

Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs’ Commissioner hosts town hall

Staff Sgt. Daniel Nelson
 134th Public Affairs Detachment

Service members and Civilians of the Alaska National Guard attended a town hall June 21, presented by the adjutant general of the AKNG, Maj. Gen. Laurie Hummel, where she discussed the current status, operations and future operations for the organization.

Hummel opened by welcoming those in attendance or watching online from other locations and wishing everyone a happy solstice.

A major benefit to conducting routine town halls is that it allows the force to stay informed on the big picture of what the Alaska National Guard is currently working on and has planned for the near and distant future directly from the organization’s leadership. Additionally, people are afforded the opportunity to ask questions or address matters for the adjutant general to personally respond to.

Topics discussed during the town hall included the budget of the Alaska National Guard and how it is being utilized to meet the needs and demands



Alaska National Guard Maj. Gen. Laurie Hummel, the adjutant general and commissioner of the Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, holds a town hall meeting June 21, 2018, at the National Guard armory on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. Hummel introduced new leadership, presented nominations for the Governor’s Denali Peak Performance Awards, presented a legislative update and held a question and answer session. (Photo by Spc. Michael Risinger, 134th Public Affairs Detachment)

See **GUARD** on page 6

Overseas Cost of Living Allowance (COLA)

Did you know that COLA is...

- A supplemental pay allowance designed to offset overseas prices of non-housing goods and services
- Intended to equalize purchasing power
- Based on a Service member’s income
- Directly impacted by prices in the United States
- Based on data and exchange rates that fluctuate
- Impacted by your participation in a Living Pattern Survey (LPS)

To find out more about COLA visit:
www.defensetravel.dod.mil

DEFENSE TRAVEL MANAGEMENT OFFICE
 THE DOD CENTER FOR TRAVEL EXCELLENCE

US remains engaged in Indo-Pacific region, DOD officials say



David F. Helvey, the principal deputy assistant secretary of defense for Asian and Pacific Security Affairs, briefs reporters during a trip to the Indo-Pacific region, June 1, 2017. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jette Carr, U.S. Air Force)

Jim Garamone
 DoD News

The United States has deep interests in the Indo-Pacific and will remain engaged in the region, U.S. officials said at the Center for a New American Security conference last Friday.

Alex N. Wong, the deputy assistant secretary of state for East Asia and Pacific Affairs, said the United States has an unmatched alliance structure in the region with treaties with Japan, Thailand, South Korea, Australia, the Philippines and New Zealand.

There are more forward-deployed U.S. service members in the Indo-

Pacific region than anywhere else, Wong said, and they field the most advanced weapons systems in the U.S. inventory.

And, the United States does more two-way trade with Indo-Pacific countries than any other country in the world, he said, and the United States is the premier foreign investor in the region.

It is clear, Wong said, the international order based on the rule of law the United States has championed in the Indo-Pacific since the end of World War II has served the region well, and Chinese attempts to change

See **PACIFIC** on page 4

Secretary of Defense visit



Secretary of Defense James Mattis visited Fort Greely, Alaska on Monday, June 25, where he received an overview of Fort Greely’s Ground Based Midcourse Defense program. As part of the visit, Secretary Mattis spent some time with the Soldiers of the 49th Missile Defense Battalion discussing the importance of their no-fail mission. (Photo by Chris Maestas, Fort Greely Public Affairs)

Fire Department 4th of July safety message

Jason Berry
 Fort Wainwright Assistant Fire Chief

Independence Day is approaching and it is common to enjoy festivities with fireworks. The Fort Wainwright Fire Department would like to remind everyone to be safe as they celebrate and be aware of local and federal policies concerning the possession and use of fireworks or pyrotechnics.

On Fort Wainwright, the possession, sale, distribution, and use of fireworks are prohibited, except for in commercial displays. Questions regarding commercial displays should be directed to 353-9164.

The City of Fairbanks prohibits the sale, purchase, use, manufacturing, trans-portion, or storage of

fireworks within City Limits except where permitted for commercial fireworks displays and State of Alaska permitted pyro technician. The prohibition includes the use, sale and release of Chinese sky lanterns by adopted fire code. For definitions and more information, visit https://library.municode.com/ak/fairbanks/codes/code_of_ordinances%20?nodeId=PTIICOOR_CH30FIPRPR_ARTIIFI

Outside Fairbanks City Limits, fireworks are generally unrestricted, except Chinese sky lanterns. However, it is important to know the regulations and statues of the city where you live, and any restrictions that the State of Alaska and Bureau of Land Management has imposed.

See **FIREWORKS** on page 3

WEEKEND WEATHER

4TH OF JULY COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

Friday



Showers with a high of 69 and a low of 52.

Saturday



Thunderstorms with a high of 70 and a low of 54

Sunday



Showers with a high of 72 and a low of 55.

On Wednesday, July 4, celebrate Independence Day at the Fairbanks North Star Borough Parks & Recreation Department’s Pioneer Park, as our local cities, borough and military communities come together to participate in Pioneer Park’s 31st Annual July 4th Celebration. Various events will be taking place during the day, starting off at noon with a special performance by the U.S. 9th Army Band. Starting at 1 p.m. will be the official July 4th ceremony featuring representatives of state, city and Eielson and Fort Wainwright military commanders, a special military Salute to the Union, local musicians, a kid’s parade, food and entertainment. This event is free to the public, For more information, call 907-459-1087.

Is achieving a “Beach Body” negatively effecting your body image?

Lt. Stephanie Meno
Nutrition Care

Summer is upon us, and with that, a season of new beginnings and fresh starts. Many students are rejoicing as they reach their ever-needed summer vacation, a time of relaxation and rest from stressful schedules and academic pressures. For many, summer involves an escape to a warmer destiny; somewhere where the troubles of winter can be melted away.

Amidst the crowds, lax schedules, and warm weather attire, many individuals may find themselves stuck in the rut of harsh self-scrutiny and poor body image. Feeling insecure in one’s appearance or looks can ensnare a woman or man in a cloud of negativity and self-doubt. Lacking self-esteem or having poor body image could become handicapping; in the sense that it may be preventing someone from thriving in the experiences that life has to offer.

How do you know if you may be struggling with poor body image? Here are some red flags that may indicate poor self-esteem or body insecurities:

Chronically Comparing: Many individuals who struggle with poor body image may constantly be comparing themselves to others. This may include people who are regularly encountered (such as family or friends), as well as

strangers, celebrities, models in magazines, etc. Comparing can involve particular body parts, size, or certain characteristics. This often leads to greater dissatisfaction with one’s appearance and body image.

Unable to receive compliments or praise: Even the kindest gesture or compliment from another person can be difficult to accept when you are struggling with poor body image. Individuals with low self-esteem may be quick to deflect any compliments or praises or find reason to suspect another’s motive when complimented.

Hypersensitivity in interactions with others: Low self-esteem or poor body image may lead to constant questioning about how others act and what others say. Many motives, behaviors, gestures, and words can be misinterpreted to mean failure when an individual constantly sees themselves in a negative light.

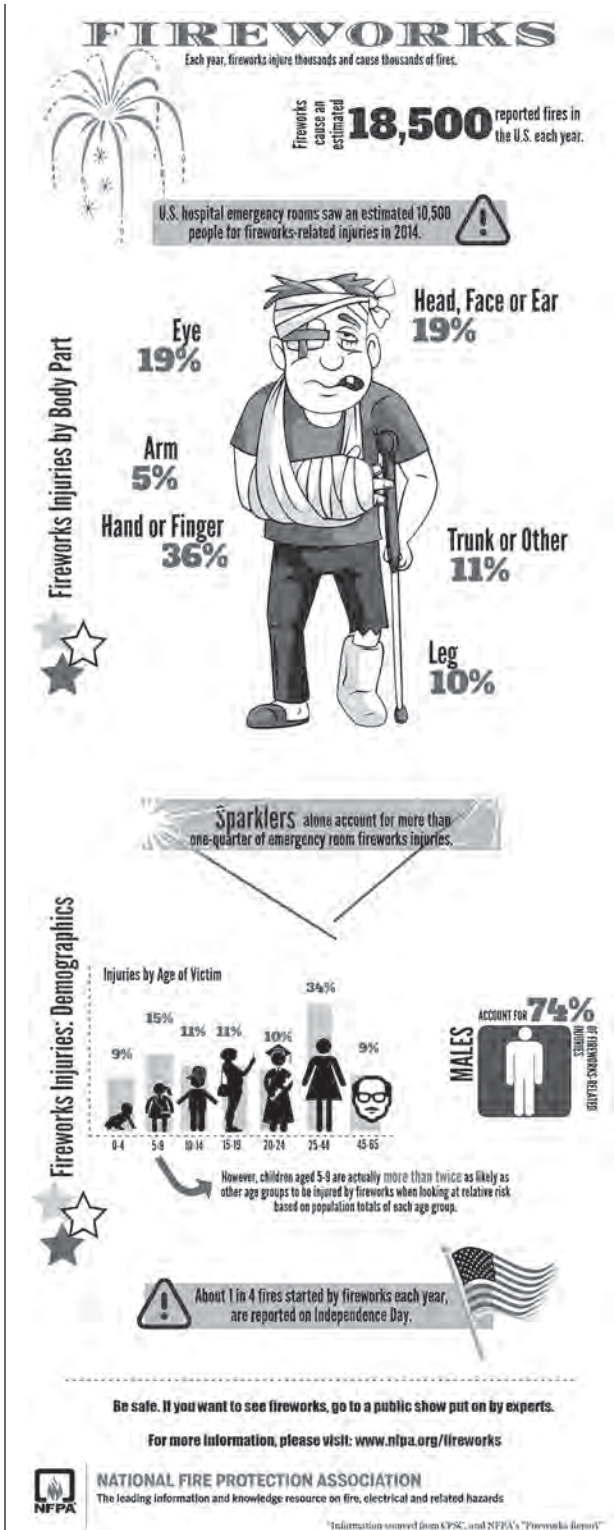
Inability to enjoy the present: When body image concerns are at the forefront of one’s mind, it can become all-consuming to the point that it is impossible to think of anything else. Living in the moment is not achievable when thoughts are focused on body “imperfections”.

The truth is, for an individual struggling with poor body image, these issues may be constantly present, not just during a certain time. While some circumstances and situations may be more triggering, learning how to build

positive self-esteem may be helpful in breaking the paralyzing effect of poor body image.

No matter what season of life you may be in, you can strengthen your self-worth and learn to love and appreciate your body. If you have lived in a critical relationship with your body, this may be difficult to imagine. Take small steps towards self-love and appreciation. Begin by practicing awareness of negative thoughts you may have about yourself throughout the day. Challenge those thoughts with something you appreciate about yourself, even if you do not yet believe it. There are many other ways you can boost your self-confidence, such as nurturing yourself and treating your body kindly, giving to or serving others, writing positive affirmations for yourself, and spending time with people who appreciate and celebrate your unique attributes.

Summer can become a time that uncannily promotes diet fads and crazes, creating frenzy for anyone who may already be struggling with poor body image. Take the opportunity to strengthen yourself and go against the grain that is often promoted by our culture. You are an individual unlike any other, your life precious and valuable. Rejoice in the fact that you are beautifully created – that alone is cause for celebration.



Weekly Financial Tips: Summer fun

Ryki Carlson
Survivor Outreach Services Support Coordinator

With summer finally here and the kids out of school, the challenge now is how to keep them entertained while staying within budget. Here are some ideas that will help.

Bowling – If you’re looking for an activity on those rainy days or when it’s too hot to play outdoors, consider taking your child bowling. Visit www.kidsbowlfree.com for details on how get 2 free games of bowling daily for the kids.

Arts and Culture – Blue Star Museums are offering FREE days for military from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Check out the map on the Blue Star site for a museum near you at www.arts.gov/national/blue-star-museums. Many of these museums offer the same benefits for Gold Star Families.

Build and Grow Clinics – Lowe’s and Home Depot offer classes for basic projects to help build your child’s confidence.

Crafts – Many local craft stores offer free classes for kids, usually on Saturdays. Give them a call or check their Facebook pages.

Summer Playground Programs – Many local parks are offering drop-in programs for kids and families. Check their websites for opportunities or if you are traveling and searching for a playground for your children visit www.playgroundbuddy.com. This free app has an extensive list with over 200,000 playgrounds worldwide.

Movies
Regal Cinemas are offering \$1 family friendly movies starting at 10 a.m. each Tuesday and Wednesday during

their Summer Movie Express. To find the closest location to you visit www.regmovies.com/movies/summer-movie-express.

Cinemark Theatres are offering Reel Family Time. Their admission every Monday is \$1.25 per person for parties of three or more. These tickets are only available at the box office, and are NOT available for purchase online. Visit their site at www.cinemark.com/discounts to see a full list of their discounts as well as to locate a theatre near you.

Books
Bookstores often run summer reading programs. Barnes and Noble’s summer reading program encourages children to read and even earn a free book. For more information visit their website: www.barnesandnobleinc.com/our-stores-communities/summer-reading-program.

Book Adventure, created by Sylvan Learning encourages children in grades K-8 to read. They earn points for prizes for successfully reading and taking multiple choice quizzes on the books they have read. Take time to see this fun learning site at www.bookadventure.com.

Local libraries offer summer reading programs. Lots of community libraries offer reading programs with prizes. Visit or call your local library to find out about their summer programs.

Biking – Remember that biking offers great exercise, increases balance skills and helps develop your child’s motor skills. Just ensure they wear protective gear. Besides, almost all of us remember the great fun riding a bike offers.

Skateboarding and Rollerblading – Most communities offer a park or trail for these sports. Search your community for these options.

Whatever summertime fun your children have, it’s important to remember safety.

MEDDAC Minute

Brandy Ostanik
Medical Department Activity – Alaska, Public Affairs

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS
Emergency: 911
24 Hour Nurse Advice Line: 1-800-874-2273 Opt. 1
Appointment Line: 361-4000
Behavioral Health: 361-6059
Benefits Advisor: 361-5656
Immunizations: 361-5456
Information Desk: 361-5172
Patient Advocate: 361-5291
Pharmacy Refills: 361-5803
Referral Center: 361-1810
Tricare On-Line: www.tricareonline.com
Health Net Federal Services: www.tricare-west.com, 1-844-866-9378

PERFORMANCE TRIAD TIP
Mindful eating takes the concept of mindfulness and applies it to why, when, where, what and how you eat. This means being aware of both physical and emotional feelings connected to eating. Mindfulness may help you to avoid overeating. First bites may be the most satisfying, and additional bites many not be as pleasurable. This can help with portion control.

EYE HEALTH
Bassett ACH Optometry Clinic provides services to retirees and dependents. Anyone over the age of three is encouraged to schedule a

comprehensive eye exam once a year for optimal eye health. To book an appointment, or for questions, call 361-5212.

SAVE TIME AND TRAVEL WITH SECURE MESSAGING
Want instant access to your healthcare team? Request an appointment, check labs, ask questions, get forms filled out and more. Scan the QR link or go to <https://app.relayhealth.com/Patients/Registration.aspx> to register. You will have access to your team within 1 business day.

HANDLING FOOD?
Anyone serving food on post, including bake sales, must have a valid food handler’s card. The card, valid for one year, can be obtained from Preventive Medicine at building 4077, adjacent to Bassett ACH. The Food Handler’s course slides can be found and studied on our website at www.alaska.amedd.army.mil/Preventive_Med/Preventive_Medicine.htm. After reviewing the slides, a proctored test must be taken and passed with a 70 percent or better. Call 361-5182 for test times and more information.

PATIENT TRAVEL VOUCHERS
Two weeks turn-around time is the expected timeframe for vouchers to be approved for patients traveling for care outside of Fairbanks. For patients who have vouchers outside of this two week window please contact the Patient Administration Department at 361-5001.

ALASKA POST

The Interior Military News Connection

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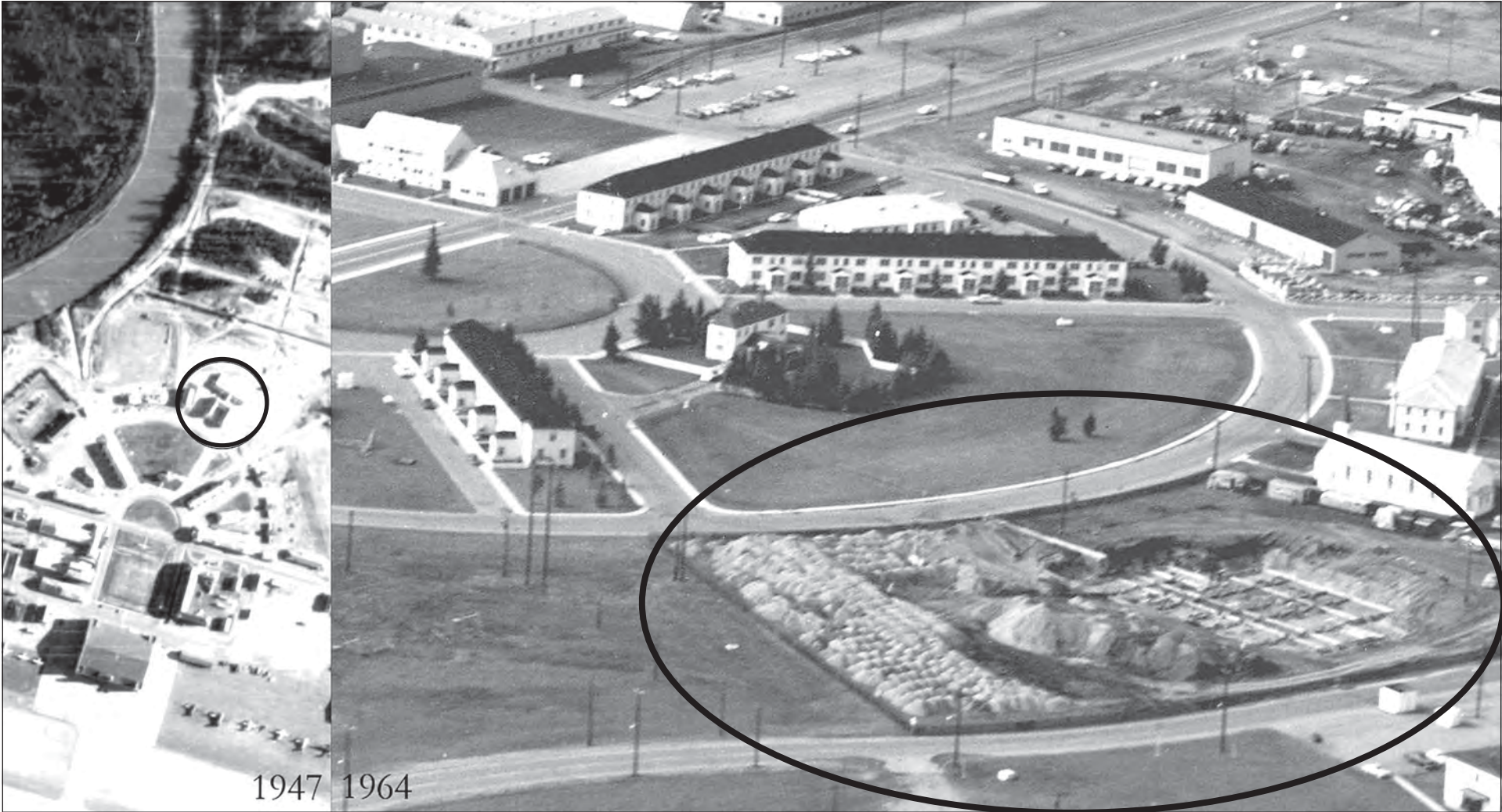
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Fort Wainwright Police: 353-7535

History Snapshot: Building 1044: 1947 & 1964



L. Amber Phillippe
Fort Wainwright Landscape
Historian

After occupying the site for twenty years, the original Building 1044 was demolished in the summer of 1964. The site was prepped for the construction of what is now the Last Frontier Community and Activity Center, also Building 1044. The original 1044 was built as a

barracks for Alaska’s first Women’s Army Corps (WAC) Unit, which arrived at Ladd Field in April 1945. The barracks had been “practically a small post itself,” and was much admired as the “pride of Air Transport Command bases throughout the world” and “famed as the most attractive WAC living quarters on any post.” Tragically, on June 26, 1945, faulty wiring caused the barracks to catch on fire, and it burnt nearly to the ground.

Two days later, however, site clearing began, and the barracks were rebuilt to the same specifications by the end of the year. It is not clear whether the WACs were able to move back into their intended residence by the time World War II was over and they departed Alaska in December 1945. While it is presumed that 1044 lived on as a barracks until 1964 when the decision to demolish it

was made, it is not known for sure. As seen in the photograph, 1044 was demolished and the site readied for new construction. Note the exposed utilidor tunnel. If you have any stories or photographs to share with the Cultural Resources Management program please call, (907) 361-9329 or email laurel.a.phillippe.ctr@mail.mil.

(File photo, Fort Wainwright Environmental)

FIREWORKS

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For general information on Alaska fireworks policies, read AK Statute 18.72, located, at <http://touchngo.com/1glcntr/akstats/Statutes/Title18/Chapter72.htm> For current Alaska Wildfire Information, visit <http://akfireinfo.com> AK Division of Forestry also posts information on Facebook, at <https://www.facebook.com/AK.Forestry/>

If you do partake in the usage of fireworks on the 4th of July, remember that each year thousands of people; most often children and teens, are injured while using consumer fireworks. Despite the dangers, few people take into consideration all the associated risks such as devastating burns and other physical injuries, starting fires, and even life-threatening situations. Supervisors, please take the time to remind employees of holiday fireworks safety awareness and promote safe practices at work as well as at home.

Fireworks and general Fire Safety questions should be directed to the following:

Fort Wainwright Assistant Fire Chief Berry, at 907-353-9164

Fairbanks Deputy Fire Marshal Green, at 907-450-6614

State of Alaska Deputy Fire Marshal Carrington, at 907-451-5200

Be safe and enjoy your 4th of July.



Fireworks are often used to mark special events and holidays. However, they are not safe in the hands of consumers. Fireworks cause thousands of burns and eye injuries each year. People can enjoy fireworks safely if they follow a few simple safety tips:

BE CAREFUL!

- Be safe. If you want to see fireworks, go to a public show put on by experts.
- Do not use consumer fireworks.
- Keep a close eye on children at events where fireworks are used.

CONSUMER FIREWORKS

NFPA is opposed to consumer use of fireworks. This includes sparklers and firecrackers. Even sparklers burn hot enough to cause third-degree burns.

HOW HOT DOES A SPARKLER BURN?

1200 °F — Sparklers

1100 °F

1000 °F

900 °F — Glass melts at 900 °F

800 °F

700 °F

600 °F

500 °F — Wood burns at 575 °F

400 °F

300 °F — Cakes bake at 350 °F

200 °F — Water boils at 212 °F

100 °F

0 °F

FACTS

- ! Fireworks cause an average of almost 18,500 reported fires per year.
- ! Sparklers account for roughly one-quarter of emergency room fireworks injuries.

(Illustration courtesy, National Fire Protection Association)

SADD

SOLDIERS AGAINST DRUNK DRIVING

353-4145

Signed. Sealed. Delivered

Team Army brings home third straight gold medal in wheelchair basketball

Annette P. Gomes
Warrior Care Transition

Team Army was looking for a “three-peat” in an effort to bring home another gold medal during the 2018 wheelchair basketball finals - they did just that.

In front of a packed crowd at the United States Air Force Academy’s Clune Arena, Team Army battled Team Air Force for Warrior Games supremacy.

Enthusiastic fans chanted, screamed and cheered for their favorite team.

Limited in motion by extensive knee cap surgery and a shoulder surgery, Staff Sgt. Shawn Runnells was a first time participant. He says communication was key to winning the game.

“I was completely focused on the game. I couldn’t hear anything outside of what was happening on that floor. I was focused on my next move and the incredible communication that was happening. It was on point. We told each other who stole the ball, who was down court, we simply gelled so well together,” Runnells said.

Team Army led Team Air Force 29-18 at the half.

U.S. Army retired Spc. Brent Garlic, who had 13 points and three assists, praised the game plan and the reward for the hard work it took to win.

“I love it when a plan comes together. I put the work in and I expected nothing less, anything less would have been uncivilized. This is

phenomenal. Basketball is my heart and I don’t want this day to end, I can’t wait till next year, I’m just ready to go,” said Garlic.

U.S. Army retired Sgt. Chris McGinnis said the path was lit for a victory.

“It was becoming really intense, but after we won the games against the

U.K., [Special Operations Command], Navy and the Marines and we were headed into the finals, I was becoming more and more excited. It’s really a phenomenal feeling,” McGinnis said.

Team Army won the game 57-44. Retired U.S. Army Pfc. Billy Demby coached Team Marine Corps in the wheelchair basketball competition at

the 2015 Warrior Games at Quantico, Virginia. In 2018, Team Army invited Demby to coach once again at the 2018 Warrior Games in Colorado Springs, Colorado. After hugging several of his players and their family members he summed up the experience in just a few words and a smile.

“This is great. Just one word, great.”



Team Army is all smiles after winning a gold medal during the 2018 Department of Defense Warrior Games for the year in a row. The DoD Warrior Games is an adaptive sports competition for wounded, ill and injured service members and veterans. Approximately 300 athletes representing teams from the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Special Operations Command, United Kingdom Armed Forces, Canadian Armed Forces, and the Australian Defence Force. Participants competed in archery, cycling, track, field, shooting, sitting volleyball, swimming, wheelchair basketball, and - new this year - powerlifting and indoor rowing. (Photo by Annette P. Gomes.)

PACIFIC

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that would be bad for the nations of the region and the world.

David F. Helvey, the principal deputy assistant secretary of defense for Asian and Pacific Security Affairs, said Defense Secretary James N. Mattis’ National Defense Strategy identifies the Indo-Pacific region as the priority for DOD.

‘WE HAVE DEEP INTERESTS IN THE REGION’
“This reflects the reality,” Helvey said. “We have deep interests in the region that span the gamut of our relationships.”

The core principles of the region’s international order based on the rule of law are long established, he said, and they include freedom of navigation and overflight, peaceful resolution of disputes and support for upholding international norms and standards for behavior.

Helvey said most nations in the Indo-Pacific region support these principles and see the benefits of them each day via trade and economic prosperity.

Since taking office, Mattis has make six trips to the Indo-Pacific region to visit with established allies, and has also met with defense and military leaders from Indonesia, Vietnam and India, he said.

Wong said the Chinese want to replace the long-established system with One Belt, One Road -- a system centered on benefiting China.

“You look at [One Belt, One Road], which was only announced in 2013 ... that is a response from China to catch up to the free and open system,” Wong said. “We don’t really don’t need to respond to OBOR, we need to empower our partners in the region to say that if China wants to play in the area of regional integration ... it has to play by the high standards; the best value standards that will ensure broad prosperity and ensure the sovereignty of the nations of the Indo-Pacific.”



U.S. Army paratroopers with 6th Brigade Engineer Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division and their Canadian army counterparts move out from a fighting position during Exercise Talisman Saber in Shoalwater Bay Training Area, Australia, July 14, 2017. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Daniel Love, U.S. Army)

INDO-PACIFIC REGIONAL ALLIANCES

Key to this is the network of alliances the United States maintains with the nations of the region, Helvey said, noting the American military conducts exercises each year to ensure interoperability with allied and partner nations. Many of those nations, he said, are members of the defeat-ISIS coalition and previous training has been invaluable in allowing the militaries to work together.

“To the extent that we can work together, we can operate together,” Helvey said. “We can perform different types or missions and operations seamlessly in concert with our allies and partners. It represents

one of the best ways to maintain our strategic advantage.”

Helvey said the United States must pay attention to China, which is a large U.S. trading partner and an emerging super power.

“How do we manage the competition with China in a way that ... ultimately redounds to our benefit?” Helvey posited. “Part of that is maintaining open and stable means of communication with our Chinese counterparts. Part of it is ensuring we are introducing and exercising the right kind of risk reduction measures -- hot lines, confidence-building measures -- so that when we are operating in close proximity ... they are done in a safe way.”

Weekly Events

June 29 – July 6

30

Doggy Dash 5k Fun Run
June 30
10 a.m.

Lace up. Leash up. It's time for another fun run, but this time you get to bring your pooch along! Pre-register at the PFC, or sign up at the race start.

Physical Fitness Center, building 3709
Call 353-7223, registration required

3

BOGO Laser Tag
July 3
1 to 3 p.m.

Looking for something to do over the Training Holiday? Look no further than Laser Tag! Today only, score BOGO (buy one, get one) on all laser tag games.

Last Frontier Community Activity Center, building 1044
Call 353-7755

4

Red, White & Blue Golf Tournament
July 4

Celebrate Independence Day out on the greens! This open tournament has flexible start times (reservations highly recommended), with teams playing 3 different formats over the entire 18-hole course. Join in on the summer cookout and cocktails too!

Chena Bend Clubhouse, building 2090
Call 353-6223, reservations recommended

5

Tangle Lakes Overnight Float Trip
July 5 through 8

Starting at Tangle Lake, we'll make our way across the lake via canoe and do some backcountry hiking along the way. Relax by the campfire under the Midnight Sun before paddling back via Landmark Lake. All skill levels are welcome. Transportation, equipment, and instruction are included.

Outdoor Recreation Center, building 4050
Call 361-6349, reservations required

Please note that Fort Wainwright Family and MWR facility hours may change due to the holiday weekend.



Fish on!



just for the Halibut

B.O.S.S. Seward Halibut Fishing Trip
August 31 – September 3

\$145 // Includes transportation, lodging, and a halibut fishing day trip. Service Members will be afforded the opportunity to explore the town on their non-fishing day.

Due to the popularity of the trip, SMs will not be allowed to register for the trip without submitting an approved memo and \$50 deposit. The trip must be paid for in full 2 weeks prior to the date of the trip, or slot will be forfeited. No refunds will be issued within one week of the trip.



*Available to Single Service Members, Singles with Dependents, and Geo-Bachelors.

For more information, contact B.O.S.S. at (907) 353-7648

www.wainwright.armymwr.com
@WainwrightMWR #WainwrightBOSS





Military Crisis Line

1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1

Fort Greely Command Sergeant Major presides over graduation

U.S. Army Garrison Fort Greely Command Sgt. Maj. Chris Magee served as the guest speaker during the Delta Partners for Progress Heavy Equipment Operator and Mechanic Academy at the Delta Junction Fairgrounds June 21. Magee congratulated the 16 graduates on their accomplishment, and shared values and character traits that have served him well during his 25 year Army career. Magee concluded his speech by advising the graduates to always move forward and not back. "I have spent my entire career moving toward the sound of gunfire and not away, I would recommend you do the same." (Photo by Chris Maestas, Fort Greely Public Affairs)



GUARD

Continued from page 1

of the organization, current missions being conducted and future operations for Alaska Guardsmen in different theaters around the world, changes to the many offices within the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and changes of key personnel on both the Air and Army sides of the Alaska National Guard.

“I wanted to talk about all of these organizations to say that together we are the DMVA,” added Hummel.

Hummel also took the opportunity

to recognize nominees for the Denali Peak Performance Award for their commitment to excellence and impeccable work ethic. Each person recognized was nominated by their peers and leadership.

Changes to key personnel within the Alaska National Guard included those retiring, leaving the organization due to a new job out of state, or assuming new roles within the organization. Additionally, Hummel talked about incoming personnel through appointments into a key leadership role from within the AKNG and those transferring in from another state’s National Guard.

A major point addressed during

the town hall was the importance of safety while enjoying the short Alaskan summer; not just for those who plan to camp and hike but also in and around town. Hummel expressed that it is necessary to take time to recharge while being mindful of the potential dangers associated with the Alaskan wildlife, and the need for safety near the many waterways throughout the state.

Additionally, Hummel stressed the importance of having a plan while recreating and not operating a motor vehicle or boat while under the influence of alcohol, which could result in legal repercussions or worse.

The questions and answers portion at the end of Hummel’s town hall allowed

her to address additional matters ranging from her strategic priorities to running a report on the Alaska Code of Military Justice and measures being taken to ensure it is being enforced equally throughout the AKNG.

Hummel closed out the town hall by stating how proud she is of the tremendous work and professionalism of the service members and civilians of the Alaska National Guard.

“The work you do is recognized by the people throughout the State of Alaska,” added Hummel with regards to the Alaska National Guard’s reputation among citizens throughout Alaska.

Opening ceremony kicks off Khaan Quest 2018

Pfc. Grace Nechanicky
134th Public Affairs Detachment

The opening ceremony for Khaan Quest 2018, a regularly scheduled, multinational exercise co-sponsored by U.S. Pacific Command and hosted annually by the Mongolian Armed Forces, marked the beginning of the exercise at Five Hills Training Area, Mongolia, June 14.

KQ18 is scheduled to take place June 14 to 28.

The purpose of the exercise is to gain United Nations training and certification for the participants through conducting realistic peace support operations, to include increasing and improving UN Peacekeeping Operations interoperability and military relationships among participating nations.

Lt. Gen. D. Davaa, Chief of the General Staff, Mongolian Armed Forces, began the ceremony with opening remarks.

Next to speak was Maj. Gen. Timothy McKeithen, Deputy Commanding General-National Guard, U.S. Army Pacific.

“Perhaps one of the most valuable aspects of this exercise is the forging of relationships.

Not only will we create professional military-to-military relations, we can and should build personal, lasting connections as well,” said McKeithen.

Following McKeithen’s remarks, Battulga Khaltmaa, President of Mongolia, delivered a speech.

“Through you, I extend my sincere appreciation to the United States and all participating countries that sent their military personnel for your support to organize Khaan Quest,” he said. “This training deepens the mutual defense understanding and friendship among our countries.”

“It provides opportunities to

cooperate and share knowledge and experience with each other.”

Through partnerships, participating countries can address broader shared interests across the Indo-Pacific region. Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief exercises offer opportunities to practice the difficult integration of capabilities of joint forces, international and national aid organizations.

To conclude the opening ceremony, platoons from the participating countries marched around the parade field past the reviewing stand. The ceremony also included a performance by a MAF band and a photo session with the distinguished visitors.

Two hundred U.S. personnel and 1,134 MAF personnel are participating in KQ18, along with 212 personnel from various other nations. This year, 17 other nations are participating, including the U.S.

The exercise consists of a UN peacekeeping operation (PKO)



The Mongolian Armed Forces band leader renders honors during rehearsal June 14, 2018, at Five Hills Training Area, Mongolia, before the opening ceremony for Khaan Quest 18. Khaan Quest 18 is a combined (multinational) joint (multi-service) training exercise designed to strengthen the capabilities of U.S., Mongolian and other partner nations in international peace support operations. (Photo by Sgt. David Bedard, 134th Public Affairs Detachment)



Alaska Army National Guard 2nd Lt. Sonya Hood, platoon leader for the 297th Regional Support Group contingent at Khaan Quest 18, stands at the head of the platoon June 14, 2018, at Five Hills Training Area, Mongolia, before the opening ceremony for the exercise. Khaan Quest 18 is a combined (multinational) joint (multi-service) training exercise designed to strengthen the capabilities of U.S., Mongolian and other partner nations in international peace support operations. (Photo by Sgt. David Bedard, 134th Public Affairs Detachment)

Command Post Exercise and field training exercise, a Command Training Exercise, and the Critical Enabler Capability Enhancement Exercise at the Five Hills Training Area, each of which will support the overall exercise objectives.

During these portions of the exercise, all forces involved will work to enhance interoperability and mission effectiveness in common tactics, techniques and procedures in accordance with the United Nations doctrine for peacekeeping operations.

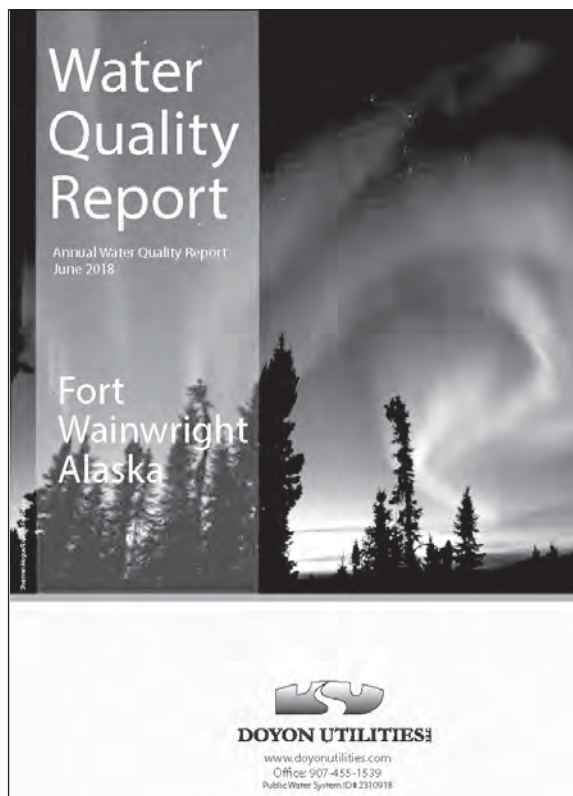
The U.S. military and members of the MAF have a longstanding relationship and routinely participate in joint exercises. The U.S. Embassy represents U.S. activities in the country and announces U.S. involvement in exercises.

Other nations involved in the exercise include Australia, Bhutan, Canada, China, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Nepal, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Doyon Utilities LLC’s Annual Water Quality Report available online

Staff Report
Doyon Utilities LLC

Doyon Utilities has published its annual report on the drinking water system at Fort Wainwright,



Fort Greely and known as the Annual Consumer Confidence Report.

The Environmental Protection Agency and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation have given us an opportunity to tell the rest of our story in the form of this annual Consumer Confidence Report.

Doyon Utilities is pleased to prepare this comprehensive report for our customers who work and reside on Fort Wainwright.

Our goals and efforts are to provide you with a complete picture of the water quality program.

Any additional issues or queries on Fort Wainwright’s water quality can be brought to Doyon Utilities’ attention by calling 907-455-1500.

Find the complete documents of Forts Greely, Richardson and Wainwright spanning the last five years, at www.doyonutilities.com/news.

Fort Wainwright online report
<http://www.doyonutilities.com/download/fort-wainwright-june-2018/>

Fort Greely online report
<http://www.doyonutilities.com/download/fort-greely-june-2018/>

Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson online report
<http://www.doyonutilities.com/download/jber-richardson-june-2018/>

The Silent Farmer: Decorated Soldier of World War II finally awarded Medal of Honor

(Part 1 of 2)

Joe Lacdan
Army News Service

Garlin Conner charged alone into the cold abyss, toward the massive silhouettes of German tanks in the distance.

Clutching a telephone, radio and wire, the first lieutenant carried himself through the frigid January air, toward 600 encroaching Germans and the enemy rounds he knew were coming.

Conner could not turn back if he wanted to. His company needed a guide to cut into the surging German infantry or risk getting overrun. The Kentucky marksman always fought in front of his men, and his fellow Soldiers trusted him to lead. Conner often fired at the opposition standing while others ducked for cover.

Conner could see the enemy before they spotted him, fellow Soldiers wrote.

The thunder of the German rifles didn’t rattle him. His father had raised him to be fearless while hunting wild game in the woods of southern Kentucky. A bullet wound in his left hip could not keep him from returning to the front lines, nor could orders to remain at a military field hospital. On a frigid winter morning in 1945, Conner would once more put himself between his fellow Soldiers and the onslaught of enemy fire.

This time, in a snow-covered forest, 5-foot-6-inch Conner faced the full brunt of German forces. On Jan. 24, the Nazi-led German army mounted a desperate surge to split American units near the French-German border.

Conner headed toward the flurry of bullets until he ducked into a shallow, snowy ditch.

Here in the frozen French countryside, amid rampant automatic fire, Conner would make what could be his final stand, guiding American artillery toward the German infantry. Here, Conner would remain until American forces stopped the Germans, or until a bullet stopped him.

QUIET FARMER

When locals in the rural farming town of Albany, Kentucky, would ask Garlin “Murl” Conner about his time in World War II, he’d hush them quickly.

“I’d done what I had to do,” Conner said in Soldier accounts, “and that’s all there is to it.”

After returning to Clinton County following the war and starting a tobacco farm, the decorated Army veteran decided he had seen enough of the world and the horrors of armed combat. Conner had found peace plowing fields in the shadows of the Appalachians.

Conner never boasted about his acts of bravery. For more than 53 years until his death in 1998, he rarely spoke about the war again -- not to his wife, Pauline, or even to a fellow Soldier.

During the two decades since Conner died of complications related to heart and kidney failure, others took up the cause the farmer so adamantly declined. Former Army Green Beret Richard Chilton, with the support of seven retired generals, presented Conner’s bid for the Medal of Honor to the Army’s personnel records office.

The curious case of Conner, who held a war record so compelling that it rivals the accolades of the more famous veteran Audie Murphy, baffled those who knew him. In all, Conner spent more than 800 days on the front lines in World War II. He suffered seven combat wounds while earning four Silver Stars, three Purple Hearts, a Bronze Star, the French military decoration Croix de Guerre, and the Distinguished Service Cross.

And yet, in an effort to get Conner recognized with a Medal of Honor, Chilton and his team endured a difficult quest that spanned decades. A federal district court rejected Conner’s initial bid for the award. In the 2014 ruling, a federal judge in Kentucky told a heartbroken Pauline that she had not filed her husband’s paperwork in time.

Conner had for decades shied away from talk of the award, much like he avoided any conversation of his four years in the Army. Still, his family continued to cling to hope that one day Conner would earn the U.S. military’s highest distinction.

OLD KENTUCKY HOME

A curving paved road leads to Murl and Pauline Conner’s red brick farmhouse wedged near the foothills of the Appalachians in southern Kentucky, two miles north of the Tennessee state line.

Blue skies hang over Albany’s green rolling landscape, as plowed fields seem to shine under the midday sun. Cardinals outside the one-story house chirp as a light wind sweeps by. This farm, cradled in the hilly terrain of Clinton County, hid the story of a man whose steely courage withstood the gravest circumstances.

Just footsteps down the road from the farm, Murl’s son Paul, and his wife Kathy, live in a modular home that was built to replace their home that had been destroyed by a tornado. Paul took over the farm after his father suffered a heart attack on a spring day in 1979.

He spent long hours planting tobacco plants before the farm transitioned into raising cattle as its primary product.

Born nine years after Conner returned from the war, Paul contrasts his dad in appearance. Burly and stout, he sports a much larger frame than his father, who had been thin and wiry, at 5-foot-6-inches tall, and weighing only 120 pounds during active duty.



Spanish Air Force Master Sgt. Ignacio Martinez, a surveillance operator assigned to NATO Flying Squadron Two based in Geilenkirchen, Germany, monitors surveillance scopes during a training sortie over the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex, Alaska May 7, 2018. RED-FLAG Alaska is hosted by Eielson Air Force Base and serves as a platform for training with other U.S. military services as well as international allies and partners. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Jerilyn Quintanilla)

Paul shares his father’s love of animals. And Paul raised his four children with the same grounded morals he learned from his father. Paul said his father offered sound advice that Paul would later instill in his children. “Be a man of your word,” Paul recalled his dad saying. “Do what you say. If you can’t fulfill a promise, don’t make it. Be mindful of people around you because everyone has feelings.”

In the family’s living room, Paul sits next to a black and white portrait of Murl as a young Soldier, flanked by faded portraits of Paul’s children and grandchildren. Decorated with beige ceramic lamps, rustic wooden chairs and shelves, the room has changed little since Pauline and her husband moved into the home more than 50 years ago.

For decades the photo loomed over the room. As a boy, Paul occasionally would stare at the black and white picture in awe.

When he asked his father about his time in the Army, he’d receive the same cold response: “We went over there, we did what we had to do,” Paul recalled his father saying. “And it needs to stay over there.”

Paul grew up without knowing the full extent of his father’s achievements on the battlefield. And for the most part, so did Pauline.

Generations have passed since the Soldier with only an eighth-grade education used wit and intelligence to thwart enemy advances. But buried in eyewitness accounts and in the testimonials of fellow Soldiers, Conner’s heroic deeds remained etched in history, unknown to his family and many of Albany’s residents.

“I just thought he was a farmer and he did a little something in the war,” said Walton Haddix, a family friend of the Connors. “But he never would talk about it. He never mentioned anything he did in the military.”

Outside of his war medals, this 200-acre farm on the lower east end of Clinton County is Conner’s lasting legacy. The family purchased the plot of land in 1949, after the government bought the family’s previous farm to make way for the Wolf Creek Dam and Lake Cumberland Reservoir. With his time in service long behind him, Conner turned his attention to his farm and raising Paul.

He never boasted about his wartime achievements, telling his wife he didn’t want to appear to be bragging. After all, Conner’s five brothers also served in the military: four in World War II and one in the Korean War.

As a farmer, he took pride in working on his farm, where he could often be found in his long-sleeved khaki shirt, farmer’s billed cap and overalls, riding a tractor or teaching Paul how to grow tobacco from the soil.

But the war never truly left him. Sometimes, at night, Conner would wake, gripped with tension and reliving moments from the battlefield, said his wife. Instead of returning to bed, Conner would retreat to the family’s wooden porch, where he lingered for hours smoking cigarettes.

The episodes at times became so traumatic, Pauline declines to talk in detail about them. Pauline said her husband suffered symptoms consistent with post-traumatic stress disorder, an illness that had not yet been widely identified until the Vietnam War.

“If anyone had PTSD, it was Murl,” Pauline said.

Conner carried the burden internally, never voicing his anguish to his family. The last time Conner had spoken publicly about the war, it happened to be the same day Pauline laid eyes on her future husband for the first time.

A HERO’S WELCOME

On a bright spring day in May 1945, the Wells family heard that a war hero, a native of Clinton County, would be returning after four years overseas.

The local American Legion post organized a parade in the town square to welcome back a war veteran whose bravery had townspeople talking. They traveled from surrounding counties, some by wagon. Others drove in by car, while some came on

foot.

Garlin Murl Conner, a farmer’s son who voluntarily joined the Army in 1941, had come home from the war.

Pauline Wells, still in her teenage years, climbed into the back of the family’s horse-drawn wagon along with her two brothers, two sisters and her parents at the family’s farm in northern Clinton County. They drove the wagon along a dirt trail, 10 miles to the town square. The county’s schools dismissed classes early so students could attend the parade.

Pauline’s family learned that following the parade, Conner would be speaking to the crowd about the war. So townspeople crowded into the second floor of the old courthouse. Sergeant Alvin C. York, the most decorated Soldier of the First World War, also attended, beginning what became a lifelong friendship with Conner. Pauline leaned onto the wooden bench in the back row to hear Conner speak.

“I was expecting a giant of a man,” Pauline said.

When Conner finally emerged before the crowd, his appearance stunned Pauline. Wearing his olive-colored military dress uniform, the lieutenant’s small stature underwhelmed the young Pauline. With narrow shoulders, and a slender frame, Conner hardly appeared like heroes in storybooks.

“That little wharf rat,” Pauline said to her mother, Tressie. “He couldn’t have done all the things they said he’d done.”

But unbeknownst to Pauline and her family, Conner had long proved his mettle to U.S. forces, the Allies, and fellow Soldiers, his commanding officer would say.

Conner was a quiet man of few words. The native of nearby Aaron, Kentucky, stood before the crowded courtroom and said what would be his last public statements about his time in the war.

“It gives me great pleasure,” Conner began, “to be able to come out here today. I am not a speaker, and did not come here to make a speech.”

“But,” Conner continued, “I will try to explain to you a small part of the war in Europe and some of the things I saw.”

Conner didn’t mince words. He talked first about the early November morning in 1942 when his unit first landed on the shore of Fedala, Morocco, in support of Operation Torch. American and Allied forces wrested control of North Africa from the Axis powers in only three days.

He moved onto the invasion of Licata, Sicily, a war-ravaged city that lay in tatters after 38 days of continuous fighting. Through his 10-minute testimony, Conner didn’t talk about his medals, or the times he fought on the front lines ahead of his men. Instead he spoke of his unit’s achievements, and how they survived the changing elements and terrain.

Finally, Conner touched on his unit’s trek into southern France and a difficult battle in the foothills of the Vosges Mountains. But he didn’t say a word about any of his selfless, valorous acts. Nor did he mention a fateful January morning near a small French village during the aftermath of the Battle of the Bulge, when for three hours in the winter of 1945, he risked his life so his unit could survive.

Editor’s note: The U.S. Army posthumously inducted 1st Lt. Garlin Conner into the Pentagon’s Hall of Heroes Wednesday, June 27. The Pentagon ceremony added Conner’s name to the distinguished roster in the Hall of Heroes, the Defense Department’s permanent display of record for all recipients of the Medal of Honor.

Because of the length of this article, the second portion will be published in the next Alaska Post newspaper, on July 6.