



FORGING THE

WARRIOR SPIRIT

THE JRTC & FORT POLK GUARDIAN

Vol. 46, No.47

Home of Heroes @ Fort Polk, LA

Nov. 22, 2019

BJACH receives full accreditation by Joint Commission

BJACH

FORT POLK, La. — Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital has earned The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval for hospital accreditation by demonstrating continuous compliance with its performance standards. The Gold Seal of Approval is a symbol of quality reflecting the health care organization's commitment to providing safe and effective patient care.

BJACH underwent a rigorous, unannounced onsite survey Oct. 29-31. During the review, a team of Joint Commission expert surveyors evaluated the hospital and the outlying clinics: Fontaine Troop Medical Clinic and Lancon Soldier Centered Medical Home. Surveyors assessed the organization's compliance with hospital standards related to several areas, including infection prevention and control, medication management, emergency management, environment of care and leadership.

"Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital is pleased to receive accreditation from The Joint Commission, the premier health care quality improvement and accrediting body in the nation," said Col. Jody Dugai, BJACH commander.

"I am extremely proud of our team for their accomplishments. We

continue to work together to develop and implement strategies that improve care for our service members, their Families and our community."

Surveyors recognized several departments for exceptional work: Patient Centered Medical Home and Soldier Centered Medical Home patient care and documentation, Dining Facility cleanliness, Surgical Processing Department for explanation of processes, Operating Room organization and appearance, Facilities documentation and assessments, safety assessments of hospital construction areas, Pharmacy compounding explanation, Infection Control processes and monitoring, and the Emergency Department team Survey Analysis for Evaluating Risk room assessment.

The Joint Commission evaluates and accredits more than 16,000 health care organizations in the United States, including 4,400 hospitals, more than 3,900 home care entities, and more than 7,000 other health care organizations that provide behavioral health care, laboratory, ambulatory care and long term care services.

Although The Joint Commission certification is not mandatory, government medical treatment facilities undergo the accreditation process to instill patient confidence by being



CHUCK CANNON / GUARDIAN

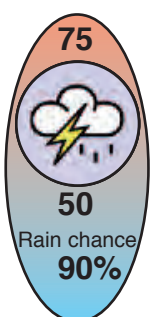
Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital received full accreditation by The Joint Commission during a visit Oct. 29-31. Pictured, from left are: Lt. Col. Brian Adams, deputy commander for Clinical Services; Maj. Camille Betito, deputy commander for Administration; Col. Jody Dugai, BJACH commander; BJACH Command Sgt. Maj. Alexander Poutou; Col. Michael Szymaniak, deputy commander for nursing; and Roy Lockwood, deputy commander for Quality and Safety.

completely transparent. The process helps assure patients that the military hospital is measured by the same high-quality standards as civilian hospitals. The standards help hospitals measure, assess and improve performance.

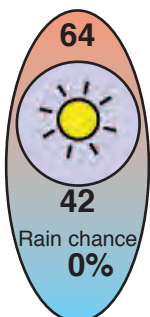
Earning the Gold Seal of Approval is a remarkable accomplishment, but it does not stop there. BJACH healthcare professionals are

constantly aware of how patient safety is an integral part of the organization's culture. Accreditation is a continuous process of learning performance-improvement methods to advance the safety and quality of care, which can reduce the risk of errors for patients. BJACH is in constant pursuit of excellence to ensure it is medically ready to deliver safe, high quality care every day.

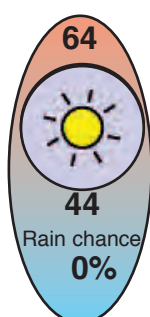
Weekend weather



Today



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Sunday

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Viewpoint

CG, CSM wish Polk team Happy Thanksgiving

Command Sgt. Maj. Bass and I would like to wish each Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk Soldiers, Airmen, Families, Department of the Army civilians, guests and local neighbors a Happy Thanksgiving.

We are grateful that this year for Thanksgiving, the majority of our Soldiers are here at Fort Polk: 32nd Hospital Center returned last week from the National Training Center; the 519th Military Police Battalion recently returned from Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia; Soldiers from the 524th Firefighter Detachment recently returned from Romania and Bulgaria; and multiple 353rd Infantry Regiment Soldiers have returned from deployments to Afghanistan.

After all the time you have been deployed or working within a de-

manding unit's operational tempo, we encourage you to relax and enjoy your well-deserved Thanksgiving here in the United States — watch the parades on television, have a great Thanksgiving meal either in the Patriot Inn Dining Facility or a home cooked meal surrounded by Family (or both — PT hard next week!); and enjoy the great American tradition of watching football games after Thanksgiving dinner.

JRTC and Fort Polk still has Soldiers that remain forward deployed; let's all remember the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division Soldiers deployed on the Southwest Border; the Operations Group Soldiers deployed in Kuwait and Afghanistan; and Soldiers deployed in Afghanistan, Qatar and Honduras.

The Fort Polk Families of each of these deployed Soldiers are sacrificing sharing the traditions of Thanksgiving so that our Nation can remain safe.

We look forward to the return of each of our deployed Soldiers.

A special Thanksgiving welcome this year to 4,800 Soldiers from the

4th Infantry Division that are with us here at JRTC for the current 2/4ID rotation.

These Warhorse Soldiers are building readiness throughout their formation and continue to bring the fight to Geronimo.

It is great to share an Army Thanksgiving in the field with the 4th Infantry Division.

Thank you for all that each of you do — from building readiness for our Army during JRTC rotations to ensuring your globally deployable formation is fully prepared to be on point for the Nation.

On this uniquely American holiday, we wish the entire JRTC and Fort Polk Team a Happy Thanksgiving!

FORGING THE WARRIOR SPIRIT!

HOME OF HEROES

Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, commanding general, JRTC and Fort Polk

Command Sgt. Maj. David W. Bass, JRTC and Fort Polk command sergeant major



Frank



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

Angie Thorne

T.C. Bradford

Keith Houin
Staff writers

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

Email: Kimberly.K.Reischling.civ@mail.mil

Trading post ads:
tradingpostads@yahoo.com
Fort Polk Homepage
home.army.mil/polk/

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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In our view

Guardian staff asked Fort Polk community members, "With all the new holiday movie releases coming out, what are you most excited to see?" Here are their responses:

Shaun Williams:
"Black Widow and Eternals. I'm curious to witness what phase four of the Marvel Cinematic Universe has in store. I'm anxious to learn why the Eternals are on Earth and did not join the fight against Thanos."



Erica Vandermeer:
"I want to see A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood. I grew up watching Mr. Rogers and it will be interesting to learn more about him."



Shelby Chautin:
"Frozen II. I loved the first one and the songs are really catchy."



Lisa Skinner: *"I want to see Midway. Seems like it will be a historical piece."*



Briefs

Road repair extended

The closure for Bell Richard, Holmlund and Magnolia Drive at the intersections with Louisiana Avenue have been extended, due to weather, through today between 7:30 a.m. and 3 p.m. Paving from Access Control Point 1 (main gate) to La. Hwy 467, requires changes to the traffic pattern of Corvias housing residents due to these intersections being closed to traffic.

Residents will be required to use detours along these routes to access and depart the housing areas. ACP 4 will remain open Monday through Friday from 4-6 p.m. for outbound traffic. Through traffic on Louisiana Avenue from La. Hwy 467 to ACP 1 is open for in and outbound traffic, but motorists are encouraged to use alternate routes due to traffic congestion and rough conditions.

Prescribed burns

Prescribed burns are taking place across the installation throughout housing areas in November. Prescribed burns are the burning of underbrush, debris and detritus that chars the forest ground into a black carpet. Burning dead or fallen trees in addition to the underbrush reduces the amount of fuel available for potential wildfires.

Prescribed burns take place about every three years. Appropriate notification of burn days will be coordinated to allow families to make appropriate plans. If you don't want to smell the smoke, you will have enough time to leave before the fires are lit.

Alternatively, you can stay indoors with the windows and doors closed. The fires are kept small and any smoke produced is short-lived.

Drainage repair

A contract was awarded to repair the failed drainage structure at Turtle Pond on Warrior Hills Golf Course. The fitness trail will require a closure and detour through Dec. 6. During PT hours (6:30-8 a.m.), a detour will be used that follows the cart path adjacent to the hole 18 fairway. Golfers and recreational walkers should be aware of the construction activities and detour the work zone. During the hours 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., pedestrians are asked to either avoid the work area or utilize the signalized intersections at La. Hwy 467 and Corps Road and La. Hwy 467 and Louisiana Avenue to detour the construction zone.

During the construction phase, hole 18 will be realigned to keep golfers out of the construction zone.



Fort Polk's Nathan G. Jernigan, chief of operations and Maintenance Division receives the IMCOM Stalwart Award Nov. 19 in San Antonio, Texas. Pictured, from left, are: Command Sgt. Maj. Dan Dennison, senior advisor to the director of IMCOM; IMCOM Readiness director Brenda Lee McCullough; Maj. Gen. Timothy McGuire, acting IMCOM commander; Jernigan; and Command Sgt. Maj. Joe Ulloth, senior enlisted leader for IMCOM.

Polk's Jernigan among 15 IMCOM 'Stalwarts'

By JOSHUA FORD
IMCOM

FORT SAM HOUSTON, TEXAS — Maj. Gen. Timothy McGuire, acting commanding general for U.S. Army Installation Management Command, and Command Sgt. Maj. Joe Ulloth, senior enlisted leader for IMCOM, presented the command's most prestigious award to 15 professionals during a luncheon held November 19 in San Antonio, Texas.

"The professionals we're going to recognize today have demonstrated a passionate commitment to their role within IMCOM and the Army," said McGuire. "They have done what it takes to get the job done, and they have set a new, higher standard for service to others."

The Stalwart Award is given to employees who distinguish themselves among their peers and leaders as outstanding IMCOM civilians and exceed the call of duty to achieve the Army and IMCOM objectives. The program honored recipients for their work in 2018.

IMCOM Directorate-Readiness:

Nathan G. Jernigan, chief of Operations and Maintenance Division, U.S. Army Garrison Fort Polk, received his award in the IMCOM Directorate-Readiness division. In addition to his du-

ties as chief of Operations and Maintenance in the Public Works Directorate, Jernigan is also the lead architect for Fort Polk's Intergovernmental Support Agreements with the Vernon Parish Police Jury, the City of Leesville and the Town of Rosepine.

While each of the IGSA's yielded significant gains, they also helped stimulate competition among small and large businesses to deliver the lowest possible cost to the Army, driving a reduced contractor bid from \$38 million to \$20 million annually, gaining Fort Polk an annual cost avoidance of \$18 million. Collectively, during a five-year period, Fort Polk saved \$112 million in cost savings and avoidance as a result of Jernigan's work.

Jernigan's work resulted in stronger bonds between the community and installation, while improving the capability of both partners who serve those who live and work in the area surrounding Fort Polk.

Thanks to Jernigan, the IGSA option is a success at Fort Polk. Because of his expertise with IGSA's, he was asked to participate on the panel for the Association of Defense Communities Installation Innovative Forum 2019 to discuss the challenges and successes of the IGSA's at Fort Polk.

Soldiers test new IVAS technology, capabilities

By BRIDGETT SITER

Army News Service

FORT BENNING, Ga. — Soldiers at Fort Pickett, Virginia, are testing a Microsoft-designed prototype goggle, the Integrated Visual Augmentation System (IVAS), that offers the capabilities they need to regain and maintain overmatch in multi-domain operations on battlefields that are increasingly urban, congested, dark and unpredictable.

The event is called a Soldier touch point, or STP, and it is fast becoming the standard for the new Army Futures Command's rapid acquisitions methodology. STPs allow industry partners to field test system prototypes repeatedly throughout the research and development process to ensure the final product, in this case the multi-functional IVAS goggle, is met with enthusiasm and truly useful when it's fielded to the force.

The Soldier Lethality Cross Functional Team and their partners in military and industry are hosting the STP at Fort Pickett, a National Guard post known for relevant training sites, like the urban village used to replicate combat scenarios that have become commonplace in Middle Eastern operations. The object is to make sure the warfighter drives the design and development based on need and utility. The concept is called Soldier Centered Design, and though it's not a new concept, it is the first time it has been institutionalized, the first time it has been applied systemically to increase speed and efficiency.

"When terms like 'situational awareness' get thrown around time after time, it's easy to lose sight of what it really means."

MAJ. BRAD WINN

Cross Functional Team lead action officer for IVAS

In the spring, Soldiers and Marines from various line and special forces units tested an early IVAS prototype based on Microsoft's heads up display which was designed using Microsoft's HoloLens 2. That first STP was geared toward proving concept and utility.

The STP currently underway at Fort Pickett, the second of four STPs in the 24-month development schedule, is a tougher test that will assess new capabilities at the platoon level and increase demands on the system in more complex training environments. At this point, about half-way through STP 2, Microsoft has gathered feedback from more than 3,200 hours of user experience.

The SL CFT is one of AFC's eight CFTs



COURTESY PHOTO

The second of four Soldier Touch Points in the 24-month IVAS development schedule is a tougher test designed to assess new capabilities at the platoon level and increase demands on the system in more complex training environments.

tasked with modernizing the Army after the 2018 National Defense Strategy identified an erosion in close combat capabilities relative to pacing threats around the world. The SL CFT focuses on developing weapons for the Close Combat Force — those who close with and destroy the enemy — to make them more successful in battle. Success is defined in terms of survivability, lethality, situational awareness and maneuverability.

Of the products and programs in the SL CFT portfolio, IVAS is arguably the most intriguing, as it is the result of complex, non-traditional partnerships and unconventional funding methods (contracts with Microsoft funded through Other Transaction Agreements), and it harnesses a variety of next generation technologies unlike anything the American Soldier has employed before.

The final product — officials say it will likely be fielded in the fourth quarter of fiscal year '21 — will include a variety of features: A color see-through digital display that makes it possible for the user to access information without taking his eye off the battlefield; thermal and low-light sensors that make it possible to see in the dark; rapid target acquisition and aided target identification; augmented reality and artificial intelligence, to name just a few. IVAS is billed as a fight-rehearse-train system, meaning its function on the battlefield is priority, but its augmented reality capabilities, like real-time mapping, will make it useful for training and rehearsing operations anywhere at any time. And though it's said to "enhance the surviv-

ability" of combatants, its target identification technology will save civilian lives, too.

"When terms like 'situational awareness' get thrown around time after time, it's easy to lose sight of what it really means," said Maj. Brad Winn, the CFT's lead action officer for IVAS. "In this case, one of the greatest capabilities of IVAS is Aided Target Recognition, a feature that gives users the ability to quickly identify anything or anyone in sight, which means they can tell the difference between a threat and a civilian non-combatant."

Winn is one of many members of Team IVAS, a diverse group of Soldiers, civilian employees, academics and industry partners who leverage their respective organizations' expertise to expedite the development and fielding process.

Aside from the SL CFT, Team IVAS includes experts from Microsoft, other CFTs, PEO Soldier, ATEC, the Army's Combat Capabilities Development Command Research Lab and Soldier Center, and a half dozen other members of that complex integrated network of mostly military command-level organizations known as the Futures Force Modernization Enterprise.

Microsoft "deployed" a team from the west coast to live at Fort Pickett for the duration of this STP, more than a month, to gather feedback and make changes to the goggle every day. They'll repeat the process next summer, when they put the next iteration of IVAS, the all-weather, ruggedized and militarized, form-fitting prototype to the test in company level operations.

Candidates earn spurs during demanding Spur Ride

By **ANGIE THORNE**

Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. — The 3rd Battalion, 353rd Armor Regiment, Operations Group, hosted its spur ride ceremony Nov. 14 outside of Tiger Hall, North Fort Polk.

The spur ride ceremony — the ritual bestowing of spurs on the candidates — caps a week of grueling classroom study and field skill exercises.

The history of the spur ride began when Soldiers still rode horses and its traditions have been maintained as the cavalry transitioned to today's version of wheeled metal mounts.

Spurs evolved as a source of distinction to recognize the best the cavalry has to offer. Much like their predecessors, today's Soldiers relentlessly train in professional development and leadership skills before being considered worthy of spurs.

Today's spur programs are officer and non-commissioned officer heavy leadership development programs. The program focuses on the individual trooper's physical, technical, professional and communicative abilities.

Col. David W. Gardner, Operations Group commander, said the spur ride was about doing something that separates Soldiers from their peers and demonstrates their commitment to the Army profession.

"These Soldiers have put themselves forward to be all they can be," he said.

Lt. Col. Mark K. Snakenberg, 3rd Bn, 353rd Armor Reg, battalion commander, said it is an honor to recognize the 22 individuals who were the latest additions to the ancient and honorable Order of the Silver Spur.

"They did it the hard way. This week has been pretty arduous for the entire battalion, but especially for the group of spur holders who are trainers and our most recent spur holders — previously candidates," he said.

Snakenberg said before they went to the field, new spur recipients conducted 40 hours of formal academic instruction in basic Soldier skills, the art and science of reconnaissance, security and patrolling and instruction in the lost art of field craft.

After the completion of that academic instruction, Snakenberg said they tried something a little bit different.

"At 2 a.m. Nov. 14 these individuals reported to the clamshell — a temporary modular building used for a variety of purposes — behind you. It's the first time in quite a long time that the Tiger Battalion executed an alert on a two hour recall and was able to get everyone that needed to be here in formation and ready for operations. A pretty dramatic feat," he said.

What followed was a night insertion into the box and an 18-kilometer movement over the course of about 28 hours.

"They did it in difficult terrain, in freezing or near freezing weather conditions, and for much of that movement they had up to 70 pounds of load on their backs. It was a tremendous physical challenge. All the while, the world class 1st Battalion (Airborne), 509th Infantry Regiment is harassing them with small arms fire, machine guns, a light armored vehicle and CS (tear) gas representing a chemical strike. Through it all, these spur candidates absolutely proved their mettle," said Snakenberg.

New spur recipient, Staff Sgt. Agau Anyang,



COURTESY 3rd BN, 353rd REG

Spur Ride candidates take on training involving tear gas representing a chemical strike on their way to earning their spurs.



ANGIE THORNE / GUARDIAN

Sponsors from the 3rd Battalion, 353rd Armor Regiment place spurs on the boots of new members of the Order of the Silver Spur Nov. 15 at the Spur Ride Ceremony.

3rd Bn, 353rd Armor Reg linguist team leader, said to be part of this history is an honor.

"I'm a linguist, so I feel that adding the skills and experiences we learned this week is important because it not only makes me better at my job, but also makes me a more well rounded Soldier," he said.

The thing that was most challenging for him, said Anyang, was accepting the mantle of leadership.

"Through this process (spur ride) I have learned how to not only be part of a team, but to lead. I no longer hesitate to put myself out there. I have a voice," he said.

Capt. Shiloh J. McGruder, HHC commander, is also the proud owner of new spurs.

He said the spur ride was tough, but it's what leaders must endure.

"It was challenging, especially keeping Soldiers with a wide range of specialties on the same sheet of music under strenuous conditions," he said. "I'm proud of the togetherness and cohesion we built in real time. It's not easy to

make people pick up a 70 pound rucksack in freezing weather at night."

McGruder said showcasing their capabilities under stress has made them more confident.

"Overcoming the challenges faced in the spur ride makes every other difficulty seem easy to conquer," he said.

Sgt. 1st Class Richard Huffman, noncommissioned officer in charge, Regionally Aligned Forces, Team Two, sponsored a spur candidate. He said being a sponsor/trainer means helping to insure his candidate is prepared for the spur ride. A sponsor also places the newly earned spurs on his candidate's boots.

"Earning their silver spurs is a right of passage. They have completed all tasks put before them through hard work and dedication. That includes everything from recon to patrolling. We threw a lot at the candidates and they handled it well. I think they will be able to look back at this achievement with pride and the knowledge that they overcame all challenges put before them," he said.

Scots Guards bring heritage, music, war fighting to JRTC

By **CHUCK CANNON**

Guardian editor

FORT POPK, La. — If you happen to catch a performance of the Scots Guards pipes and drums, don't make the mistake of thinking it's just a bunch of musicians in kilts.

"We are the 1st Battalion of the Scots Guard, part of the Household Division, and we are an infantry regiment in the British Army," said Maj. Adrian Havelock.

The Scots Guards is at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk for Exercise Rattlesnake with the 4th Infantry Division, 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team and 112th Infantry Regiment.

"We are regular Soldiers in a regular division, and our unit, the Scottish Guards, is a mechanized unit — like your Stryker battalions," Havelock said.

"We have 70 people permanently based in London that handle the ceremonial aspect, and then we have a battalion of 600 based just outside of London which does war fighting, and that's us."

Havelock said the Scots Guards were invited to participate in Exercise Rattlesnake.

"We have British troops come over and do many rotations here and likewise, American units do rotations in England, and that's part of building the relationship between our two countries," Havelock said. "The object of us participating in these exercises is to learn things about you and you to learn things about us. We use the word 'interoperability' which is basically what makes you work, what makes us work, and where the friction points are, so that when it comes to real war in the future, we know how to circumnavigate those problems because we've practiced it."

As far as the musicians — bagpipers and drummers — Havelock said they are Soldiers first and music is a secondary role for them.

"They would have joined as Soldiers," he said. "Some of them would have learned the bagpipes at school and so are proficient. When they join the Scots Guards some will put their hands up and say they'd like to learn the pipes or drums. But they are trained infantry Soldiers and do everything we do."

There are about 15 regiments in the British Army that have a pipes and drums band, Havelock said. He said the band is usually about 16 strong and consists of pipers and drummers.

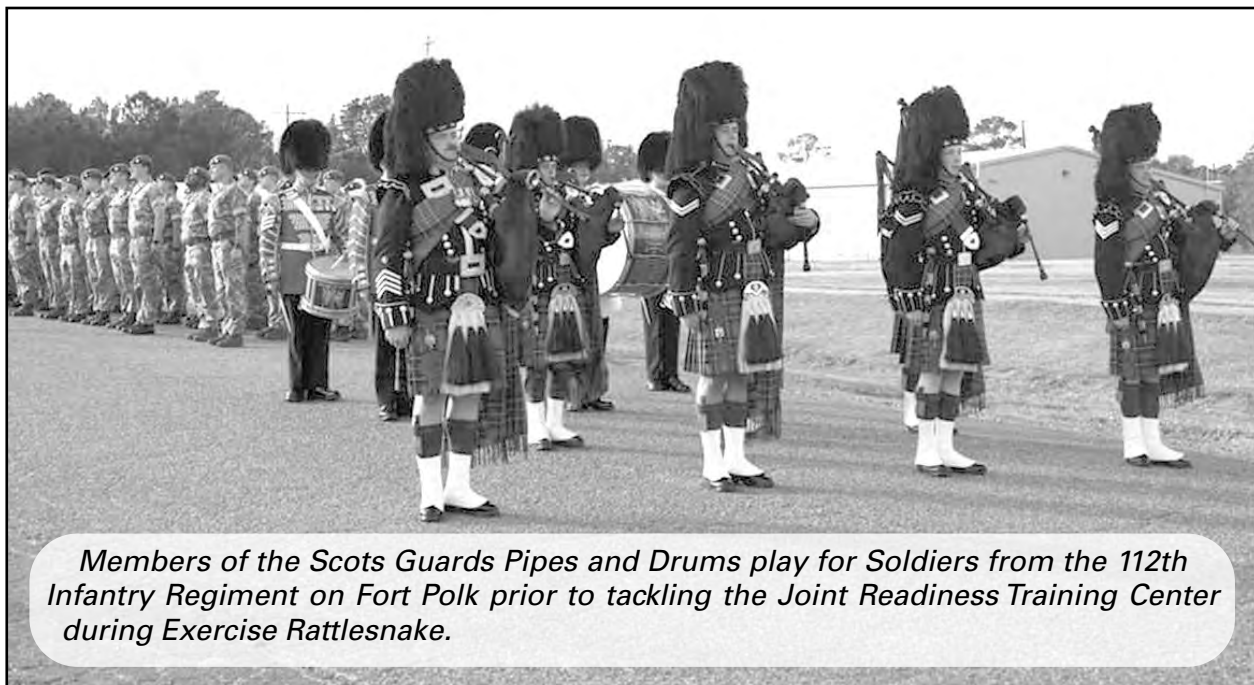
"The pipers and drummers here are infantry Soldiers," he said. "They will go out into the box, and fight. A lot of them are mechanized trained and can drive and shoot the UK Stryker."

But while they are Soldiers first, it's often bagpipers, drummers and guards dressed in their ceremonial finest that attract the most attention.

"You've probably seen the iconic British Soldier in a red coat, with a basket on his head," Havelock said. "Those are the guards."

There are five Guards Regiments in the British Army: Grenadier Guards, Coldstream Guards, Scottish Guards, Irish Guards and Welsh Guards.

"We have a secondary duty," Havelock said. "We conduct ceremonial and public duties in London predominantly. We protect Buckingham Palace, the Tower of London, Windsor Castle and Parliament, and conduct state ceremonial visits, such as when Donald Trump came across the other day, it would have been the Guards that



Members of the Scots Guards Pipes and Drums play for Soldiers from the 112th Infantry Regiment on Fort Polk prior to tackling the Joint Readiness Training Center during Exercise Rattlesnake.

SCOTS GUARDS

provided security. That is a tiny bit of what we do."

The pipers and drummers accompanying the Scots Guards on Exercise Rattlesnake are known as assault pioneers.

"They are the equivalent of infantry engineers," Havelock said. "They are the ones who go into battle in the front, put in the Bangalore torpedoes, the charges to help you blow doors off in an urban environment, blow the wire out of the way so the unit can go straight through. The key is they are Soldiers first and musicians second."

But, there's no escaping the fact that these infantry engineers — assault pioneers — are also talented musicians. Havelock said that can cause problems during training back in England.

"When you try to balance the demand for music versus operational training, the two can conflict," he said. "Some people, like the Queen, can say 'I want some pipers for this event,' but that might clash with an event you're doing to prepare for operations."

When Havelock came over on a reconnaissance visit in July to meet with the units he would support during the JRTC rotation he said he brought his pipe major with him and gave the unit commanders a demonstration of what the musicians could provide.

"We showed them what they could do, how wonderful they are and what a spectacle they are," he said. "We offered it to them. All of our regiments have something special about them; we have more than 400 years of history, we have Scottish heritage, tartan and kilts, and the pipes and drums are very much a part of that heritage. I thought it was brilliant to come and show as much of our heritage of being Scotland's finest when we came over here."

Havelock said since their arrival for Exercise Rattlesnake, the Scots Guards have marched for the 112th Inf Reg and plan to play at the JRTC and Fort Polk Awards Ceremony and the After Action Review for Rattlesnake.

But one of the more unique performances will take place on Thanksgiving Day.

"We'll be in the box, and the plan is everyone in the box is going to get a turkey dinner," Havelock said. "A lorry or truck, will bring our instruments to us in the box, and while the Soldiers are eating their turkey dinner, my Soldiers will play

a bit of music in the background. It should be a memorable event not only for us, having Thanksgiving, which is not something we celebrate, but interestingly, two days later is St. Andrew's Day, which is a very important day for us as he's our patron saint and a day we celebrate. So we've agreed to celebrate St. Andrew's Day when you celebrate Thanksgiving, and our musicians will play and it will be a good bond between our countries."

Another special opportunity has presented itself for the musicians of the Scots Guards. Havelock explained.

"Part of the experience in coming to America is not just soldiering; four or five of my soldiers have never left the United Kingdom. Four of them had never been on a plane before," Havelock said. "It was agreed from the beginning that after the exercise, I would let them have a bit of R&R — rest and recuperation — and so we're going to take the unit down to New Orleans for three days."

Havelock said with New Orleans considered the birthplace of jazz and the pipe major a musician, they decided to conduct a recon in July.

"We went there and saw a few musicians playing in Jackson Square," he said. "We made an inquiry and learned all we had to do was book a time, so we did and we'll play there on Dec. 7."

Havelock said it will be a special occasion for the Scots Guards pipers and drummers.

"For them to have a photograph of playing in Jackson Square, to show their sons and daughters they played in the most iconic music city in the world, is wonderful," he said.

"Selfishly, there's also a social media PR piece to it. Having the photograph and story will probably go pretty viral on social media. Our Army needs inflow, it needs new Soldiers, and while our inflow is good, you must maintain it. It's events like this that will trigger that 17 year old that is wondering what to do with his life to join the Army."

"The pipes and drums is something that makes us special."

Havelock said the American Soldiers have been gracious in welcoming his unit.

"We've never been more welcomed by our American brothers," he said. "It's been a truly wonderful experience. They've gone above and beyond anything we could have hope for."

Fort Polk Soldiers ruck donations for annual BOSS toy drive

GUARDIAN STAFF

The Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk holds its annual Toy Drive through Dec. 10. This year the installation has partnered with Operation Home Front to provide assistance to more families.

As part of the event there was a ruck march Nov. 20 where Soldiers “rucked” their toy donations to a collection point next to the Berry Mission Training Center. The photos on this page are from the ruck event.

Toys can be donated at boxes located throughout the installation. Toys will be distributed Dec. 12. Contact your unit Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers representative, call 531-1948 or visit polk.armymwr.com for more information.



CHUCK CANNON / GUARDIAN

Polk paratroopers parachute into Geronimo Drop Zone

By **TERRY SADLER**
ACofS, G-2 (MSN SPT)

FORT POLK, La. — On Nov. 13, Soldiers with the 1st Battalion (Airborne), 509th Infantry Regiment, and Joint Readiness Training Center Operations Group conducted airborne operations at Geronimo Drop Zone in the JRTC training area. The photographs on this page show the paratroopers and their C-130 aircraft both on the ground and in the air.



TERRY SADLER, ACOFS, G-2 (MSN SPT)



TC, BRADFORD / GUARDIAN



Welcome Home, Patriots

Soldiers with the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division are returning home from deployment. Elements of 2nd Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment and 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment were given a hero's welcome at the Warrior Gym Nov. 20.

Left: *Spc. Christopher Shoemaker-Fulmer gets a big hug from his wife Casey.*

Above: *1st Lt. Cole Borland is welcomed back by Mickey Rogers and Jim Muffler.*

Anvil dedicated at Mission Training center a reminder of mission, pride

By **ANGIE THORNE**

Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. — The newest “Forging the Warrior Spirit” anvil was unveiled at the Berry Mission Training Complex Nov. 18. This is the second of 10 anvils to be placed throughout Fort Polk. Upcoming locations include Wheelock Gym, Fort Polk Education Center, Main Post Exchange, In and Out Processing and more.

The anvils are works of art that symbolize pride and represent the Joint Readiness Training Center’s mission of assisting brigade combat teams in developing and forging the Warrior Spirit in their Soldiers and formations, according to Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank.

Howard Thrasher, Mission Training Complex director, said just as tools are forged in a foundry, the anvil in front of the Mission Training Center symbolizes that this is the place for Soldiers to forge their skills before deploying.

Michael Ford, MTC supply specialist, said, “The anvil brings a sense of pride and belonging to the people in this building as part of the Fort Polk team.”

Ron Tucker, MTC information systems security manager, said the anvils are being placed in front of buildings that represent aspects of a Soldier’s life and show the importance of building a well-rounded Soldier.

“It’s going to be a common thread at Fort Polk



From left: Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk commanding general, Ron Tucker, Information Systems Security manager, Howard Thrasher, Berry Mission Training Complex director, Michael Ford, MTC supply specialist, Matt Stevens, plans and operations, and Command Sgt. Maj. David W. Bass, JRTC and Fort Polk command sergeant major, unveil the second Forging the Warrior Spirit anvil in front of Fort Polk’s MTC Nov. 18

ANGIE THORNE / GUARDIAN

to see these anvils in places where we assist the Army — one team, one fight — to train these Soldiers,” he said.

Kirk Mayfield, G-3 deputy, said the anvils represent an esprit de corps that highlights Fort Polk as one of the Army’s premiere training centers.

They slither, swim, jump, climb, everywhere on Fort Polk

By **KEITH HOUIN**
Guardian staff writer

Editor's note: This is No. 2 of an eight-part series on the fauna and flora of Fort Polk and the surrounding area.

FORT POLK, La. — Of the many phobias that exist, one of the most common is the fear of snakes. If you have Ophidiophobia (fear of snakes), Herpetophobia (fear of reptiles) or Batrachophobia (fear of amphibians), the rest of this story may give you reason for concern.

"There are more than 72 species of reptiles and amphibians on and around Fort Polk. This includes American alligators, lizards, snakes, turtles, tortoises, frogs, toads and salamanders," Sarah Pearce, Installation Natural Resources Coordinator and Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan program manager, said.

Reptiles and amphibians are often confused with each other, but there are significant differences.

"Reptiles have dry scaly skin, breathe air through lungs, and lay hard or leather-like shelled eggs on land or maintain eggs inside their body until hatching. Amphibians have moist skin, can breathe through gills, lungs or their skin, and lay soft eggs in water or moist substrate like mud. Most amphibians spend their larval stage in water and their adult stage on land," Pearce said.

Whereas most reptiles and amphibians are typically harmless, there some that can cause serious injury.

"The American alligator, alligator snapping turtle and common snapping turtle are found on Fort Polk and can cause injury to humans and

their pets," she said. "Fort Polk is also home to five venomous snake species: The cottonmouth, copperhead, coral snake, pigmy rattlesnake and timber rattlesnake. The best way to avoid contact with venomous snakes is to treat all snakes with respect meaning do not touch or handle them. Most snakes are camouflaged and difficult to see in their natural environment. Be cautious when treading in their habitat."

Though the thought of encountering these animals can be a bit unnerving, they all play an important role in sustaining the ecosystem.

"Reptiles and amphibians are part of the natural ecosystem and their part in the overall food-web is important to all of us because we are the stewards to sustaining the necessary habitat for their long-term existence. Understanding the sensitivity of how and where they survive allows us to coexist," Abigail Arfman, a Fort Polk non-game subject matter expert, through a cooperative agreement with Colorado State University, said.

"Reptiles and amphibians are declining at alarming rates. These declines matter to us for many reasons especially because these species, particularly amphibians, are biological indicators of habitat integrity. This means that these species can help us monitor an ecosystems health," Arfman said.

However, these animals aren't the only part of the sustainment of an ecosystem.

"Fort Polk is dedicated to sustaining these lands in accordance with the installations Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan so that Soldiers may continue to train where wildlife and the military mission coexist. One of the main challenges land managers face in pro-



viding a balance between the coexistence is human-wildlife conflict, such as, directly or indirectly harassing or killing reptiles and amphibians," Pearce said.

"Reptiles and amphibians may also be affected by habitat degradation such as removal, alteration or pollution, as well as illegal collecting, and the introduction or competition from feral and invasive species."

Despite the dedicated professionals maintaining a peaceful coexistence between people and wildlife, they aren't the only ones who can help sustain the ecosystem and the benefits it provides.

Everyone can get involved by "leaving wildlife in the wild and learning more about sustaining the environment that we live in and contributing where you can to lost habitat," Pearce said

Punishment for UCMJ violations costs money, rank, career

STAFF JUDGE ADVOCATE

FORT POLK, La. — The preamble to the Manual for Courts-Martial states, "the 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." At the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, the commanding general and subordinate commanders take good order and discipline seriously.

Across Fort Polk, the following disciplinary issues continue to be prevalent: Sexual assault, driving under the influence, wrongful use/possession of controlled substances, fraternization, inappropriate relationships and domestic vio-

lence. Below are recent examples of adverse legal actions across the installation.

- A specialist, assigned to 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, was punished under Article 15 for wrongfully using a Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC) for personal use and making a false official statement in violation of Articles 92 and 107, Uniform Code of Military Justice. The service member was sentenced to a reduction to the grade of E-3, forfeiture of \$491, 14 days of extra duty and 14 days of restriction.

- A specialist, assigned to 46th Engineer Battalion, was punished under Article 15 for fraudulently receiving entitlements and exemptions in the amount of \$18,752 in violation of Article 121, UCMJ. The service member was sentenced to reduction to the grade of E1.

- A specialist, assigned to 46th Eng Bn, was administratively separated under Chapter 14-12b (Patterns of Misconduct) with a General (Under Honorable Conditions) discharge, for having an unregistered weapon in the home and failing to report to the appointed place of duty on diverse occasions. Generally, this characterization of service results in the loss of a service member's Montgomery GI Bill benefits.

- A private, assigned to 1st Battalion, 509th Infantry Regiment, was administratively separated under Chapter 14-12c(2) (Commission of a Serious Offense) with a General (Under Honorable Conditions) discharge, for wrongful use of a controlled substance in violation of Article 112a, UCMJ. Generally, this characterization of service results in the loss of a service member's Montgomery GI Bill benefits.

Patriot Inn dining facility to host annual Thanksgiving feast

By **Chief Warrant Officer 2 FRANK PETERSON**
3/10 Brigade Food Advisor

FORT POLK, La. — Fort Polk's Patriot Inn Dining Facility hosts its annual Thanksgiving meal Nov. 28 from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Menu includes:

- Appetizers — deviled eggs, shrimp cocktail
- Entrees — roasted steamship round of beef, roasted turkey, honey glazed baked ham, orange glazed Cornish hens, buttered king crab legs
- Sides — baked macaroni and cheese, can-

died yams, roasted garlic mashed potatoes, wild rice, Southern style cornbread, dressing, seasoned collard greens, roasted Brussels sprouts, buttered corn on the cob, green bean casserole

- Salads — mustard potato salad, macaroni salad, chef salad, Caesar salad, fruit salad, assorted fruits

- Desserts — sweet potato pie, pecan pie, peach cobbler, marble cake with butter cream frosting, German chocolate cake, assorted cookies.

The meal is open to everyone and their families. Cost is as follows: \$9.10 for service members, Department of Defense civilians, DoD family members, civilians; \$6.80 for family members of pay grade E-4 and below. A kid's menu is available upon request (hot dogs and French fries).

Additional Thanksgiving DFAC meals include a Continental breakfast from 7:30-8:30 a.m. and dinner from 5-6 p.m.

The dining facility is located in bldg 1162, Glory Loop. For more information call 531-7540.

Briefs

BJACH hours

Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital will observe the following hours of operation during the Thanksgiving holiday period:

- Thursday and Nov. 29 — outpatient clinics, outpatient pharmacy, laboratory and radiology closed.
- Inpatient services and the emergency room will remain open.

Call 531-3784 for more information.

BJACH construction

The Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital emergency check-in and lobby area has moved to the radiology department as part of ongoing hospital construction. There will be no interruption of services during the temporary move. Signs will direct patients to the temporary emergency room entrance. Call 531-3111 or email kathy.l.ports.civ@mail.mil for more information.

Commissary hours

The Fort Polk Commissary will observe the following hours of operation during the Thanksgiving holiday:

- Sunday — 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
- Monday through Wednesday — 8 a.m.-8 p.m.
- Thursday — closed
- Nov. 29 — 8 a.m.-8 p.m.
- Nov. 30 — 9 a.m.-8 p.m.

Call 531-7678 for more information.

Masquerade ball

Gator R.O.C.K.S., a mentoring organization for officers, hosts a masquerade ball, Dec. 14, from 6-11 p.m., at the Warrior Activity Center, bldg 352, 1321 Corps Road. Cost is \$50 per person and includes a three-course meal and entertainment. Proceeds go toward Reserve Officer Training Corps scholarships and the mentoring program. Call (256) 694-5624 or (870) 494-5192 for more information.

MCY nominations

Operation Homefront is accepting nominations for the 2020 Military Child of the Year Awards, as well as applications for the 2020 Military Child of the Year Award for Innovation. Nominations are open through Dec. 9, and awards will be presented at a recognition gala April 2 in the nation's capital.

The awards will recognize seven young people ages 13 to 18 who are legal dependents of a service member or military retiree. To nominate a child for the award go to www.militarychildoftheyear.org and click on the nominations tab.



T.C. BRADFORD / GUARDIAN

Hero Tree decorated

Girl Scouts with Fort Polk Troop 2101 look on as Lily Falcetto pins an ornament on the "Our Hero Tree" at the Allen Memorial Library. The tree was dedicated Nov. 19. Webelos and Cub Scouts with Fort Polk's Pack 72 posted the colors and the Girl Scouts led the Pledge of Allegiance to open the ceremony. Soldiers and veterans in attendance were recognized. The event culminated with a speech from Brig. Gen. Patrick Frank, commander, JRTC and Fort Polk, and refreshments.

Fort Polk, Apple Pie Brigade suffer loss

By **CHUCK CANNON**

Guardian editor

FORT POLK, La. — Sara Simmonds, a longtime friend to Fort Polk Soldiers as they left on deployments and returned home, passed away Nov. 15. She was 101.

Simmonds was the leader of the well-loved Apple Pie Brigade that provided a friendly smile, hug or handshake and a tasty apple pie to Soldiers as they prepared to board an aircraft at Alexandria International Airport on their way to Afghanistan, Iraq and other deployments. She was often the last local civilian face they saw before deploying.

She was also on hand to welcome those same Soldiers when they returned, again with a smile, hug and apple pie.

"This is about the Soldiers and all they do for us," Simmonds said in a 2011 interview with the Guardian.

Simmonds began this mission in 2004 when members of the Idaho National Guard were stranded at Alexandria's England Air Park en route overseas. They were originally scheduled to be here for three days, but it turned into six weeks, she said.

Sara was having dinner at the air park bistro one night when those National Guard Soldiers

showed up. She stopped to talk to several of them. During their conversations, it was brought to her attention that they were there for an indefinite amount of time due to a transportation backlog.

"Their conditions were dismal in the old hangar, and they did not have transportation to get to the store to purchase personal items," she said.

Fred Rosenfeld, operator of the bistro and Parc England Hotel, said, "I offered them transportation, and Sara and I fed several of those Soldiers that night. Then, she went into overdrive. Sara also rallied the help of the community to make their conditions as comfortable as possible during their stay."

That was the beginning of the Apple Pie Brigade.

From that point, Simmonds made it her mission to help every Soldier who processed through Alexandria International Airport, and she rallied the help of the community and volunteers to assist in those efforts.

Simmonds was preceded in death by her first husband, Robert Allen, who died during World War II, and her second husband, the late Dr. Noel Simmonds. She is survived by a niece.

Services for Simmonds were held Nov. 20 at First United Methodist Church in Alexandria.

Knowing is not enough — act on your family health history

By **GENEVA MERIDITH**
BJACH preventive medicine

FORT POLK, La. — Has your mother or sister had breast cancer? Does your mother, father, sister or brother have diabetes? Did your mother, father, brother or sister have colorectal (colon) cancer before age 50? If you answered “yes,” you are more likely to get the same disease as your parent or sibling and should consider earlier screening. Talk to your doctor about when to start screening and what other steps to take to prevent the disease or find it early. Finding disease early can often mean better health in the long run.

Did you know that Thanksgiving is also National Family History Day? Even if you don't have a parent or sibling with cancer or diabetes, you might be more likely to get a disease if other people in your family have or had the disease. However, having a family health history of a disease doesn't mean that you will definitely get it. Knowing your family health history risk can help you — if you act on it.

Collecting your family health history is an important first step. Whether you know a lot about your family health history or only a little, take time to talk to your family about their health histories at family gatherings this holiday season. It might not be easy. Your family members might not be used to talking about their diseases or might not want to talk. But starting the conversation is important. Remember, you're asking not just for your own health, but also for the health of everyone in your family.

How to collect Family health history

- Talk to your family. Write down the names of your close relatives from both sides of the family: Parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews. Talk to these family members about what conditions they have or had, and at what age the conditions were first diagnosed. You might think you know about all of the conditions in your parents or siblings, but you might find out more information if you ask.

- Ask questions. To find out about your risk for chronic diseases, ask your relatives about which of these diseases they have had and when they were diagnosed. Questions can include:

- * Do you have any chronic diseases, such as heart disease or diabetes, or health conditions, such as high blood pressure or high cholesterol?

- * Have you had any other serious diseases, such as cancer or stroke? What type of cancer?

- * How old were you when each of these diseases or health conditions was diagnosed? (If your relative doesn't remember the exact age, knowing the approximate age is still useful.)

- * What is your family's ancestry? From what countries or regions did your ancestors come to the United States?

- * What were the causes and ages of death for relatives who have died?

- Record the information and update it whenever you learn new family health history information. My Family Health Portrait, a free web-based tool, is helpful in organizing the information in your family health history. My Family Health Portrait allows you to share this information easily with your doctor and other family members.

- Share family health history information with your doctor and other family members. If you are concerned about diseases that are common in



your family, talk with your doctor at your next visit. Even if you don't know all of your family health history information, share what you do know. Family health history information, even if incomplete, can help your doctor decide which screening tests you need and when those tests should start.

If you have a medical condition, such as cancer, heart disease, or diabetes, be sure to let your family members know about your diagnosis. If you have had genetic testing done, share your results with your family members. If you are one of the older members of your family, you may know more about diseases and health conditions in your family, especially in relatives who are no longer living. Be sure to share this information with your younger relatives so that you may all benefit from knowing this family health history information.

How to act on family health history

Knowing about your family health history of a disease can motivate you to take steps to lower your chances of getting the disease. You can't change your family health history, but you can change unhealthy behaviors, such as smoking, not exercising or being active and poor eating habits. Talk with your doctor about steps that you can take, including whether you should consider early screening for the disease. If you have a family health history of disease, you may have the most to gain from lifestyle changes and screening tests.

What you can do if you have a family health history of the following:

- Colorectal cancer: If you have a mother, father, sister, brother or other close family member who had colorectal cancer before age 50 or have multiple close family members with colorectal cancer, talk to your doctor about whether you should have screening starting at a younger age, being done more frequently and using colonoscopy only instead of other tests. In some cases, your doctor may recommend that you have genetic counseling, and a genetic counselor may recommend genetic testing based on your family health history.

- Breast or ovarian cancer: If you have a parent, sibling or child with breast cancer, talk to your doctor about when you should start mammography screening. If your relative was diag-

nosed with breast cancer before age 50, if you have a close relative with ovarian cancer, or if you have a male relative with breast cancer, your doctor might refer you for cancer genetic counseling to find out if genetic testing is right for you. In some cases, your doctor might recommend taking tamoxifen, raloxifene, or aromatase inhibitors, drugs that can decrease risk of developing breast cancer in some women.

- Heart disease: If you have a family health history of heart disease, you can take steps to lower your chances of getting heart disease. These steps can include eating a healthy diet, being physically active, maintaining a healthy weight, not smoking, limiting your alcohol use, having any screening tests that your doctor recommends and, in some cases, taking medication.

- Diabetes: If your mother, father, brother or sister has type 2 diabetes, you could have prediabetes and are more likely to get type 2 diabetes yourself. But there are important steps you can take to prevent type 2 diabetes and reverse prediabetes if you have it. Ask your doctor whether you need earlier screening for diabetes. Find out more about the National Diabetes Prevention Program's lifestyle change program and how to find a program near you; (BJACH Health Promotion offers monthly diabetes classes held every second Thursday; for more information call 531-6880) and learn how to prevent type 2.

- Osteoporosis: This is a medical condition where bones become weak and are more likely to break. A family health history of osteoporosis is one of a number of factors that make you more likely to develop osteoporosis. For example, if you are a white woman whose mother or father fractured a hip, talk to your doctor about screening for osteoporosis earlier (at about age 55, compared with age 65 for most women). Talk to your provider about risk assessment tools and to learn more about screening process.

- Hereditary Hemochromatosis: Hereditary hemochromatosis is a disorder in which the body can build up too much iron and can lead to serious liver damage and other problems. If you have a brother or sister with hemochromatosis, you may be more likely to develop the condition yourself. Talk to your doctor about testing for hemochromatosis and whether you should take steps to lower the amount of iron in your body.

Fort Polk Exchange offers opportunities for holidays

EXCHANGE

FORT POLK, La. — The Army and Air Force Exchange Service is providing opportunities for Fort Polk Soldiers and Family members this holiday season.

- The Exchange is giving one lucky military moviegoer a golden opportunity to see free flicks during December. At a special screening of “The Polar Express” at the Fort Polk Reel Time Theater on Nov. 30 at 3 p.m., moviegoers will be entered to win two “golden tickets,” which can be used to see one movie a week for free in December. The contest is part of the Exchange’s Military Family Month celebration.

Each ticket purchase will count toward an entry for the two “golden tickets,” and one winner will be drawn.

- With the Exchange’s extended holiday price guarantee, from Dec. 1 to Dec. 24, Fort Polk shoppers who make a purchase at their Exchange and find the identical

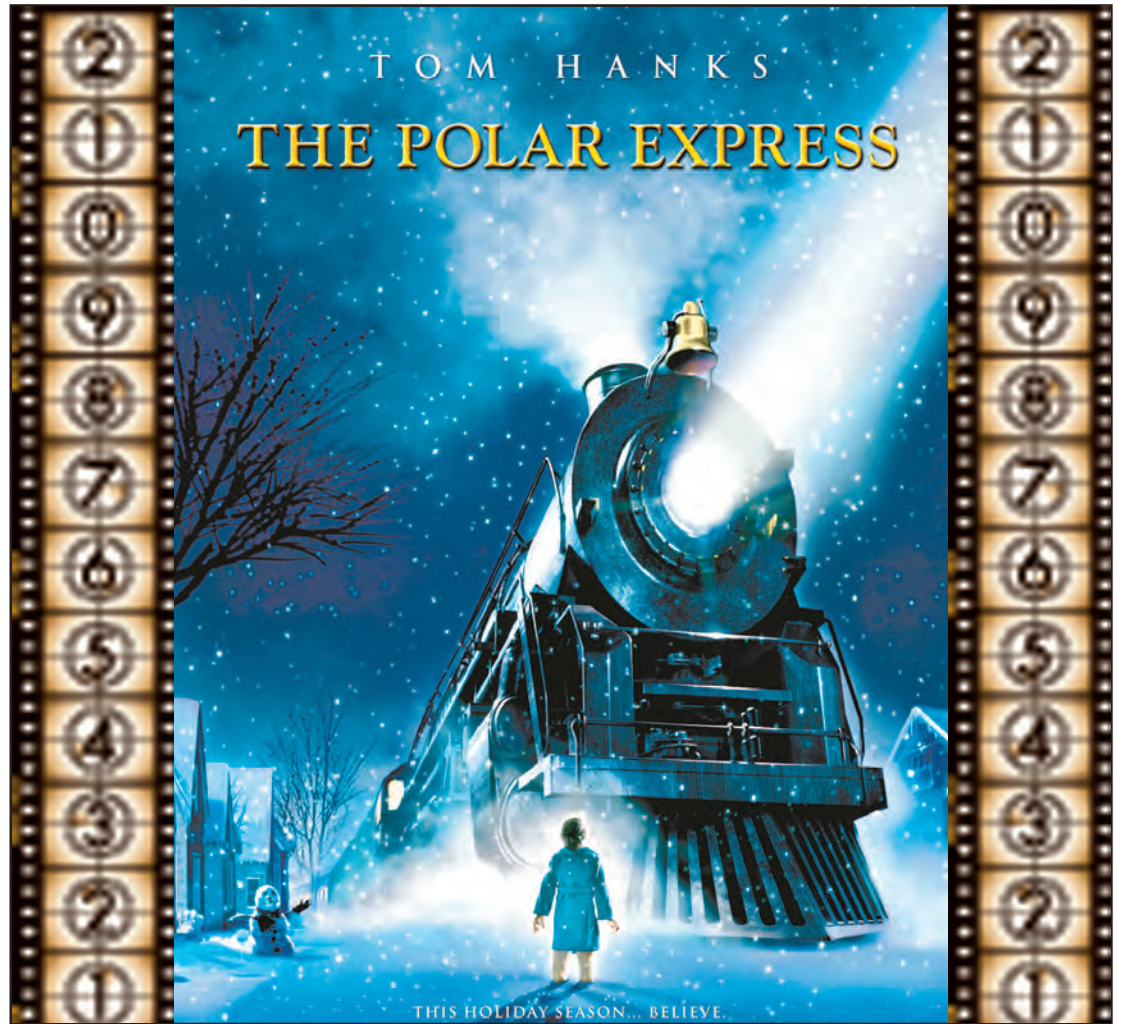
item at a lower price at another retailer can receive an Exchange gift card for the difference.

Shoppers must present a receipt or online order confirmation along with a local competitor’s current ad at their Fort Polk Exchange customer service desk. Some exclusions apply.

The Exchange’s regular price guarantee allows for price-matching within 14 days. The holiday extended price guarantee lets Fort Polk shoppers get the best deals through most of December. The extended price guarantee also applies to **ShopMyExchange.com** purchases.

Online shoppers, including honorably discharged Veterans, can receive their gift card by filling out a customer feedback form at **ShopMyExchange.com/customer-service** or by calling the Exchange Customer Contact Center at (800) 527-2345.

For more information, contact Carrie Beltz, (337) 537-1792 or **Beltzc@aafes.com**.



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JRTC Ops Gp hosts Native American Indian Heritage celebration

By **ANGIE THORNE**

Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. —The Joint Readiness Training Center Operations Group hosted the National American Indian Heritage Month celebration Nov. 20 at Fort Polk's Bayou Theater.

"This event allows us to honor some remarkable Americans, particularly those in our armed services," said Col. David W. Gardner, JRTC Ops Gp commander. "We remember and honor the sacrifices of our fellow Soldiers who belong to the 573 federally recognized Native American tribes."

Gardner said American Indians and Alaska natives serve at one of the highest rates per capita of all population groups in the United States since the American Revolution and continue to do so with distinction.

"Native Americans currently account for 1.4% of the U.S. population. However, more Native Americans are represented in our military than the general population — showing their drive to influence our country and the world," he said. "In a world where 0.5% of the population serves in the military, our Native American brothers and sisters in arms are pulling more than three times their weight in service and they have done it while rising above unparalleled challenges to defend our nation with pride and honor."

The guest speaker was Sgt. 1st Class James Atcitty, JRTC Ops Gp, Task Force 3, platoon medical Observer/Controller/Trainer, a Navajo American Indian who comes from a long heritage of Native American warriors with direct ancestors serving the United States in virtually every conflict since World War II.

Atcitty said though he spent his childhood growing up on posts from Europe to the United States, he has always had a special connection through his family to his tribal lands in the Four Corners region of the U.S. — where Utah, Colorado, Arizona and New Mexico come together.

"It is the ancestral home of the Navajo people. There, people still live traditional and geographically isolated lives. On the reservation, paved roads and utilities are often a luxury. Many Navajo people still chop wood and haul coal and water to remote home sites," he said.

Atcitty said military service has always been a big part of his family history.

He said his maternal grandfather served as a chaplain in World War II; on his father's side, his grandfather's cousin served as a Navajo Code Talker — Navajo Indians that spoke the Navajo language in WWII were recruited by the Marine Corps to communicate in the Pacific theater — and uncles and extended family have served in different branches of the military from the Korean War to operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

"My father, Charles Atcitty, was the first Navajo Indian to graduate from West Point in the class of 1979. Although I'm proud of my family's contributions and achievements, November is a month dedicated to honoring all Native Americans. National policy has not always been fair to Native Americans, but that has not stopped its countless members from answering the call of duty," he said.

Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, JRTC and Fort Polk commanding general, said many Native American Soldiers stand in Army formations.

"Soldiers should be proud to stand side by side with them as we square off with whatever enemy our country asks us to face," he said.

Maj. Brandon Cook, JRTC Ops Gp, said what impressed him most about the ceremony was learning how many Native Americans have served and continue to serve in the military and the many brave acts they have performed.

Cook said celebrating a Soldier's heritage should give everyone an appreciation for the Army family and its diversity.



ANGIE THORNE / GUARDIAN

Sgt. 1st Class James Atcitty, Joint Readiness Training Center Operations Group, Task Force 3, platoon medical Observer/Controller/Trainer, was the guest speaker at the National American Indian Heritage month celebration held Nov. 20 at Fort Polk's Bayou Theater.

"Celebrations like today give Soldiers an opportunity to learn about and better understand the Soldiers standing next to them. The Army is a perfect place to bring those cultures together," he said.



KEITH HOUIN / GUARDIAN

Dishing out dinner

Students and staff from the Middle School and Teen Center serve Thanksgiving meals to the Vernon Parish community at First Assembly Christian Academy Nov. 16. The dinner was sponsored by the Veterans Place, nine churches and various businesses.



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Enjoy abundance of Christmas lights at Natchitoches festival

FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

NATCHITOCHES, La. — The days are flying by and the flavors and smells of Thanksgiving are within reach. That means Christmas and everything from its music, lights, treats, trees, delicacies, décor and present-shopping are also just around the corner.

Whether you are one of those folks that wait until the turkey dinner is done to begin indulging in this most festive of seasons or have already begun, the place you want to be is the 2019 Natchitoches Festival of Lights.

The Natchitoches Christmas Festival is a six-week long extravaganza that offers visitors and locals a chance to revel in the exuberance of more than 300,000 Christmas lights and 100 lighted set pieces as they illuminate downtown Natchitoches and Cane River Lake every evening at dusk through Jan. 6. Christmas events take place in downtown Natchitoches along the banks of the Cane River Lake and the Historic District. Times and dates are approximate and subject to change.

While participating in the holiday fun, you can work up an appetite and just like any good festival in Louisiana, there is large variety of food on hand to conquer your hunger, including funnel cakes, cotton candy, hamburgers, meat pies, alligator and more. Possibly the most sought after festival food is the famous Natchitoches meat pie, which is available from local restaurants and food vendors along the riverbank.

Saturday at 10 a.m. is the official start of the Festival of Lights. The day features musical entertainment, children's activities and fireworks. Get into the holiday spirit while wandering the festival and enjoying live performances by Cane



River Soul and Louisiana Red.

Cookies with Santa takes place Saturday from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. in an enclosed tent on the South end of the riverbank. The event is an opportunity for kids to create a Christmas ornament, sit on Santa's lap for a photo op and enjoy sweet treats with jolly St. Nick. Accompanying parents are required to purchase a ticket. Tickets are \$10 per person. Children 2 and under do not require a ticket and may sit on a parent's lap. Children must be accompanied by an adult. There is no admission to enter the riverbank area on this day. For a more in-depth schedule of events in the coming weeks visit www.natchitocheschristmas.com.

Ticket prices for Nov. 30 and Dec. 14 and 21 are \$5 per person, Dec. 7 is \$8 per person. Tickets can be purchased online at www.natchitocheschristmas.com/tickets.

In its 93 years of existence, this family friendly festival has helped shape the area's unique history and plays as important a role as any historical figure, place or event of the oldest permanent settlement in the Louisiana Purchase.

Those traditions help set the Natchitoches Christmas Festival apart from other Christmas celebrations or Louisiana festivals. Don't miss your chance to discover those Christmas customs while making family holiday memories to last a lifetime.

Discover fun facts about festive Christmas lights

GUARDIAN STAFF

FORT POLK, La. — Have you ever wondered about those twinkling lights on your Christmas tree? If so, check out the following trivia found at various websites:

- Thomas Edison, the inventor of the first successful practical light bulb, created the very first strand of electric lights. During the Christmas season of 1880, these strands were strung around the outside of his Menlo Park Laboratory. Found at www.loc.gov.

- It is estimated that more than 150 million light sets are sold in America each year, with more than 80 million homes decorated with holiday lights.
- 1925 saw the first widespread commercial sales of Christmas lights

That is, until Albert Sadacca, a teen at

the time out of New York City, decided to repurpose the white novelty lights his family had sold for years by turning them into colored bulbs. As a result, a cheaper and more accessible Christmas light was born. Found at www.christmasdesigners.com.

- Outdoor Christmas light displays on houses evolved from decorating the traditional Christmas tree and house with candles during the Christmas season. The tradition of lighting the tree with small candles dates back to the 17th century and originated in Germany before spreading to Eastern Europe. Found at www.ehow.com.

- So, how much electricity do Christmas lights use? Your display size and choice of bulbs, whether incandescent or LED, will influence your energy bill the most. For example, a 100-count string of

incandescent mini lights runs at 40 watts, while a 70 count of 5mm Wide Angle LEDs is approximately 4.8 watts total. Found at www.christmaslightsetc.com.

- As lights became affordable to more people in the 1950s, people decorated their houses to symbolize the Christmas star that was supposed to have led the three wise men to the manger where Jesus was born. The displays have become a symbol of the Christmas season. Found at www.highcountrylights.com.

- The vast majority of Christmas lights on the market these days are sourced from China. No matter where you purchase your lights, you'll almost certainly be buying lights originating from China. That includes the big box stores. Buy from them, and you'll be buying lights made in China. Found at www.christmasdesigners.com.

Lagniappe

BOSS

Take note of Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers upcoming events and volunteer possibilities.

• Toy drive

Donate toys for families in need this holiday season. Toy distribution takes place Dec. 12. Contact your BOSS representative or call 531-1948 for more information.

• Football fun

The Home of Heroes Recreation Center is your football headquarters for NFL Sunday Ticket. For more information call 531-1948.

• Lemon lot

Trying to sell your vehicle? Bring it to the BOSS Lemon Lot. Registration is \$5 for 30 days. Cars that are not registered will be towed.

Register at the Home of Heroes Recreation Center. For more information call 531-1948.

Festivals

Texas renaissance

The annual Texas Renaissance Festival, located in Todd Mission, Texas, 21778 FM 1774, about 55 miles northwest of Houston, takes place Saturday and Sunday and Nov. 29-Dec. 2.

The theme Saturday and Sunday is Highland fling. The pipes are calling. Witness the thrill of Highland games and show off your bonnie knees in Scottish finery. General admission per day is \$23.95 per adult and \$11.95 per child. Parking is \$15.

There are special deals and

packages on the website.

For more information visit www.texrenfest.com or call (800) 458-3435.

Louisiana Renaissance

Louisiana Renaissance Festival, 46468 River Road, Hammond, takes place Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 29-Dec. 1 and Dec. 7-8. The theme Saturday and Sunday is romance. Bring the one you love and the first 200 couples dressed to match receive a toy rose.

Veterans and active duty military get 50% off at the ticket booth. For more information visit www.la-renfest.com or call (985) 429-9992.

Miscellaneous

• Seasonal dinner

A community dinner takes place Dec. 14 at 2 and 6 p.m. at the Wooten Theatre, 102 East First St., DeRidder. Those invited include the lonely, widowers, needy, veterans and anyone who would like to share a meal with others. No one will be turned away.

The purpose of the dinner is to show those who need a good meal and fellowship that even though the season can be rough, there are people who care. If you would like to volunteer call (337) 396-8083 or email brian13f2003@yahoo.com.

• Arts and crafts show

If you want to gift a few unique presents this year, you might want to stop by the Fleur de Lis Arts and Crafts show at the Natchitoches Event Center, 750 Second St., Natchitoches, Nov. 30 from 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Admission is free. For more information visit www.facebook.com/FleurDeLisArtsAndCrafts/.

• Holiday park

Visit Dark Woods Christmas in the Park, 4343 University Parkway, Natchitoches, for a magical winter wonderland from Saturday through Dec. 25 — weather permitting. This newest holiday attraction offers a variety of holiday experiences and the beauty of Christmas lights and decor in a woodland setting. For more information visit Facebook at Christmas in The Park or call (318) 332-8546.

• Christmas in Roseland

Head to the American Rose Center, 8877 Jefferson Paige Road,

Shreveport to attend Christmas in Roseland each Friday through Sunday from Nov. 29-Dec. 15 and every night from Dec. 16-22.

During the holiday season the park is transformed.

Walk through the winter wonderland with thousands of twinkling lights, dozens of lighted displays, giant Christmas cards, nightly entertainment rides on the Roseland Express train, photos with Santa and tons of fun for the family.

Admission is \$20 per carload or \$5 per person. Children ages 2 and under get in free.

For more information visit www.rose.org.

• Museum exhibit

The Alexandria Museum of Art hosts the “Pelican State Goes to War” — a look at Louisiana’s contribution to World War II on loan from the New Orleans World War II Museum.

The event can be seen through Feb. 22. There will also be panels, performances and discussions in conjunction with the exhibit throughout its stay.

Admission is free. For

more information visit

<https://themuseum.org/#>.

• Choir performance

The Vernon Parish Community Choir presents Handel’s “Messiah” at the Leesville High School auditorium, 502 Berry St. Leesville. The performance is held Dec. 8 at 3 p.m. For more information call (337) 424-7118, (337) 238-1036 or (337) 238-2540.

Clubs/groups

• Bass Masters

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

Meetings are held at 6 p.m. at the New Llano American Legion, Post 387, 500 Vernon St. The next meeting takes place Dec. 10.

The December championship tournament takes place at Sam Rayburn Lake Dec. 14 and Toledo Bend Dec. 15. The entry fee is \$40. For more information visit www.fortpolkcommunitybassmasters.com.

• Lose weight

Join Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS) every Thursday at the Vernon Parish Library meeting room. Weigh in is 5-5:50 p.m.

The meeting starts at 5:50 p.m. For more information call (337) 208-0896.



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STATEWIDES

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Published for the community of Fort Polk, La.

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Ads Is Noon Tuesday

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Deadline for FREE ads is NOON Tuesday.

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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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Fort Polk Guardian

www.thefortpolkguardian.com

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Published for the community of Fort Polk, La.

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