

# Alaska Army Guard MP keeps marksmanship skills sharp during TAG Match

134th Public Affairs Detachment

Dressed in his usual uniform but adding Kevlar body armor and a combat helmet, Alaska Army National Guard Spc. Carlos Polidura, a military police Soldier with the Military Police Ground Based Interceptor Security Company at Fort Greely, stood out.

His stern demeanor distinguished him from the rest of the competitors with his confidence on full display. He pulled out his pistol from his drop-leg holster ready to shoot his target as part of 2020's The Adjutant General Match marksmanship competition during the first weekend of August at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska.

The TAG Match is an annual event hosted by the Alaska National Guard that tests the participants' marksmanship skills under timed conditions.

Normally charged and responsible for



Alaska Army National Guard Spc. Carlos Polidura, Military Police Ground Based Interceptor Security Company, shoots a course of fire Aug. 2, 2020, during the 2020 Alaska National Guard Adjutant General Match at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. TAG Match is a marksmanship competition comprising several timed pistol and rifle events. (Photo by Spc. Marc Marmeto)

policing the areas of responsibility of the armed forces against all criminal activity by military or civilian personnel, Polidura said events like the TAG Match are something National Guard Soldiers can benefit from.

"There are skills that Soldiers should always practice," Polidura said. "Stuff like this helps remind people what skills — beside your job — you

need to know as a Soldier."

When range officials barked at the Soldiers to aim fire, Polidura had mere seconds to unholster his weapon from his waist, get his eyes locked on the target, and fire accurately.

"I was definitely nervous the first round," Polidura recalled. "After you shoot the first magazine and you hear all the rounds go off,

I don't feel nervous anymore."

Polidura noted that the TAG Match helps him with his job as a military police Soldier by keeping his skills sharp if the time ever comes to use his weapon. He said that just like his mother, who was a nurse, Polidura wants to do what he can to serve and help people anyway he can.

"I've been an MP for eight years."



Alaska Army National Guard Spc. Carlos Polidura is a military police Soldier serving in the Military Police Ground Based Interceptor Security Company, participating in a course of fire Aug. 2, 2020, during the 2020 Alaska National Guard Adjutant General Match at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. TAG Match is a marksmanship competition comprising several timed pistol and rifle events. (Photo by Spc. Marc Marmeto)

Polidura said. "I want to do what I can do with my time in the

military to help the community anyway I can."

## USAG Alaska DFMWR bids farewell to one of their own



The U.S. Army Garrison Alaska, Fort Wainwright community bid farewell to its Physical Fitness Center facility manager, Jasmine Henry, as she begins the next chapter in her career at Fort Carson, Colorado. Henry has worked within the Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation from February 2016 to August 2020. Her Civilian Service Commendation Medal citation reads, "Your dedication was shown through your exemplary leadership skills and your commitment to the success of the program, enhancing Fort Wainwright's mission in promoting resiliency and wellbeing. Your passion was evident by your devotion to the mission, which provided a strong positive impact on Soldiers, their Families and the Fort Wainwright community." (Photo by Daniel Nelson, USAG Alaska, Fort Wainwright Public Affairs)



**Soldiers and Families at Fort Wainwright can exercise at home with Army and Air Force Exchange Service's weekly BE FIT live workouts**

**Carina DeCino**

Army and Air Force Exchange Service Public Affairs

Need some Monday motivation? Soldiers and military Families at Fort Wainwright can put in some work as a military community during live BE FIT workouts on the Exchange's Facebook page at 9 a.m. each Monday.

BE FIT ambassadors Roy Montez and Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Sonja Berry host 20-minute workouts on Facebook at 11 a.m. CST every Monday. In addition, Soldiers, Airmen, retirees, veterans and military Family members can watch the series on the Exchange Facebook page.

The live workouts, which include interval training, core workouts, strength exercises and more, grew out of a desire to promote wellness during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"These BE FIT workouts remind Fort Wainwright Soldiers that staying fit is critical—especially during the pandemic," said Fort Wainwright general manager Gloria Sylvia. "Joining the Exchange workouts through Facebook fosters a sense of community and resiliency."

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### WEEKEND WEATHER

**Friday**



Patchy fog then mostly sunny. High: 72F.

**Saturday**



Mostly sunny then slight chance of showers. High: 74F.

**Sunday**



Sunny. High: 75F.

### IN BRIEF

The Army's collection of armed robotic combat vehicles showcased an "exceptional" ability to identify enemy positions after about a month of testing, but more development is still needed to improve battlefield precision, said Brig. Gen. Richard Coffman.

Read more on page 7



# Nutrition Corner: Perks of Coffee

Each morning, millions of people wake up with a cup of coffee. According to the Harvard School of Public Health, 54 percent of Americans age 18 or older drink coffee daily; spending over \$40 billion a year on coffee drinks. It’s a common consensus that coffee tastes great, but what other benefits might it have? Coffee has many potential health benefits for those who choose to drink it.

Preliminary studies suggest that coffee can decrease the risk of type 2 diabetes, while other studies indicate drinking coffee may reduce the risk of Parkinson’s disease. In the past, it was often believed that coffee contributed to heart disease. However, more recent scientific studies have shown people who drank more coffee actually had a lower risk of

heart disease than those who drank less. Coffee may also be protective for the liver. According to a study from the University of Scranton, coffee is actually the number one source of antioxidants in the American diet. It is always important to keep several things in mind when reviewing information about food and health. For coffee specif-

ically, health benefits are from the drink itself and not what is added to it. The potential protective factors are likely reduced if high amounts of cream, sugar or even non-dairy, oil-based cream – think of that bottle of French Vanilla “creamer” in the office fridge – is added. The average 16 ounce mocha has upwards of 300 calories with 15 grams of fat and 35 grams of sugar. Drinking

these daily can easily lead to weight gain. Most people know that weight gain is linked to many other diseases. On the other hand, plain black coffee has less than five calories. To reap the benefits of coffee drinking, limit the cream and sugar. It is reassuring to know that the world’s favorite drink just might have some health benefits after all.

# Tenant Bill of Rights represents ‘fulfillment of Army’s promise’

Military family housing residents may recall talk over the past year of a forthcoming tenant bill of rights that would articulate the DOD’s expectations for safe and properly maintained on-base homes. That document is now a reality. Secretary of Defense Dr. Mark T. Esper signed the document on May 1 after it was endorsed by the civilian-appointed leaders of each military branch. Last week, Installation Management Command issued a directive to inform military housing occupants Army-wide about it, to ensure they are aware of the 15 rights that will benefit them and the five tenant responsibilities they need to embrace while living on post. Army leaders have mentioned time and again over the past 18 months how the “team fumbled the ball” back then by not establishing an oversight plan or repercussions for unsatisfactory performance. The full Tenant Bill of Rights reads as follows: “The Department of Defense is fully committed to ensuring our nation’s most-valued resource – its military service members and their families – have access to safe, quality and well-maintained homes and communities on DOD installations. “The National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal 2020 set out 18 rights of military service members and their families (tenants) residing in privatized housing. The (DOD) commits to ensuring that privatized housing tenants receive quality housing and fair treatment from the Military Housing Privatization Initiative project owners (MHPI companies) that operate and maintain privatized housing. “It is paramount that residents receive the full benefit of each right. The DOD, through each of its military departments, will work diligently and expeditiously to develop the processes and procedures needed to implement these rights and make tenants aware of them. “(Some) of the rights set forth by

Congress pertain to legal matters that do not lend themselves to unilateral action by the department. To the extent it is not already the case, the military departments commit to working with the MHPI companies to incorporate these rights and procedures into appropriate project legal documents. In some cases, more work is required before the benefits of these rights are fully available to tenants.” The Department commits to providing the full benefit of the following 15 rights by May 1, 2020. 1. The right to reside in a housing unit and a community that meets applicable health and environmental standards. 2. The right to reside in a housing unit that has working fixtures, appliances and utilities and to reside in a community with well-maintained common areas and amenity spaces. 3. The right to a written lease with clearly defined rental terms to establish tenancy in a housing unit, including any addendums and other regulations imposed by the landlord regarding occupancy of the housing unit and use of common areas. 4. The right to a plain-language briefing, before signing a lease and 30 days after move-in, by the installation housing office on all rights and responsibilities associated with tenancy of the housing unit, including information regarding the existence of any additional fees authorized by the lease, any utilities payments, the procedures for submitting and tracking work orders, the identity of the military tenant advocate, and the dispute resolution process. 5. The right to have sufficient time and opportunity to prepare and be present for move-in and move-out inspections, including an opportunity to obtain and complete necessary paperwork.

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[Artist's Concept] Army researchers develop a reinforcement learning approach called Hierarchical Reinforcement Learning that will allow swarms of unmanned aerial and ground vehicles to optimally accomplish various missions while minimizing performance uncertainty on the battlefield. (Shutter-

# Army advances learning capabilities of drone swarms

U.S. Army CCDC Army Research Laboratory Public Affairs Army researchers developed a reinforcement learning approach that will allow swarms of unmanned aerial and ground vehicles to optimally accomplish various missions while minimizing performance uncertainty. Swarming is a method of operations where multiple autonomous systems act as a cohesive unit by actively coordinating their actions. Army researchers said future multi-domain battles will require swarms of dynamically coupled, coordinated heterogeneous mobile platforms to overwhelm enemy capabilities and threats targeting U.S. forces. The Army is looking to swarming technology to be able to execute time-consuming or dangerous tasks, said Dr. Jemin George of the U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command’s Army Research Laboratory. “Finding optimal guidance policies for these swarming vehicles in real-time is a key requirement for enhancing warfighters’ tactical situational awareness, allowing the U.S. Army to dominate in a contested environment,” George said. Reinforcement learning provides a way to optimally control uncertain agents to achieve multi-objective goals when the precise model for the agent is unavailable; however, the ex-

isting reinforcement learning schemes can only be applied in a centralized manner, which requires pooling the state information of the entire swarm at a central learner. This drastically increases the computational complexity and communication requirements, resulting in unreasonable learning time, George said. In order to solve this issue, in collaboration with Prof. Aranya Chakraborty from North Carolina State University and Prof. He Bai from Oklahoma State University, George created a research effort to tackle the large-scale, multi-agent reinforcement learning problem. The Army funded this effort through the Director’s Research Award for External Collaborative Initiative, a laboratory program to stimulate and support new and innovative research in collaboration with external partners. The main goal of this effort is to develop a theoretical foundation for data-driven optimal control for large-scale swarm networks, where control actions will be taken based on low-dimensional measurement data instead of dynamic models. The current approach is called Hierarchical Reinforcement Learning, or HRL, and it decomposes the global control objective into multiple hierarchies - namely, multiple small group-level

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# 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 pmppediatricsanywhere.com.

# ALASKA POST

The Interior Military News Connection

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# The Chaplain’s Corner

## Can we find peace today?

**Chaplain (Maj.) Daryl Densford**  
U.S. Army Garrison  
Alaska Deputy Garrison Chaplain

If you were paying attention to history last week, you noticed that 6 August was the 75th anniversary of the dropping of the atom bomb on Hiroshima, Japan. This bombing began the process of ending the war with Japan, saving millions of lives according to some scholars. It was a significant event in history. Imagine how it must have been for people living that history. Imagine the pilot and other crew members of the Enola Gay who launched that day to drop the bomb on Hiroshima. Imagine what they must have thought as they looked back and saw the explosion, then later likely viewing the pictures

of the destruction and death. Obviously, that is part of war, not just hitting the targets but the unintended and unfortunate collateral damage that comes with it. Imagine how those airmen must have felt at the time.

Right in the midst of this scene was a chaplain, Chaplain William Downey of the 509th Composite Group, who was right there with them during that time. We do not have much information on what he did in the way of religious support or counseling, but we do have a recording of the prayer that he prayed with the crew of the Enola Gay before they took off on 6 August 1945:

“We pray Thee that the end of the war may come soon and that once more we may know peace on earth.

May the men who fly this night be kept safe in Thy care and may they be returned safely to us. We shall go forward trusting in Thee knowing that we are in Thy care now and forever in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.”

Chaplain Downey prayed for an end to the war, he prayed for peace. Isn’t that what we are all seeking? Certainly as chaplains, but also as service members and Families living in a military setting, we strive for peace. We long for peace. But it seems like, especially for those of us in the military, peace never comes because we are always leaning forward to our next deployment or our next assignment when we are involved in war-fighting and preparing for war-anything but peace. While we

know that the military exists to restore peace, to make peace, living in the military we are always looking toward the next war. For many people, it is a stressor, something that we cannot get away from because we live in uniform and we live on or near military installations.

But I want to encourage you with something. Just as Chaplain Downey prayed for peace with the crew of the Enola Gay, we can also pray for peace, and we should pray for peace, but there is a peace that we can have that we can never find in the world. There is a peace that Jesus promises. He said in the Christian New Testament in John 14:27, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives.



Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” This peace is a peace that outlives any earthly peace, any treaty, any temporary absence of war. It is a peace that we can even experience during war, in the midst of war. Chaplain Downey was there with the crew of the Enola Gay in the midst of war representing the peace that God brings. In the same way today, Jesus brings us peace, even in the midst of war. If you are strug-

gling, if you are stressed or anxious about what may be ahead for us in the military; or if you are wondering about what is going on in the world around us: not just the COVID-19 pandemic, but the protests and the riots, with it seeming like peace exists nowhere, that nobody is getting along; you can find peace in Jesus Christ. He promises you His peace. He offers you His peace. He brings to you his peace.

# TENANT

Continued from page 2

6. The right to report inadequate housing standards or deficits in habitability of the housing unit to the landlord, the chain of command and housing management office without fear of reprisal or retaliation, including the following forms: (A) unlawful recovery of, or attempt to recover, possession of the housing unit; (B) unlawfully increasing rent, decreasing services or increasing the obligations of a tenant; (C) interference with a tenant's right to privacy; (D) harassment of a tenant; (E) refusal to honor the terms of the lease; or (F) interference with the career of a tenant.

7. The right of access to a military tenant advocate or a military legal assistance attorney, through the housing management office of the installation of the department at which the housing unit is located to assist in the preparation of requests to initiate dispute resolution.

8. The right to receive property management services provided by a landlord that meet or exceed industry standards and are performed by professionally and appropriately trained, responsive and courteous customer service and maintenance staff.

9. The right to have multiple, convenient methods to communicate directly with the landlord's maintenance staff and to receive consistently honest, accurate, straightforward and responsive communications.

10. The right to have access to an electronic work order system through which a tenant may request maintenance or repairs of a housing unit and track the progress of the work.

11. With respect

to maintenance and repairs to a housing unit, the right to the following: (A) prompt and professional maintenance and repair; (B) to be informed of the required timeframe for maintenance or repairs when a request is submitted; and (C) in the case of maintenance or repairs necessary to ensure habitability of a housing unit, to prompt relocation into suitable lodging or other housing at no cost to the tenant until the (work) is completed.

12. The right to receive advice from military legal assistance on procedures involving mechanisms for resolving disputes with the property management company or property manager to include mediation, arbitration and filing claims against a landlord.

13. The right to have reasonable, advance notice of any entrance by a landlord, installation housing staff or members of the chain of command into

the housing unit, except in the case of an emergency or abandonment of the housing unit.

14. The right to not pay non-refundable fees or have application of rent credits arbitrarily held.

15. The right to expect common documents, forms and processes for housing units will be the same for all installations (across the DOD) to the maximum extent applicable without violating local, state and federal regulations.

“With respect to the three remaining rights – access to maintenance history, process for dispute resolution and withholding of rent until disputes are resolved – the DOD will continue to work with MHPI companies and, as necessary, Congress to ensure the benefits of these rights are fully available. While the department develops standardized, formal processes for these rights, service members and

their families will be able to leverage the support available from their respective military branches to address and resolve relevant housing issues. Tenants seeking assistance should continue to engage their housing office, installation leadership or chain of command.”

The five tenant responsibilities are as follows:

1. Prompt Reporting. The responsibility to report in a timely manner any apparent environmental, safety or health hazards of the home to the landlord and any defective, broken, damaged or malfunctioning building systems, fixtures, appliances or other parts of the home, the common areas or related facilities.

2. Care for the Home. The responsibility to maintain standard upkeep of the home as instructed by the housing management office.

3. Personal Conduct. The responsibility to conduct one-

self as a tenant in a manner that will not disturb neighbors, and to assume responsibility for one's actions and those of a family member or guest in the housing unit or common areas, including the responsibility not to engage in any inappropriate, unauthorized or criminal activity in the home or common areas.

4. Access by Landlord. The responsibility to allow the landlord reasonable access to the rental home in accordance with the terms of the tenant lease agreement to (for) necessary repairs in a timely manner.

5. Rules and Guidelines. The responsibility to read all lease-related materials provided by the landlord and to comply with the terms of the lease agreement, lease addenda and any associated rules and guidelines.

# FIT

Continued from page 1

Each video begins with a short introduction, then Montez describes each exercise before he and Berry lead viewers on stretching. During the workout, Montez pauses to rest, provides advice and answers questions from the online audience.

“It’s like having a free trainer,” said Berry, the Exchange’s assistant director for public health and food safety. “It demonstrates the Exchange’s commitment to fitness and healthy lifestyles.”

The Exchange’s BE FIT initiative highlights better-for-you dining grab-and-go options and provides an assortment of fitness gear and wellness services. The program empowers military customers, their families and the broader military community to make healthy lifestyle choices.

The community is encouraged to follow the Fort Wainwright Exchange’s Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/WainwrightExchange>. For more BE FIT choices, visit the Exchange’s community Hub.

# Remaining vigilant against terrorism

**William Christina**  
USAG Stuttgart Antiterrorism Officer

August is Antiterrorism Awareness Month. And now, more than ever, your vigilance is required to protect us and our mission.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting civil unrest that has been affecting the global population, we must remember that terrorism continues to be a growing threat, both abroad and at home.

How can we mitigate this? The best protection that we have is you—the “eyes and ears” of our community—utilizing constant vigilance and monitoring daily activities where we live and work.

Always pay attention to your surroundings, and if you observe something suspicious or questionable, report it.

It might be nothing, but it could also be everything and make all the difference.

**What is antiterrorism?**  
Antiterrorism is essentially, “the defense measures used to

reduce the vulnerability of individuals and property to terrorist acts.”

It deals primarily with risk assessment, the establishment of authorized actions to prevent terrorist developments, and various training procedures for preparation of the onset or consequences of a terrorist attack.

As terrorist threats become more internal in nature, the success of a robust antiterrorism campaign depends greatly on the community’s involvement and readiness to identify and report suspicious — and potentially terrorist — behavior and thwart the attack before it occurs.

**Consider the following activities and behavior as suspicious:**

A person or vehicle stays in the same place for an unusual length of time.

A parked car with the engine running — regardless of a person inside or not.

A person behaves strangely or exhibits unusual movements, looks out of place or is wandering aimlessly.

A person concealing an object or carrying a weapon or suspicious bag.

A person looking into cars, moving from car to car and/or trying to open door handles.

A person looking into windows of homes or forcibly entering a car or home.

A person running from a home for no apparent reason, especially at night.

A vehicle drives around your block frequently, slowing down and speeding up.

A vehicle without lights on, arriving or leaving at night.

A person who is asking questions about security forces, security measures or sensitive information.

A person who is drawing pictures or taking notes in a location that is not normally of interest to a tourist.

A briefcase, backpack, suitcase or package left unattended.

Chemical smells or fumes that worry you.

Many activities or behaviors can be considered suspicious, and there could be reasonable explanations for

some suspicious-looking activities or behavior. But by thinking things through, being observant and using common sense, you will be able to make a good judgment about whether an activity or behavior is suspicious. Your role as a concerned citizen is to report whatever you think is wrong or suspicious.

**What are the types of terrorism?**

State-Sponsored terrorism, which consists of terrorist acts on a state or government by a state or government.

Dissent terrorism, which are terrorist groups, which have rebelled against their government.

Left- and right-wing terrorists, which are groups rooted in political ideology.

Religious terrorism, which are terrorist groups, which are extremely religiously motivated; and

Criminal Terrorism, which are terrorist acts used to aid in crime and criminal profit.

**Enter the “lone wolf”**

The most dangerous, unpredictable and random element within the terror arena is the “Lone Wolf.” He or she may be a Local National, a recent immigrant, a disgruntled individual, or perhaps an extremist. He or she might be residing on post, among us; known, liked, and respected, but with an agenda of terror.

We call this the most dangerous of terrorists



First responders work together to triage “victims” during exercise Stallion Shake. To mitigate potential terrorist attack, August is Antiterrorism Awareness Month. (Photo by USAG Stuttgart Public Affairs)

because he or she is totally unpredictable and random in who, what, when or why they attack. It is most difficult to plan a counter or mitigation strategy for those aforementioned reasons. Situational awareness and observing “warning signs” are the only real effective mitigators in this scenario.

**The active shooter**

An active shooter incident can occur at any time and at almost any location. He or she is the perpetrator of a type of mass murder marked by rapidity, scale, randomness and often their suicide at the conclusion of the event. To counter, thwart or successfully mitigate an active shooter, one needs to have the proper education.

It is strongly recommended that personnel attend an Active Shooter Course such as A.L.I.C.E. Training or utilize the standard ‘Run, Hide, Fight’ template that is currently taught internationally.

**Cyber terrorism**

Our immediate concern with cyberterrorism are those acts of internet terrorism including deliberate large-scale disruption of computer networks down to the individual workstation or personal computer by means of viruses, worms, phishing and other malicious software. To combat cyberterrorism, education is once again a vital tool. The Cyber Awareness Course is an annual requirement. The link is <https://cs.signal.army.mil>.

**Learning more**

An excellent learning tool is Antiterrorism Level 1 Training, which is mandatory annual training for all U.S. Military and DOD civilian personnel. Though optional for them, dependents (Family Members) and contractor personnel are highly encouraged to take this training as well. AT Level I can easily be accessed through the Joint Knowledge Online portal at <https://jkodirect.jten.mil>.



Army developing mobile app to give Soldiers remote task management tools

Joseph Lacdan  
Army News Service

As part of the “This is My Squad” initiative, the Army is developing a new mobile app to help leaders better connect with squad members and manage everyday tasks.

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael A. Grinston recruited a team of 15 NCOs from a variety of career fields to give feedback and help build the app’s features. The app will be introduced at this year’s Association of the U.S. Army Annual Meeting in October.

The app development squad will work with Army Futures Command to explore mobile solutions for training management, counseling and sponsorship.

“We’re really looking at how do we give a squad leader an app – like a leader’s book – right there in the palm of their hands,” Grinston said during a virtual town hall at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, Monday night. “It does more than just record data.”

Grinston said he has had discussions about adding a virtual counseling feature that allows NCOs to document counseling sessions with Soldiers from their phones. The application will replace the Army Training and Doctrine Command’s “Squad Leader” app, which let NCOs and junior Soldiers access learning and



Staff Sgt. Nilberto Navarro, center, a squad leader in the 51st Transportation Company, briefs his Soldiers and performs pre-combat checks prior to the start of a training patrol July 29, 2015, in Sennelager, Germany. As part of the “This is My Squad” initiative, the Army is developing a new mobile app to help leaders better connect with squad members and manage everyday tasks. (Photo by 2nd Lt. Kyle Hensley)

development tools. No release date has been announced and development of the project will continue into the next fiscal year.

Under the “This is My Squad” initiative, or TIMS, Grinston said that leaders focus on the positive aspects of their Soldiers’ lives.

The effort involves getting to know squad members on a deeper level by building trust and learning their backgrounds. TIMS also emphasizes taking

ownership and responsibility while focusing on leadership.

“It’s not about one program. It’s about the leader in the middle,” Grinston said. “And if we could focus on leadership and then all these things that are happening around us get better. It’s really looking at a positive culture where we look at things in a positive way.”

Grinston said TIMS lays the foundation for Project

Inclusion. That Army-wide initiative focuses on eliminating practices that discriminate while striving to improve diversity and equity.

Building trust with other Soldiers makes difficult conversations on race possible, Grinston said.

“That’s what it means to be in your squad. You don’t shy away from those things that are hard to talk about,” Grinston said. “Because you trust that the

person on the other side is a valued member of your team. They’re not going to judge you; they’re going to help you if you’re going through difficult times and you’re comfortable talking to them.”

The deaths of Minnesota resident George Floyd and Spc. Vanessa Guillen from Fort Hood, Texas, recently brought the national discussions of race to the forefront. Army senior leaders have pledged for a greater examination of racial diversity, equity and inclusion within the Army’s ranks.

In June, the service announced it would start removing official photos from promotion boards to eliminate unconscious bias. The Army also called for a re-evaluation of race disparities within its legal justice system.

Grinston said he had emotional family discussions regarding diversity and inclusion with his 18-year-old daughter. Grinston said TIMS could apply to multiple squads in a Soldier’s life, including their family.

“There was a lot of questions about diversity,” he said. “She was struggling with it. That’s what it means to be in my family; it means we sit down and we talk about these difficult times and what’s going on. You don’t just ignore it.”

New Army Digital Garrison app serves as guide to on-post services

Devon Suits  
Army News Service

The Army has launched the new Digital Garrison mobile app that provides information and facilitates access to a full array of on-post services, as part of a partnership with the Army & Air Force Exchange Service, or AAFES.

The app, which can be downloaded on Android and Apple devices, provides users with secure access to facility information and other "quality-of-life" services by consolidating data from three related networks, said Scott Malcom, Army Installation Management Command public affairs director.

"It puts real-time installation information in everybody's pockets," Malcom said. "There are hundreds of thousands of people that access Army installations every day. Almost every one carries a cell phone. The app will add value to their time spent on an installation – whether it is to live, work, train, or play."

**App features**

Within the easy-to-use app, Soldiers, families, veterans, and civilians living or working at a Digital Garrison-enabled post can access resources about their local exchange; Army Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation program; and other services.

More than 60 installations are represented on the app, with plans to add more in future updates, Malcom said. Joint bases operated by other services and select garrisons without sites on the networks that feed the app will not be incorporated in the initial launch.

Users can customize the app to meet their needs. Digital Garrison will include an installation directory, gate locations and hours, fitness and recreation options, weather, event information, and more, he said.

Soldiers and families who are new to an area can also access in-processing and other newcomer material before a permanent

change of station, Malcom said.

“When they do move, they enjoy the continuity provided by an enterprise solution,” he added.

Digital Garrison also provides an in-app shopping function through ShopMyExchange.com, along with local AAFES shopping and restaurant details. It also features a mobile wallet function where shoppers can use their MILITARY STAR card.

Program officials are set to continually improve the app through daily updates, based on in-app feedback from users, in addition to regularly scheduled major updates.

One of the first major updates will include local commissary information and a link to Click2Go, the Defense Commissary Agency’s online grocery ordering portal and curbside pickup service, but only if the capability is available at a given installation.

“Feedback is very important to us,” Malcom said. "The app

includes a feedback portion where users can communicate and help us shape it going forward. This is not a ‘one and done.’ Users can count on the fact that we will continually optimize the app after launch."

Push notifications for emergencies are also an important feature of the app, Malcom said. For example, installation officials may send a pre-drafted notification during an active-shooter situation or at times of inclement weather.

Leaders will also have the ability to write their own customized messages and announcements to distribute to the force through the app after the first major update scheduled to occur at the end of August, Malcom said.

Residents of on-post housing can link to their installation’s privatized housing partner, he said. Personnel living in military housing will eventually have a similar capability.

Digital Garrison will become the Army enterprise mobile app for installations, Malcom added. Local app solutions will cease, ensuring all applicable garrisons comply with the Federal Information Security Management Act and other cybersecurity protocols.

**Bridging capabilities**

The partnership that brought the Digital Garrison app to life started in July 2019, Malcom said. At that time, the Exchange, IMCOM, and Army MWR were all developing apps to essentially do the same thing – provide information about on-post services or activities.

“The Exchange is honored to partner with the Army to ensure the 125-year-old Exchange benefit remains relevant to its communities,” said Karen Cardin, AAFES senior vice president for customer experience.

The team released a

Digital Garrison beta version in January, which fueled a more significant test of it in early March. During the limited user evaluation, a total of 10 installations throughout the U.S., including Hawaii and Alaska, and Germany were chosen by program officials to participate, Malcom said.

"During that process, we learned how garrisons should prepare their online data to optimize its presentation in the app," he said. “We learned that the better a garrison maintains their websites that feed Digital Garrison, the better the garrison is represented in it. The pilot allowed us to work out all the details and provide clear instructions to all the installations feeding the app to prepare their data for transmission.”

The decision to create the app shows the Army’s eagerness to transition from the “industrial age to the information age,” Malcom said.

Notice to creditors

In the Matter of the Estate of Jason Brackins

You are notified that the court appointed Michael Valenti as personal representative of this estate. All persons having claims against the person who died are required to present their claims within four months after the date of the first publication of this notice or the claims will be forever barred. Contact Michael Valenti, 3462 Central Ave., Eielson AFB, Alaska 99702. Phone: (626) 620-8480 Email: Michael.valenti.4@us.af.mil.



# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

## Fort Wainwright Family & MWR

### Weekly Events

August 15 - 22

**16 B.O.S.S Chena ATV Trip**  
Registration Deadline: August 16 8 a.m.  
Join B.O.S.S. and Outdoor Recreation for this exciting adventure exploring Alaska by ATV! This event is on August 23. \*ATV Safety Course is required.  
B.O.S.S., Bldg 1045  
Call 353-7648, registration required

**17 Soldier & Family Readiness Group Training**  
August 17 - 20  
Varies  
Join ACS for a VIRTUAL SFRG Training! You can select one training that fits your schedule for your position. Training will be held on Microsoft Teams.  
Army Community Services, Bldg 3401  
Call 353-7908, registration required

**19 Youth Sports & Fitness Workout Wednesday**  
August 19  
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

**21 Warrior Zone Movie Night**  
August 21  
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

**21 Online Soldier Showdown**  
Registration deadline: August 21  
Varies  
You Got Game? Prove it. Compete in the worldwide online Esports Soldier Showdown. This FREE gaming tournament is open to all Active Duty Army and National Guard. Saturday, August 22 tournament is Brawlhalla.  
Online Soldier Showdown  
<https://www.armymwr.com/esports>, registration required



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### DRONE

Continued from page 2

microscopic control, and a broad swarm-level macroscopic control.  
“Each hierarchy has its own learning loop with respective local and global reward functions,” George said. “We were able to significantly reduce the learning time by running these learning loops in parallel.”  
According to George, online reinforcement learning control of swarm boils down to solving a large-scale algebraic matrix Riccati equation using system, or swarm, input-output data.  
The researchers’ initial approach for solving this large-scale matrix Riccati equation was to divide the swarm into multiple

smaller groups and implement group-level local reinforcement learning in parallel while executing a global reinforcement learning on a smaller dimensional compressed state from each group.  
Their current HRL scheme uses a decoupling mechanism that allows the team to hierarchically approximate a solution to the large-scale matrix equation by first solving the local reinforcement learning problem and then synthesizing the global control from local controllers (by solving a least squares problem) instead of running a global reinforcement learning on the aggregated state. This further reduces the learn-

ing time.  
Experiments have shown that compared to a centralized approach, HRL was able to reduce the learning time by 80 percent while limiting the optimality loss to 5 percent.  
“Our current HRL efforts will allow us to develop control policies for swarms of unmanned aerial and ground vehicles so that they can optimally accomplish different mission sets even though the individual dynamics for the swarming agents are unknown,” George said.  
George stated that he is confident that this research will be impactful on the future battlefield, and has been made possible by

the innovative collaboration that has taken place.  
“The core purpose of the ARL science and technology community is to create and exploit scientific knowledge for transformational overmatch,” George said. “By engaging external research through ECI and other cooperative mechanisms, we hope to conduct disruptive foundational research that will lead to Army modernization while serving as Army’s primary collaborative link to the world-wide scientific community.”  
The team is currently working to further improve their HRL control scheme by considering optimal grouping of agents in the swarm to minimize

computation and communication complexity while limiting the optimality gap.  
They are also investigating the use of deep recurrent neural networks to learn and predict the best grouping patterns and the application of developed techniques for optimal coordination of autonomous air and ground vehicles in Multi-Domain Operations in dense urban terrain.  
George, along with the ECI partners, recently organized and chaired an invited virtual session on Multi-Agent Reinforcement Learning at the 2020 American Control Conference, where they presented their research findings.



Robotic combat vehicles display next-gen features in live-fire exercises

Joseph Lacdan  
Army News Service

The Army’s collection of armed robotic combat vehicles showcased an “exceptional” ability to identify enemy positions after about a month of testing, but more development is still needed to improve battlefield precision, said Brig. Gen. Richard Coffman.

Coffman, director of the Next-Generation Combat Vehicle Cross-Functional Team, praised the capabilities of the four robotic combat vehicles, or RCVs, during the platoon live-fire exercises here.

Soldiers from the 4th Infantry Division used two modified Bradley Fighting Vehicles, called Mission Enabling Technologies-Demonstrators, or MET-Ds, to control and maneuver the RCVs to determine whether the autonomous vehicles increased the lethality and efficiency of ground units.

“The ability [to spot enemies] was exceptional, because that reduces the risk on our Soldiers and allows us to remain in a covered and concealed position and make decisions,” Coffman said during a media conference call Thursday.

The MET-Ds, which are manned with six Soldiers, have 360-degree situational awareness cameras, a remote turret with a 25 mm main gun, and enhanced crew stations with touchscreens. The RCVs are M113 surrogate platforms that also have 360 cameras and fire 7.62 mm machine guns.

From inside the MET-Ds, Soldiers were able to control the RCVs up to a 2,000-meter range, but struggled to extend that distance in dense forest regions, Coffman said.

Developers plan to add more features to the vehicles in Phase II of testing, including a new radio tether to increase the operating range, an unmanned aerial vehicle and a target recognition capability based on synthetic data. Phase II, which is scheduled for the first quarter of fiscal year 2022 at Fort Hood, Texas, will feature three platoons of robotic vehicle with control vehicles.

“This is about

commanders on the battlefield and giving them more decision space and reducing the risk on our men and women,” Coffman said. “We go into the nastiest places on earth. And these robots are absolutely going to do that in the future. We’re not there 100 percent yet.”

A third party will evaluate the technical and tactical performance of the operating crews and robotic vehicles, as well as the overall success of the experiment. The findings will then be briefed to the service’s senior leaders.

After the evaluation of Phase II’s results, Coffman said the Army will decide whether to continue testing.

**Room for improvement**

Soldiers testing the autonomous vehicles noted that greater sensory capabilities must be developed for the controlled vehicles to serve as unmanned replacements.

“Right now we don’t have sensors that can tell whether we’re coming across a little puddle that we can just drive through or whether that puddle is 8 feet deep and going to bog us down,” said Jeffrey Langhout, director of the Army Combat Capabilities Development Command’s Ground Vehicle System Center. “A robot can navigate its own way and it relies on the sensors that it has to keep from driving into ditches and all kinds of problems. We certainly have a long



Workers prepare a modified Bradley Fighting Vehicle, known as a Mission Enabling Technologies-Demonstrator, during an exercise at Fort Carson, Colo. Brig. Gen. Richard Coffman, director of the Next-Generation Combat Vehicle Cross-Functional Team, and Jeffrey Langhout, director of the Army Combat Capabilities Development Command's Ground Vehicle Systems Center, spoke about the experiments during a media conference call Aug. 6, 2020. (Courtesy photo)

way to go on that.”

Sgt. Matthew Morris, assigned to 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 4th ID, said the lack of downward visibility hindered operation of the RCVs. He said the vehicle’s ability to see down steep terrain must improve to prevent the vehicle from overturning.

When a human drives a vehicle into soft sand they instinctively know to shift to a lower driving gear and the RCVs must develop that sensitivity, Coffman said.

“For me specifically, I think that the ability to see downward once

we approach certain inclines and declines would probably be an astute upgrade that would push us forward in the right direction,” Morris said, adding the vehicles must increase its audio signature to increase communication abilities with crew members.

Vehicle operator Sgt. Scott Conklin, who is also with 3rd ABCT, said that the two-person crew could handle the increased workload, but the frenetic pace of operating with the 360 cameras made the RCVs challenging to operate.

Coffman said re-

ardless of how the program evolves, he said humans will retain a level of autonomy over the robotic combat vehicles.

"We don't want a fully autonomous

vehicle,” he said. “We don’t want the machine deciding. We want very specific rules of what that machine will and will not do. The humans are in charge.”

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