



# FORGING THE WARRIOR SPIRIT

## THE JRTC & FORT POLK GUARDIAN

Vol. 47, No. 22

Home of Heroes @ Fort Polk, LA

May 29, 2020

### JRTC welcomes 4th SFAB for Rotation 20-08

By **CHUCK CANNON**

Command information officer

FORT POLK, La. — As the Army moves forward in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Army leaders have chosen the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk — the Army's crucible combat training center for Infantry Brigade Combat Teams and Security Force Assistance Brigades — to develop a game plan that allows for the resumption of unit training while at the same time affording protection for Soldiers, civilians, contractors and Family members.

Soldiers with the 4th Security Force Assistance Brigade, based at Fort Carson, Colorado, began arriving at Alexandria International Airport's Arrival/Departure Airfield Control Group (ADACG) May 26, and will continue arriving daily through early June to participate in Rotation 20-08.

Joining the Fort Carson Soldiers is the 3rd Battalion, 126th Infantry Regiment (Michigan Army National Guard), and elements of the Security Force Assistance Command from Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

Maj. David Cook, JRTC Sustainment Operations Center, said as each element arrives at Alexandria, the Soldiers go through screening by a team of JRTC and Fort Polk medical personnel, led by Lt. Col. Brian Adams, deputy commander for Clinical Services at Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital, and Sgt. 1st Class Teresa Bocanegra, NCOIC of BJACH ob/gyn and clinical services.

"We have a doc here and medics, and we take the incoming Soldiers' temperatures and have a



The 4th Security Force Assistance Brigade, from Fort Carson, Colorado, deplane at the Alexandria International airport May 26.

series of questions we ask to make sure there hasn't been anyone who tested positive for COVID-19 or taken any type of medication that would reduce their temperature," Cook said. "Then we give them an in-brief before they come onto JRTC to make sure they understand we're protecting our community and the Soldiers on Fort Polk."

Cook said about 200 advance party Soldiers were processed through the ADACG on May 26.

He said one or two flights a day are expected until the entire unit has arrived.

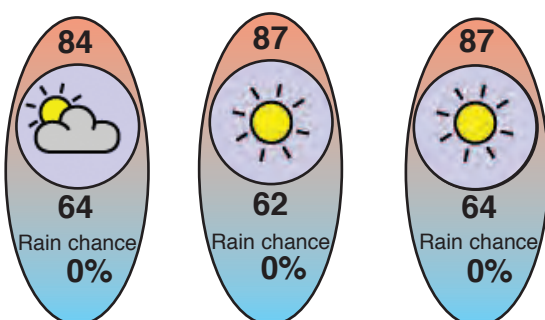
Bocanegra said she and Adams were on hand to ensure screening was done correctly and determine if any Soldiers needed further testing.

"We here to control the medical aspect of their arrival," she said.

Bocanegra said that because of precautions

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### Weekend weather



Friday

Saturday

Sunday

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# Viewpoint

## In our view

Guardian staff asked JRTC and Fort Polk Facebook followers, "What did you do over the Memorial Day weekend?" Here are their responses:



**April Evans:** "We spent our Memorial Day weekend with our family and friends enjoying our freedom and being blessed."

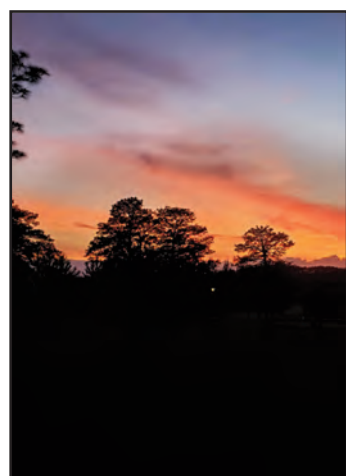


**Staff Sgt. Rapier Smiley and, spouse, Julie Smiley:** "We spent our Memorial Day weekend welcoming our daughter, Audrey Rae Smiley, into the world."



**Patrick Guidry:** "I was thinking about the men and women that I know that died in service, as well as my deployments and figured I'd head to my shop and make a replica of my bronze stars."

**From left to right:** "Heather Comeaux, Jennifer Stolzle, Summer Peters, Jennifer De-Monaco, Yuri Tei, Lucy Parker, Becca Hovsepian, Keegan Mortinger and, kneeling, Amanda Engel, completed a work out of the day for a hero — fallen Navy Lt. Michael Murphy — as Hank (the dog) watched encouragingly."



**Col. Greg Cannata:** "Mine was quiet ... remembering, liking a bunch of posts from my Soldiers, widows, and their kids."



**Kamryn Croker:** "I celebrated my sixteenth birthday with my family and friends. My parents even surprised me with a new car!"



**Maj. Camille Betito:** "My daughter, Renee Betito Yudhistira, 6, caught several fish at Catfish Cove. Live garlic scented worms seem to be the best bait."



**Jimmy Coker:** "I fired up the smoker and fed the family."



## Guardian

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All editorial content of the **Guardian** is prepared, edited, provided and approved by the Public Affairs Office, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk.

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



## Briefs

### ACP changes

During Rotation 20-08 (June) North Fort Polk is locked down for the safety of the community and rotational Soldiers.

Access control point 7 (Alligator Lake) is closed to all but commercial traffic and rotational traffic.

ACP 6 (Chaffee Road) is now open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

As always, ACP 1, (Entrance Road), is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

### Off limits

The following establishments in the Fort Polk, Leesville, Barksdale Air Force Base and Shreveport areas have been designated as off limits by the Armed Forces Disciplinary Control Board of the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk:

- Blackhawks Motorcycle Club, 2463 VFW Road., Leesville
- The Venue, 11810 Lake Charles Highway, Leesville
- American Legion Post 510, 703 North Gladys St., Leesville
- Adolph's Grocery, 100 Vernon St., New Llano
- Banshees Motorcycle Club, 1330 and 1340 Rapides Ave., Alexandria
- BEAST Motorcycle Club, 3149 Davis Road., West Lake
- Outcast Motorcycle Club, 5151 U.S. Highway 90 East, Lake Charles
- Pipes Emporium, 1304 Centenary Blvd., Shreveport
- Kokopellis, 400 Commerce St., Shreveport
- Lotus, 2001 East Texas St., Suite 3, Bossier City.

For a complete list of Fort Polk policy letters visit <https://home.army.mil/polk/index.php/about/pol>.

### 100% ID scans

Beginning June 6, the installation will transition back to a 100% scan of all personnel entering the installation.

It will remain a no-contact scan.

Drivers will present their cards to access control point personnel, including any cards belonging to other occupants in the vehicle.

The cards will be manually scanned without the guard touching the cards.

### AAFES mask policy

Face coverings are mandatory throughout AAFES facilities, including the Main Post Exchange Food Court, to protect the community from COVID-19 transmission, as foot traffic has increased in these areas.



### **\*\*NOTICE FROM THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, WESTERN DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA\*\* (FORT POLK)**

Anyone who received a United States District Court Violation Notice with an appearance date of Monday, June 1, 2020, at 8:00 a.m. will need to appear as ordered. The courthouse is located at Building 1946, 15<sup>th</sup> Street, Fort Polk.

#### ATTENTION:

Intake will occur outside the building; individuals will be allowed into the courtroom only as their case is called.

Please go to the below link for additional information.

<https://www.lawd.uscourts.gov/ft-polk>

OSJA

## Soldiers punished, separated for UCMJ violations

### OSJA

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

The preamble to the Manual for Courts-Martial states, "(t)he 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."

However, certain disciplinary issues continue to be prevalent across Fort Polk such as breaking quarantine/isolation orders, violating General Order No. 1, driving under the influence of alcohol, wrongful use/possession of controlled substances, fraternization, and sexual assault.

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

- A private first class, assigned to 3rd Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, was punished under Article 15 for disobeying a lawful order (being in a social gathering of five or more people), in violation of Article 92, Uniform Code of Military Justice. The service member was sentenced to a reduction to E-2, forfeiture of \$971 pay for two months, extra duty for 45 days and restriction for 45 days.

- A private first class, assigned to 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div, was punished under Article 15 for communicating a threat and domestic assault, in viola-

tion of Articles 115 and 128b, UCMJ. The service member was sentenced to forfeiture of \$491 pay, extra duty for 14 days, 6 month suspension and restriction for 14 days.

- A sergeant, assigned to 519th Military Police Battalion, was administratively separated under 14-12b (Patterns of Misconduct), with a General (Under Honorable Conditions) characterization of service. Generally, this characterization of service results in the loss of a service member's educational benefits.

- A private, assigned to 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div, was administratively separated under Chapter 14-12c, with a General (Under Honorable Conditions) characterization of service for engaging in an inappropriate relationship with an officer. Generally, this characterization of service results in the loss of a service member's educational benefits.

- A private, assigned to 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div, was administratively separated under Chapter 14-12c(2), with a General (Under Honorable Conditions) characterization of service for wrongful use of a controlled substance. Generally, this characterization of service results in the loss of a service member's educational benefits.

- A private, assigned to 710th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div, was administratively separated under Chapter 14-12c, with a General (Under Honorable Conditions) characterization of service for possessing two unregistered weapons in his on-post residence. Generally, this characterization of service results in the loss of a service member's educational benefits.



# 2020 hurricane season: Preparing during COVID-19 pandemic

By TOMMY J. MORRIS

DPTMS

FORT POLK, La. — Hurricane season begins June 1 and ends Nov. 30. As the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk continues to take precautions to keep Soldiers, civilians and Family members safe from COVID-19, it is important to stay prepared for other emergencies as well.

Hurricanes are dangerous and can cause major damage due to storm surges, wind damage and flooding. They can happen along any U.S. coast or in any territory in the Atlantic or Pacific oceans. Storm surge is historically the leading cause of hurricane-related deaths in the U.S.

While many preparedness tools are similar, certain actions may look different while COVID-19 remains a concern.

Emergencies can happen unexpectedly in communities just like Fort Polk's. The most important step you can take in helping your local responders is being able to take care of yourself and those in your care. Communities are able to recover more quickly the better prepared its residents remain.

Consider the following steps in planning and preparing for a severe weather event while dealing with the constraints of COVID-19.

**Know your hurricane risk.** Hurricanes bring many hazards to U.S. coastlines and inland areas, including storm surges along the coasts, inland flooding due to heavy rainfall, tornadoes, strong winds, rip currents and large waves.

**Make an emergency plan.** Make sure everyone in your household knows and understands your hurricane plan. Discuss the latest Centers for Disease Control guidance on COVID-19, and how it may affect your hurricane planning.

**Make a plan by location.** Many emergencies 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 places you and your household regularly attend.

Planning ahead ensures that you and your family will know what to do and have the necessary supplies to be safe wherever you are.

Locations to consider and plan for include homes; workplaces; vehicles/regular methods of transportation; schools/daycares; places of worship; sports arenas, playing fields and entertainment locations; and shopping areas.

To develop a plan for different locations, it is important to get information about the organization or building managers' plans. If plans are not available, familiarize yourself with local alert/warnings; building alarm/alert systems; building evacuation/shelter in place plans; the building's structure; and the environment surrounding the building.

**Gather supplies.** Have enough supplies for your household, including medications, disinfectant supplies, cloth-face coverings and pet supplies in your go-bag or vehicle. After an emergency, you may need to survive on your own for several days.

Being prepared means having your own food, water and other supplies to last for at least 72 hours. A disaster-supplies kit is a collection of basic items your household may need in the event of an emergency.

Assemble items for your kit and store in airtight plastic bags, plastic bins or a duffel bag.

Items to consider for your kit include water (one gallon for each person for at least three



days); food (a three-day supply for each person); battery-powered/hand-crank radios and a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration weather radio with a tone alert; flashlight; first-aid kit; extra batteries; whistle; dust mask; plastic sheets and duct tape (to shelter in place); moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties; wrench/pliers; manual can opener; local maps; and a cell phone with charger and backup battery.

Also consider what unique needs your family might have, such as supplies for pets or seniors.

As of March, the CDC has recommended including additional items in disaster kits to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 or other viruses and the flu. These additional items include cloth-face coverings (for everyone ages 2 and up), soap, hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes; prescription medications; non-prescription medications like pain relievers, anti-diarrhea medications, antacids or laxatives; prescription eyeglasses and contact-lens solution; infant formula, bottles, diapers, wipes and diaper rash creams; cash or traveler's checks; vital records; sleeping bags and blankets for each person; complete changes of clothing for each person and depending on the climate; fire extinguishers; matches in a waterproof container; feminine supplies and other personal hygiene items; paper cups, plates, paper towels and plastic utensils; and paper, pencils, books, games, puzzles or other activities for children.

**Store important documents.** Use a safety deposit box, an external drive or a cloud service for safe and easy access to your documents during a disaster. Maintain photo IDs; birth certificates and Social Security cards to prove identity and apply for disaster assistance; military service documents; pet ID tags; housing payments, insurance policies and sources of income; tax statements to provide contact information for financial and legal providers and apply for FEMA dis-

aster assistance; and physician information, copies of health insurance information, immunization records and medications.

**Strengthen your home.** If you plan to ride out the storm in your home, make sure it is in good repair. Declutter drains and gutters; bring in outside furniture; and consider hurricane shutters and proper plywood, steel or aluminum panels to board up windows and doors. Keep in mind that the garage door is the most vulnerable part of the home.

**Staying safe during a hurricane.** Listen for emergency information and alerts. If told to evacuate by local officials, then you should comply immediately.

Determine how best to protect yourself from high winds and flooding. Take refuge in a designated storm shelter, or an interior room. If trapped in a building by flooding, go to the highest level of the building. Do not climb into a closed attic; you may become trapped by rising floodwater. Do not walk, swim or drive through floodwaters.

If you evacuate to a shelter, follow CDC guidelines for protecting you and your family from COVID-19. Be prepared to take soap, hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes or general household cleaning supplies to disinfect high-frequency contact surfaces. Maintain at least 6 feet between you and persons not part of your immediate family. Avoid crowds or gathering in groups as much as possible.

**Consider those with disabilities.** If you or anyone in your household has a disability, identify whether you may need additional help during an emergency.

Keep a contact list in a watertight container in your emergency kit. Be ready to explain to first responders that you need to evacuate and choose to go to a shelter with your family, service ani-

Please see **Hurricane**, page 9



# Spreading mental health awareness during COVID-19

By **CHRISTY GRAHAM**

Guardian editor

FORT POLK, La. — May is Mental Health Awareness Month; since 1949, organizations like Mental Health America have been using the media and local events to reach people.

At the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, the Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital's behavioral-health team works to accomplish the same goal: To reach people and spread awareness about the reality and prevalence of mental health illnesses.

Maj. Ashley Cesar, chief of behavioral health for BJACH, highlighted the importance of this month for the military.

"Military personnel are at a higher risk for experiencing mental illnesses. We are routinely exposed to traumatic experiences, and we have to make quick decisions in short time frames with small margins for error," she said. "We have to remain on guard for symptoms of stress and depression."

Although service members are at a higher risk, there are roadblocks that deter Soldiers from getting help.

Pfc. Fabiana Pettroza, behavioral health technician, believes that one of the most important goals of this month's awareness campaign is to help Soldiers see past one of the largest obstacles.

"There is a mental-health stigma in the military, and I think it's important to recognize that and note that seeking help isn't shameful," she said.

Other barriers to treatment may include cultural background, fear of appearing weak, repercussions and ineligibility for special programs.

"Special schools and programs do mental-health evaluations prior to entrance, and Soldiers worry that behavioral-health encounters may impact their eligibility for those programs," said Pettroza.

"This doesn't automatically preclude Soldiers from those programs," said Cesar.

Cesar explained that, although not every Soldier will have identical treatment outcomes, simply having encounters with behavioral health isn't going to stop them from achieving their goals.

Fighting these misconceptions takes information and awareness, one of the goals of Mental Health Awareness Month.

Takenya Jones-Stewart, substance abuse social worker at JRTC and Fort Polk detailed some of the behavioral-health team's efforts in reaching Soldiers and their Families to spread awareness. "We have fairs, giving Soldiers the opportunity to get information about services that are available," she said.

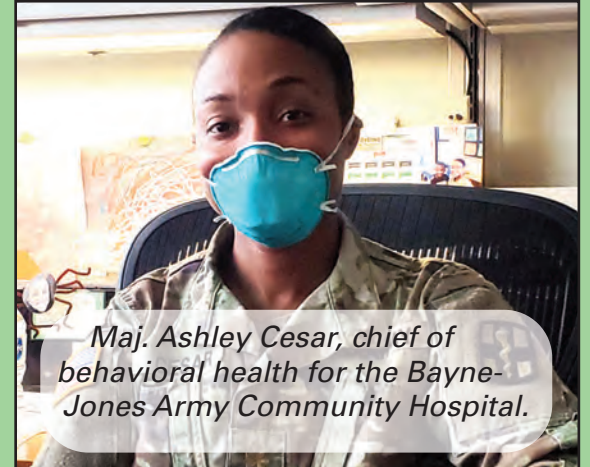
As COVID-19 continues to impact everyone's status quo, this year's mental health awareness month has focused its efforts on posts through BJACH's Facebook page. The reach doesn't end there, however.

At JRTC and Fort Polk, there are several avenues of approach for getting help. Soldiers can utilize walk-in appointments and may benefit from command referrals. There are also medical referrals to behavioral health through primary care providers or as suggested follow-up treatments/appointments for continued care after an emergency room visit, for example.

"We are able to accommodate all of those avenues, in addition to offering virtual services. We have tele-health options through the Brooke

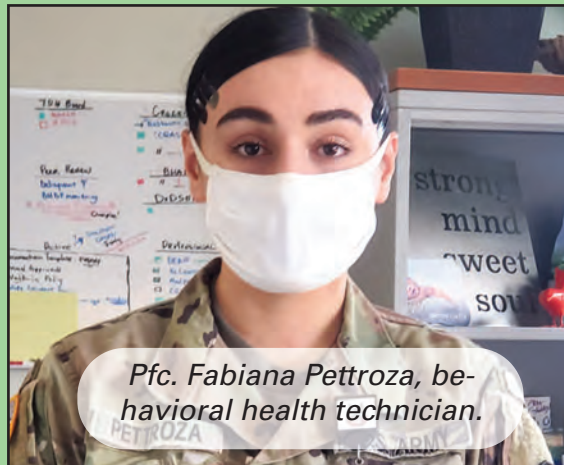


*Takenya Jones-Stewart, substance abuse social worker.*



*Maj. Ashley Cesar, chief of behavioral health for the Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital.*

## Your Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital medical team



*Pfc. Fabiana Pettroza, behavioral health technician.*



*Lt. Col. Michael A. Davidson, command surgeon for Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk.*



Army Medical Center at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. If you're not able to get an immediate appointment in the clinic at BJACH, then we can offer that virtual service, as well," said Cesar.

"Command referrals can be a great tool that I would encourage commanders to use, if they do have specific questions about changes in behavior or the overall Soldier," said Cesar. "If we don't take this step to make sure you're being seen by someone, that Soldier is likely to suffer in silence."

Jones-Stewart added that command referrals "work in a positive way. Sometimes, a Soldier just needs to come in and see what behavioral health is about, because they have been convinced of the stigma. Command referrals can help to jumpstart what needs to happen."

Regardless of the approach, reaching out can be a difficult task for anyone who may be suffer-

ing from anxiety or depression. Making that choice, however, is a sign of toughness.

"It does take a lot for someone to take that first step and to be vulnerable with someone you don't know about intimate details in your life. It takes a lot of courage and strength to do that," said Cesar.

Lt. Col. Michael A. Davidson, command surgeon for JRTC and Fort Polk underscored the significance of mental health and this month's aim for spreading awareness.

"It's important to understand that there are resources available; it's important to build trust and to comfortably talk to the medical community," he said. "Trust in your medical team and trust in your community. Here at JRTC and Fort Polk, I truly believe that we have providers that take the time and care about Soldiers and their Families."



# Rotation

Continued from page 1

that have been taken before the Soldiers left their home stations, she doesn't see a problem with anyone with COVID-19 showing up at the ADACG.

"They've been tested and quarantined and there should be no issues with someone slipping through," she said.

Bocanegra said there is always the possibility that a Soldier could develop symptoms en route to JRTC.

"But that's why we are here," she said. "If they are positive, we'll catch them. It's good to have the testing on both ends because we don't want outside entities contaminating the local populace."

By taking such proactive steps, Bocanegra said not only does it help reduce the risk of COVID-19 being spread on JRTC, it's also encouraging for the Families of those Soldiers who have made the trip south.

"This lets them know that we're taking care of their Soldiers and we're not going to send them back home with the coronavirus," she said. "It's also comforting to our local Soldiers and Families, letting them know we're not going to allow the virus to be brought on Fort Polk."

As the Soldiers exited their bus or aircraft, they lined up wearing masks and maintaining social distancing (6 feet). They were then called in to the ADACG where their temperatures were taken, medical questions asked and ID cards checked by 4th SFAB S-1 personnel. Following the in-brief, the Soldiers were transported by bus to JRTC's North Fort Polk where they were assigned barracks rooms.

On May 27, advance party Soldiers began receiving equipment and vehicles at the Control Receiving and Shipping Point (CRSP) on North Fort Polk. Transport trucks brought the vehicles from Fort Carson, and 4th SFAB Soldiers moved them to a motor pool.

Also on May 27, Maj. Sarah Jones, JRTC SOC, held a Reception, Staging, Onward-movement and Integration (RSOI) rehearsal at North Fort Polk for the 4th SFAB. Jones explained the 4th



CHUCK CANNON / GUARDIAN

*Fort Polk medical personnel process 4th SFAB Soldiers through a medical screening questionnaire station while following social-distancing and face-covering guidelines.*

SFAB's projected movements as they began participation in Rotation 20-08.

In a statement released to 4th SFAB Soldiers and Family members, Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, commander, JRTC and Fort Polk, said installation leadership has developed protective measures to ensure the safety and welfare of participating Soldiers. He said the JRTC Operations Group observer, coach, trainers will provide a professional and safe training event to prepare 4th SFAB Soldiers for their follow-on deployment to Afghanistan later this summer. "The safety of Soldiers and Families at JRTC and Fort Polk is of the utmost importance," he said.



*A 4th SFAB Soldier undergoes a temperature scan while following COVID-19 mitigation measures.*



*A briefing for 4th SFAB took place May 26, while observing social-distancing and face-covering guidelines.*



*A 4th SFAB Soldier steps up to the S-1 check-in station, following COVID-19 mitigation measures.*

Please see **Rotation**, page 7



# Rotation

Continued from page 6



Soldiers for 4th SFAB retrieve a vehicle from the centralized receiving and shipping point on Fort Polk.



Access control point 7, near Alligator Lake, receives incoming personnel and equipment for the 4th SFAB 20-08 rotation.



A Fort Polk military police officer at the safety bubble located on Entrance Road near the fire station.



Maj. Sarah Jones, JRTC SOC (left), converses with Maj. Edwin Bodenheimer, 4th SFAB executive officer.



Maj. Sarah Jones, Joint Readiness Training Center Sustainment Operations Center, conducts a reception, staging, onward movement and integration rehearsal briefing for 4th SFAB Soldiers on May 27.

CHUCK CANNON / GUARDIAN



# 509th Soldiers fly high for proficiency jump over Geronimo drop zone

The photos featured on this page are from the 1st Battalion (Abn), 509th Infantry Regiment's proficiency jump at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk held May 26. Paratroopers conducted the jump over the Geronimo Drop Zone. The U.S. Air Force also conducted air-land training on the flight strip that day. Proper COVID-19 mitigation measures were observed throughout the trainings.



COURTESY KEITH MORROW





# Hurricane

Continued from page 4

mal, caregiver, personal assistant and your assistive technology devices and supplies.

Plan ahead for accessible transportation that you may need for evacuation or getting to a medical clinic.

Inform your support network where you keep your emergency supplies.

Contact your city or county government's emergency-management agency or office. Many local offices keep lists of people with disabilities, so they can be helped quickly in a sudden emergency.

If you are dependent on dialysis or other life-sustaining treatment, know the location and availability of more than one facility. If you use medical equipment in your home that requires electricity, talk to your doctor or health care provider about how you can prepare for its use during a power outage.

Wear medical alert tags or bracelets. If you have a communication disability, make sure your emergency information indicates the best form of communication for you. If you use an augmentative-communications device or other assistive technologies, plan how you will evacuate with the devices or how you will replace equipment if lost or destroyed. Keep model numbers and note where the equipment came from (Medicaid, Medicare, private insurance).

Plan how you will communicate with others if your equipment is not working, including laminated cards with phrases, pictures or pictograms. Keep Braille/text communication cards, if used, for two-way communication.

Plan for children with disabilities and people who may have difficulty in unfamiliar or chaotic environments.

**Know your evacuation zone.** Many kinds of emergencies can require you to evacuate. In some cases, you may have a day or two to prepare, while other situations might call for an immediate evacuation. Planning is vital to making sure that you can evacuate quickly and safely, regardless of the circumstances.

Learn your evacuation routes, practice with household members and pets and identify where you will stay. Learn the types of disasters that are likely in your community. Know the local emergency, evacuation and shelter plans for each specific disaster.

Plan how you will leave and where you will go if you are advised to evacuate. Check with local officials about what shelter spaces are available. COVID-19 may have altered availability. Identify alternate place(s) you may go to in an emergency. If needed, identify a place to stay that will accept pets. Most public shelters allow service animals only.

Be familiar with alternate routes out of your area. Always follow the instructions of local officials and remember that your evacuation route may be on foot depending on the type of disaster.

Come up with a family/household plan to stay in touch in case you become separated. Designate a meeting place and update it depending on the circumstance.

Keep a full tank of gas if an evacuation seems likely. Consider downloading a fuel app to check for outages along your route.

During an evacuation, listen to a battery-powered radio and follow local evacuation instruc-

tions. Leave in time to avoid being trapped by dangerous weather, and take your emergency tool kit.

Be alert for road hazards such as washed-out roads or bridges and downed power lines. Do not drive into flooded areas.

Call or email a designated, out-of-state contact in your family communications plan. Tell them where you are going. Leave a note telling others when you left and where you are going.

Secure your home by locking doors and windows. Unplug electrical equipment such as radios, televisions and small appliances. Leave freezers and refrigerators plugged in unless there is a risk of flooding.

After an evacuation, check with local officials both where you're staying and at home before you travel back. If you are returning to disaster-affected areas, prepare for disruptions to daily activities and remember that returning home before storm debris is cleared is dangerous.

Let friends and family know before you leave a location and when you arrive to another. Charge devices and consider getting back-up batteries in case power-outages continue. Bring supplies such as water and non-perishable food for the car ride. Avoid downed power or utility lines;

they may be live with deadly voltage. Stay away and report them immediately to your power or utility company.

**Returning home after a hurricane.** Listen to local officials for information and special instructions. Wear protective clothing and work with someone else while cleaning up. Do not touch electrical equipment if it is wet or if you are standing in water. If it is safe to do so, turn off electricity at the main breaker or fuse box to prevent electric shock. Avoid wading in floodwater, which can contain dangerous debris. Underground or downed power lines can also electrically charge the water.

Save phone calls for emergencies. Phone systems are often down or busy after a disaster. Use text messages or social media to communicate with family and friends.

Document any property damage with photographs. Contact your insurance company for assistance.

Only use generators outside and away from your home. Never run a generator inside a home or garage.

For additional information, contact Mr. Tommy J. Morris, DPTMS, Chief, Protection Branch, at 531-4875 or [tommy.j.morris2.civ@mail.mil](mailto:tommy.j.morris2.civ@mail.mil).

**Ready** FEMA

## Are You READY!

Some disasters strike without any warning. Have you thought about those supplies you'll need the most? They will usually be the hardest to come by. Enlist your children to help gather supplies for your family's emergency kit. It'll bring you a sense of relief, and your kids a feeling of empowerment.

Make sure you have enough supplies to last for at least **three days**. Think about where you live and your needs. Consider having a large kit at home, and smaller portable kit in the car or your workplace.

**If a big storm is coming...**

- ✓ Fill your car with gas
- ✓ Fill plastic bags with water and place them in the freezer
- ✓ Get extra cash out of the bank
- ✓ Fill prescriptions

### Emergency Supplies List

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3-day supply of non-perishable food (dried fruit, canned tuna fish, peanut butter, etc.)                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Whistle to signal for help   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Can opener   | <input type="checkbox"/> Household chlorine bleach and medicine dropper (when diluted nine parts water to one part bleach, bleach can be used as a disinfectant. Or in an emergency, you can use it to treat water by using 16 drops of regular household liquid bleach per gallon of water. Do not use scented, color safe or bleaches with added cleaners.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paper plates, plastic cups and utensils, paper towels  | <input type="checkbox"/> Local maps   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Cash or traveler's checks  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water – at least a gallon per person, per day for drinking and hygiene                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency reference material such as first aid book or information from <a href="http://www.ready.gov">www.ready.gov</a>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First aid kit  | <input type="checkbox"/> Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, ID, and bank records in a waterproof, portable container  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prescription medication and glasses  | <input type="checkbox"/> Pet supplies   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sleeping bag or warm blanket for everyone in your family   | <input type="checkbox"/> Infant formula and diapers   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Change of clothes to last for at least 3 days, including sturdy shoes; consider the weather where you live | <input type="checkbox"/> Paper and pencil   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Matches in a waterproof container  | <input type="checkbox"/> Books, games or puzzles (let your kids pick these out themselves!)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Toothbrush, toothpaste, soap and other personal items  | <input type="checkbox"/> Your child's favorite stuffed animal or security blanket   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feminine hygiene supplies  | <input type="checkbox"/> Pet food and extra water for your pet  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fire extinguisher  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dust mask, and plastic sheeting and duct tape, to help filter contaminated air                             |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Battery-powered or hand-cranked radio and extra batteries  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlights and extra batteries  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cell phone with charger, extra battery and solar charger   |   |

**Don't forget to think about infants, elderly, pets, or any family members with special needs!**



# Using mobile mental health apps to cope during social isolation

## HEALTH.MIL

WASHINGTON — Living through a global pandemic while adapting to new circumstances, like social distancing, can cause distress in anyone.

“We all need social connection and being separated can make people feel more isolated and lead to depressive symptoms like low mood, poor concentration or unbalanced sleep,” said Kelly Blasko, a clinical psychologist at the Defense Health Agency. “It is easy to feel overwhelmed, and that can lead to other mental-health concerns such as anxiety and worry.”

Addressing mental health issues early can prevent potential problems down the line.

“We need to look at medical readiness holistically with mental health as just one aspect of overall health,” said Blasko. “Just like preventive measures are used to reduce the chances of a physical injury, there are preventive measures to reduce the chances of poor mental health.”

Mobile mental-health tools, including apps, can provide valuable support to people experiencing anxiety during COVID-19.

“These health technologies can help during the times between seeing your provider and can continue to improve the symptoms (of anxiety or depression),” explained Blasko, who is the lead for mobile health clinical integration at the DHA’s Connected Health branch.

Connected Health has developed mobile health tools and published several articles and research on the benefits of using digital health in clinical care, including guidelines on integrating mobile mental-health tools into clinical practice.

The DHA’s mobile apps are free and available for anyone to download from Apple or Android app stores. There are apps that enhance self-care



DHA CONNECTED HEALTH

*Mobile mental health tools, including apps, can provide support to people experiencing anxiety while sheltering at home. May is Mental Health Awareness Month.*

and others that are a companion to treatment with a health care provider.

“Many self-care apps can be used without ongoing treatment. For example, Breathe2Relax teaches diaphragmatic breathing, a skill we all can use to reduce stress,” said Blasko.

“The military health system is expanding its virtual health services during this time and beneficiaries should check directly with their providers to see what options are available for them,” she added.

Blasko cautioned that mental-health apps should never replace help from a health-care provider.

“It is always good to seek help from a professional if you are worried about your mental health,” she said, noting the military crisis line is available for urgent mental-health issues. “These tools can be a way to develop daily coping skills and self-care habits. It is important to know how a mobile app is going to be helpful before relying on it for self-care.”

## COVID-19: lifestyle tips to stay healthy during the pandemic

By JOSEPH JONES

Health.mil

JOINT BASE LEWIS-MCCHORD, Wash. — COVID-19 has changed many daily routines in unprecedented ways. Many people are at home more to minimize exposure. Isolation can illicit the temptation to eat snacks high in sodium, junk food and low-quality meals rather than nutrient-dense foods. This is challenging for many during social distancing and self-isolation.

A day that may have previously included physical activities, like walking to/from your car, shopping for groceries, family outings or visiting shopping malls, are absent for many. This lifestyle shift may normalize a sedentary lifestyle with activities like watch-



ing television, reading or sitting at your computer for longer periods. Stay proactive to maintain an active

lifestyle. Even if you are not directly af-

Please see **Lifestyle**, page 11



# Lifestyle

Continued from page 10

directly affected by COVID-19, it likely has a drastic impact on your day-to-day routine, which could negatively affect your overall health.

## What are some things we can do to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle?

- Stay active. Gyms may not be open, but there are safe alternatives to stay active while adhering to social-distancing restrictions. Aerobics can be done at home. In uncrowded, outdoor areas, going for a brisk walk or jog is still considered safe. Push-ups, sit-ups, jumping-jacks and more exercises are great ways to stay fit while away from the gym. For more ideas visit <https://www.afcmc.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/2147181/staying-physically-active-during-covid-19/>.

- Get adequate sleep. Good sleep is essential to overall health. According to The National Institutes of Health, "Immune system activation alters sleep, and sleep in turn affects the innate and adaptive arm of the body's defense system."

While the amount of sleep needed for good health and optimum performance mostly depends on the individual, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends adults get seven or more hours of sleep per night.

- Maximize diet and nutrition. Practice self-discipline and avoiding emotional/stress eating, which may be related to the drastic changes surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the CDC, whole foods like dark, leafy greens, oranges, tomatoes and fresh herbs are loaded with nutrients. Make it a habit to try to eat more nutritious foods instead of processed snacks or fast food.

- Focus on self-care: Take time to care for yourself. Be supportive and suggest the same for those close to you. Meditation, relaxation, quality time with family and other personal care activities promotes wellness. The Defense Health Agency has



free, evidence-based self-care tools developed by psychologists that you can check out at <https://health.mil/About-MHS/OASDHA/Defense-Health-Agency/Operations/Clinical-Support-Division/Connected-Health/mHealth-Clinical-Integration>

- Maintain personal health-care concerns. If you have medications prescribed for any condition, be sure to take them as directed by your provider. Chronic conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, asthma and many others should be kept in check by taking medications as prescribed. Be sure to reach out to your health-care team with any concerns as well. Telehealth solutions are available if you want to speak with a provider about a concern unrelated to COVID-19.

- Cope with stress and anxiety. Positively cope with stress and anxiety induced by COVID-19. Positive coping mechanisms include exercise, meditation, reading and spending time on your hobbies. Do these activities more each day and develop healthier routines.

- Stay connected. Talking with loved ones while in isolation can help reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression.

Busy schedules before COVID-19 may have limited how often people called loved ones, but now is a great time to increase focus on con-



nections.

The guidance above is to improve health and wellness. Please be aware that eating nutritious foods, physical activity, adequate rest and taking care of mental health makes people more resilient, they're not a cure for COVID-19.

In addition to these suggestions, be sure to follow CDC guidance and talk with your healthcare provider about any health concerns you may have.

If you have a medical emergency, visit an emergency room. If you have an injury or illness unrelated to COVID-19, call your primary care provider.

If you have questions or do not know exactly what to do, call the military health system Nurse Advice Line at (800) 874-2273, option 1.1.



# Community

## Barbecue lunch for COVID —19 heroes

By ANNABELLE R. ARCAND

MWR illustrator

FORT POLK, La. — Bayne Jones Army Community Hospital medical personnel received a special lunch treat May 22. The Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Programs partnered with the Gary Sinise Foundation and organized lunch at BJACH's staff parking lot.

Charles Johnson, the Forge Bar and Grill chef, and his team prepared delicious barbecue pulled-pork sandwich or veggie burger lunch boxes for this special occasion.

The BJACH staff worked around the clock during this year's COVID-19 pandemic. Healthcare workers have demonstrated their commitment under demanding conditions to mitigate the impact of the virus and to keep the Joint Readiness and Fort Polk community safe.

"We are very fortunate to be supported by MWR, the Gary Sinise Foundation and such a close community who were willing to do this for us," said BJACH's Commander Col. Jody L. Dugai. "Not all heroes wear capes and our medical staff have been working through the COVID-19 responses here in the local community. It is a huge morale booster for the team."

A free lunch cannot defray heroic efforts, yet it was a welcome gesture of recognition and gratitude.

"We were excited to partner with the Gary Sinise Foundation for the Serving Heroes initiative," said MWR Business Operation Division Chief Nino Bassaro. "It feels great to be able to show a small gesture of recognition and gratitude for the Soldiers' and staff's efforts."

Actor and musician Gary Sinise is a big supporter of the United States military. After por-



ANNABELLE R. ARCAND/MWR

*Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital's leadership, Col. Jody L. Dugai and Command Sgt. Maj. Alexander L. Poutou, enjoyed handing out lunch boxes to medical staff members. In collaboration with MWR, the Gary Sinise Foundation hosted the "Serving Heroes" event on May 22 at BJACH.*

traying the character Lt. Dan in the movie "Forrest Gump," he founded the Gary Sinise Foundation.

Sinise initiated Serving Heroes, which provides free meals to Soldiers at military bases and transportation hubs; heroes working at police departments, fire houses; and to veteran senior-living facilities nationwide.

The foundation believes that "Serving Heroes is more than a meal. It's an opportunity to form connections and strengthen communities. It's a simple way to remind our heroes that America cares and is grateful for their service. We're

showing our gratitude face-to-face with a plate, a smile and a handshake."

MWR cannot agree more with this statement and strives to serve our Soldiers, Families and Military Community.

This is not the first time MWR and JRTC and Fort Polk partnered with Sinise. In 2018, Sinise and his Lt. Dan Band performed for the Fort Polk Community.

"It is always an honor to work with Gary Sinise and his foundation," said MWR Director Wayne Bardell. "We look forward to partnering in the future."

## 'Home sweet home' leaves a sour taste for some quarantine-weary

HEALTH.MIL

WASHINGTON — As physical distancing continues efforts to avoid the spread of COVID-19, the old saying "there's no place like home" might sound bittersweet. Whether people live alone or with others, they may be experiencing fear, anxiety and frustration over restricted movement.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently released guidance about businesses and workplaces reopening. However, healthcare experts warn, until there's widespread testing and a vaccine for the contagious virus, staying home remains the safest course of action. How can people cope with the challenges of largely being confined to home?

"Human beings are social creatures and need to maintain connections through a variety of relationships offering social support and a sense of security," said Col. Nathan Keller, Ph.D., director of the student-counseling center at Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, Maryland.

"When we're unable to do that, we can become frustrated and anxious," said Keller, who's also a



*Col. Nathan Keller and his family have enjoyed group activities during the COVID-19 pandemic, but they also schedule solo time.*

clinical social worker. That's why it's important to focus on the positive aspects of your particular living situation, mental health experts say, and use available resources to stay connected to

sources that help relieve stress.

"Being confined with others is beneficial be-

Please see **Home**, page 15



# Take care to watch for, avoid encounters with snakes while outside

By **ANGIE THORNE**

Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. — One of the safer social-distancing activities for Families, no longer under stay-at-home orders, is to explore and enjoy nature. Louisiana is known for fishing and hunting, as well as its many waterways, wildlife and natural beauty.

However, it isn't always safe when explorers unexpectedly encounter some of nature's creatures (especially the slithery kind).

From May through September, the weather in Louisiana is usually hot with average temperatures ranging from lows in the 70s to highs in the 90s and above, according to [www.weather-us.com](http://www.weather-us.com).

Why does that matter? It's an important fact when you remember that snakes are cold-blooded and thrive in temperatures between 70 and 90 degrees Fahrenheit. That means they become more active in spring and summer, just like humans do.

Jon West, Directorate of Public Works, Environmental and Natural Resource Management Division, Conservation Branch chief, said the best thing to do when you see a snake is to leave it alone.

He said when people encounter snakes or any other type of wild life, they need to remember that they are treading into that animal's natural habitat.

West said during an encounter, snakes are usually going about their normal lives and don't want a confrontation any more than people do and, given the chance, will simply slither away.

"The best thing to do is slowly walk away. Unless they are provoked, snakes typically aren't aggressive. The chances of getting bitten are slim," he said.

However, in the event that you accidentally stumble across a snake — literally — understand the snake may see it as an attack, according to West.

"If that happens and you get bitten, you need to seek medical attention immediately. Treat any bite as venomous, and try to remember what the snake looked like to help professionals identify it later," he said.

West said that snakes play an important role in the ecosystem and shouldn't be killed just because they are snakes.

"Every snake we have captured has been relocated and released back into a safe environment, even the cottonmouths," he said.

As you walk through the woods or enjoy the beauty of the many waterways found in Louisiana, be careful for your own sake and that of the snakes and other wild life you may encounter.

Though there are about 48 different snake species in Louisiana, here are a few that are common to this area.

## Non-venomous snakes:

- **Louisiana Pine Snake** — this snake usually reaches lengths of 4 to 5 feet long.

The snake is generally associated with sandy, well-drained soils and open pine forests, especially longleaf-pine savannah. Pocket gophers appear to be an essential component of the Louisiana Pine Snake habitat.

They create the burrow systems in which the pine snakes are most frequently found and serve as a major source of food for the species. It is a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act, according to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

- **Rat snake** (also called Chicken snake) — this is probably the most common and harmless snake found in the area, according to West. Adult rat snakes are typically 3 to 5 feet long but may reach more than 6 feet. The snake's appearance varies greatly throughout its geographic range. The Black Rat Snake and Texas Rat

Snake are the most common in this area. They are often found in abandoned barns and buildings in suburban areas.

- **Garter snake** — they can reach 2 to 4 feet long and can be distinguished from other species by the presence of three yellow, longitudinal stripes down a dark body, but some exhibit a checkered body pattern.

They tend to prefer moist, grassy environments and are often found near water like the edges of ponds, lakes, ditches and streams. Garter snakes may be

active by day or night and are often found under boards or other debris.

- **Speckled king snake** — these are medium-size nonvenomous snakes that kill by constriction. They are one of the most common snakes in North America. They are called king snakes, because they sometimes eat other snakes. The

patterns, especially the bands and speckles, break up the snake's body outline so it is less visible to predators like birds of prey, foxes, coyotes and other snakes, according to the San Diego Zoo. The speckled king snake is common to this area and has a yellow or white speckle on each black or brownish scale. The size of the speckles can be evenly distributed, leading to the nickname "salt and pepper snake" or can be denser in certain areas, creating a banded look.

- **Yellow belly water snake** — this species lives throughout east Texas and much of Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi and Alabama. It is an aquatic species generally found near the larger, more permanent bodies of water like marshes, swamps, river

bottoms and along the edges of lakes and ponds. They feed mainly on fish, frogs and tadpoles. Adults typically reach 4 feet in

length. Due to its plain, dark-greenish to black dorsal color, stout body, aquatic nature and nasty disposition, this harmless species is often mistaken for the venomous Western Cottonmouth.

- **Broad-Banded water snake** — this is a subspecies of the Southern water snake. Not venomous, but it may bite if harassed. They are typically found in and around bodies of water. It grows from 1 to 2.5 feet

in length. Like other nonvenomous water snakes, it has several dark, vertical lines that outline the upper lip scales. A dark line is often

present running from the corner of each eye diagonally down to the corner of the mouth. They can be active day or night.

- **Corn snake** — these are often mistaken for venomous copperheads. Copperheads, however, have hourglass-shaped (rather than square) blotches, and are generally browner than corn snakes. Corn snakes especially favor sandy

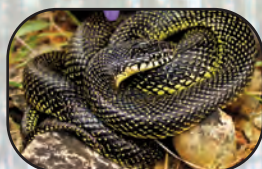
pinewoods. This species is relatively tolerant of human disturbance and can be found in suburban and agricultural areas. They are often

found around old buildings and barns and often enter people's homes searching for rodents or hiding places. Corn snakes spend most of their time underground or hiding under objects such as logs, boards or pieces of roofing tin. Corn snakes are active day and night but become primarily nocturnal in the warm summer months.

## Venomous snakes:

Except for the coral snake, the other members of this poisonous list are members of the pit viper family. All of them are extremely venomous snakes. Pit vipers have "heat-sensory pits between the eye and nostril on each side of head," which enables them to detect minute differences in temperatures, so the snakes can accurately strike the source of heat, which is often potential prey.

Please see **Snakes**, page 14





# Don't miss out on Leslie's top five must-read books

By Lt. Col. (retired) MARK S. LESLIE

DPTMS director

FORT POLK, La. — I usually review a book that is on the Chief of Staff of the Army's reading list every month. There are excellent books on the list and all are worthy reads, but this list does not comprise my reading portfolio.

I have been a reader my entire life, and sometimes you come across books that have such powerful messages that they impact your life and your leadership. I think this is why the Chief has a reading list in the first place. It is a way to impart timeless, hard-earned lessons on to our Army, develop leaders and influence generations.

I wanted to take a moment and pass on a few must-read books from my personal reading list. Most of these books I have read several times (if not more) and used them throughout my career in leaders' professional development (LPD) sessions or just conversation.

When a community reads a book, it provides a common frame of reference and is a tool to mold and shape thought.

While this is not a comprehensive list of the great books I have read, these are some of the ones I cannot live without.

- "About Face" by Col. David Hackworth. If you are an Army leader and have not heard of

Colonel David Hackworth (or Hack), I don't know where you have been. A controversial figure, usually loved or loathed, but there is no doubting his combat record.

He served in post World War II Italy, Korea, and Vietnam; and he commanded multiple times at every level. Likely the most decorated man in Vietnam, he dedicated his life to the Army and Soldiers. I won't ruin the book for you, but his inglorious end, after a distinguished career, spoiled the Army for him for a while. Fortunately for us, he sat down and wrote this book. It is a virtual field manual on war fighting and leadership, with lessons that will apply for as long as we have an Army.

My copy is dog-eared, worn and signed by him. I corresponded with Hack for years and still treasure the notes he took time to send me. Sadly, he passed in 2005, but his work and legacy live in this book. I gave this book as a Christmas gift to every platoon leader and company commander that worked for me.

If I ever needed motivation or a fresh approach to training, I could pick up this book, open it to any chapter and find a nugget to invigorate the training schedule. This book is a must

read for all leaders at every level.

- "Once a Warrior King" by David Donovan. This book is a classic from Vietnam. Why it does not have the legacy of other Vietnam memoirs is beyond me, but it is especially relevant as our Army tries to find the culture of waging war through allies and partners with Security Force Assistance Brigades. I read this book many years

before becoming a combat advisor in Iraq and often recalled just how much the situations I was in almost mirrored that of the author's. It reinforces the truism that while we think our situation

is unique, in reality, it likely has been dealt with before. This book is a gritty and raw handbook for dealing with the challenges of being an advisor. I recommend this book to any and all that may have this challenging but critical duty.

- "Small Unit Leadership" by Col. Danridge M. Malone. A book for every generation of Army leaders, I first read this book as a young fire-team leader and have read it a dozen times since then. The lessons and qualities that Malone convey in this work are still relevant today. This work has something for every level of leader. I recall being in the Primary Noncommissioned Officer Course (yes, I just dated myself) and discussing the les-

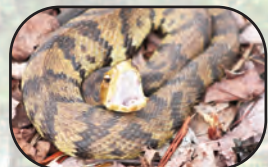
Please see **Books**, page 15

## Commentary

## Snakes

Continued from page 13

- **Northern cottonmouth** (or water moccasin) — North America's only venomous water snake, it has a blocky, triangular head. They are semiaquatic, so they're happy both swimming in water and basking on land in their native range in the southeastern United States. The name 'cottonmouth' comes from the white coloration of the inside of the snake's mouth.



They range from 2 to 4 feet in size.

- **Timber rattlesnake** — this snake is found in a wide variety of habitats including lowland cane thickets, high areas around swamps and river floodplains, hardwood and pine forests; and mountainous areas and rural habitats in farming areas. Timber rattlesnakes become active above ground by late spring and can be seen periodically until late fall. They are active during day and night but spend the majority of their time coiled in ambush positions ready to capture prey. Their average length is 5 feet.



- **Copperhead** — they average lengths between 2 and 3 feet. In contrast to its patterned body, the snake's coppery-brown head has a pair of tiny dark dots, usually on top of the head. They have muscular bodies and their heads are arrow-shaped. Their pupils are vertical, like cats' eyes, and their irises are usually orange, tan or reddish-brown.

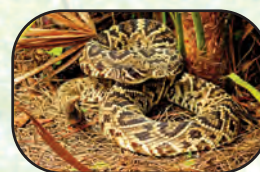


They are happy in almost any habitat that has sunlight and cover.

- **Pygmy rattlesnake** — they're between two and three feet long. The Pygmy Rattlesnake is the most commonly encountered venomous snake in urbanized areas, often found in gardens or brush piles. It has a diet of insects, frogs, lizards, mice and more.



- **Eastern diamondback rattlesnake** — Diamondback venom is a potent hemotoxin that kills red blood cells and causes tissue damage. Bites are extremely painful and can be fatal. When cornered, rattlers feverishly shake their tails as a last warning to back off. Rattles are made of loosely at-



tached, hard and hollow segments. Snakes add a new rattle segment each time they shed. It averages 5.5 feet.

- **Texas coral**

**snake** — the coral snake has some infamous cousins. It is a member of the Elapidae family, which includes the cobras of Asia and Africa. It has the second most toxic venom of any snake in the world. They are considered less dangerous



than rattlesnakes as they have a less effective poison delivery system. That's why there have been no deaths in North America since

the 1960s when effective antivenom was developed.

If you see a snake, call 531-1379 or Corvias at (866) 463-2047.

**Editor's note:** The information about snakes was found at <https://texashillcountry.com>, <https://srelherp.uga.edu>, [www.livescience.com](http://www.livescience.com), [www.nationalgeographic.com](http://www.nationalgeographic.com), [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov), [www.livescience.com](http://www.livescience.com), [www.inaturalist.org](http://www.inaturalist.org), <http://herpsofarkansas.com> and [www.whatsnakeisthat.com](http://www.whatsnakeisthat.com).



# Home

Continued from page 12

cause it's a collective experience," said Keller, who lives with his wife and their 17-year-old daughter. "You have the ability to commiserate and know that you're not alone. You can focus on taking care of each other, remind one another of positive memories and create new shared experiences."

For those who live alone, "Maybe there's a sense of relief or gratitude that you can focus on what you need to do without any disruptions," said Navy Lt. Cmdr. Tarah Lewis, a psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner and assistant professor in USU's Graduate School of Nursing.

"You can devote as much time as you want on personal projects," said Lewis, who lives alone in what she describes as a tiny one-bedroom apartment in downtown Bethesda.

"I don't even have a pet. I don't have a car. I'm used to being outside, walking around and going to restaurants and shops," she said.

Lewis said people who live alone may be particularly vulnerable to feeling lonely, "maybe even envious of others," she said. "You go on social media and see families going camping or

roommates cooking brunch together."

Reaching out to others helps. For Lewis, that means online fitness challenges with friends and playing games such as "two truths and a lie" during after-work videoconferences with co-workers.

"Those games are fun because I learned things about my colleagues that I never knew," Lewis said. "I felt more connected with some of them than I ever did before."

People who live with others need to find time alone Keller said. "Focusing on yourself when you live with others may sound selfish, but you need that self-care time so you have the patience and energy to support others."

Alone time might mean listening to music, reading, going for a walk or run, or meditating. "Think of things you enjoy, and put those in your toolbox," Lewis said.

Whether on your own or with others, Keller and Lewis suggest the following:

- Stick with a schedule. "Having a routine provides structure and normalcy," Lewis said. Keller said his family created a plan so they're getting

up at the same time, working the same hours and eating meals together. Their schedule also allots personal and family-fun time.

- Move your body. Exercise helps you feel better physically and mentally.

- Cut yourself some slack. "There are days where you're not going to feel as productive, or you're not going to be the perfect parent or spouse," Keller said. "It's OK to have those moments."

"It's OK to not feel OK," Lewis added. "There's no shame in saying, I'm feeling off, and I need to talk to somebody."

The Department of Defense's Psychological Health Center of Excellence offers information on mental health resources including call centers and mobile apps.

"We're at war. The boots on the ground are the healthcare providers and front-line workers. To do my part, I'm going to practice physical distancing. I'm going to wash my hands. I'm going to cover my face if I have to be around other people. These are things that I have control over, and I take great comfort in that," Lewis said.

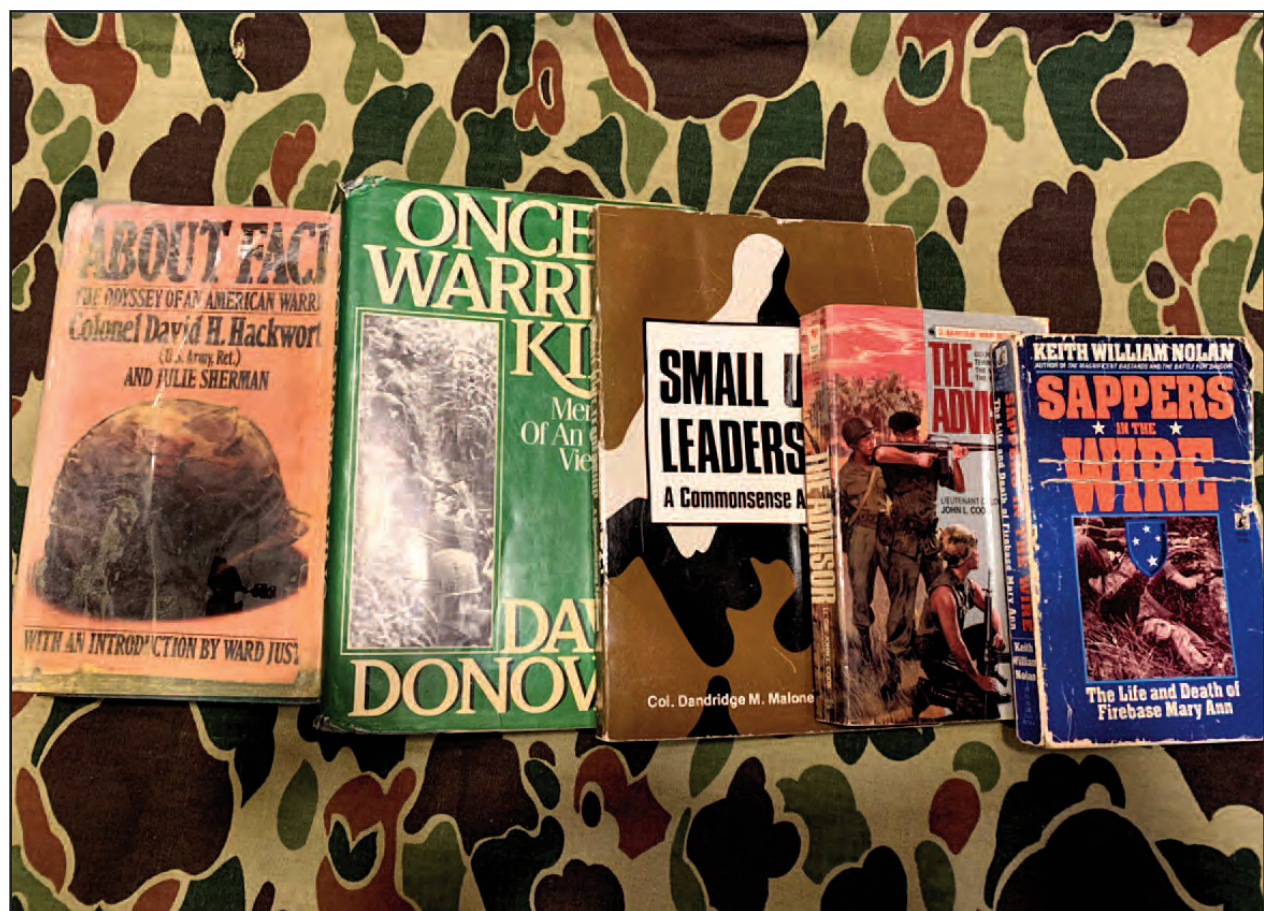
# Books

Continued from page 14

sons in this book and, again, as a battalion commander discussing it with the division commander. You have likely seen this book somewhere. If you have not read it, pick it up, pay the price and reap the rewards.

- "The Advisor" by Lt. Col. John L. Cook. I read this book many years ago and was so impressed by it that I bought a dozen copies and made every man on my advisor team read it. It is another classic that anyone assigned the critical, tough and often less-than-glorious duty of advising must read. Cook does a fantastic job of honestly telling the reader where he triumphed, failed and how he did each of those, and how he could have done better. He does this through masterful story telling of his time in Vietnam as an advisor. Any leader will finish this book and be better for it. I have members of my old advisor team still tell me that, although they resisted it, this book set the framework for the team and they recall it today.

- "Sappers in the Wire" by Keith William Nolan. I picked this book up by chance and was delightfully surprised by its relevance and worthiness. Another book set in Vietnam, it's about the famed "Americal" Division and one of the last great battles of the Vietnam War. A study of leadership, failure and the defense, I used this book as a primer for an LPD session in preparation for an upcoming Joint Readiness Training Center Decisive Action Training Environment rotation. It is a perfect vehicle to discuss the near-lost art of the defense. I had the battalion's leaders read the book and develop a lessons-learned presentation. The staff did a deep-dive analysis and presented their counterpart's contribution to the battle in the book, and each company was assigned a principle of the defense to present. While some of them openly doubted the realistic application in today's world, it was an excellent LPD. Coupled with the practical exercise and tactical exercise without troops we did on the de-



LT. COL. (RETIRED) MARK S. LESLIE

fense after the LPD, the battalion was well prepared for the defense mission at JRTC. The book became a term of reference, and I recall hearing one company commander telling his lieutenants, "just like in the book the old man had us read guys, remember the part when ..." I knew it had the impact we sought and the hard-learned lessons from the Americal Soldiers weren't lost but still contributing to our Army. If you think you know leadership and the art of the defense, read this book and see how much you learn.

As I said earlier, this is not an exhaustive list of

the books I find worthy, but they are some that I can't live without and wanted to share with the readers. You likely have a list of your own that have impacted you. If you're a leader, I urge you to develop your own list of books and a developmental program that gets leaders together to share what they learned from the readings. Share what you wanted them to get out of it also. The CSA list is a great place to start, but don't be exclusive to it. There is a wide world of books, written by authors from the profession of arms, meant to give back to the modern-day leader.



# History packed Honor Field sees increased visitors

By **CHRISTY GRAHAM**

Guardian editor

FORT POLK, La. — Honor Field is commonly used for Army physical fitness tests, award ceremonies and often graced by the presence of helicopters used in Air Assault training, but COVID-19 restrictions, along with rising temperatures, caused an influx of visitors to utilize the track.

With a quick internet search, Honor Field's Facebook page tops the results list. The page allows followers to check-in while they use the field for group or individual workouts. People are able to share their fitness goals, achievements and photos from the field.

According to one follower, Karla Garcia, "I'm not sure if many people are aware that this site exists, but I think they are using Facebook to check into the location," she said. "I just started using Honor Field since gyms closed during the stay-at-home-order."

Soldiers are finding creative reasons and ways to use the field also. Sgt. Martin Fane, 46th Engineer Battalion, said "I've never used the field for squad-level workouts before, but with COVID-19, I figured we could use it to better prepare for future APFTs."

Honor Field, located off La. Hwy 10, features a one-mile track, a thick tree-lined backdrop, pull-up bars, bleachers and a covered and tiered staging area — it also offers a bountiful history.

From 1943-1946, Honor Field was the site of a prisoner of war camp, housing German prisoners during World War II.

Between 1962 and 1972, the parade field saw more than 1 million infantrymen march across it in graduation ceremonies.

The 5th Infantry Division dedicated the field to Medal of Honor recipients born in Louisiana on Sept. 2, 1972.

Also known as the Red Devils, the 5th Inf Div was reactivated and stationed at Fort Polk in the early 70s, after serving in World Wars I and II and Vietnam. The 5th Inf Div was inactivated for the final time in 1992.

Please see **Honor**, page 17

*Sgt. Martin Fane, 46th Engineer Battalion, does push ups with his squad. Pictured, from left to right: Pfc. Preston Brown, Pfc. Quinton Smith, Spc. Ronald Jones, Pvt. Joel Hensley and Pvt. Don Govero. Fane is in the center of the formation.*



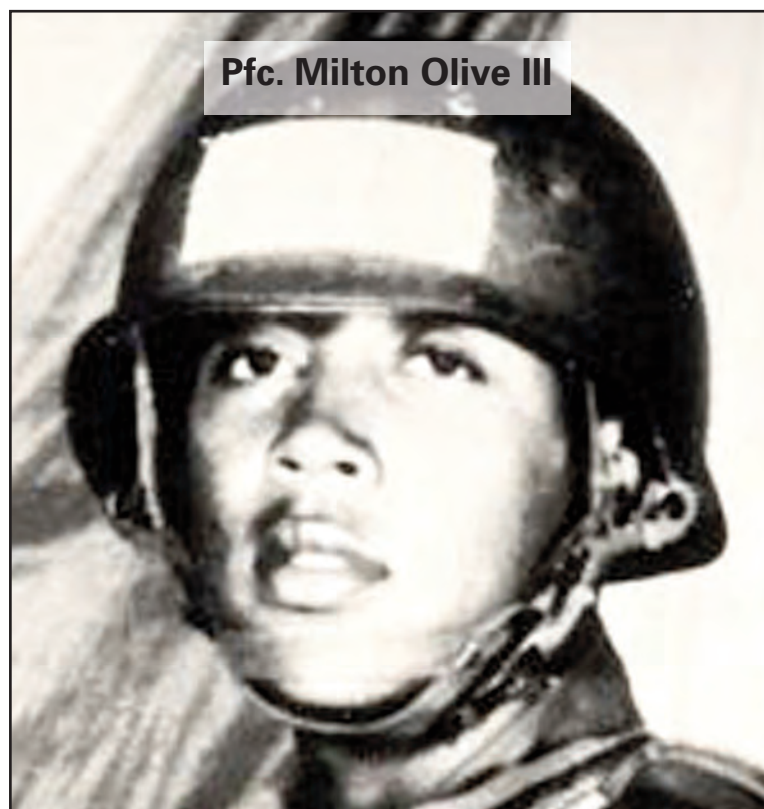
CHRISTY GRAHAM / GUARDIAN EDITOR

Stage area at Honor Field



COURTESY KARLA GARCIA

Pfc. Milton Olive III



*An Honor Field memorial for Pfc. Milton L. Olive III who absorbed the shock of a live grenade, giving his life, to save the lives of his fellow Soldiers while serving in Vietnam.*

CHRISTY GRAHAM / GUARDIAN EDITOR



# Honor

Continued from page 16

Soldiers and civilian visitors can easily miss the several memorials at Honor Field.

Situated beside the parking lot is a memorial for Pfc. Milton Olive III, a Medal of Honor recipient who sacrificed his life by grabbing a live grenade and absorbing its blast to save his fellow Soldiers during combat in Vietnam.

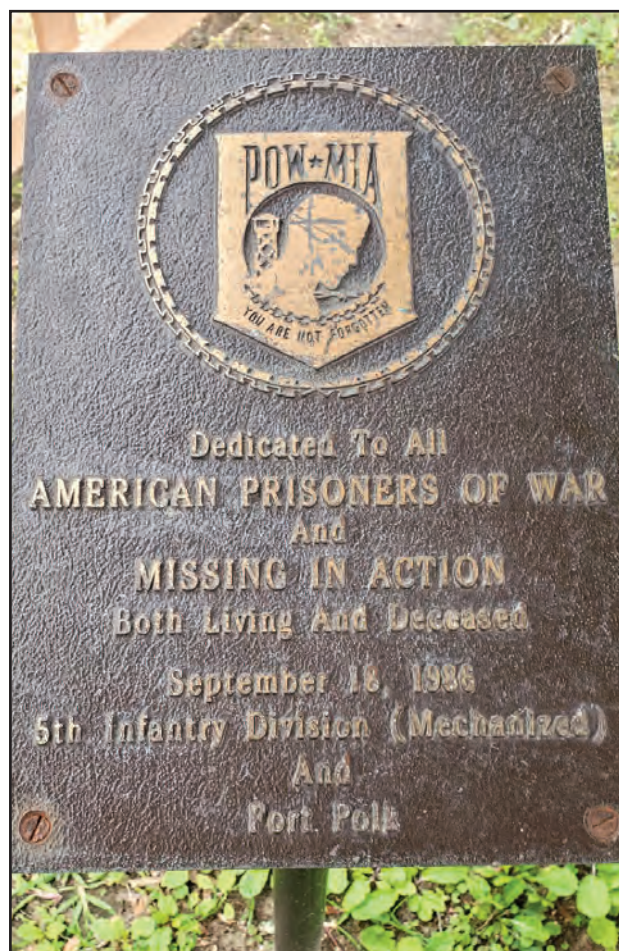
To the left of Olive's memorial sits a gazebo containing a list of Louisiana-born Medal of Honor recipients who served during the Vietnam, Korean, WWII and Civil War campaigns.

Another dedication to Medal of Honor recipients in the gazebo lists Staff Sgt. Travis W. Atkins, 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor at the White House by President Donald Trump on March 27, 2019 for his service during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

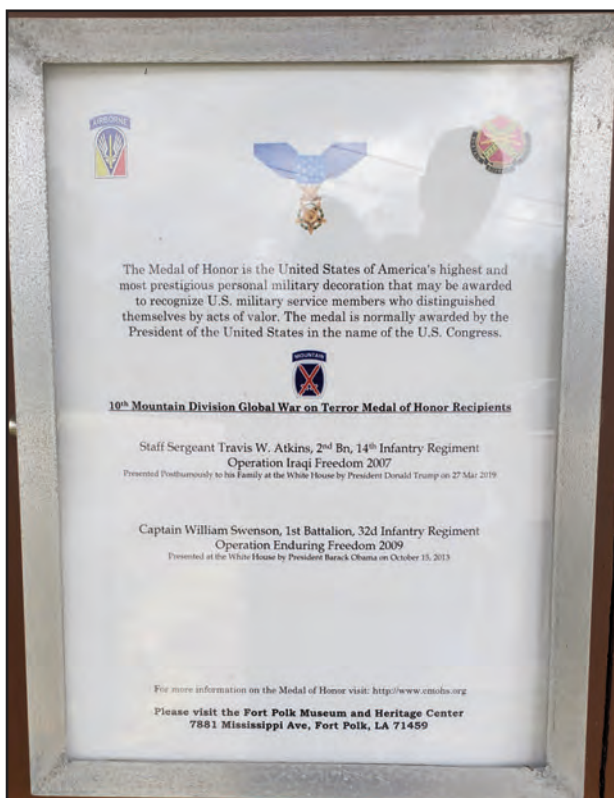
Capt. William Swenson, 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, received the Medal of Honor at the White House by President Barack Obama on Oct. 15, 2013 for his service during Operation Enduring Freedom.

Finally, the gazebo contains a POW and Missing in Action plaque dedicated to "all American Prisoners of War and Missing in Action, both living and deceased," by the 5th Inf Div and Fort Polk on Sept. 18, 1986.

The next time you find yourself at Honor Field, either enjoying squad-level physical training or taking a stroll, stop to remember and honor those listed in these memorials — share in the field's history for just a moment.



Pictured is a Prisoner of War/ Missing in Action plaque dedicated to "All American Prisoners of War and Missing in Action." The plaque was dedicated by the 5th Infantry Division and Fort Polk on Sept. 18, 1986; it is located within a gazebo near the Honor Field parking lot.



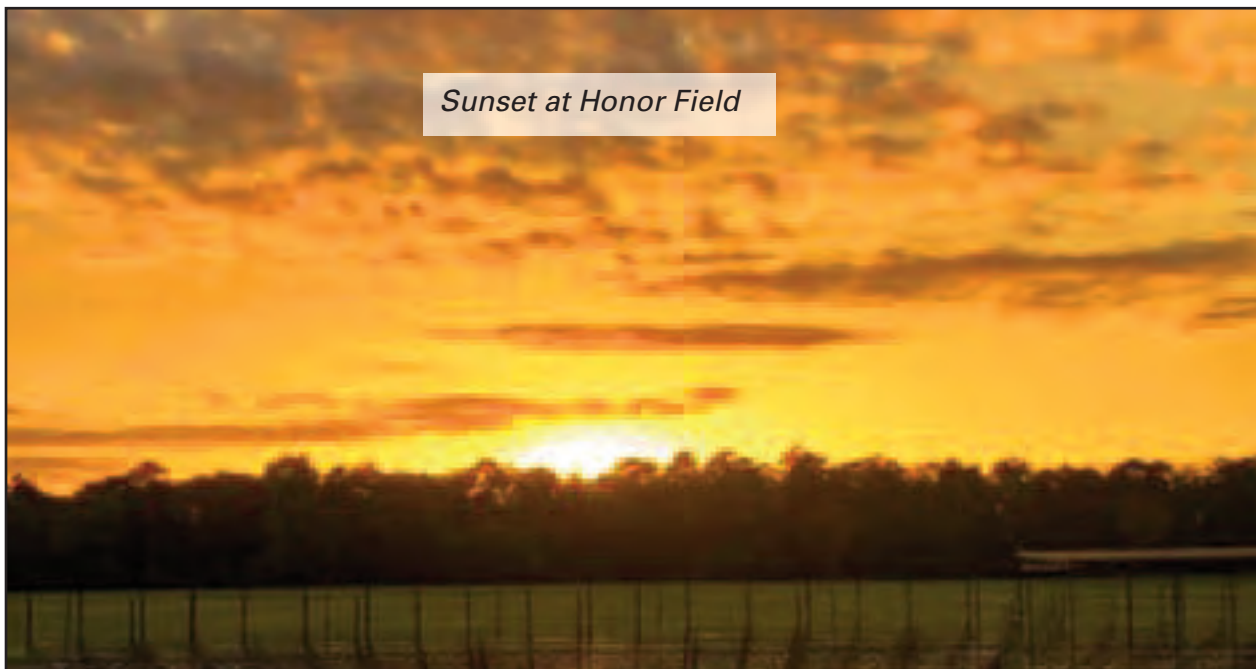
A list of Medal of Honor recipients found in Honor Field's memorial gazebo.



An Honor Field dedication to Louisiana Medal of Honor Recipients. The parade field was dedicated on Sept. 2, 1972 by the 5th Infantry Division.



Pictured is a map, located near the Honor Field parking lot, of the Prisoner of War camp located on the site of Honor Field during World War II at Camp Polk.



Sunset at Honor Field



# Lovely little ones get last laugh

By **CHRISTY GRAHAM**

Guardian editor

FORT POLK, La. — In the midst of a well-deserved slumber, following hours of exhaustive pain and work, a penetrating howl jolted me onto my feet. I felt my chest constrict and a freezing anticipation spread through my body — I was gripped and ready for peril.

Being frightened awake is an awful thing to experience. For me, waking up should be a slow process; although I can spring into action, it is my least favorite way to start the day.

My perfect morning involves a fresh coffee while I'm still under my warm covers. I am more of a roll-out-of-bed kind of girl, and I reserve my spring for emergencies.

Now, back to that piercing howl. I jumped to my feet and scanned the room to gain some perspective. After a meager two hours of sleep, I was disoriented and unsure why my surroundings were unfamiliar.

I found myself in a labor and delivery suite at the Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital. I was safe; and that scream came from my baby girl, Lucine, who was only a few hours old.

Although my brain and body told me that an emergency was imminent, everything was perfectly fine. The little baby's tummy was merely ready for a refill. I swallowed hard, as it felt like my heart and stomach had jumped into my throat through the alarm. I picked up my pink bundle of joy and relieved her perceived agonizing hunger.

Lucine ate every 90 minutes, on the dot, for three months. Each time began with a similar hunger cry from her powerful lungs. This was my first baby, though. Her screams continually sent my body into that jarring response: My heart rate increased, my chest would tighten and I'd feel a warm and cold rush through my body.

After a little mental conditioning, I was able to convince my body of the logical reality — Lucine wasn't in any danger and she wasn't starving, so I could stay calm. I learned that loudness wasn't always relative to the level of danger in any given circumstance.

I gave birth to my son, Levi, two years later. This time, I convinced myself I wouldn't let a baby scare me. I'd spring into action when he needed me, but I wasn't going to fall into unnecessary panics at every scream.

This is the parenting juncture at which I realized kids don't have a repertoire of screams for different issues. Blood-curdling shrieks are most kids' go-to siren when they need anything.

One such example was in our last home. It was a stacked condominium, meaning it had stairs — a lot of stairs. Between the bottom and top floors there were 5 flights. They were a daunting feature of the house, but we enjoyed the daily leg workouts. During one naptime, however, they proved to be a literal hurdle for my husband, Buddy.

As Levi was tucked into his first big-boy bed, the rest of us quietly relaxed two floors below in the living room. Suddenly, we all heard Levi's caterwaul. He sounded like a wounded alley cat after a dispute over dumpster food. Again, my heart relocated into my throat, but my husband jumped into action before I could gulp the mass back into place.



Lucine



Levi



Leia

CHRISTY GRAHAM/ GUARDIAN

## Commentary

Buddy bounded up the two flights in what seemed like three massive leaps; he might as well have flown up the steps. We were convinced that Levi had fallen out of bed or, worse, down some of the hardwood stairs in an attempt to find us after his nap. But, this time, it was neither a hunger pang nor a horrifying tumble down some stairs; the reality was that Levi woke up and heard the goblins under his bed. Through his toddler mumbles, I was pretty sure he was convinced the imps were planning to take him into their horrible, underground liar and chain him to a stone wall.

By my third child, Leia, I grew a stronger mental defense against the overwhelming yet unavoidable anxieties of parenting. There are daily worries, but I started to feel like an expert at discerning between the loud-just-to-be-loud moments and the truly serious incidents.

Perpetually bound to make mistakes as I am, I've occasionally swooped in to find her hollering because Buddy wouldn't let her get inside the dishwasher — as if she were a dish — or over our strict, no-standing-on-the-table rule.

As I write, I'm pending my fourth child (another boy), and I've learned that it's usually the lack of sound that indicates danger. If anything, shrill yells are comforting proof that my children are breathing and their internal alarm systems are functioning.

In my experience, quiet, kid-free moments tend to bring more danger than any of the loud moments combined. Busy in the kitchen, I can easily find myself distracted by dinner preparations; once I notice my internal thoughts are audible again, my alarm system kicks into gear. If Buddy is home, his eyes will usually meet mine and we silently communicate, "it's too quiet to be good," then we split to search for and count the kids.

Recently, on one such scouting mission, Buddy discovered Leia elbow-deep in an unflushed toilet. To her credit, Leia was clearing out the wads of toilet paper that Lucine had left behind, which probably would have clogged the pipes — again — but it was still unsettling.

First, because Leia obviously needed to be disinfected from head to foot and toilets, water and toddlers are never a safe combination. We've installed toilet locks, thus thwarting any future deep-toilet diving missions Leia may have had scheduled.

Another quiet occasion, filled with thrilling activities like putting my feet up, I felt the unset-

ling peace of daytime stillness fill my soul. Buddy was at work, so I examined each room myself: Lucine was playing with her dolls, Leia was trying to get one of Lucine's dolls, but I couldn't find Levi.

Could the goblins have taken him? No, that was my anxious-ridden brain basking in impossibilities.

Levi was somewhere, and I hoped he wasn't hurt. I picked up a faster pace as I moved through the rooms, and my calls grew louder. Where was he?

That old adage came to mind, the one about finding something in the last place you'd look. In this case it was the diaper-changing area. The last place I'd think to look, because Levi was potty trained and incredibly proud of his accomplishment. To be near that infantile device would have tarnished his well-earned, potty-trained reputation.

Unhurt in his quiet deviousness, Levi smirked when his eyes met mine. He knew that climbing on top of the changing table was a "no-no," because it was dangerous. I'm also sure he knew that sprinkling (or pouring) baby power over him and the surrounding vicinity was likely not on mom's calendar either.

I plopped him into the tub and began multitasking; I was thoroughly washing the powder off his scalp while I daydreamed about that one second I got to put my feet up — silver linings are everything.

This wasn't my last silent alarm; in fact, I'm far from hitting a point where relaxing in silence will be a reality. My heart still has occasion to relocate just like it did that first night, because kids are scary. They are learning right from wrong and danger from safety; bonks and messes are bound to happen and parents are tasked with circumventing most of these inevitable occasions.

I can rest in knowing that I've gained some vital parenting skills, however. It isn't a perfect science, but I know that not every sob or scream means a trip to the emergency room.

Perhaps my spring is a little less bouncy for terrifying, midnight dreams, but it can still get me where I need to be when necessary. Sometimes, this can be a point of dismay for my children, as I don't run monsters off quickly enough, let them use my laptop as a surfboard or open a banana at just the right angle.

It's just another reality of parenting: We will disappoint our children. We may not respond to each cry as quickly or anxiously as we did the last, but the love, worry and care remain the same.



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