



FORGING THE

WARRIOR SPIRIT

The JRTC and Fort Polk Guardian

Vol. 47, No. 47

Home of Heroes @ Fort Polk, LA

Nov. 25, 2020



CHUCK CANNON / GUARDIAN

Home for Thanksgiving

Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Mulcahey hugs his spouse, Rachel Mulcahey, at a welcome-home ceremony Nov. 21, following a nine-month deployment to Kosovo as part of Task Force Medi-

cal's KFOR-27. Brig. Gen. David S. Doyle, commander, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, was the keynote speaker for the ceremony held at 4:45 a.m. in Fort Polk's Warrior Gym.

Fort Polk's holiday celebrations, preparations



CHRISTY GRAHAM/GUARDIAN

Above: Office of the Staff Judge Advocate Soldiers and civilians celebrate the upcoming holiday season with a group meal Nov. 19 after a ceremony recognizing Soldiers and civilian employees for their hard work and dedication.

Right: Maj. Camille Betito (left), Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital deputy commander, serves sides at BJACH's holiday meal Nov. 19. Beyond serving patrons, BJACH's leadership also carved the turkey and ham for the holiday meal service.



JEAN GRAVES/BJACH



JEAN GRAVES/BJACH



CHUCK CANNON/GUARDIAN

Col. Jody Dugai (center), BJACH commander, and Maj. Camille Betito (right), BJACH deputy commander of administration, serve hungry Soldiers during the Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital meal Nov. 19.

5th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Regiment Family Readiness Group members offer gift wrapping services at Fort Polk's Army and Airforce Exchange Service on Nov. 20.



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The Guardian is published weekly by the Public Affairs Office, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk.

The Guardian can be found on the JRTC and Fort Polk web site at **home.army.mil/polk** and the JRTC and Fort Polk Facebook page at **@JRTCandFortPolk/**. Guardian archives can also be found on the JRTC and Fort Polk website.

Links to the Guardian are also included in all-users emails to government email users and by request to non-military units. To be included on all-users messages email **kimberly.k.reischling.civ@mail.mil**.

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

Body pods

The Army Wellness Center is offering free body composition assessments for active duty service members, Family members, retirees and Department of the Army civilians on Thursday from 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Prior to an assessment, patrons are asked to fast for two hours, avoid physical activity/exercise for two hours, wear form fitting clothes (Spandex/lycra type material) and complete a health and wellness questionnaire upon arrival. Common access card users can complete the form at awc.army.mil.

The AWC is located at 1365 Third St, bldg 283.

For more details, please call 531-3055.

LifeShare blood drive

Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital is hosting a LifeShare Blood Drive Dec. 3 from 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

The LifeShare bus will be located outside of Entrance B.

Register in advance for the blood drive at lifeshare.org.

For more information contact Staff Sgt. Heather Adkins at heather.d.adkins3.mil@mail.mil.

Retirement Services

If you've reached 18 years in service, it's a good time to start looking at the Army retirement process.

The Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk Retirement Services Office offers mandatory preretirement briefings quarterly at the Education Center.

For more details, contact the Retirement Services Office at 531-0363/0402.

AAFES Black Friday

While the Fort Polk Exchange will be closed on Thanksgiving Day, Army and Air Force Exchange Service stores worldwide will open at 8 a.m. Friday to provide a safe, secure and sanitized shopping experience.

Shoppers looking to get an early start on holiday shopping — potentially laser focused on presents and decorations — can do so on Friday at 8 a.m. at the Fort Polk Exchange or on [the Shop My Exchange website](http://theShopMyExchange.com) starting at noon.



Make informed decisions this holiday

GUARDIAN STAFF

FORT POLK, La. — This Thanksgiving will likely be a stressful one for many Families as questions arise about COVID-19 conditions.

A few things to consider are “how, who and should?”

• **HOW:** How can I help? You can protect your family, friends and community by planning your Thanksgiving activities in accordance with [Centers for Disease Control guidelines](#). These guidelines will help you make informed decisions and better protect your family, friends, community and the force. Of course always mask up, social distance and wash your hands!

• **WHO:** Who can I ask? Do not hesitate to ask your primary care provider any questions that you have, you've heard or about screening and testing information or criteria ([Joint Readiness Training Center](#) and

[Fort Polk's Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital](#).) You can also call the CDC Hotline at (800) 232-4636 for assistance.

In Louisiana, if you have questions about coronavirus, please contact the Louisiana 211 Network by dialing 211. Or, you can text the keyword LACOVID to 898-211 for the most current information about the outbreak as it becomes available.

• **SHOULD:** “Should I travel there?” is a question many will have this Thanksgiving. Every situation is different and individual Families will have to make the best decision to protect those they care about.

This needs to be an informed decision. One way to enable the Fort Polk team to make informed and safe decisions is to do some research.

Some tools available to help you to make that decision at the country, state and local areas are: The [CDC website](#), [NBC news website](#) and [CDC's map and travel notices](#).

A promotional graphic for the Apple COVID-19 app and website. It features a laptop displaying the website, a smartphone showing the app interface, and a blue virus icon with an 'i' inside. Text includes the title "Apple Releases New COVID-19 App and Website", a URL, and several bullet points describing the app and website's features and availability. Logos for the U.S. Army and other military branches are visible at the bottom right.

Apple Releases New COVID-19 App and Website

<https://www.apple.com/newsroom/2020/03/apple-releases-new-covid-19-app-and-website-based-on-cdc-guidance/>

The new COVID-19 website, and COVID-19 app available on the App Store, were created in partnership with the CDC, the White House Coronavirus Task Force and FEMA.

Allow users to answer a series of questions around risk factors, recent exposure and symptoms for themselves or a loved one.

- CDC recommendations on next steps, including guidance on social distancing and self-isolating,
- how to closely monitor symptoms, whether or not a test is recommended at this time
- when to contact a medical provider.

The app and website also offer access to resources to help people stay informed and get the support they need.

- Users will receive answers to frequently asked questions about COVID-19, including who is most at risk and how to recognize symptoms.
- In addition, they will learn the most up-to-date information from the CDC like best practices for washing hands, disinfecting surfaces and monitoring symptoms.

Warrior Operations Center / (337) 531-4916/7157 / usarmy.polk.incom.mbx.eoc-loc@mail.mil 5 November 2020

Army News

No 'easy-button' in Army modernization, says G-8

By THOMAS BRADING
Army News Service

WASHINGTON — The Army's G-8 said he has high hopes for modernization efforts heading into the next year, despite potential budget cuts that could impact them as well as future end strength and force readiness.

"We're on the path to deliver the capabilities our Soldiers require to fight and win," said Lt. Gen. James Pasquarette during an Association of the U.S. Army Noon Report webinar Nov. 18.

In previous years, Army modernization has come with its share of hold-ups and headaches. But this time, Pasquarette believes the force's current efforts are much more promising than past attempts.

The general, who has now served two years in his role as G-8, said he was confident that if topline cuts were required, leaders would continue funding top modernization capabilities.

"(The Army secretary and Army chief of staff) have both stated that we must modernize the Army," Pasquarette said. "This is a once-in-every-40-years opportunity, and it's against a valid requirement."

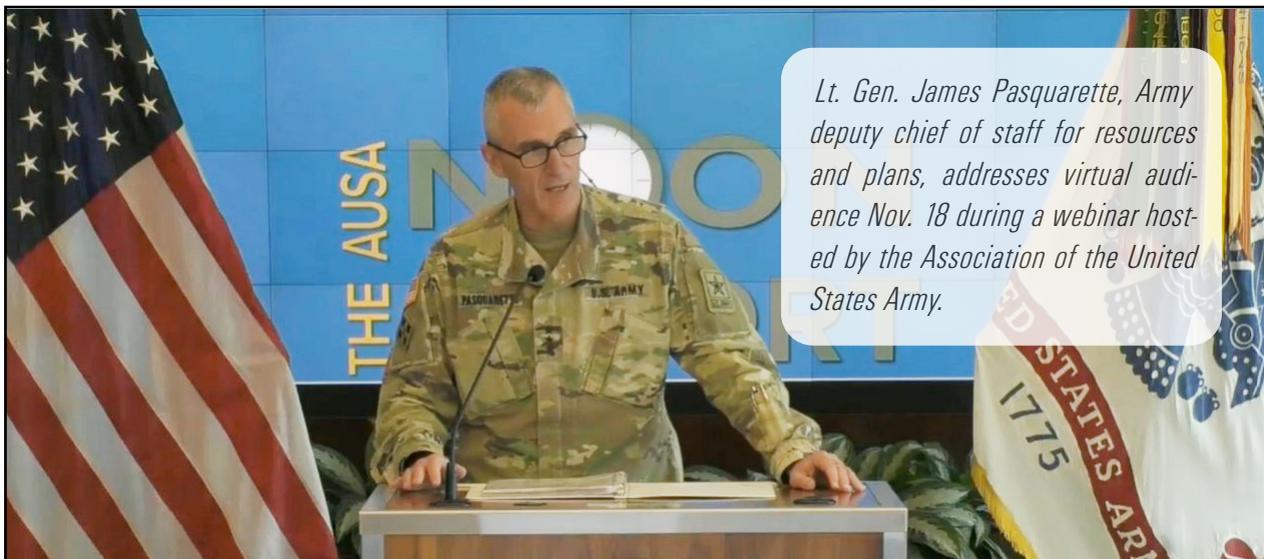
"Russia and China aren't going anywhere," he added, underscoring the importance of modernization. He said Army officials believe near-peer competitors "will continue going the wrong direction" regarding diplomatic relations.

In addition to having support from senior leaders, another helpful source for modernization programs has been the U.S. Army Futures Command. Established in 2018 with a sharp focus on meeting modernization goals, he said this centralized effort has brought a streamlined approach to modernization. And having a four-star general "intimately involved in the modernization effort" has assured its success.

"Since the end of the Cold War, when the Army has been faced with a significant downturn in the top line, the easy button has been modernization," he said. In other words, when previous budgets have taken a hit, modernization was the first to be cut.

"(Army leaders) have turned down the modernization dial in order to preserve end strength," he said.

"And whatever was left after that, we put into readiness to ensure we had the ability



Lt. Gen. James Pasquarette, Army deputy chief of staff for resources and plans, addresses virtual audience Nov. 18 during a webinar hosted by the Association of the United States Army.

THOMAS BRADING / ARMY NEWS SERVICE

to fight."

To him, hitting "the easy button" is just a way out for that moment in time, he said. Now things are different: There is no easy way out.

"The equipment we have today is what we need to deter, and if necessary, fight and win against high-end adversaries" like China and Russia, he said. And if it comes time to cut spending, "I believe we'll continue to fully resource top priority" efforts like Army Futures Command's cross functional teams, said Pasquarette.

Despite challenges, "we're on a path to deliver the next-generation capabilities our Soldiers require to fight and win against near-peer adversaries in the future," he said.

The Army's No. 1 modernization priority, the long-range precision fires portfolio, is on track to deliver the force's long-range hypersonic weapon, he said. Earlier this year, in a joint effort with the Navy, the Army successfully test fired a hypersonic missile and plans to have a battery of prototype hypersonic weapons fielded by fiscal year 2023.

When it comes to mid-range capabilities, the Tomahawk, a low-flying subsonic missile, and SM-6, a supersonic, high-altitude missile, are both capable of "striking maritime and land targets at range," he said, adding they are also on track to be fielded by 2023.

The Extended Range Cannon Artillery, which is capable of firing rounds more than 40 miles, is also on the horizon, he said, adding that a follow-on variant with an auto-loader is in the works, too.

Other modernization programs are also in various stages of implementation. For example, next month the Army plans to release a request for proposal for the Optionally Manned Fighting Vehicle.

Pasquarette assured the virtual audience "we're on a positive path" to modernization as the Army continues to "revolutionize how we fight where it matters most — at the squad and platoon levels."

But modernization is not cheap, especially when facing a flat budget.

For the third year in a row, senior leaders have conducted "night court" processes across Army portfolios to realign funds to modernization efforts, he said.

The budgetary review strategy, which was most recently conducted in the spring under COVID-19 conditions, helped leaders realign billions of dollars, he said.

Pasquarette, who manages the night court process, did not disclose an exact dollar amount or how many programs were cut during the 2022 program review, but he said this year's findings were comparable to last year's deep-dive.

During last year's budget review for 2021, senior leaders realigned roughly \$10 billion and eliminated 80 legacy programs.

Last year "we received the resources needed to grow the Army, increase the readiness of the Army and invest in the future readiness of the United States Army," the general said.

Even though the future of the Army's spending is "a bit hazy," he said, Army leaders and lawmakers are making the right choices to keep modernization efforts on track.

Warrior Medics return home to heroes' welcome

By **CHUCK CANNON**
Command information officer

FORT POLK, La. — The Families of 16 Soldiers assigned to Fort Polk's 115th Field Hospital are especially happy this Thanksgiving as their Warriors returned home to a heroes' welcome early Nov. 21.

David S. Doyle, commander, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, Command Sgt. Maj. David Henry, JRTC and Fort Polk command sergeant major, fellow Soldiers and Family members braved a 4:45 a.m. ceremony at Fort Polk's Warrior Gym to get their first glimpse of their loved ones in nine months.

The 16 Warrior Medics were part of East Regional Command's Task Force Medical — KFOR-27 — in Kosovo.

Maj. Caitlin Ebbets, 115th FH, said her team provided medical support for U.S. Soldiers in the Kosovo mission, part of the United Nations' charter to maintain peace while Serbia and Kosovo worked out a peace accord.

"It became a COVID-19 response mission," said Ebbets, who served as the unit's commander. "Our Soldiers figured out how to manage a COVID response and put out preventive measures and responses to both U.S. and Kosovo forces."

Doyle was the keynote speaker at the ceremony and thanked the returning Soldiers for their dedication and service.

"I have three things to say to this group of outstanding Warriors assembled here: Thank you, thank you and thank you," Doyle said. "Thank you for the example you set for the United States Army by being ready to deploy, by going forward to do a difficult mission in a time of pandemic."

Doyle also thanked the Warrior Medics for providing expertise and medical equipment, English speaking skills and a variety of other things that were necessary for the Kosovo community.

"Finally, thank you for what you are going to do as you rejoin the Fort Polk and JRTC Family here," he said.

"Thank you for what you're going to do as you continue to serve the United States Army and thank you for everything you represent as you stand in formation this morning."

Lt. Col. Jason K. Marquart, commander, 115th Field Hospital, said his Soldiers are "an amazing crew."

"They went to a mission that has been established for a long time, and these Soldiers went down range as the medical unit for



CHUCK CANNON/GUARDIAN



Staff Sgt. Seneca Ratledge (center) hugs his daughters, Ana (left) and Natalia (right), after a welcome-home ceremony at the Warrior Gym Nov. 21.



Brig. Gen. David S. Doyle, commander, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, speaks at a welcome-home ceremony, Nov. 21, for 16 Soldiers recently deployed.

that task force and had to adapt to COVID on the fly," he said.

"They had to establish COVID protocol at the operational level, and they did an amazing job while providing Role-1 care for the whole theater."

Role-1 medical support is that which is integral or allocated to a small unit and will include the capabilities for providing first

aid, immediate lifesaving measures and triage.

"Major Ebbets and her team were successful, providing basic care and developing a COVID response," Marquart said. "I'm very proud of them and the sacrifices they made. They adapted and achieved great things."

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Louisiana volunteer awards
Front row (from left to right) Sgt. Anna Gomez, Medical Department Activity; Lis Johnson, spouse; Sgt. Juan Galarza, MEDDAC; Sgt. Chris Horn, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 509th Infantry Regiment; Sgt. Daniel Alfaro, 46th Engineer Battalion; and Patrick Holly, Judge Advocate General corps, received the Louisiana Volunteer Service award Nov. 20 in front of bldg 350 for their time coaching Fort Polk's children in various sports.
Back row (from left to right) Col. Ryan K. Roseberry, Fort Polk garrison commander; John Stromberg, Fort Polk's Child, Youth and School Services sports director; and Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher M. Ausburn, Garrison command sergeant major. Roseberry told the volunteers, who each have 100 or more volunteer hours, that Fort Polk couldn't be as great without them.

Home

Continued from page 5



Above: 115th Field Hospital Soldiers stand in formation during their welcome-home ceremony Nov. 21, following a nine-month deployment in Kosovo.

Far right: Spc. Nyandoro Niles-Rodney (center) holds his kids, Zion (right) and Aria (left), after a welcome-home ceremony Nov. 21.

Right: Staff Sgt. Seneca Ratledge (right) embraces his wife, Lupe (left), Nov. 21 after a welcome-home ceremony at Fort Polk's Warrior Gym.

