

ALASKA POST

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Fort Wainwright, Alaska

December 6, 2019

Firewood cutting on Fort Wainwright

**U.S. Army Garrison
Alaska Department of
Public Works
Environmental Division**

Multiple firewood cutting areas are open on U.S. Army Garrison Alaska - managed lands. Firewood cutting areas are designated by the garrison forester and can be harvested by permit only. Firewood harvest supports and enables mission readiness through landscape maintenance

and development, and in meeting the Army's natural resource stewardship goals.

This year's cutting areas are open in the Tanana Flats, Yukon, Donnelly Training Areas and special plots on the main cantonment of Fort Wainwright located in the east and west approaches to Ladd Airfield.

Tall vegetation (trees and shrubs) clearing is required in the approach

areas to support airfield safety, and the nearby cutting areas provide great opportunities for easy firewood gathering. Maps for all the designated firewood cutting areas can be found on the U.S. Army Garrison Alaska iSportsman website at <https://usartrak.isportsman.net/woodcutting.aspx>.

Firewood cutting permits cost \$30 (\$10 per cord, 3 cord minimum purchase — 10 cord maximum) and

can be paid for with a credit card online. To obtain a firewood cutting permit you must be a registered iSportsman user.

If you have not already done so, you can obtain an account on the website and obtain a Recreation Access Permit, the free permit required for everyone utilizing military lands for recreation.

Using their iSportsman account, users can select 'Register' from the web-

site menu and purchase their permit and view firewood cutting area maps.

Additional cords can also be purchased through the website, using the 'Acquire Permit(s)' and 'Additional Wood Cutting Cord Permit' options.

If you have technical issue with your account, please contact the Department of Public Works Environmental Office helpline at 907-361-9684 and leave a message.



Soldiers prepare an M2A2 Bradley infantry fighting vehicle for support to Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve in eastern Syria, Oct. 31, 2019. (Photo by Spc. DeAndre Pierce)

US Forces reset in Syria, ISIS struggles to re-form

Jim Garamone
Defense.gov

U.S. forces are reset and re-postured in Eastern Syria and have restarted operations with the Syrian Democratic Forces aimed at defeating ISIS, Lt. Gen. Robert White, the commander of Combined Joint Operation Inherent Resolve, said last week in Baghdad.

At an impromptu news conference outside his headquarters, the general said everything is going well.

U.S. forces withdrew from an area 10 kilometers deep on the Syrian-Turkish border. Turkey launched an incursion into the area in early October.

Already a complicated battlespace, the Turkish move made it even more chaotic, introducing Turkish-supported paramilitary groups, Russian forces and Syrian regime forces into the region, White said.

U.S. service members remain in Eastern Syria to ensure that ISIS doesn't re-emerge and get money from oil fields in that part of Syria.

White said the command will reduce the number of U.S. forces in the area to around 600. "We are in the process of removing some of the Soldiers and service members that were there, [and that will] probably take about another week, based on the austere environment that's there," he said. "Most of them will return either to [the continental United States] or down into Kuwait."

The U.S. and coalition effort is focused on the mission to defeat ISIS, said senior Operation Inherent Resolve officials. The coalition effort is aimed at helping Iraqi and Syrian forces take on the terror group. The physical caliphate that ISIS established has been destroyed, and the mission now is to prevent it from reconstituting itself.

"What we're seeing from [ISIS] at the moment is a relatively low-level of attacks being conducted against the Iraqi government security forces, etc., in certain ... more marginal parts of the coun-

try," the official said. "We're not seeing a huge groundswell of support for them amongst the population. Nor are we seeing them being able to gather the momentum that they particularly would like to."

Nor has the group been able to capitalize on the death of their leader Baghdadi, the confused situation in northeast Syria or the protests in Iraq, defense officials have said. Officials believe that the terror group wanted to take advantage of these opportunities, but can't.

Officials said there are roughly 11,000 ISIS fighters in Syria and Iraq, but they are ineffectual. They are finding it difficult to move people and materiel around. They have been forced into marginal areas and cut off from sources of funding and recruiting.

Every time these small cells of terrorists try and pull together a larger group to launch attacks, "they're either

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Senior leaders testify on progress to remedy military housing

Sean Kimmons
Army News Service

The Army's top leaders updated lawmakers Tuesday on progress being made to fix problems seen in privatized military housing.

In his opening statement, Secretary of the Army Ryan McCarthy restated the Army's "serious commitment" to offering quality housing to Soldiers, civil servants and their Families.

"It is our responsibility to provide housing, not simply to code but also to quality," he testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee on Capitol Hill.

The current housing crisis, he said, must be fixed using a house-to-house approach, in addition to correcting the governance model and underlying issues to ensure systemic change.

Withholding incentives

Earlier this year, Army senior leaders placed housing as the No. 1 priority for quality of life, following complaints of health concerns inside homes and mismanagement of housing contractors.

In the past 10 months, the Army identified governance flaws, initiated commander-driven town halls and created 24-hour helplines to hear feedback directly from families, McCarthy said.

"We have empowered the chain of command as part of the solution, created transparency of the work order process, and ultimately, sought to regain the trust of the men and women in our ranks and their

See HOUSING on page 4



Secretary of the Army Ryan D. McCarthy and Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. James C. McConville, along with other service secretaries and chiefs, speak to the Senate Committee on Armed Services during a hearing on privatized housing in Washington D.C., Dec. 3, 2019. (Photo by Sgt. Dana Clarke)

WEEKEND WEATHER

Friday



Partly sunny, with a high near 1; low near minus 1.

Saturday



Mostly cloudy, with a high near 14. Low near 8.

Sunday



Mostly cloudy, with a high near 21. Low around 12

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

EAT AND GO BOWLING WITH SANTA!

Dec. 14, 9 a.m.-noon

Nugget Lanes Bowling Center

12 & under: \$12; 13+ \$15 (reservations recommended)

Breakfast includes pancakes, eggs, sausage, bacon and juice

www.wainwright.armymwr.com

Nutrition Corner: Preventing food poisoning

Brandy Ostanik
Medical Department Activity
— Alaska

Did you know that nearly 48 million Americans get food poisoning each year? Here are some useful tips to avoid spreading food poisoning in your own home.

Always use separate plates, cutting boards, utensils and food preparation surfaces for raw meat and for cooked and ready to eat foods.

Even when you are grilling out, do not put the cooked steaks, chicken or burgers on the same plate they were on before they were put on the grill. This can spread food-borne illnesses such as salmonella

and e-coli. If you need to use the same food preparation surface, wash and sanitize it between preparing raw meat and prepared foods.

Avoid thawing or marinating food on the countertop. Instead, put it on a plate or in a container on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator.

When meat thaws at room temperature, bacteria grow more rapidly. There is also no need to wash or rinse meat and poultry. This practice only sprays raw meat juices all over you and your kitchen and potentially spreads bacteria and viruses that cause food borne illness.

Cook your eggs and meat products thoroughly. The only way to confirm your food is cooked thoroughly is by using a food thermometer. Using color or smell as an indicator is a poor and unreliable way to determine if a food is cooked.

Consuming products, such as raw cookie dough, that contain raw eggs puts you at risk for food poisoning so do not consume them.

Before you start food preparation, always wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds. Be sure to remind your little ones to wash theirs too before helping you in the kitchen, setting the table or

eating.

Featured Recipe Peanut Butter No Bake Cookies

Yield 60 cookies

Ingredients:

1 ²/₃ cups sugar or equivalent sugar alternative (see package instructions for ratios)
½ cup milk
6 tablespoons unsalted butter
¼ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
3 cups old fashioned rolled oats
1 cup smooth peanut butter
1 tablespoon vanilla extract

¼ teaspoons salt

1) Line a baking sheet with wax paper or parchment.

2) Bring the sugar, milk, butter and cocoa to a boil in a medium saucepan over medium heat, stirring occasionally and then let boil for one minutes. Remove from heat. Add the oats, peanut butter, vanilla and salt. Stir to combine.

3) Drop teaspoonful amounts of the mixture onto the prepared baking sheet, and let sit at room temperature until cooked and hardened, about 30 minutes. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to three days.

Popular heartburn drug ranitidine (Zantac) recalled

Kirk Frady
Regional Health
Command Europe

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recently recommended a nationwide voluntary recall of Ranitidine (also known by its brand name, Zantac) for several prescription-strength and over-the-counter ranitidine products.

Prescription strength ranitidine in 150 mg and 300 mg tablets, and 15 mg/mL Ranitidine Syrup (Ranitidine Oral Solution, USP) are



The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recently recommended a nationwide voluntary recall of Ranitidine (also known by its brand name, Zantac) for several prescription-strength and over-the-counter ranitidine products. (Courtesy Photo)

involved in the recommended recall. These specific products can

only be obtained by prescription. Several manufacturers

have also voluntarily recalled their over-the-counter ranitidine products.

Ranitidine is approved for multiple indications, including treatment and prevention of ulcers of the stomach and intestines and treatment of gastroesophageal reflux disease.

According to an FDA news release, the recall recommendation was made because of potential N-Nitrosodimethylamine amounts that exceed levels established by the FDA.

NDMA is classified as a probable human carcinogen (a substance that could cause cancer) based on results from laboratory tests. NDMA is a known environmental contaminant and found in water and foods, including meats, dairy products and vegetables.

Patients who wish to stop taking prescription ranitidine should talk to their health care professional about other treatment options. There are multiple

drugs approved for the same or similar uses as ranitidine.

Anyone who has purchased over-the-counter ranitidine should contact the retail store where it was purchased to find out if that particular product has been recalled, or visit the FDA website for more information: <https://go.usa.gov/xpRVS>.

As with all medications, excess ranitidine should be disposed of in accordance with local waste management regulations.

Soldier passes torch to son with final airborne jump

Staff Sgt. Christopher Schmielt

Command Sgt. Maj. Terry M. Sanchez, command sergeant major of the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne), with over 500 jumps, took part in his final airborne operations on Fryar Drop Zone, Fort Benning, Ga. Nov. 25, 2019.

The jump marked the last airborne operation for Command Sgt. Maj. Sanchez's career and also marked the beginning for Pvt. Diego A. Sanchez, an infantryman, assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division, who was attending the U.S. Army Airborne School, and eldest son of Command Sgt. Maj. Sanchez.

"The significance of this jump is that I am passing the torch off to

my son, who is going to go to the 82nd Airborne Division, which is where I started at — and his jump career is going to begin where mine ends after 31 years," said Command Sgt. Maj. Sanchez. "It's a proud moment, and it is bittersweet. It is bittersweet, but it is time for me to stop jumping and let these younger kids jump."

Command Sgt. Maj. Sanchez will be retiring from the Army at the beginning of the new year. Many accomplishments and accolades have marked his illustrious career, but being able to jump with his son is a feat worth ending on.

"Someone asked me, 'Why don't you keep going?'" said Command Sgt. Maj. Sanchez. "I like to go out on top, and I

think where I am at in my career right now, being a group sergeant major, to me that is on top. Leaving the Army and being able to jump with my son, is probably one of those things you can't replicate, you can't top it, so I feel good about getting out at this point of my career and seeing him just start his career, it's just a good feeling."

Pvt. Sanchez will be going to the 82nd Airborne Division in Fort Bragg, in N.C. after his completion of hometown recruiting, in northwest Fla.

The sentiment and importance of being able to jump with his father will not be lost on the young Soldier.

"So many people will never have this opportunity in their life, it's once in a

lifetime, so having him come and do this now is great," said Pvt. Sanchez. "I am very thankful that he was able to come and jump with me at the beginning, because, it is in final jump of his career, so it is a big milestone for him, and it was amazing to be able to be there with him and watch him jump one last time."

"I felt awesome, knowing that was his last one and the beginning of my jump career; and just watching him and sitting next to him on the plane and watching him jump out of the door was awesome," said Pvt. Sanchez.

Command Sgt. Maj. Sanchez was also in attendance for the graduation ceremony and pinned the Basic Parachutist Badge [wings] on Pvt. Sanchez, but still knew the nostalgia of being able to jump with his son, was unforgettable.

"To me being in the



Command Sgt. Maj. Terry M. Sanchez (right), command sergeant major of the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne), and Pvt. Diego Sanchez (left) pause for a photo during the graduation ceremony at the U.S. Army Airborne School, Nov. 27, 2019 on Fort Benning, Ga. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Christopher Schmielt)

actual aircraft, which probably a little higher risk than actually pinning his wings on, it was a little more nostalgic for me," said Command Sgt. Maj. Sanchez. "Just seeing him all kitted up, next to me on the bird with the door open and the wind blowing in our face, you know it was just one of those events that you go

through once in a lifetime. So, I think that would be a little more prioritized. Pinning the wings on is a little more of the symbolic or ceremonial thing, which is good, but having that experience up in the aircraft is not ever going to happen for a lot of people.

"Still, it was an experience that I won't forget."

MEDDAC Minute

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
Tricare On-Line: www.tricareonline.com
United Health Care: uhcmilitarywest.com, 877-988-9378

Need a flu shot?

If you missed the family flu vaccination clinic last week, no need to worry. Beneficiaries 6 months and older can receive a flu vaccination at Bassett Army Community Hospital during regular walk-in immunization hours. Monday through Wednesday and Friday 7:30 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. and Thursday 10 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. The clinic is located in primary care.

Tobacco cessation

Are you ready to quit tobacco? In the process but having trouble? Let our tobacco cessation educators assist you in the process. Classes are offered weekly at Preventive Medicine for beneficiaries. Call 361-4148 for upcoming classes and to register.

Patient Portal improved

Access is now easier, quicker and more user friendly! Schedule or cancel an appointment, talk with your provider, get test results and more. Check out the redesigned and upgraded Patient Portal at www.tricareonline.com.

Stressed? Depressed?

The Bassett ACH primary care clinic offers internal behavioral health consultations. Assistance with concerns such as stress, chronic pain, tobacco dependency, weight loss, depression, diabetes and more is being offered without the need of a referral. For more information, or to schedule an appointment, call 361-5670.

ALASKA POST

The Interior Military News Connection

EDITORIAL STAFF

Garrison Commander

Col. Christopher Ruga

Fort Wainwright PAO

Grant Sattler

Command Information/

New Media

Brady Gross

Community Relations/

Media Relations

Eve Baker

Staff Writer/Editor

Daniel Nelson

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The ALASKA POST — The Interior Military News Connection

The Chaplain’s Corner

Chaplain Paul Fritts
U.S. Army Garrison
Alaska, Fort Greely

For as long as I can remember, my parents kept a little brass dish on the mantle over the fireplace. I know nothing about the dish, where it came from, how old it is or how it came to be on the corner of the mantle. As far as I knew, the little brass dish had always been there. It never held anything exceptionally important, just odds and ends, or knick-knacks. You probably have a similar dish, bowl or mug somewhere in your home. When my parents died, I became the new keeper of the little brass dish. I’m looking at it and its contents right now. There’s a rectangle of hook Velcro minus its loop mate, a couple of old Army medals, three unknown

keys on a key ring, one unknown key without a ring, an empty key ring and a 4 gigabyte SD card with unknown files on it. Looking through the little brass dish makes me think of a short story I studied in high school: “Contents of the Dead Man’s Pocket” by Jack Finney, 1956. The gist of the story is that a work-obsessed man who lives in a high-rise apartment with his wife accidentally loses important work notes that blow out the open window and become stuck on a ledge. The man goes out to retrieve the notes but through a series of unfortunate circumstances is unable to get back through the window. While stuck on the ledge and in fear for his life, he attempts

to attract attention from passersby below by searching through his pockets for items that may help him. He drops coins on the sidewalk and lights bits of paper on fire with matches. But nothing from his pockets helps him. It is only when he sorrowfully realizes the missed opportunities of choosing work over spending time with his wife that he musters the courage to break the window and save himself. According to Paul, “...the wages of sin is death...” (Romans 6:23). Death is our “paycheck.” It is what we have earned as sinful human beings. Consequently, outside the saving grace of Jesus we are all like Jack Finney’s main character; stuck on the ledge of our sin, afraid, hopeless and essential-

ly dead. So, what’s in your spiritual pockets? Are you trying to get the attention of those around you with only spiritual knick-knacks, pocket lint and some loose change? Paul also writes of being dead in Christ: “Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ... In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus” (Romans 6:8, 11). Sheltered within the saving grace of Jesus we have the ability to reach deep into our spiritual pockets and pull out eternal truths essential to our lives like faith, hope and love. But here’s the twist. We must constantly be on guard against the belief that we can save ourselves. Jack Finney’s hero saved him-



self, but not as a result of anything he had in his pockets. Ultimately it was the love he had for his wife that motivated him to overcome the paralyzing fear keeping him precariously on the ledge. It is love that saves us as well — Jesus’ unconditional and undeserved love. What about the contents of our spiritual pockets? Reach deep and share the faith, hope and love you have with those around you in order to bless them. For God and Country! The Fort Greely Chapel community is a traditional, Protestant Army chapel service meeting on Sundays at 10 a.m. with a weekly Communion observance. Interested? Please call 907-873-4397 or “Like” our chapel Facebook page at www.facebook.com/FGAChapel.

Housing: Nearly half of force lives on post

Continued from page 1

Families,” he said. Backing these efforts, housing operations have now been assigned to the commander of Army Materiel Command, Gen. Gus Perna, who has delegated authority to slash incentive fees for housing contractors. “We developed new incentive fee metrics measuring work order response times, work order repair quality, and resident satisfaction that will allow us to withhold fees for substandard performance,” McCarthy said. Incentives have already been cut for poor performance at Fort Benning, Georgia, and Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, with possibly more to come across Army installations in the near future. A new incentive fee award structure is also expected to be released Jan. 1, he added. The average incentive fee now stands at 77 percent, with the lowest at 11 percent, said Army Chief of Staff Gen. James McConville, who also attended the hearing along with other military senior leaders. “We see that making a difference in the performance of the

“The Army is resolved in our commitment to providing safe, quality, and affordable housing to our Soldiers and their Families. But much more work remains.”

Secretary of the Army Ryan D. McCarthy

contracts,” McConville said. **Budget standstill** A tri-service Resident Bill of Rights is also awaiting to be published once Congress can pass the National Defense Authorization Act. In it, there are 12 rights intended to protect residents of privatized military housing. McCarthy highlighted dispute resolution as one of the rights that should greatly benefit residents. “When the Bill of Rights is published, I think the dispute resolution is one, in particular, that we need to put in place as quickly as possible,” he said. “It’s why in many cases that the only mechanism that families have to get results is legal action.

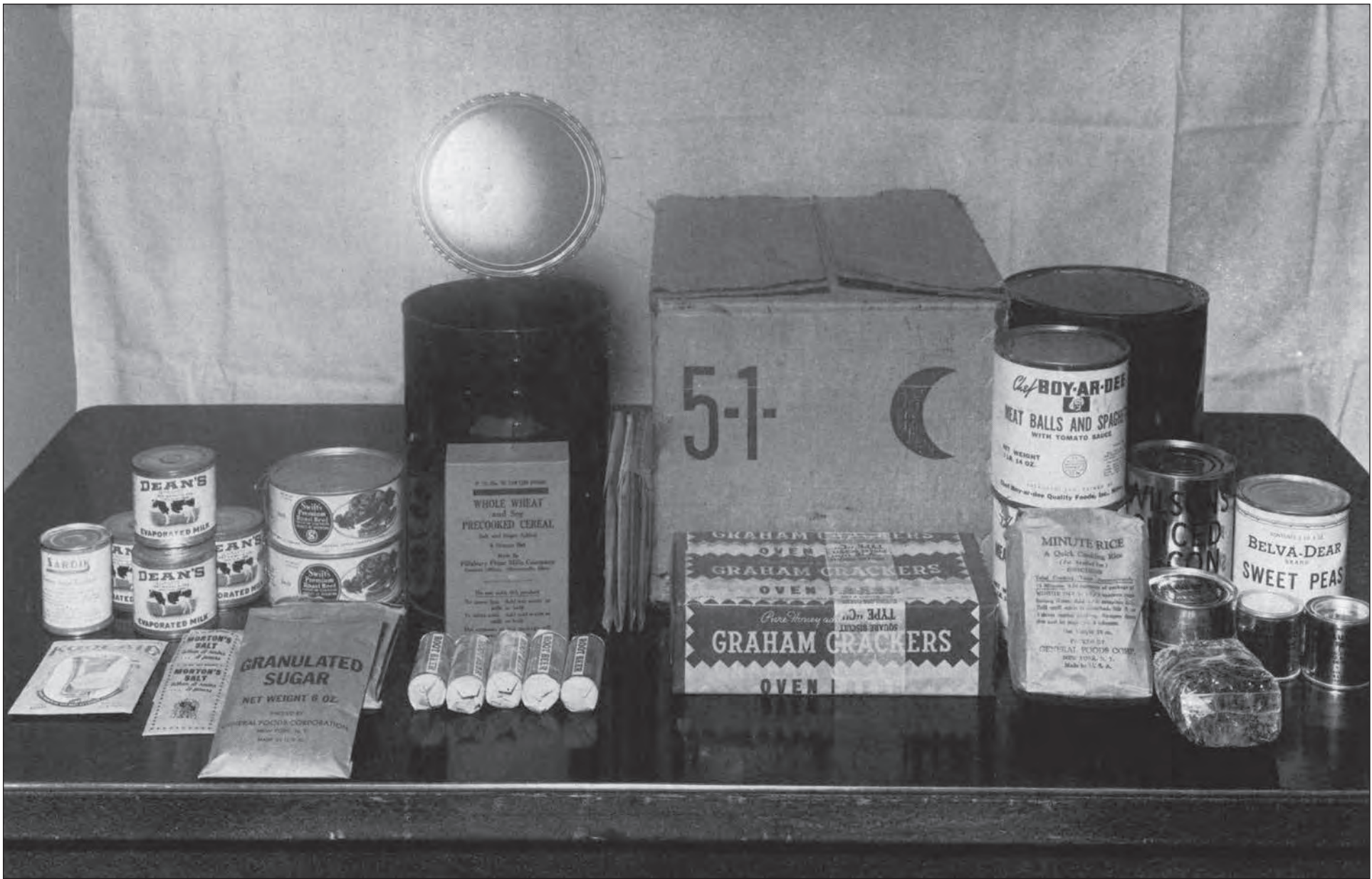
So the sooner we can have a dispute resolution in place, it will help improve matters dramatically.” About \$1.1 billion in budget requests to improve housing is also being held up while the government operates under a continuing resolution. “We cannot start the projects, we cannot initiate the projects. We don’t have the funding,” McCarthy told lawmakers, adding in some cases it affects current projects. **Need for new homes** Today, nearly half of the force lives on post. Since February, over 2,200 families had to be temporarily displaced as a result of issues inside their homes. About 180 families are still in temporary housing

while private-sector companies carry out work orders. “To displaced families, days can feel like weeks. And weeks can feel like months,” McCarthy said. “These aren’t simply numbers; these are lives.” The Army has over 86,000 privatized homes. Of those, one-third need to be rebuilt and another one-third need minor repairs. Some issues have involved lead paint, mold and other toxic hazards, especially in older homes found across installations. McConville said

some older homes are difficult to refurbish and cannot be torn down since they are considered historical. “We need to modernize them,” he told lawmakers. “Lead is a huge issue and we’re very, very concerned for our families.” Due to the historical standards of the homes, only about 10 of them can be remediated each week, he added. “It’s going to take us some time,” he said. “It’s going to take us two to three years with these homes to get them to the level that we want

them to be.” While “significant strides” have been made to improve housing over the past year, McCarthy noted the finish line is still not in sight. An overall analysis of the Army’s privatized housing requirements is currently underway, he said, and is slated to be completed by the spring. “The Army is resolved in our commitment to providing safe, quality, and affordable housing to our Soldiers and their Families,” he said. “But much more work remains.”

History Snapshot



Emergency rations testing, 1942

In December 1942 a test team deployed by Ladd Field's Cold Weather Test Detachment bivouacked at an existing crash site near Ladd Field to field test the performance of airplane emergency kits. Among other recommendations, the team suggested that downed pilots in winter should heat both their mess kits and their utensils, or else "the food would become cold and the fork would freeze to the teeth." Some of the items shown in this picture include: Sardik Fruit Cocktail, Dean's Evaporated Milk, Kool-Aid, Morton's Salt, granulated sugar packets, tins of Swift's Premium Roast Beef, Whole Wheat and Soy Precooked Cereal, Graham Crackers, Chef Boyardee Meat Balls and Spaghetti Sauce, Minute Rice, a tin of Wilson's Sliced Bacon, Belva-Dear sweet peas and rolls of root beer candy.

Cultural Resource Program file photo)

Syria: Troops work to ensure defeat of ISIS

Continued from page 1

rumbled by somebody, or they don't have enough material," the official said. The group is not entirely toothless and has launched some small-scale attacks. Officials have said the danger comes if the group is allowed to recover, so continuing pressure on ISIS is required to finally eliminate the group. In Iraq, OIR officials are focusing on the capabilities security

forces — defense and police — need to deal with the ISIS threat. "It is a very different threat from the one that they defeated in the liberation of the northern areas and the west ... a couple of years ago, and they have to approach it differently," the official said. "It's almost back to a more standard Iraqi security approach — controlling movement around population areas, policing, the occasional operations to attack

these pockets of [ISIS] wherever they are found. In broad terms, I think they're doing that pretty well." There is room for improvement and Iraqi and coalition advisors are working together to improve capabilities like intelligence collection and dissemination, counterinsurgency operations, surveillance systems, the decision-making process and overall command and control. This is a far cry

from what the coalition did in the past. Coalition forces were training and outfitting large numbers of soldiers to take on ISIS in Mosul and its surrounds. The coalition forces do not need to do that now, because the Iraqis can train their own soldiers now. "We can slightly step back providing the advice for that sort of thing and focus on areas that no matter their air force capability, for example," he said. The coalition role

has changed and will continue to change if conditions continue to improve, and there is a reduced threat from ISIS. "I think you can see and expect to see that trend continuing," he said. "Because what we don't want to be doing is having our Soldiers here and teaching Iraqi soldiers how to shoot their rifles for forever." If the situation continues to improve, "we would expect to see some sort of continued reduction in our presence over time,"

the official said. "We want to continue to work with the multilateral institutions who are working here. So NATO has a mission here. The [European Union] has a mission here. They're all involved in security sector reform. I think what you are likely to see is that clear distinction between our mission — OIR — focusing on that enduring defeat of [ISIS] and the other multilateral organizations doing longer term security sector reform."

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We are here to serve our Active Duty military members as well as dependents and veterans.

EAFB: Stop by and see us at the **Education Center** 2631 Wabash Avenue, 2nd Floor or call (907) 377-5106.

FTWW: Find us at the **Army Education Center**, Building 4391, Neely Road or call (907) 361-7486.



Join us!

Red Cross of Alaska Holiday Dinner

- ▶ **Who:** Single service members from Fort Wainwright and Eielson Air Force Base
- ▶ **What:** Join us for a holiday dinner with a movie, football and gifts/prizes, in fun and casual setting!
- ▶ **Where:** North Haven Community Center - 4268 Neely Rd, Fort Wainwright, AK 99703
- ▶ **When:** December 24, 2019 from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- ▶ **Why:** Come and relax, celebrate the season and play some games before the meal!
- ▶ **How:** Please RSVP no later than Dec. 18 by calling, texting, or emailing Stephanie at (907) 444-9529 or stephanie.pflugrad@redcross.org.



COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY of ALASKA FAIRBANKS



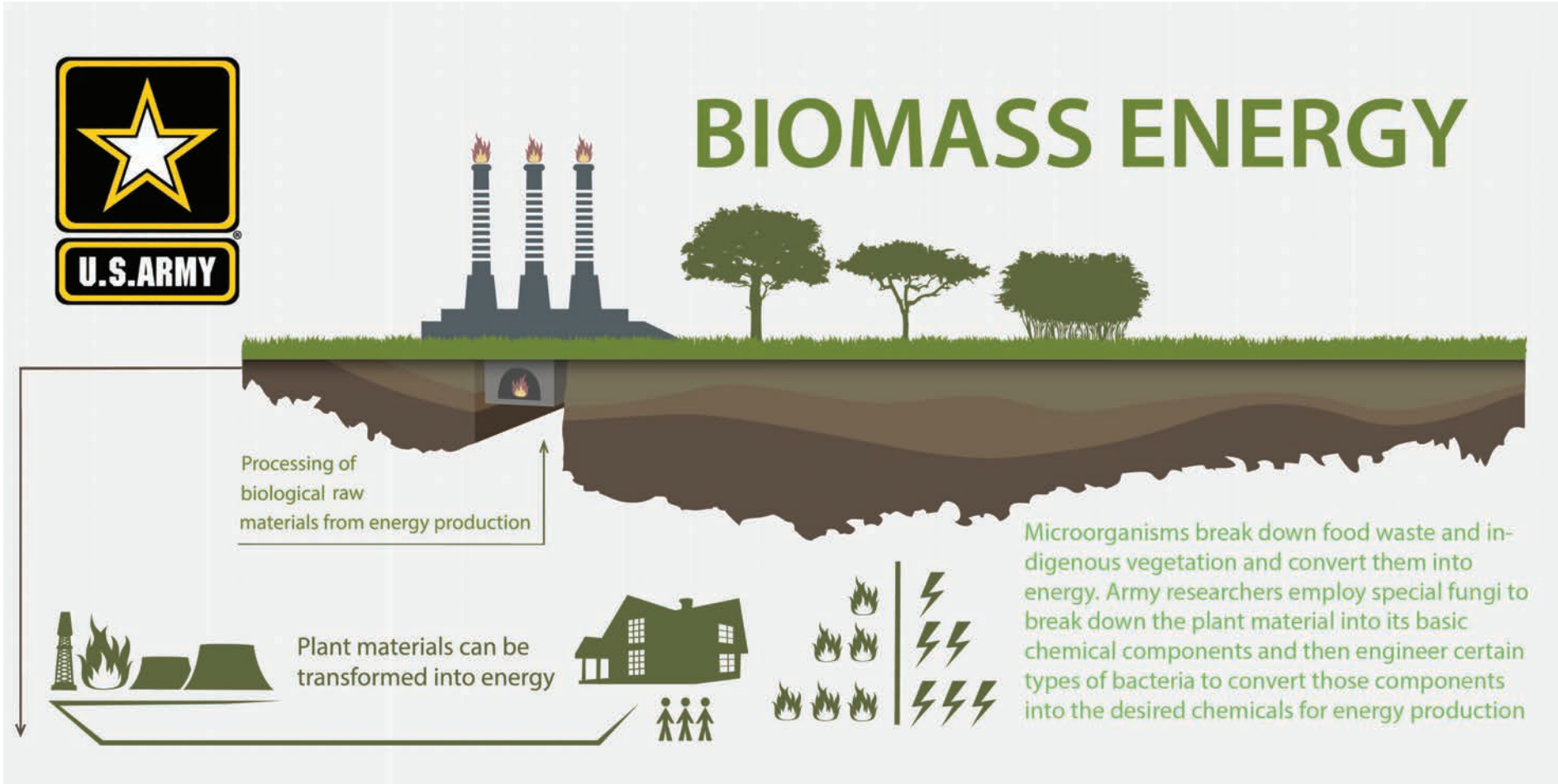
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This infographic shows how Army researchers break down food waste and indigenous vegetation and convert them into energy. (U.S. Army illustration)

Army scientist focuses on biomass-to-energy research

CCDC Army Research Laboratory Public Affairs

Generating a constant source of energy to power devices remains a top priority for Soldiers in the field. Army research on transforming native, ubiquitous vegetation into a reliable, small-scale fuel source could help reduce the volume of energy supplies Soldiers have to carry, such as batteries and electric generators.

“Every pound of supplies that has to be delivered is an additional burden and risk,” said journeyman fellow Marcus Benyamin. “If we can provide clean water and energy more efficiently than the way we currently do now, we’ve reduced the risk to the Soldier just by lightening that logistical load.”

An adventurer of the lab, Benyamin describes his time he spent conducting research at the U.S. Army

Combat Capabilities Development Command’s Army Research Laboratory as nothing short of breathtaking.

“I’m surrounded by researchers who have worked for decades and possess a bounty of technical knowledge,” Benyamin said. “Working [here] is like being a kid in a candy store.”

Benyamin graduated with a Bachelor of Science in chemical and biomolecular engineering, as well as mathematics, at the University of Maryland, College Park, in 2017. Now, he works on biomass-to-energy research in the lab’s Sensors and Electrons Directorate.

His projects focus on using microorganisms, which break down food waste and indigenous vegetation and convert them into energy. Specifically, Benyamin employs special fungi to break down the plant material into its basic chemical com-

ponents and then engineers certain types of bacteria to convert those components into the desired chemicals for energy production.

“In a normal consortium, you can have thousands of different organisms in any given natural process,” Benyamin said. “Right now, we have two to three, but we’re hoping to add more.”

Benyamin first learned about the Army Research Laboratory in high school when he read a news report on liquid body armor. Intrigued by the story, he entered the Science and Engineering Apprenticeship Program, or SEAP, in 2011, and investigated fuel cells under the mentorship of Army physicist Dr. David Mackie in the Biotechnology Branch.

Since then, he has received guidance from various other mentors at the lab as he’s returned each year under SEAP and later under the College Qualified

Leaders program.

According to Benyamin, what he obtained from his supervisors was more than just lab protocol.

“My first mentor, Dave, taught me how to think freely and solve experimental problems as they came up,” Benyamin said. “My second mentor, Justin Jahnke, helped me with both my research and my career, instilling organization, discipline and the philosophy of engineering. And finally, my current mentor, Matt Perisin, helps me conceptualize what I’m doing and keeps me focused and on track, even when I have a tendency to chase down every little detail. They’ve pushed me to every success I’ve had in research and walked me through every setback. I’m incredibly grateful for their years of guidance.”

Benyamin also mentioned his gratitude for the collaborative culture at the

laboratory and how the flexibility of the journeyman fellowship has allowed him to explore his field and try new things.

“As an organization, I appreciate ARL most for its long-term investment in people, for its culture of cooperation and for its willingness to accept risk,” Benyamin said.

Looking forward, Benyamin envisions himself pursuing a master’s degree or a doctorate, but insisted he would return to the lab. He reflected how this organization had consumed so much his life that he could never separate his development from it.

“This place saw me grow up,” Benyamin said. “I would not be the researcher I am today, the engineer I am today, or the person I am today without ARL, without these programs, or without these people behind them.”

Fort Leonard Wood Robotics University develops new robot to be used by all services

Sam Campbell

The Robotics University at Fort Leonard Wood, Training Area 211, is ready to field a new robot — the Man Transportation Robotic System Increment II – to be used by the Army, Air Force, Marines and Navy for multiple purposes, including explosive ordnance disposal and detection of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear hazards.

According to the U.S. Army Acquisition Support Center, “The MTRS Inc II provides the warfighter with an ability to locate, identify and clear landmines, unexploded ordnance and improvised explosive devices in the path of maneuvering forces. It also provides CBRN Soldiers with the capability to employ CBRN sensors from a distance.”

Officials said the robot is finished with preliminary development, and is scheduled to be fielded February 2020 with a unit at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

According to Dwayne Resch, new equipment training manager, officials in the acquisition community have been pushing to stan-

dardize robotics hardware across the entire military — and the MTRS could be the answer to that call.

“This is probably the first robot that has crossed over to every branch,” he said. “It keeps cost down.”

He said it can be configured differently depending on a unit’s needs, only requiring minimal changes.

Beyond minimizing financial burdens, the 156-pound MTRS Inc II boasts an impressive array of improvements from its predecessor, the Talon 5, Robotics University officials said.

The robot’s radio system is used not just for communication, but to transmit live streams of video and data, which requires large bandwidth due to huge file size. Matt Resch, robotics technician, said the radio can handle that and more.

“The radio has really improved quite a bit,” he said. “We’re barely touching the capabilities. The way you can program it, and how much stuff you can do inside that is amazing.”

The MTRS Inc II also features a thermal camera and more degrees of movement for its mechanical arm than

its predecessor, allowing the arm to turn horizontally without rotating the entire machine.

Training and operation of the machine has taken cues from a popular form of entertainment among the younger population — video games.

“Almost every robot now is (coming) standardized with a PlayStation controller or an Xbox controller, trying to get the mindset of these young Soldiers coming in,” the technician said.

He said the community is “getting rid of the old suitcase-style controllers they had.”

Chris McDonald, a senior instructional design specialist with Intelligent Decision Systems Inc., is working with the Robotics University on an actual video game where Soldiers are trained on how to operate the robot.

The game is slated to be an official part of the MTRS Inc II training course curriculum.

“It’s developed like a first-person (perspective), so you’re behind the controller of the robot,” he said. “There’s skyline, there’s trees, there’s birds singing,



Bill Hagerty, Robotics University new equipment trainer, points to the new thermal vision camera atop the MTRS Inc II robot. The robot will soon replace its predecessor, the Talon 5 and boasts an array of improvements. (Photo by Sam Campbell)

there’s tracks. We have a whole team of game developers on it that are trying to make it as close to something you (would play) on a (console).”

Officials said the benefit of this type of training is that Soldiers can do it anywhere, even from the comfort of their own home.

“You’ll be able to sit back, maybe at midnight when you’re normally playing ‘Call of Duty,’ (and say) ‘let me knock this out,’” McDonald said. “This is interactive and it’s fairly fun.”

The Robotics University has a 12-year history at Fort Leonard Wood. It repairs

every single EOD robot in the entire Army.

University officials said if units find themselves with an MTRS Inc II machine in need of repairs, they can fix it and fix it fast. The technician said typical turnaround is only a matter of days.

“We diagnose the problems they’re having and repair them and ship them back to the Soldiers,” Matt Resch said. “From ship to ship date is roughly about two weeks.”

The university was given its title because it is a “one-stop shop” for all things robotics, Dwayne Resch said.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Fort Wainwright Family & MWR

Weekly Events

December 7 - 14

- 7

Bodyweight Bench Press Challenge
December 15
12 p.m.

Compete to take the title for Bodyweight Bench Press Challenge! Train to find out how many reps you can do in 5 minutes. Registration is December 1 - 15.

Physical Fitness Center, Bldg 3709
Call 353-7223, registration required
- 11

Soldier & Family Readiness Group Training
December 11
9 a.m. - Noon

This Leader Course is a guide on all SFRG positions and their rules/regulations and the connection between SFRG and Leadership.

Army Community Services, Bldg 3401
Call 353-4227, registration required
- 12

Welcome to Winter
December 12
6 - 8 p.m.

Come out to learn how to properly prepare for the winter conditions. Tips for winterizing your vehicle, how to drive on ice, and more! Civilian attire recommended.

Last Frontier Community Activity Center, Bldg 1044
Call 353-7755
- 12

Gum Drops & Sun Drops
December 14
2 - 4 p.m.

Come celebrate the start of winter with family and friends at the Last Frontier Community Activity Center. Decorate gingerbread houses, arts and crafts, treats, and more! Registration deadline is December 12.

Last Frontier Community Activity Center, Bldg 1044
Call 353-7755, registration required
- 13

B.O.S.S. Movie Night
December 20
6 - 8 p.m.

Join B.O.S.S. at the Regal Cinema for a night out to experience this new comedy. Watch Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker. This trip includes a \$5 Concession Stand Gift Card. Registration deadline is December 13.

B.O.S.S., Bldg 1045
Call 353-7648, registration required



Breakfast with Santa

December 14
9 a.m. - noon
at the
Nugget Lanes Bowling Center

Eat and go bowling with Santa Claus!

12 & Under: \$12 **13+: \$15**
breakfast includes pancakes, eggs, sausage, bacon, and juice
Price includes Cosmic Bowling and shoe rental!



RESERVATIONS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED
Nugget Lanes Bowling Center (907) 353-2654
www.wainwright.armymwr.com
@WainwrightMWR #WainwrightBowl

USAG ALASKA FAMILY AND MWR

HIRINGFAIR



FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2019
2 - 6 PM @ MURPHY HALL BLDG 1045 GAFFNEY ROAD

Join our amazing team! For more information, call: (907) 353-1087
Find out more at www.wainwright.armymwr.com

@WainwrightMWR #WainwrightMWR

Fort Wainwright 2019-20 Holiday Worship Schedule

Everyone is invited, all are welcome!

		
20 Dec 19	Service of Lessons & Carols (with light dinner & Christmas crafts)	SLC 1700-2000
24 Dec 19	Cornerstone Protestant Christmas Eve Service	NLC 1600-1700
24 Dec 19	St. George Anglican Candlelight Christmas Eve Service	SLC 1800-1900
06 Jan 20	St. George Anglican Feast of the Epiphany Service	BACH 1200-1230
02 Feb 20	St. George Anglican Candlemas Service	SLC 1100-1200

"Home Blessing Kits" for the St. George Anglican & Good Shepherd Catholic communities will be available at SLC.

All regular services will continue as scheduled



Southern Lights Chapel (SLC), Corner of Neely Rd. & 8th St., 361-4261
Northern Lights Chapel (NLC), Corner of Rhineland & Luzon, 353-9825
Bassett Army Community Hospital Chapel (BACH), 4076 Neely Rd, 361-5002

For more information call the Religious Support Office at 353-6112



www.facebook.com/FWARSO



Native American, Vietnam gunner lives by warrior culture

Thomas Brading
Army News Service

Ernie Wensaut, a former Army machine gunner for the 1st Infantry Division, was born in a traditional Potawatomi tribal family home, on their reservation in Wisconsin.

Growing up, he remembers native ceremonies held for each passing season.

The ceremonies often integrated beating drums with a lot of dancing, he said. The tribal men used the rites as a declaration of their heritage and beliefs.

Wensaut was given the native name “Wimigo” by his father, a traditional medicine man, he said.

“Ceremonies help us stay in touch with our tribe, and our family roots,” he said. “Each family has a drum dedicated to their ancestors.”

Wensaut’s family lineage dates back hundreds of years, with relatives who fought alongside historic Native American figures such as Black Hawk, a war chief of the Sauk American Indian, he said.

“With my people, it is expected that if we’re called to fight for our country — we fight — no matter how our country treated us in the past,” Wensaut said. “I’m proud to have fought for my country.”

It was also his Native American culture, Wensaut said, that helped him survive the Vietnam War.

Drafted into the Army in 1966, Wensaut knew war was imminent. Before he left, the tribe had a ceremony and he was given a buckskin tobacco pouch and his father said, “Carry this, it’ll see you through.”

Wensaut held his pouch close during his year-long combat tour in Vietnam, and experienced many close calls in battle.

Before he left, he asked his girlfriend, Darlene, to wait for him. She said yes, and the couple planned to marry after he returned.

In October 1966, Wensaut deployed to War Zone C in South Vietnam, a mountain region near the Cambodian border known for its high concentration of enemy forces hidden throughout its pathless jungles and boggy swamps.

Nightmare in the jungle

The Soldiers of the 1st Division — sometimes called The Big Red One — usually patrolled around noon, he said, when the sun — like the temperature — was at its highest point. In the jungle, the temperature and humidity were both usually around 100 percent.

The men carried upwards of 60 pounds of gear, with additional weight carried by radio operators and machine gunners, like Wensaut. After a while, their crisp, olive-drab fatigues started to fade and were usually sopping wet from sweat.

Although the Soldiers were only a



Pvt. Ernie Wensaut, 1st Infantry Division gunner, in Vietnam. (Courtesy photo)

few weeks into their combat tour, he said, they would soon face danger — and not just from things like sun stroke, mosquitoes, dehydration, leeches and fatigue.

Enemy forces could be just a few yards away, completely veiled in jungle foliage and you’d never know, Wensaut said. It was hard for his patrol to see the guerilla fighters. The Viet Cong also used intricate underground tunnels to travel and booby traps — called punji spikes — against their American foes.

“It felt like the Viet Cong were everywhere we turned,” he said.

While on patrol, the Soldiers followed a basic principle: never take the jungle trails, he said.

This meant if they had to use machetes and tediously hack through the thick, nearly impenetrable jungle floor, they did.

Until one day, when their lieutenant — fresh from college — tried to save time, he said.

The young officer — who, like Wensaut, had been in Vietnam only a handful of weeks — hoped to take a short cut along the trail.

“Being caught on a jungle trail was the easiest way to be ambushed,” Wensaut said.

Although Wensaut was suspicious, he followed the officer’s orders. At first, everything was calm. The only exception to the silence came from ambient noises of the jungle — like tree frogs croaking or tropical birds chirping in the distance, he said.

However, when the Soldiers came to a fork in their trail ... the nightmare started, Wensaut said. Without warning, cracks of machine-gun fire tore through the air from all directions.

It was what Wensaut feared — they walked into a death trap. A few Soldiers — toward the front of the patrol — were killed instantly. Others fell over clutching onto their wounds, he said.

“We didn’t know how many VC were even out there,” Wensaut said. “It was

all happening within seconds.”

The Americans fired aimlessly back into the jungle, almost reactionary, he said. They were unable to see the enemy, let alone target any of them. Wensaut lobbed multiple grenades, hoping to keep them at bay — wherever they were.

The VC — who spoke little English — taunted the surviving Soldiers, Wensaut recalled. From all directions they chanted in chorus, “Tonight GI, you die!” with laughter, and circling their prey.

Through the gunfire, their fresh-faced lieutenant was heard pleading for help over the radio, Wensaut said. His arm was riddled in wounds and nearly amputated, but he was able to call in medical support.

Meanwhile, Wensaut and another assistant gunner — a Texan named Pvt. Regan — were in triage mode. The gunners pulled a wounded sergeant, shot through the chest, from the line of fire and concealed him in the bush.

There, they started to patch the NCO officer up, but he needed to be stabilized. Although bandaged, the sergeant required a medical evacuation.

Shortly after, a medevac chopper was whirring overtop the trees. Medics tried lowering a rescue basket down to collect the killed and wounded. Although clearly marked with four bright red crosses overtop a white background — a symbol of non-combative activity — the medics also took ground fire, he said.

In the midst of the chaos, Wensaut recalled, he looked toward the sky just beyond the jungle canopy, and prayed to himself, “Don’t let me die here.” After all, he had Darlene waiting to marry

him in Wisconsin.

After the medical evacuation failed, the lieutenant called in an air strike. From the sky, fighter jets screamed toward the battlefield. They carpeted the area with small butterfly-style cluster bombs.

“It was like fire-crackers going off everywhere,” Wensaut said.

After the cluster bombs, their hidden enemy persisted and shortly after, more air power came roaring in. Stuck between firefight and air power, all the Soldiers could do was hunker down into an embankment, he said.

The jets roared through the clouds and swooped down into the battlefield. From those jets came a trail of 10 massive napalm canister explosions. Each one ignited on impact, and caused an inferno burn into the sky, taller than the trees.

As the napalm seared the jungle, another wave of F-16s plunged into the fight to finish the job. They sprayed rounds from their rotary cannons at lightning speed. After that, things went quiet again.

“We waited and waited... but, that seemed to be it,” Wensaut said. “It was over, for that day at least.”

As the dust settled, the dead and wounded were evacuated. Only three gunners, including Wensaut, walked away unscathed. The battle was only a taste of what his year-long combat tour would be.

“Everybody had fear in them, but after a battle or two, we started to get hardened,” he said.

“War affects you, but what really affected me were the men we were losing. The guys you got to know and become friends with, then the next

week they’re gone.”

As expected, new Soldiers — identifiable by their crisp, new fatigue uniforms — rotated in to replace the fallen Soldiers after that day on the trail.

In the 11 months that followed, Wensaut was part of multiple search and destroy missions throughout War Zone C.

He fought in Operation Cedar Falls and Operation Shenandoah, but admits, “I was in more battles than I can remember, because wherever the first division was, I went.”

No hero’s welcome

Back in the United States, Darlene waited patiently for Ernie to come home. But, as the nightly news started airing images of the war into living rooms across the country, waiting became difficult.

“Watching the news was really scary,” she said. “I never knew if he was okay or not.”

She sent Ernie multiple letters and care packages. He was usually in the field, and rarely had time to respond. One of her care packages was even returned, she said, covered in mold.

An antiwar movement swept the country, he said, but those feelings never extended to Wensaut’s native tribe. They viewed him

— and every veteran — as a warrior, who was called to fight for his country, and bravely answered the call.

Wensaut didn’t receive a “hero’s welcome” by his country, when he returned in 1967. He flew into California at night to avoid protesters who notoriously spit on, yelled at and called Soldiers names, he said.

The only title Wensaut cared about was “survivor.”

On the other hand, his tribe in Wisconsin honored him as a warrior. His dad hosted a ceremony to welcome him home. During it, he was brought to the front of the tribe — a location reserved for warriors of the highest honor.

“They honored veterans in my community,” he said, “All tribes still hold their respect of veterans very high.”

Wensaut and Darlene were married Nov. 11, 1967, at his Potawatomi reservation in Wisconsin. They recently celebrated 52 years together and have two children.

Wensaut separated from active duty after he completed his enlistment. He spent the following decades working in construction, logging and mills.

Today, he’s retired and enjoys deer hunting and says he is proud to be a Soldier for life.

601072

Community Involvement Plan Survey, Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska

The United States Air Force (USAF) is seeking community participation in the 2019 Eielson Air Force Base (AFB) Community Involvement Plan update. Individuals stationed at Eielson AFB and residents of the Fairbanks North Star Borough are encouraged to participate in this survey. Community input is a critical element of the environmental cleanup process. Your input will provide Eielson officials with information they will use to continue to keep the community actively involved and informed about environmental cleanup activities at Eielson AFB.

The USAF is also seeking community interest in reestablishing the Eielson Restoration Advisory Board (RAB), which was adjourned on 31 March 2014 due to lack of participation. Members of the RAB review and provide comments on environmental restoration documents and environmental activities, participate in regular RAB meetings, provide information to the community, and receive information from the community to convey to Eielson AFB. If reinstated, RAB meetings will be held semi-annually. If you are interested in serving on an Eielson AFB RAB, please respond before 17 December 2019 to: EielsonRABSurvey@eaast.com or call 907-456-4751 x130

A community involvement questionnaire was developed in accordance with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency guidance on CIP and RAB protocols. The names of citizens who participate in the survey are confidential and will not be released.

You may complete the survey in one of four ways: by phone, in person, by email, or in writing. If you are interested in completing the survey, please respond by email to: EielsonRABSurvey@eaast.com or call 907-456-4751 x130 before 17 December 2019. Interviews conducted by phone or in person are expected to take approximately 30 minutes or less. EA Engineering, Science, and Technology, Inc. will conduct interviews and consolidate survey results on behalf of Eielson AFB.

For more information on the Eielson AFB Environmental Restoration Program, please visit: <http://afcec.publicadmin-record.us.af.mil/Search.aspx> or the Elmer E. Rasmuson Library at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks, 310 Tanana Loop, Fairbanks, AK 99775

Thank you for your time and consideration. Your support is greatly appreciated.

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