

THE JRTC AND FORT POLK

GUARDIAN

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Inside:

- McCullough visits Fort Polk...page 2,5
- Initiating separation...page 4
- STARBASE groundbreaking...page 5,6
- Maj. Gen. Talley visits BJACH...page 8

McCullough tours Fort Polk Quality of Life improvements

By **CHUCK CANNON**
Public Affairs and Communications

FORT POLK, La. – Brenda Lee McCullough, director, U.S. Army Installation Management Command Directorate-Readiness, visited the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk Jan. 31-Feb. 2 to get a first-hand look at the status, quality and improvements being made at the sprawling Army post in south central Louisiana.

Fort Polk was one of four selected installations identified in a pilot program targeting quality-of-life improvement. In addition to Fort Polk, they included Fort Irwin, California; Fort Wainwright, Alaska; and Fort Hood, Texas.

Among the areas on Fort Polk visited by McCullough were the following:

- Home of Heroes and Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers
- Warrior Center
- Toledo Bend Recreation Site
- Directorate of Emergency Services dispatch and E911 Center
- Army Community Service
- New Parent Support Program
- Corvias Military Housing
- Commissary
- STARBASE (STEM Center)
- UMCS (Utility Monitoring Control System)
- Warrior Information Exchange
- Installation Planning Board
- Auto Skills Center
- Playtown & Café (Indoor Playground) and Bowling Center

After beginning her visit with office calls to JRTC and Fort Polk leadership on Feb. 1, McCullough checked out upgrades at the Fort Polk's BOSS headquarters and recreation area. She said Fort Polk's BOSS program ranks as one of the top programs in the Army. She was briefed by Cpl. Toymeisha Patterson, BOSS president, on opportunities and events in which



Brenda Lee McCullough, director, U.S. Army Installation Management Command Directorate-Readiness, visited the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk Jan. 31-Feb. 2 and toured the Home of Heroes Recreation Center Feb. 1.

ANGIE THORNE/GUARDIAN

the installation's single Soldiers participate.

"I have 24 installations and the Fort Polk BOSS Program is one of the top three," McCullough said. "It's a robust program that not only provides events and entertainment, but focuses on life skills and community service. Let's keep it in the top 3."

Following her trip to the Fort Polk Toledo Bend Recreation Site and a tour of the improvements made to the popular outdoor spot, McCullough walked through a Corvias Military Living renovated home in Palmetto Housing Area.

"I like what's being done and this seems to be a great home for young Soldiers and their families."

Other areas visited by McCullough on Feb. 1 included Directorate of Emergency Services Dispatch and E911 Center, Army Community Service, New Parent Support Program and the Commissary.

McCullough began the second day of her tour by getting a first-hand look at Fort Polk's Utility

Monitoring Control Systems. The UMCS allows Fort Polk's

Directorate of Public Works to monitor air conditioning and heating use and operations on buildings throughout the installation, saving money and reducing repair times.

McCullough learned that 78 buildings are currently being monitored, with a total of 104 slated to come on line. Focus is placed on high-occupancy buildings, such as barracks and headquarters buildings, but Greg Prudhomme, DPW director, said the goal is to eventually have all installation buildings in the system.

"We did a comparison between one month where the system was not in use, and the same month the following year when the system was in use, and the savings were about \$1,300," Prudhomme said. "The system costs about \$14,000 to install in a building."

"So, the system pays for itself in about 15 months," McCullough said. "Then that's how you need

Please see **Tour**, page 5



JRTC and Fort Polk
Brig. Gen. David S. Doyle
Joint Readiness Training Center
and Fort Polk

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For more information on Fort Polk units and happenings visit the following Facebook pages: **@JRTCOperationsGrp**, **@BayneJonesACH** or **@fortpolkmwr**.



Cover photo: From left to right: Sophia Walker, 12, Brenda Lee McCullough, director, U.S. Army Installation Management Command Directorate-Readiness, Eric Adams, 13, Col. Sam Smith Jr., Fort Polk garrison commander, Emanuel Korankye, 13, Command Sgt. Maj. Stephen Nielson, garrison command sergeant major, Anne Smith, Vernon Parish School Board curriculum director and Daelion Barbour, 13, participate in the groundbreaking ceremony at the home of the future STARBASE program, bldg 744, Feb. 1. See story on pages 4,5. (Photo by Angie Thorne).



HEALTH CARE



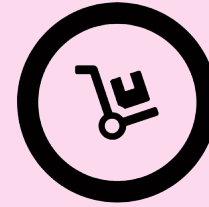
SPOUSE
EMPLOYMENT



HOUSING



CHILD CARE



PCS MOVES

Quality of Life Initiatives

People first

CTC Infrastructure

Fort Polk Infrastructure

Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital

Commanding General's Priorities



CHRISTY GRAHAM/GUARDIAN

Saturday 100th Home Based Business honored

At the First Saturday Market, Col. Sam Smith, garrison commander, had the honor of awarding Alison L. Matheny, owner of Red Headed Rita Quilting, the 100th Home Based Business permit for JRTC and Fort Polk. For more on Fort Polk's HBB, see the JRTC web site at <https://home.army.mil/polk/index.php/about/garrison-directorates-and-support-offices/HBB>



Department of Defense, nation celebrate Black History Month

By DAVE VERGUN
DoD News

ARLINGTON, Va. — Black History Month, also known as National African American History Month, is an annual celebration of achievements by Black Americans and a time to recognize the positive impact they've had on the history of the United States and the Defense Department.

Black people have fought in every United States war, from the Revolutionary War through the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Ninety African Americans have been awarded the Medal of Honor.

Yet, throughout most of American history, Black service members were placed in segregated units. Desegregation didn't occur until Jan. 26, 1948, when President Harry S. Truman issued Executive Order 9981 directing the armed services to integrate.

Active-duty service members number 1,319,283; of those, 227,974, or 17.3%, are African American, as of December 2021.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2020, the Black or African American population was 41.1 million, representing 12.4% of the U.S. population.

Notable dates

- Black people, both slave and free, served on both sides during the Revolutionary War. African Americans also served on both sides in the War of 1812 (1812-1815).

Many served with the British to gain their freedom and resettle in non-slave nations, particularly Canada, Bermuda and Sierra Leone.

- In the Civil War (1861-1865), more than 186,000 African Americans fought for the Union Army and Navy. A lesser number of African Americans were used as laborers on the Confederate side.

- Six regiments of African Americans, known as buffalo soldiers, served in the Indian Wars from 1863 to the early 1900s and in the Spanish-American War in 1898.

- About 367,000 African Americans service members served in Europe during World War I (1917-1918).

- Around 1.3 million African American service members served during World War II (1941-1945).

- During the Korean War (1950-1953), about 600,000 Black service members served in the armed forces.

- About 300,000 African Americans served in the Vietnam War (1961-1975).

The two top-level Black Americans in DOD have been Army Gen. Colin Powell, who served as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 1989 to 1993, and Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III who was sworn in January 2021.

History of the Celebration

The origin of Black History Month is associated with the noted African-American historian Carter G. Woodson. In 1926, he initiated the celebration of Negro History Week during the second week in February.

February was chosen because that is the birth month of Frederick Douglass, an abolitionist and social reformer, and President Abraham Lincoln, who abolished slavery.

The celebration was expanded to the entire month of February in 1976 by President Gerald Ford; since that time, every president has designated February as Black History Month.

During his 1976 Black History Month announcement, Ford linked the commemoration to the nation's 200th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence that year.

On Feb. 11, 1986, Congress passed Public Law 99-244, which designated each February as "National Black (Afro-American) History Month."

DA to initiate separation of COVID-19 vaccination order refusers

HQDA-OCPA

WASHINGTON — The United States Army announced Feb. 2 that it will immediately begin separating Soldiers from the service who refuse to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

Under a directive issued by Secretary of the Army Christine Wormuth, commanders are to initiate involuntary administrative separation proceedings against any Soldier who has refused the COVID-19 vaccination order and does not have an approved or pending exemption request. The order applies to regular Army Soldiers, reserve-component Soldiers serving on Title 10 active-duty and cadets.

“Army readiness depends on Soldiers who are prepared to train, deploy, fight and win our nation’s wars,” said Wormuth. “Unvaccinated Soldiers present risk to the force and jeopardize readiness. We will begin involuntary separation proceedings for Soldiers who refuse the vaccine order and are not pending a final decision on an exemption.”

Army Directive 2022-02 details how Army commanders are to proceed with separation proceedings and requires them to process these separation actions as expeditiously as possible.

Service members separated due to refusal of the COVID-19 vaccination order will not be eligible for involuntary separation pay and may be subject to recoupment of any unearned special or incentive pays.

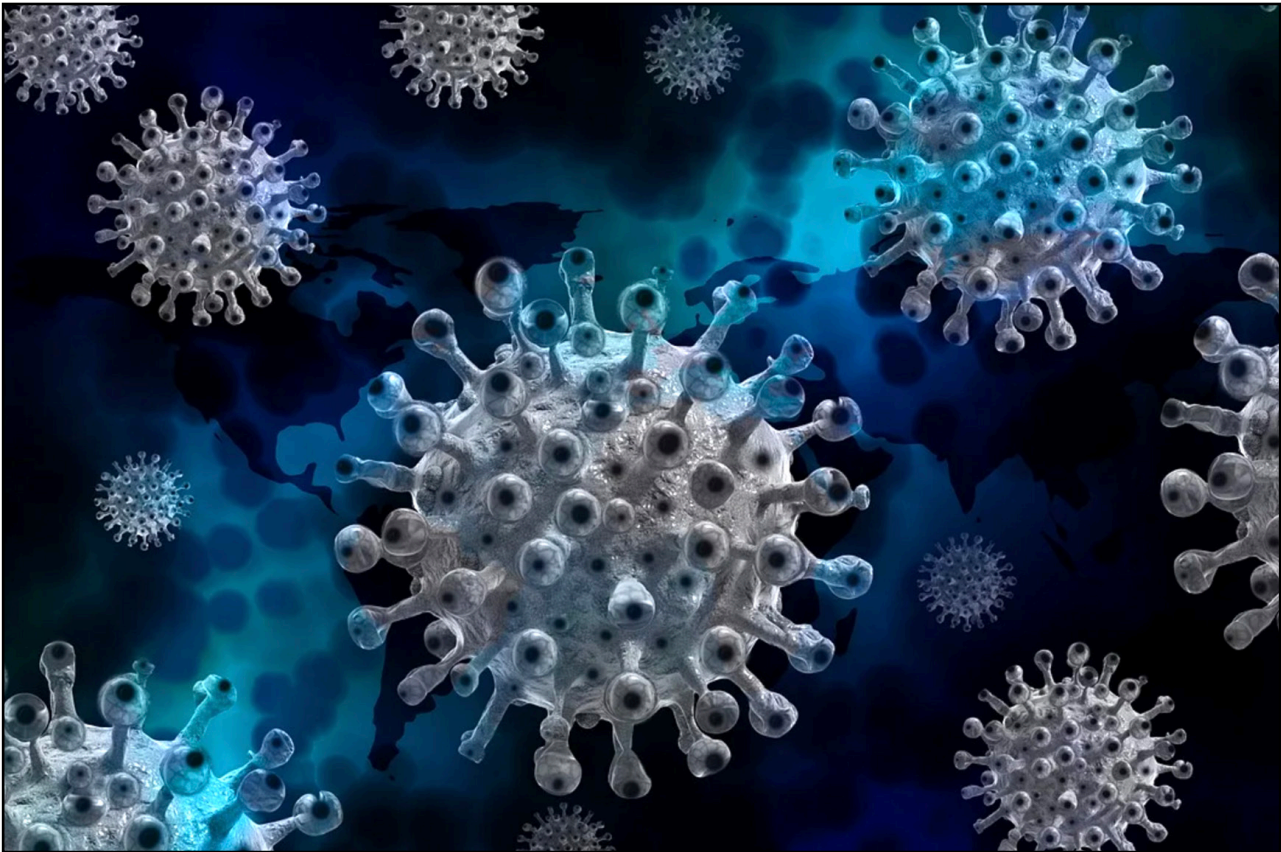
As an exception, Soldiers who will complete their separation or retirement, or begin transition leave, on or before July 1, will be granted a temporary exemption and will be permitted to complete their separations or retirements.

The least favorable characterization of service that may be issued is General (Under Honorable Conditions), unless additional misconduct warrants separation with an Other than Honorable characterization of service.

Unvaccinated Soldiers who have requested medical exemption or religious accommodations are temporarily exempt from the COVID-19 vaccination requirement while their requests are under review.

Soldiers who receive denials of their medical exemption or religious accommodation requests will have seven calendar days from the denial to do one of the following or face separation proceedings:

- Begin a COVID-19 vaccination regimen. If a Soldier indicates intent to begin the vaccination regimen, commanders may use their discretion to adjust the timeline based



U.S. ARMY COVID-19 VACCINATION RATES			
Component	% Complete*	% Partial & Complete*	
Active Army	96%	97%	
Army Reserve	79%	83%	
REGULAR ARMY (ACTIVE COMPONENT) EXEMPTION DATA			
Permanent Medical Exemptions	Approved: 6	Disapproved: 656	Requested:709
Permanent Religious Exemption	Approved: 0	Disapproved: 266	Requested: 2,910
Temporary Exemptions	5,870 (includes requests for permanent exemptions above)		
Refusals	3,350		
Official Reprimands	3,073		
*As of Jan. 26, 2022			

on local COVID-19 vaccination supplies.

- Submit an appeal to the final appeal authority.

If a final appeal is denied, the Soldier will have seven calendar days from notice of denial to begin the COVID-19 vaccination regimen.

Commanders will ensure unvaccinated service members comply with COVID-19 screening and testing requirements and applicable safety standards. Army leaders will continue to counsel unvaccinated individuals on the health benefits of receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.

- The Army has not yet involuntarily separated any Soldiers solely for refusing the lawful order to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. As of Jan. 26, Army commanders have relieved a total of six regular Army

leaders, including two battalion commanders and issued 3,073 general officer written reprimands to Soldiers for refusing the vaccination order.

Army Directive 2022-02 (Personnel Actions for Active Duty Soldiers Who Refuse the COVID-19 Vaccination Order and Accession Requirements for Unvaccinated Individuals) is available online at the Army Publishing Directorate website (<https://armypubs.army.mil/ProductMaps/PubForm/ArmyDir.aspx>).

The Army’s most recent update on vaccination and exemption statistics are available online at <https://www.army.mil/article/253543/>.

For more information, please contact us-army.pentagon.hqda-ocpa.mbx.mrd-press-desk@army.mil.

Tour

Continued from page 2

to capture the impact when we review resourcing decisions.”

Following the briefing at the UMCS site, McCullough attended the Warrior Information Exchange and the Installation Planning Board.

While at the IPB, McCullough said such venues are important.

“The IPB shows how the installation is performing and highlights current projects,” she said. “It provides for a robust conversation between directorates and units which sets us on the right azimuth. It’s a useable forum that’s been well thought out.”

McCullough next spoke to specific programs on the installation. She called Fort Polk Home Based Business Program, “awesome.”

“You must promote them (HBB) by being patrons yourselves,” she said to directors and commanders.

On government service job opportunities, she said that sometimes the Army can’t compete with hourly salary and signing bonuses found in the civilian sector.

“What we need to emphasize in advertising and recruiting for government service jobs is the benefits of government employment: Sick leave, time off, incentives, skills, certification, these incentives should be incorporated into our recruitment efforts,” she said. “Those benefits more than compensate for the hourly wages in our private sector.”

Commenting on the new facilities and services that are part of the quality of life improvements, McCullough said, “As we open these services, we need to use them. (We can) help change the narrative on Fort Polk by promoting the positive.”

McCullough concluded the day by visiting the Auto Skills Center, the new indoor playground and bowling center.

Col. Sam Smith, Fort Polk garrison commander, said visits by senior leaders such as McCullough are important.

“We appreciate Ms. McCullough spending time with us here at Fort Polk,” Smith said. “We are proud to demonstrate the progress the collective team accomplished in quality of life improvements for our Soldiers, civilians, retirees and their Family members, and the superb teamwork that takes place on our installation.”



Brenda Lee McCullough, director, U.S. Army Installation Management Command Directorate-Readiness, visited the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk Jan. 31-Feb. 2. She toured and was briefed at the Utility Monitoring Control Systems, the Corvias prototype home (middle left), driving range (bottom left) and the Auto Skills Center (bottom right).

Her encouragement, support and guidance are important as we strive to put people first, win the fight for talent and showcase our installation as one of the best in the Army.”



ANGIE THORNE/GUARDIAN



CHUCK CANNON/GUARDIAN



CHUCK CANNON/GUARDIAN

Fort Polk hosts **STARBASE** groundbreaking ceremony

By **ANGIE THORNE**
Public affairs specialist

FORT POLK, La. — The groundbreaking ceremony for the Department of Defense STARBASE Youth Program was held Feb. 1 at Fort

Polk’s Child Development Center, bldg 744 — the future home of the program.

DoD STARBASE is sponsored by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. The program offers students opportunities to participate in

challenging “hands-on, minds-on” activities in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Students interact with military personnel to explore careers and observe STEM applications in the “real world.” The program

Please see **STARBASE**, page 6

STARBASE

Continued from page 5

provides students with 25 hours of stimulating experiences at National Guard, Marine, Air Force Reserve, Army and Air Force bases across the nation, according to <https://dodstarbase.org>.

Tiffany Koch, Fort Polk's school liaison officer, said Polk STARBASE is a state of the art STEM program.

Koch said local school systems were developing a way forward with STEM curriculum while JRTC and Fort Polk was focusing on improving Quality of Life for Soldiers, Families and retirees. "Without the willingness of the Vernon Parish School Board to be our tier 1 partner in education, none of this would be possible," she said.

Lisa Lohman, Vernon Parish School Board curriculum supervisor and STEM coordinator for Vernon Parish, said they were excited to expand their partnership with Fort Polk.

"We want to continue to offer STEM opportunities for all students in Vernon Parish," she said.

Anne Smith, Vernon Parish School Board curriculum director, said this is a unique hands-on opportunity for students in Vernon Parish to learn STEM.

"It's a great way for them to further explore outside the classroom," she said. "This is great. We are excited for our students."

Koch said they were looking forward to having students in the building in school year 2022-2023.

"The students will experience activities that allow for collaboration, digital literacy, critical thinking and creative problem solving," she said. "They will design rockets, Mars rovers and explore how to survive in space."

Koch said the STARBASE program will provide onsite instructors, materials and mentorship opportunities from installation units.

"Our partnership is only beginning to grow. Within the next five years we plan to expand STARBASE and apply for the STARBASE 2.0 program," she said.

Col. Samuel Smith Jr., Fort Polk garrison commander, took part in the groundbreaking. Smith said the STARBASE program offers a positive, proven approach to engendering excitement and interest in science, technology, engineering and math.

"The STARBASE STEM program will put children at the core of the experience, making them active learners instead of passive listeners," he said. "It exposes our kids to technical areas in a manner that they can get excited about seeing, touching and doing STEM activities and tasks."

Smith said the program's success relies on collaboration between Fort Polk, the STARBASE Academy, school boards and the local

From left to right: Col. Sam Smith Jr., Fort Polk garrison commander, Brenda Lee McCullough, director, U.S. Army Installation Management Command Directorate-Readiness, Sophia Walker, 12, Eric Adams, 13, Daelion Barbour, 13, Emanuel Korankye, 13, Anne Smith, Vernon Parish School Board curriculum director, and Command Sgt. Maj. Stephen Nielson, garrison command sergeant major, participate in the groundbreaking ceremony for the STARBASE program Feb. 1.



ANGIE THORNE/GUARDIAN

Col. Sam Smith Jr., Fort Polk garrison commander, addresses the audience at the groundbreaking ceremony for the Fort Polk STARBASE youth program Feb. 1.



community.

"We are privileged to have a great partnership with these stakeholders and look forward to strengthening our partnership and collaboration to invest in our future," he said.

Daelion Barbour, 13, took part in the groundbreaking ceremony. He said the STARBASE program is a great learning opportunity for youth.

"It gives them a firm foundation and field of vision for their future," he said.

Brenda McCullough, director, IMCOM Readiness, took part in the groundbreaking

ceremony and said her family didn't push school subjects that were STEM based when she was a child.

"As an adult, I regret that because I've learned just how much better our world can be with science, math and technology. That's why I love supporting programs like this," she said. "I don't want any kid — ever — to not have the opportunity to learn more about science and technology. I think this is fantastic. I wish I had this at all of my installations. Anything that we can do to stimulate a child's mind, I'm all about it."

Briefs

Vote for spouses

Three Fort Polk spouses are eligible for the Armed Forces Insurance Military Spouse of the Year award. The voting portion of the competition takes place today through Friday. If you would like to vote for your favorite Fort Polk spouse, the spouses and their links are Manda Lynn McVey at <https://msoy.afip.org/profiles/2022-manda-lynn-mcvey>, Emily McGruder at <https://msoy.afip.org/profiles/2022-emily-mcgruder> and Jamie Lynn Blum at <https://msoy.afip.org/profiles/2022-jamie-lynn-blum>. Base winners will be announced Feb. 17.

519th bicycle clean up

Abandoned bicycles on the 519th Military Police Battalion footprint will be marked for collection and removal withing 45 days of marked notice. If you own a bicycle at the 2450 22nd Street barracks, call to confirm that your bicycle has not been marked as abandoned as soon as possible. For more information call 513.967.5620.

Flu shots

Flu shots are available for Department of Defense civilian employees at Occupational Health, bldg 3515, from 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Monday-Friday. If accommodations need to be made outside of those hours contact 337.531.6131.

Fire marshal class

A Fire Marshal Class is held the second Tuesday of each month at 9 a.m. in the Main Fire Sta-

tion. The next class is Tuesday. The Fort Polk Fire Prevention Division's goal is to provide fire protection services to prevent loss of life or personal injuries and reduce property loss to the lowest attainable level consistent with mission and sound engineering and economic principles.

This is accomplished by providing education to the public and establishing and enforcing regulations that foster fire safety inside the work environment. As a fire marshal, you are the first line of defense in ensuring a safe working environment for your area. Contact fire inspector James McArthur for more information at 337.531.0686 or 337.378.9198.

Memorial Illumination

The Cane River Creole National Historical Park hosts a Memorial Illumination event to honor the people who were enslaved on Magnolia Plantation, 5549 La. Hwy 119, Derry, and Oakland Plantation, 4386 La. Hwy 494, Natchez, as part of Black History Month. The Magnolia event takes place Feb. 12 and the Oakland illumination is Feb. 26. Each luminaria represents an enslaved man, woman or child.

Groupings of luminarias reflect a moment in time in the plantation's history.

The events are free and include self-guided tours that take place from 6:30-8 p.m. The tours will be outdoors and cover about a half mile over uneven and unpaved ground. The tours will take place rain or shine. Participants are encouraged to bring a flashlight and dress appropriately for weather and walking conditions.

The institution of enslavement and the act of emancipation have left indelible imprints on many aspects of Cane River life and the park has been working for years to uncover the stories of the people that lived on the two plantations.

Contact the park if you would be willing to volunteer to assemble and place luminarias on Feb. 12 or 26. Masks are required for everyone, regardless of location or vaccination status in all NPS buildings, crowded outdoor spaces and all forms of enclosed public transportation.

For more information visit <https://www.nps.gov/cari/index.htm> or call 318.352.0383.

ACP 6 weekend hours

Access Control Point 6 (Chaffee Road at North Fort housing), for a limited time, will be open weekends. Gate 6 is operational Monday through Sunday from 5 a.m.-9 p.m. and closed on federal holidays. This limited weekend access is in support of an installation wide traffic study and scheduled to end March 1. The senior commander has determined the need to reevaluate the traffic demand of all ACPs, including ACP 6 on the weekends. The results of the study will help determine the total traffic volume and demand which influences ACP hours of operation and manning.

Got News?
Call the Guardian
at 531-1416

IF: GATHERING 2022 March 4-5

The Fort Polk Religious Support Office hosts its annual Christian women's conference — live streamed from Dallas, Texas — at the Main Post Chapel. The theme of the conference is, "We Need Hope." The IF: 2022 conference offers everyone a voice, a seat at the table and the opportunity for female Soldiers, wives, mothers, sisters and daughters to invest in hope.

The Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk is excited to offer free registration to 120 individuals. Registration is now open. For more information about the event visit <https://www.ifgathering.com/if2022/>.



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UNDER SPECIAL EVENTS

Talley visits BJACH, Fort Polk, discusses leadership, readiness

By JEAN CLAVETTE GRAVES
BJACH PAO

FORT POLK, La. — Maj. Gen. Michael J. Talley, deputy commanding general for operations, U.S. Army Medical Command, visited the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk Feb. 1.

While at Fort Polk, Talley conducted key leader engagements with Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital and the senior mission commander. He conducted a professional development session for installation military medical personnel and participated in an orientation tour of the Joint Aide Station Rear and Fort Polk training area.

Talley is the embodiment of Army Medicine. A former enlisted combat medic and respiratory technician, he later commissioned as a medical service officer to lead and serve for more than three decades.

Talley discussed the transformation of Army medicine, the importance of the combat training center and provided his insight on leadership to the attendees.

Talley said leaders must clearly communicate task and purpose to Soldiers.

"Explaining the purpose behind what we do is very important," he said. "As leaders we need to let those we lead understand the why behind what we do and the decisions we make."

Talley said it is important to talk about leadership.

"When we think about the revolutionary changes ahead from a military standpoint, we don't always think about what kind of leader we need to be to accomplish the priorities the Army has for me," he said. "It's important to keep each other in check, there are no perfect leaders. As leaders we must go beyond being technically and tactically proficient."

Talley said the American people have bestowed great trust in those who are in the profession of arms, and that a leader's character and integrity are non-negotiable.

"Mentorship is three-dimensional," he said. "I have found through the years some of my best mentors have been my subordinates. Welcome mentors any way you can and get used to feedback from those around you."

Talley said Army Medicine should prioritize the combat training centers.

"We want to send the best and the brightest to our combat training centers," he said. "From a strategic perspective JRTC and Fort Polk is critically important to any future major conflicts."

Talley discussed the national defense strategy and articulated the 2028 vision of Army Medicine: Ready, reformed, reorganized, responsive and relevant.

"Our strategy focuses on six lines of effort," he said. "A good road map and way ahead is

Maj. Gen. Michael J. Talley, deputy commanding general for operations, U.S. Army Medical Command, conducted a leadership professional development session for military medical professionals at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk Feb. 1.



JEAN CLAVETTE GRAVES/BJACH

through the synchronization and integration of the medical efforts, building readiness, supporting modernization, medical reforms and strengthening alliances and partnerships."

Capt. Kenny St. Germaine, medical logistician with the 32nd Hospital Center, said the most valuable take away from the session was understanding the future of Army medicine from a strategic perspective.

"Hearing first hand from the deputy commanding general of operations from MEDCOM about how BJACH and our installation tie into the greater fight," he said, "I think JRTC as a whole is a readiness builder for our Army's deployable forces. Having the best leaders here to guide and shape the way our Army fights and deploys is essential."

Germaine, as a Louisiana native, said people moving to Fort Polk should know the state and local community is very welcoming for military personnel and their Families.

Maj. Carmen Salcedo, surgeon cell liaison officer for JRTC and Fort Polk, provided Talley with a tour of the JASR, recent renovations, and day-to-day operations in support of rotational units.

"It was very valuable for Major General Talley to visit the JASR. Although he's been stationed here in the past we've made some recent improvements to the facility," she said. "Visiting the JASR during a rotation gives him the opportunity to see Army medicine in action, in support of the combat training center."

Salcedo said being stationed at JRTC and Fort Polk is a huge learning opportunity.

"We don't learn the operational side of things working at medical treatment facilities," she said. "Coordinating with rotational units and supporting the JASR has given me so much insight."

Staff Sgt. Jory Huie, a combat medic with

2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, is tasked as the noncommissioned officer-in-charge of the JASR mission for the current rotation.

"I'm glad the general got to see the JASR first hand and hope he sees the value in it," he said. "None of the medics working here have had any clinical time before. While working in the JASR, they have had a month straight working in a clinic; they have one-on-one interactions with providers and receive a lot of great training."

Huie said having the JASR supports the readiness of rotational units.

"We are keeping a lot of people out of the emergency room," he said. "Having the JASR gets Soldiers back into the fight a lot quicker. We have a streamlined process in place from the time a patient arrives through disposition. We are screening, treating and getting Soldiers back into the fight quickly."

Talley said there are many changes ahead for Army Medicine with the focus moving from health-care delivery to readiness.

"Medical professionals need to remain trained and ready," he said. "As long as our Soldiers are getting the best care here and on the battlefield that is all that matters."

This was not Talley's first visit to JRTC and Fort Polk. He served as a Senior Task Force observer/controller and also as an observer/controller for Project Warrior at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California.

"I enjoyed my time at Fort Polk and thought it was a wonderful assignment," Talley told Brig. Gen. David S. Doyle, commander, JRTC and Fort Polk, during an office call. "But the improvements that have been made since my time here are tremendous. The installation looks great."

Fort Polk Girl Scout endeavors to create youth council

By **ANGIE THORNE**
Public affairs specialist

FORT POLK, La. — Striving to be a success and make a difference in the world isn't the sole purview of adults.

At one point, those same adults were youths grappling with the need to fulfill their ambitions.

Alethea Vaseliades, 12, is one of those people. She is the daughter of Ann Vaseliades and Col. Aristotle Vaseliades, Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital commander. Alethea attends Leesville Junior High School and is a Girl Scout in Fort Polk's Girl Scouts of Louisiana Pines to the Gulf Council Fort Polk Service Unit, troop 2172.

Vaseliades is working toward her Silver Award in Girl Scouts. Each age group has an award goal, bronze (fourth and fifth grades), silver (six, seventh and eighth grades) and gold (ninth through 12th grades). These are the highest awards a girl can earn in Girl Scouts.

Vaseliades strives to be successful in her efforts to earn the award, but that's not all. She could have chosen almost any project to help her earn the silver award, but Vaseliades also wanted to make a difference. Her project — she chose to start a Fort Polk Youth Council — could be a challenging task.

Vaseliades said she likes to be successful at everything. "It's a bit of a problem," she said.

In her endeavors to make the council happen, she and her troop leader and silver award manager, Jade Martinez, reached out to Col. Sam Smith, Fort Polk garrison commander, for guidance.

Alethea, along with her mom (Ann), Martinez and Smith held a meeting Jan. 27 in the garrison commander's conference room.

Some of the issues Alethea wants the youth council to be involved in include possible renovations to the Middle School and Teen Center, communication flow, creating a sponsorship program to help new military students feel comfortable and help them ease into life at Fort Polk and more.

"Adults make decisions on behalf of youth, but they don't always have an understanding of what we want or maybe even what we need. I want to bring that to the forefront," she said. "We need to know what's going on and how it impacts us."

Vaseliades said she thinks one of the most challenging issues about the council might be finding other youth to participate.

"I want to find other kids that are just as passionate about this council as I am," she said.

Smith worked with Vaseliades on building a strong foundation for the youth council and how to best achieve her goals including how many members the council should have, whether they would be voted in, some of the issues they would tackle, time lines and dead-



lines and how to make the overall attempt successful.

"I want you to create objectives and I'm going to help you develop a timeline and achieve your goals," Smith said.

Ann Vaseliades, Alethea's mom, said it's not just about Alethea getting the Silver Award.

"I'm really excited about this project and her making a positive impact on Fort Polk youth and the installation as a whole," she said. "It's a great idea. I think it's necessary for both the Garrison and Fort Polk youth."

Ann said the council is also a way for youth to learn about the Army and how it works, as well as gain knowledge and skills about and how to deal with other topics that they will encounter as adults," she said.

Ann said she was proud of her daughter and her desire to create something beneficial to Fort Polk.

"It's a sustainable project and could be here long after we leave," she said.

Martinez said the council is a great idea because she feels the about 8,000 kids on Fort Polk are under represented.

"They have no voice. It's important and I'm glad to see her championing this issue," she said.

Martinez said the Girl Scouts are all about creating young ladies of courage, confidence and character.

"Alethea and this project exemplify those objectives," she said.

Martinez said she loves watching her Scouts strive for success.

"It's uncommon, but gratifying when they



show the initiative and want to make a lasting and positive impact," she said.

When the meeting concluded, Smith presented Vaseliades with a garrison coin and encouraged her to keep striving to meet her goals.

Vaseliades said the meeting was a bit intimidating for her but that it was really helpful.

"Now I know what I need to do and I'm excited to get started and make this (youth council) become reality," she said.

ANGIE THORNE/GUARDIAN

Heart **disease**: It can happen at any age

By **GENEVA MERIDITH**
BJACH Health Promotion

FORT POLK, La. — February is American Heart Month. People are encouraged to focus on their cardiovascular health.

With the dangers of the COVID-19 pandemic still at the forefront of health concerns, it's even more important for people to take care of their cardiovascular health. Start small by getting back on track with scheduling your medical appointments with your provider, getting active and eating healthy.

Take note of some of the heart healthy advice listed below:

Monitor physical health

Make a heart-health plan with your doctor.

You'll want to take steps to protect your heart, but if you are not sure where to start you can always work with your doctor to make a plan.

Your doctor can help by:

- Checking your blood pressure and cholesterol numbers — and teaching you how to check your numbers at home.

- Sharing advice for healthy eating and physical activity.

- Supporting you in other heart-healthy changes, like quitting smoking by referring you to Bayne-Jones Army Community Tobacco Cessation program, offered monthly.

- Connecting you with specialists to treat heart problems and other conditions.

- Prescribing medicines if you need them.

If you haven't been keeping up with regular doctor visits, you're not alone. Many people have postponed doctor visits during the COVID-19 pandemic. But now's the time to get back on track! Don't wait — schedule an appointment today.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also recommends full vaccination against COVID-19. COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective, and free. After you've been fully vaccinated you can participate in many of the activities that you did prior to the pandemic by following all CDC safety protocol guidelines.

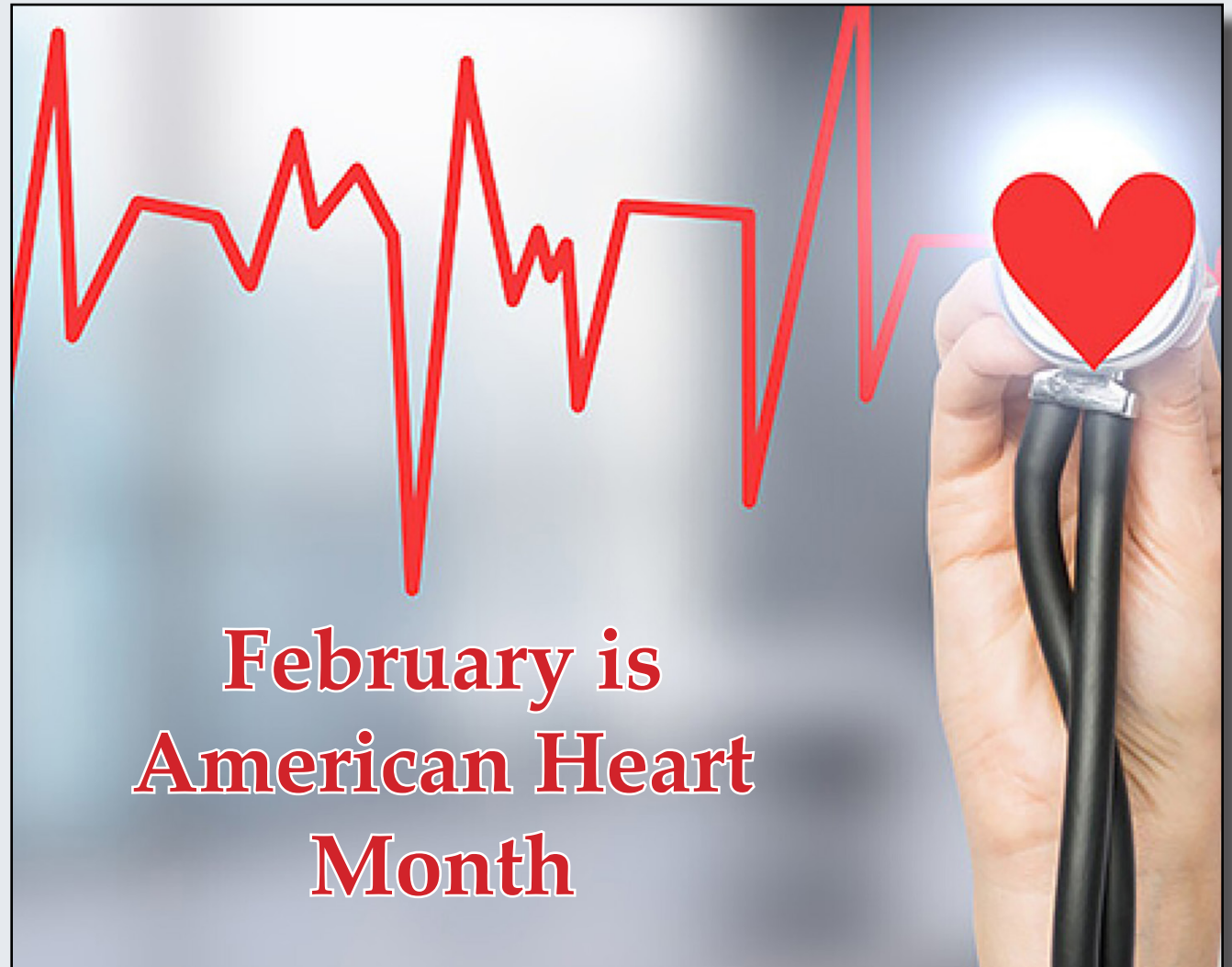
Find simple ways to get active

Look into participating in local activities listed through social media. BJACH Health Promotion has just begun the 10,000 Steps a Day 90 Day Challenge. If you have a sedentary lifestyle this is a great opportunity for you, your family and friends to form a 2 to 20 person individual team. For more information contact Health Promotion at 337.531.6131/4818.

Physical activity is key to a healthy heart. And when you're active, it's easier to keep doing all the things you love — like traveling, seeing friends and playing with your children.

Try these tips to get more active:

- Start with just 5 minutes of exercise. If you haven't been active lately, start slow and go at



your own pace. Even 5 minutes of activity a day has real health benefits, and you can build up to more over time.

- Walk more. Walking is a great way to start being active. Try fitting in a short walk in the morning or after dinner.

- Get moving while you get things done. Active chores like gardening, vacuuming, washing the car and raking leaves all count as physical activity.

- Find an activity buddy. Physical activity can be more fun with other people. Try a group activity class at your local rec center or invite a friend to go for a walk with you.

Get tips for healthy eating

Small changes in your eating habits make a big difference in your heart health. There's no one right way to eat healthy. You can find healthy eating habits that work for you. If you're having difficulties BJACH offers Nutrition Care at 337.531.3131.

Try these tips to make heart-healthy changes:

- Eat more fruits and veggies. Try making half your plate fruits and veggies at each meal. And if you can't buy fresh, remember that canned and frozen options count too.

- Cut down on sodium. Too much sodium (salt) can raise your risk for high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke. Processed and packaged foods have a lot of sodium — so check the nutrition facts label and choose options with less sodium.

- Choose healthier fats. Too much saturated

fat from fatty meats and full-fat dairy can be bad for your health. Try swapping saturated fat for healthier unsaturated fats — like fats in olive oil, avocados and nuts.

Be a heart healthy role model

Kids love to imitate their parents and grandparents, so show your family how you're taking steps to protect your heart.

Follow these tips to be a heart-healthy role model for your family:

- Talk about your family health history. If heart problems run in your family, you can take steps to lower your risk. Starting that conversation with family members is the first step.

- Get active together. Family time is a great time to be active. Go for a walk or bike ride together or kick a soccer ball around in the park. If your kids or grandkids see you enjoying physical activity, they'll be more likely to give it a try.

- Share healthy meals. Meals are a great opportunity to pass on healthy habits. Ask your kids or grandkids to help you shop for healthy ingredients and cook a meal to enjoy with the whole family.

BJACH Health Promotion offers tobacco cessation, diabetes and weight management classes to assist you in your journey in making a healthier lifestyle change. For more information on class date, time, and location please call 337.531.6880/4818.

Editor's note: The information for this story was found at www.cdc.gov and www.million-hearts.hhs.gov.

Walk this way to exercise, better health in 2022

By KEVIN STUART

Military ombudsman

FORT POLK, La. — The holiday season is over and now is the time to look forward to a healthy and fun 2022.

People often talk about getting in shape as part of their New Year's resolution, but should we only use that time frame as motivation? What about doing something now?

All it takes is engaging in an exercise that needs no gym membership, special equipment or training. I am referring to an exercise that has one of the lowest dropout rates of any form of exercise.

Have you figured out the name of this exercise? If you said walking, then you are absolutely right.

Now is the time to walk your way to feeling good and potentially to better health. As cooler temperatures creep in, now is a good time to showcase the benefits of this easy exercise and have some fun in the process.

Someone once said that walking can add "years to your life as well as life to your years." People have been participating in this type of exercise since childhood.

Walking has many positive benefits. They include assets such as conditioning your heart and lungs; burning calories while providing a lower impact exercise that is easier on the joints; helping to build muscle and possibly enhance a sense of well-being, creative thoughts and improvements in mood; and it may help to reduce body fat. I can testify about some of these things because it has worked for me.

I can go on and on about the numerous benefits of walking, but the bottom line to me is that walking is easy, healthy and fun.

If you are just starting out on a walking or fitness program and haven't worked out for a while, then I would suggest you consult with a medical provider before starting your walking plan.

I would also suggest that walkers should warm up for a few minutes (normally 5-7 minutes) prior to the walk and follow up with a cool down (about 4-6 minutes) after the walk.

Here are few tips to consider when commencing your walking routines:

- Park your vehicle far away when going to work or to the store.

- Make it a goal to walk consistently (it should become a habit, like brushing your teeth every day).

- Utilize the steps instead of an elevator (if medical condition allows). Walk around the house or block once or twice a day if time permits.

- Walk in place indoors during television commercials or during work breaks or when the weather is bad for going outdoors.

- Make it a point to walk your pet once or



twice a day if you have one or even consider walking a friend's or neighbor's pet if you don't.

- Look for different routines or routes when walking to make it fun.

- Walk with family members, friends, co-workers or neighbors while enjoying nature.

- Walk to think or just to clear your mind.

- Walk and enjoy the sights around your neighborhood, work environment and other places of interest.

- Walk for fun, happiness, joy, fitness and health.

So everyone, get ready, get set and begin by setting your physical body in motion and commence to experience the benefits of walking. Put on your walking sneakers and "walk this way" for health, wellness and fun today.

COMMENTARY


JRTC & FORT POLK


CIVILIAN FITNESS

HEALTH PROMOTION PROGRAM

Enhancing the health, fitness and quality of life for our DA Civilian community, while increasing organizational wellness and mission productivity.

- NUTRITION INFORMATION
- TOBACCO CESSATION PROGRAM
- MIND OVER BODY (MOB) CLASS
- ALCOHOL AWARENESS
- WELLNESS CENTER
- DIABETES EDUCATION
- WEIGHT MANAGEMENT







Driving range gets new cover

The Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk Directorate of Family Morale, Welfare and Recreation officially re-opened the Warrior Hills Golf Course driving range after a ribbon-cutting ceremony Jan. 28, unveiling upgrades including an awning, new turf and an irrigation system. Following the ribbon-cutting, the command team and golf course club members stepped onto the new turf to test out the upgraded driving range.



Boingo brings internet to barracks

Boingo Wireless launches its dedicated, wired 1 Gig high-speed internet after a ribbon-cutting ceremony Jan. 27. Col. Sam Smith and Boingo Wireless representatives cut the ribbon prior to Soldiers being invited to refreshments and information on the new service, which starts at \$99, for Fort Polk barracks — the first military base with access to Boingo's high-speed fiber service. "Soldiers will be able to get more accomplished more quickly. I also know a lot of Soldiers who game are going to be excited about this," said Cpl. Toymeisha Patterson, Fort Polk's Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers president.



Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk Quality of Life Conference



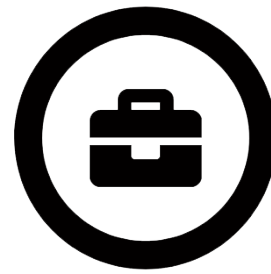
CHILD CARE



HEALTH CARE



HOUSING



SPOUSE
EMPLOYMENT



PCS MOVES

Quality of Life Initiatives

People first

CTC Infrastructure

Fort Polk Infrastructure

Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital

Commanding General's Priorities

QoL Schedule of events

- Welcome — 9:00-9:30 a.m.
- Housing/Barracks — 9:30-10:15 a.m.
- Education/Child Care — 10:30-11:15 a.m.
- Spouse Employment — 11:15 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
- Lunch — 12:10-1:10 p.m.
- Fort Polk Infrastructure — 1:15-2:00 p.m.
- Health Care — 2:00-2:45 p.m.
- MWR events and activities — 3:00-3:30 p.m.
- PCS moves — 3:30-4:00 p.m.
- Feedback/Closing Remarks — 4:00-4:30 p.m.

***Held February 9th at the Warrior Center
1321 Corps Road***

This is an event for the Soldiers, Civilians, Retirees and Family Members of Fort Polk.

Seating is limited. RSVP to kayla.l.moore16.civ@army.mil NLT Feb. 4th.

Lunch is available for \$12 per person.

Check VIN numbers

The Directorate of Emergency Services Traffic Division will release the following vehicles to the Directorate of Family Morale, Welfare and Recreation if they remain unclaimed. Check the last four numbers of the VIN number. If one of these vehicles belongs to you, please contact the Fort Polk Police Traffic Section at 337.531.1806 / 6675 / 2677.

2019	Ford	Fiesta	9660
2009	Chevrolet	Equinox	7783
2002	Honda	CRV	7722
2014	Nissan	Maxima	0131
1988	Chevrolet	3500	4195
2005	Mercury	Sable	9544
2011	Chevrolet	Equinox	3730
2014	Chevrolet	Malibu	9771
2009	Chevrolet	Cobolt	8756
2006	Hyundai	Elantra	4769
2019	Kia	Forte	0634
2011	Dodge	Avenger	1373
1999	Ford	F150	6684
2003	Lincoln	Navigator	8394
2008	Chevrolet	Equinox	5638
2004	Lincoln	Town Car	1307
2014	Nissan	Altima	6092
2001	Toyota	Corolla	6348
2005	Ford	F150	9044
2005	Nissan	Altima	9465
2017	Nissan	Sentra	3505
2006	Dodge	Charger	5068
2000	Ford	Ranger	3852
1998	Honda	CRV	6564
1995	Ford	Crown Vic	4288
1995	BMW	530i	4287
2005	Chevrolet	Cobalt	1230
2009	Pontiac	G6	7014
2001	Kawasaki	650	0233
2011	Dodge	Durango	6226
2002	Ford	Mustang	1003
1979	Kawasaki	KZ650	5918
2013	Utility	Trailer	3802
2007	Mitsubishi	Eclipse	2929
2001	Volkswagen	Jetta	9197
2002	Mitsubishi	Eclipse	4078
2016	Kia	Rio	5808
1992	BMW	4dr	7858
2005	Dodge	Magnum	9914
2016	Kia	Optima	8345
2001	Honda	Civic	5428
2008	Ford	Explorer	3754
2006	Ford	Escape	0697
2013	Dodge	Avenger	9243
2001	Volvo	S 40	1073
2001	Mercury	Grand Marquis	1956
2013	Chevrolet	Camaro	0144



Fort Polk Soldiers found guilty of UCMJ violations

OSJA

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

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

Across Fort Polk, the following disciplinary issues continue to be prevalent: Driving under the influence of alcohol, wrongful use/possession of controlled substances, fraternization, sexual assault and underage drinking.

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

- A private first class assigned to 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, received a field grade article 15 for wrongful use of marijuana. They received reduction to E1, forfeiture of \$1148 per month for 2 months, 45 days of extra duty and 45 days of restriction.
- A private first class assigned to 710th Brigade Support Battalion, received a company grade article 15 for failing to report. They received a punishment of 7 days extra duty and

an oral reprimand.

- A private assigned to 2nd Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, was separated with a general characterization of service for misconduct/abuse of illegal substances.
- A private assigned to 115th Field Hospital, was separated with a general characterization of service for misconduct/abuse of illegal substances.
- A specialist assigned to 46th Engineer Battalion was separated with a general characterization of service for commission of a serious offense.
- A specialist assigned to 509th Infantry Regiment, received a general officer memorandum of reprimand for failing to obey the order to get the COVID-19 vaccine. The general officer memorandum of reprimand was permanently filed in the Soldier’s AMHRR.
- A staff sergeant assigned to Operations Group, received a general officer memorandum of reprimand for driving under the influence of alcohol. The general officer memorandum of reprimand was permanently filed in the Soldier’s AMHRR.
- A specialist assigned to 5th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Regiment, received a general officer memorandum of reprimand for driving under the influence of alcohol.

The general officer memorandum of reprimand was permanently filed in the Soldier’s AMHRR.

DEHYDRATION

First Sergeant says, “DRINK WATER!”

Some people get less thirsty in cold weather, so they drink less water in the winter than in the summer. Being less thirsty doesn’t mean that you’re better hydrated, however.

We tend to sweat less in cold weather. Your body still loses moisture in cold weather, but without sweat as an indicator, you might not realize you need to drink water to replenish fluids.

Know dangers, maintain portable space heater safety

By CHAD ESTES

Fire prevention assistant chief

FORT POLK, La. — When the weather turns cold, it's common to seek the refuge of a warm home. People often take unnecessary risks and make unfortunate mistakes when trying to keep their home or work space warm.

Heating is the second leading cause of U.S. home fires, deaths and injuries. Portable space heaters are the type of equipment most often involved in home-heating equipment fires.

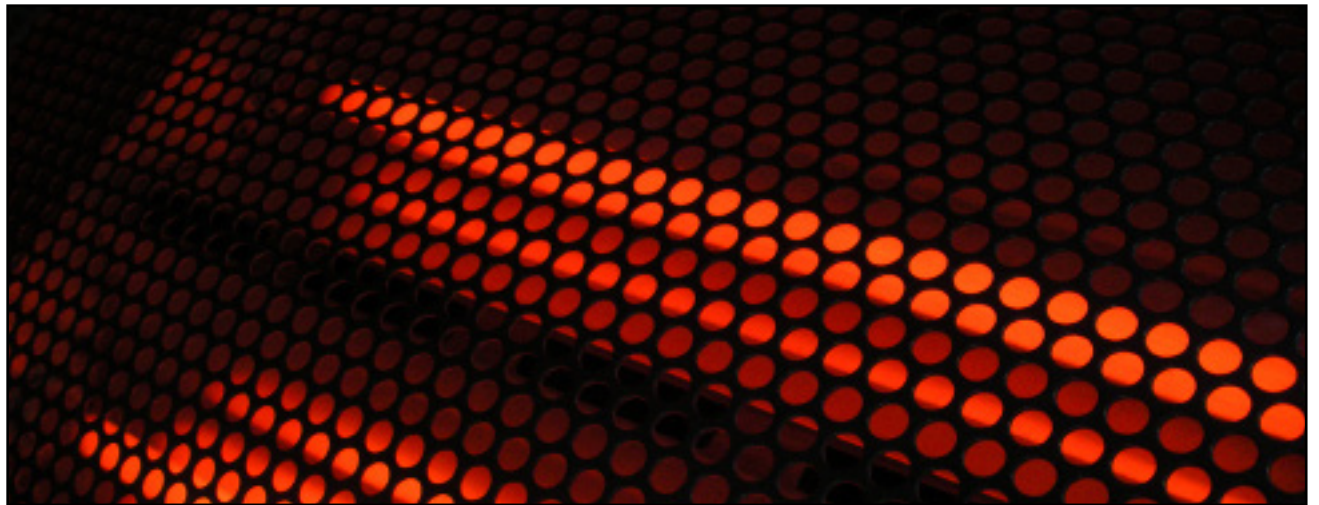
Portable space heaters have become a popular way to supplement central heating or to heat one room.

Half of home-heating fire deaths were caused by flames that started because the heating equipment was too close to things that could burn, such as upholstered furniture, clothing and mattresses or bedding.

If you plan to use portable electric space heaters, make sure to follow these tips and recommendations:

Heater checklist

- Purchase a heater with the seal of a qualified testing laboratory.



- Keep the heater at least 3 feet away from anything that can burn, including people.
- Choose a heater with a thermostat and overheat protection.
- Place the heater on a solid, flat surface.
- Make sure your heater has an auto shut-off which activates if it tips over.
- Keep space heaters out of the way of foot traffic. Never block an exit.
- Keep children away from the space heater.
- Plug the heater directly into the wall outlet. Never use an extension cord.
- Space heaters should be turned off and

unplugged when you leave the room or go to bed.

Portable space heaters are not permitted anywhere on the Fort Polk cantonment area without a permit from the Fort Polk Fire Prevention Office. Any personnel involved in a fire caused by a portable space heater, without a permit of use, will be held liable.

Two in five deaths in space-heater fires involve portable electric space heaters. Please use due diligence when using any heating device whether it be electric, gas or open flame. Don't become an unforgettable memory for a fire fighter.

New dependents could mean additional tax rebates

OSJA

FORT POLK, La. — Parents of a child born in 2021 — or parents and guardians who added a new child to their Family in 2021 — did not receive a third-round economic impact payment for that child and may be eligible to receive up to \$1,400 for the child by claiming the Recovery Rebate Credit.

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, signed into law on March 11, 2021, authorized a third round of economic impact payments and required them to be issued by Dec. 31, 2021. The IRS began issuing these payments on March 12, 2021, and continued through the end of the year.

Eligible parents of children born in 2021 and Families that added dependents in 2021 should claim the 2021 Recovery Rebate Credit; most other eligible people already received the full amount and won't need to claim a credit on their tax return.

Families and individuals in the following circumstances, among others, may not have received the full amount of their third-round economic impact payment because their circumstances in 2021 were different than they were in 2020. These Families and individuals may be eligible to receive more money by

claiming the 2021 Recovery Rebate Credit on their 2021 income tax return:

- Parents of a child born in 2021 who claim the child as a dependent on their 2021 income tax return may be eligible to receive a 2021 Recovery Rebate Credit of up to \$1,400 for this child.
- All eligible parents of qualifying children born in 2021 are also encouraged to claim the child tax credit — worth up to \$3,600 per child born in 2021 — on their 2021 income tax return.
- Families who added a dependent — such as a parent, a nephew or niece or a grandchild — on their 2021 income tax return who was not listed as a dependent on their 2020 income tax return may be eligible to receive a 2021 Recovery Rebate Credit of up to \$1,400 for this dependent.

Individuals must claim the 2021 Recovery Rebate Credit on their 2021 income tax return to get this money; the IRS will not automatically calculate the 2021 Recovery Rebate Credit. The IRS began accepting 2021 income tax returns on Jan. 24.

Most other eligible people already received the full amount of their credit in advance and don't need to include any information about this payment when they file their 2021 tax return. The IRS issued



additional payments — called plus-up payments — to individuals who initially received a third-round economic impact payment based on information on their 2019 tax return and were eligible for a larger amount based on information on their 2020 tax return.

If you have any questions about tax issues or would like to schedule an appointment for free tax filing services, please contact the installation tax center at 337.531.1040. If you want to schedule an appointment with an attorney, you may contact the Legal Assistance Office at 337.531.2580.