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Soldiers approach a landing zone in a UH-60 Black Hawk in Kosovo April 16.

PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. TAWNY SCHMIT

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HONORING A LIFE ... AND SACRIFICE

Fort Rucker renames street Mayfield Avenue after local hero

By Jim Hughes

Fort Rucker Public Affairs

Fort Rucker honored the life and sacrifice of one of its own when the post renamed Third Avenue to Mayfield Avenue during a May 26 ceremony.

The street was named in honor of Spc. Henry Jarrett Mayfield Jr., a 1st Battalion, 58th Aviation Regiment Soldier killed in action in Kenya Jan. 5, 2020, and Mayfield's parents performed the unveiling at the conclusion of the ceremony outside the unit's motor pool.

Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker commanding general, said the event highlights the importance of family.

"It's clear that Mitch comes from an amazing and supportive, big family – four brothers, four sisters, loving parents, grandparents, and many aunts and uncles. I'm certain that his

patriotism, dedication, ambition and Soldier qualities are all a direct result of a loving family devoted to raising him, guiding him and shaping him into the wonderful young man that joined the Army and became a Soldier," Francis said of the man known to his family as Mitch.

"Mitch was also a member of an Army family, serving with a unit and a team that valued the opportunity of serving with him – many of whom are present in this formation today," Francis continued. "Some of the most remarkable, bravest and influential Soldiers from Army Aviation are found on our street signs. These are names our community knows well – Novosel, Molinelli, Ruf and Crandall. We honor these Soldiers with these street names because, like Mitch, they made a difference to the Army and to those they served with every day.

"These street names serve as part of a lasting legacy to our local heroes and a reminder for us all to remember their names and sacrifice to their nation," he added. "We want to honor and appreciate Mitch's service and sacrifice indefinitely as his name joins these legendary leaders and Soldiers."

Mayfield's commitment to the mission, the Army and his fellow Soldiers was clearly very strong, Francis said. "He made his unit better, the people around him better, and made a difference for the Army serving his country and devoting himself to something bigger than himself. Naming this street after him is a small token of our enduring gratitude for his faithful service to the U.S. Army and to our nation."



PHOTOS BY JIM HUGHES

Carmoneta Horton-Mayfield and Henry Mayfield Sr. unveil the street sign bearing their son's name during a ceremony May 26 on Fort Rucker. Third Avenue on post was renamed Mayfield Avenue to honor the life and sacrifice of Spc. Henry Jarrett Mayfield Jr., a 1st Battalion, 58th Aviation Regiment Soldier killed in action in Kenya Jan. 5, 2020.



Francis

The general also had a message for Mayfield's family. "We will never forget you."

Mayfield's former commander, Lt. Col. Keith A. Haskin, said he knew the specialist was someone special soon after their first meeting.

"I was immediately impressed with his intellect and his work ethic," Haskins said. "As we prepared for the deployment to the Horn of Africa, he was identified as a Soldier who could not only perform his assigned MOS (military occupational specialty), but one who could also assist in the air traffic control mission of the battalion.

"During the mission readiness exercise in July 2019, Henry began his cross-training to be certified as a landing zone safety officer and

performed the same functions as our air traffic controllers," the commander said, adding that the Air Force, that runs the LZSO program, usually requires a seasoned air traffic controller of at least the E-6 rank to perform those duties. "I remember receiving pushback from many Air Force personnel, saying the mission was too complex for someone that was not a seasoned controller. But I knew better. I knew Henry would not only perform brilliantly, but I also knew he would do whatever is necessary to accomplish the mission and support his fellow Soldiers. And that is what he did, day in and day out."

He added that Soldiers could still share many tales of Mayfield and his outgoing per-

MAYFIELD cont.

sonality. “But the one common thread in all of them is how Henry was a true team player and a friend that everyone looked to when they needed a boost.”

For his actions in Kenya, Mayfield was awarded the Combat Action Badge, the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart.

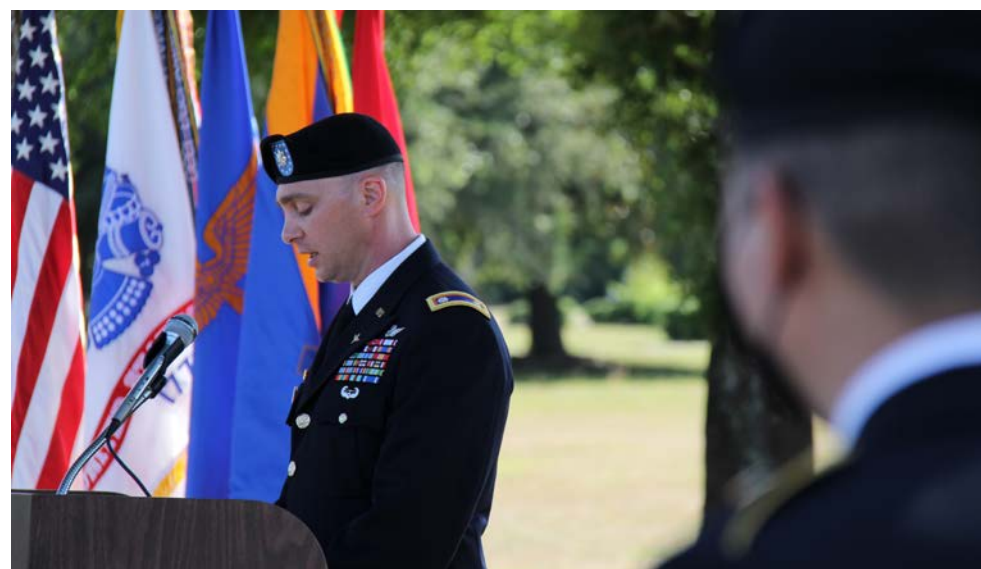
“He was a dear friend to the unit and to his family,” Haskin added. “This avenue, named in his memory, will honor the life and sacrifice of Spc. Henry ‘Mitch’ Mayfield. Soldiers and civilians alike following in his footsteps will be reminded of him as they drive on Mayfield Avenue, or walk each day from the barracks behind me. Just like Henry will always be remembered by all within the unit, so too will his name and memory be honored by all those who eat in the (dining facility) at Baledogle Airfield, Somalia; relax in the (morale, welfare and rec-

reation) facility in Manda Bay, Kenya; conduct airborne operations into a critical drop zone in Kenya; or drive down this road – all four locations now permanently bear his name.

Above and beyond the honoring of the memory and sacrifice of Mayfield, Haskin said people should think about two things when traveling down the newly named avenue.

“Live every day to the fullest – take advantage of every day you have on Earth, because you don’t know when it will be your last,” he said.

“And always train hard. He was probably one of the hardest workers we had in the battalion. What he did every day to train, and get ready and get mission focused is a lesson for everyone who is in the Army and really just life in general,” Haskin added.



Lt. Col. Keith A. Haskin, Mayfield's former commander, speaks at the ceremony.



Members of the Mayfield family and other guests at the ceremony.

Fort Rucker welcomes new chief warrant officer of the Aviation Branch

By Kelly Morris
USAACE Public Affairs

Army Aviation Soldiers, family and friends gathered on Howze Field to welcome a new chief warrant officer of the Aviation Branch to the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker during a change of responsibility ceremony May 27.

CW5 Michael "Myke" L. Lewis Jr., incoming chief warrant officer of the Aviation Branch, assumed responsibility from CW5 Jonathan P. Koziol as the officer saber passed to him from ceremony host Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, USAACE and Fort Rucker commanding general.

Francis thanked the attendees, both in person and online via social media livestream, including Soldiers and veterans, members of the Wiregrass community, and families of the honorees.

"It certainly is a perfect day to celebrate CW5 Jon Koziol's 34-year career, and to welcome the next command chief warrant officer of the branch Myke Lewis," Francis said.

"Myke has served at every echelon of Army aviation as a warrant officer from the tactical to the strategic, and we could not be more excited to welcome team Lewis to the USAACE team," Francis said.

Lewis comes to Fort Rucker from his most recent assignment as the Army aviation standardization officer at Headquarters, Department of the Army's Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff G-3/5/7 Aviation Directorate at the Army Pentagon.

Lewis thanked family, guests, and USAACE leaders for attending the event.

"Maj. Gen. Francis, Sherrie and I want to thank you and Jodie for your support and for giving us another opportunity to serve the aviation branch," he said.

He thanked the Koziols for what they have

done for his family, and said he felt encouraged by what he has seen at Fort Rucker in the past few days.

"When you see what Colonel Chasteen's son did yesterday, that reflection garden over at the chapel, and you meet the Mayfield family and you hear Spc. Mitch Mayfield's story, or you speak to a Gold Star brother ... who is just as excited as he can be to start an aviation career like his brother did, you can't help but feel a little invigorated about those things, and by God you find that energy to keep doing what they're doing, and that's serving selflessly," Lewis said.

"I'm glad to be part of something bigger than myself," Lewis said.

Francis said the leadership and mentorship of Koziol and his wife Kyle will have a positive impact for years to come.

"[Koziol] set the wheels in motion for a new leader development model for aviation warrant officers that will be emulated by other branches across the Army. His efforts will improve aviation readiness and set the conditions for Army aviation to be [Multi-Domain Operations] capable and ready to introduce Future Vertical Lift into our formations with leaders who are ready to fight and win in large scale combat operations," Francis said.

At USAACE, Koziol focused on how to better access, train, and retain the warrant officer corps. Under his leadership, warrant officers saw the first rise in aviation incentive pay in more than 20 years.

With 34 years of selfless service and leadership under his belt, Koziol is qualified in seven different aircraft. During his career he flew 5,000 hours, with four combat tours in the AH-64.

Koziol described his role at USAACE



PHOTO BY KELLY MORRIS

CW5 Michael L. Lewis Jr., incoming chief warrant officer of the Aviation Branch, assumes responsibility from CW5 Jonathan P. Koziol as the officer saber is passed to him by Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, USAACE and Fort Rucker commanding general at Howze Field May 27.

Headquarters as the "best seat in the house," to be able to watch the "greatest aviation fighting force in the world" operate on a routine basis, including across the combat aviation brigades and the transformative work being done at USAACE.

"We are preparing for the next fight, and continue to sharpen the warfighter's edge," Koziol said.

Koziol, who was officially retired from the Army during the ceremony, shared his impressions across three decades of service in the U.S. Navy and U.S. Army.

"How small you feel in the Atlantic Ocean. The coldest days of my life in Hohenfels, Germany. The muddiest days in Bosnia, the hottest in Iraq, and the beauty of flying around

the mountains of Afghanistan..."

"Facing the crippling fear of combat and being able to push it aside to support your fellow Soldiers. The profound joy of mission success. The sincerity in the eyes of a Soldier you support and them thanking you for making a difference. That awkward last goodbye as you wait for the plane to leave for deployment. More importantly, the exciting joy and sense of accomplishment of coming back and seeing your family," Koziol said.

Looking back over his career, Koziol said he was grateful for his family's support, and to have been taught by and served with the best aviation professionals in the world in Army Aviation.

"How lucky I've been," he said.

IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

USAACE, Fort Rucker leadership take town hall directly to residents' homes

By Jim Hughes
Fort Rucker Public Affairs

After receiving minimal to no interest in previous housing town halls in the post theater, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker leadership took the town hall directly to residents' homes May 6.

The results were much better, according to Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, USAACE and Fort Rucker commanding general.

Francis, along with Command Sgt. Maj. James D. Wilson, Aviation Branch command sergeant major; Col. Whitney B. Gardner, garrison commander; Command Sgt. Maj. Raymond P. Quitugua Jr., garrison command sergeant major; leadership from the 1st Battalion, 145th Aviation Regiment; and representatives from Corvias and the Directorate of Public Works Housing Office all walked through the Allen Heights neighborhood to speak with residents at the neighborhood center and at their homes to find out what issues they may have or feedback on what is being done right.

"We thought this was a better method to get people to talk to us where they live and to see what their issues are," Francis said. "The good news is that people did come out, and where we did have issues we were able to get after them and fix them immediately. And we had just as many people tell us they're happy to be living on Fort Rucker and that the response they get from Corvias to issues they may have is immediate – they are very pleased with the service they receive."

Several residents did take advantage of the opportunity to speak with senior leadership to bring up issues with their homes. The

commanding general then worked with the on-hand Corvias representatives to send maintenance workers to address those issues as soon as the residents returned home.

Francis said that he's so impressed with how this first event of its kind went, he's planning to do it again.

"We were just discussing how we're going to do more of these in the different housing areas on Fort Rucker because we want to ensure that not only are we doing world-class training at Fort Rucker, but that our people are living in world-class housing, as well," he said.

But residents' participation is key, the general added.

"Come out and tell us what you think – good or bad," Francis said. "If we don't know about it, we can't address it. This method of getting out there where people live is extremely effective – you get direct access to the commanding general and command sergeant major of Fort Rucker, along with our housing right with us to immediately fix whatever issues you have."

The walking town hall accomplished exactly what leadership intended for it to do, according to Gardner.

"It was a blast," he said. "There was a second lieutenant in flight school out in front of his house cleaning the wheels of his car and when he looked up he had a two-star general there asking about how things were going for him living in housing."

"We enjoyed getting out there and getting good feedback from the residents – we also received some great suggestions," the colonel



PHOTO BY JIM HUGHES

Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker commanding general, and other USAACE and garrison leaders, along with housing officials from Corvias and the post, discuss issues with housing residents in the Allen Heights neighborhood during the walking town hall May 6.

added. "It was nice to walk through the neighborhoods, and see people out there and kids playing."

"For town halls, this is the format that we will use in the future," he said. "We expect to do another one in June in Munson Heights and probably in Bowden Terrace in July. It may not be monthly forever, but we want to get out and canvas all of the neighborhoods as quickly as we can."

The garrison commander also praised the 1-145th Avn. Regt. unit leadership for participating in the event.

"That unit engagement and ownership of the quality of housing for their Soldiers is so critical," Gardner said, adding that garrison support can only go so far. "When you have unit leaders engaged at all levels – company commanders, first sergeants, battalion-level leaders, brigade-level leaders – it's very impactful for those who choose to live on post to know they have their unit leaders there to support and defend them when they have issues. In my mind, the 1-145th Avn. Regt. is the epitome of what engaged leaders need to look like as it relates to housing."

Both leaders agreed that the living experience on Fort Rucker is mostly a positive one for residents, but also that it could be better.

"We want this to be the best place to live. We want everyone to want to live on post for the quality of the home you get for the price, the amenities, the proximity to all the amenities on post – like the classrooms, flightlines and fitness centers – and the great support residents enjoy."

Francis agreed with the colonel's assessment and praised the housing team.

"I think Corvias is an outstanding partner here with us at Fort Rucker and we're very happy with them," the general said. "I am never satisfied, however. We know we can get better, we know we have areas to improve and that's what we're doing here – we're finding out where those areas are and we're getting after them immediately."

"We appreciate the teamwork between the garrison and housing, and most importantly, we're thankful for all of the residents of Fort Rucker and their continued support of our mission here," Francis said.

Fort Rucker leadership conducts its 2nd housing walking town hall

By Jim Hughes

Fort Rucker Public Affairs

Fort Rucker leadership took to the streets of the Munson Heights neighborhood to meet with residents in their yards and on their porches to gather feedback and help with any issues people may experience with living on post during the its second walking town hall May 19.

Each neighborhood in on-post housing comes with its own unique living experience and challenges, and Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker commanding general, along with members of his staff and Aviation unit leadership, the garrison command team, the Army housing office and Corvias representatives, plan to visit each community during the walking town halls to find out what life is like in each area, according to Col. Whitney B. Gardner, Fort Rucker garrison commander.

"It was a little different than last time," Gardner said. "The execution was the same, although we added the Directorate of Public Safety's sergeant major (Sgt. Maj. Jesus Goytia) to the group to help answer any traffic, law enforcement or security questions."

The garrison commander said the participation level went up, as well, and that people largely seemed pleased with living on post, and the responsiveness and quality of work they received from Corvias when problems have come up.

Those who discussed issues mainly focused on the hilly landscape in Munson Heights, and the challenges it presents for some residents when there is heavy rainfall, Gardner added.

"There were some concerns that cropped up after the recent rain storms – there are several homes that have to deal with runoff

problems at the bottom of a hill with water pooling up in their yards," he said. "We also spoke with some people who don't have gutters on their homes, so they're dealing with runoff problems."

The command group also heard from some residents who were having trouble getting any grass or foliage to grow in their yards because of the shade, Gardner said, adding that Corvias engineers were immediately able to get to work in hopes of finding solutions for each problem.

"We were able to go and look at the areas behind homes, and see what projects have been completed and what we can still do to help out with those issues," the colonel said. "Right now, we're focused more on low-cost projects that can divert some of the water away from homes and property, or installing gutters on homes that need them."

"I'm confident in our Corvias and engineering teams that they can come up with solutions in a reasonable amount of time," he added. "For long-term landscaping that would make the area perfect, we'll need to try to get that added into financial planning for later years."

Other residents brought up Corvias' plan to open neighborhood pools May 28, but with some new policies that have some people concerned.

"To use the pools, people will need to sign a no-harm waiver since there won't be any lifeguards at the pools this year, but most people don't seem to have a problem with that," Gardner said. "But some people did have an issue with Corvias requiring people to make reservations at the pools."

Melissa Bryson, Corvias' Fort Rucker operations director, explained the new policies



PHOTO BY CAPT. KAITLIN DWYER

Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker commanding general, Col. Whitney B. Gardner, Fort Rucker garrison commander, and other USAACE and garrison leaders, along with housing officials from Corvias and the post, discuss issues with a housing resident in the Munson Heights neighborhood during the walking town hall May 19.

to residents who brought them up, and most seemed satisfied with what she told them, including that no one expects there to be a capacity issue at any of the pools.

Another topic broached by some residents was people abusing the policy on allowing boats, trailers and recreational vehicles in the housing areas for short periods of time, Gardner said.

"There are some people who disregard the lease agreement they sign, and keep boats, trailers and RVs in their driveway or on the street for longer than is allowed," he said. "We have to keep the streets clear at all times to ensure emergency services are not impeded if there is an emergency. Neighbors also owe it to their fellow neighbors to keep

the community aesthetically pleasing – not everyone wants to look out their window and see a big RV."

All in all, the colonel said the second walking town hall was even more successful than the first, and he hopes that trend continues in the future.

"I think this is a very effective way to conduct town halls. We're doing our best to get the word out that these walking town halls are happening, but we ask neighbors to help neighbors," Gardner said. "If you know we're coming, or you know of fellow residents who have issues, let them know when we'll be here – that we want to help them and we value their feedback."

Post practices hurricane response

By Jim Hughes
Fort Rucker Public Affairs

Fort Rucker leaders and staff from across the post took time to participate in a tabletop exercise that ran through in great detail who does what and when they do it if a hurricane takes aim at the area.

More than 70 commanders, senior staff and managers of almost every unit and agency on post participated in the virtual event, including some commanders coming on board this summer to ensure continuity throughout the 2021 hurricane season, according to Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker commanding general.

"The intent here today is twofold, one is to recap as we head into the hurricane season next week, and No. 2, as we go through a significant period of transition this summer that we don't lose any ground in terms of all of the incoming folks understanding what their roles and responsibilities are in this process," Francis said. "We all need to walk away with a shared understanding as we are about to enter what is anticipated to be a highly active hurricane season in the Gulf Coast. We need to have all of our ducks in a row, and with the amount of transition that's going to be happening, I want everyone on the same sheet of music."

That sheet of music is an extensive one, with plans in place for everything from flying aircraft away from the danger area, to stacking them into hangars, to stopping flying training, to managing stock levels at the Army and Air Force Exchange Service and commissary, to estimating available community medical support, to deciding when to tell people to stay home and shelter in place, and many more, according to Francis.

Hurricane season runs from June 1 to Nov. 30, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration predicts another above-normal Atlantic hurricane season.

"Forecasters predict a 60% chance of an above-normal season, a 30% chance of a near-normal season, and a 10% chance of a below-normal season," NOAA put out in a May 20 press release. "However, experts do not anticipate the historic level of storm activity seen in 2020."

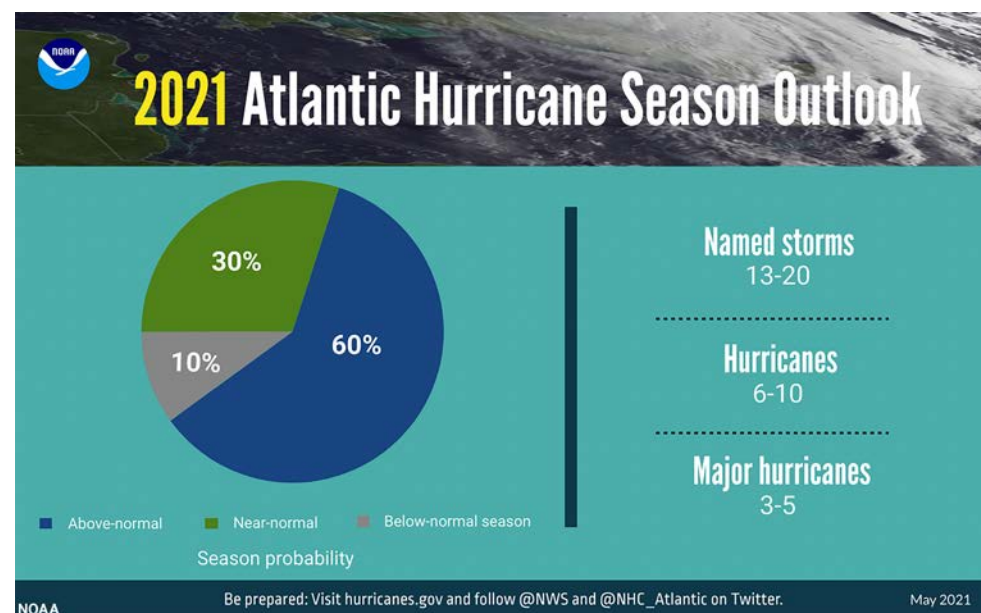
At Fort Rucker, one of the first signs of danger comes to the command team in the form of an email from Cindy Howell, Fort Rucker Weather Operations.

During the exercise, Howell started things off with a spaghetti chart showing the many predicted paths of the simulated Hurricane Frank at H-120 – 120 hours before expected impact.

The chart clearly showed the erratic behavior expected from storms, and history itself reveals the finicky nature of hurricanes, according to Col. Chad Chasteen, USAACE chief of staff, who was a brigade commander the last time Fort Rucker had to fly away aircraft from a storm.

"At 96 hours, the models are still very sloppy," he said, adding that the general needs to decide whether to fly away the aircraft or not well before the hurricane impacts Fort Rucker – while the weather is still good enough to fly in. "Right at the point where the CG really needs to decide if we're going to fly away or stack the aircraft, sometimes it doesn't even seem like he has a good model to make a good decision, but he's going to have to make a decision."

"In my experience, these things never go exactly where we think they're going to go or where we hope they go. The one that required us to fly away changed tracks so many times – it looked like it was going to cut across Tampa Bay, and then shifted left and went all the way up towards Fort Campbell (Kentucky) where we actually put aircraft," Chasteen added. "One thing we all need to understand is to intuitively know these forecasters do the absolute best they can, but it



is so dynamic that we will require daily, possibly twice daily touch points once we get around that 72-hour mark."

All staff deftly handled each scenario highlight and discussed considerations they had in reaching each decision to allow all others to know their roles, responsibilities and thought processes, according to Col. Whitney B. Gardner, Fort Rucker garrison commander, who will be turning garrison command over to Col. Robert J. Holcombe in June.

"We have a great plan in place to ensure the safety of all who call Fort Rucker home – everyone who works, trains and plays here," he added. "Every storm will be different and each one will come with its own wrinkles, but I think we've built in enough flexibility to handle any scenario Mother Nature might throw at us."

"We have a great staff and directors at the garrison," Gardner said. "Many have been through this before, so (Holcombe) has a great team and he's going to be able to handle this as commander."

Francis was pleased with how the exercise played out, but he also let everyone know that their work needs to continue.

"A lot of work went into prepping for this and I really appreciate it," he said. "I'm feeling a lot better going into this hurricane season – I think we're pretty tight."

"But a hurricane is not an event you can just cram for and be ready," he added. "This has to be an ongoing process of keeping your plans and estimates current – you need to be running estimates all the time between now and the end of hurricane season. When these things happen, they will happen fast and there will be a lot of different things going on."

While leadership and staff on post will continue to hone their plans, Gardner reminded the entire post community that each of them owe it to themselves to ensure their personal readiness for hurricane season.

"Now is the time to prepare – don't wait until a hurricane is bearing down on us," he said. "Each of you is critical to our success at Fort Rucker, and while we do everything we can to protect you, there are some things you need to do for yourself to be ready to deal with severe weather."

For more on getting ready for the 2021 hurricane season, visit <https://ready.army.mil/>.

‘GREAT JOB!’

15-year-old Fort Rucker Scout completes Gold Star Family Reflection Garden, earns Eagle rank

By Jim Hughes
Fort Rucker Public Affairs

A 15-year-old Fort Rucker youth exercised vision, leadership and organizational skills well beyond his years to create a place of reflection on post to honor Gold Star families and their loved ones who made the ultimate sacrifice for the nation.

Ryker Chasteen, member of Fort Rucker's Boy Scout Troop 50, earned his Eagle Scout rank with the completion of his project that was unveiled at the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Gold Star Family Reflection Garden behind Wings Chapel May 26.

Above and beyond providing a facility the entire Fort Rucker community can take great pride in for many years to come, Ryker's creation also serves to inspire hope, Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker commanding general said at the ceremony.

"It's days like today that give you hope for our future – when young men like Ryker and all of his fellow Scouts do something that's bigger than themselves for the benefit of other people," he said. "To achieve Eagle Scout is



PHOTOS BY JIM HUGHES

Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker commanding general, helps Eagle Scout Ryker Chasteen cut the ribbon on the Gold Star Family Reflection Garden behind Wings Chapel on post during a May 26 ceremony. Building the garden was Chasteen's Eagle Scout Project, which he accomplished with help from fellow Troop 50 Scouts.

a tremendous accomplishment. Ryker, congratulations to you on this accomplishment, and also for doing it in such a special way at a special time of the year for us here at Fort Rucker.

"The Army has a lot of great traditions for remembering and memorializing the ultimate sacrifice paid by our fallen heroes and caring for their families," Francis said. "Ryker, you've helped make this a very special place to be for our Gold Star families. This chapel is visited by thousands of people every year, and this plot of ground is now a sanctuary, a quiet place of beauty, and this garden is a peaceful place to remember our fallen comrades.

"Ryker, thank you for visualizing, planning and executing this memorial garden for our Gold Star families," he continued. "Your tenacity and desire to make this happen is now a reality, and we're all better for it. Great job!"

After the general spoke, he helped Ryker

and the other Scouts who helped on the project cut the ribbon on the garden.

The new Eagle Scout said that despite the challenges he had to overcome completing the project, overall the actual work "was not too difficult."

"The most difficult part was the pavers," Ryker said, adding that he received a lot of help from his fellow Scouts, family and friends. "They were heavy and uncomfortable to work with – they took a lot of work to get in. We had to measure the area, dig it out, put in a layer of paver sand to get it all leveled out and put in some pads that would keep them from moving so much. Then we had to line them all up and had to cut some to be the right proportions."

The pandemic complicated achieving his goal, as well, as scheduling for the volunteer effort became more complicated and also hampered the fundraising for the \$3,000-plus project. Ryker sold masks to raise money, and reached out to friends, family, and



EAGLE SCOUT cont.

organizations such as the Army Aviation Association of America and the Fort Rucker Community Spouses Club for donations.

He thanked all who helped him achieve the completion of the garden, and added that he is happy to complete his work to achieve the Eagle Scout rank at the age of 15, when typically Scouts achieve it at 17 or 18. "It's very cool to get it done at an early age."

Ryker said he plans to remain a Scout to earn more merit badges and help younger Scouts rank up on their way to Eagle Scout.

As for life after Scouts, Ryker said he would like to go into the study of animation. "Probably game design – something along those lines."

This isn't the first time the Chasteen family has left its mark on the Fort Rucker community in the form of an Eagle Scout project.

Ryker's older brother and fellow Eagle Scout, Roman, completed a project to install benches along Beaver Lake and its running trail several years ago – earning Eagle Scout rank at the age of 14.

Col. Chad Chasteen, proud father of two Eagle Scouts and also USAACE chief of staff, said he was ecstatic to see Ryker's vision become a reality.

"It was a little more ambitious than I was ready for when I first saw it," the colonel said, adding that initial work on the plan and sketching it out began last fall. "As his parent, I just wanted to get behind him and support his idea. I helped him get to the people he needed to get permission from, but really it was his idea, it was his vision and it was his drive that made this a reality."

But Ryker did get a lot of help along the

way, he added.

"Ryker's getting a lot of credit, but this was a team effort by Troop 50 – the only Scout Troop left on Fort Rucker and has been going since the Vietnam era," Chasteen said. "In order to actually complete an Eagle Scout project, you have to have the support of a team. He has to design the project, get the project approved, fundraise for the project and then itemize costs, so they know you raised all this money, but it's all going to go right back into the project. You have to rally volunteers and then organize them to meet the workflow."

"It took a lot of work, but it is really inspiring," the chief of staff said, adding that Ryker displayed skills that impressed him.

"I was impressed with that rare skill of patience – something I'm not gifted with," he

said. "When things were going wrong – we had innumerable problems because this was our first time doing something like this, and we were discovering and learning and going through it and having to go back to the hardware store over and over again – he was so patient, and that's a skill."

"Also, his decisiveness and understanding that leadership isn't about just telling people what to do – you have to lead by doing," the colonel continued. "He had to jump in, get his hands dirty if he expected other people to do it – he had to dig holes, so other people would dig holes. That's a good lesson for all of us – if you're willing to get out there and do the work, then your team will do the work. You can't expect your team to work harder than you are – I'm proud of him for that, as well."

MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY

Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker commanding general, CW5 Michael L. Lewis Jr., Aviation Branch chief warrant officer, and Command Sgt. James D. Wilson, Aviation Branch command sergeant major, salute a wreath in honor of the nation's fallen service members at the Fort Rucker Memorial Day Ceremony May 28 at Veterans Park.



PHOTO BY JIM HUGHES

General to flight school graduates: ‘Remain focused on people’

By Kelly Morris
USAACE Public Affairs

Brig. Gen. Michael C. McCurry, director of Force Development, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-8 at the Army Pentagon, delivered a message about the importance of people to flight school graduates at the U.S. Army Aviation Museum May 20.

“As you go out to the force, always remember that although we love our machines, it’s important we remain focused on our people,” McCurry said.

He challenged the aviators to train hard, never accept less than the standard and honor their commitment.

McCurry explained the primary reason Army Aviation exists is for the Soldier on the ground.

“We see, smell and feel the battlefield as a foot Soldier,” he said.

“When that Soldier needs to know what’s just over the hill, we go find out. When that Soldier needs to be placed in a better tactical position, we put them there. If they’re running low on ammunition, we deliver. If that Soldier needs an extra little bit of fire power, we bring it to bear on the enemy. And God forbid, if that Soldier is wounded on the field of battle, we’re coming to get them,” McCurry said.

A master aviator with more than 30 years of service, and an aviation legacy passed down to him from his own father, McCurry said he was passing along that sacred bond to the group of graduates at the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence.

“I am committed to passing this bond on to each of you, including my own daughter and son-in-law who are also aviation warfighters. As a father of an armored lieutenant and an infantryman as well, I know they

expect and deserve nothing less from Army Aviation,” he said.

Moments later McCurry would later pin the wings on his own daughter, 1st Lt. Mary Delvaux, as she graduated, while her husband, 1st Lt. Evan Delvaux, who is also an Army aviator, looked on.

He congratulated the graduates on earning their silver wings, and thanked the families for their love and support.

“Without their support, none of our newest Army aviators would be here,” he said.

Graduates should consider the milestone of their graduation as an opportunity to learn, he said.

“As aviators we tend to identify with our platforms, so many of you are now calling yourself Apache or Black Hawk or Chinook or airplane pilots. That’s great. But as you graduate from flight school today you are aviation warfighters with a license to continue learning our business,” he said.

McCurry explained graduates will now move on to their units or go back to their home states, and “get to work”—progress through readiness levels, and begin to participate in a crew.

“You will work with our brilliant enlisted maintainers. You will begin to train in larger and larger groups and collective training events,” and train for all types of conditions, he said.

“This is where you really begin to do the business of Army aviation—to integrate as a member of the combined arms team, performing reconnaissance, employing fire and maneuver. This is where we maneuver our ground partners and critical supplies or perform medical evacuation. That is the essence



PHOTO BY KELLY MORRIS

Brig. Gen. Michael McCurry, director of Force Development, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-8 at the Army Pentagon, congratulates his daughter, 1st Lt. Mary Delvaux, as she exits the stage during the flight school graduation at the U.S. Army Aviation Museum May 20.

of being a true aviation warfighter,” he said.

With Future Vertical Lift on the horizon as the Army continues to modernize, it’s important to remember to place a priority on people.

“People have always been the heart of Army aviation.... You must always be ready, training hard and taking care of each other,” he said.

McCurry, who served as a scout and

attack aviator, thanked Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, USAACE and Fort Rucker commanding general, for the opportunity to be back at the Home of Army Aviation, where McCurry met his wife, Sadie, 28 years ago.

“It’s always incredible coming home – home to the Wiregrass, Mother Rucker and, of course, our tremendous Army Aviation Museum,” he said.

1-212th Avn. Regt. welcomes new commander

Lt. Col. Edward C. Adams accepts the unit colors from ceremony host Col. George G. Ferido, 110th Aviation Brigade commander, as Adams assumes command of 1st Battalion, 212th Aviation Regiment from outgoing commander Lt. Col. Gregory L. Gabel during a change of command ceremony conducted on Howze Field May 14.



PHOTO BY KELLY MORRIS



DG

The U.S. Army has partnered with the Army & Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) to create the **Digital Garrison** mobile app. **Digital Garrison** is a one-stop information source for Army communities. The app puts real-time information into Soldiers', families', and civilians' hands and keeps military communities connected – a key part of readiness and resiliency.

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Fort Rucker CDC staff reaps benefits of renovated kitchen facility

By Jim Hughes

Fort Rucker Public Affairs

After more than two months of renovations to its in-house kitchen facility, the Fort Rucker Child Development Center is reaping the benefits of improved efficiency, ease of use and a more comfortable atmosphere.

The \$300,000 in renovations resulted in what is basically an entirely new facility, complete with numerous repairs, new equipment, a more efficient workspace and a new air conditioning system, according to Toni Hampton, Fort Rucker CYS coordinator.

“Our building was built in 1991 and there have not been any major renovations in the kitchen since then,” Hampton said. “What they did was replace all of the equipment – we have a new oven, a new refrigerator, a new freezer, new sinks – and they reconfigured the area to make the workflow easier for the kitchen staff.”

The kitchen also now includes a new ice

maker and an area for preparing meals for children with allergies to certain foods, she added.

Dianna Stinson, food preparation staff at CDC, said the renovations are a big help.

“We love it – it’s more spacious and the equipment is up to date, so it makes our job a lot easier to accommodate the kids,” she said, adding that she is impressed with the way the workspace was organized. “Everything is basically at hand, which makes my job a lot easier – the kids want their food when it’s supposed to be there, and this helps me better help them.”

CYS’ kitchen staff is supposed to have four people in the CDC, with two at the youth center and one at the school age center, Hampton said.

“They order the food, they stock the food,



Stinson and Marinela Foor, youth center food preparation staff, work in the newly renovated kitchen.



PHOTOS BY JIM HUGHES

Dianna Stinson, child development center food preparation staff, works in the newly renovated kitchen facility to prepare and serve lunch at the CDC May 25.

and almost all of our menu items are created from scratch,” she added. “They also have to provide alternatives for children with allergies. They deliver all of the food down to the classrooms, they do all of the dishes, so it’s a big job.”

But the CDC staff is currently a staff of one, thanks to a cook shortage, Hampton said, adding that Marinela Foor, youth center cook, and Marion McCloud, school age center cook, help Stinson ensure the children at the center are eating properly.

“She is working as hard as she can work,” she said of Stinson. “She is so dedicated and she’s just been through everything. She’s

worked during COVID, worked during the kitchen shutdown at the CDC and now she’s just doing what has to be done. I can’t say enough good things about her.”

For her part, Stinson enjoys taking care of the children of Fort Rucker by preparing them four meals a day: breakfast, lunch, and afternoon and evening snacks, she said.

“I love the people that I work with at the CDC,” she said. “I love that the parents and the staff here entrust me to take care of their little ones.

To apply for or get more information on the food preparation positions at the CDC, visit <https://www.usajobs.gov/>.

Best Warrior

The U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker honors the FY21 USAACE Best Warrior Competition and Drill Sergeant of the Year winners, including the U.S. Army Aviation Missile Command winners, at a ceremony at the U.S. Army Aviation Museum May 14. The winners received the Army Commendation Medal, presented by Command Sgt. Maj. James D. Wilson, Aviation Branch command sergeant major, and Command Sgt. Maj. George M. Dove, AMCOM command sergeant major. The winners will represent USAACE in the upcoming Training and Doctrine Command level competition. The winners are Staff Sgt. Daron Ashcraft, AMCOM NCO of the Year; Spc. Christian Kerkado, AMCOM Soldier of the Year; Staff Sgt. William Lemmond, USAACE Drill Sergeant of the Year; Staff Sgt. James M. Standliff, USAACE NCO of the Year; and Spc. Michael Viruet, USAACE Soldier of the Year.



PHOTO BY KELLY MORRIS

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