

F.E. WARREN AIR FORCE BASE

PEACEKEEPER

JULY 2020

90th Medical Group conducts mass COVID-19 testing

Story and photos by Glenn S. Robertson



Captain Hyun Yoon conducts a COVID-19 swab test May 20, 2020 at the base clinic on F. E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyo. The effort was intended to ensure the medical readiness of personnel tripping out to the missile field. Medical group staff tested about 250 personnel throughout the day. (U. S. Air Force photo by Glenn S. Robertson)

Medical personnel from the 90th Medical Group tested more than 250 troops from across the 90th Missile Wing May 20, 2020 on F. E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyoming.

The personnel, composed of Defenders, Maintainers, Operators, Facility Managers and Missile Chefs, were directed to receive testing to ensure minimization of COVID-19 infections to

personnel traveling to the missile field.

Lieutenant Colonel Erin Knightner, commander of the 90th Operational Medical Readiness Squadron, was tasked with spearheading the effort.

“We decided to push for a nearly ‘all hands on deck’ approach to test as many of those going out to the missile field at once,” said Knightner.

“We are working to ensure full support of those personnel carrying out our no-fail mission.”

Personnel arriving for testing first checked in with medical personnel at the base golf course, who verified their information and provided them with a sticker that would be placed on their testing kit. They were then directed to the clinic, where medical staff would conduct the actual test.

All of this happened with troops never having to leave their vehicle.

“We wanted to make this as efficient as possible for everyone,” said Knightner. “The actual testing process is not particularly pleasant, but we did try to ensure it had some conveniences for those getting tested.”

Testing for COVID-19 involves the insertion of a swab deep into the nasal cavity, then rotating it to collect a sample – an uncomfortable proposition at best.

“I’ve gone through this test three times already,” said Tech Sgt. Anthony Sezer. “I can do it again if they need me to, but I’m hoping this one is the last time.”

Following the test, the kits were collected and taken back to the on-site laboratory for antigen testing to verify if any of those tested might be asymptomatic, but still carrying the virus.

Results for the tests typically take 2-3 days, said Knightner, and would be available before those tested were expected to trip out to the missile field.

F. E. Warren honors first responders, medical professionals



Aviators from F. E. Warren Air Force Base fly over the Wyoming State Capitol building as part of a salute to first responders and medical professionals May 16, 2020 in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Helicopter pilots from the 37th Helicopter Squadron flew over several medical facilities in Cheyenne to honor the efforts of medical professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic. (U. S. Air Force photo by Glenn S. Robertson)

Mobile Medics

From running through the plains and hills of Guernsey, Wyoming, trailing the 90th Ground Combat Training Squadron's warrior Airmen to working in a garage behind F.E. Warren's medical building gowned and masked, these medics were made to adapt.

"The 90th Medical Group has been phenomenal with using us. As an independent duty medical technician this is what we were designed to do," said Tech. Sgt. Christina Pyeatt, 90th GCTS independent duty medical technician. "I was super ecstatic to be able to come over and assist."

With the outbreak of Covid-19, the 90th Medical Respiratory Clinic was created and designed to focus on patient care and safety. Being a geographically separate unit aids in keeping patients that may have symptoms out of the main medical facility and away from healthy individuals.

"We don't want our fighting capabilities to degrade, so our on base testing center is a bit more liberal with who qualifies to be tested," Pyeatt said.

The process, which is limited to active duty personnel, includes a call to the nurse's hotline, directions to the respiratory clinic and patient testing.

The clinic is unique in a sense that the patients remain in their vehicle. For the protection of the medical personnel and patient, instructions will be given through the car window with minimum contact taking place during the actual test.

"In the back of my mind, there is always the thought of exposure," said Pyeatt. "We have taken great lengths with our personal protective equipment and how we operate."

To ensure medical personnel don't become patients themselves, they wear extensive protective gear and limit contact between patients and testers.

"As medical health professionals, when we take care of patients and contribute to their healthcare and that of their family, it is that selfless service aspect even though we have concerns at the back of our minds," Pyeatt said. "It is what we do, it's what we are made for, it's what we train for. So we just do it."

Technical Sgt. Christina Pyeatt, 90th Ground Combat Training Squadron independent duty medical technician, gears up for a Covid-19 test at the respiratory clinic on F.E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyo., April 24, 2020. Every day, health care providers put themselves at risk without question. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Ashley N. Sokolov)

90th MDG wall breaking: upcoming construction

Story and photo by 1st Lt. Ieva Bytautaitė



Members of 20th Air Force and the 90th Missile Wing participate in a ruck march, June 19, 2020, F. E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyo. The ruck march was an event organized by 20th Air Force headquarters staff to build comradery and create a space for difficult conversations about racism and discrimination. (U.S. Air Force photo by 1st Lt Ieva Bytautaitė.)

20th Air Force headquarters staff and members of the 90th Missile Wing gathered together 19 June, 2020 at F. E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyoming, for a 5K ruck march.

When most people hear the term "ruck march" they think of blistered

feet and heavy backpacks. Although the majority of participants carried a ruck ranging from 35 to over 70 pounds, the intent of the event, dubbed "Ruck Racism", was to build comradery and allow for a safe space to start having important, yet sometimes uncomfortable conversations about how racism and discrimination affects Airmen.

The idea for the ruck march came from Senior Master Sgt. Cleophus Gallon, 20th Air Force operations and training superintendent.

"I saw one of my best friends, Chief Master Sgt. Erik Blanco from the 341st Training Squadron at Lackland AFB doing this, and I wanted to support him and his efforts," said Gallon. "Although I couldn't physically join his initiative, I could ruck in solidarity here so I did a 4.5 mile ruck with a 35 pound pack on the same day as his event."

When Gallon's coworker, Master Sgt. Alexis Chapa, 20th Air Force manager of training, heard that Gallon was going to do the ruck, he wanted to do something similar here at F.E. Warren.

"I told him, don't do this alone, let's do this together," Chapa said. "These types of events bolster comradery, open up lines of communication and help us start having conversations about race and discrimination, which can be uncomfortable for many people."

Master Sgt. Stefan Hobbs, 20th Air Force manager of weapons and tactics and security forces operations, joined the initiative and encouraged his fellow Airmen to join as well.

"The main reason I wanted to participate and get others involved was to have that open dialogue, build relationships and give people a space to talk to each other and hear perspectives and stories from people who may not look like you," Hobbs said. "It's also a good time to take a mental pause and enjoy the sisterhood/brotherhood."

Gallon, Chapa and Hobbs hope to continue holding similar events throughout the year.

"We are so thankful for the support from the 90th Missile Wing First Sergeant's Council and the 90th Security Forces Group for helping us out by providing traffic cones and vehicles to keep everyone safe," Chapa said. "This was definitely a team effort."

90 SSPTS becomes 90 MSOS

Story by Glenn S. Robertson

When the Missile Security Operations Concept was implemented across the missile fields of F. E. Warren, Malmstrom and Minot Air Force Bases, responsibilities and functions of the different squadrons were realigned to more effectively and efficiently defend those facilities.

With the adoption of new operational mission sets, the 90th Security Forces Support Squadron officially became the 90th Missile Security Operations Squadron March 26, 2020.

Twentieth Air Force restructured missile wing security forces with MSOC in October 2017. This new initiative created new squadrons and altered current ones.

"MSOC created a third Missile Security Forces Squadron and combined the maintenance support functions and traditional missile field responsibilities of those three squadrons," said Chief Master Sgt. Raymond Bradley, 90th Security Forces Group Chief Enlisted Manager. "Now, those squadrons work on a rotating schedule, doing

the same tasks during their scheduled week in the field, each under one responsible Commander."

Before MSOC, the 90th SSPTS was a 75-person unit primarily responsible for support functions. Following the integration, SSPTS absorbed the Tactical Response Force and Convoy Response Force sections from the 790th Missile Security Forces Squadron, bringing the personnel to 201. Also, MSOC split the squadron's mission into two distinct duties: The operational mission of TRF, CRF and the small Unmanned Aerial Systems Cell; and the support section of training, armory operations, combat arms, mobility, supply, budget and the Keys Cryptological Control Center.

"On top of maintaining our original mission sets of support, we assumed new mission responsibilities and became more operational with the creation of the sUAS cell and the additions of the TRF and CRF," said Major Timothy Marriner, 90th MSOS commander. "We're the core integrating unit



Senior Airman Joshua Hudson, 790th Missile Security Forces Squadron tactical response force assaulter, secures a landing site during emergency security response training with the 37th Helicopter Squadron at a launch facility in the F.E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyo., missile complex, Dec. 16, 2016. The TRF shifted from the 790 MSFS to the 90 MSOS March 26, 2020. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Christopher Ruano)

of the 90th Security Forces Group; we facilitate the mission of the three missile field security squadrons and the Security Forces Squadron while accomplishing our own operational mission in collaboration with the 37th Helicopter Squadron, 90th Operations Group and the 90th Maintenance Group."

Given the addition of responsibilities vested in the squadron, a new name was a fitting change.

"We felt it necessary to change the name of these squadrons to give them a more fitting description of their duties," said Bradley. "By moving TRF and CRF under MSOS' span of control, it gave them not just a support function but an operational mission set, hence the name change to Missile Security Operations Squadron."

The importance of the squadron accepting and

taking on the challenge of operational responsibilities while nearly tripling the personnel was echoed across the group.

"The designation from SSPTS to MSOS recognizes a change in the squadron's operational mission," added Col. Damian Schlussel, 90th Security Forces Group commander. "The new name clearly shows that they are an operational unit and not only a support agency."

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Changes of Command



90th Operations Group



90th Security Forces Squadron



90th Communications Squadron



90th Medical Group

Defenders close out Police Week



Airman First Class Tristen Richards, Senior Airman Zachary Burrows and Airman First Class Yasmin Evans wait for the beginning of the national anthem at the parade field flag pole on F. E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyoming, May 15, 2020. The three airmen lowered Old Glory as part of a retreat ceremony. The ceremony was conducted as a closing to Police Week, established to honor law enforcement officers currently serving their communities and those who have fallen in the line of duty. (U. S. Air Force photo by Glenn S. Robertson)



Defenders of the 90th Missile Wing salute the flag during the national anthem at the parade field flag pole on F. E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyoming, May 15, 2020. The Defenders participated in the ceremony as a closing to Police Week, established to honor law enforcement officers currently serving their communities and those who have fallen in the line of duty. (U. S. Air Force photo by Glenn S. Robertson)



Senior Airman Zachary Burrows and Airman First Class Tristen Richards fold the flag at the parade field flag pole on F. E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyoming, May 15, 2020. The airmen lowered Old Glory as part of a retreat ceremony. The ceremony was conducted as a closing to Police Week, established to honor law enforcement officers currently serving their communities and those who have fallen in the line of duty. (U. S. Air Force photo by Glenn S. Robertson)



Airman First Class Yasmin Evans waits to lower the flag at the parade field flag pole on F. E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyoming, May 15, 2020. Evans was one of three airmen who lowered Old Glory as part of a retreat ceremony. The ceremony was conducted as a closing to Police Week, established to honor law enforcement officers currently serving their communities and those who have fallen in the line of duty. (U. S. Air Force photo by Glenn S. Robertson)

Overcoming Your Biggest Obstacle: Yourself

Commentary by Maj. Bryce Fiacco, 90th Contracting Squadron Commander

I didn't want to be here. By here, I mean a Contracting Officer in the United States Air Force. From the time I was very young, my heart was dead set on being a pilot. Not just any pilot, but a fighter pilot with all the intrigue, danger, romance, and respect demanded of heroic job through the eyes of a younger me. If you had told five-year-old me that I'd be sitting behind a desk instead of cutting through the clouds with afterburners, I'm sure my story would have been very different. As it stands, I couldn't be happier or more fortunate to be sitting where I am today.

Several years ago after commissioning, I reported to pilot training where I sailed through the ground portion of training and had goosebumps the entire day before my first flight in the T-6. As we took off I was thrilled . . . for about 30 seconds before I began getting actively airsick (nice way of saying I puked my guts out). What followed next was about six weeks of torture getting sick both on the ground in a swivel "training" chair as well as multiple times on every flight. It turned out that my dreams of being a fighter pilot did not coincide with my weak stomach and violent motion

sickness. I had failed and I was broken!

When the Air Force told me I was going into Contracting, I didn't have a clue what that meant nor did I care. I went to training and even arrived at my next duty station with a bad work ethic and worse attitude. If I could no longer achieve my dream, I didn't really care about much else. I was depressed, felt like a letdown, and in a very dark spot personally and professionally.

Thankfully, my spouse as well as my new commander saw possibilities of success where I only saw failure. They prodded and encouraged me daily to get over it and start over. It wasn't an immediate switch where suddenly I overcame all obstacles, but a gradual climb out of a low place. The problem wasn't a new career or loss of the old one, but myself. I had let self-pity and unhappiness take over when things didn't go the way I had planned. Some days were hard, other days were harder, but I continued my growth and change over the next several months until the best part of the story was that my biggest challenge was past tense.

Since I was finally able to overcome myself several years ago, I have been blessed beyond imagination. I've been fortunate

enough to get additional education, win a variety of awards, and even be selected for command. I've supported over \$10 billion (yes, billions with a "b") in acquisitions both domestically and abroad. Most importantly, I get to support decisions which impact thousands of Airmen on a daily basis as we acquire and sustain our fighting capabilities.

I'm quite certain that not everyone here at F.E. Warren AFB is doing exactly what they imagined a few years before. Most of us didn't envision our current position even a few months ago prior to COVID. Some of us don't have the job we wanted, we all have struggles in our personal lives, and some of us dislike the region. Regardless of our challenges, nothing is so big that it cannot be defeated by overcoming ourselves. Our peers, supervisors, and even commanders have all struggled, fallen, and failed in our lives. Getting back up and overcoming these fights requires resilience, good attitude and hard-work. Nelson Mandela said it best when he noted, "Do not judge me by my success, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again."

Rucking for heroes

Story and Photos by Glenn S. Robertson

participated in a "virtual ruck march" May 7,



Staff Sergeant Kenneth Rosenquist (left) and Senior Airman Cole Michael, HVAC technicians with the 90th Civil Engineer Squadron, begin their ruck march May 7, 2020 on F. E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyo. The two Airmen were among more than 80 participants across the squadron who loaded up with 15 lbs. or more and marched on base while practicing safe social distancing guidelines. The march was organized to honor first responders and medical professionals working through the COVID-19 pandemic. (U. S. Air Force photo by Glenn S. Robertson)

The Coronavirus has placed restrictions on the daily lives of people around the globe. Yet, some Airmen refuse to allow the restrictions of the current environment become limitations on their abilities.

Following social distancing protocol, more than 80 Airmen from the 90th Civil Engineer Squadron

2020 on F. E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyoming.

The event, organized by Tech Sgt. Allen Adams, Prime BEEF manager for the 90 CES, required participants to ruck a minimum of 3 miles while carrying at least 15 pounds to honor first responders and medical professionals across the U.S.

"It's another way that we can get together without actually being together," said Adams. "Plus, we can push together for readiness and honor the people who are fighting COVID-19."

The event started with a commander's call conducted through a video conferencing program, then each participant began their own individual ruck march with their distances recorded by phone applications.

Some went to Curt Gowdy State Park, some used treadmills and some marched around the parade field and other places on base, but they maintained social distancing protocol.

"Where they do it really wasn't important," said Adams. "As long as they meet their minimums and recorded their effort, we've accomplished the mission."

Lt. Col. Brian Low, 90 CES commander, explained the squadron has continued to explore new, innovative ways to maintain unit cohesion and mission readiness throughout the pandemic.

"My guys are pretty creative," said Low. "We're doing squadron PT on Zoom and events like this, and while we're not able to do full contingency training, we've been able to come up with innovative ways to maintain readiness while we get through this."

The Airmen of 90 CES and their families who rucked more than 300 miles in one day helped prove that resilience, unit cohesion and readiness is still possible, despite restrictions on coming together.





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