

NEWS BRIEFS

Housing inspections begin

Housing inspections on post begin Monday. Those who have yet to schedule an appointment can do so by using the QR code below or by visiting assetcalc.net/?redirect=army and following instructions. Appointments are available Monday through Friday. Someone over 18 and on the lease will need to be at the unit during the inspection.

Further information can be found in the Jan. 16 edition of the Fort Cavazos Sentinel or by visiting cavazossentinel.com/news/housing-inspections-begin-feb-3-appointment-scheduler-open-now/article_2d4bf23e-d909-11ef-977d-c31dcf3f3c58.html. Questions about scheduling an inspection can be directed to the RER Solutions and Jones Lang Lasalle Help Desk at army@housinginspections.info.



Post hosts Super Bowl party

There will be a Super Bowl LIX watch party beginning at 4 p.m. Feb. 9 at Samuel Adams Brew-house. There will be food and drinks for purchase and free popcorn during the event. The event is free and open to anyone. Minors must be accompanied by adults.

Legends Way temporarily closes

Legends Way between 72nd Street and Pleiku Drive will close 9:55-11 a.m. Feb. 13. Please plan accordingly.

Scholarship applications open

The Fort Cavazos Family Scholarship Fund application period is open through Feb. 17. High school students and military spouses seeking undergraduate and/or graduate degrees are eligible to apply.

Visit fortcavazosscholarship.org for more information.

Cavazos leadership hosts WTA Fly Friendly Town Hall



Photo by Blair Dupre, Sentinel News Editor

Tracy Crawford, director of the Directorate of Aviation Operations, addresses the audience during the Western Training Area Fly Friendly Town Hall Jan. 23 at the San Saba Civic Center at San Saba, Texas. The town hall addressed concerns and answered questions about aviation training in the WTA.

BY BLAIR DUPRE
Sentinel News Editor

SAN SABA, Texas — Fort Cavazos leadership met with local ranchers to address concerns about aviation training in the western training area in a town hall Jan. 23 at the San Saba Civic Center.

“I want to say it is truly an honor and a privilege to be here with you all as we join in this meaningful dialogue,” said Col. Lakicia

Stokes, U.S. Army Garrison-Fort Cavazos commander. “I’d like to recognize the valuable contributions of our ranchers in the western training area. Your land, your partnership and your understanding play a central role and aid us to execute our mission of preparing Soldiers to defend our nation. This area’s terrain is not only vital for training, but it also represents the enduring partnership between the Army and our local community. For that we are profoundly grateful.”

Stokes stressed the importance of the training conducted at Fort Cavazos.

“III Armored Corps’ enduring priorities are warfighting, developing leaders, partnership and caring for Soldiers, families and civilians,” she said. “In warfighting there are two priorities, which are readiness and training. Our mission is readiness. We prepare our Soldiers to face the toughest challenges

See **Town Hall**, A6

Pedal to the metal: Cub Scouts race in Pinewood Derby



Photo by Ayumi Davis, Sentinel Editor

Chase Thomas, 9, cheers after his car ties in a race during the Pinewood Derby Saturday at the Main Post Chapel at Fort Cavazos.

BY AYUMI DAVIS
Sentinel Editor

The Main Post Chapel was filled with the cheers and excitement of children and parents alike as the children put their handmade speedy cars to the test at the Pinewood Derby Saturday at Fort Cavazos.

Boy Scouts of America Cub Scouts Pack 221, led by Col. Jeremy Kerfoot, commander of 89th Military Police Brigade and cubmaster of Pack 221, put their zippy creations to the test in a series of races, racking up calculated speeds of over 130 miles per hour.

The Pinewood Derby is an annual event, educating the children with a hands-on science, technology, engineering and mathematics activity, said Sandy Kerfoot, den leader for the Bear-ranked Cub Scouts and spouse of Jeremy.

“(The children) go through the whole process of designing a car, thinking about the STEM process behind it,” she explained. “We share videos with them about things that make (the car) go fast, the physics behind it. (The children) are sanding it and putting it together.

A total of 54 Cub Scouts raced, producing decorated cars from a mouse riding a hunk of cheese to a rocket.

Alice Walton, 7, decorated her car orange with pink and yellow accents, with the word “love” written on top and a flower to finish.

“I picked a design like a sunset,” she said.

1st Sgt. Chance Thomas, Predator Troop, 4th Squadron, 3rd Cavalry Regiment, helped his son, Chase Thomas, 9, build his vehicle, a “Star Wars” Rebel Alliance pilot flying a X-wing, and enjoyed the process.

“Sitting out there and teaching him — telling him how to measure things and how to cut things — was a lot of fun because he doesn’t really do, normally do, that stuff with me,” Chance said.

After a flag ceremony and recitation of the Scout Oath, it was off to the races for the Cub Scouts. Runs were done between Cub Scouts within the same den in heats, with awards given for first, second and third place. The top three from each den then competed for an overall win. Separate awards were also given to the winner of the “Outlaw” race and for the most creative car, most “out of space” car and most “Cub Scouty” car.

Colton Muncie, 9, enjoyed the derby, earning ninth place overall, first place in his den and the most out of space car with his rocket creation, set with flashing lights and red and white stripes.

“It’s just having fun, seeing friends and participating,” he said.

See **Race**, A6

New SECDEF addresses force

BY PETE HEGSETH
Secretary of Defense

It is the privilege of a lifetime to lead the warriors of the Department of Defense, under the leadership of our Commander in Chief Donald J. Trump. We will put America First, and we will never back down.

The president gave us a clear mission: achieve peace through strength. We will do this in three ways — by restoring the warrior ethos, rebuilding our military and reestablishing deterrence.

We will revive the warrior ethos and restore trust in our military. We are American warriors. We will defend our country. Our standards will be high, uncompromising and clear. The strength of our military is our unity and our shared purpose.

We will rebuild our military by matching threats to capabilities. This means reviving our defense industrial base,



Pete Hegseth

reforming our acquisition process, passing a financial audit and rapidly fielding emerging technologies. We will remain the strongest and most lethal force in the world.

We will reestablish deterrence by defending our homeland — on the ground and in the sky. We will work with allies and partners to deter aggression in the Indo-Pacific by Communist China, as well as supporting the president's priority to end wars responsibly and reorient to key threats. We will stand by our allies — and our enemies are on notice.

All of this will be done with a focus on lethality, meritocracy, accountability, standards and readiness.

I have committed my life to warfighters and their families. Just as my fellow Soldiers had my back on the battlefield, know I will always have your back. We serve together at a dangerous time. Our enemies will neither rest nor relent. And neither will we. We will stand shoulder to shoulder to meet the urgency of this moment.

Like each of you, I love my country and swore an oath to defend the Constitution. We will do that each and every day, as one team. Together we will accomplish the president's mission to deter war, and if necessary, defeat and destroy our enemies. Godspeed!

GREAT PEOPLE AT THE GREAT PLACE



Photos by Ayumi Davis, Sentinel Editor

Primitivo Talaoc, human resources specialist, Directorate of Human Resources, poses for a picture Jan. 16 at the Copeland Soldier Service Center at Fort Cavazos.

BY AYUMI DAVIS
Sentinel Editor

Many Soldiers and civilians are familiar with temporary duty orders, but none at Fort Cavazos may be more than Primitivo Talaoc, human resources specialist, Directorate of Human Resources.

Talaoc processes temporary duty, or TDY, orders, along with appellate leave and separation paperwork for military prisoners. Most of his days are filled with approving amendments to TDY orders.

“When (units) go on rotation or deployment, I do all the orders for them,” Talaoc said. “They request it through me, and I process it through the system that the Army has to generate the orders for them.”

Entire units deploying or training elsewhere, such as 1st Cavalry Division's deployment to Poland or 1st Cav. Div.'s 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team's October rotation to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California, calls for hundreds of TDY orders at a time, and when any amendment occurs, that's another hundreds of documents to approve. On any given day, Talaoc could process over a thousand amendments, noting he recently approved more than 2,500 amendments in one day.

“It's easy,” he expressed. “You just have to pay attention to it ... The moment you see something, just continue doing it; clean it up.”

Prior to this, Talaoc had processed reassignment orders. This job is familiar to him, as he was in the Army for 24 years as a human resources specialist. After retiring as a sergeant first class, he applied to become a civilian because he missed the camaraderie.

“When you're retired, especially with the kids already grown up, you miss that commitment, you miss that team camaraderie or anything like that,” he said. “This is the way that I can serve the service member, by doing our part down here in the MPD (Military Personnel Division).”

Talaoc takes it day by day, simply trying to serve Soldiers in whatever capacity he can.

“I already did my career in the Army,”

he said. “This thing is just for me to return to the Army, serve again this time. So I don't really think about success, because I know I've already been successful in the service ... So as long as I do what is supposed to be done correctly and in accordance with the guidance from the commander and the bosses down here, and the guidance from the Department of the Army, I'm good with that.

“I enjoy taking care of service members,”

Talaoc continued. “I enjoy taking care of the unit, and that's the commitment I have ... You help them out the best you can. If they don't know the answer, you find the answer for them ... So that's success for me. If I'm making the unit 100% operational because of what I do, I'm happy.”

Outside of his job, Talaoc enjoys spending time with his two grandsons and collecting vinyls, with a particular focus on classic rock.



Primitivo Talaoc, human resources specialist, Directorate of Human Resources, looks at his computer Jan. 16 at the Copeland Soldier Service Center at Fort Cavazos.



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SOMETHING TO SAY?

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Ordnance school provides vehicle recovery training at Fort Cavazos

BY HEATHER ASHLEY
Sentinel Assistant Editor

Soldiers with Regional Training Site-Maintenance (Fort Cavazos) have trained vehicle repairers across the Army in recovery operations for over 30 years here, offering Fort Cavazos vehicle repairers cost-effective and convenient access to specialized training.

Since 1991, the RTS-M at Fort Cavazos has offered year-round courses to certify track and wheeled-vehicle repairers in the active-duty Army, Army Reserve and National Guard to operate and maintain recovery vehicles, and rig and recover vehicles. They also host an advanced leadership course for wheeled-vehicle maintainers.

“There are 17 ordnance schools in the Army that do wheeled vehicle recovery (courses),” Sgt. Maj. Pierre Brudnicki, senior-enlisted advisor for the RTS-M said. “We are one of only five ordnance schools in the Army that teach track recovery.”

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Alejandro Cedillo, RTS-M (Fort Cavazos) commandant, said the training is among the most sought after of courses here, especially since the school at Fort Cavazos is among the few in the Army to offer both track and wheeled recovery courses.

Cedillo said he learned about the recovery school early on in his 22-year career as an enlisted Soldier, but it took him almost a decade to get the training.

“It’s almost fascinating to see the Soldiers getting the training here quickly,” he said, adding he wants Soldiers to have better access to the schooling.

The recovery school offered at Fort Cavazos is in the ideal location, Cedillo said.

“There is a lot of armor here,” he said. “The environment here is marked for this training. The environment this installation holds for us here is exactly what we need for this training. This is truly the perfect setting for us.”

The 16 personnel and one officer assigned to the RTS-M here fall under the 94th Training Division (Force Sustainment), which is headquartered at Fort Gregg-Adams, Virginia. With the permanent party RTS-M here, more Soldiers have access to the required schooling closer to home.

All units with vehicles in their inventory are required to have a recovery team, and all members of the recovery team must be certified, the school being one of the requirements.

“It’s convenient, cost-efficient and there is a faster turnaround time than sending the Soldiers somewhere else,” Brudnicki said. “It’s a benefit to the Soldiers. They are getting experience, knowledge and know-how. It sets them apart from others in their career field.”

There are other benefits to the certification for both units and individual Soldiers.

“When they deploy, it comes in handy,” said Master Sgt. Fabien Balarezo, RTS-M. “It also helps with promotion and retention.”

Sgt. Sara Black, a track vehicle repairer assigned to 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, has wanted to attend the course since she arrived at her unit two-and-a-half years ago. Black graduated with her class Jan. 23.

“I fought to get this school,” she said. “I always wanted to attend this school.”

The H8 (for wheeled maintainers) or H9 (for track maintainers) recovery

designations are the only military occupational specialty-specific additional skills identifiers available to mechanics.

“The school is only open to feeder MOSes 91-series maintainers,” Cedillo said.

Soldiers can only go through the school once to certify on either wheeled or track vehicles.

During the 17-day school, Soldiers go through classroom learning and a written test, then move on to the motor pool where they learn about the tow and recovery vehicles, drive the vehicles, participate in a practical exercise and, lastly, have their final exam in the field. They will learn to safely recover a mired track or wheeled vehicle as well as a track or wheeled vehicle that has been flipped on its side. Soldiers must demonstrate their ability to safely recover vehicles to successfully complete the school.

“They teach us literally everything we need to know and more,” Black said. “I didn’t know there was a science behind it and now I know the science behind it. We are leaning the physical limits of our equipment and how to surpass that.”

Learning tow and recovery procedures in a controlled environment not only ensures the students learn correctly, but also safely.

“Safety is a huge, huge thing,” Brudnicki said. “It minimizes the risk of loss of life and destruction of equipment.”

The school runs throughout the year, alternating the track- and wheeled-recovery courses.

They also host the 45-day advanced leadership course for wheeled-vehicle repairers, a required course for sergeants and staff sergeants in that MOS.



ABOVE, Track vehicle maintainer Soldiers begin an exercise to properly right a M113 armored personnel carrier during recovery training. Jan. 15 at Fort Cavazos. **TOP RIGHT,** Sgt. Sara Black, a track vehicle repairer, 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, secures a tow hook to begin recovery operations on an M113 armored personnel carrier during the 17-day recovery training program Jan. 15 at Fort Cavazos.

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A large group of people, identified as OHSU faculty and staff, are posed for a group photo in a large gymnasium. The group is arranged in many rows, filling most of the floor. Many individuals are wearing grey sweatshirts with "OHSU" printed on them. Some people are making peace signs, and one person is lying on the floor in the foreground. The gymnasium has blue bleachers in the background and a wooden floor.

Nearly 700 employees with the Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation pose for a photo during the All-Hands Day training event Jan. 17 at Abrams Physical Fitness Center at Fort Cavazos.

Fort Cavazos Public Affairs

A man wearing a bright yellow beanie and a dark jacket is shown in profile, blowing a white egg into the first of five red plastic cups lined up on a table. The cups are part of a game, likely the 'egg in the cup' challenge. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and a red wall.

Ricardo Caraballo, Belton Lake Outdoor Recreation Area maintenance technician, races to blow a ping pong ball across cups filled with water during the All-Hands Day training event Jan. 17 at Abrams Physical Fitness Center at Fort Cavazos.

Stokes noted in addition to

"That's what we do," he said. "We serve."



Dining Facility Operations Schedule

Feb. 2025


PHANTOM CENTRALIZED HUB

Building #41018
Old Ironsides & 77th St.

SUN	MON	TUES	WEDS	THUR	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

Breakfast: 7:30-9 a.m. Monday-Friday
 Lunch: 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Monday-Friday
 Dinner: 5-6:30 p.m. Monday-Friday
 WR Manager SFC Philpott: 954-654-1083

(BRUNCH/SUPPER): 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
 (BRUNCH/SUPPER): 5-6:30 p.m.
 HOLIDAY: 11 a.m.-3 p.m.


BLACK JACK

Building #34002
Old Ironsides Ave. & Pyongyang Dr.

SUN	MON	TUES	WEDS	THUR	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

Breakfast: 7:30-9 a.m. Monday-Friday
 Lunch: 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Monday-Friday
 Dinner: 5-6:30 p.m. Monday-Friday
 CMD Food Advisor WO1 Leon: 928-345-8178

(BRUNCH/SUPPER): 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
 (BRUNCH/SUPPER): 5-6:30 p.m.
 (HOLIDAY): 11 a.m.-3 p.m.


ALWAYS READY

Building #91226
HQ Ave., West Fort Cavazos

SUN	MON	TUES	WEDS	THUR	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

Breakfast: 7:30-9 a.m. Monday-Friday
 Lunch: 11:30-1 p.m. Monday-Friday
 Dinner: 5-6:30 p.m. Monday-Friday
 WR Manager: 254-288-9538

(BRUNCH/SUPPER): 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
 (BRUNCH/SUPPER): 5-6:30 p.m.
 (HOLIDAY): 11 a.m.-3 p.m.


CULINARY OUTPOST FOOD TRUCK 1

The Lonestar
Conference Center

Closed due to services and maintenance

Breakfast: 7:30-9 a.m. Monday-Friday
 Lunch: 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Monday-Friday
 Dinner: Closed
 WR Manager SFC Philpott: 954-654-1083


OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

Building #21020
Battalion & 58th St.

Closed due to renovation. Tentatively scheduled for completion in May.

Breakfast: 7:30-9 a.m. Monday-Friday
 Lunch: 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Monday-Friday
 Dinner: 5-6:30 p.m. Monday-Friday
 Food Program Manager Ms. Sturdivant: 254-287-6595

(BRUNCH/SUPPER): 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
 (BRUNCH/SUPPER): 5-6:30 p.m.
 (HOLIDAY): 11 a.m.-3 p.m.


PATRIOT INN

Building #12007
Old Ironsides & 33rd St.

Closed for conversion to a bistro. Tentatively scheduled for completion in summer.

Breakfast: 7:30-9 a.m. Monday-Friday
 Lunch: 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Monday-Friday
 Dinner: 5-6:30 p.m. Monday-Friday
 WR Manager: 254-288-9538

(BRUNCH/SUPPER): 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
 (BRUNCH/SUPPER): 5-6:30 p.m.


CULINARY OUTPOST FOOD TRUCK 2

1-44/4-5 ADA BN
area parking lot

SUN	MON	TUES	WEDS	THUR	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

Breakfast: 7:30-9 a.m. Monday-Friday
 Lunch: 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Monday-Friday
 Dinner: Closed
 WR Manager SFC Philpott: 954-654-1083


CULINARY OUTPOST KIOSK

Old Ironsides and
Pyongyang Drive

SUN	MON	TUES	WEDS	THUR	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

Monday- Friday 2 p.m.-7 p.m.
 (WNK): 8 a.m.-6 p.m.
 CMD Food NCOI MSG Kim: 253-677-9877


ALWAYS READY KIOSK

HQ Avenue
West Fort Cavazos

SUN	MON	TUES	WEDS	THUR	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

BRK, LUN, DIN: 2-7 p.m. Monday-Friday
 (WNK): 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
 On Jan. 9, the kiosk will operate on weekend hours.
 WR Manager: 254-288-9538


CULINARY OUTPOST FOOD TRUCK 3

Installation
Rotation

Closed due to services and maintenance

Breakfast: 7:30-9 a.m. Monday-Friday
 Lunch: 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Monday-Friday
 Dinner: Closed
 WR Manager SFC Philpott: 954-654-1083


THEODORE ROOSEVELT

Building #9205
Battalion & 21st St.

SUN	MON	TUES	WEDS	THUR	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	2		

Town hall facilitates important dialogue, educates public on crucial training efforts

Town Hall: *Continued from A1*

imaginable, whether that’s on the ground or in the air. That rigorous, relevant and realistic training is at the heart of everything we do.

“At any given time, we have about 5,000 Soldiers who are deployed, carrying out critical missions in defense of our nation,” she continued. “That readiness depends on their ability to train in environments that closely mirror the conditions that they may face in combat. The western training area is critical for the low altitude helicopter training our aviators need to succeed in complex missions, particularly in rugged or barren terrain.”

Stokes acknowledged the low altitude training can pose challenges to the rancher’s daily lives and touched on another of III Armored Corps’ enduring priorities — partnership.

“As we look at partnership, this town hall is an opportunity to strengthen our ongoing dialogue,” she said. “We understand that low-flying aircraft and aviation training activities in this region have raised concerns. Please know that your feedback is crucial to our operations, and we are committed to finding the right balance between conducting realistic and relevant training and respecting your rights, property and way of life. Our goal is to be good stewards of the land and good neighbors of each other. As we continue to work together I encourage you to share your thoughts and ideas. Your insights help us improve and ensure our partnership remains strong for years to come.”

Following Stokes’ opening remarks, aviation experts conducted a multimedia presentation, explaining how the training works and helps Soldiers succeed in missions, the types of aircraft flying on the installation, tactics, techniques, procedures and more.

“In short, the reason we fly the way that we do is because that is what we need to do to survive in combat operations,” said Col. Kacie Lee, 166th Aviation Brigade commander. “When the nation calls us to do our mission, wherever that is, whenever that is, we’re going to have to conduct tactical flight. Tactical terrain flight is very challenging. It’s one of the most demanding terrain modes that we operate in. It requires a lot of practice. It requires a lot of repetition. So it’s not something we can do infrequently.

“We have a motto in the Army — you may have heard it — ‘Train



Photo by Blair Dupre, Sentinel News Editor

Col. Lakicia Stokes, U.S. Army Garrison-Fort Cavazos commander, speaks to San Saba Independent School District students after landing at the San Saba Civic Center in a CH-47 Chinook before the Western Training Area Fly Friendly Town Hall Jan. 23 at San Saba, Texas.

as you fight,” Lee explained. “We know that when we fight it’s going to have to be in these demanding combat modes, so we try to execute those modes as much as we can at home.”

Scott Nutter, air traffic and air-space officer, Directorate of Aviation Operations, explained what happens when complaints about the low-flying aircraft are received.

“I look at the validity of the complaint — I make sure it was a Fort Cavazos aircraft,” he explained. “That means I’m checking radar. I’m checking out flight plans. I’m making sure who it is. If it is determined to be a Fort Cavazos aircraft, I’ll gather all the pertinent data, and I will send that to our aviation units who will do an investigation. When they do that, they’ll look at their flight plans, their onboard systems

where they record much of what happens when an aircraft is flying to determine (if they violated) FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) or Army rules or regulations and if so, what they can do to fix that.

“Once they determine what has happened, they’ll send me all the data back and either myself or another representative from Fort Cavazos will contact the complainant back with exactly what happened and what we’re going to do or are doing about it in reference to what happened,” Nutter continued. “Our installation operation center phone number is 24/7, 365. Ultimately everything will come back to me to do that initial findings investigation.”

At the end of the presentation, ranchers were invited to ask questions, express their concerns and

speak with the experts one-on-one, as well as examine maps of the western training area and photos depicting aircraft at different elevations. There were approximately 40-50 community members who participated in the event.

“The voices of the pilots are recorded,” said Chief Warrant Officer 5 Travis Westfall, 166th Aviation Brigade command chief warrant officer. “The positions of the flight controls are recorded. How fast the aircraft is going is recorded. If we’re making consistent, repeated mistakes, we’re going to do our best to put in control measures so that specifically stops.”

Stokes closed the town hall expressing her gratitude for the conversation.

“We want to know what your concerns are,” Stokes said. “We

will go back and look at how we, as a team, can improve moving forward.”

Prior to the town hall, elementary, middle and high school students from San Saba Independent School District traveled to the San Saba Civic Center and spoke with Fort Cavazos pilots, who answered questions about aircraft and their experience as pilots in the Army. Then they all watched as an AH-64 Apache and a CH-47 Chinook, carrying Fort Cavazos leadership, landed in an open area near the building.

Stokes exited the Chinook and addressed the students.

“We greatly appreciate you all and everything that you all do for our team,” she said. “We are excited to have you all here, and hopefully y’all are as excited as we are.”

Sportsmanship, STEM key lessons in Pinewood Derby

Race: *Continued from A1*

Ian Figueroa, 8, with a Minecraft-themed car, likes racing and also had fun at the event.

“I was not in the best three, but at least I

tried my best,” Ian said.

Sportsmanship is another key lesson from the derby, Sandy said.

“Just being good sports,” she said, “seeing that sometimes your car doesn’t cross the

finish line and cheering on your fellow Cub Scouts while you’re there. So there’s a bit of competition in it that not everybody’s going to win, but we’re all doing our best.”

Representatives from III Armored Corps, the Fort Cavazos Police Department and Fire Department also participated, putting their own cars to the test in a race. The Fire Department reigned victorious with a miniature fire engine, complete with flashing lights and a siren.

“Honestly, we didn’t even think that we were going to place in this race, not knowing what the rules were or the expectations looking at here,” said Lt. John Daly, Fire Station 1, Fort Cavazos Fire Department. “This is our first time in the race, and, surprisingly, we took it and won by a mile. I’m really pleased with that.”

Participating in events like these shows support and presence for the community, said Lt. Christopher Barker, Fort Cavazos Police Department.

“They can see that we’re here and here for helping each other out because we’re a family,” he said. “This is Fort Cavazos, The Great Place.”

“We wanted our scouts to feel like they’re part of the community,” Sandy expressed about inviting III Armored Corps and the police and fire departments. “That’s one of the things that we feel sometimes can be lacking, is this idea that we’re all part of this together. And there’s a big aspect of scouting that is about the community — serve the community. Citizenship is one of the aims of scouting — to create civic leaders.”



Photos by Ayumi Davis, Sentinel Editor

ABOVE LEFT, Decorated wooden cars sit on a racetrack during the Pinewood Derby Saturday at the Main Post Chapel at Fort Cavazos. **ABOVE RIGHT,** Cub Scouts and parents cheer as they watch one of the final races during the Pinewood Derby Saturday at the Main Post Chapel at Fort Cavazos.



Photo by Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Emily Beightol-Deyerle, 167th Airlift Wing
A C-17 Globemaster III aircraft sits on a flight line being readied for its next mission March 2, 2024, at the 167th Airlift Wing at Martinsburg, West Virginia.

DOD orders additional 1,500 troops, air assets to southern border of US

BY MATTHEW OLAY
DOD News

WASHINGTON — The Department of Defense is sending 1,500 active-duty service members and additional air and intelligence assets to the southern border to augment troops already conducting enforcement operations in that region, then-Acting Secretary of Defense Robert Salesses announced Jan. 22 via a statement to the media.

The announcement came roughly 36 hours after President Donald J. Trump issued an executive order directing DOD to address the situation at the border.

“On Monday (Jan. 20), to protect the security and safety of United States citizens, President Trump declared that a national emergency exists at the southern border of the United States,” the statement reads. “The president directed me to take all appropriate action to support the activities of the secretary of homeland security in obtaining complete operational control of the southern border of the United States.”

The Pentagon has since created a task force to oversee the expedited implementation of border-related executive orders with U.S. Northern Command heading up the effort and being supported by U.S. Transportation Command, the National Guard Bureau, the Department of Homeland Security



Photo by Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Alexander Kubitz, OSD Public Affairs
An aerial view of the Pentagon May 15, 2024.

and the military services.

The 1,500 additional active-duty service members authorized by Salesses are initially being put to work on the placement of physical barriers and other border missions, a senior military official told the media. The service members include 1,000 Soldiers, as well as 500 Marines who had previously been on standby in Southern California to potentially help combat the Los Angeles County wildfires that broke out two weeks ago, the senior official said.

With 2,500 active-duty personnel already in the region, the additional

1,500 troops will represent a 60% increase in active-duty forces since the president was sworn in Jan. 20, Salesses remarks in his statement.

“We anticipate that overall, on the southwest border, (active-duty personnel) will provide real-time situational awareness of persons, vehicles, vessels and aircraft; and they’ll work with (U.S. Customs and Border Protection) on operator-level maintenance, movement and staging of (CBP) assets,” the senior military official said.

In addition to the additional active-duty ground personnel, DOD will provide airlift support for flights operated by DHS to

implement the deportation of more than 5,000 individuals detained by CBP at the border sectors in San Diego and El Paso, Texas, Salesses’ statement reads. TRANSCOM is providing two C-130 Hercules and two C-17 Globemaster aircraft to assist in that support, the senior military official said.

Additionally, the official added there are UH-72 Lakota military helicopters that began flying Jan. 22 in support of CBP.

DOD is also coordinating with the State Department to obtain diplomatic visas and provide host-nation notification for those individuals who are deported, a

senior defense official said.

Additionally, DOD is providing intelligence analyst support at the U.S. border.

“We’re in the process of sourcing those requirements right now,” the senior military official said.

“We also anticipate that there could be some additional airborne intelligence, surveillance and support assets that would move down to the border to increase situational awareness,” the official added.

Regarding DOD’s future activity on the border, the senior defense official said that — while there are no specifics to release at the moment — there will be a number of additional border enforcement missions developing.

“This is going to be a big priority for the department under the acting secretary and the secretary that will be coming on board,” the defense official said.

“In short order, (DOD) will develop and execute additional missions in cooperation with DHS, federal agencies and state partners to address the full range of threats outlined by the (president) at our nation’s borders,” Salesses’ statement reads.

“President Trump directed action from (DOD) on securing our nation’s borders and made clear he expects immediate results,” the statement concludes. “That is exactly what our military is doing under his leadership.”



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Zanzibar

Bar offers great rooftop views, island vibes

BY JANECEZ WRIGHT
Fort Cavazos Public Affairs

AUSTIN, Texas — The first time I heard about Zanzibar was about a year ago.

I love anything rooftop, and I was excited to see if the spot lived up to the rave reviews.

About an hour from The Great Place, Zanzibar is in downtown Austin, but its tucked-away location can make it difficult to find.

Just look for the Marriott Hotel sign, or ask the attendant standing out front on the sidewalk.

The elevator ride to the roof gave speakeasy vibes and featured a wall that beckoned guests to capture the moment with a photo.

When my friends and I reached the top, we were escorted to a spacious area decorated with greenery and rattan seating.

The space is open, but the low tables and chairs grouped together create smaller spaces that made it more intimate.

The rooftop features 360-degree views of the city and an airy feel reminiscent of being on vacation.

A cluster of thin trees separate the casual space from the other side which features a trendy bar and small tables for a more formal dining experience.

I scanned the menu offerings prior to arriving and was anxious to try one of the creative cocktails.

Mocktails and draft beers are on the menu, but their cocktails intrigued us with their names as well as the ingredients.

The “Feels Like Summer” felt just like my favorite season with a refreshing blend of tequila, pineapple, guava and chili presented in an eclectic cactus mug adorned with a fresh lime wedge and a beautiful tropical flower.

My friends were feeling adventurous and ordered the “Monkey Medicine,” a frothy blend of rum, banana liqueur, coconut, tropical citrus and lime packed with ice and presented in a generous

mug decorated with three vibrant magenta, edible, flowers and the three wise monkeys adorning the rim.

The cocktail was the perfect size for sharing and we all sampled the giant, tropical creation.

We also ordered “Duke’s Pearl,” a white, pearlescent drink just as lovely as its name that was a concoction of rum, passionfruit, pineapple, honey and lime.

We decided to order a variety of the island-themed appetizers to get a taste of everything. We started with the grilled pineapple salsa that was the perfect combination of sweet and salty. The duck egg rolls were a unique take on traditional Asian fare and offered a savory blend of rotisserie duck and cabbage drizzled in sweet chili sauce.

Additionally, we enjoyed succulent pulled pork sliders, spicy jerk wings and the juicy “Kahuna Burger.”

We arrived late in the afternoon and enjoyed the last bit of sunshine. We stayed well into the evening and watched as the lights brought the city to life at night.

No matter the time of day, the views were spectacular, and we took advantage of the Instagram-worthy backdrop.

If you’re looking for a taste of the islands with rooftop views of the city, look no further than Zanzibar. We went on a Saturday, but they offer Happy Hour Sunday-Thursday from 3-6 p.m. Parking can be a task, so plan ahead.

For more information or to see the menu, visit zanzibaratx.com.



Zanzibar features spectacular rooftop views of nightlife in downtown Austin, Texas.



Photos by Janecze Wright, Fort Cavazos Public Affairs

ABOVE, Order a variety of the island-themed menu offerings at Zanzibar in Austin, Texas, for an authentic taste of the Caribbean. **CUTOUT,** “Feels Like Summer” is one of the most beautiful cocktails at Zanzibar.



“Monkey Medicine” is large enough to share at Zanzibar and features the three wise monkeys posed on the rim.



ENTERTAINMENT

PLAY

BLAIR'S BOX OFFICE REVIEWS

From Eggman to rent plans: January's movies hit all right notes

BY BLAIR DUPRE
Sentinel News Editor

January's movies are being praised by critics and moviegoers, giving a great start to 2025.

'Sonic the Hedgehog 3'

In this third installment of the Sonic the Hedgehog series, audiences follow Sonic (Ben Schwartz), Knuckles (Idris Elba) and Tails (Collen O'Shaughnessey) as they face a new enemy, Shadow (Keanu Reeves).

Of course, Jim Carrey returns as Doctor Eggman along with Agent Stone (Lee Majdoub) and Tom (James Marsden) and Maddie Wachowski (Tika Sumpter).

Many "third movies" have lost steam when compared to their predecessors, but "Sonic the Hedgehog 3" makes it seem like they're just getting started.

Shadow was featured in the post-credits scene of "Sonic the Hedgehog 2," and Reeves has said during the press tour for "Sonic the Hedgehog 3" he felt pressure to deliver a great performance in the role after seeing fan reactions to Shadow's unveiling. I can promise you he delivers.

Still the standout for me was Carrey, as I couldn't stop smiling and laughing from the moment he came on screen. Quick one-liners from Sonic and Eggman's great comedic acting knocked this movie out of the park for me.

I highly recommend giving this film a watch, and don't forget to watch both post-credits scenes.

'One of Them Days'

"One of Them Days" follows best friends Dreux (Keke Palmer) and Alyssa (SZA) as they overcome obstacles of a particularly challenging day as they find themselves with no rent money and only hours to pay up.

In their efforts to obtain the money, smaller incidents snowball into bigger ones that put their friendship to the test.

I watched this comedy when I myself was having "one of them days," and it was just what I needed to turn my mood around. It was nice to see someone else struggling to get through the challenges of their day; granted, Dreux and Alyssa's day was much worse than mine.

The standout performer for me was Palmer. She portrayed Dreux with a great balance of humor and heart making her feel really relatable. I also enjoyed the character of Berniece (Aziza Scott), as she added a lot of humor to the film as well.

If you're looking to enjoy a movie with your girlfriends or are just a fan of good comedies, I recommend giving "One of Them Days" a watch.

This film is rated "R" and is meant for adult audiences. Please watch at your own discretion.



Courtesy of Paramount Pictures



Courtesy of Sony Pictures

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 <p>Everest</p> <p>4-yr-old, Great Pyrenees mix, brown & white, female.</p>	<div>ADOPTED</div>  <p>Mac</p> <p>8-yr-old, German shepherd/Siberian husky, cream & tan, male.</p>	<div>ADOPTED</div>  <p>Jangle</p> <p>2-yr, 1-mo-old, boxer mix, brown brindle, male.</p>	<div>ADOPTED</div>  <p>Richard</p> <p>3-yr-old, domestic short-haired tabby, brown, male.</p>	<div>ADOPTED</div>  <p>Velma</p> <p>9-mo-old, border collie/pit bull, black & white, female.</p>	<div>ADOPTED</div>  <p>Brownie</p> <p>1-yr-old, border collie mix, brown, female.</p>

DIVARTY Soldiers honor National Blood Donor Month with blood drive

BY SGT. JONATHAN GOMEZ
DIVARTY

The 1st Cavalry Division Artillery honored National Blood Donor Month with a blood drive Jan. 10 at the Robertson Blood Center at Fort Cavazos. Soldiers lined up at the center throughout the day to donate, demonstrating their commitment to saving lives and supporting the military community.

After the blood drive, Soldiers participated in a reflective session titled “The Gift of Life,” where they shared personal experiences and thoughts about the importance of donating blood. For many, donating was significant.

Maj. Brandon Eans, operations planner, DIVARTY, addressed the Soldiers during the reflection, emphasizing the event’s significance.

“Every drop of blood donated today carries the potential to save a life,” he said. “It’s a reminder that our actions can have a profound impact, no matter how small. National Blood Donor Month is a time to celebrate those who give and inspire others to join. Today, we came together to ensure hope and support for those in need.”

During the reflection, Sgt. 1st Class Charles Perkins, home station mission command first sergeant, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, DIVARTY, asked the group whose first time it was donating blood. Roughly five Soldiers raised their hands, shifting the discussion to how meaningful it was for first-time donors to participate and contribute to such an important cause.

The winter and colder months challenge blood donation centers, as donor turnout typically declines. Staff Sgt. Jose Gonzalez, fire control noncommissioned officer, DIVARTY, reflected on the importance of stepping up during these times.

“There’s always a need for blood, but this time of year is harder for donation centers,” he said. “Knowing that makes it even more important for us to show up and give.”

The blood drive highlighted the Army’s commitment to service and the resilience of its community.

“This is about more than donating blood,” Perkins noted. “It’s about being there for each other and the people who depend on us.”

Through this event, DIVARTY continued its legacy of service, showing how small actions can have a monumental impact.

“Every drop represents hope, sacrifice and the willingness to make a difference,” Eans said. “That’s what being a Soldier is all about.”

For more information on the Robertson Blood Center or how to donate blood, call 254-285-5808, or visit the center at Bldg. 2250, 761st Tank Battalion Avenue.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jose Gonzalez, DIVARTY

Staff Sergeant Anthony Reeves, fire control sergeant, 1st Cavalry Division Artillery, donates blood during the DIVARTY Blood Drive Jan. 10 at the Robertson Blood Center at Fort Cavazos.



FORT CAVAZOS CHAPEL SERVICES



CATHOLIC

Sunday Mass, 9 a.m., Main Chapel, [facebook.com/FrCavazosRomanCatholic](#)
Noon Mass, Monday through Friday, Main Chapel
Confession after Mass or by appointment, call 254-286-6749, Main Chapel

PROTESTANT

St. George Parish (Anglican, Lutheran, Episcopalian), Sunday, 9 a.m., Old Post Chapel, [facebook.com/SaintGeorgeFortCavazos](#)

SPANISH PROTESTANT

Alcance, Sunday, 1:30 p.m., Veterans OIF Chapel.

GOSPEL CONGREGATION

Gospel Service, Sunday, 11 a.m., Memorial Chapel, [facebook.com/ComancheHappeningsNow](#)

TRADITIONS

Traditions Service, Sunday, 10 a.m., Ironhorse Chapel, [facebook.com/groups/jhtpsw/](#)

CHAPEL NEXT

Contemporary Service, Sunday, 11:15 a.m., Main Chapel, [facebook.com/FortCavazosChapelNext](#)

OPEN TABLE

All-Inclusive Christian Chapel, [facebook.com/OpenTableChapel](#)

WFC PROTESTANT

Non-Denominational Protestant, Sunday, 11:00 a.m., West Fort Cavazos Chapel

JEWISH

Shabbat Service, Friday, 6 p.m., Lucky 16 Chapel

MUSLIM

Friday Jummah Prayers at 1:30 p.m., 25th Street Chapel

OPEN CIRCLE

Camp Finlayson, contact Linn Vodisek, [vodiseklinn@gmail.com](#)

BUDDHIST

Soku Gakkai International (SGI) Nichiren, Online, contact Martin Bonner, 254-258-0844
Theraveda, Thursday, 10:00 a.m., Rugged Spirit Chapel, Contact Chap. Guan Zhen, 213-281-1927

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ADDITIONAL SERVICES/STUDY

Children in the Middle, call 254-288-1913 to reserve, Family Life Chaplain Training Center
Men of Honor, Contact Ken Wooten, 254-466-6254
Protestant Women of the Chapel (PWOC), Tuesday, 9-11:30 a.m., Main Chapel, [facebook.com/FortCavazosPWOC](#)
Mothering Bluebonnets, [facebook.com/FortCavazosMotheringBluebonnets](#)
Club Beyond-High School, Contact Frank Ayala, [fayala@clubbeyond.org](#)
Club Beyond-Middle School, Contact Frank Ayala, [fayala@clubbeyond.org](#)

Catholic Women of the Chapel (CWOC), Tuesdays from 9:30-11:30 a.m., bimonthly Thursday 5-7 p.m., Main Chapel. Facebook: Fort Cavazos CWOC (Catholic Women of the Chapel)
Catholic Youth Ministry-Crusaders, 8-12 grades, Contact Maria Fuavia, 573-842-8181
Catholic Religious Education-CCE, Wednesday, 5:30-7:30 p.m., Main Chapel, Contact Maria Fuavai, 254-287-0241

* Holiday hours and events are posted on the Garrison Chaplain’s Facebook page, [facebook.com/FortCavazosChaplain*](#)

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HEALTH

CRDAMC PA receives Army PA of Year award



Photo by Rodney Jackson, CRDAMC Public Affairs

Capt. Matthew Perdue, a physician assistant, or PA, at Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center, receives an Army Commendation Medal from Lt. Gen. Kevin D. Admiral, commander of III Armored Corps and Fort Cavazos, in recognition of being one of the Phantom Lethal Warriors of the Week during a ceremony Jan. 10 at III Armored Corps Headquarters at Fort Cavazos. Perdue was also named U.S. Army Surgeon General PA of the Year.

BY RODNEY JACKSON
CRDAMC Public Affairs

Capt. Matthew Perdue, a physician assistant at Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center, was recognized as one of the Phantom Lethal Warriors of the Week by Lt. Gen. Kevin D. Admiral, commander of III Armored Corps and Fort Cavazos, during a ceremony Jan. 10 at III Armored Corps Headquarters.

Perdue serves in a dual role as Interservice Physician Assistant, or PA, Program phase II clinical coordinator and program director for the Emergency Medicine PA, or EMPA, Program at CRDAMC.

He received the award after being named the U.S. Army Surgeon General PA of the Year and will receive that award from Lt. Gen. Mary Izaguirre, U.S. Army surgeon

general and commanding general of U.S. Army Medical Command, later this year.

“This Phantom Warrior Awards ceremony is our opportunity to recognize excellence in our formations,” Admiral said. “These are members of Team Cavazos who went above and beyond to help our Soldiers, families and members of the Central Texas community.”

“It’s unusual, but he is fulfilling two full-time program director billets in our hospital,” said Col. Christopher Mitchell, medical director of the Interservice PA and the EMPA Programs. “In these roles, he is responsible for the initial and advanced training of PAs, who provide medical care to the majority of our operational force, consistent with the ethos ‘From the Line, For the Line,’ embraced by all Army PAs.”

Perdue also works clinically in the

emergency department, both in the main department and the urgent care zone.

“He is an excellent clinician and is well regarded by his students and colleagues,” Mitchell said. “Captain Perdue is a clear example of the best of the Medical Specialist Corps and is a role model for other PAs.”

Perdue has been a PA for a little over eight years and a member of the CRDAMC team since 2019.

“It’s an honor,” said Perdue when asked what it meant for him to receive the surgeon general award. “This is a new award, and to be the first to receive it feels like being a part of Army PA history.”

His advice to PAs aspiring to the award is “always demand excellence of yourself.”

“Be the clinician, leader, peer and friend that you would want to have,” he said.



SPECIAL DELIVERIES

NOV. 24, 2024

A son, **Matthias Jacob**, to Jeremy Reyes and Emily Castillo, 1st Cav. Div.

NOV. 25, 2024

A daughter, **Aria Sofia**, to Johnny and Maria Ramirez, 2nd ABCT.

NOV. 26, 2024

A daughter, **Elizabeth Joy**, to Adrian and Hannah Roppolo.

NOV. 28, 2024

A daughter, **Alora Isla**, to Richard and Kyah Guzman.

A son, **Lucas James**, to Daniel and Trinity Campbell.

NOV. 29, 2024

A son, **Ronin Malana**, to Mason Long and Victoria Rodriguez, 1st and 2nd ABCT.

DEC. 4, 2024

A son, **Kellen Lewis**, to Matthew and Lisa Pratt.

A daughter, **Emma Paige**, to Adam and Kristina Frazier.

A son, **Santo Emiliano**, to Sean and Latisha Reyes.

DEC. 5, 2024

A daughter, **Leilani Valeria**, to Xavier Sena and Jasmine Jones, 1st Air Cav. Bde.

DEC. 24, 2024

A son, **Emiliano**, to Dani Marcelo and Annalee Olivares, DIVARTY.

A son, **Karlos Alexander Elijah**, to Christopher Wade and Karla Perez, III Armored Corps.



Payment deadline extended

If you live in the West Region, you now have until Feb. 28 to make a payment to TriWest.



Graphic courtesy of TRICARE Communications

TRICARE beneficiaries who live in the West Region now have until Feb. 28 to set up payment with the new West Region contractor, TriWest Healthcare Alliance.

TriWest beneficiaries’ payment deadline extended

BY RODNEY JACKSON
CRDAMC Public Affairs

TRICARE beneficiaries who live in the West Region now have until Feb. 28 to set up payment with the new West Region contractor, TriWest Healthcare Alliance.

Beneficiaries who pay for TRICARE coverage using a bank electronic funds transfer, credit card or debit card, must change their recurring payment information to TriWest prior to the new deadline, and those who don’t act by these dates will be disenrolled, retroactive to Jan. 1.

The Feb. 28 payment deadline has been extended for those enrolled in a TRICARE premium-based plan (TRICARE Young Adult, TRICARE Reserve Select or TRICARE Retired Reserve) and TRICARE Prime or TRICARE Select.

The latest deadline extension comes as a number of beneficiaries and health care providers have reported difficulty with the TriWest online portal, including long wait times to reach TriWest’s call center.

TriWest is bringing on additional staff to reduce wait time and ensure TRICARE beneficiaries get their questions

answered or can transfer payment information to maintain health care coverage.

Many beneficiaries have active referrals in the West Region that have not yet been authorized by TriWest. All active referrals and preauthorizations from the previous contractors (Health Net Federal Services or Humana) that were issued before Jan. 1, 2025, will be honored by TriWest and will be valid through their expiration or June 30, 2025, whichever comes first. The TRICARE Health Plan team is working directly with TriWest to actively process all existing referrals. Beneficiaries can check their referral status or get assistance by visiting the TriWest online or calling 888-874-9378.

How to set up your payments

The easiest and fastest way to set up payments with TriWest is through their secure portal.

1. Visit the TriWest portal at tricare-bene.triwest.com/signin.
2. Select the “New User? Sign Up Now” option.
3. Beneficiaries will be asked to input their email address. A verification code will be sent.
4. Check the email for the verification code. Then, enter it

to continue. Beneficiaries should ensure they enter the correct Benefits Number when asked. Enter the Benefits Number without dashes. (Beneficiaries can obtain their 11-digit Benefits Number from the back of their uniformed services ID card. See “Showing Your ID to Providers” to locate the Benefits Number on the ID card. It provides a picture graph of ID and common access cards showing the Benefits Number, which is different than a Department of Defense ID number.)

5. Complete the information requested (name, address, etc.) in the secure forms.
6. Select a payment method.
7. Complete all fields.
8. Submit.

Beneficiaries can also download an Automatic Monthly TRICARE Payment Set Up Request Form, located on tricare.millwest. Complete the form and mail it to the address on page two. This form is for recurring monthly payments.

If beneficiaries run into any issues with these options, they can call TriWest customer service at 888-TRIWEST (874-9378) and provide their payment information over the phone. Call volume is heavy now, so please be patient.



Soldiers, many of whom are completing mobilization training at North Fort Cavazos, and Gatesville community members fill their plates during the 17th annual Gatesville Military Appreciation Fish Fry Friday night at the Gatesville Civic Center at Gatesville, Texas. The event hosted approximately 375 people from Fort Cavazos and Gatesville.

Gatesville citizens welcome Soldiers with annual fish fry

BY HEATHER ASHLEY
Sentinel Assistant Editor

GATESVILLE, Texas — Community members shared their hometown hospitality Friday night at the 17th annual Gatesville Military Appreciation Fish Fry at the Gatesville Civic Center.

Gatesville Volunteer Fire Department members fried 270 lbs of catfish and hushpuppies and event volunteers served side dishes and iced tea as Gatesville residents, city and Coryell County elected officials and approximately 375 Soldiers from Fort Cavazos commingled.

The fish fry is a perennial favorite event for Gatesville Mayor Gary Chumley.

“Of all my duties as mayor of Gatesville, this is my most favorite activity I get to take part in,” Chumley said.

He and his wife, Kim, enjoy meeting with the Soldiers and hearing about their communities while sharing a part of their own Central Texas community.

“They say ‘this reminds me of my hometown,’” Gary said. “That’s the greatest compliment I can think of.”

Royal Netherlands Air Force Sgt. Maj. Frank Mulder, 302nd Squadron, RNLAf, said the welcome he felt in Gatesville was deeply appreciated.

“It’s a very welcoming feeling,” he said about the reception. “It feels like a warm blanket.”

For Mulder and his fellow Dutch airmen, the appreciation and gratitude they receive in the U.S. is a different experience for them.

“The military is more a part of the community here,” he explained. “Texans are the nicest people in the states.”

Maj. Roel Van Esch, deputy commander, 302nd Sqdrn., RNLAf, agreed, adding the support of the community is helpful to their training mission.

“We need to train and we can’t do that without the support of the community,” Van Esch said. “We have a very welcomed feeling.”

Creating that welcome and that hometown-away-from-home feeling is the objective of the fish fry each year.

Carla Manning, Gatesville Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs representative and Fort Cavazos Good Neighbor, said the annual event began as a way for the community to wrap their arms around the Soldiers following the Nov. 5, 2009, mass shooting at Fort Cavazos.

Gatesville and the Soldiers loved the fish fry and relationships forged so much the event became an annual occurrence.

This year, the event had 375 between Soldiers, elected officials, area civic members, veterans and others who want to support the troops.

The partnership shows no signs of ending.

“We’re very blessed to have all of you come and join us for this event,” Manning said, addressing the Soldiers during her remarks. “It always warms

our hearts to see the military and we get to show them a little Texas hospitality.”

Most of the Soldiers in attendance this year are completing mobilization training at North Fort Cavazos under First Army Division West.

First Army Division West Commanding General Maj. Gen. William A Ryan III mentioned Soldiers from Texas, Nevada, Arizona, Colorado and Pennsylvania were in attendance.

He encouraged his Soldiers to spend time with the community members and build relationships with the community, noting Gatesville is Div. West’s partner city.

“Make sure you take the time to meet, talk with and thank all the great people here in Gatesville who do this for all of us and so much more,” he said. “You’ll meet some great new friends here, I promise you, and they are squarely in your corner.”

Ryan thanked the Gatesville community members for all they do.

“It’s always wonderful to be with all of you,” he said, “and thanks for your continued partnership, leadership and support to our Soldiers and our families. We know how lucky we are and no one loves their Army more than the citizens of this great city.”



Gatesville Volunteer Fire Department firefighters prepare catfish for the fish fry during the 17th annual Gatesville Military Appreciation Fish Fry Friday the Gatesville Civic Center at Gatesville, Texas.



Gatesville Mayor Gary Chumley and his wife, Kim, chat with Royal Netherlands Air Force Sgt. Maj. Frank Mulder, 302nd Squadron, RNLAf, as First Army Division West Command Sgt. Maj. Vincent Simonetti looks on during the 17th annual Gatesville Military Appreciation Fish Fry Friday at the Gatesville Civic Center at Gatesville, Texas.

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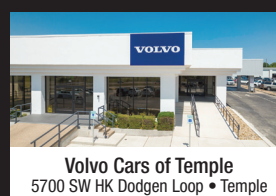
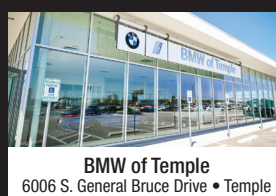


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