

Redstone Rocket

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Redstone celebrates Army's birthday, heritage in June

By JO ANITA MILEY

Garrison Public Affairs

In June, Army Heritage Month, this nation pauses to thank and honor all those who have served in the Army over the past 246 years. They had the courage to stay the course and work together as one team in support of our nation.

In May 2019, the secretary of the Army approved Army Directive 2019-20 implementing Army Heritage Month into the Army's equal opportunity program. The directive was effective immediately and applies to the active Army, National Guard and Reserve. It established June as Army Heritage Month, centered around the Army birthday on June 14. The Army was founded on this date in 1775 when the Continental Congress authorized the enlistment of expert riflemen to serve in the American Continental Army.

Flag Day is also celebrated on June 14 to honor the U.S. flag and to commemorate the flag's adoption. Army Material Command's Equal Opportunity Adviser and Program Manager, Master Sgt. Elaine Paxton, said honoring the Soldiers who had the courage to confront agony, danger and uncertainty, especially in battle to serve our nation, is key to celebrating Army Heritage Month.

"We've always celebrated the Army's birthday in June. However, this is only the third year since Army Heritage Month was added to the Army's military Equal Opportunity Program calendar of observances," she said. "Commanders of Army commands, Army service component commands, and direct reporting units will observe and conduct Army heritage and birthday activities during the month to recognize the service and sacrifices of a diverse Army and our long history of defending the nation and our national interests. Several events and activities will take place on Redstone to highlight Army Heritage Month."

The Army birthday celebration is the key event to celebrate Army Heritage Month.

On Saturday, June 12 the Garrison's directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation will hold the 246th



File photo by Bryan Bacon

In June 2019 Redstone Arsenal celebrated the Army's 244th birthday. Cutting the cake, from left, are then Col. Kelsey Smith, World War II veteran Harold McMurrin and Command Sgt. Maj. Billy Counts.

Army Birthday celebration at the Redstone Gateway, near Gate 9, from 5-9 p.m. The family-friendly event will feature a "Cruise-In" Car Show, food trucks, craft vendors, fireworks and a glow stick fun run/walk around the Gateway. It honors the commitment of service members and celebrates the Army's time-honored traditions and heritage.

Redstone Senior Commander Lt. Gen. Donnie Walker will open the event with remarks and participate in a cake-cutting ceremony with Garrison Commander Col. Glenn Mellor.

Garrison Command Sgt. Maj. Juan Jimenez has been involved in planning the Army birthday celebration along with others in the Garrison.

"It is very important to celebrate the U.S. Army's heritage in order to continue to educate our current and future generations of Americans about the Army's rich history of men and women who have laid the path to freedom that we so enjoy as citizens in the U.S.," Jimenez said. "This

allows us to share the history of Soldiers past and present as a constant reminder that we appreciate our Army and our Soldiers from the Army's establishment in 1775 to present times.

"The Army has allowed me to experience some great and challenging aspects of life while serving for the past 28 years. As a noncommissioned officer, I realize that I am a member of a time honored corps, which is known as 'the backbone of the Army.' Serving our nation as a Soldier affords me the ability to give back a small fraction of what this great country has given not only to me, but my family as well. I realized that freedom is not free while growing up listening to my dad and uncles' challenging stories of their time serving in the Army at various locations, moreover Vietnam. As a kid I always felt like I wanted to do more and joining the Army gave me that opportunity."

For more information about Army Heritage Month, call 450-6575.



MILITARY

Aviation demonstration advances technology.

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COMMUNITY

Memorial Day reminder of sacrifices made for freedom.

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FEDERAL

Marshall research team soars to success in microgravity.

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SPORTS

Burgess paces gray past royal blue.

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RocketViews

Acting secretary of Army sends message to the force

I want you to know that I have an unceasing admiration for your remarkable sense of duty and devotion – thank you. It has been my highest honor to serve alongside you. Having served in many capacities both in and out of uniform for over three decades, starting out as a young Ranger private to most recently as the acting secretary, it has been an utter privilege.

I have continued to be amazed, impressed, and humbled by the state of the Army and with the professionalism, capabilities and hard work of our Soldiers and leaders. Our Army is strong. We are ready. We are modernizing. We are deployed supporting and defending our nation. It is your deep commitment to preserving and defending our Constitution that makes our Army what it is today. A bedrock of the Army's long history is continual forward progress, renewed by transition and guided by dedicated leaders. As I step away, know that I will continue to be a strong advocate for the Army team. May God bless you, your families and this great Army.

John Whitley

On this date in history: June 2

In 2003: Europe launched its first voyage to another planet, Mars. The European Space Agency's Mars Express probe departed from the Baikonur space center in Kazakhstan.

In 1990: The Lower Ohio Valley tornado outbreak spawned 66 confirmed tornadoes in Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, and Ohio, killing 12.

In 1979: Pope John Paul II started his first official visit to his native Poland, becoming the first Pope to visit a communist country.

In 1966: Surveyor 1 landed in Oceanus Procellarum on the Moon, becoming the first U.S. spacecraft to soft-land on another world.

In 1886: President Grover Cleveland, 49, married Frances Folsom, 21, in the Blue Room of the White House. (To date, Cleveland is the only president to marry in the executive mansion.)

In 1763: At what is now Mackinaw City, Michigan, Chippewas captured Fort Michilimackinac by diverting the garrison's attention with a game of lacrosse, then chasing a ball into the fort.

In 1692: Bridget Bishop became the first person to be tried for witchcraft in Salem, Massachusetts; she was found guilty and later hanged.

Crimes, accidents & other occurrences

The Directorate of Emergency Services, Law Enforcement Division, provided the following list of reported incidents May 16-22:

May 19: A Redstone traffic accident investigator stopped a speeding vehicle on Ride-out Road. The National Crime Information Center revealed the driver had a warrant with Decatur Police Department for domestic violence third degree. Decatur police confirmed the warrant and requested extradition. The driver was apprehended and shortly afterward remanded into the custody of a Decatur police officer. The vehicle was secured on scene for future removal.

May 21: The Redstone Arsenal Civil Police Liaison Office received an information packet from the Fort Benning Department of the Army Civilian Police Civil Liaison Office regarding a Soldier that was being held at the St. Clair Sheriff's Department on a warrant entered into the National Crime Information Center by Fort Benning personnel for desertion. Redstone CPLO traveled to St. Clair

Sheriff's Department to take the Soldier into custody for return to military control. The Soldier was later placed on a flight departing Huntsville International Airport to arrive at Lawton Air Field to be taken into custody by the Fort Sill Military Police.

May 21: A two-vehicle accident occurred at the intersection of Martin Road and Dodd Road. Traveling north on Dodd Road, vehicle 1 entered the path of vehicle 2 which was eastbound on Martin. It was determined the driver of vehicle 1 failed to yield to traffic before entering the intersection. Both vehicles sustained functional damages.

Citations included three for failure to merge left when emergency vehicles are present; one for driving while license is suspended or revoked; one for failure to yield right of way; one for failure to use seat belts; one for no proof of insurance; five for expired registration; one for reckless driving; and 42 for speeding.

Quote of the week

“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.”

– Eleanor Roosevelt

Send your letters to editor

The Redstone Rocket invites your signed letters to the editor and your commentaries. Unsigned letters will not be published. Send your letters and commentaries to skip.vaughn@theredstonerocket.com.

RedstoneRocket

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First responder spotlight

By SKIP VAUGHN
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What do you think of your job?

"I love my job," Jonathan Carroll, a firefighter at Station 5 at the Airfield, said. "I feel like I provide a useful service to the community. Like I do something that matters. We provide a safe environment for the mission here, for the testing, everything that goes on here."

Carroll, 26, from Cleveland, Alabama, a small town in Blount County, joined the Redstone Fire Department March 28. The Cleveland resident served in the Air Force from 2013-19 and left as a staff sergeant. He was deployed in the United Arab Emirates for six months in 2015. He and his wife of six years, Holly, have a daughter, Harper, 2. He enjoys the outdoors, fishing, working out in the gym and being with the family. Carroll roots for the Alabama Crimson Tide.



Jonathan Carroll

Insight on mysterious pains and voodoo dolls

My boss asked me if I had any big plans for my birthday. I was caught off guard.

Let me assure you, there's nothing about my appearance or demeanor that says "big plans."

Most of my big planning involves asking myself how can I sleep to ensure that I wake up with enough working body parts to get out of bed in the morning and make it to work.

Big plans. The last big plan I had was in 2012.

I'm now closer to 40 than I am 30 and I went to the doctor a couple weeks ago for the first time in, let's call it, a while.

I went because I've got a pain in my wrist that shoots all the way from my fingertips to my shoulder. While I was there they asked if there was anything else. I told them about half of my right leg being numb. I kept the fact that I couldn't lift my left arm over my head anymore to myself. I'm saving that surprise for later.

Look, I haven't made the best life choices when it comes to my overall health and well-being. I get that. And, according to my doctor, apparently you have multiple system failures in your mid-30s, 40s and 50s.

She didn't mention anything after that, so I'm not sure if she was saying "If you make it any farther than that it'll either be a miracle from God or medicine will have advanced far beyond my expectations," or "It just get better after 55."

Based on my experience over the last 37 years, I'm not betting on the "it just gets better" theory. While I've been known to whine, I'm not wine.

I don't have a fancy doctor degree, but I did attend about a semester or two of law school and I ran a newspaper, both of which are achievements that clearly

Snippets

By Jonathan Stinson
Assistant editor

qualify me as an expert on a number of topics unrelated to the cost of ink and paper, and torts.

And it is my professional opinion that my recent uptick in ailments have nothing to do with God or science, but instead there's a particular person who has been working on a voodoo doll for the past decade and they've finally got it to work.

Why would someone go through to trouble of trying to create a voodoo doll of me? That's a great question.

It's probably because I wrote a column once about Tim Tebow.

You see, I was unaware that the quarterback of the Florida Gators, who caused my beloved Crimson Tide so much trouble, would have such a following in the heart of Alabama.

And after we beat them in the 2009 SEC Championship and Tebow cried, I wrote a tongue-in-cheek column that compared the quote "There's no crying in baseball" to how it applies in football.

I've been told tongue-in-cheek doesn't come across well in print.

I've never taken that advice, even after hundreds of emails and letters from readers who have shared their extremely low opinions of me.

It was in one of those letters that I'm pretty sure someone had tried to curse me, like in the other-worldly sense. I was well-cursed in the vernacular sense.

It seems like one of those Auburn fans was finally successful.

Getting to know you

By SKIP VAUGHN
Rocket editor
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Name: Andy Kolankiewicz

Position: Java Cafe manager under Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation

What did you want to be when you grew up?

A race car driver or an astronaut. Because it seemed exciting.

What do you hope to accomplish in 2021?

Make 2021 better than 2020 was. That should be easy.

What is the best part about your job?

The people. I have the most amazing staff and the best clientele on Redstone.

Who is your hero, and why?

Gordon Ramsay, he is a celebrity chef. Because of his attitude and demeanor.



If you could choose to do anything for a day, what would it be?

Go to the beach. Because I haven't been in a while.

What is the best piece of advice someone has given you?

"Be nice until it's time not to be nice." I got it from a movie.

What do you like to do for fun?

Go to the gym.

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Know your laws: Statutes of limitations

By AMY WASYLUKA

Huntsville attorney

The Alabama Supreme Court recently granted a Writ of Mandamus directing a trial court to enter an order dismissing the Mobile County Board of Health and Family Oriented Primary Health Care Clinic's claims against Abbott Laboratories and Abbott Laboratories Inc. on the basis that Mobile's claims were barred by the applicable statute of limitations.

Statutes of limitations protect defendants against plaintiffs bringing claims against them for conduct which occurred too far in the past. Not only do statute of limitations protect defendants, but they also ensure that plaintiffs prosecute any claims they may have in a timely manner. Alabama's statutes of limitations are found in the Alabama Code. Relevant limitations periods include:

6-2-38, Alabama Code (1975), pro-

vides that in general there is a two-year statute of limitations period for the following actions including but not limited to: wrongful death; malicious prosecution; libel or slander; personal injury; recovery of wages or overtime etc.; and damages to personal property.

6-2-34, Alabama Code (1975), provides that in general there is a six-year statute of limitations period for the following actions including, but not limited to: trespass to real or personal property, false imprisonment, assault or battery, actions for the use or occupation of land, and



actions on simple contracts.

6-2-33, Alabama Code (1975), provides that in general there is a 10-year statute of limitations period for the recovery of lands, tenements or hereditaments or the possession thereof; and, actions founded on any contract or wright under seal.

This is not an exhaustive list of Alabama statutes of limitations and there are often legal factors which can affect the running of limitations period. Therefore, if you believe you may have a cause of action for a lawsuit, it is important to find an attorney to ad-

vice you with respect to any limitations periods which may be applicable to your claims.

Both the Huntsville/Madison County Bar Association and the Alabama State Bar provide referrals to attorneys who work in a wide range of legal areas. You can look for an attorney using the Huntsville/Madison County Bar Association's Find a Lawyer Service at: www.huntsvillebar.org/directory or by calling the Alabama State Bar's Lawyer Referral Line at 800-392-5660.

Editor's note: The opinions in this column do not constitute legal advice nor do they establish an attorney-client relationship. If you have questions concerning the issues discussed, contact an attorney of your choice. No representation is made that the quality of the legal services to be performed is greater than the quality of legal services performed by other lawyers.

DAU Corner

DoD Sustainment Series: Sustainment Early in Acquisition

Tuesday, 06/08/2021 10:00 A.M. CDT <https://www.dau.edu/events>

1100-1130: Opening by Dr. Vic Ramdass and keynote by Ms. Stacy Cummings

1130-1230: Panel #1 "Sustainment Early in Acquisition?"

1230-1300: Break

1300-1400: Panel #2 "Building Successful Software Sustainment Strategies During Acquisition?"

Summer Law Series – Procurement Integrity

Thursday, 06/10/2021 12:00 P.M. CDT <https://www.dau.edu/events>

This summer, DAU is proud to offer our Summer Law Series featuring Jessica Tillipman, Assistant Dean for Government Procurement Law Studies at The George Washington University. At this session, Dean Tillipman will address procurement integrity. Come prepared to listen, learn, and ask questions.

Acquisition Topics: Operational Energy-Aware Acquisitions Culture

Wednesday, 06/16/2021 11:30 A.M. CDT <https://www.dau.edu/events>

Energy is a strategic enabler to our combat capability and readiness. The Air Force is the DOD's largest energy consumer, and is thus, has the unique opportunity to leverage modern technologies and processes to improve lethality, while aligning objectives with the Secretary of Defense's latest climate priorities. Operational energy, or aviation fuel, accounts for over 80% of the Air Force fuel budget annually, so the Air Force is working to identify energy-informed solutions to improve aircraft range, reduce maintenance actions, decrease planning time, and deliver an assured supply of fuel to the fight.

Soldier/civilian/family readiness briefs

By Army News Service and Defense Department websites

Female medical Soldiers pledge support toward vaccines

WASHINGTON – Maj. Christine Bacsa initially hesitated to take the newly-released COVID-19 vaccine after learning she had become pregnant in December. She didn't know if the vaccine could lead to complications with her pregnancy or if it could potentially harm her fetus.

"At that time there really wasn't enough information about the vaccine and pregnancy," Bacsa said during a livestream panel discussing the effects of COVID-19 vaccines. "So to make my decision, I really had to think about my situation."

However, talks with her health care team at the Office of the Army Surgeon General and other medical professionals quickly alleviated those concerns.

Bacsa, a senior Army public health nurse, successfully completed her second dose of the vaccine in April during her second trimester and experienced no side effects.

"Being pregnant, I did find myself in a similar high-risk category, given some of my own personal medical history," she said. "I had a lot of questions about the safety of the vaccine. But really, what helped me was discussing all my concerns and questions.

"When you look at the risks and benefits ... the choice in the end was really easy."

Bacsa is now one of more than 298,600 fully-vaccinated Soldiers as of May 17. The Army also announced it had administered more than 1 million vaccines at about 80 installations worldwide and has administered 95% of the vaccines it received. Over half of active-duty Soldiers have received at least one inoculation.

"I'm incredibly proud and thankful for the effort our medical teams have invested to reach this milestone of 1 million vaccinations administered. It is a testament to their dedication to the health and safety of our force," Christopher Lowman, senior official performing the duties of the undersecretary of the Army, said. "This is helping us improve our readiness and take care of our communities."

Although pregnant women have a slightly increased risk at developing serious illness from COVID-19, Northwestern University published data on May 11 that revealed the virus did not present any significant risk to pregnancy.

"Based on how these vaccines work in the body, it's unlikely that it'll pose a risk to us during our pregnancy or to our fetus," Bacsa said. "These vaccines have been shown to be safe and effective."

Bacsa said she supports vaccines as an effective treatment against coronavirus. She encourages other Soldiers to take the inoculations, as the Army strives to meet its goal of vaccinating 70% of the force by July 4.

Military

Aviation demonstration delivers technological firsts

By AMY TOLSON

DEVCOM Aviation & Missile Center
Public Affairs

When it comes to giving the warfighter a definitive edge on the battlefield in future conflicts, collaboration is key, as evidenced at Dugway Proving Ground, Utah, in May.

The Combat Capabilities Development Command Aviation & Missile Center's Air Launched Effects and Advanced Teaming science and technology program teams participated in the Experimentation Demonstration Gateway Event 21, led by Army Futures Command's Future Vertical Lift Cross-Functional Team. More than 600 expert participants from 20 Department of Defense agencies participated, including members of the AvMC workforce from Fort Eustis, Virginia; Huntsville; and Moffett Field, California.

"The collaboration amongst the engineers, scientists and warfighters was instrumental in the success of EDGE21 and really set the conditions for Project Convergence 21 later this fall," FVL CFT Director Maj. Gen. Wally Rugen said.

The goal of EDGE21 was "to mature, integrate and test key elements of the ecosystem, as well as an opportunity to get emerging capabilities into the hands of the Soldiers while reducing risk for Project Convergence," Nate Bordick, AvMC Intelligent Teaming branch chief, said. The aviation-focused demonstration resulted in 56 technological firsts for the Army Futures Command's modernization efforts.

"As the engineers figuring out hard problems, working alongside our industry partners, it was a huge honor to support our FVL CFT and PEO Aviation teammates in doing things that haven't been done before as we continue to experiment and inform the requirements of how Air Launched Effects, launched from air and ground assets, can increase our lethality and situational awareness on the battlefield," AvMC Director Jeffrey Langhout said.

Soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division were able to get hands on experience with the developing Advanced Teaming and ALE technology, which allowed for the exchange of valuable feedback and ideas through those Soldier touch-points. Soldiers participated in launching experimental ALE and route control



Army photo

An ALE-Small launches from a Deployable Advanced Ground Off-Road tactical ground vehicle at the Experimentation Demonstration Gateway Event 21, led by Army Futures Command's Future Vertical Lift Cross-Functional Team at Dugway Proving Ground, Utah.

was pushed to platoon leaders on the ground so they could use multiple ALE unmanned aircraft systems to investigate areas of interest using Team Awareness Kit tablets.

Other key test objectives, according to Bordick, included:

- Increasing "the ability to get Air Launched Effects-Small into the fight and extend the ecosystem's reach by demonstrating C-12 and Deployable Advanced Ground Off-Road tactical ground vehicle ALE launches." A C-12 successfully launched an ALTIUS 600 at 25,000 feet, the highest ALTIUS launch ever performed. EDGE was the first time the ALE-S was integrated onto a tactical vehicle driven by Soldiers.

- Assessing "the Aided Target Recognition capability onboard ALE-S, as well as the ability to share threat/targeting info across the network to ultimately improve survivability and shorten the kill chain."

- Collecting "sensor data for training Vision Based Navigation software used to operate ALE in GPS

"As the engineers figuring out hard problems, working alongside our industry partners, it was a huge honor to support our FVL CFT and PEO Aviation teammates in doing things that haven't been done before as we continue to experiment and inform the requirements of how Air Launched Effects, launched from air and ground assets, can increase our lethality and situational awareness on the battlefield."

Jeffrey Langhout.
AvMC Director

denied environments."

For members of the AvMC workforce, the work continues leading up to PC21 and beyond.

"For the remainder of the fiscal year, we will continue to mature, integrate and test advanced ALE payloads and teaming behaviors to enhance collaborative Reconnaissance, Surveillance and Target Acquisition mission capability and improve operational resilience," Bordick said. "In Project Convergence 21 we will

begin to demonstrate increasing autonomy that improves dynamic battlefield adaptability, significantly reduces man in the loop requirements, and pushes mission command down to the lowest tactical level.

"Beyond FY '21, we will incrementally mature and demonstrate increased mission capability using manned-unmanned teams of greater size, spanning multiple domains, and with greater levels of autonomy."

Swipe away updates with Digital Garrison

By JONATHAN STINSON

Assistant editor

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The race to see who can get the most users to download the Digital Garrison app is close.

Redstone Arsenal is sitting at No. 4 on the list of total installation downloads of the Digital Garrison app. Fort Hood and Fort Bragg are on its heels at No. 5 and No. 6.

Redstone has a 15-user lead over Hood and a 112-user lead over Bragg.

“For the size of Redstone Arsenal, compared to the Fort Campbells and Fort Braggs of the Army, we are doing very well,” Garrison Commander Col. Glenn Mellor said. “We just need to ensure we get the word out that this is a very useful tool for anyone who needs it.

Everyone should be interested in the alert system that is becoming more useful as the app becomes more widely used for the immediate delivery of noise alerts, weather closings and other important information.”

Since its rollout, the Digital Garrison

app has continued to be updated as users have provided feedback on what works and what doesn't.

“(Digital Garrison) has a lot of flexibility and can tie into a vast amount of data that can be accessed in one location,” Mellor said, highlighting the potential of the app.

“The ability to get several pieces of information within a few swipes and taps is important for the people who work on and live near Redstone,” he said. “I am mostly interested in installation information, but the ability to see upcoming events and hours of operations for gates, Commissary and PX and be a swipe away from the weather forecast is a definite benefit.

“For those who go TDY, this is a great tool to find out information about the base or training center you are going to.”

To date, Digital Garrison has had close to 140K downloads across all the installations.

The app can be found in Apple's app store and Android's Google Play storefront, and anyone who is curious about noise alerts or the things that go boom on Redstone can use the app.

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REDSTONE Explorer

DG

Redstone Arsenal is transitioning to Digital Garrison, a new enterprise solution provided by Installation Management Command, for our Installation App.

EASY SETUP!!
Download Digital Garrison,
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Set Up Your Profile,
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C3 EXCHANGE MARS

Local Toastmasters club receives recognition

By **SAMANTHA TYLER**

Army Materiel Command Public Affairs

Army Materiel Command's top leader Gen. Ed Daly recognized the AMC Toastmasters Club for receiving a corporate-level award May 21.

The club received the Toastmasters' Corporate Recognition Award. Only about 14 of these awards are given each year, according to Jesse Barber, the club's president.

Toastmasters is a network of clubs that offer opportunities to practice public speaking, improve communication and build leadership skills. The worldwide organization has 364,000 members in more than 16,200 clubs, found in 145 countries.

"This is about an effort for people to introspectively look at how they can become better," Daly said.

According to Barber, the Corporate Recognition Award program provides an opportunity to recognize long-standing and dedicated corporate sponsors in the district.

"Toastmasters International has examined AMC's Toastmasters Club and found some unique characteristics not found in other clubs with respect to club management, member development, and support to the district," Barber said.

The AMC Toastmasters Club char-



Photo by Doug Brewster

Army Materiel Command's Commander Gen. Ed Daly recognizes the AMC Toastmasters Club for receiving the Corporate Recognition Award from Toastmasters International. From left are Daly, AMC Toastmasters Club President Jesse Barber and Secretary Rontario Hicks.

tered in 2016. Barber said the club has won Toastmasters International highest club honor, President's Distinguished, every year since then. It has also placed in the top three every year in the district's speech contest.

AMC's club is focused on areas including self-development, building collaborative teams and productivity, Barber said.

To learn more about Toastmasters, visit www.toastmasters.org.



Photo by Jason Cutshaw

Meritorious career

Lt. Gen. Daniel Karbler, commander of the Space and Missile Defense Command, pins the Legion of Merit on Lt. Col. Russell Brownfield, SMDC G-8 Force Structure Division chief, during Brownfield's retirement ceremony Friday. Brownfield retires with more than 44 years of service.

Native Colombian pursues dream as military officer

By RICHARD BUMGARDNER

Security Assistance Command Public Affairs

BOGOTÁ – As Chief Warrant Officer 3 Mauricio Garcia and his Colombian safety officer counterpart walk the flight line at a **Colombian Army base**, inspecting for safety hazards and violations, he could not help but marvel on how his life has come full circle.

Garcia, a UH-60M Black Hawk pilot and aviation safety officer, is deployed here as part of a Spanish-speaking technical assistance field team from the Security Assistance Command's training unit, the Security Assistance Training Management Organization, based at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

The Colombian Ministry of Defense funds the five-person TAFT team, via a foreign military sales case, to advise the Colombian Army on how to run and manage their Advance Rotary Wing School, along with their aviation safety, supply, logistics and maintenance programs.

Due to his unique background and life path, Garcia's official role of aviation safety officer is routinely overshadowed by the cultural, language, and in-depth knowledge he has accumulated over the past 20 years.

In this two-part story, Garcia now finds that his multiple military careers have merged in unexpected ways.

In the beginning

Born in Medellin, Colombia, to working class parents, he loved going out to the local airport to watch airplanes take off and land, knowing that one day his dream of flying might be a reality.

"My father was a transit agent and mother worked in a beauty spa, so I knew that it would be very hard for my parents to pay for flight school," Garcia said. "My only chance to fulfill my dream was to join the Colombian Army or Air Force."

At 16 and straight out of high school, he enrolled in the Colombian Officer Academy to prepare him for a career as an officer in the military, and hopefully into the cockpit of either a fixed-wing or rotary-wing aircraft.

Unlike military academies in the U.S., students at Colombian military schools have to



Courtesy photo

Then 2nd Lt. Mauricio Garcia graduates from the Colombian Military Officer Academy.



Courtesy photo

This is then 2nd Lt. Mauricio Garcia's graduation photo from Colombian Military Officer Academy. He is now a chief warrant officer three in the U.S. Army.

Straight out of Colombia

First of two-part series

fund the tuition costs themselves. In 1999, that worked out to about \$1,200 **per semester** plus the cost of Garcia living by himself in Bogota where the school was located. Garcia's parents worked hard to make sure he could stay in school.

In **December 2003**, after three difficult years of being away from home, with long hours devoted to dual-track military science and law studies at the military academy, Garcia graduated at age 19.

He soon found himself assigned as a second lieutenant in an Army infantry battalion, not what he was expecting, leading soldiers against terrorist and insurgent groups like the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, known as FARC.

Over the next six years, Garcia did what infantry soldiers do, attending advanced skills training like the counter-guerrilla courses, the Urban Special Forces School, and graduating from the grueling Lancero School.

Built as a collaboration between the U.S. Army and Colombian military, the Lancero School is a result of a request in the mid-1950s by then-president of Colombia, Lt. Gen. Gustavo Rojas Pinilla, who asked the

U.S. Army for help in building an advance tactics school for their military leaders. U.S. Army Capt. Ralph Puckett, a Ranger assigned to Puerto Rico's 65th Infantry Regimental Combat Team, had the experience and language skills to make that happen.

Puckett and his team led that effort from 1955-57 and built the bedrock of what is known today as the Escuela de Lanceros, or Lancero School.

"One of my proudest memories of my time with the Colombian military was graduating from Lancero School," Garcia said, who still wears that tab on his uniform.

However, after six years in the military, sometimes spending months in the Colombian jungle working counter-narcotic operations, Garcia knew it was time for a change.

"I left the Colombian Army because I never had the opportunity to fly," he said.

Twist of fate

While Garcia was preparing to do a year of community service as an intern lawyer, a mandatory requirement to receive his law certificate, fate presented him an unexpected turn as his uncle in Miami, Florida, invited him to the U.S. to study English.

"I never saw coming to the States as an opportunity, mainly because I didn't speak English," he said. "But I wanted to learn English to prepare myself better for a future career as a lawyer in Colombia."

In 2007, Garcia moved to Miami to start classes at a community college. After his girlfriend from Colombia visited, they discovered their relationship was going to change with an unexpected arrival.

"She's from a very conservative family so we got married," Garcia said. "My wife was an American citizen from birth, and after we decided to stay and live in the U.S., I told my wife that the minimum that I can do is to serve my new home country."

Even without the language skills he thought he would need, Garcia enlisted in the U.S. Army in September 2008, where he spent the first eight months at the Defense Language Institute, in San Antonio.

"I passed my proficiency test and was shipped out to basic training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma," he said.

After basic training, Garcia moved on to his military occupation skill training at Fort Sam Houston as a 68J medical logistics specialist, which involved receiving, storing and issuing medical supplies.

Over the next four years, Garcia served with the 31st Combat Support Hospital at Fort Bliss, Texas, deployed to Afghanistan in 2009, back to El Paso, and then in 2011 moved the family to Washington, D.C., when he took an assignment at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

"When Walter Reed closed (due to a Base Realignment and Closure decision) I had to decide between going to Bethesda or Fort Belvoir Community Hospital, where I eventually decided to go to," he said. "Even after moving to Fort Belvoir, and helping to open up the hospital in January 2012, I was thinking about flying and how to make that happen."

Discover in part two how Chief Warrant Officer 3 Garcia's career changed by a chance meeting with an Army aviation safety officer.

Editor's note: On May 21, retired Col. Ralph Puckett received the Medal of Honor for his heroics during the Korean War.

Society awards Darville coveted Urbahn Medal

By DAVID SAN MIGUEL

Engineering and Support Center Public Affairs

A crowning achievement to an already illustrious career, the Society of American Military Engineers awarded the Urbahn Medal to Lt. Col. Hugh Darville during a virtual recognition session May 19.

Darville, slated to retire in August, most recently served as deputy commander and interim commander of the Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville.

Named in honor of Max Urbahn, the medal is awarded annually to a licensed architect member of SAME for eminent and notable contributions in the field of architecture.

For Darville, the award culminates a career spanning 26 years and recognizes his contribution to the architecture profession, leaving a lasting and measurable impact on the military engineering community.

According to the announcement, Darville was selected as this year's recipient because of his "strategic vision for the architecture profession in the U.S. Army Engineer Branch and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers."

It cites how Darville "tackled the institutional and policy obstacles for bringing more architecture graduates into the Army and USACE."

"He worked to change personnel regulations, change officer skill identifiers, and cement relationships with accredited architecture programs to accommodate Army engineer captains at the career course," retired Lt. Col. Neal Wright, SAME vice president, said.

"Hugh's skills as an architect allow him to



Lt. Col. Hugh Darville

excel in the execution of the immediate mission as evidenced by his work in humanitarian and contingency operations. Hugh has been engaged in almost every major contingency operation of the U.S. Army and the Corps of Engineers over the past 20 years."

He oversaw humanitarian assistance and contingency construction projects, highlighting the importance of architects to Army engineer leadership, including planning, design and construction of a training complex in Botswana; three theater missile defense sites in Israel; an orphanage in Moldova; and the renovation of 29 schools in Iraq, a regional hospital in Bulgaria, and two schools and three clinics in Macedonia.

Darville also designed the master plan and key facilities for Camp Bondsteel in Kosovo — the largest contingency construc-

tion project since Vietnam, housing 5,500 servicemembers — setting the standard for future contingency basecamp designs.

During Hurricane Katrina reconstruction, he served as liaison between USACE and the City of New Orleans. And, during the "surge" in Iraq, he oversaw design and construction of joint security stations keeping Iraqis safe from Al Qaeda.

Wright added that early on in his career, Darville had grasped the organization's goals and objectives, and ensured the curricula at the Army Engineer School could directly transfer to recognized architecture, engineering, construction, or AEC civilian credentialing programs from professional certification to trade apprenticeships and skills validation.

"Hugh also led by example, obtaining both his architecture license and the certified construction manager certification, one of the very few uniformed leaders with either credential," he said.

During his four-year tenure as deputy commander and interim commander, the Huntsville Center executed 20,900 contract actions globally valued at \$10.1 billion for 43 strategic Department of Defense programs with 31 Centers of Standardization/Expertise, encompassing design of chemical weapons demilitarization and ballistic missile defense facilities, modernization of Army and Air Force facilities, design oversight of DOD and Veterans Affairs medical facilities; and support to disaster response and overseas contingency operations, including reconstruction of Puerto Rico's electrical grid following Hurricane Maria, and developing alternate care facility concepts and performance work statements for the nationwide COVID-19 response.

In 2018, as deputy, then commander, of Task Force Essayons, Darville led the 130-member team providing architectural engineer services to the multinational 74-country coalition of forces assembled to defeat ISIS, designing seven master plans and 66 facilities in Iraq and Syria.

Retired Lt. Gen. Todd Semonite, former commander of the Corps of Engineers and 54th chief of engineers, commented on Darville's contribution to the architectural engineer community and his eventual selection for the Urbahn Medal.

"Hugh is the first active duty Army engineer in a generation to become a licensed architect and championed efforts to ensure aspiring architects could follow his footsteps," he said. "Due to his efforts, architecture graduates are included in the highest priority for selection as engineer officers by Cadet Command; the Architectural Experience Program and architectural licensure are included in Army policy as a priority for engineer officer professional development; architects receive the same 'skill identifiers' as engineers for selecting officers to fill key developmental positions; and reimbursement for architectural exam, licensure and related credential fees are authorized.

"Importantly, Hugh also personally mentored several dozen young officers about navigating architectural licensing requirements while serving their country," Semonite said. "Hugh's contributions to the field of architecture, both towards accomplishing the Corp's mission in support of our nation, and in ensuring USACE and the Army have the architects needed to accomplish future missions, make him the best choice for this distinguished award."

Lance missile battle buddies stay connected

From combined reports

For the past 15 years, retired Sgt. 1st Class John Williams of San Antonio, Texas, and his wife, Petra, have held annual reunions for veterans of the Lance missile and Multiple Launch Rocket System community.

Their reunion scheduled Sept. 2-4 is the first since 2019, again in San Antonio. There was no reunion in 2020 because of the pandemic.

They have strived to keep their comrades and families informed through Williams' 1,300-member International Lance and MLRS Veterans Outreach group on Facebook.

The retired educator and his wife, a nurse, held their first reunion at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, in 2006 with the help of retired Staff Sgt. David Nuncio, who has since died, and a few others.

Each year the event has grown and it was held in Europe in 2017 and rotated between Fort Sill and San Antonio. But after 2021, because of the cost involved, Williams said the reunion will be held tentatively and the site will be either San Antonio or another designated location.

"My wife and I cherish all of our friends," he said of the main reason for the gatherings. "The comradeship and



Retired Sgt. 1st Class John Williams

fun we have is amazing. We're a small but unified artillery community."

"These events are open to everybody that was associated with Lance or MLRS at any level, including family members."

He said the plans after September's reunion will be announced.

Hallinan leads new mid-range capabilities project

By **NANCY JONES-BONBREST**

Rapid Capabilities and Critical Technologies Office

With the vital mission of supplying a new Mid-Range Capability by fiscal 2023, Gary Hallinan became the first project manager of the Rapid Capabilities and Critical Technologies Office Mid-Range Capability Project Office during an assumption of charter ceremony May 14.

The Mid-Range Capability, part of the Army's number one modernization priority of Long Range Precision Fires, will be designed to hit a variety of mid-range targets. The MRC prototype, consisting of launchers, missiles, and a battery operations center, will be fielded to an operational battery in fiscal 2023.

"I have the right team working hard on a singular outcome that will provide our warfighters a better opportunity to come home," Hallinan said. "We are responding to the needs of the Army with the MRC prototype."

The MRC addresses a need identified by the FY '20 Strategic Fires Study in coordination with key theaters and combatant commands and is a pivotal capability to achieving the Army's modernization goals. In standing up the office, the team – headed from the start by Hallinan – wasted no time in moving forward with their mission to prototype the MRC. Officially stood up last July 1, they awarded their first contract, a prototype other transaction authority, on Nov. 6 and had funds

obligated on the contract shortly after.

"We talk about being fast in the Rapid Capabilities and Critical Technologies Office and this office is a perfect example of just how rapidly we can move out once given a mission," Lt. Gen. L. Neil Thurgood, director of Hypersonics, Directed Energy, Space and Rapid Acquisition, which includes leading the RCCTO, said. "This team has been asked to do a very difficult task for the Army and I have no doubt that they have the right person leading the effort."

The MRC will complement other critical systems in the Army's long range fires portfolio, providing a combined operational and strategic capability that can attack specific threat vulnerabilities in order to penetrate, disintegrate and exploit targets in deep maneuver areas critical to the joint fight.

The capability also allows the Army and joint services to synchronize and leverage modernization efforts and investments across mid-range missile programs in support of multi-domain operations.

Hallinan came to the RCCTO after serving the product director for Field Artillery Launchers in the Strategic and Operational Rockets and Missiles Project Office, part of the Program Executive Office for Missiles and Space.

Thurgood presented him the charter to lead the MRC Project Office.

"Thank you for such an honor to be the first project manager of this program office," Hallinan said. "We



Photo by Jori Canterbury, RCCTO

Gary Hallinan, right, becomes the first project manager of the Rapid Capabilities and Critical Technologies Office Mid-Range Capability Project Office during an assumption of charter ceremony May 14. Lt. Gen. L. Neil Thurgood, left, director of Hypersonics, Directed Energy, Space and Rapid Acquisition, which includes leading the RCCTO, hosted the ceremony.

have a lot of hard work to do and I have no doubt this team that surrounds me today is up to the task."

Gold Star flag waves for families of fallen Soldiers

By JASON CUTSHAW

Space and Missile Defense Command
Public Affairs

Prior to Memorial Day, the Space and Missile Defense Command held a ceremony to honor families who lost loved ones serving in the armed services.

Members of SMDC gathered with Gold Star families as the command raised a Gold Star service flag Friday at the command's headquarters.

"This ceremony is one of both sorrow and solace," Lt. Gen. Daniel Karbler, SMDC commander, said. "The raising of the flag gives us occasion to remember and reflect on our fallen heroes, the valiant men and women who made a selfless commitment to defend our nation's values, freedoms and liberties – choosing lives of service and sacrifice. It also reminds us of the respect and gratitude we owe those who carry their legacy forward with both courage and perseverance, our Gold Star families.

"As this flag flies, it reaffirms our enduring connection to the generations of service members who have gone before us, our pride in our nation's bravest warriors, and our promise to support those who carry the great burden of their loss.

Because as all of you know well, freedom isn't free. It is bought and paid for with the sacrifice made by our service members and their families."

Karbler said the command's presence at the ceremony confirms that the memory of those the country has lost in service to the nation will not be forgotten.

"I hope it brings a measure of comfort and peace to our Gold Star families to know that you are not alone," he said.

The blue and gold star banner tradition began in World War I when white service flags bordered in red were displayed from homes, businesses, schools and churches to indicate, by the use of a blue star, each active service member in the U.S. military. A gold star indicated those who had given their lives for their country.

In 2015, the Army authorized the Gold Star service flag to be flown under the American flag during significant observances, such as Memorial Day.

Phillis Reid, a paralegal for the SMDC Legal office and the command's project coordinator for survivor outreach events, said the command will always remember the nation's fallen heroes and the loved ones they left behind.

"Now, more than ever it is important

to honor Gold Star families to ensure their fallen heroes are never forgotten and that they, making their own sacrifices, are not forgotten," Reid said. "We are humbled by their strength and have these events to let them know they are and will remain an important part of our SMDC and Army family."

Reid said SMDC has been a supporter of Redstone Arsenal Survivor Outreach Services programs since 2011 and started the Gold Star flag raising ceremony in 2017.

"As Memorial Day is a day of remembrance of those who have died in service to our country, it is the perfect opportunity to acknowledge all the men and women of our armed forces who have made the ultimate sacrifice and honor their families," Reid said. "Over the years we have planned many events for the families, and we take every opportunity to encourage others to follow suit. Our Gold Star families deserve the recognition."

After the ceremony, the families laid a red rose at the base of the flagpole in honor of their loved one. The Gold Star flag remained on the flagpole throughout the Memorial Day weekend and was

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Photo by Cecil Longino

Space and Missile Defense Soldiers raise the Gold Star flag Friday to honor families who lost loved ones serving in the armed services.

Army recognizes financial management intern

By **KATIE DAVIS SKELLEY**

DEVCOM Aviation & Missile Center Public Affairs

It is not often that a new employee in a temporary role has the opportunity to create official organizational processes and develop tracking tools – especially for one as high-profile as the Army Rapid Capabilities and Critical Technologies Office.

But Jessica Steele was up to the challenge. Steele, with the Combat Capabilities Development Command Aviation & Missile Center Resource Management Office, completed a six-month rotational assignment at RCCTO and became such a valued asset that she was named the Army Financial Management and Comptroller Financial Management Intern of the Year for Below ACOM, a Department of the Army-level award.

Starting what is essentially a new job every few months can be stressful for anyone, especially in a young, dynamic organization like RCCTO. Steele said that while she was nervous to move from AvMC to RCCTO, her apprehension was quickly put at ease.

“The program manager trusted me from day one and that really set the tone for the developmental,” she said. “I was a trusted member of the team and valued. They spent a lot of time with me,



Jessica Steele

not only educating me on program management, but walking me through how developmentals can grow and shape your career and how they can teach you about parts of your field that you never would have realized was a door for you.”

Meeting new challenges head on is nothing new for the self-proclaimed Army brat. After spending her childhood moving for assignments, Steele said she learned “from a pretty young age to put myself out there, be myself and not to be afraid of anything.”

That skill served Steele well when after

obtaining her degree in education at the University of Alabama, when she picked up and moved to South Africa to work for a nonprofit, training local managers on the ground running the organization. It was there that Steele discovered her love for accounting.

“I found that I needed to teach myself managerial accounting so I could teach them, and then found that I really liked working with budgeting – I found it fascinating,” she said.

It was a natural fit for Steele to later join the AvMC team, as her mother had worked for the organization in its earlier incarnation as the Aviation and Missile Research, Development and Engineering Center. Steele said she was influenced by her mother’s own willingness to accept developmental rotations in her career.

“I saw that she was learning so much and I loved that,” she said.

Heading to RCCTO for six months was also an opportunity to build bridges between the two organizations who work closely together. Steele said that Resource Management Division Chief Terrence Clay referred to the post as a developmental but “it was more like a trial-by-fire,” she said with a laugh. “It is such a fast-paced organization with such high stakes visibility – it was a lot. It was a lot to learn but very rewarding.”

Clay had no such qualms.

“Jessica has never met a job too big or

too small, and that’s what makes her invaluable to the organization,” Clay said.

Steele is quick to point out that she considers the award a team effort and that she was successful at RCCTO because she was given the tools and the autonomy to do so.

“I read the (award) email two or three times. I thought to myself, ‘Surely they have emailed the wrong person,’” she said. “Honestly, I was shocked. I am still in shock and a little overwhelmed. Even when someone gets nominated on their own, they didn’t do it on their own and they didn’t get there on their own. I have gained a wealth of experience from all of the people involved, from my own leadership at AvMC to the team I supported at RCCTO – it shouldn’t be just me getting this award.”

Steele hasn’t spent much time at Resource Management recently, after accepting another developmental at DEVCOM headquarters, serving on the Science and Technology Integration Strategy Cohort for Future of Work. Steele’s words of advice to others considering a rotational assignment out of their comfort zone: It’s OK to be scared. Do it anyway.

“Always do the thing that scares you,” she advised. “There’s a reason that it keeps popping in your mind. Don’t not take the risk because you are afraid of the outcome.”

Flag

Continued from page 14

taken down Tuesday morning.

Attendee Annette Hall, president of the North Alabama Chapter of American Gold Star Mothers, and mother of Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Hall, who died in Afghanistan while serving with the 10th Mountain Division’s 2nd Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, said it is important for Gold Star families to know the sacrifice of their loved ones are not forgotten.

“The most important thing to Jeffrey while he was in the Army was his men,” Hall said. “To honor him and the men he served with is one of the greatest things anyone could do.”

Another Gold Star family member said that for SMDC to support the families who have sacrificed meant a lot and lets them know they are not forgotten.

“My dad was a World War II and Korean War veteran so I grew up with Memorial Day being important,” said Eilene Shellman, mother of Spc. Paul Gordon Knaack II, who died after being wounded while serving with the 82nd Airborne Division in Afghanistan. “Losing a child in service to the country is whole different ballgame. Memorial Day is not just one day a year, Memorial Day is every day for us. Being able to come here at SMDC and seeing the Gold Star flag and being surrounded by other Gold Star families gives peace and comfort with knowing you are not alone.”

**WASTE...
...RUINS MY TASTE**



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for those downstream!**

**Keep Redstone Arsenal water streams free of pollutants.
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down a storm drain, call the Garrison Environmental Office,
Storm Water Program manager at 955-8501.**

Screaming Eagles take flight in Black Hawk simulator

By ETHAN STEINQUEST

Fort Campbell Public Affairs Office

FORT CAMPBELL, Ky. – Fort Campbell is entering the latest frontier of flight simulation technology with the Army-owned and operated Black Hawk Aircrew Trainer, or BAT, a highly immersive device that the installation began using May 3.

Boasting a complete UH-60 cockpit, state-of-the-art visual systems and a dedicated operating station for instructors, the BAT allows pilots to build mission readiness while saving the Army both time and money.

“Since the Army has the rights to the software, it’s not a proprietary issue,” Tim Hight, chief of Training Support, Training Division, Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security, said. “As the aircraft gets upgraded, the simulator is directly in step. In the past, it cost the Army a lot of money to update the software, but now that the Army has bought the rights, we can stay concurrent with what the aircraft has on board.”

DPTMS also expects to see reductions in labor, material and maintenance costs after purchasing the BAT for roughly \$10.3 million. Hight said the system should pay for itself within three years.

“It’s a 12:1 cost savings,” Fred Workman, supervisory training support specialist, Jones Training Support Center, said. “We’re talking about maintenance, fuel, wear and tear – getting in the device versus being in an actual aircraft.”

The Utility Helicopters Project Office began fielding BATs in August 2016 and expects to see them in use Armywide by the first quarter of 2025. Fort Campbell was the 15th installation to receive the technology.

“It’s really the tip of the spear for Army aviation – Fort Campbell and the 101st Combat Aviation Brigade in particular,” Allen OBrion, UH-60 operational devices (Training Aids, Devices, Simulators and Simulations) lead, UHPO, Program Executive Office for Aviation, said. “We delayed Fort Campbell slightly because we have a new configuration BAT. Our first 11 were UH-60M only aircraft models, and this newest one accommodates UH-60L as well, which is the legacy Black Hawk.”

Because the installation uses both of those models, UHPO decided to wait until the BAT could support them before fielding it to Fort Campbell. The result is a more streamlined version of the Transportable-Black Hawk Operations Simulator.

“BAT is a big improvement as far as facilitating the training and making it easier,” Chris Hill, a training instructor with DPTMS, said. “More time is spent training than loading or resetting the device because of errors, and it’s as close as you can get to the real thing without being in the aircraft.”

Using a system like BAT also allows pilots to train under conditions that cannot be replicated in exercises with live aircraft.

“One of the most significant advantages of a simulator is you can give them things you can’t in the aircraft, like a fire or a hydraulic malfunction or threat,” Paul Riccio, a training instructor with DPTMS, said. “You can shoot at them in the simulator all



Photo by Ethan Steinquest

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Ahmed Edwards, 5th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, 101st Combat Aviation Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), guides 1st Lt. Glen Fisher, 5-101st Avn. Regt., left, and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Sam Harvill, 5-101st Avn. Regt., right, through training exercises May 10 using the Black Hawk Aircrew Trainer. The BAT is a highly immersive and cost-effective flight training simulator the installation began using May 3.

day long, make it nighttime, put them in a thunderstorm or icy conditions. The environment is completely manageable by the operator, and you can make it whatever you want.”

A majority of Fort Campbell’s instructor pilots and simulator operators received BAT training the first week the system was in use, and now the pilots of the 101st Combat Aviation Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), are settling into their own training rhythm.

DPTMS offers five BAT training periods a day, Monday through Thursday, and each session allows for three pilots including the operator. Usage is being determined through a regular training rotation.

“It’s been almost a seamless transition,” Hill said. “They’re doing everything they can do in the aircraft, from emergency procedure training and instrument flight rules to sling loads and flying against a known threat and using the aircraft’s survivability equipment to counter it.”

Many of those exercises count as credits for the Commander’s Aviation Training and Standardization Program, which includes annual requirements for Army pilots.

“You get more realistic training out of the device than you did with our older legacy devices,” OBrion said. “When you couple that with the synthetic training environments that basically replicate the real world because it’s based on satellite imagery, you really have a feeling that you’re flying at Fort Campbell, Korea or wherever the data is pulling from.”

BAT’s ability to keep pace with innovations in aircraft technology further enhances its impact on mission readiness, and OBrion said it has been well-received at other installations.

“That’s one of the things we didn’t have with the T-BOS, and it got so far behind,” John Kokoski, a training instructor with DPTMS, said. “As updates happen with the aircraft, we’re going to update this similarly.”

Fort Campbell also benefits from the BATs being built in nearby Huntsville which gives DPTMS easy access for troubleshooting and other issues.

“We have a good working relationship, they’re close by and basically any time there’s a new upgrade we’ll be first in the hopper to get it,” Hight said. “But I think the biggest highlights are the cost savings, the superior electronics package and the Army actually owning the software.”

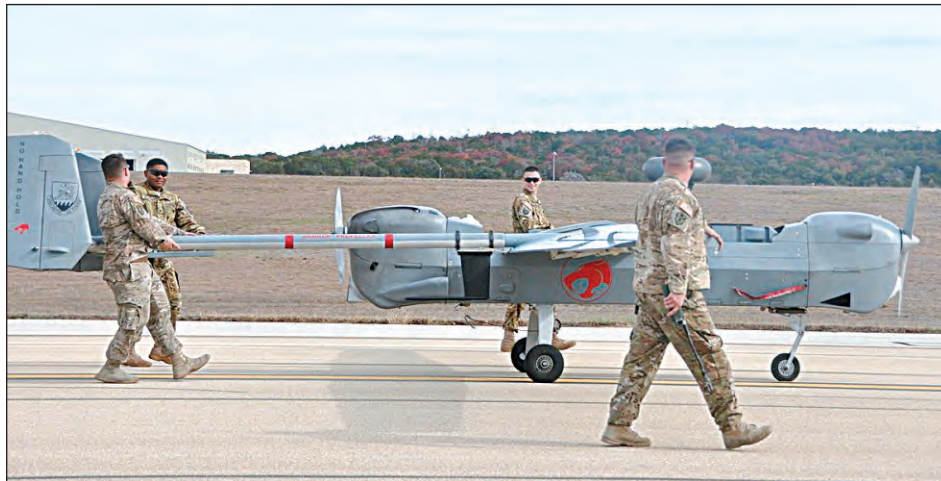
Unmanned aircraft system blazes trail for three decades

By Program Executive Office for Aviation
Public Affairs

The role of unmanned aircraft systems in the Army is growing at unprecedented rates. Rapid advances in technology are enabling more and more UAS capability to be deployed on the battlefield. As the Program Executive Office for Aviation's Unmanned Aircraft System Project Office designs, develops and delivers the next generation UAS to the Soldier, it will more than likely build on the legacy created by the MQ-5B Hunter, the first and longest serving Army UAS.

When the Hunter was initially fielded in 1995 the UAS became a game changer on battlefield. The system carried a wide array of onboard payloads used to survey enemy elements and transmit to ground-based or airborne battle management systems which was essential to field commanders.

"The Hunter provided commanders with near-real time intelligence, reconnaissance, target acquisition, target identification and battle damage assessment capabilities," Bill Smithson, a senior logistics specialist who has worked on the Hunter program since its inception, said.



Army photo

Soldiers from the 15th Military Intelligence Battalion recover a MQ-5B Hunter unmanned aircraft system at Robert Gray Army Airfield at Fort Hood Texas, following a test flight Dec. 9, 2015. Initially fielded in 1995, the Hunter was the first and longest serving Army UAS, remaining in the Army inventory for more than 30 years.

"The Hunter also enhanced the commander's ability to identify and track hostile activity and targets, and identify friendly forces to avoid unnecessary loss of life."

Described as the workhorse for unmanned aerial vehicles during its more than 30-year tenure, the UAS provided operational support to the force with more than 225,000 flight hours, of which

over 80% supported combat operations.

It also paved the way for other unmanned aircraft to be developed and fielded. The Hunter's capabilities set the standard for the Army's unmanned aircraft systems program, achieving several operational and technological firsts.

In 1999 the Hunter became the first UAS to be deployed overseas when it was used to support contingency operations in the skies over Kosovo. It was also the first UAS to cross the border into Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Converting to a weaponized configuration in January 2006, the Hunter became the Army's newest UAS propelled by a heavy fuel engine and equipped with the latest in avionics. It was also one of the first UAV's to incorporate Automatic Take Off and Landing technology for a fully autonomous flight including pre-programmed way points.

Even with all its success the Hunter never reached full rate production as a program, and on Dec. 16, 2015, the Hunter flew its final flight in Army service at Fort Hood, Texas. As the Army transitioned to the larger and

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Aircraft

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more capable MQ-1C Gray Eagle, the Hunter transferred to government-owned, contractor-operated units and continued supporting overseas operations another four years. On Dec. 16, 2019, the Army directed its first and oldest UAS be returned to the U.S. and divested from the inventory. The Hunter UAS flew its final training flight at Dugway Proving Ground, Utah, in March 2020.

“The men and women who worked on this program put their hearts and souls into seeing the overwhelming success that has spanned over three decades,” Smithson said. “Although the program started on a shaky foundation, it grew and thrived as the first set of unmanned ‘Eyes Beyond the Horizon’ for the Army and our allies.”

While no longer part of the active UAS fleet, today the Hunter can be found on displays like the one mounted on a platform just outside the Sparkman Center, and mounted on the latest display recently erected outside PEO Aviation headquarters. According to Smithson, the Endurance UAS Product Office’s Non-Program of Record Product Team is in communication with other organizations that may be interested in the possibility of obtaining a Hunter UAS for future displays.

The Hunter’s real contributions were on the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan, where its reconnaissance, surveillance, targeting and acquisition capabilities quickly won over Soldiers and commanders. But the lessons learned and advancements achieved during its more than 30 year lifecycle years will undoubtedly provide untold benefits for Army UAS program for years to come.



PEO Aviation Public Affairs photo

Members of the Program Executive Office for Aviation’s Unmanned Aircraft System Project Office stand in front of a newly constructed MQ-5B Hunter aircraft display April 27 after its installation outside PEO Aviation headquarters. Initially fielded in 1995, the Hunter was the first and longest serving Army UAS, remaining in the Army inventory for more than 30 years. The final Hunter flight took place in March 2020 at Dugway Proving Grounds, Utah.

Engineers' Learning Center opens doors for in-person classes

By KRISTEN BERGESON

Engineering and Support Center Public Affairs

The Corps of Engineers Learning Center is now offering in-person instruction for mission-critical courses at its new location at Redstone Gateway.

The center, which provides technical and professional training for USACE and other government agencies, moved from the Bevill Center at the University of Alabama in Huntsville to the first floor of Building 100 Secured Gateway in March. However, all classes were held virtually until May due to COVID-19 restrictions.

With the gradual introduction of in-person training, currently limited to critical courses with on-site requirements, students and instructors are finally able to enjoy the many amenities available in and around the new center. Roy Elam, USACE Learning Center director, said the move was designed with a focus on improving two major areas: workforce security and student experience.

"Because we're on Redstone Arsenal, we can now access the secured USACE network through Wi-Fi, which we couldn't do from the UAH campus,

so just the increased cybersecurity is a huge benefit," Elam said. "In addition, we now have security guards and CAC-access throughout the facility."

The ability to log in to the secure network, combined with the facility's new state-of-the-art video conferencing tools and monitors, allows classes to virtually connect with instructors and leadership across the globe. These technological advances proved to be beneficial for the new center's first in-person class, the Visitor Assistance Program course for USACE park rangers, Elam said.

"This class was able to have their leadership from headquarters in D.C. give them briefings via WebEx," he said. "At Bevill, they would have had to schedule one of the VTC (video teleconferencing capability) rooms with leadership, but now they can just pull it up right from their desks."

The new center also includes eight "huddle rooms," collaborative spaces where classes can split into smaller groups to complete projects or study based on their individual needs. A tablet computer is posted on the outside of each room for scheduling and communicating upcoming events. For more informal gatherings, students can go to any



Army photo

A class of 41 park rangers with the Corps of Engineers attend the first in-person training offered at the new USACE Learning Center. The center, which opened its doors for mission-critical courses in May, is located in Building 100 Secured Gateway.

one of the numerous communal spaces spread throughout the facility.

Within walking distance or a short drive from the Learning Center are a hotel, multiple restaurants and a coffee shop, providing out-of-town students and instructors with all of the conveniences needed to live comfortably away

from home. The center also has a dining area with concessions for students to purchase, and food trucks arrive daily with a variety of lunch options.

These amenities have a tremendous impact on the student experience, as well as the quality of learning, said Jonathan

See Classes on page 20

Classes

Continued from page **19**

Carlisle, Northwest Division's natural resource program manager and lead instructor for the USACE Visitor Assistance Program. He travels from Portland, Oregon, to Huntsville at least three times each year to lead the weeklong training and attended more than 40 classes, either as a student or as an instructor, at the center's old location.

"Personally, being on the Arsenal and having everything close by is so much more convenient," he said. "It also helps to make sure that students are on time for class, which is really important for decreasing interruptions."

Prior to COVID-19, the center trained about 10,000 students each year, with more than half of those attending class in a traditional classroom setting. Though the USACE Learning Center is currently only offering in-person training for mission-critical courses, Elam said he hopes to soon fill all four of the center's large classrooms with students.

"The better trained your people are, the more ready you are to successfully complete the operations," Elam said. "This new facility allows for more effective training for even more students, so it will have a huge impact on USACE as a whole."

The Learning Center is also equipped to handle large conferences and seminars outside of the ULC's standard catalog. In August, the center will host the annual USACE Safety Officer's meeting. Nearly 100 safety officers from across the Corps are expected to attend in person, while the remaining will participate via WebEx.

Building 100 Secured Gateway is part of Redstone Gateway, a mixed-use development near Gate 9 geared toward government contractors and research firms. The 250,000-square-foot building, located in the secured section of the Gateway that sits behind the gate, houses approximately 1,400 employees from the Program Executive Office for Missiles and Space, the FBI, USACE, and Finance Centers.

For more information about the USACE Learning Center and its 200-plus course offerings, visit ulc.usace.army.mil.

Strategic team launches Zombie target from Scotland

By JASON CUTSHAW

Space and Missile Defense Command Public Affairs

The Space and Missile Defense Command Technical Center's targets team launched a Pathfinder Zombie target May 19 from the Hebrides Range in Scotland during the ongoing At-Sea Demo/Formidable Shield 2021 exercise.

The purpose of At-Sea Demo/Formidable Shield 2021, which includes approximately 10 nations participating with ships, aircraft, ground assets and deployed staff, is to improve allied interoperability in a joint live-fire Integrated Air and Missile Defense environment. SMDC played a role in the exercise by internationally shipping a fully integrated round for the first time.

"This was my first mission as test director for SMDC. Leading this team of professionals in the first international Pathfinder Zombie launch was an honor for me and being in Scotland was pretty special within itself," Pamela Galloway, mission test director, Targets Test Directorate, Technical Center, said. "We provided a successful target at the planned launch time and appeared to have met all test objectives. Early indications are that the Pathfinder Zombie launch and flight were nominal."

She then explained how launching from overseas changed how the team normally operates during a launch.

"Logistics was our main challenge," Galloway said. "With this mission being overseas we had to develop a new logistics plan, which included building up the target into an All-Up-Round, or AUR, and shipping that AUR to the United Kingdom. After researching several options for shipping the round, we opted for a new acquisition for a shipping container that required design, manufacturing and test just weeks prior to use."

"Another challenge was that the range integration time was split between two other target programs preparing for their launch, so our team had to be more flexible on how we prepared for ops. The entire effort was very challenging."

She said the team adapted well to the unknowns of operating on a foreign range.

"After multiple range holds, none due to our target, and sitting on console for 12 hours when our nominal count is 5.25 hours, the Pathfinder Zombie team ran a flawless hot countdown and launched exactly on the time defined by the customer," Galloway said.

Galloway and three other team members were onsite for the launch, with others from SMDC supporting them from Redstone Arsenal. She added that the whole team was critical to the mission planning and development of the Pathfinder Zombie target launch.

Team member Ricky Judy, SMDC ground support lead, said one their biggest obstacles was ensuring the team brought everything they might need to complete the mission.

"You don't have the luxury of running to the store to purchase items at a moment's notice," Judy said. "Another challenge is working at a new range and trying to meet their range requirements during a pandemic. Working around the restrictions of number of personnel assembling for meetings, target checks and pad preparations along with making sure we coordinated with the range on any requirement or procedure that might affect the current daily operational tempo. And let's not forget driving. It was quite an adventure at times."

Judy said one of the successes for the team while in Scotland was being able to use their new shipping container to transport a ready-to-fire target.

"This was the first test of the container with an all-up-round shipped from Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico, to Scotland on a C-130 aircraft," Judy said. "And while I was not on the ground for the launch, it proved to be a valuable experience for me as I now have a better understanding of their range requirements, how their range operates and logistic readiness necessities for a successful mission in a foreign nation."



Army photo

The Space and Missile Defense Command Technical Center's Targets Team launched a Pathfinder Zombie target May 19 from the Hebrides Range in Scotland during the ongoing At-Sea Demo/Formidable Shield 2021 exercise. The purpose of At-Sea Demo/Formidable Shield 2021, which includes approximately 10 nations participating with ships, aircraft, ground assets and deployed staff, is to improve allied interoperability in a joint live-fire Integrated Air and Missile Defense environment. SMDC played a role in the exercise by internationally shipping a fully integrated round for the first time.

After the test, Kevin Creekmore, Test Directorate director and launch target mission director, said the exercise is the most complex integrated air and missile defense event the Zombie team has participated in.

"We launched a Pathfinder Zombie target, used for a simulated sea-based terminal engagement, to include coordination with multiple allied ships along with concurrent air-breathing threats," Creekmore said. "Pathfinder Zombie is a threat representative, low-cost Short Range Ballistic Missile target suitable for use in U.S. and foreign missile defense testing. The Zombie targets utilize excess Army motors that are near the end of their operational life, but can be repurposed for flight testing at much lower cost than developing new system."

Creekmore said the Pathfinder Zombie government and contractor team worked extremely hard and came together in difficult conditions to provide a target meeting mission requirements.

"The team performed exceptionally and really represented the Army and United States well during the planning and execution of this mission," Creekmore said. "Due to COVID-19 restrictions the coordination and planning was radically revised for the original plan and required extensive coordination due to the diverse nature of the test participants and the remote location of the event."

Redstone drinking water meets safety standards

By Garrison Environmental Management Division

The Garrison and Wolf Creek drinking water compliance and supply team are committed to providing you with a safe and dependable supply of drinking water. During 2020, we monitored your drinking water continuously for potential contaminants to ensure it met the stringent requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act. Based on the 2020 analytical results, your drinking water met the SDWA standards and the drinking water provided to you on Redstone Arsenal is safe to drink.

Huntsville Utilities provided the majority of drinking water at Redstone during 2020. Redstone purchased approximately 2.1 million gallons of potable water per day from Huntsville Utilities and supplemented this supply by producing approximately 0.45 million gallons per day at water treatment plant 3 on Redstone. Water treatment plant 1 did not produce potable water during 2020 due to ongoing renovations which improved the sludge removal system, improved the laboratory area, rebuilt a pump, and improved various other areas to modernize plant 1. Huntsville Utilities used their two surface water plants as the primary sources for the potable water provided to Redstone Arsenal. The Tennessee River serves as the raw water source for these plants as well as both of the Garrison plants.

Source water assessments that provide baseline data for the quality of our raw water before it is treated are available during regular duty hours for review in the Environmental Management Division office at building 4488 on Martin Road, room A-336. These assessments identify the origins of potential contaminant sites and assessed their susceptibility to our raw water supply systems. Based on our assessments, the potential contaminant sites exhibited a low risk to the Redstone Arsenal's raw water supply.

We routinely monitor your drinking water for many constituents in accordance with federal and state safe drinking water laws and regulations. Again, as reflected in the 2020 test results, the drinking water produced by Redstone Arsenal and purchased from Huntsville Utilities is safe to drink and meets federal and state drinking water standards. If you have any questions about this report, or your drinking water, call the drinking water manager in the Garrison Environmental Management Division at 955-8230. We want you to be informed about your drinking water utility.

The Garrison can provide detailed tables which present the Redstone Arsenal and Huntsville Utilities drinking water monitoring data for 2020 (or the most recent monitoring periods) as required.

Although your drinking water meets federal and state requirements, we have learned through monitoring and testing that some constituents have been detected in our drinking water. However, the EPA has determined that your water is safe at or below these detection levels.

Be aware that all drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of these contaminants does not necessarily indicate that the water poses a health risk. In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the EPA prescribes regulations which limit the amount of certain contaminants in the drinking water provided by public drinking water systems. The Food and Drug Administration regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791.

The MCLs for various contaminants are set at very stringent levels. To understand the possible health effects described for many regulated constituents, a person would have to drink two liters of water every day at the MCL level for a lifetime to have a one-in-a-million chance of having the described health effect. However, some people may be more vulnerable to these contaminants than the general population. People who are immuno-compromised such as cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy, organ transplant recipients, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly and some infants may be particularly more at risk to infections from these contaminants. People at risk should seek advice from their health care providers about drinking the water from their public water system. The EPA/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by cryptosporidium and other microbiological contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791).

Although there is not a problem with lead in drinking water at Redstone Arsenal, lead, if present in elevated levels, can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Lead contaminants in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. The Garrison is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components. When the water has been sitting in the water lines for several hours (especially over the weekend), you can minimize the potential for elevated lead and iron level exposure by flushing the lines for two to five minutes before using the water for drinking or cooking. If you are concerned about lead in your water, you may have your water tested by calling our water quality lab at 876-4062. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is also available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline or at www.epa.gov/safewater/lead.

Contaminants that may be present in source water include the following:

- Microbial contaminants, such as viruses and bacteria, which may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations and wildlife.
- Inorganic contaminants, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally-occurring or result from urban storm water runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining or farming.
- Pesticides and herbicides, which may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, urban storm water runoff, and residential uses.
- Organic chemical contaminants, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are byproducts of industrial processes and petroleum production. They can also come from gas stations, urban storm water runoff, and septic systems.
- Radioactive contaminants, which can be naturally occurring or be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

The sources of drinking water (both tap water and bottled water) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs and wells. As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally occurring minerals and, in some cases, radioactive material, and can also pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or human activities.

The water supply team at Redstone is committed to providing top quality water to every tap. We ask all of our customers to help protect our water sources, which are the heart of our community, our way of life, and our children's future. We extend our sincere thanks to each of you, our Redstone Arsenal valuable customers, for the opportunity to serve you. Feel free to share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example Redstone businesses). You can do this by posting this in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.

Community

Cain caps 46 years of service at IMCOM Sustainment

By SKIP VAUGHN

Rocket editor

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After four and a half decades of government service, Mike Cain had many people he wanted to thank.

He said they made him who he is today. Cain retired as the chief of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation for Installation Management Command-Sustainment. Since November 2016 he provided FMWR Directorate support to 27 garrison FMWR programs spanning seven Army commands located in 19 different states and one foreign country.

His retirement ceremony luncheon was held May 26 in The Summit.

"It's just like a mural, like a collage," Cain said of his 46-year career which included three years as a first lieutenant. "So many people, places and things. You remember the song by John Lennon and Paul McCartney 'In My Life'? That's what it is. When you span four and a half decades working with so many people, they become a part of you. Just like a collage. All those pieces put together. You're made up of so many

"It's just like a mural, like a collage. So many people, places and things. You remember the song by John Lennon and Paul McCartney 'In My Life'? That's what it is. When you span four and a half decades working with so many people, they become a part of you. Just like a collage. All those pieces put together. You're made up of so many things. And that's what you become."

Mike Cain



Photo by Skip Vaughn

Mike Cain, the retiring chief of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation for Installation Management Command-Sustainment, and his wife, Kay, wave to their grandchildren via Zoom during his retirement ceremony at The Summit.

things. And that's what you become."

His focus has been "people always, mission first." But he said his mission now is "Florida bound" as he and his wife move to Rockledge, Florida, to be with their daughters and grandchildren.

Cain and his wife of 49 years, Kay, have lived at Redstone the past four years. They have two daughters, April and Autumn, and three grandchildren, Ben, 16, Winnie, 13, and Sawyer, 7.

Thirty-seven people attended the luncheon in The Summit ballroom and 57 others watched virtually via Teams and Zoom. The Cains waved to their grandchildren via Zoom during the ceremony.

Davis Tindoll, director of IMCOM Sustainment, presented Cain the Meritorious Civilian Service Medal and the certificate of retirement. He also shared memories of his friend for over 50 years. They played high school football against each other in Kentucky just outside of Fort Knox. Cain's Meade County team beat Tindoll's North Hardin team, 35-14.

"You will be remembered as someone who's made a difference," Tindoll said. "And you will be missed."

Cain, 69, from Brandenburg, Kentucky, grew up in an Army family as the son of a noncommissioned officer. He was a distinguished military graduate from ROTC at Eastern Kentucky University where he earned his bachelor's and master's of science in recreation and park administration.

After serving in the Army 1974-77, he became a community MWR outdoor recreation programmer in May 1979 at Fort Knox. His career took him to Germany, Florida, Texas and finally Alabama.

"It's been a lot of moves," Cain said. He counted nine permanent change of station moves in four and a half decades.



Photo by Skip Vaughn

Davis Tindoll, director of IMCOM Sustainment, left, receives a memento from Mike Cain during Cain's retirement ceremony. It's a framed article about the high school football game they played against each other in Kentucky when Cain's Meade County team beat Tindoll's North Hardin team, 35-14.

Veterinarian captain cares for military working dogs

By REBECCA SALLEE

Staff writer

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The officer in charge of the Veterinary Treatment Facility does his best for all of the four-legged patients that come through his doors.

But Capt. Tim Beck said there is a special place in his heart for the military working dogs.

Beck, recently serving a temporary assignment at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, joined the Army as part of the health professional scholarship program in 2017.

In addition to the usual duties of a vet, Beck is the health provider for some of the country's most loyal patriots: military working dogs.

Several qualities set them apart from other dogs, he said.

"The most unique thing about treating working dogs is almost all of them are trained in patrol, also known as "bite-trained," Beck said. "We don't interact with them in our clinic without a muzzle."

But that's because their instinct when they are in pain is to bite. "Ninety-seven percent of my working dogs are cuddle dogs," he said.

In fact, the only time Beck was bitten by a working dog, he was wearing a "bite suit" and it was "on purpose."

"I have never been bit in a clinic," he said.

Redstone's working dogs are "incredibly fit," requiring them to be on a high-calorie diet, typically 500 calories per cup, compared to typical dog food that is 400 to 450 calories per cup. And some military working dogs eat as much as eight cups of food a day – but they work it off.

"I always compare them to professional athletes," Beck said.

He sees the military working dogs at least once a month for "spot day," when he checks their weight and body condition, inspects their kennels, and provides monthly medicine for heartworm, flea and tick prevention.

Twice a year, he conducts a semiannual physical exam on the dogs. During one, he draws blood for a complete workup; during the other, he decides if they might need more bloodwork.

At times, Beck said, veterinarians take information from the dog handlers and interpret it along with their own observations to assess an animal's health.

"The handlers have an incredibly strong bond (with the dogs)," he said, recalling an incident during a temporary assignment in Turkey when a handler told him his dog was "licking his lips funny."

On a hunch, Beck took an X-ray and found that the dog's stomach was bloated and filled with air, which can occur when it's hot and a dog drinks water too fast.

That condition can lead to GDV, gastric dilatation-volvulus, and is more common in large and giant breed dogs. It's critical because the stomach can rotate, trapping gas inside the stomach, and threatening the dog's life. (In this instance, the dog was fortunately just suffering from "bloat.")

Most military working dogs now undergo a simple procedure where their stomachs are "pexied," or pinned to avoid GDV, Beck said.

Capt. Sean Lulofs, kennel master of the K-9 Branch, has been training dogs for over 29 years, and credits excellent veterinary care for their overall good conditioning.

Lulofs doesn't want to reveal the number of working dogs at the Arsenal, but said they are usually Belgian Malinois or German shepherds. "I also have a Dutch shepherd," he said.

All of the dogs are trained to apprehend subjects. Some also detect explosives and others also detect narcotics.

The Arsenal's working dogs perform explosive searches when VIPs visit the Arsenal, and during random antiterrorism measures, Lulofs said, adding that there is a working dog at one of Redstone's gates every day to conduct random searches.

The dogs and their handlers are also called upon to do K-9 police patrol work elsewhere in the country for the U.S. Secret Service and Department of State, including



Courtesy photo

Veterinarian Capt. Timothy Beck poses with Dixi, a German shepherd currently assigned at Air Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

some events involving the president or vice president.

The Redstone handlers and veterinarian work together to keep the dogs in top shape, because you never know who's going to need their services next.

A graduate of Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, Florida, Beck graduated from the Ohio State University School of Veterinary Medicine and "owed" the military three years of service. He did a one-year internship at a large clinic at Fort Hood, Texas, and came to the Arsenal in 2018.

The following year, he was assigned to a year at Incirlik Base in Turkey, where he treated the military working dogs. He returned to Redstone in September 2020.

At Redstone, Beck is in charge of a team of six Soldiers and three civilians at the veterinary clinic. He also travels regularly to Columbus Air Force Base in Mississippi to care for military working dogs there.

He and his wife Anna, director of communications and special projects at the Huntsville Botanical Garden, have two cats, Atlas and Hercules.

Illinois native recalls camaraderie among fighter pilots

By SKIP VAUGHN

Rocket editor

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Lee Smith had big aspirations while growing up in the small community of Harvard, Illinois, 60 miles northwest of Chicago.

“In 1962 I went to the Air Force Academy because I wanted to be a fighter pilot,” the retired Air Force colonel said.

He graduated in 1966 with a bachelor’s in engineering and then received his master’s from Purdue in 1967. He completed his pilot training at Reese Air Force Base in Lubbock, Texas, in April 1968. Next he had about a year of advanced training at McConnell Air Force Base, Kansas.

Capt. Lee Smith was 25 in 1969 when he became a combat fighter pilot with the 354th Tactical Fighter Squadron based in Takhli, Thailand. From June-December 1969, he flew 84 combat missions in the F-105D single seat fighter/bomber.

These were daytime missions over Laos, South Vietnam and North Vietnam. Normally they flew in formations of two or four F-105 Thunder Chiefs.

“It was less threatening than many others faced, particularly the F-105s that bombed Hanoi,” Smith said. His squadron of about 30 pilots was among three squadrons in the 355th Tactical Fighter Wing, so there were about 100 fighter pilots stationed at Takhli at any given time.

During Smith’s six months at war, eight pilots in his squadron were killed in action.

Smith, who resides in Madison, said he did not get shot down or injured but did have two significant emergency landings. He said he most remembers “the camaraderie with the other fighter pilots.”

He received five Air Medals. After Thailand he returned to Reese Air Force Base, where he had received his pilot training, and became a T-38 Talon instructor pilot.

Smith went on to serve 26 years in the Air Force. He retired in 1992 at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, where he was assigned to the Joint Air Defense Operations/Joint Engagement Zone. He served as the test director for an Army, Air Force and Navy test of combat identification.

“I thought it was fantastic,” he said of his Air Force career. “I enjoyed the people, I enjoyed the work and I enjoyed traveling all over the world. But most of all I enjoyed the opportunity to fly fighter and attack aircraft. My favorites were the F-105 Thud and the A-10 Warthog.”

His assignments included Osan Air Base, Korea; Royal Air Force Woodbridge, England; Norvenich Air Base, Germany; and Kelley Barracks in Stuttgart, Germany. After retiring at Eglin Air Force Base, he worked in the defense industry. He came



Courtesy photo

Retired Air Force Col. Lee Smith and his wife, Janet, reside in Madison.

Vietnam revisited Part 322 in series

to Huntsville in 1993 to work for Raytheon Company and he retired in 2010 as a Raytheon program manager supporting the Space and Missile Defense Command.

When he and his wife arrived from Florida in 1993, he said, they expected to leave after three years.

“And that was 28 years ago and we haven’t left yet. Love it,” he said. “I enjoy the community, the positive community support toward the military and the military industrial complex. And I enjoy the church community that I’m a part of.”

He and his wife, Janet, celebrated their 53rd anniversary in May. They have two daughters – Elizabeth Williams of Grapevine, Texas, and Janell Zesinger of Madison – and five grandchildren. Two of their grandchildren are in Texas and three in Madison.

Smith, 77, has served as a volunteer tax preparer with the Redstone Tax Center the past 11 years. For the past seven years, he has also volunteered with AARP tax services in Huntsville.

For the past six years, he has volunteered as a military tour guide at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center. He is a member of the Air Force Association and he attends the Messiah Lutheran Church in Madison.

His younger brother, Barry, 74, of Portland, Oregon, is a Navy veteran who served on an aircraft carrier in the Gulf of Tonkin in 1968-70.

Smith shared his thoughts on this nation’s commemoration of 50 years since the Vietnam War.

“The current recognition for all the Soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen who fought and support-



Courtesy photo

In 1969 Capt. Lee Smith was a combat fighter pilot with the 354th Tactical Fighter Squadron based in Takhli, Thailand.



Courtesy photo

In 1987 Col. Lee Smith was stationed at Kelley Barracks in Stuttgart, Germany.

ed that conflict is very appreciated,” he said. “It is particularly appreciated by those of us who lived through that time in our history.”

Editor’s note: This is the 322nd in a series of articles about Vietnam veterans as the United States commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War.

St. John Paul II alums attending U.S. Military Academy

By **JONATHAN STINSON**

Assistant editor

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One local high school has eight students attending the U.S. Military Academy.

“These eight students are from three St. John Paul II Catholic High School graduating classes of 2017, 2019 and 2020,” Sharon Wieter, director of strategic communications for the school, said. “This is quite an accomplishment as the class sizes were: 108, 79 and 101 respectively.”

The students are: Dianna Boyer, Bridget Cianfaglione, John Boyer, Gerard McCarron, Gerald Moore, Seth Brown, Matthew Sauter and Adler Brininger.

“Each of these young men and women embraced the core JP II values of Learn Enthusiastically, Lead Honorably and Live Responsibly,” Headmaster Jeremiah Russell said. “They are a reflection of the strong foundation given them through their faith, service to others, and academic commitment to excellence. Many of them have parents or relatives who served or are serving. It has been a pleasure to watch them continue their journey to be who God is calling them to be.”

During their time at the school all of the students were actively involved in school clubs, organizations and sports, according to Wieter.

“In addition to being competitive athletes, many were team captains and several went on to win at the state level, both as a team member and individually,” she said. “All were members of the JP II National Honor Society and other honor societies while at JP II.”

Each senior at the school is required



Courtesy photo

Eight former students from St. John Paul II Catholic High School are attending the U.S. Military Academy. From left, first row, are Dianna Boyer and Bridget Cianfaglione; second row, John Boyer, Gerard McCarron, Gerald Moore, Seth Brown, Matthew Sauter and Adler Brininger.

to perform 100 hours of community service and, for example, the class of 2021 spent more than 11,000 serving others in Huntsville and Madison County, according to Wieter. The 89-student Class of 2021 also was offered more than \$11.8 million in scholarships.

Since 2002, the school has had 24 students attend military academies with the U.S. Military Academy leading the way with 15 students attending West Point.

Memorial Day reminder of sacrifices made for freedom

By KARI HAWKINS
Army Materiel Command Public Affairs

Reminders of past Memorial Day ceremonies were present among the veterans, service members, community leaders and attendees who came together Monday to rekindle Huntsville's longstanding tradition of honoring the nation's fallen on its most solemn holiday.

About 300 patriots attended the Huntsville Memorial Day Ceremony at the Huntsville/Madison County Veterans Memorial Park, a ceremony that was canceled last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As in years past, the ceremony was marked by the placing of wreaths at the memorial representing the community's Gold Star families, the City of Huntsville, the North Alabama Veterans and Fraternal Organizations Coalition, and more than 30 military and veterans groups.

"While Memorial Day may still look different as we continue to grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic, one thing that remains the same are the memories and emotions that go along with this remembrance each year," Redstone Senior Commander Lt. Gen. Donnie Walker said.

"This day is a reminder that we have within our community, our state and our nation, families who live each day with the painful reminder of a life cut short so each of us can live long in freedom."

Walker shared the podium with Huntsville Mayor Tommy Battle at a memorial that honors and respects its fallen heroes as well as its veterans and service members.

The memorial represents the struggle for freedom that defines the nation, Battle said, from the Revolutionary War of almost 250 years ago to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Freedom does reign in our nation and the walls of this memorial point out those who have fought, who have died, who have

served this great country," Battle said. "As we memorialize those who have served and those who have died, these walls are a reminder of the people who have made us a better nation."

Walker said the memorial and the fallen heroes whose names are etched in its walls are symbols of military values and service, and the sacrifices made for freedom and liberty.

"Of all the military values these fallen heroes displayed, their sacrifice is the ultimate and truest form of selfless service," he said. "Whether they were drafted or volunteered at a time of war, their commitment to serving our nation defined their lives and deserves our deepest appreciation. This monument is a witness to their duty, courage and sacrifice."

But his comments were especially directed to the families of fallen heroes who were in the audience.

"For the families of fallen service members, the military values of honor and personal courage have hit hard in their homes," he said. "This Memorial Day, like all others before and after, brings to the forefront the loss that they endure every day. Their courage and grace is inspiring to all of us."

While Memorial Day is a traditional holiday for remembering the nation's military heroes, it is also a day to honor the nation's military heritage, military values and those serving in uniform today as well as the nation's patriotism, Walker said.

"In this community and state, patriotism runs deep," he said.

"You can hear patriotism in the words of our elected and community leaders who pledge their support to the military missions of Redstone Arsenal and the state's other military installations. You can see patriotism in the everyday acts of kindness extended to the military families, service members and



Photo by Megan Cotton Gully

The Gold Star wreath is carried to its place of honor during the Huntsville Memorial Day Ceremony at the Huntsville/Madison County Veterans Memorial by Medal of Honor recipient and retired Capt. Mike Rose and Redstone Senior Commander Lt. Gen. Donnie Walker. Walking with them are, Gold Star mothers, from left, Lydia Scott and Annette Hall. A member of the Young Marines escorts the group.

the nearly 400,000 veterans who call Alabama home. And you can feel patriotism in the way this community honors its fallen – and their families."

More than 1.1 million U.S. men and women have died in war throughout the nation's history. Each of the nation's fallen heroes represent a military story of duty, courage and sacrifice, he added, with some of the stories known and many others left untold.

"But how each of us responds to these fallen heroes says much about the traditions we hold dear," he said. "I hope each of you, today and every day, live in respect of the memories of those who gave the greatest gift

of all – their life for ours, their life for our nation, their life for our flag and the freedom it symbolizes."

While the nation is one of many differences, Walker said Americans are bound together and unified by love of country.

"That goes to the heart of what it means to be an American," he said. "As we honor this Memorial Day, I hope the link we have in the loss of our fallen heroes reminds us all how important it is to stand up for liberty and freedom. Today is a reminder of the true cost of war and a reminder to honor those who died while answering the call to serve our great nation."

Madison honors those who proudly wore the uniform

By EMILY STRICKLAND
Staff writer
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The late morning sun shone brightly on the City of Madison Wall of Heroes during the Madison City Memorial Day Ceremony Monday.

Dozens of Madison residents attended the observance, which took place at 11 a.m. at Madison Veterans Memorial Park and was facilitated by American Legion Post 229.

See Madison on page 32

Photo by Eric Schultz

Members of American Legion Post 229 stand at attention during the Memorial Day Ceremony.



Madison

Continued from page 31

“Today, we honor every man and woman who proudly wore the uniform



Photo by Eric Schultz

The colors are presented by Bob Jones High School Air Force JROTC.

of our armed forces and bravely defended America,” Lt. Gen. L. Neil Thurgood said. “Whether serving here at home or abroad, this elite group of individuals has ensured that you and I are able to live our daily lives free of tyranny and fear.”

Thurgood, the Director of Hypersonics, Directed Energy, Space and Rapid Acquisition who oversees the Army Rapid Capabilities and Critical Technologies Office, spoke in honor of those who died in service and reminded the crowd why it is important to observe Memorial Day.

“This is a day to cherish their memory and to celebrate the courage and the deeds of all veterans who have served the nation,” he said. “They have rightfully earned our gratitude, our respect and a place of honor among us. And we will work to instill and keep their honor, for that is how honor is kept.”

Thurgood was joined by U.S. Rep. Mo Brooks and Madison Mayor Paul Finley, who each shared remarks and honored the ultimate sacrifice made by those who gave their lives in service in the military.



Photo by Eric Schultz

A member of the American Legion Post 229 honor guard plays Taps.

Members of the Bob Jones High School Air Force JROTC presented the colors at the beginning of the ceremony and also raised the colors at noon in accordance with the U.S. flag code, which instructs that the American flag is to be flown at half-mast from dawn on Memorial Day until it is raised to full-mast at noon. The St. John Paul II High School band performed “God Bless America” and “In the Mood,” and Girl Scout Troop 926 and Boy Scout Troop 201 assisted in posting wreaths on the monument.

The event was a solemn reminder of



Photo by Eric Schultz

Lt. Gen. L. Neil Thurgood speaks during the Memorial Day Ceremony.

the many sacrifices made by U.S. military service members throughout the nation’s nearly 250-year history.

“The harsh reality of war, and military service in general, is that not everyone will make it home,” Thurgood reminded the crowd. “Let us honor the memory of heroes no longer with us. And let us strive to live up to the example set by such selfless patriots each and every day. Your presence here shows you acknowledge and appreciate the great sacrifices our military men and women have made for generations to come, ensuring freedom endures.”

Endangered species share land on Redstone Arsenal

By EMILY STRICKLAND

Staff writer

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Alabama is one of the most biodiverse states in the U.S., and the nearly 40,000 acres of land encompassed by Redstone Arsenal are no exception to that. However, Endangered Species Day, observed on May 21, shed some light on a few of the plants and animals that may not be around forever.

Currently, a handful of endangered and threatened species reside within the gates of Redstone Arsenal. Endangered species include the Alabama cave shrimp, the Indiana bat and the gray bat, while the northern long-eared bat and Price's potato bean are currently threatened.

Christine Easterwood has been an ecologist with the Garrison Environmental Management Division for 11 years. Her primary role is to track the populations of endangered and threatened species that live on the Arsenal and ensure that installation activities and missions of the Army's tenant organizations do not put those populations at risk of harm.

If a mission cannot be completed without posing a risk to an endangered or threatened species, Easterwood coordinates with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to work out the best path forward, ensuring that organizations on the installations can meet their goals while preserving the natural environment as much as possible.

Endangered species, Easterwood said, are at the highest risk for becoming extinct. "They may be more sensitive to changes in the environment, either from humans or pollution or contaminated groundwater."

Threatened species are "one step down" from endangered, she said. "They're not critically in danger, but if the pattern continues, making them more rare or sensitive, then they may be headed towards becoming endangered, with a higher risk of extinction."

Identifying and monitoring the abundant wildlife on Redstone Arsenal takes cooperation from many different organizations. Easterwood's office works with Auburn University and other state and federal agencies to survey the land every few years or so and get an understanding of what baseline populations exist on the Arsenal. In some cases, like that of the Indiana bat, the survey does not necessarily chronicle the exact size of the population, but rather highlights the areas on the installation that would serve as a suitable habitat for the animal.

"The thing about managing is trying to keep the landscape in the best condition it can be to support the animal or the plant," Easterwood said.

This management differs greatly by species. For example, the Alabama cave shrimp, which has only been found in Madison and Jackson counties, is present in one cave on Redstone Arsenal. Because of their subterranean habitat, Alabama cave shrimp are vulnerable to groundwater contamination; therefore, any organization performing an activity that may affect the groundwater quality must take proper precautions to ensure that their activity is not posing an unnecessary risk to the species. Groundwater protection precautions are usually included in best management practices for normal construction work, since they prevent erosion and groundwater sedimentation. In this instance, these practices serve an additional purpose because they protect the Arsenal's Alabama cave shrimp population.

The three endangered/threatened bat species on Redstone Arsenal provide another example. While many people associate bats with caves, Easterwood said that bat activity in wooded areas is more of a concern on the installation. Many species of bats hibernate in caves during the winter but live in forest "maternity colonies" where they raise their young during the warmer months. To protect these populations, time-of-year restrictions have been placed on tree cutting.

On an individual level, Easterwood encourages visitors to be good stewards of the land on Redstone Arsenal.

"If you're out here hiking or biking, try to keep your footprint restrained," she said. "Try to stay on trail." Easterwood also asks that visitors take personal responsibility and refrain from littering.



Christine Easterwood



Photo by Dave Deiber

Courtesy photo

An Alabama cave shrimp is photographed beside a penny to show the size of the creature.

Volunteers invited to help preserve Path to Nature

By REBECCA SALLEE

Staff writer

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More time at home during the pandemic allowed many of us to pay extra attention to our outdoor spaces, but the ecologist at Redstone Arsenal had the opposite problem – and she’s hoping volunteers can help turn things around.

Teleworking allowed Christine Easterwood to cover her office duties, but prohibited her from tending to one of her favorite projects, the Path to Nature on the Arsenal’s south side near the Col. Carroll D. Hudson Recreational Area.

Built in 1995 and funded by the DOD Legacy Resource Management Program, the 72-acre nature observatory is visited during a typical year by hundreds of area school children.

The Path to Nature is literally just that, with one path leading to a tupelo wetlands area, and another leading to a deck that overlooks a pond. Permanent “ecological concept signs” along the way educate students about the abundant flora and fauna teeming at the area.

The grounds also feature picnic tables, bathrooms, and a covered outdoor classroom with electrical outlets and workstations for students.

Even before the classroom was built and the path was named, Huntsville City Schools introduced students to the wetlands on field trips through EARTHSCOPE, its environmental education program.

The following year, the Legacy program funded the design and construction of a “watchable wildlife site” in the area with an interpretive trail.

Construction was funded by the Army Community of Excellence and the Garrison, Easterwood said.

The Path to Nature opened to Huntsville city and Madison and Madison County schools in 1995.

On the path, students “wind their way through pristine tupelo gum swamps, lush bottomland forest and scrub and shrub swamps,” Easterwood said.

The area is home to numerous species of animals, including beavers, deer, wood ducks, great blue herons, barred owls, great horned owls, osprey, warblers, and many other birds.

On a recent visit to the Path to Nature, she spotted a slider turtle that appeared to be nesting, multiple rabbits, and a piliated woodpecker, on or near the wetlands.

Wood ducks frequent the wetlands during nesting season and often make use of artificial nest boxes, Easter-



Photo by Eric Schultz

Christine Easterwood, ecologist for the Garrison, holds a Pond Slider turtle found on the Path to Nature.

wood said. “When they grow big enough, the babies bail out, fall to the water and start swimming.”

The emergent wetland and pond on the grounds “is a great place to see herons,” she said. “Bird lovers love to come down here and enjoy the diverse array of species.”

Earth Day is usually the biggest day of the year at the Path to Nature, but April 22 events were canceled in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic.

Easterwood hopes by the time Earth Day 2022 rolls around, the area will have once again reached its potential.

It is showing some wear and tear, especially after a year in which it was given little attention.

The boardwalk that led to the tupelo wetlands recently had to be demolished because the rise and fall of the water compromised it structurally and made it unsafe, Easterwood said.

There is currently no sustainable funding available for maintenance of the property. “Just to clean up what we’ve got would be really invigorating,” Easterwood said.

While the grounds have been mowed regularly during the pandemic, other maintenance issues were ignored.



Photo by Eric Schultz

This is the outdoor classroom at the Path to Nature.

Easterwood has tried to manage the overgrowth of privet and other invasive species along the path, and weeds in wooden plant containers, but Mother Nature is winning the battle.

Handmade flower boxes that once beckoned bees and butterflies are now dominated by clover and other weeds.

Opportunity is knocking for volunteers, either individuals or groups, to help improve the Path to Nature in time to welcome visitors this summer, and students back in the fall.

Volunteers can plant flowers, weed gardens, put up bird houses, clear the paths of debris, and the list goes on, Easterwood said, emphasizing that all planting and other work must be approved through her office.

Easterwood came to the Arsenal in 2007 after earning her master’s in wildlife biology at Auburn University.

She and her husband, Jud, a supervisory wildlife biologist for the state of Alabama, have three children, Leah, 9, Grayson, 7, and Bryce, 5.

Anyone interested in volunteering at the Path to Nature is encouraged to call Easterwood at 842-8697, or email her at christine.f.easterwood.civ@mail.mil.



Courtesy photos

Best yards in housing

Yards of the Month contest winners for May were 484 Cooke Drive and 527B Magnolia Circle, according to Hunt Military Communities. They thank everyone for participating and look forward to doing this again in June.

Federal

Marshall research team soars to success in microgravity

By TAYLOR GOODWIN

NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center

No force – including gravity – could hold a team of NASA researchers down in their quest for a scientific breakthrough to benefit life on Earth and in space.

Scientists from Marshall Space Flight Center completed two parabolic flights April 28-29 to test modifications to a payload called the ring-sheared drop.

"This demonstration proved that the modified hardware is capable of deploying and pinning each of the protein solutions that will be used in an experiment using the ring-sheared drop hardware on the International Space Station," Louise Strutzenberg, co-investigator on the ring-sheared drop parabolic re-flight experiment, said. "The lessons learned will prepare us to take the next steps before resuming testing on the space station."

The team flew out of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, on Zero Gravity Corporation's modified Boeing 727 aircraft, which achieves periods of variable gravity through a series of maneuvers called parabolas. The plane, called G-Force One, completed 30 parabolas each day – enabling the teams to tend to their experiment in weightlessness for 22-second intervals.

Developed by Marshall and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute of Troy, New York, the experiment studies the formation of potentially destructive amyloid fibrils, or protein clusters, like those found in the brain tissue of patients battling neurodegenerative diseases – such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

Such illnesses damage neurons, the drivers of the human nervous system, which chemically control information processing necessary for the mind and body to operate. The accumulation of these amyloid fibrils refuse to dissolve the way most proteins do. Instead, they build up over time until disrupting the healthy function of tissues and organs – which can be debilitating, or in some cases, fatal.

In Earth-based experiments, researchers determined that amyloid fibrils may be created by shear flow, or the difference of flow velocity between adjacent layers of a liquid. In grounded experimentation, that formation is affected by the shape of experiment containers and by heat convection – the tendency of hotter, less dense material to rise in fluid and colder, denser material to sink due to gravity.

However, conducting the experiment in microgravity eliminates heat convection and allows liquids to form in spherical drops, eliminating the need for a container. In these weightless conditions, researchers can "pin" a droplet of liquid between two rings and cultivate amyloid fibrils for study.

The ring-sheared drop payload initially launched to the International Space Station in 2019, but the hardware needed modifications to achieve the desired results. Since then, the Marshall team has been working to improve the efficacy of the experiment by making necessary adjustments before attempting more orbital deployments.

The team began with two parabolic flights in November 2020, which allowed them to test several possible improvements to the payload. After flight, the team had approximately five months to implement lessons learned and prepare for the next flight opportunity in April.

In April's parabolic flight campaign, the test apparatus consisted of a syringe that holds solution to be dispensed, the newly modified cage-tip tube capable of dispensing a stable liquid drop, and a motor that is activated to drive the piston in the syringe to dispense the liquid. During flight, video cameras were in position to capture the behavior of the fluid droplet as it was dispensed.

"Being weightless is truly an indescribable experience," Marshall materials science engineer Gabriel Demeneghi said. "It is even more exciting to be in microgravity to make strides on a project that you're passionate about."

On day one of flight, the team pinned two out of three protein solutions. Due to a power supply issue, the team's high-speed camera was unable to capture the pinning. However, a backup camera captured the majority of in-flight operations. Once their feet were firmly on the ground, the scientists were able to review video footage, correct the power supply, and modify operations to increase efficiency.

On the second day, the team pinned one-inch drops of all four flight fluids – gathering all necessary footage and data to analyze on the ground. In addition, they successfully pinned one-inch drops of two pre-sheared test solutions that the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute team prepared in pre-flight activities.

NASA's Flight Opportunities program, within the Space Technology Mission Directorate, makes these experiment flights possible, facilitating rapid demonstration of promising technologies for space exploration, discovery, and results to benefit life on Earth.

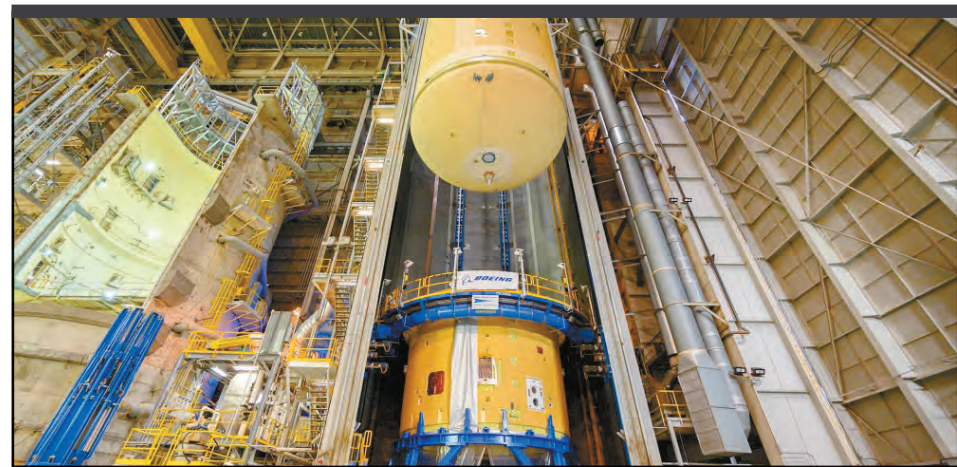
The ring-sheared drop hardware is sponsored by NASA's Biological and Physical Sciences, part of the agency's Science Mission Directorate. The payload is scheduled to launch to the space station this summer from NASA's Wallops Flight Facility on Northrop Grumman's 16th Commercial Resupply Services mission.

Editor's note: Taylor Goodwin, a Media Fusion employee, supports Marshall's Office of Strategic Analysis & Communications.



ZERO-G photo by Steve Boxall

Marshall's ring-sheared drop team tests their payload in weightlessness on Zero Gravity Corporation's G-Force One aircraft. Each team member is at least partially vaccinated and was tested for COVID-19 each morning before entering flight facilities.



NASA photo

Core stages unite

Technicians at NASA's Michoud Assembly Facility stacked two of three hardware elements for NASA's Space Launch System rocket April 28. Crews connected the liquid oxygen tank flight hardware with the intertank. Later, they will add the forward skirt to form the upper portion of the core stage that will help power Artemis II, the first crewed mission of NASA's Artemis program and second flight of the SLS rocket. Crews moved the intertank to the assembly and stacking area in March, and then moved the liquid oxygen tank to the same area. The joining of the three structures together is the first major assembly of hardware for the Artemis II core stage. When completed, the upper part of the stage will stand 66 feet tall – just a fraction of the entire core stage. The fully-assembled, 212-foot-tall rocket stage consists of five hardware elements.

Bilbrey becomes deputy director of safety at Marshall

By NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center

Julie Bilbrey has been named deputy director of the Safety and Mission Assurance Directorate at Marshall Space Flight Center, pending approval by the Office of Personnel Management. Bilbrey will be jointly responsible for planning and directing the center's safety, reliability, and quality engineering and assurance operations.

Bilbrey's new position is part of the Senior Executive Service – the personnel system covering top managerial posi-

tions in federal agencies.

Since 2009, Bilbrey has held multiple leadership positions in the directorate, including chief of the Program Analysis and Systems Integration Branch, manager of the Mission Systems Assurance and Technical Support Department and, currently, manager of the Vehicle Systems Department. She recently completed a temporary assignment as acting deputy manager of Marshall's Science and Technology Office.

In 2005, Bilbrey was named associate manager of the Science & Mission

Systems Office, where she also held the position of chief operating officer of the National Space Science and Technology Center. The previous two years, she was technical assistant to the director of the Space Systems Programs/Projects Office. In 2003, Bilbrey was an International Space Station payload operations director, where she managed and directed both mission preparation and real-time space station payload operations.

From 1998-2002, Bilbrey was lead of the Flight Training Integration Team, Training and Crew Operations Group,

within the Flight Projects Directorate. She joined Marshall in 1987 and spent the first 11 years of her career in Spacelab mission operations, where she trained payload flight crews and ground support personnel while serving in various flight controller positions.

Bilbrey holds a bachelor's in industrial and systems engineering from Georgia Tech. She has received numerous awards, including a Silver Snoopy, Space Flight Awareness Honoree award, NASA Outstanding Leadership Medal, and two Center Director's Commendations.

Sports

Burgess enjoys one of her best nights for gray team

By SKIP VAUGHN

Rocket editor

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Ann Burgess showed she's got game like her youngest sister. Burgess, whose baby sister Linda Burgess played in the WNBA, had a stellar night in senior softball May 24.

She had three hits and made two putouts at catcher as the gray team beat royal blue 15-9 on field 2 at Brahan Spring Park. They play in the 55-and-over Rockets league in Huntsville Senior Softball.

Burgess, 59, went 3-for-3 with a walk, one run batted in and scored two runs. She caught two foul popups behind the plate to strand runners on first and third in the third inning.

"Lovely. I enjoyed it. It's one of my best," she said. "Don't get to play often because I work at the Von Braun Center. And every opportunity I get I come out and play."

Linda Burgess, 51, the youngest of the five sisters, starred at Bob Jones High School and the University of Alabama before playing for the Los Angeles Sparks and Sacramento Monarchs in the Women's National Basketball Association. In her 90 games in the WNBA, she averaged 5.8 points and 3.7 rebounds. The 6-foot-1 forward retired from professional basketball in 2001 and resides in Macon, Georgia. She was inducted in the Huntsville-Madison County Athletic Hall of Fame in 2019.

Player/coach Sam Sepulveda, David Koch and Ron Baer had four hits apiece for gray (7-5). David Key had three hits. Ken Valine and pitcher Michael Gundersen added two hits apiece. Gundersen, a left-hander, pitched all seven innings for the win.

Gray committed five errors but they made plays when needed to strand baserunners, including Burgess' two catches in the third with two on and one out.

"Honestly it was good defense and our battings were solid. They weren't great but they were solid," Sepulveda, who played shortstop and batted leadoff, said.

Darnell Ford had three hits with an RBI double and scored three runs for royal blue (6-6). Jorge Marin, Mark Wilbourn, pitcher Pete Mitchell and Yogi Guess had two hits apiece. Mitchell took the loss.

"We hit the ball to them," royal blue player/coach Bob Thomson said.



Photo by Skip Vaughn

Ann Burgess gets three hits and scores twice as gray beats royal blue 15-9.

David McNeill	4	0	0	0
Steve Bishop	4	1	1	0
Ann Burgess	3	2	3	1
Ken Valine	4	1	2	1
Bill Santi	4	1	1	0
Michael Gundersen	4	3	2	1
Totals	43	15	24	14

Pitching

	IP	AB	H	R	ER
Michael Gundersen (won)	7	39	14	9	9

	R	H	E
Royal blue	0	0	1
Gray	2	4	5

Royal blue (6-6)

	AB	R	H	RBI
Jorge Marin	3	2	2	2
Mark Wilbourn	4	0	2	3
Mike Keyser	4	0	1	2
Jerry Bevel	4	0	0	0
Stan Sillivant	4	0	1	0
Pete Mitchell	4	1	2	0
Bob Thomson	4	0	0	0
Brian Yarger	4	1	1	0
Yogi Guess	4	2	2	1
Darnell Ford	4	3	3	1
Totals	39	9	14	9

Pitching

	IP	AB	H	R	ER
Pete Mitchell (loss)	6	43	24	15	11

Gray (7-5)

	AB	R	H	RBI
Sam Sepulveda	5	3	4	1
David Koch	5	3	4	4
Ron Baer	5	1	4	4
David Key	5	0	3	2

Senior softball league standings

Here are the standings for the 55-and-over Rockets league in Huntsville Senior Softball which plays Monday and Thursday evenings at fields 2 and 1 in Brahan Spring Park:

	Won	Loss
Navy blue	8	4
Maroon	7	5
Gray	7	6
Royal blue	7	6
Red	6	6
Green	2	10

Moto powers maroon in clutch against green

By SKIP VAUGHN

Rocket editor

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With men on second and third and two outs in the third inning, the green team intentionally walked maroon slugger Scott Landers to take their chances with Moto Miller.

Miller made them pay.

His grand slam helped power maroon to a 22-21 win Thursday on field 2 at Brahan Spring Park. They play in the 55-and-over Rockets league in Huntsville Senior Softball.

“Just relaxed and stayed within myself,” Miller, the maroon catcher, said. “And on the grand slam, I wanted to protect my teammate who they just walked.”

Landers had slugged a two-run homer in the first and singled and scored in the second for maroon (7-5). So green gave him an intentional pass in the third.

Miller described his thoughts as he approached the plate with the bases loaded, two outs and his team trailing 12-8.

“I’m just waiting for my pitch,” he said. “I’m being patient and waiting for my pitch I know I could hit hard.”

With a 2-1 count, he blasted the next pitch over the left field fence.

“My favorite pitch is the next one,” Miller said.

He went 4-for-4 with six runs batted in and four runs scored. Two of his six home runs are grand slams. Miller also caught a popup for the first out in the top of the fifth inning.

Player/coach Chris Maggio hit a three-run homer and went 4-for-4 with six RBIs and two runs scored. Mark Hoffman was 4-for-4 with two doubles, one RBI and two runs. Landers went 3-for-3 with his two-run homer, two doubles and four runs. Mike Keyser added three hits with a two-run triple. Dennis Brasher and Larry Guthrie added two hits apiece.

Maggio pitched all seven innings for the win as the maroon took their third straight.

“Everybody hit,” Maggio said. “We all contributed. It’s our second close game in a row (with the 21-20 win over navy blue May 24).”

Terry Koelbl went 5-for-5 with a double, two RBIs and three runs for green (2-10). Robert Tolliver and Jeff Crews had four hits apiece. Yogi Guess and Ron Baer had three hits apiece. Ruthie Hambrick, Ragnar Opiniano and Tom Fickling added two hits apiece. Player/coach Billy Cooley took the loss in the circle.

“Chris (Maggio) was a tough pitcher,” Cooley said. “He stopped us one run short.”

Green (2-10)

	AB	R	H	RBI
Ruthie Hambrick	5	2	2	3
Terry Koelbl	5	3	5	2
Robert Tolliver	5	2	4	3
Ragnar Opiniano	5	2	2	1
Tom Fickling	5	2	2	3
Billy Cooley	4	1	1	0
Jeff Crews	5	3	4	2
Shawn Gordon	2	1	1	1
Mike Panko	1	0	0	0
Yogi Guess	4	3	3	1
Ron Baer	4	2	3	1
Totals	45	21	27	17



Photo by Skip Vaughn

Maroon catcher Moto Miller hit a grand slam and caught a popup in the 22-21 win over green.

Pitching

	IP	AB	H	R	ER
Billy Cooley (loss)	6	38	26	22	21

Maroon (7-5)

	AB	R	H	RBI
Tim Lawter	3	2	2	1
Scott Landers	3	4	3	2
Moto Miller	4	4	4	6
Mark Hoffman	4	2	4	1
Chris Maggio	4	2	4	6
Dennis Brasher	4	2	2	0
Bill Santi	4	1	1	1
Mike Keyser	4	2	3	2
Larry Guthrie	4	2	2	1
David Key	4	1	1	1
Totals	38	22	26	21

Pitching

	IP	AB	H	R	ER
Chris Maggio (won)	7	45	27	21	18

		R	H	E
Green	2 5 5 0 1 3 5 --	21	27	1
Maroon	3 4 5 5 5 0 x --	22	26	6

Rocket City Trash Pandas salute military community

Photos by ERIC SCHULTZ

Staff photographer

This was a home run for the community as the Rocket City Trash Pandas held Military Appreciation Night on Thursday at Toyota Field in Madison. The Trash Pandas, Double-A affiliate of the Los Angeles Angels, lost 3-2 to the Birmingham Barons.



Heather Pierce, of Madison, cheers for the Trash Pandas as Still Serving Veterans sponsored the Rocket City Trash Pandas Military Appreciation Night at Toyota Field. Pierce is wearing the cap of her grandfather and Vietnam veteran Sgt. James Robinson. He served with the 101st Airborne in Vietnam.



From left are Lt. Col. Jonathan Hathaway, assistant program manager at Rapid Capabilities and Critical Technologies Office; Trash Pandas mascot Sprocket; and Lt. Gen. L. Neil Thurgood, director of Hypersonics, Directed Energy, Space and Rapid Acquisition.

Gen. Ed Daly, commander of the Army Materiel Command, throws out the ceremonial first pitch virtually on the scoreboard at Toyota Field.



Jamie Viney, 4, gives Lt. Gen. L. Neil Thurgood a high-five in the stands. Thurgood, director of Hypersonics, Directed Energy, Space and Rapid Acquisition, gave opening remarks at Thursday's event.



Luke Hendrix, 5, shows his patriotism at the game.

Keep pushing to take the checkered flag

I'm a year-round sports fan. But when it comes to car racing, I have a confession to make.

I don't like motorsports. If it's on television, I'll turn the channel. I've just never been attracted to racing that doesn't involve running.

But it's a sport and the world revolves around athletics, right? There's beauty in competition of every kind as far as I'm concerned.

There are also lessons from sports that can be applied to everyday life. I found a tidbit from motorsports history that takes the checkered flag as a teachable moment.

On May 26, 2013, Tony Kanaan ended years of frustration by finally winning the Indianapolis 500. Kanaan drove past Ryan Hunter-Reay on a restart with three laps to go, then coasted across the finish line under yellow when defending race winner Dario Franchitti crashed far back in the field.

The Brazilian finished second in 2004 and twice finished third. He finally reached his goal at Indy.

The moral of this story is never give up. Don't ever give up.

From the sidelines

By Skip Vaughn
Rocket editor

Your glory days in sports

By SKIP VAUGHN

Rocket editor

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What is the highlight of your athletic endeavors?

"I played college baseball (at the U.S. Military Academy from 1992-95)," Col. Greg Fortier, the project manager for Future Attack Recon Aircraft under the Program Executive Office for Aviation, said. "On April 2, 1994, that was my 20th birthday and we went to Annapolis to play Navy. We went there and beat them (10-4) on my 20th birthday. And it was what we called a Star game so you get to put a gold star on your varsity letter. It was a total team effort. I played second base and I went 2-for-4 with one extra base hit (a double). I played the whole game. It was great because my family was able to drive down to watch me play. They drove down from Connecticut. It's obviously one of the best memories of my four years at West Point for sure."

Fortier, 47, from Terryville, Connecticut, has served in the Army 25 years. He arrived at Redstone in June 2017 from Washington, D.C. He had a tour in Afghanistan (2002-03) and a tour in Iraq (2004-05), both with the 82nd Airborne Division. The Madison resident and his wife of 16 years, Angela, an attorney with the Army Materiel Command Legal Center, have two daughters, Grace, 13, and Faith, 11. Fortier likes to run and play golf. He roots for the New York Yankees, the New York Giants, the Florida State Seminoles and the Army Black Knights.



Photo by Skip Vaughn

Col. Greg Fortier, of the Program Executive Office for Aviation, enjoys a golf outing at the Links. He played baseball for the U.S. Military Academy from 1992-95.

Sports & Recreation

Senior softball league

More players are needed for the 55-and-over Rockets league in Huntsville Senior Softball. Games are Monday and Thursday evenings on fields 2 and 1 at Brahan Spring Park. The six teams include navy blue, gray, royal blue, maroon, red and green. Email league director Chris Maggio at cmaggio51@aol.com.

High school football officials

The North Alabama Football Officials Association are a group of officials that serve North Alabama. They currently contract to high schools in Huntsville, Madison, Madison County, Limestone County and Jackson County. If you are interested in becoming a referee today, visit <https://nafoa.net>.

Conferences & Meetings

Sergeants major association

The Sergeants Major Association is still meeting every third Thursday of the month at 11:30 a.m. They are not meeting at a physical location because of the pandemic but they are meeting virtually through Zoom. Attendees must download the Zoom app on either their home computer, laptop or mobile device to participate. Once you get into the Zoom app, you will see Meeting ID number. Type in 710 211-4188. Then you will see the "Join meeting" button. If you have problems getting into Zoom, call retired Sgt. Maj. Willene Orr 410-533-2685.

Warrant officer association

The Redstone Arsenal Warrant Officers Association meets on the second Wednesday of each month from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. via zoom. For more information, call Keith

Langewisch 604-9250.

West Point chapter

Do you know there is a West Point chapter in the Huntsville area? They do several chapter activities throughout the year to include cheering on Army to victory during sporting events and their annual Founder's Day celebration. For more information about the chapter activities and to learn how you can be a part of this organization, visit the chapter website at <https://sallyport.westpointaog.org/topics/11179/memberships>. For more information or assistance, email Dale McDonough at dmac550@gmail.com.

Business/government expo

The Business to Government Contracting Expo is Oct. 27-28 at the Von Braun Center in Huntsville. Free expo tickets are available for DOD/CAC holders. This event should interest primes, 8As, government agencies, military directorates and also buyers, sellers and small and large business. For information call Phil Kiver (509) 999-8645 or email pkiver@contractready.org.

Veterans of foreign wars

VFW Gentry-Isom 2702 meets the third Saturday of each month at 10 a.m. in its post home on the corner of Sparkman Drive and 2900 North Memorial Parkway. For more information, call Bobby Lee Jr. (931) 265-5685 or email bobbyleejr01@gmail.com.

Korean War veterans luncheon

Legacy 4 Korean War Veterans Foundation will hold its 15th annual luncheon honoring the Korean War veterans June 24 from 11 to 1 p.m. at The Summit. The guest speaker is Gen. Ed Daly, commander of the Army Materiel Command. This event is by invitation only. If interested in attending, email KC Bertling at KCBertling@yahoo.com or visit www.legacy4koreanwarveterans.org and send a message.

Rocket Announcements

Scholarship benefit banquet

Huntsville Bible College will hold its 28th annual Vision Banquet, Friday at 7 p.m. virtually via Facebook, on YouTube and at www.hbcl.edu. Funds from this event will be used to provide scholarships for the fully accredited college and to pay for the college's operating costs. The guest speaker is Rev. Reginald Calvert of the New Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church, Birmingham. For more information, call the college at 469-7536.

Lions Club chapter

The Madison Area Family Lions Club is a newly formed chapter that carries out the mission and vision of Lions Club International. They are a group of volunteers with active roles in serving the needs of Madison and surrounding areas. For membership information, email madisonlionsclub@gmail.com.

Marine Corps league

The Brandon-Wilbourn Marine Corps League Detachment 820 conducts a monthly meeting every second Saturday of the month at noon at the American Legion Post 237, 2900 Drake Ave. The detachment is open to all active, retired and former Marines. The league is a veterans/military service organization formed to promote the interest of the Marine Corps and preserve the traditions of the Marine Corps. For information call Commandant Earl Hokanson 881-2852, Senior Vice Commandant Albert Mallory 379-2904 or Adjutant Stephen Cecil 829-1839.

Purple Heart chapter

Military Order of the Purple Heart, George A. Rauh Chapter 2201, meets the second Monday of each month at 7 p.m. at the American Legion Post 237 at 2900 Drake Ave. All combat-wounded veterans are invited. For more information, call Leonard Robinson 337-8313.

Miscellaneous Items

Men's ministry

Men's Ministry addresses the needs of men and plants seeds for spiritual growth in Christ. Call Harry Hobbs at 783-1793 for more information.

Young citizen of month

Do you know a young citizen in grades 7-12 who has done something special and deserves recognition? Rocket City Broadcasting/Community Awareness for Youth conduct the Young Citizen of the Month award program. Each month's recipient will meet the Huntsville mayor and City Council members, receive a Huntsville Human Relations Commission certificate and other prize packages. Sponsors include Rocket City Broadcasting, Huntsville Utilities, Hunts-

ville Optimist Club, Huntsville Police Department, CAFY and the Florida Institute of Technology Huntsville Site. To nominate a young citizen, visit mystar991.com or call Kenny Anderson 883-3993.

Masquerade gala

The Redstone Arsenal Military and Civilians Club presents "Masquerade Gala in the Garden," Oct. 22 from 6-10 p.m. at the Huntsville Botanical Gardens, benefiting the RSAMCC community assistance grants and merit scholarship awards. For information visit rsamcc.org.

Charity car show

Vets with Vettes and Corvette Owners 16th annual Charity Car Show is Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Cabela's parking lot, 7090 Cabela Drive. Events are open to all cars, bikes and trucks. There will be trophies and plaques along with games and prizes, silent auction, food and drinks and a 50/50 drawing. Proceeds will benefit veterans' charities. This is a rain-or-shine show with a prize package from Cabela's.

Community blood drive

A planned blood drive wants you: Redstone housing residents and anyone else with access to Redstone Arsenal. Hunt Military Communities is sponsoring an American Red Cross blood drive June 11 from 12:30-4:30 p.m. outside the post housing office, 302 Hughes Drive. They will have complimentary refreshments – juice drinks and snacks – outside the office to help donors replenish after giving blood. Interested persons should contact David Ugarte, resident service specialist, at david.ugarte@huntcompanies.com. For information call him at 430-1517. Appointments are encouraged but not required as all walk-ins are welcome for donors.

Exchange job openings

Redstone Exchange HR Recruitment Office will conduct weekly on-the-spot interviews at the Main Store food court every Tuesday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information, call the Exchange Recruitment Office 650-5928.

Health department ratings

The Madison County Health Department released its weekly food/lodging establishment ratings for May 17-21. The highest scores included The Fresh Market Inc. (Retail), 4800 Whitesburg Drive, 100; Publix Super Market 209 (Produce), 12796 Bailey Cove Road, 100; Lucky's Supermarket 18 (Produce), 3423 Pulaski Pike, 100; and Walmart 5716 (Fuel Station), 9020 Bailey Cove Road, 100. The lowest scores included Jimmy John's Gourmet Sandwiches, 7690 Highway 72 West, Madison, 85; Sak's Food Mart, 525 Scott Road, Toney, 85; M&M Food Mart, 323 Butler Road, New Market, 84; and Dunkin' Donuts, 103-B Brookridge Drive, Madison, 82.

