

Ebola isolation at US base 'pretty much vacation'

November 25 2014, by Brock Vergakis



This photo taken on Nov. 4, 2014 provided by the U.S. Air Force, shows the 633rd Air Base Wing established at the Langley Transit Center in a pre-existing expeditionary training center, for military personnel returning from Ebola missions in West Africa, at Langley Air Force Base Va. With plenty of flat screen TVs, game nights and even an outdoor fire pit, life in isolation for members of the U.S. military who have returned from the Ebola mission in West Africa can look a lot like summer camp. The Defense Department is requiring military service members to undergo 21 days of isolation and monitoring as a precaution, but that doesn't mean the troops are sitting in a hospital or even just one building. At Langley Air Force Base, one of five U.S. bases designated to house returning service members for monitoring, a wooded section of the base

near the runway has been turned into a small village. (AP Photo/U.S. Air Force, Staff Sgt. Jason J. Brown)

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Nearly 1,800 U.S. troops have been deployed to Liberia and Senegal for the Ebola mission, along with almost 100 contractors and nearly 60 Defense Department civilians.

The 90 service members at Langley are among the first to return home since the Defense Department began requiring isolation as a precaution in November. They weren't exposed to the deadly virus or any Ebola patients, but helped set up a facility in Liberia to treat medical workers who would be. For those in isolation, temperatures are taken twice daily. No one has exhibited any symptoms of the virus since returning on Nov. 13.

Officially called the Langley Transit Center, the encampment hosts 21 small buildings that include dormitories, bathroom and shower facilities, a fitness center, cafeteria and an entertainment and recreation center.

The center is outfitted with video games, a small library and commercial

internet, to allow service members to video chat with friends and family. There are often bingo, pool and ping pong tournaments.

In the small dormitories, between six and eight service members each get their own full-size bed. The base allows each of the people in isolation to pick what they want for their three hot meals a day. A traditional Thanksgiving meal will be served on Thursday, and a race and football game at an adjacent field will also be held for those in isolation.



In this photo taken on Nov. 6, 2014, provided by the U.S. Air Force, contractors take a break from working on the entertainment room, called "the Hub," at the Langley Transit Center at Langley Air Force Base, in Va. With plenty of flat screen TVs, game nights and even an outdoor fire pit, life in isolation for members of the U.S. military who have returned from the Ebola mission in West Africa can look a lot like summer camp. The Defense Department is requiring military service members to undergo 21 days of isolation and monitoring as a precaution, but that doesn't mean the troops are sitting in a hospital or even just one building. At Langley Air Force Base, one of five U.S. bases designated to

house returning service members for monitoring, a wooded section of the base near the runway has been turned into a small village. (AP Photo/U.S. Air Force, Staff Sgt. Natasha Stannard)

Air Force Capt. Jasmine Pettie, who the Air Force has dubbed the transit center's mayor, said outside groups are also trying to meet the personal needs of the individuals who are there by getting donations for things like protein shakes and Gatorade. Sometimes, her job includes responding to small requests to have more bananas instead of apples and making sure printers have paper.

For Air Force Maj. Jeffrey Chaperon, a hospital administrator based at Langley who is under quarantine after working in Liberia, a lot of time at the center is spent exercising. He said the group of Airmen, sailors, Marines and soldiers at the facility are all keeping a positive attitude.



This photo taken on Nov. 7, 2014, provided by the U. S. Air Force, shows fitness equipment at a gym which can comfortably accommodate up to 90 military personnel returning from supporting the Ebola mission in West Africa, at the Langley Transit Center at Langley Air Force Base, Va. With plenty of flat screen TVs, game nights and even an outdoor fire pit, life in isolation for members of the U.S. military who have returned from the Ebola mission in West Africa can look a lot like summer camp. The Defense Department is requiring military service members to undergo 21 days of isolation and monitoring as a precaution, but that doesn't mean the troops are sitting in a hospital or even just one building. At Langley Air Force Base, one of five U.S. bases designated to house returning service members for monitoring, a wooded section of the base near the runway has been turned into a small village. (AP Photo/U.S. Air Force, Staff Sgt. Teresa J. Cleveland)



In this photo taken on Nov. 7, 2014, renovations continue at the Langley Transit Center at Langley Air Force Base, Va., for personnel who will undergo monitoring as they return from supporting the Ebola mission in West Africa. With plenty of flat screen TVs, game nights and even an outdoor fire pit, life in

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This photo taken on Nov. 7, 2004 provided by the U.S. Air Force shows the 633rd Air Base Wing, a controlled monitoring area at the Langley Transit Center for military personnel returning from Ebola missions in West Africa, at Langley Air Force Base Va. With plenty of flat screen TVs, game nights and even an outdoor fire pit, life in isolation for members of the U.S. military who have returned from the Ebola mission in West Africa can look a lot like summer camp. The Defense Department is requiring military service members to undergo 21 days of isolation and monitoring as a precaution, but that doesn't mean the troops are sitting in a hospital or even just one building. At Langley Air

Force Base, one of five U.S. bases designated to house returning service members for monitoring, a wooded section of the base near the runway has been turned into a small village. (AP Photo/U.S. Air Force, Staff Sgt. Teresa J. Cleveland)

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