



FORGING THE

WARRIOR SPIRIT

THE JRTC & FORT POLK GUARDIAN

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COMMISSARY CONCERNS

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Upcoming town hall to address issues, concerns at commissary

By JEAN DUBIEL

Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. — Army installations across the globe take pride in the features and amenities that make them unique, like a modern indoor swimming pool or an expansive athletic complex. Some posts are blessed by their exotic location, including those in Hawaii, Italy or Germany.

But there are certain facilities that are ubiquitous with Army life and can be found at most any installation: A post exchange, dining facility, library and a commissary.

At Fort Polk, the commissary came under scrutiny during an Army Family Action Plan town hall meeting held Aug. 20. Issues concerning the quality of some of the food and services were brought up, and similar complaints have been submitted through the Interactive Customer Evaluation system (ICE) since March of 2019.

Defense Commissary Agency officials at the AFAP town hall said they are committed to listening to the issues faced by patrons, and making improvements where needed. In keeping with that commitment, Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, commanding general of the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, invited Zone 1 manager for Defense Commissary Agency, Herbert Winchester, to attend a commissary town hall meeting Sept. 16 at 5:30 p.m. at the commissary. All authorized commissary shoppers are invited to attend the meeting and provide feedback on how Fort Polk's commissary can be improved to offer a better shopping experience for the Soldiers, retirees and Families that live here.

Commissary Officer William Easter said the commissary is clean, carries a variety of international items and offers competitive prices.

"We try to maintain the cleanliness of this store through contractor cleaners and our own efforts,"



The Fort Polk Commissary, bldg 601, is open Tuesday through Friday from 9:30 a.m.-8 p.m. (early bird and disabled shoppers may enter at 8 a.m.), Saturdays from 9:30 a.m.- 8 p.m., Sundays from 10 a.m.-6 p.m., and closed Mondays.

said Easter. "We have a gourmet section that includes German and Cajun products, Thai and Korean food items, and a large selection of Hispanic items on aisles 2 and 3. And our prices are competitive with grocery stores off post."

To stretch those hard-earned dollars farther at the commissary, Easter recommends patrons get a savings card from the customer service window, which they can use along with commissary coupons available through the website www.commissary.com, under the "Savings Center" window, then under the tab "Coupons."

Easter said the commissary tries to offer a variety of meat cuts. "We carry all USDA meats, in grades

from Choice to Angus. We also have organic, grass-fed beef available," said Easter.

The organic offerings don't stop at the meat counter.

"We have many organic items in the produce section and throughout the store, from cereal to peanut butter and jelly, and in the dairy and frozen sections."

To make customers feel welcome, the commissary offers free coffee from 8 a.m. to noon and pick up service for deli orders.

"You can make your order at the deli counter, go do the rest of your shopping and when you return, your order is ready," said Easter.

Some of the concerns raised at the AFAP meeting and in the ICE

**Town Hall meeting
at commissary
Sept. 16, 5:30 p.m.
with
Herbert Winchester,
Zone 1 manager,
Defense Commissary
Agency**

comments involved checkout lines, baggers, expiration dates and out of stock items.

"We have four self-checkout lanes and two service lanes on 7 and 8 where you can bag your own groceries. If a bagger presents themselves at one of these lanes, the customer can tell them they want to bag their own," said Easter.

"One thing I would like customers to know is that DeCA employees (cashiers and managers) can assist you in bagging your items, and we do not want tips. We just want to help you." For clarification, baggers are not DeCA employees and work for tips.

The issues of near out-of-date items and empty shelves are being addressed with distributors and industry management, said Easter.

"We have two employees that monitor the chilled items and other dated food items looking for expiration dates, and that's all they do," he said. "I know that yogurt is the No. 1 item that tends to expire fast, so we keep a close eye on that. As for empty shelves, I'm concerned about it too. I track everything that's not in stock, and I monitor the floor for those items daily. If I see a product is out (empty), I go to the back and get the product and place it on the shelves as soon as it comes in."

Easter said the morale of the troops and their Families is his greatest concern.

"I am looking forward to the town hall so I can get everyone's input on how we can improve," he said. "We want your patronage."

JEAN DUBIEL / GUARDIAN

Tools may help prevent crime

By Retired Lt. Col. MARK LESLIE
DES

FORT POLK, La. — With the recent spike in active shooter events across the country, the Fort Polk Directorate of Emergency Services wanted to take a moment to assure the community that Fort Polk is as safe as it can be.

Your DES trains every day for a variety of threats that include an active shooter response. The relationships that our DES has with local, state and federal partners ensure that if there is a threat to the Fort Polk community, Fort Polk is prepared and, if necessary, ready to respond.

Fort Polk partnered with the National Safety Council to host a training seminar for Families called "Surviving an Active Shooter Event." Those who attended learned that prevention is the best way to survive an active shooter.

Several tools were presented and made available to report suspicious activity. These tools have also been mentioned at Fort Polk Community Information Forum events.

Although there have been several tragic active shooter events in the past few weeks, there are some success stories that are attributed to a concerned and informed public that saw something and said something. These included a high school student who posted threatening comments about a possible retaliatory attack at her school and a college student that had stockpiled weapons in his dorm room. We will never know their true intent, but we do know that they were exposed and reported by concerned citizens.

We wanted to provide a detailed list of reporting tools available for Fort Polk residents both

on and off the installation and for events or activities on or off Fort Polk.

First, in the event of an active emergency, 9-1-1 is — and will remain — the first number to call as well as 531-COPS (2677) on Fort Polk. But, if suspicious behavior is observed that is not an immediate concern or threat, feel free to use these reporting tools.

• **The "See Something, Send Something" App.** Go to the app store and type in "See Something, Send Something" and download to your phone.

The app is a nationwide suspicious activity reporting tool for citizens to help in the fight against terrorism and criminal activity, but not to replace

9-1-1 for emergency situations.

It is free and allows people to send a photo or written note to the state police intelligence center, where its credibility can be examined and referred to the proper law enforcement agency.

• **The Army Criminal Investigation Division App.**

This app allows for a safe and anonymous way to report information about a crime in which the Army is, or may be, a party of interest. Go to the app store and type in "Army CID" and download.

The CID crime tips submission system is a web-based and smartphone app submission method. The public can access the system via any Internet-connected device by visiting www.cid.army.mil/. In addition to the web interface, the app can be used to submit tips and is available for free download from the Apple Store and Google Play.

The CID Crime Tips app is also approved for download on government smartphones and smart

devices. Apple users can access the app through the Department of Defense Enterprise Mobility Personal Use Mobile Apps and DoD Apps icons on their device. Android users can access the app using the Mobile@Work icon on their device.

• **Army iSalute** is used for information that may be of interest to U.S. Army Counterintelligence: Visit the Internet at www.in-scom.army.mil/isalute/ or call (800) CALL-SPY (225-5770). The Fort Polk Army Counterintelligence Field Office phone number is (337) 292-0767.

• **NIXLE:** This is not a reporting tool but a valuable asset for being aware of a wide variety of threats.

To be notified in your local area off the installation, go to <https://local.nixle.com/register/> and register with your zip code or the zip code you are visiting. The web site offers public safety warnings and advisories on everything from weather to traffic events.

• **STEP:** Another great service that is free of charge is the U.S. State Department's Safe Traveler Enrollment Program, or STEP. The service allows U.S. citizens and nationals traveling and living abroad to enroll their trip with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate at <https://travel.state.gov>. You will receive important information from the embassy about safety conditions in your destination country, helping you make informed decisions about your travel plans. It also helps the U.S. Embassy contact you in an emergency, whether natural disaster, civil unrest and allows family and friends get in touch with you in the event of an emergency.

Help us help you — be the sensor that detects a threat or suspicious activity and report it. You just may save a life.

Be aware of your surroundings and when something just does not seem right, do your duty and report it. Law enforcement professionals will do the rest.

The world is too dangerous a place to ignore your instincts. See Something, Say Something.



Leslie

Commentary



Guardian

Editorial Staff

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

Col. Ryan K. Roseberry
Garrison commander

Kim Reischling
Public affairs officer

Chuck Cannon
Command information officer

Jean Dubiel

Angie Thorne
Staff writers

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

Email: Kimberly.Reischling@us.army.mil

Trading post ads:

tradingpostads@yahoo.com

Fort Polk Homepage

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

Advertising

For advertising contact
Theresa Larue
(337) 404-7242

Email: sales@thefortpolkguardian.com

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Briefs

RCCC brief

A Reserve Component career counselors brief for first term Soldiers who are slated to ETS within six months is held Tuesdays at 1 p.m. in bldg 250, 1716 Third Ave., the installation In/Out Processing bldg. The brief provides professional guidance and career counseling to Soldiers leaving the active Army. For more information call 531-1850.

ASAP training

The Fort Polk Army Substance Abuse Program hosts its annual Suicide and Substance Abuse training, featuring guest speaker Jared Estes, Tuesday at 10:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. in Bayou Theater, 7830 Mississippi Ave. Call 531-6187 for more information.

Law enforcement jobs

Fort Polk's Soldier For Life-Transition Assistance Program offers an opportunity for Soldiers to learn about employment with federal and other law enforcement agencies Thursday from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Library and Education Center in bldg 660. For more information call 531-1591.

Abandoned vehicles

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



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

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



JEAN DUBIEL/GUARDIAN

From left, Garrison Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Ausbun; Garrison Commander Col. Ryan Roseberry; Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk commander; Mark McDonough, president of American Water Military Services Group; Greg Prudhomme, Directorate of Public Works; and Johnny Bevers, deputy garrison commander, break ground Aug. 29 at the site of the new green sand water filtration system. The system is being installed to remedy the brown water problem experienced by some residents in the South Fort housing areas.

Green sand filtration to remedy brown water

By JEAN DUBIEL
Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. — South Fort housing residents that have experienced the bane of brown water spewing from their taps can look forward to a clear resolution of the problem with the installation of a green sand filtration system.

Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, commanding general, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, said during a groundbreaking ceremony held Aug. 29 that the day has been a long time coming.

"A lot of people here have put a lot of work into this green sand filtration system. It's a great day for Fort Polk," he said. "Mark (McDonough, American Water, Military Services Group) and his team have been great partners to us, and they are with us all the way. We've had some tough discussions, and some close discussions about providing clean water for Soldiers and Families at Fort Polk."

Frank thanked the congressional staff leaders for attending the ceremony and said "we could not have done this without your support on Capitol Hill," and mentioned a few out-of-town heroes that were instrumental in bringing the project to bear: Michael Brown, Bobby McGough, Steve Golub and Capt. Bud Bateman of U.S. Army Public Health Command.

"Those four were the team that helped bring us over the edge," said Frank. "We were right on the cusp of getting the money for this approved — \$12.8 million — but they provided the insights on the water quality that we need to go to the leadership in the Army and say, 'These are the is-

sues we have for our drinking water at South Fort Polk.' This team of four was the critical enabler that helped achieve the right decision."

Frank also acknowledged a few "hometown heroes" connected to the project.

"Greg Prudhomme, Nathan Jernigan and Betty Beinkemper are all with (Directorate of Public Works), they get a lot of photos from me and have a lot of one-on-one discussions with me, but it's all about quality of life for our Soldiers and Families. They've had a huge impact."

Two green sand filtration systems will be installed in the South Fort area to remedy the long-standing problem of brown water, created by high levels of iron and manganese found in the installation aquifers.

"You can't go to a Fort Polk town hall meeting without someone coming forward to ask about the water conditions," said Frank. "They fill up the tub for their children to get a bath and have brown water. We're doing something about that now. North Fort already has it (green sand filtration), and Leesville has it, so we're bracketed by the filtration. Now South Fort will have it, too."

Mark McDonough, president, American Water, Military Services Group, said the establishment of this project was the result of vision and hard work.

"I give credit for the vision to General Frank," said McDonough. "He and his staff, and the relationship we have with (the Directorate of Public Works), evokes that vision of care for the servicemen and women of the Army and their Families. This project represents the drive for mission assurance and readiness that begins with taking

Please see **Filtration**, page 8

Army looks to enhance mission command with robotic swarms

By **DAN LAFONTAINEEL**

CCDC C5ISR Center Public Affairs

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. — Army Futures Command, or AFC, is exploring the extent to which swarming formations of robotic systems could be used to enhance mission command capabilities for Army small units.

Scientists and engineers within AFC's Combat Capabilities Development Command, or CCDC, are exploring the potential to deploy unmanned aerial systems, or UAS, and unmanned ground vehicles, or UGV, to act as complementary swarm components.

Swarming is a method of operations where multiple autonomous systems act as a cohesive unit, actively coordinating their actions.

Once mobilized, the swarms would enable small units to quickly implement manned-unmanned teaming, or MUM-T, for a variety of mission types. Data would flow quickly from the swarm back to Soldiers, mounted or dismounted, who could then provide further instructions, if necessary, to the swarms.

"The Army is looking to swarming technology to be able to execute time-consuming or dangerous tasks. The Army wants robustness, flexibility and persistence, so we're moving away from controlling through tele-operating and trending toward commanding," said Osie David, a chief engineer in CCDC's center for Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Cyber, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance — or C5ISR.

Autonomous swarms are designed to complement, not replace, human capabilities as the robotics will assist Soldiers in their complex decision-making process on the battlefield, said David, who noted that the C5ISR Center is exploring the extent to which swarming robotics can support commanders and their staff during the execution of mission command.

Mission command is the Army's philosophy of command and a warfighting function that promotes freedom and speed of action. It combines the centralized intent from the commander with the decentralized execution of subordinate commanders, who then decide how best to achieve the commander's objectives.

In executing mission command, commanders must have a broad perspective, understanding and knowledge of activities throughout complex operational environments. Swarming technologies provide versatility for a ground force commander to accomplish different mission sets based on the reconnaissance requirements, said R.J. Regars, a systems engineer in the C5ISR Center's Command, Power and Integration Directorate, or CP&ID.

"Swarm technology, with a potential combination of unmanned aerial and ground vehicles, is ideally suited for difficult-to-maneuver environments like cities, forests or caves. The swarms could move quickly and quietly while tracking specific targets in locations where a traditional Army formation cannot quickly maneuver while sending



Army Futures Command, or AFC, is exploring the extent to which swarming formations of robotic systems could be used to enhance mission-command capabilities for Army small units.

U.S. ARMY

data to units several miles away," Regars said. "The ability to continuously patrol an area or route and quickly convey that data back to the unit is extremely valuable."

A key goal of the project will be how best to combine a Soldier's cognitive skills with autonomous robotics systems.

To better define and conceptualize the best tactics and applications of future swarming capabilities for mission planning, technical experts from the center met with Soldiers and Marines at Fort Benning, Georgia, to gain insights from their operational expertise.

"The swarming technology provides versatility for how a ground force commander could employ UAS or UGV swarms to accomplish different mission sets based on the recon requirements," said Capt.

Michael McCarty, an Army Infantry officer. "It's definitely a positive for me as a future commander."

So far the feedback has centered on reducing cognitive overload by filtering and prioritizing data for actionable information and developing simple-to-use systems that would free up Soldiers to perform other warfighting functions.

"Swarming improves the ability to target specific locations with minimal collateral damage because we can identify our targets ahead of time. When we combine manned and unmanned systems, it's a force multiplier that turns a platoon into a company," said Capt. Troy Makulec, an Army Armor officer. "Whether it's ground or aerial swarming, it improves the likelihood of survival for our Soldiers on the ground."

Executive order offers better access to mental health resources

By **DAVID VERGUN**

Army News Service

WASHINGTON — An executive order signed last year by President Donald J. Trump has already been especially helpful to transitioning service members, said Karin Orvis, director of the Defense Suicide Prevention Office.

Orvis spoke at the 2019 Veterans Administration/Department of Defense Suicide Prevention Conference in Nashville, Tennessee Aug. 28.

Executive Order 13822, "Supporting Our Veterans During Their Transition From Uniformed Service to Civilian Life," directs the departments of Defense, Veterans Affairs and Homeland Security "to come together and ensure we have seamless access to mental health care and suicide prevention resources for transitioning service members and recent veterans, particularly during their first year of transition after separation or re-

tirement," she said.

The first year of transition is particularly stressful for many service members, Orvis noted.

After the executive order was signed, the three departments drafted a joint action plan that contained 16 initiatives, she said, noting that 10 initiatives have already been completed.

The plan has two broad goals:

- First is to ensure all transitioning service members and veterans are aware of and understand the mental health resources available to them.

- Second is meeting the needs of at-risk service members and veterans, to include improving mental health care and suicide prevention services, particularly for those identified as high risk.

Orvis provided two examples.

The Transition Assistance Program has been enhanced to include information on VA benefits, she said, particularly mental health resources for

the first year after separation and beyond. TAP provides information, training and resources to service members as they plan to transition from the military into civilian life.

There's also now a mandatory separation health assessment included in TAP that must be completed by all transitioning service members no later than 180 days before their separation date, she said.

The assessment includes a mental health component.

Second, Military OneSource availability has been extended. It was originally offered to service members for only up to 180 days after separation or retirement. It's now available for a full year, and offers help with taxes, spousal employment, a variety of training and education and relocation assistance. There is also help for those who are having interpersonal or relationship issues.

3rd SFAB tackles JRTC crucible before deployment

GUARDIAN STAFF

FORT POLK, La. — Soldiers assigned to 3rd Security Force Assistance Brigade worked with host nation forces and battled opposing forces during Rotation 19-09 at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk.

The photos on this and the next two pages show the Soldiers in action as they prepare for a future deployment.



JRTC OPS GROUP





JRTO OPS GROUP





JRTO OPS GROUP



Fort Polk's Directorate of Emergency Services firefighters stand outside of the new live fire simulator located at the DES training compound on Texas Avenue. The structure features three levels, a rappel tower, various forcible entry door configurations, stand pipes for hoses, a sprinkler system, replaceable walls and roof and more.



JEAN DUBIEL / GUARDIAN

New simulator improves installation, community readiness

By **JEAN DUBIEL**
Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. — The Directorate of Emergency Services Fire Department at Fort Polk has a new asset that bridges the gap between training relevance and safety.

The new three-level fire training structure is called a live fire simulator and it is located in the firefighter training area off Texas Avenue.

It uses flammable materials like wooden palettes and hay to create fire and smoke, features sprinkler systems and hose links that need to be accessed during a fire, several types of doors to breach, windows, a replaceable wall and the means to emplace a sloped roof at any angle.

These and other features help replicate realistic firefighting scenarios and better reflects the type of structures that are encountered in and around Fort Polk — especially multi-level buildings. Because the unit is a training aid, controls are in place to ensure the safety of the firefighters.

"This unit allows us to train for above ground

and below ground fires, it has forcible entry points — doors that we can breach and replace so we can train our guys or even the DES police — and a rappel tower for window rescues," said DES Fire Chief Bill Nowlin.

"This unit corrects a deficiency that was cited during a higher headquarters assessment and puts us on par with other departments."

Nowlin said at some point he'd like to reach out to some of Fort Polk's mutual aid partners and offer a joint training session for their departments.

"There's nothing on this scale in the local area for them to use," he said.

"They have to drive a pretty good distance to access something like this, and now we have (a simulator) right here."

The new structure also addresses the training requirement for military firefighters, said Nowlin.

"Our 12Ms (military occupational specialty — military firefighters), and those with the 46th Engineer Battalion, that are returning from deployment can meet their annual training with this

simulator as well. So it serves multiple agencies, reaches outside of the garrison and increases overall emergency readiness," he said.

Roof breaching is another training scenario available to the firefighters.

"The simulator gives them the ability to ladder a roof, and we can select any (degree of slope) we want, cut a hole in that roof, and get through the ceiling."

The facility also has a working sprinkler system so firefighters can practice securing a water source and stand pipes for attaching hoses.

The structure offers another level of readiness for Fort Polk by ensuring emergency responders have the appropriate training, said Nowlin.

"It increases our capability tenfold," he said. "We're required to do live fire training every year. This simulator gives them real fire experience where they can use a charged hose line (using water), access multiple floor levels, breach doors, rescue victims, enter confined spaces and more."

"They can practice everything with this simulator."

Filtration

Continued from page 3

care of those (Families) that have been entrusted to us. As your utilities and privatization provider, we humbly accept that role. We appreciate the drive that (the command) had to get the things we need to make our services more effective and efficient and give you compliant water 100% of the time. Susan Story, the president of American Water, likes to say that being in the water business is a calling. What I like to say is that when you are in the Military Services Group (of American Water), it's the highest calling within water. We won't let you down."



Social media security: Take note of tips from Army special agent

By C. TODD LOPEZ

Army News Service

WASHINGTON — Even the most innocuous data posted to a social media feed can be married up with other publicly available information to provide online criminals the tools they need to exploit members of the military or general public, an Army special agent said.

Special Agent Deric Palmer, program manager for the Digital Personal Protection Program, part of the Major Cybercrime Unit at the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command, explained how those who aren't careful or aren't paying attention can unwittingly provide scammers and other online criminals all the information they need to exploit them.

Social media accounts, Palmer said, serve as fertile ground for digging up the kinds of information that can be used to impersonate someone, steal identities or break into other online accounts, such as banking or insurance.

A Facebook page, for example, might contain current and past physical addresses where a person has lived, phone numbers, email addresses, names of pets, significant events such as birthdays and anniversaries, hobbies and other interests. Just browsing a Facebook page, Palmer said, he can figure out your favorite music, books, TV shows, political and religious leanings.

All that, he said, serves as "an attack vector" that an unscrupulous person can use to communicate with users further and gain their trust. Additional communications can bring out even more details that might later be used to break into online accounts or exploit users in other ways. Some social media users, Palmer added, even volunteer critical information that could be used to access their online financial accounts that they'd never divulge if they were asked by a stranger.

Some online memes, he noted, pose as games that get users to volunteer information that, coupled with other easily obtainable information, can be used to exploit them. A quick search online reveals a simple graphic meme that purportedly allows users to choose "your new cat name" and then post the results, along with the meme itself, on their own social media feed.

For the "cat name" meme, users would use the last digit of their phone number as a selector for any of nine name prefixes, their zodiac sign to choose from a list of 12 middle names, and their favorite color to choose from a list of eight potential last names.

A user might end up with "Count Sassy Pants" as a silly name for their cat. When they post that on their social media feed, along with the meme image itself, would-be criminals will know their phone number ends in 8, they were born in either August or September, and that their favorite color is yellow. Coupled with data already on their social media feed, and with data that can be obtained from data brokers, the information makes it easier to exploit users, Palmer explained.

Military personnel also are candidates to be impersonated online — malicious users might opt to use imagery of real-world service mem-



bers available online to exploit other users. The U.S. military is one of the most trusted institutions in the nation, and online criminals, Palmer said, take advantage of that.

"The U.S. military is viewed as a prestigious club. ... It's an indicator of prestige," Palmer said. "It's instant respect. If I can pretend to be a U.S. general, unwitting people will respect me immediately."

With that respect, he said, a criminal can exploit other users while pretending to be a member of the U.S. military. Palmer's advice to service members: Don't post your picture in uniform with the name tape visible.

"It immediately makes you a target," the special agent said.

Palmer offered some tips to avoid being scammed:

- Immediate red flag! Be suspicious if you are asked for money or a wire transfer to pay for a purported service member's transportation, medical bills, communication fees or marriage-processing charges.
- Be suspicious if the person with whom you are corresponding wants you to mail anything to a foreign country.
- Be aware that military members at any duty location or in a combat zone have access to mail, cyber cafes, Skype and other means of communicating with their families, and they

have access to medical and dental treatment.

- The military will ensure that family members are notified if a service member is injured.

- Insist on a "proof of life." The scammers will not video chat with you, because they know you will catch them in their lie.

- Trust your instincts! If it seems too good to be true, it probably is.

The special agent also provided eight points for better security online, and to make users less likely to be victimized by online criminals:

- Permanently close old, unused accounts.
- Enable two-factor authentication on any platform that allows it.
- Use strong passwords, and use different passwords for every account.
- On social media, accept friend requests selectively.
- Configure the strongest privacy settings for each social media account.
- Think before you post.
- Limit use of third-part applications on social media applications, read the license agreement, and be sure exactly what those applications want to be able to access.
- Change answers to security questions, and use false answers so that online criminals can't use information they gather online to gain access to your accounts.



Pledging to stem Soldier, Family member suicide

Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank (left), commander, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, and JRTC and Fort Polk Command Sgt. Maj. David Bass place their signatures on a proclamation calling for support for September's designation as National Suicide Prevention Month. Frank and Bass, along with Garrison Commander Col. Ryan K. Roseberry, Garrison Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Ausbun and unit leaders across the installation signed the proclamation prior to the monthly Community Information Forum Sept. 4 at the Warrior Center.

Polk shoppers can support relief programs

EXCHANGE

FORT POLK, La. — The Army and Air Force Exchange Service is giving shoppers another chance to support airmen and Soldiers in need during its second Give and Get Back donation period of the year.

From Sept. 13 to 17, shoppers can donate to either Army Emergency Relief or the Air Force Assistance Fund at the register at the Fort Polk Exchange. For every \$5 donated, shoppers receive an Exchange coupon for \$5 off a \$25 purchase.

"Exchange shoppers are making a real difference for Soldiers and Families in need," said retired Lt. Gen. Raymond V. Mason, AER director. "We're grateful for such a successful partnership with the Exchange that benefits the military community."

This is the third year the Exchange has partnered with AER and AFAF to host the Give and Get Back campaign. Since the Give and Get Back campaign began in 2017, Exchange shoppers have given more than \$680,000 to the funds, which provide emergency assistance, sponsor educational initiatives and offer community programs that support the military community.

"The Exchange mission is to make the lives of Soldiers, airmen and military Families better,"

said Tom Shull, Exchange director/CEO. "Supporting Army Emergency Relief and the Air Force Assistance Fund is a fantastic way to fulfill this mission."

The Sept. 13 to 17 giving period is in honor of the Air Force's 72nd birthday on Sept. 18. The third and final giving period will fall during the holiday shopping season, from Dec. 6 to 10.

In addition to the support for military relief programs, AAFES is offering military students who make a difference in their community the opportunity to win one of 10 \$2,000 scholarships through the AAFES and Unilever Rewards of Caring essay contest.

Through Sept. 26, authorized students in grades six through 12 with a 2.5 grade point average or higher on a 4.0 scale can submit an essay in English of 500 words or less explaining why their community and involvement in service projects are important.

Mail entries to:
Exchange Rewards of Caring Scholarship 2019
Fall Contest
P.O. Box 7778
Melville, NY 11775-7778.

Submissions must be postmarked by Sept. 26. For complete rules visit www.operationintouch.com.

Briefs

School lunch menu

The following school lunch menu is for Vernon Parish schools for Monday through Sept. 13. Meals are served with salad bar and choice of milk:

Monday: Steak finger basket, mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans, peaches and Jello cup, whole wheat roll.

Tuesday: Oven fried chicken, barbecue sauce cup, steamed cabbage, candied sweet potatoes, fruit, whole wheat cornbread.

Wednesday: Taco salad with whole grain chips, Mexicana corn, taco salad cup, fruit, spice cake.

Thursday: Pork roast with gravy, fluffy whole grain rice, sweet peas, fruit, sherbet, whole wheat roll.

Sept. 13: Chili hot dog on whole wheat bun, French fries, ranch style beans, watermelon, coleslaw.

ASIST training

Fort Polk's Suicide Prevention Program hosts an Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training class Sept. 25-26, from 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. each day at the Fort Polk Education Center, room 127. There are 15 slots available for the class. ASIST teaches participants to recognize when someone may have thoughts of suicide and work with them to create a plan that supports their immediate safety. Call 531-6187 or email john.l.pilgrim.civ@mail.mil to sign up or for more information.

AAFES briefs

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

- AAFES invites military children "under the sea" in honor of Ariel's 30th birthday bash at the Main Exchange Saturday. Military children ages 4 and older are invited to the Main Store from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and are encouraged to dress up as their favorite princess and bring their princess dolls to join in on the fun. The event includes a dress up station with temporary tattoos and nail art plus two doll stations. Call 537-1001 for more information.

- Soldiers and military Families can get a jump-start on holiday shopping thanks to the Army and Air Force Exchange Service's fee-free layaway. Through Dec. 24, the Fort Polk Exchange will waive its \$3 service fee for items priced at \$25 or more. Toys, bikes, clothing and more are included. To place items on layaway, military shoppers pay a deposit of 15% of the purchase price. Items must be picked up by Dec. 24. For program details and eligibility information, shoppers can visit the Fort Polk Exchange customer service desk.

Small steps save lives: Know key facts of suicide risk

By DAVID VERGUN

Army News Service

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — In September, the Defense Department is kicking off Suicide Prevention Month with a reminder: Small steps save lives.

Dr. Karin Orvis, director of the Defense Suicide Prevention Office, said taking simple safety measures and precautions can prevent someone who's distraught or depressed from taking his or her own life.

Speaking at the 2019 Suicide Prevention Conference sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs and DoD, Orvis said the message for the military and veteran community is, "Be there and step up. We can all do meaningful, yet small, steps to help prevent suicide."

Orvis said knowing some key facts about suicide can help family, friends and colleagues form a suicide prevention strategy:

- Most military and veteran suicide deaths involve a firearm.
- Most nonfatal suicide attempts involve medication.
- Suicide can be impulsive, occurring less than 10 minutes from the time someone thinks about it to the time he or she acts on it.

Orvis said DoD and the VA are strongly committed to preventing suicides throughout the year, but they can't do it alone. She said everyone in the community has a role to play in suicide prevention. Remember:



Dr. Karin Orvis, director of the Defense Suicide Prevention Office (center), prepares to speak at the 2019 Suicide Prevention Conference sponsored by the departments of Veterans Affairs and Defense in Nashville, Tenn., Aug. 29.

• Even something as small as offering a shoulder to cry on can be meaningful.

• Putting time and distance between the individual and the lethal means can avert a tragedy.

DoD takes public health approach to suicide prevention

By DAVID VERGUN

Army News Service

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The causes of suicide are complex, with contributing factors that can range from environmental to biological to social to psychological. And there is no one fix.

So said the director of the Defense Suicide Prevention Office today as she opened the 2019 Department of Veterans Affairs/Department of Defense Suicide Prevention Conference in Nashville, Tenn.

The Defense Department has taken a number of steps to address those factors, Dr. Karin Orvis said, focusing on three areas.

The first, she said, is data surveillance and reporting. Beginning this year, DOD will publish an annual suicide report.

That first report will release calendar year 2018's suicide counts and rates for service members and provide data on suicide deaths among military family members from calendar year 2017, she said.

"We must do better."

Dr. KARIN ORVIS

Director, Defense Suicide Prevention Office

Regarding the data, "transparency and timeliness is of the utmost importance to us," Orvis said, adding that reliability and standardization of data are also important in compiling accurate reporting.



As for data over recent years, Orvis said, she's "disheartened that the trends are not going in the right direction for our military community."

"We must do better," she said. "We have much more progress to make."

The second area of DoD focus is program evaluation, Orvis said.

Program evaluation includes outcomes, not only in terms of suicide deaths and attempts, but also in leading indicators such as unit cohesion, help-seeking behaviors and reducing barriers to care, she explained.

The department is also looking at promising practices in the civilian community that have been demonstrated to reduce suicide. Those deemed effective are being started as pilot pro-

grams, with possible DoD-wide implementation, she said.

For example, Orvis said, several pilot studies are now being conducted, including ones focused on problem solving and teaching emotional regulation skills and help-seeking.

The third focus area is private and public collaboration.

"We can't act alone to prevent suicide," Orvis said, noting that DoD partners

with other federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, academia and community organizations, looking at the best ways to support service members, veterans and their families.

For example, she said, DoD collaborates with National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention on areas such as help-seeking, hope and education for those in need.

Also, the department is partnering with the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors for support of family members of a loved one whose death was by suicide.

The biggest collaborative efforts, she said, are with the VA and the Department of Homeland Security, focused especially on high-risk veterans who are transitioning out of the military.

Early preparedness can help with financial survival in disaster

By **TOMMY MORRIS**

DPTMS emergency manager

FORT POLK, La. — September is National Preparedness Month and the theme for the week ending Saturday is Financial Preparedness.

It can be a challenging experience rebuilding after a disaster or other emergency. Having access to personal financial, insurance, medical and other records is crucial for starting the process of recovery quickly and efficiently.

Taking the time now to collect and secure these critical records will give you peace of mind and, in the event of an emergency, will ensure that you have the documentation needed to start the recovery process without delay.

Steps should include:

- Gather financial and critical personal, household and medical information.

- Consider saving money in an emergency savings account that could be used in any crisis. Keep a small amount of cash at home in a safe place. It is important to have small bills on hand because ATM's and credit cards may not work during a disaster when you need to purchase necessary supplies, fuel or food.

- Obtain property (homeowners or renters), health and life insurance if you do not have them. Review existing policies for the amount and extent of coverage to ensure that what you have in place is what is required for you and your family for all possible hazards.

Additional steps to take to be financially prepared for an emergency include:

- Download FEMA's Emergency Financial First Aid Kit at **FEMA.GOV** or **www.consumer-finance.gov/prepare** and fill it out.

- Find a safe place to store the kit and the important documents you've gathered. Include ID cards, Social Security cards, telephone and account numbers, credit cards, utility information and insurance numbers.

- Understand your insurance options and the extent of coverage in case of disaster. These include renter's, homeowner's, auto and flood insurance.

Having financial and medical records and important contact information will be crucial to help start the recovery process quickly. Take time now to safeguard the following critical documents:

- **Household identification**

- *Photo ID to prove identity of household



members

- *Birth certificate to maintain or re-establish contact with family members

- *Social Security card to apply for FEMA disaster assistance

- *Military service records

- *Pet ID tags

- **Financial and legal documentation**

- *Housing payments to identify financial records and obligations

- *Insurance policies to re-establish financial accounts

- *Sources of income to maintain payments and credit

- *Tax statements to provide contact information for financial and legal providers and apply for FEMA disaster assistance

- **Medical information**

- *Physician information to provide doctors with health information if medical care is needed

- *Copies of health insurance information to ensure existing care continues uninterrupted

- *Immunization records

- *Medications

- **Insurance**

- Having insurance for your home or business property is the best way to ensure you will have the necessary financial resources to help you repair, rebuild or replace whatever is damaged. Document and insure your property now.

- Household contact information should include:

- Banking institutions

- Insurance agent

- Health professionals

- Service providers

- Place of worship

Get your benefits electronically

A disaster can disrupt mail service for days or weeks. Consider electronic payments for regular benefits as a significant way to protect yourself financially before disaster strikes.

While there are warnings for many types of potential disasters, many emergencies and disasters occur without any warning.

Since you can't predict where you will be for disasters, it is important to have plans and supplies for the locations you and your household go to regularly.

Planning ahead will ensure that you and your household will know what to do and have the supplies you need to be safe wherever you are.

Individuals and households should consider the locations they frequent; find out what plans are available for these locations, and customize their personal and household plans based on what household members would do if an emergency occurred while they were at that location.

Be prepared for an emergency

Locations to consider and plan for include:

- Home

- Workplace

- Vehicles — have a plan for traveling between work and home, and other commonly visited locations in case of an emergency.

- School and daycare

- Places of worship

Following these guidelines will help ensure you and your family are financial survivors in the event of an emergency or natural disaster.

Army leadership committed to financial reform, accountability

ARMY.MIL

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Army is focused on reforming the Department's financial practices to improve performance and to optimize its purchasing power. Army financial reform consists of two "pillars" — auditability and financial stewardship.

The law requires the Army to produce auditable financial statements and account for the money it spends, and the property and equipment it manages.

To continue progress in Financial Reform, the Army is aggressively developing a culture that expects auditable records at every level. The Army has a responsibility to maximize its resources, operate transparently, and execute its budget, according to the law.

As expected, the results of the fiscal year 2018 (FY18) audit produced a benchmark to begin measuring progress for future audits. The Army is taking steps, such as implementing strong internal controls, to remediate findings ahead of the FY19 audit.

The Command Accountability and Execution Review Program helps to maximize the Army's purchasing power, encourage active management of Operations and Management funds by leaders and decrease the number of de-obligations.

In developing the FY20 budget (\$182 billion) Army leaders reviewed all programs and projects, aligning them with the National Defense Strategy and Army priorities. The NDS explains how the U.S. competes, deters, and defeats the nation's adversaries.

The results validated Army programs, synchronized resourcing and reinvested savings in programs which focused on financial reform and auditability.

The Army is also reinforcing a "cultural change" to its leaders. Financial stewardship will continue to be a command responsibility. Leaders and commanders, at all levels, will be held responsible for the management and performance of their budgets.

The Army has a responsibility to maximize its resources, operate transparently and execute its budget, according to law and policy. Congress penalizes the Army for losing buying power by cutting funds from its appropriations. The Army is committed to optimizing purchasing power by efficient budget execution through financial reform.

National Guard positioned to respond to Dorian

By **TECH. SGT. ERICH B. SMITH**

National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. — As Hurricane Dorian makes its way along the coast, the National Guard is in place to respond, said Air Force Gen. Joseph Lengyel, chief of the National Guard Bureau, during a Pentagon press conference Tuesday.

"As I stand here, there are more than 5,500 National Guard members in four states, ready to provide full-spectrum recovery and support to all those impacted by Hurricane Dorian," Lengyel said. "A preponderance (of those forces) are in Florida."

According to Guard officials, the Florida National Guard has a little more than 4,500 Soldiers and Airmen mobilized for response efforts.

Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina National Guard are positioning Soldiers and Airmen ahead of the hurricane as it proceeds along its path, Lengyel said.

"(Guard members) will be poised to work and ready for their communities and states — from the inception of preparation, through the response, through the recovery — until the (local first) responders can handle this without any military assistance," Lengyel said.

Part of the Guard response, he added, includes the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, which allows Guard elements in states affected by a hurricane or other disaster to request Guard personnel from other states should additional assets be needed.

Prep for possible hurricane response efforts also began well before Dorian formed, said Lengyel.

"The preparation for this hurricane started last spring," he said.

At that time, Guard leadership in each state mapped out their available capabilities as well as what additional assets may need to be shared with or drawn from other states.

Additionally, pre-arrangements were made detailing how Guard elements in one state would automatically support response efforts in another state.

A similar meeting is held each spring, said Lengyel, as overseas deployments and other training requirements may affect what assets are available.

The goal is to ensure quick response in times of need, he said, adding that less time and distance to getting assets on the ground equals more lives saved.

"It's an efficient system," Lengyel said of the EMAC and yearly planning efforts.

He also stressed how collaboration with local and state as well as federal agencies and other military entities — such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency and U.S. Northern Command — makes for an effective response and recovery effort.

"We stay in sync with NORTHCOM, FEMA and all our partners associated with the hurricane response," he said.

While Dorian continues on its path, Lengyel stressed that the Guard remains flexible in its response preparations.

"As this storm moves north, Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina will in succession, I believe, add more forces to National Guard structures that are in place."

Lengyel added that Guard units from through-



Florida National Guard Soldiers and Airmen, from the CBRN Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP), load equipment and prepare for potential missions responding to Hurricane Dorian.

CHING OETTEL/ARMY NEWS SERVICE



Florida National Guard members prepare for potential hurricane response missions in Opa-Locka, Fla., as outer winds from Hurricane Dorian hit the Florida coast, Sept. 2. Approximately 5,500 Guard members stand ready to respond in Florida, Georgia and the Carolinas as Dorian, now a Category 2 storm roughly 100 miles off the coast of Florida, slowly moves northward after pummeling the Bahamas as a Category 5 storm.

out the country are there if needed.

"The National Guard can also draw upon from a proven and highly trained force of over 450,000

men and women — Soldiers and Airmen — from all 50 states, three territories and District of Columbia if needed," he said.

West Point football games recruiting Soldiers for prior-service program

By **BRANDON O'CONNOR**

Army News Service

WEST POINT, N.Y. — Each week during the season, Army West Point football players wear a decal on the back of their helmet honoring an Army division the current cadets may one day serve with.

During the Aug. 30 season opener against Rice, the team honored the Soldiers of the 82nd Airborne Division with the red, white and blue AA decal proudly displayed on the back of their helmets along with the American flag.

The commanding general and command sergeant major of the 82nd Airborne Division attended the game, the division's chorus performed before the review parade and as has become the norm over the last couple years, Soldiers from the division who are eligible to attend the U.S. Military Academy were invited to visit for the game.

This season marks the third year of the Soldier Visit Program where five to 10 West Point eligible Soldiers from the honored division for home games are invited to attend the game and learn more about West Point.

The visits are structured much in the same way as an official visit for an athlete being recruited by one of West Point's corps squad teams. The Soldiers arrive the Thursday before the game and are paired with a prior-service cadet currently attending West Point who hosts them for the weekend. The Soldiers stay in the barracks with their host cadet, attend classes and eat in the cadet mess hall.

They are also given a tour of both West Point and the U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School and the chance to meet with leadership from both West Point and USMAPS. They then attend the football game with the corps of cadets and are honored along with division leadership on the field during a break in the game.

The goal of the program is to introduce eligible Soldiers, meaning those who are under 23 years old, unmarried and have no dependents, to the possibility of applying to attend West Point.

"I talk to command sergeants major or sergeants first class who are senior noncommissioned officers and they'll say, 'I had no idea that West Point was an option for a Soldier.' It blows my mind," said Capt. David Mason, the Soldiers regional commander and founder of the Soldier Visit Program.

As part of each year's incoming class, West Point has available slots for 85 current active duty Soldiers and 85 Reserve/National Guard Soldiers. Typically, the full allotment of Reserve/National Guard Soldiers are admitted, but less than 50 of the spots for active duty Soldiers are filled, Mason said. There are also additional spots available for Soldiers to attend the prep school for a year.

According to Capt. Brian Gaudette, an offi-



As part of the Soldier visit program — focusing on Soldiers eligible to attend West Point — Soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division were asked to attend the school's season opener Aug. 30 against Rice University and learn more about West Point.

cer in the West Point Directorate of Admissions, on average 53% of prior service applicants are admitted to the academy, a much higher percentage than applicants coming directly from high school.

"They see it as more attainable," Mason said of the Soldiers' reactions after visiting for a football game. "They learn more about USMAPS because people have this pie in the sky view of what a West Point cadet is, and that it is the all-star captain of the football team, and they're on all-state and they do all these things. They don't see themselves as that mold. I think it definitely opens their eyes."

Once the Soldiers return to their division, even if they don't end up applying to West Point, the academy still gains a benefit from them telling their friends about the program and spreading the word that West Point is an option for Soldiers on active duty.

Pfc. Abdiel Leon was one of 10 Soldiers from the 82nd airborne Division to visit for the Rice game. Before being invited on the trip, he said he had heard of the prior-service program at West Point but knew next to nothing about it. In the month since being invited, and even before arriving at West Point for the visit, he'd done enough research to compel him to go ahead and apply to the academy.

"So far, after seeing all the things that I saw and all the good opportunities and the things I could do here, I'm definitely going to go through and finish that application," Leon said. "I never even thought about West Point. I never even thought that I would be given the opportunity. So, now that I was given the opportunity just to even come here, it has definitely changed my mind."

During the trip, the 82nd Abn Div Soldiers had the chance to spend time with prior-service cadets, meet with Command Sgt. Maj. Jack Love, the senior enlisted leader at West Point, and attend a spirit dinner in the cadet mess hall along with going to the season opener for the Black Knights.

"I plan on staying in the Army for 20 years, and there's no better place to try to stay in than USMA," Sgt. Levi Aslani said of why he is interested in West Point. "The connections you make here, the opportunities you make, or are given to you, no other place compares."

Aslani applied to West Point for the Class of 2023 and after not getting in on his first try he is taking this year to improve his application with the hope of being accepted to the prep school for the next academic year. A

fter visiting West Point for the first time, he said his desire to attend West Point has only increased.

"I paired up with a prior service E-5 as well," Aslani said. "He was in the boat of either staying enlisted or being an officer and he chose the officer route and he's really reaping the benefits from it."

The visits are a chance for the Soldiers to meet with current cadets who have taken the same path as them and ask questions they couldn't get answered elsewhere. After being invited to take part in the visit, Pfc. Mackenzie Hochstetler said she talked with officers who are West Point graduates to learn more about the academy. But it was not until she arrived at the academy that she has come to realize why it is special.

"It's definitely a place where you see a lot of competitiveness," Hochstetler said. "A lot of times, you don't really see that in the regular Army, but everyone wants to be the best. I think that's a cool atmosphere. I think that's important, especially being at West Point and that reputation of being a West Point grad, I kind of understand it now. Because it's a pretty big deal. It's prestigious."

Defense strategy for preventing suicides requires team effort

By DAVID VERGUN

Army News Service

WASHINGTON — Suicide decimates not only families, but also military units, a senior Defense Department official said at the 2019 Department of Veterans Affairs/Department of Defense Suicide Prevention Conference in Nashville, Tenn., held Aug. 26-29.

James N. Stewart, performing the duties of the undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, cited the death of an airman in a unit he once commanded in his remarks at the conference.

"It had a tremendous impact on the unit in every single way," he said. "Rather than focusing on the mission, what consumed us was how did we fail? How did we miss it? We thought we had the tools. We thought we had the training. How did this happen? How did we not pick up on the signs?"

Teamwork has always been a warfighting principle, and it's no different when it comes to combating suicides, he said.

"One suicide is too many, let alone the alarming numbers we're seeing today," he added.

Executive orders issued last year and earlier this year direct the Defense Department and the services to collaborate with federal agencies such as the VA, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Health and Human Services, other federal agencies and even community partners, Stewart said, with



the goal of providing seamless care during and beyond the transition of service members to civilian life.

Additionally, he said, the Defense Strategy for Suicide Prevention that was established in 2015 and the DoD's 2017 establishment of the Defense Suicide Prevention Program guide the department in strengthening programs and efforts and serve as the foundations for future improvements in critical areas.

One year before separation or retirement, Stewart said, all service members begin the transitioning process.

The process includes completing a comprehensive, standardized and individual assessment and identifying and addressing gaps so DoD can improve health benefits and support, he explained.

The causes of suicide are complex, he acknowledged.

"No two individuals have the same life experiences," Stewart said, noting that everyone has a role to play in caring for their teammates.

The way to do this begins with engaged leadership each and every day, he said. Often, he added, small steps save lives, and he encouraged people to recognize the warning signs and do something before it's too late.



Stewart

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Take time to enjoy benefits of Fort Polk's Warrior Hills Golf Course

GUARDIAN STAFF

FORT POLK, La. — Fort Polk linksters have several opportunities to enjoy the rolling fairways and smooth manicured greens of Warrior Hills Golf Course during the month of September.

- Drive, chip and putt challenge, Saturday, 9 a.m.

Cost is \$15 per participant age 18 and older. There are three categories in the longest drive: Men, women and seniors. In the putt and chip events, everyone competes together.

First place in each category receives a \$75 VISA gift card and the best overall finisher receives a \$125 VISA gift card. Limit one prize per participant.

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

prizes and lunch.

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

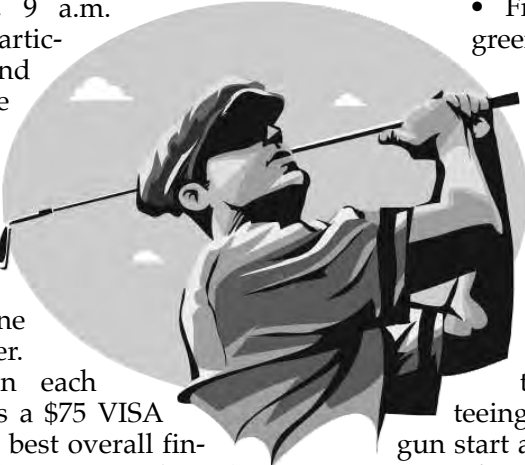
- Fifty percent off green fees Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays through Sept. 30. Cart fees are not included.

- Wednesday night golf scramble, Wednesdays through Oct. 30

teeing off with a shotgun start at 5 p.m. Players must sign in by 4:45 p.m.

Cost is \$20 for members and \$25 for non-members. Price includes cart, golf and prizes.

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



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Natchitoches celebrates return of fall with Meat Pie Festival

By ANNABELLE ARCAND

Special to the Guardian

FORT POLK, La. — Fall brings the promise of cooler temperatures, colorful leaves and savory food. In the South — particularly in Louisiana — savory food and festi-

vals go hand in hand.

The meat pie festival in Natchitoches, Louisiana, Sept. 20-21, rings in the beginning of fall with delicious culinary delights and offers activities for both young and old.

The town of Natchitoches has a long and rich history of hosting var-

ious festivals throughout the year. The annual meat pie festival celebrates its return for the 17th time this year and combines the celebration of Louisiana's most favorite snack with music, activities and beer.

Pies have been around for many years. Whether sweet or salty — there is a filling for everyone's taste.

The American Pie Counsel reveals that the love for pies started with the ancient Egyptians. Also the Greeks had their own recipe for pies of all kind. English settlers brought the pie to America.

The crust was not meant to be eaten and just served to hold the filling together during the baking process. It was called a "coffin." After the American revolution it became more popular to eat the coffin along with its sweet filling.

Where did the meat pie originate? The meat pie finds its roots in England. The word pie most likely derived from the bird magpie who collects all kinds of goods and keeps it in its nest. Early pies were filled with all kinds of different meats.

The early pie indulgers were not picky where the meat for the filling came from and fully utilized their environment. Crows and other birds were top choices to fill these baked goods.

If you are craving some savory pies, most likely not filled with crow meat, then the meat pie festival might be a fun weekend experience for individuals and families.

The festival also includes Natchitoches' annual Cane River Run, which takes place Sept. 21. The river run takes participants through the Creole National Historic Park along the Cane River Lake which is home to historic plantations and winding roads. This activity is hosted by the Independent Motorcycle Riders of Natchitoches.

The meat pie festival will have children's activities, balloon rides, food vendors, arts and crafts and live entertainment. Bands will play in honor of the 50th anniversary of the summer of 1969.

Gates open Sept. 20 at 5 p.m. and Sept. 21 at 10 a.m. For more information visit meatpiefestival.com.

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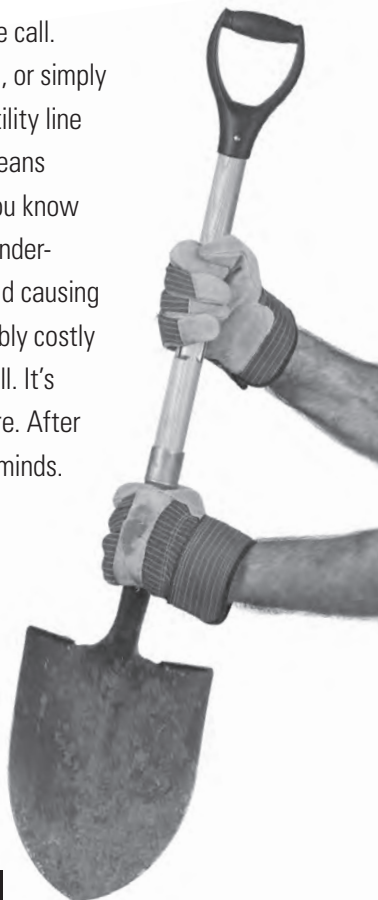
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Factor in Louisiana faith, family, fitness, food, fun at NSU festival

NSU

NATCHITOCHES, La. — If you are in the mood to immerse yourself in Louisiana culture while having a good time, you won't want to miss the 21st annual Creole Heritage Center Celebration.

The event is hosted by Northwestern State University at its Creole Heritage Center Sept. 27-28 in the NSU Sylvan Friedman Student Union Ballroom and on the Rue Beauport Riverfront in downtown Natchitoches.

Film and television star Robert Ri'chard best known for riveting films like: *Bolden*, *Coach Carter* and *One on One* will be in attendance as the honorary co-ambassador along with NSU President Chris Maggio.

The theme for this year's event is "Let Your Legacy Live On." Webster's Dictionary defines legacy as something transmitted by or received from an ancestor or predecessor or from the past.

Most people don't think about what they are contributing or leaving behind for their families and communities, but this celebration focuses on the legacy that has been passed on and will be passed on to future generations. The five characteristics of legacy include faith, family, fitness, food and fun, which Louisiana has in spades.

Following that concept, discussion topics on Sept. 27 includes faith and healing; family genealogy challenges; fitness — wellness and health; food — traditional foods and healthy eating; and fun — recreation and entertainment.

The evening concludes with a Zydeco dance featuring Brandon Ledet and the Creole Touch.

Take part in the fun Sept. 28 as the day begins with a 5K Legacy Fun Run and Walk, led by Ri'chard and Maggio on the Rue Beauport River-

front. In addition, a special tribute will be held to honor the Legacy of Folk Artist Clementine Hunter.

Live musical entertainment takes place throughout the day along with other fun activities for the whole family.

Now is the perfect opportunity to get involved in the Creole Heritage Center with exclusive coverage and sponsorships as the organization strives to promote education and community service programs.

Through Sept. 16 tickets are \$25 per person and includes all activities, including the Zydeco dance and reception. After Sept. 16 tickets are \$30 per person. To purchase tickets visit www.eventbrite.com.

For more information visit creolecenter@nsu-la.edu or call (318) 357-6685.



Robert Ri'chard



NATCHITOCHES.COM

Take magnolia tour in Natchitoches

NV&CB

NATCHITOCHES, La. — The world-famous movie *Steel Magnolias* will be the focus of the 65th Annual Natchitoches Fall Pilgrimage.

This year marks three decades since the beloved movie was released.

Homes and other film locations will be open for the tour.

The Natchitoches Historic Foundation presents the American Cemetery Mourning Tour Oct. 11, which is the location of the famous cemetery scene from the movie.

The tour continues Oct. 12 as participants take a peek into *Steel Magnolia* homes.

The Steel Magnolia House highlights this ticket, along with numer-

ous other locations where behind-the-scene movie secrets will be shared

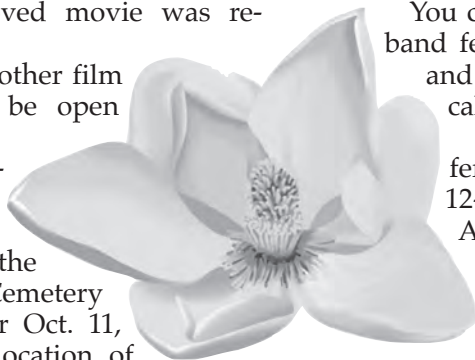
Stick around and your ticket will get you into a recreation of Shelby's wedding reception party in the Steel Magnolia House garden Oct. 12.

You can dance to the same band featured in the movie, and feast on armadillo cake.

The APHN also offers a country tour Oct. 12-13, featuring Saint Augustine Church (where the wedding was filmed), and Cherokee Plantation.

Throughout the weekend, local celebrities who starred in the film as extras will relate stories of moviemaking in and around Natchitoches during that exciting time.

For more information, visit www.melroseplantation.org.



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Lagniappe

BOSS

As summer ends, Fort Polk's Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers hosts entertaining events to keep the fun going.

- **Baseball game**

BOSS is attending a Houston Astros vs LA Angels baseball game. Limited space is available so register today. The cost is \$45 per person, which covers transportation and hotel. The trip departs from the Home of Heroes Recreation Center Sept. 21.

- **Lemon lot**

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

For more information call 531-1948.

Festivals

- **Jazz & Blues Fest**

The best local and national musicians gather each year at the Highland Jazz & Blues Festival. Shreveport's own "party in the park" takes place in Columbia Park, 700 Columbia St. Sept. 14.

This free festival features great food and local artwork and has become one of the fastest growing events in the city. The event is people, family and dog friendly. For more information visit www.highlandjazzandblues.org.

- **Fall festival**

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

- **Arts festival**

Sample a variety of local food and art during the Red River Revel Arts Festival, Sept. 28-Oct. 6 in downtown Shreveport's Festival Plaza, 101 Crockett Street. This enormous, family-friendly festival features more than 100 visual artists, music from every genre, food and drink ven-

dors, and more.

For more information call (318) 424-4000.

Miscellaneous

- **School concert**

A back to school concert takes place Saturday on the Polk stage, 109 East Texas Street and Fourth Street, Leesville, at 6:30 p.m.

Enjoy the music of the Crime Stoppers Band as you enjoy food from food trucks and have a good time.

- **Appreciation breakfast**

Leesville Veterans of Foreign Wars post 3106, 242 Harriet Street, Leesville, hosts a first responders appreciation breakfast Wednesday from 7-9 a.m. The breakfast is free and open to the public. For more information call (337) 238-0041.

- **Recognition Day**

Leesville Veterans of Foreign Wars post 3106, 242 Harriet Street, Leesville, hosts a POW/MIA Recognition Day Sept. 20 at the Vernon Parish Veteran's Plaza, downtown Leesville, at 6 p.m. The event focuses on remembering those who put country before self, but have yet to return home from their wars. For more information call (337) 238-0041.

- **Le Tour De Bayou**

Whether you are a serious bike rider or do it just for fun, you won't want to miss out on the eighth annual Le Tour de Bayou.

The biking event is a scenic cycling tour that winds through the bayou region of central Louisiana. The tour takes place Sept. 21 and registration is open for any excited cyclist. All tour levels begin and end at Kent Plantation House, 3601 Bayou Rapides Road, Alexandria. There are six levels (tour miles) of participation — 101, 69, 40, 25 or 10 miles and 2-mile family ride, walk or run.

A post-ride party at Kent Plantation House features live Louisiana music, jambalaya and plenty to drink. It's the perfect place to relax and have fun after a long ride. For more infor-

mation call (318) 487-5998 or go to www.bikereg.com.

- **Quilt show**

The Annual Red River Quilt show takes place Sept. 27-28 at the Louisiana State Fairgrounds, 3701 Hudson Ave, Shreveport. The quilt show displays more than 200 quilts to be enjoyed and judged.

While there, you can enjoy special exhibits, a silent auction of quilted items, vendor mall, product and technique demonstrations, door prizes and more.

Admission is \$8 per person. The show is held from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. in conjunction with the opening weekend of Red River Revel Arts Festival. For more information visit www.redriverquilters.com.

- **Craft fair**

Stop by the seventh annual St. Michael's Ladies Auxiliary Craft Fair Oct. 12 from 8 a.m.-2 p.m. at 105 West South Street, Leesville. Start your holiday shopping early with vendor offerings such as hair bows, woodworking, jewelry, wreaths and more. For more information call (337) 353-4448.

Clubs/groups

- **Bass Masters**

Join the Fort Polk Community Bass Masters. The club meets monthly on the Tuesday before each tournament. Meetings are held at 7 p.m. at the New Llano American Legion, Post 387, 500 Vernon St.

The next meeting is Tuesday. The September tournament takes place at Sam Rayburn Reservoir, just north of Jasper, Texas, Sept. 14. The entry fee is \$40. For more information visit www.fortpolkcommunitybassmasters.com.

- **Lose weight**

Join Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS) every Thursday at the Vernon Parish Library meeting room. Weigh in is from 5-5:50 p.m. The meeting starts at 5:50 p.m. For more information call (337) 208-0896.

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Published for the community of Fort Polk, La.

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* Businesses will not receive free advertising. All business ads must be prepaid. We accept Visa and Mastercard. (This includes child care, quarters-cleaning, or the sale and/or breeding of multiple pedigreed/registered animals)

* Only single soldiers living in barracks may list numbers with 531 prefixes.

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