DOD'S ONLY HH-60L MEDEVAC STATIC DISPLAY AT FORT RUCKER'S MECCD -- SEE PAGE 7

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VOLUME 72 • NUMBER 1 • JANUARY 21, 2022

ΗK

ABOVE THE BEST

USAACE honors its instructors of the year

PAGE 2

FEEDBACK NEEDED

DOD launches housing tenant satisfaction survey

PAGE 3

UNDER FIRE

DPS, USAARL team up to exercise active-shooter response

PAGE 4

REIMAGING

Renovations continue at AAFES main building

PAGE 6

FLY, FIGHT AND WIN

Air Force AETC command team visits Fort Rucker's 23rd FTS



USAACE honors instructors of 4th quarter, year

By Kelly Morris USAACE Public Affairs

The U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence conducted a combined virtual and in-person ceremony honoring its top instructors for the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2021, and its FY 2021 overall USAACE Instructors of the Year at the U.S. Army Aviation Museum Dec. 16.

Each quarter, academic instructors, instructor pilots and noncommissioned officer flight instructors from USAACE and Fort Rucker are nominated by their supervisors for the honor of competing for Instructor of the Quarter.

They are evaluated on quality of instruction, quality of materials developed and used, and quality of their presentation. After all evaluations are completed, scores are compiled and winners of the quarterly competitions are selected. The Instructors of the Year are determined from the quarterly winners.

4th QUARTER WINNERS

• The Noncommissioned Officer Academic Instructor of the Quarter is Staff Sgt. Manuel A. Sanchez, 1st Aviation Brigade (Fort Huachuca, Ariz.).

• The Civilian Academic Instructor of the Quarter is Alexander A. Tejada, 128th Avn. Bde. (Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia).

INSTRUCTORS OF THE YEAR

• The Officer Academic Instructor of the Year is Capt. Edmund C. Preisser, 1st Avn. Bde.

• The Officer Flight Instructor of the Year is CW2 Zachary A. Eichhorn, 110th Avn. Bde.

• The NCO Flight Instructor of the Year is Staff Sgt. Amanda L. Wallace, 110th Avn. Bde.

• The NCO Academic Instructor of the

Year is Staff Sgt. Alvin Santiago Centeno, 110th Avn. Bde.

• The Civilian Academic Instructor of the Year is Alexander A. Tejada, 128th Avn. Bde.

• The Civilian Instructor Pilot of the Year is Robert R. Foor II, 110th Avn. Bde.

Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, USAACE and Fort Rucker commanding general, welcomed attendees and lauded the impact made by instructors who go beyond teaching to inspire their students.

"They lead from the cockpit and the classroom, and epitomize the type of instructor that we need as we continue to modernize the training and education that will shape our Army and aviation warfighters," Francis said.

"They train our pilots, our maintainers, our (Unmanned Aircraft Systems) operators and maintainers These instructors work at Fort Rucker, Fort Huachuca, and Joint Base Langley-Eustis. It's our pleasure today to honor the best and the brightest from across our aviation enterprise and our training enterprise," he said.

Instructors play a critical role in the USAACE mission to drive change and develop leaders by producing agile and adaptive aviation professionals, integrate aviation capabilities and requirements, and enable commanders and soldiers on the ground to fight and win.

Army Aviation is integral to the combined arms team as the Army continues its modernization efforts to transition from two decades of counterinsurgency operations to focus on winning in large-scale combat operations, Francis explained.

"We have to keep our focus on support-



PHOTO BY KELLY MORRIS

Fort Rucker honored the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence Fiscal Year 2021 Instructors of the Year in a ceremony at the U.S. Army Aviation Museum Dec. 16. The Officer Academic Instructor of the Year is Capt. Edmund C. Preisser, 1st Aviation Brigade. The Officer Flight Instructor of the Year is CW2 Zachary A. Eichhorn, 110th Avn. Bde. The NCO Academic Instructor of the Year is Staff Sgt. Alvin Santiago Centeno, 110th Avn. Bde. The Civilian Instructor Pilot of the Year is Robert R. Foor II, 110th Avn. Bde. The NCO Flight Instructor of the Year is Staff Sgt. Amanda L. Wallace, 110th Avn. Bde. Not pictured is the Civilian Academic Instructor of the Year.

ing the ground force commander. We have to consistently adapt our professional military education, our flight training and maintenance to better develop agile leaders and Soldiers who are prepared to fight and win in complex environments," Francis said.

As the nation faces threats to its national security across all domains, Army aviation must continue to "grow competent, confident and innovative Soldiers and leaders," and refines its doctrine, standard operating procedures and tactics for the future fight, he said.

"Our Soldiers will be prepared to incorporate advances in technology, capability, and effectively employ them on the battlefield. All of that preparation begins right here with our outstanding instructors that make it happen every day," Francis said. Francis said the branch is stronger because of the instructors' legacy of leadership and instruction.

"Your students will use you as the benchmark against what all other instructors and leaders are measured," he said. "Know that every one of you has made an immeasurable impact first toward your students, and then by your students' future contributions You are our instructors of the year, and we are better for it."

During the event, just before the instructors took center stage to be recognized, a prerecorded video played that featured each of the individual instructors.

The instructors received a certificate of achievement and gifts from sponsoring organizations.

DOD launches 2022 housing tenant satisfaction survey

By U.S. Army and Fort Rucker Public Affairs

Fort Rucker on-post housing residents will soon have the opportunity to complete the 2022 Department of Defense Tenant Satisfaction Housing Survey.

Survey results provide leadership with feedback about living in Army housing and will guide the decisions the Army makes about future housing, said Lt. Gen. Jason Evans, deputy chief of staff of G-9, which provides policies, programs, resources and expertise for services and installation infrastructure to enable total Army readiness. G-9 is the sponsor of the survey.

"By responding to the survey, every resident will have a voice in how the Army and its partners continue to maintain and improve the quality of our housing," he said, adding that tenants can rate their satisfaction with services, property and the overall housing experience through the online survey.

An online survey link will be emailed from CEL & Associates, Inc. – an independent, third-party company – Jan. 11 to more than 110,000 tenants living in privatized, government-owned and government-leased housing on Army installations across the globe. Completing the confidential survey takes about 10 minutes, and tenants have until Feb. 24 to take part, according to Melissa Bryson, operations director for Corvias at Fort Rucker.

"The survey gives residents an opportunity to provide feedback to the Army and Corvias that is used to evaluate the current state of the partnership and guide future improvements to the housing facilities and residential services," she added. "The results we collect from the survey will be instrumental in helping us achieve our goal to provide our residents with the best possible service and quality on-post living," Bryson said. "Previous surveys helped us to identify areas to change and new customer service initiatives were implemented based on the feedback."

Based on feedback from the 2020 survey, Corvias has improved lawn care service by hiring a new lawn care contractor, and increasing oversight to ensure the service meets or exceeds the contract terms. Communication to residents regarding lawn care scheduling and what to expect throughout the season was also fully revamped, she added.

Additionally, Corvias team members now contact 100 percent of residents who have a work order completed in their home, Bryson said. "Residents have the option to track their maintenance request live with the Resident Portal app and maintenance technicians update the status in real time, which allows for residents to be notified of any changes to their work order."

All survey answers are strictly confidential, and residents are urged to offer honest responses. Personal data is not tabulated, and the survey does not identify the resident in any way, she said.

"Residents of Fort Rucker who complete the survey have the opportunity to win prizes," Bryson said. "Those who complete the survey prior to Jan. 17 will be entered into a random drawing for a \$50 gift card. Three additional drawings will be held – one on



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

Feb. 1, one on Feb. 8 and the final drawing will be held two days after the survey period closes. Two winners will be randomly selected during the first drawing, three winners will be selected on Feb. 1, four winners will be chosen during the drawing on Feb. 8 and five winners will be drawn in the final drawing.

Residents who moved into a Corvias home prior to Dec. 8 should receive an email from ArmyHousingSurvey@celassociates.com on Jan. 11. Residents who did not receive a survey should contact ArmyHousingSurvey@celassociates.com with their installation name and address. The Army is investing billions of dollars into transforming barracks and on-post housing at installations across the globe to provide Soldiers and their families with quality, safe and secure housing, and a better quality of life.

The Army has also fully implemented the Tenant Bill of Rights, ensuring privatized housing tenants receive quality housing and fair treatment, according to Army public affairs.

The Tenant Satisfaction Survey is Office of Management and Budget approved with an OMB Control Number 0704-0553.

Fort Rucker DPS, USAARL put active-shooter response skills to the test

By Jim Hughes Fort Rucker Public Affairs

The Fort Rucker Directorate of Public Safety honed its emergency response skills and the U.S. Army Aeromedical Research Laboratory put its active-shooter response plans to the test during an exercise Jan. 12 at the lab.

Even though gunshots sounded, fake blood flowed and gruesome injuries were moulaged onto volunteers, the exercise went well, according to Lt. Col. Phillip Lenz, director of DPS.

"This was an exceptional exercise for both USAARL and the DPS," he said. "All of our training objectives were met, and both organizations learned valuable lessons in support of emergency action plans and the overall DPS approach as we prepare for the upcoming full-scale exercise in February."

USAARL officials also found the training highly valuable for several reasons, according to Maj. Michelle Slayden, USAARL director of the Research Operations Group and executive officer.

"Leadership at USAARL works hard to provide a safe work environment for our Soldiers and staff," she said. "One of the most important ways we do this is by organizing training on how to confront potential hazards and threatening scenarios."

The active-shooter response exercise was



Medical personnel treat a simulated casualty outside of the building.



PHOTOS BY JIM HUGHES

Fort Rucker Directorate of Public Safety first responders enter the U.S. Army Aeromedical Research Laboratory building as role players ask for help during an active-shooter response exercise at the Jan. 12.

the latest example of this kind of training, Slayden added.

"It was our way of offering our unit's personnel assurance that leadership takes their safety seriously," she said. "We wanted them to gain confidence that if a worst-case scenario were to occur, we have a plan in place that we have practiced as a unit, and that it is reviewed and updated regularly."

The exercise also provided USAARL the opportunity to collaborate with multiple agencies from across Fort Rucker "to provide a realistic training environment and to gain a better understanding of how our internal emergency action plan nests with those of our Fort Rucker partners," Slayden added.

And that's all to the good, Lenz said, adding that he appreciates USAARL partnering with DPS for the exercise.

"As a result of our request to find a host to conduct higher level training, USAARL stepped up as an incredible partner, and an organization who is as passionate about protecting their people and accomplishing the mission as we are," he said. "Col. Mike Tarpey and his team were great to work with and that passion starts at the top of the organization."

Exercises such as this one are vital to validating and improving upon the plans designed to ensure the safety of those who live, work and play on Fort Rucker, Lenz said.

"We owe it to the Fort Rucker community to continually hone our collective DPS response approach and, even more so, to always look for ways to get better," he said.

"We can't stress enough the importance of communication at all levels, where it starts with the police responding to neutralize the threat, and the many actions and requirements for the incident command post," Lenz added. "As the situation matures, it is

ARMY FLIER | JANUARY 21, 2022 5

EXERCISE cont. -

imperative that the ICP provides critical information to the incident operations center to support senior commander information requirements and common operating picture development."

In addition to the communication focus, the DPS learned several ways to improve the collective approach to its response, he said.

"This exercise allowed us to validate our standard operating procedure for the use of the rescue task force that combines police and fire assets to go into the 'warm zone' to move key patients to the casualty collection point for triage and ambulatory movement," Lenz said.

Slayden complimented the entire DPS staff for making the exercise a total success

for USAARL.

"The close coordination for this exercise with the DPS team has been phenomenal," she said. "The professionalism, experience and attention to detail that DPS brought to the table in the planning and execution of this extremely valuable training event has been tremendous.

"The USAARL team has learned so much throughout the process of planning and carrying out the active shooter exercise," Slayden said. "Overall, we at USAARL consider the exercise to have been a tremendously positive experience and we eagerly look forward to future collaboration with our partners throughout Fort Rucker."



Emergency responders tend to a simulated casualty in the entryway of the building.



Fort Rucker emergency responders make their way through the USAARL hallways to find casualties.

REIMAGING AAFES renovations continue in food court, main store

By Jim Hughes Fort Rucker Public Affairs

The improvements keep coming in the Army and Air Force Exchange Service main building that houses the post exchange, food court, Four Seasons and vendor outlets.

While Starbucks and Qdoba Mexican Eats are fully operational and putting smiles on people's faces, and other infrastructure improvements are complete, work continues on the reimaging project, according to Brenda Hyland, Maxwell, Fort Rucker and Gunter Exchange general manager.

"The work started in mid-November of 2020 and, so far, they've put in a new HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning system), new lighting, a new ceiling, new ductwork, polished concrete floors, new paint and other improvements in the Four Seasons area, the mall and the food court," she said. "Qdoba and Starbucks also have opened – people really seem to be enjoying them."

Customers will also enjoy the new HVAC systems, complete with all-new ductwork, come the summer. The system in the Four Seasons is complete, while work continues in the food court and main store systems, Hyland said, adding that a new bathroom facility for customers is also up and running in the main store.

Which is good because the bathroom area in the mall section is under renovation, along with work still going on to improve infrastructure for the food court, which resulted in the closings of Popeye's and Subway for the time being, and Charley's will close in the near future once needed materials arrive. The entrance near the Four Seasons is also getting a facelift, as well, she said.

Other work going on or scheduled to begin soon includes reimaging work in the main store, to include new lighting, floor polishing and new fixtures, and also moving the Power Zone to where the cleaning supplies, and health and beauty section is, the general manager added.

The main store will also be getting a new jewelry counter, an expanded center pad where the men's department is now for premium handbags, and a Be Fit area for athletic shoes and sportswear, "targeting the community we are a part of," Hyland said, adding that people will see dust coverings up where the work is going on.

"The store team has worked really hard to move the merchandise in that area into other parts of the store, so we don't lose representation of the merchandise," she said.

Construction workers are also doing the majority of the noisy, dusty work at night to avoid impacting customers' shopping experience at the store, she said.

Future work will include a facelift for the main entrance, including new sliding glass doors and a more modern appearance, Hyland said, adding that August is the new target date for all work being completed on the reimaging project.

"It is a really exciting time for us," she said. "The big events were the openings of Qdoba



PHOTO BY JIM HUGHES

A portion of the main store is curtained off as the reimaging project continues.

and Starbucks, and the whole facelift in the food court – it looks like a new place. We have all new furniture out there, and the booths have USB ports so people can charge their devices while sitting there. It's really made it much cozier and more comfortable to hang out there. Considering how many students we have on Fort Rucker, I think it's a nice place for them to be able to go, and can catch up with family and friends on their devices, and get lunch, or get coffee and a snack – it's something that was really lacking before. We're happy we were able to secure these things for our community."

The general manager also thanked customers for their patience and great attitudes while all the work has gone one.

"I really hope that they are enjoying the upgrades as much as we are – they seem as excited about it as we are," she said. "I thank them for their patience during the process because last year during the summer the food court was really torn up. Hang in there – we're almost there!"

She also thanked her staff for their resilience, and commitment to the AAFES mission and their customers. "Thanks to all of our associates for doing such a great job and hanging in there – they have truly been troopers," Hyland said. "It's exciting, but it can also be wearing. Everyone has been really fabulous throughout the whole process. A construction project of this magnitude always has the potential to not be fun to go through, but because everyone has really pulled together and are being so wonderful, it's been a joy instead.

"Everyone has been able to focus on the wonderful parts of it and the excitement of getting new facilities – thank you from bottom of my heart to everyone," she said, adding that support from command and the garrison has been wonderful, as well. "I'm really grateful we have such a wonderful community and installation."

In AAFES news not related to the upgrades, the main store will close at 4 p.m. Jan. 26 for annual inventory instead of its normal 6 p.m. closure time.

To stay up to date on all AAFES news, including hours and closures, follow the organization on Facebook or download the Digital Garrison app.

DOD'S only HH-60L MEDEVAC static display at Fort Rucker's MECCD

By Spc. Jordan Arnold USAACE Public Affairs

The Medical Evacuation Concepts and Capability Division received the first and only HH-60L static display in the Department of Defense Dec. 8.

"It's been a year in progress. The aircraft was brought in on a truck, and it's a capability development device that we're going to use to help inform and modernize the HH-60 fleet and how we look forward to future systems," said Col. Samuel Fricks, division chief of the MECCD.

The aircraft was transported from Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia, to Fort Rucker on a truck. Using a crane, the helicopter was placed next to the MECCD building where it will remain temporarily while the parking lot is renovated into a concrete display pad.

Fricks said that for the MECCD, the focus is on "materiel and non-materiel solutions" to fix gaps in Army medicine as it continues to modernize and grow.

The aircraft, 03-26995, served in the 507th Medical Company and Company C, 2d Battalion, 4th Aviation Brigade before being retired as a Category B maintenance trainer. Last year, it was no longer needed as a trainer and transferred to the MECCD. The DUSTOFF Association provided a monetary gift to Fort Rucker that will fund the construction of a permanent mooring for the aircraft.

The aircraft will serve multiple purposes at its final resting point. Flight paramedics can simulate treating patients, determine the amount of space required to complete critical care tasks in the cabin, and even determine requirements of autonomous systems that fly themselves.

The MECCD falls under the under the Army Futures Command, Medical Capabilities Development Integration Directorate, Futures and Concepts Center. It serves as the Army's capability developer for all air and ground systems used for medical evacuation and represents the users in the acquisitions process.

"If it has to do with MEDEVAC, it comes through this office," said Fricks.

The acquisition and restoration of this Black Hawk capability device was coordinat-



PHOTO BY SPC. JORDAN ARNOLD

HH-60L Black Hawk Medevac 995 on display at Fort Rucker.

ed by Donald Choate, a combat development analyst with MECCD, who worked in conjunction with William "Todd" Richburg and John Hannon. Richburg is the H-60 training aids and devices manager, aircraft products manager, managing Black Hawks divested from the military, and John Hannon, the product director for UH-60 Maintenance Devices.

The process of restoring the helicopter to cosmetic functionality seemed to flow easier with the amount help being pitched in, thanks to Bryant W. Clark, a production specialist for USfalcon, Inc. at Joint Base Langley-Eustis. Clark managed putting 995 together and worked with Hannon to load and deliver the aircraft.

The aircraft will be accessible for evaluation and to study the amount of cube space inside to help capitalize on the medical evacuation procedures. It will also serve as a focal point for pictures, promotions, and other ceremonies for the Aeromedical Professionals at Fort Rucker.

The pad for the retired HH-60L Blackhawk is anticipated to be completed in the spring, with a debut by March.

Fort Rucker senior executive 'builds the bench' of future Army leaders

Kidd

By Kelly Morris USAACE Public Affairs

On a given day, the civilian deputy to the commanding general at the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence focuses on ensuring the training mission has the necessary manpower, money and materiel it needs to thrive, and supporting the Army Aviation Branch.

William G. Kidd, senior executive at USAACE, described his role as the "floor manager" of a very large "factory" called Fort Rucker.

"My job is to harness all the parts of the Army enterprise to support Army aviation training here at Fort Rucker, and all other aspects of our portfolio within the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command," Kidd said.

The USAACE trains warrant officers, officers, NCOs and Soldiers to become pilots, air traffic controllers, maintainers, and Unmanned Aircraft Systems operators and maintainers. It includes more than 180 "production lines," launching hundreds of Army aircraft each day, and all the fuel, firefighters, air traffic controllers and the many other services that go along with it.

But Kidd makes time in his busy schedule for another priority — supporting the Army's People First initiative through leader development and mentorship.

Through various speaking and mentoring engagements, he aims to encourage others to be ready to step into senior roles when their time comes.

"As the years go by, you find that building that bench becomes the major part of your responsibility as a senior executive," Kidd said.

Kidd participates in informal and formal mentoring sessions with multiple mentees,

some from around USAACE, and others through Army programs.

He serves as a mentor for the Civilian Education System Advanced Course, and as a guest speaker for the popular Secretary of the Army Leader Development Seminars that target senior Army executives.

"Mr. Kidd is full of golden nuggets and pieces of wisdom for senior Army leaders. He has that down-home (delivery), and he always gets great reviews from the students," said Larry Wilson, instructor at the Army Management Staff College Department of Academic Support and Distance Learning at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

The leader development seminars tailor the training to the individual student and focus on leader identity.

"What we're looking for is increased awareness of who they are as a leader, with the idea of informing institutional training, operational training and self-development," Wilson said.

The seminar challenges leaders to think beyond ADP 6-22 to understand there is more than one way to successfully lead others.

"What we really know about leadership in the Army wouldn't fill a thimble when it comes to scholarly research on the subject," Wilson said. "We want them to know who they are, what's their natural inclination in terms of influencing others, and then become very good at that."

Leaders like Kidd play an important role by speaking form their own depth of experience, and often field a wide variety of questions from students.

In a virtual seminar session in November, Kidd invited participants to recite the Oath



PHOTO BY KELLY MORRIS

of Office with him, and provided an overview of USAACE. He also asked the students to clarify how they see themselves.

"As a civilian, are you in the Army, do you work for the Army, or are you the Army?" he said, as he emphasized the latter.

Kidd said leaders should improve their listening skills — to not just listen with their ears but to pick up on everything in the environment.

"The most important part about communicating is not transmitting, it's receiving," he said. "Usually the most critical things are the ones that are not quite said, the things people are a little hesitant to talk to you about."

Kidd urges military and civilian leaders to know their people, and to better understand the role civilians play in the organization.

"You've got to get up and get out and see people. They want to succeed every day and you need to help them by being present and engaged in what they're doing," he said. Kidd cautioned against making faulty assumptions when civilians are hesitant to embrace new ideas and ways of doing business. He explained that while leaders may only stay in one place a few years, some civilians will work 20 to 30 years in a job, so they take a more long-term view. In fact, he recently presented an award to a civilian who had been an instructor for 60 years, he said.

"Most folks I run into are so invested in the organization and what it does that they are averse to taking risks sometimes, to go in a different direction, because they've seen a lot of these things before, and they love the organization and believe in what we do so much that they will push hard not to screw it up," he said.

Leaders also must make time to ensure their people understand how they fit into the big picture.

"That is your job as a leader — to help them see themselves in relation to the organization and the mission it does," he said.

If he had it to do over, when he transitioned out of the Army uniform and into a civilian role he would have focused more on adapting his leadership style to get the most out of a very diverse workforce without alienating them, Kidd explained.

"I would have recognized that I was in a different environment and I needed to apply a different kind of leadership style and approach to the effort as an Army civilian," he said.

Kidd said he enjoys the interaction during the developmental programs and courses.

"It reminds you just how talented and dedicated the civilians are in the Department of the Army, and how lucky this country is to have men and women who are willing to dedicate their lives to their nation, whether in uniform or out of uniform."

Air Force AETC command team visits Fort Rucker's 23rd FTS

Air Education and Training Command

Public Affairs

Air Force Lt. Gen. Brad Webb, commander of Air Education and Training Command, and Chief Master Sgt. Erik Thompson, AETC command chief master sergeant, visited the 23rd Flying Training Squadron at Fort Rucker Jan. 11.

During their visit they met with students and instructors from Helicopter Training Next, as well as flew with the team there.

"We have proven that we are able to deliver helicopter pilots to their operational units 33 percent faster," Webb said. "The focus is always about continuing to deliver highly qualified, competent pilots."

Full HTN implementation is planned for March with student pilots arriving at 23rd FTS in July.

HTN is a helicopter-only training course that is an initiative under Pilot Training

Transformation efforts. The last time the Air Force used a helicopter-only syllabus was in 1993, coinciding with the establishment of AETC.

Typically, the helicopter pilot training pipeline lasts 17 months, including six months training on the fixed-wing T-6. The HTN program started in August 2020, with the first class graduating in less than 11 months.

The first HTN graduate, a second lieutenant, finished the formal training unit portion at Kirtland AFB, N.M., Dec. 7, 2021. The new helicopter pilot was able to complete all of the pilot training required, from flight screening to graduating from the FTU in 16 months. The second and third graduates, both second lieutenants, finished FTU at Kirtland AFB Dec. 8 and have arrived at operational units, UH-1N squadrons.



PHOTO BY JIM HUGHES

Air Force Lt. Gen. Marshall B. "Brad" Webb, commander of Air Education and Training Command, and Capt. Austin Kong, 23rd FTS instructor pilot, prepare for takeoff in a TH-1H Huey at Fort Rucker Jan. 11.

By taking helicopter pilots out of fixedwing aircraft training, training time was cut fixed-wing training at AETC.



COMMAND

Maj. Gen. David J. Francis Fort Rucker Commanding General

Col. Robert J. Holcombe Fort Rucker Garrison Commander

EDITORIAL STAFF

Jimmie E. Cummings Jr. Director of Public Affairs

Jim Hughes Command Information Officer

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

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