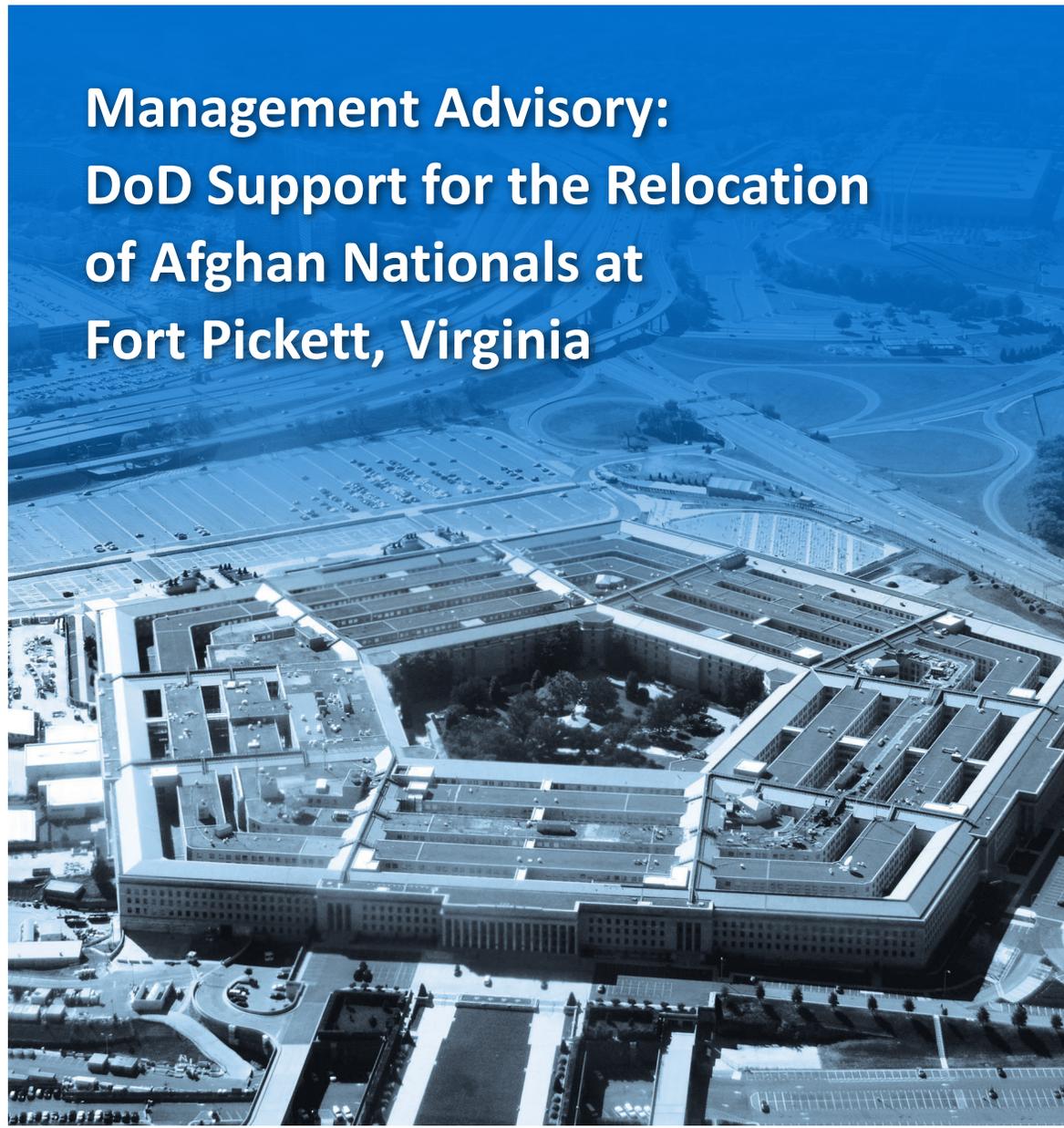




# INSPECTOR GENERAL

*U.S. Department of Defense*

JANUARY 20, 2022



## Management Advisory: DoD Support for the Relocation of Afghan Nationals at Fort Pickett, Virginia





**INSPECTOR GENERAL  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
4800 MARK CENTER DRIVE  
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January 20, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDER, U.S. NORTHERN COMMAND  
COMMANDER, U.S. ARMY MATERIEL COMMAND  
COMMANDER, U.S. ARMY NORTH  
DIRECTOR, JOINT STAFF  
AUDITOR GENERAL, DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
AUDITOR GENERAL, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

SUBJECT: Management Advisory: DoD Support for the Relocation of Afghan Nationals  
at Fort Pickett, Virginia (Report No. DODIG-2022-055)

The purpose of this management advisory is to provide the officials responsible for receiving, housing, supporting, and preparing Afghan evacuees for movement to their final resettlement location the results from our site visit to Task Force (TF) Pickett at Fort Pickett, Virginia. The audit team visited TF Pickett from September 24 through 27, 2021. We conducted the work on this project with integrity, objectivity, and independence, as required by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency's Quality Standards for Federal Offices of Inspector General.

Our review of TF Pickett operations at Fort Pickett was conducted as part of the "Audit of DoD Support for the Relocation of Afghan Nationals (Project No. D2021-D000RJ-0154.000)."<sup>1</sup> The objective of this audit is to determine whether the DoD has adequately planned and provided support for the relocation of Afghan evacuees. The audit team visited Fort Pickett to review housing and other facilities, security, medical care, and costs associated with the effort. Despite having limited time to plan for this massive effort, TF Pickett personnel housed and sustained Afghan evacuees.<sup>2</sup> However, TF Pickett personnel did experience challenges, such as ensuring accountability of Afghan evacuees and holding Afghan evacuees accountable for misdemeanor infractions committed on Fort Pickett.

The 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment and 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, were the main Army and Marine Corps units supporting TF Pickett. Those units dedicated resources to support the effort, to include manpower, equipment, and supplies.

<sup>1</sup> DoD OIG Project No. D2021-D000RJ-0154.000, "Audit of DoD Support for the Relocation of Afghan Nationals," announced on August 23, 2021.

<sup>2</sup> TF Pickett is supported by DoD, interagency, and non-governmental organization personnel. However, for the purpose of this report, we refer to TF Pickett personnel as DoD personnel.

## Operation Allies Refuge

On July 14, 2021, the President announced Operation Allies Refuge, with the Department of State (DOS) as the lead Federal agency, to support the relocation of Afghan evacuees who previously supported the U.S. Government and were in the process of completing their Special Immigrant Visa applications.<sup>3</sup> Applicants' immediate family members were also included in the relocation effort. During Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Freedom's Sentinel, the U.S. Government employed Afghans in supporting roles to assist in these operations. Due to that employment, some Afghans, their families, and close friends faced ongoing, serious threats. According to a statement by the President on August 30, 2021, the DoD executed the largest airlift in U.S. history, evacuating more than 120,000 people from Afghanistan in just 17 days. The DOS activated the Afghanistan Coordination Task Force and requested and received DoD-provided support in the form of temporary housing, sustainment, and other support at suitable DoD facilities both within and outside the continental United States.<sup>4</sup>

## Operation Allies Welcome

On August 29, 2021, the President announced that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) would serve as the lead Federal agency for Operation Allies Welcome (OAW), coordinating ongoing efforts across the U.S. Government to resettle vulnerable Afghans in the United States, including those who worked for the United States and Coalition forces since 2001.<sup>5</sup> The DHS processes, screens, and vets Afghans in coordination with the DoD, the DOS, and other Federal agencies. The DOS and the Department of Health and Human Services are responsible for the final resettlement and integration efforts.

### ***DoD Roles and Responsibilities Supporting Operation Allies Welcome***

On August 15, 2021, the Secretary of Defense directed the U.S. Northern Command to provide temporary housing, sustainment, and support inside the United States for Afghan evacuees, their families, and other individuals at risk from the Taliban. As the DoD's lead combatant command for OAW, the U.S. Northern Command provides housing and security at U.S. military installations. As of December 31, 2021, there were five U.S.-based military installations, including Fort Pickett, supporting the relocation of Afghan evacuees under OAW.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> In 2014, Congress amended the Special Immigrant Visa program to provide U.S. visas for translators and interpreters who performed "sensitive and trusted activities" for the U.S. Government in Afghanistan.

<sup>4</sup> The Afghanistan Coordination Task Force is led by the DOS and includes experts from various U.S. Government agencies, including the DoD, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Health and Human Services.

<sup>5</sup> Operation Allies Refuge was the operation to airlift at-risk Afghan evacuees, who supported the DoD, out of Afghanistan. OAW is an ongoing effort across the U.S. Government to support these Afghan evacuees as they resettle in the United States.

<sup>6</sup> The five installations are Fort Pickett, Virginia; Fort McCoy, Wisconsin; Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico; Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey; and Camp Atterbury, Indiana. Between November 17, 2021, and December 30, 2021, the last Afghan evacuees were processed out of former OAW-supported installations at Fort Lee, Virginia; Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia; and Fort Bliss, Texas, and resettled.

## Fort Pickett Operations and Task Force Pickett

Fort Pickett is located in Blackstone, Virginia, approximately 65 miles southwest of Richmond and 45 miles west of Fort Lee, Virginia. Fort Pickett has approximately 42,000 acres of land and is operated by the Virginia Army National Guard. The installation is a regional training center that features a combination of open and wooded terrain. Fort Pickett also operates an Army airfield and has barracks to support more than 5,000 personnel. In addition to supporting the Army National Guard Maneuver Training Center, Fort Pickett often hosts other Federal agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, for training.

On August 25, 2021, the DoD announced that Fort Pickett would provide support to Afghan evacuees in the form of housing and sustainment. The next day, personnel from the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command's Fires Center of Excellence and the 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment arrived at Fort Pickett. TF Pickett personnel originally planned for 5,000 Afghan evacuees, but on August 29, 2021, TF Pickett personnel were told to increase their capacity to 10,000. On August 28, 2021, the first group of 788 Afghan evacuees arrived. As of September 27, 2021, there were 5,878 Afghan evacuees housed at Fort Pickett.

## Afghan Evacuee In-Processing at Fort Pickett

Upon arrival at Fort Pickett, Afghan evacuees received a verbal welcome brief that detailed which facilities and resources were available, summarized the resettlement process, and outlined the rules of Fort Pickett. In addition, arriving Afghan evacuees underwent an initial medical screening to identify any communicable diseases or pregnancies. Next, the International Rescue Committee, an international non-governmental organization that helps with refugee resettlement in the United States, met with the families, and entered information from evacuee passports or other government-issued identification into the Hummingbird database.<sup>7</sup>

The International Rescue Committee assigned each Afghan evacuee to a cohort for scheduling appointments for all of the in-processing stations (biometrics, medical, resettlement, and onward travel) that evacuees needed to go through before their departure. A cohort consisted of groups of 25 to 30 people. TF Pickett kept families in the same cohort and housed the people in the same cohort together. TF Pickett personnel assisted the International Rescue Committee in publishing daily cohort lists detailing where Afghan evacuees needed to be and when. Each area in which TF Pickett housed Afghan evacuees had a mayor cell that consisted of TF Pickett personnel. The mayor cell was responsible for communication between Afghan evacuees and the Task Force Commander's Action Group. Additionally, according to TF Pickett personnel, mayor cell personnel escorted Afghan evacuees to their scheduled appointments throughout the day and accompanied Afghan evacuees as they went through in-processing to provide any needed assistance.

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<sup>7</sup> The Hummingbird database is a DOS-owned database used to support OAW. The system captures Afghan evacuee identification data, such as name, date of birth, and passport number; medical data, such as lab results, vaccinations, and medical exams; and biometric data, such as fingerprints and photos for immigrants seeking resettlement.

## Afghan Evacuee Sustainment Procedures and Observations

TF Pickett's initial plan was to use existing hard structure buildings to house, care for, and feed Afghan evacuees. The Fort Pickett garrison personnel identified available one- and two-story barracks sufficient to house Afghan evacuees.<sup>8</sup> In addition, TF Pickett officials awarded a support contract to house, care for, feed, and provide security for additional incoming Afghan evacuees. The contract provided 165 trailers to house an additional 5,000 Afghan evacuees. TF Pickett personnel called the area with the 165 trailers Pickett Village. Figure 1 is a picture of the contracted trailers from Pickett Village.



Figure 1. Contracted Trailers Used to House Afghan Evacuees in Pickett Village  
Source: The DoD OIG.

### ***Hard Structure Barracks***

At Fort Pickett, the one- and two-story barracks housed the majority of Afghan evacuees. The barracks were segregated into all-female barracks, all-male barracks, family barracks, and coronavirus disease–2019 (COVID-19) isolation barracks. The barracks were large rooms with either bunk beds or single beds, with working heating and air conditioning units.

<sup>8</sup> A DoD OIG engineering team inspected the buildings at Fort Pickett used for the basic life support of the Afghan evacuees.

The occupancy of the barracks varied; however, the average occupancy of each barrack building was 85 persons. The Fort Pickett barracks area had its own dining facilities, restrooms, and shower facilities for Afghan evacuees housed there. Figure 2 is an example of the barracks used by Afghan evacuees at Fort Pickett.



Figure 2. Barracks Housing for Afghan Evacuees at Fort Pickett  
Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

### ***Food and Water***

There were several dining facilities located in the barracks housing area at Fort Pickett. The dining facilities were one-story, contractor-operated buildings. During the site visit, the audit team observed that the dining facilities were clean and there were no extended wait times for Afghan evacuees to receive meals. According to TF Pickett personnel, Afghan evacuees received meal cards. Single Afghan evacuees received individual meal cards, while the head of each Afghan household received a family meal card.

According to TF Pickett personnel, each person was allotted three hot and culturally appropriate meals each day, and typically the head of the household retrieved the allotted meals for the family in to-go containers. Afghan evacuees ate outdoors or in their living quarters. Afghan evacuees also had access to unlimited snacks at a 24-hour “grab-and-go” tent. Additionally, numerous pallets of free bottled water were accessible at all times.

### ***Restroom and Shower Facilities***

Showers and restrooms were located on each floor of the barracks and were available for use 24 hours per day. There were also additional portable restrooms and handwashing stations for use throughout the barracks housing area. Contractor personnel maintained and cleaned the showers, restrooms, and portable restrooms. During our walkthrough, the audit team observed clean and well-maintained restroom and shower facilities with no waiting time.

## ***Pickett Village***

As of September 25, 2021, TF Pickett personnel had used only a few of the contracted trailers to house Afghan evacuees. The interior of the trailers contained either double or triple bunk beds on each side of the trailer, with no shower or bathroom located inside the trailer. Pickett Village had its own dining facility, restrooms, and shower facilities.

### ***Food and Water***

The Pickett Village dining facility was a large, contractor-built tent that served three hot and culturally appropriate meals each day. Afghan evacuees housed in the hard structure barracks also had the option to receive their meals from this dining facility. Even with Afghan evacuees from the barracks and Pickett Village using the single dining facility, the contractor arranged the facility in a way that prevented long lines. During our walkthrough, the audit team observed that the dining facility was clean. Additionally, we observed that the evacuees housed in Pickett Village had access to free bottled water and unlimited snacks at a 24-hour “grab-and-go” tent.

### ***Restroom and Shower Facilities***

Showers, restrooms, and handwashing stations were provided, maintained, and cleaned by contractor personnel. The shower trailers were designated either male or female. The portable restrooms were also designated either male or female and had numerous handwashing stations available outside. The showers, restrooms, and handwashing stations were available for use by Afghan evacuees 24 hours per day. During our walkthrough, the audit team observed that the restroom and shower facilities were clean, with no waiting time.

## ***Other Amenities Provided Throughout Fort Pickett***

In addition to providing housing, food, water, showers, and restrooms, TF Pickett provided additional amenities for the benefit of Afghan evacuees. The additional amenities included worship and recreational areas and donations and laundry facilities.

### ***Worship and Recreational Areas***

TF Pickett had a worship tent separated by gender. TF Pickett also had three recreational tents. One recreational tent was for women and children only and the other two tents were for all Afghan evacuees to use. The recreational tents had televisions, tables for foosball and table tennis, and a basketball hoop. In addition to the recreational tents, there was a soccer field that Afghan evacuees used for soccer games and practice.

## ***Donations and Laundry Facilities***

TF Pickett provided Afghan evacuees with linens, towels, soap, and shampoo. Afghan evacuees had the choice to wash their personal laundry themselves or to drop it off and have it washed and dried for them by contractor personnel. TF Pickett provided Afghan evacuees with donated items, such as toiletries, baby items, and clothing, at the various distribution centers throughout Fort Pickett.

## ***Afghan Evacuee Sustainment Challenges***

We conducted a walkthrough of the housing facilities at Fort Pickett and identified electrical and fire safety deficiencies. Specifically, the dining, worship, and recreational tents lacked grounding on their respective electrical systems.

The lack of grounded electrical systems could result in the electrocution of facility users in the event of a short or a fire caused by a lightning strike. During our site visit, we notified TF Pickett personnel of the electrical and fire safety deficiencies, which they immediately resolved by grounding the electrical systems.

## ***Medical Care Procedures and Observations***

TF Pickett provided two types of medical care for Afghan evacuees: medical in-processing and medical treatment. A Navy Expeditionary Medical Unit (EMU), deployed to supplement TF Pickett, assisted with Afghan evacuee medical in-processing, including providing medical checks, communicable disease testing, and immunizations. As of September 29, 2021, there were 117 EMU personnel supporting TF Pickett.

The DHS required TF Pickett medical personnel to give Afghan evacuees specific vaccines and medical screenings. EMU personnel recorded the medical treatment provided to each evacuee on a standard form. Once an Afghan evacuee received all required medical treatment and had a completed form, they had what the DHS and DoD called “medical assurance.”<sup>9</sup> Urgent and acute medical care for Afghan evacuees was provided by the medical contractor. The medical contractor provided infectious disease care, distributed medications, administered x-rays, provided obstetric-gynecological care, and provided ambulance services.

## ***EMU In-Processing***

Afghan evacuees were bused from Dulles International Airport to Fort Pickett. According to TF Pickett personnel, upon arrival, the EMU received a manifest, or list of names and ages, from the DOS personnel who chartered the buses. The EMU then performed an initial medical evaluation of each Afghan evacuee. Originally, this initial evaluation only required a temperature check, but TF Pickett medical personnel added a questionnaire to screen for

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<sup>9</sup> Medical assurance was required by the DHS for the assurance process and included a health assessment, tuberculosis testing, and immunizations.

symptoms of illness, as well as a visual assessment for measles, scabies, and lice. The medical building had five medical stations; therefore, personnel could process five families at a time through the medical in-processing.<sup>10</sup>

### ***Access to All Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-Required Vaccinations***

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published a vaccine schedule, which listed 13 vaccines required by age group. On September 5, 2021, the DHS issued a memorandum to establish medical requirements for Afghan evacuees.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, on September 8, 2021, the U.S. Northern Command Commander ordered DoD personnel to provide all Afghan evacuees the immunizations recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. TF Pickett personnel stated that they provided the 13 age-appropriate immunizations recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, including the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR), polio, COVID-19, and flu vaccines. The EMU administered as many as nine vaccines at a time to each Afghan evacuee. The following table provides the list of the 13 immunizations.

*Table. Required Immunizations for U.S. Immigration*

Required Immunizations	
1. Measles, Mumps, and Rubella	8. Influenza
2. Polio	9. Pneumococcal Pneumonia
3. Tetanus and Diphtheria (Td/Tdap)	10. Rotavirus
4. Pertussis (DTP/DTaP/DT)	11. Hepatitis A
5. Haemophilus Influenza Type B (Hib)	12. Meningococcal (MenACWY)
6. Hepatitis B	13. COVID-19
7. Varicella	

Source: The DoD OIG.

According to the U.S. Northern Command, as of October 15, 2021, at Fort Pickett, 100 percent of Afghan evacuees were vaccinated for MMR and varicella, 99 percent were vaccinated for COVID-19, and 65 percent were vaccinated for polio.<sup>12</sup>

EMU personnel documented the vaccines provided to each Afghan evacuee in packets containing paper copies of medical information. Each Afghan evacuee, upon departure from Fort Pickett, received a paper copy of their medical packet while TF Pickett retained a paper copy and the information that resided in the EMU’s Excel spreadsheet.

<sup>10</sup> Medical buildings were not connected to housing. Medical buildings were walking distance from the housing.

<sup>11</sup> DHS Memorandum, “Medical Requirements for Operation Allies Welcome,” September 5, 2021.

<sup>12</sup> As of November 5, 2021, the U.S. Northern Command reported that Fort Pickett had vaccinated 100 percent of Afghan evacuees for MMR, varicella, COVID-19, and polio.

## ***Prevention of the Spread of Communicable Diseases***

According to TF Pickett medical personnel, there had been only a few cases of communicable diseases. EMU personnel tracked COVID-19 cases, measles cases, and any other outbreak of an infectious disease or illness among Afghan evacuees. As of September 27, 2021, TF Pickett had 15 Afghan evacuees in COVID-19 isolation and 70 Afghan evacuees in COVID-19 quarantine. Afghan evacuees stayed in isolation or quarantine for at least 10 days, depending on their symptoms. However, EMU personnel said measles were the top concern due to the contagious nature of the illness. Sexually transmitted infections, which had low case numbers, were also tracked. Communicable diseases, such as measles, COVID-19, and sexually transmitted infections, were reported to the U.S. Northern Command and local Virginia hospitals.

To ensure the health and safety of all personnel supporting OAW and to prevent the spread of COVID-19, on September 3, 2021, the U.S. Army North Commander ordered all personnel on installations supporting OAW to wear a face mask and all Afghan evacuees to be tested for COVID-19 through rapid antigen testing every 72 hours. EMU personnel stated that Afghan evacuees were tested regularly, by their assigned barracks, for COVID-19 with rapid antigen tests. If a test was positive, EMU personnel tested the Afghan evacuee with a polymerase chain reaction test.<sup>13</sup>

EMU personnel stated that as of September 25, 2021, they performed COVID-19 testing on 500 to 700 Afghan evacuees every day through random and deliberate testing and surveillance. According to EMU personnel, as of September 25, 2021, the rate of positive tests for COVID-19 among Afghan evacuees was less than 0.5 percent.

However, TF Pickett personnel did not meet the U.S. Army North requirement to use rapid antigen testing to test Afghan evacuees for COVID-19 every 72 hours. TF Pickett personnel stated that the requirement was unrealistic because they would be required to test almost 2,000 Afghan evacuees per day. On October 28, 2021, the U.S. Army North issued an order removing the requirement for Afghan evacuees to be tested for COVID-19 through rapid antigen testing every 72 hours.

According to EMU personnel, Afghan evacuees were provided with education related to health and hygiene. EMU personnel stated that face masks were available for everyone. However, during our walkthroughs of Fort Pickett, the audit team observed only a limited number of Afghan evacuees wearing face masks, most of which were in the medical clinic area. In addition, we observed that Afghan evacuees and military personnel wore masks at medical stations.

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<sup>13</sup> Rapid antigen testing for COVID-19 uses a nasal swab to determine if a person is infected with COVID-19. Molecular tests, also known as RT-PCR tests, use nasal swabs (either shallow or deep) in most tests and saliva in some tests. Most molecular or PCR tests produce results in less than an hour.

In other areas, such as living quarters and outside common areas, Afghan evacuees and military personnel were encouraged, but not required, to wear masks. The audit team observed very few Afghan evacuees and military personnel wearing masks in these areas. EMU personnel said that there were posted signs with COVID-19 information; however, we did not see any during our walkthroughs. TF Pickett personnel said that the mask requirements were unrealistic as Service members for TF Pickett and Afghan evacuees all slept in close quarters and masks were not required when sleeping.

Throughout Fort Pickett, there were barracks and trailers designated as isolation facilities to separate Afghan evacuees with communicable diseases and prevent the spread of disease. TF Pickett personnel stated that they offered the entire family of an infected individual the option to isolate together. In addition, the contracted medical care provider had medical isolation tents for Afghan evacuees with communicable diseases. Figure 3 is an example of the contractor-provided medical isolation tents at Fort Pickett.



Figure 3. Medical Isolation Tents  
Source: The DoD OIG.

### ***Chronic, Acute, and Emergency Medical Care***

TF Pickett had a contractor on site to administer specialized health care. The specialized health care included chronic care (such as pharmacy services), acute care (such as treating a cut or broken bone), and emergency medical care (such as stabilizing patients before they were transferred to an appropriate medical facility). TF Pickett established a dedicated medical treatment area, which was composed of tents for different medical services, sleeping and holding areas, and ambulances for medical emergencies.

## ***Medical Care Challenges***

TF Pickett medical personnel faced several challenges related to providing medical screenings and medical care to Afghan evacuees. Specifically, the TF Pickett contracted medical personnel had challenges with:

- limited availability of local community hospitals for emergency care;
- recording and tracking medical information; and
- sustaining expanded, long-term medical care.

## ***Challenging Site Location***

TF Pickett relied on local hospitals to treat Afghan evacuees experiencing medical emergencies; however, the nearest hospital was a small community hospital 35 miles away. The nearest large hospital was 67 miles away. TF Pickett and contractor medical personnel expressed concerns that local medical resources in the areas around Fort Pickett were overburdened. Specifically, both local hospitals were short-staffed in the wake of COVID-19 and had limited ambulance capacity. Furthermore, Fort Pickett had to share local medical resources with other military installations supporting the OAW effort, including Marine Corps Base Quantico (TF Quantico) and Fort Lee (TF Eagle). The lack of local medical resources led TF Pickett to contract for a sizeable expansion of chronic, acute, and emergency medical care, and six dedicated ambulances.

According to TF Pickett personnel, if the contractor could not treat a medical condition at Fort Pickett, TF Pickett personnel and the contractor dispatched an ambulance, and TF Pickett and the contractor notified the DOS. The DOS was responsible for Afghan evacuee patients while they were at the hospital and until their return to Fort Pickett. Figure 4 is an example of the medical care tents and ambulances at Fort Pickett.

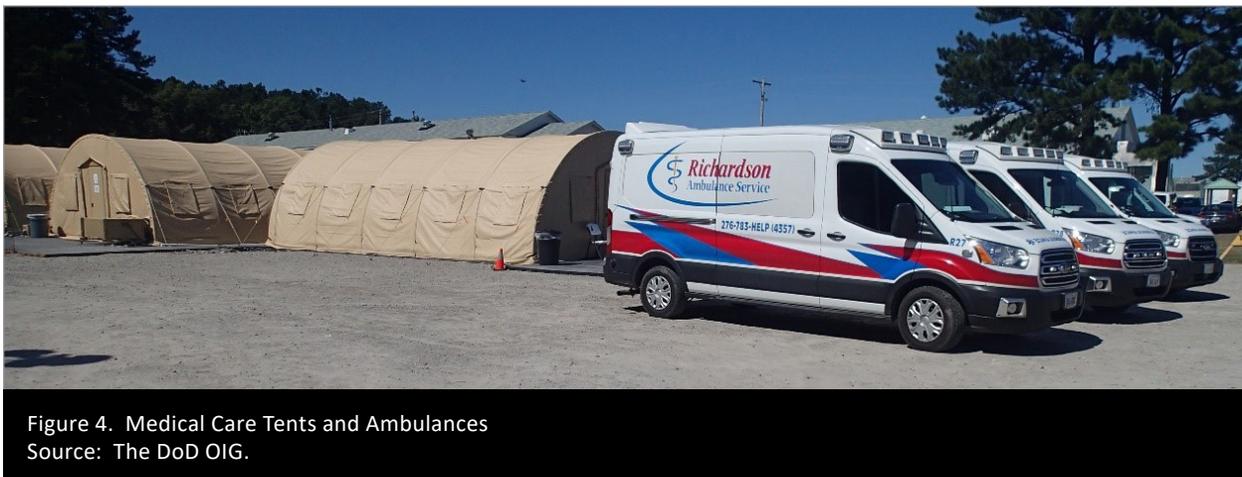


Figure 4. Medical Care Tents and Ambulances  
Source: The DoD OIG.

## *Challenges with Recording and Tracking Medical Information*

EMU personnel stated that there were many challenges with medical recordkeeping for the Afghan evacuee population at Fort Pickett. First, a significant number of Afghan evacuees did not have any identification or medical documents as many fled Afghanistan without having the time to pack official documents. In addition, many evacuees were separated from their medical documents because the documents were packed in luggage that remained at Dulles International Airport.

Further, EMU personnel encountered problems with the spelling of names and dates of birth, which caused confusion on medical records and pharmacy orders. For example, EMU personnel stated that many Afghan evacuees had multiple spellings of their first and last names on their medical records. In addition, many Afghan evacuee dates of birth were either unknown or did not directly translate to the Gregorian calendar, which led to multiple birthdates.<sup>14</sup> Pharmacy orders rely upon accurate spelling of names and dates of birth. Confusion over spelling of names and dates of birth led to incorrect medical forms and pharmacy documentation.

Also, when Afghan evacuees first arrived at Fort Pickett, there was confusion in recording which individuals were assigned to which cohort. This created confusion for TF Pickett personnel because after EMU processed Afghan evacuees by cohort, some Afghan evacuees would change cohorts and not notify TF Pickett personnel of the change. As a result of the multiple spellings of Afghan evacuees' names and the frequent unreported movement of Afghan evacuees within cohorts, EMU personnel had difficulty tracking Afghan evacuee medical care.

Poor medical recordkeeping led to confusion over the number and type of immunizations provided to Afghan evacuees. In September 2021, Fort Lee (TF Eagle) medical personnel were sent to help TF Pickett EMU personnel administer measles vaccines. While assisting EMU personnel, TF Eagle medical personnel realized that in some cases Afghan evacuees received multiple doses of the same vaccine. TF Pickett EMU personnel acknowledged that the lack of documentation and Afghan evacuees switching cohorts led to some evacuees receiving more vaccinations than necessary. Neither TF Pickett nor TF Eagle medical personnel could determine the exact number of Afghan evacuees who received multiple doses of a single vaccination.

TF Eagle medical personnel helped TF Pickett pause medical immunizations for 72 hours to organize medical records and improve the medical record tracking system. On September 20, 2021, TF Pickett EMU developed an Excel spreadsheet to track the medical history and associated documentation of each Afghan evacuee. TF Pickett medical personnel stated that relying on these spreadsheets was sufficient for tracking evacuee

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<sup>14</sup> According to EMU personnel, some Afghan evacuees did not know their dates of birth and would provide different dates.

medical treatment. However, relying on spreadsheets to track Afghan evacuees with multiple spellings of their first and last names increased the possibility of human error when recording information and could lead to unnecessary vaccinations or missed required medical care.

TF Pickett personnel stated that there were no reported medical effects as a result of evacuees receiving multiple doses of the same vaccination; however, the lack of a reliable process for tracking medical treatment increases the risk that confusion will continue in the future. Due to the evacuees switching cohorts, having multiple spellings of first and last names, and multiple birth dates, as a best practice, the TF Pickett Commander should consider implementing a unique identification system, like a lanyard with a unique identification number such as those used at Fort Lee, which would help with the medical assurance process to ensure everyone has completed all required steps.

### ***Challenges to Sustaining Expanded, Long-Term Medical Care***

Another challenge for TF Pickett personnel was sustaining medical care as the length of the OAW mission and the number of Afghan evacuees increased. TF Pickett personnel expressed concern for pregnant Afghan evacuees. Specifically, the volume of prenatal care, along with delivery and post-partum care, necessary for 133 pregnant Afghan evacuees required hospital visits. However, according to TF Pickett personnel, transportation to the nearest hospitals could take between 50 and 75 minutes. In addition to pregnancies, EMU personnel said 10 percent of Afghan evacuee patients had dental problems that could lead to medical emergencies if not treated. EMU personnel said this would not be a concern if Afghan evacuees were only on site for 21 days, which was the original estimated time needed on site to complete their medical assurance. However, EMU personnel stated that they believed Afghan evacuees would remain at Fort Pickett for several months before being resettled, which could lead to more significant medical complications. As a result, TF Pickett personnel were working on adding additional medical and dental services for the Afghan evacuee population.

## **Observations of Afghan Evacuee Accountability and Security Procedures**

The audit team observed the accountability and security measures put into place by TF Pickett security personnel and Army National Guard personnel that normally operate the post. Our accountability and security observations included the following two areas.

- ***Accountability Screening.*** Upon arrival at Fort Pickett, Afghan evacuees were immediately in-processed into the DOS tracking software, Hummingbird. According to TF Pickett personnel, this system was put into place to better track Afghan evacuees through the assurance process; however, the system was installed after Afghan evacuees had been on the base. TF Pickett personnel stated that this led to difficulty inputting and reconciling the data with actual records of Afghan evacuees.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> TF Pickett needed to retroactively process Afghan evacuees due to the evacuees arriving before the system had been installed. This led to data errors as they needed to correctly identify all evacuees, and many Afghan evacuees provided different information from when they were entering through in-processing.

- **Access Control.** TF Pickett established checkpoints stationed around the joint operations area to control the movement of Afghan evacuees.<sup>16</sup> TF Pickett security personnel stated that in the event of an emergency, Quick Response Force personnel would patrol the joint operations area in a van. If needed, these units were ready to assist in detaining individuals until Virginia State Police arrived at the scene. TF Pickett personnel did not carry weapons and were only allowed to respond to de-escalate a situation. Security personnel stationed at these checkpoints were aware of their roles and responsibilities in response to a potential security incident.

## **Accountability Challenges**

TF Pickett personnel did not have controls in place to ensure accountability of the 5,878 Afghan evacuees under their supervision. As of September 27, 2021, TF Pickett personnel had not performed any accountability checks of Afghan evacuees after initial in-processing. During our site visit, there was no physical way to identify Afghan evacuees, such as a lanyard with an identity card. This caused accountability issues throughout all processes of Afghan evacuee sustainment. According to TF Pickett personnel, there were instances where Afghan evacuees switched cohorts, which led to confusion since TF Pickett personnel tracked Afghan evacuees specifically by cohorts when scheduling medical appointments or meetings with DOS personnel. By contrast, at other military installations supporting OAW, such as Fort Lee, TF Eagle personnel conducted 100-percent daily accountability checks of all Afghan evacuees on base and required Afghan evacuees to wear badges with unique identifiers.

TF Pickett security personnel acknowledged that at Fort Lee, Afghan evacuees wore badges for identification, as well as to keep track of issues and medical records throughout the DOS assurance process. TF Pickett security personnel stated that this technique would be useful, but the significant number of Afghan evacuees at TF Pickett made it difficult to implement. Specifically, Fort Lee had approximately 1,700 Afghan evacuees while TF Pickett had more than 5,000, with the expectation of an increase to 10,000 Afghan evacuees. However, at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst (TF Liberty), which housed a similar number of Afghan evacuees as TF Pickett, the audit team found TF Liberty personnel implemented a similar identification system using wristbands with a unique four-digit number for each Afghan evacuee.

We discussed the lack of accountability of Afghan evacuees with the TF Pickett Commander during the exit conference on September 27, 2021. As a result, in October 2021, according to TF Pickett personnel, they started conducting accountability checks to ensure accountability of each Afghan evacuee. Specifically, every 72 hours TF Pickett personnel used the housing roster and each Afghan evacuee's Hummingbird number to ensure accountability.

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<sup>16</sup> The joint operations area is the area Afghan evacuees can move about without restriction. The areas include housing, dining, medical, and recreation areas. The checkpoints exist to ensure evacuees do not accidentally move into unauthorized locations such as the water treatment area, active ranges, the daycare on post, and ammunition depots.

## ***Security Challenges***

According to TF Pickett personnel, security was a concern. TF Pickett personnel stated that they had several challenges regarding the security of Afghan evacuees on Fort Pickett. Specifically, TF Pickett had challenges with holding Afghan evacuees accountable for misdemeanors. In addition, TF Pickett had challenges with controlling unauthorized access to the joint operations area, where Afghan evacuees were located.

### ***Holding Afghan Evacuees Accountable for Misdemeanors***

According to TF Pickett security personnel, they encountered challenges holding Afghan evacuees accountable for misdemeanors occurring on post. TF Pickett security personnel stated that there had been several reported instances of theft, physical abuse of Afghan women and children, and other crimes by Afghan evacuees. TF Pickett security personnel stated the TF Pickett military police had limited law enforcement authority over Afghan evacuees in the joint operations area.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, TF Pickett relied on the Virginia State Police in Nottoway County, and the Blackstone Police Department to investigate crimes reported on Fort Pickett and make any necessary arrests. However, according to TF Pickett security personnel, the Virginia State Police in Nottoway County, and the Blackstone Police Department were small and were responsible for not only investigating crimes reported on Fort Pickett, but also crimes committed in the city of Blackstone. Consequently, according to TF Pickett security personnel, misdemeanors went unaddressed as local law enforcement did not have the capacity to handle them.

At other installations supporting the OAW mission, the task forces had support from more law enforcement agencies. For example, at Marine Corps Base Quantico, the TF Quantico Commander leveraged relationships with the Quantico Provost Marshal's Office to have six Provost Marshal officers support TF Quantico. Additionally, in the vicinity of TF Quantico, civilian law enforcement personnel from the DHS, the Department of Justice, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation were available to assist TF Quantico should the situation arise. Due to its remote location, Fort Pickett did not have these law enforcement agencies in the immediate area. Therefore, TF Pickett personnel could only rely upon the Virginia State Police in Nottoway County and the Blackstone Police Department. Because of local law enforcement's limited capacity, TF Pickett security personnel only reported felonies to local law enforcement, leaving the misdemeanors unaddressed.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Fort Pickett had no assigned or permanent military police. The Fort Pickett military police referenced in this advisory were Soldiers brought on duty in Additional Duty Operational Support for the purpose of providing security to the installation in response to the increase in traffic related to OAW. TF Pickett was considered concurrent jurisdiction between the DoD, Virginia State Police, Nottoway County Sheriff's Office, Blackstone Police, and DHS Law Enforcement. Because of the concurrent jurisdiction, the Fort Pickett military police did not have arrest authority and could only detain Afghan evacuees until the local, state, or appropriate federal law enforcement arrived to investigate or arrest the detainee.

<sup>18</sup> According to TF Pickett personnel, incidents are reported to the Staff Judge Advocate, who then makes a determination whether to report the incident to local law enforcement.

During the site visit, TF Pickett stated that they also did not attach misdemeanors, such as theft, committed by individual Afghan evacuees to their DOS profiles. As a result, TF Pickett security personnel stated that they were concerned with the fact that families who chose to sponsor Afghan evacuees and their families would not have a full profile detailing incidents allegedly committed during an evacuee's time at Fort Pickett. On January 6, 2022, TF Pickett personnel provided a document to verify TF Pickett had tracked security incidents, including misdemeanors, beginning on September 7, 2021; however, we determined that TF Pickett did not consistently identify individual Afghan evacuees involved by name or their Hummingbird number.

Other bases have implemented a Misconduct Review Board to address misdemeanors and other infractions. For example, at Fort Bliss, TF Bliss stood up the Misconduct Review Board to manage cases denied for prosecution. The board consisted of representatives from the DoD, the DHS, the DOS, as well as a TF Bliss lawyer, and a cultural representative. The Misconduct Review Board reviewed the evidence and the task force's suggested remedial measures, and ultimately made administrative determinations. According to TF Bliss personnel, the Misconduct Review Board imposed corrective actions, which included assigning cultural training to help evacuees assimilate to American norms, issuing warning letters, and expelling Afghan evacuees from the installation. As a best practice, the TF Pickett Commander should consider implementing a Misconduct Review Board or another mechanism to ensure misdemeanors committed by Afghan evacuees are appropriately handled and documented.

TF Pickett security personnel also stated that there were few repercussions for Afghan evacuees who committed felonies. Specifically, TF Pickett security personnel gave examples of two felonies that they referred to local law enforcement and said the Afghan evacuees who committed the felonies were quickly returned back to the post after the local magistrate lowered their charges to misdemeanors.<sup>19</sup> In addition, TF Pickett security personnel stated that there had been several instances of reported crimes, including knives stolen from the dining facility, weapons made from pipes, and nails found in an Afghan evacuee's possession. TF Pickett security personnel were concerned that there was no mechanism to deter repeat offenders. Because of these issues, TF Pickett security personnel stated that there was no reason for Afghan evacuees to stop committing these infractions.

On September 27, 2021, TF Pickett stated that they were going to receive DHS agents to help mitigate the security risks by patrolling the joint operations area. However, TF Pickett security personnel were unsure how long the agents would continue to support TF Pickett. On September 29, 2021, TF Pickett started receiving additional support and as of October 12, 2021, had 28 DHS agents and 21 Air Marshals to help mitigate the security risks in the joint operations area. TF Pickett security personnel stated that DHS agents

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<sup>19</sup> One felony included an Afghan evacuee stealing a vehicle, and the other felony was physical abuse. In Virginia, magistrates are court-appointed officials who review criminal complaints brought by law enforcement officers, issue warrants, and make other initial determinations.

and Air Marshals still faced the challenge of not being able to execute law enforcement duties, such as investigating Afghan evacuees and making arrests. Nevertheless, TF Pickett security personnel stated that the additional security presence had deterred crime.

### ***Lack of Access Controls***

Fort Pickett is not an installation accessed solely by DoD personnel. The installation contains the Blackstone wastewater treatment facility, a local truck driving school, and a daycare facility that the local population accesses regularly; therefore, the task force cannot restrict access to the installation. According to TF Pickett personnel, a common access card was not needed to enter the post; only a valid driver's license was required. TF Pickett did not have controls in place to prevent vendors from driving into the joint operations area to sell merchandise where Afghan evacuees were living. During the site visit, the audit team noticed vendors who were not authorized by TF Pickett in the joint operations area selling merchandise to Afghan evacuees. Allowing unauthorized vendors into the TF Pickett joint operations area posed a security risk because TF Pickett did not know what the vendors were selling to Afghan evacuees. In addition, unauthorized vendors could take advantage of Afghan evacuees. For example, TF Pickett personnel stated that an Afghan evacuee accidentally tipped a delivery driver \$2,000 because he did not know the money conversion rate.<sup>20</sup>

During our site visit, TF Pickett personnel stated that they were working on a barrier plan to implement access controls. In October 2021, TF Pickett personnel stated that they had implemented their barrier plan. Specifically, TF Pickett stated that personnel with a need for access to the joint operations area must obtain a placard for their vehicle.<sup>21</sup> According to TF Pickett personnel, to control access to the joint operations area from unauthorized personnel entering, TF Pickett military police inspect the placards at two controlled entrances. According to TF Pickett personnel, they also search vehicles for contraband, such as alcohol and firearms.

### **Financial Costs of TF Pickett Operations**

In an August 19, 2021, memorandum, the DoD Deputy Comptroller established cost-reporting requirements and procedures for DoD Components supporting the relocation effort.<sup>22</sup> The Deputy Comptroller required DoD Components to submit weekly flash reports of all direct and reimbursable costs associated with the relocation of Afghan evacuees and directed the Defense Finance and Accounting Service to provide additional reporting instructions to DoD components. The Deputy Comptroller also stated that the DoD Financial Management Regulation provided instruction on reporting the cost of contingency operations.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> After this was reported to TF Pickett personnel, TF Pickett personnel contacted the delivery driver and the money was returned.

<sup>21</sup> A placard is a sticker or decal that is placed on the vehicle.

<sup>22</sup> Office of Under Secretary of Defense, Comptroller, "DoD Support to the Department of State for Afghan Special Immigration Visa (SIV) Applicants," August 19, 2021.

<sup>23</sup> DoD Regulation 7000.14-R, "DoD Financial Regulation," volume 12, chapter 23.

As of October 21, 2021, TF Pickett reported the total cost of its support to OAW at \$525 million. This total included expenses for basic life support that consisted of food, medical care, clothing, and equipment provided under the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program. In addition, the total cost included TF Pickett support personnel's travel expenses.

## **Additional Impacts of Support for OAW**

The Office of the Secretary of Defense is responsible for reporting on mission impact to both the House and Senate Armed Services Committees.<sup>24</sup> On September 24, 2021, U.S. Northern Command personnel reported that there have been no mission impacts at any of the eight military installations supporting OAW.

However, on September 22, 2021, Fort Pickett personnel stated that its efforts to support Afghan evacuees impacted the readiness of several military units. Fort Pickett personnel identified the following impacts to readiness:

- Fort Pickett personnel canceled training reservations for 5,271 personnel from 22 units. As of October 21, 2021, training reservations had been canceled through March 2022. The prolonged use of barracks by Afghan evacuees reduced Fort Pickett's ability to support normal training operations and build readiness across the force for Army units, other Services, and other Federal agencies.
- The U.S. Navy has a tenant relationship with Fort Pickett. The U.S. Navy moved ammunition, weapons, and vehicles to another location, resulting in costs for these movements.

We are providing this management advisory for information and use. This advisory identifies challenges identified during our site visit to TF Pickett, located at Fort Pickett, Virginia. We provided this information to the TF Pickett Commander during an exit conference at Fort Pickett on September 27, 2021.

The interagency partners, as well as the commands directly and indirectly responsible for the relocation of Afghan evacuees, should read this management advisory to be aware of the challenges and opportunities for improvement regarding the in-processing, sustainment, and physical security support for the relocation of Afghan evacuees. The DoD OIG will issue additional advisories for each site visited to the appropriate organizations responsible

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<sup>24</sup> Section 2815 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 states that the Secretary of Defense shall not sign a memorandum of agreement with another Federal agency to provide the agency with a vacant facility for purposes of temporary housing support unless the Secretary first submits to the Committees on Armed Services of the House of Representatives and Senate a certification that the provision of the facility to the agency will not negatively affect military training, operations, readiness, or other military requirements, including National Guard and Reserve readiness.

for the Afghan relocation effort, for their review and use. We considered management's comments on a discussion draft copy of this advisory when preparing this final memorandum. A written response is not required. If you have any questions, please contact me at

[REDACTED]



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cc:  
Commander, Task Force Pickett



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