
They Get It, and That's What Makes Them Great

THERE IS A SAYING THAT HOME ISN'T WHERE YOU LIVE, BUT WHERE YOU ARE UNDERSTOOD.

Understanding the needs of our service members – current and past – and their families is what defense communities do and why they are great places for the military to call home. In “What Great Communities Do,” we travel around the country to meet the inaugural class of the Great American Defense

Communities program. We see how two communities, the Fort Leonard Wood region in Missouri and Lawton, Okla., are supporting the youngest members of military families through groundbreaking programs. We venture to the home of the Big Red One, the Army's 1st Infantry Division, to learn how Kansas State University is leveraging the power of education to make the Flint Hills region the most military-inclusive community in the nation, and how Colorado Springs is taking a holistic approach to supporting soldiers and families through its Peak Military Care Network. On the West Coast, we experience how Monterey, Calif., also has made education a priority, and how the entire region around Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington state supports the area's second- largest employer. In Fort Walton Beach, Fla., we explore how one community is helping transitioning service members become entrepreneurs, and how in Goldsboro, N.C., pilots at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base are helping children's dreams take flight. In Dayton, Ohio, hometown heroes take center stage throughout the year, and in the Grand Forks community in North Dakota the military and local government have created a community that military families don't want to leave.

In “Excellence as a Way of Life,” we meet a select group of communities, organizations and individuals that lead through action and example, and comprise the 2016 Defense Community Award winners. There are three inspiring leaders from both sides



of the fence: Mike Reese, a community leader working to support Fort Polk in Louisiana and the region that depends on it; Lt. Col. Ralph “E.T.” Taylor, Jr., from Joint Base Charleston in South Carolina who led by example when his region and state faced record flooding; and Col. John Devillier, who actively worked to create strategic-growth partnerships between the military and civilian community around Wright-

Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio. We learn how a drive-through restaurant epitomizes the support in Sierra Vista, Ariz., for the men and women of Fort Huachuca, and how Naval Air Station Whiting Field in Milton, Fla., epitomizes community-installation collaboration. Finally, we see how the former Fort Chaffee is fast-tracking redevelopment in western Arkansas.

A “Legacy of Support” shares the story of John Lynch, whose impact on defense communities and role in shaping ADC was extraordinary.

Welcome to the inaugural issue of America's Defense Communities – telling the stories of the people and places that understand how to create a great home for our military family. We share these stories to recognize their accomplishments, but also to provide communities with ideas they may want to try. We also hope you will share this magazine, as well as the examples of America's defense communities and their vital role in our national defense.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Ford". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "F" and a cursive "Ford".

Tim Ford
Publisher

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AMERICA'S DEFENSE COMMUNITIES

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ABOUT ADC

ADC builds resilient communities that support America's military. We are the connection point for leaders from communities, states, the military and industry on community-military issues and installation management to enhance knowledge, information sharing and best practices. With nearly 300 communities, states, regions and affiliated industry organizations, ADC represents every major defense community/state in the nation.

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FAST FACTS:

Class of 2016

Great American Defense Communities

South Puget Sound, WA

REGIONAL POPULATION: 3,733,380

INSTALLATIONS SERVED: Joint Base Lewis-McChord

- Joint Base Lewis McChord is the third-largest installation in the Army and home to I Corps and the Air Force's 62nd Airlift Wing.
- More than 60,000 family members live on and off base.
- More than 58,000 military retirees live within 50 miles of the base.

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Grand Forks, ND

REGIONAL POPULATION: 67,000

INSTALLATIONS SERVED: Grand Forks Air Force Base

- Eight community members serve as ambassadors appointed by the 319th Air Wing Base commander.
- The Community Partnerships Initiative brings together more than 60 community members from the public, private and nonprofit sectors.
- Grand Sky, the country's first industrial park dedicated to the advancement of the UAS industry. Tenants, will bring up to 3,000 jobs to the Grand Forks region.

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Monterey, CA

REGIONAL POPULATION: 433,898

INSTALLATIONS SERVED: Presidio of Monterey (POM) and Naval Support Activity Monterey (NSAM)

- Known as the Language Capital of the World, Monterey hosts educational programs designed to integrate military dependents.
- The public-public partnership between Monterey and the Presidio of Monterey is known nationwide as the Monterey Model.
- Presidio houses the Department of Defense's Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) with more than 3,800 military personnel being trained by 1,100 instructors in more than 75 different languages and dialects.

p.16

Colorado Springs, CO

REGIONAL POPULATION: 668,353

INSTALLATIONS SERVED: Fort Carson, Peterson Air Force Base, Schriever Air Force Base, Cheyenne Mountain Air Station, United States Air Force Academy

- 70 local organizations or chapters that currently support the presence of military installations.
- Military Family Life Consultants serve 11 schools in 3 school districts.
- One in four residents is a former or current member of the military.

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Flint Hills Region, KS

REGIONAL POPULATION: 98,545

INSTALLATIONS SERVED: Fort Riley

- Kansas State University provides outreach programs to more than 2,500 military-connected students.
- More than 4,000 community members attended an Army community listening session in 2015 to support Fort Riley.
- Manhattan and Junction City hold monthly networking events for local business leaders and Fort Riley soldiers and spouses.

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The Great American Defense Communities program was launched with support from House and Senate Defense Communities Caucus to acknowledge the actions of cities, counties and regions that support and nurture their installations and the quality of life for military families. The 2016 inaugural class was selected by a panel of defense community advocates and experts. Among dozens of nominees, these 10 communities were recognized based on the broad range of efforts they carry out on behalf of military personnel and their families, covering areas such as education, job opportunities, housing, family support during deployments and community appreciation. The Great American Defense Communities program is supported by grant funding from CBRE and Sodexo.

Fort Leonard Wood Region, MO

REGIONAL POPULATION: 160,178

INSTALLATIONS SERVED: Fort Leonard Wood

- The Waynesville R-IV is the largest school district in the region and has about 6,000 students.
- Seventy-five percent of the district's students are military-connected and 60 percent are military dependents.
- The Veterans to Farmers program has helped more than 100 veterans and soldiers learn agricultural skills important to the region's economy.

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Dayton Region, OH

REGIONAL POPULATION: 800,909

INSTALLATIONS SERVED: Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio Air National Guard Base, Springfield Dayton Veterans Affairs Medical Center

- Approximately 179,000 military retirees call the Dayton Region home.
- More than 100 organizations in the local region support military members, military families and veterans.
- The installation and facilities employ about 30,000 military, civilian and contract personnel.

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Goldsboro, NC

POPULATION: 36,437

INSTALLATIONS SERVED: Seymour Johnson Air Force Base

- The 4th Fighter Wing is comprised of more than 4,000 Airmen.
- Seymour Johnson Air Force Base is Wayne County's largest employer, with more than 6,500 military and civilian personnel.
- A new multi-sports complex is being constructed on 63 acres of Seymour Johnson land in partnership with the city of Goldsboro.

p.35

Eglin-Hurlburt Community, FL

REGIONAL POPULATION : 262,172

INSTALLATIONS SERVED: Eglin Air Force Base, Hurlburt Field, Duke Field

- Nine military affairs councils support activities for military members and families.
- The city of Fort Walton Beach was named a "Top-Ten City for Veteran Entrepreneurs" by USAA and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.
- More than 2,000 businesses in Okaloosa and Walton Counties have employed veterans.

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Lawton, OK

REGIONAL POPULATION: 130,644

INSTALLATIONS SERVED: Fort Sill

- 9,000 military children attend Lawton area public schools.
- 2,600 students participate annually in the STARBASE program. The program was established to promote an interest in math and science, and raise the awareness of the value of science and technology to the national security posture of the United States.
- In 2013 the City of Lawton announced the opening of Serco, and since then has added 1000 new jobs to the community, joining Goodyear, Cameron University, Raytheon, and NorthropGrumman as leading employers of veterans and military spouses.



What G Communi

Contributing Writers: Kathleen Brady, Christopher Delporte, Randy Ford & Willona Sloan



The new commander of the 319th Air Base Wing, Col. Rodney Lewis, gives a speech at the change-of-command ceremony at Grand Forks Air Force Base in North Dakota. The base and the Grand Forks area have worked to create a thriving community that airmen don't want to leave. See "Creating a Community with Staying Power" on page 12. (Photo credit: Joshua Komer/Grand Forks Herald)

Great Communities Do

TEN GREAT AMERICAN DEFENSE COMMUNITIES SHARE THEIR STORIES

It started with a simple idea. How can we recognize the great things that communities are doing to support service members and their families and how can we share those stories? Through the input from the House and Senate Defense Communities Caucuses and support from committed partners, the idea of Great American Defense Communities was born. This year's inaugural class of 10 communities and regions offers a glimpse into what makes these such special places for military families, told through the stories of people who make it happen.

These are simple stories of people trying to make a difference — people like Lloyd Reshard,

the CEO of Cognitive Big Data Systems, a successful technology company started through the Venture Hive program in Fort Walton Beach, Fla., or the Bellerby family from Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. whose daughter has excelled because of Club TIGER, or pilots at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in North Carolina taking sick children under their wings.

These are just a sample of the thousands of stories that play out each day, each in its own way, but all demonstrating what communities do to ensure that our military family has great places to call home. Congratulations to the 2016 class of Great American Defense Communities.



Col. Paul Bauman, 319th Air Base Wing commander, reads the book "Mousetronaut" to children at the Library on Grand Forks Air Force Base. The library hosts weekly story time and craft sessions for young children. (Photo credit: U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Xavier Navarro)

Grand Forks, North Dakota

Creating a Community with Staying Power



Sgt. David Dobrydney walks next to an RQ-4 Global Hawk in a hangar at Grand Forks Air Force Base. (Photo credit: Logan Werlinger/Grand Forks Herald)

“When airmen get orders that say they are going to Grand Forks, they don’t want to come here,” Tom Ford, the county government relations officer, admitted with a smile in his voice, “but then they fall in love with the place because the community embraces them.” The proof is that a quarter of the base’s military personnel choose to stay in the area when they leave the service.

Some join the police force. Others, particularly retirees, go to work in the community's veteran services program. Many veterans join the faculty of the University of North Dakota, particularly its aviation studies program and pilot-training programs. Northland Community & Technical College trains technicians in the service and repair of unmanned aerial systems. There also are opportunities in the private sector. Related industries, notably Northrup Grumman, makers of Global Hawk surveillance aircraft, and General Atomics, with its Reaper and Predator remotely powered aircraft, have been drawn to the Grand Forks area because of its educated workforce and welcoming community, and community-base partnership. The Grand Forks region, which spills over the border into a corner of Minnesota, has a population of 67,000.

When Grand Forks Air Force Base (GFAFB) was threatened with closure during the 2005 round of Defense Base Closure and Realignment, city and county governments, as well as the private sector, combined to save it. At that time, the base's Cold War defense capabilities, such as missiles, bombers, and aircraft interceptors, were no longer part of the new military strategy. The base was spared from closure, but it became apparent that actions should be taken to streamline operations and make GFAFB a more efficiently run facility. As a result, the base determined it did not require all of its land, so the county leased what had been the Strategic Air Command Alert area in the southwest corner of the base. With technological expertise and contributions from the base, the county developed that 217-acre section into the \$300 million public-private partnership Grand Sky Technology Park, America's first unmanned flight system

aviation park. Military and commercial industries share base runways for training, testing and developing unmanned flight vehicles at GFAFB. The North Dakota Department of Commerce offers tax credits for qualified tenants. The Federal Aviation Administration has designated it the Northern Plains Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Test Site, one of six such sites in the nation that will help to integrate UAS into the national airspace. Even North Dakota's climate makes a contribution: its four seasons allow testing in extreme heat and cold, as well as high wind conditions.

Sen. Heidi Heitkamp, D-N.D., co-chair of the Senate Defense Communities Caucus, touted the UAS program as an example of how the military and civilian communities in Grand Forks have brought their partnership efforts to a new level.

"When Grand Forks had the chance to build up its community with greater integration between the military and civilian communities, it not only exceeded its support of previous years, it aimed for the sky – literally. Through an enhanced-use lease, Grand Forks County now leases 1.2 million square feet of land from the Air Force and subleases the land to a private developer, facilitating the creation of Grand Sky," she said. "After three years in the making, this unique public-private partnership has come to life and is helping create seamless opportunities for young entrepreneurs and industry experts alike – a setup *The New York Times* calls 'a Silicon Valley for drones, in North Dakota.'"

As impressive as the commercial results

may be, it is not the only aspect of the partnership. The military combines with local governments to operate a joint fire department (at a savings of \$4,000 for the base and \$10,000 for the city), shared public parks and recreational facilities from volleyball to golf, and shared health services such as emergency management (including ambulances and emergency management technicians) and mosquito control.

The city of Grand Forks and the surrounding area consider the base to be part of its own culture and economy, which has helped the area to thrive and the base to endure. Col. Rodney D. Lewis, commander of GFAFB, observed, "The level of support that these communities have extended to our wing goes far beyond anything I have experienced in my 25-year career. Our airmen deploy in harm's way far from home and work long hours in austere conditions. They do so with complete confidence that the families they leave behind have the full support of our local community. The patriotism, trust, support and friendship that exist here are unparalleled and a great source of strength for the airmen and families of this wing."

— KB



Lisa Disbrow, undersecretary of the Air Force, left, and Tom Falck, Grand Forks County commissioner, right, sign the Joint Use Agreement between the U.S. Air Force and Grand Forks County at Grand Forks Air Force Base. This agreement allows the county and its partners to use the runway on Grand Forks AFB. (Photo credit: U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Xavier Navarro)

Service members from Joint Base Lewis-McChord speak to representatives from various civilian and government agencies during the Hiring Heroes job fair at McChord Field. (Photo credit: Joint Base Lewis-McChord Public Affairs Office)

South Puget Sound, Washington

Smooth Transitions

Last year, Washington state budgeted \$495 million to widen seven miles of Interstate 5 that run along Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM). This installation, which was formed in 2010 from the merger of the Army's Fort Lewis and the McChord Air Force base, has more than 40,000 active service members and about 17,000 civilian workers, making it Washington's second largest employer (after aerospace giant The Boeing Company).

The improving highway, which traverses the Pacific Northwest's booming South Puget Sound area, is a fitting metaphor for transitioning service members' path to civilian employment in the region. The workforce development programs

are the work of local governments, businesses and the base. They created the South Sound Military & Communities Partnership to provide a single point of contact to develop, discover and coordinate opportunities in higher education, entrepreneurship, employment, and career and technical apprenticeship training. Among those participating are local and county stakeholders from more than 15 communities, including the Nisqually Indian Tribe.

The culmination of each year's efforts is the Washington State Military Transition Summit, where thousands of service members and a range of educators and employers convene. However, many programs serve the military throughout the year, including:

- Rally Point 6 (RP6) in the City of Lakewood, a national nonprofit that helps service members, veterans and their families map out a strategy for their transition. Help can take the form of reformatting resumes or guiding a homeless veteran into emergency care. Nearly all RP6 participants – 98 percent – are connected to resources, and 40 percent achieve their employment goals, which is well above the industry standard.
- The Veteran Internship Program in Tacoma, which focuses on those with cyber security and training development skills who are interested in working in local government. Veterans help the “VIPs” by serving as transition coaches.



Lt. Gen. Stephen Lanza, I Corps commanding general, presents retired Sgt. 1st Class Sotero Soto with a certificate of appreciation during the Korean War-era Veterans' Salute ceremony at Joint Base Lewis-McChord. (Photo credit: Sgt. Daniel Schroeder/USPACOM News)

- Camo2Commerce, a project of the Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council, Workforce Central, local chambers of commerce and other partners, provides career coaching, specific training, and placement with the help of local community and technical colleges. In November 2015, the program received the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Capital One Award for Small Business Veteran and Military Spouse Employment for leadership as a small business or organization in hiring veterans, transitioning service members and military spouses. In January, the program also received \$2.5 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Labor, which will help to keep its doors open through June 2017.



Vanessa Johnson of Joint Base Lewis-McChord, right, visits with Trooper Makayla Morgan, left, and Trooper Katie Colello-Bidewell about career opportunities with the Washington State Patrol during the Washington State Service Member for Life Summit job fair in Hangar 10 on McChord Field. (Photo credit: U.S. Army)

- The human resources department of the city of Tacoma does job recruitment at JBLM. It helps potential job candidates by conducting open mock interview exercises and employment information sessions. The city also offers a veterans hiring preference per its municipal code.

Steve Vincent, a retired U.S. Navy captain who serves as a volunteer member of the Washington Military Transition Council, observed, “Transition is a full-contact team sport. The unique catalyst in this community is the willingness for all the players to roll up their sleeves and work together. We bring together a broad section of industry, education, for-profit training, Department of Defense, state agencies and nonprofits with a common interest of helping a transitioning service member successfully transition into the civilian world and land on their feet. We do this because many of us have been in their shoes ... and we know what great employees they will be.”

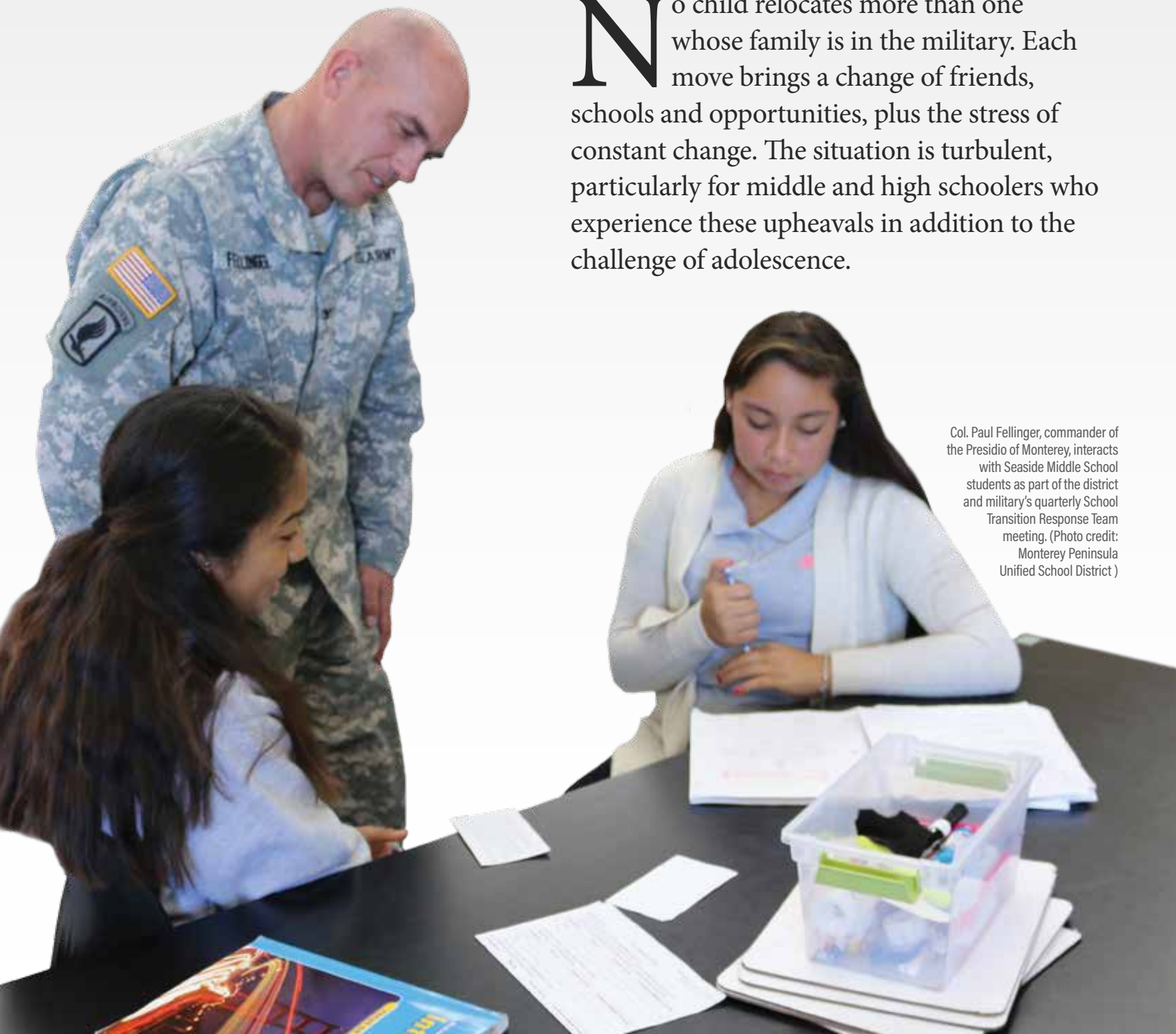
Transition services are just one manifestation of the strong bond among the base, its military and civilian personnel, and the community at large. Their mutual commitment came to the fore when JBLM was faced with a possible reduction of 11,000 soldiers and civilian jobs through the Army's Supplemental Programmatic Environmental Assessment (SPEA) 2020. At an Army SPEA 2020 listening session held in January 2015, the support of representatives of 600 local stakeholders helped to persuade the Army to slash the proposed reductions by 90 percent, down to 1,250 active duty personnel. The welcoming community, flourishing area employers including Boeing, Amazon, Starbucks, and Microsoft, the transition services, plus the magnificent waters and mountains of the Puget Sound region, are key elements in making JBLM the nation's number one requested installation. — KB

Monterey, California

Easing Change *for Children of Military Families*

No child relocates more than one whose family is in the military. Each move brings a change of friends, schools and opportunities, plus the stress of constant change. The situation is turbulent, particularly for middle and high schoolers who experience these upheavals in addition to the challenge of adolescence.

Col. Paul Fellingner, commander of the Presidio of Monterey, interacts with Seaside Middle School students as part of the district and military's quarterly School Transition Response Team meeting. (Photo credit: Monterey Peninsula Unified School District)





Celebrate **100** years of Joint Base Lewis-McChord
military & community partnerships at WWW.MYJBLM.COM



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Seymour Johnson AFB



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GOLDSBORO
BE MORE DO MORE SEYMOUR



“Military families make many sacrifices in service to our country. The stresses associated with periodic, and sometimes unexpected, deployments can take their toll on children and spouses,” said Tom Jennings, former non-commissioned officer and board president of Monterey Peninsula Unified School District (MPUSD). “The district is committed to serving military families to ensure their children don’t miss out on vital educational and childhood opportunities.”

MPUSD is situated along the central coast of California and stretches from the city of Marina in the north down to the city of Monterey at its southern end. It serves more than 10,000 students, 11 percent of them in military families stationed at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, the Defense Data Manpower Center, Naval Support Activity Monterey, Naval Postgraduate School, Fleet Numerical Meteorology and Oceanography Center, and the Naval Research Lab.

The children of service families typically are enrolled in the district for only five to 18 months. Of the more than 20 schools in MPUSD, four predominantly serve military students and their families. These are La Mesa Elementary, Marshall Elementary, Walter Colton Middle and Monterey High School.

“Improving educational opportunities for all our families, especially our military families, is a top priority,” said Monterey Mayor Clyde Roberson, and the district has proved this to be so. MPUSD established a record of working with specialists from the military to respond to the social and emotional needs of these students, as well as to behavior and conditions that could interfere with learning. In 2015 it received a \$1.2 million Department of Defense Education Activity grant to further this work. At the elementary school level, the grant will fund a behaviorist-counselor to work with teachers. At the middle- and high-



Staff and students at Los Arboles Middle School proudly show they are scholars. Every pre-teen and teenager on campus is referred to as scholars, demonstrating the school's commitment to elevate students' learning status to be truly academic. (Photo credit: Randy Tunnell)

school levels, whether a student is transitioning to a new school environment or simply navigating adolescence, he or she will receive support through an on-campus liaison. Students also have the opportunity to participate in the Military Child Education Association's Student 2 Student program.

Also expected to positively affect students is the adoption of the International Baccalaureate (IB) degree program at Walter Colton Middle School and Monterey High School. This program is rigorous, fully portable and is recognized around the world wherever a military family might be posted. The IB emphasizes practical connections and applications to the real world. It involves cross-curricular learning with an international emphasis and also will serve as an advantage to students from civilian families. The 2016-2017 school year will be devoted to planning with rollout to begin in 2017-2018. The IB program comes out of MPUSD's innovative Reimagining Secondary Teaching and Learning Initiative to increase engagement and self-directed learning. It will draw on assistance from the Naval Postgraduate School and the Defense Language Institute, as well as the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey.

“The Monterey Peninsula School District is important both locally and globally,” said Capt. Kevin Bertelsen of Naval Support Activity Monterey. “The district provides direct, effective support to the Department of Defense and Department of State by providing high-quality education to children of American service members, as well as those of our allies. Supporting military children enhances the quality of life for our entire armed forces community, and has long term, positive benefits for national security. I appreciate the district's support of our nation's defense and overall stable security posture the United States is able to provide around the world.” — KB



Monterey High School JROTC celebrates its annual pass and review this spring. (Photo credit: Monterey Peninsula Unified School District)



Colorado Springs, Colorado

Connecting the Dots to Comprehensive Care

Colorado Springs truly is a military-connected community. With the United States Air Force Academy, Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station, North American Aerospace Defense Command, Peterson Air Force Base, Schriever Air Force Base, and Fort Carson all in the area, just about everyone touches the military in some way. In fact, one in four residents is a former or current member of the military.


To meet the needs of military-connected individuals and families, the Peak Military Care Network (PMCN) works with 32 partner agencies and each of the installations to coordinate streamlined service delivery across multiple organizations.

“What we’ve done is really try to work with community-based organizations holistically. Not around one particular issue but anything that might affect a service member or a family member,


whether it’s anything from workforce training for a transitioning veteran or a spouse looking for employment to early care and education,” said Kate Hatten, president and CEO, Peak Military Care Network.

PMCN receives referrals from partner agencies or people find them through their website. Last year, partners made more than 2,100 referrals for service within the network. To help clients access the services they need, PMCN offers navigation support and some case management and follow-up.

In addition, PMCN provides partner agencies training on military culture, which helps military-connected individuals feel more comfortable and also instills confidence in military leaders who refer soldiers to services outside of the installation.



Military spouse Lindsay Kester and son Elias, 3, receive a high-five from Kate Hatten, president and CEO, Peak Military Care Network, along with one of the 250 “Family Movie Night” gift baskets that were distributed as part of Military Spouse Appreciation Day in Colorado Springs, Colo. (Photo credit: Teresa Lee)



Members of Academy Winds perform the national anthems of Canada and the United States for the annual Colorado Springs Salute to the Armed Forces luncheon. (Photo credit: U.S. Air Force Academy Band)

In meeting its goals of fostering collaboration, coordination and communication, PMCN helps change lives. When a woman who was on the brink of losing her home first called Pikes Peak United Way's 2-1-1 service, she only was looking for help getting food for the month. Through the process of addressing this issue, the 2-1-1 representative learned the woman was a recent widow of a Vietnam-era veteran, and as such, she was eligible for certain benefits. That's when the coordinated network of partners went into action.

"Through one of our navigation partners at the time, they were able to work with the bank, and defer some of those payments that she had missed; work with the VA and Social Security to get the benefits so she had income to be able to make those payments so she could stay in her house," says Hatten. "That's an example of how it works when it's working well."



Service members from Peterson Air Force Base, Colo., were recognized and awarded medals during the Pikes Peak or Bust Rodeo Salute our Troops night on July 11, 2014, in Colorado Springs, Colo. (Photo credit: U.S. Army Space & Missile Defense Command)



Gen. John Hyten, commander of Air Force Space Command, gives the keynote speech at the 2015 Armed Forces Week luncheon, honoring the enlisted men and women of all the military services. (Photo credit: Tim Kimmell)



ADC President Michael Cooper speaks at the Great American Defense Communities press conference held at the Pioneers Museum in Colorado Springs. (Photo credit: City Communications)



Colorado Springs Mayor John Suthers and El Paso County Commissioner Dennis Hisey display a flag in honor of the Great American Defense Communities Award. (Photo credit: City Communications)

It's also worked well for Army veteran Matthew Shaver. He has received services from agencies such as Rocky Mountain Human Services and Goodwill Staffing, which have provided him with job training and placement.

Most important, he was able to talk to people who understood his unique situation while he was experiencing a difficult time. "I think they are doing a grand job because they have informed me of organizations that I did not know about and they understand my frustrations because they are military friendly," said Shaver.

PMCN saves people valuable time and energy. "The service makes life easier," Shaver said. At the end of the day, making lives easier is what PMCN is trying to do.

"There are soldiers and airmen in this community, and they're spending a lot of time in harm's way. Making sure that they know that their families are taken care of back home was something we wanted to give them — peace of mind and assurances that this community was going to care for their families," said Hatten.

Are PMCN's efforts paying off? Shaver would say so. "Thank you [PMCN] for following through and always checking on me," he said. — WS

Dayton Region, Ohio

Bringing Our Heroes Out to the Game

"Hometown Heroes has truly become one of America's great traditions."



An 8-year-old boy says it's been 180 days since his dad was deployed from Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

"What I really miss about him is that he's missing how good I'm getting at baseball and all my games," the son says.

In the video that plays on the centerfield scoreboard one evening

in 2013, he, his two brothers and his mom describe what it's like having a loved one deployed. When the video ends, the crowd stands and cheers as the Dayton Dragons mascots escort them to the field, and they are introduced as "our Hometown Hero family ... the family of Technical Sgt. Tyler Jones."

Craig Campbell's song "Family Man" begins to play.

"Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Technical Sgt. Tyler Jones!"

The family turns around, and one by one, they spot Dad, the boys racing to him with matching grins and disappearing into a group hug.

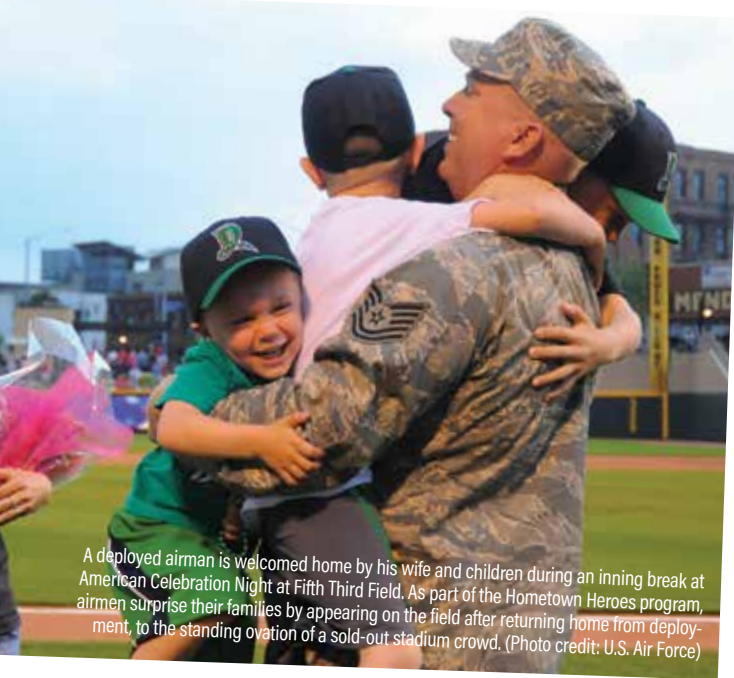
"Sgt. Jones has returned home three weeks early to surprise his children tonight at Fifth Third Field."



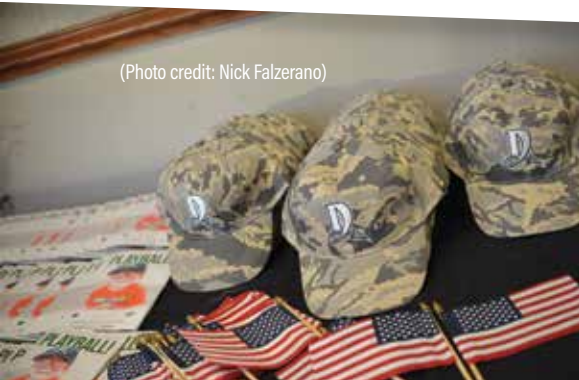
Military members and families bring a giant U.S. flag onto Fifth Third Field, home of the Dayton Dragons baseball team, during the opening ceremonies of American Celebration Night honoring the Dayton Region's Hometown Heroes. The Dayton Dragons are an affiliate baseball team of the Cincinnati Reds. (Photo credit: Nick Falzerano)



(Photo credit: U.S. Air Force)



A deployed airman is welcomed home by his wife and children during an inning break at American Celebration Night at Fifth Third Field. As part of the Hometown Heroes program, airmen surprise their families by appearing on the field after returning home from deployment, to the standing ovation of a sold-out stadium crowd. (Photo credit: U.S. Air Force)



(Photo credit: Nick Falzerano)



Emotional moments honoring service members and their families have become common at home games for the Dayton Dragons, a minor league team affiliated with the Cincinnati Reds. The Dragons were on the ground floor in 2003 when the Dayton Development Coalition founded the Hometown Heroes initiative, which honors the airmen and their families with free admission or sponsored tickets to sports, arts and entertainment events throughout the year. The program was founded with support from local companies and working in conjunction with Wright-Patterson and the Dragons.

Hometown Heroes is one of the most powerful programs of the 14-county Dayton region, where 27,000 uniformed personnel, civilians and defense contractors work to protect our nation's security at Wright-Patterson. The Dayton area also is home to the Ohio Air National Guard Base in Springfield and the Dayton Veterans Affairs Medical Center, which opened in 1867.

As part of the Hometown Heroes initiative, deployed service members have sent video greetings to be displayed to a packed stadium, including their loved ones, who get priority viewing spots on the field. Donated tickets allow military families to come to the game for free. New recruits have been sworn in on the field before sold-out crowds. The NCAA college basketball First Four games, held at the University of Dayton, follow a Hometown Heroes focus with tickets provided for service members. Several theater and performing arts organizations in the Dayton region now participate in the Hometown Heroes program by providing tickets or special performances.

"Hometown Heroes has truly become one of America's great traditions. The series of events taking place across the Dayton region showcase the community's passion for the United States Air Force and all who serve our nation in uniform," said retired Lt. Gen. Tom Owen, a former Air Force Life Cycle Management Center commander who participated in many Hometown Heroes events while stationed at Wright-Patterson. "For the Dayton region, Hometown Heroes brings to visible action what many have come to know as our nation's best community-based

relationship. Hometown Heroes is a community-wide celebration honoring the airmen at Wright-Patterson. This is just one of the many great things being done for Wright-Patterson by the team at the Dayton Development Coalition."

A little more than a century ago, two Dayton brothers changed history.

The area's aviation goals have evolved. The mission today is national security.

In their day – according to David McCullough's book, *The Wright Brothers* – Orville and Wilbur were "inseparable" and "indispensable to each other."

Today, so are the airmen and their community. — RF

Wright-Patterson Air Force Base Installation Commander Col. John M. Devillier and 88th Air Base Wing Chief Master Sgt. Lisa R. Arnold, give high-fives to new recruits swearing into Air Force service during the NCAA First Four tournament at the University of Dayton Arena. The swearing-in is part of festivities honoring the military through the Dayton Region's Hometown Heroes program, in partnership with the NCAA and the University of Dayton. (Photo credit: U.S. Air Force)

Then-commanding general of the 1st Infantry Division, Maj. Gen. Paul Funk, and then-President of Kansas State University, Dr. Kirk H. Schulz, renewing the K-State-Fort Riley Partnership by signing a partnership resolution at Kansas State University, as university and division senior leaders look on. (Photo credit: David Mayes of Kansas State University)



Flint Hills Region, Kansas

Bridging Town, Gown and Fatigue

“What is unique about our partnership is that we bring the whole of the university towards Fort Riley. It’s not just about looking at Fort Riley as a source of prospective students. It’s looking it as a rich community, a diverse community.”

In addition to being the home of the Big Red One (1st Infantry Division), the Flint Hills region of Kansas also is the home of the Wildcats of Kansas State University (K-State) in the town of Manhattan, about 15 miles from Fort Riley. For many years, meaningful interaction between the university and the Fort Riley Army installation was lacking. That was until about 10 years ago when the idea of a mutually beneficial partnership was born. The K-State – Fort Riley partnership was formalized in 2008, and it has continued to evolve.

“What is unique about our partnership is that we bring the whole of the university toward Fort Riley. It’s not just about looking at Fort Riley as a source of prospective students. It’s looking at it as a rich community, a diverse community,” said Art DeGroat, executive director of Military & Veterans Affairs at K-State. “You can’t find a piece of our university that’s not deeply engaged

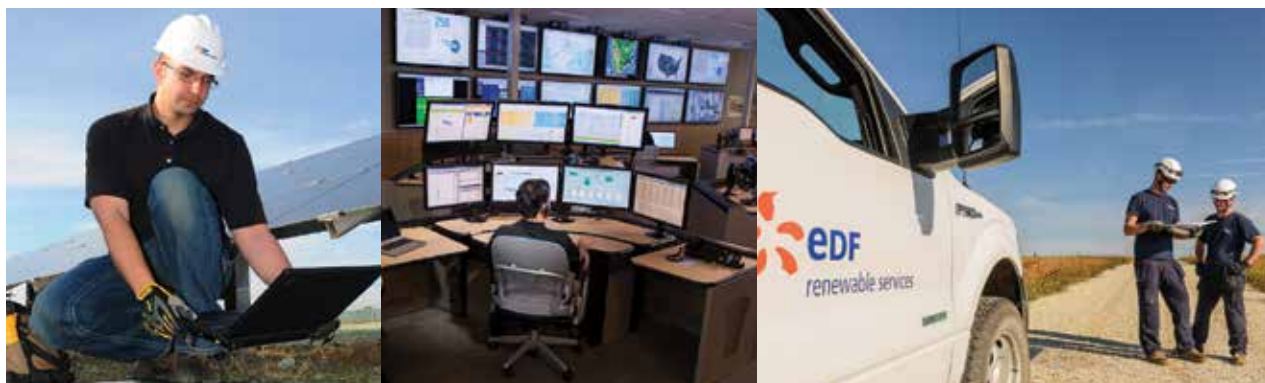
with the daily lives of Fort Riley’s soldiers or their families on or off duty.”

For K-State, a major objective of the partnership includes providing professional development to increase mission readiness. One example is the series of free cultural education events the university offers to Fort Riley soldiers.

“When Fort Riley has a unit that is preparing for overseas deployment, our university will find graduate students and professors and international students from the countries to which our soldiers will be deploying, and then we will host a series of cultural education and cultural training [events] above and beyond what the Army does to help prepare soldiers,” DeGroat said.

Additional services include offering transitioning military personnel access to career and employment services, providing access to athletic training facilities, and creating opportunities for military leaders to share their

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expertise with K-State faculty and students.

A perfect opportunity to share expertise occurred when Fort Riley became one of the first units equipped with the new unmanned aerial systems. As it happens, K-State has the second-ranked unmanned aviation research and education program in the country. The partnership provided an incredible opportunity for teaching, learning and connecting in an authentic way.

Outreach to military families is another objective of the partnership. To help military families better integrate into the Flint Hills community, K-State creates special programs just for them through its Institute for the Health and Security of Military Families, created in 2009 for this purpose.

“The military families know very few people who are not in the Army with them. When they come to Fort Riley, they have a rare opportunity to really get to know and be part of the civilian community—many of these connections become life-long,” says DeGroat.

In addition, K-State has made serving military children a focus of its education school curriculum. “Every one of our education degree-seeking students is taking courses on understanding the unique needs of military children,” says DeGroat.

K-State’s work to serve military-connected youth attracted a visit from Dr. Jill Biden, second lady of the United States, in April.

During her visit, Biden met with students and educators from K-State and Fort Riley Middle School. She praised the hard work of teachers in addressing the unique needs of military children.

Biden told *The Topeka Capital-Journal*, “I’m hoping it becomes part of our culture [that] all teachers all across the United States will make an effort to recognize military children and their challenges.” K-State’s graduates will be well-prepared for this effort.

To keep things fresh and energized, and to ensure that goals are properly aligned, the K-State president and the commanding general of the 1st Infantry Division at Fort Riley evaluate and re-sign the partnership agreement annually.

The K-State–Fort Riley partnership is striving to build the most military-inclusive community in the nation. With a solid foundation in place, they’re on their way. — WS



Dr. Jill Biden greeting military-connected students upon arrival at Fort Riley Middle School to witness Kansas State University College of Education's pioneering work in preparing teachers to better serve military-connected students as part of the White House Joining Forces and Operation Educate the Educator initiatives. (Photo credit: Fort Riley Public Affairs)



Dr. Beth Funk (left), former first lady of the 1st Infantry Division, and Dr. Noel Schulz, assistant dean of engineering and K-State first lady, presenting the partnership resolution. (Photo credit: David Mayes of Kansas State University)



Dr. Biden with Fort Riley Middle School administrators describing the value of K-State College of Education's work in preparing teachers to meet the unique needs of military-connected students. (Photo: Fort Riley Public Affairs)

Lawton, Oklahoma

Stronger Communities Through Childhood Fitness

Fort Sill has a fabled place in American history. Its field artillery training has served the nation in every military operation since 1869. Located on the Great Plains near Lawton, Okla., it numbers among its early frontier scouts “Buffalo Bill” Cody and “Wild Bill” Hickok. Many of its enduring structures are the work of the Buffalo Soldiers, the regiments that were the first African-Americans in the regular army. It also is the final resting place of the great Apache chief Geronimo.

Military and civilian members of the Lawton-Fort Sill community long have worked together on common interests, such as education and employment opportunities. The base and community have an amazing history of resilience in the face of change and challenge. They have joined forces once again to tackle another pressing challenge, one that’s facing many other communities throughout

the country: childhood obesity. A program called Fit Kids of Southwest Oklahoma, in conjunction with local schools, is taking on a campaign to improve the health and well-being of all its children by providing access to fitness and nutrition programs. Fit Kids of Southwest Oklahoma, originally Lawton Fit Kids, was developed in 2006 to serve as a coordinating organization in an effort to create a more active and healthy community for children. The burgeoning community-based initiative includes participation in the Safe Routes to Schools program, intramural sports, fourth-grade testing, information on healthy food choices, and the Commanding General’s Challenge to get and stay fit.

Lawton public schools worked with the base to develop a plan that would serve the unique needs of the military child. Criteria include academic success, healthy social and emotional development, parental involvement, and effective partnerships. Eighty percent of the service members and their families,

including 9,000 children from military families, reside off post. For nearly 15 years, the Army Partnership with Lawton Area Schools (APLAS), consisting of the community, 17 school districts, and Fort Sill itself, has enriched



the lives and education of all students in the area. Now, with Fit Kids, even more is being accomplished.

Brenda Spencer-Ragland, director of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation at Fort Sill, met with Dr. Ben Cooper, founding member of Fit Kids, to create a program to focus on service families. "I know as a senior leader that the military can invest in the best playgrounds and sidewalks on the installation, but if it does not have strong connections to the community, where military families eat, play and work, then it will be very difficult to accomplish the same types of projects and wellness goals off the installation," she said.

Representatives from Fit Kids, plus civilian and military stakeholders, meet each month at the Comanche County Memorial Hospital to provide training, create teamwork and inspire further integration with possible future programs, including those from the Department of Defense Healthy Base Initiative. The result has been a number of lively, engaging, health-enhancing community events such as:

- Fit Kids Walk or Bike to School, with hundreds of kids finding an enjoyable way to set off for the school day;
- Operation Live Well Health Expo, with NBA players, outdoor games, nutrition information contests, professional health advisors and prizes from Fit Kids; and
- Open Streets Lawton Fort Sill, which turned city streets into a temporary park for family activities involving walking, exercising, bicycling, dancing, playing and socializing.

Working together, the APLAS also has improved fitness in the schools, as evidenced by the following:

- In 2015, Freedom Elementary Public School became the first and only school on a military installation to win Silver Level status as part of the Alliance for a Healthier Generation; and

This seamless connection between a city and its neighbor military installation fosters numerous partnerships that improve the quality of education, health, and wellness everyday.



Children get an aerobic workout during Zumbafest at the Operation Live Well Expo at Fort Sill. The high-energy music was provided by the 77th U.S. Army Band's salsa band. (Photo credit: Monica Wood, Fort Sill Family and MWR)



The Operation Live Well Expo kicks off at Fort Sill with a ribbon cutting led by Maj. Gen. Mark McDonald, Fires Center of Excellence and Fort Sill commanding general. The ribbon cutting signified the official opening of the Fort Sill Army Wellness Center. (Photo credit: Monica Wood, Fort Sill Family and MWR)





outside the home each week. The goal is to see if written materials are effective in educating consumers on making healthy food choices.

Inspired by the teamwork among Fort Sill, the service members and their families, city, county and state governments, and private enterprise, U.S. Sen. James M. Inhofe noted: "This seamless connection between a city and its neighbor military installation fosters numerous partnerships that improve the quality of education,

- The 434th Field Artillery Brigade sent 72 drill sergeants to Tomlinson Middle School to train them for the Presidential Youth Fitness Challenge Test. As a result, 70 percent of students achieved certification.

In addition, Fort Sill was chosen to be the first all-military population to participate in a study of people who eat many meals

health and wellness every day. The Army Partnership with Lawton area schools and Fit Kids of Southwest Oklahoma, two standout partnership programs promoted and led by community leaders, represent superb examples of this successful link, which have raised standardized test scores and improved student fitness." – KB

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Capt. Adam Luber, 334th Fighter Squadron pilot, and Jeremiah Seaberry, the first child to participate in Pilot for a Day, sit on the wing of an F-15E during a 4th Fighter Wing Pilot for a Day event. (Photo credit: U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Ashley J. Thum)

Goldsboro, North Carolina

Helping Children's Dreams Take Flight

What child hasn't stared up at the sky, spotted the contrails of a plane flying high above the earth and dreamed about jetting to faraway lands or taking off on a big adventure — perhaps of growing up and piloting a supersonic airplane or futuristic spacecraft? Children's fantasies and playtime can be a healthy escape and key to a healthy and active mind.

"Inadequate opportunity for children to play and for adolescents to quietly reflect and to daydream may have negative consequences — both for social-emotional well-being and for their ability to attend well to tasks," writes neuroscientist Mary Helen Immordino-Yang.

But for children challenged by the burden of a debilitating illness — often unable to run, play and do the "kid stuff" that healthy children do — the ability to escape their reality, even briefly, can have a profoundly positive impact. It allows sick children to leave behind the scary world of a life-threatening illness and to just be kids.

That's the goal of Pilot for a Day, a program that started in 2015 as a partnership between Seymour Johnson Air Force Base (SJAFB) in Goldsboro, N.C., and Goldsboro Pediatrics, which provides care for the majority of children in Goldsboro, Wayne County and the surrounding area. The program enables a young child with a chronic disease to get in the cockpit of a simulator

and experience the thrill of being a jet pilot.

“Our emotional well-being and mental health are very closely related to helping improve our physical health, especially for a child who is constantly dealing with days in the hospital, seemingly nonstop office visits and other challenges,” said Dr. Katherine MacDonald, a physician with Goldsboro Pediatrics and the practice’s liaison with SJAFB for Pilot for a Day.

Seymour Johnson, Wayne County’s largest employer, is home to the 4th Fighter Wing, which has played a key role in every major U.S. military conflict in the last 60 years. The base employs more than 5,700 military members (including active duty and reservists) and 1,000 civilians.

The first eager participant in the Pilot for a Day program was 9-year-old Jeremiah Seaberry, who has severe sickle cell disease. Seaberry, who was grinning from ear to ear when he showed up on base for his pilot training last April, has “the most dynamic and vibrant spirit you’ll ever see,” according to MacDonald.

Seaberry, who wasn’t expected to live past his first birthday, has had a “really rough time,” she said, adding that the Pilot for a Day program was an experience he’ll never forget.

“He may never be able to fly a plane on his own, but this will stay with him for the rest of his life,” MacDonald said.

“The whole medical group and the 4th Fighter Wing came together and made him the center of attention that day,” she said. “They had personalized patches for him, a helmet, his own flight



Capt. Adam Luber and Jeremiah Seaberry watch F-15E Strike Eagles on the flightline. (Photo: U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Ashley J. Thum)

suit, and it was all about Jeremiah that day. He came to our office a few weeks later for a regular office visit and was wearing his flight suit. His grandmother, who is his caregiver, even said he wore the suit to school one day for show and tell.”

On his big day, Seaberry was made an honorary member of the 334th Fighter Squadron, and was given the call sign “Swoosh,” a nod to his love of basketball. He also received a full mission briefing from Capt. Kat Frost, Pilot for a Day project officer, who described “Operation Slam Dunk” to take place by order of the president of the United States over a place called “Badguyland.”

“It’s an amazing opportunity to get these kids on base to actually see and touch the planes they see flying overhead every single day.”

Swoosh’s crewmate for the day, Capt. Adam Luber, a pilot with the 334th Fighter Squadron, provided firsthand experience about the life of an Air Force fighter pilot. Luber took Seaberry on a tour of the flight line, showed him around the planes, and though he was only able to barely peek above the instrument panel, Seaberry sat in the cockpit of a F-15E fighter, which had his name and call sign temporarily affixed to the aircraft. He even



Jeremiah Seaberry looks to Capt. Kat Frost, Pilot for a Day project officer, for help during egress training. (Photo credit: U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Ashley J. Thum)



A 4th Operations Support Squadron aircrew flight equipment technician fits Jemimah Seaberry with flight gear.
(Photo credit: U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Ashley J. Thum)

took a walk on the wing. The day also included time in a flight simulator and a virtual reality parachute trainer.

“This program is for children who have experienced some kind of difficulty in their life, whether that’s because of illness or a disability,” Frost said. “We work with the 4th Medical Group and medical providers in the local community to identify children that qualify for and may be interested in this opportunity.

Knowing we were able to give him these memories that might

help him get through some of the tough times made it one of the most rewarding experiences I’ve ever had.”

To symbolize the completion of his pilot training, Seaberry was presented with his own flight wings.

What did Swoosh think of his day? “Awesome,” he said.

MacDonald said that she hoped Seaberry would be the first of many children to take part in the Pilot for a Day program.

Seaberry comes from a civilian family, but

MacDonald said that the children of service

members also would take part. “I hope it continues for many years to come,” she said.

“It’s an amazing opportunity to get these kids on base to actually see and touch the planes they see flying overhead every single day,” MacDonald noted. “It’s a lot of work, but the base has done an amazing job.” — CD



American States Utility Services, Inc. (ASUS), is a subsidiary of American States Water Company, an investor-owned utility company founded in 1929 and is publicly traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the trading symbol AWR. Through site-specific, client-focused 50-year utilities privatization contracts, ASUS provides operations, maintenance and construction management services for water, and wastewater systems at a growing list of US military installations. Today we operate systems supporting more than 350,000 military and civilian personnel and their families. Through our wholly owned subsidiaries, we contract with the federal government to operate, maintain, renew, replace, and construct water and wastewater systems on U.S. Army and U.S. Force installations in Texas (including areas of southeastern New Mexico), Maryland, Virginia, and North and South Carolina. By providing reliable, safe, economical, and secure water and wastewater systems, we help the U.S. Department of Defense and the military services achieve their goals related to the conservation of resources, reduction of life-cycle costs, and the availability and dependability of mission critical infrastructure.

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SERVING THOSE WHO SERVE®

Graduates of the SWARM! program come together to celebrate their completion of the 12-week Venture Hive Veterans Accelerator program. (Photo credit: Venture Hive)

Eglin-Hurlburt Community, Florida

Business Ventures FOR VETERANS

There's a big buzz in Fort Walton Beach, Fla. It's Venture Hive Veterans. The City of Fort Walton Beach and Venture Hive, a business accelerator and incubator organization from Miami, have teamed up to encourage and support veteran-owned businesses.

Eglin Air Force Base, Hurlburt Field, and Duke Field provide more than 72,000 jobs and create an \$8.9 billion economic impact on the community. As soldiers transition out of the military the thought of where to go next might seem scary. While some will stay connected the installation and the defense community, others will find the idea of owning their own business to sound both appealing and daunting.

"Recognizing that many of those who have gone through our local military installations and served here see fit to make their long-term home here, we felt that there was an opportunity to provide a platform for veteran-owned businesses and businesses owned by military dependents and DoD retirees," said Nathan Sparks, executive director, Economic Development Council of Okaloosa County.

The City of Fort Walton Beach worked with Venture Hive to launch a program geared toward veterans, as well as military spouses and Department of Defense retirees. The inaugural class was selected last year following a nationwide search. Participants received a \$25,000 non-equity grant, training and mentoring during the 12-week program. Afterwards, they had access to free downtown office space for up to two years.

Lloyd Reshard, CEO of Cognitive Big Data Systems, was part of that first class. After 26 years with the Air Force Research Laboratory, Reshard retired in 2012. "I enjoyed working for the Air Force Research Lab because it allowed me to exercise my entrepreneurial spirit to create new technical capabilities to support the warfighter. I had the freedom to come up with new ideas and find funding to do development and testing," he said.

In 2014, he co-founded Cognitive Big Data Systems, which specializes in using video analytics applications for robotic vision systems, business intelligence, and video surveillance. He had the ideas and the technical knowledge, but he credits Venture Hive with helping him take the business to the next level.

“Venture Hive enabled us to refine our business model, mature our video analytics solution, expand our resource network and learn how to scale out our solution to a lot of users,” Reshard explained. “Entrepreneurship is exciting; however it requires a lot of effort. The Venture Hive training teaches you how to build and grow your business through a very lean approach.”


“To have a city that really wants to create an environment where veterans can thrive, and their spouses, and other members of the military and the DoD can have successful businesses. We think that’s a point that deserves some recognition.”

The second cycle of the Venture Hive program has just finished, which means great things for the Fort Walton Beach community. The fact that veteran-owned businesses now are firmly established in the community, and that those businesses are hiring local people, shows a positive outcome of the city’s economic development efforts. Not only will these new businesses hire local employees, they will hire other veterans, who make up 18-20 percent of the city’s workforce.

“In many cases, veterans like to work with other veterans, and this is an employment opportunity in addition to an incubation opportunity,” Sparks said.

The City of Fort Walton Beach’s efforts to promote veteran entrepreneurship have not gone unnoticed. It was recently named a “Top 10 City for Veteran Entrepreneurs” by USAA and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

“The city has been the catalyst to making this happen,” said Sparks. “That’s something that’s unique and something that we’re very proud of. To have a city that really wants to create an environment where veterans can thrive, and their spouses, and other members of the military and the DoD can have successful businesses. We think that’s a point that deserves some recognition.” — WS



Lloyd Reshard at the Venture Hive SWARM! event in Fort Walton Beach in November 2015. Designed as an official unveiling and community showcase for businesses participating in the Venture Hive Veterans accelerator, SWARM! drew hundreds of community members. (Photo credit: Venture Hive)



The inaugural Venture Hive Veterans 2015 class pictured with city of Fort Walton Beach leaders. The class included seven companies and veteran entrepreneurs from six states. (Photo credit: Venture Hive)

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Fort Leonard Wood Region, Missouri

Connecting Kids to the Community

Military children, like their parents, serve in their own way. They must be brave, helpful and flexible. They have to deal with things such as long separations from a deployed mom or dad, to adjustment to a new school, to increased responsibilities at home.

They also have the challenge of making new friends in a new place. That's not a problem in Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.

At Club TIGER, military kids can make friends and be part of the group. The Club TIGER afterschool program provides an excellent opportunity for



During the school year, Club Tiger members at Waynesville Middle School are able to meet with local professionals from a variety of fields in order to learn about the jobs they do, and the education and training needed to perform those jobs. (Photo credit: Marianne Ward, Waynesville R-VI School District)

students to socialize, engage and learn.

For 75 years, Fort Leonard Wood has been a thriving Army installation. Located in the Ozark Mountains, the FLW installation is the sixth-largest employer in the state.

Numerous organizations connect the installation to the wider community. One of those programs is Club TIGER, which is provided by the Waynesville R-VI School District and staffed by AmeriCorps/VISTA members.

Club TIGER offers tutoring, homework assistance, arts and craft projects, physical fitness, and other fun activities to spark students' curiosity and engage them in exciting learning experiences. Seventy-five percent of students in the school district are considered military-connected.

"It's a low-cost, safe, fun, academically engaging environment for the students," said Erin

Kaberline, who works with Sustainable Ozarks Partnership. Kaberline's two daughters have participated in the program.

Club TIGER's staff understands the special challenges military children face, and they help kids just be kids.

"A lot of military children face the same kind of challenges. They move around a lot; they're new to the school district," says Kaberline. "They're able to make those personal connections with either the adult volunteers or with other students that really help them to feel bonded to the community. It provides a great opportunity for kids to come in, meet people, and get involved immediately."

Having a space where her daughter can connect with other children socially is important to Beth Bellerby, an executive assistant at the Military



A group of Club TIGER high school students pitch in to clean up a stretch of Interstate 44. The Waynesville High School Club TIGER program is involved in many community improvement projects. (Photo credit: Marianne Ward, Waynesville R-VI School District)



“One of the key parts of building a resilient child is to make sure they feel like they’re able to make the world a better place.”



(Photo credit: Marianne Ward, Waynesville R-VI School District)

Police Regimental Association. Bellerby’s daughter, a rising fourth-grader, has been with Club TIGER since kindergarten.

As a parent, Bellerby appreciates the program’s focus on parental engagement. Parents can come and participate in the hands-on activities,

and Bellerby has done anything from making art to making mud pies. “I definitely enjoy spending time with my daughter but also watching her do different activities,” Bellerby said.

Best of all, she has enjoyed watching how her daughter has grown. “I’ve seen her grow as a young lady in the way that she talks. She’s very clear about things,” added Bellerby.

The program’s goal is to help students also grow academically. Club TIGER strives to have all students reach high standards, and at minimum attain proficiency in reading, language arts and math. They also want to increase parental involvement in literacy activities at home.

In addition to creating connections between kids, Club TIGER connects kids to the larger community. Last year, the younger Tigers made blankets for the homeless; middle school kids helped out in the community garden; and high schoolers developed their own community projects.

Having a chance to give back to the community helps kids feel more connected to it, and that’s better for everyone.

“One of the key parts of building a resilient child is to make sure they feel like they’re able to make the world a better place,” said Kaberline. — WS



A Fort Leonard Wood Soldier reads to a group of Club TIGER students at Freedom Elementary School. Literacy activities provide students with ample opportunities to interact with positive adult role models. (Photo credit: Marianne Ward, Waynesville R-VI School District)



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Fort Chaffee Redevelopment Authority

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Naval Air Station Whiting Field

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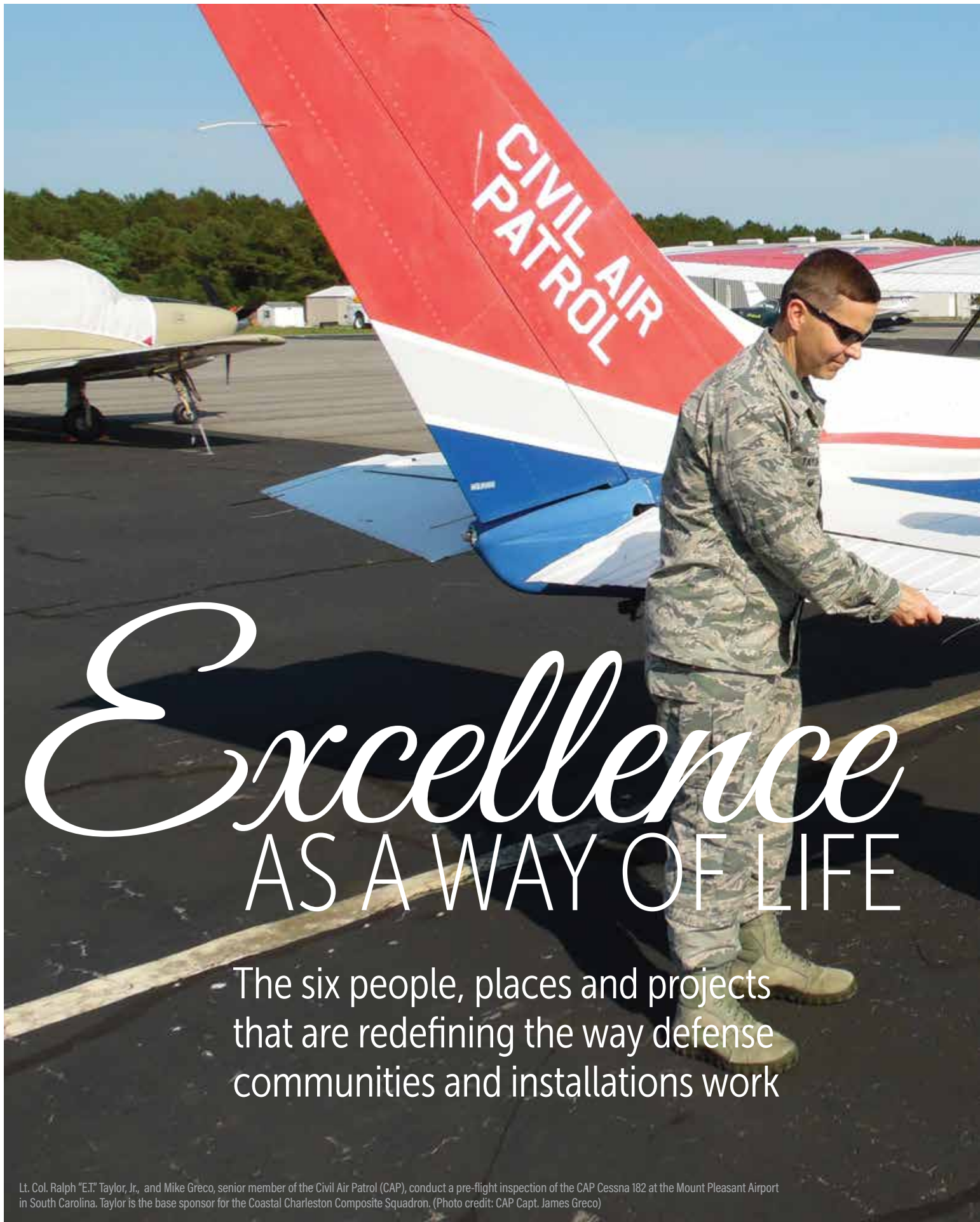
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Excellence AS A WAY OF LIFE

The six people, places and projects
that are redefining the way defense
communities and installations work

Lt. Col. Ralph "E.T." Taylor, Jr., and Mike Greco, senior member of the Civil Air Patrol (CAP), conduct a pre-flight inspection of the CAP Cessna 182 at the Mount Pleasant Airport in South Carolina. Taylor is the base sponsor for the Coastal Charleston Composite Squadron. (Photo credit: CAP Capt. James Greco)



ABOUT THE DEFENSE COMMUNITY AWARDS

For more than three decades, this prestigious juried awards program sponsored by ADC honors the achievements and leadership present in our defense communities, on military installations, within the Department of Defense and on Capitol Hill.



Colin Powell once said, “If you are going to achieve excellence in big things, you develop the habit in little matters. Excellence is not an exception, it is a prevailing attitude.” As a retired four-star general, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and secretary of state, Powell should know all about striving for excellence. When I interviewed recipients of the 2016 Defense Communities Award, none of them used the word “excellence” in their response

— yet its pursuit was evident in everything they said. Each person talked about building top-notch installations and creating successful base redevelopment. They are examples of focused professionalism, perseverance and commitment — not just leaders at their bases, but within their communities and our nation’s military. They lead by doing, and when you look back at their accomplishments, you can see why they deserve the moniker of excellence.

— Barbara Bryant

They Built It: NOW IT'S "GO TIME"

JOHN LYNCH BASE REDEVELOPMENT EXCELLENCE AWARD

(Photo credit: Fort Chaffee Redevelopment Authority)



Fort Chaffee Redevelopment Authority (FCRA) is all about planned obsolescence.

Executive Director Ivy Owen is working to put himself out of a job, and after nine years, he is well on the fast track.

"The authority was formed in 1997 to find developers for 6,000 acres that were once part of part of a nearly 77,000-acre Army post in western Arkansas that was closed in the 1995 BRAC round," he explained. "All except 1,500 usable acres of the property are or will soon be occupied. When the development rights for those are sold, the authority will disband and the three local communities that received the land from the Army will take control of the property."

Owen's team has worked tirelessly since 2007 to market the land to investors, but early efforts were hindered by the state's struggle to

build a new section of Interstate 49 through the property. The 6.5-mile section finally opened in 2015. That milestone, combined with Owen's efforts to engage investors he had known over the years and hiring a professional real estate marketer, has paid off.

The excess acreage of Fort Chaffee, a broad swath of remote, empty land, has been transformed into Chaffee Crossing, a mixed-use, "smart growth" community that has attracted more than \$1.1 billion in capital improvements.

The community, in a region hard hit by a diminished military presence and under-employment, now hosts a broad range of manufacturing and light industrial businesses that have invested \$500 million in facilities, some of which include North American and regional headquarters. These businesses have helped create 1,400 jobs since 2007.



(Photo credit: Champ Williams, videographer for Fort Chaffee Redevelopment Authority)



(Photo credit: Fort Chaffee Redevelopment Authority)



Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson (center, second to the left of the sign), highway commissioners, legislators, elected officials and community leaders from the Fort Smith region gathered in July 2015 to celebrate the opening of the newest section of Interstate 49. The governor has made it a priority to find funding for a new bridge that will connect this section of I-49 to I-40 just 13 miles to north. (Photo credit: Fort Chaffee Redevelopment Authority)



(Photo credit: ArcBest Corporation)



(Photo credit: Fort Chaffee Redevelopment Authority)



(Photo credit: Fort Chaffee Redevelopment Authority)

And there's more to come.

ArcBest Corporation plans to open a new \$42 million corporate headquarters for 975 management employees, representing 300 new jobs. Arkansas Colleges of Health Education will open the state's first college of osteopathic medicine to train 150 students per year on a campus that will host 1,000 people by 2021. These two businesses alone will triple the number of jobs the authority has attracted and increase its economic impact by \$200 million per year. The medical college's private foundation also plans to develop a \$70 million mixed-use, traditional neighborhood development featuring student housing, retail and commercial space, and health care clinics.

Chaffee Crossing has attracted other educational institutions, including

satellite classrooms of two state universities and a future Montessori school, along with churches, commercial businesses, restaurants, a veterinary hospital, a brewery and three retail shopping centers.

The community has a strong residential component with 1,600 single- and multi-family units across 19 developments ranging from million-dollar homes to townhomes, duplexes, upscale apartments, cottages for foster children and assisted living facilities for the disabled. Many outdoor recreational amenities such as parks, multi-use trails, golf, soccer, softball and fishing lakes are nearby.

FCRA is working with various agencies to fund construction of a new bridge across the Arkansas River to connect I-49 with I-40. While this is sure to attract more development,



Chaffee Crossing now has five health-related clinics underway including primary care, dental, psychiatric, and a 24-hour veterinary hospital. One of the primary-care clinics will provide residencies for Arkansas College of Osteopathic Medicine residents. (Photo credit: Fort Chaffee Redevelopment Authority)

FCRA is looking not just for companies with deep pockets, but for investors whose goals are compatible with the community's smart growth ethos and philosophy.

While Chaffee Crossing has a bright future, many people stop by to try to relive a moment in pop culture history: Elvis Presley's famous Army haircut, which happened on Fort Chaffee in 1958. The barber chair, the building and the barracks where he slept are part of the Chaffee Crossing Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

"One of the first requests I made of the authority's board after I was hired was for \$40,000 to design a historic district around the 'Elvis building' — which has become a major tourist attraction, drawing people from all over the world." Owen recalls, "I didn't think they'd give me the money — and the project wound up costing three times what I asked for — but they let me go out on a limb, and fortunately it didn't break."

Owen calls the FCRA's campaign to develop Chaffee Crossing, which was launched in the midst of a severe recession, a "challenging adventure," but realizes that it could have been worse.

"I didn't have to overcome back then the huge number of complex, federal and state regulatory hurdles America's defense communities face today," he pointed out, and urged those who are stepping into shoes like his to seek community and economic development training and certification, tap old networks and establish new ones, and "join professional associations like ADC to learn from what they're doing. You'll need all the help you can get.

"Never think you can go it alone."

Fort Chaffee Redevelopment Authority is the recipient of the 2016 ADC John Lynch Base Redevelopment Excellence Award. For more on John Lynch and his lasting impact on ADC, turn to "A Legacy of Support" on page 64.



Ivy Owen, executive director, Fort Chaffee Redevelopment Authority. (Photo credit: Fort Chaffee Redevelopment Authority)



The "Elvis" barbershop. (Photo credit: Fort Chaffee Redevelopment Authority)



The Arkansas College of Osteopathic Medicine. FCRA donated 200 acres to the school to be developed into both an educational campus and a mixed-use, traditional neighborhood with retail, commercial and residential options. (Photo credit: Fort Chaffee Redevelopment Authority)



Army Staff Sgt. Paul Garcia enjoys lunch at Tanuki Sushi Bar and Garden in 2014 just days prior to the eatery's 20th anniversary. The restaurant, owned by Mickiko "Maggie" Grace, displays gifts from around the world sent by soldiers who were once stationed at Fort Huachuca. (Photo credit: Beatrice Richardson, Sierra Vista Herald)

A Century OF MUTUAL BENEFIT

COMMUNITY EXCELLENCE AWARD

"YOU WANT FRIES WITH THAT?"

This monotonous question must have been music to the ears of soldiers at Fort Huachuca in 1975 when they visited the first McDonald's franchise in the nation to feature a drive-through window. It was installed expressly for these customers to allow them to order food while complying with the requirement to remain in their vehicles when they traveled off-post in uniform.

The residents of Sierra Vista, Ariz., enjoy "dining out" on that story because it's an apt illustration of the efforts the city has made to maintain its long and close relationship with the fort, which was built in the late 1800s.

"The folks here have always viewed the fort as an extension of our community," explained Assistant City Manager Mary Jacobs. "Decades ago, before the need arose for heightened security around military installations, people would routinely

go on post to shop at the PX, use the bowling alley and go hiking. The post was part of their day-to-day lives. But we also recognize its huge, beneficial impact — it brings \$2.4 billion in jobs and other economic opportunities to the state."

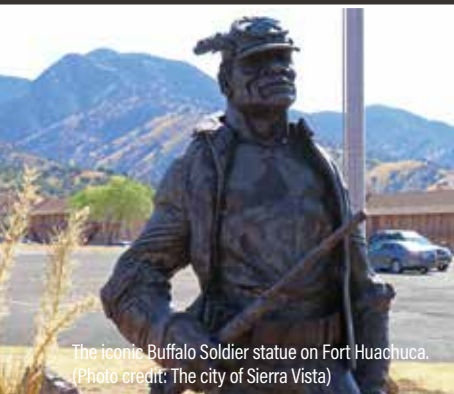


A soldier assists local students as they plant fruit trees at Col. Smith Middle School in February as part of a 30-tree orchard project funded by The Fruit Tree Planting Foundation. (Photo credit: Fort Huachuca Public Affairs Office)



The recently completed Canyon Vista Medical Center. The center was the single largest construction project in Sierra Vista's history. (Photo credit: The city of Sierra Vista)

As far as we're concerned, the fort isn't like family. It is family.



The iconic Buffalo Soldier statue on Fort Huachuca. (Photo credit: The city of Sierra Vista)



A red-nosed Fort Huachuca soldier assists students during a Kick Butt Fair that highlighted the dangers of smoking at a school. (Photo credit: Fort Huachuca Public Affairs Office)

In 1972, Sierra Vista annexed the installation, which allowed it to begin focusing in earnest on the types of services it could provide to support the fort, which employs 15,000 people, more than half of whom live in the city and the nearby areas. The city began by taking over maintenance of the fort's traffic lights, and has transitioned to providing library services, collecting trash and recyclables, and providing on- and off-post public transportation, among others partnerships. Cochise College and the University of Arizona South have worked

together to design courses to meet soldiers' needs, such as a recently approved major in cybersecurity and management and leadership courses.

Private citizens also have lobbied for the post's preservation, establishing the Fort Huachuca 50 in 1987 to advocate against base closure and for the protection of on-post jobs and missions.

This cooperation includes shared use and maintenance of the fort's airfield. Fort Huachuca deeded to the city property that provides access from a state highway to a portion of its runway, around which Sierra Vista built its own airport. Since then, the two have worked together to maintain the runway and facilities. The fort runs the air traffic control tower and provides firefighting personnel and relies on the city to provide and maintain a dedicated fire truck and runway sweeper. Sierra Vista used federal grants to obtain this equipment and navigational aids, and to reconstruct and extend the runway.

"This type of cooperation has become routine," said City Manager Chuck Potucek. "We invest in the airfield as part of our joint planning process."

When asked to describe the most important example of the civilian community's support for Fort Huachuca, however, Potucek said that those mentioned above pale in comparison to its extraordinary water conservation efforts, which the fort counts on to meet federal environmental regulations.

Both Sierra Vista and Fort Huachuca value greatly the nearby San Pedro River, which, as a federally protected Riparian Natural Conservation Area, is home to a number of endangered species. To prevent Fort Huachuca's water use from potentially adversely affecting the river's water levels, Sierra Vista's extensive community water conservation efforts and its wastewater treatment plant have reduced local water use and recharged the local aquifer with billions of gallons of reclaimed water.

"The efforts of both Fort Huachuca and the community have helped the installation meet its obligations under the Endangered Species Act, and ultimately enabled the fort to receive consistency favorable biological opinions from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife [Service] agency," explained Potucek.

"Each new commanding general, even for the short amount of time they're here, quickly realizes, and brags to folks at the Pentagon, that they've never seen a more tightly knit community than ours," Jacobs said. "As far as we're concerned, the fort isn't like family. It is family."

Sierra Vista, Ariz, is the recipient of ADC's 2016 Community Excellence Award.



Michael Reese, chairman of Fort Polk Progress, and Fort Polk officials helped to ring in the 2nd Annual Living History Event celebrating the Louisiana Maneuvers, a massive training event that established Fort Polk and helped to prepare soldiers to deploy for World War II. (Photo credit: Tammy Sharp)

In a previous life, Michael Reese might have been a cat herder. It would help explain his uncanny ability to work so closely with a huge number of people, not only locally, but throughout the state and region and with national leaders to ensure that Fort Polk would be a “station of choice” for military personnel and their families.

Realizing in 2005 that Fort Polk was at risk of closure or downsizing in a future BRAC round and in conjunction with a regional summit focused on the installation, Reese examined how civilian communities

Pursuing Progress AT FORT POLK

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AWARD



Michael Reese, chairman of Fort Polk Progress, Fort Polk command staff and Vernon Parish School Board officials break ground for South Polk Elementary School, a \$21 million facility funded in part by a grant from the Department of Defense. The school is slated to open this fall. (Photo credit: Lauren Manary)

supported installations in other parts of the country. He then decided to follow suit by networking, planning and building support in and ultimately well beyond the immediate off-base communities of Vernon Parish and Leesville, La.

“We assessed Fort Polk the way we did other industries and identified it as the state’s biggest employer and the largest single economic impact,” he recalled.

That realization spurred him to approach other stakeholders across the state to discuss the post’s impact and needs, leading to the founding of



Chairman of Fort Polk Progress Michael Reese addresses spectators and press during a news conference celebrating the ground breaking of South Polk Elementary School, a \$21 million facility that will service primarily military-affiliated students. (Photo credit: Lauren Manary)

Fort Polk Progress to create an organized approach to supporting the installation and its personnel. Reese serves as the organization's chairman.

Through Fort Polk Progress, Reese and his colleagues reached out to the post and the Army at various levels to determine soldiers' needs and mission requirements, which included improved roads, good schools, dining and recreation options, and spousal employment opportunities to name a few. Understanding that these also were priorities the Army examines when assessing the viability of installations, he began reaching out to communities around the post, chambers

of commerce and state and federal legislators to develop strategies and plans to address these logistical and quality of life issues.

Understanding the impact of the installation, the state began

increasing the types of investments that would help the region grow and provide better service to Fort Polk. Resulting initiatives included reconstructing or widening of several major state highways to reduce congestion and expanding the number of travel routes, including the widening of Highway 28, the route between Fort Polk and Alexandria, the nearest major metropolitan area. In addition, the state funded a future growth management project that provided water, sewer and road infrastructure just outside the installation. This project alone has promoted growth in the area, which hosts a university, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs clinic, veterans' cemetery and a new elementary school.

"We assessed Fort Polk the way we did other industries and identified it as the state's biggest employer and the largest single economic impact."



(From left) Michael Reese, chairman of Fort Polk Progress, and Vernon Parish School Board Superintendent James Williams meet with officials in the office of Rep. Steve Scalise (R-La.), House majority whip, in Washington, D.C. (Photo credit: Tammy Sharp).

Michael Reese, chairman of Fort Polk Progress, along with Murray Viser, president of Barksdale Forward, and Chuck Kleckley, speaker of the Louisiana House of Representatives, and Col. Lee Walters, were featured on Louisiana Public Broadcasting's "Grassroots Politics and Louisiana's Military" McLeod Lecture Series, held at McNeese University. (Photo credit: Lauren Manary)

Fort Polk Progress also launched a major education initiative to provide more ambitious academic opportunities for local students and those from military families who live on post and attend area schools. The effort began with an education symposium involving the state board of education, Vernon Parish School District, chambers of commerce and representatives of local businesses. Members of the public, including military families and military leaders also were invited to provide their input.

This led to increased investment in the schools and improvements in academic performance; the school district is among the five top-performing districts in the state. In addition, local voters have voted for a \$21 million bond to renovate and expand Leesville High School. Together with another \$21 million investment in a new elementary school that will serve nearly 900 students, there has now been a significant investment in education facilities. The education initiative earned recognition from the Military Child Education Coalition and attracted the attention of the National Math and Sciences Initiative, which provided the school district with \$1.2 million to allow three schools in Vernon Parish and one in Beauregard Parish that teach military dependents to add advanced



"To support the Army family and the Army, you must be prepared to support their imperative to address bigger needs in addition to local installation priorities."

placement courses and other training for students over three years.

The community has a long history of supporting Fort Polk, dating back to 1940 when many residents vacated their property for the Army to build the post, and their dedication has never wavered, Reese pointed out. The post, which has the Army's only successful land purchase program, bought 47,000 acres adjoining a military training area after failing to secure additional property in two other states.

"Working together through Fort Polk Progress has allowed us to come to a meeting of the minds and target what needs to be done, then coordinate efforts at the local, state, regional and national levels to get things done," Reese noted. "All mayors, parish presidents, chambers, state and federal elected officials can tell you succinctly what the installation's priorities are and what our communities and state are doing

to support the post. Much of our success has been based on the great work that elected leaders throughout the region have done to focus on improving the military value and quality life for Fort Polk."

The key, he said, is communication.

"It takes constant work to cultivate relationships with regional groups and to develop new relationships on post, because the leadership changes so frequently," he explains. "We also need to rise above and understand the Army's and the Department of Defense's military mission and how to support that as well. To support the Army family and the Army, you must be prepared to support their imperative to address bigger needs in addition to local installation priorities."

Michael Reese is the recipient of the 2016 ADC Community Leadership Award.

A Spirit of Collaboration THAT'S EASY TO SEE

INSTALLATION EXCELLENCE AWARD

Naval Air Station Whiting Field Commanding Officer Capt. Todd Bahlau cuts the ribbon celebrating the reopening of Navy Outlying Landing Field Summerdale after a 10-year hiatus. Baldwin County, Ala., Commissioner Chris Elliot (center) attended the celebration marking the resumption of flights to the military airfield. (Photo credit: U.S. Navy photo by Jay Cope)

Although many military installations develop staunchly supportive relationships with the surrounding civilian communities, evidence of this collaboration rarely stands out to the casual observer. The most easily identifiable signs might consist of a memorandum of understanding, photos or news footage of a ribbon cutting, a social event or volunteer project, or a sales receipt documenting a store's military discount policy.

But they're all about the landmarks at Naval Air Station (NAS) Whiting Field in Milton, Fla., and in the surrounding civilian communities. The examples are many, whether it's the off-base military helicopter landing field Escambia County is building to exchange for an existing landing field or the 300-acre solar array NAS Whiting Field partnered with Gulf Power to have built on one of its remote landing fields to power nearby civilian homes. Another example is the protective fence Santa Rosa County built on land it remediated adjacent to one side of the 4,000-acre main installation. It's also pretty hard to miss the billboard a local resident had put up to salute the base for winning the Navy's Installation Excellence Award for two consecutive years.

NAS Whiting Field also enjoys its fair share of the more typical events many communities hold for the installations in their midst, says Capt. Todd Bahlau, NAS Whiting Field's commanding officer.

For example, the Santa Rosa County Chamber of Commerce celebrates Military Appreciation Month each year by holding a free picnic, for all 3,000 personnel on base. And local civic organizations have — more than once — built homes for returning local

veterans who were disabled during deployments. The county also polls military spouses on their professional experience to see what types of civilian job opportunities the local community can offer.

"Meanwhile, Whiting sailors have logged more than 20,000 volunteer hours in 2015 mentoring youth, coaching kids' sports teams, doing environmental cleanup projects, working with the homeless and low-income veterans," Bahlau said.

So it's no surprise that NAS Whiting Field won the 2015 USS Bainbridge Award, which recognizes one Navy command each year for community service. Selection for the award

is based on competition in five categories: Personal Excellence Partnership, Environmental Stewardship, Project Good Neighbor, Health Safety and Fitness, and Drug Free Workplace. Within its size and type of command category, NAS Whiting Field placed first in two categories and was runner-up in two others.

The installation also has participated in more than 250 community events held by chambers of commerce, military affairs committees, planning boards, CEO roundtables, and education committees, to educate the public about the installation's operations and strategic importance, according to Jim Breitenfeld,

"Whiting sailors have logged more than 20,000 volunteer hours in 2015 mentoring youth, coaching kids' sports teams, doing environmental cleanup projects, working with the homeless and low-income veterans."



Volunteers from the local community serve hamburgers, hot dogs, chips and more to sailors stationed at Naval Air Station Whiting Field in May. The annual picnic is the focal point for the Military Appreciation Month activities hosted by various organizations within the local area. (Photo credit: U.S. Navy photo by Jay Cope)



Naval Air Station Whiting Field sailors help sort and store food during the annual postal carriers food drive in Santa Rosa County. The postal carriers collect large amounts of canned goods for the Bay Area Food Bank, and the charity requires a large number of volunteers to prepare the food for distribution (Photo credit: U.S. Navy)



Sailors from Naval Air Station Whiting Field paint the walls to help prepare the East Milton Boys and Girls Club for its opening (Photo credit: U.S. Navy)

Defense Support Initiative manager for the Economic Development Council of Okaloosa County.

But Bahlau and his staff take particular pride in the types of joint military-civilian collaboration that have improved the base's ability to carry out its military mission: flight training involving Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard personnel and a broad range of aircraft, which entails flying about 1.2 million operations annually. He cites as an example of these partnerships, the extensive funding provided, not only by the Navy but through county and state grants to purchase private land surrounding the base to protect its two on-base airfields and 12 outlying landing fields in two states and five counties from encroachment — a total of 5,500 acres.

The above-mentioned helicopter landing field Escambia County plans for NAS Whiting Field is part of an unprecedented land swap between the two that is authorized by the National Defense Authorization Act. The county will swap land it owns in

Santa Rosa County, near the base, on which it will build the landing field. In return, Escambia will take ownership of one of the base's remote landing fields for commercial development.

"Santa Rosa County has been equally instrumental in helping us preserve our flying mission by imposing land development codes that prevent incompatible development underneath existing mission flight tracks," Bahlau added.

"The importance to our operations of our collaboration with the many civilian communities we work with cannot be overestimated," he said. "We are fortunate to have found many innovative ways to contribute to and benefit from our presence across several counties in Florida and Alabama as well as generous state-level assistance. We are proud to partner in so many unique and effective ways with many civilian communities to advance our

mission while working with them to improve quality of life, both on and off the installation."

Naval Air Station Whiting Field is the recipient of ADC's 2016 Installation Excellence Award.



Naval Air Station Whiting Field Commanding Officer Capt. Todd Bahlau drops the puck at center ice for the April 2 Pensacola Ice Flyers hockey game. As part of the Month of the Military Child festivities, Bahlau was joined on the ice by his daughter. (Photo credit: U.S. Navy photo by Jay Cope)

Naval Air Station Whiting Field
(Photo credit: U.S. Navy photo by Jay Cope)



The Naval Air Station Whiting Field Color Guard helps present the nation's colors before the Pensacola Ice Flyers Military Appreciation Night hockey game. (Photo credit: Pensacola Ice Flyers)



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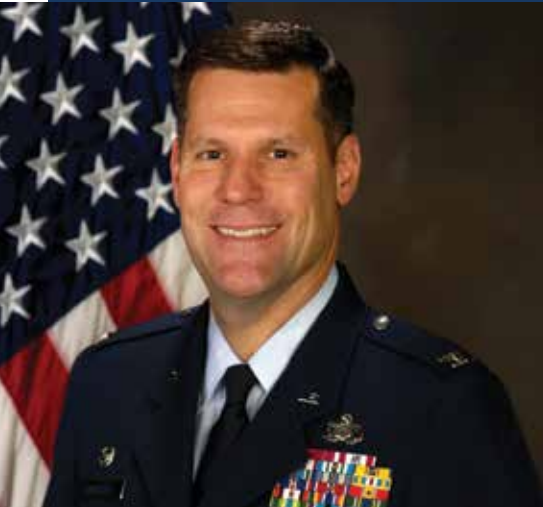
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Putting Partnership at THE HEART OF CHANGE

MILITARY LEADERSHIP AWARD



As commander of the 88th Air Base Wing at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Col. John Devillier oversees 27,000 military and civilian personnel on the 4,000-acre installation near Dayton, Ohio. And somehow he has found time to develop mutually beneficial collaborations between Wright-Patterson and the surrounding community. His effort serves as a model for partnership across the country. America's Defense Communities magazine asked Devillier why these partnerships are so important and what he and his team have done to form and cultivate them.



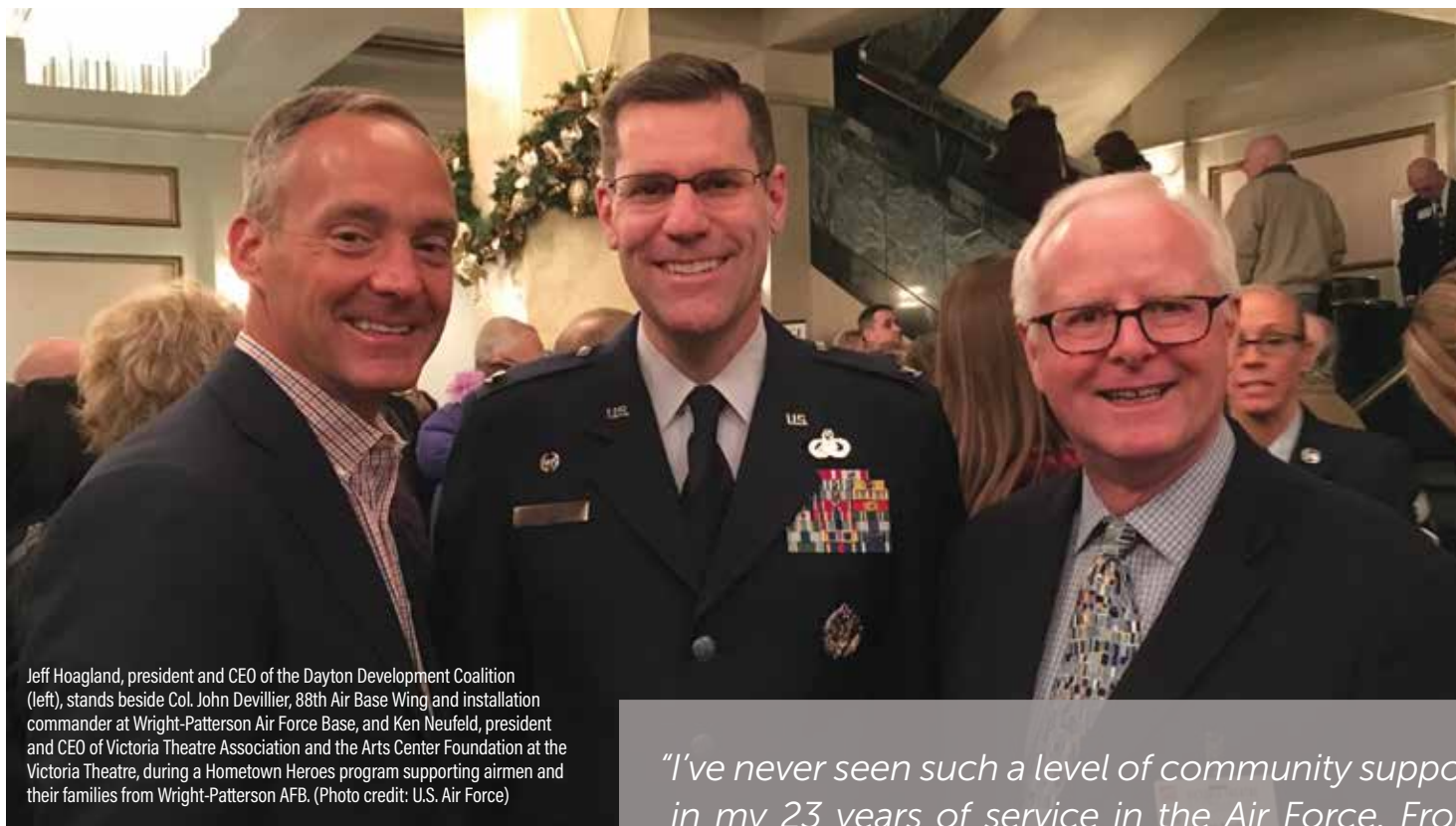
Photo credit: Wright-Patterson Air Force Base Installation Public Affairs

ADC: You stood up a distinct Air Force Public-Private Partnership office at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. What does that accomplish that couldn't be done before?

COL. DEVILLIER: First, I have to provide a shout out to my predecessor, who planted the seed for the partnership office at Wright-Patterson. We took that seed and have nurtured the concept to identify ideas for exploration within the realm of both public and private partnership opportunities. These opportunities have allowed us to offset costs in shared collaborative areas such as training and to improve revenue streams in service areas such as recreation or medical services. As I

have told the partnership team, it is OK to not be successful with each partnership endeavor; however, the more endeavors we undertake, the better chances of finding a good fit between Wright-Patterson and our Miami Valley partners. We see our partnership office as a capital investment.

ADC: You've spearheaded several initiatives to benefit the community, such as an internship fair, government resume workshops, allowing students to use the base's fire training facilities; and partnering with the VA to treat veterans on base through the Buckeye Health Consortium. What are you proud of?



Jeff Hoagland, president and CEO of the Dayton Development Coalition (left), stands beside Col. John Devillier, 88th Air Base Wing and installation commander at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, and Ken Neufeld, president and CEO of Victoria Theatre Association and the Arts Center Foundation at the Victoria Theatre, during a Hometown Heroes program supporting airmen and their families from Wright-Patterson AFB. (Photo credit: U.S. Air Force)

"I've never seen such a level of community support in my 23 years of service in the Air Force. From the Hometown Heroes program to our routine interactions with city mayors and managers to our partnering with local colleges and universities, the Miami Valley supports Wright-Patterson."

COL. DEVILLIER: Given the outstanding relationship Wright-Patterson has with the Miami Valley, brainstorming possible partnership ideas is fairly straight forward. We have a number of natural ties to the local community through organizations such as the Dayton Development Coalition and our relationships with local colleges, universities and hospitals. What we needed to do was communicate to the local community that we're looking for mutually beneficial partnerships — once the word got out, ideas began to flow from our off-base partners and internally from Wright-Patterson itself.

We're really excited about the recently formed Dayton Region Military Collaborative under the leadership of the Dayton Development Coalition to further advance partnership possibilities. With regard to being proud of a

particular partnership, each one is special as it meets a need for both the installation and for our local community partners. Some, such as the Buckeye Health Consortium, have more visibility, yet each of our partnership initiatives fills a need between us and our Miami Valley community partners.

ADC: What has Dayton done specifically to support the base or add to morale?

COL. DEVILLIER: I've never seen such a level of community support in my 23 years of service in the Air Force. From the Hometown Heroes program to our routine interactions with

city mayors and managers to our partnering with local colleges and universities, the Miami Valley supports Wright-Patterson. I often joke that if you have two airmen rubbing sticks together at Wright-Patterson someone from the local community will be there to cheer them on — it is that special of a relationship!

ADC: You clearly make it a priority to provide recreational and educational opportunities for Air Force personnel on the base—examples include the USO Center and the base's partnership with Wright State University to offer free graduate school tuition to airmen.

Col. John Devillier signs a partnership initiative agreement with Sinclair Community College President Dr. Steven Johnson. (Photo credit: U.S. Air Force)



Col. Devillier speaks to a crowd of airmen along with Cincinnati Bengal's mascot Who Dey. (Photo credit: U.S. Air Force)

"One person can change a climate — be that person."

COL. DEVILLIER: Given Wright-Patterson's moniker as the "Center of Innovation" in the United States Air Force, providing developmental opportunities for our workforce is a top priority. Thus, we continually assess our relationship with local colleges and universities, not only to develop our internal workforce, but to also provide an avenue for local graduates to serve our nation as Wright-Patterson leads the way in preparing America's Air Force for the challenges of the future. Our recent addition of the USO on Wright-Patterson will provide another mechanism to not only enhance quality of life for Airmen but to further our social ties with the Miami Valley.

ADC: Do you and your family enjoy the Dayton area?

COL. DEVILLIER: My family and I have truly enjoyed our time in the Miami Valley. The Midwestern values and friendly demeanor of the citizens of the Miami Valley has been second to none. The area is centrally located to major metropolitan areas and

provides an exceptional quality of life. There is a reason *Air Force Times* ranked Wright-Patterson as the number one stateside installation to be stationed at, and my family and I have been blessed to experience this positive quality of life first hand over the past two years.

ADC: When you pass the baton, what will be your advice?

COL. DEVILLIER: My advice to the incoming commander is: do not let the barriers of doing something different stand in the way. Given the fiscal challenges we all face, there is great benefit for looking to partner and rather than say "no, because," find a way to say "yes, if."

ADC: You've said, "One person can change a climate — be that person."

COL. DEVILLIER: This saying stems from my personal desire to see everyone treated with dignity, honor and respect. We spend a large portion of our day with our "work family," and my experience has shown me that if you treat people well, they will

move mountains for you. Each one of us, no matter our given role in an organization, plays an important part in the overall team's success, and one person can set the example in an organization, so I challenge everyone to be that person.

ADC: What have you learned professionally and personally from this role?

COL. DEVILLIER: Personally, my role has given me a greater appreciation for the breadth of missions we have here at Wright-Patterson, supporting our nation and the importance of having a strong and positive collaboration with our surrounding communities in the Miami Valley. Working together, we can not only improve the quality of life for our airmen, we can find collaborative methods to work together and solve challenges. Ultimately, don't be afraid to question the status quo.

Col. John Devillier has been recognized with ADC's 2016 Military Leadership Award.

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Mike Greco, senior member of the Civil Air Patrol (CAP), explains the Cessna 182 inspection checklist to Lt. Col. Taylor. (Photo credit: CAP Capt. James Greco)

Partnering FOR COMMON BENEFIT

MILITARY LEADERSHIP AWARD



Military installations and their host communities can benefit from working together to solve shared problems and improve quality of life both on and off base. But using such partnerships not only to address routine issues but to respond to crises can be a force multiplier on both sides of the fence. Lt. Col. Ralph "E.T." Taylor, Jr., 628th Mission Support Group deputy commander, has been launching projects with this in mind since December 2014 by leading the Air Force Community Partnership Program (P4) at Joint Base Charleston in South Carolina. ADC asked him to describe what the partnerships have achieved thus far.



ADC: What has it been like working with the local community?

LT. COL. TAYLOR:

Charleston has been very supportive of the military since it began hosting the Air Force base in 1941, and over the years, we've made a lot of efforts to communicate and learn about each other. Our Public Affairs Office has an honorary commander program, for example, through which a local civic leader is teamed with a commander and attends orientation sessions, commander's calls, promotion ceremonies, and other events on

base. One honorary commander even made a point of seeing off all troop deployment departures and welcoming returning troops.

Members of various units are always attending community events to see what's going on outside the wire. This type of interaction is extremely important because collaboration is most effective when each partner knows what the other brings to the

fight. This environment made it easy to organize the seven workshops we held involving more than 350 military, civilian and Secretary of the Air Force Installations, Environment and Logistics leaders to discuss suitable P4 initiatives. Of the 10 we identified, we've made great progress in launching five with a sixth waiting in the wings.

ADC: Can you give us an overview?

LT. COL. TAYLOR: They're pretty wide-ranging. They include medical and motorcycle safety training, education and sports. Our on-base clinic conducts joint medical training with Trident Medical Center, which enhances our staff's emergency management and other health care skills and improves Trident's understanding of patients with military backgrounds. Trident Technical College is providing professional motorcycle safety instruction to civilian and military riders using our motorcycle safety track. The college offers military discounts and maintains the base's motorcycle fleet.

We're also partnered with the Berkeley County Library to bring their state-of-the-art bookmobile on base to serve personnel several days a month when the base library is closed. This year, for the first time, we've invited a local disabled youth little league to use the ball fields on base and hope to host them annually. As chair of the base traffic council, I also focus on minimizing the negative effects our military mission can have on roads surrounding the base. That led to us re-route the many trucks

"This environment made it easy to organize the seven workshops we held involving more than 350 military, civilian and Secretary of the Air Force Installations, Environment and Logistics leaders to discuss suitable P4 initiatives."



Joint Base Charleston leadership and Berkeley County Library officials in front of the BCL Bookmobile on agreement signing day. The agreement was signed in March. (Photo credit: Airman Megan Munoz, 628th Air Base Wing Public Affairs Office)



Lt. Col. Taylor leads a P4 meeting with Joint Base Charleston leadership and local community leaders. (Photo credit: Tech. Sgt. Renae Pittman, 628th Air Base Wing Public Affairs Office)

"The great thing about successful partnerships is that, if you forge strong ones during the good times, when the bad times hit — a hurricane, a shooting or some other emergency — your response will be that much stronger."

making deliveries at a particular gate away from the routes commuters use to ease rush hour congestion. In addition, we worked with local schools to design a roundabout to improve traffic flow and make it safer for parents to drop off and pick up students. Once we get over the funding challenge of this project, it will make a huge positive impact.

ADC: Among all of the P4 projects you've launched thus far, are there any that particularly stand out?

LT. COL. TAYLOR: Although not an P4 project, our partnership with the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) stands out as a success story to me. The local CAP squadron was previously located off-base and due to a leasing issue, they needed a new location. As their



sponsor, I worked with the Real Estate Working Group to secure them a location on base. They now have a permanent presence on Joint Base Charleston and hold their weekly cadet and officer meetings, conduct training, and participate as a true partner. CAP, which had been part of the reserve fleet, was made part of the Air Force's total force in August 2015. They have a plane which can be used to launch time-sensitive flights for their missions and also missions in support of the base and/or state. They logged more than 65 flying hours escorting state and federal emergency management officials to view the damage caused by the historic 2015 floods the state suffered. They took more than 1,000 photos during those flights to help identify the hardest-hit areas and expedite the distribution of relief supplies.

ADC: You mentioned identifying a total of 10 P4 projects the base could launch. Are there any waiting in the wings?

LT. COL. TAYLOR: We are putting the final touches on transferring all of the base's 9-1-1 calls to Charleston's 9-1-1 call center. Once complete, we will be linked with Charleston County's state-of-the-art 911 system and

save over \$500,000 in infrastructure upgrades over the next five years. Another potential initiative reflects the commitment of our joint base commander, Col. Robert Lyman, to meeting the needs of the team, which includes not only active-duty military personnel but spouses, veterans, and retirees. We're looking into developing a skills database, similar to one that Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida, is creating, that will allow other agencies access to find and hire skilled personnel.

ADC: Are you enjoying spearheading Joint Base Charleston's P4 initiatives, and how important do you believe they are to achieving the base's mission objectives?

LT. COL. TAYLOR: In my role as the deputy mission support group commander, I'm already involved in most of the installation support functions, so I think it's natural for me to lead partnership efforts. With installation support, you are always looking for smarter ways of doing things and partnerships often times can offer those types of solutions. It's a great way to get to know and work with the local communities and these types of cooperative relationships are absolutely vital. Local, state and federal agencies have limited resources to draw on but, from a base perspective, if you synergize with your civilian counterparts, know what's outside the wire and make the best use of it, it's amazing what you can accomplish.

The great thing about successful partnerships is that, if you forge strong ones during the good times,

when the bad times hit — a hurricane, a shooting or some other emergency — your response will be that much stronger. Our ability to share and trade resources and expertise is also important from a financial standpoint. Federal, state, and local governments all face budget constraints. Already, from our current completed agreements, we stand to save the government over \$900,000, and we are not done yet!

Lt. Col. Ralph "E.T." Taylor, Jr., has been recognized with ADC's 2016 Military Leadership Award.

"If you synergize with your civilian counterparts, know what's outside the wire and make the best use of it, it's amazing what you can accomplish."



(Photo credit: Civil Air Patrol Capt. James Greco)

How John Lynch impacted defense communities and their organization.

A Legacy of

By Daniel Cohen



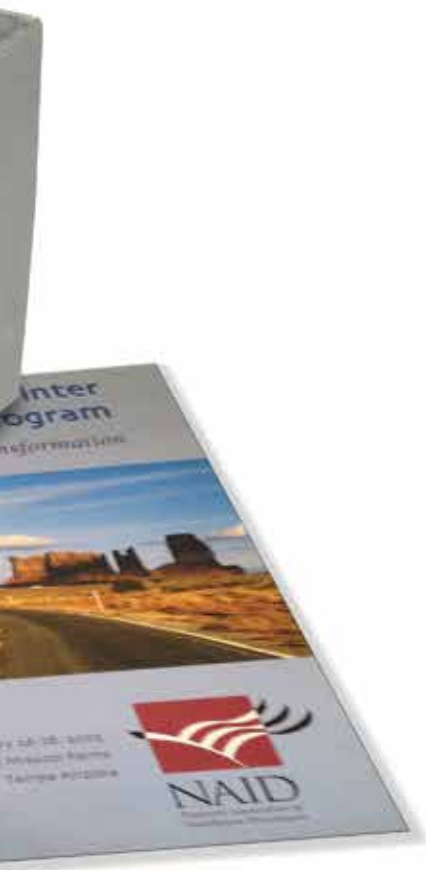
Support

It started with a shoebox.



Following a lengthy career at the U.S. Defense of Department (DoD) assisting communities and contractors coping with downsizing, John Lynch began his retirement in 1990 with the objective

of turning what had been for many years a loose collection of local government officials responsible for redeveloping closed military bases into an independent organization able to promote the needs of base closure communities and provide technical support to its members.



Until that point, the National Association of Installation Developers (NAID) — the predecessor to the Association of Defense Communities (ADC) — had been supported financially by DoD's Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) and its primary activity was convening an annual meeting.

Lynch began his volunteer effort working out of the office of George Schlossberg, who, like John, had just left a job working at the Pentagon. As the general counsel for OEA, Schlossberg had worked closely with John and was happy to provide him limited space at the law firm he had moved to.

Working out of Schlossberg's office, Lynch reached out to NAID members to craft a policy agenda for the association and start a series of technical

publications. Initially, John kept all of his NAID paperwork in a banker's box in Schlossberg's office.

"I have all of NAID in my shoebox," he would tell colleagues, recounted Schlossberg, who now is ADC's legal counsel.

"I cannot tell you how instrumental John was in the formation of ADC."

Lynch's work in the early 1990s organizing communities responding to a base closure, launching a dialogue with DoD by providing a voice for communities and spurring Congress to modify the BRAC process to consider the needs of defense communities turned ADC into the independent organization it is today, according to the community leaders who worked with him during that period.

"I cannot tell you how instrumental John was in the formation of ADC," Schlossberg said.

In the months following Lynch's death last December at the age of 81, the colleagues and community representatives he worked with remembered an individual who devoted his career to supporting communities striving to recover from base closures and cutbacks in defense spending.

He was a pioneer in the field of defense conversion and "a walking encyclopedia" of information about the BRAC process for closure communities, said Patrick O'Brien, who worked with Lynch at OEA before becoming the agency's director.

"John was an extraordinary guy," said Michael Houlemard, who started

working on the redevelopment of Fort Ord, Calif., in the 1990s before becoming the executive officer of the Fort Ord Reuse Authority.

He had the perfect personality for helping local leaders through the struggle of not knowing what was going

to happen to their community following an announced base closure.

Lynch was able to convince local leaders to stop focusing on the loss resulting from a base closure and, instead, embrace the opportunity to shape their region's future, added Jeffrey Simon, who first met Lynch when he was working for the commonwealth of Massachusetts in the mid-1980s trying to help five communities address base closures from the previous decade.

"I just appreciated and admired him," Simon said.

SETTING A FOUNDATION FOR NAID

ADC's roots stem from a series of conferences first held in 1976 among airport managers at former military facilities in the Midwest. OEA helped to support those annual meetings, a role spearheaded by the agency's Wally Bishop. Bishop was OEA's primary liaison to NAID during the organization's first decade in existence, while Lynch played a supporting role.

By the time the first BRAC round occurred in 1988, he dedicated more time to working with the fledgling organization in an effort to jump start a dialogue between affected communities and DoD leadership.



"That dialogue didn't exist prior to 1988," recounted Bill Laubernds, who at the time was working on the reuse of Kincheloe Air Force Base in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. "He got DoD to understand the need for a program to assist communities," Laubernds said.

After leaving OEA, John accelerated his efforts to organize NAID members, with the aim of helping closure communities better understand the base reuse process and pushing changes to ease communities' recovery from closures. Lynch established an agenda for NAID to accomplish those goals, something that the organization didn't have prior to that time.

He understood that improving the base closure process to benefit affected communities would require working with the Pentagon to revise its process for carrying out base closures and lobbying Congress to update the BRAC statute. That prompted a "seismic shift in the organization," Laubernds said. Many members of NAID's board were not convinced the association should be taking on that role.

"A lot of people just didn't view the organization as supposed to be more proactive," Laubernds said. "He changed the direction of NAID."

In advocating for defense communities, Lynch made certain that NAID did not take a stand on whether subsequent BRAC rounds were justified, noted Houlemard. Instead, he focused on adopting positions that would strengthen communities.

"He kept us out of being attacked," Houlemard said. Lynch strived

to maintain NAID's focus on its core mission of ensuring communities would not unduly bear the brunt of DoD actions, he said.

One of the most important changes to DoD's BRAC implementation process Lynch helped spur in the 1990s was the requirement for the federal government to consider a community's reuse plan when disposing of a closed installation, Laubernds said.

"He understood that Washington couldn't tell a community what to do; it had to be the local community that supported the plan," he said.

Another policy he fought for was the creation of the economic development conveyance, allowing communities to obtain former base property at below market cost for the purpose of generating jobs.

"We were able to accomplish quite a bit. ... There were a lot of improvements," Laubernds said.

"I view him [John] as the key guy that took NAID from an organization with limited [capabilities] to an organization that could really make a difference and influence the process," he said.

To fully appreciate how far ADC has come since its formative years, Schlossberg said, "[You need to remember] how fragile things were with the organization. To get a meeting in the Pentagon was not an easy thing because no one had heard of NAID," he said.

NAID HELPS COMMUNITIES THROUGH BRAC'S EARLY ROUNDS

Beyond the dialogue NAID forged with DoD and Congress, the association also helped communities navigate the BRAC process in the 1990s when DoD held three BRAC rounds.

"John envisioned NAID as a resource for communities to deal with multi-faceted problems they had no experience in," said Paul McCarthy, who was the Glenview, Ill., village manager when the BRAC Commission voted to shutter Naval Air Station Glenview.

The association allowed community leaders from across the nation facing similar challenges to learn from each other. "John saw a need ... and NAID grew as a



consequence,” McCarthy said. “I got on the board of directors because I saw the organization as a real asset.”

NAID’s growth soon dictated the organization hire a full-time staff member, especially as John outgrew the file cabinet in Schlossberg’s office. After retaining an executive director for two years, NAID’s board decided the organization could benefit from professional management, and in the mid-1990s it entered into a management contract with a Washington, D.C.-based trade association.

“This served the organization well for a number of years,” said Christine Shingleton, who served on NAID’s board starting in the mid-1990s, including one year as president.

Lynch played a significant part in determining what direction the association should take as it looked to hire an outside organization to support its growth, noted Shingleton, who led the redevelopment of the former Marine Corps Air Station Tustin, Calif., as Tustin’s assistant city manager.

“Before then, it was just a bunch of volunteers, kept together by John,” Schlossberg said.

“He had a way of engaging people one on one or in groups in a selfless way.”

Many former NAID board members recounted Lynch’s passion for producing technical reports aimed at disseminating successful approaches to base redevelopment. John assumed the role of editor, identifying members to write individual chapters to use their experience as a case study or to make use of their expertise.

“His belief was, ‘We don’t have to reinvent the wheel ... we can look around at good practices and let other communities take advantage of that,’” said Simon.

At the same time, Lynch had a way of getting NAID members to contribute to the publications. “John had a certain selfless volunteer attitude, always encouraging people to do more outreach,” Schlossberg said.

“That was all John,” Simon said of the series of technical reports NAID produced.

Lynch’s contribution to defense communities came in a variety of forms. Houlemard recounted how John would interact with community leaders at NAID’s winter conference at the Tempe Mission Palms in Tempe, Ariz., listening to their struggles in an attempt to offer advice.

“He had a way of engaging people one on one or in groups in a selfless way,” Houlemard marveled. “He would always work behind the scenes.”

Even as Lynch’s role with NAID began to wane by the end of the 1990s, his influence remained, Houlemard said.

“John Lynch was always there, anything we did we would always check back with him,” he remembered.

Tim Ford, CEO of ADC, tells a similar story about his early encounters with Lynch.

“While John’s leadership with NAID diminished in the late-1990s, that is when I actually began my interaction with him,” Ford said. “From the late-1990s all the way through BRAC 2005, John took a lead role guiding NAID’s publications. He ran a very tight ship. And while staff often groaned about John’s arrival in the office because it usually meant more work, he was quietly teaching us the business of base redevelopment. More importantly, he was sharing his knowledge with all communities through a series of publications that become the gold standard for all BRAC communities.”



SHAPING DoD'S ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT PROGRAM

Lynch's role in spearheading NAID into an independent organization was really the second chapter in a life's work devoted to helping communities respond to defense drawdowns.

His interest in defense conversion started early, as it was the subject of the dissertation he wrote for the Ph.D. in economics he earned from Syracuse University. The topic typically examines the plight of manufacturers forced to respond to cutbacks in defense spending, but John was equally interested in helping communities revitalize closed military bases.

The research Lynch completed for his dissertation made him a pioneer in the field starting in the late 1970s and positioned him as an expert in the topic through the 1990s, said O'Brien, who joined OEA in the late 1980s when Lynch was an associate director for the agency. While at OEA, John wrote several books on defense conversion.

"If you were doing anything [in this field], John was probably part of your network," O'Brien said.

More so than the assistance he offered to communities coping with base closures starting in the 1970s, Lynch's most lasting contribution to defense communities may be the part he played in establishing the Pentagon's economic adjustment program, the federal effort coordinated by OEA to help states and communities recover from cutbacks in defense procurement and base closures or realignments.

He saw the need for a DoD office dedicated to supporting communities, workers and contractors hurt by defense retrenchment, as well as for a broader federal effort to supplement the department's resources, O'Brien explained. Lynch also understood how such a federal program should be structured and where the resources would come from. His vision helped change "the mindset in the building [Pentagon]," O'Brien said, and culminated in the executive order President Jimmy Carter issued in 1978 establishing the economic adjustment program.

"He was actually the forefather for what we know today as the economic adjustment program," O'Brien said.

Lynch also was heavily involved in helping OEA evolve from its initial conception to a field agency, "not just delivering technical support but going into the field and delivering results," he said. "He was a catalyst for much of what happened back then."

Despite his oversized contribution to the field of economic adjustment in general, and to defense communities in particular, Lynch was very humble, according to his colleagues. Many of the people Lynch worked with were not even aware he had a Ph.D.

Simon recalled Lynch's humility when ADC presented him its Senator David Pryor

Special Achievement Award during its annual conference in 1998. He had not been told ahead of time about the honor, the only award ADC confers that requires approval of its board of directors.

"I remember how stunned he was," Simon said, but no one else in attendance was. "He was the only one who was stunned."

Editor's note: In memory of the legacy of our longtime friend and colleague, John Lynch, ADC has renamed one of its annual awards in his name. Beginning this year, base closure communities recognized for significant achievement will be honored with the John Lynch Base Redevelopment Excellence Award.





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