

# ARMY FLYER

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PHOTO BY MASTER SGT. SCOTT THOMPSON

Capt. Charles Auer, B Company, 2nd Battalion, 238th General Support Aviation, out of Peoria, Ill., begins the checklist before a night mission in a CH-47 Chinook during Winter Strike 21 at Alpena Combat Readiness Training Center, Mich., Jan 28. Winter Strike 21 is a cold-weather readiness event held as part of the Northern Strike exercise series that offers the Michigan National Guard's unparalleled facilities as a venue for U.S. and coalition forces to receive advanced all-domain joint fires training in all weather conditions.

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Two TH-67 Creek aircraft fly along with their partner aircraft from Fort Rucker at the start of the ceremony at Cairns Army Airfield Feb. 17.

PHOTOS BY JIM HUGHES

# Fort Rucker, Army Aviation bid bittersweet farewell to *TH-67 Creek*

By Jim Hughes  
*Fort Rucker Public Affairs*

Army Aviation bid a bittersweet farewell to an old friend that an estimated 90% of its aviators learned to fly in when it hosted its TH-67 Creek Final Flight ceremony at Cairns Army Airfield Feb. 17.

Two TH-67s, escorted by an AH-64 Apache, two UH-60 Black Hawks and a CH-47 Chinook, first flew to Howze Field for a salute from Brig. Gen. Stanley Budraitis, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker deputy commanding general, Col. George Ferido, commander, 110th Aviation Brigade, and CW5 Jonathan Koziol, chief warrant officer of the Aviation Branch, then on to Cairns for a hose down courtesy of the

airfield fire department and a short speech from Lt. Col. Keith Hill, 1st Battalion, 223rd Aviation Regiment commander.

“If you’re an Army Aviator who began your Aviation career between 1993 and 2020, the odds are pretty good that the TH-67 Creek helicopter was the foundational tool on which you built your Aviation tradecraft,” Hill said. “The TH-67 has spent three decades preparing our Aviators to eventually transition to the UH-1 Huey, the AH-1 Cobra, the OH-58 Kiowa and Kiowa Warrior, the UH-60 Black Hawk, the AH-64 Apache the CH-47 Chinook and even the C-12. The TH-67 prepared our Aviators for operations in the



Lt. Col. Keith Hill, 1st Battalion, 223rd Aviation Regiment commander, speaks during the TH-67 Creek Final Flight ceremony at Cairns Army Airfield Feb. 17.

Balkans, for operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, Pacific Pathways, Atlantic Resolve, and many other subsequent regional and contingency missions that followed.”

The TH-67 also served as the primary trainer not just for U.S. military students, but also for allied partner students from Afghanistan, Brunei, Denmark, Georgia, Germany, Iraq, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mauritania, the Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Trinidad and Tobago and the

United Arab Emirates, the commander added.

The TH-67 arrived at Fort Rucker in 1993 to begin its service as the primary trainer for Army Aviators – eventually earning its title as the longest-serving primary flight trainer in the Department of Defense. The fleet grew to 181 aircraft and over the decades flew more than 1,915,000 hours and trained more than 25,000 students in the initial entry rotor wing program, he said.

The retiring of the TH-67 was probably



## TH-67 cont.

a “pretty sad moment for a lot of Aviators,” said Kenneth Tilley, USAACE Army Aviation Branch historian who attended the ceremony.

“It’s sad to see any helicopter leave the inventory, but it’s especially sad when it is one you’ve flown,” Tilley said. “You rarely hear any pilot speak negatively about this airframe – they really like it a lot. That makes it a little bittersweet to see it leave the inventory.”

Hill is one of the aviators who felt that way.

“It’s the day that a lot of aviators are watching their first love leave our inventory. This is the helicopter they were in when they first learned to start the engines, first picked it off the ground and flew their first cross-country flight in. It’s kind of a big deal, but it is symbolic,” he said, adding that Army Aviation has officially moved on completely to the UH-72 Lakota to help beginner aviators transition smoothly into the more advanced helicopters.

“Seeing the Creek helicopter fly among the formation of its helicopter teammates no doubt should invoke a little bit of sentiment in our Army Aviators, and our maintainers who tirelessly committed their hands and their minds to pulling off maintenance magic every day to meet the unyielding demand,” Hill said. “Along with our support personnel who managed the burden of resourcing, logistics and mountains of administrative requirements, our air traffic controllers and tower operators who have managed to get thousands of nervous aircrews safely back on the ground when unfavorable lower Alabama weather rolls in unexpectedly.

“And, of course, I’d like to thank our team of instructor pilots who are the nucleus of our operations,” the commander added. “For nearly 30 years they have used this great helicopter to transform civilian pedestrians into confident, proficient and daring Army



**The fire department at Cairns gives one of the TH-67s at the ceremony a farewell hose down. This aircraft has the distinction of being the first TH-67 at Fort Rucker, arriving in 1993.**

Aviators.”

He thanked the Creek Nation for lending its name to the TH-67, and also surrounding communities, such as the people of Daleville, “who for over 50 years have hosted the Fort Rucker team, which includes all of the students and their families who will always have a soft spot in Daleville no matter where life takes them.”

The TH-67s, which have served as the Army’s primary flight trainer since 1993, will now move on to serve with other agencies, said Hill, adding that the UH-72 Lakota, which began being used at Fort Rucker to train pilots in 2016, will now fully take over duties as the trainer for Army Aviation.

As with many Soldiers, while the TH-67s are retired from the Army, they will find employment elsewhere, throughout the world, Tilley said.

“I don’t know specifically where they will go, but these helicopters are all over the world



**Hill speaks with local media representatives in front of Fort Rucker’s first TH-67 Creek.**

with sheriff’s departments, police departments, forestry, other government agencies and also with agencies in other countries,” he

added. “They will be flying for a long time all over the world for years and years to come.”

# WRIGHT BROTHERS MASTER PILOT AWARD

## FAA honors Fort Rucker flight instructor for 50 years of safe flying

By Jim Hughes

*Fort Rucker Public Affairs*

A third generation Army Aviator and Fort Rucker flight instructor received the Federal Aviation Administration's most prestigious award Feb. 4, honoring him for 50 years of accident- and incident-free flying.

Scott Tomlinson, who took his first solo flight when he was 16, received the FAA Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award certificate and pin from his boss, Todd Marshburn, director of Amentum Rotary Wing Flight Training, during a small ceremony at Cairns Army Airfield.

"Flying was in my bloodstream," Tomlinson said. "My dad was an Army Aviator and my grandfather was a flight instructor in World War 2. When I graduated high school, I went right into the Army and went to flight school. I graduated in July 1973 and I've been hanging around aircraft ever since."

Tomlinson flew in the Army for about 10 years before becoming an Army chaplain. He retired as a major after 22 years in the Army and eventually found his way back to Fort Rucker to become a flight instructor.

"I've been here at Fort Rucker for about 14 years as a flight instructor," he said, adding he finds instructing highly rewarding. "It's exciting. It's also nice to be around young people and see them catch new skills, and also to give them the experience they need to move on with their lives."

"At Fort Rucker, we emphasize what training is, and the basic definition is that

learning is a change of behavior as a result of experience," Tomlinson said during the ceremony. "We're giving these young men and women experience, so they can become good and safe pilots for the Army."

And he has no plans to stop doing it.

"I still enjoy what I'm doing and still passing the physicals, so I'm going to continue until the Lord directs me elsewhere," he said.

Above and beyond training the nation's Soldiers, Tomlinson also taught his wife, Helen, to fly.

"Her favorite statement to me was, 'Please don't talk to me that way. She's been the only student to talk to me like that,'" Tomlinson said. "The biggest miracle is we're still married after the experience."

Helen quickly added that Scott was a great instructor.

"He's awesome," she said. "I've been flying with him for many years. About six years ago, we decided to get our own little Cessna 172. Four years ago, I got my private pilot license and two years ago I got my instrument rating. We truly love to fly together – it's fun."

On its website, the FAA says the award is given to recognize individuals who have exhibited professionalism, skill and aviation expertise for at least 50 years while piloting aircraft as Master Pilots.

To be eligible for the Wright Brothers MPA, nominees must meet the following criteria:

- \* Hold a U.S. Civil Aviation Authority or



PHOTO BY JIM HUGHES

**Todd Marshburn, director of Amentum Rotary Wing Flight Training, shows a picture of the pin he's about to present to Scott Tomlinson, Fort Rucker flight instructor, after presenting him the Federal Aviation Administration Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award for 50 years of accident- and incident-free flying during a small ceremony at Cairns Army Airfield Feb. 4. Tomlinson's wife, Helen, put the pin on her husband before he put a duplicate on her.**

FAA pilot certificate;

- \* Have 50 or more years of civil and military flying experience;

- \* Up to 20 years of the required 50 years may be U.S. military experience;

- \* The effective start date for the 50 years is the date of the nominee's first solo flight or military equivalent;

- \* The 50 years may be computed consecutively or non-consecutively; and

- \* Be a U.S. citizen.

Marshburn said that since the awarded started in 2003, the FAA has only presented just over 6,000 of them.

"To say that this is a big deal is an understatement," he said. "This is fantastic. Mr. Tomlinson has every FAA certification and he's been doing it for 50 years – and he's still enjoying it. To me that's a testament to really what the award is about – not only accident and incident free, but really his expertise,

dedication and professionalism.

"Scott is the embodiment of what I like to see," Marshburn added. "Most people his age wouldn't be doing anything similar – he's still teaching the next generation. It's great, it's wonderful, it's what I live for, and it gives me a real source of pride simply because it's so rare to see nowadays."

Tomlinson added his thoughts on Army Aviation.

"The Army has a great program for young men and women – they can come in right out of high school and go right into flight school – it's probably the best opportunity in America," he said. "Army Aviation is the best way to learn how to fly."

For more about the award and a list of all pilots who've achieved the honor, visit <https://www.faasafety.gov/content/masterpilot/Default.aspx>.





First graders in their classroom on the 100th day of school at Ellis D. Parker Elementary Feb. 11.

PHOTOS BY JIM HUGHES

# 'GIVING IT THEIR ALL'

*Parker Elementary staff, students, parents excel in midst of pandemic*

**By Jim Hughes**  
*Fort Rucker Public Affairs*



Students arrive for the start of the school day.

Students and staff at Fort Rucker's Ellis D. Parker Elementary School found reason to celebrate Feb. 11 as they hit the 100-day point in the school year in the midst of a world-wide pandemic.

A complicated school year by any standard, 2020-21 is going well at the four-month point of students gracing the new school's halls, which is a testament to the talent, resilience and dedication of its staff, students and parents, according to Dr. Vicki Gilmer, school principal.

"We have had a successful year so far," she said. "We have been solution oriented in our challenges, such as spacing during lunch times, grade-level zones and a safe recess period daily."

While educational and development goals remain intact at the school, dealing with the safety issues raised by the pandemic is always a

top consideration, Gilmer said.

"We have worked incredibly hard to maintain a safe learning environment," she said. "Prior to opening, we had our partners at Lyster Army Health Clinic and our district personnel tour and view our procedures. We have maintained grade-level bubbles, so that we can assure there is no crossover of students. At any time, we can tell you where a student has been – right down to their seat in the café."

All teachers and students adhere to safety measures throughout the day by masking up and maintaining social distancing. Students in first to sixth grades have their own laptop for individual use, and students in all grades have their individual bags of supplies for math, reading and other subjects, the principal added.

Teachers and staff at the school say they are

## SCHOOL cont.

comfortable with the precautions being taken and people's adherence to the guidelines the school operates under, including Vicki Harper, sixth grade teacher.

"We are blessed to have this huge, new school in the middle of a pandemic. The size of the building and the way that grade levels are in their own neighborhoods allow each grade level to travel specific paths during the day to minimize contact with other grade levels," Harper said. "This is important because if we did have a staff member or student become COVID positive, we could narrow down their location and their contact with others during the day."

"Our administration has put many health and safety guidelines in place," the teacher added. "There are hand sanitizer stations throughout the school, classrooms are stocked with disposable wipes to clean surfaces, we have clear plexiglass dividers at small group tables, and teachers have removed nonessential items from their classrooms, so that student desks can be spread out."

The new school first brought in students for in-house learning Oct. 1, then went on break for the holidays in December and resumed at-home learning for two weeks in January. Students were welcomed back into their classrooms Jan. 19, and students and staff are happy to be back where they're supposed to be, ac-

cording to Gilmer and Harper.

"Being in school is always our preferred method, but we recognize the ongoing battle with COVID-19 and will always support measures that support the safest environment," Gilmer said. "There is so much more that can be accomplished with a full day of school and face-to-face instruction. The transition was seamless, thanks to our great parents, students and staff. We are able to transition back and forth very easily now."

Harper is impressed with the children's resilience in adapting to the situation, adding that things have been going "remarkably well for such an unusual year."

"We knew back in August that this would not be a normal school year and we had to be flexible," she said. "Starting the school year in remote, then to brick-and-mortar in October, then back to remote in January – I think the students and staff are to be commended for how well they've dealt with the uncertainty."

"I've been pleasantly surprised at how well the students have adapted to the new normal," Harper added. "I've never heard a student complain about wearing a mask – they are happy to be in the building with their friends. They realize that they learn better at school."

But there are still Parker Patriots who continue with their learning at home, Gilmer said.



**Parker Elementary School sixth graders change classrooms with their mobile desks, which have rollers to allow them to use the same desk all day. The mobile desks also raise up to allow students to stand, if they wish, during class.**

"We began our second semester on campus Jan. 19. At that time, our virtual students had the opportunity to return to the brick-and-mortar campus if they wished to. Approximately half of our virtual students returned to campus. We now have about 20 students who have decided to remain in the virtual platform for the remainder of the school year. We are super proud of those students and the work they are doing, as well."

With the great majority of students safe and happy back at school, Gilmer said she is looking forward to the rest of the 2020-21 school year, which ends June 9.

"Our goal for 2021 is to finish strong and celebrate the work accomplished during these difficult times," she said. "It is an honor to serve our families here at Fort Rucker. The teachers and staff show up every day, giving it their all, and for that they are heroes to me."

"I would like to ask all parents and staff members to keep up the good work," the prin-

cipal added. "We are going to keep using our safety measures with fidelity."

Harper is looking for a strong finish to the year, as well.

"This year has gone by so fast already – I can't believe it's already February," she said. "I am one of the two drama club directors. The fifth- and sixth-grade drama club is performing 'You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown' in May. This is an annual tradition at the elementary school, and even though we had to put extra precautions in place this year, we didn't want the musical to be yet another thing the kids would miss out on in 2020-21."

"My goal is that, despite everything that was different about this school year, our kids will show academic growth, and whether they PCS to another post or school, or they return next year, they will know that Parker Elementary was a safe, loving environment for them," Harper said.

“My goal is that, despite everything that was different about this school year, our kids will show academic growth, and whether they PCS to another post or school, or they return next year, they will know that Parker Elementary was a safe, loving environment for them.”

– Vicki Harper  
*Parker Elementary sixth grade teacher*



# TRADOC PEOPLE FIRST ASSESSMENT TEAM VISITS



PHOTOS BY JIM HUGHES



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ABOVE: Capt. Alison Carney, 1st Aviation Brigade S4, points out facility locations surrounding barracks Bldg. 8351 to Army Training and Doctrine Command People First Assessment Team members Sgt. Maj. Robert Hightower Jr., Fort Lee, Virginia, who hails from Opp; and Sgt. Maj. Matthew Scott Updike, from Fort Eustis, Virginia.

RIGHT: Updike speaks with Sgt. Lorenzo Gutierrez, 164th Theater Airfield Operations Group, about the living conditions in barracks Bldg. 8351 Feb. 18.

The PFAT is visiting Fort Rucker Feb. 15-19. TRADOC has two such teams, made of senior NCOs with leadership experience in a variety of Army units, visiting TRADOC locations throughout the Army. The team at Fort Rucker is touring facilities across post and meeting with Soldiers of various ranks in groups of 15-20, all while maintaining all social distancing and COVID-19 protective measures.

The team is assessing U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker policies and procedures, talking to Soldiers about what they experience on a daily basis and the things that affect their quality of life, and working with leadership on maintaining a healthy command climate.

Updike said the team's experience at Fort Rucker has been "phenomenal," adding that he's been impressed with the discipline of the Soldiers on post, the support of commanders at all levels, and the honesty and openness of local leadership to help make the Army better.

# COMANCHE

## U.S. Army Aviation Museum home to 1 of only 2 ever built, flew

**Army Flier**  
*Staff Report*

An aircraft that never quite made it into the Army's operational inventory and looks like something out of a science-fiction movie is on display at the U.S. Army Aviation Museum.

The Boeing-Sikorsky RAH-66 Comanche on display at the Aviation museum is one of only two of the helicopters that were built and flew, according to Bob Mitchell, U.S. Army Aviation Museum curator.

"This (aircraft) was a revolutionary design and it was something that was designed totally thinking outside of the box," said the curator. "It was designed to incorporate a lot of new technology, such as radar absorption and defeating geometrics, and was also designed to have a very low infrared profile. Radar-guided missiles and infrared-guided missiles are two great threats to Army helicopters, so this aircraft addressed both those threats with its radical design and engineering."

The helicopter's concept came about as a result of conflicts in the late 70s, according

to Mitchell. It was designed around the term, "come-as-you-are war," which essentially meant that the military fighting force had to be ready for combat at a moment's notice.

"You're not going to have days, weeks or months to prepare and mobilize," he said. "You're going to have to get over there and address the threat pretty quickly, and the idea of an aircraft that could be broken down quickly and loaded into the belly of a C-5 (Galaxy aircraft) or a C-141 (Starlifter aircraft) and deployed somewhere in the world overnight started to emerge."

The Army wanted an aircraft that could be deployed quickly, had revolutionary technologies, could perform the duties of reconnaissance and also have light anti-tank capabilities, and thus the Comanche was born, said Mitchell.

The aircraft featured a radar-defeating geometric design that allowed stealth capabilities. The weapons bays were housed inside the aircraft and would only be visible while in



FILE PHOTOS

use, further decreasing the aircraft's chance of detection.

In addition to its radar stealth capabilities, the Comanche also had a low infrared signature that allowed the helicopter to keep a low profile when faced with infrared sensors, said the curator.

On a conventional helicopter, fuel is compressed, combusted and expelled as heat that is easily detectable with infrared sensors, said Mitchell. But with the Comanche, the exhaust is vented along a porcelain array that runs along the tail of the helicopter and air is drawn down to further cool the exhaust, reducing its infrared profile.

The aircraft also had a host of sensor technologies, night-vision capabilities, sight capabilities and a plethora of other revolutionary technologies, but as parts continued to be added to the aircraft, the weight also increased significantly.

"The Army's requirements for the aircraft were basically hard stops (in its research and development)," Mitchell. "The weight requirement was essential, as well as size, and unfortunately for the Comanche, over the years the weight just kept increasing and increasing well over what the Army's requirements were.

"Instead of drawing a line in the sand and going with an 80-percent solution, they just kept modifying and modifying and modifying," he said. "As a result, the helicopter was in research and development for the better part of 25 years, and anything that languishes in R&D for that long is probably never going to see the light of day."

Essentially, the parts that made the Comanche great were the same things that led to its ultimate downfall, and the program was ended in 2004. Although the helicopter is regarded by many as a failure, the Comanche program pioneered a lot of technology that is used in the Army's current fleet of helicopters, Mitchell said.

"A lot of great technology came out of this aircraft," he added. "Even though we didn't get the aircraft, we got all of the great technology that came out of it and it provided the Army with a lot of great resources."

The museum is open to visit Mondays-Fridays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. It is closed on federal holidays, except for Memorial Day, Independence Day and Veterans Day.

For more information about the museum, visit <http://www.armyaviationmuseum.org>.





# Soldier credits SHARP training for fostering accountability

By Capt. Kevin Livingston  
*Army News Service*

DEPLOYED LOCATION — 2020 presented many challenges to the U.S. Army in terms of accountability. High profile events, such as the tragic death of Pfc. Vanessa Guillen at the hands of a fellow Soldier after alleged harassment exposed a critical failure in the enforcement of the Army's Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention program at every echelon within units at Fort Hood, Texas.

While the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee's findings prompted some to cast doubt on the SHARP program's integrity, a National Guard Soldier praised its teachings in helping him recognize and intervene in a suspected sexual harassment situation.

Spc. John Pack, a signal support specialist deployed with 1st Battalion, 137th Aviation Regiment, credits bystander intervention training for helping him to recognize and intervene when a fellow Soldier was on the receiving end of unwanted verbal and physical advances from a superior during pre-mobilization training at Fort Hood. Although he did not know the Soldier personally, he realized that she was uncomfortable and chose to act.

"It started when he (the Soldier's officer-in-charge) gave her his phone number for reporting purposes based on their jobs. It seemed professional, so that didn't worry me," said Pack. "Then things progressed, and he started asking her for photos, and that was an indicator for me. I thought, 'Why would this officer want this [junior Soldier's] photo?'"

Pack said he continued to keep an eye on the Soldier's situation and her continued interactions with her OIC. Over the course of the next few days, he saw the situation evolve from inappropriate text messages to direct physical contact. After an interaction in front of other

Soldiers occurred with no one addressing the problem, Pack said he knew he had to do something.

"Everyone who saw was enlisted and didn't know how to address it. So, I asked her directly if anything was going on and if she was OK," said Pack. "She said he made her uncomfortable and that his advances were continuing in front of others and privately. I had spoken to other Soldiers on [our] shift, but no one wanted to come forward since he was an officer, so I decided I would intervene and let my command know."

Pack said his leadership immediately addressed his reporting of the situation. Although he and the Soldier were in different units, Pack saw both chains of command intervene and start an investigation, ultimately holding the officer accountable and relieving him of duty.

Pack would later learn that the officer in question had an alleged history of approaching and harassing Soldiers of lower rank, but that he was the first to speak up and say something to higher leadership. He also discovered that once word of potential wrongdoing had spread, others who had experienced unwanted advances began coming forward.

Bystander intervention, the act of someone perceiving a problem, interpreting it as possible harassment or assault, and stepping in to disrupt, is one of the central pieces of the Army SHARP program. The 28th Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade emphasized bystander intervention to their Soldiers while training at Fort Hood. Master Sgt. John Paul Karpovich, the brigade sexual assault response coordinator, commented that Pack's quick thinking and willingness to come forward affected positive change for the Soldier involved and the units



PHOTO BY CAPT. KEVIN LIVINGSTON

**Spc. John Pack, a signal support specialist with 1st Battalion, 137th Aviation Regiment, poses for a photo after performing a radio check on a UH-60 Blackhawk.**

as a whole.

"I believe a success story is when we have someone who sees a potentially harmful event and then decides they are going to be the person to step in and feel responsible for stopping [harassment] from happening," said Karpovich. "[Pack] took what he heard in training and made the decision to be an active bystander. That set the tone for the rest of the unit and set the climate by saying what is unacceptable."

Pack credits his quick thinking to his classes, both during pre-mobilization and his weekend drills as a traditional guardsman, about the Army SHARP program, adding that the SHARP program does work when Soldiers

and leadership stand behind and support the training.

"Morals have no rank," said Pack. "You can acknowledge something is wrong, see something and say something. Any Soldier should be willing to put themselves in that situation to take care of each other, in and out of the uniform."

Pack is currently deployed in support of Operation Inherent Resolve and Operation Spartan Shield. He said he plans to remain in the National Guard for as long as possible, and will pursue his undergraduate degree to eventually commission as an officer once he returns home.

# Army to target sexual harassment, assault in new command climate survey

By Devon Suits

*Army News Service*

WASHINGTON – An updated version of the Defense Organizational Climate Survey, or DEOCS 5.0, will provide commanders with an evidence-based feedback tool to help them identify and intervene against a variety of areas critical to command climate, including destructive behaviors, such as sexual harassment, sexual assault, and associated retaliation.

The Army will incorporate 10 additional questions about sexual harassment and sexual assault reporting climate into all DEOCS surveys, said Michelle Zbylut, director of the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences.

The additional line of questions supports a People First Task Force initiative linked to the Fort Hood Independent Review, Zbylut said.

Army senior leaders stood up the task force in December to aggressively address the results of an independent report and restore an Army-wide culture of dignity and respect, according to task force officials.

Like a vehicle's check engine light, the DEOCS is intended to identify risk factors that drive an installation's or unit's command climate, said Jenna Newman, social science advisor with the Army Resilience Directorate.

The survey is managed and administered by the Defense Department's Office of People Analytics (OPA), Zbylut explained. The core survey is a collection of approximately 100 questions, with the option to include no more than 10 service-specific questions.

Installation leaders can also include no more than 10 multiple-choice and up to five open-ended questions to target local interests, she added. These questions are selected from a bank of options to ensure the survey's reliability and compliance with DOD policies.

"The optional DEOCS content includes a

wide variety of topics, ranging from workplace experiences, professional development, discrimination, to COVID-19," Zbylut said. "The additional questions allow commanders to dig deeper into a given topic area."

Installation commanders are required to conduct a DEOCS upon the first 120 days of taking command, Zbylut said.

Participation in the survey is considered voluntary for all personnel and provides them a safe, secure, and confidential means to submit feedback. The recent update to the DEOCS will allow participants to complete it through their smartphone or tablet, creating more flexibility for anyone who wants to participate, Zbylut added.

"Many individuals in the Army will have taken a DEOCS at some point in their career, but these questions are going to look different from previous iterations," Zbylut said.

A focused survey

To refine the survey, OPA received input from all military branches. The organization also included data and research from policy-makers and subject-matter experts connected to force resilience; diversity, equity and inclusion; equal employment opportunity; suicide prevention; and sexual assault and prevention response initiatives.

The process determined a list of crosscutting risk and protective factors that are actionable and relevant to include in the survey.

Several protective factors associated with positive behaviors include cohesion, connectedness, inclusion, leadership support, morale, transformational leadership, and work-life balance, Zbylut said.

Alternatively, risk factors identified in the DEOCS focus on binge drinking, passive leadership, racial or ethnic harassing behaviors,



PHOTO BY SGT. DUSTIN BIVEN

**Lt. Col. James Raines, commander of 2nd Battalion, 18th Field Artillery Regiment, 75th Field Artillery Brigade, renders and receives a salute after completing a weeklong external evaluation March 29, 2019, on Fort Sill, Okla.**

sexually harassing behaviors, sexism, stress, toxic leadership, or workplace hostility, she added.

The opportunity to participate in a DEOCS is typically limited to a four-week window, she said. Once the survey is closed, the results are generated within 72 hours and sent to the local administrators, the commander, and the commander's supervisor.

Using the survey's findings, commanders should develop an action plan to address areas of most concern, she added.

"A commander may try to dive deeper into some areas based on what they see in their report. For instance, they might go out and conduct additional focus groups or interviews," Zbylut said. "If the survey revealed a more serious issue, such as findings of sexually harassing behaviors, the commander will need to work with subject-matter experts."

10 questions

The 10 additional Army-only questions -- five about sexual harassment and five about sexual assault -- will allow the Army to assess

a command's reporting climate and see how leaders are actively discouraging or, by not actively discouraging, contributing to a permissive command climate surrounding those behaviors, Newman said.

"The survey can only help [commanders] if [they] are willing to listen to the answers and do something with the information," Zbylut said. "The DEOCS is just one tool ... and it doesn't replace speaking with Soldiers one on one. However, it can help steer the conversation, or show things that are brewing before they become a larger issue."

These questions have appeared on previous versions of DEOCS, which will provide the Army with historical comparisons and the ability to examine trends over time, Zbylut said.

"To make this survey work, it's important that people participate," said Newman, adding that the past issues at Fort Hood potentially speak to a larger issue throughout the Army. "To truly understand the scope and contours of these issues, we need to hear from as many people as we can -- voluntarily, of course."





PHOTO BY JIM HUGHES

## TAX CENTER OPENS

Command Sgt. Maj. Raymond P. Quitugua Jr., Fort Rucker garrison command sergeant major, and Lt. Col. Colin Cusack, Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, cut the ribbon to the tax center Feb. 16 in Bldg. 5700. The tax center is now open for by-appointment-only free tax preparation and filing services for military members and retirees. For more information on the Fort Rucker Tax Center or to make an appointment, call 334-255- 2937.

# ARMY FLIER

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