

THURSDAY, JULY 3, 2025

THE FORT JACKSON LEADER

"VICTORY ... STARTS"

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Remain vigilant, make good decisions this holiday

By **GEN. GARY BRITO** and
**COMMAND SGT. MAJ.
RAYMOND HARRIS**
Training and Doctrine Command

This year's Fourth of July marks the 249th anniversary of the United States' Declaration of Independence. As you celebrate this holiday, we encourage you to reflect on the blessings that freedom represents and the opportunities it affords.

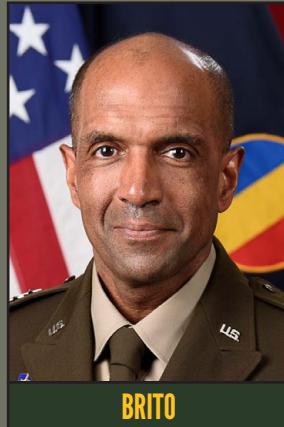
Whether you plan to travel, participate in water activities, enjoy outdoor grilling, attend patriotic parades or fireworks shows, this holiday brings an increased risk for mishaps. To reduce your risk, maintain an awareness of potential hazards and take appropriate actions to eliminate or mitigate them. Make risk-informed decisions and remain vigilant at all times, regardless of the activity.

Prior to the holiday, leaders will talk to every Soldier and Army Civilian professional under their supervision about the hazards associated with this holiday. Leader discussions must cover risk management and mitigation strategies while reinforcing safe and responsible conduct. Choosing to celebrate safely does not prevent you from enjoying the holiday, and it can prevent you from becoming a casualty.

We count on each one of you to keep yourself and those around you safe. Look out for each other, use good judgment, and make sound choices. Enjoy this Fourth of July while integrating risk management in all your activities.

We hope you all enjoy a well-deserved holiday. Thank you for your professionalism and service to our Army and Nation.

Victory Starts Here!



BRITO



HARRIS

Safely light up the night

By **CHRIS HAIRR**
Training and Doctrine Command
Safety Office

The Fourth of July is a festive time of year. Many of us get the day off and have cookouts or parties, and some cities and towns hold festivals. Of course, no Independence Day celebration would be complete without a fireworks display. From bottle rockets to Roman candles, fireworks have entertained and captivated our minds since we were small children.

Unfortunately, a lot of folks don't take the major hazards related to fireworks seriously. Some people enjoy igniting firecrackers or cherry bombs and holding them in their hand as long as possible before throwing them — sometimes at each other. People just don't seem to understand what can happen with these unsafe practices.

Many of those who have used fireworks have a close-call story to tell. My father had multiple fireworks incidents when he was younger, but one in particular stands out. When he was 15, he and his friends from the neighborhood decided to take some Roman candles to a nearby field. It was a particularly dry summer that year, and the field had tall grass — up to his knees at some points. So they wouldn't be seen by police, they chose a spot that was out of sight from the road. They lit their Roman candles and started shooting them almost horizontally. Then, as some foolish people do, they started shooting them toward one another.

For about an hour and a half that night, they ran around that field having fun. Then, a scary series of events took place. One of

my father's friends had one of the Roman candle's flaming orbs get caught inside his T-shirt sleeve. Almost simultaneously, another friend was struck in the eye. The two injured teenagers and one other stopped shooting their Roman candles so they could check how badly they were injured. The other three boys, including my father, continued playing.

About 10 minutes later, my father inadvertently shot a few of the fireballs into an area of thicker, drier grass. Those two shots caused the lower portion of the grass to ignite, and, almost instantaneously, the entire corner of the field was on fire. When they saw the blaze, they immediately ran away. The majority of the field eventually ended up burning. Fortunately, no property, other than the empty field, was damaged, and none of them were caught by police. My father and his friends were lucky to escape further injury. With the fire spreading as quickly as it did, it could've very easily surrounded them, trapping them in the field.

Still, there were some medical consequences to their careless behavior. The young man who had the orb shot up his sleeve had to go to the emergency room with third-degree burns across the underside of his upper arm, along his armpit and down a few inches on the side of his torso. The doctors had to give him skin grafts, and he spent a week in the burn unit to make sure the injury was kept clean. For as long as he and my father kept in contact, he had bad scars all along the grafted areas.

The other young man — the one that

See **SAFELY:** Page 9

ON THE COVER

Staff Sgt. Andrew Yost, with the U.S. Army Drill Sergeant Academy, recites the NCO Creed after being inducted into the Sgt. Audie Murphy Club, June 27.



Photo by **NATHAN CLINEBELLE**

See Page 5

THE FORT JACKSON LEADER

Fort Jackson, South Carolina 29207

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Commanding General Maj. Gen. Daryl O. Hood
Garrison Commander Col. David G. Gaugush
Command Information Officer Robert Timmons
Media Relations Officer Nathan Clinebelle
Social Media Manager Veran Hill

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DENTAC welcomes Ma as new commander

Story, photos by ROBERT TIMMONS

Fort Jackson Public Affairs

Changes of command are some of the most common U.S. military ceremonies and at Fort Jackson there are many each year.

Col. Yat H. Ma took command of the Dental Health Activity-Fort Jackson from Col. Susan Cebula in one such ceremony held at the Joe E. Mann Ballroom, June 27.

Cebula, as her last official act as commander, passed the unit colors to Col. Tawanna M. McGhee-Thondique, commander of Dental Health Activity – East, Ma would take command when McGhee-Thondique passed them to him.

“We have witnessed the transfer of command and control from one strong leader to another,” McGhee-Thondique said. “I am so proud to be part of an organization that invests in and continues to groom its talent.”

Both of “these fine officers” dental school educations were through the Armed Forces Health Professions Scholarship Program.

The program was a “launching pad for their illustrious careers,” she added.

Cebula had a positive influence on the command.

“Susan attests that her proudest accomplishment is centered around taking care of people on her team, building ... strong leaders that will carry the Army Medical Department into the future,” McGhee-Thondique said. “Thousands of Soldiers and civilians have been promoted in greater rank and responsibility. Individual unit and collective combat training has increased year after year, and her execution has been the best in the region.”

Ma was welcomed into the DENTAC family during the ceremony.

“Thank you for joining our team,” McGhee-Thondique said, adding that she is looking forward to what he brings to the team.

Ma was born in Hong Kong and in 1985 moved to Brooklyn, New York. He initially enlisted in the Army where his first assignment was in Baumholder, Germany. There he gained valuable experience working in a dental unit. Upon commissioning, he was assigned to units including Fort Benning, Georgia; Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Fort Hood, Texas; and Landstuhl, Germany.

“It’s a privilege to be recognized and given the opportunity to lead Fort Jackson DENTAC,” Ma said. Fort Jackson DENTAC mission differs from others as it goes beyond permanent party ... “it encompasses all facets of military populations, impacting the lives of our young recruits and our permanent party.”



Capt. Junhyeong Hwang salutes during a ceremony where Col. Yat H. Ma took command of Dental Health Activity- Fort Jackson.



Col. Yat H. Ma, Dental Health Activity - Fort Jackson commander, stands in front of the unit colors moments after taking command of the unit from Col. Susan Cebula, June 27.

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.

■ Basic Riders Course: July 29-31 (5 seats open)

■ Advanced Riders Course: Tuesday (6 seats open)

■ Intermediate Drivers Course: July 22 (20 seats open)

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

■ Remedial Drivers Course: Tuesday (12 seats open)

Additional training not associated with the link above:

■ Unit Safety Officer Course: Aug. 5-6 25 (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.

Victory Fresh

Victory Fresh offers healthy alternatives to fast food. Victory Fresh offers Grab and Go entrees, a Build Your Own Power Bowl station, Hot BBQ bar, and brick oven pizzas during lunch hours of 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Additionally, Grab and Go items are available during extended hours and breakfast is available from

7-9:30 a.m. Victory Fresh helps patrons manage fueling their bodies in a healthy way, within the time constraints of an on-the-go lifestyle.

Summer Reading Program

Join the Thomas Lee Hall “Post” Library for this year’s Summer Reading Program: “Level Up at Your Library.” Sign-up for SRP to read, log minutes, and receive prizes. Programs will be held all week long. Coloring sheet contests will last throughout June and July. Registration began June 1.

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 - AUG. 8

Youth Sports Registration

Registration for tackle football, flag football, cheerleading, soccer and cross country begins. For more information and costs to register, call (803) 751-7451.

TOMMORROW

Independence Day Celebration

Hilton Field. Open to the public. Gates

open at 4 p.m. with live music beginning at 5:30. Music includes the 282d Army Band, (rock and pop), Aden Webb, (country and rock) and SYR (Celtic folk rock). There will be food trucks, amusement rides and fireworks.

JULY 6-12

Club Beyond

Club Beyond, an approved ministry partner here at Fort Jackson is taking high schoolers and middle schoolers to overnight camps this summer to Carolina Point Young Life Camp in North Carolina. The trip is for military teens who have just completed 9th-12th grades. If you are interested in participating, register at cb114.younglife.events/2025-carolina-point-week-7-cb114hs. For more information, call the Club Beyond Fort Jackson Community Director at (256) 794-2623.

JULY 10

Green to Gold briefing

Noon, Education Center. Ever think about turning in those stripes for some bars? The Green to Gold Active Duty Option Program is a two-year program that provides eligible, Active Duty enlisted Soldiers an opportunity to complete a baccalaureate degree or a two-year graduate degree and earn a commission as an Army officer. For more information, call (803) 554-9987.

JULY 11

165th Change of Command

9 a.m., Victory Field. Col David Uthlaut relinquishes command of the 165th Infantry Brigade to Col. Joshua M. Betty.

JULY 12

Fort Jackson Movie Schedule

3319 Jackson Blvd.

Phone: 751-7488

SATURDAY, JULY 5

■ Elio (PG)

WEDNESDAY, JULY 9

■ Final Destination: Bloodlines (R)

- 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.

Private Weapons Day

10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Aachen Range. Shooters can shoot at targets between 25-200m. 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. For more information, call (803) 751-3484. For information about registering your weapon, call (803) 751-6019.

JULY 15-AUG. 28

Intramural Basketball

The interest meeting and letter of intent deadline for the Summer Intramural Basketball League is July 11 at the Solomon

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.

Audie Murphy Club welcomes two new members

By **ROBERT TIMMONS**
Fort Jackson Public Affairs

Joining the Sgt. Audie Murphy Club is no easy task.

It is a private Army organization for noncommissioned officers whose leadership achievements and performance merit special recognition may earn the reward of membership.

Noncommissioned officers must prove they exemplify leadership and are committed to the Army Values.

Staff Sgts. Tyler Bergman and Andrew Yost were welcomed into the club during a ceremony, June 27 at the 1917 Club.

"We are here to witness not just an induction, but a declaration that excellence in leadership, character and service is still alive and well in the NCO Corps," said retired Command Sgt. Maj. Kimberly Nieves during the ceremony.

Nieves, former senior enlisted leader for Moncrief Army Health Clinic, is no stranger to the club as she is also a member.

"I know firsthand the weight of the medallion and more importantly, the responsibility that comes with it," she said. "I don't take this moment lightly, because I know what it takes to get here today."

Post Command Sgt. Maj. Erick Ochs placed silver medallions with infantry blue ribbons around Bergman and Yost's necks. These special medallions have the likeness of Audie Murphy inscribed on them and can be worn with their uniforms.

"The Sgt. Audie Murphy Club is not a reward," Nieves said. "It is a responsibility. It is not the finish line - it's a fire that must be carried forward."

"Those who wear the medallion carry the weight of a legacy forged in valor, humility and an unshakeable commitment to Soldiers."

The club's namesake was "more than the most decorated combat Soldier in U.S. history. He was a servant leader, a man who returned home and used his voice, his influence and his pain to inspire others," she added.



Photo by **NATHAN CLINEBELLE**

Post Command Sgt. Maj. Erick Ochs places the Sgt. Audie Murphy Club medallion around the neck of Staff Sgt. Tyler Bergman, from 1st Battalion, 34th Infantry Regiment, during an induction ceremony, June 27. Staff Sgt. Andrew Yost, with the U.S. Army Drill Sergeant Academy, was also inducted into the club that day.

Murphy was awarded the Medal of Honor for fighting off a German attack by firing a machine gun off the turret of a burning tank destroyer.

Murphy would go on to star in numer-

ous movies including playing himself in, "To Hell and Back" based on his autobiography of the same name.

Murphy was killed in a plane crash on May 28, 1971.

Task Force prioritizes trust in PCS process

By **C. TODD LOPEZ**
DOD News

As Army Maj. Gen. Lance G. Curtis stood in line at the Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, commissary to order a sandwich for lunch, he couldn't help but notice something odd.

"I'm standing next to an airman, and he's got his bike helmet, and he's got this huge backpack," Curtis said, adding that he asked the airman if he always carries everything with him.

The Air Force technical sergeant told Curtis that he was new to the base and had filled his backpack with newly purchased items he needed because he was having trouble accessing his household goods, which were still in temporary storage.

"As he explained, I'm literally writing his name and his phone number, his rank and his situation on the wrapper of my sandwich," Curtis said. "I got back to the operations center, and within 10 minutes, he got a phone call about his situation, and then I called him later that night to check up on him. We are now getting him the help that he needs."

As the commander of the newly created Permanent Change of Station Joint Task Force, Curtis was in a unique position to help the airman. Not every service member will receive a call from a two-star general to advocate on their behalf and help unlock the predicament that can sometimes arise from the movement of household goods. However, Curtis said he'd like every service member, family member and DOD civilian to be able to call a real per-

See **PCS**, Page 11



Command Sgt. Maj. Michael F. Johnston, receives the Leader Training Brigade colors from Col. Kenneth Dwyer, outgoing LTB commander.



Col. Eric B. Alexander, Leader Training Brigade commander, receives the colors from Maj. Gen. Daryl O. Hood, Fort Jackson commander.

LTB holds leader change double header

By **ROBERT TIMMONS**
Fort Jackson Public Affairs

It's normal for unit leadership teams to change every two years, but usually not at the same time.

The combined change of command and change of responsibility ceremony for the Leader Training Brigade bucked that trend.

Col. Eric B. Alexander and Command Sgt. Maj. Michael F. Johnston took command and responsibility for the unit from Col. Kenneth Dwyer and Command Sgt. Maj. Jon Otero during a ceremony held June 25 at Victory Hall.

Dwyer would preside over the change of responsibility before handing off LTB command to Alexander.

"We pass the torch between two great Army leaders and great warriors," Dwyer said during the first half of the ceremony.

He added it was a "great blessing" to

work every day with Otero for the past two years because of his "every day strength and calm."

"You made the Leader Training Brigade a better place," Dwyer concluded.

"This was an incredible two years," Otero said, "I'm glad I could serve it with you."

Dwyer also spoke to Johnston saying the noncommissioned officer would do well in his new role.

"The Army most certainly got it right selecting you to be the big CSM at the Leader Training Brigade," he said. "Your passion, drive and infectious energy make it clear to me that you were the right noncommissioned officer to continue to take care of the Soldier and civilians in this formation."

Johnston said he was looking forward to working with Alexander and the LTB.

In the second half of the ceremony, Maj. Gen. Daryl O. Hood received the unit colors from Dwyer and passed them to Alexander

signifying the transfer of command.

Dwyer took the podium again to thank those who helped make his tenure a success.

"To the Soldiers and civilians of the Leader Training Brigade, every day you made the magic happen," he said. "And I am so proud to have been on your team for the last two years."

Alexander is the right person at the right time to lead the unit, said Dwyer, who is headed to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, to take command of the Joint Special Forces Medical Training Center.

In return, Alexander thanked Dwyer and the team for welcoming him and remarked on the importance of LTB's mission.

"I'm flabbergasted, amazed," he said. "I can't use another adjective for the mandate that this brigade has across the Army ... We train the people that take care of our nation's sons and daughters, and that's a huge responsibility."



Alexander salutes Hood after taking command of the brigade from Col. Kenneth Dwyer.

Photos by NATHAN CLINEBELLE

Jackson plays ball

with 'Hootie' and the Lexington Blowfish

Photos by Nathan Clinebelle

Soldiers were honored by the Lexington Blowfish baseball team at its annual Fort Jackson night, June 28. From the first pitch to races around the outfield, members from the Fort Jackson community participated in a fantastic night with the community.

Maj. Gen. Daryl O. Hood, threw out the first pitch while trainees and fans were serenaded by the 282d Army Band.

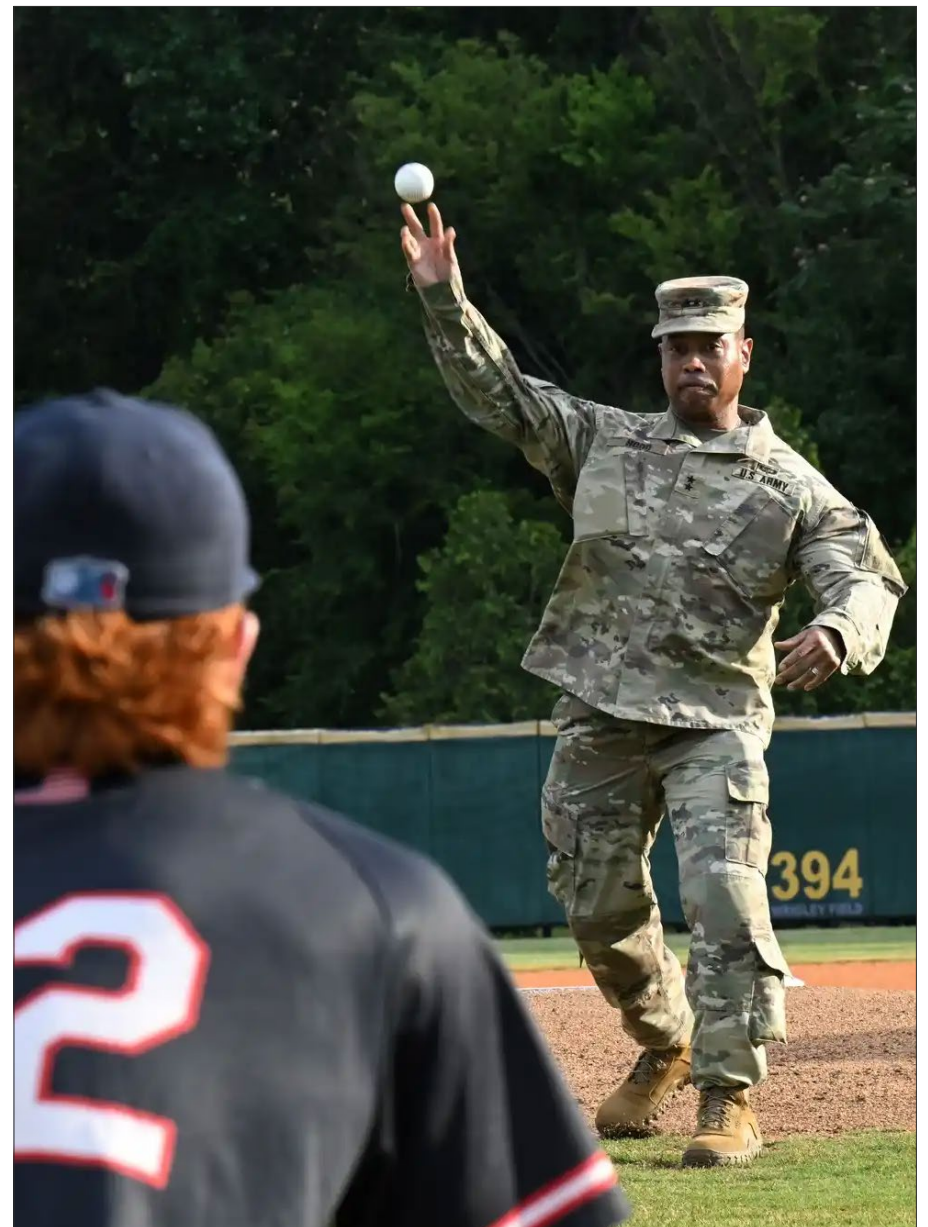
They even got to meet the team's mascots: Hootie and Blowie the Blowfish.



Hootie, the Blowfish mascot, poses for pictures with trainees.



Trainees watch a ball game during the Lexington Blowfish's Fort Jackson Night held June 28 in Lexington, S.C.



Maj. Gen. Daryl O. Hood, Fort Jackson commander, throws out the first pitch during the game.



Trainees relax while watching the baseball game.

Safely

Continued from Page 2

was hit in the eye by the orb — also had to go to the emergency room. He suffered permanent damage to his eye and eyelid and had to have surgery that night. Sadly, his eye sustained too much damage to ever recover, so it had to be removed. It was replaced with a glass eye that he must live with for the rest of his life.

He had to spend two weeks in the hospital recovering from the surgery and the burns on his eyelid.

That night, two people's lives were forever changed. But despite the horrible injuries his friends suffered, my father continued using fireworks unsafely. Eventually, though, he saw the error of his ways.

If you plan to shoot fireworks, please keep my father's story in mind. When used properly, fireworks can add excitement to a celebration. In the hands of the careless, however, the festivities could end badly.

For your information

A new report from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission highlights the hazards posed by consumer fireworks use. In 2023, the CPSC received reports of eight deaths and an estimated 9,700 injuries involving fireworks.

Out of the eight deaths, five were associated with firework misuse, two with a device malfunction and one involved unknown circumstances.

The report shows that between 2008 and



2023, injuries from fireworks increased overall, despite recent data showing a steady decline since the peak in 2020 during the pandemic when public displays were canceled.

To understand more about fireworks-related injuries and hazards around the Fourth of July, the CPSC conducted an analysis of the injury data in the four weeks surrounding the holiday in 2023 and found the following:

- Teenagers 15-19 years old had the highest estimated rate of emergency department-treated, fireworks-related injuries. Children ages 5-9 years old had the second highest rate.
- There were an estimated 800 emergency department-treated injuries associated with firecrackers and 700 with sparklers.
- The parts of the body most often injured by fireworks were hands and fingers (an estimated 35% of injuries) along with the head, face and ears (an estimated 22%).

About 42% of the emergency department-treated, fireworks-related injuries were for burns.

In fiscal 2023, roughly 18% of selected and tested fireworks products were found to contain noncompliant components, including fuse violations, the presence of prohibited chemicals and pyrotechnic materials overload.

The CPSC urges consumers to celebrate safely this holiday by following these safety tips:

- Never allow children to play with or ignite fireworks, including sparklers. Sparklers burn at temperatures of about 2,000 degrees — hot enough to melt some metals.
- Make sure fireworks are legal in your area and only purchase and set off fireworks that are labeled for consumer (not professional) use.
- Never use fireworks while impaired by alcohol or drugs.
- Keep a bucket of water or a garden hose handy, in case of a fire or other mishap.
- Light fireworks one at a time, then move back quickly.
- Never try to relight or handle malfunctioning fireworks. Soak them with water and throw them away.
- Never place any part of your body directly over a fireworks device when lighting the fuse. Move to a safe distance immediately after lighting fireworks.
- Never point or throw fireworks (including sparklers) at anyone.
- After fireworks complete their burning, to prevent a trash fire, douse the spent device with plenty of water from a bucket or hose before discarding it.

For more information, visit the CPSC website at <https://www.cpsc.gov>.

SALUTING THIS CYCLE'S HONOREES

3rd Battalion, 13th Infantry Regiment

DRILL SERGEANT OF THE CYCLE

Staff Sgt.
Elliot Pierce

ALPHA COMPANY SOLDIER LEADER

OF THE CYCLE
Pvt. Rafael Lopez

SOLDIER OF THE CYCLE

Pfc. Marc Jones

BRAVO COMPANY SOLDIER LEADER

OF THE CYCLE
Spc. Rhonda Johnson

SOLDIER OF THE CYCLE

Spc. Martin Sullivan

CHARLIE COMPANY SOLDIER LEADER

OF THE CYCLE
Spc. Jessie Lewis

SOLDIER OF THE CYCLE

Pvt. Jalen Smith

DELTA COMPANY SOLDIER LEADER

OF THE CYCLE
Pfc. Arwin Grant

SOLDIER OF THE CYCLE

Pfc. Julianna Candelaria

ECHO COMPANY SOLDIER LEADER

OF THE CYCLE
Pvt. Mia Powell

SOLDIER OF THE CYCLE

Pfc. Jacob Fackler

Heading to the July 4th fireworks? Be sure you:



Bring water and stay hydrated - It will be hot

Events

Continued from Page 4

Center. The games are on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays at 6 and 7 p.m.. For more information, call (803) 751-3096.

JULY 19 Fort Jackson 10-miler

5 a.m., Hilton Field Sports Complex. For more information or to register, call (803) 751-3700.

JULY 24 Ultimate Frisbee Tournament

6 p.m., Hilton Field Sports Complex. Games begin July 24 and letters of intent are due July 23. For more information, call (803) 751-3096.

JULY 27 Special Worship Service

9:30 and 11 a.m., Solomon Center. The Religious Support Office is hosting a

special worship service with a special message by Will Graham, of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. Worship music will be played by the Afters. For more information, call (803) 751-3121.

JULY 27-31 Club Beyond

Club Beyond, an approved ministry partner here at Fort Jackson is taking high schoolers and middle schoolers to overnight camps this summer to Rockbridge Young Life Camp in VA. The is for military teens who have just completed 6th- 8th grades. If you are interested in participating. register at [cb114.younglife.events/2025-rockbridge-wk-11-cb114ms](#). For more information, call the Club Beyond Fort Jackson Community Director at (256) 794-2623.

AUG. 9 Outdoor Fishing Trip

5 a.m., Marion Street Station. Travel to Hilton Head, S.C. with Outdoor Recreation Team and fish 3-5 miles offshore for black sea bass, mackerel, black drum,

red fish, bluefish and maybe even a shark. Climb on board the 70-foot fishing boat for a five-hour fishing trip. The boat offers shaded and seated fishing areas, restrooms, and even has snacks and drinks for sale on board. Transportation and coolers will be provided. Cost (\$95 per adult) covers transportation, license, bait and tackle. Preregistration required at Outdoor Recreation. For registration and more information, call (803) 751-3484.

AUG. 9-10 Dog Days at the Waterpark

10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Palmetto Falls Water Park. Bring Fido to Palmetto Falls to wallow in the water. Dogs vaccinations must be current. Season pass holders are allowed one dog per pass. Non-pass holders \$10 per dog. For more information, call (803) 751-4796.

AUG. 12 Shred Day

9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Recycle Center. Come and shred all types of paper with sensitive information will be accepted, but NO

classified documents. Shredding papers with your personal information provides a level of insurance against identity theft and misuse. If you have any questions or comments please call, (803) 751-4208.

AUG. 16 Edisto River Tubing

7 a.m., Marion Steet Station. Join Fort Jackson Outdoor Recreation and enjoy a relaxing trip tubing down the Edisto River. This journey will last two hours. \$45 per person price includes transportation, rentals and shuttle service. Personal coolers are allowed. For more information and to register call (803) 751-3484.

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.

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

PCS

Continued from Page 5

son who has the authority to resolve issues. But ideally, he'd like them to have no problems at all.

The joint task force Curtis leads was established in May at the direction of Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth to improve how the Defense Department moves service members from one assignment to the next.

In the May 20, 2025, memorandum standing up the task force, Hegseth directed the U.S. Transportation Command to make various changes to the existing program that moves household goods. He noted that while the PCS process has "never been a great system," recent changes have made things worse.

"We know it's not working, and it's only getting worse," he said. "We've heard your concerns about contractor performance, quality and accountability. We hear you loud and clear, and that's why we're taking decisive action immediately."

The task force now has approximately 20 members and will grow to more than 50, Curtis said. The team also collaborates with members from the Transcom operations staff, representatives from each of the military services, including the Coast Guard, personnel from the Office of the Secretary of Defense and representatives from the commercial household goods moving industry.

On June 18, 2025, the department canceled the existing mechanism for conducting PCS moves, the Global Household Goods contract, also known as GHC. Curtis said the secretary gave him the authority to terminate the contract for cause because the contractor was not "meeting the expectations that we have within DOD for household goods moves." At its inception, Curtis said, the concept of the GHC program had merit. It was part of a transformation initiative to redo how the department moved service members from one duty location to another.

Curtis still stands behind the concept of GHC and what it aimed to accomplish, but the department was unhappy with the execution.

"At the end of the day, there were a lot of good things about GHC as a transformation initiative that really made the system better,"



Department of Defense photo

Movers pack up household goods. The Permanent Change of Station Task Force has been set up to improve household good shipments.

he said. "The problem was the contractor was not meeting our expectations."

Before the GHC effort, which launched in April 2024, the department had been using a household goods shipment system called Tender of Service. The department had used the ToS process for a decade before GHC and reverted back to it after GHC was canceled.

Under ToS, Transcom handled the massive volume of vendors participating in household goods movements across the globe, and that became overwhelming.

GHC provided a single responsible party to meet the needs of service members involved in PCS moves and managed the vendors who conducted those moves.

Despite GHC being canceled, the department still has a busy moving season ahead of it. Approximately 300,000 individuals and families relocate each year, with about 120,000 of those moves occurring during "peak PCS season," which runs from mid-May to the end of September and during which DOD sees an increase of about 8.2% in moves.

Curtis said, despite these challenges, the department is confident it can move all those people using the ToS process it has used for years.

"We have the capacity within commercial industry to handle the peak season," he

said. "I met with industry because I wanted assurances that capacity was available for the peak season. When we made the decision to do the termination for cause, it was deliberate. We had a good plan in place, and we knew the commercial industry could handle the additional load."

At the time the contract was canceled, Curtis said GHC was handling only about 20% of actual moves, with 80% still being managed through ToS.

Not every service member will choose to use Transcom or their local joint personal property office to conduct a move. Some individuals will find a mover on their own and later seek reimbursement as part of a personally procured move.

For those members, the department will now offer reimbursement up to 100% of the rate calculated for a move under the ToS system and up to 130% of the cost of a move as calculated by GHC, Curtis said.

"That incentive for our service members is the right answer for them," he said. "It allows them to conduct the move if they want to do it on their own and to not lose money. That is a huge win for our service members."

Right now, Curtis said, he has seen a drop-off in PPMs, but he thinks that will change now that service members know they won't lose money by conducting a move themselves.

Curtis said DOD will work through this year's peak moving season, but the goal of the task force is to ensure the department provides the highest quality moving services for service members, civilian employees and their families.

The task force, Curtis said, must build an efficient system to ensure service members will always, to the extent possible, have the best possible moving experience.

"We're working on trust, timeliness and accountability," he said.

Speaking on those topics, Curtis said individual and family possessions represent memories and mementos from their lives before and during military service, and the department must ensure those treasures are moved to their final destination safely and intact. He added that household pickups and deliveries must occur as scheduled.

"All of us want the pickups and the deliveries to be high quality, and I'm holding the vendors accountable," he said. "Their pickup and delivery must be in accordance with the prearranged timelines. I'm not ignorant of the fact that every single move that we conduct is not going to go perfectly, but our mindset is we want to beat things down to zero."

Curtis said the department aims to reach a point where bad moves are extremely rare.

Finally, touching on accountability, Curtis said it will be a part of everything the task force does going forward as it works to improve the moving experience.

"Our contracts have to have clearly defined standards," he said. "They have to have oversight responsibilities and there have to be consequences tied to the accountability."

The general noted that to fully meet the secretary's intent, significant changes are needed in how the department conducts the movement of household goods.

"We are operationalizing the way we (move) household goods," Curtis said. "We have a common operating picture each day that we are looking at to find out where the friction points are across the United States, and we are removing obstacles for the benefit of the service members, their families and our Department of Defense civilians."

The task force is setting up a 24/7 call center that will enable service members to call whenever they encounter issues with their move. Curtis said the center is scheduled to open this month.

VICTORY... STARTS HERE



A drill sergeant candidate renders a salute during a drill and ceremony competition for the U.S. Army Drill Sergeant Academy Class 013-25.

Photo courtesy of STAFF SGT. DANA CLARKE