

HIGH DESERT WARRIOR

Fort Irwin



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Fort Irwin breaks ground on new Simulations Center

Story and photo by
Kimberly Hackbarth

FORT IRWIN, California — Leadership from the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, and the Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District broke ground on a \$44 million Simulations Center March 23, during a ceremony, here.

Construction on the 68,000-square-foot, single-story facility is estimated to start mid-April 2023 and complete in March 2025 under the supervision of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District.

The Simulations Center will bring new capabilities to the NTC's training of a divisional staff on their mission essential task list, and enhance the virtual and constructive training environment of the rotational training units.

The facility will house two related functions: a Simulations Center (Sim Center), which includes a Mission Command Training Center, Tactical Operations Center (TOC) Pads, and building information systems, and the companion Leader Training



Leadership from the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, and the Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, and RA Burch Construction Company ceremoniously break ground on Fort Irwin's new Simulations Center March 23, 2023, on Fort Irwin, California. Construction on the 68,000-square-foot, single-story facility is estimated to start mid-April 2023 and complete in March 2025 under the supervision of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District.

Program (LTP) portion which will include offices for the rotational unit's command staff, rehearsal rooms and administrative support space.

Brig. Gen. Curt Taylor, commanding general of the National Training Center and Fort Irwin, spoke at the ceremony and highlighted how

the new facility complements the Army's recent revisions to FM 3-0, Operations, which establishes multidomain operations as the Army's operational concept.

"We're a brigade-centric training center ... and now the Army just published that the division is the principal

warfighting formation, so how does that change the role and purpose of the National Training Center?" Taylor said. "It's time to bring the division to the National Training Center."

Taylor explained how the facility will accommodate a division.

"What this facility will do is it will allow us to conduct a live brigade rotation in the box simultaneously and seamlessly with a division level constructive exercise right here so we can better integrate the division in the brigade fight," Taylor said.

The "box" refers to the

NTC's vast training area which is about the size of the state of Rhode Island.

Col. Julie Balten, the commander Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, said the mission at the Corps of Engineers is to deliver engineering solutions for the nation's toughest challenges, which includes continuing to deliver state-of-the-art facilities at Fort Irwin to support warfighters and their families to strengthen the nation's security and energize the local economy.

"Construction of the Weed Army Community Hospital, water treatment plant, Gray Eagle hangar and the Fort Irwin Library over the last several years are all tremendous examples of our desire to continue to support the growth and transformation this community has experienced over the past 20 years," Balten said. "Along with our partners, we are committed to meeting the needs and requirements of world-class sustainable installations, like Fort Irwin, where Soldiers and their families call home."

Fort Irwin, Barstow sign fourth IGSA

Story and Photo by Kimberly Hackbarth

Col. Jason Clarke, Fort Irwin garrison commander, and Paul Courtney, Barstow mayor, signed an intergovernmental support agreement (IGSA) March 21, at the city hall in Barstow, California.

IGSAs are formal agreements between Army installations and state or local governments for the provision, receipt, or sharing of installation support services, according to the Army G-9 Installations website.

The signing officialized the fourth IGSA between Fort Irwin and Barstow.

Previous IGSAs allow Barstow to provide base operation support services, and animal control services on the installation, while the most recent IGSA covers solid waste services.

The IGSA is slated to start March 27 and continue for a 10-year period, costing approxi-



Col. Jason Clarke (left), Fort Irwin garrison commander, and Paul Courtney (right), Barstow mayor, sign an intergovernmental support agreement (IGSA) March 21, at the city hall in Barstow, California.

mately \$90 million.

Raquel Cisneros, the resource management officer for Fort Irwin, coordinated Fort Irwin's

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ASA, Installations, Energy & Environment visits Fort Irwin

Story and Photos by
Kimberly Hackbarth

Rachel Jacobson, Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Army for Installations, Energy and Environment, visited Fort Irwin, California, for the first time March 6-9.

During her visit, Jacobson toured the installation, learned about quality of life projects, energy and environmental projects, and watched a live-fire exercise conducted by a rotational unit in the training area, commonly known as "the box."

"I've heard a lot about Fort Irwin over my time in this position and I've heard about its importance, and I've heard



Rachel Jacobson, Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Army for Installations, Energy and Environment, walks around Fort Irwin, California, March 7, with garrison leaders. Jacobson visited Fort Irwin March 6-9 to better understand the needs of the installation.

from the Soldiers who are my colleagues how valuable it is to them to train here," Jacobson

said. "Because it's one of our most remote locations and has

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Community

Fort Irwin hosts Women's History Month celebration

Story and Photos by
Kimberly Hackbarth

Fort Irwin's Military Equal Opportunity Office and Operations Group, National Training Center hosted a Women's History Month Celebration March 15, at Sandy Basin Community Center on Fort Irwin, California.

The Department of Defense's theme for the observance this year is "Celebrating Women Who Tell Our Stories."

Command Sgt. Maj. Jeri Pihlaja, the senior enlisted advisor for Goldminer Team, Operations Group, National Training Center, served as the guest speaker for the event.

Pihlaja shared a story about being involved in the initial invasion in Iraq as a wheeled vehicle mechanic and how leadership lacked trust in her because of her gender.

"We are not here to discuss gender equality today; we're here to talk about women's history," Pihlaja said in her speech. "I wanted to share a little of my story."

Pihlaja spoke about the history and significance of the observance.

"Each March, as it was mentioned previously, the Department of Defense pays tribute to the women who, through their determination and contributions have shaped America's history and whose efforts continue to pave the way forward," Pihlaja said.

In her speech, Pihlaja highlighted women who have made history, to include Dr. Mary E. Walker, who has a clinic on Fort Irwin named in her honor.

"Dr. Mary Walker remains the only woman to receive a Medal of Honor," Pihlaja said, adding that Walker served as a surgeon during



Command Sgt. Maj. Jeri Pihlaja, the senior enlisted advisor for Goldminer Team, Operations Group, National Training Center, speaks during a Women's History Month celebration March 15, 2023, at Sandy Basin Community Center on Fort Irwin, California.

the Civil War and was captured by Confederate troops.

Pihlaja referred back to her own history, telling the audience how she grew up and about her journey in the Army.

"At no time in my life could I have ever imagined that I would stay in the Army past 20 years or achieve the rank of command sergeant major," she said. "Somehow, through extremely dedicated work, I have surpassed all my expectations."

Pihlaja said the number one thing she enjoys doing is leading and training Soldiers, which she has been doing for over 21 years as a noncommissioned officer.

Lt. Col. John Williams, the deputy commander for Opera-

tions Group, introduced Pihlaja during the event and acknowledged Pihlaja's impact on the unit and the Army.

"Her efforts in this position have helped the readiness of our Army greatly and we are very lucky to have this kind of talent on the Operations Group team," Williams said. "When I think of a command sergeant major, I think of a Soldier who has a vast experience in their field, a Soldier who has literally done it all, and that's exactly what Command Sgt. Maj. Pihlaja is."



Lt. Col. John Williams, the deputy commander for Operations Group, introduces Command Sgt. Maj. Jeri Pihlaja, the senior enlisted advisor for Goldminer Team, Operations Group, National Training Center, during a Women's History Month celebration March 15, 2023, at Sandy Basin Community Center on Fort Irwin, California.

part of the IGSA.

"[The \$90 million] includes cost of living increases for labor and all rotational trash requirements as well," she said.

According to Cisneros, the equipment will be contractor owned and operated and will adhere to California laws regarding air quality.

"The contractor will run all aspects of a solid waste services [to include] delivery of the dumpsters, picking up, replacing them, upgrading any areas that [have damaged dumpsters], and picking up of the trash,"

Cisneros said. "With this particular change, we now have a person to go to to be able to get those problems fixed quickly."

The IGSA's with the city of Barstow are a collaborative effort and bring the Fort Irwin and Barstow communities closer together, Clarke said.

"Each time we do this, it's a great way to reconnect with our community," Clarke said. "These partnerships are really, really beneficial for both our community at Fort Irwin and the community here in Barstow."

Courtney, who has served as mayor of

Barstow since 2020, spoke about the impact the IGSA's have on the Barstow community.

"This continues to be a big turn for Barstow and Fort Irwin," Courtney said. "I get to be part of the 4th contract and over time, this income will help increase the quality of life for Barstow."

In the future, Fort Irwin and Barstow may have the opportunity for additional IGSA's, according to Clarke.

"I just look forward to continuing to do more of these as we continue to grow our relationship with Barstow," Clarke said.

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Maj. Gen. Keith L. Ware
Newspaper Competition — Tabloid Category

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Fort Irwin kicks off 2023 AER campaign



Photos by Jack J. Adamyk

Brig. Gen. Curt Taylor, National Training Center and Fort Irwin commanding general, and Col. Jason A. Clarke, Fort Irwin garrison commander, signed into action the 2023 Army Emergency Relief program on Fort Irwin, California, March 1, 2023. The AER program's mission is to provide grants, interest-free loans and scholarships to promote readiness and help relieve financial distress of Soldiers and their Families.

From ASA, Page 1

very unique installation needs, my purpose of the visit was to better understand those needs."

Fort Irwin garrison staff, including the garrison commander, Col. Jason Clarke, briefed Jacobson on quality of life projects including plans for improved barracks and additional entertainment venues for families.

"We are very fortunate to have the support of our leadership to provide new quality of life facilities," Clarke said. "The garrison conducts a variety of community programming for our Soldiers, families, and civilians and these new facilities will allow us to enhance and expand programs and events, so Soldiers do not have to travel 45 minutes one way for entertainment."

Staff also discussed the recent memorandum of understanding signed between Fort Irwin and Barstow Community College that allows students of two Barstow Community College programs, child development education program and

cosmetology, the opportunity to gain firsthand experience that could lead to jobs on Fort Irwin as child youth assistants and barbers.

"Our relationship with the leaders and partners in the Barstow community is extremely important," Clarke said. "Every employer in the High Desert community is looking for employees and we need to develop as many programs and opportunities we can to entice people to work at Fort Irwin."

The ability to tap into community resources is vitally important at Fort Irwin, Jacobson said.

"All installations have a lot of programs to integrate with the community and to make sure that installations are obtaining community services as needed, but there's a unique situation here because of the distance between the installation and a large population center," Jacobson said.

"So, to be able to bring those services on base is obvi-

ously due to a lot of planning and creative thinking and exceptional partnerships."

Jacobson traveled into the training area where a rotational unit conducted a live-fire exercise as part of its training and said she felt fortunate to have that experience.

"That experience gave me a much deeper appreciation for what we do for installation support [and it] is so important because without a solid foundation of an installation, that kind of training is not going to be possible and that's what it's all about is that training," Jacobson said. "That's why we are the best army in the world."

One highlight of Jacobson's visit included speaking with Soldiers, she said.

"Here they are, week two of this fairly grueling experience [and] they were all so dedicated, so enthusiastic, so professional," Jacobson said. "It just made me proud and they set the example for the Soldiers we want to recruit."



Rachel Jacobson (center), Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Army for Installations, Energy and Environment, meets with the Fort Irwin garrison commander, Col. Jason Clarke (left) and garrison directors March 7, at garrison headquarters on Fort Irwin, California. Jacobson learned about quality of life initiatives and projects at Fort Irwin.

News

CYS hosts teen career fair



Photos by Jack J. Adamyk

Fort Irwin students attended the Child and Youth Services career fair at the Middle School Teen Center on Fort Irwin, California, March 1, 2023. Departments from Fort Irwin provided students with information on careers and military occupational specialties.

The science behind the Army Comprehensive Body Composition Study

by Carey Phillips

Natick Mass

The U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine cross-divisional team recently completed the U.S. Army Center for Initial Military Training-directed Army Comprehensive Body Composition study.

The ACBC is an Army-wide study of more than 2,690 Soldiers evaluating the effectiveness of the tape test and providing the scientific data and analysis to advise Army senior leaders to make data-driven decisions about the future of the Army Body Composition Program (ABCP). It has been roughly 20 years since the last time body composition equations have been evaluated and 10 years for body composition standards and Army Regulation 600-9. Even then, neither was the in-depth and diverse approach of the ACBC study.

Questions from senior leaders emerged about the link between fitness, health, and physical performance and the current methods used to measure body composition in the Army. In January 2021, USACIMT called upon USARIEM to provide answers.

“There were lots of questions about body composition and USACIMT saw us as subject matter experts and asked us to lead an Army-wide study to look at body composition,” said Holly McClung, ACBC study lead and nutritional physiologist at USARIEM.

To do this, McClung collaborated with Dr. Kathryn “Katie” Taylor, director for USARIEM’s Soldier, Performance, Health and Readiness (SPHERE) database and built a team of military, civilian, and contractor personnel across USARIEM. The team approached the task in two phases — Phase 1: an analysis of historical data using the SPHERE Database and Phase 2: a field study, to assess what the current Total Army Soldier population looked between 2021 and 2022.

Phase One: A look backward

“For the first phase, we wanted to look at a snapshot of what the Army looked like in the two years prior to the onset of the global pandemic,” said Taylor. “We looked at body composition and performance on the [Army Physical Fitness Test], which was the test before the ACFT, and a series of other metrics. We looked at how all these outputs were impacted by a number of different demographic variables — sex, age, race/ethnicity, postpartum status among women and injury outcomes — to understand whether these variables effected body size measurements using body mass index.”

Using the SPHERE database, a large repository with access to multiple administrative, medical and performance-based data sources currently collected by the Army, the team was able to collect the data needed to generate a retrospective look of body composition for each individual Soldier during the required timeframe. If a Soldier did not meet the height and weight requirements of ABCP, they then had their body fat estimated using the circumference-based tape method for a final pass or fail measurement.

“The Army collects a ton of data on all its Soldiers so it allows us to take all that information and combine it so we can get a snapshot in time of each individual Soldier in the Army at any given period of time,” said Taylor. “We were using unit recorded height and weight to calculate BMI to look at how body size/composition was impacted by all the different factors that we were interested in evaluating.”



Army photograph by Pfc. Lilliana Fraser

A U.S. Army Soldier receives a standard AR-600-9 tape test at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, on Oct. 18, 2021. The scan/study is part of a comprehensive body composition study examining the association between body composition and Soldier physical performance and the Army’s efforts to optimize holistic health and fitness, and improve Soldier readiness.

The results of this historical glimpse were presented to USACIMT leadership prior to moving on to the second phase - going out into the field.

Phase Two: Real-time field measurement

Data collection took place in four different locations over a period of nine months, placing participants in one of the 40 categories that were identified. Categories were broken down by sex, age and race/ethnicity. Once the specified number of participants per category was reached, the ACBC study team closed the category to new volunteers to avoid oversampling.

“What is really unique about the study is this is the first time, we really looked at a representative sample of the Total Army,” said McClung. “We took the demographics from the Pentagon and then we stratified our study sample to figure out exactly what number of Soldiers we needed in each category. We knew, to the exact number, how we needed to recruit to fill all the demographic bins.”

“We broke it down to these very tiny categories to ensure that we could say there was equal distribution across the different groups to what they represented in the Army,” said Taylor.

The ACBC field study kicked off in October 2021 at Fort Bragg.

“For our first data collection, we really wanted to go out and

just collect as much data as we could in 14 days, across all three compos — active duty, reserves and National Guard,” explained McClung. “Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Grinston came down to Fort Bragg, was a study participant and really got behind the study, which I think helped us have such a successful kick off to data collection at Fort Bragg.”

Soldiers who volunteered to participate in the ACBC study had their body composition analyzed using the most modern technologies and techniques. This included dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry body composition analysis, 3D total body scanning and bioelectrical impedance analysis. The team completed standard circumference-based taping in accordance with Army Regulation 600-9 to round out data collection.

“The Army will always need a way to assess body size or composition that is field efficient. We know Soldiers represent a fit population and because of that we need to consider the relationship between muscle mass (and/or body fat) and physical performance. We have a strong data set from ACBC allowing us to break down body composition by sex, age, ethnicity and race and feel confident in drawing a relationship between body composition and physical performance, say on the ACFT,” said McClung.

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Event Calendar



April 2023



SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
Karaoke Every Friday Night 2000-2300 hrs. SHOCKWAVE 	COSMIC BOWLING Every Saturday Night 1830-2230 hrs. Desert Winds 	Month of the Military Child 			1 BOSS: Bus Victorville Mall - Post Easter Egg Hunt - Makers Market - Easter Bunny AAFES	
2	3	4	5 Gold Star Spouse Day	6  Fort Irwin Chambers Meeting	7 Spouses Coffee USO 	8 - Month of the Military Child Spring Fling - BOSS: Huntington Beach Trip - Easter Bunny AAFES
9 Sunrise Service 	10	11 Town Hall 	12 Days of Remembrance Commemoration	13	14  	15  BOSS: Long Beach Trip ODR: Off the Grid Brewing Company
16 	17	18	19 Annual Volunteer Recognition Ceremony - MEDDAC PFPC	20 Blood Drive (Sandy Basin)	21 Concert in the Park 	22 MCSC Wild West Night - Alcohol Awareness 5K - Teal Ribbon Ride 
Desert Warrior Week						
23	24	25	26 Lewis Elementary Carnival	27	28 VIP BOX Tour 	29 VIP BOX Tour - BOSS: Ontario Mills Mall
30						30

National Training Center and Fort Irwin Highlights

- 01 APR: BOSS Bus Victorville Mall
- 14-16 APR: NHRA (Las Vegas)
- 01 APR: Post Easter Egg Hunt
- 17-21 APR: Desert Warrior Week
- 01 APR: HBB Makers Market
- 21 APR: Concert in the Park
- 08 APR: Month of the Military Child Spring Fling
- 22 APR: MCSC Wild West Night




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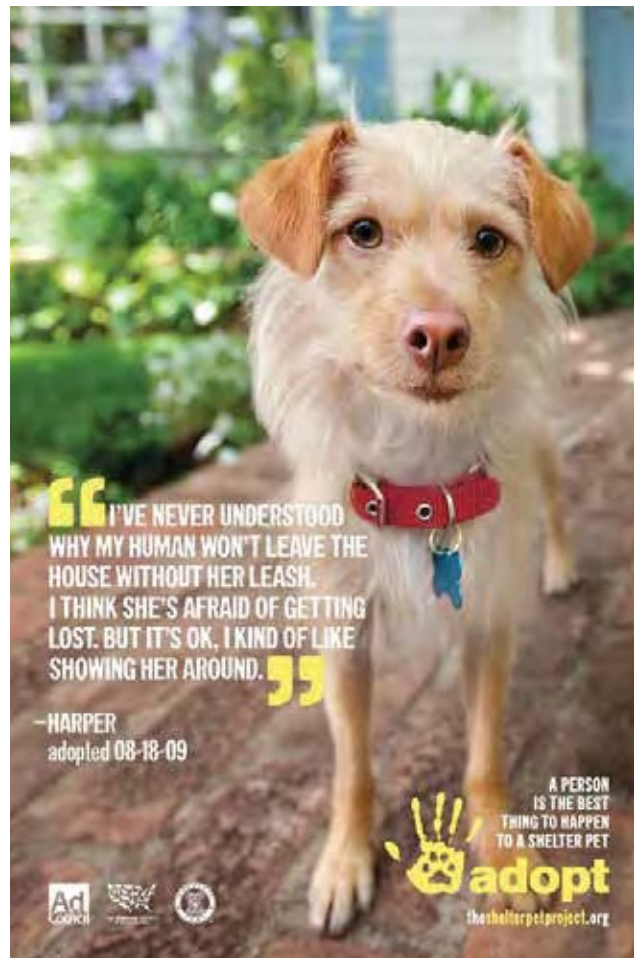
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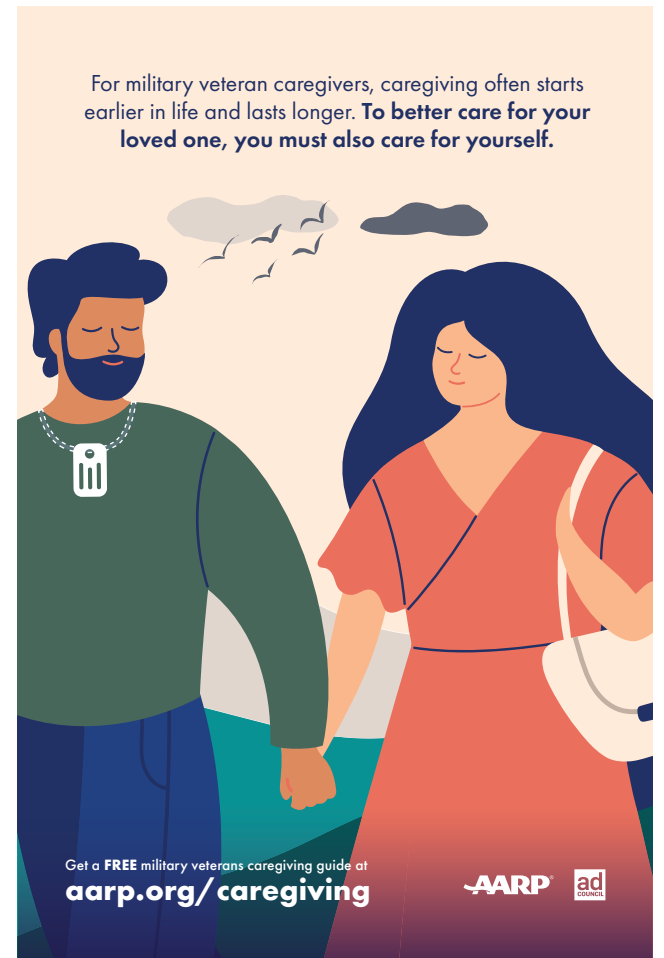
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“When it comes to body composition, our focus in the past has predominantly been on body fat percentage, with minimal focus on lean muscle mass,” explains Taylor. “But lean muscle mass does play a key role in being a successful Soldier... If we could also incorporate performance, we might be able to capture some Soldiers who are capable of performing as a Soldier at the highest levels. And those are the individuals that the Army wants to make sure that they’re not losing.”

Another aspect of the ACBC study is the link between body composition and injury outcomes and performance.

“There are definitely those outlier Soldiers that perform very well and performance itself is protective against some of the health outcomes that the Army is interested in,” said Taylor. “But we are trying to find a balance between ensuring that people have a healthy body composition that does not put them at higher risk for health outcomes like future injury but also accounts for those that may carry more muscle mass (body weight) and are good performers.”

The representative sample

With the representative ACBC study population sample, USARIEM can make interpretations for the Total Army from the ACBC data collected. Data can be interpreted at an Army level for each of the demographic collection categories very similar to the technique used in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey research model.

“As researchers we had to work hard to ensure we collected data from each specific demographic group, or bin, so that we could make these interpretations. It was not as easy as showing up on an Army post and ask whoever is interested to volunteer and be measured as a participant — that would just be a convenience sample and could skew the interpretation of the outcomes to just those that were interested in getting their body measured,” said McClung. “Having the strength in our study design allows us to extrapolate what outcomes would look like if we were able to collect data on each and every Soldier in the Army. To be honest, it was difficult to collect this data set and it was a lot of planning and works on the front end too, but well worth the outcome to provide Army Senior Leaders impactful output in real-time.”

This representative sample could have been a complicated and difficult task, however, partnering with USACIMT made it much more manageable.

“We couldn’t have done this study without them. USACIMT has the network across all Army installations, and they helped us narrow down locations based on what specific demographics were needed to complete our study sample. They knew where to lead us to find the Soldiers needed and in good numbers. This is why our team traveled to specific posts at certain times of the year, because USACIMT knew who was going to be at specific trainings at specific locations,” McClung explains. “For instance, the National Guard. It would be really difficult for us to get a representative sample of the entire National Guard if we would have to go to almost every state to enroll Soldiers in the study, but if we went to Fort Lee at a specific time of the year, the National Guardsmen/women are there completing their training. So, we could get a national sample of however many hundred Soldiers that we needed in



A U.S. Army Soldier receives a Dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry scan at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, on Oct. 18, 2021.

Army photograph by Pfc. Lilliana Fraser

one swoop.”

“When you look at our data, we have matched three distributions across military occupational specialties which was not our main goal, but when we started evaluating the data it matched almost perfectly with Total Army breakdown for physical demand categories — heavy, moderate and low — that exist for the MOSs,” said Taylor. “We were very happy with our sample, because we felt like we accurately captured all the different grouping of Soldiers, ensuring no Soldier felt like they were under-represented in our population.”

The ACBC was a constantly evolving study. The data needs changed consistently as study demographic categories closed. Certain categories such as 18—20-year-old males, were easy to recruit for and therefore closed pretty quickly, whereas others were a bit more difficult. But in the end, the team got the job done.

Collecting this much data, in this short time period was a challenge, but also a huge accomplishment.

“USARIEM is known for our field study expertise and our ability to take the show on the road,” said McClung. “I think having that respect and rapport, not only with the installations that we were going to, but with USACIMT and some of the Army Senior Leaders really helped to put us on the map.”

The Analysis of the Data

The USARIEM researchers provided the scientific analysis of the ACBC data to advise Army leaders and policy working groups to make science-based decisions on body composition and the health of the Soldier.

“With the ACBC data set we can look at how a 530 or 550 would impact Soldiers across the Army level and how that relates to ABCP flags, injuries, and health outcomes. This is what influenced the recommendation for a 540 ACFT score to exempt height and weight requirements. If we did not have the rich representative data, numbers in sex, age, ethnicity and race, we would miss out on that type of interpretation and flexibility. We are able to look at how potential changes would impact the entire Army,” said Taylor.

With the data collection complete and analyzed, McClung and Taylor have spent a good deal of time briefing leaders and discussing the outcomes. The duo serves as the scientific advisors to Army senior leaders, including Secretary of the Army,

Christine Wormuth; and Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Grinston, as they inform on potential modernization of policy.

“Data-informed decisions are being made for the Soldier. Katie and I are asked to step up and explain the study outcomes, so we are involved in some of the working groups. We help clarify outcomes and impact but leave the policy recommendations to the rest of the team,” said McClung. “We present the science in a nonbiased way.”

As part of the working group, McClung and Taylor are in the room with Army senior leaders and ready to answer the scientific questions that allowing the working group to make fully informed decisions.

The team

This study took teamwork to a whole new level. USARIEM’s three divisions, Military Performance Division, Military Nutrition Division and Thermal and Mountain Medicine Division, worked together to staff each of the data collection trips. The ACBC team was nicely divided into military,

civilian, and contractor personnel.

“It was pretty exciting for our entire team, especially the Soldiers because each and every one of them are touched by this work and future policy. The ABCP is real to them every six months,” said McClung. “For the Soldiers, it really means a lot to be part of something that directly impacts them and their careers.”

Depending on the study location and needs, the study team flexed from 20 to 30 USARIEM members. The days were long — on average 12 plus hours a day. The team would rotate in and out, taking turns pitching in where and when needed.

USARIEM may be the study leaders, but the team includes many more. USACIMT initiated the study, calling in USARIEM to lead the science. USACIMT was there every step of the way providing support, pre-briefing, being onsite during data collection and taking the lead with media. The site coordinators and support teams at each study location, Fort Lee, Fort Bragg and West Point, were critical to enabling data collection. Most importantly, the Soldier study participants were a huge part of the team — without them stepping up to volunteer, there would be no ACBC data to present or impact potential change.

“I feel like we couldn’t have done it without each piece of the team. I’m so grateful for all that they did,” said McClung. “We tried to make it fun.”

A task well done

On March 9, Grinston announced significant changes to the Army Body Composition regulation. These changes are a direct result of the research conducted by McClung, Taylor and the USARIEM team. The ability to improve the lives of Soldiers through high quality research is a strength of USARIEM and a reflection of the commitment exhibited by their scientists. This success is being recognized by Army Senior Leaders up to the Secretary of the Army. For the “dynamic duo,” as Wormuth, called McClung and Taylor, it is a career accomplishment they will never forget.

“It’s the highest honor as a scientist,” said Taylor.

“It is,” agreed McClung. “To have your science put into policy that’s forward moving and impacts the entire Army, it’s mind blowing. I feel like I’m just trying to ride the wave.”

News



by Chaplain (Capt.)
Gabriel Hess

Squadron Chaplain

Matthew 11:28-30 Take my yoke upon you

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Ever melted a machine gun barrel? There are a variety of automatic weapons in service in our military, such as the classic M2 Browning, or the M240B. Fired nonstop at their full cyclic rate their barrels will melt and deform in a matter of minutes, quickly becoming useless. Given just a few seconds of rest between shots, and a few minutes of cooling after they become hot, and they can be used for thousands or even tens of thousands of rounds.

Rest is essential to our lives as mortal human beings. Without it, our performance flags, our joy fades, and our energy disappears. Prolonged periods without rest can cause us to seize up, like an engine without any oil to lubricate it, a phone that has gone too long without a charge, or a machine gun barrel running at its full cyclic rate without a break in fire.

Yet, life doesn't always cooperate with our need for rest. Sometimes, even when we try to maintain balance in our lives between our work and our need for rest, we may have to work past that breaking point, where weariness begins

to tear us down and our limitations and weaknesses become exposed.

Jesus' message here is precisely for you in these moments. His invitation in this passage is to those who have been worn down by more than we can bear, who have carried burdens of any kind for further than we feel we are capable of carrying. To us His promise is not always that He will make these burdens disappear, but that He will bear them with us.

What burdens do you carry?

How can I take hold of this rest that Jesus promises?

Do I trust that Jesus Christ can and will bear my burdens with me?

May you find rest from your burdens in Jesus Christ.

Chaplain's + Corner



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OBITUARY



With great sorrow, the family and friends of Nathaniel Harris Pickett announce his passing. Nathaniel, 67, was born on May 22, 1955, in Pompano Beach, Florida, to the late Pauline Wells-Pickett and Theodore Pickett. After graduating from Northeast High School in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, in 1973, he attended West Virginia State College on a football scholarship, where he received a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice and a minor in Political Science in 1978. He was a proud member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., Theta Psi Chapter, which he joined in 1976. He also obtained a Master of Science degree in Criminal Justice from Troy State University, an Associate Science degree in Restaurant Management from Victor Valley College in 1992, and a Master of Public Administration degree in Administrative Organization and Management from Golden Gate University in 1999.

Nathaniel had a long career in the United States Army. He was commissioned in 1978 and rose to the rank of Major. He distinguished himself by being awarded the Army Achievement Medal, the Army Commendation Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, a Superior Unit Award, the Parachutist Badge, the Overseas Service Ribbon, and the Army Service Ribbon. Reviews of his performance included "his dedication and expertise are outstanding," he "always demonstrated concern for the best interest of his subordinates," he "is truly an outstanding officer," and he "is unquestionably one of the finest officers in the US Army."

Nathaniel also worked for more than 20 years at the California Department of Transportation. In addition, he worked tirelessly to help others and provided housing for many people in need. Well known within the community, he dedicated his time to the service of others and had a vision to revitalize his beloved community through real estate improvements and development. He was also a member of Mojave Desert Christian Church, a devoted Christian, and both a family man and a businessman.

Nathaniel was blessed with 10 children and a stepdaughter. He is survived by his daughters Nicole Sams (Ex Kano), Marquise Gladden, Kelsey Pickett, Kyla Pickett, Katrina Pickett, and his stepdaughter Kamrien Proctor, and by his sons Marcus Gladden (D'Andra), Lawrence Kalib Pickett, Jonathan Pickett, and Matthew Pickett. He was predeceased by his son Nathaniel Pickett II. Nathaniel is also mourned by his ex-wife Sherri Pickett, his granddaughter Kennedy Gladden, his grandson Christian Thomas, his granddaughter Delilah Gladden, and his grandson Marcus Gladden, Jr. He was predeceased by his siblings Willie Simmons Jr., Linda Albury, Joyce Pickett, Betty Jean Mitchell, and Geraldine Hackett. He is survived by his siblings Jennie Lee Wells, Luetrell Barnes, Joann Knight, Flora Pickett-Coley, Willie James Pickett, Patricia Mack, Donald Pickett, and a host of nieces, nephews, other relatives, and friends. Nathaniel will be remembered and missed for his love, laughs, and encouraging words. His memory lives on through his invaluable service to our country, the numerous lives that he touched, and his impact on our community.

A funeral service for Nathaniel will be held on Friday, March 31, 2023, at 11:00 a.m., at Union Missionary Baptist Church, 1360 Riverside Drive, Barstow, California, 92311, and interment will be held on Monday, April 3, 2023, at 10:30 a.m., at Riverside National Cemetery, 22495 Van Buren Boulevard, Riverside, California, 92518.

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In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, the Army has prepared a Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate potential environmental effects of military training and support activities on Fort Irwin, San Bernardino County, California. The Final EIS will serve as a Legislative EIS (LEIS) to support the extension of the public land withdrawal for portions of Fort Irwin. The Notice of Availability for this Final LEIS will be published in the Federal Register in April 2023, and an electronic copy of the Final LEIS will be made available for view online or download from the Fort Irwin LEIS website: <https://aec.army.mil/index.php/irwin-nepa-meeting>. No sooner than 30 days after the issuance of the Final LEIS, the Army will decide on a course of action and will issue a Record of Decision. Please see the website for official 30-day period dates.

Fort Irwin fulfilled its obligations to consult under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act concurrently with this NEPA process through the development of a Programmatic Agreement in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, other government agencies, Native American tribes, and the public. The Programmatic Agreement was completed on December 15, 2022 and is provided as an appendix to the LEIS.

Fort Irwin has completed consultation under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding the proposed activities. The Biological Opinion (BO) that resulted from this consultation was issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on December 13, 2021 and concludes that the proposed actions are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of endangered or threatened species. This consultation identified appropriate measures that were specified in the BO that will be implemented by Fort Irwin to avoid or minimize effects of the activities. Fort Irwin will comply with the Endangered Species Act and implement the measures that are specified in the BO. The BO is provided as an appendix to the LEIS.

The Army recognizes the current challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. If you have difficulty accessing the Final LEIS, please contact the NEPA Planner by phone at (760) 380-5906, by mail to the NEPA Planner, Fort Irwin Directorate of Public Works, Environmental Division, Building 602, Fifth Street, Fort Irwin, California, 92310-5085; or by email to usarmy.jbsa.aec.nepa@army.mil.

Hard copies of the Final LEIS are available for public review at the following locations:

Barstow Public Library
304 E Buena Vista Street
Barstow, CA 92311

Fort Irwin NTC Post Library
2nd Street Building 331
Fort Irwin, CA 92310

Fort Irwin Environmental Division Directorate of Public Works
5th Street Building 381
Fort Irwin, CA 92310

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