much longer, so Medina and Rudd decided to make a dynamic splint.

A dynamic splint can reduce recovery time and improve the overall range of motion for a joint injury using controlled, prolonged stretching.

“If we can’t get it with non-dynamic means, then we will go into a dynamic splint,” Medina said. “They are more cumbersome to make, they are harder to wear – because they have big components.”

The only option the occupational therapists had was to make the splint, which had its own difficulties.



ABOVE: Air Force Staff Sgt. Devin Rudd, 673d Medical Operations Squadron physical medicine technician, creates a dynamic splint at the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson hospital Feb. 26 for Air Force Master Sgt. Robert Wagner, 773d Civil Engineer Squadron primary security manager, after he injured his hand playing soccer. (Courtesy photos)
ABOVE RIGHT: An X-ray shows the injury Air Force Master Sgt. Robert Wagner, 773d Civil Engineer Squadron primary security manager, suffered in October.
RIGHT: The dynamic splint helped restore Wagner's hand mobility.

“This is where it [got] interesting; our biggest issue with him was getting the [splint] on,” Medina said. “When we finally had it on and we pulled his finger down, we realized that the [tuning] component was too far up.”

The splint wrapped around the palm of the hand and a string holding onto the middle finger would be pulled by a guitar tuner to force the tendons to stretch.

“We had a good angle, but we had to move [the tuner] further down to get full flexion,” Rudd said. “We had to redo the entire thing.”

On the second try, they ran into even more problems.

“Other things went wrong like the splint material wasn’t sticking, so we were like ‘OK, that’s not working – oh yeah! Rivets!’ So we just kept at it,” Medina said. “Making

this splint took a little more than an hour because of the additional modifications.”

Wagner said when he was amazed by their ingenuity.

“In CE, we build stuff that people are in awe of, but when you think about occupational therapy it’s usually stuff like balls, rollers, stretching out and stuff, not intuitive contraptions using fulcrums and pulleys to put your body against itself – to heal itself,” Wagner said. “You just tighten that tuner [and] it just wrenches [my finger] down, stretching all the tendons.

“This is not just a piece of bubblegum and some duct tape,” Wagner said. “There had to be a lot of engineering going through [their] head to build that thing. This is the innovative engineering that takes therapy into a new dimension.”

The OT clinic doesn’t see hand injuries

every day, let alone ones that need dynamic splints, but they are trained to adapt and overcome.

“We don’t make very many dynamic splints, but for hand-therapy protocol, they are common,” Medina said. “Since I’ve been here, that is the first dynamic splint I’ve had to make.”

After two weeks of ‘fine tuning’ 15 to 20 minutes a day, Wagner was able to extend his finger straight and close his hand into a fist.

“I think [occupational therapists] are very needed in the Air Force, because otherwise we would have a bunch of broke bodies without any proper technique to heal them and put them back in the work force,” Wagner said. “In a job that is customer-service based, it is very easy to become stagnant and just do your job, but the positive outlook that they want to help their people is refreshing.”



Volunteer recognition

The deadline to submit a nomination for Volunteer of the Quarter is April 5. Volunteers can be active duty, or civilian (adult family members, retirees, or Department of Defense civilians).

Submissions are for January through March 2016. Email submissions to *673fss.fsfr:familyprograms@us.af.mil*.

For information, call 384-1517 or 552-4943.

Express closure

The JBER-Elmendorf Express on 9th St. is closed for renovation until 8 a.m. Saturday. The gas station will remain open for fueling. The 24-hour Express at the Joint Military Mall and the JBER-Richardson Express remain open.

For information, call 753-0232.

Palace Chase/Front

In-service Air Force Reserve recruiters will host Palace Chase/Palace Front briefings at the PME auditorium April 4 and 18, beginning at 8 a.m. and noon.

The program allows active Airmen to transfer to National Guard or Reserve duty immediately after their active service ends.

For information, call 552-3595.

JBER Tax Center open

Active duty members, Reserve component members, retirees, and family members can receive free tax return preparation and electronic filing at the Tax Center.

Volunteers are trained to prepare federal and state tax returns and can provide advice on military specific tax issues, such as combat zone tax benefits and the effect of the Earned Income Credit.

Volunteers are also trained to deal with Permanent Fund Dividends.

All tax returns through the tax center are forwarded electronically to the IRS and by selecting direct deposit, taxpayers can receive their refunds in as little as seven to 10 days.

The Tax Center is located on the third floor of Building 600 and will be open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Thursday from 1 to 8 p.m., and the second and fourth Saturdays of the month from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Taxpayers will need military ID; social security cards and birth dates for all dependents; last year’s federal income tax return; wage and earning statement(s) from W-2s, W-2Gs, and 1099-Rs; any Forms 1098, interest and dividend statements; bank routing and account numbers for direct deposit; amounts paid to day care providers and the day care providers’ tax identification numbers. To itemize deductions, bring evidence of the expenses.

The Affordable Care Act requires proof of essential health coverage. Your proof of coverage is the Internal Revenue Service Form 1095: Employer Provided Health Insurance Offer and Coverage. Active duty, National Guard, Reserve, retiree and civilian employees must bring this form, available in MyPay.

Walk-ins are welcome; to make an appointment, call 384-1040.

Legal services available

The Anchorage team of the 6th Legal Operations Detachment offers legal services for eligible members of the JBER community. Services are hosted monthly at the USARAK legal office; for appointments, call 384-0371.

Those eligible are retirees (medical or full term), active duty, and reservists, plus their family members who have a valid ID card.

Attorneys can help with will preparation, estate planning, divorce and separation issues, child custody or support, adoption, landlord/tenant issues, and debt.

Pothole repair

The 773d Civil Engineer Squadron encourages all Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson personnel to report potholes. In housing areas, contact Aurora Housing at 753-1051. All other requests will be tracked by 773d CES.

Take note of the location – including street and cross-street names or building numbers. Then email *773CES.CEOH.PotHoleRepair@us.af.mil* or call 552-2994 or 552-2995.

Include your name and contact information so crews can follow up about location or the severity.

Weather and mission permitting, potholes are repaired within 24 hours of reporting.

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. The seminar covers loan pre-qualifications, offers and acceptance, inspections, title searches, types of loans, and closure process.

For information or to sign up, contact the 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 information, call 353-6507.

Rental Partnership

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

The other option, RPP 5 Percent below market, saves the member five percent off the rental fee other tenants pay; however,

utilities are paid for by the tenant.

Both options are available with no deposits or fees to the member except pet fees as applicable.

This program provides active-duty military personnel, enlisted and officers, accompanied and unaccompanied with affordable off-base housing. An allotment must be executed under either option for the rental payments, made directly to the landlord resulting in a more trouble free transactions.

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

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

U-Fix-It Store

The U-Fix-it stores, open to all Aurora Military Housing tenants, issue home maintenance items.

Availability is subject to change and limits; some may have a cost. American flag kits and fire extinguishers are available.

U-Fix-It work includes all home maintenance activities, allowing occupants to make minor improvements and repairs and cut down on service orders.

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 office 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; priority goes to those PCSing.

For information, call 375-5540.

Giant Voice testing

Giant Voice mass notification system testing occurs Wednesdays at noon.

If the announcement is difficult to hear or understand, please call 552-3000.

If the announcement is difficult to hear or understand in base housing areas, contact JBER at *Facebook.com/JBERAK*.

Richardson Thrift Shop

The JBER-Richardson Thrift Shop, in Building 724 on 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.

JBER Bargain Shop

The JBER-Elmendorf Bargain Shop, in Building 8515 Saville across from the log cabin, is open Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and the first Saturday of the month 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., with consignments accepted Wednesdays 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Volunteers are welcome.

For information, visit *jber-spousesclub.com* or call 753-6134.

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 move. The program allows spouses to register for Department of Defense positions and be considered for jobs offered internally.

Spouses are matched with jobs based on their qualifications and preferences. Spouses are eligible for up to two years from the date of the PCS orders and are in the program for one year.

Spouses, even those who have never filled a federal position, can now register at the either of the JBER personnel offices.

For more information about the program or to register, call 552-9203.

JBER’s Attic

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

For more information, call 552-5878.



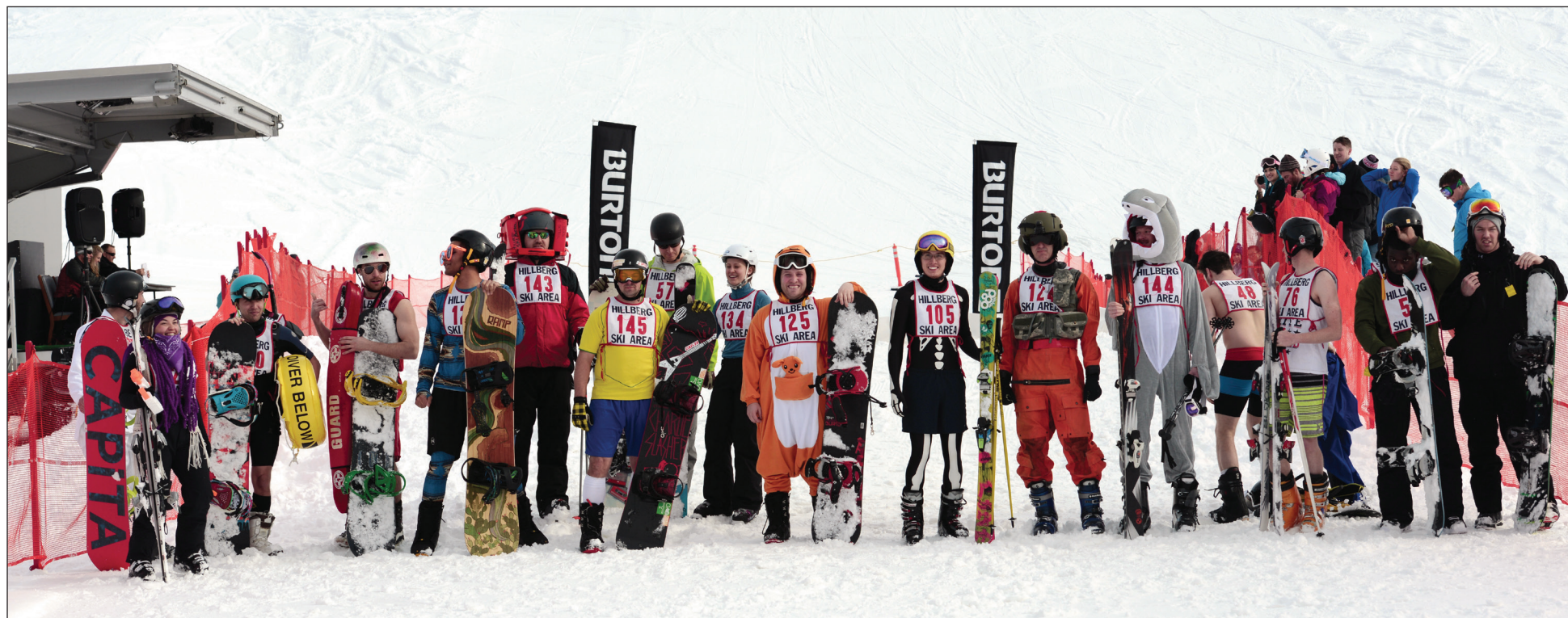
673d Force Support Squadron life guard Alex Flores snowboards at Hillberg Ski Resort's Slush Cup. The Spring Meltdown symbolized the end of the season and the Slush Cup was the last event at the ski resort until next winter. (U.S. Air Force photos/Airman 1st Class Christopher R. Morales)



Trevor Bird, Hillberg Ski Resort manager, passed the slush pond without a fall for the third year in a row during Hillberg Ski Resort's Slush Cup at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.



Slush Cup participants who won titles like sickest splash, cleanest run and best costume gather for a group photograph.



Skiers and snowboarders line up for a photograph before the Slush Cup during Hillberg Ski Resort's Spring Meltdown at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, March 20. Participants skied or snowboarded across a slush pond, and prizes were given to a select few who made the cleanest run, sickest splash, and more.



A competitor skis across the slush pond during Hillberg Ski Resort's Slush Cup.



A competitor jumps sideways into the slush pond during Hillberg Ski Resort's Slush Cup at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.

The year of mercy: time to change, time to act

By Air Force Chaplain (Maj.) Jesus Navarrete
673d ABW Chaplain

Pope Francis reaches out repeatedly to people who see themselves as beyond help. With a gentle smile and loving embrace, and with words of welcome and comfort, he acts out his role as a brother to the poor, the imprisoned, the displaced and the socially unconventional. He says as much in his writings: “Jesus’ whole life, his way of dealing with the poor, his actions, his integrity, his simple acts of generosity, and finally his complete self-giving is precious and reveals the mystery of his divine life” (“Joy of the Gospel” #265).

Pope Francis’ popularity coincides with a continuing decrease in church attendance. People are attracted to Francis’ personality, his courage and his strong ideas, but this has not led to any new eagerness to affiliate with the institutional church. Journalists vie with one another to describe “the Francis Effect,” but so far it has not included a massive return to weekly church attendance.

The absence of a common understanding of what the church really is constitutes a real difficulty. In the popular understanding, the Catholic Church is a service institution for its members, providing them spiritual comfort through liturgy and sacraments and reassuring them that they are loved by God. There is nothing wrong with that; it just doesn’t say enough. It doesn’t say, for example, what the “Dogmatic Constitution on the Church”



Pope Francis’ popularity coincides with a continuing decrease in church attendance. People are attracted to Francis’ personality, his courage and his strong ideas, but this has not led to any new eagerness to affiliate with the institutional church. (Courtesy photo)

of Vatican II made fundamental, namely, that the church is the “light of the nations” and a “sign or sacrament of humanity’s relation with God.” Further, this widespread “institutional” perspective on the church,

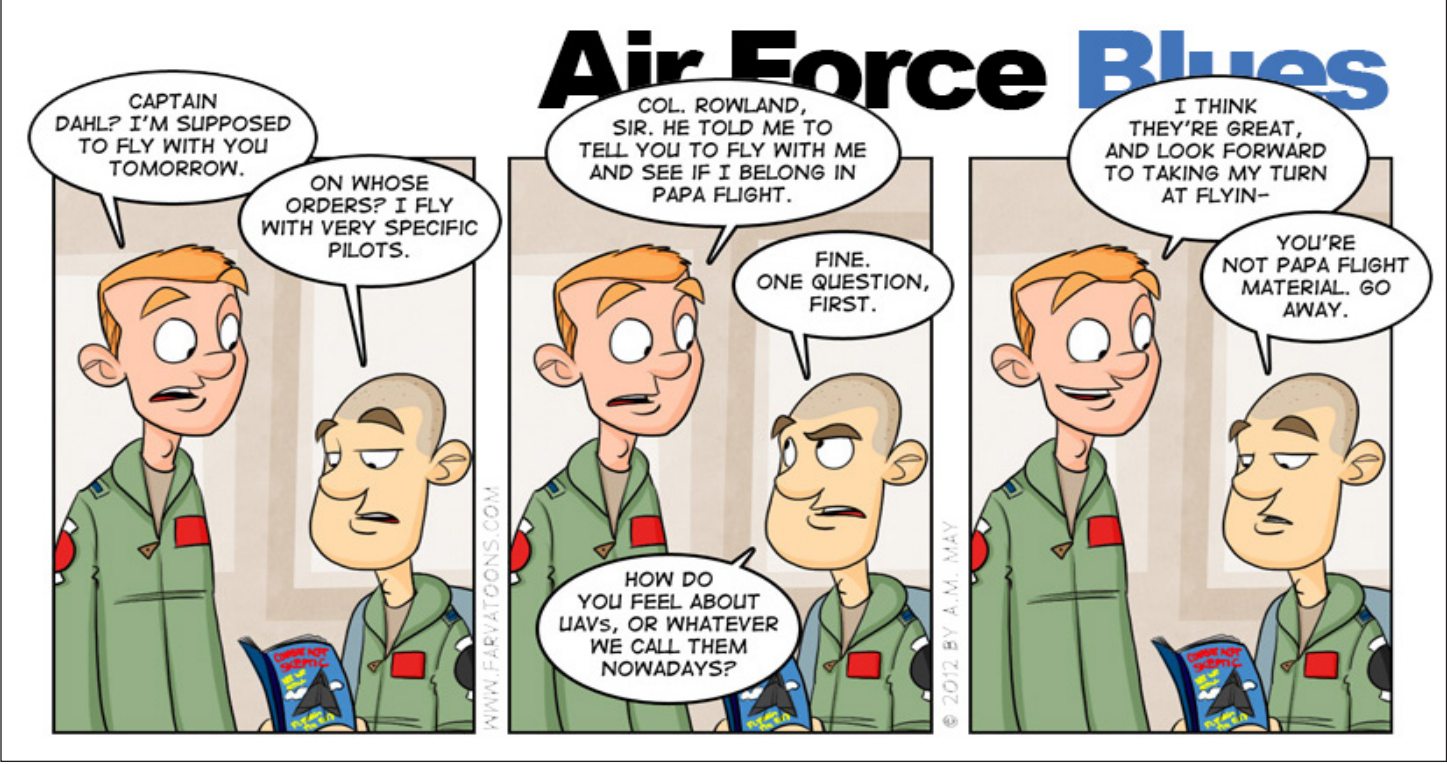
self-preoccupied as it is, does not welcome reform or evolution. In the past, the church often presented it-self as a “perfect society” and showed no interest in accommodating itself to the variety of cultures, languages and

traditions of global humanity. What worked in the past gave it a sense of security. That may explain why some Catholics are so interested in retrieving medieval vestments and rituals.

But Vatican II gave a fuller account of the meaning of the church as a community of God’s people who are bound to God and to one another through faith, mutual commitment and mission so as to live an apostolic way of life. In recent years we have seen examples of what that means: our chapel communities striving to express humanly their common faith and mutual care, our resiliency programs for all of our armed forces members and families, laity entering into both commissioned and volunteer forms of ministry and the development of faith formation programs like the ones we just started for children and other adult formation ones. In all these cases, the “pilgrim church” is moving gradually toward its true expression.

But in order to reach out and bring back some of our military members we need to agree with the Holy Father in describing our church as a field hospital. By describing the church as a “field hospital” for those wounded and in need of care, Francis shows that recruiting new chapel members is not foremost in his mind. The wounded people he is thinking about are those who have never experienced the church as a source of mercy. Many youth and young adults, apart from a minority raised in traditional Christian families, have been persuaded by a cynical media culture that the church is a hoax. Many others have been put off by bad experiences with priests or with chapel communities and have sworn off churchgoing. Nonetheless Pope Francis, following the example of Jesus in the Gospels, urges us to see alienated, poor, disenchanting and marginalized people as privileged clients of the church’s ministry.

Those outside the church are not going to be attracted by complicated doctrines and moral explanations. What will draw them in is mercy. Mercy means being met with respect, finding their pain and their questions acknowledged as real, being invited into a circle of hope and joy as partners in the church’s journey toward a better life. In a society that trains people to live fantasy lives in virtual reality, people still hunger to be real and to be loved. The media culture proposes endless caricatures of human purpose by inviting lonely and drifting viewers to imagine themselves as sexy and powerful players in the game of life. How can the church meet such people with a convincing witness to the joy and meaning that come from living in the body of Christ?



The Arctic Warrior Chapel will undergo a renovation through June. The 8:30 a.m. Catholic Mass and 11 a.m. Collective Chapel Services will meet at the Richardson Community Center on Hoonah Ave. during the renovation.

Express Closure

The JBER-Elmendorf Express on 9th St. will re-open Saturday at 8 a.m.
For information, call 753-0232.

FRIDAY

Spring Fling Easter Eggstravaganza

Come out to the Arctic Oasis Community Center at 9:30 p.m. for this free egg hunt for ages 13 to 18. Don't forget to bring your flashlight and school ID/dependent ID to be verified.

For more information call 384-1508, or 552-2266.

SATURDAY

Easter Egg Scramble

The Arctic Oasis Community Center hosts free Easter Egg hunts to offer another way to get out and enjoy the holiday and have fun. The hunt, sorted by age and presented by JBER Youth Programs, gets under way at 10:30 a.m. The event will take place outdoors; dress accordingly.

For more information call 384-1508, or 552-2266.

Easter Fun Day/Craft Fair

Join in the fun at the Arctic Oasis Community Center from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. for a day full of fun, including an Easter Bunny visit, petting zoo, balloon animals, bouncy house, prize hunt, magician, crafts, face painters, and an ice cream sundae bar.

For more information call 552-8529.

BOSS Get Air trip

Come out and have some fun, meeting up at the Warrior Zone at 1 p.m. Sign up to reserve your spot. Trip ends at 4 p.m.

For more information call 384-9006.

Snowmachine ride

Head to Willow or Spencer Glacier for this ride from 8 a.m.

to 5 p.m. Meet at the Outdoor Adventure Program building, where transportation, gear, gas, and the machine will be provided. Minimum and maximum sign up numbers apply.

For more information call 552-4599.

ONGOING

Lunch at the Museum

Bring a sack lunch and check out the JBER Wildlife Education Center, Building 8141, 19th St., April 21, from noon to 2 p.m. Kids are welcome and admission is free, with more than 200 wildlife mounts, educational displays, and wildlife movies playing Fridays and Tuesday at noon.

Open most Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday afternoons (subject to staffing availability). Visit the Facebook page at 'JBER Wildlife Education Center.'

For more information contact jberwildlife@gmail.com.

Wildlife Wednesday

Stay warm and scientifically enriched this winter with the this free science lecture series on the second Wednesday of each month at the Alaska Zoo Gateway Lecture Hall.

Each lecture begins at 7 p.m. and covers a different topic focused on wildlife research in Alaska.

For more information, visit alaskazoo.org.

Sunday bowling bingo

Enjoy discounted bowling every Sunday at the Polar Bowl and receive a bowling bingo card. Bowlers will attempt to cover the pattern of the day on their bingo card for a chance to win prizes.

For information, call 753-7467.

Zumba

Have fun with your fitness at the Arctic Oasis Community Center on Thursdays from 6 to 7 p.m.

For more information, call 552-8529.

Military Children Program scholarship

The scholarships for Military Children Program is accepting applications from eligible students at commissaries or online at militaryscholar.org.

For more information call (856) 616-9311.

AER scholarships

Army Emergency Relief is taking applications for scholarships. Scholarships are available for children, spouses and other dependents of active, retired and deceased Soldiers.

Applications and instructions are available at aerhq.org; submission deadline is May 1.

For information, call 384-7478.

Adult Writing Society

The Loussac Library hosts this multi-genre group the second Thursday of each month from 6 to 7 p.m. for writers 18 and up. Share your work and get constructive criticism and feedback.

For information, call 343-2909.

Keystone meeting for teens

Keystone Club is a leadership development experience providing community service opportunities for young people ages 13 to 18.

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

For information, call 384-1508.

Single Airman Program

Single service members, are you interested in getting out and enjoying all that Alaska has to offer?

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.

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.

Protestant Women of the Chapel meetings

Women are invited to meet with the Protestant Women of the Chapel. Bible studies are Tuesdays at 9:30 a.m. at the Richardson Community Center.

For more information, email jber.ak.pwoc@gmail.com or call 552-5762.

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 1 to 2 p.m.

These seminars explain 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 JBER-Richardson at 384-3088.

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/msmrre.

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., Monday, Thursday, or Friday and receive one free game.

For more information, call 753-7467.

Library Story Times

Family Homecare Series: Tuesdays 10 to 11 a.m.

Toddler Tales: Wednesdays 10 to 11 a.m.

Preschool Story Time: Thursdays 10 to 11 a.m.

Surprising Science: Tuesdays 3 to 4 p.m. and Thursdays 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Lifeguards needed

The Buckner Fitness Center is hiring lifeguards.

Check out www.nafjobs.org for upcoming openings on JBER. The Buckner Fitness Center is an equal opportunity employer.

NAF jobs

Looking for a fun job? Check out nafjobs.org for fun and exciting positions within the JBER Force Support Squadron. FSS is an equal opportunity employer.

Chapel services

Catholic Mass

Sunday

8:30 a.m. – Richardson Community Center

11:30 a.m. – Midnight Sun Chapel

Monday and Wednesday

11:40 a.m. – Richardson Community Center

Tuesday and Friday

11:30 a.m. – Midnight Sun Chapel

Thursday

12:00 p.m. – Hospital Chapel

Confession

Confessions are available anytime by appointment or after any mass. 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

Lunch and Learn

Fridays at 11:30 a.m.

Kosher lunch provided. At the CFLTC

Call 384-0456 or 552-5762.

Religious Education

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

673d FORCE SUPPORT SQUADRON



Easter FUN DAY

AND SPRING CRAFT FAIR

**MARCH 26
11 A.M. - 2 P.M.**

- PHOTO BOOTH • FACE PAINTERS •
- EASTER CRAFTS • EASTER BUNNY •
- ICE CREAM SUNDAE BAR •
- BOUNCY HOUSES • PRIZE HUNT •
- Balloon Animals • Magician •
- Petting Zoo •



**\$7 PER PERSON
UNDER 1 YR. OLDS FREE
LIMITED QUANTITY
OF TICKETS AVAILABLE**



Eggstravaganza

TEEN FLASHLIGHT EGG SCRAMBLE

MARCH 25 • 9:30 P.M.

FOR 13 - 18 YRS. OLD • FREE EVENT!

SCHOOL ID/DEPENDENT CARDS WILL BE VERIFIED.

DON'T FORGET YOUR FLASHLIGHT!

EASTER EGG SCRAMBLE

MARCH 26

FREE EVENT!

10:30 A.M. - AGES 0 - 4 YRS OLD

11 A.M. - AGES 5 - 8 YRS OLD

11:30 A.M. - AGES 9 - 12 OLD

OUTDOOR EVENT, PLEASE DRESS ACCORDINGLY



GET AIR

TRAMPOLINE PARK

MARCH 26 • 2 - 4 P.M.

MEET UP AT THE WARRIOR ZONE AT 1 P.M.

**\$15 DUE WHEN YOU SIGN-UP TO HOLD YOUR SPOT (REFUNDABLE)
COME ON OUT AND HAVE SOME FUN!**

**BLDG. 655
384.9023**

**OPEN TO
SINGLE SERVICE MEMBERS,
GEOGRAPHICAL BACHELORS,
& SINGLE PARENTS.**



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www.facebook.com/JBERLife
www.jberlife.com

Buckner Fitness Center opens expansion

By Air Force Staff Sgt. Wes Wright
Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson
Public Affairs

Base officials cut the ribbon at the new Buckner Physical Fitness Center during a ceremony at the gym March 21.

The 35,000 square-foot state-of-the-art addition includes an aquatic center, rock-climbing wall and a plethora of new strength

and cardio machines. The total square footage of available fitness space now exceeds 122,000 square feet.

“The improvements and features are tremendous,” said John Limon, BPFC director. “Before, we had about 55 pieces of cardiovascular equipment. Now, we have 130. We’ve never had an indoor track; now we do. Squat racks went from two to 16. Our weightlifting platforms went from one to eight and, there’s so much more.”

Limon said one of the marquee attractions at Buckner is the addition of an aquatics center, which includes a waterslide, lazy river, a diving board and a wave pool. There is also a play feature that shoots water like a water gun.

Due to high maintenance and personnel cost associated with the aquatics center, there is a fee to access the pool; it is \$5 for children under 13 and \$7 for adults. The aquatics center hours are 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday. It is also open from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., and 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

While family recreation was a consideration with respect to pool design, the new pool area will also help with physical rehabilitation and resiliency.

“There are parts dedicated for wounded warriors,” said William Leider, quality assurance representative for the Army Corps of Engineers. “There’s a [motorized] chair [which lowers people] into the pool. They can float, and they

can swim and build strength back into their body.”

The new, 34-foot rock-climbing wall also promises to be a key attraction at the expansion, Limon said. It has sections for everyone, from the experienced climber to the novice. The fitness center staff provides safety and harness hook-up instructions before people use the self-belaying system.



John Limon (center), Buckner Physical Fitness Center director, shows gym patrons a new rock-climbing wall in BPFC's new expansion following a grand opening ceremony March 21. (U.S. Air Force photos/Staff Sgt. Wes Wright)



The new aquatic center at the Buckner Physical Fitness Center sits ready for use following a grand opening ceremony of the center's expansion March 21.

“Here at Buckner, we are very much focused on making Soldiers and Airmen better warfighters,” Limon said. “I think that is evident in the layout and the equipment we have offered. We also understand that there is a strong resiliency piece that goes into fitness. Things like the aquatic center and rock wall offer a chance to get away from the everyday rigors of military life and make people more resilient.”

Buckner’s upgrades also included many new sets of free weights. It also includes a full Hammer Strength station lineup-plate-loaded resistance machines that pivot off a fixed fulcrum.

“Our old weight room had a maximum capacity of roughly 60 people,” Limon said. “Now, we can easily accommodate 300 people.”

One of the reasons Buckner can now accommodate so many people in its free weight area is the addition of a Pulastic multi-purpose court the size of a basketball court. A Pulastic surface has a slight cushion to it, offering a gentler surface for different types of workouts.

“It’s got some bounce to it,” Limon said. It allows us to have multiple conditioning programs. We have battle ropes, medicine balls; people can do walking lunges

and box jumps; you name it.”

For cardio enthusiasts, not only are there 130 different cardio stations, but there is also a new indoor running track; and, for anyone with a lower body injury or anyone looking for an alternate form of cardio, the center now has arm ergometers.

“Basically, it’s a cardio station like the hand bikes you see pedaling around in the summer,” Limon said.

Further outdoor upgrades are scheduled to be completed in 2017 and include three baseball/softball fields and a multi-purpose field.

Completion of the indoor expansion marks the end of almost a decade of planning and nearly three years of construction, as various delays and setbacks challenged organizers and construction crews.

“This has been a long time in coming,” said Air Force Col. Brian Bruckbauer, 673rd Air Base Wing and JBER commander. “This is a huge treat for all the men and women who work on JBER. There is a lot to see here and a lot for our families to take advantage of. Hats off to everyone who was involved in this project.”

For more information on the programs and improved features to the BPFC, call 384-1369.



Parents dance with their children during the Father/Daughter and Mother/Son Dance at the Arctic Warrior Events Center March 18. The event was sponsored by the Family Advocacy Program, the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office, the chapel team, and the USO. (U.S. Air Force photos/Airman Valerie Monroy)



Air Force Master Sgt. Michael Granato, 3rd Operations Support Squadron, dances with his daughter Natalie Granato, 4, during the Father/Daughter and Mother/Son Dance.



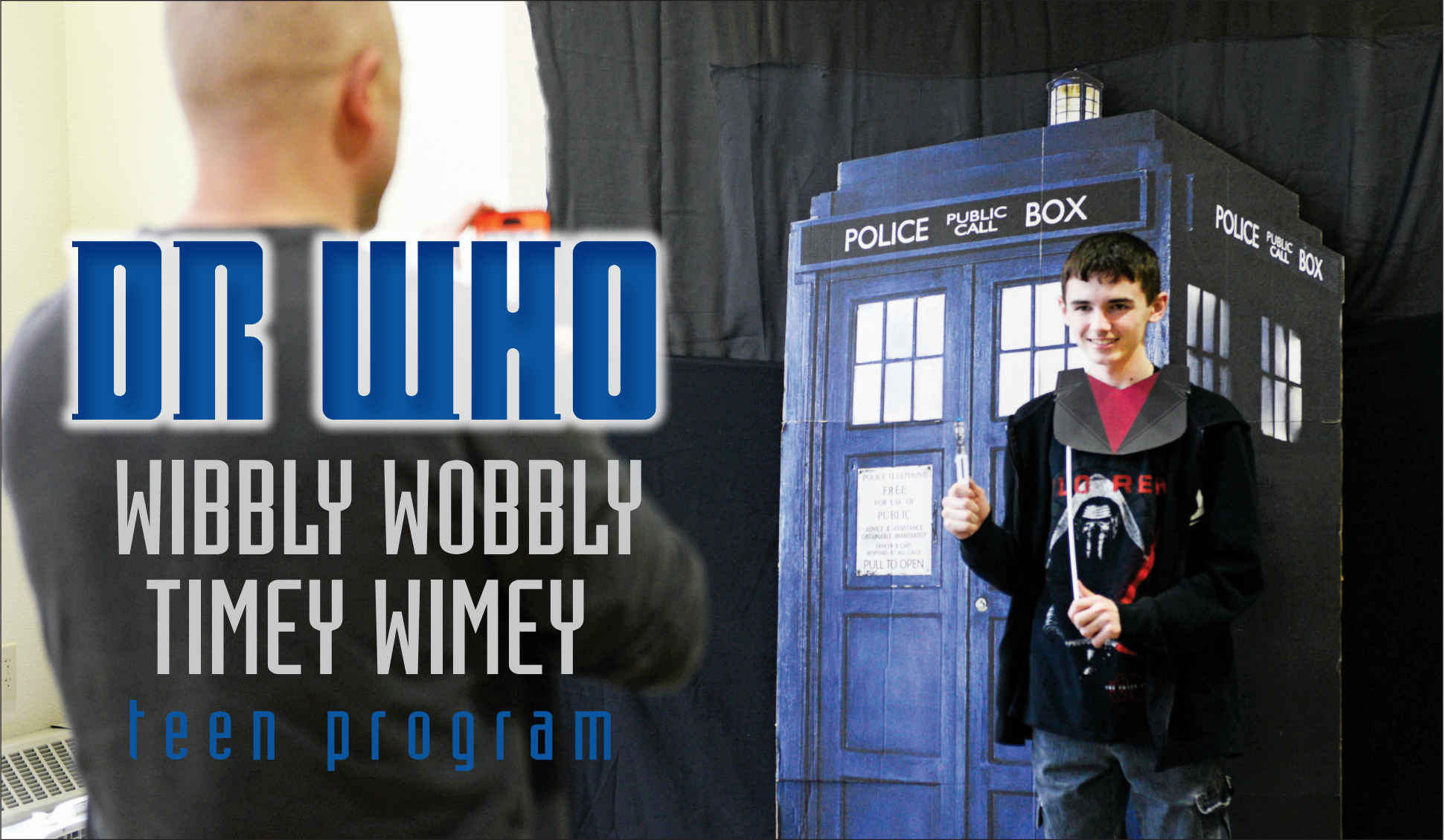
Tech. Sgt. Viktor Morgan, 3rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, and his daughter Bianca Morgan, 7.



Air Force Master Sgt. Richard Duken, 962nd Airborne Air Control Squadron, dances with his daughter Alessandra Duken, 8, during the Father/Daughter and Mother/Son Dance.



Paul Thiel, 673rd Force Support Squadron, dances with his daughter Joryan Thiel, 10, during the Father/Daughter and Mother/Son Dance. The event was open to all families from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.



Kaleb Johnson, 13, gets his photo taken during the Dr. Who Wibbly Wobbly Timey Wimey teen program at the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Library, March 16. Teens discussed their favorite Dr. Who characters and episodes during the event. Johnson is the son of Tech. Sgt. Kristopher Kreis, with the 673d Logistics Readiness Squadron. (U.S Air Force photos/Airman Valerie Monroy)



Teens fold paper fortune tellers during the Dr. Who Wibbly Wobbly Timey Wimey teen program. In addition to dressing in Dr. Who costumes, teens played games and made multiple crafts to take home.



Teenagers take part in the arts and crafts offered during the Dr. Who Wibbly Wobbly Timey Wimey teen program at the Joint Base Elmendorf- Richardson Library.