

JRTC AND FORT JOHNSON

MARCH 31 VOL. 52, NO. 7

GUARDIAN

FOOTBALL PLAYER
TALKS SUICIDE
PREVENTION

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FORT JOHNSON
AND SURROUNDING
COMMUNITIES TALK
EDUCATION

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BJACH TRAINS
TO SAVE LIVES

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COVER PHOTO

1st Battalion, 5th Aviation Regiment trained in sling load operations March 11 to better prepare for the upcoming JRTC Rotation Season and to ensure the continued readiness of its aviators. (U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Zachary M. Hafele)



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suicide prevention



JRTC AND FORT JOHNSON

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For additional information, please visit the @JRTcandFortJohnson Facebook page.



ON POST

Upcoming Events



Easter Cookie Decorating

Apr. 4, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at
Play Town & Café

Visit Play Town & Café and decorate some delicious Easter cookies!

For more information call 337-531-4057.



Dye Hard Color Run

Apr. 5, 9-10 a.m. at Warrior Hills Golf Course

When life hands you color, run with it! The annual Fort Johnson Dye Hard Color Run returns April 5. Cost is \$15 for ages 5+ and free for ages 4 and below.

[Click here to register and for more information](#)



Catfish Derby

Apr. 12, 7-11 a.m. at Catfish Cove

Children 15 years and under are invited to participate in the ultimate youth fishing tournament! This event is open to the public. Persons 16 and older are invited to assist children fishing. Prizes will be awarded to winners who catch tagged catfish.

For more information call 409-504-2445.



Crawfish Boil

Apr. 12, noon at Catfish Cove

It's that time of the season! Join us for a free crawfish boil at Catfish Cove after the Catfish Derby. Enjoy all-you-can-eat crawfish, live entertainment, music, free fishing and more!



OUTSIDE THE GATES

OFF POST

EVENTS



10-12
April

Railroad Days Fest
DEQUINCY, LA.

[Click for more info](#)



12
April

Doll Festival
DERIDDER, LA.

[Click for more info](#)



12
April

Anacoco Spring Parade
ANACOCO, LA.

[Click for more info](#)



19
April

Spring Music Festival
LEESVILLE, LA.

[Click for more info](#)



26
April

Chamber Fest
LAKE CHARLES, LA.

[Click for more info](#)

NO ARMY OR FEDERAL ENDORSEMENT IMPLIED.

Discover Louisiana



FARMERS MARKETS



DeRidder

The “shop local” movement that is all the rage across the country is nothing new to us. We’ve long known that the best-tasting fruits and veggies come from Louisiana farms and farmers. If you haven’t been to a farmers market, be sure to stop by while in town for snacks, souvenirs and more. But don’t just shop, get to know our local growers! We suggest you call and check the market’s website for seasonal days or change of location and time.

Discover these local Louisiana farmers markets for local goods:

Leesville — Visit the 3rd Street Market in historic downtown Leesville to enjoy locally grown fruits and vegetables, as well as a variety of jellies, jams, salsas, and much more! The Market is located on 3rd Street between Harriet Street and South Street.

DeRidder — The DeRidder Farmers Market is open, weather permitting, 7 days a week. The DeRidder Farmer’s Market is located at 216 North Washington Avenue across from The Stadium Sports Grill.

Alexandria — The Alexandria Farmers Market is a weekly gathering that connects the community of Alexandria with the farmers, ranchers, and agricultural artisans of Central Louisiana.

Lake Charles — Southwest Louisiana boasts a proud community of local producers of fruits and vegetables, honey, jams, spices, wood works, soaps and other various commodities. The great part is they can all be found at one of the local farmer’s markets that happen in our cities on various days of the week. Locals take great pride in what they have to offer and you can’t beat fresh home grown goods.

Natchitoches — The Natchitoches Farmers Market takes place on the downtown Natchitoches riverfront, offering just about anything you can imagine, including fresh fruits and vegetables, plants and cut flowers, herbs, homemade baked goods, honey, jams and jellies, handcrafted jewelry and art, farm fresh eggs.



Leesville



Lake Charles



Alexandria



Top Right: Keon Coleman, Buffalo Bills wide receiver (left) and Paul DeRousselle, National Football League agent, discuss the importance of teamwork during suicide awareness training March 21 at Fort Johnson. Left: Fort Johnson Soldiers and fire department team members meet-and-greet with Coleman. (U.S. Army photos by Porsha Auzenne)



BILLS WIDE RECEIVER, AGENT, DISCUSS SUICIDE PREVENTION, TEAMWORK

By Porsha Auzenne
Fort Johnson Garrison Public Affairs Office

FORT JOHNSON, La. — The Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Johnson hosted a special suicide awareness training event on March 21.

The event, held at the Bayou Theater, featured Keon Coleman, Buffalo Bills wide receiver, and Paul DeRousselle, sports agent for the National Football League.

The training aimed to raise awareness about the importance of teamwork and support in preventing suicide.

By sharing their experiences and insights, Coleman and DeRousselle, both Louisiana natives, helped to create a sense of community and connection among the audience members.

Christa Zayas, Fort Johnson's Suicide Prevention Program coordinator, presented questions gathered from the audience to the duo.

"What do you find most effective when your teammates are crashing out under pressure and letting their emotions get the best of them?" one question read.

"I'm crashing out with them," said Coleman, emphasizing the value of teamwork. "One band, one sound. We can find out the reason a teammate is overwhelmed and upset later, but for the moment, we are there to support them regardless."

"We'll all crash out together," Coleman

smiled, "let coach figure out how to calm us down."

The event took a light-hearted turn when audience member Reggie Booth Jr., Home of Heroes Recreation Center supervisory specialist, dared Coleman to call Josh Allen, Buffalo Bills quarterback and front runner for the 2024 NFL's Most Valuable Player award.

"What's the over-under?" Coleman asked as he proceeded to dial Allen. "If he answers, I need 50 pushups. I can only lose if he doesn't answer, but I don't have to do anything. It's a one-sided deal."

To the delight and shock of the crowd, Allen indeed answered Coleman's call through FaceTime. Allen waved to everyone and proceeded to thank the troops for their service and sacrifice.

"I need my 50 pushups!" Coleman joked at Booth as the crowd laughed. "You lost. See, my quarterback loves me!"

When asked about how teamwork can help suicide prevention, DeRousselle recollected his earlier days as a lawyer.

"I'm an agent professionally, but I practiced law earlier in my career," DeRousselle said. "It has one of the highest rates of alcoholism and suicide."

DeRousselle compared his experiences to those Soldiers face.

"When dealing with people who are under a lot of pressure and similar situations, teamwork

— **TEAMWORK Continued on page 11**



“ When dealing with people who are under a lot of pressure and similar situations,
TEAMWORK IS IMPORTANT. ”

— Paul DeRousselle, National Football League sports agent



Coleman signs a card for Sgt. Hunter M. Ketchem, intel analyst with the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division "Patriots." (U.S. Army photo by Porsha Auzenne)

“One band, one sound.” — Keon Coleman, Buffalo Bills wide receiver

is important. A lot of people feel like they're alone, misunderstood and overlooked. They feel others won't understand the pressure and the problems that come with mental health struggles," DeRousselle said. "When people feel hopeless, they feel lost."

DeRousselle shared a story with the audience about how suicide affected him personally.

"One of my classmates committed suicide," DeRousselle said. "The signs were there, but a lot of us were like, 'He would never do that.' So, being part of someone's team or network, you shouldn't ignore those signs and think, 'Well this person would never do that,' but often, the

signs are in your face."

DeRousselle proceeded to give guidance to the audience to help those showing warning signs of suicide.

"If you notice something, try to take them to someplace privately they love and talk to them. People are more willing to open up, as publicly reprimanding someone may push them away."

Even athletes, he said, struggle with suicide. DeRousselle recalled the story of New England Patriots veteran Junior Seau, who tragically took his life after a long battle with chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) — a condition caused by repetitive head trauma that leads to depression.

"Even after football, athletes have a hard time transitioning from playing to being civilians. That closely correlates to Soldiers making the transition out of the Army," DeRousselle said.

"Having more resources available geared towards arming people with the correct psychological tools can also help," he said in closing.

For those suffering through a crisis, help is available. If you or someone you know needs help, contact the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at 988 and press 1 for the Military Crisis Line. For additional resources, please visit the Army Suicide Prevention Program webpage at www.armyresilience.army.mil/suicide-prevention.

Beauregard, Vernon Parish schools attend Education Summit



Vernon Parish School Board Superintendent James Williams speaks with school teachers, personnel and students from Vernon and Beauregard Parishes at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Johnson's Education Summit March 21, at the Warrior Center, Fort Johnson, La. (U.S. Army photo by Karen Sampson)



Larry Hollie, Beauregard Parish School Board superintendent, Brig. Gen. Jason A. Curl, commanding general of Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Johnson, Megan Calderera and Command Sgt. Maj. Oracio Peña, command sergeant major of JRTC and Fort Johnson award Gracie Calderera Beauregard Parish middle school student of the year. (U.S. Army photo by Karen Sampson)



Brig. Gen. Jason A. Curl, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Johnson commanding general, speaks with school teachers, personnel and students from Vernon and Beauregard Parishes at the JRTC and Fort Johnson's Education Summit March 21. (U.S. Army photo by Karen Sampson)

By Karen Sampson
Fort Johnson Garrison Public Affairs Office

FORT JOHNSON, La. — School teachers, personnel and students from Vernon and Beauregard Parishes joined the installation leadership and Department of Education teams at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Johnson's Education Summit March 21, at the Warrior Center.

The summit celebrates the hard work of students, teachers and education personnel. It highlights the continued partnership between the school districts and JRTC and Fort Johnson.

"This gathering honors the dedication of our classroom teachers, administration, counselors

and personnel," said Vernon Parish School Board Superintendent James Williams.

He said the personnel's care for children is beyond reproach and to be recognized.

Williams commended the installation leaders' consistent support of the schools in Vernon and Beauregard Parishes throughout their tenure.

"When you think about achievement on a school level, whether it be about test scores or a level of success after they leave school, be it career or college education, their hard work pays off," Williams said. "I always try to make it a point to remember the people in this room who make that success possible."

Within its 16 schools and two early childhood education centers, the Vernon Parish School District helps 7,500 students navigate the school

system requirements leading to success.

Williams emphasizes that meetings such as this are where a lot of ideas are heard and planning gets done for the school year.

Beauregard Parish Superintendent Larry Hollie says gratitude is a key element in their lives at Beauregard Parish schools.

Beauregard Parish boasts 13 schools with 5,600 students.

"Ninety-five percent of our teachers are happy with their job," said Hollie. "To me, that is a hallmark of a great teacher."

"The jobs that we have are not easy" he said. "But we love what we do."

He said the educators of the community love developing Beauregard Parish and growing their students into adults.

1st Battalion, 5th Aviation Regiment trains in March to hone their skills

1st Battalion, 5th Aviation Regiment took part in a Canadian paratroop March 20 to ensure seamless patient transfer throughout the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Johnson's rotational training season and beyond. (U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Zachary M. Hafele)



1st Battalion, 5th Aviation Regiment trained in sling load operations March 11 to better prepare for the upcoming JRTC Rotation Season and to ensure the continued readiness of its aviators. (U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Zachary M. Hafele)

1st Battalion, 5th Aviation Regiment took part in a Canadian paratroop March 18 to strengthen international military relationships and provide valuable training to the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Johnson's Operations Group. (U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Zachary M. Hafele)



Fort Johnson celebrates Medal of Honor events

By Karen Sampson
Fort Johnson Garrison Public Affairs Office

FORT JOHNSON, La. — FORT JOHNSON, La. — The Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Johnson community celebrated Medal of Honor recipients March 17-25.

“Out of the 40 million Americans who served in the military since it was established in 1862, only 3,547 have received the Medal of Honor,” said Mark Leslie, Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security director.

One of the ways Fort Johnson celebrated these heroes was to unveil street signs designated as Medal of Honor Streets. Medal of Honor decals were added to street signs at Bellrichard Avenue — honoring Pvt. 1st Class Leslie Allen Bellrichard, Schowalter Street — honoring 1st Lt. Edward Rightor Schowalter and Fournet Court — honoring 1st Lt. Douglas B. Fournet March 18.

Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Johnson’s Shughart-Gordon Training Complex is also named in honor of Medal of Honor recipients Master Sgt. Gary I. Gordon and Sgt. 1st Class Randall D Shughart.

Another event held in celebration of Medal of Honor took place at Fort Johnson’s Allen Memorial Library.

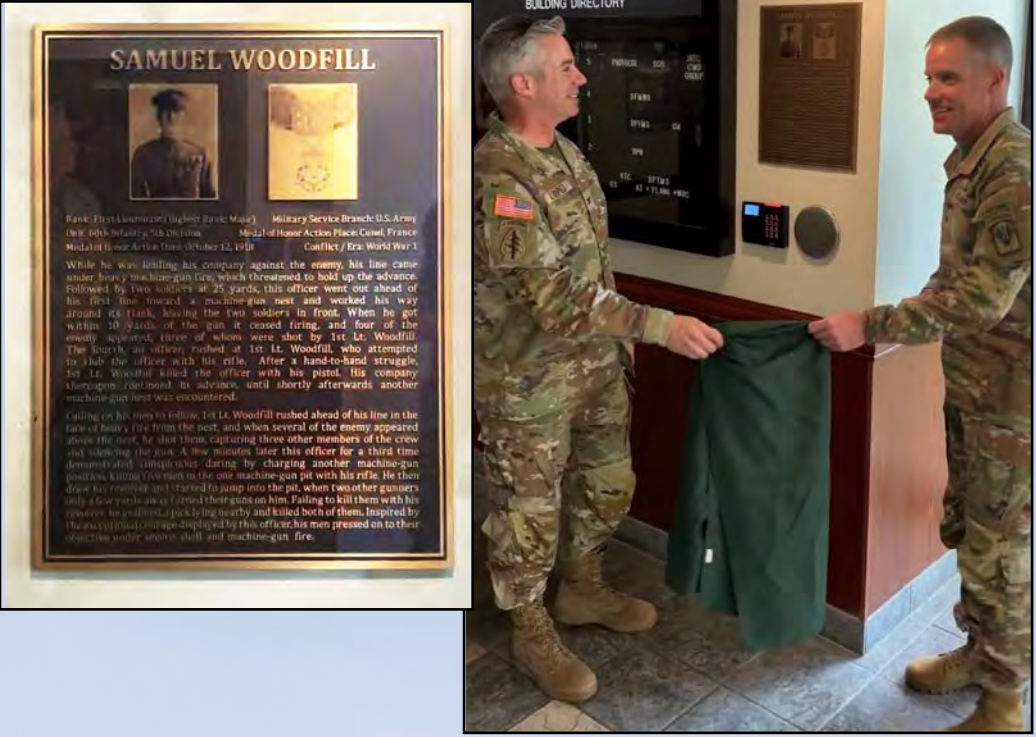
Leslie and Col. CJ Lopez, Fort Johnson garrison commander, were masters of ceremony at the library’s Medal of Honor Storytime event held on March 21. They read and talked to the children about servicemembers sacrifices and described to them how special it is for these heroes to receive the award.

Library staff also created an elaborate display of books dedicated to stories and history surrounding Medal of Honor recipients for all library patrons to enjoy. In fact, an actual Medal of Honor ribbon sits in a glass encasement for all to see and admire.

Events ended on National Medal of Honor Day, March 25, as a special plaque was unveiled in the lobby of Woodfill Hall, also known as Building 350, by Brig. Gen. Jason A. Curl, JRTC and Fort Johnson commanding general and Col. CJ Lopez, Fort Johnson garrison commander, commemorating 1st. Lt. Samuel Woodfill, a member of Company M, 60th Infantry, 5th Division, who was awarded the Medal of Honor Oct. 12, 1918 for his bravery during action in World War I.

For more in-depth information and history of Medal of Honor recipients visit <https://www.defense.gov/Spotlights/Medal-of-Honor/>

Col. CJ Lopez (left), Fort Johnson garrison commander and Brig. Gen. Jason A. Curl, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Johnson commanding general, unveil the new Samuel Woodfill plaque at Woodfill Hall in honor of Medal of Honor Day. (U.S. Army photos by Karen Sampson)



Pvt. 1st Class Leslie Allen Bellrichard, Medal of Honor recipient, is commemorated by adding a Medal of Honor decal and an unveiling ceremony at the intersection of Fort Johnson’s Bellrichard and Mississippi Avenues. (U.S. Army photo by Karen Sampson)



Above: Col. CJ Lopez, Fort Johnson garrison commander, reads a book to children at a special Medal of Honor Storytime at Allen Memorial Library March 21. (U.S. Army photos by Karen Sampson)
Left: Mark Leslie (right), Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security director, explains to children what a Medal of Honor is and what it represents during a special Medal of Honor Storytime at Allen Memorial Library March 21. (U.S. Army photos by Karen Sampson)



ADVANCE YOUR MILITARY CAREER!

Access **FREE** support at every stage of your journey.



Contact a USO Transition Specialist today to develop a personalized plan!

USO.org/ServiceMemberSupport

**Education • Navigate Installation Support
Financial Wellness • Mentorship Opportunities**

USO TRANSITION PROGRAM

The USO is a not-for-profit organization and not part of the Department of Defense (DOD).



Aleia Vail, USO transition specialist, talks with a Soldier about the many beneficial programs USO has to offer. (U.S. Army photo by Karen Sampson)

Fort Johnson welcomes USO and Aleia Vail

By Karen Sampson
Public Affairs Specialist

FORT JOHNSON, La. — The Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Johnson community extends a warm welcome to Aleia Vail, the installation's new United Service Organizations transition specialist.

Vail's office is located at the Army Community Services building and is available to help Fort Johnson's active-duty community.

"I provide resources to service members, military spouses and families whether they need assistance with employment, career advancement or financial wellness," Vail said. "I like to say the USO is a resource for resources."

A new USO center in Fort Johnson's North Fort area is estimated to open in the autumn of 2025.

"There will be an exponential number of resources when the new USO opens," Vail said.



Army Community Service

"We hope to also schedule concerts soon."

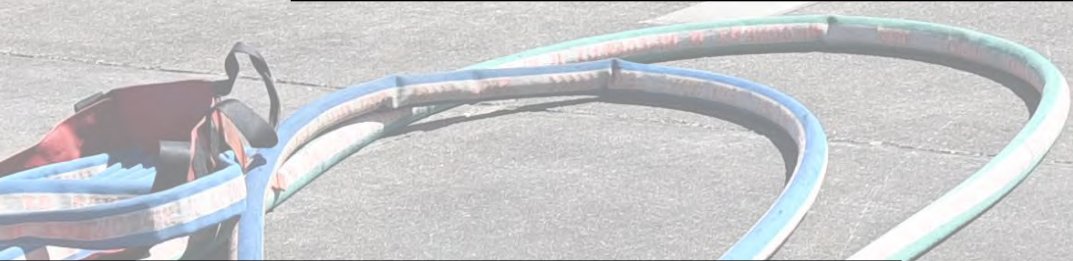
The USO center is a place outside their home where a service member can relax, find various forms of entertainment and participate in activities. According to the USO website, the USO is the leading nonprofit dedicated to strengthening the well-being of the people serving in America's military and their families. Since 1941, the USO has been by the side of service members throughout their military service. Impactful support is

provided through our 250+ locations around the world, a robust care package delivery program, global entertainment, military spouse and youth programming, and much more, all made possible by donors, corporate partners, volunteers and staffing to properly fuel your body to help you meet your goals.

Active-duty service members who desire more information can contact Aleia Vail, USO transition Program at 337-602-8207 or avail@uso.org



Fort Johnson Fire Fighters train at Macks Army Airfield to prepare for worst case scenario



Fort Johnson's TAP team works to teach, support, transition Soldiers

By Transition Assistance Program

FORT JOHNSON, La. — The Fort Johnson Transition Assistance Program has emerged as a vital resource for service members leaving the military. TAP is available to all service members, including those in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard. This comprehensive program, designed to facilitate a seamless transition to civilian life, has been instrumental in helping veterans navigate the challenges of reintegration.

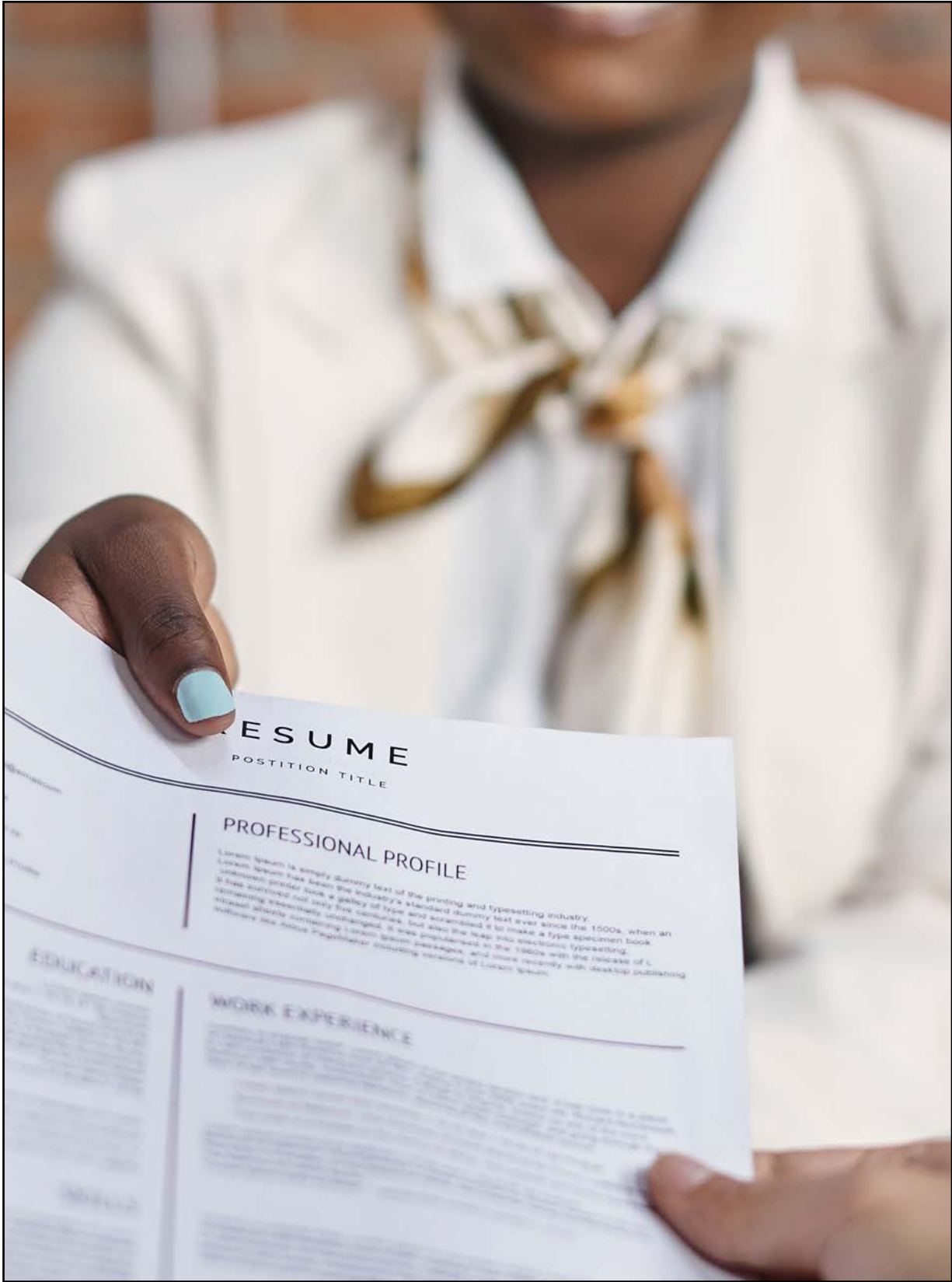
TAP, mandated by Congress in 2011, is a collaborative effort between the Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Labor. These programs provide a wide range of services, including career counseling, resume building and job placement assistance. Participants also receive guidance on education and training opportunities, as well as support for entrepreneurs and small business owners.

According to recent statistics, more than 200,000 service members transition out of the military each year. TAP has been successful in helping these individuals find employment, with a reported 80% of participants securing jobs within six months of completing the program.

Chris Ausbun, TAP transition services manager, said, "We're proud of the progress we've made with the Transition Assistance Program. Our goal is to ensure that every service member has the support they need to thrive in civilian life. We're committed to providing the resources and guidance necessary to make their transition as smooth as possible."

To ensure a seamless transition from military to civilian life, it is highly recommended that service members enroll in TAP as early as possible. For those exiting the military through normal separation, enrollment can begin as early as 18 months prior to their transition date. Meanwhile, retirees can take advantage of the program's resources and support up to 24 months before their retirement date.

By starting the TAP process early, service members can maximize the program's deliverable-based approach, which is designed to provide a structured and supportive framework for transition. Early enrollment allows individuals to develop a comprehensive plan, set achievable goals and take deliberate steps towards a successful tran-



sition. This proactive approach enables Soldiers to make informed decisions, capitalize on opportunities and navigate the challenges of reintegration with confidence.

The benefits of early enrollment in TAP are numerous. It provides ample time for:

- Career exploration and planning
- Education and training opportunities
- Resume building and interview preparation
- Networking and job placement assistance
- Entrepreneurial guidance and support

By taking advantage of the TAP program's resources and support early on, service members can set themselves up for success, mitigate potential challenges and ensure a smooth transition into the civilian sector. It is essential

for service members to prioritize their transition planning and enroll in TAP as early as possible to reap the full benefits of this comprehensive program.

As TAP continues to evolve and improve, its impact on the lives of veterans is undeniable. By providing comprehensive support and guidance, the program helps ensure that service members are equipped to succeed in civilian life, and that their sacrifices are recognized and valued.

For more information about the Transition Assistance Program, visit the [Fort Johnson homepage](#) or contact your Fort Johnson Transition Assistance Office at 337-531-1591.



APRIL 15

10 a.m.-1 p.m.

at Warrior Fitness Center

8184 Alabama Avenue

For more information call the Transition Assistance Program at 337-531-4621

SPRING HIRING EVENT

Register your weapon today!



Firearms registration is mandatory on Fort Johnson. That includes pistols, shotguns, semi-automatic and automatic weapons.



You must fill out form 563 to register your weapon. You can pick up the form at the Visitor Center or use this link to print out [form 563](#).



For more information call the Visitor Center at 337-531-0380.

Time to say goodbye!

The connection to your old desk phone is set to go away soon. The new Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) will be taking its place. Look in the Next Guardian (April 14 edition) for the latest up to date list of new phone numbers for the installation.



A partial list of the numbers that have changed so far can be found on the Fort Johnson webpage at [Fort Johnson Phone Book](#).

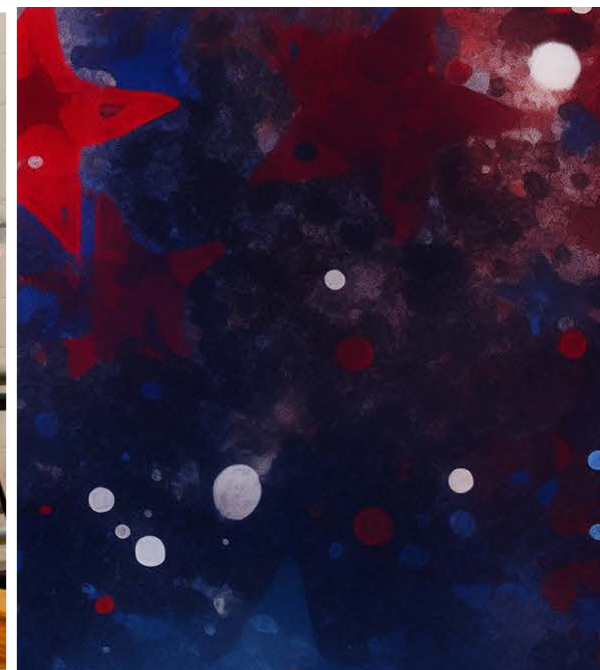
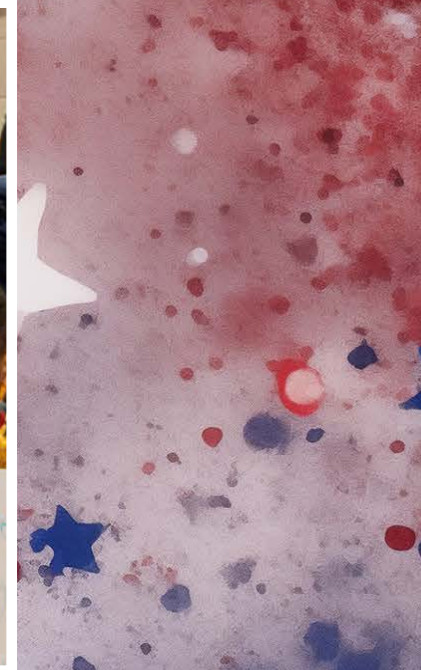
amazon

pickup & returns

New Location

Fort Johnson's Post Exchange, 7742 Colorado Ave., bldg 850, now offers Amazon Pickup and Returns! Make your exchange at the customer service counter. Simplify your experience by having your pick up or return code from Amazon ready.

FRIENDS AND FAMILY WELCOME THEIR SOLDIERS HOME!



(U.S. Army photos by
Angie Thorne, Chuck
Cannon and Karen
Sampson)

March

Win during
March Madness
by registering
at your local
community center!



MADNESS

3

Exciting family
prizes are up
for grabs!

April 2
Military Child
Appreciation
8 a.m.-5 p.m.



The new Army housing survey is here!

Check
your
inbox



Don't mean to hound you,
but make sure you take it!



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Readiness

Counseling

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ARMY EMERGENCY RELIEF

ANNUAL CAMPAIGN MARCH 1 - JUNE 14



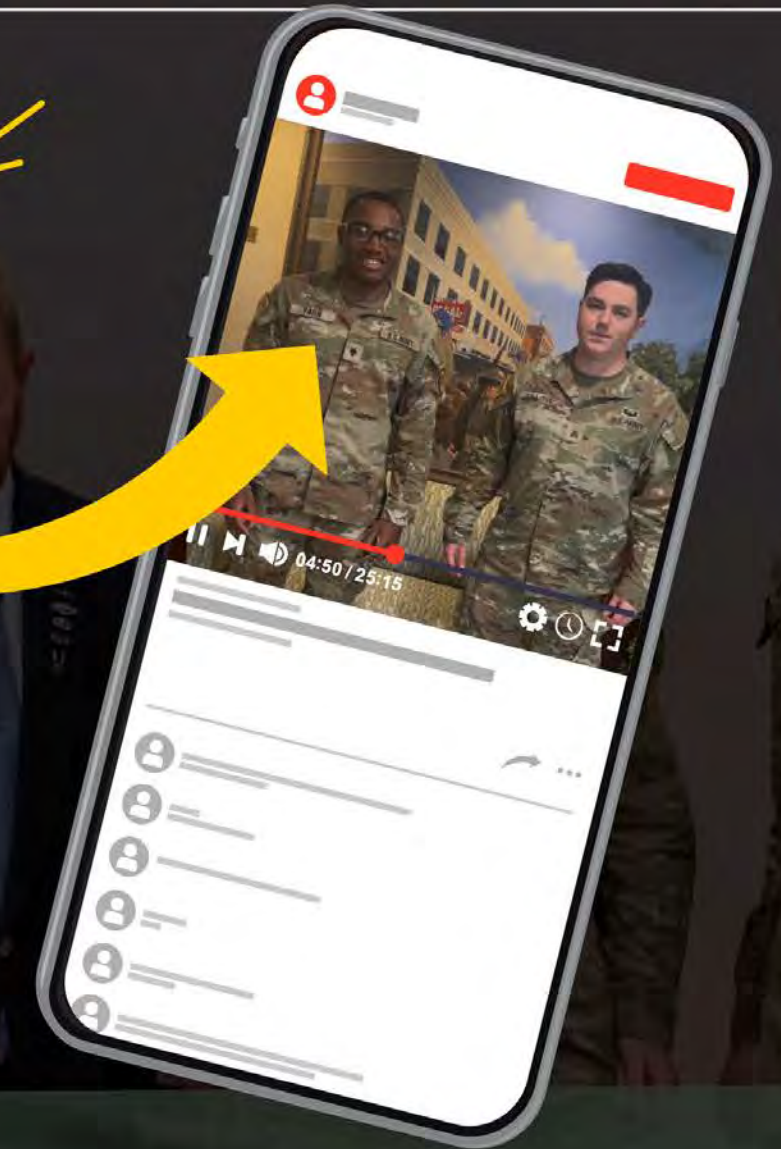
**AER CELEBRATES THE U.S. ARMY'S
250 YEARS OF BRAVERY AND SERVICE**

HONORING THE PAST **250** 1775 - 2025 SECURING THE FUTURE



WANT TO BE FEATURED IN FORT JOHNSON'S
ARMY 250TH BIRTHDAY VIDEO?

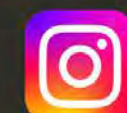
*This could be
you!*



Send us a recording of you (with fellow service members, friends, family or alone) saying, **"Happy 250th Birthday U.S. Army!"** to our direct messages for a chance to be featured on Fort Johnson social media!



JRTCandFortJohnson



@jrtcandfortjohnson

Check VIN numbers

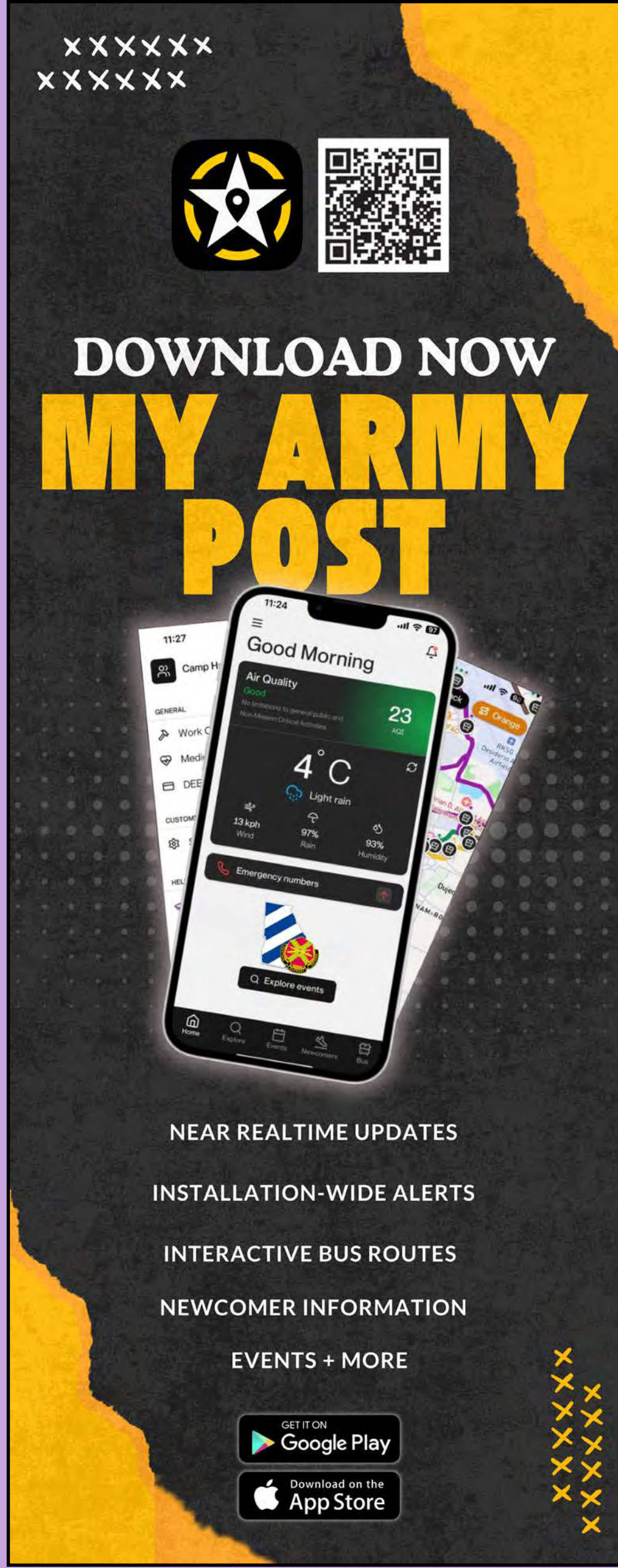
The Directorate of Emergency Services Traffic Division will release the following vehicles to MWR for disposal if they remain unclaimed. Vehicles are listed with the last four of their VIN number. If one of these vehicles belongs to you, please contact the Fort Johnson Police Traffic Division at 337-531-1806, 6675 or 2675.

A photograph of a red Chevrolet Silverado pickup truck, showing the front and side profile. The truck is parked on a paved surface, and a building is visible in the background.

2016	Yamaha	R3	2153
UNK	UNK	Boat trailer	N/A
UNK	UNK	Kayak trailer	N/A
UNK	McClain	Boat trailer	N/A
2001	Ford	F150	0450
2000	Ford	Ranger	3852
2006	Nissan	350Z	4586
2004	Cadillac	Escalade	5765
2003	Ford	Crown Victoria	2046
2011	Chevrolet	Cruz	6489
2012	Land Rover	Land Ranger	2214
2005	Honda	Civic	6295
1994	GEO	Tracker	0139
2007	Ford	F150	7785

A red Chevrolet Silverado pickup truck is shown from a front-three-quarter view. The truck is parked on a paved surface, and a building is visible in the background. The truck features chrome accents on the grille and bumper, and a silver step bar on the side.

A promotional graphic for JRTC and Fort Johnson. At the top, there are three circular icons: Facebook (blue with a white 'f'), Instagram (a gradient circle with the camera icon), and YouTube (red with a white play button). Below these icons, the text reads "FOLLOW JRTC AND FORT JOHNSON ON FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM AND YOUTUBE". In the center, the phrase "GET CONNECTED" is written in a large, bold, black, italicized serif font. Below this, there are three social media handles, each on a colored, brush-stroke-like background: a blue background with a white Facebook icon and the text "/JRTCandFortJohnson", a purple-to-pink gradient background with a white Instagram icon and the text "@Jrtcandfortjohnson", and a red background with a white YouTube icon and the text "@JRTCandFortJohnson".



April 12 from 7-11 a.m.

The Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Johnson annual Catfish Derby takes place at Catfish Cove. Children ages 15 and under are allowed to fish. Persons 16 and older are allowed to assist children fishing. The event is open to the public.

The derby offers activities, a fillet demonstration, a raffle, games, educational booths and prizes.

For more information call 409-504-2445

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**For more information call
409-504-2445**

BJACH nutrition team leads community engagement

By Jean Clavette Graves
BJACH PAO

FORT JOHNSON, La. — Registered dietitians from Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital led a monthlong series of hands-on events, educational outreach, and interactive classes throughout March in support of National Nutrition Month. Their efforts highlighted the critical connection between food, health and mission readiness for Soldiers and Families at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Johnson, Louisiana.

Capt. Aireal Williams, chief of the Nutrition Care Division at BJACH, said educating the community on the benefits of proper nutrition is important year-round.

“Our goal this month was to focus on this year’s theme, ‘Food Connects Us,’” she said. “We coordinated a variety of events to showcase this. We organized a post-wide food drive in support of the installation’s food pantry, hosted commissary tours to teach our community how to read food labels and shop for the most nutritious options, visited child development centers and DeRidder High School to help students build healthy habits early, and led three cooking classes focused on kid-friendly meals, cooking in small spaces and fueling for performance.”

According to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, National Nutrition Month was established in 1973 as an annual campaign to encourage informed food choices and promote healthful eating and physical activity habits.

Williams said each engagement was designed to both educate and inspire.

“Food is such an important part of our lives,” she said. “When it comes to nutrition, we often don’t know what we don’t know. Our goal this month

was to reach as many people as possi-

ble with that message.”

Lilli Keppinger, a registered dietitian at BJACH, joined Williams in leading this year’s outreach. The pair took to the airwaves March 17 to share their initiatives on KJAE 93.5 and Today’s Country KVVP 105.7 and produced two social media reels to expand their reach.

“Getting the word out about nutrition is important for several reasons,” Keppinger said. “National Nutrition Month is a great springboard for raising awareness about the role nutrition plays in overall health. It’s also a chance to educate the public on evidence-based practices in a world overwhelmed with misinformation.”

Keppinger said knowing what to eat—and when—can make all the difference in achieving nutrition goals.

“Regular messaging helps people build confidence in their ability to make healthy choices,” she said. “Whether it’s meal planning, label reading, or understanding the difference between fad diets and sustainable habits, nutrition education supports everything from mental health to chronic disease prevention. It’s about creating a strong foundation for a healthier, more resilient lifestyle.”

Justine Ramsey, a registered dietitian with the Vernon Parish Louisiana State University Agricultural Center, partnered with the BJACH team for the Family Friendly Meals cooking class, providing ingredients and educational materials.

“I provide direct education and support community projects in Vernon and Beauregard parishes,” Ramsey said. “Through a grant from the Supplemental Nutrition Program, I’m empowered to participate in and support opportunities like this.”

Ramsey said she was proud to collaborate with BJACH to help the Fort Johnson community make healthier, more informed food choices.

As the Army continues to prioritize holistic health and wellness, the role of registered dietitians remains essential to the success of Soldiers and their Families.

Through expert guidance, community engagement and evidence-based education, the BJACH Nutrition Care Division is helping to fuel the force—one meal at a time.



Capt. Aireal Williams, right, and Lilli Keppinger, left, registered dietitians from Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital, teach students the importance of hydration and nutrition during a presentation at DeRidder High School, March 24. The visit was part of BJACH’s National Nutrition Month outreach to promote healthy habits. (U.S. Army photo by Jean Clavette Graves)



Capt. Maria Ong and her daughter, Menchu, 3, prepare a kid-friendly meal during a National Nutrition Month cooking class at the Fort Johnson Education Center, March 14. (U.S. Army photo by Jean Clavette Graves)



Capt. Aireal Williams, a registered dietitian at Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital, meets with a patient to discuss nutrition education and meal planning strategies at the BJACH Nutrition Care Clinic. The clinic is non-referral based. (U.S. Army photo by Jean Clavette Graves)

BJACH prepares medical teams for battlefield and homefront care

By Jean Clavette Graves
BJACH PAO

FORT JOHNSON, La. — At Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital, training isn’t just a requirement—it’s a mission imperative. Supporting the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Johnson, BJACH is equipping its medical teams with the skills and confidence needed to deliver world-class care at home and in combat. From aeromedical evacuation drills and emergency department cross-training to hands-on clinical skill refreshers, these training efforts ensure BJACH personnel are ready to save lives anytime, anywhere.

Sgt. 1st Class Chip Allen, noncommissioned officer in charge of the BJACH emergency department, led efforts to ensure all assigned combat medical specialists, or 68Ws, received cross-training in the ED and other clinical areas. This initiative was developed to allow for cross-departmental coverage when needed.

“For our medics, this is important because it increases versatility, competence and flexibility for them to work anywhere in our organization,” he said. “This bolsters the knowledge and manpower utilization of our 68Ws when they move on to other Army units.”

Allen said cross-training improves and supports future operational readiness, enhancing their ability to work in a variety of roles in both combat and clinical settings.

“This endeavor will benefit my department and the hospital by breaking the isolation bubble of working exclusively for an assigned clinic,” he said. “It builds teamwork and confidence in our medical capabilities to learn and grow into the Army’s most versatile MOS, both on and off the battlefield.”

Allen said the Fort Johnson community can be confident knowing that BJACH medics are trained, competent and ready to support patient care wherever they are needed.

Following their emergency department rotation, BJACH medics began cross-training in the hospital’s primary care clinics.

Maj. Tynika Reese, clinical nursing officer in charge of the BJACH emergency department, coordinated aeromedical evacuation hot and cold load training with the 1st Battalion, 5th Aviation Regiment’s “Cajun Dustoff” on March 18 and 20.

Reese said the training was designed to ensure emergency department personnel are prepared for high-pressure situations.

“For many of our civilian staff and new military Soldiers, this may be their first exposure to military medical evacuation operations,” she said. “The training aimed to familiarize everyone with the process, procedures and the



Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital staff transport a simulated casualty during hot and cold load training March 18 with Cajun Dustoff, 1st Battalion, 5th Aviation Regiment. The training helped familiarize clinical personnel with aeromedical evacuation procedures to improve communication, coordination and response during medical emergencies. (U.S. Army photo by Jean Clavette Graves)

importance of teamwork. Effective patient transport relies heavily on clear communication between the flight crews and hospital staff to ensure a smooth handoff and optimal care during critical moments.”

Reese said practicing in real or simulated scenarios enhances readiness, strengthens capabilities and improves staff efficiency.

“The mission of the Joint Readiness Training Center is to deliver realistic training for military units by preparing them for various operational challenges,” she said. “The 1-5 Aviation and the BJACH emergency department play vital roles in this mission by ensuring that Soldiers receive prompt and effective medical care during training exercises. With Cajun Dustoff providing rapid transport from the field to our helipad, we can quickly address injuries and life-threatening conditions.”

Reese added that integrating MEDEVAC operations with hospital care establishes a comprehensive support system that prioritizes Soldiers’ health and readiness.

“This partnership enhances our ability to respond effectively and provide the highest level of care to our patients,” she said.

Training at BJACH isn’t limited to emergency personnel. The Hospital Education and Staff Development team hosted a Skills Fair March 25–27 featuring interactive stations focused on critical individual and clinical skills.

1st Lt. Allyssa Moore, a registered nurse assigned to BJACH’s inpatient ward, volunteered to coordinate the event.

“The purpose was to keep staff trained and updated on policies as well as new medical information and procedures,” she said. “Patient safety is our number one priority, and events like this ensure we’re practicing safe, high-quality care.”

Moore said this was her first time planning an event of this scale.

“Nurses were our target audience for this fair, but we wanted it to be of value to everyone in the hospital,” she said.

She took a census of the nursing staff to determine what areas they wanted more training in and included annual training requirements as she coordinated instructors and course topics.

“Each station was designed to reinforce core clinical competencies while giving staff the chance to refresh skills they might not use every day,” she said. “My goal was to make the training both meaningful and applicable to real-world scenarios.”

Moore said participants could sharpen their skills in wound care, blood transfusion protocols, central line maintenance, pain management and perioperative nursing — just to name a few.

She also participated in the hot and cold load training offered by the emergency department.

“I think cross-training in other areas is important,” she said. “I look at organizations like they’re made up of boxes. Each box is a different section, and sometimes we get so focused on what we’re doing in our box that we forget about the other boxes. Working or training with other sections helps us build understanding and organizational synergy.”

Moore said through interdepartmental training and engagement opportunities, communication and efficiency will improve.

With training events like these, BJACH continues to reinforce its commitment to patient safety, operational readiness and high-quality care. Whether on the battlefield or at Fort Johnson, BJACH medical teams stand ready to support Soldiers and Families with expertise, confidence and compassion.



JRTC & Fort Johnson Motorcycle Safety Courses

See your unit
Motorcycle Mentor
first!



- Type in <https://safety.army.mil>
- Click on 'OFF-DUTY' at the top of the page
- Under 'PMV-2 (Motorcycles)' choose 'Training'
- Click on visit AIRS Website at https://airs.safety.army.mil/usg_disclaimer.aspx
- Follow the above link, type in your CAC code and click on "I ACCEPT"
- At the top for Region, click on "Southeast", and in Garrison, click on "Fort Johnson"
- Utilize the calendar and choose a course/date and click on "Location"
- This will take you to a page. Read the instructions and fill out the form

(337) 531 - RIDE **APRIL 2025**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 Basic Riders Course 	2	3 Intermediate Drivers Training 	4	5
6	7	8 Basic Riders Course 	9	10 Intermediate Drivers Training 	11 Remedial Drivers Training 	12
13	14	15 Basic Riders Course 	16	17 Intermediate Drivers Training 	18 Advanced Rider Course 	19
20	21	22 Basic Riders Course 	23	24 Intermediate Drivers Training 	25	26
27	28	29 Basic Riders Course 	30			

PLAYGROUND SAFETY

Playground safety is crucial, especially in Louisiana, where environmental factors like insects, intense sun, and small objects can pose risks to young children

- ✓ **INSECT SAFETY**
- ✓ **SUN PROTECTION**
- ✓ **CHOKING HAZARDS**
- ✓ **EQUIPMENT SAFETY**
- ✓ **GENERAL SAFETY**

Ensure playground safety by inspecting for fire ant mounds, spider webs, and choking hazards like small objects. Check equipment for sharp edges and hot surfaces and provide shade to prevent sunburn. Supervise children, apply sunscreen, and encourage hydration. Keep a first aid kit on hand and ensure the play area is well-maintained with soft surfaces

Contact the Garrison Safety Office if you have any questions or concerns at (337)531-SAFE



Military Child Appreciation Event



April 2nd
8 am - 5 pm

KIDS COLORING CONTEST
Pick up a coloring sheet from your Community Center & turn them in before April 18th!
While you're here register for the **LAST March Madness drawing!**

We'll have **Lemonade & Cookies to Enjoy!**

Corvias
PROPERTY MANAGEMENT





Child abuse: Know the signs

By Army Community Service

FORT JOHNSON, La. — April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. This annual observance was created to recognize the importance of protecting children from abuse and child endangerment. The mission Army Community Service is to organize and execute a range of events and activities that will raise awareness about child abuse and neglect by providing information on available resources for Soldiers and Families.

Violence can take a heavy toll on a child and lead to serious consequences for their health and well-being that can last into adulthood.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), there were 558,899 victims of child abuse and neglect across the United States in fiscal year (FY) 2022.

Oftentimes, children who experience abuse have difficulty defining what a safe home means to them. Children can struggle with finding the right words to express themselves and what they are feeling.

This may include expressing emotions, such as anger, in unhealthy ways.

A child who is exposed to abuse may believe certain unhealthy behaviors are normal and acceptable, such as insulting others when feeling angry.

Research shows that children exposed to violence in the home, or who are themselves victims of physical abuse, are put at serious risk for long term physical and mental health problems. Child abuse can have long-term physical, emotional, and psychological effects according to medicinenet.com.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, children who are abused or neglected may suffer immediate physical injuries such as cuts, bruises, or broken bones. Child abuse and neglect can disrupt brain development, potentially resulting in the impairment of the brain's functions.

These functions may include working memory, self-awareness, planning and problem-solving. This damage can result in failure in school, depression and substance use. Most often, a parent, family member, caretaker or someone close to the family is the perpetrator of child abuse.



According to a HHS report, most individuals who committed child abuse in 2021 were the victim's parents (76.8%).

If you suspect or know someone who is in an abusive environment please don't hesitate to get in touch with the Fort Johnson, Hopeline at 337-531-4673, or the Victim Advocacy Program at 337-531-6897.

You can also contact the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to report suspected or known child abuse and neglect at 855-4LA-KIDS (855-452-5437).

During the Month of April, the Fort Johnson

New Parent Support Program (NPSP) is hosting a variety of activities:

- April 2 at 9 a.m. — Child Abuse Prevention Month Proclamation Signing and Pinwheel Planting at the Warrior Community Center.
- April 5 at 9 a.m. — DFMWR Dye Hard Color Run at the Warrior Hills Golf Course.
- April 17 at 1 p.m. — Baby Boot Camp class at Army Community Service.
- April 18 at 7 p.m. — Glow Movie Night at the Head Quarters Field, and
- April 22 at 9 a.m. — Tree Planting with NPSP at the Warrior Hills Golf Course.



**YOUR
OPINION
MATTERS**

**GOT ISSUES?
LET YOUR
VOICE BE
HEARD**



SCAN



**ARMY FAMILY
ACTION PLAN**

If it's a program or service,
an AFAP issue can **IMPROVE IT.**
If it's a policy or regulation,
an AFAP issue can **CHANGE IT.**
If it's a law,
an AFAP issue can **AMEND IT.**
If there's a low-cost, creative
solution,
You should **PURSUE IT.**

Celebrate Month of the Military Child with AAFES

AAFES

DALLAS – The Army & Air Force Exchange Service is saluting the nation's youngest heroes worldwide in celebration of Month of the Military Child.

Throughout April, the Exchange will celebrate with free events, giveaways, activities and sweepstakes for military children.

"The Exchange is all in to make sure our youngest heroes feel like they are home, no matter where their families' service takes them," said Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Rich Martinez, the Exchange's senior enlisted advisor. "We are honored to celebrate military kids with these special events, giveaways and more all month long."

Highlights include:

A free collectible military brat patch at Exchange checkouts (while supplies last). In-store events from late March through early May at more than 50 Exchanges featuring themes and toys such as Nerf, Disney Princess, Star Wars, Play-Doh, Beyblades and more. Visit the community Hub at <https://publicaffairs-sme.com/Community/momc> to find local events.

Exclusive sweepstakes giving away more than \$20,000 in toys and Exchange gift cards,



available at ShopMyExchange.com/sweepstakes beginning April 1.

Giveaways for military kids including a free goodie bag and certificate of appreciation for Purple Up Day on April 15 at select Exchanges.

Free Treat Day on April 19, offering free food and drinks at Exchange restaurants including

Burger King, Starbucks, Subway, Qdoba and more.

"These events and promotions are a special salute to military children," Martinez said. "Exchange associates worldwide look forward to welcoming and celebrating these young heroes during this exciting month."

Academic achievers earn prize in Exchange's You Made the Grade

AAFES

DALLAS – Three military kids won the Army & Air Force Exchange Service's You Made the Grade sweepstakes and learned studying hard pays off.

Air Base Aviano third grader Lysander Brown, son of Maj. Dexter Brown, was presented with the grand-prize \$2,000 Exchange gift card. Fort Belvoir sixth grader Jorlan Delgado, son of Maj. Jorge Delgado, received his second-place prize of \$1,500. A Fort Johnson ninth grader earned the third-place prize of \$500.

Delgado said it was like Christmas when he learned he was named a winner.

"I was really, really surprised," Delgado said.

The winners were randomly selected from more than 1,170 military students who entered the drawing after maintaining at least a B average during the 2024 fall semester.

"We've only entered one time, but never thought we would actually win," Maj. Dexter Brown, Lysander's father, said. "We really appreciate the program."

For more than 25 years, the Exchange's You Made the Grade program has rewarded students in first through 12th grade for above-average grades to encourage and inspire them to



continue studying hard.

Military children with a B average or higher can bring their report cards each grading period to their local PX or BX for a \$10 or \$20 gift card as well as a coupon sheet, which includes:

- A free small fountain, frozen drink or bubbler beverage.
- A free kid's meal at a participating Exchange restaurant.
- A free combo meal at a participating Exchange restaurant.
- A free kid's hair service at The Barber Shop, Hair Studios, or Stylique beauty salons.
- 10% off any pair of headphones (excluding Apple and Beats).
- 10% off apparel and footwear.
- A \$5 coupon for Exchange mall conces-

sions or kiosks.

- An entry for the worldwide sweepstakes.

"Children belonging to military families face a great deal of uncertainty, such as a parent deploying or moving often, that can disrupt schooling," said Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Rich Martinez, the Exchange's senior enlisted advisor. "The Exchange's You Made the Grade program seeks to recognize and honor students of military families for their resiliency inside the classroom."

The next drawing will take place in June. To enter the drawing, shoppers can complete the form on the back of the gift card and mail it to:

You Made the Grade
PO Box 227398
Dallas, TX 75222-7398

International exchange students give back to Fort Johnson community



Cpl. Austin "Quinn" Pickard, licensed practical nurse and noncommissioned officer in charge, and Lt. Col. Shemica Ward, clinical nursing officer in charge of the Labor, Delivery and Postpartum Ward at Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital, share a moment with a group of international exchange students during a special visit March 27. The teens — Suzanne Lay and Isaé Cissoko, seniors from France; Ariadna Ruiz Sanchez and Marco Brenes Suárez, sophomores from Spain; and Sutheera Kongsap, a sophomore from Thailand — are part of the International Student Exchange Program and attend Leesville High School while living with active-duty military families stationed at Fort Johnson. (U.S. Army photo by Jean Clavette)

Adrienne Webster, spouse of Spc. Chester A. Kowalski II, 2nd Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, receives handmade baby burp cloths from Suzanne Lay, a 12th-grader from France, March 27 at Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital. Webster, holding her newborn daughter Arabella, was the first recipient of the donated items, crafted and delivered by participants in the International Student Exchange (ISE) Program. The group, all Leesville High School students staying with active-duty military families assigned to the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Johnson, visited the Labor, Delivery and Postpartum Ward to support new parents and give back to their host community. (U.S. Army photo by Jean Clavette Graves)



RECREATION & PARKS QUARTERLY CALENDAR

April 2025

- 5** Fishing for Fun with Just Imagine SWLA
Riverside Park (1701 Fitzenreiter Rd.)
10 am - Noon
- 12** USGC Wind, Waves & Wheels
Veterans Memorial Park (Lakefront)
10 am - Noon
- 19** Citywide Easter Egg Hunt
Hillcrest Park (2808 Hillcrest Dr.)
10 am - Noon
- 26** Celebrate Earth Day with #ReTreeLC
Hillcrest Park (2808 Hillcrest Dr.)
10 am - Noon

May 2025

- 3** LA Region 5 STEM Center Cardboard
Canoe Races
1-10 North Beach
10 am - Noon
- 10** Paws in the Park
Bark du Lac Dog Park (111 W. Pine St.)
10 am - Noon
- 17** National Kids to Parks Day
Lock Park (1535 Ryan Street)
10 am - Noon
- 31** Sasol's Nature in Focus Wings of
Wonder & All Things Birds
Tuten Park (5801 Nelson Rd.)
10 am - Noon

June 2025

- 2** Mallard Golf Club Jr. Golf Clinic
Buddy Prejean Park (1601 Illinois St.)
10 am - Noon
- 14** Phillips 66 STEM Day in the Park
Drew Park (416 Dr. Michael DeBaakey Dr.)
8:30 - 10:30 am
- 20** Summer Fun Skate Night
Lake Charles Event Center (900 Lakeshore Dr.)
5:30 - 8:30 pm
- 28** Art in the Park
McMillan Park (543 Goos St.)
10 am - Noon

Events are subject to change. Unless otherwise noted, all events are free and family friendly.
Follow www.cityoflakecharles.com, www.facebook.com/LakeCharlesLouisiana
and @lccityhall on Instagram for updates.

For more information, call (337) 491-1280.

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APRIL 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
FOLLOW US ON ★ FORT JOHNSON FAMILY AND MWR ★ JRTC AND FORT JOHNSON ★ JOHNSON CYS	FOR SPRING BREAK TRIPS CALL 726-780-1402 FOR MORE INFO! 	1.  April Fool's Day	2. Proclamation Signing 9:30am - 10am Warrior Center ENVIRONMENTAL DAY PX 10AM	3. NPSP PLAY MORNING PLAYTOWN 10AM SCAVENGER HUNT ALLIGATOR LAKE 5PM	4.  WEAR BLUE DAY COOKIE DECORATING PLAYTOWN 11AM - 1PM	5. COLOR RUN WARRIOR HILLS 9AM TEEN JOB WORKSHOP APRIL 5, 12, 19, 26 ACS
6. NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK APRIL 6-12	7.  BOOKMARK MAKING ALLEN MEMORIAL LIBRARY ALL MONTH LONG!	8. STORYTIME ALLEN MEMORIAL LIBRARY 11:30AM TUESDAYS & FRIDAYS	ARTS & CRAFTS BUY CERAMIC GET PAINT FEE FREE!	10. STEM ALLEN MEMORIAL LIBRARY 5PM VOLUNTEER OF THE QUARTER 5PM WARRIOR CENTER	11. MOMC STORYTIME ALLEN MEMORIAL LIBRARY 11:30AM	12.  CATFISH DERBY CATFISH COVE 7AM-11AM CRAWFISH BOIL 12PM - 3PM CYS SKATE NIGHT MST 4PM - 6PM
13. NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK APRIL 13-19	14. KLUBS & KARTS BUY KART RIDE GET PUTT PUTT FREE! 2PM - 6PM SPRING BREAK FIELD TRIP WEEK LAKE CHARLES, LA	15.  PURPLE UP DAY SOWELA, LEESVILLE, LA	16. LIBRARY SCAVENGER HUNT ALL DAY KIDS BOGO WARRIOR LANES LAFAYETTE, LA	17. NPSP PLAY MORNING PLAYTOWN 10AM BABY BOOTCAMP ACS 1PM - 4PM BATON ROUGE, LA	18.  GLOW OUTDOOR MOVIE NIGHT 7PM BEACH BLDG 2070 FORT JOHNSON, LA	19. SUPERHERO CHALK WALK WARRIOR HILLS 9AM TEDDYBEAR CRIME SCENE 1PM BLDG 2070
20. EASTER BRUNCH WARRIOR HILLS 11AM - 2PM	21. COLORBLIND OIL CHANGE AUTO SKILLS 12PM - 4PM	22. TREE PLANTING WARRIOR HILLS	23. POWER WEDNESDAY MAIN POST CHAPEL EVERY WEDNESDAY (EXCEPT APRIL 16TH)	24. BRING YOUR KID GET FREE BUCKET OF GOLF BALLS ALL DAY!	25. MOMC Pool Party 5pm - 7pm MOMC LOCK IN 25TH & 26TH MST	26. FISHING TOURNAMENT ALLIGATOR LAKE 7AM
27. FAMILY BOWLING DAY WARRIOR LANES ALL DAY KIDS FISHING TOURNAMENT TOLEDO BEND 9AM	28. NATIONAL HAT DAY	29. BOOKS & BUBBLES ALLEN MEMORIAL LIBRARY 5PM	30. NAILED IT THE FORGE 6PM	VERNON SPRING BREAK - APRIL 14-18 BEAUGARD SPRING BREAK, APRIL 18-25 FOR MORE DETAILS CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE AT JOHNSONARMY.MWR.COM OR SCAN THE QR CODE     EFMP Exceptional Family Member Program ACS		

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Dye Hard Color Run

APRIL 5TH

Warrior Hills Golf Course

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