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ARMY PHOTO

A 4th Combat Aviation Brigade UH-60 Black Hawk out of Fort Carson, Colo., flies by the Mount Rushmore National Memorial in South Dakota.

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OPEN MONDAYS

7-day shopping arrives at Fort Rucker Commissary

Fort Rucker Commissary

Staff Report

The Fort Rucker Commissary is open seven days a week thanks to a Defense Commissary Agency test program that began May 16.

The new Monday opening does offer limited services, though, according to Marisol Hennessey, Fort Rucker Commissary store director.

Those service limitations on Mondays include:

- * self-checkout registers only;
- * debit and credit card payment only;
- * fresh meat is available, but no meat cutters are on site for special orders;
- * the deli and bakery are open, but there is no Sushi Chef; and
- * self-bagging and carry out.

The commissary is providing this test service to determine how well seven-day

shopping is received by the Fort Rucker community, the store director said.

“We are testing an extra day of shopping to see if this helps improve the shopping experience for the Fort Rucker community,” Hennessey said. “The commissary benefit is a significant boost to military quality of life, and we are exploring various ways like seven-day shopping to help our customers maximize it.”

New store operating hours are Sundays, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Mondays, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Tuesdays-Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Early Bird hours are Tuesdays-Fridays from 8:30-9 a.m.

DECA’s new program is part of ongoing improvements and convenience the agency is piloting to better serve its customers and improve their benefit, she added.



PHOTO BY JIM HUGHES

Col. Robert J. Holcombe, Fort Rucker garrison commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Raymond P. Quitugua Jr., garrison command sergeant major, deliver a CLICK2GO order at the Fort Rucker Commissary July 20 while at the store for the grand opening of the new service.

Commissary CLICK2GO, the Defense Commissary Agency’s online ordering and curbside delivery service arrived at the Fort Rucker Commissary July 20. Information on how the service works is found on www.commissaries.com with dedicated sections such as “How CLICK2GO Works.”

First-time customers will need to create an account, according to DECA officials.

For more information and news on commissaries, visit <https://www.commissaries.com/shopping/store-locations/fort-rucker> or <https://www.commissaries.com/>.

SOLDIERS HELPING SOLDIERS

Golf tournament to benefit AER raises \$30,000 for campaign

By Jim Hughes

Fort Rucker Public Affairs

Almost 100 golfers took to Silver Wings Golf Course May 6 to play 18 holes and also raise money for Army Emergency Relief during the All In Credit Union Golf Tournament to benefit AER.

The event raised \$30,000 for Fort Rucker's current AER Awareness Campaign, Bobby Michael, president and CEO of All In Credit Union, said at the kickoff of the tournament.

Lt. Col. Jason C. Brubaker, Fort Rucker garrison executive officer, thanked the credit union, golf course personnel and the golfers for their support of AER through the tournament.

"Thank you, All In Credit Union team, for putting on this event – for 31 years you have been doing this for a great cause," Brubaker said. "AER is near and dear to command-



PHOTOS BY JIM HUGHES

Participants head out to tee up at the 31st annual All In Federal Credit Union Golf Tournament to support AER. Almost 100 golfers took to the Silver Wings Golf Course in support of AER.



Lt. Col. Jason C. Brubaker, Fort Rucker garrison executive officer, addresses the players at the 31st annual All In Credit Union Golf Tournament to support Army Emergency Relief May 6. Brubaker and Bobby Michael, president and CEO of All In Credit Union, thanked the participants, sponsors and organizers of the event for their support of AER, the program that helps Soldiers when they encounter unexpected financial hardship.

ers' hearts. We know that when we have Soldiers in dire need of financial assistance, AER comes through and helps them out. As commanders, we can rely on AER to help Soldiers – give them zero-interest loans or grants when they have critical family emergencies or when unexpected financial crises happen in their lives."

This year's \$30,000 brought the total raised by the credit union during its 31 years of hosting the tournament to \$500,000, Michael said.

"Because AER is dedicated to helping the Army take care of Soldiers, our task has been an easy one – to support it and ask others to support it," he said. "Thank you all for your support of AER – a vital organization – this does matter."

AER has extended its 2022 awareness campaign through June 30 to provide time for all Soldiers to receive training on the pro-

gram.

The campaign's closing ceremony has been moved to July 14.

Army Emergency Relief was founded in 1942 by Secretary of War Henry Stimson and Army Chief of Staff Gen. George Marshall. Charged with relieving undue financial stress on the force, AER serves the enduring priorities of the secretary and chief of staff of the U.S. Army, according to the organization's website.

Since 1942, AER has provided \$2 billion to nearly 4 million Soldiers, including \$1 billion since 9/11. Through zero-interest loans, grants and educational scholarships, AER ensures no Soldier faces financial hardship on their own, according to AER officials.

To donate to the organization that helps Soldiers help Soldiers, contact your unit AER coordinator, or donate online at <https://www.armyemergencyrelief.org/>.

TOP HONORS

Parker Elementary 6th grader one of Top 5 Beta Club members in country

By Jim Hughes
Fort Rucker Public Affairs

An Ellis D. Parker Elementary School sixth grader is one of five Beta Club members nationwide to earn the John W. Harris Leadership Award for 2021-22.

Ashlyn Lenz received the award at the National Beta Club Induction Ceremony at the school May 11 that also saw three other students from Parker Elementary receive the statewide Beta Club awards they earned, according to Dr. Vicki Gilmer, school principal.

“Despite the pandemic, the Parker Elementary School Beta Club continued with its mission to proudly promote academic achievement, strong character, dedicated leadership and compassionate service,” the principal said. “Parker Elementary School also participated in the state competition

for the first time and had many members place in several events. It is with great honor and pride that we recognize our members who placed in the Alabama State Beta Convention.”

Courtney McKiver won first place in language arts in sixth grade, and second place in science.

Jackson Boenker won fifth place in language arts for fifth grade, and Boenker and Hailey Halterman won third place in the Technology Elementary Division.

These victories at the state level provide an opportunity for the winners to compete at the national level, as well, Gilmer added. The Beta National Convention will be held at the Gaylord Opryland Resort in Nashville,



PHOTOS BY JIM HUGHES

Dr. Vicky Gilmer, Ellis D. Parker Elementary School principal, presents Ashlyn Lenz the National Beta Club John W. Harris Leadership Award during a ceremony at the Fort Rucker school May 11.

Tennessee, this summer.

Lenz will also be recognized at the national convention, as well as receive tuition for the Beta Leadership Camp in July, the principal said.

Holly Seales, Alabama Junior Beta State sponsor, music teacher at Rehobeth Elementary School in Dothan and guest speaker at the event, provided some insight on why Lenz was selected as one of the top Beta members nationwide.

“Ashlyn Lenz is described as an excep-

tional person,” Seales said. “She is virtuous, intelligent, talented, determined, humble and a leader among her peers. Ashlyn is a student who possesses a remarkable work ethic. She leads by example with a heart of pure gold and truly enjoys helping others. Along with numerous school activities, service projects and extracurricular functions, Ashlyn maintains an A average and, furthermore, she rises to any challenge and does so with enthusiasm, a sense of duty and an unwillingness to be satisfied with anything less than what is the best.

“This dedication has earned Ashlyn the highest respect from her family, her peers and her teachers,” she added. “Her character and leadership skills have also earned her the highest and most prestigious award that is recognized by the National Beta Club. Each year, only five junior Beta members are chosen from hundreds of nominations that come from across the nation as recipients of this prestigious award.”

The gathered crowd’s attention was then drawn to current club members inducting



McKiver



Halterman



Boenker

HONORS cont.

new members into the club.

Inducted were: Jude Cannon, Lily Castillo, Zoe Craig, Hannah Johnson, Silas Johnson, Edward McKiver, Abram Medina, Ethan Proffitt and Camilla Tarpey from the fourth grade; and Macy Dishman, Isabella Dunn, Brooklynn Emery, Alessandra Francis, Audrey Griger, Emiliano Pedrego and Hope Wilson from the fifth grade.

Gilmer thanked the Beta Club members, and also Suzette Hilton and Wanda Wilds, Beta Club sponsors at the school, for their efforts.

“This is an extra duty for them, and they have done it willingly – and not only have they done it willingly, they have done it tremendously well,” the principal said. “We competed for the first time ... and look at the

results of that effort. Thank you very much for your wonderful effort with our kids.

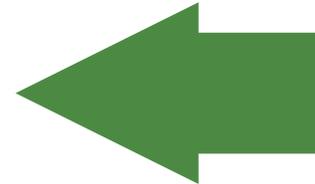
“Not only is the Beta Club about your service and about your character,” she said to the students, “but it is also a reflection of who you are as an individual. Moms and dads, I want thank you for that. These kids didn’t become great kids just by themselves – they became great kids because you put the effort

into them and have shown them the kind of people that you want them to be. Their character has reflected that, and that is why they have been chosen for this wonderful honor. Thank you for raising wonderful people.

“Boys and girls, I am proud of you – congratulations! From now on, you will be a Beta – a big honor to carry with you throughout your life,” Gilmer added.

Fort Rucker needs YOUR input about your experiences with Army Community Service (ACS)!

The survey is open to ALL Fort Rucker personnel and family members. Please complete this brief survey by May 31, 2022.



Scan this QR code with your smartphone or tablet to get started!

<https://survey.tradoc.army.mil/EFM/se/0AFDD71A4C685F4D?ACScustomerSurvey>

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER BREAKFAST

Guest speaker challenges leaders to provide firm foundation

By Jim Hughes

Fort Rucker Public Affairs

More than a hundred Soldiers, civilian employees and family members attended the Fort Rucker National Day of Prayer Breakfast May 5 at The Landing.

Brig. Gen. Stanley E. Budraitis, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker deputy commanding general, opened the event before various prayers were offered and guest speaker retired Chaplain (Col.) Robert “Bobby” Whitlock put a challenge to those in attendance.

“We ask God’s blessing on the mission here at Fort Rucker to train tomorrow’s aviation warfighters and leaders, and also on our men and women now serving in harm’s way around the world in defense of freedom and their families,” Budraitis said. “We also remember today to ask for God’s guidance for our leaders in the Wiregrass community, at Fort Rucker, and for our president and other national leaders as they make difficult decisions about the future of our country.”

Chaplain (Maj.) Scott Kennis then offered the invocation and Marge Simmons sang the national anthem. Chaplain (Maj.) Marty Schubert offered a prayer for the nation; Col. Whitney B. Gardner, USAACE chief of staff, offered a prayer for the U.S. military; and Chaplain (Capt.) Victor Matos offered a prayer for Fort Rucker.

Chaplain (Capt.) Mickey Basham read a

scripture and then Chaplain (Col.) Robert J. Crowley introduced Whitlock as the guest speaker.

Whitlock began by issuing a challenge to the attendees.

“I am going to challenge the leaders that are in this room. I think there is something in our military in general, but the Army specifically because the Army is the branch that I know having spent 34 years in uniform,” he said. “I love our Army, I am a Soldier for life, so I still count myself among your ranks. But as proud as I am of our force, and all that you and so many others in the force have done for our nation, I believe we’re still missing something critical.

“With all of our training, all of our knowledge, all of our dedication, all of the appreciation of a grateful nation and all of the love of our families, we are still losing quality Soldiers to alcohol, drugs, divorce, risky behavior, horrible decisions and suicide,” he said.

“We’ve built an impressive organization with an impressive record of success, we’ve built the most lethal and most flexible force on the planet,” Whitlock continued. “We’ve taken raw recruits, boys and girls, turned them into men and women, transformed them into warriors who know all about the warrior ethos and they can spit out the Army



PHOTO BY JIM HUGHES

Retired Chaplain (Col.) Robert “Bobby” Whitlock speaks at the National Day of Prayer Breakfast May 5 at The Landing.

Values by heart. We’ve built an extraordinarily successful force and we stand Army Strong.

“But here’s a question. What are we standing on? What do we believe, what do you believe? And what do you with that belief? No matter what you build, it cannot stand for long if it is not built on a solid foundation,” he said. “As leaders, we do our best to give our Soldiers and their families everything they need to be the best they can be – to survive the rigors of military life.

“What are we as leaders not offering them? I think it’s a firm foundation,” Whitlock said. “Every structure needs a foundation – something solid on which to stand. If the foundation is weak, then the structure will fail.

“So what do I believe we’re missing? What have we as leaders failed to provide to our Soldiers and families? A foundation of faith,” he said. “And by faith I mean belief grounded in reality. The confidence that you know the truth and in that knowledge you are set free. The understanding that right and wrong, good and evil, are not just individual concepts

but are objective realities that can be identified, understood, integrated, confronted and defeated in our day-to-day lives.

“You might be thinking, ‘Chaplain, that’s what the Army Values are for.’ I will tell you I do not believe the Army Values are the foundation. I believe the Army Values are the form of the foundation. They’re the things that you pour the concrete into.

“What’s the concrete? I think the concrete is you. It’s what you believe, leaders. It’s what you live and practice every day in front of your formations, in your homes, in your communities, and when nobody else is watching. It’s the very core of who you are,” Whitlock said. “It’s what motivates you to lead and that which causes you to serve in this station. It is your belief system, your understanding of right and wrong, it is the priorities you demonstrate.

“The example you set it is your core beliefs that steer you through life and anchor you in times of distress. The concrete is you,” he added.

PRAYER cont.

“And yet, we’re so risk adverse that we go, ‘I don’t want to force my beliefs on anybody,’” Whitlock added. “I’m not asking you to do that – I want you to pour yourself into their lives, help them build a foundation that will not fail. Many of those we lead are drifting, they need a foundation, an anchor that keeps them secure in a world of constant change.

“I’m asking you to share those things that have made you a successful leader,” he said. “What is it that you stand on, what gets you through the hard times? If it’s good enough

for you, then it’s good enough to give away. If it’s not good enough to give away, then why are you standing on it?”

“Great leaders make great investments. The really great ones did something amazing – they changed me, they poured themselves into my life and by doing so made me a better man, a better chaplain, a better Soldier,” Whitlock said. “They imprinted their core beliefs on me – not because they forced me to believe what they believed, but because they demonstrated what those beliefs did for

them.

“I am convinced that this is what leaders do. I won’t lie to you, this is hard work, it takes significant effort, it takes personal investment, and there is risk involved,” he added. “In today’s overly sensitive and politically charged environment, there will be those who accuse you of forcing your faith on others and being too confident or too opinionated.

“Again, I’m not asking you to force anything,” Whitlock said. “I’m asking you to give yourself away. I’m asking you to stand for

those things that you know are right, and to teach them to those placed under your guard, show them who you are, share with them the beliefs and understandings of life that make you, you.

“Give away your core values. Pour yourself into their lives and change them for the better. Do all of this knowing that God is able to deliver you, but if not, do it anyway because you know it’s the right thing to do,” he said.



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.

DOWNLOAD DIGITAL GARRISON TODAY FROM THE APPLE APP STORE OR GOOGLE PLAY!



Commissaries work with distributors to address baby formula availability, implement shopping limits to ensure equal access

By Defense Commissary Agency
Corporate Communications

FORT LEE, Va. – The Defense Commissary Agency is implementing shopping limits on select specialty baby formula items as the agency works with its distributors to increase supply levels.

Since May 13, in conjunction with established WIC (Women, Infants and Children) program purchasing limits at state level, commissaries have placed product limitations on all classified specialty baby formula, similar to the limits customers are seeing in commercial retailers and military exchanges.

Purchase limits can vary by location based on local state WIC purchasing limits. Overseas stores are also tied to purchasing limits through the WIC-Overseas program.

“We’re implementing purchase limits because of increased demand and to ensure that everyone has equal access to essential items, and to prevent panic buying where product is available,” said Bill Moore, DECA director and CEO. “The availability of baby formula for all our stores is fluid right now and evolving daily. We are working with our distributors to

increase our supply levels of these critical products.”

The commissaries’ current stock levels of available baby formula are as follows: 50 percent for CONUS and 70 percent for OCONUS commissaries – not counting the recalled products pulled from store shelves. “If the availability of baby formula becomes an issue for overseas commissaries the agency will airlift product, if necessary, and assuming the products are available,” Moore said.

For commissaries in Europe there are also alternative options for supply through locally produced products, called offshore acquired items. OSA items are sometimes purchased

by overseas commissaries to supplement U.S. stock assortments when needed.

For commissaries in the Pacific, the OSA option isn’t available because there are currently no approved local sources for baby formula.

“Across our commissaries, we are in the same position as commercial retailers,” Moore said. “Our distributors are receiving limited allocations of the quantities, which limits supply to our stores.

“Bottom line, we want our customers to know we are doing everything we can to get the products they need onto their store shelves – especially to our overseas and remote commissaries.”

MAY 26 2022

Walking Town Hall
Begins Thursday, May 26, at 4 p.m.
in the Bowden Terrace neighborhood

MEET & GREET

MG DAVID J. FRANCIS

COMMANDING GENERAL USAACE AND FORT RUCKER

U.S. ARMY
UNITED STATES ARMY AVIATION

Expected in late 2023, NGSW signifies an evolution in Soldier lethality

By Staff Sgt. Michael Reinsch

Army News Service

WASHINGTON -- The future Soldier will soon be significantly more lethal.

The Army recently announced that the Next Generation Squad Weapon, the XM5 rifle and XM250 light machine gun will replace the M4/M16 rifle and the 249 light machine gun, with some Soldiers expected to receive the weapons by the fourth quarter of 2023. New Hampshire-based weapons manufacturer Sig Sauer was awarded the contract.

The new weapon system will use the 6.8 mm family of ammunition instead of the 5.56 mm ammunition the M4/M16 utilized. The 6.8 mm has proven to outperform most modern 5.56mm and 7.62mm ammunition against a full array of targets.

“We should know that this is the first time in our lifetime – this is the first time in 65 years the Army will field a new weapon system of this nature, a rifle, an automatic rifle, a fire control system, and a new caliber family of ammunition,” said Brig. Gen. Larry Burris, the Soldier Lethality Cross-Functional Team director. “This is revolutionary.”

Army units that engage in close-quarters combat will be the first to receive the weapons including those with 11B infantrymen, 19D cavalry scouts, 12B combat engineers, 68W medics, and 13F forward observers.

According to Brig. Gen. William M. Boruff, the program executive officer in the Joint Program Executive Office, the course of action to support readiness with the new ammunition is going to be carried out through a combined effort of the industrial base at Sig Sauer and the Lake City Ammunition Plant.

“Now, consider preparing a new weapon fielding starting with absolutely zero inventory and the industrial base being established.

It’s daunting,” Boruff said.

Despite starting from the ground up the Lake City Army Ammunition Plant has actively began producing rounds during the prototyping process and will continue to provide ammunition in the future.

In 1964, before the Army entered the Vietnam conflict, the M16A1 rifle was introduced into the service’s weapons rotation. It was a significant improvement on the M14 rifle, and it became the standard service rifle for Soldiers.

“The Next Generation Squad Weapon and ammunition will provide an immense increase in the capability for the close-combat force,” said Brig. William Boruff, program executive officer for armaments and ammunition.

In 2017, the Small Arms Ammunition Configuration Study identified capability gaps, and in 2018, the Next Generation Squad Weapon program was established to counter and defeat emerging protected and unprotected threats.

“We are here to establish overmatch against near-peer adversaries, and that is more urgent and relevant today than any time in recent history,” Burris said. “We are one giant step closer to achieving overmatch against global adversaries and threats that emerge on the battlefield of today and tomorrow.”

During the prototyping phase, the NGSW outperformed the M4 and M249 at all ranges, and leaders said that the maximum effective ranges will be validated during another testing phase.

Burris said that with the help of industry partners, the Army accelerated through an acquisition process that normally takes eight



ARMY PHOTO

Pictured is the Army’s XM250 light machine gun designed to replace the M249. The XM250 weighs 13 pounds with a bipod and 14.5 with the suppressor.

to 10 years to complete in only 27 months.

More than 20,000 hours of user feedback from about 1,000 Soldiers were collected during 18 Soldier touch points and more than 100 technical tests have shaped the design of the NGSW system. The Army will continue to improve on the weapon systems by combining new technology while decreasing size, weight, power and cost.

“This is a process driven by data and shaped by the user, the Soldier who will ultimately benefit on the battlefield,” Burris said. “The Soldier has never seen this full suite of capabilities in one integrated system.”

“We committed to kitting the Soldier and the squad as an integrated combat platform in order to introduce and enhance capabilities holistically. We are committed to creating an architecture that facilitates technology growth and capability integration across those platforms,” Burris added.

The XM5, which weighs about two pounds heavier than the M4, and the XM250, which is about four pounds lighter, are still in their prototype phase and may change slight-

ly by the time it is out for mass production. The XM5 weighs 8.38 pounds and 9.84 with the suppressor. The XM250 weighs 13 pounds with a bipod and 14.5 with the suppressor.

Currently the XM5 basic combat load is seven, 20-round magazines, which weighs 9.8 pounds. For the XM250 the basic combat load is four 100-round pouches, at 27.1 pounds. For comparison: the M4 carbine combat load, which is seven 30-round magazines, weighs 7.4 pounds, and the M249 light machine gun combat load, which is three 200-round pouches, weighs 20.8 pounds.

The overall length of the weapons with suppressors attached are 36 inches long for the XM5 and 41.87 inches long for the XM250. The barrel of the XM5 is 15.3 inches long and the XM250 is 17.5 inches long. The barrel on the XM250 is also not considered a quick-change barrel like the M249.

“We are facilitating the rapid acquisitions of increased capabilities to enhance the ability of the Soldier and the squad to fight, win, and survive on the modern battlefield,” Burris said.

Interoperability key to successful EDGE22, future conflicts

By Amy Guckeen Tolson

DEVCOM Aviation & Missile Center Public Affairs

DUGWAY PROVING GROUND, Utah – The U.S. Army never fights alone – and it doesn't experiment in a vacuum, either.

Faster. Farther range. Greater survivability. To the Warfighter, whether their uniform bears the flag of the United States or they're a member of the coalition forces, those attributes can mean the difference between life and death on the battlefield.

That desire for advancing transformational capability and increasing interoperability brought more than 23 Department of Defense organizations and seven international allies to Dugway Proving Ground April 25 to May 13 to experiment under harsh conditions at one of the nation's premier western test ranges for the Experimental Demonstration Gateway Event 2022.

"The most important thing we need to do as a Department of Defense is show interoperability in our warfighting capabilities, and the ability to transmit data anywhere we need it on the battlefield of the future," said Under Secretary of the Army Gabe Camarillo. "To get there, it's absolutely critical that we do experiments like EDGE22 on a more regular basis. I was very pleased to see that we've made tremendous progress today, not only with all the organizations across the Army that have a role to play in this effort, but with our coalition partners, as well."

The annual exercise, sponsored by Army Futures Command's Future Vertical Lift Cross-Functional Team, allowed participants to assess new tactics, technologies and interconnecting architectures in an effort to ensure overmatch and decision dominance in future conflicts. The 19 days of learning,

which centered around a tactical scenario that simulated a wet gap crossing in Europe, pushed the boundaries on a variety of efforts to include interoperability, the network, electronic warfare, multi-intelligence sensors, interactive drone swarming and enhanced sustainment.

"Achieving interoperability is a massive systems engineering challenge," Camarillo said. "There's no substitute for getting out in the dirt and figuring out how these systems are going to work together and talk to each other."

THE WOLFPACK

Somewhere in the desert, Soldiers with the 82nd Airborne Division launch a swarm of Air Launched Effects, or ALE. Taking to the air, the drones conduct reconnaissance, detect potential threats and report back.

A second swarm of ALE launches, becoming an additive measure to overwhelm enemy threat systems.

Then comes a third swarm — it's kinetic, with the capability to take out a target or allow for long range fires.

Finally, a fourth swarm launches, performing battle damage assessment.

They call it the Wolfpack. EDGE22 marked the largest ALE swarm to date, maxing out at seven in one swarm, with only one pilot on the ground needed to execute the swarms' tasks. That layered capability will provide commanders real-time decision making, while keeping Soldiers out of harm's way, allowing for a situation to develop until ground forces are absolutely needed. The Wolfpack will deploy as a forward element



PHOTO BY HALEY MYERS

The U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command Aviation & Missile team successfully completes the first ever Hellfire missile engagement from the Modular Effects Launcher at the Experimental Demonstration Gateway Event 2022 at Dugway Proving Ground, Utah.

of the Future Attack Reconnaissance Aircraft ecosystem in areas of expected enemy contact.

A variety of platforms were used to launch the ALE, not just aviation-centric, showcasing the importance of both air and ground operations. Also key to the evolving technology — the network.

"What we're seeing with drones is they're extending our reach even further. We've got to make sure our concepts align with that technology, and make sure that since our drones can go that far, can we communicate that far, can we sense that far, can we operate in a tough neighborhood that far," said Maj. Gen. Walter "Wally" Rugen, Future Vertical

Lift Cross-Functional Team director.

EVOLUTION OF TECHNOLOGY

A single Black Hawk flies at low altitude. A team of scientists and engineers meet the bird on the landing pad, carrying a Hellfire missile. After installing it on the Modular Effects Launcher, or MEL. The Black Hawk — acting as a surrogate for the Future Attack Reconnaissance Aircraft, or FARA — takes to the sky again, flying out to meet its target.

Minutes later, target destroyed — mission complete.

It was a first for the MEL, and one of more than 30 technological firsts out of 67 technical objectives at EDGE22. But more

EDGE22 cont.

importantly, Army leaders said, was the innovation and evolution of technology that occurred, with Soldiers, scientists, engineers and international partners working side by side. Soldiers from the 82nd Airborne provided a mission command element, as well as some air assets and an infantry platoon, to allow for technologies to be operationalized and integrated.

“What an opportunity like this does is illustrate the complexity of the future battlefield, and helps us prioritize that incremental approach,” said Program Executive Officer for Aviation Brig. Gen. Rob Barrie. “We’re not going to be doing everything at once, but seeing it employed by Soldiers with actual technology gives us a clearer path for how we can incrementally improve in achieving the desired end state.”

Case in point: the MEL, which will enable the FARA to integrate, carry and launch the variety of current, developmental and future weapons needed for Multi Domain Operations. EDGE22 firsts for the launcher that employs a modular open systems approach, so it can fit a variety of weapon systems, also included flight operations in multiple configurations and captive carry of a special purpose mission equipment pod.

“The [Aviation and Missile Center] team successfully completed the first ever Hellfire missile engagement from the Modular Effects Launcher,” said Col. Justin Highley, commander for the U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command Aviation & Missile Center’s Technology Development Directorate — Aviation Systems Integration & Demonstration. “The MEL provides Army aviation the ability to rapidly integrate and employ various weapons and capabilities, and we previously demonstrated the ability to launch ALEs and 2.75” rockets.”



ARMY PHOTO

More than 23 Department of Defense organizations and seven international allies experiment under harsh conditions at one of the nation’s premier western test ranges for EDGE 22.

Other technologies that were able to move the ball down the field in terms of capabilities at EDGE22 included a high altitude solar powered glider that set a record for time aloft at 26 hours, and oftentimes returned with more power than when it had taken off. EDGE22 was also the first opportunity to confirm bi-directional communications between the Integrated Visual Augmentation System and Enhanced Night Vision Goggle-Binocular.

‘WE NEVER FIGHT ALONE’

To meet emerging challenges, the U.S. Army is boldly transforming to provide the joint and coalition forces with the speed, range and convergence of cutting-edge technologies needed for future decision dominance and overmatch in strategic competition. EDGE22 marked the first time international partners were invited to participate in the campaign of learning. Italy, Germany and Canada all brought soldiers and equipment to Utah, while Australia, France, the Netherlands and United Kingdom, sent ob-

servers.

The Italians, Dutch and Germans all experienced firsts with the systems they brought to Dugway, and walked away with a greater technical understanding of how they would connect to the network.

“What I think we’re witnessing here is a revolution in the way military operations are conducted,” said Air Commodore Robert Adang, commander of the Royal Netherlands Air Force Helicopter Command. “We come from a time where capabilities were more or less standalone, employed in their own specific domain. Here, we see a network of very complex systems that work with each other, partly manned, partly autonomous, achieving synchronized effects that haven’t been possible until today.”

People are the foundation for everything the Army does, and as evidenced at EDGE, the Army is making sure it has the right people, allies and partnerships with the right skills and training, in the right roles, to succeed in complex future missions. EDGE proved that partnering with allied nations

strengthens relationships, and furthers the next generation of vertical lift capability and employment in future operations.

“If you want to fight together, cooperate, you have to start cooperation with the development of your concepts, to have a clear view that you have nearly the same concepts,” said German Brig. Gen. Thomas Czirwitzky, director of external relations, Armaments Projects, German Army Concepts and Capabilities Development Centre. “From this starting point you can then develop and realize your concept, together, so you have the possibility to cooperate in the real fight.”

U.S. Army leaders echoed that sentiment. “We never fight alone,” said Brig. Gen. Brandon Tegtmeier, deputy commanding general of the 82nd Airborne Division. “You look at what we’re doing in Europe. We’re always with our Allies and partners, and it’s always a big effort to work interoperability at the beginning of a fight or in a fight. Here we’re baking it into the technologies earlier with all the partners that are here. That is a big step.”

U.S. to resume small, persistent presence in Somalia

By C. Todd Lopez

DOD News

WASHINGTON -- For 16 months now, American military personnel in the U.S. Africa Command area of responsibility have provided advise-and-assist support to forces in Somalia on an ad hoc basis — traveling into the country when needed and then leaving afterward.

U.S. forces are helping Somali forces in the fight against al-Shabab, but the ad hoc model will soon change to one of persistent presence in the country, Pentagon Press Secretary John F. Kirby said.

"The president has authorized the Department of Defense to return a small, persistent U.S. military presence to Somalia,"

Kirby told reporters during a briefing in the Pentagon May 16. "This decision was based on a request from [Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III] and included advice from senior commanders and, of course, concern for the safety of our troops who have incurred additional risk by deploying in and out of Somalia on an episodic basis for the past 16 months."

Plans are being made now for just how and when that change will be implemented, Kirby said. But he did add that the mission for U.S. forces involved will be the same — they will provide advise-and-assist support but will not be directly involved in conflict.

"Those forces, as they have been, will continue to be used in training, advising and equipping partner forces to give them the tools that they need to disrupt, degrade and monitor al-Shabab," Kirby said. "Our forces are not now, nor will they be, directly engaged in combat operations. The purpose here is to enable a more effective fight against al-Shabab by local forces."

Kirby told reporters the Department recognizes that al-Shabab has increased in strength and so poses a heightened threat. The existing model of U.S. assistance moving into and out of the country as needed, he said, is inefficient.

"The advise-and-assist mission, as we've seen in many places around the world, is best done when you're on site, and you can

develop those relationships and keep those conversations going and stay as relevant as possible," he said. "When you're coming and going, that ... contact is a little bit harder to work."

Kirby also said that just moving into and out of the country, rather than staying in place, increased the risk to U.S. troops.

"Shifting to a persistent presence will not change the mission and it will not imply substantial changes in resources," he said. "We're working now to evaluate local conditions, including those following the Somali presidential election yesterday. And we're engaging partners in the region, including the Somali government to determine the best way forward."

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Jim Hughes
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David Agan
Digital Media Manager

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