



FORGING THE

WARRIOR SPIRIT

THE JRTC & FORT POLK GUARDIAN

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Home of Heroes @ Fort Polk, LA

March 27, 2020



CHUCK CANNON / GUARDIAN

Fort Polk goes HPCON Charlie

Below: Spc. Balance and Cpl. Pina conduct preventive maintenance checks and services on their patrol vehicle before starting shift. Military policemen are mission essential to installation operations as their checks at the post's gates are the first line of defense and provide heightened security. For HPCON Charlie guidelines see page 3 of today's Guardian.



SFC. RUSSEL J. DIMAL / JRTC-HQS

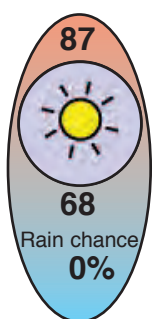


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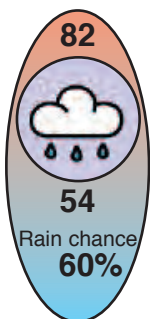
Above left: A Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital Soldier serves a patient at the drive-thru pharmacy. For patients who only have to pick up medications, this reduces personnel traffic in and out of the hospital mitigating the risk for potential COVID-19 transmittance.

Left: BJACH's drive-thru screening for COVID-19 serves to keep those who might be infected with the virus separate from healthy Soldiers, Family members and retirees. In addition to MPs, medical personnel are also vital mission essential members of the Fort Polk team.

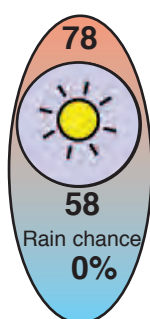
Weekend weather



Friday



Saturday



Sunday

Inside the Guardian

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Viewpoint

In our view

Guardian staff asked the Fort Polk community, "What do you like most and least about telework?" Here are their responses:



Stacey Delgado, Employment Readiness program manager, Army Community Service: "What I like most is that I can be with my fur babies all day. The thing I really dislike is that I am an extrovert and I like talking to people. This is going to be a challenge unless people start calling me. My office line (337-531-6922) is transferred and I'm available Monday - Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m."



Shelby Waryas, chief, Marketing and Special Events, DFMWR: "I love my new staff meetings and coworkers, but what I miss most is my garrison teammates and doing awesome Movie Nights and other MWR events for Soldiers and Families!"



Maj. John Ferrell, executive officer, 519 Military Police Battalion: "My favorite part about telework is that I finally have an office with a view, but with a wife and six kids, I'm by far the lowest ranking person in my home office." "



Cleophus Graves, patrol branch Chief, Directorate of Emergency Services: "The best part of teleworking is having my four legged coworker here with me, however, with my son out of school and wife teleworking also, I've been banished to my camper for a quiet and private place to work."



Nicolas Batista, JRTC G3 Plans Officer: "I enjoy the calmness and comfort, wearing what I want and espresso anytime, but the things I like least are the lack of access to the X drive and a fear of the wife's "honey do list."



Jonathan Hirsch, administrative law attorney, Office of the Staff Judge Advocate: "What I like most is the short commute and the ability to focus on my work without interruptions works well for me. What I like least is the lack of interaction with my coworkers and increased communication difficulties."



Julie Fitzgerald, human resource specialist, (labor management employee relations), Civilian Personnel Assistance Center (CPAC) : "I think the thing I like most about telework is that I don't have to commute, so I can use less fuel and energy. There's less electricity used by the government. I have an hour and a half more time in the day. I think the thing I like least is that I miss my coworkers."



Guardian

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Briefs

HPCON C guidelines

The Army has raised the Health Protection Condition level to Charlie with additional HPCON Delta measures across all installations to align with the National Capital Region to maintain operational readiness and protect the force.

Under HPCON Charlie installations will limit access to essential personnel and limit the numbers of access points. Unit personnel are expected to follow all social distancing guidance to continue protecting their force. HPCON Delta, Soldiers are expected to remain at home for extended periods of time as movement in the community may be restricted.

For the Soldiers, civilians, retirees and Family members who call Fort Polk home the following applies:

- Commanders have been directed to be in a mission essential personnel posture, to include the following: Commanders, senior enlisted leaders, critical staff members, platoon sergeants and squad leaders. Other individuals include medical personnel, logisticians, clean teams (on recall), MPs and Directorate of Emergency Services officers and aviators.

The commanding general expects three contact points per day per Soldier. One contact point must be face-to-face. The other two may be done via text, telephone or facetime.

- Soldier will continue to do daily physical training.

- The Louisiana governor's stay-at-home order remains in force. Social distancing should be maintained and individuals should only leave home for essential needs.

- Drive through screening (9 a.m.-3 p.m.) and drive through pharmacy (8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.) will continue.

- The school lunch program has been discontinued. Schools plan to reopen April 20.

- Individuals are being quarantined to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and allow time to get tests back.

- Always call first before entering a health facility.

- More than half of the garrison is teleworking to help in preventing the spread of COVID-19.

- The tax center is closed as taxes are no longer due April 15. The new due date is tentatively scheduled for July.

- Access control points will continue on the current schedule.

As on noon March 26 there were 2,305 cases of COVID-19 reported in Louisiana, with 83 deaths. The majority of the cases continue to be centered near New Orleans, Baton Rouge and Shreveport.



Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, commander, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, passes the installation's colors to incoming JRTC and Fort Polk Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Henry as outgoing Command Sgt. Maj. David Bass looks on during a change of responsibility ceremony March 20 at Fort Polk's Warrior Center.

Henry takes reins as Fort Polk's top NCO

By **CHUCK CANNON**

Command information officer

FORT POLK, La. — The Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk bid farewell to Command Sgt. Maj. David Bass and welcomed Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Henry during a change of responsibility ceremony March 20 in the Warrior Community Center.

Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, commander, JRTC and Fort Polk, was guest speaker for the ceremony, which was limited to the Families of the Soldiers being recognized due to concerns over the COVID-19 virus. The event was live-streamed on the installation Facebook page.

Frank thanked Bass for his service and welcomed Henry to the JRTC and Fort Polk Family. After Frank's remarks, Bass took the podium and

thanked those who made his assignment a success, including Family, friends and fellow Soldiers. As he spoke about his battle buddy and commander, Bass said Frank did three things NCOs need from the officer corps to be successful.

"He trusted me, he empowered me, and the one thing that really changes the dynamic — that many will never admit to because it sometimes doesn't feel good — is he held me accountable," Bass said. "Thank you, sir, for your leadership and your unwavering and relentless love for Soldiers and Families."

Bass reminded those listening that when he was chosen as JRTC and Fort command sergeant major, he told everyone he did not come to the

Please see **CoR**, page 6

Soldiers can now apply for AER assistance electronically

By DEVON SUITS

Army News Service

WASHINGTON — The Army Emergency Relief program has implemented changes to assist Soldiers and Families impacted by the spread of COVID-19.

The new guidelines ensure Soldiers and Families can process assistance applications on time, while under quarantine or observing limited face-to-face interaction, said retired Command Sgt. Maj. Charles Durr Jr., chief of assistance.

Soldiers and Families must first inform their chain of command of their current financial hardship. They will then need to fill out an AER application and supporting documentation and route it up to their chain of command for approval.

Any documents containing personally identifiable information must be transmitted securely, officials said. Soldiers and Families can request a SERV-U link from an AER officer to safely transfer their application, or use the Department of Defense Safe website (<https://safe.apps.mil/>). The electronic request for assistance must include:

- AER Form 101, Application for Financial Assistance
- AER Form 57, AER Budget Planning Sheet
- AER Form 575, AER Electronic Funds Transfer Authorization
- Supporting documents validating financial need


Once a Soldier's chain of command has approved an application, it must be sent to an AER official for final review.

"The AER special assistance application processing guidelines have been well received by unit leadership," Durr said.

Unit leadership has "been effectively processing assistance cases electronically via secure portal transmission, and Headquarters AER has been electronically depositing funds into Soldier's bank accounts successfully," he added.

As of March 20, AER has processed 14 cases totaling more than \$15,000, Durr said.

Out of the total number, four cases supported personnel under quarantine, five provided financial assistance due to loss of pay, and five aided personnel impacted by the recent travel ban.



HOW TO REQUEST AER ASSISTANCE DURING COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

Soldiers and Families who have been exposed to COVID-19 and are restricted should follow the steps below to request AER assistance:

- 1. Inform Company Commander/First Sergeant of valid financial need**
- 2. Electronically forward AER application and supporting documentation to unit COC**
- 3. After the review, forward the necessary documents to the local AER section for evaluation**

If you require additional guidance during non-business hours please contact an AER HQ caseworker through the Army Operations Center at 703-697-0218

ARMY NEWS SERVICE

"After 34-years of service, I have seen the benefits of the AER program to our Soldiers," said Army Vice Chief Staff Gen. Joseph M. Martin. "I encourage leaders to educate themselves about the program and join the campaign by sharing what they learned about the benefits of AER and invite their Soldiers to voluntarily join the legacy of Soldiers helping Soldiers."

Travel ban, PCS stop movement

Soldiers impacted by the recent Department of Defense stop movement order — which has halted the majority of permanent change-of-station moves — can also request AER financial assistance.

Some Soldiers and Families have already shipped their household goods and vehicles, but the travel ban is preventing them from accessing their next duty location, Durr said.

AER can help fund the basic necessities Soldiers and families will need to get through this challenging time, he added.

Soldiers who aren't under any travel restrictions can visit their closest AER office for sup-

port. Those who cannot visit should follow the same steps to submit an electronic request for assistance. On Fort Polk call 531-1957/1958.

Non-Title 10 Reserve, Guard

To provide support to Soldiers impacted by COVID-19, AER will allow non-Title 10 National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers affected by the virus or travel ban to request assistance, officials said.

Applicants will be considered on a case-by-case basis, for extreme hardship.

Under normal conditions, active-duty Soldiers and their dependents, along with Reserve and Guard Soldiers activated on Title 10 orders for more than 30 days and their dependents, are qualified for AER assistance, officials said.

Non-Title 10 personnel must securely transmit their AER request and supporting documentation to a field grade officer or command sergeant major within their chain of command. The Soldier must then send the application to AER headquarters at assistance@aerhq.org for final approval.

Army provides medical facilities to support COVID-19 efforts

U.S. ARMY PUBLIC AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON — As more people are exposed to COVID-19, the Army is preparing to provide medical support and hospital capacity to help states and other national agencies contain the virus and protect the nation.

Moving on the orders of Secretary of the Army Ryan McCarthy, the Army recently issued deployment orders to the 531st Hospital from Fort Campbell, Kentucky, the 627th Hospital from Fort Carson, Colorado, and the 9th Hospital from Fort Hood, Texas, to deploy to New York and Washington state.

"Army health care professionals are adequately equipped with first-rate training, equipment and technology in order to deal with emergent health issues," McCarthy said. "Protecting the health of the force and the American people are our top priorities."

Army hospitals are expeditionary facilities with full hospital capability. Each hospital has intensive-care-unit beds and intermediate-care beds. In addition, Army hospitals have operating rooms, an emergency department, X-ray facilities and pharmacy.

Although they are designed to serve as trauma hospitals, they have the capability to function as

full-service hospitals for every patient type.

Army hospital staffs can provide routine and emergency medical support to community medical staffs, allowing them to focus their resources and efforts on detecting and treating patients believed to have been exposed to COVID-19.

This response is part of the whole-of-nation approach to fighting COVID-19. The Army is working with interagency partners — including the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Department of Defense Military Health System and others — to support and protect the military force and the American people.

Telework: Fort Polk employees stay-home, stay healthy

By **JEAN CLAVETTE GRAVES**

Public Affairs Specialist

FORT POLK, La. – COVID-19 has forced me to get out of my comfort zone as a public affairs specialist.

Normally I'm focused on community relations, coordinating Soldier support for off-post events or activities and conducting tours for organizations interested in learning more about the U.S. Army and the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk mission. With all community activities cancelled or postponed, I've been teleworking, taking photos, interviewing Soldiers and Family members for Polk People (see page 2) and learning about different aspects of my career field in public affairs.

As an extreme extrovert, I've learned that I miss community engagements and meeting face-to-face with people in the surrounding towns and parishes.

I prefer to be surrounded by people than being alone in my office. But I encourage everyone to stay safe, healthy and distance themselves, so we can get back to normal sooner rather than later.

As state and local governments across the country begin stay-at-home orders for non mission essential personnel, more and more people are taking advantage of telework opportunities in order to stay productive and safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Office of Personnel management has encouraged agencies across the federal government to accommodate telework for employees wherever possible. Fort Polk has taken this seriously.

Agencies across the installation have implanted telework schedules for their employees to help accommodate social distancing, adhere to government guidance to stay home and promote the health and safety of the work force.

What is telework?

According to the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010, telework is an arrangement that allows an employee to perform work, during any part of regular, paid hours, at an approved alternative worksite.

It is an important tool for achieving a resilient and results-oriented workforce. At its core, telework is people doing their work at locations different from where they would normally be doing it. This makes sense when you consider "tele" comes from the Greek word meaning "from a distance" — when combined with work it means work from a distance.

In preparation for telework, civilian employees and Soldiers took telework training, established a telework schedule, created a telework agreement with their supervisors and coordinated with the information technology department to ensure they had the technical capability to work from home.

Some employees are solely teleworking during the current public health emergency

and some are working from home on certain days based on their organizational mission and requirements.

OPM has established **telework.gov** as the official website for the federal government's telework program. This site has tools, training and a frequently asked questions section to assist.

Contractors and other personnel should visit their company's website and talk to their supervisor to determine if telework is authorized, approved and appropriate for their current position.

The outbreak of COVID-19 has more and more people working from home, PC Magazine recently published 20 tips for working from home. Here are a few of them and how they apply to Fort Polk personnel:

- Maintain regular hours and create a morning routine: Get up, get dressed and get to work during the same hours you would if you were going into the office to work.
- While working in pajamas, bathrobe and slippers may sound appealing, it may be a bad strategy for a productive work day. Continue a normal morning routine, exercise, shower, have coffee and prepare for the day as if you were heading to the office.
- Set ground rules with people in your space: With Louisiana's schools shut down and a stay-at-home order in place, this is especially important.
- Find a place with limited distractions to conduct your duties. If there are two adults teleworking with children in the home, adjust your schedules and divide the child rearing and domestic responsibilities. One adult could work the day and one the swing shift.
- Schedule breaks and take them in their entirety: Take a lunch break and periodic

breaks throughout the day. For most employees on Fort Polk, a 30-minute lunch break with two 15-minute

breaks is the norm — take those breaks.

- Don't short change yourself; step away from your work space and the computer screen for the full duration of your break. Walk your dog, get some fresh air, stretch, do yoga, empty your dishwasher, just do something non-work related during your break.
- Keep a dedicated office space: In a perfect world everyone will have a home office, but in reality that may not be the case. If the kitchen table is your telework location, make sure your Family understands that while you are there with your laptop plugged in it is your office and to respect your space.
- Use a virtual private network: Use a VPN to connect to your official network. Most civilian employees had VPN established through the network enterprise system ahead of the COVID-19 crisis knowing working from home might become a reality.
- Socialize with colleagues: Loneliness, disconnectedness and isolation are common problems for remote work life, especially for extroverts. Email, text, call and instant message your work friends and colleagues to stay



Jean Clavette Graves

connected and less isolated.

- Look for training opportunities: There are a lot of training opportunities for Soldiers and civilian employees. Some are mandatory and some optional.
- During the normal duty day schedules and priorities can become so packed these training opportunities are often neglected.
- While working from home without the normal distractions associated with the office, employees have the perfect opportunity to catch up on mandatory training and get ahead on professional development opportunities.
- Over communicate: Keep your boss and everyone who needs to know informed about your schedule and availability often.
- When you finish a project or an important task say so. Anyone who has worked for the Army knows what a situational report or SITREP is — do one regularly so your supervisor knows what you are doing.
- Take advantage of the perks: Without commute times, telework employees have more time to do tasks at home they may not normally have time for.
- Make more homemade meals, do a load of laundry during your breaks, finish weekend chores throughout the week to allow yourself more time on the weekends to do what you really enjoy.
- End your day with a routine: Just as you started the day with a routine, end it with one. Shut down your computer and set clear boundaries for yourself that the work day is complete.

Working from home is the best way to continue to be productive in support of the JRTC and Fort Polk mission while adhering to social distancing measures and stay-at-home guidance.

By implementing a telework schedule across the installation, civilian employees, contractors and non-essential personnel will help keep our community healthy and support readiness for active duty personnel stationed here.

Commentary

Frank welcomes Henry, bids adieu to battle buddy Bass

By Brig. Gen. PATRICK D. FRANK

Commander, JRTC and Fort Polk

Editor's note: What follows are the remarks made by Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, commander, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, at the change of responsibility ceremony March 20 for outgoing Command Sgt. Maj. David Bass and incoming Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Henry. The ceremony was streamed live on Facebook to maintain social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

FORT POLK, La. — All the Way. Good morning to two exceptional Army Families — the Bases and the Henrys. Despite not having a traditional change of responsibility ceremony and being surrounded by Family, friends, and hundreds of Soldiers and leaders — know that the entire Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk team is watching this ceremony online right now as we say farewell to CSM and Misty Bass and welcome to CSM and Heather Henry.

Sergeant Major of the Army (retired) Gates, on-line our local Mayors — Mayors Allen, Lewing, Hardy, Standifer and Clanton — thank you for the friendship you have built with the Bases and for the warm welcome that you have provided to the Henrys. To our commanders and command sergeants major, we appreciate you observing this time honored Army tradition of the change of responsibility between two experienced, combat tested senior noncommissioned officers — CSM Bass and CSM Henry.

CSM Bass has been stationed at JRTC and Fort Polk for just over 4-years; first as the Operations Group CSM — focused on building collec-

tive readiness for our Army's Infantry Brigade Combat Teams in the JRTC Box; to be followed by just over 2 years of service as the Installation CSM. The Bases are well known across the Fort Polk as "Team Bass" — that includes Misty and the five Bass children: Dillon, Daisy, Demi, Drew and Dawson. Misty, thank you for all that you have done for Soldiers and our Families — in your job within the Vernon Parish School District, you have assisted the children of our Army Families in developing reading comprehension skills.

CSM Bass is legendary for his one-liner "Go to Ranger School." First, it is excellent advice; secondly it reflects CSM Bass' two areas of focus — leader development and building Army readiness.

CSM Bass took the essence of being an Observer Coach Trainer in the Box and applied this method to his development of junior leaders across Fort Polk.

From the newest corporals in 3/10 MTN, to the sergeants on a bulldozer in

46th EN, to an MP Platoon Sergeant on the SWB Mission, to a Squad Leader establishing the 32 HC Field Hospital in the Box, or the SGT crew chief on our famous Cajun Dustoff MEDEVAC company, CSM Bass mentored the next generation of Army leaders through his personal daily Blue Book example of the non-commissioned officer leader.

CSM Bass built readiness for our Army through his professional coaching of BCT in the Box — from the Brigade CSM to Team Leaders — he shared his years of experience in a manner that created positive momentum for the unit and the leader that he was engaging; this type of success leads to victories on the JRTC battlefield — Geronimo



Battle buddies reminisce

CHUCK CANNON / GUARDIAN

did not always appreciate that, but the BCT recognized the lessons learned they had been provided by CSM Bass — and our Army enhances its combat readiness.

Leaders across the Army are in dialogue on the optimal position to assign CSM Bass; his four years at JRTC and Fort Polk are a doctorate in Warfighting — the Army will leverage your exceptional skill sets in a position of increased responsibility. CSM it was our honor to serve alongside of you — All the Way!

CSM Henry and his spouse Heather are here from the Sergeant Major's Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas, where CSM Henry had the relentless position as the deputy commandant of the Academy. Heather and CSM Henry have two grown and successful children — James and Sarah. Heather is a self-employed home based business owner. Welcome Heather — your example has already inspired spouses to seize opportunity and establish a home based business.

As an Infantryman, CSM Henry has served in outstanding formations — from the 82nd Airborne Division, to the 75th Ranger Regiment, to the 10th Mountain Division and the 173rd Airborne Brigade, he has

multiple combat tours and is the warfighter that will seize upon the motto "Forging the Warrior Spirit."

CSM Henry excelled at the Sergeants Major Academy in refining the organizational structure of that historic institution — he will provide us with the same critical eye and professional architect's vision as Fort Polk expands on the Quality of Life initiative; this program has the potential to dramatically reshape the Soldier and Army Family perceptions of life at Fort Polk — CSM Henry is the right senior NCO leader to join the team during this monumental effort. Heather and CSM, welcome to JRTC and Fort Polk — the entire team that is watching on-line is excited to meet you, learn from you, and serve with you.

To the Soldiers, Army Families, DA Civilians and Contractors at JRTC and Fort Polk, today you have witnessed a unique change of responsibility — an on-line ceremony — the enduring aspect of this Army tradition is the dynamic strength and professionalism of the U.S. Army Noncommissioned Officer Corps represented in these two outstanding command sergeants major.

All the way!

Forging the Warrior Spirit!

CoR

Continued from page 3

position to make friends.

"As we depart for whatever the Army has next, I still have no friends: Misty and I just have more Family.

"If you are a Soldier, then go to that school I promised not to talk about (Ranger School). Remember, I love you and do not hesitate to call me if you need me."

Henry was next to speak and after thanking his Family and those who selected him for his position, he said he looked forward to his role in enabling FORSCOM units to build readiness in support of global missions, while at the same

time facilitating a high quality of life for Soldiers and Families.

"Know that I am committed to the men and women of this command and their Families every day, giving you my best," Henry said. "I will effectively translate guidance and priorities from our headquarters and higher headquarters to our formations.

Henry said he would provide recommendations to Frank while making a concentrated effort to communicate, collaborate and coordinate with major subordinate commands through their commanders, command ser-

geants majors, sergeant major, the JRTC and Fort Polk staff and the installation's Families.

"I ask that we strive to be leaders of character, lead by example, have moral courage, take initiative in the absence of orders, care for our Soldiers and their Families, build readiness, face challenges with confidence, and do the right things at the right time for the right reasons, regardless of the consequences," he said.

Editor's note: For the comments of Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, commander, JRTC and Fort Polk, made during the change of responsibility ceremony, see the commentary on this page.

Isolation, quarantine orders explained by SJA

By Maj. NORBERTO O. DALUZ
OSJA

FORT POLK, La. — Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, commander, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, has signed a number of orders authorizing subordinate commanders to restrict the movement of individuals on Fort Polk in order to “flatten the curve” of the Coronavirus on the installation. These orders, which were effective March 19, cover three specific categories: Servicemembers, civilians living on the installation and civilians affiliated with the installation but living off the installation.

Commanders at all levels, supervisors of civilian personnel, or medical personnel, such as those working at Fort Polk’s screening site, clinic or hospital, will determine if a person has come into contact with someone who is presumptive positive or has been to a location believed to be at a heightened risk for COVID-19. If that authority determines the risk of the individual spreading COVID-19 to others on the installation is present, that authority is empowered to order the individual into quarantine or bar that person from post for 14 days.

An additional set of orders, signed on March 23, gives these same authorities the power to isolate service members (regardless of location of residence) or civilians residing on the installation who have tested positive for COVID-19. A third order allows a commander, supervisor or medical personnel to bar civilians that live off-post who have tested positive for COVID-19.

Unique to this second set of orders is the authority to order service members or civilians residing on the installation to isolate at a particular location as determined by the commander. This provision is necessary for those patients who test positive, show symptoms and, in the opinion of medical providers, represent a threat to themselves or the community if not isolated in a designated facility. Additionally, only the commanding general or his designee can release an individual from isolation.

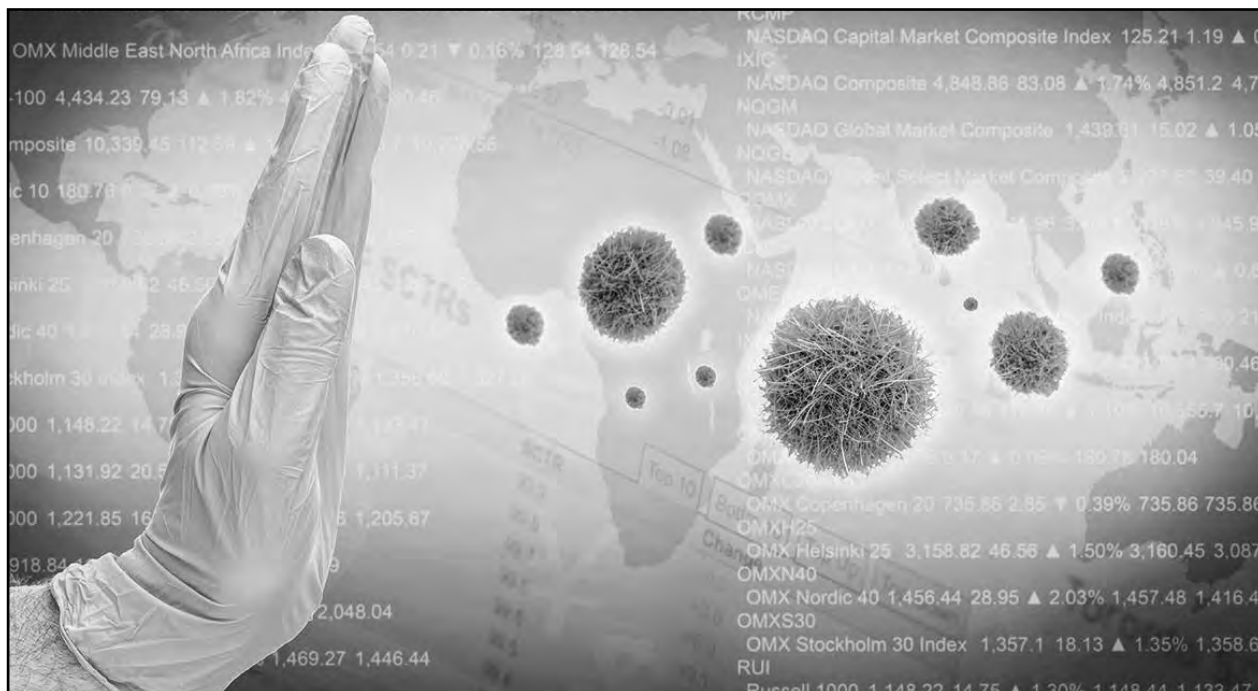
All orders contain a notice that a failure to obey the quarantine, isolation or temporary ban order is punishable either under the Uniform Code of Military Justice; Title 18, United States Code (USC), section 1382 (trespass); /or Title 42, USC section 271 (breach of quarantine).

Below is a quick question and answer for Soldiers and civilians to better understand the left and right limits of the quarantine and temporary ban orders currently in effect.

Q. Is it true that the commanding general issued three separate memos that cover quarantine? What are the differences?

A. On March 19, the commanding general, in consultation with the Staff Judge Advocate, signed three orders granting commanders on Fort Polk authority to quarantine individuals (Soldiers, dependents or civilians) residing on Fort Polk or temporarily ban individuals who reside off-post. Memorandum No. 1 applies to Fort Polk Soldiers. The order specifically notes that the order is punitive under Article 84, UCMJ. The order also contains guidance for Soldiers who are quarantined and require medical attention.

Memorandum No. 2 applies to civilians who live on Fort Polk (such as civilians who work on Fort Polk, retirees living on Fort Polk, or Soldier dependents). Memorandum No. 3 applies to civilians who work on Fort Polk but live off-post.



If issued, this order temporarily bans a civilian from Fort Polk for 14 days because they are presumptive positive, suspected of having traveled to a location where COVID-19 is present, or may have come into contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19. Contained in the order is language that directs the civilian to temporarily quarantine him or herself. When a commander quarantines a Soldier, dependent or civilian living on-post or temporarily bans a civilian living off-post, the commander is doing so under the commanding general’s inherent authority to protect the force and defend the installation from threats, including those of a biological nature.

Q. Can my husband’s commander order my Soldier, me or our Family into quarantine or isolation?

A. Yes: When a unit commander identifies someone suspected of having come into contact with someone who is presumptive positive for COVID-19 or who has traveled to a location such as Korea, Italy, New Orleans, Houston, Seattle, New York) with COVID-19 cases, or is exhibiting symptoms consistent with COVID-19, that commander has the authority to order the individual into quarantine. If the individual has tested positive for COVID-19, the commander will order the Soldier or civilian into isolation. This applies to dependents who reside on-post or a civilian who may not be a dependent but resides on Fort Polk. In the case of a civilian living off-post, the commander has the authority to temporarily bar them from post for 14 days using the temporary ban order. Only the commanding general or his designee has the authority to release someone from isolation.

Q. How do these quarantine orders work? How does a commander place someone at Fort Polk into quarantine?

A. When a commander, based on experience, judgment, intuition or medical advice, believes there is risk that an individual may spread COVID-19, the commander must take action. In making the decision to quarantine or temporarily ban an individual, the commander will make a risk assessment balancing the welfare of the community against the rights of the individual(s) concerned. The intent behind the quarantine orders is to protect the Fort Polk community from infection by temporarily taking out of circulation individuals who may be carriers of the virus be-

cause they have: Come into contact with infected individuals; traveled to areas with known cases of COVID-19 (such as South Korea, Italy, New York.); or may be exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 (such as dry cough, fever over 100.4, lethargy, breathlessness, difficulty breathing) but have not been officially diagnosed by a medical provider.

Q. What happens if I am a civilian, but not a dependent, who lives on Fort Polk?

A. A commander is granted the same authority to quarantine a civilian who is not a dependent but lives on Fort Polk. The commander will employ the same analysis from the previous question. However, the notification memo quarantining a civilian will be slightly different since civilians, as a general rule, aren’t prosecuted under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Nonetheless, there will be serious repercussions for any civilian who resides on Fort Polk who breaks or attempts to break quarantine up to and including being permanently banned from living on or accessing Fort Polk. Additionally, violating this lawful regulation may constitute a Federal criminal misdemeanor offense under 18 USC 1382.

Q. What steps, beyond what was already discussed, will a commander take when issuing a quarantine order?

A. The commander must annotate the name of the person to be quarantined or temporarily banned at the top of the memorandum after the “Memorandum for” section. Next, the individual being quarantined will acknowledge that they have read and understand the order at the bottom of page two. The commander will provide the memorandum to the individual and explain that he or she is quarantined for 14 days and any breach of quarantine subjects them to punishment under the UCMJ or punishment under 18 USC 1382. Preferably, the individual will acknowledge the memorandum in person, but if unable to complete a written acknowledgment, then a verbal acknowledgment of the order with a witness will suffice. If the latter option is chosen, the commander will draft a memorandum for record documenting the conversation.

Q. Which commanders are authorized to issue the CG’s quarantine order?

A. Any unit commander may order a subordi-

Please see Orders, page 8

COVID-19: Fort Polk's Warrior Operations Center responds

By **MATTHEW J. WEST**

Warrior Operations Center

FORT POLK, La. — Beginning in early March, the COVID-19 threat was realized throughout the United States. As Fort Polk is situated in the southwest portion of Louisiana, the installation began to track cases or presumptive cases nearby.

For most emergencies that emerge in this area, the general public has no visibility about what is happening behind the scenes: The men and women that work in the Installation Warrior Operations Center (WOC) are working every day to produce plans, orders and track these incidents.

COVID-19 is no exception. The Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security (DPTMS), led by Mark Leslie, and his chief of Plans and Operations, Dave Dancer, as well as the current operations team from the assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, have been working 16-plus hours a day for the past two weeks. The Chief of Operations for DPTMS, William "Dusty" Andrews and his battle captains, watch officers and staff have maintained situational awareness of not only Fort Polk, but also regional areas to include Louisiana, East Texas and Mississippi.

During this extremely trying time, there is panic and uncertainty throughout the public. You will find no panic in the WOC. You have professionals that are working daily, ensuring the public is kept informed, providing the commanding general's guidance and the chain of command with the most up-to-date information, so they can make informed decisions.

Some of these unsung heroes are the G-3 Readiness Officer Steve Mudd; G-3 Deployment Officer Bill Gilliam; and G-3 Operations Officer Jeff Lawson. These individuals are working six days a week to provide relevant information and update the command as quickly as information is received.

From the DPTMS side, Jeff Quick and Jean Dubiel lead a team of watch officers that manage day-to-day required information, and provide



Fort Polk's Warrior Operations Center team works diligently through the COVID-19 emergency.

higher headquarters with up-to-date informational requirements.

Clint Gilder, Eric Goody, Jaqueline Daniels, Master Sgt. Damion Patterson, and Sgt. 1st Class Wilbert Williams serve as the 24-hour watch officers that are the hub of information that goes in and out of Fort Polk.

Again, most of the personnel assigned, living

or working on Fort Polk don't know these outstanding people are working here day in and day out.

So, on the next emergency, when you are worried about a tornado, hurricane or like now, a pandemic, remember: You have a group of professionals that are working hard to get through it and make everyone else's life a little bit easier.

Orders

Continued from page 7

A. Any unit commander may order a subordinate or his family into quarantine or temporarily ban a civilian who does not live on Fort Polk from the installation.

Because of the number of Soldiers and civilians residing on Fort Polk, the CG does not have the capability to personally serve every individual directed into quarantine or temporarily ban a civilian residing off-post. The CG has delegated that authority to Fort Polk commanders at every echelon.

Q. Does the commander have any other obligations?

A. Once a commander has directed someone into quarantine or temporarily banned them from Fort Polk, presented the order to the individual concerned, and the individual has acknowledged the order verbally or in writing, the commander must notify the installation operations center by email.

The operations center will inform the Department of Emergency Services and DES will temporarily add the individual's name to the installation bar registry which will flag your ID card

should you attempt to enter the installation or are pulled over by a military police patrol for a traffic infraction.

Q. I just heard of a fellow Soldier who has broken quarantine, now what? What if a Soldier breaks isolation?

A. Effective March 22, the CG has reserved authority to take administrative or military justice disciplinary action on all violations or orders to restrict movement, quarantine, or isolate issued in connection with the current response to the outbreak of COVID-19.

The reservation will remain in effect until revoked. All suspected violations will be reported through the chain of command to the CG and the SJA within 2 hours of discovery.

Q. A Soldier just admitted to breaking quarantine because he just had to get out of the barracks? What's the worst that can happen to him?

A. Prior to Jan. 1, breaking a medical quarantine was proscribed in Article 134, UCMJ. Under the Military Justice Act of 2016, breaking a medical quarantine was moved under Article 84, UCMJ, to place it near other "place of duty" of-

fenses in the UCMJ and established the offense as its own punitive article.

The maximum punishment for someone who has broken a medical quarantine is:

- If the breach of medical quarantine involves a quarantinable communicable disease, then the maximum punishment is reduction to E-1, total forfeiture of all pay and allowances, one year confinement and a dishonorable discharge.

- In all other cases involving a breach, the maximum punishment is reduction to E-1, forfeiture of two-thirds pay per month for six months, six months confinement, and a bad conduct discharge.

Bottom Line: Every Soldier and civilian assigned to Fort Polk must do his or her part to ensure adherence to the Centers for Disease Control guidelines and CG's directives to ensure the safety and health of the force and community.

This article is not designed to serve as a substitute for legal advice, but to provide clarity on existing quarantine and temporary ban orders for Soldiers and civilians assigned to the Joint Readiness Center and Fort Polk.

Full night's sleep could be best defense against COVID-19

By SAMIR DESHPANDE

Health.mil

WASHINGTON — Amidst growing concern about COVID-19 infection, health officials have provided several recommendations to help individuals protect themselves and their families from infection, including washing hands regularly and maintaining a distance of at least 6 feet from anyone who is coughing or sneezing. Fortunately, a growing body of evidence suggests that an additional lifestyle modification could also dramatically improve your odds of avoiding infection — getting more sleep.

It has long been known that sleep is important for military performance. The Walter Reed Army Institute of Research has conducted sleep studies since the 1950s, showing that sleep loss negatively affects emotional regulation, judgment, cognitive performance, learning and memory, psychological resilience and reaction time — each of which could be critical for success in multi-domain operational environments — and almost all other environments as well, from the athletic field to the classroom to the boardroom. This is why elite athletes make sure they obtain 8-10 hours of sleep per night: To acquire that extra “edge” that can make the difference between success and failure.

In addition, and of particular relevance given current concerns about the spread of COVID-19, recent evidence suggests that sleep is also important for healthy immune function and the ability to fight off infection.

“From a Soldier lethality perspective, we often state ‘sleep is ammunition for the brain’, as sleep is critical for decision making, vigilance and reaction time. When it comes to fighting the common cold and flu, sleep is your internal body armor that helps you fight some viruses and disease,” said Army Col. Deydre Teyhen, commander of the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research.

The relationship between sleep and infectious disease is now being explored by researchers across the world, and several interesting and important findings have been reported. For example, in one study, volunteers without previous exposure to the common cold were exposed to a live sample of the virus. Researchers found that no variable predicted whether a participant would fall sick better than sleep duration — not even age or stress level. In other words, those who habitually slept less were more likely to fall ill with the cold virus.

In another study conducted by the same group, a “sleep threshold” was discovered: Individuals who averaged less than seven hours of sleep per night were found to have a three-fold greater risk of infection relative to those who averaged eight or more; that rate climbed to a 4 ½-fold greater risk for those with less than five hours of sleep.

Perhaps most surprisingly, it has also been found that six months after receiving a hepatitis B vaccination, individuals who slept fewer than six hours on the night prior to vaccination were at significant risk of being unprotected compared to those who had obtained more than seven hours of sleep.

In addition, there is now limited but exciting evidence from animal studies suggesting that sleep not only helps protect against initial infection, it also plays a direct role in aiding recovery from infectious illness.

Although there have not yet been any studies



in which the relationship between sleep duration and COVID-19 infection have been studied directly, lessons learned from studying the relationship between sleep duration and other infectious diseases can readily be generalized to COVID-19.

“Sleep is critical for maintaining physical, cognitive and immunological dominance on and off the battlefield. Leaders must prioritize sleep as a valuable asset in maintaining readiness and resilience, especially in the context of multi-domain operations and increased health risks worldwide — including those risks associated with exposure to infectious diseases,” says Army Lt. Col. Vincent Capaldi, director of the Behavioral Biology branch at WRAIR, responsible for studying the relationship between sleep, performance and military effectiveness.

Unfortunately, approximately one in three American adults do not obtain the American Academy of Sleep Medicine-recommended 7 or more hours of sleep per night, a situation that is estimated to cost the United States economy approximately \$411 billion a year due to increased errors and accidents, lower productivity and increased absenteeism. And the problem is particularly pronounced in the military, where approximately two in three Soldiers average six or fewer hours of sleep a night.

Research laboratories under the U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command including WRAIR, the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Disease and U.S. Army Medical Materiel Development Activity, are working diligently on a range of solutions to detect, treat and prevent COVID-19, including a vaccine.

WRAIR sleep and infectious disease researchers are also jointly exploring the relationship between sleep and immune function — a natural collaboration since the WRAIR infectious disease research programs are among the best in the world, having contributed to the development of many FDA-approved vaccines and every existing FDA-approved malaria prevention drug. Furthermore, WRAIR’s world-renowned sleep and performance research program has generated several technological and knowledge products, including wrist actigraphy (a precursor to current smart watch technology) to reliably measure and quantify sleep in the field; human

functional brain imaging studies that have furthered scientific understanding of sleep and sleep loss and the discovery of “sleep banking”: the finding that extra sleep prior to a mission with sleep loss blunts the performance decrement and reduces the amount of sleep needed to fully recover afterwards.

As medical countermeasure development efforts progress, obtaining at least seven hours of sleep per night in a comfortable, cool, quiet, dark and safe area, in addition to regular handwashing with soap and water and maintaining a healthy social distance (6 feet), will continue to constitute the first line of defense against infection.

Trivia about sleep

WWW.RESTONIC.COM

FORT POLK, La. — Here are a few weird and wonderful facts about sleep found at www.restonic.com.

- Whales and dolphins never fully fall asleep. Half their brain always stays awake so they can continue to surface breathe.
- The mind incorporates sounds and smells as people dream. If a person is napping while someone’s cooking lasagna, they might start dreaming they are dining at an Italian restaurant.
- Everyone dreams four to seven times each night. Everyone. Most people forget 90% of their dreams.
- Somniphobia is the fear of sleep.
- Waking up multiple times during the night is normal. Some studies suggest people wake up as many as eight times throughout the night as they cycle between light and deep sleep.
- Falling asleep takes an average of 10-20 minutes. Falling asleep too quickly may be a sign of sleep deprivation.
- More than 80% of people under 30 dream in color.
- Ever fall asleep and wake up with a sudden jolt seconds later? That action is called a myoclonic jerk.



Heroes of the battle

Angela (left) and Alex Chopper, Fort Polk Family members, prepare and sew masks for first responders, medical professionals and immune compromised citizens amidst the COVID-19 crisis in the area.

If you know anyone in the Fort Polk community going above and beyond to help during the COVID-19 crisis (while maintaining social distancing guidelines) let us know by calling the Guardian at 531-4033.

CID cautions teleworkers to adhere to IT best practices

USACIDC

QUANTICO, Va. — As the Army community continues to encourage teleworking, the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command reminds users about cyber adversaries and the importance of keeping all information on the network safe.

As telework increases across the Army, network users play an important role in protecting the Department of Defense Information Network. CID encourages users to follow department-issued guidance and best practices as well as those developed by the Department of Defense. This information will help ensure users maintain secure use of common capabilities and continue to operate effectively during telework status.

CID officials also remind the Army community that your government furnished equipment is for official government use only and to be used only by authorized users. It is important to remind family members the computer is for your work only and not to be used for other purposes. Users are encouraged to utilize good practices such as locking and removing your common access card and maintaining the physical security of their equipment.

Additional important reminders for government teleworkers:

- The use of government furnished equipment is the preferred method for connecting to DoD resources
- Adhere to your organization-specific telework user guidance
- Use your organization's official connection services while conducting official business (such as VPN, MobiKEY, Skype for Business and Vidy-oDesktop) and log off from connection at the end of work day or during idle times when you are

not directly interacting with network resources.

- While connected to the NIPRNet, use of streaming video/audio and internet access is not authorized except for official business
- Study and follow the acceptable use policy for government systems
- Use your organization's approved communication and collaboration methods for official business
- Work offline whenever possible

CIDC's major cybercrime unit continues to warn the Army community of ongoing coronavirus-themed phishing attacks impersonating organizations with the end goal of stealing information and delivering malware.

"Cybercriminals are innovative and will take advantage of current browsing trends to conduct social engineering attacks," said Edward Labarge, director, major cybercrime unit, USACIDC. "We have already seen this with malware infected COVID-19 maps and phishing emails related to the pandemic."

Labarge recommends always inspecting the URL and ensuring you know where the link will take you, because criminals are disguising themselves in an effort to steal money or sensitive information.

"When conducting research on COVID-19 or any other topic, you want to ensure you use good cybersecurity best practices," he said. "This includes keeping your browser, operating system and antivirus software up to date. Additionally, you should never click on an unknown link. You can check the link by hovering your mouse over the URL to see where it leads."

Some trusted sources available for use:

- DAF COVID-19 webpage:
<https://www.af.mil/News/Coronavirus-Disease-2019/>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



(CDC) COVID-19:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

• USAF COVID-19 Information Page:
<https://www.af.mil/News/Coronavirus-Disease-2019/>

• World Health Organization:
<https://www.who.int/>

Please continue to exercise proper cyber hygiene while utilizing VPN and government computers as well as personal devices.



JRTC AND FORT POLK AAFES, COMMISSARY AND MWR COVID-19 SERVICES UPDATE

Commissary purchasing limits

As of March 26

LIMIT (1) PER CUSTOMER

- Package of toilet paper
- Package of paper
- Bag or box of plain rice



LIMIT (2) PER CUSTOMER

- Antibacterial hand gels, wipes, and sprays
- Hygienic or baby wipes
- Hand soap
- Bleach
- Facial Tissues
- Pasta Sauce
- Dried Pasta
- Loaves of bread
- Milk (WIC excluded)
- Eggs (WIC excluded)
- Bagged potatoes
- Bagged onions
- Bagged apples
- Banana bunches

LIMIT (3) PER CUSTOMER

- Fresh Beef - to include ground beef, steak, roast, etc.
- Fresh Pork - to include ground pork, pork chops, pork roast, etc.
- Fresh Chicken - to include ground chicken, chicken breasts, whole chicken, etc.

- Limit to (4) Per Customer - Gallon containers of water

"ONE TEAM - ONE FIGHT"

For the latest updates, please visit the JRTC and Fort Polk Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/JRTCandFortPolk> and Fort Polk Family MWR at <https://www.facebook.com/fortpolkmwr>



April is Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month

By **RUSSELL TOOF**

Army News Service

SEMBACH, Germany — National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month is observed each year during the month of April to raise awareness and educate communities on the prevention of sexual assault.

The Army's 2020 theme is "Building Cohesive Teams through Character, Trust and Resilience. Protecting Our People Protects Our Mission."

"Once you have strength in the structure, your people and their mission are protected," said Florence Hare, a nurse practitioner and Sexual Assault medical director/program manager at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center.

"The Sexual Assault Response Teams build strong foundations within our military and civilian communities. The trust that is then placed in them by our service members and civilians allows all their work, their mission, to be accomplished."

Sexual Assault Awareness Month began in 2001, when the National Sexual Violence Resource Center coordinated the first formally recognized Sexual Assault Awareness Month campaign. It wasn't until 2009 when President Barack Obama made the first official proclama-

tion that April was Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

"SAAPM reminds everyone about the importance of prevention, intervention and recognition of sexual assault to not only care for a victim, but more importantly, remove the threat from the ranks and prevent sexual assault from occurring," said Hare.

The Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention program's primary mission is to enhance Army readiness through the prevention of sexual assault, sexual harassment, and associated retaliatory behaviors while providing comprehensive response capabilities.

"The most important part for me is the work we do with victims and their supporters," said Julia Armstrong, the Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention program manager for Regional Health Command Europe. "It is important to build relationships with the other professionals who assist victims and to work closely as the Sexual Assault Response Team. This team develops a holistic support plan to assist victims throughout the entire process and is built on the needs of the individual we are helping."

If you have been a victim of sexual harassment or sexual assault, you can visit sexualassault.army.mil, Department of Defense

helpline at (877) 995-5247, Fort Polk Garrison SHARP 531-4656/1549 for help and resources.





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Reischling, Kimberly K CIV USARMY IMCOM (USA)
ALL USERS: Women's Mentorship Program (UNCLASSIFIED)



Reischling, Kimberly K CIV USARMY IMCOM (USA)
ALL USERS: #FortPolk #ThingsToDo (UNCLASSIFIED)

All users emails

1. Automatic to government email users
2. By request to non-military units. Contact below
3. Includes variety of messages, things to do, installation events

email kimberly.k.reischling.civ@mail.mil

POC: Kim Reischling, PAO, (337) 531-1392, Kimberly.k.reischling.civ@mail.mil

Soldiers punished, separated from Army for UCMJ violations

OSJA

FORT POLK, La. — Across Fort Polk, the following disciplinary issues continue to be prevalent: Sexual assault, driving under the influence, wrongful use/possession of controlled substances, fraternization, inappropriate relationships, and domestic violence.

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

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

A staff sergeant, assigned to United States Army Medical Department Activity, was issued a General Officer Memorandum of Reprimand for driving under the influence of alcohol with a blood alcohol content of 0.247%, more than three times the legal limit. The CG directed the GO-MOR be placed permanently in the Soldier's AMHRR.

A sergeant, assigned to 710th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light), was administratively separated under Chapter 14-12c, with a General (Under Honorable Conditions) characterization of

service. Generally, this characterization of service results in the loss of a service member's educational benefits.

A specialist, assigned to 1st Battalion, 509th Infantry Regiment, Operations Group, was administratively separated under Chapter 10, with an Other Than Honorable conditions characterization of service, for possessing and viewing child pornography. Generally, this characterization of service results in the loss of a majority of the service member's VA benefits.

A private first class, assigned to 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div, was punished under Article 15 for wrongful use of a controlled substance, in violation of Article 112a.

The service member was sentenced to a reduction to Pvt., forfeiture of \$866 pay for two

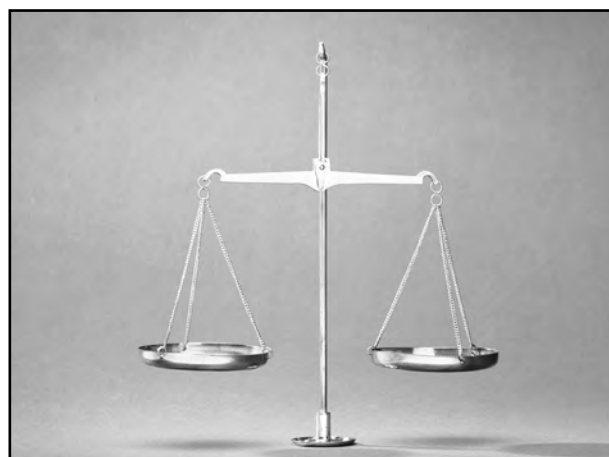
months, extra duty for 45 days and restriction for 45 days.

A private first class, assigned to 5th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn

Div, was punished under Article 15 for misuse of his government travel credit card, in violation of Article 92. The service member was sentenced to a reduction to PV2, forfeiture of \$453 pay, suspended for 180 days; extra-duty and restriction for 14 days.

A private, assigned to 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div, was administratively

separated under Chapter 14-12c(2), with a General (Under Honorable Conditions) characterization of service for wrongful use of a controlled substance. Generally, this characterization of service results in the loss of a service member's educational benefits.



Army makes exceptions to promotion policy during COVID-19

By DEVON SUITS
Army News Service

WASHINGTON — In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the Army has initiated several policy exceptions that will impact enlisted promotion cycles scheduled until the end of this fiscal year, unless terminated sooner, G-1 officials announced Tuesday.

Due to the recent restrictions placed on travel and training, the Army is altering its approach to semi-centralized promotion boards, along with changing the training requirements required for promotion eligibility, said Sgt. Maj. Mark A. Clark, the Army G-1 directorate of military personnel management sergeant major.

The exception will impact the active-duty and Army Reserve force, with many of the alterations taking effect during the May promotion month, Clark said. The National Guard will produce additional guidance at a later date.

"The overall impact is to protect the force and preserve readiness," Clark said. "We are trying to get ahead and be proactive and creative. We want commanders and Soldiers to understand that we're thinking about what's best for them and what's best for the Army — all at the same time."

As the COVID-19 environment continues to evolve, the Army will continue to review its policy exceptions every 30 days and make any necessary changes. The modifications will be in place until Sept. 30.

Virtual board

Commanders are now authorized an alternative means to evaluate personnel during a monthly unit promotion board, Clark said.

With the exception to policy, commanders can conduct a promotion board within a virtual environment. It will be up to the command team to determine their proper means of communication, he added.

"There are certain organizations that currently are not resourced to perform the AFCT. The Army has created this exception to policy to adhere to travel and training restrictions, along with ensuring social distancing"

Sgt. Maj. MARK A. CLARK

Army G-1, directorate of military personnel management sergeant major

"We gave some latitude to the command teams, allowing them to be creative on how they want to assess their Soldiers," Clark said. "With all of the different virtual options that command teams will have access to ... it gives the commander the option to do (their promotion boards) via the internet or in an environment that supports social distancing."

In addition to the virtual boards, leaders can also rely on their battalion command sergeant



Soldiers check their targets on an M-4 range during qualification. While weapons qualifications are not tied to a Soldier's promotion recommendation or pin-on eligibility, a Soldier's weapons qualification score is incorporated during a unit promotion board process. Until the exception of policy is lifted, a Soldier's promotion points will be based on their most recent weapons qualification, regardless of when completed

major to make promotion recommendations based on their "one-on-one interactions with an eligible Soldier," Clark added. Battalion command sergeants major can obtain input from their chain of command or through the noncommissioned officer support channel to make an informed decision about an eligible Soldier.

Professional military education

Starting in May, the Army will temporarily suspend its professional military education course requirements for staff sergeants and sergeants first class who need to complete the Advanced Leader Course or Senior Leader Course, respectively, Clark said.

The temporary suspension of PME will not waive the PME requirement, Clark said. Soldiers will still be required to complete the course at a later date and will be prioritized first in the training pipeline to ensure they meet this training requirement.

"Soldiers who have always been doing the right thing ... by already completing their requisite level of professional military education to qualify themselves for promotion, will be selected for promotion before (the Soldiers) that have not completed their professional military education," he said.

Soldiers who fail to fully qualify themselves for promotion consideration before reaching their primary zone could put their careers at risk, Clark added.

U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command has distance learning options for Soldiers attending the Basic Leader Course, Master Leader Course and the Sergeants Major Course, therefore negating a need for an exception to policy for these respected ranks, Clark said.

For the National Guard only, the force is authorizing the Director, Army National Guard to determine the appropriate applicability since the

policies on completing PME to qualify for promotion differ. The National Guard will produce additional guidance at a later date.

Similar to the changes to the active force, the temporary suspension does not diminish the importance of PME. A Soldier will be required to complete this training requirement at a later date.

APFT, weapons qualification

The Army Physical Fitness Test will continue to be a promotion eligibility requirement, officials said. However, Soldiers will be able to use their last recorded APFT for promotion recommendation and pin-on, regardless of when the fitness test was administered.

"There are certain organizations that currently are not resourced to perform the APFT," Clark said.

The Army created this exception to policy to "adhere to the travel restrictions and training restrictions, along with ensuring social distancing."

The policy exception also prevents Soldiers from falling off of the promotion standing list because of an expired APFT, Clark said. Further, commanders cannot flag Soldiers for failing to take the fitness test during this time.

Soldiers who previously failed the APFT will remain flagged until they can successfully pass their fitness evaluation. Additional guidance will be published at a later date, officials said.

Beyond the APFT, the Army is also providing the same extension to weapons qualifications, Clark said. While weapons qualifications are not tied to a Soldier's promotion recommendation or pin-on eligibility, a Soldier's weapons qualification score is incorporated during a unit promotion board process.

Until the exception of policy is lifted, a Soldier's promotion points will be based on their most recent weapons qualification, regardless of when completed, officials said.

Soldier-centered approach leads ground modernization efforts

By **SEAN KIMMONS**
Army News Service

WASHINGTON — Nearly two years into its largest modernization overhaul in four decades, the Army looks to continue its momentum of developing new ground systems centered on input from Soldiers.

Testifying before the House Armed Services Committee's tactical air and land forces subcommittee, the Army's acquisition chief told lawmakers Thursday that adequate funding is needed to build on those efforts.

"The Army's modernization program takes time and money," said Bruce Jette, assistant secretary of the Army for acquisition, logistics and technology. "We are working to achieve efficiency wherever possible and we need sufficient, predictable, sustained and timely funding to ensure a successful outcome."

Realigning funds

In its fiscal year 2021 budget request, the Army has realigned \$9 billion to fund its six moderniza-

tion priorities over the next five fiscal years.

In total, there is now \$63 billion over that period aligned against those priorities: Long-range precision fires, next-generation combat vehicle, future vertical lift, the network, air and missile defense and Soldier lethality.

The realigned funds come after senior leaders carried out extensive "night court" sessions that led to the elimination or reduction of 80 programs across the Army.

In the latest budget request, the top program being canceled is about \$122 million for the Advanced Precision Kill Weapon System, a guidance kit for helicopter-launched rockets. The largest program reduction is \$222 million for upgrades to Bradley Fighting Vehicles.

The Army intends to replace the Bradley with the Optionally Manned Fighting Vehicle. In January, the Army halted its solicitation for a rapid prototype and now plans to solicit it again to gain more interest from industry.

"We've made it clear OMFV is

continuing," Jette told lawmakers. "The objective we were pursuing is unchanged. It's the methodology by which we're trying to get there."

Jette also thanked Congress for granting the Army new authorities to strengthen its acquisition process.

As a result of the middle-tier acquisition authority, the Army has been able to rapidly prototype and accelerates select modernization efforts. Currently, there are 11 rapid prototyping efforts and one rapid fielding effort, he said.

In addition, the other transaction authority, or OTA, has allowed the Army to attract small companies and nontraditional businesses.

In fiscal 2019, the Army awarded 830 agreements valued at

roughly \$5 billion, he said.

Jette also credited the unique relationship between his office and Army Futures Command for bringing system concepts and designs to life.

"Together they are aligning requirements, development and acquisition expertise with representatives from testing, logistics, science and technology and other important Army communities," he said.

The collaboration has quickly delivered equipment to Soldiers, such as the Enhanced Night Vision Goggle-Binocular and the Command Post Computing Environment, a software system that supports mission command.

"And, in both cases, statement

Please see **Soldier**, page 16

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Esper lists top DoD priorities during COVID-19 pandemic

By DAVID VERGUN
Army News Service

WASHINGTON — Protecting the Defense Department's people, maintaining military readiness and supporting the whole-of-government interagency response are DoD's top three priorities amid the coronavirus pandemic, Defense Secretary Dr. Mark T. Esper said.

Esper, joined by Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Army Gen. Mark A. Milley and Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chairman Ramón "CZ" Colon-Lopez, conducted a virtual town hall meeting March 23 to answer questions about DoD's coronavirus response.

"I've made protecting our people our top priority," Esper said, referring to service members, DoD's civilian employees and contractors, and their Families.

Meanwhile, the secretary said, maintaining mission readiness is important so DoD can be ready to fight and win if called upon to do so.

DoD is "all in" on supporting the interagency effort to protect the American people, Esper said, noting that the department has deployed thousands of National Guardsmen in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and four territories.

The Army is deploying field hospitals to major U.S. cities, and the Navy has deployed the hospital ship USNS Mercy to Los Angeles, the secretary said, adding that the hospital ship USNS Comfort will soon deploy to New York City.

"This is not the first challenge the United States has ever faced."

Gen. MARK A. MILLEY
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

World-class researchers at Fort Detrick, Maryland, and other locations are working with researchers elsewhere to come up with vaccines, Esper said, while other DoD efforts include opening up strategic stockpiles of masks, ventilators and other equipment to help the American people.

Testing kits and personal protective equipment are available for DoD medical workers, he said, but he acknowledged that there will be shortages, just as in the civilian sector until the private sector can ramp up production.

Esper said the department is in close coordination with allies and



Brian Kearney, research microbiologist, harvests samples of coronavirus in a Biosafety Level 3 laboratory at the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases at Fort Detrick, Md. This virus stock will be used to develop models of infection for coronavirus, as well as diagnostic tests, vaccines and therapeutics.

ARMY NEWS SERVICE

partners and has even reached out to Iran to offer assistance in battling COVID-19.

The secretary also stressed preventive measures people should be taking to slow the spread of the virus, such as social distancing, wiping down surfaces that are touched and hand washing. The best and most trusted guidance can be found on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website, www.cdc.gov, which is updated regularly, he added.

"This is not the first challenge the United States has ever faced," Milley said. "This is not the first war we've ever been in." As they deal with the invisible coronavirus enemy, military leaders at all levels are expected to follow DoD guidance and to look after their Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines, he added.

Combatant commanders and leaders at bases and installations have been delegated with a decision-making authority on matters such as determining when service members and their Families can move to new duty assignments, the chairman said.

"We will get through this through solid leadership, caring for our troops and keeping focus on the mission," Milley said.

Colon-Lopez said the mission is clearly understood and that it's "a no-fail mission." The U.S. military will be flexible and adaptable to deal with this challenge, he said.

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Army scientists create innovative quantum sensor

ARMY NEWS SERVICE

ADELPHI, Md. — A quantum sensor could give Soldiers a way to detect communication signals over the entire radio frequency spectrum, from 0 to 100 GHz, said researchers from the Army.

Such wide spectral coverage by a single antenna is impossible with a traditional receiver system, and would require multiple systems of individual antennas, amplifiers and other components.

In 2018, Army scientists were the first in the world to create a quantum receiver that uses highly excited, super-sensitive atoms — known as Rydberg atoms — to detect communications signals, said David Meyer, a scientist at the U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command's Army Research Laboratory.

The researchers calculated the receiver's channel capacity, or rate of data transmission, based on fundamental principles and then achieved that performance experimentally in their lab — improving on other groups' results by orders of magnitude, Meyer said.

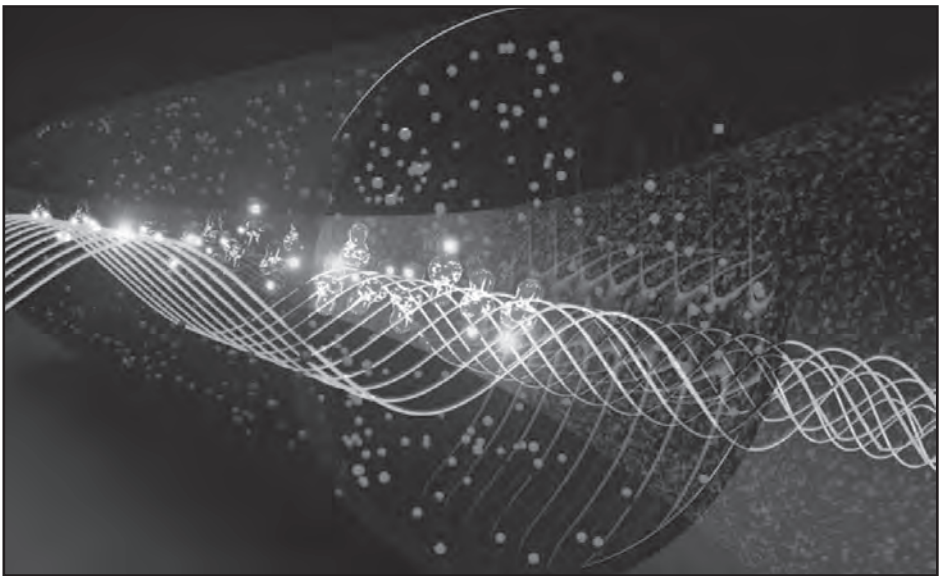
"These new sensors can be very small and virtually undetectable,

giving Soldiers a disruptive advantage," Meyer said. "Rydberg-atom based sensors have only recently been considered for general electric field sensing applications, including as a communications receiver. While Rydberg atoms are known to be broadly sensitive, a quantitative description of the sensitivity over the entire operational range has never been done."

To assess potential applications, Army scientists conducted an analysis of the Rydberg sensor's sensitivity to oscillating electric fields over an enormous range of frequencies — from 0 to 10 to 12 Hertz. The results show Rydberg sensors can reliably detect signals over the entire spectrum and compare favorably with other established electric field sensor technologies, such as electro-optic crystals and dipole antenna-coupled passive electronics.

"Quantum mechanics allows us to know the sensor calibration and ultimate performance to a very high degree, and it's identical for every sensor," Meyer said. "This result is an important step in determining how this system could be used in the field."

This work supports the Army's modernization priorities in next-



Rydberg atoms are optically excited to Rydberg states that detect incoming radio frequency fields in this artist's interpretation.

generation computer networks and assured position, navigation and timing, as it could potentially influence novel communications concepts or approaches to detection of RF signals for geolocation.

In the future, Army scientists will investigate methods to continue to improve the sensitivity to detect even weaker signals and expand detection protocols for more complicated waveforms.

The Journal of Physics B published the research, "Assessment of Rydberg atoms for wideband electric field sensing," in its special issue on interacting Rydberg atoms. Army scientists David H. Meyer, Kevin C. Cox and Paul D. Kunz led this research, as well as Zachary A. Castillo from the University of Maryland. This work was supported by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency.

Soldier

Continued from page 14

of need to delivering those capabilities was less than 18 months," Gen. John Murray, the AFC commander, said during the hearing.

The general also noted successful test shots of the Precision Strike Missile and the Extended-Range Cannon Artillery, which both aim to greatly extend the range of two key long-range precision fire delivery systems.

Soldier-centered approach

The Army has also relied on Soldiers to play a larger role in developing new equipment.

"In all of our efforts we are leveraging a Soldier-centered design approach to delivering capability, putting Soldiers at the center of our production," Murray said.

Before, Soldiers typically did not see a new

piece of equipment until a limited user test.

"And it usually didn't fare well because we didn't have Soldiers involved from the front," he said. "So that has become a standard principle for everything."

Soldiers, he said, have been heavily involved with the next-generation squad weapon, as companies vie to replace the M4 carbine and M249 squad automatic weapon.

The Integrated Visual Augmentation System, or IVAS, has been another success of Soldier feedback. Murray said there has already been more than 6,000 hours of Soldier touch points that have helped engineers make modifications to the system.

"Within this approach, we are committed to learning early and learning often," he said. "This means focusing on characteristics and working with industry and our Soldiers to make sure that when we do write requirements, we get them right the first time."



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