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A Soldier conducts a helocast water insertion jump during training at Bellows Beach, Hawaii, Jan. 25.

PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. ALAN BRUTUS

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Army Aviation announces fiscal year 2021 Ellis D. Parker Awards

By Lt. Col. Andy Thaggard
USAACE Public Affairs

Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker commander, announced the fiscal year 2021 recipients of the Ellis D. Parker Awards during the Army Aviation Senior Leader Forum today.

The Ellis D. Parker Award annually recognizes the top Army Aviation battalions (or equivalent) in four categories based on unit mission, and is named for Lt. Gen. Don Parker, an Army Aviation pioneer. Awards will formally be presented to the units in the near future.

* Table of Distribution and Allowances (TDA) Category: Special Operations Aviation Training Battalion, U.S. Army Special Operations Aviation Command, Fort

Campbell, Kentucky

* Combat Service Support Category: 404th Aviation Support Battalion, 4th Combat Aviation Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Carson, Colorado

* Combat Support Category: 2d Airfield Operations Battalion, 111th Aviation Regiment, 83d Troop Command (Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa), U.S. Africa Command, Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti

* Combat Category, and overall winner: 4th Squadron, 6th Cavalry Regiment, 16th Combat Aviation Brigade, 7th Infantry Division, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington

More information on the Ellis D. Parker



PHOTO BY LT. COL. ANDY THAGGARD

Francis

Award can be found at: <https://home.army.mil/rucker/index.php/about/usaace/usaace-gl4/> [ellis-d-parker-award](https://home.army.mil/rucker/index.php/about/usaace/usaace-gl4/ellis-d-parker-award)



The U.S. Army has partnered with the Army & Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) to create the **Digital Garrison** mobile app. **Digital Garrison** is a one-stop information source for Army communities. The app puts real-time information into Soldiers', families', and civilians' hands and keeps military communities connected – a key part of readiness and resiliency.

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Tax center offers free services for active, retired military, families

By Jim Hughes
Fort Rucker Public Affairs

The Fort Rucker Legal Assistance Office is once again offering free tax preparation and filing services to eligible people with its tax assistance center that reopened Jan. 31.

The Fort Rucker Tax Assistance Center is located in Bldg. 5700, Rm. 371F and its mission is to provide free professional-level federal and state preparation and filing services to active-duty and retired military and their families within the Fort Rucker community, said Capt. Natalie Gaynier, tax center officer in charge and legal assistance attorney.

People need to make an appointment by calling 255-2937 to receive the service, Tod Clayton, tax center coordinator, said.

“We tend to get a lot of appointment requests early on, so if you have trouble getting through, just keep trying,” Clayton said, adding that people will need to maintain social distancing and wear a mask at their appointments. Additionally, children are not allowed at tax preparation appointments.

The office is open Mondays-Fridays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Last year, the center prepared and filed almost 1,300 federal and state tax returns, saving local Soldiers, retirees and family members nearly \$355,000 in tax preparation fees, according to Clayton. The refunds given to Soldiers and retirees amounted to almost

\$1.8 million.

The staff at the center is made up of Fort Rucker Soldiers who are trained and certified by the Internal Revenue Service’s Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program, Gaynier said.

“We’re excited to be able to save Soldiers money, and to help them build some life skills by learning how to file their taxes correctly,” she said. “Our staff is fully trained and motivated to ensure people get everything they’re entitled to with their refunds, or, if they owe, to ensure they’re not paying anything more than they’re supposed to be paying.”

While the staff at the center will handle the preparation and e-filing, people will need to bring some paperwork with them for the service, Clayton said.

People will need: a valid military ID card; a current driver’s license; Social Security cards; all relevant W-2s (wage and earnings statements, do-it-yourself-moves); 1099-R (pension, retirement, IRA); a copy of their last year’s tax return, if available; a blank or cancelled check with routing and accounting number; a power of attorney, if necessary; Form 1098 (interest statements for tuition, mortgage, student loan, etc.); Form 1099-DIV/INT; and Form 1099-G (gambling winnings, unemployment compensation, etc.).



PHOTO BY JIM HUGHES

A fully trained and certified tax center worker helps a community member prepare and file his income taxes in this file photo taken before the COVID pandemic. The Fort Rucker Tax Assistance Center reopened Jan. 31.

Additionally, this year, the IRS is sending out Letter 6419 to some people for advanced child tax credit payments, which people will need to bring in if they receive one, Clayton said. “The IRS will also send out Letter 6475, which is on economic impact payment information for anyone who received a stimulus payment. People who receive that should bring it in, as well.”

While the center staff would like to help all eligible people with their tax returns, they

aren’t staffed to help certain people within the community, Clayton said.

The center will not prepare returns for people with: state-only returns, more than two state returns, business or independent contractor returns (1099 MISC or 1099 NEC), individual or broker day trading investment returns, cryptocurrency capital gain returns, more than one rental property, farming activity returns and Puerto Rico returns.

300+ YEARS OF SERVICE

6 Soldiers, 5 civilians retire during quarterly ceremony

By Jim Hughes
Fort Rucker Public Affairs

Six Soldiers and five civilian employees retired with more than 300 years of combined service during the Fort Rucker Quarterly Retirement Ceremony Jan. 28 in the U.S. Army Aviation Museum.

Col. William D. Porter, dean of the School of Army Aviation Medicine, hosted the event and he was assisted by Command Sgt. Maj. Charles E. Hancock, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence Army Reserve and National Guard senior enlisted adviser.

The following are brief write-ups on each retiree.

LT. COL. RANDY JAMES

James, U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center chief of the Aviation Division of the Directorate of Assessments and Prevention, entered military service in 1994 at the United States Military Academy in West Point, New York, and was commissioned as an aviation officer in 1998.

He served multiple combat tours in support of operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom.

He said the highlights of his career were and will always be the relationships he made and the honor of serving alongside heroes.

He and his wife, Linnet, have four children. They plan to reside in Enterprise.

MAJ. ANTONIO JASSO

Jasso, Aviation Platforms Requirements Directorate operations officer, entered military service in 1997 as an aviation officer. He

served multiple combat tours in support of operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom.

He said the highlights of his career were meeting his wife, having a family and making it to retirement.

He and his wife, Mirna, have two children. They plan to reside in Enterprise.

CWS PEDRO GUTIERREZ

Gutierrez, Directorate of Evaluation and Standardization Fixed-Wing Branch chief, entered military service in 1995 as a B-1 offensive avionics specialist in the Air Force. In 1997, he was selected for Army Warrant Officer Flight Training.

He served multiple combat tours in support of operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom, and other operations.

He said the highlight of his career was shaping the transport and special electronic mission aircraft fixed-wing mission while at DES.

He and his spouse, Angela, have one child. They plan to reside in New Brockton.

1ST SGT. KAYLAND TEEMER

Teemer, Army Cincinnati Recruiting Company first sergeant in Cincinnati, Ohio, entered military service in 2000 as an administrative assistant. She also served as a human resource specialist and recruiter.

She said the highlight of her career was having her wonderful husband, Frank, by her side for 20 of the 21 years, and helping to provide for their two sons.



PHOTOS BY JIM HUGHES

Jasso, Gutierrez, Bowman, Bishop, Beck and Childress.

They plan to reside in Jacksonville, Florida.

1ST SGT. MICHAEL BOWMAN

Bowman, A Company, 1st Battalion, 223rd Aviation Regiment first sergeant, entered military service in 2000 as a powertrain mechanic. He served multiple combat tours in support of operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom, and Freedom's Sentinel.

He said the highlight of his career was marrying his beautiful wife, Eliashia. They plan to reside in Dothan.

SGT. 1ST CLASS MICHAEL BISHOP

Bishop, senior evacuation capability development NCO for Medical Evacuation Concepts and Capabilities Division, Medical Capability Development and Integration Directorate, Futures and Concepts Center, Army Futures Command, entered military service in 2002 as a combat medic. He served multiple combat tours in support of operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom.

He said the highlights of his career were having the honor and privilege to provide Dustoff MedEvac support to the nation's wounded warriors for the last 18 years, re-

ceiving recognition as the 2005 Dustoff Association Flight Medic of the Year, and meeting and marrying his beautiful wife, Erin.

They have two children and plan to reside in Enterprise.

MARK BECK

Beck, 1-223rd Avn. Regt., began his Army civilian career in 1996 after retiring from a 20-year military career. He was hired by the 1-14th Avn. Regt. as an OH-58D standardization pilot.

He said the highlight of his career was the camaraderie and professionalism of the OH-58D Kiowa Warrior community as they performed their mission with daring and bravery, protecting America's heroes on the ground.

He and his wife, Angela, have two children and one grandchild. They plan to reside in Enterprise.

SCOTT CHILDRESS

Childress, U.S. Army Aeromedical Research Laboratory, began his federal civilian career with the Army in 1993 with V Corps in Frankfurt, Germany, photograph-

RETIREES cont.

ing the 50th anniversary ceremonies of WWII in France and Belgium.

He said the highlight of his career was working closely with then-Col. George W. Casey Jr., who would later become the 36th chief of staff of the U.S. Army.

He and his wife, Steffanie, have two children. They plan to reside in Enterprise.

GARY PRUYNE

Pruyne, 1-212th Avn. Regt., began his Army civilian career in 1986 as a maintenance test pilot at Fort Eustis, Virginia.

He said the highlights of his career were the camaraderie and friendships he made, and the opportunity to serve with the nation's best as an enlisted Soldier, warrant officer and Department of the Army civilian.

He and his wife, Julie, have three children and four grandchildren. They plan to reside in Enterprise.

CHARLIE MAHONE

Mahone, CRC chief of the Army Readiness Assessment Program Division, entered federal civil service in 2004 after a successful military career.

He said the highlight of his career was spearheading efforts to institutionalize the Army Readiness Assessment Program as a vital component of the Army's overall safety program at the battalion level.

He and his wife, Vanessa, have five children. They plan to reside in Enterprise.

MARK HAYS

Hays, USAARL, began his federal civilian career in 2005 in Shreveport, Louisiana, after serving 22 years in the Navy.

He said the highlight of his career was working closely with the medical teams Overton Brooks Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Shreveport and USAARL at Fort



James, Teemer, Pruyn, Mahone and Hays.

Rucker in support of America's warriors before, during and after battle. He and his wife,

Glenna, have three children and six grandchildren. They plan to reside in the local area.

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Fort Rucker civilian receives Order of St. Michael Gold Award

By Kelly Morris
USAAACE Public Affairs

As Gary Pruyne retires from Fort Rucker, he carries with him a token that reflects his distinguished service to Army Aviation both as an Army aviator and a Department of the Army civilian employee.

Pruyne was awarded the Order of Saint Michael — Gold Award for his significant contributions over a lifetime of service to the Army Aviation community, its Soldiers and families, during a ceremony at the U.S. Army Aviation Museum Jan. 28.

Retired Maj. Gen. Tim Crosby, president of the Army Aviation Association of America and former Program Executive Officer for Aviation, presented the award.

“We don’t give out many of these. (Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker commanding general) and I watch over this program pretty closely, and there’s not a lot of people that get (the Gold award),” Crosby said.

Established in 1990 as a partnership between the Army Aviation Association of America and the U.S. Army Aviation Center, the award includes four categories — Bronze, Silver, Gold and Honorary Knight.

According to the Army Aviation Association of America website, Saint Michael is referred to in biblical writings as “an archangel who wages war against evil. He was known as the heavenly prince or champion who specifically charged forward to guard and defend others. He is legendary as the leader of angels who fought a war in heaven and conquered the dragon and cast it down from the skies. Michael’s battles are an allegory of the struggle between good and evil.”

Throughout the centuries, Michael has

been depicted with a sword fighting or standing over the conquered dragon.

“The legendary image of Saint Michael defeating the dragon exemplifies the bravery and gallantry that we associate with the Aviation Soldier. His angelic qualities demonstrate the boldness and swiftness of Army Aviation on the battlefield. As a brave warrior and protector, Saint Michael is the embodiment of courage and justice and is an appropriate symbol of the values and high level of excellence exhibited throughout Army Aviation,” the website explains.

The Gold Award is given to individual whose service across their lifetime of service may include professional writing and speaking in support of the branch, supporting important initiatives, and long-lasting contributions over their career in Army Aviation.

During the ceremony, Lt. Col. Charles Walker, 1st Battalion, 223d Aviation Regiment commander, spoke about the highlights of Pruyne’s more than more than 56 years of combined active duty and civilian service — which included multiple combat deployments, proficiency in numerous aircraft, and a common thread of service at Fort Rucker, and of helping to shape the future of the branch.

“Those of us lucky enough to have shared a cockpit with him or heard him teach, we’re the lucky ones. We saw a master’s class in aviation instruction,” Walker said.

While on active duty, and continuing his service as a civilian, Pruyne was involved in nearly every aspect of Army Aviation, including door gunner, instructor pilot, operations and maintenance, air traffic control, and simulations.

He served during critical events in Army



PHOTO BY KELLY MORRIS

Gary A. Pruyne stands for a photo with Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker commanding general, and retired Maj. Gen. Tim Crosby, Army Aviation Association of America president, after Pruyne was awarded the Honorable Order of Saint Michael Gold Award for his lifetime of service to the Army Aviation community in a ceremony at the U.S. Army Aviation Museum Jan. 28.

Aviation’s history, including special operations, flight instruction, and fielding new aircraft. He amassed nearly 15,000 accident-free flight hours, most of those as an instructor who touched the professional lives of many aviators.

Pruyne entered the Army in 1966, and after completing Advanced Individual Training and the Aircraft Maintenance Course at Fort Rucker, he spent 900 flying hours in combat as a crew chief and hoist operator in Vietnam.

As an enlisted flight instructor, he taught aerial gunnery for the UH-1 to Vietnam bound crew chiefs and served as subject matter expert for all aspects of aerial gunnery. He developed the academic and flight programs

of instruction that led to the Department of the Army designating a new military occupational specialty, 67A1F — Aerial Door Gunner, which better prepared thousands of Soldiers headed to Vietnam over the next several years.

He graduated Initial Entry Rotary Wing training in 1970, completed AH-1 Cobra qualification, and headed back to Vietnam to serve as aircraft commander, fire team leader and platoon maintenance officer. Pruyne earned 38 Air Medals, eight with “V” device for valor, and two Bronze Star medals for his actions in combat.

He went on to serve as instructor pilot and standardization pilot at Fort Rucker for

AWARD cont.

the UH-1.

While at Fort Rucker, he demonstrated all emergency procedures for a film to be presented to the House Armed Services Committee to determine the future of emergency procedure training. He was the subject matter expert for the initial draft of the UH-1 Aircrew Training Manual that was continually revised and used until the Army transitioned to the UH-60 Black Hawk. He also completed his bachelor's degree in aeronautical science, and made the commandant's list for his high grade-point average while at the Warrant Office Advance Course.

While stationed at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, he developed the Annual Gunnery program for the 25th Division Air Cavalry Squadron, Attack Battalion, and Hawaii National Guard Air Troop. The program was so successful that it was used as a template for years and helped develop numerous gunnery programs Army-wide.

He again returned to Fort Rucker to serve with the Directorate of Evaluation and Standardization, Attack Observation Branch, including performing SP duties at the Army level in the AH-1 and UH-1.

While serving in Korea, Pruyne's duties included serving as the primary pilot for then-Col. Ellis D. Parker, commander of Eighth Army Aviation Office, and he was responsible for all Army aviation training in the Republic of Korea. There, he served as AH-1 and UH-1 instructor and night vision goggles instructor pilot. He was selected to serve as a subject matter expert for Parker to travel and participate in higher-level meetings that impacted the future of what is now the Army Aviation branch.

Pruyne served in the 24th Infantry Division as a standardization pilot and instrument examiner, and the Chief of Flight

Standards, and as pilot in command for Gen. Maxwell Thurman, the then-TRADOC commander in the UH-60 Black Hawk. He was selected "below the zone" for the rank of chief warrant officer four, which placed him in the top 3 percent of all eligible personnel.

He served as SP and IE in the OH-58 and TH-67, and closed out his career training aviators in the UH-72.

Of his many stints at the "Home of Army Aviation," his time with DES stands out to him.

"I got to travel to all the military installations, and try to pass on a little knowledge and expertise and stuff to all the various IPs and SPs that I've known throughout all the years.

That's probably the most rewarding thing for me," Pruyne said.

He also enjoyed training aviators and aircrew members.

"Just the satisfaction of seeing them, from one day they know nothing about a helicopter, to three or four weeks later they're learning to hover it and fly. And then of course over the years you see them come back.

"There are many of these guys here that I'm with now that I gave them their check rides, and they're all W4s and retired and GS-13's now. I go out to Lowe or Cairns or wherever and I see people I've known for 30 or 40 years," Pruyne said. "It's a close community."

With the award in hand, and looking back

on his career, Pruyne said he would do it all again.

"Couldn't ask for anything better. I've had the pleasure of working with a lot of really good people. The best of the best."

He said he now looks forward to retirement and spending time with his son and grandchildren.

For Pruyne's son, Sean, who attended the ceremony along with his family, it was a proud moment to see his father receive the award.

"I wouldn't have missed it for the world," he said. "He never talks about what he has done in the military, he's so humble. He's been passionate about it."

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CLEAN BILL OF HEALTH

Fort Rucker drinking water scores high marks on testing reports

By Jim Hughes
Fort Rucker Public Affairs

Fort Rucker's drinking water consistently scores high marks on the annual Consumer Confidence Report.

The post's water is tested at different locations throughout the year, according to Ryan Arne, Fort Rucker Directorate of Public Works director.

"Since our water system is privatized through American Water Enterprises, they make sure that all water testing parameters are within the recommended standards," he added. "The water system is monitored regularly, as well, for bacteria and other chemical substances that may find their way into the water source. Fort Rucker's drinking water is in full compliance with U. S. Environmental Protection Agency Primary and Secondary Drinking Water Standards."

Fort Rucker's water system is Army owned, privately managed by American Water, and state enforced and permitted, Arne said, adding that the system is capable of producing 5 million gallons a day of treated and finished water.

The majority of the water consumed on Fort Rucker comes from seven water wells on main post, Arne said. "These water wells draw from deep aquifers – namely the Tusahoma Sand, Providence Sand, Clayton, Ripley and Nanafalia aquifers."

American Water performs routine water sampling per strict Alabama Department of Environmental Management regulations and there were no violations or exceedance of water quality parameters at Fort Rucker in

2021, he said, adding that Fort Rucker's water consistently scores well on annual tests, as well.

Water testing results are summarized in the latest annual Consumer Confidence Report, which can be found at <http://www.amwater.com/ccr/fortrucker.pdf>.

While the report should instill confidence in the Fort Rucker community using that water at a rate of almost 900,000 gallons a day, it also helps Col. Robert J. Holcombe, garrison commander and on-post housing resident, sleep well at night.

"Fort Rucker is our home, and clean water is a basic necessity – we keep a close watch on the quality of water our community consumes," he said. "We won't allow any missteps with the quality of our water. I have the utmost confidence in our team at DPW and American Water – they're talented professionals who realize the importance of their mission."

The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency sets standards and regulations for many different contaminants in public drinking water, including disease-causing

germs and chemicals, Arne said.

"The Safe Drinking Water Act was passed by Congress in 1974, with amendments added in 1986 and 1996, to protect our drinking water," he added. "Under the SDWA, the EPA sets the standards for drinking water quality, and monitors the state, local authorities and water suppliers who enforce those standards. As part of the SDWA, EPA has set maximum contaminant levels, as well as treatment requirements for over 90 different contaminants in public drinking water."

Additionally, National Primary Drinking Water Regulations are standards and treatment techniques that public water systems must follow. "These regulations protect public health by limiting contaminant levels in drinking water," Arne said.

There are a number of threats to drinking water, he added, including improperly disposed of chemicals, animal waste, pesticides, human threats, wastes injected underground and naturally-occurring substances. Likewise, drinking water that is not properly treated or disinfected, or which travels through an improperly maintained distribution system, may also pose a health risk.

Above and beyond the EPA's National Primary Drinking Water Regulations, are the National Secondary Drinking Water Regulations, he said.

"Color and smell pertains to the aesthetic quality of the drinking water and is

referred to in a regulatory sense as National Secondary Drinking Water Regulations," he added. "These are guidelines to help public water systems manage their drinking water for issues not related to health, such as taste, color and smell.

"Chloride, copper, foaming agents, iron, manganese pH, sulfate, threshold odor number, total dissolved solids and zinc are examples of contaminants that we look for in drinking water relative to secondary standards," Arne said, adding that there are no health hazards associated with discolored water. "Odor and taste are useful indicators of water quality, even though odor-free water may not necessarily be safe to drink if all other parameters are not met. Odor is also an indicator of the effectiveness of different kinds of treatment."

These contaminants are not health threatening and public water systems only need to test for them on a voluntary basis, according to the EPA website at <https://www.epa.gov/sdwa/secondary-drinking-water-standards-guidance-nuisance-chemicals>.

"The EPA believes that if these contaminants are present in your water at levels above these standards, the contaminants may cause the water to appear cloudy or colored, or to taste or smell bad," according to the EPA site. "This may cause a great number of people to stop using water from their public water system even though the water is actually safe to drink."

Secondary standards are set to give public water systems some guidance on removing these chemicals to levels that are below what most people will find to be noticeable, according to the EPA.

For more information on Fort Rucker's water and other environmental information, visit

<https://fortrucker-env.com/programs.aspx?cur=7&program=p>.



NO HAZARDS

Hydrant test interruption causes water discoloration on post

By Jim Hughes
Fort Rucker Public Affairs

A disrupted fire hydrant flow test resulted in some Fort Rucker Munson Heights residents reporting severely discolored water in their homes in early December.

While the appearance of the water was certainly troubling, people's health was never at risk, according to Ryan Arne, Fort Rucker Directorate of Public Works director.

"There were absolutely no health hazards associated with the discolored water," he said. "I understand seeing your water discolored in that way is concerning, but it was a direct result of the testing getting interrupted before all of the settled iron deposits and natural occurring minerals in the pipes were able to be flushed, not because anything unsafe was introduced into the system."

American Water, who manages the post's water system, was in the process of testing 139 of the post's fire hydrants when technical difficulties and a storm moving into the area Dec. 8 resulted in testing coming to a halt in the Munson Heights area, according to company officials.

This didn't allow the hydrants to be flushed properly prior to residents experiencing discoloration in their water, officials said, adding that once work was able to resume they assigned an employee to work through the night flushing the lines in and around the neighborhood.

Since the incident, DPW and American Water have identified steps to take to help prevent something similar happening in the future, according to Arne.

"American Water will not conduct fire hydrant flow testing until we have completed notification in the housing areas," he said. "Additionally, they will start and finish the flow testing in one continuous task and not get caught up in a weather delay that prevents a full flush of the lines."

Other steps include:

- * Notify DPW and Corvias of the Hydrant Flow testing dates and areas impacted one week prior to testing;

- * Do not perform hydrant testing on potentially bad weather days and complete the

"Fort Rucker is our home, and clean water is a basic necessity – we keep a close watch on the quality of water our community consumes... We won't allow any missteps with the quality of our water. I have the utmost confidence in our team at DPW and American Water – they're talented professionals who realize the importance of their mission."



COL Robert Holcombe
Fort Rucker Garrison Commander



GRAPHIC BY DAVID AGAN

job, or at least Flushing, the day of the hydrant testing;

- * Ensure directional flushing is performed in the event discolored water remains after testing to ensure all discolored water is removed from the system as soon as practical;

- * Ensure that flushing continues until there is not any noticeable discoloration of water at the hydrant; and

- * If discolored water remains, American Water is dedicated to applying resources needed to continue the flushing until the turbidity is within recommended specifications.

Arne said people live on post who have concerns about the aesthetic properties of their water should call the Fort Rucker Environmental Health Section at 255-7380

or 255-7327.

"They have trained professionals who can speak with you in more detail and can provide guidance on water issues," he said. "They also have technicians who can come on-site to evaluate your situation and collect samples, if necessary. If a problem is identified which requires certain maintenance or corrective action by the government, the inspectors will issue a written memorandum to ensure timely follow-up action on this type of issue."

He also recommended residents who are experiencing discolored water should run water inside the unit until the water is clear, and also contact their neighborhood centers to report the issue.



CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

DOD, nation celebrate Black History Month

By David Vergun
DOD News

Black History Month, also known as National African American History Month, is an annual celebration of achievements by Black Americans and a time to recognize the positive impact they've had on the history of the United States and the Defense Department.

Black people have fought in every United States war, from the Revolutionary War through the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Ninety African Americans have been awarded the Medal of Honor.

Yet, throughout most of American history, Black service members were placed in segregated units. Desegregation didn't occur until Jan. 26, 1948, when President Harry S. Truman issued Executive Order 9981 directing the armed services to integrate.

Active-duty service members number 1,319,283; of those, 227,974, or 17.3%, are African American, as of December 2021.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2020, the Black or African American population was 41.1 million, representing 12.4% of the U.S. population.

NOTABLE DATES

Black people, both slave and free, served on both sides during the Revolutionary War. African Americans also served on both sides in the War of 1812 (1812-1815). Many served with the British in order to gain their freedom and resettle in non-slave nations, par-

ticularly Canada, Bermuda and Sierra Leone.

In the Civil War (1861-1865), over 186,000 African Americans fought for the Union Army and Navy. A lesser number of African Americans were used as laborers on the Confederate side.

Six regiments of African Americans, known as buffalo soldiers, served in the Indian Wars from 1863 to the early 1900s and in the Spanish-American War in 1898.

About 367,000 African Americans service members served in Europe during World War I (1917-1918).

Around 1.3 million African American service members served during World War II (1941-1945).

During the Korean War (1950-1953), about 600,000 Black service members served in the armed forces.

About 300,000 African Americans served in the Vietnam War (1961-1975).

The two top-level Black Americans in DOD have been Army Gen. Colin Powell, who served as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 1989 to 1993, and Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III who was sworn in January 2021.

HISTORY OF THE CELEBRATION

The origin of Black History Month is associated with the noted African-American historian Carter G. Woodson. In 1926, he initiated the celebration of Negro History



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PHOTO

Tuskegee Airmen gather around a table and talk in Ramitelli, Italy, in March 1945.

Week during the second week in February.

February was chosen because that is the birth month of Frederick Douglass, an abolitionist and social reformer, and President Abraham Lincoln, who abolished slavery.

The celebration was expanded to the entire month of February in 1976 by President Gerald Ford; since that time, every president has designated February as Black History Month.

During his 1976 Black History Month announcement, Ford linked the commemoration to the nation's 200th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence that year.

On Feb. 11, 1986, Congress passed Public Law 99-244, which designated each February as "National Black (Afro-American) History Month."

Canada, Ireland and the United Kingdom also celebrate a Black history month.

Aviator Call Signs

The history, naming rituals

By Katie Lange
DOD News

If you've been a fully trained military pilot for more than a few months, chances are that you've scored yourself a call sign by now. The call sign tradition is celebrated by aviation communities across all military branches. These pilot nicknames can quickly identify an aircraft or individual, and they also help to confuse the enemy, who might be listening in on your communications.

Nowadays, call sign naming rituals for fighter, bomber and other pilots are a pretty formal process amongst the services, which will be detailed later in this article. But those rituals developed slowly over time, and the origins of the tradition are a bit murky. Several military historians were interviewed for this story, and no one could definitively say how pilot call signs got their start.

AN UNCLEAR ORIGIN

Some historians believe aircraft call signs were first used when radio became a commodity around 1930. As radio communications grew in prominence into World War II, so did call signs for planes, ships and occasionally geographic points, said National Naval Aviation Museum historian Hill Goodspeed. He said aircraft call signs became common in the 1970s because they were short and added an extra level of identification, "particularly



NAVY PHOTO

Operations on the deck of the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan in the Arabian Sea, June 27.

during times of intense, fast-paced operations."

According to several historians, a lot of individual aviators in the early days of flight had nicknames, too, but they weren't classified as call signs — they were generally given early in a pilot's career and revolved around his physical traits, personality or something pop culture-related. For example, when nicknaming became popular during World War II, Army Brig. Gen. David Lee Hill was from Texas, so his nickname was "Tex." Marine Corps Col. Gregory Boyington was nearly a decade older than the men serving in his command, so he was known as "Pappy."

Some historians say that pilot call signs may have originated from ground controllers wanting a quick way to reference those aviators over the radio, but that's still hearsay.

Call signs were sometimes even given to the enemy. Air Force Academy historian Brian Laslie said one famous case was that of World War I German ace Manfred von Richthofen, who painted his fighter aircraft red. His nick-

name in German was "Der Rote Kampfflieger" — a mouthful for any English-speaking pilot — so he was known to Americans by its loose translation, "The Red Baron."

Like aircraft, call signs for pilots became more widespread by Vietnam; however, official naming ceremonies for them weren't institutionalized until the 1980s, National Air and Space Museum curator Michael Hankins said.

CURRENT NAMING RITUALS

While naming rituals vary from service to service and squadron to squadron, a lot of the main components of the process are the same throughout the aviation community, no matter the branch.

Most current call signs are still based on the same sources as in the early days of aviation — a derivative of a last name, physical features, personalities or pop culture. Air Force Lt. Col. Keith Anderson said some call signs are intentional misspellings of common words to create an acronym referencing a story about the pilot. According to Anderson and Navy Cmdr. Chris

Papaioanu, most are based on the pilot screwing something up.

"Quite often, a call sign will be based on a retelling of a mistake a young pilot made, with the rule being that the story has to be at least 10% true," Anderson said.

Across the branches, most pilots earn their call signs at their first operational squadron as a junior officer, if they didn't receive one earlier. A few call sign ideas are usually thrown around within a squadron before a pilot's peers vote on their favorite. That name is then approved by the squadron's commanding officer.

"The skipper's there to veto it just in case it's crossing any lines or getting too aggressive," said Navy Cmdr. Michael Patterson.

"I have seen a number of call signs get rejected for a number of reasons — it wasn't funny enough, it wasn't silly enough, it went from the PG-13 range and beyond and it kind of needed to be toned down a little bit," said Marine Corps Lt. Col. Christopher Demars.

If a rejection happens, usually there are

CALL SIGNS cont.

backup names at the ready.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

"Everybody wants something that sounds awesome, that sounds cool. But it's just never going to work out that way," said Demars, whose call sign "Ollie" came from embellished stories he told that reminded his squadron of the old military history TV program "War Stories with Oliver North."

Call signs can be embarrassing for the pilot, which many aviators said helps build a humility-based culture. For example, Patterson said he knows a few guys with the call sign "BamBam," likely because they blew out their aircraft's tires when they forgot to take off their parking brake as they launched from their aircraft carrier's catapult.

"My call sign is Cage," Anderson explained. "A heat-seeking missile has a seeker on the front that must be 'uncaged' in order to follow the heat source before the missile can be fired. The button to make this happen is on the con-

trol stick, but I have cartoonishly small hands and I can't reach that button, so I'm 'Cage' because I can never 'uncage.'"

Regardless of the story behind the name, it's all good-natured.

"There's supposed to be an aspect of fun in it," Demars said.

While the Army doesn't have fixed-wing aircraft, its helicopter pilots also have call signs.

"When we make pilot in command, we get a choice of our local call sign," said Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Kyle Pearl, a Black Hawk pilot with the Idaho Army National Guard. "Some of our guys have other call signs like nicknames that you typically see in the Air Force and Navy."

CHANGES ARE RARE

Another general naming practice: while more than one pilot can have the same call sign, it's rare to be renamed.

"Unless you've really done something to highlight yourself after you've been given a call



ARMY PHOTO

Army Warrant Officer Adaliz Pagan, with Puerto Rico Army National Guard Aviation, performs a preflight inspection on the UH-60 helicopter before departing to Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Aug. 27.

sign, typically it will stay the same," Papaioanu said.

Anderson said that, at least in the Air Force, there's one exception: if a pilot has flown a combat mission with their call sign, it can never be changed.

No matter how a call sign came about, they all come with a sense of pride. Not only are they useful for communications and identification purposes, but they can also be a term of endearment, a rite of passage and a way of bonding an aircrew together.

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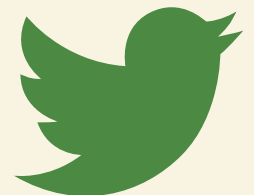
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