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# After challenging year, Army posts high marks in civilian employee survey

By Joseph Lacdan  
 Army News Service

In a year where the Army overcame numerous challenges, it also achieved its best overall ratings ever in the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, a top Army civilian personnel leader said recently.

The Army posted an employee engagement index rate of 72.7% in fiscal year 2020, up three percentage points from the previous year, and saw its biggest increase in the 'leaders lead' category, which, at 62.7% marked a 3.5% increase from 2019. The U.S. Office of Personnel Management released the results in January after distributing the survey in the fall.

"When the numbers first started rolling out, I was extremely excited by the high response rate year over year, especially in this COVID year," said Todd Fore, deputy assistant secretary of the Army for civilian personnel. "But



Photo by Christopher Larsen

Robert Winchel, left, a managed care analyst at Madigan Army Medical Center, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., receives a congratulatory elbow bump Oct. 1, 2020. Winchel was selected as the U.S. Army Medical Command's civilian of the year.

.....  
 See Army, page 4

# Get the COVID-19 vaccine when you can and get it now, Fauci and Place say

By Military Health System  
 Communications Office

Get a COVID-19 vaccine, and get it as soon as it's available to you.

That's the message from President Biden's Chief Medical Adviser Dr. Anthony Fauci and Defense Health Agency Director Lt. Gen (Dr.) Ron Place during recent town halls with military families addressing the safety, efficacy and availability of the vaccine.

"You're part of the solution to this outbreak," explained Fauci, emphasizing that the vaccine is needed to protect not only Service members, but their families and acquaintances as well.

"You've got to think of your own health, which is really very important, but you've got to think about your societal obligation, including people close to you personally as well as other members of families of other individuals," he said.

Fauci and Place addressed thousands of military families during a second virtual town hall event hosted by Blue Star Families, a non-profit Military/Veteran Service Organization dedicated to military family matters, and the American Red Cross. The initial virtual town hall was Feb. 4.

During the March 4 town hall, Place said



Photo by Navy Mass Communications Specialist 2nd Class Michael Chen

Spc. William Hunter, right, administers the COVID-19 vaccine to Navy Chief Damage Controlman Solita Livingston at Navy Branch Health Clinic Chinhae, Republic of Korea, Jan. 8.

the Department of Defense had administered almost 1.3 million total doses of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines at 335 DOD sites around the world. As of March 11, this number has now increased to nearly 1.5 million vaccines administered. Additionally, more than 82,000 vaccinations have been administered to Military Health System beneficiaries at retail pharmacies, Place said.

While supply is increasing and the DoD continues to limit vaccines to certain groups under Tier 1 of the distribution plan, Place said he expects that most DoD vaccination sites will move to Tier 2 by April. Tier 2 means the vaccines will be available to MHS families in the DoD.

"When your tier comes up, no matter where you are, in the United States, OCONUS (outside the continental United States), coming from OCONUS to the United States, when your tier comes up you get the vaccine," Place said.

Asked whether holding off until a specific vaccine becomes available is a good strategy, Fauci advised: "Get the one you can get now." Janssen's one-shot vaccine recently received Food and Drug Administration emergency use authorization, so now there are three vaccines available to the public.

He also said to not wait to get vaccinated because of fear of the COVID-19 variants from South Africa, Brazil, and Great Britain. "Get vaccinated and get a high enough titer (a measure of antibodies in the blood). That will give enough of a cushion to protect against the variants."

To further allay hesitancy among Service members to get vaccinated, he called the likelihood of serious adverse reactions to the vaccines "vanishingly small."

# Q&A: Are COVID-19 vaccines safe and effective?

By TRICARE.mil Staff

**A**s the fight against COVID-19 continues, vaccination is one way to slow the spread and protect yourself. Chances are you know someone who's already been vaccinated. Still, you may be concerned about safety - and wondering when to schedule the vaccine for yourself. "It's important for people to know that these vaccines, though produced in record time, have gone through the same safety processes as other vaccines," said Dr. John Kugler, chief of the Clinical Support Division at the Defense Health Agency.



Photo by Pfc. Jailene Bautista/5th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Pfc. Tanner Tate, a medic assigned to the 528th Field Hospital, vaccinates a community member at the state-run, federally-supported Elizabeth High School COVID-19 Community Vaccination Center in Elizabeth, New Jersey, March 5.

As the COVID-19 vaccine becomes available to you, you may have questions. Here are some answers about the vaccine.

**Q Will I experience side effects after getting a COVID-19 vaccine?**

**A** You may. Most common side effects are pain and swelling in the arm where you received the shot. You may also have fever, chills, tiredness, and headache. These symptoms are a sign that your body is building protection against the coronavirus. They should go away in a few days. Contact your doctor if the side effects are worrying you or don't seem to be going away after a few days. Since vaccines carry a risk of allergic reactions, the CDC recommends that your vaccine provider monitors you for 15 to 30 minutes after vaccination. In the rare case that you think you're experiencing

a severe allergic reaction after leaving the vaccination site, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.

**Q Can a COVID-19 vaccine make me sick with COVID-19?**

**A** No. It can't make you sick with COVID-19. According to the CDC, none of the authorized and recommended vaccines contain the live virus that causes COVID-19.

**Q I'm pregnant. Is it safe for me to get the COVID-19 vaccine?**

**A** If you're pregnant, you may be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Vaccination may reduce that risk and is available to pregnant women. Individuals should discuss with their provider when deciding whether to be vaccinated.

**Q How many shots of COVID-19 vaccine do I need?**

**A** It depends. Currently, the Janssen vaccine (also known as the Johnson & Johnson vaccine) requires only a single shot. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines require two shots given at least 21 days (for Pfizer) and 28 days (for Moderna) apart. If the pandemic continues, people may need additional shots (boosters) in the future, similar to how booster shots are needed to protect against other diseases.

**Q Does it matter which COVID-19 vaccine I get?**

**A** There are currently three COVID-19 vaccines authorized and recommended for people in the U.S.:

- Janssen vaccine (1 shot)
- Moderna vaccine (2 shots, at least 28 days apart)
- Pfizer vaccine (2 shots, at least 21 days apart)

"All three of these vaccines can reduce your risk of serious illness or death due to COVID-19," Kugler added. "Vaccines differ by age authorized, and in how they are produced and work. The CDC has information for patients about each vaccine."

Keep in mind, it typically takes a few weeks after your last shot for your body to build immunity to COVID-19. Once fully vaccinated, new guidelines from the CDC provide recommendations for private settings.

**MISSION CRITICAL**

PLEASE NOTE: There is a 15 day deferral after each COVID vaccine

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- In-Person - Maintenance Facility Building 1108
- Phone - 24-Hour Emergency Maintenance Request Line: 703-619-3880

**LEVEL 2 – MAKE CONTACT**

- Villages at Belvoir Management: 571-318-7546
- Contact Your Chain of Command
- Fort Belvoir Housing Office: 703-805-3018/3019

**LEVEL 3 – CONTACT GARRISON COMMANDER**

- Garrison Commander's Housing Hotline: 571-259-9867
- Submit concerns to the Fort Belvoir Interactive Customer Evaluation ICE System: <https://ice.disa.mil>

Residents with health concerns related to housing conditions, call Fort Belvoir Community Hospital Rapid Hotline: 571-231-2004

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**Eagle**

Volume 29  
Issue 60

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The *Belvoir Eagle* is published in cooperation with the Public Affairs Office, 9820 Flagler Road, Fort Belvoir, VA, 22060. To contact the *Belvoir Eagle*, email us at [usarmy.belvoir.imcom-atlantic.mbx.public-affairs-office@mail.mil](mailto:usarmy.belvoir.imcom-atlantic.mbx.public-affairs-office@mail.mil). Submission deadline is noon Thursday. The *Belvoir Eagle* is published each Thursday — by Rappahannock Media LLC, 1360 Old Bridge Road, Woodbridge, VA 22192, a private firm in no way connected with

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# Contact tracing is crucial in the race to avoid COVID-19 variants

By Paul Lara  
Belvoir Eagle

One year ago, the sole epidemiology technician at Fort Belvoir Community Hospital was gearing up for battle. Other states had experienced community spread of COVID-19, and Rolando Diaz already had several patients he suspected were also infected, but the state of Virginia had almost no capacity to test them.

“Virginia had about 25 tests for the entire state and they had to be very selective about who was tested,” Diaz said, adding that when they got results back from an out-of-state lab, it confirmed that a Marine, stationed at Quantico, tested positive.

That news unleashed a torrent of concerned phone calls from what Diaz called the ‘worried well’; people who had encounters that made them concerned they might have been exposed. Reassuring people they likely weren’t exposed was the first of many challenges.

“Early on, we were looking for sources of who gave it to whom,” Diaz said. “By mid-to-late April, the state and even the DoD shifted from determining whom you got the virus from, to who you could have given it to. We went from looking for sources to looking to those that may have infected someone else. There was a dramatic shift. Even then, those numbers



Photo by Paul Lara

Rolando Diaz, right, epidemiology technician at Fort Belvoir Community hospital, confers with Maj. Laurence Webb, chief of Public Health Nursing, March 11. Diaz continues to lead contact tracing efforts for Fort Belvoir, as case counts decline and the number of vaccinated people rises.

overwhelmed us entirely.”

“It’s very time-consuming and labor-intensive work,” said Col. Jeremiah Stubbs, MD, the deputy chief of Public Health Occupational Medicine. “Without Diaz’ work, we’d not be able to wrap our arms around this at all.”

Hospital leadership was able to backstop Diaz with 1st Lt. Moonkyu Choi, RN to help him.

“He’s been instrumental in saving my sanity. It’s not just the phone calls and doing the contact tracing, it’s also the reporting of

all your cases,” Diaz said. “Without his help, there’s no way I would have made it through the month of July.”

Starting as a Preventative Medicine Specialist in the Army, he worked with communicable diseases, and said that his increased training helped prepare him for last year.

“If you look at contact tracing, whether it’s COVID-19, measles or HIV, the principals are almost the same; it centers on communication,” said Diaz. “When I speak to someone, the goal is that I don’t want to worry them more than what they should be. It takes a lot of training to let them see the potential seriousness of the exposure without causing them to go into a panic.”

With vaccines in wide distribution, Diaz said that the nation is now in a race to vaccinate as many people as possible before new COVID-19 variants surface

that won’t respond sufficiently to the three vaccines in use.

“That’s the hope, is to get people vaccinated to reduce the likelihood of that happening. I think a viral mutation is a part of life, whether flu or COVID-19, it’s inevitable,” Diaz said.

This is a battle Diaz was trained for, but regrets the monumental loss we all suffered.

“It’s like a whole other world war that was won on a microscopic level, and something that I hope I’ll never see again.” Diaz said.

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I really think what is key is the engagement of our leadership at all levels, because they really do care about the feedback that they are receiving.”

The Army also had an increase in its global satisfaction index at 69%. The category measures federal employees’ overall satisfaction with their job, pay and organization. About 70% of Army civilians said that they would recommend their organization to others, up from 68% the previous year.

“Those are very, very good numbers across government [organizations], but exceptional in large organizations,” Fore said. “I think it is incredible that we have such a high response rate across the department.”

According to the survey, which OPM made available to full-time and part-time, permanent Army civilians, 45% of the Army’s more than 184,000 employees participated in it.

“Our employee engagement activities have enabled us to not only communicate to employees, but actually to hear what employees have to say,” Fore said.

### Communication methods revamped

In 2020, the Army evolved the way it communicates with its employees in large part because of the coronavirus pandemic. As the nation’s largest military branch, communication had been an area where the Army struggled, Fore said.

But the ability to communicate has improved in recent years and the global pandemic opened the need to make contact more effectively.



Courtesy U.S. Army

In a year where the Army overcame numerous challenges, it also achieved its best overall ratings ever in the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, said Todd Fore, deputy assistant secretary of the Army for civilian personnel, during an interview March 3.

When the Army began stay-at-home orders in March 2020, leaders had to open more lines of communication including using virtual

options as many of its Soldiers and civilians had to work from home or were separated from their units. To achieve mission requirements, supervisors have used virtual means such as online conferences and chat rooms to reach employees.

“I think we’ve really upped our game in communication,” Fore said. “I believe that COVID has enabled us to talk to employees at a different level. And since we’re all using various forms of technology, I think our communication and outreach for employees has actually improved.”

Fore said the Army’s Civilian Implementation Plan, or CIP, as well as the Army People Strategy, has had an impact on the service’s civilian workforce in encouraging them to seek career advancement opportunities. The CIP is the Army’s effort to augment and enhance the contributions of its civilian workforce by modernizing talent management policies and activities.

Fore added that the opening of the Army Civilian Career Management Activity, or ACCMA, on Fort Belvoir in October has helped reach employees at the strategic level. ACCMA will help Army recruiting and retention attract qualified candidates to critical positions that have been challenging to fill.

The Army still has areas where it must continue to improve, Fore said, including in diversity and inclusion. Listening sessions are now being held at various installations as part of Project Inclusion, the service’s plan to listen to the concerns of Army personnel to promote diversity and equal opportunities not only for Soldiers but also their civilian counterparts.

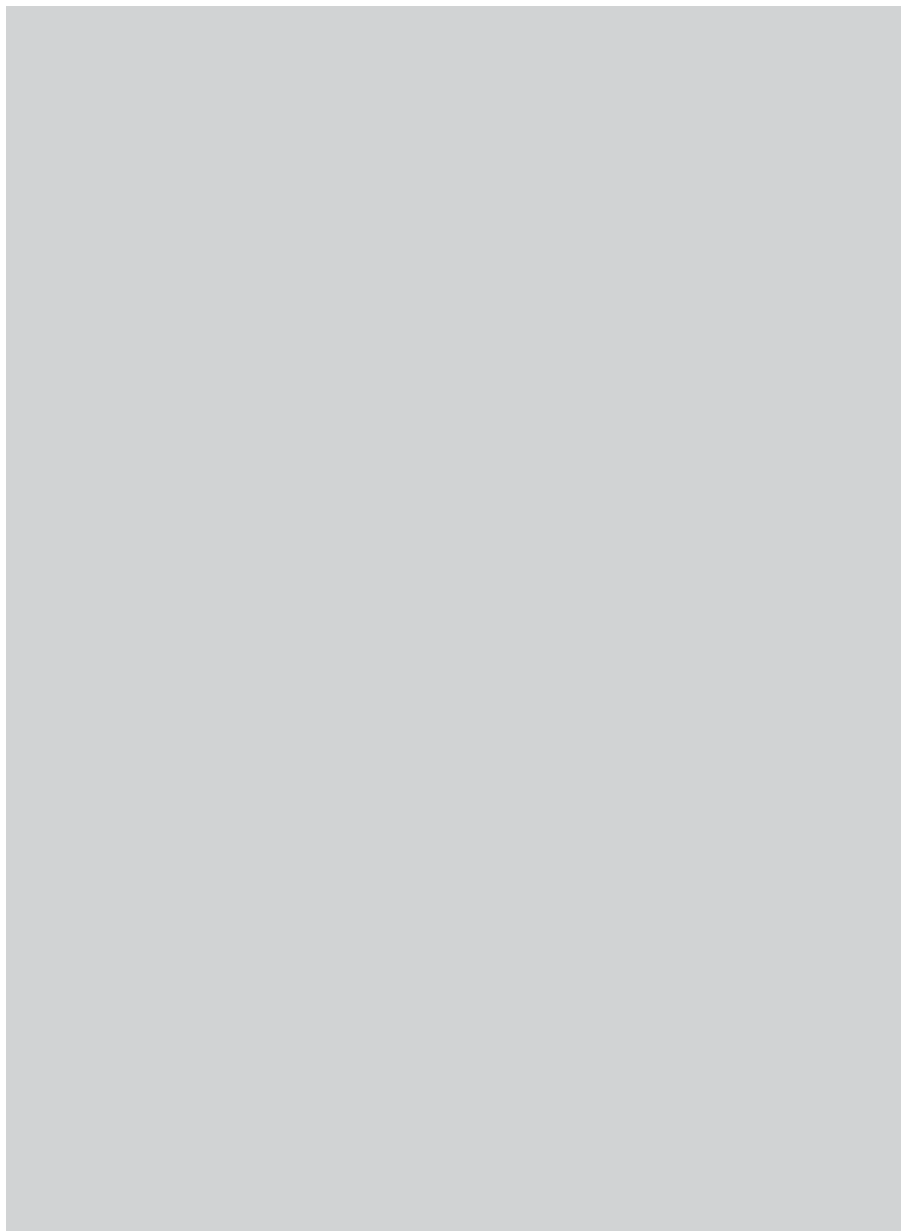
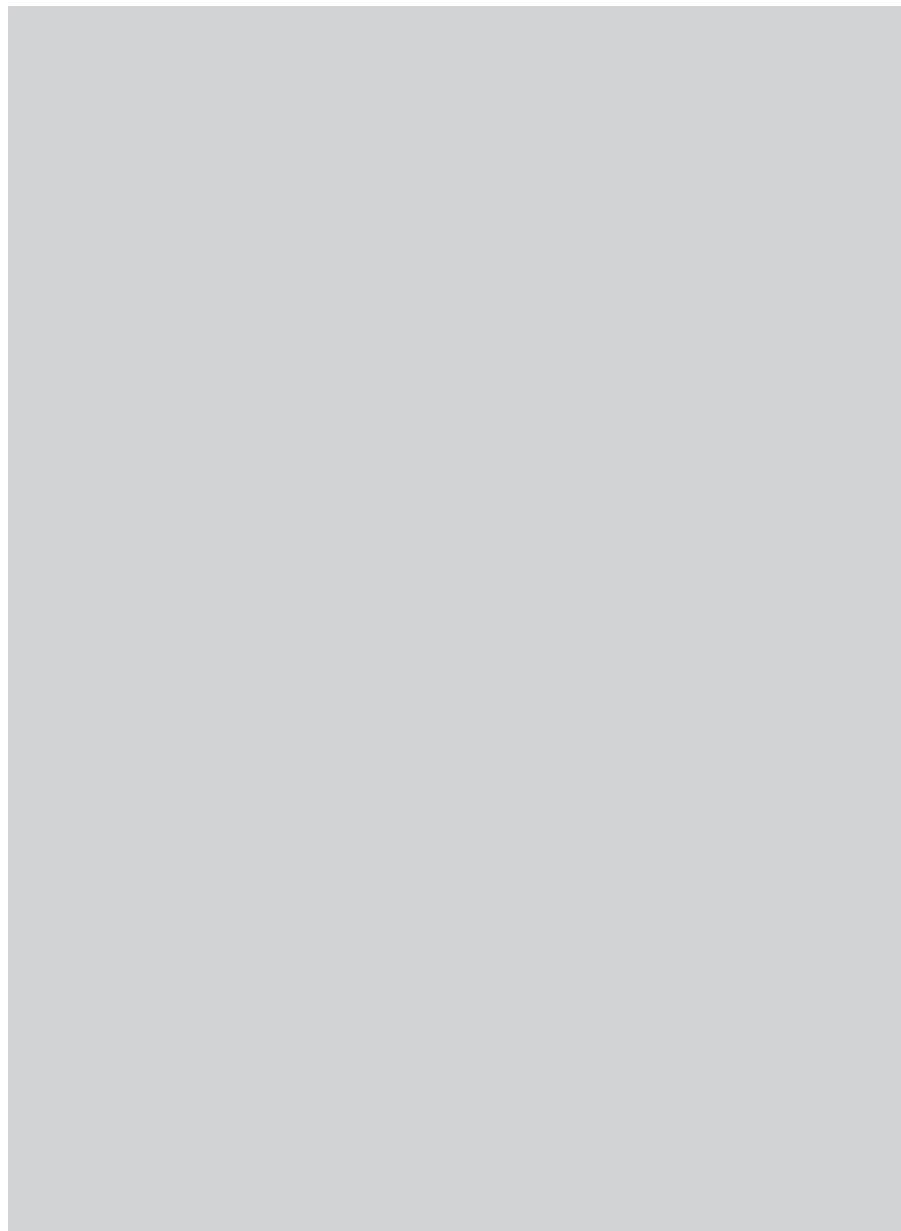




Photo by Frederick Shear

The senior official performing the duties of Under Secretary of the Army, Mr. Christopher Lowman, discusses protective equipment for Soldiers with Col. Derek Bird, Lt. Col. Stephen Miller and Maj. Melissa Elledge, with PEO Soldier, March 8.

## Under Secretary of the Army Visits PEO Soldier

By Frederick Shear  
PEO Soldier

Earlier this month, the senior official performing the duties of Under Secretary of the Army, Christopher Lowman, visited PEO Soldier to receive an update on the Army's progress in developing protective equipment and clothing for female Soldiers.

Representatives from Project Manager Soldier Survivability, Product Manager Soldier Protective Equipment and Product Manager Soldier Clothing and Individual Equipment updated the second-ranking civilian in the Army on the status of armor, ballistic equipment, helmets and uniforms that provide more protection, maneuverability and comfort during all types of duties and missions.

"Today we have women serving in every type of Army unit, so it's critical to Army readiness to ensure women have properly fitting equipment and uniforms," said Lowman. "One impact is it reduces injuries, but proper fitting and design also increases the overall effectiveness of the Soldier. I was pleased to see the improvements and range of considerations that went into developing the equipment and uniforms, and I think it'll make a positive impact for our women Soldiers."

Col. Derek Bird, PM SSV, Lt. Col. Stephen Miller, PdM SPE and Maj. Melissa Elledge, Assistant Product Manager, Body Armor, SPE, highlighted components of the Soldier Protection System, the Army's next-generation personal protective equipment system.

Among these was the Modular Scalable Vest Generation II, which is 26% lighter than the current body armor vest. It will be available in eight sizes, up from

the current five. PEO Soldier also briefed how the Female Ballistic Combat Shirt, worn under the MSV, is designed to accommodate the build of female Soldiers while providing increased ballistic protection.

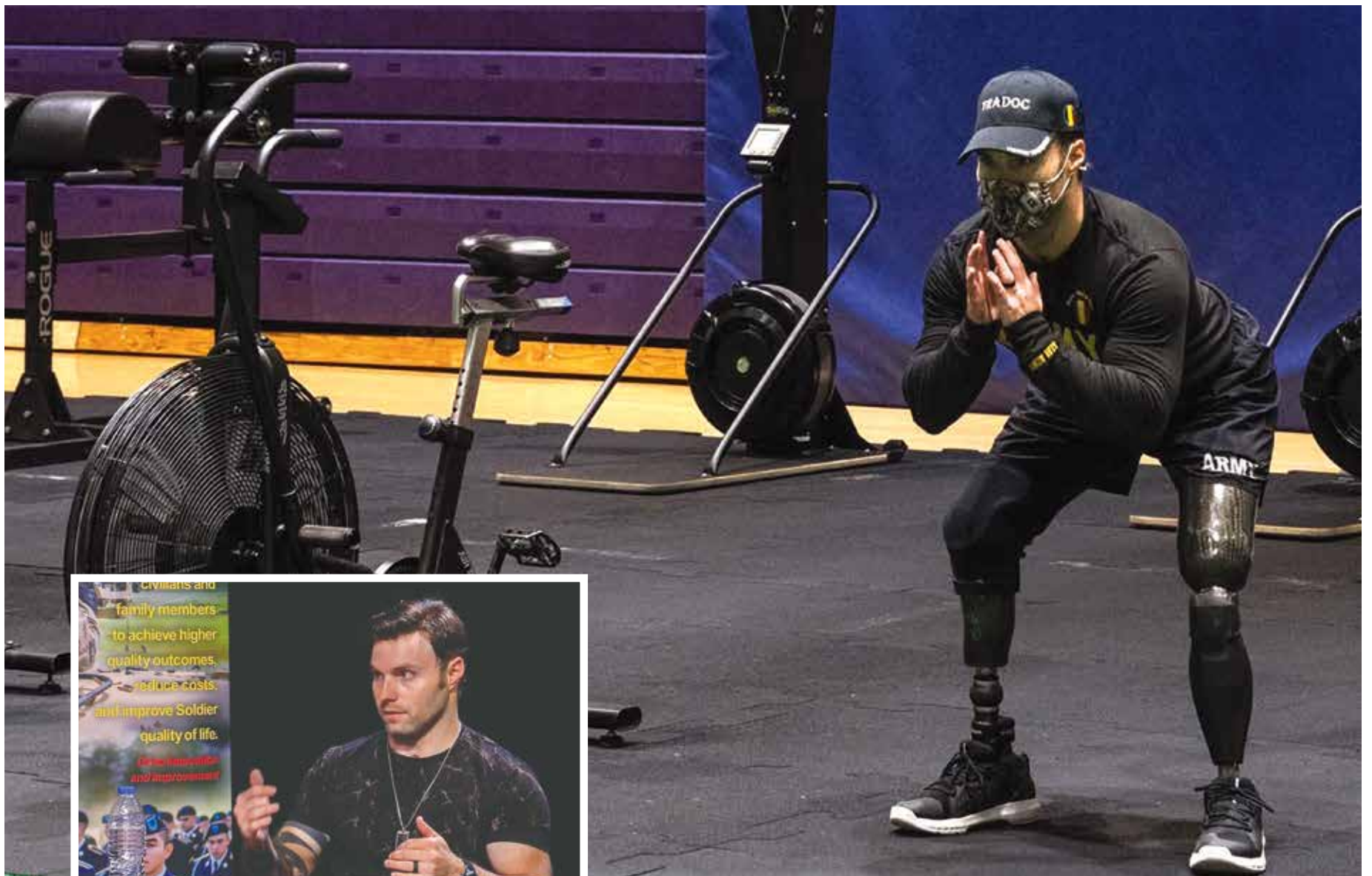
"Our job is to design, develop, and field lifesaving equipment that fits every Soldier, regardless of gender, and that is exactly what we do every day," said Elledge.

Other SPS components presented to Mr. Lowman included the Enhanced Small Arms Protective Insert Plate Generation III, designed in a format known as the "shooter's cut," that weighs less and allows for more upper body movement than current plates, as well as the Integrated Head Protection System, which weighs less than helmets worn now, provides more protection and better fits female Soldiers.

The Army is fielding SPS components to units over the next several years.

Mr. Lester Smith, Assistant Product Manager, PdM SCIE, also informed Mr. Lowman about developments with the Improved Hot Weather Combat Uniform-Female, which comes in 16 additional sizes to the unisex IHWCU and makes adjustments to account for neck, hip, waist and chest sizes. Other SCIE programs highlighted included the Improved Maternity Work Uniform and the Army Aircrew Combat Uniform – Female, currently under joint development with the Air Force.

"Our team appreciated the opportunity to walk Mr. Lowman through our portfolio," said Miller. "Leadership buy-in and support is crucial to continued improvement of these capabilities and ensuring we get the right kit, to the right Soldiers, at the right time."



Photos courtesy TRADOC

Justin "JP" Lane works out before his talk with TRADOC Leadership Development, Feb. 19

JP Lane, double amputee, motivational speaker and musician, relates how he overcame his battle injuries during the TRADOC Leadership Professional Development session Feb. 19.

# Resilience: overcoming our battles – together

By Paul Lara  
*Belvoir Eagle*

Speaking at a TRADOC Leadership Professional Development roundtable, Justin "JP" Lane said he knew for most of his life he was destined to be a Soldier.

"I joined because as an 8th grader I saw the twin towers fall, and I decided when I'm old enough I could prevent that from ever happening again," Lane said. "As the dust settled and my tears settled, I knew I was going to serve my country. I had a strategic plan, by going Reserve and having an 8-year contract, and travel and work elsewhere. My plan was to go active duty and become 100% Army.

"I wanted to be as front-line as I could get. I asked my recruiter 'what's the most dangerous job there is? And he said 'a combat engineer looks for bombs and makes bombs', and I said 'sign me up'."

He was notified after training that he was deploying to Afghanistan, and he said he was thrilled. On his arrival to a Forward Operating Base, one of the biggest threats was improvised explosive devices, which were threats to Humvees and smaller vehicles. Lane, however, felt invincible riding in a Bradley Fighting Vehicle, and he related the ineffectual blasts to a fun ride.

"I really love roller coasters. When a blast goes off, and your truck goes up and comes back down, it feels like a roller coaster. In

the moment, everyone was okay, so I thought 'I could do this every single day and I don't care, because if my Soldiers are fine, it'll be okay,' Lane said. "Just a normal, everyday life, getting blown up.

"July second, 2018, was my day off. We leave the FOB to cover a dangerous route. We cleared it, and covered the rest of the routes and came back," said Lane. "While we were gone, Taliban had come back and put in a bigger IED," Lane said, adding that it was the first time an IED penetrated an RG31 (mine-resistant vehicle). "The blast amputated both legs, snapped my right arm in half, and everything in my torso was damaged except my heart and left lung. My spine had snapped in half, and ... at that moment... I didn't understand the extent of the damage."

Lane suffered 26 injuries, was in a coma for two months, and underwent 28 surgeries.

U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Hendrex met Lane about three years ago, as part of Operation Proper Exit, to help wounded Soldiers leave the service on their own terms, by sharing medical records and classified event investigations downrange.

"I was stunned to read what Lane had gone through, and impressed that Lane even survived," Hendrex said.

At the Center for the Intrepid, Lane was determined to recover as quickly as possible.

"As a double amputee, I was discharged in six months, instead of the usual two years of

recovery. I needed to repeatedly tell myself, 'we're going to get through this. Never give up; never surrender.' I continued to fight every single day.

"I was in a wheelchair for a year, and I got used to the height change, sitting all the time. Once in my prosthetics, I felt amazing," Lane said, adding "It wasn't until God told me 'start music' that I had a purpose and something to reach for, and all thoughts of suicide disappeared."

Ten years later, Lane is now an inspirational speaker, singer, and recording an album. He said his resiliency comes from four pillars: faith, social, physical and mental.

"There will be trials we face, and we need to lean on our faith. Socially, you need to lift others up. Mentally – be tough and able to handle things; become smarter and allow your mind to be the best it can. Physically, keep up with your fitness. I'm not in the Army, and a double amputee, but I work out six days a week and three days it's twice a day. When you look healthy and feel healthy, it helps you to grow," Lane said.

"Don't allow others to give you a title. People call me a wounded warrior. I don't see myself as wounded. I feel stronger than ever in my life," Lane said. "I'm just a warrior, not a wounded warrior. I have friends that humble me that are triple and quadruple amputees. Everybody has their own battles, and we can overcome our battles – together."

# Responsible recreation on post: it's up to you

By Directorate of Public Works,  
Environmental Division

People are spending more time outdoors and recreation will only increase as the weather gets warmer. We love that everyone is enjoying all that Fort Belvoir has to offer, but it is important that we do so responsibly. Make sure you are having fun in approved recreation areas and not in controlled environmentally sensitive areas. Simply walking off of trails or making your own trails through the woods can result in major impacts to natural and cultural resources. Activity in these areas accelerates erosion which can cause accidents due to unstable ground, degradation of significant wildlife habitat, deterioration of wetlands, and negative impacts to important cultural resources.

## Environmentally Sensitive Areas

The land surrounding Fort Belvoir's living quarters and facilities is designated as environmentally sensitive. Many

rare plant and animal species call Fort Belvoir home. This is largely due to the fact that Fort Belvoir provides good habitat conditions for many protected species, including *Stygobromus phreaticus* which was thought to be extinct until 1996 when it was found on Fort Belvoir. Fort Belvoir has the only known population of this species on the planet, making them very important to protect.

Fort Belvoir also has a significant Bald Eagle population with several nesting pairs. Eagle nests are located throughout the installation's forest and are very sensitive to human impacts. Nesting pairs usually lay their eggs in February and are easily spooked by noises and human presence. If they feel threatened, they will abandon the nest resulting in death of the unhatched chicks. The pair usually will not nest again until the next season, dramatically impacting the overall population of Bald Eagles in our region.

## Litter and Pollution

Litter and pollution are also

major issues impacting these environmentally sensitive areas and we've been noticing more of it lately. Trash left behind outdoors can contribute to stormwater pollution and negatively affect water quality. Poor water quality degrades habitat conditions and impacts both aquatic and terrestrial wildlife. Stormwater pollution can also affect the quality of our drinking water, so it's important to prevent it as much as possible. Disposing of household goods properly is an easy way to do this. Do not leave items loose in your backyard that the wind or stormwater could carry into environmentally sensitive areas. If you discover that stormwater pollution has reached environmentally sensitive areas, report it to DPW Environmental's Stormwater Team at 703-806-3406. Do not attempt to clean the area yourself as this would be trespassing.

## Stormwater Management Facilities

Fort Belvoir has various stormwater management facilities

that have been designed to improve water quality, manage excess runoff, and prevent erosion and flooding. Some of these facilities may look like ponds or depressions during dry weather. However, they are not for recreational purposes and can fill rapidly during storms. It's important that these facilities remain in good working order since they are costly to build and repair. If the original design of these facilities is altered, their functionality will decrease causing major pollution, flooding, and/or erosion, which threatens our water quality and storm preparedness.

Remember, trespassing, fort building, tire swings, and bike riding are strictly prohibited in these areas. Littering, personal trail construction, and collection of natural and cultural resources, including bird feathers and suspected artifacts, are forbidden on all Fort Belvoir lands. Fort Belvoir truly is beautiful to see. Let's keep it that way by enjoying its beauty in a way that is safe and protects its beauty for generations to come.

## Recreational Opportunities

If you do want to get outdoors on post, Fort Belvoir has plenty of recreational opportunities available. Here are some **DO**s and **DON'T**s to get you started.

### DO

Explore Fort Belvoir's 14 miles of designated nature trails. A trail map can be found under the recreation program at: <https://home.army.mil/belvoir/index.php/about/Garrison/directorate-public-works/environmental-division>.

Explore your neighborhood and playgrounds.

Explore Fort Belvoir's waterfront at Tompkins Basin.

Explore fishing opportunities by visiting <https://ftbelvoir.isportsman.net/>.

Kayak or boat Accotink Bay.

Pick up after yourself and dispose of household goods properly.

Visit the site of the Fairfax family's Belvoir Manor to learn about Fort Belvoir's rich history.

Maintain a safe distance from any wildlife encountered.

### DO NOT

DO NOT explore outside of the approved recreation areas or trail systems. Protected species and cultural resources may be impacted.

DO NOT cut trees, build tree houses/forts, or construct personal trails outside of your backyard. This can be detrimental to natural and cultural resources.

DO NOT play or interfere with stormwater management facilities; such as stormwater ponds. Don't leave trash behind.

DO NOT fish without the appropriate licenses/permits or in locations not listed on iSportsman.

DO NOT launch your kayak or boat from unapproved boat launching sites. Approved boat launching sites can be found on trail maps and iSportsman.

DO NOT dump trash in the "woods." If you notice pollution in a wooded area outside of designated trails or parks, report it instead of attempting to clean it up yourself. To report pollution, click the "Report Stormwater Pollution" button on the Environmental Division webpage at <https://home.army.mil/belvoir/index.php/about/Garrison/directorate-public-works/environmental-division>.

DO NOT dig or pick up any suspected artifacts. If you think you have found an artifact, contact Environmental Division at [dorothy.e.keough.civ@mail.mil](mailto:dorothy.e.keough.civ@mail.mil) or 703-806-0049.

DO NOT pursue or harass wildlife.



**PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
FORT BELVOIR COMMUNITY HOSPITAL**

**PREPARE. PREVENT. PROTECT**  
March 21-27, 2021 • National Poison Prevention Week



Text **poison** to 484848, call 1-800-222-1222, or email [poisonhelp.hrsa.gov](mailto:poisonhelp.hrsa.gov)

- Connects you to a nurse, pharmacist, or other poison experts at your local poison control center.
- Is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Is a free phone service.
- Offers bilingual or translation services.
- Know poison risk for every season and holiday.
- Call 911 if someone has trouble breathing, trouble waking up, seizures, or other life-threatening signs.

# Poison Control Week, a chance to review household safety

By Bridget Pilgrim  
*Garrison Safety Office*

In 1961, Congress established National Poison Prevention every third week in March to bring awareness, reduce unintentional poisoning, and promote poison prevention. Poison centers receive millions of calls each year. This week is an opportunity to highlight the dangers and to provide tips for people of all ages. Be aware of potential poisons in the workplace and in your home, and ensure you have the poison control phone number in your phone's contacts to reduce response time.

The following tips can help you and your loved ones prevent poisoning:

**First Aid Tips:**

- If the person collapses, or stops breathing, call 911.
- If a person swallowed the wrong medicine or too much medicine call the Poison Control Center at 800-222-1222.
- If a person inhaled poison, get fresh air right away, and call 800-222-1222.
- For poison on the skin, take off any clothing that the person touched. Rinse the skin with running water for 15-20 minutes, and call 800-222-1222.
- For poison in the eyes, rinse the eyes with running water for 15 to 20 minutes, and call 800-222-122.

**Home Safety Tips  
(Be aware and secure):**

- Carefully read all warning labels before using chemicals or cleaners
  - Do not mix cleaning products together  
Keep cleaning products and cosmetics up and away from children. Remember there is no such thing as a 100 percent child proof lock. The following household items should be stored out of reach of children:
    - All medicines, including vitamins and supplements
    - Tobacco
    - Laundry/cleaning supplies
    - Button batteries (those found in musical greeting cards and key fobs) are easy to swallow and can cause tissue burns
    - Any type of lubricant, oils, engine oil
    - Alcohol
    - Personal care products, such as lens disinfectants, hand sanitizers
    - Other chemicals
- Additionally, one of the most common instances of household poisoning is from improper food handling, with 48 million Americans experiencing food poisoning each year. Practice safe food preparation and handling, and avoid cross-contaminating utensils or countertops while cooking.
- It is recommended to have the Poison Control Center number near for easy access. Hopefully, you will never need it.



# Golf provides perfect break from the pandemic

By David Fawcett  
*Belvoir Eagle*

One recent Monday, Fritz Diekmann noticed something unusual at the Fort Belvoir Golf Club. It was busy.

Typically, Mondays are the slowest days of the week for clubs. The warm weather contributed to the higher than expected numbers. But the pandemic has impacted turnout at courses as well and Fort Belvoir is no exception. Golf allows people the opportunity to get outside and still maintain social distancing in adherence to COVID-19 protocols.

Some of the golfers are regulars to the course, while others are newcomers.

"You are just seeing a lot more people," said Diekmann, the PGA Head Golf Professional at the Fort Belvoir Golf Club. "It remains busy."

Unlike other Virginia courses who have lifted restrictions, Fort Belvoir continues to keep safety measures in place.

Typical golf features like rakes, water coolers, ball washers and benches are still unavailable. New hole cups were installed that are only an inch deep. The

decrease in depth allowed the flagstick to remain in the cup and golfers to retrieve their balls without having to touch the cup or the flagstick. Golfers are allowed to use a cart, but are limited to one person per cart or two if they are family members.

In addition, Fort Belvoir will host fewer tournaments. And when the club does host a tournament, it will only provide boxed food for patrons instead of allowing them to eat inside the club.

But the steady stream of golfers coming in just to play offsets the reduction in tournaments.

"There's not a lot of other stuff going on," said Diekmann. "People are leery about travelling."

The higher numbers are a carryover from last year. Diekmann said January was a busy month before snow limited outings in February. But the number of tee times has picked up again in March and will continue as the course prepares for more golfers during the summer.

"Golf nationally has seen a huge uptick," Diekmann said.



*Photo by Paul Lara*

A golfer shoots to the green in this 2018 file photo. A pent-up demand to get outdoors is boosting use of the Belvoir Golf Club, but COVID safety precautions remain in place.



## CALLING ALL MILITARY-CONNECTED ARTISTS

By Paul Lara  
*Belvoir Eagle*

**W**orkhouse Arts Center is located right between Fort Belvoir and Marine Corps Base Quantico, and has a call for art entries for its upcoming exhibition, Arts for All: Diversity, Inclusion and Equity in the Military. The exhibition is in support of the One Military, One Community Initiative to impact change in defense communities and help create a better place for all Service members and their Families to call home, according to Audrey Miller, Workhouse Arts gallery manager.

“The call is for any and all branches of the military and also is open to military families, and caretakers as well,” Miller said. “The main themes are diversity, inclusion and equality, and other experiences artists may have had before, during or after their military service. This also includes military dependents and the experiences they may have had as well.”

Miller said the exhibition is open to all forms of media: traditional, paintings, drawings, 3D art, as well as photography and other forms of print.

“We have a special gallery set



Combat Veteran Screaming  
Digital photograph on aluminum  
by Peter Buotte



Daddy's Girl  
Acrylic on Canvas  
by Jacqueline Jones



Islands  
Acrylic on Canvas - author unnamed



Common Threads - Trenches  
Military Uniform, name tapes  
by Brenda Maltz

aside for our (Workhouse Military in the Arts Initiative), called Warrior Way. We either have a solo exhibition or small group exhibitions, depending on the theme,” said Miller, adding there is a military spouse exhibition planned for the fall.

The exhibit is part of the WMAI, in partnership with the Northern Virginia Regional Commission. WMAI offers classes and workshops for military and families, with open houses on Saturdays and a program called Recovery Forge, for metalworking.

Debra Balestreri, director of visual arts education at Workhouse, said this military community is near to her heart.

“I’m a military brat, and my dad was a Marine Corps Vietnam veteran. It was a labor of love

living on base after base – these are my people, so I’d love to work with them,” Balestreri said. “One of the things I wanted to do was include a therapeutic component, helping veterans with PTSD and TBI. A lot of that support went into therapeutic support. It also made sense with our mission, that we would have that component in what we offer.”

Jessica Herman, who helps Soldiers with traumatic brain injury learn to paint, said it creates bonds – internal and external.

“When our paintings are complete, we have built a relationship of trust and a healthy rapport,” Herman said. “The Service member usually expresses a feeling of mastery in learning a new skill of painting and of pride in replicating their place. (The

paintings) are meaningful because they represent the therapeutic alliances with these individuals and are beautiful representations of places that are meaningful to them in their healing journeys.”

“Even if you’re not a professional, it’s a wonderful hobby to have,” Miller said. “The title says it: Arts for all. If you’re an artist in our community, I would encourage you to submit your artwork.”

The call for artists is open through April 30. Submit artwork, bio and artist statement at [workhousearts.submittable.com/submit](http://workhousearts.submittable.com/submit). The exhibition will open to the public May 12, Miller said, and added it will be available for online viewing as well.

“It’s something we should have done a long time ago, so I’m very glad it’s happening,” said Miller.

