

THURSDAY, SEPT. 25, 2025

THE FORT JACKSON LEADER

"VICTORY ... STARTS HERE."



MWR CENTRAL OPENS AT THE SOLOMON CENTER



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Nine new faces inducted into Drill Sergeant Hall of Fame

By **HUNTER RHOADES**

Center for Initial Military Training

Nine new faces will be permanently displayed in the Drill Sergeant Hall of Fame after a ceremony, Sept. 18.

"The most pivotal point of every drill sergeant career is their time served on the trail as a drill sergeant. The one person whom every individual who serves within the Army clearly remembers is their Drill Sergeant," said retired Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Campbell, co-founder of the U.S. Army Drill Sergeant Association. "It's an honor to recognize the individuals who have had a massive impact on the continued improvement of the drill sergeant program by inducting them into the hall of fame, where their names and faces will be seen by all future drill sergeants, along with their contributions to the drill sergeant community that they're entering into."

The induction ceremony, which coincided with the annual active duty and Reserve Drill Sergeant of the Year Competition, emphasized the academy's evolution since its founding. Since its establishment in 1964, the drill sergeant has been a pillar of excellence for the Army's next generation of American warfighters.

"My time on the trail, from Fort Benning to the Drill Sergeant Academy and concluding at the Center for Initial Military Training, has been the most impactful and memorable of my career to date," said Sgt. 1st Class Jake Mrzena, the 2024 Reserve Drill Sergeant of the Year. "Being inducted alongside these legends within the drill sergeant community means a lot. I'm grateful to the association for believing my contributions were equal to

this great honor."

This induction ceremony was one of the most significant to date, with inductees coming from currently serving Soldiers and civilians, retirees and Medal of Honor recipients being recognized for their service and support to the Army's drill sergeants. Inductees included:

■ Retired Lt. Col. Harold Nobles for his service within the Army as a member of the initial drill sergeant pilot program, before commissioning, and continued service to advancing the drill sergeant program while both in and out of uniform.

■ Retired Command Sgt. Maj. William Payne for his exceptional service as the Commandant of the 108th Training Division overseeing the Drill Sergeant School for the Army Reserve.

■ Command Sgt. Maj. Joshua Bittle for his service serving as the commandant of the U.S. Army Drill Sergeant Academy and the rapid transformation of Drill Sergeant Program of Instruction and standardization.

■ Sgt. Maj. Andrew Palmer for his service while serving as the deputy commandant of the U.S. Army Drill Sergeant Academy where he created and validated updated Rifle Marksmanship POI for drill sergeant candidates.

■ Retired Capt. James Ross for his service as one of the first instructors for the Pilot Trainer Preparation Course in 1964 which was the Army's initial drill sergeant concept.

■ Retired 1st Sgt. Robert Rose for his selfless service to the drill sergeant program,

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Photo by SGT. 1ST CLASS DANA CLARKE
Sgt. 1st Class Jake Mrzena from Class 12 of the Drill Sergeant Hall of Fame is inducted during a ceremony at the U.S. Army Drill Sergeant Academy, Sept. 18.

ON THE COVER

Maj. Gen. Daryl O. Hood, Fort Jackson commander, cuts the ribbon for the opening of MWR Central at the Solomon Center, Sept. 19. The center is to be the hub where the community can spend quality time.

See Pages 6-7



Photo by NATHAN CLINEBELLE

THE FORT JACKSON LEADER

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Two drill sergeants stand above the rest

By **HUNTER RHOADES**

Center for Initial Military Training

The 2025 Army and Army Reserve drill sergeants of the year were announced during a ceremony held at Fort Jackson, Sept. 19.

After four grueling days of competition, Sgt. 1st Class Randall Smith, a drill sergeant leader representing the U.S. Army Drill Sergeant Academy, was awarded the honorary belt as the Army Drill Sergeant of the Year. Staff Sgt. Brady Benedict, a drill sergeant representing the 95th Training Division, earned the title of Army Reserve DSOY.

"It's a great honor winning Army Drill Sergeant of the Year, I look forward to working with the individuals I competed against this week as they return to their centers of excellence to better the drill sergeant program as a whole," Smith said.

The drill sergeant is a symbol of excellence across the Initial Military Training environment. They are experts in all warrior tasks and battle drills, live the Army Values, exemplify the Warrior Ethos and are the epitome of the Army as a profession.

Unlike other Army competitions, the DSOYs will receive a permanent change of station to Fort Eustis, Virginia, where they will work at the proponent level influencing changes to the Initial Military Training environment.

"Throughout these last four days, all thirteen competitors have been physically and mentally challenged to ensure the right non-commissioned officers serve another year, advocating for their peers, as the DSOY," said Command Sgt. Maj. Michael McMurdy, Center for Initial Military Training senior enlisted advisor. "The 2025 DSOYs, will represent all 6,500 drill sergeants across the Initial Military Training environment and advocate for them as the Army transforms to meet the needs of the modern battlefield."

Benedict said as the 2025 Army Reserve Drill Sergeant of the Year, he hopes "to positively impact every current and future Reserve drill sergeant and to ensure they're efficient and effective at managing both their civilian roles and their task of transforming civilians into U.S. Army warfighters."

Lt. Gen. David Francis, Center for Initial Military Training commander, who presided over the award ceremony, expressed his expectation for the newly awarded DSOYs.

"Drill sergeants are the standard bearers for the Army and the Initial Military Training environment," he said. "Transforming American volunteers into members of the world's premiere land-based fighting force isn't an easy task, but the professionalism, expertise and ability to think outside of the box is what make our drill sergeants the best across the total force."



Photo by SGT. 1ST CLASS DANA CLARKE

(Above) Sgt. 1st Class Randall Smith, drill sergeant leader with the U.S. Army Drill Sergeant Academy, stands at attention after being named the 2025 Army Drill Sergeant of the Year, Sept. 19.



Photo by SPC. PARKER DICKEY

(Left) Staff Sgt. Brady Benedict, 95th Readiness Division, Army Reserve Drill Sergeant of the Year, applies a tourniquet to a simulated casualty, Sept. 16.

Community Updates

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Oktoberfest Rescheduled to Oct. 17

Fort Jackson's Oktoberfest Festival originally scheduled for tomorrow has been postponed until Oct. 17 due to inclement weather. The event will start at 4:30 p.m. with the Volksmarch followed by the tapping of the Keg and live music at the 1917 Club. Patrons can keep their Beer Steins filled for \$25 to take part in the Volksmarch. There will be vendors, games and live music. For more information, call (803) 751-3933.

Jewish High Holy Days

Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement)
Century Chapel
Oct. 1 – 7-8:30 p.m.
Oct. 2 – 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 5:30-8 p.m.

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: Monday through Wednesday (3 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.

Holiday Closures

The Directorate of Human Resources will be closed on the following holidays and training holidays:

Columbus Day	Oct. 13
Veterans Day	Nov. 11
Thanksgiving Day	Nov. 27
Thanksgiving Training Holiday	Nov. 28
Christmas Eve	Dec. 24
Christmas	Dec. 25
New Year's Day	Jan. 1

Separation preparation

Are you separating from the Army? Have your Separation Program Designator (SPD) code on your DD 214 when clearing through the Education Center. SPD codes are used to determine a Soldier's educational benefits upon separation. For more information contact the Army Continuing Education System.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

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. 3

Breast Cancer Awareness Lunch

Noon to 1 p.m., Soldier Performance Readiness Center. Bring your own lunch and hear a Dr. Jill Sullivan, Medical Oncologist speak about breast cancer.

Discover more about breast cancer and interact with the guest speaker and panel members.

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.

Boundaries Seminar

As part of a Healthy Relationships Virtual Fair watch pre-recorded podcasts on how to create clear boundaries in your relationships and learn about programs that financially assist abused family members of military personnel. To view the recordings visit: <https://m.facebook.com/USA5THRCTGBDEBST>

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. 8

Conflict Management

1 p.m., MS Teams. As part of Healthy Relationships Virtual Fair learn to appraise conflict and employ respectful conflict management techniques in both your personal and professional life. For more information on how to register, email:

Fort Jackson Movie Schedule

3319 Jackson Blvd.
Phone: 751-7488

SATURDAY, SEPT. 27

■ No Showing

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 1

■ Nobody (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.

usarmy.knox.usard.mbx.hq-g1-soldier-family-assistance-branch@army.mil

OCT. 11

Fire Prevention Carnival

10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Fort Jackson Fire Department. Come out and learn fire and lithium battery safety with the Fort Jackson Fire Department. There will be bouncy houses, food trucks, an obstacle course and more. For more information, call (803) 361-4453.

OCT. 14, 16

Career Workshop

10:30 a.m. to noon., The S.C. Department of Veterans' Affairs is hosting a career workshop. For more information or to register, scan the



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.



Courtesy photo

Pfc. Zeyad Al Mifrij, left, poses for a photograph with New York Army National Guard Lt. Col. Brian Napier during Al Mifrij's Sept. 1 graduation from Basic Combat Training at Fort Jackson. The two met in 2008 when Napier was a lieutenant in the 25th infantry Division and Al Mifrij was his Iraqi interpreter.

Officer, interpreter meet at BCT graduation

By ERIC DURR
New York National Guard

In 2008, when New York Army National Guard Lt. Col. Brian Napier was a lieutenant running an ad hoc route clearance platoon north of Baghdad, he developed a bond with Zeyad Al Mifrij, his Arabic interpreter.

Al Mifrij rode with Napier on 210 missions, and they worked together every day, Napier recalled. And not only did he speak to the locals for Napier, Al Mifrij helped develop intelligence that identified IED locations and saved lives.

"In order to be effective, and rather than just waiting for the bombs to show up, we tried to get ahead of it by maintaining and building relationships with the locals," Na-

pier recalled.

So, when Pfc. Zeyad Al Mifrij graduated from basic training at Fort Jackson on Sept. 11, Napier made sure he was there.

"I just had to be there," said Napier, who now serves as the executive officer of the 42nd Infantry Division Artillery.

His visit to Fort Jackson to be there with Al Mifrij, his wife Sarab, and children Hussein, Abdalhafiz, Yasir and Iris, is just the latest installment in a relationship that began 17 years ago, Napier said.

Napier met Al Mifrij when he was told that his firing platoon in the 2nd Battalion, 11th Field Artillery Regiment, a part of the 2nd Stryker Brigade of the 25th Infantry Division, was to be converted into a route clearance platoon.

"There were too many bombs, not

enough route clearance platoons, so they gave my platoon of cannoneers a crash course and off we went," he said.

The platoon was equipped with MRAPS—the mine resistant ambush protected vehicles— and Huskey vehicle mounted mine detection systems. And, they had Zeyad Al Mifrij.

"Zeyad was my trusted link to not only communicate with locals, but determine what information was likely not true," Napier recalled.

Mifrij, who had degrees in computer science and graphic design, always talked about how much he loved the United States," Napier said.

And unlike some Arabic interpreters,

See **INTERPRETER**, Page 9

Month raises breast cancer awareness

By CHARLENE DAVIS
Public Health Nurse

Do you ever wonder why October is dedicated to breast cancer awareness? For nearly four decades, October has been recognized as National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, a time to educate communities, promote screening, and highlight the importance of early detection. It's also a month to honor survivors and support those currently undergoing treatment.

Breast cancer remains the most common type of non-skin cancer in the United States, accounting for about 30% of all new cancer cases in women (American Association for Cancer Research). While often thought of as a women's disease, men can also be affected. In fact, the American Cancer Society estimates that about 2,800 men in the U.S. will be diagnosed in 2025. Lack of awareness and stigma can often delay care, especially among men, trans men, and non-binary people.

Why Early Detection Matters

Detecting breast cancer early can make treatment more successful. Studies show that more than 25% of breast cancers are first discovered through self-breast exams. While self-exams are not a replacement for screenings such as mammograms, they are an important tool to help individuals recognize changes in their own bodies.

How to Perform a Self-Breast Exam

■ In the shower: Using the pads of your three middle fingers, check the entire breast and armpit area with light, medium, and firm pressure.

■ In front of a mirror: Look for changes in breast shape, contour,

See **AWARENESS**, Page 9



Photos by NATHAN CLINEBELLE



MWR Central

opens in the Solomon Center

By **ROBERT TIMMONS**
Fort Jackson Public Affairs

MWR Central opened in the Solomon Center to large crowds and fanfare Sept. 19.

Col. David Gaugush, garrison commander, said the location is to be the hub of where our Soldiers, their Family members, our veterans, retirees and the thousands of visitors each week can spend quality time with their Families.

He said Fort Jackson was excited about reopening Andy's Gym that expanded the fitness footprint on post.

"What is unique about this is that we are offering on-site, hourly child-care," he added. This is in response to challenges across the Army where "families are burdened by the fact its challenging for them to go and take

care of themselves, while doing the parent-child handoff. We are offering the opportunity for them to have their children be looked after while they are here getting a good workout."

The reopening is part of the post's focus to offer the best quality of life for service members and their families.

We have taken several "disaggregated facilities and services across the installation and brought them to a more centralized location where they can be more easily accessed," he added.

The services that moved into MWR Central includes Outdoor Recreation rental check out. Marion Street Station, the former home of Outdoor Recreation's rental check out recently closed its doors.

Fifteen to 20% of Fort Jackson's service members live on the installation and MWR Central is envisioned to help bring many of those residing off post back on post to use the facilities.

Gaugush said he was confident "we are going to provide not just a product, but great services and opportunities ... that will bring our service members

and their families back on the installation and a venue to build camaraderie with their teammates after duty hours."

The opening at the Solomon Center is "a continuation of (Maj. Gen. Robert Solomon's) legacy," said Chip Martin, who was the aide to Maj. Gen. Robert Solomon from 1984-1985 and Army Training Center and Fort Jackson chief of staff in 2003.

Martin also spoke at the Solomon Center naming ceremony in 2005.

Solomon "was a fun, kind human being," Martin said. "When he came here, he just embraced this community. Even when he retired, he worked in several charitable organizations."

Martin said the best way the community can follow Solomon's legacy is to "take advantage" of what the post offers and "make it a focal point for their families."

The celebration of the center opening carried on that night with an evening of dueling pianos.

For more information about Fort Jackson's Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation visit: <https://jackson.armymwr.com/>.



Clockwise from far left top: Patrons swarm into Solomon Center for the opening of MWR Central, Sept. 19. MWR Central contains many activities once located elsewhere on post including Outdoor Recreation.

Pam Long, fitness expert with the Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation, talks to a visitor about changes made to the center.

Esperanza Romero, financial counselor with Army Community Service, speaks to patrons about what MWR Central offers to the community.

Family members peruse MWR Central after its reopening ceremony held Sept. 19. The center is part of the post's focus on providing the best quality of life for the community.

Col. David Gaugush, garrison commander, speaks during the ceremony. He said MWR Central was a place where service members and their families come after hours to build camaraderie with their teammates.

What to expect in the next iteration of MREs

By KATIE LANGE
Pentagon News

The old saying “variety is the spice of life” is especially true when it comes to food. While service members in combat will eat whatever they’re given, having good meals that match what they might eat at home is important for morale and readiness.

Every year, food scientists at the Army Combat Capabilities Development Command Soldier Center’s Combat Feeding Division in Natick, Massachusetts, work to develop new components for meals ready-to-eat. They’re based on warfighter feedback received by each service to add variety or replace unpopular items. Researchers also look at trends in the commercial sector to see what might play well on newer menus.

What’s Coming, What’s Going

The next iteration of MREs is MRE 46, which is expected to come out in 2026. The menu’s developers said that in MRE 46, they plan to replace the beef taco filling, pork sausage patty and jalapeno pepper jack beef patty — all of which were not rated high among surveyed service members — with a Cuban-style beef picadillo with vegetables, buffalo-style chicken, and a Thai-style red curry with chicken and rice.

“Buffalo chicken is something that (Soldiers) have requested. It’s a popular item ... so we’re hoping that this item will be long-standing,” explained Julie Edwards, a Combat Feeding Division senior technologist and registered dietitian.

More protein-filled snacks will round out the MREs, including new s’mores recovery bars and freeze-dried chocolate peanut butter bites. Another big focus of the newest iteration is more caffeinated products.

“What we’ve noticed is caffeine is one of the least consumed items in the MRE,” Edwards said. “Previous generations were big coffee drinkers, but the newer generation of Soldiers are not.”

As replacements, researchers looked to develop new beverage options, as well as energy chews, energy gels, caffeinated gum and even caffeinated jelly beans.

Edwards said service members also requested a larger, more durable towelette.

“Any new item that we get that can help



Photo by TECH SGT. TYLER J. BOLKEN

A supply of meals, ready-to-eat is prepared for distribution, Nov. 13, 2024. The contents of the next iteration of the meals was recently released by the Combat Capabilities Development Command.

bring variety and increase acceptability is important,” Edwards said. “We know that eating an MRE isn’t everyone’s No. 1 thing, but we want to make it safe to eat — that’s our No. 1 priority — and then to make it taste good as well.”

Like with the new close combat assault ration, developers also focused on reducing the weight and volume of the new MREs without cutting calories or nutritional value.

Passing the Military Grade

All new items being considered for MREs must meet shelf-life requirements before they can be evaluated by warfighters, meaning they have to still be edible after spending six months in 100 degrees Fahrenheit and three years at 80 degrees Fahrenheit.

Edwards said a lot of commercial items that could be considered for MREs wouldn’t pass muster. For example, she said it’s been a challenge to find snacks — aside from nuts — that provide 10 grams or more of protein. Many of them have a chemical reaction over time that gives them an unappetizing ap-

pearance. She used beef jerky as an example.

“I know in the commercial sector, you see lots of beef jerky that’s shelf stable. However, it has a very short commercial shelf life,” Edwards said. “What happens to jerky over time is it gets dark in color and becomes unappealing. So, we had a challenge of finding jerkies that meet our shelf-life requirements.”

MREs also have to meet specific nutritional requirements under the Department of War-wide Army Regulation 40-25. Those requirements are different than nutritional needs for civilians and can often depend on environmental factors.

After shelf-life requirements are met, operational testing can begin. Teams of researchers go out and work with warfighters in the field to determine what they like, then behavioral psychologists hold focus groups to elaborate on the data. Edwards said it’s important they get honest feedback from everyone at every rank.

“We want you to give us this feedback

because it does help. It does make a difference,” she said. “Operational tests are very expensive and time-consuming. So, we want to make sure that we’re being good stewards of investing money in the right areas.”

From there, the feedback is analyzed and presented to service leaders who are part of the Joint Services Operational Rations Forum. Those folks decide which new items to implement.

“From start to finish, it’s about a four-year process until the Soldier actually sees (the new meals),” Edwards said.

Meanwhile, items for MRE 47, which is expected to come out sometime in 2027, are already in development. One service request was to include more plant-based items, Edwards said. For snacking, the Combat Feeding Division has developed plant-based animal crackers, a new recovery bar, a protein bar and fruit-flavored cereal. Edwards said the four vegetarian meals currently available to troops will be replaced with plant-based entrees.

Awareness

Continued from Page 5

skin texture, or nipple appearance. Flex chest muscles by pressing hands on hips to spot any dimpling or puckering.

■ **Lying down:** Place a pillow under your shoulder, raise your arm behind your head, and use opposite hand fingers to check the breast and armpit. Don't forget to gently squeeze the nipple to check for discharge.

The more familiar you are with your breasts, the easier it becomes to notice anything unusual.

Get Involved This October

Moncrief Army Health Clinic's Public Health Team invites the community to a special Lunch and Learn event from noon to 1 p.m., Oct. 3 at the Drill Sergeant Timothy Kay Soldier Performance Readiness Center. An oncologist, cancer organizations, and breast cancer survivors will share valuable information and resources. Bring your lunch and come join us!

In the meantime, here are a few simple ways to take part in Breast Cancer Awareness Month:

- Check in with a friend, colleague, or family member who has been affected by breast cancer.
- If you're over 40, schedule your mammogram, or speak to your doctor earlier if you have risk factors.
- Learn and start performing regular self-breast exams to know your "normal."
- Make healthy lifestyle choices
- Participate in a run or walk

For more information on how you can schedule a mammogram, please stop by Moncrief Army Health Clinic Radiology Department or call (803) 751-2366/4606. For more information, visit <https://www.breastcancer.org>.

Interpreter

Continued from Page 5

he liked the Army and the work and wanted the team to succeed, Napier recalled. He also talked about being in the American Army, Napier said.

As Napier got ready to rotate home at the end of his 15-month deployment, Al Mifrij, asked his lieutenant to write an endorsement to help him immigrate to the United States. The interpreter wanted to take advantage of a program which allowed Iraqis who helped U.S. forces immigrate to America.

It took time, and more letters and endorsements from other American officers. And there were bureaucratic hang ups when the birth of

Yasir in 2012 required the family to start the visa process all over again, Napier recalled.

But in 2017 the family finally arrived in the United States and settled outside of Cleveland, Ohio.

Al Mafrij turned out to be good at making money in America, Napier said.

He got a job and within six months he was buying, renovating and selling small houses.

Eventually, he became the manager of a Walmart store and completed a degree in cyber security. But he never forgot that dream of joining the U.S. Army and giving back to his adopted country, Napier said.

But with one son in college, Al Mifrij was no longer a young man. He also had to make sure he had the time to leave his job for basic and advanced training.



Photo by SGT. 1ST CLASS JERIMIAH RICHARDSON

Members of the U.S. Army Drill Sergeant Association unveil a picture of a newly enshrined member of the Drill Sergeant Hall of Fame, Sept. 18.

Hall

Continued from Page 2

while serving in multiple positions, over a decade.

■ Master Sgt. Christopher Adame for his service to the drill sergeant program as he served in the position of Drill Sergeant Academy Chief of Training. Through this position Adame advised the course schedule with rapidly changing physical fitness standards and impacts from the coronavirus pandemic.

■ Sgt. 1st Class Jake Mrzena for his continued service and dedication to the

drill sergeant program, culminating as the U.S. Army Reserve Drill Sergeant of the Year.

■ Retired Sgt 1st Class James "Jim" Rose for his 45 years of service, both in and out of uniform, supporting the drill sergeant program and Initial Military Training.

"It's an honor to be inducted with these individuals, and an even larger honor to be inducted beside my brother," said James "Jim" Rose. "Being part of the transformation of the drill sergeant program since 1985, it means the world to be honored and have my photo hung on the walls besides these legends within the drill sergeant community."

But his computer background allowed him to get an age waiver to enlist as a signal support specialist working in computer security Napier said. And, he added, he was happy to write an endorsement for Al Mifrij security clearance.

So, on Sept. 11 —on the 24th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks— Al Mifrij became a 45-year-old private first class heading to Fort Stewart, Georgia for his advanced individual training.

He's happy that he could be there for Al Mifrij and help him and his family along their American journey, Napier said.

"I am just incredibly proud of him," Napier said.

"I mean he had had so many struggles along the way, and he had said he was going to find a way to join the Army, and he did it," he said.

SALUTING THIS CYCLE'S HONOREES

**3rd Battalion,
13th Infantry
Regiment**

**DRILL SERGEANT
OF THE CYCLE**
Staff Sgt.
Ryan Christy

**ALPHA COMPANY
SOLDIER LEADER
OF THE CYCLE**
Spc. Shaylee Logan

SOLDIER OF THE CYCLE
Pvt. Yaritza Cestou

**BRAVO COMPANY
SOLDIER LEADER
OF THE CYCLE**
Spc. Mariah Stewart

SOLDIER OF THE CYCLE
Pvt. Victor Greer

**CHARLIE COMPANY
SOLDIER LEADER
OF THE CYCLE**
Pfc. Marcus Barcon

SOLDIER OF THE CYCLE
Pfc. Merlinda McKenzie

**DELTA COMPANY
SOLDIER LEADER
OF THE CYCLE**
Pfc. Charles Wilson

SOLDIER OF THE CYCLE
Pfc. Axel Zirabes

**ECHO COMPANY
SOLDIER LEADER
OF THE CYCLE**
Spc. Tyler Jones

SOLDIER OF THE CYCLE
Pfc. Erlyn Urieta-Acosta

Events

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or to register, scan the QR code.

OCT. 15
Financial Abuse Seminar
2 p.m., MS Teams. Explore signs, tactics, and impacts of financial abuse in a relationship during this online seminar of the Health Relationships Virtual Fair. For more information on how to register, email: usarmy.knox.usard.mbx.hq-g1-soldier-family-assistance-branch@army.mil.

OCT. 17
Trunk or Treat & Haunted Clinic
4 p.m. to 8 p.m., Moncrief 3rd Floor Lawn. Join the Guardian Readiness Team for an eerily wonderful night of candy, fun, and thrills. Event schedule:
4-5:30 p.m.Trunk of Treat
4:50-5 p.m.Best truck and costume
6-8 p.m.Haunted Clinic
(on the ground floor of Moncrief) For more

information, call (803) 751-2291.

OCT. 21
Financial Abuse Seminar
Noon, MS Teams. Explore signs, tactics, and impacts of financial abuse in a relationship during this online seminar of the Health Relationships Virtual Fair. For more information on how to register, email: usarmy.knox.usard.mbx.hq-g1-soldier-family-assistance-branch@army.mil.

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 more. 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 pumpin and then use it as a target. For more information or to regis-

ter, call (803) 751-3484.

Zombie 5K
8 a.m., Twin Lakes Park. Come out and enjoy an adult-themed Halloween 5K run. For more information, call (803) 751-3700.

OCT. 28
Five Love Languages Seminar
1 p.m., MS Teams. Learn your love language and how to effectively communicate love within your relationship during the online seminar as part of the Health Relationships Virtual Fair. For more information on how to register, email: usarmy.knox.usard.mbx.hq-g1-soldier-family-assistance-branch@army.mil.

OCT. 31
Gaslighting Seminar
2:30 p.m., MS Teams. Learn what gaslighting is and the signs to look for and how to respond to it during this seminar as part of the Healthy Relationships Virtual Fair. For more information on how to register, email: usarmy.knox.usard.mbx.hq-g1-soldier-family-assistance-branch@army.mil.

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. The lunch, held the first Wednesday of the month. For more information, call (803) 751-3979.

NOV. 12
Education/Career Fair
9 a.m. to 1 p.m., 1917 Club. Fort Jackson's Army Continuing Education System, Transition Assistance Program and Army Community Service presents an education and career fair. Come learn how to prepare for your next career. For more information, call (803) 751- 7209.

NOV. 18
Shred Day
9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Recycle Center. Come out and recycle your papers. All types of paper with sensitive information will be accepted, but NO classified documents. For more information, call (803) 751-4208.

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

When home isn't safe: Tips for victims of domestic abuse

Military One Source

If your partner's behavior becomes unpredictable, you may start to feel as if you are constantly walking on eggshells around them.

You may even feel restrained from your normal daily activities and that you are becoming isolated from friends and family.

If this sounds like your experience, the Family Advocacy Program and Military OneSource offer ways to help you prioritize your safety.

Call The Hotline

For immediate support, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline 24/7 at (800) 799-7233.

Maintain your support network

You can take these steps to help ensure your safety and wellness if you start feeling trapped and that your partner is watching your every move:

- Create scheduled check-ins with trusted family, friends or neighbors by phone, text or social media so they know you're OK.

- You may not feel comfortable or safe sharing information about your relationship while home with your partner (for example, you may be worried that they will overhear you, or that they are monitoring your phone, email or web activity).

But if you can, checking in with your network can help them become aware of your safety concerns.

For example, if the abuse has escalated and you're not reaching out to them at the time you normally would, it might tip off your network to call for help.

- Develop a code word or phrase to share with your support network to indicate that you are experiencing an emergency and are in need of immediate help.

- Have a discussion with your friends and family about what help is most important to you if you ever need them to intervene (since help in an emergency can look different to different people).

Let your friends know that this may mean asking them to be prepared to call 911, or to call your partner's cellphone as a distraction to their behavior.

Maximize your privacy at home, especially as a way to connect with help

- Going to the bathroom and running the shower or faucet while on the phone with a friend, or when calling the Family Advocacy Program or the National Domestic Violence Hotline, can help add another layer of privacy and noise to distract from your partner overhearing your conversation.

- Stepping outside is a good way to take time to breathe, practice mindfulness and center yourself to help calm your anxiety.

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This may also be a good time to make a call to friends or family, or to call Military OneSource to speak with a consultant for some brief counseling.

Make a backup plan for emergencies

- Be prepared.

In extreme cases, you may determine that you need to leave home for your safety, and your children's safety.

If your partner has been physically abusive or threatened violence — especially if they have access to a gun — it might be a good idea to hide a bag of essentials in the event the abuse escalates to the point where you need to leave.

Keep items such as medications, spare cash (if available), a change of clothes, a phone charger and IDs in a safe place that is accessible only to you.

- Plan the fastest and easiest routes out of your home (and if you can, share them with your children) in the event you need to quickly escape.

Visit the National Domestic Violence Hotline website to search for local shelters for domestic abuse victims.

Manage your situation with help from these resources

Each relationship and situation is different, and some of these ideas may not work for you or your family.

If you are unsure about where to start, you can contact your installation's Family Advocacy Program to speak with a victim advocate, who can help you develop a safety plan unique to you.

If you have experienced sexual assault or threatening sexual harassment during military service, you can find information and resources via the VA military sexual trauma webpage.

You can also talk or chat with an advocate at the National Domestic Violence Hotline by visiting thehotline.org or calling (800) 799-7233, or reach out to the Defense Department's Safe Helpline.

Getting help for an abusive relationship can be even more complicated for individuals with a disability, or who are caring for loved ones in a multigeneration household. The following information will help you locate the resources you may need.

- For families with special needs, contact your installation Exceptional Family Member Program Family Support staff.

- If needed, you can explore resources from The Deaf Hotline, where advocates are available 24/7 for crisis intervention, education, information and referrals for deaf, deaf-blind and deaf-disabled callers at (855) 812-1001.

- The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline offers 24/7 free and confidential emotional support to people in a crisis.

THE FAMILY ADVOCACY PROGRAM AND MILITARY ONESOURCE OFFER WAYS TO HELP YOU PRIORITIZE YOUR SAFETY IF YOUR PARTNER'S BEHAVIOR BECOMES UNPREDICTABLE.

FLU VACCINE DATES

Date	Time	Location
October 14	11 a.m.- 6 p.m.	Fort Jackson Theater, 3319 Jackson Blvd.
October 18	10 a.m.- 3 p.m.	Fort Jackson AAFES Main PX, 4110 Century Division Ave.
October 20	11 a.m.- 6 p.m.	Fort Jackson Mini Mall, Bldg. 4712 Liberty Division Rd.
October 21	11 a.m.- 6 p.m.	Fort Jackson Theater, 3319 Jackson Blvd.
November 4	9 a.m.- 2 p.m.	Fort Jackson Commissary, 4716 Commissary Way.
November 6	11 a.m.- 6 p.m.	Fort Jackson Theater, 3319 Jackson Blvd.
November 7	11 a.m.- 6 p.m.	Fort Jackson Theater, 3319 Jackson Blvd.
November 13	4-6 p.m.	Fort Jackson Theater, 3319 Jackson Blvd.
November 14	4-6 p.m.	Fort Jackson Theater, 3319 Jackson Blvd.

DATES MAY CHANGE DUE TO VACCINE AVAILABILITY



Shots are available to those over 6 years old. Department of Defense ID card holders only.

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VICTORY... STARTS HERE



Sgt. 1st Class Randall Smith, drill sergeant leader at the U.S. Army Drill Sergeant Academy, puts on face paint during the 2025 Drill Sergeant to the Year Competition, Sept. 16. Smith won the competition and was named the Army's top drill sergeant.

Photo by SGT. 1ST CLASS DANA CLARKE