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June 18, 2021

Alaska Army National Guard aviation pilots get Red Card certification

Spc. Grace Nechanicky
Alaska National Guard Public Affairs

The Alaska Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 207th Aviation Regiment dropped water from Bambi buckets over the rural areas of the installation here as part of their annual Red Card certification, June 9.

Red Card certification, also known as the Incident Qualification Card, is an accepted interagency certification that qualifies a person in order to accomplish the required mission when arriving on an incident. For 1-207th AVN pilots, this certification means proficiency in water bucket drops to assist with wildfire emergencies within the state.

Specifically, Alaska National Guardsmen must obtain this certification in order to assist with fires that are on federal land, are federally managed, or in order to transport federal agency personnel, according to Lt. Col. Michele Edwards, Alaska National Guard's state Army aviation officer.

"Because they're bringing people in from out of state, they need to make sure that

they have a common standard operating picture for everyone," she elaborated.

"If we didn't do this training to get the federal Red Card certification, we wouldn't be able to support the state in every possible scenario," she continued. "This gives the state the full flexibility to use resources in the National Guard regardless of who's managing the fire."

The unit has also been preparing for their certification during the month leading up to it, taking four online classes on aviation firefighting, as well as one in-person instruction.

The unit certified using both a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter with an approximately 550-gallon bucket, and a CH-47 Chinook helicopter with an approximately 2,000-gallon bucket. Both of these aircraft may be called upon and utilized for intra-state wildfire emergencies, and the pilots of these aircraft must re-certify annually.

The helicopter that is sent out to support any given wildfire is dependent mostly upon what the manager of that fire needs, and

what assets the National Guard has available to offer at the time. There are also other considerations, such as how many aircraft are using which water locations at the site already.

"There are many things to consider, but the primary consideration is the needs based on the fire, and what other civilian assets are available," said Edwards. "There are no civilian helicopters in state that provide the high-volume, heavy lifts that our CH-47s provide."

In addition to providing support for wildfire emergencies within the state, being Red Card certified for water bucket drops gives the 1-207th AVN the opportunity to stay proficient with their federal sling-load mission.

"When we are deployed, when our Ch-47s are deployed, or our Black Hawks are deployed, we are required to do a sling load mission," explained Edwards. "So, this allows us to improve our crew's proficiency in that sling load mission."

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A 1st Battalion, 207th Aviation Regiment UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter with a Bambi water bucket system attached flies overhead during the unit's Red Card certification on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, June 9, 2021. Red Card certification, also known as the Incident Qualification Card, is an accepted interagency certification that a person is qualified in order to accomplish the required mission when arriving on an incident. For 1-207th AVN pilots, this certification means proficiency in water bucket drops to assist with wildfire emergencies within the state. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Dana Rosso)



A Koku Jieitai (Japan Air Self-Defense Force) Airman conducts a pre-flight inspection of an F-15J Eagle during RED FLAG-Alaska 21-2 on Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska, June 14, 2021. RED FLAG-Alaska is a U.S. Pacific Air Forces-sponsored exercise designed to provide realistic training in a simulated combat environment, with primary flight operations over the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Beaux Hebert)

RF-A 21-2 takes off from Eielson AFB

Staff Sgt. Zade Vadnais
354th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

The first aircraft operating in support of RED FLAG-Alaska 21-2 took to the skies from the Eielson flightline early this morning.

RF-A 21-2 marks the first full-fledged exercise since 2019 following the global COVID-19 pandemic and the U.S. Department of Defense's subsequent travel restrictions.

"COVID-19 has been a factor for this exercise, but it's

not keeping us from training and making it a quality exercise," said Capt. Christopher Ellsworth, 353rd Combat Training Squadron executive officer and RF-A 21-2 assistant team chief. "We've been working really hard here at CTS to ensure that."

RF-A 21-2 is a Pacific Air Forces-sponsored exercise designed to provide realistic training in a simulated combat environment. A series of command-directed field training exercises will provide joint offensive counter-air,

interdiction, close air support, and large force employment training.

Approximately 1,500 service members are expected to fly, maintain and support more than 100 aircraft from more than 20 units during this iteration of the exercise. Joint and allied forces including personnel assigned to various units at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, and the Koku Jieitai (Japan Air Self-Defense Force) are participating.

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Secretary of the Army Christine E. Wormuth, Army Chief of Staff Gen. James C. McConville, and Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael A. Grinston celebrate the Army's 246th birthday by hosting a mass reenlistment ceremony and cake cutting at the Pentagon, Arlington, Va., June 14, 2021. Army senior leaders were joined by Deputy Secretary of Defense Kathleen Hicks. (Sgt. Kevin Roy)

People at the forefront of Army birthday celebration

Devon Suits
Army News Service

Soldiers, civilians and their families remain at the center of the Army's legacy and future, senior leaders said Monday, as the service moved beyond a challenging year to celebrate its 246th birthday.

While participating in a birthday cake-cutting ceremony, Secretary of the Army Christine E. Wormuth felt that the cake was a fitting symbol for the service, as each requires a recipe, quality ingredients, and precise measurements to complete.

Emblematic of the cake-making process, the Army's most significant ingredient — a diverse and inclusive workforce — is at its best when thoroughly integrated within the service.

The result is an institution worthy of the label "world's finest land-fighting force," Wormuth added.

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WEEKEND WEATHER

Friday



Mostly sunny then isolated thunder storms. High: 74F.

Saturday



Scattered rain showers. High: 73F.

Sunday



Isolated rain showers then isolated thunder storms. High: 56F.

IN BRIEF

At a time when the Army is reckoning with the findings of the Fort Hood report, one officer is sharing his own story of how leadership, both good and bad, can make all the difference for Soldiers.

"I wanted to take my life."

Those are the words 1st Lt. Rashaan Legard shares in a stark video, using spoken word poetry to recount his experience after reporting being sexually assaulted.

Read more on page 3

Nutrition Corner: Keeping Your Cooler Clean

The land of the midnight sun offers plenty of opportunities for a day picnic to the lake or even a week long camping trip. After excursions it's easy to get home, empty the cooler and forget about it until the next outing, but a clean, safe cooler starts before your next picnic or trip even begins. Take good care of your cooler and

you'll ensure that it's bacteria- and germ-free every time you use it. Here's how:
Before You Hit the Road: When you're picnicking, barbecuing or camping, things can get messy. To make sure you have all the essentials you'll need for quick and easy cleanup, pack a bottle or bar of soap and clean towels. You'll also need

clean water. Try to find out ahead of time if you'll have access to fresh water at your destination. If not, bring a few jugs of water from home. If that's not possible, pack disposable wipes to clean hands and surfaces before and after cooking and eating.

After The Fun Is Done: Melted ice is a sign that

your food is no longer safe and that it's time to toss all leftovers. While you're at it, immediately throw out all used bags and wrappers so they don't contaminate your cooler.

Scrub It, Then Store It : At the end of the outing, or as soon as you return home, clean your cooler with water and a mild detergent and

rinse thoroughly. Then, make sure to wipe it completely dry before storing. If lingering odors are an issue, a quick wipe with a vanilla extract-soaked paper towel can freshen things up. Finally, if your cooler has a drain plug, make sure it's open to prevent moisture from accumulating during storage.



Fort Wainwright Joint College Graduation and Credentialing Recognition Ceremony

The Fort Wainwright Joint College Graduation and Credentialing Recognition Ceremony of 2020-2021 is slated to take place Tuesday, June 22, starting at 7 p.m., on the Fort Wainwright Ladd Parade Field, located across from the headquarters building 1555. Rehearsals begin at 5:30 p.m., for all participating graduates. Graduates and graduation platform guests will line up at 6:30. Note: In case of inclement weather, the graduation ceremony will be moved to the Southern Lights Chapel, located on 9th Street and Neely Road. For more information call 1-907-361-7486.

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://myaccess.dmdc.osd.mil/>
Health Net: www.tricare-west.com, 1-844-8676-9378

Mass vaccine locations

Mass Vaccination Opportunities for those 18 and older, located at building 3728, (the old Dining Facility between Post Office and USO). Register online, at <https://informatics-stage.health.mil/BACHCOVID-Series.aspx>

Dates for vaccination clinics are; Friday, June 18; Tuesday, June 29; Friday, July 2, and Friday, July 9.

Note: Pfizer Vaccine (Ages 12-17), are not administered on Fort Wainwright, free vaccines for ages 12 and above in Fairbanks. Find an appointment, at <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/Pages/COVID-19/vaccineappointments.aspx>. Free Uber and Lyft rides through website to and from vaccine site. If you have questions, call 1-907-646-3322.

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

School and sports physicals

Upcoming School and Sports Physicals dates, are July 22, August 5, and 19.

Appointments are required. Call 907-361-4000 to make your appointment as soon as possible. These are

for children and youth, ages 3 to 18, and must have been seen at Bassett or have established care record. Medical issues will not be addressed unless they pertain directly to the physical.

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

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.

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.

ALASKA POST

The Interior Military News Connection

EDITORIAL STAFF

Garrison Commander

Col. Christopher Ruga

Fort Wainwright PAO

Grant Sattler

Command Information/

New Media

Brady Gross

Community Relations/

Media Relations

Eve Baker

Staff Writer/Editor

Daniel Nelson

Staff Writer

Brian Schlumbohm

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The Chaplain's Corner

Here comes the sun

Chaplain (LTC) John Verdugo
U.S. Army Garrison,
Fort Wainwright Garrison Chaplain

One of my favorite songs is, Here Comes The Sun, by the Beatles. Perhaps you're old enough to know it? If you're unfamiliar with it, take a listen. It speaks about a long, cold, and lonely winter. This was my first Alaskan winter, and it felt just like the song says. Add to this winter, the COVID-19 Pandemic, and it's easy to understand how many of us probably had a moment of sadness or depression settle in. And like the song says, it felt like years since I last felt the warmth of the sun.

Decades of research show that one's religious beliefs and spiritual practices contribute to their psychological well-being during stressful times. The power of hope, found in our faith practice, leads to less depression and anxiety. Similar studies also reveal that the practice of prayer and meditation is positively associated to physical, mental and spiritual health.

The beauty of prayer and meditation is that it doesn't matter where we are physically, mentally or spiritually. All that matters is that we slow down enough to silence the noise and busy-ness around us and within us, and

take time to focus our attention on our loving Creator. What we need to do is to stop for a moment, soak in the sun, and breathe in a deep breath of thankfulness.

This week different cultures and religious traditions will celebrate summer solstice, the longest day of the calendar year. The word solstice comes from the Latin, from sol (sun) and sistere (to stand or to stop). Given the dark days of Alaska winter, summer solstice affords us the opportunity to bask in the sun as we enjoy the great outdoors by going fishing, hunting or hiking. The long sun-filled summers allow us to get our barbeque grills

going with family and friends, travel to known and unknown destinations, and enjoy a midnight Goldpanners ball game without the need for lights.

Given the uncertainties of last year and the COVID-19 pandemic, it's good to see some things getting back to normal. It's good to see the sun shine again. It's good to see smiles returning to faces (listen to the song) as mask requirements lessen. It's also good to stop for a moment and give thanks for the life-giving sun. Maybe this summer solstice will provide us with the much needed opportunity to finally stop for a moment in order to reconnect with our Creator and



creation through prayer and meditation; to be thankful for what we have: family, friends, and faith.

So during this solstice, let's stop for a moment to renew our practice of prayer and meditation. Let's pray for one another, and tell God what we need. And let's thank God

for all the good that's been done, even when the days were dark. Then we will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. And this peace will continue to guard our hearts and minds long after summer solstice ends and comes again.

Officer shares harrowing experience of assault to drive culture change

Antonieta Rico
Army Resilience Directorate

At a time when the Army is reckoning with the findings of the Fort Hood report, one officer is sharing his own story of how leadership, both good and bad, can make all the difference for Soldiers.

"I wanted to take my life."

Those are the words 1st Lt. Rashan Legard shares in a stark video, using spoken word poetry to recount his experience after reporting being sexually assaulted. Legard, then an E-4 at the duty station when the assault happened, said leadership failures he encountered — from not being believed, to leadership turning a blind eye, to being painted as a bad Soldier — are what drove him to become an officer and leader himself.

"I knew I wanted to make an impact on my Soldiers and

See OFFICER on page 4



First Lt. Rashan Legard uses spoken word poetry to recount his experience after he reported being sexually assaulted. Legard said supportive leadership can make all the difference for Soldiers. In his case, it was one of his NCOs at the time who ensured he got the resources he needed to seek help and "get back in the fight." Watch the full video here: www.dvidshub.net/video/796597/spoken-words-pain. (Screenshot of video by Cadet Vanessa Atchley)

ARMY

Continued from page 1

The Army has maintained a "winning attitude" since being created on June 14, 1775, said Army Chief of Staff Gen. James C. McConville. He added the service's proud legacy continues today with the extraordinary men and women who choose to raise their right hand to serve, especially during the recent demanding times.

Over the past year, the Army responded to the COVID-19 pandemic, natural disasters, civil unrest, and provided Soldiers to protect the National Capital Region, said Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael A. Grinston.

"It has been an incredible year, and I couldn't be more proud of our Army," Grinston said. "A special thanks to [National Guard and Reserve] Soldiers that ... continue to be out there on the frontlines every day."

The Army also had

more than 140,000 Soldiers deployed across 140 different countries in support of missions, including combating transnational terrorism, deterring near-peer competition, and strengthening relationships with allies and partners.

"When we send our troops somewhere, we are not sending them to participate," McConville said. "We send them to win because there is no second place or honorable mention when it comes to combat. Every single day, our troops understand that and they live up to that message."

Today's global security environment has evolved to become more complex than any time in history, said Deputy Secretary of Defense Kathleen Hicks. The rapid rate of technological change, combined with the increasing threat across the land, mar-

itime, air, cyber, and space domains, continues to strain military readiness.

"Future combat is going to take a different approach," Hicks said. "One thing is immutable — this nation needs its Army, and it will need it in the future."

The Army is an integrated deterrence component, capable of putting boots on ground to secure freedoms, protect vital interests, promote stability, deter aggression, and fight and win the nation's wars, Hicks added.

While Soldiers have safeguarded democracy and defended the nation for the past 246 years, the Army owes a tremendous debt of gratitude to all who paid the ultimate sacrifice or never returned home, Wormuth said.

"For us to succeed on the next battlefield, we are going to have to draw again on the



Secretary of the Army Christine E. Wormuth celebrates the Army's 246th birthday by hosting a mass reenlistment ceremony and cake cutting at the Pentagon, Arlington, Va., June 14, 2021. (Sgt. Kevin Roy)

characteristics that defined the forces that first parachuted into Normandy, braved the winter at Chosin Reservoir, sweated in the

remote jungles of Vietnam, liberated Kuwait, and then who decimated al-Qaida and ISIS," Wormuth said.

"Our people will

always be at the center of both celebrating the legacy of the Army and when realizing the Army's future aspirations," she added.

OFFICER

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never have them go through what I've been through," Legard said. "To protect them, and to develop leaders to protect Soldiers too."

After about four years in the enlisted ranks, Legard went to Reserve Officer Training Corps and was sworn in as an officer in August 2019. But that move to the officer ranks would not have been possible without the life-saving help of another Army leader.

"My NCO, when I got moved to a different unit, she took me to behavioral health and used the resources. And that is what helped me," he said. "Resources do work, they saved my life."

He asks sexual assault victims in the military who may be going through the same hardship he went through to not lose hope.

"There are great leaders out there," Legard said. "I want Soldiers to know that no matter what you experience. It is not everybody, it's not all leaders."

"The good leadership I had, they were supportive. They encouraged me to seek help. They took me to get help. They showed me how to be a Soldier..."

Similarly, he has received support to share his story from his current leadership at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, where he is a platoon leader with the 96th Aviation Support Battalion, 101st Combat Aviation Brigade.

"I'm a 6-foot-3, 245 pounds, black male," Legard said. "I felt if I told my story, other males who have experienced this would want to speak up as well. It can happen to anybody."

After the Fort Hood report findings, Army senior leaders have been the first to acknowledge that leadership has fallen short. In a recent public discussion, Dr. James A. Helis, Director of the Army Resilience Directorate — which oversees the Army's Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention program — said engaged leadership "that in all ways, every day, enforces Army values on an ongoing basis" is key in the fight against sexual assault.

"Lt. Legard talking about his experience shows his courage, leadership, and care for his Soldiers," said Helis. "Leaders like Lt. Legard are forging the only path forward for

our Army: An organization where sexual assault is eliminated by leaders sustaining a healthy, prevention climate, holding perpetrators accountable and supporting survivors so they are not afraid to report and seek help."

Signaling this shift in culture, Legard also shines a spotlight in his poem on mental health, LGBTQ discrimination, respect for women, and race. He said he is confronting these difficult issues in the hopes of reaching Soldiers who may be struggling.

"I am with you. No matter what has happened to you, I promise you, you can bounce back. There are people out there who want to help you. Just don't give up. Don't give up," Legard said.

His powerful words seem to be reaching Soldiers and leaders. Legard said that since a Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month presentation for his battalion, Soldiers have come up to him around post to let him know they have never seen a presentation like his in the military.

Sgt. Crystal Lorick, also with 96th ASB, heard Legard speaking during the

SAAPM presentation.

"It takes a lot of courage to come forward and put yourself out there to bring awareness...to the fact that not only females go through this but all Soldiers no matter the gender," Lorick said. "Every Soldier should have leadership who cares about them and their well-being."

Capt. Shannakay Henry watched the video of Legard's poem and received the message of caring for Soldiers loud and clear. "As a captain who will be commanding Soldiers soon, I took several things away," she said. "As a leader I have to ensure that leaders within my formation understand that SHARP and EO (incidents are) not something that will be tolerated no matter your rank or title. In addition, making sure...they are educated and equipped with the tools to support Soldiers."

Legard's advice to leaders boils down to believing Soldiers, listening to them, and getting them the resources and help they need to recover.

"When a Soldier comes up to their leader and tells them what happened, give the Soldier the benefit of the doubt," Legard said.

"When you are dealing with those issues and you feel nobody is listening to you or believing in you, that's heavy on your mind, and your body, and your soul...I was facing suicide, I felt isolated...but when I got those resources, I was right back in the fight," he said.

Cadet Vanessa Atchley, with the Bowie State Army ROTC program, produced the video showcasing Legard's poem. Atchley is no stranger to tackling the difficult topic of sexual assault through that format. She previously produced a video where retired Chief Warrant Officer 3 Edward Wilson also uses spoken word poetry to talk about the insidious nature of sexual assault.

Atchley, who is a prior enlisted Sergeant First Class, said that in her 13 years in the Army she has seen or experienced the issues Legard talks about in the video.

"It's essential for victims to either speak out or seek resources for help," Atchley said. "Both videos provide different perspectives but ultimately they create difficult conversations that need to be discussed in our ranks to build trust."

RF-A

Continued from page 1

"Our primary focus is to work on that joint integration, which is how we actually fight," explained Ellsworth. "We have flying units as well as ground forces and we're integrating as much as we can with our mission planning, our execution, and mission debriefing."

RF-A 21-2, like all RED FLAG exercises held in Alaska, is taking place in the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex, an expansive military operations area comprised of over 77,000 square miles of special-use airspace, ranges, and military operations facilities.

The exercise is scheduled

to continue until June 25. All participants in RF-A 21-2 are operating under strict COVID-19 mitigation protocols, remaining ready and postured to support the U.S. commitment to security and stability in the Indo-Pacific region despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

CARD

Continued from page 1

Edwards said that the wildfire support mission is a reason that many individuals join the Alaska Army National Guard's aviation unit.

"We have Soldiers in our organization join because they want to help the state," she said. "This is just another way that we, in the National Guard, support our state, and can also train for our federal mission."

Sustained funding necessary to ensure future readiness, vice chief says

Devon L. Suits
Army News Service

While the Army was able to accomplish an array of missions this past year, readiness levels may still be fragile to the global challenges it currently faces against growing near-peer threats, the vice chief of staff told lawmakers Wednesday.

In a whirlwind year, the Army has demonstrated its ability to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, natural disasters, civil unrest, and support operations along the southwest border, said Gen. Joseph M. Martin.

The Army also maintained missions across 140 countries, including combating transnational terrorism, deterring near-peer competition, and strengthening relationships with allies and partners, Martin added, as he testified before the House Armed Services Committee's subcommittee on readiness.

"The Army is busy, and our ability to meet these challenges demonstrates a high level of readiness rebuilt over the past several years," Martin said.

However, competitors continue to demonstrate significant technological and military advancements that erode the U.S. military's advantage across the land, maritime, air, cyber, and space domains, he said.

"To meet future challenges, the Army is undergoing the most significant transformation in the past 40 years," he said. "This transformation -- the bedrock of future readiness -- will enable the Army to support the joint



Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Wine, assigned to 1st Squadron, 7th U.S. Cavalry Regiment, acts as range safety NCO while a Polish soldier fires an M4 during a marksmanship competition at Forward Operating Site Drawsko Pomorskie Training Area, Poland, May 27, 2021. (1st Lt. Abigail Hammock)

force with a credible land-combat power necessary for deterrence and decisive victory."

Last month, senior leaders released a \$173 billion budget proposal for fiscal year 2022 that prioritizes people-first initiatives as well as efforts to maintain readiness levels and provide a credible and capable land force supporting joint all-domain operations.

As the Army continues on a solid path to build and maintain a ready force, it must retain its competitive advantage against a potential adversary, Martin said.

Timely, adequate, predictable, and sustained funding is necessary to ensure readiness gains and meet



Vice Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Joseph M. Martin testifies before the House Armed Services Committee's subcommittee on readiness, June 9, 2021. (Photo Credit: Screenshot image)

priorities set within the Army's modernization, readiness and people strategies. The Army's size is also equally important, as senior leaders look to maintain end-strength numbers, he added.

"Even today, we are unable to meet all the global requirements asked of us. Any strength reductions will further reduce our ability to provide the combat power ... and place an excessive hardship on our

Soldiers and families," he said.

The Army plans to shift to the Regionally Aligned Readiness and Modernization Model, or ReARMM, in fiscal 2022 to provide Soldiers and families more predictability during training, modernization, and mission efforts, he said.

ReARMM will allow active-duty, National Guard, and Reserve forces to generate and project power during times of competition, crisis and conflict, followed by scheduled times

for modernization and training, its organizers have previously said. The majority of active-duty units will cycle through eight-month phases, while Guard and Reserve units will operate under extended phases to match total force requirements.

Martin added that fiscal 2022 would also include several multinational and joint training opportunities, as COVID-19 restrictions continue to lift due to increased vaccinations and herd immunity.

One training event — Project Convergence 22 — is slated to provide a joint campaign of learning and an opportunity for allies and partners to participate. Project Convergence ensures that the Army can rapidly and continuously converge effects across all domains.

"I talk to our partners often, and they miss those opportunities," Martin said, adding that the Army is ready to move past the pandemic to support relationships with allied and partnered forces.

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The Army's Tuition Assistance Program continues to assist Soldiers, despite glitches

Staff Report
U.S. Army Public Affairs

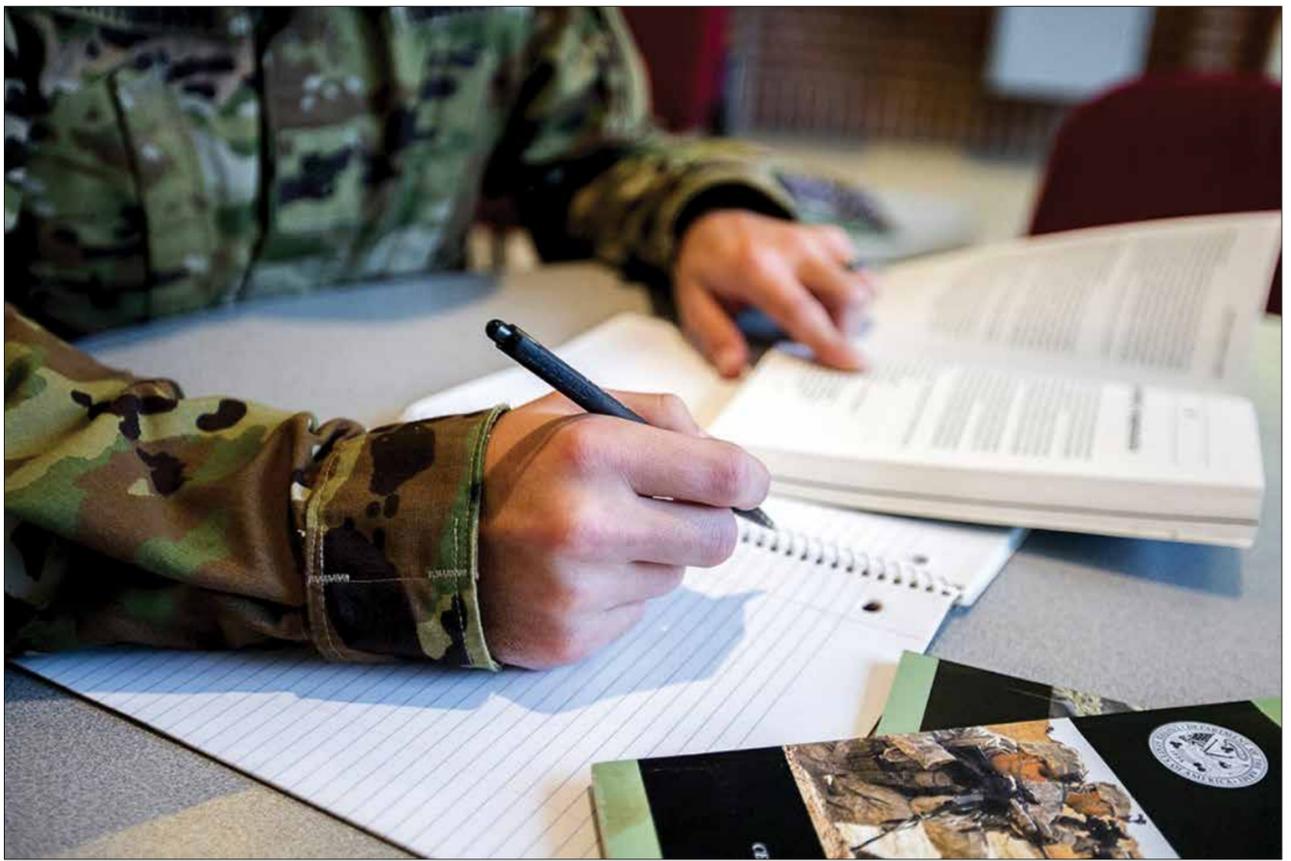
The U.S. Army's Tuition Assistance Program will continue to provide Soldiers with funds to assist in paying for voluntary higher education courses while the Army works to make improvements to its new tuition-assistance website.

"Soldiers will be reimbursed for any out-of-pocket expenses up to their authorized amount and will have a year to file their claims," said Col. Charles Rambo, director of Army Credentialing and Continuing Education Services for Soldiers (ACCESS).

To ensure that Soldiers can continue to obtain tuition assistance benefits, the Army has established an exception to policy allowing them to sign up for educational programs through a manual process at Army education centers and offices. These exceptions to policy will bridge the gap while developers diagnose, correct, test and deploy updates to the Army IgnitED platform.

The Army will work with university finance offices to ensure they understand how to input Soldier data to receive correct payments. Army personnel will also maintain contact with the university provosts to explain the exception-to-policy process in order to resolve any issues Soldiers are experiencing.

"I own this problem and take responsibility for it,"



(Courtesy U.S. Army)

said Lt. Gen. Ted Martin, commanding general of the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center. "I humbly apologize to the Soldiers who have had any financial hardship because of this."

Martin made a commitment to respond quickly to all Soldier requests for assistance.

During fiscal year 2020 (October 2019 to September 2020), more than 110,000 Soldiers used the Tuition Assistance Pro-

gram, and during the current fiscal year (beginning October 2020) more than 81,000 used it to enroll in over 255,000 courses.

"Leaders need to guide and help their Soldiers through this situation, and we need Soldiers to keep their leadership informed as they request TA for classes," said Sgt. Major of the Army Michael Grinston.

Steps Soldiers can take for assistance include:

Open a Help Case on the IgnitED website at <https://armyignitedprod.servicenowservices.com/ignited>.

Tell your chain of command you are having trouble.

Soldiers needing help with opening a ticket should request assistance from their assigned education center/office.

Find your education center at <https://installations.militaryonesource.mil/?looking-for-a=pro->

program-service=13/focus=program.

Contact the tuition assistance representative at your educational institution and ask about their refund policy.

ACCESS will verify enrollment with the educational institutions and will reimburse them. No Soldier should be paying upfront, out-of-pocket costs associated with their education within the limits of the program.

National Museum of the U.S. Army to reopen on June 14

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The U.S. Army announced today that the National Museum of the United States Army will reopen on June 14, the Army's 246th birthday. The museum, which is located at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, officially opened in November 2020, but was closed temporarily due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"June will be a month of celebration as we recognize Army Heritage Month, the Army's birthday and the reopening of the Army museum," said John Whitley, acting Secretary of the Army. "As the museum tells the history of our American Soldiers and honors their accomplishments and sacrifices, we will also reflect on their more recent service to our nation, including their contributions to



(Courtesy U.S. Army)

COVID-19 and disaster-relief efforts, and the protection they provide us all."

The Museum is the first comprehensive and truly national museum to capture,

display and interpret the Army's history through the eyes of Soldiers. Its displays and interactive-learning exhibits illustrate the Army's role in

building and defending our nation, as well as Army humanitarian missions and technological and medical breakthroughs built on Army ingenuity.

In addition to the galleries and exhibits, the museum features a multisensory 300-degree theater, a tranquil rooftop garden and hundreds of historic treasures

rarely or never-before-seen by the public.

Free, timed-entry tickets are now available through the museum's website at <http://www.theNMAUSA.org>. All tickets must be reserved in advance online, and there is a limit of five tickets per request.

The timed-entry tickets are part of the museum's comprehensive plan, developed according to guidance from the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Army's Public Health Center, to protect the health of its visitors and staff.

For more information, including an interactive map, a list of exhibits, educational programs, a special events calendar and more, please visit <http://www.theNMAUSA.org>.

To view a short video of the museum, please visit https://youtu.be/3MLNA_bf2EE.

AWC
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GENERALLY, ADEQUATE INTAKE LEVELS FOR WOMEN REQUIRE ABOUT NINE CUPS OF FLUID PER DAY AND MEN ABOUT 12.5 CUPS.

INDIVIDUALS WITH CERTAIN HEALTH CONDITIONS AND DIFFERENT ACTIVITY LEVELS HAVE DIFFERENT FLUID NEEDS.

EATRIGHT.ORG

Wildfires: Protect Yourself and Your Community

Personal Responsibility
You can protect your family and home from wildfires by following these safety tips:

- Make and frequently practice a family evacuation plan that includes meeting locations, a communication plan and pet accommodations.
- Use building and yard materials that won't burn easily.
- Keep an area up to 500 feet around your home free, clear and green.
- Clear your roof, gutters and eaves of dead leaves and pine needles often.
- Leave your home when asked to do so.
- Create an emergency bag of personal items that you will need if you are asked to leave your home.



(Courtesy of Army & Air Force Exchange Service Public Affairs)

Thank the Troops this Fourth of July by Sending Army & Air Force Exchange Gift Cards

Staff Report

Army & Air Force Exchange Service Public Affairs

Anyone who wants to thank service members and spread patriotic cheer during the Fourth of July can purchase gift cards from the Army & Air Force Exchange Service.

Military shoppers as well as civilians can show their support by purchasing gift cards from the Exchange's website, HYPERLINK "<https://www.shopmyexchange.com/>" ShopMyEx-

change.com.

Physical gift cards can be used by authorized shoppers at any Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps or Coast Guard exchange worldwide and at HYPERLINK "<https://www.shopmyexchange.com/>" ShopMyExchange.com, HYPERLINK "<https://www.mynavyexchange.com/>" MyNavyExchange.com and HYPERLINK "<https://shopcgx.com/>" ShopCGX.com.

The Exchange operates 4,920 stores in more than

30 countries, 50 states and four U.S. territories.

eGift cards that never expire can be sent to any authorized Exchange shopper but can only be redeemed at HYPERLINK "<https://www.shopmyexchange.com/>" ShopMyExchange.com.

"An Exchange gift card is the easy and affordable way to say thank you to service members, retirees and Veterans," said Fort Wainwright Exchange General Manager Gloria Sylvia. "As our Nation cel-

brates the Fourth of July, it's the perfect time to let those who serve and have served know their sacrifice is deeply appreciated."

Veterans who have signed up for their lifelong Exchange online benefit can also use gift cards to shop exchanges online. Veterans with service-connected disabilities can use gift cards to shop in stores.

Veterans can find out more on the Exchange's community Hub page at HYPERLINK "<https://publicaffairs-sme.com/Community/veterans>"

<https://bit.ly/Veterans>.

Any American can purchase gift cards ranging from \$10 to \$500 addressed to a specific Soldier, Airman, Guardian, Sailor, Marine, retiree or Veteran by visiting HYPERLINK "<https://www.shopmyexchange.com/>" ShopMyExchange.com and clicking "Purchase Gift Cards" at the bottom of the page. Authorized shoppers can also purchase gift cards through their ShopMyExchange.com accounts.