

ALASKA POST

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February 24, 2017

Sorting the mail, blazing a trail: African-American women in WWII

Elizabeth M. Collins

"I'm going to send a white first lieutenant down here to show you how to run this unit."

The general's yell hung in the air, shocking the Soldiers lined up at attention. As chew-outs go, telling a major, a battalion commander, no less, that a lieutenant would be taking over was particularly degrading.

But the general didn't plan to send just any lieutenant. He planned to send a white lieutenant -- the implication, of course, was that the lieutenant would not just be white, but male. And the general was dressing down one of the highest-ranking African-American women in the Army, the commander of 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion. The battalion was the only black Women's Army Corps unit deployed to Europe in World War II.

"Over my dead body, sir," replied Maj. Charity Adams, not sure if she was most insulted by "white," "first lieutenant" or "white first lieutenant," she explained in her memoirs, "One Woman's Army: A black officer remembers the WAC."

She knew she might be court-martialed, so she planned to charge the general, whom she never names, with violating the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Command's rules against explicitly stressing segregation.



Battalion Commander Maj. Charity Adams and Executive Officer Capt. Abbie Noel Campbell inspect the first Soldiers of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion to arrive in England, February 15, 1945. The only African-American Women's Army Corps unit sent to Europe during World War II, the 6888th was responsible for clearing years' worth of backlogged mail in both England and France. Viewing their jobs as crucial to morale at the front, they processed some 65,000 pieces of mail a shift and worked three shifts a day. At the same time, the Soldiers faced constant prejudice and broke gender and racial barriers. (Photo Courtesy of the National Archives)

FORMING THE WAC

Adams was the first African-American woman to be commissioned into the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) at Fort Des Moines, Iowa, in the summer of 1942.

See ADAMS on page 4



U.S. Air Force Gen. Terrence O'Shaughnessy, Pacific Air Forces commander, and Chief Master Sgt. Anthony Johnson, Pacific Air Forces command chief, observe operations during a tour of the Central Heat and Power Plant (CHPP) during a base visit at Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska, Feb. 8. The CHPP uses about 180,000 tons of coal to provide heat and electricity for the Eielson mission and its residents year round. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Cassandra Whitman)

PACAF commander visits Eielson

Airman 1st Class Cassandra Whitman
354th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Gen. Terrence O'Shaughnessy, the Pacific Air Forces commander, and his command team, made their initial visit to Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska, Feb. 8-9. During his visit, Gen. O'Shaughnessy

learned about the 354th Fighter Wing mission, with emphasis on the future beddown of two squadrons of F-35A Lightning IIs. Additionally, he toured Eielson's Central Heat and Power Plant and visited with and thanked Airmen around the base. Beyond the gates of

See PACAF on page 4

North Pole students win Best in Nation, Verizon Innovative Learning App Challenge

Sharice Walker
Fairbanks North Star Borough
School District Director, Community
& Public Relations

In a first for Alaska, a team of North Pole Middle School students were named Best in Nation winner of the fifth Annual Verizon Innovative Learning app challenge. The App to help Veterans identify PTSD triggers earned the North Pole Middle School \$20,000 and their student team, a trip

to a technology conference in Florida.

The eight teams named Best in Nation will all receive \$20,000 for their school (\$5,000 for best in state and another \$15,000 for best in nation), the chance to build their concepts into working apps with experts from MIT and an all-expenses-paid trip to the Technology Student Association conference in Orlando, Fla. in June 2017.

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North Pole Middle School's Best in Nation, Verizon Innovative Learning App Challenge winners; Matthew Johnson (left), Malcolm Ode, Natalie Clemente, Cadence Young and teacher Anna Creamer pose with North Pole City Mayor Bryce Ward (back row, left), North Star Borough School District Superintendent Karen Gaborik, Lt. Col. Richard Sonnier, chief of Behavior Health at Medical Department Activity-Alaska, Fort Wainwright, and Chief Master Sgt. Alvin Dyer from the 354th Civil Engineer Squadron, Eielson AFB. (Photo courtesy, Fairbanks North Star Borough School District)

Military Saves Week promotion kicks off

Staff Report
Fort Wainwright Army Community Service



While saving money and getting out of debt is something military Families should always work toward, Military Saves Week, Feb. 27 thru March 3, highlights the importance of the issue and encourages Soldiers and Families to make a pledge to work toward building an emergency fund and nest egg, said Monica Teel, Army Community Service Financial Readiness program manager.

"The purpose is to improve mission readiness, resiliency and quality of life for Soldiers and families," she explained. "To reduce credit and loan debt, to promote saving for emergencies, large

See SAVING on page 7

Social media within limits

Staff Report
Fort Wainwright Public Affairs Office

Social media was one of the topics of discussion in the recent Community Action Council held here at Fort Wainwright, Feb. 1.

Social media has grown very popular among both young and old over the past few years. It is a good way to connect with family, friends

See SOCIAL on page 3



WEEKEND WEATHER



Friday
Snow likely.
High 36; low 17.



Saturday
Snow likely.
High 33; low around 6.



Sunday
Snow likely.
High 27; low around 9.

TAX ASSISTANCE CENTER

Fort Wainwright's Tax Assistance Center is serving all active-duty, military retirees from all branches and their family members with help with their 2016 personal income tax returns. The Tax Assistance Center is located in building 1051, Suite 9, near the law center on the north side of Fort Wainwright.

Walk-in hours are: Monday thru Wednesday, 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 5 p.m.;

Thursdays, noon to 7 p.m.;

Fridays, 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m.

For more information, call 353-2613.

Nutrition Corner: Vegetables of many colors

NUTRITION 101:

Did you know that the new 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (eighth edition) was recently released?

The Dietary Guidelines, required under the 1990 National Nutrition Monitoring and Related Research Act, is designed to help all Americans ages two and older eat a healthy diet. The key recommendations in the new document include eating a variety of vegetables of all colors.

Remember that different colors mean different nutrients and you should vary your vegetables from meal to meal and from day to day. The guidelines recommend include whole fruits and I would add to that – avoid getting your fruit intake from higher calorie juices.

Even 100% juice, which is better than juice drinks made with sugar, can have more calories and less fiber than whole

fruits. Make half of your grains whole as they contain more fiber and vitamins and minerals. Think out of the box for this one. No one says you have to stick to whole wheat pasta and brown rice.

Try something extraordinary like faro (fibrous on the outside and gooey on the inside) or quinoa (a bit smaller than faro but just as delicious and packs in some protein and fiber).

Choose only low fat and fat free dairy products. Aim for skim milk, 1% milk, low fat yogurt, and low fat cheeses; 2% milk is actually considered a high fat milk.

Choose a variety of lean proteins to include plant based proteins such as soy, beans, and peas, nuts, and seeds. Be sure to focus on what is good for you (fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and low fat dairy) and limit foods inconsistent with healthy eating patterns.

Nutrients to limit are saturated fats found in high fat animal products and coconut oil, trans fat found in processed baked goods and margarine, added sugars in candy and soda, and sodium in several pre-prepared meats and meals.

FEATURED FOOD: Eggplant

RECIPE SPOTLIGHT: Ratatouille

INGREDIENTS:

1.5 Tablespoons olive oil
2.5 garlic cloves, minced
1 eggplant, cut into ½ inch cubes
Salt to taste
1 cup grated parmesan cheese
2 zucchini, sliced
1 large onion, sliced into rings
2 cups sliced mushrooms
1 large green bell pepper, sliced
2 large tomatoes, chopped

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 350oF. Coat bottom and sides of a 1 ½ quart casserole dish with 0.5 tablespoon olive oil.

Heat 1tablespoon olive oil in a medium skillet over medium heat. Cook and stir garlic until lightly browned. Mix in parsley and eggplant. Cook and stir until eggplant is soft, about 10 minutes. Season with salt to taste.

Spread eggplant mixture evenly across bottom of prepared casserole dish. Sprinkle with a few tablespoons of Parmesan cheese. Spread zucchini in an even layer over top. Lightly salt and sprinkle with a little more cheese. Continue layering in this fashion, with onion, mushrooms, bell pepper, and tomatoes, covering each layer with a sprinkling of cheese.

Bake in preheated oven for 45 minutes

TRICARE'S Nurse Advice Line: The right choice for active adults

Staff Report

Medical Department Activity – Alaska

Do you know that more than half of all adults 65 and older have three or more chronic medical problems, such as heart disease, diabetes, cancer, or arthritis? Older adults can have multiple health problems and not know whether they need to see a doctor or can administer self-care. Have you considered TRICARE's Nurse Advice Line (NAL)?

If you are suffering from a rash, a sinus infection, or perhaps you just have a common cold; there is help! When you call the NAL, a registered nurse will help you assess if you can handle your health concern with self-care or if you need to see a medical professional.

Since its launch, the NAL has been able to increase patient safety and further ensure a positive patient experience. Military Health System (MHS) Patient Centered Medical Home (PCHM) team members can access live NAL information so they are aware of their patients' situation and can provide follow-up, if needed.

The NAL is a great medical assessment tool that provides access to care, especially after hours and when traveling, which is great for retirees on the move. When you don't know what kind of care you need, the NAL helps you access the right type of care at the right time. The NAL can also help you find a doctor and schedule next-day appointments at military hospitals and clinics when available.

The NAL is an easy option for beneficiaries to get information on their medical problems quickly and at any time. To access the NAL dial 1-800-TRICARE (874-2273) and select option 1. Get more information about the Nurse Advice Line on the TRICARE website, at www.tricare.mil/NAL.

MEDDAC Minute

Important Phone Numbers

Emergency: 911
24 Hour Nurse Advice Line:
1 (800) 874-2273, Opt. 1
Appointment Line: 361-4000
Behavioral Health: 361-6059
Benefits Advisor: 361-5656
Immunizations: 361-5456
Information Desk: 361-5172
Patient Advocate: 361-5291
Pharmacy Refills: 361-5803
Tricare On-Line:
www.tricareonline.com
United Health Care:
uhcmilitarywest.com,
(877) 988-9378

PERFORMANCE TRIAD TIP

Do you have a positive attitude about losing weight?

Your attitude has everything to do with your ability to be successful! A negative attitude is a path to failure. But a positive attitude will lead you to success.

DO YOU KNOW JOE?

We want to hear from you and starting June 20, the Joint Outpatient Evaluation System will be randomly mailed to beneficiaries requesting input on appointment satisfaction. Your responses will assist Medical Department Activity - Alaska leadership to improve services and your overall experience. Look for your envelope in the mail.

STAY FIT AND INFORMED

A Performance Triad app has been launched by Army Medicine to assist Soldiers and Family members in creating healthy nutrition, activity and sleeping habits.

The app is free and is available by searching "Performance Triad" on your mobile device's app store.

NEED LAB RESULTS?

No need to come into Bassett Army Community Hospital or call into your provider. You can get lab results, schedule medication refills, schedule appointments and more through TRICARE Online. Go to www.tricare.mil to log in or create an account.

WALK-IN CLINIC

Beneficiaries 18 and older can utilize the Walk-in Clinic Nurse option when needing to be seen for strep throat screening, urinary tract infection screening, pregnancy testing, blood pressure monitoring, suture removal, wart removal and sexually transmitted disease checks. The clinic is open 7:30 to 11:30 a.m. and 1 to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. For more information call 361-5833.

SAFELY DISPOSE OF MEDICATIONS

Bassett ACH is set to receive your expired or no longer needed medications through our MedSafe program during regular pharmacy hours. The MedSafe box is located inside the main entrance across from the information desk.

U.S. Army Medical Department Activity-Alaska, Army Medical Homes earn national recognition

Brandy Ostanik

Medical Department Activity-Alaska Public Affairs

The primary care Army Medical Homes at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Fort Greely, and Fort Wainwright (Kamish), and Bassett Army Community Hospital, have been recognized by the National Committee for Quality Assurance as Patient Centered Medical Homes.

"JBER, Bassett ACH and Kamish achieved initial recognition in 2014 and were recertified this year; earning the highest possible level 3 recognition," says Lt. Col. Jeremy Beachcamp, chief of primary care at Bassett ACH. "Fort Greely, the newest Army primary care clinic in Alaska having opened in Dec. 2015, achieved their initial recognition this year on their very first attempt."

The NCQA is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving health care quality. Since its founding in 1990, NCQA has been a central figure in driving health improvement throughout the healthcare system. As part of the recognition process, NCQA reviewed hundreds of documents submitted by the four USA MEDDAC-AK AMHs that provided fact-based evidence that the clinic was conducting business as a true Medical Home.

"The importance of this recognition is not a shiny plaque on the wall but rather it represents our commitment to delivering the very highest quality primary care every day to our Soldiers, their families, and retirees," says Beachcamp. "I'm proud that our beneficiaries in Alaska, from JBER to Delta Junction and points in-between, are receiving care within their Medical Homes that meet the highest national standards to which other clinics aspire".

The NCQA measures the ability of medical facilities to provide quality healthcare through standardized,

objective measurement guidelines. NCQA requires recognized facilities to enhance access to care and patients' continuity with their provider teams, keep track of patient data to help manage patients' wellbeing, plan and manage care using evidence-based practices, provide self-care support and community resources, as well as track and coordinate tests, referrals and other care for patients. Finally, clinics have to show that they measure their performance and patients' feedback to continue improving the quality of care.

Here's what patients can expect from their Army Medical Homes here in Alaska.

A PERSONAL PROVIDER

Each patient has an ongoing relationship with a personal Physician, Physician Assistant or Nurse Practitioner who is trained to provide first contact, continuous and comprehensive care.

PHYSICIAN DIRECTED MEDICAL PRACTICE

The personal physician leads a team(s) of individuals at the practice level who collectively take responsibility for ongoing patient care.

WHOLE PERSON ORIENTATION.

The personal provider is responsible for providing all of the patient's health care needs or for arranging care with other qualified professionals.

COORDINATED AND INTEGRATED CARE

Each patient's care is coordinated and integrated across all elements of the health care system and the patient's community.

QUALITY AND SAFETY FOCUS

All members of the healthcare team are focused on ensuring high quality care in the medical home.

IMPROVED ACCESS

In the PCMH, enhanced access to care options are available through same day appointments, after-hours care, secure messaging (Relay Health), Tricare On-line, virtual health (telemedicine), and other innovative options for communication between patients, their personal physician and practice staff. Our expectation is urgent appointment requests will be seen within 24 hours and that routine/wellness appointments will be seen within 7 days when requested.

PCMHs have consistently performed

better than non-PCMHs with higher patient and staff satisfaction, quality and safety outcomes such as cancer prevention, medical readiness categories, polypharmacy and behavioral health admission rates, as well as cost containment with decreasing ER utilization, medical board timelines, and per capita cost.

"To earn and retain the trust of our beneficiaries, USA MEDDAC AK is committed to innovation, continuous process improvement and a laser-like focus on safe, quality patient care," says Beauchamp. "NCQA PCMH recognition affirms our progress in achieving these goals, but ultimately it's that beneficiary and their experience of care who remains as the central focus within our AMHs".

ALASKA POST

The Interior Military News Connection

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The ALASKA POST – The Interior Military News Connection

History Snapshot: African-American History Month: Segregated regiments construct the Alcan Highway

L. Amber Phillippe
Fort Wainwright Landscape Historian
Lisa Graham
former Cultural Resources Manager

The black Soldiers who helped construct the Alcan Highway, served during a time of intense discrimination in American society against African Americans. Black Soldiers were rarely allowed to serve in active combat roles.

The accepted viewpoint of the time was that black Soldiers were not equal in skill or capabilities to their white counterparts, and they were segregated into all-black units, usually serving under the command of white officers.

This discrimination was even seen in the placement of the units in Alaska during the highway project. Steps were taken to position the all-black units away from settlements in order to control and limit the interactions black Soldiers had of local white and native populations while in Alaska.

During this time of segregation, Soldiers of the 93rd, the 95th, the 97th Reg-

iments and the 388th Battalion worked at an amazing pace in difficult conditions and successfully helped complete the construction of the highway in less than two years and on November 20, 1942 when the Alaska Highway officially opened.

Over a million African Americans served during World War II and ultimately the hard work and determination of these Soldiers; proved that black Soldiers should be on equal footing as white Soldiers, leading to the desegregation of the Army in 1948.

If you are interested in learning more about building of the Alaska Highway and the black regiments that helped build it, check out "The World War II Black Regiment that Built the Alaska Military Highway" by William E. Griggs and Philip J Merrill or the PBS documentary titled "Building the Alaska Highway."

Like Historic Photos? Check out the Fort Wainwrights Cultural Pinterest page for more history snapshots, at www.pinterest.com/fwacultural/.



93rd Engineers standing in the chow line at Morley Bay, Yukon. (Image courtesy, National Archives Bureau of Public Roads)

SOCIAL

Continued from page 1

and others over the vast distances tied together via the Internet. The various platforms that include Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Flickr, YouTube, Snapchat and others allow users to share ideas, photos, videos, music and other items that can be converted to a digital signal.

Many see social media as a passing "fad" or only for the young, but many others see it as the beginning structure of the "global village" where people around the globe can come together as well as any physically co-located community and share common ideas and interests. We will have to wait and see what the future will hold for this new method of communication.

Social media is the digital space where people can converse on many topics from recent vacations, pet photos and videos, other fun adventures in one's daily life.

Operational security should be the

primary concern. Below are items to consider from Department of the Army when posting to social media:

- If you aren't comfortable placing the same information on a sign in your front yard, don't put it online.
- Do not post personally identifiable information.
- Do not reveal sensitive information about yourself such as schedules and event locations.
- Do not post information that can damage Army operations.
- Take a good look at security settings. Set security options to allow visibility to "friends only."
- Closely review photos and videos to make sure they don't give away sensitive information.

For more information on online security, visit www.onguardonline.gov.

Social media is also a place where individuals and groups can discuss weightier issues that are affecting people in the U.S. and around the world. Some of these discussions involve social, religious

and political issues. The use of social media by military personnel and federal workers during these times can sometimes be tricky.

The following guidance has been provided concerning social media

Civilian and military personnel may generally express their personal views on public issues or political candidates via social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, or personal blogs, much the same as they would be permitted to write a letter to the editor of a newspaper. If, when expressing a personal opinion, personnel are identified by a social media site as DoD employees, the posting must clearly and prominently state that the views expressed are those of the individual only and not of the Department of Defense.

As previously noted, active duty military members and further restricted civilian employees are prohibited from participating in partisan political activity. Therefore, while these employees may "follow" "friend" or "like" a political party or candidate running for partisan office, they may not post links to, "share" or "re-tweet" comments or tweets from

the Facebook page or twitter account of a political party or candidate running for partisan office. Such activity is deemed to constitute participation in political activities. Social media guidance for military members [FAQs Political Activities and Members of the Armed Forces] and civilian employees [Social Media and the Hatch Act] offers advice on how to avoid violating the rules.

Service members must also be careful not to comment, post, or link to material that violates the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) or Service regulation. Examples include showing contempt for public officials, releasing sensitive information, or posting unprofessional material that is prejudicial to good order and discipline under the UCMJ.

General guidance on the Hatch Act may be found at the U.S. Office of Special Counsel website at www.osc.gov.

For more information on the military or civilian political activity, Hatch Act or DoD Directive 1344.10, contact the legal office 353-6554.

PACAF

Continued from page 1

Eielson, O'Shaughnessy took time to visit Fort Greely and Clear Air Force Station.

At a base-wide All Call, O'Shaughnessy shared his priorities for PACAF and how Eielson Airmen contribute to the command's warfighting mission.

"One of my top priorities is to maintain the capability and capacity to win, not only today, but tomorrow," said O'Shaughnessy. "Eielson offers the ability to train our operational force at a high level with our professional aggressor team, which ensures our Airmen are ready to fight at a moment's notice."

O'Shaughnessy learned what makes Eielson unique including the premiere training Alaska offers the Air Force.

"Eielson brings the ability to train at a level that is unmatched anywhere else in the world," said O'Shaughnessy. "Not only do we have the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex that is absolutely amazing and provides the aircrew unique training, but the F-22s at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson add a fifth generation element to provide a venue that is matchless for our joint

partners and allies."

With the arrival of the F-35s fast approaching, O'Shaughnessy offered insight on how it will contribute to the future mission at Eielson.

"The first thing is to get excited," said O'Shaughnessy. "The arrival of the F-35 is an amazing opportunity. It's an evolution in combat power coming to the Indo-Asia-Pacific region over and above what we already have, and it's the best the United States has to offer."

The general offered insight to Airmen on how his previous assignments helped prepare him to be the commander of PACAF.

"I've been very fortunate with the opportunities the Air Force has afforded me in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region," said O'Shaughnessy. "I've had multiple assignments in this region so I have a good understanding of the challenges and opportunities PACAF Airmen are faced with. It helps me appreciate the tough conditions they have to work in."

Chief Master Sgt. Anthony Johnson, the PACAF command chief, spoke with members of Eielson's enlisted force to gain a better understanding of the unique challenges Airmen in The Last Frontier encounter in the base's harsh conditions.

"I think readiness and development are very import-

ant," said Johnson. "These goals fall succinctly in line with the commander's priorities for us as Airmen in this theater."

The command chief also provided his perspective on enlisted development and leadership.

"I like to see the empowerment of our NCOs to be able to make pertinent decisions while doing the things they are expected to do with commander's intent," said the chief. "For me, empowerment goes a long way to mission success and we should be able to tap and leverage that to make sure we are always ready to meet the needs and demands of this theater."

Before departing, the general and chief expressed their gratitude to the Icemen Team for their professionalism and willingness to complete the mission.

"I just want to thank Eielson's Icemen," said O'Shaughnessy. "Chief and I are incredibly impressed. You work in a challenging environment and not only survive, but thrive."

11515045
North Wind Behavioral Services
Counseling Services
2 x 2

17516059
Once Upon a Child
Grab Bag Promo Ad
2 x 5

18516035
Valley RV Center, Inc.
Now Open!
2 x 5

18516104
St. John Baptist Church
64th Anniversary Ad
2 x 4

ADAMS

Continued from page 1

The push to include African-Americans in the WAAC had faced challenges, but the efforts of African-American newspapers and activists, including Mary McLeod Bethune, a member of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Black Cabinet," and her good friend First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, had ultimately prevailed. A quota was set for 10 percent of the total WAAC, which became the Women's Army Corps (WAC) about a year later.

There was space for 40 in the first officer training class, and it was clear they would have to be the best of the best.

"I was sure I would never pass," recalled Capt. Violet Hill, Company D commander. "At that time, I had completed two years of college. ... Their goal was 40 Negro women who would then form the officer corps that would train the subsequent enlisted women. ... Their standards, their expectations and their hopes were high. ... They preferred women who had not only the education background but also some maturity and work experience, which would be an asset in embarking on an endeavor that was experimental and had a lot riding on it."

"There's no doubt that in that first class, both African-American as well as white women, they did really select the best that they could to give the Women's Army Corps the best possible chances," agreed Dr. Francoise Bonnell, director of the U.S. Army Women's Museum, noting that the women were all professionals, some with masters' and law degrees.

SEGREGATION

While the WAAC/WAC was segregated with separate "Negro" companies and barracks -- Adams writes of her shock at being told to step aside with all the other "colored" girls — it was less so than the rest of the Army, according to Bonnell.

The WAC was so small that all of the Soldiers usually trained together, for example, and an attempt to designate colored tables in the cafeteria lasted only a few days when that first group of African-American WACs refused to eat. And in one of her assignments, Adams worked in an all-white office.

That's not to say the women didn't encounter blatant racism.

Travel, especially throughout the South, could be especially humiliating. "The incident that I'll never forget is when there were four of us having to change trains," remembered Staff Sgt. Evelyn Martin. "I was informed by a train conductor, we -- and he used the n-word -- could not ride the train. I kept my composure, and I said, 'We have to ride it. The military has to know where we are.' In order to ride that train, the officer of the day ... and an MP and the conductor -- they found a piece of wrapping paper and some cord and separated us from the white passengers."

Adams tells similar stories, and as she rose through the ranks, her very uniform started to raise questions: "I was waiting with my parents in the small, dirty, and crowded 'colored' waiting room in the Atlanta railroad station," she recalled. "There were very many military personnel roaming around the station ... so the MPs were constantly moving throughout the crowd. ... Two white MPs ... addressed me.

"Some people have — there was a question — 'Yes, I see. You want to know if I really am a major in the U.S. Army. ... Names? I can see your rank. Your serial numbers? Your unit? Location? The name of your commanding officer?'" Adams asked, advising the men to report themselves before she had the chance. They learned a lesson, she wrote, adding that another MP refused to question her when confronted by a suspicious passenger.

Those reactions were harbingers of the surprise and hostility she and her executive officer, Capt. Abbie Noel Campbell, encountered when they flew to Europe in January 1945 in advance of their battalion. They were, she wrote, "among U.S. military personnel who could not believe Negro WAC officers were real. Salutes were slow in coming and, frequently, returned with great reluctance."

FIRST IN EUROPE

The two women were literally the first black WACs in Europe and, technically, they weren't supposed to be there. Although black Army nurses served in combat zones, when African-Americans

had first been allowed to join the WAC, it had been with the proviso that they could never serve overseas. It only happened because of the "needs of the Army," Bonnell said.

"That's how we oftentimes see policies and progress. ... After the D-Day invasion ... the mail very quickly became backed up. ... There was also a push by African-American groups to try to force the War Department to allow and to actually create requisitions for African-American WACs in the European Theater. ... Eventually, based on this need, a requisition was sent out for 800 women."

Many of the women were hand-picked. They were blazing a trail and they were expected to excel. They had to be, as Adams told her troops, "the best WAC unit ever sent into a foreign theater. ... The eyes of the public would be upon us, waiting for one slip in our good conduct or performance."

"One day I came home from work ... and the girls said ... 'Your name's on the board,'" remembered Staff Sgt. Essie O'Bryant. "There was a list of girls selected to go overseas. ... I went in to my commanding officer [Capt. Campbell] ... and she said, 'I selected the girls that I would like to go overseas with me.' ... It was an honor for her to think that much of me."

OVERWHELMING TASK

After long, fraught journeys across the Atlantic that involved shadowing by German U-boats and a V-1 "buzz" bomb that landed just as some of them disembarked in Scotland, the Soldiers of the 6888th arrived in Birmingham, England, in February 1945.

They were stationed at an old school and it must have been a dismal prospect. Mattresses were made from straw; showers were in the courtyard and heat was almost nonexistent.

In a large warehouse, stacked ceiling-high were piles of mail, years' worth of letters and packages waiting to be delivered to millions of service members, civilians and aid workers all over the continent.

It was a massive undertaking, but the women knew mail from home meant everything to Soldiers on the line, so they buckled down and worked three shifts a day, seven days a week. (This was actually the reason the general accused Adams of incompetence. He expected to inspect the whole battalion and was livid when only a third of the Soldiers were available. He later apologized and told her he respected her for standing up to him.)

"They supplied us with files, the names of men who were enlisted in the Army in the European Theater," remembered Pfc. Dorothy Turner. "You know what was so exciting about that? There was part of the history of these men on the files. ... You could see the last time that this man got mail and you were so determined to find him because you had this pile of mail that he should have gotten over the years and packages. ... You knew that he had not gotten any news from his family or friends ... and you were determined to try to find him."

It required immense attention to detail. For the same reasons the mail had gotten backlogged in the first place, many Soldiers simply didn't have the time to keep their address cards up to date as their units advanced, which sometimes required two or three changes a week. Soldiers also changed units. And then there were the name duplications.

"At one point," Adams wrote, "we had more than 7,500 Robert Smiths. ... There were, of course, tens of thousands of Roberts with other last names. Moreover, there were variations of first names, nicknames that are used in the United States: Bob, Rob, Bobby, Robby, Bert, and so forth, just for Robert."

In addition to tracking down Soldiers, the WACs also had to censor the mail, blacking out sensitive information. They had to print V-mail cards. (The military would photograph certain letters and send them overseas on microfilm. It saved space and weight but was time-consuming.) They processed some 65,000 pieces of mail a shift and finished a six-month job in three. Then they were off to Rouen, France, to tackle another backlog, and then Paris.

Tragedy struck in France, where three of the WACs died in a jeep accident while on furlough. They were buried in Normandy.

Furloughs were common, however, and the women found time to relax and travel despite their heavy workloads. The 6888th veterans also all spoke of how friendly the people of were, particularly the people of Birmingham, welcoming the WACs into their

homes and treating them with a respect many had never experienced at home — or with their own countrymen in Europe.

STANDING UP TO RACISM

Although black and white WACs had initially used the same Red Cross hotels and recreation facilities without incident, one day Red Cross officials proudly announced that they had procured a separate hotel for the 6888th in London, suggesting the WACs would prefer it that way. It was a nice hotel, but Adams told them, "as long as I am a commanding officer ... not one member of that unit will ever spend one night here."

As far as she knew, no one ever did. It was, she wrote, "an opportunity to stand together for a common cause."


The final insult came on the troop ship home. Adams, who would soon be promoted to lieutenant colonel, was the highest-ranking woman aboard, leaving her in command of not only her unit, but also a white Army Nurse Corps detachment. They refused to accept Adams' authority. Tired and fed up, Adams struggled to keep her temper under control:

"If you cannot go home under my command, I suggest you pack your belongings. ... We sail at midnight. You have 20 minutes to get off. I don't care whether you go home or not, but if you go, you go under my command." Adams turned to make a dramatic exit and almost ran into the ship's captain. He corrected her: The women would have only 17 minutes to disembark. No one did.

"What's more important? The military policies and customs and courtesies or blatant racism?" asked Bonnell, noting that military courtesies usually won out. She explained that after the war, many of the WACs used their GI Bill benefits for college and even graduate school, becoming educators, lawyers, community leaders and social activists. Adams herself became a college dean.

"The experience of African-American women at this particular time lays the groundwork for change, not only for their race, but also for women in general," she continued. "We see progress in terms of the changes in military policy and opportunities taking place for women in part because of the challenges women experienced in World War II, none more so than African-American women."

Editor's Note: One of the last veterans of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, Cpl. Alyce Dixon, died at the age of 108, Jan. 27, 2016, as Soldiers began work on this story. All of the veterans' quotes come from oral histories supplied by the Veterans History Project and Lt. Col. Charity Adams Earley's memoirs. If you or someone you know served in the 6888th, we want to hear from you.



Army Emergency Relief
Soldiers helping Soldiers

The Army Emergency Relief Campaign
February 1- May 15, 2017

The campaign gives each active duty military and retired service member of the Army the opportunity, through on-the-job solicitations, to contribute voluntarily to the program.

Donations can be made through Unit Team Captains/Key Workers or by visiting <https://www.aerhq.org>. Remember to select Ft. Wainwright.

At Army Emergency Relief we help Soldiers and Families like you and yours everyday with scholarships, grants, and loans that are always free of interest and fees.

For more information please call (907)353-7453
Welcome Center 3401 Santiago Avenue

www.wainwright.armymwr.com
@WainwrightMWR #WainwrightMWR #WainwrightACS

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All You Can Eat Ad
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Fort Wainwright Family & MWR

Weekly Events

February 24 – March 3

27 Military America Saves Week
February 27 through March 3
Classes daily from 11:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.

Learn how you can become stronger— financially— with help from ACS Financial Readiness.

February 27: Retirement Planning in 10, 20, 30, and 40 years

February 28: New Blended Retirement System

March 1: R&R on a Budget

March 2: Basics of Savings

March 3: Car Buying Seminar

Army Community Service, building 3401, 2nd floor
Call 353-4369, registration required

28 Tuesday Trivia Night
February 28
7 p.m.

Challenge your buddies to find out who is the smartest in the group. Trivia Night at the Warrior Zone will have your brain twisting and turning, searching for the answers!

Warrior Zone, building 3205
Call 353-1087

2 Ice Dogs Meet & Greet
March 2
6 to 7:30 p.m.

Skate with the Ice Dogs! The team will be out in full force and ready to sign autographs and take pictures with their biggest fans. This family event includes free skating, as well as hot chocolate and cookies!

Physical Fitness Center Ice Rink, building 3709
Call 353-72223

2 Read Across America
March 2
5 to 7 p.m.

Oh what fun we will have! Grab your hat and read with the cat... the Cat in the Hat, that is! Help the Post Library celebrate Dr. Seuss' birthday with reading, games, crafts, and other fun activities.

Last Frontier Community Activity Center, building 1044
Call 353-2642

2 Thursday Night Ski at Birch Hill
March 2
4:30 to 9 p.m.

Don't miss out on the last night of Thursday Night Ski offered at Birch Hill Ski & Snowboard Area this season. Birch Hill is the only place in the area that offers lighted skiing, and makes for a great way to get the most out of winter. Come celebrate the snow with us!

Birch Hill Ski & Snowboard Area, building 1172
Call 353-1098 or 361-6349



Upcoming Events

non-stop fun for everyone

12 Paint and Pour
March 12
4 to 6 p.m.

Amaze yourself. Come enjoy complimentary beverages, and leave with a hand-painted masterpiece (see right). Mingle with friends, get inspired by a local artist, and discover a new way to unwind! This is the final Paint and Pour before summer hits; you don't miss out!

Last Frontier Community Activity Center, building 1044
Call 353-7755

13 Teen Babysitter Certification Course
March 13 through 16
Noon to 6 p.m.

Is your teen looking to earn a little extra cash? Have they considered babysitting? Join CYS for Babysitter Certification during Spring Break, and learn what it takes to care for a child, including basic emergency situations and babysitter etiquette.

Youth Center, building 4109
Call 353-7713, registration required



PLEASE VISIT WAINWRIGHT.ARMYMWR.COM FOR A COMPLETE EVENT CALENDAR



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Eielson Air Force Base

Friday – 24th

LAP SWIM, 6 to 8 a.m. and 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Pool inside Baker Field House, Eielson AFB, Call 377-1925.

FREE BOUNCE, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Eielson City Center, Eielson AFB, Call 377-2642.

BALLISTICS, 11 a.m., Baker Field House, Eielson AFB, Call 377-1925.

OPEN SWIM, 5 to 8 p.m., Pool inside Baker Field House, Eielson AFB, Call 377-1925.

TEEN BREAK, 7 to 10:40 p.m., Eielson Youth Center, Eielson AFB, Call 377-6336.

FENCES (PG-13), 7 p.m., Ernie Walker Theater, Eielson AFB, Call 377-2269.

Saturday – 25th

LAP SWIM, 10 a.m. to noon, Pool inside Baker Field House, Eielson AFB, Call 377-1925.

FREE BOUNCE, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Eielson City Center, Eielson AFB, Call 377-2642.

PIYO, 9 a.m., Baker Field House, Eielson AFB, Call 377-1925

TABATA BOOTCAMP, 10 a.m., Baker Field House, Eielson AFB, Call 377-1925

COLLEGE FOOTBALL, 11 a.m., 354 Sports Bar inside Yukon Club, Eielson AFB, Call 377-5219.

OPEN SWIM, 1 to 7 p.m., Pool inside Baker Field House, Eielson AFB, Call 377-1925.

PASSENGERS (PG-13), 7 p.m., Ernie Walker Theater, Eielson AFB, Call 377-2269.

Sunday – 26th

LAP SWIM, 10 a.m. to noon, Pool inside Baker Field House, Eielson AFB, Call 377-1925.

FREE BOUNCE, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Eielson City Center, Eielson AFB, Call 377-2642.

OPEN SWIM, 1 to 7 p.m., Pool inside Baker Field House, Eielson AFB, Call 377-1925.

SING (PG), 7 p.m., Ernie Walker Theater, Eielson AFB, Call 377-2269.

Monday – 27th

FREE BOUNCE, 10 a.m. TO 7 P.M., Eielson City Center, Eielson AFB, Call 377-2642.

BALLISTICS, 11 a.m., Baker Field House, Eielson AFB, Call 377-1925.

RIPPED, 5:15 p.m., Baker Field House, Eielson AFB, Call 377-1925.

TABATA BOOTCAMP, 6:30 p.m., Baker Field House, Eielson AFB, Call 377-1925.

Tuesday – 28th

SPIN, 5:30 a.m., Baker Field House, Eielson AFB, Call 377-1925.

LAP SWIM, 6 to 8 a.m. and 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Pool inside Baker Field House, Eielson AFB, Call 377-1925.

REUNION BRIEFINGS, 9:30 to 10:30 a.m., Airman & Family Readiness Center, Eielson AFB, Call 377-2178.

FREE BOUNCE, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Eielson City Center, Eielson AFB, Call 377-2642.

PIYO, 10:30 a.m., Baker Field House, Eielson AFB, Call 377-1925

LADIES BOOK CLUB, 5 p.m., Eielson Library, Eielson AFB, Call 377-3174.

SPIN, 5:30 p.m., Baker Field House, Eielson AFB, Call 377-1925.

Wednesday – 1st

LAP SWIM, 6 to 8 a.m. and 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Pool inside Baker Field House, Eielson AFB, Call 377-1925.

FREE BOUNCE, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Eielson City Center, Eielson AFB, Call 377-2642.

BALLISTICS, 11 a.m., Baker Field House, Eielson AFB, Call 377-1925.

OPEN SWIM, 5 to 8 p.m., Pool inside Baker Field House, Eielson AFB, Call 377-1925.

RIPPED, 5:15 p.m., Baker Field House, Eielson AFB, Call 377-1925.

TABATA BOOTCAMP, 6:30 p.m., Baker Field House, Eielson AFB, Call 377-1925.

Thursday – 2nd

SPIN, 5:30 a.m., Baker Field House, Eielson AFB, Call 377-1925

LAP SWIM, 6 to 8 a.m. and 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Pool inside Baker Field House, Eielson AFB, Call 377-1925.

FREE BOUNCE, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Eielson City Center, Eielson AFB, Call 377-2642.

STORYTIME, 10 a.m. to 11 a.m., Eielson Library, Eielson AFB, Call 377-3174.

DEPLOYMENT BRIEFING, 1 to 2 p.m., Airman & Family Readiness Center, Eielson AFB, Call 377-2178.

OPEN SWIM, 5 to 8 p.m., Pool inside Baker Field House, Eielson AFB, Call 377-1925.

SPIN, 5:30 p.m., Baker Field House, Eielson AFB, Call 377-1925

ZUMBA, 6:30 p.m., Baker Field House, Eielson AFB, Call 377-1925

Friday – 3rd

LAP SWIM, 6 to 8 a.m. and 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Pool inside Baker Field House, Eielson AFB, Call 377-1925.

FREE BOUNCE, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Eielson City Center, Eielson AFB, Call 377-2642.

BALLISTICS, 11 a.m., Baker Field House, Eielson AFB, Call 377-1925.

OPEN SWIM, 5 to 8 p.m., Pool inside Baker Field House, Eielson AFB, Call 377-1925.

377-1925.

TEEN BREAK, 7 to 10:40 p.m., Eielson Youth Center, Eielson AFB, Call 377-6336.

COLLATERAL BEAUTY (PG-13), 7 p.m., Ernie Walker Theater, Eielson AFB, Call 377-2269.

Saturday – 4th

LAP SWIM, 10 a.m. to noon, Pool inside Baker Field House, Eielson AFB, Call 377-1925.

FREE BOUNCE, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Eielson City Center, Eielson AFB, Call 377-2642.

PIYO, 9 a.m., Baker Field House, Eielson AFB, Call 377-1925

TABATA, 10 a.m., Baker Field House, Eielson AFB, Call 377-1925.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL, 11 a.m., 354 Sports Bar inside Yukon Club, Eielson AFB, Call 377-5219.

GIVE PARENTS A BREAK, 12:30 to 5:30 p.m., CDC, Eielson AFB, \$30/child, Call 377-3237.

OPEN SWIM, 1 to 7 p.m., Pool inside Baker Field House, Eielson AFB, Call 377-1925.

MANCHESTER BY THE SEA (R), 7 p.m., Ernie Walker Theater, Eielson AFB, Call 377-2269.

Sunday – 5th

LAP SWIM, 10 a.m. to noon, Pool inside Baker Field House, Eielson AFB, Call 377-1925.

FREE BOUNCE, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Eielson City Center, Eielson AFB, Call 377-2642.

OPEN SWIM, 1 to 7 p.m., Pool inside Baker Field House, Eielson AFB, Call 377-1925.

ROGUE ONE: A STAR WARS STORY (PG-13), 7 p.m., Ernie Walker Theater, Eielson AFB, Call 377-2269.

IN BRIEF

FINANCE TIP

Did you know that a Citibank Statement is NOT a receipt? Be sure to keep all receipts when TDY or in PCS status to ensure proper reimbursement.

NUTRITIONAL TIP

Did you know that drinking soda increases your risk of osteoporosis? Your bones need calcium to stay strong. Thirty years ago, a young person most likely drank twice as much milk as soda.

LATIN NIGHT

If you enjoy dancing to Latin music, head over to the 354th Sports bar Feb. 25, from 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. Childcare will be available from 9 p.m. to midnight. The cost for childcare is \$10 per child one year and older for the entire three hours. Contact 377-3721 for more information or to sign your children up for childcare.

WEEKLY KIDS SEWING CLASS

Join the Arts and Crafts Center Wednesdays from 10 to 11:30 a.m. and Saturdays from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. for a kids sewing class! The cost is \$11 per person. Each class focuses on different projects gears toward different age groups. Three children at a minimum are needed to hold the class each week and basic sewing supplies will be provided. Call 377-4880 for more information.

STORYTIME AT THE LIBRARY

The Eielson library holds story time every Thursday from 10 to 11 a.m. for children ages 5 and younger. Come out and enjoy listening to themed story's read by the Library staff or volunteers. Call 377-3174 for more information.

MEDICAL GROUP OFFERS SLEEP ENHANCEMENT CLASS

The 354th Medical Group provides sleep enhancement education classes on Tuesdays from noon to 1 p.m. The class is four weeks long and begins the first Tuesday of every month. For any questions or to register for the class, please call 377-6354.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

The 354th Force Support Squadron is holding a customer appreciation week Mar. 13 thru 17. Visit various FSS facilities during customer appreciation week and be entered into multiple drawings for the end of the week party. A Roaring 20s Party and Kids Carnival will be held Mar. 17, from 5 to 7 p.m. See www.eielsonforcesupport.com for more details.

EIELSON CHAPEL SERVICES

The Eielson Air Force Base Chapel team offers a variety of services. Your Chaplain Corps offers Catholic and Protestant worship services each week and our multi-faith worship center can support the needs of other faith groups. For more information, call us at 377-2130.

Catholic Community:
Religious Formation, 9 a.m., Sundays
Catholic Mass, 10:30 a.m., Sundays
Sacrament of Reconciliation by appointment

Protestant Community:
Contemporary Service, 9 a.m., Sundays
Kids Church, 9 a.m., Sundays
AWANA, 4 to 6 p.m., Sundays
Jr./Sr. High Youth Service, 6 p.m., Wednesdays

Fort Wainwright BOSS extends program to Airmen

Airman Eric M. Fisher
354th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Recently, 13 Airmen had the opportunity to go to Birch Hill on Fort Wainwright, Alaska to enjoy a day of skiing and snowboarding at a reduced cost thanks to coordination between Fort Wainwright's Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers and Eielson Dormitory Management.

BOSS is an Army initiative which helps improve the morale and welfare of single Soldiers and will now invite single Airmen from Eielson to join them for their events.

By combining forces and including both branches of service in the events, BOSS is better able to serve Soldiers and Airmen by increasing participation; which helps increase the number of events that can be held.

"Part of the reason we looked at bringing in other military installations was to increase participation numbers," said U.S. Army Sergeant Ashley Morris, the Fort Wainwright BOSS president. "The other part is that when it comes to recreation, we have more resources than other locations. Because of this, we're able to provide more opportunities."

Even though BOSS events are now open to both Airmen and Soldiers, it can be tough to spread the word to everyone who may be in-

terested in attending.

"The biggest difficulty is notifying all eligible Airmen," said U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Calida Malone, the 354th Civil Engineer Squadron Airman dormitory leader. "It's hard to break the stigma that these events are only for Airmen in the dorms, but they're really for all single and unaccompanied Airmen, regardless of rank and age."

Through these events, both single Airmen and Soldiers alike will find the opportunity to build camaraderie between the two branches.

"When it comes to Soldiers or Airmen, there are grey areas as far as what we know about each other's branches," said Morris. "When they're able to meet face-to-face and talk to each other, they realize they're not too different from one another."

In addition to building networks across branches, these events will give Airmen the opportunity to get out and have fun.

"At the end of the day, leadership wants their Soldiers or Airmen to get out and experience Alaska and enjoy themselves," said Morris. "These initiatives help Airmen and Soldiers keep their morale high and improve their quality of life."

For more information on events hosted by BOSS, visit wainwright.armymwr.com/pacific/wainwright.



Airmen from Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska, pose in front of the Ski Lodge at Birch Hill, Feb. 3, on Fort Wainwright, Alaska. Thirteen Airmen from Eielson attended the skiing and snowboarding event hosted by Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman Eric M. Fisher, 354th Fighter Wing Public Affairs)

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Calendar Sponsorship

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APP

Continued from page 1

“It is amazing what young minds guided by high quality educators and family support can produce. We are very proud of teacher Anna Creamer and her students,” said Fairbanks North Star Borough School District Superintendent Karen Gaborik. “A special thanks to Verizon Wireless for their support of our schools and students.”

The nationwide contest challenges students to design mobile app concepts aimed at improving and solving issues in their schools and communities. The student

team was chosen from more than 1,800 teams from across the country. Only one of eight national winners, the six North Pole Students were told of their win this morning.

Their app concept is called In-Reach – an app that helps people with PTSD log their symptoms to better determine their triggers and provides access to forums and local PTSD specialists.

Verizon Innovative Learning, the education initiative of the Verizon Foundation, created the annual app challenge in partnership with the Technology Student Association, and in collaboration with the MIT Media Lab, to spark greater student interest in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) and provide hands-on learning experiences.

“The jobs that will define our future are in fields like science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), and it is the mission of Verizon Innovative Learning to ensure that all kids have an equal chance at taking advantage of these opportunities that can lead them to better economic futures,” said Justina Nixon-Saintil, director of education programs for the Verizon Foundation. “The app challenge – a hands-on learning experience that immerses students in a real world project, is one way we engage students and encourage them to think about how they can solve important problems with technology.”

SAVING

Continued from page 1

purchases, and to build wealth for a stress free retirement.”

The program encourages Soldiers and Family members, including teens, to make saving pledges this month on www.militarysaves.org. The focus is planned and automatic savings utilizing automatic transfers from their checking to their savings account, setting up an allotment in myPay, or a direct deposit to a separate savings account for each savings goal.

“Don’t wait to see what you have left at the end of the month to save,” warned Teel. “Set a budget and make putting money in savings one of the first things you do.

This way, you make your saving goal and you’re not tempted to over spend.”

Those who pledge at least \$1 during Military Saves gain valuable access to monthly e-newsletters with saving advice from national experts, a free credit score courtesy of FINRA Investor Education Foundation, and lots of great information through a partnership with USAA at www.USAAEF.org.

MAC Federal Credit Union on post has joined the program’s efforts offering incentives, including an opportunity to open a Military Saves Club savings account. The Military Saves Club savings account requires the participant to deposit and save at least \$100 monthly for 11 months; as kudos for a job well done if they maintain that balance, in the twelfth month, MAC will deposit \$100, which is more money than what the account would accrue in interest alone. In addition, the ACS Financial Readiness Program is partnering with MAC FCU, Army One Source, and the University of Alaska Fairbanks’ Cooperative Extension Service to provide free, daily financial readiness classes for every day of Military Saves Week, open to the Fort Wainwright community. From Retirement planning in 10, 20, 30 and 40 years, New Blended Retirement System, R&R on a Budget, Basics of Savings, and Car Buying Seminar. The classes are all one hour in length, starting at 11:45 a.m. – perfect for a bring your brown bag lunch and learn. There’s plenty of room so call to register (907) 353-4369 or walk-in. All classes will be held at the Education Center, building 4391, on Neely Road, room 3.

“People don’t have to live with debt. It’s a hard sell when people are living paycheck to paycheck, but if they recognize that they can look at how much money they make now and make a plan with what they have, they can make changes,” said Teel.

From emotional spending to not properly planning for a PCS move, Teel said there are a variety of life events that can trip up military families on their road to financial freedom.

“A PCS move to or from Alaska can be a significant financial event for families,” she said. “While the major expenses are typically covered by the government, many families don’t plan for the sightseeing or family visits along the way, or the necessary household items for their new home like blackout curtains and up front move in costs (initial rent, security, utility and pet deposits). If they put all of those extra expenses on a credit card, it’s not

uncommon to accumulate \$3,000 to \$6,000 in debt.”

Add in the loss of COLA, BAH or even a spouse’s income due to the move and this can spell real trouble for an unprepared military Family, Teel said.

“Studies show that most payday loans happen within the \$500 to \$1000 range,” she said. “As Americans continue to spend more than we make, just coming up with that amount can be a financial burden.”

This is why only working to pay off debt alone is not enough; families need an emergency fund and need to save for expenses in their lives or they can often end up right back in debt even after working diligently to get out from under it, she explained.

“It’s never too late to start a new pattern of saving,” said Teel. Tax season is a good time to evaluate spending and savings plans and make new goals. “Extra money in the form of an income tax return is an excellent opportunity to bump up your savings,” she said. “Consider saving part or all of those funds for an emergency or PCS fund and then pay down debt, contribute to your retirement, save for a large purchase down the road and/or simply spend the other part.”

The ACS Financial Readiness program has two financial counselors that can provide one-on-one assistance or brief units and FRGs.

“Having savings and no debt helps create peace and means less stress and worry,” said Teel. “This will mean you can enjoy your Army life a little more and take advantage of the amazing opportunities available here in Alaska or wherever you’re stationed. It also means a brighter future; remember, bad debt not only affects credit scores but security clearances, the ability to rent an apartment and your retirement.”

Tackling overspending and debt with the rest of the country is the Army’s way of demonstrating that we can and will lead in this national endeavor. As a matter of fact, the Army hopes to outdo every other military branch with their number of pledges by March 3rd; the goal is for the Army to get at least 20,000 people to pledge to save automatically this year through allotments, direct deposits or automatic transfers.

For more information about Military Saves Week, making a savings pledge, or for information about the Financial Readiness program, call Monica Teel at 353-4369.

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