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PHOTO BY SPC. HUNTER GARCIA

Soldiers conduct training at Hohenfels Training Area, Germany, Aug. 10 during Saber Junction, an exercise designed to assess readiness and promote interoperability with allied and partner nations.

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Parker Elementary Patriots get off to virtual start for new school year

By Jim Hughes
Fort Rucker Public Affairs

The 2020-21 school year kicked off Aug. 24 on Fort Rucker, and while it may not be the first-day at the newly completed LTG (R) Ellis D. Parker Elementary School that the staff, students and parents might have wanted, it was the one they need.

With the COVID-19 pandemic continuing its devastation, students and parents were able to choose between two options shortly before the school year start date, according to Dr. Vicki Gilmer, Parker Elementary principal.

“Our awesome students had the opportunity to select from a Virtual School Option, which includes a semester commitment and is run by the Virtual Campus, or the Local

School Option, which will meet remotely with Google Classroom when in Health Protection Condition C, which is the current level at Fort Rucker, and on campus when in HPCON Level B,” Gilmer said.

“We all had visions and dreams of what the new year in the new facility would be like; however, in this time of pandemic, we have to put aside the ideas of what we thought and tackle what we have,” she added. “Mission No. 1 is to keep everyone safe yet continue to serve our families with the very best. The new facility is a wonderful, state-of-the-art school with all the bells and whistles, but first we have to refocus and look at what our families need and how we can provide that.”



A hallway in the new school.



PHOTOS BY JIM HUGHES

LTG (R) Ellis D. Parker Elementary School

The hard work and flexibility the staff at the school displayed at the end of the previous school year is paying big dividends for the start of this school year, Gilmer said.

“We learned a great deal last year when we flipped from classrooms to remote in approximately 48 hours,” she said. “We listened to parents and teachers about the pros and cons of the schedules we used. We have refined our platform and we have also had to prepare for what remote learning looks like at the beginning of a school year. When we went into remote learning in the spring, students were very familiar with many of the digital tools used.”

While many of those students are returning this year, there are many “great new families,” as well, Gilmer said, and the school staff is committed to making sure they have a smooth transition into becoming Parker Patriots.

“We have totally designed the first day of school as a pre-flight day,” she said. “Just like a good pilot, we are going to walk through our platform, check our instruments and verify understanding with each child one-on-one. Every child on the first day of school will have a session with the teacher to make sure he or she is operational and can use all the basics of the platform.”

If the post is able to move to HPCON B during the school year and students are al-

lowed to enter halls of the new facility for the first time, Gilmer said safety will be Job No. 1.

“We will follow all Department of Defense Education Activity, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and local Army guidelines to ensure a safe return to school when the HPCON level permits,” she added. “We had the opportunity to have our partners from the garrison, Lyster Army Health Clinic and our community superintendent join us for a tour recently, and really take a good look at what we have in place. We take these guidelines seriously and we will implement them with fidelity.”

Despite the change in plans, excitement still runs high for the new school year among the staff, and the principal also has a message she’d like to pass on to students.

“I would tell them that we have an opportunity to do great things,” she said. “We have the chance to take an unfortunate event and turn it into a history-making event. I want all my awesome kiddos to show their grit, and when we look back at this we will be so proud of what they accomplished.”

She also had a message for parents.

“I am going to ask the parents to be our partners,” she said. “We are here 100% for the families. These are weird times and the unknown is unsettling. We are committed to being positive, problem solvers and service

School *cont.*

oriented.

"If families have an issue, such as dual parents working, students in child and youth services, etc., let us know and we will work a plan for you," Gilmer added. "We have partnered with our friends at CYS to help assist those students who will be attending that facility while we are not permitted to be open per the DOD guidelines.

"We find, at times, that families will share with neighbors and other families their concerns, but they don't bring those concerns to us," she said. "We are sincerely asking for the opportunity to assist them with any issues that may arise."

The principal also thanked her staff: paraprofessionals, teachers, front office workers and all other employees, for the work they've done in getting everything ready for the 2020-21 school year.

"We have had staff members come in all summer long to prepare this great facility," she said. "When we learned we were going remote, staff members showed up and started prepping for students, and there are so many more examples of the great efforts they have made to ensure everything is ready.

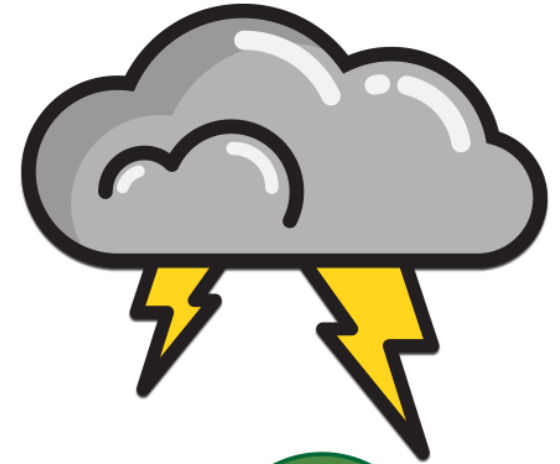
"I could not be prouder and more in awe of the heart and passion of this staff," Gilmer said. "In these uncertain times, to me, they are truly shining a light of hope and they are showing incredible dedication."

Even though the school year in the new facility didn't start off in the fashion most staff, parents and students wanted, she said that "being in one facility is amazing."

"We have spent the last three years operating as one school on two campuses with two staffs. Now it seems like the whole family is home and it is a great feeling," Gilmer said.

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For more information, visit www.ready.gov

AER campaign exceeds last year's contributions despite pandemic challenges

By Jim Hughes
Fort Rucker Public Affairs

The Fort Rucker Army Emergency Relief Campaign came to its official close Aug. 18 during a ceremony where officials reported that donations exceeded last year's despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Campaign officials and volunteers spearheaded this year's effort to raise a total of more than \$160,000, exceeding last year's total by \$13,000 and placing Fort Rucker among the highest contribution metrics in the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, according to Capt. Andrew Tehvand, D Company, 1st Battalion, 145th Aviation Regiment and Fort Rucker 2020 AER campaign coordinator.

"This year's campaign posed many complications that were expertly handled by Beth Gunter, Fort Rucker AER officer," Tehvand said. "Staff Sgt. Jason Tudor and Staff Sgt. Sammydee Aeakahana, assistant campaign coordinators, solved each unique problem as they arose."

Maj. Gen. David J. Francis,

U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker commanding general, spoke at the ceremony and thanked all of the volunteers and local AER officials for a successful campaign despite being interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic almost immediately after starting March 1.

"Thank you to all of the volunteers who gave a hand up to Soldiers taking part in this year's campaign," Francis said, adding that the campaign was paused three weeks after its start because of the pandemic and then picked back up July 1. "Our volunteers did an absolutely phenomenal job despite the COVID challenges for our Soldiers out there – about one in three Soldiers on Fort Rucker

donated to this cause to help other Soldiers and their families."

In 2019, Soldiers at Fort Rucker received more than \$300,000 in assistance via interest-free loans and grants when they turned to AER as a solution to their financial hardships, the general said, adding that 105 spouses and



PHOTOS BY JIM HUGHES

Command Sgt. Maj. Jasper Johnson, Fort Rucker garrison command sergeant major, and Chester Witkowski, deputy to the garrison commander, present Beth Gunter, Fort Rucker AER officer, with a check representing the amount raised during the 2020 AER campaign during a ceremony Aug. 18.

dependents also received almost \$220,000 in scholarships for the 2020-21 school year from the program.

"Our Warrior Ethos states that we never leave a fallen comrade, and AER helps us to do that through Soldiers helping Soldiers," Francis said, adding that retirees can benefit from AER, as well. "Contributions to this year's campaign will make a lasting impact for generations to come."

"I'm very proud of the Fort Rucker community for stepping up and lending a helping hand to Soldiers – it's really critical in this day and age, with the challenges that we've had with COVID, to make sure that our Soldiers aren't experiencing any undo financial hardship," he added. "AER and our

leadership have helped us to do that. You've all made a significant difference in the lives of our Soldiers and their families.

"We are deeply grateful and truly appreciate all that you've done and continue to do for all of our Soldiers and their families," he said. "Congratulations on a hugely successful AER campaign."

Chester Witkowski, deputy to the Fort Rucker garrison commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Jasper Johnson, garrison command sergeant major, presented Gunter with a check representing the amount raised for the campaign to close the ceremony that was held before a limited audience in the USAACE headquarters building. All In Credit Union also donated \$8,000 to the campaign.



Fort Rucker moves to virtual in, out processing

By Jim Hughes

Fort Rucker Public Affairs

Necessity is the mother of invention, and the COVID-19 pandemic created the need to in and out process Soldiers at Fort Rucker in the safest manner possible to help mitigate the spread of the virus.

The answer, as has been the case with so much in dealing with COVID-19, was to move as many of the steps in the processes as possible into the virtual world, according to Fort Rucker Directorate of Human Resources officials.

The move to virtual in and out processing began Aug. 5 and has largely met the goals of decreasing foot traffic across the installation to help limit people's exposure to other people while still getting Soldiers processed effectively, said Omar Allen, lead human resources assistant with the DHR Military Personnel Division Personnel Management Branch.

All newly arriving Soldiers report to Bldg. 315 upon arrival, he said. The process includes unit S1 personnel gathering all of the Soldier's documents, such as PCS orders, amendments, and DA Forms 31 to scan to the MPD.

"MPD arrives the Soldier to Fort Rucker, prepares in-processing documents, and scans in-processing packets back to the S-1 for distribution to Soldiers," Allen said. "In-processing documents identify activities that can be in-processed virtually versus those that require an appointment. Once the Soldier completes in processing, S1 scans the in-processing packet back to MPD for a final review and completion stamp."

Out processing uses same process for Soldiers to complete the DA Form 137-2, Installation Clearing Record, he said, adding



PHOTO BY HOLLY STERLING

that other Army installations are developing virtual in- and out-processing procedures unique to the requirements of their locations.

Feedback on the process has been positive, but there have been challenges to work through – challenges the DHR staff and Fort Rucker units have worked through successfully,

"Implementing new processes are often met with major concerns; however, in a collaborative environment, the MPD works jointly with the brigades and the tenants units to establish and solidify the virtual installation in- and out-processing system,"

Allen said.

The new process will continue for as long as leadership deems it necessary to protect Soldiers and the Fort Rucker community, but officials are also looking at aspects of the system that can become a permanent part of in and out processing, he said.

While face-to-face contact is minimal with the new system, that doesn't mean customer service is taking a backseat, Allen said.

"The most important thing Soldiers should know is that although MPD personnel will not physically see them, we are here

to support them 100 percent," he said. "The S1 is equipped to assist service members with obtaining in and out processing documents, and ensuring completion in a timely manner.

"As this process is in its infancy, we ask all involved to exercise tactical patience to ensure that each service member receives the support they need to complete this process without undue delays," Allen said, adding his thanks to the 110th Aviation Brigade and 1st Aviation Brigade staffs for all of their hard work in streamlining the process.

For more information on virtual in and out processing, call 255-1814.

Flight school, diversity focus of Army Aviation cadet mentorship events

By Kelly Morris
USAACE Public Affairs

Army Aviation experts come together virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic as mentors to help ensure cadets with the United States Military Academy and Reserve Officer Training Corps, including at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, get the information they need to pursue their dreams.

The virtual mentorship events, with the support of the Organization and Personnel Force Development Directorate, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence, provide information about flight school and career progression.

In a recent session conducted via Zoom with cadets at historic Tuskegee University, Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, USAACE and Fort Rucker commanding general, greeted cadets and encouraged them to branch Aviation.

"It's an incredible opportunity to lead some of the finest young men and women that our Army has to offer -- incredible leaders, incredible patriots, and you get to fly the most modern aircraft in the world," Francis said.

The events seek to dispel myths and doubts cadets may have about Aviation, according to Lt. Col. Erika Salerno, deputy at OPFD.

"We provide an overview of Army Aviation and a question and answer session with aviation officers to assist cadets with their branching decision and with their transition from cadet to lieutenant," she said.

Capt. Matthew Manning, an Apache pilot serving with 25th Combat Aviation Brigade, joined the virtual event from Hawaii to speak about flight school, and the importance of diversity.

For years Manning volunteered to reach out to HBCUs to promote the branch, and eventually linked up with OPFD's efforts. With a passion for outreach, he encouraged

Tuskegee cadets to seek Aviation, and Combat Arms in general.

He explained the sacred trust Aviators have with the commanders and Soldiers on the ground that they support.

"Our motto is 'Above the Best' because we fly above the best Soldiers in the world, regardless of what their ethnicity, gender or race or what their branch is. We're going to support them each and every day," Manning said.

Manning pointed out the diversity among the aviators who came together as a team to eagerly support and participate in the ongoing outreach to HBCUs.

"There's no (branch of service) like the Army when it comes to camaraderie, and there's no branch like Army Aviation when it comes to family," he said. "When it comes down to flying, ... you're going to do whatever it takes to make sure that brother or sister comes home."

Manning encouraged the cadets to be the change that they seek in the world.

"Success is not based off race, it's based off your character and how well you're going to take care of your Soldiers. That's what it means to serve in the U.S. Army," Manning said. "The more diversity we have, the better we are."

He encouraged them to carry the school's proud Tuskegee Aviation legacy forward.

"You sit in that chair right now holding the keys to success. That Red Tail legacy is already within you. You've walked that ground that they have walked. And you have everything at your fingertips in order to make a difference," Manning said.

As cadets asked their questions, topics included the difficulty level of flight training, how to prepare for Survival Evasion Resistance and Escape school, and whether



PHOTO BY KELLY MORRIS

Capt. Matthew Manning, Apache pilot with 25th Combat Aviation Brigade, volunteers to brief cadets at Tuskegee University via Zoom about Army Aviation, flight school and career progression.

imperfect eyesight can be a disqualifier.

Lt. Kayla Freeman, an Army aviator who serves as a flight test engineer at Redstone Arsenal, and is a graduate of Tuskegee, spoke to the cadets about issues with her eyes that eventually required surgery. Despite these challenges, she went on to pursue her dream to fly.

"Don't count yourself out," said Freeman.

Francis responded to a question about what his advice would be to a new platoon leader.

"You have to be humble, especially in aviation. When you come into an aviation platoon, you have people around you that have far more experience than you do. Your platoon sergeant will have about 14 to 17 years in the Army already. That's intentional. The reason we pair you up that way is because you're new, and that NCO has been around for a while. Their job is to build you as a leader and help you be successful," Francis said.

He explained the young leaders will also be surrounded by warrant officers with years of tactical and technical expertise. The chal-

lenge is to lead those professionals well.

"Just because you have more experienced people around you doesn't mean that you abdicate the responsibility to lead. What they want is for you to lead them," Francis said. "The training you're going to get is going to prepare you to lead that formation. And you're going to get better, and you're going to make them better, at the same time."

Francis encouraged cadets to take the Selection Instrument for Flight Training test, and get their flight physical.

"I think you've seen what an impressive branch this is. It is an incredible capability for the United States Army. And you get to get a cockpit every day and go do what we do. And I would just tell you I've been doing this for 31 years, it's an absolutely phenomenal career. If I could start over again and be in your place, I would do it today," Francis said.

"We want you, and are looking for you to come be a part of the Aviation Branch," Francis said. "You've got great potential there, and I would encourage all of you to give Aviation a shot."

Creating your personal signature at the Army's Home, IMCOM

By **Adriana King**
IMCOM G9

Employees at Fort Rucker gathered Aug. 7 to participate in U.S. Army Installation Management Command's Service Culture Campaign refresher course, Create your Personal Signature.

The course is one of 20 refresher courses offered to non-supervisory personnel assigned to IMCOM to help them incorporate service excellence in all aspects of operations.

IMCOM's workforce and leaders are required to take one Service Culture Campaign refresher course per year to foster relationships. In the course, they are reminded how to take care of IMCOM's most valuable resource – its people, the workforce and their customers.

However, with the COVID-19 pandemic, face-to-face training for the civilian workforce has slowed down or stopped altogether. Alfred Alexander, Transition Services Manager and Service Culture Facilitator at Fort Rucker, decided to utilize one of the

platforms available to Department of Defense civilians to facilitate this course virtually.

"This course reminds all employees that the work we do at IMCOM is unique and we need to feel proud," said Alexander.

In Create your Personal Signature, Alexander presented participants with opportunities to discuss reasons why the work at IMCOM is never ordinary, regardless of what we do for the organization.

Gaining a better understanding of IMCOM's tag line, We are the Army's Home, and its mission statement, "IMCOM delivers quality base support from the Strategic Support Area, enabling readiness for a globally responsive Army," were the participants' focus. They learned that IMCOM's customers should perceive a sense of home every time they seek services; a sense of security, belonging, trust, friendship, and support.

Alexander converted this course into a virtual learning opportunity. Participants



Alexander

ARMY PHOTO

were required to read IMCOM's Pledge to our Customers and the course outline before the class started. This allowed the students

the time to start thinking about course topics and come prepared to contribute to a lively discussion during the actual class.

One class participant said that the course helped them see how their job relates to IMCOM's tag line and mission.

Other attendees said that the virtual interaction helped everyone stay involved throughout the course.

When talking with graduates of the most recent Service Culture Facilitator course, IMCOM's Commanding General, LTG Douglas Gabram spoke about the importance of the SCC.

"I ask you to apply this, practice the SCC, and spread the word," said Gabram. "The Service Culture Campaign will be a powerful tool going forward."

More information is available at the following links.

<https://home.army.mil/imcom/index.php/professionals/sc>

https://army.deps.mil/army/cmds/imcom_HQ/SCI/SitePages/IMCOM%20Service%20Culture%20Campaign.aspx

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HUEY PROTOTYPE

Aviation Museum features XH-40, 'helicopter that changed world'

Army Flier
Staff Report

The U.S. Army Aviation Museum showcases an aircraft that some regard as the single most important helicopter in Army Aviation.

The very first XH-40 prototype helicopter – a precursor to the UH-1 Huey – played a primary role in the shaping of the Army Aviation of today, according to Bob Mitchell, U.S. Army Aviation Museum curator.

"The XH-40 is probably the single most important helicopter in the collection," said Mitchell. "It was the Army's first turbine helicopter and really the turning point for the United States Army and certainly Army Aviation – this is the helicopter that changed

the world."

The XH-40 is significant because before turbine engine helicopters, the Army had to rely on reciprocating engine helicopters, which were oftentimes unreliable, and prone to vibration and failure, said the curator.

"This aircraft changed everything," he said. "Now we had a reliable power plant, very little vibration, very high thrust-to-weight ratio, and it just changed everything in on the battlefield."

Originally meant to be a medical evacuation aircraft, the Army quickly realized the versatility of the aircraft, which ushered in a new era of rotor-wing flight, said Mitchell.



The XH-40 returning to the museum after being restored in 2016.



FILE PHOTOS

The XH-40 on display at Fort Rucker's U.S. Army Aviation Museum.

"When word got back to Congress that this helicopter was so instrumental in saving lives, they appropriated money for research and development for a new medical evacuation helicopter," said Mitchell. "That would be the Huey."

Since its induction into the Army in 1955, the Huey has seen service through the Vietnam War, the Gulf War and recent conflicts, and thousands of UH-1 helicopters are still used in the civilian world today – along with the Air Force, he said.

After this particular XH-40 was no longer in use, the aircraft found its home at the gate of the installation where it sat for decades as a static display, taking all kinds of punishment – from Mother Nature and even vandals, said Mitchell.

"We took it down years ago, and put her in storage and that's where it sat for years," he said, adding it was restored and returned

to the museum in 2016. "She's had a rough road, but now she's been preserved and in a climate-controlled environment, and available for people to observe for decades.

"We're able to bring this thing in and present it to the world and not only tell its story, but also to have it available for all of those generations who came before us to tell their stories, as well," said the curator. "That's really what we live for. Not only to be able to work with these pieces of history, but to have them available to people for them to enjoy. It's all about the stories."

The museum is open to visit 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/>.

Army Aviation Airfield/Heliport Management Survey available online

By Aviation Civilian Personnel
Proponency, Career Program 64

Aviation

Office of the Director

The Army faces a global security environment that continually grows more competitive and volatile. Army Aviation's responsibility to manage and operate airfields/heliports has greatly increased over the last decade. The "Airfield/Heliport Manager" is critical for the overall management of Army Airfield/ Army Heliport facilities and services to provide a safe, efficient, and effective airfield environment for aviation operations.

What is it?

The Army Airfield / Heliport Management Survey supports the ongoing transformational efforts of the Army Civilian Implementation Plan (CIP) through a data-driven approach for examining critical tasks, knowledge, competencies, and training required for the safe operation of Army Airfields and Heliports by Department of the Army Civilian workforce and will aid in other departmental transformational efforts such as standardized position descriptions, certification and credentialing programs, and training and education opportunities.

The Army Airfield / Heliport Management Survey is intended for Airfield/Heliport managers, Airfield Operations Personnel, Chief/Director Airfield/Aviation Division, and Director DPTMS/Deputy Garrison Commander or other Supervisors of Airfield/Heliport Managers/Airfield Management Personnel.

The Army Airfield/Heliport Management Survey has four overarching priorities:

Capture critical tasks, knowledge, competencies, and training

Inform data-driven program and policy



PHOTO BY MAJ. ROBERT FELLINGHAM

Army medics prepare helicopters for a mission during Saber Junction at Hohenfels Training Area, Germany, Aug. 7. The joint exercise is designed to assess readiness and promote interoperability with allied and partner nations.

changes

Evolve career program investments supporting future Aviation skillsets

Integrate efforts to support the Army CIP
Why is this important to the Army?

People are the Army's greatest resource with almost 2,000 Aviation Civilian professionals around the world supporting Aviation forces. This is a time of significant transition for the Civilian Enterprise and Career Program Enterprise Management and the most comprehensive Army Aviation modernization effort since the late 1970s. This initial effort of the Army Airfield / Heliport Management Survey supports the

desired outcomes of the CIP in enhanced processes to reduce time to hire, inform increased credentialing and certification programs, and inform program policy changes to ensure that the Army remains ready as the world's premier military force.

How can you help?

If you are an Airfield/Heliport manager, Airfield Operations Personnel, Chief/Director Airfield/Aviation Division, Director DPTMS/Deputy Garrison Commander or a Supervisor of an Airfield/Heliport Managers, make your voice heard. We Need You to take the survey!

The survey is located at: [https://survey.](https://survey.tradoc.army.mil/EFM/se/0AFDD71A1FFFAE73?%20ArmyAirfield-HeliportManagementSurvey%20)

[tradoc.army.mil/EFM/se/0AFDD71A1FFFAE73?%20ArmyAirfield-HeliportManagementSurvey%20](https://survey.tradoc.army.mil/EFM/se/0AFDD71A1FFFAE73?%20ArmyAirfield-HeliportManagementSurvey%20)

The survey is open for 60 days for data collection. To access the survey you must copy and paste the link into your browser.

For additional information regarding the content of this survey or other Aviation Career CP-64 Program interests, contact the Aviation Civilian Personnel Proponency Office at 334-255-2811.

If you need assistance or help with the functionality of this survey contact the USAACE QAO Evaluator at 334-255-1759.

New Army Digital Garrison app serves as guide to on-post services

By Devon Suits

Army News Service

WASHINGTON – The Army has launched the new Digital Garrison mobile app that provides information and facilitates access to a full array of on-post services, as part of a partnership with the Army and Air Force Exchange Service, or AAFES.

The app, which can be downloaded on Android and Apple devices, provides users with secure access to facility information and other "quality-of-life" services by consolidating data from three related networks, said Scott Malcom, Army Installation Management Command public affairs director.

"It puts real-time installation information in everybody's pockets," Malcom said. "There are hundreds of thousands of people that access Army installations every day. Almost every one carries a cell phone. The app will add value to their time spent on an installation -- whether it is to live, work, train, or play."

APP FEATURES

Within the easy-to-use app, Soldiers, families, veterans, and civilians living or working at a Digital Garrison-enabled post can access resources about their local exchange; Army Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation program; and other services.

More than 60 installations are represented on the app, with plans to add more in future updates, Malcom said. Joint bases operated by other services and select garrisons without sites on the networks that feed the app will not be incorporated in the initial launch.

Users can customize the app to meet their needs. Digital Garrison will include an installation directory, gate locations and hours, fitness and recreation options, weather, event information and more, he said.

Soldiers and families who are new to an

area can also access in-processing and other newcomer material before a permanent change of station, Malcom said.

"When they do move, they enjoy the continuity provided by an enterprise solution," he added.

Digital Garrison also provides an in-app shopping function through ShopMyExchange.com, along with local AAFES shopping and restaurant details. It also features a mobile wallet function where shoppers can use their MILITARY STAR card.

Program officials are set to continually improve the app through daily updates, based on in-app feedback from users, in addition to regularly scheduled major updates.

One of the first major updates will include local commissary information and a link to Click2Go, the Defense Commissary Agency's online grocery ordering portal and curbside pickup service, but only if the capability is available at a given installation.

"Feedback is very important to us," Malcom said. "The app includes a feedback portion where users can communicate and help us shape it going forward. This is not a 'one and done.' Users can count on the fact that we will continually optimize the app after launch."

Push notifications for emergencies are also an important feature of the app, Malcom said. For example, installation officials may send a pre-drafted notification during an active-shooter situation or at times of inclement weather.

Leaders will also have the ability to write their own customized messages and announcements to distribute to the force through the app, Malcom said.

Residents of on-post housing can link to their installation's privatized housing partner, he said. Personnel living in military housing



ARMY GRAPHIC

will eventually have a similar capability.

Digital Garrison will become the Army enterprise mobile app for installations, Malcom added. Local app solutions will cease, ensuring all applicable garrisons comply with the Federal Information Security Management Act and other cybersecurity protocols.

BRIDGING CAPABILITIES

The partnership that brought the Digital Garrison app to life started in July 2019, Malcom said. At that time, the Exchange, IMCOM, and Army MWR were all developing apps to essentially do the same thing -- provide information about on-post services or activities.

"The Exchange is honored to partner with the Army to ensure the 125-year-old Exchange benefit remains relevant to its communities," said Karen Cardin, AAFES senior vice president for customer experience.

The team released a Digital Garrison beta version in January, which fueled a more significant test of it in early March. During the limited user evaluation, a total of 10 installations

throughout the U.S., including Hawaii and Alaska, and Germany were chosen by program officials to participate, Malcom said.

"During that process, we learned how garrisons should prepare their online data to optimize its presentation in the app," he said. "We learned that the better a garrison maintains their websites that feed Digital Garrison, the better the garrison is represented in it. The pilot allowed us to work out all the details and provide clear instructions to all the installations feeding the app to prepare their data for transmission."

The decision to create the app shows the Army's eagerness to transition from the "industrial age to the information age," he said.

"The Exchange worked side-by-side with IMCOM to put real-time information in the hands of Soldiers, families and civilians," Cardin added.

"Digital Garrison is another chapter in our long relationship with Army families, allowing us to fulfill our mission to make life better for those who serve."

DOD personnel election season *DOS AND DON'TS*

By **Katie Lange**
Defense.gov

WASHINGTON -- It's election season again – that time when federal, state and local political campaigns kick into high gear.

Whether you're extremely involved in politics or you aren't even registered to vote, the Defense Department has expectations for the way its military service members and civilian employees conduct themselves during this time.

Here are some of the guidelines.

VOTING

Active-duty military and civilian employees are encouraged to take part in their civic duty by voting.

In fact, DOD voting assistance is provided through the [Federal Voting Assistance Program](#).

ATTENDING EVENTS

Service members can attend rallies, debates, conventions, political club meetings

and fundraising events – but only as a spectator. Members of the Armed Forces – active-duty, Reserve or retired – cannot wear their uniforms at these events, unless they're members of the color guard at a national convention.

OPINIONS/DONATIONS

DOD employees are also allowed to make personal monetary donations and express their personal opinions on candidates and issues, but service members just can't do so as a representative of the Armed Forces.

Employees can write letters to the editor of a news outlet expressing their personal views — as long as they're not part of an organized letter-writing campaign or are soliciting votes for a party, cause or candidate.

Most importantly, the letter must make it clear that the views expressed are solely the writer's and not those of the DOD.

SIGNAGE

DOD personnel can put their favorite party, cause or candidate's bumper sticker on their car, but no large political signs, banners or posters can be displayed on their car or home.

This includes those who live on a military installation in a privatized housing development.

PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

Service members and civilian employees are to refrain from partisan political activities. Any political activity they take part in should, as stated above, clearly avoid implying DOD sponsorship, approval or endorsement of a candidate, campaign or cause.

Prohibited activities include:

- * Campaigning for a candidate;
- * Soliciting contributions;
- * Marching in a partisan parade;
- * Writing signed partisan political articles, letters or endorsements in an attempt to solicit votes; and

* Performing any duty for a political committee or candidate during a campaign.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Your actions online can affect your career and the DOD just as much as they can in person. That's why the department also issues guidelines for active-duty service members, active-duty National Guardsmen and federal employees.

DOD employees are allowed to express their own views on issues and candidates, like in a letter to a news outlet. However, if they are identified on their account as active-duty, the post must state that the views expressed are their own and not those of the DOD.

DOD personnel shouldn't participate in partisan political activities online, either, which includes posting direct links to a political party, candidate, campaign, group or cause. That's considered the equivalent of distributing literature on behalf of those entities, which is prohibited.

Similarly, service members and civilian employees can "friend," "follow" or "like" a political party, candidate or cause, but they can't engage in political activities on those pages.

For example, they can't suggest that others "like," "friend" or "follow" that page, and they can't forward an invitation or solicitation from that page to others.



tion from that page to others.

Active-duty members are subject to additional restrictions based on Joint Ethics Regulations, the Uniform Code of Military Justice and service-specific rules.

Service member who aren't on active-duty are not subject to the above restrictions, but they are required to make it clear that their actions are their own and not endorsed, approved or sponsored by the DOD.

WHEN CAN CANDIDATES OR OFFICIALS VISIT MILITARY FACILITIES?

Political candidates and other elected or appointed officials may access DOD installations and facilities to conduct official business or various other activities. However, they are not allowed to engage in campaign or election-related activities, including:

- * Town hall meetings;
- * Speeches;
- * Public assemblies;
- * Fundraisers;
- * News conferences; and
- * Post-election celebrations or concession addresses.

This restriction applies to overseas installations and areas under control of U.S. military combat or peacekeeping forces.

For more in-depth dos and don'ts concerning political activities, check out [DOD Directive 1344.10](#).



Army releases revised command policy

By Sean Kimmons

Army News Service

WASHINGTON -- The Army recently published the latest version of its Army Command Policy since 2014, which now includes updates to corrective training, sexual harassment reporting and extremist activity on social media.

The 200-plus page policy, also known as Army Regulation 600-20, is the official guidance for commanders across the Army, and is typically revised every five years.

"As Soldiers, NCOs, officers, and [Department of the Army] civilians, we all have an obligation to know, enforce and take appropriate action in accordance with Army Command Policy," Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael A. Grinston wrote in a message to the force.

The revised regulation has nearly 70 different changes, which is quite significant, said Lt. Col. Melissa Comiskey, chief of command poli-

cy for the Army's G-1 office.

"This is a massive regulation," she said. "It is command policy. It is the commander's guide, so there's a lot that's encompassed in here."

Much of the updates come from previous directives that have since been superseded by the new regulation, which was published July 24.

"The Army continues to move and continues to build policy," she said. "As we're building policy, it doesn't get immediately incorporated into a regulation. That's why we have Army directives."

The regulation now includes specified authority to correct minor acts of indiscipline with brief forms of exercise.

"The changes empower NCOs to lean on non-punitive measures as a form of corrective training to address minor deficiencies," said Sgt. Maj. Jasmine Johnson, the command policy sergeant major, adding an example could be a Soldier doing 10 pushups for arriving late to formation.

Another update is for commanders to notify their Soldiers that they cannot possess a firearm or ammunition, if they have a qualifying conviction of domestic violence.

The change comes after a domestic violence working group years ago identified a gap in the previous AR 600-20, Comiskey said.

The regulation also expands the policy on extremist group activities by incorporating social media for the first time, as well as command options for violations under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

"Social media was not addressed in the previous regulation," Comiskey said. "Also the requirement for commanders to notify either their [staff judge advocate] or [criminal investigation division] when there's any type of reports of extremist activities in their organization."

Policies from several Army and Defense Department directives have also been moved under the authority of the Sexual Harassment/

Assault Response and Prevention program.

The SHARP program is now responsible for sexual harassment complaints, for instance, instead of the Military Equal Opportunity Office.

Criteria for a sexual assault incident response oversight report as well as a commander's critical information requirement have been added, too.

The SHARP policy also covers requirements for the DOD Sexual Assault Advocate Certification Program, Comiskey said.

The revised regulation has a lot of discussion about harassment and discrimination, Comiskey said. "Again, that's obviously not tolerated in our Army and 600-20 reinforces that."

"The Army hopes to foster a culture of dignity, respect and inclusion," Johnson added. "It's a guide to ensure Soldiers are being treated fairly, and commanders are able to maintain good order and discipline in their ranks."

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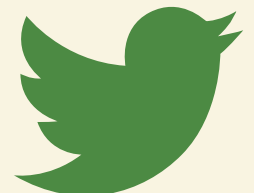
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