



FORGING THE WARRIOR SPIRIT

THE JRTC & FORT POLK GUARDIAN

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Home of Heroes @ Fort Polk, LA

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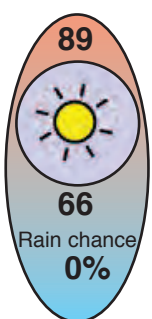


CHUCK CANNON / GUARDIAN

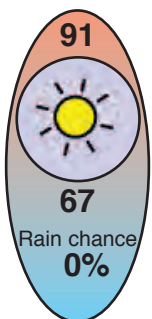
JRTC's newest Rangers wish the U.S. Army Happy Birthday!

The Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk hosted a 245th birthday celebration for the U.S. Army at Warrior Field June 11. JRTC and Fort Polk commander, Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank (far right) and Command Sgt. Maj. Michael C. Henry (far left), were joined by Sgt. Mitchell Blackwood, JRTC Operations Group (second from left) and 2nd Lt. Kyle Barnes, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (second from right), the most recent Ranger graduates, in the cake cutting ceremony.

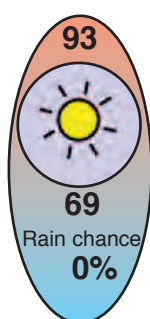
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Viewpoint

FORSCOM CG message on diversity and inclusion

By **Gen. MICHAEL X. GARRETT**
FORSCOM commander

Dear FORSCOM Soldiers, Civilians, and Family Members:

Every Soldier and Department of the Army Civilian swears an oath to support and defend the Constitution. This includes the right of our people to peaceably assemble and petition our government. We will continue to support and defend those rights, and we will continue to protect Americans.

America is a country founded on the declaration of an ideal that everyone is "created equal" and is endowed with certain "unalienable

rights ... that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Our Constitution's preamble talks about forming a "more perfect Union" and our Nation sought to enlighten that definition over the last 250 years.

Even with considerable progress, it is important to remain aware that as a Nation and an Army, we know inequalities still exist and there are those who still harbor bias. It is our duty as brothers and sisters in arms to admit that reality, and commit to positively changing the future of our force. Diversity and inclusion are woven into our Army Values, and are, quite simply, the right thing to do.

To Army leaders of all ranks, listen to your people. Lead with compassion and humility, and create an environment where every member of the team is treated with dignity and respect. Now is the time for each of us to strive for understanding. It is up to us to create a culture of inclusiveness and belonging across our Army. Our strength is our diversity.

Thank you for your service. It is an honor to serve alongside you as an American Soldier.

Freedom's Guardian!



Michael X. Garrett
General, USA
Commanding

Message

In our view

Local, state and federal Louisiana elected officials, community members and stakeholders wish the Army a happy birthday:



Clarke, Johnson and Allen



Rice



Williams

Col. Kendall Clarke, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, commander, U.S. Rep. Mike Johnson (center) and Leesville Mayor Rick Allen, at the 2019 Army birthday celebration: "Although a large gathering to celebrate the 245th birthday of the U.S. Army isn't possible this year, it is always an occasion to express our sincere gratitude to the men and women in uniform and their Families. Thank you for your selfless service to our country every day. We look forward to celebrating together again soon. Happy 245th to the Army."

Charles Rice, civilian aide to the Secretary of the Army, Louisiana (South): "Happy birthday to our Army. As a veteran, I know that your service, sacrifice and mission are vital to our country."

Command Sgt. Maj. (Retired) Lawrence Williams: "I am proud to see another Army birthday! I am 90 years old; if I was asked to come back to the Army, I would."



Please see **Birthday**, page 6



Guardian

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For more information on Fort Polk units and happenings visit the following Facebook pages: [@JRTCOperationsGrp](https://www.facebook.com/JRTCOperationsGrp), [@BayneJonesACH](https://www.facebook.com/BayneJonesACH) or [@fortpolkmwr](https://www.facebook.com/fortpolkmwr).

Briefs

Roadwork

Mississippi Avenue is undergoing renovations — pavement milling, new asphalt and installation of permanent pavement parking.

Travel lane and shoulder closures are projected to continue through June 19. The primary traffic impact will be continued delays associated with flaggers controlling traffic within and around the work zone. The moving work zone will require intermittent temporary closures of intersections and drives along this segment of Mississippi Avenue.

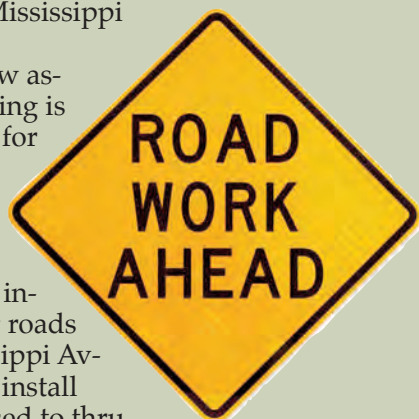
The new asphalt paving is projected for June 22-July 10.

The contractor

will close intersecting roads at Mississippi Avenue and install

"road closed to thru traffic" signs along Alabama Ave after 8 a.m. Monday through Friday.

Flaggers will be placed within the work zone to control and mitigate conflicting traffic movements. Efforts will be made to minimize traffic impacts, but delays should be expected and alternate routes used if available.



MiTICK program

The Guardian reported on the Military Tick Identification/Infection Confirmation Kit in the June 5 edition of the e-Guardian. In addition to the information within that article, "DoD helps discover facts about ticks, diseases they carry with MiTICK program," Army Public Health (formerly Preventive Medicine) provided specific steps for the MiTICK submission process on Fort Polk.

First, the tick must be alive and in good condition. It is recommended to place the live tick in a small container with a few blades of grass and to refrigerate (not freeze) the specimen until it can be dropped off at bldg 3516.

Information regarding branch, age, gender, contact information and the location of the tick's attachment will be required, but it will be kept confidential and only used to contact the individual if any tick tests positive for diseases.

For more details, contact Lenoir P. Ross at 531-3402.



CHUCK CANNON / GUARDIAN

Soldiers with the 32nd Hospital Center's Task Force Vanguard participate in a ceremony June 8 prior to their deployment for a nine-month tour to Iraq. The unit will assume a combat support hospital role in Iraq.

32nd HC deploys TF Vanguard to Iraq

By **CHUCK CANNON**

Command information officer

FORT POLK, La. — More than 80 Soldiers from the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk's 32nd Hospital Center, departed for a nine-month tour in Iraq following a deployment ceremony June 8 at Warrior Gym.

Col. Lee Burnett, commander, 32nd HC, delivered the keynote address. He told those preparing to deploy that even though nine months might seem like a long time, the time would pass quickly, and they would develop lifetime friends.

"The bonds you make during the next nine months will never break," he said. "Those to your left and right are your brothers and sisters for life. When you need a hand, they will be there."

Burnett said TF Vanguard was in quality hands with Col. Paul Johnson and 1st Sgt. Demetrius Peggins.

"These two leaders have been key to the success of the 32nd and 115th Field Hospital," he said. "When this mission came down, they both stepped forward and took on the challenge."

Burnett thanked 1st Medical Brigade and JRTC and Fort Polk leadership for their support as TF Vanguard prepared to deploy. He closed by thanking TF Vanguard Family members who were unable to attend the ceremony due to COVID-19 mitigation protocol.

"Thank you to each spouse, partner, son, daughter, mother and father," he said. "Your support means the world to this team."

Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, commander, JRTC and Fort Polk, addressed the Soldiers. He said as he walked through the ranks of the formation before the ceremony, speaking with those about to deploy, he was reminded of something he already knew about TF Vanguard.

"I thought the phrase that best describes who you are to all of us is 'an inspiring team,'" he said. "We're absolutely inspired by your example."

Frank said the Soldiers in the formation to his front could deploy across the United States in

any hospital, probably making a salary much higher than what they make in the Army.

"But your dedication to duty is what drives you," he said. "Your teamwork is inspiring."

Frank pointed out that as a battalion commander in Iraq, it was the medical professionals who were unsung heroes.

"They provide the confidence for those in front line units to go out every day to execute their mission," he said. "You may not know you provide that kind of confidence for every unit in the Army, but you do."

Frank said he could not be prouder of the 32nd HC and TF Vanguard.

"You're going to go over there and represent JRTC and Fort Polk and III Corps in an exceptionally professional manner," he said. "Everyone will know the mark of professionalism you leave on that theatre as you deploy back here to JRTC and Fort Polk."

He reminded the deploying Soldiers that while they are gone, their Families would be taken care of.

"Don't be shy about letting your chain of command know if your Family needs assistance," Frank said. "That's our job while you're deployed."

Col. Paul Johnson, 32nd HC, deputy commander for nursing and commander, Task Force Vanguard, said his team would assume the combat support hospital role in Iraq.

"The big thing (facing us) will be infection control, because of being in a tent and not having as controlled an environment as in a hospital," he said. "But we're trained and ready. We'll pull it off. We always do."

Maj. Tyler Powell, an internal medicine doctor with 32nd HC, said this is his second deployment.

With a young daughter and son, he said he's fortunate to have a strong spouse.

"I'll try to stay as connected as possible, through FaceTime and calling," he said. "My wife just separated from the Air Force so she understands deployments. She's definitely the rock for our house. I'm blessed to have her."

Army news

Service members, civilians bound by DoD rules during elections

By TERRI MOON CRONK

Defense.gov

WASHINGTON — It's election season again and federal, state and local political campaigns are kicking into high gear. Defense Secretary Dr. Mark T. Esper's latest ethics video lays out the importance of political activity rules that Defense Department civilian employees and service members must follow; it can be viewed at <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/753404/secdef-ethics-message>

In the 2020 DoD Public Affairs Guidance for Political Campaigns and Elections memorandum of Feb. 11, DoD spokesman Jonathan Rath Hoffman summarized the rules that apply to all DoD personnel regarding involvement in political events.

"The Department of Defense has a longstanding and well-defined policy regarding political campaigns and elections to avoid the perception of DoD sponsorship, approval or endorsement of any political candidate, campaign or cause," Hoffman wrote.

"The department encourages and actively supports its personnel in their civic obligation to vote, but makes clear members of the armed forces on active duty should not engage in partisan political activities," his memo read.

Sources of Authority

The Hatch Act is a federal law passed in 1939 that limits certain political activities of federal employees, according to the U.S. Office of Special Counsel. It applies to DoD civilian employees. The law's purposes are to ensure that federal programs are administered in a nonpartisan fashion, to protect federal employees from political coercion in the workplace and to ensure that federal employees are advanced based on merit and not on political affiliation, the OSC site added.

DoD policy for service members is contained in Department of Defense Directive 1344.10, Political Activities for Members of the Armed Forces. It is DoD policy to encourage members of the armed forces to carry out the obligations of citizenship while keeping with the traditional concept that members on active duty should not engage in partisan political activity. All members of the armed forces, including active-duty members, members of the reserve components not on active duty and retired members are prohibited from wearing military uniforms at political campaign or election events.

As the secretary said in his ethics video, both active-duty service members and civilian employees must understand federal rules and DoD



It's election season again and federal, state and local political campaigns are kicking into high gear. Defense Secretary Dr. Mark T. Esper's latest ethics video lays out the importance of political activity rules that Defense Department civilian employees and service members must follow.

policies pertaining to political activities. Service members and employees should direct any questions to their supervisors or their supporting legal office, said a senior official in DoD's Standards of Conduct Office.

Resources

For more information concerning political activities, check out DoD Directive 1344.10 for service members and the U.S. Office of Special Counsel website for civilian employees.

Ethics and leadership

In his ethics video and previous ethics messages to the department, Esper emphasized the importance of leaders regularly training their subordinates in the importance of maintaining ethical standards.

"Maintaining the hard-earned trust and confidence of the American people requires us to avoid any action that could imply endorsement of a political party, political candidate or campaign by any element of the department," he said.

"As the secretary has stated, we must continuously train and prepare so that we are ready to

do what is right when ethical dilemmas arise," said Scott Thompson, director of DoD's Standards of Conduct Office. "Training is not a one-time event. The secretary expects department leaders to be personally involved in training their organizations and discussing examples of ethical decision-making — good and bad. In addition to annual ethics training, leaders should routinely make conversations about ethics a natural part of meetings and engagements with personnel."

As leaders, teammates and colleagues, all must inspire one another by setting the right example of ethical conduct, Thompson emphasized.

"Shortly after taking office, Secretary Esper reminded DoD personnel that each of us takes a solemn oath to support and defend the Constitution. The department's mission imparts a special responsibility on each of us to serve with the utmost integrity and vigilance in protecting the duties and confidences with which we have been entrusted," he added. "To ensure we are ready to do what is right when ethical dilemmas arise, we must train and prepare ourselves."

DoD increases money for do-it-yourself moves this summer

By JOSEPH LACDAN

Army News Service

WASHINGTON — Soldiers now have an added incentive to choose the personally-procured move (PPM) when moving to their next duty stations this summer.

Aside from limiting exposure to COVID-19, a revision to the Defense Department's Joint Travel Regulations has increased the monetary payment to Soldiers who choose to move their household goods.

Now through Dec. 31, Soldiers using the PPM program can receive a payment equal to 100% of

the estimated cost the government would pay to move their items. When Soldiers choose the option, they shoulder the cost and responsibility of packing and moving their belongings themselves, and the payment compensates them for those expenses.

Please see **Moves**, page 13

From Revolutionary War until today: U.S. Army stands strong

GUARDIAN STAFF

Editor's note: The information for this article was obtained from the United States Army Center of Military History.

FORT POLK, La. — America's Revolutionary War began on April 19, 1775 with exchanges of musketry between British regulars and Massachusetts militiamen at Lexington and Concord. As their fellow citizen Soldiers from New Hampshire, Connecticut and Rhode Island responded to the alarm, a state of war existed between the four colonies and the British government.

Called the Army of Observation, a force of New Englanders surrounded Boston and had the British troops who occupied it under siege, but they needed help. They appealed to delegates who represented the 13 colonies to join them in the struggle for American liberty.

When the delegates to the Second Continental Congress convened in Philadelphia on May 10, they soon learned that armed men commanded by Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold had captured the British forts at Ticonderoga and Crown Point on Lake Champlain in New York. The Constitutional crisis, in which Americans sought a redress of grievances from the British king and Parliament, had become open hostilities.

The delegates realized that even though many citizens desired reconciliation, they would now have to address the new military situation. Congress took the next step that eventually transformed a local rebellion into a war for independence when it established the Continental Army: The force we know today as the U.S. Army.

On June 14, 1775, Congress "Resolved, that six companies of expert riflemen be immediately raised in Pennsylvania, two in Maryland and two in Virginia... (and) as soon as completed, shall march and join the Army near Boston, to be there employed as light infantry, under the command of the chief officer in that army."

The delegates then prescribed an oath of enlistment that required the Soldiers to swear: "I have, this day, voluntarily enlisted myself, as a Soldier, in the American Continental Army, for one year, unless sooner discharged; and I do bind myself to conform, in all instances, to such rules and regulations, as are, or shall be, established for the government of the said Army."

The next day Congress voted to appoint George Washington "to command all the Continental

forces" and began laying the foundation for the American army.

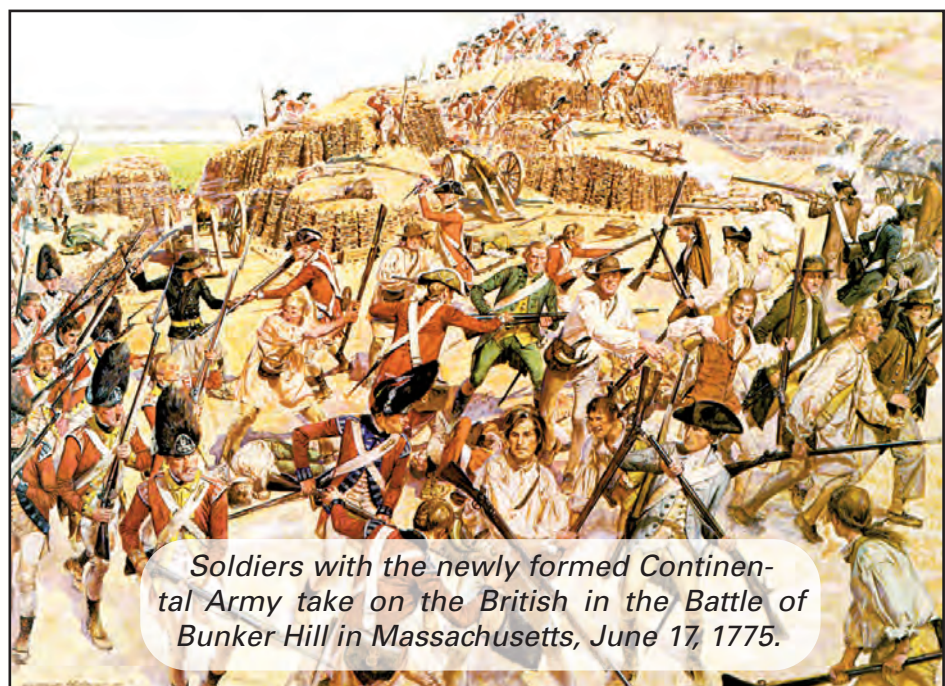
With words that sound hauntingly familiar 245 years later, "The delegates of the United Colonies ... reposing special trust and confidence in the patriotism, valor, conduct and fidelity" of George Washington, issued its first commission by appointing him "General and Commander in chief of the Army of the United Colonies, and of all the forces now raised, or to be raised by them, and of all others who shall voluntarily offer their services, and join the Defense of American liberty, and for repelling every hostile invasion..."

• The following is a description of the U.S. Army birth as it appears in Robert Wright's "The Continental Army."

At least some members of Congress assumed from the beginning that the force would be expanded. That expansion, in the form of increased troop ceilings at Boston, came rapidly as better information arrived regarding the actual numbers of New England troops. By the third week in June delegates were referring to 15,000 at Boston. When on June 19 Congress requested the governments of Connecticut, Rhode Island and New Hampshire to forward to Boston "such of the forces as are already embodied, towards their quotas of the troops agreed to be raised by the New England Colonies," it gave a clear indication of its intent to adopt the regional army.

Discussions the next day indicated that Congress was prepared to support a force at Boston twice the size of the British garrison, and that it was unwilling to order any existing units to be disbanded. By the first week in July delegates were referring to a total at Boston that was edging toward 20,000. Maximum strengths for the forces both in Massachusetts and New York were finally established on July 21 and 22, when solid information was on hand. These were set, respectively, at 22,000 and 5,000 men, a total nearly double that was envisioned on June 14.

The "expert riflemen" authorized on June 14 were the first units raised directly as Continentals. Congress intended to have the 10 companies serve as a light infantry force for the Boston siege. At the same time it symbolically extended military participation beyond New England by allocating six of the companies to Pennsylvania, two to Maryland, and two to Virginia. Each company would have a captain, three lieutenants, four sergeants, four corporals, a drummer (or horn player) and 68 privates. The enlist-



Soldiers with the newly formed Continental Army take on the British in the Battle of Bunker Hill in Massachusetts, June 17, 1775.

US ARMY CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY

ment period was set at one year, the norm for the earlier Provincials, a period that would expire on July 1, 1776.

Responsibility for recruiting the companies was given to the three colonies' delegates, who in turn relied on the county committees of those areas noted for skilled marksmen.

The response in Pennsylvania's western and northern frontier counties was so great that on June 22 the colony's quota was increased from six to eight companies, organized as a regiment. On June 25, the Pennsylvania delegates, with authority from the Pennsylvania Assembly, appointed field officers for the regiment. Since there was no staff organization, company officers and volunteers performed the necessary duties.

On July 11, delegate George Read secured the adoption of a ninth company that his wife's nephew had organized in Lancaster County. In Virginia, Daniel Morgan raised one company in Frederick County, and Hugh Stephenson raised another in Berkeley County. Michael Cresap's and Thomas Price's Maryland companies were both from Frederick County. The 13 companies were organized during late June and early July. They then raced to Boston, where their frontier attitudes created disciplinary problems.

The inclusion of troops from outside New England gave a continental flavor to the army at Boston. A desire to broaden the base of support for the war also led John Adams to work for the appointment of a Southerner as the commander of all the continental forces — raised, or to be raised — for the defense of American liberty.

On June 15, Congress unanimously chose George Washington. Washington had been active in the

military planning committees of Congress and by late May had taken to wearing his old uniform. His colleagues believed that his modesty and competence qualified him to adjust to the "Temper and Genius" of the New England troops. Washington was given the rank of General and Commander in Chief.

Congress clearly respected Washington, for it granted him extensive powers which combined functions of a regular British commander with the military responsibilities of a colonial governor. His instructions on June 20 told him to proceed to Massachusetts, "take charge of the Army of the United Colonies," and capture or destroy all armed enemies. His was also to prepare and send to Congress an accurate strength return of that army.

On the other hand, instructions to keep the army obedient, diligent and disciplined were vague. The Commander in Chief's right to make strategic and tactical decisions on purely military grounds was limited only by a requirement to listen to the advice of a council of war. Washington had the right to determine how many men to retain, and the power to fill temporarily any vacancies below the rank of colonel. Permanent promotions and appointments were reserved for the colonial governments to make.

As for Washington's selection, in strictly military terms he was the best-qualified native-born American. He had begun his military career in 1752 in the Virginia militia as one of four regional adjutants responsible for training. During the first phase of the French and Indian War, he served with gallantry as Edward Braddock's volunteer aide at the battle of the Monongahela, and later as the commander of Virginia's two provincial regiments defending the colony's frontiers.

Birthday

Continued from page 2



Strickland

Col. (Retired) Joey Strickland, secretary, Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs: "Since its official establishment on June 14, 1775, the U.S. Army has played a vital and significant role in the development and defense of our nation. Many times, it stood as the lone symbol and beacon of hope that is America. It is an Army of the American people welcoming all people who have a desire to serve our nation and protect freedom and democracy. It is fitting that, on the 76th anniversary of the Army's landing on Omaha Beach on D-Day, we celebrate, salute and pay tribute to America's symbol of strength and join millions of patriotic Americans who have worn the uniform in saying happy 245th birthday to the Army."



Reese

Sen. Mike Reese, Louisiana, district 30: "I am incredibly proud to represent an Army community and to celebrate the Army's 245 years of heroic service to our country."



King

Jerrod King, police chief, Alexandria: "Happy birthday to the United States Army; 245 years of courage and sacrifice." (King is an Army veteran who served with the 519th Military Police Battalion).



Beebe

Mayor Clarence Beebe, Hornbeck: "We understand freedom is not free. Thanks to the Army for protecting our freedom. Happy 245th birthday, Army!" (Pictured with Cpl. Bianca Ortiz, president, Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers program).



Brocato

Tali Brocato, Junior Miss 2020: "On behalf of the Lake Charles Armed Forces Commission, happy 245th birthday to the Army!"



Morris

Logan Morris, president, Vernon Parish Chamber of Commerce: "We pursue happiness each day, sleep peacefully each night and enjoy life in the greatest country in the world because the Army has answered the call to protect our liberties and those of the free."



Hall

Mayor Jeff Hall, Alexandria: "The City of Alexandria has a special bond with the U.S. military and the Army in particular. Our relationship dates back to the Louisiana Maneuvers, as great Army leaders including Eisenhower, Patton and Bradley met at the Hotel Bentley to plan the winning strategy for the World War II battles in Europe. It continues today as we support the vital mission of Fort Polk and the Joint Readiness Training Center. On behalf of the citizens of Alexandria, I thank you all for your dedication and service to our country and wish a happy 245th birthday to the Army."



Lyles

Laura Lyles: "Happy birthday! On behalf of the Natchitoches area Chamber of Commerce, we thank you for your service." (Pictured with Cpl. Bianca Ortiz, president, BOSS program).

Happy Birthday!

Please see **Birthday**, page 9

Army recognizes the diversity of its people as it marks 245

By **JEAN CLAVETTE GRAVES**

Public affairs specialist

Editor's note: This week I had the opportunity to talk to some amazing Soldiers stationed at Fort Polk to highlight the Army's greatest resource — our people. There are so many wonderful service members; I was privileged to talk to a few. I am humbled by their dedication, their motivation and their service — happy 245th birthday to the Army.

FORT POLK, La. — The Army is made up of Soldiers — professional men and women who choose to serve the nation and swear to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic. Gen. George Patton once said, "The Soldier is the Army. No army is better than its Soldiers. The Soldier is also a citizen. In fact, the highest obligation and privilege of citizenship is that of bearing arms for one's country." This Sunday, the Army will celebrate 245 years.

On Jun. 14, 1775 the Second Continental Congress formed the Continental Army to unite the 13 original colonies in their fight against British tyranny. This year's theme — our people — highlights the contributions of Soldiers past and present, and inspires those who will serve in the future.

The Fort Polk Guardian talked to some of our people — people who have come from around the world and across the country to serve. We talked to people from all walks of life, who represent the fabric of our nation and the ideals upon which it was founded; people who choose to be part of something bigger than themselves, who have accepted the challenge and who illustrate the heart of the Army. The people listed below are just a few of several who have come together as part of the enduring legacy of Soldiers who have served the nation for 245 years.

Sgt. Roderick McGrew Jr., 1st Battalion, 509th Infantry Regiment

McGrew enlisted in 2017 to fulfill a childhood dream of becoming a Soldier. McGrew is from Dallas, Texas and graduated from Stephen F. Austin University. He chose the infantry because he said it was the most prestigious option, and he needed the mental and physical challenge. He said he wanted to be part of a winning team. "The Army has a great track record," McGrew said, "I'm conscious of all of those who've served before me and recognize Soldiers, past and present, and their Families who are willing to make sacrifices for our country."

Motivated to continue his journey, McGrew completed six prerequisite courses for Northwestern State University's Nursing Department this year and has been conditionally accepted to the Shreveport campus. He is pursuing the

Army Medical Department's Enlisted Commissioning Program in hopes of continuing his service as a registered nurse and commissioned officer.

He confided that helping his fellow Soldiers has been his greatest personal benefit during his enlistment. "I serve from a place of grace; the relationships I've developed with my fellow Soldiers and the opportunity to mentor and counsel them has been extremely rewarding." McGrew credits his family's encouragement and backing to his success, "I wouldn't be able to do this without my family supporting me," he said.

Staff Sgt. Duke Nishihara, 46th Engineer Battalion

Nishihara enlisted in 2011 as a Bradley fighting systems vehicle maintainer. He retrained as combat medic after his first enlistment and currently serves as the battalion senior medic, charged with supporting the health and welfare of his fellow Soldiers.

From Anaheim, California, Nishihara is the oldest son of Japanese immigrants. He is a first-generation American, and the only person in his family to serve in the U.S. Army.

"I love the Army, I love the cohesion, I love working with a team, I love mentoring Soldiers, I love the challenge and I love being a medic," said Nishihara.

He plans to continue serving and aims to attend Ranger School, become a drill sergeant and pursue a nursing or physician's assistant school commissioning program.

"I try to honor the legacy of those who served before me. I'm fully committed and proud that I've had the opportunity to serve in my current capacity," he said. "The Army has given me the confidence to lead."

He said through his service he's learned patience and resilience. "The Army is a great place to figure out what you want out of life, gain valuable skills and earn money for college. Even if you only serve one enlistment, don't hesitate, it will set you up for your future," he said.

Spc. Allen Khosho, 52nd Translator/Interpreter Company

Khosho was born and raised in Baghdad, Iraq, and is the second eldest of seven children from a Syrian family. After the liberation of Iraq, he started working for KBR in its dry cleaning facility at a nearby military installation. As his English improved, he began working as a combat interpreter with the 18th Cavalry Regiment and the 3rd Infantry Division between 2006



and 2007. He quickly earned the trust of the American Soldiers and he felt welcomed as part of the unit. He decided to come to the United States with the goal of joining the Army.

Khosho said, "The brotherhood and what the Army stands for motivated me to become a Soldier. The units I worked with did so many good things. They put a lot of bad people away, built schools and made a difference. I wanted to be part of it."

His journey took 10 years. He became a citizen, earned his General Education Diploma, started taking college courses and worked in the civilian sector. He never lost sight of his goal to become a Soldier. He wanted to be an infantryman. He was rejected six times by recruiters for a variety of reasons, but he overcame them all.

In 2017, he finally met a recruiter who told him about the interpreter/translator military occupation specialty. Once he began the process of becoming a translator, he spent six months finalizing his application process, medical assessments, security clearances, completing his GED and physical requirements. Finally on Jun. 26, 2018, 10 years after his arrival in the U.S., he left for basic training at Fort Jackson.

"I'm glad it took so long; I matured. I grew a deeper passion for my new country, more focused on the big picture and more appreciative of the opportunities that were afforded to me in America," he said.

As he approaches the two-year anniversary of his enlistment, he is in awe of how much the Army has accomplished in such a short amount of time.

"Compared to other countries, with a millennia of history, the U.S. has become the greatest country in the world in such a short amount of time. It means a lot to me to be part of the Army's history. I am proud to be part of it. I'm an example for others; now, my baby sister wants to be an Army pilot," he said. "I try to always do the right thing, maintain the highest standards and honor the memory of those who served before me."

Spc. Hope Hanzlik, 317th Brigade Engineer Battalion

Hanzlik joined the Army as a nodal network systems maintainer in 2018 right after high

Please see **Diversity**, page 8



McGrew



Nishihara



Khosho



Hanzlik

school. Her job is to establish communications from battalions to the brigade to ensure the commanders have the ability to communicate with each other.

From Portland, Oregon, Hanzlik was on track for college in high school and surprised her family and friends by enlisting, despite having several veterans in her family. Her grandfather came to the U.S. from Ger-

many after WWII. He joined the Army to earn his citizenship, and her father served in the Air Force during the Vietnam War.

During high school, her parents traveled a lot with her younger brother who was a rising star on the professional tennis circuit. She said she was often left to her own devices and didn't always make the best choices. After staying out late, hanging out with older people and not focusing on the future, the Army proved to be the right choice for her.

She admits she joined on a whim. It wasn't a life-long dream, but after a customer at the Starbucks she was working at suggested she talk to a recruiter, she was hooked on the idea.

"I like being in the Army. There are so many opportunities; I have continuous access to train on a wide range of topics," she said. "I have great leadership that has been encouraging me to learn more."

She said the discipline she's developed while serving has motivated her to start taking college courses, and she has decided she would like to become an officer.

"My company commander and first sergeant have suggested I apply for the 10th Mountain Hip Pocket scholarship and to pursue the Green to Gold program," said Hanzlik. "It's fantastic to think about the Army turning 245. It's a great representation of the Army's importance. Being part of such an old institution predating our country illustrates how dedicated people are to protecting our freedom and that we can survive any manner of conflict," she said. "Our history is all about giving people their rights and protecting those rights."

Sgt. 1st Class Barbara Wandick, 190th Medical Detachment, 32nd Hospital Center

Wandick, a native of Bakersfield, California, a mother of three teenagers and a licensed practical nurse, joined the Army in 2002. She initially enlisted as a combat medic, but later became an LPN where she works primarily with inpatient care. Currently, she is the rear detachment NCO for three forward detachments from the 32nd Hospital Center.

Lack of opportunities at home motivated Wandick to enlist. She needed to get away from her hometown and find herself.

"I always liked helping and being a medic; now nursing allows me to be helpful and serve others," she said regarding why she has dedicated her life to the Army. "Intrinsically, I find the traditions and values of the Army important. I



Wandick

cause of traditions.

"Two hundred forty-five years shows and proves that traditions and values passed from one generation to the next matters," she said. "My first identity is being a Soldier. I signed up for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week — to give my life if necessary. The Army is important to me. I'm proud to belong to this organization, with such a long history rooted in tradition," she said. "I've made decisions in my life. My children have had to sacrifice, but for me, my priorities are God, country and then family."

Sgt. 1st Class Adriana Fox, JRTC Operations Group

Fox is a chaplain assistant, the senior religious affairs specialist, an observer/coach/trainer for Operations Group and the mother of a four-year old. Fox was born in Cali, Colombia. Her father was a biologist who worked in the U.S. Embassy. After the civil war, she and her family relocated to the U.S.

Fox joined the Army in 2008 at 19. She joined the Army for a sense of service to the country. This year, she was the first person with her MOS to earn the Expert Soldier

Badge.

"The Army gives me a sense of fulfillment, and there is no greater camaraderie in any other organization," she said.

She wants to continue to serve and benefit the team. "My mentors invested in me and made me who I am today. Sometimes I feel like this is not my rank, but that I carry this rank for those leaders who encouraged me, I honor their service by mentoring and investing in the younger Soldiers coming after me" she said.

The Army has reached 245 years because the organization is continuously training others. "The way I view it is the Army is a time-honored organization; the leaders who came before us invested in the Soldiers who replaced them. It's an

want to perpetuate that as much as possible with the next generation of Soldiers," she said.

She says she tries to honor the legacy of those who served before her by honoring and supporting the traditions upon which the Army was built. Wandick said that the Army is a sub-culture of society as a whole. Society is constantly moving forward she said, but the Army is just as good, big and powerful as it is be-



organization that will keep on growing because of the leaders' investments into Soldiers."

She said she never wants to disappoint those who have believed in her. Every day she does her job because of those who served before her. Not only does she want to honor the legacy of those before her but also perpetuate it for the future, she said.

"In a time like this, the Army represents hope and safety. We are here to protect our people. Nobody is out; we are inclusive."

She said her greatest moment in the Army was transforming civilians into Soldiers during her time as a drill sergeant. "Watching them march with pride across the stage, while the Army song played during graduation, made it all worth it," she said.

Staff Sgt. Kurt Oxendine Jr., 46th Eng Bn

Oxendine was born in Utica, New York but grew up traveling the world as the son of an Army Soldier. He had no intention of joining the Army. He was pursuing a degree in information technology and working at Fort Campbell's Child and Youth Services when he met his wife and daughter. In 2012 he was motivated to join to provide for his family, just as his father and uncle had for their Families.

Oxendine began his career as a wheeled vehicle mechanic and eventually retrained as a generator mechanic. He never lost sight of his goal to earn a degree and work in IT.

In 2019 after finishing his degree, with the encouragement of his mentor, he applied to become a cyber network defender.



Oxendine

Please see **Diversity**, page 9

Diversity

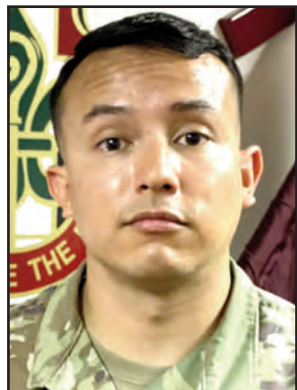
Continued from page 8

"I joined the Army to create a positive foundation for my wife and daughter. That reason strengthened over time and evolved because of the relationships I've made with my fellow Soldiers and the opportunities I've been given," he said.

Oxendine comes from a long line of military service.

Both his father and uncle recently retired. "I am proud to continue the Family legacy of service and perform honorably. I want those who came before me to know they left the Army in good hands when they passed the torch to me," he said. "I'm honored to be a part of the Army's history. Each day, I make it a point to improve upon myself as a Soldier and as a leader, ensuring that I'm upholding the standards of the leaders who taught me," said Oxendine.

Spc. Jesus Gil, Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital



Gil

Gil joined the Army in 2017 as a behavioral health specialist. Originally from El Grullo, Mexico, Gil decided to enroll in high school in Kansas after a visit with his sister. He said he liked it so much he decided to become a citizen and serve the country.

Gil's career goals are in law enforcement. At the time of his enlistment there were no military police positions available, but he is currently working on retraining for a position with the Criminal Investi-



On June 14, 2020, we recognize 245 years of defending and protecting America, and salute the generations of Soldiers who have answered the call to serve.

gation Division. He feels his background as a behavioral health specialist will benefit him in his new MOS.

"I don't see this as a job. I like coming to work everyday. I like the challenges I face daily," said Gil. "I have had the opportunity to work for the current and previous command teams as their driver, and they have taught me a lot," he said.

He attributes his broadening understanding and respect for the Army to studying for boards.

"Over the past 245 years, the Army has gotten better and continues to improve," he said.

According to him, coming to work each day with a positive attitude and always trying to help

and taking advantage of opportunities is his way of honoring the legacy of those who have come before him.

"Everything we do has an impact on other people, especially at the hospital. We are serving other Soldiers and enabling them to get back to their training. We are doing our part to build readiness for the Army," he said.

The U.S. has multiple races, languages and cultures.

"In the Army, I am able to work with people from different backgrounds and mindsets. The diversity of the people in the Army is what makes it special," Gil said.

Birthday

Continued from page 6



Murray and Timberlake

Quinten Murray (left) and Dywane Timberlake (right): "We are both proud veterans serving veterans. Happy birthday to the Army and those who serve, past, present and future."



Wyatt and Shimko-Wyatt

Cpt. (Retired) Michelle Shimko-Wyatt (right) and Staff Sgt. (Retired) Michael Wyatt (left): "The Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association, La. 6-1 would like to say Happy 245th birthday to the Army."



Duvall

Mayor Donna Duvall, Rosepine: "On behalf of the Board of Aldermen, Chief Delbert Keel, the Rosepine Police Department and the town of Rosepine employees, we salute the Army celebrating its 245th birthday!"

4th SFAB Rotation 20-08 ramps up with patrols, live fire

GUARDIAN STAFF

FORT POLK, La. — As Rotation 20-08 begins at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, the Army's premiere training ground for Infantry Brigade Combat Teams and Security Force Assistance Brigades, the 4th SFAB got a taste of what they can expect when they deploy later this summer.

In addition to patrols and interaction with role players serving as those the Soldiers are tasked with advising, the Soldiers face their first live fire exercise, complete with calls for fires, improvised explosive devices and ambushes — all while maintaining COVID-19 protocol, to include social distancing and the wearing of masks.

The photos on page 10 and 11 of today's Guardian highlight some of the first-week activities for 4th SFAB.

Please see **4th SFAB**, page 11



Clockwise, from above: An improvised explosive device detonates as a 4th Security Force Assistance Brigade patrols as part of a live fire exercise during Rotation 20-08 at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk; a 4th SFAB Soldier fires at a target during an ambush; an Observer, Controller/Trainer watches from his perch high above the action; two 4th SFAB Soldiers prepare to enter and secure a building.



4th SFAB

Continued from page 10



Clockwise, from left: A 4th SFAB advisor works with a role player; a 4th SFAB security team prepares to remove a vehicle damaged during an improvised explosive device roadside attack; a 4th SFAB Soldier mans a machine gun; 4th SFAB vehicles roll out on patrol at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk during Rotation 20-08; a 4th SFAB security team returns fire during an ambush as part of a live fire exercise at the JRTC training area at Pearson Ridge June 10; an SFAB advisor secures information from a role player during Rotation 20-08. As noted in the photos, the 4th SFAB and JRTC Observer, Controller/Trainers maintain COVID-19 protocol during the rotation to include social distancing and wearing masks.

'Boys are back in town'

Former A/353rd command team returns for Rotation 20-08

By **CHUCK CANNON**

Command information officer

FORT POLK, La. — The last time Capt. Miguel Moyeno and 1st Sgt. Matthew Carter were at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, they were the command team for Alpha Company, 3rd Battalion, 353rd Infantry Regiment, and were tasked with providing training for newly stood up Army units: The 1st and 2nd Security Force Assistance Brigades.

Today, the pair is back at the JRTC participating in Rotation 20-08 as part of the 4th SFAB: Moyeno as a team leader, Team 3, Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 4th SFAB, and Carter the B Co first sergeant.

Moyeno said in addition to helping train 1st and 2nd SFAB, he also came back to JRTC as an observer during the 3rd SFAB's rotation.

"I think that experience will make it easier for me to go through it (rotation) — there's not a lot that I haven't seen" he said. "I was able to see it as a trainer, as an observer, and now I get to put it all together.

"It gives me a good perspective of what could happen and what 'right' looks like. It allows me to raise the bar."

Moyeno said other members of his unit have asked what they can expect during an SFAB rotation at JRTC since he's been through it and had the past experiences.

"It's been instrumental for my team and the company," he said. "It's helpful in preparing for the rotation. We said, 'We can let JRTC happen to us, or we can at least come to JRTC to succeed.'"

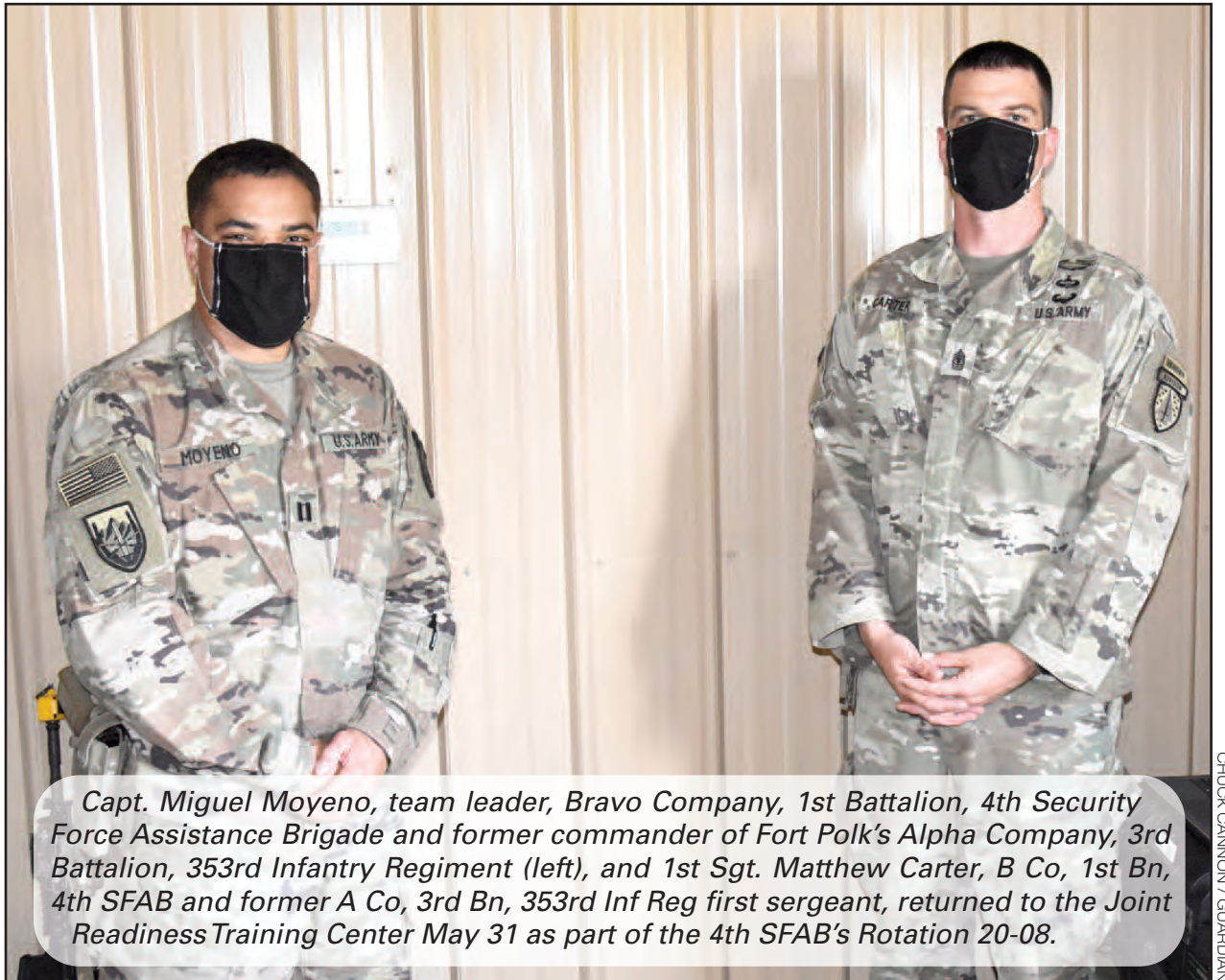
In addition to training and observing SFABs at JRTC, Moyeno also went to Iraq to watch 1st SFAB during its deployment to develop training plans for 2nd SFAB.

"The experience of going to Iraq while I was here to see what areas we needed to train the SFABs has been key to my development, and helped shape the expectations of my team," he said. "We do all this training, but actually going to Iraq and seeing what an SFAB does and what it looks like, was important. Getting to see the end result allowed me to let my team know of the importance of the training."

SFAB members are all volunteers. Moyeno said that's a force multiplier for his team.

"With everyone wanting to be part of the team and go through the selection process, it shows those who really want to make a difference," he said. "When you have a collective group of individuals like that, it makes the job easier. I think the experience will make them valuable members when they return to their normal brigade combat teams."

When Moyeno said he walked past his old company area on North Fort after arriving May



Capt. Miguel Moyeno, team leader, Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 4th Security Force Assistance Brigade and former commander of Fort Polk's Alpha Company, 3rd Battalion, 353rd Infantry Regiment (left), and 1st Sgt. Matthew Carter, B Co, 1st Bn, 4th SFAB and former A Co, 3rd Bn, 353rd Inf Reg first sergeant, returned to the Joint Readiness Training Center May 31 as part of the 4th SFAB's Rotation 20-08.

CHUCK CANNON / GUARDIAN

31, he thought of everything he and Carter accomplished during their time with A Co.

"One of our biggest improvements was professionalizing the instructors," he said. "I think they bring a lot to the table and support a huge mission that is relatively unknown, advisors that need training before they deploy and take positions. I was glad to be part of that."

Carter agreed that he had done a little reminiscing since returning to North Fort.

"It's great coming back," he said. "Seeing the same area I used to work in and getting to see old friends. It's hot, but it's better than being cold. I'm a big fan of Fort Polk."

Carter said he's impressed with how JRTC Operations Group Observer, Controller/Trainers have developed the flexibility to train an array of different units.

"It's amazing to see how the OC/Ts are able to jump from an IBCT (Infantry Brigade Combat Team) to an SFAB and shows just what professionals they are," he said. "I'm excited to be here. Capt. Moyeno and I have been bragging the past year about the professionalism of the OC/Ts."

Carter said Soldiers quizzed him in his company on what they could expect at Fort Polk.

"The first question they asked was if the horses were still there," he said. "I said, 'yes.' Joking aside, they definitely picked mine and Captain Moyeno's brains a lot. We were able to share lessons learned with the team. I'm really thankful that while I was here, JRTC, the 353rd, all the way up to the COG (Commander Operations Group) and Brigadier General Frank, supported our decision to go to the SFAB and share our knowledge."

Carter said the 4th SFAB wants to learn from

their mistakes during Rotation 20-08, rather than when they deploy later this summer.

"I think that's an advantage of being in an organization with more senior Soldiers — we're more open to receiving criticism," he said. "We have an open mentality. We understand the OC/Ts are going to pull us aside and tell us we messed up, but they're doing that because they believe in their mission. We've told our team that sometimes they might see an OC/T as an enemy, but we've been there and they are there to make the organization better."

Carter said if the Army sees fit, he hopes to one day make it back to Fort Polk.

"Anytime I tell someone at Fort Carson that I came from Fort Polk, they'll take a deep breath and say, 'Oh my gosh, you came from there?'" he said. "I explain to them it's different when you're stationed there, you develop relationships with people. It's one of the best Army communities I've ever experienced, as well as one of the finest military posts."

"There is so much to do here. And the support of the leadership is incredible all the way to Brigadier General Frank. He's always out front, leading the way. I really like the small town community feel of Fort Polk."



Moyeno



Carter

Soldiers punished, separated for UCMJ violations

OSJA

FORT POLK, La. —At the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, the commanding general and subordinate commanders take good order and discipline seriously.

The preamble to the Manual for Courts-Martial states, “(t)he purpose of military law is to promote justice, to assist in maintaining good order and discipline in the armed forces, to promote efficiency and effectiveness in the military establishment, and thereby strengthen the national security of the United States.”

However, certain disciplinary issues continue to be prevalent across Fort Polk such as breaking quarantine/isolation orders, violating General Order No. 1, driving under the influence of alcohol, wrongful use/possession of controlled substances, fraternization, and sexual assault.

Below are recent examples of adverse legal actions for units within the Fort Polk jurisdiction.

- A staff sergeant, assigned to 3rd Battalion, 353rd Regiment, Joint Readiness Training Center Opera-

tions Group, was issued a General Officer Memorandum of Reprimand for refusing to submit to a lawful breath or blood test, driving under the influence of alcohol and for endangering the lives of his children. The CG directed filing the reprimand in the Soldier’s Army Military Human Resource Record.

- A sergeant, assigned to 2nd Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), was administratively separated under Chapter 14-12c (Commission of a Serious Offense), with an Other Than Honorable characterization of service, for firing six rounds towards a crowd of patrons at The Venue striking three individuals and causing injuries that required medical attention. Generally, an OTH characterization of service results in reduction to the lowest enlisted grade and the loss of a majority of a service member’s VA and educational benefits.

- A private first class, assigned to 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, 3rd BCT Team, 10th Mtn Div (Light Infantry), was punished under Article 15 for wrongful use of a

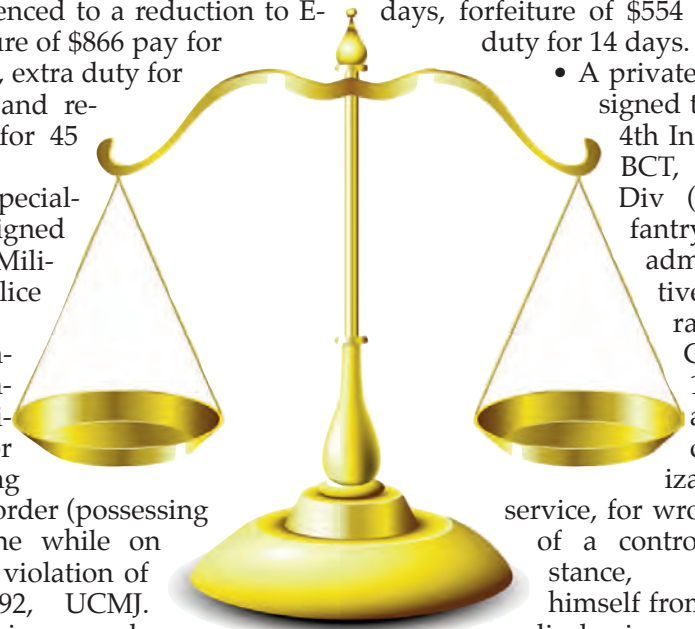
controlled substance, in violation of Article 112a, Uniform Code of Military Justice. The service member was sentenced to a reduction to E-1, forfeiture of \$866 pay for 2 months, extra duty for 45 days and restriction for 45 days.

- A specialist, assigned to 519th Military Police Battalion, was punished under Article 15 for disobeying a lawful order (possessing cell phone while on duty), in violation of Article 92, UCMJ. The service member also fell asleep while on duty, in violation of Article 95, UCMJ. The service member was sentenced to a reduction to E-3.

- A specialist, assigned to 519th MP Bn, was punished under Article 15 for dereliction of duty (failing to stay awake while patrolling), in vio-

lation of Article 92, UCMJ. The service member was sentenced to a reduction to E-3, suspended for 90 days, forfeiture of \$554 and extra duty for 14 days.

- A private (E-2), assigned to 2nd Bn, 4th Inf Reg, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div (Light Infantry), was administratively separated under Chapter 10, with an OTH characterization of service, for wrongful use of a controlled substance, absenting himself from his unit, disobeying a lawful order from a noncommissioned officer and disrespecting a noncommissioned officer. Generally, an OTH characterization of service results in reduction to the lowest enlisted grade and the loss of a majority of a service member’s VA and educational benefits.



Moves

Continued from page 4

The PPM program gives Soldiers an alternative to a traditional permanent-change-of-station move, where a government-contracted moving company ships their household goods to their new duty station.

With more Soldiers expected to make PCS moves during the latter part of the peak moving season, an updated policy couldn’t have come at a more opportune time, said Larry Lock, Army compensation and entitlements chief G-1.

While much of the country remains under COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, making a PPM might be the more practical option for some Soldiers and their Families, he said. Safety restrictions vary by state, and commercial movers will be heavily tasked, he added.

The change could help increase the number of PCS moves in what the Army’s G-4 predicts will be a busier moving season. Moving more Soldiers to their new duty stations helps the Army maintain readiness and meet its global force requirements, said Derrick Candler, chief of Transportation Policy Division, G-4.

“Industry may face challenges to support this huge increase during the summer season,” Candler said. “This initiative can help increase the number of moves to ensure our people can get to their next duty station quickly. This will have positive effects on the entire Army and DoD. The PPM also reduces the strain on Families and moving companies.”

As part of the continued efforts to improve quality of life for its military Families, the Defense Travel Management Office had pursued the change to ease the burden of Families who prefer the PPM to a traditional move, Lock said. He

added that PPM moves typically result in cost savings for the government, and the policy update will pass those savings onto the Families.

In April, the DoD signed a \$7.2 billion contract with a single company, New Jersey-based American Roll-On Roll-Off Carrier Group, to move household goods for the military.

After Dec. 31, Candler said the policy would be re-evaluated in conjunction with each military branch on whether the reimbursable costs will remain at 100% or return to 95%.

The DoD has made monetary allowance payments of 95% for PPMs since 1998, when it bumped the sum up from 80%. Candler said that each service must collectively agree to make the change permanent.

“We’re hoping, based on this change and the moves that take place during the summer, that we can justify continuing this,” he said. “All the services benefit from this increase.”

Lock said typically younger, single Soldiers or young couples with no children choose the PPM option. Soldiers with more time in service and/or larger Families often choose to have their household items shipped by a government contractor.

Also possibly boosting the number of moves this summer is a change to granting exceptions to policy for the COVID-19 stop-move order. Secretary of the Army Ryan D. McCarthy delegated approval authority for PCS moves, temporary-duty assignments and military leave to the first brigadier general or Senior Executive Service officer in a Soldier’s chain of command.

Approval authorities may grant exceptions for Soldiers determined to be mission essential, for



changes necessary for humanitarian purposes and for extreme hardship.

Soldiers who fall under an exception must travel with printed copies of the approved exception to policy. Soldiers exempt from travel restrictions will be required to carry a memorandum signed by their supervisor that states the reason for exemption.

Soldiers and civilians enrolled in military education programs qualify as exempt from travel restrictions and do not require an exception to policy. These programs include officer training and education programs; non-commissioned officer professional development and specialty training programs; and civilian training, education and development programs.

Fort Polk celebrates 2020 NCO/SOY at Warrior Center ceremony

By **ANGIE THORNE**

Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. — The Fort Polk Noncommissioned Officer and Soldier of the Year award presentation took place June 3 at the Warrior Center.

Command Sgt. Maj. Michael C. Henry, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk post command sergeant major, was the guest speaker at the event. He welcomed the NCOs and Soldiers who took part in the annual competitions and recognized their individual efforts.

"These candidates have demonstrated excellence while facing challenges and overcoming personal obstacles that culminated in presenting themselves to numerous boards conducted by sergeants major and senior NCOs from across the installation," he said.

The purpose of the NCO/SOY competition, said Henry, is to select the best NCO/SOY to represent Fort Polk at the Forces Command 2020 NCO/SOY competition held in August.

"This event provides NCOs and Soldiers an opportunity to showcase their efforts, display esprit de corps and demonstrate individual and unit excellence through a rigorous professional competition," he said.

Henry said this year's competition was different than those of the past due to the COVID-19 environment.

"They weren't able to be as aggressive as they have in the past by adding a wide range of pieces to the competition such as the Army Physical Fitness Test or a road march, which adds a higher level stress to the event. Instead, we did a reduced-level event in a basic combat training environment. We executed the competition at board level, as we will do at Forces Command, and they did it over a video conference," he said.

The importance of this year's event was to showcase the Soldiers' efforts as they endeavored to overcome any challenges to succeed under unusual conditions.

Henry said one of the toughest things the Soldiers had to deal with was the ambiguity of the questions stemming from a broad source of information.

"There is also the challenge of dealing with the technology necessary to teleconference with the board. Competitors may not be as familiar with this type of communication. A young specialist trying to convey that they are confident and capable, even while dealing with the adversity of an electronic system that is new to them, adds a challenge they didn't expect," said Henry.

Though every one of these competitors has participated and won within their own right, Henry said the competition hasn't been just individual effort.

"It has also encompassed the contributions of Soldiers, NCOs and command teams that have helped prepare their Soldiers by giving them the space and time they needed to be recognized as competitors," said Henry.

The winner of the 2020 NCO of the Year is Staff Sgt. Erica Whaley, Fort Polk Dental Activity.

Whaley said being chosen to compete in the NCO of the Year competition was an honor.

"It made me realize that my unit believed in me and that they knew I would be competitive," she said.

Whaley said the competition was focused on the oral boards.



Staff Sgt. Erica Whaley, Fort Polk Dental Activity, (left) is the 2020 Noncommissioned Officer of the year stands with the winner of the 2020 Soldier of the Year competition, Spc. Logan Shepard, 1st Battalion, 5th Aviation Regiment, at a ceremony held June 3 at the Fort Polk Warrior Center.

"Usually you sit in front of the panel as they ask their questions, which can be intimidating," she said. "I still felt the pressure and was nervous, even while conducting the board through a teleconference. That's been the main difference this year."

She said the hardest part for her was studying the broad range of topics.

"It was a lot to cover within a short period of time," she said. "I had to dedicate a lot of time to studying and reviewing every day. I involved my Soldiers and Family in the process. My two daughters would help me study at home and, when I got a break at work, my Soldiers would help me study. They would quiz me," she said.

Whaley said she couldn't believe when all that hard work resulted in success.

"It feels really good to know that I've won, but I'm going to give my mind a break from studying before I jump back in for the FORSCOM competition," she said. "My kids were proud of me, but they were happy it was over."

The winner of the 2020 Soldier of the Year competition is Spc. Logan Shepard, 1st Battalion, 5th Aviation Regiment.

Shepard said it was highly competitive among the junior enlisted Soldiers for the chance to represent his battalion in the competition.

"I studied hard and worked toward it as a personal goal, just to prove to myself that I could do it. I was ecstatic to be chosen, not only for my company but also the battalion," he said.

The primary drive behind the way the competition took place was the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing guidelines, said Shepard.

"For the competition to be fully virtual is unique. It was a curveball I wasn't expecting, but as a 'millennial' using technology, it wasn't too difficult. The process maintained its professional capacity. We still had to go through the board procedures as though we were there in person," he said. "The difficulties were not being able to look people in the eyes and technical issues such as sound cutting out, but we overcame those."

Shepard said details are important in his job as



Command Sgt. Maj. Michael C. Henry, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk post command sergeant major, speaks at the 2020 Noncommissioned Officer of the Year and Soldier of the Year ceremony held June 3 at the Warrior Center.

a critical-care flight paramedic, and he felt that helped him as he studied the vast Army regulations and information necessary to go before the board and be successful.

"I would go through each and every line of a regulation. It was a shot in the dark as to what we would be asked. Thankfully, I know how to study and not task saturate myself, so I never felt overwhelmed," he said.

Shepard said now that he has been successful in winning Soldier of the Year, he is going to continue to review and learn as much as he can before heading to the FORSCOM level.

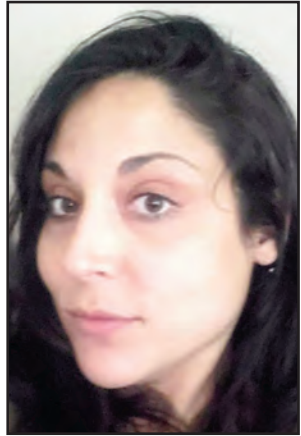
"I'm glad to be able to represent myself, my unit and my NCO support chain of command. There is a lot to learn and I will give it 120% because it is the next level. The bar is set high, and I will make the jump," he said.

Take trip into history at Warrior Memorial park

By **CHRISTY GRAHAM**

Guardian editor

Editors note: If interested in touring this memorial site (or the many others at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk) visit the Public Affairs Office (bldg. 4919) and pick up a walking-path map near the front entrance.



Graham

The small stretch of road that enters the park is centered on the memorial, which is fashioned into a loop frequently used as a quick and quiet walking path by visitors. After parking to the right of the site, I chose to walk back and appreciate the full and sobering view.

The Prisoner of War / Missing in Action flag, centered at the front of the memorial loop, is one of the most prominent features before entering the actual walking path. Perhaps, due to the frequent breeze during my visit, the flag happened to catch my attention repeatedly — another element that continually set a solemn tone, as I could both see it waving and hear it whipping in the wind.

At the foot of the flagpole is the Global War on Terrorism memorial. This is a sleek commemoration exhibiting two pillars, filled with units and Soldiers' names, a globe and a plaque stating, "The Global War on Terrorism monument honors the Fort Polk Soldiers, Families and civilians whose support and sacrifice will forever be remembered."

To the left sits a rose-colored marble monument dedicated to the 5th Infantry Division (mechanized) that served at Fort Polk from Sept. 21, 1975 until Nov. 24, 1992, and stone-slab commemoration for the service of the 1st Maneuver Enhancement Brigade from Sept. 16, 2007 until Sept. 15, 2015.

To the right, another commemorative statue rests "In honor of the troopers and Families of the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment that served Fort Polk from 1993 until 2005."

After considering the names and dedications at the entrance of the park, I started on the walking path toward the right. There are nine military vehicles lining the walking path, most of which served during World War II, the Korean War and Vietnam. The vehicles displayed include armored personnel carriers, howitzers, tanks, bulldozers and a scoop loader; each one has its own descriptive sign posted in front.

Just behind the vehicles is a well-kept curve of various trees and hedges. The most striking foliage was the magnolia trees, showcasing their

FORT POLK, La. — Tucked off to the side of Louisiana Avenue, the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk's Warrior Memorial Park sits far enough from the traffic that it creates an illusion of seclusion, despite the hustle of the post's day-to-day operations.

The small stretch of road that enters the park is centered on the



Entrance to the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk's Warrior Memorial park off Louisiana Avenue.



The M24, Chaffee light tank is named after Gen. Adna R. Chaffee who pioneered the use of tanks in the Army.

sturdy white flowers resting heavily on the branches. Their blooms stood out against the military green vehicles and the deeper, shiny green hues from the leaves.

Deeper into the park, behind the established walking path that loops through the vehicle display, are the memorials for 2nd Brigade Soldiers who lost their lives and for the 5th Inf Div Soldiers who "participated in Operation Just Cause in Panama" and to their Soldiers who lost their lives.

Even farther behind the loop is the monument for the heritage families; again, listed on two sleek pillars that match the ones found at the front of the park.

Here are attractively worn wooden benches, sitting beneath the thick canopy, adding to that remote ambiance unique to the park.

Beyond this memorial are another group of tall trees, rustic benches and a set of silhouettes, creating a historical picture of a family working the land during a time now forgotten.

I got the sense that the area, the most distant section in that pocket, was built for reflection. When facing away from the road, isolated



Memorial at Warrior Memorial park dedicated to the Troopers and Families of the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment who served at Fort Polk from 1993 to 2005.

enough that the traffic sounds waned against the prevailing rhythm of nature, I was able to connect to that different time. I mulled over the possible realities of all of the heritage families' daily lives; all of the past Soldiers' sacrifices and how they resulted in the Fort Polk I know today. I was sure, then, that this quiet place was constructed for contemplation. It stands so we can remember how and why we, the Fort Polk community, stand today.

Please see **Park**, page 16

Commentary

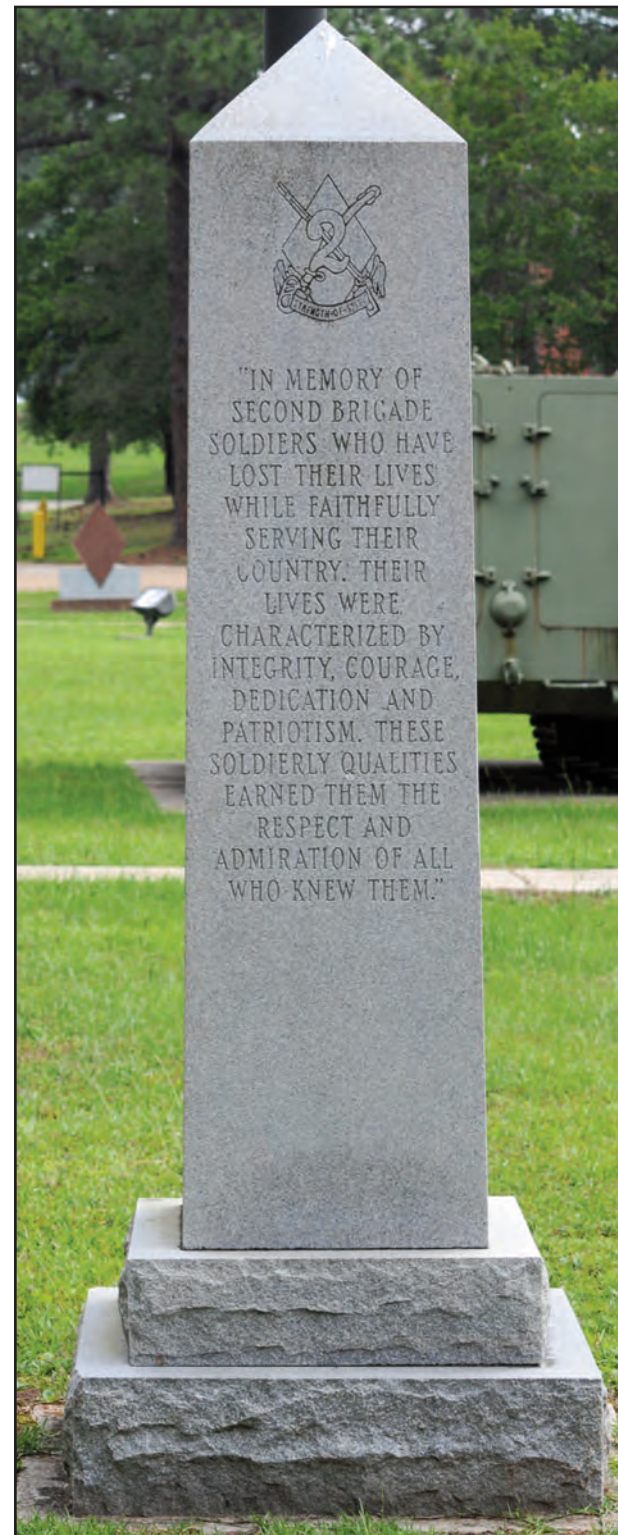


Pictured is the MHD16M Bulldozer, Engineer, also known as the "Crawler tractor." This piece of equipment was primarily used during World War II for combat construction and is on display at Warrior Memorial park at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk off Louisiana Avenue.

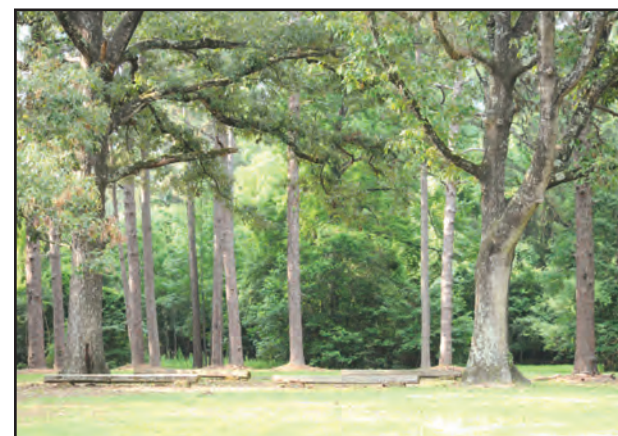
The farthest corner at Warrior Memorial park, overlooks the silhouettes of a family working the land.



Pillars honoring the heritage families are located toward the rear of the Warrior Memorial park at JRTC and Fort Polk.



A memorial for the "2nd Brigade Soldiers who lost their lives while faithfully serving their country," is located at the Warrior Memorial park at JRTC and Fort Polk.



The farthest corner at Warrior Memorial park, overlooks the silhouettes of a family working the land.

Briefs

FreedomFest

Out of concern for the health and safety of Soldiers, Families, Department of the Army civilians, retirees and local communities during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk leadership has made the decision to postpone the Toby Keith concert originally scheduled for July 18.

Toby Keith has generously agreed to perform at JRTC and Fort Polk on Nov. 7. More information on the event will be provided at a later date.

AAFES sweepstakes

Fort Polk Soldiers, retirees, veterans and Families can show how their days are “better together” to win \$4,500 in prizes from the Army & Air Force Exchange Service and Procter and Gamble.

Authorized shoppers can submit a photo or video at ShopMyExchange.com/sweepstakes to win Exchange gift cards and great P&G prizes.

Birthday sweepstakes

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service is wishing the Army a happy 245th birthday by giving away more than \$5,400 in tactical gear.

Authorized shoppers at Fort Polk and installations worldwide can enter June 12 through July 9 at ShopMyExchange.com/Sweepstakes.

Religious support

Congregants are welcome to attend services at the Main Post Chapel under social distancing and 25% occupancy guidelines.

The Fort Polk religious support office still offers the following Facebook live feeds on Sundays:

- Catholic service, 8:30 a.m. (live stream only)
- Chapel Next service, 10 a.m.
- Gospel service, noon
- Traditional Protestant service, 8 a.m.
- Catholic service, 4 p.m.

For more information on religious activities on Fort Polk visit [@FortPolkChapel-Page](https://www.facebook.com/FortPolkChapelPage).

Red Cross volunteers

The Red Cross office is now open by email appointment. Also, a volunteer orientation will be held June 23 at 10 a.m. Email FortPolk@RedCross.org to register for the class or to make an appointment.



Super Army kid

John "Henry" Moltz V, 10, finishes 6th as an informal participant in the Morale, Welfare and Recreation's Army 10-miler qualifier event held on June 5. "When I finished the 10-mile race, I felt tired, thirsty and happy about my time. I finished in 1 hour, 16 minutes and 36 seconds," Moltz says. Moltz trained for the qualifier by running and increasing his distances each time. "I practiced running 10 miles three separate times to make sure I could do it; then, I ran the race," he says. This was MWR's second and final qualifier before the Army 10-miler race, held in Washington D.C., later this fall.



LT. COL. JOHN "HENRY" MOLTZ/US ARMY

Cycling Toledo Bend safely, enjoying views

By JOSEPH FONTENOT
DPTMS

FORT POLK, La. — As bicycles are considered vehicles, bicycle operators are granted the same rights as motor vehicle drivers. Thanks to the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, the roadside shoulder is kept clear, allowing cyclists to remain as far to the right as possible for their safety.

Bicycles are one of the best ways to explore Toledo Bend without a boat. While there are several routes to Toledo Bend, I must say my favorite 37-mile passage is via La. Hwy 111/392, left on La. Hwy 191 from the Village of Anacoco.

There is a downhill stretch on the highway, roughly two hills past the area of road where the road numbers change from 111 to 392. It is not for the faint of heart; there is no roadside shoulder for the next six miles, so front/rear strobe lights are necessary.

With a 255 foot elevation difference from Anacoco to the levee road, you're in store for one of the nicest 38 miles-per-hour downhill runs. The ride's thrill peaks when you turn onto 191 and,

as you peddle onto the dam, you are rewarded with a spectacular view overlooking the lake. As you descend the levee, you are usually treated to a flock of Canadian geese that love to hang out on the levee side.

Commentary

Now the race is on; it's you against the wind. Sometimes it's your friend; and, other times, it's the daily challenge you need to clear your mind.

This ride provides great views and a nice way to explore Sabine/Vernon Parish. Below is a list of cycling laws, which can also be viewed at http://www.sp.dotd.la.gov/Inside_LaDOTD/Divisions/Multimodal/Highway_Safety/Bicycle_Ped/Pages/La_Bicycle_Laws.aspx.

- Safe passing laws — Louisiana requires that the operator of a motor vehicle, when overtaking and passing a bicycle proceeding in the same direction on the roadway, shall exercise due care while the motor vehicle is passing the bicycle and shall leave a safe distance between the motor vehicle and the bicycle of not less than three feet and shall maintain such clearance until safely past the overtaken bicycle. An operator of a mo-

Please see **Cycling**, page 18

Cycling

Continued from page 17

tor vehicle may pass a bicycle traveling in the same direction in a no-passing zone only when it is safe to do so. Source: La. Rev. Stat. Ann. §32:76.1.

- **Helmet laws** — Louisiana requires that any person under the age of 12 riding a bicycle, as an operator or passenger, must wear a protective bicycle helmet. The issuance of a citation for failure to wear a required helmet shall not be prima facie (based on the first impression; accepted as correct until proved otherwise) evidence of negligence. The comparative negligence statutes of Louisiana shall apply in these cases as in all other cases of negligence. Source: La. Rev. Stat. Ann. §32:199.

- **Sidewalk riding** — Louisiana does not have a statute that specifically authorizes or prohibits the operation of a bicycle upon a sidewalk.

- **Dooring law** — Louisiana requires that no person open any door of a motor vehicle located on a highway without first taking precaution to ensure that this action does not interfere with the movement of traffic or endanger any other person or vehicle. In addition, no person shall leave open any door of a motor vehicle located on a highway for a period of time longer than necessary to load or unload passengers. Source: La. Rev. Stat. Ann. §32:283.

- **Vulnerable road user laws** — Louisiana does not define who is a “vulnerable road user,” but protects bicyclists by providing that it is unlawful to harass, taunt, or maliciously throw objects at or in the direction of any person riding a bicycle. Source: La. Rev. Stat. Ann. §32:201.

- **“Idaho Stop” and vehicle detection errors** — Louisiana does not provide any modifications to the requirement to come to a complete stop when directed to stop by traffic control devices and does not authorize bicyclists to disobey traffic lights that fail to detect bicyclists.

- **Treatment as a vehicle** — in Louisiana, bicycles are vehicles according to the statute that defines vehicles. A person riding a bicycle has all of the rights and duties of the driver of a vehicle as provided in Title 32 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes, except as to those provisions which by their nature can have no application. Source: La. Rev. Stat. Ann. §§32:1(92); 32 §194.

- **Mandatory use of separated facilities** — Louisiana doesn’t require that bicyclists use lanes other than a normal vehicular traffic lane.

- **Where to ride** — Louisiana requires that bicyclists ride as close as practicable to the right-hand edge of the roadway except under any of the following circumstances: (1) when overtaking and passing another bicycle or vehicle proceeding in the same direction; (2) when preparing for a left turn at an intersection or into a private road or driveway; (3) when reasonably necessary to avoid conditions that make it unsafe to continue along the right-hand curb or edge of the roadway, including a lane that is too narrow for a bicycle and a vehicle to travel safely side by side within the lane; (4) when approaching a place where a right turn is authorized; and (5) when operating upon a roadway or a highway, where there are two or more marked traffic lanes and traffic travels in only one direction, in which case a bicyclist may ride as near the left-hand curb or shoulder of that roadway as practicable when preparing for a left turn. Source: La. Rev. Stat. Ann. §32:197.

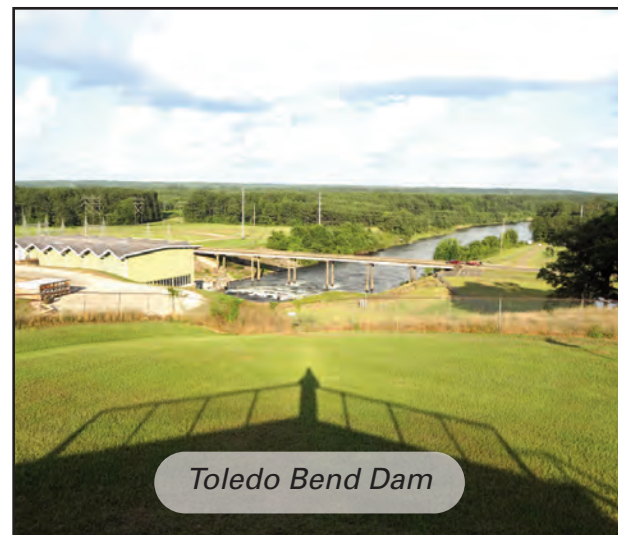


Rider's view of the road the on path toward Toledo Bend.

JOSEPH FONTENOT/DPTMS



Toledo Bend Lake



Toledo Bend Dam



The highway passing over Toledo Bend Dam

Winds, rain of hurricane season can create hostile havoc

By **ANGIE THORNE**

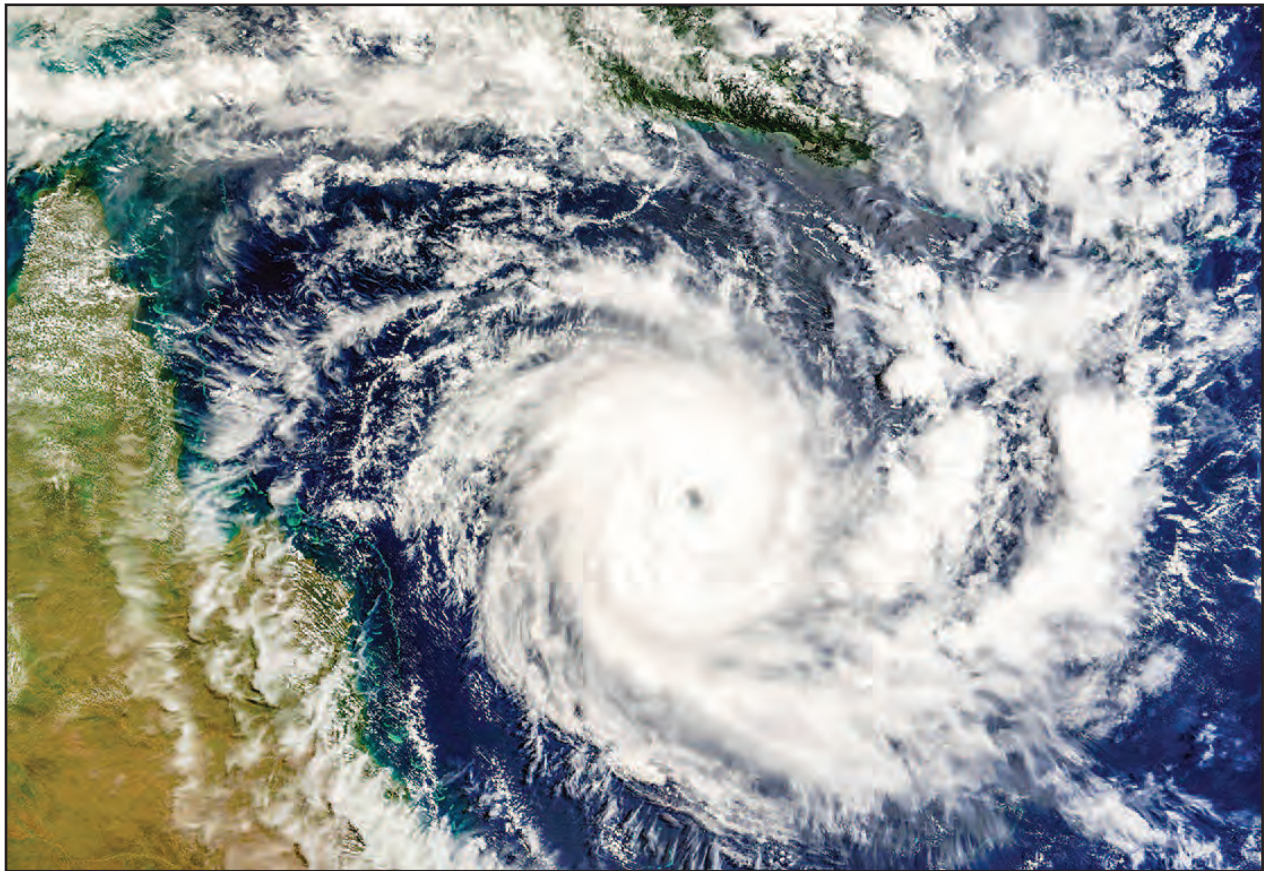
Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. — The power of a hurricane, like all natural disasters, is intense, powerful and violent. I should know — I was born and raised in Louisiana; and I've been through enough of them. My childhood was spent near the coast of the Gulf of Mexico and my family and neighbors met the storms head on more times than I can count. Anyone who lives along a coastline understands and learns to deal with hurricanes as a matter of survival, just as other parts of the country deal with their own forms of catastrophe.

Of the natural disasters — earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tornados, landslides, tsunamis, avalanches, fires, drought, wildfires and floods — I think I prefer having to deal with hurricanes, not because they aren't horrible, but because it is a slow moving disaster with categories of intensity that people can watch, track and be warned about well before they hit their intended targets.

Though tornados have degrees of intensity and can be tracked, they form and move much faster than a hurricane, as do many of the other natural disasters listed above. That speed leaves little time for people to prepare or get out of the way of danger. Tornados, for example, are easily born from the hurricane winds and behave somewhat like a volatile, excitable child on a sugar rush and throwing a temper tantrum. They are the storm within a storm and finding myself in one's path can be more frightening to me than the hurricane that spawned it.

The easiest levels of a hurricane to deal with come in the form of a tropical storm or category one hurricane. Though still dangerous, with



ample water and wind, they are storms I feel fairly confident to handle, prepare for and get through — largely unscathed. In other words,

they're "doable," and much preferable to category 2-5 hurricanes.

I've lived through category 2 and 3 hurricanes. I don't really

want to do it again — thanks. I'm grateful that I've never been through a category 4 or 5 hurri-

cane, nor have I any desire to do so. With what I know, I'd likely pack up and head out before one lands. It seems the wise and prudent thing to do.

As hurricanes are spotted far out in the Atlantic Ocean or Gulf of Mexico, the anticipation of the actual event can be nerve wracking. You watch this monstrosity that grows as it feeds on warm water and the perfect mix of warm and cool air. That's a simplistic explanation from

Please see **Hurricane**, page 20

Commentary

Keep in mind, dangers of fireworks, sparklers during celebrations

By **SHEILA ANTHONY**

DPM health promotion

Editor's note: Fireworks are not allowed on Fort Polk.

FORT POLK, La. — The summer season is synonymous with barbecues, parades and fireworks. The National Safety Council advises everyone to enjoy fireworks at public displays conducted by professionals and not to use any fireworks at home. Although legal, they are not safe.

In 2017, eight people died and more than 12,000 were badly injured, requiring medical treatment after firework-related incidents. Of these injuries, 50% were to children and young adults under age 20. Over 67% of injuries occurred between June 16 and July 16.

While the majority of these incidents were due to amateurs attempting to use professional-grade, homemade or other illegal fireworks or explosives, an estimated 1,200 injuries were from less powerful devices like small firecrackers and sparklers.

Sparklers burn at about 2,000 degrees — hot enough to melt some metals. Sparklers can quickly ignite clothing, and children have received severe burns from dropping sparklers on their feet. According to the National Fire Protec-

tion Association, sparklers alone account for more than 25% of emergency room visits for firework injuries. For children under 5 years of age, sparklers accounted for nearly half of the total estimated injuries.

Consider using alternatives, such as glow sticks, confetti poppers or color streams.

Additionally, fireworks start an average of 18,500 fires each year, including 1,300 structure fires, 300 vehicle fires and nearly 17,000 other fires.

If consumer fireworks are legal to buy where you live and you choose to use them, be sure to follow the following safety tips:

- Never allow young children to handle fireworks.
- Older children should use them only under close adult supervision.
- Never use fireworks while impaired by drugs or alcohol.
- Anyone using fireworks or standing nearby should wear protective eyewear.
- Never hold lighted fireworks in your hands.
- Never light them indoors.
- Only use them away from people, houses and flammable material.
- Never point or throw fireworks at another person.
- Only light one device at a time, and maintain a safe distance after lighting.



- Never ignite devices in a container.
- Do not try to re-light or handle malfunctioning fireworks.
- Soak both spent and unused fireworks in water for a few hours before discarding.
- Keep a bucket of water nearby to fully extinguish fireworks that don't go off or in case of fire.
- Never use illegal fireworks.
- You can also just grab a blanket, a patch of lawn and kick back, letting the experts handle the fireworks show.

Hurricane

Continued from page 19

cool air. That's a simplistic explanation from someone who isn't a meteorologist.

This waiting period is also the stage that gives you plenty of time to stock up on necessities, if you haven't already (all those lists of things you should buy to prepare for a hurricane that we keep running in the Guardian) and make your home as ready as you can if you are going to bat-ten down the hatches and ride out the storm. After all, you're in it for the long haul now.

Once the storm hits, whether day or night, there is little relaxation or sleep happening. As I've done, you'll grapple with the storm raging outside your windows. Time seems to slow and stretch painfully and the storm is measured over hours or days, not minutes, depending on the atmospheric conditions.

In the middle of the storm, adrenaline pumps through your system and an underlying tension keeps your emotions on edge.

As gusts of around 100 miles per hour (depending on the hurricane's category) blow around your home, and you hear the wind howl as it picks up stray pieces of debris from your yard — anything from stray toys you forgot to pick up to the aluminum sheeting that used to be the roof of your carport (that part happened to my family) — you fight to stay calm. It's an uneasy balance as you wait out Mother Nature's sound and fury.

If you happen to be in the path of the eye of the storm, you'll experience an eerie and almost unnatural calm. The skies are still and usually have an unhealthy looking greenish-yellow cast to them. I've only been through the eye of a storm a couple of times, but I'll never forget the feeling of unease knowing it's just a short break before the hurricane's winds and rain are back to batter you once again until the storm finally passes.

But it's not all about the wind — it's also about the water. Hurricanes bring enormous amounts of water due to storm surge on the coast and heavy rains. How fast a storm passes determines the water damage a hurricane can bring inland.

If the storm slows and stalls, it can dump enough water on a state to bring on a secondary disaster — floods. What hasn't been demolished by wind is then destroyed by high water, not to mention the continued danger to human lives.

Giving you a small taste of what I've experienced as hurricane season gets underway is my way of hoping you'll better understand and respect hurricanes, especially if you are new to Louisiana and Fort Polk. I've talked quite a bit about the category a hurricane takes. Below is an explanation of what those categories mean when a hurricane's winds whorl:

The Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale is a 1 to 5 rating based on a hurricane's sustained wind speed.

- Category 1 — 74-95 miles per hour — this means the winds are dangerous and will produce some damage to things such as roof shingles, trees and power lines.

- Category 2 — 96-110 mph — is extremely dangerous winds that can cause extensive damage. There could be major roof and siding damage with trees toppling across roads or onto homes. Power outages can last from several days to weeks.

- Category 3 — 111-129 mph — is listed as a storm that will produce devastating damage.



Many of the same issues found in category 2 will occur, but on what could be a wider and more destructive level. Electricity and water will be unavailable from several days to weeks.

- Category 4 — 130-156 mph — at a category 4 level, hurricane damage is considered catastrophic. Homes and businesses can lose roofs and/or structural walls completely. Most trees will be snapped or uprooted and power poles will be downed. Power outages can last for months.

- Category 5 — 157 mph or higher — this most devastating level is also catastrophic. A high percentage of framed homes will be destroyed with total roof failure and wall collapse. Power outages will last from weeks to months and the area will be considered uninhabitable.

Thankfully, most hurricanes don't reach the category 3, 4 and 5 ranges. Most of them stay at tropical storm level, such as Cristobal, or fall into one of the first two categories. That's bad enough, but recent history has shown what happens when you have a one-two punch like Katrina (a category 3 hurricane that hit New Orleans Aug. 29, 2005) and Rita (a category 3 hurricane that hit Louisiana near the Texas border Sept. 24, 2005). Both storms were clocked with winds at category 5 levels while in the Gulf of Mexico only to decelerate enough to hit land at a category 3. The damage and destruction wreaked havoc on Louisiana.

As of May 21, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration announced that it expects an above-normal 2020 Atlantic hurricane season, according to forecasters with NOAA's Climate Prediction Center, a division of the National Weather Service.

The outlook predicts a 60% chance of an above-normal season, a 30% chance of a near-normal season and only a 10% chance of a below-normal season. The Atlantic hurricane season runs from June 1 through November 30.

NOAA's Climate Prediction Center is forecast-



ing a likely range of 13 to 19 named storms (winds of 39 mph or higher), of which 6 to 10 could become hurricanes (winds of 74 mph or higher), including 3 to 6 major hurricanes (category 3, 4 or 5 with winds of 111 mph or higher). NOAA provides these ranges with a 70% confidence. An average hurricane season produces 12 named storms of which 6 become hurricanes, including 3 major hurricanes.

That means we are far from out of the woods this season.

Read up on your hurricane safety and prepare for the worst-case scenario, and hope that Fort Polk's luck in missing out on any ill effects from Cristobal was the worst we will see this season.

Editor's note: Scientific information, percentages and statistics were found at www.noaa.gov.

As spring turns to summer, observe water safety

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

Editor's note: This article on water safety is the second in a series of articles running in the Guardian in June, which is National Safety Month. The information for this story was found at <https://oceanservice.noaa.gov>, <https://www.weather.gov>, www.redcross.org, www.nsc.org and www.boat-ed.com/louisiana.

FORT POLK, La. — As summer looms and temperatures rise, Soldiers and Families are going to start looking for relief from the heat. One of the best ways to do that, other than staying inside close to an air conditioner, is to head outside and get wet.

Before the Fort Polk community heads to the closest pool, river, lake or beach, keep social distancing practices in mind, as well water safety measures to head off both illness and accidents.

Shane Denning, Fort Polk's Garrison Safety Office director, said some of his fondest memories growing up revolve around water: surfing at the beach, water skiing at the lake or having fun at a swimming pool party.

"Water is also connected to one of my scariest memories: My little sister nearly drowned. Family fun should be just that — fun. However, it only takes an instant of complacency or negligence for a moment to turn into tragedy. Take a minute, implement the appropriate safety precautions and then have fun.

If Louisiana is able to enter phase three in the reopening process and you are able to make plans to visit the Gulf or any ocean setting this summer, keep in mind rip currents. Rip currents are powerful, narrow channels of fast-moving water that start near the beach and extend offshore through the line of breaking waves. They are prevalent along the East, West and Gulf coasts, as well as the shores of the Great Lakes. The currents can move at speeds of eight feet per second. Panicked swimmers often try to counter them by swimming toward shore, putting them at risk of fatigue and drowning.

The best ways to prevent getting caught in a rip current are:

- Check water conditions before going in by looking at the local beach forecast.
- Only swim at a beach with lifeguards. The chances of drowning at a beach with lifeguards are 1 in 18 million, according to the U.S. Lifesaving Association.
- Don't assume! Great weather for the beach does not always mean it's safe to swim or even play in the shallows. Rip currents often form on calm, sunny days.
- Learn how to spot a rip current at the "Break the Grip of the Rip" free online training, a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Ocean today video that can be found on YouTube.
- You want to swim out of the rip, parallel to shore, along the beach and then follow breaking waves back to shore at an angle.

Swimming, though a great recreational sport, can be dangerous even



without the rip currents and waves. It's important to learn how to be safe while you're in the water. The American Red Cross offers these important swimming safety tips you should be aware of before you head to the pool or beach:

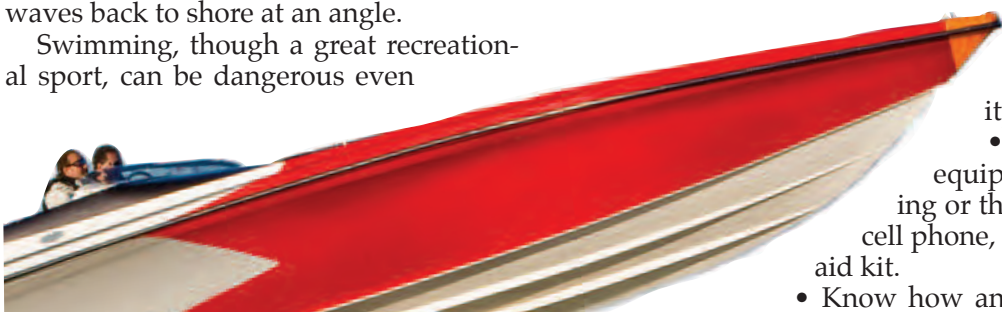
- Swim in designated areas supervised by lifeguards.
- Always swim with a buddy; do not allow anyone to swim alone.
- Never leave a young child unattended near water and do not trust a child's life to another child: Teach children to always ask permission to go near water.
- Have young children or inexperienced swimmers wear U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets around water, but do not rely on life jackets alone.
- Maintain constant supervision of swimmers.
- Make sure everyone in your family learns to swim well.
- If you have a pool, secure it with appropriate barriers. Many children who drown in home pools were out of sight for less than five minutes and in the care of one or both parents.
- Avoid distractions when supervising children around water.
- If a child is missing, check the water first. Seconds count in preventing death or disability.
- Have appropriate equipment, such as reaching or throwing equipment, a cell phone, life jackets and a first aid kit.
- Know how and when to call 9-1-1



or the local emergency number.

- Protect your skin. Limit the amount of direct sunlight you receive between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Please see **Water**, page 22



Water

Continued from page 21

and wear sunscreen with a protection factor of at least 15.

- Drink plenty of water regularly, even if you're not thirsty. Avoid drinks with alcohol or caffeine in them.

- Enroll in Red Cross home pool safety, water safety, first aid and CPR/Automated External Defibrillator courses to learn how to prevent and respond to emergencies.

A popular activity when heading to the beach or lake is recreational boating.

To keep things fun but safe, the person operating the boat should always take a boat safety course. Louisiana law requires boat safety education for all boat operators born after Jan. 1, 1984, who will be operating a motorized vessel more than 10 horsepower.

The minimum age requirement for the online course is 10 years old. Not carrying your Louisiana Boater Card when it is required can result in a fine. Being familiar with boating safety rules and educating yourself can reduce risks.

In 2017, the United States Coast Guard reported 4,291 boating incidents that resulted in 658 deaths, 2,629 injuries and about \$46 million in property damage. You can stay safe by being prepared and using the appropriate equipment, whether enjoying a ride on a motorized boat, paddling a kayak or wakeboarding.

Learning the following safety measures can help keep you from having watercraft mishaps:

Life jackets are essential

- Life jackets are at the core of safe boating, whether using a motorized or non-motorized vessel. The Coast Guard reports 76% of boating deaths in 2017 were due to drowning, and 84% of the victims were not wearing a life jacket.

- While regulations on life jacket use vary from state to state, the "Wear It" program of the National Safe Boating Council promotes boating safety by encouraging boaters to wear life jackets any time they are on a boat, motorized or non-motorized.

- Good swimmers still need life jackets. When people fall off a boat, they may become disorient-

ed, injured or unconscious. Life jackets can keep victims' heads above water so they can breathe and be rescued more easily. Every child should wear a life jacket at all times when boating.

- Choose the right life jacket for the activities you will be doing. Double check to make sure the life jackets are Coast Guard approved and fit correctly for your size and weight by holding your arms straight up over your head and asking a friend to grasp the tops of the arm opening and gently pull up to make sure there is no excess room above the openings and that the jacket does not ride up over your chin or face. The life jacket should also be properly fastened.

Be prepared

- Check that your equipment is in good working order.

- Review a pre-departure checklist and more to ensure you have everything you need in your boat, including a tool kit and first-aid kit.

- Before leaving, always file a float plan with someone you trust. A float plan is an overview of a boat excursion that can give authorities a head start in looking for a boater if they fail to reach their destination.

- Dress properly and bring an extra set of clothes in case you get wet.

- Don't forget sunscreen and know the signs of heat illnesses.

Exercise good judgment

- Don't drink and drive a boat; alcohol affects judgment, vision, balance and coordination.

- Once on the water, use common sense; in a split second, a situation can arise or the weather can turn.

- If you notice storm clouds, a sudden temperature drop or wind speed increasing, play it safe



and get off the water.

Safety tips for water skiers, tubers and wakeboarders

Skiing, tubing and wakeboarding are popular water sports, but they also can be dangerous with participants traveling at high speeds. Remember to take the following steps to minimize the risks:

- Learn how to get up and out of the water and how to safely use the tow rope.

- Always have a spotter in the boat, and go over basic hand signals.

- Be sure the towline is not caught in the propeller or wrapped around you before beginning.

- Wait for the propeller to stop before getting back on the boat.

- Enjoy these activities during daylight hours only.

No matter how you enjoy the water this summer, Denning said the most important tip he can give to Soldiers and Families taking part in water based activities is to pay attention.

"That's it. Watch out for your Family, friends and each other," he said.



National Safety Month 2020

GOTTA GO?

The highway is calling after weeks of self-isolation. But there's no need to rush. Take your time and make a plan. The road will always be there.

For more information visit <https://safety.army.mil>

U.S. ARMY U.S. ARMY COMBAT READINESS CENTER

Safety Poster Week 2