

THURSDAY SEPT. 7, 2023

THE FORT JACKSON LEADER

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ARMY

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Come out and join the 2023 5K Run/Walk for the Fallen - 7 a.m., Sept. 9 on Hilton Field

Army aligns mental health support with Brandon Act

U.S. Army Public Affairs

As part of the Army's ongoing efforts to eliminate the stigma associated with seeking mental health support, the Army has approved a policy empowering Soldiers to request a mental health evaluation through a commander or supervisor in accordance with the Brandon Act. The Army's new Brandon Act policy will allow Soldiers to confidentially seek help through their leaders in the rank of staff sergeant or above,

and it will charge leaders to quickly and confidentially connect Soldiers with resources.

Named after Petty Officer 3rd Class Brandon Caserta, who died by suicide in 2018, the Brandon Act aims to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health care and provide an additional avenue for support. The act allows Soldiers to initiate a self-referred, command-facilitated mental health evaluation for any reason, at any time and in any environment.

"I call on leaders to continue making it clear that taking care

of your mental health and your family is encouraged," Secretary of the Army Christine Wormuth said. "We must constantly look for additional ways to connect our Soldiers with the necessary resources for their well-being, and the Army's new policy to implement the Brandon Act gives Soldiers another tool to seek help while honoring the legacy of Petty Officer Caserta."

Soldiers will not be required to provide a reason or basis to request and receive a referral. Mental health providers will conduct the mental health evaluations as soon as possible and will provide necessary clinical care.

This policy applies to Soldiers in the regular Army, the Army National Guard and the Army Reserve who are on active duty for over 30 days. Guidance for Army National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers not on active duty for more than 30 days is currently under development. Soldiers will continue to have the option to contact a mental health care provider directly, without



Brandon Caserta



The Army has approved a policy to allow Soldiers to confidentially request mental health evaluations through their commanders in accordance with the Brandon Act. The act was named after Navy Petty Officer Brandon Caserta who died by suicide in 2018.

THE ACT ALLOWS SOLDIERS TO INITIATE SELF-REFERRED, COMMAND-FACILITATED MENTAL HEALTH EVALUATIONS FOR ANY REASON.

the involvement of their leadership.

Petty Office Caserta's parents,

Patrick and Teri Caserta, have been a driving force in implementing the Brandon Act across the military services.

"We did not want our son to die in vain," said Patrick Caserta, a retired Navy senior chief combat veteran. "We are in the lifesaving business, and we will remain in this business the rest of our lives. We thank the Secretary of the Army and her staff for implementing this policy."

Additional mental health resources include the 988 Veterans Crisis Line, Military OneSource nonmedical counseling, and the 24/7 Psychological Health Resource Center. For more information, visit Health.mil. Soldier patient rights and confidentiality of health information will be protected in accordance with Public Law 104-191, applicable privacy laws, and Department of Defense privacy regulations.

ON THE COVER

Trainees in the Future Soldier Preparatory Course with 1st Battalion, 61st Infantry Regiment, reach for salads during lunch, Aug. 29.



Photo by ROBERT TIMMONS

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THE FORT JACKSON LEADER

"We Make American Soldiers"

Fort Jackson, South Carolina 29207

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Commanding General Brig. Gen. Jason E. Kelly
Garrison Commander Col. Timothy Hickman
Public Affairs Officer Tom Byrd
Command Information Officer Robert Timmons
Editor Emily Hileman
Social Media Manager Nathan Clinebelle

Website: home.army.mil/jackson/index.php/FortJacksonNews

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BOSS provides opportunities for single service members

By EMILY HILEMAN

Fort Jackson Public Affairs

Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers program creates opportunities for single Soldiers, single Soldiers with children, geographic bachelor(ette)s, and even single service members of sister branches at Fort Jackson.

For many, joining the military was their first taste of freedom, leaving their hometowns, friends and Families behind for better opportunities such as careers only available to service members and education opportunities.

However, it can also create a sense of isolation and loneliness that many had never experienced prior to joining the military and moving away from the only lives they knew. The BOSS program aims to reduce those components and create a sense of community.

"It starts with the single service members," said Staff Sgt. Andy Navos, Fort Jackson BOSS president. "Whether you're a single service member, single parent or geo bachelor. It's made to get everyone out of the barracks and more involved."

The BOSS Program was founded in 1989 to respond to the recreational needs of single service members, who make up 35% of the Army.

BOSS also assists to the growing need for suicide prevention, equal opportunity concerns and sexual harassments and assault incidents that single service members may encounter throughout their careers.

"Soldier suicides are a major concern for senior leaders in the Army," said Fort Jackson Garrison Command Sgt. Maj. Cesar Duran. "And the BOSS program is one tool we use to help single Soldiers and service members socialize, get involved, and have fellowship with others and give them a sense of community."

The activities and events the BOSS program participates in are based on their four pillars of Quality of Life, Community Service, Recreation and Leisure and Life Skills.

BOSS provides opportunities throughout the year for service members to get involved in their community and volun-



Courtesy Photo

Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers members float down the Edisto River during one of the BOSS program outings, June 24. Transportation to and from the river as well as floats were provided for participants.

teer in a variety of ways. BOSS members volunteer their time and resources to assist with blood, food and clothing drives on Fort Jackson as well as helping with various on post events such as the Directorate of Family, Morale, Welfare and Recreation run series.

Volunteers are always needed and hours can be recorded and can be used to obtain the Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal, said Duran. Service members at Fort Jackson only need 200 hours for the year to receive the award.

"There's a little bit of intentional gray area for what is considered a life skill," said Duran. "Here we look at it as anything a Soldier may need to get through life and those ideas and skills vary from service member to service member."

"They've held cooking classes to teach how to cook healthier in the barracks,

... IT'S NOT JUST A
'CHECK THE BLOCK'
TYPE OF PROGRAM...

- Garrison Command
Sgt. Maj. Cesar Duran

wilderness classes and they're going deep-sea fishing at the end of the month," Duran added.

Both single parents and geo bachelors might feel that because they have children or they're married, they can't attend, but the BOSS program knows they're isolated and welcomes them.

"We even hold events where single parents can bring their children like bowling at Century Lanes and the upcoming trip to the Eudora Safari Park in Salley, South Carolina," Navas said.

Although some of the activities such as the safari park and deep-sea fishing, both upcoming events this month, sound expensive, Alec Stoess a recreation assistant and BOSS advisor for the Directorate of Family, Morale, Welfare and Recreation said their events are cost effective.

"If you were to do a paint and sip event

off post, you'd probably pay between \$50-70, but BOSS was able to host the event, provide all materials and even food for \$10 per person," Stoess said. "Deep-sea fishing would normally be about \$100, and we're able to work together to provide it for \$35 per person."

"Every senior leader on Fort Jackson is required to support the BOSS program," said Duran. "Because it's not just a 'check the block' type of program. People have to be invested in the program as participants and leaders."

BOSS provides opportunities for all four pillars several times each month.

Upcoming activities this month are:

- Eudora Safari Park - Sept. 16
- Conceal Carry Class - Sept 22
- Food Drive at the Fort Jackson Fire Department - Sept. 28-29

Those interested in participating in any of the BOSS activities are encouraged to call (803) 629-9781 or email them at ftjacksonboss@gmail.com.

Community Updates

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ArmyIgnitED 101

Are you new to tuition assistance or credentialing assistance? Maybe you are looking from some refresher training. The Fort Jackson Army Continuing Education System is holding ArmyIgnitED 101 briefs every second and fourth Mondays and Wednesdays of each month. The briefings are held virtually, starting at 10 a.m. Mondays, and in person at the Education Center (4600 Strom Thurmond Blvd.) beginning at 10 a.m. Wednesdays. To sign up email your attendance request to usarmy.jackson.93-sig-bed.mbx.dhr-jacksoned-center@army.mil. Walk-ins are welcome.

Guest Day at the Fort Jackson Golf Club

Fort Jackson Golf Club members are now permitted to bring up to three guests. Also on guest days, green fees are waived for a member's guest(s), but each guest must pay cart and user fees. Upcoming Guest Days are: Sept. 14 and 28; Oct. 5, 14, 20 and 29; Nov. 2, 9, 16 and 26; Dec. 2, 8, 14 and 20.

Alpine Lodge now open

Renovations are complete and this lodge is ready for: birthday, holiday, retirement, promotion parties, even weddings. Parties, get togethers, you decide. Includes: amazing location, pond (no swimming) overlooking loft, outdoor porch. Full size kitchen (no stove) tables and chairs. For more information, call Outdoor Recreation at 751-3484.

Solomon Center game room

The Solomon Center has a new Game Room with four pool tables, two table tennis tables, two dart boards and TVs. There is also a small snack concession with tables and chairs to sit and relax out of the South Carolina heat. Hours are Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The game room is open until 7 p.m. on family days.

Lunch Buffet at the NCO Club

Lunch Buffet at the NCO Club is served Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Tuesdays feature soul food. On Wednesdays the NCO Club now offers an all-American Buffet, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Thursdays are themed menus and Friday is all you can eat seafood. The NCO Club is open for breakfast Thursdays from 6:30-8:30 a.m. Ordering is easier than ever through Chow Now, jackson.armymwr.com/categories/social-and-dining.

Tuition Assistance Information

All tuition assistance requests for fiscal year 23 must be submitted and approved prior to 8 p.m. Sept. 7 due to the Army's fiscal year closeout. There will be no exceptions granted. Soldiers should make sure current contact information is in their ArmyIgnitED accounts in the event the education center has questions regarding a submission and/or requires additional information. Soldiers using TA should regularly check their ArmyIgnitED accounts and respond to any messages received; messages are automatically emailed to the email address listed in the ArmyIgnitED account.

Water outage

Some buildings on Fort Jackson will have a temporary loss of heating and hot water from 7 a.m. Sept. 10 to 5 p.m. Sept. 22 as the Directorate of Public Works installs safety measures at a central energy plant on post.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

TODAY

Post Newcomer's Orientation

8 a.m. NCO Club. This orientation is mandatory for all Soldiers and Department of the Army Civilians arriving at Fort Jackson. Spouses are encouraged to attend. This will be a great opportunity for spouses to receive first-hand information

about the valuable available resources on and around Fort Jackson. There will be no on-site childcare for this event. For additional information, call Army Community Service at 751-5256.

FRIDAY

Spouse Federal Resume Workshop

9:30-11:30 a.m., Army Community Service Building, 9810 Lee Road. Are you seeking federal employment? Come learn everything you need to know about: transitioning from private industry to the federal government; writing a correct federal resume; creating effective Knowledge Skills and Abilities; answering "Self-Assessment Questionnaires"; "formatting your resume to be noticed by reviewers; interviewing; and tracking the progress of your application. Topics covered are: USAJobs account, position classification standards and functional guides; breaking down the vacancy announcement adjusting your experience to the vacancy. Call 751-5256 to reserve a seat.

Money & Mindsets

1:30-2:30 p.m., 9180 Lee Road. Army Community Service Financial Readiness Program in partnership with the Ready & Resilient Performance Center will host a "Money & Mindsets" webinar on Microsoft Teams. This webinar will dive into an individual's mindset regarding managing money, effective self-talk, and goal setting. This is a great opportunity to learn about self-motivation, setting and achieving goals that will help you improve the management of your personal finances and achieving financial goals. Registration is required. For more information, or to register, call 751-5256.

Post CSM 2nd Friday Skeet Shoot

1-5 p.m., Aachen Range. Join Outdoor

See **EVENTS:** Page 10



Fort Jackson Movie Schedule

3319 Jackson Blvd.
Phone: 751-7488

SEPT. 8

■ A Million Miles Away (PG) 6 p.m. (Distributor Appreciation Screening - Free Admission)

SEPT. 9

■ The Equalizer 3 (R) 2 p.m.

SEPT. 13

■ Gran Turismo (PG-13) 11 a.m.

■ Mission: Impossible-Dead Reckoning (PG-13) 3 p.m.

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 751-6739.

Pilot awarded Medal of Honor for pitch-black rescue

By **CHRISTOPHER HURD**
Army News Service

President Joe Biden presented Larry Taylor, a Vietnam War Army helicopter pilot, with the Medal of Honor during a ceremony at the White House Sept. 5.

The president upgraded the Silver Star award that Taylor originally received for his heroic actions rescuing a four-person patrol team in 1968.

"When duty called, Larry did everything to answer," Biden said. "Because of that he rewrote the fate of four families for generations to come. That's valor. That's our nation at its very best."

Taylor, was commissioned through the Army Reserve Officer Training Program at the University of Tennessee in 1966. He volunteered as an armor officer before quickly switching to be a pilot, flying some of the Army's first AH-1G Cobra attack helicopters.

After qualifying as an Army aviator, he was sent to Vietnam in August 1967 to serve with D Troop (Air), 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry, 1st Infantry Division. A distress call came into his unit late at night, June 18, 1968. A long-range reconnaissance patrol team of four Soldiers was surrounded and in danger of being overrun.

Then-1st Lt. Larry L. Taylor in his UH-1 "Huey" helicopter. Taylor served in Vietnam from 1967 to 1968 with D Troop (Air), 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry, 1st Infantry Division. He flew over 2,000 combat missions in UH-1 and Cobra helicopters.

Taylor and his co-pilot had two minutes to fire up their Cobra and head out into the darkness. They only knew the general direction of the team. They were unable use the lights on the helicopter because they would give away their position and the position of the patrol team.



Photo by HENRY VILLARAMA

President Joseph R. Biden Jr. presents the Medal of Honor to former U.S. Army Capt. Larry L. Taylor during a ceremony at the White House in Washington, D.C., Sept. 5, 2023. Taylor was awarded the Medal of Honor for his acts of gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty while serving then- as 1st Lt. Taylor, a team leader assigned to Troop D (Air), 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry, 1st Infantry Division, near the hamlet of Ap Go Cong, Republic of Vietnam, June 18, 1968.

"I didn't think I was ever going to find them," Taylor recalled.

The reconnaissance team was hunkered down behind a cart path. They were on a mission in southern Vietnam to track North Vietnamese troop movement when they noticed a large enemy force positioned around them. They tried to escape the same way they came but were quickly surrounded.

Their only option was to take cover and prepare for the fight they knew was coming, said Dave Hill, rear gunner on the patrol team.

The team radioed for air support, which arrived not long after. As Taylor and his co-pilot flew overhead, they made radio contact with the men on the ground.

Taylor asked the patrol team to

mark their location with flares so he and another Cobra crew could differentiate them from the enemy.

"We knew we would be discovered at some point because we were surrounded," Hill said. "We popped the flares, and all hell broke loose."

Bullets and rocket-propelled grenades started flying, some hitting the embankment in front of the Soldiers while others flew over their heads. Seeing enemy muzzle fire, the two Cobra gunships started making attack runs using their mini-guns and aerial rockets. According to reports, both helicopters took on intense ground fire from the enemy.

Both Cobras were close to being out of ammunition running low on fuel. Thinking quickly, Tay-

lor radioed the patrol team with a rescue plan.

He told the other gunship to fire its remaining rounds along the eastern flank of the patrol team. He would fire his remaining rounds along the western flank and then use his landing lights to draw the enemy's attention.

When the two Cobras made their attack runs, Taylor instructed the reconnaissance team to fire the ir claymore mines and run to the nearby rice paddy clearing.

"That will give 'Charlie' something to think about," Taylor said recalling his plan.

They all executed, and the patrol team met Taylor's helicopter at the extraction point. The gunship was a two-seat aircraft with no room for passengers. It touched

down under intense fire, and the Soldiers climbed under the helicopter onto the rocket-pods and landing skids.

Taylor immediately took off and got the helicopter out of firing range. He then dropped the patrol team off at a nearby safe location. Before the Cobra took off again for its return flight to base, the four Soldiers looked up at Taylor and all saluted.

"[Taylor's] innovation was well beyond the call [of duty], as was his courage," Hill said. Asked what chance of survival the team had without Taylor's actions, Hill responded empathically, "absolutely zero."

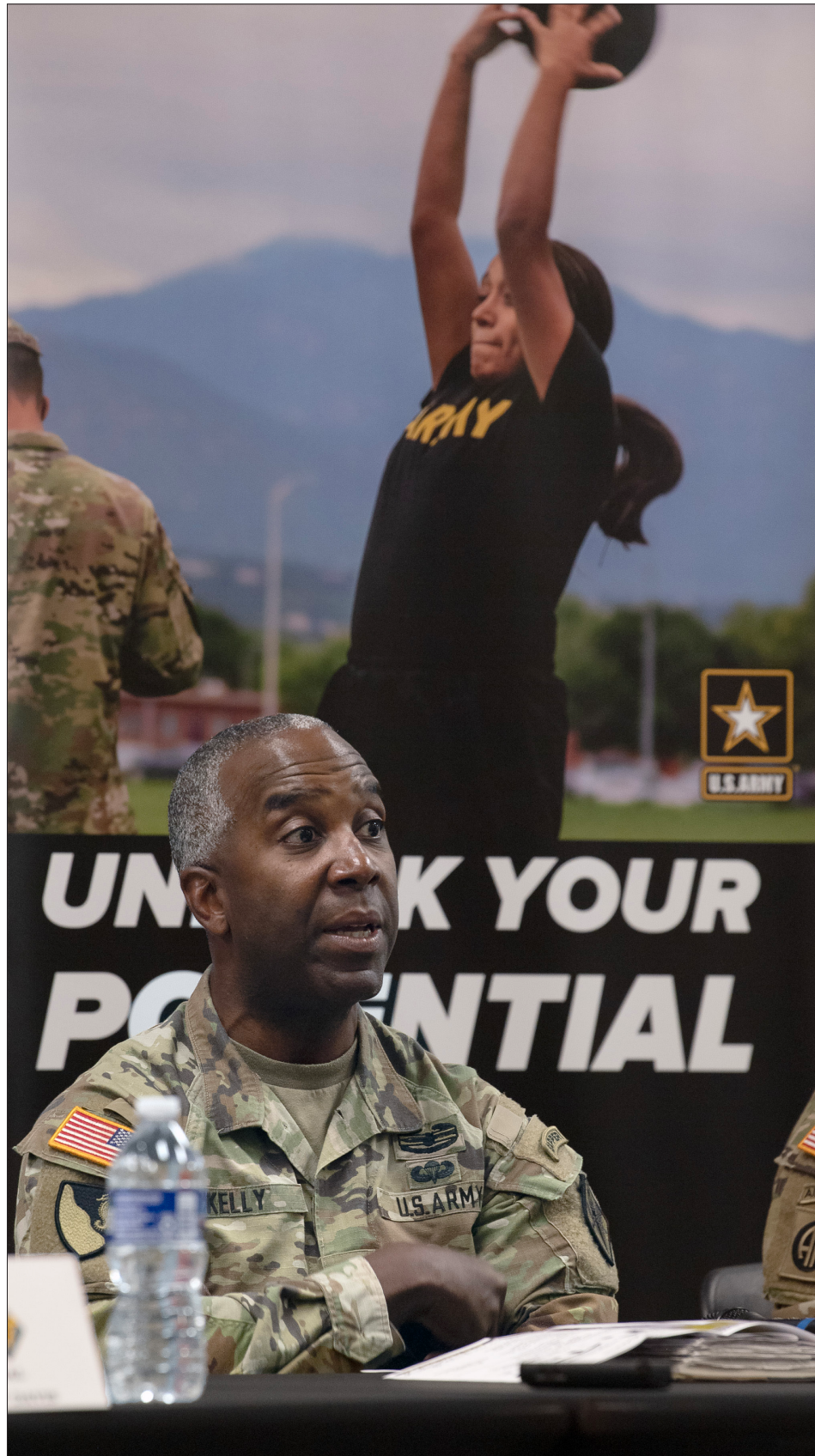
Taylor served in Vietnam until August 1968, flying more than 2,000 combat missions and taking enemy fire 340 times. It wasn't easy but throughout the war Taylor never lost a man, he said.

"You do whatever you can to save the lives of the people you're trying to rescue," he explained. "Today, I've become life-long friends with several of these people."

Hill is now one of those people. Having not seen each other since that fateful night in Vietnam, they finally met at a long-range reconnaissance patrol reunion in 1999. They've been friends ever since and take turns attending their respective unit reunions.

"That's the ultimate," Taylor said of receiving the Medal of Honor. "You can't get any better than that. I'm thankful that we were able to get the (Soldiers) out that night, and all four of them became lifelong friends."

During his time in the Army, Taylor received more than 50 combat decorations, including the Silver Star, 43 Air Medals, a Bronze Star and two Distinguished Flying Crosses. He finished his military career as a captain and returned home to Tennessee.



Brig. Gen. Jason E. Kelly, Fort Jackson commander, speaks during a Future Soldier Preparatory Course update held on the installation, Aug. 29.

Reaching for Greens

Prep course reaches milestone

By **EMILY HILEMAN**
Fort Jackson Public Affairs

August 8 marked one year of the Future Soldier Preparatory Course, an innovative solution to the recruiting crisis. On Aug. 29-30 Fort Jackson opened its doors and gave an update on the program's status.

"The Future Soldier Prep Course is where desire meets investment," said Brig. Gen. Jason E. Kelly, Fort Jackson commander. "And every day these young men and women show that when provided the right resources and training, they are able to perform and meet or exceed the standards expected of every Soldier."

The FSPC is divided into two programs or tracks.

The academic track takes trainees scoring 21 or above on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery, or ASVAB, and works to develop and improve their word knowledge, reading comprehension, arithmetic, reasoning and test-taking skills.

Trainees re-test every three weeks and have up to 90 days to increase their score. Once they improve their score to an appropriate number, they are able to renegotiate their Military Occupational Specialty or MOS, contract and even sign-on bonuses.

Pvt. Yasmin Diaz, an academic track trainee struggled with word knowledge when she first attempted the ASVAB.

"In high school, you don't really focus on the words, you're just trying to write essays," she said. "So, when I went to take the ASVAB, it

was mainly focused on knowing the words and synonyms and they didn't really teach us that (in high school)."

Diaz is hoping to renegotiate her MOS and serve in the National Guard in her hometown so she can give back to her mother, a single mother who raised Diaz and her three siblings.

Participants in the academic track have seen an average ASVAB score increase of 18.5%.

The fitness program accepts recruits that are between two and six percent over the allowable body fat composition to join. These trainees work with several members of the Fort Jackson Holistic Health and Fitness team as well as their cadre to ensure weight loss.

"We prioritize the holistic health and fitness approach here," said Capt. Emily Rice, Alpha Co. 1st Battalion, 61st Infantry Regiment commander. "So, sleep is very important, and our physical training plan is well-programed so that the trainees are not overtraining any one system."

"If you improve their diet and their activity level, they're going to lose weight," she said. "A piece that we often forget about is the importance of regulating circadian rhythms, which reduces cortisol and causes weight loss."

Rice, a registered dietician by trade, said she worked with physical and occupational therapists at

the Fort Jackson Holistic Health and Fitness center to program a curriculum that would not over-exert the trainees. They also monitor the trainees to ensure they don't lose an unhealthy amount of weight in a short period of time.

Participants in the fitness track have lost an average of 1.7% body fat per week.

The FSPC has seen an overwhelming level of success with more than 10,000 Soldiers success-

fully passing on to Basic Combat Training, giving the program a 95% graduation rate.

Twenty-three percent of available awards in Basic Combat Training are earned by Future Soldier Prep Course graduates and more than 15% have scored 500 or above on the Army Combat Fitness Test, where the maximum score is 600.

The potential of these dedicated and driven Soldiers is not lost on Kelly.

"If one wants to serve, we have a way to fight through the individual obstacles that may have prevented their service in the past."

... WHERE DESIRE MEETS INVESTMENT ...

- Brig. Gen. Jason E. Kelly
Fort Jackson commander



A dining facility worker at the 1st Battalion, 61st Infantry Regiment dining facility, gives the final touches on the salad bar before trainees came in to eat lunch. Items are color coded green, yellow and red to help Soldiers to eat healthy.



Trainees in the Future Soldier Preparatory Course get a slice a bread during lunch, Aug. 29. The 1st Battalion, 61st Infantry Regiment, is one of two battalions that train both tracks of the program.

Photos by ROBERT TIMMONS

Future Soldier Preparatory Course By The Numbers

- More than 10,000 moved on to Basic Combat Training
- 95% BCT graduation rate
- 18.5% average ASVAB increase
- 1.7% average body fat loss per week
- 23% of available BCT awards awarded to prep course grads
- 15% scored 500 or more on Army Combat Fitness Test

WHY I SERVE

2ND BATTALION, 13TH INFANTRY REGIMENT

PFC. RYAN MASSEY, 19

Reno, Nevada

"My friends and Family influenced me to join the Army. They made me realize that I needed something to better myself as a son, brother and nephew."

"I thought Basic Combat Training would be all exercise, yelling, and sleeping dirt, but now I know only the sleeping in dirt is true."

"The most challenging part of BCT was receiving corrective action for other peoples' mistakes and the gas chamber. The gas chamber was spicy."

"Do push-ups, work on your two mile run and get in the mindset of doing the right thing when no one is looking," is advice I would give to a new trainee.

"My MOS is 25B - Information Technology Specialist. I've worked in IT for the past four years and there was a \$20,000 sign on bonus."



PVT. EMILIO ALMAZAN, 21

Corona, California

"I joined the Army to put honor on my last name and to ensure a better life to those around me - whoever they may be."

Before joining, I imagined Basic Combat Training would be "the same thing I went through, which was time-based tasks based on urgency and being detail-oriented."

"Finding a medium between my peers to ensure victory due to everyone coming from different origins," was the most challenging part of BCT.

Advice I would give to someone planning to join the Army is, "Perspective is essential, keep looking at everything from different angles."

"My MOS is 91B - Wheeled Vehicle Mechanic. A job isn't tedious if you feel like it's second nature and I love working on vehicles and helping those around me with them feels like something I would do."



SPC. MATTHEW VILLALOBOS, 32

Salem, Oregon

"My students influenced me to join the Army. As a high school teacher, I want to be a better influence for my students."

"I imagined Basic Combat Training would be constant push-ups and ruck marches."

"The most challenging part of BCT was getting all of my battle buddies on the same page during formations and other tasks."

"My advice (to future trainees) would be to grow up fast and begin thinking about others above yourself. I would also suggest working on your physical fitness."

"My MOS is 09S - Officer Candidate. I chose this MOS to complete Officer Candidate School, which will allow me to work on my leadership skills for my students."



PFC. HILARIE LONG, 18

Enterprise, Alabama

"I've always wanted to join the Army, ever since I was a little girl and understood what the Army was and what it stands for."

"Before joining, I believed Basic Combat Training would be difficult and challenging mentally more than physically, because of the transformation to becoming a Soldier."

"The most challenging part of BCT was not being able to see or talk to my mom every day. My mom is my best friend and I would not be where I am today without her."

"The advice I would give to someone planning to start BCT is always be prepared for anything. Right time, right place, right uniform."

"My MOS is 13B - Cannon Crewmember. I chose this MOS because I wanted to work in the field and it was one of the only ones with airborne."



PFC. ALDEMIR PARRA, 19

Miami

"The person who influenced me to join the Army was my high school physical education teacher. He served 20 years in the Army and continues to be my role model."

"I imagined Basic Combat Training would be filled with never-ending physical training and screaming drill sergeants, based on what I saw in movies."

"The most challenging part of BCT for me was learning how to work as a member of a team. Overcoming obstacles with my battle buddies, despite cultural and language barriers was the most challenging and rewarding part of BCT."

"My MOS is 25S - Satellite Communication Systems Operator-Maintainer. I chose this MOS because it is related to the major that I'm currently studying, which is computer engineering."



SPC. SARAH REZNIKOVA, 25

Columbus, Georgia

"I was always surrounded by Soldiers growing up - my Family, my friends, the people I looked up to the most. I knew I was always meant to be a Soldier, so I got my bachelor's degree and joined the Army."

"I knew Basic Combat Training would be tough and challenge me physically and mentally. I didn't have any expectations besides I would come out a better person, one who is disciplined and always strives for better."

"The most challenging part of BCT was understanding my platoon and learning how to lead and motivate. We all come from different walks of life and because of that, we all work differently, but as Soldiers we had to work in unison."

"My MOS is 35F - Intelligence Analyst. Military Intelligence is transferrable in the Army and the civilian world. It's also a good field if you have a family."



To read more why Soldiers serve visit: home.army.mil/jackson

Jackson makes Soldiers, American citizens

By **MAJ. PETER AHCHING**
4th Battalion, 39th Infantry
Regiment

Forty-three Soldiers saw their dreams come true as they became naturalized American citizens during the naturalization ceremony by the 4th Battalion, 39th Infantry Regiment following their Family Day ceremony on Fort Jackson, Aug. 29.

Being an American citizen is a distant dream for some non-Americans living in America. However, new Soldiers at Fort Jackson took advantage of the Expedited Naturalization Executive Order signed into law by former President George W. Bush on July 3, 2002, to become American citizens while serving in the Army.

Naturalization is the term for the legal process by which a non-American may apply for and obtain American citizenship. The Expedited Naturalization Executive Order allows an expedited process for Soldiers to become naturalized.

"We are very proud of our trainees who are becoming American citizens today," said Lt. Col Jonathan Baker, battalion commander. New trainees can go online and create an account and fill out their Form N-400 or they can start the paper copy of the Form N-400 and complete it during Basic Combat Training. The application process uses the 20-page Form N-400 and can be expedited during BCT.

A few days after new trainees arrive to Fort Jackson, all legal immigrants receive a naturalization brief from their battalion legal team. Trainees can fill out the Form N-400 and their chain of command sends it to their battalion legal team for processing.

The battalion legal assistants will ensure the packets are complete. The packets are then mailed off to the U.S. Citizenship & Immigrations Services mailbox with a spreadsheet containing the applicants' information, so the field office can begin working on them.



Photo by **NATHAN CLINEBELLE**
Soldiers, with the 4th Battalion, 39th Infantry Regiment, raise their hands while taking the Oath of Allegiance after their Family Day activities, Aug. 26.

Trainees then work with their battalion legal team and USCIS to complete the process. Although it is expedited, applicants still must be fingerprinted, interviewed, and pass the naturalization exam. The exam covers a series of topics such as principles of American democracy, history, geography, and holidays.

If the applicant completes everything, they will do an interview and be given an exam by a USCIS Officer. Once they complete the interview and pass the test, they will receive a date when they can take the Oath of Allegiance to the U.S. and become a citizen at the end of Basic Combat Training.

For those that are unable to complete the process in 10 weeks at BCT, they can continue the process when they get to their Advanced Individual Training. They can go online and update their address change, so the proper USCIS field office can continue with their application. They can also call the Military liaison at USCIS.

SALUTING THIS BCT CYCLE'S HONOREES 2nd Battalion, 13th Infantry Regiment

ALPHA COMPANY
SOLDIER LEADER
OF THE CYCLE
Pvt. Nathan McClellan

SOLDIER OF THE CYCLE
Pvt. Emilio Almazan

BRAVO COMPANY
SOLDIER LEADER
OF THE CYCLE
Spc. John Hussey, Jr.

SOLDIER OF THE CYCLE
Spc. Matthew Villalobos

CHARLIE COMPANY
SOLDIER LEADER
OF THE CYCLE
Pfc. Ryan Massey

SOLDIER OF THE CYCLE
Pfc. Hilarie Long

DELTA COMPANY
SOLDIER LEADER
OF THE CYCLE
Pvt. Mallory Shea

SOLDIER OF THE CYCLE
Pfc. Aldemir Parra

ECHO COMPANY
SOLDIER LEADER
OF THE CYCLE
Spc. Sarah Reznikova

SOLDIER OF THE CYCLE
Pfc. Zechariah Hannah



STAFF SGT. ZARIN CARR
**DRILL SERGEANT
OF THE CYCLE**

Aug. 30 Retirees



Photo by **NATHAN CLINEBELLE**

The Army Training Center and Fort Jackson honored the service of Chief Warrant Officer 4 Danny I. Meyers, from Fort Huachuca, Ariz., and Gerald Cruzado, U.S. Army Garrison, Fort Jackson, during the 4th Battalion, 39th Infantry Regiment graduation, Aug. 30.

Events

Continued from Page 4

Recreation and Post Command Sgt. Maj. Erick Ochs at the inaugural 2nd Friday range day. Cost is \$10 per round if you bring your own shotgun and ammo and \$25 per round if you use ours. Each round consists of 25 clay targets launched from our two skeet houses. Whether you're an experienced shooter or it's your first time come and join the fun.

SATURDAY

Run/Walk for the Fallen

8 a.m., Hilton Field. Fort Jackson honors service members from South Carolina who died serving the Nation since Sept. 11, 2001 with a run. Registration begins at 7 a.m. on Hilton Field with a ceremony at 7:30 a.m. The run begins promptly at 8 a.m.

SEPT. 12

Shred Day

9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Recycle Center. The Fort Jackson community is invited to drop off items needed to be shredded, Sept. 12. The next shred day is Nov. 15.

Spouse Education/Career Seminar

9:30-11:30 a.m., MS Teams. The event will introduce military spouses of active-duty service members to no-cost

services offered through the Spouse Education and Career Opportunities program that will support their career and education development. This will include connecting spouses to a major component of the SECO Program, the Military Spouse Employment Partnership Program, which gives them access to more than 600 partner employers committed to recruiting, hiring, promoting, and retaining military spouses. Call 751-5256 to obtain a link.

SEPT. 19

Command Family Readiness Representative Academy

8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., TSC Classroom 2. The Command Family Readiness Representative course is designed to prepare Soldiers who are appointed as CFRRs to assist with the operational, logistical, and administrative aspects of the Soldier Family Readiness Group. The CFRR needs to know the ins and outs of the SFRG and how their role can assist unit commanders with their SFRG. This course includes all the mandatory courses required for CFRRs when it comes to SFRG Informal Funds. Call 751-5256 to reserve a seat.

Meals in Minutes & Your Budget

1:30-2:30 p.m., 9810 Lee Road. Army Community Service Financial Readiness Program, in partnership with the Fort Jackson Armed Forces Wellness Center will host Meals in Minutes. Learn how to save calories while also optimizing your budget. AFWC and ACS provides pro-

grams and services to improve and/or maintain readiness of the military community. Registration is required. For more information, or to register, please call 751-5256/6749.

SEPT. 21

Fort Jackson Sportsman Club meeting

6 p.m. Alpine Lodge. The Fort Jackson Sportsman Club will host its monthly meeting. The guest speaker this month will be taxidermist Jim Stout.

SEPT. 22

Cars and Coffee

8-11 a.m., Solomon Center Parking Lot.

Enjoy cool cars and hot coffee.

SEPT. 23

Flea Market

8 a.m. to noon., Solomon Center. Hurry and reserve your spot. Spaces are available. For more information, call 751-4056.

'Do It in Pink' Aerobathon

10 a.m to 1 p.m., Solomon Center. Join us for this two-hour aerobathon. Early detection saves lives. Dress in pink to work out. Commanders' Cup points can be earned for this event. For more information, call 751-3700.

Jewish High Holiday Services

Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year)

Sept. 15
10:30 to 1 p.m.
Sept. 16
10:30 to 1 p.m.

(Trainees should arrange for MRE for lunch)

Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement)

Sept. 24
7-8:30 p.m.,
Sept. 25
10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Morning Service
5:30-8:30 p.m. – Afternoon/Concluding Services
(Trainees should arrange for MREs for lunch and dinner)

All services will be held at Lightning Chapel

Did you know: The Army Immersion Cooling System (AICS) is most effective when incorporated into the flow of training and used throughout the training day, in a shaded area.

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

FAITH GROUP	DAY	TIME	PLACE
CATHOLIC MASS	SUNDAY	9:30-10:30 A.M.	MAIN POST CHAPEL
CATHOLIC MASS	MON-FRI	NOON	MAIN POST CHAPEL
GOSPEL SERVICE	SUNDAY	10:30 A.M.	DANIEL CIRCLE CHAPEL
GENERAL PROTESTANT	SUNDAY	11 A.M. TO NOON	MAIN POST CHAPEL
INITIAL ENTRY TRAINING	DAY	TIME	PLACE
ANGLICAN	SUNDAY	9-10 A.M.	LIGHTNING CHAPEL
CATHOLIC MASS	SUNDAY	8-9 A.M.	SOLOMON CENTER
PROTESTANT CONSOLIDATED SERVICE	SUNDAY	9:30-10:30 A.M.	SOLOMON CENTER
THE BRIDGE (PROTESTANT)	SUNDAY	8:30-9:30 A.M.	ANDERSON CHAPEL
CHURCH OF CHRIST	SUNDAY	10:30-11:30 A.M.	MAGRUDER CHAPEL
HISPANIC PROTESTANT SERVICE	SUNDAY	8:30-10 A.M.	MAGRUDER CHAPEL
ISLAMIC SERVICE	SUNDAY	8-9 A.M.	DANIEL CIRCLE CHAPEL
JEWISH SERVICE	SUNDAY	10:15-11:30 A.M.	LIGHTNING CHAPEL
THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS	SUNDAY	10:30 A.M. - NOON	ANDERSON CHAPEL

Interservice father-daughter duo share inspiration

By SGT. AMBER COBENA and
SGT. EGYPT JOHNSON
U.S. Army Central

Parents serving with their children in the military is very rare. But that's just what happened when Col. Johannes Castro, the commander of the 4th Battlefield Coordination Detachment, received news that he would be serving jointly with his daughter at Shaw Air Force Base, S.C., after assuming command on June 21, 2023.

Castro's daughter, U.S. Air Force air battle manager Capt. Melissa "Peach" Castro, received orders to the 609th Air Operations Center, U.S. Air Forces Central with a report date of June 23, 2023. After a phone conversation with her mother, she was surprised to find out that she would be stationed at Shaw Air Force Base alongside her father, Col. Johannes Castro. U.S. Air Forces Central and U.S. Army Central are both headquartered at Shaw Air Force Base.

"Capt. Castro and I have the opportunity to sit in meetings together and work directly with the same leaders," said Col. Castro. "This opportunity has been really special."

The Castros' military family history started with the Vietnam War, inspiring Col. Castro to serve at a young age. He and his wife, Marla, have four daughters, two of which currently serve in the military. The oldest, Capt. Castro, followed her father's footsteps into military service, however, she decided to join the U.S. Air Force instead of the U.S. Army. Experiencing the military lifestyle at a young age nurtured her passion to serve.

According to a survey conducted by the National Military Family Association in 2022, two-thirds of military dependent teens reported that they plan to serve in the military to follow their parents' footsteps.

"I witnessed that the military provided a variety of opportunities such as travel and education," said Capt. Castro. "The Army was not in my future because I grew an itch for aviation watching my grandfather build and fly planes."

Both Castros' careers work hand in hand. The 4th Battlefield Coordination Detachment serves as the U.S. Army liaison to the U.S. Air Force. Capt. Castro's main job responsibility is to coordinate air support for USARCENT ground elements and other



Photos by SGT. AMBER COBENA

Col. Johannes Castro, the commander of 4th Battlefield Coordination Detachment, is saluted by his daughter, Capt. Melissa Castro, an air battle manager assigned to 609th Air Operations Center, at Patton Hall on Shaw Air Force Base, S.C., July 20, 2023. The Castros serve jointly together at Shaw Air Force Base.

branches in support of U.S. Central Command. The 609th Airborne Operations Center provides operational-level command and control of air, space and cyberspace operations.

"Both of us have been very involved early on in our careers with the joint military community," said Capt. Castro. "We always joked around that at some point our paths would cross."

"I plan to continue mentoring my daughter. I push her to chase her dreams," said Col. Castro.

Simultaneously, Capt. Castro said that she plans to grow in her career field and to one day take command like her father.



VICTORY... STARTS HERE



Soldiers from 4th Battalion, 39th Infantry Regiment take the Oath of Allegiance to the U.S., Aug. 26.

Photo by NATHAN CLINEBELLE