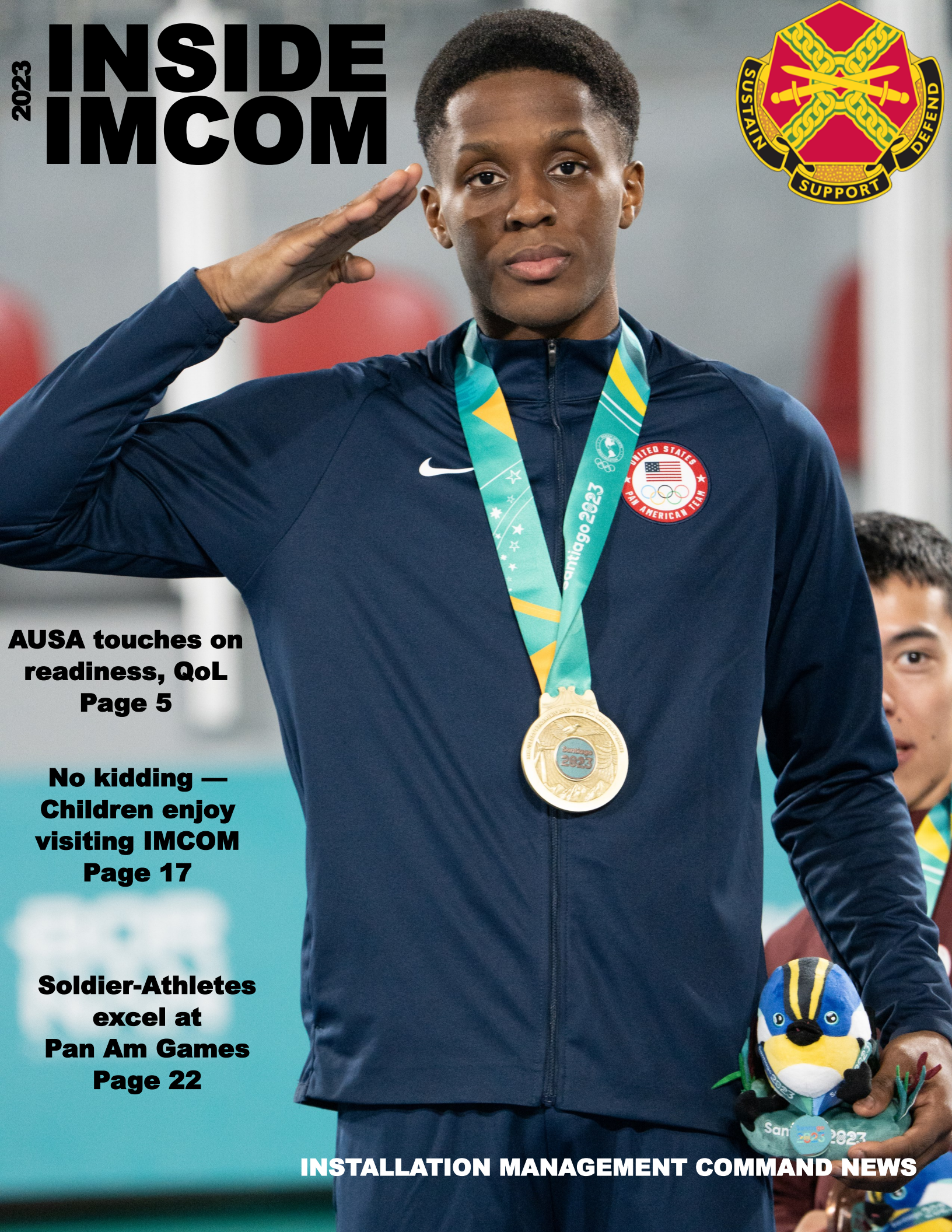


2023

INSIDE IMCOM



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Children enjoy
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COVER:

SPC Khalfani Harris salutes during the medal ceremony after he won the gold medal in the 68kg classification in taekwondo during the Pan American Games on Oct. 21 in Santiago, Chile.

(U.S. Army photo by MAJ Nate Garcia)

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, civilian or contractor – 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:
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COMMANDER'S CORNER

LTG OMAR JONES ★★ ★



From left, COL Jay Condrey, LTG Omar Jones, CSM Jason Copeland and BG Joe Ricciardi pose with IMCOM professionals during the first workforce social held at the IMCOM Commanding General's quarters. (U.S. Army photo by MAJ Johnny Howze)

IMCOM Professionals,



I am amazed and inspired by the commitment of our team – all of you! – to improve the quality of life for our Army's Soldiers and Families and the readiness and strength of our Army.

Join me in congratulating our Soldier-Athletes of the U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program who competed in the 2023 Pan American Games. It is clear they put their heart and soul into competing, and seeing their success is truly inspiring.

I enjoyed spending time with our IMCOM professionals and their families during the HQ Organization Day at the Pedrotti's Ranch in Helotes, Texas. I was privileged to host nearly 50 of our IMCOM professionals for the first workforce social at my quarters, enjoying good conversation and great food!

As we look ahead to the holiday season, spend some time with family and friends to recharge. Just as IMCOM is the Army's home, our families and friends make our home. Spend time with them!

Finally, I thank each one of you for your service and commitment to maintaining and improving the quality of life for our Soldiers, Families, and Civilians. It is my sincere honor to serve alongside you.

WE ARE THE ARMY'S HOME!

WHO ARE YOU?

ANDRE DOUGLAS

Position: G4 Executive Officer

Where are you from?: Born and raised in a small town called Meriden, Connecticut.

Did you serve? 27 years in the Army.

What was your final rank? Retired Command Sergeant Major.



How did you become involved with IMCOM? I was the Fort Belvoir Garrison Command Sergeant Major. When I retired from Fort Jackson, I was hired as the G8 Deputy Executive Officer.

What is your best memory of the Army? I was the first First Sergeant for the World Class Athlete Program and activated the Company in August 1997.

What do you enjoy most about your job? Helping and assisting the G4 Staff or anyone that needs assistance from the G4 Front Office.

What is something that you would like your IMCOM teammates to know about you? I was the Bagram Deputy Garrison Commander (Afghanistan) twice 2013-14 and 2017. I was the G8 XO, G1 XO and now the G4 XO. I love football, basketball, boxing, and golf. I love cars.

QUALITY OF LIFE



IMCOM Commanding General LTG Omar Jones, second from left, and MG James Isenhower, 1st Armored Division CG, emphasize that taking care of people has a direct correlation to Army readiness at a contemporary military forum during the Association of the U.S. Army's annual symposium Oct. 11. (U.S. Army photo by Will King)

Senior leaders discuss readiness during AUSA

By Stefan Alford
AMC Public Affairs

WASHINGTON – The Army's senior sustainer emphasized the direct correlation between quality of life and readiness at the Association of the United States Army's Annual Meeting and Exposition here Oct. 11.

"Delivering ready combat formations means getting our Soldiers and what they need to the fight – anywhere in the world – and sustaining them there," said Gen. Charles Hamilton, commanding general of Army Materiel Command. "Sustainment is about warf-

ighting, period. And that also means that taking care of people ... is about warfighting."

These aren't afterthoughts, Hamilton stressed; they are the foundation of the Army's ability to fight and win the nation's wars.

"Improving housing conditions and transforming the military health system ... is about warfighting. Providing quality and affordable childcare programs and improving spouse employment ... is about warfighting. Continuing to improve the PCS process ... is about

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QUALITY OF LIFE

AUSA

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warfighting,” he said.

Those quality-of-life programs and services were the focus of a contemporary military forum panel discussion on “Delivering Ready Combat Power: Taking Care of People.” The main take-away: Army leaders at all levels want real-time Soldier and Family feedback to know and understand quality-of-life issues so they can find solutions.

“No Soldier or family should ever feel unheard,” said Lt. Gen. Omar Jones, commanding general of Installation Management Command, who served as a panelist. “If Soldiers or Army Families are living in conditions they feel are not safe, not clean or not in good condition, they need to tell their chain of command. As long as even one family is living in an unacceptable home, then we have work to do.”

IMCOM actively encourages feedback to make improvements, whether on family and unaccompanied housing, or programs and services, such as childcare, spouse employment, and PCS-related issues, Jones added.

Maj. Gen. James Isenhower, commanding general of 1st Armored Division and Fort Bliss, Texas, and his wife, Sherrill, also served as panelists, bringing the Senior Commander and Army family perspective to the discussion.

“Home is where the Army sends you,” said Sherrill. “The geography may change, but the services and facilities don’t. They are tailored to specific locations, but they provide a consistent experience to give a continuing sense of community.”

She explained that there’s a familiarity across installations with Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation services, such as housing offices, fitness centers, and Child and Youth Services programs that offer predictability and make Soldiers and Families feel at home.

“You may not yet know when you arrive where the commissary is, but you know there is one,” she said.

Spouses and Soldiers are the best source of truth on an installation, added Isenhower, and leaders need

their feedback and input to identify needs and trends.

“I’m part of the problem,” he joked. “I’m old and gray haired. The value from our younger people to resolve issues quickly and the input from the lower levels helps us improve quality of life across every aspect.”

Increased quality of life is directly tied to increased Army readiness and is critical to upholding the Army’s commitment to care for Soldiers, Army civilians and families, said Hamilton. It’s a wide-reaching effort that spans more than 80 Army installations worldwide to enable sustainment and readiness.

“For our Soldiers with families, we have nearly 100,000 homes on our installations, ranging from apartments to townhouses to single-family homes with multiple bedrooms, multiple bathrooms, and large living spaces,” he said, with more than 86,000 privatized, and over 13,000 owned and leased by the Army.

“More than 19,000 of the privatized homes will be replaced or renovated by 2026, and more than 2,000 of the Army-owned homes will be replaced or renovated by 2028,” Hamilton shared. “So, in just five years more than one-fifth of our entire inventory of housing will be essentially brand new.”

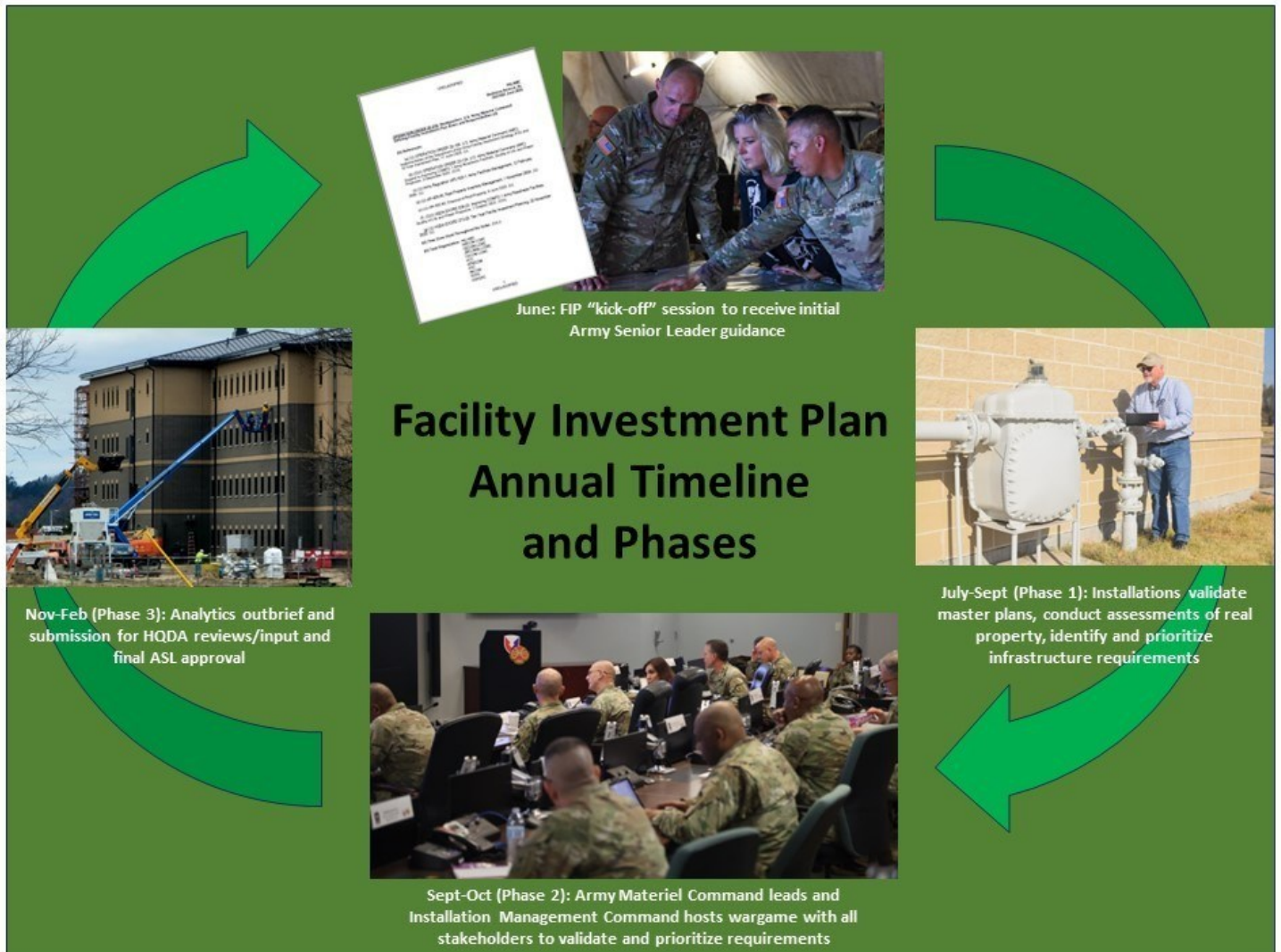
Additionally, more than 6,700 barracks buildings at Army installations worldwide have enough space for 480,000 individual, unaccompanied Soldiers. Hamilton noted the service is increasing investments on renovations and construction to continue improvements across the barracks portfolio.

“Fundamentally, delivering ready combat formations means that we must be committed to improving the quality of housing and amenities to better support the needs and lifestyles of our Soldiers and their families,” he said.

The Army has a team-of-teams approach to taking care of people and upholding the commitment to the Soldiers and Families of the world’s most lethal ground force, Hamilton said in closing.

“They deserve our best,” he said. “They deserve to work and live in safe and healthy environments, and they deserve access to quality programs and services that support readiness and resilience. They deserve it ... and it will be delivered.”

FIP WARGAME



Infrastructure funding at the forefront

By Stefan Alford
AMC Public Affairs

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas — The Army wrapped up its annual Facility Investment Plan wargame to prioritize infrastructure needs and program funding for future construction and renovation projects.

Senior leaders representing the active Army's major commands participated either in person or virtually

Sept. 25-29 to review all real property assets in the service's inventory – from barracks and work centers to quality of life facilities like child development centers, dining facilities, and fitness centers.

The Army Materiel Command-led and Installation Management Command-hosted FIP wargame event began in 2020 to establish a cyclic and evolving process to strengthen installation readiness for the

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FIP WARGAME



USAG Stuttgart Directorate of Public Works officials conduct a recent facility inspection to upload current conditions into the BUILDER database prior to the annual FIP Wargame. (U.S. Army photo by Marcus Fichtl)

FIP

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Army of 2030 and beyond.

The wargame captures military construction, restoration, and modernization needs as identified by installations, which are then prioritized by senior leaders, explained Jordan Matthews, AMC G-4 facilities division chief and FIP program lead for AMC.

Following the FIP wargame, the prioritized construction and modernization projects are submitted for Army senior leader approval.

The approved FIP is then incorporated into the Army's funding plans and submitted to the Secretary of Defense as part of the Army's Budget Estimate Submission.

In FY22, restoration and modernization projects from previous FIP wargame efforts resulted in 222 awards

totaling \$1.2B, including 50 barracks projects at 17 installations; a cyber center of excellence; two child development centers; airfield, rail and pier repairs supporting deployment readiness; and utilities power substations and heat plants.

Barracks projects continued to see increased emphasis in FY23, said Matthews, with approximately 45 barracks projects awarded for \$1.07 billion. In addition, 13 Child Development Centers/Youth Centers for \$114 million were awarded. Combined, the barracks and centers make up 65% of all investment funding, according to Matthews.

"These investments directly affect the quality of life of Soldiers and Families on Army installations and reflects our commitment to People – the Army's top priority," he said. "The Army will also award 50 additional projects totaling \$1.15 billion supporting power projection, stationing, modernization, installation readiness, energy and utilities, and other (Army Senior Leader) directed initiatives."

ORG DAY 2023



Food, fun and fellowship were on the agenda for IMCOM's Org Day on Oct. 5 at Pedrotti's Ranch in Helotes, Texas. Our teammates enjoyed spirited games such as Jenga, line dancing and a buffet of delicious cuisine that included beef brisket and chicken. (U.S. Army photos by MAJ Johnny Howze)



PEOPLE



John Arroyo, a retired U.S. Army captain and Green Beret with his wife Angel, stands with members of IMCOM's Religious Support Office. Arroyo shared his story of resilience during the first U.S. Army Installation Management Command Quarterly Prayer Luncheon on Sept 11 at the Fort Sam Houston Theatre. (U.S. Army photo by Steve Warns)

Ex-Green Beret shares message of resilience

By Steve Warns
IMCOM Public Affairs

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas – John Arroyo has a simple message for those who might be struggling.

“If you just get up, you have the ability to face that day,” said Arroyo, a retired U.S. Army captain and Green Beret who shared his story of resilience during the first U.S. Army Installation Management Com-

mand Quarterly Prayer Luncheon on Sept 11 at the Fort Sam Houston Theatre. “You can be broken – emotionally, mentally, and physically – but if you get up, you have the ability to recover and face tomorrow.”

Arroyo details his life, injury, spiritual journey, and ongoing recovery in “Attacked at Home! A Green Beret’s Survival Story of the Fort Hood Shooting.” His life has

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ARROYO

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been one of continually getting up, from overcoming an impoverished childhood in southern California to recovering from a near-fatal gunshot wound on April 2, 2014. A Soldier shot and wounded Arroyo before committing suicide at Fort Hood (now Fort Cavazos), Texas. Four, including the gunman, were killed, and 16 others were wounded.

“It is my hope that Soldiers and Civilians will see themselves in John’s story and how our faith can make us more resilient,” said Col. Monica Lawson, IMCOM command chaplain, who first became acquainted with Arroyo in June 2023. “I also hope we remember that in times of adversity as well as in times of peace, God is always with us, speaking to us and directing us even when we don’t know it or can’t see it.”

Finding his tribe

Arroyo’s desire to enlist and serve in the U.S. Army didn’t stem from patriotism but rather from a desire to transform his life. Born on Sept. 10, 1977, in Montebello, California, he grew up in Whittier, California, approximately 20 miles southeast of Los Angeles, the youngest of three children.

“I grew up in a fatherless home; because of it, that caused me to pursue approval outside the home,” Arroyo said. “That ended up in a lot of negativity and put me around the wrong people. Those days, I was easily influenced, and because of it, I got into drugs. It wasn’t that other people influenced me – I was probably equally a bad influence. I needed transformation and discipline to get myself together.

“My sister, especially, said, ‘You need to leave and relocate to a new environment and a new group to tribe with.’ ”

In June 1998, Arroyo enlisted in the Army, chose motor transport operator as his military occupational specialty, and found the leadership and the love he sought. He decided to make the military his career after re-evaluating his life in 2000.



John Arroyo, a retired U.S. Army captain and Green Beret, shares his story of resilience during the first U.S. Army Installation Management Command Quarterly Prayer Luncheon on Sept 11 at the Fort Sam Houston Theatre. (U.S. Army photo by Steve Warns)

“Everything I was looking for at home I found when I showed up to my unit in the 82nd Airborne Division,” he said. “Initially, I thought about leaving and returning home to be a civilian truck driver, but I was like, ‘Why am I leaving? Everything that I love is here right now.’ I liked the military. At the time, there wasn’t a war going on. Being a truck driver was a co-ed duty assignment, and it honestly felt like we were in college. We were like a big group of brothers and sisters. I loved the community and camaraderie, and we had leaders who loved us. They gave us tough love, but I found the identity that I was looking for.”

He found his identity as a Green Beret and a purpose to continue serving.

“Special Forces Command didn’t put the Green Beret inside me. They pulled it out of me,” Arroyo said. “I was already a Special Operator in my heart, and all the military did was pull it out and mold me. It’s who I am. The motto of the Green Berets is “De Oppresso

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Liber,” which means Free the Oppressed. The Army, through the Green Berets, sent me around the world to free the oppressed. Today, the mission continues; only my uniform and my choice of weapons have changed. My uniform is healed scars, and my weapon of choice is a message of resilience.”

The ultimate test

Arroyo’s resiliency was tested like never before on that fateful day at Fort Hood (now Fort Cavazos), when he was shot in the neck during Spc. Ivan Antonio Lopez’s shooting rampage. The .45 caliber bullet severed Arroyo’s left jugular vein, destroyed his voice box, punched through his shoulder and arm nerve bundle, and broke his right scapula.

Immediately, he said he heard a strong voice imploring him, “Get up, or your wife will die.”

That moment, he chose to get up. And he believed it was divine intervention that aided him in his recovery.

“The first grasp in my recovery process was my faith,” Arroyo said. “I believe my Creator, my God, is the one who put – the ear, nose, and throat surgeons – in my path. I believe it was Him who guided me to the chaplains and counselors. He encompasses everything, and he was able to get me through physical, emotional, and spiritual healing.”

Arroyo still does rehabilitation for his injuries and doesn’t have full use of his right arm. While his physical rehab is ongoing, forgiving the shooter was crucial to his emotional and spiritual healing. Chaplains and counselors stressed to Arroyo the importance of forgiveness.

“The shooter, he was gone, and I was going to carry that bitterness,” he said. “One of the things they said was, ‘John, how are you going to heal if you’re carrying that poison, which is the root of bitterness? You can never heal unless you can forgive.’ So, that’s how my mental, emotional, and spiritual healing started.”

More importantly, through prayer and reflection, he learned to forgive himself and strengthen the familial

“Today, the mission continues; only my uniform and choice of weapons have changed. My uniform is healed scars, and my weapon of choice is a message of resilience.”

CPT (ret.) John Arroyo

bonds with his wife, Angel, and his children. And it’s that spiritual journey he hopes will resonate with readers.

“The message I received was, get up,” Arroyo said. “My primary goal is to be utterly transparent because many of our Soldiers and their families are broken. They are masters of hiding brokenness. Soldiers come home and cut their families down with their tongues, and they engulf their homes with rage, anger, alcoholism, opioid abuse, and whatever else. And so, our books are seeds. They are seeds to plant so that families can be restored.

“Additionally, not every Green Beret, Delta Force operator, senior commander, or sergeant major will open their hearts up in front of their soldiers. But you know what they’ll do? They’ll read a book about a Green Beret who was shot at Fort Hood (now Fort Cavazos). When they do, it becomes a mirror of what has happened in their life, so our book is a glimpse of hope. It’s all about how some of the most broken things in your life can be restored.”

Lawson, whom her grandparents raised during a part of her teenage years, echoes that sentiment.

“I was reminded of how the hand of God, the protection of God, the promises of God, and the favor of God have been a part of my life. Even when I did not acknowledge Him, God still loved and cared for me,” Lawson said. “It has been and continues to be my faith that has kept me and made me the resilient person that I am today.”

SGM Tolbert reflects on his life of service

By Steve Warns
IMCOM Public Affairs

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas – SGM Joshua Tolbert was born to be a Soldier for Life.

“When I was a kid, all I ever wanted to do was to be in the Army,” said Tolbert, who will retire in November as the U.S. Army Installation Management Command Provost Sergeant Major. “I had relatives who served in various branches, but I always wanted to be a Soldier.”

Tolbert’s journey to becoming a Soldier started at Thunderbird Youth Academy, a military school in Pryor Creek, Oklahoma. While he was there, he also started taking college classes at Northeastern Oklahoma. He enlisted in the Army in November 1999.

“When I first joined, I intended to make a career of it from the day I started, and I stuck it out,” Tolbert said. “I knew what I was getting into. I didn’t have illusions. That’s extremely rare. In fact, one of the things I did not struggle with but was different was I was so locked in tight when I came in that I had to calm down a little bit when I got to my first duty station.”

While Tolbert knew that he would eventually join the Military Police Corps when he enlisted, he didn’t know exactly what being an MP entailed.

“I had an instructor who was an MP, and that’s kind of why I went in the direction of going into the MP Corps,” Tolbert said. “I’m glad that I did. I have enjoyed the MP corps. It is one of the few branches that has just as much of a peacetime mission as a wartime mission.”

The Army gave Tolbert plenty of opportunities during his career, but perhaps the biggest opportunity for him was the chance to live overseas.



Sgt. Maj. Joshua Tolbert poses with his wife, Brittany, during his retirement ceremonies at IMCOM Headquarters. (U.S. Army photo by Steve Warns)

“I not only saw the world, but experienced the world,” Tolbert said. “You can vacation anyplace and get a taste of it, but there are layers of complexity that you don’t get in a short period of time.”

Tolbert was stationed in Germany for four years, Korea for four years, Japan for three years, Italy for one year, and a one-year deployment to Iraq. Asked to pick a favorite place, he cited Japan for its tight-knit community and efficiency.

Plus, he’s also one of the first U.S. enlisted service members to receive the Japanese Defense Cooperation Medal. He received the medal while he was the Sgt. Maj. for First Corps (FWD) for his efforts in the establishment of the first bilateral U.S. Army and Japanese Ground Self Defense Force Headquarters.

Tolbert predates IMCOM, but he has worked as an MP when there were Area Support Groups and has always supported IMCOM in the law enforcement role. It also has allowed him the opportunity to fulfill his core role and function of law enforcement on the installations.

“It has exposed me to a lot of new information and courses,” Tolbert said. “That has allowed me, in my twilight, so to speak, to have a better understanding of how the Army works and hopefully communicate to the people coming after me.”

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Federal Mass Transit Benefit

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- Reduce lbs. of CO₂ yearly.
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2. Submit info to JOIN COMMUTE either individually or as a group.
3. Enjoy the ride!

DES directors praise workshop

By Steve Warns
IMCOM Public Affairs

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas – The first Directors of Emergency Services Workshop, held Aug. 21-25 at Headquarters, U.S. Army Installation Management Command, was an invaluable experience, Col. Jon Doyle said.

Approximately 90 protection professionals gathered at the workshop to learn and share best practices on how to provide and integrate base operations services across the U.S. Army garrisons with the intent to effectively lead, manage and plan emergency services with available resources that are aligned with IMCOM's core competencies in order to enable readiness for a globally responsive Army.

"We've done small DES courses for new individuals, but we've never done a workshop like this, where we gathered the SMEs in the room and brought up issues in a concise forum," said Doyle, the director of the



Lt. Col. Megan Williams, the 720th MP Battalion Commander and the Installation Provost Marshal for Fort Cavazos, Texas, speaks during the DES Workshop at IMCOM Headquarters. (U.S. Army photo by Steve Warns)

Provost Marshal/Protection Directorate. "I'm hoping the DES directors will take back that they are heard and know that they have an advocate at the headquarters level willing to take on the hard issues that are cutting across the enterprise."

Josh Solomon, PM/P law enforcement branch chief, said the event was a great place to network.

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TOLBERT

From Page 13

Everyone wants to retire on a high note, Tolbert said, and he isn't different. One of the leaders he has served with who has allowed him to do so is Col. Jon Doyle, director of the IMCOM Provost Marshal/Protection Directorate.

"He's taking things that people may not have done anything with or been able to do for a very long time and brought issues forward with solutions to the highest levels of the MP Corps," Tolbert said. "The manner in which he communicates those issues tends to put people in a position of wanting to assist."

And Doyle is quick to point out Tolbert has left an indelible impression on IMCOM PM/P with a fearless

and honest approach that has improved the lives of Soldiers and their families.

"Not only has he become my professional battle buddy, but we have become fast friends," Doyle said. "I can always count on him to keep me grounded and to check on my personal and professional wellbeing. He finds ways to make me laugh and also see challenges from different perspectives. Often in ways I had not considered."

Tolbert and his wife, Brittany, will retire to Eastland, Texas, where he plans to be active in the community and the local VFW.

"It's a fantastic town with a great spirit of community that we're very much looking forward to being a part of," Tolbert said. "One of my passions is history, and they have an awesome museum that exists on the backs of volunteers. I hope to get involved with that."

PEOPLE



About 90 DES professionals from across IMCOM attended a workshop Aug. 21-25. (U.S. Army photo by Steve Warns)

DES

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“Every installation is unique, and every Army command they are situated with brings a unique set of problems,” Solomon said. “We gained a better understanding of their problems, and they were able to see how they are tied in to the (Commanding General’s) annual command guidance.”

Doyle and Solomon praised IMCOM Commanding General Lt. Gen. Omar Jones’ willingness to resource the workshop and tackle hard questions and issues facing the garrisons. The DES workshop will be an annual event every fourth quarter, Doyle said.

“For him to give clear guidance, directly from him, down to the directors at the garrison level so they know exactly how he’s thinking, what he’s thinking, is something they don’t get,” Doyle said. “They always get an interpretation through staffs. There was no ambiguity of what he said. It was clear, concise, ‘This is how I think.’”

“The CG’s No. 1 priority is people, and everything we do in the protection portfolio is about people. It’s

about people who live, work, play or visit on our installations. You don’t have an installation unless it’s protected.”

The timing of the workshop couldn’t have been better for Lt. Col. Megan Williams, the 720th MP Battalion Commander and the Installation Provost Marshal for Fort Cavazos, Texas. Williams assumed her roles earlier this summer.

“There has been some turnover in our brigade. At Fort Cavazos, we have a brigade commander who is the DES, and the battalion commander who is the provost marshal for the installation,” Williams said. “Being able to be here and get the headquarters’ perspective of where we need to be going, the exposure to the IMCOM campaign plan, all of this at the beginning of our tenures is very good to reinforce where we need to launch and grow from an initial point. It’s also a good waypoint for us to make sure we’re going where we need to go.”

Lt. Col. Brian Pilch, the DES for USAG Japan, had one just word for DES directors interested in attending the workshop.

“Go,” he said. “You create contacts, and those contacts can help you reach solutions to problems you might have on your installations.”

PEOPLE



IMCOM professionals and their children stand in front of a fire engine that belongs to the 502 Air Base Wing, which is the host tenant for JBSA, during the first “Bring Your Kid to Work” day Aug. 11 at IMCOM HQ. (Photo by Arwynn Warns)

Children enjoy visit to IMCOM HQ

By Sarah Luna and Danella Luna
IMCOM Public Affairs

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas – The Installation Management Command All Hands meeting Aug. 11 started like never before with IMCOM Chief of Staff COL Jay Condrey’s daughter, Vivian, at the helm.

She set the tone for a fun-filled day of learning for more than 50 of the participating children at IMCOM’s first “Bring Your Kid to Work” day.

Other children seated at the command conference room table included IMCOM CSM Jason Copeland’s children Jaylyn and Justin.

“Having the kids here is a dream for us,” Copeland said. “This is the first time my kids actually see who I am working alongside with and some of what I get to do.”



Sam Brown poses with his mom, Lauren, IMCOM’s Religious Education Program Director. (Photo by Denali Luna)

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PEOPLE



From left, LTG Omar Jones, IMCOM Commanding General, speaks with some of the children during IMCOM's Bring Your Kid to Work day, while G9 Marketing Director Amy Leon poses with her son, Miles. (Photos by Denali Luna)

KIDS

From Page 17

Jaylyn nodded her head as she sat next to IMCOM Commanding General LTG Omar Jones, who expressed his appreciation for the children.

"People in the Army can't do their job without the support of folks like you," Jones said. "Thank you for being part of the Army family."

After the meeting, Jones invited youngsters into his office where they heard about his career, asked questions about Army service, and looked at some mementos. Children from ages 2 to 17 reflected on their favorite aspect of being at the headquarters.

Several staff and youths agreed a highlight was the 502nd Fire Department and Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston Security Forces Military Police presence.

"I like the fire truck," said Sam Brown, whose mother, Lauren Brown, is IMCOM's Religious Education program director.

Abby Franco spent the day with her dad, Antonio, meeting some of his coworkers and their kids. Together they completed a scavenger hunt to learn more about IMCOM people and efforts.

G9 Marketing Director Amy Leon and teenage son,

"People in the Army can't do their job without the support of folks like you. Thank you for being part of the Army family."

LTG Omar Jones to the children of IMCOM professionals

Miles, toured the headquarters talking about her role. It was time well spent for Miles.

"I like to see what my mom does for a living," Miles said. "I think it's great I get to meet other kids, the people my mom works with and to spend the day with my mom."

On a tour of the headquarters, one child expressed interest in the U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program, while another saw themselves joining an Airborne unit.

Whether learning more about IMCOM, one another, or themselves, IMCOM's Bring Your Kid to Work day strengthened relationships among parents, children, co-workers, and created ties to more than the place where people work. Children saw and heard how IMCOM is the Army's Home as a People First organization.

ENVIRONMENT



The author learned environmental public affairs isn't confined to a desk. (Courtesy photo)

ORISE and shine to new opportunities

By Conner Beckwith
AEC Public Affairs

My adventure took shape when I stumbled upon USA-Jobs and saw a public affairs job opportunity with the U.S. Army Environmental Command through the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE). Freshly graduated from the University of Arkansas with a degree in biology, I embarked on a journey of exploration and self-discovery, unaware of the remarkable path ahead.

The ORISE program places individuals from the academic community (students, recent graduates, and faculty members) in research projects under the Department of Defense. This program is one way to ensure a steady influx of scientists and engineers to meet the DoD's future STEM needs. This collaborative approach leverages a young STEM professional with new, unique perspectives and ideas with the initiative U.S. Army and offers valuable job training for participants.

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Although initially hesitant about venturing into public affairs within an environmental command, my father's experience in Air Force public affairs inspired me to take a leap of faith and see where this would take me. Little did I know this would become the best learning experience I could have asked for, where I could strengthen my passion for the environment and find an unexpected new interest.

What sets ORISE apart for me is its emphasis on continuous learning. Unlike most traditional internships, where rigid structures limit one's exposure, ORISE and USAEC encouraged me to embrace the many facets of the field. The experience is designed to provide a fluid understanding of the Environmental Command, with an emphasis on the niche domain of environmental public affairs.

In ORISE, each participant is assigned a mentor in their new position. My mentor, Lally Laksbergs, through unwavering support and guidance, helps me navigate the complexities of not only the Army and DoD, but the Environmental Command, enriching my understanding of environmental public affairs beyond my expectations. In this role, she challenges me and guides me throughout the year, pushing me beyond my limits while ensuring I understand how to implement this learning in the future. Through her mentorship I have gained confidence and competence in the command, prompting me to write my first article – which you're reading now.

Throughout the course of this past year, I've had the privilege of working with dedicated professionals who were not only experts in their respective fields but also always open to help me learn and understand.

This experience is not confined to a desk. Rather, it's sometimes an immersive and hands-on adventure.

A significant turning point was realizing that research for educational campaigns and interviews with subject matter experts not only amplifies the command's voice but also enriches my understanding of environmental science. I now recognize the critical im-

portance of communication and scientific understanding in the environmental world; a valuable lesson I believe I couldn't have gained from any other experience.

For example, I've been able to interview the command's highly regarded entomologist, Dr. Bill Miller. From the interview alone I was able to understand the importance of our Integrated Pest Management Program and the intricacies of communicating pest management across the world, something that would have taken me who knows how long to learn from a written report versus an hour-long conversation.

Another gratifying experience was having the opportunity to travel to Fort Leonard Wood, where I was able to participate in and take photos of the Environmental Performance Assessment System team to expand my environmental knowledge and gain a better understanding of our mission, blending both passions into one.

As I conclude my first year with ORISE, the most gratifying aspects of my journey has been discovering an interest in public affairs and reigniting my passion for environmental science. This niche field offers unique challenges and opportunities that sparked a newfound sense of purpose. I realized the profound impact of environmental public affairs on shaping public perception and driving change toward a sustainable future. USAEC is not only equipping me with the essential tools for success in my field but also is presenting opportunities to broaden my horizons. AEC is providing the flexibility to explore various paths and the choice to either continue building my career within the organization or venture elsewhere. This is an environment where even an ORISE participant, such as myself, feels profoundly valued.

To anyone considering an ORISE opportunity, I recommend seizing this chance to explore your potential, learn from professionals, and embrace growth in an environment that values innovation and curiosity. Plus, you get paid to do it; who wouldn't want to seize this type of experience? ORISE has been the catalyst for my personal and professional transformation, and I am eager to embrace the exciting future it has paved for me in environmental public affairs.

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Things to Update on Your LinkedIn Profile

LinkedIn, the World's Largest Professional Network with More Than 830 Million Members in More than 200 Countries and Territories Worldwide. Use These Tips To Optimize Your Profile. For More Info Contact PAO email: usarmy.jbsa.imcom-hq.mbx.public-affairs-office@mail.mil

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PAN AM GAMES



SPC Kamal Bey celebrates after he pinned Brazil's Joilson De Brito to win the 77kg gold medal in Greco-Roman wrestling at the Pan American Games in Santiago, Chile. (U.S. Army WCAP photo by MAJ Nate Garcia)

WCAP Soldier-Athletes haul in the hardware

By Steve Warns
IMCOM Public Affairs

SANTIAGO, Chile – The U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program displayed serious mettle during the 2023 Pan American Games from Oct. 20 to Nov. 5.

Eight Army WCAP Soldier-Athletes won medals for the United States, which boasted a roster of 631 athletes and led all countries with 286 medals over 16 days.

Five struck gold, with Spc. Khalfani Harris kicking off U.S. Army WCAP's haul winning the 68kg weight class in taekwondo, Sgt. Ildar Hafizov capturing the 60kg weight class in Greco-Roman wrestling, Spc. Kamal Bey winning the 77kg weight class in Greco-Roman wrestling, and 1st Lt. Sam Sullivan and Sgt. Joanne Fa'avesi helping the U.S. Women's Rugby 7s beat Canada to cap U.S. Army WCAP's showing.

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Cpt. Sam Chelanga, who had competed in the Chicago Marathon on Oct. 8 before entering the Pan American Games, earned a silver medal in the men's 10,000-meter run.

Sgt. Ednah Kurgat won bronze in the women's 10,000-meter run, and Staff Sgt. Nick Mowrer teamed with 1st Lt. Lisa Emmert of the Army National Guard to earn bronze in 10-meter mixed air pistol.

Sgt. 1st Class Naomi Graham lost in the quarterfinals of the women's boxing 75kg division, and Sgt. 1st Class John Joss will compete in the Para Pan American Games on Nov. 17-26.

Taekwondo

Harris reflected on his U.S. Army WCAP journey that he calls his "training arc."

"It's meant to be tough, physically and mentally," said Harris, who recently moved to Charlotte, North Carolina, to train with USA Taekwondo. "But with persistence, consistency and patience, the possibilities are endless."

Harris' training arc resulted in his first international medal Oct. 21. He had a dominant tournament, only losing one bout en route to defeating the Dominican Republic's Bernardo Pie for the gold medal in a close match.

"I was in no panic. I just have to remember that I'm an experienced fighter and also a very athletic player," Harris said. "I knew that I would've been able to score given the circumstances of the fight. I stayed calm and collected, and I aimed and fired."

That ability to aim and fire didn't surprise USA taekwondo director of athlete affairs Sherman Nelson, who calls Harris a "taekwondo specimen."

"He can do every kick from every angle, and he raises the bar on athleticism, kicking ability and talent overall," Nelson said. "The U.S. is better with Khalfani Harris on the team."

Harris isn't sure if he's qualified his weight class for the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris, but he feels he has



Staff Sgt. Nick Mowrer, right, of the U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program and 1st Lt. Lisa Emmert of the Army National Guard take aim during their bronze medal match against Brazil during the Pan American Games in Pudahuel, Chile. Mowrer and Emmert beat their Brazilian counterparts to win the bronze. (U.S. Army photo by MAJ Nate Garcia)

a better shot at qualifying after winning gold. He also expressed his gratitude for U.S. Army WCAP, which he credits for making him a better Soldier, athlete and person.

"Everyone that I worked with at WCAP, even the other athletes that I've gotten to know have motivated me to achieve more," Harris said. "Iron sharpens iron, and I'm really enjoying my time and journey."

Shooting

Mowrer was off target with a fifth-place finish in the men's 10-meter air pistol Oct. 26, but he found his aim 24 hours later to earn the bronze with Emmert.

"You go home and lick your wounds, but you learn stuff, too," said Mowrer, who teamed with Emmert during a World Cup competition earlier this year. "I came in with a plan. The plan didn't work out 100 percent. I went home, slept on it, came back with a new plan, had my teammate to lean on and it worked out."

Mowrer praised the chemistry between himself and Emmert.

"We come from similar backgrounds (Mowrer hails from Butte, Montana; Emmert hails from Houghton, Michigan), and as team members, we mesh together and rely on one another on the firing line," Mowrer said.

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Emmert, who won her first international medal, submitted her application to join WCAP. She believes WCAP will further her shooting career.

“It’s encouraging, and I’m excited to see where it will lead,” she said.

Running

Chelanga and Kurgat continue to be among the world’s best long-distance runners and earned their first international medals. Chelanga captured silver Nov. 3 in 29 minutes, 1.21 seconds, while Kurgat ran 33:16.81 on Oct. 30 to win bronze.

Chelanga was pleased he won silver after competing in the Chicago Marathon less than a month before running in the Pan American Games. Chelanga placed ninth in the Chicago Marathon.

“Coming from Chicago less than four weeks ago, I was kind of tired and I knew I needed to pace myself to win a medal,” said Chelanga, who finished second to fellow American Isai Rodriguez and will focus on the U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials in February. “It feels great to win a medal. I’m glad I gave it a shot.”

Kurgat finished third in a tightly contested race. She credits Army WCAP for developing her as a complete runner.

“It’s played a big role in my running career as a Soldier-Athlete,” Kurgat said. “I’ve been able to grow mentally and physically, and it continues to help me prepare for the Olympics.”

Greco-Roman Wrestling

Bey and Hafizov earned their first Pan American Games gold medals Nov. 3 in dramatic fashion.

Bey, who was down 5-0 at one point to Brazil’s Joilson De Brito in the 77kg gold medal match, stormed back to score 12 straight points and pinned De Brito with one second left.

“Everything went according to plan besides being down 5-0,” Bey said. “I knew I could get this guy tired and just wait him out. I was waiting for opportunities to



1st Lt. Sam Sullivan of the U.S. World Class Athlete Program takes a bite out of her gold medal after helping the U.S. Women’s Rugby 7s team to the Pan American Games title in Santiago, Chile. (U.S. Army photo by Steve Warns)

score, and when they were there, I took them. There is no better way to finish out a tournament like this than with a pin. It’s definitely something worth celebrating.”

Hafizov took a 7-0 lead over Cuba’s Kevin De Armas in the 60kg final and held off De Armas’ rally to win 7-5.

“I was expecting a fight, because everyone here who steps on the mat, they want to win,” Hafizov said. “I saw myself on the medal stand.”

Women’s Rugby 7s

Sullivan and Fa’avesi were part of a team that dominated the Pan American Games. The U.S. recorded four consecutive shutouts before beating Canada 19-12 for the gold medal Nov. 4.

“We weren’t surprised by our dominance,” said Sullivan, who finished the tournament with two tries against Jamaica and a try each against Colombia, Paraguay and Brazil. “That is the standard level of performance we have set for ourselves coming into this tour. Sometimes the score doesn’t reflect how we felt about the game, which I think was the case with several of the games this weekend. We got the result, but we still have work to do.”

While the U.S. Women’s Rugby 7s team will celebrate its gold medal, Sullivan said the team doesn’t look ahead.

“I won’t start thinking about the 2024 Olympics until the job is done on the World Series this year,” Sullivan said. “Momentum doesn’t win the next game. Work ethic and resilience wins games.”