

THURSDAY, AUG. 21, 2025

THE FORT JACKSON

LEADER

"VICTORY"

TEAM JACKSON WELCOMES SHOAF AS

NEW PCSM



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Army launches annual climate survey

Army Public Affairs

The Army launched its annual Defense Organizational Climate Survey campaign to gather valuable feedback from Soldiers and Department of the Army Civilians about their unit or organization's command climate, unit cohesion, and leadership.

The survey is now open and takes approximately 20 minutes to complete: www.surveysdrc.com/DEOCS. It's 100% anonymous and a valuable opportunity to provide critical feedback that drives organizational change, strengthening the profession and workforce.

"The DEOCS is a valuable tool that allows Soldiers and DA Civilians to share honest and constructive feedback about the command climate, said Lacresha Snow, Army Military Equal Opportunity program director. "It's an Army-wide command priority, and all Soldiers and Civilians should take it."

The DEOCS is a mixed-method survey conducted by the Department of Defense Office of People Analytics to help commanders and leaders understand and improve the organization's climate.

OPA recently rolled out a new version, DEOCS 5.1, that captures more nuanced insights with fewer questions. It also enables trend analysis over time.

The survey explores individuals' experiences within their unit or organizations and with their supervisors and leaders. The combined respons-



Photo by NATHAN CLINEBELLE

Flags from the different schools comprising the Leader Training Brigade stand during the combined change of command/change of responsibility ceremony, June 25.

es provide leaders with important insight about the current climate and help to identify emerging or existing challenges that negatively impact their unit.

"The data provided in the DEOCS not only tells a story, but it also provides the tools necessary for leaders to bring about positive change that directly affects the well-being of team members and enhances unit readiness, said Snow.

Emphasizing the importance of everyone doing their part to make the Army better, Secretary of the Army Daniel Driscoll, said, "I expect our leaders and employees to support the Army's commitment to building and maintaining trust in our units," in a policy memo.

"The DEOCS is more than a checkbox – it's a direct line to share honest feedback," said Snow. "The positive impact it can have for Soldiers and Civilians is more than worth the effort."

5 Things You Should Know about AT Awareness Month

1. The Army has proclaimed August as Antiterrorism Awareness Month
2. This month is to instill heightened awareness and vigilance to prevent acts of terror
3. Every Battalion size element SHOULD have an Antiterrorism Officer (ATO)
4. There are Random AT Measures (RAMs) that your unit can do to help deter would be threat actors
5. One report or call can be the difference between thwarting an act of terror and disaster

SEE SOMETHING? SAY SOMETHING!
(803) 751-3113/3114

Or Dial 911 in an Emergency



We Make American Soldiers!

ON THE COVER

Post Command Sgt. Maj. William M. Shoaf receives the Fort Jackson colors from Maj. Gen. Daryl O. Hood, post commander during a change of responsibility ceremony, Aug. 15.



Photo by ROBERT TIMMONS

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THE FORT JACKSON LEADER

Fort Jackson, South Carolina 29207

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Lummer signs on as Adjutant General chief

Story, photos by
ROBERT TIMMONS
Fort Jackson Public Affairs

Col. R. Arron Lummer became the 23rd chief of the Adjutant General Corps and the 37th commandant of the AG School during a ceremony held Aug. 19 in the Soldier Support Institute auditorium.

Lummer assumed the titles after receiving the AG School colors from Col. Jason Edwards, SSI commander during the ceremony. Edwards received the colors from Col. Chesley Thigpen before passing them to Lummer.

The ceremony is simple and full of tradition. The passing of the colors is the key to a change of commandant ceremony as the banner served as a rallying point during war time. When Edwards passed the colors it represented the school never being without a leader.

Edwards praised Thigpen's efforts over the past few years including leading a team to develop a new military occupational specialty for recruiters. The process normally takes 5 years – Thigpen got it done in one.

Thigpen is leaving to become the Army Training Center and Fort Jackson's deputy commanding officer.

The transition was seamless between the two leaders, Edwards said. "What you see on both sides of the aisle here today is humble."

"You're humble leaders focused on the mission, focused on the training, and focused on Soldiers," he added. "So, thank you for making this a seamless transition."



Col. R. Arron Lummer, Adjutant General Corps chief and AG School commandant, speaks during a ceremony, Aug. 19.



Col. R. Arron Lummer, chief of the Adjutant General Corps and AG School commandant, receives the colors from Col. Jason Edwards, Soldier Support Institute commander during a change of commandant ceremony held Aug. 19. Lummer assumed duties from Col. Chesley Thigpen.

**I AM IMMENSELY PROUD
TO BE ON THIS TEAM**

- Col. R. Arron Lummer
Adjutant General School
commandant

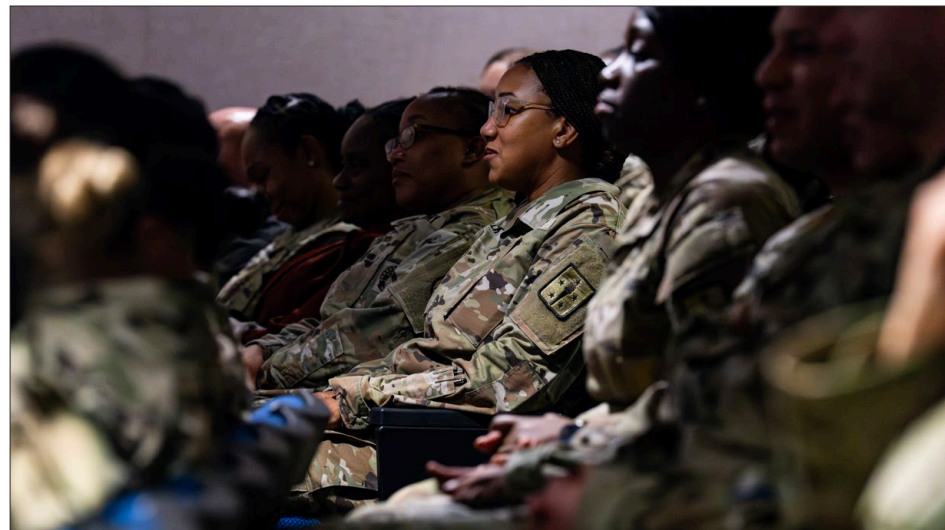
Lummer comes to Fort Jackson from Korea where he was the Assistant Chief of Staff, G1, for Eighth Army.

"I think most will find Arron to be the right Soldier to lead the branch into the future," Edwards said. "The AG School and its amazing personnel are ready for you."

Lummer said he is proud to be chosen for the position.

"I'm immensely proud to be on this team," he said to the AG Soldiers present at the ceremony. "These are tough, exciting times, and we have a lot of work to do, and I absolutely believe that there's virtue in action – so let us get to it."

"Number 37 is on the net, sir."



An adjutant general Soldier watches as Col. Jason Edwards, Soldier Support Institute commander, speaks during the AG School change of commandant ceremony, Aug. 19.

Community Updates

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Safety Training

The Installation Safety Office presents various safety training classes. To register for the Army Traffic Safety Training or Local Hazards training classes, go to the website <https://airs.safety.army.mil/default.aspx>. To register for the Unit Safety Officer training, contact your safety specialist.

■ Advance Riders Cours: Sept. 9 (6 seats open)

■ Basic Riders Course: Sept. 29-Oct. 1 (3 seats open)*

■ Intermediate Drivers Course: Sept. 18 (25 seats open)

■ Local Hazards Course: Every Monday at 10 a.m. (except holidays)

■ Unit Safety Officer Course: Oct. 7-8 (20 seats open)— send your designated Safety Officer an email to register

■ Heat Illness Prevention Training: Every Monday at 1 p.m. (except holidays) at Strom Thurmond Bldg., Room 207.

* Safety officials encourage those wishing to attend in case of no shows.

First Friday Golf

Maj. Gen. Daryl O. Hood, Fort Jackson commander, invites you to join him for First Friday Golf the first Friday of every month. This is a Captain's Choice event and will begin at 11:30 a.m. at the Fort Jackson Golf Club. You may enter your own team or sign up as a single and be paired with a group. Entry fee is \$45 for FJGC members and \$55 for non-members. The entry fee includes applicable greens fee, user Fee, cart, prizes, and a boxed lunch. Register by calling the pro

shop, at (803) 562-4437.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

UNTIL TOMORROW

Kickball Tournament

Hilton Field Sports Complex. The "Just Kicking It" Kickball Tournament. will take place at Hilton Field Sports Complex. , 6:45 p.m. today and 5:30 pm. tomorrow. A Department of Defense ID card is required to register. An interest meeting will be held Tuesday at the Solomon Center. Letter of Intent must be turned in by Aug 19. For more information and to register, call (803) 751-3096.

AUG. 26

Intramural Golf League

Fort Jackson Golf Club. An Intramural "ParTee" Golf League begins Aug. 26 and Department of Defense ID card required to register. The Letter of Intent deadline is Tuesday and an interest meeting will be held Aug. 25. For more information, call (803) 751-3096.

SEPT. 3

Community Lunch

Noon to 1 p.m., Main Post Chapel Fellowship Hall. The Fort Jackson community invited to attend a lunch with food, fellowship, fun and a brief inspirational message. The lunch is held on the first Wednesday of the month.. For more information, call (803) 751-3979.

SEPT. 5

Lunch and Learn with Sew and Heal

11:30 a.m., Bldg. 9810 Liberty Division Road. Join this class to use sewing as a coping skill and make a small craft. This

event is part of Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. For more information, call (803) 751-2915.

SEPT. 6

5K Run/Walk for the Fallen

7 a.m., Hilton Field. Come join Fort Jackson in honoring the fallen Soldiers and their families. Registration begins at 7 a.m., opening remarks at 7:45 a.m., and the run/walk begins at 8. For more information, call (803) 751-5256.

Private Weapons Day

10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Aachen Range.

Shooters can shoot at targets between 25m and 200m. Paper targets, spotting scopes, tables and chairs are provided. Patrons can shoot rifle or pistol at a Day rate or on an hourly rate. Pre-register at Marion Street Station: \$25 per person for all day (4 hours), \$10 per person per hour (pre-register), \$15 per person per hour (day onsite/cash only). Ensure all weapons are registered on post. No automatic weapons or .50 cal allowed. Age 12 and up, 17 and younger must be accompanied by an adult. Open to All authorized ID card holders. For more information, call (803) 751-3484.

SEPT. 8 TO NOV. 4

Fall Intramural Basketball League

Solomon Center. A Department of Defense ID required to play and the deadline for submitting a letter of intent is Sept. 5. An Interest meeting will be held Sep 8. This is a Commander's Cup event. Sign up today: For more information call (803) 751-3096.

SEPT. 10

Fort Jackson Movie Schedule

3319 Jackson Blvd.

Phone: 751-7488

SATURDAY, AUG. 23

■ No Showing

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 27

■ No Showing

- All shows start at 2 p.m.
- Ticket sales open 30 minutes before each movie.
- Movie times and schedule are subject to change without notice.

SafeTALK Seminar

9 a.m., Bldg. 9810 Liberty Division Road. You are invited to attend this seminar taught by the S.C. Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities. The objective of the seminar is to share ways to be alert of someone thinking of suicide and how to connect them with resources. This event is part of Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. For more information, call (803) 751-2915.

SEPT. 13

Beaufort Tour

7 a.m. to 7 p.m., 5450 Strom Thurmond Blvd. Join Army Community Service for a newcomer's orientation "area tour" to Beaufort, South Carolina. Take a land and

See **EVENTS:** Page 10

THE FORT JACKSON LEADER

SEND ALL SUBMISSIONS TO

usarmy.jackson.93-sig-bde.mbx.atzj-pao@army.mil

Deadline for events to be included in the Community Updates is one week before publication. Include the time, date and place the event will occur, as well as other necessary information.

If you submit an article on an event that already has taken place, please send it as soon as possible. Tuesday is the last day we will be able to accept an article for publication the following

Thursday. Include the date and place of the event, as well as a description of what took place. Please include quotations, if possible.

With any photo you submit, include IDs — rank, unit, and first and last names. All submissions will be edited and published using Associated Press Style.

Questions? Call (803) 751-3615.

Rugby team gains confidence at Jackson course



Athletes with the University of South Carolina's Rugby Team conducted several obstacles at the Confidence Obstacle Course under supervision and coaching provided by Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 34th Infantry Regiment cadre.

By Staff Sgt. James McCann

Guard helps protect DC

By **DAVID VERGUN**
DOD News

On Aug. 11, President Donald J. Trump declared a crime emergency in the nation's capital and vowed to make streets there safe again.

Within 24 hours, National Guardsmen were assisting law enforcement in Washington, said Army Lt. Col. John E. Landry of the Army outreach office in the Pentagon.

Their initial mission is to provide a visible presence in key public areas, serving as a crime deterrent. They will not arrest, search or direct law enforcement. While they will not conduct arrests, guardsmen have the authority to temporarily detain individuals to prevent imminent harm, ensuring that custody is promptly transferred to law enforcement authorities, he said.

They are equipped with personal protective equipment, including body armor; weapons are available if needed but will remain in the armory. The first teams on the ground are using primarily multipurpose wheeled vehicles. Future requirements will be determined based on the evolving needs of the supported law enforcement agencies, Landry said.

As of this morning, there were approximately 680 District of Columbia National Guard soldiers and 130 D.C. Air National Guard members in Washington, according to an official from Joint Task Force District of Columbia, the unit tasked with leading them.

As of now, West Virginia is the only state that has authorized National Guard troops to be mobilized. The governors of Mississippi, South Carolina and Ohio have made announcements that they will ultimately

See **GUARD**, Page 9



The color guard from the U.S. Army Drill Sergeant Academy stands at ease.



The Fort Jackson Salute Battery fires off a volley in honor of former Post Command Sgt. Maj. Erick Ochs during a change of responsibility ceremony held Aug. 15.



Post Command Sgt. Maj. William M. Shoaf receives the Fort Jackson colors from Maj. Gen. Daryl O. Hood, post commander during a ceremony where he assumed authority of the installation from Command Sgt. Maj. Erick Ochs.

Jackson welcomes Shoaf as ... post sergeant major

Story, photos by
ROBERT TIMMONS
Fort Jackson Public Affairs

Fort Jackson welcomed Command Sgt. Maj. William M. Shoaf, home to South Carolina and as its senior enlisted leader during a ceremony held Aug. 15 on Victory Field.

Shoaf assumed responsibility for the Army Training Center and Fort Jackson from Command Sgt. Maj. Erick Ochs.

The ceremony was bittersweet as Shoaf was welcomed into Team Jackson while Ochs bid farewell.

Shoaf, from North Augusta, South Carolina, officially took over after receiving the unit colors from Fort Jackson Commanding General, Maj. Gen. Daryl O. Hood.

The passing of the colors is the first official act Shoaf will complete as Fort Jackson's senior enlisted advisor.

Hood said the ceremony is "truly a representation of a transition," and that he is "very pleased" to be part of Team Jackson.

"It's been my privilege and pleasure to see your phenomenal efforts ... that didn't just start when I arrived, but happened back on March 10, 2023, when you assumed responsibility," said Hood to Ochs during the ceremony. "I do want to say, thanks so much for being my battle buddy, for being on that is not only my advisor, but can also help me to check the azimuth and adjust as necessary."

Even though it was tough seeing Ochs go, Hood said he was "excited" for Shoaf taking over.

"I'm excited for you," said Hood who presided over the ceremony. "I've known your background and your reputation. You know, at this level, your character precedes you just like your reputation ... Your assignment history certainly speaks volumes in and of itself."

Shoaf enlisted in the Army as a military policeman in 1997. He has held multiple leadership positions in his career including first sergeant, battalion and brigade command sergeant major, and regimental command sergeant major for the Military Police Corps Regiment.

He also deployed multiple times including a tour in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and twice to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

"I want to thank you for allowing me this opportunity," he said to Hood during the ceremony. "It's a great opportunity and a great privilege to serve with you and the alongside this phenomenal team as we, as a greater community, make American Soldiers."

He said he is "incredibly" honored to be Fort Jackson's 28th post command sergeant major.

"I'm here to serve you," Shoaf said to Fort Jackson during the ceremony. "That's my purpose. Our Army mission is to make American Soldiers, and we'll do that together."

Shoaf took over responsibility for a post that is constantly at work.

Fort Jackson accomplished many feats during Ochs's tenure, including training 77,920 Soldiers; producing 4,813 drill sergeants; processing 111,000 patients at Moncrief Army Health Clinic 111,000 patients; and graduating 3,300 students from master resiliency training.

"Today is not about the past, though, it's about the future," Ochs said. "We have an unlimited potential to continue driving transformation and building readiness in the command."

He said Shoaf is the right person for the job.

"I know you are going to do great," Ochs said to Shoaf. "You're the right leader at the right time in the right office. Enjoy every day. It's going to go fast. You're not going to be able to do everything you want to, but you will change lives."



Sgt. Maj. Jonathan Duncan, Fort Jackson's operations sergeant major, salutes during the ceremony.

Developing Teamwork

Trainees with 1st Battalion, 34th Infantry Regiment had a busy first two weeks of training. They went on their first ruck march, entered the gas chamber and even tried their hand at the Teamwork Development Course.

The TDC is designed to enhance problem-solving by putting trainees through challenging obstacles that require teamwork to complete.



Photos courtesy of 1ST BATTALION, 34TH INFANTRY REGIMENT

Guard

Continued from Page 5

ly support the task force, the official said, adding they haven't received word on the number of West Virginia guardsmen who will be mobilized.

The National Guardsmen are assisting the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department and federal law enforcement partners with monument security, community safety patrols, protecting federal facilities and offices, traffic control posts and area beautification, said Pentagon Press Secretary Kingsley Wilson during a meeting last week with the Pentagon press corps.

The guard's support of local law enforcement is already making an impact in the district.

Air Force Staff Sgt. Amaya, a security forces officer assigned to the 113th Squadron, 113th Wing of the D.C. Air National Guard, was patrolling the National Mall with fellow airmen when he witnessed a

National Park Service police officer being assaulted while directing traffic Aug. 16.

"The park police officer asked for our help, and I was the first one to catch up and was able to detain (the suspect) to the park police and turn him over," Amaya said. "I have grown up and lived my entire life in the (D.C., Maryland and Virginia area). I remember coming here when I was in fifth grade for field trips, and all the way now into my 20s, I'm still coming to D.C. So, I care a lot about this city."

The guard's presence at the National Mall has drawn positive attention from civilians. Service members engage with tourists and residents, taking pictures and providing support to metropolitan police and other security personnel to keep the city safe, Amaya said.

"That's our purpose for being out here," he said. "I would have done that for anybody. I wouldn't (have) just (seen) somebody get attacked and stood by. I would've acted and helped them."

Amaya emphasized the importance of personal interaction, especially in relation to how the National Guard's presence is por-



Photo by NAVY PETTY OFFICER 2ND CLASS ALEXANDER KUBITZA

District visitors capture a photo with U.S. National Guard service members from the 372nd Military Police Battalion in Union Station, Washington D.C., Aug. 14, 2025.

trayed in the media, saying, "I want people to see that we're human beings, we're their neighbors, we're their friends and we're just here to help."

The guard's presence at the National Mall

has drawn positive attention from civilians. Service members engage with tourists and residents, taking pictures and providing support to metropolitan police and other security personnel to keep the city safe.



Photos by VERAN HILL

Joining the retiree roll

Fort Jackson honored the service of Command Sgt. Maj. Erick Ochs, former post command sergeant major; and Command Sgt. Maj. Steven L. Gudiel, 1st Battalion, 13th Infantry Regiment, during the Aug. 14 Basic Combat Training graduation.

Events

Continued from Page 4

sea tour departing downtown Beaufort Marina at the Waterfront Park. We will cruise along the waterfront to get an introduction to Beaufort's incredible history and abundant wildlife. Space is limited and is first come, first served. For more information and to register, call (803) 751-5256, option 3.

SEPT. 16
Community Information Exchange
2-3 p.m., 1917 Club. The Fort Jackson community is invited to join post leaders in a forum to identify issues or concerns in support of the Total Army Family. The forum assists leaders in taking care of the Army Family. For more information, call (803) 751-5670.

SEPT. 20
Fort Gordon trail ride
8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Join us for a horseback

trail ride at Fort Gordon, Ga. horse stables. Novice or pro, this guided ride will be great for those looking for an outdoor adventure. Cost: \$75 per person. Participants must be 7 years old or older. for more information or to register, call Outdoor Recreation at (803) 751-3484.

SEPT. 25
Suicide Prevention Panel
1:30 p.m., Zimmerman Auditorium, 10098 Cherbourg St.. Come listen to three dynamic speakers and panel of facilitators speak about overcoming thoughts of suicide, relationship concerns and resources. This event is part of Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. For more information, call (803) 751-2915.

SEPT. 26
Oktoberfest 2025
4:30 p.m., 1917 Club. Fort Jackson's Oktoberfest Festival kicks off Sept. 26. Check in starts at 4 p.m. with the Volksmarch Walk at 4:30 p.m. (1 Mile). The event costs: \$25. The fee includes beer stein, beer tastings, snack stops and t-shirt. The Oktoberfest Festival starts at 5:30 p.m. There will be vendors, games and live music.. For more information, call (803) 751-3933.

OCT. 1
Community Lunch
Noon to 1 p.m., Main Post Chapel Fellowship Hall. The Fort Jackson community invited to attend a lunch with food, fellowship, fun and a brief inspirational message.. The lunch, held the first Wednesday of the month. For more information, call (803) 751-3979.

OCT. 4
Do it in Pink 5K
8 a.m., Palmetto Falls Water Park. Come out and run for breast cancer awareness. For more information, call (803) 751-3700.

OCT. 4-5
Fall Family Campout
Twin Lakes Park. This overnight family friendly camping event will have fun activities such as games, fishing, s'mores making and arts & crafts. We will provide hot dogs and chips for dinner and coffee and individually wrapped pastries for breakfast. tents, cots, sleep bags & pads, cook stoves/pots and pans are available for rent. For more information, call (803) 751-3484.

OCT. 24
CYS Presents: Fall Festival

6 p.m., Youth Sports Complex, 5975 4th Division Road. Come enjoy the Child, Yourh Services Fall Festival where there will be food trucks, arts and crafts, games, bounce houses, photo booth and DJ Music. For more information, call (803) 751-4824.

OCT. 25
Halloween Archery Class
10 a.m., Heise Pond. Come out and learn how to shoot a bow and arrow. Attendees will decorate a pumpkin and then use it as a target. For more information or to register, call (803) 751-3484.

Zombie 5K
8 a.m. Twin Lakes Park. Come out and enjoy an adult-themed Halloween 5K run where zombie volunteers pop out along the route and will interact/chase runners for a spooky good time. For more information, call (803) 751-3700.

NOV. 5
Community Lunch
Noon to 1 p.m., Main Post Chapel Fellowship Hall. The Fort Jackson community invited to attend a lunch with food, fellowship, fun and a brief inspirational message.

WORSHIP SCHEDULE	FAITH GROUP	DAY	TIME	PLACE
	CATHOLIC MASS	SUNDAY	9:30-10:30 A.M.	MAIN POST CHAPEL
	CATHOLIC MASS	MONDAY-FRIDAY	NOON	MAIN POST CHAPEL
	GOSPEL SERVICE	SUNDAY	10:30 A.M.	KINGS MOUNTAIN CHAPEL
	GENERAL PROTESTANT	SUNDAY	11 A.M. TO NOON	MAIN POST CHAPEL
	REVIVE SERVICE	SUNDAY	5 P.M.	MAIN POST CHAPEL
	JEWISH SHABBOS SERVICE	FRIDAY	6-7 P.M.	CENTURY DIVISION CHAPEL
	INITIAL ENTRY TRAINING	DAY	TIME	PLACE
	CATHOLIC MASS	SUNDAY	8-9 A.M.	SOLOMON CENTER
	PROTESTANT CONSOLIDATED SERVICE	SUNDAY	9:30-10:30 A.M.	SOLOMON CENTER
	CHURCH OF CHRIST	SUNDAY	9-10 A.M.	CENTURY DIVISION CHAPEL
	HISPANIC PROTESTANT SERVICE	SUNDAY	11 A.M. to NOON	SOLOMON CENTER (1st and 3rd Sundays)
	GOSPEL SERVICE	SUNDAY	11 A.M. to NOON	SOLOMON CENTER (2nd and 4th Sundays)
	ANGLICAN	SUNDAY	9:30-10 A.M.	LIGHTNING CHAPEL
	ISLAMIC SERVICE	SUNDAY	8-9 A.M.	LIGHTNING CHAPEL
	JEWISH SERVICE	SUNDAY	10:30-11:30 A.M.	120TH AG BN (for trainees in 120th only)
	THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS	SUNDAY	10:30 A.M. to NOON	CENTURY DIVISION CHAPEL

Hegseth, RFK Jr join physical fitness challenge

By **DAVID VERGUN**
DOD News

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and Robert F. Kennedy Jr., secretary of Health and Human Services, joined service members from five military branches and Defense Department civilians, Aug. 13 to participate in a first-of-its-kind “fitness check.”

The event, held in the Pentagon Athletic Center, featured six, five-person teams representing the Army, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, Marine Corps and DOD. Each team participated in a competition where individuals had to complete 50 pullups and 100 pushups in 10 minutes or less.

“We’re going to have a little fun today — a little competition between departments — and I appreciate you taking part,” Hegseth told the joint force contestants at the event’s outset.

He explained to the group that the fitness check was part of an overall promotion by DOD to highlight the importance of physical fitness throughout the chain of command.

“We’ve talked about (how) we’re going to be fit, not fat; we’ve talked about how we’re going to be ready — it’s a real thing,” Hegseth told the group, adding that it matters what service members look like, how they carry themselves and whether or not they are capable of doing what the job requires of them on a physical level.

In his Jan. 25, 2025, message to the force, Hegseth made it clear that having high standards — including high fitness standards — is one of his top priorities that contribute to restoring the warrior ethos.

In addition to physical fitness, Hegseth said physical health is also a key ingredient to having a successful fighting force, which is why DOD is working with Kennedy and HHS to identify pilot programs to improve the quality of food that troops are consuming.

Kennedy spent his time addressing the group, stating that there is a diabetes crisis among America’s youth, with about 38% of the country’s teens suffering from diabetes.

Additionally, 78% of young Americans don’t qualify for military service, with a failure to meet physical fitness standards being a major factor, Hegseth and Kennedy said.

The secretaries said one of the primary goals of the fitness check is to eventually expand it beyond the military to young Americans in order to encourage them to embrace fitness.



Photo by NAVY PETTY OFFICER 1ST CLASS ALEXANDER KUBITZA
Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth hosts a fitness check with Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. at the Pentagon Athletic Center, Aug. 13.

“(This is) really a challenge to the American people, who — if they’re like my kids — they look up to you guys and gals; they look up and respect the commitment you’ve made,” Hegseth told the service members prior to the fitness check’s start.

The competition itself consisted of two 10-minute rounds, providing the competitors — including Hegseth and Kennedy — the chance to alternate between participating in the pushups and pullups in one round and observing and counting reps for their teammates in the other.

When the competition ended, the Marine Corps team was victorious. One Marine — Gunnery Sgt. Daquan Hye — had the fastest overall completion time for all participants by doing the 50 pullups and 100 pushups in a mere two minutes, 43 seconds.

Hye said maintaining a high level of physical fitness in the military is important for two reasons: sustaining the warfighter mentality and setting high standards.

“When people see you out, they should see by the way you carry yourself — by the way your physique looks — (that) they shouldn’t be surprised when you tell them that (you’re) in the military,” Hye said.

For many participants in the fitness challenge, just having the opportunity to come out in a friendly, joint environment and compete against their fellow service members and civilians was a great experience, win or lose.

“It’s a great competition; it’s great to get out there ... (to) build that team cohesion against the joint forces and also to push ourselves as hard as we can and then set the example for others to follow,” said Army Command Sgt. Maj. Nicholas P. Rockey.

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MY ARMY POST



Civilian of the Quarter

The Army Training Center and Fort Jackson recognizes Lee McCray from the 1st Battalion, 61st Infantry Regiment as Civilian of the Quarter for 3rd Quarter, Fiscal Year 2025.

His outstanding contributions and negotiation skills combined with his ability to excel in streamlining the processing of over 350 trainees this quarter, while simultaneously processing the battalion Ccapters contributed greatly to the Basic Combat Training mission.



LEE MCCRAY
1-61ST

VICTORY... STARTS HERE.



Drill sergeant candidates with the U.S. Army Drill Sergeant Academy's Class 018-25 fire using close combat optics.

Photo by SGT. 1ST CLASS DANA CLARKE