

ARMY FLYER

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VOLUME 70 • NUMBER 1 • JANUARY 16, 2020



PHOTO BY MASTER SGT. CASEY NELSEN

Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 121st Infantry Regiment of the 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team provide security as a CH-47 Chinook lands after a key leader engagement in southeastern Afghanistan in December. The 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team deployed to Afghanistan last year in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel.

ABOVE THE BEST

USAACE honors top instructors for FY19

PAGE 2

NEW FIRE STATION

Runkle Stagefield firefighters get new, improved workplace

PAGE 3

DEPLOYMENT TEA

Primary school hosts parents with a deployed spouse

PAGE 5

50 YEARS

G3 official retires after a half century of service

PAGE 7

NEW COMMANDER

Former USAACE deputy to take over IMCOM

PAGE 9

USAACE honors top instructors for FY19

By Kelly Morris

USAACE Public Affairs

The U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence recognized its instructors of the year for fiscal year 2019 in a ceremony at the U.S. Army Aviation Museum Dec. 19.

Each quarter, supervisors nominate academic instructors, instructor pilots and NCO flight instructors from around the USAACE community, including the Warrant Officer Career College, School of Army Aviation Medicine, USAACE NCO Academy - Fort Rucker, USAACE NCO Academy - Fort Eustis, and U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center, for the honor of competing for instructor of the quarter.

The instructors of the year are determined from the quarterly winners. They are evaluated on quality of instruction, quality of materials developed and used, and quality of their presentation.

The following are the FY 2019 winners.

* The Officer Academic Instructor of the Year is Capt. Kimberly A. Smith, D Company, 1st Battalion, 145th Aviation Regiment, 1st Aviation Brigade.

* The Officer Flight Instructor of the Year is CW3 Aaron J. Moss, A Co., 1-14th Avn. Regt., 110th Avn. Bde.

* The Warrant Officer Academic Instructor of the Year is CW2 Cody S. Dodge, B Co., 1-145th Avn. Regt., 1st Avn. Bde.

* The NCO Flight Instructor of the Year is Sgt. 1st Class Roberto Landa, A Co., 1-223rd Avn. Regt., 110th Avn. Bde.

* The NCO Academic Instructor of the Year is Staff Sgt. Ben Adams, C Co., 2-13th Avn. Regt., 1st Avn. Bde.

* The Civilian Academic Instructor of the Year is Rodney A. Dippel, Enroute Care Branch, School of Army Aviation Medicine.



PHOTO BY KELLY MORRIS

The 2019 USAACE instructors of the year are Fred Polidore (110th Avn. Bde.), Civilian Instructor Pilot of the Year; Rodney A. Dippel (USASAM), Civilian Academic Instructor of the Year; Staff Sgt. Ben Adams (1st Avn. Bde.), NCO Academic Instructor of the Year; Sgt. 1st Class Roberto Landa (110th Avn. Bde.), NCO Flight Instructor of the Year; CW2 Cody S. Dodge (1st Avn. Bde.), Warrant Officer Academic Instructor of the Year; CW3 Aaron J. Moss (110th Avn. Bde.), Officer Flight Instructor of the Year; and Capt. Kimberly A. Smith (1st Avn. Bde.), Officer Academic Instructor of the Year.

* The Civilian Instructor Pilot of the Year is Fred Polidore, D Co., 1-14th Avn. Regt., 110th Avn. Bde.

Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, USAACE and Fort Rucker commanding general, hosted the ceremony and presented the awards.

"We always say, we are not going to put somebody in front of Soldiers to train them that isn't highly qualified, and today what we're going to get to see are the very best of those," Francis said in his remarks.

Francis commended the winners as "inspiring leaders that are training the future of Army Aviation here every day. They epitomize the type of instructor that we need as we continue to endure periods of fiscal uncertainty that impact our Army, and as we transition our force from largely counter insurgency operations to large scale ground combat operations."

"That is a critical piece of where we are today. So, what an exciting time to be part of this branch, what an exciting time to be an instructor in our branch, and we're going to

recognize the very best of those here today," he said.

Francis emphasized the importance of resourcing not only the technically and tactically proficient instructors, but leaders in their respective fields, because their example and efforts ensure the organization is able to train professional Aviation warriors who are mentally, spiritually and physically fit.

Francis noted the individual strength of character of the instructors.

"You simply can't fake the passion, the understanding and the sheer drive that those represented up here today demonstrate. We can only be as successful as our instructors and leaders by taking a genuine and personal interest in their success," he said.

Every combat Aviation leader passes through Fort Rucker's gates, including the Army's current chief of staff, Gen. James. C. McConville, who sat in the same seats as Fort Rucker students sit in today.

"His instructors inspired him. You are inspiring the future leaders of the Aviation

Branch and our Army, and for that we applaud you," Francis said.

Each of the winners received a USAACE Certificate of Achievement for excellence in training that cited the professionalism, dedication to duty and technical expertise of the instructors. They also received gifts and professional journals from sponsoring organizations.

Also recognized during the ceremony was Capt. Abraham J. Johnson, formerly of D Co., 1-145th Avn. Regt., 1st Avn. Bde. Johnson represented USAACE and competed at the TRADOC level where he placed second runner up in the TRADOC level Officer Academic Instructor of the Year competition for FY2018.

The USAACE mission is to train, educate and develop combat Aviation leaders and integrate indispensable Aviation capabilities across the warfighting functions in support of commanders and Soldiers on the ground.

IMPROVED QUALITY OF LIFE

Fort Rucker opens new fire station at Runkle Stagefield

By Jim Hughes
Fort Rucker Public Affairs

Fort Rucker officials cut the ribbon on a new fire station at Runkle Stagefield near Elba Dec. 18.

The new facility replaces the former station, which was built in 1976, and will greatly improve the quality of life for assigned firefighters and improve their mission effectiveness, according to Lonny Keen, Fort Rucker fire chief.

“If you look next door at the old station there, built in 1976, you can tell this is definitely long overdue,” Keen said during the ceremony. “We’re slowly getting fire stations replaced and Runkle is the first.

“If you look at our patch, you’ll see the word initiate on there. Initiate is short for quality of life initiatives, and that’s what we’re trying to do,” the fire chief added. “Build new fire stations, obtain new fire trucks and gain items that improve quality of life – that’s exactly what that vision is about. It’s an exciting moment for myself and for the department, and I hope we can continue this positive momentum forward.”

Keen added that as far as Fort Rucker officials are aware, this is the first time the Installation Management Command has built a Training and Doctrine Command fire station. The facility is 3,800 square feet, and



The crews who will work in the new station closed out the ceremony by pushing a fire truck into the bay area.

PHOTOS BY JIM HUGHES

features individual bedrooms, a kitchen, an office, separate latrines, a laundry room, a weight room and a dayroom separate from the bay, “which the guys over here will definitely appreciate.”

The fire chief then thanked past and current leadership for making the new facility happen. “It will certainly make our firefighters happier and their livelihoods better.”

The new fire station will greatly enhance the department’s mission to keep U.S. Army

Aviation Center of Excellence aviators safe, added Col. Whitney B. Gardner, Fort Rucker garrison commander.

“Our mission here is to produce pilots -- we’re here to enable training readiness,” the colonel said. “If you look at our priorities, we focus on people, we focus on readiness and we focus on the community of Fort Rucker – this is an example of us, as an organization, having our priorities right.

“I think this is a great example of what

we’re going to see in the future as we have more ribbon cutting ceremonies, and we actually prioritize the funds that we have to ensure that we have the best facilities to support those who are here to support training and readiness,” Gardner added. “I’m very proud of us, as an organization, and I’m very proud of our fire department.”

Making the new fire station a reality was truly a team effort, said Lt. Col. Phillip Lenz, Directorate of Public Safety director, and he

NEW STATION *cont.*



Lt. Col. Phillip Lenz, Directorate of Public Safety director, Col. Whitney B. Gardner, Fort Rucker garrison commander, and Lonny Keen, Fort Rucker fire chief, cut the ribbon on the new Runkle Fire Station, located near Elba, Dec. 18.



The old station, built in 1976, will be scheduled for demolition.

thanked the Directorate of Public Works for its efforts in getting the facility built.

"The real essence of this station is what you do to support the USAACE mission and the larger Aviation brotherhood," Lenz told the gathered firefighters. "Plain and simple, Fort Rucker is a strategic support area and USAACE makes pilots – that's what we do here. Because of you and your capabilities, this station further advances the mission set, and will pay huge dividends in the continued capability building of this critical Aviation Center mission for our Army as we prepare for the battlefield of the future, whether it

be in the immediate horizon or well into the future.

"Thank you for what you do each and every day," he added. "You have an incredibly challenging and dangerous mission where you're willing to do what has to be done to save lives."

Lenz closed by quoting Edward Coker, a New York City firefighter in the late 1800s and early 1900s, by saying, "When a man becomes a fireman, his greatest act of bravery has been accomplished. What he does after that is all in the line of work."

MEMORIAL SERVICE



PHOTO BY JIM HUGHES



PHOTO BY JIMMIE CUMMINGS

The 1st Battalion, 58th Aviation Regiment held a memorial ceremony in remembrance of Spc. Henry J. Mayfield Jr. Jan. 10 at Wings Chapel on Fort Rucker. Mayfield was killed Jan. 5 during an attack in Manda Bay, Kenya, while supporting Operation Octave Shield. "Our thoughts and prayers go out to (Mayfield's) family, friends and loved ones," said Col. William Garber, commander, Air Traffic Services Command and 164th Theater Airfield Operations Group. "Mayfield was a dynamic Soldier who inspired those he served with to excel both on and off duty. The 164th TAOG will miss his leadership and camaraderie."

Primary school gives extra care, attention to students with deployed parent

By Jim Hughes

Fort Rucker Public Affairs

The Fort Rucker Primary School treated parents with a deployed spouse to its annual Deployment Tea Dec. 11 shortly before the students went on holiday break.

The students whose parents attended are all members of the school's Deployment Club, a program designed to give extra care and attention to children with a deployed parent, said Yvette M. Esteves-Hurst, a reading teacher who also helps run the club.

The club has 17 members, she said at the tea, which she described as the culminating event of the Deployment Club.

"The deployed parent is a priority in our school," Esteves-Hurst said. "We've been doing this program for 13 years and it's been successful. We want to thank our principal because she loves this program and she allows this time for us to do this group."

René Hammond, a guidance counselor at the school who helps run the club, also thanked parents for their support of the program before highlighting what the club had been up to in its twice-a-week meetings throughout the school year.

"We couldn't accomplish what we do without your support," she said as a slide show played showing the students making crafts that were given to parents and taking part in other activities exclusive to club members.

"Your child is very special, so sometimes they have a unique opportunity like this one: Sparky came to the school, and no one got to take a picture with Sparky, but Deployment Club members did," Esteves-Hurst said. "We do little things like that."

And other children take notice, Hammond added.

"(The students in the club) love it so



PHOTOS BY JIM HUGHES

Yvette Esteves-Hurst and René Hammond, who run the Deployment Club at Fort Rucker Primary School, speak to parents about the program at the annual Deployment Tea Dec. 11 at the school.

much, and when we pick them up from their classrooms, some other children not in the club will ask why we're not picking them up," she said. "We tell them it's for students with deployed parents – one of your parents have to be deployed to take part. It's common for a child to say, 'Oh ... well, I'll tell my dad to get deployed.'"

It also helps children form bonds with other children in similar circumstances, she said. "In the beginning, it's rough, and they're sad and all, but we help them adjust and explain to them they're not the only one going through this situation. When they see that they have something in common, it helps them build friendships they otherwise may never have explored."

Deployed parents receive monthly newsletters throughout the year sharing information about what is happening in the classroom from week to week, Hammond added. "We like to share the students' experiences with the parents, so even if they're not here, they feel like they are by receiving the newsletter."

While the education and wellbeing of all

with us. We talk to them about what it means to be deployed, how they feel about it and how they are doing with it," she said. "And then we also share how the child is doing with the parents."

Hammond said they receive positive feedback regularly from parents with children in the program. "They've shared stories with us where they've taken things we've sent them, for example a Christmas ornament, and they place it in their barracks or wherever they live – a tent or whatever – so it's important to them. They feel a part of what's going on even though they're not here – that's our goal. Even though they're not here, they're still a part of their child's life at school, and we're including them in what's happening in their child's life."

The Fort Rucker Directorate of Family, and Morale, Welfare and Recreation goes "above the call of duty for us," by catering the Deployment Tea each year, Hammond said, thanking Hugo Siegel, Beverley O'Donnell and the rest of the directorate for their support. "We appreciate them so much."



Parents with deployed spouses gather for lunch at the Deployment Tea.

Fort Rucker Reserve Air Traffic Services Company redeploys from USCENTCOM mission

By Maj. Linda Gerron
11th Expeditionary CAB

FORT HOOD, Texas – Twenty-eight Soldiers assigned to F Company, 7th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, 11th Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade returned to Fort Hood following a nine-month deployment to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility in support of Operation Spartan Shield and Operation Inherent Resolve, Jan. 5.

The Fort Rucker Air Traffic Services Company facilitated over 18 thousand flights, which included missions around Kuwait and Iraq, to name a few, while serving under 5th Battalion, 159th Aviation Regiment, 244th Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade.

Lt. Col. Michael R. Bean, commander of 7-158th, said this “was a non-standard mission where two different companies from two different brigades came together and returned together.”

During the deployment, the ATS companies from the 11th and 244th ECAB were tasked to merge as a single company to conduct airspace management, lessen risks to airspace users, and increase the overall force effectiveness.

Col. Harvey A. Cutchin, commander of the 244th ECAB, said this feat was a success due to the same training standards brought on by both companies, and due to the leadership that guided the mission through.

“Capt. Curtis T. Patterson, the company commander, and his team did an excellent job in bringing the companies together,” said Cutchin. “His leadership was key in helping us manage aircraft flow and maintaining a safe environment for the aircraft.”



PHOTO BY SGT. ALEXANDER MORGAN

Brig. Gen. Jami Shawley, commanding general of the Army Reserve Aviation Command, and Command Sgt. Maj. Judd Mooso greeted the redeploying Soldiers at Robert Gray Army Airfield, Texas, Jan. 5.

Col. Roger F. Deon, commander of the 11th ECAB, agreed with Cutchin.

“I am very proud of Company F,” he said. “Their dedicated efforts and true professionalism in direct support of the ATC mission within the CENTCOM area of responsibility directly enabled the combined and joint forces.”

“Now, our goal for the 11th ECAB is to learn from 244th ECAB’s deployment, gather their lessons learned, and shape our collective training so we can continue to build the most capable, combat-ready, and lethal Reserve force,” he added.

With the mission complete, F Co. will conduct demobilization operations at the Fort Hood Deployment Readiness Center, where they will receive briefings, medical evaluations and other counseling opportunities. Once post-deployment recovery and administrative requirements are complete, the unit will begin the reintegration phase back into family life, the community and their civilian jobs.

CG HOSTS POST RUN



PHOTOS BY JIM HUGHES

Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker commanding general, CW5 Jonathan P. Koziol, Aviation Branch chief warrant officer, and Command Sgt. Maj. Brian N. Hauke, Aviation Branch command sergeant major, led Soldiers from units across Fort Rucker on a post run early Dec. 19. After the run, the Soldiers formed up on Howze Field where Hauke and Francis thanked them for joining them on the run, their service to the country, and all they do for Army Aviation and the Army. Francis also reminded the Soldiers to remain vigilant over the holidays, and to stay safe while they enjoy down time with family and friends.



'HERE FOR A REASON'

Fort Rucker G-3 airspace official retires after 50 years of service

By Kelly Morris
USAACE Public Affairs

Those who know him best in Army Aviation refer to him as a “national treasure.”

Jack Holmes, a Vietnam veteran who retired from the Army as a Chief Warrant Officer 4, has been the G-3 installation air traffic and airspace official for the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker for 30 years.

After half a century of combined active duty and Department of the Army civilian service, Holmes made his final flight, landing on Howze Field Dec. 19, closing the chapter in his life marked “federal service.”

“Today we witnessed the culmination of 50 years of active and federal civilian service in support of Army Aviators across the globe. Jack Holmes’ selfless service to his fellow aviation professionals and to this branch, and specifically what we do here at Fort Rucker, has been immeasurable and will have an impact for decades to come,” said Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, commanding general, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker.

Holmes said he is grateful for the “professional, mission-oriented” comrades he has worked with at Fort Rucker.

“I have been incredibly blessed. We are family. We’ve laughed a lot together. There’s been times we’ve cried together. I think that is a huge blessing,” Holmes said. “For me and my family, it’s time for me to retire. This season is over.”

During his tenure at G-3 Air, the U.S. Army Air Traffic Services Command recognized his office as having the best Airspace

Management Program in the Army for more than five years.

“I feel that I am not performing my job satisfactorily if we are not the best in the Army,” Holmes said. “The success story is not just mine. It is due to the professionalism of everyone involved in the flight training mission at Fort Rucker.”

His office manages the most complex core of airspace in the Army, with hundreds of aircraft and three launch periods per day.

That personal commitment to excellence has been a common thread throughout his career.

From his youth he was interested in Aviation. When his father was stationed at McConnell Air Force Base in Wichita, Kansas, Holmes was surrounded by aviation. He was taking flying lessons in his teen years.

He recalled the letter he received in the late 1960s that began with the words “greetings and salutations,” and ended in his being drafted in the U.S. Army.

“It’s the best thing that ever happened to me,” Holmes said. “It gave a lot of people like myself discipline and a sense of direction.”

To Holmes, service provided a chance to focus on something greater than self.

“I think what we’ve got to do is think of something bigger than ourselves, and how can we pour ourselves into that. At the same time, be involved in something that you’re willing to sacrifice for. Even if it means giving up your life to do that. That’s what we need to do. Not look inward at ourselves, but (ask), how can I serve? How can I make Fort



PHOTOS BY KELLY MORRIS

Jack Holmes, the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker's G-3 airspace official for 30 years, speaks to a crowd of leaders, friends and family gathered on Howze Field to witness his final flight in a UH-72A, as he retires after 50 years combined active duty and Department of the Army civilian service Dec. 19.

50 YEARS *cont.*

Rucker better?” he explained.

Before becoming an Army Aviator, he first trained to be an OH-13 and OH-23 mechanic.

After basic training, he recalled boarding a bus with “40 of my new best friends,” headed for a place called Fort Rucker.

“I didn’t have a clue where Fort Rucker was,” he recalled. He knew they were getting close when he heard the sound of Huey helicopters.

Just after completing the training, he was off to Vietnam for approximately 19 months.

“At that time, during the Vietnam conflict, you didn’t go over as a unit. You went over as an individual,” he said.

He served with D Troop, 3rd Squadron, 5th Air Cavalry Regiment (Light Horse), 1st Aviation Brigade, Vinh Long, Republic of South Vietnam, as a door gunner, crew chief and a UH-1H mechanic.

“We were flying eight to ten hours a day in Vietnam. That was seven days a week,” he said.

Among his citations, Holmes was awarded the Air Medal with “V” Device for participating in an operation near “Parrot’s Beak,” which is close to the border between Vietnam and Cambodia. They were able to destroy the majority of an entire North Vietnam army regiment that they caught in the open, which turned into a three-day campaign.

After he returned home from Vietnam, Holmes applied for flight school, and soon he was off to Fort Walters, Texas, for primary, flying the TH-55. With 100 hours to his credit – which he described as being “cocky and dangerous at the same time” – he headed back to Fort Rucker for instrument training in the TH-13, and combat and tactics training in the UH-1H.

“At that time, everybody went into the Huey. Then when you finished flight school, you could go Cobra driver or Chinook,” he

It’s important for them to know when a Soldier comes here, this becomes their home

- Jack Holmes

USAACE G-3 installation air traffic and airspace official

said, of the early 1970s.

During an assignment with the 128th Assault Helicopter Company in Korea, Holmes “grew up” as an aviator and officer, and was designated an instrument instructor pilot. He became one of few school-trained instructor pilots in a time when instructors were appointed by the command based on their experience level.

Then, while stationed at Fort Polk, Louisiana, he was introduced to airspace management, in addition to serving as a standardization officer and instructor pilot at a time when the Army was undergoing significant changes in how it conducted flight training. He was chosen to become the commanding general’s pilot, and also participated in Reforger 78 conducted by NATO.

Later, while stationed in Alaska, he mastered whiteout snow takeoffs and landings, became part of the unit’s High Altitude Rescue Team, and developed a love for the Chinook mission.

Holmes also worked at the Department of the Army Regional Representative Office in Kansas City, Missouri, representing the Army to the Federal Aviation Administration and the FAA to Army units.

During his career, he flew the UH-1D/H, the CH-47 A/B/C, the OH-58 A/C and the TH-67. Over the years he has also flown numerous civilian fixed-wing aircraft.

He has his FAA Commercial License for both fixed and rotary wing aircraft, and is Instrument rated in both fixed and rotary

wing aircraft, multi-engine fixed wing aircraft, rotary wing Certified Flight Instructor, and rotary wing Certified Flight Instructor Instruments.

In total, he came to Fort Rucker six different times during his career, most of those for training, and eventually made the Wiregrass his permanent home.

Holmes said he was proud to work in Alabama’s “Aviation corridor of excellence,” that spans from Huntsville including NASA and Redstone, down to Maxwell Air Force Base at Montgomery, to the Aviation Center at Fort Rucker.

With five base fields, 15 stage fields, and upwards of 65 remote training sites for him to keep an eye on locally, Holmes has overall responsibility for all airfields and stage fields to ensure the facilities are in compliance with current regulations, including any time upgrades are done to ramps, taxiways, parking spots or lighting.

“Our Fort Rucker facilities were built in the 1950s, for first generation aircraft. Lowe was a Bird Dog and Beaver airfield. We now have fourth generation helicopters that are out there, and Future Vertical Lift is going to be a lot different,” Holmes said.

With his experience working with the FAA and communities, it is not surprising that his job at Fort Rucker also included providing guided aerial tours for visiting officials.

“I get to be the host. The installation speaks for itself,” he said. “How many times

have we come back in on short final here, and whoever I’m giving the tour to will say, “I did not realize (Fort Rucker) was this complex. I did not realize the enormity of what you do here.”

The mission here is “absolutely incredible,” he said.

Holmes hopes others will understand not just the economic impact Fort Rucker has on the community, but also the impact the training mission has to the Army and the Department of Defense.

“What we do here, how we train our aviators, and how then those aviators go out and conduct warfighting missions or humanitarian missions These are the Army’s best. Whether enlisted or officer or warrant officer, these young men and women are the best that we have to offer,” he said.

He hopes Fort Rucker’s neighbors understand the Soldier is also a citizen of the local community, involved in civic organizations, clubs and churches.

“It’s important for them to know when a Soldier comes here, this becomes their home,” he said.

Holmes said he is thankful for his wife, Linda, who has understood and supported the Army way of life.

His advice to young people who are setting goals for the future is to look at what their interests are, and he stressed the importance of a sense of direction and discipline.

“Let the Army train you for something you can use when you retire or finish your commitment,” he said.

Looking back over his career, Holmes said he would do it all again, “without hesitation.”

“I depend upon my faith quite a bit. I very, very much believe in God’s providence and that he had me here for a time and a reason,” Holmes said. “Just like you read in Ecclesiastes 3:1, there is a time and place for everything. I think he had me here at this time and place for doing this.”

Former USAACE deputy commander to take reins at IMCOM Jan. 22

By Lisa Hunter

U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Command Public Affairs

REDSTONE ARSENAL – Maj. Gen. Doug Gabram will soon be reunited with his Army Materiel Command family when he assumes command of the U.S. Army Installation Management Command, headquartered in San Antonio, Texas.

Gabram will assume command of IMCOM and be promoted to lieutenant general Jan. 22.

“Doug Gabram is the absolute right leader at the right time to assume command of Installation Management Command,” said Gen. Gus Perna, AMC commander. “No other organization influences strategic readiness and quality of life for our Soldiers, civilians and families like IMCOM. I have full faith and confidence that he understands the awesome responsibility and the end state we are driving towards: making every installation the No. 1 installation of choice for our people.”

IMCOM was created in 2002 to integrate and deliver base support to enable readiness for a globally responsive Army. The commands 50,000-person workforce handles the day-to-day operations of U.S. Army installations around the globe. Army installations are communities that provide many of the same types of services expected from any small city. Fire, police, housing, and child-care are just some of the things IMCOM does in Army communities every day.

“I’m thankful for the opportunity to continue to serve, and specifically to be able to serve in an organization that enables readiness for our entire Army,” Gabram said. “IMCOM supports operational readiness, mobilization, and quality of life across the Army. It plays a pivotal role in the chief of staff’s No. 1 priority -- people -- and is a key



Gabram

ARMY PHOTO

enabler in readiness. I am honored and humbled to serve as the IMCOM commander, and to be back on the AMC and Army team.

“I’ve really appreciated being a part of Team Redstone over the last four years,” Gabram said. “It’s rare that you find a community and an Army installation that are truly one. Redstone Arsenal is extremely diverse, with AMC and its subordinate commands, the Missile Defense Agency, NASA, the FBI and the Army Project Executive Offices for Aviation and Missiles and Space. Because we’re so varied, it creates an opportunity for great teamwork, which we get the privilege of being a part of every day. On top of that, the support that the military receives from the community is truly outstanding, and it’s been a privilege being a part of this



I have full faith and confidence that he understands the awesome responsibility and the end state we are driving towards: making every installation the No. 1 installation of choice for our people.

- Gen. Gus Perna

Army Materiel Command commanding general

very close community.”

Since February 2019, Gabram has served as the director for Test at the Missile Defense Agency based on Redstone Arsenal. The Missile Defense Agency’s mission is to develop and deploy a layered Missile Defense System to defend the United States, its deployed forces, allies and friends from missile attacks in all phases of flight. As the director for Test, Gabram was responsible for the planning, programming, budgeting, staffing and managing a comprehensive Ballistic Missile Defense System test program to field an integrated and effective capability to the warfighter.

Prior to his assignment with MDA, Gabram served for three years as the commander of the U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Command, an AMC major subordinate command, also based on Redstone Arsenal. In that position, he led more than 18,000 military and civilians in providing aviation, missile, and test, measurement and diagnostic equipment sustainment support to the joint warfighter to enable readiness.

During his tenure as the AMCOM commander, Gabram led a team that worked tirelessly to improve readiness of Army aircraft and missile systems by building supply chain depth, meeting with original equipment manufacturers and other supply chain

partners, and identifying the top readiness drivers for each aircraft and missile system.

“In the end, whether Soldier or civilian, all we do must translate into combat power and mission ready units,” Gabram said of his assignments at Redstone Arsenal. “I have learned an incredible amount about the complexity of building readiness for the Aviation and Missile enterprises. Ultimately, everything we do is all about putting capable, reliable, effective and safe weapon systems in the hands of our Soldiers. And, maybe, more importantly, sustaining those systems to stay in the fight.”

Gabram was commissioned in 1984. Before assuming command of AMCOM, Gabram served as the deputy chief of staff, G-3/5/7 for the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia.

He also served as the deputy commanding general (Support), 1st Cavalry Division “America’s First Team,” Fort Hood, Texas; deputy commander for the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence, Fort Rucker; and chief of staff for the 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood. Gabram served as the brigade commander of the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, and as battalion commander of the 1st Battalion, 101st Aviation, Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

Army Housing Summit set to forge path forward in housing reinvestment

By Kari Hawkins

AMC Public Affairs

REDSTONE ARSENAL – Nearly a year after assuming responsibility for all Army housing, Army Materiel Command is hosting a comprehensive review of the sweeping reforms and improvements made across the enterprise to ensure Soldiers and families have access to high quality on-post housing.

During the Housing Summit, which is running Jan. 14-16 at AMC Headquarters at Redstone Arsenal, representatives of the Army's seven privatized housing companies and Army leaders from 60 installations are reviewing strategies and programs to provide the best options for Soldiers, civilians and their families.

"We are absolutely committed to provide safe and secure housing on every installation, and making every installation an installation of choice for our Soldiers and families" said Gen. Gus Perna, commander of AMC. "The summit is another step in our commitment to hold ourselves and privatized housing companies accountable to provide a high-quality standard of living and to earn back the trust of our housing residents."

Since March, the Army and AMC have set conditions for improvements, beginning with visits to 100 percent of housing units, the establishment of 24/7 housing hotlines at every installation and quarterly town halls hosted by installation leadership. In July, more than 25,000 residents provided input through the Resident Satisfaction Survey that gave the Army insight into housing experiences and further pinpointed issues that needed to be addressed. In addition, an Army Inspector General report yielded feedback to improve housing.

"The steps we took in the spring and summer of 2019 improved our visibility of

the housing landscape and allowed us to lay out a way ahead for course correction," Perna said.

Other significant initiatives in 2019 included:

- Hiring more than 100 additional staff at installation housing offices to provide quality assurance and control checks on work being done in homes, with the goal to have 100 percent of homes between occupancies, 100 percent of life, health and safety work orders and 5 percent of all work orders checked;

- Revising the incentive fee structure with the housing companies to better account for resident and installation leadership feedback;

- Providing full access for garrison commanders to housing work orders so they can execute the quality control measures needed to ensure issues are properly fixed the first time;

- Creating mobile apps as an additional method for residents to submit and track work orders;

- Establishing a Housing Environmental Health Response Registry through the Army Medical Command to address housing health or safety concerns; and

- Senior Army leaders meeting regularly with RCI company executives to review housing properties and provide oversight.

The Army also joined the Air Force and Navy to develop a Resident Bill of Rights, expected to be signed later this month that will empower service members and their families to hold housing providers accountable.

While these initiatives have yielded progress and improvements, Perna said it will take time to rebuild relationships with housing residents and develop a strategy to ensure quality reinvestment.



PHOTO BY PATRICK ALBRIGHT

Construction workers install new windows in a Fort Benning, Ga., historic home as part of a broader effort to improve overall housing at the installation.

The Housing Summit will provide a forum for Army leaders and RCI companies to work together on determining the best way to reinvest more than \$500 million in funds from the companies and for the Army to develop a holistic investment strategy for Army-owned housing and barracks that will prioritize resources across installations.

During the summit, Army leaders are reviewing the current status of housing with representatives of RCI companies BBC, Hunt, Michaels, LendLease, Corvias, Lincoln and Clark. The seven companies have all signed 50-year agreements to maintain, manage and lease more than 87,000 houses at 44 U.S. and overseas installations, and re-invest in those

properties to maintain safety and quality.

"We still have much work to do, and rest assured this is a continuing priority with Army senior leaders. We are in this for the long haul," Perna said. "We remain steadfast in holding ourselves and privatized housing companies accountable to provide safe and secure housing on our installations. We are investing in long-term planning for future oversight, and enacting a set of policies and programs that will improve residents' quality of life. At the end of the 50-year contracts, our expectation is that our housing units are in significantly better condition than they were at the beginning of the contracts, and better than they are today."

5 siblings spend last holiday season together before basic training

By **Devon L. Suits**
Army News Service

FORT MEADE, Md. – As the holiday season came to a close, Spc. Austin and Pfc. Haley Wierzbicki cherished the last moments they had with their family in Walnut, Illinois, before returning to their respective duty stations to start the new year.

As a close-knit family of three sisters and two brothers, both Haley and Austin, and their parents, Nicole and Karl, acknowledged the significance behind this year's holiday visit.

This is the last season the family will have together before the three youngest siblings, Sequia, Sierra and Mason, head off to basic military training and don their Army uniforms.

"It makes me feel proud – like I did something right along the way," said Nicole. "They have excelled in this [small] town and during school. They will go on to do greater things in their lives."

During their visit, the oldest sister, Haley, a combat medic specialist on holiday exodus from advanced individual training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas; and Austin, a signals intelligence analyst stationed at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, regularly shared stories about their careers thus far, they said.

Anxious and determined, "the triplets" had plenty of questions for their older brother and sister, Nicole said. The three graduate high school in the summer and are slated for BMT shortly after.

"I chose to enlist because ... I needed more of a challenge and wanted to try something harder for myself," Haley said. "It was nice to be home [during the holiday exodus]. Not having a chance to see my family and being away for so long at BMT was a big change. My family noticed a big change in my brother



COURTESY PHOTO

er and I after being gone for so long."

All of Haley's siblings shared similar reasons for joining the Army. The two Soldiers would often share the tips and tricks they learned to overcome the plights during BMT and AIT, Austin said.

"I was the first to go, and I was nervous because I didn't know what to expect," Austin said. "After recognizing what was right and wrong, I gave them all some advice to help make it easier. I wanted to point out [things] they should learn to help set themselves apart from their peers."

"Once they have graduated their AIT ... and get to their unit, I look forward to hearing their perspective on the Army – to see if they have enjoyed it as much as I have," he added.

Sequia is excited about her new career as a mortuary affairs specialist. After hearing many stories from her older siblings, she looks forward to the next chapter in life and can't wait to see how the Army will shape her in the long run, she said.

"When Sequia was younger, she found a dead bird and would ask to fix it or wanted

to find a way to make it better," Nicole said. "Most kids are scared of things like that, but she was always accepting of it."

Eager to follow in Haley's footsteps, Sierra initially tried to enlist as a combat medic, she said. However, changes during the enlistment process that were outside her control forced her to alter her career path. Sierra eventually chose to become a combat engineer.

"Combat engineering seemed like the adrenaline rush that I was looking for in life," she said. "It was the [demolitions and explosives] and teamwork aspect ... that I thought was cool. It is going to be this exhilarating feeling, and it just seemed like an adventure that I wanted to take."

Mason considered Army artillery to be the "King of Battle" and opted to enlist as a cannon crewman.

Both Mason's and Sierra's career choices are a perfect fit, Nicole explained. The two are both "extremely outgoing" and are constantly looking for something new to do.

While Mason is excited to get out there and fire a howitzer cannon, he is mostly concerned about getting "smoked" during BMT,

he said. His older siblings tried to quell his concerns, but it will be up to him to push through training after he departs.

Throughout each enlistment process, the children kept their parents involved during the process, often explaining their career decisions and help ease their minds, Nicole said.

Army recruiters were always available and there to answer many of Nicole's questions.

"[My kids] were all enthusiastic," Nicole said. "I can't be anything but happy for them and support them along the way."

Seeing a change in Haley and Austin, Nicole appreciated the lasting impact the Army has had on her family, she said. Both now exhibit a high level of confidence and leadership, and she can't wait to see what happens to her three youngest.

"As a parent, you see your kid in a different light," Nicole said. "When they can finally see themselves in that light, it all comes together. It will be nice to see them grow."



FORT RUCKER MOVIE SCHEDULE

FOR JAN. 17-FEB. 6

Friday, Jan. 17

Bad Boys: For Life (R)..... 4 p.m.
Bad Boys: For Life (R)..... 7 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 18

Bad Boys: For Life (R)..... 4 p.m.
Bad Boys: For Life (R)..... 7 p.m.

Sunday, Jan. 19

Bad Boys: For Life (R)..... 1 p.m.
Bad Boys: For Life (R)..... 4 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 23

Bad Boys: For Life (R)..... 7 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 24

Bad Boys: For Life (R)..... 7 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 25

Jumanji: The Next Level (PG-13)..... 4 p.m.
Jumanji: The Next Level (PG-13)..... 7 p.m.

Sunday, Jan. 26

Cats (PG-13)..... 1 p.m.
Black Christmas (PG-13)..... 4 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 30

Jumanji: The Next Level (PG-13)..... 7 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 31

Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker (PG-13)..... 7 p.m.

Saturday, Feb. 1

Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker (PG-13)..... 4 p.m.
Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker (PG-13) 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, Feb. 2

Little Women (PG)..... 1 p.m.
Dark Waters (PG-13)..... 4 p.m.

Thursday, Feb. 6

Black Christmas (PG-13)..... 7 p.m.

TICKETS ARE \$6 FOR ADULTS AND \$5 FOR CHILDREN, 12 AND UNDER. MILITARY I.D. CARDHOLDERS AND THEIR GUESTS ARE WELCOME. SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 255-2408.

HONORING A HERO



PHOTO BY JIM HUGHES

Fort Rucker personnel, including the Directorate of Public Safety and its ladder fire truck flying the American flag, joined hundreds of local residents to line Highway 84 in Daleville to honor Navy Ensign Joshua Watson as his remains were driven from Dothan to Enterprise Dec. 13. Fort Rucker officials again extend their condolences to Watson's family and friends.

FROM DFMWR



Visit Fort Rucker Army Community Service on Facebook for a calendar of our activities!

GOLF AS THERAPY WITH PGA HOPE

Golf as Therapy with PGA HOPE – Helping Our Patriots Everywhere – is now at Silver Wings Golf Course every Wednesday from 10 a.m. to noon. PGA HOPE introduces golf to veterans with disabilities to enhance their physical, mental, social and emotional well-being.

The program introduces the game of golf through a developmental six- to eight-week curriculum taught by PGA professionals trained in adaptive golf and military cultural competency. All veterans are welcome at no cost.

For more information, call 255-0089.

YOUTH T-BALL, BASEBALL, SOFTBALL REGISTRATION

The child and youth services youth sports and fitness program is taking registrations for youth T-ball, baseball and softball through Feb. 15 at parent central services in the Soldier Service Center, Bldg. 5700, Rm. 193, or online using Webtrac. A current sports physical and valid CYS registration are required. Age control date for T-ball and baseball is May 1, 2020, and for softball is Jan. 1, 2020.

There will be a parents meeting on Feb. 19 at 6 p.m. in the youth center gym.

Costs are T-ball, \$25, for ages 5-6; baseball, \$45, for ages 7-12; and softball, \$45, for ages 9-15. The teams will be broken down into the following age groups:

For more information, call 255-2254 or 255-9105.

BUILD AND ENHANCE YOUR CAREER

Mark your calendars and make plans to attend a private-sector employment workshop session Jan. 23 in Bldg. 5700 in the Army Community Service Multipurpose Room

from 9 a.m. to noon – but people should arrive by 8:45 a.m. to sign in and complete some paperwork. You'll learn the essentials of conducting a successful job campaign, to include creating impactful résumés and cover letters, reviewing job interview strategies, and other helpful tips. Advance registration is required.

For more information or to register, call 255-2594.

MAD SCIENTIST WORKSHOP

The Center Library would like to encourage future innovators, educators and leaders with its Mad Scientist Workshop scheduled for Jan. 23 from 4-5 p.m. for ages 7-12. For this event, participants will be making snowflake slime while testing different reagents. Registration is limited to the first 15 participants. All supplies will be provided. The workshop is open to authorized patrons and is Exceptional Family Member Program friendly.

For more information or to register, visit the library or call 255-3885.

LIFEGUARD COURSES

Lifeguard courses are scheduled for Jan. 23-26 and will be open to patrons ages 15 and up. Costs are \$125 for military members and Department of Defense ID card holders, and \$135 for members of the general public. Class times will be Thursday and Friday from 4-8 p.m., Saturday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from 1-5 p.m. at the Fort Rucker Physical Fitness Center Indoor Pool.

People must pass a prerequisite test on the first day must to enter the course. People can register at the front desk of the Fort Rucker PFC.

The cutoff for registration is the first

day of the course start date. Online training needs to be completed before testing out.

Candidates who take the training program are also eligible for employment with Fort Rucker MWR.

For more information on how to apply, call 255-2296.

CYS BINGO NIGHT

The Fort Rucker Youth Center will be hosting a bingo night Jan. 24 from 4-5:30 p.m. Popcorn will be served. For more information, call 255-2271.

CYS I HAVE A DREAM SKATE NIGHT

The school age center will host a skate night Jan. 24 from 5-8:00 p.m. Safety skate will be from 5-6 p.m. for \$5 per hour followed by regular skate from 6-8 p.m. for \$10 per hour. Participants must pay using correct cash only. Safety skate is for those that are beginning skaters and those learning to skate – youth must be picked up by 6 p.m. Participants must be registered members of CYS to participate.

For membership information or to sign-up for membership, call parent central services at 255-9638. Registered members with emergency medications must bring all required medications to the school age center to participate in skate night.

For more information, call 255-9108.

POLAR PLUNGE 5K

The Polar Plunge 5K fun run has been rescheduled for Jan. 25 at 10 a.m. at Lake Tholocco's West Beach. The event is open to all authorized personnel with post access and their guests.

People can pre-register at either PFC and register on race day from 9-9:45 a.m. at

Lake Tholocco. Runners will start and finish at West Beach. At 11 a.m. participants will be invited to sprint and plunge into Lake Tholocco. Hot beverages will be provided after people's arctic dive. Commemorative fleece blankets will be available for purchase for \$10.

For more information, call 255-2296.

COMMANDING GENERAL'S GOLF TOURNAMENT

Silver Wings golf Course will host the CG's Golf Tournament Jan. 25. Breakfast will be served at 6 a.m. The format is four-person team scramble and begins with an 8 a.m. shotgun start. Lunch and awards will follow play. Entry fee is \$70 for non-members and \$60 for members. Entry fee includes 18 holes of golf, driving range balls, cart, tournament meals and two Mulligans. Prizes go to closest to the pin and closest to the line. U.S. Golf Association verifiable handicap required. If no verifiable handicap, player plays as a scratch player. Prizes will be based on the number of teams participating. Steve's or CG Dogfight points can be used in lieu of handicap.

For more information, call 255-0089.

MAKER MONDAY

Make, create, build and explore at the Center Library's Maker Mondays. The library invites children ages 7 and up to think outside the box in a creative after-school program featuring its MakerSpace lab Jan. 27 from 3:30-4:30 p.m. Children will explore a variety of art, and science, technology, engineering and mathematics activities, as well as participate in fun challenges that are guaranteed to ignite their inner engineer. This program is open to authorized patrons, though space is limited to 15 participants.

For more information or to register, visit the Center Library or call 255-3885.

MOVE, GROOVE, READ! BABY LAPSIT

This program is designed especially for babies aged 0 to 18 months and their grown-ups. You and your baby will sing songs, do finger-plays, and enjoy books and baby games, all intended to help little ones discover words and language.

These lapsits will be held at the Center Library every first and third Tuesdays of the month at 11:15 a.m.

For more information, visit the Center

Library or call 255-3885.

THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN SEMINAR

An Army Community Service accredited financial counselor will present a Thrift Savings Plan seminar Feb. 5 from 5-6 p.m. in Bldg. 5700, Rm. 350. The seminar will feature a discussion of the significant aspects of the TSP, including: why invest with the TSP, how to start your contribution, risk tolerance, traditional and Roth accounts, TSP funds, and diversification. Free child care will be available with registration. Class is subject to cancellation without pre-registration.

For more information and to register, call 255-9631.

THE POWER OF MUSIC

The new parent support program will host a discussion on the power of music Feb. 6 from 10-11 a.m. in the Spiritual Life Center, Rms. 19 and 20. Staff and participants will discuss the many benefits of music and how to incorporate it into people's daily routines with their children.

Always free, always fun, always empowering. Pre-registration is required by the Friday before each class each month.

Free childcare is available with pre-registration.

For more information, call 255-9647.

CYS CHINESE NEW YEAR CELEBRATION

It's the Year of the Rat – and youth are invited to find out about their zodiac sign and join in on other fun activities, including Lion and Dragon Dance, chopsticks demonstration, fan making and more, at the youth center's Chinese New Year Celebration Jan. 31 from 4-5:30 p.m.

The event is open to the public.

For more information, call 255-2271.



DUELING PIANOS
FEBRUARY 14 • THE LANDING • 7 PM

- \$10 General admission tickets: Seating is located on the upper levels from the main floor. Reserved seating is not available for general admission.
- \$60 Four person VIP tables: (Price of VIP table includes premium upper level reserved seating, one bottle of chilled champagne, and dessert cheese platter)
- \$150 Ten person VIP tables: (Price of VIP table includes premium lower level reserved seating, two bottles of chilled champagne, and dessert cheese platter)
- General Admission Tickets available at The Landing, all Coffee Zone locations, and MWR Central. VIP Tickets available only at The Landing.

THE LANDING
Bldg. 113, Novosel St.
(334) 255-0769 / 0767

Fort Rucker MWR
f t i rucker.armymwr.com

Grab dinner before the show!
Sweetheart Dinner
The Landing Zone • 4:00 p.m.
This three course dinner for two - \$45.
Reservations are highly recommended.

Are you an active duty or retired Army dependent child or spouse attending college for your first undergraduate degree?

Applications for 2020-2021 AER scholarships are now being accepted at www.aerhq.org



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NEWS IN BRIEF

AER SCHOLARSHIPS

Army Emergency Relief is now accepting scholarship applications for 2020-2021 AER scholarships. Spouses and dependent children of active duty, retired and Title 10 National Guard or Reserve Soldiers, and spouses and dependent children of deceased active duty or retired Soldiers may be eligible to apply for AER scholarships. Applications from dependent children will be accepted until April 1 at 11 p.m. CDT; spouses may apply throughout the year.

Visit <https://www.aerhq.org/Apply-for-Scholarship> to learn more. For questions concerning the application process, call 255-2341.

CORVIAS SCHOLARSHIPS

Corvias Foundation recently began accepting 2020 scholarship applications from

military spouses and children of active-duty service members. The application process for the military dependent student scholarship will close Feb. 14, while the military spouse scholarship application process will close May 8. Both scholarship programs offer financial support for eligible applicants pursuing higher education degrees. The military-dependent student recipients will each receive a four-year college scholarship of up to \$50,000. The military spouse scholarships will be awarded to 20 individuals who will each receive an award of \$5,000. These funds can be used for any need that will help the recipients complete their degree, such as tuition, childcare or gas for transportation.

Individuals who are interested in applying can visit corviasfoundation.org/apply-now/ to review eligibility criteria and access the application.

CHANGE OF COMMAND



PHOTO BY JIM HUGHES

Air Force Lt. Col. Howard K. A. Darling assumes command of the 23rd Flying Training Squadron as he accepts the unit's guidon from Col. Richard A. Carrell, 58th Operations Group commander at Kirtland AFB, N.M., as outgoing commander Lt. Col. Jake A. C. Brittingham looks on during a ceremony on Cairns Army Airfield Dec. 19. Darling's previous assignment was serving as the unit's operations officer.

ARMY FLIER

COMMAND

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Fort Rucker Commanding General

Col. Whitney B. Gardner
Fort Rucker Garrison Commander

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The "Army Flier" is an authorized publication for the Fort Rucker community, published under the authority of AR 360-1.

Contents are not necessarily official views of, or endorsed by the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army, or Fort Rucker.

The "Army Flier" is published digitally bi-monthly by the Fort Rucker Public Affairs Office, Bldg. 131, Sixth Avenue, Fort Rucker, AL, 36362.

Questions, comments or submissions for the "Army Flier" should be directed to the editor at usarmy.rucker.us-ag.mbx.atzq-pao@mail.mil.

The PAO staff reserves the right to edit submissions selected for publication. For more information about the "Army Flier," call (334) 255-1239.

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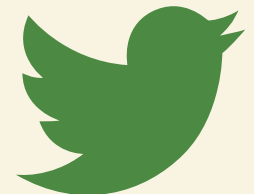
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Deadline for submissions is one week before publication.