

# ARMY FLIER

SERVING THE U.S. ARMY AVIATION CENTER OF EXCELLENCE AND THE FORT RUCKER COMMUNITY SINCE 1956

VOLUME 71 • NUMBER 15 • NOVEMBER 24, 2021



PHOTO BY AIR FORCE SENIOR AIRMAN KAITLYN ERGISH

Army Staff Sgt. Joseph Kayitare participates in Exercise Bushwhacker at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz., in October. The exercise is designed to assist airmen with establishing, sustaining and defending the base.

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# Happy Thanksgiving



Command Sgt. Maj James D. Wilson, Aviation Branch command sergeant major; Chaplain (Capt.) Jason Nelson, 1st Battalion, 13th Aviation Regiment; William G. Kidd, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence deputy to the commanding general; and Capt. Phillip Lenavitt, C Company, 1-13th Avn. Regt., serve Soldiers a Thanksgiving-style lunch at the dining facility Nov. 23.



Brig. Gen. Stanley E. Budraitis, USAACE deputy commanding general; Command Sgt. Maj. Kirk Coley, USAACE training sergeant major; and 1st Lt. Jonathan Wilson, A Co., 1-13th Avn. Regt., serve Soldiers at the DFAC.

*Photos by  
Jim Hughes*



Members of the dining facility staff pose for a photo with members of the command group.



Sgt. 1st Class Mykel Obert, and 1st Sgt. Eric Pantoja, both of the NCO Academy, and Command Sgt. Maj. Raymond P. Quitugua Jr., garrison command sergeant major, and Col. Robert J. Holcombe, garrison commander, serve Thanksgiving fare to Soldiers.

# RAISING SPIRITUAL READINESS

## Chaplaincy serves up free coffee to help connect with post community

By Jim Hughes

*Fort Rucker Public Affairs*

The Fort Rucker chaplaincy recently received a donation of 37 pallets of coffee K-Cups and its staff is putting it to use to help increase the spiritual readiness of the post community.

Donated by Holy Joe's Café, a nationally recognized nonprofit dedicated to providing free coffee to chaplain ministries across the armed forces, the bounty inside the Spiritual Life Center is helping Fort Rucker chaplains connect with Soldiers, according to Chaplain (Lt. Col.) David Schnarr, garrison chaplain.

"It's a fantastic idea," he said. "So many of us enjoy coffee – it's a morale booster – and it's a way for the greater community outside the gates to do something directly for the troops. People like doing things for Soldiers – something that can really bring joy to them. A cup of coffee in the morning is hard to beat."

But the bounty isn't going to just sit in the Spiritual Life Center, Schnarr said.

"We're pushing it out to Soldiers, civilians and everyone on post – if you want some, contact your chaplain and they'll be more than willing to get you some coffee," he said, adding that the coffee will also be available at various chaplaincy events and offices. "Years ago, people used to talk about chaplains and candy. Well, coffee is much more practical."

The Army recognizes spiritual readiness – defined in Field Manual 7-22 as "the ability to endure and overcome times of stress, hardship, and tragedy by making meaning of life experiences," – is vital for Soldiers, and the post's resident experts on that subject are the chaplains, Schnarr said.

"So, getting Soldiers, Army civilian employees and contractors involved in engaging with their chaplains provides an opportunity to build that spiritual readiness," he said. "We have all sorts of issues going on in the Army,



Soldiers enjoy a cup of the donated coffee recently at Wings Chapel.



PHOTOS BY CHAPLAIN (LT. COL.) DAVID SCHNARR

**Soldiers from the chaplaincy move donated coffee from Holy Joe's Café into the Fort Rucker Spiritual Life Center.**

and having the coffee is another way to help us make a connection with people."

The chaplains will have a lot of connecting to do, as the 37 pallets come out to more than 3 tons of coffee, according to Schnarr. So, people wanting to get a free box of K-Cups should get in touch with their chaplain, maybe even inviting them over for a helping of spiritual resiliency.

"One of things we want to do is get it out there even more to the sections, offices, squads, teams – get out there because that starts that engagement," the chaplain added.

Receiving all that coffee was a team effort involving more than just Holy Joe's and its partners in the coffee and transportation industries, as the chaplaincy received help from some of

its Fort Rucker teammates – the Directorate of Public Safety and the commissary – as well, Schnarr said.

DPS helped coordinate getting a late-arriving truck filled with coffee onto post and to the chapel, and the commissary provided a pallet jack and plate to connect the truck trailer to the loading dock at the Spiritual Life Center, the chaplain said.

"Just another example of the Fort Rucker community coming together to make things happen – we have a great community here," Schnarr said.

For more on the Fort Rucker chaplaincy, visit its website at <https://home.army.mil/rucker/index.php/chaplain>.

# ‘LET US LEAD BY SERVING OTHERS’

## Parker Elementary Jr. Beta Club seeks to spread holiday cheer

By Jim Hughes  
*Fort Rucker Public Affairs*

Ellis D. Parker Elementary School students are hard at work ensuring Wiregrass people in nursing homes and assisted living residences don't feel left out of the holiday cheer going on all around them this season.

The effort, Letters Against Isolation, is spearheaded by the school's Junior Beta Club, and features students throughout the school creating holiday greeting cards and messages to be sent to the people living in the facilities, according to Ashlyn Lenz, sixth grader and club member.

The club works throughout each school year to live up to its mission statement, let us lead by serving others, she added.

"The club is a group of people who are always about helping the community and serving others," Lenz said. "We want to make the world a better place for everyone."

And they're doing a good job of it, said

Wanda Wilds, Junior Beta Club sponsor at the school, adding that more than 250 cards have been created so far and she expects more than 500 to be made in total.

"Letters Against Isolation is a project started by two young girls in California, and it eventually ended up going worldwide – its aim is just to reach out to people," she said, adding that this is the second year the school has taken part in the program. "The whole school enjoyed doing it last year, so we decided to continue and keep it going."

Last year, the students sent their cards to people in California, but this year decided to keep it local, according to Shae Fishel, sixth grader and club member

"We realized that there are people in school who have mothers or other family members in nursing homes," she said. "So why send them all the way to California when there are people

**Junior Beta Club members (standing) help third graders create cards as part of the club's Letters Against Isolation program Nov. 18.**



PHOTOS BY JIM HUGHES

**Members of the Ellis D. Parker Elementary School Junior Beta Club share the message in a holiday greeting card created by a student destined to be delivered to a person living in a local nursing home or assisted living facility in the near future.**

in the Wiregrass who need them?

"I love Beta club because I like helping people a lot," Fishel added. "I like putting a smile on someone's face. It brings so much joy."

Two club members agreed, and also shared the contents of a couple of the cards.

"Dear friend, I hope you have amazing plans for Christmas. I know I sure do. I don't know about you, but I think Christmas is the best time of the year. I believe this because we celebrate Jesus, Santa comes and you get presents. I hope you know that you are not alone for this Christmas. I am thinking about you – hoping you are warm and happy because I am sending you hugs and kisses. I hope you have a merry Christmas and a happy New Year! Signed, a sixth grade student," read Bella Proffitt, club member.

"Merry Christmas! What did one snowman say to the other? I smell carrots. Merry Christmas, friend! How are you? I hope you are having an awesome day. Do you like candy canes? I do, but only peppermint and fruit. Have you ever seen snow? I have and I love it. Happy holidays! Just know that we love you! Signed, a sixth grade student," read Jacob

Echeverry, club member.

This project isn't just a one-off for the Beta Club members, according to Wilds. The club spends its time looking for opportunities to provide service to the community, and in the past has participated in school clean-up and beautification, and other programs.

"In December, they're thinking of maybe doing something nice for the gate guards during the holidays," Wilds said of the 18 members of the club. "They'll talk in our meetings about what to do – they're always looking for ways to support the community. They're developing leadership through service."

Lenz added that in October, the group participated in the Treats for Troops program. "We sent letters and little handmade goodie bags for deployed Soldiers."

The group also sent posters and candy bowls to the staff at Lyster Army Health Clinic, according to Imiri Tutwiler, sixth grader and club member. "We did it to brighten up their day, and thank them for their service because we realize they are working extra hard because of COVID and the vaccines."

# Army Aviation trainee lauded for personal courage

By Kelly Morris  
USAAACE Public Affairs

While one U.S. Army Aviation trainee focuses on becoming an unmanned aircraft systems operator, his efforts as a volunteer are making a difference in the lives of others.

Pfc. Mason M. Horton, a 15C Gray Eagle operator trainee at 2nd Battalion, 13th Aviation Regiment, 1st Aviation Brigade, based at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, recently intervened to keep members of the local community safe while volunteering to help with security at a festival, and for his actions he was awarded the Army Achievement Medal.

“The Army Values guide Soldiers like Private 1st Class Horton to what is right on a daily basis. He demonstrated core values of personal courage and selfless service during a time of urgency and safety without any hesitation and with utmost professionalism. We are truly privileged to have PFC Horton within our organization,” said Capt. Tyra Takeddine, D Company, 2-13th Avn. Regt. commander.

On Sept. 24, Horton volunteered to help provide security detail to support one of the post’s morale welfare and recreation efforts at an annual fall festival event in Sierra Vista, when he noticed an individual who appeared too intoxicated to drive, with a small child in tow, walking toward a parking lot.

Horton decided to approach the man, and struck up a conversation to get more information and try to intervene.

The man initially refused, but Horton persisted. Horton eventually called and paid for a cab with his own money to keep the man from getting behind the wheel, and he waited with them until the cab arrived to ensure they made it home safely.

“That was not his job, but we teach these guys if you see something, you say something.

He was not afraid to stand up and ask him, ‘Hey, what are you planning on doing?’” said Staff. Sgt. William Lemmond, a D Co. drill sergeant.

Lemmond said the Army has a saying that “everybody is a safety officer.”

“You see something wrong, you just address it,” Lemmond said. “Don’t be afraid, don’t hold back, especially when it comes to people’s safety.”

In a society that tends to be risk-averse, Horton chose to make a difference in a situation where the average person would not get involved, Lemmond said.

“A lot of people in general tend to keep to themselves. They don’t like confrontation. They don’t like pointing out things due to backlash, or confrontation. He did everything we teach them,” Lemmond said. “We’re proud of him.”

Horton was one of more than a dozen Soldiers volunteering that night. Some helped with cleanup and others helped with security at event checkpoints.

Horton said he has seen people get hurt in car accidents in the past, and when he noticed someone’s judgment was impaired, he just couldn’t be a bystander.

“It was already late at night, I think (the event) was fixing to close down, and a lot more people were on the road. You don’t want anyone getting hurt or the kid getting injured,” Horton said. “There’s many people that could have been (impacted), and we wouldn’t even know their fate by the end of the night. The guy could have woke up the next morning and said, ‘really, I did that?’” Horton said.

Horton is among more than 400 advanced individual training Soldiers in Lemmond’s charge at the 2-13th.

“This group doesn’t have much downtime,”



Horton

ARMY PHOTO

Lemmond said of the AIT “swing” shift where Soldiers rise at 11 a.m., complete a rigorous training regimen, and bed down at 3:30 a.m. the next morning.

Horton is one of only two trainees Lemmond has seen receive the medal in his nearly two-year tenure there.

According to Horton, it is the “fair but tough” leaders like Lemmond that help steer the Soldiers in the right direction.

“I really appreciate my drill sergeant, Lemmond, here,” Horton said. “He is the best drill sergeant to ever come through D Co., 2-13th. He is there for any Soldier that needs help. He’s the one you can talk to about anything you really need.”

Lemmond trains Soldiers to fulfill their generation’s opportunity to make the Army

better.

“It’s kind of like that old saying, ‘iron sharpens iron.’ One person can sharpen another,” Lemmond said. “This is the next generation of the Army, these guys right here — every single decade is the next generation. I’ve been in the Army exactly one decade longer than these Soldiers, so they’re going to take my job one day.”

He hopes all the trainees carry with them one resounding message.

“Live up to the Army Values,” Lemmond said. “It encompasses everything.”

And that’s an area where Horton leads by example.

“He showed moral courage,” Lemmond said “He stood up and just did what he had to do to get the job done.”

# Female drill sergeant earns Aviator wings

By Kelly Morris

USAACE Public Affairs

One of the first female drill sergeants at Fort Benning, Georgia, continues to show how a highly trained, disciplined and fit Soldier can ascend to new heights — this time, by trading in her campaign hat for a flight helmet.

WO1 Jessica L. Burns earned her aviator wings in a ceremony at the U.S. Army Aviation Museum in October and is ready to take her place above the best Soldiers in the world as a Black Hawk pilot.

With 14 years in the Army, Burns measures success in terms of family life.

“I think that is probably my biggest accomplishment — doing all of this as a single mom, having my children full time,” Burns said.

“I’ve managed to get them off to school, and do homework and make dinner — do everything a mother needs to do and be on top of my game for flight school,” she said. “Everyone on post, my community, my parents, everyone came together to help support me.”

When she joined the Army in 2007, Burns enlisted as a medic, and served in multiple “Charlie Med” companies focused on medical readiness, including at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, where she worked in the camps and at a troop clinic, and served as a medical evacuation liaison. She described her time there as a good learning experience where she was able to work with other branches of service.

She served in Cuba during Operation Vigilant Shield, when they moved the prison from communal cell to single cell operation.

Afterward, Burns concentrated on logistics for a while, then went to school to learn to speak French to prepare her to support U.S. Africa Command missions so she could serve as a translator. She eventually added Raven Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems battalion

subject matter expert to her repertoire.

Burns’ deployments include to Iraq and Kuwait. While serving in Kuwait, she was told she needed a broadening assignment and soon found herself at drill sergeant school at Fort Jackson, South Carolina.

“It was something I always wanted to do as a young Soldier but I was nervous. I didn’t think I was capable of doing that, and I already had my daughters,” she said.

She graduated among the top of her class, and received the Iron Drill Sergeant Award for having the highest physical fitness score.

Burns served as one of the first female drill sergeants at Sand Hill at Fort Benning.

“I remember going to Starbucks and wearing my campaign hat and the lady was like, ‘What are you? What is that hat?’” she said.

Burns said the challenges she faced as a female in those first few months made her want to work harder. In moments of doubt, she would see her young daughters walk around in her campaign hat, and that was enough to restore her focus.

“I ended up doing the best that I could and worked through it all,” she said.

She recalled some good leaders at the brigade and first sergeant level that brought the females in to talk to them, treated her as a professional, and judged her based off the work she was doing and the feedback from the trainees.

Her company was chosen for the pilot program when the infantry school extended its timeline from 14 to 22 weeks for its one-station unit training cycle to develop a more lethal and ready force.

“There was a lot of dedication that went into that program. It was a lot longer hours, and it was draining for sure ... but it came out with



PHOTO BY KELLY MORRIS

**WO1 Jessica L. Burns enlists the help of her daughters to pin her Army aviation wings on as she graduates flight school at the U.S. Army Aviation Museum at Fort Rucker in October.**

great results though. Those trainees got to their duty stations as top (Army Combat Fitness Test), top shooters,” she said.

Burns feels thankful for the experience as a drill sergeant.

“It definitely built confidence in myself, and resiliency for sure. I feel like it made me an overall better NCO, better Soldier because now

I understand a different piece of the puzzle-going to an infantry unit and understanding tactics, getting in that 10-level understanding, whereas a medic we don’t do battle drills. Even in flight school, knowing some of the stuff that I learned as a drill sergeant has helped me in this environment,” she said.

Burns received the Order of Saint Maurice

## WINGS cont.

— Legionnaire award that recognizes outstanding contributions to the Infantry.

When she put in her packet and was selected for flight school, she finally realized a dream she had for years.

"I was so excited, I couldn't believe it," she said. "The Black Hawk portion of flight school has been better than I could ever expect. The (instructor pilots) out at Lowe (Army Heliport) were inspirational, very professional, absolutely amazing. I actually went to school every day learning, having fun. It was a healthy environment," she said.

Sgt. Maj. Shavonda L. McLean, Lyster Army Health Clinic sergeant major, who has served as a mentor for Burns over the years, said Burns has a history of determination and resilience.

"I'm proud of her. As I watched her mature from a private to a pilot, she transformed from a Soldier to an NCO. She was a great leader, as I watched her grow up kind of following in my

footsteps becoming an NCO then a drill sergeant, and then taking it above and beyond to become a pilot," McLean said. "I really appreciate the growth that I've seen from her, and I am just honored to be part of her journey."

Burns holds to a mantra that "everything happens for a reason," and her journey inspires those she leads.

"To this day, all these trainees are messaging me, 'How do I become a pilot like you?' That's something I want to teach other people — I want to provide for other people," she said.

Though flight school was more demanding than she anticipated, and she endured some setbacks due to the coronavirus pandemic, she was proud to see it through while raising her daughters.

"Everything I do is for my girls," she said. "As long as I can set that good example for them, I'm just over the moon happy."



PHOTO BY LT. COL. ANDY THAGGARD

**Burns pulls a fuel sample while preflighting a UH-60M Black Hawk helicopter at Fort Rucker, Aug. 3. Burns has completed Initial Entry Rotary Wing flight training, and is a student pilot in the Black Hawk track.**

## VETERANS DAY

Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker commanding general, and CW5 Michael L. Lewis Jr, chief warrant officer of the Aviation Branch, salute the wreath during the Fort Rucker Veterans Day ceremony Nov. 10 at Veterans Park.



# New ACS brief sheds light on purpose, benefits of EFMP

By Jim Hughes

*Fort Rucker Public Affairs*

The Exceptional Family Member Program ensures family members with special needs get the help they need and also helps Soldiers get assigned to places where those needs can be met.

The Fort Rucker Army Community Service Exceptional Family Member Program now offers a short training briefing for educating Soldiers and families on what the program is, and how it helps take care of family members with special needs, according to Amanda Guettler, EFMP coordinator.

“We have found overall that folks just don’t really understand if they need to be enrolled, why they need to be enrolled, or what the benefits of enrolling are,” she said, adding that she hopes that the EFMP 101 brief will help “mitigate some of that and clarify a lot of the unknowns about EFMP.”

“The briefing is just the basics – we don’t get too deep into the weeds with it,” Guettler said.

EFMP is a mandatory program, and she said that many become frustrated when they find they must enroll in the program.

“A lot of that frustration comes from a lack of understanding about the EFMP process,” Guettler said. “Some Soldiers or family members are waiting until it is crunch time to take care of enrollment, whether it’s just an additional enrollment update or going overseas and needing a screening. The EFMP enrollment process is not speedy. On average, it’s a 45-day process once all of the information has been provided – that can take a couple of weeks or so for the family to gather – so, we just want to help make it a more seamless process for our Soldiers and family members.”

Guettler based EFMP 101 off of an Air Force briefing she recently observed being presented virtually at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, she said, adding that she was greatly impressed with the presentation.

She and the EFMP coordinator at Camp Simons, located at Eglin and supporting the 7th Special Forces Group, have both presented the EFMP 101 brief once a piece, and the feedback has been enthusiastically positive, Guettler said.

## EFMP 101: LEARN THE BASICS

Call **ACS EFMP Family Support** at **(334) 255-9277** to schedule a session.

Sessions are approximately one hour and are available at your location upon request.



Guettler provided her brief to an NCO Academy class before it was even finalized, and said it went really well.

“They were highly engaged in the subject and asked so many questions,” she said. “They said that they just did not know all of these things that they were learning about EFMP, so that really encouraged me to go ahead faster than I was planning to, and get this up and running.”

The EFMP 101 brief lasts between 30 and

45 minutes, depending on how many questions are asked by participants, Guettler said, adding that she will bring the brief to the requesting organization’s location of choice.

It is open to all Fort Rucker units and Soldiers as a training opportunity, and Guettler feels it would also benefit spouses and family readiness groups.

To request the brief or get more information on EFMP, call 255-9277.

# Former Black Hawk pilot pursues Army Fellows Program

By Kelly Morris  
*USAACE Public Affairs*

The U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence Aviation Branch Safety Office welcomes the opportunity to host Graham Ernst, a Department of the Army civilian participating in the Army Fellows Program, for a chance to see the emphasis the USAACE places on safety at Fort Rucker and in Army Aviation.

Ernst, a former UH-60 Black Hawk pilot, is assigned to the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center as a safety and occupational health specialist, with the added bonus of rotating through other on-post safety offices.

“The big thing is just a different lens on organization functions. Each organization has a different scope, and this provides him an opportunity to look through a two-star (general’s) lens and see what our initiatives and taskings are. It also allows him to see doctrinally how it’s integrated and reviewed before published,” said CW4 Joshua McCurry, the USAACE Aviation Branch safety officer.

Army fellows enter the program as a GS-7, and advance to GS-11 in two years after completing required distributed learning coursework, resident training, university training, and developmental assignments. The final phase is a year of on-the-job training.

Ernst said as an aviation officer he was in the habit of being proactive and inserting himself into Army mechanisms, but as a fellow he has to “take a step back and learn.”

“I have most of my knowledge in aviation operations and an aviation-specific field. I had to twist the way I’m thinking more into the safety perspective,” Ernst said. “It’s interesting and challenging. Safety is such a large and diverse field.”

Usually people would start the learning at the smallest organization and work their way

up, but Ernst is starting at the top, at the “highest institutional level,” he said of the CRC.

Training at other on-post safety entities provides a broader picture of Army safety.

“Working with the garrison safety office you start to see a lot of the training hit the road — training, principles, techniques, you get to really see their functional area,” Ernst said.

Spending a month at the Aviation Branch Safety Office at USAACE headquarters, Ernst gets an inside look at how the office advises the command and staff, develops doctrine and policies, and reviews Programs of Instruction as they foster a culture of safety.

“We’ve given him quite a few POI’s. We give him guidance and say, ‘hey, we’re looking for risk management integration into this, making sure they are citing correct up to date publications’, and we kinda just turn him loose on it and then we go back and do an AAR on what was done and show him different intricacies of how this stuff is implemented and uploaded to the various organizations such as (the Directorate of Training and Doctrine), G3, or the CRC,” said McCurry.

With hundreds of aircraft launches per day, Fort Rucker flies approximately 25 percent of the Army’s total flying hour program. The ABSO is responsible for reviewing courses and lesson plans for safety, and also accident investigations, McCurry explained.

The office provides safety management oversight for the Survival Evasion Resistance Escape training at Fort Rucker, and also ensures hundreds of facilities are inspected annually.

Although the ABSO is a small team, they have a reach that goes beyond Fort Rucker to include the 128th Aviation Brigade at Fort Eustis, Virginia, and 2-13th Aviation Regiment



Ernst

PHOTO BY KELLY MORRIS

at Fort Huachuca, Arizona.

The ABSO aims to provide fellows like Ernst every available opportunity to learn, which may include about procedures to protect maintenance personnel, and any available Department of Transportation and FAA training sessions, according to Jerry Mosley, safety specialist and accident investigator at ABSO.

“What I like is for him to ‘right seat’ whatever my job is for the day, for him to see what’s going on,” Mosley said. “Any training that I can get for him while he’s over here that’s going to help, and anything we’re involved in on a daily routine .... That will give him a better idea of what it’s like once he becomes a safety and occupational health manager,” Mosley said.

The ABSO team said they appreciate a mutually-beneficial opportunity to mentor future leaders.

“All of us will eventually be replaced and it’s good to share your knowledge and impart wisdom and lessons learned on individuals,”

McCurry said. “It also allows us to re-center so we can get back to the basics and make sure we are up and relevant with the latest processes and techniques.”

“We’re glad to have them any time they’re available for us to work with them,” Mosley said. “We both get a valuable experience from it — we learn from fellows, and they learn from us.”

For now, Ernst said his goal is to finish the CP-12 Program and advance in the career path as a Safety and Occupational Health manager, and that requires getting out of his comfort zone and pursuing opportunities that arise.

“As fellows we have to seek out the knowledge,” Ernst said. “You have to seek it out while it presents itself, otherwise it’s a lost opportunity. There’s so much out there, and I’m trying to gather it all in.”

Learn more about Career Program 12 at <https://safety.army.mil/CP-12/Home>.

# Engineer became highest ranking Native American in Union Army

By David Vergun  
*DOD News*

It's a time to reflect on the contributions and sacrifices Native Americans have made to the United States, not just in the military, but in all walks of life.

Ely S. Parker overcame adversity to attain the highest rank of any Native American in the Union Army during the Civil War.

Parker, whose tribal name was Hasanoanda, was born on the Tonawanda Reservation in Indian Falls, New York, in 1828. He was a member of the Tonawanda Seneca tribe.

His father, William Parker, was a chief in that tribe and had fought in the War of 1812 for the United States.

In addition to English, Eli Parker spoke Seneca, which is an Iroquoian language. The Seneca Tribe is one of six in the Iroquois Confederacy. The others are Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Tuscarora and Mohawk.

As a young man, Parker worked in a law firm in Ellicottville, New York, before applying to take the bar examination. However, he was not permitted to take it because, as a Native American, he was not then considered a U.S. citizen.

American Indians were not considered U.S. citizens until passage of the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924.

As fate would have it, Parker had a chance encounter with Lewis Henry Morgan, a non-Native American lawyer, who was also a famous anthropologist interested in Iroquois ethnography.

The two became close friends and had a number of meetings in which Parker shared his

knowledge of Iroquois culture and traditions.

Their relationship was mutually beneficial because Morgan helped Parker gain admission to study engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York.

As an engineer, Parker contributed to maintenance work on the Erie Canal and other projects.

Later, as a supervisor of government projects in Galena, Illinois, he befriended Ulysses S. Grant, forming a relationship that would prove useful later.

In 1861, near the start of the Civil War, Parker tried to raise a regiment of Iroquois volunteers to fight for the Union, but he was turned down by New York Gov. Edwin D. Morgan.

He tried to enlist in the Union Army as an engineer, but he was told by Secretary of War Simon Cameron that, as an Indian, he could not join.

Later, Parker contacted Grant, who was by that time a brigadier general in the Union Army. The Union Army suffered from a shortage of engineers, and Grant ensured that Parker was accepted into the Army.

Parker was commissioned in the Army in early 1863. He became chief engineer of the 7th Division during the siege of Vicksburg, Mississippi, which occurred from May 18 to July 4, 1863. Grant, who had become a major general, was in overall command, and the Union Army prevailed at that siege.

Grant was pleased with the work done by Parker during that siege and made him his adjutant during the Chattanooga Campaign in



ARMY PHOTO

**Ely S. Parker, left, and Ulysses S. Grant, center, are pictured together in an undated photo.**

Tennessee, Sept. 21 to Nov. 25, 1863.

Parker subsequently transferred with Grant and served with him through the Overland Campaign and the Siege of Petersburg, Virginia, from May 4 to June 24, 1864. At Petersburg, Parker was appointed as the military secretary to Grant, with the rank of lieutenant colonel. He subsequently wrote much of Grant's correspondence.

Parker was present when Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, April 9, 1865. He helped draft the surrender documents.

At the time of surrender, Parker said that Lee "stared at me for a moment. He extended his hand and said, 'I am glad to see one real American here.' I shook his hand and said, 'We are all Americans.'"

Parker was brevetted a brigadier general on that day. Brevet is a former type of military commission conferred especially for outstanding service, by which an officer was promoted to a higher rank without the corresponding pay.

After the Civil War, Parker remained the

military secretary to Grant. He also was a member of the Southern Treaty Commission, which renegotiated treaties with Indian tribes, mostly in the southeast, that had sided with the Confederacy.

Parker resigned from the Army on April 26, 1869.

After Grant was elected president of the United States, he appointed Parker to serve as commissioner of Indian affairs, the first Native American to hold that post. He held the position from 1869 to 1871.

Parker became the chief architect of Grant's peace policy involving Native Americans in the West. Under his leadership, the number of military actions against Indians were reduced, and there was an effort to support tribes in their transition to living on reservations.

Parker died in poverty in Fairfield, Connecticut, on Aug. 31, 1895.

He was portrayed in the 2012 film "Lincoln." He's also featured in the novels "Grant Comes East" and "Never Call Retreat."





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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# ARMY FLIER

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

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

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