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- Provide for a continuum of services to enhance health and wellness at all levels of the life-cycle.
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- Perceive ourselves as advocates, innovators and pioneers in the practice of human caring.
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First Lady Lauds Los Angeles Mayor’s Homeless Vets Initiative

By Amaani Lyle

WASHINGTON, July 16, 2014 – First Lady Michelle Obama today praised Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti for taking on the challenge of assisting transitioning veterans through employment and support resources.

Speaking at the Unite for Veterans summit in Los Angeles, Obama said Garcetti’s initiative involves commitments from 150 businesses and public sector organizations that aim to hire 10,000 veterans by 2017, giving veterans a chance not only in finding work, but also in keeping it.

“The idea that any of our veterans are spending months, or even years, struggling to find a job is unacceptable,” Obama said over applause. “The image of even one of these heroes sleeping out in the cold huddled up next to an overpass, ... that should horrify all of us, because that’s not who we are.”

But whether in business, government or in communities, simple steps can make a difference, the first lady said.

On employment, she explained, the Obama administration began new programs to help veterans get civilian licenses for jobs they held in the military.

“Through our Joining Forces initiative, we have rallied businesses to hire and train more than half a million veterans and military spouses,” she said. “When it comes to veteran homelessness, my husband vowed not just to address this issue, but to end it once and for all.”

As a result, the administration is cutting red tape across agencies, launching new programs and strengthening of existing ones to expedite putting veterans in homes, the first lady noted.

“Over the past few years, these efforts have brought tens of thousands of veterans out of homelessness,” she said. “They have helped prevent over 100,000 more from falling into homelessness in the first place.” And despite challenging economic times, Obama added, the rate of homeless veterans in the United States has fallen by 24 percent.

Still, she acknowledged that though more than 10 percent of homeless veterans in America live in Los Angeles, a grassroots approach to tackling the problem makes it “eminently solvable.”

In conjunction with the United Way and the Chamber of Commerce, Los Angeles has united public and private partners to launch Home for Good, which has housed more than 9,000 veterans since 2011, the first lady said. She applauded voters and legislators in California for voting to authorize $500 million toward housing for veteran families, the largest state-funded effort in the country.

But the personal stories of veterans, service members and their families, she added, have had the greatest impact on her.

“I’ve been blown away by their courage and dedication and their unwavering commitment to excellence,” she said.

She noted that she sat next to Army Sgt. 1st Class Cory Remsburg, a severely-wounded veteran Army Ranger and Bronze Star and Purple Heart recipient, during the president’s State of the Union address in January.

“I remember the young man who had nearly been killed by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan but fought back to speak again, stand again and walk again.” But, she added, she also knows well the everyday stories of talent and skill that veterans display each day.

“They are mastering cutting-edge technologies,” Obama said, noting that they’re leading dozens of their peers in some of the most dangerous missions on the planet. “They’re doing everything from handing out humanitarian aid, responding to incoming fire, building relationships with local leaders – sometimes all in one day,” she said.

The first lady said that expertise is in action at the White House, where veterans hold such staff positions as policy team members, military aides and Navy mess staff.

“They are some of the sharpest, most dynamic and most effective people I have ever had the pleasure of working with,” Obama said. “So when these men and women come home, they have got the skills that any company in America should want.”

And though veterans by and large are well-prepared to succeed in career or educational environments, she said, too often the transition back to civilian life presents a litany of challenges.

“The friends who’ve been by your side every minute are suddenly spread out across the country. The missions that drove you every day are gone,” Obama said. “The skills you’ve spent years developing are not valued or understood in the civilian world.”

The first lady emphasized that while the majority of returning veterans transition back into good health, good spirits and successful careers, no veteran’s circumstance should go overlooked.

“All we have to do is show just a fraction of the courage and commitment that our veterans have shown all of us,” she said. “We just have to keep veterans in mind when we’re hiring for that next open spot. We just have to make sure they have a place to call home.”
Communications Giant Makes Huge Strides in Supporting Military and Vets

By Rick Kern

When it comes to our military, putting their money where their mouth is — is more than just talk for AT&T. The communications behemoth has remained dedicated to supporting active military personnel, veterans, and their families for nearly 100 years — recognizing their value as employees, and doing all they can to mobilize them in the workforce.

“At AT&T, we feel veterans make our company better,” said David Purdie who handles military trade media relations for the company. “They understand teamwork, can adapt quickly, and have strong leadership and technical skills.”

And while they have incorporated veteran recruitment into their business practices for years, recently they have ramped it up, creating additional programs and opportunities that play to the strengths of those who have served. “We value the creativity and problem-solving skills veterans bring to the table,” Purdie continued. “The technical training they get in the military qualifies them for many positions within our company.”

Accordingly, AT&T has upgraded its promotion as a preferred employer throughout the veteran community, dedicating a Military Talent Attraction Program Manager to inform the military about AT&T and their endeavors about recruitment opportunities among the military. Additionally, because the job search and application process can be problematic for transitioning veterans, they have enhanced their Web-based employment support with online tools and resources to streamline the recruitment process.

“Our military jobs website, veterans can ask for help with finding positions that would be a good fit for them,” Mr. Purdie told us. “Our Military Skills Translator lets them search for AT&T job openings using their military occupational codes. In addition, we have a military policy online to promote portable and virtual careers in the U.S.”

Among their more prolific endeavors is AT&T’s role as a founding member of the 100,000 Jobs Mission. Launched in 2011 by JPMorgan Chase and 10 other companies, the program is a shared commitment among 154 companies, enjoying such success by 2020. Since its creation this alliance of hope has be problematic for transitioning veterans, they have many positions within our company.”

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“This is only the beginning, however, AT&T supports many other veteran and military friendly programs. For example, they bring peace of mind to their military and veteran job-seekers who are unable to find a position in one company, to access a talent-sharing database allowing them to be considered by other military-friendly employers within the 100,000 Jobs Mission program.

In 2014, the 100,000 Jobs Mission announced it was expanding its efforts to include military spouses. Spearheaded by AT&T, the Military Spouse Talent Exchange (MTX), online portal gets the resumes and profile information of spouse job-seekers in front of participating 100,000 Jobs Mission companies. Like the Veteran Talent Exchange, MTX allows employers to easily access and exchange the profiles of candidates referred by other coalition companies.

The coalition’s companies have collectively hired nearly 141,000 veterans through the first quarter of 2014. With the welfare of veterans as a corporate goal, 2013 found AT&T again teaming up with JPMorgan Chase and the 100,000 Jobs Mission to launch a veteran talent exchange portal. The initiative enables military and veteran job seekers who are unable to find a position in one company, to access a talent-sharing database allowing them to be considered by other military-friendly employers within the 100,000 Jobs Mission program.

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This is only the beginning, however, AT&T supports many other veteran and military friendly programs. For example, they bring peace of mind to their military employees while deployed by providing differential pay and other benefits for their family while they are activated. Once they return, they also have the ability to come back to the company at the same level as their previous job or higher.

Their Veterans Employee Resource Group (ERG) has been in place for more than 30 years and has nearly 7,000 members. “It offers an instant community for employee veterans to continue their service by engaging in volunteer activities in their communities,” notes Purdie. AT&T’s Pioneers volunteer organization, on the other hand, does a number of things to support the military including preparing and sending thousands of care packages to troops overseas, greeting soldiers at airports, collecting cell phones as part of the Cell Phones for Soldiers program, and hosting events across the nation to recognize and honor military members and their families.

It is rare for a vast industrial concern such as AT&T to marshal the corporate will to place people ahead of profit. However, the communications giant and their corporate colleagues have inaugurated a luminous model that shines as a beacon of commercial responsibility. With countless vocational resources for veterans and military personnel to enhance their employment experience and improve their quality of life, AT&T continues to take its corporate citizenship seriously, and blaze a trail its, contemporaries, colleagues, and competitors should follow. For more information, visit their Website at www.corp.att.com/gov/vets/ and hit the relevant pages.
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Branched out: From Marine, Soldier, Sailor to Airman

By Staff Sgt. Evelyn Chavez, 455th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan (AFNS) -- (This feature is part of the “Through Airmen’s Eyes” series on AF.mil. These stories focus on a single Airman, highlighting their Air Force story.)

Staff Sgt. Jesus Yanez is the only member of his family to pursue a profession of arms and he’s done it in four different military branches.

The security forces member, who is currently deployed to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, from the Texas Air National Guard’s 204th Security Forces Squadron in El Paso, Texas, has answered his nation’s call not just once but four times: first as a Marine, then a Sailor, Soldier and currently as an Airman.

“It sort of just happened, being in all four branches,” said Yanez, 455th Expeditionary Base Defense Squadron defender. “I didn’t even think about it until one of my friends mentioned it. From the Marine Corps to the Air Force, every branch has taught me something different.”

Each branch of service has been a stepping stone for Yanez. He started his military career in 1993 as a Marine at Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. Yanez was a logistics Marine, where he was in charge of storing and distributing equipment and moving personnel.

“The Marine Corps instilled discipline and has influenced the way I am now,” Yanez said. “What I learned there I have applied to every branch that I have served, but each branch has also given me an attribute that has made me the person I am today.”

Although Yanez enjoyed serving in the military, he left the Marines after completing his four years of service. Two years later, he joined the Navy Reserve in his hometown of El Paso, Texas. He served from 1999 to 2001 as a master-at-arms, where he performed force protection duties that would later help him with his Air Force career. After he completed his time in the Navy, Yanez looked for other opportunities to challenge him as an individual.

“I am the type of person who looks for challenges every day,” Yanez said. “That is the reason why I joined the military.”

His next two opportunities were with the Army Reserve and Air Force. While serving from 2001 to 2006 in the Army Reserve in Fort Bliss, Texas, as a heavy wheel mechanic, Yanez learned about the Air Force’s 204th Security Forces Squadron.

“I was asked if I would be interested in an active guard reserve position with the Air Force,” Yanez said. “I was interested and accepted it. This is something I was really interested in and it would allow me to stay in my hometown. As a single father, this was a better option because it avoided moving my kids to another place.”

Throughout his service in all branches Yanez learned there are more similarities than differences.

“The camaraderie is the same,” Yanez said. “Regardless of branch of service, everyone always works together to get the job done. I have also learned that anywhere you go, if you take care of the people below you, they will take care of you.”

As a NCO with extensive life experience, Yanez is able to help the younger Airmen in his unit.

“He brings ton of experience to the fight,” said Chief Master Sgt. Eric Soluri, the 455th EBDS chief enlisted manager. “Younger Airmen and NCO’s look up to him and he is the ‘go-to guy’ in his sector.”

Yanez has instilled the values he has learned in the Airmen below him, as they often come to him to share life experiences.

“I give them advice about the military and life,” Yanez said. “The military has given me so much, and I help them understand that if you give 100 percent to the military, it will give 100 percent back to you.”

While he’s had many opportunities while serving in the different branches, Yanez’s loves his current job in the Air Force.

“What I love about the Air Force is my job,” Yanez said. “As part of the combat readiness training center at my home station, I am able to teach Airmen and Soldiers skills that will help them in the combat zone. Everything I have learned before, I now use to help everyone I train.”

Yanez has served with pride and dedication as a Marine, Soldier, Sailor and Airman. He is able to pay forward his knowledge and experience by helping the younger Airmen and next leaders in line.

“I get to prepare the Airmen coming up in ranks,” Yanez said. “I would not change the choices and experiences I have been through because they have made me who I am today.”

PHOTO CAPTION: Staff Sgt. Jesus Yanez stands in front of his sector station July 2, 2014, on Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. Yanez has served in four military branches throughout his career. (U.S. Air Force photo/Staff Sgt. Evelyn Chavez)
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RESERVE AIRMAN SAVES FELLOW AIRMAN AFTER ATV ROLLOVER

By Maj. Ashley Conner, 477th Fighter Group Public Affairs

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska -- The swift actions of an Airman during an ATV accident saved the limb and probably the life of a fellow Airman.

Airman 1st Class Makayla Conant, 477th Security Forces Squadron, was the passenger in a Razor ATV being driven by fellow Security Forces member, Staff Sgt. Philip Strumsky, when the ATV fell on its side after accelerating too quickly from a stopped position.

“The ATV flipped over on my side and the roll cage landed on my arm just below my elbow and trapped me in,” said Strumsky. “It was excruciating pain and I looked down to see if my hand was still attached.”

Conant immediately unbuckled herself and Strumsky, who was wearing his seat belt, helmet and gloves, and with the help of another friend lifted the roll cage off of Strumsky.

“We had just completed Combat Casualty Care training during Commando Warrior in Guam where they taught us what to do during a Humvee rollover and how to handle that kind of situation,” said Conant. “My instincts kicked in and I did what anyone else in the situation would have done.”

Conant applied a T-shirt to the wound that was now bleeding heavily, stabilized his arm and called 911.

“I was very impressed that she didn’t hesitate or have a deer in the headlights moment. She remembered her training and they immediately got me out,” he said. “I was glad. I knew I needed an ambulance. Quick.”

The group was on an isolated dirt road five miles from civilization near Houston, Alaska. Their friend rode out to the main road to meet the paramedics and lead them back to the scene.

A member from the Houston Volunteer Fire Department arrived followed by an ambulance that took Strumsky to the Mat-Su Regional Hospital for x-rays. He was then transported to the JBER hospital where he met by his girlfriend, Lindsey, and 477th SFS superintendent, Master Sgt. Hiram Gunter.

“Quick.” said Conant for a decoration for her rescue efforts that Grimstad was going to present to her.

“But really is important to make sure that you take a friend with you when you go out,” said Strumsky. “I’ve been riding alone that day. I doubt I would have been able to free myself with one working arm.”

The 477th Security Forces Squadron is nominating Conant for a decoration for her rescue efforts that day.

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PHOTO CAPTION: Staff Sgt. Philip Strumsky underwent four surgeries to repair his arm after an ATV accident. The swift actions of Airman 1st Class Makayla Conant saved his arm and probably his life. Both Airmen are Reservists assigned to the 477th Security Forces Squadron. (Courtesy Photo)
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**Russian Military Buildup Near Ukraine Concerns DoD Officials**

By Jim Garamone  
DoD News, Defense Media Activity

WASHINGTON, July 16, 2014 – U.S. defense officials are concerned about a buildup of Russian troops along that country’s border with Ukraine, Pentagon spokesman Army Col. Steve Warren said today.

“We believe there are now between 10,000 and 12,000 Russian troops on the border,” Warren told reporters. “We also have reason to believe that the Russians are continuing to support the separatist movement in Ukraine.”

The size of the Russian presence in the region means it’s capable of conducting operations on either side of the border, he added. “I can’t speak for what they intend to do. Certainly, it is intimidating.”

A few weeks ago, about 1,000 Russian soldiers were along the border. Earlier this year, tens of thousands of Russian troops were deployed in the area, Warren said.

The United States wants the Russians to stop what it terms provocative behavior and “execute actions that are in line with their words,” Warren said. Russian officials have said they want peace and stability in Ukraine and de-escalation of the situation there, but their actions work counter to those goals, he noted.

U.S. officials believe that some weaponry -- “possibly some heavy weapons” are flowing into Ukraine for use by separatists, Warren said. The troops moving to the area are battalion task groups and are combat soldiers.

U.S. and Ukrainian military officials met in June. “Another team is due to head out in the next few weeks to scope out specific defense institution building activities and programs that we may want to pursue,” he added.

The United States has sent body armor, uniforms and foodstuffs to Ukraine, and more aid is on the way. In addition, night-vision and thermal-imaging equipment and medical supplies are expected to arrive in Ukraine soon, Warren said.

**Battle of Guam**

By Tom Gruber

Exactly 70 years ago on July 21 US forces started the amphibious assault on Guam to retake the island after two and a half years of Japanese occupation.

Guam, the southernmost part of the Mariana Islands, became a US territory in 1898 following the Spanish-American War and remained a strategically important outpost for the US until December 8, 1941, when the poorly fortified island was captured by Japanese forces right after the attack on Pearl Harbor. The island, which had long been an obstacle for Japan’s regional aspirations, suffered terribly during the Japanese occupation. Its people were subjected to forced labor, family separation, torture, rape, beheadings and the whole population was forced to embrace Japanese culture. Roughly 10% of Guam’s population fell prey to war violence during these years.

US landing operations started on July 21, 1944, a date commemorated every year as Liberation Day. American forces faced a more difficult test than the Japanese had in 1941 - the assault was anticipated by Lt. General Takashina and his 18,500 soldiers. US forces selected Asan Beach for the operation, a
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suitable but heavily defended section, which was well covered by large caliber artillery and mortar positions from the surrounding hills.

The objective of the mission wasn’t any different form most landing operations. As one Marine commander put it during the pre-invasion briefing: “The theory is simple gentlemen. It’s the old school solution - seize the high ground and hold it.”

US forces landed in two separate sections, the 3rd Marine Division above and 1st Provisional Marine Brigade below the Orote Peninsula, both on the west side of Guam. As more and more landing craft reached the shore Japanese counterattack became increasingly fierce sinking and damaging 42 LCTs altogether. Despite the strong resistance all units got ashore within the designated time frame and secured the beachheads by nightfall. The first day of the operation resulted in 1,047 American casualties, and by August 10, when Guam was finally secured, 1,744 soldiers had died and 5,970 wounded from the III Amphibious Corps and the Army’s 77th Infantry Division.

The persistent counterattacks also took their toll on the Japanese. Food and ammunition supply was difficult not only for the invaders but for the defenders as well - let alone that Japanese commander Lt. General Takashina had to be replaced by General Obata after getting killed in action on July 28. Following an engagement on August 2-4, the Japanese defensive line collapsed and US forces continued their way to the north. Since Japanese soldiers collectively refused to surrender almost all of them were killed, while General Obata committed suicide after Japanese resistance officially ended.

Only officially though - one of the last three Japanese holdouts found decades after the end of the war was sergeant Soichi Yokoi, discovered in one of the caves of Guam on January 24, 1972. Despite hiding for 28 years - he had known about the end of the war since 1952 - his explanation for not coming out of hiding was the Japanese fighter attitude of preferring death to the disgrace of being captured alive. Many remarkable soldiers fought on the Allied side as well: four US Marines became Medal of Honor recipients based on their outstanding deeds during the Battle of Guam: PFC Luther Skaggs Jr., Captain (later General) Louis H. Wilson, Jr., furthermore PFC Frank Witek and PFC Leonard F. Mason who both gained the recognition posthumously.
The Definition of Sacrifice

By Rick Kern

It’s the kind of voice that stays with you. It sort of echoes through your soul long after its words trail off. It’s not overbearing, and not monotone — stripped of emotion. It almost trembles with a quiet conviction and gut-level-honesty that comes from going through the fire, not around it...

“Quite often I think about my earthly heroes such as Navy Seal Adam Brown, and quickly realize how much farther I need to come before I consider myself a real man. One thing I do know is that it’s time to give back.”

The voice — deep, measured, and passionate about giving back belongs to former United States Marine, Chris Daidone, founder of a remarkably unique and unusually compelling organization known as, The Definition of Sacrifice (DOS). Created in 2012, DOS gives veterans an open forum online to share their hearts, vent, muse, pay tribute to friends and fallen — basically, it gives them a voice and an opportunity to be heard.

Spread primarily through the Internet, The Definition of Sacrifice has struck a nerve among the veteran's community. According to Daidone, between the DOS Website and FaceBook page, he is reaching about 4,000 veterans a month. A published photographer, he views this effort as a mission and a calling, crisscrossing the country to document his comrades in arms with his camera. “This journey, this mission, is what I truly feel that I’ve been called to do,” he explains. “In life, we find ourselves in one of three situations — about to go through a crisis, already in a crisis, or in the process of recovering from a crisis. This trifecta of sorts will haunt all humans throughout the course of our lives. Having said this, doesn’t this perfectly describe the sacrifices that our nations combat veterans face?” And because he feels so strongly, Daidone travels the nation seeking veterans who want to be heard — posting images and stories directly from the mouths of our nation’s warriors.

Chris himself has a harrowing story of a difficult childhood beleaguered by a drug addicted, alcoholic father who ultimately took his own life. It all sent Daidone careening out of control into a world of lying, stealing, cheating, and hurting others. “I was the very definition of the twentieth century prodigal son,” he writes. And it led him to the United States Marine Corps — where he found his way. Eventually he found a faith in God that helped guide him further. In time, he would find a heart for his fellow servicemen and women, and establish DOS. “This mission of The Definition Of Sacrifice, is by no means meant to exploit, but rather aid in healing,” he told us. “I am a firm believer in the power of words and pictures. This mission is to be an open canvas where combat veterans can speak their minds, encourage others, and most importantly remind other veterans that they are not alone. Everyone has a story to tell. If by your story, you were able to touch just one life, wouldn’t it be worth it?”

It has become more than worth it. Consider Chris Bova, a former Sargent in the U.S. Marines. He wanted to share his story specifically to reach out to other soldiers. Bova writes on the DOS Website, “My name is Chris Bova, formerly SGT. Bova. I served 4 years active duty in the Marine Corps. From here my story will be nothing in comparison to some of the other veterans that have shared or will share their story. There is no climax of a single horrific event that injured me in a life changing way. However I do believe going to war in any capacity, whether big or small, changes people forever.

Cont’d on next page
The reason I agreed to tell my story is not to brag about my accomplishments or to create sympathy from my short comings and I don’t think any other veteran who decides to share their story has any of that intent either. The purpose of sharing my story is to help any other person who is struggling with life because of their experience.”

After candidly sharing a deeply moving story of war, loss, heartbreak, and hope, Bova explained that he is continuing to invest his life to support of U.S. service members and their families. “Recently I have left the playing field to fight a new fight and carry on with a new mission. I work for the National Ability Center in Park City, UT. The National Ability Center stands with other national and local community partners and government agencies in the support of U.S. service members and their families. We believe in promoting and empowering resilience and a healthy, active and enjoyable life through sport, recreation and educational programs. We also believe successful long-term care of our nation’s service members must include strong community and governmental partnerships.”

SFC Josh Burnette told a powerful story of his own enlistment and eventual deployment to Iraq where he was severely injured and lost both legs when he stepped on an explosive device. He describes his arrival back home and subsequent recovery in vivid detail. “It was the 2nd of July 2012 and I had just arrived back stateside to Walter Reed. After a quick ride in the biggest ambulance I’ve ever seen I arrived at the hospital. I went straight into the ER and then to the ICU. For several weeks I was in and out of surgeries, fighting infections, and dealing with the psychological pains and depression of realizing the magnitude of my injuries. I spent several months on inpatient status going back and forth from my room to surgery and to appointments.

After a short time I started attending physical therapy. My first trip into the main therapy gym was a turning point into my recovery. After being rolled into the gym in my wheelchair I quickly noticed I was easily one of the oldest amputees and my injuries though severe were nothing compared to the wounds these young men were working so hard to recover from. It was a very humbling moment for me and I made a decision that day that I would not let my injuries or my prosthetics define who I was. I worked hard to excel in my therapy and before long I was up and walking again.

Each day was a battle all in its own and my therapists worked hard to challenge me everyday. In total I spent roughly 10 months in the hospital before returning back to my unit. I still undergo medical treatment and work daily to improve my situation and quality of life. I have very recently gone through Cont’d on next page
some more treatments to look into Traumatic Brain Injury and understand the effects it can have. It has been a long road and I understand that my personal injuries just like many others that have come before me and ones yet to come will continue to challenge me.”

Disclosing your identity is optional on the DOS Website — it’s about healing, hope, and hanging your heart out there, names are not required! Consequently, among the more intense postings is the narrative of a guy known only as, “Anonymous Veteran.” Speaking to his fellow soldiers he writes, “I am proud to have served in the United States Army. While I am not injured extremely, I am mentally taxed. My story is very similar to many of you. I grew up in a broken home, my parents split up when I was 3. My mother passed away when I was 14. After she passed I started drinking and doing drugs, heavily. I graduated when I was 17, that summer was crazy, I actually had alcohol poisoning and was clinically dead for 5 mins.

My grandmother told me I would be in the military within the next year, I laughed. I was attempting to go to college in Arizona for mechanical engineering. Well, I partied way to hard and eventually joined the military in OCT 1998. I enlisted under an airborne contract and was a 12B.”

His story, like many on the DOS Website, is the stuff of high drama and concludes with Anonymous Veteran reaching out to something bigger than he is, “I decided to try to work it out with my wife and we had a son, then I deployed again, as always. Once again she cheated on me and this time deleted my checking account and disappeared with my son. All of this while deployed. My team really supported me this rotation and once again Miles K was doing miraculous things without even knowing it. The thoughts were there, thankfully action never was. I then left my team for a staff job, and ended up deploying almost 18 of the 27 months I was there, by choice. The worst decision I could have made but I was running from the real issues at hand that I had stateside. Alcoholism, not being able to see my son, going thru a divorce, and financial issues. Trying to keep this short I will say this. I was in a very prestigious unit, now that I am out I still work with and advise very important units. Like most veterans my time home was minimal while in. I have recently found Christ and was baptized.”

With a full roster of resources posted on the Website to help his fellow veterans, Daidone continues to journey through America meeting with vets, documenting, and defining the sacrifices of those fighting men and women who ache to be heard. And while a number of participants, including Chris, give credit to their faith for helping them prevail through circumstances that would grind most men to powder, Daidone is emphatic that DOS is not a faith-based initiative. “I’m not preaching the Gospel,” he says, “that’s just the direction I’m going personally.”

He hopes to raise the money to take the photographs and testimonies he’s compiled, and create a coffee-table book. With the proceeds from its sale, Daidone wants to invest in various organizations that help veterans, as well as fund his own work. “A lot of people want me to come to them,” he explains, “but it gets expensive covering car rentals, flights, hotels, and meals.”

“We love this nation,” he writes. “More importantly, we cherish those who defend it. Our warriors often come home to a lackluster welcome at best. Out of work, most forgotten, and even some exploited by so called “non-profit” organizations for their personal gain. They’re broken both mentally and physically, and have very few genuine places to turn for help.

The Definition Of Sacrifice is a not-for-profit mission formed by veterans, dedicated to give back to those who selflessly gave everything for us. God has blessed us with the gift of creativity. So we harness these abilities through the use of a camera to bring our nation’s combat veteran back into the forefront of our nation’s minds through photo/video documentation and personal story.”

For more information, or to lend your support to their voices, visit the DOS Website at www.thedefinitionofsacrifice.com.

Chris Daidone

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Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, July 16, 2014 – The Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Mercy departed Pearl Harbor yesterday to participate for the first time ever in the sea phase of Rim of the Pacific 2014, the world’s largest international maritime exercise.

Mercy is scheduled to participate in various events, including simulated medical evacuations, a mass casualty exercise and subject-matter expert exchanges with other RIMPAC participants.

“I am looking forward to operating with different allied partner nations,” said Navy Capt. Michael Perkow, mission commander aboard Mercy during RIMPAC. “This is a great opportunity for everyone to learn together and operate in a multinational environment.”

The medevac simulations are scheduled to arrive within Mercy’s task force and other participating ships. The simulations will test the ability of each ship’s medical department to respond, evaluate patients, and then decide whether they need to be taken to Mercy for a higher level of care.

The mass casualty exercise is scheduled to simulate an oil platform accident with 40 patients being brought to Mercy, allowing the ship’s staff to train in an environment in which a large number of injured people are loaded onto the ship.

Subject-matter expert exchanges are slated to take place with medical personnel from other nations participating in RIMPAC. “The [exchanges] are for Mercy’s staff to learn best practices other navies have developed and also for our allied partners to learn some of our best practices,” Perkow said.

This year’s RIMPAC marks the first time in the exercise’s history that hospital ships have participated. Twenty-two nations, 49 ships, six submarines, more than 200 aircraft and 25,000 personnel are participating.

From the exercise began June 26 and runs to Aug. 1 in and around the Hawaiian Islands and Southern California.
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Navy SEALs Bring Motivation, Challenge to US Naval Academy Wrestling Camp

By Lt. David C. Lloyd, Naval Special Warfare Group 2 Public Affairs

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (NNS) -- Members of the SEAL and Special Warfare Combatant-Craft Crewman (SWCC) Scout Team and SEALs assigned to various East-coast based SEAL teams participated in the 2014 SEAL Wrestling Training Camp at the United States Naval Academy, July 6-13.

The weeklong wrestling camp offered 130 high school students from across the country the opportunity to work closely with the SEALs and wrestling coaches from the academy. The demanding program is designed to motivate as well as provide the wrestlers physical and mental training opportunities and introduce them to the career programs available in the Navy special warfare community.

“From a philosophical standpoint, the camp teaches the kids how to commit to something,” explained Daniel Song, the U.S. Naval Academy head assistant wrestling coach. “Here, you’re all in and having the SEALs participate brings legitimacy to the program. The kids draw a little more energy from their presence, it’s intangible, but it’s palpable. You can feel it, you can see it, and the kids respond.”

Commitment is exactly one of the characteristic traits that the Naval Special Warfare (NSW) community looks for in individuals interested in becoming one of the Navy’s elite.

“It means a lot for me to volunteer and give back to the NSW community and kids,” said one of the SEALs assigned to an East-coast based SEAL team. “Wrestling is a team sport but also a one-on-one sport. You’re out there and if you quit, you lose. Wrestling has helped me while at BUD/S (Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL) to never quit.”

The SEAL Wrestling Training Camp is highly intensive and one of six wrestling camps offered at the Naval Academy over the summer. Unlike the other wrestling programs, the SEALs put the wrestlers through two grueling daily work-out routines similar to the Navy’s BUD/S training course in between the technique sessions in the gym. The training sessions are intended to reinforce a strong work ethic, teamwork, determination, and the fortitude necessary to reach the wrestlers’ potential.

“This is really as good as it gets,” said the three-time All American and National Champion Eastern Intercollegiate Wrestling Association and three-time All American and National Champion Navy SEAL Lieutenant volunteering at the camp. “Aside from family, wrestling and the Navy are the two most important things to me, so having the opportunity to do them both together with a great group of guys who have been working hard all week long is excellent.”

This week’s SEAL Wrestling Camp is the sixth consecutive summer held at the Naval Academy.

For more news from Naval Special Warfare Group 2, visit www.navy.mil/local/nswgtwo/.

Eugenics Becomes Policy

By Marietta Herczeg

On July 14, 1933, six months after Hitler’s rise to power, the Law for the Prevention of Genetically Diseased Offspring was enacted in Germany. It called for compulsory sterilization of people who suffered from “hereditary” degenerations such as epilepsy, chronic alcoholism or physical deformities. This was the first organized step in the direction of the Nazis’ goal of racial purity.

The racial hygiene movement in Germany had its roots in Social Darwinism and took its inspiration from the forced sterilization programs of US eugenics laws. During the twelve years of the Third Reich, Jews, criminals, political dissidents, homosexuals, people with mental or physical handicaps, the “idle” and the “weak,” commonly referred to as “unfit for life” were targeted for sterilization, imprisonment or extermination in order to achieve a racially and genetically pure Germany.

At the same time enormous funds were poured into scientific and pseudo-scientific research that aimed at the betterment of the German race.

According to the law doctors were obligated to report possible candidates for sterilization in their practice. To lend the process a legal veneer, Genetic Health Courts were created in 1933, where a three-person panel consisting of the district judge, a physician...
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About 200 Genetic Health Courts condemned 410,000 people to sterilization against their will. Apart from forced sterilization, with the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 the state also took steps to define racial status and control marriage while criminalizing relation between Aryans and non-Aryans. The “unfit for life” were not only excluded from marriage and procreation, but also from education and public health care. As the next step, homosexuality and the abortion of Aryan fetuses were criminalized in 1937. The process of racial purification culminated in the Action T4 euthanasia program and the extermination camps of the Final Solution.

Nazi propaganda lamenting the social burden of keeping the “unfit” alive

and an expert in genetics deliberated over whether a certain person was to be sterilized. The court’s decision could be appealed but in the majority of cases sterilization was carried out anyway, by vasectomy for men and tubal ligation for women, with the use of force if necessary.

Eugenics Becomes Policy...from page 18

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HIGH SCHOOL CREATES “WALL OF HONOR” TO COMMEMORATE ALUMNI MILITARY SERVICE

By Rick Kern

An Amherst, New York high school has rallied members of its staff, administration, and alumni to create a deeply moving commemorative display that pays tribute to former students who have been, or presently are, members of the United States military. Sweet Home High School (SHHS), which has seen its alumni serve in our armed forces since its first graduating class in 1960, dedicated what is formally known as, The Sweet Home Military Alumni Wall of Honor, on November 15, 2013.

The dedication ceremony, which lasted nearly an hour, was attended by a whopping 400-plus members of the community and featured an impressive roster of speakers including, members of the state Senate and Assembly, retired military personnel, educators, and alumni. Cumulating with a ribbon-cutting that officially inaugurated the display, the event was followed by a reception affording attendees the opportunity to mingle and enjoy fellowship, food, and refreshments — including cakes decorated for each branch of the military. Additionally, the dedication ceremony was recorded and posted on the Alumni Association’s Website where it can be viewed at www.sweethomeschools.org/District/2195-Untitled.html.

The Wall of Honor, some three years in the making, was initially inspired by both Sweet Home Class of 1960 alumnus and U.S. Army Veteran, Mr. Gary Bainbridge, and Alumni Association Coordinator and English Teacher, Mrs. Lisa LaBrake. Their discussions, driven by a spirited conviction to honor the contributions of those former students who have proudly served our country, led to the formation of a sub-committee who, with shared convictions, rolled up their sleeves and took the project from concept to creation. In addition to Mr. Bainbridge and Mrs. LaBrake, the sub-committee included several alumni as well as the school’s Principal, Joleen Reinholz, and Athletic Director, Chris DeMarco.

“I was in the first graduating class from Sweet Home High School back in 1960. When we lost an alumnus to the Vietnam War in 1968 it was a wakeup call and something we will never forget,” recalled Mr. Bainbridge. “He is honored currently with a gold plaque and his picture on our Military Wall of Honor. We had wall plaques for Sweet Home athletes and plaques for those who did well after leaving SHHS,” he continued. “There were several attempts to put together a Military Wall of Honor as well, but most failed due to lack of funds or lack of interest. We finally switched gears and with the help of the Athletic Department and the Alumni Association the ball started rolling.”

And as word got out that the ball was in fact rolling, the vision spread like wildfire and the committee had no trouble marshaling the necessary talent to forge the dream into solid reality. The Art Department (including students), Custodial Department, and Grounds Crew all had a hand (or two) in building a first class display — with the latter two departments joining forces to put the actual wall-proper up in a mere three weeks.

Prominently located in the school’s Main Foyer directly across from one of its busiest entrances, The Sweet Home Military Alumni Wall of Honor has been strategically positioned in a high traffic area to catch the eye and engage the hearts and minds of the student body. “We wanted our students to stop and look, to really consider and recognize the cost of freedom,” said...
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POW/MIA Bracelets: The Legacy Continues

By Staff Reporter

Those of us who came of age during the Vietnam War probably remember the POW/MIA bracelet phenomenon. Everyone everywhere seemed to wear either a copper or stainless steel bracelet and they were among the few unifying trends with the momentum to bridge the “Generation Gap” — even my best friend’s mother wore one.

Initially, the bracelets were made by a college student named Carol Bates whose conviction to help POW/MIAs has continued. According to reports, Ms. Bates still works in the field and is employed by the Defense POW-Missing Persons Office. Ms. Bates and fellow student, Kay Hunter, pursued the idea to remember American prisoners of war suffering in Southeast Asian prisons.

While Vietnam has long since developed from the savagery of a brutal war zone to a tropical paradise with an impressive tourist trade, the remains of many of our service personnel still remain undocumented. According to the Department of Defense (DoD), 1,641 Americans are yet missing and unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War. That number was adjusted about one year ago with the release of the name of Colonel Thomas W. Dugan, USAF, listed as MIA in Laos on December 13, 1968. And though we have made considerable progress bringing our boys’ remains home it is a long way to go. The DoD has said that a mere 942 Americans have been returned and identified in the nearly 50 years since the Vietnam War ended in 1975.

POW/MIA bracelets may not capture the imagination of the nation with the same fervor or ignite the same passion they did during the Vietnam War, but they are still a force to be reckoned with and hold tremendous meaning. For example, The National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia, established in 1970, offers them through their Website at www.pow-miafamilies.org.

That group exists solely to gain the release of all prisoners, obtain the fullest possible accounting for the missing, and secure the repatriation of all recoverable remains of those who died serving our nation during the Vietnam War. The National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia offers POW/MIA bracelets that are ½ inch wide stainless steel, and etched with the name, rank, service branch, country, and date of loss of the serviceman or woman. 100 percent of all proceeds go straight to the League to help sustain their documentation and recovery efforts.

Among the more prominent companies to offer commemorative bracelets is a group called, Memorial Bracelets. Established in 2001, Memorial Bracelets offers a wide range of products. They strive to help people remember and honor the victims of terrorist attacks, military casualties, and POW/MIA by offering bracelets, dog tags, and pendants engraved with the name of victims and heroes of terrorism or an inspiring message.

Memorial Bracelets does not limit their commemorative products to engraved stainless steel. Instead, they memorialize soldiers, first responders, pets, and children, as well as customize some of their products to suit requests — with an array of colors, offering aluminum as well as stainless steel. Additionally, they feature a number of supportive messages such as, Until they all come home, Semper Fi, and Always in my heart, along with many others.

The group is dedicated to a number of philanthropic efforts revolving around those lost to war and terrorism, as well as their families. The Memorial Bracelets Website, www.MemorialBracelets.com, was conceived by Rob Tacy, its president, and launched October 23, 2001 to venerate those lost in the September 11th terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. In a press release describing its creation in the wake of the 9/11 horrors the group writes, “Seeing people desperately looking for lost loved ones reminded me of the Vietnam War era when America’s were looking for soldiers MIA (Missing In Action),” said Rob Tacy, President of Memorial Bracelets. “We were interested in creating a way for people to remember those lost on 9-11 and helping the families of the victims.” Tacy added.

The money initially raised from selling bracelets was donated to the Twin Towers Orphans Fund to help support children who lost one or both parents in the tragedy. Just four months later, by the end of February, 2002, they had donated $5,000 to the charity.

Memorial Bracelets continues to support a number of causes and to date has donated over $175,000. Their generosity helps the children who lost one or more parents in the September 11, 2001 tragedies, children who lost parents protecting our country fighting in the military, injured Marines and their families, and the families of those who fought in Southeast Asia and are still looking for a soldier listed as a Prisoner of War (POW) or Missing in Action (MIA).

As their products grow in popularity, wearers have taken to bearing their souls on the Memorial Bracelets blog. It is filled with hundreds of stories explaining why people wear Memorial Bracelets to honor the memory of a fallen soldier or lost loved one. For more information about why so many wear Memorial Bracelet’s products to remember their lost loved one, and share their story with others who see their bracelet or dog tag, visit www.whywewear.com.
DOJ Official Admits Slain Kent State Students Were "Murdered" to UN Evidence for National Guard "Command to Fire on Protesters" Mounts

By Rick Kern

In a shocking, and long overdue public admission, Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Roy L. Austin, Jr., officially acknowledged that the four unarmed students shot to death by the Ohio National Guard May 4, 1970 were in fact, murdered by them. The declaration, made boldly before the U.N. Human Rights Committee in Geneva, Switzerland, marked the first time in the 44 years since the bloodbath where four students were killed and nine wounded, that a member of the United States government officially referred to the Kent State Massacre, as murder, not just a civil rights incident.

Mr. Austin was part of the 28-member United States delegation participating in its 4th Periodic Human Rights Review of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights convened by the United Nations Human Rights Committee last March in Geneva, Switzerland. The 18 member UN Human Rights Committee, made up of experts appointed from various governments, monitors compliance with the ICCPR Human Rights Treaty which was ratified by the U.S. in 1992, and includes over 165 countries.

Mr. Jamil Dakwar, Director of the American Civil Liberties Union's Human Rights Program (HRP), litigates and advocates before U.S. courts and international human rights bodies, and is an expert in human rights issues. Additionally, he serves as the ACLU's main representative to the United Nations so it was no surprise to find him participating in this latest event.

Explaining the gathering Dakwar said, "Part of the process allows for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from participating countries to make presentations to the UN Human Rights Committee (UNHRC) that express areas of concern, shedding light on historic, traumatic events."

The United Nations human rights process is a judicious mechanism that strengthens the integrity of the accord, and helps hold participating nations accountable to it.

"This last gathering there were some 80 individuals representing over 40 NGOs," Mr. Dakwar continued, "upon making their case for noncompliance, the committee then prioritizes and decides to use or disregard the information presented to it."

Enter Ms. Laurel Krause, co-founder of the Kent State Truth Tribunal (KSTT), an organization dedicated to unearthing, documenting, and promoting the truth about the Kent State massacre. Established some four years ago, with award-winning filmmaker Emily Kunstler, the Kent State Truth Tribunal was founded upon the emergence of new forensic evidence regarding the May 4, 1970 Kent State Massacre, and remains focused on revealing truth and bringing justice to Kent State shooting victims and survivors. "We hope the Kent State Truth Tribunal will help to heal those involved, establish cause and effect, and shed light on command responsibility for the Kent State massacre on May 4, 1970," the KSTT website states.

"In the 40th anniversary of year of the Kent State massacre," said Ms. Krause, "KSTT recorded more than 80 testimonials from original witnesses and witnesses of May 4, 1970 in Kent, Ohio. Since then we have been searching for truth and justice for Kent State that in 2014 took us the United Nations."

Laurel is the younger sister of Allison Krause, who, at barely 19 years-old, became one of the four victims Deputy Assistant Attorney General Roy L. Austin was referring to when he used the word "murder" referring to the Kent State killings. Krause was in Geneva on representing the KSTT as an NGO to speak before the U.N. Human Rights Committee on behalf of the damaging and irresponsible injustice her sister and every victim of the Kent State shootings has suffered.

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She prepared reports succinctly alleging multiple violations of human rights on the part of the United States with respect to the Kent State shootings, and implicated groups like the Department of Justice and the FBI. Furthermore, in her recent address to the United Nations Human Rights Committee, Krause noted, "There has not been a credible, independent, impartial investigation into Kent State. No group or individual has been held accountable. Even in
2010 upon the emergence of undeniable, credible forensic evidence pointing to direct U.S. government involvement, there has still not been a full accounting of the events on and near that day, and no remedy delivered to the victims."

Then the gloves came off, "Because of the failure of the US government to pursue accountability and deliver redress to victims," Krause continued, "we ask the UNHRC to press the U.S. to initiate a new investigation of Kent State, with a particular focus on the forensic evidence that emerged in 2010."

Ultimately, the UNHRC expressed an appreciable degree of interest in Krause's Kent State campaign. While it is considered a homerun when one committee member follows up on an NGO presentation, Krause gained the interest of two United Nation Human Rights Committee members, Walter Kaelin and Yuval Shany, where both members asked probing questions about Kent State individually. Consequently, the Kent State shootings became a "notable topic" requiring the United States to respond the next day.

The "real" United States score emerged when Deputy Assistant Attorney General Roy L. Austin Jr. noted that, "In 1970, four students were killed — were murdered, nine were wounded." He went on to briefly discuss a past attempt at prosecution as a Civil Rights case, basically giving a legal one-liner as to why there is nothing that can be done now, and then promptly dismissed the new evidence, remarking that is had been looked at and noting that, "...it does not make an unprosecutable case, prosecutable."

Austin also mentioned that the statute of limitations had lapsed yet his bold re-classification of Kent State into murder could negate the statutory roadblock if the shootings were formally reclassified as "Murder" by the DOI — for which there is no statute of limitations. And with that offhanded dismissal, what many believe is among the grossest miscarriages of justice and abuses of human rights in American history was protected and preserved by Mr. Austin. Or was it?

Krause wasted no time responding, "Now that the US government and the Department of Justice have officially decreed that Kent State was murder before the UN, the Kent State Truth Tribal demands the government adhere to rules of civil society and once-in-for-all treat Kent State as MURDER — wherein the statute of limitations never lapses or expires. Examine the forensic evidence already."

Krause didn’t just show up at the U.N. Human Rights Committee Review to complain, what she and the bulk of Kent State victims and relatives seek is truth and justice — something there is a virtual consensus among them that our government has carefully avoided, even whitewashed. But while the May 4th Kent State massacre itself may be it may be far off in the distant past, the truth of what happened at Kent may well be much closer than we realize.

In fact, Mr. Austin framing the shooting as the crime of "murder" at the UNHRC was a huge step towards justice. "This is as official as it gets," Ms. Krause told us, "Roy L. Austin Jr. was probably the highest ranking U.S. official there, and the whole thing was being formally documented." She went on to tell us still incredulous, "This is the first time in 44 years that the United States government has ever copped to the fact that this was murder — so now we demand the US government treat Kent State as a murder." According to Krause, the government has never been conciliatory to her or her family from the outset of the nightmare to today. The horrific discovery that Allison had been gunned down by the Ohio National Guard was heard second hand, and her murder was punctuated by what Laurel has described as, "Men in uniform at the hospital murmuring that they should have shot more," when her family went to there to identify Allison's body. "No one from Kent State University or the U.S. government was there as we faced the horror the U.S. military inflicted on our family."

Krause explained that the cold-hearted rejection of her the U.S. government was bluntly brought home by way of contrast in Geneva when an emissary of the powerful High Commissioner of Human Rights' office approached her in person at the United Nations in Geneva and asked, "Is there anything we can do?" She was stunned. "Not one member of the U.S. government, Kent State University, or anyone involved in this wrong, ever reached out to us," she recalled. "That's when I realized how outrageous it was. Military personnel shot their weapons on an American college campus; the National Guard did their killing, and then they walked away. All they did was blame the students. It changed everything for us, the fact that we were embraced by a governing world body."

In her report to the UNHRC, Laurel Krause implored the Committee, noting, "With a solid history of the U.S. government failing to institute or organize credible, independent investigations into events where U.S. government agencies may be involved, we call on the United Nations to organize an independent team of inspectors to examine the new forensic evidence found at Kent State in 2010."

The forensic evidence she is referring to is the watershed discovery of an order to fire on the only available recording of the Kent State shooting, by internationally-accredited forensic experts Stuart Allen and Tom Owen in 2010. The tape was made by then Kent State student Terry Strubbe, who hung the microphone of a reel to reel recorder out of his dorm window May 4, 1970 and recorded 29 minutes, including the deadly 13 second volley.

Alan Canfora, Director of the Kent May 4 Center, a non-profit educational charity, located a cassette copy of the long-forgotten Strubbe tape in a Yale University archive in 2007 and urged journalists to examine its contents. Mr. Canfora was a prominent Kent student protestor in 1970 and was among those wounded by Ohio National Guard at Kent State on May 4, 1970. Regarded as an expert in the 1970 Kent State student protests and the Ohio National Guard shooting incident Canfora has dedicated his life since Kent to the pursuit of justice and the truth about what happened on May 4, 1970. Ultimately, the Cleveland based Plain Dealer newspaper, commissioned Allen and Owen to digitally analyze the Strubbe tape in the hope that technological advances in audio engineering would reveal more about the shooting.

Stuart Allen, the lead forensic audio expert who analyzed the Kent State tape, has provided expert forensic testimony and evidentiary support in over 20 federal districts and 40 states for the intelligence community, law enforcement, and the legal profession for almost 40 years. Using KGB software Allen verified a male voice shouting orders to the Guardsmen just seconds before the shooting began. Among the directives are the words, "Guard... All right, prepare to fire!" Followed by: "Get down!" And finally, "Guard, fi..." The final directive to fire is cut off by the sounds of what Allen claims are 67 shots in roughly 13 seconds.

Nearly two years later, in April 2012, Canfora, along with then Ohio Congressman Dennis Kucinich, wrote letters to the Department of Justice in an attempt to use the new digital, forensic audio findings to reopen an investigation into the shooting. According to a letter Mr. Canfora received from Assistant Attorney General Thomas E. Perez in response to Stuart Allen's discovery, the FBI also analyzed a digital copy of the
Yale version of the Strubbe tape.

The United States Department of Justice never contacted Mr. Allen nor asked Allen a question about his Kent State findings, nor did the Department of Justice listen to his enhanced CD. The net effect of the government’s examiners was their allegation that the voices they heard were “unintelligible,” “...no military-like voice commands to fire or otherwise were heard,” and the group could not reach “consensus.”

Interestingly, CNN’s Susan Candiotti covered the government’s refusal to reopen the case for the news network, even mentioning that the FBI destroyed the original Strubbe tape, and interviewed Mr. Allen. Upon clearly hearing the words that the FBI analysts said were “unintelligible,” Candiotti remarked to Stuart Allen on their 2012 news piece, “I get chills when I hear that.”

According to Canfora, the FBI analysts are the only ones on the planet who haven’t heard the command to fire. In a new development he recently told us, “…three forensic audio experts thus far agree there was a command to fire on May 4, 1970, and a new panel of additional experts in California will soon announce their own analyses. Our goal is to seek further audio forensic expert opinions in the USA and abroad until the evidence is verified as irrefutable. Then the government will have no choice but to agree and the Kent State cover-up will finally be destroyed.”

Canfora, who is professionally a law librarian, has carefully documented countless witness statements from various sources confirming or implying an order to fire on the May 4 Center Website, at www.May4.org.

“I’ve welcomed ongoing testing and verification of this unique recorded evidence of a verbal command to shoot and kill Kent State students on May 4, 1970. Continued scientific verification of this hidden evidence is currently underway. Our longstanding goal in Kent remains the same since 1970: to seek truth from facts and evidence. Due to our ongoing efforts soon the government and public will be compelled to acknowledge overwhelming verification of irrefutable digital, forensic audio evidence proving the command to fire revealed within the Strubbe recording.”

When Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Roy L. Austin, Jr. made his statement addressing the Kent State Truth Tribunal concerns, he dished out the party line, essentially parroting the substance of the Perez letter to Canfora. He explained there were double-jeopardy and statute of limitations issues preventing a new investigation. What slipped out, however, was his admission, as an official representative of the U.S. government, that the Kent State shooting deaths were murder.

For Alan Canfora it’s always been about the truth, not about prosecution — he longs for healing and honesty in the wake of the Ohio National Guard opening fire on unarmed students protesting America’s invasion of Cambodia in 1970. “We have a good strategy and we’re well-funded,” says Canfora, “so I’m confident it’s just a matter of time until we solve the Kent State murder mystery.”

Laurel is looking for the U.S. to come clean about the murder of her sibling and the others. “My sister Allison stood for peace May 4, 1970,” Krause says passionately, “she died for peace, the U.S. government has never let that be known. I stand with my sister and will continue to stand for my sister.” For more information about the Kent State Truth Tribunal visit www.truthtribunal.org and read her blog, www.mendocoastcurrent.wordpress.com.

According to Laurel and Allison’s father, Arthur Krause, who fought fiercely to bring the truth about his daughter’s murder to light until his dying breath, (to the extent of declining a $1.5 million bribe said to have been offered to him in the presence of author Peter Davies if he would drop his civil suit) there is a precious story that perfectly embodies Allison’s spirit. Mr. Krause at one point is said to have recounted that a couple days before the shooting, Allison Krause and her boyfriend Barry were on the campus Commons when they noticed a Guardsman with a flower in the barrel of his rifle. An officer asked the Guardsman if this was proper. The Guardsman removed the flower and the officer walked off. Allison picked up the flower, and said to the Guardsman, “Flowers are better than bullets.” What a beautiful sentiment — what a shame it had to be engraved on her tombstone.

May 4 Collection. Kent State University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives.

Ms. Laurel Krause, co-founder of the Kent State Truth Tribunal (KSTT)
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WASHINGTON, July 17, 2014 – The Defense Department teamed up with the Justice Department to produce an advanced training program for advocates who provide support to military victims of sexual assault, senior DoD and Justice Department officials said.

DoD collaborated with the Justice Department’s Office for Victims of Crime to develop a curriculum that expands on the skills learned in initial sexual assault response coordinator and sexual assault prevention and response victim advocate training.

The Advanced Military Sexual Assault Advocate Training is designed to enhance victim advocacy skills across the services, officials said.

“It was important to collaborate with the Office for Victims of Crime and tailor an advanced training to meet the needs of advocates supporting military victims,” said Army Maj. Gen. Jeffrey J. Snow, director of DoD’s Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office. “The professional advocates in the Defense Department -- both military and civilian -- provide critical support to victims of this crime and are central to building victim confidence. We are able to combine the Justice Department’s expertise in learning development with DoD’s victim-centered approach to training and policy.”

The advanced training is part of DoD’s ongoing efforts to educate response professionals and add to the quality of support sexual assault victims receive. The 20-hour online course provides sexual assault advocacy skills training through role-playing scenarios that require course participation and interactivity, building on the skills learned during initial certification. This training also counts toward continuing education requirements for biennial certification through the department’s Sexual Assault Advocate Certification Program.

“This groundbreaking partnership between the Office for Victims of Crime and the Department of Defense Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office makes state-of-the-art training available to sexual assault response coordinators and victim advocates who serve victims on military installations,” said Joyce E. Frost, the director of the Justice Department’s Office for Victims of Crime.

“As the Department of Defense moves forward with policy changes that affect victims of sexual assault in the military services, we believe this accessible and cost-effective online training will play an important role in changing the landscape of the military response to victims,” Frost added.

Recent policy changes at the Defense Department are designed to ensure that survivors of sexual assault have access to a trained and professional system of support. DoD created a special victims counsel program to provide free legal consultation and representation to victims of sexual assault throughout the justice process.

Another reform supports a special victim capability for the investigators and legal personnel who respond to allegations of sexual assault. Additionally, all response coordinators and victim advocates are certified through D-SAACP, a certification program established with the National Organization for Victim Assistance.

“We measure our results in the choices of victims, who are now reporting in unprecedented numbers,” Snow said. “Working with the Office for Victims of Crime to implement their best practices in DoD training promotes greater awareness of the issues victims face and enables our responders across the services to provide the support and resources victims need.”
By: Matthew Daly

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Department of Veterans Affairs says it has made “tremendous progress” in reducing a disability claims backlog that reached above 600,000 early last year. Members of Congress and the department’s assistant inspector general don’t believe it.

Allison Hickey, the VA’s undersecretary for benefits, told Congress that at the insistence of officials from President Barack Obama on down, the benefits backlog has been whittled down to about 275,000 — a 55 percent decrease from the peak.

Hickey’s claims were met with disbelief by some. Rep. Jeff Miller, R-Fla., chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, told her flatly that he thinks the VA’s numbers are inaccurate.

“I don’t believe anybody at the table is telling the truth from the VA,” Miller said at a contentious hearing that lasted more than five hours Monday night. “I believe you are hiding numbers.”

Asked if she trusted numbers produced by VA, the agency’s assistant inspector general, Linda Halliday, said no.

“I don’t want to say I trust them,” Halliday said.

In a report issued earlier Monday, Halliday said that in its rush to reduce the backlog of disability claims, the VA has made benefits payments of more than $85 million to veterans who lacked adequate medical evidence that they deserve them. Without improvements, the VA could make unsupported payments to veterans totaling about $371 million over the next five years for claims of 100 percent disability alone, Halliday said.

The IG’s office also found widespread problems at VA regional offices in Philadelphia and Baltimore, including mail bins full of disability claims and associated evidence that had not been electronically scanned for three years.

“Improved financial stewardship at the agency is needed,” Halliday told the House veterans panel. “More attention is critical to minimize the financial risk of making inaccurate benefit payments.”

Special initiatives designed to remove older claims and speed processing of new claims are worthwhile, Halliday said, but in some cases they “have had an adverse impact on other workload areas” such as managing appeals filed by veterans and reducing overpayments to veterans.

Hickey defended her agency, saying the department has spent the past four years redesigning and streamlining the way it delivers benefits and services to veterans.

Last year, the Veterans Benefits Administration, which she oversees, completed a record 1.2 million disability rating claims, Hickey said. The agency is on track to complete more than 1.3 million rating claims this year and pay a total of $67 billion in benefits — about half the VA’s budget, Hickey said. More than 90 percent of the claims are being processed electronically, she said.

The VA has long struggled to cope with disability claims. The backlog intensified in recent years as more soldiers returned from Iraq and Afghanistan, and as the VA made it easier for Vietnam-era veterans to get disability compensation stemming from exposure to Agent Orange.
The VA has set a goal to process all claims within 125 days at 98 percent accuracy in 2015, but so far has fallen far short. The agency now processes most claims within 154 days — or more than five months — at a 90 percent accuracy rate, compared with an accuracy rate of 86 percent three years ago, Hickey said. At one point, veterans were forced to wait an average nine to 10 months for their disability claims to be processed.

"It has never been acceptable to VA ... that our veterans are experiencing long delays in receiving the benefits they have earned and deserve," Hickey said, adding that she was "saddened and offended" by related problems that have plagued VA health centers in recent months. Investigators have found long waits for appointments at VA hospitals and clinics, and falsified records to cover up the delays.

Halliday, in her report, said she found similar problems with the benefits agency, including faulty claims processing that "increases the risk of improper payments to veterans and their families."

Inspectors surveying Philadelphia’s VA benefits center in June found mail bins brimming with claims and associated evidence dating to 2011 that had not been electronically scanned, she said. Inspectors also found evidence that staffers at the Philadelphia regional office were manipulating dates to make old claims appear newer. The findings are similar to problems in which investigators have found long waits for appointments at VA hospitals and clinics, and falsified records to cover up the delays.

In Baltimore, investigators discovered that an employee had inappropriately stored in his office thousands of documents, including some that contained Social Security data, “for an extensive period of time.” About 8,000 documents, including 80 claims folders, unprocessed mail and Social Security information of dead or incarcerated veterans, were stored in the employee’s office, Halliday said.

Kristen Ruell, an employee at the VA’s Pension Management Center in Philadelphia, told the committee that mail routinely “sat in boxes untouched for years” at the pension office. Instead of addressing the problem, she said, VA supervisors enacted a policy prohibiting taking photos.

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After VA officials in Washington issued a directive last year ordering that a backlog of claims older than 125 days be reduced, the Philadelphia office “took this to mean that they could change the dates of every claim older than six weeks,” Ruell said. While pension center managers later told the IG’s office that the mislabeling was based on a misunderstanding of the directive, Ruell said, “these behaviors are intentional.”

“The VA’s problems are a result of morally bankrupt managers that through time and (government service) grade have moved up into powerful positions where they have the power to and continue to ruin people’s lives,” Ruell said.

Follow Matthew Daly on Twitter: https://twitter.com/MatthewDalyWDC
ARmY REsERVe SOldiers come together to LEARN how to save lIVES

By Sgt. 1st Class Mark Bell

FORT MEADE, Md.-- Army Reserve Soldiers from the 200th Military Police Command and other major Reserve commands took time away from their military and civilian jobs to learn a skill that could save lives.

Twenty-five Soldiers, dressed in business casual, sat in a small room surrounded by large paper taped to the walls covered in words and phrases as a result of several group brainstorming activities during a week-long Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training course recently.

After completion of the course, Soldiers were qualified to teach the two-day ASIST course to Army Soldiers and civilians.

Brig. Gen. Phillip Churn, the commanding general of the 200th Military Police Command, took several minutes to talk with the course participants and expressed the importance of the program for Active Duty, Army National Guard and the Army Reserve Soldiers.

“This program is one of my top priorities,” he said. “We must give our Soldiers the proper education and resources to help our 200th MPCOM families. Some of us may only wear the uniform one weekend a month, but they are our family 365 days a year.”

Churn, who commands more than 14,000 Soldiers and the largest military police organization in the Army, said suicide prevention and saving lives is a critical mission for every Soldier.

“We must help our families who live in 44 states, and it starts right here in the classroom,” he said. “The information you are receiving today is critical for laying the foundation of a healthy Army Reserve family.”

ASIST is required by the Army for all personnel whose duties are likely to bring them in contact with Soldiers, civilians and family members who are in crisis, said David Dummer, the command’s Suicide Prevention Program Manager.

He said the Army estimates that these Soldiers and civilian employees, collectively referred to as “gatekeepers,” comprise about 10 percent of total personnel.

Since October, Dummer said the 200th MPCOM has completed 13 of 17 scheduled ASIST workshops and taught nearly 400 personnel how to help anyone who is contemplating suicide.

“The research-based ASIST curriculum was designed by LivingWorks, a global leader in suicide prevention,” Dummer said. “Instructors must follow the LivingWorks model and are required to meet eligibility criteria in order to maintain their certification.

At the conclusion of the workshop, Dummer said every brigade and direct reporting unit under the Fort Meade-based major Army Reserve command now has at least one ASIST instructor.

“We must take care of our own,” he said. “We stand shoulder-to-shoulder on the battlefield and back home in our communities across this great nation. Our Soldiers fight for our freedoms abroad and today, we take on a battle to ensure our formations and families have a voice and someone is there to listen to them in a time of need.”

He said the Army Reserve is a proud organization filled with people who are making a difference in the lives of their communities.

“As we never leave a comrade behind in harm’s way, and we will never leave an Army Reserve family behind in a time of need.”
ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF VISITS ROTC CADETS AT SUMMER TRAINING

By Alex McLaughlin, U.S. Army Cadet Command Public Affairs

FORT KNOX, Ken. (July 11, 2014) -- Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Ray Odierno spoke for more than an hour to Army ROTC Leadership Development Assessment Course Cadets here, Thursday, with a valuable message to help them in their journey as Army officers.

He took time with Cadets to share the wealth of experience he has gained during a 38-year career that has seen him hold many leadership positions. Covering a wide range of topics, Odierno touched on conflicts across the world and he addressed the dynamics of constantly changing technology and cultures. His main focus, however, was the magnitude of the effect the future officers will have in the Army.

“The world around us is becoming more complex,” Odierno said. “It will be much more difficult for you than it was for me when I was your age. The ability to move information is making people more aware. The ability to disseminate technology is increasing around the world.”

“Although the world continues to evolve there is one thing where we maintain a distinct advantage, our leaders,” Odierno said. “We have by far the best leaders in the world. We have the best educated and the best trained leaders. We empower our leaders to do their job. We invest in our leaders.”

Odierno’s words were meant to inspire the Leadership Development Assessment Course, known as LDAC, Cadets. However, he gave a stern warning against potential pitfalls that Cadets might experience during their time in the Army.

“You’ve got to learn from your mistakes,” Odierno said. “Don’t be a complacent leader. One pitfall I’ve seen in leaders is they look for instant gratification. You’ve got to do what is best for all your Soldiers in the long term. Do the tough right, and not the easy wrong. That is what makes a good leader.”

Odierno said Cadets should not underestimate the importance of their training at LDAC, and he stressed competence, commitment and character as key components of officership. “I can promise you that, early in your career, your character will be tested,” he said.

After Odierno’s talk, he opened the floor for LDAC Cadets for questions. Many Cadets asked about the importance of their training at LDAC, and he stressed that experience during their time in the Army.

“Leadership is not the same thing as management,” Odierno said. “Leadership is about inspiring others and empowering others to achieve a common goal.”

Odierno reassured LDAC Cadets they will be more relevant to the success of the Army than they may yet realize.

“Every single day something new is going on in the world that is potentially challenging stability,” Odierno said. “Your job in a few years will be to be a part of an institution that is responsible for defending this country. You are going to swear to defend this country against all enemies foreign and domestic and that is a big responsibility.”

(Editor’s note: Alex McLaughlin is a summer intern supporting the Cadet Summer Training Public Affairs Office at U.S. Army Cadet Command and Fort Knox, Kentucky.)
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A Brief History of West Point

West Point’s role in our nation’s history dates back to the Revolutionary War, when both sides realized the strategic importance of the commanding plateau on the west bank of the Hudson River. General George Washington considered West Point to be the most important strategic position in America. Washington personally selected Thaddeus Kosciuszko, one of the heroes of Saratoga, to design the fortifications for West Point in 1778, and Washington transferred his headquarters to West Point in 1779. Continental soldiers built forts, batteries and redoubts and extended a 150-ton iron chain across the Hudson to control river traffic. Fortress West Point was never captured by the British, despite Benedict Arnold’s treason. West Point is the oldest continuously occupied military post in America.

Several soldiers and legislators, including Washington, Knox, Hamilton, and John Adams, desiring to eliminate America’s wartime reliance on foreign engineers and artilleryists, urged the creation of an institution devoted to the arts and sciences of warfare.

President Thomas Jefferson signed legislation establishing the United States Military Academy in 1802. He took this action after ensuring that those attending the Academy would be representative of a democratic society.

Colonel Sylvanus Thayer, the “father of the Military Academy,” served as Superintendent from 1817-1833. He upgraded academic standards, instilled military discipline and emphasized honorable conduct. Aware of our young nation’s need for engineers, Thayer made civil engineering the foundation of the curriculum. For the first half century, USMA graduates were largely responsible for the construction of the bulk of the nation’s initial railway lines, bridges, harbors and roads.

After gaining experience and national recognition during the Mexican and Indian wars, West Point graduates dominated the highest ranks on both sides during the Civil War. Academy graduates, headed by generals such as Grant, Lee, Sherman and Jackson, set high standards of military leadership for both the North and South.

The development of other technical schools in the post-Civil War period allowed West Point to broaden its curriculum beyond a strict civil engineering focus. Following the creation of Army post-graduate command and staff schools, the Military Academy came to be viewed as the first step in a continuing Army education.

In World War I, Academy graduates again distinguished themselves on the battlefield. After the war, Superintendent Douglas MacArthur sought to diversify the academic curriculum. In recognition of the intense physical demands of modern warfare, MacArthur pushed for major changes in the physical fitness and intramural athletic programs. “Every cadet an athlete” became an important goal. Additionally, the cadet management of the Honor System, long an unofficial tradition, was formalized with the creation of the Cadet Honor Committee.

Eisenhower, MacArthur, Bradley, Arnold, Clark, Patton, Stilwell, and Wainwright were among an impressive array of Academy graduates who met the challenge of leadership in the Second World War. The postwar period again saw sweeping revisions to the West Point curriculum resulting from the dramatic developments in science and technology, the increasing need to understand other cultures and the rising level of general education in the Army.

In 1964, President Johnson signed legislation increasing the strength of the Corps of Cadets from 2,529 to 4,417 (more recently reduced to 4,000). To keep up with the growth of the Corps, a major expansion of facilities began shortly thereafter.

Another significant development at West Point came when enrollment was opened to women in 1976. Sixty-two women graduated in the class of 1980, to include Andrea Hollen, Rhodes Scholar. Just as women are a vital and integral part of the U.S. Army, so they are at West Point.

In recent decades, the Academy’s curricular structure was markedly changed to permit cadets to major in any one of more than a dozen fields, including a wide range of subjects from the sciences to the humanities.

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“I am very happy with the job [Carter] has done here,” said Greenert. “He has refined the curriculum and moved it in a direction that is refocused towards the fleet.”

During the ceremony, Greenert noted Carter’s accomplishments in completing the initial phases of the Naval Leadership Continuum, establishing the Navy Leadership and Ethics Center, and examining the future naval war at sea.

“Carter was the right leader at the right place at the right time,” said Greenert. “Thank you for setting the stage for future analysis, for future planning, and for future development. We’ll deep dive into the war at sea, Gardner will take it from here.”

Carter departs the NWC following his appointment to vice admiral and assignment as superintendent of the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland.

“Today I relinquish the most significant assignment of my career,” said Carter. “This past weekend I came back here to the hallways of the NWC. There was nobody here and I just wanted to walk through and soak in the flavor of the NWC.

“I reflected on the naval giants who have come before me. Their portraits are hanging all over the campus here - such history, such passion, and such success in shaping the Navy’s future.”

Carter, a Rhode Island native, took command of NWC as the 54th president and first naval flight officer in history to hold the position. While appointed as president, he refined the college’s educational and research programs and worked to reconnect NWC with the fleet.

“For the first time in the 130 year history of the NWC, this institution will be led by a member of the naval special warfare community, better known as the SEALs. Their motto is: Ready to lead, ready to follow, never quit, the only easy day was yesterday,” said Carter. “Rear Adm. Howe, I am sure you are ready to lead, and the last 12-months have shown me that every member of this remarkable command is ready to follow, and they will never quit.”

Howe, a U.S. Naval Academy, Naval Postgraduate School and National War College graduate, holds dual Master of Arts degrees in national security and reports from his most recent assignment as commander of Special Operations Command, Pacific.

“I am incredibly humbled, honored and excited to be standing in front of you as the 55th president of the NWC,” said Howe. “Rear Adm. Carter, thank you for your stalwart leadership over the last year at the NWC, the Navy’s home of strategic thought. A son of Rhode Island and clearly a rising star in the Navy, you have advanced this institution with intellectual initiative and relevance, and as you promised last year, you have respected, protected and promoted the institution.”

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Face of Defense: Marine Completes 90-pound Weight Loss

By Marine Corps Cpl. Tyler Viglione

MARINE CORPS RECRUIT DEPOT SAN DIEGO, Calif., July 17, 2014 – For many potential recruits, enlisting in the Marine Corps is as easy as talking to a recruiter. But for some, it takes some willpower.

Marine Corps Pvt. Alexander D. Klopfenstein, Platoon 1025, Bravo Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, had to put in some grueling work before he could even consider enlisting.

Klopfenstein was born in Bakersfield, California, but he moved around a lot during his high school years. Eventually, the family decided to settle down back in Bakersfield, where he became a member of the Bakersfield High School’s swim team until graduating in 2012.

Klopfenstein said he loved to swim and competed in the 50-, 200- and 500-meter races. It wasn’t until he graduated from high school, he added, that he started dealing with weight problems.

“When I was on the swim team, I would be on a very high-caloric diet,” the 20-year-old Marine said. “After the school year was over, I kept eating the way I had been and wasn’t doing enough exercise to burn it all off, which resulted in me gaining a substantial amount of weight.”

At the peak of his weight, and standing at 5 feet 11 inches, Klopfenstein weighed about 270 pounds. His dream always had been to pursue a life in the Marine Corps, he said, but he didn’t know if he would be able to serve because of his weight.

“When I first went to talk to the recruiter, they told me I was too big to join,” he said. “I knew that I had to lose the weight and get down to the Marine Corps standards because of how bad I wanted it.”

Klopfenstein said he began jogging every day and changed his diet to six small, healthy meals in pursuit of his goal. “The only thing that kept me motivated was that I have always wanted to become a Marine, and I wasn’t going to let the opportunity pass by,” he said.

Months passed while Klopfenstein stayed dedicated to his routine of jogging and eating correctly, and he began to notice the drop in his weight. His motivation and determination did not go unnoticed by the Marines in his recruiting station when he returned some time later.

“For about two months before Klopfenstein left for recruit training, he was in our office every day working on his pull-ups, crunches and sit-ups,” said Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Richard G. Guerrero, station commander, Recruiting Substation Bakersfield East. “We saw the motivation and knew how bad he wanted to be a Marine.”

Klopfenstein’s recruiter and Marines from their office used him as an example for others who wanted to join the Marine Corps and would often say, “If Klopfenstein can do it, you can, too,” explained Guerrero, a Los Angeles native.

In April 2014, Klopfenstein arrived here and began recruit training. During his training, he lost 25 more pounds, dropping his weight to 180 pounds.

Having completed all of the requirements in recruit training to earn the title Marine, Klopfenstein will now attend Marine Combat Training at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, California, and then move on to his military occupational specialty school as an intelligence specialist.

“When I first got to recruit training, I couldn’t even run 3 miles,” he said. “Now I can, and it feels amazing.”

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