

June 20, 2014

INSSC **This Week**



U.S. Army Garrison Natick Public Affairs Office



Groundbreaking for Kansas Street

Also inside:

**2013 Department of Defense Thomas Jefferson &
U.S. Army MG Keith L. Ware Award-winning Digital Publication**



Commander's Corner

William E. Cole
Brigadier General, U.S. Army, Commanding General, Natick Soldier Systems Center



Have a safe Independence Day ...



On Friday, July 4, we will celebrate Independence Day. Two hundred thirty-eight years ago, the signers of the Declaration of Independence accepted tremendous responsibility and risk to themselves, their families and to each other when they committed their lives to the ideas and principles that would become the United States of America. Their foresight and leadership have given us unprecedented freedom and opportunities to achieve more than even they could have ever dreamed possible. To this day, our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen and Special Operators volunteer to accept this commitment.

As we continue to honor this great commitment, let's not lose sight of the everyday risk in our lives, especially during this holiday.

Heat and humidity are now significant factors. Whether traveling, working in your yard or watching a parade, make sure you have adequate drinking water, shade and sunscreen. Remember that children and the elderly are more susceptible to heat injuries and that some medicines and medical conditions also increase the risk of suffering a heat injury.

During water-related activities, be aware of these sobering facts: Most fatalities occur to people who never intended to get in the water, and about two-thirds of all drownings occur within an arm's reach of safety. Follow these simple rules: Swim in supervised areas only; obey all rules and posted signs; get out of the water when bad weather threatens; have proper personal floatation devices readily available for everyone, and use them. They are like seat belts; if they are not worn, it is too late to put them on during the emergency.

Never drink alcohol while driving, boating, operating any machinery or when you are accountable for others.

Be sure to get adequate rest before undertaking the above activities.

Finally, be aware that fireworks laws differ in each state. Always use the correct Personal Protective Equipment, fire extinguishers and first-aid kits.

Army Safe is Army Strong!

William E. Cole
Brigadier General, U.S. Army
Commanding General, Natick Soldier Systems Center

NSSC This Week

NSSC

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[Brig. Gen. William E. Cole](#)

Garrison Commander
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About this newsletter

NSSC This Week is a biweekly newsletter covering NSSC news within the Army and commercial media.

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NSRDEC Strategic Communications.

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On the Web: www.army.mil/natick

Cover photo: Robert Hawley,
NSRDEC Strategic Communications

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Upcoming Events

Dueling Pianos

Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation will present "[175 Keys Dueling Pianos Show](#)" on Thursday, June 26 at 5 p.m. at the Community Activities Center.

176 Keys specializes in an all-request, sing and clap along, audience-led, comedic piano show.

Tickets are \$20 apiece. Admission includes heavy appetizers, and a cash bar will be available.

For more information, contact Sherita Baker at sherita.m.baker.naf@mail.mil, or ext. 4791.

Organization Day

"NSSC Organization Day" will take place Friday, July 11.

This year's event will be combined with "Bring Your Sons and Daughters to Work Day."

Outback Steakhouse of Framingham will cater the meal, which will include macaroni and cheese for children. Tickets are \$12 for adults, \$6 for children 12 and younger.

The opening ceremony will take place at the flagpole at 9 a.m., followed by a 5-kilometer run/walk. The 5K awards ceremony will be at 1 p.m. near the pool.

For more information, contact [Duane Young](#), ext. 5609, or [Janice Kopacz](#), ext. 4205.

Within the Gates

Cruising Speed

Join the Civilian Welfare Fund for a Cruise to Bermuda, Aug. 28-Sept. 4, on Norwegian Cruise Lines.

CWF has 18 cabins available: eight mid-ship insides, \$797.78 per person; four obstructed ocean views, \$877.78 pp; two ocean view with porthole windows, \$927.78 pp; two mid-ship ocean view with picture windows, \$967.78 pp; and two balconies, \$1,157.78 pp.

Make initial reservations by Sept. 1 through Janice Kopacz, ext. 4205.

Pedal Power

Natick Soldier rides away from troubles

By Bob Reinert, USAG-Natick Public Affairs / NATICK, Mass. (June 11, 2014)

No one will ever mistake Staff Sgt. Eric Murray for a Tour de France winner, but that really doesn't matter.

His bicycle became a lifeline of sorts for Murray after he suffered wounds to his lower extremities from two mortar rounds in a September 2006 attack near [Sadr City, Iraq](#), and later during his divorce. When he hopped on the saddle, his troubles disappeared.

"I got on the bike, and I didn't think about my ex-wife at the time," Murray said. "I wasn't thinking about how often do I get to see my son? And I wasn't thinking about the flashbacks that I have from Iraq."

"I was just thinking about there's the road, (and I was) ... just enjoying life again."

Murray had discovered "[Ride 2 Recovery](#)," an organization that helps service members and veterans to heal physically, mentally and emotionally through cycling. R2R holds a number of multi-day challenge rides of up to 450 miles each year that bring veterans together in various parts of the country.

"When I found Ride 2 Recovery, I was enjoying the physical aspect, but I was also enjoying the fact that I was able to clear my head," Murray said. "Getting on the road, I didn't care about anything except for what was in front of me on the road."

His first R2R ride was last year's [Minute-man Challenge](#) from Waltham, Mass., to Philadelphia.

"And (I) fell in love with it just because of the camaraderie with all the wounded veterans and PTSD members," Murray said. "I got into it and started riding and started liking it a little bit. They donated a bike to me so ... I can continue to ride. I've just been riding ever since then."

Though the 35-year-old father of three sons hadn't ridden since his youth, Murray said he felt comfortable on the bike from the start.

"I wasn't afraid to fall," Murray said. "In cycling they always say it's not if you're going to fall, it's when you're going to fall. I've fallen a couple of times, and I get back up on the bike and I push myself to where I know I can't go anymore."

Murray has stayed upright well enough to do four challenge rides since being assigned in July 2013 to the [Natick Soldier Research, Development and Engineering Center](#) as a combat arms NCO with the Human Research Volunteer, or [HRV](#), program.

"On the rides, they try not to let you fail," Murray said. "If you're hurting, somebody's going to come up and help push you and get you up there. We ride for about 50 to 60

miles a day ... and then we get on our bikes and go on the next day."

Murray said he has met some inspirational veterans out on those roads.

"We have some Soldiers in the program that are just phenomenal," Murray said. "It makes for a good time on the rides."

"We've got some that are triple amputees, double amputees. We've got some that are a little heftier because of their injuries, but once we all come together, it's just like one big family that just melded together instantly."

Next up for Murray will be the 2014 Minute-man Challenge in September from Boston to Fort Lee, N.J.

"It's awesome to see different parts of the country that we help defend as military personnel," said Murray, "but it's just the camaraderie (that) makes everything ... so great."

Don't expect Murray to abandon the bike anytime soon. He said that it helps him ward off the bad days.

"If I could do it on a daily basis, I would," Murray said. "It's not my entire life, but I try to allow it to (be) a little bit of my life."



Photos: Tiffini M. Skuce / Ride 2 Recovery



R2R holds a number of multi-day challenge rides of up to 450 miles each year that bring veterans together in various parts of the country.

JTAG ... You're It

Meeting helps aerial delivery collaboration take off



Photo: Yama Proving Ground

Where do you go to find out user needs and what all the services are doing to advance aerial delivery? JTAG, you're it.

The Joint Technical Aerial Delivery Group, or JTAG, enables interservice agencies responsible for the aerial delivery mission to share information, discuss technologies, and formulate joint service programs. The need for interservice cooperation has increased due to the development of multipurpose airborne systems and blended technologies. Avoiding duplication of effort is particularly important given budget constraints. The meeting is attended by the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines and Special Operations.

"The meeting enables information sharing between all the services to make sure we are working well together and are sharing information," said Richard Benney, director of the Aerial Delivery Directorate at the Natick Soldier Research, Development and Engineering Center, or [NSRDEC](#).

The meeting takes place every couple of years at different locations, with NSRDEC hosting the most recent meeting.

"JTAG gives engineers the chance to get smarter on what the users want," Benney said. "Natick is the largest R&D facility in the world regarding aerial delivery. We do a lot of work for the other services. This is a center of expertise. The (JTAG) meeting gives us a chance to get an overview of what other people are doing and for them to find out what we are doing. Sometimes, other services let us know what their future needs are – not just what they are doing right now."

"JTAG is to the airdrop community what Facebook is to teenagers. It is a forum where everyone gets together and shares all the information about aerial delivery," said Gary Thibault, Cargo Aerial Delivery team leader, Product Manager Force Sustainment Systems, or [PM FSS](#), at [Natick Soldier Systems Center](#).

"The meeting is used, a lot of times, to bring in physical prototypes. It is great for a hands-on exchange of ideas and displays," Thibault added.

The JTAG meeting helped kick-start interest in the Joint Precision Airdrop System Mission Planner

JTAG helped advance the Joint Precision Airdrop System

The meeting connects people with points of contact and gives them access to subject matter experts, or SMEs, from all services, which can lead to funding and testing opportunities, as well as the sharing of assets, including aircraft, riggers, and crew SMEs. The meeting can also promote partnerships that may result in faster product maturation/fielding.

For example, during a past JTAG meeting, a [SOCOM](#) operator stated that he considered the NSRDEC-developed prototype of the Joint Precision Airdrop System Mission Planner to be "essential mission equipment"

"JTAG is to the airdrop community what Facebook is to teenagers. It is a forum where everyone gets together and shares all the information about aerial delivery."

Gary Thibault, Cargo Aerial Delivery team

for high-altitude airborne operations. JPADS uses GPS, steerable parachutes, and an on-board computer to direct loads to a designated location. The JPADS Mission Planner hardware and software give the aircrew the capability to plan the mission, make changes in flight, if necessary, and direct the aircraft to the drop location.

Soon after the meeting, the Air Force started serious planning and agreed to participate and contribute dollars and people to support JPADS Advanced Technology Concept Demonstration.

"I believe that the USAF interest in maturing and developing a program of record for the JPADS Mission Planner was kick-started as a result of a JTAG," Benney said.

JTAG accelerated the Advanced Emergency Bailout Parachute program

"In September 2009, the Army faced the unanticipated requirement to issue a bailout parachute to jumpmasters by September 2013," said Takis Blanas, Personnel Airdrop team leader, Product Manager Soldier Clothing and Individual Equipment, or [PM-SCIE](#).

PM-SCIE was able to leverage the Navy's existing Thin-Pack Parachute, which has a longer shelf life and takes up less space than its predecessor, to create the Advanced Emergency Bailout Parachute, or AEBP.

"The JTAG provided a forum over the years that made all the services aware of this Thin-Pack program. So everybody was ready to just jump on it and leverage it because it was well known to everyone," Thibault said.

"Because of the JTAG, the Army was able to adopt the Navy Thin Pack as the Army AEBP and field it to all units by the deadline of September 2013, allowing airborne operations to continue uninterrupted," Blanas said.

JTAG enables Natick to better serve the user community

"The meeting can help ensure that early on, for early S&T, you can help formulate requirements based on what they need, and what is the state of the possible, what is actually achievable – based on physics, often – and help us to better understand from the user community what they want to be able to do and translate that into engineering specifications or engineering requirements," Benney said.

"The warfighter has become a significant presence at the meeting ...," Thibault said. "You've got to listen to them, regardless of their rank, because they understand the equipment ... It's important to have the technical perspective, but you need that user perspective to understand if what you are doing technically meets their requirements."

"Technically, we might think it is the best thing since sliced bread. But you give it to a Soldier, they might be thinking not only is this bread horrible, I won't even eat it. You got to listen to these folks, and you have to make the right bread," Thibault added.



Photo: Robert Haulcy, NSR/DEC Strategic Communications

Potholes and frost heaves have turned Kansas Street into a slalom course for vehicles.

Taming the Rough Road

Groundbreaking held for Kansas Street improvements

By Bob Reinert, USAG-Natick Public Affairs / NATICK, Mass. (June 16, 2014)

A groundbreaking ceremony was held June 16 for improvements that will be made to Kansas Street, the roadway that leads to the [Natick Soldier Systems Center](#) gates.

The \$2.5 million, state-funded construction project includes resurfacing and utility improvements that should aid traffic flow to and from NSSC.

“One of the very first questions I got at my first town hall was, ‘When is Kansas Street going to get fixed?’” recalled [Brig. Gen. William E. Cole](#), NSSC senior commander. “Well, ladies and gentlemen, finally, we can say that that day has arrived.”

Cole pointed out that the project has been in the works for years and that “great partnerships” made the groundbreaking possible in this cooperative effort between the [Town of Natick](#), the [Commonwealth Massachusetts](#), and NSSC.

“A couple of years ago, we designed a master plan for the Soldier Systems Center to chart our way into the future,” Cole said. “We shared that master plan with the Town of Natick. The design of this Kansas Street

project that we’re about to kick off, done by the town, complements the master plan that we have inside the base.”

Josh Ostroff, chairman of the Town of Natick Board of Selectmen, served as master of ceremonies for the groundbreaking.

“Today, we celebrate a milestone on Kansas Street that provides access to an invaluable resource that empowers, equips and feeds warfighters who defend our freedoms.”

Marty Jones, president and chief executive officer of MassDevelopment

“Kansas Street is about a third of a mile long, but it has a long history,” Ostroff said. “(NSSC) is a facility where brains and brawn come together.”

Marty Jones, president and chief executive officer of [MassDevelopment](#), alluded to a 2012

analysis that put the overall annual economic impact of NSSC at \$4.4 billion.

“Today, we celebrate a milestone on Kansas Street that provides access to an invaluable resource that empowers, equips and feeds warfighters who defend our freedoms,” Jones said.

Maj. Gen. L. Scott Rice, adjutant general of the [Massachusetts National Guard](#), pointed out that NSSC is the only active-duty Army installation in New England.

“And that’s pretty important, because the work that they do hits all sorts of people,” Rice said. “Not only does it hit, as you can clearly see, the U.S. Army ... but they even impact every member of the U.S. military.”

In closing his remarks, Cole made reference to the potholes and frost heaves that have greeted drivers in recent years as they approached NSSC.

“On behalf of the Natick Soldier Systems Center workforce, and also on behalf of their shock absorbers and tires on their vehicles,” said Cole, “I’d like to thank you for bringing this project to the finish line.”



USARIEM welcomes new commander

By Bob Reinert, USAG-Natick Public Affairs / NATICK, Mass. (June 10, 2014)

Col. Thomas G. Eccles III, M.D., became the 20th commander of the [U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine](#) in a June 9 change of command ceremony.

Eccles took over from Col. Deborah L. Whitmer as Maj. Gen. Joseph Carvalho Jr., M.D., commanding general, U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command, presided. Eccles previously served as chief of the General Pediatrics Service at [Tripler Army Medical Center](#), Honolulu, Hawaii. Whitmer

moves on to the [U.S. Naval War College](#) in Newport, R.I.

Carvalho pointed out that in Eccles, USARIEM was getting a [Massachusetts Institute Technology](#) graduate, a hazardous materials expert, and a board-certified pediatrician.

“We are confident you come fully prepared for the mission at hand, with a variety of operational and leadership assignments under your belt, as well as deployments in support

of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn,” Carvalho said.

Eccles, who grew up in Simsbury, Conn., was obviously pleased to be home.

“I’m a native New Englander, a lifelong Red Sox fan — and all that goes with it — an engineer and a physician,” Eccles said. “As such, I’ve followed USARIEM and its unparalleled R&D for more than 25 years.

“I can’t tell you how thrilled I am to be able to serve here with you all. General Carvalho, thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to lead.”

Carvalho recognized Whitmer’s efforts at USARIEM during a challenging period in its history.

“Throughout this time, Colonel Whitmer’s leadership of this organization has been steadfast and laser-focused,” Carvalho said. “Despite budget constraints, she worked tirelessly to ensure researchers could continue to travel and collaborate with partners, ensuring that USARIEM’s work was not halted during these uncertain times.”

Eccles also saluted Whitmer’s service at USARIEM.

“Thank you for your leadership and the friendship you have shown me,” Eccles said. “You have brought a brilliant organization through uncertain times and positioned us for a vital role in the Army’s future. I am honored and humbled to follow you in command.”

Whitmer noted that USARIEM made strides over the past two years despite the fiscal headwinds. She mentioned the Physical Demands Study in particular.

“As a female Soldier and this organization’s commander, I knew this team would lend the finest scientific rigor to this important study that the Army could ask for,” Whitmer said. “I am confident that once your job is complete, you will have provided valid, reliable and accurate results that will be used to select Soldiers for accession into physically demanding occupations, and I am honored to have been leading the organization during this time.”

In closing his remarks, Carvalho praised the “exceptionally fine” people who work at USARIEM.

“The work being done at this organization is critical to our service members,” said Carvalho, “ensuring the health, performance and effectiveness of troops in training or combat.”

Photos: Melissa K. Buckley



Symposium focuses on TBI

By Melissa K. Buckley / FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo. (June 12, 2014)

[Fort Leonard Wood’s](#) first Traumatic Brain Injury Symposium, held Friday, spanned from telling attendees what [TBI](#) is to how technology plays a role in learning how to avoid them.

Six leading Army TBI specialists took turns sharing their information and studies. Each session was followed by a question-and-answer period.

The subject matter experts discussed their specialty work in ongoing Army studies and efforts; Army assessment methods, approach and treatment; helmet technology to prevent and detect head trauma; and impairment study data associated with measured blasts.

More than 750 of the installation’s military and civilian workforce, Family members and retirees attended the TBI symposium held at Nutter Field House.

Maj. Gen. Leslie Smith, Maneuver Support Center of Excellence and Fort Leonard Wood commanding general, said the symposium was not solely about the Army.

“We are not here to just talk about the U.S. Army. We are here to talk about the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines,” Smith said.

He asked randomly selected attendees why they came to the symposium.

“I just filled (received for training) yesterday with 207 Soldiers. We are here today because, not only in the Army, but our Soldiers could have received TBIs in high school sports. As a first sergeant of a basic training unit, I am here to learn the symptoms of a TBI, so I can get my Soldiers the proper medical attention,” said 1st Sgt. Malia Nemetz.

In 2013, the Department of Defense recorded 26,561 TBI cases, according to Stephanie Panker, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Division, Office of the Army Surgeon General, acting Army TBI Program director.

Of those, 13,257 were mild; 1,010 were moderate, and 175 were severe.

A TBI is caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head or a penetrating head injury that disrupts the normal function of the brain.

The severity of a TBI may range from a mild concussion — a brief change in mental status or consciousness, to severe — an extended period of unconsciousness or amnesia after the injury.

Thomas Buckley, Georgia Southern University associate professor, demonstrates to Capt. Kim Carruthers, Maneuver Support Center of Excellence, deputy G-4 Logistics, the operation of the Helmet Impact Telemetry System at the TBI Symposium held June 5.

Donald Lee, Soldier Protective and Individual Equipment, [Natick Soldier Research, Development and Engineer Center](#) team leader, brought examples of some headgear system prototypes being developed.

“We want to protect you. We are always dancing on that fine line between mission performance on the battlefield and how well we can protect you,” Lee said. “We provide U.S. Soldiers and Marines with the best equipment that we can.”

Lee stressed the importance of using all of the padding issued with the existing helmets.

“That headgear system is a protection system. If you take out or move even one pad in the helmet you might as well take them all out. It is that serious,” Lee said. “Don’t replace them with pads you can buy at (military surplus stores). They may feel more comfortable, but they aren’t designed for the headgear.”

Capt. Matthew LoPresti, [Center for Military Psychiatry and Neuroscience](#), Water Reed Army Institute of Research, research psychologist, presented his Experienced Breacher Injury Study.

“The breacher community came to us and said we should take a look at their study,” LoPresti said. “These are individuals who are repeatedly exposed to blasts that they actually set off as part of their jobs.”

By placing pressure sensors in helmets, the researchers are able to monitor blast overpressure exposure levels.

LoPresti said he is still looking for experienced breachers and control participants with operational experience to study. LoPresti can be contacted at matthew.l.lopresti.mil@mail.mil or 301.319.9765.

Also discussed was a system used by the Department of Kinesiology at Georgia Southern University. It is called the Helmet Impact Telemetry System.

The data from the system helps researchers analyze individuals with single and cumulative impacts in order to measure posture, gait and motor impairment.

The presenters spent the afternoon visiting high-impact training areas here as they continued the TBI discussion.



Natick employees receive GBFEB honors

By Jeffrey Sisto, NSRDEC Public Affairs / NATICK, Mass. (May 29, 2014)

Three employees from the [U.S. Army Natick Soldier Research, Development and Engineering Center](#) were individually honored at this year's [Greater Boston Federal Executive Board](#) Excellence in Government awards ceremony May 7 at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum in Boston.

Dale Tabor and Christine Charette, both from the Airdrop and Aerial Delivery Directorate, received the Outstanding Workplace Innovation (Initiative) Award and the Outstanding Workplace Innovation (SAVE) Award, respectively, while Melynda Perry of the Textile Evaluation and Materials Team received the Specialty Employee of the Year Award.

The GBFEB EIG awards are held annually to recognize and publicly praise New England federal employees' achievements. Nominees

must be civilian, military or postal employees of the federal government, National Guard or active-duty military assigned to the New England region.

"These recognitions are extremely well deserved and are the culmination of a tremendous amount of hard work and dedication on the part of these employees," said [Dr. Laurel Allender](#), acting NSRDEC technical director.

Tabor was recognized for his development of the [Enhanced Speed Bag System](#), or ESBS, a hands-free rope brake assembly that controls the rate of descent and orientation of a cargo package dropped from a helicopter to ground units that need to be resupplied. Often, these small units operate in austere environments where terrain and enemy contact prevent typical resupply methods.

Christine Charette (left), Dale Tabor and Melynda Perry, from the U.S. Army's Natick Soldier Research, Development and Engineering Center, display the awards they received at the Greater Boston Federal Executive Board Excellence In Government ceremony.

To get around this, aircrews employ an ad-hoc technique known as Speed Ball by using rucksacks, aviator kit bags, and body bags as containers to free-drop supplies from helicopters to dismounted Soldiers. This method results in only a 60 percent survivability rate for the equipment and supplies being dropped, which could prove devastating to Soldiers in urgent need of ammunition, food or water.

In contrast, the ESBS is designed to land with its base down, allowing the energy-dissipation material to absorb the impact for packages up to 250 pounds each. Testing showed the ESBS improved the survivability of ammunition up to 98 percent.

"We believe it is a game changer for ground forces and their commanders," Tabor said. "If we can get them this technology, it will reduce the risk to Soldiers that have to retrieve these packages and the logistical burden of losing those supplies."

Charette, a textile technologist, was recognized for her work in developing a methodology to validate the service life of legacy military personnel parachutes and substantiate the service life extensions for recently fielded personnel parachutes.

In her research, Charette found that the service life of a personnel parachute system

was based on the number of years it has been in service, instead of the number of uses.

Since the 1970s, the standard service life of personnel parachutes has been 12 years.

"If a parachute is used five times or 500 times, is it still good for 12 years?" Charette asked. "We need to be fiscally responsible in how we evaluate the serviceability of these systems. Being data driven is the only way to go."

Charette then planned a data collection approach that provides a measure of how the parachutes' design safety margin will change throughout its life cycle with usage and environmental exposure. Her research has influenced the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Marine Corps to initiate their own studies and it is projected to save the government millions of dollars.

Perry, a chemist, was recognized for her exceptional technical ability and research efforts in the insect repellent area to ensure warfighters are fully protected from vector-borne diseases.

Perry is developing a new test method to measure the permethrin content on textiles used in uniforms. Permethrin is a commonly used insecticide.

The method would ensure it meets both the performance level standards and the Environmental Protection Agency regulatory safety requirements.

"I'm looking at permethrin treating fabric and generating toxicity data during the cut and sew trial to see if it is a viable option to move forward," Perry said.

Currently, permethrin treatment is added to the garments as the last process in uniform development. When a treated garment does not meet performance requirements, a huge economic investment has already been made and the government loses money.

"If we were to treat a fabric prior, we would eliminate an entire manufacturing process if the material doesn't meet requirements ahead of time," she said.

Perry's research on treating the fabric prior to manufacturing is expected to save the government millions of dollars and increase the quality of life for service members in the field.

All three award recipients said that they were humbled by the personal recognition, but accepted it on behalf of their teams and the work that goes on at NSRDEC.

"It validates what we all do here," Perry said.

USAG-Natick Public Affairs wins national award

By USAG-Natick Public Affairs / NATICK, Mass. (June 13, 2014)

The [U.S. Army Garrison-Natick Public Affairs Office](#) earned first place in the Special Purpose Publication category in the 2014 [National Association of Government Communicators](#) Blue Pencil & Gold Screen Awards Competition.

The NAGC competition had 325 entries in 41 categories this year from all levels of government from federal to local around the U.S. Canada and Montenegro were also represented. The awards were presented June 12 at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

USAG-Natick won for "Year in Review 2012," a compilation of stories from those 12 months about the Natick Soldier Systems Center. The category included 26 publications from federal, state and municipal governments, and the USAG-Natick entry scored 262 out of 270 possible points from judges Bethany Hornbeck, Greg Letherman and Paula Turner of the National Energy Technology Laboratories.

"Our panel of judges was unanimous in rating this near perfect document our overall winner," they said. "From stellar and compelling writing, to professional photography and a dazzling layout, this publication went well beyond meeting our criteria; it set the standard. Many of us don't realize how much research goes into outfitting, feeding, and protecting our soldiers. Seldom have we seen a government document of any genre that was so engaging, so moving, and so well polished. This book made us want to read every page.

"Because this was the first edition of this publication, we were astounded at the creative vision of the staff, and we feel this document exceeded its stated goals and was well worth the meager price paid to produce

it. In short, it was an honor for us to judge this publication, and we give it our highest recommendation, both as a model for good communication and as a great read!"

The USAG-Natick Public Affairs team earlier this year won the IMCOM [Keith L. Ware Journalism Competition](#), the Department of the Army Keith L. Ware Journalism Competition and the [Department of Defense Thomas Jefferson Award](#) for Best Digital Publication.

"This award is a complete team effort," said John Harlow, USAG-Natick Chief of Public Affairs. "Bob Reinert of USAG-Natick Public Affairs and Phil Fujawa of the Natick Soldier Research, Development and Engineering Center's Strategic Communications Division made this publication stand out. There were also significant contributions from Kelly Field from the U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine, Alexandra Foran from the NSRDEC Public Affairs Office, and Dave Kamm and Tom Kean from NSRDEC Strategic Communications.

"To know that our efforts are the best among all federal, state and municipal communicators is great. It shows the talent that we have here at Natick."

Brig. Gen. William E. Cole, NSSC's senior commander, praised the award-winning effort.

"The work done by our Public Affairs team keeps Natick on the minds of not just our Soldiers, but decision-makers throughout the Army," Cole said. "They not only tell the story of the equipment that protects our Soldiers, but they also tell the story of the people behind the equipment. We're very proud to have this team telling our story."

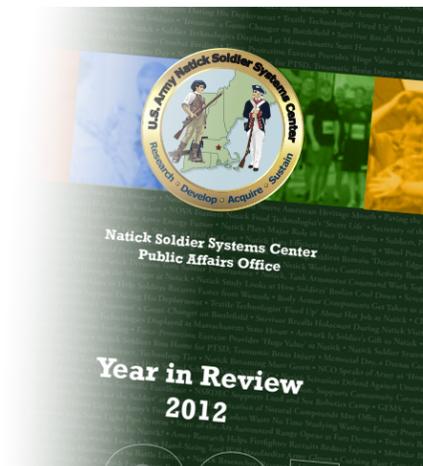




Photo: Richard Walmus, NSRDEC Strategic Communications

Natick celebrates 239th Army birthday

By Jane Benson, NSRDEC Public Affairs / NATICK, Mass. (June 13, 2014)

The [Natick Soldier Systems Center](#) celebrated the [239th Army birthday](#) a day early on June 13. Col. Collier Slade, military deputy commander, [Natick Soldier Research, Development and Engineering Center](#), noted that it was fitting the ceremony took place near the original Army's birthplace and at a place dedicated to the Soldier.

The Army was established by the [Second Continental Congress](#) on June 14, 1775, when the Congress began supporting New England militia members who were opposing British troops.

Natick's celebration opened with NSRDEC's own Clara Calderon singing a moving

rendition of the Star-Spangled Banner. The singing of the national anthem was followed by a cake-cutting ceremony.

In a time-honored tradition, Slade — who was flanked by NSSC's oldest Soldier, oldest civilian employee, youngest Soldier and youngest civilian employee — carved the cake with a sword. The oldest Soldier was Lt. Col. Michael Boye, 56, and the youngest Soldier was Pvt. 2 Mackenzie Palmer, 19. The oldest civilian employee was Bob Noonan, 81, and the youngest was Kush Bhagat, 19.

"To our youngest Soldier and civilian, I recommend that you talk to Bob, because he is doing something really right," Slade said.

"This is my first official Army birthday bash," said Slade, recounting how he had served 10 of his 27 years in the Army at U.S. embassies overseas, where the Marines outnumbered the Soldiers and the Marine Corps birthday was celebrated. He noted that he enjoyed those events, but they weren't Army.

"It is appropriate for us to celebrate the Army's 239th birthday here at the beautiful Natick Soldier Systems Center peninsula for a couple of reasons," Slade said. "The first is that it all started here, or close to here ... so this is really the equivalent of coming home for your birthday. The second reason that it makes so much sense for us to celebrate the Army's birthday here is that we all at the NSSC specialize in birthdays. What I mean is that the work that we do ... helps to ensure the safety and protection of our Soldiers — helping them to have more birthdays. Bottom line, the work done here saves lives and protects Soldiers.

"We together, military and civilians, side by side, make up the world's best Army."

In five days during May, the second drive at NSSC brought in 1,926 pounds of clothing and personal hygiene items, more than doubling what was provided for NECHV through the inaugural event. That amounts to more than a pound for each Soldier and civilian who works at the installation.

Soldiers from the Natick Soldier Systems Center recently delivered more than 1,900 pounds of clothing and other items to the New England Center for Homeless Veterans.

About four years ago, Sarah Ross was walking through downtown Boston on a sightseeing trip with her mother. The Army veteran didn't like what she saw all around her.

"There were veterans everywhere on the streets with signs, and it made me really upset," said Ross, recalling how they lacked warm clothing to ward off the chill on that November day. "I think that people in general — and this could just be a misconception on my part — think that veterans are taken care of, and that's just not the case."

When a couple of the veterans told her about the nearby New England Center for Homeless Veterans, or [NECHV](#), she went about trying to find a way to help that organization.

"That's where it kind of started with me, is to actually see it in Boston," Ross said. "That reality hits you again that you're having a really good time, but not everyone is having such a good time."

So, last October, Ross and fellow former Soldier Darren Bean held their [first clothing drive](#) at [Natick Soldier Systems Center](#), where both are now civilian employees, to benefit homeless veterans. The five-day collection effort netted 800 pounds of clothing and other items for NECHV.

"I didn't know the kind of outcome that we were going to get," Ross said. "So there was no expectation."

That surprising outcome prompted Ross to hold another drive last month while Bean focused on his many other activities on behalf of veterans' groups.

Ross was humbled by the response from her co-workers.



Photo: John Harlow, USAG-Natick Public Affairs

NSSC Aids Homeless Vets

By Bob Reinert, USAG-Natick Public Affairs / NATICK, Mass. (June 10, 2014)

"I didn't do this," Ross said. "I just put bins out. People donated. This isn't my thing. It's NSSC's thing."

When it came to collecting and then delivering items to NECHV, young Soldiers from NSSC's Human Research Volunteer program pitched in to help Ross, the [HRV](#) program coordinator.

"They donated their time, their gas money, their cars to come and help me," Ross said. "So that was great."

They pulled up to NECHV on June 2 in five vehicles filled with donated items. The center was happy to receive them.

"The New England Center for Homeless Veterans provides a broad array of supportive services to veterans here in New England, and from throughout the nation, who are facing, or at risk of homelessness," said Andy McCawley, NECHV president and chief executive officer. "In order to most effectively accomplish its mission, the center relies upon community support in the form of goods, services and private philanthropy.

"The recent clothing and toiletries drive by the men and women serving the United

States Army at the Natick Lab in Massachusetts is an important source of clothing and needed personal essentials for the veterans we serve," McCawley said. "We are grateful for their altruism and support for those who have served this country in uniform."

Ross added that she hopes to continue the NSSC drives twice annually — once to collect winter clothing and once to accept summer clothing.

"I'm just so excited that this many veterans are going to be getting clothing, and appropriate clothing," Ross said. "They deserve to be dressed appropriately.

"My goal is just to make this a regular thing. I would love for it just to be a staple."

Ross expressed pride that NSSC's people had lived up to the installation's mission to take care of Soldiers.

"Those clothes were donated in the name of what we say we do every day," Ross said. "We put our money where our mouth is, which is really cool, I think."





Fenway Park Observes Army Birthday

Soldiers from the U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine represented Natick Soldier Systems Center and presented the Colors at the June 14 Red Sox-Cleveland game in observance of the Army's 239th birthday.

Photos by Jahn Harlow, USAG-Natick Public Affairs