

EL MORRO

SENTINEL
OF THE CARIBBEAN



Full Story on Page 9

Under the guidance of Directorate of Public Works (DPW) Environmental Division staff, 13 children from the installation's Child Development Center (CDC) planted 13 trees native to Puerto Rico in the CDC's grounds as part of Fort Buchanan's ongoing reforestation and preservation efforts on Earth Day, April 22, 2022. Photos courtesy of DPW Environmental Division staff. See more photos in our special Earth Day 2022 centerfold.



EDITORIAL INFORMATION

Garrison Commander
Col. Tomika M. Seaberry

Garrison Command Sergeant Major
Command Sgt. Maj. José A. Banks

Deputy Garrison Commander
Lt. Col. Brian M. Mandock

Deputy to the Garrison Commander
Yvette L. Castro

Public Affairs Officer
Grissel Rosa

Command Information
Rosie Irizarry

Mailing address-
Public Affairs Office
ATTN: IMSE-BUC-PA
390 Double Eagle Ave., Suite 311
Fort Buchanan,
Puerto Rico 00934-4616

Story Submissions-
Email to: rosario.irizarry.civ@army.mil
Telephone numbers
(787) 707-4013/4486

EL MORRO is an authorized publication, published in accordance with Army Regulation 360-1. Contents of EL MORRO are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, Department of the Army or U.S. Army Garrison, Fort Buchanan.

EL MORRO is published monthly by the Public Affairs Office, U.S. Army Garrison. All editorial content of EL MORRO is prepared, edited, provided and approved by the U.S. Army Garrison, Public Affairs Office. For guidance on how to submit items for publication, e-mail the garrison Public Affairs Office.

The PAO reserves the right to edit all submissions and to determine the suitability for inclusion in EL MORRO.

Every effort will be made to publish submissions in a timely manner. However, time, layout, style and editorial considerations, as well as determinations for publication, are established by the Garrison Commander or the Public Affairs Officer.



Col. Tomika M. Seaberry Garrison Commander

May – a month worth celebrating

The month of May is a unique month filled with remembrances. It allows us to reflect on various observances related to our key priority, which is our people. We celebrate the contributions of Asian American and Pacific Islanders' Heritage; recognize our Public Service employees, Military Spouses, and Mothers. We also pay tribute to the brave men and women who died, honoring their word, commitment, and loyalty to our nation during Memorial Day.

We proudly celebrate Asian American and Pacific Islanders Heritage Month and recognize the accomplishments and influence of over 23 million Americans who have their roots in over 50 ethnic groups in more than 40 countries. So many Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have made tremendous contributions to the United States and the world. Diverse cultures remain significant in our nation; for example, seeing the first African Asian American Vice President of the United States, Kamala Harris, take the second-highest position in the USA was remarkable. She doesn't stand alone in carving greatness into our history.

We also observe Public Service Recognition Week during this month, celebrated during the first week of May. It is a time to honor the men and women who serve our nation as federal, state, and local government employees. After two years of living under this COVID-19 reality, I thank all our garrison employees who continue

working to find innovative solutions to unprecedented situations. I sincerely say to our garrison employees, "Thank You for your hard work. It doesn't go unnoticed. On behalf of the Fort Buchanan community, I want you to know how proud I am to serve with you." Let's continue doing amazing things together.

An observance that is very dear to our hearts is the Military Spouse Appreciation Day. We set aside this day to pause, reflect and recognize the military spouses across the active and reserve components. It is our way of showing appreciation for the sacrifices made by military spouses while their service member is away defending our country. They are the epitome of resiliency. During the Military Spouse Day and every day, we must recognize the importance of their commitment to the readiness and well-being of our Soldiers. To all, our blessings, and thank you for your unwavering support.

To all mothers in our community. From your daughters, sons, granddaughters, grandsons, nieces, nephews, neighbors, etc. Thank you for all the hugs, care, words of encouragement, fun memories, unyielding patience, and unconditional love. "You are incredible and empowered women, SUPERHEROES" because... "You are the best! Happy Mother's Day! Bless you, all."

Command Sgt. Maj. José A. Banks Garrison Command Sergeant Major

A Salute to Our Heroes



On Memorial Day, we remember and honor the American Service Members, ordinary men and women, who died while in military service. President John F. Kennedy said, "A nation reveals itself not only by the men it produces but also by the men it honors, the men it remembers."

What for some people may be a day off from work, for others who wore the uniform or still wear it, Memorial Day has a distinctive meaning. It is a day of reverent celebration. That is why this Memorial Day is not about a short workweek but a day to honor those we have lost. We cannot forget what our Soldiers who went in harm's way have done for us. More than a million have paid the ultimate price in the wars and conflicts this nation has fought since the first colonial soldiers took up arms in 1775 to fight for our independence. Today we all enjoy the benefits of their service.

Since 1866, when the people of Waterloo, New York dipped their flags to half-mast and decorated their village to remember the Soldiers who died during the Civil War, our nation has paid tribute to those lives of all service men and women who have fallen in the line of duty. Since 1948, Arlington National Cemetery has decorated each of its graves with our nation's flag. The graves at Arlington as in the Puerto Rico National Cemetery and other cemeteries around the nation remind us that freedom is not free. It has a cost. The Soldiers resting there lived supporting the lives and the values that created the backbone of our nation.

Let's remember the words of President Abraham Lincoln as he stood at the site of the battle of Gettysburg: "We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a

final resting place for those who here gave their lives that the nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But in a larger sense we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it far above our power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it cannot forget what they did..."

These Soldiers share a special heritage, a common bond with today's Soldiers. These were ordinary men and women who rose to meet seemingly impossible odds and did extraordinary things. These brave men and women left the safety of their sovereign soil to defeat tyrants, ensure justice and fulfill the promise of safety and security for our citizens and the global community. Their lives were dedicated not to conflict or death but to compassion and to life.

Therefore, it is our responsibility to teach others about their sacrifices. It will be our way to pay tribute to them by helping other generations to understand the essence of patriotism, which lies in the willingness to sacrifice for one's country. I ask you to remember and honor the missing as well. Our nation is committed to the Warrior Ethos "I will never leave a fallen comrade behind" and continues its efforts to locate, identify and repatriate those men and women who have not returned home.

On behalf of a grateful nation, our salute to our fallen warriors, our heroes who made the ultimate sacrifice defending freedom so we can reap the benefits of peace.

Updated Army directive to help new parents care for children, maintain health

Excerpts of story by Joe Lacdan, Army News Service

Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Tae Harrison

Just before the ceremony when she assumed command of a U.S. Army Reserve company in 2012, then-Capt. Kelly Bell felt nauseated. Concerned, her fellow Soldiers checked on her. Bell explained that she just had morning sickness, after recently learning she had become pregnant with her first daughter. She wanted to attend the Army's pre-command course but under the Army regulations at the time, pregnant Soldiers could not attend training classes.

"My application kept getting denied because I was pregnant even though it was 100% classroom settings," said Bell, now a lieutenant colonel in the Army Reserve. "I had a temporary profile, and I couldn't go to the class. So, I had to wait until after she was born." Bell, the 7203rd Medical Support Unit commander in Hobart, Indiana has known pregnant Soldiers who have been facing challenging situations in the Army since she had her daughter nine years ago.

So, in February 2021 Bell joined together with other Soldier-parents to submit a white paper from the field that identified five obstacles that pregnant and postpartum Soldiers face in the Army. That white paper inspired a working group at the Army Headquarters, which has been comprehensively reviewing the Army's pregnancy, postpartum, and parenthood policies over the last year.

The result of that effort is the new Parenthood, Pregnancy and Postpartum Army Directive which has updated regulations for parents and families into the 12 policy changes included in the omnibus directive. The policies will not only help new Soldier-moms transition back to duty but help all Army parents better care for military children and expand their families while advancing their military careers.

"We recruit Soldiers, but we retain families," said the Army's Chief of Staff Gen. James C. McConville. "Winning the war for talent means making sure our best and brightest people don't have to choose between service and family."

Army Secretary Christine E. Wormuth approved the initiatives on April 19 and released the directive, which will strive to alleviate many of the administrative burdens Army parents face, today.

Challenges of pregnancy and new parents

One story that stood out to the working group that built the proposal, came from Sgt. Carrie Vargas, a Human Resources Sgt. for the 508th Military Police Detention Battalion.

In his first months of life, Vargas' son, Keanu, has already overcome more health complications than most children will ever face. In February 2021 a medical specialist at Fort Bliss, Texas, noticed irregularities in his condition and tests revealed Keanu had a congenital heart defect. Vargas and her husband, Staff Sgt. Christopher Vargas, reassigned to Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, so they would have access to facilities that could treat their son's fragile condition. Shortly after his birth at midnight on a May morning Keanu's skin turned blue. Doctors quickly intubated him and airlifted him to Seattle Children's Hospital. They realized something was really, really wrong," she said. At the hospital, Keanu went into cardiac arrest. The staff placed him on external life support and a ventilator. After a failed open-heart surgery, Doctors informed the Vargas family that their newborn needed a heart transplant, and he struggled to breathe on his own. During that time, Carrie or her husband lived with Keanu at the hospital. Fortunately, her command team at JBLM supported her and facilitated the ability for her to be with Keanu.



Secretary of the Army Christine E. Wormuth signed the new Army Parenthood, Pregnancy and Postpartum Directive that will help new Army moms transition back to duty and also assist all Soldier parents in caring for military children.

Her son underwent successful transplant surgery, but he still has special needs.

Vargas wants other new parents in the Army to have the necessary accommodations to care for their newborns, especially those with a critical birth condition like Keanu. Vargas, an advocate for the Army's new Parenthood, Pregnancy and Postpartum directive, said her command team has made the transition back to duty manageable, but she knows other Soldier parents don't always have the same opportunity.

The changes in the directive include a new stipulation that one parent will be deferred for one year from deployments, operations, and training in excess of one duty day in order to remain with their newborn. The changes also call for a new provision that standardizes convalescent leave up to 42 days for a Soldier and their spouse who experience pregnancy loss. Another change gives Soldiers a year exemption from physical fitness tests after the conclusion of pregnancy.

From feedback to policy change

As an admin of the group, Bell learned that new lactating Soldiers often do not have adequate storage for breast milk while on duty, especially during field training. She said that Soldiers often have to dispose of the valuable milk causing mental distress. The new directive provides extensions up to 24-month for lactating Soldiers for assignments that include deployments, mobilizations, combat training center rotations, or other training events where lactation accommodations cannot be provided. Under the new directive, lactation accommodations for new moms are clarified and not limited to one year. "We believe all of these will have an outsized impact on our ability to recruit and retain talent as well as promoting and improving the well-being of all parents," said Amy Kramer, lead action officer for the policy.

Another significant change: the Army will open many Professional Military Education schools to pregnant officers and warrant officers. The Army will also allow pregnant NCOs to attend the Sergeant Major Academy and temporary promotions will remain available indefinitely for all pregnant and postpartum NCOs. Previously, the Army did not

allow expecting Soldiers on a temporary profile to attend or complete their professional military education. These changes help prevent Soldiers who have children from falling behind in their careers due to pregnancy, Kramer said.

In an effort to establish comparable leave and accommodations across all Army components, the directive also implements paid leave in the Reserve Components [RC] for birthparents, allows leaders discretion in allowing pregnant RC Soldiers to take and complete Active-Duty tours, and extends many existing Active-Duty accommodations to RC Soldiers.

The directive also excuses Soldiers from wearing service uniforms during pregnancy and for up to one year postpartum to alleviate burdensome clothing alternation costs. During that time Soldiers can wear combinations of Army Combat Uniforms and maternity uniforms during pregnancy and the post-partum period while safely returning to a healthy body composition after birth. Under the previous regulations, recently pregnant Soldiers had to take their uniforms to alterations or purchase entirely new uniforms entirely, which could cost as much as \$700. Bell added some postpartum Soldiers resorted to risking their health to meet the Army's body composition requirements.

"Soldiers were oftentimes using extreme measures to try to get back to a weight and body composition that would meet the standard; whether it was crash dieting, liquid dieting, or [diet] pills," Bell said. "And a lot of Soldiers because they were trying to lose weight so fast, [stopped] breastfeeding."

As part of the Army's greater focus on improving the welfare and lives of its people, the service seeks to retain its top talent with the measures as more than 21,000 Soldiers have separated in the past 10 years due to complications related to pregnancy or parenthood. According to the Army, women accounted for 80% of those separations. Under the directive, greater emphasis on the intricacies of parenting, pregnancy and postpartum will be incorporated into commander education.

Winkler shared one story of a junior Soldier whose infant daughter had contracted COVID-19. The Soldier's chain of command told her to activate her family care plan. To do so, the Soldier had to send her daughter to New York City to be cared for by her grandmother during the height of the pandemic. The Soldier needed to transport her baby to the city while still reporting for duty on time. The Soldier ended up leaving the Army, Winkler said.

Under the new directive, the Family Care Plans will protect new parents, especially single and dual-military parents, from military separations and from having to take personal leave to care of sick children. The directive also encourages commanders to give Soldiers flexibility to attend to certain unforeseen parenting requirements.

Vargas said, she was fortunate to have leadership that accommodated her needs, but other families have had a different experience. "Future policy changes will help medically fragile babies like Keanu," Vargas said. "The policy encourages command teams to support families during these experiences. The updated policy will not allow command teams to use family care plans against Soldiers solely because a child is sick." Keanu still requires assistance such as getting infusions, he requires tube feedings, and close monitoring for rejection and infection. But his mother says that his condition continually improves. "He's getting better," Vargas said of her son. "But it's a slow process."

Fort Buchanan celebrates Military Spouses

Story and photos by Rosie Irizarry,
Public Affairs Specialist

Fort Buchanan's Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (FMWR), Army Community Service (ACS) celebrated Military Spouse Appreciation Day by taking them on a Party Bus Sightseeing Historical Tour of Fort Buchanan May 6, 2022

Among the eight military spouses taking part in the tour, were Soldiers who are married to Soldiers, a Navy spouse and Sonia Cáceres, spouse of the Commanding Officer of the 1st Mission Support Command (1st MSC), US Army Reserve. The sightseeing tour was composed of eight stops, the first was at the Post Chapel and the second stop was at US Army Garrison Headquarters.

At the Post Chapel, the military spouses were received by Religious Affairs Noncommissioned Officer, Sgt. Juan Merced Jaipersad, who provided the distinguished guests with information on the services offered by the Fort Buchanan Religious Support Office.

At Garrison headquarters the group was received by the Acting Deputy to the Garrison Commander Raúl L. Rodríguez; FMWR Director, Yvette L. Castro; FMWR Business and Recreation Chief Thomas M. Kenney, Supervisory Sports Specialist Roberto Fernández and other garrison staff. Rodríguez welcomed the military spouses on behalf of Fort Buchanan Garrison Commander Col. Tomika M. Seaberry and expressed the command's appreciation for their service to our military and the nation. He provided an overview of the installation's chain of command and the garrison's internal chain of command.



Fort Buchanan recognizes and appreciates the contributions of our military spouses. Ready and resilient they routinely put the welfare of Service Members, families and the nation above their own. Spouses understand that loving a service member means facing the challenges that can accompany their service.

Thank you and Happy Military Spouse Appreciation Day!



"Thank you not just for today, but for what you do all year long," said Castro in recognition of their strength, loyalty and commitment to Service Members.

"This is the first time I take part in an event like this. I had never visited the Chapel and other sites on post," said military spouse and Soldier, Staff Sgt. Evenise W. Robles with the 1st MSC. "Today I felt comfortable, like I was with family. It feels good to support and be appreciated for that support," said Staff Sgt. Robles whose husband is presently in Basic Training.

"Today was very good, I received great information," said Litza Martínez spouse to an Active Duty Soldier in Recruiting Command. "I feel appreciated, and this is not always felt. While our Soldier is deployed we are home caring for children, cars, the home and at the same time tense because our spouse is deployed, or we are PCSing (Permanent Change of Station), today we were appreciated," Martínez concluded.



Fort Buchanan celebrates The National Day of Prayer

Story and photos by Rosie Irizarry,
Public Affairs Specialist

The 1st Mission Support Command (1st MSC), US Army Reserve hosted and US Army Garrison Fort Buchanan co-hosted, a community celebration of the National Day of Prayer at Fort Buchanan's Community Club and Conference Center, May 5, 2022.

The guest speaker was US Army Reserve Deputy Chief of Chaplains and Director of Strategy, Plans, Policy, Resources, Soldier and Family Readiness, Chaplain, Brigadier General Andrew R. Harewood. 1st MSC Family Life Chaplain, Maj. Joseph Okpe delivered the invocation and 1st MSC Command Chaplain, Maj. Edgardo Ortíz provided welcome remarks. Command remarks were given by 1st MSC Commander Col. Carlos M. Cáceres.

Special guests were Puerto Rico Army National Guard (PRARNG) Chief of Staff, Col. Giovanni Torres in representation of PRNG Assistant Adjutant General Brig. Gen. Narcisso Cruz; Co-Host and Fort Buchanan Deputy Garrison Commander Lt. Col. Brian Mandock, representing Garrison Commander Col. Tomika M. Seaberry; members of the US Coast Guard and several local religious leaders.

"We are especially grateful and recognize the presence of spouses and children of some of our deployed Soldiers that are with us today, thank you for your sacrifice and thank you for being here with us," said Chp. Okpe as he provided a brief overview of the history of the National Day of Prayer. "The National Day of Prayer enables us as a Nation, to recall and teach the ways in which our founding fathers searched the wisdom of God when faced with critical decisions and adversities," said Chp. (Maj.) Okpe. "The unanimous passage of the bill establishing



the National Day of Prayer as an annual event signifies that prayer is just as important to our nation today as was in the beginning," concluded.

"True prayer is a way of life, not just for use in case of emergency. Making prayer a habit so when the need arises, it will already be in practice. Prayer changes us," said Chp. (Maj.) Ortíz during his welcome remarks.

"Thank you for the Garrison's willingness to coordinate events like this to help increase the spiritual readiness of our Soldiers, our Civilians and Family members," said Chp. (Maj.) Okpe.

"This is one of the events I most look forward to because it's actually a reflection of one of the most attractive traits of serving in the military. It is the fact, that when we serve despite our backgrounds, gender, color, where we come from, we come together. That makes serving in the military a very unique organization, a very unique experience. Today's event is a very special event because we are using the amazing platform of the military to send a powerful message, a message of unity, here today we have leaders from different faiths that have joined us because that is the essence of who we are. We are blessed and very fortunate to have an amazing UMT (Unit Ministry Team) at the garrison, giving our Service members a voice, knowing that when they are in need

they have someone they can reach out to. Thank you all for being here and for showing your support. It is an honor for me," said Col. Cáceres.

Leading the prayer for Puerto Rico and Families, PRARNG, Chp. Catholic Priest (Lt. Col.) Julio Vera. US Coast Guard Sector San Juan, Chaplain, Lt. Daniel Rivera led the prayer for Service men and women at home and abroad. A member of the post chapel Protestant Congregation, US Air Force (Ret.) Joseph J. Bender prayed for the Fort Buchanan community, Retirees and Veterans and leading the prayer for world peace was Puerto Rico Air National Guard Chp. (Cpt.) Iraida Alvarez.

During the lunch service, a musical group comprised of, Staff Sgt. Reymundo Fonseca member of the PRARNG Honor Guard and the 248th PRNG Army Band; playing the piano from the installation chapel, Elvin J. Cedeño; on vocals, Rodriguez Army Health Clinic Speech Language Pathologist, Soide Y. Rodríguez; 1st MSC Chaplain Candidate, Lt. Yesbelmari Figueroa on vocals and percussion and led by 1st MSC Deputy Command Chaplain Lt. Col. Wanda I. Acevedo, played and sang a selection of inspirational songs and hymns.

"It is always a joy to be in Puerto Rico and it is a singular honor to represent the US Army Chief of Chaplains, Chaplain (Major General) Thomas L. Solhjem on this great National Day of Prayer event. I still believe in the power of prayer because when we pray things happen," said guest speaker, Chap. (Brig. Gen.) Andrew R. Harewood who quoted one of his favorite authors who said, "We've got to stop rehearsing the difficulty, and trust God for love, for healing and for power," end quote. He continued "That's why we are here today, because we are a Nation that was founded under the power of prayer." He concluded saying, "Let us remind all that we are, God founded, "In God We Trust."



First Responders from the Municipality of Bayamón, PR receive honors for supporting Fort Buchanan's Full Scale Exercise

Story and photos by Rosie Irizarry, Public Affairs Specialist



First Responders from the Bayamón Municipal Emergency Management Agency Disaster Administration (Agencia Municipal Para el Manejo de Emergencias Administración de Desastres de Bayamón), (AMMEAD) and, Disaster and Prehospital Medicine (DIPHOM) Bayamón, were two of several partners and organizations that actively participated in the exercise. They were honored for their contributions to the success of this major exercise at the Bayamón Emergency Management Facility April 21, 2022.

December 7 to 8, 2021 USAG Fort Buchanan Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security (DPTMS) conducted a Full Scale Exercise (FSE) in support of readiness. The FSE served to validate the installation's capability to prevent, protect, mitigate, respond, and recover from an all-hazards event (natural, technological or terrorism).

Seven members from AMMEAD and DIPHOM received USAG Fort Buchanan Certificates of Appreciation from Deputy Garrison Commander Lt. Col. Brian Mandock; DPTMS Director, Héctor M. Morán and Installation Emergency Manager, Félix Otero. In attendance for the honor presentation was AMMEAD Director, Manuel J. Félix.

The recipients were Edwin J. Rivera, DIPHOM; Miguel A. Rivera, AMMEAD; Harry E. Marrero, AMMEAD; Pablo Rubio, AMMEAD; Eduardo Castrillón, AMMEAD; Jean C. Ortíz, AMMEAD and Edward Rodríguez,



DIPHOM. Additionally AMMEAD Bayamón Planning Officer, Harry E. Marrero received the USAG Fort Buchanan 3 X 5 Bronze Medal for exemplary contributions from the planning stages of the full-scale exercise until the end.

Eight other first responders unable to be present were given certificates of appreciation for their invaluable involvement. One of these awardees was Joshua Serrano. He was awarded the USAG Fort Buchanan Bronze 3 X 5 Medal for commendable actions. The others were Bayamón Medical Emergency Medical Director Dr. Víctor Alicea, Rafael Ortega, Yavier Vázquez, Jorge Caraballo, Jose Mojica, Alexis Cruz and Emmanuel Nieves.

"The contributions from the Municipality of Bayamón made our Full Scale Exercise successful," said Otero. "Thank you all," he concluded.

"From our side we are your first responders because of our physical location in reference to the installation," said AMMEAD Director Félix. "We are here to serve you," concluded.

The awardees watched a video compilation of the FSE where many of their rescue actions in partnership with Fort Buchanan Fire and Emergency services personnel, as well as other services and agencies were documented.

"It (the exercise) was a good event, at both a professional and personal level," said AMMEAD Firefighter Supervisor, Eduardo Castrillón, "My time at Fort Buchanan was a great experience."



Fort Buchanan celebrates its US Army Volunteers

Story and Photos by Rosie Irizarry, Public Affairs Specialist

The Fort Buchanan Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (FMWR) Army of Community Service (ACS) celebrated their US Army Volunteers Recognition event in observance of Army Volunteer Appreciation Week held at the installation's Community Club and Conference Center, April 21, 2022.

Present was Fort Buchanan Garrison Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Brian Mandock; Garrison Command Sgt. Maj. José A. Banks; FMWR Director Yvette Castro and other garrison staff and tenants.

Approximately 60 Army Volunteers were honored for their support with a historical tribute and demonstration from a local dance "Bomba" troupe from the Municipality of Loiza called "Junte Loiceño," a candy bar and luncheon.

"We thank you today at this event, for this celebration where we gather to celebrate volunteerism, service and humility," said Garrison Command Chaplain Maj. David S. Keller during the invocation.

"Volunteers are essential to the Army's mission. They selflessly give their time to the Army community by serving Soldiers, Families, Retirees and Civilians. I've always loved the quote by James Doolittle – 'There's nothing stronger than the heart of a Volunteer' that's really true of you all. Without volunteers, the Army mission would not be fulfilled. They accomplish the work that otherwise would not have been done due to time and financial constraints. Fort Buchanan is a better community for your presence. Thank you for making our community one of the best in the US Army," said Acting ACS Director and Family Advocacy Program (FAP) Manager Ruth González during the welcome remarks.

"On behalf of Col. Tomika M. Seaberry our Garrison Commander, welcome everyone to this event. ACS I



really appreciate what you have done, I have never seen such an event like this one, the way it has been set up is great. Thank you for all the support and putting this together. As volunteers we don't do this for recognition, but it is a good thing when you get recognized...when somebody says "job well done, thank you for what you

do," said Command Sgt. Maj. Banks. "The skills and experience, which you bring every day, is amazing and saves us a lot of money. The purpose in life is to help others and there is no better way to help than to volunteer your time. Someone once told me, if you're not helping in somebody's life, if you're not assisting someone improve their life, you are wasting your time. Thank you for what you do and enjoy this great event," concluded Banks.

The entertainment was provided by "Junte Loiceño," with a visual and musical/choreographed journey of the "Bomba Afro-Borinqueña." It is a cultural dance rooted in the island's account of African slavery.

Lt. Col. Mandock, Command Sgt. Maj. Banks, Chp. (Maj.) Keller, Religious Support Noncommissioned Officer in Charge Sgt. Juan Merced, other male and female volunteers joined Junte Loiceño musicians and dancers in doing a high – energy Bomba number at the end.

Thank you Volunteers, "We Salute You!"





Over 21 Veteran and supporting organizations, as well as garrison directorates and tenant organization representatives met during the Fort Buchanan Retired Soldier Council's 3rd Quarter Veterans Organizations meeting at the Brig. Gen. James A. Buchanan Conference Room, April 20, 2022.

Some of the participants were, recently appointed Executive Director of the San Juan Veterans Affairs Regional Office, Leanne Weldin; Retired Soldier Council President Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Fernando Fernández; Fort Buchanan Garrison Commander Col. Tomika M. Seaberry; Garrison Command Sgt. Maj. José A. Banks; Garrison Command Chaplain, Maj. David S. Keller; Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army (CASA) Luis A. Soto; CASA Emeritus Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Félix A. Santoni and US Army Reserve Ambassador, Command Sgt. Maj. (Ret.) René A. Berlingeri Otero, among others.

Some other organizations represented were, Garrison Transition Assistance Program, Wounded Warrior Project and



Fort Buchanan Retired Soldier Council celebrates 3rd Quarter Veterans Organizations Meeting

Story and photos by Rosie Irizarry, Public Affairs Specialist



Mission Continues, American Red Cross Puerto Rico Chapter at Fort Buchanan, Association of the US Army (AUSA), Small Business Administration/Paralyzed Veterans of America (SBA/PVA), Guitars For Vets, Blinded Veterans Association, Military Order of World Wars and Veteranos Con Puerto Rico (Veterans with Puerto Rico).

"A lot has happened since we last met," said Col. Seaberry. "COVID-19 has been a challenge and our access policy has been changing." She providing an overview of the changes up to as recent as, April 19, 2022 change permitting DOD and Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC) Service Connected card holders to bring guests onto the installation after first going to the Visitor Control Center. Also indicated that the guests were to be accompanied by the affiliated sponsor at all times.

Col. Seaberry also listed the events and facilities that are now open such as the renovated Tennis Courts, the fishing derby held at Las Casas Lake, the elimination of long lines to enter the Army and Air Force Exchange Service (Exchange) and the Commissary (DECA) with open entry and changing the Health Protection Condition (HPCON) to Alpha, to name a few.

The Garrison Commander indicated the need for a Medical 101 for Veterans "to educate folks that are still wearing their uniform today and retired," said Seaberry. The Medical 101 will provide Veterans with up to date information on benefits

for themselves, their dependents and their survivors.

Col. Seaberry mentioned garrison Earth Day events such as the ground breaking of the new Mountain Bike/Nature Trail and a future Organizations Day where representatives of different organizations can, "while enjoying the natural beauty of Fort Buchanan," said Seaberry, "in friendly matches, compete to win at the end of the day, the Best Organization" award.

Command Sgt. Maj. Banks announced the upcoming Walk/Run 5k in observance of Armed Forces Day. It will be an open post event. Adrian Lamboy Olmo representing the Paralyzed Veterans Association (PVA) suggested that it be a Walk/Run/Roll, to include those who cannot walk or run. Command Sgt. Maj. Banks agreed immediately to include the word "Roll."

VA Director Weldin stated that the San Juan VA Regional Benefits Office now operates by appointment only, thus eliminating long waits and conglomeration of beneficiaries and their escorts in waiting areas. Weldin also announced the launching soon of the centralized site for Military Sexual Trauma (MST) Claims with approximately 150 remote employees.

Several other organizations shared concerns and announced initiatives and events in support of Veterans.

"This was a great meeting because we are seeing needs and tying them to resources here," said CASA Luis Soto.





USAG Fort Buchanan Environmental Division celebrates Earth Day 2022 with weeklong events

Story by Rosie Irizarry, Public Affairs Specialist
Photos by DPW – Environmental Division Staff and Rosie Irizarry, Public Affairs Specialist

Fort Buchanan’s Directorate of Public Works (DPW) Environmental Division started the observance of Earth Day 2022, from April 18, to April 22, by executing community activities and events throughout the installation.

Virtual Seminars began with an Earth Day presentation by Acting DPW Environmental Division Chief, Francisco J. Méndez followed by seminars the rest of the week on Natural Resources Programs, Climate Change Impacts, Restoration Programs theme, Storm Water Management, and the last presentation on Electronic Waste Management. Fort Buchanan’s partners, the US Army Corps of Engineers; Environmental Engineers Institute, member of College of Engineers and Land Surveyors of Puerto Rico (CIAPR). Aerostar SES LLC and the US Environmental Agency (EPA) – Region 2 presented Microsoft Teams seminars facilitating the successful exchange of information and ideas directed towards plans and actions for improvement of the planet’s deteriorating condition.

Simultaneously DPW Environmental Division staff carried out on-post events such as the installation-wide distribution of Earth Day awareness materials and US Army global messages. Information booths were set-up at the Army and Air Force Exchange main store lobby and materials given out at installation access points.



Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA) Antilles High School Chemistry and Biology Classes with the instruction of AEROSTAR SES personnel, Rick Levin and Roxanne Fuller practiced Ground Water Sampling Techniques at Soldier’s Plaza. AEROSTAR SES provides support to the Department of Defense Environmental Restoration Program under the US Army Corps of Engineers.

Earth Day-Week events continued with a Ground Breaking Ceremony at a new Mountain Bike and Nature Trail near the South Gate Area. Deputy Garrison Commander Lt. Col. Brian Mandock; Garrison Command Sgt. Maj. José A. Banks; DPW Director Anibal Negrón; Acting Environmental Chief, Francisco Méndez; Resource Efficiency Manager Homar Velázquez and Compliance Manager Addy Molina carried out the ground breaking ceremony.

Two Reforestation events were held, one at the Child Development Center (CDC) and the second at the grounds near Toro Creek. At the CDC, 13 children planted 13 trees from a variety native to Puerto Rico. At another site approximately 20 trees representing a variety inherent to the island as well as some endangered species of trees were planted by members of the Environmental Division, DPW’s Operation and Maintenance staff and partners from Starbucks.

In November 2021 Fort Buchanan’s Starbucks partnered with “Para la Naturaleza” (For Nature), a local company dedicated towards the protection of Puerto Rico’s ecosystems and communities. At that time “Para la Naturaleza” donated 50 Puerto Rican trees.

Fort Buchanan stands by the Army Earth

Day 2022 theme: “Sustain the Mission. Secure the Future. A Partnership for the Planet.” On Earth Day and every day, let us reflect on how we can become better environmental stewards and help make our world a better place.



CaribeFederal.com

HATO REY • GUAYNABO • PONCE

FOR ALL OF YOUR FINANCIAL NEEDS, **JOIN TODAY**, AND BE PART OF PUERTO RICO BASED LARGEST AND BETTER CAPITALIZED FEDERAL CREDIT UNION.

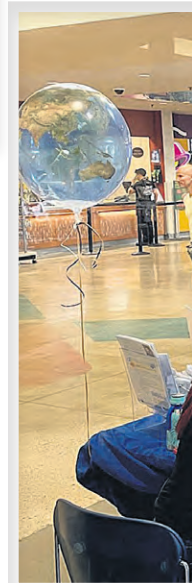
Caribe Federal Credit Union

Service with human warmth

*Certain restrictions apply. Subject to credit approval. Federally insured by NCUA.






USAG Fort Buchanan Environmental Division celebrated Earth Day 2022 with weeklong events and activities.

Photos courtesy of DPW Environmental Division personnel
and by Rosie Irizarry, Public Affairs Specialist






Army
EARTH DAY
2022



**SUSTAIN THE MISSION.
SECURE THE FUTURE.**

A PARTNERSHIP FOR THE PLANET.



U.S. ARMY



Red Cross honors

Story by Rosemarie Valdéz, Regional
Communications Director, Red Cross PR



For the American Red Cross Puerto Rico Chapter, Memorial Day is a very important and significant event where we join the nation to remember and honor the lives and sacrifices of fallen U.S. Service Members. These brave men and women of the United States military made the ultimate sacrifice in service for our country.

In our chapter, we have been deeply involved in remembrance activities that have taken place around the island. In the Puerto Rico National Cemetery located in Bayamón, young and adult volunteers have joined us to provide educational materials, march in the parade and be part of the flower arrangement presentation in honor of our fallen heroes. Additionally, a few years ago and within the framework of our 125th anniversary, we were able share stories of Red Cross volunteers that served and died during World War II. In the past, numerous Red Cross nurses were deployed to provide services abroad in different locations. Today, in the Ukrainian conflict, the commitment continues as the American Red Cross has sent trained staff to Europe to support the emergency communication needs of U.S. military members, so they can stay in touch with family members back home. Just as we have staff mobilized in different parts of the world, we also have a strong commitment to our service members and veterans on the island. We are grateful to provide our services from an office located inside Fort Buchanan.

JOIN VOLUNTEER SERVICE

Many family members of fallen soldiers can help other military families in need through the American Red Cross. The Puerto Rico Chapter has many veteran volunteers who provide support and help their community. Their past military experience adds value to the humanitarian work they provide to current military and veteran families. Our veteran volunteers understand the struggles and challenges they face today and they provide comfort and care in every case they manage. To become a volunteer, contact Volunteer Services at (787) 758-8150 and (787) 403-9503 or email: miguel.hernandez3@redcross.org.

The American Red Cross Puerto Rico Chapter office in Fort Buchanan is located at Bldg. 514, South Terminal Road. The hours of operations are, Tuesday and Thursday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Red Cross staff and volunteers will be available to help with any inquiry and any new or current emergency communication cases or referrals. Stop by the office or call: (787) 707-2158.



**American
Red Cross**



Chaplain's Corner

Want a good apple? Don't go to an oak tree

Column by Garrison Command Chaplain
Maj. David S. Keller – “Serving with You!”

If you've spent any time around a television over the years, you may have watched an older type of movie called a 'Western.' Many of these movies are so old that they are still replayed without color on modern screens. They are characterized by old western towns, cattle ranches, horses, and a far simpler way of life. In these movies, the hero would wear a white hat and the bad guy would be dressed in black. The motivations of the characters were plainly evident.

Today, it would seem that we live in a drastically different time. Not only do we not wear cowboy hats (unless you are from Texas) and ride horses as a primary means of transportation, we also don't dress to match our intentions. It can be difficult to spot the one that will try to take advantage of you. We are constantly barraged with phone and email scams that seem to sell a good product or service, but will try to pilfer your hard-earned money. What should we do?

The Bible sheds a little light on the subject in the Gospel of Matthew. How do we know what is good? How do we know what is right? Scripture tells us to carefully observe the people and things in our lives. Using a metaphor, the Bible shares that to know the type of tree, you

must analyze its fruit. Want a good apple? Don't go to an oak tree. Looking for an avocado, don't go to a palm tree.

Don't rush into decisions before spending some time observing the facts. Earnestly try to discover the truth. Prayer to God and meditation on spiritual truths serve to help us adjust our view towards what is holy and pure. This in turn calibrates our mental sensors to know right from wrong. And before making a decision, remember to seek counsel, from God and others.

If you'd like to experience the truth about God this weekend, please join us for our Protestant and Catholic services at the post chapel on Sundays:

**Protestant Chapel
Service: 9:30 a.m.**

Catholic Chapel Mass: 11:30 a.m.

Go to for more information, Fort Buchanan St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Community: <https://www.facebook.com/Fort-Buchanan-St-Francis-of-Assisi-Catholic-Community-115141189921692/> or for the Fort Buchanan Chapel Protestant Service: <https://www.facebook.com/Ft-Buchanan-Chapel-Protestant-Service-101189707958782> which continues to be live streamed every Sunday.



From your Safety Officer... Hurricane Preparedness Part 1 of 2

Column by Garrison Safety Officer
Carlos J. Alvarado



Hurricane season in the Atlantic and the Caribbean starts on June 1 and ends on November 30. Various organizations classified 2022 as an above-average hurricane season ranging from 16 to 20 named storms and 6 to 8 hurricanes. During the last seven years, atmospheric events developed before the season started, therefore the moment to prepare is now.

Planning ahead

During the planning process, you and your family must develop an emergency action plan that consider ways in how to preserve your physical and mental health, as well means to stay connected and informed. It is a common error during planning to overlook special needs the elderly and pets have. The emergency action plan should include.

- Shelter plan – Home, workplace or mass care shelter
 - Evacuation routes – check with local government evacuation/shelter plans. Identify several places you could go in an emergency such as a friend's home in another town or a hotel. Choose destinations in different directions so that you have options during an emergency. Be familiar with alternate routes and other means of transportation out of your area. Always keep a full tank of gas and take your emergency go-kit.
 - Family Communication plan – Make sure everyone carries a hard copy of a list of contact information for your family and other important people/offices in his or her backpack, purse or wallet. Post copies of the list in prominent places throughout the house.
 - Practice – Have regular family meetings to review and practice the plan.
- Hurricane-Proof your home**
- Landscaping - Evaluate the trees, shrubs, and other areas of your yard to determine what accessories (furniture, tools, etc.) or additions could be potential threats.

- Storm shutters and impact windows – Initially could be an expensive option but you can have a return on investment between 50 to 80 percent. In addition, the level of protection and peace of mind doubles.
- Inspect your roof – Water-proof the roof on its entirety and make sure drainage is clear of obstructions. Tie down items like A/C compressors, solar water heaters and satellite antennas.
- Surge protectors – During an atmospheric event, you may experience power surges that send excess electricity through your home and overpower your appliances. Invest in surge protectors for valuable items, like your computers and TV equipment.
- Hurricane insurance - you may want to take precautionary measures ahead of storm season and call your insurance provider. You may profit from adding hurricane insurance coverage to your existing policy.
- Get emergency supplies - Stock your home and your car with supplies. A disaster can easily disrupt the food supply at any time, so plan to have at least a 5-10 days' supply of food, water and medications on hand.

Build a kit coming soon...

In the next part of this series: Hurricane Preparedness, we tell you how to build a "Go-Kit" and provide more links. For more information on emergency preparedness, you can access the following links:

- Ready Army - <https://ready.army.mil/>
- Negociado Para El Manejo de Emergencias y Administración de Desastres (NMEAD) <https://manejodeemergencias.pr.gov/>



Your Fort Buchanan Fire Chief wants you to know...

Backup Generators at Home

Fort Buchanan Fire Department is committed in creating a fire prevention culture in our community by providing fire prevention tips, safety guidelines and how to apply them in our daily routine. This month's topic is the proper use of backup generators at home.

Using a Generator at Home

The primary hazards to avoid when using a generator are carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning from the toxic engine exhaust, electric shock or electrocution, and fire. Follow the directions supplied with the generator.

- To avoid electrocution, keep the generator dry and do not use in rain or wet conditions. Operate it on a dry surface under an open canopy-like structure, such as under a tarp held up on poles. Do not touch the generator with wet hands.
- Be sure to turn the generator off and let it cool down before refueling. Gasoline spilled on hot engine parts could ignite.
- Store fuel for the generator in an approved safety can. Use the type of fuel recommended in the instructions or on the label on the generator.

Local laws may restrict the amount of fuel you may store, or the storage location. Ask your local fire department. Store the fuel outside of living areas in a locked shed or other protected area. To guard against accidental fire, do not store it near a fuel-burning appliance, such as a natural gas water heater in a garage.

- Plug appliances directly into the generator, or use a heavy duty, outdoor-rated extension cord that is rated (in watts or amps) at least equal to the sum of the connected appliance loads.

Check that the entire cord is free of cuts or tears and that the plug has all three prongs, especially a grounding pin.

- Never try to power the house wiring by plugging the generator into a wall outlet. Known as "backfeeding," this practice puts utility workers, your neighbors and your household at risk of electrocution.
- Remember, even a properly connected portable generator can become overloaded, resulting in overheating or generator failure. Be sure to read the instructions.
- If necessary, stagger the operating times for various equipment to prevent overloads.

How to Prevent Carbon Monoxide (CO) Poisoning When Using a Generator

- Never use a generator, grill, camp stove or other gasoline, propane, natural gas or charcoal-burning devices inside a home, garage, basement, crawlspace or any partially enclosed area.
- Keep these devices outdoors, away from doors, windows and vents that could allow carbon monoxide to come indoors.
- Opening doors and windows or using fans will not prevent CO buildup in the home. Although CO can't be seen or smelled, it can rapidly lead to full incapacitation and death. Even if you cannot smell exhaust fumes, you may still be exposed to CO. If you start to feel sick, dizzy, or weak while using a generator, get to fresh air RIGHT AWAY - DO NOT DELAY.
- Install CO alarms in central locations on every level of your home and outside sleeping areas to provide early warning of accumulating carbon monoxide. Test the batteries frequently and replace when needed.
- If the carbon monoxide alarm sounds, move quickly to a fresh air location outdoors or by an open window or door. From the fresh air location call 9-1-1 off post and (787) 707-5911 on post for help and remain there until emergency personnel arrive to assist you.

For more information, contact the Fort Buchanan Fire Department Prevention Section at (787) 707-3410.

The National Weather Service expects high temperatures for this summer.
See flyer below on how to practice Heat Safety.

Practice **HEAT SAFETY** Wherever You Are

Heat related injuries are **PREVENTABLE**.

Protect yourself and others from the impacts of heat waves



Job Sites

Stay hydrated and take breaks in the shade as often as possible



Indoors

Check up on the elderly, sick and those without AC.



Vehicles

Never leave kids or pets unattended -
LOOK before you LOCK



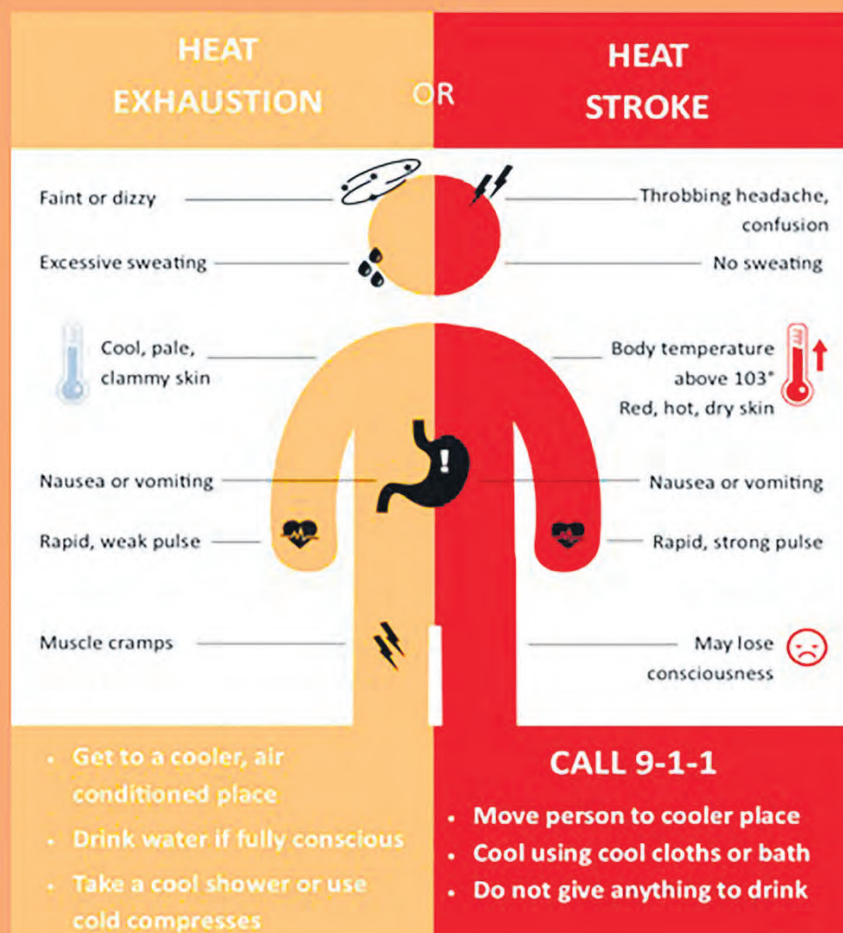
Outdoors

Limit strenuous outdoor activities, find shade, and stay hydrated.

Hazards

- ✓ Not acclimated
- ✓ Previous heat injury
- ✓ Poor fitness
- ✓ Overweight
- ✓ Alcohol or nicotine use
- ✓ Lack of quality sleep
- ✓ Minor illness (cold) or injured
- ✓ Medications (prescribed or over-the-counter)
- ✓ Skin disorder such as rash or sunburn
- ✓ Age (above 40)

Heat Injuries



- Get to a cooler, air conditioned place
- Drink water if fully conscious
- Take a cool shower or use cold compresses

- Move person to cooler place
- Cool using cool cloths or bath
- Do not give anything to drink



**USAG Fort Buchanan
Installation Safety Office**
Office: (787) 707-3853
Mobile: (787) 600-4478

Email:
usarmy.buchanan.imcom-atlantic.list.safety@army.mil



ISO Interactive
Customer Evaluation
(ICE) link

Army CID outlines measures to safeguard against cyber threats

Story by Staff Sgt. Michael Reinsch, Army News Service



Since the onset of COVID-19, more people are engaging with others on social media, a U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Division agent said. Humans are increasingly becoming more connected digitally now than ever before. But, where there is a gathering of people, there is almost always someone looking to exploit them said Special Agent Deric Palmer, CID Cyber Field Office, Digital Persona Protection Program Manager.

“I would say there’s always a good use aspect of social media. A lot of people can’t see the harm that comes along with it,” Palmer said.

Palmer, who has a combined 20 years working in law enforcement, recently published his yearly guide “Social Media Protection” in which he outlines topics to ensure his audience is aware and prepared for threats that exist online, and to maximize the privacy and security settings with their social media accounts. “Cyber is everything in today’s standard: whether we’re on a computer or if we have our phone attached to us, cyber is a driving force for both investigations and our day-to-day business within the government and within corporations,” Palmer said. “So, having a good acumen of what cyber vulnerabilities exist out there is important for people to recognize and understand.”

When Palmer is asking his platform users about their use of social media, he often asks what the risk and reward is. He looks at it from a social engineering perspective when educating people on the potential dangers of posting or using social media.

“I thought I was a pretty secure and private guy, especially coming from law enforcement background. I was always hypervigilant about my safety and the safety of my family,” Palmer said. “But when I went through my social engineering course, it scared the heck out of me. I realized I wasn’t as private as I thought I was.”

Social engineering is looking at all the aspects of someone’s life to get a desired effect out of that person. These aspects can be gathered from open-source websites and from the posts users make online. He said sometimes the intent of the social engineering can be relatively benign, such as changing advertisements, or it can be malicious, like identity theft.

“Think of social media as a massive watering hole, and everybody goes to social media,” Palmer said. “Well, if you have all the animals going to the watering hole, the predators are right there with you. People don’t really think about that. They think about what’s fun and, especially under the current COVID times, there’s been a big turn to social media to deal with the contentions of being quarantined and teleworking. People don’t think about the trolls and the lurkers on social media that are basically stalking people.” Palmer described the potential predators to be anyone from an old acquaintance, to cyber criminals, to state actors from



Photo credit: Photo from Army Times

an adversarial government.

To ensure Soldiers are educated on their online presence, Palmer advises Soldiers to better protect themselves while online.

“The reality is, we can’t erase everything, right?” Palmer said. “If anyone tells you that something is 100% secure in a cyber aspect, they’re lying to you. There’s going to be a vulnerability whether we know about it, or we don’t know about it.”

According to Palmer, even though it likely will never be 100% safe while online, that doesn’t mean steps cannot be taken to mitigate the risk. Good cyber hygiene includes ensuring passwords are updated and strong, encrypting files when needed, keeping their social media accounts private and free from public view, setting up in-home routers properly and recognizing social engineering attempts.

“Everything really comes down to, what is your cyber risk tolerance? What is your risk/reward when it comes to the technology that you’re using?” Palmer said. “Start taking control of your digital identity. Start thinking about your privacy. That goes down to strong passwords and using password managers.” Even though some users have taken measures to protect their information online, more than 150,000 U.S. citizens in 2020 were affected by cyber-attacks according to a report published by the FBI’s Internet Crime Complaint Center. Each year, the number of cyber-attacks increase by several thousand.

Another issue can arise from a service member having an unsecured social media. Cyber criminals are using publicly available photographs of service members from their social media accounts to create catfishing accounts. The 2020 FBI IC3 report indicated more than 23,000 people reported falling victim catfishing scams, which resulted in a loss of more than \$600 million.

The use of service member’s social media pictures is a common tactic used by online impersonation scammers.

These scammers simply copy your photographs, create a Catfishing account and commonly target women who are elderly, divorced or widowed for financial gain. In some instances, the victims may reach out to the real service member to either inform them of the impersonation or to demand answers,” Palmer said.

But there are several ways someone can protect their information while online, Palmer said. Personal information is easily accessible to others online. But Palmer lays out in his opt-out guide how someone can request and be deleted from those sites.

His opt-out guide lists some of the top sites that house personal information. These repositories of personal information are, most of the time, sold to big companies to create targeted marketing. But the repositories can also be used by predators for a variety of nefarious activity, Palmer said. When someone is going to start social engineering, they often start with the personal information that is readily available. Even if someone doesn’t participate in social media, the digital footprint is still there. For Palmer, for someone to be safe from a cyber-attack or not to be targeted by social engineering, it is important to remain vigilant while on and off the internet and know to take care of your digital footprint.

“People need to understand the type of data that we’re leaking willingly, and how it’s being monetized and sold,” Palmer said.

“Everyone has the ability to protect themselves and everyone on social media. By taking steps to ensure that the photographs or their social media accounts are not accessible by anyone that is not their friend, can cause a disruption with impersonation accounts.”

“If you have fallen victim to a Confidence/Romance scam, don’t send the cyber-criminal money, and report the offending account to the social media platform,” Palmer said. “Every social media platform has a built-in tool to report an offending account. Contact your local law enforcement agency if you provided money to a scammer and file a report with the FBI’s Internet Crime Complaint Center, also known as IC3. If the online scam or other internet crime involves a Soldier as a suspect, they may also contact their local CID office or submit a tip through the CID tip line.”

For more information go to: CID Crime Prevention Flyers: <https://www.cid.army.mil/mcu-advisories.html> / CID Tip Line <https://www.cid.army.mil/report-a-crime.html> / CID Romance Scam Information <https://www.cid.army.mil/romancescam.html%E2%80%9D>

Fort Buchanan's SHARP Office promotes prevention holds Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month events

Story by Rosie Irizarry, Public Affairs Specialist
Photos courtesy of Fort Buchanan SHARP Program Office



First Place Winners – Plans, Analysis and Integration Office (PAIO)



Also winners - Resource Management Office (RMO)



Also winners - Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security (DPTMS)



Directorate of Public Works (DPW), Housing Division

During the month of April, the Fort Buchanan Sexual Harassment and Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) Program Office held several events to disseminate Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month preventive information and materials to the Fort Buchanan community.

Among the events were a “Spin the Wheel” activity, which tested the knowledge of participants on sexual assault awareness and prevention. “A Cup of Prevention” event was held at the Army Community Service (ACS) headquarters April 21, 2022, providing free breakfast for over 40 participants while also testing their knowledge and awareness on sexual harassment and assault.

April events culminated with a door decoration contest as Garrison Directorates were encouraged to take action and show their support in the fight against sexual harassment by decorating their organization's doors with art, images and slogans depicting the theme on awareness, prevention, victims and survivors of sexual harassment and assault. The participating garrison directorates were evaluated by the installation

Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, Adelina I. Reynoso-Acosta and Deputy to the Garrison Commander Raúl L. Rodríguez, April 28, 2022 with the winners presented certificates and prizes April 29, 2022.

The participants were the Internal Review and Audit Compliance Office (IRACO); Plans, Analysis and Integration Office (PAIO); Directorate of Public Works (DPW), Housing Division; Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security (DPTMS); Directorate of Human Resources (DHR); Resource Management Office (RMO); Installation Safety Office (ISO); Directorate of Family and, Morale, Welfare and Recreation (FMWR), Sports Division and the USAG Command Group.

The first place winner was one of the doors decorated by PAIO, with other awards and prizes going to DPTMS and RMO. Reynoso-Acosta thanked all the participants and their staff for showing their support for sexual assault victims and survivors. She and Rodríguez expressed their appreciation for their time and effort, reiterating that we are all in this fight together because “Prevention Starts With YOU!”



US Army Garrison Command Group



Directorate of Human Resources (DHR)



Internal Review and Audit Compliance Office (IRACO)



Plans, Analysis and Integration Office (PAIO)



Installation Safety Office



Directorate of Family and, Morale, Welfare and Recreation (FMWR), Sports Division

SHARP program conducts “Live Without Fear” conference in observance of Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month

Story and photos by Rosie Irizarry, Public Affairs Specialist



“April is dedicated to the survivors and elimination of sexual assault. Thank you all for being here,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Banks during his opening remarks.

“¿Buenos días y cómo están?” said Col. Seaberry. “No one wants to celebrate tragedies. . . today we celebrate survivors. Too many have been or know of someone that have been sexually abused. We have to eradicate this,” Seaberry emphasized. “I want to thank your team (SHARP) for holding this event. Here we can learn from one another,” she concluded.

“Today we are going to teach you how to say “¡Vive Sin Miedo!” in Spanish,” said Program Representative Yolanda Itarraza to the approximately 40 persons in attendance. During the presentation Yamireliz Carrasquillo, was inducted permanently into the program. During her presentation, Carrasquillo explained some of the key points of the Live Without Fear program, whose primary purpose is to empower victims of gender-based violence, and help ensure their physical and emotional safety, as well as educate children, at an early age, from the public education system. She also provided tips and guides on living a better, safer life.

Hon. Del Valle, a 14-year US Air Force Veteran and survivor of domestic violence, whose mother died at the hands of her spouse, presented an account of her life as a victim and survivor of domestic violence. Since that time, she has focused her life’s work on addressing the high rate of victims of gender and domestic violence in an effort to improve the quality of life of Puerto Rican families.



Fort Buchanan’s Sexual Harassment, Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) program held a “Vive Sin Miedo” “Live Without Fear” conference where attendees listened to testimonies of sexual violence survivors while learning how to prevent and recover quickly from difficulties and sexually violent experiences at the installation’s Community Club and Conference Center April 19, 2022.

The guest speakers were, Puerto Rico House of Representatives, District 38 Representative Honorable Wanda Del Valle Correa and director of “Vive Sin Miedo” (Live Without Fear) program; Candidate to the Ms. Mundo Pagent, Yamireliz Carrasquillo, from the Municipality of Carolina, and Tae Kwon Do (TKD) Master, Instructor and President of XXI Century TKD Victor Rivera. Present were, Fort Buchanan Garrison Commander Col. Tomika M. Seaberry; Garrison Command Sgt. Maj. José A. Banks; Garrison Command Chaplain Maj. David S. Keller; garrison directors and members of the Fort Buchanan community.



Rivera provided a demonstration on TKD a self-defense martial art and involved the audience with hands-on participation in personal self-defense techniques to keep would-be attackers from getting close and possibly save a life.

The Army and Fort Buchanan reinforces the role and responsibility of every member of the Team to prevent sexual assault, sexual harassment and associated retaliation.

If you suspect or witness a possible act of sexual assault call or contact the Fort Buchanan SHARP office: (787) 707-3518 / 24/7 Helpline (787) 406-4222 – The DOD SAFE Helpline (877) 955-5247 / Control + Click here 24/7 ONE-ON-ONE LIVE CHAT – for an emergency or life threatening situation Off Post dial 911 / On Post Police call (787) 707-4911 – Veterans Crisis Line 1-(800) 273-TALK (8255) / Control + Click here Veterans Crisis Line



A Closer Look at Substance Use and Suicide

Story by **Maria N. Ortiz**, Fort Buchanan Army Substance Abuse Specialist and Suicide Prevention Programs Manager

Suicide is the tenth leading cause of death in the United States across all age groups. A total of 44,193 suicides occur each year, or 121 suicides per day. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines suicide as “death caused by self-inflicted injuries with the intention of dying from the result of such actions.”

Substance use is a risk factor in both fatal and nonfatal overdoses, suicide attempts, and death by suicide. Associated with the general population, individuals with alcohol dependence and persons who use drugs have a 10–14 times greater risk of death by suicide, respectively, and approximately 22% of deaths by suicide have alcohol intoxication involved.

Furthermore, one study found that opioids were present in 20% of suicide deaths, marijuana in 10.2%, cocaine in 4.6%, and amphetamines in 3.4%. Among the reported substances, alcohol and opioids are associated with the greatest risks of suicidal behavior.

Suicide is a serious and preventable public health problem in the world. In Puerto Rico, is no exception. Cooperation among prevention behavioral health professionals across fields have the can help reduce suicide rates. While multiple factors influence suicidal behaviors, substance use—especially alcohol use—is a significant factor, linked to a substantial number of suicide and suicide attempts.



measure in response to pain, loss and affective changes. This often leads to a damaging cycle of alcohol use to self-medicate symptoms of depression thus deteriorating the situation.

For this reason, alcohol abuse has been reported to be the second most common psychiatric disorder associated with elderly suicide, second only to depression.

Key Facts

- More than 700,000 people die due to suicide every year.
- For every suicide, there are many more people who attempt suicide. A prior suicide attempt is the single most important risk factor for suicide in the general population.
- Suicide is the fourth leading cause of death among 15-19 year-olds.
- 77% of global suicides occur in low- and middle-income countries.
- Ingestion of pesticide, hanging and firearms are among the most common methods of suicide globally.



24/7 RESOURCES (CRISIS LINES)

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255
- PAS Crisis Line (ASSMCA): 1-800-981-0023
- TDD Crisis Line: 1-888-672-7622
- INSPIRA Crisis Line: 787-644-0559/787-448-5651
- Veteran Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255; Dial 1
1-866-712-4822 (Spanish)
- Crisis Text Line: Text "HELLO" to 741741
- Hospital Panamericano: 1-800-981-1218
- Hospital San Juan Capestrano: 1-888-967-4357
- VA Hospital PR: 787-622-4822

Every suicide is a tragedy that affects families, communities and entire countries and has lingering effects on the people left behind. Suicide was the fourth leading cause of death among 15-29 year-olds globally in 2020. Suicide does not just occur in high-income countries, but is a global phenomenon in all regions of the world. In fact, over 77% of global suicides occurred in low- and middle-income countries in 2020.

Suicide is a serious problem; however, suicides are preventable with timely, evidence-based and often low-cost interventions. In 2020, a survey conducted by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration showed that 9.8 million people at 18 years of age seriously considered suicide in the past 12 months, with 1.4 million making nonfatal suicide attempts. Young adults, 18–25 years old were also more likely to have serious thoughts of suicide or suicide attempts. One study among the elderly found that 24.5% of people ages 60–69 and 13% of people ages 70–79 had consumed alcohol before attempting suicide. Older persons use alcohol as a palliative

The Fort Buchanan Army Substance Abuse Program (ASAP) mission is to strengthen the overall fitness and effectiveness of the Army's workforce by providing guidance and leadership on all non-clinical alcohol and other drug policy issues; developing, establishing, administering, and evaluating non-clinical alcohol and other drug (AOD) abuse prevention, education, and training programs. Contact the installation ASAP office at: (787) 707-3125.

If you are, feeling distressed or hopeless, thinking about death or wanting to die, or, if you are concerned about someone who may be suicidal, please contact Suicide Prevention Lifeline at:

1-800-273-TALK (8255). You may also use these helpful link: <https://www.armyresilience.army.mil/ASAP/index.html>

There is no greater. . . !

Story by Cpt. Guisele Ballarini, U.S Army Veterinary Corps Officer
Photos by Grissel Rosa, Public Affairs Officer and S gt. Josue E. Pagan Carbone, Public Affairs Intern



Every year Fort Buchanan Police Officer/Canine Handlers and their assigned dogs go through a thorough certification process to ensure that their trainings are up to date, Fort Buchanan Police Officer/Canine Handler Angel L. Rivera poses with Police Officer/Canine Eendora after the 2021 Certification process. (Eendora loves her toy.)

There is no greater. . . trust than the one created by the bond between working dogs and their Military and Law Enforcement Handlers.

There is no greater. . . honor than to serve as a Veterinary Corps Officer to care for the wellbeing of our four legged

Service Members. We recognize and pay tribute to the men and women who have served, treat them with respect and care for them when transitioning out from service. On a similar note, I see working dogs who have been trained to serve for our freedom and safety all around the places we live, study, shop and work.

Daily I see the signs right when coming in to the post gate “This area is being patrolled by military working dogs” but do we stop and think that. As said by Barbara Snow Executive Director US War Dogs Association Chapter 2, “There is no greater nose to scent, eyes to sight, heart to give and no braver or more courageous spirit to work and serve.” This is what they do, day in and day out, and they too need love, care and training like the one that effortlessly is received from their handlers, also day in and day out.

Working dog handlers are an essential piece in building and maintaining readiness and performance. Together they are a team and they train as they fight! The speed and obedience shown by these dogs who respond to their



Fort Buchanan Police Officer/Canine Handler Nelson Del Valle demonstrates for children on post how his assigned Police Officer/Canine German Shepard, Lord responds to different orders using single words and hand signals.



Fort Buchanan Police Officer/Canine Handler Nelson Del Valle demonstrates how his assigned Police Officer/Canine, Lord uses his heightened sense of smell and training to sniff pout drugs and contraband.

handlers’ commands, words that need only to be said once, is to be admired.

Just as with Service Members, a working dog’s medical care relies on the U.S Army Veterinary team, but this care goes beyond their readiness while they are serving, I believe we owe them the care, the love and respect once their working dog days are over.

The responsibility for the medical care of a working dog does not compare to the joy that as a Veterinarian I have experienced from seeing them recover from surgical procedures, overcoming terminal prognosis and from helping through their transition to a loving home wagging their tales and a toy in their mouths to hopefully go for a run on the beach or to comfortably sleep on a couch. There is no greater. . . joy!

The credit for a successful outcome in a working dogs’ life while on duty and upon retirement is always the result of a team effort; Handlers, Veterinary technicians, Civilian and Military Veterinarian providers can tell these good stories because someone stepped up and decided to give a working dog a loving home until they are ready to cross the rainbow bridge.

With Memorial Day upon us, I am grateful for the opportunity to share these thoughts about working dogs so when we pause and remember our Heroes . . . let us also remember our heroes with paws.



Autocita

"Su Transporte de Confianza"

Handicap Transport

7 días / 24 horas

SERVICIOS A

Hospital de Veteranos

Clinicas de Veteranos

Viajes Privados



712-2030

UN SERVICIO DE PRIMERA PARA GENTE DE PRIMERA

787-712-2030

Lunes a Viernes 7:00am a 7:00pm
Sabado y Domingo 8:00am a 5:00pm



HAPPY 247TH BIRTHDAY U.S. ARMY

JUNE 14, 1775



DEFENDING
AMERICA

24/7

