

## Wreaths Across America: How one tribute started a movement

**Katie Lange**  
Defense.gov

National Wreaths Across America Day has become such a big tradition that it's hard to believe it began from just one personal tribute.

### HOW IT HAPPENED

The Worcester family of Harrington, Maine, owns their own tree farm. In 1992, they had a surplus of wreaths during the holiday season, so the family patriarch, Morrill – who had long felt

indebted to our fallen veterans – got help from a Maine politician to have those spare wreaths placed beside graves in Arlington National Cemetery in areas that received fewer visitors each year.

Several volunteers stepped up to help, including veterans from American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars posts and a truck company owner who transported the wreaths to Arlington, Virginia, where a small ceremony was held at the cemetery's Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. This remained a small yearly tradition for nearly 15 years until a photo taken at the 2005 ceremony went

viral. Almost immediately, thousands of people wanted to know how to help or how they could begin a similar tradition in their states.

By the next year – with the help of some civic organizations and volunteers, including in the trucking industry – there were 150 simultaneous ceremonies held across the country. By 2008, the movement to remember, honor and teach had grown so much that Congress had declared the third Saturday in September National Wreaths Across America Day.

By 2014, the now-nonprofit Wreaths Across America had reached its goal of placing a wreath at all 226,525 graves in the cemetery.

### WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA TODAY

The event continues to grow. This year, the organization shipped a staggering 1.75 MILLION wreaths to 1,640 locations that held ceremonies across the U.S. A few dozen locations overseas also participated. According to the organization, this was the first year it was granted permission to place wreaths at Normandy to honor those who died during World War II's D-Day invasion.

Veterans and Gold Star families are many of the roughly 2 million volunteers who prepared the wreaths, shipped them across the country and put them on graves.



Wreaths are placed on memorial markers in Arlington National Cemetery's Section E during the Wreaths Across America event in Arlington, Virginia, Dec. 16, 2017. (Photo by Elizabeth Fraser, U.S. Army)

## 2018 Overseas Cost of Living Allowance Overseas Living Patterns Survey

This survey is used to track the shopping patterns of uniformed service members stationed overseas. The data collected will assist in the determination of Overseas Cost of Living Allowance paid.

This survey runs through Dec. 31. Participation in this survey is voluntary. However, maximum response is encouraged so that data will be representative of your location of assignment.

This data is instrumental in updating OCOLA indices. Incomplete surveys cannot be used as this might result in inaccurate analysis of shopping behavior. To ensure that this survey results in valid OCOLA, please answer questions for all applicable categories.

To prepare for the survey, determine where you purchase groceries, clothing, household furnishings, entertainment, communications and transportation. Estimated time to complete the survey is 40 to 50 minutes.

To complete the survey between the Dec. 1 to Dec. 30 open period, visit <https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/colaSurvey.cfm?ID=alaska> or scan the QR code.



## Artificial intelligence experts address getting capabilities to warfighters

**Terri Moon Cronk**  
Defense.gov

Two Defense Department artificial-intelligence experts testified on Capitol Hill yesterday on DOD's efforts to transform delivery of capabilities enabled by artificial intelligence to the nation's warfighters.

Lisa Porter, deputy undersecretary of defense for research and engineering, and Dana Deasy, DOD's chief information officer, testified at a hearing of the House Armed Services Committee's subcommittee on emerging threats and capabilities.

The John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2019 directed the defense secretary to conduct a comprehensive national review of advances in AI relevant to the needs of the military services. Section 238 directed the secretary to craft a strategic plan to develop, mature, adopt and transition AI technologies into operational use.

"Today we are experiencing an explosion of interest in a subfield of AI called machine learning, where algorithms have become remarkably good at classification and prediction tasks when they can be trained on very large amounts of data," Porter told the House panel. Today's AI capabilities offer potential solutions to many defense-specific problems, such as object identification in drone video or satellite imagery and detection of cyber threats on networks, she said.

However, she added, several issues must be addressed to effectively apply AI to national security mission problems.

"First, objective evaluation of performance requires the use of quantitative metrics that are relevant to the specific use case," she said. "In other words, AI systems that have been optimized for commercial applications may not yield effective outcomes in military applications."

See AI on page 3



Lattice Modular Heli-Drone is displayed during a test run of the Lattice Platform Security System at the Red Beach training area, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, California, Nov. 8, 2018. The Lattice Modular Heli-Drone is being tested to demonstrate its capabilities and potential for increasing security. (Photo by Marine Cpl. Dylan Chagnon)

## Accidents don't take holidays

**Jerry L. Zingg**  
Marine Corps Base Quantico

It's that time of year where many of us are caught up in holiday routines and tend to take seasonal hazards for granted. Doing so, however, can mean the difference between a happy holiday and tragedy. Statistics show that mishaps occur more frequently during the holiday period. A little common sense, combined with some advanced planning, can help accident-proof

a fresh one. Make sure it is deep green, has a strong pine scent and its needles don't fall off when you touch it. When you get it home, cut about two inches off the bottom at an angle. Fill the tree stand with water and keep it full every day. Never place a tree near a fireplace, radiators or heaters, and keep it away from doorways and the room's main traffic areas. Be aware that some artificial trees can also burn, so check them for flammability and follow all included safety precautions.



Statistics show that mishaps occur more frequently during the holiday period. (Graphic by U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center)

your holidays, making them safer for you, your family members and visitors.

### Fire

If the national statistics hold true this year, there will be at least 400 fires involving Christmas trees. As a result, 10 people will die, 80 will be hurt and more than \$15 million in property will be lost. So, before you pick out a Christmas tree this year, it's important to know a few tips to ensure you make a safe selection.

If you want a natural tree, pick

When it comes to decorating with electric lights, take special precautions such as never hanging them on metal trees. Avoid overloading outlets with electric decorations, and replace cords that show signs of wear. Just because the lights worked fine last year doesn't necessarily mean that they're good now. This is especially true for outdoor lights and cords that are subjected to rain, ice and strong winds.

See ACCIDENTS on page 7

## WEEKEND WEATHER

**Friday**



Mostly sunny, with a high and low of -15 degrees.

**Saturday**



Partly cloudy, with a high of -5 degrees and a low of 11 below.

**Sunday**



Sunny, with a high of -8 degrees and a low of 16 below.



U.S. Army Garrison Alaska will be closing Trainor and Badger Gates on Christmas day, Dec. 25 and New Years Day, Jan. 1. Office closures and hours may change due to the upcoming holidays. It is advised to contact the office prior to going to ensure it will be open.



# DOD scaling up effort to develop hypersonics

**David Vergun**  
Defense Media Activity

The Defense Department is looking to step up its development of hypersonic weapons – missiles that travel more than five times faster than the speed of sound – DOD leaders said at the National Defense Industrial Association-sponsored “Hypersonics Senior Executive Series.”

“In the last year, China has tested more hypersonics weapons than we have in a decade,” said Michael Griffin, undersecretary of defense for research and engineering. “We’ve got to fix that.”

Russia also is involved in hypersonics, Griffin said. “Hypersonics is a game changer,” he added.

If Russia were to invade Estonia, or China were to attack Taiwan tomorrow, Griffin said, it would be difficult to defend against their strike assets. “It’s not a space we want to stay in,” he told the audience.

DOD is looking at air-breathing boost-glide hypersonics systems, the latter being used by China, Griffin said. The United States has the boost-glide system competency to get these developed today, he noted.

On the flip side, he said, the U.S. needs to develop systems to counter adversary hypersonics. The place to take them out is in their relatively long cruise phase, in which



A Defense Advanced Research Products Agency illustration depicts DARPA's Falcon Hypersonic Test Vehicle as it emerges from its rocket nose cone and prepares to re-enter the Earth's atmosphere. DARPA has conducted several test flights of the vehicle in recent years. (Photo illustration by DARPA)

they don’t change course suddenly. It’s not a particularly hard intercept, he said, but it requires knowing they’re coming. Current radars can’t see far enough. “They need to see thousands of kilometers out, not hundreds,” Griffin said.

The Western Pacific is a particularly difficult area, he noted, because “it’s not littered with a lot of places to park radars, and if you found some, they’d likely become targets.”

Space-based sensors, along with tracking and fire-control solutions, are needed in the effort to counter adversaries’ hypersonics, Griffin said, pointing out that hypersonics targets are 10 to

20 times dimmer than what the U.S. normally tracks by satellites in geostationary orbit. “We can’t separate hypersonics defense from the space layer,” he said.

## GETTING TO PRODUCTION, FIELDING

Congress has given DOD the funding and authorities to move ahead with hypersonics development, Deputy Defense Secretary Patrick M. Shanahan said, and the department wants competing approaches from industry.

Tough decisions lay ahead, he said in the development and engineering phase, operationalizing the technology and then in acquisition. Those decisions include how much to invest and how many hypersonics to produce. “Should it be tens of thousands or thousands?” he said.

Industry will respond, Shanahan said, but government needs to clear a path and help fuel the investments up front, as with the effort field intercontinental ballistic missiles decades ago.

DOD is not risk-averse, the deputy secretary said. “Break it,” he added. “Learn from the mistake. Move on. Break it again and move on, but don’t make the same mistake.” It’s much more expensive to do the analytics to prevent it from breaking than it is to break it, he said.

# First enlisted female graduates Army’s Sapper Leader Course

**Michele Vowell**  
Fort Campbell Courier

Sgt. Hailey Falk is the Army’s first enlisted female Soldier to graduate from the rigorous Sapper Leader Course since the program’s inception in 1985.

Falk, 23, received her Sapper tab Dec. 7 after completing the “demanding 28-day leadership development course for combat engineers that reinforces critical skills and teaches advanced techniques needed across the Army.” She is assigned to Bravo Company, 39th Brigade Engineer Battalion “Bull Strike,” 2nd Brigade Combat Team “Strike,” 101st Airborne Division, at Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

“Sgt. Falk’s success as the first enlisted [female] graduate represents a step forward in the process of recognizing success in the combat arms field by performance, not by gender,” said Capt. John D. Baer, B Co. commander, 39th BEB. “The combat engineer MOS [12 Bravo] opened to females in 2015, and Sgt. Falk’s graduation from the Sapper Leader Course reinforces the wisdom in that decision by proving that both genders can achieve success in the enlisted combat arms career field.

According to the Army, the mission of the course is to “train and certify the next generation of Sapper leaders, to serve as members of Combined Arms team, through training in small unit tactics and combat engineer battle drills in a physically demanding, stressful and austere environment.”

## SAPPER LEADER COURSE

Falk was promoted to sergeant last summer. With a high Army Physical Fitness Test score and a dedication to physical fitness, Falk’s leadership saw her potential to succeed at the Sapper Leader Course.

“Sgt. Falk is an outstanding noncommissioned officer and embodies the be, know, do leadership model and esprit de corps. She accepts the most difficult task without hesitation. As an NCO, she leads from the front and drives troops forward to accomplish all missions,” said Staff Sgt. William Frye, Falk’s squad leader.

Each platoon in B Co. rallied to help Falk and her fellow Soldiers succeed at Fort Leonard Wood.

Among the challenges Falk faced at the leader course was the Sapper physical fitness test. The test is graded by Army standards to the individual’s age and gender. The minimum passing criteria is 230 total score, with no less than 70 points in each event.

The Sapper Leader Course not only challenged Falk physically, but mentally. According to the Army, the Sapper Leader Course is designed “to build esprit de corps by training Soldiers in troop leading procedures, demolitions (conventional and expedient) and mountaineering operations. The course culminates in an intense field training exercise that reinforces the use of the battle drills and specialized engineer techniques learned throughout the course.”

At the end of the course, Falk’s instructor

delivered the news that she had passed.

“At that moment, that’s when it hit me that I did all this. Now, it didn’t seem hard anymore,” she said. “During, it seemed like the hardest thing I’ve ever done. Then, after, I [thought] I could do this again, honestly.”

Baer said Falk’s success should be a challenge to all combat engineers of any gender.

“There are physiological differences between genders, and female combat engineers often have to work harder to meet the strenuous physical demands of combat relative to their male peers. Additionally, the unit’s operational demands prevent an extended preparation time for the school,” Baer said. “Sgt. Falk has humbly taken on these challenges, succeeding purely through hard work and mental toughness.”

As the first female enlisted Soldier to graduate from the Sapper Leader Course, Falk said she encourages other Soldiers to try it and plans to encourage those under her command to enroll in the school.

“I would say ‘go for it.’ Don’t be scared of failure. As long as you work hard for it and you don’t give up, you can push through it,” she said. “It’s not just you, there are other people who are working to help you get it. All of your battle buddies are earning your tab for you. You can’t just earn it yourself. Everyone has to work together.”

See SAPPER on page 6



Sgt. Hailey Falk, combat engineer with 39th Brigade Engineer Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, receives her Sapper tab from Capt. Timothy Smith, Sapper Training company commander, U.S. Army Engineering School, during the Sapper Leader Course graduation ceremony Dec. 7 at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. Falk is the Army's first female enlisted Soldier to graduate the school and earn the Sapper tab. (Photo by Stephen Standifird, Fort Leonard Wood Public Affairs)

# ALASKA POST

The Interior Military News Connection

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# The Chaplain’s Corner

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

Searching for My Star  
Christmas 2005 was my second deployment but my first Christmas separated from loved ones. I was assigned to a remote, northwestern area of Iraq. Although I was busy helping my Soldiers experience some Christmas cheer, I wasn’t feeling the Christmas spirit. Furthermore, in 2005 it was more of a challenge to communicate from a combat zone with family members back home than it is now. I wasn’t able to video chat with my wife, Karen, and our children, but I did have an email from home. In Karen’s holiday note to me she provided some wonderful pastoral care to the pastor.  
I had previously emailed her a litany of complaints. Army leaders often say that Soldiers aren’t happy unless they’re complaining. Sometimes that’s true. But sometimes, Soldiers are genuinely unhappy and

complaining is simply what human beings do. I was sad, whiny and feeling sorry for myself. Almost everyone who has ever been on a deployment will feel this way at some time, even the Chaplain. But instead of wagging her finger at me, Karen wrote, “Have you found your Christmas star?”  
The Iraqi desert sky at night is beautiful. My wife’s encouragement prodded me to quit staring at my boots and look up. I looked, and looked, and looked again... but no Christmas star. Even though I was looking, I wasn’t really seeing. It took me a while to understand that Karen wanted me to get outside of my own head, so that I could focus my attention on others. We like to say in our home that a rising tide raises all boats. When I consciously made the choice to focus on relieving the needs of others, to raise them up, much to my surprise, I felt better too.  
Over the years, three important lessons have emerged from my understanding of this experience.

First, it’s not about me. Helping others is an end unto itself. My good feelings are a happy byproduct of the effort. Second, the traditional season of giving during Christmas shouldn’t be limited to a few weeks at the end of the year. People have needs all year long that deserve our attention. Finally, we must guard against the temptation to be selective about who is the other that receives our help. Let’s remember that Joseph, Mary and Jesus became the other as an immigrant family fleeing Herod’s death threats when they crossed the border into the relative safety of Egypt (Matthew 2:13-23).  
I found my Christmas star when I not only looked up to heaven above me but also began seeing the faces of others around me. Are you feeling blue this Christmas? Look up, and then look around. In so doing, I pray you find your Christmas star too.



**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

Fort Wainwright Family and MWR - Holiday house Facilities will have varying operating hours the upcoming holiday season. See below for the facilities that will be affected.	Christmas Eve - December 24, 2018	Christmas Day - December 25, 2018	New Years Eve - December 31, 2018	New Years Day - January 1, 2019
Army Community Service	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Auto Skills	Closed	Closed	11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.	Closed
Birch Hill Ski & Snowboard - Ski Hill	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Birch Hill Ski & Snowboard - Tubing Hill	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
BOSS	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Chena Bend Clubhouse and Golf Course	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
CDC I	Closed	Closed	7 a.m. to 4 p.m.	Closed
CDC II	Closed	Closed	7 a.m. to 4 p.m.	Closed
CYS Hourly Care	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Family Child Care (FCC) Office	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Last Frontier Community Activity Center	Closed	Closed	10 a.m. to 4 p.m.	Closed
Melaven Fitness Center	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Melaven Aquatics Center	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Murphy Hall	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Nugget Lanes Bowling Center	Closed	Closed	8 p.m. to 1 a.m.	Closed
Outdoor Recreation Center	Closed	Closed	10 a.m. to 4 p.m.	Closed
Parent and Outreach Services	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Physical Fitness Center (PFC)	Closed	Closed	8 a.m. to 4 p.m.	Closed
PFC Ice Rink	Closed	Closed	10 a.m. to 2 p.m.	Closed
Post Library	Closed	Closed	10 a.m. to 2 p.m.	Closed
School Age Center (SAC)	Closed	Closed	7 a.m. to 4 p.m.	Closed
School Support Services	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Warrior Zone - Bar Side	4 p.m. to 10 p.m.	Closed	4 to 10 p.m.	Closed
Warrior Zone - Game Side	4 p.m. to 10 p.m.	Closed	4 to 10 p.m.	Closed
Warrior Zone - Kitchen	4 p.m. to 10 p.m.	Closed	4 to 10 p.m.	Closed
Youth Center	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Youth Sports & Fitness	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed

**AI**  
**Continued from page 1**  
**CHALLENGES, VULNERABILITIES**  
DOD is working to address such challenges and vulnerabilities in multiple ways, she said, most of which will leverage the complementary roles of the new Joint Artificial Intelligence Center and the department’s research and engineering enterprise.  
Second, Porter said, existing AI systems need enormous amounts of training data, and the preparation of that data in a format that the algorithms can use, in turn, requires a large amount of human labor.  
“AI systems that have been trained on one type of data typically do not perform well on data that are different from the training data,” she noted.  
The JAIC’s focus on scaling and integration will drive innovation in data curation techniques, while the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency will pursue algorithms that can be “robustly trained with much less data,” Porter said.  
“The high-performance computing modernization program is designing new systems that will provide ample processing power for AI applications on the battlefield,” she added.  
Countering adversarial AI is one of the key focus areas of DARPA’s “AI Next” campaign, she emphasized. “Ultimately, as we look to the future, we anticipate a focus on developing AI systems that have the ability to reason as humans do, at least to some extent,” Porter said. “Such a capability would greatly amplify the utility of AI, enabling AI systems to become true partners with their human counterparts in problem solving. It is important that we continue to pursue cutting-edge research in AI, especially given the significant investments our adversaries are making.”

**THREE THEMES OF JAIC EFFORT**  
Deasy detailed the JAIC and highlighted three themes of its effort.  
“The first is delivering AI-enabled capabilities at speed,” he said. “JAIC is collaborating now with teams across DOD to systematically identify, prioritize and select mission needs, and then rapidly

execute a sequence across functional use cases that demonstrate value and spur momentum.”  
The second theme is all about scale, he said.  
“JAIC’s early projects serve a dual purpose: to deliver new capabilities to end users, as well as to incrementally develop the common foundation that is essential for scaling AI’s impact across DOD,” he explained. “This means [the use of] shared data, reusable tools, libraries, standards and AI cloud and edge services that helped jumpstart new projects.”  
The third theme is building the initial JAIC team.  
“It’s all about talent,” he said. “And this will be representative across all the services and all components. Today, we have assembled a force of nearly 30 individuals. Going forward, it is essential that JAIC attract and cultivate a select group of mission-driven, world-class AI talent, including pulling these experts into service from industry.”  
Two weeks ago, before more than 600 representatives of 380 companies, academic

institutions and government organizations at DOD’s AI Industry Day, Deasy said, he announced that the department had achieved a significant milestone: “JAIC is now up and running and open for business.”



# Soldier for Life - Transition Assistance Program launches Hire a Soldier magazine

Jenny Hale

The Soldier for Life - Transition Assistance Program launched its first edition of a new Army magazine called Hire a Soldier on Nov. 29. The online publication features advice, tips and stories for transitioning Soldiers who are planning for life after Army service.

The first edition features Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel Dailey and his advice for transitioning Soldiers. "At the end of the day, transition is a process, and it's something every Soldier will go through. We all must transition at some point and from every rank in the Army. There are a lot of resources out there, and starting early is key to properly preparing," Dailey said.

The magazine answers some of the most common questions from Soldiers, including personal branding, soft skills and translation, reenlistment, job search references, hiring event tips and more. It can be read by visiting <https://go.usa.gov/xP6SW>.

"Transitioning can be daunting. Sharing information, lessons learned and advice to make the process smoother is our goal," Walter Herd, director of SFL-TAP said. "Successfully transitioned Soldiers are advocates for Army

service, and the more prepared we can help Soldiers become during their transition, the more successful they tend to be, which can assist in helping future Army recruiting efforts."

Hire a Soldier originally began as a hashtag campaign launched in summer 2017 by SFL-TAP. The hashtag went viral on Twitter, resulting in Soldiers finding interview opportunities with potential employers. Since that time, transitioning Soldiers, veterans and hiring managers have used #HireaSoldier to tag job openings and their advice or tips for military transition.

"The Hire a Soldier campaign, and now magazine, has become much more than a hashtag," said Jenny Hale, magazine editor and marketing contractor for SFL-TAP. "It was created to bring awareness to the civilian sector and support transitioning Soldiers in their career goals after Army service. It's been amazing to see awareness grow with civilian companies, transitioning Soldiers, program alumni and SFL-TAP."

The SFL-TAP Hire a Soldier Magazine can be found at <https://go.usa.gov/xP6SW>. Learn more by searching #HireaSoldier on social media and by visiting Facebook (@ArmySFLTAP), Twitter (@SFLTAP) and LinkedIn ([www.linkedin.com/groups/7063275](http://www.linkedin.com/groups/7063275)).



The Soldier for Life – Transition Assistance Program launched its first edition of a new Army magazine called Hire a Soldier on Nov. 29. The online publication features advice, tips and stories for transitioning Soldiers who are planning for life after active duty. The first edition features Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel Dailey and his advice for transitioning Soldiers. (Graphic by Jenny Hale) (Photo by Jenny Hale)

# Fort Greely Chapel pipe organ to play again



Art Thompson, of Nenana, works to diagnose issues with the Fort Greely Chapel pipe organ, which has been silent for years. According to Thompson, "there are approximately less than a dozen pipe organs in working condition in the entire state of Alaska." He believes that it will take 120 hours of labor to get the organ in working condition. The Thompson's have committed to not only making the improvements but covering the cost of the parts. (Photo by Angela Glass, USAG Fort Greely Public Affairs)

**Angela Glass**  
USAG Alaska Fort Greely Public Affairs Office

The Fort Greely Chapel is experiencing a true Christmas miracle; their vintage pipe organ is getting some much needed repairs after years of silence.

Missionaries Art and Terri Thompson have offered to completely restore the Chapel's pipe organ, which contains 914 wind pipes each one resembling one distinct musical note, back to its original sound.

The Thompson's traveled to Fort Greely to inspect the organ and spent the entire day with Fort Greely Garrison Chaplain, Lt. Col. Paul Fritts, diagnosing what it would take to make its original sound. "Other than a bit of water damage and a few decades of neglect, it is in not too bad of shape and

still has quite a nice sound," said Art.

The incredible story does not end there, Chaplain Fritts and Thompson noticed that the pipe organ had a name etched into the side, "R. Byard Fritts." Assuming the name was the builder or installer of the organ, Art was able to research and successfully locate the son of the late R. Byard Fritts, Paul Fritts. Through email communication, Fritts was able to recall helping his father install the organ in the summer of 1966.

"I remember being there, stuck on base several weeks, and thinking of how ambitious my father was to place an organ above the stairs," recalled Fritts.

The Thompsons moved to Nenana in 2007 to become radio missionaries, and being avid lovers of music, they have rescued many organs, but intoned that it is a true miracle that a

location as remote as Fort Greely has such a rare antique. According to Art, "there are approximately less than a dozen pipe organs in working condition in the entire state of Alaska." He believes that it will take 120 hours of labor to get the organ in working condition.

The Thompson's have committed to not only making the improvements, but covering the cost of the parts.

"We consider ourselves philanthropists and have been looking for ways to support the work of the chaplaincy, and we believe that the organ will greatly enhance the worship experience," said Art. "We are very happy to be supporting the U.S. military."

All in all, it looks like Chaplain Fritts' wish for a refurbished pipe organ has become a holiday miracle.

# SADD

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## 1/24 IN holiday season range training



Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, train on the range firing the M2 .50 caliber machine gun and Mk 19 grenade launcher Dec. 13 at Fort Wainwright. Staff Sgt. Timothy Shamblin (left) and Spc. Christopher Cook (right) hone their skill on the .50 caliber machine gun. "We are qualifying our teams on the M2 and the Mark 19, so we can get them qualified for dismounted operations," said 1st Lt. Benjamin Grove of Bravo Company, 1/24 IN, and officer in charge of the range. "In case their electronic systems go down in the Stryker, they can still effectively engage the enemy." (Photo by Staff Sgt. Christina J. Turnipseed, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division Public Affairs)





# Fort Wainwright Family & MWR

## Weekly Events

### December 21 – 28

22

**Skate with Santa**  
December 22  
1:30 to 4 p.m.

Ho! Ho! Ho! It's time for some ice skating with Santa and his elves! Bring your friends and family out to the PFC Ice Rink for an afternoon of indoor skating, free hot cocoa, and cookies.

PFC Ice Rink, building 3709  
Call 353-7223

26

**Kids Ski & Snowboard Camp**  
December 26 through 28  
Noon to 3 p.m. each day

Next stop: the Winter Olympics! Gear your kids up for a winter of fun by enrolling them in the Kids Ski & Snowboard Camp at Birch Hill Ski & Snowboard Area. Beginners and experts alike are encouraged to participate.

Outdoor Recreation Center, building 4050  
Call 361-6349, registration required

26

**Winter Break Pin-Sanity**  
December 26 through 28  
11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Winter Break is for fun! Students up to age 18 can enjoy 2 games of bowling, shoe rental, and a small drink for just \$5! With specials on pizza too, there's no excuse not to be at Nugget Lanes this week!

Nugget Lanes Bowling Center, building 3702  
Call 353-2654, reservations recommended

27

**Youth Winter Adventure Camp**  
December 27 through 29  
10 a.m. to 1 p.m. each day

Get out there and play in the snow this Winter Break! Try snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, fat tire biking, and outdoor archery tag with the fun folks of CYS Youth Sports & Fitness. Register with Parent Central Services.

Parent Central Services, building 1049, Suite 2  
Call 353-7713, registration required

28

**Family 1/2 Day Snowmachine Trip**  
December 28  
9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Take the family along for a 1/2 day snowmachine ride Even though we're staying close, the adventure will go far!

Outdoor Recreation Center, building 4050  
Call 361-6349, registration required

*Please be aware of schedule adjustments due to the upcoming holidays. See [www.wainwright.armymwr.com](http://www.wainwright.armymwr.com) for updated information.*



## Outdoor Recreation Winter 2018 Trips

### December

Adventure	Date	Length	Price	Location
Snowmachine Safety Course	December 1	9 a.m. – Noon	\$15	Outdoor Recreation
Introduction to Belay Class	December 6	5:30 – 7:30 p.m.	Free	Outdoor Recreation
Cross-Country Skiing for Beginners	December 8	10 a.m. – 2 p.m.	\$35	Glass Park
Introduction to Belay Class	December 13	5:30 – 7:30 p.m.	Free	Outdoor Recreation
Fat Tire Biking to Hoodoo Brewery	December 14	5:30 – 8 p.m.	\$15	Hoodoo Brewery
Stiles Creek Snowmachine Trip*	December 15	8 a.m. – 5 p.m.	\$110	Chena River SRA
Pounding Paws Kennel Tour	December 16	9:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.	\$35	Pounding Paws
Introduction to Belay Class	December 20	5:30 – 7:30 p.m.	Free	Outdoor Recreation
Snowmachine Safety Course	December 22	9 a.m. – Noon	\$15	Outdoor Recreation
Snowmachine Safety Course	December 22	1 – 4 p.m.	\$15	Outdoor Recreation
Kids Ski and Snowboard Camp	December 26-28	Noon – 3 p.m.	DoD: \$175 Non-DoD: \$225	Birch Hill Ski & Snowboard Area
Introduction to Belay Class	December 27	5:30 – 7:30 p.m.	Free	Outdoor Recreation
Family 1/2 Day Snowmachine Trip*	December 28	9 a.m. – 1 p.m.	\$50	Outdoor Recreation
Birch Lake Ice Fishing**	December 29	8 a.m. – 5 p.m.	\$50	Birch Lake

\*Snowmachine Safety Course required  
\*\*Alaska Fishing License required



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Birch Hill Ski & Snowboard Area

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# The 24th Annual Air Force vs Army Hockey Game

## January 19, 2019

Game Starts at 1:35 p.m.  
At The Carlson Center

Event is FREE and open to the public  
Doors open at 1 p.m.



# Exoskeleton event brings teams together to advance exoskeleton technology

**U.S. Army Research, Development and Engineering Command Soldier Center Public Affairs**

Several key organizations recently came together to advance exoskeleton technology for the Soldier during an intensive three-day Operations and Maneuver and Technology Interchange meeting.

The User Technical Touch Point - Exoskeleton event was a three-day living classroom, hands-on experience. It offered an interactive forum for operational and technology immersion on both infantry maneuvers and technology demonstrations. Groups of several Military Operational Specialties, or MOS's, were represented, laying down their kits and equipment and walking observers through a day in the field, on the job.

Operational vignettes and subject interviews offered context on the physiological and cognitive demanding infantry tasks, before, during and after operations. Vendors, requirement developers and engineers discussed “what they are and what they aren’t” in the current exoskeleton marketplace, debunking the Hollywood Iron Man effect and focusing on real-time products: the Dephy Exo Boot and Lockheed Martin’s ONYX.

Soldiers were encouraged by the endurance improvement, mobility and lethality benefits of donning the systems. Those who wore the systems commented on how it felt to wear an exoskeleton and the relationship between a new user and the system. Their candid feedback regarding form, fit and function will help developers prioritize and make modifications to the systems in preparation for a fall 2019 VIP demonstration.

Observers commented on the flexibility of use as the systems were adjusted with minimal effort from one user to the next over three days. User comments, such as those made by field artillery Soldiers, emphasized the potential value of having an exoskeleton or exoskeleton-like system to provide enhanced endurance during operations, which means a positive impact on lethality and combat

effectiveness. “The importance of this User Touch Point event was two-fold: it gave those involved in developing this technology the ability to better understand the physical aspects of the tasks and duties of the Soldiers and gain an understanding of the Soldier’s perspective in how this capability can be of value,” said James Mingo, a senior



Several key organizations recently came together to advance exoskeleton technology for the Soldier during an intensive three-day Operations and Maneuver and Technology Interchange meeting. Soldier feedback played a key role in the event. Soldiers from the 10th Mountain Division show some of the equipment that they use during everyday tasks and learn how an exoskeleton can help. (Photo by David Kamm, U.S. Army Research, Development and Engineering Command Soldier Center)

military analyst with U.S. Army’s Training and Doctrine Command. “They understand it.” “It provided hand-on experience to the Movement and Maneuver Soldiers of some of the top seven combat MOS,” said Raul Esteras-Palos, Robotics Requirements Division, Capabilities Development and Integration Directorate, or CDID, Maneuver Center of Excellence, or MCoE. “This event is an effective way to gain valuable feedback necessary for the advancement of the Army’s exoskeleton program.” Soldiers believe that endurance translates into improved lethality while preserving the body from the effects of what

is already strenuous work. Comments included discussion on injuries (lower back, neck, shoulder and leg) directly related to both training and combat conditions, impacts that are well documented in the medical community.

The U.S. Army Research, Development and Engineering Command Soldier Center is preparing Soldier Touch Point events with 82nd and 101st Airborne, followed by meetings with requirement developers, stake holders and senior leadership. The data from these User Touch Point events will be made available to the Lethality Cross-Functional Teams.

“Maj. Gen. Piatt, commanding general, 10th Mountain Division’s support has allowed us to tap into the expert knowledge of some of the most experienced Army professionals of our nation,” said David Audet, branch chief, Mission Equipment and Systems Branch at the RDECOM Soldier Center. “This was a unique opportunity for developers and engineers. We are indebted to the troops for their selfless service and owe them the opportunity to listen to their concerns and take action.”

Teams from the U.S. Army Research, Development and Engineering Command’s Soldier Center, Program Executive Office Soldier, the Maneuver, Aviation, and Soldier Division at ARCIC/TRADOC, requirement developers from the Maneuver Center of Excellence and Maneuver Support Center of Excellence, Army Research Labs, exoskeleton developers from Dephy Inc. (Massachusetts) and Lockheed

Martin Missiles and Fire Control (Florida), and other support contractors attended the event.

The U.S. Army Soldier Center is part of the U.S. Army Research, Development and Engineering Command, which has the mission to provide innovative research, development and engineering to produce capabilities that provide decisive overmatch to the Army against the complexities of the current and future operating environments in support of the joint warfighter and the nation. RDECOM is a major subordinate command of the U.S. Army Materiel Command.

## Army Civilian Service Lapel Pins

**Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs), DASA (Civilian Personnel)**

What is it? Army Civilian Service Recognition creates opportunities for displaying and acknowledging the dedicated service of the Civilian workforce and its significance in furthering the Army mission.

What are the current and past efforts of the Army?

Army leadership strives to promote a culture of employee appreciation and recognition. Leaders, at the lowest supervisory levels practicable, can now bestow uniquely designed lapel pins to Civilians to recognize creditable Army service.

Army will continue to recognize significant milestones in an employee’s Army career to create a positive

impression on Civilian employees. The recognition confirms that the Army is an employer that fosters an environment of employee engagement.

Why is this important to the Army?

People are the most important assets to the Department of the Army, and are critical to accomplishing the mission. Recognition of the Civilian workforce is highly effective and a proven strategy for improving employee engagement, boosting morale and enhancing productivity. Employee engagement is a key driver for recruitment and retention and directly supports readiness. Civilians will wear the pins with pride, knowing they are part of a community of people who have chosen to use their talent, skills and expertise in the service to the Army and the nation.

## SAPPER

Continued from page 2

### HER ARMY FUTURE

A week after graduation, Falk said she is catching up on her sleep and preparing for her next adventure – attending Pathfinder School in January.

“[I’m] hoping to get as many [Army] schools as I can,” she said. “I’m ready to do anything at this point. I just got through that, I guess I can do anything.”

Her squad leader and company commander agree Falk has a bright future.

“With Sgt. Falk graduating Sapper Leader Course, she now has no limits. She has faced and overcome the many challenges of one of the Army’s hardest schools,” Frye said. “Her unit now has one more lethal fighter among the ranks who is now an expert in mobility, counter mobility and survivability, ready to provide her task

force with the tools to accomplish the most difficult missions.”

“Graduation from the course represents months of diligent preparation and an exceptional quantity of mental stamina,” Baer said. “Sgt. Falk has exhibited these qualities throughout her career in the 101st, and I suspect this is just the beginning of her success in the military.”

Falk remains humble about her accomplishment and credits her leadership and unit for her success.

“I still don’t think it’s a big deal, [but] I couldn’t have done it without everyone,” she said. “I’m just glad I have the support system back here. My first sergeant, my sergeant major came [to graduation]. A lot of people from the unit came to support. I owe it to all of them because without all the training – even though I didn’t want to do it at the time – the training that we do, that I dread, it ended up paying off.”



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# Increased body pain in cold weather - fact or fiction?

**Alofagia Oney**  
Regional Health Command Europe

When the weather turns cold and gloves and scarves become main accessories in every day apparel, some people seize the opportunity to hit the slopes or test out new compression jogging pants on a crisp morning run. Others, however, prefer to hibernate under a blanket or lock in a permanent position next to a cozy fire, avoiding the outdoors at all cost because their bodies simply do not function well for them in the cold.

“I have had countless patients [come to me] with exacerbations of symptoms related to weather,” said Dr. Jeffrey Tiede, chief of the Department of Pain Management at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center. “Nearly everyone believes that temperature, barometric pressure and humidity correlates with a number of painful conditions like arthritis and fibromyalgia.”

But what does the science say? Human biometeorology studies the relationship between atmospheric conditions and people, and despite how a person’s body may make them feel in the cold weather, the data regarding symptom exacerbation in relation to weather is mixed.

In 2013, a Dutch study was published called Influence of Weather on Daily Symptoms of Pain and Fatigue in Female Patients with Fibromyalgia: A Multilevel Regression Analysis. As part of the study, the researchers surveyed symptoms of a group of patients with fibromyalgia and

correlated them with independent data of temperature, barometric pressure, sunshine duration and other weather related factors. The authors concluded that no association exists between fibromyalgia symptoms and weather.

“Whether or not symptoms are heightened during cold weather, there is no conclusive evidence that temperature or barometric pressure change actually worsens the disease,” said Tiede. “Simply put, although your knee pain may hurt worse in winter, nothing is different in the joint.”

Tiede acknowledges that there is no conclusive explanation for why people may feel like their bodies hurt more in cold weather, but he does believe that seasonal affective disorder may be a factor.

“Seasonal affective disorder is a recurrent episode of depression, or hypermania, associated with seasonal onset and remission,” said Tiede. “And even though a person may not meet the clinical criteria of seasonal affective disorder, it is quite likely that we all have a bit of the winter blues.”

According to Tiede, the science correlating mood and pain is quite robust and depressed patients, or those with persistent mild depression, report higher pain scores and functional decline, or the decrease in a person’s ability to engage in activities of daily living.

“For those of us living in Germany, we know it’s not the brightest place during these long winter months,” said Tiede. “However, proper diet, exercise, sleep patterns and being aware of how the cold weather impacts your mood can help mitigate some of the psychological factors that can add to your body pain.”



ACCIDENTS

Continued from page 1

Never run cords under the carpet, and turn off all decorative lights before leaving the house or going to bed. A Christmas Eve fire in Dallas a few years ago took the lives of a 31-year-old mother and her four young daughters. The cause of the fire was traced to an overloaded extension cord, which ignited their decorated tree.

If decorating with candles, ensure you keep them at least 12 inches from anything that can burn such as drapes, towels or clothing. Candles should always be in a sturdy holder and placed where they cannot be knocked down. Never leave a lit candle unattended and always supervise children near any flame. Battery-operated flameless candles, which can look, smell and feel like the real thing, are an attractive alternative for some decorators.

It’s also a good idea to consider the age of your decorations. If you’ve had them for many years, it might be time to invest in a newer, safer set. Before regulations in the late 1970s, items such as tinsel, artificial icicles, glitter and painted figures often contained dangerous levels of lead, chromium, antimony, cobalt and even arsenic. Angel hair (artificial snow) contained glass filings, and some brands were even comprised of asbestos fibers.

Fireplaces and space heaters are also popular during the holidays. Keep these tips in mind if you plan to use yours:

- Before starting a fire, remove all combustible decorations from the area and be sure the flue is open.
- Keep a screen in front of the fire to ensure sparks are contained.
- Have your fireplace and chimney inspected and cleaned on a regular basis.
- Never allow a fire to smolder overnight.

- Use space heaters with great caution, placing them at least three feet from combustible materials such as blankets.
  - Ventilate fuel heaters as recommended by the manufacturer. Install a carbon monoxide detector near the fuel heater.
  - Keep a fire extinguisher handy.
- If you allow smoking in your home, provide ashtrays for the smokers and ensure cigarette and cigar butts are fully extinguished before emptying into the trash. Many house fires occur after holiday parties, when a lit cigarette falls into a sofa or bed and smolders undetected while everyone is asleep. A multi-purpose fire extinguisher is a good investment and should be kept handy in case of fire. Make sure you and your family members learn how to use extinguishers properly.

A smoke detector is another potentially life-saving device every home should have. The National Fire Protection Administration recommends installing smoke alarms on every level of your home, including the basement. Make sure that there is an alarm outside every separate sleeping area. Test alarms at least monthly by pushing the test button. Also remember to have an escape route in the event of a fire. It’s important everyone in the house knows the route and practices it.

Slips, trips and falls

Between icy sidewalks and the increased use of ladders to hang decorations, slip, trip and fall injuries are another concern during the holidays. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, falls are the leading cause of fatal injuries in the home, claiming 6,600 lives each year. Placing nightlights throughout your home will help guide the way in the middle of the night. Toys and other items that could be a trip hazard should also be put away so they don’t obstruct the walking path. If using extension cords, never place them in walkways. Outdoors, when there’s

ice or snow, shovel paths, put down sand or salt and make sure the area is lit. In addition, be sure to use extra care when hanging outdoor lights and decorations from the top of a ladder.

Toy safety

Even the smallest revelers aren’t immune to holiday hazards. The Consumer Product Safety Commission reports there were an estimated 240,000 toy-related injuries treated in U.S. hospital emergency departments in 2016. Parents should always supervise their child’s play and expect the unexpected. Inspect toys regularly to ensure all safety devices remain in place. If Santa brings a bicycle, skateboard, roller blades or scooter this Christmas, make sure he also provides properly fitted safety helmets.

Alcohol

Despite widespread publicity about the dangers of drinking and driving, traffic accidents and deaths increase dramatically during the holidays. If you are hosting a holiday party that will be serving alcohol, try to discourage guests from drinking too much. Discuss a sober designated driver plan ahead of time and be ready to call a cab or arrange a ride for those too drunk to drive. Also provide a variety of non-alcoholic drinks such as juices, tea, sodas and bottled water.

Never force alcoholic drinks on anyone. Starchy foods such as cheeses and crackers will help absorb the alcohol, so be sure to include them in your holiday spread. Close the bar an hour before the party ends and provide a place to sleep for those individuals that may have had too much to drink. Remember, time is the only true sobering method.

Be smart this holiday season. Follow the safety advice provided with the equipment you use, merchandise you buy and activities you plan. Keep your home, family, guests and yourself safe and healthy this and every holiday season!

Task Force commander: ISIS forces degraded from caliphate to caves

David Vergun  
Defense.gov

At one time, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria controlled a self-proclaimed caliphate that stretched from Syria to Iraq, but now that force in Iraq has been degraded so much that the remnants are hiding in caves, deep wadis and tunnels in the desert and hills of western Iraq’s austere terrain, the commander of Task Force Rifles told Pentagon reporters Dec. 12.

Army Col. Jonathan C. Byrom, who also serves as deputy director of Joint Operations Command Iraq, spoke via video teleconference from Baghdad.

Kurdish Peshmerga and Iraqi security forces are conducting continuous clearance operations against these small pockets, the colonel said.

Checkpoints along the Iraq-Syria border have now been reopened, and Iraq’s border guard and security forces are operating along that border to prevent ISIS from crossing, he said. That includes “intense cross-border fires” by Iraqi and coalition forces in



An Iraqi soldier observes a live-fire exercise from atop an M1 Abrams tank at the Besmaya Range Complex in Iraq, Nov. 12, 2018. (Photo by Spc. Eric Cerami)

consultation and coordination with Syrian Democratic Forces, he added. Iraqi security forces are large-scale clearance operations, and are hunting

ISIS leadership and trying to take out the terrorist group’s media, propaganda and financial capabilities, Byrom said.

ASSISTANCE FROM U.S., COALITION FORCES

U.S. and coalition forces are advising, assisting and enabling Iraqi forces, he said, support that includes providing them with joint fires, intelligence, aerial surveillance and training, along with some equipment. “It’s a good partnership” that’s preventing a resurgence of ISIS and continues to degrade their numbers and effectiveness, the colonel said.

Byrom emphasized that the Iraqis are conducting their own missions and making the decisions. “They are effectively targeting ISIS and regularly conducting operations that disrupt ISIS and preventing their resurgence,” he said.

Asked how many ISIS fighters remain in Iraq, Byrom said he doesn’t focus on the number. “What we’re really focused on is the capability and whether they can translate this capability into destabilizing or resurging,” he explained.

The good news story, he said, is that ISIS attacks “are not having that much of an impact on the population.”

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