



FORGING THE

WARRIOR SPIRIT

The JRTC and Fort Polk Guardian

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Home of Heroes @ Fort Polk, LA

Dec. 18, 2020

BJACH hosts RHC-C Best Medic Competition

By JEAN CLAVETTE GRAVES
BJACH Public Affairs Officer

FORT POLK, La. — Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital hosted 14 Soldiers from seven military treatment facilities for the Regional Health Command – Central Best Medic Competition Dec. 8-10, at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk.

Staff Sgt. David McAfee, emergency room shift leader, and Capt. Nikolas Roumell, emergency room nurse, from Weed Army Community Hospital, Fort Irwin, California, earned the top placement. Maj. J. Bryan Ahlborn, chief of the optometry department and 2nd Lt. Austin Pinkerton, a pediatric nurse from Carl R. Darnell Army Medical Center, Fort Hood, Texas, came in second.

Soldiers from across the region competed in the continuous and grueling 72-hour competition in two-person teams. Teams and individuals earned points by successfully completing tasks designed to test their technical, tactical and medical proficiency. Soldiers completed a variety of activities including weapons qualification, land navigation, a prolonged field-care exercise and

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Sgt. Brandon Clark, medical laboratory technician from Reynolds Army Health Clinic, Fort Sill, Okla., performs lifesaving measures during the prolonged field care phase of the Regional Health Command – Central Best Medic Competition on Dec. 9 at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk. Please see page 5 for more Best Medic Competition pictures.

JEAN CLAVETTE GRAVES/BJACH

Weekend weather



Inside the Guardian

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Viewpoint

In our view

Guardian staff asked the JRTC and Fort Polk community, "If you could only eat one food for the rest of your life, what would you choose and why?"



Justin Criswell: "Mexican food because that is where my heart is – I love the salsas and quesadillas."



Brice Bennett: "I would say spaghetti because it's my favorite dish. My brothers make fun of me, because I used to say that I wanted to make the Spaghetti Factory."



Jack Tan: "I would pick seafood – any kind of seafood is my favorite."

Pfc. Isaac Skarstedt: "Rice Krispie treats, because they are fun to eat and you can flavor them in so many different ways."



Mary Lopez: "I'd pick sushi because that is the phase I'm in right now. Most of the time, it is good for you, and there is just something about the salty flavor when you mix it with soy sauce."



Spc. Cesar Garcia: "I'd have to say steak because it is delicious and research has shown that steak may help with autoimmune diseases and other issues."



Allen Scranton: "I would probably say pasta, because there is so much you can do with it – it's a versatile dish."



Pfc. Jonathon Carlson: "Fondue would be my pick because it is bread that you can dip into anything."



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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**, **@BayneJonesACH** or **@fortpolkmwr**.

Briefs

Vehicle release

The Directorate of Emergency Services Traffic Section releases the following vehicles to a towing company for disposal on Jan. 11, if they remain unclaimed. Vehicles are listed with the last four numbers of their VIN number.

If one of these vehicles belongs to you, please contact the Fort Polk Police Traffic Section at 531-1806/6675/2677.

1999	Lexus	GS400	0410
2015	Ford	Focus	5067
2015	Ford	Fusion	5279
2007	Ford	Explorer	8233
1998	GMC	Sonoma	9145
2000	Chevrolet	Camaro	8488

Lunch and learn

The R2 Performance Center presents the January Lunch and Learn Jan. 20 from noon-12:45 p.m. The meeting takes place at 8148 Alabama Ave., bldg 2380.

The discussion covers the dilemma between who people are and who they're perceived to be. For more information call 531-2427. To RSVP, email jennings@magellanfederal.com.

Corvias survey

Fort Polk residents have until Jan. 15 to complete their 2020 Department of Defense Tenant Satisfaction Housing Survey. The survey takes less than 10 minutes to complete and all answers are strictly confidential. Feedback provides the Army and Corvias with information to guide future improvements to housing facilities and residential services. Four \$25 gift card winners are randomly selected from those who have completed the survey by the deadline. If you didn't receive a survey contact ArmyHousing-Survey@CELAssociates.com with your installation, name and address.

Holiday Checkpoints

Fort Polk's Directorate of Emergency Services Police will conduct multiple DWI/sobriety checkpoints at various times and locations over the Christmas and New Year's holidays. The purpose of sobriety checkpoints is to deter drivers from operating motor vehicles while impaired and ensure the safety of installation residents.



Soldiers receive 2021 BAH increase

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

FORT POLK, La. — Fort Polk Soldiers will see an overall average increase of 5.36% in their 2021 Basic Allowance for Housing rates, effective Jan. 1, 2021. The greatest increase at Fort Polk is to warrant officer 1 (7.74 percent) and first lieutenant (7.62).

"This is great news for Fort Polk," said Col. Ryan Roseberry, Fort Polk's garrison commander. "This is a quality of life measure that will have a positive impact on our Soldiers and Families."

The Department of Defense released the 2021 BAH rates on Tuesday, Dec. 15. The average increase is 2.9% percent when the new rates take effect, with Fort Polk's average rate several points higher. An estimated \$23 billion will be paid to about one million service members.

The 2021 Basic Allowance for Housing, as part of a robust military compensation package, continues the member out-of-pocket expense element at five percent of the national average housing cost by pay grade. The out-of-pocket expense amounts incorporated in the 2021 Basic Allowance for Housing rates vary by grade and dependency status and range from \$70 to \$158 monthly. Even with the out-of-pocket expense amounts, the overall military pay and benefits package remains competitive and healthy.

Housing cost data are collected annually for about 300 military housing areas in the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii. An important part of the BAH process is the cooperation from the services and local military housing offices in the data collection effort. Input from local commands is used to determine in which neighborhoods data

is collected and to direct the data collection effort in those neighborhoods towards adequate apartment complexes and individual housing units.

Median current market rent and average utilities (including electricity, heat and water/sewer) comprise the total housing cost for each military housing area and are included in the Basic Allowance for Housing computation.

Total housing costs are developed for six housing profiles (based on dwelling type and number of bedrooms) in each military housing area. Basic Allowance for Housing rates are then calculated for each pay grade, both with and without dependents.

An integral part of the Basic Allowance for Housing program is the provision of individual rate protection to all members. No matter what happens to measured housing costs — including the out-of-pocket expense adjustment, an individual member who maintains uninterrupted BAH eligibility in a given location will not see his/her BAH rate decrease. This ensures that members who have made long-term commitments in the form of a lease or contract are not penalized if the area's housing costs decrease.

The department is committed to the preservation of a compensation and benefit structure that provides members with a suitable and secure standard of living to sustain a trained, experienced and ready force now and in the future.

For more information on the Basic Allowance for Housing, including the 2021 Basic Allowance for Housing rates and 2021 Basic Allowance for Housing rate component breakdown, please visit www.defensetravel.dod.mil.

Army News

Army continues to combat discrimination through Project Inclusion

By JOSEPH LACDAN
Army News Service

WASHINGTON — To help foster a culture built on trust, the Army is conducting additional listening sessions at most Army installations as part of Project Inclusion, a senior leader-directed initiative that began in the summer. Fort Polk's listening session is slated for Oct. 19-21.

Project Inclusion, which is part of the Army's five-year strategic diversity plan, is a holistic effort to listen to Army personnel and enact programs to promote diversity, equity and inclusion.

"The thing that we're doing going forward is building a system to assess all these programs that we're putting in place," said Col. Timothy Holman, the Army's chief diversity officer. "We're looking at how we leverage the value of diversity."

In support of the initiative, the Army has developed plans to implement diversity and inclusion into its military education programs. Holman said the service will create a senior mentorship program at various universities by connecting a senior faculty member to Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps programs.

The Army also aims to recruit students from historically black or minority academic institutions to become involved in Army research as Army civilian employees.

Official photos and gender and race details have even been eliminated from promotion boards, while senior leaders have ordered a re-examination of the Army's justice system to assure equal and fair treatment of minorities.

Your Voice Matters

Following the death of Spc. Vanessa Guillen at Fort Hood, Texas, and Minnesota resident George Floyd, race relations drew increased attention in the national spotlight.

In June, the Army began the "Your Voice Matters" listening-session tour to assess those concerns as well as emphasize a greater focus on the Army's people.

The tour goes along with the new Army People Strategy's diversity, equity and inclusion annex, which outlines the service's plans to maximize and leverage the talents of its Soldiers and civilians by increasing diversity and inclusion to build cohesive teams.

Using data from each tour session held at eight installations so far, the Army has identified 20 issues that were updated to senior leaders Dec. 17, with other periodic updates to be conducted in the future.



LOUIS DEYAN/ARMY NEWS SERVICE

Lt. Gen. Laura J. Richardson, U.S. Army North commander, receives a "Your Voice Matters" listening tour in-brief at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas, Oct. 21. The Army will use data collected from the voluntary and confidential sessions to determine whether installation or Army-wide policies need to be reviewed, revised or updated based on systemic or institutional trends. During the tour, Army leaders give Soldiers the opportunity to voice their concerns about social issues and how to improve the Army. The tour continues Jan. 12-14 at Fort Sill, Okla.

"We're hearing some things that are concerning," Holman said.

"But a good thing that we've heard at nearly every installation is that they're glad the Army's having a venue to have these difficult discussions."

To compile an accurate list of concerns, the tour will continue Jan. 12-14 at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and run through the end of 2021. The next two sessions will be held on Jan. 26-28 at Fort Riley, Kansas, and Feb. 2-4 at Fort Eustis, Virginia.

Proper physical distancing measures will be implemented and some attendants will participate by video teleconference.

"What we try to do is listen," Holman said. "And then when we hear those concerns, we capture them based on the Army People Strategy's four lines of effort: Acquire, develop, employ and retain and two of the four critical enablers: Quality of life and Army culture."

The Army Diversity Office plans to gather the data from the visits and then perform a policy evaluation where it will weigh the effectiveness of current policies with each post's command team and revisit each installation.

Holman said they search for service-level issues that they can present to Secretary of the Army Ryan D. McCarthy. Holman noted that the Army's senior leaders have held their own tour of Army installations in a concurrent effort to address Soldier issues.

"We started these listening sessions, because

we wanted to understand what was the impact on readiness," said Anselm Beach, deputy assistant secretary of the Army for equity and inclusion. "We found that both Soldiers and civilians actually value these sessions, especially because they see it as a psychologically-safe place for them to voice issues that they would not normally have a venue to voice."

Beach added that Soldiers and civilians have not only identified problems but presented constructive ideas that could potentially improve Army processes.

During the sessions, teams of eight to 10 people, including equal opportunity advisers, equal employment opportunity professionals and a chaplain or military psychologist, meet with Soldiers. The topics range from diversity; equity and inclusion; quality of life; and also concerns in training, promotion or readiness.

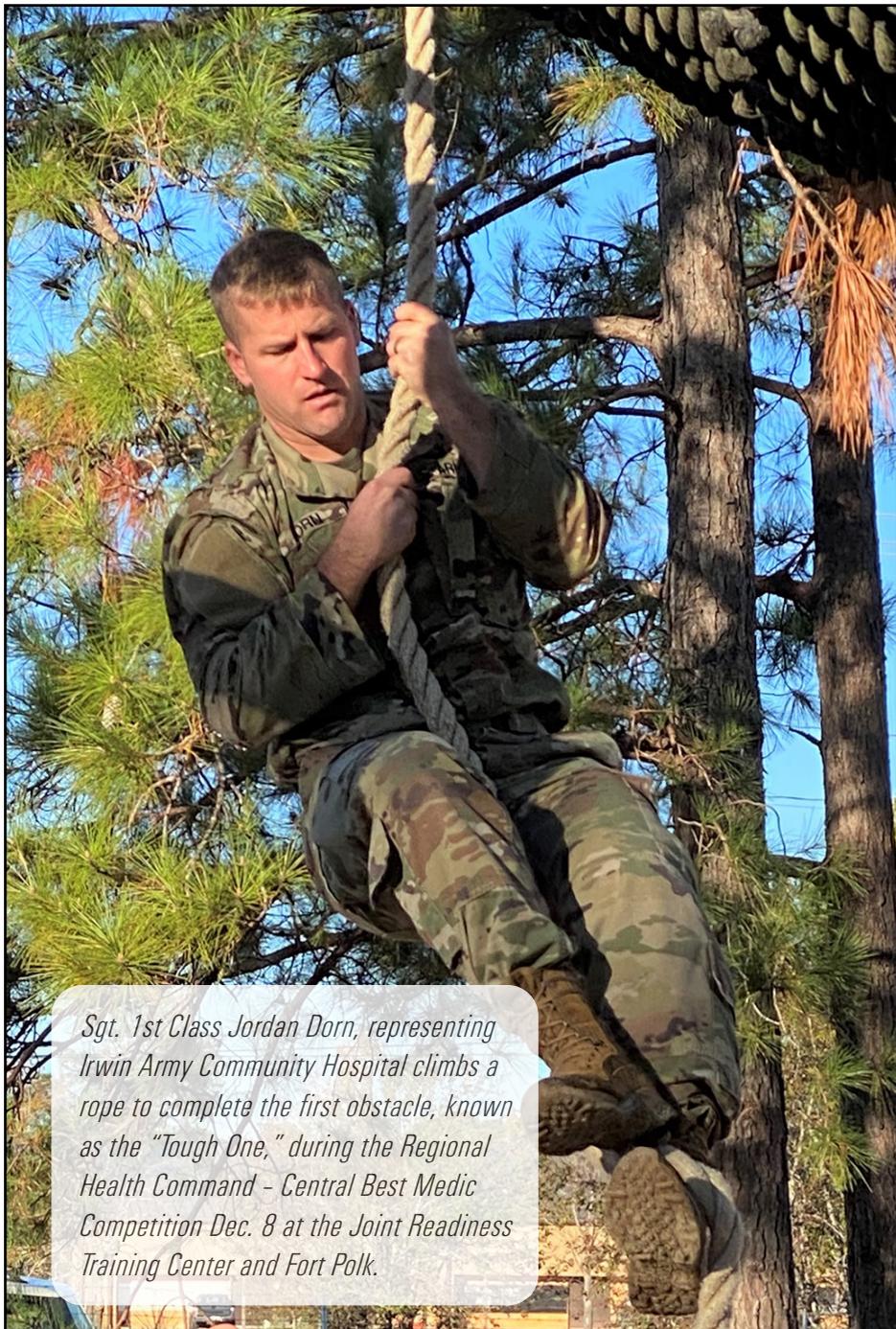
"We want to make sure that we are not stuck in old constructs as we head into a 21st century workforce," Beach said.

"If you were to look at some of the things that the (Army) chief of staff called the 'corrosives within the force,' such as suicide, sexual assaults and sexual harassment ... racism and extremism — those topics are derived detractors from what we want to reach with diversity, equity and inclusion."

For more information on upcoming listening sessions, click [here](#) or check with your Equal Employment Opportunity office.

Medic

Continued from page 1

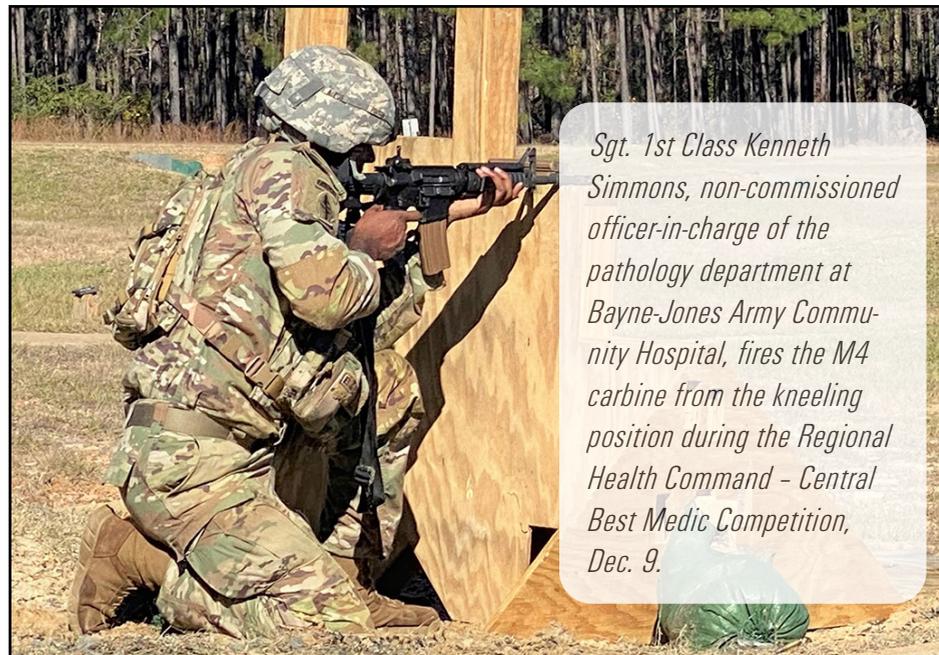


Sgt. 1st Class Jordan Dorn, representing Irwin Army Community Hospital climbs a rope to complete the first obstacle, known as the "Tough One," during the Regional Health Command - Central Best Medic Competition Dec. 8 at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk.



Sgt. 1st Class Jordan Dorn rolls a 'patient' towards him as Staff Sgt. Jordan Wallace provides assistance during Regional Health Command - Central Best Medic Competition on Dec. 9.

JEAN CLAVETTE GRAVES/BIACH



Sgt. 1st Class Kenneth Simmons, non-commissioned officer-in-charge of the pathology department at Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital, fires the M4 carbine from the kneeling position during the Regional Health Command - Central Best Medic Competition, Dec. 9.

combat water survival testing.

"This competition illustrates the Army's number one priority of taking care of its people," Command Sgt. Maj. Timothy Sprunger, RHC-C command sergeant major said. "These medics are a great resource and their competence and skill enables the rest of the force to maintain (its) readiness."

Ahlborn and McAfee, who had the two highest individual scores (934 and 924, respectively) will move forward and represent RHC-C at the Command Sergeant Major Jack L. Clark Jr. U.S. Army Best Medic Competition at Fort Gordon, Ga., in January.

Sprunger noted that every medic is a Soldier first and must execute under fire; then once the smoke clears, they tend to the wounded.

"To be the best medic, you need to be the

most physically fit on the battlefield," he said.

Ahlborn agreed and said the practical applications of each event was gratifying.

"I learned what it would be like on a combat deployment or with troops on the frontlines," Ahlborn said. "I want to take back what I've learned to my unit and ensure my Soldiers are prepared."

McAfee, said the most rewarding aspect of the event was successfully completing each task and moving forward with his teammate.

Brig. Gen. Wendy Harter, RHC-C commanding general, addressed the competitors during their recognition ceremony. She reiterated the importance of participating in the Best Medic Competition and similar events to ensure central-region Soldiers' overall readiness. She praised the events'

realistic nature, which allowed competitors to practice skills that will keep Soldiers alive in the field.

"These were tough scenarios with tough facilitators; as leadership, we have high expectations and standards. The fog of war guarantees nothing ever happens as predicted, so Soldiers must be prepared," she said.

Harter reminded participants that they are the future of Army Medicine, and they play an integral part in the modernization of the Army.

"I charge you to take what you have learned to the Soldier medics who follow in your footsteps," Harter said.

"Mentor and train them well — one day you will look around and see the men and women you trained leading this great Army."

DPTMS takes time to train in effective leadership

By **ANGIE THORNE**
Public Affairs specialist

FORT POLK, La. — A Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security Leader Professional Development class was held Dec. 11. Mark Leslie, DPTMS director, led the class.

The training's purpose was to provide a deliberate framework, grounded in Army values, for a leader culture in DPTMS that develops civilians into competent leaders, capable of decisive action, and staff work that enables informed decision making.

Leslie said the vision for the class is to have an atmosphere within DPTMS that inspires confidence in subordinates, peers and superiors.

"I want to encourage trust and know that we've done the work to ensure that," he said.

Col. Ryan K. Roseberry, Fort Polk garrison commander, spoke to the participants and urged them not to take leadership skills for granted while striving to hone their abilities.

"It's sometimes a challenge to accomplish all we have to do in the time given, especially if we are understaffed. Learning to have the proper processes, planning and ef-

iciency in place can help leaders meet their goals," he said.

The class covered a wide range of topics from the three Cs of the Army profession — competence, character and commitment — to an eight-step training model that included learning skills such as planning; training and certifying leaders; rehearsing; and executing.

David Dancer, DPTMS Plans and Operations chief, said the class conveyed the importance of communicating with leadership and enabled him to better understand what his supervisors want from him.

"Understanding their vision helps us successfully do our jobs," he said.

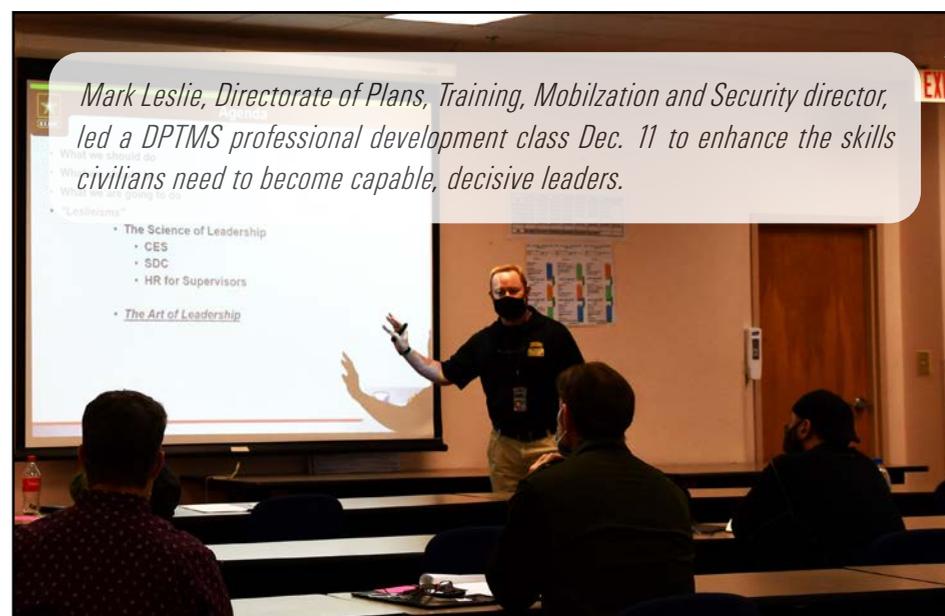
Dancer also said he enjoyed the class interaction.

"Participants were given the chance to discuss what they felt could improve their organization," he said.

Dancer said the class also highlighted the significance of getting things right.

"When we impart information to the community, Soldiers or command, they need to know that, through research and experience, we are conveying the truth," he said.

Joseph Schlag, airfield operations supervisor, also participated in the



ANGIE THORNE/GUARDIAN

training.

Schlag said he believes professional development like this is essential because, without the influence of leaders, the workforce might do great things in the wrong areas — not the things needed to enhance the mission.

"It is important for the workforce to connect and communicate with leadership to understand what they perceive the mission to be. It's always best for the mission when a supervisor explains what they want to accomplish," he said.

"This helps the workforce focus on the essential tasks, making the mission successful and strengthen-

ing the organization."

Schlag said the main thing he took away from the training is that you have to know your people to understand what drives them.

"You have to care about their successes and failures so that you can better prepare them to learn and lead. Today's workforce are tomorrow's leaders. They must understand what they are doing and why they are doing it. We don't want one winner — we want everyone to win. That drives a mission to success," Schlag said.

"I feel like it's my job to help my people do their job; I work for them so they can complete the mission."

Soldiers can now submit, track work orders online

DPW

FORT POLK, La. — Soldiers living in Fort Polk barracks will start 2021 with a new way to submit work orders to fix issues with their Army homes via the Army Maintenance Application at armymaintenance.com.

The new program releases Army-wide Jan. 1 for Army-managed Family housing, lodging and barracks; but at Fort Polk, only the barracks are managed by the Army as partners manage lodging and Family housing on post, according to Greg Prudhomme, Director of Public Works.

While the vast majority of Soldiers living in Fort Polk bar-

racks, both permanent party and those living on post while training, will have to wait until next year to take advantage of ArMA, DPW began registering Soldiers and service providers into the system, Prudhomme said.

"This pilot program is going well," he said.

Though Fort Polk DPW officials haven't yet received any feedback from Soldiers on the program, reports from Fort Campbell, Ky., that has been running the pilot for a longer period, have been positive. "We're using the pilot program to get people in DPW, Soldiers, clerks and service providers trained on the new system, so

we're ready when it goes live," Prudhomme said.

That workload will increase tenfold starting Jan. 1, once all barracks are included in the program, he said.

"We've had some challenges with the new system, but we're training and learning together," Prudhomme said.

"DPW and our partners are committed to making the best possible use of this new system to keep our Soldiers well accommodated in their Army homes."

Soldiers will be able to use the system to get work orders placed for nonemergency repairs to their barracks homes, such as broken outlets, cracked windows and malfunctioning

toilets.

Right now, those orders are placed over the phone or in the automated system, he said.

The program's advantages include Soldiers being able to submit and alter service requests 24 hours a day, seven days a week, on personal computers or smartphones; the ability to upload photos to help maintenance staff understand the issues being reported; check on the status of requests; ask questions about requests; and take part in automated customer satisfaction surveys, Prudhomme added.

The account can follow the Soldier as well, Prudhomme

Please see **ArMA**, page 8

Fort Drum Light Fighters School returns to Fort Polk

By Staff Sgt. ASHLEY MORRIS
3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div

FORT POLK, La. — 1st Sgt. Anthony J. Martel, first sergeant of the Fort Drum and 10th Mountain Division Light Fighters School, and his team of instructors and cadre members have been on Fort Polk the past few weeks training Soldiers and leaders from 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division and Joint Readiness Training Center Operations Group.

The Pre-Ranger Course, Rifle Marksmanship Instructor Course and Mountain Athlete Warrior Course are all being conducted simultaneously at different locations across Fort Polk.

All courses, to include the class with the most training days, PRC, began Nov. 30.

“Typically, we would come in January, stay for five weeks, and run all of our courses at once,” said Martel. “This year, the courses are split between this month and February, due to 3rd BCT training requirements.”

The Pre-Ranger Course is three weeks long.

On the first day of the Pre-Ranger Course, candidates must pass the Ranger physical fitness test, a swim assessment and receive a “go” on their equipment layouts to advance to the next training phase.

Throughout the course, candidates are tested on land navigation, troop-leading procedures and their ability to complete a 12-mile ruck march in less than 3 hours.

Although making it through the course and attending Ranger School is considered an individual task, the candidates use teamwork to complete missions throughout the course.

“The biggest challenge we’ve seen was overcoming the hurdles presented during this pandemic,” said Staff Sgt. Juan Gomez, the non-commissioned officer in charge of the Pre-Ranger Course.

“Social-distancing requirements altered a few plans. Once we found a suitable location to conduct training, everything fell into place. Our main purpose is to ensure 10th Mtn Div Soldiers are physically, mentally and administratively ready to go forward to Ranger School and become successful. I think we’ve accomplished that.”

This year, due to COVID-19 restrictions, class sizes for all three courses have been reduced to ensure adherence to social-distancing requirements. COVID-19 restrictions may have presented a challenge for the longer courses, but this meant more class offerings for the week-long Mountain Athlete Warrior course.

This month, three separate MAW classes were held to support leader instruction on the correct way to execute physical training exercises.



STAFF SGT. ASHLEY MORRIS/ U.S. ARMY

“At the Mountain Athlete Warrior program, we train the trainers — the ones who are leading and planning PT,” said Staff Sgt. Martin P. Altmann, an instructor for Mountain Athlete Warrior, when explaining the mission of the program. “We’re teaching them to train more like athletes. We’re really pushing dynamics warm-ups as a way to help reduce injuries that we’ve seen across the board.”

On Oct. 8, the Army released the updated Field Manual 7-22: Holistic Health and Fitness. This update shifted from a one-size-fits-all approach to physical training and readiness to a more comprehensive approach to overall Soldier readiness: It includes physical, mental, spiritual, sleep and nutritional domains.

The Mountain Athlete Warrior course supports the physical domain by equipping leaders with the knowledge to spot unsafe movements during training that can potentially lead to Soldier injuries.

“During the Army physical fitness test, we had our two minutes of push ups, two minutes of sit ups and our two-mile run, and we trained to that. That is not necessarily the athletic demands we rely on in the field or during deployments,” said Altmann when discussing the shift from the Army physical fitness test to the Army Combat fitness test.

“Now, with the ACFT, we’re training more to what we do in combat or job duties.”

The Mountain Athlete Warrior program is not the only course taught by the Light Fighters School that increases combat efficiency. With its foundation built from Training Circular 3-22.9: Rifle and Carbine and Training Circular 3-20.40: Training and Qualification – Individual Weap-

ons, the Rifle Marksmanship Instructor Course trains leaders to teach rifle instruction within their units by teaching the basics of preliminary marksmanship instruction and ending with advanced marksmanship.

“Everything that we teach comes out of the TC,” said Master Sgt. James M. Calfa, an RMIC instructor. “At the beginning of the course, we go over the new qualification table in-depth. The students complete a known distance qualification range with iron sights and also with the rifle combat optics. We started with 15 students, and we had to drop three.”

Students must shoot at least 30 out of 40 targets to pass the course. If a Soldier is unable to pass the qualification, they are dropped. During the two week run of the course, the instructors go over drills and challenges to improve speed and lethality with rifles. Although some lessons are taught in a traditional classroom environment, magazine change and movement drills are conducted at different ranges to apply their newly refined skills immediately.

“They teach back the new qualification table and the four principles of marksmanship,” said Calfa. “Our job is to ensure that these leaders can take the lessons they have learned and improve marksmanship across their formations.”

Whether it is preparing Soldiers for Ranger School or training leaders on improving physical readiness, the Light Fighters School brings their knowledge and expertise to Fort Polk to help increase combat effectiveness across the board.

When the LFS returns here in February, they will hold another Pre-Ranger Course and conduct the Air Assault Course and Assault Gun Leader Course.

Officials say COVID-19 vaccine distribution rollout successful

By TERRI MOON CRONK
Defense.gov

WASHINGTON — COVID-19 vaccine shipments are being delivered to every site identified by public health jurisdictions in Operation Warp Speed's first wave of shipments this week, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex M. Azar told reporters Dec. 16.

And, Azar said, the FDA concluded Dec. 14 that the vaccine is 94.5% effective in reducing the incidence of COVID-19.

Vaccine confidence among people is surging, he said of the vaccination's safety and "extraordinary" effectiveness.

"We have a great deal of work in the coming months to get a vaccine to every American who wants one," the secretary said.

"But we're confident in our approach to using the health care providers and institutions like hospitals and pharmacies that do such a good job of providing tens of millions of vaccines to Americans every year.

"For next week, we have allocated another approximately two million doses of Pfizer's vaccine," he added.

If Moderna's vaccine is authorized by the Food and Drug Administration in the coming days, Azar noted, OWS will have allocated nearly 5.9-million doses of the vaccine.

Azar was joined by Army Gen. Gustavo F. Perna, chief operating officer of OWS; and Dr. Moncef Slaoui, chief advisor to

OWS, for the press briefing.

The secretary said OWS has supported two authorized antibody treatments, which can help prevent hospitalizations, and help patients at the highest risk for severe disease — those who are 65 and older and individuals who have other medical conditions that put them at risk for hospitalization because of COVID-19.

"If you test positive and you fit in those categories, please speak to your health care provider immediately because the best time to get those antibodies is not when you show up in the emergency room, but soon after being diagnosed with COVID," Azar said.

In the meantime, the FDA issued an emergency use authorization on Dec. 14 for the first fully at-home diagnostic test for COVID-19 that does not require a prescription, he said. The test will cost about \$30, and the company that makes it expects to be able to produce millions of the tests per month in the coming year.

"Even with the emergence of these new tools, we are not at the finish line yet, especially as we approach the holidays," the secretary cautioned.

"In the coming months, we've all got to continue taking steps to keep ourselves, our loved ones and our community safe."

He advocated what he called the three Ws: Wash your hands, watch your distance and wear



Army Spc. Angel Laureano holds a vial of the COVID-19 vaccine at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Bethesda, Md., Dec. 14.

LISA FERDINANDO/DOJ

face coverings when you can't watch your distance. The secretary also cautioned against going to overcrowded, indoor restaurants and bars, in addition to household gatherings with multiple families congregating.

"You think that because you know people, they can't be infected, you can't infect them; you're not symptomatic, and you're not going to infect them," Azar said.

"This is how the disease is spreading right now. This is what's leading to cases which are leading to hospitalizations and, tragically, leading to fatalities."

The onset of efficacy is very fast after immunization, Slaoui said.

"We should start to see an

impact in the high-risk populations that are being immunized as we speak," he said.

It took impressive and professional leadership and collaboration — from loading the trucks with the vaccine to getting the dosages to pharmacies and hospitals — to achieve success this week, Perna said.

"We're going to be at 886 additional locations in the United States, so there is a steady drumbeat cadence of (the) delivery of vaccines out to the American people," he said.

The following two million doses to be delivered will start again Monday Perna said.

"It's a constant flow of vaccine always expanding the distribution network in every state that we're really going for," he added.

ArMA

Continued from page 6

said. Soldiers who go from living in the barracks at Fort Polk to Army-managed Family housing in Germany would just need to update their information into the new system to use ArMA.

Specific maintenance request categories will exist for common repairs such as plumbing, electrical, broken glass and

more; but if a dedicated catalog item does not exist for a specific maintenance request, residents will be able to use the general interior or exterior request item, officials said.

A list of all of open maintenance requests will be available at the bottom of the homepage of the application for easy ref-

erence, according to Installation Management Command officials.

Users will be able to click a case number to view details about that particular maintenance request.

The site will also feature an activity text box to provide comments or inquiries between user

and DPW. Any comments or questions from DPW clerks will be visible just below the input text box.

Beginning Jan. 1, people who experience difficulties or have questions about the new system can send an email to support@armymaintenance.com.

Briefs

AAFES pet photo contest

Military shoppers at Fort Polk can show off their furry friends' "howl-iday" costumes for a chance to win \$3,000 in Exchange gift cards during the Army and Air Force Exchange Service's Holiday Pet Photo contest.

Until Dec. 31, shoppers can visit ShopMyExchange.com/sweepstakes to enter. Winners will be notified on or around Jan. 31.

SAMFE response

When in need, count on the Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital Sexual Assault Medical Forensic Examiners.

No appointment is necessary for a sexual assault forensic exam — just go to BJACH's emergency room. BJACH has SAMFEs available 24 hours per day, 365 days per year that will maintain your reporting option (restricted or unrestricted).

Services for minors (17 and younger) are available with BJACH's memorandum of understanding and agreement partner. Before heading to BJACH, the following course of action is recommended:

- Call the Sexual Harassment \ Assault Response and Prevention hot line at 531-1848.

- Head to the BJACH ER as soon as possible.

- If you can, avoid showering, eating, drinking, brushing your teeth, using the restroom or changing clothes.

New ACP, VCC hours

Due to the President's Executive Order making Christmas Eve, Dec. 24, a federal holiday, Fort Polk's access control points and the Visitors Control Center will adjust their hours of operation:

Thursday, Dec. 24 and Friday, Dec. 25

- ACP 1 (main gate), and ACP 7 (Alligator Lake) will be open 24 hours a day (to include all holidays) ACPs 2, 5, 6 and the Visitors Control Center will be closed.

- Saturday, Dec. 26, beginning at 5 a.m. all ACPs and the Visitors Control Center return to normal hours of operations for weekdays, weekends and federal holidays.



Stay safe this winter, utilize mitigation measures

DPTMS

FORT POLK, La. — As the temperature drops and the potential for COVID-19 rises, adhering to mitigation measures can lower the chance of spread.

Wearing face covering indoors is required in all on-post buildings (except personal residences) unless alone and outdoors if unable to maintain 6 feet physical distance.

- The Governor of Louisiana and the Centers for Disease Control recommend limiting social gatherings because of the high risk for COVID-19 spread

- Limit indoor gatherings/meetings to the space that physical distancing allows. Maximize virtual meetings when possible.

- Families should check their school's links for updates and plans for schooling posture (virtual/open/closed).

- Individual physical training will be conducted Jan. 4-10.

- All on post gyms, Forge Bar, Anvil Bar and the post theater will be closed from Jan. 4-10.

Facilities that are open:

- Child Development Centers/Child and Youth Services and school-age activities: No change.

- Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital and Dental clinics: No change.

- Commissary/PX/Shopette/Barber Shops, Library: Normal operating hours

- Restaurants, food courts, retail food establishments: Normal operating hours. Maximize use of take out dining.

- Faith-based activities: Normal operating hours. Maintain social distancing.

- Directorate of Family Morale, Wellness and Recreation activities at Alligator Lake and Toledo Bend: Normal operating hours.

- Air Traffic Control: Minimal manning.
- All units/directorates: Discretionary use of telework for the period Jan. 4-10.

Leave and travel:

- Within 24 hours of their return to Fort Polk, service members will report to their unit aid station for a medical screening. All service members will undergo a seven-day modified quarantine period.

If a Soldier is determined to be high-risk for COVID-19, they will receive a COVID-19 test and be placed on a 10-day quarantine period in bldg 240 or their assigned residence. This effort will be based on medical assessment or command led. If there is a positive-contact trace, the Soldier will be placed on a mandatory 14-day quarantine.

- Leaders will conduct follow up health checks with Soldiers during their seven-day, modified quarantine period, which is reportable through their respective chains of command.

- All tenant units: The Department of Defense's stop-move order was replaced by ALARACT 054-2020, which lists travel categories as exempt, waived, unrestricted and restricted based on installation status.

The Chief of Staff reviews all exceptions for restricted locations. The Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk is unrestricted. For further information, please review the below resources.

Vernon Parish School Board: www.vpsb.us.

Travel restrictions by installation: <https://media.defense.gov>.

Travel restrictions by state: www.nbc-news.com.

Official DoD travel guidance: www.fcgpentagon.mil/fcg.cfm.

Foreign travel guidance: www.cdc.gov.

Main Post Chapel children perform Christmas pageant



The Fort Polk Main Post Chapel hosted a children's Christmas Story pageant Dec. 12. Before the performance began parents helped their kids perfect their costumes.



The angel choir at the Main Post Chapel Christmas Story pageant, held Dec. 12, led the congregation in singing Christmas songs such as "Away in the Manger" and "Silent Night."

ANGIE THORNE/GUARDIAN



A shepherd and his sheep hear the good news from an angel on high at the Main Post Chapel Dec. 12.

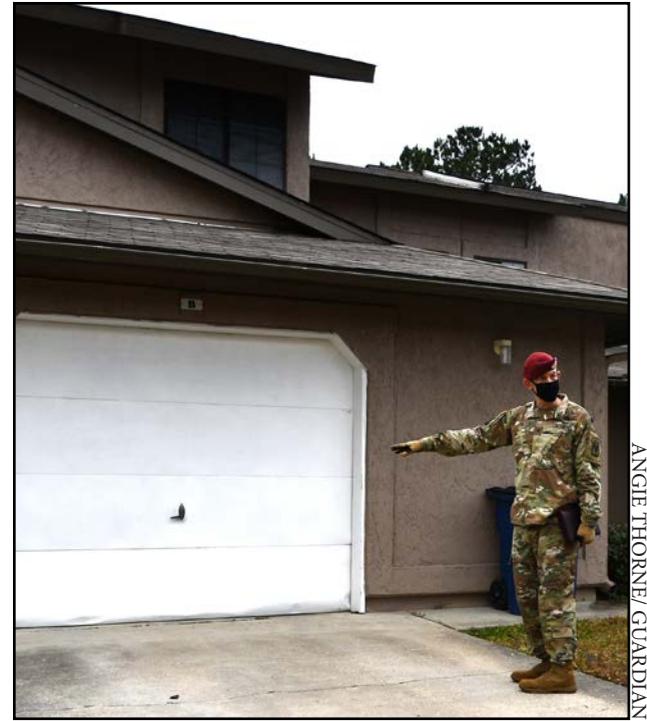


Mary and Joseph sit with baby Jesus under the star Dec. 12 during the performance of the Christmas Story pageant held at Fort Polk's Main Post Chapel.

Fort Polk command completes Maple Terrace Walking Town Hall



Brig. Gen. David S. Doyle, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk commanding general, center, leads a group of Fort Polk leadership and Corvias partners on the second of a series of Walking Town Halls, held Dec. 16 in the Maple Terrace neighborhood, to assess Fort Polk housing and talk to residents about how to make things better.



ANGIE THORNE/GUARDIAN

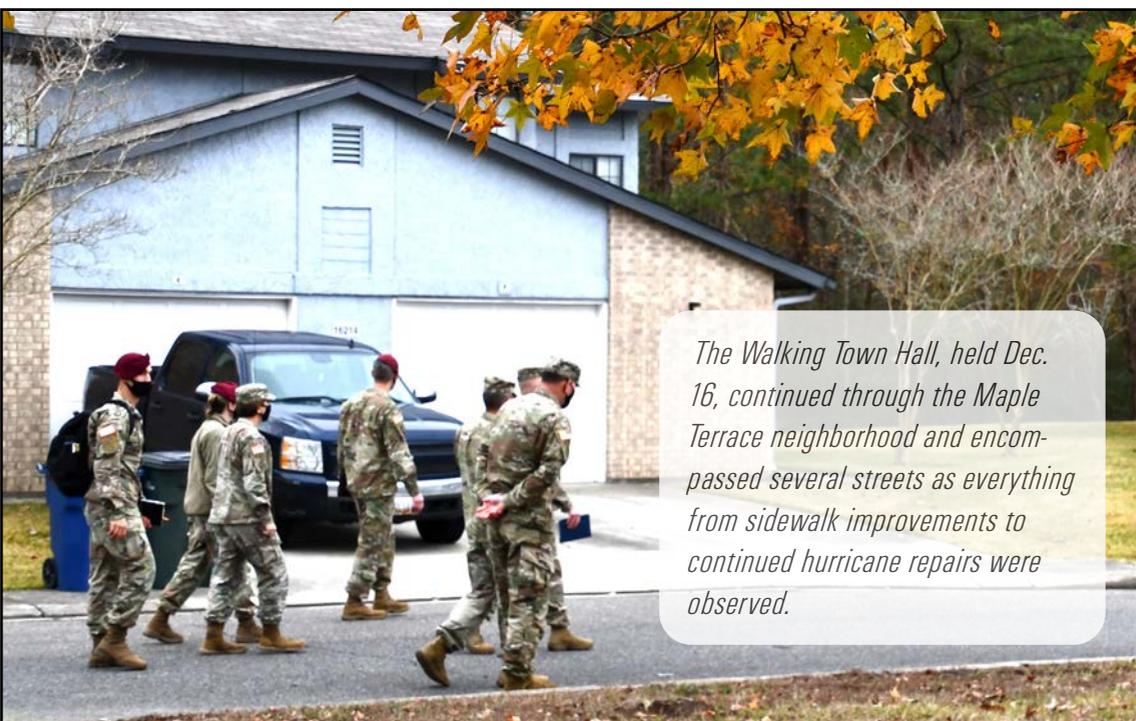
As Brig. Gen. David S. Doyle, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk commanding general, walked along the streets of Maple Terrace he would point out things he felt should be checked on and improved.



Julie Ross, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, stopped to talk to Brig. Gen. David S. Doyle, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk commanding general, during the Maple Terrace Walking Town Hall held Dec. 16. Ross said she was pleasantly surprised by Doyle's genuine concern as he asked about whether she or her neighbors had any issues with their homes.



Corvias representatives explain to Fort Polk leadership how they corrected a water leak at one of the Maple Terrace homes during the Walking Town Hall held Dec. 16.



The Walking Town Hall, held Dec. 16, continued through the Maple Terrace neighborhood and encompassed several streets as everything from sidewalk improvements to continued hurricane repairs were observed.



Rick Talmadge, center, is a Maple Terrace resident who stopped by the neighborhood community center to talk to Brig. Gen. David S. Doyle, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk commanding general, and Command Sgt. Maj. Michael C. Henry, post command sergeant major. Talmadge said he appreciated Doyle's active interest in making things better.

Fort Polk Safety Office offers holiday safety tips, practices

SAFETY OFFICE

FORT POLK, La. — Holiday safety is an issue that burns brightest from late November to mid-January, when Families gather, parties are scheduled and travel spikes. Take some basic precautions to ensure your Family remains safe and injury-free throughout the season.

Holiday travel

Many people choose to travel by car during the holidays, which has the highest fatality rate of any major form of transportation based on fatalities per passenger mile. In 2017, 329 people died on New Year's Day, 463 on Thanksgiving Day and 299 on Christmas Day, according to Injury Facts. Alcohol impairment was involved in about one-third of the fatalities. To stay safe on the roads over the holidays and every day:

- Prepare your car for winter and keep an emergency preparedness kit with you.
- Get a good night's sleep before departing — avoid drowsy driving.
- Leave early, planning ahead for heavy traffic.
- Make sure every person in the vehicle is properly buckled up.
- Put cellphones away; many distractions occur while driving, but cellphones are the main culprit.
- Practice defensive driving.
- Designate a sober driver to ensure guests make it home safely after a holiday party.

Decorate safely

When decorating, follow these tips from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission:

- Keep potentially poisonous plants — mistletoe, holly berries, Jerusalem cherry and amaryllis — away from children.
- If using an artificial tree, check that it is labeled "fire resistant."
- If using a live tree, cut off about 2 inches of the trunk to

expose fresh wood for better water absorption. Remember to water your tree and remove it from your home when it is dry.

- Place your tree at least 3 feet away from fireplaces, radiators and other heat sources, making certain not to block doorways.
- Avoid placing breakable ornaments or ones with small, detachable parts on lower tree branches where small children can reach them.
- Only use indoor lights indoors and outdoor lights outdoors, and choose the right ladder for the task when hanging lights.
- Replace light sets that have broken or cracked sockets; frayed or bare wires; or loose connections.

• Follow the package directions on the number of light sets that can be plugged into one socket.

- Never nail, tack or use stressed wiring when hanging lights and keep plugs off the ground and away from puddles and snow.
- Turn off all lights and decorations when you go to bed or leave the house.

Candles and fireplaces

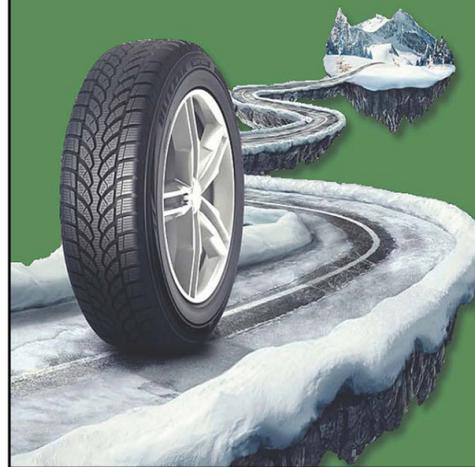
The use of candles and fireplaces, combined with an increase in the amount of combustible, seasonal decorations in many homes during the holidays, means more risk for fire. The National Fire Protection Association reports that one-third of home decoration fires were started by candles and that two of every five decoration fires happen because the decorations were placed too close to a heat source.

- Place candles where they cannot be knocked down or blown over and out of reach of children.
- Keep matches and lighters up high and out of reach of children.
- Use flameless, rather than lighted, candles near flammable objects.

SAFETY CORNER

HOLIDAY TRAVEL – Road Trip Safety Tips

✓ GIVE YOURSELF EXTRA TIME!



- ✓ CHECK TIRES – Be sure your tires have good tread, are properly inflated and don't forget to check your spare
- ✓ STAY ALERT – Always be aware, drive sober and buckle up
- ✓ STOCK UP – Keep blankets, ice scrapers, emergency flares, flashlights and jumper cables handy
- ✓ SERVICE YOUR CAR – Have your vehicle checked thoroughly before long road trips
- ✓ PLAN AHEAD – Check weather, traffic and road conditions before you leave the house

- Don't burn trees, wreaths or wrapping paper in the fireplace.
- Use a screen on the fireplace at all times when a fire is burning.
- Never leave candles or fireplaces burning unattended or when you are asleep.
- Check and clean the chimney and fireplace area at least once a year.

Turkey fryers

Be alert to the dangers if you're thinking of celebrating the holidays by frying a turkey. The Consumer Product Safety Commission reports there have been 154 turkey fryer related fires, burns or other injuries since 2004, and \$5.2 million in property damage losses have resulted from these incidents.

The NSC discourages the use of turkey fryers at home and urges those who prefer fried turkey to seek out professional establishments or consider using an oilless turkey fryer. If you must fry your own turkey, follow all U.S. Fire Administration turkey fryer guidelines.

Food poisoning is no joke

The foodsafety.gov website from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provides some valuable holiday food safety tips:

- Wash your hands frequently when handling food.

• Keep raw meat away from fresh produce.

- Use separate cutting boards, plates and utensils for uncooked and cooked meats to avoid cross-contamination.
- Use a food thermometer to make sure meat is cooked to a safe temperature.
- Refrigerate hot or cold leftover food within two hours of being served.

• Holiday leftovers are safe for three to four days when properly refrigerated.

It's better to give safely

Avoid safety hazards while gifting with these tips from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission:

- Choose toys for children under 3 that do not have small parts that could be choking hazards.
- For children under 10, avoid toys that must be plugged into an electrical outlet.
- Be cautious about toys that have button batteries or magnets, which can be harmful or fatal if swallowed.
- When giving scooters and other riding toys, give the gift of appropriate safety gear too.

To find out about holiday toy safety and recalls, check the [U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission website](http://www.uscpa.gov).

BOSS
BETTER OFF STAYING SOBER
CAMPAIGN

SINGLE SOLDIERS AGAINST DRUNK DRIVING (SADD)

IF A SOLDIER NEEDS A RIDE
CALL BOSS
WE WILL GET THEM A RIDE
BE SAFE
DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE

337-531-1948



COMMISSARY HOLIDAY HOURS

Dec. 21: 9:30 a.m. - 8 p.m.
 Dec. 24: 9:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
 Dec. 25: CLOSED
 Dec. 31: 9:30 a.m. - 8 p.m.
 Jan. 1: CLOSED



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 ON INSTAGRAM AND TWITTER

**GET
 CONNECTED**

Twitter: @FortPolkPAO
 Instagram: jrtc_and_fort_polk

Trees for Troops brought holiday spirit to Fort Polk Soldiers, Families

By **BELLA ARCAND**
 MWR illustrator

FORT POLK, La. — Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk Soldiers and their Families were gifted with live Christmas trees on Dec. 11 at an event sponsored by the Trees for Troops Foundation and FedEx.

“Trees for Troops is a true blessing for Soldiers and their Families,” said Wayne Bardell, Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation director.

“We are honored to be a part of this program. The Christmas Spirit Foundation and FedEx spared no effort to deliver Christmas trees and holiday spirit to the installation — this generosity deserves a special

recognition.”

Picking a live Christmas tree is a tradition that, for many, makes the holiday — it would be unimaginable for some Families to skip this step.

For this reason, Fort Polk has worked with the Trees for Troops Foundation for more than 10 years, ensuring that every Family gets to celebrate the holidays with the perfect tree.

“My family truly appreciated getting our first real tree this year from Trees for Troops. When we got home with our new tree, we spent the afternoon creating homemade ornaments to decorate it,” said Nicole G. Lipe. “Every time the kids walk by the tree, they talk

Please see **Trees**, page 14



Nicole G. Lipe and her kids stand with their new Christmas tree Dec. 11 at Fort Polk's Trees for Troops event sponsored by the Trees for Troops Foundation and FedEx.

BELLA ARCAND/DENVER

KLUBS AND KARTS

MINI GOLF

WITH

SANTA

FREE
(AGES 14 & UNDER)

DEC 20

1PM - 3PM

CALL 337-531-5481
FOR MORE INFO





Cookies & Canvases

Arts & Crafts Center
January 16
10am - 1pm

\$25 per participant
Ages 3+

Painting supplies, cookies & hot chocolate will be provided



Register by Jan 7 at Arts & Crafts or
Call 337-531-1980

Trees

Continued from page 13

about how much they love their 'troop tree.' I love that Trees for Troops started a new tradition for our Family."

The DFMWR Marketing and Special Events staff welcomed and assisted Families with their tree of choice and provided refreshments.

The Trees for Troops program delivers free trees for service members; and perhaps, it helps instill the Christmas spirit, taking care of Soldiers and Families who've fallen into financial hardship or cannot afford a live or artificial Christmas tree.

Trees for Troops began in 2005, shortly after the Christmas Spirit foundation came into existence, and partnered with FedEx to deliver free Christmas

trees to military installations nationwide.

The idea of donating trees to military personnel started in the 1990s when Christmas tree farms sent trees to Soldiers overseas. However, the concept of a no-cost Christmas tree for Soldiers and Families was founded when the National Christmas Tree Association formed the Christmas Spirit Foundation.

This organization had the desire to promote the Christmas spirit all year. Since then, Christmas tree farmers have donated trees to support the foundation.

For more information about the Christmas Spirit Foundation or to become a donor, visit christmasspiritfoundation.org.



Directorate of Family Morale, Wellness and Recreation's staff unload Christmas trees from a FedEx truck for Fort Polk's Trees for Troops event Dec. 11.