

Soldier Systems Center

SPOTLIGHT

Issue 22

September 2025

BOSS
SAILING



A Brief Word



Strategic Role and Career Preparedness of Department of the Army Civilians Amid Restructurings

Department of the Army Civilians (DACs) are poised to play a pivotal role in the Army's comprehensive restructuring efforts as it shifts focus on modernization, operational efficiency, and strategic deterrence. To navigate this transformation successfully and sustain fulfilling career trajectories, DACs must proactively engage in strategic career development.

A crucial first step is familiarizing themselves with the Army People Strategy, particularly the Civilian Implementation Plan, which highlights core objectives such as talent acquisition, workforce development, and retention. DACs are encouraged to leverage learning platforms like Army IgnitED and Udemy Training to build competencies in high-demand areas—including artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, logistics, and leadership.

Using the Army Career Tracker (ACT) enables individuals to set clear career goals and identify skill gaps that align with emerging mission needs. Active engagement with the Civilian Talent Marketplace, coupled with mentoring and leadership programs from the Army Civilian Career Management Activity (ACCMA), offers valuable exposure to diverse career pathways and professional growth opportunities.

Staying informed is equally vital. Subscribing to ACCMA communications and participating in forums such as the AUSA Annual Meeting help DACs stay ahead of workforce developments and policy shifts. Maintaining open dialogue with supervisors and career managers also ensures that civilians understand how their roles fit into the Army's evolving strategic framework.

Those who embrace change, invest in relevant skill sets, and align with modernization priorities won't just adapt, they'll thrive in the reshaped Army landscape. We know that Soldiers do amazing things, but they can't do them alone. We must have talented and dedicated Army civilians to maximize our Army's capability, capacity, and lethality. The Army's civilian ranks enable our Army's readiness and are critical to the defense of our nation.

Be proud of what you do. Please, don't hesitate to reach out, after all, the Garrison staff exists to support you.

Mr. Keith Jackson
Deputy to the Garrison Commander



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Army Community Service (ACS) Program Update

Mrs. Yolanda Kennedy has departed USAG Natick as the Army Community Service Coordinator to pursue an exciting new career opportunity. We thank her for her dedicated service and the positive impact she made during her time with ACS. At this time, until we receive authorization to hire a replacement for Mrs. Kennedy, ACS will temporarily suspend all program functions on Natick SSC.

Army Community Service Support and Services

Please report all emergencies to the Police Desk in building 1.

Financial Support visit the Army Emergency Relief (AER) website to apply <https://www.armyemergencyrelief.org>.

Family Advocacy Concerns Contact Hanscom AFB at (781) 225-6385.

Military One Source is your 24/7 gateway to trusted information, resources and confidential help. When MilLife happens, it's your "first line of support" — giving service members and military families tools to stay well and thrive. Call anytime at 800-342-9647 or visit their website at <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/>. They're here for you.

Non-Emergency or In-Processing Inquires Contact Ms. Lynn Valcourt at (508) 206-4051 or lynn.m.valcourt.civ@army.mil.

We understand the importance of these services and deeply regret any inconvenience this may cause. We are working diligently to restore ACS operations as soon as possible and will provide updates as they become available.

Thank you for your understanding and continued support.



MWR Resources



At Natick Family and MWR, we strive to continuously improve the quality and ease of access to MWR services and information. When planning your next event, please visit our website where you can easily request rental equipment, request dates for facility use, or send a message to one of our representatives.

Water Sports: The dock is in, and the boats are ready. If you want to take a canoe or kayak out on the lake during lunch or after work, swing by MWR in Building 38 to rent a boat and pick up a life preserver and paddle.

Thirty Minutes to Win It is BACK!!!

TMtWI Class offers TWO CLASSES per day that run FIVE DAYS a week!

Choose between 11:40 a.m. and 12:20 p.m. start times and, for the first time ever, you can choose between two payment options:

- **\$50/month** for TWO CLASSES per week (ONLY \$6.25 per class!) OR
- **\$75/month** for UNLIMITED CLASSES (you can pay with a CREDIT CARD in Building 38).

Please direct all inquiries to darin.p.stgeorge.naf@army.mil or (508) 206-4098

Equipment Rental

Visit www.natick.armymwr.com and click on the 'Equipment Checkout Center' banner.



Help Wanted!

For all of the cooking & baking enthusiasts on Natick, the Garrison is seeking volunteers to help plan and run the

2025 NSSC Chili Cookoff on Oct. 28.

2025 NSSC Pie / Dessert Bake-off on Nov. 18.

Volunteers will help with planning, establishing the contest rules, developing a Spotlight advertisement, set up, and running of the contest.

Volunteers should send an email to Brian Balough (brian.j.Balough.civ@army.mil) no later than Sept. 12, 2025



30 MINUTES TO WIN IT!

TWO CLASSES A DAY - FIVE DAYS A WEEK AND YOUR FIRST CLASS IS FREE!

Choose between 11:40 a.m. and 12:20 p.m. start times and, for the first time ever, you can choose between two payment options:

- \$50/month for TWO CLASSES per week (ONLY \$6.25 per class!)
- \$75/month for UNLIMITED CLASSES (if you come 3x a week, still only \$6.25 a class!)

Classes are to be utilized during the month that they are purchased and are not transferrable or carried forward.

Classes can be purchased with CASH or CREDIT CARD in Building 38.

Please direct all inquiries to darin.p.stgeorge.naf@army.mil or (508) 206-4098



**JOIN DARIN P. ST. GEORGE,
FITNESS PROGRAM SPECIALIST,
FOR CLASS TODAY!**

Hero WOD

Severin

September 2025

This workout is dedicated to Army Sgt 1st Class Daniel Crabtree who was killed in Al Kut, Iraq on Thursday, June 8. To Daniel's family and friends, we express our sorrow; to his wife, Kathy, and daughter, Mallory, we tearfully acknowledge your loss as the true cost of freedom. Fair winds, Daniel.

For Time
50 pull-ups
400-meter run
21 thrusters
800-meter run
21 thrusters
400-meter run
50 pull-ups
Rx W - 65 lb
Rx M - 95 lb

A Hero WOD, also known as a Hero Workout, is a challenging and intense CrossFit workout that is named after a fallen hero. These workouts are created to pay tribute to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to their country or community.

Do you and your team participate in the monthly Hero WODs? Send us your photos completing the workouts and we'll share them here in the Spotlight!



INTERACTIVE CUSTOMER EVALUATION (ICE)

Story by Gregory Boisvert, Plans, Analysis and Integration Office

The Interactive Customer Evaluation or ICE system is a web-based program that allows customers to provide feedback on services offered by the Garrison at NSSC and is a driver for continuous process improvement.

Not all Garrison service providers utilize ICE as a customer feedback system, but most Garrison service providers are represented within ICE.

INTENT OF ICE

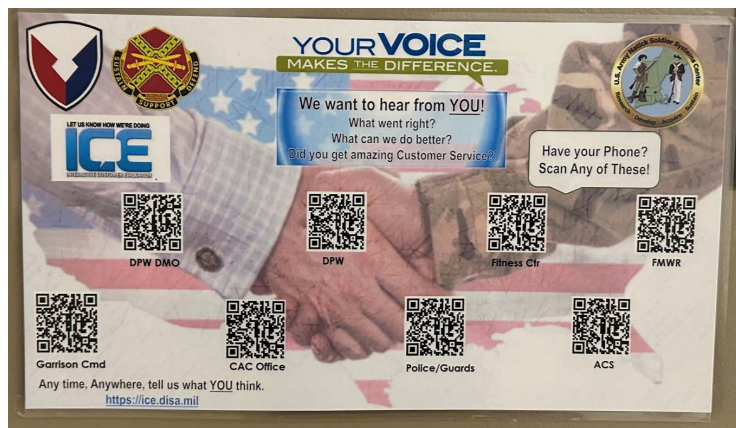
ICE provides immediate feedback ratings on facility appearance, employee and staff attitude, timeliness of service, hours of service, and whether or not the service meets the needs of the customer. ICE allows customers to recognize outstanding service, make recommendations for improvements and lets service providers know where they may have missed the mark.

WHAT ICE IS NOT INTENDED FOR

ICE is not intended for internal employment complaints, to solicit business, to spread rumors, to make public announcements, to distribute spam or to communicate threats.

PROVIDING ACTIONABLE FEEDBACK

ICE comments that include feedback that a manager can act on are the most effective. These helpful comments include details such as who, what, when and where the incident took place, to include a complete summary of the submitter's suggestion for improvement. By using these simple tips when submitting an ICE comment card, customers can provide thorough feedback that can be critical in making changes to Garrison services.



CONTACT INFORMATION

Leaving a way for managers to contact the ICE comment submitter is crucial to giving actionable feedback. When leaving an ICE comment, the form does not require customers to leave their name or other contact information and allows for anonymous feedback. While anonymity may be necessary in some cases, leaving contact information allows managers or leaders to reach out and contact customers for further clarification and allows for two-way communication.

If remaining anonymous is a concern, it is recommended customers utilize a personal e-mail address or phone number for questions and follow-up purposes.

REQUEST A RESPONSE

The ICE form has an option for the customer to request a response from management. Customers seeking a response need to check the appropriate block in the ICE system. This will signal to leadership that customer follow-up is required. For example, if customers who submit an ICE comment regarding a don't leave contact information, management can't investigate their situation further, provide them a response or update them concerning their situation. It is the Garrison's



Reviews | **Rate** | Ratings

We appreciate your feedback. Tell us about your experience today!

*Privacy Advisory: If all fields are completed, this form enables customers to provide information and to consent to assistance with the Privacy Act and/or to be contacted. DoD S&C - Plans & Policy Program Request.

Where are you satisfied with your overall experience?

	Not Satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied
Facility Appearance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Facility Staff Attitude	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Timeliness of Service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Quality of Service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Did the product or service meet your needs?

	No	Yes
	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Comments & Recommendations for Improvement:

CAUTION: Do NOT enter sensitive or personally identifying information in this text field. By providing comments in this text comment box, you are acknowledging that this information provided may be reviewed throughout the organization to which this comment was submitted and possibly at higher organizations (levels within the ICE system).

☐ Request a Response

If you would like a response, please check the Request a Response checkbox above and enter your contact information below.

0/4000

policy that if a response is requested and contact information is provided, customers will be contacted within three business days.

SATISFACTION RATINGS

Whenever possible, customers should respond to the satisfaction questions on the form when sharing a comment. Satisfaction responses on the ICE system feed directly into the Army's customer service tracking systems. Having honest and accurate feedback data feeding into rating systems helps Army leaders determine where additional resources are needed.

SUBMITTING AN ICE COMMENT

Submitting an ICE comment is quick, easy and can be done at any time from any computer or device with internet access. Customers can access the ICE link at <https://ice.disa.mil/>, scan a QR code for various services posted around post.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT SERVICE PROVIDER

One of the trickiest parts of leaving good feedback on the ICE system is choosing the correct service provider. From https://ice.disa.mil, enter Natick Soldier Systems Center in the initial search box. Then at the NSSC installation portal, there is a second search bar to search for and choose the service provider. If customers do not see the

service provider they are looking for, they should select the General Site Comment link and the Garrison Plans, Analysis and Integration Office will re-direct their comment to the correct service provider.

The Garrison welcomes all questions, comments and concerns about the ICE system, please email comments or questions about the ICE system to Greg Boisvert at gregory.c.boisvert.civ@army.mil



B.O.S.S. Sailing

Story and Photos by Sgt. Geneva Y. Thomas, Religious Affairs NCOIC and USAG-Natick BOSS President

On Saturday, August 23, Better opportunities for Single Soldiers hosted a beginner sailing life skills event aboard a Liberty Fleet schooner in Boston Harbor.

Participants received instruction from the crew on essential seamanship and safety practices, covering topics such as the vessel's components, points of sail, wind reading, basic helm commands, and techniques for tacking and gybing. Additionally, the crew introduced the fundamentals of coastal navigation, including chart interpretation, buoy identification, maintaining a proper lookout, and understanding right-of-way rules.

Emphasis was placed on weather awareness, discussing wind shifts, sea conditions, and risk management prior to setting sail. Participants engaged in hands-on activities involving helm commands, line handling, and situational awareness, all of which are vital for effective leadership, decision-making, and risk management in various contexts.

This interactive, team-focused event enhanced communication, confidence, and decision-making skills in dynamic environments, leaving everyone with a deeper understanding of safe sailing practices and their relevance to leadership, resilience, and unit cohesion.



Personal View: Choosing Life, Choosing Hope

Story by Vannessa L. Josey, USAG-Natick Public Affairs Office

September is Suicide Prevention Month, and for me this is not just about awareness. It is about survival. I have been on both sides of suicide. I have lost people close to me who attempted, and others who were tragically successful. I have also been the one who was ready to give up.

I had a plan. I even started. But I couldn't finish. What stopped me was the thought of the people I would leave behind, the family, the friends, the colleagues - who might believe they weren't enough to keep me here. I couldn't put that weight on their shoulders. That realization became my turning point, but the battle didn't end there.

Every day since, I've learned that surviving isn't a single choice - it's a series of choices. Each morning, I wake up is a win. Every day is a chance to work through the thoughts that once convinced me I didn't belong here. Every day is an opportunity to repair and strengthen relationships that remind me I am not alone, even when my mind tries to convince me otherwise.

The work of living is not easy. Some days, it feels impossible. But I have also discovered that healing comes from paying attention to every part of myself. My mental health matters as much as my physical health. My spiritual health matters just as much as both. When one of those pieces is neglected, the others suffer. When I invest in them - through conversations, counseling, prayer, exercise, or simply rest - I build strength to face the next day.

One of the hardest lessons for me was accepting help. For years, I believed I had to be strong for everyone else. That reaching out would mean I was weak. The truth is the opposite. Asking for help is one of the bravest things you can do. It takes courage to admit you can't carry everything alone. And none of us were meant to carry it alone.

If you are struggling, I want you to know you are not broken, and you are not a burden. You deserve help. You deserve healing. You deserve to live. Reaching out to a counselor, chaplain, doctor or trusted friend may not solve everything overnight, but it can be the step that pulls you back from the edge.

And if you notice someone around you who seems withdrawn, overwhelmed or not themselves, don't stay silent. You don't have to have all the answers. Sometimes just asking, "Are you OK?" or "Do you want to talk?" can open the door to hope.

If you or someone you know is in crisis, dial 988 to connect with the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. Veterans, service members and their families can dial 988, then press 1 to reach the Veterans Crisis Line. Help is available 24/7.

Suicide prevention is not only about saving lives - it's about choosing life, one day at a time. I remind myself daily: my life has value. So does yours. Every tomorrow we are given is another chance to heal, to grow, to reconnect and to choose hope.



USARIEM's Chief Physiologist Receives Distinguished Service Award at MHSRS2025

Story by Maddi Langweil, USARIEM Public Affairs

Kissimmee, FL—The Department of Defense's premier Military Health System Research Symposium grants nine competitive awards annually, and this year, the U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine's Chief Physiologist Karl Friedl, Ph.D., received the Distinguished Service Award.

The Distinguished Service Award honors international partners, federal civilians, individuals in academia or senior U.S. active-duty military who have made career-long contributions towards the success of military medical research for the warfighter. The recognized individual has strengthened the visibility of DoD-sponsored research and has made contributions that involve improvements to overall health and well-being, injury treatment or recovery solutions for the warfighter.

Friedl has spent over 40 years on research for the soldier, with a focus on stress physiology and the limits of human performance. As the Army's Chief Physiologist, Friedl conceives new research directions, mentors and leads new initiatives, and connects an extensive network of researchers and capabilities. In his 30 years of active-duty service in the Army, he conducted, led, and funded research, serving as the Director of Military Operational Medicine Research Program, Commander of USARIEM, and Director of Telemedicine and Advanced Technology Research Center at Fort Detrick, Maryland.

Over the course of his career, Friedl received many honors, including the IEEE Engineering in Medicine and Biology Society with the Professional Career Achievement Award, the Parkinson's Action Network and Alzheimer's Association with the Udall and Ronald and Nancy Reagan Award and countless others including the Founder's Award from the Pennington Biomedical Research Center and the



Diabetes Research Leadership Award from the Diabetes Technology Society.

While Friedl feels honored to be recognized, he notes that “research is a team effort involving many people that make it possible, from logisticians, regulatory support staff, and contract officers to the researchers, the research volunteers and many others.”

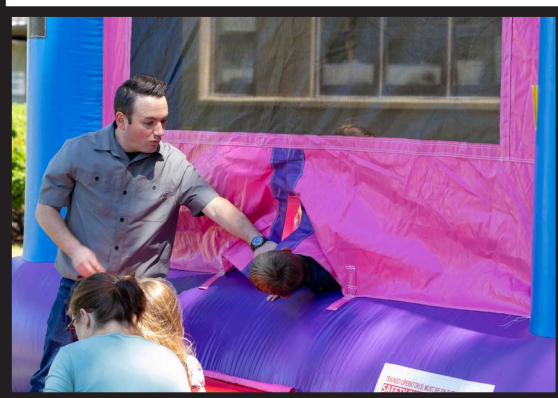
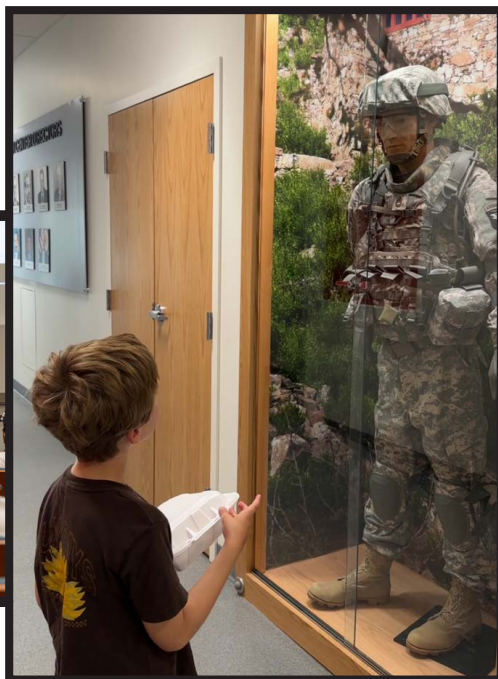
Friedl emphasized the critical importance of the whole team as well as the larger research community. “Our successes have come about from inspired exchanges and collaborations with a large network of international military medical research partners, strong academic centers with an interest in serving military research needs, our federal partners at National Institute of Health, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and NASA, and the Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force,” he said.

For another year at MHSRS, Friedl is excited at the prospect of interacting with this intense concentration of military researchers, senior leaders, professors and industry partners. “We have so many important problems to solve and so many great brains working to create new options for the warfighter. The future is always bright!” Friedl said.



NSSC Hosts Youth Public Safety Academy

Natick Soldier Systems Center hosted 17 students from the Middlesex Sheriff's Office Youth Police Safety Academy for an immersive STEM visit. Students toured labs and facilities including the Navy Kitchen, Cognitive Dome, and Doriot Climatic Chambers, gaining a firsthand look at how science and technology support the Soldier. The day wrapped up with a STEM activity featuring drone simulators, SNAP circuits, and treaded robots — giving the students a chance to experience innovation in action.



Bring A Child To Work Day Event Caps Summer

NSSC came alive with energy and laughter during Bring A Child to Work Day on Aug. 22, as employees welcomed their children for a fun-filled experience on post. From jumping in the bouncy house outside Carney Hall, to enjoying kid-friendly meals in the MWR Café, to casting votes for the afternoon movie in Hunter Auditorium, the day gave children a glimpse of where their parents work while fostering curiosity about future careers. The event was well attended and highlighted the importance of family, community, and inspiring the next generation. Thank you to everyone who made the day a success!



Watermelon Airdrop STEM Challenge Engages Students and Families

Story and photos by Alfred Tripolone III, USAG-Natick

Additional photos by Jeff Sisto, DEVCOM-SC Public Affairs; and Isabella Varney, DEVCOM - SC

With cheers, laughter, and the occasional dramatic splatter, students tested their creativity and engineering skills during the Watermelon Airdrop STEM Challenge, hosted by the DEVCOM Soldier Center on Aug. 13.

The event brought together more than 100 students across 36 teams representing elementary, middle, and high school levels. Participants included children of NSSC employees along with students from the surrounding community. Each team received identical kits filled with approved materials to build parachutes and protective systems for their watermelons.

On event day, the melons were weighed, rigged, and dropped from a height of about 70 feet. The heaviest watermelons to survive the fall earned trophies, while every participant received a certificate and a set of 3D-printed “watermelon rigger wings.”

For many, the challenge was a family affair. Stephanie Brown, Deputy to the Asst. Director for Soldier Protection and a former Navy officer, entered with her 12-year-old son and 8-year-old daughter, both of whom had also taken part in last fall’s Pumpkin Drop.



“My kids thought it was great to see the watermelons smash throughout the morning,” Brown said. “They liked getting a box of items to create their parachute design from, making them think through the limitations and ideas. They learned a lot about engineering, physics, and even knot tying.”

Brown added that the highlight was exposing her children to NSSC’s engineers and scientists. “Events like this make it easy for them to see the possibilities of their future,” she said.

For Jeremy Whitsitt’s son, Landon, and his teammate

Andrew, the hardest part was settling on one design.

“They had several they were working through, and

picking the one to go with was difficult,” said Whitsitt, the Deputy Chief of Staff, Human Resources for DEVCOM SC. “They learned that their design was actually pretty good. After watching the drop, I know there are things they would do differently next time, but overall, they were pleased. It was a great late summer activity.”



Dr. Angela Hunter's daughter Amaya teamed up with friends and fellow GEMS program participants Ginger Manzano and Sidney Blood. Their careful design not only survived but won first place.

"The anticipation of seeing the drops and hearing the systems land was quite dynamic," said Hunter, DEVCOM SC Logistics Management Specialist and SAO. "Amaya and her teammates had fun just being in the midst of the event. They were excited because they were the first drop of the day, and even better, they came in first place!"

Hunter said the challenge also helped the girls understand how parachutes protect people and equipment in real-world Army missions. "They gained an understanding that this was only a watermelon, but for Soldiers and the equipment that are airdropped, it's critical to make sure the system works properly," she said.

This was the second Watermelon Airdrop Challenge in less than a year, following an inaugural competition in November 2024. With strong participation and enthusiasm from families and the local community, NSSC intends to make it a recurring summer tradition.

Awards were presented by Soldier Center Deputy Director Jaclyn Fontecchio and Military Deputy Col. Alexander Babington, who joined families and colleagues in cheering on the participants.

With perfect weather and a crowd of teammates, families, and friends, the day showcased more than clever engineering. It highlighted how NSSC continues to bring people together through creative, hands-on STEM opportunities that build community, inspire future problem-solvers, and leave a few memorable splashes behind.



USARIEM Optimizes Lethality at the Military Health System Research Symposium

Story by Maddi Langweil, USAIRIEM Public Affairs

Lethal warfighters power the force of today, but the Army will employ a far more vigorous generation in the future. To support this evolution of warfighters, the U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine is developing new scientific innovations, as revealed during the 2025 Military Health System Research Symposium.

The Department of Defense's premier annual scientific conference invites DoD subject-matter experts, international partners and industry-related organizations to engage in conversation and spark new efforts that will enhance the future warfighters' ability to serve and protect in response to evolving military needs.

This year, several U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine researchers, soldiers and Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education research fellows attended the four-day international event presenting seven oral presentations and eighteen poster presentations while moderating four warfighter-centric sessions to hundreds and thousands of the four thousand attendees.

"I'm excited to be here and very grateful for the opportunity to present and be immersed amongst others of expertise," said Capt. Katelyn Culley, Occupational Therapy Researcher at USARIEM. "MHSRS grants our team the opportunity to showcase cognitive biomedical research which offers solutions to optimize and sustain Warfighter mental performance, lethality and readiness. Our work focuses on environmental exposures, readiness state monitoring, occupational epidemiology, injury risk mitigation, return to duty strategies and biomedical performance enhancement to sustain and improve Warfighter capabilities for present and future missions."

Culley had the opportunity to present two research



posters, one on the relationship between pain catastrophizing and pain sensitivity in Army basic trainees and the other on leveraging culturally relevant events for empirically supported suicide prevention training. Similar to Culley's work, many attendees were drawn to USARIEM presentations, including Staff Sgt. Michelle Ott's study on the diet quality of U.S military cadets across sexes, conducted by the Military Nutrition Division at USARIEM.

Ott and the research team found that the diet quality of U.S. military cadets could be improved, and future research will be needed to look at potential mediators of lower diet quality between men and women. "This was a very popular topic during my session; it opened up new doors to speak with others in the nutrition field," Ott said.

But to make a difference, like the research Ott and Culley conducted, "it has to be actionable data," said USARIEM Research Psychologist Bill Tharion during Wednesday's human system and wearable oral presentation session, which he moderated. Tharion adds that the work USARIEM does to support the warfighter needs to have a keen sense of purpose that directly helps build the future of the U.S. Armed Forces.



In a previous operational health and performance session, moderated by Research Physiologist Holly McClung and Lt. Col. Bridget Owens, McClung delivered an oral presentation on the award-winning Army Comprehensive Body Composition Study, known as the ACBC. The ACBC study led to key updates to Army policy that modernized the way warfighters are measured under the Army Body Composition Program.

“We need to understand what the force looks like and make sure every warfighter is equally unbiasedly measured. At the time, the most current database we had was from the early 2000s and the equations we were using were 20 years old, and we know that the U.S. population has changed, the Army population has changed,” McClung said during her oral presentation. “So, the time was right for USARIEM to go out and answer these questions to inform Army Senior Leaders.”

As researchers shared innovative policy-changing research that benefits the future of warfighter fitness and long-term health in one session, on the other side of the conference in another session, Col. Laura McGhee, Acting Chief of the Military Performance Division, discussed how to translate research from the lab to experimentation — a concept that is used for operational testing of proposed warfighting concepts, technologies and conditions to meet the needs of the future force.

“Not everything a lab does results in something that can participate in experimentation,” McGhee said during Tuesday’s afternoon session.

For many experienced USARIEM researchers, like research physiologists Karl Friedl, Beth Beidleman and Gabrielle Giersch, MHSRS has become an annual place to present and collaborate with fellow associates. Other USARIEM researchers presented at MHSRS for the first time including Staff Sgt. Gabrielle Martinez and Lt. Col. Pierre Fabries, Ph.D., Research Physiologist.

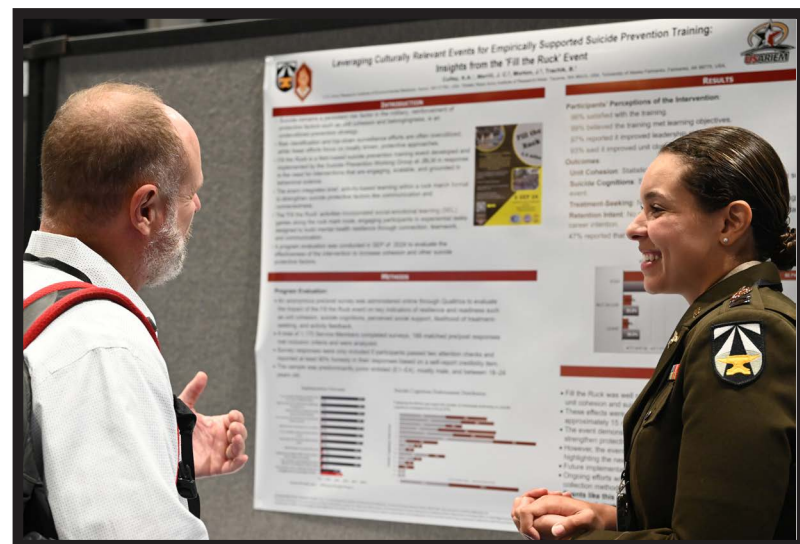
“When I attended MHSRS last year, I observed confident and rehearsed scientists and applied that experience and knowledge to the presentation we get to see today,” Martinez said. “I took my

mentorship from my officers and the investment I’ve been putting in myself to highlight this important work that I get to present this year.”

This research, Martinez suggests, has been a year-long study that she has helped conduct and complete from the beginning to the end. “I now get to see all that data that I helped collect come alive,” she said.

Each year at the Military Health System Research Symposium, researchers, fellows and soldiers showcase their warfighter-centric work with the promise to support the new generation of the military. At MHSRS, like-minded peers are forming a better, stronger and faster group of warfighters to be more lethal and optimized in all environments—a mission USARIEM strives for everyday.

“As a warfighter and as a researcher, I am part of the extraordinary team at USARIEM that uses science to support people like me,” Ott said. “The work we do positively impacts the warfighter that has already saved countless lives and will save more in the future.”



Back to School Safety: A Shared Responsibility

Story by the Installation Safety Office

As summer fades and families gear up for a new school year, excitement fills the air—new backpacks, fresh supplies, and the promise of learning adventures ahead. But amid the anticipation lies an important responsibility we all share ensuring our children's safety as they head back to the classroom.

While much attention is rightly placed on keeping kids safe during school hours, the journey to and from school is just as critical. These daily transitions, whether by foot, bike, bus, or car, present key moments of vulnerability, especially for young children starting school for the first time.

In addition to preparing your child academically, take time to teach them essential safety habits for their commute. This is also an ideal moment to remind older students of basic back-to-school safety rules and reinforce good practices that may have slipped over the summer.

Together, we can make this school year not only exciting and enriching—but safe from start to finish.

1. Drivers

- Never block crosswalks.
- Yield to pedestrians in crosswalks and take extra care in school zones.
- Never pass a vehicle stopped for pedestrians.
- Use extreme caution in school zones. Always stop for school buses when you see flashing red lights and / or the bus's stop sign for loading or unloading children.

2. Walkers

- Walk on the sidewalk; if there is no sidewalk and you must walk on the street, walk facing traffic.
- Before crossing the street, stop and look left, right, and left again to see if cars are coming.

- Never dart out in front of parked cars.
- Never walk while texting or talking on the phone.
- Do not walk while using headphones.

3. Bike Riders

- Always wear a helmet that is fitted and secured properly.
- Children need to know the rules of the road: Ride single file on the right side of the road, come to a complete stop before crossing the street and walk the bike across.
- Watch for opening car doors and other hazards.
- Use hand signals when turning.
- Wear bright colored clothing or a high visibility vest.

4. Bus Riders

- Remind your children the proper way to exit and enter a school bus.
- Arrive at the bus stop early.
- Line up 6 feet away from the curb as the bus approaches.
- If seat belts are available, buckle up.
- Wait for the bus to stop completely before standing.
- Do not cross in front of a school bus if possible, or walk at least 10 feet ahead until you can see the other drivers.

Important Reminder - According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), all drivers are legally required to stop when a school bus displays red flashing lights and / or a lit stop sign. Vehicles must remain stationary until the lights cease flashing, the extended stop sign is withdrawn, and the bus resumes motion. This law is in place to safeguard children who may be crossing the street or walking near the bus—your attention and compliance can save lives.



Saluting the Silent Strength

Story by Keith Jackson, Deputy to the Garrison Commander USAG - Natick



Nestled in the heart of Massachusetts, the Natick Soldier Systems Center stands as a hub of innovation and critical support for the U.S. Army. Behind the scenes, the unsung heroes of the Department of Public Works (DPW) play a vital role in keeping the installation running smoothly. This dedicated team works tirelessly to ensure the facility remains operational, secure, and mission-ready both day in and day out.

Their responsibilities extend far beyond basic maintenance; they are integral to the success of soldiers, scientists, and civilians alike, managing vital infrastructure such as roads, buildings, and energy systems. The DPW team responds swiftly to emergencies, upholds environmental standards, and facilitates construction and modernization projects that enhance the garrison's future. Their contributions significantly influence mission readiness and the overall quality of life for everyone at Natick.

For the DPW team, each day is marked by commitment and diligence, beginning well before dawn and often extending into the night. They tackle challenges ranging from snow removal during severe weather to coordinating facility

upgrades and ensuring compliance with Army regulations. Their professionalism and sense of duty shine through in every task they undertake, whether it involves supporting community events or conducting essential inspections. The impact of their work is evident in the numerous accounts from those on post, highlighting their readiness to address issues promptly and effectively. These stories underscore the vital role of DPW, revealing that they are not merely a support team but a cornerstone of the garrison's operations.

To the dedicated personnel of USAG Natick SSC DPW, your contributions may often go unnoticed, yet your significance is undeniable. You serve as the protectors of our infrastructure, the champions of safety, and the vital force that sustains this installation. We extend our gratitude for your unwavering commitment, sacrifices, and service. Your efforts not only strengthen Natick but also make its mission achievable.

You make Natick stronger. You make Natick possible. Thank you and we appreciate all you do for the service members and civilians on the installation.



Staying Ahead of the Storm:

Massachusetts and the Hurricane Season

Story by Brian Simeone, Installation Emergency Manager

National Preparedness Month is observed every September. It's an annual campaign to remind everyone to prepare for emergencies and disasters, ensuring the safety of individuals, families, and communities. This article is part of the USAG Natick Installation EMs awareness and education.



As the 2025 Atlantic hurricane season continues, it is essential for Massachusetts residents to understand the potential risks and take proactive steps for preparedness. NOAA predicts an above-average season with 13-19 named storms, including 6-10 hurricanes and 3-5 major hurricanes (Category 3 or higher). While no major hurricanes have yet made landfall in Massachusetts, this forecast emphasizes the need for vigilance and readiness.

Key Steps to Prepare for Hurricane Season

- **Know Your Evacuation Zone:** Massachusetts has designated hurricane evacuation zones (A, B, and C) based on storm surge flooding risk. Visit www.mass.gov/knowyourzone to determine if you live or work in one of these zones.
- **Create a Family Emergency Plan:** Develop a plan addressing how your family will communicate, evacuate, and shelter in place if necessary. Include meeting locations, emergency contacts, children, individuals with disabilities, and pets. Mass.gov offers resources for creating a plan.

Build an Emergency Kit:

Assemble a kit with enough supplies to sustain your family for 3-5 days without power or access to stores. Essential items include:

- o Bottled water (1 gallon/person/day)
- o Non-perishable food
- o Flashlights and extra batteries
- o Battery-powered or hand-crank radio and extra batteries
- o First aid kit
- o Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- o Copies of important documents (insurance policies, medical records, etc.) stored in a waterproof container
- o Special items include (medications, baby formula, pet supplies)
- o Cash, as ATMs may be inoperable during power outages



National Preparedness Month

Preparedness Starts At Home

Prepare for Power Outages:

Have a plan for potential power loss and consider investing in a generator (and learn how to use it safely).

Protect Important Documents:

Secure essential documents like insurance policies, medical records, and identification in a waterproof container. Consider backing up important documents online.

Stay Informed:

Monitor news and weather reports for updates and emergency alerts. Sign up for local notification systems and download the free Massachusetts Alerts app.

Pet Preparedness:

Never leave your pets behind. Include pet supplies in your emergency kit, research pet-friendly shelters or hotels, and ensure vaccinations are current.

Resources for Massachusetts Residents Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA):

Offers comprehensive hurricane preparedness resources on their website.

Mass 2-1-1:

Call 2-1-1 for non-emergency assistance during a disaster, including information on shelter locations, disaster assistance programs, or how to volunteer.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA):

Provides forecasts and warnings, including hurricane analysis and forecast system improvements for more accurate predictions.

FEMA Mobile App

Download the app for real-time alerts and information on preparing for disasters.

Remember, preparing in advance can make a significant difference in your safety and resilience during a hurricane. Take these proactive steps now to ensure you and your loved ones are ready for whatever the 2025 hurricane season brings.



USAG-Natick strengthens ties with Natick community during National Night Out

Story and photos by Alfred Tripolone III, USAG-Natick Public Affairs

For the second year in a row, U.S. Army Garrison Natick joined local first responders and neighbors on Natick Common for the town's annual National Night Out, highlighting the installation's continued commitment to community partnership and transparency.

Held the first Tuesday of August, the event brought together police, firefighters, public safety officials, and community organizations for a family-friendly evening focused on building trust and celebrating unity. As a returning participant, USAG-Natick and the Natick Soldier Systems Center (NSSC) offered residents a hands-on look at the research, innovation, and support work that happens on post every day.

"Events like National Night Out remind us that we're part of something bigger than just the mission on base, we're part of this community," said Lt. Col. Gregory Kozlowski, commander of USAG-Natick. "When we participate in community events, we're building trust and letting our neighbors know we're not behind closed gates. We're here with them, for them."

Personnel from across the installation, including security guards, civilian staff, and scientists,

engaged with the public, answering questions and showing how their work supports the U.S. military around the world. Many families stopped by the NSSC display to learn about protective gear, food technology, and career paths at the installation.

"What happens at Natick supports Soldiers around the world, making them safer and stronger, but we can't do that without the support of the communities here at home," said Kozlowski. "I want to thank the community for all of their support because that support makes our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Guardians, and Coast Guardsmen more capable. Engaging with

our community also helps us share our mission and inspire the next generation, whether that's a kid curious about science or a parent who wants to know more about what we do behind the fence line."

Participation in National Night Out is one part of the garrison's annual missions to foster positive, long-



term relationships with the Natick community. That includes everything from supporting school visits and hosting open houses to participating in safety fairs and emergency response coordination.

“USAG-Natick is proud to be part of the town of Natick,” said Kozlowski. “Participating in National Night Out is one way we show that partnership goes both ways, we rely on the community, and they can rely on us. It’s an opportunity to strengthen relationships and highlight the work our people do every day in support of the nation’s warfighters. Additionally, we are able to highlight the vast career opportunities that lay within the U.S. Army outside of people see in movies.”

As the only active-duty Army installation in New England, NSSC continues to play a unique role in both the local and national defense landscape. Garrison leadership say they plan to maintain a visible and welcoming presence in the community as part of their ongoing mission to connect, educate, and support.





CHAPLAIN-LED BSRT TRAINING CIVILIANS ONLY

DATE: WEDNESDAY , SEPTEMBER 10, 2025

TIME: 8:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.

**LOCATION: ASHLAND WARREN
CONFERENCE CENTER AND INN**

THIS EVENT INCLUDES:

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS ON WORKPLACE
DYNAMICS.**

TEAM-BUILDING EXERCISES IN A RETREAT ENVIRONMENT.

FREE BREAKFAST, LUNCH, AND SNACKS.



SUPERVISOR APPROVAL REQUIRED

**LIMITED SLOTS AVAILABLE – RSVP
REQUIRED.**

**OIC: CH SOUTHARD
NCOIC: SGT THOMAS**

Your Installation and the Medal of Honor: The Prendergast Building (Building 7)

THOMAS FRANCIS PRENDERGAST

RANK: CORPORAL

CONFLICT/ERA: PHILIPPINE INSURRECTION

SERVICE BRANCH: U.S. MARINE CORPS

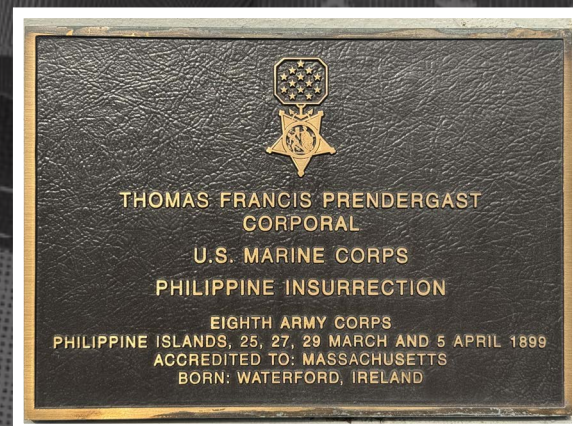
MEDAL OF HONOR ACTION DATE:

MARCH 25, 27, 29 and APRIL 5, 1899

MEDAL OF HONOR ACTION PLACE:

THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS

CITATION : For distinguished conduct in the presence of the enemy in battle, while with the 8th Army Corps on 25, 27, 29 March, and 5 April 1899.



NATICK VETERANS
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT



VALOR ★ HONOR ★ FREEDOM ★ SACRIFICE ★ DUTY

There is an opportunity for Veterans and Department of Defense Civilians to participate in the Natick Veterans Oral History Project. The project, launched in 1998 at the Morse Institute Library in Massachusetts, invites community participation to preserve and share the personal stories of veterans and home front workers from World War II to present conflicts, through interviews archived on DVD and accessible for public use.

For more information: <https://natickveterans.com>

If interested please contact the Installation Public Affairs Office:

usarmy.natick.id-training.mbx.nati-imne-ssc-pa@army.mil



10:00

Yoon Gate Open - August 8

Yoon Gate has resumed normal operations. Click link for more details.

Good Evening

Quality 50 AQI

ations to general public

Mission Critical

74°F

Clear

2 mph Wind

87% Rain

92% Humidity

Emergency numbers

Explore Newcomers Bus

