



FORGING THE

WARRIOR SPIRIT

THE JRTC & FORT POLK GUARDIAN

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Home of Heroes @ Fort Polk, LA

July 10, 2020

Kiowas make final flight at JRTC, Fort Polk

By **CHUCK CANNON**

Command information officer

FORT POLK, La. — On July 9 at 1 p.m., eight pilots with the 1st Battalion, 5th Aviation Regiment, flew OH-58C Kiowa helicopters in a double "V" formation over the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk for the aircrafts' final flight at JRTC and Fort Polk.

The Kiowas have been replaced by the UH-72 Lakota.

Capt. Tyler Smith, commander, Bravo Company "Gators," 1st Bn, 5th Avn Reg, said there is a bit of nostalgia with the departure of the Kiowas, which have been a part of Fort Polk since the early 1980s.

"They were great birds to fly," Smith said. "You could land them anywhere, in any type of environment; they were great for what we were using them for here."

The OH-58 Kiowa is a family of single-engine, single-rotor, military helicopters used for observation, utility and direct fire support and has been in continuous Army service since 1969. At Fort Polk, the OH-58s have been in use since the 1980s, and were used to fly JRTC Operations Group Observer, Controller/Trainers as they monitored units participating in the crucible that is the "Box."

But times change, advances in technology are made and missions evolve. Thus, the Kiowas were replaced Army wide by the Lakota.

"The OH-58Cs here and at the National Training Center (Fort Irwin, California) are the last ones in the Army inventory," Smith said. "When we retire them, they're gone."



Staff Sgt. ASHLEY M. MORRIS/3rd BCT

Eight 1st Battalion, 5th Aviation Regiment, pilots fly the retiring OH-58 Kiowa helicopters over Fort Polk July 9. The pilots are flying in a "V" formation while conducting two figure eights in the Fort Polk and Leesville airspace during the helicopters' final flight.

Smith said a good way to compare the Kiowa and Lakota was to think about a Toyota Corolla and Porsche.

"You keep the maintenance up on the Corolla and she'll get you where you need to go, with nothing fancy," he said. "But if you're a pilot, you like flying the Lakota because she's sleek

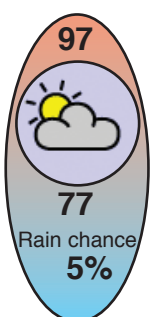
and has lots of bells and whistles."

And, Smith said, with more rotations conceivably arriving at JRTC without aviation task force support, the Lakota adds another capability.

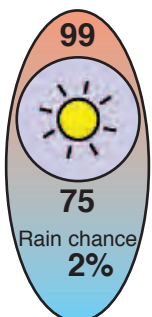
"The Kiowas were two-seaters," he said.

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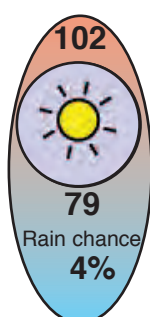
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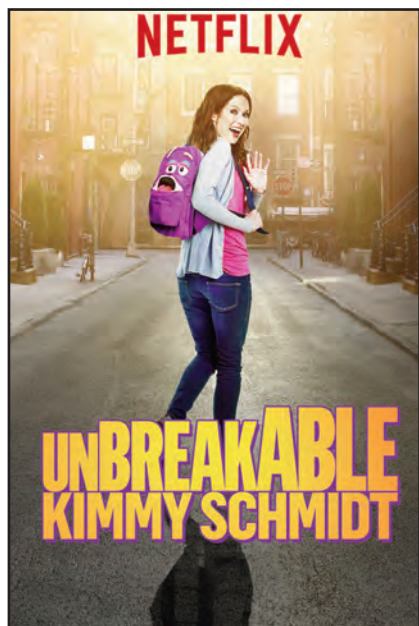
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Viewpoint

In our view

Guardian staff asked the JRTC and Fort Polk community, "What binge-worthy shows are you streaming this summer and why?" Here are their responses:



Thomas Moore: "‘Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt’ is a good show with dry humor that I stumbled across and started watching. ‘Lucifer’ is a show that is a little funny with some action and drama added to the mix. The main character is a fallen angel who doesn’t like being in hell and, instead, winds up solving murders in Los Angeles."



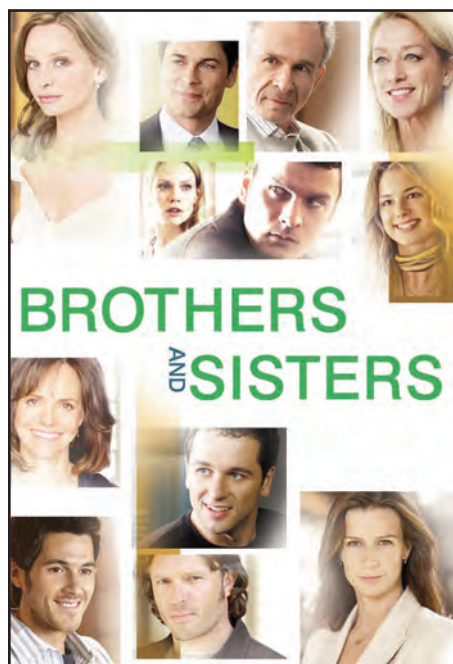
Austin Boatright: "I’d suggest ‘Grimm’ and ‘the Vampire Diaries’ as shows to binge. If you’re into fantasy — were-wolves, vampires, monsters or aliens — you’re going to get it with either of these shows. They also have good storylines and a focus on friendship."



Daniel Lewis: "The anime, ‘Black Clover,’ would be my suggestion. It is another fighting anime, but the storyline is one of the reasons why I like it. The main character is someone devoid of magic in a world where magic rules everything."



Rachel McCurdy: "‘Supernatural’ is a show that I’ve binged a few times. I like it because the characters are relatable and for the show’s science fiction/fantasy aspect."



Jackline Sandlin: "‘Brothers and Sisters’ on Hulu is my suggestion. I’m watching it for the second time in a row, because I like the show. I’m also flipping to ‘The West Wing’ for a third time."



Valerie Lewis: "I’d nominate ‘Station 19’. Years ago, in Indiana, I was a volunteer firefighter, so I enjoy watching firefighting shows/movies."



Guardian

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

Briefs

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If you're interested in receiving the weekly e-Guardian to your inbox, then please send your personal email address to kimberly.k.reischling.civ@mail.mil, and you'll be placed on the distribution list for non-government email users.

Summer reading

The Allen Memorial Library is hosting a virtual summer reading program, and readers can earn prizes until Aug 3.

Winners can call 531-2665 to schedule in-house prize pickup during business hours, which are Monday-Friday, 11 a.m.-7 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; and Sunday noon.-5 p.m. Curbside pickup is also available on Tuesdays, noon.-2 p.m.; Wednesdays, 2-4 p.m.; and Thursdays, 4:30-6:30 p.m.

Register by July 27 online [here](#) or by calling 531-2665

BOSS events

Listed below are upcoming and free Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers events:

July 13 — Auto skills basic maintenance class; 6 p.m. at the Auto Skills Center

July 18 — Ceramics painting class; 9:45 a.m. at the Arts and Crafts Center

July 24 — Cooking demonstration class; 6 p.m. at the Warrior Center

July 26 — Mini golf and go-karts; at 1 p.m. at Klubs and Karts

Christmas in July

The Alexandria/Pineville area Convention and Visitor's Bureau's Christmas in July event this year is Bingo.

To play, all you have to do is get out and visit local businesses and take a photo with your phone while you're there.

You have 25 days of Christmas in July to enter for a chance to win one of four awesome prize packs. The event is virtual, so read the rules and get your Bingo card on this [Facebook page](#) or [website](#).

AAFES layaway

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service is helping military Family members move to the head of the class this school year by extending its layaway program to include electronics essential to help students excel in the classroom through Aug. 31.

A \$3 service fee and a 15% deposit are required to hold items on layaway. Items must be picked up by Aug. 31. Shoppers can visit customer service at the Fort Polk Exchange for complete details.



CHUCK CANNON / GUARDIAN

Pilots and crewmembers of A Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Aviation Regiment provide an aircraft and support for the Soldiers of the 41st Transportation Company, 519th Military Police Battalion, 16th Military Police Brigade as they conducted sling load operations July 2.

Soldiers apply skills to sling load operations

By **CHUCK CANNON**

Command information officer

FORT POLK, La. — Soldiers with the 41st Transportation Company, 519th Military Police Battalion, 16th Military Police Brigade, spent July 2 on the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk's Honor Field learning the ropes of sling load operations on UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters.

Pilots and crewmembers with Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Aviation Regiment provided the aircraft and contributed to the training of the day's activities.

Staff Sgt. Eric Depaula, a sling load certifier with 41st Trans Co, said having sling load capabilities is important for a unit where the primary mission is to move equipment.

"We can sling load a HMMWV (high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle) to a location and not have to drive it," Depaula said. "That saves manpower and Soldier fatigue."

Depaula who, with Staff Sgt. Dangelo Vasquez, led the training effort said 15 Soldiers received training.

"Once these Soldiers completed the class they were qualified to sling load at the unit level," he said. "We plan on conducting this training every quarter."

Vasquez said with today's highly mobile Army, sling load operations have become more important.

"There is a lot of equipment that can be moved by sling load," Vasquez said. "And it's much

quicker to move something by air than to drive it."

The sling load training is also used as an incentive, Vasquez said.

"We're all truck drivers so to be able to get out here and train with and ride on helicopters, it shows the Soldiers a different side of the Army," he said. "It gets them excited and trained up."

Capt. Ellen Johnson, commander, 41st Trans Co, said the training allows non-commissioned officers in the unit with air assault and sling load operations skills to share their expertise with younger Soldiers.

"It empowers our NCOs who have the skills and capability to coach and train our Soldiers," she said. "Not only does it keep them proficient in that skillset which can diminish rapidly if not used, it also allows them to pass on their knowledge."

That, in turn, makes the 41st Trans Co more of an asset to JRTC, she said.

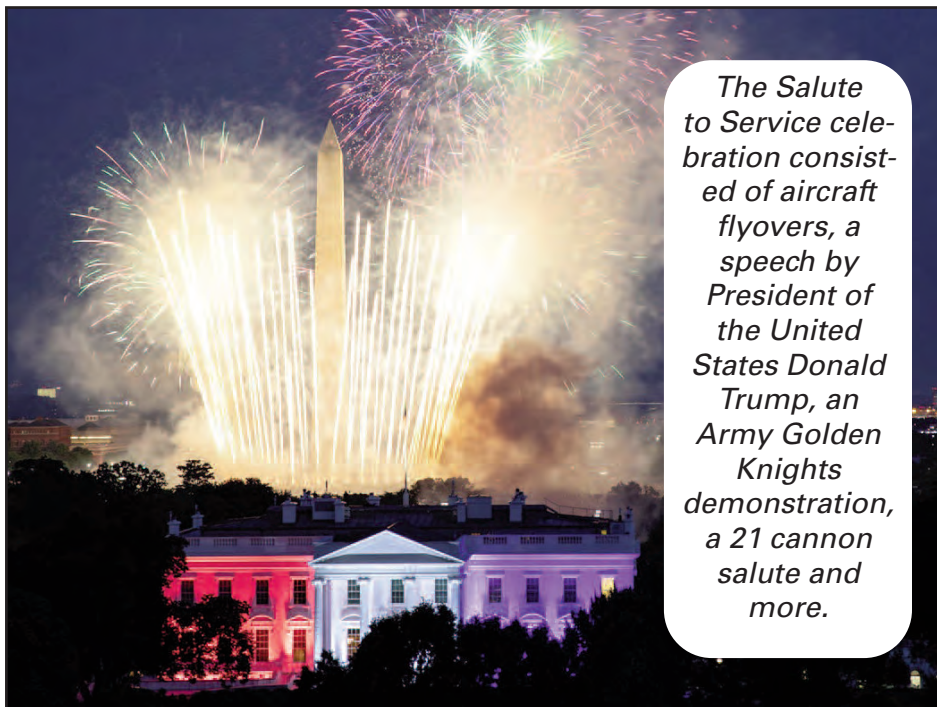
"We support every rotation, and this increases our ability to do the job," Johnson said. "Also, these Soldiers will eventually move on to other units. Not only does it make our unit more proficient, it makes our Soldiers and NCOs more proficient and more of an asset across the Army."

Johnson agreed with Vasquez's assessment on the "fun" part of the training.

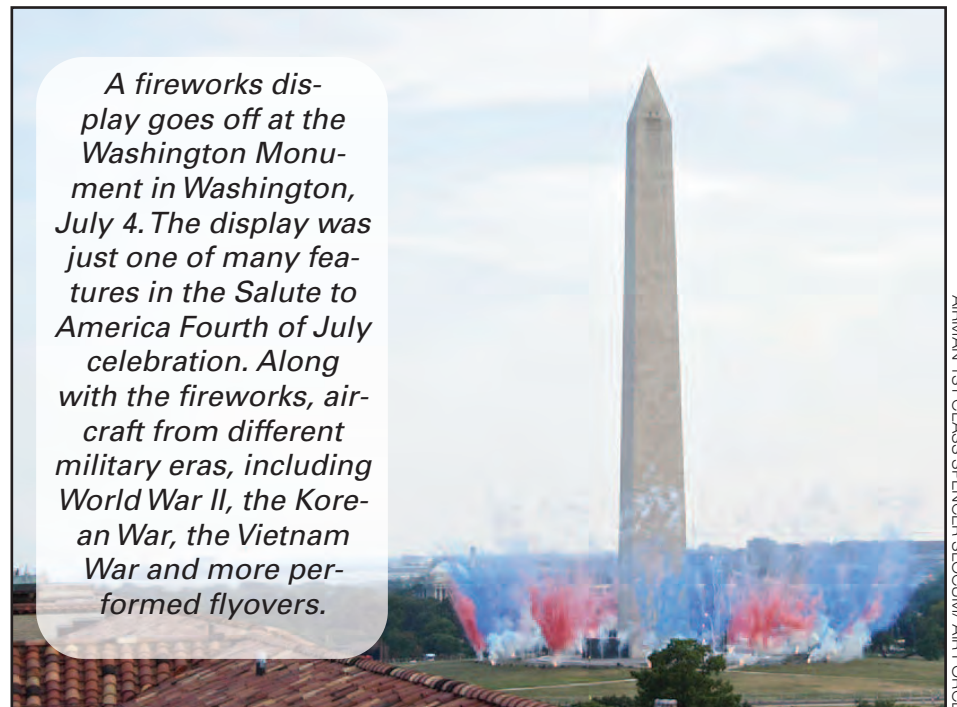
"Not only do we want to train to become proficient, but it also breaks the monotony," she said. "It gets them out of the motor pool, away

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Army news



The Salute to Service celebration consisted of aircraft flyovers, a speech by President of the United States Donald Trump, an Army Golden Knights demonstration, a 21 cannon salute and more.



A fireworks display goes off at the Washington Monument in Washington, July 4. The display was just one of many features in the Salute to America Fourth of July celebration. Along with the fireworks, aircraft from different military eras, including World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and more performed flyovers.

AIRMAN 1ST CLASS SPENCER SLOCUM / AIR FORCE



A 21-cannon salute is fired prior to the start of the Salute to Service celebration in Washington, July 4.



Blue Angels F/A-18 Hornets and Thunderbirds F-16C Fighting Falcons fly over the White House in Washington, July 4. Also making an appearance at the ceremony were aircraft from different military eras, including World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and more.

July 4th 'Salute to America' honors U.S. military personnel

By **C. TODD LOPEZ**
DoD News

WASHINGTON — Before military aircraft screamed over the National Mall and fireworks lit up the night sky July 4 as part of the "2020 Salute to America" event in the nation's capital, the president spoke from the south lawn of the White House about the contributions of U.S. military personnel to American freedom and history.

"We will salute the greatness and loyalty and valor of the men and women who have defended our independence for 244 years," said Donald J. Trump.

"We will honor the amazing men and women of the United States military. Never in history has a nation used so much power to advance so much good."

The president said that service members who fought to defend the United States should be remembered for future generations.

"These are great people and great heroes," he said.

"Our greatest leaders and heroes should be recognized and even immortalized for coming generations to see."

The president also highlighted military achievements over the last year, including a raid that resulted in the death of ISIS founder and leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and a strike that resulted in the death of Qasem Soleimani, the head of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Quds Force, a U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organization.

The president also highlighted efforts to rebuild and modernize the U.S. military.

"We have worked to fully rebuild the armed forces of the United States," he said.

"No enemy on Earth stands a chance. We've invested \$2.5 trillion — all made in the . We've never had anything near the power in the equipment that we have right now — we did that over

the last three years."

After Trump's speech, a flyover of military aircraft preceded a fireworks display on the National Mall.

The flyover included representative aircraft from military conflicts of the last 75 years, including World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam and Operation Desert Storm. Modern military aircraft, such as the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter also performed flyovers.

Also part of the event was a cannon salute and a parachute jump by the Army's Golden Knights who landed on the National Mall near the White House.

"We thank God for the gift of life and for the blessings of liberty," the president said.

"We honor the legends of our history; the glories of our founding fathers and the giants of the past; and the heroes of today who keep us safe, who keep us strong and proud and who keep us free."

Ranger school graduate hopes to inspire future candidates

By Staff Sgt. ASHLEY M. MORRIS

3rd BCT Public Affairs NCO

FORT POLK, La. – There is a line in the Army Ranger Creed that states, “Acknowledging the fact that a Ranger is a more elite Soldier who arrives at the cutting edge of battle by land, sea or air, I accept the fact that as a Ranger my country expects me to move further, faster and fight harder than any other Soldier.”

For 1st Lt. Addison Lufkin-Collier, an armor officer assigned to B Troop, 3rd Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, that quote is more than just a line from a creed — it has become part of the 24-year-old’s personal mantra.

“As a lieutenant graduating from ROTC, I chose the armor branch because I thought it was unique,” said Lufkin-Collier, a Vancouver, Washington native. “There is a light and a heavy side. Each side offers different opportunities and career paths.”

Serving in an infantry brigade combat team means that Lufkin-Collier gets first-hand experience on the light side of the armor branch.

After graduating the armor basic leader course, Lufkin-Collier reported to Fort Polk in September 2019.

“I was excited about coming to an IBCT,” Lufkin-Collier said as she smiled. “When I graduated armor school, Ranger School felt like the next step in pushing my career forward.”

When the 10th Mountain Division Light Fighters school came to Fort Polk earlier this year,

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Staff Sgt. ASHLEY M. MORRIS / 3rd BCT

1st Lt. Addison Lufkin-Collier, Bravo Troop, 3rd Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, returns to the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk after 61 days of grueling Ranger School training. Lufkin-Collier completed her training and graduated on June 23.

Fort Polk fire inspector prevents child from wandering onto highway

By ANGIE THORNE

Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. — Fort Polk fire inspectors train for any emergency. So it’s no surprise that even when they aren’t on the job, their training stays with them — no matter the circumstances.

Carlos Jackson, a Fort Polk fire inspector and reserve Airman in the U.S. Air Force, 307th Force Support Squadron, said many people think that firefighters just respond to fires.

“That’s not true. We respond to everything from HAZMAT (hazardous materials) incidents, accidents, calls for medical aid, house fires and more. We are called for any type of emergency that can happen on post,” he said.

Jackson said even when they aren’t on duty, firefighters are ready to step in and render aid.

“There are times when we leave work and might see an accident. We don’t just drive by; we are going to stop and help. We tend to assist in emergencies — no matter the type — that happen outside duty hours,” he said.

Jackson was off duty and headed to workout with friends when he found himself in such a situation. As he was driving along what he describes as a fairly busy highway, Jackson saw a small child in a ditch next to the road. He said he guessed the child was about 3. After scanning the area and verifying that there were no adults with the child, Jackson’s training kicked in and he made the split second decision to turn around and head back to the little one before the child could wade into traffic.

“I knew something wasn’t right. It’s not nor-



Carlos Jackson, a Fort Polk fire inspector and reserve Airman in the U.S. Air Force, 307th Force Support Squadron, stands in front of a fire truck at Fort Polk's Central Fire Station July 8.

ANGIE THORNE / GUARDIAN

mal for a child that age to be alone and close to a busy highway. As I watched, the child crossed a ditch filled with water and continued to head toward the road, so I didn’t hesitate. I knew I had to act immediately because, if I didn’t, the possibility of this kid getting hit by a vehicle was high,” he said. “I turned around and headed back to the child on the shoulder of the road facing incoming traffic. I put my emergency lights

on and got out of the truck.”

Jackson said he approached the child while trying to wave off oncoming traffic. He said he didn’t want to startle the boy but knew he had to get to him quickly because the child had made it across the ditch and was heading toward the road. Vehicles began honking their horns, and it

Please see **Fire**, page 8

O-16696 oldest operational aircraft in Army

By **CHUCK CANNON**

Command information officer

Editor's note: This story ran in the June 12, 2009 edition of the Fort Polk Guardian. The helicopter in the story below is the same helicopter that will be placed on static display at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk following the OH-58 Kiowas' retirement the week of July 13, 2020.

FORT POLK, La. — When you're talking age, 40 doesn't seem that old. However, when you're talking about an aircraft that's 40 (now 51) years old, it's a different story.

One of those "different stories" calls Fort Polk home. An OH-58 "Kiowa" helicopter, tail number O-16696, assigned to Fort Polk's 5th Aviation Battalion, reached the ripe old age of 40 June 3, 2009, and a birthday party of sorts was held for the distinguished lady at the helipad next to the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk headquarters building.

Not only did she turn 40 (51); but in doing

so, she cemented her status as the oldest flying aircraft in the Army inventory.

"The OH-58 was supposed to be removed from inventory in 1995," said Chief Warrant Officer Marlin Phillips, at the time maintenance officer and test pilot for the 5th Avn Bn. "That's been extended to 2019 because she is such a good bird."

Capt. William Whitesel, commander, Bravo Company, 5th Avn Bn, said the Kiowa's attributes include cost effectiveness and the perfect aircraft for its mission at Fort Polk — an observer, controller/trainer platform.

"It costs about \$300 an hour to fly the OH-58 compared to about \$2,500 an hour for the Lakota, the Kiowa's eventual replacement," Whitesel said. "And she's perfect for flying observer, controller/trainers over the battlefield."

"When you're flying 3,400 hours a year — as much as most combat units, Phillips said — you might think maintenance on the OH-58 would be difficult.

"She's really easy to maintain," he said. "Our biggest problem is in keeping the old ra-

dios operational. We can get helicopter parts, but the radios are out of inventory."

Phillips was also quick to point out that taking care of a 40-year-old bird is a team effort. "Consolidated Services Corporation does our civilian maintenance and performs probably 95% of the work on this aircraft," Phillips said.

"They are probably some of the best maintenance folks in the business."

As the helicopter's crew and maintenance team gathered to wish the grand ole lady a happy birthday, Brig. Gen. James Yarbrough, then commander, JRTC and Fort Polk, stopped by to pay his respects. "This is pretty cool," Yarbrough said. "This is a landmark day. Somewhere in the Army is the oldest tank; we have the oldest aircraft."

Lt. Col. Scott Chaisson, commander, 5th Avn Bn, closed the birthday party by giving coins to some of the maintenance crew.

"This aircraft is a testament to the work we do at Fort Polk," Chaisson said. "You can look at this aircraft and see that it's well-maintained. It's something we should all take pride in."

Kiowas

Continued from page 1

"They could carry a pilot and an OC/T. The Lakota can carry a pilot, OC/T and four passengers.

That gives us increased capabilities."

Although the Kiowas are being retired, like many old Soldiers, they will continue to serve in places such as sheriff's offices in Texas, Alabama, Georgia and Florida.

Although three of the birds will be cannibalized for parts, eight will be used for police work.

And one — tail No. O-16696, the oldest operational aircraft in the

Army's inventory — will remain at the JRTC and Fort Polk and set up as a static display, giving newly arriving Soldiers and their Families a glimpse of 5th Aviation history.

"There's no doubt the Kiowas will be missed," Smith said.

"They are a big part of the legacy of the JRTC and Fort Polk. But it's time to move on, and I'm sure the Lakota will make it's mark just as the Kiowas did, continuing the honored tradition of preparing Soldiers and units to go down range and succeed on the battlefield."

A veteran OH-58 helicopter receives a "water salute," in keeping with aviation tradition, following the Kiowa helicopters' last flight July 9 at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk's airfield.



CHUCK CANNON / GUARDIAN



1st Battalion, 5th Avn Reg pilots fly over Fort Polk July 9 during the OH-58 Kiowa helicopter's final flight. After retiring, the veteran helicopters will either be placed in a static display at the Fort Polk airfield or used for parts. The UH-72 Lakota will replace the Kiowa helicopters.

Three OH-58 Kiowa helicopters stand ready to bid farewell to active service on July 9. The retiring helicopters were flown by eight 1st Bn, 5th Avn Reg, pilots in a "V" formation in the Fort Polk and Leesville airspace, making two figure eights during their flight.



Sling load

Continued from page 3

from ground vehicles, and allows them to work with helicopters. I don't think there's a Soldier in the Army who doesn't like to work with the birds. It's a morale booster. Some of these Soldiers may have only seen pictures of a helicopter or one fly overhead; but to see one up close and hook a piece of your own equipment up to that bird, there is nothing like it."

Johnson said for her Soldiers to get the adrenaline rush from working with helicopters makes the training a pleasure instead of a chore.

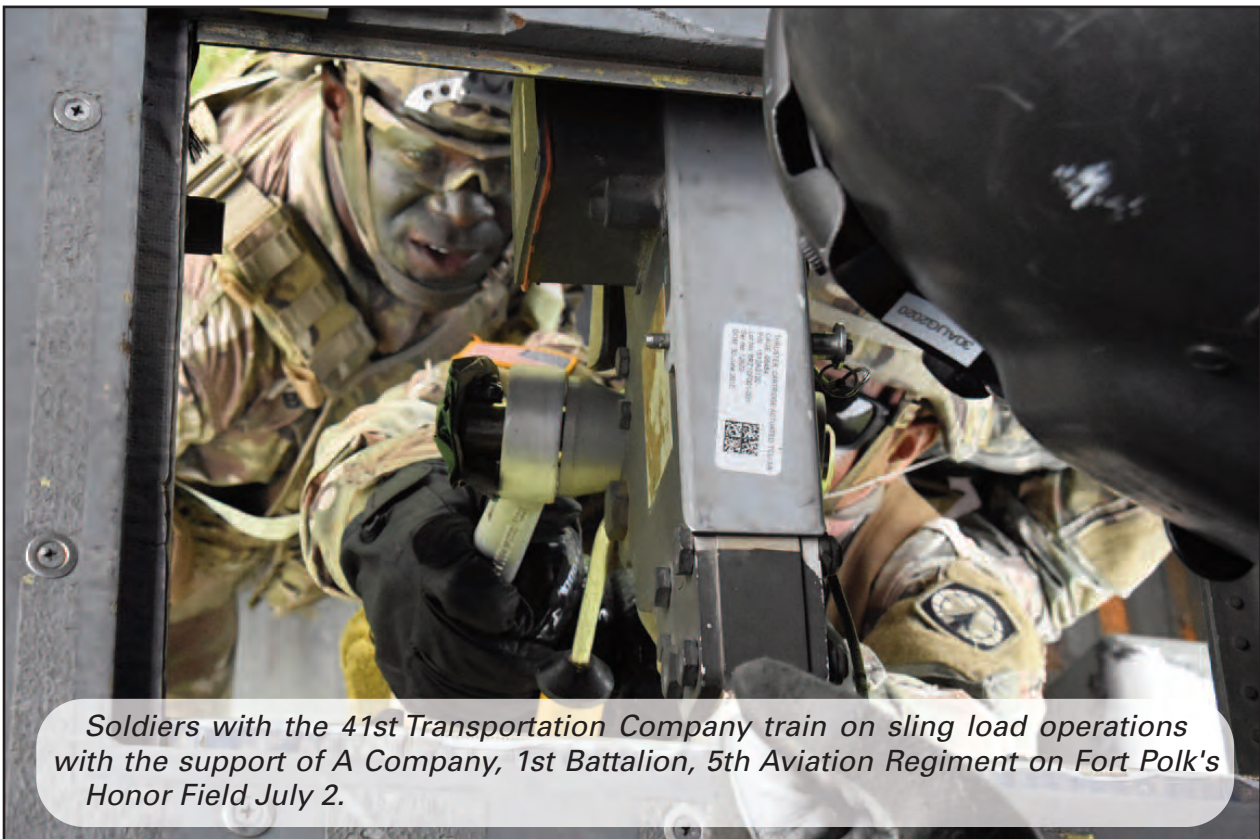
"To hear them say 'this is cool,' or 'this is fun,' you don't hear that often, so getting that emotion out of them is nice," she said. "There is nothing like leaving the motor pool for a field-based environment and doing something Army."



41st Trans Co Soldiers prepare sling load equipment for operations on Fort Polk's Honor Field July 2.



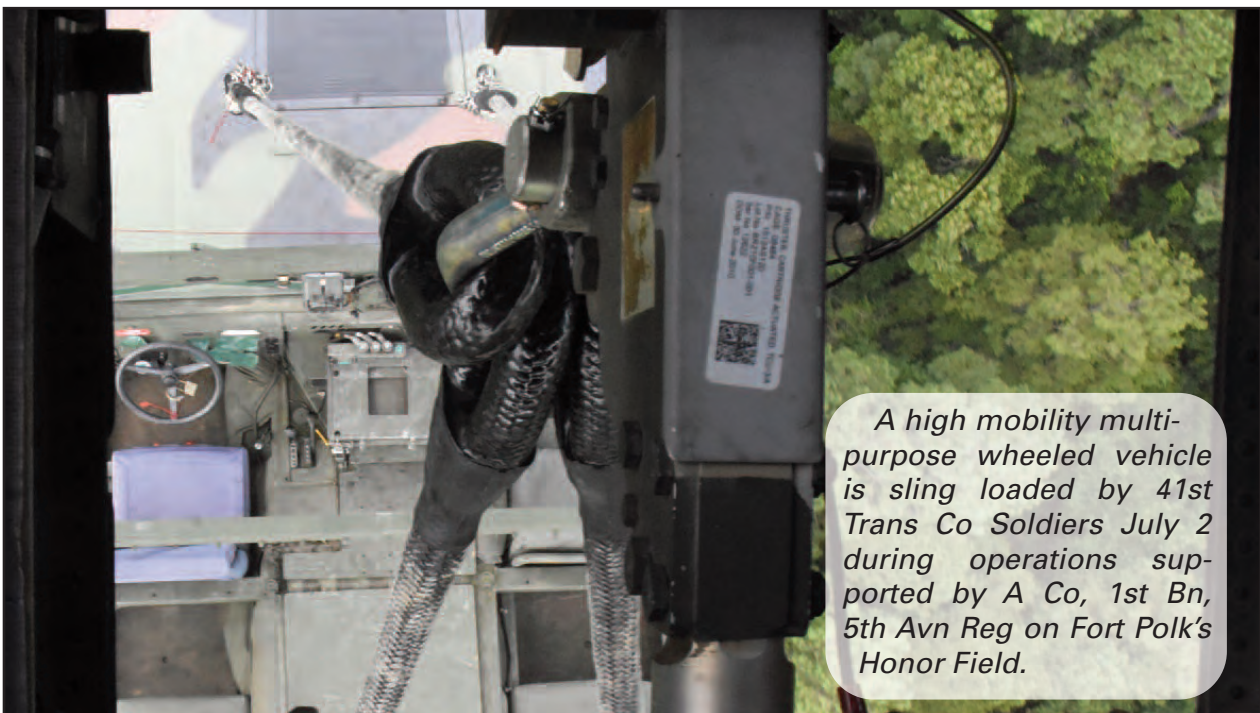
41st Trans Co Soldiers run to a safe location before A Co, 1st Bn, 5th Avn Reg pilots lift sling-loaded equipment with a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter July 2 on Fort Polk's Honor Field.



Soldiers with the 41st Transportation Company train on sling load operations with the support of A Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Aviation Regiment on Fort Polk's Honor Field July 2.



Soldiers with the 41st Trans Co and A Co, 1st Bn, 5th Avn Reg, conduct sling load operations on Fort Polk's Honor Field July 2.



A high mobility multi-purpose wheeled vehicle is sling loaded by 41st Trans Co Soldiers July 2 during operations supported by A Co, 1st Bn, 5th Avn Reg on Fort Polk's Honor Field.

Ranger

Continued from page 5

Lufkin-Collier seized the opportunity to attend the Pre-Ranger course.

Her first day of Ranger School was March 1.

"Ranger School is interesting because anyone can do it, regardless of their career field," said Lufkin-Collier. "Success in Ranger School also fully relies on the individual and their desire to attend."

Lufkin-Collier recently returned to Fort Polk from Fort Benning, Georgia, where she graduated June 23 after completing four months at one of the toughest courses in the Army — Ranger School.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, recent graduations from the course have been limited by social distancing requirements, allowing only essential personnel to attend the ceremonies.

Ranger School is a leadership school; candidates are not only tested on their technical know-how, but are also evaluated on how well they lead a platoon of their peers through the different phases.

The course is broken up into three phases: Benning, Mountain and Florida. During the 21-day cycle of Benning phase, candidates are tested on their physical stamina and mental resolve.

"The biggest lesson was endurance," said Lufkin-Collier. "The hardest part about Ranger School is that it keeps going. You're always being tested; you're always being assessed."

During the Mountain phase, Ranger school students spend three weeks in the northern Georgian mountains learning how to lead their platoon on continuous combat patrol missions across backbreaking terrain.

The Mountain phase, which some consider the most challenging, turned out to be just as troublesome for Lufkin-Collier. She ended up being recycled, meaning that she had to restart that phase. It may have been easier to quit, but Lufkin-Collier was determined to continue with the course.

"There is this idea of pushing forward despite a mounting desire to stop," Lufkin-Collier said.



Lufkin-Collier stands with her graduating class at Fort Benning, Georgia, as Ranger School cadre apply the Ranger Tab to each trainee's shoulder June 23. Adhering to COVID-19 guidelines, the graduating class stands in a socially distanced formation while the cadre wear facial coverings.

"There are a lot of times when you notice everyone is just as miserable as you are, and then you realize that you're not alone."

Although graduating Ranger School is an individual achievement, teamwork is required to graduate. Being around her fellow leaders and observing how they led was the best part of the 61-day course, said Lufkin-Collier.

"You get to see a lot different leadership styles and how people utilize them," Lufkin-Collier said. "You build a lot of really good relationships with your peers and other fellow leaders, which makes for good memories and working relationships."

Lufkin-Collier was recently moved to B Troop after her return to Fort Polk, where she has assumed command as the rear detachment commander. The current troop commander is in New York training future officers attending the 2020 U.S. Army Military Academy — West Point,

cadet summer training program.

When the mission is over and everyone returns from West Point, Lufkin-Collier will serve as a platoon leader within the troop.

"I'm looking forward to being a PL," Lufkin-Collier explained. "I am excited about our upcoming gunnery. It will be my first real experience going through gunnery with vehicles other than tanks, and I'm looking forward to learning from and leading my Soldiers."

In the meantime, Lufkin-Collier is using this time to inspire troops to experience new things and take advantage of as much special training as possible.

"The biggest thing I can bring back from Ranger School is motivation for Soldiers to realize there is always more they can do to shape their careers," Lufkin-Collier said. "Everyone has the potential to do more than expected and go further than they ever imagined."

Fire

Continued from page 5

seemed to startle the child. As a truck was heading their way, the boy started to move quickly and began to dart toward the road as the truck continued to honk.

"He was on the shoulder of the road between the grass and the white line along the edge of the road, and I had to run and grab him before he ran into the street and possibly the truck," he said.

Now that Jackson had the child in his arms, they both calmed down; but Jackson said he then realized that he didn't know where the child lived. That's when he discovered the little one was a special needs child.

"I asked him where he lived and where his parents were. He couldn't speak clearly. All he was able to do was point to a nearby apartment complex," he said.

With child in tow and seemingly happy to be along for the ride, Jackson began knocking on doors as he tried to find out where the little boy belonged.

After knocking at four or five different apart-

ments, Jackson said he wasn't having much luck. None of the people he spoke with knew the child, and he realized that he needed to call the police for additional help.

After the police arrived, Jackson stayed with the child because the little boy seemed comfortable with him.

"When it comes to emergency services, we want to ensure that children warm up to you. We call it 'establishing a rapport,'" he said.

The police showed up and the group found someone who pointed them in the right direction. They finally found the right apartment, and the little boy's mother was grateful that her son was found. "She had a big smile on her face and said thank you," he said.

At that point, Jackson checked with the police, and they confirmed he could leave and continue on his way to work out with friends.

Jackson potentially kept something terrible from happening to that little boy; but being humble, he said he found it a bit difficult to understand why people made a big deal out of what he

expects anyone would do. He said it was a rewarding experience, but he thinks it's a bit crazy that he's gotten this much recognition.

"I know I prevented a potential fatality. In my job, things don't always turn out that way. Sometimes we lose them. Keeping someone safe or knowing that I did something good is a great feeling," he said. "I love my job, and I'm glad that I'm capable of providing that service to those in need."

Greg Self, Fort Polk Directorate of Emergency Services, Fire and Emergency Services assistant chief, said, as firefighters, his men are held to a higher standard. He's not surprised that Jackson stepped up and took action.

"We are always looking for ways to keep people safe. It's a firefighter's instinct to help people," he said. "Carlos is no different, it just comes naturally to him."

Self said he is proud that Jackson did the right thing when it came to helping a child in danger.

"He's just a good guy that has a love for what he does," said Self.

PTSD battlefield

Former Soldier fights to win battles in head, heart

By **ANGIE THORNE**

Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. — Most people have little idea the price Soldiers pay to keep citizens safe and free. The cost comes due when Soldiers return home from deployments and must learn to deal with new physical and mental scars. Between 11-20% of Soldiers who deployed during Operation Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom have some form of post-traumatic stress disorder, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The clinical definition of PTSD, according to the VA, is a mental health problem that may develop after experiencing or witnessing a life-threatening event like combat, a natural disaster, car accident or sexual assault.

But to someone who personally lives with PTSD, it can mean something different.

Buddy, a former Soldier with three deployments under his belt — two to Iraq and one to Afghanistan — said he personally defines PTSD as the rewiring of your brain to react in negative ways to external stimuli.

Buddy will remain anonymous, but he has agreed to discuss his experiences dealing with PTSD, giving insight into his mental health journey.

Rewiring

Buddy said his first deployment to Iraq (2004-2005) was casualty heavy and rewired his brain for survival. He admits that deployment was probably the primary starting point to his issues.

"In 18 months, I don't think there was a day when we didn't get mortared, fired upon or hit with IEDs. People were stepping on land mines. There was this staggering magnitude of sustained pressure to be on guard. We were weary from constantly being on the move, attacked and on the attack," he said.

He quickly learned survival meant suppressing his emotions and dealing with them later, and that didn't happen until he was back from deployment.

"My young age, experiences down range and a lack of coping skills set me up for my dependence on alcohol and extreme PTSD," he said.

Buddy said being rewired that way meant he couldn't go back to the life he had before deployment.

"Those changes are permanently ingrained in me and have become my new normal," he said. "For a long time, it was hard for me to wrestle with that reality in a way that didn't overcome my life."

Buddy said he comes from a fighter's background.

"I've boxed my whole life. I think that lifestyle, along

with my training as a Soldier, con-

tributed heavily to how I react to threats — real or imagined. To engage with physical force is instinctive to me. After my brain was rewired, that is the only reaction I seemed to have," he said.

Alcohol

Buddy said he coped with his emotions by drinking.

"Alcohol exacerbated my issues. I thought I needed to suck it up and wait for it to get better," he said. "I would drink and let my emotions come out. That wasn't a healthy coping mechanism. It allowed me to feel, but in a dampened and altered state."

Buddy said he wasn't the only person that felt that way.

"Like myself, most Soldiers were in denial and trying to cope on their own. The thinking is, 'If you aren't able to fix your issues, you're weak.' You experienced it, so you have to find a way to crawl out of the pit by yourself," he said.

Buddy said Soldiers don't think of behavioral health or other mental health professionals as a battle buddy that's going to help them get through their issues.

"Instead, you are looking for help from your left and your right — from the guys who went through the same things that you did. At the same time, we don't really break down and talk about it. We beat our chests and say 'this too shall pass' and 'we're going to get through this.' We did that by drinking together," he said.

Sleep issues

Buddy developed sleepwalking and sleep-running issues due to his PTSD.

He would wake up from night terrors; and when he was drinking, the alcohol made him perceive those dreams as reality.

"When I woke up, my brain continued the dream. I would engage in the real world in a hostile manner because I was actively doing something combat-related in my head. I would often come back to reality with a handgun in my hand or no longer in my house," he said.

When Buddy was stationed at Fort Polk, he lived in Camellia Terrace and there were several times when he said he would come to his senses in his underwear at the Shopette with the military police in his face.

"I would have no recollection of how I got there. I would try to talk to them and explain that I was trying to fill in the gaps of what had happened because, 10 seconds ago, they weren't even there in my mind," he said.

Triggers

When people hear gunshots, the initial reaction is to run in the opposite direction, but Soldiers are trained to run toward the action. Buddy said his body and mind reacts to loud noises and anger by throwing him into an alternate reality, especially when he's caught off guard.

"My brain would slip into another place, and it would take me hours to come to terms with what happened," he said. "Loud noises are a big trigger for me, especially metal on metal sounds, gunshots, fireworks or things that emulate combat noises — the same sounds I would react to as a Soldier."

He said another trigger is people yelling violently.

"If I'm in a grocery store and some guy gets excited and starts yelling about something — it

doesn't matter what — I'll turn and feel like that's someone I'm going to have to engage with physically," he said. "Most of the time, it completely shatters my reality. Suddenly, I'm looking for threats, weapons and waiting to engage with maximum force and lethal intent. My body gets a tremendous dump of adrenaline, and I get the shakes."

Even devoid of a real threat, that release of hormones often came with engaging the person involved, regardless of the situation.

"Often, I would come at them with violent intentions," he said.

Buddy said an example might be a truck dropping its back plate. That unexpected noise would trigger him and he'd find himself engaging with the driver in a hostile manner because the driver becomes the cause of his feelings.

"In my mind, all those suppressed emotions, that I'm no longer able to contain, are coming out because of him. It might not make any sense; and when my head is clear, I know he isn't to blame. But, in that moment, the driver (or anyone close to a triggering situation) is to blame, not only for what I'm feeling in that episode, but for all the pain and agony I had to go through," he said.

Buddy said he would provoke people in these situations by insulting them, physically touching them and instigating a fight so that he could feel justified in taking action.

"I had multiple fights in bars, the barracks and at stores. Violence was my standard reaction," he said.

Denial

Buddy said he was in PTSD denial. He related getting help to being vulnerable and weak and didn't want to admit that he had a problem.

"The key word is vulnerable. In combat arms, if you are vulnerable, you are exposed because somebody didn't do what they were supposed to do. There's a breakdown and the enemy is now exploiting a weakness. So, if you are left vulnerable, it's because you or somebody else didn't do their job," he said. Vulnerability had negative connotations and denial was part of the survival instinct.

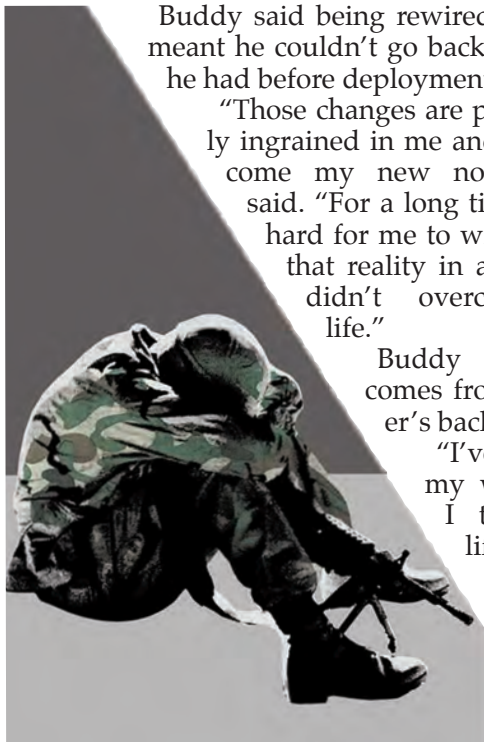
"My inability to fully confess that I was struggling with PTSD came from a place inside me that said I was better than PTSD," he said.

After an episode ended and Buddy was back in his own head, he said he wouldn't take responsibility for his actions because, from his perspective, it was everyone else's fault.

"They (the Army) made me react that way. I felt completely justified in all my actions because I did what any good Soldier would do. I would think, 'you can't blame me for doing this just because it isn't what you thought was appropriate.' I never felt guilty about any of these confrontations. I was always able to justify my reactions, and that enabled me to continue denying that I needed help," he said. "Even when I was sleepwalking, I figured it was out of my control, so you can't hold me accountable for what I did."

Turning point

Though Buddy had been to behavioral health and through four or five cycles of anger management, it never worked because he wasn't ready to accept it.



Please see **PTSD**, page 10

Soldiers punished, separated for UCMJ violations

OSJA

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

However, across Fort Polk, the following disciplinary issues continue to be prevalent: Violating General Order #1, driving under the influence of alcohol, wrongful use/possession of controlled substances, fraternization and sexual assault. Below are recent examples of adverse legal actions for units within the Fort Polk jurisdiction.

A private (E-2), assigned to 5th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, was issued a General Officer Memorandum of Reprimand for performing sexual acts on another Soldier, in violation of Article 120, Uniform Code of Military Justice. The CG directed filing the reprimand in the Soldier's Army Military Human Resource Record.

- A specialist, assigned to 2nd Battalion,

4th Infantry Regiment, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div, was issued a GOMOR for driving while under the influence of alcohol and speeding. The CG directed filing the reprimand in the Soldier's AMHRR.

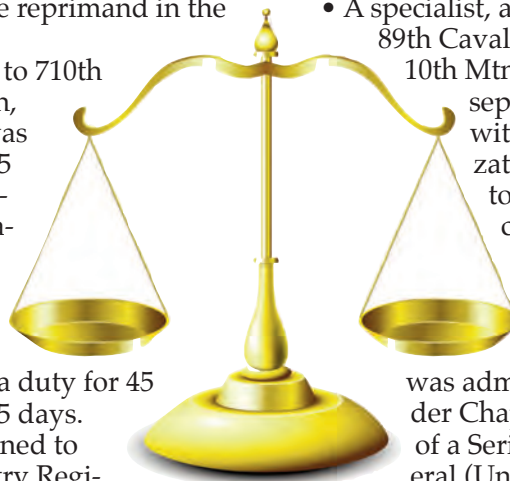
- A sergeant, assigned to 710th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div, was punished under Article 15 for wrongful use of a controlled substance, in violation of Article 112a, UCMJ. The service member was sentenced to a reduction of E-4, forfeiture of \$1,373 pay, extra duty for 45 days and restriction for 45 days.

- A private (E-1), assigned to 2nd Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div, was administratively separated under Chapter 14-12c (Commission of a Serious Offense) with a General (Under Honorable Conditions) characterization of service for wrongful use of a

controlled substance. Generally, this characterization of service results in the loss of a service member's educational benefits.

- A specialist, assigned to 3rd Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div, was administratively separated under Chapter 5-8, with an honorable characterization of service for inability to provide a valid family care plan.

- A private (E-1), assigned to 519th Military Police Battalion, United States Army Garrison, was administratively separated under Chapter 14-12c (Commission of a Serious Offense) with a General (Under Honorable Conditions) characterization of service for domestic assault and making a false official statement. Generally, this characterization of service results in the loss of a service member's educational benefits.



PTSD

Continued from page 9

"I would smile and convince them that I was fine. I made them believe there were no problems, and I didn't need to be there," he said. "I was convinced that I was Dr. Jekyll, not Mr. Hyde."

Buddy finally came to the realization that he needed help.

"I was so depressed that I didn't want to live that way anymore. Suicide was right around the corner, and that scared me," he said. "At that point I was already out of the military. I had suffered through nine years of triggers, episodes and waking and sleeping nightmares."

There is no single circumstance that is at the root of Buddy's PTSD, instead, he said there are layers of continuously stressful (sometimes horrific) moments pieced together from each of his deployments that make up the whole of Buddy's PTSD issues.

"It was scary acknowledging that I have a problem," he said. "I wasn't OK anymore. I had to come to terms with the fact that I had PTSD and needed help. Until I admitted that I had an issue, I couldn't begin to heal."

Therapy

Therapy helped challenge his denial and difficulties.

"I was able to begin minimizing my triggers in minutes instead of hours or days. Much of that progress came with sobriety and not being on opioids for injuries," he said. "Even though I still have triggers, I have acquired an arsenal of tools, stowed in my mental tool box, that help me rationalize challenging thoughts and coax myself into getting back to my new baseline," he said.

When Buddy is triggered now, he said he is no longer violent or hysterical.

"I've learned to deal with the adrenaline, challenge the reality of the situation and rationalize what's happening in my environment to see it for

what it is — to truly be in that moment. Then I breathe deep and try to relax back into reality," he said.

A therapist once told Buddy that his mind is a battleground, and he was losing the battle against PTSD.

"That was a game changer for me. She put my situation in terms that, as a Soldier, I could understand," he said. "Now I purposefully think of my mind as a battleground and my triggers and episodes as fights. I don't like to lose; I won't lose. That's what the Army trained me not to do. My mind is a battleground, and it dictates how my body engages in this world. I have to win the battle in my mind, and I always fight to win — that's my strongest tool."

Support system

Once Buddy sought therapy and admitted to himself that he has PTSD, he also realized he had been struggling alone because he felt ashamed. Now he has a strong support system made up of his wife, children and parents.

"It was hard to share what I had been through with the people I love. I felt like I couldn't be open and honest with them before. Now, I openly talk to my family about what I went through, even my kids. I help them understand my issues in ways that they can understand and that are age appropriate.

"I try to explain that when I yelled, it was because I was upset about things from deployments. My oldest daughter understands better than her younger siblings, and she said, 'You did a lot for us, and I didn't even know it. You are

one of the strongest, bravest people I know.' She builds me up and makes me feel like what I did as a Soldier isn't shameful," he said.

Continuing battle

Buddy said fighting PTSD is a constant, ever-evolving process that requires full attention and effort.

"You will probably have to maintain that discipline throughout your life," he said. "Though I haven't needed therapy in years, if I did, I wouldn't hesitate to reach out. For now, I have a mentor that I speak with regularly, my family, faith in God and prayer — my coping toolbox is full. Those things help keep me centered and on the right track."

Seek help

To other Soldiers that haven't sought help, Buddy said he wants to encourage them to get the support they need to fight their PTSD battles.

"Don't allow your depression and emotional status get to the point that suicide seems like the only answer. You've probably already waited far too long and need to seek help," he said. "Find someone who is trained to allow you to be vulnerable, someone with whom you can be honest. Don't downplay what you are experiencing or compare yourself to other people. There is nothing wrong with asking for help."

If you are looking for help call the National Suicide Prevention Line at (800) 273-8255 or Veterans Administration crisis line at (800) 273-8255, press 1.



Pentagon briefed department's COVID-19 response to reporters

HEALTH.MIL

ARLINGTON, Va. — COVID-19 has presented local leaders and commanders in the Department of Defense with unprecedented decision-making challenges in the past few months.

Thomas McCaffery, assistant secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, voiced confidence in the response of these leaders who are using Military Health System data to make decisions about COVID-19 for their commands. McCaffery made his remarks during a July 1 press briefing at the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia.

"Decision-making is very much tied to what is happening in their local community," McCaffery said. "(The MHS) tracks (COVID-19) cases and gets reports on a daily basis, and that information is shared with the commanders on the ground to make well-informed decisions about what to do."

Thomas Muir, director of Washington Headquarters Services, and Lernes Hebert, deputy assistant secretary of Defense for Military Personnel Policy, joined McCaffery in the briefing.

The officials described how the Military Health System is supporting community leaders across the nation facing pandemic re-opening decisions by offering timely data and sharing information.

The leaders also noted the vast system of medical specialties, professions and research that informs the total effort to give commanders the medical resources they need.

The officials said the COVID-19 pandemic affects each population center differently and at different times. As the country experiences "hot spots" of pandemic activity, community leaders and military commanders together decide protocols for public safety on a case-by-case basis, backed by Pentagon and CDC guidance and updated health surveillance data.

"The installation commanders are following local public health guidance and ensuring that we have a well-informed force, as evidenced by the behavior they've exhibited throughout this pandemic," Hebert said.

MHS gathers and analyzes data on COVID-19 largely through the Defense Health Agency's Armed Forces Health Surveillance Branch.



Thomas McCaffery, assistant secretary of Defense for Health Affairs (left) briefs reporters about Department of Defense response efforts to the COVID-19 pandemic. Also participating are Lernes Hebert, deputy assistant secretary of Defense for Military Personnel Policy, and Thomas Muir, director of Washington Headquarters Services.

AFHSB monitors the spread of the virus and other emerging pathogens that may threaten the safety of U. S. service members.

Muir shared how the Pentagon uses the most current medical surveillance data as employees slowly return to the office.

"We look at the same data from authoritative sources," Muir said. "We are fortunate in the DC area that (COVID-19 cases) are trending downward. Working with local public health authorities and the Pentagon Public Health Office drove us to make the decision to move into phase 2 of our resilience plan, so we're seeing a return of the workforce."

Signs are posted all over the Pentagon, Muir said, to encourage employees to social distance in the workplace when possible and wear cloth face coverings. Face coverings are provided to employees arriving without one at the building. Muir reported strong compliance with the new procedures, complimenting the workforce for their flexibility.

"We're seeing great behaviors from a well-ed-

ucated and informed workforce," Muir said. "They know what they need to do to protect themselves and their families."

MHS redoubled military medicine's research and development efforts to focus on diagnostic testing and has previously announced a \$75 million investment in vaccine research candidates. McCaffery noted that the DoD is supporting Operation Warp Speed, the whole-of-government initiative to deliver 300 million doses of an effective vaccine for COVID-19 by January 2021.

"It's natural that we do research on vaccines because we want to make sure deployed troops have protection against infectious diseases," McCaffery said. "So some of the research we've done for military purposes on several vaccine and therapeutic treatments is a part of the all-government effort to meet that Operation Warp Speed goal."

For more information on how MHS is contributing to DoD coronavirus efforts, visit the coronavirus page on the Military Health System website.

Army modernizes by revamping business approach for impact by 2027

By THOMAS BRADING

Army News

WASHINGTON — The Army is overhauling how it does business behind the scenes to operate at the speed of conflict during the information age, said the top Army finance official, who outlined plans for a new business system slated to impact modernization efforts by 2027.

The Enterprise Business System Multi-Functional Capabilities Team, or EBS-MFCT, is a three-tiered business rollout currently six months into its initial phase, said Jonathan D. Moak, the senior official performing the duties of the assistant secretary of the Army for financial management and comptroller.

By the time it is fully functional, it will completely revamp how all business is done and reported in a rapidly modernizing Army, Moak said.

The new system goes far beyond the pen and ledger of yesterday's money handling, and taps into tomorrow's advanced technology such as artificial intelligence, robotic process automation and algorithms that are constantly learning, he said.

It will gradually replace the clunky 30-year-old business model currently being used and will shift toward a holistically functioning modern plan, similar to what works in private industries.

"This system will positively im-

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Members of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 158th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion team up with Canadian Army logisticians to provide the manpower, sweat and service needed for Exercise Cougar Conqueror 2016.

pact the buying power of the entire United States Army," Moak said. "And, if we commit ourselves to a streamlined system that's more reliable with respect to information accuracy, it will improve our lethality across the Army."

How the Army's enterprise business operates is the lifeblood for movement and support of funds, people and materiel throughout the force. So as the Army modernizes its force and equipment, it's also improving its business process execution, data-analytics value and cloud computing advances, he said, all while reducing cost and freeing up manpower.

What to expect

Soldiers and civilians working in the financial, logistics, acquisition and human resources career fields will be directly affected by the new system, Moak said. "It will impact their day-to-day operations, so it's critical to get their feedback and buy-in during this Herculean effort, because we're going to lead our way through this."

Everyone else, depending on various degrees of improvements, will be impacted by things like improved system latency and more accurate accountability when they need it most.

Today, some Soldiers have to memorize the meanings of countless codes, all needed to categorize different financial activities. One big change Moak hopes to offer is predictive outcomes, similar to Google searches, which will allow troops to quickly search for things in inventories.

"If we're able to bring in advanced machine-learning algorithms and artificial intelligence, we know that will reduce errors, increase productivity and user satisfaction," he said.

With robotics process automation, the Army can also take repetitive processes and apply machine learning to them, he added. These changes may open the door to more manual processes being predicted and free up time for analysts to focus on higher-priority targets and value projects.

"We are committed (to) providing a better, timelier user experiences across the range of battlefield functions down to the tactical edge for Soldiers," said Robin P. Swan, Office of Business Transformation director. "From supply, maintenance activity to personnel activity, we're providing data to analyze at the point of need and execute those tasks better."

The Army's business base extends all the way from the strategic support area to the tactical point of the spear, he said. The new systems will provide a "converged enterprise business system approach" to enable uninterrupted operations, he said.

The need for change

The Army's current business system was simply "unsustainable," Swan said. It branched off into multiple functionally focused areas that are expensive to manage and lack both the agility and ability to share information cleanly between systems and commands.

"A business transformation is necessary to support the needs of the warfighter because we have to ensure proper stewardship of all of the Army's assets," Moak said. "We have to bring that oversight into the information age, and we're driving change that's going to impact the Army for a long time."

"The genesis of reviewing all of the business operations happening in the Army today is to be prepared for the Army of 2028," he added. "Im-

proving communication between systems and end-users will provide actionable insights to leaders and allow for accurate, timely and secure data for decision making."

For example, identifying the cash on hand at a particular command today requires sorting through multiple system reports, phone calls and spreadsheets.

Likewise, "Commanders need to be able to trust the numbers they see in their supply systems, as that will reduce their overall risk and improve the Army's buying power," he said. "Laborious and time-intensive methods tie up decision-making space and hinder timely reallocation of resources in areas that enable warfighters."

On top of that, the critical business system support capabilities that are in place — especially in logistics — are either aging or long gone, he said. A change was not just in order but critical, he added.

To take on this vital need, the Army established the EBS-MFCT, Moak said, and called on the leadership of John Bergin, who serves as deputy assistant secretary of the Army for financial information management, to take the helm.

"The EBS-MFCT will deliver a multi-phase approach to Army Business Operations Modernization that shall include, at a minimum, the consolidation of the major Army (enterprise resource planning) onto a single platform," Bergin said. "This will deliver better visibility to Army commanders in the field and in garrison, enable Army auditability, improve Army operational resilience and directly contribute to improved readiness."

The EBS-MFCT will leverage distributed team members from across every functional domain in the entire Army, with major centers of gravity in the National Capital Region; Redstone Arsenal, Alabama; Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland; and Fort Lee, Virginia, Moak said.

"Right now, we're still in the very beginning stages," Moak said. "The Army has been working on this for about a year, but functional teams have only worked on this for the last several months."

Three-phased approach

Today, a team of financial experts is knee-deep in the first of three phases for the transformation, Moak said. Phase 1 lays the groundwork for the EBS-MFCT organization and puts the wheels in motion for phases 2 and 3.

"Success (during Phase 1) is realizing and fully optimizing affordable systems that support the entirety of our business activities and end-to-end business processes that enable each of the functional domain areas to improve accurate and timely decision-making," Moak said.

For now, Army leaders are setting conditions and enabling capabilities needed for the restructuring. To do this, they are combing through current business processes and taking a hard look at the force's current legacy financial and logistics capabilities while also considering how they will be modified over the phased timeline.

"What we've embarked on is significant business process reengineering, for process efficiency and better alignment of supporting information technology," Swan said.

In roughly 18 months, as the foundation stage is set, it will be time for phase 2 — or the incremental fielding phase, Moak said.

"(Phase 2) begins with (initial operating capa-



STAFF SGT. ADRIAN BORUNDA/ARMY NEWS

Members of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 158th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion team up with Canadian Army logisticians to provide the manpower, sweat and service needed for Exercise Cougar Conqueror 2016. The HHC Soldiers integrated with the 3rd Canadian Brigade during the exercise at Canadian Forces Base Wainwright, Alberta, Canada, during offensive training there.

bilities) of certain requirements and ends when conditions are set for (full-operational capability) of the modernized EBS landscape," he said.

Ideally, the second phase will be an about-face in the right direction for the new plan, he said. It will bridge together the critical core and legacy systems, identified during phase 1, with new emerging requirements and technologies planned for in the last step, he explained.

This sets the stage for Phase 3, or "the end game" as Moak dubbed it. The final chapter of the financial overhaul will bring full operational capabilities and sustainment of the new enterprise resource planning system for the rest of its service life, he said.

Although the 2027 end date is set, checkpoints from one phase to the next are to be seen as flexible, especially during such an early stage of development, Moak said, but as time goes by, the checkpoints will become clearer.

Until then, Moak and his team are focused on the road map needed in the first stage, and that comes with asking questions like, "How are people currently conducting their business? What steps do they take to do their jobs each day? What changes are needed?"

To answer those questions, teams will eventually be deployed to each of the affected organizations, he said, to help individuals at the local level through new processes and to learn how to use the new system.

The work being done by financial and logistics experts will eventually give commanders in the field a modern process to provide them with accurate, timely information to help increase their readiness objectives.

"We're helping to improve combat power all the way to the tactical edge wherever Soldiers operate," Moak said. For the service members, this effort is about "having the right equipment, at the right time and at the right place as that increases the trust between our systems and our unit commanders."

Community

LDVA launches Project LOVE, asks community to write veterans

By **BRANDEE PATRICK**

LDVA director of communications

BATON ROUGE, La. — Col. Joey Strickland, Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs secretary, is launching Project LOVE — Love Our Veterans Every day — an initiative to show veterans love and support during the COVID-19 pandemic. Strickland is asking Louisianans to write to the more than 600 veterans who live in Louisiana's five state-run veteran's homes.

"Our veterans are among our state's and nation's most priceless treasures," Strickland said. "Writing a letter to them showing them we care is a small token of our appreciation for their service and sacrifice. Throughout this summer, I encourage all Louisianans to reach out to a veteran in a written letter."

Louisianans can address their letters to Project LOVE and send them to one or more of the homes.

The addresses are as follows:

- Louisiana Veterans Home
4739 Highway 10



Jackson, LA 70748

- Northeast Louisiana Veterans Home
6700 Highway 165 North
Monroe, LA 71203
- Northwest Louisiana Veterans Home
3130 Arthur Ray Teague Parkway
Bossier City, LA 71112
- Southeast Louisiana Veterans Home

4080 W. Airline Highway
Reserve, LA 70084

- Southwest Louisiana Veterans Home
1610 Evangeline Road
Jennings, LA 70546

For more information visit vetaffairs.la.gov, email veteran@la.gov, call (225) 219-5000 or follow their Facebook, Instagram or Twitter.

Legal assistance helps Families navigate IDEA prior to school openings

OSJA

FORT POLK, La. — Fort Polk Legal Assistance is available to assist parents/guardians who have students with disabilities.

The office supports the Exceptional Family Member Program and an attorney is available to discuss children's needs, the services available through the school systems and any issues in accessing those services.

In 1975, Congress mandated public education for all students with disabilities.

To support this goal, Congress created the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

The IDEA affords important rights and responsibilities to students, parents, schools, school districts and states in providing a free education for children with disabilities.

A child who qualifies under the IDEA receives an individualized education program (IEP). The IEP is often called the cornerstone of IDEA.

The IEP spells out the child's entire educational arrangement and it consists of several stat-

ments and descriptions.

The IEP must contain:

- a statement of the child's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance;
- a statement of measurable annual goals; a description of how the child's progress toward meeting the goals will be measured;
- a statement of the special education and related services and supplementary services to be provided to the child and program modifications and supports;
- an explanation of the extent to which the child will not be participating with nondisabled children in general education classes;
- a listing of accommodations on state and district assessments; a statement of dates to begin services and their frequency, location, and duration;
- and a specification of goals and services for post-secondary transition if the child is sixteen or older.

In developing the IEP, assistive technology

must be considered. Specific services and accommodations must also be considered if the child has behavior problems, limited English proficiency, visual impairment or is deaf/hard of hearing.

The child's parent/guardian, regular and special education teachers, school administrators and others form the IEP team that creates the IEP.

In creating the IEP, the school district must assess all areas of suspected disability and establish goals and services to meet each of the child's needs resulting from the disability.

If the parents disagree with what the school district offers, the parent may request a due process hearing and seek additional or different services.

The Fort Polk Legal Assistance office represents the needs of individual Families with children enrolled in EFMP for education purposes and is available to assist Families as they navigate the IDEA framework.

Schedule an appointment with an attorney by calling the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, Legal Assistance Division at 531-2580.

Fort Polk Museum outdoor display evokes pride despite COVID-19 closures

By **CHRISTY GRAHAM**

Guardian editor

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

FORT POLK, La. — On Mississippi Avenue, nestled between the Bayou Theater and the Army

Community Service building, the Fort Polk Museum (bldg 927) maintains historical treasures related to the installation that are points of pride for Soldiers past and present.

Although the interior exhibits of the museum are still closed to the public due to COVID-19, there are several memorials and military vehicles displayed outdoors that can be enjoyed.

There are three tributes on either side of the entrance and four tanks encircling the building.

On the left of the entrance is the Freedom Tree

plaque, which was relocated from another site on South Fort Polk, according to Richard Grant, Fort Polk Museum director and curator.

The plaque was dedicated in 1973 to Staff Sgt. Lonnie J. Tullier and all Prisoners of War and Missing in Action service members.

According to the **Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund page**, Tullier went missing and was ultimately declared dead during the Vietnam cam-

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Museum

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paign — he was originally from Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

The newest Freedom Tree (an oak tree) is located at Woodfill Hall, otherwise known as “building 350,” and was dedicated by Fort Polk’s Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers Program in 2019.

Also to the left of the museum is a Fort Polk boundary marker, circa 1955; and a 7th Armored Division memorial that was presented in 1981 “in honor of those who gave their lives in the service of their country while serving in the 7th Armored Division.”

The large stone depicts the unit’s crest, details the unit’s World War II battles — Rhineland, Ardennes, Alsace and Northern France — and lists the unit’s activation date (March 1, 1942) on Camp Polk.

To the right of the entrance is a plaque presented in June 1990 by the Leesville-Vernon Chamber of Commerce; a tribute to Maj. Gen. John E. McMahon, 5th Infantry Division commander; and a monument dedicated by the 3rd Training Brigade — stationed to train at North Fort’s Tiger Land — in honor of “those who served here and gave their lives in Vietnam for the cause of freedom.”

The tanks, three to the right and one to the left of the building, are seemingly posed to protect the museum. Present for duty is an M26 heavy tank, an M4 Sherman medium tank, the M603A battle tank and a T55 main battle tank from Russia. According to Grant, much of the museum is dedicated to the history of the Louisiana Maneuvers in the 1940s and the infantry AIT at Tiger Land, both induced by oncoming conflicts.

The Louisiana Maneuvers, responding to the upcoming WWII, consisted of “some of the brighter minds of the Army...preparing to go to war with Germany,” Grant said.

At the time, the military was still using WWI tactics, such as the box formation. “The maneuvers tested what is now known as the triangular formation, incorporating Army infantry and artillery into one division,” said Grant.

“The maneuvers also demonstrated that horse cavalries were largely obsolete due to the mechanized nature of WWII, and it was more efficient to move troops by vehicle instead of making the units march. Not only was it faster, but the vehicles could tow artillery while also moving the troops.”

Tiger Land was in response to the upcoming campaigns in Southeast Asia. “By 1962, Fort Polk was designated as an infantry training center — it was the biggest one throughout the Vietnam war,” Grant said.

While the museum cannot host any visitors yet, Grant said the facility is undergoing minor changes. Interactive, touch-screen monitors are being placed on the walls near some of the interior exhibits, allowing future patrons to read and listen to pertinent facts related to the displays.

In the meantime, the JRTC and Fort Polk community can still appreciate the outdoor display at the museum, along with the other memorial sites listed on the walking-path map.

Each site is an opportunity to slow down and remember the rich military heritage from which current Soldiers, Families, contractors and Department of the Army Civilians stem.



CHRISTY GRAHAM/ GUARDIAN

This is an M60A3 battle tank located to the right of the Fort Polk Museum. Although the interior museum exhibits are still closed because of COVID-19, the Fort Polk community is welcome to come visit the outdoor display. The museum is located off of Mississippi Avenue between the Bayou Theater and the Army Community Service building.



This plaque, relocated to the Fort Polk Museum's outdoor display, is for a Freedom Tree memorial that was dedicated in 1973 to Staff Sgt. Lonnie J. Tullier and all Prisoners of War and Missing in Action service members. Tullier served during Vietnam, went missing and was ultimately declared dead in 1968.



Taken from inside the Fort Polk Museum, this photo depicts troops being moved via vehicle during the Louisiana Maneuvers in 1940. Prior to this time, the Army was still marching units to and from different locations.



The Fort Polk Museum, with several exhibits including displays on the Fort Polk heritage families, Tiger Land, The Louisiana Maneuvers and past and present war campaigns, is located at bldg 927 off of Mississippi Avenue. The facility sits between the Bayou Theater and the Army Community Service building. At this time, the museum remains closed to the public due to COVID-19.

Fort Polk Community Relations as important now as ever

By JEAN CLAVETTE GRAVES

Public Affairs Specialist

Fort Polk, La. — Community relations and outreach is an important aspect of the Army Public Affairs Program. The objectives of the community relations program is to increase public awareness of the Army through engagements with civic, corporate, academic and government audiences; foster good relations with public entities by securing lasting relationships through repetitive positive engagements; enhance the Army's reputation as a respected professional organization that is responsible for the nation's defense, an all-volunteer force and smoothly transitioning Soldiers after service; and inspire patriotism and improve public perception of the Army to maintain the trust and confidence of the American people.

At the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, there is an active and vibrant community relations program focused primarily on the six parishes that surround the installation. Each parish has a unit that they are partnered with — 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division is partnered with Sabine and Vernon parishes; the 519th Military Police Battalion is partnered with Beauregard Parish; 46th Engineer Battalion is partnered with Rapides Parish; the 32nd Hospital Center is partnered with Calcasieu Parish; and Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital is partnered with Natchitoches Parish.

The commanding general and garrison commander are active participants of the community relations program and work closely with community leaders and stakeholders in all six parishes, as well as those at the state and federal level.

Due to the rotational operational tempo, Operations Group and 1st Battalion, 5th Aviation Regiment are not aligned with any parishes in particular, but they are always willing to support requests for aerial static displays, participate in airshows and support open houses and tours upon request.

COVID-19 has put a damper on the community relations program. Scheduled engagements since mid-March have all been cancelled. The Public Affairs Office is starting to get requests for Veterans Day support, but the current pandemic environment makes planning any large gathering difficult.

Some of the events/activities that were cancelled included Dragon Boat Races in both Alexandria and Natchitoches, sending color guards at a Professional Golf Association Tour in Lake Charles, the Anacoco spring parade and Leesville's Mayfest. Static displays, Deridder's annual organizational day celebration with the 519th, several Memorial Day events and Army Birthday celebrations in each parish were also cancelled this year.

Despite the setbacks, the Public Affairs Office has gotten creative to continue engagements with community partners, such as their inclusion in the JRTC and Fort Polk Guardian "In our view section" and participation in the 245th Army Birthday Tribute video released on the JRTC and Fort Polk Facebook page on June 14.

Earlier this year the Natchitoches Area Chamber of Commerce invited the commanding general as the keynote speaker at their July general membership luncheon.

With the uncertainty of COVID-19, the chamber and the Public Affairs Office developed a plan to allow the commander to participate while



JEAN CLAVETTE GRAVES / GUARDIAN

Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, commander of the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, discusses education initiatives, the 2028 Campaign Plan and the installation's response to COVID-19 on the Natchitoches Area Chamber of Commerce podcast with Maggie Matuschka, events coordinator and host of Chamber Chat.

maintaining social distance.

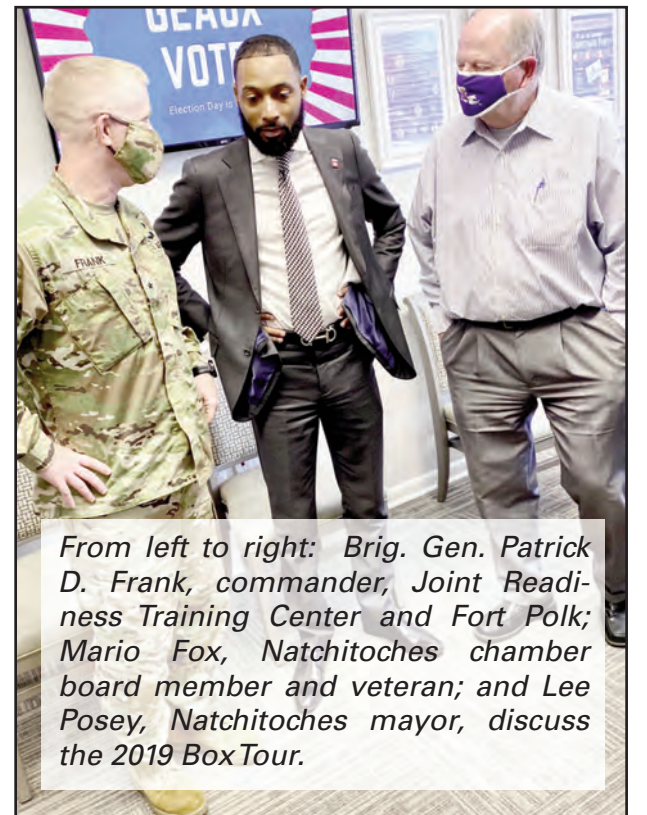
Laura Lyles, president of the Natchitoches Area Chamber of Commerce, asked the installation commander speak at a general membership luncheon after meeting Brig. Gen Patrick Frank during the 2019 Box Tour. "Growing and nurturing the relationship with Fort Polk is important to the Natchitoches community. I could think of no better way to do that than with a conversation with General Frank. People would have loved to see him in person at a luncheon, but COVID-19 had other plans," said Lyles.

She said COVID-19 has forced the chamber to work harder to reach out and provide value to their members. In-person meetings have been curtailed, so she and her staff have been making more telephone calls, paying extra attention to emails and using social media platforms to engage with chamber membership and the community.

On Wednesday Frank participated in an interview with Maggie Matuschka, events coordinator and host of Chamber Chat. In the spirit of creativity, he did the podcast interview in lieu of speaking at a face-to-face luncheon, which normally includes more than 80 chamber members. The chat focused on the mission of the combat training center; educational initiatives, including the expansion of high school dual enrollment opportunities and partnerships between the installation and Northwestern State University; the installation's response to COVID-19; and the 2028 Campaign Plan.

The full podcast is published on the chamber's [website](#).

Following the interview, the chamber of commerce hosted a small meet and greet with 15 of its members, local leaders and stakeholders in the community. Lee Posey, Natchitoches mayor; Dr. Chris Maggio, Northwestern State University president; and Louie Bernard, Louisiana State



From left to right: Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, commander, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk; Mario Fox, Natchitoches chamber board member and veteran; and Lee Posey, Natchitoches mayor, discuss the 2019 Box Tour.

Senator for District 31, were just a few of the local leaders that participated in the event. Also in attendance were chamber members and veterans Jeremy Miller, a former Geronimo and manager of Super One Foods, and 82nd Airborne "All American" Mario Fox.

Natchitoches, the original French colony in Louisiana, is the oldest settlement in the Louisiana Purchase. Established in 1714, Natchitoches retains its European flavor through its architecture, heritage and lifestyle.

Soldiers and their Families can find a host of things to do in this historic city by viewing the visitor and convention center [website](#).

JRTC, Fort Polk announcements and activities



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FAMILY SPAGHETTI DINNER 1 3/2LBS OF FRESHLY COOKED SPAGHETTI NOODLES 32 HOMESTYLE MEATBALLS COOKED IN A ZESTY MARINARA 1/2 GALLON OF OUR HOMEMADE MARINARA WITH FRESH BASIL, THYME AND OREGANO 1 LOAF OF FRESH GARLIC BREAD 1 LARGE GARDEN SALAD 1 DOZEN FRESHLY BAKED COOKIES	GARLIC BUTTER GLAZED PORTERHOUSE PORK CHOPS (12OZ) LOUISIANA STYLE CAJUN RICE (DIRTY RICE) SAUTEED GREEN BEANS WITH BACON AND PEARL ONIONS FRESH BAKED FRENCH BREAD	GRILLED RIBEYE STEAK (10 OZ) WITH STEAKHOUSE BUTTER BAKED POTATO WITH ASSORTED TOPPINGS (CHIVES, CHEDDAR, CHEESE, BACON BITS) SWEET PARMESAN CHEESE CORN-ON-THE-COBB STEAKS WILL BE COOKED TO YOUR PREFERRED DEGREE OF DONENESS
\$40	\$70	\$60

YOUTH SPORTS SUMMER CAMP SCHEDULE JULY 2020

CAMP	DATE	TIME	AGES	COST	LOCATION
Archery	July 7-10	1000-1100	8-18	\$ 25	Perez Field
Kidnastics (Gymnastics & Tumbling)	July 7-10	0930-1015 1030-1115	5-8	\$ 25	Youth Fitness Center Bldg 2070
Skating Camp	July 7-10	1100-1200	8-14	\$ 25	Siegfried Youth Center
Baseball/Softball	July 7-10	1730-1830	8-15	\$ 25	Perez Field
Paintball & Archery Tag	July 11	0900 - 1100	8 and up	\$ 18	Perez Field
Start Smart Baseball	July 13 - 17	0930 - 1015 1045 - 1130	5 - 7	\$ 25	Youth Fitness Center Bldg 2070
Gymnastics Camp	July 13 - 17	1130 - 1230	8 - 14	\$ 25	Youth Fitness Center Bldg 2070
Fitness Circuit Training	July 13 - 17	1300 - 1400	8 - 15	\$ 15	Youth Fitness Center Bldg 2070
Cheerleading Camp	July 13 - 17	1730 - 1830	6 - 12	\$ 25	Youth Fitness Center Bldg 2070
Smart Start P.E. Fun	July 13 - 17	1730 - 1930	5 - 8	\$ 25	Youth Fitness Center Bldg 2070
Kidnastics (Gymnastics & Tumbling)	July 20 - 24	1700 - 1745 1800 - 1845	5 - 8	\$ 25	Youth Fitness Center Bldg 2070
Fitness Circuit Training	July 20 - 24	1400 - 1500	8 - 15	\$ 15	Youth Fitness Center Bldg 2070
Soccer	July 27 - 31	1000 - 1100	8 - 15	\$ 25	Youth Fitness Center Bldg 2070
Start Smart Soccer	July 27 - 31	1700 - 1745 1800 - 1845	5 - 8	\$ 25	Youth Fitness Center Bldg 2070

Fitness Circuit Training



Youth must be registered with CYS and have a current health assessment on file
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