

ARMY FLIER

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

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PHOTO BY CW3 BOBBY TRIANTOS

A 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade AH-64E Apache takes flight during an aerial gunnery exercise at Fort Stewart, Ga., April 15. Aerial gunnery allows 3rd CAB aviators and crewmembers to train their mission essential tasks, and improves the brigade's combat readiness.

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SELFLESS SERVICE

Fort Rucker honors, thanks volunteers of the year

By Jim Hughes

Fort Rucker Public Affairs

Fort Rucker honored its top volunteers during its annual Volunteer of the Year Recognition Ceremony April 26 at The Landing.

Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker commanding general and speaker during the event, thanked all of the community's volunteers for their sacrifices of their time, efforts, talents and selfless service in making Fort Rucker a special place to live, work, play and pray.

Vernon Johnson, Army Volunteer Corps coordinator, began the event by presenting a check representing the \$345,000 in man hours

that volunteers gave to the Fort Rucker community in 2021 to Col. Robert J. Holcombe, Fort Rucker garrison commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Raymond P. Quitugua Jr., garrison command sergeant major.

While that figure is impressive, "that is not what this is really about," Francis said.

"When you come through the gates at Fort Rucker, you hear the guards say, 'Welcome home!' because this is the home of Army Aviation," the general added. "But I argue that what makes this a home is the people here. And what makes this home a very, very special place to live, to work, to play, and to pray is all of you volunteers and what you do within our com-



PHOTOS BY JIM HUGHES

Capps

munity."

He said many organizations on Fort Rucker benefit from the selfless service that volunteers provide, such as Army Community Service; Morale, Welfare and Recreation facilities; Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers; chapel programs and worship services; youth sports programs; Soldiers and family readiness groups; Lyster Army Health Clinic; military personnel; the Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security; and others.

The theme of this year's ceremony is "shining a light on the people and the causes that inspire us to serve," Francis added. "I am truly inspired and the Fort Rucker community is inspired by what all of you do on a day-to-day basis. You're not doing it for a pat on the back, you're not doing it for the recognition, you're doing it because you care about this place and you care about the people here – our Soldiers, our families and our civilians at Fort Rucker. Thank you for your tremendous efforts – you are all so important to us, so important to our mission and important to our families."

The following are the volunteer of the year

winners and short write-ups on each that were read at the ceremony.

YOUTH VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR – EMMA KATE GOODSON

Goodson went above and beyond in her duties as a volunteer. She is being recognized for her thoughtfulness and ingenuity in her work with ACS assisting with the Army Emergency Relief closing ceremony, conducting the Lending Hangar inventory, and helping with Exceptional Family Member Program special events. She is also an honor student at Emmanuel Christian School and volunteers with various other organizations.

ADULT VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR – RETIRED MAJ. DONALD DOHERTY

Doherty provided over 500 certified volunteer hours in 2021. He supported the Army Aviation Museum tremendously during 2021 by showing up on schedule – no small feat in itself – filling in for others, and always having a smile. He has volunteered at the museum for more than two years and truly is one of the best



Goodson

VOLUNTEERS cont.

volunteers serving with the museum.

FAMILY VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR – JOSHUA AND STAFF SGT. DEANNA LUCCHESI

The Lucchesi family has embodied the spirit of volunteerism with their contributions to the Soldier Family Readiness Group. This family worked together to revamp their unit SFRG program during a restricted time period. As the SFRG leaders, they coordinated and planned multiple Soldier and family events, such as Stepping into the Challenge, SFRG Virtual Game Night, Halloween Trunk or Treat, Friendsgiving Thanksgiving Feast and Deck the Halls with ornament making for the kids, as well as their Christmas party, all while hosting regular SFRG meetings. Thorough their efforts, a 20% increase in participation with the SFRG was experienced. The family also volunteers at their local church in Dothan.

ACTIVE DUTY VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR – CPL. ANASTASHA L. CAPPS

Capps worked tirelessly with multiple organizations across the installation. Her work with the Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers extended well beyond her unit, and she also assisted with coordinating the Ozark Library

cleanup, Fort Rucker Outdoor Recreation cleanup, costume drive, and setup and cleanup for Freedom Fest.

HELPING HAND AWARD – GABRIEL SISTRUNK

Sistrunk enriched the lives of servicemembers, families, retirees and civilians throughout the installation. His assistance especially helped during the shutdown and transition of Bldg. 315, which served as the initial in-process point for all new Soldiers, civilian employees and contractors arriving to Fort Rucker. He also supported many wounded warrior volunteer fundraising efforts.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD – VIRGINIA FRICKS

Fricks has made an impact on countless lives throughout her time volunteering. She exemplifies the meaning of serving as the heart of the Army community. She has volunteered at multiple installations, including Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Fort Carson, Colorado; Fort Hood, Texas; Fort Stewart, Georgia; Fort Riley, Kansas; and Fort Rucker. She volunteered with numerous organizations, such as FRGs, parent teacher associations, youth sports, Girl Scouts, spouse clubs, and MWR arts and crafts.



Lucchesi family



Doherty



Sistrunk



Fricks

330+ YEARS OF SERVICE

10 Soldiers, 3 civilians retire during quarterly ceremony

By Jim Hughes
Fort Rucker Public Affairs

Ten Soldiers and three civilian employees retired with more than 330 years of combined service during the Fort Rucker Quarterly Retirement Ceremony April 29 in the U.S. Army Aviation Museum.

Col. Robert J. Holcombe, Fort Rucker garrison commander, hosted the event and he was assisted by Command Sgt. Maj. Raymond P. Quitugua Jr., garrison command sergeant major.

The following are brief write-ups on each retiree.

COL. TERRY A. MEYER

Meyer, U.S. Special Operations Command Special Operations Forces Lessons Learned Program branch chief, entered military service in 1992 as an aviation officer.

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

He said the highlight of his career was learning to fly from the same heroes whose

sacrifices in Vietnam inspired his own decision to serve.

He has two children and plans to reside in the southeast.

LT. COL. PHILLIP R. LENZ

Lenz, director of the Fort Rucker Directorate of Public Safety, entered military service in 1989 as a military intelligence Soldier. He commissioned through the Reserve Officer Training Program at Eastern Kentucky University in 1996.

He served multiple combat tours in support of operations Iraqi and enduring Freedom, and Intrinsic Action.

He said the highlight of his career was serving as the Fort Rucker director of DPS where his incredible team was recognized with the 2020 Sgt. Maj. Wardell Turner Award for having the best emergency services program in the Army.

He and his wife, Janet, have four children. They plan to reside in western Pennsylvania.



Warfield

MAJ. BRIAN THIELMANN

Thielmann, Army Headquarters G-8 aerial intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance synchronization staff officer, entered military service in 1990 as a Marine infantryman. After an 11-year break in service, he entered the Army Warrant Officer Flight Training Program.

He served two combat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, and commanded the air ambulance detachment in Soto Cano, Honduras.

He said the highlight of his career was serving as a medevac platoon leader in charge of a National Guard platoon that he had never met in the busiest and most dangerous place in Afghanistan.

He and his wife, Melody, have two children.

He said to the Soldiers and civilians he has served with: it has been his honor. Dustoff!

CWS JEFF WARFIELD

Warfield, senior warrant officer advisor to the deputy commanding general at Fort



PHOTOS BY JIM HUGHES

Snow

Rucker, entered the Army Reserve as an aviation "street to seat" candidate in 1992. He graduated Warrant Officer Candidate School in 1993 and Initial Entry Rotary Wing in 1994.

He said the highlight of his career was when he became the aviation training officer for the Aviation and Safety Division.

He and his wife, CW4 Sandra Poppy, have three children.

CW4 JOSHUA SNOW

Snow, Directorate of Evaluation and Standardization Fixed Wing branch chief at Fort Rucker, entered military service in 2000 as a cavalry scout. He was selected for Warrant Officer Flight Training in 2004.

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

He said the highlight of his career was becoming an Army aviator.

He and his wife, Tabitha, have two children. They plan to reside in Harrison, Michigan.

CW3 PAUL OLSON

Olson, Aviation Survivability Development and Tactics Team forensics officer at Fort Rucker, entered military service in 1994 as an airborne infantryman. He was selected to attend flight school in 2008.

He said the highlights of his career were as enlisted being a sentinel at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, as an NCO patrolling the streets of Baghdad with his squad, and as a warrant officer anytime on "short final to the x."



Meyer



Lenz



Thielmann

RETIREES cont.

He and his wife, Tracie, plan to reside in Enterprise, and continue to debate whether to adopt more Great Danes.

CW3 DANIEL MUNGER

Munger, A Company, 1st Battalion, 14th Aviation Regiment section leader for AH-64E, entered military service in 1995 as an airborne infantryman. He was selected for Warrant Officer Flight Training in 2008.

He served four combat tours in support of operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom. He said the highlight of his career was serving as battalion aviation mission survivability officer and instructor pilot for the 1-82nd Combat Aviation Brigade at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

He and his wife, Mika, have three children. They plan to reside in Enterprise.

MASTER SGT. PERRY WASHINGTON

Washington, 23rd Quartermaster Brigade operations NCO at Fort Lee, Virginia, entered military service in 1997 as a petroleum supply specialist. He served multiple combat tours in support of operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom.

He said the highlight of his career was the outstanding support he received from his wonderful family – his wife, Priscilla, and two children. They plan to reside in Anniston.



Olson

SGT. 1ST CLASS MAURICE JONES

Jones, platoon and assistant operations sergeant at Fort Polk, Louisiana, entered military service in 2002 as an infantryman.

He served multiple combat tours in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

He said the highlight of his career was marrying his beautiful wife, Sharde, and having two wonderful children.

They plan to reside in Enterprise.

SGT. 1ST CLASS DANIEL MAUGANS

Maugans, Aviation Capability Development Integration Directorate aviation systems repair NCO at Fort Rucker, entered military service in 2002 as an aircraft power-train mechanic.

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

He said the highlight of his career was marrying his beautiful wife, Nicole, and having two wonderful children.

They plan to reside in Nashville.

GINNIE NEAL

Neal, Fort Rucker Directorate of Human Resources quality assurance specialist, entered federal civilian service in 1978 with the Defense Logistics Agency Contract Administration Division as a clerk typist at Napier Field.



Munger



Washington



Maugans



Kruse

She said the highlights of her career were receiving the employee of the year award in 1995, the Commander's Award for Civilian Service in 2013, and working with the exceptional civilians and military personnel at Fort Rucker. She plans to reside in Dothan.

RUSSELL KRUSE

Kruse, Headquarters and Headquarters Co., 1-223rd Avn. Regt., entered civil service in 1999 as an instructor pilot. He said the highlight of his career was teaching students and seeing the lightbulb come on.



Jones



Neal



Williams

He and his wife, Roxanne, have three children. They plan to reside in Pensacola, Florida.

CURTIS WILLIAMS

Williams, Fort Rucker garrison, entered civilian service in 2002 after a 17 1/2-year career in the military.

He said the highlight of his career was serving as the first mobilization and deployment program manager assigned to Fort Rucker.

He and his wife, Kathy, have one child and one grandchild. They plan to reside in Enterprise.

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

Soldiers, families get chance to let leadership know which ACS programs are important to them

By Jim Hughes

Fort Rucker Public Affairs

Fort Rucker leadership is giving Soldiers and family members a chance to make their voices heard in what Army Community Service programs and services are important to them via a short survey being conducted by the Fort Rucker Inspector General's office.

But, so far, few people are taking advantage of the opportunity, and that could be

to the community's loss, according to Kent Thompson, chief of ACS.

"ACS is an agency designed to help Soldiers and family members live a better life while they are in the Army," Thompson said. "You can live a much better life if you are informed and knowledgeable of things that affect you in the Army. We have every-

thing from volunteer programs to relocation assistance to financial readiness to the Exceptional Family Member Program that helps families with special needs to family advocacy to new parent support – all of these programs are designed to help Soldiers and family members live a better life."

Thompson added that all of ACS' services and programs are explained on the Directorate of Family, and Morale, Welfare and Recreation website at <https://rucker.armymwr.com/>.

"This survey is super important," he continued. "It could have a huge impact on the Soldiers and family members of Fort Rucker. The results will inform command on whether or not they need to retain some of these services or not."

It is also super short, according to

Thompson.

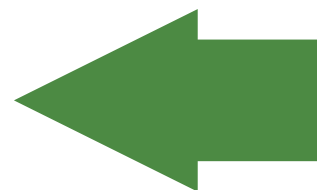
"There's a QR code that you can scan to get started," he said. "It asks very simple questions like which ACS services did you use in the past 12 months and asks you to rate the services you received. If you just used one service, you'll probably spend maybe five minutes on it – 15 minutes tops if you used all of our services."

Those few minutes will be time well spent as the results will inform Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker commanding general, the true impact of cuts ACS experienced in 2019, and what programs are most beneficial to the Soldiers and families at the home of Army Aviation.

To take the survey, scan the accompanying QR code with your smart phone.

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>

AAFES senior enlisted advisor visits Fort Rucker as PX renovations near completion

By Jim Hughes
Fort Rucker Public Affairs

As major renovations near completion on the Fort Rucker Post Exchange, a special visitor stopped by April 28: Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Kevin Osby, the Army and Air Force Exchange Service senior enlisted advisor.

During his visit to Fort Rucker, Osby toured the Exchange shopping center, which is about 80% of the way through a major \$11 million upgrade. For a previous article on the upgrades, visit <https://www.army.mil/article/253399>.

Osby also met with Command Sgt. Maj. James D. Wilson, Aviation Branch command sergeant major, and Command Sgt. Maj. Raymond P. Quitugua Jr., garrison command sergeant major, to focus on how the Department of Defense retailer can continue to improve the quality of life for the Fort Rucker community.

"The Exchange is all in to make Fort Rucker a great place to work and live," said Osby, one of about 30 active-duty service members assigned to the Exchange. "We're committed to expanding and improving our services and options to best serve the community."

And AAFES is doing just that, according to Wilson.

"I think it was a great visit," he said. "AAFES is very important to Fort Rucker and to the Army in general, and also to the betterment of our Soldiers, retirees' and fam-

ilies' lives. It's also important to our Army culture that AAFES is successful, and that is what this is about: how do we keep AAFES successful and hopefully expand some of what AAFES provides to our Soldiers, families, and retirees and their families.

"Fort Rucker is a small post and we have small AAFES facilities, but we have a great team of people who are dedicated to their jobs, and dedicated to the Soldiers, families and retirees here. They're very proud of what they do and the product that they provide us is outstanding – we're very proud of AAFES at Fort Rucker," Wilson added.

"It was great to meet with the chief master sergeant," he said. "We invited him back at any time to come see how we're doing. We're excited about where we're going in the future."

The renovation project began in November 2020, and is evidence of the Exchange's dedication to making life better for Soldiers, retirees and families at Fort Rucker. This is one of the more extensive renovations the Exchange has undertaken at any location and an example of how the military community benefits when the Exchange collaborates with the garrison and Army Installation Management Command.

Shoppers have already seen some of the new additions, such as the Starbucks and Qdoba in the food court, which also features new furniture and charging stations. The



PHOTO BY JIM HUGHES

Brenda Hyland, Maxwell, Fort Rucker and Gunter Exchange general manager, Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Kevin Osby, the Army and Air Force Exchange Service senior enlisted advisor, Command Sgt. Maj. James D. Wilson, Aviation Branch command sergeant major, and Command Sgt. Maj. Raymond P. Quitugua Jr., Fort Rucker garrison command sergeant major, discuss how the Department of Defense retailer can continue to improve the quality of life for the Fort Rucker community during a meeting in the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence Headquarters Building April 28.

Four Seasons area has received energy efficient LED lighting and HVAC, as well as new flooring, ceiling and paint. New restrooms have been added in the main store.

The renovations are expected to wrap up around September. Still to come is new lighting, HVAC and floors in the main store, which will also have an updated layout. The mall-area restrooms are receiving a floor-to-ceiling refresh. Popeyes and Subway are also being updated and will reopen in June, at which time Charleys will close for its turn for upgrades. The end result will be a total trans-

formation to a modern shopping experience.

Every time Soldiers shop their Exchange – whether in person or at <http://www.shop-myexchange.com/> --they are strengthening their community as 100% of Exchange earnings are reinvested in the military community through funding for critical programs, as well as capital improvements.

"It matters where you shop," Osby said. "Small changes can make a big difference in a community. The Exchange is passionate about enhancing the quality of life for our heroes."



PHOTO BY KELLY MORRIS

Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker commander, and Brig. Gen. Paula C. Lodi, deputy commander (support), U.S. Army Medical Command, Joint Base San Antonio, Texas, cut the ribbon on the medevac aircraft 26995 capability development tool during an unveiling ceremony at Fort Rucker April 14.

Fort Rucker unveils medevac aircraft capability development tool at ceremony

By Kelly Morris
USAACE Public Affairs

Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker commanding general, and Brig. Gen. Paula C. Lodi, deputy commander (support) for the U.S. Army Medical Command, Joint Base San Antonio, Texas, cut the ribbon on the medevac aircraft 26995 capability development tool during an unveiling ceremony at Fort Rucker April 14.

The aircraft is the only HH-60 static display in the Department of Defense, and will

help inform and modernize the HH-60 and inform decisions for Future Vertical Lift.

The L model HH-60 Black Hawk was the first rotary wing aircraft after the UH-1 “Huey” to have design features incorporated uniquely for the medevac mission.

This aircraft served multiple combat tours in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. It was retired in 2014, and then served as a maintenance training aircraft at Fort Eustis, Virginia,

providing a quality teaching benefit to the Army’s 15 series maintenance personnel.

Only a few of its kind were produced, and it is the last surviving HH-60L in the Army.

“Indeed, ‘greater love hath no man than this that one should lay down his life for his friends,’ and that exemplifies the spirit of 995 and the medevac mission,” said Lodi, during her remarks. “Today we have an opportunity to both honor and demonstrate learning from the past, but do so with an eye towards the future.”

The project is nearly two years in the making, according to Col. Samuel L. Fricks,

chief of Army Future Command’s Medical Evacuation Concepts and Capabilities Division, Medical Capability Development Integration Directorate.

“Unlike most aircraft on display, 995 still has a mission—that of capability development,” said Fricks. “It will help improve patient care in current and future systems, as we’re able to test concepts and conduct studies onsite.”

Fricks thanked the DUSTOFF Association for providing the financial gift to Fort Rucker for the permanent mooring of the aircraft.

Army Futures Command incorporates international partners into annual demonstration

By Lisa Ferguson

AFC Future Vertical Lift Cross Functional Team

DUGWAY PROVING GROUND, Utah – Army Futures Command's Future Vertical Lift Cross-Functional Team kicked off its annual Experimental Demonstration Gateway Event May 2 to assess new tactics, technologies and interconnecting architectures with more than 16 inter-service organizations and seven international partners.

EDGE 2022 includes progressive efforts connecting Joint All-Domain Command and Control to the lower tier of the air domain by extending the reach and lethality of the Future Attack Reconnaissance Aircraft Ecosystem to accelerate combined kill chains in all-domain operations. This year seven international partners -- to include Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands and United

Kingdom -- are participating, some with network and weapons systems. This inclusion advances efforts to ensure integration and interoperability among allied nations.

"The EDGE experimentation is a powerful step in our transformation towards a data-centric Army," said Lt. Gen. James Richardson, AFC acting commanding general. "The effort continues our campaign of learning by focusing in on our aviation assets' ability to network and utilize data as ammunition."

EDGE22 objectives include the following.

* **Interoperability:** Improve ability for allies and partners to coherently, effectively and efficiently act together to achieve tactical, operational and strategic objectives. Achieved across multiple dimensions: technical, proce-

dural, human and information.

* **Network:** Advance data-centric solutions and enable the speed, range and convergence to achieve decision dominance and overmatch.

* **Interactive Drone Swarm:** Technology demonstration within Future Unmanned Aircraft System signature effort. Alters battlefield geometry providing tailored capability for threat overmatch through advanced teaming.

* **Multi-INT Sensors:** Pursue tailorable payloads, including electronic sense, decoy and attack. Advance AI enabled aided target recognition to improve threat detect and identification.

* **Enhanced Sustainment:** Increase systems' reliability, availability and maintainability. Critical in contested and expeditionary logistic environments.

"We're doing a couple really big things at EDGE22," said Maj. Gen. Walter Rugen,

Future Vertical Lift Cross-Functional Team director. "Pulling in our international allies is an important piece, and the interactive drone swarm, testing how that needs to be fought, seeing how that concept develops and what needs to go into our doctrine. The swarm is tailored to generate overmatch, this concept of outpacing the enemy in a battlefield geometry that breaks them."

Bottom line, he said, is that our teams are working to innovate and to "execute violently to get after innovation."

EDGE22 is part of AFC's Project Convergence Campaign of Learning and builds on lessons learned from previous experiments at our nation's Western Test Ranges, including EDGE21 at Dugway Proving Ground and Project Convergence 21 at Yuma Proving Ground, Arizona.



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!



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SUGAR BEARS

Army aviators provide heavy lift for National Park Service

By Eve Baker

Fort Wainwright Public Affairs

FORT WAINWRIGHT, Alaska – Approximately 1,200 climbers are expected to attempt to reach the summit of Denali this year, and their efforts are supported in part by the Sugar Bears of Fort Wainwright, a company of CH-47F Chinooks.

Two helicopter crews from the company flew approximately 7,000 pounds of gear up to Kahiltna Glacier on Denali in late April to help establish two base camps for the National Park Service, which oversees the climbing season.

Formally known as B Company, 1st Battalion, 52nd Aviation Regiment, the Sugar Bears have a decades-long relationship with the National Park Service in Alaska.

According to ranger Joe Reichert, every year since the late 80s that the unit has not been deployed – and with the exception of

2020, due to the cancellation of climbing season because of the COVID pandemic – the unit has assisted with delivering the gear to the mountain.

“It helps these guys to be able to come to the park and train at altitude. They do some stuff in the eastern Alaska [mountain range] group on Deborah, Hess, and Hayes, but then they can come here and go to 14,000 and 17,000 feet on Denali. It’s kind of an exchange—they get their training, and we get some help every year,” Reichert said.

Not only do the Sugar Bears help deliver the gear – which includes medical supplies, camping gear, and other equipment – and retrieve it at the end of the season, they also train to assist with high-altitude rescues throughout the Arctic.



A CH-47F Chinook helicopter is parked on Kahiltna Glacier while the Soldiers of B Company, 1st Battalion, 52nd Aviation Regiment, also known as the Sugar Bears, offload gear for the National Park Service at the mountaineering base camp.



PHOTOS BY EVE BAKER

Students from Talkeetna Elementary School tour a CH-47F Chinook belonging to B Co., 1-52nd Avn. Regt. The unit was based in Talkeetna, Alaska, for a week while conducting high-altitude training and transporting gear for the National Park Service to the mountaineering base camp.

Mission coordinator CW4 Francois Collard said his crew members were staged out of Talkeetna all week, flying in the National Park each day to “train at different altitudes with different weights on board to really fine-tune our skills and our performance planning for these helicopters.”

The Sugar Bears have provided critical assistance numerous times over the years on occasions when National Park Service assets were not available or incapable of accomplishing the mission. The last time the unit assisted was in 2018 when a flightseeing aircraft crashed into a mountain in the vicinity of Denali.

In addition to delivering the supplies and training at high elevations, the Sugar Bears also supported community relations by hosting groups of elementary school students from Talkeetna Elementary each day.

On the day of the base camp set-up mission, the morning started with a visit by a

first-grade and second-grade class. Students swarmed the helicopters, climbing inside and looking underneath, asking questions the whole time, such as “What is that zipper thingy, how much did this cost, do you bring dogs in here, and is there real-life Army-man stuff in here?”

CW2 Bobby Webb was an outstanding tour guide, providing plenty of engagement for the children and answering the questions to the best of his ability.

For the record, his answers to the above questions were as follows: a storage pouch; he wasn’t sure exactly; yes, sometimes; and “this whole thing is filled with real-life Army-man stuff.”

Provided Army commitments do not take the Sugar Bears out of the area and the weather cooperates, the unit will return in August to retrieve the gear from the mountain for the rangers, saving them many trips in much smaller aircraft.

ARMY G-1 VISIT

Warrant Officer Candidate Trevon Lovett, Warrant Officer Candidate School Class 22-13, presents a class T-shirt to Lt. Gen. Gary M. Brito, Army deputy chief of staff, G-1, after the general had lunch with about 20 cadets at the U.S. Army Warrant Officer Career College's Swartworth Hall May 3 at Fort Rucker. Brito spoke with the cadets and fielded their questions throughout the lunch. He also met with WOCC leadership and staff, toured the WOCC facilities, and spoke with senior warrant officer students during his one-day visit.



PHOTO BY JIM HUGHES

ARMY FLIER

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Maj. Gen. David J. Francis
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