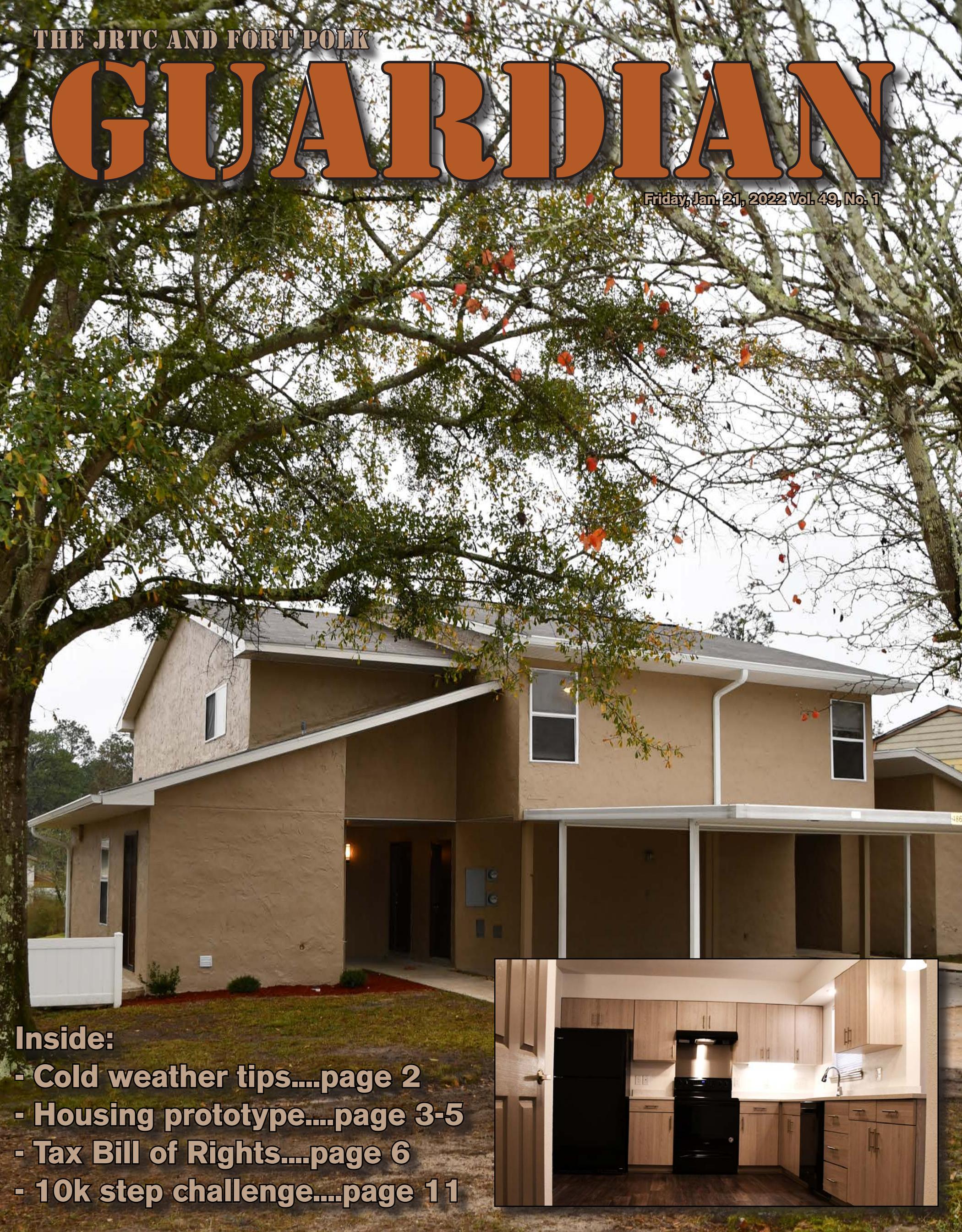


THE JRTC AND FORT POLK

# GUARDIAN

Friday, Jan. 21, 2022 Vol. 49, No. 1



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# Check out some tips for cold weather power outages

DPTMS

FORT POLK, La. — Winter is here. Heavy accumulations of ice can bring down trees and topple utility poles and communication towers, causing power outages. Ice can disrupt communications and power for days while utility companies repair the damage.

Even small accumulations of ice can be dangerous to motorists and pedestrians. Bridges and overpasses are particularly dangerous because they freeze before other surfaces. Preparing for a winter storm power outage is the key to making it less severe for you and your family. The following are tips to consider as well as winter storm necessities to gather ahead of time.

## • Winterize your home

Without power, you'll have limited options for heating your home. So, it's important to make sure your house holds on to as much heat as possible.

Weatherizing your house with draft guards and weather-stripping around doors and windows will help your house retain heat and help you stay warm without heat or electricity.

When water freezes, it expands. If it's in a pipe at the time, the ice can burst it, leading to major damage. Property damage from burst water pipes can be expensive to fix. The pipes most at risk of freezing are those without insulation running through unheated spaces. Also, pay special attention to pipes in cabinets or in outside-facing walls.

Insulating pipes ahead of time is perhaps the best method to prevent them from freezing during a power outage. But if you haven't done that, there are few other tricks that can help. Open up cabinet doors under sinks in your kitchen and bathrooms. Close your garage door (but make sure you can open it manually). And if

**How to Prepare for a Winter Power Outage**

**WHAT TO DO BEFORE A WINTER POWER OUTAGE**

- Winterize your home.
- Stock up on food and water.
- Set aside warm clothing.
- Gather flashlights, radios and other necessities.
- Know what to unplug if the power goes out.
- Get a portable generator.

**HOW TO STAY WARM DURING A WINTER POWER OUTAGE**

- Condense your living space.
- Keep doors to the outside closed.
- Block any drafts from entering your home.
- Cover windows and close blinds at night.
- Dress in multiple layers.

Constellation Energy

you know a faucet is connected to a pipe in an exterior wall, let it run at a trickle. Even that much water running through it can keep the pipe from freezing.

## • Stock up on food and water

Food and drinkable water should rank at the top of your winter storm necessities. The difference between a brownout and a blackout is that the power goes completely out during a blackout. If the weather is bad enough and leads to a long-term power outage, the food in your refrigerator and freezer will only last as long as those appliances keep them cold enough not to spoil.

To be safe, stock up on shelf-stable foods and bottled water (in case there's a problem with the tap water or you have an electric water pump).

What you have on hand to cook with during a winter power outage, such as an outdoor grill, will determine what you buy. But canned goods, cereals and rice, powdered milk and instant coffee, nuts and dried fruits are all good options. If you have an infant, don't forget baby food or formula.

If you suspect your tap water won't be drinkable during a blackout, you'll need bottled water too. A person needs about a gallon a day, not including water for washing or cooking, so make sure you

buy enough for you and your family.

## • Set aside warm clothing

It's natural to worry about how to heat your home when the power goes out in winter. But there are ways to stay warm other than starting a fire in your fireplace or wood stove. Wearing several layers of clothes is a great way to hold on to body heat.

If you know a winter storm is coming, set aside warm clothes where you and your family can easily get to them. Make sure to include hats and gloves, warm socks, sweaters, coats and boots.

## • Gather flashlights, radios and other necessities

You'll need flashlights or lanterns handy to be able to see at night. Battery-powered or crank radios can help you stay informed about emergency efforts in your area.

Make sure you have all the batteries you need to power your electronic winter storm necessities. Keep your phone charged ahead of a winter storm. You can also get portable chargers, or power banks, which you can have ready in case of an outage. For more information on how to plan and prepare for all disasters or hazards, contact Tommy J. Morris, Emergency Manager, at 337.531.4875 or [tommy.j.morris2.civ@army.mil](mailto:tommy.j.morris2.civ@army.mil).



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For more information on Fort Polk units and happenings visit the following Facebook pages:

[@JRTCOperationsGrp](https://www.facebook.com/JRTCOperationsGrp), @

[BayneJonesACH](https://www.facebook.com/BayneJonesACH) or [@fortpolkmwr](https://www.facebook.com/fortpolkmwr).



**Cover photo:** This is a picture of the outside of the completed Palmetto Terrace prototype home. (Inset) Kitchen view of the prototype home. (Photo by Christy Graham).



HEALTH CARE



HOUSING



CHILD CARE



PCS MOVES



SPOUSE  
EMPLOYMENT

# Housing is key to quality of life for Fort Polk community

## PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND COMMUNICATIONS

FORT POLK, La. — Fort Polk residents have seen many improvements to the installation's housing as Corvias has completed the Out Year Development Plan Phase I and continues phase II.

Wil Motta, Corvias operations director, said work on ODP 1, a \$15 million project that comprised both Dogwood and Maple Terrace housing areas, was delayed after Mother Nature put a kink in the plans by throwing two hurricanes, a tropical storm and an ice storm at Fort Polk in 2019.

During ODP 1, there was \$15 million available, and the decision was made to do a lot of exterior work," he said. "The Dogwood project involved exterior painting of buildings, removing and repairing fascia, overlay of roofs and rain gutters. It was a large-scale project. We also did 3.5 miles of road in the area of North Fort."

Work in Dogwood Terrace included 526 roof repairs, 402 buildings painted, and 402 buildings received trim and rain gutters, Motta said. In Maple Terrace, exterior renovations included work on roofs, paint trim and gutters. Roofs and painting are completed on (620) homes and 436 homes received trim and gutter.

"The roof overlays extended the lives of the existing roofs and prevent roof leak issues, which means fewer ceilings that we'd have to repair due to water intrusion," he said.

The second phase of the same project, ODP 2, involved Maple and Palmetto Terrace renovations, Motta said, and invested \$77 million into Fort Polk's Family housing portfolio.

ODP 2 included additional hurricane repairs, 1,372 roof replacements, exterior renovations of 1,058 homes, 149 geothermal upgrades, demolition of 46 homes on Norris Loop and 185 medium interior repairs. A number of homes were also converted — two-bedroom homes into 44 four- or five-bedroom homes.

Geothermal upgrades now are complete among all Fort Polk Family housing (3,661 homes.).

"As a result, about \$1 million will be saved annually for energy and operational cost avoidance. These savings are reinvested into Fort Polk housing capital, home and roadway improvements.

"And the new converted units will not only



*Maple Terrace Community Center offers a wide range of amenities including a fitness center and clubhouse rooms. Hours Monday-Friday are 8 a.m.-5 p.m.*



*Residents can enjoy the Maple Terrace Community Center pool — inset is the children's pool area — to cool off during the intense Louisiana heat.*

provide more space for future residents, but more housing options for larger Families, said Motta.

The monkey wrench in completing ODP 1 was weather that ranged from hurricanes to tropical storms to ice storms," Motta said.

"We had 2,652 roofs that had damage of some sort," he said. "Half of those roofs had significant damage. The decision was made by

Corvias and the local command that any roof determined by insurance adjusters to need just partial repairs, we would do a 100% repair.

Motta said part of ODP 2 involved the demolition of the homes on Norris Loop in Palmetto.

"Most of those buildings were vacant so the agreement was to demo 36 of the homes on

Please see **Housing**, page 4

# Housing—

Continued from page 4

Norris Loop,” Motta said. “That’s one of nine areas in Palmetto that will be demolished or have already been demolished and will be converted to either more parking or green spaces.”

ODP 1 and 2 have addressed many issues, Motta said, but there is a lot more to do.

“We’re working with local command to make this an installation of choice, and meet quality of life criteria for our service members and their Families,” he said. “We are the biggest landlord here. We want to make sure the incentive is there for service members to live here. We’re looking into accommodating requests as best as we can.”

Motta said while Corvias might not be perfect, they are concerned for their residents’ welfare. “We’re always going to do our absolute best for our residents,” Motta said.



*Renovated housing in the Dogwood Terrace neighborhood.*

## Take survey, win

### CORVIAS

FORT POLK, La. — By now, on-post residents should have received their 2022 Department of Defense Tenant Satisfaction Housing Survey. Those who complete the survey will be entered into a random drawing for a \$50 gift card.

Drawings will be held Feb. 1, 8 and the final drawing will be held two days after the survey period closes. Four winners will be selected Feb. 1; five winners will be selected Feb. 8 and six winners will be drawn during the final drawing.

Residents who moved into a Corvias home prior to Dec. 8 should have received an email from [ArmyHousingSurvey@CELAssociates.com](mailto:ArmyHousingSurvey@CELAssociates.com) on Jan. 11. Residents who did not receive a survey should contact [ArmyHousingSurvey@CELAssociates.com](mailto:ArmyHousingSurvey@CELAssociates.com) with their installation name and address. Residents must fill out and submit the online survey by Feb. 24.

The survey takes less than 10 minutes to complete. Questions will assess the residents’ evaluation of their present home, community amenities, resident activities, community maintenance team and property management team.

The survey is administered by an independent, third-party group. All survey answers are strictly confidential and residents are urged to offer honest responses. Personal data is not tabulated, and the survey does not identify the resident in any way.



*Fort Polk command talks to Army and Corvias housing representatives during the December Dogwood Terrace Walking Town Hall in December.*

*Residents attended the Palmetto Community Center Town Hall Jan. 19.*

## Town halls offer housing communication options

### PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND COMMUNICATIONS

FORT POLK, La. — If you see the Fort Polk command team walking in your neighborhood — along with a team of subject matter experts and organization leaders — there’s a good chance they are conducting a walking town hall and residents are encouraged to step right up and talk to them about any and everything having to do with housing.

A different type of housing town hall was held Jan. 19. Brig. Gen. David S. Doyle and Command Sgt. Maj. Michael C. Henry, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk command team, Col. Sam P. Smith and Command

Sgt. Maj. Stephen R. Nielson, Army Garrison Fort Polk command team, Fort Polk Housing Assistance Office Chief Betty Beinkemper and representatives from Corvias hosted a Town Hall in the Palmetto Community Center to allow residents to voice concerns over housing issues.

Topics discussed included indoor and outdoor housing amenities, streets, sidewalks, water and other related issues. The command teams host town halls, in both community centers and walking through neighborhoods, to get first-hand comments on what can be done to improve the quality of life at the JRTC and Fort Polk.

# Corvias completes Palmetto Terrace **prototype** home

By **CHRISTY GRAHAM**

Public Affairs and Communications

FORT POLK, La. — On the evening of Jan. 19, after three weeks of work, a Palmetto Terrace Community home was renovated into the prototype for future home upgrades in the Palmetto and Maple Terrace communities, a part of the installation's Quality of Life initiative to improve housing for residents.

This prototype is just one step in the Out-Year Development Plan Phase 2, a project with more than \$70 million invested.

Phase 1 of the project, completed in November 2021, involved a \$15 million investment which serviced the Dogwood and Maple Terrace housing area.

According to Wil Motta, Corvias operations director, "this prototype served as an experiment to figure out what design and structural changes would work — and what wouldn't — in an effort to enhance Quality of Life for Fort Polk Families."

Motta explained that the prototype helped Corvias visualize what the new homes would look like, but also helped them identify challenges they would encounter.

"Testing things out allowed us to gather information and reconfigure plans, ensuring that the bulk of renovations would run safely and efficiently," he said.

According to Motta, these upgrades are medium renovations, which entails full interior demolition and redesign, while home exteriors receive fresh paint and gutters.

"We moved walls, installed new appliances and removed carpets from high-traffic areas, replacing them with luxury vinyl plank. The vinyl plank opens up the home, reduces maintenance efforts and is aesthetically pleasing," he said.

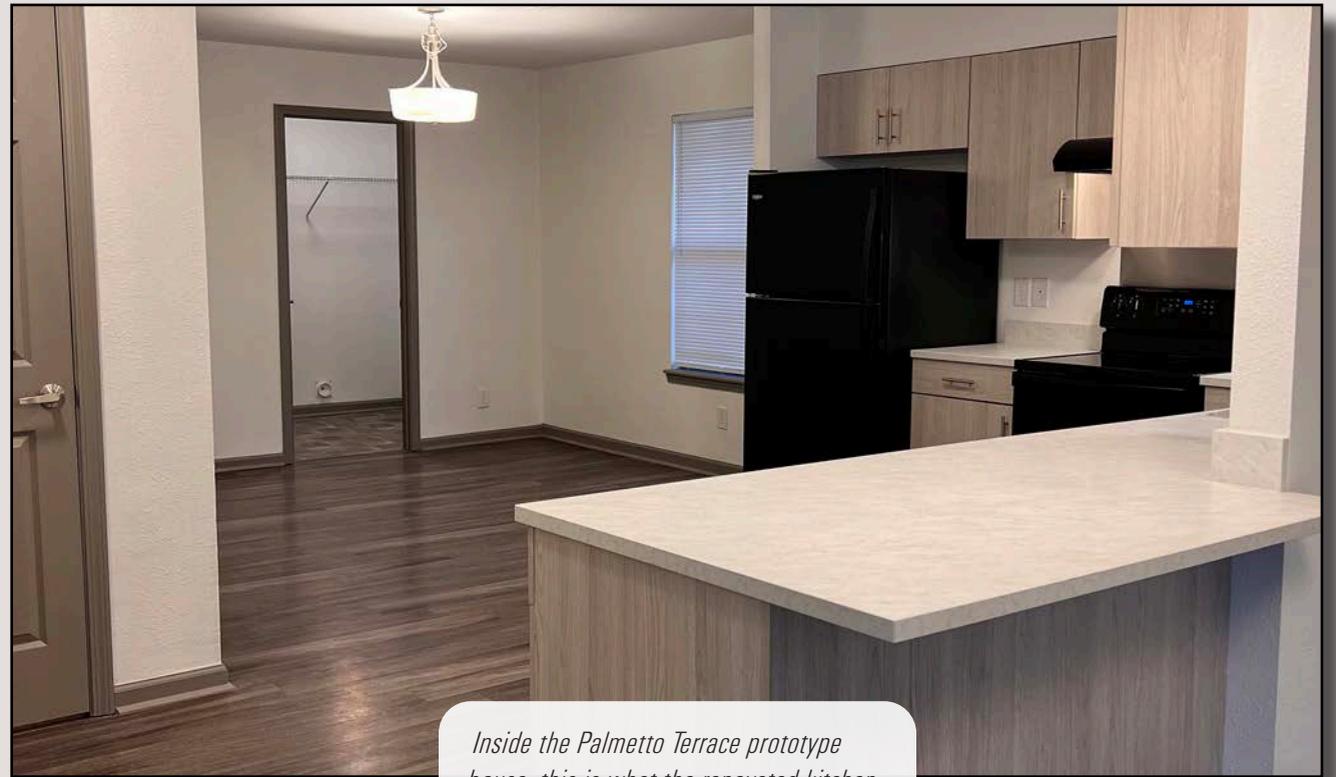
Corvias focused efforts on the spaces where Families spend most of their time, Motta said. Although exterior and upstairs areas are being updated, there aren't structural changes planned. Instead, main-floor living spaces, such as the kitchen and living room, are given a more open-space concept, requiring more of the structural changes.

Motta said that, while some homes in the Palmetto housing area will be renovated, other homes are just coming down to make room for green spaces.

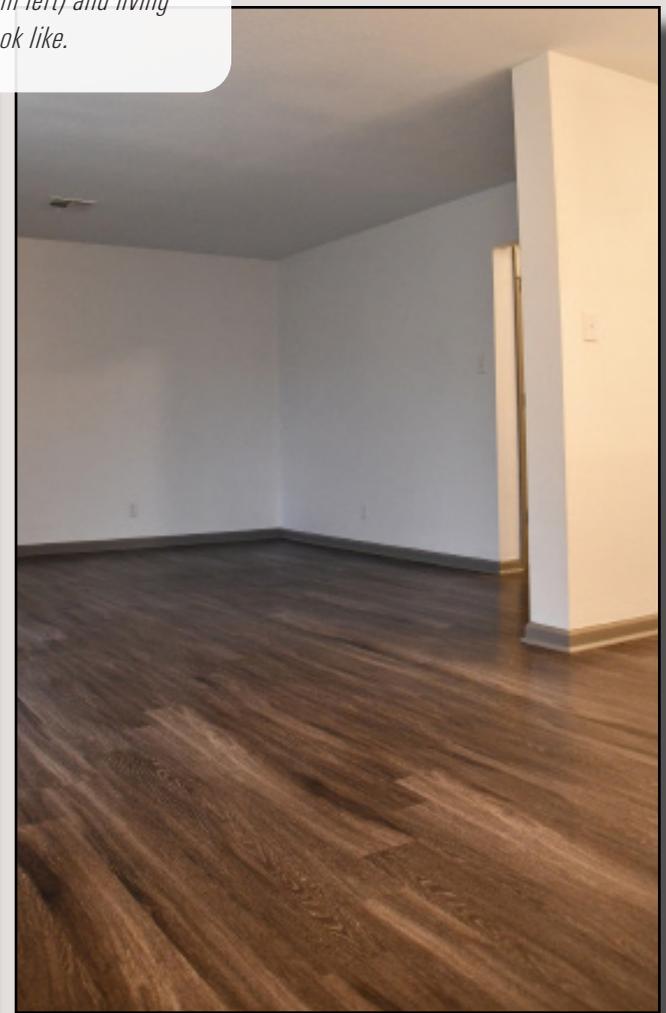
"There are 36 homes on Norris Loop alone that are going away — in total, 46 homes in the Palmetto community will be demolished, including nine slabs that will be removed and converted to green spaces," he said.

With ODP 2, Motta said they are also trying to accommodate larger Families, company-grade officers and field-grade officers.

"The vast majority of our inventory is two-bedroom homes. Out of 3,661 homes, 41% have two bedrooms. The second initiative



*Inside the Palmetto Terrace prototype house, this is what the renovated kitchen (top), bathroom (bottom left) and living room (bottom right) look like.*



CHRISTY GRAHAM/GUARDIAN

of OPD 2 is to renovate these two-bedroom homes and convert them into spaces fitting larger Families," he said.

Four-plex homes on the installation, which have two sets of two-bedroom units upstairs and two sets of two-bedroom units downstairs, can be converted into two separate four-bedroom homes.

"We want to combine these units to make additional four-bedroom options for residents," Motta said.

"It is important to Corvias that we are doing something that goes along with the Quality of Life initiative that the Army has embraced — we can do that by improving housing options

for service members."

Motta said that cooperation from the residents is also vital to this Quality of Life initiative project, as some homes need to be vacated.

In the case of the prototype home, located on Berkley Court, all the homes are vacant on that street, which meant residents had to move.

"There will be a lot of movement in the community. We are relying on the cooperation of our residents for the demolitions and renovations to occur safely," Motta said.

"It is a part of the commitment the partners — the Army and Corvias — have made to ensure that we are improving that quality of life of our service members and their Families."

# Know your Taxpayer Bill of Rights

## OSJA

FORT POLK, La. — As the tax season approaches, it is important for taxpayers to know their rights. The Taxpayer Bill of Rights outlines the 10 fundamental rights taxpayers have when working with the Internal Revenue Service.

- **The right to be informed:** Taxpayers have the right to know what they need to do to comply with the tax laws. They are entitled to clear explanations of the laws and IRS procedures in all tax forms, instructions, publications, notices and correspondence. They have the right to be informed of IRS decisions about their tax accounts and receive clear explanations of outcomes.

- **The right to quality service:** Taxpayers have the right to receive prompt, courteous and professional assistance in their dealings with the IRS, to be spoken to in a way they can easily understand, to receive clear and easily understandable communications from the IRS and to speak to a supervisor about inadequate service.

- **The right to pay no more than the correct amount of tax:** Taxpayers have the right to pay only the amount of tax legally due, including interest and penalties and have the IRS apply all tax payments properly.

- **The right to challenge the IRS's position and be heard:** Taxpayers have the right to raise objections and provide additional documentation in response to formal IRS actions or proposed

actions, to expect that the IRS will consider their timely objections and documentation promptly and fairly and to receive a response if the IRS does not agree with their position.

- **The right to appeal an IRS decision in an independent forum:** Taxpayers are entitled to a fair and impartial administrative appeal of most IRS decisions, including many penalties, and have the right to receive a written response regarding the Office of Appeals' decision. Taxpayers generally have the right to take their cases to court.

- **The right to finality:** Taxpayers have the right to know the maximum amount of time they have to challenge the IRS's position, as well as the maximum amount of time the IRS has to audit a particular tax year or collect a tax debt. Taxpayers have the right to know when the IRS has finished an audit.

- **The right to privacy:** Taxpayers have the right to expect that any IRS inquiry, examination or enforcement action will comply with the law, be no more intrusive than necessary and will respect all due process rights, including search and seizure protections and will provide, where applicable, a collection due process hearing.

- **The right to confidentiality:** Taxpayers have the right to expect that any information they provide to the IRS will not be disclosed unless authorized by the taxpayer or by law. Taxpayers have the right to expect appropriate action will be taken against employees, return preparers, and others who wrongfully use or disclose taxpayer

return information.

- **The right to retain representation:** Taxpayers have the right to retain an authorized representative of their choice to represent them in their dealings with the IRS. Taxpayers have the right to seek assistance from a Low Income Taxpayer Clinic if they cannot afford representation.

- **The right to a fair and just tax system:** Taxpayers have the right to expect the tax system to consider facts and circumstances that might affect their underlying liabilities, ability to pay or ability to provide timely information.

Taxpayers have the right to receive assistance from the Taxpayer Advocate Service if they are experiencing financial difficulty or if the IRS has not resolved their tax issues properly and timely through its normal channels.

The IRS also is committed to protecting taxpayers' civil rights. The IRS will not tolerate discrimination based on age, color, disability, race, reprisal, national origin, English proficiency, religion, sex, sexual orientation or status as a parent.

This includes any contact with IRS employees and the staff or volunteers at community sites.

The Fort Polk Installation Tax Center is open. If you want to make an appointment with them to get your taxes done or to answer questions, you may call 531.1040 after Monday.

If you want to talk to an attorney about taxes or any other legal issue, you may call the Fort Polk Legal Assistance Office at 337.531.2580 to make an appointment.

# Prepare yourself for common tax season IRS scams

## OSJA

FORT POLK, La. — The Internal Revenue Service reminds taxpayers that they will not ask for or accept gift cards as payment for a tax bill.

However, that does not stop scammers from targeting taxpayers by asking them to pay a fake tax bill with gift cards. They may also use a compromised email account to send emails requesting gift card purchases for friends, family or co-workers. Gift cards make great presents for loved ones, but they cannot be used to pay taxes.

### Here is how this scam usually happens:

- The most common way scammers request gift cards is over the phone through a government impersonation scam. However, they will also request gift cards by sending a text message, email or through social media.

- A scammer posing as an IRS agent will call the taxpayer or leave a voicemail with a callback number informing the taxpayer that they are linked to some criminal activity. For example, the scammer will tell the taxpayer that their identify has been stolen and used to open fake bank accounts.

- The scammer will threaten or harass the taxpayer by telling them that they must pay a fictitious tax penalty.

- The scammer instructs the taxpayer to buy gift cards from various stores.

- Once the taxpayer buys the gift cards, the scammer will ask the taxpayer to provide the gift card number and PIN.

### You can protect yourself by remembering that the IRS will never:

- Call to demand immediate payment using a specific payment method such as a gift card, prepaid debit card or wire transfer. The IRS

will mail a bill to a taxpayer who owes taxes.

- Demand that taxpayers pay taxes without the opportunity to question or appeal the amount they owe.

- Threaten to bring in local police, immigration officers or other law enforcement to have the taxpayer arrested for not paying.

- Threaten to revoke a taxpayer's driver's license, business licenses or immigration status.

If you have been targeted by a scammer, you should contact the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration by calling 800.366.4484.

The Fort Polk Installation Tax Center is open. If you want to make an appointment with them to get your taxes done or to answer questions, you may call 531.1040 after Monday.

If you want to talk to an attorney about taxes or any other legal issue, you may call the Fort Polk Legal Assistance Office at 337.531.2580 to make an appointment.

# Take note of raised traffic **fin**es on Fort Polk

## OSJA

FORT POLK, La. — The Office of the Staff Judge Advocate advises the residents of Fort Polk that by an order dated Dec. 15, 2021, the

Western District of Louisiana implemented a new fine schedule for minor traffic offenses occurring on Fort Polk.

The order increased the fines for the following traffic offenses:

Tickets will be issued with the new fine amounts this month.

If you have any questions or want to talk to an attorney about traffic offenses or your rights, you may contact the Legal Assistance Office at 337.531.2580.

Violation	Fine	Court Cost	Total
Speeding 1-10 miles over limit	\$40	\$30	\$70
Speeding – 10 over limit	\$75	\$30	\$105
Speeding – 15 over limit	\$100	\$30	\$130
Speeding – 20 over limit	\$115	\$30	\$145
Speeding – 25 over limit	\$150	\$30	\$180
Speeding – 30 over limit	\$175	\$30	\$205
Speeding – 45 over limit	Mandatory appearance		
Failure to Yield Right of Way	\$75	\$30	\$105
Failure to obey official traffic control signal	\$75	\$30	\$105
Failure to comply with lawful order of officer	\$75	\$30	\$105
Failure to obey stop sign	\$75	\$30	\$105
Driving less than the posted minimum speed or impeding the normal reasonable flow of traffic	\$75	\$30	\$105
Driving left of center in wrong lane or in wrong direction on one-way	\$75	\$30	\$105
Illegal passing	\$75	\$30	\$105
Illegal turn, turn approach or failure to signal	\$75	\$30	\$105
Following too close	\$75	\$30	\$105
Illegal backing	\$75	\$30	\$105
Failure to stop for railroad, electric or mechanical signal device	\$75	\$30	\$105

Passing school bus which is displaying stop signal	\$100	\$30	\$130
Entering restrict road	\$75	\$30	\$105
Failure to Dim headlights	\$75	\$30	\$105
Spilling load on highway	\$75	\$30	\$105
Defective horn	\$40	\$30	\$70
Defective muffler or no muffler or muffler cutout	\$75	\$30	\$105
Inspection sticker violation	\$75	\$30	\$105
Child restraint violation	\$100	\$30	\$130
Impeding Traffic	\$75	\$30	\$105
Simple obstruction	\$75	\$30	\$105
Allowing unlicensed driver to drive	\$100	\$30	\$130
Careless Operation	\$100	\$30	\$130
Cutting through parking lot	\$75	\$30	\$105
Defective Equipment	\$75	\$30	\$105
Exhibition of Speed and Drag Racing	\$175	\$30	\$205
Expired Driver's License	\$50	\$30	\$80
Expired Inspection Sticker	\$75	\$30	\$105
Expired Plate	\$75	\$30	\$105
Expired Registration	\$75	\$30	\$105
Failure to Yield	\$75	\$30	\$105
Following Too Close	\$75	\$30	\$105
Illegal Tinted Windshield	\$100	\$30	\$130
Improper Backing	\$75	\$30	\$105
Improper Display of License Plate	\$75	\$30	\$105
Improper Lane Usage	\$75	\$30	\$105
Improper Lighting	\$75	\$30	\$105

Improper Parking	\$75	\$30	\$105
Improper Turn	\$75	\$30	\$105
No Headlights	\$75	\$30	\$105
No License Plate	\$75	\$30	\$105
No License Plate Light	\$75	\$30	\$105
No Motorcycle Endorsement	\$75	\$30	\$105
No Insurance	Mandatory Appearance		
Proof of Insurance	\$75	\$30	\$105
No Seatbelt (1 <sup>st</sup> Offense)	\$50	\$30	\$80
No Seatbelt (2 <sup>nd</sup> Offense)	\$75	\$30	\$105
No Taillights	\$75	\$30	\$105
No Turn Signal	\$75	\$30	\$105
Open Container	\$55	\$30	\$85
Failure to Yield to Emergency Vehicle	\$75	\$30	\$105
Improper Parking - Handicapped	\$100	\$30	\$130
Switched Plates	Mandatory Appearance		
Use Personal Mobile Electronic Device while Driving	\$200	\$30	\$230
Tampering with or Removing Barricades	\$100	\$30	\$130

## Blood needed: Armed Services Blood Program urges **donors** to step up

By **CLAUDIA SANCHEZ-BUSTAMANT**  
MHS Communications

FORT POLK, La. — The Armed Services Blood Program says donations are down and is encouraging volunteers to step up and donate blood to replenish the supply.

“Blood supply is critically low across the nation,” not only for the ASBP, but for civilian organizations as well, said Army Col. Audra Taylor, the ASBP’s division chief. The ASBP provides lifesaving blood products to service members, their Families, retirees and veterans worldwide.

“Historically, donations decrease in the holiday and winter months due to schedule changes, people taking leave, Families going on vacation, weather conditions or illnesses impeding people from donating,” Taylor said.

“This year, it’s all of those things in addition to COVID-19 restrictions and overall health and safety concerns for potential donors and ASBP blood donor center team members.”

Army Lt. Gen. (Dr.) Ronald Place, the Defense Health Agency’s director, echoed the sentiments about the importance of blood donors and a steady resupply of blood products.

“Adequate blood supplies are a critical part of a ready medical force. Our medical providers must have everything they need to complete their mission, including blood. A donation can be done in as little as one hour and yield lifesaving blood products for surgical

procedures, traumatic injuries, chronic illness and cancer treatment,” Place said.

### Blood is vital year-round

“There is no substitute for blood,” said Taylor. “It’s a critical tool in saving lives.” Administered to treat various conditions, blood products are essential for warfighters in combat operations and for emergency use wherever they are, Taylor added.

“It’s also necessary to conduct surgeries at military hospitals and clinics,” she said. “It could be critical to the survival of a newborn baby, treatment to those with blood-borne illnesses, certain cancers or burn victims.”

The ASBP ensures global military medical centers, hospitals and clinics have immediate and easy access to safe and viable blood and blood products. This includes whole blood, red blood cells, platelets, plasma and transfusable components derived from them.

“But it’s not possible for ASBP to fulfill its mission if not for our donors,” Taylor said.

In general, most people don’t think about blood until it’s needed, she added.

Additionally, blood products will expire if left on the shelf for too long. Some are only viable for a few days or weeks. “It needs to be on the shelf before the need arises,” Taylor said.

### National Blood Donor Month

Military leaders and medical providers are grateful for the many military community members who have participated in blood donor programs in recent years.

National Blood Donor Month was established in January 1969 to address blood shortages during the holiday and winter season and to thank donors who have supported the nation’s blood supply throughout the year.

As the official provider of blood products to the U.S. armed forces and military community, the ASBP helps ensure mission readiness around the world.

“We focus on equipping the warfighter with the lifesaving blood and blood products they need on the battlefield as well as in military hospitals and clinics worldwide,” said Taylor.

This includes collecting, processing, storing, transporting and distributing blood and products to ill or injured service members, their Families, retirees and veterans.

### Where can you donate?

ASBP blood donor centers are located throughout the United States and at locations around the world.

“We have over 20 donor centers, and many of them conduct mobile blood drives in their areas and sometimes in places farther away on a regular basis,” Taylor explained.

“As the Defense Department’s blood program, we are limited to collect at federally owned or leased properties only,” she said. “But we’re thankful for the many bases, academies, centers and more that help us make mission and sponsor regular blood drives.

If you are able, eligible and willing, visit [www.militarydonor.com](http://www.militarydonor.com) to donate today.

# BJACH educates staff, beneficiaries on MHS GENESIS

By JEAN CLAVETTE GRAVES  
BJACH PAO

FORT POLK, La. — The Department of Defense Military Health System is transitioning to MHS GENESIS, the new electronic health record. Bayne-Jones Army Community is preparing to go live with MHS GENESIS on March 19 and is training staff and personnel to provide patients what they need, when and where they need it. The pathology and emergency medical departments conducted super user and end user training at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, Jan. 10-12.

Lt. Col. Kevin Goke, chief of behavioral health services for BJACH is the MHS GENESIS transition information steering committee chair. Goke has gone through the MHS GENESIS transformation while stationed at Madigan Army Medical Center, Joint Base Lewis-McChord in 2017 and understands the importance of training departmental staff on the new EHR.

“We are moving to a new era of technology with MHS GENESIS, understanding the impacts on overall patient care is very important,” he said. “Bar code scanning and other factors will impact our day to day operations.”

Goke said MHS GENESIS training ensures a better understanding of EHR workflow and yields system efficiencies.

“MHS GENESIS is different than the current systems,” he said. “Our current systems are essentially an electronic version of a paper chart. MHS GENESIS is an evolution in health care delivery. Everyone will be able to share and access information. For example, when I see a new patient I will see what the primary care manager has annotated in their records.”

Goke said MHS GENESIS will eliminate duplication of effort by providers.

Ryan Bradford, supervisory laboratory scientist, is an MHS GENESIS super user and attended the end user training with the pathology department.

“I think MHS GENESIS will make our jobs easier because all medical records will be in one place as opposed to three separate systems,” he said. “Overall, this will increase our effectiveness.”

Bradford said in the short term there will be some challenges for his department as they embrace new workflows.

“With any new technology there will always be a learning curve going from the old to the new,” he said. “As long as our team is open to change and willing to work through the issues, it should be smooth sailing and will benefit the organization and our beneficiaries in the long run.”

Bradford said once fully deployed, patient care and satisfaction will be enhanced. Beneficiaries can log into the patient portal to get lab results, message their provider and much more.



*Bayne-Jones Army Community is preparing to go live with MHS GENESIS on March 19 and is training staff and personnel to deliver patients what they need, when and where they need it. The pathology and emergency medical departments conducted super user and end user training at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, Jan. 10-12.*

The BJACH public affairs office has begun messaging beneficiaries through social media and other outlets about what to expect during the transition. MHS GENESIS will go live March 19.

Patients can take steps now to prepare for the MHS GENESIS transformation:

- **Primary care:** Primary care appointments between February and April 2022, should be made as soon as possible to avoid delays during the MHS GENESIS transition.

- **Same-day care:** BJACH recommends calling the appointment line first, 337.531.3011, to check for open or re-opened appointments due to cancellations.

If there is no availability, another option for retirees and Families is to visit a TRICARE-authorized urgent care center for same-day, acute needs. Beneficiaries, other than active duty service members, do not need a referral to receive care at a TRICARE-authorized urgent care center.

- **Call the NAL:** The Nurse Advice Line can triage and assist with obtaining appropriate care. Call 800.874.2273, Option 1.

- **Specialty care:** BJACH may need to temporarily defer specialty care to the network. For questions regarding a network referral, patients should contact their clinic or PCM team via secure message. Please ensure the clinic has a correct contact number on hand for referral purposes.

- **Pharmacy:** Beneficiaries should talk to providers now about 90-day prescriptions. Be sure to have prescription refills on hand or look into using a TRICARE network retail pharmacy or the mail-order service. For more information on home delivery, visit <https://www.tricare.mil/homedelivery>.

Patients requiring prescription refills in March should submit their refill requests pri-

or to the GENESIS go live date on March 19. For faster refill prescription pickup services, the pharmacy recommends patients use the ScriptCenter kiosk located inside BJACH Entrance A. The ScriptCenter can be accessed 24 hours a day. Patients can ask the pharmacy staff for more information on how to use the ScriptCenter kiosk.

- **Lab:** Patients may experience longer wait times in outpatient sample collection areas while staff adjust to the new processes.

- **Radiology:** Patients should make sure to get their routine radiology appointments taken care of early to avoid extended wait times. Screening mammograms do not require referrals to obtain care.

## MHS GENESIS Patient Portal

The MHS GENESIS Patient Portal will replace TRICARE Online after the records transfer using the same DS Logon access, <https://myaccess.dmdc.osd.mil/>. Patients can also access their online health record by using a Common Access Card or DFAS account credentials. The portal will provide 24/7 secure access to personal health information, to include lab results, prescription refills, secure messages with care teams and more.

Beneficiaries are encouraged to register for access to the new Patient Portal if they have not used DS Logon previously. Visit <https://patientportal.mhsgenesis.health.mil>.

The Defense Health Agency recommends keeping personal copies of paper records. If feasible, scan the hardcopy documents to digital and back up on an external hard drive, ensuring proper physical and digital storage safeguards to protect personal information.

**Editor's note:** Follow the BJACH Facebook Page @BayneJonesACH and visit the BJACH website, [bayne-jones.tricare.mil](https://bayne-jones.tricare.mil), to stay up-to-date MHS GENESIS related topics.



# MILITARY HEALTH SYSTEM MHS GENESIS

## *Patient Portal Factsheet*



### What is the Patient Portal?

MHS GENESIS Patient Portal is a secure website that allows you to access your health information, schedule appointments, and exchange messages with your care team anytime and anywhere. It replaces TRICARE Online (TOL) and Secure Messaging for sites currently using MHS GENESIS. If your site does not have MHS GENESIS, you will continue using TOL and Secure Messaging to access your health care information.

### How do I access the Patient Portal?

To access the MHS GENESIS Patient Portal, visit [patientportal.mhsgenesis.health.mil](https://patientportal.mhsgenesis.health.mil). Beneficiaries can log in using their DS Logon. A free Premium Access (Level 2) account is required to view the health record. The DS Logon Premium account allows you to view personal data about yourself in the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs systems, apply for benefits online, check the status of your claims, update your address information, and more.

In preparation for the new MHS GENESIS Patient Portal, log in to milConnect and create your DS Logon. Beneficiaries with an existing DS Logon should upgrade their account to Premium Access. A link to the "My Access Center" is available on the MHS GENESIS Patient Portal landing page to direct patients on how to get their DS Logon credentials.

### Where do I go for more information?

For questions regarding the DS Logon, visit [www.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect](https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect) or contact the Global Support Center (GSC) at **1-800-600-9332**.

### Features

- View your health information
- Exchange secure messages with your care team
- Request prescription renewals
- View notes from your clinical visits and certain lab/test results, such as blood tests
- Schedule medical and active duty dental appointments
- Complete a pre-visit active duty dental health questionnaire online
- Access information related to your health concerns and medications



Last updated on January 2020

For more information, visit [health.mil/MSHGENESIS](https://health.mil/MSHGENESIS)

# Attitude — what about it? Assess your way of thinking in new year

By KEVIN STUART  
BJACH ombudsman

FORT POLK, La. — Recently, while shopping in a local store, I witnessed one of the store employees display one of the most positive attitudes I've seen in a long time. The employee was helpful, professional and positive in every aspect of customer interaction, even when the customer appeared to be rude, impolite and discourteous.

The store associate demonstrated a positive attitude that was inviting and keen to the customer's questions and concerns. The employee also displayed great patience in addressing the customer's concerns.

I have also seen numerous people who live and work on Fort Polk displaying positive attitudes. I get so fired up and happy to see the effect it has on others. Have you figured out the topic of this commentary? I am writing about a subject that appears minor to some, but major to others and could be the difference in winning or losing a war or battle, gaining or losing a friendship, co-workers or Family members.

I am referring to "Attitude — what about it?" It's a topic that applies to just about everyone, especially if you work or serve in a job or position that provides services to other people.

Webster's dictionary defines attitude as "a state of mind or a settled way of thinking or feeling about someone or something, typically one that is reflected in a person's behavior." Attitude can also be defined as the way a person looks at life.

Moreover, it's the way a person chooses to see and respond to situations, events, people and themselves. A person's attitude is created by their thoughts and we choose our thoughts. A person is the architect of their own frame of mind.

I have noticed on numerous occasions the word "attitude" given a negative connotation. For example, some parents may scold their children, or leaders/managers may admonish their employees for having or displaying an attitude — meaning a bad attitude. On the other hand, some companies and corporations may acknowledge or recognize those employees who consistently display an exceptionally positive attitude.

A person displaying a positive attitude can go a long way when dealing with customers, patients, clients and the like. An organization that consistently exudes a positive attitude will normally lead their customers to a positive experience while leaving the organization feeling good about themselves. The same can be said amongst staff members and management as well.

On the other hand, how many times have you heard someone refer to an individual as having a terrible or bad attitude? A negative



attitude is the result of negative thinking, focuses on the problem and stops seeking opportunities or solutions. A negative attitude normally survives with a constant diet of negative self-talk and thinking.

Have you noticed the difference in how you feel when talking with someone you perceive with a good attitude compared to a person with a negative attitude? Think about it.

Think about all of the power you have in your attitude. That's right, I truly believe that everyone has some power over their attitude, whether they know it or not. A person's attitude can have a significant impact on others, whether it's good or bad.

Would you rather work or follow a person in a tough situation with a good attitude versus a negative attitude? A person's attitude can have a direct impact on how you communicate and collaborate with people, contribute to the culture of a work environment and perform one's daily duties and responsibilities.

There are many things in life we cannot control, but we can control our attitude. I believe a person must decide how they are going to approach their day, job, family/friends and life, because their attitude will play a big part in the outcome. No one can change our attitude unless we choose to give that power away. The attitude we have is ours ... we own it!

I feel it's important to understand the impact our attitude can have on people around us. Our attitude can be contagious. We hold the key to how others will perceive and react to our attitude. Can you think about the times you have received or given a friendly smile when speaking to another person? A small gesture, such as a smile, can go a long way toward influencing another's reaction. Individu-

als who display a happy and positive attitude often help others around them feel better.

However, a frown, or not speaking to someone, can do just the opposite. I have seen situations in which a person who displays a negative attitude has the tendency to bring everyone around them down. You've probably heard the phrase "misery loves company."

According to a Harvard Business review, research shows that when people work with a positive mind-set, performance on nearly every level — productivity, creativity, engagement and experience with others such as family, friends, coworkers and more — improves.

So, the next time you are unsure about your attitude for that day, look in the mirror, assess how you feel and ask, "What about my attitude?" Take action from there.

I believe a person's attitude is just as important as education, great wealth, failures or successes; attitude is just as important as someone's talent, skill or appearance. I believe a person's attitude can have a major effect on a team, company, church, home or even an entire Army.

In the words of the late Norman Vincent Peale (a motivational and inspirational speaker who wrote the best seller book the Power of Positive Thinking): "Give everyone a smile. Spend so much time improving yourself that you have no time left to criticize others. Be too big for worry and too noble for anger." And when you get up in the morning, you have two choices — either to be happy or to be unhappy. Just choose to be happy."

So I hope everyone can wake up and choose to be happy and continue to maintain and nurture that positive attitude, to hopefully make a positive difference in someone's life whether on Fort Polk or anywhere in the world.

## COMMENTARY

# • Are you ready for BJACH - Dept. of Public Health – Health Promotion 10,000 Steps a Day 90-Day Step Challenge?

• The challenge begins on Jan. 24 and ends on Apr. 17, 2022.



## 10,000 STEPS A DAY 90 DAY CHALLENGE



### What do you need to do?

1. Form a team of 2-20 Soldiers, civilians and/or Family members
2. Select a team captain to collect and report weekly steps
3. Register your team with the Health Promotions Team [geneva.h.meridith.civ@mail.mil](mailto:geneva.h.meridith.civ@mail.mil) or [usarmy.polk.medcom-bjach.list.public-health@mail.mil](mailto:usarmy.polk.medcom-bjach.list.public-health@mail.mil)

**Thank You and Happy Stepping!**

## Staying fit, **healthy** in challenging pandemic environment

By Maj. AERI HODGES  
BJACH chief of public health

FORT POLK, La. — One of the greatest ways to improve team morale and increase fitness — while preserving your health in the midst of a pandemic — is to participate in individual fitness challenges such as Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk’s 10,000 Steps a Day Challenge.

JRTC and Fort Polk is about to kick off its annual challenge that includes teams of up to 20 individuals participating across the installation.

Teams can consist of active duty Soldiers, Family members, retirees and Department of Defense civilian employees.

The event, sponsored by the Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital Department of Public Health Nursing & Health Promotion section, is a great way to build esprit-de-corps

and improve your health and fitness.

Teams must register in advance by contacting Meridith Geneva, health promotions technician at [geneva.h.meridith.civ@mail.mil](mailto:geneva.h.meridith.civ@mail.mil). All registered participants will have their steps counted and be eligible for prizes.

The goal is to reach 10,000 steps per day. This can be done while maintaining social distancing.

Team members can walk on their own without coming into close contact with other teammates. Daily step counts will be reported and tracked by each team captain, who will then forward the result to the DPH Nursing department at Fort Polk.

The challenge can be used to explore new fitness categories for those who are adventurous. Walking is not the only activity you can count.

If your favorite activity it is jogging, walking, hiking, climbing, rowing, lifting or stair climbing, you can convert those activities into



steps using a conversion table provided to team captains.

It is important to stay active. Don’t let the pandemic, bad weather or other excuses stop you from participating in events that will help you get moving!

The challenge runs from Monday4–April 17, so don’t delay, register today and get stepping.

# Check VIN numbers

The Directorate of Emergency Services Traffic Division will release the following vehicles to the Directorate of Family Morale, Welfare and Recreation if they remain unclaimed. Check the last four numbers of the VIN number. If one of these vehicles belongs to you, please contact the Fort Polk Police Traffic Section at 531.1806/6675/2677.

1999	Chevrolet	Suburban	3573
2000	Chevrolet	2500	0222
2005	Toyota	4 dr	8911
1993	Honda	Civic	0478
2019	Ford	Fiesta	9660
2009	Chevrolet	Equinox	7783
2002	Honda	CRV	7722
2014	Nissan	Maxima	0131
1988	Chevrolet	3500	4195
2005	Mercury	Sable	9544
2011	Chevrolet	Equinox	3730
2014	Chevrolet	Malibu	9771
2009	Chevrolet	Cobolt	8756
2006	Hyundai	Elantra	4769
2019	Kia	Forte	0634
2011	Dodge	Avenger	1373
1999	Ford	F150	6684
2003	Lincoln	Navigator	8394
2008	Chevrolet	Equinox	5638
2004	Lincoln	Town Car	1307
2014	Nissan	Altima	6092
2001	Toyota	Corolla	6348
2005	Ford	F150	9048
2005	Nissan	Altima	9465
2017	Nissan	Sentra	3505
2006	Dodge	Charger	5068
2000	Ford	Ranger	3852
1998	Honda	CRV	6564
1995	Ford	Crown Vic	4288
1995	BMW	530i	4287
2006	Jeep	Commander	5558
2005	Chevrolet	Cobalt	1230
2009	Pontiac	G6	7014



## Fort Polk Soldiers **punished** for disciplinary issues

### OSJA

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

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

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

Below are the most recent examples of ad-

verse legal actions for units within the Fort Polk jurisdiction.

- A private assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, was separated with general characterization of service for misconduct/abuse of illegal substances.

- A private first class assigned to 317th Brigade Engineer Battalion was separated with a general characterization of service for misconduct/abuse of illegal substances.

- A private assigned to 2nd Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, was separated with a general characterization of service for misconduct/abuse of illegal substances.

- A staff sergeant assigned to 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, received a General Officer Memorandum of Reprimand for failing to obey the order to get the COVID vaccine. The GOMOR was permanently filed in the Soldier’s AMHRR.

## Briefs

### Flu shots

Flu shots are available for Department of Defense civilian employees at Occupational Health, bldg 3515, from 8 a.m.–3:30 p.m., Monday–Friday. If accommodations need to be made outside of those hours please contact 337.531-6131.

### Fire marshal class

The Fort Polk Fire Prevention Division’s goal is to provide complete fire protection services to prevent loss of life or personal injuries and reduce property loss to the lowest attainable level consistent with mission and sound engineering and economic principles. This is accomplished by providing education to the public and establishing and enforcing regulations that foster fire safety inside the work environment. As a Fire Marshal, you are the first line of defense in ensuring a safe working environment for your area(s). Contact Fire inspector James McArthur for more information at 337.531.0686 or 337.378.9198.

### New MRI scanner

The Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital Radiology Department is installing a new MRI scanner. On Jan. 28, the patient pick-up/drop off drive through at Entrance B will be blocked from

7 a.m.-6 p.m. The entrance will be open to foot traffic, however, patients with mobility issues may use the pick-up/drop off drive through located at entrance A. BJACH apologizes for any inconvenience.

