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Alaska Army National Guard infantrywoman makes history

Edward Eagerton
Alaska National Guard Public Affairs

On the cusp of Women's History Month, one Alaska Army National Guard Soldier made her own mark in history last month by becoming the first infantry woman in the Alaska National Guard.

Sgt. Serita Unin, now a fireteam leader with Bison Company, 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment, Alaska Army National Guard, is a Cup'ik Eskimo from the Kashunamiut Tribe who grew up in Bethel. She joined the Guard in 2009, six years before former President Barack Obama lifted the ban on women serving in combat units. At the time of her enlistment, combat arms jobs were not open to women.

"I came in as a generator mechanic and did that job for about 10 years," said Unin. "Initially I didn't want to go infantry. My commander at the time asked me if I wanted to switch jobs, and at first, I didn't want to."

Despite her hesitation, she explained, her leadership thought she was right for the job.

"A couple of drills later,"



Sgt. Serita Unin, a fireteam leader with Bison Company, 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment, Alaska Army National Guard, poses for a photo on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, March 16, 2021. Unin made Alaska National Guard history by becoming the first infantry qualified woman in the organization after she reclassified into the infantry military occupational specialty last month. (Photo by Edward Eagerton, Alaska National Guard Public Affairs)

she continued, "I got a call from my squad leader asking if I wanted to go infantry, and I thought, 'I don't know,' then I went to drill, and my unit told me I was going 11 Charlie (infantry mortarman), and I got to thinking, 'It wouldn't be a bad idea.'"

Unin said she knew it

was going to be physically and mentally demanding, but she was in the habit of working out twice a day. Physical fitness was ingrained in her routine, and though soft-spoken and thoughtful, her reflections on life and the importance of mental and physical health reveal a woman

with a strong constitution. Clearly, her former leadership saw the same when they volunteered her.

She was already thinking about changing her job at the time because she was in a position that maxed out at the rank of E-4 or specialist and she was looking for upward mobility. When

the opportunity presented itself, she rose to the challenge.

"I transferred over to Bison Company in October 2019 and waited to attend the infantry reclassification class since then," she said.

In January, Unin attended a three-week infantry reclassification course in Arkansas and graduated last month as the Alaska National Guard's first female infantry Soldier.

"At first, it was amazing ... but then I realized that this was bigger than myself. I realized that me being an infantry NCO will give other females a chance to become infantry if they wanted."

Though the ban on women serving in combat roles was lifted in 2015, it would take another two years for women to begin filtering into these units. At first, to recruit women directly into combat arms military occupational specialties, a female infantry officer and female infantry noncommissioned officer must have been trained and established in the gaining unit to have females in the chain of command.

See HISTORY on page 3

Month of the Military Child

April is Month of the Military Child and during a special visit from U.S. Army Garrison Alaska command team of USAG Alaska Fort Wainwright Commander Col. Christopher Ruga and USAG Alaska Fort Wainwright Command Sergeant Major Rob Preusser, Fort Wainwright School Age Center kids were able to spend time with both Army leaders.

"It was awesome to get to hang with the kids. As a child from a military family, I get them and the issues they face with PCS moves, making new friends and many other issues. These kids are our future leaders of tomorrow and it's awesome to see them being molded and cared for by our talented and caring staff." Preusser posted online after the event.

With the signing of the MOMC proclamations by Col. Ruga and Command Sgt. Maj. Preusser, it was time set aside to show appreciation of the military families; especially the children who support our military branches daily in the sacrifices they make and the challenges they overcome.

We all can show your support by wearing purple on Purple Up Day, Wednesday, April 14, and thank military youth for their strength and sacrifices.



Command Sgt. Maj. Rob Preusser interacts with kids during the Month of the Military Child proclamation signing visit at the Fort Wainwright School Age Center. (Photo courtesy of Fort Wainwright Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation)



Col. Christopher Ruga, USAG Alaska commander and Command Sgt. Maj. Rob Preusser sign multiple Month of the Military Child proclamations during a special visit at the Fort Wainwright School Age Center. (Photo courtesy of Fort Wainwright Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation)



Preventing sexual assault is everyone's responsibility

By Devon L. Suits
Army News Service

Building a culture of prevention, awareness, trust and support continue to drive efforts within the Army's Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention program, as it works toward rolling out new changes to eliminate those harmful behaviors.

"As we turn our focus to National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month during April, it is going to take all of us working together throughout the year," said Jill Londagin, the SHARP program director.

"Together, we can work toward eliminating inappropriate behavior and prevent sexual violence," she said in an interview Tuesday. "Every member of our Army family has an obligation to live the Army's values and ensure that everyone is treated with dignity and respect."

Restoring trust

Year round, the SHARP program maintains its commitment to eliminating sexual harassment/assault and associated retaliation, in addition to supporting survivors and holding offenders accountable, she said.

The success of the program requires leaders at all levels to take responsibility through the development and maintenance of professional organizational climates, she said.

It is incumbent of all leaders to harbor an environment built on trust, all while reinforcing the Army's values and culture throughout constant training across a Soldier's career.

Unit cohesion is also a core focus of the Army's "This is My Squad" initiative, which aims to create unified, physically fit, trained and ready teams.

See PREVENT on page 4

WEEKEND WEATHER

Friday



Slight chance of snow then partly sunny. High: 5F.

Saturday



Sunny. High: 16F.

Sunday



Cloudy. High: 28F.

IN BRIEF

Sgt. Ildar Hafizov and Spc. Alejandro Sancho fought their way to victory at the U.S. Olympic Wrestling Trials in Fort Worth, Texas, April 2-3, earning themselves spots on the U.S. Wrestling Olympic Team where they will represent the Army at the Summer Olympic Games this July in Tokyo, Japan.

Read more on page 7.

Nutrition Corner: Beverage choices

In making your daily food selections, you should be particularly mindful of your beverage choices? While your beverage selection may seem inconsequential, they can impact your total daily caloric intake, which can contribute to unwanted weight gain and dental caries. It is easy to unknowingly consume 500 to 1,000 calories per day in beverages alone.

For example, one 20-ounce bottle of cola contains 240 calories. If you drank one per day for

a year, that can contribute up to a 25 pound weight gain. Not to mention the 65 grams of additional sugar, about 1/3 cup, per day, which ends up to be about 118 cups of sugar per year.

Imagine the impact that has on your dental health as well. This also goes for energy drinks, sports drinks, juice and other sugared drinks such as lemonade. Don't be fooled by juice. Just because it contains some vitamins does not mean it should be consumed in large quantities.

Rely on your whole fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, low fat dairy and whole grains for your vitamins and minerals. One eight-ounce cup of orange juice contains 110 calories, so if you do enjoy a cold glass of juice in the morning ensure it is 100 percent juice and limit yourself to four to eight ounces per day.

If you are hooked on drinking sugar sweetened beverages because plain water is boring to you, think outside of the box for some other options. A

good natural replacement is fruit infused water. It is quick, easy and low in calories. A low to moderate intake of diet beverages (diet cola) and commercial zero calorie water flavoring powders are safe and effective for reducing calorie intake, when replacing sugared beverages, for most individuals.

Featured Food:

Fruit Infused Water! All you need to do is make a pitcher or bottle of water and throw in your favorite

mix of fruits and vegetables.

Featured Recipes:

Cherry Limeade – Fill a pitcher with water and combine with one thinly sliced lime and six pitted cherries cut in half. Add a small piece of mint for an extra burst of flavor. Best when fruit is infused for a minimum of four hours.

Cucumber Lemon – Fill a pitcher with water and add 10 to 14 thinly sliced cucumbers and four slices of lemon.

History Snapshot: Ladd Field Permanent Pass, 1941



August 'Augie' Hiebert was a radio engineer who operated the broadcast facilities of KFAR, which was located about two miles from what is now the University of Alaska Fairbanks and on the grounds of the current Fairbanks Golf Course. Prior to the war, KFAR was a commercial radio station, but following the U.S. entering World War II, it became the Armed Forces Radio Service outlet. KFAR served Ladd Field and Alaska's distant stations and received national programming that was previously inaccessible to the Fairbanks audience. Augie Hiebert related how the programming was distributed: "We had these big 16-inch transcriptions that were flown up here with NBC's best programs – Red Skelton, Jack Benny, all that stuff, CBS stuff, Mutual stuff, ABC stuff. And we had a marvelous program service that, of course, the townspeople enjoyed too. Now, these programs didn't have any commercials in them. All the commercials were deleted because they didn't want to figure that the government was subsidizing advertising. But it was wonderful programming for both civilians and the military. We did that through the whole war."

AFAP urging people to submit their ideas

Brandy Cruz
Fort Hood Public Affairs

For more than 30 years, the Army Family Action Plan has given people a voice to make changes that provide a positive impact on the Army family.

The Army family is not just Soldiers and their families, it is also surviving family members, retirees, Department of the Army civilian, non-appropriated funds civilians and contractors, among others. In order to make a change for everyone, requests have to be made.

"Anything you think would help the Army provide better service," Sallie Davis, Fort Hood AFAP manager, said. "There's probably some things out there that people would like to change, but they just don't know about this."

Since AFAP's inception, 692 issues have been identified, 128 legislative changes have been made, 184 Army policy and regulatory changes and have made 208 improvements to programs and services.

Issues can include local or Army-wide issues. Davis explained that whenever they receive an issue request, it is taken to the garrison commander, who determines if it is an issue that can be resolved locally or should be sent to Installation Management Command. If the issue is bigger than IMCOM, it is sent to Army-level for resolution.

Some major Army-wide issues that were AFAP requests include the Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers program, TRICARE for Life, dislocation allowance, temporary lodging expenses, Military Thrift Savings Plan, extended educational benefits for survivors, in-state college tuition for military spouses, among others.

It only takes one person to make a change and Davis said nothing is too big or too small. If there is an issue a person would like resolved, it is helpful to include ways it could be improved.

To suggest an improvement, visit www.myarmyonesource.com, search AFAP in the search bar and click the "AFAP Issue Management System" button on the right side of the page.

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
MEDDAC-AK Website: www.bassett-wainwright.tricare.mil
MHS Patient Portal: <https://my-access.dmdc.osd.mil/>
Health Net: www.tricare-west.com, 1-844-8676-9378

COVID vaccination

All TRICARE beneficiaries over 18 who would like to receive the COVID-19 vaccine will soon have the opportunity. Bassett Army Community Hospital is expecting 1,000 doses of the vaccine in early March. Upon delivery, we will begin scheduling appointments online.

Patient advocate

The Medical Department Activity – Alaska Patient Advocate acts on behalf of all patients and the commander to resolve problems and implement necessary corrections. Beneficiaries needing assis-

tance, or who have questions about the care received at MEDDAC-AK, can contact our Patient Advocate at 361-5291.

Town hall

MEDDAC-AK will conduct a Facebook Live event Monday, March 1 at 6 p.m. to discuss the COVID-19 vaccine and answer questions from our beneficiaries.

Talk with a registered nurse

Think you should go the emergency room but aren't sure? Wondering if you need an appointment? A registered nurse is standing by 24 hours a day, seven days a week to help. Call the Nurse Advice Line for your immediate health care needs. The nurse can even book you an appointment if necessary. Call 1-800-TRICARE (874-2273).

Clean out your medicine cabinet

The new year is 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.

AER ARMY
EMERGENCY
RELIEF

Contact your
COMPANY-level
AER Representative
to find out more



ALASKA POST

The Interior Military News Connection

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The Chaplain's Corner

Spiritual guidance

Chaplain (CPT) Jaffet Duquela
1st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, 25th Aviation Regiment

Within our daily lives, we are faced with many decisions. However, in the Christian tradition, we are commanded to glorify our Lord in all that we do. Christians should want to honor God in everything they do. But it is not always easy to know how to honor God. In regards to that, there are some who say, "The Holy Spirit guided me," or "I was led by the Spirit." What does it mean that the Spirit guided them and if the Spirit is personally guiding us, how can we

be sure that we are being guided by him and not our own desires?

One way to ensure that we are being led by the Holy Spirit is to never go against the Word of God. Making decisions that conflict with Scripture means that we are not being led by the Holy Spirit. We cannot be in sync with the Holy Spirit and go against the Scriptures at the same time. So the first test is to ask, what does the scripture teach about this action?

Another way to make sure we are being led by the Spirit is to ask advice from godly people. The Holy Spirit imparts a variety of gifts and wisdom to

others in the body of Christ. No one possesses all the wisdom to make the best decision in every scenario. Some might respond, "Well, I don't need advice because I'm following the advice of the Holy Spirit." That sounds godly, but it could also be the sin of pride. Seeking the advice of godly individuals is actually a way to seek the will of the Holy Spirit on an issue. The ministry of the Holy Spirit in and through others can illuminate those blind spots. Seeking the guidance of compassionate and merciful people can help make sure we are being led by the Spirit.

As we try to dis-

cover the will of God in our lives it is also an opportunity for us to grow. The Holy Spirit teaches us, in part, how to conform to the image of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 3:18). This is the process of sanctification, being made holier. If we are unwilling to actually look at what the Bible says about a particular decision or belief, then we are probably not being led by the Spirit. The unwillingness may also point to a lack of faith or even rebellion. The Scriptures are the objective words of the Spirit and therefore, we can infer what the Holy Spirit wants when we are aligned with the Scriptures. When we



are opposed to doing what the scriptures say we should take a look at ourselves and ask why.

Do you need Spiritual Guidance? Do you want to honor God with your life? Look to the scriptures to see if your life is aligned with what the scriptures teach. Ask Godly friends and leaders for

advice and help when you come to the decision point. And finally if you find yourself not wanting to do what the scriptures teach or follow godly council, ask God to help you search your own heart. We must be humble and willing to hear what the Spirit has to say in order to be guided by him.

HISTORY

Continued from page 1

However, by 2020, this directive had changed to require only one of the two. With Unin now a qualified infantry NCO, the process to allow recruiters to enlist infantry women into the Alaska Army National Guard is moving forward, with recruiting command submitting the qualifications to the National Guard Bureau to open up these enlistment opportunities to women.

Despite the historical elements of Unin's journey, she looked at the bigger picture.

"It is awesome being a part of something historical," she said, "not just about me, it's about the whole unit, it's about all females that want to go infantry, and it's about the battalion itself."

Unin said her most important role is being a good leader.

"I have three Soldiers under me in my fire team," she said. "For me, being an NCO, it's about taking care of the Soldiers and mak-

ing sure they have everything they need to be successful, not only as a team member but also in the civilian world.

For Unin, the infantry became like a second family, a sentiment common among people who serve in combat arms. She enjoys the unity and family-oriented nature of the unit.

"Being infantry in an infantry unit, people take care of each other," she said. "It's one big melting pot of amazing people who love infantry."

When asked what she would tell other women looking to challenge themselves to serve in combat arms positions, her response was clear.

"Do it," she said. "You only live once. The standards are physically demanding, but if that's what you really want to do, all you have to do is work hard, work out, be mentally fit, and just go for it."

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

Army lab, UCF optimize 3D printing process

U.S. Army DEVCOM Army Research Laboratory Public Affairs

Army researchers collaborated with academic partners from the University of Central Florida to improve additive manufacturing. This partnership may help deliver extreme lightweight components to future Soldiers.

By optimizing the printing process for the additive manufacturing of a high-strength magnesium alloy and fabricating 24 micro-lattice structures, researchers characterized the compressive strength and failure modes, which will enable much lighter Army components.

"We used a magnesium alloy known as WE43, which has only been successfully 3D printed by a handful of researchers," said Dr. Brandon McWilliams, the lead researcher for 3D printing metals at the U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command, known as DEVCOM, Army Research Laboratory. "In this work, we optimized the process to achieve higher density than previously reported and used that to produce and characterize lattice structures made up of WE43."

Magnesium Elektron WE43 is a high

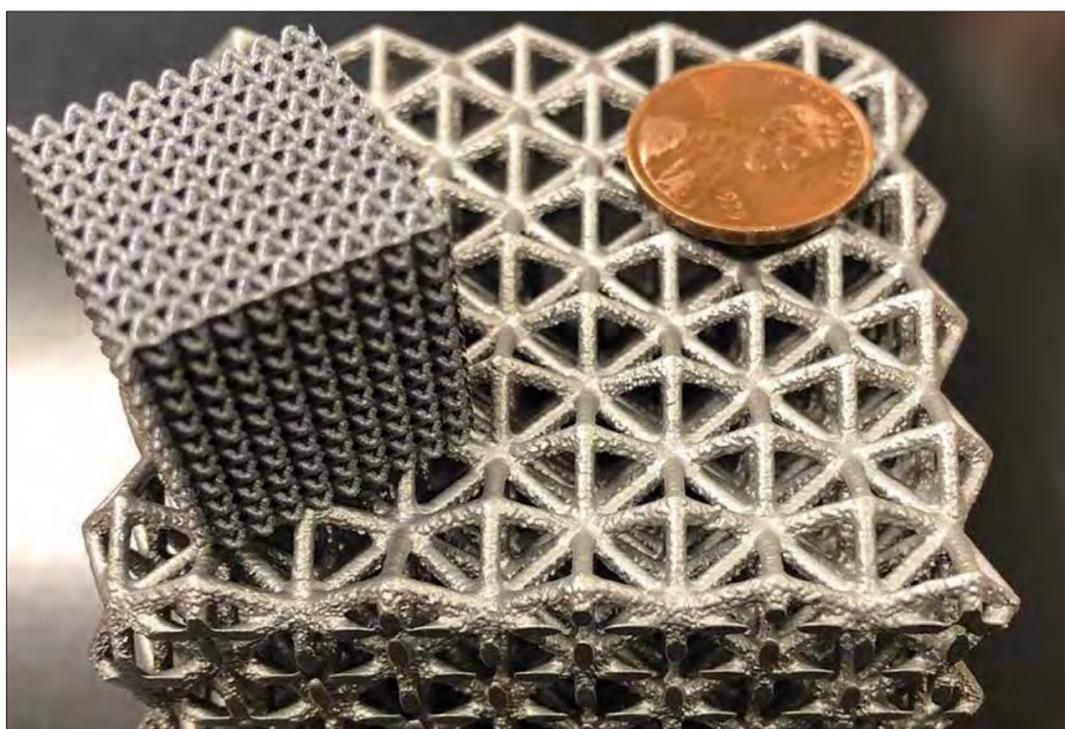
strength casting alloy. It can be used in temperatures of up to 300°C (572°F), according to AZoM, an online publication for the materials science community. "This alloy has good mechanical properties coupled with excellent corrosion resistance."

Advanced additive manufacturing has the potential to deliver critical parts at the point of need, reducing the need for lengthy logistic chains. Also, the U.S. Army's modernization strategy calls for lightening the load to help support future Soldiers.

The research team published their findings in the peer-reviewed journal *Materials*.

McWilliams said he believes joining advanced lightweight alloys with novel multi-scale structures through additive manufacturing will be a key aspect of modernizing Army weapon systems. There are many lightweight structural applications in the automotive, aerospace and biomedical industries.

"Current systems are too heavy, which increases burden to the Soldier, reduces fuel efficiency and degrades mission effectiveness," he said. "It is my goal as an Army researcher to conduct



Advanced additive manufacturing has the potential to deliver critical parts at the point of need, reducing the need for lengthy logistic chains. (Courtesy University of Central Florida)

research, which has the maximum chance of success of transition from basic and applied research stage to practical application in order to enable transformational overmatch."

Partnering with academia and industry has been a priority with the laboratory since it introduced its Open Campus initiative.

"This was an exciting and rewarding collaboration that produced the technological accomplishment founded on fundamen-

tal understanding of materials and additive manufacturing," said Prof. Yongho Sohn, lead researcher at University of Central Florida. "Technological vision with clear scien-

tific objectives defined by Dr. McWilliams and his team was the key to our contribution."

Army researchers will now evaluate the high strain rate and ballistic properties

of these 3D-printed materials and look for demonstration applications, such as ultra-lightweight unmanned aircraft system and robotic vehicle components, he said.

Junior Soldiers address harmful behaviors

Devon Suits
Army News Service

Spc. Brittney Verberkmoes recalled the impact that suicide had on units at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, after witnessing the grief others felt as they dealt with the tragic loss of a fellow Soldier.

Verberkmoes, a multimedia illustrator with the 95th Civil Affairs Brigade, never had a personal connection with the individuals who had died. Still, the significant feeling of loss forced her to evaluate her mental health and consider the level of trust she had with her peers and leaders, she said in an interview last week.

"The Army tells us to look out for each other, but it makes you think," said Verberkmoes, who joined the service about three years ago. "Am I looking out for my battle buddies? Is our leadership looking out for us?"

Similar questions were



Spc. Brittney Verberkmoes participates in a group discussion about suicide during a "people first" themed solarium at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, New York, March 15-19, 2021. Verberkmoes is a multimedia illustrator with the 95th Civil Affairs Brigade on Fort Bragg, North Carolina. (Photo by Sgt. Gregory Muenchow)

brought up during a "people first" solarium at the U.S. Military Academy here, which also aimed to rid sexual harassment/assault, and discrimination/extremism within the Army ranks.

One hundred junior officers and enlisted Soldiers, representing a range of experiences and backgrounds throughout the active-duty, Guard, and Reserve, participated in the weeklong event

that ended March 19.

Christopher J. Lowman, the senior official performing the duties of the undersecretary of the Army; Vice Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Joseph M. Martin;

and Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael A. Grinston opened the event March 15.

Event organizers divided personnel into small groups to address the harmful behaviors that have impacted cohesion and trust in the Army. Through a series of moderated discussions and exercises, each group concentrated on one of the three topics to share their ideas to help solve them.

"If you are a Soldier in the U.S. Army, you are 30 times more likely to die of suicide than you are from COVID-19," Martin said.

The Army lost close to a "battalion's fill of Soldiers" to suicide last year, he added.

Further, the Army's Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention program implemented in the past decade "is not working" and in need of support, Martin said.

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PREVENT

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"We believe a culture of trust can prevent or stop a sexual assault," Londagin said. "Squad leaders are the most influential members of the unit. They set the climate and they know and understand their Soldiers and their families. They actively influence squad members to perform at their maximum potential and adhere to the Army's values."

In addition to building trust at the unit level, the Army has

established the People First Task Force to address the list of findings and recommendations from the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee report released in December.

One immediate action under the PFTF included an Army-wide solarium, held in mid-March at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, New York, Londagin said.

One hundred junior officers and enlisted Soldiers throughout

the active-duty, Guard, and Reserve participated in the event. They were divided into smaller groups to discuss ways to rid the Army of sexual harassment/assault, discrimination/extremism, and suicide.

Task force recommendations will inform changes to Army policy, programs, and directives to ensure the safety and well-being of personnel, as the Army continues to address behaviors that impact cohesion and trust.

Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin also recently directed a 90-day Independent Review Commission on countering sexual assault within the military, Londagin said. One of the commission's lines of effort will target victim support and care, as the Department of Defense and Army build a better culture of trust and support.

Building a culture of prevention, awareness, trust and support continue to drive efforts within the Army's Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention program, as it works toward rolling out new changes to eliminate those harmful behaviors. April is National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month and it is going to take all Army personnel working together throughout the year to eliminate inappropriate behavior and prevent sexual violence, according to the director of SHARP.

Proving support

Trust and support go hand in hand, Londagin said. Sexual assault response coordinators and victim advocates are standing by to support individuals with resources, advocacy services, or guide them through the restricted or unrestricted reporting process.

Peers and leaders also need to be mindful, supportive, and non-judgmental, particularly if a survivor chooses to disclose information about an assault, Londagin added.

"We know that it's not always easy to respond to someone when they tell you that they have been sexually assaulted, especially if it's a friend or family member," she said.

"Often listening is the best way to support the survivor. Using phrases such as 'I believe you; I support you; and I want you to know that you are not alone,' goes a long way to show support."

While SHARP professionals continue to be ready when an incident occurs, Soldiers, civilians and family members can also

learn about the range of resources available to a survivor. Victims can seek medical attention or behavioral health support, report a crime through the Army Criminal Investigation Command, or even call the DOD Safe Helpline at 877-995-5247.

The helpline is a secure, confidential, and anonymous crisis support service specially designed for DOD personnel affected by sexual assault.

"It is also important to highlight 'bystander intervention' or anything that someone can do to stop a potentially harmful situation," Londagin said. "It is everyone's responsibility to maintain a safe and respectful Army [and] we need [everyone] to stand-up and step-up against this behavior."

Building a culture of prevention, awareness, trust and support continue to drive efforts within the Army's Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention program, as it works toward rolling out new changes to eliminate those harmful behaviors. April is National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month and it is going to take all Army personnel working together throughout the year to eliminate inappropriate behavior and prevent sexual violence, according to the director of SHARP.

SHARP program improvements

A stand-alone SHARP regulation is in the final stages of approval, as the Army looks to consolidate close to 15 different regulations and directives, Londagin said.

Once released, the new guidance will provide SHARP professionals and leaders one unified regulation to enable and improve sexual harassment/assault prevention and response requirements throughout the force.

While the policy is still under review, it could be approved and released within the next two months, Londagin said. However, findings by the PFTF and DOD Inde-

pendent Review Commission could delay the regulation's release to ensure all recommendations are reviewed and incorporated, as part of the program's transformation.

"We are trying to get it out to the field as quickly as possible. We know how imperative it is to have one stand-alone regulation to identify the responsibilities and activities of leaders and SHARP professionals to fully execute the program," she said.

Army senior leaders have also submitted a permanent exception to DOD policy to ensure proper care of Army civilians and adult dependents who have reported being sexually assaulted while stationed in the U.S. or abroad, she said.

Under the current policy, the Army can only provide limited services to civilians and family members 18 years and older, if they are overseas, she added. The new policy will provide individuals unrestricted reporting options and SARC and victim advocate services. Civilians and adult dependents will also have access to advocacy services during the investigation, legal, and recovery process.

"Historically, we have asked for an exemption to policy for two years," Londagin said. With a permanent exemption in place, the Army can "provide the support our Army civilians and families need [and] the advocacy services that we know that they deserve."

SHARP program leaders are also working toward a centralized selection and management process for all SARCs and victim advocates.

A centralized selection process will help improve the program by setting standardized criteria for all SHARP personnel, Londagin said. Commanders will still be able to nominate a Soldier for a SARC and victim advocate role, while a centralized approach will ensure that the best people are in place to support sexual harassment/assault prevention efforts.

Army competing every day in Indo-Pacific, senior leaders say

Sean Kimmons
Army News Service

As the Army's largest service component command, U.S. Army Pacific continuously competes across a vast region between the north and south poles and from the west coast of the U.S. to India, its commander said Tuesday.

"Our daily focus is on competition," said Gen. Paul LaCamera. "We've got to be ready to respond in crisis and we've got to be prepared to win in conflict."

Ongoing training plays a key part in this, since the final area in any conflict is "still the most dangerous piece of ground on the face of the earth," he said during a discussion with the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

"The focus of making sure that our forces are trained and ready to fight in that last 100 meters is absolutely critical," he added.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has tempered some training over the past year, LaCamera said safety precautions, such as training bubbles and testing, have allowed many Soldiers to still interact with allies and partners.

"We have been able to adapt to that and we have been able to continue to train," he said.

Later this year, the Army plans to hold another Defender Pacific



Soldiers assigned to 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, and Royal Thai Army soldiers stand at attention March 30, 2020, in Krabi, Thailand, during the opening ceremony of the Hanuman Guardian 20-2 exercise. (Spc. Ezra Camarena)

exercise, which would see thousands of Soldiers head to the region to train.

Joint team

The Army's role in great power competition with Russia and China is not necessarily to end up in conflict, but rather deter them, said Gen. James C. McConville, the Army's chief of staff.

To do this requires transformational changes that are currently underway in the Army, which include modernized equipment, a new talent management system, and updated doctrine

and organizations, such as multi-domain task forces.

"We're in the process right now of taking a look at the future; the type of capabilities that we need to provide for the joint force," McConville said during the event. "We are aligned with the joint force and we're aligned with our allies and partners in the region. We know in the future, whether it's in the Indo-Pacific or other places around the world, we'll go as a joint team."

The Army expects to build at least two multi-domain task forces in the region and

another one in Europe, he said. The MDTF's can provide long-range precision effects, such as fires and an intelligence, information, cyber, electronic warfare and space, or I2CEWS, element, and possibly air and missile defense and attack aviation capabilities.

The first MDTF, which is based out of Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, has already tested its capabilities during exercises in the region.

"We're not waiting to get it right before we start deploying it," McConville said. "We're getting good feedback

from the commanders in the field on what they want this to do as we develop this organization moving forward."

McConville said it will be up to other government officials to decide where the task forces, or at least parts of them, could be strategically positioned in the future.

"We're providing options, which become dilemmas to our competitors," he said. "And the politics or the policy of where they're actually based and how they're based will be worked out through the policymakers and the

diplomats."

Arctic strategy

The Army's newly released Arctic strategy mentioned that a MDTF could initially be based out of Alaska to experiment in the delivery of tactical to strategic effects in the region.

"This experimentation in Alaska will pose an anti-access/aerial denial challenge for rival powers, constraining their operational choices and provides the U.S. with strategic advantage in crisis and conflict," the strategy reads. "An experimental MDTF in Alaska will also provide opportunities to test Army modernization priorities' ability to function in extreme environments and explore region-specific operational concepts."

The strategy also noted the Army may upgrade Alaska's two-star headquarters into an operational headquarters and create arctic-capable units.

As the polar icecaps melt in the region, it could also create new sea routes that may be contested. Those routes could prevent potential setbacks in shipping, as seen recently on the Suez Canal in Egypt.

"When those sea lanes open up that will save 19 sail days from Asia to western Europe," LaCamera said. "Our ability to protect our interests rests in our ability to fight."

JUNIOR

Continued from page 4

"We don't know the answers – that is why we are here," Grinston told participants.

"You have an obligation to speak up this week," said Grinston, adding that participants should expect deep and uncomfortable conversations. "You owe it to the future of the Army to speak up, because we need your advice. All views are important."

Shift in culture

While assigned to a focus group on sexual harassment/assault, it took some time at first for Spc. Jennifer Avila to open up about an incident she had nearly a year ago.

She said it felt good to talk to others about her past. She wasn't alone,

as other group members shared their stories.

As a Guard Soldier on active-duty orders, Avila also acknowledged her initial fear of reprisal and lack of understanding of the SHARP process. The event gave her a better appreciation of the reporting process, which she plans to use to help educate others in her unit before they deploy later this year.

Holding a fear to "speak up" when a problem occurs is something that Verberkmoes also noticed during her group discussions about suicide. Junior Soldiers are often intimidated to express their thoughts openly with higher-ranked individuals, she said.

Verberkmoes admitted that there is a particular

"fear of getting into trouble," she said. She believed that most Soldiers choose to stay quiet to avoid adding another issue to a leader's long list of daily responsibilities.

Both Avila and Verberkmoes felt a shift in the Army's culture was necessary to combat behaviors that can be detrimental to unit readiness and cohesion.

"Soldiers that are just coming into the Army see and understand the world differently," Verberkmoes said. "They can see an issue differently than the older generations, so we have to come to a mutual understanding."

In 1953, President Dwight D. Eisenhower led the first Project Solarium, which laid the founda-

tion for a Cold War policy, officials said. In 2014 and 2015, Army captains participated in a series of solariums to evaluate the aspects of talent management, vision and branding, culture, education and training, and mission command.

"I feel very proud to be part of this change, and I am willing to go back to my unit to be part of a solution," Avila said. "Solarium is giving Army's leaders a window into what is happening" throughout the total force.

Having an opportunity to participate in the solarium was a step in the right direction, Verberkmoes said, as she hopes senior leaders will continue with similar feedback mecha-

nisms in the future.

"We've done a lot of programs over the years to get after the harmful behaviors," Lowman said last week. "We've spent a lot of money and a lot of time and a lot of emphasis over the years, with not a whole lot of change."

By using a different approach, he expects the solarium to positively impact the Army's assessment of current policy and structure toward suicide, sexual harassment/assault, and discrimination/extremism, he said.

"That's really why we're here – not to talk to you about those behaviors, but frankly to listen," Lowman added. "We are here listen to each and every one of you."

Weekly Events

April 10- 17

10 #MilitaryKidsHaveHeart Scavenger Hunt
April 10 - 30
During Normal Business Hours

Support Child Abuse Prevention Month with ACS! Find all 4 puzzle pieces and decorate your puzzle to be entered in to win a prize. All 4 locations can be found on the web.

Family Advocacy Program, Bldg 3414
Call 353-4336

13 Teen Hiring Fair
Job announcements posted: April 13
Resume submission: April 14 & 15

Teens, ages 16 - 18 years old can join the Family and MWR Team! Eligible vacancies are Office Aid & Recreation Aid (Youth Programs).

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

16 Month of the Military Child: Purple Up
April 16
All Day

Celebrate Month of the Military Child with us! Wear purple and show your support of our Military Children. Send in your photos to WainwrightMWR Facebook & Instagram.

wainwright.armymwr.com

Wainwright MWR on Facebook & Instagram

16 Youth Sports & Fitness: Bowling
April 16
4:30 - 5:30 p.m.

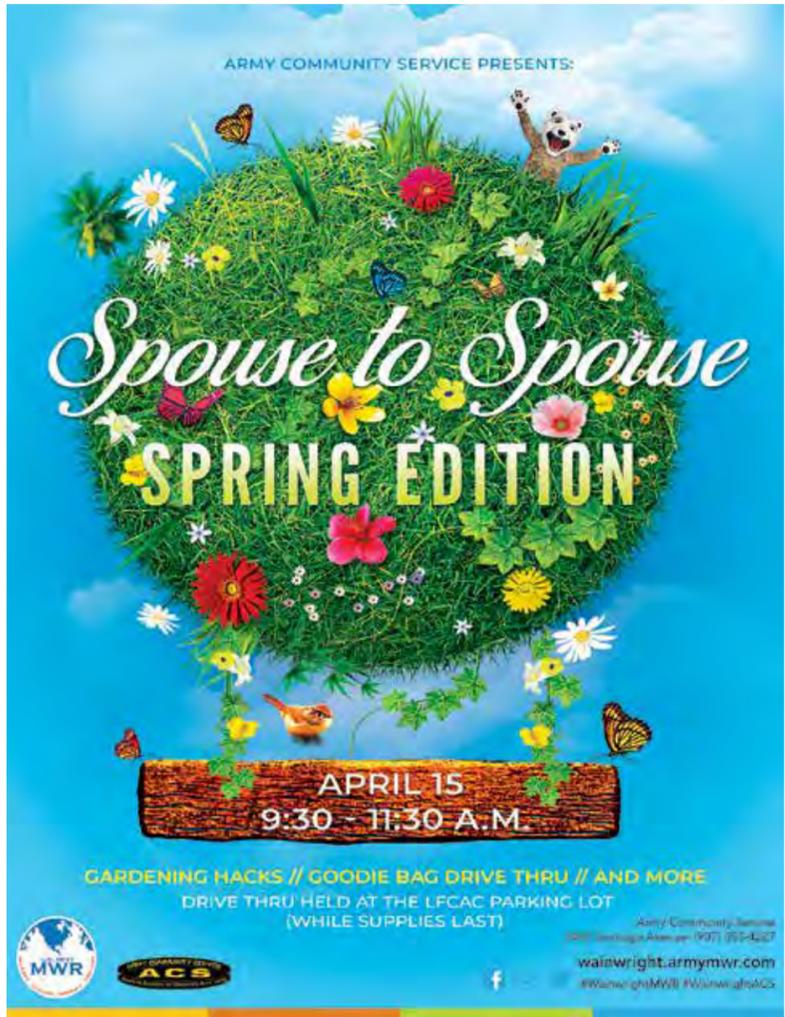
Youth ages 5 - 18 years old come out to Nugget Lanes Bowling Center and bowl with Youth Sports! Cost: \$12 per child. Must complete registration at Parent Central.

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

16 B.O.S.S. Hatchet Throwing
Registration Deadline: April 16
Event: April 25, 1 - 5 p.m.

Learn the art of Hatchet Throwing taught by Outdoor Recreation. Once you have a feel for the throw, we will complete with a fun hatchet throwing competition!

B.O.S.S., Bldg 1045, Top Floor
Call 353-7648/4145, registration required



Ice Skate at PFC Ice Rink Monday, Wednesday, & Friday - Sunday.
Find hours of operation and rental pricing at wainwright.armymwr.com.
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Grit — Determination — Perseverance
Military Kids — Tomorrow's Trailblazers

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Ready Army invites children and teens to join in, learn about emergency preparedness, and inspire Army Families all over the world to get ready for emergencies.
Prepare Strong!

As emergencies affect the entire Family, make your children a part of preparedness planning.
For more information visit www.ready.gov/IDS and www.militarychild.org

PURPLE UP!

2021 Military Kids

Two more Soldier-athletes headed to Summer Games

Brittany Nelson
Installation Management Command

Sgt. Ildar Hafizov and Spc. Alejandro Sancho fought their way to victory at the U.S. Olympic Wrestling Trials in Fort Worth, Texas, April 2-3, earning themselves spots on the U.S. Wrestling Olympic Team where they will represent the Army at the Summer Olympic Games this July in Tokyo, Japan.

Hafizov and Sancho, members of the U.S. Army's World Class Athlete Program (WCAP), are joining six other Soldier-athletes at the 2020 Summer Olympic Games, now being held in July 2021 due a delay caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hafizov grabbed the Olympic title for the Greco-Roman 60kg weight class and Sancho for the Greco-Roman 67kg weight class. The Army's was on display at the nationally broadcasted event as both Soldiers competed against fellow WCAP opponents in their Championship Series; Hafizov faced Sgt. Ryan Mango and Sancho wrestled Sgt. Ellis Coleman.

Sancho's emotional victory marks his first time making the U.S. Olympic team. He beat Ellis in the best-of-three-series, 2-0 and 3-1.

"This feels unbelievable," Sancho said shortly after his win. "This is such an amazing feeling and I am so proud to be part of the Army team. WCAP and the Army have changed my life. I can't thank them enough for what they have done for me."

Sancho noted that mental preparation is crucial and the Army values helped keep him disciplined throughout the competition.

"Anything can happen in this sport," said Sancho. "I just wanted to keep a good position throughout the matches and kept my mind on the goal, to win."



Sgt. Ildar Hafizov earned his spot on the U.S. Olympic Wrestling Team in the men's Greco-Roman 60kg weight class at the 2021 U.S. Wrestling Olympic Trials, April 2-3, in Fort Worth, Texas. Hafizov defeated fellow World Class Athlete Program teammate Sgt. Ryan Mango in the finals. WCAP now has eight Soldier-athletes representing the Army at the Summer Olympic Games this July. (Maj. Nathaniel Garcia, U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program)

Hafizov fell short at the 2016 trials as the runner-up in the 67kg weight class. He earned a long-awaited victory this time around, beating Mango 7-0 and 8-0.

"I feel so great," Hafizov said after his win. "I have an overall sensation of happiness, I am so proud of myself. I have been waiting five years for this moment."

A former Uzbekistan Olympian, Hafizov came to America to chase his dreams, a goal he was able to achieve through his victory at his second U.S. Olympic trials appearance.

"Like everyone else, I wanted a better life for my family. My wife and kids are my inspiration," said Hafizov, father of two. "I am so proud to represent our great country and the Army. The Army gave me the ticket for a better life."

Staff Sgt. Spencer Mango, one of WCAP's wrestling coaches, spoke of the Army's large presence at the trials, with five Soldier-ath-

letes making it to the Championship Series round.

"We bring quality Soldier-athletes into the program and our strength shows," said Mango, 2018 U.S.A. Greco-Roman Wrestling Coach of the Year and two time Olympic Team Member. "These guys went through a lot of adversity this year and they have been working hard. They stayed focus and were able to get the job done."

Sgt. Jenna Burkert, a competitor in the Women's Freestyle 57kg weight class, was among the five Soldier-athletes to make it to the championship round. Her emotionally-charged and hard fought battle did not go unnoticed.

"Jenna has had a rough month, her mom passed away last week," said Sgt. 1st Class Jermaine Hodge, WCAP's women's wrestling coach. "She is a gamer, she has trained for these trials and she is giving it her all. All you can do is live for the



Spc. Alejandro Sancho (in blue) earned his spot on the U.S. Olympic Wrestling Team in the men's Greco-Roman 67kg weight class at the 2021 U.S. Wrestling Olympic Trials, April 2-3, in Fort Worth, Texas. Sancho defeated fellow World Class Athlete Program teammate Sgt. Ellis Coleman (in the red) in the finals. WCAP now has eight Soldier-athletes representing the Army at the Summer Olympic Games this July. (Maj. Nathaniel Garcia, U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program)

moment."

After Burkert's debut at the Olympic trials, the 2019 Pan American silver medalist thanked her mom.

"It is an absolute honor to be her daughter," the three-time Wrestling World Team Member said. "At the end of the day I know my mom didn't care about the wins or the losses,

she wanted me to have fun and do my best. She meant everything to me and is my champion."

It's safe to say the Army walked away from the trials victorious with two more Soldier-athletes crowned as Olympians to compete in the upcoming Summer Games.

Hafizov and Sancho bring the total

number of Olympic qualified WCAP Soldier-athletes to eight. The six other Soldier-Olympians are Staff Sgt. Naomi Graham, boxing; Staff Sgt. Sandra Uptagrafft, 1st Lt. Amber English, and Staff Sgt. Nikolaus Mowrer, shooting; and Sgt. Amro Elgeziry and Sgt. Samantha Schultz, modern pentathlon.

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- Blueberry Pancake Kit Pick Up at the USO April 24
- Stop & Stand Up Against Child Abuse Activity April 1 - 30

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- walk a lap around the house
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