

ARMY FLYER

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

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Army aviators participate in an aerial gunnery event at Grafenwoehr Training Area, Germany, July 20.

PHOTO BY SGT. JUSTIN ASHAW

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Fort Rucker names new school LTG (R) Ellis D. Parker Elementary School

By Jim Hughes

Fort Rucker Public Affairs

Fort Rucker and Department of Defense Education Activity officials announced July 30 the dedication of Fort Rucker's new on post elementary school in honor of retired Lt. Gen. Ellis D. Parker, celebrating the man known to many as the godfather of Army Aviation.

Given that the post is the home of Army Aviation and much of the new school's design inspires thoughts of Aviation, officials could think of no finer person as a namesake for the school that will educate the youth of Fort Rucker, according to Col. Whitney B. Gardner, garrison commander and an Army Aviator for 25 years.

"There really is no one who comes to mind that has had more of an impact on the development, growth and health of the Army Aviation Branch," Gardner said of Parker, who passed away March 26. "Then, on top of that, he retired here and then committed over 20 years of his life to Fort Rucker, Enterprise and the Wiregrass community. Naming the school after him is an amazing opportunity to honor him and his family for all they've given to our communities.

"It makes sense, too, because when you look at that school, so much of it inspires thoughts of Aviation – the design, the artwork, certain architectural features. So, to have someone who embodies Aviation as the namesake of the school is the perfect combination.

"I think it's wonderful that the children who grow up here at the Home of Army Aviation will be able to look back on their elementary school days and have that connection to a man who meant so much to the branch," the colonel said. "Hopefully, this



PHOTO BY JIM HUGHES

LTG (R) Ellis D. Parker Elementary School

school and its namesake may even inspire some of our Fort Rucker youth to come back home, pursue careers in Army Aviation and give back to our exceptional local communities."

School officials are excited about the dedication, as well, including Principal Dr. Vicki Gilmer.

"We are proud to be located at the Army's home for aviation as our elementary school becomes known as LTG(R) Ellis D. Parker Elementary School," she said. "We are thrilled to be called Parker Patriots in honor of this local legend! Go Patriots!"

Gardner added that a grand opening for the school is planned for Sept. 29. Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker commanding general, will host the ceremony. The event is scheduled to include a parachute jump exhibition by the Army Golden Knights, an aircraft flyover, a ribbon cutting and special guest DODEA Director Thomas M. Brady.

The following is a short biography of Parker.

Parker was a true Army Aviation pioneer who provided the vision, the masterful leadership, and the commitment necessary to consolidate and modernize Army Aviation during its formative years.

Born Nov. 1, 1932, in Sadlersville, Tennessee, he dreamed of flying since his early childhood. He graduated from Field Artillery Officer Candidate School as a distinguished honor graduate and was commissioned as an Army Second Lieutenant in 1957.

Parker graduated from Army Primary Flight Training in 1958. After earning his wings, Parker flew his first nine years in various fixed-wing aircraft including the Grumman OV-1 Mohawk, an aircraft that had a special place in Parker's heart, and one in which he would attain 2,000 hours. His fixed-wing assignments included duty in the U.S., Korea and Vietnam, commanding at the company and platoon level. In September 1969, he attended rotary wing qualification training, after which he returned to Vietnam as a company commander, flying the Bell

UH-1B and H Iroquois gunship and airlift helicopters.

In March 1981, Parker was selected as deputy director of Requirements and Army Aviation Officer, Headquarters Department of the Army. It was under his watch that Army Aviation officially became a branch on April 12, 1983. When Army Aviation became a branch, he was the obvious choice to give it life, direction and vitality as the Commanding General of the Aviation Center.

Parker retired from the Army in 1992 with over 5,000 flying hours. He was inducted into the Army Field Artillery Hall of Fame in 1982 and the Army Aviation Hall of Fame in 1995. Parker was temporarily brought back onto active duty to chair the Army Retiree Council and the Department of Defense Retiree Council.

Parker retired in Enterprise, where he continued to serve as a leader in the Fort Rucker and the Wiregrass community for 28 years.

People, mission take priority at USAACE civilian employee town hall

By Kelly Morris

USAACE Public Affairs

The U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence conducted a mission-focused town hall for USAACE Department of the Army civilians, with multiple sessions held onsite at the Seneff Building and virtually July 22-23.

The goal was to provide employees an opportunity to hear from leaders about current priorities, and to be able to ask their questions. Three sessions accommodated a limited number of onsite attendees, socially distanced and wearing masks, and for additional employees to participate via MSTeams.

Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, USAACE and Fort Rucker commanding general, opened the event by thanking civilian employees for their support to the USAACE mission.

"The warrant officer 1s that were checking everybody in today – they all start the Black Hawk course on Monday. That is why we are here," Francis said. "We are producing future Army aviators for our nation, and each and every one of you have an important role in that, whether you work out on the flight line, at Bldg. 5700, the hospital, our any of our tenant units on post. All of you are critical to that effort."

Francis acknowledged the unprecedented challenges facing the nation, including the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

"I can tell you as the branch chief I never thought I'd become an epidemiologist—and I'm not – but here we are. And so we're all facing this together," he said. "I could not be more proud of how this community has continued the fight despite the COVID conditions. We have continued to train army aviators for our Army in the active component, National Guard and Reserves. Each and every one of you are key to that being



GRAPHIC BY DAVID AGAN

successful and safe."

More than 1,100 DA civilians at USAACE contribute to the Army's readiness by supporting the training mission during what Francis described as a "critical time" for the nation.

"The Army does not get a break in terms of deployments, in terms of our requirements around the world," Francis said. "Therefore it's absolutely vital that we continue to safely execute our mission here at Fort Rucker, and we couldn't do that without all of you."

"Our ability to continue to produce our lieutenants, warrant officers and certainly captains in the Captains Career Course, all the way up through our Pre-Command Course is absolutely vital to our Army and our readiness right now," he said.

The USAACE's complex mission set is multifaceted: to train, educate and develop agile and adaptive Army Aviation leaders; to

manage the Aviation Enterprise; and to integrate Aviation capabilities and requirements across the warfighting functions to enable commanders and Soldiers on the ground to fight and win.

Francis' vision for the branch is a professional, modernized force that can do combined arms maneuver to support the ground force commander to compete and win in large-scale combat operations.

As the Army shifts its focus from approximately 20 years of counterinsurgency operations to large scale combat operations against potential peer threats, the one constant is change.

"For all of you who served or are currently serving and you're watching this transition occur, there are some pretty monumental things that we have to do. One of the biggest things is we have to get the force right," Francis said.

Issues facing the Aviation branch and the center include a shortage of aviators that necessitated a ramp-up in training throughput at Fort Rucker and the need for more aircraft and instructor pilots. Fort Rucker received a plus-up in funding last year that allowed an increase in maintenance capability on the flight line, so the post has "better aircraft availability now than we've ever had," Francis said.

The branch is also addressing retention challenges particularly among Aviation warrant officers.

"We just got the first flight pay incentive increase that we've had in 20 years, which started on Jan. 1," he said.

Modernization remains a priority as the Army presses toward a Multi-Domain Operations capable force in 2028 and the branch makes strides toward Future Vertical Lift. However, Francis prioritized a focus on

Town hall *cont.*

people, and leader development as “the most important thing we do.”

“If I give the same piece of equipment to us versus any other nation, we’re going to win, and it isn’t because of the equipment, it’s because of our people. It’s because we have better leaders, better commanders, better NCOs, better warrant officers than any other force on our planet,” Francis said.

The Army’s future leaders must train now for a different fight that will be very austere, violent and complex.

“We want to set the conditions for that in our aviation fleet, our UAS fleet, our maintainers across the board, to prepare our Army for large scale combat operations.”

In a standards-based Army that lives by seven core Army Values, a key component of the Army’s strength is diversity.

“We can take people from the widest array of backgrounds you can imagine, come together as a team to accomplish a mission. The Army does this better than any other institution in our nation. That we can do that with the scale, and effectiveness with which we do it, it’s incredible,” Francis said.

Participant questions touched on a variety of topics, including talent management and future professional development opportunities.

Going forward, civilian career programs will be more centrally managed, which means civilian functional-level training will be funded, according to William G. Kidd, deputy to the commanding general at USAACE.

Because of COVID-19, civilian training may be online or a blend of online and resident.

The Army’s People Strategy focuses on civilian workers as well as military, including “functional training and development for a lifetime of service with the department,” Kidd said.

The Army looks to focus more on developmental assignment opportunities in the future, “short-term assignments that would give Army civilians experience and develop some skills you might need in your job or a future job, as well as (to determine) whether you would like to work in that functional area over time,” Kidd said.

“I’d like you to sign up for them, and we’d like to sponsor you if you’d like to go to Command and General Staff College or one of the other developmental programs,” he said. “We’re going to work extra hard here at Fort Rucker to ensure all of you have oppor-

tunity to move up in your career or at least help you be effective in your job right now.”

Participant questions included a concern about wearing of masks and conducting training in the summer heat, with temperatures above 95 degrees and a heat index that has reached 110 degrees in lower Alabama.

Francis said it’s understandable if people need to take a quick break from the mask now and then in the heat, but the COVID-19 measures are working and the safety of the workforce is his priority. The center continues to work to acquire more maxillofacial shields for flight school students as more of those become available.

Multiple participants asked about the potential for telework in the future beyond COVID-19, a matter the command is looking into, Francis said.

Faulkner and Newton gates will remain temporarily closed through Aug. 16. They will resume normal operating hours Monday, Aug. 17. The Daleville, Enterprise and Ozark gates and the Daleville and Ozark visitor control centers will maintain normal operating hours. People traveling on post are encouraged to allow extra time for their daily commutes during this time. We apologize for the inconvenience and thank you in advance for your patience.

The Faulkner and Newton gates will remain temporarily

CLOSED

through August 16

They will resume normal operating hours Monday, August 17.



HONORING SERVICE

5 Soldiers, 1 civilian retire at quarterly ceremony

By Jim Hughes

Fort Rucker Public Affairs

With more than a combined 150 years of service to the nation, five Soldiers and one civilian retired at the Fort Rucker Quarterly Retirement Ceremony July 31 at the U.S. Army Aviation Museum.

Col. Joshua P. Higgins, Capability Development and Integration Directorate director, hosted the event and was assisted by Sgt. Maj Derek J. Quackenbush, CDID sergeant major.

Short write-ups on each retiree follow.

LT. COL. ANNA M. HABERZETTL

Haberzettl, Air Traffic Services Command executive officer, was commissioned in 1993 after graduating from the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York. She served multiple combat tours in support of operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom. She stated the highlights of her career were the military and civilians she had the honor of serving alongside. She has two daughters. She plans to reside near running trails.

CW3 JON K. HUNT

Hunt, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence Directorate of Evaluation and Standardization Attack Branch, entered military service in 1998 as a combat engineer. In 2008, he was selected to attend army warrant officer flight training. He served multiple combat tours in support of operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom, Freedom Sentinel and Inherent Resolve. He said the highlight

of his career was being selected to serve as an attack branch standardization pilot at DES. He and his wife, Jeanette, have four children. They plan to reside in Enterprise.

CW3 JOHNATHAN M. BLAISE

Blaise, F Company, 1st Battalion, 212th Aviation Regiment deputy standardization officer, entered military service in 2000 as a UH-60 helicopter repairer. He has served multiple combat tours in support of operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom. He said the highlight of his career was serving with all of the outstanding officers, NCOs, and Soldiers he had the privileges of serving with. He and his wife, Katie, have four children. They plan to reside in Coffee Springs.

1ST SGT. ERIC D. KAHLE

Kahle, 3-501st Assault Helicopter Battalion, 1st Armored Division, Combat Aviation Brigade at Fort Bliss, Texas, entered military service in 2000 as a combat engineer and later re-enlisted as an attack helicopter repairer. He has served multiple combat tours in support of operations Iraqi Freedom, Enduring Freedom, Resolute Support and Freedom's Sentinel. He said the highlight of his career was marrying his beautiful wife, Rachel, and having three wonderful children. They plan to reside in Enterprise.

SGT. 1ST CLASS JULIUS E. LEWIS III

Lewis, ATSCOM Quality Assurance



PHOTOS BY JIM HUGHES

Lt. Col. Anna M. Haberzettl and family.



CW3 Jon K. Hunt and family.

Retirees *cont.*

Division air traffic control maintenance inspector, entered military service in 2000 as an air traffic control systems repairer. He has served multiple combat tours in support of operations Iraqi Freedom, Enduring Freedom, New Dawn and Atlantic Resolve. Lewis said the highlight of his career was

marrying his beautiful wife, Julia, and having three wonderful children. They plan to reside in Indianapolis.

JOHN R. LOPEZ

Lopez, Aviation Center Logistics Command quality assurance representative,

served on active duty from 1978 to 2000, and as a Department of the Army civilian at Fort Rucker for 19 years. He said the highlight of his career was getting qualified on seven aircraft in the Army inventory, receiving a bachelor's degree in professional aeronautics from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

and working with many wonderful people throughout the years.

He and wife, Georgette, have four children and four grandchildren. They plan to reside in Enterprise.



CW3 Johnathan M. Blaise and family.



1st Sgt. Eric D. Kahle and family.



Sgt. 1st Class Julius E. Lewis III and family.



John R. Lopez and his wife, Georgette.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Fort Rucker thanks, honors 2019 volunteers of the year

By Jim Hughes
Fort Rucker Public Affairs

The U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker commanding general took time to honor and thank the installation's volunteers for the priceless gifts of their time, effort and selfless service to help out in all aspects of the community during a ceremony July 24.

Maj. Gen. David J. Francis told the volunteers on hand to be recognized at the Calendar Year 2019 Fort Rucker Volunteer of the Year Recognition Ceremony at the U.S. Army Aviation Museum that they represent what is best about the country.

"What an honor it is to be here today to recognize our volunteers of the year," Francis said at the ceremony that was held to a minimal audience in attendance and broadcast over Microsoft Teams to other personnel. "At a time in our history when our airwaves are full of bad news, it is fantastic to be able to share the good news of the heroes in our midst who demonstrate selfless service, pride in their communities, teamwork and genuine concern for other people.

"This is truly an example of what is best in our nation," he added. "They serve in our family readiness groups and our thrift shop, they serve as Scout leaders, they volunteer in



PHOTO BY JIM HUGHES

Fort Rucker's 2019 volunteers of the year pose for a photo with members of the USAACE command team during a ceremony July 24 at the U.S. Army Aviation Museum.

our chapels and Army Community Service, they are our youth sports coaches, and they serve in our spouses club, our schools and in this magnificent museum, just to name a few. Our volunteers represent all that is great about our nation, our Army, our community and our families."

The 2019 volunteers of the year are Aaron Druilhet, Youth Volunteer of the Year; Natalie McGrew, Adult Volunteer of the Year; Roy and Leslie Templin, Volunteer Family of the Year; CW4 Heather Sheltroun, Active-Duty Volunteer of the Year; Sue Luther, Helping Hand Award; and Martha Boyle, Lifetime Achievement Award.

He said the six honored as the year's top volunteers have gone above and beyond serving the people of Fort Rucker and the local communities.

"They don't look for recognition, they do what they do because service is a part of who they are, and the content of their character is what led them here today. We are all better

as individuals, and as a community, for their leadership and service," Francis added.

"The team that we have the privilege of working with at Fort Rucker is truly amazing," the general continued. "We ensure the massive, critical mission of training the future of Army Aviation occurs here every day. Not only are the volunteers that we are recognizing a part of that team, but they are individuals who make Fort Rucker a phenomenal place to work, live, play and pray even under these current conditions.

"It is these volunteers who allow us to thrive as a community," Francis added. "Our children grow up in a community that demonstrates service to others, and how to treat all with dignity and respect. So, today, we recognize the shining examples of our community, and we thank them for their selfless service and their contributions to our community."

Each volunteer of the year received a certificate signed by the commanding general, a

personalized Alabama clay eagle statue and a volunteer of the year parking pass.

The following are short write-ups on each winner taken from their nomination packages.

YOUTH VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Druilhet went above and beyond his duties as a volunteer, and was recognized for his thoughtfulness and ingenuity for his work with the main post Catholic parish and Enterprise High School, among various other organizations with whom he dedicated his time.

ADULT VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

McGrew was tremendously supportive of both the Protestant Women of the Chapel and the Fort Rucker Spouses Club who served as a role model for young Aviation Branch leaders and their families.

VOLUNTEER FAMILY OF THE YEAR

The Templin family embodied the spirit of volunteerism with their contributions to the main post Catholic parish.

ACTIVE-DUTY VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Sheltroun worked tirelessly with multiple organizations across the installation, including volunteering with the Department of Defense Education Activity and youth services.

HELPING HAND AWARD

Luther enriched the lives of service members, families, retirees and civilians throughout the installation through her generous work with the Exceptional Family Member Program.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Boyle has left an indelible mark on the Fort Rucker community and has impacted countless lives throughout the installation. She exemplifies the meaning of serving as the Heart of the Army community.

'LITTLE BIT OF EVERYTHING'

MUSEUM OFFERS PORTAL INTO ARMY AVIATION HISTORY

By Jim Hughes
Fort Rucker Public Affairs

More than 100,000 people visit the U.S. Army Aviation Museum each year to get a glimpse into the history of Army Aviation and learn from its past.

But as much as patrons are able to see what the history of Army Aviation holds, there is much more than currently meets the eye when it comes to the museum's vast collection.



A scene in the U.S. Army Aviation Museum.

FILE PHOTOS

Fort Rucker's museum is the showcase for Army Aviation.

— Bob Mitchell
U.S. Army Aviation Museum curator

"Currently, in the existing museum, we are limited by space, so we primarily display what was actually in the Army's operational inventory," said Bob Mitchell, U.S. Army Aviation Museum curator. "When grandpa brings his kids and grandkids in here to show them the helicopter he flew, we have to have it in here, which means that there is a lot of stuff that we have that we can't really put [on display]."

Currently there are about five storage facilities that house a slew of prototype

aircraft and equipment, as well as many aircraft that are slated for restoration in the future to be exhibited on the museum floor, and although the current museum has about 120,000 square feet of floor space, it's not enough to be able to display everything that is housed in the museum's storage units, said Mitchell.

From the first XH-40 prototype helicopter that paved the way for the famous Huey helicopter to a Boeing-Sikorsky RAH-66 Comanche, an aircraft that never quite made

MUSEUM

it into the Army's operational inventory, the museum has something for everyone, said Mitchell.

The Comanche, which is one of the museum's biggest attractions, allows visitors to see just how far the evolution of Army Aviation has come from aircraft that flew more than 100 years ago, which can also be seen within the museum's walls. There are about 50 aircraft on display in the public galleries at any one time throughout the museum, but the entire collection encompasses over 160 airplanes, helicopters and other vertical flight aircraft, according to the museum's website, www.armyaviationmuseum.org, most of which is found in storage out of public view.

Of the vast collection of aircraft and memorabilia that the museum houses, the unseen artifacts encompass more than two thirds of the museum's entire collection, said Mitchell. The collection has been accumulated over the last 60 years, and due

to space constraints, the museum is typically limited to showcase aircraft that were in the Army's operational inventory, but that doesn't negate the importance of the pieces sitting in storage.

"Fort Rucker's museum is the showcase for Army Aviation," Mitchell said. "When non-military personnel and veterans come to Fort Rucker, they generally come to see the museum. It's basically Army Aviation's house, so we want to make sure the visitors have a pleasurable visit (and that) they understand the mission of Army Aviation and its rich heritage.

"Most people who interact with Fort Rucker and the museum will walk away with the opinion of the Army based on the museum," he added. "It is very important we conduct ourselves in a professional



The Boeing-Sikorsky RAH-66 Comanche, one of only two of the helicopters that were built and flew, on display at the museum.



The VCH-34 Choctaw "Army One" helicopter that carried such notables as presidents Dwight D. Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy, actress Marylyn Monroe, and foreign dignitaries, such as Nikita Khrushchev, premier for the Soviet Union, and Francisco Franco, former prime minister of Spain, is on display at the museum.

manner, the exhibits are correct and people leave here understanding Army Aviation."

The museum is set up in a way to try and take people on a journey through the history of Army Aviation as they walk through various exhibits, said Mitchell.

"They can expect to find examples of Army Aviation dating from the Wright Brothers' production of the Army Wright Model B flyer through World War I and World War II, the Korean Conflict, Vietnam War and the global war on terrorism," he said. "It is important to understand that the United States Army is the reason for the modern-day helicopter. The Army paid the money, and conducted research and development to get the helicopter where it

is today.

"We have a little bit of everything in here," he added. "We have an original Newport 28 from World War I. There are only a handful of those that survived. We also have a Super 68 from the Battle of Mogadishu, as seen in the movie 'Black Hawk Down,' and pretty much a sampling of everything in between."

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

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

A message from Army senior leaders to all Soldiers, civilians, family members, Soldiers for life

U.S. Army
Press Release

Dear Soldiers, Civilians, Family Members and Soldiers for Life:

On July 26, we celebrate the 72nd anniversary of the official end to racial segregation in the U.S. Armed Forces. However, just as neither the thirteenth amendment nor the Civil Rights Act eliminated racism from American society, the integration of our military did not eliminate racism from our ranks. The past few months have reminded us that we still have a long way to go on our never-ending journey to be a more perfect organization.

The U.S. Army did the right thing 72 years ago, but admittedly, some leaders in the Army were reluctant. A common phrase

both then and now is that the Army is not a social experiment, and that is true. But the Army does not need to experiment to know that our strength lies in the diversity of our people and, more importantly, inclusion. Defending the Constitution and protecting the American people requires great leadership, and the best leaders are those capable of understanding multiple perspectives and empathizing with those whom they lead. Our best leaders are those who know how to inspire others and make each person feel like a valued member of a team, whether that person is a Soldier, an Army Civilian, a Family Member, or a Retiree/Veteran Soldier for Life. That is how you recruit and



ARMY PHOTO ILLUSTRATION

retain America's best and brightest. That is how you defend a Nation from all enemies, foreign and domestic.

Our Army's philosophy is People First, and our attitude is Winning Matters. That means treating each other with dignity and respect. It means putting the right people in the right place at the right time. It means building cohesive teams that are highly-trained, disciplined, and fit. "Project Inclusion" is a new holistic effort to eliminate

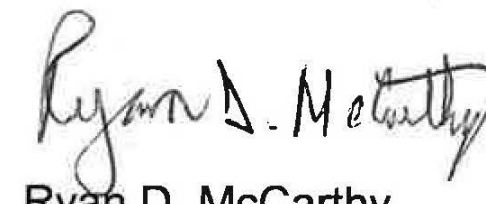
both overt prejudice and unconscious bias. The elimination of DA photos from promotion boards is just the first step. "This Is My Squad" is the foundational element to inculcate an Army culture of taking care of each other. Your "squad" includes your leadership, your battle buddies, your subordinates, and your family, whether you are a private, a civilian, or a general. And when a member of your squad is in trouble – from harassment, assault, mental health concerns, or prejudice – you take action because you care.

We are proud to serve with the greatest Soldiers in the world and be a part of the greatest fighting force. Today, let us celebrate how far we've come as we work to continue moving forward together.

People First – Winning Matters – Army Strong!


Michael A. Grinston
Sergeant Major of the Army


James C. McConville
General, United States Army
Chief of Staff


Ryan D. McCarthy
Secretary of the Army

Army Greens slated to reach all installations by mid-2021

By Devon Suits
Army News Service

WASHINGTON -- Recruiters, drill sergeants, and initial entry trainees will be among the first to receive the new Army Green Service Uniform, as program officials look to distribute it to all installations by the middle of next fiscal year.

The uniform harkens back to the "greatest generation" of Soldiers who fought during World War II.

"For the past year, I've been wearing the Army Greens. Wherever I go, people tell me that they love the uniform," said Army Vice Chief Of Staff Gen. Joseph M. Martin.

"As we transition to the next phase of the rollout, I'm excited for the Soldiers who are about to receive the uniform," he added. "I think that when they see themselves in the mirror they'll feel connected to the Soldiers of the past and realize that they're writing the next chapter of what people feel about our Army."

ROLLOUT SCHEDULE

Personnel in basic combat training and one-station unit training should receive the AGSU beginning in the first quarter of fiscal year 2021, said Lt. Col. Naim Lee, product manager of Soldier Clothing and Individual Equipment at Program Executive Office Soldier.

Fort Sill, Oklahoma, will be the first training location to issue the uniform, shortly followed by Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri; Fort Benning, Georgia; and Fort Jackson, South Carolina, he added.

The Army had originally planned to begin issuing the uniforms at IET locations before the end of this fiscal year. However, Lee said, setbacks during production related to COVID-19 forced a short delay in the rollout process.

Soldiers attending the Army's Recruiting and Retention College at Fort Knox, Kentucky, started to receive their AGSUs earlier this month, he said.

The Army is continuing to work through its distribution and production channels to ensure all recruiters are issued the uniform starting in November through April 2021.

"The Army prioritized recruiters and drill sergeants, because they serve as the face of the Army," Lee said.

After a select group of recruiters were able to wear the uniform as part of a pilot, they indicated that the new uniform may help attract quality applicants. The uniform may also help inspire the next generation of leaders by connecting the "all-volunteer force" to its historical lineage, Lee said.

Moving forward, the Army and Air Force Exchange Service will supply the new uniform through a wave-based rollout approach, Lee said. The AGSU is currently available for purchase at the Fort Knox AAFES location.

The majority of AAFES locations within the U.S. are scheduled to have the new uniform by December. Stores in Alaska, Europe, Japan, and South Korea, along with National Guard and Reserve military clothing locations, should have a supply of uniforms by February 2021.

The mandatory wear date for all Soldiers is Oct. 1, 2027.

Active-duty enlisted Soldiers, including Active Guard and Reserve Soldiers, will continue to receive their annual clothing-replacement allowance to offset the new uniform's cost, Lee said. Other Guard and Reserve Soldiers will begin receiving uniforms no later than the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2021.



FORT KNOX PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Recruiting students at Fort Knox, Ky., receive their initial issue Army Green Service Uniform on July 8, 2020. Recruiters, drill sergeants, and initial entry trainees will be among the first to receive the uniform, as the Army works to distribute it to all installations by the middle of the next fiscal year.

EVERYDAY SERVICE UNIFORM

The Army is currently the only service without an everyday business uniform, Lee said.

The current Army Service Uniform, commonly known as dress blues, was previously considered an optional purchase uniform prior to 2008, PEO Soldier officials said. Over time, leaders realized that the dress blues were too formal for everyday business use.

With the launch of the AGSU, Soldiers will now have an everyday service uniform, which will set an appropriate standard for professionalism within an office setting, Lee added.

Eventually, the Army will stop issuing the dress blues to all Soldiers. The uniform will continue to be optional and serve as a dress uniform for all Soldiers requiring a formal attire.

LIMITED USER TEST, EVALUATION

As the Army delivers its new uniform, PEO Soldier will continue to conduct limited user testing and evaluations through May 2021, Lee said.

Early in the development process, the Army held an all-female uniform board that determined the design, components, features and fit of the female uniform. While both the male and female uniforms are similar, PEO Soldier officials said the female version allows for an elective skirt and shoe wear option.

In January, leaders held an additional uniform board to solidify minor changes to the uniform that were identified during ongoing user evaluations.

"Soldiers shared how the uniform is a better fit to their body," when compared to the Army Service Uniform, Lee said. "In terms of comfort -- we made changes through the limited user evaluation feedback process" to improve the Army Greens.

Feedback will continue to be solicited from a larger Army population, specifically from Soldiers who wear the uniform often. Through this process, program leads will shape future iterations of the ensemble to accommodate different body types or make improvements to the product's longevity.

"We have teams that will receive feedback through Soldier touchpoints," Lee said. "And given the current environment [with COVID-19], we will have to incorporate" other forms of communication.

"Soldiers are enjoying this new uniform and they are eager to go out and get it," he added. "We can't get it to them fast enough."

USAACE BEST WARRIOR COMPETITION

The USAACE Best Warrior Competition is under way. As the sun came up over Fort Rucker Aug. 3, competing Soldiers and NCOs competing were wrapping up the Army Combat Fitness Test. More coverage will follow once the competition wraps up.



PHOTOS BY KELLY MORRIS



ARMY FLIER

COMMAND

Maj. Gen. David J. Francis
Fort Rucker Commanding General

Col. Whitney B. Gardner
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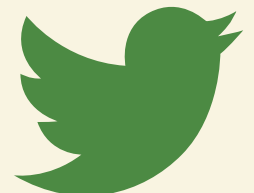
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