

# ALASKA POST FREE

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## Army revamps leave and pass regulation

**Thomas Brading**  
Army News Service

The June 3 revision of Army Regulation 600-8-10, which covers leaves and passes, is part of the largest update to Army military leave policy in more than a decade, said Larry Lock, chief of Compensation and Entitlements for the Army's G-1 office.

"The new regulation encompasses recent changes in leave and passes, rearranges the sections to make it more user friendly, clarifies policy, and covers the new leave forms," he said. "It also aligns the terminology more closely with" Defense Department Instruction 1327.06, or Leave and Liberty Policy and Procedures.

The result is a regulation that is more comprehensive and will reduce confusion, especially for Soldiers working in joint environments, he said.

The DOD Instruction covers leave and liberty procedures and sets a blueprint so the Army can be uniform with the other military services. Based on input from Soldiers, the Army took the opportunity to improve the Department of Army Form 31, or Request and Authority for Leave, and the DA Form 4179, or Leave Log.

"We're an all-volunteer force since 1973, and to sustain our force we want to take care of our peo-



Spc. Dallas Ochoa, assigned to the 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, reunites with his daughter, Kaylynn, following a homecoming ceremony at William Bill Reed Special Event Center, Fort Carson, Colorado, Nov. 13, 2018. (Photo by Sgt. Micah Merrill)

ple," Lock said. "One way to do that is to streamline the process for requesting leave, and enhance morale by encouraging Soldiers to take time off."

### Updated leave forms

Last updated in 1993, the time to update the leave form had come, he said, especially with so many changes to the regulation. "To be a more usable

form given changes in the types of leave, the Army updated the DA Form 31 to make sure commanders and Soldiers clearly understand what type of leave was chargeable and what type was non-chargeable," Lock said. "Soldiers, Army leaders and commanders need to keep track of leave, for personnel reasons and for audit purposes."

In other words, depending on the types of absence Soldiers request, they can

now more clearly distinguish it as chargeable or non-chargeable on the leave form. Soldier feedback resulted in larger Leave Address, Remarks and Organizational Address fields. While it is not required by regulation, Soldiers can now enter three or more addresses where they expect to stay while on leave.

"We now have an improved process, and that has improved the DA Form 31," Lock said.

The DA Form 4179, Leave Log, was also updated to help personnelists track the absences requested, approved or disapproved for Soldiers in their organizations.

Both the new DA Form 31 and the new DA Form 4179 are available on the Army Publishing Division website. All Soldiers are encouraged to always download the latest versions of the forms as improvements will continue to be made.

### Parental leave

While new parents have been able to take advantage of the military parental leave policy, or MPLP, since last year. The revised AR 600-8-10 includes the MPLP, and further explains the policy. The leave policy associated with childbirth can be somewhat confusing, and the revised regulation helps Soldiers navigate through the different leaves, Lock said.

There are three different types of leave associated with the birth of a child: maternity convalescent leave, primary caregiver leave, and secondary caregiver leave.

New birthparents are authorized 42 days of maternity convalescent leave upon release from the hospital or birthing center. As this is convalescent leave, it

**See LEAVE on page 3**

## NCO evaluation changes create flexibility, boost readiness

**Joseph Lacdan**  
Army News Service

The Army has begun to shift its rank advancement structure for NCOs by moving from a two-year promotion projection process to a month-to-month format, as well as allowing top performing Soldiers to be eligible for promotion six months earlier.

The overhaul to evaluating NCOs is intended to boost Army readiness and improve the quality of its NCO corps, said Sgt. Maj. Mark Clark, Army G-1 directorate of military personnel management sergeant major. Soldiers will soon feel the impact of those changes as the Army transitions to a greater focus on merit to promote its enlisted leaders rather than on time in service.

As part of the changes, the Army is widening the scope of its order of merit list, or OML, to select NCOs for promotion. The list will be used as a guide to select Soldiers for promotion to sergeant first class through sergeant major. Sergeants and staff



More than 40 Soldiers graduate from an Emergency Basic Leaders Course at an undisclosed location in Kuwait on July 7, 2020. The Army is currently transitioning to a performance-based annual evaluation to promote its NCOs. The evaluation will be based on several factors including performance at military training schools. The service will no longer use a centralized promotion board. The Emergency BLC is a modification of BLC, which is required for promotion to the rank of sergeant. (Photo by Master Sgt. Thomas Wheeler)

sergeants will continue to earn promotions based on points and cutoff scores.

Instead of a centralized promotion selection board, the service will move to a performance-based annual evaluation for Soldiers eligible for promotion to sergeant first class and above. The OML now contains a "fully qualified" list to identify Soldiers who have earned imme-

diated eligibility for promotion. The OML also determines which Soldiers earn selections to go to training associated with rank advancement.

The changes began in fiscal year 2019 with the command sergeant major/sergeant major board in August 2019 and continued with the fiscal 2020 master sergeant board in May. The fiscal 2020 CSM/SGM board is current-

ly underway.

The Army's next policy change will be with the fiscal 2021 sergeant first class board, which will convene on Sept. 20. That board will inform decisions that include selection for training to attend the Master Leaders Course, assignment selections and NCOs with

**See NCO on page 2**

## Build A Kit

Ready Army

When disaster strikes, emergency responders address the most critical needs and may not be able to get to an area until it is deemed safe. While they work on behalf of the entire community, it is your responsibility to ensure your family's well-being during times of crisis. Emergency kits are essential tools for meeting that challenge.

To prepare your family for an emergency, get one or more emergency kits that include enough supplies to meet your essential needs (see list below-not all inclusive) for at least three days. Think reusable and multi-use. A metal bowl can do double duty as a cup and saucepan. A brightly colored poncho can be used as water repellent clothing, a marker and two together can create a temporary shelter. Keep a kit at home, and consider having kits in your car and at work. These kits will enable you and your family to respond to an emergency more quickly. Your various emergency kits will be useful

whether you have to evacuate or shelter-in-place. Check with your local officials for any other specific items that should be included in your kit. Be sure to rotate your items periodically, ensuring nothing is expired when the need comes.

Suggested basic items to consider for a home emergency kit:

- Water – at least one gallon per person per day for at least three days
- Food – nonperishable food for at least three days, consider items that do not require cooking and will maintain freshness for several months such as energy bars, freeze dried foods and dehydrated foods
- Formula and diapers for any infants
- Food, water, other supplies and documents for any pets
- Manual can opener
- Flashlight, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration battery-powered weather radio, battery-powered cellphone charger and extra batteries or hand crank powered

**See KIT on page 2**

### WEEKEND WEATHER

Friday



Chance of rain. High: 49F.

Saturday



Slight chance of rain. High: 51F.

Sunday



Mostly sunny. High: 54F.

### IN BRIEF

The Army continues to be committed to preventing suicide among its Soldiers, DA Civilians, Family Members and Retirees. Suicide prevention is a top priority for the Army, and it places emphasis on suicide prevention every day of the year.

Read more on page 7.

# Nutrition Corner: Picky Eaters

Myth vs. Fact. Making my child sit and eat everything that is offered will make him or her learn to be a good eater - MYTH!

It is completely normal for toddlers to go from great eaters to picky eaters overnight, which can be frustrating, and sometimes concerning, for parents. This holds especially true for parents who were taught as young children to clean their plate at every meal, even if they were already full.

Force-feeding or making children sit and eat all that is offered to them can actually make matters worse. This tactic can develop into a power struggle and turn mealtime into an unpleasant experience for both parents and children. It can also exacerbate fussy eating behaviors and develop into an unhealthy relationship with food.

Ellyn Satter, a widely respected registered dietitian and family therapist known for her work concerning eating and feeding, intro-

duced the “Ellyn Satter’s Division of Responsibility in Feeding.”

According to Satter, both parents and toddlers, through adolescence, have a responsibility during mealtime. Parents are responsible for “what, when and where” and the child is responsible for “how much and whether.” In this model, it is the parents’ job to select and prepare the food, offer regular meals and snacks, make meal times pleasant, show them how to behave at family mealtime and model healthy eating behavior. It is important for the parent not to cater to the child’s likes and dislikes but to keep their prior experience with food in mind.

It is the child’s job to eat the food their parents eat, the amount he or she needs and to learn how to behave at the table. In this model, the parent is the leader, not the force feeder. Satter believes that when parents do their job with feeding, children will do their job with eating.

Remember, it is normal for toddlers and children to be picky eaters, it is a way they show independence. In addition to incorporating Satter’s tools, there are some methods to minimize the frustration.

For example, parents should continue to offer a variety of foods, even if their child has refused the food in the past. Just because a child refuses a food, does not mean they will dislike the food for the rest of their life. It can take several tries before a toddler will even try a food and several more tries before they determine if they like it or not. Just wait a few days and offer the food again, this time with a food you know will be accepted.

Parents should also be an example and show their child they like eating healthy food. If the child sees their parent picking through vegetables the child will likely learn to do the same thing.

Provide meals and snacks every two to three hours

around the same time every day to get on a good schedule. Only offer water in between. Get out of the habit of using food to pacify children and limit juice to four ounces per day. This can make them come into mealtime not hungry and will be more likely to exhibit picky eating behaviors at the table.

Eat together as a family and limit distractions such as television, tablets and phones. Mealtime is an opportunity for the family to reconnect and for children to learn table manners and positive eating behaviors.

Parents concerned their child’s eating behaviors are affecting their overall health should see their provider and request a referral to a registered dietitian.

Risk signs include a child refusing to eat foods from one or more food group, not gaining enough weight, or when family relationships are strained because of your child’s eating patterns.

## Grilled potatoes:

Ingredients:  
2 pounds potatoes, quartered  
1/2 cup water  
1/2 cup mayonnaise  
3 teaspoons crushed dried rosemary  
2 teaspoons garlic powder  
1 teaspoon onion powder  
Salt and pepper to taste

Wooden skewers, soaked in water for 30 minutes

Place potatoes and water in a microwave safe bowl. Cook potatoes in microwave on high until just tender, about 15 minutes, stirring half way through. Drain potatoes and allow to steam for a few minutes to dry.

In a large bowl, stir together mayonnaise, rosemary, garlic powder, onion powder, and salt/pepper. Mix in potatoes and toss. Marinate covered in the refrigerator for one hour.

Remove potatoes from marinade and put on skewers. Grill, covered for six to eight minutes, brushing occasionally with marinade. Stir half way through. Remove and serve warm.

## KIT

Continued from page 1

devices

- First aid kit and prescription medications
- Sanitation supplies such as moist towelettes, disinfectant and garbage bags
- Important documents in watertight packaging – personal, financial and insurance – store copies in a separate location (safety deposit box, relatives, or trusted friend)
- Your family emergency plan, local maps and your command reporting information
- 5-Gallon bucket with plastic bags for use as a portable toilet
- Cash in small denominations

Additional items can be essential for those stationed abroad:

- Passports
- Birth abroad certificate for children born overseas
- Cash in local currency

- Card with local translations of basic terms
- Electrical current converter
- Know the Army Information Hotline number for assistance 1-800-833-6622

Many other items could prove helpful:

- Fire extinguisher.
- Any tools needed to turn off utilities
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Metal or plastic bowl
- Coats and rain gear
- Sleeping bags or other bedding
- A weather-appropriate change of clothes for each person
- Books, games, puzzles, toys and other activities for children
- Batteries and cell phone chargers

## NCO

Continued from page 1

substandard performance.

“The most important [change] was to give us flexibility to be able to respond to emerging requirements,” Clark said in an interview Thursday.

The OML then serves as the promotion evaluation board’s summary of the Soldier’s achievements, including performance reports in military schools, physical fitness, military and civilian education, and the variety of duty and leadership roles held.

“[The OML] is based on the Soldier’s performance over the lifecycle of their career,” Clark said. “So it’s a total Soldier evaluation of their potential to perform at the next level.”

Beginning in May, Army will announce the names of Soldiers selected for promotion to the rank of sergeant through sergeant major by the 15th of the month prior to the promotion month.

## Promotion eligibility

Under the new changes, Soldiers will be selected from the OML to take required training in an effort to qualify them for promotion.

The Army made the change to create an

environment where NCOs train to qualify ahead of their scheduled promotions, Clark said. Under the former 24-month projections, Soldiers were not considered for training until after they were selected for promotion and often could not get fully trained because of scheduling conflicts, deployments or medical profiles.

“It created a false sense of readiness that we had a population that was ready to be promoted, but we could not promote them unless they were school trained,” he said. “So we needed to put the emphasis on getting school trained earlier to identify our [promotable] population.”

The creation of new units, such as security force assistance brigades in 2016, accelerated the need to bring qualified NCOs to new assignments quickly, he added. Army leaders learned that the 24-month projection of force structure and promotion requirements proved too slow to keep pace with the service’s changing needs.

The projection didn’t account for unforeseen variables including an NCO’s availability or changes to force structure. By going to a month-to-month process, the Army can refer to the

OML to select the top candidates for newly-created units such as an SFAB. Clark said the ability to choose from candidates already listed in the OML eliminates the need to project losses and promotion requirements.

“We can just simply go down the OML to identify the next qualified individuals to do those requirements versus waiting to do another board and project two years out to do those requirements,” Clark said.

The U.S. Army Human Resources Command uses the OML, in conjunction with its Manner of Performance tool, to determine duty assignments. The tool gives Army talent managers the ability to quickly evaluate where an NCO stands among their peers, based on a Soldier’s career path and the Army’s current needs.

The OML also helps determine which Soldiers will be selected for retention. Soldiers who do not meet promotion requirements or fail to make the fully qualified list could be considered for involuntary separation.

Soldiers previously seen by an evaluation board can track their OML status at the Army Career Tracker website at <https://actnow.army.mil/>.

## MEDDAC Minute

### Important Phone Numbers

**Emergency:** 911  
**MEDDAC-AK Website:** [www.bassett-wainwright.tricare.com](http://www.bassett-wainwright.tricare.com)  
**24 Hour Nurse Advice Line:** 1-800-874-2273 Opt. 1  
**Appointment Line:** 361-4000  
**Behavioral Health:** 361-6059  
**Benefits Advisor:** 361-5656  
**Immunizations:** 361-5456  
**Information Desk:** 361-5172  
**Patient Advocate:** 361-5291  
**Pharmacy Refills:** 361-5803  
**Tricare On-Line:** [www.tricareonline.com](http://www.tricareonline.com)  
**Health Net:** [www.tricare-west.com](http://www.tricare-west.com), 1-844-8676-9378

### New Website

Finally, a one-stop-shop for all your Medical Department Activity – Alaska information needs. No more searching for phone numbers or hours of operation! Check out our new website at [bassett-wainwright.tricare.mil](http://bassett-wainwright.tricare.mil).

### COVID-19 Hotline

The scope of the COVID-19 Hotline has changed over the last several months. The hotline, (907) 361-3057, is now staffed to assist those who have tested positive or have had direct contact (within six feet for 15 minutes) with a known COVID-19 positive person. Please do not contact the hotline with questions regarding symptoms, travel or testing.

### Delays In

### Access To Care

October 31, MEDDAC-AK will go live with MHS GENESIS, the military’s new electronic health record. This system will track your treatments, record your prescriptions, and allow your health care team to document every facet of your care. We are working closely with DHA to ease the transition. However, no software rollout is perfect. During October and November, patients will see a decrease in appointment availability and getting prescriptions filled.

### Medication Education

Our pharmacies have launched a new way to learn about your prescriptions. Most medications will not come with a QR code on the bottle. When the code is scanned, a fact sheet and video can be viewed giving information regarding the medication.

### Patient Praise

“Mrs. Brown in case management is very helpful and goes out of her way to make sure I am being taken care of. All of the nurse case managers go above and beyond to help soldiers with their needs, or point them in the right direction, and they have all helped me any time I’ve had questions. I think they make things at Kamish run smoothly. I appreciate the hard work they do, their insight and knowledge, and the care they put into their job.”

## ALASKA POST

The Interior Military News Connection

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# The Chaplain's Corner

## I Want Slushies!!

**Chaplain (Capt.) J. Daniel Roland**  
1st Battalion, 52nd  
Aviation Regiment  
Chaplain

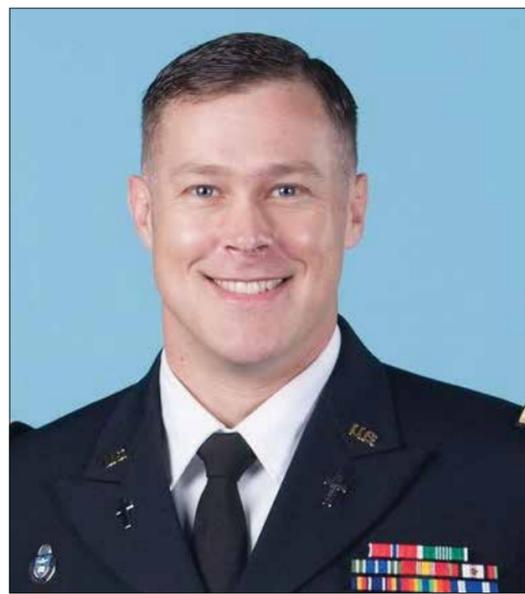
My oldest child burst into the world a little over 12 years ago, and his life has taught me so very much. I thought I had a firm grasp of the rudimentary facts of life, and was confident that he would flourish under my vigilant, benevolent, and erudite guidance. One thing I was not prepared for was his love of vegetables, tomatoes and a general eschewing of the sweeter things like donuts and some types of candy. Occasionally,

I would wonder what was wrong with my son when he would ask for a tomato or cucumber slices... Then his siblings came along and assured me that my genetic penchant for sugar was definitely transferrable. Since we moved to Fort Wainwright, one of my children's favorite requests is to go the Shoppette and get slushies. I remember one Saturday about 3 weeks ago. I had been stressed about a few late tasks to get done before I could go Caribou hunting, and I was trying to focus. My 8 year old chose a time to ask if we could get slushies, and

while I was thinking about something else I didn't give him a clear answer. In fact, I think I was so focused on what I was doing I didn't give him an answer at all. He then proceeded to ask me several times without letting me get a thought in edge-wise. It was exasperating! I asked if he couldn't see that I was busy, and he simply replied by saying: "I want slushies!"

Many parents can relate, but did you know that God tells us to be like that? In Luke 18:1-8 Jesus tells a parable about a very apathetic judge who finally gave to

a persistent widow justice concerning her case. Can you imagine the amount of work that widow had to do? Do you imagine that she was tempted to give up and think that her case was hopeless? In that parable, Jesus praises the widow for not giving up, for refusing to accept anything less than the justice she so deeply wanted. In fact, Jesus tells us that God, Himself, will hear our requests for justice as often as we bring them to Him. Currently our wonderful country is going through a time of deep racial division and economic stress. In this election year,



political parties are busy trying to disparage their opponents and tout their own personnel and values. Everywhere we turn we see something troubling and we can feel like God is an apathetic Judge who is content to let us struggle and be divided. Here is the lesson from both

my younger son, and the Scriptures. "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17)! You and I should be always bringing our country and leadership to the Lord. We can request that God bring us healing and unity. We can ask that liberty and justice truly be provided for all!

## Exchange, Disney to host free online movies, activities for military children through December

**Carina DeCino**  
Army and Air Force  
Exchange Service  
Public Affairs

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service and The Walt Disney Studios are helping military families at Fort Wainwright and U.S. military installations worldwide create magic moments at home with Operation Fun, a series of free online movie screenings and weekly virtual activities.

Military families can access everything the campaign has to offer through Exchange's XKids interactive community Hub page at [ShopMyExchange.com/XKids](http://ShopMyExchange.com/XKids), or check out the Exchange Facebook page for a video breakdown of activities directly from the Exchange XKids.

The fun kicks off with PixarFest, a celebration running through the end of September. Kids can log on to the Hub every Sunday to find a new Pixar-themed activity sheet, along with other activities and videos.

A military-exclusive online screening of "Toy Story 4" is scheduled for 3 p.m. Central time on Sept. 25. Online screenings are a first for the Exchange, whose longstanding partnership with Disney has brought unique in-store events, sweepstakes and concept shops to military families, as well as first-run movies to Warfighters in Southwest Asia.

Operation Fun movie streams can be accessed from the Hub and are open to all autho-

rized shoppers with a ShopMyExchange.com account, though the number of viewers who can tune in at once is limited. Movies will be available for streaming for 48 hours so families around the world can join the fun.

"This year has been unusually difficult for military families, so we wanted to give them something special that they could enjoy together," Fort Wainwright Exchange general manager Gloria Sylvia. "Military kids already sacrifice so much, so we hope these activities show them how much we appreciate their resilience and strength during this unprecedented time."

Operation Fun events center on monthly live videos just for military kids:



- Sept. 25: "Toy Story 4" free movie screening.
- Oct. 24: "Incredibles 2" free movie screening.
- Nov. 26: "Frozen 2" free Thanksgiving movie screening.

- Dec. 12: Disney Jr. interactive video activity night.

Families can visit [ShopMyExchange.com/XKids](http://ShopMyExchange.com/XKids) to access Operation Fun activities, information

and a calendar of events. They can also follow the Exchange on <http://www.facebook.com/ShopMyExchange> to keep up to date on the latest Operation Fun events and activities.

## LEAVE

Continued from page 1

is non-chargeable.

The primary caregiver, as designated by the Soldier, is authorized 42 days of non-chargeable primary caregiver leave that must be taken within 12 months of qualifying birth events, but it does not all have to be taken in a continuous block.

The secondary caregiver is authorized 21 days of non-chargeable secondary caregiver leave, which also needs to be used within 12 months of the qualifying birth and is not required to be taken in a continuous block. The regulation has full details and covers exceptions to the normal leaves.

Much of the MPLP was already in place and has not changed since last year's policy, Lock said.

The Army is striving to help troops better understand their benefits, especially the young Soldiers who make up the majority of new Army parents, he added.

Previously, a parental leave of only 10 non-chargeable days was available for non-birthparents, and had to be used within 45 days after the birth. Now, secondary caregivers leave is a very significant leave change in support of family quality of life.

### Other leave issues

Soldiers may request a non-chargeable absence to assist at major events for Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and similar groups. This was previously authorized by AR 600-8-10, but it now falls under an umbrella category that supports participants in competitive sporting and other events.

"The military is pretty arduous duty. Soldiers earn 30 days of paid leave per year, beginning with their first year on the job. No other American industry out there comes close to that," Lock said. He suggests that all Soldiers should often check their leave balance.

"Every month Soldiers have the personal responsibility to verify the accuracy of their leave and earnings statements, which shows their balance, the amount of leave they used during the current fiscal year, and the number of leave days they will lose if they don't take it before the end of the fiscal year," he said.

For eligible Soldiers, the Remarks section, beginning on Oct. 31 will state the maximum leave they can carry over at the end of the fiscal year, and when the ability to carry more than 60 days will expire.

This should be checked every month, because leave usage affects the carry-over amount. Soldiers should not rely on Special Leave Accrual, which is restricted to a very limited number of cases and review at the Department of the Army level.

One of the biggest leave problems, Lock said, is getting Soldiers to take their leave.

"Soldiers are very dedicated to their jobs, to the point that they are reluctant to take leave," he said. "It is good to know that they are really dedicated, but they also need to make their own well-being and their Families a priority. This will contribute to improved performance and increased motivation when back at work."

"At the end of the day, it's up to Soldiers to track their leave," he added. "It is a commander's role to grant time off, when possible, but it is still the responsibility of every Soldier to manage their own leave."

Commanders are responsible for having an effective annual leave program that provides Soldiers with the opportunity to take leave, to include an extended leave, during the year, operational requirements permitting.



Sept. 11, 2001, changed more than the skyline of New York City - the attacks changed a generation of Americans, our Army and our world. That day's destruction and devastation did not condemn this country to a future filled with fear. No, this loss, as profound as it was, did not break the soul of this nation. It made us stronger. That day fortified Americans with pride and patriotism and created a spirit of service in the hearts of a new generation. That day fundamentally changed our nation and our Army for the better. We now observe Patriot Day annually on September 11th as a National Day of Service and Remembrance for the thousands of lives lost in the 9/11 attacks. (Courtesy image)

## What the payroll tax deferral means for Soldiers

**Thomas Brading**  
Army News Service

With plans to put payroll taxes on ice for the rest of the year, Army finance officials warn Soldiers the tax breaks are temporary and will be collected starting in January.

In order to provide relief during the COVID-19 pandemic, a presidential memorandum was issued last month, followed by guidance from the Internal Revenue Service a few weeks later, to temporarily defer Social Security taxes.

Effective this month and through the end of calendar 2020, the federal government will defer the withholding of payroll tax in order to provide relief during the COVID-19 pandemic. Soldiers will be responsible to pay their deferred taxes between January and April 30, said Larry Lock, chief of Compensation and Entitle-

ments for the Army's G-1 office.

The Federal Insurance Contributions Act, or FICA, is the U.S. federal payroll tax and part of former President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal domestic program. It's essentially a trust fund for American workers, with every paycheck taking 6.2 percent in gross wages for Social Security.

FICA taxes go into a government trust fund, which pays out to retired Soldiers and eligible beneficiaries. Soldiers need to understand their money goes back into the Social Security program come next year, Lock said.

So what does this mean for the Soldiers? According to the emergency declaration signed by President Donald Trump last month, individuals whose monthly basic pay is less than \$8,666.66 will benefit from this deferral.



(Thomas Hamilton III, U.S. Army Europe)

If the monthly rate of basic pay is at or above this threshold, the Social Security tax withholding will not be affected by the temporary deferral. This threshold was established by the Department of Treasury.

Soldiers with monthly wages under the threshold are not eligible to opt-out

of the deferral, which will happen automatically.

This essentially impacts all enlisted Soldiers; officers at the grade O-1 through O-4; grade O-5 with less than 16 years of service; grade O-6 with less than 14 years of service; and all warrant officers from W-1 through W-4.

If Soldiers separate or retire in 2020 before Social Security taxes are collected in 2021, they will still be responsible for the tax repayment, Lock said.

The best way to plan is two-fold, Lock said. First, Soldiers should check their Leave and Earnings Statement, or LES, in the deductions sections for FICA-SOCIAL SECURITY taxes. Once there, they can identify the amount deferred for the applicable pay period, he said.

After that, Soldiers should adjust for their tax liabilities during the period of January through April 2021. The deferral and tax liability will be administered by the Defense Finance and Accounting Service.

As more information becomes available, it will be posted on: <https://www.dfas.mil/taxes/Social-Security-Deferral/>

## Military spouse earns IMCOM award for videography support

**Susan Melnyk**

Military spouse Tanja Olsen was presented with the Friends of Recreation volunteer award by U.S. Army Installation Management Command, in late April 2020. Olsen was awarded for her commitment to promoting USAG Bavaria Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation and garrison programs through videography.

Olsen has been the force behind more than 60 videos produced for USAG Bavaria FMWR, over the past three years. Most recently, she edited and shot footage for FMWR's 2019 admission for the National Recreation and Park Association Gold Medal Award, resulting in a finalist

position for the organization.

Born and raised in Germany, Olsen fell in love with videography after moving to the United States with her husband, a warrant officer in the U.S. Army.

"Our second child was born six weeks after my husband deployed, and I would record videos to send him," she explained. "I realized that I could put all those little videos together and send them out to our families as a Christmas card. It was a way to let our families and friends see what we'd been up to throughout the year and how our kids had grown."

Starting something new is not always easy, but Olsen

See IMCOM on page 5



Tanja Olsen holds her IMCOM Friends of Recreation award. She was presented this award in late April for her commitment to promoting FMWR and garrison programs through videography, at USAG Bavaria. (Photo by Lisa Greco, U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation)



# Shoppers can win \$25,000 in cash prizes with MILITARY STAR Home for the Holidays Sweepstakes

**Carina DeCino**  
Army and Air Force Exchange Service Public Affairs

With the swipe of a card, shoppers at Fort Wainwright and U.S. military installations worldwide will get a chance to win their share of \$25,000 in cash during the MILITARY STAR® card's Home for the Holidays sweepstakes.

From Sept. 18 through Oct. 15, all shoppers who use a MILITARY STAR card to make two purchases from any military exchange (including ShopMyExchange.com, myNavyExchange.com, ShopCGX.com and exchange concessionaires) or participating Morale, Welfare and Recreation facility plus two purchases at any commissary operated by the Defense Commissary Agency will

be automatically entered into the sweepstakes.

Five lucky winners—one each from the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard—will each be awarded \$5,000.

“This has been a stressful, unprecedented year, and Soldiers and their families could use some holiday cheer,” said Fort Wainwright Exchange general manager Gloria Sylvia. “This sweepstakes will make it easier for our lucky winners to spread some much-needed joy to their friends and family this holiday season.”

The MILITARY STAR card is administered by the Army and Air Force Exchange Service. Winners will be announced on or about Nov. 13. For official rules and alternate method of entry, visit <https://MyECPcom/CustomerAds/Page/Exchange>.

## IMCOM

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persevered.

“The first one was almost an hour long. When I look at it now, it was horrible. You have to start somewhere, and at first you don't know about editing. You don't know how to tell a story,” said Olsen. “But it was a start. And the family started demanding those videos every year, because they get to see the kids — hear them and watch them run around together.”

Olsen went back to school to complete a bachelor's degree in digital media and web design. Then shortly after she graduated, the family received orders for Germany. Having spent the majority of her adult life in the United States, the mother of three had not considered how a return tour to Germany would affect her career.

“I didn't realize that I wouldn't be able to apply for most positions on-post, due to being a German citizen and falling under SOFA,” she explained. “I started to look around for a place to volunteer, and found the FMWR marketing office.”

Over the course of three years, Olsen donated over 550 volunteer hours, resulting in more than 60 videos shown at briefings and shared on Facebook across the garrison — all while working on her MBA at the University of Maryland Global Campus on Tower Barracks.

“Where would I be able to film a sporting event, music concert, family event, a huge public event like Volksfest, theater performances and musicals?” Olsen questioned. “Where else would I be able to get experience in all of those genres to put in my portfolio?”

With her MBA completed, what is on the horizon for Olsen and her family?

“Another move!” Olsen answered. “I'd love to work for a news station or movie production company.”

Reflecting on her time spent in this community, she has a piece of advice for her fellow military spouses at USAG Bavaria.

“Don't stay in the house,” Olsen encouraged. “Get out and volunteer.”



(Courtesy illustration)

## Combat COVID-19 by donating plasma

### Military Health System

In June 2020, the Department of Defense began an effort to collect donated units of plasma from patients who have fully recovered from COVID-19 to support the development of an effective treatment against the disease. The DOD's goal is to obtain 10,000 COVID-19 Convalescent Plasma units by September 30, 2020.

Donations will be accepted at Armed Services Blood Program donation centers across the continental United States, and in Hawaii, Guam and Germany, or through scheduled mobile collection drives.

Collected CCP will be available for treatment of COVID-positive patients in DOD treatment facilities who meet established criteria and in accordance with approved protocols. CCP may also be pre-positioned with Combatant Commands in the event of approval for prophylactic use.

CCP will be used to treat critically ill patients and to support the development of an effective treatment against the disease.

Collection of plasma from recovered COVID-19 beneficiaries will help the DOD develop therapeutics to support active duty service members to ensure readiness.

“This is the time to encourage the community to step up and donate — during a developing crisis — and help their brothers and sisters in arms stand ready. We are asking for you to continue scheduling and keep blood drive dates to the best of your ability. The is now.” — Lt. Gen. Ronald L. Place, Director, Defense Health Agency

### What is convalescent plasma?

Convalescent plasma is the liquid part of blood from patients who have recovered from an infection. Antibodies present in convalescent plasma are proteins that might help fight the coronavirus infection.

It is being investigated for the treatment of COVID-19 because there is no approved treatment for this disease at present.

### How does it work?

The collection process for this type of plasma is the same as standard plasma collection. Here's how

treatment works:

- Recovered coronavirus patient donates plasma
- Blood is tested
- Plasma is stored and transported to hospital
- Patient treated with plasma
- Therapy complete
- Patient may become donor

Through the blood donation process, this convalescent plasma is collected from a recovered person and transfused into a sick patient who is still fighting the virus. While it is not known for certain that the treatment will be effective, there is anecdotal evidence that suggests CCP may boost the immune system of the patient and help with the recovery process.

### Are you eligible for this program?

The Armed Services Blood Program is currently looking for people who have fully recovered from the coronavirus to give convalescent plasma for seriously ill COVID-19 patients. You may qualify if you:

- Are at least 17 years old, weight at least 110 pounds and in good health, and feel well.
- Have a prior diagnosis of COVID-19 and meet specific laboratory criteria
- Are symptom-free of COVID-19 for 14 days of more

NOTE: If you have been pregnant, additional testing may be needed to determine if you have developed HLA antibodies since your last pregnancy.

### Blood donor centers

Eligible donors should contact the Armed Services Blood Program at <https://www.militaryblood.dod.mil/Donors/COVID-19andBloodDonation.aspx> to find a complete list of available collection centers.

For safety and efficiency of the donation process for both donor and staff, please contact your local blood donor center FIRST before coming in to donate. If it is established you might be a candidate, a donation appointment will be set.

Once the appointment is confirmed, the donor must bring the required documentation and undergo the standard donation procedure.

Final determination will be made by the medical director or designee.



# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

## Fort Wainwright Family & MWR

### Weekly Events

September 12 - 19

12

#### Army Family Action Plan

Starting September 12  
Varies

Discuss and identify any issues within the Garrison and go over the recommended corrective action. Pick up a form from ACS or the Commissary starting September 12 and turn it in before November 31.

Army Community Services, Bldg 3401  
Call 353-4332

14

#### Mock Interview Training

September 14  
Noon - 1:30 p.m.

This training course is for Soldiers, Family Members, Retirees, Veterans and Civilians. The training is meant to provide individuals with an opportunity to gain interviewing experience or improve current experience.

Army Community Services, Bldg 3401  
Call 353-4332, registration required

16

#### Workout Wednesday

September 16  
Varies

Every Wednesday join the Youth Sports & Fitness Team for Workout Wednesday videos! These videos can be found on the Wainwright MWR Facebook page.

Youth Sports & Fitness, Bldg 1045  
Call 353-7482

17

#### Organizational Point of Contact Training

September 17  
Noon - 1 p.m.

Organizational Point of Contact Training guides those who have assumed the responsibilities of tracking and certifying volunteer hours submitted by volunteers within their organization. Also, receive guidance for using VMIS.

Army Community Services, Bldg 3401  
Call 353-4332, registration required

17

#### Clearwater Silvers

Registration deadline: September 17  
Meet at the Boat Launch: 10 a.m.

Ages 7 and up are welcome to join Outdoor Recreation at one of the clearest streams in the interior! Fishing Clearwater River for Coho is something you'll want to cross off your Alaskan Bucket List! \*Alaska state fishing license is required.

Outdoor Recreation Center, Bldg 4050  
Call 361-6349/361-6350, registration required



The Dreaded Orange Ball Tournament at Chena Bend Golf Course is September 11-13! Call (907) 353-6223 to book your tee time. For more information, go to [wainwright.armymwr.com](http://wainwright.armymwr.com). @WainwrightMWR #WainwrightMWR

## September is National Preparedness Month

**Jeremy Zidek**  
Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

Each year the State of Alaska and the nation participate in National Preparedness Month. This year with the COVID-19 pandemic affecting everyone, it is more important than ever to prepare for disasters and other events. Every Alaskan should have a Family Emergency Plan, an emergency kit with at least 7 days of supplies (ideally 2 weeks), and should be aware of the hazards that can impact their community.

Alaskans face a wide range of natural disasters such as earthquakes, wildfires, floods, storms and now the COVID-19 pandemic. Each family or individual can gain piece of mind by taking simple steps to become better prepared.

**Make a Plan -** Developing a Family Emergency Plan is easy and can be completed in a few hours. It starts with a conversation about each household members' responsibility during a disaster, how everyone will reunite, where to go if you cannot return home, how to contact one another, and other information. The State of Alaska offers the My Emergency Plan and COVID-19 Planning for Families with Children guides to help individuals and families plan.

**Build a Kit -** A emergency supply kit should include items like food, water, a battery-operated radio, first aid kit, flashlight, tool kit, important documents and more. During COVID-19, Alaskans should consider adding personal protective equipment, sanitizers and over the counter medica-

tions to their emergency preparedness kit. It is recommended that people have two weeks of supplies in their home.

**Prepare for Disasters -** Identify the risks and hazards that can impact your community and take steps to prevent harm or damages. Before an earthquake practicing Drop, Cover, Hold on Drills increases the likelihood that people will perform the proper earthquake safety action when the shaking starts. Non-structural mitigation prevents items large and small from becoming dangerous falling objects or being destroyed. Knowing the warning signs of a disaster and acting quickly can save lives.

For more information go to [ready.alaska.gov](http://ready.alaska.gov) or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/readyalaska/>

**Ready**

**NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH**

**2020** Disasters Don't Wait. **MAKE YOUR PLAN TODAY.**

# Suicide Prevention Month 2020

**Derek Ferrell**  
Installation Management  
Command Headquarters

The Army continues to be committed to preventing suicide among its Soldiers, DA Civilians, Family Members and Retirees. Suicide prevention is a top priority for the Army, and it places emphasis on suicide prevention every day of the year.

September is Suicide Prevention Month, and during this month, the Army elevates the conversation of suicide prevention to bring into focus the dynamic, complex and challenging issue of suicide, resources available to identify and assist personnel in need of help dealing with life issues along with the tremendous impact it can have on those family members, friends and

teammates left behind and its impact on readiness.

The chief executor and subject matter experts for Suicide Prevention Month is your installation's Suicide Prevention Program Manager. The SPPM is responsible for coordinating all training, guest presenters and events for their respective installations. They serve as leaders' primary point of contact.

This year's DOD Suicide Prevention Month theme, Connectedness, illuminates the incredibly important role and support each of us play within our family units, organizations and our communities.

In support of this theme, the Suicide Prevention Month 2020 slogan is "Connect to Protect." The slogan emphasizes the important role we all play



(Department of Defense graphic)

in taking care of one another.

By staying connected, we can continue to support one another through difficult times, provide comfort and strengthen when confronted with difficult life issues, and be an ever steady and ready advocate for one another.

We can continue to

strengthen and expand fostering an environment and culture that not only supports help seeking behavior, but encourages it. Army senior leaders have stated, seeking help for any issue professional or in one's private life is a sign of strength, not weakness. Seeking help highlights maturity, self-awareness, and the

understanding that we all need help at different times in our lives.

As leaders continue to have engaged conversations both up and down the chain of command to support, advise and provide assistance and resources to those in their formations, everyone is encouraged to seek out their local SPPM for information,

resources and assistance for installation Soldiers, Civilians, Family Members and Retirees.

For more information on Suicide Prevention Month material, please visit the Army Resilience Directorate site at this link: [https://marcomcentral.app.pti.com/printone/login.aspx?uigroup\\_id=591698](https://marcomcentral.app.pti.com/printone/login.aspx?uigroup_id=591698)

## ARMY SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM

# Shoulder to Shoulder

# FINDING STRENGTH and HOPE TOGETHER



Prevent Army Suicide  
Ask ★ Care ★ Escort

Talk to your Chain of Command, Supervisor, Chaplain, or Behavioral Health Professional or call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255), press 1 for the Veterans Crisis Line

[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)    [www.militaryonesource.com](http://www.militaryonesource.com)  
[www.preventsuicide.army.mil](http://www.preventsuicide.army.mil)