

NEW AVIATORS TO INCUR 10-YEAR SERVICE OBLIGATION – SEE PAGE 10

# ARMY FLYER

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PHOTO BY SGT. SARAH D. SANGSTER

DUSTOFF pilots and flight crew train on air-to-ground patient transfers and report requirements during a multi-ship joint training mission with Tripler Army Medical Center and the 8th Forward Surgical Team recently in Hawaii. The crew provided sustained medical care and transportation en route to medical facilities through each role of care, while 8th FRST provided surgical field care, and TAMC provided trauma and patient care. C Company, 3rd Battalion, 25th Aviation Regiment is the only MEDEVAC company in the 25th Infantry Division. The company trains daily for critical missions in order to be prepared for real-world missions.

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# Fort Rucker welcomes USAACE deputy commanding general

By Kelly Morris  
*USAACE Public Affairs*

The Fort Rucker community welcomed Brig. Gen. Stanley E. Budraitis as the incoming deputy commanding general, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker, in a virtual ceremony conducted on Howze Field Aug. 14.

The deputy commanding general serves as the principal assistant to the USAACE commanding general. He is responsible for functional training management and organic units assigned across Fort Rucker, and tenant units based at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, and Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia.

In this role, Budraitis advises the commanding general and principal staff members on all Aviation training and is responsible for synchronizing the Aviation Enterprise to ensure the best trained, best equipped and ready aviation warfighters are available across the Aviation Branch.

Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, USAACE and Fort Rucker commanding general welcomed the Budraitis family.

"This day has been a long time in coming. In fact, it's been almost a decade since we've had a brigadier general that held the post of deputy commanding general here at Fort Rucker. And I can't think of a better choice than Stan Budraitis to take this challenge on," Francis said.

Budraitis has commanded aviation and ground units, served as adviser to the U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Command commander, and assistant adjutant general of the Mississippi National Guard leading through multiple natural disasters and other domestic challenges, Francis explained.

Budraitis arrives at Fort Rucker at "yet another inflection point for Army and Army Aviation," Francis said, as the Army

pivots from 20 years of Counterinsurgency Operations to Large Scale Combat Operations against near-peer and potentially peer competitors.

The largest post-Vietnam modernization effort is currently under way, with Future Vertical Lift among the top Army modernization priorities, Francis explained.

"These aircraft – the Future Attack Reconnaissance Aircraft and the Future Long Range Assault Aircraft – and their enabling capabilities such as Future Tactical Unmanned Aircraft Systems, Air Launched Effects, Modular Open System Architecture, Long Range Precision Munitions and more, is all funded and coming at record speed," Francis said.

These modernization programs will bring "leap-ahead technology, the likes of which we have never seen in our Army," he said.

The path forward includes changes to leader development, to include "career long assessments that enable us to develop leaders with the knowledge, skills and behaviors that will enable them to lead, fight and win in complex, ambiguous environments of the future," Francis said.

Large Scale Combat Operations will require the total force — active, National Guard and Reserve – to be successful, according to Francis.

"Stan has operated in active duty and National Guard positions and brings a wealth of experience and perspective that will benefit the total aviation force, 51 percent of which resides in the National Guard and Reserves," Francis said.

"So Stan, as we bring you on active duty yet again, Jody and I could not be more excited that you and Desha will be on board to



PHOTO BY KELLY MORRIS

## Budraitis

lead Army Aviation into the future," Francis said.

Budraitis, who hails from Mississippi, is a master Army aviator with more than 2,000 flight hours in the UH-1, OH-58 and UH-60 helicopters, and has served at every command level from lieutenant to brigadier general. He most recently commanded the 66th Troop Command where he provided mission command to 2,600 Soldiers.

Budraitis thanked his family, leaders and the community for their support.

"What a great Army day today is for my

family and me. But as an American, practically every day is a great day, and having the honor to serve each day in the greatest, most lethal and most powerful Army in the history of mankind is a great privilege.

"By whatever standard you measure our great nation, whether economic power and individual opportunity, military might, or our nation's benevolence to the world promoting peace, democracy, and freedoms around the globe--though not perfect, America is without a doubt the greatest nation that has ever existed," he said.

Budraitis said he is passionate about service.

"I love being a Soldier and being around Soldiers. It's truly inspiring," Budraitis said. "Joining the Army is in the top three decisions of my life, and I can't be more proud than to be called a Soldier in the United States Army."

He thanked the commanding general for his leadership and vision, and for supporting the branch across all components.

"Major General Francis, sir, thanks for giving me the privilege to lead and develop America's most complex, most resilient, and most lethal weapon system – our aviation Soldiers. All of our Soldiers are critical whether they are in a control tower, a command post, an Army aircraft, or maintaining our complex aircraft," he said.

Budraitis described Army Aviation as a "finite maneuver force with infinite mission requirements," and he emphasized the priorities of people, readiness and modernization for the Army and Army Aviation.

"What we do here at Fort Rucker is critical for our Army and our nation as we prepare for Large Scale Combat Operations against any near-peer adversary," Budraitis said. "Our Army has an insatiable appetite for Army Aviation."



# ENHANCING SECURITY

## Post set to upgrade to new installation access system in September

By Jim Hughes

*Fort Rucker Public Affairs*

Fort Rucker is scheduled to begin its upgrade to the Automated Installation Entry program during the second week of September in a move by the Army to ensure continuity across the service and enhance installation security at all of its posts.

While the upgrade to the common operating system will be largely transparent to people associated with Fort Rucker, there will be some effort required up front to get everyone's post access credentials registered in the system, according to Brian Bowman, physical security specialist with the Directorate of Public Safety.

"This new program relies on technology that will verify the identity of individuals to ensure that they meet Army-approved access standards against several criminal and terrorist databases," Bowman said.

"As of last fall, the AIE program is the approved electronic physical access control system for the Army. Fort Rucker is getting AIE Tier 2, which consists of handheld scanners similar to the ones people currently see in use at the access control points," he said, adding that some other installations using AIE are Redstone Arsenal, Anniston Army Depot, Fort Benning, Georgia, and Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

Military members, family members, retirees, civilian employees and others with accepted post entry credentials don't need to go anywhere or do anything beyond planning for an additional few seconds at the gates to get themselves registered in the new system, Bowman said.

"A security officer, using a hand-held device similar to those currently in use, will conduct the initial credential registration of DOD ID cards at the ACPs," he added. "It will take about 10-15 seconds per ID card. Subsequent scans following the initial registration process will only take between one and three seconds. Initial scanning for registration of DOD ID cards will initially take place during off-peak times."

DPS will establish initial credential registration options during the first week of the upgrade using the exit lanes for people to update on their own schedule. A schedule for this will be published soon, Bowman said.

Non-DOD ID card holders older than 18 who have a valid reason for entering the installation who want to obtain an AIE access card must agree to a background check, which uses the National Crime Information Center Interstate Identification Index, a Federal Bureau of Investigation database that provides criminal histories from all 50 states and the District of Columbia, according to the physical security specialist.

"This check involves verifying people's identity and checking their criminal history against the Army Fitness Adjudication Standards," Bowman said. "Those with derogatory information related to the standards will be denied unescorted access to the installation. All non-DOD ID card holders are required to go to one of the visitor control centers to meet this requirement.

"Additionally, all personnel that have a valid visitor pass from the previous access



FILE PHOTO

control system are required to obtain a new AIE Access Card," he added.

The Ozark VCC is open Mondays-Fridays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., and the Daleville VCC is open Mondays-Sundays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The AIE registration process for visitors takes an estimated three to seven minutes to complete. AIE Access Cards and visitor passes are issued for the duration of the visitor's stay (e.g., five days to attend family day and a graduation), up to 6 months (unsponsored) or one year (sponsored). Visitors will need nothing more than they already bring in with the current system. For more, visit <https://home.army.mil/rucker/index.php/visit>.

Bowman and others responsible for keeping Fort Rucker safe welcome the move to the new system.

"It has access to more databases and information than Fort Rucker's current system, and reportedly returns information just as fast as systems previously used across the Army. One benefit to installation security is the ability to access debarment informa-

tion from other installations using AIE. If a person is barred from, for example, Fort Benning, that information will populate on the guard's scanner screen if that person attempts to access Fort Rucker."

As with any major change, officials expect challenges to arise while implementing the new system and are taking measures to mitigate the impact on the Fort Rucker community.

"We have reached out to other installations currently using AIE and are implementing some of their best practices," Bowman said. "One best practice to get DOD ID cards registered into the AIE system is to randomly scan people's cards as they enter and exit the installation during off-peak hours, and as individuals enter during peak hours, as traffic allows. This practice ensures minimal mission impact and inconvenience to those accessing the installation."

He added that more information will be put out on the upgrade as it is finalized.

# DIGGING DEEP

## USAACE honors 'best warriors'

By Kelly Morris  
USAACE Public Affairs

After a four-day event that tested the mental and physical strength of eight Fort Rucker Soldiers, two competitors rose to the top in the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence Best Warrior competition Aug. 2-5.

This year's USAACE Best Warrior Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year is Staff Sgt. Zachary M. Doerr, who serves as an Air Traffic Control instructor at C Company, 1st Battalion, 13th Aviation Regiment, 1st Aviation Brigade.

The USAACE Best Warrior Soldier of the Year is Spc. Kemuel Miranda, who serves as a medical lab technician at Lyster Army Health Clinic.

Command Sgt. Maj. Brian N. Hauke, Aviation Branch command sergeant major, congratulated the competitors during a ceremony at the U.S. Army Aviation Museum Aug. 5.

“On behalf of (Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, USAACE and Fort Rucker commanding general), (Chief Warrant Officer 5 Jonathan P. Koziol, chief warrant officer of the Aviation Branch), and myself, thank you for your courage during this competition, let alone the courage to get out of bed every morning and defend our nation and its freedoms we all enjoy,” Hauke said.

Hauke explained courage enables a person to encounter danger and difficulties with firmness, or without fear or fainting of heart. “I believe I’m reasonably safe in saying that each competitor at some point over the course of the competition had to dig deep and find the courage necessary to get through one of these events, if not multiple events.

“They had the courage to confront the uncertainty that lay ahead. At the very minimum each competitor had the courage to compete, and I commend all of you for that. The courage to stand out, set themselves apart from their peers, and the courage to say ‘I can do that,’” Hauke said.

The competition had a reduced number of events this year due to COVID-19. Events included the Army Combat Fitness Test, formal board proceedings conducted virtually with a panel of sergeants major, a written exam testing Army knowledge, rifle marksmanship qualification, and 12-mile road march. For the culminating event, the competitors headed into the woods for a timed day and night land navigation event.



PHOTOS BY KELLY MORRIS

**The 2020 USAACE Best Warrior competition winners pose with their trophies immediately following a ceremony at the U.S. Army Aviation Museum Aug. 5. Pictured are Spc. Kemuel Miranda, USAACE Best Warrior Soldier of the Year, and Staff Sgt. Zachary M. Doerr, USAACE Best Warrior NCO of the Year.**

The winners were each presented the Army Commendation Medal for meritorious achievement and selection as the USAACE NCO and Soldier of the Year for 2020, a USAACE command team coin, a wooden flag, and a trophy on behalf of the USAACE command sergeant major, and other items from sponsoring organizations.

Both winners said the biggest challenge was the ruck march.

“The final mile and a half, all my muscles were cramping up and I’m pretty sure I stopped sweating. I was like, you know what, you got to keep on driving through it and I made it to the end,” Doerr said.

With six years in the Army, Doerr currently serves in an air traffic control equipment training section where he teaches the implementation, setup and control of a mobile ground approach radar system known as the Air Traffic Navigation Integration and Coordination System.

“I find instructing very rewarding just because you get a group of Soldiers that come in very fresh and they don’t know anything about that portion of training the equipment or controlling. A few days later whenever they test out of your portion they are very knowledgeable on it, and just seeing that development is very rewarding,” Doerr said.

Doerr said he was surprised that he won in the NCO category.

“I’m very honored to be able to represent

“**Thank you for your courage during this competition, let alone the courage to get out of bed every morning and defend our nation and its freedoms we all enjoy.**

**– Command Sgt. Maj. Brian N. Hauke**  
**Aviation Branch command sergeant major**”



## Best cont.

Fort Rucker at the (Training and Doctrine Command) level board, and I'm glad that I did as well as I did. I'm proud," he said.

For Miranda, the last few miles of the ruck march pushed him to the limit.

"It went to the point of past exhaustion, past pain until I couldn't feel anything else," Miranda said. "Once you turn around the last time you know you have 3 more miles to go and everything is just hurting, you're

just trying to finish as fast as you can. It was worth it."

The competition gave Miranda a chance to meet Aviation Soldiers.

"Being in the clinic it's hard to meet all the aviation people, all the other Soldiers and personnel that work with aviation. It was really nice to meet them," he said.

The winners will now move on to compete in the TRADOC-level competition.



Soldiers completed a 12-mile ruck march as part of the 2020 USAACE Best Warrior Competition on Fort Rucker.



Command Sgt. Maj. Brian N. Hauke, Aviation Branch command sergeant major, congratulates the competitors.

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# 'TOTAL TEAM EFFORT'

## Fort Rucker food services team rises to challenge of keeping quarantined Soldiers well fed

By Jim Hughes

*Fort Rucker Public Affairs*

Napoleon said that an Army marches on its stomach, and a herculean effort by the team at Fort Rucker is ensuring that Soldiers residing in the post's quarantine facilities stay ready to move on and carry out their missions once their time there comes to an end.

U.S. Army Garrison Fort Rucker's primary mission of taking care of Soldiers is a continuous challenge the team has successfully carried out for decades, but the COVID-19 pandemic brought with it numerous unprecedented challenges, including how to feed Soldiers put into quarantine status while PCSing, on temporary duty or reporting to the post for training, according to Col. Whitney B. Gardner, garrison commander.

"Making this work was a total team effort – everyone on the installation worked together to make this successful," he said, adding that training at Fort Rucker never ceased despite the challenges associated with the pandemic. "The U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence command group, all of the tenant units, and later the people at IHG who really helped us expand accommodations and alleviate some of the stress on the quarantine facility barracks – they all deserve credit."

But that didn't mean the food services operation wasn't a challenge, the colonel said,

adding that the requirement started small, then quickly picked up steam, and then went on and on and on.

"When this started in March, it was just a few meals a day," he said. "Then we started getting more and more people in the facility, and that meant our great team here had to move into uncharted territory to figure out how to accomplish the mission and keep the Soldiers fed."

In the initial stages, the dining facility was preparing meals in the single digits each day for the quarantine area, and now, they prepare, package and deliver almost 700 meals a day at the facilities, according to Debra Anglin, Logistics Readiness Center director.

"Our contractor, Southern Food Management, has done an outstanding job in taking care of our Soldiers throughout this period. Plus, we are still serving normal dining facility operations and field chow as well," she said, adding that field chow is food prepared in the DFAC and then put into chafing dishes for transport to where the Soldiers are training."

While deftly handling the increase in quantity as it arose, the length of maintaining the operation did take the team by surprise, Gardner said, adding he is impressed with his team's response.



PHOTOS BY JIM HUGHES

**Fort Rucker dining facility employees prepare the lunchtime meals in the DFAC Aug. 12.**

"We did not expect to be doing it for this long. Back in March, I expected to be running this operation for 60 days at the most," he said. "The fact that we've been doing this for so long and continued to get better and better at accomplishing this mission just shows you what a great team we have."

"We have the right leadership and the right employees at the DFAC, and they care about what they do and they care about Soldiers," Gardner added. "I'm impressed with how they remain flexible, how they work through the logistical challenges and stay on top of the ever-increasing demand."

And Gardner understands firsthand how

important food is when a Soldier is under quarantine conditions. He spent 22 days in quarantine at Fort Bliss, Texas, after returning from Liberia in 2015.

"The facilities were great, but what really made those three weeks more bearable is that we had good food," he said. "It was an important part of the day. When you're in that status, every day becomes routine, and you find yourself looking forward to meals because it breaks up the day."

"Having good, quality meals improves your quality of life greatly when you're in a quarantine situation. You're there to protect yourself and those around you, but it's not fun, and it is mentally challenging when you're separated from people like that."

Knowing how important food would be to the Soldiers put into quarantine status, Gardner made sure his team knew the mission, and they have carried out his intent to the letter.

"I wanted to make sure we had the contracts in place and were getting the support we needed to ensure that our Soldiers, those in quarantine or restricted movement status, were going to get the best, highest quality, well-rounded food – not a box lunch. I wanted them to get a hot breakfast, a hot lunch and a quality dinner. I wanted them to get the same food they would get if they walked into the dining facility," he said. "We have a great team over there and they have truly delivered."

Even though the food services operation continuously receives many positive comments on its effort through personal contact, letters of appreciation and the Interactive Customer Evaluation system, that doesn't mean there haven't been issues, Anglin said, adding that the path to success lies in how



## Food services *cont.*

the team responds to those issues.

She shared the story of one Soldier who submitted a negative ICE comment on a Friday night, noting a drop in the quality of the food and lack of coffee. Sunday morning, that same Soldier submitted a positive comment thanking the team for the return of coffee and an uptick in the quality of the food.

"Initially, the issues we had centered on two areas: how we delivered the food to ensure it is kept safe in transit and what time the quarantine site needed the meals delivered," she said. "Pallets and extra delivery vehicles were procured by the contractor and we coordinated schedules for each meal period for the delivery of meals. Both were taken care of rather quickly and operations have run smoothly for quite a while without incident."

The food services team also keeps a close eye on the quality of its product and responds immediately to any issues that arise, Anglin added.

"Our quality assurance team regularly visits the quarantine site area where the meals are dropped off to ensure Soldiers are getting quality meals," she said. "We also seek feedback from the staff on how we can better serve them and we ensure the deliveries are made at the time they are requested. "There haven't been any major issues or complaints to date thanks to great teamwork and constant communication."

The person running the quarantine facility, Maj. Carl Warren, garrison executive officer, agrees.

"The DFAC team has done an amazing job at providing meals to the quarantine facility," he said. "I came over in mid-April and I was amazed at how many personnel from the dining facility were involved in the process to ensure the meals are delivered and presented properly."

"There are times the quarantine facility has gone from needing to provide 76 meals



Once packaged up and put into containers to retain heat, the meals are loaded into a van.



The van is immediately driven to the quarantine entry area where Soldiers remove the meals for distribution to the people in the facility.

to upwards of 120 meals in a two-day span, and the team always meets those requirements," Warren said, adding the team also goes the extra mile to meet the special dietary requirements of some Soldiers. "I estimate that 98% of time the dining facility arrives with the meals at the scheduled time, which is a big help when some of our quarantined Soldiers are completing on-line training ahead of their scheduled courses."

Another issue to be overcome is, well, the dining facilities themselves, Gardner said.

"Our dining facilities aren't fantastic," the colonel said. "We've been limping along with these old buildings for a very long time. What our team is able to produce in those buildings that aren't of the highest quality is impressive."

Officials have a plan in place to get the post new dining facilities, but it will take quite a while to get it accomplished, according to Joseph Wyka, Directorate of Public Works director.

"Our two dining facilities remain among the hardest working facilities on Fort

Rucker," he said. "DPW has partnered with the LRC over the past year to keep them in operation through some challenging facility issues. Although a new dining facility is templated as part of a new Advanced Individual Training Complex, at this point this facility will not be up and operational until 2030."

"We have developed some good work-arounds for heating, cooking and dish washing issues that allowed the LRC to continue to provide meals to Soldiers in training and even support quality hot meals for our Soldiers in quarantine," Wyka added. "The new dining facility will allow us to greatly improve our level of service to our Soldiers, so we continue to advocate for it to be moved forward in the construction program."

Although no end is in sight for ceasing the food services operation at the quarantine facilities, Gardner is confident his team is up for any challenge.

"They have proven themselves time and time again, and I have no doubt that they will continue to take good care of our Soldiers for as long as this mission remains," he said.

# 'ABSOLUTELY AMAZING'

## GEMS makes real-world impact on area youth through virtual setting

By Jim Hughes  
*Fort Rucker Public Affairs*

The U.S. Army Aeromedical Research Laboratory held its Gains in the Education of Mathematics and Science program in the virtual world for the first time in July to help leave a lasting real-world impact on area youth in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It was incredibly successful despite all of the challenges," said Amy Baker, GEMS program coordinator, and science, technology, engineering and mathematics education administrator at USAARL.

"It was absolutely amazing," she said of the virtual GEMS program held over two sessions in July for more than 400 participants. "The feedback I received from parents and students was very positive and very appreciative, so I would say it was an overall success."

That success was achieved with a lot of planning, preparation, and GEMS teachers' skillset of adapting and overcoming.

"I think one thing that was very beneficial for us was our teachers and mentors did the prep work on the front end – loading all of the content, and having it set up and ready to go before the sessions started," Baker said. "Also their ability to be flexible during GEMS. As teachers, they are familiar with that – that is how their day rolls. On the piec-

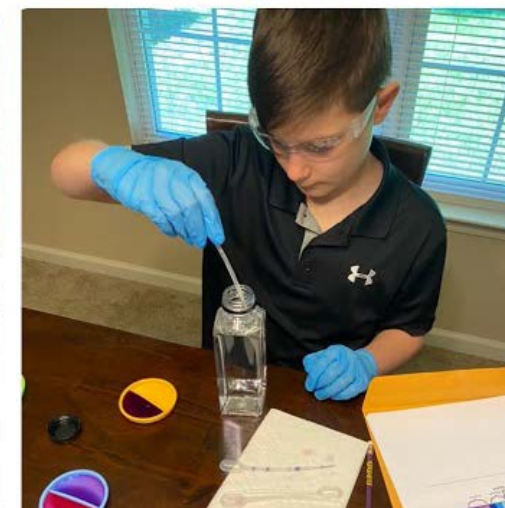
es that we may have been worried on how it was going to go, they were like, 'Nah, don't worry – it will be fine.'"

Students picked up the supply kits they would need to take part in their respective session at USAARL just prior to their session starting, along with printed copies of their module plans that they could use as a step-by-step guide to the various activities and experiments, according to Baker.

While the great majority of students watched module videos on Google Classroom, and interacted with teachers and mentors while online to showcase their results, some had to resort to emailing in their results for whatever reasons prevented them from logging onto the system, she added.

The GEMS move to the virtual world did not come without issues, though, as complications from the pandemic did cause some delays in getting in planned supplies for some of the modules, causing students, mentors and teachers to find workarounds, which they did masterfully, according to Loraine St. Onge, USAARL research administration manager and GEMS laboratory champion.

"That was the benefit and the value of all of the preplanning that the lab, as well as the teachers and mentors, put into the devel-



COURTESY PHOTOS

**A biochemistry GEMS student conducts an experiment on understanding pH levels and indicators to determine the differences between acids and bases**

opment of the materials for the classes," she said. "When those few supplies didn't come in, they did not have any trouble adjusting and adapting, and offering to their students solutions or challenging the students to come up with their own solutions."

"Of course we wanted everything to be perfect, but it didn't really negatively impact the material we delivered or the content of

the program because the teachers and mentors were so adaptable and prepared in offering alternative solutions to the students," St. Onge added.

The program also succeeded in mitigating the loss of face-to-face interaction between teachers, mentors and students, she said.

"With our virtual classrooms, we did not do a live stream or meet in a teleconference,



## GEMS *cont.*

the content was pre-loaded each morning and then we had mentors available throughout the day – sometimes well into the night – to answer the students' questions," St. Onge said. "Some students weren't able to participate until after parents got home from work, and for those students we still had staff available to answer their questions.

"It was nice to step back and watch that dialogue unfold between the teachers and students, and to see how our mentors and teachers were challenging the students to think scientifically and come up with creative solutions to problems they were encountering when trying to do the activities," she added. "I was honestly blown away how well it seemed to unfold in an environment

where our instructors were not face to face with the students."

While it's impossible at this time to tell what direction future GEMS programs will take, Baker and St. Onge feel there are takeaways from the virtual program.

"Personally, the virtual piece allows me, from a planning, organizing and administrative standpoint, to think outside of the box a bit and to push beyond what we typically have done to incorporate more technology into the program," Baker said. "I think this helped take the blinders off a bit to think about what we can do creatively to keep GEMS fresh, new and exciting for students.

"I think that our reach has the potential to be bigger, as well, as some of the students



**Biochemistry GEMS students conduct a gummy bear osmosis experiment showing what happens when varying liquids (tap water, distilled water, salt water) flow through a semi-permeable membrane.**



**A neuroscience GEMS student engages in a tongue mapping experiment to better understand the sense of taste.**

who participated have younger siblings who were also able to experience GEMS because their sibling was participating," she added. "Many parents were also able to experience firsthand what goes on at GEMS rather than just hearing about it from their children."

St. Onge said those and other takeaways from the other labs hosting virtual GEMS this year will probably be discussed at the Army Educational Outreach Program GEMS program review meeting in September.

"My hope is that in that meeting we will be able to have an open discussion on the pros and cons of having the virtual option available, and I can already foresee that some of the GEMS programs that ran this summer with the virtual program will be eager to try to adopt that in future years," she said.



**A planetary GEMS student completes a seismograph challenge, which is used to detect and record earthquakes.**

"I think it's a time of transformation for the program as a whole," St. Onge added. "I look forward to the opportunity to discuss with AEOP and the other laboratories how we can strengthen GEMS across the country, as well as expand our reach by continuing to transform the program in unique ways that are required for us to adapt to the times."

But for 2020, virtual GEMS did what it was supposed to do, she said.

"We exceeded my expectations," St. Onge said. "I'm happy with what our team accomplished. It helped so much to have the support of our command team at USAARL and Fort Rucker. We're fortunate that we have the support and engagement of so many people and all of our leadership who help us whenever we needed it. We're so grateful for that."



# New aviators to incur 10-year service obligation

By Thomas Brading  
*Army News Service*

WASHINGTON -- Starting in October, commissioned and warrant officers selected for initial entry flight training will be required to serve at least a decade once they become an Army aviator, according to an all Army activity message published Aug. 12.

The new policy doesn't include Soldiers currently in training, said Chief Warrant Officer 5 William S. Kearns, aviation and officer policy integrator for the Army's G-1 office. "We're looking at troops selected for flight training in the fiscal year 2021 and beyond."

The change comes as the cost and requirements for aircraft have increased across the board, Kearns said.

"There are many complexities in these advanced helicopters, which translates to increased costs in flight hours, maintenance, and training requirements," Kearns said. "They require more time for people to gain experience. There's the technical expertise that goes along with it as well. In the end, it's the Army getting a good return on the investments."

These investments set the Army apart from all the branches, he said. For example, it's the only service that allows people to go into flight training with only a high school degree. "You don't have to have a college degree to apply or be accepted into it," he said.

The policy also applies to Army Reserve and National Guard components, but their obligated service will remain part-time, he said. "The service obligation begins on the date an officer attains an aeronautical rating of Army aviator or is removed from attendance, whichever is earlier."

Before Army Secretary Ryan D. McCarthy



MASTER SGT. MATT HECHT

**UH-60L Black Hawks from the New Jersey National Guard's 1-150th Assault Helicopter Battalion sit on the flight line during sunset at the Army Aviation Support Facility, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., in 2018.**

signed a memorandum for the change in June, the Army had bumped up its incentive pay for aviators in January. The pay raise was the first in two decades to help balance pilot numbers at all ranks and stay competitive with the civilian market.

Across the force, warrant officer recruiters are actively on the lookout to fill their ranks.

"We want as many applications as we can, so if anybody has any questions, be sure to contact that warrant officer recruiting team," Kearns said. "It's a great time to apply to be-

come a pilot, and [Soldiers] can get in with a high school degree. There are some other prerequisites they have to meet. But, we want as many people as we can get to apply.

"We are very, very interested in seeing more applications," he added.

This call to action comes amid challenging times, with many civilian airlines running on reduced flight schedules, said Chief Warrant Officer 5 Jon Koziol, the Army's command chief warrant officer to the aviation branch, during a Facebook livestream in June.

"This global pandemic has made unprecedented impacts on the world's economies and our way of life," Koziol said. "Some of the impacts may have directly affected [Soldiers'] ability to pursue [their] goals of working for the commercial sector, especially the airlines."

For anyone interested in becoming a warrant officer, individuals should contact a warrant officer recruiter or visit the Army's Warrant Officer Recruiting [website](#).



# CID Cybercrime Unit warns that rental scams on the rise

By Jim Hughes

Fort Rucker Public Affairs



ARMY GRAPHIC

Housing rental scams are on the rise worldwide. The U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command, commonly known as CID, reminds the Army community to be cautious when responding to any advertisement regarding home or apartment rentals.

According to Edward Labarge, director of CID's Major Cybercrime Unit, scammers use a variety of tactics to steal people's money before the victim determines the listing is fake.

"A typical rental scam works by a property being listed at a low price, usually below market rate, to get the attention of potential renters," said Labarge. "Then the scammers will pressure the renters to pay a deposit and the first and last month's rent to secure the rental."

Army CID reports there are currently millions of fake listings for apartments, duplexes, and houses listed on classified ads and reputable rental sites worldwide. The scam is accomplished when rentals are advertised, but they do not actually exist, are no longer available, or are up for sale.

"Rental scams will be more prevalent in larger metro areas where there are a large number of real estate rentals on the market," said Labarge. "This makes it easy for these types of scams to go unnoticed due to the large volume of rentals."

Although rental scams may be targeted toward anyone seeking a rental property, military members may be more prone to falling victim due to frequent Permanent Change of Station moves.

Labarge also said areas surrounding military installations are targeted due to competitive rental markets and service members having unique housing situations where they may not be available to view a property in person

prior to arriving in the area.

Fake listings often lure victims in by offering military discounts, low rent, good neighborhoods, and great amenities.

"If a house or apartment is being listed well below market norms, there is a reason," said Labarge. "If it's too good to be true, it usually is. Also, a good telltale sign that the listing is a scam is that the landlords won't want to meet you in person or there is no screening process. Every landlord will want to make sure they meet you in person, no matter how brief since they are making a major decision to trust that you'll follow the rules of the lease."

CID officials remind the Army community, if you feel you are a victim of a rental scam, contact your local CID office or law enforcement agency as well as the Federal Trade Commission.

The following are some of the known types of rental scams.

## HIJACKED ADS

Scammers use real rental ads and photos from legitimate postings to create their own fake ads. Scammers will often use the same name as the legitimate posting and change the email address, or other contact informa-

tion, to their own.

## PHANTOM RENTALS

Scammers make fake listings using photos from properties that are not for rent, for sale, or do not exist.

## WATCH FOR WARNING SIGNS

- They want you to sign or send money before you see the property.
- They want the security deposit or first month's rent before you sign the lease.
- They ask you to wire or send money through a payment app.
- They say they are out of town or out of the country.
- They are ready to make a deal with no background information.

## PROTECT YOURSELF

- Do not rely solely on email to contact the owner and be wary of foreign telephone numbers.
- Do online research of the rental company, property address, and the owner.
- Conduct a reverse image search of the photos to see where else the images are being used.
- Ask for additional photos. The actual owner

or property manager should be able to provide additional photos.

- Compare rent amount to other rentals in the area.
- Take a tour, or have someone you know in the area tour for you, in person or by video.
- Call the company to verify before signing a lease agreement.
- Never pay a security deposit, first month's rent, or application fee with cash, wire transfers, gift cards, prepaid cards, or payment apps because once you send it, there is no way to get your money back.
- Obtain and review a copy of any contract prior to sending any money or providing any personal information.
- Do not make rush decisions. Scammers will often pressure suspecting victims to complete the deal quickly due to increased interest in the property, creating a false sense of urgency.

In addition, the Criminal Investigation Command's Major Cybercrime Unit continues to warn the Army community of ongoing Coronavirus-themed phishing attacks impersonating organizations with the end goal of stealing information and delivering malware.

Labarge said the Major Cybercrime Unit continues to "aggressively pursue cybercriminals both domestic and abroad who target our Soldier's and their families in their online campaigns."

For more information about computer security, other computer-related scams, and to review previous cybercrime alert notices and cyber-crime prevention flyers visit the Army CID MCU website at <https://www.cid.army.mil/mcu-advisories.html>. To report a crime to Army CID, visit [www.cid.army.mil](http://www.cid.army.mil).



# Lyster Soldier exceeds expectations, eager to make a difference

By Janice Erdlitz

LAHC Public Affairs Officer

When you pass Spc. Naomi Raber in the halls of Lyster Army Health Clinic, at first glance you see just another Soldier in uniform.

For Raber, a medical laboratory technician assigned to Lyster Army Health Clinic, is not your typical Soldier working in a medical clinic. She's a graduate of Army survival, evasion, resistance and escape training, a physically and mentally challenging school.

The SERE course is required for jobs, specialties, and assignments that have a significant or high risk of capture and exploitation such as combat aircrews, special operations forces, Army Special Forces and Rangers, and military attachés.

"When I first arrived at Fort Rucker, I heard about SERE school from multiple peo-



PHOTO BY JANICE ERDLITZ

**Raber**

ple and was immediately intrigued. It sounded terrifying, but I fought hard for the opportunity to attend the school," remarked Raber.

The Army SERE program training cur-

riculum consists of 21 consecutive days of phased training that provides students with the skills and knowledge necessary to survive, evade, resist, and escape in all environments and potential captivity scenarios.

Raber continued to explain, "Because I volunteered for SERE as a lab tech, the flight students attending the school thought that I was slightly crazy at first. However, the ability to work as a team with Soldiers from all different ranks in a very stressful environment was incomparable to anything I've ever experienced before."

Following SERE school, Raber remarked she felt ready and eager to make a difference in her unit. She has a greater appreciation for the opportunity female Soldiers have to participate and serve in all ranks and occupations in the military.

Before joining the Army, Raber from Peoria, Arizona, had always pushed the lim-

its and challenged stereotypes. "I had numerous people tell me that I didn't know how difficult the Army would be and that challenged me even more towards that goal."

Raber's future goal is to become a medic and deploy. "There have been people who have supported my drive immensely, but there have been an equal amount of people who have told me that my goals are unrealistic because I am a woman. However, one of the most amazing feelings is being able to exceed expectations and not just meet the standard, especially when people don't expect you to succeed."

Her advice to young women joining the military is to not let anyone tell you that you are not capable of something. "If you let the doubts of others fuel you to your goals, rather than discourage you, you will be a stronger woman and a stronger Soldier," concluded Raber.

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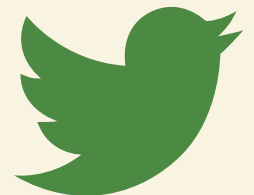
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