



DIRECTORATE OF PREVENTION, RESILIENCE AND READINESS

DPRR
MEDIA UPDATE
Dec. 13-19, 2024

WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

Spouses Have More Access within the Enterprise-Exceptional Family Member Program

Spouses can now view active EFMP packages in a similar format as service members, ensuring consistency when accessing package details. They can see EFMP enrollment expiration dates, track the progress of open actions and view EFMP documents. When a spouse navigates to the "My Actions" page and clicks on a package initiated by their service member, the view will mirror the service member's page. Additionally, a spouse can view Family Member Travel Screening (FMTS) packets (in a read-only format) that their service member has initiated, allowing them to stay informed on the package status. Link for EFMP website: <https://efmp.army.mil/EnterpriseEfmp/>

Winter Resilience Strengthening Campaign

With a sharp focus on the dimensions of personal readiness, DPRR's Winter Resilience Strengthening campaign presents posts on topics such as financial planning, combating loneliness and strategies for moving to new military bases. Along with focusing on these core skills, the campaign highlights established programs and capabilities that offer Army community members support with transitions such as the winter PCS season. Help our community members stay resilient during the winter months and [download the social media campaign today.](#)

DPRR YouTube Channel

Did you know that DPRR has a YouTube channel? Training and education empower leaders and Soldiers to demonstrate resilience. When individuals gain experience in applying these skills, it fosters cohesive team building and drives readiness. With over 140 offerings, the channel provides podcasts, webinars and other learning opportunities on a variety of key topics. Take a few minutes to explore all the offerings, and don't miss the latest releases—[subscribe to the channel today.](#)

RESOURCES

DPRR Blog: Family Child Care Homes Provide Options, Employment Opportunities for Army Families

The number of Family Child Care program homes is growing, giving Army Families more options for affordable, safe and flexible child care to support their work schedules and careers. Offering full-day, part-day and hourly care, the program is ideal for those with unpredictable, atypical work schedules who need extended child care hours, for those who desire smaller group sizes or a home environment or for those who are frustrated by long waiting lists for day care centers. [Learn more about FCC's options and opportunities.](#)

Child Care Options and Employment Toolkit

DPRR has published new materials to increase awareness about child care options and to recruit child care professionals. The resources include information on various programs, including those offered by Child and

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Youth Services and a pilot program that provides child care for Army Reserve and National Guard Families during weekend drill and battle assembly training. [Download the toolkit](#).

Family Advocacy Program Toolkit

The Family Advocacy Program provides service members and Army Families with resources to overcome challenges, improve their quality of life and create safe, supportive environments. FAP includes the New Parent Support Program, services to prevent abuse and neglect within Families and intimate partnerships, advocacy support and a wide range of seminars and workshops. Learn more about FAP and how it benefits Army Families with this newly published toolkit, which includes posters, fact sheets and social media graphics. [Download the toolkit](#).

More to Be Done Campaign: Awareness Materials

As part of our commitment to a more ready force, DPRR has launched the More to Be Done awareness campaign, symbolizing the ongoing journey toward a safer, more resilient community. This campaign reflects our collective commitment to tackling challenges head-on, preventing suicide and eliminating sexual harassment and sexual assault in Army formations. It includes a dynamic collection of awareness materials, such as visually striking posters, detailed brochures, attention-commanding banners, pocket-sized informational cards and a variety of digital resources. In the spirit of collaboration and shared responsibility, we look forward to the positive impact of More to Be Done in our community. [Order and download campaign materials](#) at no cost to share with your team.

EVENTS

DPRR Monthly Podcast Series

Podcast: Hardships at Home: The Portrayal of Military Families in Traditional, Military Community and Military-Focused News Publications

Speaker: Scott Parrott, Ph.D.

Description: Dr. Parrott, the guest for November's podcast, talks about the divide between military and civilian culture, focusing on the relationship between civilian communities and the services. He gives examples of how news publications portray military Families, often using terms referring to hardships such as substandard housing and financial problems.

Recording: [Listen to the November podcast on DPRR's Buzzsprout channel](#).

SOCIAL MEDIA

Discover what you're missing if you're not following and liking us on [Facebook](#), [X](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#). As an Army member, you can enhance prevention, build resilience and improve readiness by staying up-to-date on events, policies and program changes through DPRR's social media channels.

ARTICLES AND VIDEOS

ARTICLE: Defense Bill Orders Military to Take New Action on Brain Injury

THIS IS OUR ARMY.

SYNOPSIS: The National Defense Authorization Act that both chambers of Congress just passed includes a new set of mandates on brain safety in the military, requiring the Pentagon to set new safety limits for troops' blast exposure, to track and report exposures throughout their careers, to modify existing weapons to reduce the danger and, for the first time, to take brain safety into account when designing weapons. The provisions on brain safety reflect a broad shift in how Congress and the military view the hazard of blast exposure, also called overpressure. Evidence mounted this year that service members are at risk of developing brain injuries from repeatedly firing their weapons and from high-performance equipment like speedboats and fighter jets, but the military often has missed the problem.

REPORTER: Dave Phillipps, *The New York Times*

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/12/18/us/defense-bill-brain-injury-blast.html>

VIDEO: Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on the Strength of a Diverse Military

SYNOPSIS: Lloyd Austin spent more than four decades in uniform and made history as the nation's first African American Defense Secretary. During a visit to the prestigious West Point military academy, Austin talked with CBS News national security correspondent David Martin about the responsibilities of a Defense secretary and the importance of a diverse fighting force.

REPORTER: CBS Sunday Morning, CBS News

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/politics/government/defense-secretary-lloyd-austin-on-the-strength-of-a-diverse-military/vi-AA1vTR1n?ocid=BingNewsSerp>

ARTICLE: U.S. Military Academies See Decrease in Reported Sexual Assaults in 2024 After Previous Historic High

SYNOPSIS: The rate of sexual assault in U.S. military academies "significantly decreased" in 2024, according to a new report the Pentagon released Thursday. But while the drop marks progress—the figure is down from the highest rate ever recorded, in 2022—officials warned that more work is needed, as the latest data still indicate a higher rate of assaults than in past years. The *Annual Report on Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence at the Military Academies* showed that 783 Cadets and Midshipmen experienced sexual assault, down from 1,136 in 2022 when the last prevalence survey was released.

REPORTER: Haley Britzky, CNN, KCRA3

<https://www.kcra.com/article/military-academies-sexual-assault-drop-2024/63173018>

ARTICLE: 14.5% Junior Enlisted Pay Raise, Restriction on Care for Transgender Military Kids Headed to Biden's Desk

SYNOPSIS: The just-passed National Defense Authorization Act includes a significant 14.5% pay raise for junior enlisted Soldiers as well as restrictions on gender-affirming health care for the children of service members—angering transgender advocates and their Democratic allies. The annual defense policy bill, approved by the Senate on Wednesday, is headed to President Biden for signature.

REPORTER: Rebecca Kheel, *Military.com*

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2024/12/18/145-junior-enlisted-pay-raise-restriction-care-transgender-military-kids-headed-bidens-desk.html>

ARTICLE: Soldiers Can Now Get \$2,000 If They Travel for a Family Emergency

SYNOPSIS: Soldiers and their Family members who need short-notice, often-expensive travel for an emergency will be eligible next year for more financial assistance to pay for those unexpected costs. Soldiers may receive \$2,000 for domestic travel and up to \$4,000 internationally for emergency situations like the death of a loved one, important surgeries and disaster assistance under a new program run by the nonprofit Army Emergency Relief.

REPORTER: Patty Nieberg, *Task & Purpose*

<https://taskandpurpose.com/military-life/soldiers-emergency-travel-2000/>

ARTICLE: Military Housing Allowance Rates Are Going Up an Average of 5.4% Again in 2025

SYNOPSIS: Military households will receive an average 5.4% increase in their basic allowance for housing next year. The Pentagon estimates that it will pay \$29.2 billion in housing allowance payments in 2025, up from the 2024 estimate of \$27.9 billion. In 2023, military households received a 12.1% average increase after costs had skyrocketed the prior year. The department didn't cite a prevailing reason for the 2025 increase, which tops any from 2010 to 2022.

REPORTER: Amanda Miller, *Military.com*

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2024/12/13/military-housing-allowance-rates-are-going-average-of-54-again-2025.html>

ARTICLE: Most Girls Do Not Think They Could Succeed in the Military: DOD Data

SYNOPSIS: Youth interest in military service is in a worrisome steady decline. And gender is part of the issue, with teenage girls expressing significantly less confidence than boys that they have what it takes to be successful in uniform, according to new data compiled by Joint Advertising Market Research & Studies. But despite the torrent of bad news for military recruiting, officials are optimistic that having a better understanding of younger generations' barriers to service, real or imagined, will provide recruiters with the opportunity to counteract misconceptions and speak more effectively to candidates for the services.

REPORTER: Hope Hodge Seck, *Army Times*

<https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-military/2024/12/16/most-girls-do-not-think-they-could-succeed-in-the-military-dod-data/>

ARTICLE: U.S. Army Officer Found Guilty of Sexual Harassment in Historic Military Case

SYNOPSIS: A former Army battalion commander was found guilty last Friday of sexual harassment of a subordinate in what prosecutors hailed as a historic military justice case. Lt. Col. Herman West, who was previously stationed at Washington state's Joint Base Lewis-McChord, faced multiple charges over his treatment of a female officer in his command.

REPORTER: Staff, *The Guardian*

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/dec/14/us-army-officer-guilty-sexual-harassment>

ARTICLE: Congress Demands Answers on Low Testosterone Issues Among Special Operators

SYNOPSIS: Congress has demanded that the Defense Department look into incidents of special operators who report low levels of testosterone, a deficiency that can lead to a range of physical and mental health effects that many refer to as "Operator Syndrome." According to researchers, by age 35, many special operators have the same testosterone levels as men who are 80 to 90 years old. The new Defense Secretary

will brief lawmakers next year on available treatments for low testosterone in the military health system and protocols for testing and screening.

REPORTER: Patty Nieberg, *Task & Purpose*

<https://taskandpurpose.com/military-life/low-testosterone-operator-syndrome-sof/>

ARTICLE: Another Commissary Closure Leaves Customers Seeking Answers

SYNOPSIS: For months, customers of the Forest Glen Annex commissary in Silver Spring, Maryland, have been inconvenienced by its temporary closure and have regularly asked about the reopening date. The commissary was closed due to “visible cracks observed in the walls and floor.” Supunnee Ulibarri, spokeswoman for the Defense Commissary Agency’s Central/Eastern United States and Europe regions, said, “Right now, we cannot address reopening until we complete the assessments of the Forest Glen commissary for safety.” The commissary is one of at least two closed this year because of structural issues.

REPORTER: Karen Jowers, *Army Times*

<https://www.armytimes.com/pay-benefits/mil-money/2024/12/17/another-commissary-closure-leaves-customers-seeking-answers/>

ARTICLE: Active-duty Troops Eligible for Flexible Health Care Spending Accounts Next Year

SYNOPSIS: Many service members will be able to enroll in a tax-advantaged flexible spending account starting next year to help pay medical expenses not covered by Tricare, according to a Defense Department spokesman. “A Health Care Flexible Spending Account is an optional benefit that enables service members to set aside up to \$3,300 in pre-tax earnings to pay for health expenses such as co-pays and cost shares, vision, dental, and drug store items,” Joshua Wick wrote in a recent email to *Stars and Stripes*.

REPORTER: Jonathan Snyder, *Stars and Stripes*

<https://www.stripes.com/theaters/us/2024-12-18/military-health-flexible-spending-accounts-16213634.html>

ARTICLE: Live in the Tricare West Region? Do This Before Dec. 31

SYNOPSIS: Changes are coming to Tricare regions on Jan. 1, and certain beneficiaries in the West have less than two weeks to provide their payment information to the new contractor, TriWest Healthcare Alliance. Those who don’t take action could lose their medical coverage. West region beneficiaries who pay enrollment fees or premiums by credit card or bank electronic funds transfer must provide their information to the new contractor by Dec. 31.

REPORTER: Karen Jowers, *Army Times*

<https://www.armytimes.com/pay-benefits/military-benefits/health-care/2024/12/18/live-in-the-tricare-west-region-do-this-before-dec-31/>

ARTICLE: First Military Housing Project Since WWII Moves Forward at Fort Buchanan

SYNOPSIS: At Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico, Soldiers are eagerly awaiting a \$32 million housing complex that will mark the first new residences on the installation since World War II. The project, scheduled to be completed in January 2026, consists of tearing down 27 old housing units, building 26 new ones and providing supporting facilities.

REPORTER: Carlos Cuevas, *Army.mil*

https://www.army.mil/article/282019/first_military_housing_project_since_wwii_moves_forward_at_fort_b_uchanan

ARTICLE: Corvias Says It's Investing \$91 Million in Fort Liberty Housing

SYNOPSIS: More than 1,100 homes at Fort Liberty, North Carolina, will receive \$91 million in renovations. Corvias secured more than \$560 million in capital to support its privatized military housing at six military installations. In total, more than \$210 million will be invested in renovations at Fort Liberty, as well as at Fort Meade, Maryland, and Fort Novosel, Alabama.

REPORTER: Joseph Pierre, *Fayetteville Observer*

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/money/realestate/corvias-says-its-investing-91-million-in-fort-liberty-housing/ar-AA1w2P4A?ocid=BingNewsSerp>

VIDEO: Soldiers Arrive at Richmond Airport to Fly Home for the Holidays

SYNOPSIS: Cheers are likely erupting at Army bases nationwide as trainees leave for two weeks of "holiday block leave." More than 40,000 soon-to-be Soldiers at 21 bases across the United States can participate in this seasonal tradition. The Army is the only military branch that pauses basic and advanced individual training during the holidays.

REPORTER: Staff, WTVR CBS 6

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/soldiers-arrive-richmond-airport-fly-164956824.html>

VIDEO: Thousands of Fort Jackson Soldiers and Trainees Take Leave After Rigorous Basic Training

SYNOPSIS: Thousands of Soldiers and trainees at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, are taking a much-needed break this holiday season after completing weeks of grueling training. According to Maj. Gen. Daryl Hood, more than 8,000 will get two weeks off. "When they leave and take the two-week break, we want them to continue to exercise, enjoy Mom and Grandmom's cooking, try to do it in portion size, but don't just stay there for the whole time and do nothing—because when you come back, we are going to continue with our physical regime," Hood said.

REPORTER: Kei'Yona Jordon, WACH FOX 57 (SC)

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/travel/outdoor-activities/thousands-of-fort-jackson-soldiers-and-trainees-take-leave-after-rigorous-basic-training/ar-AA1w79EV?ocid=BingNewsVerp>

ARTICLE: Soldiers March Through the Snow to Support Each Other

SYNOPSIS: On an early December morning, after several feet of snow fell, Soldiers at Fort Drum, New York, took part in a foot march for a very important mission: to get toys for their hopeful kids this holiday season. With the everyday cost of living weighing heavily on young service members, they can find it particularly hard to fulfill their children's Christmas wish lists. But for the past 30 years, that burden has been made lighter because of a generous program, Mountain of Toys, run by the Sergeants Major Association. Cmd. Sgt. Maj. Christopher Foley, the association's president, points out that young Soldiers with Family members struggle because they have the expenses of setting up a new home as well as buying equipment to survive winter in the frigid temperatures typical of this part of northern New York. That's why Army parents are so grateful to take advantage of the opportunity to select free toys at this annual event. As one overjoyed participant, Spc.

Jamie Dorris, notes, "I think it's a cool opportunity to come here, pick up a few toys just so [kids] have a good Christmas."

REPORTER: Brian Dwyer, Spectrum Local News

<https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nys/central-ny/news/2024/12/13/mountain-toys-ruck-march>

ARTICLE: Heroes and Helpers Brings Hope to the Local Community

SYNOPSIS: Soldiers at Fort Gregg-Adams, Virginia, partnered with Kiwanis Club of Colonial Heights for a special mission last weekend, Heroes and Helpers, during which they were each paired with one of 39 local children to go Christmas shopping at Target. Each child received \$150 to spend on gifts for themself and loved ones, with their Soldier chaperones helping them choose favorite novelties like board games, toys and books.

REPORTER: Ericka Gillespie, *Army.mil*

<https://www.dvidshub.net/news/487606/heroes-and Helpers-brings-hope-local-community>

ARTICLE: Installation Units, Organizations Participate in Exchange Community Gift Wrap Program

SYNOPSIS: In the spirit of the season, Army and Air Force Exchange Services at Fort Knox, Kentucky, is partnering with on-post organizations to provide free gift wrapping for community residents. The Exchange Community Gift Wrap Program is open until 8 p.m. on Dec. 24. Those who want to get their packages wrapped must make an appointment by calling the Family Morale, Welfare and Recreation program at 502-624-2628.

REPORTER: Savannah Baird, *Army.mil*

https://www.army.mil/article/282026/installation_units_organizations_participate_in_exchange_community_gift_wrap_program

ARTICLE: Learn About the Behind-the-Scenes Work of Preserving Military Stories

SYNOPSIS: In a recent episode of *Veterans Voices*, public radio station WYSO spoke with Charlie Palumbo, who runs the Military Voices Initiative at StoryCorps. Click the link below to read a transcript of the interview, in which Palumbo explains how she goes about capturing the experiences of veterans and service members and why it is so important that she share them with the public.

REPORTER: Will Davis, *WYSO*

<https://www.wysostore.org/2024-12-16/learn-about-the-behind-the-scenes-work-of-preserving-military-stories>

ARTICLE: Forces Command Forum Focuses on Building Spiritual Readiness

SYNOPSIS: Last week, the U.S. Army Forces Command Chaplain Office at Fort Liberty, North Carolina, hosted 132 chaplains and religious support professionals from active-duty, Army National Guard and Army Reserve units from the United States and around the world for their annual training forum. Among the top Army leaders to address the audience was Lt. Gen. Stephen G. Smith, FORSCOM Deputy Commanding General, who noted how difficult it is to provide continual religious support and to keep Soldiers spiritually ready in the face of dangerous, high-stress situations. "It's what you bring to the table. It's what you do each and every day out in our formations. I think you are unsung heroes, and a lot of times, you probably prefer it this way," Smith said. "You work behind the scenes. You don't do it in a bragging manner, but you're out there with us, among us, each and every day, with our people, who are our most important asset."

REPORTER: Staff, U.S. Army Forces Command Public Affairs Office

https://www.army.mil/article/282020/forces_command_forum_focuses_on_building_spiritual_readiness

ARTICLE: ASC Headquarters and Headquarters Company Supports Soldier Readiness

SYNOPSIS: At Rock Island Arsenal, in Illinois, the U.S. Army Sustainment Command is an invaluable resource for Soldiers, helping them get everything they need to the right place, at the right time and in the right condition. ASC can assist with tasks as small as reminding Soldiers to keep life insurance information up to date and to schedule and keep medical appointments or as critical as supporting them during life-threatening medical crises. In highlighting the many services provided, Maj. Jessica Carr, leader of the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, said, “We connect and partner with resources across the garrison so that we can ensure what we’re offering to the Families can help make their daily lives or their quality of life as military Families better.”

REPORTER: Greg Wilson, ASC Public Affairs

https://www.army.mil/article/282101/asc_headquarters_and_headquarters_company_supports_soldier_readiness

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