

## As suicide cases rise, Army leaders encourage Soldiers to recognize warning signs

**Joseph Lacdan**  
Army News Service

The Army has not lost a single active-duty Soldier to the COVID-19 pandemic, the service's top uniformed leader said Thursday. But the restrictions following the virus' onset may have affected the mental health of some Soldiers.

The Army reported that the active-duty suicide rate has risen in 2020, following the implementation of stay-at-home restrictions in March.

The Army's senior leaders have met each month to address suicide prevention and how to mitigate cases.

Chief of Staff Gen. James C. McConville cited suicides as one of the three most difficult issues currently faced by the Army. The other two are sexual harassment/assault and extremism. McConville called suicides the "hardest" problem to solve

among the three.

"One of my biggest concerns is that we have young men and women who think things have gotten so bad that they don't want to live," McConville told Soldiers from his Pentagon office during a livestream of the 2020 Army Fires Conference. "All of us go through adversity in life. And all of us need a helping hand. All of us fail. When people fail, you've got to be there for them."

Numbers began to increase in the last quarter of 2019 through the third quarter of 2020, and continued to increase since the pandemic's onset, said James A. Helis, head of the Army Resilience Directorate. He added that neither the National Guard nor the Army Reserve have seen a significant change in suicide numbers.

"We don't know what is causing this persistent rise.

We can say that it's been recognized by Army leadership at all echelons," Helis said. "Army leadership is committed to solving and addressing this problem."

McConville said responsibility falls upon each Soldier to recognize suicide warning signs. Among them are financial problems and a lack of interest in work tasks.

Army leaders cannot definitively attribute COVID-19 as the reason for the spike, but acknowledge the timeline coincides with the pandemic's spread. Even in the midst of a pandemic that McConville said he does not expect to end any time soon, Soldiers still must be tasked for missions and deployments as well as attend training.

Soldiers with Families also had to cope with the loss of childcare for a period of time and many had to assist their children with remote schoolwork. The combined factors



A Soldier helps a fellow Soldier onto the rooftop of a building in order to provide protective overwatch for another element of their patrol in Afghanistan Jan. 29, 2012. Army senior leaders recently discussed the importance of suicide prevention and recognizing warning signs after the service reported an increase in suicides among active-duty Soldiers in 2020. (Photo by Sgt. Kimberly Hackbarth)

of pandemic restrictions and uncertainty while meeting duty standards could lead to added stress, Helis said.

"All of those things can amplify risks for behavioral health issues and potentially

risks for death by suicide," he said. "So, we know that there was an increased strain on the force."

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## Fort Wainwright, Nordic Ski Club partner to maintain trails on Birch Hill

**Eve Baker**  
U.S. Army Garrison Alaska, Fort Wainwright Public Affairs

Birch Hill is a popular spot for many forms of recreation throughout the year. What is unique about this recreational area, from a land management perspective, is that half of it falls under the control of Fort Wainwright, and is considered military land, while the other half is situated in the civilian community. Fort Wainwright, the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks and the Parks Department of the Fairbanks North Star Borough formed a partnership for managing the land that has been going strong for more than 45 years.

The club built and maintains the cross-country ski trails located on both sides of Birch Hill, sourcing the majority of its maintenance funding through its members and club activities, while the Borough has helped pay for some of the facilities constructed on the civilian side, according to Chris Puchner, club president.

The Borough and the club have also facilitated the installation of lighting on 11 kilometers of trails on both the military and civilian sides, so skiers can enjoy the trails during the extended hours of



A sign on the civilian side of Birch Hill near the crossover point to military land indicates which trails can be accessed on foot or skis by passing through the poles. The trails were built through a partnership between the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks, Fairbanks North Star Borough Parks Department and Fort Wainwright. (Photo by Eve Baker, U.S. Army Garrison Alaska, Fort Wainwright Public Affairs)



A sign along the Sonot Connector trail on Fort Wainwright indicates the trail is for non-motorized activities only. The trail was built through a partnership between the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks, Fairbanks North Star Borough Parks Department and Fort Wainwright. (Photo by Eve Baker, U.S. Army Garrison Alaska, Fort Wainwright Public Affairs)

winter darkness. Fort Wainwright contributes to the partnership by providing access to military land, including a winter biathlon course and inspecting the trails on the military side for safety.

This collaborative work by civilian entities on Fort Wainwright is made possible by a land use license signed by the garrison commander that "gives them the right to put up signage and construct

ski trails" on military land, said Kate Siftar, chief of the Master Planning Division in the Fort Wainwright Department of Public Works. "The license doesn't grant land ownership, just use," and is reviewed for renewal every five years.

The license is similar to the one granted to any group that wants to come onto military property and use a training area or range for things like rifle and hunter training, law enforcement training, educational field studies and youth leadership or sporting activities, but it is unique for its length of term and the regular renewal.

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Patricia Jones, a clinical systems trainer at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, overcame breast cancer after being diagnosed in 2019. (Photo by Russell Toof)

## Breast cancer survivor shows strength through adversity

**Russell Toof**

Patricia Jones' family have always been pink ribbon supporters. Then in Oct. 2019, Jones herself was diagnosed with triple-negative breast cancer. October also happens to be breast cancer awareness month.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines triple-negative breast cancer as a kind of breast cancer that does not have any of the receptors that are commonly found in breast cancer.

"I was being seen at the time for what doctors thought were kidney stones," said Jones. "They did a scan. The doctor came in and said, 'good news there are no kidney stones, but we found a mass in your right breast and you might want to get that taken

care of.'"

After her diagnosis, Jones went to the Landstuhl medical library and started doing research and met with oncology at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center.

"I got the lump removed and I went through chemotherapy and just went from there," said Jones. "It takes a village to get through chemotherapy. It takes a lot out of you. You need to rely on friends, family and coworkers to help get you through it."

Jones has been given a clean bill of health, but others are not so fortunate.

According to the American Cancer Society, the average risk of a woman in the United States developing breast cancer

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### WEEKEND WEATHER

**Friday**



Mostly sunny. High: 48F.

**Saturday**



Mostly sunny. High: 44F.

**Sunday**



Mostly sunny. High: 40F.

### IN BRIEF

Military working dogs often scout areas for explosives devices and hazardous materials and assist in rescue operations, but giving dogs the necessary commands to perform these missions can put Soldiers in harm's way. Augmented reality may change that.

**Read more on page 5.**



# Nutrition Corner: Nutrition 101 — Myth Busters

Should grains be avoided when trying to lose weight? Definitely not. Foods containing grains often get a bad reputation for making people gain weight but the truth is many grains provide great nutritional benefits. Whole grains still contain the grain kernel—the bran, germ and endosperm, which naturally provide fiber, B vitamins like thiamin and folate and iron. Include whole grains as part of a balanced diet to help reduce risk of heart disease and to help prevent constipation.

Some examples of whole

grains are both nutritious and delicious are rolled oats, barley, popcorn, brown rice, millet, quinoa, farro, and whole wheat bread and pastas. Refined grains do not contain the bran or germ, which results in a finer texture and improved shelf life. Unfortunately, it removed dietary fiber, iron and B vitamins. Many times they are fortified back in to refined grain products but not always. As refined grains are replaced with whole grains, be mindful of your portion sizes. Whole grains are naturally healthier,

but there are just as many calories in them as their refined counterparts.

**Recipe Spotlight:**  
**Farro and asparagus salad.**

Ingredients:

- 2 cups farro
- One bunch asparagus, trimmed
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- ½ cup chopped walnuts
- ¾ cup dried cranberries
- ½ cup chopped fresh parsley
- ½ cup chopped green onions

- ¼ cup balsamic vinaigrette
- ¾ cup shaved parmesan cheese

Preparation:

- Prepare farro according to package instructions
- Fill a large pot with salted water and bring to a boil over high heat. Once the water is boiling, stir in the faro and return to a boil. Reduce heat to medium, then cook the faro uncovered, stirring occasionally for 20 minutes. Reduce heat to low, cover and continue simmering until tender, about 30 more

minutes. Drain and allow to cool

- Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Add the asparagus, and cook until tender, about three minutes. Drain and immerse in ice water. Once asparagus is cold, drain and chop. Set aside.
- Place faro, asparagus, tomatoes, walnuts, cranberries, parsley and green onions in a large bowl. Drizzle balsamic vinaigrette over and sprinkle about ¾ cups parmesan cheese, then toss. Top with the remaining ¼ cup parmesan cheese. Serve.

# History Snapshot: Memorializing the People of Our Past – Building 4065, Capt. John Winfield Bassett



Fort Wainwright recognizes the service of Dr. Bassett who was called to active duty Jan. 13, 1941, from his medical practice. He served as the commanding officer of Delta Company, 7th Medical Battalion, 7th Division, and assigned Attu in the Aleutian Islands in April 1943. Japanese forces captured Attu in June 1942. On May 11, 1943, U.S. troops (Task Force 51.4) launched a campaign to recapture Attu. U.S. infantrymen dug in May 28, recapturing Attu. Approximately 800 Japanese troops remained and, being trapped, they launched an attack May 29, overrunning the advance aid station commanded by Capt. Bassett and killing wounded Soldiers. Despite his efforts defending the unit, Capt. Bassett was shot and killed as he organized a defense of this patients. For his heroism, Capt. Bassett was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart and the Silver Star

## MEDDAC Minute

**Important Phone Numbers**

**Emergency:** 911  
**MEDDAC-AK Website:** [www.bassett-wainwright.tricare.com](http://www.bassett-wainwright.tricare.com)  
**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](http://www.tricare-online.com)  
**Health Net:** [www.tricare-west.com](http://www.tricare-west.com), 1-844-8676-9378

**New Website**

Finally, a one-stop-shop for all your Medical Department Activity – Alaska information needs. No more searching for phone numbers or hours of operation! Check out our new website at [bassett-wainwright.tricare.mil](http://bassett-wainwright.tricare.mil).

**COVID-19 Hotline**

The scope of the COVID-19 Hotline has changed over the last several months. The hotline, (907) 361-3057, is now staffed to assist those who have tested positive or have had direct contact (within six feet for 15 minutes) with a known COVID-19 positive person. Please do not contact the hotline with questions regarding symptoms, travel or testing.

**Delays In Access To Care**

October 31, MEDDAC-AK will go live with MHS GENESIS, the military’s new electronic health record. This system will track your treatments, record your prescriptions, and allow your health care team to document every facet of your care. We are working closely with DHA to ease the transition. However, no software rollout is perfect. During October and November, patients will see a decrease in appointment availability and getting prescriptions filled.

**Medication Education**

Our pharmacies have launched a new way to learn about your prescriptions. Most medications will not come with a QR code on the bottle. When the code is scanned, a fact sheet and video can be viewed giving information regarding the medication.

**Patient Praise**

“Mrs. Brown in case management is very helpful and goes out of her way to make sure I am being taken care of. All of the nurse case managers go above and beyond to help soldiers with their needs, or point them in the right direction, and they have all helped me any time I’ve had questions. I think they make things at Kamish run smoothly. I appreciate the hard work they do, their insight and knowledge, and the care they put into their job.”



## ALASKA POST

The Interior Military News Connection

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# The Chaplain’s Corner Light in the Darkness

**Chaplain (Capt.) Kenneth D. Gillespie**  
Medical Command  
Alaska Chaplain

Some may think of darkness as the opposite of light; an opposing force struggling for dominance. This season of transition between autumn and winter in Alaska seems to be the darkest part of the year. The nights are growing longer and longer and the snow has not yet come. It is easy to forget how bright and warm it was just a few weeks ago, or how the whole world will seem to glow in the infinite refraction of light in the snow and ice, which awaits just ahead.

For many, this year of struggle and loss in the midst of the

COVID-19 pandemic has felt especially dark, and it is not at all uncommon to feel as though one is becoming lost in despair. Much like darkness, despair robs us of our confidence and sense of orientation, and it can feel as though it is all-encompassing. Just like with darkness, despair, although perceived as potent, is not an opposing force, but rather represents only an absence in our lives. An absence with profound consequences, an absence of hope.

You see, despair, like darkness, is not some great enemy we must struggle against and overcome. To try to do so only causes fatigue and frustration. Many of us have expelled our precious time, effort

and energy attempting to eliminate despair, trying to eliminate an absence, only to find ourselves exhausted and even more fully enveloped by it. We must accept despair for what it is, the absence of hope, and from that place of truth, we may just find our way through.

The average human eye can detect the light of a single candle from more than a mile away and the darker the environment, the more sensitive to light our eyes become. Imagine being in a completely dark place, one where you could not even see your own hand in front of your face and then imagine the lighting of a single candle. Such a plain and ordinary thing, otherwise in-

significant, but it can transform the darkness.

Likewise, hope can and does transform despair. It does not require some great measure of hope in order to counterbalance what we feel as a tremendous sense of despair. They are not opposing forces. Just as the light of one candle transforms our experience of complete darkness, so too does just a bit of hope transform our experience of total despair.

As we think about how to stay healthy and oriented during this time of growing darkness and despair, consider an alternative to expending our precious time, effort and energy toward battling a perceived enemy,



which in reality, is not there. Instead, might we each become intentional about developing an abiding sense of hope? Hope, a simple desire or expectation, an anticipation of what may come, can transform our experience of despair.

There are many sources of hope in one’s life: faith, community, our friends and family, or the opportunities tomorrow hold are just a few. It need not be a grand or dramatic plan, just

a simple dream will suffice, the thought that the darkness is only temporary. Never underestimate the impact we have on one another, to sow seeds of hope in the lives of those around us. Simple seeds of hope, which may be the very thing that holds the despair at bay.

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” (The Gospel of Saint John 1:5, English Standard Version)

## CANCER

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sometime in her life is about 13 percent. This means there is a one in eight chance she will develop breast cancer. Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in women (only lung cancer kills more women each year).

Jones, a clinical systems trainer at LRMC and Navy veteran, goes into this Octo-

ber, breast cancer awareness month, for the first time as a survivor.

“I’d just like to thank everyone who helped me get through this,” said Jones.

Jones’ advice for others going through cancer treatments is to follow the advice of the doctor and see a nutritionist in order to maintain healthy

eating.

“Be forgiving of yourself because you’ll be too tired to do some of the things you’d regularly do on a day-to-day basis,” added Jones. “It will be tough on your body, but you’ll get through it.”

For information and resources on all types of cancer, visit <https://www.cancer.org/>.

## HILL

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“The garrison and the community, at the same time, have access to 37 kilometers of ski trails. It’s a pretty good arrangement for both,” said Eric Chun, lead realty planning specialist for DPW.

The non-motorized trails constructed by the club on both sides of the hill are open to the general public. There is no fee to use the trails on either side of the hill, though the club does encourage regular trail users to donate money toward the trail maintenance fund, according to Puchner.

Civilians who wish to cross over to the military side of the trail network on

skis or on foot are required to have a government issued ID on them at all times. Should civilian users wish to access the parking area on the military side of the hill or to use the downhill ski area, they need to obtain a day-use pass from the Visitor Center at the main gate. Under current pandemic health precautions, however, members of the general public are not permitted to access the post without a mission essential purpose and an exception letter signed by the garrison commander. Once conditions improve, after careful review, access will be restored.

Additions to the

trail network on the Fort Wainwright side in the last few years include the Sonot Connector, White Bear and Sunnyside trails. The Connector facilitates the annual Sonot Kkaazoot 50-kilometer ski race, a course that starts in downtown Fairbanks, passes through Fort Wainwright along the Chena River and proceeds up Birch Hill on the military side to the civilian trail network. It also eliminates the potential for a clash between alpine and Nordic skiers on the military side of Birch Hill by keeping the Nordic skiers on a dedicated path through the trees.

“The goal has been

to create a multi-use trail system jointly managed by the Borough, military and ski club,” said Bruce Jamieson, special projects director for the club, “for non-motorized activities, like mountain biking, Frisbee golf, hiking, cross-country running, skiing and snowshoeing.”

In addition to year-round maintenance work and trail grooming, the club has recently installed a number of new signs on the military side. The signs are located at each trail intersection and provide the names of the intersecting trails and emphasize their status as non-motorized trails.

## Worship Services on Fort Wainwright

### Good Shepherd Catholic Community

Mass: Sundays, 9 a.m., SLC  
Holy Hour Adoration: Thursdays, 6 p.m., SLC  
Catholic Women of the Chapel: Wednesdays, 9 a.m., SLC

### St. George Anglican Parish

Holy Communion: Sundays, 11 a.m., SLC  
Mid-Week Holy Communion: Wednesdays, noon, BACH

### Cornerstone Protestant Community

Worship Service: Sundays, 11 a.m., NLC  
Protestant Women of the Chapel, Wednesdays, 10 a.m., NLC  
Cornerstone Youth, Sundays, 1 p.m., NLC

### Congregación Protestante Piedra Angular

Servicio de adoración: Domingos, 1 p.m., SLC

### Fort Wainwright Religious Support Office, 353-6112

Southern Lights Chapel (SLC), 8th St & Neely Rd.  
Northern Lights Chapel (NLC), Luzon & Rhineland Avenues

## SIGNS

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### Soldiers can help

McConville said he learned about a sergeant major who recently rescued a sergeant first class from suicide by intervening at the right time. The general urged Soldiers to follow the sergeant major’s example by stepping in when they suspect a colleague may be considering taking their own life.

Soldiers must find strength by leaning on fellow unit members and dealing with adversity as a group, McConville said.

When the pandemic began, the Army had many Soldiers telework for the first time and restrictions separated many from their units, which could have led to feelings of isolation. Army leaders encouraged Soldiers to have face-to-face meetings while still meeting safety requirements to assess warning signs of suicide or depression.

And if Soldiers cannot meet in person they can host supervisors to assess the well-being of their troops.

“That’s been a point of emphasis: that physical, face-to-face, interpersonal interaction with your Soldiers,” Helis said. “There’s virtual means where you can lay eyes on somebody. You just have to be creative, but also have to be diligent in finding those opportunities.”

Soldiers with suicidal thoughts can seek help by calling the Military Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255.

Soldiers can also contact their post’s military health clinic, their supervisor or their unit chaplain.

Soldiers can overcome fear from failure in their military careers or home life with the support of their squads in the

Army or in life, said Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael A. Grinston.

“Don’t be afraid to go through tough times,” Grinston said during the conference Wednesday. “It’s going to make us stronger.”

Grinston said during his first weekend of active duty at what is now Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, fellow Soldiers invited him and others living in the barracks to go skiing in the mountains. He said he could count on his fellow Soldiers to uplift him and said that today’s Soldiers should do the same.

“That’s the value of life,” he said. “And it’s not what I want or what I don’t have. It’s what I have right in front of me. And every day, it’s there. We just have to sometimes show each other what it means to be alive.”



# Weekly Tips: Fall Produce

Since fall is upon us, we have the opportunity to enjoy lots of produce. Whether we shop at our local farmer's market or the grocery store, we want to keep our produce fresh as long as possible. Here are some tips for keeping them fresh longer.

- **Apples** – There is perhaps no ingredient more representative of autumn than a crisp, sweet-tart apple. The fruit's widespread popularity is reflected in the incredible number of varieties. In North America alone there are 2,500 types. To keep them fresh longer, store apples in a cool, dark place away from other ethylene-sensitive produce. Early in the season, they are best eaten as soon as possible. Midseason apples will keep for a few weeks, while late-season fruit is

good for a few months.

- **Beets** – Both the bulbous root and leafy stalk are edible. When storing beets cut the bulbous roots from the stalk before storing them; place the leaves and stalks in a perforated plastic bag in the crisper. The beet roots can be stored loose, also in the crisper. Do not wash prior to using them.

- **Broccoli** – Store unwashed broccoli in a closed plastic bag in the refrigerator. It will keep for four or five days.

- **Cabbage** – Use plastic wrap to cover the entire head of the cabbage or store in a perforated plastic bag in the crisper drawer. Cabbage will keep for up to two weeks.

- **Carrots** – Remove tops and wash before storing. They'll draw moisture from the root, so store

them separately in a plastic bag; they will keep for two weeks. If your carrots are limp, you can refresh them by soaking them in ice water for about 30 minutes. Do not store next to apples, the ethylene gas will make the carrots bitter. If you have them in your garden, you can leave them there and use them as needed all winter long.

- **Celery** – Wrap washed celery in foil; it will last up to two weeks. Celery is susceptible to freezing so don't store in the back of the refrigerator.

- **Cranberries** – Place fresh cranberries in a tightly sealed plastic bag in the refrigerator. They should keep up to two months. Be sure to separate and toss out individual cranberries that are soft and decaying, as they will quickly spread to the rest

of the batch.

- **Garlic** – Store garlic at room temperature in a well-ventilated area of your kitchen. Keep away from sunlight to avoid sprouting. Green garlic should be placed in a plastic bag in the fridge. Peeled or chopped garlic should be stored in an airtight container in the fridge.

- **Onions** – Store uncut onions in a cool, dry place with good air circulation. They will last approximately one month. Once they are cut, place them in a plastic bag in the refrigerator. Be sure to use them within 3 days.

- **Potatoes** – Place potatoes in a cardboard box, paper bag, mesh bag or basket to ensure good ventilation. Store your potatoes in a cool, humid, and dark place (45 to 50 degrees F is the ideal tem-

perature range).

- **Squash** – Store in a cool, dark storage area (about 50 to 55 degrees F) and they will keep for about a month. Ideally, only cut or cooked squash should be refrigerated, since they will suffer chill damage below 50 degrees F.

- **Sweet Potatoes/Yams** – Do not refrigerate. Keep in a cool, dark and dry place. They will keep for months. Ensure you cut off the green spots prior to cooking.

**REMEMBER:** As an alternative, consider preserving fresh edibles economically and conveniently by drying fruits and vegetables. Drying preserves the vitamin, mineral, protein and fiber content of foods. Additionally, dried foods – when kept dry – remain edible virtually forever.

# Flu shots more important than ever!

Kirk Frady

According to medical experts, getting your flu shot is extremely important, especially in the midst of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

MTFs will soon be offering flu vaccinations to young children and adults 65 and older, and installation-sponsored community influenza vaccination events are currently scheduled to begin in early November, depending on where you are located, and vaccine availability.

Specific event dates, times and locations will be announced on AFN, your MTF's web and social media sites and through local installation communication channels. Once the vaccine is available, flu shots will also be offered at MTFs during regularly scheduled appointments.

"The first and most important step in protecting against the flu is to get vaccinated," said Col. Scott Mower, Regional Health Command Europe Force Health Protection Officer. "The second is to take everyday preventive actions to stop the spread of germs, like frequent hand-washing, avoiding contact with sick people,



According to medical experts, getting your flu shot is extremely important, especially in the midst of the global COVID-19 pandemic. (Courtesy Photo)

practicing good social distancing, and staying home if you are sick. The third step is, if you do think you might have the flu, contact your Medical Treatment Facility's COVID-19 hotline."

Because the symptoms of COVID-19 and the flu are quite similar, a health care provider may recommend testing and evaluation for one or both illnesses.

Mower says that while receiving the flu vaccine will not protect you against COVID-19, it has been shown to reduce the risk of illness, hospitalization and death from influenza virus infections, which cause the flu.

"Getting a flu vaccination also helps

prevent flu epidemics and decreases the burden on the health care system during the COVID-19 pandemic," Mower added. "If you are not in an active duty military unit, the fastest way to get the vaccine is to go to a local community flu drive event where it is being offered."

"Community flu events this year may be more time intensive and logistically challenging than in year's past in order to protect participants from COVID-19," said Mower. "We are asking for everyone's patience up front and will do our utmost to minimize any inconveniences. Your safety and the safety of our staff is paramount."

While flu vaccina-

tions are an annual requirement for Soldiers, everyone is urged to get one. The Army medical community in Europe offers the vaccine to not only Soldiers, but to their Family members, Retirees and Civilians as well.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, flu activity begins to increase in October, peaking between December and February and diminishing by May.

Each year the effectiveness of the flu vaccine varies. And while it is still too early to predict how effective this season's flu vaccine will be in Europe, the vaccination is still recommended as it may make the illness

milder and prevent hospitalization if the flu is contracted, according to Regional Health Command Europe officials.

Mower said that according to a recent study, "Vaccination reduces the number of flu related deaths, the number of hospital intensive care unit admissions and the duration of hospital stay for patients who do get hospitalized."

"The study also found that unvaccinated adults with the flu who were admitted to the hospital were two to five times more likely to die than someone who had been vaccinated. The more people who get vaccinated against the flu, the lower the chance of it spreading to those who have a higher risk for severe symptoms," added Mower.

While influenza and COVID share some common symptoms, there are distinct differences.

"COVID-19 and flu share some similar symptoms," said Mower. "For example, viral infections cause both COVID-19 and the flu. However, COVID-19 is due to the SARS-CoV-2 virus, and flu is from influenza A and B viruses. The biggest difference is that symptoms of flu tend to occur faster and can

have greater variation. But COVID-19 is more likely to lead to severe illness or death. While both viruses can spread via person to person contact, the flu spreads faster and is more likely to affect children."

According to public health officials, it's possible to have COVID-19 yet be asymptomatic and not show any signs of being or feeling ill. Thus, the need to practice good hand hygiene and social distancing and use a face covering in public or when social distancing is not possible.

"For both COVID-19 and the flu, it's possible to spread the virus for up to two days before experiencing any symptoms," Mower said. "And you may remain contagious for at least 10 days after signs or symptoms first appeared. When it comes to staying healthy and safe, one should always err on the side of caution."

Mower offered additional tips and advice to help protect yourself and others from flu and help stop the spread of germs.

1. Avoid close contact: Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When

**See FLU on page 5**



## NATIONAL CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS MONTH 2020



# Social Security Tax Deferral

HQDA ASA M&RA/DCS G-1  
What is it?

Social Security tax deferral is a temporary relief being provided during the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on guidance from the Internal Revenue Service, a presidential memorandum has been issued to temporarily defer Social Security taxes. This change is effective from mid-September until December 2020. Soldiers and civilian employees don't have an option to opt out.

Individuals whose monthly basic pay is less than \$8,666.66 will benefit from this deferral. For those with the monthly basic pay at or above this threshold will not be affected by the temporary deferral. This threshold was established by the Department of Treasury.

What are the current and past efforts of the Army?

The Army is taking steps to notify and educate service members and DA Civilian employees of changes to their payroll tax withholding to allow them to plan ahead to payback the withholding of the deferred taxes during the first four months of 2021.

- Effective mid-September to December: Defense Finance and Accounting Service will temporarily defer the withholding of the 6.2 percent Social Security tax, to allow a larger paycheck.

- January- April 2021- DFAS will begin collecting the tax deferment alongside the FICA tax deducted from monthly pay, resulting in less money in the paycheck.

If a military member or civilian employee separates or retires in 2020 before the Social Security tax can be collected in 2021, they are still responsible for the Social Security tax repayment.

What continued efforts does the Army have planned?

The Army leaders encourage the Soldiers and Civilian employees to have a two-fold plan to account for the payback of the deferred social security taxes in January 2021:

- Check: Leave and Earnings Statement in the deduction section for FICA-Social Security taxes to identify the amount deferred for the applicable pay period.

- Adjust: tax liabilities during the January through April 2021 time period. DFAS will administer the deferral and tax liability.

To avoid unnecessary hardship that may be brought on by additional spending decisions:

- Soldiers should consult with a Personal Financial Manager or counselor at Army Community Service, or contact Military OneSource for support.
- Civilian employees should seek advice from an Employee Assistance Program financial counselor.

Why is this important to the Army?

Personal financial readiness is vital to overall Army mission readiness. Army encourages its force to save the deferred money, or plan to adjust their spending to accommodate the payback.

# Augmented reality dog goggles could help protect Soldiers

U.S. Army CCDC Army Research Laboratory Public Affairs

Military working dogs often scout areas for explosives devices and hazardous materials and assist in rescue operations, but giving dogs the necessary commands to perform these missions can put Soldiers in harm's way. Augmented reality may change that.

Through a project funded by the Small Business Innovation Research program and managed by the Army Research Office, an element of the U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command's Army Research Laboratory, a new technology has been developed by Command Sight, Inc., to provide military working dogs with augmented reality goggles that allow a dog's handler to give it specific directional commands while keeping the warfighter remote and out of sight.

In 2017, Dr. A.J. Peper started Command Sight, a small business based in Seattle, to bridge human and animal communication. Through conversations with current and former military operators he identified a need to increase the efficacy of communication between canine and handler. As a result, Command Sight built the first prototype of augmented reality glasses for military working dogs.

Peper said initial feedback from his proof of concept was, "the system could fundamentally change how military canines are deployed in the



These augmented reality goggles are specially designed to fit each military working dog with a visual indicator that allows the dog to be directed to a specific spot and react to the visual cue in the goggles. The handler can see everything the dog sees to provide it commands through the glasses. (Courtesy Command Sight)

future."

The augmented reality goggles are specially designed to fit each dog with a visual indicator that allows the dog to be directed to a specific spot and react to the visual cue in the goggles. The handler can see everything the dog sees to provide it commands through the glasses.

"Augmented reality works differently for dogs than for humans," said Dr. Stephen Lee, an ARO senior scientist. "AR will be used to provide dogs with commands and cues; it's not for the dog to interact with it like a human does. This new technology offers us a critical tool to better communicate with military working dogs."

The initial prototype is wired, keeping the dog on a leash, but researchers are working to make it wireless in the next phase of development.

"We are still in the beginning research stages of applying this technology to dogs, but the results from

our initial research are extremely promising," Peper said. "Much of the research to date has been conducted with my Rottweiler, Mater. His ability to generalize from other training to working through the AR goggles has been incredible. We still have a way to go from a basic science and development perspective before it will be ready for the wear and tear our military dogs will place on the units."

The basic science research behind this technology focuses on understanding canine vision and cognition as this tool is developed.

"We will be able to probe canine perception and behavior in a new way with this tool," Lee said.

Currently, military working dogs are commonly directed by hand signals, which require the handler to be within sight of the dog, or by laser pointers, which also required the handler to remain close to the dog and generates a light source, which could be a safety issue.

Audio communication, using a camera and a walkie talkie placed on the dog are also used to direct the canines and allows the handler to be fur-

ther from the dog, but the verbal commands can lead to confusion for the dog, for example, a dog runs around a set of stairs rather than going up them.

Augmented reality goggles could offer Special Forces dogs and their handlers a new alternative.

"The military working dog community is very excited about the potential of this technology," Lee said. "This technology really cuts new ground and opens up possibilities that we haven't considered yet."

The augmented reality system uses goggles military working dogs have already been wearing for protection in inclement conditions and aerial deployments from Rex Specs. By leveraging a product the dogs are already used to wearing, Peper said it makes the technology adoption easier for both the dogs and the handler.

"Even without the augmented reality, this technology provides one of the best camera systems for military working dogs," Lee said. "Now, cameras are generally placed on a dog's back, but by putting the camera in

See DOG on page 7

**BE PREPARED FOR AN EARTHQUAKE**

**FEMA**

FEMA V-1003/May 2018

**Earthquakes can collapse buildings and cause heavy items to fall, resulting in injuries and property damage.**

Earthquakes are the sudden, rapid shaking of the earth, caused by the breaking and shifting of underground rock.

Can happen anywhere. Higher risk areas are California, Alaska, and the Mississippi Valley

Give no warning

Cause fires and damage roads

Cause tsunamis, landslides, and avalanches

**IF AN EARTHQUAKE HAPPENS, PROTECT YOURSELF RIGHT AWAY**

DROP

COVER

HOLD ON

If in a vehicle, pull over and stop.

If in bed, stay there.

If outdoors, stay outdoors.

Do not get in a doorway.

Do not run outside.

# FLU

Continued from page 4

you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.

2. Stay home when you are sick: If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. This will help prevent spreading your illness to others.

3. Cover your mouth and nose: Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick. Flu and other serious respiratory illnesses, like respiratory syncytial virus, whooping cough, and severe acute respiratory syndrome, are spread by cough, sneezing, or unclean hands.

"Maybe you've heard of 'sneeze in your sleeve' to remind you to cover your mouth and nose with the inside of your

elbow, not your hand, when you sneeze or cough," Mower said. "That keeps the germs off of your hands."

4. Wash your hands: Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.

5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth: Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

6. Practice other good health habits: Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at home, work or school, especially when someone is ill. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.



# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

## Fort Wainwright Family & MWR

### Weekly Events

October 10 - 17

**10** **Army Family Action Plan**  
October 10 - November 30  
During Normal Business Hours  
Soldiers, Family Members, Veterans, & Civilians are invited to help identify issues within the Garrison and recommend corrective action. Forms can be picked up with ACS.  
  
Army Community Services, Bldg 3401  
Call 353-4332

**13** **Garrison Post Supervision Policy of Children & Adolescents**  
October 13, 15, 20, & 22  
Varies  
Join us on the Ft. Wainwright Army Community Service Facebook Page for Garrison Post Supervision Policy of Children & Adolescents covering various topics.  
  
Family Advocacy Program, Bldg 3414  
Call 353-7317

**14** **Frontier Fitness**  
October 14  
5:30 - 6:30 p.m.  
Stay active with the activity of the month with Youth Sports & Fitness! \*Physical and Microsoft Teams app are required.  
  
Youth Sports & Fitness, Bldg 3414  
Call 353-7713, registration required

**14** **Blue Star Community Promotion**  
October 14 - 16  
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.  
#WainwrightBlueStar Community Members can claim a Subway Discount Card by showing their Blue Star Community Card. Appointments can be made for additional time frames. \*While supplies last.  
  
Family and MWR Marketing, Bldg 1045  
Call 353-6725, registration required

**16** **Paint the Town Purple**  
October 16  
All Day  
Help spread awareness for Domestic Violence by wearing purple every Friday in October! Take a Selfie and submit it to the Ft. Wainwright Army Community Service Facebook Page to show your support.  
  
Family Advocacy Program, Bldg 3414  
Call 353-7317



**TRICK OR BOWL!**

*calling all ghouls and goblins!*

JOIN US FOR A FAMILY FRIENDLY AFTERNOON OF GLOW-IN-THE-DARK BOWLING, TRICK AND TREATS, FUN!

**OCTOBER 25, 11:30 AM - 2 PM**

**\$15/PERSON OR \$42/4 PEOPLE: 3 HOURS OF UNLIMITED BOWLING + SHOE RENTAL + PUMPKIN CRAFT**  
\*MUST PREPURCHASE TICKETS & RESERVE YOUR LANE

PURCHASE TICKETS & RESERVE YOUR LANE TODAY!

3702 Santiago Avenue (907) 353-2654  
[wainwright.armymwr.com](http://wainwright.armymwr.com)  
#WainwrightMWR #WainwrightBowl



**Halloween spooktacular**

*Cosmic Bowl Costume Contest*

Head to Nugget Lanes Bowling Center October 30, 9 p.m. for a Spooktacular time!  
For more information, go to [wainwright.armymwr.com](http://wainwright.armymwr.com).  
@WainwrightMWR #WainwrightMWR

## Exchange’s Operation Fun continues with free online screening of ‘Incredibles 2’

**Carina DeCino**  
Army and Air Force Exchange Service Public Affairs

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service and The Walt Disney Studios invite families at Fort Wainwright and installations worldwide to an at-home movie night with a free online screening of “Incredibles 2,” beginning Oct. 23.

The military-exclusive screening is one of many family-friendly online activities offered as part of the Exchange and Disney’s Operation Fun campaign at [ShopMyExchange.com/XKids](http://ShopMyExchange.com/XKids), part of the Exchange’s community Hub.

“The Exchange’s customers are heroes, so ‘Incredibles 2’ is a fitting choice for military families,” said Fort Wainwright

Exchange general manager Gloria Sylvia. “Much like the characters in the film, military families are stronger when they join together—that’s why we wanted to give them an opportunity to do so in the comfort of their own homes.”

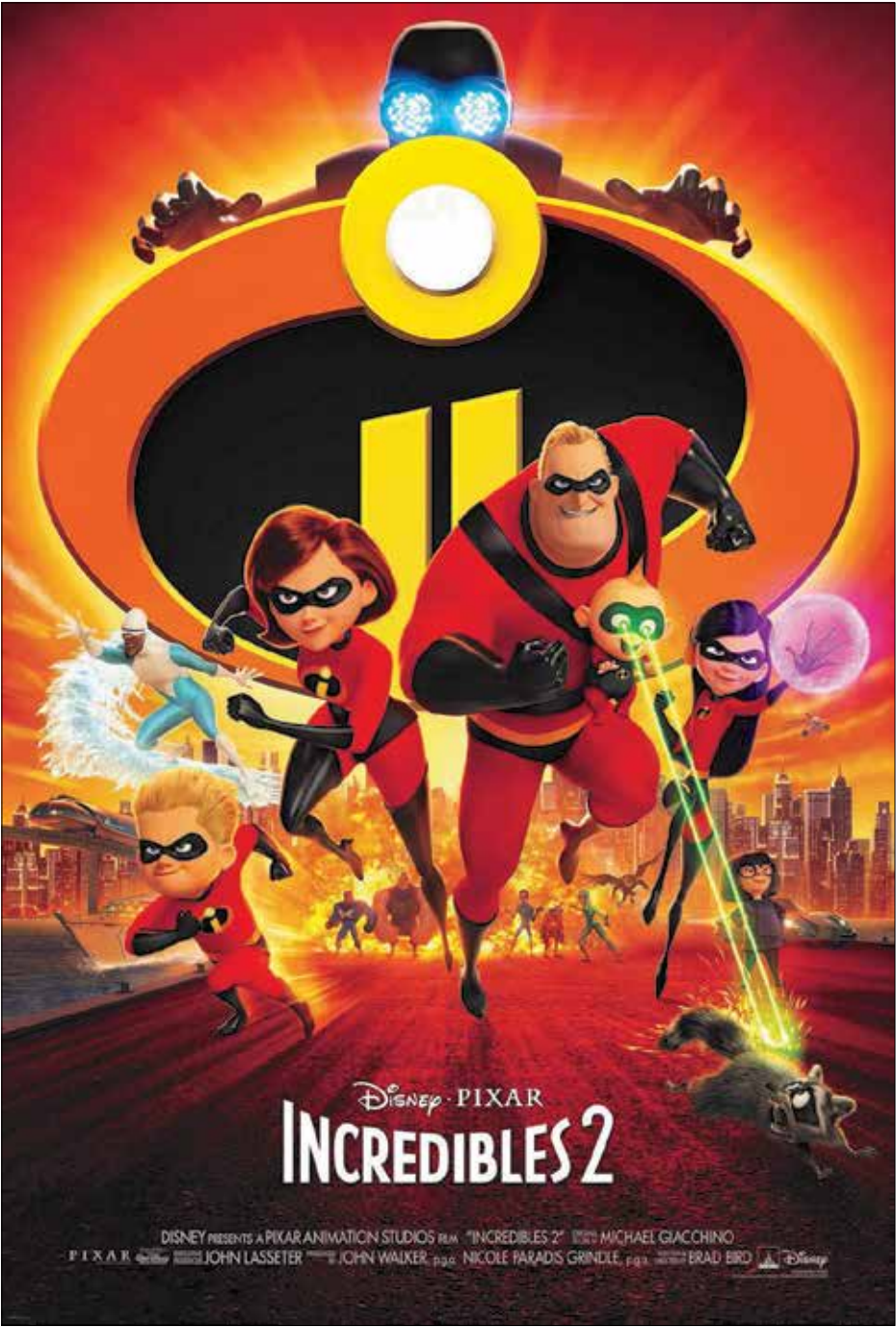
The screening will be available to all authorized shoppers with a [ShopMyExchange.com](http://ShopMyExchange.com) account for 48 hours starting at 3 p.m. Central Time/noon AKT Oct. 23 at the XKids Hub, though the number of viewers who can tune in at once is limited.

Families can also log onto the XKids Hub weekly for new kid-friendly activities including interactive videos, Disney-themed activity sheets, games and more. Highlights for October include special Halloween-themed

activities and the Oct. 23 launch of a video series featuring the XKids sharing their top toy picks of the season.

Online activities and live video events will continue at the XKids Hub through the end of the year: On Thanksgiving, the Exchange and Disney will offer a free online screening of “Frozen 2,” and a Disney Jr. interactive video activity night is scheduled for Dec. 12.

Families can visit [ShopMyExchange.com/XKids](http://ShopMyExchange.com/XKids) to access everything Operation Fun has to offer, including a calendar of events. They can also follow the Exchange on <http://www.facebook.com/ShopMyExchange> to get all the latest on Operation Fun activities delivered straight to their timeline.





October 9, 2020

DOG

Continued from page 5

the goggles, the handler can see exactly what the dogs sees and it eliminates the bounce that comes from placing the camera on the dog’s back.”

The Command Sight team has completed the Phase I of the SBIR and was selected to continue to Phase II. The SBIR program funds research and technology development with small businesses using a three-phase process. In contrast to the basic research programs managed by ARO, the SBIR program focuses primarily on feasibility studies leading to prototype demonstration of technology for specific applications.

Additionally, the Department of Defense Rapid Reaction Technology Office has provided funding for the next phase of development. With that funding, Command Sight is now working with Navy Special Forces to build prototypes that will be tested on their military working dogs. Each of the dogs received a 3D scan to get dimensional data to understand where to place optics and electrical components, specific to each dog.

The researchers plan to spend the next two years developing a production level wireless product. Once they have a prototype they will get user feedback and revise the product for manufacturing.

“ARO has been a critical partner in making technical, training and direct user connections to build ground swell of interest and secure funding sources,” Peper said. “We’re excited about getting this into the hands of the Soldier, hopefully in just a few years.”

Soldier Center’s new fabric will enhance cybersecurity, subzero weather durability

Jane Benson  
CCDC SC Public Affairs

The Combat Capabilities Development Command Soldier Center, or CCDC SC, is working with industry to develop a new shelter fabric that will increase durability in subzero conditions and provide electromagnetic, or EM, shielding. The EM shielding will prevent the detection of EM emissions that are generated within a Command Post shelter and provide cybersecurity to Command Post wireless networks.

CCDC SC’s Expeditionary Maneuver Support Directorate is working with industry partners to develop the new laminate systems with higher performance and durability. Kristian Donahue, a chemical engineer in EMSD at CCDC SC, explained that General Purpose, or GP, shelter fabrics are currently made with a coating that becomes brittle at subzero temperatures. This impacts the durability of the fabric, the environmental protection of the shelter, and the light discipline aspect of signature management. Light discipline refers to luminous signs that can lead to the detection of the presence of troops and military facilities.

Donahue stated that the team was already able to successfully develop a new GP tent material that eliminates the low-temperature durability issues, a significant milestone which will help



The Combat Capabilities Development Command Soldier Center, or CCDC SC, is working with industry to develop a new shelter fabric that will increase durability in subzero conditions and provide electromagnetic, or EM, shielding. The EM shielding will prevent the detection of EM emissions that are generated within a Command Post shelter and provide cybersecurity to Command Post wireless networks. (Photo by CCDC)

benefit the EM shielding work as well.

“Our goal is to also add additional functionality to this GP tent fabric by integrating an electromagnetic shielding material into the GP fabric,” said Donahue. “This EM shielding fabric will prevent the EM emissions generated within a Command Post shelter from being detected by adversaries, as well as provide cybersecurity to wireless networks operating within the CP.”

Donahue explained that EM shielding is important for both security and Soldier safety.

“Electromagnetic emissions can be detected by adversar-

ies therefore giving away your position,” said Donahue. “Those emissions can also be intercepted and exploited by cyber warfare units.”

The new shelter fabric is also lower weight, thus reducing the logistical footprint. Moreover, there is no longer the risk of increased volume associated with the current fabric, which may become stiff at subzero temperatures and the stiffness can affect volume. In certain cases the increased volume may interfere with moving and packing.

The new fabric technology will also enhance Soldier protection and lethality.



07 AUG 2020

Energy Action Month – Energy Resilience Gives Us the Power to Win

October is Energy Action Month and this year’s theme, “Energy Resilience Gives Us the Power to Win” reinforces the importance of the Army having a resilient and secure installation energy and water posture at its installations and enduring locations overseas to enable Warfighters to accomplish their mission.


Energy Resilience, or uninterrupted access to energy, is essential for Army readiness and ensuring the Total Army can deploy, fight, and win. Army assets are increasingly at risk for natural, physical, and cyber threats and must be able to withstand disruption in electricity, fuel, and water supplies. Currently, our installations rely, with few exceptions, on commercial energy and water sources to accomplish critical missions. In order to reduce mission risk, the Army needs to prioritize its ability to provide resilient energy and water supplies, facilities and infrastructure to continue supporting those critical missions during a power outage.

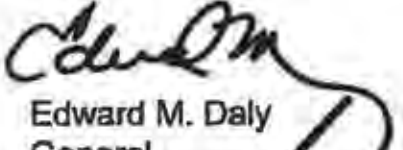
Energy and water resilience, efficiency, and affordability impact all Army missions. The Army is modernizing installation and operational energy and water programs, technology, and infrastructure to increase the Army’s ability to support multi-domain operations. Through diligent energy management, our installations can become robust and resilient power projection platforms where our Soldiers live, train, and work.

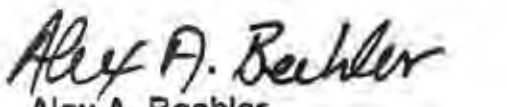
The Army conducts Energy Resilience Readiness Exercises (or “pull the plug” exercises) at installations to identify capability gaps. These exercises test an installation’s emergency and standby energy generation systems, infrastructure, equipment, and fuel that support critical missions. The fence line is now the frontline – we must remain vigilant in protecting Army assets.

The Army is the largest consumer of electricity in the Federal Government, spending more than a billion dollars on installation and operational energy a year. Commands at all levels must prioritize energy resilience requirements to ensure reliable energy to sustain critical missions and reduce consumption. By taking action and making informed decisions, we possess the power to reduce energy consumption and improve resilience.

During October, it is everyone’s responsibility to become energy aware, and to apply this awareness throughout the year. We urge the entire Army to remain mindful of energy use, reduce consumption, and promote energy awareness.

  
Jason T. Evans  
Lieutenant General,  
Deputy Chief of Staff,  
G-9 (Installations)

  
Edward M. Daly  
General,  
Commanding General,  
Army Materiel Command

  
Alex A. Beehler  
Assistant Secretary of the Army  
Installations, Energy and  
Environment