

IN **PRESIDIO OF MONTEREY** BRIEF

September 2020



PoM firefighters battle River, Carmel fires

Presidio, DLI team-up to combat terrorism

Survivor Outreach aides veteran in
\$100,000 payout

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The PoM InBrief is a command-authorized publication for the Monterey military community — published monthly by the Presidio of Monterey Public Affairs office.

We publish information of interest to members of our community — including all service members, military families, civilian personnel & veterans who access services at our installation.

Story ideas and submissions of original material are always welcome.

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Cover: Lt. Kythe Stillwell, Presidio of Monterey Fire Department, monitors a controlled burn Aug. 20 during the Carmel Fire. The burn was started to create a fire line to prevent the fire from spreading. Photo by: Joseph Kumzak

NEVER FORGET

09.11.2001

U.S. Army Soldiers and Civilians who died at the Pentagon September 11, 2001

SPC Craig S. Amundson
MSG Max J. Beilke (Ret)
Ms. Carrie R. Blagburn
COL Canfield D. Boone
Ms. Donna M. Bowen
SFC Jose O. Calderon-Olmedo
Ms. Angelene C. Carter
Ms. Sharon A. Carver
Ms. Ada M. Davis
LTC Jerry D. Dickerson
Ms. Amelia V. Fields
Mr. Gerald P. Fisher
Mr. Cortez Ghee
Ms. Brenda C. Gibson
COL Ronald F. Golinski (Ret)
Ms. Diane Hale-McKinzy
Ms. Carolyn B. Halmon
Ms. Sheila m. S. Hein
MAJ Wallace Cole Hogan Jr.
SSG Jimmie I. Holley (Ret)
Ms. Peggie M. Hurt

LTC Stephen Neil Hyland Jr.
SGM Lacey B. Ivory
LTC Dennis M. Johnson
Ms. Brenda Kegler
Mr. David W. Laychak
Ms. Samantha I. Lightbourn-Allen
MAJ Stephen V. Long
Mr. Terence M. Lynch
Ms. Teresa M. Martin
Ms. Ada L. Mason-Acker
LTC Dean E. Mattson
LTG Timothy J. Maude
Mr. Robert J. Maxwell
Ms. Molly L. McKenzie
MAJ Ronald D. Milam
Ms. Odessa V. Morris
Mr. Teddlington H. Moy
Ms. Diana B. Padro
MAJ Clifford L. Patterson
Jr. Mr. Scott Powell

Ms. Deborah A. Ramsaur
Ms. Rhonda S. Rasmussen
Ms. Martha M. Reszke
Ms. Cecelia E. Richard (Lawson)
Mr. Edward V. Rowenhorst
Ms. Judy Rowlett
SGM Robert E. Russell (Ret)
CW4 William R. Ruth
Ms. Marjorie C. Salamone
COL David M. Scales
Ms. Janice M. Scott
LTC Michael L. Selves (Ret)
Ms. Marian H. Serva
Ms. Antionette M. Sherman
Mr. Donald D. Simmons
Ms. Cheryle D. Sincock
LTC Gary F. Smith (Ret)

Ms. Patricia J. Statz
Ms. Edna L. Stephens
SGM Larry L. Strickland
LTC Kip P. Taylor
Ms. Sandra C. Taylor
SGT Tamara C. Thurman
SSG Willie Q. Troy (Ret)
LTC Karen J. Wagner
Ms. Meta L. Waller (Fuller)
SPC Chin Sun PAK Wells
SSG Maudlyn A. White
Ms. Sandra L. White
MAJ Dwayne Williams
Mr. Edmond G. Young Jr.
Ms. Lisa L. Young



Presidio firefighter loses home while fighting River Fire



Photos courtesy Gina Orlando

Firefighter's loss

Joseph Kumzak
Presidio of Monterey

While Presidio of Monterey firefighter, David Serna, was working a 24-hour shift battling the River Fire in Monterey County Aug. 19, a sheriff's deputy instructed Serna's wife, Gina, to immediately evacuate their home in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

The fire was not a threat to their neck of the woods until that point, but it shifted and began rapidly approaching their home.

Gina called Serna around 2:30 A.M. to tell him the troubling news. He told her, "grab what's important to you and go to my parents' house."

Serna remained on duty to finish his shift -- protecting other peoples' homes and property while the CZU Lightning Complex Fire approached his home of nine years.

"I was really worried about my wife, but I had to stay focused on my job," Serna said. "If my mind wasn't there, someone on my crew or someone else could have been hurt."

Once off-duty, he drove to his parents' house in Davenport to see Gina and his pets. He then decided to go check on their home.

"I was about one-eighth of a mile from my house when I hit a wall of fire," he said. "It was all just fire ... that's all I saw! He jokingly added, "I did my best Dukes of Hazard impression -- I put it in reverse and got out of there."

He did not make it to his house to verify the damage, but he knew from the fire's intensity that it was gone. He said, "nothing could escape that." He returned the next day and confirmed what he already knew; the house was gone.

Gina managed to gather some important items before she drove away from her home for the last time.



Gina Orlando (left) and David Serna hold a sentimental item that survived the fire that took their home, Aug. 19, in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

"Everything we own now is in three suitcases, which is all she was able to get," Serna said. "She got our passports, some documentation, a few pictures, but not as much as she wanted to."

She also saved their cat and dog, but had to leave their two chickens. She opened the coop door for them hoping they would make it.

Serna found the chickens' remains and hid them, so Gina would not see their lifeless bodies. She insisted he show them to her.

"She grabbed a shovel head and dug a little hole and buried them. It was closure for her ... her girls were gone," said Serna.

Gina, a professional photographer, lost most of the photography equipment she uses for her business.

Story continued next page



Presidio firefighter, David Serna, looks upon the burnt out rubble of his Santa Cruz home.

Serna Cont.

Serna lost all of the photos and negatives he had from his thirty years as a firefighter, among other sentimental items.

“My wife bought me a complete collection of Calvin and Hobbes [hardback books], which is my favorite,” he said. “The entire collection is gone.”

“It’s sad to lose that stuff, but I didn’t lose what’s most important to me – my wife and our pets,” he said.

Serna and Gina miss their mountain cottage and the belongings they lost, but have been overwhelmed by the support from the Army, PoM Fire Department and the community.

“My fire family and my Army family have caught me as I stumble through this,” said Serna.

Col. Varman Chhoeung, Presidio of Monterey commander and Shawn Marshall, Director of

Story continued next page



Before and after photos of David Serna's Santa Cruz home.

Serna Cont.

Emergency Services, coordinated efforts to provide emergency relief for the Serna family.

“Between housing, DES, the fire department, FMWR and all of our other directors who could possibly help -- they all jumped forward and starting acting without any direction from headquarters,” said Chhoeung. “It was really good to see how the team came together to take care of one of our own.”

Serna said he especially appreciates the community response because he did not have to ask for help.

“As a firefighter I’m not used to being on this side of it. I’m used to being the one who’s helping,” he said. “Everything that they have done for me has been above and beyond. I did not expect all of this.”

Serna and Gina moved into a house in the Ord Military Community two weeks after losing their home. The Parks at Monterey Bay made an extra effort to quickly prepare the house for the Serna family.

Thomas Joyce, PoM Fire Chief, said Serna returned to work more quickly than expected because of the support he received.

“I can come to work and do my job with peace-of-mind, and I don’t have to worry about my wife. She is in a home where she feels safe, and our pets have a place to run around,” Serna said.

He asserted that the donations and support have brought him and Gina a step closer to normal because they do not have to worry about buying essential items for their home.

“If you take care of your people, they will take care of the mission,” Chhoeung said. “This is a perfect example of that. If you take care of the Serna family, he comes back to work to continue his mission protecting our community, and that’s what happened because of our incredible team here.”

Army Launches Digital Garrison App



Army launches Digital Garrison

Devon Suits
Army News Service

WASHINGTON — The Army has launched the new Digital Garrison mobile app that provides information and facilitates access to a full array of on-post services, as part of a partnership with the Army & Air Force Exchange Service, or AAFES.

The app, which can be downloaded on Android and Apple devices, provides users with secure access to facility information and other “quality-of-life” services by consolidating data from three related networks, said Scott Malcom, Army Installation Management Command public affairs director.

Users can customize the app to meet their needs. Digital Garrison will include an installation directory, gate locations and hours, fitness and recreation options, weather, event information, and more, he said.

Soldiers and families who are new to an area can also access in-processing and other newcomer material before a permanent change of station, Malcom said.

“When they do move, they enjoy the continuity provided by an enterprise solution,” he added.

Digital Garrison also provides an in-app shopping function through ShopMyExchange.com, along with local AAFES shopping and restaurant details. It also features a mobile wallet function where shoppers can use their MILITARY STAR card.

Program officials are set to continually improve the app through daily updates, based on in-app feedback from users, in addition to regularly scheduled major updates.

One of the first major updates will include local commissary information and a link to Click2Go,



The Army's Digital Garrison mobile app's online dashboard.

the Defense Commissary Agency's online grocery ordering portal and curbside pickup service, but only if the capability is available at a given installation.

“Feedback is very important to us,” Malcom said. “The app includes a feedback portion where users can communicate and help us shape it going forward. This is not a ‘one and done.’ Users can count on the fact that we will continually optimize the app after launch.”

Push notifications for emergencies are also an important feature of the app, Malcom said. For example, installation officials may send a pre-drafted

notification during an active-shooter situation or at times of inclement weather.

Leaders will also have the ability to write their own customized messages and announcements to distribute to the force through the app after the first major update scheduled to occur at the end of August, Malcom said.

Story continued next page

App Cont.

Residents of on-post housing can link to their installation's privatized housing partner, he said. Personnel living in military housing will eventually have a similar capability.

Digital Garrison will become the Army enterprise mobile app for installations, Malcom added. Local app solutions will cease, ensuring all applicable garrisons comply with the Federal Information Security Management Act and other cybersecurity protocols.

"It puts real-time installation information in everybody's pockets," Malcom said. "There are

hundreds of thousands of people that access Army installations every day. Almost every one carries a cell phone. The app will add value to their time spent on an installation -- whether it is to live, work, train, or play."

App features

Within the easy-to-use app, Soldiers, families, veterans, and civilians living or working at a Digital Garrison-enabled post can access resources about their local exchange; Army Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation program; and other services

More than 60 installations are represented on the app, with plans to add more in future updates, Malcom said. Joint bases operated by other services and select garrisons without sites on the networks that feed the app will not be incorporated in the initial launch.

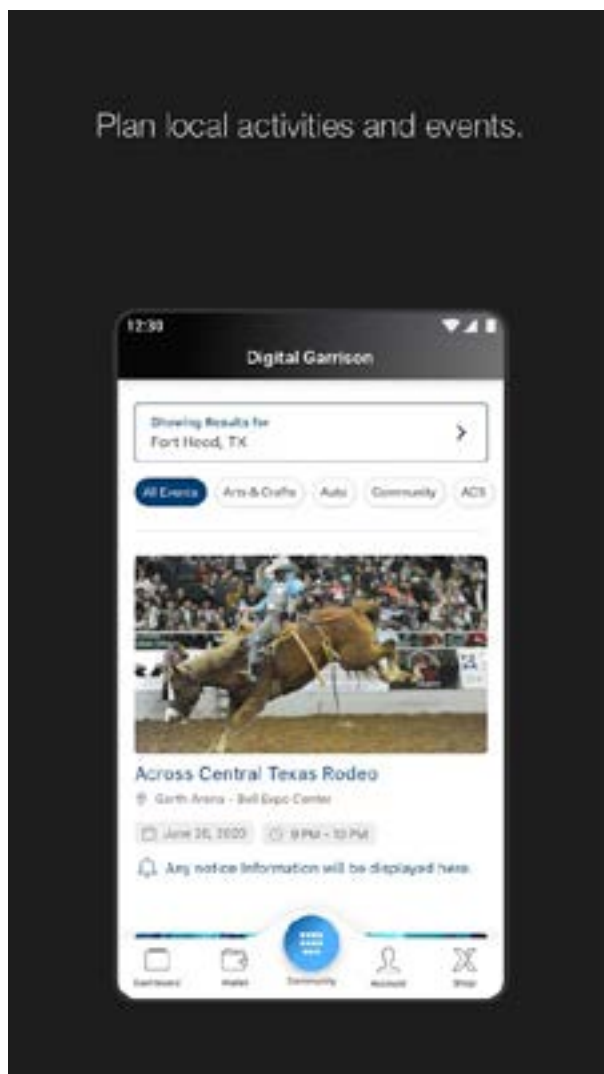
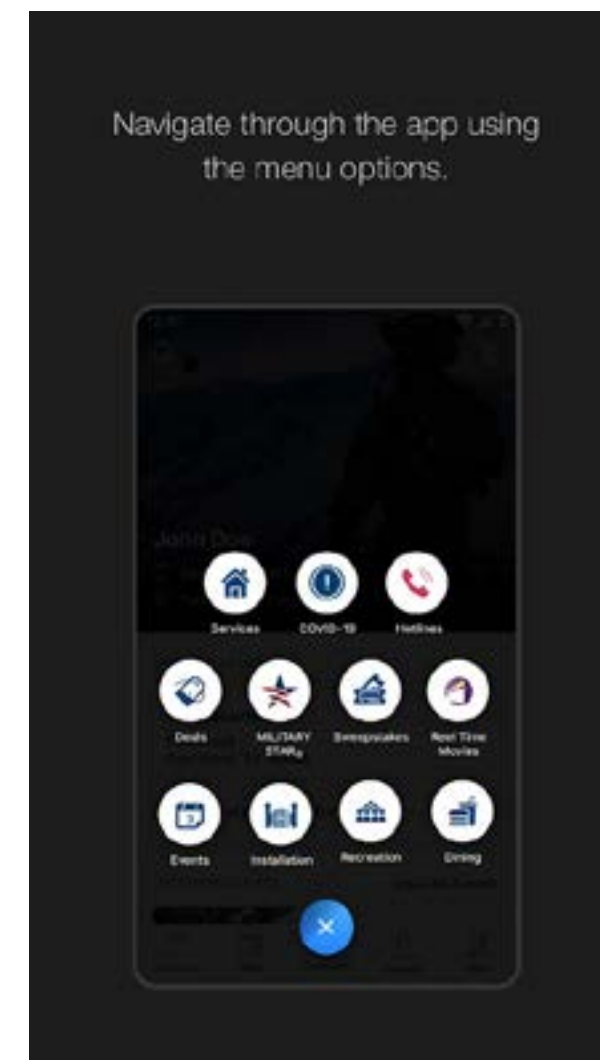
Bridging capabilities

The partnership that brought the Digital Garrison app to life started in July 2019, Malcom said. At that time, the Exchange, IMCOM, and Army MWR were all developing apps to essentially do the same thing — provide information about on-post services or activities.

"The Exchange is honored to partner with the Army to ensure the 125-year-old Exchange benefit remains relevant to its communities," said Karen Cardin, AAFES senior vice president for customer experience.

The team released a Digital Garrison beta version in January, which fueled a more significant test of it in early March. During the limited user evaluation, a total of 10 installations throughout the U.S., including Hawaii and Alaska, and Germany were chosen by program officials to participate, Malcom said.

"During that process, we learned how garrisons should prepare their online data to optimize its presentation in the app," he said. "We learned that the better a garrison maintains their websites that feed Digital Garrison, the better the garrison is



represented in it. The pilot allowed us to work out all the details and provide clear instructions to all the installations feeding the app to prepare their data for transmission."

The decision to create the app shows the Army's eagerness to transition from the "industrial age to the information age," Malcom said.

"The Exchange worked side-by-side with IMCOM to put real-time information in the hands of Soldiers, families and civilians," Cardin added. "Digital Garrison is another chapter in our long relationship with Army families, allowing us to fulfill our mission to make life better for those who serve."

Presidio, DLI team-up to combat terrorism

Marcus Fichtl
Presidio of Monterey

With thousands of service members and civilians on the Presidio of Monterey, the mission to protect the post from terrorism hasn't changed in the time of COVID-19.

"The threat has morphed but it is still there," said Janice Quenga, the garrison's anti-terrorism officer. "Even though we have COVID-19, the criminal threat, the terrorist threat is still out there."

Quenga said during the last couple years the Presidio in partnership with DLI has been hitting the drills hard. Those drills include: active shooter scenarios, random security checks and cross-service exercises.

She added a campaign of hammering the concept of "see something, say something" has paid off dividends, including recently when an Airmen found a physical security threat in the Air Force dorms. After coordination with her unit AT officer, 100 percent of the rooms were checked for the security flaw and all issues were resolved.

Quenga added the rapid response came because of the team-work between garrison, DLI and the joint services.

And that's what made August's joint-signing of the Anti-Terrorism proclamation by Garrison Commander Col. Varman Chhoeung and DLI Commandant Col. Gary Hausman, only the second-ever AT joint-signing on post, all that much more important. Anti-terrorism is a team effort.

See something, say something.

Garrison Commander Col. Varman Chhoeung (foreground) and the Defense Language Institute's Commandant, Col. Gary Hausman, sign a pledge to remain ever vigilant against the terrorist threat last month.

PoM Firefighters battle Carmel, River fires



Photos by Joseph Kumzak

Monterey blazes

Joseph Kumzak
Presidio of Monterey

CARMEL, Calif. — Lightning rarely strikes in the Monterey area, but in the early morning of Aug. 16 the calm skies of Monterey turned into what many called an epic lightning show that lasted over five hours. Photographers and residents flooded social media with pictures and video of the rare spectacle

The Presidio of Monterey Fire Department received a call that morning requesting immediate support to help contain a fire near Mount Toro in Salinas sparked by the lightning. A crew of four firefighters from the PoM Fire Department responded and arrived on scene to battle the blaze dubbed the River Fire.

“It’s crucial to get fire crews on scene quickly to put the fire out, or to contain it as quickly as possible, so it doesn’t spread into a larger incident,” said David Wilcox, Presidio of Monterey deputy fire chief. “The location of the fire made it very difficult – the steep terrain and the fire being two-miles-in made it difficult to fight the fire.”

PoM firefighters were assigned to a strike team made up of five engines and a team leader that included Marina, Seaside, North County and Greenfield Fire Departments. The strike team works 24-hour shifts performing a variety of tasks from fighting fire to clearing vegetation to prevent fire from spreading

Lt. Kythe Stillwell, PoM Fire Department, said the first day on the River Fire was a chaotic roller coaster

Battling heat from the weather coupled with heat from the fire, PoM firefighters hiked miles up a steep hillside to provide hose, supplies and water to crews already on scene.

“It was so steep in some areas, we used the hose line to pull ourselves up the mountain,” Stillwell said.

The strike team battled the blaze on the mountain for several hours, but the fire was spreading rapidly



Photo by Joseph Kumzak

A bulldozer helps firefighters create a fire line in preparation of a controlled burn to prevent the spread of the Carmel Fire Aug. 20.

— making it increasingly difficult to contain. They were ordered off the mountain, but did not know a safe route to get down because of the spreading fire.

“The fire jumped the line and crossed over top of us, and ran down the hill about a 100-yards from our location,” Stillwell said. “We have to move now – we have to get to the area that’s already burned.”

“They [CalFire] didn’t know where to direct us to for us to get off the mountain,” Stillwell said. “So at that point they said we need to get these guys off the mountain. That area is lost, so there’s no reason to keep them up there.”

CalFire ordered a helicopter to airlift the strike team off the mountain. Already exhausted, they hiked another hour through rough terrain to reach the helicopter landing zone.

After being airlifted off the mountain, the strike team returned to their trucks and assembled at a staging area on Pine Canyon Road to consolidate and take a break to eat.

Story continued next page

Blazes Cont.

Shortly after arriving at the staging area, another fire erupted near the strike team.

“We started preparing hose for the next assignment and someone said look behind you. We all turned around and there was a big wall of fire coming down the canyon,” Stillwell said. “It came so fast it was already on the first house.”

The strike team dispersed to protect houses in the fire’s path. PoM firefighters stayed in place to protect the staging area, a farmhouse and other nearby structures.

Stillwell added, “we focused on areas where embers had landed or fire spots that popped up ahead of the main fire.”

PoM firefighters, along with the strike team, completed a variety of tasks and assignments that first 24-hours until their shift ended the next day.

“There were so many things stacked against us from the beginning ... the weather and the terrain,” said Stillwell. “It was a very tough day.”

PoM firefighters said working with firefighters from local departments made it less stressful because they had already developed those relationships.



Steven Cortez (left) and Lt. Kythe Stillwell, Presidio of Monterey Fire Department, extinguish spot fires, Aug. 20, after a brush fire burned a mountainous area in Carmel Valley.

“It makes things easier when we go on strike teams with firefighters we’re already familiar with, because we already know each other and know expectations of each other,” said Lt. Jermaine McClain, PoM firefighter. “There’s a lot of trust involved when you’re on wildland fires. Especially when things go bad.”

Stillwell added, “when we go on outside fires, or they come on ours, there’s already common working knowledge about things like: how hose packs are put together or where equipment is on each vehicle. So we try to do some kind of standardization for continuity.”

PoM firefighters continued battling the River Fire and Carmel Fire for two weeks with the strike team.

Col. Varman Chhoeung, Presidio of Monterey commander said, “It’s a team effort to extinguish these big fires. I think CalFire does an excellent job coordinating all of the resources that come from all over the state. Our folks are honored to be part of that, and part of the effort to help the greater community.”

Chhoeung added, “I am extremely proud of our fire department and what they did. I wish we had more assets we could have dedicated, but we dedicated everything that we could.”



Presidio firefighters plan their attack on the Carmel Fire.

Survivor outreach aides veteran in \$100k payout

Zack Frank
Presidio of Monterey

PRESIDIO OF MONTEREY, Calif — On Christmas day 2016, U.S. Navy Seabee Peter Mellett suffered a devastating loss when his wife Veronica died of a sudden brain aneurism while the couple was celebrating the holiday with their five children at Lake Tahoe.

“My 5 year old daughter Isabella said goodbye to her mother for the very last time by holding her hand,” said Mellett of Veronica’s final moments.

This loss left the family stunned for several years as they struggled with their new reality. Mellett moved from active duty to the reserves to adjust to his new role as a single parent. In 2017, he retired from the Navy and transitioned into a civilian career. He did this all without any additional spousal benefits as he believed there was no program to help his situation

However, on Father’s Day 2020, the now retired Mellett received a phone call from an old friend wanting to share his condolences. The caller was Nate Pleasentbey, Presidio of Monterey Survivor Outreach Services Support Coordinator, who had just learned of Veronica’s passing.



Retired Navy Seabee, Peter Mellett, seen while serving in uniform.

The two had met years earlier when Pleasentbey was involved with Operation Care and Comfort

“A tremendous organization,” said Mellett. “They would have NFL tickets, and baseball tickets for us, as well as care packages for us while we were in Iraq in 2006/2007. Nate would hand deliver the tickets to our detachment.”

After speaking with his friend, Pleasentbey began thinking of any program for veterans that could help provide the Mellett’s with financial support. Veronica was not a uniformed service member and reserve retirees like Mellett are not entitled to receive their earned military pensions until they’ve reached age 60.

Pleasantbey said, “Things changed dramatically when I made mention of the Family Servicemembers Group Life Insurance (FSGLI) policy.”

Mellett went through his service paperwork and discovered that he was covered by FEGLI. FSGLI was introduced, along with TSGLI, in 2005, as a rider-policy, to the preexisting Servicemembers Group Life insurance (SGLI). It provides a term life insurance benefit of up to \$100,000 for a member’s spouse and \$10,000 for dependent children.

“He asked me the \$100,000 question,” said Mellett. “I almost fell off my chair.”

Pleasantbey began working with the survivor to submit a claim. He travelled to meet with Mellett in person and the two went over all of the required paperwork. Almost finished, they discovered that one document needed correction. Pleasantbey drove home immediately and corrected the document on his personal photocopying machine.

Speaking to Pleasantbey’s dedication to help, Mellett said, “He was truly outstanding throughout the whole process. This was such a selfless act.”



The Mellett family pose for a Christmas photo shortly before the loss of Veronica.

Following the submission of the claim the Mellett family received his \$100,000 in benefits.

“I never would have received this money except for Nate.” Said Mellett.

In thanks, Mellett penned a handwritten letter to the command of the Presidio of Monterey, commending Pleasantbey for his efforts, including sacrificing hours of his personal time to get the paperwork completed and submitted.

Mellett’s letter closed by saying that Pleasantbey, “has been a friend for a number of years, even though we had not talked for a long time. Nate is an incredible asset.”



SOCIAL SECURITY Payroll Tax Withholding Deferral

Effective for the September mid-month pay, DoD will temporarily defer the withholding of your 6.2% Social Security tax if your monthly rate of basic pay is less than \$8,666.66.

BACKGROUND

In order to provide relief during the COVID-19 pandemic, a Presidential Memorandum was issued on August 8, 2020 and guidance followed by Internal Revenue Service on August 28, 2020, to temporarily defer military members' 6.2% Social Security (Old Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance) or "OASDI" tax withholdings.

KEY FACTS

- For Army, Air Force and Navy military members, the Social Security tax is labeled as "FICA-SOC SECURITY" on the Leave and Earnings Statement (LES).
- For the Marine Corps military members, the Social Security tax is labeled as "Social Security" on the LES.
- This change is effective **through the end of the 2020 calendar year** and only applies to your Social Security tax withholding.
- You are **not eligible to opt-out of the deferral** if your basic pay falls within the stated wage limits. The deferral will happen automatically.
- Per current IRS guidance, **collection of the deferred taxes will be taken from your wages between January 1 and April 30, 2021.**
- If you separate in 2020 before the Social Security tax can be collected in 2021, you are still responsible for the Social Security tax repayment.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

If you have questions on the temporary deferral of the 6.2% OASDI withholding:

- Visit the IRS page: <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/guidance-issued-to-implement-presidential-memorandum-deferring-certain-employee-social-security-tax-withholding>
- As more information becomes available, it will be posted on: <https://www.dfas.mil/taxes/Social-Security-Deferral>
- For more information on financial readiness:
 - Visit <https://finred.usalearning.gov>
 - Visit your installation-based Military and Family Support Center and speak with a personal financial manager or counselor, or contact Military OneSource at <https://www.militaryonesource.mil>

Additional information on the collection process will be provided in the future.



SOCIAL SECURITY Payroll Tax Withholding Deferral

Effective September 2020, DoD will temporarily defer your 6.2% OASDI tax withholding if your wages, subject to OASDI*, are less than \$4,000 in any given pay period.

BACKGROUND

In order to provide relief during the COVID-19 pandemic, a Presidential Memorandum was issued on August 8, 2020 and guidance followed by Internal Revenue Service on August 28, 2020, to temporarily defer employees' 6.2% Social Security (Old Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance) or "OASDI" tax withholdings.

KEY FACTS

- This change is effective **September through the end of the 2020 calendar year** and only applies to your OASDI tax withholding.
- You are **not eligible to opt-out of the deferral** if your OASDI wages fall within the stated limits. The deferral will happen automatically.
- Per current IRS guidance, **collection of the deferred taxes will be taken from your wages between January 1 and April 30, 2021.**
- The OASDI deduction is found on your LES under the deductions tab/section.
- If you separate in 2020 before the Social Security tax can be collected in 2021, you are still responsible for the Social Security tax repayment.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

If you have questions on the temporary deferral of the 6.2% OASDI withholding:

- Visit the IRS page: <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/guidance-issued-to-implement-presidential-memorandum-deferring-certain-employee-social-security-tax-withholding>
- As more information becomes available, it will be posted on: <https://www.dfas.mil/taxes/Social-Security-Deferral>
- For more information on financial readiness:
 - Consult with an Employee Assistance Program financial counselor or seek assistance from a private financial advisor.

* *Wages subject to OASDI: Gross wages less Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB), Dental, Vision, and Health/Flexible Spending Accounts (HSA/FSA).*

Additional information on the collection process will be provided in the future.

The “76 Arty” Pass in Review



A battery of the 76th Field Artillery passes in review at the Presidio of Monterey's parade ground. A full section consisted of two six-horse teams, six drivers, additional cannoneers, two limbers, a caisson, and a French 75mm field piece.

Cameron Binkley
Command Historian

One of the most famous outfits to make its home at the Presidio of Monterey was the 76th Field Artillery. That regiment's 2d Battalion arrived in 1922 and remained until 1940. The unit was formed for the American Expeditionary Force during World War I and sailed to France in early 1918. To hasten mobilization, U.S. artillery units, including the 76th, adopted the French-made 75mm cannon, a revolutionary weapon that ingeniously tackled several design problems. Americans liked the gun and it dominated post-war Army inventories.

In July, Germany launched its last offensive and the 76th saw intense action and many casualties supporting the 3d Infantry Division along the Marne River. Stubbornly entrenched, the 3d became “The Rock of the Marne” by holding off three German divisions. The 76th also fought in the St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne campaigns, ending WWI decorated with France's Croix de Guerre.

But life in Monterey was surprisingly dangerous, too. At least three artillerymen lost their lives on duty at the Presidio. Second Lieutenant George R. Huffman died as the result of a fall of his horse at the Presidio in 1932, while cannoneer Cpl. Horace K. Ewing lost his life in 1929 during a race at Monterey's ballpark. After jumping from his

gun carriage seat in a failed attempt to help turn a plunging six-horse team, Ewing fell beneath the wheels of his two-ton caisson. To the horror of numerous onlookers, he was crushed instantly. Most well-known is the story of Pvt. Eustace V. Watkins killed valiantly fighting the great Monterey Oil Fire of 1924 after falling into a “sea of burning oil” suddenly unleashed by an exploding storage container.

Camp Huffman (part of Camp Ord, now within Fort Ord National Monument), Ewing Road on the lower Presidio, and Watkins Gate Road on the former Fort Ord were named after these artillerymen.

Remembering the Memorialized: Combs

Memorialization #7

SFC Alfred H. Combs 1931-1965

SFC Combs was from Seaside, CA and graduated from the DLIWC Vietnamese course in 1964. He was killed in action by a ground explosion in Vietnam. He was awarded the Silver Star, Bronze Star and Purple Heart.

On 30 June 1970 the Defense Language Institute officially named Building 627 "Combs Hall".

During the ceremony COL Kibbey M. Horne, former DLI Commandant, said, "The Army is more than numbers, it is people. It is therefore appropriate that our buildings should be named for our distinguished graduates who died while serving out country valiantly."

To learn more about the men and women memorialized at the Presidio of Monterey, Defense Language Institute and former Fort Ord visit the memorialization page on our website:

<https://home.army.mil/monterey/index.php/about/memorialization>



News Briefs: **Army**

Chaplain Corps honors first active-duty African-American female colonel



WASHINGTON — As the Army's first active-duty African-American female chaplain to pin on colonel rank, Monica Lawson had a message to the naysayers during her promotion ceremony Wednesday.

Even after several leadership roles in her Army career, as well as earning two master's degrees and being an ordained elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, some may think her promotion was only affirmative action.

Monica, who serves as the chief of recruiting for the Army chaplaincy, sought to nip any of those thoughts in the bud.

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Rescues and wildfires: National Guard responds on West Coast



SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Rescue missions and support to civil authorities fighting wildfires were the focus of West Coast troop visits by the National Guard's highest-ranking general and his senior enlisted advisor this week.

Army Gen. Daniel Hokanson, chief, National Guard Bureau, and Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Tony Whitehead, senior enlisted advisor, visited Soldiers and Airmen in Alaska and California.

"Times like this – in fact, 2020 in general – proves just what a tremendous value the National Guard is to our nation," Hokanson said. "In early June, we had 120,000 National Guardsmen and women on duty at the height of our COVID-19 and civil disturbance response."

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Army Ranger to receive Medal of Honor for hostage rescue mission



ARLINGTON, Va. — An Army Ranger who risked his life to save dozens of hostages facing imminent execution by ISIS fighters will be awarded the Medal of Honor, the White House announced Thursday.

Sgt. Maj. Thomas "Patrick" Payne, who is assigned to the U.S. Army Special Operations Command, was part of a joint task force that assisted Iraqi security forces Oct. 22, 2015, in raiding an ISIS prison near Hawija in northern Iraq.

Payne and his teammates liberated 70 hostages -- many of whom were captured Iraqi security forces personnel -- after a request by the Kurdistan Regional Government. D. Moak, the senior official performing the duties of the assistant secretary of the Army for financial management and comptroller.

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News Briefs **Air Force**

CMSAF visits First Sergeant Academy



MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, Ala. — During her visit, Bass discussed the current climate of the force, the role of first sergeants and her priorities: people, readiness and culture.

Bass emphasized the tremendous influence first sergeants have on the culture of their units.

“You have an opportunity every day to help influence that culture,” Bass said. “You’ve got to influence for the better and I need you as first sergeants to be thinking with your neck up.”

As the first female chief master sergeant of the Air Force, Bass addressed the struggles of being a female in the military and the role first sergeants have in helping improve the climate of equality.

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Hurricane Hunters track Sally



ELLINGTON AIRPORT, Texas — The 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron “Hurricane Hunters,” flew nine missions into Hurricane Sally to track the storm and gather data.

The 53rd WRS, an Air Force Reserve unit assigned to the 403rd Wing, started flying missions into then-Tropical Storm Sally from their home station, Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi, Sept. 11, said Maj. Grant Wagner, a 53rd WRS navigator and mission commander.

As the storm headed toward the coast of Mississippi, the 403rd Wing evacuated their planes to another base and relocated three WC-130J Super Hercules aircraft to Ellington Airport, Texas to continue flying missions into Sally.

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Air Force improves lactation support for nursing mothers



ARLINGTON, Va. — The Department of the Air Force recently announced new guidance that will improve support to nursing mothers when they return to work after having a baby.

The updated policy, which is effective immediately, increases flexibility with lactation breaks and also mandates access to a refrigerator for the purpose of storing human milk.

“Many women choose to continue breastfeeding after they return to work,” said Christy Nolte, deputy assistant secretary of the Air Force for reserve affairs and Airman readiness. “We should do what we can to support that choice, making it easier for nursing moms to continue to serve. Changes like these contribute to readiness, and improve quality of life for our service members and their families.”

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News Briefs: Navy

Coast Guard Cutter Arrives in Japan Following an Onboard Fire



YOKOSUKA, Japan — The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Waesche (WMSL 751) arrived at Yokosuka, Japan today after combatting a shipboard engineering fire on Sept. 20, during a scheduled deployment to the U.S. 7th Fleet's area of operations.

Black smoke was reported at 5:18 p.m. (local time) Sunday, and investigations revealed fires in the exhaust stack and nearby spaces.

After 90 minutes of firefighting, the fires were confirmed extinguished.

Five crew members reported minor injuries sustained during firefighting efforts and were treated by the onboard medical team.

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U.S. joint forces sink ex-USS Curts during Valiant Shield live-fire exercise



PACIFIC OCEAN — U.S. joint armed forces conducted a multi-platform live-fire missile exercise, Sept. 19, involving surface, air, and subsurface launched ordnance to sink the decommissioned frigate USS Curts (FFG 38) as part of exercise Valiant Shield 2020.

The sinking exercise (SINKEX) combined an orchestrated sequence of live ordnance targeting the ex-USS Curts, including air-launched ordnance from fixed and rotary wing squadrons of Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 5, embarked aboard USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76), surface-launched missiles from cruisers USS Antietam (CG 54) and Shiloh (CG 67), a subsurface launched missile from Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarine USS Chicago (SSN 721), as well as various supporting Navy and U.S. Air Force aircraft.

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Navy Food Service Winners Awarded During Virtual Event



WASHINGTON — Winners of the 2019 Capt. Edward F. Ney Awards were recognized Sept. 16 during the Military Foodservice Awards ceremony hosted by the National Restaurant Association Education Foundation (NRAEF) via Facebook Live.

While the 2020 Military Foodservice Awards Dinner, originally scheduled for May 15, was canceled due to COVID-19, the NRAEF recognized the importance of celebrating this year's award winners representing all branches of the military. They accomplished this by hosting the first-ever Military Foodservice Awards virtual celebration.

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News Briefs: **Marines**

Marine Corps fields first new service pistol in 35 years



QUANTICO, Va. — For the first time since former President Ronald Reagan's Administration, the Marine Corps is fielding a new service-wide pistol replacement.

Marine Corps Systems Command began fielding the M18 Modular Handgun System in September. This striker-fired, semi-automatic, 9-mm pistol is based on the Sig Sauer Model P320. The M18 will replace all other pistols in the Marine Corps inventory, including the M9, M9A1, M45A1 and M007.

"All Marine Corps units with a pistol will receive an M18," said Brian Nelson, M18 project officer at MCSC.

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Marines pay tribute to 9/11



SAN DIEGO —Today does not need an intro. For nineteen years, Sept. 11 has become more than just another date on the calendar – it's a day that has affected every American's life in some way, shape, or form. 'Never Forget,' became a phrase strongly associated with the day and quite frankly, we have not. Marines from the 12th Marine Corps District showed a form of remembrance this morning at the San Diego Convention Center in an effort to pay homage to those we lost on that tragic day.

United States Marine Corps Cpl. Quentin K. Hadan and Cpl. Jackson K. Golz, both administration clerks assigned to the 12th Marine Corps District, began planning a 9/11 tribute physical training event on Sept. 9, 2020.

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Task force Marines place first in innovation challenge



CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. — Three communications Marines with Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force – Southern Command developed a solution to limited radio frequency range capability that won them first place in 4th Marine Logistics Group's Innovation Challenge on Sept. 9.

This innovation challenge asked Marines and Sailors, of all ranks, to bring their new ideas and solutions to current capabilities gaps to MLG leadership.

For Sgt. Raul Sanchez, Sgt. Adan Hernandez, and Sgt. Dayne Daylong, the capability gap was the limitations of the radio frequency range of vehicle-mounted radios, and they were determined to solve it.

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INBRIEF

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