



FORGING THE

WARRIOR SPIRIT

THE JRTC & FORT POLK GUARDIAN

Vol. 46, No. 37

Home of Heroes @ Fort Polk, LA

Sept. 13, 2019

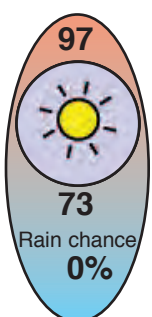


CHUCK CANNON / GUARDIAN

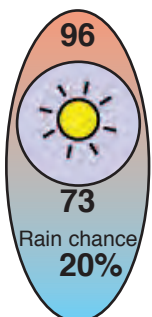
My baby!

Sgt. Lucy A. Avila (right), 524th Engineer Detachment, 46th Engineer Battalion, is all smiles as she sees her son Troy, 2, for the first time in nine months during a redeployment ceremony at the South Fort Polk Fire Station Sept. 9 after she and six additional 524th Engineer Detachment Soldiers returned from a deployment to Romania. For story and more photos see page 5 of today's Guardian.

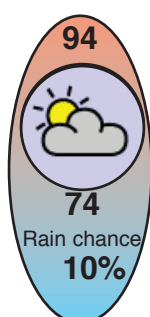
Weekend weather



Today



Saturday



Sunday

Inside the Guardian

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Viewpoint



In our view

Guardian staff asked Fort Polk community members, "Where were you when 9/11 happened?" Here are their responses:



Command Sgt. Maj. Vladimir Querales: "I was part of the Expert Infantry Badge committee at Fort Bragg and was on my way to a synch meeting for the training. As I was parking, I heard about the first plane that hit the tower on the radio. They were wondering if it was an acci-

dent. When the second plane hit, I knew something else was going on. We had to place the EIB on pause and get everyone back to their companies and battalions for follow on instructions."

Kim Moltz: "I was doing graduate research in Morgantown, West Virginia, and the plane that went down in Pennsylvania was about 45 minutes away from us. We were in a study room and someone came in and told us what happened. They closed the university and sent us home."



Master Sgt. Andrew Messick: "I was on my computer working on a project and my mom came home from work and told me to turn on the news. I had just enlisted and was waiting to ship out. I called my recruiter that day to see what I should expect and he said he didn't know, but I could be deploying."

Donna Lungrin: "My husband was stationed here at Fort Polk and I was working for Cubic in the simulation center. There was a rotation going on so I was working, and we had Soldiers here from New York. I remember it was a traumatic and stressful time for them."



Chad Estes: "I was at a union meeting at (Fire) Station 2 at Fort Polk. We got a call to stop the meeting and turn on the TV, and that's when the second plane hit. Everyone was shocked. When the plane hit the pentagon, we knew it was going to go south from there."



Chief Bill Nowlin: "I was stationed at Royal Air Force — Alconbury, England, as the fire chief there. I was in the emergency operations center with a major talking about the EOC set up, when a firefighter came in and said the World Trade Center was on fire. We turned on the TV just in time to see the second plane hit, and the major shouted 'Oh my

God, we're at war!' and ran out to find the commander."

Adrian Todd: "I was at a training for social workers in Baton Rouge. I saw it on the news that morning in my hotel room and my initial reaction was confusion. By the time I got to the conference, we all realized this was intentional and all sense of safety was gone at that point."



Sgt. Maj. Jeremy Compton: "I was on PCS leave from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, and saw it on the news. I had only been in the Army about three years at that time. I signed in to my new unit early to see what was going on because of what I saw."



Guardian

Editorial Staff

Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank
Joint Readiness Training Center
and Fort Polk commanding general

Col. Ryan K. Roseberry
Garrison commander

Kim Reischling
Public affairs officer

Chuck Cannon
Command information officer

Jean Dubiel

Angie Thorne
Staff writers

Editorial Offices
Building 4919, Magnolia Street
Fort Polk, LA 71459-5060
Voice (337) 531-4033
Fax (337) 531-1401

Email: Kimberly.Reischling@us.army.mil

Trading post ads:

tradingpostads@yahoo.com

Fort Polk Homepage

<http://www.jrtc-polk.army.mil>

Advertising

For advertising contact
Theresa Larue
(337) 404-7242

Email: sales@thefortpolkguardian.com

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The **Guardian** is published weekly by the Public Affairs Office, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk. Printed circulation is 13,000.

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Briefs

Town hall

A Fort Polk Commissary town hall is scheduled for Monday at 5:30 p.m., with Herbert Winchester, Zone 1 manager, Defense Commissary Agency.

Commissary patrons are invited to bring their questions and concerns about commissary operations and selections to the attention of DeCA.

William Easter, Fort Polk commissary officer, will also be on hand to answer questions.

Ranger, SF brunch

A monthly Ranger/Special Forces brunch is held Saturday at 9:30 a.m. at Fort Polk's Patriot Inn Dining Facility.

Cost is \$6.25. For more information call Keith Morrow at 531-6368 or (337) 378-4534.

RCCC brief

A Reserve Component career counselors brief for first term Soldiers who are slated to ETS within six months is held Tuesdays at 1 p.m. in bldg 250, 1716 Third Ave., the installation In/Out Processing building.

The brief provides professional guidance and career counseling to Soldiers leaving the active Army.

For more information call 531-1850 or visit your career counselor.

Abandoned vehicles

The Directorate of Emergency Services traffic section will release the following Vehicles to a towing company for disposal Monday if they remain unclaimed.

Vehicles are listed with the last four numbers of their VIN number. If one of these vehicles belongs to you please contact the Fort Polk Police Traffic Section at 531-1806/2677:

- 2004 Ford Explorer 4462
- 2014 Ford Fiesta 7482
- 2007 Nissan Altima 9565
- 2015 Ford Focus 9482
- 2003 Hyundai Elantra 4309
- 1993 Ford F150 7911
- 2004 Saab 93 1559
- 2006 Dodge Charger 4366
- 2006 Audi AA4 2899
- 2009 Ford Focus 5947
- 2000 Honda Prelude 7268
- 2002 Chevrolet 1500 2885
- 2008 Kia Sorento 0551
- 2001 Volkswagen Jetta 2900
- 2004 Volkswagen Jetta 5636
- 2004 Chevrolet Impala 5629
- 1995 Nissan Maxima 8470



From left: Sgt. Elvis Palarchie, Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital and Fort Polk NCO of the Year; Fort Polk Police Chief Bobby Lungrin; Col. Ryan K. Roseberry, Fort Polk garrison commander; and Fort Polk Fire Chief Bill Nowlin place a wreath in remembrance of those who have lost their lives in the War on Terrorism, as well as their Family members, during a 9-11 Remembrance Ceremony Sept. 11 at the South Fort Polk Fire Station.

CHUCK CANNON / GUARDIAN

Ceremony remembers events of 9-11

By **CHUCK CANNON**

Command information officer

FORT POLK, La. — Guest gathered at the Fort Polk Fire Station Sept. 11 to pay homage to Soldiers, first responders and civilians who lost their lives Sept. 11, 2001, when terrorists commandeered four civilian airliners, crashing two into the twin World Center Trade Towers in New York, one into the Pentagon in Washington, and one in an open field in Pennsylvania.

Nearly 3,000 were killed in the attacks that have resulted in a War on Terrorism that has lasted more than 18 years and claimed the lives of more than 6000 service members including 96 from Fort Polk.

Col. Ryan K. Roseberry, Fort Polk garrison commander, reminded the solemn assembly how on that morning 18 years before, as black smoke poured from the World Trade Center towers, firemen, police officers and paramedics ran towards danger to protect American citizens and ensure no one was left behind.

"They demonstrated Warrior Ethos," Roseberry said.

He also noted how the 40-plus passengers on United Airlines Flight 93 halted an attack on the U.S. Capitol by wresting control of the aircraft

from the terrorists, crashing it into a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, costing them their lives, but saving countless others.

"Their 'Let's Roll' became a rallying cry for thousands of citizens who would soon raise their right hand to become the fighting force who have since deployed during the last 18 years of continuous combat."

Roseberry then highlighted the "Warrior Spirit" demonstrated by the Soldiers, airmen, Marines and sailors who ran to rescue their fellow service members when a plane plunged into the Pentagon.

As the ceremony began at 9 a.m., a salute was paid to Fort Polk's first responders — firefighters, police officers and emergency medical technicians. In his remarks, Roseberry thanked the first responders from the installation and surrounding communities for providing a safe environment for Soldiers and their Families.

Roseberry recalled the image of President George Bush, standing with a bullhorn on a debris pile at Ground Zero, next to a New York City firefighter.

"The President told the crowd of first responders, 'I can hear you, the rest of the world can

Please see **Ceremony**, page 8

Army's Combat Training Center leaders discuss current trends

By SUE RACH

Army News Service

FORT BENNING, Ga. — Leaders from the U.S. Army's Combat Training Centers shared current trends and tactics to win on the battlefield during a CTC panel discussion on day two of the 2019 Maneuver Warfighter Conference at the Maneuver Center of Excellence at Fort Benning, Georgia Sept. 10-12.

This year's conference theme, "The Brigade Combat Team: Ready for Large Scale Combat Operations," provided a key platform for the leaders to highlight their center's continual efforts in providing brigade combat teams with the rigorous and realistic training scenarios required for units to stand ready to defeat the enemy.

Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, commanding general, the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, Louisiana began the "CTC Trends and Best Practices" discussion along with panel members Col. Scott Woodward, commander of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California and Col. Joe Hilbert, commander of Operations Group, Joint Multinational Readiness Center, Hohenfels-Grafenwoehr training complex, Germany.

"Here's what we're seeing from units coming out of the box at JRTC," said Frank. The box refers to the training battle areas. "Staff proficiency needs to be improved down to the company and battery level.

"They need to understand what their battalion and brigade commanders want them to kill on the battlefield. So war-gaming is important as well, there's never too much units can do when it comes to war-gaming."

Other areas he saw as needing improvement included coordinated and refined use of artillery fire and air assault assets. The need for synchronized fires capability was also a trend at NTC said Woodward.

"Fires needs more synchronization, along with enabling rotating units' mission command posts, reconnaissance and continuing to focus on the fundamentals," he said. "Don't forget the art of warfare, and remember repetition sets us apart."

Army Regulation 350-50, "Army Combat



PATRICK ALBRIGHT/ARMY NEWS SERVICE

From left, Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, commanding general of the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk; Col. Joseph E. Hilbert, commander of the Joint Multinational Readiness Center at Hohenfels, Germany; and Col. Scott Woodward, commander of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California, form a panel of military experts discussing trends related to the U.S. Army's Combat Training Centers Sept. 11 at Fort Benning, Ga. during the 2019 Maneuver Warfighter Conference.

Training Center Program," outlines the purpose and task of combat training centers as enabling and building trained and proficient, combat-ready units and leaders ready to conduct operations as part of the joint force, with an end state of units and leaders prepared to deploy worldwide, fight with confidence, and win against any adversary anytime under any conditions.

This highly realistic operational environment is often created by replicating enemy scenarios through the use of a near-peer opposing force, or OPFOR. Defeating the OPFOR means defeating the enemy, according to AR 350-5.0

Frank touched on three ways to beat the

JRTC's dreaded Geronimo, or OPFOR.

"It's crucial for units to establish and enforce security 24/7 on the battlefield. This is the area Geronimo (JRTC's OPFOR) sees as the weakest link in units in the box," he said.

Seizing the opportunity to gain an advantage and win was another area he advised units to take.

"Units need to take any opportunity to gain an advantage; the enemy will, so we need to do the same," Frank said.

Woodward added, having a great attitude and keeping things simple was the key to winning against JRTC's OPFOR: "Keep it simple, focus on killing things, steel to targets."

The National Training Center and Joint Readiness Training Center operate under U.S. Forces Command while the Joint Multinational Readiness Center, falling under 7th Army Training Command, operates under U.S. Army Europe. These centers, referred to as maneuver combat training centers or "dirt centers," are just three of the Army's four premier training grounds. The fourth is the Mission Command Training Program at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

U.S. Army Forces Command's JRTC and NTC train Army BCTs by conducting force-on-force and live-fire training in a joint scenario across a range of conflict also using live, virtual and constructive training via replicating enemy scenarios with a near-peer OPFOR.

The center supports unit readiness, force generation processes and focuses on collective training events supporting BCTs in decisive action proficiency.

Army briefs

Soldier shares story

FORT BELVOIR, Va. — Taking care of and showing love and appreciation for others, is a core reason why retired Maj. Dennis Skelton chose to stay in the Army. He continued to serve for 21 years, even after suffering grievous wounds during Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2004.

Skelton told his story to a large crowd of Soldiers, veterans and Army civilians during the "Why We Serve" ceremony hosted by the Army's chief information officer/G-6, Sept. 5. During the event, 30 young men and women

from the Baltimore and Richmond areas raised their right hand to take the Oath of Enlistment.

More lethal Strykers

FORT BENNING, Ga. — The Army is pressing ahead vigorously with efforts to make its Stryker Brigade Combat Teams more deadly.

The Stryker force accounts for nearly a third of the Army's Infantry forces, according to several speakers Sept. 10.

Strykers have seen extensive service in the post-9/11 era, but the Army has seen a need to prepare them for the battlefield.

Polk Soldier/firefighters redeploy after nine months in Romania

By **CHUCK CANNON**

Command information officer

FORT POLK, La. — Seven Soldiers with the 524th Engineer Detachment (Firefighter), 46th Engineer Battalion, returned home to a heroes' welcome Sept. 9 following a nine-month deployment to Romania in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve.

Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, commander, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, was the keynote speaker during a redeployment ceremony held at 7 p.m. in South Fort Polk Fire Station.

"There are a lot of Family members here who want to get these Soldiers back home and into their arms," Frank said.

"They are probably the most excited of all of us here. And there are a bunch of fireman in the back who are excited to have their teammates back."

Frank said the returning Soldiers showed the Romanian and Bulgarian armies what the world's best Soldiers look like, act like, how they perform on the battlefield, how they perform in training, and what they can do for the community.

Frank handed out four-day passes to the returning Soldiers.

"I gave them coins when they left, now I've given them a four-day pass," he said. "That goes on top of their block leave."

"It's great to have you back home, team," Frank said. "Group, attention. Fall out to your Families, fellow friends and Soldiers."

Lt. Col. Ian R. Davis, commander, 46th Engineer Battalion, opened the event by welcoming the Soldiers home. He went through a list of the accomplishments by the unit during the deployment.

"Let's give our Soldiers a hand for their hard work," Davis said. "The Soldiers participated in community activities and sporting events with their fellow Romanian and Bulgarian firefighters."

The unit's mission was to provide structural and aircraft rescue firefighting capabilities for Romanian and Bulgarian military firefighters. During the deployment, the detachment's Soldiers responded to more than 20 emergencies that included with vehicle accidents, fire alarms and medical aid.

The unit also worked with Bulgarian Directorate of Emergency Services of Novo Selo Training Area (NSTA) leadership to rewrite and renew the Mutual Aid Agreement between NSTA and the regional State of Silven.

Following the ceremony, Sgt. Lucy A. Avila ran to the waiting arms of her 2-year-old son.

"I missed him the most, more than anything," she said, tears streaming down her cheeks. "I missed him so much."

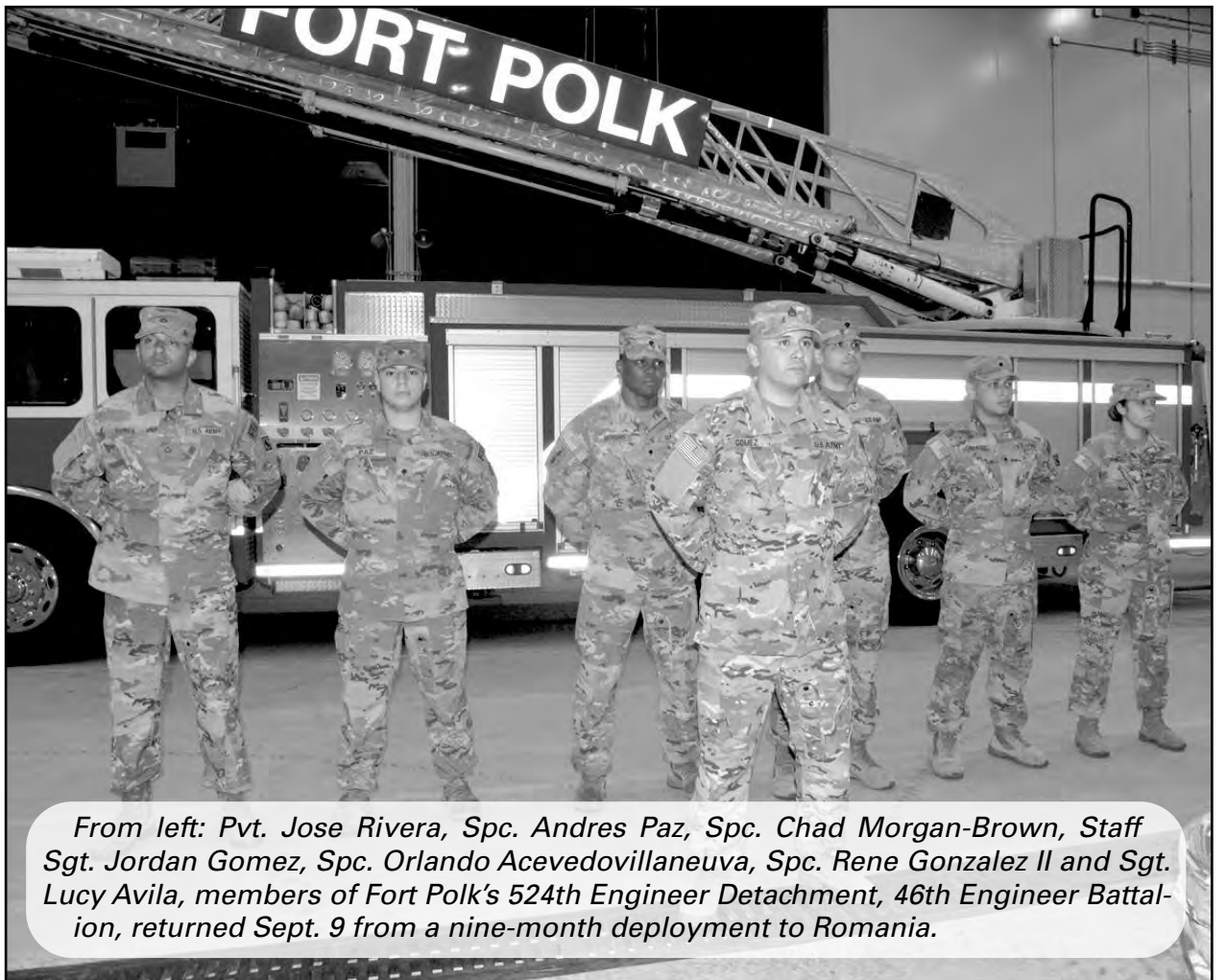
"I'm gonna give this little man all of my attention."

Staff Sgt. Jordan D. Gomez was all smiles as he reunited with his spouse and three children.

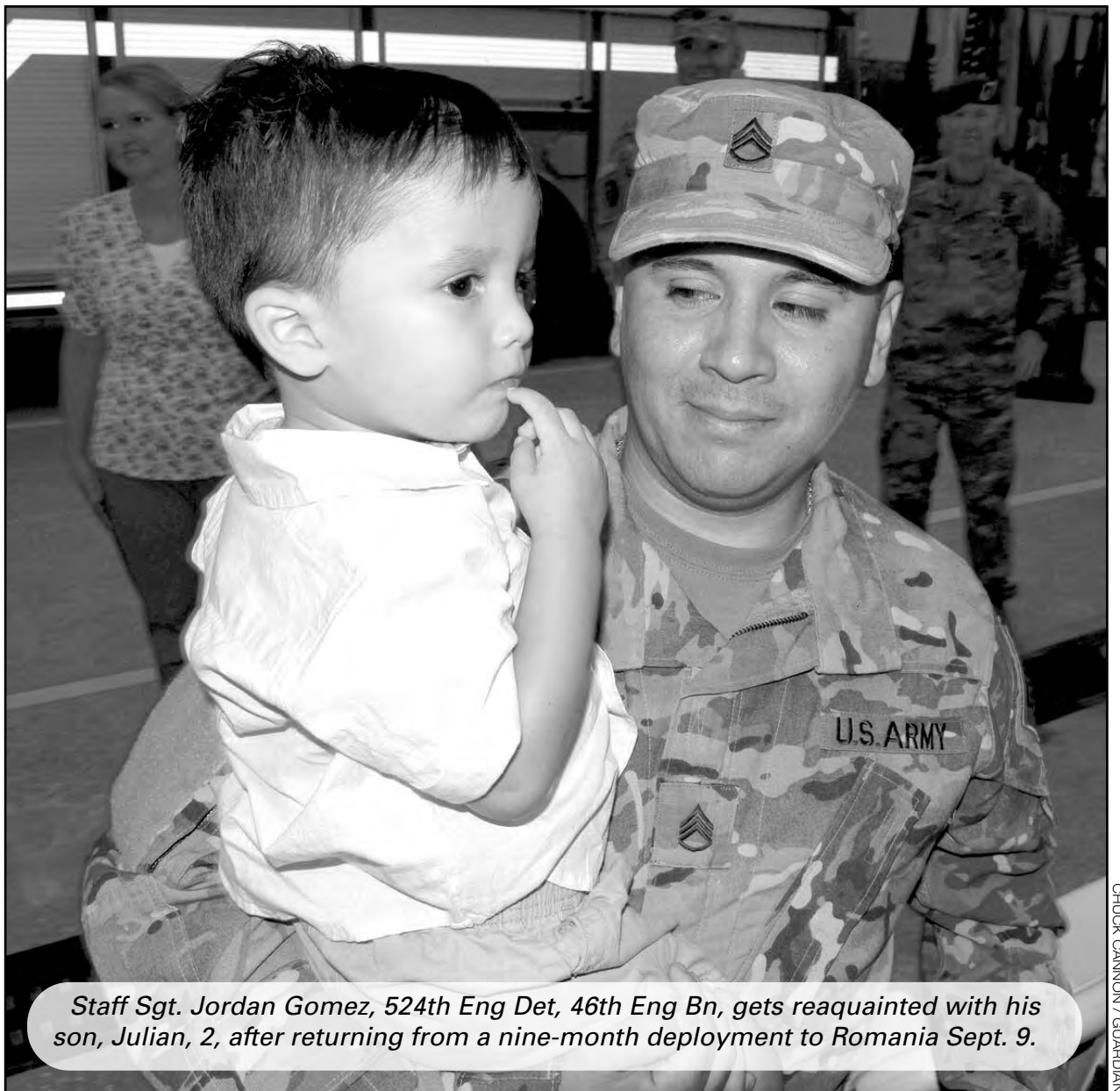
"I'm so glad to be back home," he said. "This deployment was hard because I missed so much with my kids."

"I'm excited to watch my son Anthony (12) play football."

The returning Soldiers/firefighters included: Gomez, Avila, Spc. Orlando Y. Acevedovillaneuva, Spc. Rene Gonzalez II, Spc. Chad C. Morgan-Brown, Spc. Andres Paz and Pvt. Josue V. Rivera.



From left: Pvt. Jose Rivera, Spc. Andres Paz, Spc. Chad Morgan-Brown, Staff Sgt. Jordan Gomez, Spc. Orlando Acevedovillaneuva, Spc. Rene Gonzalez II and Sgt. Lucy Avila, members of Fort Polk's 524th Engineer Detachment, 46th Engineer Battalion, returned Sept. 9 from a nine-month deployment to Romania.



Staff Sgt. Jordan Gomez, 524th Eng Det, 46th Eng Bn, gets reacquainted with his son, Julian, 2, after returning from a nine-month deployment to Romania Sept. 9.

CHUCK CANNON / GUARDIAN

Keller shoulders dual role: DES, Viper 6

By **JEAN DUBIEL**
Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. — Taking over the responsibilities of an installation Provost Marshal Office is an enormous undertaking — add to that the onus of command over a deployable military police battalion, and someone's plate is rather full.

That someone is Lt. Col. Shawn C. Keller.

Keller became the commander of the 519th Military Police Battalion "Vipers" and the Fort Polk Director of Emergency Services Aug. 16.

Keller said balancing the DES role with the battalion commander role has its challenges.

"I am definitely leveraging my civilian teammates to provide that continuity of effort," he said. "They are the resident experts and have the historical knowledge about the installation and can help me with the overall mission, both for the fire, police and

emergency service piece as well as the military/combat piece."

Keller's leadership philosophy places emphasis on the importance of maintaining professionalism and discipline in ensuring the safety of the community, he said.

"We are here to provide a service for our military community and the local civilians. I want them to feel safe in their homes at night and know that their installation is secure," said Keller. "Some communities live in fear, but at Fort Polk, residents can relax and be comfortable."

As the DES, Keller is the head of the Provost Marshal Office, a professionally trained, positive, customer focused Army law enforcement and access control organization that is responsive to the needs of not only the commander but also the civilian community. The Provost Marshal Office is the chief law enforcement office on the installation and provides the community with 24-hour police support to maintain good order and discipline, safety and security for all those who live and or work on Fort Polk.



Keller

Responding to an active shooter event is one of the most important aspects of force protection, and Keller said Fort Polk's law enforcement assets are continually training to address that possibility.

"I did a ride along right after I came on board, and I can tell you our (law enforcement and emergency services personnel) are doing active shooter training during their shifts on a daily basis. When they are not busy with real world response, they are training. They will go to the hospital, barracks, gymnasiums, schools ... anywhere an incident could potentially happen. Ultimately, if we can save lives, we'll do our best to do so," said Keller.

The public can do its part to help as well, said Keller.

"The national message of 'See something, say something,' should be taken seriously by the public. If something doesn't look right to you, if you see someone that is out of place or someone taking pictures at the gate ... anything unusual, please call us and let us investigate," he said.

Call 531-COPS (2677) or download the "See Something, Say Something" app from your app store.

Ribbon cut as North Fort wash rack officially opens for business

By **ANGIE THORNE**
Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. — A ribbon cutting ceremony was held at the North Fort Polk wash rack Sept. 5.

Repairs and improvements totaling \$3,085,000 were made to the facility which is used to remove the Louisiana clay and mud that adheres to vehicles during a rotation.

The Army Sustainable Restoration Modernization project was directed by Installation Management Command Headquarters and awarded to Pacific Tech Construction by the Fort Worth Corps of Engineers on Sept. 29, 2018. The facility turnover occurred Aug. 16.

Repairs were made to the 16-inch water lines that were leaking underneath the concrete slab, water cannons, electrical switch gears, control/power panels, lighting system and pumps. Additionally, two new vehicle hand wash stations were built.

The project increased capacity and minimized vehicle return time while enhancing rotational mission support.

Andy Tarver, Fort Polk Corps of Engineers account manager, said rotational Soldiers use the wash rack to clean their equipment before loading it on a train for the return to their home stations.

"When Soldiers arrive for training, they put their vehicles through harsh terrain. Mud and clay gets caked on these vehicles. The high pressure water cannons and high volume of water needed to clean

their equipment at the wash rack is imperative," he said.

The water used at the wash rack is recirculated, said Tarver.

"Once used, the water is filtered and pumped back into the large lagoon located behind the wash rack. Some water is needed to refill the lagoon occasionally because water evaporates. The whole idea is that the water is recyclable," he said.

Tarver said the repairs and improvements were necessary.

"Everything about the wash rack is more efficient now," said Tarver.

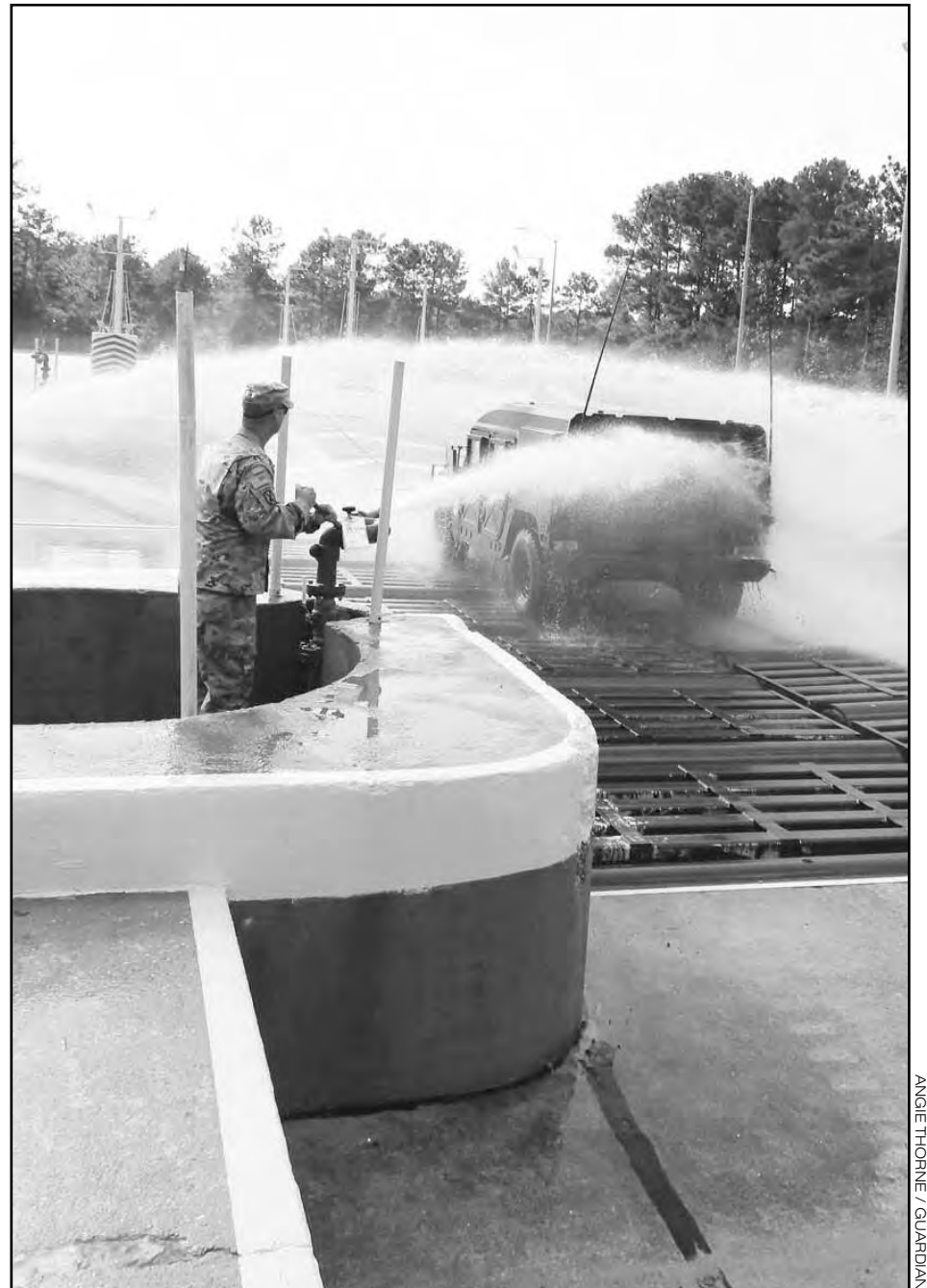
Brig. Gen. Patrick Frank, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk commanding general, said almost everyone in attendance at the ribbon cutting had at one time or another washed a tactical vehicle at this wash rack.

The problem, said Frank, is that over time the wash rack had degraded.

"We knew we needed to renovate it, but we couldn't come out of the rotational cycle. But through the good work of many of you sitting in the audience today, we figured out how to use the South Fort wash rack while getting the North Fort wash rack fixed," he said.

The end product is the "jewel behind us," said Frank.

"This will serve all of our rotations from here on out, as well as all of our globally deployable units that we have here at Fort Polk. It is a modern part of JRTC that will be put to great use as we continue to build readiness into our units," he said.



ANGIE THORNE / GUARDIAN

Cannons fire in commemoration of 1846 Battle of Monterey

By **JEAN DUBIEL**
Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. — Soldiers with the 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, had the opportunity to fire M119A3 Howitzers and get a close look at the M777A2 cannon and the rounds used during a live fire exercise at Peason Ridge Sept. 11. These weapons systems were manned by Soldiers with the 5th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div. The event served as a commemoration of the Battle of Monterey which took place during the Mexican/American War in September of 1846.



JEAN DUBIEL / GUARDIAN



BOSS dedicates 'freedom oak' to OIF/OEF casualties

By **JEAN C. GRAVES**
Public affairs specialist

FORT POLK, La. — Members of the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk Better Opportunity for Single Soldiers program planted an oak tree at the post headquarters Sept. 11 to serve as a living memorial for service members who were severely injured or died in support of Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom.

BOSS President Cpl. Bianca Ortiz was 10 years old on Sept. 11, 2001. She shared her story of where she was on that fateful day and how that act of terror inspired her and her brother to join the military. She said she joined the Army to sustain freedom for her family and to fight for the

American way of life.

Ortiz said the dedication of the oak tree was in keeping with the tradition set by the Fort Polk Offi-

cers' Wives Club who dedicated a freedom oak on the corner of Mississippi and Louisiana avenues on Memorial Day 1973.

That tree still stands in honor of the Soldiers who trained at Fort Polk and were killed, captured or missing in action during the Vietnam War.

"This young, fresh and unmarked oak tree represents strength, life and determination. As this oak tree grows it will weather storms, provide protection and shade and will become a home to other living things," said Ortiz.

She compared the oak tree to herself and the generation of Soldiers who grew up after the attack on Sept. 11, 2001. She said despite their youth they are determined and ready to fight for the ideals of this nation.

"As this tree grows the lives of those who were lost will never be forgotten," she said.



JEAN GRAVES/PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST

Ceremony

Continued from page 3

hear you, and the people who knocked these buildings down will hear all of us soon," Roseberry said. "Our heroic first responders would soon pass this fight to those of us in camouflage as our Nation would defeat terrorists in multiple regions around the globe."

Roseberry closed by highlighting the role played by the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk in preparing American Soldiers for the rigors of combat. He then thanked everyone for attending the ceremony and issued a challenge.

"Today, on this Patriot's Day and National Day of Service and Remembrance, continue to watch over the Families of our fallen, and may we never forget how special it is to live in a country that in our darkest hour, had citizens, first responders and Soldiers forging the Warrior Spirit for our Nation."

Fort Polk Police Chief Bobby Lungrin said that on Sept. 11, 2001, police officers, firefighters, Soldiers and citizens awoke and went about their daily lives, unaware of what the day would hold or that shortly, the world would be changed forever.

"On that day, thousands of lives were suddenly ended by evil, despicable acts of terror," Lungrin said, his voice trembling with emotion. "In New York City, first responders rushed against the tide of people fleeing burning buildings hoping to save their fellow citizens — 412 of them perished alongside those they tried to save."

Lungrin pointed out that since it's been 18 years since that infamous day, most first responders and Soldiers entering service were either not born, have no memory of the event or do not recall the empathy or anger felt by many Americans that day.

"Much was made of the nation never forgetting," he said. "Unfortunately, some have forgotten. For some, vigilance has been replaced with complacency.

"But this is America," he continued. "The

character and qualities that defined the heroes of that day are still present in first responders and Soldiers. Rest assured the current generation stands ready to meet any future attacks with determination, resolve and bravery if called upon."

Fort Polk Fire Chief Bill Nowlin followed Lungrin and related the story of New York Fire Department Battalion Chief Joe Pfeiffer. Pfeiffer was the initial incident commander at the twin towers and made his command post in the lobby of Tower One.

"The chief gave orders to the first arriving firefighters, including a young lieutenant on Engine 33," Nowlin said. "He told the lieutenant to advance his crew to the 70th floor. The order was immediately followed."

Nowlin said the lieutenant was Kevin Pfeiffer, Joe Pfeiffer's younger brother.

"Kevin Pfeiffer died that day," Nowlin said, voice crackling at the gravity of his comments. "That was the last time the chief spoke to his brother. This is the meaning of sacrifice; this is the meaning of selflessness; this is truly the meaning of service before self."

Nowlin said as horrible as Sept. 11, 2001 was, it should serve to remind of the heroic stories of ordinary citizens who went above and beyond the call of duty to help their fellow Americans.

"It should remind us all what makes this country so great," he said. "I challenge everyone to remember our commitment to this great nation, the ideas on which it is founded, the concept of heroes, the land of the free and the home of the brave."

The ceremony began with a silent tribute, followed by a fire station bell sounding for 30 seconds. Chap. (Lt. Col.) Derrick E. Riggs, Fort Polk installation chaplain, offered the invocation, followed by the National Anthem.

Following the speakers, Roseberry, Lungrin and Nowlin, along with Fort Polk's NCO of the Year, Sgt. Elvis Palarchie, Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital, laid a wreath honoring

those who lost their lives in the War on Terrorism.

Spc. McKayla S. Taylor, 1st Battalion, 5th Aviation Regiment, closed the ceremony by playing Taps.

Following the ceremony Commander of Operations Group Col. David Gardner said it's important to hold these ceremonies so Americans won't forget those who fell that day and those who continue to serve.

"Eighteen years ago I was in Kosovo and my wife and son were in New York City," he said. "It was disbelief."

Former Fort Polk Fire Chief Michael Kuk said he was stationed at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas when the attacks took place.

"My personal connection was that I had seven buddies who were senior chiefs in the New York City Fire Department, who I had gone to school with, trained with, attended conferences together, and they didn't make it," he said. "I want to honor their memory. I knew they were being crushed and it tore me up. If we forget, we'll never sustain our democracy."

Retired Lt. Col. Mark Leslie, Fort Polk's deputy chief of Emergency Services, said he was returning to his home at Fort Hood, Texas after PT when he heard on his car radio about the first plane hitting one of the towers.

"As I walked through the door, my wife was watching TV and the second plane hit," he said. "We just sat and watched; we couldn't believe it."

Leslie said he headed back to work with a renewed sense of purpose.

"Shortly after, I took command and deployed a company four or five months later," he said. "It (the attacks) gave us all a sense of purpose. Having 3,000 Americans killed on our own soil by a cowardly act, hit us hard. Civilian deaths always hit you harder, because you kind of expect military deaths. It's one of the hazards of our profession. But when people we're supposed to protect

Fort Polk Soldiers test new Army rations

By **JEAN DUBIEL**

Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. — There is a saying that has been attributed to both Napoleon Bonaparte and Frederick the Great that attests to the importance of well-provisioned troops: “An army marches on its stomach.”

The U. S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command in Natick, Massachusetts, takes that saying seriously, and developed a new line of nutritious meals for service members serving on the front lines or during a field exercise. It is called the Unitized Group Ration, or UGR.

Susan Harrington with CCDC Combat Ration Research and Development, said there are two versions of UGR — an A series and a B series — which contain all the foods needed to feed 50 people. Items are pre-measured and grouped for proper nutritional balance, saving the food service staff time because the menu planning and much of the food preparation has been done ahead of time. The menus are approved by the Surgeon General and follow the specific guidelines set forth by Army Regulation 30-22, Army Food Program.

There are 14 menus available for UGR configuration which installation subsistence supply management offices can choose from. At Fort Polk, Soldiers with the 1st Battalion (Airborne), 509th Infantry



Soldiers sample the new rations at a mobile kitchen set up at the 1st Battalion (Airborne), 509th parking lot Sept. 9.

Regiment and the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, taste-tested six of the newest menus available with UGR-A at a mobile kitchen set up in the 509th parking lot on 16th Street Sept. 6-10.

These new menu items include nutty pumpkin bread, chicken breakfast burritos, turkey sausage with egg and cheese empanadas, cheese frittatas, whole wheat butter-milk pancakes, vegetable calzones, Korean barbecue chicken thighs, parmesan crusted tilapia, Creole jambalaya, Thai coconut seafood and more.

“We are testing UGR-A here at Fort Polk, and it consists of com-

mercial frozen foods like hamburgers and spaghetti and meatballs for dinners,” said Harrington. “For breakfast, the meals include eggs, bacon, sausage and other (traditional) food items.”

Tests that conducted using the proper scientific method must include a control, and the UGR testing was no different.

“To validate the meals, we offer the current menu items along with the new ones so we can get an idea of what items the Soldiers like better,” said Harrington.

Each Soldier that grabbed a plate of chow at the mobile kitchen was also given a survey to fill out to list what they did or didn’t like about the meals.

Frozen and shelf-stable foods were included in the test, with assessments for compactness, storage stability, protection, modularity, enhanced nutrition, warfighter acceptance, convenience and production. These characteristics have become important in anticipation of supporting highly mobile, widely dispersed warfighters in varying climatic extremes, according to the CCDC website.

“We want to make sure everything is compatible with (equipment used in) the containerized kitchen, that cooks have an ease of preparation, and that the food looks as good as it did when it was packaged for shipment,” said Harrington. “We also want to know that it tastes

good, so we gave (Soldiers) the form to fill out. These Soldiers are providing the input for the 2021 line of menus, so their opinions will impact the future of Army meals.”

Sgt. Kenneth Amewu is a 92G (military occupation specialty — cook) with the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division. He was on the team cooking the UGR food and said the new rations offer more variety for diners.

“It gives our customers the kind of options they would have at a regular restaurant. They get excited about the options and seem to like it,” he said. “Our biggest challenge is allowing enough (lead time) to get everything cooked before they arrive to eat. For example, if they are going to eat at 5 p.m., we need to start cooking at 2 p.m.”

A couple of the taste-testers said the new rations tasted similar to the old ones.

“It’s pretty good,” said Capt. Tim Mangan, C Company, 1st Bn (Abn), 509th Inf. Reg. “I’ve never really had a problem with Army chow, and I can’t tell a difference — it tastes the same to me.”

“The chicken is very good,” said Capt. Michael Glass, D Company, 1st Bn (Abn), 509th Inf. Reg.

“I think they may have done something different to the bacon, but I don’t know what it is. As for the eggs, it’s hard to improve on the Army egg.”

TF Patriot Soldiers conduct 9/11 memorial PRT session

By **Sgt. ASHLEY M. MORRIS**

3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div PA NCO

DAVIS-MONTHAN AFB, Ariz. — Several Task Force Patriot Soldiers from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment and 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment held a special physical readiness training session at the Davis-Monthan Air Force Base fitness track, Tucson, Arizona, Sept. 11, to commemorate the 18th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

The CrossFit themed workout honored the victims of the attacks and the 6,400 service members who gave their lives in support of Operations Iraqi and Enduring freedom.

Maj. Sean Cockrill, a certified CrossFit coach and the operations officer for 2nd Bn, 4th Inf Reg, created a workout session that consisted of exercises that hold special meanings.

“The military and CrossFit communities are big into hero workouts to memorialize those who have gone before us, including military, law enforcement, families and friends,” Cockrill said. “For this event, I wanted to not only commemorate the tragic events of 9/11, but also pay tribute to the service members that have been killed in action in the global war on terror that followed those tragic events.”

The terror attacks that killed nearly 3,000 people happened 18 years ago, and today’s genera-



Soldiers with HHC, 2nd Bn, 4th Inf Reg, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div, take a group photo at the 9/11 memorial PRT session held Sept. 11 at Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona.

tion of young recruits are either too young to remember that historic day or were not born yet. On Sep. 11, 2001, Islamic terrorists hijacked four commercial airplanes, crashing two into the World Trade Center twin towers in New York City and one into the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. The fourth plane — heading towards the White House — was diverted and crashed into a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

Spc. Robert Martino, a nodal network systems operator-maintainer assigned to HHC, 2nd Bn, 4th Inf Reg, was 5 years old on Sept. 11, 2001. He was attending kindergarten on Chambers and Greenwich streets in Tribeca, New York City.

“I was young,” Martino said. “At first I did not realize what was happening, then everyone started panicking. It was surreal trying to figure out what was going on.”

Now that Martino is older, the PRT session held special meaning to him.

“As the years went on I kind of realized the effect that day had on my father and everyone in my neighborhood,” Martino said. “This PT session meant a lot to me because I saw the group come together in unity to achieve a goal, kind of like the locals in downtown New York did after September 11.”

Before beginning the workout, Lt. Col. Dallas Cheatham, 2nd Bn, 4th Inf Reg commander, led the group in a moment of silence.

Partner teams ran a combined total of 6,400 meters around the track, completing eight 400-meter laps, with exercises between each lap. The 6,400 meters represent the number of service members killed in action during OIF and OEF.

While one partner ran a lap, the other partner performed nine Army combat fitness test leg tucks and 11 pushups, to represent the date of the terror attacks. In the remaining time they waited for their partner, they conducted 417 air squats representing the height in meters of the twin towers.

The workout began at 5:46 a.m., Mountain Standard Time. The first tower was struck at 8:46 a.m., Eastern Standard Time.



COURTESY

Northwestern State University honors members of the Armed Forces by allowing them to participate in home football games with the coin toss and serving as honorary captains. Pictured here at the Sept. 7 game are (from left) NSU President Dr. Chris Maggio; retired Staff Sgt. Charles "Trey" Cotton, Lt. Col. Wendell Bender, professor of Military Science; retired Lt. Col. Arthur Smalley, Northwestern Demon Regiment chief of staff; Cadet Bruna Galarza, Camila Galarza and Staff Sgt. Juan Galarza.

Military honored at NSU football game

GUARDIAN STAFF

NATCHITOCHES, La. — Northwestern State University continued its tradition of honoring those serving in the U.S. Armed Forces by inviting veterans and active-duty Soldiers to participate in game day activities and the pregame coin toss at the school's home football game Sept. 7.

Honorary captains for the Sept. 7 game versus Midwestern State were retired Staff Sgt. Charles "Trey" Cotton III, Sgt. Juan Galarza, Cadet Bruna Galarza and daughter Camila, who hail from Danbury, Connecticut.

Sgt. Galarza is a combat medic who serves as an emergency room non-commissioned officer for U.S. Army Medical Department Activity at Fort Polk.

Cadet Galarza recently left her enlisted assignment with the 519th Military Police Battalion at

Fort Polk to become an officer through NSU Reserve Officer Training Corps and the Army's Green to Gold Program.

She has more than nine years of military service, including a one-year deployment to Afghanistan, and is pursuing a Master of Science degree in Homeland Security at NSU.

Camila celebrated her third birthday at the football game.

Cotton last served as a cavalry scout with 1st Cavalry Division, 1st Brigade Reconnaissance Troop.

He served seven years, including a one-year deployment to Sadar City and Baghdad, Iraq. Cotton hails from Many, Louisiana.

Lt. Col. Wendell Bender, NSU ROTC professor of Military Science, and retired Lt. Col. Arthur Smalley, Northwestern Demon Regiment chief of staff, escorted the honorary captains.

Enjoy tournaments, scrambles at WHGC

GUARDIAN STAFF

FORT POLK, La. — Fort Polk linksters have several opportunities to enjoy Warrior Hills Golf Course:

- Garrison commander's golf tournament, Sept. 20, 11:30 a.m. shotgun start. Cost is \$45 for non-members and \$35 for members. Prepay by Sept. 18 and save \$5. Cost includes greens fee, cart, range ball, prizes and lunch.

- Speed golf tournament, Sept. 21, 8 a.m. Cost is \$10 per person and prizes go to the top two players. Golfers play nine holes on foot and can run or walk between holes. A player's score is total strokes added to total time taken to complete the round.

- Soldier for Life Retiree golf tournament tees off with a shotgun start at 9 a.m. on Oct. 18. The 18-hole scramble costs \$45 per individual or \$180 per four-person team and includes greens fee, cart and lunch. Prizes awarded to top finisher.

- Fifty percent off green fees Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays through Sept. 30. Cart fees are not included.

- Wednesday night golf scramble, Wednesdays through Oct. 30 teeing off with a shotgun start at 5 p.m. Players must sign in by 4:45 p.m. Cost is \$20 for members and \$25 for non-members. Price includes cart, golf and prizes.

To find out more about events at Warrior Hills Golf Course call 531-4661 or visit www.polk.armymwr.com.

Briefs

School lunch menu

The following school lunch menu is for Vernon Parish schools for Monday through Sept. 20. Meals are served with salad bar and choice of milk:

Monday: Hamburger on whole wheat bun, French fries, ranch style beans, lettuce/tomato/pickle cup, orange wedges.

Tuesday: Chilli con carne, whole grain rice, mustard greens, fruit, whole wheat cornbread.

Wednesday: Barbecue beef on whole wheat bun, potato rounds, green Lima beans, fruit.

Thursday: Carnival hot dog, Bush's baked beans, oven baked fries, fruit.

Sept. 20: Cheesy chicken or beef/chilli/cheese nachos, corn on the cob, ranch style beans, apple wedges.

Mud run fun

Fort Polk's annual Warrior Swamp 5K Mud Run, hosted by the installation Directorate of Family Morale, Welfare and Recreation is held Saturday at Alligator Lake. The first group takes off at 7:30 a.m. with heats following every 10 minutes. There is limited space available so sign up at eventbrite.com. Priority registration is given to Soldiers, Family members, retirees and Department of Defense civilians 18 and older.

College fair

Vernon Parish schools hosts a college fair Sept. 23, from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Leesville High School cafeteria. The event is for juniors and seniors. Representatives from four-year colleges, technical and community colleges and the military will be on hand to answer questions.

For more information call (337) 239-3971.

AAFES briefs

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service offers the following programs to its customers:

- Today through Tuesday Fort Polk Exchange shoppers have an opportunity to support airmen and Soldiers in need during its second Give and Get Back donation period of the year. Shoppers can donate to either Army Emergency Relief or the Air Force Assistance Fund at the register at the Fort Polk Exchange.

- Celebrate world Play-Doh day with a Kitchen Creations events Saturday, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Fort Polk Main Exchange. Play-Doh and Kitchen Creations playsets are provided and children can keep what they make.

Call 537-1001 for more information.

Boxing club gives pugilists chance to showcase skills

By **CHUCK CANNON**

Command information officer

FORT POLK, La. — What a difference a year can make.

In July 2018, Sgt. 1st Class Jeffrey Cereceres and former All-Army boxer and current Vernon Parish Deputy Sheriff Sidney Russell, were doing their best to get a thriving boxing club started for Soldiers, Family members and local civilians in the Leesville/Fort Polk area.

Ground Zero Gym, located near Fort Polk on U.S. Hwy 171, was their base of operation and the duo had one primary member — Staff Sgt. Mike Ruffin, who along with Cereceres was assigned to Joint Readiness Training Center Operations Group Task Force 4. Cereceres' and Russell's goal was to help Ruffin earn a spot on the All-Army boxing team and increase the numbers of the local group.

A year later, Ground Zero boasts a bustling band of boxers, including kids, Soldiers, area law enforcement officers and Family members. There is even an airman assigned to Fort Polk on the team. More than 30 pugilists call Ground Zero home.

"We've had exceptional growth during the past year," Russell said, between barking assignments and encouragement to his boxers. "We have a great group of boxers who are focused and want to excel."

Russell said the team counts 15 Soldiers among its team members, as well as children and Family members of Soldiers.

"I was surprised we grew as fast as we did," Russell said. "We've got some motivated Soldiers who have joined and we're excited about our team."

Russell said he hopes some of his Soldiers will pursue a spot on the All-Army boxing team. For now, they hone their skills by fighting in matches throughout Louisiana and Southwest Texas, as well as Golden Gloves competitions.

The boxers have had a lot of success, Russell said, and have captured several trophies and championship belts.

One of the teammates, Airman 1st Class Josh Shank, is one of the team's more powerful boxers.

"He doesn't look intimidating, but he's an animal," Russell said.

Shank said boxing is a great way to get rid of pent up energy.

"It also helps me stay in shape," he said. "I had done a little martial arts training but this seemed like something I would enjoy more."

Shank has a 4-0 record and said he is thinking about making boxing a career option.

"I'm going to work hard and try to go as far as I can with it, maybe pro," he said.

Cereceres' daughter, Anelisse Cereceres, 17, is another of the team's top boxers. She said she loves getting in the ring and mixing it up with other boxers.

"I got into it because of my dad," she said. "I want to become a world champion. I like winning awards and working hard. I hope to turn pro eventually."

Cereceres said probably the most talented boxer and one who continues to improve is Pfc. Myracle Salinas, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division.

The 20-year-old from Savannah, Georgia said



Members of the Leesville Boxing Club, comprised Soldiers, Family members, local law enforcement and area civilians, show off some of the hardware they recently won at meets in Louisiana and Texas.



Airman 1st Class Josh Shank gets a few tips from Leesville Boxing Club coach Sgt. 1st Class Jeffrey Cereceres during a training session at Ground Zero Gym.

he joined the Army to improve his boxing skills.

"When I was little, all I did was draw and I wanted to learn to do something that would get me out of the house," he said. "I met a guy who was into mixed martial arts and he got me interested."

Salinas said he wasn't very good at first, but he soon learned to love MMA, so much so that he harbors hopes of one day fighting in Ultimate Fighting Championship — or UFC.

"I joined the Army so I could learn boxing to help my striking skills for UFC," he said.

"That's my goal and this club is going to help

me reach that goal."

Cereceres said the club is open to anyone who wants to try their hand at boxing. He said there is only one requirement: Hard physical work.

"Before we get in the ring each day we hit the road and work out," he said. "We only want those who are serious about learning how to box and become good boxers."

To find out more about the Leesville Boxing Team stop by Ground Zero Gym after 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and pay Cereceres or Russell a visit. They'll let you know what it takes to become a talented boxer.

CHUCK CANNON / GUARDIAN

Preparation can mean difference in surviving disaster

FORT POLK DPTMS

FORT POLK, La. — September is National Preparedness Month and one way to help ensure you survive a natural or man-made disaster is to make a plan.

Your family may not be together if a disaster strikes, so it is important to know which types of disasters could affect your area. Know how you'll contact one another and reconnect if separated. Establish a family meeting place that's familiar and easy to find.

Step 1: Put together a plan by discussing these four questions with your family, friends or household to start your emergency plan:

- How will I receive emergency alerts and warnings?
- What is my shelter plan?
- What is my evacuation route?
- What is my family/household communication plan?

Step 2: Consider specific needs in your household.

As you prepare your plan, tailor your plans and supplies to your specific daily living needs and responsibilities. Discuss your needs and responsibilities and how people in the network can assist each other with communication, care of children, business, pets or specific needs like the operation of durable medical equipment. Create your own personal network for specific areas where you need assistance. Keep in mind some these factors when developing your plan:

- Different ages of members within your household.
- Responsibilities for assisting others.
- Locations frequented.
- Dietary needs.
- Medical needs including prescriptions and equipment.
- Disabilities or access and functional needs including devices and equipment.
- Languages spoken.
- Cultural and religious considerations.
- Pets or service animals.
- Households with school-aged children.

Step 3: Fill out a family emergency plan.

Step 4: Practice your plan with your family/household.

Some disasters strike without any warning and family members may not be in the same place. How will you get in touch with each other? Where will you meet? How will you get out of your house in case of a fire? What if your neighborhood is being evacuated? It's important to make a plan now so that you will know what to do, how to find each other and how to communicate in an emergency.

- Pick the same person for each family member to call or email. It might be easier to reach someone who's out of town.

• Text, don't talk, unless it's an emergency. It may be easier to send a text, if you have a phone, and you don't want to tie up phone lines for emergency workers.

Preparing for emergencies shouldn't fall on your shoulders alone. Young children and teens alike need to be part of the process for their own safety and sense of empowerment. Visit www.ready.gov/plan to use or create your own Family Emergency plan from the fillable card.

- Work together to build an emergency kit.
- Sit down as a family to talk about your communications plan.



- Role-play what you would do during a disaster.

- Hold preparedness drills in your house.
- Create a plan and practice it twice a year.
- Choose a meeting spot near your home, then practice getting there.
- Choose a spot outside of your neighborhood in case you can't get home. Practice getting there from school, your friends' houses and after school activities.

- Keep your family's contact info and meeting spot location in your backpack, wallet or taped inside your school notebook, and put it in your cell phone.

Emergency alerts

Public safety officials use timely and reliable systems to alert you and your family in the event of natural or man-made disasters. There are different warning alerts you can receive and the types of devices that receive the alerts.

• Wireless emergency alerts

During an emergency, alert and warning officials need to provide the public with life-saving information quickly. Wireless emergency alerts, made available through the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System infrastructure, are just one of the ways public safety officials can quickly and effectively alert and warn the public about serious emergencies.

What you need to know about WEAs:

* WEAs can be sent by state and local public safety officials, the National Weather Service, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, and the President of the United States.

* WEAs can be issued for three alert categories — imminent threat, AMBER and presidential.

* WEAs look like text messages, but are designed to get your attention and alert you with a unique sound and vibration, both repeated twice.

* WEAs are no more than 90 characters, and will include the type and time of the alert, any action you should take, as well as the agency issuing the alert.

* WEAs are not affected by network congestion

and will not disrupt texts, calls, or data sessions that are in progress. Mobile users are not charged for receiving WEAs and there is no need to subscribe.

Emergency alerts system

* The Integrated Public Alert and Warning System, is a modernization and integration of the nation's existing and future alert and warning systems, technologies and infrastructure.

* The Emergency Alert System is a national public warning system that requires broadcasters, satellite digital audio service and direct broadcast satellite providers, cable television systems, and wireless cable systems to provide the President with a communications capability to address the American people within 10 minutes during a national emergency.

* EAS may also be used by state and local authorities, in cooperation with the broadcast community, to deliver important emergency information, such as weather information, imminent threats, AMBER alerts and local incident information targeted to specific areas.

* The President has sole responsibility for determining when the national-level EAS will be activated. FEMA is responsible for national-level EAS tests and exercises.

* EAS is also used when all other means of alerting the public are unavailable, providing an added layer of resiliency to the suite of available emergency communication.

Plan for evacuation

A wide variety of emergencies may cause an evacuation. In some instances you may have a day or two to prepare, while other situations might call for an immediate evacuation. Planning ahead is vital to ensuring that you can evacuate quickly and safely, no matter what the circumstances.

Before an evacuation:

- Learn the types of disasters that are likely in your community and the local emergency, evacuation

Please see **Preparation**, page 13

Preparation

Continued from page 12

ation and shelter plans for each specific disaster.

- Plan how you will leave and where you will go if you are advised to evacuate.

- Identify several places you could go in an emergency such as a friend's home in another town or a motel. Choose destinations in different directions so that you have options during an emergency.

- If needed, identify a place to stay that will accept pets. Most public shelters allow only service animals.

- Be familiar with alternate routes and other means of transportation out of your area.

- Always follow the instructions of local officials and remember that your evacuation route may be on foot depending on the type of disaster.

Develop a family/household communication and re-unification plan to maintain contact and take the best actions for each of you and re-unite if you are separated. Assemble supplies that are ready for evacuation. If you have a car, keep a full tank of gas in it if an evacuation seems likely. Keep in mind that gas stations may be closed during emergencies and unable to pump gas during power outages.

During an evacuation

- A list of open shelters can be found during an active disaster in your local area by listening to local radio and television stations.

- Take your emergency supply

kit and leave early enough to avoid being trapped by severe weather.

- Take your pets, but understand that only service animals may be permitted in public shelters.

- Call or email the out-of-state contact in your family communications plan. Tell them where you are going.

- Secure your home by closing and locking doors and windows.

- Unplug electrical equipment such as radios, televisions and small appliances. Leave freezers and refrigerators plugged in unless there is a risk of flooding. If there is damage to your home and you are instructed to do so, shut off water, gas and electricity before leaving.

- Follow recommended evacuation routes. Do not take shortcuts; they may be blocked.

- Be alert for road hazards such as washed-out roads or bridges and downed power lines. Do not drive into flooded areas.

After an evacuation

If you evacuated, check with local officials both where you're staying and back home before you travel.

- Residents returning to disaster-affected areas after significant events should expect and prepare for disruptions to daily activities, and remember that returning home before storm debris is cleared is dangerous.

- Let friends and family know before you leave and when you arrive.

- Charge devices and consider



getting back-up batteries in case power-outages continue.

- Fill up your gas tank and consider downloading a fuel app to check for outages along your route.

- Bring supplies such as water and non-perishable food for the car ride.

- Avoid downed power or utility lines; they may be live with deadly voltage.

- Stay away and report them immediately to your power or utility company.

- Use generators outside your home. Never run a generator inside a home or garage, or connect it to your home's electrical system.

Following these preparedness plans can go a long way toward helping you and your family survive a disaster.

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Bring your form information to the Public Affairs Office, Bldg 4919, Magnolia Dr.
For further assistance, contact: Theresa Larue 337-404-7242

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ACTUAL SIZE

Guest speaker shares his dark season at ASAP training

By **ANGIE THORNE**

Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. — The Fort Polk Army Substance Abuse Program presented its annual suicide and substance abuse training event Sept. 10 at Bayou Theater. Sessions took place at 10:30 a.m. and 2 p.m.

The guest speaker was Jared Estes. Estes was in an accident with his wife of six months and two friends when a drunk driver hit them from behind driving at close to 150 miles per hour. Both cars burst into flame on impact. Estes was in the passenger seat and was severely burned over close to 50% of his body — his right side taking the brunt of the flames. The passengers in the back seat also survived — one had been thrown from the vehicle and the other had severe burns to her arms and hands. But Estes' wife, who was driving, died in the crash. The drunk driver and his passenger survived.

Estes travels across the country sharing his inspiring story of young love, tragedy, rehabilitation, healing and survival during the darkest moments of his life.

Estes said it took him more than three years and 50 surgeries to come back physically after the accident. In that time, he said he learned tough lessons to fight his way out of the dark.

"If you are fighting a dark or stressful season in your life, my hope is to share my story and shine the light on a few of the tools that have helped me through my recovery time and day-to-day life," he said. "I hope that what I have to share with you serves as a reminder that if you find yourself in one of those dark seasons, you have those exact same skills inside to make it through."

Estes said he hated being called a victim.

"I want you to know that we can all be mas-

ters of difficult circumstances in our lives by taking those circumstances and using them to help find our purpose and give back to others," he said. "I think it's important to reject that feeling of being a victim."

He said pity is also a dangerous emotion.

"I wallowed in self-pity, but I learned that it is a noose that we can hang ourselves with if we aren't careful. Once we allow self-pity to enter our hearts, we convince ourselves that what we are going through is worse than what others have gone through and they can be happy but we can't. We start to feel alone in crowded rooms and shut others out," he said.

Estes said everyone goes through pain and loss and that life is a series of those light and dark seasons.

"I think one of the lessons in life we need to learn is if we are struggling through our own dark season, we need to look beyond our own pain to the people around us who are also struggling and hurting. By helping others, we end up pulling ourselves out of the dark. That's what saved my life," he said.

Estes said he believes people end up finding themselves — their purpose, potential, who they are and what they need to learn — when they are struggling.

"Life is a fight for every one of us at times, but it is such a good fight," he said.

Spc. Michael Eskew, 705th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company, said attending the suicide and substance abuse training was important because people need to learn that no one should feel alone in their situation or unimportant enough to take their own life.

"The main thing is that no one should feel their life is irrelevant," he said.

Also attending the training, Chuck Cannon, Public Affairs Office command information offi-

cer, said he thinks a lot of Soldiers and civilians face problems that can include financial and family difficulties, work issues and the loss of a loved one, and need to know they are not alone, that others have faced similar issues and survived, some even stronger than before.

"It gives them hope that suicide is not a way out, that there are those who care about them and will help them through tough times," he said.

Cannon said on a personal level, the suicide training was interesting because he got to see that not only did Estes survive physically and emotionally, but also that he was able to look back on the event and even at times laugh about it.

"He will never forget his injuries or the loss of his life's mate — the scars will always be there — but he's not letting them dictate how he lives. He's found that not only can he be an encouragement to others, but also in doing so, it helps him heal. It's proof that no matter what we go through, our survival can be an inspiration to others if we allow it," said Cannon.

Estes speaks at various places, but said military bases are his favorite place because Soldiers are his heroes.

"I was forced into a bad place and had to fight my way out. But you signed up to be a Soldier knowing it could send you to some of the darkest places in the world. To me, that's true courage. When I'm around you, I am inspired and influenced by you," he said. "I'm sure some days you can get caught up in the day-to-day stress of your job and life, but I hope you never forget how rare, awesome and inspiring you are, especially to me. Your courage and strength has carried me at times. Thank you."

For more information call the Army Substance Abuse Program at 531-6187.

Suicide prevention requires community effort for success

By **JOHN L. PILGRIM**

Suicide Prevention Program Manager

FORT POLK, La. — Fort Polk leadership renewed their commitment to Soldiers and their Families by signing a proclamation declaring September suicide prevention month.

The proclamation signing took place during the installation's

monthly Community Information Forum Sept. 4 in the Warrior Center.

Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, commanding general, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, spoke about the importance of focusing on Soldier's needs as well as the responsibilities of unit leadership in addressing warning signs and sup-

porting help-seeking behavior. Following his address Frank and the leadership from each Fort Polk subordinate unit signed the proclamation.

The importance of this signing cannot be underestimated. Suicide is a constant threat to mission readiness and every

Soldier lost is a tragedy. The impacts are felt throughout the Soldier's immediate Family and friends, the unit and the community.

It is up to the Army community to recognize the warning signs, identify high-risk behaviors and provide immediate assistance through available resources. Defeating suicide takes active involvement from everyone. As part of Fort Polk's ongoing efforts there will be numerous activities throughout the month of September highlighting this issue.

We were privileged to have Jared Estes visit the installation Sept. 10. Estes is a motivational speaker who discussed suicide prevention and alcohol and substance abuse issues. There were mental health profes-

sionals available at the sessions for audience members who were motivated to seek help.

There was a leader's session at the Mission Training Complex for senior Army leaders as well as civilian directors. There are additional opportunities to speak with subject matter experts at community outreach events at the Fort Polk Main Exchange Wednesday and on the first floor of Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital near the dining facility Sept. 24. Both events take place from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

Reinforcing the Army profession and its values to heighten awareness and instill responsibility and accountability is everyone's business. It's important for us to recognize when we, or others, are having difficulties in dealing with the complexities of our world and have the courage to seek help.

The Fort Polk community must cultivate an environment of accountability to ourselves and for each other's resilience, recognize warning signs, connect those at risk to resources and promote help-seeking behaviors as a sign of strength.

Commentary

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Call or text Keith for Pricing and availability. 337-274-2764. Hurry, seats will fill up fast



Follow tips to prevent sewer blockages in home

AMERICAN WATER

FORT POLK, La. — Many sewer blockages occur between the house and the utility's sewer main.

Pouring grease, fat or oil down the drain can lead to sewer overflows and backups. When washed down the drain, grease and oil can adhere to the insides of the pipes that carry the wastewater from homes and businesses to the sewer treatment facility.

Over time, this build up of grease can restrict the flow of wastewater, or worse yet, block the homeowners' or utility's sewer pipes. These blockages can lead to sewage overflows or backups in homes and businesses. It can also have an adverse affect on the environment if the overflow enters local rivers, lakes and streams.

The good news is that blockages caused by grease are preventable. Residents can do their part to reduce grease and oil that enters the sewer system by properly disposing of grease and oil and not washing it down the drain.

Tips for residents

- Never pour grease into sinks, toilets or down drains.
- Allow the grease to cool and use a rubber scraper to remove the fat, oil and grease from cookware, plates, utensils and cooking surfaces. Then place the grease in a sealed container and dispose of it in the trash.
- Install baskets/strainers in sink drains to catch food scraps and empty them into the trash.

Keep in mind, garbage disposals do not prevent grease from washing down the drain. Also, detergents that claim to dissolve grease may pass



it down the line and cause problems in other parts of the wastewater system.

Share this information with your friends and neighbors.

Use the trash can for trash

Another tip to help prevent sewer overflows, blockages and backups is to dispose of trash in the trash can instead of flushing it down the drain. Flushing baby wipes (even those that are labeled flushable or biodegradable) and paper towels down the toilet has become an issue in some areas. These should be tossed in the trash.

Other helpful tips

Flushing the wrong things down the drain can cause problems in your plumbing lines and the local sewer system. While it might seem to make your daily life easier, putting the wrong thing down the toilet or drain can and do cause blockages, which take time and money to fix.

- Never pour or flush toxic chemicals or contaminants down the drain that could cause damage to the wastewater system's electrical, mechanical, biological and physical process components or cause harm to the groundwater, soil or atmosphere.

- Prevent surface or groundwater from entering into the wastewater system. Sump pumps, basement or crawl space drains, roof gutters, down spouts and floor drains cannot be connected to the wastewater system. Pipes and clean-outs should be properly maintained to assure a watertight connection.

- Prevent damage to all system components located on the property being served.

Report sewer overflows

If you are an American Water Military Services at Fort Polk wastewater customer, please report any suspected sewer overflows to 537-1161.



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Precision putting

A golfer taking part in Fort Polk's Drive, Chip, Putt Challenge Sept. 7 at the Warrior Hills Golf Course pauses to putt perfectly as his golf buddies look on.

COURTESY WARRIOR HILLS GOLF COURSE

Lagniappe

BOSS

- **Baseball game**

BOSS is attending a Houston Astros vs Los Angeles Angels baseball game. Limited space is available so register today. The cost is \$45 per person, which covers transportation and hotel. The trip departs from the Home of Heroes Recreation Center Sept. 21 at 11 a.m. For more information call 531-1948.

Festivals

- **Fall festival**

The First United Methodist

Church of Leesville, 202 North Fifth St., hosts a Fall Festival Sept. 28 from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. There will be food, face painting, games, crafts, jewelry and tons of fun. For more information call (337) 239-3828.

Miscellaneous

- **Recognition Day**

Leesville Veterans of Foreign Wars post 3106, 242 Harriet St., Leesville, hosts a POW/MIA Recognition Day Sept. 20 at the Vernon Parish Veteran's Plaza, downtown Leesville, at 6 p.m. The event focuses on remembering those who put country before self,

but have yet to return home from their wars. For more information call (337) 238-0041.

Clubs/groups

- **Bass Masters**

The Fort Polk Community Bass Masters meets monthly on the Tuesday before each tournament.

Meetings are held at 7 p.m. at the New Llano American Legion, Post 387, 500 Vernon St.

The September tournament takes place at Sam Rayburn Reservoir, just north of Jasper, Texas, Saturday. Entry fee is \$40. For more information visit www.fortpolkcommunitybassmasters.com.



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Advertisement: In 25 words or less (one word per block) give description, price, telephone number and other pertinent information. For garage sales, list time, date and location.

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| #302 | 906 | \$530 |
| #306 | 132 | \$190 |
| #308 | 659 | \$390 |
| #309 | 257 | \$200 |
| #311 | 259 | \$200 |
| #313 | 305 | \$230 |

CAN BE COMBINED FOR LARGER UNIT,
UTILITIES INCLUDED IN ABOVE IN
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| #1 | 1227 | \$1030 |
| #2 | 297 | \$250 |
| #3 | 264 | \$220 |
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