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Exposing the Northern Lights

By Brian Schlumbohm
Fort Wainwright PAO

The aurora borealis, or northern lights, are a common sight in Alaska, at least for a few of those who may venture out in the hours of darkness and cold with the luck of timing on their side.

Along with the joy of seeing one, and bitten by the shutterbug, frequently comes the desire to capture an image to share that experience through photography.

Here are a few photography tips that may help get you within the proverbial, celestial ball park.

A motionless camera, a long exposure and a great aurora are all you need.

First, having a tripod is a must; but even if you don't have one don't let that stop you. Grab a bag of dried beans or rice - that's right, a bag of dry beans or rice placed inside in an extra stocking cap or large tube sock will work great as a camera stabilizer. Setting the bag on any stable surface, such as a car hood, lawn chair or mailbox, anything that won't move or sway during an exposure, will work. Gently seat the camera on the bag, pressing down until it is completely supported by the bag while you are still able to view through the eye piece. It works well in a crunch. Consider keeping a bag of beans or rice in your vehicle just in case. You never know when a great shot will present itself, and tripods take up room.

It is best if the camera can be manually set. The ability to set shutter speeds, aperture settings, focusing and the ISO settings provides the best results for capturing low-light scenes. Some of the newer auto-



Alaska scenery is a photographer's paradise, even when the lights are out.

matic cameras have programmed low-light settings, which could allow for a successful aurora photo. It wouldn't hurt to give it a try and experiment with a camera's automatic shooting programs.

When shooting the aurora, find an area to shoot from that is out of the direct light from street lights, passing cars or building lights.

Once the camera is securely fixed atop a tripod or safely nestled on a bag of beans, try a starting exposure at 15 seconds, 5.6 f stop (aperture) and an ISO of 320. From that setting, depending on the intensity of the aurora's glow and movement, adjustments can be made to the speed and aperture to brighten or darken the image captured.

Check the LCD screen. If the image is too dark and the aurora doesn't show very well, try a longer exposure (shutter setting) or lower aperture number.

If the image is too light or lacks vivid colors, shorten the exposure time or raise the aperture number. Lastly, if the images are still too dark, the ISO number can be raised up in increments. Note that the higher the ISO number, the grainier the images may become.

Every aurora is different in size, intensity, movement and color. Starting out with a basic setting allows quick changes in a timely manner. The northern lights can change slowly and the camera's settings may work for many exposures. Or the

intensity of the lights may grow or diminish and exposure settings may have to be changed often.

Reviewing captured images in the LCD viewer will help in determining exposure changes.

A good practice is to have a notebook to jot down observances of the scene to compare how the images turn out with different camera settings. This will help you better understand what to expect the next time. Also take into consideration that digital cameras save various types of information with image files. Not only time and date, but also information about apertures, shutter speeds, ISOs and other camera settings.

Keep in mind that the aurora happens hundreds

of miles above the earth, so where to direct your focus is important. Some of the best aurora shots are made with interesting foregrounds in them: cabins, trees, lakes and even people. It's a hard decision to make on just where to focus in your scene.

Being out with the right equipment, at the right time, and photographing the aurora is to be considered lucky. But as to not always count on luck, the University of Alaska Fairbanks Geophysical Institute's aurora activity forecast webpage is an excellent source to gauge when the possibilities are good for an aurora photo opportunity. The web page can be found at <https://www.gi.alaska.edu/monitors/aurora-forecast>.

Transition Assistance Program counselor, providing exemplary service

Greg Corbett
Fort Wainwright Transition Assistance Program Contract Installation Manager

How long does it take for Service Members to figure out what they want to do after leaving Active Duty? At the Fort Wainwright Transition Assistance Program, transitioning Soldiers are given the tools and foundation to become successful in civilian life through job search training, resume preparation, Veteran Affairs benefit briefings, and other civilian resources.

TAP helps transitioning Service Members explore what they want to do after Active Duty. The Counselors and staff encourage them to consider what it takes to transition into a civilian career. Preparation is the key, including the job search process, writing



a resume, interviewing skills, networking, and dressing for success. Transition is not an overnight process or something that can be planned in a week or a month.

The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) is an integral

part of every Service Members personal life cycle. TAP provides comprehensive transition services to separating and retiring Service Members, and their Family members. The TAP counselors are instrumental in helping provide the

congressionally-mandated pre-separation counseling, and job search training. A great counselor can make a difference in the life of the Service Member who is preparing to enter into the civilian job market.

Mr. Gerald Harrison, assigned to the Fort Wainwright TAP Center is just that type of transition counselor. Gerry, a retired 22 year former Marine Corps Master Sergeant, retired Marine Corps Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps Instructor, and now TAP Transition Counselor has devoted himself to a life of service and generosity. In the year and a half that Gerry has been working with Service Members he has single handedly helped hundreds of Soldiers gain employment. His number one agency that he enjoys working with is the United States Border Patrol.

He has tirelessly worked with the US Border Patrol, Alaska State Troopers, Fairbanks Police Department, and also the Federal Bureau of Investigation, helping hundreds of Service

Members find their next career. Gerry networks with his contacts and gives his clients a leg up in the hiring process. The Border Patrol agents stated "Gerry has single handedly helped the success of our recruiting department here at Blaine Sector over these last few years." He was recently recognized and awarded a Letter and Certificate of Recognition, along with a memento emblazoned with the Border Patrols crest and logo for his sustaining help in directing Soldiers into their next career as a border patrol agent.

Mr. Harrison is just one of several transition counselors on the staff at the Fort Wainwright TAP center. Every counselor and staff member strives to provide the best service possible

See TAP on page 2

WEEKEND WEATHER

Friday



Slight chance of snow. High: 10F.

Saturday



Partly sunny. High: 10F.

Sunday



Mostly cloudy. High: 19F.

IN BRIEF

During this time of the year a frozen water line or heating system can happen at any time. Generally it can come from a window left open in an office or home overnight. Several hundreds of gallons of water can spray out from the burst line which can cause thousands of dollars of damage.

Read more on page 4.

Nutrition Corner: Nutrition 101

Did you know that one teaspoon of table salt contains more sodium than most people need in one day. The recommended intake of sodium is 1,500 mg for adults under 50 and one teaspoon contains much more than that - approximately 2,300 mg. Furthermore, the salt we add at the table only contributes five to 10 percent of our daily intake of sodium. Most sodium comes from convenience foods such as grab and go items and highly processed foods. Watch out for the high sodium content of pizza, cured meats, soups, sandwiches, cheese, frozen meals, pasta and pasta sauce.

Sodium does play an important role in the body. Most people do not

need more than the recommended 1,500 mg, and while sodium also plays an important role on the culinary side by enhancing flavor and tenderizing meats, unfortunately, high sodium intake can lead to high blood pressure which increases risk for heart disease, stroke and congestive heart failure. The good news is that lowering your sodium intake can help lower your blood pressure. Start by not adding salt at the table or in your recipes. The sodium can be cut in half in most recipes without affecting the quality of the final product.

Try to shop the perimeter of the grocery store to get fresh produce, meats and low fat dairy products. If you prefer canned vegetables,

aim for the products with no added salt. Use the nutrition fact label to guide you. Low sodium products will have 140 mg or less per serving. Don't be fooled by the reduced sodium claim; these products have 25 percent less sodium than the original product, but are not necessarily low in sodium. For example, reduced sodium soy sauce is still very high in sodium although it is reduced from the traditional product. With one third of Americans diagnosed with high blood pressure, it is important that we all start looking at decreasing this necessary, but overabundant nutrient in our diet.

Featured Food:
Farro. Naturally low in sodium (25 mg), this ancient

grain packs in 3g of fiber, 6g protein and a whole lot of texture and flavor.

Recipe Spotlight: Roasted carrot and farro salad

INGREDIENTS:
2 pounds of carrots, peeled and cut into one-inch pieces
1/4 cup olive oil plus 1 tablespoon, divided
1 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
3/4 teaspoon pepper, divided
1 cup uncooked faro
1/2 cup reduced fat Greek yogurt
1 1/2 teaspoons lemon zest
3 tablespoons lemon juice
1 clove garlic, minced
2 cups fresh baby arugula

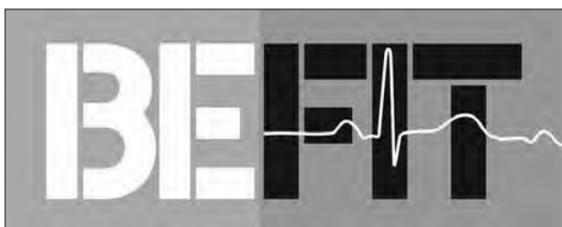
1/4 cup chopped walnuts, toasted

PREPARATION:

Step 1: Preheat oven to 400 F
Step 2: Combine carrots, 1 tablespoon olive oil, cumin, 1/2 teaspoon pepper on a large rimmed baking sheet; toss to coat. Spread carrots in a single layer.
Step 3: Bake 25 to 30 minutes or until tender, stir in 10 minute increments
Step 4: Cook farro according to package directions.
Step 5: Whisk together yogurt, 1/4 cup olive oil, lemon zest, lemon juice, garlic and remaining pepper.
Step 6: Combine farro, carrots and baby arugula in a large bowl; drizzle with yogurt mixture, tossing to coat. Sprinkle with walnuts

Exchange's BE FIT gear helps Fort Wainwright shoppers stay fit to fight in the New Year

Carina DeCino
Army and Air Force Exchange Service Public Affairs



The Army and Air Force Exchange Service at Fort Wainwright is helping Soldiers and the military community achieve fitness resolutions with the gear they need in the New Year.

The Fort Wainwright Exchange and ShopMyExchange.com are stocking up on the latest athletic apparel and shoes, fitness trackers and workout equipment—everything needed to live a BE FIT lifestyle.

Name-brand athletic apparel and footwear is being incorporated into shops that look and feel like major sporting goods stores. Essential BE FIT gear offered at the Fort Wainwright Exchange includes:

- Athletic apparel and footwear.
- Digital fitness accessories.
- Watches and wearable technology with fitness-tracking capability.
- Hydration accessories.

"A new year is an opportunity to set new goals and forge a path to meet them," said Gloria Sylvia, Fort Wainwright Exchange general manager. "The Fort Wainwright Exchange is dedicated to helping every member of the military community lead healthy, active lifestyles as 2021 kicks off."

The Exchange takes a holistic approach to providing BE FIT options to promote and encourage healthy, better-for-you options. The initiative highlights health-conscious dining grab-and-go options and provides an assortment of fitness gear and wellness services. More information about how the Exchange can help military shoppers lead a BE FIT lifestyle, including healthy recipes and workout tips, can be found at the Exchange's online community Hub.

Veterans with service-connected disabilities can shop in store, and all honorably discharged veterans who have verified their eligibility to use their lifelong online Exchange benefit can find BE FIT gear at ShopMyExchange.com.

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

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 pmpediatricsanywhere.com.

Specialist Available

Did you know you can see a specialist right here at Bassett urinary incontinence, overactive bladder, pelvic organ prolapse and fecal incontinence WITHOUT a referral from your PCM? Call 361-4000, option 4, option 1, option 1 to request an appointment with Dr. Christa Lewis.

Third Party Insurance

Do you have insurance other than TRICARE? Guaranteed no extra cost to the beneficiary, Bassett ACH is required to obtain a copy of private health insurance coverage from all non-active duty beneficiaries. To provide us with this information, beneficiaries will be asked to complete a DD Form 2569 annually.

Clean Out Your Medicine Cabinet

It's a great time to check your medicine cabinets for expired prescription and over the counter medications. A MedSafe box, located inside the main entrance of Bassett ACH across from the information desk, is in place to securely receive your expired or no longer needed medications.

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, table or computer from

New MILITARY STAR accounts start the New Year with extra savings from Jan. 15 through Jan. 28

Carina DeCino
Army and Air Force Exchange Service Public Affairs

Fort Wainwright Soldiers and military shoppers can start the New Year with extra savings. Shoppers who sign up and use a new MILITARY STAR® account Jan. 15 through 28 will save 15 percent on first-day purchases instead of the 10 percent discount regularly offered. The discount will appear as a credit on the first monthly billing statement.

"As many military families are looking to stick to their New Year budgets, the extra MILITARY STAR savings help shoppers get the best value for their dollar," said Fort Wainwright Exchange general manager Gloria Sylvia. "The MILITARY STAR card is one more way the Exchange helps the Fort Wainwright community save."

Cardholders earn 2 percent in rewards points on their MILITARY STAR purchases—including at the commissary and Exchange mall vendors—and



The MILITARY STAR card is administered by the Army and Air Force Exchange Service and is accepted at all military exchanges and commissaries. For more information, visit MyECP.com.

receive a \$20 rewards card every 2,000 points

Other benefits of the MILITARY STAR card include:
• Free shipping on all ShopMyExchange.com and MyNavyExchange.com orders.
• 5 cents off every gallon of fuel at Exchange fuel locations.

See STAR on page 3

TAP

Continued from page 1

to each and every Soldier that walks through the doors. Gerry is the epitome of what a successful counselor can do to enhance the next step for the Service members as they make their way out the door and into the civilian community.

TAP encourages transitioning Service Members to start the program 18 months prior to transition or 24 months prior to retirement. Service Members complete several mandatory classes and have the opportunity to take advantage of additional career resource classes. Service Members who take the time to attend TAP early and go often are much better prepared for the civilian sector.

To learn more about TAP, visit www.sfl-tap.army.mil. TAP is also on Facebook (@ArmySFLTAP), Twitter (@SFLTAP), and LinkedIn Groups (Soldier for Life - Transition Assistance Program Connection Group).

For local support here on Fort Wainwright or Fort Greely, Contact;

Transition Assistance Program
Fort Wainwright Welcome Center
Bldg. 3401 Santiago Avenue, Room 249
Fort Wainwright AK, 99703
Office Phone: (907) 353-2113
Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/WainwrightSFLTAP

ALASKA POST

The Interior Military News Connection

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The Chaplain's Corner Looking for Something?

Chaplain (Capt.) J. Daniel Roland
U.S. Army Garrison Alaska, Fort Wainwright Battalion Chaplain

When I was in my third year of college, my older brother gave me a beautiful knife for Christmas. My father, along with all my older brothers had similar knives manufactured by a locally renowned knife maker, so it was a very special gift. I remember how sharp it was, and how the polished metal gleamed. I also remember fastening it to my belt and taking it with me while hunting for White-tailed deer on one of the ranges

at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. I remember the elation I felt when I was successful in the hunt. The one thing I don't remember was where that knife fell as I attempted to drag/carry that deer out of the field. I spent over eight hours looking for that knife whenever I had some time to spare over the course of two weeks. I tried to track all my steps and places I might have walked. I crawled on my hands and knees in places that I thought most probable. I thought of all sorts of ways to find it. I thought of using a metal detector, or enlisting all my kids to line up and offer

rewards to the one who found it. I was briefly tempted to light the range on fire to try to burn off some of the waist tall grass that was everywhere. Thankfully I managed to resist that temptation... I never did find my special knife and I am still disgusted at myself for losing it. Have you ever lost something really important to you? Have you ever spent hours searching for something only to experience deep disappointment? Maybe you have lost a relationship or you are still searching for that special relationship that means more than anything.

Maybe I should ask this: "What are you looking for in this New Year?"

Many people are looking for a return to the "normal" that preceded the COVID-19 Pandemic. Many are looking for better habits and better health. Some are making resolutions and will make great strides in their personal habits this year! I would love to take a moment and encourage you to search for the most important relationship possible: your relationship with God. In Luke 11, Jesus tells us how we all can pray to God, and He encourages us all to approach God



just like a child would approach a loving Daddy. Verses 9-10 states "I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened." What an amazing promise from Jesus! If I want

to have a deep relationship with God, all I have to do is look for God and ask for God! Are you willing to search for God this year like you have searched for other items in your life that you may have lost at some point? I pray that this New Year is full of God's richest blessings and that we all grow closer to Him!

Show us your Alaska



A sundog appearing over Fort Wainwright when sunlight is refracted through icy crystals approximately 22° to the left, right or both sides of the sun. Sundogs are also known as parhelion (plural parhelia) in meteorology, which means "with the sun." (Photo by Brian Schlumbohm, U.S. Army Garrison Alaska, Fort Wainwright Public Affairs)

Staff Report

Want to have a photo featured in the Alaska Post or Fort Wainwright Facebook and Instagram pages?

Send us your favorite photo taken from throughout the great state of Alaska for a chance to have one featured. This is a great way to share the many things there are to do while in Alaska from hiking, camping, fishing, skiing, mushing, aurora chasing and much more.

Photos do not have to be military in nature and can be a scenic landscape, family outings, wildlife or adventuring throughout the state.

Photos should be high resolution jpg files between 600KB and 2MB. Please provide a brief description of the photo to include the activity, location, anyone in the photo and the name of who took the photo for proper attribution.

Additionally, photos must be your original work of the person submitting and not contain offensive or objectionable in manner. Must have release authority if submitting a photo of a minor child or personnel in any area not open to the public. Submit photos to usarmy.wainwright.id-pacific.list.pao@mail.mil.

To see if your photo is featured online and for previously submitted photos, visit the Fort Wainwright Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/FortWainwrightPAO/> and Instagram page at <https://www.instagram.com/fortwainwrightalaska/>.

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, 6 p.m., NLC

Cornerstone Youth, Sundays, 1 p.m., NLC

Congregación Protestante Piedra Angular

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

Northern Lights Chapel Nov. 22, 2020

Fort Wainwright Religious Support Office, 353-6112

1051 Gaffney, Unit 10

Southern Lights Chapel (SLC), 8th St & Neely Rd.

Northern Lights Chapel (NLC), Luzon & Rhineland Avenues

STAR

Continued from page 2

- 10 percent off all Exchange restaurant purchases.
 - The lowest flat-rate APR (10.24 percent) among store cards—rate is offered to all cardholders upon account approval.
 - No annual, late or over-limit fees.
 - Reduced-interest deployment plan with no payments required for eligible customers.
- New account holders will receive

the 15 percent discount on all first-day purchases at military exchanges and commissaries, as well as online at ShopMyExchange.com, myNavyExchange.com and ShopCGX.com. "All Exchange earnings go back to the community," Sylvia said. "So when Soldiers, veterans, retirees and families shop the Exchange, they're not only saving on everyday purchases, they're also giving back."

Amended Notice of Availability for a Draft Environmental Impact Statement Addressing Heat and Electrical Upgrades at Fort Wainwright, Alaska

Comment Period is December 23, 2020 through February 20, 2021

The Department of the Army is issuing this Amended Notice of Availability of the continuing availability of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as part of the environmental planning process to address heat and electrical upgrades at Fort Wainwright, Alaska. The Draft EIS evaluates reasonable alternatives, potential environmental impacts, and key issues of concern.

An electronic copy of the Draft EIS is available online at <https://home.army.mil/alaska/index.php/fort-wainwright/NEPA/HEU-EIS>. Copies of the Draft EIS will be available for review at the Noel Wien Library, Fairbanks, AK; Post Library, Fort Wainwright, AK; and Tri-Valley Community Library, Healy, AK if these facilities are open; and upon request.

The comment period originally scheduled to end on December 8, 2020 is being reopened for an additional 60 days ending on February 20, 2021. Comments received during the 60-day comment period on the Draft EIS will be fully considered prior to the identification of the Army's preferred alternative. This preference will be identified when the Final EIS is published.

There are several ways to provide comments during the comment period.

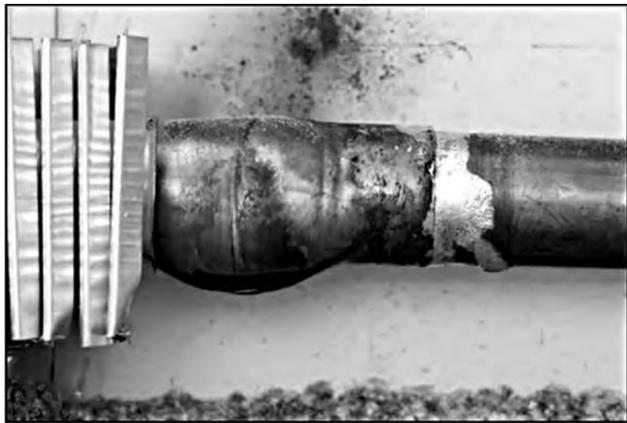
Email: usarmy.wainwright.id-pacific.mbx.heu-eis@mail.mil

Online Open House: <https://home.army.mil/alaska/index.php/fort-wainwright/NEPA/HEU-EIS>

Mail:
Ms. Laura Sample, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Program Manager Attn: IMFV-PWE (Sample)
1046 Marks Road #4500
Fort Wainwright, AK 99703-4500

If you have questions or require additional information, please contact Grant Sattler, Public Affairs Office IMPC-FWA-PAO (Sattler), 1060 Gaffney Road #5900, Fort Wainwright, AK 99703-5900; telephone: (907) 353-6701; email: alan.g.sattler.civ@mail.mil.

The U.S. Army complies with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Individuals with disabilities who may need auxiliary aids, services, and/or special accommodations should contact Grant Sattler or TDD number 711. Requests should be made at least 5 days before the accommodation is needed to make any necessary arrangements.



(File photos, USAG Alaska Fort Wainwright Installation Safety Office)

Installation Safety Office note on frozen pipes

Staff Report
USAG Alaska Fort Wainwright Installation Safety Office

During this time of the year a frozen water line or heating system can happen

at any time. Generally it can come from a window left open in an office or home overnight. Several hundreds of gallons of water can spray out from the burst line which can cause thousands of dollars

of damage.

If this occurs, it is important to know who to contact and how to remedy the situation. If the emergency is on-Post in your workspace call 353-7069; in your quarters call North

Haven emergency at 356-7126 or maintenance at 356-7000. If there is an emergency in an off-Post residence, contact a plumber for assistance. Ask your landlord where the water turn-off is in your home.

Never use an open flame or torch to thaw the line, the chance of starting a fire is very real. An electric source of heat is also dangerous. They generate too much current and can cause an electric shock.

Weekly Tips: Goals

With the New Year already started, it's time to take a look at your personal financial goals. When setting your goals, you need to know what is important to accomplish. Your financial planning begins with setting clear concise goals. Think of your financial future as one large money map. If you have no idea where you want to go, how do you propose to get there? When creating goals, you should have both short-term and long-term goals. Here are some tips to help you create your financial map.

- Examine your personal ambitions and take ownership in the goals. Believing in your goals will give you confidence to move forward.
- Take time to write your goals down. The extra effort of writing

your goals reinforces them. It also encourages you to move forward and stop procrastinating. Put these goals in places you will see them every day, such as on the refrigerator or your bathroom mirror.

- Clearly state your goals. Your list should identify specific actions or events that you will achieve. Focusing on a specific target to avoid ambiguity.

- Set realistic goals. This gives you the opportunity to stretch to reach your desires.

- Achievability plays an important role in your success. Ensure your goals are within your skills and abilities. By knowing your strengths and weaknesses, your chances of your long-term financial success increases. If the goals are a stretch, consider taking a class to increase your knowledge

and skills.

- Measure your progress along the way. Recognizing your progress helps prevent frustration while failure to measure will result in wasted effort. Celebrate your progress along the way. Cross off your short-term goals as you achieve them.

- Plan your goals. Carefully evaluate the steps necessary to achieve your goals. When goal setting, realize your plan of action is a vital step to success. Your plan will require action to work. Make the commitment.

- Prioritize your steps within your action plan.

- Remember that flexibility provides you the opportunity to change course if necessary. Knowing that sometimes life forces changes to your plans, enabling

you to take a detour without losing momentum or confidence.

- Set a timeline to reach your financial goals. Once you set the timeline, work backwards to see if it's feasible and adjust as necessary.

- Increase your financial knowledge. Take a class or two to help you reach your goals. The more you understand about finances, the more focused you become in reaching them. Financial knowledge will help you make better financial decisions.

Share your goals! The more you share your goals, the more people are willing to assist you reaching them. Ask others for resources to help you achieve success or to encourage you along the way. Knowing you are not alone makes all the difference.

2020 banner year for Army talent management, says director

Thomas Brading
Army News Service

This year has been eventful for the Army Talent Management Task Force, said its director, as the Army's "war for talent" continues into 2021 equipped with data-driven programs meant to find and retain top talent, including an online marketplace for thousands of officers.

"2020 has been the year we've demonstrated what it means to make people the Army's No. 1 priority," said Maj. Gen. J.P. McGee.

Last year, Army Chief of Staff Gen. James C. McConville named the Army's people as his topmost concern, placing talent management front and center. Army Secretary Ryan D. McCarthy then announced

people as the service's top priority during his annual address in October.

Despite facing a pandemic, the task force was still able to roll out multiple new programs in support of this priority.

"2020 has been a rough year for everyone, but when you look at the Talent Management Task Force you see how we've taken the chief's No. 1 priority and made it a reality," McGee said.

Talent alignment

In the past 15 months, the Army has helped more than 30,000 active-duty officers find ideal assignments with a new system designed to match the needs of Soldiers and incoming units.

The Army Talent Alignment Process

program, or ATAP, is a decentralized, regulated, market-style hiring system that aligns officers with jobs based on preferences that kicked off at the onset of fiscal year 2020.

Around the same time, the Army also unveiled the Assignment Interactive Module 2.0, a user-friendly bridge to ATAP that helps Soldiers find assignments, while also giving them more authority to interact with individual units they want to align with.

The data collected in the marketplace, from both officers and receiving units, have helped the Army identify the preferred locations and skills needed where officers want to serve, he said, adding it benefits both individual Soldiers and the service.

"We're able to show



An Army officer simulates what candidates will go through when they sit down at the end of the process to participate in a double-blind panel interview with senior Army officers Aug. 11, 2020. (Photo by Eric Pilgrim)

that the Army can run a system based on officers' preferences, [along with] the needs of the Army," McGee said. "This has been an effective way to get officers where they want to be."

Command assessment programs

Another new way to track down talent has been the Army's Colonel and Battalion Command Assessment Programs, or CCAP and BCAP. The five-day, in-person assessments have helped find officers with the best fit at the command and strategic levels.

The Army has run multiple command assessments, he said, starting with one BCAP at the beginning of the year, a CCAP in September, another BCAP that started in October, and more scheduled next fall.

During the first BCAP in January, officers only had to worry

about the required events like a physical test, written and psychometric test, and a double-blind board of senior leaders intended to reduce unconscious bias. Then the pandemic happened.

"We had to run [the programs] in a COVID-19 environment," McGee said. "To do this, we had to develop a very safe and consistent approach to mitigate the virus."

For example, officers were tested and screened upon arrival for COVID-19, they used rental cars instead of buses to maintain social distancing, their movement was tracked, and the Army brought in an independent group of Soldiers with the sole purpose of enforcing compliance measures.

Enlisted talent

An enlisted version of the command assessments, the Sergeants Major Assessment Program, was held last month at

Fort Knox, Kentucky. The program, which involved 28 sergeants major, is being developed as a new way to pick command sergeants major.

Although in its early stages, the Assignment Satisfaction Key-Enlisted Module, or ASK-EM, also gives ranked assignment choices "in some form of market-based approach" for NCOs between the ranks of staff sergeant through master sergeant for the 2021 enlisted manning cycle, McGee said.

The task force's efforts are not limited to the officer corps, he said, adding "they should all gain a lot of steam in the next year."

Soldier feedback underpins talent management, the general said, which is why they launched the Department of the Army Career Engagement Survey in May.

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Soldiers, civilians to repay tax deferments through December 2021

By Thomas Brading
Army News Service

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service is planning to extend payroll collections for Soldiers and Army civilians through December 2021 to reimburse a tax deferral designed to support personnel during the COVID-19 pandemic, officials said.

A presidential memorandum signed in August temporarily paused a portion of Social Security, called Old Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance, or OASDI, tax currently set at 6.2 percent of an individual's base pay from Sept. 1 to Dec. 31.

The payroll tax deferral was intended to provide financial relief to both civilian employees who make less than \$4,000 per pay period and service members with a monthly basic pay of less than \$8,666.66, according to DFAS.

"This is a two-phase approach," said Larry Lock, chief of compensation and entitlements with the Army's G-1 office. "The first phase focused on advising that taxes would be deferred. Now, we're going into the second phase, which is focusing on the collection [of money] and advising members on how we will proceed with collecting it."

To recoup funds, service members and civilians will pay the deferred 2020 Social Security tax as well



Soldiers and Army civilians can expect smaller paychecks from January through April 2021 to reimburse a tax deferral designed to support personnel during the COVID-19 pandemic. (Photo by Thomas Hamilton III, U.S. Army Europe)

as the normal 6.2 percent Social Security tax withholdings, said Michelle O. Francois, acting chief of the G-1's Civilian Personnel Benefits and Compensation Division.

Soldiers and civilians were unable to opt-out of the original deferral, and will be unable to opt-into any payment plan other than what is in motion, Lock said.

To account for the additional taxes, he urges members to plan now by calculating the amount of Social Security taxes de-

ferred during this calendar year. To determine the amount owed, personnel should:

- Log into the myPay website and navigate to the final 2020 leave and earning statement.
- Multiply 6.2 percent times the amount of basic pay received from September through December 2020.

"We are counting on Soldiers to take the responsibility of looking at their LES," he said.

Once 2020 W-2s post in January, only the total FICA taxes currently collected will be available. However, once the back taxes are repaid, personnel should expect a W-2c, the Corrected Wages and Tax Statement, which will include the collection of the owed amount. This will not change the deadlines established by the Internal Revenue Service for filing income tax returns next year.

The automated payback system isn't "one-size-fits-all," said Lock, adding

that the amount owed could fluctuate for recently separated or retired personnel.

All members will still be required to repay their deferred tax amount in full. Under this circumstance, the government will reimburse the taxes to the IRS on their behalf, Lock said.

If the taxes are not subtracted from their last check, the member "will receive a debt notice with instructions on repayment information" from DFAS, he added.

Under these circumstances, the collection will happen through a debt management process and a letter will be sent to the individual's address of record and posted through the myPay website in January.

The letter will outline instructions for repayment to be made via Pay.gov.

According to Lock, individuals who entered military service during the deferred period will end up repaying for less, depending on their entry date. The total amount will still be spread evenly through the next calendar year.

"If there are any future changes, we will have to take a look at it and respond accordingly," Francois said.

Active-duty Soldiers, Army civilians and retired Soldiers should visit <https://www.dfas.mil/taxes/Social-Security-Deferral> for the latest information.

The Water Cycle and YOU!

Ida Petersen and Bill Favitta

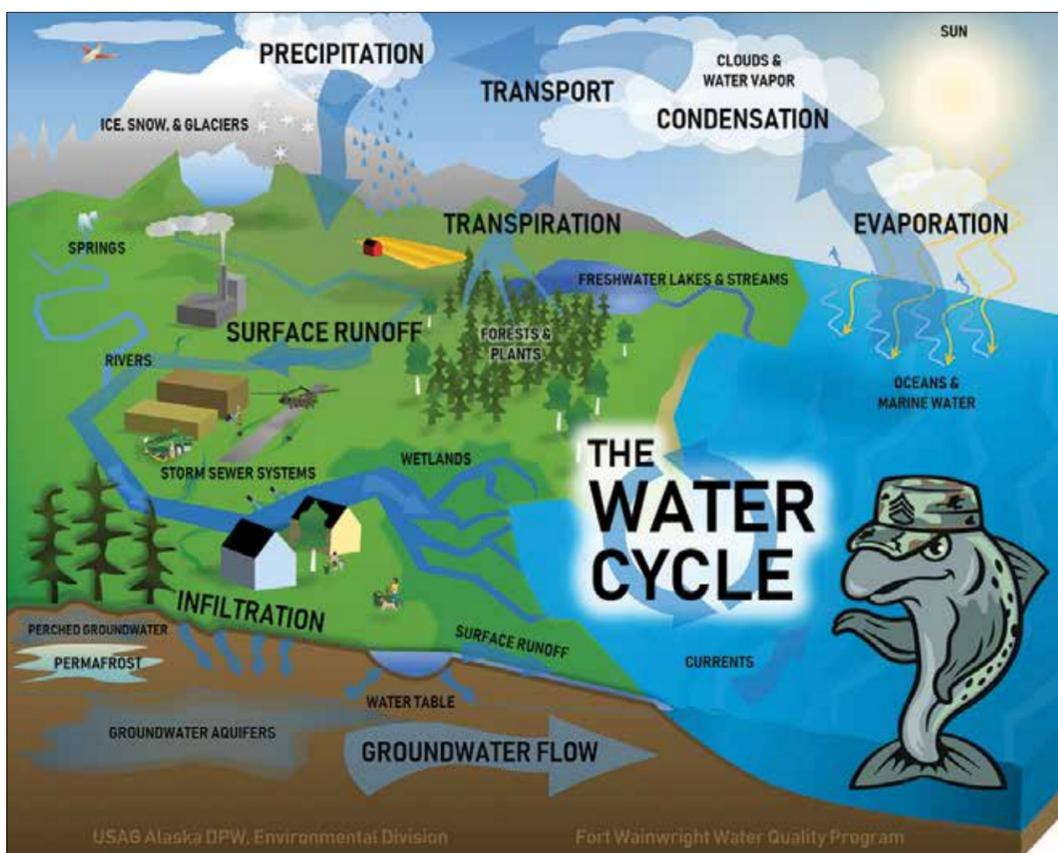
U.S. Army Garrison Alaska Department of Public Works Environmental Division Water Program

Even if you've been living under a rock, you have experienced the Water Cycle in action. Rain falling from the sky, water seeping into the ground, a flowing river, plant roots sucking up moisture; each is an example of water moving from one ecosystem to another. Protecting the Water Cycle is vital to keeping humans, animals, and the environment healthy. In the figure, you can see the planet-wide transformations that drive the cycle. Salt water in the ocean evaporates into the atmosphere and forms clouds. Clouds deposit rain and snow on the landscape. Water flows along the surface or underneath the ground. Plants and animals, including humans, use this water to survive, then release some of it back into the environment.

At any point, water may pick up pollutants that hitch a ride into future stages of the cycle. Litter, sediment, and invisible contaminants (like fertilizers, oils, pesticides, and other chemicals) get carried across land and downstream to

water bodies during a heavy rain or snowmelt. Exhaust from industrial processes can travel through the air to clouds and create acid rain. A combination of many different sources of pollution adds up throughout a watershed and can harm the living things it contacts. On Fort Wainwright, water travels across the land into the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System, which feeds into wetlands and the Chena River. Each leaking vehicle, sewer backup, or pile of dog poo, has the power to impact our valuable water.

A functioning ecosystem can filter out some pollution, but it can only do so much. Permeable soils, vegetation, and wetlands are a few examples of natural filtration zones which absorb water and contaminants to create a "sink" to slow the water down. These natural filters are often bypassed by human-created surfaces like parking lots, roofs, or culverts. While drainage systems may prevent flooding in an urban area, they also force all of that runoff to skip filtration and invade a wetland or waterway. Using strategies called "Green Infrastructure," we can use designs that act like natural filtration zones and protect the Water



Cycle. Examples of Green Infrastructure on Fort Wainwright include the trees and shrubs planted in front of Hangar 3 and the grass swales (gently-sloped ditches) that wind through housing areas like Tanana Trails.

Already, the planet has a limited water supply, mainly in forms unusable to humans such as salt water in the oceans, the polar ice caps, permafrost, or freshwater polluted with un-drinkable chemicals. In the United States, past pollution has made 40 percent

of the nation's rivers and lakes unsafe to swim in or fish from. That's why we all need to do our part in preventing pollution. Every little thing we do to protect water quality can make a difference in the Water Cycle!

- 8 things you can do to protect our water:**
- Pick up litter and pet waste.
 - Clean up spills right away, including leaks and drips from vehicles.
 - Reduce, Reuse, Recycle!
 - Bring cleaning

supplies and chemicals to the Fort Wainwright Household Hazardous Waste Program at Building 3489 for other people to use (instead of putting them in the landfill) and check there before buying new.

- Don't put fat and cooking grease down the drain and avoid using a garbage disposal to prevent clogs and backups.
- Never put any pills or medications down the toilet or drain.
- Don't drive vehicles off-road where they will tear up

- soils.
- Try pesticide-free strategies first when tending to your garden.
- Get involved in local groups and events going on in your community. To learn more, visit the Fort Wainwright Storm Water website or the Fairbanks Storm Water website at: <https://home.army.mil/alaska/index.php/fort-wainwright/storm-water> <https://www.fnsb.gov/383/Fairbanks-Storm-Water-Management-Program>

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Fort Wainwright Family & MWR

Weekly Events

January 9 - 16

9

Women in the Wilderness: White Mountain Snowmachine Trip

Registration Deadline: January 9
Event: January 16, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Tackle the trails with ODR for this ladies only trip! *Snowmachine Safety Certification required.

Outdoor Recreation Center, Bldg 4050
Call 361-6349, registration required

9

Play with the Pros

January 9 - 10
10:30 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Buy a thing and take a swing! Play alongside the golf pros from the comfort of our private, indoor Golf Simulators. Your shot could win you a pack of Titleist Pro V1 golf balls!

Chena Bend Clubhouse, Bldg 2092
Call 353-6223

11

Winter Camp: Pee Wee Floor Hockey

January 11 - 13
6 - 6:45 p.m.

Youth Sports and Fitness will hold a Floor Hockey camp from 6 - 6:45 p.m. for ages 3 - 4 years old. Masks required.

Youth Sports & Fitness, Bldg 3414
Call 353-7713, registration required

13

Virtual Teen Hiring Fair

January 13 - 14
1 - 4 p.m.

Teens, ages 16 - 18 can apply for these positions: Office Aid & Recreation Aid (Youth Programs). Submit applications at usajobs.gov.

NAF Human Resources Office, Bldg 1045
Call 353-7203, application required

15

B.O.S.S. Half Day Snowmachine Trip

January 15
Registration Deadline: January 15
Event: January 24, Noon - 5 p.m.

Explore Chena Lakes via snowmachine! *Snowmachine Safety Course is required prior to registering.

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

SPOUSE TO SPOUSE

Join us virtually!

via Facebook

LIVE January 14, 9:30 - 11:30
@FtWainwrightACS

Learn to thrive in the Last Frontier via a virtual field trip!

- Discover community resources •
- Connect with amazing people & new friends •

Army Community Service
3401 Santiago Avenue (907) 353-4227
wainwright.armymwr.com
#WainwrightMWR #WainwrightACS



Carve up the Ice at PFC Ice Rink Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays - Sundays. For more information, go to wainwright.armymwr.com.

@WainwrightMWR #WainwrightMWR

Top Soldier stories of 2020 show resilience in trying year

Sean Kimmons
Army News Service

While this year presented many challenges due to an ongoing pandemic, Soldiers continued to be resilient when faced with uncertainty. Soldiers helped on the frontlines in the COVID-19 response and also kept the peace during times of civil unrest.

An Army Ranger also received the military's highest honor, while another Medal of Honor recipient left a legacy of selfless service behind following his battle with cancer.

Below are some of the most notable Soldier stories of the year:

Soldiers on COVID-19 frontlines

Thousands of Soldiers, like Maj. Erin Velazquez, were called on to support the nation's ongoing fight against COVID-19. She led one of the Army Reserve's Urban Augmentation Medical Task Forces that rapidly deployed starting in March to help exhausted health care workers at civilian hospitals.

When her 85-member task force, made up of crit-

ical care personnel, arrived at the University Hospital in Newark, New Jersey, she said her Soldiers were greeted with open arms as her unit made sure to have the greatest impact possible by helping patients and providing mental health support to hospital staff.

More than a dozen similar task forces deployed to hotspots around the country, in what became the largest domestic mobilization in Army Reserve history.

During the initial response, U.S. Army North, which served as U.S. Northern Command's Joint Force Land Component Command, oversaw more than 9,000 military medical personnel, including those task forces.

Every state and U.S. territory also activated components of their National Guard to assist in response efforts. For instance, 2nd Lt. Justin Lee, a medical-surgical nurse with the Maryland Guard's 104th Area Support Medical Company, mobilized and later became a team leader as his unit supported long-term care facilities across the state.



(Photo illustration by Sean Kimmons)

Other Guardsmen and Army Corps of Engineers personnel also helped build several alternate care sites in major cities for many patients transferred from overwhelmed hospitals.

Army Ranger receives Medal of Honor

President Donald Trump draped the nation's highest military award around

Sgt. Maj. Thomas "Patrick" Payne's neck during a ceremony on the anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks - a day that compelled Payne to enlist.

Payne, who is assigned to the U.S. Army Special Operations Command, was part of a joint task force that assisted Iraqi security forces Oct. 22, 2015, in raiding an ISIS prison near Hawija in

northern Iraq.

Payne and his teammates liberated 70 hostages - many of whom were captured Iraqi security forces personnel - after a request by the Kurdistan Regional Government. Soldiers had to quickly rescue the hostages amid heavy

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TOP

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enemy gunfire and suicide-vest detonations during the contested nighttime operation, which left at least 20 insurgents dead.

Master Sgt. Josh Wheeler also died in the operation. Since that day, Payne said he has continually reflected on Wheeler's selfless service as well as that of his teammates.

While he miraculously survived with only minor smoke inhalation, Payne said he felt compelled to honor Josh's memory. So, when it was time to name their second son, Payne and his wife, Alison, chose Josh.

"For us, it's how his legacy lives on," Payne said. "He is an American hero."

Soldiers maintain peace during civil unrest

As the COVID-19 response carried on, thousands of Guardsmen were mobilized once again to assist local law enforcement and fire departments amid civil unrest following the death of George Floyd.

At its busiest time, the Guard had over 120,000 Soldiers and Airmen on duty serving around the world in early June. At least 90,000 of them either worked in COVID-19 or civil disturbance operations.

Master Sgt. Acie Matthews Jr., an equal employment opportunity advisor with the Minnesota Guard, and others were activated in St. Paul near where Floyd was killed after being arrested by police about 10 miles away in Minneapolis.

The incident sparked protests across the country, some of them even resulting in riots where Matthews calls home. Matthews, who mediates as part of his Army job, made it an effort to peacefully en-

gage with protesters in hopes of creating unity among all.

Georgia Guard Soldiers, like Staff Sgt. David Knicely, helped protect infrastructure and facilitate peaceful protests in downtown Atlanta after rioters looted and damaged several businesses.

Knicely said he talked with about 50 people along the fence, one-on-one. While he and other Soldiers initially faced hostile protesters, the crowd grew calmer after protesters realized they were there to protect them and keep order, he said.

Medal of Honor recipient's legacy of giving

After he received the Medal of Honor for helping save Special Forces Soldiers and Afghan commandos in 2008, former Staff Sgt. Ronald J. Shurer II considered locking up the medal away in his closet, worried it would be too much to handle.

While the medal deserved the upmost respect, the former 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) medic later learned he could use it to draw attention to the troops fighting today.

Following the medal ceremony in 2018, he participated in events led by the United Services Organization, Green Beret Foundation, Medal of Honor Society, and Special Operations Warrior Fund, to name a few.

It was his values of service, honor, and duty that led him up the mountain in Afghanistan that day. And it was the same beliefs that he committed himself to until he died May 14, after a hard-fought battle against lung cancer, said Miranda Shurer, his wife.

Ron never wanted to be defined by his cancer and chose

to live "between the scans" – the 12-week periods between each cancer screening, she said. And it was between each treatment, test, and medical evaluation that Ron and his family chose to thrive, giving back to various military and veteran causes around the U.S.

Texas Guard Soldier determined to change world

After a traumatic childhood that resulted in her being placed into foster care, 2nd Lt. Christina Meredith didn't let her early years define her.

She pursued her dreams and later won the Ms. California pageant, published a bestselling memoir and became a national speaker and an aspiring politician. She has even created a non-profit organization to advocate for foster care reform.

Meredith initially joined the Army as a chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear specialist in 2015. In June, she commissioned to be a signals intelligence officer with the Texas National Guard, accomplishing another dream of hers to be an Army officer.

Top Soldier, NCO of the year

After being pushed to their physical and mental limits, a Special Forces Soldier and a combat medic were named winners of this year's Best Warrior Competition during a virtual event in October hosted by the sergeant major of the Army.

Following a gauntlet of tests leading to the announcement, Sgt. 1st Class Alexander Berger, assigned to 2nd Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) at Fort Carson, Colorado, and Sgt. James Akinola, who represented U.S. Army Medical Com-

mand and is stationed at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, secured the top honors.

The competition recognizes Soldiers who demonstrate commitment to the Army values, embody the warrior ethos and represent the force of the future. The Army's top Soldiers and NCOs compete at locations around the world in regional events before finalists vie to be named the best of the best over a three-week span in September and October.

Normally, event organizers bring finalists together so they can be evaluated in-person on their technical skills, physical fitness, and ability to adapt and overcome challenging and battle-focused scenarios. Due to COVID-19 health restrictions, however, this year's competition was held virtually for the first time.

Recruits save life in basic combat training

A pair of new recruits leapt into action when a fellow recruit attempted suicide during the first week of basic combat training in early September.

Pvts. Carlos Fontanez and Ari Till stepped in when they noticed the recruit was in a mental health crisis while inside the communal latrine. Fontanez saw the trainee use a physical training belt as a noose and quickly grabbed him.

"I lifted him up so he could breathe, and Till unclipped the PT belt, and we just got him down and stayed by him until he got help," Fontanez said.

Drill sergeants and cadre then took over, and the trainee received professional medical care.

Both Fontanez and Till were later given

"on-the-spot" promotions to E-2, because of the responsibility they showed that day.

Veteran recites oath of enlistment at age 79

David Jager is likely the oldest person to enlist in the Utah National Guard history, if not the entire Army.

After Jager visited the Utah Guard's headquarters in Draper in February to fix a clerical error on his discharge paperwork, someone noticed that he never officially took the oath of enlistment when he joined in 1963.

With the Vietnam War in full swing at the time, Jager was hurriedly shipped off to boot camp at Fort Ord, California. He went on to serve with the 140th Field Artillery Regiment for six years before being honorably discharged at the rank of staff sergeant.

Almost 57 years later, a teary-eyed Jager raised his right hand and recited the carefully worded oath.

"It's an honor," Jager said afterward, wiping away his eyes. "I love the uniform. I love the flag."

Warrant officer cohort gets first female senior advisor

A panel of Army senior warrant officers chose the first female to serve as the voice for over 25,000 warrants in the total Army.

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Yolondria Dixon-Carter was selected to be the senior warrant officer advisor to the Army's top general in April. She is the third warrant officer to hold the position since it was

established in 2014.

Dixon-Carter now chairs the Army Warrant Officer Council, which advises Army Chief of Staff Gen. James C. McConville and other Army senior leaders on current and future development of the warrant officer cohort.

Army astronaut returns from historic space voyage

Col. Andrew Morgan returned to Earth in April, following almost nine months aboard the International Space Station.

While 250 miles above in space, Morgan completed several milestones, including setting the record for the most consecutive hours in space by a U.S. Army astronaut.

The lengthy space mission saw Morgan and his crew make more than 4,300 orbits around Earth, totaling 115 million miles. Morgan successfully completed the first seven space-

walks of his career and helped orchestrate NASA's first all-female spacewalk, taken by fellow astronauts Christina Koch and Jessica Meir. Morgan's spacewalks totaled about 46 hours.

Morgan said the mission ranked as the busiest in NASA history for spacewalks and cargo and robotics operations.

The emergency care physician further made history by swearing in 800 new Army recruits from the ISS in February. Morgan's mission, which began on July 20, 2019, coincided with the 50-year anniversary of the Apollo moon landing.

TALENT

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The survey takes roughly 15 minutes to complete and is intended to give Soldiers a voice, directly and anonymously.

As of last week, roughly 31,000 respondents have taken it. This survey "seeks to solicit the input from all Soldiers, [sent to them annually] on their birth month, to find out how they feel about the Army," he said.

Brevet promotions

A pilot program also started this year for the Brevet Promotion Program, which selects officers for temporary promotion to the next higher rank in a critical billet. Once they pin on their new rank, they will keep it until they complete the assignment or officially become promoted, McGee said.

The program was authorized by the fiscal 2019 National Defense Authorization Act. In addition to manning critical assignments, it also incentivizes retention of those officers whom the Army has invested in.

In all, 225 brevet promotions were identified during fiscal 2020, with more than 170 completed by the end of fiscal 2020. In the future, lawmakers have green-lit 770 positions as fillable for the Army through the program, "including 100 colonels, 200 lieutenant colonels, and a lower number of

majors and captains," he said.

All those positions are included in the ATAP marketplace in AIM 2.0, and only officers who are brevet promotion eligible have visibility to the various assignments.

Talent Based Career Alignment

This year, McGee and his team also rolled out the Talent Based Career Alignment, or TBCA, as another tool to retain the Army's top talent earlier in their careers, he said. In addition, Army leaders plan to retain roughly 2,000 of its best officers from every promotion cycle.

To do this, TBCA was established as "a pathway that guarantees a follow-on assignment [after completing the Captains Career Course and a company command] contingent upon continued high levels of performance," he said. In essence, "it allows officers to know their career pathway from the Captains Career Course to their attendance at Intermediate Level Education."

Currently, there are 21 volunteers in the pilot phase of the program.

With this career option, officers may have a better chance at receiving an assignment that interests them. From either being a professor at West Point, serving at "The

Old Guard," or to rising to the challenge of being part of the 75th Ranger Regiment, he said.

"[TBCA] breaks the mold that says all captains are the same when [they are treated] the same," McGee said. "We're saying we're going to find the most talented and we're going to fight for the retention of our most talented captains earlier."

"Second, we're able to spot talent earlier and earlier based on our ability to run analytics," he added. "This program assures we invest in our best talent early, let them know they have a guaranteed assignment leaving [Captains Career Course] and then a guaranteed follow-on assignment that effectively takes them to the General Command Staff College."

As 2021 approaches, McGee plans to build on lessons learned in the past year, he said, to win the Army's war for talent and continue retaining the best Soldiers.

"The Army, specifically senior leaders, are very serious about moving us into a 21st century talent management system," McGee said. "We need to be ready to fight large-scale combat operations in the future against near-peer threats. Due to that, we need to maximize our strengths and one of our true strengths is our people."