

AIT INSTRUCTOR MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN CLASSROOM, ON HIGHWAY – SEE PAGE 5

ARMY FLYER

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Two Army CH-47 Chinooks conduct a high-altitude training flight over the Bavarian Alps in Germany, May 4.

PHOTO BY MAJ. ROBERT FELLINGHAM

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CG rescinds General Order No. 1, issues GO2

By Jim Hughes

Fort Rucker Public Affairs

The U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker commanding general rescinded General Order No. 1 and replaced it with General Order No. 2 May 21.

Maj. Gen. David J. Francis announced the change via a short video on Facebook along with Command Sgt. Maj. Brian N. Hauke, Aviation Branch command sergeant major, and then distributed the order to units throughout the post via official channels.

In the video, the two discussed the reasoning behind the change and explained some of the fundamental rules in GO2.

"The case rate in the local area and Fort Rucker has increased over the last week, and, therefore, we remain at Health Protection Condition Charlie and its associated protection measures," Francis said. "We continue to evaluate these conditions daily and our decisions are based on directives from the secretary of Defense and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This situation continues to be very fluid, and we are continually making adjustments to our control measures as conditions and directives dictate."

The general said he made the move to GO2 to provide clarity and account for DOD directives.

Hauke then added that Fort Rucker's success in the COVID-19 fight "relied on the disciplined execution of directives."

"Today, Major General Francis and I would like to lay out the fundamental rules in General Order 2 that will allow us to continue to protect our people and our mission," the command sergeant major added. "No. 1, any individual who feels sick, or who believes



that they are symptomatic or who may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 will immediately self-quarantine at their residence and contact their supervisor."

"No. 2, military personnel will not travel outside a 50-mile, straight-line radius from Fort Rucker without an exception to policy," Francis said.

"No. 3, current restricted access to the Fort Rucker installation will remain in effect," Hauke said.

"No. 4, we all know how critical it is to maintain contact with family, so we have set the conditions to allow visitors outside of 50 miles to visit Fort Rucker," the general said. "However, any visitors displaying symptoms consistent with COVID-19, or who believe they have come into contact with someone

with COVID-19, will be reported to the chain of command immediately."

"No. 5, social distancing requirements, you must maintain separation of six feet distance from all other personnel who are not immediate members of the same household at all times, both indoors and outdoors," Hauke said, adding that people also need to limit gatherings to no more than 10, and wear face coverings when appropriate and required.

Francis added that GO2 also updates off-limits locations, activities and travel, and asked everyone to read the order.

To read the order, visit <https://home.army.mil/rucker/index.php/go2>.

"Again, we want to reiterate how proud we are of the Fort Rucker community in

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID AGAN

dealing with this pandemic," Francis said. "Each of us has a fundamental responsibility to do the right thing."

"Finally, as we approach Memorial Day, we should all reflect on those who have gone before us and paid the ultimate sacrifice for our nation and our way of life," he added.

"Our country would not be what it is today without their sacrifice," Hauke said. "I would also ask that we keep our Gold Star families in our thoughts this weekend as we recognize their tremendous sacrifice."

Francis concluded by thanking the entire Fort Rucker community "for your continued support and diligence in this COVID fight," he said. "We will not be under these restrictions indefinitely, but we can get through this sooner if we all do our part. Above the Best."

Corvias continues to improve housing – major renovations under way on 100+ homes

By Alisa Capaldi

Corvias Property Management Communications

Corvias, a long-term solutions and management partner to the U.S. military, has begun delivery of more than 100 renovated homes in the Munson Heights neighborhood at Fort Rucker as part of its \$325 million capital investment that continues to fund improvements to the company's entire Army housing portfolio.

Beginning home delivery entails the completion of the renovation scope followed by inspections, according to Melissa Bryson, Corvis Fort Rucker operations director, who added that once all inspections are complete, a renovated home is ready for occupancy.

"To date, two homes have been delivered and both are occupied by families who are enjoying their new homes," she said. "The first move-in was on May 11, the second was May 17. Our construction delivery schedule will provide the opportunity for six more families to move into the fully renovated homes through mid-June. All June deliveries currently have move-ins scheduled. With increased housing demand at Fort Rucker, we anticipate all 100-plus renovated homes will be occupied shortly after delivery."

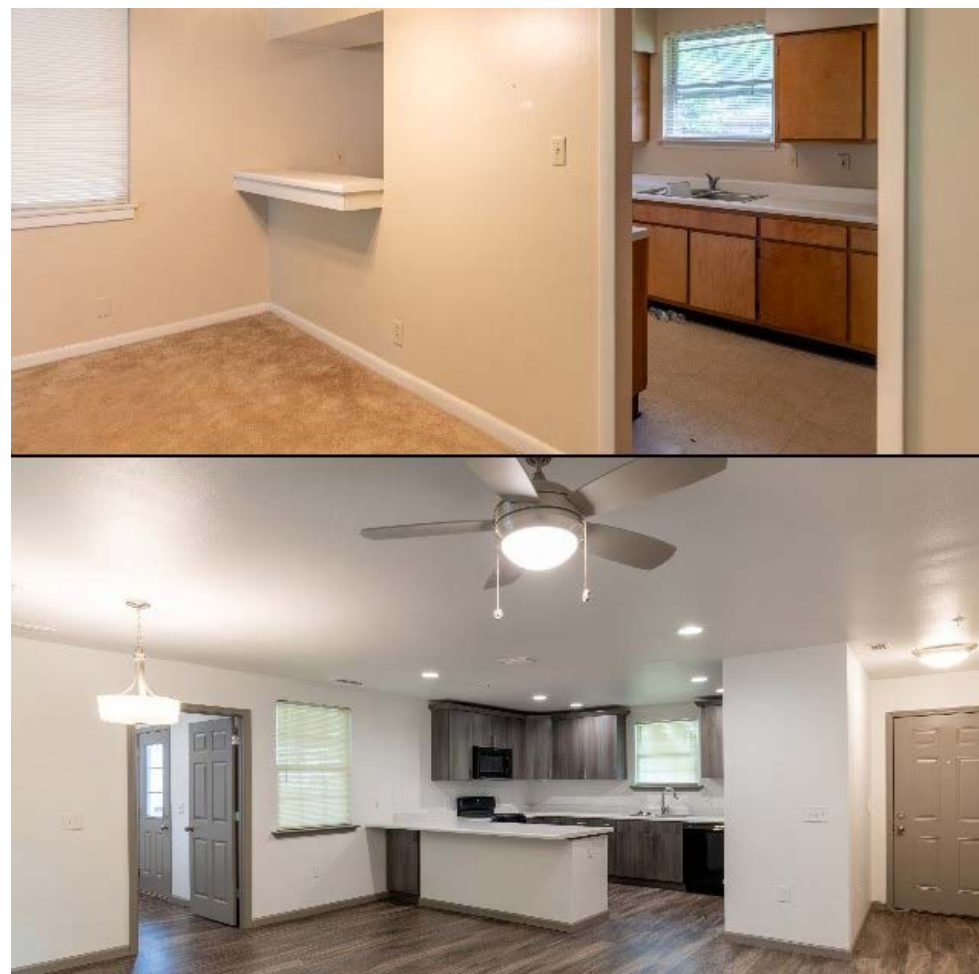
Corvias worked with local small businesses to complete the renovations, which involved gutting the homes down to the studs and designing an all-new floor plan filled with contemporary design elements.

The renovated homes, all duplexes originally built in the late 1950s, received state-of-the-art updates to modernize the layout, and refresh the look and feel of the homes.

The cabinets, lighting, fixtures and appliances used are unique to the renovations at Fort Rucker. Renovations and updates include: updated floor plans; energy-efficient systems; new front and back porches; new windows, roofs and gables; installation of upgraded interior materials like luxury vinyl plank flooring; widened driveways, refreshed landscaping and improved exterior siding; and more efficient air conditioning units, new sealant and insulation.

To complete this project, Corvias' construction and design teams worked together to design and build homes that are both functional and stylish with materials that are easy for residents to maintain. To help support the local economy, Corvias worked with local vendors with nearly 30 percent of the subcontractors coming from the area surrounding Fort Rucker.

"Completing the renovations during these challenging times of COVID-19 was especially important to our team as we wanted to maintain our promise to deliver great homes and improve the quality of life for our Soldiers and their families," said Chuck Cavaretta, vice president of construction, Corvias. "Construction work is considered essential at our installations and Corvias followed CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), state and local guidelines to prioritize the safety and wellbeing of our employees and contractors while sustaining the local economy and small businesses. We support our military families with new, modern



CORVIAS PHOTO

housing and our local business community with rewarding projects that keep their staff employed during the health crisis."

"Corvias worked with its vendors, including lighting, cabinets, flooring and plumbing, to come up with new standards for our families that reflect the state-of-the-art materials for easier maintenance," said Patricia Cotoia, director of design, Corvias. "The resulting renovation at Fort Rucker produced the best possible homes for our residents."

At Fort Rucker, Corvias provides full-service management and operation of 1,476 homes, ranging from leasing to repairs and

maintenance as part of the Military Housing Privatization Initiative.

In addition to an installation-wide housing program, Corvias is responsible for managing the infrastructure for 977 acres to ensure compliance with local, state and federal regulations pertaining to water quality and storm water runoff.

Since taking over operations, residents at Fort Rucker have better access to on-post services in addition to living in high-quality, single-family or duplex layouts that utilize Energy Star appliances to be eligible for LEED-Silver certification.

'AMAZING STAFF'

School closes out historic year, looks to future in new facility

By Jim Hughes
Fort Rucker Public Affairs

As the 2019-20 school year winds down, the principal of Fort Rucker Schools took some time to reflect on recent historic happenings and to look ahead to the 2020-21 year, despite many unknowns.

Dr. Vicki Gilmer, Fort Rucker Schools principal, said she's proud of the way school staff, the students and their parents and the Fort Rucker community came together to make the last few months of the school year a success in the midst of the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"What I'm going to remember most from all of this is the singleness of purpose from our amazing staff," she said. "The mission was to support and continue to educate our kids in an exemplary manner, and that's exactly what they did."

Once measures were taken to begin social distancing on post, the school staff immediately began teaching classes online via Google Classroom while simultaneously designing lessons and activities for the children to do online. They were also basically on call 24/7, helping parents and students with projects and lessons on weekends and in the evenings, Gilmer added.

"I'm totally amazed at what all they have done," she said, adding that the staff is also busy preparing for the move to the new school slated to open when school resumes Aug. 10 and learning the new technology that comes with the state-of-the-art facility.

"They've gone to teaching online to also learning online – they've been asked and tasked with a lot, and they have really risen to the challenge, as they always do."

As the school wraps up its final week of the school year, the focus is on students who need extra time to turn in later assignments and end-of-year goodbyes, Gilmer said.

"We're marching on as traditionally as we can with our end-of-year activities – we're doing everything we normally do, except it's virtual," she said, adding that pre-kindergarten students took part in water day, where they were online doing creative things with water. "It was truly amazing – we celebrated water day at home, but also with friends. Once you put your mind to it, you can problem-solve pretty much anything."

Of course, the staff's attention is turning more and more towards the new school year that all hope will begin in the new school on post, Gilmer said.

"The summer will be dedicated primarily to moving into the new location -- we're very excited about that," she said. "We're really looking forward to getting ourselves into the new location and getting settled in, so we'll be ready to receive our kids, be comfortable in our new school, have our logistics down and be ready to roll for the next year."

But whether or not that happens is still to be decided, Gilmer added, as the decision to whether the new school year starts in stu-



PHOTO BY JIM HUGHES

dents' homes or at the new school is still up in the air.

"No one knows what the future looks like," she said. "But what I can tell you with great certainty is that whether we're online or on campus, we'll be doing a terrific job. The hope, though, is that we're in that new beautiful building."

To be ready for that, the staff, which will largely be the same staff from this past year, is currently training online on the new technology in the facility and determining the best ways to operate the new school, Gilmer said.

"We have a lot of logistics we're going to have to work on, with two locations coming into one," she said. "Even simple things, like where bike riders go, or how walkers will enter the building. There is a lot of planning we'll be doing this summer, so we'll be ready for smooth operations once we begin."

"I am so excited – it's been a wonderful three-year process, but I'm ready to see the finish line and see us in that new beautiful school," Gilmer added. "Our staff will teach here or there or anywhere, and be great at it,

but to have such a wonderful facility, it's just incredible. Our students will have the best facility around and we're really excited to be a part of that."

She added she would like to thank a multitude of people for helping make the latter part of the school year such a success.

"I would really like to thank the families of Fort Rucker," she said. "I always use (U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence's) phrase 'Above the Best,' but I truly do think that they have been above the best. We've had some tremendous support. The faculty has been outstanding, but so have the parents – it takes their dedication, as well, to make sure their child is up and online, checking Google Classroom and making sure assignments are turned in on time. I'd like to give a huge shout-out to our parents for their dedication in this process."

"I'd also like to thank the Fort Rucker command and community," Gilmer added. "They've done such a good job of having thorough, informed decision making that has really helped protect us and also helped us complete our mission."

AIT instructor makes a difference on highway, in classroom

By Kelly Morris

USAACE Public Affairs

For Staff Sgt. Eduardo A. St. Paul Popo, February 13 was the day his wife and child were flying back from Texas after visiting a relative.

He would drive down to Richmond airport to pick up his family, and return to work at Joint Base Langley-Eustis where he serves as a 15Y AIT instructor at A Co., 1-210th Aviation Regiment, 128th Aviation Brigade, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence.

While traveling home from the airport, about 6 miles from the exit to his house, the Popos saw a vehicle up ahead lose control on the highway, and roll over multiple times before coming to rest upside down.

Popo pulled off the road, and immediately rushed to the scene. Smoke was coming from the vehicle, the engine was still running, and the driver was trapped inside.

To get to the driver, he broke a window with his bare hands and removed any shards of glass.

With the help of another person who also stopped, he was able to pull the driver out of the car and get him to safety, and assess for any injuries.

Popo stayed with the disoriented driver and continued to talk to him to keep him awake and ensure he did not go into shock, until the emergency responders arrived.

For his quick thinking and exceptional emergency response to a potentially life threatening situation that day, he recently was awarded the U.S. Army Guardian Safety Award.

Popo said his only thought in those moments, with the vehicle smoking and still running, was getting the driver out of the car and to safety.

"I just did what I hope someone else

would do for me," Popo said.

Popo had informed his supervisor that day that he was running late because of an accident on the highway, but not about his efforts to help. It wasn't until Popo's wife posted about the incident on social media and a fellow NCO saw it that his brave act came to the chain of command's attention.

As Popo's wife and child looked on from their car that day, the uncertain situation could have gone either way, explained Staff Sgt. Jonathan M. Yaeger, a 15Y AIT Instructor/Platoon Sergeant, and Popo's supervisor.

"To be honest, they could have witnessed something on one side heroic, and the other side heroic as well as devastating, with husband/father trying to save a complete stranger. He was willing to put himself out there for someone he's never met. Staff Sgt. Popo did a great job," Yaeger said.

The incident was not the first time Popo made the decision to take care of others.

Raised on the island of St. Lucia, he came to the United States with ambitions to pursue an education, but the desire to take care of his family made him rethink his path.

"At the time, due to the financial situation of my family, if I had gone to college my younger brother would not have been able to have been provided that opportunity. So after weighing the pros and cons, I finally decided to join the Army. That way I could take care of myself, try to get some schooling done, get a job, and also be able to provide a better opportunity for my younger brother as well," he said.

Popo joined the Army in 2010 to become a 15Y, an AH-64D Armament/Electrical/Avionics Repairer. An early deployment to



ARMY PHOTO

Staff Sgt. St. Paul Popo, Aviation maintainer and AIT instructor with 128th Aviation Brigade, poses for a photo after being presented the US Army Guardian Safety Award.

Afghanistan in 2012 as a young Private 1st Class maintainer pushed him to grow.

"That (deployment) actually helped me a lot due to the fact that this happened not too

long after I had made it to my first duty station, so it forced me to learn a lot - and learn a lot quickly. When you're in a deployment it's all just about work and keeping the air-

INSTRUCTOR *cont.*

craft flying. It was almost like sink or swim. So that actually benefited me in the long run, I find," he said.

He later deployed to Iraq in 2017 as an NCO, to serve as a unit movement officer where he balanced his duties of keeping the aircraft flying and also managing Soldiers.

The Army provides an opportunity for people to mature through the circumstances they are placed in, develop people skills and have new experiences, he explained.

"In general I find with being in the Army,

you get people from all walks of life. Some may have never left their home state or their hometown. And so by having all those people come together, with a myriad of experiences and knowledge of different life goals or experiences, you're able to take a little bit from all of that, and it helps you grow," Popo said.

As an NCO instructor based at JBLE, his priority is still looking out for others.

"Throughout my time in the military I've had leaders that did a little of both, some of them focused on Soldiers, some focused on the mission. The ones that resonated with me the most was focusing on the Soldier," Popo said. "At the end of the day if I'm not taking care of the Soldiers, they can't take care of the mission."

Placing emphasis on people creates a climate of motivation for his Soldiers.

"You get to a certain point where now, rather than trying to convince people to do something, they do it because they want to. They do it because they know that you have their back. They do it because they know at the end of the day if they need something you'll do it for them. And they know that the same thing that I'm asking of them is something that I've done before already," he said.

His current role of "forwarding the profession" -- making sure the students have the qualifications for soldiering as well as maintaining Army aircraft, is a good fit for him, he said.

"I feel like I'm making more of an impact," Popo said.

While Popo was focused on selfless service over the past decade, he also realized some of his own goals. He now has a ruck sack filled with experience he would not have gotten anywhere else, and a family of his own. And his younger brother just became a college graduate.

Army general to co-lead Operation Warp Speed for COVID-19 vaccine

By David Vergun
Defense.gov

President Donald J. Trump announced on May 15 that Gen. Gustave F. Perna, commander of Army Materiel Command, will co-lead an effort, dubbed Operation Warp Speed, to find a vaccine for COVID-19 by January.

Defense Secretary Dr. Mark T. Esper said the Defense Department is very excited and committed to partnering with the Department of Health and Human Services, across the government, and in the private sector to accomplish the mission. "Winning matters, and we will deliver by the end of this year a vaccine at scale to treat the American people and our partners abroad," he said.

The goal is to produce about 300 million vaccines by January, said Jonathan Rath Hoffman, assistant to the secretary of defense for public affairs, at a Pentagon press briefing.

Hoffman mentioned that it's a goal involving a whole-of-government approach, not just the DOD.

Regarding DOD and the Pentagon, Hoffman said neither has been shut down and daily operations continue, albeit with mitigation steps that include social distancing, face masks, quarantine when necessary and telework if the situation allows.

As for increasing the number of personnel at the Pentagon, Hoffman said it will be conditions-based and informed by medical experts. The Pentagon is in consultation with the governments of the District of Columbia, Virginia and Maryland. Policy and decisions are currently under review and are expected to be released in a matter of weeks.

Regarding the hospital ships USNS Comfort and Mercy, Hoffman said they have completed their work in New York City and Los Angeles and are standing by if their services are needed elsewhere.



Gen. Gustave F. Perna, the commander of Army Materiel Command

KEVIN FLEMING



Aviation modernization on track despite COVID-19

By Devon Suits
Army News Service

WASHINGTON – A critical design review for a new turbine engine that will power enduring and future Army aircraft is still on, despite a two-week delay in the program tied to COVID-19, aviation leaders said May 7.

The Improved Turbine Engine Program review has been rescheduled to mid-June, but remains ahead of schedule in accordance with the acquisition program baseline established at Milestone B, said Col. Roger Kuykendall, the Aviation Turbine Engines project manager.

ITEP is the designated engine for the Future Attack Reconnaissance Aircraft, or FARA, and is the replacement for the current T700 engines that power the Army's AH-64 Apache and UH-60 Black Hawk fleet, Program Executive Office Aviation officials said in February.

The engine has been designed to fit into the existing engine compartments of both aircraft as a drop-in replacement whereas the FARA aircraft are being designed based upon the ITEP design, officials said. The new engine will provide significant power enhancement when compared to the T700 and will significantly increase aircraft range, payload and endurance, and perform in a wide range of environments.

"We continue to monitor and assess [risks] daily, in conjunction with [General Electric] to minimize future impacts," Kuykendall said. "It is a true testament to GE and the government team to have only recognized that one impact to date."

The PEO Aviation workforce and industry partners have both stepped up to fulfill the mission during this hard time, as the force works to stay on schedule amid the COVID-19 pandemic, said Patrick Mason,

head of PEO Aviation.

"The workforce has shown an incredible persistence and resilience," he said, adding many companies continue to deliver and find ways to decrease risk throughout their supply chain. "Our adaptability has been amazing."

Tied to the Army's Future Vertical Lift modernization priority, both the FARA and Future Long-Range Assault Aircraft programs achieved critical milestones in March, Mason said.

Bell Helicopter Textron Inc. and a joint Sikorsky Aircraft Corp. and Boeing team were selected to participate in a competitive FLRAA demonstration and risk reduction effort to fuel future development and procurement decisions, said Col. David Phillips, FLRAA project manager.

The two companies are working on "conceptual designs through digital engineering, and looking at how [the Army] can use those designs to refine and draft requirements," Phillips said.

Through the engineering process, the FVL Cross-Functional Team can determine what is feasible, achievable and affordable, he added. During the feedback process, the Army will set its program requirements, targeting a request for proposal by fiscal year 2021.

"Bottom line: we are on track to meet the Army's objectives," he said. "We have laid out a strategy that allows us to accelerate the program -- to equip the force by 2030."

The Army also selected Bell and Sikorsky to design and test competitive FARA prototypes, said Col. Gregory Fortier, FARA project manager.

The Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and



COURTESY PHOTO

The 3D model of the General Electric T901 engine is lifted from its transportation canister in preparation for an AH-64E Apache fit check. The team successfully completed the fit test on Jan. 28-29 in Mesa, Ariz.

Technology and Army Futures Command have already engaged with the two companies, ensuring that FARA prototypes will be completed on time, Fortier said.

In an effort to evaluate four Future Tactical Unmanned Aerial System prototypes, the force conducted its first Soldier-operated test flight at Fort Riley, Kansas, on April 7.

Since the initial assessment, Soldiers with the 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, have completed additional training on the new UAS and will continue to support the modernization effort, said Col. Scott Anderson, UAS program manager.

Soldiers with the 2nd BCT, 101st Airborne Division, started the second Future Tactical UAS evaluation recently at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, Anderson said. A third evaluation with the 1-2 Stryker BCT, 7th Infantry Division, is slated sometime in June.

"In spite of COVID-19, we are staying on schedule," he said. "We are asking Soldiers to give us feedback. What capability do [UAS operators] need to accomplish their mission?

That informs the [Army's] requirement."

To help penetrate a near-peer competitor's anti-access and area-denial capabilities, the UAS team is also working with the FVL CFT to bolster the Army's air-launched effects, he said.

ALE extends Army aviation's reach and lethality to penetrate, disintegrate, and exploit enemy tactical integrated air defense systems, PEO Aviation officials said. Currently, the Army is establishing other transaction authorities, or a cooperative agreement with industry, to further ALE air vehicle, payloads, and mission system architecture lines of effort, Anderson added.

Through the OTAs, the force will be able to demonstrate new ALE capabilities, or mature preexisting systems, officials said.

Program leads have also received close to 40 white papers in response to the program's OTA request for ALE technology. Leaders are now assessing the submissions and plan to integrate the new technologies, targeting an initial capability by fiscal 2024.

Even with social distancing, Fort Rucker helping agencies still open for business

By Jim Hughes

Fort Rucker Public Affairs

As social distancing measures continue on post to help protect the Fort Rucker community from COVID-19, helping agencies remain open for business, but that help might be delivered a little differently than in the past.

"Most Fort Rucker services continue to meet community needs, even though we have changed how we provide the services due to social distancing," said Traci D. Waters, Fort Rucker Community Readiness and Resilience Integrator Suicide Prevention Program Manager, Directorate of Human Resources.

"If you are having trouble coping with life challenges, the Employee Assistance Program is still here to help. The service is available to Army civilians, non-appropriated fund employees, adult family members of active-duty Soldiers and retirees, she said, adding that people can contact program staff members by calling 447-3859 to request a phone appointment.

"In addition, the Army Community Services Family Advocacy Program is available to assist if you need suggestions on how to help your children cope with all the changes that are occurring at this time," Waters said.

ACS Family Advocacy can be reached by calling 255-3898. Behavioral health is also providing virtual appointments. For more information, call 255-7028.

For those experiencing financial difficulties during the pandemic, Army Emergency Relief stands ready to assist. For more information, call 255-2341 or go to www.army-emergencyrelief.org.

Waters said many people might be feeling stressed out by the pandemic or like they

just can't cope with the situation anymore, and she does have advice for those who find themselves with those feelings.

"They should remember to do the activities they enjoy the most," she said. "It can be easy to lose sight of the things we enjoy most when there is so much change occurring around us. Some great activities to help us cope include exercising, listening to music, going for a walk, playing in the backyard with your children or reading a book.

"Managing your time is another way to cope when you are feeling overwhelmed," Waters added. "Also, beware of the negative coping skills, such as drinking in excess, overeating or sleeping too much."

She also recommended people keep connected with the latest happenings around them, but not too much.

"Take a look at the USAACE and Fort Rucker Facebook page," she said. "Most installation services share their online classes and tips for getting through this crisis on that site. There is a lot of useful information posted daily.

"You should also limit how much news you listen to regarding COVID 19," Waters added. "Find one reliable source and only get an update at a certain time of the day – do not watch the constant updates because it can cause anxiety in some people."

If someone sees another person struggling with the situation, the step they should take to help them is a simple one, she said.

"The best thing to do is to talk with them," Waters said. "Talking to them helps them to see they are not alone and it will allow you to see if additional services are needed. Simple conversation with others is vital right now to keep us from feeling so disconnected from

Would you like to speak with a Chaplain?

(334) 255-9566

"Talk-2-Chaplain" is a way for you to speak confidentially with a chaplain. We're standing by Monday through Friday, 0900-1700.



our family and friends. Through your conversation, you may be able to tell if you need to get others involved to assist that individual.

"The biggest thing to remember right now is that the services you need are still available to help," she added. "We have each adjusted how we provide services, but we are still here. You are not alone. Reach out and ask for the help you need. We are ready to assist!"

Waters also provided the following information from the Defense Suicide Prevention Office.

As we all strive to support our nation's efforts to mitigate the impact of COVID-19, the Department of Defense maintains its commitment to supporting our most valuable resource – our people.

The personal health and well-being of our servicemembers, civilian employees and families is paramount. Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations and, certainly, an infectious disease outbreak that requires social distancing, quarantine, or isolation is

bound to generate stress.

Many across our nation – and around the world – are feeling stress, uncertainty, anxiety, disconnectedness, financial insecurity, as well as potentially feeling a sense of hopelessness. For some, such experiences can be associated with an increased risk for suicide.

Finding healthy ways to cope with stress during this time will help us to remain strong. The following are some tips and resources both within and outside the DOD to help cope with stressors associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

We encourage you to take these steps to support your own and others' personal health and well-being.

SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS AND CARING CONNECTIONS ARE CRITICAL RIGHT NOW

Limiting in-person contact with others is the best way to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Social distancing – also called physical distancing – means keeping physical space between yourself and other people who are not inside your home. As a result of

HELPING AGENCIES *cont.*

physical distancing requirements, you may be feeling isolated or less connected, or notice this in others. Social distancing requires only a physical space between individuals. There are still many ways to look out for each other, build cohesion, and stay connected virtually. Social connectedness and a sense of belonging improve physical, mental, and emotional well-being – now more than ever, it is vital to stay socially connected while physical distancing.

Being connected takes many forms.

* Stay connected to others. Whether through phone calls, virtual meet-ups, texts, or sending and posting messages via social media platforms – talk about your experiences and feelings with friends and loved ones if you find it helpful. Share words of support, listen without judgment; and, if needed, connect with resources and help.

* Stay connected with yourself. Make it a priority to eat healthy, exercise regularly, and to get plenty of sleep.

Use practical ways to cope and to relax. Relax your body often by doing things that work for you – deep breathing, stretching, meditating, or engaging in other activities you enjoy. Pace yourself between stressful activities, and do something fun after a hard task.

* Stay informed. Stay up-to-date on what is happening, while limiting your media exposure. Avoid watching or listening to news reports 24/7 since this tends to increase anxiety and worry.

* Get help. Numerous support resources are available including your chaplain, behavioral health provider, supervisor, peers or family members, Military OneSource, Veterans Crisis Line/Military Crisis Line, or other trusted resource.

HELP IS AVAILABLE

Even if you have never accessed such

support services before, take advantage of resources available to you. Health care support systems like telehealth services – especially for accessing behavioral health services – can provide preventative tools, resources, treatments and supports.

* If you, or someone you know, are experiencing an emotional crisis or thoughts of suicide, please connect 24/7 with free, confidential services. For those experiencing a suicidal crisis, call the Veteran Crisis Line/Military Crisis Line or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

For emotional support related to COVID-19, call the Disaster Distress Helpline.

* If you are concerned about your financial stability during the pandemic, there are several financial readiness resources available to help.

Accredited Financial Counselors are available at Army Community Service for all DoD ID Cardholders.

* Support is available to all members, including the Reserve Component, through numerous resources including chaplains, family programs and behavioral health resources.

* National Guard members in Title 32 status can access multiple programs and support services. Psychological health teams are available regardless of your activation status in every state, territory and the District of Columbia that can complete assessments, referrals and case management.

* Military OneSource is available to all service members (including National Guard members whether or not federally activated) and their families throughout their career and up to one year following separation/retirement from the military.

HOW WE SHARE INFORMATION MATTERS

Reliable information can keep you safe

and physically, emotionally, and mentally healthy during and after a public health crisis like the current COVID-19 pandemic. Look for and share only credible sources of information on COVID-19. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides up-to-date information via their website (www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html) and social media channels. The DOD also maintains a website (www.defense.gov/explore/spotlight/coronavirus) specifically designed to share the latest information about the COVID-19 response.

When communicating with family, friends, and other members of the community, avoid speculating about the potential impact COVID-19 may have. Share the importance of staying connected with the people in your life, and that help is still available for those in crisis, as well as for those who simply need some additional support.

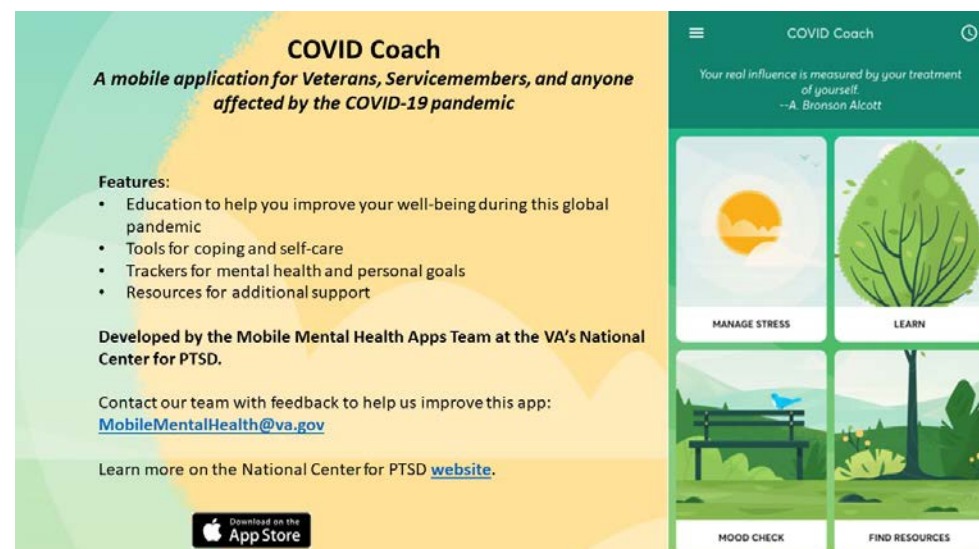
Members of the media are strongly encouraged to incorporate best practices for reporting on suicide (www.reportingonsui-

cide.org) and educate readers on helping resources.

RESOURCES

* Military OneSource is available 24/7/365 to help with handling stress and challenges related to COVID-19, as well as to provide non-medical counseling or peer support services. It is available to eligible servicemembers, including National Guard and Reserve members, and family members. You may call 800-342-9647 or connect through live chat (www.militaryonesource.mil). A dedicated section (www.militaryonesource.mil/coronavirus) provides resources, updates and information about the impacts of COVID-19 on the military community. New offerings include non-medical counseling video sessions for children and youth.

* inTransition is a free, confidential program that offers specialized coaching and assistance for active-duty servicemembers, National Guard members, reservists, veter-



HELPING AGENCIES

ans, and retirees who need access to a new mental health provider or wish to initiate mental health care for the first time. InTransition services are available to all military members regardless of length of service or discharge status. Call 800-424-7877. Outside the United States (international toll-free number): 800-424-4685. Outside the United States (collect): 314-387-4700. All calls are confidential and free.

* Agency-specific Employee Assistance Programs provide a variety of support services to civilian employees and their dependents. Topics of assistance include mental health, financial and/or legal matters, alcohol or drug abuse, work-related stressors, marriage/family and caregiving issues, illnesses, accidents and relationships. The DOD EAP provides resources, information,

and confidential help and can be reached 24/7 at 800-222-0364 (TTY: 888-262-7848). Telehealth services are now available during the COVID-19 pandemic allowing for providers to conduct telehealth video and/or phone sessions for all routine EAP services.

* Disaster Distress Helpline, 800-985-5990, is a 24/7 national hotline dedicated to providing immediate crisis counseling for people who are experiencing emotional distress related to any natural or human-caused disaster. This toll-free, multilingual, and confidential crisis support service is available to all residents in the United States and its territories. Stress, anxiety, and other depression-like symptoms are common reactions after a disaster. Call 800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746 to connect with a trained crisis counselor.

* Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration recognizes the challenges posed by the current COVID-19 situation and is providing guidance and resources to assist individuals, providers, communities and states across the country.

* Social Distancing Tips: www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/tips-social-distancing-quarantine-isolation-031620.pdf

* Virtual Recovery Resources: www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/virtual-recovery-resources.pdf

* Veterans Crisis Line/Military Crisis Line is a free, confidential resource that provides Department of Veterans Affairs support for all servicemembers, including members of the National Guard and Reserve, all veterans, and their families, even if they are not registered with VA or enrolled in

VA health care. VCL/MCL responders are specially trained and experienced in helping servicemembers and veterans of all ages and circumstances. If you, or someone you know, is in a crisis, please contact the VCL/MCL by calling 800-273-8255, press 1; by chat at www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/chat, or online at www.veteranscrisisline.net

* National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 800-273-8255, provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention, and crisis resources for all Americans and their loved ones, as well as best practices for professionals.

Note: Any reference to or listing of non-governmental organizations does not constitute endorsement by the United States Department of Defense.

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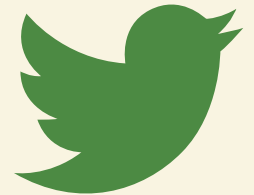
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