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COURTESY PHOTO

A Washington Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk gathers water in a bucket to help battle a wildfire near Bonney Lake, Wash., Sept 9.

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'GO PATRIOTS!'

Fort Rucker cuts ribbon on Ellis D. Parker Elementary School

By Jim Hughes

Fort Rucker Public Affairs

Fort Rucker officially opened its new elementary school during a ribbon-cutting ceremony that featured five generations of the family of its namesake in attendance Sept. 29.

Ellis D. Parker Elementary School is named to honor the late retired lieutenant general who is remembered by many as the godfather of Army Aviation, according to event host Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker commanding general.

"We're honored to have the five generations of the Parker family here today – a true testament to the incredible dedication, love of family and selfless service of lieutenant general and Mrs. Parker," Francis said during the ceremony.

"Today marks a great step forward in our continuing efforts to provide world-class education for our military families and children," the general continued. "We're proud

to partner with the Department of Defense Education Activity and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to provide a high-quality, state-of-the-art institution and education facility here on Fort Rucker."

The former Fort Rucker Elementary School opened at the same spot in 1963, Francis added.

"At the time of its opening, I'm sure it was a state-of-the-art, modern facility that provided top-notch education," he said. "But 57 years is a long time, and over time much has changed in how we educate and prepare students for success."

For decades, Fort Rucker operated two schools on Fort Rucker, a primary school and an elementary school, and then for the past three years the elementary school operated out of a temporary facility while Parker Elementary was being built, Francis said.

"With the opening of Parker Elementary

Today marks a great step forward in our continuing efforts to provide world-class education for our military families and children.

– Maj. Gen. David J. Francis

USAACE and Fort Rucker commanding general



PHOTOS BY JIM HUGHES

Maj. Gen David J. Francis, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker commanding general, leads local and Department of Defense Education Activity officials in the ribbon cutting on the new Ellis D. Parker Elementary School during a ceremony Sept. 29. Pictured are Francis; Judy Clair Matthews Parker, spouse of the school's namesake; Dr. Vicki Gilmer, school principal; Dr. Christy Huddleston, Dr. Judith Minor, Dr. Lisa Coleman and Thomas Brady from DODEA; and Col. Whitney B. Gardner, Fort Rucker garrison commander.

School, all Fort Rucker students in pre-kindergarten to sixth grade will be in one outstanding facility," he said. "This will simplify transportation, and improve safety for families and children. This new elementary school is not simply a nice-to-have, but absolutely a necessity for Fort Rucker's primary students and their teachers."

The general added that cutting the ribbon was a symbolically small act that provides "a modern 21st century education environment designed specifically to enhance learning, collaboration, exploration and higher-order

thinking skills."

He added that when deciding who to name the school after, there was really only one choice.

"No one individual had a greater impact on the establishment, evolution and wellbeing of the Army Aviation Branch," Francis said. "After retirement, the Parkers settled in Enterprise and he continued his amazing service to Fort Rucker and the Wiregrass community for over 25 years. This is truly an amazing opportunity to honor a man who had such a positive influence on the Army,

School *cont.*

the Aviation Branch and the Soldiers and families of Fort Rucker.”

The school principal, Dr. Vicki Gilmer, agreed that the naming deserved an A+.

“Many wonderful families have come through Fort Rucker and many have come through Fort Rucker multiple times,” she said at the ceremony. “The Parker family is one of those families. For decades, this wonderful family has made contributions to the US military and so many of those contributions are tied to this community. Today we recognize

excellence in our DODEA schools, the organization that proudly serves the families that serve, the Parker family represents the great connection between a family who served and an extraordinary school system that has the privilege to serve them.

“DODEA has a rich tradition in providing excellence in education,” Gilmer continued. “The DODEA mission is to educate, engage and empower military-connected students to succeed in a dynamic world. So, as we stand in front of this beautiful, remarkable 21st century school, we see clearly the dedication DODEA has in providing top-notch education to our military families. We are so proud to serve the families of this highly acclaimed Army installation.”

One of the Parkers in attendance spoke at the ceremony, retired Col. David Parker, the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center chief of staff, and said his father would be proud to have the school named after him.

“Words cannot express the gratitude the Parkers feel today,” he said. “Those of you who knew my father knew his passion he had for Fort Rucker and Army Aviation. He bled blue for Army Aviation and this post.

“I cannot think of a more meaningful tribute to not only my father, but also to all of those aviators and families whose careers he championed, than having his name on this magnificent facility,” Parker said. “I’m confident their spirit will carry on in the small souls that will soon walk through these doors. I am truly grateful, honored and humbled that our father will forever be a part of Fort Rucker and Aviation history.”

Parker added that he likes the mascot name, as well. “I never claimed to be a New England Patriots fan, but now I can proudly say, ‘Go Patriots!’”

Another person happy to see the school’s opening was Col. Whitney B. Gardner, Fort



Fort Rucker aircraft perform a flyover at the end of the ceremony.

Rucker garrison commander.

“It’s an honor to be here in the presence of so many of you who were directly or indirectly involved in the idea of this new facility and had such a major part in its creation – it is magnificent,” the colonel said. “Even those of us in green who arrived here in its final stages, we share your intense pride and look forward to an even stronger partnership in the future.”

The head of one of those partners, Thomas Brady, DODEA director, also spoke at the event.

“This building – the general talked about 21st century teaching and learning and how it is going to be different and not how it used to be – when you go into it you’ll see it, we’re neighborhoods, the wonderful teachers and staff have been professionally developed to have small group instruction,” Brady said.

“It’s just totally different than when old people like me went.

“It’s a wonderful educational facility in a very strange time (COVID-19 pandemic), and we need our children safely back in school,” he said, adding his appreciation “for the remarkable command relationships” with USAACE and Fort Rucker leadership. “We couldn’t do it without them. We thank you for that support. This school has a great staff – they are prepared and excited, and it will be safe.

The event was to feature a performance by the U.S. Army Golden Knights parachute team, but the planned jump was called off because of in-climate weather. However, a flyover by UH-72 Lakota, UH-60 Black Hawk and CH-47 Chinook helicopters did take place.



School staff raise the American flag at the school for the first time at the start of the ceremony.

'GOOSE BUMP EXPERIENCE'

Students enter
new Parker
Elementary
School for in-
person learning
for 1st time

By Jim Hughes

Fort Rucker Public Affairs

Fort Rucker students making their historic first foray into Ellis D. Parker Elementary School Oct. 1 for in-person learning made for a true “goose bump” experience, according to the school’s principal.

“When the kids were coming across the street, several times I had to take a deep breath and my eyes filled with tears – it’s been a long time coming,” Dr. Vicki Gilmer, Parker Elementary School principal said. “It was a dream that took a while to come true. To finally be able to receive our children – it is just amazing.”

Those goose bumps spread from Gilmer to the entirety of the school’s teaching and administrative staff, and also to a guest to the proceedings, Dr. Lisa B. Coleman, Department of Defense Education Activity’s Georgia-Alabama Community superintendent, who was on hand to help get the proceedings under way.

“I am overwhelmed with emotion, excitement and anticipation -- and just a bit of nervousness, because we wanted it all to be



PHOTOS BY JIM HUGHES

The Ellis D. Parker Elementary School staff put out a welcome sign to its Patriots students the morning the vast majority of students reported for in-person learning Oct. 1.

perfect, and it was a great and perfect opening this morning,” Coleman said after the students were all escorted to their new communities broken up between pre-kindergarten to sixth grade. “It was just a great day, and we are so excited to see children and they’re excited to see us. We’ve been looking forward to it for so very long – we’re just ready for this to be a great year.”

Another person overwhelmed in the moment was Mary Salerno, assistant principal, who said it was the first time in months she’d seen school buses on post.

“As that first bus pulled up and I saw it

coming into the parking lot, the emotion was just super overwhelming,” she said. “Having the kids come down off the bus so full of excitement to be here in school was just really the best feeling.”

After preparing in the new school over the summer only to not have students in their classrooms when the school year started because of the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, for teachers, like Maria Schultz, first grade teacher, seeing their pupils’ faces – both familiar and new -- was a long-awaited thrill.

“I am so excited – when the children start-

ed arriving outside, they were all standing in front of the window like kids at Christmas,” Schultz said. “I’ve been looking forward to this day since the first day we went to remote learning last year. I feel so blessed to be able to be with my students again.”

Her first-grade students were also happy to be back with their teachers and friends in the new facility, she added.

“They love this school – they’re so happy that it’s all decorated and I’m hearing really positive things. They are pumped to be back,” Schultz said, adding that greetings are a little modified thanks to the realities of

1st day *cont.*

COVID-19. “They really want hugs, so that was kind of hard to tell them – air hugs, air hugs – they’re just full of excitement.”

Sixth graders were excited to be in the new school, as well, including Dorian Smith and Vanessa Andrade.

“This is very exciting – the new school is so much different,” Smith said. “It’s definitely much larger. The classroom are a lot bigger -- this is a truly amazing school.”

Andrade agreed with Smith, adding that it was also great to be physically back in school.

“It is better to learn in person – it’s better face-to-face,” she said. “Thank you to everyone for putting in the hard work to make this amazing school.”

Both students then gave an enthusiastic “Go Patriots!” before heading back to class.

But not all Patriots were at the first day for in-person learning at Parker Elementary School, according to Gilmer, who said about 70 students signed up for virtual learning for the entire first semester, which ends in December.

“In January, when the second half of year

starts, they will have the option to return to brick and mortar if they so choose,” she said, adding she had a message for the Patriots unable to take part in the opening day excitement. “I am proud of your work – I’m hearing good things about you – and I want you guys to keep up the good work.”

While everyone at the school agrees it is great to have the majority of students back in their classrooms, Gilmer said the mission remains the same.

“We’re focusing on our mission to educate, empower and engage our students, and this school is designed for that,” she said. “They go into their neighborhoods and they instantly become a part of a group that’s going to be problem-solvers and deep thinkers – they’re going to be able to have dialogue and conversations with one another.

“I want to thank the staff – they have done an incredible job working remotely, reaching kids through the computer screen,” Gilmer added. “They were teaching online in the evening, tutoring, making sure every child was wherever they needed to be – even in a remote setting. Just a huge shoutout to the



Dr. Lisa B. Coleman, Department of Defense Education Activity's Georgia-Alabama Community superintendent, points a student to her grade area as children arrive for their first day of in-person learning at Parker Elementary School Oct. 1.

Parker Elementary School staff – they can teach here, there or anywhere.”

Coleman thanked the school’s and DODEA’s military partners, as well, for making the new school a reality.

“It was an outstanding show of support

on display this morning and I say thank you to them,” she said. “We serve our warfighters’ children – it is our pleasure to serve them. We are one force, one fight and definitely Above the Best.”



A teacher leads first graders towards their neighborhood in Parker Elementary School.



Teachers get first graders acquainted with their new classroom.

Fort Rucker hosts POW/MIA ceremony

By Jim Hughes

Fort Rucker Public Affairs

Fort Rucker hosted its POW/MIA ceremony Sept. 18 at the U.S. Army Aviation Museum to a limited audience and broadcast over Facebook Live.

Brig. Gen. Stanley E. Budraitis, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker deputy commanding general, spoke at the event, focusing his speech on a former POW who earned a Medal of Honor for his service during the Korean War, Capt. Emil Kapaun.

"We are so grateful for the legacy of honorable service and sacrifice shared by all of our servicemembers, past and present," the general said, before moving on to Kapaun's story.

"You may recall a few years ago that he was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for extraordinary heroism, patriotism and selfless service at the Battle of Unsan during the Korean War," he said. "His story is about a calling to reach out to others in their time of need."

Kapaun was raised as a farm boy in Kansas, where he distinguished himself as an intelligent student who could tell when his fellow classmates were struggling – even before their teachers knew it – and he would readily help others, he said.

Becoming a Catholic priest in 1940 and entering the Army as a chaplain in 1944, he served in the China-Burma-India campaign during WWII, and volunteered for the Korean War, according to the Kapaun's biography.

"Because of the nature of what they do, our support service personnel largely serve out of the limelight," Budraitis said. "Chaplains were not required to serve on the front lines, but Captain Kapaun did, of his own choosing."

The chaplain earned a reputation for fearlessness and moral conviction in the India and Burma theaters, the general said.

"It was said Kapaun survived multiple Jeeps being blown out from underneath him by landmines," Budraitis continued. "As the story goes, at some point he was told he wasn't getting another Jeep. So, he found an old bicycle and he would ride it in whatever direction he heard gunfire.

"The unusual sight of a chaplain on a bike, choosing to ride into the fray to support Soldiers, was a huge bolster of morale," he said. "Captain Kapaun believed his place was with the wounded."

Nov. 1, 1950, the 1st Cavalry Division came under attack by Chinese forces at the Battle of Unsan. Kapaun moved fearlessly from foxhole to foxhole while under fire to help provide medical care and support to wounded Soldiers, Budraitis said.

"For two days, he repeatedly exposed himself to enemy fire to drag Soldiers to safety," he added. "If he couldn't drag them, he would dig shallow trenches to shield them from enemy fire. He provided medical aid, assisted Soldiers in their traditions and, for many, he provided last rites."

Eventually, it became clear the Soldiers' situation was hopeless, and Kapaun, refusing to escape to safety, helped negotiate the terms of surrender, Budraitis said.

"When Kapaun was taken as a prisoner of war, he saw a wounded Soldier lying in a ditch," he added. "When an enemy soldier discovered that the American was still alive, he raised his firearm to shoot him. Kapaun intervened and saved the Soldier's life."

During brutal death marches over the next several days, Kapaun carried the stretchers of the wounded and encouraged other Soldiers to keep going to help them survive their ordeal,



PHOTO BY JIM HUGHES

Brig. Gen. Stanley E. Budraitis, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker deputy commanding general, speaks at the Fort Rucker POW/MIA ceremony Sept. 18 at the U.S. Army Aviation Museum.

Budraitis said.

"In the camp, he violated prison rules and risked his own life to sneak around at night and forage for food for his wounded comrades," he added. "He was brutally punished, but he continued on, undaunted."

Kapaun also fought against the captors' re-education program and even led fellow POWs in an Easter-morning rendition of "God Bless America" that got so loud "that other Soldiers in the valley could hear it and joined in," Budraitis said.

"His fellow Soldiers said Kapaun created a strong image of resistance to the enemy by personifying the spirit of confidence of a free man who was dedicated to his country and his faith," the general said.

The chaplain became ill and died in the camp during the spring of 1951, but many Soldiers credited his actions and his memory for their own survival, according to Budraitis.

"Captain Kapaun's selfless service and sacrifice gave others hope," he said. "He understood something about the strength of the human will and the depth of the American spirit. A powerful thing can happen, even in the direst circumstances, when people believe they have a reason to hope.

"We're so grateful today for all our ser-

vicemembers, including those who respond in moments of crisis to bring hope and help to others," Budraitis said. "It's important that we not only train well, fight well and win, but also that we take care of our brothers and sisters to the right or to the left – our people truly are our greatest strength. Everyone is a valued member of the Army team.

"Let's take that mantle passed on to us from brave Soldiers like Kapaun, and make sure we're listening, leading well and making our people our priority," he added.

The nation's POWs and MIAs are true heroes who will never be forgotten, he said.

"The annual POW/MIA recognition day reminds us that our nation will never forget and will continue to search the Earth for those yet accounted for," he said, adding that the country continues to dedicate significant resources to honor its solemn promise to those who serve.

Budraitis thanked servicemembers for their service to the nation, along with their families and local communities for their support.

"I ask that we all continue to be mindful of the many Soldiers who are currently deployed supporting combatant commanders around the world today," Budraitis said. "Keep them and their families close in your thoughts and prayers."

Fort Rucker team keeps people, assets safe during Hurricane Sally

By Jim Hughes

Fort Rucker Public Affairs

When Hurricane Sally made an unwelcome visit to Fort Rucker Sept. 16, the storm found a team at the ready to minimize damage, respond to emergencies, and keep its assets and people safe.

Sally did prove an unruly guest despite extensive preparation by that team, as the storm racked up an estimated \$100,000-\$150,000 in damages, according to Joseph Wyka, Fort Rucker Directorate of Public Works director.

Most of that damage came in the form of water damage to facilities, including roof damage to older homes in housing, downed power lines and fallen trees, he said.

“Our recent work to secure roofs, clean storm water pipes and remove dying trees paid off, as we sustained only light to moderate damage across Fort Rucker,” Wyka said. “We did see some roofs in our older homes develop minor leaks, which unfortunately did impact those families. These older shingle roofs were already scheduled to be replaced in 2021, so, in addition to our immediate repairs, these homes will get complete new roofs soon. We appreciate the patience of these families.”

The post did not receive any widespread power outages because the winds were milder than predicted, he added.

“Our maintenance crews remained on the job throughout the storm,” he said. “This allowed us to quickly repair power line breaks, remove fallen trees and mitigate any small leaks that developed. As with all emergencies, we work very closely with the Directorate of Public Safety to monitor rapidly changing weather and flooding conditions.

“One example was our joint monitoring

of a key bridge on Farrell Road near Lowe Army Heliport,” he said. “When the river rose rapidly, we quickly closed it to traffic and ensured we had viable detour routes in place. We always want to remind our Soldiers and families to stay out of any high water and report it – it can quickly change and be more hazardous than we might anticipate.”

DPS started preparing for Sally days in advance of the storm making landfall, including ensuring all emergency equipment was standing by and ready, said Lt. Col. Phillip Lenz, DPS director.

“We prepared the Incident Command Post for service, all four-wheel-drive vehicles were dispatched and topped off, all generators were fueled and tested, and the traffic trailer with cones, barriers and road closed signs was staged at DPS for immediate deployment in advance of the storm,” Lenz said. “Our personnel were placed on notice as mission essential and prepared to ride out the storm, if necessary.” DPS personnel responded to all calls for service during the storm, including a single-vehicle accident off the installation near the Fort Rucker range area.

“All the preparations made prior to the storm definitely paid off – DPS had more than enough personnel and equipment to deal with any and all calls for service,” Lenz added. “I attribute DPS’ success to my three experienced division chiefs, who know their mission, their (standard operating procedures), and know how to lead a team during surge and crisis operations.”

That success was noted by one beneficiary via the Interactive Customer Evaluation system, Lenz said.

The ICE comment was submitted by a person stuck in traffic on Hatch Road after a fallen tree blocked the road.

“A very helpful Military Police Soldier was patient enough to give me directions to the other route back to Andrews Avenue. This young Soldier was soaking wet, and was extremely respectful and patiently explained to me where to go in the calmest manner – like he wasn’t in the middle of a hurricane getting soaked.”

DPS responded to numerous weather-related calls during the storm, including downed trees, blown transformers and arcing power lines, along with continuing their normal missions throughout the storm, Lenz added.

“The fire department was able to cut and remove the downed trees from the roadway quickly to keep the installation roadways open to traffic, and augmented the efforts conducted by the DPW,” he said. “The (Department of the Army security guards), the unsung heroes of the DPS, continued to perform their access control duties with professionalism while battling strong winds and sideways rain.

While DPS was protecting people, the Aviation Center Logistics Command was taking care of aircraft, according to Col. Chad Chasteen, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence chief of staff.

ACLC moved about 150 aircraft into hangars and moored almost 500 more without any damage incurred, he said. “Pretty amazing!”

Another key player in Fort Rucker’s response was the 18th Weather Squadron, Fort Rucker Weather Operations team, and Sally proved a tough storm to predict, according to Cindy L. Howell.

“Sally made landfall near Gulf Shores as

a Category 2 storm,” she said. “Sally quickly weakened into a tropical storm by the time she moved into southeast Alabama. The most surprising thing about Sally was the lack of consistency in the computer models. There were great variations in both forecast track and intensity right from the beginning. That is why the National Hurricane Center continued to shift the track eastward. That made for a challenging forecast, but we ended up with a pretty good one!”

Fort Rucker Weather is constantly monitoring the tropics, “every single day – all day” Howell said. “When we see a storm that could potentially impact Fort Rucker, we begin informing leadership as early as possible to give everyone plenty of time for decisions and preparations.

“We also begin looking at forecast weather for several fly-away locations in the event that aircraft are evacuated,” she added. “We surge operations – even in a COVID environment. We prepare staff briefings to USAACE leadership and brief them as requested. As the storm gets closer, we begin issuing weather watches, warnings and advisories.

“And as the storm bears down, we are glued to radar,” Howell said. “Anytime we are on the right side of the storm, as we were in Sally, there is a risk of tornadoes. So, we monitored radar Monday night and through the day on Tuesday. Thankfully, the tornado threat did not materialize.”

Fort Rucker Weather Operations also keeps the public updated on weather via its Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/ftuckerwx>.

“Our team responded just as I would have expected: with precision and professionalism,” she said.

GOLD STAR MOTHER'S AND FAMILY DAY

Fort Rucker honors fallen warriors, their families during annual event

By Jim Hughes

Fort Rucker Public Affairs

Fort Rucker honored fallen warriors and their families during its annual Gold Star Mother's and Family Day Luminary Service Sept. 27 at the Main Post Chapel.

Soldiers, family members, civilian employees and Gold Star Family Members all attended the event with the mission to keep the memories of those heroes alive and to support their families, according to Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Bob Crowley, Fort Rucker garrison chaplain, who spoke at the service.

"I'm very humbled to be able to speak to you this evening, to you Gold Star Family Members and especially the mothers that are here this evening," Crowley said. "I can't imagine what it would be like to lose a child – I have two of my own. But one thing I can do is remember those who went to pay the price for freedom."

The chaplain then called everyone's attention to the Bible verse printed in the program for the event, which read, "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13)

"I live with the memories of those who I left down range, and I'm sure that each person in here can reflect (on someone similar) and realize that their sacrifice was not in vain. Freedom is not free," Crowley said.

"We look at that verse and we see the first part, it says, greater love," he said. "There are a lot of different words in the Greek language that are used in the Bible for the word love, but this particular word is actually a word that is used for brotherly love, but really

it was more than that. And the reason that it was more than that is because Jesus was talking to his 12 disciples, much like Soldiers who go down range together.

"And then I began to ponder what it must mean for a family to lose a loved one. And that really encapsulates that second part – has no one than this," Crowley said. "What a loss that must feel like at times. But it is more than that, it is a memory that we honor and continue to put forward into the future, because if you leave this post right now and you drive 50 miles in any direction, you won't have what we have in this room.

"We have a bond, we have a trust and we have an understanding that those who have lost, we surround them with that same kind of love that each of you must have for your loved ones," he said. "The military doesn't seem that way at times, but I promise you it is ... absolutely it is.

"In this last part, lay down this life for friends – we all know, those of us who have gone to war, that we don't go alone, do we? There's always strength in numbers, always strength in better weapons systems – we don't go alone, we go with our friends, we go with those we train with, that we care about," Crowley said.

"None of you can replace your loved ones, but I want you to have memories that continue to be told," the chaplain continued. "You'll have times, I still do, everyone does, where a tear may be shed, a remembrance made when you least expect it, but again, it



PHOTO BY JIM HUGHES

A Gold Star Family places a luminary in memory of a loved one during the Gold Star Mother's and Family Day Luminary Service Sept. 27 at the Main Post Chapel.

was not in vain. It is for freedom that we go defend our nation, and those that go before us that have died on foreign soil must always be remembered. Know that they will never, ever be forgotten. These men and women in blue uniforms tonight will never let that happen. That is our sacred trust that we offer to you this evening."

Once the chaplain finished speaking, eight Gold Star Families placed a luminary at the front of the church in memory of their loved ones. Soldiers, family members and

civilian employees in attendance then placed their own luminaries afterwards.

The event narrator, Mike Kozlowski, told the Gold Star Family Members that are and always will be an integral part of the military family.

"We recognize that no one has given more for our nation than the families of our fallen servicemembers," he said. "Your loved one has not been forgotten, and, on behalf of a grateful nation and community, you are not forgotten."

FIRE PREVENTION WEEK

Fort Rucker Fire and Emergency Services reminds residents to Serve Up Fire Safety in the Kitchen!

By **Lonny R. Keen**
Fort Rucker Fire Chief

Fort Rucker Fire and Emergency Services is teaming up with the National Fire Protection Association – the official sponsor of Fire Prevention Week for more than 90 years – to promote this year's Fire Prevention Week (Oct. 4-10) campaign, Serve Up Fire Safety in the Kitchen!

The campaign works to educate everyone about the small but important actions they can take to keep themselves and those around them safe.

NFPA statistics show that from 2013-2017, cooking was the leading cause of reported home fires and home fire injuries and the second leading cause of home fire deaths.

Cooking caused an average of 173,200 reported home structure fires per year – 49 percent of all reported home fires in the U.S.

These fires resulted in an average of 550 deaths – 22 percent of all home fire deaths – and 5,020 home fire injuries – 45 percent of all reported home fire injuries – annually.

"Cooking continues to be a major contributor to the home fire problem," said Lorraine Carli, NFPA vice president of outreach and advocacy. "The good news is that the vast majority of these fires are highly preventable. This year's Fire Prevention Week campaign works to better educate the public about where potential cooking hazards exist,

Keep kids safe from burns and scalds. Have a kid-free zone of at least 3 feet (1 metre) around hot things in the kitchen. Learn how to keep your family safe at fpw.org!



and basic but critical ways to prevent them."

Carli notes that this year's focus on cooking safety is particularly timely. "As the public may continue to avoid restaurants for some time and opt instead to do more cooking and entertaining at home, the potential for home cooking fires will likely increase, as well."

While NFPA and the Fort Rucker Fire and Emergency Services are focusing on home fires, these messages apply to virtually

any location.

"Situational awareness is a skill people need to use wherever they go," said a member of the Fort Rucker Fire Prevention staff. "No matter where you are, look for available exits. If the alarm system sounds, take it seriously and exit the building immediately."

For more general information about Fire Prevention Week and home escape planning, visit www.fpw.org.

ENERGY ACTION MONTH

Theme: Energy Resilience Gives Us the Power to Win

By Matthew Lowlavar

Directorate of Public Works Energy Manager

October is Energy Action Month. This year's theme is Energy Resilience Gives Us the Power to Win.

During the month of October, the Army is going to raise awareness of the critical role energy resilience plays in mission readiness, which supports the Army priorities of readiness, modernization and reform.

Currently, the Army is the largest consumer of electricity in the federal government, spending more than \$1 billion annually on installation energy. Installations support the full spectrum of Army missions, from industrial bases to training, mobilizing and deploying Soldiers – installations are increasingly connected to the fight and require reliable access to energy and water.

Army readiness depends on energy resiliency, or uninterrupted access to energy. Natural, physical and cyber threats are increasingly putting Army assets at risk. It is vital that the Army maintains the ability to deploy, fight and win. The Army is currently prioritizing its ability to provide resilient energy and water supplies in order to reduce mission risk, and is aggressively focusing on installation energy resilience and efficiency initiatives.

As Energy Action Month falls upon us, let's take a moment to understand the current Army energy focus, and how we can help support the Army's energy goals.

You can't go far these days without hearing the word resiliency. But what does resiliency mean in the terms of energy? Energy resilience enables the Army to anticipate, prepare for, and adapt to changing conditions and withstand, respond to and recover rapidly from disruptions in the availability of energy, land, and water resources (Army Energy Security and Sustainability Strategy).

Reducing our energy demand reduces our energy dependence thus making us more resilient and places the Army priorities first. By following a simple formula to calculate energy costs and a few no-cost energy conservation tips, you can help drive your own demand and the U.S. Army's energy dependence down.

To estimate how much it costs to operate a particular appliance, simply follow the four simple steps below.

1. Determine the appliance's wattage and convert it to kilowatts (divide watts by 1000).
2. Figure out the number of hours you use the appliance on average.
3. The cost per kilowatt is given to you, assuming \$0.15 per kilowatt-hour.
4. Calculate the operating cost. Multiply steps 1, 2, and 3.

For example let's look at 10-100 watt incandescent light bulbs. To find our total watts for 10 lights we would simply multiply 10 bulbs*100 watts = 1000 watts.



Energy Resilience Gives Us the #PowerToWin

STEP 1. 1,000 watts / 1,000 = 1 kW STEP 2. 12 hours STEP 3. \$0.15 per kWh STEP 4. 1 kW x 12 hours x \$0.15 = \$1.80 to operate these 10 light bulbs for 12 hours.

Now, looking over the course of a typical billing cycle (30 days) you may be paying \$54 a month just on lighting (\$1.80 a day times 30 days).

Ten-10 watt LED lights would give the equivalent lighting demands as the incandescent bulbs. Looking at the cost to operate we would go through the same steps.

To find our total watts for 10 LED lights, we would simply multiply 10 LEDs*10 watts = 100 watts:

STEP 1. 100 watts / 1,000 = 0.1 kW STEP 2. 12 hours STEP 3. \$0.15 per kWh STEP 4. 0.1 kW x 12 hours x \$0.15 = \$0.18 to operate these 10 light bulbs for 12 hours.

Now, looking over the course of a typical billing cycle (30 days) you would be paying \$5.40 for LED lighting vs the \$54.00 for the incandescent lighting.

During the month of October look for opportunities to save energy. Below are potential opportunities for energy savings.

- * Maintain your A/C for maximum efficiency by cleaning its filter and vents regularly. Replace filters that look worn.

- * Only use your A/C when the room is occupied.

- * Consider that the efficiency of refrigerators and freezers has improved considerably as efficiency standards are updated periodically. Older units are typically two to three times more expensive to run compared to a new unit.

- * Allow ample space on each of the refrigerator/freezer and around condenser coils for air circulation. Air flow increases energy performance.

- * Close all windows and doors for air conditioned spaces.

- * Set thermostats to no cooler than 75 degrees for air conditioned spaces.

- * Turn off lights/air conditioning in unoccupied rooms, when possible.

- * Ensure power-save, or sleep mode is set to activate following NEC guidelines.

Corvias residents should direct any energy issues to their facilities team, and remember the energy team is not asking for anyone to compromise the mission or safety to conserve energy. However, when the opportunity presents itself, we ask that you use the information provided to help eliminate, or reduce your energy use. It is the responsibility of each individual to help meet the Army's mission goals.

For more information call the Fort Rucker Energy Program Manager at 255-1368.

As suicide cases rise, Army leaders encourage Soldiers to recognize warning signs

By Joseph Lacdan
Army News Service

WASHINGTON -- The Army has not lost a single active-duty Soldier to the COVID-19 pandemic, the service's top uniformed leader said Thursday. But the restrictions following the virus' onset may have affected the mental health of some Soldiers.

The Army reported that the active-duty suicide rate has risen in 2020, following the implementation of stay-at-home restrictions in March.

The Army's senior leaders have met each month to address suicide prevention and how to mitigate cases.

Chief of Staff Gen. James C. McConville cited suicides as one of the three most difficult issues currently faced by the Army. The other two are sexual harassment/assault and extremism. McConville called suicides the "hardest" problem to solve among the three.

"One of my biggest concerns is that we have young men and women who think things have gotten so bad that they don't want to live," McConville told Soldiers from his Pentagon office during a livestream of the 2020 Army Fires Conference. "All of us go through adversity in life. And all of us need a helping hand. All of us fail. When people fail, you've got to be there for them."

Numbers began to increase in the last quarter of 2019 through the third quarter of 2020, and continued to increase since the pandemic's onset, said James A. Helis, head of the Army Resilience Directorate. He added that neither the National Guard nor the Army Reserve have seen a significant change in suicide numbers.

"We don't know what is causing this persistent rise. We can say that it's been recognized by Army leadership at all echelons," Helis said. "Army leadership is committed to

solving and addressing this problem."

McConville said responsibility falls upon each Soldier to recognize suicide warning signs. Among them are financial problems and a lack of interest in work tasks.

Army leaders cannot definitively attribute COVID-19 as the reason for the spike, but acknowledge the timeline coincides with the pandemic's spread. Even in the midst of a pandemic that McConville said he does not expect to end any time soon, Soldiers still must be tasked for missions and deployments as well as attend training.

Soldiers with Families also had to cope with the loss of childcare for a period of time and many had to assist their children with remote schoolwork. The combined factors of pandemic restrictions and uncertainty while meeting duty standards could lead to added stress, Helis said.

"All of those things can amplify risks for behavioral health issues and potentially risks for death by suicide," he said. "So, we know that there was an increased strain on the force."

Soldiers can help

McConville said he learned about a sergeant major who recently rescued a sergeant first class from suicide by intervening at the right time. The general urged Soldiers to follow the sergeant major's example by stepping in when they suspect a colleague may be considering taking their own life.

Soldiers must find strength by leaning on fellow unit members and dealing with adversity as a group, McConville said.

When the pandemic began, the Army had many Soldiers telework for the first time and restrictions separated many from their units, which could have led to feelings of iso-



PHOTO BY SGT. KIMBERLY HACKBARTH

A Soldier helps a fellow Soldier onto the rooftop of a building in order to provide protective overwatch for another element of their patrol in Afghanistan Jan. 29, 2012. Army senior leaders recently discussed the importance of suicide prevention and recognizing warning signs after the service reported an increase in suicides among active-duty Soldiers in 2020.

lation. Army leaders encouraged Soldiers to have face-to-face meetings while still meeting safety requirements to assess warning signs of suicide or depression. And if Soldiers cannot meet in person they can host teleconferences that allow supervisors to assess the well-being of their troops.

"That's been a point of emphasis: that physical, face-to-face, interpersonal interaction with your Soldiers," Helis said. "There's virtual means where you can lay eyes on somebody. You just have to be creative, but also have to be diligent in finding those opportunities."

Soldiers with suicidal thoughts can seek help by calling the Military Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255.

Soldiers can also contact their post's military health clinic, their supervisor or their unit chaplain.

Soldiers can overcome fear from failure in their military careers or home life with the support of their squads in the Army or in life, said Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael A. Grinston.

"Don't be afraid to go through tough times," Grinston said during the conference Wednesday. "It's going to make us stronger."

Grinston said during his first weekend of active duty at what is now Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, fellow Soldiers invited him and others living in the barracks to go skiing in the mountains. He said he could count on his fellow Soldiers to uplift him and said that today's Soldiers should do the same.

"That's the value of life," he said. "And it's not what I want or what I don't have. It's what I have right in front of me. And every day, it's there. We just have to sometimes show each other what it means to be alive."

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

AMC's top enlisted leader grounded in family, heritage

By Megan Gully

Army Materiel Command Public Affairs

REDSTONE ARSENAL, Ala. -- For Army Materiel Command's senior enlisted advisor, a secret to his success starts with never forgetting where he came from and the family that has supported him along his journey.

As the nation and the Army continue to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, Command Sgt. Maj. Alberto Delgado said he takes pride in his Puerto Rican roots and how growing up in the projects of New York City has shaped his life and Army career.

"I come from a long line of proud Puerto Ricans, my parents were both the first in their families to move away from the island, but we maintained the importance of our culture and our roots as I grew up," said Delgado about how he and his sister spent every summer in Puerto Rico until he graduated from high school. "Those summers allowed me to stay tied to the island. Also in my family we only spoke Spanish at home, English was what we spoke at school."

Delgado said that along with his family roots, it was that culture and the diversity of New York City that instilled in him his earliest leadership lesson.

"It was from my mom and from growing up in New York City, which is so diverse in different cultures, that I really learned the most important thing in life is to treat people how you want to be treated," he said. "Starting with that as the foundation of my leadership philosophy has been the secret to my success."

That foundation has lead Delgado to a 33-year Army career, starting with him join-

ing the New York National Guard when he was 17 years old, and today serves as AMC's first Puerto Rican Command Sgt. Maj. and the Army's enlisted senior sustainer.

"Working in the Army started as a job and somewhere around 10 years it became a career, but when it really clicked was when it became a passion," said Delgado. "There is nothing else I want to be doing than taking care of Soldiers. I see them as an investment and watching them succeed and becoming a command sergeant major is what success looks like to me. When I talk about leaving a legacy, that's what I'm talking about, not what positions I've held but the people I've brought up with me."

Delgado said taking the time to mentor those around you is the most important thing a leader can do and he is encouraging enlisted leaders to reach two levels down.

"Everyone is busy, but you can't use that excuse, you need to find time. It's our job to prepare the next generation and ensure they are ready when it's time to pass the torch," said Delgado. "How you treat those around you impacts more than just them, because a Soldier takes that home with them at the end of the day and it impacts the family. We can't lose good Soldiers because we aren't taking care of them and their families."

While he's had many mentors throughout his career, two that stick out to Delgado are the last two people to hold the position of AMC's senior enlisted adviser before him, retired Command Sgt. Maj. James Sims and retired Command Sgt. Maj. Rodger Mansker.



PHOTO BY DOUG BREWSTER

Gen. Ed Daly, Army Materiel Command commanding general, passes the colors to Command Sgt. Maj. Alberto Delgado during a change of responsibility ceremony July 23 at the AMC headquarters parade field.

Four years ago, when Delgado served as AMC's Operations and Logistics (G3/4) sergeant major, he credits Sims for preparing him for his future role at AMC.

"I see that everything Command Sgt. Maj. Sims did prepared me for the position I'm in today," he said. "He developed me, made sure I understood the mission, the major subordinate commands and realize the importance of what we do at AMC. Serving as the AMC 3/4 sergeant major is one of the best things that ever happened to me."

Following his own secret to success Delgado says he will focus his energy at AMC on people. He has developed a robust senior sustainment leader talent management program and is working with Gen. Ed Daly, AMC commander, on implementing the Army's Project Inclusion efforts.

"It's a proven fact that organizations with more diversity perform better," said Delgado. "I know for me, growing up in a diverse and multi-cultural area shaped who I am today."

trick OR treat SATURDAY, OCT. 31 6-8 PM
IN ALL RESIDENTIAL
AREAS ON POST



Participants must follow all provisions of General Order Number 6. Residents will turn on their porch lights to signal participation.

Additional COVID-19 protective control measures:

- Avoid trick or treating in large, non-family groups.
- Front porches are off limits for trick or treaters.
- Participating residents will give commercially and individually wrapped treats by pouring them on a table or flat surface in the driveway.
- Participating residents will not put out common-access bowls or containers filled with candy.
- Children will select candy from the table and place in their own treat bag.
- Residents must not place candy or drop candy into children's treat bags.
- Trick or treaters must not enter any residences.
- Residential haunted houses are not authorized.

Happy Halloween!

SLOW DOWN
IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS!



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Fort Rucker begins registering ID cards into the Automated Installation Entry program Friday.

ALL SCANNABLE ID CARDS (WITH BARCODE)

- ★ Examples of scannable ID cards include common access cards (CAC), retiree ID cards, family member ID cards, etc.
- ★ Initial registration takes less than 10 seconds per ID card.
- ★ Registration scanning takes place at all operational gates during normal operating hours.

People can expect some traffic delays at the gate once AIE registration begins and should allow for additional travel time, especially during morning hours.

CONTRACTORS WITH DA FORM 1602 (NO BARCODE)

- ★ State-issued driver's license will be entered into AIE system at either Daleville or Ozark visitor control centers during normal operating hours.
- ★ After registration, DA form 1602 and driver's license are presented at gate to DA security guards to be scanned.
- ★ Contractors have until Dec. 15 to be registered with the AIE system. Once grace period ends, contractors with DA 1602s must register at either the Daleville or Ozark VCC during normal operating hours.

VISITORS

- ★ Visit the Daleville or Ozark VCC during normal operating hours to register with AIE. The process takes 3-7 minutes to complete.
- ★ Visitor access credentials will be issued for the duration of the visitor's stay, e.g. five days for a graduation; up to six months (unsponsored); or one year (sponsored).
- ★ Visitors with a valid visitor pass issued prior to Oct. 9 have until Nov. 17 to register with AIE. Once grace period ends, visitors must register at either the Daleville or Ozark VCC during normal operating hours.

The Daleville Visitor Control Center is open Monday - Sunday, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

The Ozark Visitor Control Center is open Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

We apologize for any inconvenience and thank you in advance for your patience. Visit our website at <https://home.army.mil/rucker/index.php/visit> for more info.





PHOTO BY KELLY MORRIS

CELEBRATING PARTNERSHIP

A mural in downtown Enterprise that celebrates the city's partnership with Fort Rucker. Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker commanding general, and other post officials helped community leaders cut the ribbon on the mural Sept. 22. The mural, by muralist Wes Hardin, also highlights the Army's people as its greatest strength.

ARMY FLIER

COMMAND

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

Col. Whitney B. Gardner
Fort Rucker Garrison Commander

EDITORIAL STAFF

Jimmie E. Cummings Jr.
Director of Public Affairs

Jim Hughes
Command Information Officer

David Agan
Digital Media Manager

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The PAO staff reserves the right to edit submissions selected for publication. For more information about the "Army Flier," call (334) 255-1239.

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Deadline for submissions is one week before publication.