APHC releases HEALTH OF THE FORCE report
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Army Public Health Center

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The U.S. Army Public Health Center recently released its third edition of the Health of the Force report. The report makes Soldier health and readiness information accessible to a wide array of stakeholders, including military medical professionals, Soldiers, and the larger community.

As noted by U.S. Army Surgeon General Lt. Gen. Nadja West, the Health of the Force Report “highlights the Army’s current population health successes that ultimately we, as an Army, can leverage across our camps, posts and stations, in support of the Army’s number one priority, readiness.” The report compiles information from military medical surveillance systems to illustrate health outcomes and health factors that affect medical readiness among Active Component Soldiers. Medical surveillance can inform programs to reduce and prevent illness and injury in Soldiers.

“Our Soldiers and their medical readiness are the foundation of our fighting force,” said Dr. Amy Millikan Bell, APHC medical advisor and Health of the Force chairperson. “The report provides data for the overall Army and profile pages for each installation, so that installations can compare themselves to others. Commanders can understand their status in all areas and then improve the areas of weakness. Charts even provide information on how demographic factors such as age and sex can affect Soldier health.”

In his initial message to the Force, Secretary of the Army Mark Esper offered that “readiness and welfare of our Soldiers, Civilians, and their Families will always be foremost.” The conditions assessed in the report, including injury, behavioral health, sleep disorders, and chronic disease all have an immediate impact on Soldier medical readiness. Health factors, such as obesity, tobacco use, substance use, healthcare delivery, and air quality all affect a Soldier’s performance and likelihood of developing more serious medical conditions.

According to the Health of the Force report, injuries continued to be the leading cause of Soldiers not medically ready. In 2016, the most recent year for which data are available, 52% of Soldiers experienced an injury, and among those affected, most experienced multiple injuries. The report provides various insights for understanding the burden of injuries on the Army community.

The Army has recently focused on reducing tobacco use, including “tobacco-free living” initiatives. The decline in tobacco use among Active Component Soldiers from 28% in 2015 to 26% in 2016, as outlined in the Health of the Force report, demonstrates the possible effect of these programs and indicates room for continued efforts.

Senior Army leaders are using the Health of the Force report to further understand the health of their communities and to improve the environment, infrastructure and nutrition on their installations. This effort highlights health reporting in a way that provides meaningful data for senior Army leaders to create cultural change in support of the total Army’s overall readiness and health.

Senior Army leaders are using this tool to further understand the health of their communities, by installation, and to improve the environment, infrastructure and nutrition on their installations. This effort highlights health reporting in a way that provides meaningful data for senior Army leaders to create cultural change in support of the total Army’s overall readiness and health.
The U.S. Army Public Health Center’s Veterinary Services and Public Health Sanitation Directorate have teamed up with the Public Health Communication Directorate in creating a new mobile app called milPetEd, short for Military Pet Education. The app provides Soldiers, family members and retirees with animal health information, an interactive Veterinary Treatment Facility finder, and even a section where users can submit pictures of their furry, feath-ered or finned friends.

According to Katie Riley, a health communications specialist with the Public Health Communication Directorate, “The Military Pet Education app was created to provide Service members, beneficiaries and retirees with easy access to animal health information on phones and tablets.”

The comprehensive and accessible app leads the user through the various aspects of having a pet, from the basics such as considering what sort of pet would be best for you and your family, to the harder topics such as understanding the grief that accompanies losing a beloved pet. The app includes a variety of articles, all written by U.S. Army veterinary service personnel. While the app currently focuses primarily on cats and dogs, it provides some information about what to do with smaller pets or farm animals in case of an emergency.

“Future additions to the app will include information about horses, birds and other creatures people may have as animal companions,” stated Lt. Col. Wendy Mey, a preventive medicine veterinarian in the VHS Directorate. “It is important for people to know that the information on the app was written by Army Veterinary Service personnel with our military beneficiaries in mind.”

MilPetED includes extensive animal health information, ranging from general information about the importance of preventive care to species-specific information, such as preventing dog bites. In addition to physical health, the app offers information about helping animals who are experiencing emotional or behavioral difficulties.

The app offers advice that is relevant to the whole family, such as instructing parents and caregivers about the importance of teaching your children about proper animal etiquette, and the proper way of introducing a new infant to the family pet.

“Many may only visit the Veterinary Treatment Facility once or twice a year. We needed to come up with a way to ensure our Service members, beneficiaries, and retirees had easy access to trusted information at their fingertips,” said Riley. “The Military Pet Education app was created to be the one place Service members, beneficiaries and retirees need to go to obtain animal health information tips and resources on any of their devices.”

The app officially launched Sept. 12, and is available for free download from iTunes and Google Play.
Army public health experts solve excessive noise problem at Fort Knox
by Samantha Birk
Public Affairs Office

Every year, troops from all over the world come to Fort Knox, Kentucky, to utilize the installation’s state-of-the-art ranges for pre-deployment training. As a result, the base accrues tons of spent ammunition. Recently, the task of processing the spent ammo has fallen back onto the installations, and Fort Knox is one of the bases that has good machinery for this task. Other installations ship their spent ammo to Fort Knox to be recycled, and the recycling center processes in excess of 140 tons of brass annually. The budget of the recycling center on base greatly relies on the proceeds from the recycled brass ammunition.

The task of recycling the brass relies on a machine called the OD 5000, a brass deformer, which compacts the spent ammo. Since the piece of machinery had not been in use for some time, it was necessary that a noise survey be conducted to ensure the safety of the workers. Derrick Lumzer, an industrial hygienist at Fort Knox, was tasked with the survey.

“Previously, the operators of the machinery would wear double personal hearing protection, ear plugs and ear muffs which was the standard, and you could work a regular work shift which is 7 to 8 hours,” said Lumzer.

But in recent years, more stringent noise exposure levels have been put into effect by the Army. Previously, the permissible exposure level for hearing was 90 decibels. But now it is 85 decibels. Lumzer discovered that even with double hearing protection, the 100 percent dosage of noise exposure was reached in just 30 minutes. This meant that the operators of the deformer were unable to work a full 7 to 8 hour shift.

Lumzer realized that personal hearing protection was no longer sufficient, because processing just a single bin takes 45 minutes, if everything goes according to plan. Collaborating with the recycling center manager, Lumzer got to work to find a solution. He also reached out to APHC employee, Charles “Chuck” Jokel, a noise control engineer who has been with the organization for more than a decade.

“There are a lot of people who measure noise, but not a lot of people who know what to do with that information,” said Jokel.

Lumzer remarked that Jokel was “very helpful”, giving him insight into the problem and showing him how to be more proficient in reducing noise exposure.

Although there were obstacles, a solution was reached. Ultimately, it took using sound absorption material, sound blocking material and top-of-the-line ear muffs and ear-plugs to achieve an acceptable amount of hearing protection, so that the workers could work a full shift at the brass deformer.

The OD 5000, a brass deformer, compacts spent shell ammo at Fort Knox recycling center. This noisy piece of machinery was making it difficult for the recycling center employees to work a full shift. Derrick Lumzer, an industrial hygienist at Fort Knox, collaborated with Chuck Jokel, an U.S. Army Public Health Center noise control engineer, to augment the machinery.
Lawrence “Larry” Tannenbaum, of the Environmental Health Sciences and Engineering Directorate of the U.S. Army Public Health Center has published his second book. The book is titled *Ecological Risk Assessment: Innovative Field and Laboratory Studies*, and is a follow-up to his first book *Alternative Ecological Risk Assessment*.

Tannenbaum works in the Environmental Health Risk Assessment Division as a senior risk assessor. In this position, he is responsible for conducting risk assessments and writing reports; giving presentations; and organizing lab and field studies. He has worked with the organization for 23 years, previously working for the Environmental Protection Agency for a decade, doing the same work.

The book contains 35 studies regarding ecological risk assessment studies, which Tannenbaum says, “could change the environmental risk assessment field.” Each study includes the study’s premise, background, guidelines and a summary of what the study might show. The book targets students seeking graduate or doctoral degrees. He believes that the book presents a new way of looking at things and that you need an open mind to read the book, saying the book, “brings something different to the table.”

Tannenbaum credits the training he received at the U.S. Army Public Health Center with giving him the inspiration to write this book. He remarked that the most enjoyable aspect of work at the APHC is the “opportunity to learn, get at the science I do and keep pace with where the science is.”

Jeff Leach, the chief of the Environmental Assessment Branch at APHC, praised Tannenbaum’s work ethic.

“Over the years, Larry has secured funding for and carried out a multitude of studies investigating his ideas on ecological health risk assessment” said Leach. “Larry’s work ethic and passion for advancing the state of the science are unparalleled. His books are a testament to this in that he devoted his own time and resources to writing them.”

Tannenbaum said his greatest professional achievement is writing his two books. As he looks towards the future, he considers retirement sometime soon, but even if he does, he will continue writing. He is also a senior editor of a peer review journal published by the Society of Environmental Toxicology called Integrated Environmental Assessment and Management. Tannenbaum is a prolific writer, and has published nearly 40 articles in peer-reviewed literature.

He has been married to his wife for 30 years, with whom he has two children, and eight grandchildren. When he is not pursuing his scientific interests, he enjoys playing the guitar and volunteering at his synagogue where he works on the board, the membership committee, hospitality committee and the newsletter.
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