

2023

INSIDE IMCOM

INSTALLATION MANAGEMENT COMMAND NEWS



Spotlighting our professionals



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COVER:

LTG Omar Jones honored various IMCOM HQ members during the February Town Hall for their contributions since the beginning of the year. (U.S. Army photo by Steve Warns)

Inside IMCOM is a publication created by the IMCOM professional, for the IMCOM professional, to increase awareness of fellow team members and foster deeper relationships among the IMCOM workforce.

Inside IMCOM is part of our service culture. It is a venue to recognize our amazing staff, exchange useful lessons and best practices, share information with one another about the more interesting aspects of our work in our communities, and spark new ideas to inculcate our service culture and enhance our working environments.

We can't do that without you! If you are assigned to IMCOM – whether a Soldier, contractor or civilian – you are an *Insider*. You have interesting information to share and we want to know about it. *Inside IMCOM* depends on columns, commentaries, articles, letters and photos from you.

Please send your content ideas and author's name, rank, department and contact information to:
usarmy.jbsa.imcom-hq.mbx.public-affairs-office@mail.mil

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COMMANDER'S CORNER

LTG OMAR JONES



LTG Omar Jones, center, hosted a social at his home Jan. 18 for IMCOM's ID Directors. From left, Brenda Lee McCullough, ID-Readiness Director; Randy Robinson, Executive Deputy to the Commanding General; MG Tom Tickner, Deputy CG; CSM Jason Copeland; Vince Grewatz; ID-Training Director; CSM Michael Oliver, ID-Readiness CSM; Tommy Mize, ID-Europe Director; CSM Christopher Truchon, ID-Europe CSM; CSM Jon Williams, ID-Pacific CSM; CSM Kevin King, ID-Training CSM; Dave Tindoll, ID-Sustainment Director; CSM James Brasher, ID-Sustainment CSM; Craig Deatrick, ID-Pacific Director; and COL Jay Condrey, IMCOM Chief of Staff (U.S. Army photo by COL John Chu)

IMCOM Professionals,

Our team – all of you! – have been deeply involved in multiple major initiatives since the beginning of the year to improve quality of life for Army People and improve the readiness of our Army. I continue to be impressed with the breadth, expertise, and commitment of our team. I am personally grateful for the service and effort of every IMCOM professional.



The Counter Mold Workshop, the quarterly ID Directors Huddle, the FIP Wargame, and our quarterly Garrison Pre-Command Course required intense planning and coordination from everyone.

Our Counter Mold Operation, highlighted by our workshop in January, is an opportunity to proactively address mold in housing, barracks and other Army facilities to improve quality of life for our Soldiers, Families and Civilians. I'm confident this effort will reinforce our commitment to our People for the foreseeable future.

The FIP Wargame enabled Army commands and senior commanders to use data-driven analytics to assess current infrastructure requirements and communicate command priorities. We presented the output of this tremendous effort to the Army senior leaders for their consideration and resourcing to address the highest priority requirement across the Army over the next 10 years.

A vital component of our Service Culture Campaign is employee recognition. It was a true privilege to recognize so many teammates during our last town hall who worked so hard to make those events a success. And I ask each of you to seek opportunities to publicly recognize exceptional work across our team.

Again, thank you for what you do and your commitment to the quality of life for our Soldiers, Families and Civilians. Your actions are felt across our Army every single day, and it's an honor to serve alongside you.

PEOPLE FIRST – WINNING MATTERS – ARMY STRONG — WE ARE THE ARMY'S HOME!

WHO ARE YOU?

SGM KENYATTA MACK

Position: G-3/5/7 Sergeant Major

What year were you born and where are you from?: I was born in 1974 In Saginaw, Michigan.

Why did you join the Army?: I needed an opportunity, so I joined the Army the day I graduated from high school.

How did you become involved with IMCOM?: I started my tenure with IMCOM in the MP Station/DES as the Provost Sergeant at Fort Jackson, South Carolina.

In 2012 I served as the DES Sergeant Major at Fort Stewart, Georgia.

In 2015-2017 I was the Headquarters Command (HQ CMD) Command Sergeant Major on Joint Base Myer Henderson Hall, Virginia, serving under IMCOM Sustainment.

In 2018 I served as the Fort Carson, Colorado (FCCO) Command Sergeant Major under ID- Readiness.

What is your best memory of the Army?: My time at FCCO as the Garrison CSM during the Housing Crisis, Three hailstorms and the COVID Pandemic July 2018-January 2021.

What do you enjoy most about your job?: I get the chance to help 'Soldiers do what Soldiers do' on a daily basics. I get the opportunity to help Soldiers, Families and DA Civilians accomplish their goals, objectives, mission and problems every day.

What is something that you would like your IMCOM teammates to know about you?: I'm available to assist in the 'problem solving equation' every day. All you have to do is ask. Don't let the boat anchors (problems you encounter) slow you down, your efforts, commitment and presence matters. You are a valued member of the team as long as you keep pulling on the rope! Thanks for choosing to serve IMCOM daily.



PEOPLE



LTG Omar Jones, left, honors Paul Burk during his retirement ceremony Jan. 17 at the Fort Sam Houston Theater. Burk's retirement caps a 40-year career serving Soldiers, Families and Civilians. (U.S. Army photo by Steve Warns)

G9 Director Burk ends distinguished career

By Steve Warns

IMCOM Public Affairs

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas – Paul Burk, IMCOM's G9 Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Director, retired after more than 40 years of distinguished service.

During a ceremony Jan. 17 at the Fort Sam Houston Theater, Burk reflected on a remarkable FMWR journey that began as a janitor at the Fort Sill, Oklahoma, Twin Oaks Bowling Center in 1982 to forging a legacy of quality programs and services provided by Army FMWR that take care of Soldiers and their Families.

"I've loved every minute I served Army FMWR," said Burk, whose father was an Army Command Sergeant Major stationed at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, before moving the family to Oklahoma. "It has been a wonderful honor at

IMCOM to work with caring, dedicated professionals who serve our Soldiers and Families, and I will miss it."

That sentiment was shared by LTG Omar Jones, IMCOM Commanding General, who praised Burk's engaged and caring leadership.

"It will be your impact on people we will miss the most," Jones said. "There is absolutely no doubt you have left FMWR, IMCOM, Army Materiel Command and the Army itself in better shape than you found them. Exponentially so, in fact. You will always be an IMCOM professional of the highest order, and your name will be spoken in these hallways for years to come."

Burk learned the importance of putting people first during his job at Fort Sill while attending college at the University of Oklahoma. He had supportive, nurturing leaders who

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accommodated his academic schedule and showed him the positive effects of investing in their team.

After graduating with a degree in Management Information Systems, Fort Sill hired Burk as an accountant at its central accounting office. When all accounting services were centralized to DFAS, Burk became what he calls simply, “an IT guy.” Fort Sill was declared a model installation for IT in 1992 after Burk and his team implemented new enterprise information systems.

Burk’s leadership qualities were noticed by Phil Sackowitz, then the Training and Doctrine Command’s Deputy Chief of Staff for Base Operating Services who later became IMCOM’s first Executive Deputy to the Commanding General.

“From the first time I met him, I knew Paul was destined to lead,” Sackowitz said. “His thirst for knowledge, his leadership, and his passion for helping Soldiers, Civilians and Families drove him to make the right recommendations and decisions at the right times.”

Burk’s leadership and technical skills got him noticed again in 1998. As the “IT guy” for the Northeast Region of the Installation Management Agency – IMCOM’s predecessor – he and his team introduced the Army FMWR Government Purchase Card Program. Burk established much-needed controls and oversight to ensure accountability, save money and reduce risk to the Army while billions of dollars in transactions helped obtain equipment and services to take care of Soldiers, Civilians and Families.

Those efforts earned Burk the White Plume, the Army’s highest award in FMWR programs, and he became the Director of Financial Management for Headquarters FMWRC, Washington, D.C in 2009. He then moved to Fort Sam Houston as part of a restructuring action that saw FMWRC become IMCOM G9.

Burk’s experience, leadership and business acumen led him to being promoted to Deputy Director of IMCOM G9 in 2017 and in 2019 was promoted by Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Kenneth R. Dahl to become the Director of G9.

“Paul was the perfect civilian professional to lead IMCOM G9, not only because of his lifelong experience, but also because of his strong reputation throughout the Army,” Dahl said. “When the director position opened, he was a natural fit, and he immediately gained the support and loyalty of the entire FMWR community.”



Paul Burk speaks during his retirement ceremony Jan. 17 at the Fort Sam Houston Theater. “I’ve loved every minute I served Army FMWR,” said Burk, whose father was an Army Command Sergeant Major stationed at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, before moving the family to Oklahoma. “It has been a wonderful honor at IMCOM to work with caring, dedicated professionals who serve our Soldiers and Families, and I will miss it.” (U.S. Army photo by Steve Warns)

The early stages of the coronavirus pandemic tested Mr. Burk’s resolve, but his acumen, creativity and intellect prevented layoffs within FMWR despite losing more than \$1 million daily. Burk and the G9 team incorporated video conferencing software in Microsoft Teams to conduct monthly town halls to both internal and external IDs and garrisons, to keep the lines of communication open and routinely checked on teammates’ health and well-being.

Most importantly, Burk and the Child and Youth Services team quickly grasped the importance of continuing to provide quality child care so Soldiers could perform their essential duties. And as COVID conditions continued to subside, he implemented the “FMWR Strategy,” a plan to overcome FMWR’s lack of revenue and bring it back to full operational capability.

“Paul is the real deal,” said Josh Gwinn, G9 acting director who served as Burk’s deputy director. “His people love him because they trust him. And they trust him because he’s walked a mile in their shoes.”

PEOPLE



Frank Burns, Executive Officer to the U.S. Army Installation Management Command Executive Deputy to the Commanding General, shows off his new book titled 'Back Azimuths: It's All About . . . Ships.' "The book was a way to capture lessons learned throughout my life," Burns said. (U.S. Army photo by Steve Warns)

Burns reflects on life, lessons

By Steve Warns
IMCOM Public Affairs

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas – Frank Burns has had many roles during his life's sojourn.

Husband, father, son, brother, retired Army Colonel, elementary school principal, Army Civilian and now author.

"It's kind of neat to see your byline," said Burns, the Executive Officer to the Executive Deputy to the Commanding General at U.S. Army Installation Management Command. "I don't consider a life meaningful unless you share it with others. You can keep everything to yourself and not share it, but I think it's better to share it with others."

Burns shares his professional and personal experiences in

his new book, "Back Azimuths: It's All About . . . Ships."

An azimuth, or a compass direction, is an angular measurement used to locate an object measured clockwise around the horizon. A back azimuth is the projection of the azimuth from the origin to the opposite side of the azimuth circle.

"The book was a way to capture lessons learned throughout my life," Burns said. "In the military, we have the green notebooks we carry around, and some use it to capture certain lessons and meaningful things in their lives. So, it's really a memoir more so than an autobiography. As you shoot the proverbial back azimuth to certain events in your life, you see that some clearly define a certain ship. The self-reflective questions in the book allow you capture

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those lessons, and then that reflection turns the experience (s) into wisdom.”

The book, written from a Judeo-Christian perspective, consists of 21 chapters of “ships” that have specific meaning for Burns, a practicing Catholic. The chapters are divided into “Insight,” where Burns uses a Bible verse that has a significant meaning; “Inspire,” where Burns uses that Bible verse as an anchor for practical lessons to be learned, unlearned, and re-learned; and “Ignite,” which is meant to spark a certain emotive response to “Insight” and “Inspire.” The closing of each chapter offers some further reflection from the author, then gives similar questions to the reader to evoke an emotive response.

Burns grew up the eighth of nine children in Leominster, Massachusetts, and was called early to a life of selfless service. His namesake and uncle, U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Francis B. Burns, died June 8, 1951, 13 years to the day Burns was born. Cpl. Burns earned two Purple Hearts and a Bronze Star with valor in the Korean War.

Burns enlisted in the Army Reserves after graduating from high school and joined the Army National Guard when he enrolled in the University of Massachusetts-Amherst as a member of the Simultaneous Membership Program, an early commissioning program. Burns commissioned as a lieutenant when he was 19 and joined the Regular Army in 1986 upon graduating from UMass as a political science major with minors in Latin and philosophy.

He spent 30 years as an Infantry officer with various assignments stateside and overseas, including at the Pentagon during the Sept. 11 attacks, two combat deployments to Iraq and as Garrison Commander at Fort Polk, Louisiana.

It was at Fort Polk where the seed was planted to write the book.

“The suffix ‘ship’ is kind of a tongue-in-cheek or pun on the

word,” Burns said. “While at the Naval War College I thought of a different way to look at the word ‘ship.’ When I was at Fort Polk, I had many chances to engage with the community. One engagement was at Faith-Training Christian Academy and I gave a Veterans Day talk. I had one slide with five ‘ships’ and a Bible verse. I explained how I interpreted that certain ship in the context of the Bible verse. Different words and verses have special meaning to each of us and how we in turn use them.”

Burns said the book doesn’t have to be read in sequence and that all the “ships” in the book are interrelated, but three stand out for him.

“Worship, which is where I share some eulogies about my family and father-in-law,” he said. “Relationships, which is interwoven throughout the book and closes the last chapter. And Workmanship -- the work and stories that went into this book made me think about my family. They and my in-laws’ work exemplify Workmanship in word and deed.”

After he retired from active duty in 2016, Burns became principal of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Elementary School in Selma, Texas, northeast of San Antonio. He returned to the Army as a civil servant, first as a Civilian Manager in charge of Army base support functions for JBSA-Army Support Activity and in his current role to IMCOM EDCG Randy Robinson.

Burns’ calm, professional demeanor stood out for Robinson when he hired Burns as his Executive Officer in May 2022.

“Without question he’s a servant-leader,” Robinson said. “It was evident he treated everyone with dignity and respect, and it was also evident his life’s calling was serving the nation and serving others. His life is based on a firm faith based foundation and his actions follow. He’s one people can look up to and say he sets the example of service and in making our nation and world a better place.”

And Burns isn’t done with his journey. He said he would like to take different ‘ships’ and further develop them in others, be it seminars, workshops or sharing of the ‘ships’ in order to reach people and make a positive difference in their lives.

“His life is based on a firm faith-based foundation, and his actions follow. He’s one people can look up to and say he sets the example of service and in making our nation and world a better place.”

Randy Robinson, EDCG



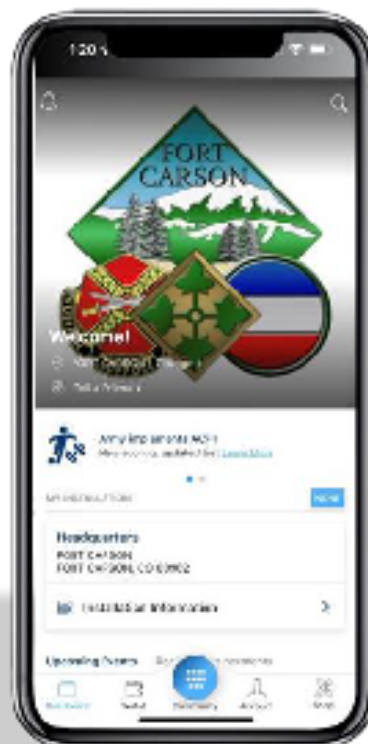
DIGITAL GARRISON

MOBILE APPLICATION



- Digital Garrison launched in 2020 to provide members of the Army community a single (enterprise solution), FISMA-compliant mobile app for accessing installation quality-of-life services.

- Digital Garrison is a partnership between the U.S. Army and the Army and Air Force Exchange Service, and integrates information provided by Installation Management Command, Army Family and MWR, and AAFES.



- 67 installations**
- 8 countries**
- 300K+ downloads**
- Push notifications**
- Application Programming Interface (API)**
- Cyber-secure**



Digital Garrison is part of the Army's move from the industrial age to the information age.

- The app keeps military communities connected, a key part of readiness and resiliency with continual optimization. Leaders may utilize the app's push notification and announcement features to communicate with their communities regularly.

- Digital Garrison links users to the My Army PCS app, the Army Maintenance Activity website, newcomer information, local hotlines and much more. Users may opt-in for push notifications and other announcements for their location via the app.



PEOPLE

IMCOM honors communications pros; 40 entries advance to AMC

IMCOM Public Affairs

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO, FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas – U.S. Army Installation Management Command announces its winners in the 2022 Maj. Gen. Keith L. Ware Communications Awards and the U.S. Army Materiel Command David G. Harris Public Affairs Competitions.

The work of these civilian writers, editors, photographers, videographers, and graphic designers was distinguished from that of their peers by a panel of 11 judges, who were instructed to pick the top two entries in each category. IMCOM public affairs professionals from 19 garrisons worldwide entered 170 pieces of content into 20 categories.

“You achieved the highest level of excellence in sharing and communicating the Army’s story around the globe,” said LTG Omar Jones, IMCOM Commanding General. “Thank you for communicating IMCOM’s top priorities that strengthen Army readiness.”

The following IMCOM winners will advance to the next level of competition, administered by AMC. Garrisons with the greatest number of entries advancing to the next level of competition are Fort Stewart, with seven entries, and USAG Japan and Fort McCoy, with six entries apiece.



The top winners in all categories will be selected and announced by the U.S. Army Office of the Chief of Public Affairs later this year.

2022 Maj. Gen. Keith L. Ware Communications Awards Competition winners:

Category A: Army Communicator of the Year: Chad Menegay, Fort Lee; David Poe, Fort Bliss

Category D: Civilian Photographer of the Year: Angelina Betran, Fort Leonard Wood; Daniel Malta, Fort Stewart

Category F: Clark Taylor Civilian Videographer of the Year: Gregory Mason, Fort McCoy; Edward Muniz, Fort Sill

Category H: Moss-Holland Civilian Writer of the Year: Scott Sturkol, Fort McCoy; Sharilyn Wells, Fort Bragg

Category L: Kathy Canham-Ross Award of Distinction: Kaleen Holliday, Fort McCoy; Amber E. Kurka, USAG Japan.

2022 AMC David G. Harris Public Affairs Competition winners include:

Broadcast Category A, News video: Daniel Malta, Fort Stewart; Dustin Perry, USAG Japan

Broadcast Category B, Feature video: Daniel Malta, Fort Stewart; Gregory Mason, Fort McCoy

Broadcast Category C, Social media/multimedia video: Gregory Mason, Fort McCoy; Jose Sanchez, USAG Japan

Broadcast Category D, Training documentation: Chad Menegay, Fort Lee; Thomas Reust, Fort Riley

Photography Category A, Feature photograph: Terrence Bell, Fort Lee; Eric Pilgrim, Fort Knox

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Photos by Fort Stewart’s Daniel Malta, left, and Fort McCoy’s Scott Sturkol were honored as best of their categories.

PEOPLE

AMC honors G4's Caraway

By Steve Warns

IMCOM Public Affairs

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas – Patrick Caraway of the U.S. Army Installation Management Command's G4 Directorate was recently honored by Army Materiel Command.

Caraway, the Year of Execution Restoration and Modernization Project Lead, was named AMC's Employee of the Quarter for the Fourth Quarter of FY22. He was nominated for the award by Edward Medina, Facility Investment Plan Branch Chief for IMCOM G4.

"To have a branch chief care enough to nominate me might be the most meaningful element," said Caraway, who has been with HQIMCOM G4 for 11 years. "Having a boss who cares enough to recognize their employees and to fight the battle to get recognition for them is really significant and rejuvenating in some regards."

AMC, IMCOM's higher headquarters, honors and recognizes AMC Civilian and Military personnel across its headquarters and 10 subordinate commands whose outstanding and innovative contributions made a direct positive impact on the Command's mission goals during the quarter.

In addition to recognizing outstanding work, some of the key program objectives include advancing a culture of achievement and productivity, contributing to a positive work environment, increasing retention, and improving employee engagement in order to influence overall morale.

KLW

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Photography Category B, News photograph: Caroline Countryman, Fort Riley; Jacqueline Hill, Fort Bragg

Photography Category C, Training documentation photograph: Eric Pilgrim, Fort Knox; Scott Sturkol, Fort McCoy

Writing Category A, News article: Brian Hill, Fort Leonard Wood; Russell Toof, Fort Leavenworth

Writing Category B, Feature article: Terrance Bell, Fort Lee; Eric Pilgrim, Fort Knox

Writing Category C, Commentary: Kevin Larson, Fort Stewart; Chad Menegay, Fort Lee



Patrick Caraway, the Year of Execution Restoration and Modernization Project Lead, was AMC's Employee of the Quarter for 4th Quarter FY22. (U.S. Army photo by Steve Warns)

"Much of what makes Patrick stand apart is the way in which he carries out his responsibilities," Medina said. "He always approaches every situation and individual with the same level of respect, commitment, dedication, honesty, integrity, empathy, transparency and hard work."

Serving an organization dedicated to the quality of life for Soldiers, Families and Civilians is as good as it gets, Caraway said.

"There are so many hard-working, diligent and professional teammates across the IMCOM enterprise that being selected or recognized as the employee of the quarter in this case, or any period to time, is unexpected and frankly a little hard to process," Caraway said.

"It also made me realize that you don't have to be the face or voice of IMCOM, or the briefer that everyone in leadership knows to have your contribution to the Command and the mission recognized as important; and in some cases noteworthy."

Writing Category D, Online publication: Timothy Flack, Camp Zama; Jim Hughes, Fort Rucker

Writing Category E, Printed publication: Molly Cooke, Fort Stewart; Marcus Fichtl, USAG Stuttgart

Graphic Arts Category B, Layout and design: Caroline Countryman, Fort Riley, Kevin Larson, Fort Stewart

Community Engagements Category A, Community Relations Campaign: Amber Kurka, USAG Japan; Dina McKain, Fort Stewart

Community Engagements Category B, Community Relations Special Event: Amber Kurka, USAG Japan; Ryan Thompson, Fort Leonard Wood

For more information, visit [Maj. Gen. Keith L. Ware Communications Awards Competition](#) | The United States Army

PEOPLE



Members of the U.S. Army Garrison Daegu Fire and Emergency Services team pose in front of fire trucks at Camp Walker, Republic of Korea, April 1, 2022. The firefighting team won the Department of the Army's Medium Fire Department of the Year and Fire Prevention Program of the Year awards for 2022. (U.S. Army photo by Mathew Gleeson)

F&ES Award winners named

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas -- Twelve U.S. Army Installation Management Command individuals and departments have been recognized in the annual Department of Defense and Army Fire and Emergency Services Awards program.

The DOD recognizes the outstanding accomplishments of fire departments, individuals and organizations through the annual DOD and Army F&ES Awards.

The following individuals and departments are the U.S. Army Materiel Command winners for calendar year 2022 and will compete for the DOD and Army awards.

Darryl Stewart, Fire Chief, Fort Gordon, Georgia

David McGlynn, Fire Inspector, Letterkenney, Pennsylvania

James Maney, Emergency Medical Provider, Fort Benning, Georgia

Yoshikazu Ito, Dispatcher, Camp Zama, USAG Japan

SGT Ryan Hawkins, Military Firefighter, Fort Hood, Texas

Blake Green, Civilian Firefighter, Fort Benning, Georgia

SSG Michael Wells, Military Fire Officer, Mihail Kogalniceanu, Romania

Marcus Shepard, Civilian Fire Officer, USAG Humphreys, Korea

Fort Hood, Texas, Large Department

USAG Daegu, Korea, Medium Department

Fort Gordon, Georgia, Small Department

USAG Daegu, Korea, Fire Prevention Program

"Our IMCOM Fire and Emergency Services professionals, departments and organizations perform life-saving work at our installations," said LTG Omar Jones, Commanding General, U.S. Army Installation Management Command.

"Thank you for providing such excellent service and achieving these outstanding accomplishments," Jones said. "Best wishes moving forward through the Army-wide and DOD levels of competition."

PARTNERSHIPS



Army team members from installations, commands, and organizations coordinated to achieve the first Statewide Intergovernmental Support Agreement. It is also the first IGSA involving three military services with a single public partner. The Texas Department of Transportation will provide operation and maintenance support to Army, Air Force, and Navy installations in the state that is expected to result in an overall estimated cost savings of 25%. (U.S. Army photo by Sarah Luna)

Historic IGSA signed

By Sarah Luna
IMCOM Public Affairs

AUSTIN, Texas — Texas Governor Greg Abbott hosted leaders from the Army, Air Force and Navy to sign an unprecedented Intergovernmental Support Agreement that will save the Department of Defense millions of dollars a year. A proclamation signing ceremony on January 25, 2023, celebrated the first and only statewide IGSA, and the only one involving three military services with a single public partner.

The Honorable Rachel Jacobson, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Energy, and Environment expressed the agreement's additional significance before signing on behalf of the Army. "This type of partnership strengthens our Army's relationship with the State of Texas, and we look forward to seeing what other innovative partnerships come next," Jacobson said.

J. Randall Robinson, Executive Deputy to the Commanding General for U.S. Army Installation Management Command, was on hand to witness the event. "The latest achievement with the IMCOM IGSA program illustrates our commitment to fiscal responsibility and innovative support agreements throughout the command. This initiative alone will save the Army millions of dollars per year. We couldn't have done it without a dedicated and collaborative team."

Now, the Texas Department of Transportation will provide

operation and maintenance support to Army, Air Force and Navy bases in the state which should result in an overall estimated cost savings of 25% for the DoD. The Army leads in the commitment with a ten-year contract for Forts Hood and Bliss.

This unique IGSA illustrates the value of transformative partnerships between military and state communities. The partners engaged in creative problem-solving, extensive communication, coordination, collaboration, and change. An IGSA of this magnitude was not possible until the Texas Military Preparedness Commission worked with state legislators to pass H.B. 3399. This bill amended the Texas transportation code by granting authority for to provide road services on federal military property.

The Governor's Office, Texas Military Preparedness Commission, Army Deputy Chief of Staff G-9 Installations, and more staff joined forces to bring the day to fruition. Mr. Rich Morris, also from IMCOM, worked extensively on details to reach this point. "The overall success of the IGSA program has only been possible because of leadership engagement at all echelons."

Morris and the rest of the Army IGSA team will continue to build on the 122 approved IGSA's in the portfolio, including agreements in environmental services, community partnerships, and areas that improve the quality of life for members of Army communities.

Federal Mass Transit Benefit

- Improve the environment with rideshare
- Save money
- Reduce stress

Why Share a Ride Instead of Driving My Own Car?

- Reduce lbs. of CO₂ yearly.
- Support IMCOM energy initiatives
- Relax or recharge with a nap.
- Network with other IMCOM employees.



- Reduce wear and tear on your personal vehicle.
- Lower your insurance premiums.

1. Visit Commute with Enterprise website: <https://www.commutewithenterprise.com/en/faqs/why-share-a-ride-instead-of-driving-my-own-car.html>
2. Submit info to JOIN COMMUTE either individually or as a group.
3. Enjoy the ride!

INFRASTRUCTURE

SOUTHCOM breaks ground on new housing construction

By Maria Gallegos

IMCOM Public Affairs

Military leaders, key civic representatives, and housing partners gathered Jan. 30 to break ground on a new housing construction project for service members and their families stationed at Doral, Florida.

Construction, which is expected to start this fall and scheduled to be completed by 2027, will provide privatized military housing near the U.S. Southern Command Headquarters in Doral and the greater Miami – Fort Lauderdale metropolitan area.

The project originated in 2015 when the Federal Aviation Administration offered the use of the land. The collaboration between the Army, FAA, SOUTHCOM, Army Materiel Command, Installation Management Command, Assistant Secretary of the Army (IE&E), City of Doral, congressional support, and housing partners enabled the project to become a reality.

With more than 51 acres of land that will be transferred from the FAA to the Army, just across from SOUTHCOM Gate 2, the new construction will provide housing for nearly 200 military service members and their families, which will help lessen the stress of financial challenges when living in a high-cost metropolitan area.

In March 2022 the Army selected Lendlease, a privatized housing partner, to execute the project. They will plan, design, build, and manage the new construction.

SOUTHCOM Commander Gen. Laura Richardson, Miami-Dade County District 12 Commissioner Juan Carlos Bermudez, Florida Lt. Gov. Jeanette Nuñez, City of Doral Mayor Christi Fraga, and Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart (FL-26) were guest speakers, along with U.S. Army Materiel Command Commander Gen. Edward Daly and IMCOM Readiness Director Brenda McCullough in attendance.

"This is a very special day for IMCOM, our service members and their families," McCullough said at the event.



From left, Chief Operating Officer of Lendlease Communities Phillip Carpenter, Army Materiel Command Commander Gen. Edward Daly, City of Doral Mayor Christi Fraga, Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart, SOUTHCOM Commander Gen. Laura Richardson, Lt. Gov. Janette Nunez, Miami-Dade District 12 Commissioner Juan Bermudez, IMCOM Readiness Director Brenda McCullough, and USAG Miami General Manager Larry Kilgore broke ground Jan. 30 to announce the new military housing construction project for service members and their families stationed at Doral, Florida. The project, which is scheduled to be completed by 2027, will comprise 139 units that will accommodate approximately 200 families. (U.S. Army photo by Maria Gallegos)

"Offering housing near the installation will make a huge difference in the service members' readiness, morale, and their overall quality of life and we look forward to continued collaboration with the team and the day of completion."

Richardson also noted during her remarks the importance of taking care of service members and recognizing communities for their continued support that will improve quality of life and enhance readiness.

"The impact of increased living and housing costs was a driving factor to develop affordable, permanent housing to take care of our number one priority – our service members and their families," she said. "This community and many leaders have been steadfast in helping us bring this project to a reality ... Championing initiatives like these prove we are all collectively committed to doing right by our service members and their families who are committed to protect and defend the Nation we all love so dearly ... SOUTHCOM is eternally grateful for your support."

"This is truly a win-win for everyone," Richardson concluded. "The SOUTHCOM team looks forward to strengthening our bonds with the City of Doral and the State of Florida as we grow our roots deeper into this amazing community."



(left) Hilary (Kapua) Kawelo, natural resource manager, US-AG Hawaii, describes the native Hawaiian plants in one of the Schofield Barracks' U.S. Army seed bank greenhouses to members of the Fort Shafter Spouses Hui (club), tour Jan. 23. (U.S. Army photo by Lally Laksbergs)

Fort Shafter Hui tours DOD's only seed bank

By Lally Laksbergs
USAEC Public Affairs

SCHOFIELD BARRACKS, Hawaii - Eleven members of the Fort Shafter Hui, or all ranks spouse club took part in a tour of the Schofield Barracks U.S. Army seed bank Jan. 23.

"The seed bank is one of the hidden gems that the Army does," said Amy Phillips, member of the Fort Shafter Hui. "It's very interesting to see how this program contributes to maintaining the Hawaiian ecology and biodiversity."

The seed bank is responsible for maintaining seed collections for Army training lands for growing, restoration and as a source for genetic back-up and works with more than 100 endangered plant species across Army lands on Hawaii Island and Oahu. The bank currently has approximately 29 million seeds and can link specific seeds or plantings back to the "mother" of the seeds, which enables rebuilding and tracking of precise populations.

"The Schofield Barracks Seed Bank is the only seed bank in the Department of Defense," said Hilary (Kapua) Kawelo, U.S. Army Garrison Hawaii's natural resources manager. Kawelo has been part of the Army's Natural Resource Program since 1995.

Spouses toured the growing laboratory, greenhouses and gardens as part of the visit. Many spouses shared their personal experiences around the islands and asked related

questions regarding propagation, fire recovery, endangered and invasive species and identification.

"We have a co-op agreement with the University of Hawaii; their program fits into what we do seamlessly," Kawelo said. The co-op agreement with (the University of Hawaii) on Oahu has been in existence since 1997, said Kawelo.

Kawelo described how the seed bank partnered with the State of Hawaii to repopulate the state flower, the yellow hibiscus or maohauhele, on the island of Molokai. The state flower is threatened by both invasive grasses and the wildfire that those grasses carry across the islands, according to Kawelo.

"Managing habitat equals ensuring protection of native species," Kawelo said.

The Fort Shafter Hui is an all-volunteer organization made up of spouses, service members and civilians, among the south region of Oahu, which includes Aliamanu Military Reservation, Camp Smith, Fort Shafter and Tripler Army Medical Center. The Explore sub-group meets often to get out, explore and learn about Oahu.

For more information about the Fort Shafter Hui, check out their website at www.fortshafterhui.com.

Groups interested in scheduling a tour of the seed lab or volunteer trip should call (808) 352-4372.

Bad break can't stop Fort Knox Energy Team

By Steve Warns

IMCOM Public Affairs

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas – Fort Knox Directorate of Public Works Energy Program Manager R.J. Dyrdek always knew he had a high-performing team.

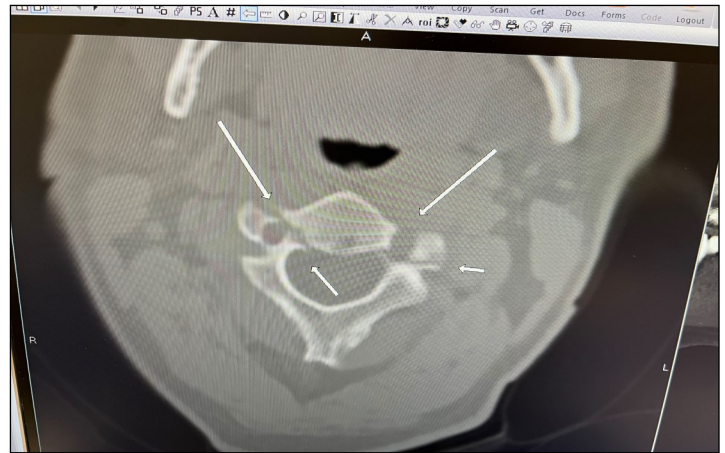
The team's innovative initiatives, ranging from geothermal heating and cooling to the combustion of natural gas that generates electricity for the installation's 11 million square feet of space, has helped transform Fort Knox into the Department of Defense's first energy-independent installation and saving millions of dollars annually.

What he didn't know was just how stellar his team is until after he fell down the stairs in his home and broke his neck in two places in October. The accident kept him immobilized and out of work for 12 weeks.

"I realize now, build that support team BEFORE you fall down the stairs," said Dyrdek, who has served as Fort Knox's Energy Manager since 2009. "Because I was in no way capable of calling up people and saying, 'Can you check on that? Can you do this? Can you do that?' I have to say for the first two weeks I didn't even remember things I should've been doing on a normal basis. Everybody took them all and ran with them like it was their job. When I started to sort of participate, maybe six or seven weeks into the rehab, everybody came on board and told me, 'I got this done, I got that done. We're still on track, and this was going to work.'"

"I count my blessings that Fort Knox's Energy Team – and it literally is a matrix team across the entire installation – carried the ball in my absence because I wasn't going to be useful at all. You really realize where your friends are when you're in that state because it would've been a mess if nothing would've taken place while I was gone for 12 weeks. I learned a lot of things about the Fort Knox Energy Team, and it's phenomenal."

Dyrdek was relaxing and finishing watching Jeopardy! with his wife Oct. 7 when he decided to go to the basement and



A photo of the CAT Scan shows where Fort Knox EM R.J. Dyrdek broke his neck in two places. (R.J. Dyrdek)

get some ice so he could make a drink.

"She got up and went outside, and I went, evidently, down the stairs," Dyrdek said. "I hit somewhere on the steps. I laid at the bottom until I regained consciousness and crawled back up the stairs. By the time my wife was coming back in, she asked me what happened, and I was unable to even tell her. I still don't have much of a memory of it. You could see blood and the things at the bottom of the steps, and you could see a blood trail up the steps. It was a horrible short period of time that could've ended extremely badly."

Doctors diagnosed that Dyrdek broke his C2 vertebrae on both sides, and there was nothing holding his neck on his head other than the muscle structure. But there was a blessing to his bad break, he said.

"Usually, the spinal cord severs at that point, and you're either paralyzed or dead," Dyrdek said. "I broke both sides of my neck that turned out to be better than if I had broken one side. It healed straight and I didn't have to put bolts in my head. I was able to get in this big neck brace that goes halfway down your back and chest. And it's very effective at immobilizing you."

See **DYRDEK**, Page 20



U.S.ARMY

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#PowerToWin

Soldier finds balance with Sikh faith, Army service

By Russell Toof

Fort Leavenworth Garrison Public Affairs

FORT LEAVENWORTH, Kan. — For new cadets at West Point, a trip to the barbershop on reception day is a normal part of the first day routine. For males, their heads and beards are shaved. This aligned with the Army regulation for grooming standards. For Maj. Simratpal Singh, then Cadet Singh, this would put him at a major crossroads of his faith and beliefs and his willingness to serve his country.

Singh was born in Punjab, India, an area that borders India and Pakistan. He came to the U.S. in 1997, when he was about 9, about two years after his father came to the U.S. seeking political asylum due to local security forces targeting Sikhs.

“I have fond memories of growing up,” said Singh. “We lived on a farm, and it was our house and our neighbor’s house. I remember running around in wheat fields, playing late in the evenings, having animals, it was typical farm living.”

Punjab had been experiencing a separatist movement with the Sikh faith, gaining traction since the Green Revolution of the late 1960s. The height of the violence came in 1984 when “Operation Bluestar” occurred, resulting in a decade-long conflict.

“As a Sikh with a beard and turban, you could be picked up by local security forces and killed,” said Singh. “That’s what we were escaping. We were at risk. My dad applied to a bunch of countries and thankfully the U.S. accepted us.”

After initially coming to California, Singh and his family moved to Seattle. He was a junior in high school when he first learned about the United States Military Academy at West Point.

“Sikhs have a very strong military tradition,” he said. “I grew up hearing stories of Sikhs fighting against oppression. Sant Sipahi. A ‘saint warrior.’ I was fascinated with that concept since childhood and I knew from an early age I wanted to do military service. My great-grandfather served in WWI for the British. My parents were supportive of military service, but they had always stressed education as



Maj. Simratpal Singh came to the United States when he was about 9 and graduated from the United States Military Academy in 2010. Singh currently is attending the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth (Courtesy, Sikh Coalition)

well. West Point would let me get a commission and a college degree.”

Singh said he was already accepted into the academy in 2006 when he was told he would need to shave his beard and take his turban off.

“It was a shock to me finding that out,” he said. “I reached out to some local Sikh community members for assistance and they said they couldn’t help get an exemption passed. I was naive thinking I would go to the academy and explain and it would be fine. At the barbershop is when I knew I had to make a decision on which way I was going to go.”

To give back to the country that had allowed his family to

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PEOPLE

SINGH

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escape the turmoil in India, he complied and shaved his beard.

"I couldn't look in the mirror for the first two weeks at the academy," he said. "I felt like the very values that would make me a good Soldier, are the ones I had violated by giving up on my faith. The rigors of the academy are what got me through and I tried to focus on being a good cadet. My dad always told me it's easier to change the system from within. Let me go into the Army and focus on being the best Soldier I can be. Maybe down the road, I can figure out how to get back to my roots. How to have my beard and turban and practice my faith."

Just a few years after leaving West Point, Singh found himself at the Pentagon for an event sponsored by the Sikh Coalition, a Sikh-American advocacy group that defends Sikh civil rights.

"I don't know how it all worked out this way," said Singh. "There were three Sikh Soldiers before me that were granted a one-time exemption. They were at this event. I was talking to some lawyers at that event and they said they could help me."

That event became the catalyst that eventually led to him receiving a religious accommodation, one that received national media attention and paved the way for other Sikhs in the military. In January 2017, the Army issued new regulations stating that Sikh Soldiers will not be forced to give up their religious turbans, hair, or beards throughout their military career.

"It's remarkable that this change happened," said Singh. "I

DYRDEK

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Dyrdek's teammates ensured nothing was missed while he was immobilized. Fort Knox Resource Efficiency Manager Chuck Beach served as the hub between Dyrdek and the team; DPW Director Jason Root and Deputy DPW Chris Karlsen assumed Dyrdek's duties; engineering technician John Griffanti took responsibility for the installation's natural gas initiatives; Deputy Garrison Commander Jim Bradford kept the Department of the Interior and Bureau of Land Management apprised of the garrison's energy program; and Garrison Commander Col. Lance O'Bryan carried the weight of the communication and coordination with AMC

know close to 100 Sikhs in the military that didn't have to make the miserable choice that I had to make. I worked with two young Sikh men in 2017 who were applying to West Point, they were given the approval. Upon their graduation, I was an instructor there and was able to administer the commissioning oath in 2021 as they finished their time at West Point. To go full circle in the process is stunning and I never would have imagined it."

Since the Army change in 2017, Singh has worked with the Sikh Coalition and other partners to create policy changes in the Air Force, Navy and most recently the Marine Corps. In late December 2022, Marine Corps Times reported that the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia granted a preliminary injunction that will allow two Sikhs to go through Marine Corps boot camp with their Sikh articles of faith. The Marines had been the only military branch that would not offer full religious accommodations to Sikh recruits. There was already a limited stateside-only exception in place for grooming standards for a Sikh Marine after the 13 weeks of recruit training.

Singh said he was proud to have been able to attend the appeals court hearing in November 2022 as an example of the Army getting it right and was glad the court made its decision in favor of the two recruits.

Over his military career, Singh has completed Ranger School, received a Bronze Star medal for clearing IEDs in Afghanistan and received both a bachelor's and master's degree in engineering as well as a Master of Business Administration.

Currently attending the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Singh said he hopes to go back to an engineer unit when the course finishes in June 2023.

"My branch is engineers and it's been a great choice so far," he said.



Dyrdek

and IMCOM concerning energy issues.

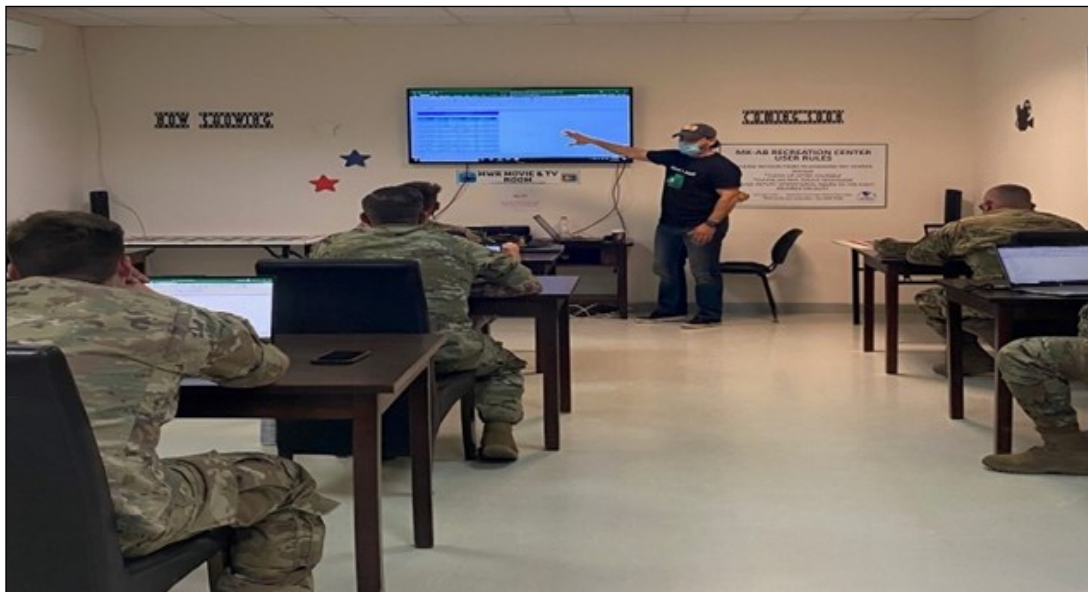
"Where R.J. is outstanding is taking the strategic vision of leaders and making it a reality," Root said. "He applies a common-sense approach to where the Army can get the greatest value for the money it invests. He then doggedly pursues the money and contracts to take the abstract and turn it into something

concrete."

Root is happy Dyrdek has healed and has returned.

"Yes, it's great to have R.J. back for the work that he completes," Root said. "But it is also the thankfulness and positive attitude that R.J. carries every day. To him, each day is a gift, and he shares it with us."

PEOPLE



Eloy Campos' favorite part of being a Training Instructor assigned to the the Directorate of Human Resources for USAG Rheinland-Pfalz is helping others to learn while also learning himself. Campos has been teaching Operation Excellence (OPEX) since 2012, and he has seen the evolution of training that centered on Morale, Welfare and Recreation to one that encompasses all IMCOM professionals. (Courtesy photo).

A passion for service

By Tammy Hoss

IMCOM G9 Directorate

Eloy Campos has worked for the Army in a variety of roles since 2004. He started his career as a Non-Appropriated Funds (NAF) flex program assistant at the Rolling Hills Athletic Club in Baumholder, Germany. He then worked several years for Child and Youth Services in the Youth Sports and Fitness program as well as working with Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers (BOSS), Warrior Zone, and special events. Eloy's passion is teaching, and that fits perfectly with his current role as a Training Instructor assigned to the Directorate of Human Resources for USAG Rheinland-Pfalz. Eloy has been teaching Operation Excellence (OPEX) since 2012. From that time, he's seen the evolution of the training from MWR centric to one that encompasses all IMCOM professionals.

Eloy's favorite part of teaching is helping others to learn while also learning himself. No class is ever the same. He enjoys meeting each new group of employees that join the organization because they bring a wealth of new experience.

The refresher courses allow him to reconnect with past students while covering new and different topics. Eloy took the initiative to translate the OPEX course into German to reach the more than 30% of the workforce that was previously overlooked. He wanted them to understand the language we speak when we say we want to create a culture

of service excellence.

Eloy's passion for delivering the message of the Service Culture Campaign (SCC) stems from his desire to spread its positive message and impact to the workforce. He feels he works in a thriving, high performing, positive workplace culture, and he wants everybody to share the same experience. When asked what component of the SCC he felt was most important, Eloy said without a doubt, Leader Workforce Engagement. "Leaders should ALWAYS care about people first!"

Eloy hopes to continue teaching for the next several years. After which, he would like to start his own Global Leadership and Culture Consulting Firm. He is so invested in our Service Culture; he wants to share it with others outside the Army realm.

Eloy feels that the SCC and OPEX should not just be seen as a mandatory training. It should be the bedrock of everything we do daily. It is a way of life in the workplace. Creating a workplace culture where people want to come to work and give their best is absolutely achievable.

We thank Eloy for his passion for delivering the message of the Service Culture Campaign and look forward to many more years of him training our team.

If you think you might be interested in becoming an OPEX facilitator either at a Garrison or at the headquarters, please reach out to Tammy Hoss at tammy.l.hoss.naf@army.mil.



New Parent Support Program Child and Family Specialist Amy McCauley demonstrates proper technique before asking newborn care class participants to practice how to hold a baby using dolls Feb. 6 at the Resiliency Center. (U.S. Army photo by Prudence Siebert)

Program offers support for soon-to-be parents

By Tanya Vass

Special to the Fort Leavenworth LAMP

FORT LEAVENWORTH, Kan. – Army Community Service's New Parent Support Program offers a number of free classes and one-on-one opportunities for soon-to-be parents to learn about the different aspects of parenthood and having a newborn.

Amy McCauley, nurse and child and family specialist for ACS, presented a newborn care class Feb. 6, during which she taught the soon-to-be parents what to expect in the baby's first few years of life, from common ailments that the baby could suffer to different techniques a parent might use to breastfeed or put the baby to bed.

"We offer classes — childbirth, newborn care and breastfeeding classes — for expectant parents so that they get an idea of what they're getting into," McCauley said. "Once that baby comes, we're available to do home visits for them if they have concerns, if there are questions, if there is

something going on. If they feel they need a little bit of help, we're there for them."

Capt. Natasha Rivera, Command and General Staff College student who is expecting her first child in April, attended the newborn care class Feb. 6.

Rivera said learning about the different techniques of newborn care such as swaddling and burping was helpful.

"Now I'm better prepared than when I have to do it with my actual baby."

Other things, like umbilical cord care, were aspects of having a newborn that she said she had not considered before.

"It definitely gave me insights of things that I just don't know just from not ever having done it before."

McCauley said that the NPSP newborn programs are not just for first-time parents.

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PEOPLE

PARENTS

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“We get everybody, because honestly, every baby is different,” she said. “So, you may be on your third baby, but it is behaving a little differently than the first and second did, and you’re kind of hitting a wall. We’re there for you.”

McCauley said the most rewarding aspect of the services available to new parents is the relief of parents realizing their baby is behaving normally for a child their age.

“So many times a baby is doing something that is odd, different, scary. It’s a relief to have someone come and say ‘No, it’s okay’ or help you figure out what you need to do with that situation.”

Additional support for new parents includes an effort to help support families in socializing and connecting with other parents. Stroller Walks are every Friday for parents with children ages 3 years and younger, and Moms’ Nights Out occur on a monthly basis. A Dads’ Night Out is also in the works.

“That gets people together and gets people to talk and compare with other parents,” McCauley said.

Expectant parents are also able to take advantage of the home visits offered by the New Parent Support Program from pregnancy up to three years after the child is born.



Newborn care class participants, including Jayme Bennett and Capt. Austin Bennett, Command and General Staff College student, practicing holding and repositioning babies with proper head support during the class, offered by New Parent Support Program, Feb. 6 at the Resiliency Center. (U.S. Army photo by Prudence Siebert)

ACS has a number of programs available to new parents, all working toward fostering a healthy home environment for both parents and children.

See <https://leavenworth.armymwr.com/programs/acs> for a schedule of classes and other available programs.



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SPORTS

WCAP distance runner sets her sights on gold



Sgt. Ednah Kurgat of Fort Carson, Colorado, breaks the tape to win the women's national title during 2023 Armed Forces Cross Country Championship held in conjunction with the USA Track and Field Cross Country National Championship in Richmond, Va. (Courtesy photo by Steven Dinote)

By Steve Warns

IMCOM Public Affairs

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas – Sgt. Ednah Kurgat continues to run down her dreams.

The World Class Athlete Program Track and Field member captured her first USA Track and Field Cross Country national championship and first Armed Forces title on Jan. 21 in Richmond, Virginia. The victories qualified her for the 2023 World Athletics Cross Country Championships on Feb. 18 in Bathurst, Australia.

Kurgat's 18th-place finish in the world championship has only whetted her appetite for gold on the Olympic and international levels.

"Running is a passion for me," said Kurgat, a power generation specialist who enlisted in the Army in May 2020 and

joined WCAP in October of that year. "I'm grateful the Army and WCAP gave me an opportunity to continue my running career as I serve my country."

Kurgat grew up in Kenya and was introduced to distance running in high school with the aim of securing a college scholarship to the United States. Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia, offered Kurgat a scholarship. She spent a year at Liberty before transferring to New Mexico, where she led the Lobos to the team championship and became the school's first individual NCAA cross country champion in 2017.

The desire to be part of a championship team and running in a warmer climate drew Kurgat to New Mexico. The Lobos won the NCAA championship in 2015.

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SPORTS



SPC Khalfani Harris, left, a combat engineer and Taekwondo Soldier-Athlete, qualified for the USA Taekwondo World Team in the -68kg weight class during a competition held in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Feb. 10. (U.S. Army Photo by Staff Sgt. Michael Hunnisett)

SPC. Harris qualifies for Taekwondo Worlds

By Staff Sgt. Michael Hunnisett
WCAP Public Affairs

TULSA, Okla. – Specialist Khalfani Harris, a combat engineer and Taekwondo Soldier-athlete assigned to the U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program, Fort Carson, Colorado, has qualified for the USA Taekwondo World Team in the -68kg weight class.

The World Team Trials were held at the Cox Business Convention Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Feb. 10. Harris had a 2-0 record, dominantly winning both rounds in both matches.

“I was nervous coming into this competition, but knew I was ready to get the job done,” said Harris. “I saw so many openings to gain points and took as much advantage of those as I could, and knew I had to secure the win in the second round.”

During his first match against Isiah Young, Harris won his first round 12-3, and second round 15-1. In the finals against opponent James Choi, Harris won his first round 8-6 and second round 14-9.

Harris, a Tampa, Florida native, was a 2019 USA Taekwondo National Champion and Youth Olympic Team member.

The 2023 World Taekwondo Championships is scheduled to take place from May 29-June 3, in Baku, Azerbaijan.

KURGAT

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“I was looking for a strong, dynamic program that was going to facilitate or make me more competitive on a professional level,” said Kurgat, who graduated from New Mexico in 2019 and was a three-time All-American.

Kurgat realized the best way to continue running was to enlist in the Army. She followed the exploits of fellow Kenyans and WCAP members Paul Chelimo and Shadrack Kipchirchir when they made the 2016 U.S. Olympic team in the 5,000 and 10,000 meters, respectively.

“I was about to graduate, and I decided to reach out to the coach at the time,” Kurgat said. “He guided me through the process, and I was able to apply. Luckily for me, I had the qualifying standards that the program had set up for soldiers.”

Kurgat continues to realize her potential on the national and international stage since joining WCAP. The national championship, which she won in a time of 32 minutes, 6.5 seconds, more than four minutes ahead of teammate Spc. Collet Rampf, was the culmination of a training regimen of running 80 miles a week, or the equivalent of running roughly three marathons.

“That was the best she has run on the national stage,” said Staff Sgt. Sam Kosgei, also a native Kenyan and WCAP Track and Field coach.

“Every time we showed up for training, she was pushing herself, so she was trusting herself that she was better than everyone on the team. She earned that confidence before she went to nationals.”

While cross country and Olympic distance running are different, Kosgei says he likes the chances of Kurgat making the U.S. Olympic team and winning the gold medal.

“I definitely won’t count her out,” he said. “Right now, she has the confidence.”

And WCAP has not only honed Kurgat’s confidence as an athlete, but it has also sharpened her readiness and resilience as a Soldier.

“I can say I’m a more well-rounded person because of WCAP,” Kurgat said. “They’ve given me a chance to train and instilled in me the desire to serve. I highly recommend the program for those who want to serve in the Army and pursue their athletic goals. It’s just one of many possibilities our Army offers.”