

# Need more OCOLA? A 30-minute survey could make it happen

**Senior Airman Curt Beach**  
Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson  
Public Affairs

From a single cart of groceries that can cost more than \$500, to higher gas prices, living in the Last Frontier can quickly burn a hole in your wallet.

Uniformed service members in Alaska have the opportunity to influence their Overseas Cost of Living Allowance and keep more of their hard-earned dollars.

A web-based Living Pattern Survey, conducted every three years, will become available for one month to service members and their families across Alaska beginning Dec. 1.

“Each service member should complete the survey to give us accurate data that reflects economic reality,” said U.S. Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Ben Manalastas, Alaska COLA country coordinator. “The survey will be

2018 COLA LIVING PATTERNS SURVEY



SCAN THE QR CODE ABOVE FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE SURVEY NOW, AND ACCESS TO THE LOCAL SURVEY BEGINNING DECEMBER 1



The COLA Living Patterns survey is used to track the shopping patterns of uniformed service members stationed overseas (and Alaska). To prepare for the survey, determine where you purchase groceries, clothing, household furnishings, entertainment, communications and transportation. The data collected will assist in the determination of Overseas Cost of Living Allowance paid to members during their assignment in Alaska. The survey data is instrumental in updating OCOLA indices. Incomplete surveys cannot be used as this might result in inaccurate analysis of shopping behavior. Your response will be treated as confidential. The survey runs from Dec. 1 to 31. Allow 40 to 50 minutes to complete the survey fully. (Graphic by Brady Gross, U.S. Army Garrison Alaska Fort Wainwright Public Affairs)

open for 30 days, and everyone’s involvement is critical to ensuring service members across Alaska receive the appropriate allowance. We also encourage service members to gather input from their spouses, especially if they do most of the household shopping.”

OCOLA is a supplement designed to match the purchasing power of service members stationed at stateside locations. In other words, the supplement helps offset costs of goods and services which are typically higher in overseas locations compared to the Lower 48.

The purpose of the survey is to identify where service members and their families shop for necessities like groceries and clothing, along with where they spend their money dining out or on personal products and services, car repairs, entertainment and so on.

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# How this blind Soldier sees the world

**MaryTherese Griffin**  
Warrior Care and Transition

Since May 13, 2008, retired U.S. Army Spc. Steve Baskis has seen the world from a different perspective. That day, while providing security as a member of the 4th Infantry Division, Baskis was injured from an improvised explosive device. The blast sent shrapnel into his head and every extremity of his body nearly costing him his left arm. Although his arm was spared, Baskis lost some of his hearing, his sense of smell, and his sight.

Now 10 years later, the 32 year old mountain climbing, kayaking adventurer says a multitude of people helped him find his new normal. That help came from Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington D.C., where he began his recovery to Chicago’s Edward Hines Jr. Veterans Affairs Hospital, the first blind rehabilitation center for veterans that opened its doors in 1945. In Chicago,

Baskis had many people help him adjust to his new normal, specifically his Army Wounded Warrior Program advocate, Linda Bronski. “Linda Bronski and a host of others helped me navigate my way through getting my bearings straight,” Baskis said.

Bronski does not see any of her efforts as being necessarily special, she just did what AW2 advocates do, take care of injured Soldiers. “I did the blind training and went for walks with him and his blind rehabilitation specialist as he learned to independently navigate [his way] inside and outside the grounds,” Bronski said. “Once he left the hospital, I stayed involved with him. I took him to appointments and took him to a gym where he would be the first veteran in a new program for injured veterans. [I also took] him to his first vocational rehab appointment.” These efforts from Bronski and others Baskis says helped him to shape his new self and build his confidence.



Steve Baskis kayaks the Colorado River from Colorado to Arizona for 12 days in September 2018. (Courtesy photo)

See BLIND on page 3



A bulldozer clears an avenue for wood cutters to access wood cutting areas on Fort Wainwright during a project that combined efforts from the garrison and engineer battalions on post. The project now provides avenues to help wood cutters access their wood and remove the trees, generating benefits for the garrison in the process by removing the trees near the airfield’s runway to meet safety requirements for aircraft approaches. (Photo by Shawn Osborn, Fort Wainwright Natural Resource Specialist)

# Fort Wainwright efforts come together to open access to wood

**Maj. Charlie Dietz**  
1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, Public Affairs

Foresters from Fort Wainwright’s garrison Environmental Division partnered with teams from the 70th Brigade Engineer Battalion and the 411th Engineer Battalion to open access to firewood cutting areas last week. The Foresters came together to offer the engineers real-world training, and in turn, helped speed up the project. The combination of efforts became a win for Fort Wainwright, increasing readiness for all those involved.

The integration of missions for the foresters and the engineers has been a goal

for the past year said Shawn Osborn, Fort Wainwright natural resource specialist. The project now provides avenues to help wood cutters access their wood and remove the trees, trains the engineers and generates benefits for garrison by removing the trees near the airfield’s runway to meet safety requirements for aircraft approaches. Garrison environmental employees were tasked with attempting to salvage enough wood that they could minimize outside contractor needs. With wood cutters purchasing permits, the garrison is raising money while saving money.

“Melding the engineers and the forestry workers is a great match for the work we do on Fort Wainwright lands, providing training and experience for the Soldiers

while working toward a mutual goal of getting the mission done,” said Dan Rees, Fort Wainwright natural resources manager and forester.


Rees said that this first-time project fusion was somewhat experimental, but upon seeing the results, is something that he wants to continue in the future. The integration was one of the resource management’s goals and the success of the trial had an overwhelming effect that he believes will be extremely useful for future projects.

“We were really impressed with the dozer work they did and the engineer’s willingness to work together. I hope to see more of the teams coming together on similar projects again shortly,” Rees said.

WEEKEND WEATHER


COMMUNITY ACTION COUNCIL

Friday




Partly cloudy, with a high of 9 degrees and a low of 8.

Saturday



Cloudy, with a high of 23 degrees and a low of 17.

Sunday



Partly cloudy, with a high of 23 degrees and a low of 21.

The Fort Wainwright Community Action Council is slated to take place next Wednesday, Dec. 5, at the Last Frontier Community Activity Center, building 1044. This event begins at 10:45 a.m., and is open to the Fort Wainwright community. Come participate and find out what’s happening on your installation. Topics will include the Living Pattern Survey, Snow Removal Plan, Real ID Act and more. Get information on future events, share your questions/concerns and get answers from the experts. See you there, or on livestream on the Fort Wainwright Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/FortWainwrightPAO/.



# Nutrition Corner: Nutrition 101

**Brandy Ostanik**  
Medical Department Activity – Alaska, Public Affairs

In making your daily food selections, you should be particularly mindful of your beverage choices. While your beverage selection may seem inconsequential, they can impact your total daily caloric intake, which can contribute to unwanted weight gain and dental calories. It is so easy to unknowingly consume 500 to 1,000 calories per day in beverages alone.

For example, one 20 ounce bottle of cola contains 240 calories. If you drank one per day for a year, that can contribute up to a 25 pound weight gain. Not to mention the 65 grams of additional sugar, about 1/3 cup, per day, which ends up to be about 118 cups of sugar per year.

Imagine the impact that has on your dental

health as well. This also goes for energy drinks, sports drinks, juice and other sugared drinks such as lemonade. Don't be fooled by juice. Just because it contains some vitamins does not mean it should be consumed in large quantities. Rely on your whole fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, low fat dairy and whole grains for your vitamins and minerals. One eight ounce cup of orange juice contains 110 calories, so if you do enjoy a cold glass of juice in the morning, ensure it is 100 percent juice and limit yourself to four to eight ounces per day.

If you are hooked on drinking sugar sweetened beverages because plain water is boring to you, think outside of the box for some other options. A good natural replacement is fruit infused water. It is quick, easy and low in calories. A low to moderate intake of diet beverages (diet cola) and commercial zero calorie water flavoring powders are safe and effective for reducing calorie intake,

when replacing sugared beverages, for most individuals.

Featured Food:

Fruit Infused Water! All you need to do is make a pitcher or bottle of water and throw in your favorite mix of fruits and vegetables.

Featured Recipes:

Cherry Limeade – Fill a pitcher with water and combine with one thinly sliced lime and six pitted cherries cut in half. Add a small piece of mint for an extra burst of flavor. Best when fruit is infused for a minimum of four hours.

Cucumber Lemon – Fill a pitcher with water and add 10 to 14 thinly sliced cucumbers and four slices of lemon.

# MEDDAC Minute

**Brandy Ostanik**  
Medical Department Activity – Alaska, Public Affairs

## PERFORMANCE TRIAD TIP

Optimizing your performance and health can be just as challenging as an obstacle course or any special skills qualifying course. It too, can be conquered. Make a plan, write it down, share it with a friend and you will be more successful in achieving your goals.

## PATIENT TRAVEL VOUCHERS

Two weeks turn-around time is the expected timeframe for vouchers to be approved for patients traveling for care outside of Fairbanks. For patients who have vouchers outside of this two week window, please contact the Patient Administration Department at 361-5001.

## BREAST PUMPS AND SUPPLIES

Do you have a breastfeeding child at home? TRICARE covers breast pumps and breast pump supplies at no cost. You must have a prescription from your provider and state which type of breast pump you need. For more information on coverage, go to [www.tricare.mil/breastpumps](http://www.tricare.mil/breastpumps).

## ANONYMOUS OR NOT

Sometimes being anonymous is not a good thing. When filling out Interactive Customer Evaluation forms, leaving contact information helps us to better serve our

beneficiaries. Many times, the issue is something we can easily fix, but without contact information, we are not able to remedy the situation. Giving us a name and number allows us to contact the beneficiary and correct the problem on the spot.

## WELLNESS CENTER APPOINTMENTS

The Fort Wainwright Wellness Center is open for appointments. With health assessments, nutrition information, stress management services and physical fitness programs, beneficiaries will find tools to take small but important steps to a healthier future. To make an appointment or to inquire about services call 361-2234.

## IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Emergency: 911  
24 Hour Nurse Advice Line:  
1-800-874-2273 Opt. 1  
Appointment Line: 361-4000  
Behavioral Health: 361-6059  
Benefits Advisor: 361-5656  
Immunizations: 361-5456  
Information Desk: 361-5172  
Patient Advocate: 361-5291  
Pharmacy Refills: 361-5803  
Referral Center: 361-1810  
Tricare On-Line:  
[www.tricareonline.com](http://www.tricareonline.com)  
Health Net Federal Services:  
[www.tricare-west.com](http://www.tricare-west.com)  
1-844-866-9378



# OCOLA

Continued from page 1

The data collected from the LPS will establish the building blocks for the Retail Price Survey. The Retail Price Survey is conducted annually by select individuals who collect prices from the most frequent establishments (derived from the LPS) on and off the installation. Once all price collections are completed, the data is sent to the Defense Travel Management Office.

This data is then analyzed and used to compare prices from overseas to those in the Lower 48 to compute the Cost of Living Index, which is used to develop the country's COLA rate.

For more information on this

process, visit the DTMO website at [www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/cola.cfm](http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/cola.cfm).

To prepare for the Living Pattern Survey, Manalastas recommends service members make a list of where they purchase groceries, clothing, household furnishings, entertainment, communications and transportation prior to the survey opening.

The web-based questionnaire will take approximately 30 minutes to complete and can be done from any computer at [www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/colaSurvey.cfm?ID=alaska](http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/colaSurvey.cfm?ID=alaska).

For more information, contact Manalastas at 552-2010 or Chief Master Sgt. Michelle Rootes at 580-3138.



Uniformed service members in Alaska will soon have the opportunity to influence their Overseas Cost of Living Allowance and keep more of their hard-earned dollars. A web-based Living Pattern Survey, conducted every three years, will become available for one month to service members across Alaska beginning Dec. 1, 2018. (Courtesy photo)

# Weekly Financial Tips: Giving Back

**Ryki Carlson**  
Survivor Outreach Services Support Coordinator

With the holiday season upon us, we are reminded to help others. Helping others should be part of our normal routine. Helping others doesn't have to cost money, think about all the things you could recycle or share instead of throwing out. Invest in others especially this time of year. Here are some charity opportunities:

1. Finding and verifying charities. Looking for the right charity and verifying their status can be as simple as checking a website: visit [www2.guidestar.org](http://www2.guidestar.org) to locate your favorite cause. GuideStar is the world's largest source of information on nonprofit organizations.

2. Surfing the web. Use a search engine that donates a percentage of its sponsored search revenue to the charities and schools designated to its users. Try [www.igive.com](http://www.igive.com). It works like every other search engine. The money iGive donates to your cause comes from its advertisers and purchases – the users do not spend a dime. Another site is [Ecosia.org](http://Ecosia.org), which is a search engine that will plant trees with your searches – for free! Try [theecokey.com](http://theecokey.com), powered by Google that donates money to cleaning up the planet. Additionally it has an eco-filter option, which searches for green products and topics.

3. Donate your time. When you donate your time, you provide your experience and help out those in need. Consider mating your skills or interest to your volunteer time.

4. Donating vehicles. If you have an old vehicle that you can't sell but want a tax deduction; consider donating it to one of the following organizations:

a. Habitat for Humanity ([www.habitat.org/support/donate-your-car](http://www.habitat.org/support/donate-your-car)) - They use the funds to build homes and provide low-interest loans to people who need help.

b. Volunteers of America ([www.voa.org](http://www.voa.org)) – They have empowered and supported those people who need to rebuild their lives and help them reach their full potential.

c. Kars 4 Kids ([www.Kars4kids.org](http://www.Kars4kids.org)) – A program that raises money for at-risk kids and provides them funds for education.

5. Donate old eyeglasses. Looking for an opportunity to reuse those eyeglasses that don't meet your needs any longer; check out [www.new-eyes.org](http://www.new-eyes.org).

6. Giving used books. Drop off your used books at the local homeless shelter, library or USO. Some people read to escape or expand their horizons; give someone that opportunity.

7. Donating used suitcases. Looking for an organization to take your used suitcases, visit [www.suitcasesforkids.org](http://www.suitcasesforkids.org). This organization provides suitcases to foster kids, since foster children usually move their belongings in garbage bags; offer them the opportunity to safely transport their personal belongings with dignity.

8. Donating used clothing. Consider cleaning out your closets of clothes you no longer wear or fit. Americans discard over two quadrillion pounds (two with fifteen zeros at the end) of used clothes and textiles into landfills each year. Consider dropping off your donations at the local thrift shop or homeless shelter.

9. Donating toiletry items. Most homeless or women's shelters accept donations of sample or regular sized, unopened toiletry items; these include shampoo, conditioner, soap, shaving cream, toothpaste, toothbrushes, razors and deodorant. Think about all those sample size ones in your bathroom cabinet. AAA also has a program called Soap for Hope, which collect these items to help neighbors in need by supplying them with valuable personal hygiene items.

# ALASKA POST

The Interior Military News Connection

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The ALASKA POST – The Interior Military News Connection



# The Chaplain’s Corner

**Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Paul Fritts**  
Fort Greely

I am Sir Fritts, a Knight of Camelot. Allow me to explain. The small university I attended had local social service clubs instead of national fraternities and sororities. Camelot was the men’s club I joined. “Pledges” were known as squires, and our pledge season was called - you guessed it - squire season. During squire season in January of 1985, my squire brothers and I memorized the hometowns, states and majors of the club members, bounced (don’t ask), and actually learned a few lessons truly worth remembering on our journey to knighthood.

My sponsoring club member was, and remains, my longtime friend Sir Andrew Hunter. Andrew’s job was to advocate for me, admonish me and generally see to it that I successfully completed squire season. On hell night, the last night of squire season, my squire brothers and I spent the

entire night blindfolded, weary and profoundly uncomfortable. Imagine our relief when we were all shuffled into a warm building, still blindfolded and seated alone at desks in separate classrooms.

At some point, Andrew entered my classroom and, without instruction, placed a cup of water in my hand. I was thirsty and gratefully drained the cup. Retrieving the empty cup, Andrew solemnly stated: “Well done Squire Fritts... now your fellow Squire Brothers will have nothing to drink.” The door to my classroom closed and I was left, alone, in the dark, to reflect on what I was led to believe I’d just done. Thirty-three years later, I’m still reflecting on that lesson learned.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37 is familiar to many people. A lawyer tests Jesus with a question about what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus asks the lawyer what the Law says. The lawyer correctly states: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength

and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” Jesus goes on to make the point in the parable that in addition to loving our neighbors, we should also enlarge the circle of those we identify as neighbors. The lawyer knows the letter of the Law, but doesn’t quite understand the spirit of who his neighbor should be. We know that struggle, too, don’t we? Focused primarily on our own needs, it’s easy to forget even the neighbors closest to us, exactly like Squire Fritts did on hell night.

During this season of giving, let’s be intentional about remembering to care for our neighbors. Let’s also accept the challenge to embrace as neighbors people who look, speak, think and worship differently than the person in the mirror. Underneath the external labels we use to divide ourselves, we’re all just people who get thirsty and need a neighbor willing to share a cup of water. For God and Country!



**Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Paul Fritts**

The Fort Greely Chapel community is open and accessible to everyone in the Delta Junction/Fort Greely community – even non-military. We are a traditional, protestant Army chapel service meeting on Sundays at 10 a.m., with a weekly Communion observance. Interested?

Please call 907-873-4397 to arrange for gate access. “Like” our chapel Facebook page by searching “Fort Greely Chapel” or use your web browser to go to <https://www.facebook.com/FGAChapel>.

For God and Country,  
Chaplain Fritts

## Avoiding accidents during winter driving

**U.S. Army Garrison Safety Office**

You should think about snow and ice every time you climb into the driver’s seat during the winter months. If a section of pavement looks wet, don’t assume it’s just water – it may be black ice, a thin film of ice that is very treacherous. Black ice is more often found on bridges and in heavily shaded areas but could show up anywhere.

Increase your vehicle spacing on icy surfaces; stopping distance can be as much as 12 times what it would be on a clear, dry road.

Give driving your full attention, concentrating on road conditions and the surrounding area. It takes only a few seconds of inattentiveness to cause an accident or be involved in one.

Slow down before you reach a curve, and if you need to apply brakes, use a feathering or pumping action. Hard braking will lock the wheels and cause skidding. Drive cautiously and methodically. Keeping a steady, moderate pressure on the accelerator helps cut the need to brake hard when brakes are applied.

Avoid unnecessary trips. If a trip can wait, postpone it instead of driving in bad weather. If you must drive in bad weather, start your trip early and allow extra time to reach your destination – bad road conditions and holiday traffic will increase your travel time.

Seeing is essential – if drivers can’t see the danger, they can’t do anything to avoid it. So before leaving on your trip, make sure windows, mirrors and headlights are clean. Check your windshield wipers to ensure that they are working properly, and check for burnt out headlights, taillights and brake lights.

For more information, contact 353-7087/83/85.

## BLIND

**Continued from page 1**

“There is nothing that surprises me in what [Steven] does,” says Bronski. “We had a thing [in our office] of ‘Where’s Steven Baskis?’ (like Where’s Waldo?), because how many people do you call and [each time] they are in another state, another country or another continent?”

Baskis now spends his time doing work for the charity he started and seeing the world he longed to travel before joining the Army, only in a different light than he planned. “Don’t get me wrong, I don’t like being blind, I mean who would?” Baskis said, but he has learned to “embrace the suck” as he says. “I’ve seen more of the world being blind than I ever did sighted.”

From climbing Mount Kilimanjaro to most recently kayaking the Colorado River for 12 days with four other blind veterans, Baskis acknowledges he has done many cool things, but that doesn’t mean everything is always great. “I have my dark thoughts and bad days like everyone else. It is not easy,” Baskis said. “But I remember some things from early on, like the fact that my team leader, who put a picture of his kids on the dash of our vehicle every day, died right next to me. I recognize... I got a second chance.”

Baskis says for him to keep moving is to keep living, something he shares and advises other Soldiers and veterans who struggle to do. “Push yourself and challenge yourself and establish your new normal. Anything is possible.”

## There is help for anyone caring for a service member

**MaryTherese Griffin**  
Warrior Care and Transition

It’s likely at some point in life one will hear a phrase like, “two heads are better than one” or “teamwork makes the dream work.” However, phrases like these all boil down to a simple four letter word, help.

This November during Warrior Care Month, the Army salutes warriors and those that support them in their recovery. Warrior care and Transition want to highlight a program designed to specifically help and support caregivers. The Military Caregiver Personalized Experiences, Engagement and Resources Forum Initiative, or PEER Forum was established in June 2014 and championed in large part by former First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden. PEER Forums provide military caregivers a forum for them to share experiences and provide each other support. According to Sandra Mason, director of Recovery Coordination Program, Defense Health Agency, PEER Forums are a confidential portal to help for all caregivers.

“Caregivers discuss a range of topics during a (PEER) Forum; however, due to the sensitive and personal nature of the topics, maintaining privacy is critical,” Mason said. “We do see trends in the type of issues and discussions that happen and have noted some topics that are routinely discussed, which we have labeled as the Big 10, these include physical health, behavioral health, transportation, employment, financial, education and respite care, among others.”

PEER Forums are available to anyone caring for a wounded, ill or injured service member, and are not restricted to family members. “Anyone who helps care for a recovering service member, in any capacity, is considered a caregiver

and encouraged to participate (in a Forum),” Mason said. “That being said, caregivers are busy individuals with hectic schedules, so we try to accommodate them as best as possible. There is always value in sharing information and encouraging caregivers to seek out additional local supports.”

Mason says the PEER Forums, which are open to those in either the active or reserve components, are producing positive support and the benefits are clear. “By forming small communities of support for each other, we’ve seen caregivers begin to flourish in their new role, and as individuals. We’ve seen caregivers encourage each other to go to school, look for jobs that are conducive to their schedules, become well known activists for the military community and advocate on Capitol Hill for additional support for military caregivers across the country. By helping one another, many caregivers are helping themselves, and are encouraged and inspired to be the best advocate and support for their recovering service member.”

One of the challenges Mason says with PEER Forums is getting the word out to caregivers. Communities across America can encourage care givers to participate in PEER Forums.

“While caregivers provide this support willingly, they also need time for themselves and time to engage with other caregivers and the community at-large. The need for respite care is a big issue for our caregivers, and the community should take note and help support,” Mason said. “It is imperative that we collectively support our military caregivers, bolster their strength, give them opportunities to connect with their peers, and provide guidance and resources to help them care for themselves, as well as their service member.”





Community Collaboration



Sparkel George (far left), Exceptional Family Member Program systems navigator; Dena Smith (left), Fairbanks Northstar Borough School District Special Education coordinator; Georgia Sandgren (right), FNSB School District military student support coordinator; and Michael Campbell (far right), U.S. Army Garrison Alaska school liaison officer and acting EFMP coordinator, participate in the Army Community Service hosted FNSB School District Special Education Department Lunch and Learn Workshop “Behavioral Concerns” on Nov. 20, at the North Haven Communities Community Center. (Courtesy photo)

# CHRISTMAS TREE CUTTING PERMITS

PERMITS FOR CUTTING CHRISTMAS TREES ON ARMY-MANAGED LANDS ARE NOW AVAILABLE UNTIL **DECEMBER 25TH**

FOR PERMITS, MORE INFORMATION AND DESIGNATED AREA MAPS, TAKE A PICTURE OR USE AN APP TO READ THE FOLLOWING QR CODE

BETTER OPPORTUNITY FOR SINGLE SOLDIERS  
invites you to write a

# Letter to SANTA

nov 23 - dec 6

**\$5 per letter**

Birch Hill Lodge: NOV 23, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m., NOV 24 & 25, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

LAST FRONTIER COMMUNITY ACTIVITY CENTER:  
NOV 26 - DEC 6, OPEN HOURS / NOV 29, 5 - 6:30 p.m.,  
and DEC 6, 5 - 6:30 p.m.

hear back from Santa at the Holiday Tree Lighting Party  
-or- pick up your letter from Santa at the Last Frontier Community Center starting Dec 9

WRITE YOUR LETTER TODAY!

[www.wainwright.armymwr.com](http://www.wainwright.armymwr.com)  
@WainwrightMWR #WainwrightBOSS

# Veterans Crisis Line

1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1

Galloping to help veterans

Gary Sheftick  
Army News Service

Completing the frigid four-mile Galloping Gobbler race the morning of Nov. 24 in Fort Wayne, Indiana, with a 50-pound rucksack was more than about staying in shape for Sgt. 1st Class John Garrett.

He sees such events as an opportunity to spread awareness about issues facing military veterans.

On the back of his rucksack was a sign that read: “According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, 22 veterans commit suicide each day. If you, or a veteran you know is in crisis, call 1-800-273-8255 and press 1.”

More than 30 people approached him during the event to talk about his sign.

This was Garrett’s 24th race wearing his uniform and rucksack. Event distances have ranged from five kilometers to the 50K ultra marathon that he plans to complete again, Dec. 29.

He began the running events three years ago. He has a condition in his legs called Compartment Syndrome, where his leg muscles do not expand to allow ample blood flow during exercise and his nerves get numb after several minutes of running. He tried surgery, but the condition returned.

To stay in shape, he runs for a few minutes until the nerves begin to numb, then walks until the condition subsides. He also wears a 50-pound ruck to help his endurance.

When he began entering road races wearing his rucksack and uniform, people immediately

approached him to thank him for his service.

“I didn’t want it to be about me,” he said. “After about five or six races, I started connecting the dots about people coming up and talking to me, and recognizing that as an opportunity.”

He began making handouts about local resources available to veterans and gave the fliers to people who approached him during the events.

“I just developed a little message to say, ‘Hey, these are some of the issues facing us,’” he said.

He believes in the Army value of selfless service. He does not want the attention he gets during races to focus on him, but instead on the issues of fellow veterans.

“I want it to be more about veterans who are facing ... [post-traumatic stress disorder], isolation and depression and those things that contribute to the suicide rate,” he said.

Garrett had two friends who served and later committed suicide. He knows unit members who deal with PTSD. He was able to work through some issues of post-traumatic stress himself after a deployment to Iraq in 2006 to 2007 with 1st Battalion, 110th Infantry Regiment.

“You kind of get numbed to things,” Garrett said of his deployment. “We were in contact so much, and whether it was an [improvised explosive device], a firefight, indirect or [vehicle-borne IED], it was something almost every single day.”

Now he is a full-time senior supply sergeant in the logistics section of the Indiana National Guard’s Night Fighters of 1st Battalion, 293rd Infantry Regiment, at Fort Wayne.

“I’m very fortunate with this battalion,” he said. “They give me a lot of support and a lot of leeway to do these races.”

He runs the Fort4Fitness Fall Festival 10K or marathon every year in Fort Wayne and takes part in many shorter 5K events around the area. Before and after the races and when he stops to walk, he discusses PTSD and ways to help veterans.



Sgt. 1st Class John Garrett of the Indiana National Guard jogs a portion of the Fort4Fitness marathon, Sept. 29, 2018 in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Garrett participates in road races wearing a 50-pound rucksack with a sign on the back providing the number to a veterans crisis hotline. (Courtesy photo)

# I.A.M. STRONG

INTERVENE \* ACT \* MOTIVATE

Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention



# Fort Wainwright Family & MWR

## Weekly Events

November 30 –  
December 7

**30** Youth Sports Registration Extension  
Through December 14

Time is running out to register your child for the exciting season Youth Sports and Fitness has to offer! Choose from Bowling, Indoor Soccer, Downhill Skiing or Snowboarding, and Fat Tire Biking. Registration ends December 14 at Parent Central Services.  
Parent Central Services, building 1049, Suite 2  
Call 353-7713, registration required

**1** Snowmachine Safety Course  
December 1  
9 a.m. to Noon

Snowmachine safety is imperative to a fun and safe riding time. Join Outdoor Recreation for a 3-hour long orientation to snowmachine safety and winter hazards, required for anyone looking to rent a snowmachine from Outdoor Recreation.  
Outdoor Recreation Center, building 4050  
Call 361-6349, registration required

**4** Inspirational Spin Fitness Class  
December 4  
9 to 10 a.m.

Increase Cardiovascular endurance while riding to uplifting music to start your day focusing on a sound body and mind!  
Physical Fitness Center, building 3709  
Call 353-7223

**5** LEVY Brief  
December 5  
9 to 11:30 a.m.

This briefing is offered to Soldiers and Families moving overseas or back to the lower 48. Information provided at the orientation include; Pre-Move Counseling, PCS Process Procedures, Finance Entitlements, Shipping Household Goods, Port Call, Family Travel, Legal Assistance for claims and Shipment of POV and pets.  
Army Community Service, building 3401  
Call 353-7908

**7** Holiday Party & Tree Lighting Ceremony  
December 7  
5:30 to 8 p.m.

Celebrate the season as we light up the tree, visit with Santa, then enjoy holiday festivities for the entire family! Win amazing prizes for under the tree, take pictures with Santa and his reindeer, and enjoy hot cocoa and sweets, all while counting down to the annual tree lighting main event!  
Birch Hill Ski & Snowboard Area, building 1172  
More information: [www.wainwright.armymwr.com](http://www.wainwright.armymwr.com)

USAG ALASKA & FAMILY AND MWR PRESENT

# HOLIDAY PARTY

TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY

**DECEMBER 7**

DOORS OPEN 5:30 PM // FREE // ALL AGES

ACTIVITIES FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY

PHOTOS WITH **SANTA CLAUS**  
**REINDEER • CAROLING**  
**SANTA SHRED • FREE FOOD & DRINK**

BIRCH HILL SKI & SNOWBOARD AREA LODGE

[WWW.WAINWRIGHT.ARMYMWR.COM](http://WWW.WAINWRIGHT.ARMYMWR.COM)





Time to eat! Join Santa for a Breakfast at Nugget Lanes Bowling Center!  
Find out more at [www.wainwright.armymwr.com](http://www.wainwright.armymwr.com)



DO YOU NEED YOUR  
SNOWMACHINE SAFETY  
CERTIFICATION?

JOIN THE OUTDOOR RECREATION CENTER  
ON DECEMBER 1, 1 P.M.  
OPEN TO ALL B.O.S.S. SERVICE MEMBERS

DECEMBER 8

## B.O.S.S. WHITE MOUNTAINS SNOWMACHINE TRIP

VENTURE OUT INTO THE SNOWY WILDS OF THE WHITE MOUNTAINS ON  
SNOWMACHINE WITH B.O.S.S.

SERVICE MEMBERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR WEARING PROPER WINTER ATTIRE, AND MUST HAVE AN OOR SNOWMACHINE SAFETY CERTIFICATION.  
\$70 PER PERSON. \$10 REFUNDABLE DEPOSIT REQUIRED. SPACE IS VERY LIMITED. REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED BY DECEMBER 1.



\*Single Service Members, Singles with Dependents,  
and Geo-Bachelors eligible for this trip.  
For more information, contact B.O.S.S. at (907) 353-7648

[www.wainwright.armymwr.com](http://www.wainwright.armymwr.com)  
@WainwrightMWR #WainwrightBOSS



## BIRCH HILL SKI & SNOWBOARD AREA

FORT WAINWRIGHT, ALASKA



# Safety: Be ready, don’t let frost bite your equipment

Courtesy

During the winter, driving becomes more hazardous, and extreme weather can take its toll on both vehicles and drivers.

Taking appropriate steps such as conducting by-the-book preventive maintenance checks and services, and applying risk management before hitting the road could save drivers from breakdowns and potentially dangerous situations.

Climate changes have an effect on vehicles and equipment. Reliable transportation is vital to keeping Soldiers safe and accomplishing missions. Soldiers and leaders must realize highways and roads can quickly become slick and treacherous during winter.

As road conditions deteriorate, drivers shouldn’t overreact with quick starts, turns or stops. When starting, drivers should accelerate slowly while keeping the front wheels pointed straight ahead. They should also keep their speed down and increase following distances behind other vehicles. A four-second gap or more is a good interval on a slippery road.

Applying brakes with steady pressure may prevent locked wheels and skids. If the vehicle begins to skid, drivers should lightly turn into the skid and ease the foot off the gas pedal until they regain control.

Another important factor to consider before entering the winter season is vehicle preparation. Vehicle operators need to keep assigned equipment in proper running condition throughout the colder months. Vehicles should be winterized around September or early October - before cold weather sets in.

During the winter, not only should vehicles be kept fully mission capable, they also need to be winterized in an effort to avoid inconvenient or dangerous situations while traveling in inclement weather. The last thing a driver needs is a vehicle that breaks down in harsh winter weather.

As nearly any driver can attest, the cold months can be quite hard on Army vehicles. Not only does an engine require special attention to get it purring in freezing temperatures, the exterior and other components can take a beating as well.

Although Army vehicles are designed to operate well in all temperatures, take the following measures before the winter weather arrives:

- Perform preventive maintenance checks and services. Conduct the before, during and after checks as prescribed by the vehicle’s technical manual. Ensure scheduled maintenance is performed in accordance with the vehicle service intervals.
- Check engine coolant. Make sure the recommended coolant has the proper mix of antifreeze and water. A coolant system is not only designed to keep the engine from overheating or freezing, it’s also responsible for protecting it against corrosion.
- Check the oil. Refer to the equipment manual for the vehicle-specific oil level and viscosity. When the outside temperature changes, it will influence

the internal engine temperature, so make sure to use the proper oil for the conditions.

- Check battery. Have the battery checked by maintenance personnel. Ensure the battery connections are free of corrosion. A vehicle battery can die without notice. During extreme winter temperatures, a battery’s life may be reduced by 30 percent.
- Check the lights, defroster and heater. Ensure all components are fully operational.
- Check tire tread depth. Ensure the depth is within the measurement prescribed by the manual and the tires are serviceable to avoid hydroplaning or loss of control.
- Check tire pressure. Make sure to inflate tires with the proper PSI listed in the manual. Tire pressure is especially important during the winter, as a properly inflated tire will help guarantee better traction in wet, snowy conditions.



Soldiers at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, training at Operation Cold Steel II exercise prepare for a training scenario on a snowy day, April 3, 2018. Operation Cold Steel II is a validation exercise to ensure Army Reserve units and Soldiers are trained and ready to deploy on short notice as part of Ready Force X, according to the Army Reserve. (Photo by Scott Sturkol)

- Check brakes. Ensure the brake lines and hoses are serviceable and brake fluid is at the proper level.
- Check windshield wiper blades and fluid. Check the condition of windshield wiper blades and replace worn blades before driving. Also, check and fill the wiper fluid reservoir. Limited visibility while driving during the winter months can be frustrating. Precipitation and salt buildup on the windshield can wreak havoc while driving in winter weather.
- Check basic issue items. Ensure the basic issue item inventory is complete and all items are in the vehicle during operations. Components of BII are designed to help personnel during emergencies.
- Inspect tire chains. Ensure they are serviceable and crews are trained on how to properly install them.
- Carry an emergency kit. Additional items such as gloves, ice scraper, windshield washer fluid, jumper cables, first-aid kit, snow shovel and flashlight will assist during emergency situations.
- Don’t be overconfident. Whether

the vehicle is a four- or two-wheel drive, both will slip on ice, so drivers must be extra careful.

- Check road conditions. Know the difference between conditions. Vehicle operations may start out as green or amber but could change to red or black during your mission.

Along with these tips, it’s imperative that drivers heed the warning and caution statements listed in the vehicle’s manual. Prior planning, winterizing vehicles and applying safe habits are all key components of safe driving habits.

Through proper understanding of winter driving and vehicle operations, the Army can reduce accidents. With the information and resources available in the Driver’s Training Toolbox, every Soldier has the tools to drive and complete the mission safely. Visit the Driver’s Training Toolbox at <https://safety.army.mil/driverstrainingtoolbox> for more information.

## Yappy Holidays! Exchange Photo Contest lets military pets be merry, bright

**Katarayna Flatt**  
Army and Air Force Exchange Service Public Affairs

Here comes Santa Claws ... or even Santa Paws!  
The Army and Air Force Exchange Service is inviting military shoppers to share photos of their pets decked in their holiday finest for a chance to win \$3,000 in gift cards in a worldwide contest.

From Dec. 1 to 24, authorized Exchange shoppers 18 years or older can submit a photograph of their pet dressed in holiday attire or with Santa at [ShopMyExchange.com](http://ShopMyExchange.com)/sweepstakes. One grand-prize winner will receive a \$1,000 Exchange gift card, while four runners-up will each receive a \$500 Exchange gift card. This year’s

contest sponsor is Purina.  
Honorably discharged veterans who have verified their eligibility to shop at [ShopMyExchange.com](http://ShopMyExchange.com) can also enter the worldwide contest.  
“Pets are the cherished pals and partners of so many warfighters and their families,” said Fort Wainwright Exchange general manager, Gloria Syliva. “We would be thrilled if a Fort Wainwright Soldier won big in this worldwide contest.”  
No purchase is necessary to enter the holiday pet photo contest. Entries must be sent as a JPG, PNG or PDF and include the pet’s name, the entrant’s legal first name and last name, mailing address, email address, phone number and Exchange location. Limit one entry per person. Winners will be notified by Jan. 31.

### Interested in Volunteering?

**Complete a Volunteer Application at any of the following locations:**  
Army Community Service • Chapel • Youth Sports • Child & Youth Services

**Once your application has been filled out and submitted, you will be scheduled for fingerprinting and a local background check will be submitted for review. A valid form of government ID is needed during the fingerprinting appointment.**

**Fingerprint and local background checks take 3-5 days from appointment to receive results. If no derogatory findings, results will be forwarded to program manager to begin the volunteer orientation.**


**Volunteer background checks are valid for 3 years as long as an annual self-disclosure form is completed by applicant.**



## NURSE ADVICE LINE

**Call the Nurse Advice Line:**

- **Toll-free phone number:**  
1-800-TRICARE  
(1-800-874-2273), option 1
- **Hours:** 24 hours a day,  
7 days a week
- **Areas served:** Continental  
United States, Alaska,  
and Hawaii





# Moving expenses now taxable for Civilian employees

21st Theater Sustainment Command Legal Office

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, passed December 2017, eliminated a number of deductions that taxpayers have come to rely on. One of these was the moving expense deduction. The act eliminated the deduction for the tax year 2018 through the tax year 2025. However, the deduction will come back in 2026 unless Congress intervenes to eliminate it permanently.

This change does not apply to military personnel, but does apply to Department of Defense Civilian employees and contractors.

In the past, if your move was motivated by a job change, you could deduct the expenses related to the move. Your new workplace must be at least 50 miles farther from your old home than your old job location was from your old home. This deduction was available even if you did not itemize your deductions, but it will be gone for 2018.

In addition, moving benefits paid in 2018 to DOD Civilian employees and contractors will now be taxable to the employee, regardless of whether the employer reimbursed the employee for their out-of-pocket moving expenses or paid the moving company directly. DOD Civilian employees and contractors must now include the cost of their permanent change of station moving benefits in their income. This can be a substantial increase in taxable income. The average cost of a military move is estimated to be over \$13,000.

The following reimbursements, whether by direct or indirect payment, are now taxable to the relocating U.S. Government Civilian employee:

1. Lodging expenses for en-route travel to the new duty station
2. Mileage for using personally owned vehicle to travel to the new duty station
3. Transportation using common carriers (such as airlines) to the new duty station
4. Shipment of household goods, to include unaccompanied air baggage and professional books, paper and equipment
5. Temporary storage of HHG in transit, as long as the expenses are incurred within 30 calendar days after the day the items are removed from the old residence and before they are delivered to the new residence
6. Shipment of mobile home in lieu of HHG
7. Extended storage of HHG for Outside Continental United States assignments
8. Shipment of POV, CONUS and OCONUS.

Temporary Quarters Subsistence Expense is an optional taxable allowance intended to reimburse employees for some costs of lodging, food and other necessities when occupying temporary quarters at the old or new duty station for a CONUS to CONUS move. Temporary Quarters Subsistence Allowance is a non-taxable supplement for employees traveling to or from an overseas duty location on official travel orders and authorized Living Quarters Allowance. The taxability of TQSE is not changed by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017.

Relocation expense and TQSE reimbursements are subject to 22 percent IRS income tax withholding by Defense Financing and Accounting Services on behalf of the employee. The reimbursements are also subject to Federal Insurance Contributions Act withholdings of 6.2 percent for the employee and 6.2 percent for the employer for Social Security and 1.45 percent for the employee and 1.45 percent for the employer for Medicare. Income tax withholdings and Federal Insurance Contributions Act contributions made by DFAS on behalf of employees will be withheld from

the employee's travel settlement payment amount (if possible) or billed to the employee as a debt.

For DOD Civilian employees, some of this tax burden may be offset by the Relocation Income Tax Allowance. This entitlement reimburses DOD Civilian employees for most federal, state and local income taxes incurred as a result of receiving taxable relocation benefits. Unfortunately, RITA itself is also considered to be taxable income, and there is no additional benefit or offset to reimburse Civilians for that tax burden.

RITA is not automatic. The employee must apply for RITA in the year after receiving taxable travel pay. Employees who receive a Withholding Tax Allowance entitlement (see below) with the travel settlement must submit a RITA claim by April 30 of the following calendar year. The method for calculating the RITA payment is based on the date the employee reports to the new duty location. For employees who reported to a new duty location on or after Jan. 1, 2015, the RITA calculation is based on taxable income from the Federal Income Tax Return (Form 1040) (after exemptions and deductions) and IRS published tax tables. RITA voucher submission requires DD Form 1351-2, DD Form 1614, Direct Deposit Form, all W-2s, RITA Status Certification Form and the completed federal income tax return. The amount of income reported on the Certification Form has to match the income tax documentation submitted with the RITA claim.

RITA payments are taxable pay in the year received. There is no relief for the tax consequence of a RITA payment. In addition, RITA is not available to new and retiring employees, although legislation to extend RITA to these employees is now pending. RITA information and forms can be found at the DFAS website.

The Withholding Tax Allowance is an advance against RITA claimed by the employee on settlement voucher DD Form 1351-2 following the completion of travel. WTA is an election, and can be declined by the employee. WTA payments are taxable in the year received, and are deducted from the RITA settlement computed in the following year. WTA is calculated using the prescribed withholding tax rate of 22 percent. If WTA is elected by the employee, the employee must file a RITA claim within 120 days (April 30) of the following calendar year. Failure to file a timely RITA claim will result in a DFAS debt and collection of the entire amount of WTA paid on the employee's behalf.


A WTA Selection Form is filed with the employee's travel settlement voucher, DD Form 1351-2. Employees should review marginal tax rates to determine whether a 22 percent WTA payment will exceed the final RITA payment (resulting in a debt to DFAS). Employees with a marginal tax rate below 22 percent may be subject to repayment of WTA amounts. Marginal tax rates can be found online at: <https://www.bankrate.com/finance/taxes/tax-brackets.aspx>. WTA information and forms can be found at the DFAS website: <https://www.dfas.mil/civilianemployees/civrelowithholdingtaxallowance.html>

Employees can reduce the costs of a move by reducing the weight of or avoiding the HHG, unaccompanied baggage or POV shipment. A do-it-yourself move may provide options to control or mitigate move expenses. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 concerns the taxability of reimbursements for previously deductible moving expenses, and does not appear to affect direct or indirect reimbursements for student travel, renewal agreement travel or early return of dependent travel.

ALASKA NATIONAL GUARD FAMILY PROGRAMS PRESENTS


Fairbanks Community Family Night


When:  
Friday, Dec 14, 2018  
5:30pm - 8:00pm




Where: Fairbanks Armory  
202 Wien Avenue, Fairbanks  
POC: Laralee Walston  
[laraleewalston1@gmail.com](mailto:laraleewalston1@gmail.com)  
907.590.7201  
RSVP by email

Please email (before Dec 10) child's name, age, and gender to: [laraleewalston1@gmail.com](mailto:laraleewalston1@gmail.com)  
We'll have a small gift for them under the tree.





Come enjoy Christmas at Hogwarts.  
Free event- open to the community



Fairbanks Health Services District  
Approved for free posting  
Dates: 12/14/2018 - 12/14/2018  
Distribution of this material is not subject to the  
content school district guidelines



iREPORTiKEEP US SAFE

Fort Wainwright Police: 353-7535

FREE

MOVIE NIGHT

"BUMBLE BEE"



POP CORN  
BOSS

DECEMBER 21  
MOVIE SHOWTIME TBD.  
CONTACT B.O.S.S. FOR MORE INFORMATION.  
REGISTER THROUGH THE B.O.S.S. OFFICE OR YOUR B.O.S.S. REPRESENTATIVE.  
A \$10 REFUNDABLE DEPOSIT WILL BE TAKEN AT TIME OF REGISTRATION. REGISTRATION ENDS 1 WEEK PRIOR TO EVENT.  
REGISTER TODAY:  
1045 Gaffney Rd., Suite 31, (907) 353-7648  
[www.wainwright.armymwr.com](http://www.wainwright.armymwr.com)  
@WainwrightMWR #WainwrightMWR #WainwrightBOSS

CID LOOKOUT

CRIME TIPS

Anonymously report crime, suspicious activity or threats to the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command with the CID Crime Tips app  
[WWW.CID.ARMY.MIL](http://WWW.CID.ARMY.MIL)