



FORGING THE

WARRIOR SPIRIT

THE JRTC & FORT POLK GUARDIAN

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Home of Heroes @ Fort Polk, LA

June 19, 2020

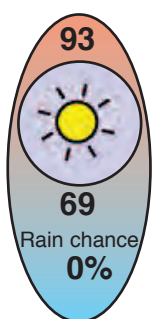


Wrapping up JRTC, Fort Polk Rotation 20-08

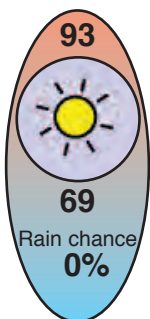
A gunner stands watch in a turret as the unit convoys to live fire exercises. Throughout the training, 4th Security Force Assistance Brigade maintained health protection posture for COVID-19 during JRTC Rotation 20-08. As training winds down to its end on Saturday, 4th SFAB units conducted further live fire exercises and participated in key leader engagements as they prepare for a future deployment. For this story on 4th SFAB see page 5 of today's Guardian.

CHUCK CANNON / GUARDIAN

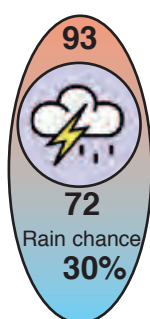
Weekend weather



Friday



Saturday



Sunday

Inside the Guardian

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Viewpoint

In our view

June is Men's Health Month, and Guardian staff asked local residents, "What do you do to maintain your physical, emotional and mental health and fitness?" Here are their responses:



Sgt. Maj. (retired) Duran Davis: "I maintain my physical health by completing 3-5 days per week of cardiovascular exercise for 45-60 minutes. I try to only eat out once or twice a week. I take men's vitamins, probiotics and do a weekly cleanse to maintain my digestive tract. My emotional, mental and spiritual health is collectively maintained with daily prayer, devotional readings and communicating with family and friends to maintain balance."



Spc. Aaron Palacios: "I try to have a positive and active mentality. I'm a go-getter; I refuse to stay in the barracks and play video games. I try to get out and stay active."



Pvt. Walter Amos: "In order to be physically, mentally and emotionally healthy I try to strive for perfection. I set goals for myself and strive to achieve them. It's important to work hard in all aspects of life — not just at the gym. Never give up on yourself, your dreams or your goals."



1st Lt. Jack Lucie: "I maintain a routine and work out consistently — physical exercise sets me at ease."



Sgt. Daniel Marsh: "I go to the gym consistently. It helps me sleep, and I get to see my physical progression."



Cpl. Joshua Lee: "I go to the gym with my friends. For men's health, it's important to surround yourself with positive energy and people."



Staff Sgt. Antonio Huerta: "I eat right. You need to put the right fuel in your body. You need a goal, too. I'm always trying to improve myself physically. Stretching is also important, and it only takes 10-15 minutes of my day."



Sgt. 1st Class (retired) Jimmy Vazquez: "I have always tried to maintain a healthy lifestyle. I'm currently doing a 21-day fitness challenge to raise awareness for veteran suicide by ruck marching and doing pushups daily."



Spc. Aavan Robinson: "For me, going to the gym reduces stress and anxiety, keeping you physically fit."



Guardian

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For more information on Fort Polk units and happenings visit the following Facebook pages: [@JRTCOperationsGrp](https://www.facebook.com/JRTCOperationsGrp), [@BayneJonesACH](https://www.facebook.com/BayneJonesACH) or [@fortpolkmwr](https://www.facebook.com/fortpolkmwr).

Briefs

COVID-19 town hall

The Fort Polk team is invited to attend the COVID-19 live-streamed Facebook town hall Tuesday, June 23, at 1 p.m.

The town hall, the 15th in a series of informative briefings about COVID-19, can be viewed live on the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk Face book page at <https://www.facebook.com/JRT-CandFortPolk>.

The town hall is hosted by Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, commander of the JRTC and Fort Polk, and features Col. Ryan Roseberry, garrison commander and Col. Jody Dugai, commander of Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital.

Base supply center

The Base Supply Center, located on North Fort Polk at 4505 Entrance Road (bldg 7802) is open Monday-Friday from 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Orders can be placed for office supplies, cleaning supplies and more.

Place orders online at <https://labsssc.com/> or by calling 531-1081. For additional details, contact Lovely M. Feagins at 531-1312 or (337) 378-5989.

Pharmacy changes

Starting Monday, Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital will end its pharmacy drive-through operations. Beneficiaries will still be required to drop off all new prescriptions (electronic and paper prescriptions) with a 4-hour turnaround. Those submitted after 12:30 p.m. will be ready for pick up the next business day after 8 a.m. BJACH's pharmacy is open Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.

Either the Refill Call-In Line 531-DRUG (3784) or the website www.tricareonline.com must be used for all refill requests.

Refills requested before 6 a.m. will be ready for pick up after noon the same day. Refills requested after 6 a.m. will be ready for pick up the next business day after noon. Patients who called the pharmacy for a refill, or are returning after drop-off time, will stand in the line near windows 1 and 2 — they will not need to check-in at the kiosk.

Same day, in-house appointments; emergency room visits; Patient Centered Medical Home; Eye/Ears/Nose/Throat Clinic; and hospital discharges will be processed and filled at the pharmacy after selecting a ticket at the kiosk. Limited seating is available in the pharmacy, and cloth masks/face coverings are required in the waiting area.



ANGIE THORNE/GUARDIAN

Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk commanding general, passes the colors to Col. Lee C. Freeman, incoming commander of the 32nd Hospital Center, at a change of command ceremony held June 16 at Fort Polk's Warrior Field.

32nd HC hosts change of command ceremony

By **ANGIE THORNE**

Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. — The 32nd Hospital Center change of command ceremony took place June 16 at Fort Polk's Warrior Field. Col. Lee A. Burnett, outgoing commander, passed the unit's colors to Col. Lee C. Freeman, incoming commander, as members of the Fort Polk command, 32nd HC Family members and others watched the exchange while practicing social distancing.

Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk commanding general, was part of the official party due to the absence of Col. Robert Howe, 1st Medical Brigade commander, Fort Hood, Texas, because of COVID-19 travel restrictions.

"It is an honor to stand in for Howe while participating in the Army tradition of the change of command for the 32nd HC," he said.

Frank commented on the necessity of a reduced formation and guest list due to COVID-19, but said the importance of a change of command remains critical to the transition of leadership within Army formations, especially one like the 32nd HC with multiple globally deployed units.

"Today is about our medical professionals — our doctors, nurses, medics and support staff. Without them, our frontline units would not be capable of conducting offensive operations in combat," he said.

Frank said the professional Soldiers in the 32nd HC, under the leadership of Burnett, had demonstrated adherence to Army standards and discipline.

"The 32nd HC courageously engages the enemies of the United States and lives the line from

the Soldier's Creed — 'I will never leave a fallen comrade,'" he said.

Frank said every American Soldier knows that the overall success for an Army on the battlefield depends on the prompt evacuation and care of its wounded warriors.

"Without this critical capability, any Army will fail in its mission. The 32nd Hospital Center, led by Lee Burnett, has been at the forefront of Army medical training to maximize unit effectiveness in combat," he said.

"Burnett focused the 32nd HC Soldiers on the demanding challenges of supporting units engaged in large scale combat operations in the 'Box' (training area) at JRTC. With Geronimo Soldiers and enemy helicopters attacking the field hospital, 32nd Soldiers defended their patients and unit, repelling the enemy attack."

Burnett's training focus set the conditions for deploying Soldiers to Kosovo and Iraq, as well as reacting to the demanding COVID-19 environment, said Frank.

"Burnett is the definition of a team player. He built cohesive teams and established mutual trust throughout the hospital center and with his teammates across JRTC," he said.

Burnett said the 32nd Hospital Center has 250 Soldiers at Fort Polk.

"With such a small unit, I'm not exaggerating when I say every Soldier is mission critical. Each individual holds an important role in the hospital whether they keep the generators running, sterilize the instruments or perform surgery. It has been my honor to be part of this unit and see it grow. Everything our unit has accomplished is

Please see **Command**, page 8

Army aims to hire 10,000 new Soldiers

USAREC PUBLIC AFFAIRS

FORT KNOX, Ky. — The U.S. Army is kicking off its first nationwide virtual hiring campaign June 30-July 2 with a goal of recruiting 10,000 new Soldiers to serve in 150 different occupations.

Army National Hiring Days is an all-Army effort to inspire individuals across the nation to “Join Us.”

As part of the three-day hiring event, Army leaders, operational units, recruiters and community partners across America will focus on encouraging individuals to explore the Army’s career paths, ranging from traditional combat roles to support positions in logistics, engineering and technology.

They will also highlight the benefits of military service, to include health insurance, retirement plans, training and education opportunities, and family support programs.

U.S. Army recruiters have focused heavily on virtual communications since mid-March when the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a socially distant society.

This new virtual hiring event will be the first time the Army has come together as a whole to leverage the digital space in a concentrated all-Army nationwide recruiting effort.

“The last three months have challenged America, and our Army has been part of the team working to fight this pandemic together,” said Maj. Gen. Frank Muth, commanding general for U.S. Army Recruiting Command.

“We are adapting our recruiting efforts to the current environment to ensure we can continue to protect and support our nation in the future. We believe Army National Hiring Days will help us find the right people who are ready to ‘Join Us.’”

During Army National Hiring Days, interested individuals can visit www.goarmy.com/hiringdays to see if they meet the qualifications; learn about job opportunities and associated hiring incentives; and connect with a recruiter in their area.

“The Army has a career for every interest, and many people aren’t aware of that,” Muth said.



“You’ll receive the technical training to succeed in your field and then have access to education benefits to go even further.”

To become an enlisted Soldier in the Army, individuals must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident; be 17-34 years old; achieve a minimum score on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test; meet medical, moral and physical

requirements; and be a high school graduate or equivalent.

Qualified applicants are eligible for bonuses up to \$40,000 or student loan reimbursement up to \$65,000, depending on the selected occupation, ASVAB scores, contract length and timeline for shipping to basic training. For more information about Army opportunities, visit goarmy.com.

Army Combat Fitness Test 2.0: Changes sparked by COVID-19 delays

By THOMAS BRADING

Army News Service

FORT EUSTIS, Va. — The Army Combat Fitness Test will be the force’s test of record Oct. 1, but the Army’s top enlisted Soldier says troops will have more time to train for and pass the six-event test — without fear of it negatively impacting their careers during that time.

Despite delays caused by COVID-19, Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael A. Grinston is confident the long-planned ACFT will stay on track.

In addition to the new training timeline, he also announced a handful of other modifications to the test, dubbing it ACFT 2.0.

It’s the same six-event physical fitness test — just an updated version, Grinston said.

So even though troops don’t have to pass the test this year, they still have to take the ACFT as scheduled.

“When it’s the test of record, you have to put it into the system of record, and that’s the only requirement right now,” Grinston said.

This means the Army won’t take administrative actions against Sol-

diers for potential ACFT failures.

Potential career impacts like separation, derogatory or referred evaluation reports, and a Soldier’s Order of Merit List standing are all off the table to be negatively impacted due to an ACFT failure.

This news comes as the Army, in response to social distancing guidelines, hit the brakes on all physical fitness tests in March.

Although fitness tests slowed down, Army leaders went full-steam ahead to plan how Soldiers will jump from the 40-year-old Army Physical Fitness Test to the new ACFT 2.0.

So what are the changes?

First, for many, the APFT is gone for good.

Once testing suspensions are lifted, the only Soldiers required to take an APFT ever again are those without a current passing score, said Grinston.

“As for everyone else, they should start training for the ACFT,” he said.

As far as the evolution of the ACFT, the biggest change for Soldiers is the option to substitute a two-minute plank, once a Soldier

has attempted the leg tuck.

The other six events are still locked into place: The 3 repetition, maximum, dead-lift; standing power throw; hand release pushups; leg tuck; 2-mile run; and sprint, drag, carry. The plank is just an interim assessment.

The plank is seen as a transitioning tool for Soldiers switching from the APFT to the six ACFT events, said Maj. Gen. Lonnie G. Hibbard, the Army Center for Initial Military Training commanding general.

Depending on an individual’s physical starting point, switching back to the leg tuck should take “anywhere between three to six months,” Hibbard added, but for now, the plank is an alternative.

Planks are a core muscle-burning exercise, completed by individuals who remain static with their elbows planted to the ground directly beneath the shoulders at a 90-degree angle while maintaining a straight posture.

Plank exercises can be conducted almost anywhere, Hibbard said, and does not require training equipment. Under the current COVID-19 conditions, this could be an ideal

transitional assessment.

Also, the stationary bike event dropped its initial 15,000-meter standard down to a 12,000-meter standard. Biking is an alternate assessment for Soldiers with permanent profiles unable to complete the two-mile run.

Additional changes for fiscal year 2021 include scoring standards. All Soldiers are challenged to pass the ACFT at the “Gold Standard,” Hibbard confirmed, which is an overall minimum total score of 60.

To pass, all troops are required to meet the moderately challenging “gold standard” instead of the more grueling “grey or black” scoring minimums — typically reserved for harsher, more physically demanding career fields. This standard applies to all Soldiers, regardless of age or gender.

Until COVID-19 hit, “we were seeing vast improvements with the ACFT,” Grinston said, adding the changes to the ACFT promotes a better physical-fitness standard that will mirror the physical demands of the Army, while also decreasing injuries and having more effective Soldiers within the ranks.

4SFAB Rotation 20-08 Led the Army into Collective Training!

By **CHUCK CANNON**

Command information officer

FORT POLK, La. — As Rotation 20-08 at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk moves into its final weekend, members of Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 4th Security Force Assistance Brigade took a moment to reflect on the training they received during the past two weeks and how it will affect their future operations.

Capt. Jeremiah Clester, B Co operations officer, said the training has gone well.

"We've gleaned a lot," he said. "We've received a lot of good information out of the training so far."

Clester said the training has helped SFAB members develop confidence in their communications systems as well as how to engage foreigners through an interpreter.

"That's one of the things we haven't been able to train on at Fort Carson," he said. "Learning how to talk through an interpreter is something we've all made improvements with."

One area Clester noted as needing work was power generation — having enough generator power to run all the equipment an SFAB takes with it when deploying.

"It's always been a tough issue for us," he said. "When trying to run all of our equipment off generators, we found some issues; energy and power management was something we worked on. But we came here pretty well trained and ready to go; we're set up for success."

Clester said the SFAB Soldiers have been able to train on things that they can't train on at home station beyond using interpreters, such as being able to talk to actual Afghans and setting up tactical operation centers in austere environments.

"It's been incredibly beneficial for that," he said.

He added the JRTC Observer, Controller/Trainers were "incredibly" helpful. "They were able to give us an outside perspective of what we are," Clester said. "It's great to have a pair of outside eyes looking in to see if we're missing anything. They let us know what we're good at and what areas need training. That way we can change our training plan when we go home and to maintain an eye on it for when we deploy."

Clester said the SFAB doesn't lack for confidence, with each member being a subject matter expert.

"Nothing has made us more a team," he said. "It's brought us closer together."

Capt. Christopher Smith, a team leader with B Co, said putting the entire 4th SFAB in the field at one time has shown capability gaps and put stress on the unit's communications systems.

"I think we're definitely learning," he said. "We're learning bandwidth issues with some of our equipment. We're finding we need to configure systems differently. We're learning how terrain features affects our equipment."

Smith said the unit has also learned to work through different types of partners.

"We've identified there are some who want you there; and some who may not want you there," he said. "Having to play mental judo with different people every day and learning how to deal with different personalities was great training. The reps will help us when we go down range. It helps our team's confidence level."

Sgt. 1st Class Paul Curry is Smith's assistant



Soldiers with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 4th Security Force Assistance Brigade, conduct a key leader engagement June 17 with a role player representing an Afghan army corps commander.



Team leaders with B Co, 1st Bn, 4th SFAB, conduct a key leader engagement exercise with a role player representing a brigade commander in the Afghan army June 17.

team leader. He said the training has been exciting.

"The dynamics are a lot different than a standard line infantry platoon," he said. "You have 12 team members, who are generally SMEs (subject matter experts) in their career field, so you have the growing pains of a smaller unit, but the experience of having multiple platoons and companies."

While the focus is on building teamwork with the SFAB, Curry said there is an additional benefit.

"I think when they (SFAB Soldiers) return to a regular unit they're going to find stronger non-commissioned officers inside of their new organizations," he said.

"They're going to be force multipliers, bring-

ing a wealth of knowledge wherever they go."

Sgt. Diana McMahon is a medic in B Co. She is one of a handful of female Soldiers who volunteered to be a member of an SFAB.

"I grew up in the military in an infantry battalion, so this is a similar environment," she said. "It's just a little more condensed."

McMahon said being able to execute your military occupational specialty properly is important for each team member.

"If you can execute your MOS properly, you have the confidence and trust of your teammates that you can do the job," she said.

"I believe in the mission, what we're doing and that we're the best at what we do. This will make me more valuable when I return to a line unit."

Henry reflects on first three months at JRTC, Fort Polk

By **CHUCK CANNON**

Command information officer

FORT POLK, La. — On March 20, Command Sgt. Maj. Michael C. Henry assumed responsibility as the senior enlisted Soldier at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk.

As he neared the end of his first three months on the job, Henry looked back at what brought him to the JRTC and Fort Polk, his impressions of the installation and what it takes to be a sergeant major in today's Army.

"I took no time off after I left my assignment as the deputy commandant of the Non-commissioned officer Leadership Center of Excellence (at Fort Bliss, Texas) and reported here, and I did that on purpose," Henry said. "I didn't want to take 30 days off — I wanted to keep up with what we were doing in the Army."

Henry said reporting quickly to Fort Polk allowed him to avoid transportation issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I luckily came in under the March 6 radar when they started talking about the stop-move order in the Army due to COVID-19," he said. "I came into a fluid environment where the Army was rapidly making strategic decisions to protect its force."

Each day the environment continued to become more dynamic and constrained, Henry said, because of the need to keep Soldiers safe yet maintain an Army that could fight and win its battles.

"I saw the most important piece was communicating what was needed to protect the force," he said. "On top of that, we had to remember we're the Army; we need to maintain and be ready."

As that related to the JRTC and Fort Polk, Henry said the question was this: How do we continue our role in training large combat formations for large-scale combat on multi-domain operations?

"It's about communication, reading and disseminating information in a manner that's achievable," he said.

In his role as the senior enlisted advisor at JRTC and Fort Polk, Henry said it's incumbent upon him to actively listen, observe and understand how JRTC and Fort Polk commander, Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, and his staff need the information distributed so it can be understood.

"I recognize the areas I will put an emphasis on, especially when it's affecting our Soldiers' and Families' quality of life, and there are other areas where I recognize elements are already taking the lead," he said. "And I must ensure I'm meeting the commander's intent."

As the deputy commandant of the NCO Leadership Center of Excellence, Henry said he was part of a team that developed training for the Army's NCO Corps. He said there's not a large difference between being at Fort Bliss and Fort Polk.

"It all boils down to communicating effec-



Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Henry, senior enlisted Soldier at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, reflects on his first three months on the job.

tively," he said. "I'm still learning the organization (JRTC and Fort Polk) and not trying to get too far ahead of myself."

Henry said his only prior experience at the JRTC and Fort Polk came as a Soldier in a rotational unit.

"I had never understood or been in or around the installation," he said. "I assumed it was bigger, but you can actually drive around it in one morning. When you do drive around here, you see what a great little piece of the world this installation is and how tight knit it is. It is a team. The people that have been here and been a part of the community, they understand the advantages, challenges and kinship available here. What was expressed to me by people who have been here — that Fort Polk was a great duty assignment — was validated."

Henry said his biggest challenge to date has been the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on not only the JRTC and Fort Polk but the military as a whole.

"I've learned to be comfortable in uncomfortable situations," he said. "There has to be a lot of patience. I'm glad I'm experiencing it (COVID-19 pandemic) in my senior time in the Army. I'm not sure I would have been as patient a few years ago."

For younger Soldiers who are contemplating staying in the Army long enough to earn command sergeant major stripes, Henry said enjoy having a say in assignment selection now.

"When you become a sergeant major or command sergeant major, you no longer have a choice in your assignment," he said. "You have to understand the meaning of selfless service, because, as a sergeant major, the Army has to place you and your skill set at the right location to be an effective piece for the senior leaders of the Army."

Henry said sergeant major positions are

nominative assignments.

"There is a process senior Army leaders do at the Pentagon to present to the senior mission commander five names they believe are the best from their talent management pool and have the skill sets needed for that specific position," he said. "I was interviewed and chosen by General Frank."

Since he's just completed three months at the JRTC and Fort Polk, Henry said he's not looking too far ahead, wondering where the Army might choose to send him next.

"I just want to be relevant and maintain the ability to have the opportunity," he said. "As long as I maintain relevance, through education and understanding the needs of our Soldiers and Families; I remain technically and tactically proficient; and I understand how to communicate that to our senior leaders, then I'm in the conversation."

As for what it takes to earn sergeant major stripes, Henry summed it up in one word: Commitment.

"On my second day in the Army, October 6, 1992, I made a commitment and said I'm going to do this for 20 years," he said. "Once you commit, you have to own it. With that commitment comes 'How am I going to do it?' As I continued through my time in the Army, I always set goals, and the key was exceeding those goals."

Now that he's passed the 20 year mark, Henry said the next questions are how long to serve and why.

"Those are adjustments you make," he said. "Whether it's providing guidance to others or shaping larger pieces of what we do. It's neat looking back at how far you've come, what you've accomplished, the mistakes you've made, what you've gained and earned. I'm still the same 'Hooah' I was on the second day in the Army, I've just got a bit more experience."

CHUCK CANNON/GUARDIAN

Eighth anvil takes its place at entrance of Anvil Field

By **ANGIE THORNE**

Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. — The latest anvil — the eighth statue placed in significant footprints throughout Fort Polk — was unveiled at the entrance to Anvil Field, which sits on the corner of Ninth Street and Alabama Avenue.

The anvils represent the branding concept behind the “Forging Warrior the Spirit” motto. Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk commanding general said seeing the anvils reminds the Fort Polk community of the importance of Fort Polk’s mission.

Sean McCroary, supervisory sports specialist, said he thinks this is the best representation yet of exemplifying “Forging the Warrior Spirit,” because it is the premier setting for Soldiers to practice for and take the Army Combat Fitness Test. But he said it’s not just for Soldiers.

“I’ve also seen Family members, veterans and Department of the Army civilians using this field. You name it and they are out here participating in a wide range of activities,” he said.

Randy Behr, Fort Polk Sports, Fitness and Aquatics chief, said the field helps focus Soldiers when it comes to resiliency.

“Sports and fitness is resiliency, which means mission readiness,” he said.



ANGIE THORNE/GUARDIAN

Sean McCroary, supervisory sports specialist, unveils the eighth of 10 anvil sculptures at Anvil Field June 15 as Fort Polk command and representatives from Morale, Welfare and Recreation, G3 and sports, fitness and aquatics leadership look on.

Capt. Robert Ogden, G3 engineer plans officer, is part of the team that has helped the anvils transform from concept to reality.

“The coordination needed to create each individual part of these anvils has been huge. There were many people that helped bring those pieces

together to make the finished product. It’s been a real success,” he said.

The last two anvils will soon be unveiled. They will be placed on the north and south ends of Alabama Avenue — the route Soldiers use to run during physical training.

3rd Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment trains and fields new gear

By **CHRISTY GRAHAM**

Guardian editor

FORT POLK, La. — Throughout June, C Troop, 3rd Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment is conducting in-class and field training with the latest in night-vision goggle (NVG) technology. The new equipment, the enhanced night vision goggles-binoculars (ENVG-B), not only provides an all-around upgrade in clarity, but also comes with thermal vision capabilities, augmented reality with heads-up display and integrates with weapon optics.

As with all training efforts, the unit is keeping COVID-19 precautions in mind by using the “same social-distancing guidelines that they use at Ranger School and here at the Joint Readiness Training Center. This includes limiting the number of Soldiers and new equipment trainers allowed in the classroom at a given time,” said Capt. William Hess, commander, C Troop 3rd Sqdn, 89th Cav Reg.

During the first week of June, 30 Soldiers received the new equipment training in a classroom environment. Twenty-eight Soldiers, with two on stand-by, completed a range density week beginning June 8, “logging hours with the equipment, executing training according to the Army’s standard qualification tables,” said Hess.

The last two weeks of June are dedicated to situational training exercises. The STX lanes will “use the

tactical environment to allow the unit to integrate the newly learned capabilities into our troop leader procedures,” said Hess.

“These Soldiers will be getting a lot of training with the ENVG-Bs.”

Program Executive Office Soldier (PEO Soldier) members from Fort Belvoir, Virginia prompted and supported the ENVG-B training for C troop. Maj. John Nikiforakis, assistant program manager, ENVG-B, PEO Soldier said, “We need to test our night vision technology in a simulated combat environment, so that, by the time it gets to combat, the equipment is refined and ready.”

“As PEO, we are the material developers for technology for the warfighter. Everything we do is geared toward making our Soldiers more lethal, more survivable, and more capable on the battlefield.”

Throughout their training, within and outside of the classroom, Soldiers will gain direct insight into equipment functionality. According to Hess, the Soldiers will also run through the training with the monocular night vision device (PVS-14) — the older NVG model — and then with the ENVG-Bs. Their performance and experiences will be logged, creating a dataset for analysis.

“What we rely on is ‘Soldiers in the loop,’ and that is the Soldier feedback, which ensures the equipment that they are going to fight with is something they actually



CHRISTY GRAHAM/GUARDIAN

3rd Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment began training on the new Enhanced Night Vision Goggle - Binocular (ENVG-B) June 1.

want to use,” said Nikiforakis.

C Troop Soldiers are excited about the ENVG-B’s and the opportunity to train with the equipment.

Pfc. Hunter Shor, C Troop, 3rd Sqdn, 89th Cav Reg, said, “Compared to the PVS-14s, I just feel the ENVG-B’s are exponentially ahead of their time with thermal technology and integrated systems.”

Similarly, Spc. Simon Ly, C Troop, 3rd Sqdn, 89th Cav Reg said, “It’s been really interesting. I’ve never used equipment with these capabilities before. There are things we can

do with the ENVG-Bs that I didn’t think we could do before. For example, the augmented reality that allows us to see checkpoints in the NVGs: I just didn’t know the technology had reached that point.”

With the Soldiers’ feedback and training data, PEO Soldier is able to further ready the device for combat, exceed expectations and meet the needs of Soldiers on the battlefield.

“We go beyond ‘own the night.’ We want to be able to identify all threats, under all conditions and be able to shoot first,” said Nikiforakis.

5-25 Bulldog Soldiers train to certify howitzer sections

By Staff Sgt. ASHLEY M. MORRIS

3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div PA NCO

Soldiers with B “Bulldog” Battery, 5th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, conducted field artillery table VI qualification training June 2–4 at Pearson Ridge.

The training certification is required prior to supporting the West Point Cadet Summer Training program in New York.

There are five gates of field artillery training consisting of 18 tables, according to the Field Artillery Gated Training Strategy. Table VI is the last event of gate II, and the first live fire event of the 18 tables. Successfully qualifying the table means they have achieved gate II certification.

The battalion focused on individual skill proficiency and team and crew proficiency during tables I through V training and certification. Section crews earn their certification during Table VI training, qualifying them to provide support for maneuver units.

“We prepared for this certification training prior to COVID-19 policies through the artillery table V certifications, which we just finished last week,” said Capt. Jeremy Tomaino, B Btry commander, 5th Bn, 25th FA. “It began in February, and we successfully certified table V in March.”

Due to crewmember change-outs, crews had to be retrained and certified on table V tasks.

“During the stay-at-home order, I conducted virtual training with my guys,” said Sgt. Nicholas Osborn, a fire section chief also assigned to B Btry. “They all know their jobs well; when we came back, it was a smooth transition. Everything clicked into place.”

Since returning to training, Tomaino said that mitigations have been followed, reducing risk and ensuring Soldier safety.

Firing sections were spaced about 70 meters apart from each other. Individual sections on

Artillerymen assigned to 5th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, conducted artillery table VI certifications at Pearson Ridge on June 3. The original certification training was delayed due to COVID-19 restrictions.



Staff Sgt. ASHLEY M. MORRIS / U.S. ARMY

standby, waiting to move into the firing point, practiced social distancing, isolating teams from each other.

With Fort Polk known for its heat and humidity, camouflage nets were used to create shaded areas for the Soldiers to stay cool during training.

“We have ice sheets under each net and water points with soap and cleaning supplies for each entity,” said Tomaino. “No one on the firing point has to (physically) interact with each other, except for medical support.”

Battery leadership conducted safety checks throughout the day to ensure Soldiers were adhering to COVID-19 safety guidelines and practicing work/rest cycles for heat injury mitigation.

Combat medics also made their rounds monitoring Soldiers for symptoms of heat exhaustion and those associated with the coronavirus.

Despite setbacks caused by COVID-19, Tomaino expressed his excitement about being able to conduct the certification training.

Although Tomaino took command of the Bulldogs a year ago, the battery was separated during the 2019 Southwest Border Mission, making it difficult to conduct battery-level training.

“This is the first time that I have been able to have the entire battery in the field conducting battery level certification for the artillery table VI,” Tomaino said. “This is a special moment for me as well as the Soldiers in Bulldog Battery.”

Command

Continued from page 3

a result of the determination, hard work and dedication of our junior enlisted, noncommissioned officers and officers,” he said.

Burnett said he and his team provided their Soldiers a plan of attack and then got out of their way. “In a matter of months, our Soldiers executed the plan by turning around our maintenance programs, pushing our personnel and training readiness into zones of excellence, eventually becoming the best unit in the brigade in nearly every metric,” he said.

Burnett said his Soldiers successfully completed the task of converting from a combat support hospital to a hospital center, requiring the fielding of millions of dollars in new equipment and complete restructuring.

“Following conversion, the unit’s focus was deployment readiness. The unit executed phenomenally during a world class validation exercise that will set the standard for future hospital center rotations here at JRTC,” he said.

Burnett said his Soldiers took that experience in the “Box” and a month later deployed their equipment and personnel to the National Training Center (Fort Irwin, California) as part of a Forces Command exercise. “I can’t tell you how proud I am of them. They did an absolutely fan-

tastic job. As they returned, we shifted gears and prepared simultaneously for participation in the Expert Field Medical Badge and the deployment of Task Force K-4 to Kosovo,” he said.

Burnett said all four EFMB candidates were fit, trained and ready to take on the challenge and successfully obtained their badge.

As for Task Force K-4, Burnett said they couldn’t know they would be deploying into the coming storm of COVID-19 in Europe.

“Upon arrival in theater, they took on a role far beyond what they could have expected and have done an amazing job,” he said.

Burnett said after Louisiana went into lockdown due to COVID-19, the 32nd HC team set up a screening site in direct support of Bayne-Jones Community Hospital and helped set the standard for on-post screening efforts.

Burnett said in April the U.S. Central Command requested an augmentation Task Force to support the medical forces currently in Iraq.

“In weeks, we set up Task Force Evacuate and prepared them to deploy. They are currently downrange providing lifesaving care,” he said. “One month later it was time to send Task Force Vanguard. They will meet up down range, and I know they will be tremendously successful.”

Frank said Freeman, who joins the JRTC and Fort Polk team from the National War College in Washington D.C., is an experienced combat veteran with four deployments to Iraq and one to Afghanistan.

Frank said Freeman embodies the Warrior Spirit and will join Task Force Vanguard as the deployed 32nd commander in Iraq.

“As a former member of the 115th Combat Support Hospital, we are proud that you have returned home to JRTC and Fort Polk to rejoin the ranks of the Home of Heroes,” he said. “The Soldiers of the 32nd stand with their new commander, ready to answer the nation’s call.”

Freeman thanked everyone for attending and said he was humbled and grateful to once again be stationed at JRTC and Fort Polk. He said the 32nd HC has a long lineage of serving the nation.

“Our Soldiers are currently serving in U.S. Army Europe and we have two Task Forces in the Central Command area of responsibility, whom I will be joining shortly down range. I’m looking forward to it,” he said.

Freeman said he is honored to serve with the Soldiers in the 32nd HC. “We will lead this proud unit as it adds another chapter to its rich history and legacy,” he said.

Louisiana bill eases hurdles to licensure for Military Families

OSJA

FORT POLK, La. — Being a military spouse can be tough, but it may have gotten a little easier in regards to career licensures.

Stacey Delgado, Employment Readiness program manager, Army Community Service Family Readiness Center, said endeavors to improve the challenges of military spouse employment at Fort Polk added a new victory to the list.

Governor John Bel Edwards and State Rep. Charles Owens co-authored HR 613 — “Breaking Down Barriers to Work for Military Families Act” — which was signed into law June 11. The law ensures that spouses of Soldiers and Department of Defense civilians are able to continue working in their chosen professions.

In attendance at the governor’s bill-signing ceremony were Sen. Mike Reese; Owens; Col. Ryan K. Roseberry, Fort Polk garrison commander; Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher M. Ausbun, garrison command sergeant major; and military spouse Jessica Ballard.

The new law focuses on the licensing challenges military spouses face during a permanent change of station as they travel to a new state and duty station.

“It has been a roadblock for Fort Polk spouses due to the numerous boards in Louisiana and their requirements,” Delgado said.

The act amends Louisiana Revised Statute 37:3651 to provide that a professional or occupational licensing board shall issue a license, certification, permit-pending normal license or registration to a Soldier/DoD civilian assigned to duty in Louisiana; or a dependent or spouse of a Soldier/DoD civilian as-

signed to duty in Louisiana.

If the spouse worked in a state and career requiring a license (doctors, nurses, hairdressers, arborists) they can be licensed in Louisiana if all of the following conditions are met:

1. The applicant holds a current and valid occupational license in another state in an occupation with a similar scope of practice;

2. The applicant has held the occupational license in the other state for at least one year;

3. The applicant has passed any examinations or met any education, training, or experience standards as required by the board in the other state;

4. The applicant is held in good standing by the board in the other state;

5. The applicant does not have a disqualifying criminal record;

6. The applicant has not had an occupational license revoked by a board in another state because of negligence of intentional misconduct related to the applicant’s work in the occupation;

7. The applicant did not surrender an occupational license because of negligence or intentional misconduct related to the person’s work in the occupation in another state;

8. The applicant does not have a complaint, allegation or investigation pending before a board in another state relating to unprofessional conduct or an alleged crime. If the applicant has a complaint, allegation or investigation pending, the board in this state shall not issue or deny an occupational license to the applicant until the issue is resolved or the applicant otherwise satisfies the criteria for licensure;

9. The applicant pays all applicable fees in this state;



LOUISIANA GOVERNOR'S PRESS OFFICE

Governor John Bel Edwards signs HR 613 — “Breaking Down Barriers to Work for Military Families Act” — into law on June 11. In attendance (from left to right) were Sen. Mike Reese; Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher M. Ausbun, garrison command sergeant major; Edwards; State Rep. Charles Owens; military spouse Jessica Ballard; and Col. Ryan K. Roseberry, Fort Polk garrison commander.

10. The applicant simultaneously applies for a permanent license. If the applicant fails to qualify for a permanent license, once the permanent applicant is vetted, the permit automatically terminates.

If the spouse worked in a career field not requiring a license in their previous state but Louisiana does, such as interior design, they can obtain a Louisiana license after proving at least three years of lawful work history in that occupation and meeting requirements 6–9, at left.

If the spouse worked in a state that did not require a license but maintains private certification and work experience such as an architect, locksmith or bartender, they can obtain a Louisiana license after proving at least two years of lawful work history in that occupation, they hold a current and valid pri-

vate certification in that field, the private certification organization holds the applicant in good standing and meeting requirements 6–9, listed above.

Spouses must send a request for a license, certification, permit or registration to the state professional or licensing board regulating their chosen profession along with proof that the required conditions are met. The board has 30 days to respond.

While this law goes into effect on January 1, 2021, giving the licensing boards opportunities to prepare for this rule change, Owens, the legislator who offered the bill, is confident that the licensing boards will have processes in place well before that date.

Contact the Fort Polk Legal Assistance Office at 531-2580 with questions or appointment requests.

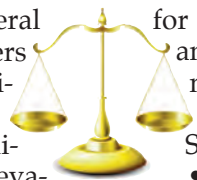
Soldiers punished, separated under UCMJ for various disciplinary issues

OSJA

FORT POLK, La. — At the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, the commanding general and subordinate commanders take good order and discipline seriously.

However, certain disciplinary issues continue to be prevalent across Fort Polk such as breaking quarantine/isolation orders, violating General Order number 1, driving under the influence of alcohol, wrongful use/possession of controlled substances, fraternization, and sexual assault.

Below are recent examples of adverse legal actions for units within the Fort Polk jurisdiction.



- A captain, assigned to Joint Readiness Training Center Operations Group, was issued a General Officer Memorandum of Reprimand for disobeying an isolation order and traveling outside of the 50-mile radius. The CG directed filing the reprimand in the Soldier’s local file.

- A first lieutenant, assigned to 3rd Battalion, 353rd Regiment, Operations Group, was issued a General Officer Memorandum of Reprimand for disobeying an isolation order and traveling outside of the 50-mile radius. The CG directed filing the reprimand in the Soldier’s Army Military Human Resource Record.

- A specialist, assigned to 519th Military Police Battalion, was issued

a General Officer Memorandum of Reprimand for driving under the influence of alcohol with a blood alcohol content of 0.114%. The CG directed filing the reprimand in the Soldier’s AMHRR.

- A specialist, assigned to 710th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, was punished under Article 15 for failing to obey a lawful order to maintain his barracks room and for failing to report for duty, in violation of Articles 92 and 86, Uniform Code of Military Justice. The service member was sentenced to a reduction to E-3.

- A specialist, assigned to 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div, was admin-

istratively separated under Chapter 14-12c(2), with a General (Under Honorable Conditions) characterization of service for wrongful use of a controlled substance. Generally, this characterization of service results in the loss of a service member’s educational benefits.

- A private first class, assigned to 5th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div, was administratively separated under Chapter 14-12c, with a General (Under Honorable Conditions) characterization of service for assault, communicating a threat and endangering the welfare of his children. Generally, this characterization of service results in the loss of a service member’s educational benefits.

Think driving safety first before getting behind wheel

GUARDIAN STAFF

Editor's note: This article on driving safety is the third in a series of articles running in the Guardian in June, which is National Safety Month. The driving safety information for this story was found at <https://safety.army.mil>, www.cdc.gov and www.nhtsa.gov.

FORT POLK, La. — As COVID-19 restrictions are lifted and Soldiers and Families tentatively make plans to travel beyond the 50-mile radius of Phase 1 and into the 100 mile radius of Phase 2, driving safety should remain a central focus.

"June through August is the deadliest time of year for Army private motor vehicle mishaps, and the easing of COVID-19 restrictions could compound already existing hazards if Soldiers are too eager to 'make up' lost time," said Shane Denning, Fort Polk's Garrison Safety Office director.

Beyond the difficulties of safely maneuvering through Louisiana's Phase 2 restrictions, there are also the ever-present stumbling blocks drivers must take into consideration on the roads — speeding, alcohol, not using seat belts, cell phone use and fatigue are some of the biggest issues causing accidents.

Denning said he believes driving fatigue is probably the worst issue Soldiers and Families will encounter as they begin hitting the roads again.

"While driving under the influence is still a major issue and concern, fatigued driving is nearly as bad. With the high operations tempo that the military undertakes, Soldiers want to cram as much as possible into every free minute they have. Rest is usually the last thing on anyone's mind when they want to play," he said.

Following these tips is a good place to start:

- Make sure whoever is driving is properly rested. Driving while drowsy is a major problem that enhances danger and the odds of tragedy. No one knows the exact moment when sleep takes over the body. Drowsiness makes you less able to pay attention to the road, slows reaction time and affects your ability to make good decisions. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that driving while drowsy was responsible for 72,000 crashes, 44,000 injuries and 800 deaths in 2013. However, it's believed these numbers are underestimated. Each year up to 6,000 fatal crashes may be caused by drowsy drivers.

Warning signs include yawning or blinking frequently, difficulty remembering the past few miles driven, missing your exit, drifting from your lane and hitting the rumble strip on the side of the road.

Prevention includes getting enough sleep (most adults need at least seven hours). Developing good sleep habits; sticking to a sleep schedule and avoiding alcohol or taking medications that cause drowsiness.

- Drive safely by observing speed limits and obeying traffic laws. In National Highway Traffic Safety Administration data from 2018, speeding contributed to more than 9,378 crash deaths.

- Don't drive distracted by talking or texting on your cellphone. Distracted driving is any activity that diverts a person's attention from the primary task of driving. All distractions endanger driver, passenger and bystander safety. Potential distractions can include texting, using a



cellphone, eating, drinking or smoking, talking, grooming, reading, using a navigation system, watching a video and adjusting a radio. The types of distracted driving include visual, taking your eyes off the road; manual, taking your hands off the wheel and cognitive, taking your mind off of driving. The following link to the distraction.gov website provides information on the laws that pertain to your state: www.distraction.gov/content/get-the-facts/state-laws.html.

- Always use a seat belt. Be sure to buckle up whether you are in the front seat or the back seat of a vehicle. Also, make sure children are properly buckled in a car seat, booster seat or seat belt appropriate for their age, height and weight; and ensure they are buckled in the back seat of the vehicle.

- Do not drive while impaired by alcohol or drugs, and avoid driving with a driver who is impaired. Every day, 29 people in the United

States die in motor vehicle crashes that involve an alcohol-impaired driver. This is one death every 50 minutes.

The annual cost of alcohol-related crashes totals more than \$44 billion. When going out in social situations, keep safety in mind by designating a non-drinking driver in a group. Don't let your friends drive impaired; if you have been drinking, get a ride home or call a taxi.

Denning said leaders should counsel their Soldiers on proper trip planning, vehicle inspections and review leave and pass plans and policies at <https://safety.army.mil/OFF-DUTY/PMV-4-Cars-Trucks/Driving-Safety-Brief-Tools>.

"Safety shouldn't be a nuisance or take away from enjoying a trip. It should enhance your leisure time by giving you the chance to do something you love again in the future. You living to see another day is a personal investment," he said.

National Safety Month 2020

TAKE A (PROPER) SEAT!

Ergonomics might not seem like an exciting topic, but musculoskeletal injuries are a leading cause of medical visits across the Army. Do like your parents said and sit up straight (and ask your leader for an ergonomics assessment). It just might save you a lot of pain.

For more information visit <https://safety.army.mil>

U.S. ARMY
U.S. ARMY COMBAT READINESS CENTER

Geronimo Jack keeps Ops Gp farm animals safe, in step

By **CHUCK CANNON**

Command information officer

FORT POLK, La. — Col. David Gardner, commander, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk Operations Group, will tell you it takes an entire team to make his unit such a renowned adversary in the JRTC “Box.”

From privates to senior officers, each Soldier plays a role in making the JRTC and Fort Polk the Army’s premiere training ground for Infantry Brigade Combat Teams and Security Force Assistance Brigades as they prepare to embark on deployments to hot spots around the globe.

Seldom are the Ops Gp Soldiers singled out for their exemplary deeds, preferring instead to remain in anonymity, allowing the entire unit to be recognized for its work.

But on occasion, one member moves to the front of the pack — or the herd, barking instructions and chasing away what-

ever gets in the way of the mission — whether man or beast.

Meet Jack the Dog, an honorary member of the Ops Gp Geronimo team and guardian of the Ops Gp Farm in the Box, an entity that provides animals for a touch of realism to



Geronimo Jack

units training in the mock villages that dot the JRTC landscape.

Jack, who has been made an honorary member of the Geronimos and now goes by the moniker Geronimo Jack, is an Anatolian Shepherd, a breed of dog that originated in Turkey and is named after the Anatolia Peninsula which forms a large portion of the nation’s territory. The dog is noted for being rugged, large and strong and having good sight and hearing, making it a natural for protecting livestock such as the goats, donkeys, geese and chickens that call the Ops Gp Farm home.

Geronimo Jack’s keeper, Dennis Ansetta, the Ops Gp farm manager, said the protective pooch became a member of the Ops Gp family in August 2012.

“I know that eventually I’m going to retire. I just hope we can retire together.”

DENNIS ANSETTA
JRTC Ops Gp farm manager

“We originally had a couple of Pyrenees to act as guard dogs for us,” Ansetta said. “But over time, the rotational Soldiers would stop by and feed them people food, and they started getting off the farm and hanging out by the Pizza Hut looking for handouts.”

Ansetta said after placing the Pyrenees with a



CHUCK CANNON / GUARDIAN

Geronimo Jack, an Anatolian Shepherd that serves as a stock and dog guard at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk’s farm in the JRTC “Box,” stands watch over one of the Boer goats used by JRTC Operations Group during rotations to add realism to the villages in the training areas. Although Geronimo Jack’s owner, Dennis Ansetta, says the dog has never bitten anyone, he cautions those who might pass by to be wary — just because he hasn’t doesn’t mean he won’t.

farmer on Toledo Bend, there was a period of time when there was no guard dog for the farm animals. As a result, a coyote killed one of the farm’s Boer goats five nights in a row.

“I knew something had to be done,” Ansetta said. “I did a little research and found an Anatolian Shepherd for sale in East Texas. The owner wanted \$125 for the dog, and when I told him it was for Fort Polk, he came down to \$100.”

Ansetta said he brought the 6-month-old pup to the Ops Gp Farm and Jack immediately paid dividends.

“The first night I left him alone; the next morning when I came in, I found a dead coyote within the fence,” Ansetta said. “Jack was only 6 months old, but he was already tough enough to take out a coyote.”

Since that day eight years ago, Ansetta said that except for old age, the farm has not lost a goat. Not only that, but Ansetta said he believes Jack thinks he’s part goat.

“He grew up with them and has been around them all his life,” Ansetta said.

“I’ve tried to feed him in a separate area, but

he won’t have anything to do with that; he wants his food placed at his spot — the end of the goat’s feed trough.”

While Jack has earned his stripes by protecting the farm herd from wild animals, Ansetta said the fierce-looking dog has also served to keep humans from slipping in unwanted, whether they are rotational Soldiers, permanent party or civilians.

“He carries on like he’s going to tear you up,” Ansetta said. “He’s never bitten anyone, but I sure wouldn’t stick my hand through the fence.”

For eight years, Geronimo Jack has been Ansetta’s daily companion as they care for and provide a touch of realism for rotational units as they prepare to deploy. Ansetta said he hopes Jack will last as long as he does.

“He’s in great shape and still checks the fence perimeter each day,” Ansetta said. “I have noticed that on hot days, he’ll come on back to the shade here instead of staying out in the sun, but he’s doing good.”

“I know that, eventually, I’m going to retire. I just hope we can retire together.”



School's out for summer

The Morale, Welfare and Recreation Special Events team prepared goodie bags and refreshments to hand out at the "School's Out for Summer" drive-through event, celebrating the end of another school year and the start of the summer season.

ANNABELLE R. ARCAD/ MWRA

Prioritize all aspects of men's health in June

GUARDIAN STAFF

FORT POLK, La. — June is Men's Health Month. In this month that also celebrates all things dad, it seems appropriate to help the men in your lives — dad or not — stay healthy. It's the perfect opportunity to encourage your guys to be cognizant of both their mental and physical well-being.

That's important because — on average — men die five years younger than women and lead 9 out of 10 top causes of death, according to <https://health.gov>.

Some of the top causes of death include heart disease; prostate and other types of cancer; influenza and pneumonia; diabetes and suicide.

A great way to change those numbers when it comes to men's health is preventive care. Regular visits with a health care provider are a starting point.

Adult men in the United States visit primary care providers at lower rates than adult women, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

Once at the doctor's office, providers can establish baselines for health factors such as high blood pressure, cholesterol, weight and screenings for cancer that will enable men to catch potentially dangerous conditions early, when they are still treatable.

You can download a helpful chart of recommended screenings at www.healthfinder.gov.

Encourage the men in your life to get physical and make exercise a part of their normal routine as well.

Adults need two and a half hours of physical activity each week, but some people find it difficult to get motivated when it comes to working out, <https://health.gov> suggests families encour-

age their dads or spouses to continue exercising and stay focused.

Whether jogging, hiking, playing sports, weight lifting, walking or taking part in any physical activity, that family support could be the difference between sitting on the couch and staying active. Physical fitness can help control weight, reduce the risk of heart disease and some cancers and can improve mental health and mood, according to www.cdc.gov.

That's the physical side, but what about the mental aspects of health?

The fact is exercise isn't just about building muscle and aerobic capacity. Studies show that exercise can treat mild to moderate depression as effectively as an antidepressant — without the side-effects, according to www.helpguide.org. A recent study, done by the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, found that running for 15 minutes a day or walking for an hour reduces the risk of major depression by 26%. In addition to relieving depression symptoms, research also shows that maintaining an exercise schedule can prevent relapse.

Exercise has been found to help with stress by releasing endorphins in the brain. The physical activity relaxes muscles and relieves tension.

The next integral piece is eating healthy by including a variety of fruits and vegetables every day.

Fruits and vegetables have vitamins and minerals that may help protect against chronic diseases.

Limit foods and drinks high in calories, sugar, salt, fat and alcohol.

Take Men's Health Month seriously — use it to become better informed and to jump-start a journey to better health.

Briefs

Fort Polk FreedomFest

Out of concern for the health and safety of Soldiers, Families, Department of the Army civilians, retirees and local communities during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk leadership has made the decision to postpone the Toby Keith concert originally scheduled for July 18.

Toby Keith has generously agreed to perform at JRTC and Fort Polk on Nov. 7. More information on the event will be provided at a later date.

Abandoned vehicles

The Directorate of Emergency Services traffic section will release the following vehicles to a towing company for disposal on July 17 if they remain unclaimed.

Vehicles are listed with the last four numbers of their VIN number. If one of these vehicles belongs to you please contact the Fort Polk Police Traffic Section at 531-1806/2677.

2018 Fiat 500 — 4235

2007 Toyota Prism — 0869

2003 Honda Accord — 4502

2005 Nissan Xterra — 8017

2003 Dodge Durango — 3729

2002 GMC 1500 — 2088

2007 Nissan Altima — 1292

Roadwork



Mississippi Avenue is undergoing renovations — pavement milling, new asphalt and installation of permanent pavement parking.

Travel lane and shoulder closures are projected to continue through June 19.

The primary traffic impact will be continued delays associated with flaggers controlling traffic within and around the work zone.

The moving work zone will require intermittent temporary closures of intersections and drives along this segment of Mississippi Avenue.

The new asphalt paving is projected for Monday through July 10.

The contractor will close intersecting roads at Mississippi Avenue and install "road closed to thru traffic" signs along Alabama Ave after 8 a.m. Monday through Friday.

Flaggers will be placed within the work zone to control and mitigate conflicting traffic movements.

Efforts will be made to minimize traffic impacts, but delays should be expected and alternate routes used if available.

Fort Polk Thrift Shop reopens in new location, overcomes challenges

By **CHRISTY GRAHAM**

Guardian editor

FORT POLK, La. — The Fort Polk Thrift Shop has seen several changes since its grand reopening on June 5. Now located in bldg 830 — the old commissary location — the thrift shop is also under new management. As of June 15, Jasmin Morrow, the previous assistant manager, took the reins as thrift shop manager from Martina Piazzon, who is moving to Fort Benning, Georgia due to her husband's permanent change of station orders.

COVID-19 mitigation efforts have imposed their own set of changes for the thrift shop.

"We have a limit of 40 customers — including children. Everyone must wear masks; and we invite every patron to use hand sanitizer," said Piazzon.

"For the register, we couldn't find a piece of Plexiglas, so we got creative: we took two large frames with the plastic inserts and hung them from the wall. Cashiers now look like living, framed portraits."

Despite these major transitions for the thrift shop, most of its operations remain the same. As of June 8, the store has resumed normal operating hours: They are open Tuesday and Thursday from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Wednesday from 11 a.m. until 6 p.m.

Donations, accepted behind the new location, still run the same way.

"The donation bin is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. To access the bins in the back, donors need to go through the gravel road on the side of the building where a 'do not enter sign' is located — just ignore the sign," Piazzon said.

Acceptable donations include any second-hand items (household goods, clothing, accessories, luggage, toys, furniture, books and movies) that are still in good condition, said Piazzon.

"Please, don't send items with stains, odors or any other unpleasant surprises," she said.

When items are donated that cannot be sold, Piazzon said they have procedures for that as well.

"We try not to throw anything away. We usually redirect the donations to people in need, pregnancy centers, victims of natural disasters, the Humane Society and the Red Cross."

Piazzon also explained that, in an effort to reduce waste and reuse anything that can be saved, the display cases in the thrift shop are all repurposed items. There are purses displayed on the remnants of a headboard and shoes resting on the same bed's footboard. "Everything we built at the new location was made with donated items; we love to recycle and repurpose everything we can," she said.

The repurposed items are often built with the help of a group of well-appreciated thrift shop volunteers.

Morrow, who started as a thrift shop volunteer, said, "The shop couldn't run without the help of volunteers."

"Volunteers come in whenever they can and for as long as they can; there isn't a schedule they commit to follow," Morrow said. "We bring volunteers in and show them around the shop; we allow them to find a task that they feel content doing."

Morrow explained that volunteers' hours are



Jasmin Morrow, manager (left), is pictured with the outgoing manager, Martina Piazzon (right), at the front counter of the Fort Polk Thrift Shop, adhering to COVID-19 facial-covering guidelines.



The Fort Polk Thrift Shop's women's apparel section is pictured above; other items found at the store are toys, musical instruments, household goods, shoes, luggage and more.

logged and tracked through a volunteer coordinator, and volunteer information is reported to Army Community Services.

Despite the hurdles of COVID-19, a large-scale move and the difficulties associated with transitions, the Fort Polk Thrift Shop continues its mission through hard work and gratitude.

"We really appreciate our donors, customers and volunteers. We would not exist without them. All proceeds go right back in our military community. Our proceeds help support educational projects, sport activities and scholarships," said Piazzon.



Storm Water Resource Team gives tips for storm runoff

STORM WATER RESOURCE TEAM

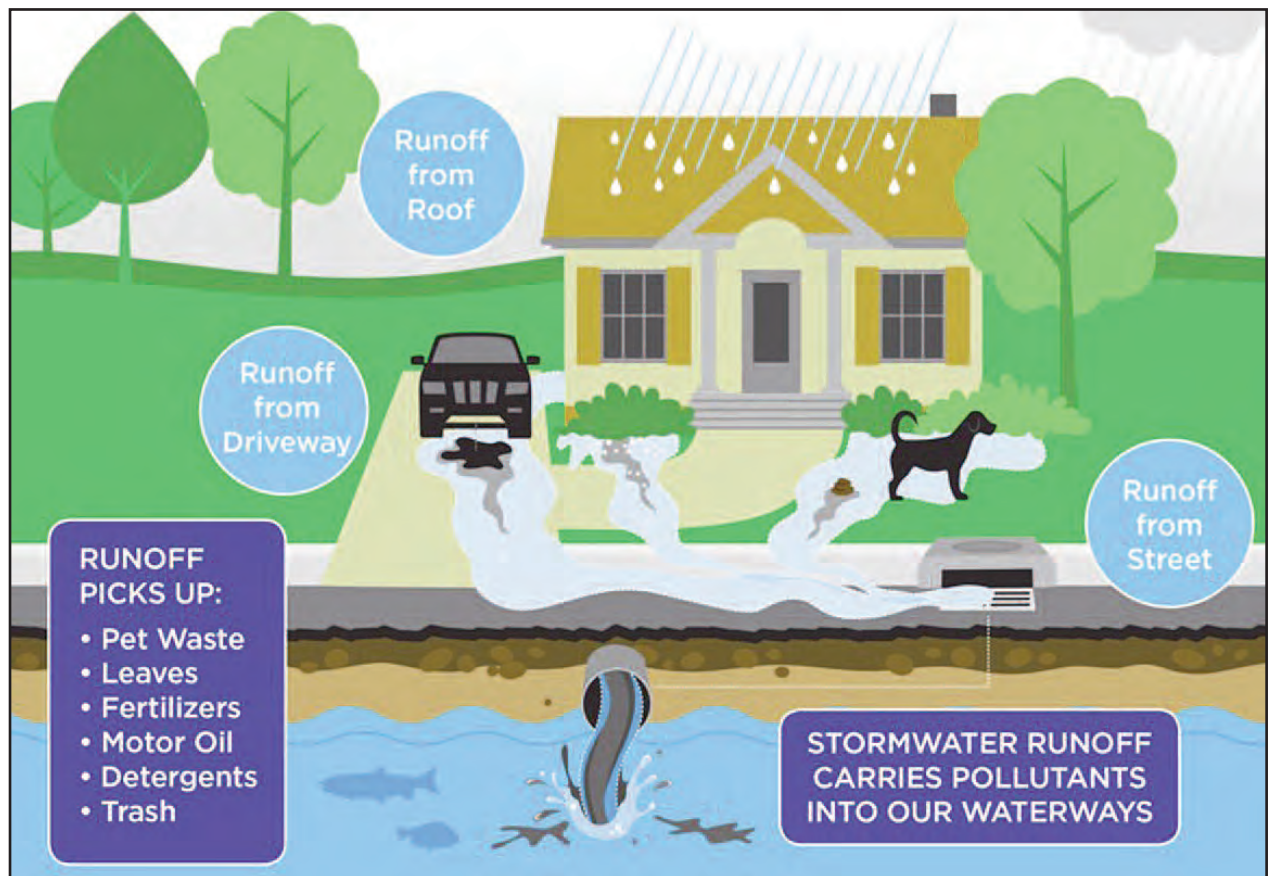
FORT POLK, La. — The summer season is a great time for lawn care and home improvement projects. As an added benefit, these normal routines and maintenance projects actually improve the quality of local waterways by minimizing pollutants in storm-water runoff.

Summer is the time to get in the habit of utilizing natural lawn care and allowing your grass to grow 3 inches before mowing. This improves lawn health by allowing roots to grow longer, which also helps remove pollutants from runoff.

This is also an excellent time to work on growing gardens, specifically rain gardens with deep-rooted native plants to filter pollutants from storm water runoff. Rainwater harvesting is a great technique to capture and store storm water for later use, such as lawn irrigation. This can be accomplished with a rain barrel.

Additional tips to remember:

- Test the soil to determine what nutrients are needed for your lawn. If necessary, use natural compost. Consider composting grass clippings, leaves and other natural materials.
- Avoid pesticides by hand pulling weeds.
- Consider installing permeable pavers allowing storm water to permeate into the ground.



Spring-cleaning recycling challenge winners announced

By ANNABELLE CUFFEE

Net Zero Waste

FORT POLK, La. — Last March, the Fort Polk Recycling team held its annual spring-cleaning recycling challenge at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk Recycling Center.

Military Families were encouraged to bring their number one plastics, aluminum cans, mixed paper, white paper and cardboard to the center throughout March. These recyclables were then weighed and recorded under the Family's name, and the top three Families were awarded prizes.

The first place winner, the Flickinger family, advises Families who want to start recycling to start small. They suggest to "do paper or card-

board first then move onto cans and bottles. Also, check what items your area accepts and rinse your cans and bottles."

The JRTC and Fort Polk Recycling Center is located on the corner of Georgia and Maine Avenues and is open Monday-Friday from 8:30 a.m. -3:30 p.m. The drive-through service is available during business hours inside bay two.

The Recycling Center currently accepts number one plastics, aluminum cans, mixed paper, white paper, cardboard, ink cartridges, scrap metal, lead acid batteries and cooking and motor oil. The 24-hour drop-off site is located outside of the Recycling Center gate and only accepts number one plastics, aluminum cans and cardboard. For questions, please contact 531-7556.



From left to right are winners Marci, Kolton, Emalynne and Dennis Flickinger along with their two dogs, Maddi and Roxie.

Army and RCI leaders strengthen integration at housing summit

By SCOTT MALCOM

IMCOM PAO

In the midst of the Department of Defense's COVID-19 global pandemic response, Family housing remains a top priority for the Army, U.S. Army Installation Management Command and Residential Communities Initiative partner companies.

Lt. Gen. Douglas Gabram, commanding general, IMCOM, hosted Army senior leaders, garrison commanders from across the globe and privatized housing company executives for a three-day housing summit beginning June 15. The leaders met to further integrate their actions in anticipation of a summer surge in permanent change of station moves that will require thousands of housing occupancy transfers across the Army.

"Summer PCS moves have been delayed and will be compressed into a shorter timeline," said

Gabram during his opening comments. "This housing summit will facilitate quality of life for transitioning Army Soldiers and Families during this summer's move cycle by confirming installation-level plans to support housing transitions."

Gabram stated the theme for the summit is "Move Forward Together," a phrase that captures the growing integration of Army and RCI leaders on behalf of Soldiers and their Families.

"This integration is vital if we are to turn houses at a quality rate during the summer surge period," said Lt. Gen. Ed Daly, the deputy-commanding general of Army Materiel Command.

Gabram said each garrison commander and their local RCI partner will jointly update the group on their plans to address the backlog of routine housing work orders, post-COVID-19 related issues impacting this year's summer surge and housing scorecards that will provide a common framework to view privatized housing across the Army. This group will reassembled



June 17 to close out the summit. Gabram was clear about what will happen during this last session. "We will summarize the list of things we need to accomplish and assign accountability and timelines for action. Housing remains a priority and we are not going to let up."

Take note of important Fort Polk information

Share Your Voice / Know Your Limits

Public Demonstrations

For Active Duty Military

CAN
Express your opinions and participate in peaceful non-partisan public demonstrations when OFF-DUTY and NOT in uniform.

CAN'T
Engage in partisan political activity or act in a manner that could imply Army approval or disapproval of any political party, campaign or candidate in a partisan election.

Actively participate in a public demonstration that is organized by a political party, campaign or candidate.

Actively participate in a public demonstration that is likely to become violent or a breach of the peace.

MUST
Follow all orders and directives about specific activities that may be issued by appropriate civil and military authorities or found in the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

SHOULD
Review Department of Defense Directive 1344.10, Department of Defense Instruction 1325.06 and Army Regulation 600-20 for basic guidance concerning participation in protests and other political activities.

CAN
Remember you represent the Army when you are on- or off-duty; be wise with the use of your social media accounts to express your personal views.

Donate money, sign petitions and express your personal opinions when you are off-duty and not in an official capacity.

Follow, friend or like a political party or candidate running for partisan office on a personal social media account, when off-duty.

CAN'T
Post, share or link to material from a partisan political party, group or candidate, even when off duty. This restriction also applies to "Further Restricted" civilian employees, such as members of the Senior Executive Service.

All Army Team members should **Think, Type, Post.**

Think about the message being communicated and who could potentially view it.

Type a communication that is consistent with Army Values.

Post only those messages that demonstrate dignity and respect for self and others.

For Army Civilians

CAN
Express your opinions and participate in peaceful non-partisan public demonstrations, when OFF-DUTY and NOT wearing an official uniform or identifying badge.*

CAN'T
Engage in a political activity in a manner that could imply Army approval or disapproval of any political party, campaign or candidate in a partisan election.

MUST
Follow all orders and directives that may be issued by appropriate civil authorities.

SHOULD
Review the provisions of the Hatch Act of 1939 (5 U.S. Code Sections 7321-7326) and Office of Special Counsel guidance concerning permitted and prohibited political activities.

*The rules regarding political activities for a limited class of employees, such as members of the Senior Executive Service, may be more restrictive.

Social Media

CAN
Post, share or link to material from a partisan political party, group or candidate, when off-duty and not in a government building, but not to subordinates.

Friend, follow and like a political candidate when off-duty and not in a government building.

Identify a political affiliation on a personal social media profile.

CAN'T
Post partisan political articles, websites or political cartoons, memes or gifs while on-duty, in a federal building, or using a government computer, including on a personal device, during your duty hours.

Refer to your official title or position while engaged in political activity on social media.

Suggest or ask anyone to make financial contributions whether on- or off-duty and whether or not using an alias.

Link to the political contribution page of any partisan group, or like, share or retweet a solicitation, including an invitation to a fundraising event.

Engage in political activity on an account that is used for official business.

Resources

Hatch Act: <https://osc.gov/Services/Pages/HatchAct.aspx>

Hatch Act Social Media Guide: <https://osc.gov/Documents/Hatch%20Act/Social%20Media%20Quick%20Guide.pdf>

DoD Directive 1344.10: <https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodd/134410p.pdf>

Army Social Media Guidance: <http://www.army.mil/socialmedia/soldiers>

Independence Day Weekend Holiday Hours of Operation				
Facility	Friday 3 July	Saturday 4 July	Sunday 5 July	Monday 6 July
Main Store	1000-1600	CLOSED	1000-1600	1000-1600
Military Clothing	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	1000-1600
Starbucks	0800-1500	CLOSED	0800-1500	0800-1500
Subway	1000-1600	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
Charleys	CLOSED	CLOSED	1000-1600	CLOSED
Qdoba	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	1000-1600
Panda Express	1000-1600	CLOSED	1000-1600	1000-1600
Optical Shop	1000-1600	CLOSED	CLOSED	1000-1600
Patriot Outfitters	1000-1600	CLOSED	CLOSED	1000-1600
GNC	1000-1600	CLOSED	1000-1600	1000-1600
Alterations	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	1000-1600
GameStop	1000-1600	CLOSED	1000-1600	1000-1600
Stylique	1000-1600	CLOSED	1000-1600	1000-1600
Barber Shop	1000-1600	CLOSED	1000-1600	1000-1600
Enterprise	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
Mini Mall (BLDG. 3310)	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	0700-1500
Barber Shop	1000-1500	CLOSED	CLOSED	1000-1500
Firestone	1000-1800	1000-1800	CLOSED	1000-1800
Smoothie King	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	0730-1800
North Fort Troop Store	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	0800-1600
Barber Shop	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
Patriot Outfitters	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
Pizza Hut	1000-2400	1000-2400	1000-2400	1000-2300
Hickory Smokehouse (truck)	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
Hospital Express	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	0900-1600
Barber Shop	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
Burger King Dining Room	CLOSED	CLOSED	1000-1500	0600-1800
Burger King Drive Thru	1000-1500	CLOSED	1000-1500	0600-1900
Express 1 (BLDG. 5498)	0600-2300	0600-2300	0600-2300	0600-2300
Express 3 (BLDG. 7000)	0800-1600	1000-1700	1000-1700	0800-1900
Class Six	1000-1800	1000-1800	1000-1700	1000-1800
Hickory Smokehouse	1100-1800	CLOSED	CLOSED	1100-1800
Bayou Theater	1800-2000	1800-2000	CLOSED	CLOSED
Pizza Hut (South Fort)	1000-2400	1000-2400	1000-2400	1000-2300

Temporary hours of operation will resume 7 July 2020.

FORT POLK

FREE

CYS REGISTRATION
REQUIRED

6TH - 12TH
GRADES

HOURS

MONDAY - THURSDAY
2:30PM - 7:00PM

FRIDAY - SATURDAY
2:30PM - 10:00PM

DINNER
PROVIDED
WEEKDAYS

CALL

531-1992

BUSES FROM

- VERNON MIDDLE
- LEESVILLE JR HIGH
- LEESVILLE HIGH
- PICKERING

At The Forge Bar & Grill
on Friday, June 19

Join us at the Warrior Center's Patio for our "Ono Grind" Traditional Hawaiian Meals, along with our authentic Luau Sides and a refreshing fruity Dessert.

Hawaiian Chicken Skewer Combo
Grilled Teriyaki Glazed Chicken Skewers with Rainbow Bell Peppers, Red Onions, Pinapples, and Mushrooms, served over White Rice and a Beverage of your Choice.
\$9/ \$10 with Dessert

Hawaiian Mahi-Mahi Skewer Combo
Grilled Teriyaki Glazed Mahi -Mahi Skewers with Rainbow Bell Peppers, Red Onions, Pinapples, and Mushrooms, served over White Rice and a Beverage of your Choice.
\$9/ \$10 with Dessert

Kalua Pork Sliders
Smoky Slow Roasted Pork served in a Hawaiian Bun with Coleslaw, Creamy Macaroni Salad, Pineapple Mango Pico and a Beverage of your Choice.
\$9/ \$10 with Dessert

Hawaiian Cheesecake Bars
Tasty Pastry made of Pineapple Cheesecake on a Grahm Cracker Crust, topped with Whipped Cream and toasted Coconut Flakes.
Only \$1 with any Hawaiian Specials or \$3 a Piece

337-531-7668 | 337-531-4440