

Taking personal protective measures

Dan Gilson

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ism Officer

News reports over the last few weeks and months have focused on pandemic response and civil unrest. These are very important issues that need our attention, but we can't lose sight of underlying security concerns.

The intelligence community has reported that homegrown violent extremists and other malicious actors have exploited the fear and uncertainty surrounding these events to further their agendas. Additionally,

these malicious actors have aspired to exploit protests and other emotionally charged social events to act out in an attempt to further their agendas.

All of these events together have many people questioning their security in the world as we know it.

As an institution, the Army has responded to the increased threat in an effort to protect its personnel and their families. Emergency planning, coordination and the application of protection programs occur mostly outside the public eye, yet still protect people on their installations.

Fort Wainwright has

implemented additional security measures in response to these events as well.

These efforts, though effective on the installation, do not always address personal vulnerabilities while on or off of post, while traveling or online. The good news is that, individually, we can all adjust our own behaviors to help protect ourselves, our families and our organizations.

The tenets of the iWATCH Program, See Something-Say Something, are important not only in protecting ourselves, but in protecting our community as well. In order to See Something you must be

vigilant and situationally aware.

It is easy to get lost in the moment of an event, yet it is still important to observe the people and things that surround us. Familiarize yourself with things that may be suspicious such as someone wearing unusually bulky clothing that could hide weapons or explosives, unattended packages to include backpacks, briefcases, boxes, etc., illegally or unusually parked vehicles near crowds or buildings, people who attempt to access an event, building or area who are un-ticketed or otherwise appear to be unauthorized

and people who ask questions of you that go beyond mere curiosity.

Understand that most people don't generally take notes or draw diagrams of event venues, they don't generally leave or become overly nervous in the presence of police officers, and they generally don't drive to an event only to take photographs from inside their vehicles. It's okay to trust your instincts.

Remember that seeing something is just part of the solution. Once you have seen something, it

See PROTECT on page 6

Fort Wainwright partners with community on off-post welcome tours for new Soldiers

Eve Baker

U.S. Army Garrison Alaska, Fort Wainwright Public Affairs

Fort Wainwright has partnered with several community organizations to provide weekly, informative off-post tours to all newcomers. This effort is designed to share information with new Soldiers and their Families about the wealth of opportunities and resources in the greater Fairbanks area. Explore Fairbanks, the Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce, University of Alaska Fairbanks, the government of the City of Fairbanks and Pioneer Park have all made significant contributions to the new tour program.

The tours began in March, though the program was temporarily put on hold due to the pandemic. Tours resumed July 10 and now take place every Friday. Safety measures include stipulations that all participants wear masks for the duration of the tour, use hand sanitizer regularly and maintain physical distance from everyone outside their immediate family.

The partnership with community organizations is a critical aspect of the tour program.

"Explore Fairbanks became involved as we were expanding our outreach program with our armed services neighbors throughout the borough. We were already hosting Fairbanks information tables at the Spouse to Spouse orientations and at the deployment seminars. What really got the ball rolling was when Explore



Mayor Jim Matherly of the City of Fairbanks, Alaska, welcomes Soldiers to the community at the Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitors Center. The Soldiers are participating in a newcomers orientation tour of the city. (Photo by Eve Baker, U.S. Army Garrison Alaska, Fort Wainwright Public Affairs)

A representative from the community organization Explore Fairbanks, Charity Gadapee, guides Soldiers from Fort Wainwright on a tour through Pioneer Park in Fairbanks, Alaska. The Soldiers are participating in a newcomers orientation tour of the city. (Photo by Eve Baker, U.S. Army Garrison Alaska, Fort Wainwright Public Affairs)

Fairbanks' president and CEO, Deb Hickok, approached the topic of orientation tours at the local FNSB [Fairbanks North Star Borough] Civilian Military meeting with a representative from U.S. Army Garrison Alaska. After that, exploratory meetings were held and the program was developed," said Charity Gadapee, director of Visitor Services and Partnership Development of Explore Fairbanks.

The tours begin with Soldiers and



interested family members boarding a military bus parked at the garrison headquarters. The first stop on the tour is the Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitors Center where they are greeted by a member of the Explore Fairbanks team and given a brief overview of how the tour will go. Following the over-

view, they are welcomed to Fairbanks by a local elected official or other prominent member of the community. The mayor of Fairbanks, Jim Matherly, has given the address several times.

"Our service members are a very important part of our community, and I feel that it's imperative that we give them a warm wel-

come and make them feel at home here. As Mayor, I feel very privileged every time I have the opportunity to welcome them on behalf of all Fairbanks residents," Matherly said.

Participants are then given about 30 minutes to explore the museum, which highlights Alaska Native culture and life in

Interior Alaska. They can also peruse the racks of free booklets and brochures on recreational opportunities throughout the state from the Alaska Public Lands Information Center and speak to a representative from the National Park Service. They are encouraged to come back to the Center on their own to explore at length and take advantage of all the resources it has to offer.

A member of the Explore Fairbanks team serves as the tour guide for the entire three-hour tour and keeps everyone on schedule throughout the morning, cuing them when it is time to get back on the bus.

The next stop on the tour is Pioneer Park, a 44-acre historically themed park offering a walk through local history and opportunities for recreation, shopping and dining. Donnie Hayes, the park's manager, often greets each newcomers tour group personally, welcoming them and describing what the park has to offer.

"We have always had a wonderful partnership with our many military members. We host a military appreciation day, partner with all branches to offer Memorial Day and 4th of July celebrations, and seek to be another reason why Alaska is home to some of the best military personnel around," Hayes said.

During the tour, the guide describes points of interest along the way, including the Fairbanks Curling Club, Big Dipper Ice

See TOUR on page 3

WEEKEND WEATHER

Friday



Mostly sunny. High: 69F.

Saturday



Chance of showers. High: 68F.

Sunday



Chance of showers. High: 61F.

IN BRIEF

It's an invisible enemy. At least that's how Soldiers felt about COVID-19 after their six-week stint at the overburdened University Hospital in Newark, New Jersey, where they said it was more like a warzone.

Read more on page 5.

Nutrition Corner: Nutrition 101

The nutrition facts of food products contain information that allows you, as the consumer, to make informed and healthy choices. Frequently, the food label is overlooked but it contains all the information you need to ensure you are getting the most bang for your buck in the nutrition department.

Before you look at anything, always check out the serving size. Everything listed on that label is relative to the portion size. Even items that look like they are single serving items, some varieties of chips for example, may have two to three servings.

Next, scope out the calories. This is of particular importance if you are trying to manage your

weight. The daily values can be used as a guide but note that they are based on a 2,000 calorie diet, which may be more or less than you need. None the less, they are a good snapshot at what nutrients the product contains. If a product contains less than 5 percent of the daily value in a particular nutrient, it is considered “low” in that nutrient. Conversely, for something to be considered “high” in a nutrient, it must have more than 20 percent of the daily value in a nutrient.

As a general rule of thumb, aim for low in cholesterol, saturated fat, trans fat and sodium; and aim for high in vitamin, minerals and fiber. Diets high in saturated fat and trans fat can increase your

risk for heart disease. High sodium diets can lead to high blood pressure. Don’t confuse “reduced sodium” with “low sodium.” Products that are low in sodium must have less than 140 milligrams of sodium per serving while reduced sodium products only have 25 percent less than their original product. A good example of how this can be misleading is soy sauce. Next time you are in the grocery store, check it out. You will find that the reduced sodium variety is indeed reduced but is still very high in sodium.

Featured Food
Greek yogurt. Calorie content varies depending on the brand and ingredients. Aim for yogurts that

are low in fat with no sugar added. A great option is to purchase plain, fat free Greek yogurt and add your own fruit or use it as a sour cream alternative.

Featured Recipe
Banana and Berry Smoothie

Ingredients
1 1/2 frozen banana
1/4 cup orange juice
1 cup strawberries
1 cup blueberries
1 cup plain, fat free Greek Yogurt
1/2 cup skim milk

Instruction
Place all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth. Enjoy!

History Snapshot: Memorializing people of our past – Building 4066, Gardiner Hall



2nd Lt. Ruth M. Gardiner, 20 May 1914 to 26 July 1943, served in the Alaskan Theater of Operations with Flight A of the 805th Medical Air Evacuation Transport Squadron, and was the first Army nurse to be killed in a theater of operations during World War II when her MEDEVAC flight went down near Naknek, Alaska. During the previous 15 months, Gardiner was one of six AIREVAC nurses in Alaska that compiled 3,500,000 air miles, evacuating 2,518 cases, all without injury or loss of a single patient. These sick and wounded resulted from the Japanese occupation of the Aleutians in World War II.

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.tricare-online.com
Health Net: www.tricare-west.com, 1-844-8676-9378

Stay Vigilant
As COVID-19 numbers continue to climb, it is important to know many new cases cannot be traced to another COVID-19 positive person. This means community spread is here and it is important to be diligent whenever outside the home. Wash hands. Wear a mask. Avoid crowded areas.

Body Composition Testing
Take a quick body composition test to determine body fat percentage and work with our Army Wellness Center to track progress. Call 907-361-2234 to schedule an

appointment.

Over The Counter Medications
Bassett Army Community Hospital Pharmacy offers beneficiaries the ability to receive free over the counter medications. Items such as fever/pain reducers, antibiotic cream, cold and allergy remedies, lice treatment and vitamin D are available. Medicines are subject to availability and families are restricted to a maximum of four items per week. A full list of medications is available at the pharmacy.

Appointments From Home
In partnership with TRICARE, PM Pediatrics is offering virtual appointments for TRICARE beneficiaries from birth through 26 years old. Visit with a pediatrician using your smart phone, tablet or computer from anywhere. Common illness that can be treated are sprains and strains, respiratory infections, coughs, skin rashes, sinus infections and pink eye. Get started by downloading the PMP Anywhere app or by visiting pm-pediatricsanywhere.com.

Fort Wainwright Family Advocacy Program mini-series

Running through Aug. 19, the Family Advocacy Program will be presenting a five video, mini-series on the different Love Languages.

Each video will range from 5 to 10 minutes in length, posted on the Army Community Service Facebook page, at <https://www.facebook.com/ftwainwrightacs>, Wednesdays and Fridays, at 12:30 p.m.. Special Love Language trivia will be randomly posted on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

“The Family Advocacy Program is providing the tools to enable couples to be healthy and

grow in their relationships,” Kristen Gonzalez, said. “We hope this series will help our Military community learn the importance of communicating their emotional needs. Knowing their own Love Language is important, but knowing their partner's will help strengthen and form healthy relationships.”

Those who may want a copy of the "5 Love Languages" Military addition, to follow along with the series, can pick a copy up from the Family Advocacy Program Office, at 3414 Rhineland Ave on Fort Wainwright.

ALASKA POST

The Interior Military News Connection

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FORT WAINWRIGHT
SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ASSAULT HOTLINE

907-353-7272

DOD-SAFE HELPLINE

877-995-5247

The Chaplain’s Corner For the Love of God

Chaplain (Capt.) Jaf-fet Duquela
1st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, 25th Aviation Regiment
Chaplain

To be placed in a state where God is one’s only real hope and salvation is a humbling experience. But do not take that statement lightly. Because what one must go through in order to get to that state places us in a sense of desperation. Both internal and external circumstances forces one to go into a place in which things/people that comfort us and distract us from our realities is removed from our lives; God

will let the things/people that bring us comfort fail us so that he may become the only thing we depend on. And in moments like these one feels weak and vulnerable, and with these feelings, we find ourselves pleading for God to help us through said crises. But it is in times like these that our faith is not only tested, but is forged and becomes stronger. One’s own trying experiences is where one comes to the realization that God is our rock, and that our hope comes from something bigger than our circumstances; and that is why it is

called mercy. The Bible says: “For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken” (Psalm 62:1). In the book of Psalms, David was struggling with his faith. He felt like his faith wasn’t growing. He was in a state of vulnerability and fragility. And this is how we often feel when we are learning to put our full trust in God. When we are in the process of making God the only thing we trust, God tests our faith in what seems to be the most inconve-

nient moments. What-ever adversity we are facing in that point and time; it can often become overwhelming for us to deal with it on our own. As soldiers, we are trained to not be weak, but strong in the physical and in the mental. We are trained to not be fragile, but as tough as stone. We are trained to face any challenge head on and not panic, but assess every challenge to the best of our abilities. But let’s be honest, it can be hard. It can be overwhelming. It can send us into a state of anxiety and panic. It can make us feel like weak of heart and



mind. Reality check. It hurts to have hope, especially when life disappoints you, especially when life gets in your way, especially when there is continuous friction against your own brokenness, especially it is rigged against your heart. God is saying to you;

he sees you trying. Will you trust in him? Will you trust him enough to rise when you feel like Life Alert because you’ve fallen and you can’t get up? To praise him when it feels like you have physically exhausted? He sees you trying, but do you trust him?

New Quality of Life Task Force tackling six priorities to help Soldiers, Families

Joseph Lacdan
Army News Service

The Army’s new Quality of Life Task Force has reached full operational capability, the service announced Thursday, as it continues to tackle six priorities to improve conditions for Soldiers and their families. To address one of those priorities, increasing access to childcare, the Army will open 10 new child development centers by fiscal year 2025, said Lt. Gen. Jason Evans, the Army’s G-9. Evans and other Army leaders make up the task force, which was formally chartered in March to also improve housing, health care, spouse employment,

permanent change-of-station moves, and upgrading the quality of living for Soldiers stationed in remote locations. “We’re focused on making life better for Soldiers and families wherever the Army takes them,” Evans said during the task force’s first media event to discuss its ongoing efforts. “We still have more work to do.” Through the help of the task force, child youth services have also provided incentives for care providers and added 100 more of them in the past year, Evans said. Additionally the Army will expand the Army Fee Assistance program, which provides financial aid to military families to offset ci-

vilian child care costs when on-post child care is not available or suitable. The service has been testing a pilot program in Maryland and Virginia to increase the number of civilian child care providers by expediting the certification process. Helen Roadarmel, program manager for the Army’s Child, Youth and School Services, said about 77 percent of the Army’s CDCs have reopened after being closed due to the COVID-19 virus. Children of care providers and mission-essential workers will receive first priority for enrollment, followed by single and dual military parents, and service members with working spouses. During the pan-

demic, centers remained open on a limited basis with priority given to families of mission-essential personnel. **Housing inspectors** Despite challenges under the COVID-19 conditions, task force leaders remained confident they can continue improving quality of life standards for Army families. To address the service’s top quality-of-life priority, housing, the Army has hired an additional 114 workers who will provide quality assurance and help oversee privatized housing inspections. “I can tell you that with great confidence that we, the Army, had a much better oversight and

management of the product that the partners are providing to our Soldiers and their families,” said Greg Jackson, chief of the Army Housing Division. “At the installation level, the housing offices have been equipped and trained and are continuing to be trained on providing quality assurance.” During PCS moves, Maj. Gen. Michel Russell, the assistant G-4, said the Army’s installation transportation offices track the health of contracted movers and whether Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines are followed. The speed and efficiency of moves are monitored

See LIFE on page 4

TOUR

Continued from page 1

Arena, an entertainment venue and sports arena called the Carlson Center, Fairbanks Memorial Hospital, local public schools, and shopping areas featuring both local shops and national chain stores, among other places. This portion of the tour is particularly useful for those who may choose to get their groceries off post, need to visit a hardware store or simply want to take advantage of what the local community has to offer. The tour guide also shares information about various events and festivals that happen throughout the year, such as the Yukon Quest International Sled Dog Race and the Golden Days Festival. Soldiers from the garrison are often asked to participate as volunteers for such events. For example, during the Yukon Quest, they may serve as dog handlers at the start or finish line for teams of up to 14 rowdy, four-legged athletes. Additionally, the guide will present local and state trivia – such as the fact that the coldest temperature ever recorded in the city of Fairbanks is -66° F – and explain the Alaska Native influence on local place names. Gadapee wrote the majority of the script

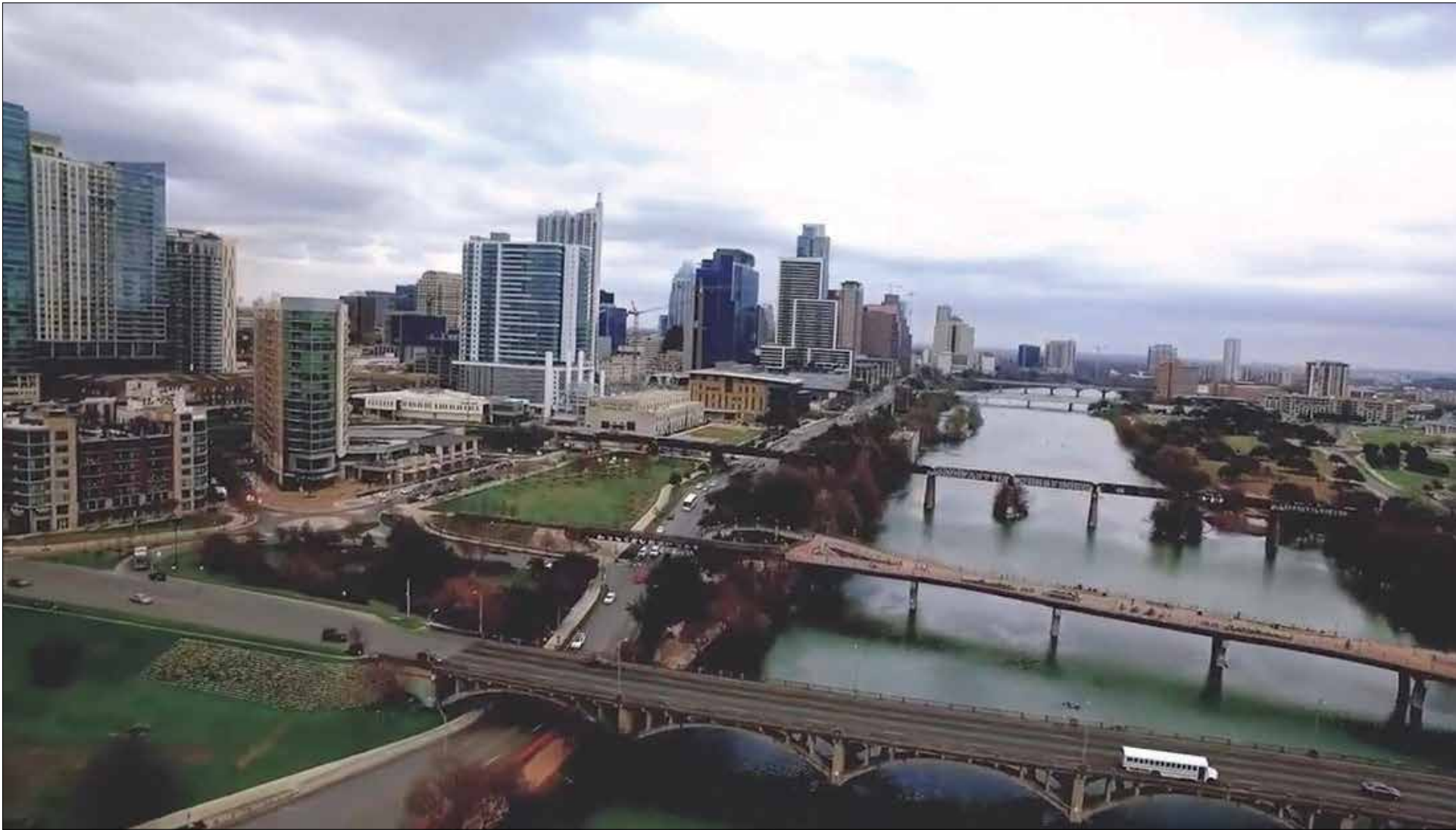
for the tour guide, a role that cycles among the staff of Explore Fairbanks and the Chamber of Commerce, and as the bus passes by a portion of the Chena River, the guide will share the following information: “A further note about rivers ... many rivers in Alaska end with the ‘na’ syllable – Chena, Nenana, Tanana, etc. Na is the Athabascan word meaning ‘river.’ There are also many rivers which end in ‘nika’ – Chatanika, Tetlanika – which is the Athabascan word meaning ‘small river.’” That is something the average newcomer to Fort Wainwright is unlikely to learn on his or her own. The next stop on the tour is the Museum of the North on the University of Alaska Fairbanks campus. The guide gives the tour participants an overview of the programs at the university and opportunities for Soldiers and Family members to take classes. Following that, participants are given free time to wander the museum, which features exhibits on Alaska’s mammals, along with Alaska Native culture, the aurora, gold mining and other topics. Participants only have time for a quick look at the museum’s offerings, but since admission is free for

active duty personnel and their Families, they are more than welcome to come back on their own at no cost. Back outside the museum, the participants are directed to an interpretive sign that points out the location of various mountains that can be seen in the Alaska Range. The guide also discusses the multi-use recreational trails on campus that allow running, hiking, biking and cross-country skiing, as well as the campus’s botanical garden and Large Animal Research Station, which enables visitors to get an up-close look at muskoxen, a unique Arctic mammal. The final stop on the tour is Creamer’s Field Migratory Bird Refuge. This is a popular recreational site close to town with miles of walking trails and interpretive signs describing the local flora and fauna. The guide explains to the tour participants how the refuge is actually an integral resource in reducing bird strikes at both Fairbanks International Airport and Fort Wainwright by providing migratory birds a temporary stopping place on their long journey north for the summer. This stop concludes the tour, and Soldiers and their Families then return to Fort

Wainwright. As many service members have experienced firsthand, a move to a new duty station can be extremely stressful and chaotic. With learning the ropes of a new job, navigating around post, and settling their families into a new home and children into new schools and activities, it can be months or longer before they get to take a breath and explore their surroundings. In a remote duty station such as an overseas post or rural central Alaska, the stress can be multiplied greatly, and exploring the local community can seem

overwhelming. Danny Wallace, the director of the Plans, Analysis and Integration Office at Fort Wainwright said that is why the tour was initiated. “This event allows for new arrivals to immediately be introduced to the local community and what it has to offer. This is a phenomenal hands-on experience that allows them to both meet local community leaders and actually participate in a hosted tour of the town. I think this sets the stage for a great experience for Soldiers and their Families as they arrive at Fort Wainwright

and Fairbanks.” Gadapee values the partnership between the various civic and business organizations that enable the tour guides “to help spotlight our community’s history and culture. We’ve been able to share Fairbank’s Golden Heart spirit with Soldiers and their Families by sharing ‘insider knowledge’ from locals. Whether it be a welcome from the city Mayor, visits with staff from UAF’s Military and Veterans Services office, to visiting local attractions, we hope to share information, which helps Fairbanks feel like home.”



The Austin-based Software Factory is a first-of-its-kind concept for the Army that will leverage a train-with-industry pipeline to empower Soldiers and Civilians to scope and solve problems with modern software practices. (Army Futures Command)

AFC announces 'Software Factory' in Austin

Army Futures Command

U.S. Army Futures Command announced the establishment of the first Soldier-led Software Factory today. The Austin-based Software Factory is a first-of-its-kind concept for the Army that will leverage a train-with-industry pipeline to empower Soldiers and Civilians to scope and solve problems with modern software practices.

This new capability will allow units to act faster and mitigate unforeseen risk inherent in multi-domain operations. It will teach Soldiers and Civilians how to solve Army problems with cloud technology and modern software, and to better prepare Soldiers for disconnected warfare in 2028 and beyond. “The capability to develop software at the lowest

tactical levels will help us provide better software products,” said Gen. John M. Murray, commanding general of Army Futures Command. “We anticipate long-term cost savings and expect the Software Factory to help us maintain a competitive advantage across Army modernization efforts.” This new software factory complements the Army’s digital talent initiative

based at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Penn. Army professionals will attend data science and engineering graduate programs, and 12 Soldiers will attend a boot-camp-style fellowship for cloud technicians to help solve Army problems through agile and secure software development processes. “All of these efforts will develop and sustain the digital talent the Army needs

for the future,” Murray said. “The CMU-trained engineers will build the data environment the Army needs. The technicians will maintain that environment. And the Software Factory will develop the skills to operate in that environment.” For additional information, contact Army Futures Command Communications at 512-809-5131 or AFCmedia@mail.mil.

LIFE

Continued from page 3

and appointments are tracked. “Quality of life is something that can't be done overnight and it certainly has been a challenge in 2020 because of COVID-19,” Evans said. “We've worked hard to continue to provide critical quality of life resources for Soldiers and families.”

Additionally more than five percent of all work orders will be randomly inspected. Jackson said home inspections will do more than a simple visual examination. A thorough evaluation of the functionality of home systems will be implemented including air conditioning, heating, and electrical.

Housing officers received special training on how to identify and locate different mold conditions and how to remove them, Jackson said. He added that Army housing has been working to solve any potential problems with homes before a resident moves in. To further keep residents informed, a mobile application is being developed that allows barracks and housing tenants to track work orders and gain access to the fall 2019 housing survey results.

In February, the Defense Department released the Military Housing Privatization Initiative Tenant Bill of Rights to help residents identify their entitlements as well

as standardize customer service at each duty station. Army Materiel Command and Army Installation Management Command lead the effort to improve the quality of Army housing, along with representatives from the Army Staff and each of the service’s major commands. If residents still have concerns, they can call a resident hotline as well as report problems through a Soldier’s chain of command.

Spousal employment
To help Army spouses find adequate employment, the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act increased the reimbursable amount for spouse relicens-

ing costs to \$1,000. However, spouses still face challenges when transitioning to another state during PCS moves. Spouses who received a professional license in one state often must re-license or earn another certification in the new state at a cost. “What we need there is reciprocity,” Evans said. “And then all of the states to adapt that. We have the governors that have been engaged in this and to some degree, some of them have the laws implemented for state licensing and reciprocity, but it's not across the board. So that is one thing we'd like to see happen.” The Civilian Employment Assignment Tool has also expanded its reach

to help spouses who are non-appropriated fund employees make a non-competitive transfer to other duty stations at the same pay grade and skill level. The Army approved assignment incentive pay for Soldiers stationed at some locations in Alaska and is working to improve educational opportunities like advanced high school courses through virtual education at Fort Irwin, California, and Fort Polk, Louisiana, Evans said. The use of telemedicine and virtual healthcare during the pandemic, particularly in primary care, has also helped assure that Soldiers continue to receive a high standard of treatment, Evans said.



Family members arrive at the Fort McCoy Child Development Center on June 16, 2020, at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin. The center, along with the Fort McCoy School Age Center/Youth Center, reopened June 15 after having had to close for the installation's COVID-19 pandemic response. The Army announced the full operational capability of its Quality of Life Task Force July 16. One of the task force's priorities includes increasing access to the Army's CDCs. (Courtesy photo)

August 7, 2020

‘Verge of collapsing’: Soldiers describe initial fight against COVID-19

Thomas Brading
Army News Service

It’s an invisible enemy. At least that’s how Soldiers felt about COVID-19 after their six-week stint at the overburdened University Hospital in Newark, New Jersey, where they said it was more like a warzone.

They worked countless hours to assist beleaguered civilian doctors and nurses. From the frantic hallways in over-capacitated hospitals to quiet moments at a patient’s bedside, holding their hand as they passed away alone, they said.

While there were no bombs or gunfire, the infectious disease still mounted attacks as exhausted healthcare workers hurried to save lives.

Starting in March, the Army deployed thousands of Soldiers to help healthcare providers nationwide.

“Our integration was seamless,” said Maj. Erin Velazquez, following her unit’s warm reception by the hospital staff. “We were greeted with open arms, and we made sure to have the greatest impact possible in all areas [of the hospital].”

Velazquez commanded Urban Augmentation Medical Task Force 332-1, one of the Army Reserve’s 15 task forces that were initially sent to Newark and elsewhere to battle the disease. And now, as cases in the first locations subside, new hotspots have surfaced in southern and western states, with Soldiers preparing to assist again.

The 85-member task forces have critical care personnel who have rapidly deployed across the country, in what has become the largest domestic mobilization in Army Reserve history, they said.

Each team is made up of various medical specialties from doctors and nurses to supply and administrative support. At the height of its overall response in April, U.S. Northern Command had more than 9,000 military medical personnel, including those teams, in the fight.

‘At its breaking point’

Early in the pandemic, New Jersey became one of the country’s worst-hit states by the virus and is also where UAMTF 332-1, an arm of the 332nd Medical Brigade out of Nashville, Tennessee, called home for nearly six weeks.

Other units were sent to similar critical areas, including New York City; Baton Rouge, Louisiana;



Members assigned to the 44th Medical Brigade line up in formation to receive an award certificate at the Javits Convention Center in New York City, before their departure ceremony, May 24, 2020. Starting in March, the Army deployed thousands of Soldiers to help healthcare providers nationwide. More Soldiers have now been called up to assist in other parts of the country. (Photo by Senior Airman Xavier Navarro)

and Seattle.

By the time UAMTF 332-1 arrived on April 14, the Garden State had roughly 70,000 confirmed cases and more than 2,800 deaths. As with other COVID-19 breeding grounds, the exact tally was hard to count and growing by the hour.

It was spring, and the University Hospital in Newark “was at its breaking point,” said Staff Sgt. Mauricio L. Pena, UAMTF 332-1’s top enlisted Soldier and a respiratory therapist. As cases surged, many hospitals had run out of beds to care for the sick.

In those days, the academic hospital was stretched beyond its limits. “I was taken aback and saddened by the conditions in New Jersey,” he said during a media event Wednesday. “The emergency department was overwhelmed, even though the hospital [staff] was moving as fast as they could.”

The virus had outpaced their best efforts. The hospital’s emergency room was jam-packed with sick people, many of whom with coronavirus-like symptoms. The need for care didn’t slow down even if the hospital reached its capacity, so many patients were forced into the hallways of the emergency room.

“I knew at that moment we had to use our skill set and training to make a posi-

tive, impactful contribution,” Pena said, regarding the Reserve troops’ unique ability to combine military training with their civilian medical experience.

Upon arrival, the Soldiers in Newark also noticed that much of the undermanned staff were visibly burned out. The countless, long days at the hospital had worn them down, he said. “They were on the verge of collapsing.”

Before the task force arrived, doctors and nurses had already worked for weeks at a time – even after many of their colleagues tested positive for the virus, which reduced the number of healthcare workers.

But with each passing day, things inched from chaotic back to stable. On May 20, the unit’s last day at University Hospital, the facility was running smoothly again, Velazquez said.

The cohesion between the Soldiers and hospital staff was immediate, she added. Once integrated, they worked side-by-side to provide support to more than 100 COVID-19 positive patients daily.

Along the way, UAMTF 332-1 went on to assist all around the hospital. The task force didn’t only provide care to COVID-19 patients, but also helped give mental health support to the hospital staff, patients, and other Soldiers,

Velazquez said, adding they also volunteered with other daily tasks like N95 mask-fitting and sterilization.

“This was an exceptional mission that provided our Soldiers with the opportunity to support our most burdened communities in a time of great need,” Velazquez said. “Many lives were not only saved but forever touched by the collaborative impact between the Department of Defense and state health care professionals.”

In the epicenter

Ten miles from University Hospital across the Hudson River was the nation’s epicenter of the virus – New York City. That’s where the 44th Medical Brigade assumed the role of Task Force Silver Dragon, which oversaw more than 3,000 troops in medical units across six states as part of Federal Emergency Management Agency operations.

The task force was headquartered in a converted convention center in Manhattan, dubbed the Javits-New York Medical Station, where more than 500 service members treated nearly 1,100 patients, said Col. Kimberlee Aiello, the brigade commander.

Despite daily interactions with COVID-19 patients, service members only had a 0.05 percent

infection rate, Aiello said, adding not everyone was tested due to limited supplies.

“When we looked across the United States, [we] saw there were limited testing capabilities,” she said. “Therefore, we wanted to be good stewards of our nation’s resources, [so] we only [tested] those who were symptomatic for COVID-19.”

While normalcy returns to parts of the country, the battle against COVID-19 persists elsewhere. About 740 military medical and support personnel have been assigned this week to go to Texas and California in support of FEMA missions, U.S. Army North officials said in a news release Monday.

More troops are on prepare-to-deploy orders, according to Army officials, in case the demand for additional forces are needed in other hotbeds. And if called on again, the Reserve Soldiers will be able to tap into their real-world experience.

“COVID has not stopped. This is ongoing,” Aiello said. “We did a great job with what we knew at the time, and we learned from our partners on how to care for patients.”

“They should all be extremely proud of what they accomplished during this historic mission.”

The Hero of Signal Mountain: The Army’s Last World War II Medal of Honor Recipient

Lt. Col. Randall Stillinger

While driving the rental car up Signal Mountain outside of Chattanooga, Tennessee, my nerves get me wondering why I’m here. A late winter snowfall grows heavier as I climb into the hills, making Highway 27 wet and slippery. I passed a marker on the side of the road that caught my attention. With some extra time before my interview, I double-backed to check it out.

Standing in the wet grass, I brushed the snow off so I could read what it said. The sign provided a brief story of a heroic man and his actions during bloody battles on the European continent over 75 years ago. It marked a wooded park area named after Medal of Honor recipient Tech. Sgt. Charles H. Coolidge, who lives just a few

minutes away.

I’ve been privileged to meet several recipients of our nation’s highest award for valor in combat over the years. A chance meeting of Army Aviator Chief Warrant Officer 4 (Ret.) Michael J. Novosel at the Fort Rucker Officers Club during Flight School was my first opportunity. First Sergeant (Ret.) David McNeerney, also a veteran of the Vietnam War, was the second recipient I was honored to meet as we coordinated an AH-64 “Apache” familiarization flight for him. Both of these heroes have since passed away, but it was the landing of a one-of-a-kind civilian job, managing American Airlines’ Military and Veterans Initiatives program, that allowed me to meet about 55 of the 69 Medal of Honor recipients who are living today.

My mission in Chattanooga was twofold. Primarily it was to represent American Airlines, which sponsored the dedication ceremony for the National Medal of Honor Heritage Center that bears Coolidge’s name. My second mission was to interview one of two living Medal of Honor recipients from World War II, Coolidge himself. Having served in the same division, I wanted to tell the story of the last remaining of the 14 recipients who hailed from the 36th Infantry Division.

The Interview

I’m nervous for a few reasons. First, I’m about to meet one of two living recipients from our Greatest Generation. Ninety-six year old Marine Corps Chief Warrant Officer 4 (Ret.) Hershel “Woody” Williams being the other. Most remaining World

War II veterans are in their 90s. Some have reached 100 and beyond, but they are leaving us at an astounding rate nonetheless. Coolidge is a mentally tough man, but is physically fragile at 98-years old. His 99th birthday is right around the corner in August.

The second reason I’m nervous is that his life over the last 54 years has been less than easy. Showing symptoms of Multiple Sclerosis as early as 1966, and being officially diagnosed in the early 1970s, he has faced significant challenges far beyond the battlefields of Europe.

My conversations with his sons Charlie and John leading up to the interview gave me some insight into his physical condition. The disease caused him to start using a mobility device in

1983 and now he’s mostly confined to a bed with very few exceptions. I was warned that our conversation might not happen or last very long since he goes in and out of sleep during the day. I was uneasy because I felt I was intruding into the life of a legendary man, who may not want to be bothered with an interview.

Work Ethic

Coolidge was actually born on Signal Mountain in 1921, in the same area that he lives today. Life was not easy growing up in the Depression years, but the family always got by. His father operated a printing company that was subsequently handed down to each generation, and remains in the family today.

See HONOR on page 7

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Fort Wainwright Family & MWR

Weekly Events

August 8 - 15

8 Summer Reading Program
August 8 - September 1
Varies

Take on the Summer Reading Program all the way through September 1. Pick up books from the Post Library, log your reading sessions in the app, and earn prizes. Register today!
Post Library, Bldg 3700
Call 353-2642, registration required

8 B.O.S.S Paintball
Registration Deadline: August 8
9 a.m.

Join B.O.S.S. and Outdoor Recreation for a fun paintball competition on August 15! \$20 per person, price includes paint and equipment.
B.O.S.S., Bldg 1045
Call 353-7648, registration required

9 ATV Safety Course
Registration deadline: August 9
1 p.m.

Complete an ATV Safety Course on August 16. An ATV Safety Course is required to register for ATV Trips or check-out an ATV. Cost is \$15 per person. Face coverings required.
Outdoor Recreation Center, Bldg 4050
Call 361-6349/6350, registration required

12 Youth Sports & Fitness Workout Wednesday
August 12
Varies

Workout with Youth Sports & Fitness every Wednesday by checking out the video on the Wainwright MWR Facebook page. Keep an eye out for the Scavenger Hunt clues too!
Youth Sports & Fitness, Bldg 1045
Call 353-7482

14 Warrior Zone Movie Night
August 14
Doors open at 5 p.m.

Join us for movie night at the Warrior Zone! Doors open at 5 p.m. and movie starts at 6 p.m. Spaces are limited. Don't forget to grab a bite to eat! Must be 18+ to enter.
Warrior Zone, Bldg 3205
Call 353-1087



Ride the waves with ODR on August 16! Registration deadline is August 9. For more information, go to wainwright.armymwr.com.
@WainwrightMWR #WainwrightMWR

PROTECT

is necessary to say something. Leave any situation that makes you uncomfortable and notify the appropriate authorities. Always call 911 if you feel that the behavior or the item you observed presents an emergency, if not, contact the local law enforcement agency through their non-emergency numbers.
It is also appropriate to report the information to military law enforcement, counter intelligence agents or your chain of command. Be sure to accurately report as much information as you can regarding the

behavior or object that you observed. Identifying suspicious activity and reporting accurate timely information not only helps to protect you and your family but the larger community as well.
Most of us are proud of our military, government or law enforcement service or affiliation and show it with the way we dress or how we accessorize our vehicles with decals, license plate frames or personalized license plates. While being proud of who we are is noble, making ourselves visible because of it could bring unwanted attention.

Violent actors have used identifying clothing or items to target their victims. Simply thinking about and making an informed decision about what you wear or how you customize your car can go a long way towards protecting you and your family.
Active shooter incidents seem to dominate the news. They are terrifying and violent, but they can be survived. Understanding that there are always potential dangers around us, taking note of your surroundings and formulating plans in response to dangers go

a long way in increasing your survivability.
Remember that during an active shooter situation that you should Run, Hide, Fight. Run, if you can get away from the threat without putting yourself or others in danger, then do it. Hide, if you cannot depart the area due to the constraints of your environment, then find a place to hide and barricade yourself inside if possible. Fight, when all else fails and you find yourself confronted with a violent attacker, use everything at your disposal to reduce the threat such as throwing objects or striking them with items from your surroundings. Lastly, cooperate with all instructions given by law enforcement officers and understand that they will treat everyone as a potential adversary until they can confirm that you are not a threat.
As dangerous as these situations are, with a little thought and planning, they can

be survived.
Online security concerns may be the most difficult to deal with. The online world resides in our homes, workplaces and, quite frequently, in our pockets. It is important to understand that adversaries from criminals to terrorists can leverage your online information to their benefit.
Consider that the entire world may see the information you post online in social media outlets before you post and realize that information you post regarding your identity, location, relationships and affiliations can create an increased risk of identity theft, stalking or targeted violence.
Recommended online precautions include reviewing privacy settings and limit who can view your social media sites, avoiding posts which include your home or work address and phone numbers, limiting any reference, current or former to

military, government or law enforcement employment or military affiliation, avoiding detailed accounts of your day such as the time you leave for or return home from work, or routes you use for daily travel, and never allow applications on your electronic devices to geo-locate your whereabouts.
Although the events of the world give us reason to be concerned about our safety, there are several actions we can employ to reduce our risks. Making conscious decisions about how we appear, maintaining awareness of our surroundings, reporting suspicious activities, formulating plans in the event of a violent act, and protecting your online presence will make the world a much safer place for you, your family and your community.
No one should be more concerned with the safety and security of you and your family than you.

Continued from page 1

August 7, 2020

HONOR

Continued from page 5

His father, sticking to strong principles, never laid anyone off during those lean years. He paid them for a few hours, even if it was just to put a little food on their tables.

Coolidge worked at the shop as a teenager, learning the family business and a strong work ethic from his father. After the war, and after working for a while at the Veterans Administration, he rejoined his father and brother in the printing company as a bookbinder. Coolidge became a master at creating leather-bound books with ornate gold leaf designs along the edges and backbone. He made a name for himself as one of only a few people who had this unique skill and his handiwork contains the Hamilton County records inside the courthouse.

Coolidge's work in the industry continued for several more decades as he worked at the same printing company on a daily basis until 2005 at the age of 84. He kept coming to the office regularly until 2016 when he was 95.

War Stories

Having been drafted into the Army on June 16, 1942, Coolidge headed to Ft. McClellan in Alabama for Basic Training. It was at Camp Edwards in Massachusetts where he was assigned to M Company, 3rd Battalion, 141st Infantry Regiment of the historic 36th Infantry Division (Texas Army National Guard). In April of 1943, his unit shipped off to North Africa to prepare for the eventual invasion of Europe.

In September of that year, the 36th was the first U.S. combat unit on the European continent when they landed near Paestum, Italy to inaugurate the ensuing Battle of Salerno. After the beach landing, Coolidge and the division withstood numerous counterattacks to hold their ground, despite taking over 1,900 casualties. Four 36th Infantry Division Soldiers received the Medal of Honor for their actions during that battle alone.

The 36th fought vigorously across Italy over the course of the next several months. They were embroiled in battles at places called Anzio, Mount Lungo, San Pietro, the Rapido River, Monte Cassino and the eventual taking of Rome. It was in May of 1944 that Coolidge's actions for gallantry in Velletri earned him a Silver Star, an award that would be overshadowed by his actions in October of that same year.

John Coolidge, the youngest of his sons, said, "Dad has never been bashful about telling stories of his men and what they endured. As kids, we three boys heard a lot of his stories. Some had happy endings like when he asked the Germans to surrender (and they did). Others weren't quite so good."

On one occasion, he talked a buddy into going back to an aid station to get some coffee. On his way back out of

the house, he stepped out of the door only to be instantly killed by the shrapnel from an exploding German 88mm shell. Coolidge, who was following close behind, caught his body as it was thrown back into his arms by the concussion.

Another story tells of how he was determined to sleep in a bed on the ground floor of a house that his unit had taken shelter in. His Soldiers begged him to come down to the basement due to a continuous barrage of German gunfire. He finally gave into their pleas, walked down the stairs, and just as his head cleared the floor line, a round from a German 88mm made a direct hit on the back of the house. Shrapnel ripped holes throughout the bed he had been lying on just a few seconds before.

At Monte Cassino, Coolidge and his unit were ordered to climb the mountain and attack the monastery from the rear. When the unit got into place, they were notified that the attack had been called off. When he asked how they were supposed to get back to friendly lines, he was told that it was "every man for himself." It was dawn and he knew that the dangerous daylight mission required all of his senses to get his men back. As he went to remove the machine gun tripod off his back, his helmet fell off and clanked down the escarpment. The Germans, hearing the racket, opened fire on the helmet as it went down. Coolidge had a hard time hearing while wearing the helmet anyway, and opted not to wear one for the rest of the war, despite strong advice from others.

Earning the Medal of Honor

While many of the bloody battles fought by the 36th took place in Italy, it was in France where the 23-year old Coolidge conducted valorous actions that earned him a special place among just over 3,500 U.S. military service members.

A month after capturing Rome, the division was pulled off the line to help spearhead the Aug. 14, 1944 invasion of Southern France, known as "Operation Avalanche." As the division worked its way towards the German border, enemy resistance stiffened and the weather got worse as summer gave way to fall.

On Oct. 24, Coolidge's 12-man squad was tasked to clear several hills East of Belmont Sur Buttant near the German border. They met no resistance clearing Hill 623 and were told to dig in upon arrival at the top.

An enemy unit then came through the thick woods searching for the Americans. Coolidge calmly went out to meet them with one of his Soldiers, George Ferguson, a New Yorker who spoke enough German to get by. He told Ferguson to ask them if they wanted to surrender. During the conversation, Coolidge saw that one of the enemy hiding

behind a tree was getting ready to shoot. He instantly lifted and fired his Carbine first, taking out two Germans, and then "all hell broke out." The ensuing firefight lasted the better part of four days as they fought to hold the hilltop as ordered.

On the fourth day, German tanks rolled up the hill with more infantry behind. The lead tank was within 25-35 meters of Coolidge's position when the tank commander opened the hatch. Coolidge stood up and looked the tanker directly in the eye. The German then said, in perfect English, "You guys wanna give up?" Coolidge calmly responded, "I'm sorry, Mac. You've got to come get me." The tank's turret was turned towards where he was standing and fired, but narrowly missed.

The tank fired five times at Coolidge at that close range, missing each time. As the turret swung right, he went left, and vice versa. He used trees as a shield to prevent the shrapnel from tearing into him. When a bazooka that he found lying nearby didn't fire due to a missing battery, he started throwing grenades. He then went man to man, yelling, giving guidance and encouraging them all while throwing as many grenades as he could.

Unable to withstand the enemy's overwhelming force, Coolidge eventually ordered his squad to come off the hill, ensuring that he was the last one holding his position. It was later reported that he and his squad, which mostly contained new replacement Soldiers, killed 26 enemy and wounded over 60 on Hill 623. Coolidge was recommended for the Medal of Honor because of the leadership and courage that he showed in the face of the enemy.

In regards to the actions that earned him the medal, Coolidge said that he was saving his own life as well as others. "I didn't care about me," Coolidge said. "I cared about my men. I'd do anything for them."

He credits the strong religious faith of his family for surviving 22 months on the front lines of the war without being killed or wounded, like so many who became a casualty within weeks of arriving. He knew that his parents, who took their kids to church every Sunday, prayed for him daily.

When asked if he'd like to send a message to the men and women of the 36th Infantry Division, who still wear the same "T-Patch" that he wore 77 years ago, Coolidge thought for a little, then with quiet resolution, said "tell them that they can serve with pride."

Family Pride and Love

My time with Mr. Coolidge ended with sons Charlie and John bringing out the actual medal that was awarded to him in 1945 by Lt. Gen. Wade H. Haislip at an airfield near Dormstadt, Germany. I held it briefly before handing it to back to the rightful owner. His sons then placed it



Charles H. Coolidge, a World War II recipient of the Medal of Honor, holds the medal that was presented to him by Army Lt. Gen. Wade H. Haislip on June 18, 1945 in Dormstadt, Germany, on Feb. 21, 2020. Coolidge is one of only two living recipients of the Medal of Honor from World War II. (Lt. Col. Randall Stillinger)

around his neck, something that isn't done very much these days as his public appearances are extremely rare. I could tell that they remained tremendously proud of their dad and his accomplishments over the years.

The following day he was scheduled to join nine fellow recipients of the Medal of Honor for the dedication of the Charles H. Coolidge National Medal of Honor Heritage Center, whose mission is to educate future generations about the meaning behind the medal and the men (and one woman) who have received it. His sons speculated that it may be his last public appearance.

His son Charlie, himself a retired Lt. Gen. in the U.S. Air Force, later said that he'd asked his father if he still wanted to attend the dedication ceremony. He nodded yes. To be sure, he asked him one more time. He looked Charlie in the eye and said a firm "Yes!" They knew it was going to be a very special day for him, the whole family, the city of Chattanooga, and for everyone who traveled from out of town for the occasion.

After some time speaking to his sons, I took one final glance at the World War II hero on my way out of the house. He was lying in his hospital bed in what was once a living room with a full-time nurse by his side. A patriotic blanket with the colors of our nation helped keep him warm as he looked out over the same mountain where he was born. A flag pole was installed in the backyard so he could keep an eye on the colors that he and so many had fought, bled and died for.

During the two days spent getting to know Coolidge and his family, I saw the tremendous pride his sons felt for

their dad, pride in his military service, and pride in the medal with the blue ribbon that put their dad in an elite club of Americans. I could also feel their tremendous love for him as they provided exquisite care for the oldest living recipient of the Medal of Honor, especially considering the health struggles he has faced for the last five decades.

For those of us in military service, recipients of the Medal of Honor are our celebrities. They're our heroes (even though they don't like being called that), and the incredible stories of their heroism make them larger than life.

In all honesty, it's tough to witness firsthand the vulnerable side of those you look up to, but seeing the love and care provided to a 98-year old living legend was inspirational to say the least. A final salute was in order before I left the house and drove back down Signal Mountain, the long-time home of one of America's heroes.

Medal of Honor Citation

Leading a section of heavy machineguns supported by 1 platoon of Company K, he took a position near Hill 623, east of Belmont sur Buttant, France, on October 24, 1944, with the mission of covering the right flank of the 3d Battalion and supporting its action. T/Sgt. Coolidge went forward with a Sergeant of Company K to reconnoiter positions for coordinating the fires of the light and heavy machineguns. They ran into an enemy force in the woods estimated to be an infantry company.

T/Sgt. Coolidge, attempting to bluff the Germans by a show of assurance and boldness called upon them to surrender, whereupon

the enemy opened fire. With his carbine, T/Sgt. Coolidge wounded 2 of them. There being no officer present with the force, T/Sgt. Coolidge at once assumed command. Many of the men were replacements recently arrived; this was their first experience under fire. T/Sgt. Coolidge, unmindful of the enemy fire delivered at close range, walked along the position, calming and encouraging his men and directing their fire.

The attack was thrown back. Through 25 and October 26, the enemy launched repeated attacks against the position of this combat group but each was repulsed due to T/Sgt. Coolidge's able leadership. On October 27, German infantry, supported by 2 tanks, made a determined attack on the position. The area was swept by enemy small arms, machine-gun, and tank fire.

T/Sgt. Coolidge armed himself with a bazooka and advanced to within 25 yards of the tanks. His bazooka failed to function and he threw it aside. Securing all the hand grenades he could carry, he crawled forward and inflicted heavy casualties on the advancing enemy.

Finally it became apparent that the enemy, in greatly superior force, supported by tanks, would overrun the position. T/Sgt. Coolidge, displaying great coolness and courage, directed and conducted an orderly withdrawal, being himself the last to leave the position.

As a result of T/Sgt. Coolidge's heroic and superior leadership, the mission of this combat group was accomplished throughout 4 days of continuous fighting against numerically superior enemy troops in rain and cold and amid dense woods.