

AMERICA'S DEFENSE

★ COMMUNITIES ★

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to Stay Connected**

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Two DOD Senior Advisors**

November 2021



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Four Decades of Resilience



By Tim Ford, Chief Executive Officer, ADC

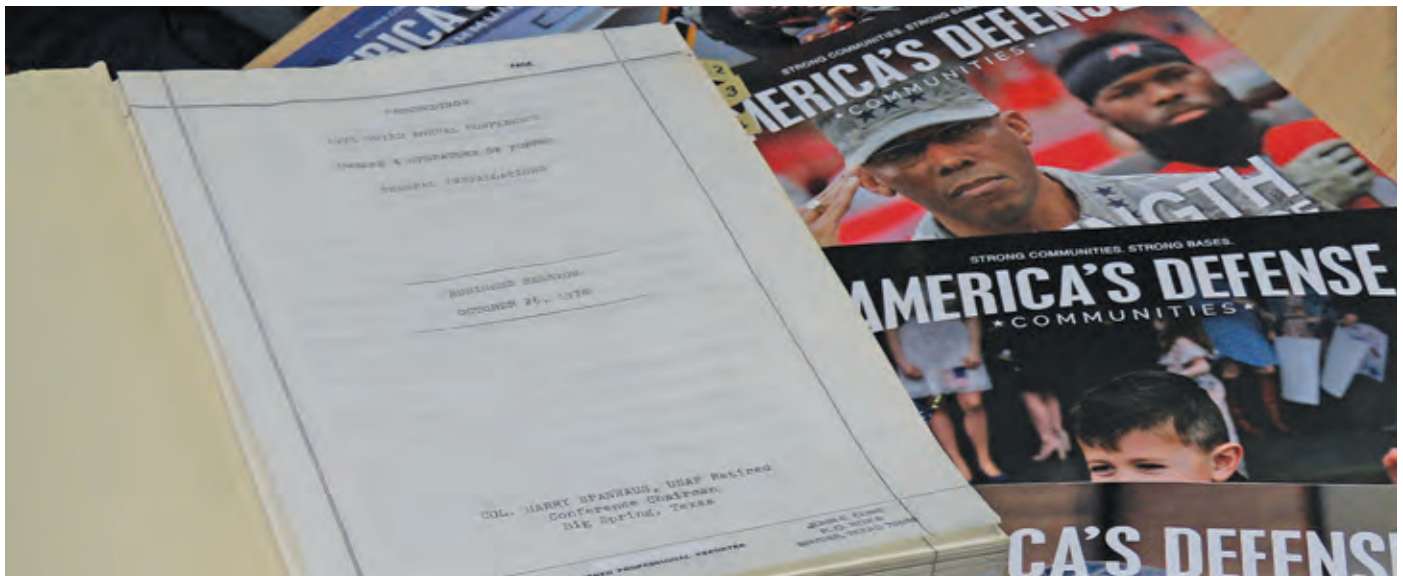
Nearly forty-five years ago, a group of airport managers from recently closed military bases gathered in Big Spring, Texas to share ideas about how to recover. This gathering would lead to the formation of the organization now known as the Association of Defense Communities. We know exactly what happened at this meeting because we have a word-for-word printed transcription in the ADC archives. Resilience was not the exact word they used then, but the idea was the same.

Whatever you call it, our ability to persist, adapt and transform in the face of challenges and remain focused on the mission is in the DNA of our communities, the military and ADC. Few periods have tested the collective resilience of our communities, installations, and military families as the past two years have. Many challenges remain, but we can continue to learn from the stories of people and organizations whose efforts have made a difference in our communities.

This year's issue of *America's Defense Communities* takes a broad look at the concept of resilience. In Everett, Washington, we learn about how the city and naval station coped with the first COVID-19 case in the U.S. In Coastal Georgia, one soldier inspired a way to continue a beloved local farmers market while maintaining social distancing. At NAS Pensacola and NAS Whiting Field, Florida, we learn about how the community and bases coped with repeated crises. These stories and many others in this issue summarize the strength, grit and empathy that define our defense communities.

Who knows how defense communities will describe their role forty-five years from now, but I have no doubt they will learn from what we achieved from being collectively resilient during this trying time. 🇺🇸

The original transcript of ADC's first 1978 gathering.
ADC photo by Chris Duyos



What's Inside

NOVEMBER 2021



14

FEATURES

10

Perspectives

- 10 Diversity and Inclusion in Our Communities
- 12 Climate Resilience and the DOD Mission
- 14 The Path to Resettlement for Afghan Refugees

19

On the Ground in Defense Communities

- 20 Modernizing Healthcare in Texas
- 22 Employing Fort Knox Spouses
- 24 Saving the Snowy Plover
- 26 DCIP Project Updates
- 28 Climate Resilience in Hawaii
- 30 One Military, One Community

32

Meet the 2021 Great American Defense Communities

- 34 Altus, Oklahoma
- 36 Everett, Washington
- 38 Coastal Georgia
- 40 Great Falls, Montana
- 42 NAS Pensacola & NAS Whiting Field, Florida



DEPARTMENTS

1

Publisher's Note

4

About ADC

6

Snapshot

44

The Last Word



Above, left to right: Anissa Nash, a U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Command budget analyst, teleworks from home. Photo courtesy of Anissa Nash; The Coastal Georgia community celebrates its recognition as one of ADC's Great American Defense Communities in March 2021. Army photo by Fort Stewart Public Affairs Office

Facing page: An Afghan evacuee admires a piece of clothing at a donation facility run by U.S. soldiers and civilians in Fort McCoy, Wisconsin Sept. 7, 2021. Army photo by Spc. Rhianna Ballenger

On the cover: Cpt. Jerred Olson receives a COVID-19 vaccine at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii on Jan. 14, 2021. Army photo by 1st Lt. Angelo Mejia

PUBLISHED BY



ABOUT ADC

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

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Community Snapshots

America's Defense Communities looks back at some of the moments that caught our eyes over the past year.





5



6



7

1 First Lady, Dr. Jill Biden, speaks with a fleet and family support center life consultant during her visit to Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Washington, March 2021. Navy photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Aranza Valdez **2** CDR Kerry Hudson has her shoulder boards replaced by her sons during her promotion to captain aboard the Battleship Wisconsin. The ceremony was hosted by the Hampton Roads Naval Museum. Navy photo by Max Lonzanida **3** Garrison Command Sgt. Maj., Command Sgt. Maj. Tamisha Love welcomes an Afghan child to Fort Lee with a U.S. flag Aug. 5, 2021. Army photo by 1st Lt. Tom Burcham IV **4** Mechanic 3rd Class Kristopher Williams stabilizes a wood beam during a Habitat for Humanity event in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Aranza Valdez **5** ADC and community members from Great Falls, Montana celebrate the region's recognition as one of ADC's 2021 Great American Defense Communities. Photo courtesy of Malmstrom Air Force Base **6** U.S. Navy Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Estefania Ramos poses for a photo at a community vaccination center at York College in Brooklyn, New York in March 2021. Army photo by Sgt. Robert O'Steen **7** Airman Jonnica Blaylock poses for a photo while handing out Halloween candy during "Trunk or Treat," an event hosted by Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana to celebrate the holiday while staying safe. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Lillian Miller

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INCREDIBLE COMMUNITIES
BEGINNING ON PAGE 32.



U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Michael Slavin, videographer with Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia, interacts with an Afghan child at Upshur Village on Quantico in Sept. 2021. Marine Corps photo by Tia Dufour

More Seats at the Table

ADC spoke with Bishop Garrison, Senior Advisor to the Secretary of Defense for Human Capital and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion about extremism and DOD's commitment to diversity and inclusion. This interview was conducted at ADC Reconnect in Washington, D.C. in July 2021 and has been edited lightly for clarity and length.



ADC: For people who don't know, tell us a bit about what you and your office do.

GARRISON: I like to describe my duties as “personnel and readiness plus.” As one of the secretary’s leads on DEI, I work on making a more inclusive environment for all service members and civilians. For example, I was a part of the DOD liaison team for the Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment. The IRC did some tremendous work, and my role was to provide updates to the secretary and deputy. In addition, as the co-lead for the Countering Extremism Working Group, I get an overall sense of scope on extremist activity and look into what policies we may need to put in place moving forward.

ADC: You mentioned extremism. Could you talk to us a little bit about where DOD is on that and what the challenges are?

GARRISON: What I cannot stress enough is the secretary, the deputy and the Joint Chiefs chairman have said both publicly and in testimony that the vast majority of those who serve do so honorably. When we see individuals who take certain speech and turn it into unlawful behavior or activity, however, we see problems that need to be addressed. To be clear, this is a very small population having an outsized impact on overall operations, climate and culture. Those of us who serve on the Countering Extremism Working Group have been focused on comprehending the specifics of that type of behavior. We are looking at how and why it’s happening and what types of policies we can put into place to address it.

“Forty-three percent of those who serve in the military are people of color, yet when you look at the leadership, there is a massive drop-off in both people of color and female representation.”

BISHOP GARRISON

Senior Advisor to the Secretary of Defense for Human Capital and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

ADC: So you're talking about putting concrete parameters on defining extremism?

GARRISON: Exactly. To be clear, we are not talking about any type of prohibitions against anyone’s constitutional rights. We at DOD do not want to try to label or identify any groups as “extremist.” Instead, we’re talking about combating types of behaviors that erode the order and discipline essential to unit cohesion. We want to make sure that we’re doing everything we can to address that behavior while keeping our defense communities safe.

ADC: How is DOD going to meet its diversity and inclusion goals, especially in the senior ranks?

GARRISON: My team is currently reviewing what our demographics are and what policies need to be in place to see proper and appropriate representation within the ranks. Forty-three percent of those who serve in the military are people of color, yet when you look at the leadership, there is a massive drop-off in both people of color and female

representation. We are asking ourselves what is causing this dropoff and what we can do to retain more of our top talent.

I know a lot of people are concerned that we’re looking to push out certain demographics or have undue support of others, and that’s simply not the case. The way I see it, we’re trying to build a bigger table. At this table, you have people who have always had seats at it. I’m not trying to take anyone’s seat. I’m trying to build a larger table so that there’s room for more seats and more voices. Study after study, we see that diversity of lived experience will bring you more diversity of thought, and that in turn is a greater capability when dealing with the complex problems that our national security faces. Essentially, we want to bring together top-notch teams that have the ability and the flexibility to address a lot of these critical issues. 🗨️

Bishop Garrison, right, talks with ADC's Randy Ford at ADC Reconnect in Washington, D.C. in July 2021. ADC video image



How Climate Resilience Fits into the DOD Mission



ADC spoke with Joe Bryan, DOD’s Senior Climate Advisor, about installation resilience, climate change and what’s next after a summer of rampant climate-related disasters. This interview, conducted at ADC Reconnect in Washington, D.C. in July 2021, has been lightly edited for clarity and length.

ADC: One of the things you’ve been talking about is the relationship between communities and installations when it comes to climate and resilience. Could you tell us a little bit about that?

BRYAN: What I believe, and the ADC community knows well, is that an installation is not an island. From public infrastructure to utilities like water and electricity, we rely on local communities. Conversely, what we do on our installations to improve our own mission resilience also has the potential to benefit local communities.

For example, I was out at Miramar Marine Corps Air Station, California a couple of weeks ago, and they’ve done an amazing job of building a microgrid that’s capable of supporting the mission and, in emergencies, helping the nearby community. When the community grid is under stress from things like extreme heat, Miramar can help relieve the pressure. It’s an illustration of how communities and bases can work together and be good partners.

ADC: ADC has been very appreciative of DOD and Congress for helping us form those partnerships beyond the gate. How would you say the administration is doing right now in terms of prioritizing these issues?

BRYAN: Climate is a priority for this administration. The President has made that exceptionally clear in his executive orders and public statements. Secretary Austin has also made it abundantly clear that there is almost nothing that the DOD does that is not impacted by climate. That includes our missions abroad and our installations here at home.

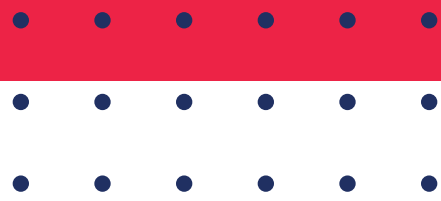
You are going to see aggressive action out of this administration to address the climate challenge while also making ourselves more resilient and mission-capable. By strengthening the energy resilience of facilities, we can ensure that they could continue to operate when the grid goes down from climate-related extreme weather or even something like a cyberattack as we saw on the Colonial Pipeline recently. Our investments in operational energy efficiency can enhance capability while reducing our climate impact. You can expect that kind of leadership from the department.

ADC: Our communities are looking forward to being partners on that, too, so thank you.

BRYAN: We’re looking forward to it. 🇺🇸



Senior Advisor to the Secretary of Defense on Climate, Joe Bryan, participates in the virtual Congressional Clean Energy EXPO meeting from the Pentagon, Washington, D.C. DOD photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Jack Sanders



Always Ready to Help

By Chris Duyos

Team Rubicon Rallies Defense Community Volunteers to Aid Afghan Refugees

As the U.S. withdrew from Afghanistan, military installations from Virginia to New Mexico began to receive an influx of refugees fleeing the country. To assist with the thousands of new arrivals, DOD enlisted Team Rubicon, a nonprofit specializing in natural disaster cleanup, to assist with donations and processing.

Team Rubicon was founded after Jake Wood, a former Marine, witnessed the widescale destruction and suffering in Haiti following the earthquake that rocked the country in 2010. He realized that veterans, skilled in adapting to austere

and dangerous environments during active service, could make for excellent disaster response volunteers.

“Our mission is to mobilize military veterans to help communities prepare, respond and recover from humanitarian crises,” said Art Delacruz, Team Rubicon’s CEO. Team Rubicon sees enlisting veteran volunteers in their relief efforts as a way for them to continue their service “in a different capacity” while transitioning to civilian life.

Team Rubicon’s reputation and infrastructure prompted DOD to ask the

nonprofit to assist with refugees arriving in the U.S. Answering the call for those in need, the organization began managing donation initiatives at installations and in defense communities across the country.

Communities near bases such as Fort McCoy, Wisconsin and Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey have high rates of veterans which provides a volunteer recruitment pool right at their doorstep.

While volunteers come from all over, those from defense communities have been extremely helpful to Team Rubicon’s donation management system. The work involves long hours of sorting through bins of clothes in warehouses. While arduous and clerical, this work means much more to these veterans, many of whom served in Afghanistan.

Now they can repay those who once protected them by ensuring they receive new clothes, toiletries and other essentials.

“The [defense] communities are rallying around these bases, and I think a lot of that has to do with this connection to the things that happened in Afghanistan,” Delacruz said.

One veteran living near Fort McCoy drove his pickup truck across Wisconsin to pick up handmade quilts to donate to refugees. A local high school soccer team had its own donation drive that sent hundreds of essential supplies to Team Rubicon’s facilities.

“There are so many strong [defense] communities that are wholly committed to offer assistance to meet the needs [of Afghan refugees],” Delacruz said. Team Rubicon continues to rely on the unwavering support of defense communities in assisting our allies in their time of greatest need. 🇺🇸



Marine Corps Cpl. Hunter Degnan interacts with Afghan children at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia, Sept. 7, 2021. Marine Corps photo by Tia Dalfour

Team Rubicon volunteers assist with sorting clothes at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin. Photo courtesy of Team Rubicon





Service members and their families light candles at a vigil in memory of the service members lost in the Aug. 26, 2021 attack at Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, Afghanistan. Marine Corps photo by Lt. Cpl. Joseph Cooper

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ON THE GROUND in America's Defense Communities

The COVID-19 pandemic reminded us that when our defense communities and the military are working together as one, we make progress for our service members and their families. ADC is committed to uniting its defense communities to create great places for our military to live, train and defend our nation. In the following pages you'll read about communities working together in big ways (putting DOD infrastructure dollars to work) and small (saving an endangered bird species on the California coast).

Gen. Jacqueline Van Ovost, Air Mobility Command commander, bumps elbows with Dr. Mamie Futrell, community support coordinator, during her visit to Dover Air Force Base, Delaware. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Jonathan W. Harding



A Regional Approach to Healthcare

One lasting impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is DOD's efforts to modernizing delivery of health care. *By Randy Ford*



DHA Director Army Lt. Gen. Ronald Place unfurls the DHA flag in July 2021, as Air Force Brig. Gen. Jeannine M. Ryder, 59th Medical Wing commander and director of the San Antonio medical market, unveils the market's flag. Assisting them are DHA Senior Enlisted Leader Army Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Gragg and Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Marc Schoellkopf. Army photo by Jason W. Edwards

Calling the virus “the ultimate disruptor,” Dr. Terry Adirim said it “tested the readiness of and resilience of the entire enterprise.” But Adirim, the acting secretary of defense for health affairs, said in August that it had led to “seemingly small but significant wins” in how the department cares for service members, families, TRICARE beneficiaries and others.

Along with advancements like more telehealth visits, Adirim pointed to Keesler Medical Center in Biloxi, Mississippi. The staff there began using the recommended 15-minute waiting period after a patient receives a COVID-19 shot to schedule appointments for routine care they may have skipped earlier in the pandemic.

Among the department’s major modernization efforts is the establishment of regional medical markets that link all military hospitals and clinics in a region. The Defense Health Administration adopted the model after Congress gave it control of all military hospitals and clinics in the 2017 defense authorization.

“It helps create a flexible, integrated health system that best supports the operational demands of the department, and it meets the needs of our patients. In my eyes, that’s a win-win,” said DHA Director Army Lt. Gen. Ronald Place when helping launch the Jacksonville, Florida medical market in early 2020.

The Jacksonville market was one of the first, along with the Mississippi coast region, central North Carolina and the D.C. area. DHA has continued spreading the model across the country.

Julie Freeman, commander of Medical Department Activity-Fort Stewart and Winn Army Community Hospital in Georgia, said her region’s new Low Country medical market is “elevating clinical practices, management systems and technology.... We are stronger when we work together.”

Army Col. Martin Doperak, commander of Tripler Army Medical Center said the new Hawaii market, which he oversees, will benefit the entire region.

“Our patients can now access a larger network of providers and specialists, our medical professionals have greater opportunities to maintain their skills, and our facilities can more easily share resources,” Doperak said. “In other words, I know our system as a whole will be healthier and more prepared due to this transition.”

Left: Defense Health Agency Director Army Lt. Gen. Ronald Place, left, talks with Col. Dwight Kellicut, chief of vascular surgery at Tripler Army Medical Center, part of DHA's Hawaii medical market. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Caleb Barrieau



Empowering (and Employing) Spouses in the Bluegrass State

A new initiative out of the Greater Fort Knox region addresses dual issues for military spouses: employment and growing their professional networks. **By Chris Duyos**



The Soldiers and Family Readiness Group (SFRG) team and others pose for a group photo, following the Volunteer of the Year Award Ceremony in May 2020. Army Photo by Spc. Kaylee Harris

Since 2020, the Fort Knox region has undertaken initiatives to provide military spouses with assistance and education on employment.

Last year, the Knox Regional Development Alliance launched a program to support military spouses' careers—for those moving to the Greater Fort Knox region, and those already there searching for employment.

The program provides access to local job boards in addition to opportunities for targeted professional networking. Several organizations teamed up to make the program as robust a resource as possible, including the Kentucky Career Center, Lincoln Trail, the Lincoln Trail Workforce Development Board and Fort Knox.

As a first step, spouses are asked to fill out a short questionnaire on greaterfortknox.com. Then, participants are matched with an experienced Kentucky Career Center professional. The program also gives military spouses job training opportunities for free.

"Whether it's training, career workshops or help finding employment, our career center team provides a one-stop shop for any employment or training needs," said Sherry Johnson, Lincoln Trail Workforce Development board director.

Military spouses are also matched with a "community connector" who will assist them with growing their professional network.

"Statistics say that upwards of 70 percent of job opportunities don't come from a job board but rather from professional relationships," said Jim Iacocca, KRDA's president and CEO. "Being new to the community, military spouses typically don't have that."

The resource is now shared with every soldier arriving at Fort Knox, which allows spouses to be aware of this support system even before they move to the region. Summer Carney, a former DOD employee from a military family, joined Fort Knox Army Community Services to oversee the base's spouse employment program.

"Whether you are about to move here, have just moved here or have been stationed at Fort Knox for some time, the community wants to help," Iacocca said. 🇺🇸



MOVING FORWARD WITH TELEWORK IN THE DEFENSE COMMUNITY

Amy G. Manley, IIDA and Ellen Keable, CCMP™
Jacobs Workplace Performance Strategies
JULY 20, 2021



The Future of Work

The flexibility that comes with working remotely "may prove to be a silver lining of the pandemic," according to a new report from Jacobs Workplace Performance Strategies.

"We need to build on the momentum and opportunities to advance mission; support our workforce, families, and communities; and increase efficiency, resilience, and agility for ongoing transformation of work for the DOD and all federal agencies and partners," Amy Manley and Ellen Keable wrote in the report, "Moving Forward with Telework in the Defense Community."

Read the report at defensecommunities.org.

As a federal property, Vandenberg is obligated to protect the snowy plover under the Endangered Species Act of 1973. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Aubree Owens



Vandenberg members met with Lompoc city leaders and educators during the "Meet Surf Beach" event Feb. 25, 2021. Air Force photo by Michael Peterson

Saving the Snowy Plover

Civilians and service members alike band together to protect an endangered bird species on the California's Central Coast.

By Chris Duyos

Surf Beach in Santa Barbara County is known for two things: Vandenberg Space Force Base and the Western Snowy Plover.

Vandenberg Space Force Base is well-known for its spacecraft and missile testing launches that light up the night sky, yet the base is also known for its pristine beaches lining the Pacific Ocean. Established in 1941 and bordering the town of Lompoc, the base remains the area's largest economic engine.

Surf Beach is located on the base and is a popular destination for local civilians and servicemembers – but human traffic on the beach has interfered with the bird's nesting season causing the population to decrease to the point that the Snowy Plover is now an endangered species.

Determined to preserve access to Surf Beach for local residents and protect the Snowy Plover's habitat, Vandenberg SFB has launched several initiatives aimed at conservation efforts, including establishing a community outreach program. During

nesting season, volunteers are tasked with patrolling the beach to ensure nests are preserved and conservation rules are being followed, all while educating beachgoers on the importance of the habitat.

Tiffany Whitsitt, the supervisor of Vandenberg's Beach Keepers program, is also leading the effort to educate students in the Lompoc area about the Snowy Plover.

"Surf Beach is at the intersection of biology, civil engineering, construction, rocket science and environmental statistics," Whitsitt said. "We can work together to explore all of these things while raising awareness for community-based problem-solving and environmental education initiatives."

With one out of every 10 Western Snowy Plovers calling the coastline of Vandenberg SFB home, the base has an obligation to protect the species, which they take seriously. Vandenberg's efforts to engage the community on this issue allows civilians to enjoy the beach responsibly, promotes conversation and avoids beach closures. 🇺🇸



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SCAN ME



INFRASTRUCTURE

THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

By Chris Duyos

In 2020, the Department of Defense announced 16 grants totaling approximately \$50 million under the Defense Community Infrastructure Program (DCIP) by the Office of Economic Adjustment, now known as the Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation. Our communities hit the ground running in 2021. Here are updates on some of the 2020 grantees.

A DCIP grant provided half the funds for the Big Sky Recreation Center, a \$20 million project in Great Falls, Montana. It will be the only public indoor pool facility in the area, providing residents of the region a chance to enjoy recreational activities, including swimming—even in the winter. The recreation center will also serve as a training facility for the 40th Helicopter Squadron and the 120th Airlift Wing from Malmstrom Air Force Base. The indoor pool will allow the two units to conduct water rescue and survival training year-round to maintain flying mission qualifications.

In Abilene, Texas, DCIP granted over \$900,000 to the Abilene Independent School District to build a STEM/STEAM facility at the elementary school on Dyess Air Force Base. According to the Abilene Chamber of Commerce, the complex will include a “6,876 square feet Makers Lab area... that entails specialized equipment for use by elementary students including multiple 3D printers, robotic arms, laser engravers, a vinyl cutter and more.”

At Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri, construction of an Early Childhood Center started this July. The Waynesville School District received over \$600,000 for the

“Offering a STEM/STEAM education to the children of airmen is important to the Abilene community. Providing a first class facility is a component of this—and it’s important to us that we are doing everything we can to insure top-notch education opportunities for airmen’s children.”

GRAY BRIDWELL

Vice President of Military Affairs, Abilene

center’s \$3 million cost. The project will be of great benefit to the community, increasing capacity for early childhood opportunities. Over half of the beneficiaries will be military children.

In the Southwest, Fort Huachuca, Arizona and the city of Sierra Vista are working together on a new emergency medical services substation. The substation will reduce response times to emergencies on the installation and in the community,

creating additional support systems for both military and civilians. DCIP funded over \$1.4 million of the project’s \$3.1 million cost, which began construction in September.

Although the program is only in its second year, it is well on its way to achieving its objective: investing in the communities that installations across the country rely on, improving quality of life and cultivating strong relationships between the two. 📍



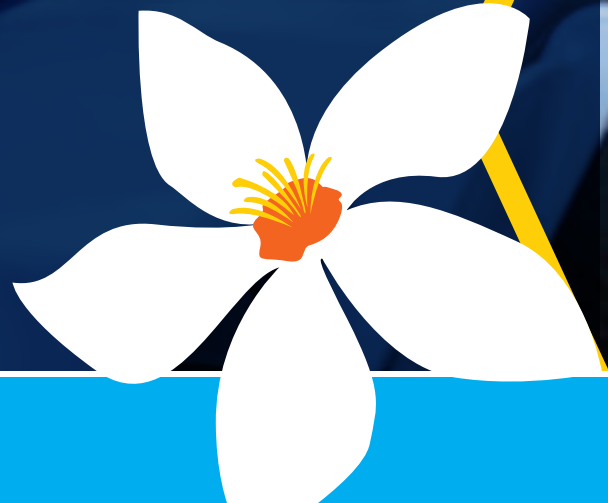
(Left to right) The new Dyess Elementary School STEM Complex opens on August 19, 2021. DCIP grants provided nearly \$1 million to the project. Photo courtesy of Abilene Chamber of Commerce / Concept art for the emergency medical services substation in Sierra Vista, Arizona. DCIP granted \$1.4 million to this project. Photo courtesy of Tony Boone

First Lady, Dr. Jill Biden poses for a photo during a military-family barbeque on Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam in July of 2021. Navy photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Anthony J Rivera



Working Together on Climate IN THE ALOHA STATE

By Grace Marvin



As residents of the only U.S. state comprised entirely of islands, rising sea levels are on the minds of many Hawaiians—and DOD leadership. ADC spoke to Capt. James G. Meyer, Commanding Officer for Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command (NAVFAC) Hawaii and Regional Engineer for Navy Region Hawaii and Brennon Morioka of University of Hawai'i College of Engineering to learn more about the challenges facing the island and our nation's bases.

ADC: Joint Base Pearl Harbor Hickam was cited in the 2019 Government Accountability Office report as a military base most threatened by climate change. What conversations are happening at your base about how to plan for the possible impacts of climate change?

MEYER: Climate consideration is an essential element of our national security, and we are assessing impacts of climate change on our security strategy, operations and infrastructure. It's an ongoing discussion in all our planning processes as we move forward, because it impacts not only our infrastructure, but our operations and missions as well.

MORIOKA: Some of the threats caused by climate change that the base is facing are no different from those faced by the state over the coming decade. This includes sea level rise and having to address its impacts on our coastlines, beaches and ports. We as



Capt. James G. Meyer, Commanding Officer for NAVFAC Hawaii and Regional Engineer for Navy Region Hawaii (left). Brennon Morioka, Dean of the College of Engineering at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (right).



a community—and the military is a very integral part of that community—need to be prepared. If one part of our community gets impacted, what we find is our entire island, if not our entire state, becomes impacted as well.

ADC: What are some of the climate change issues in Hawaii, specifically that affect Joint Base Pearl Harbor Hickam?

MEYER: In the past few years, we have seen storms become more intense and frequent, along with heavier rainfall that is projected to get worse in the future. Storm surges and flooding are obviously a major concern for us.

ADC: How has the base collaborated with the University of Hawai'i to address these climate change concerns?

MEYER: We have a great relationship with the University of Hawai'i. We have many ongoing efforts working together. Specifically, we are working with them on some data sets that help us with the tsunami- and flood-related risks at Pearl Harbor, but that same information could be used when it comes to climate change and other storm impacts that could happen at our bases.

MORIOKA: The military is extremely involved in our business community as well as in our academic and research areas, including the University of

Hawai'i. We have some of the world's best researchers, scientists and engineers when it comes to climate change and the impacts of sea level rise. Oahu is really a small incubator of sorts, and the base will be impacted much like any of our other critical infrastructure, whether it is roads, ports or airfields. We even share our main airfield at Honolulu International Airport with Hickam Air Force Base. What we do as a community, and as an overall island and state, very much needs to be in sync with what the bases and military are doing with all their infrastructure as well. 📍



Download ADC and Stantec Consulting Services Inc.'s new report to learn more about resilience planning for communities.



Airmen from Team Little Rock view the American Indian Heritage booth the Herk Nation Diversity and Inclusion Celebration event at Little Rock Air Force Base, Arkansas, in April 2021. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Mariam K. Springs



COMMUNITIES COMMIT TO INCLUSION

A 2021 survey revealed perceptions around diversity, equity and inclusion from defense community residents.

Earlier this year ADC, with pro-bono, technical support from Booz Allen Hamilton, conducted a national survey to better understand the state of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in America’s defense communities. As an organization, ADC understands that communities play a vital role in promoting cohesiveness and a sense of belonging among community members, and people thrive when they feel welcomed, valued and respected in their community.

The survey found that some demographic and affiliation groups have substantially different experiences living in defense communities than other individuals, and individual perceptions of DEI are distinctive across racial/ethnic minority groups.

Two of the report’s key findings included: Black/African American respondents perceive greater effects of racial inequity in defense communities; and military spouses/domestic partners perceive greater challenges related to DEI in their defense communities than their active duty service member and veteran peers. 📄

Read more about the report, the survey design and analysis at defensecommunities.org/onecommunity.



“ Give people a safe space to address their concerns in a platform where their voices are heard without retaliation. I think that people should learn how to address social injustice of other races without bias. More opportunities need to open for others to be a part of the causes that matter to them.”

—Black/African American Female Military Spouse/ Domestic Partner

“ Educate the community that everyone deserves equal treatment and respect.”

—Hispanic Male Active Duty Service Member

“ The concept of ‘diversity’ and racial justice specifically targets white people and creates a racist view towards white people.”

—White Male Active Duty Service Member

“ Though I believe that my community addresses issues of equality and inclusiveness well, there is always room for improvement and therefore nothing better than to make education and employment opportunities stronger.”

—White Male Veteran



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Key

- Class of 2021
- Class of 2020
- Class of 2019
- Class of 2018
- Class of 2017
- Class of 2016

**Altus,
Oklahoma**



Clockwise from top left: Young girl pets a horse during the cattle drive at Altus Air Force Base, Oklahoma, Aug. 26, 2021. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Kayla Christenson / Children play in “snow” at the annual holiday tree lighting event, Dec. 2020, at Altus Air Force Base. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Amanda Lovelace / An airman takes a photo of leaders on horses during the cattle drive at Altus Air Force Base. The wing commander, group commanders and command chief rode their assigned horses, along with dozens of cattle. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Kayla Christenson

Community Pride & a Rural Vibe in Altus

by Willona Sloan

For members of the military who learn they will be stationed at **Altus Air Force Base** in Altus, Oklahoma, the news may be met with excitement, or for others, not so much. Altus' motto is "city with a future to share." This small city has plenty that makes it special, and it's ready to shine.

"We are considered a 'rural and isolated' assignment in military terms," said Rodger Kerr, CEO of the Altus Chamber of Commerce. "We, as local Altusians, have known over the years that some people come to Altus excitedly, because they realize that this is going to be a little bit slower walk of life for them."

"Some people come to Altus, and I use the term, 'crying, kicking and screaming,'" Kerr said. "Many find out once they come to Altus that our community is real, and we really do truly appreciate and love our airmen and their families."

What Altus lacks in brand name stores and eateries, it makes up for with its hometown pride, inclusive and friendly environment, and commitment to the military community.

That commitment includes partnering with Altus Air Force Base and continually enhancing the quality of life for all residents. For example, to address the need for more affordable housing, the city recently broke ground on a 56-unit multi-family housing development. The project evolved over years of communication among the military, the city of Altus and Chamber of Commerce, and community members, according to the Altus Times.

Altus' school system already ranks in the top third of the Department of Defense school rankings, and the district keeps improving, Kerr said. The school district also has added new sports programs such as archery.

"We already have a national champion team here in our school system," said Kerr.

While working as a bartender on Altus AFB, Haley Hoover used to get the same question from newcomers: "What's there to do around here?" She published the blog post "So The Air Force Sent You To Altus, Oklahoma..." on her website (thesparklinghippie.com) to help new arrivals delve into the local experience.

Five years later, Hoover, now a success coach and founder of Sparkling Hippy, LLC, said her post still receives nearly 300 views per month, and she receives messages of thanks from families using her tips while stationed at Altus.

"For years I felt it was my mission to help people see Altus for what it is: a small, rural town with charming characters, a unique

history and lots of wide-open natural spaces to explore," she said.

While Altus enjoys a slower pace, it also offers excitement such as the much-anticipated Annual Cattle Drive at Altus AFB, when ranchers and base leadership drive longhorn cattle through the base.

The community's connection to Altus AFB is a big part of its charm, and that partnership goes both ways.

"The city of Altus and Altus Air Force Base have built a solid partnership over the years that only grows stronger with time," said Col. Blaine Baker, 97th Air Mobility Wing commander. "Through organizations like the Military Affairs Committee, Friends of Altus and the Committee of 100, numerous events are held year-round that bring together airmen and their families with the citizens of Altus."

"These events immerse the people of the Mighty 97th into the local community, help them experience the local culture, and lead to long-lasting connections and relationships. It is the welcoming environment and spirit of togetherness that truly make Altus 'Mobility's Hometown,'" Baker said. 🍷



The World Was Watching

In April 2021, ADC had the opportunity to visit Everett, Washington, a historic port city 25 miles north of Seattle. Home to **Naval Station Everett**, the region is well-known as an aviation hub because of Boeing's long-standing presence, but in early 2020, the community became known for something else: the country's first recorded case of COVID-19.

By Grace Marvin



A DC spoke to Mayor Cassie Franklin about the importance of working with the Navy during that difficult time and the city's commitment to making sure every service member who calls Everett home feels safe and welcomed in the community.

ADC: I understand you grew up in a military family. Can you talk a little bit about your background and how it influences you today?

FRANKLIN: I grew up in a bit of a Navy family. My dad served in the Navy for a few years before I was born, so I don't remember that service, but I remember the stories, looking at the photos and the pride in that service that we felt as a family. I think it grounded me in who I am today and my commitment to serving the community and my appreciation of what the military does for us.



Members of the Naval Station Everett Environmental Division pose for a photo in April 2021. The Secretary of the Navy recently declared that the division won the 2021 Secretary of the Navy Environmental Awards. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Ethan Soto



Mayor Cassie Franklin speaks to ADC during an interview in downtown Everett in April 2021. ADC photo by Chris Wright

“Our naval base is on what was formerly tribal land, and our partnership with the Tulalip tribes is of the utmost importance. As we grow the base and industry in the region, we’re working in partnership and collaboration to ensure that growth does not negatively impact the environment or the people in our region.”

—MAYOR CASSIE FRANKLIN

ADC: There was a COVID-19 outbreak on the USS Kidd early on in the pandemic. What was that experience like?

FRANKLIN: The pandemic has had a significant impact on Everett and our base. I don’t know if you recall, but the first case in the United States was treated here in Everett. That first month that we had that COVID patient in January of 2020, the USS Kidd went out for a mission in South America. Three months later, they had an outbreak. Our base’s sailors were dealing with an outbreak, and our city was dealing with being with the place COVID-19 hit in the U.S. We were both test cases for how to handle the pandemic. How can we keep our community safe? How can we keep our sailors’ families safe? I think the world was watching and learning from us, so it was a time of intense pressure.

ADC: How is the city working to ensure that all service members and their families experience a welcoming, inclusive community when they are stationed here?

FRANKLIN: Diversity, equity and inclusion are important priorities for the city of Everett. Since taking office in 2018, I’ve issued a couple mayoral directives on equity, and we have been making strides towards becoming a more inclusive, safe, welcoming city for all. We’ve hired an equity manager, and a lot of this work we do, not as a single entity, but in partnership with our county partners and our base. It’s just as important for our Naval Station Everett families to know that this is a safe and inclusive place to be and to serve your community. As we work through everything that we need to do to become a more equitable community, working in partnership with our base is of the utmost importance. Everett is not a place that will tolerate hate, and we will continue to work toward being a safe, inclusive and welcoming community for all.

ADC: Can you tell us about the One Everett initiative?

FRANKLIN: It started as a community initiative during the pandemic to help us feel united and remind each other that we’re all in this together. The city is also focused on diversity, equity and inclusion, so we expanded that initiative to really focus on equity and inclusion, especially thinking about all the challenges that we experienced in 2020 and the racial tensions across the country with the murder of George Floyd. The One Everett message has been super important to our city, to remind our community that this is no place for hate, that everybody is welcome here, and that absolutely includes our service men and women at the base. 🇺🇸

**Everett,
Washington**



Watch the full interview with Mayor Cassie Franklin on ADC’s YouTube channel.

SHARING PRODUCE AND PROMOTING HEALTH IN THE PEACH STATE

When the local farmers market was canceled at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, a thoughtful idea by a **Fort Stewart** soldier proved to be a game-changer for the community. **By Chris Duyos**



Rebecca Myers loves vegetables. As a garrison command sergeant major at Fort Stewart, Georgia, she would often head to the nearby town of Hinesville every Thursday and pick up a week's worth of produce at the farmers market. But when the COVID-19 pandemic hit the U.S. in March 2020, the market was shut down. Myers instantly recognized how important access to local, fresh produce was to the community, so she decided to find a way to continue the market while staying COVID-safe.

"When I was stationed at Fort Leonard Wood [Missouri], one of the local farmers markets... had a stand where you could pick up a box of assorted vegetables," Myers said.

Inspired by that, she reached out to the Liberty County Chamber of Commerce.

Myers and the chamber established a program where people would pay \$25 for a box filled with produce (and, for an extra fee, additional products from

other vendors, such as meats, herbs and crafts) to be picked up from the chamber's parking lot at the end of the week. They distributed a form online to gauge interest, expecting about a dozen people to sign up. But as word of the produce subscription boxes spread via social media and word of mouth, orders poured in from hundreds of local residents.

To help with logistics, Myers reached out to her fellow soldiers. She ran Fort Stewart's Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers program. With one of the initiative's core values being volunteerism, she had little difficulty enlisting soldiers to sort, pack and carry boxes in the muggy Georgia summer.

"What's good for Hinesville is good for Fort Stewart and vice versa," Myers said.

With over 20,000 soldiers at the base, and roughly three-quarters of them and their families living in adjacent communities, the program was a win-win for civilians and military, creating a way

for both to continue receiving healthy, local food when the farmers market was closed.

For those who live in Hinesville, the subscription box program was invaluable.

"I work in the health care industry, so I didn't really want to be around a lot of people [when the pandemic began]" said Susan McCorkle, a Hinesville resident for nearly 50 years. "It was really convenient to go by, pick up the box and still have that convenience of getting farm-fresh foods each week."

She even discovered new products she wouldn't have bought otherwise, such as local artisan soap, McCorkle said.

The subscription box program lasted for eight weeks, serving roughly 200 to 300 people each week. All leftover items were donated to families in need.

Today, the farmers market is back up and running, but the resourceful collaboration between Fort Stewart and the Liberty County community during a difficult time won't soon be forgotten. 🍌

Clockwise from top left: Volunteers help fill the subscription boxes. City of Hinesville photo by Rebecca Myers / While the contents of the box changed weekly, Hinesville residents could expect a mix of organic fruits, vegetables and artisan products such as soap. City of Hinesville photo by Rebecca Myers / Volunteers transport subscription boxes to cars. Photo courtesy of Liberty County Chamber of Commerce / Hinesville residents could expect a box filled with bananas, pineapples, corn, and other kinds of produce. City of Hinesville photo by Rebecca Myers

Coastal Georgia



MAKING INCLUSION PART OF THE MISSION

At **Malmstrom Air Force Base** in Great Falls, Montana, creating an inclusive environment is part of the mission. That mission begins with welcoming new arrivals. The Airman and Family Readiness Center (A&FRC) works to make transitions as smooth as possible.

By Willona Sloan



The center's newcomers orientation, which is presented twice every week, features a welcome from Wing leadership, and informs members of the military and their families about the many resources and services available at Malmstrom AFB, as well as in the Great Falls community, such as information about the local school district and nearby opportunities for exploring nature.

Arriving at a new installation can be a daunting experience—especially for first-timers.

“We get a lot of young troops that come through right out of basic [training] and tech school,” said Carmen Kubiak, community readiness consultant with A&FRC. “We want to make sure that they're welcomed, and they know that we're here for them.”

The focus on creating a positive onboarding experience demonstrates a great deal about the people at Malmstrom AFB.

“The staff was very welcoming and energetic,” said Capt. Blake Cykala,

Great Falls, Montana



sustainment services flight commander in the 341st Force Support Squadron, of his experience attending the orientation with his wife.

In the past, orientations may have touched only 55% of new arrivals, and few family members, Kubiak said.

“We are now getting 100% of the individuals that come to Malmstrom,” she said.

Another way that Malmstrom AFB creates a positive and inclusive environment is through its Diversity & Inclusion Council.

“A Tiger Team was stood up in the Summer of 2020 after the death of George Floyd,” said Maj. Rashida Brown, group practice manager, resource management flight commander. “We were charged with investigating whether minority members of the 341 MW were affected

by racial inequalities and if there was anything we could do to locally improve those conditions.”

From that effort, the D&I Council was formed to provide a program that “focuses on not only celebrating and recognizing our diverse force, but creating an environment where every member of Team Wing 1 feels a cohesive and inclusive connection to the mission, the organization and, most importantly, to each other,” Brown said.

D&I Council programs have included providing presentations for new military members on base through the First Term Airman Center on the topic of diversity and inclusion, and presenting at the classes for new lieutenants. Many members of the council also have been certified in diversity and inclusion, and can teach private classes to groups around the base when requested.

“In my opinion, these briefings are extremely beneficial in multiple ways. They open a door to holding difficult conversations,” said Master Sgt Rachael Dobson, 341 MDG executive officer, unit training manager.

Master Sgt. Darnell Dobson, also a member of the D&I Council, notes that Malmstrom’s efforts to intentionally be inclusive are showing positive benefits.

“Malmstrom celebrated its first-ever Pride Month in June, and there are several other special observances,” Dobson said. “It also gets people out and involved with events and cultures that they might not have exposure to. In the end, I think it helps to better understand people, which helps the mission.” 🇺🇸

Left to right: Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force JoAnne S. Bass meets with the 341st Missile Wing’s Diversity and Inclusion team Feb. 9, 2021, at Malmstrom Air Force Base. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Tristan Truesdell / Carmen Kubiak leads a Newcomer’s Orientation at the Airman and Family Readiness Center at Malmstrom Air Force Base in Great Falls, Montana. Photo courtesy of Carmen Kubiak

**NAS
Pensacola &
NAS Whiting
Field**

COMING TOGETHER WHEN THE UNTHINKABLE HAPPENS

By Randy Ford

From left to right:

The Blackwater CSX train trestle spans the Blackwater River in Milton, near NAS Whiting Field. City of Milton photo by Stephen Prestesater

Seabees from the Naval Construction Battalion Center in Gulfport, Mississippi help clear Hurricane Sally debris at NAS Pensacola in September 2020. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Anderson W. Branch

Capt. Timothy F. Kinsella Jr. (right), Commander of Naval Air Station Pensacola tours the National Naval Air Station Museum, which is located on the base, with Rear Admiral Kyle Cozad, President of the Naval Aviation Museum Foundation in October 2021. Photo by Chris Wright

The communities around NAS Pensacola and NAS Whiting Field celebrate their selection as a Great American Defense Community during a July 2021 Pensacola Blue Wahoos baseball game. Photos courtesy of Pensacola Chamber of Commerce

Every military community has pride in its installation, “but you’re very seldom really put to the test to show that,” said Debi Graham, vice president, armed services at the Greater Pensacola Chamber in Florida.

For Graham and her neighbors, such a test came on the morning of Dec. 6, 2019, when a gunman opened fire at Naval Air Station Pensacola and killed three sailors in an attack later classified by the Department of Justice as terrorism.

“After it happened, all the city leaders, all the county leaders came immediately to the base to ask, ‘What can I do for you?’” said Timothy Kinsella Jr., the commanding officer. “It was like they were stuck to my hip.”

NAS Pensacola is known as “The Cradle of Naval Aviation,” with more than 16,000



service members and 7,400 civilian workers. As the first training site for naval aviators, many of the enlisted officers are young, arriving in the area immediately from boot camp.

“Their families and our country have entrusted these young men and women who have volunteered, so we want to get them through their time here safely,” Graham said.

The community also came through for those families and the military when COVID-19 hit, sourcing thousands of face masks for service members in the early days of the pandemic. For young couples expecting babies but unable to travel to see family, they created the “Shower in a Box,” with items such as car seats, formula and diapers.

Then, in September 2020—at one of the peaks of the COVID-19 pandemic—came yet another test for the region, when Hurricane Sally caused major damage in the area. It destroyed the homes of many civilians working on the base.

“They still came into work because we still had all those sailors and Marines and airmen that live on the base that needed

food. They needed the galley to be open,” Kinsella said.

The storm also did a lot of damage at Naval Air Station Whiting Field, about an hour north from Pensacola in the neighboring county. Naval Air Station Whiting Field was established in 1945 and after World War II became the first Navy jet training center. Today it provides training for all helicopter aviators.

Like in Pensacola, the installation gets strong support from “a community that surrounds you and that understands your experiences,” said Ed Spears, director of economic development for the city of Milton.

There’s a strong focus on military family-friendly programs and activities, he said.

Like at NAS Pensacola, many of NAS Whiting Field’s service members are at their first duty station, and the community prides itself on creating such a welcoming environment that many of its service members want to come back years later.

“It could be upwards of 20 years from training here, deploying around the world, and getting the chance to step back and finally choose for the first time where to

live,” Spears said. “Many choose to come back home here.”

Together, the two installations account for about 40% of the region’s economy and at least that much of its character.

“Without the installations, I shudder to think what the future would be,” Spears said. “Those things trickle down from the installations to who coaches your youth team and the military members who volunteer at schools.”

And even though some say the two installations and their communities have a bit of a friendly rivalry, they continue to work closely across fence lines and county lines.

“At the end of the day, everybody is on the same team. A win for them is a win for us and vice versa,” Spears said.

Graham agreed, saying that spirit is what can get the installation and community through tough times, whether it’s a pandemic, a natural disaster or a terrorist attack.

“You know, the fence line and county line become a little a little more blurred during things like this,” she said. 🍷



Defining our Core Strengths and Legacy



By Bob Ross, President, ADC

The turbulent history of the past few years will be remembered as a confluence of complex issues that impacted most aspects of American life. The global pandemic, entire sectors of our economy upended, sweeping demand for racial and gender equity, national political polarization and paralysis, and the stunningly chaotic end of a 20-year war are all hard to digest. It's even harder to process it all in a thoughtful manner that can inform our way ahead.

As we chart a path for ADC, our own history and collective story can be a guide. History illustrates that change is inevitable, sometimes deliberate, and sometimes unexpected. We can't control the world around us. But if host communities have set firm roots in supporting installations, their missions, and service members and their families, they are headed in the right direction with strong relationships already in place to respond to the next thing that comes their way. Such enduring resilience has always been a requirement and strength for successful defense communities.

Our association will renew an emphasis on our core strengths in providing high-quality information, being a thought-leader and a voice for local communities and sharing your stories to illustrate the collective impact of America's defense communities. There are countless stories like the one in this edition of *America's Defense Communities* of Rebecca Myers, a service member whose creativity in

a time of crisis made sure military families across coastal Georgia had access to fresh food. Her impactful creative initiative spilled over into the local community as well.

At ADC, we celebrate innovative ideas and actions that have an impact and share them to spark the next great idea. ADC's new *Defense Community Champion* program embodies this concept. We are excited to highlight people who engage their communities with impactful creative initiatives.

Leaders who formed our organization nearly 45 years ago could not have imagined the evolution of defense communities today. However, they would recognize our core strengths of partnerships and the impactful creative initiatives people bring to defense communities.

Partnerships and creative solutions have always been at our core. They are part of our legacy. We should build upon them and promote them throughout America's diverse defense communities. 🇺🇸



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