

## 5 Questions with: Rick Gross

By Thomas Zimmerman 08 May 2018



*A new Carlisle Barracks web series will highlight the hard working men and women who work here, supporting the Army, servicemembers, employees, retirees and their families. This week we highlight: Rick Gross, Prevention Specialist and Acting ASAP Man*

### **Rick Gross, Prevention Specialist and Acting ASAP Manager**

*Tell me a little bit about yourself.*

Anyone who knows me knows that first and foremost I am a husband and father. I am blessed to have an amazing wife, a true best friend and partner. My two sons, ages 13 and 6, and two daughters, ages 11 and 3, bring much laughter and joy to our house. We all have a good time together. Beyond that I like a variety of things: disc golf, bird watching, good literature, and the Washington Capitals.

*What brought you into the Army family?*

Most Army civilians I have met have some connection to the Army – prior

service, an immediate family member who serves, etc. In my case, getting a job with the Army was something of a fortunate accident. I was looking for a job in central PA and a buddy of mine worked for the Army Substance Abuse Program in Washington, DC at Walter Reed. After talking with him I started scouring USAJobs, and wouldn't you know it, there was a job opening here at Carlisle Barracks. My friend pointed me to the Army Reg that governed the program, I read it cover to cover, nailed the interview, and next thing I knew I was working for the Army!

*What drew you to Carlisle Barracks?*

Initially I knew nothing of Carlisle Barracks. My wife had found an internship doing horse training in Dillsburg and that is what brought us to the area. After being here a short time it didn't take long to realize that this is a very pleasant place to work – small installation, lots of opportunity to be outdoors in the area, friendly people. Just this week I have seen several new birds down by the Letort (it is spring migration season!). I like green space and Carlisle Barracks has plenty of it. I also like the small-town feel of Carlisle itself and of Carlisle Barracks. If you need something, there is a good chance you will know someone who you can ask for help.

*What are your duties/responsibilities here?*

My official title is "Prevention Specialist." Functionally, that means I try to make sure that Carlisle Barracks Garrison Soldiers and employees, and Carlisle Barracks tenants, have access to and complete the required substance abuse training each fiscal year. I plan and implement the installation annual Prevention Plan. You will see me completing training for various units, working with the youth at the McConnell Center, and generally trying to remind community members to make low-risk choices, especially when it comes to alcohol and drug use. (Of course, low-risk when it comes to drug use means NONE outside of prescription drug use, and even those need to be used only as prescribed.) It's worth noting that at the moment I am the acting Substance Abuse Program Manager as well.

*What's the most rewarding part of your service over the years?*

If I had to identify only one thing that is rewarding about working for the Army, it would be my increased appreciation for the sacrifices that Soldiers and their families make. I knew this was true from an intellectual perspective before working for the Army. But being a civilian for the Army has brought the reality of that sacrifice into a new light. After working at Carlisle Barracks for a year I went to Germany 5 years, then returned to

cameras in 20 for many of my friends deployed while we were there, some of them multiple times. My wife and I saw firsthand the difficulty and sacrifice of being on repeated deployments, away from one's family, knowing your loved one is in harm's way much of the time. My appreciation for the sacrifices that Soldiers and their families make will never be the same after that. What a tremendous sense of duty, loyalty, and courage these people have.

*What's your favorite thing to do here?*

There are many – hiking in this area is excellent (I recommend the Mountain Creek trail in Pine Grove Furnace, especially with kids). There is a great Disc Golf course North of Carlisle (Coyote Hills Disc Golf course). We spend a lot of time in our church community at St. Patrick's Church, so anything associated with the kids' activities or the church and school is nice. In terms of Carlisle Barracks, there is nothing quite like an afternoon stroll down by the Letort. It's a great way to keep things in perspective and reenergize myself for the afternoon.