

COOKING UP A DREAM - CHEF'S CAREER LEADS FROM HIGH-SOCIETY RESTAURANTS TO SERVING SOLDIERS – SEE PAGE 11

ARMY FLYER

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

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PHOTO BY AIR NATIONAL GUARD MASTER SGT. MATT HECHT

A New Jersey Army National Guard UH-72 Lakota returns to the National Guard Training Center at Sea Girt, N.J., March 24 after an observation mission.

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GENERAL ORDER NO. 1

CG takes further measures to protect Fort Rucker community during pandemic

Fort Rucker Public Affairs

Staff Report

The Fort Rucker and U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence commanding general issued a General Order No. 1 April 2 to further protect the post's Soldiers, family members and civilians employees.

The order places further restrictions on people's travel, gathering and visitation activities during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, according to the order issued by Maj. Gen. David J. Francis.

The general order applies to everyone subject to the military authority of Francis, the senior commander at Fort Rucker.

The order is in effect immediately and will remain in effect until rescinded by the commanding general.

"Due to the spread of COVID-19, aggressive prevention and mitigation measures are necessary to reduce the transmission of the disease," the order reads. "Restrictions on certain activities are essential to preserving the health of Soldiers, civilians, and family members. In alignment with the public health emergencies declared at the federal, state and local levels, it is prudent to restrict certain activities in order to maintain good order and discipline, health and safety, and ensure the readiness of our force."

PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

As governments at all levels continue to respond to COVID-19, various restrictions on gatherings, work and travel have been issued, according to the order. "It is the duty of all Fort Rucker personnel and their dependents to observe and obey these restrictions,



where applicable."

Additional restrictions on travel are the following, according to the order.

* On-post: Military personnel residing on-post are restricted from leaving the installation, except out of necessity. Necessity is limited to healthcare needs, grocery shopping, take-out food, and essential postal, banking, laundry services, home repairs, auto parts/repairs, and gas stations. Outdoor physical activities that maintain social distancing are encouraged. Large group activities are prohibited. Adhere to the social distancing guidelines below. All other travel is prohibited.

* Off-post: Military personnel residing off-post may only travel between their place

of residence and Fort Rucker to perform their military or work duties, or out of necessity. Travel to off-post facilities is authorized only for necessity. Eligible personnel are authorized to travel to the installation in order to use the commissary, post exchange and other essential services. Necessity is limited to healthcare needs, grocery shopping, take-out food, and essential postal, banking, laundry services, home repairs, auto parts/repairs, and gas stations. Within the guidance of local off-post communities, outdoor physical activities that maintain social distancing are encouraged. Large group activities are prohibited. Adhere to the social distancing guidelines below. All other travel is prohibited.

* Family members, Department of the Army civilians and contractors (hereinafter "civilians") are requested and strongly encouraged to abide by the above restrictions on travel for military personnel. Failure to abide by this request may result in denial of access to the installation in order to protect Fort Rucker personnel.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

Social Distancing: Unless required by the mission, all personnel will observe the following social distancing methods, according to the order.

* All personnel will maintain a separation of six feet distance from all other personnel who are not members of the same household,

GENERAL ORDER *cont.*

at all times both indoors and outdoors.

* Individual barracks rooms are restricted to the assigned occupants. No other person is allowed in any given barracks room except an individual assigned to that room and individuals conducting an assigned task on behalf of the command, such as a health and welfare inspection. At no time will more than three military personnel be present in a single barracks room at any given time.

* Social gatherings of more than people are strictly prohibited.

* Military personnel, whether residing on or off-post, are prohibited from inviting or allowing individuals travelling to Fort Rucker who reside outside a 50-mile straight-line radius centered on Fort Rucker (hereinafter “non-local persons”) to visit their residence. Additionally, military personnel are prohibited from meeting or staying overnight in other lodging with non-local persons who travelled to the local area after the date of this order.

* Civilians residing on-post are prohibited from inviting or allowing non-local persons to visit their residence. Additionally, civilians residing on-post are requested to refrain from meeting or staying overnight in other lodging with non-local persons who travelled to the local area after the date of this order. Failure to abide by this request may result in denial of access to the installation in order to protect the health and safety of Fort Rucker personnel.

* Civilians residing off-post are requested to refrain from inviting or allowing non-local persons to visit their residence and to refrain from meeting or staying overnight in other lodging with non-local persons who travelled to the local area after the date of this order. Failure to abide by this request may result in denial of access to the installation in order to protect the health and safety of Fort Rucker personnel.

HYGIENE

* All personnel will wash their hands with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizing gel, before going to common on-post areas such as the PX, commissary, mail room, barracks, etc.

* All personnel are encouraged to disinfect high-touch areas, such as desks, light switches and door handles, no less than twice daily.

QUARANTINE/ISOLATION

Military personnel are required to adhere to the directives of medical personnel and commanders regarding an order into quarantine or isolation. Civilians and family members are highly encouraged to adhere to these directives and are required to adhere to applicable local restrictions. Failure to abide by these directives may result in denial of access to the installation in order to protect the health and safety of Fort Rucker personnel, according to the order.

* Personnel arriving from a travel health notice Level 2 or 3 country, exhibiting symptoms associated with COVID-19, or having close contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 will be placed in administrative quarantine under Restriction of Movement in designated on-post facilities, their on post residence, or their off-post residence pending test results or completion of a 14-day quarantine.

* Quarantined personnel must immediately inform their chain of command and/or medical personnel if they exhibit any medical symptoms associated with COVID-19.

* Personnel confirmed positive or exhibiting symptoms sufficient for medical personnel to make a reasonable determination of COVID-19 diagnosis will be placed in isolation under Restriction of Movement at a designated location until cleared to return to

duty by medical personnel.

* All quarantined or isolated personnel must cooperate with the directives of the garrison commander, his designees and medical personnel, including any directives concerning the virus-monitoring process. The GC's directives will be in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations, and public health and safety policies.

* Personnel quarantined or isolated in on-post facilities will follow all directives concerning conduct within the facility, to include any limitations concerning contact with other quarantined or isolated personnel.

* All other personnel aside from those quarantined or isolated are prohibited from entering on-post quarantine or isolation facilities, except personnel assigned duties by order of the GC or his designee.

EXCEPTIONS

* Emergency situations involving possible loss of life, limb, or eyesight should be handled as such and do not require prior approval.

* Official travel directed by the chain of command is not affected by this order.

* Military personnel will comply with all Department of Defense and Headquarters Army restrictions on travel, as well as ap-

plicable local restrictions regarding travel, whether personal or official.

Persons subject to the general order have the individual duty to know and understand the prohibitions contained therein, according to the order. “They have a further duty to become familiar with and respect the laws and regulations of the state and local authorities regarding COVID-19 prevention. Violations of state and local laws and regulations may result in criminal punishment or adverse administrative action.”

Unit commanders shall ensure their personnel are briefed on the prohibitions and requirements of the order.

Requests for waivers or amendment of any provision of the order must be submitted through the chain of command to the commanding general for decision.

The provisions of the general order are punitive. “Through this General Order, all active duty members assigned to Fort Rucker, Department of the Army civilians, and non-DA civilians present on Fort Rucker who violate the provisions of this Order, and/or any other future lawful order consistent with a military commander's Emergency Health Powers as described in DODI 6200.03, may be subject to administrative or disciplinary action as available to enforce this Order.”

Due to the spread of COVID-19, aggressive prevention and mitigation measures are necessary to reduce the transmission of the disease

**- General Order No. 1 issued by
Maj. Gen David J. Francis**

TOWN HALL

CG provides local COVID-19 update, announces future actions

By Jim Hughes
Fort Rucker Public Affairs

As Alabama reports a continuing increase of COVID-19 cases, the commanding general of the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker commanding general said during a virtual town hall March 26 that the post still has no confirmed cases of the illness.

Maj. Gen David J. Francis also reaffirmed his priorities, defined the current situation and announced some upcoming additional measures to be put in place that will affect flight school, Fort Rucker Schools, Soldier travel and other facilities in the near future at Fort Rucker's second town hall broadcast through Facebook.

He also added that he's proud of the response of the Fort Rucker community as a whole during this crisis situation.

"I would like to tell everyone out there how incredibly proud we are of the response of Fort Rucker, the local community, and our Soldiers, civilians and family members out there who have cooperated with the control measures that we have put in place," Francis said.

He complimented the staff, students and parents of Fort Rucker Schools, the medical professionals at Lyster Army Health Clinic, the flight students and instructor pilots of USAACE, and all the rest who are working to navigate Fort Rucker through the rough waters of this pandemic.

"Everyone's been truly remarkable," he said. "I'm incredibly proud of entire commu-

nity and way we've pulled together to fight this crisis."

Fort Rucker recently moved its Health Protection Condition from Bravo to Charlie at the direction of the Army, as well, although this was a smooth transition since the post had already been operating with most Charlie measures already implemented, Francis said.

"Over the last week, we have moved much of our classroom training to virtual training and those places where we've not been able to do that yet, we're exercising social distancing practices as recommended by CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) and regulating that very, very closely," he said. "And we'll continue to expand that virtual capability. In fact, our plan right now is to get 100% of our courses that are taught in a classroom to a virtual state."

He said officials have also eliminated buses to airfields, "so we're not packing flight school students onto buses, they're driving individually, so we've eliminated that hazard."

Francis then discussed future measures to be taken at Fort Rucker. "Priority No. 1 is protecting our Soldiers, families and civilians – and all of the measures I'm about to talk about are designed to do just that, and protect the mission at the same time."

He said he's extending all current control measures, including the school closures, to at least April 17.



PHOTO BY JIM HUGHES

The panel at the second Fort Rucker town hall addressing local issues associated with the COVID-19 pandemic March 26.

"We will continue to assess that," he said. "I'm aware that (Gov. Kay Ivey of Alabama) just announced that Alabama schools will go to virtual learning the rest of the year – we're not there yet, but we'll continue to assess it – and if we make a different decision later on, we'll have the flexibility to do that."

Francis is also mandating Soldiers begin individual physical fitness training March 30, rather than in groups, a matter that Command Sgt. Maj. Brian N. Hauke, Aviation Branch command sergeant major, discussed further.

"I want to reinforce that this doesn't alleviate the requirement for physical fitness training – the expectation out there is as professionals you get out there on a daily basis, and get after your physical fitness training and get it done," Hauke said, adding that for advanced individual training and warrant officer candidate students that individual training "will be a little more structured – you're going to be out there during a set time and doing physical fitness on your own."

Francis also talked about flight training measures that will be in effect from April 6-17.

"We're going to pause initial entry training, which will pause flight training for about 810 students for about two weeks," the gener-

al said. "That may change a little bit and the duration may change a little bit. We will continue to train our critical Army mission sets, which include the instructor pilot course, the maintenance test pilot course and our fixed-wing training that occurs in Dothan. This will keep 154 students still training. This will significantly reduce the amount of flight training going on for a couple of weeks here as we continue to assess this situation.

"This is going to allow us to do several things," he added. "It will allow us to address how we clean our aircraft and our simulators between flight periods, and between students and instructors, and it will allow us to get COVID-19 test kits on Fort Rucker, so we have an immediate way to test for COVID – we expect that capability well before that two-week suspension is complete."

He said that this does not mean Fort Rucker is closing, as many critical missions will continue in the safest manner possible.

"Our maintenance of the largest helicopter and fixed-wing fleet in the Army will continue just like we're doing it right now," Francis said. "We have a large number of aircraft here that require maintenance, and we will continue to do that, and with our maintenance force we will continue to exercise social distancing, professional distancing and

TOWN HALL *cont.*

all of the measures that our contractors are putting in place out there, but we will continue the maintenance effort on the Army's largest fleet of aircraft anywhere in the world."

Col. Whitney B. Gardner, Fort Rucker garrison commander, asked for everyone to keep tuned into the Fort Rucker/USAACE Facebook page and Fort Rucker website for the latest news and notices of service changes, and noted that personnel were following the town hall, as well, and answering many questions as they showed up on the town hall live feed.

"If you're on following us on Facebook, I assume you've seen our Fort Rucker services chart posted daily (showing open and closed facilities)," he said, adding that Army Community Service staff continues to provide essential services, including ensuring Soldiers have access to Army Emergency Relief, and the Directorate of Family, and Morale, Welfare and Recreation "has been incredibly creative and continues to provide top-notch goods and services through digital means and take-out options.

"You should expect no major changes at the commissary for now, and it's open the first 30 minutes of the day to uniformed Soldiers, our senior population and those who are immune system-compromised," Gardner added. "We will also continue purchase limits on certain items when stocks are low. I've noticed over past week that panicked purchasing and hoarding are not a major problem here.

"The commissary has fought through challenges with supply distribution on items like meat, but I'm happy with how well the staff is staying ahead of the problem and continuing to support everyone with smiles on their faces – be sure to tell them how much you appreciate them," he said.

"We realize that this is a time with many inconveniences and limitations, so every-

one's pattern of life has changed, but this community acts with grace and patience, and I can't thank you enough for that," Gardner added. "Your positivity, encouragement and patience, even when a service does not meet your expectations, has a powerful effect on the community team. Our people are doing their very best under the same conditions as you. So, let's continue to be mindful of our words, actions, and especially our social media posts and responses to others on official and informal community pages – thanks for

being a great community."

In closing, Francis said, "this is a fluid situation, and those dates we put out tonight, those are marks on the wall, and we are continually assessing the situation every day, multiple times a day, so there may be further adjustments to this as we see an emerging threat or changing condition that requires us to change something. If we make major changes, we'll be back in this forum to let you know about it to make sure you are as informed as you can be. Watch the Fort

Rucker Facebook page, talk to your chain of command, keep your Soldiers informed, keep yourself informed, and most importantly keep practicing that social distancing, restrict your travel, don't invite people onto Fort Rucker and please be safe out there."

The full version of the video is available at <https://www.facebook.com/ftucker/> and leadership highly encourages all Fort Rucker people to view the video to be fully informed.

30 DAYS TO SLOW THE SPREAD

Listen to and follow the directions of your **STATE AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES**.

IF YOU FEEL SICK, stay home. Do not go to work. Contact your medical provider.

IF YOUR CHILDREN ARE SICK, keep them at home. Do not send them to school. Contact your medical provider.

IF SOMEONE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD HAS TESTED POSITIVE for the coronavirus, keep the entire household at home. Do not go to work. Do not go to school. Contact your medical provider.

IF YOU ARE AN OLDER PERSON, stay home and away from other people.

IF YOU ARE A PERSON WITH A SERIOUS UNDERLYING HEALTH CONDITION that can put you at increased risk (for example, a condition that impairs your lung or heart function or weakens your immune system), stay home and away from other people.



For more information, please visit
CORONAVIRUS.GOV



Fort Rucker pharmacy moves to drive-thru service amidst COVID-19

By Janice Erdlitz

LAHC Public Affairs Officer

Faced with the need to practice social distancing in a crowded pharmacy waiting room, Lyster Army Health Clinic staff knew they couldn't continue conducting business as usual.

In a matter of a week, the pharmacy incrementally went from normal seating in a pharmacy waiting area to six-foot physical distancing with chairs, to limited foot traffic, to hand delivery with two drive-thru areas for picking up prescriptions.

"Through a little innovation, imagination and inspiration, we have come up with a way to serve our public in the safest way we know how, and that is with a drive-thru pharmacy," commented Lt. Col. Karen Holtzclaw, deputy commander for nursing and patient services at Lyster Army Health Clinic.

The pharmacy leadership team, Army medics, healthcare personnel and the entire Lyster team joined together to support the new mission requirements of the pharmacy. With the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's COVID-19 guidelines on social distancing, protecting the staff and patients created the opportunity to offer to drive-thru services for pharmacy patrons.

Robert Yates, a patron using the service, said he appreciated the new service.

"This is the first time I've used the drive-thru pharmacy," he said. "It was easy to use and quick. I was really surprised how smoothly everything went."

Another patron, Kevin Conley, remarked, "It's an easier function for us to just pull in and grab our medication and go. It's a faster process. You don't have to interact with as many people, so you can practice social distancing."



PHOTO BY JANICE ERDLITZ

Spc. Alexis Ballard, Lyster Army Health Clinic, hand delivers a prescription pick up to Kevin Conley in the pharmacy drive-thru line.

The rapidly evolving COVID-19 pandemic created a social distancing obstacle for pharmacies across the nation. Lyster leadership found it important to act immediately to promote social distancing and minimize the opportunities for exposure to COVID-19 to its beneficiaries and staff members, said Col. Jimmie Tolvert, Lyster commander.

In a matter of days, pharmacy waiting areas went from standing-room-only to drive-thru services to minimize and limit the possibility of COVID-19 exposure, he added.

"I am proud of our team meeting and exceeding the challenges," the commander said. "We have our shoulders together, moving forward regardless of the circumstances.

We found proactive, out-of-the-box ways to better serve our patrons. Lyster is committed to the safety and wellbeing of the Fort Rucker community."

For more information on Lyster pharmacy service, visit <https://lyster.amedd.army.mil/> or follow their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/LysterArmyHealthClinic/>.

TRUE GRIT

School staff exercises passion, perseverance, strength of character during crisis

By Jim Hughes

Fort Rucker Public Affairs

The secret to the success of Fort Rucker Schools during the COVID-19 pandemic is largely one of grit.

And not the kind that hurts when it gets in your eyes – it's the one that means you have courage, passion, perseverance and strength of character: the one the staff at Fort Rucker Schools was honing well before the current situation, according to Principal Dr. Vicki Gilmer.

"One of the things we've focused on in the last few years has been a growth mindset and grit, and really developing grit in our staff and our students," Gilmer said, adding that with the changes brought on by the pandemic, "we got the opportunity truly to put it to use."

When the COVID-19 pandemic gathered steam in mid-March and decisions were made to send students home starting March 18, the staff was faced with a monumental task: how to continue the education of hundreds of students while maintaining social distancing.

The solution came in the form of Google Classroom and Google Meets, a component of Classroom, Gilmer said.

"We got in there and we trained in three days," she said, adding that Classroom serves as a place for students to turn in assignments and such, and Meets allows face-to-face interaction and virtual classrooms with students via the internet. "We just took a crash course, and we jumped in there and started kind of working it as we were learning it. We were able to take the break before spring



PHOTOS BY JIM HUGHES

Teachers from Fort Rucker Schools meet with students in their new virtual classroom setting last week.

break and launch the platform March 23 with our parents and our students, and check out what worked and what didn't work."

For the most part, the first week-plus "was fantastic," she said, adding that with spring break this week, the staff is, fine tuning everything and making adjustments.

Each class meets virtually three times a week, and when they're not in the virtual classroom setting, children are working on assignments or watching instructional videos their teachers are making, Gilmer said.

"We've had 93% average attendance, which is pretty much a normal school day,"

the principal said. "We have had things come up, such as tech issues or not having enough laptops, but we've always been able to work with the parents and students to solve them."

Gilmer added that the schools have even worked with single parents to design alternative schedules to allow their children to take part.

"I think we've been really successful," she said. "We'll continue to work with our kids and parents with a team mindset of getting this thing done."

The staff is also working to keep spirits up during the pandemic, Gilmer said, add-

ing they have continued with dress-up and spirit days.

"It helps keep a sense of normalcy for them: there is my teacher, I'm still in a classroom, there's my friends, I'm still doing things that are normal, and gives that sense of stability to students," she said.

And it seems to be working.

"We're really on track with completion of assignments, and that's what we're kind of using for attendance right now – looking at completion and attendance on the live sessions," she said. "We've been very, very pleased. We have our counselors in there for

TRUE GRIT *cont.*

any kids that seem to not be logging on – we get with them right off the bat, and get them back and operating. We’ve had a lot of success with the students, and very few instances where we had to get in there and ask, ‘What do you need?’ Even in those instances, we’ve always come up with good solutions.”

There’s been no letdown in what is expected of students or the quality of instruction, either, Gilmer said.

“We continue with the excellent education we always provide – that’s why we started right off the bat continuing our focus on teaching and learning,” she said. “We’re looking at every critical standard that the kids have to meet by the end of their grade level and we’re focusing on those.”

The successes continue even above and beyond the virtual classroom environment the staff created practically overnight, as the school issued more than 100 laptops for students in need of them, and also have been providing free to-go breakfasts and lunches to all children on Fort Rucker during the time of the closure, Gilmer said.

“Our café staff extraordinaire have been the ones pulling this off,” she said of the free meal effort. “I give them huge props – they’re working through spring break, making meals



Fort Rucker Schools staff and mascot, Patriot, hand out free meals for children on Fort Rucker March 24 at the primary school.

-- 2,346 meals as of March 30 – serving them to parents.”

All of the successes surrounding Fort Rucker Schools during this time of crisis says a lot about the entire staff, Gilmer added.

“I’ve worked on this campus at Fort Rucker for 30 years, and I’m just going to brag,” she said. “I don’t know of a finer staff anywhere.”

“Our motto is inspired and compassionate learners striving for excellence, and that really is a reflection of the staff,” the principal continued. “They’re inspired – they want to do their best. They’re compassionate – they care about their kids and they want everyone to have excellent instruction, so they can go forth and do whatever they want. I can’t say enough about the team here. They are just re-

ally one team, one mindset and one mission.

“I really want to thank the teachers and staff – they have adapted to meet the need of their students in an incredible manner and I am just very proud,” she added. “It’s an honor to work for them.”

Gilmer also thanked all of those outside of the school staff for their help with the effort.

“The community effort has been huge,” she said. “We’ve had great community support from the command, the installation and the Directorate of Public Safety. We’ve had terrific support from our parents in having grace and patience with us as we go on this journey together.”

Our motto is inspired and compassionate learners striving for excellence, and that really is a reflection of the staff.

- Dr. Vicki Gilmer
Fort Rucker Schools principal

Survivors find easier access to Army installations

By IMCOM and Fort Rucker

Public Affairs

Certain Gold Star and next-of-kin survivors are expected to find it easier to visit Army installations since a new process went into effect in January.

The new survivor's access policy allows qualified survivors to get through gate security more easily and travel on post without an escort to attend events, view memorials, receive services and similar activities using their survivor's access card.

"The Army values people, especially our Gold Star spouses and family members," said Lt. Gen. Douglas Gabram, commanding general, U.S. Army Installation Management Command. "This change allows them to more easily receive the benefits and services to which they are entitled, and helps enable them to remain connected to the Army."

Eligible survivors are those who meet the criteria to receive the Gold Star lapel button or Gold Star Next-of-Kin Lapel Button, including widow or widower, parent, child, stepchild, child through adoption, brother, half-brother, sister and half-sister.

Eligible survivors may apply for and receive a survivor's access card through the Army's Automated Installation Entry system at their local garrison. Installations without AIE will use DA Form 1602 for survivor's access.

Survivors serviced by Fort Rucker need to start at Survivor Outreach Services with Cheareice Thomas, SOS support coordinator, to get their access cards.

"I will verify they are who they say they are and the connection that they have to a fallen servicemember, and then help them fill out an application request on the Form 1602," Thomas said. "Once that has been

completed, we'll go to one of the visitors centers where the Directorate of Public Safety team will conduct a background check – everything is kept confidential."

Once cleared, the DPS team will sign off and stamp the application request form and the next stop will be the ID Card Section where the Directorate of Human Resources will issue them a card, she added.

Among the services available to Gold Star spouses and next-of-kin family members is the Army Survivor Outreach Services program, which provides dedicated and comprehensive support through a network of civilians serving as advocates for survivors. SOS staff can assist survivors to access benefits available to them at their local installation, such as career and financial counseling.

The access cards also remind survivors that they are still part of the Army family, Thomas said.

"It definitely provides a more dignified and respectful way for them to be able to come and receive services, and just be openly welcomed in a warm manner to our Army installations," she said. "You want them to be able to come and visit, and not feel like they're being questioned and drilled when getting access to the services that they need."

Fort Rucker SOS services 13 counties in Alabama and about 400 Gold Star Family Members, Thomas added. "It's an honor to be able to work with these families."

SOS is located in Bldg. 5700, the Soldier Service Center, on the first floor in Rm. 186. To contact the office, call 255-9639. If there is no answer, Thomas said to leave a message and she will return people's calls.

To track survivors' feedback on the new



ARMY GRAPHIC

process, the Interactive Customer Evaluation survey added new questions to help determine customer satisfaction with outreach efforts.

"The Army honors our surviving Family members by ensuring their access to our installations and Army-led joint bases," said IMCOM Provost Marshal Col. Kevin A. Comfort.

IMCOM is directing policy compliance and training for its 75 garrisons and installations.

The new process resulted from Section 626 of Public Law 115-232, the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization

Act for Fiscal Year 2019. The law recognizes survivors as having a valid requirement for long-term, unescorted access to Army installations.

Survivor's access cards will be consistent across the Army and will be valid for three years. DOD leaders are determining policy to provide reciprocity for survivor's cards across all services.

For more information on Survivor Outreach Services, visit

<https://www.armymwr.com/programs-and-services/personal-assistance/survivor-outreach>.

ACLC engine test solution boosts aircraft readiness

By Lisa Simunaci
AMCOM Public Affairs

Reducing helicopter maintenance time and repair costs are a priority for the U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Command, and a new system at Fort Rucker will help meet that goal.

The Army's first Modernized Flexible Engine Diagnostic System is now operating at Fort Rucker. MFEDS is a test cell, assigned to AMCOM's Aviation Center Logistics Support Command, that assesses the flight readiness of engines after repair and before they are reinstalled on an aircraft.

ACLC provides maintenance oversight for more than 270 Apache, Black Hawk and Chinook aircraft that support the pilot-training mission and the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence.

"The high-density training mission at Fort Rucker accounts for 25% of the Army's flying hour program," said Col. Rick Martin, ACLC commander. "The potential of the MFEDS to dramatically decrease turn-around times from engine pull to reinstall can significantly improve operational readiness rates and aircraft availability here at Fort Rucker as well as the operational ground commander."

MFEDS is capable of testing the T-700 series engines used on UH-60 Black Hawks and AH-64 Apaches. It also tests the T-55 engines mounted on the CH-47 Chinooks.

Fort Rucker's training program launches more than 500 aircraft sorties daily. Maintenance to support that mission requires about 190 engine test cell validations annually. Before MFEDS was available, the current facility, a 1970s-era building with 10 cells, operated at an 80% non-mission capable rate over the past five years.

Without functional test cells, the aviation



PHOTOS BY LISA SIMUNACI

AMCOM's Aviation Center Logistics Command's Col. Richard Martin is surrounded by people who helped make the Army's first Modernized Flexible Engine Diagnostic System a reality at Fort Rucker.

maintenance contractor is required to conduct on-wing testing, which equates to 16 hours of downtime per engine. That downtime means each aircraft that undergoes testing is unavailable for at least two days of training.

"We couldn't meet demands with the current setup and building a new facility is a long-term and expensive proposition," Martin said.

In April, Martin approached Project Executive Office Aviation's Product Development Office for Aviation Ground Support Equipment in search of a solution. By August, Martin presented an Operational Needs Statement to support the aviation training mission and to improve the overall aviation readiness at Fort Rucker by reducing the downtime associated with the T700 and T55-series engines.

From there, a collaborative effort kicked



The Army's first Modernized Flexible Engine Diagnostic System is now operating at Fort Rucker.

into high gear to secure funding, prepare necessary environmental assessments and complete the acquisition process.

"This was a true team effort that included the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence, Army Materiel Command, AMCOM and

PEO Aviation personnel working together toward a common goal," Martin said. "The reduced maintenance time equates to an annual cost savings of \$5.6 million and regaining 3,072 hours of lost flight training time."

COOKING UP A DREAM

Chef's career path leads him from high society in San Francisco to serving America's finest at Home of Army Aviation

By Jim Hughes
Fort Rucker Public Affairs

The executive chef at The Landing and 5-Star Catering discovered his life's calling as a child soaking up the energy created by his grandmother's seemingly magical abilities in the kitchen at her home in Oregon.

That life's calling led Robert Greene to Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts in San Francisco, and jobs at Brix Restaurant and Gardens, and Bouchon Bakery in Napa, California, the Ritz-Carltons in Las Vegas and San Francisco, the W Hotel in San Francisco and, for the past year, Fort Rucker.

"I just love the energy in the kitchen," Greene said. "I think that is what attracted me the most. I loved watching my grandma cook – just to be able to at a moment's notice, off the top of her head, to make these dishes. She's from the South, so she used ton of lard in her food."

In that kitchen, complete with typical grandmother fixings such as pastel colors, "over-the-top" wallpaper and cast-iron

Dutch ovens that had been in the family since the 1800s, "she'd fry chicken and make a huge mess, and I'd walk behind her and pick it up and eat it," Greene said. "She taught me the basics of cooking – telling me what she was doing, and I would help. I learned to make biscuits from her and she showed me how to properly bread things. From an early age, I've spent most of my time in the kitchen."

And he still spends most of his time in the kitchen.

"My wife (Cristy) and I were doing a survey, and it asked, 'If I can't find you, where will you be?' Her answer: 'Always in the kitchen,'" he said, adding that he's also a bit of a handyman around the house and enjoys tinkering with cars, as well. "That's where I'm comfortable. Every night is like 'Iron Chef' – I go through ingredients and make something. I cook for six – my wife and I have four kids: 11, 8, 3 and 5 months."



Add that time cooking at home to the typical 12-hours a day at work, and it's a good thing Greene loves his work.

"It's a labor of love – I've been doing it for 15 years now," he said, adding how he was star struck when working in Napa and was able to borrow ingredients "down the road from Bouchon at the French Laundry," a restaurant he considers one of the best in

the United States.

"Brix was my first official job when I graduated. I did an internship there and got to work with a really energetic chef," he said. "We were busy, and that really helped developed my work ethic."

But roughly a decade and a half of long hours working in those high-class establishments and two-hour commutes every

COOKING *cont.*

day took its toll on Greene's family life, and he and Cristy decided it was a time for a change.

"I loved my job, but I never saw my family," he said. "So, I took a step back and said, 'I need to reassess what I'm doing.'"

While the geographical limitations of the country pretty much made the general direction of that change to be to the east, the exact location was preordained. And people who enjoy Greene's work at The Landing and 5-Star Catering can thank Cristy for the family's landing in the Wiregrass.

"My sister-in-law lives out here," he said. "I met my wife over 10 years ago at a grocery store, and she was getting ready to pack up and move out here because her sister was out here. I convinced her to stay, and that's when we kind of developed. Since then, she was always probing at me that we should move out here and, finally, it came to that point and I said, 'OK, let's do it.'"

"I love it here because the people are nice – I love the genuine attitude people have -- and my commute is like 15 minutes," he said of the drive from Enterprise. "I love the quiet – it's just nicer and I don't feel as disconnected as I did back in Bay area. I like the culture out here, the pace is a little bit slower and I can focus on my family, which is near and dear to me."

Upon hitting the Wiregrass, Greene didn't immediately land at The Landing. He spent some time working at the Rawls Restaurant in Enterprise and was interviewing with Corks and Cattle when he received word he'd gotten the job at Fort Rucker.

"I came out here hoping to kind of start a new life with my family and the stars just kind of aligned for me," he said. "When I applied for this job, they held a cooking competition with a mystery basket (where the chefs don't know what ingredients are



PHOTO BY JANICE ERDLITZ

Robert Greene, The Landing and 5-Star Catering executive chef, and a competitor at the Southeast Food Expo Cooking Competition in Biloxi, Miss., in January.

available to them until the competition begins and then they have to make something out of them) and you had to impress them – it worked out pretty well for me."

Greene's first experience on the job at Fort Rucker came at the Black History Month luncheon in 2019, and it was a positive one. "I walked in and said, 'OK, this is good – 300 people eating lunch.'"

He added that he's also happy to be serving a new clientele as he's moved from cooking for the rich-and-famous clientele in the Bay area – President Bill Clinton, Celine Dion, Snoop Dog, Idris Elba, Mike Rowe and the Dalai Lama, just to name a few – to America's finest at the Home of Army Aviation.

"It's a lot more meaningful to me – I do enjoy giving back to the Soldiers," said Greene, who grew up in an Air Force family. "I think that, in itself, is really awesome, and they're genuinely appreciative of their meals – it's nice to get that kind of feedback from them (through Interactive Customer Evaluation comments and face-to-face

contact).

"It really went unnoticed in the kitchen when I was working at the W and the Ritz-Carlton. You're proud of what you do, but you don't really get the direct feedback that you get here," he added. "I really appreciate it and it's nice to give to the Soldiers because they sacrifice so much."

But there was a bit of a learning curve when it came to his culinary creations.

"It was a fun learning curve," he said, adding that he's classically trained in French cuisine. "There's definitely a cuisine they like here."

In the spirit of adapt and overcome, after a few items he initially prepared were "shot down," he quickly modified his creations to please the palates his clientele.

"For instance, for the Aviation Ball (which was canceled recently due to the COVID-19 pandemic), I'll be doing dolmas (a Greek dish featuring grape leaves stuffed with meat, olive oil and rice), but to put a southern twist on it, I'll be making sausage dolmas and instead of grape leaves I'll be

wrapping them in collard greens," Greene said. "So, it's elevated, but it has the flavors that people want. I also have done a cheesy corn meal pancake with pickled green tomatoes on it and smoked ham. You can still elevate it, but keep it to where you can kind of please everybody."

While nothing is finalized as of yet, Greene said he and the staff are looking at adding more themed-type events at The Landing, offering cooking classes for Soldiers and family members, and rolling out a new menu at 5-Star Catering.

"If you're looking for something updated and new, something different, maybe something that you're not used to, definitely give The Landing a try," he said. "We're making strides and improvements from how things used to be in the past. I really think we're reinvigorating the culture here."

Greene's career plans for the future include pleasing the palates of the Fort Rucker community for quite some time.

"I'm definitely thinking about hanging here for a little bit," he said. "Teaching has always been a passion of mine, so that's something I want to kind of segue into at some point. Maybe even in the Army – I'm not sure what avenues are available for that. But I definitely want to stay with the Army for the time being – there are opportunities at resorts in Germany and Hawaii that could be kind of fun in the future."

Looking back on what's led him to this point in his career, Greene said he thinks that child in his grandmother's kitchen would be thrilled with where following his dream has taken him.

But would he ever go back and give grandma some critiques on her cooking?

"No, never. She can do no wrong," he said. "But I might put a little bit of salt on it when she's not looking."

Temporary changes to retention, promotion, as COVID-19 persists

By Thomas Brading

Army News Service

WASHINGTON – Army leaders announced new reenlistment and promotion policies that will last until Sept. 30, as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to change how the military operates.

“In response to COVID-19, we’ve made some important changes to enlisted promotion and retention policies to take care of our people and keep our Army ready,” Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Grinston said. “We are

taking unprecedented and immediate action to keep the right people in the right rank when we need them most.”

The initiatives include short-term reenlistment opportunities, virtual promotion boards, and halting certain qualifications that are all intended to “protect the force and preserve readiness,” said Sgt. Maj. Stuart Morgan, the Army’s career counselor.

“It’s unknown if the COVID-19 outbreak is going to end two weeks from now or six months from now -- or even longer,” Morgan continued. “It’s a constant analysis we go through; we are reevaluating the environment and identifying the operational environment that we’re in.”

SHORT-TERM REENLISTMENTS

Roughly 9,000 Soldiers are within six months of leaving the Army and now eligible for short-term reenlistment, Morgan said, with extension options available from three to 11 months.

Interested Soldiers must get approval from their commander. The initiative was sparked by the COVID-19 pandemic, Morgan said, and intended to bridge the gap between separating Soldiers and those who committed to 12-month reenlistments or longer.

“We learned Soldiers wanted to continue their service,” Morgan said, “but some were unable to commit to an entire year or longer.”

Previous reenlistment options for Soldiers start at 12 months or longer, with some contracts that include bonuses worth up to \$80,000. There are no bonuses included with these new, short-term reenlistments.

The benefit of these reenlistments, how-



PFC. LAWRENCE BROADNAX

Capt. Ryan King, D Company Commander, 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division administers the oath of enlistment to Spc. JaQuan Jenkins, quartermaster and chemical equipment repairer from the regiment, March 14 at Camp Bhan Dan Lan Hoi, Kingdom of Thailand.

ever, is to give Soldiers financial stability during an uncertain time.

“Many Soldiers were preparing to transition out, but their civilian job opportunities disappeared,” Morgan said, while the COVID-19 outbreak has slowed the economy. Last week, more than 3 million Americans filed for unemployment.

“The Army understands the [economic] environment right now,” Morgan said. “We’re not just going to push a Soldier out to the front gate and say ‘good luck.’ A job that may have been available two weeks ago has now disappeared.”

This initiative is a chance for the Army to take care of its people, he said.

VIRTUAL PROMOTIONS

Another way to ensure force readiness

is to continue promoting troops, said Sgt. Maj. Mark Clark, the Army G-1 directorate of military personnel management sergeant major.

But with travel restrictions in place, conducting these critical promotion boards can be challenging, he said. However, Army leaders have empowered battalion commanders to assess these risks, and adopt virtual promotion boards “as a means to mitigate that risk,” Clark said.

In other words, for the next six months, battalion commanders are empowered to conduct virtual personnel boards instead of meeting troops in-person. These commanders will also have the liberty to choose how their boards are conducted.

Battalion command sergeants major can also make promotion recommendations to



CHANGES *cont.*

the commanders based on one-on-one interactions with eligible Soldiers, Clark said.

“Commanders can either do a normal monthly promotion board or if their command is decentralized, they’ll do the virtual boards,” Clark said. “Battalions may have Soldiers located in different states or differ-

ent areas where traveling would be required to attend.”

QUALIFICATIONS HALTED

In addition to virtual promotion boards, Professional Military Education, or PME, requirements have been halted for Soldiers

in the Advanced Leader Course and Senior Leader Course. Those affected will enroll on a later date.

“We don’t want Soldiers to leave their homes and be in a mass population in an attempt to get trained,” Clark said. “So again, this is another opportunity to mitigate the risk.”

Some Soldiers will complete their requirements through distance learning, like troops enrolled in Basic Leader, Master Leader, and Sergeants Major courses.

Although Soldiers must still pass their Army Physical Fitness Test to rank up, they can use their last APFT score for these purposes, he said. This interim change is also applied to their weapons qualifications.

“Soldiers with an expired APFT would normally lose their promotable status, but we’ve taken those expiration dates and ex-

tended them so their commands don’t have to worry about putting their Soldiers at risk,” Clark said.

If troops are fully qualified to promote, except for their PME requirements, he said, they will receive a full promotion and will have until their next rank to complete their required schooling.

Army leaders are taking care of their Soldiers, Clark said. “It’s in line with the chief of staff of the Army’s top priority. We are developing policies to help commanders protect our people.

“We have some of the greatest weapon systems the world has ever seen,” he continued. “But those weapon systems don’t mean anything without the people. We have to make sure we keep people first because people are our key to win as a team.”

It’s in line with the chief of staff of the Army’s top priority. We are developing policies to help commanders protect our people.

- Sgt. Maj. Mark Clark

Army G-1 directorate of military personnel management

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