



FORGING THE

WARRIOR SPIRIT

THE JRTC & FORT POLK GUARDIAN

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Home of Heroes @ Fort Polk, LA

April 24, 2020



JRTC Soldiers, Families attacking PT!

Social distancing and stay-at-home orders have not put a damper on Fort Polk Soldiers their Families' plans to stay in shape:

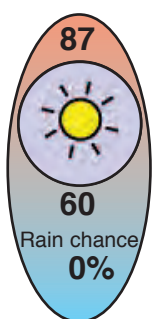
Above: Maj. Jerome Trageser, Joint Readiness Training Center Operations Group and his Family Katelyn (spouse), Brody, 5, and Sawyer, 7, work out in the family carport gym.

Top right: Pfc. Asher Flowers, Pathfinder Company, 1st Battalion, 509th Infantry Regiments, prepares to pump a little iron.

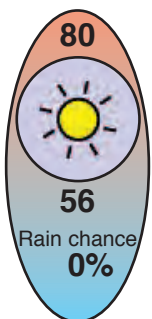
Bottom right: Capt. Will Brink, JRTC and Ops Group public affairs officer, and his children, Nate and Natalee, go through circuit training in their front yard.



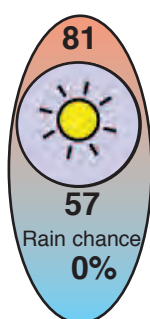
Weekend weather



Friday



Saturday



Sunday

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Viewpoint

In our view

Guardian staff asked local, state and federal Louisiana elected officials and stakeholders to share their appreciation for the Fort Polk community during the COVID-19 pandemic. Here are their responses:



Senator Mike Reese, Louisiana Senate District 30: "I greatly appreciate the service and sacrifice of our military families during this pandemic. From school closures to the stop movement order impacting their normal PCS process, I know they are facing significant challenges. My office is available to assist in any way that we can."



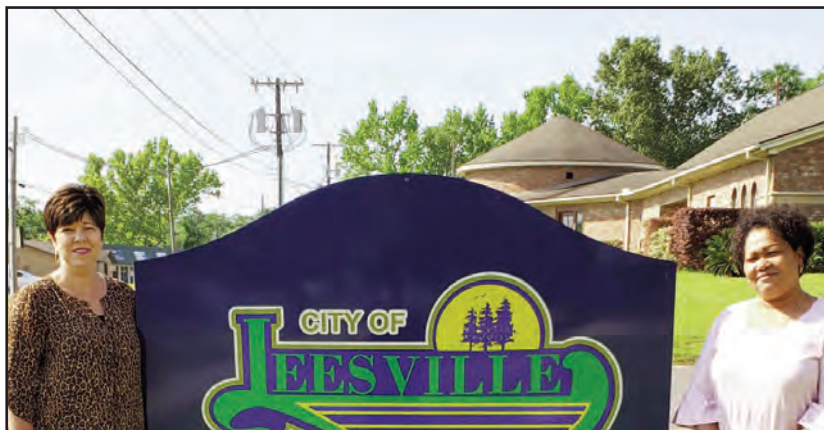
Mayor Misty Clanton, DeRidder: "We will get through this together! Thank you for your continued commitment and service to our country."



Mayor Carolyn Todd, New Llano, (left) pictured with daughter, Kamilah Todd: "Social distancing has made me realize how important a hug, a smile, a handshake and an 'I love you,' really are. I miss all of those. We should let our family and friends know how much we love and appreciate them. I give a great big thank you to Brigadier General Frank and all those that make up the JRTC and Fort Polk, as well as our essential workers of Vernon Parish. #NewLlanoProud."



Mayor Rick Allen, Leesville: "No matter what we face, it doesn't change the fact that when you're stationed at Fort Polk you are a part of the family and this is your community. I couldn't be more grateful to you and your Families for the daily sacrifice you make. I want you to remember, if you have to deploy to protect our freedom, I will protect the family you leave behind with the same intensity with which you protect ours. God Bless you from my family to yours. (Pictured: Rick (back left) and Traci Allen with kids Jailea (front left) and Mason)."



Patti Larney, Leesville City Administrator (left) and Sonny Harrell, City Clerk of Leesville: "The City of Leesville is continuing to operate as close to "normal" as possible. City Hall remains open, however, we are closed to the public at this time with city council meetings conducted via teleconference. The spring concerts were cancelled, our parks are closed and all of these things that provided us the opportunity to mingle with the Soldiers and their families have been cancelled. Things just are not the same. The City of Leesville would like to use this opportunity to let everyone know that we miss seeing you all around town and are eager for things to get back to 'normal.' We hope to see all of you soon."

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Guardian

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

Briefs

COVID-19 screening

Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital's COVID-19 drive-up screening hours are Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-1 p.m., on Texas Avenue next to the Berry Mission Training Center.

Drive-thru pharmacy

The Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital drive-thru pharmacy is open from 8 a.m.-4:30

p.m., Monday through Friday, in the BJACH upper level



parking lot. Follow the signs to drop off prescriptions or park for curbside delivery of previously called in or dropped off prescriptions. Call Kathy Ports at 531-3111 for more information.

PX curbside pickup

To help Soldiers and their Families practice physical distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Fort Polk Main Post Exchange has implemented curbside pickup.

Shoppers at the Fort Polk Exchange are able to order at [ShopMyExchange.com](https://www.shopmyexchange.com) and pick up their purchases at the curb.

Authorized military shoppers with installation access can visit [ShopMyExchange.com](https://www.shopmyexchange.com), find what they need and choose the pick up at store option.

When the order is ready, the store will call and offer the curbside pickup option. At the store, shoppers will park in a designated numbered space, call the phone number on the sign and the order is delivered to their vehicle.

Absentee voting

If you want to vote absentee visit [FVAP.gov](https://www.fvap.gov) or stop by the Fort Polk Installation Voting Office at 920 Bell Richard Ave. Capt. Justin Smith is the installation voting assistance officer.

Call him at 531-0886 or email justin.m.smith.12.mil@mail.mil.

Resilience module

The American Red Cross offers a free virtual resilience module titled "Stress Management and Relaxation" to anyone who lives or works on Fort Polk.

Contact the American Red Cross on Fort Polk at FortPolk@RedCross.org for more information or to schedule the training.



CHUCK CANNON / GUARDIAN

Keeping fit while social distancing

Clockwise, from above left: Sgt. 1st Class Jesus Duran, 509th Infantry Regiment, and his daughter, Yubia, take an early morning run through their off-post housing area; Staff Sgt. Antonio Ellison, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, and his children Jordan, 10, and Hope, 7, get in some circuit training in front of their home; and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Paul Wheeler, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div, runs through his neighborhood.

CACs may be updated online through Sept. 30

By **SUSAN A. MERKNER**
IMCOM

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO, FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas — Army personnel whose Common Access Cards are expiring between now and Sept. 30 may update their cards online.

Eligible cardholders may log onto ID Card Office Online at www.pki.dmdc.osd.mil/self_service/ to update the certificates on their CACs, Uniformed Services ID Card and Volunteer Logical Access Credentials within 30 days of the expiration date.

The temporary changes were approved by the Department of Defense April 16 as a safety measure during the coronavirus pandemic.

"The continued operation of ID card facilities is an essential DoD mission," said Michael C. Klemowski, chief, Soldier Programs Branch, Soldier Programs and Services Division, Installation Management Command. "We can help maintain health and safety standards by reducing the

number of visits to ID card offices for basic actions such as renewing expiring credentials."

Without the change, users who are teleworking would lose access to DoD networks, systems and email, and would be required to visit a DoD ID card office in person for a new card.

Cardholders who have updated their cards online will maintain access to the gates and post facilities, such as the Post Exchange, Commissary and Family Morale, Welfare and Recreation programs.

ID cards may be updated online within 30 days of expiration. For example, a card expiring May 30 may be updated no sooner than May 1.

Online updates will not work for cards that already have expired.

The new measures are in place through Sept. 30 and may be extended depending on the scope of the coronavirus national health emergency, according to the DoD.

For additional information, including step-by-step instructions, visit www.cac.mil/coronavirus.

Army's Military Child of Year blossoms after overcoming life's hurdles

By JOSEPH LACDAN

Army News Service

WASHINGTON — Fionnuala Mahoney kept her secret hidden from her mother, teachers and other children at school.

She sat in the back of the class with her shoulders slumped and her face covered by her long, brown hair, hoping to escape her teacher's gaze.

When finally asked to read a passage from her textbook, she'd remember how her mom had done it the night before. Pretending to read, she'd recite it in class, word for word, with her finger tracing the page. She kept the secret for as long as she could, fooling her peers and teachers, and progressed from kindergarten through first grade.

While attending second grade her teacher finally noticed.

"She didn't want people to know," her mother Shari said. "I guess ... she felt embarrassed or ashamed that she wasn't reading and she didn't know how to verbalize that."

Her mother took her to a special learning teacher who evaluated Fionnuala, finding that she could not read because she had dyslexia.

Children with dyslexia learn differently from other students, responding better to visual cues and multi-sensory instruction. They often possess normal intelligence but struggle to make the association between spoken language and the symbolism of letters. The condition impacts the part of the brain responsible for interpreting words and decoding, and dyslexic students often fall behind their peers in reading comprehension and English.

John Stein, emeritus professor at Oxford University, has postured that dyslexia can be a blessing, spawning skills others don't possess. He has argued people with dyslexia often go on to excel in creative fields such as architecture and art.

According to the Mayo Clinic, dyslexia has no known cure and continues to impact those diagnosed into adulthood.

Finn's older brother began reading before the age of 3. That weighed upon Finn's mind. She struggled to keep pace with her classmates and her grades suffered. "I just thought I wasn't as smart as anyone else," she said.

Father can't always help

Working long hours in the service of others, Capt. Howard Mahoney, an Army surgeon, missed much of his children's childhoods. Medical school and residency meant he could not always help with many of Finn's early struggles as she tried to overcome dyslexia.

"She'd come to me, sometimes, she'd be crying," he said. "She'd be like, 'I don't understand.'"

Today, Finn remains quiet and soft-spoken, but that facade masks a giving personality.

She volunteers at the Lamb Center in Fairfax, Virginia, where the 18-year-old hands clean clothes and soap to veterans and homeless people. She sits with grieving parents of Soldiers who have recently passed in Section 60 at Arlington National Cemetery.

That selflessness began in her household. The Operation Homefront 2019 Army Military Child of the Year acts as caretaker of her 81-year-old grandmother, Joan Boibeaux, who suffers from dementia and she aids her father, a wounded warrior, in his rehabilitation.

Girl who perseveres

Howard and Shari decided to call their

youngest daughter Fionnuala, an old Irish name that meant "white shoulders," and one who "perseveres." According to Irish lore, Fionnuala was one of four children of Lir, an Irish god of the sea. Her jealous stepmother cast a spell, turning her into a swan for 900 years.

Like the Fionnuala of old, Finn endured difficulties early in her life: She spent much of her childhood without her dad, as duty called for extended hours in emergency care and later two years an ocean away in Germany.

Finn slowly would begin to emerge from her shell by the time she reached her middle school years at McLean. Those years coincided with the most difficult time in her family's lives. Her mother told them her father suffered a training accident in Germany.

He would begin rehabilitation that continues to this day.

Torn apart

The nightmares would come without warning. They crept into his mind as he slept in his family's two-story home just outside of Washington D.C..

In his dreams, Howard would find himself strapped to a gurney with one of his limbs separated from his body, like the patients he had treated. He'd wake in the early hours of the morning screaming, trembling from the haunting images.

Howard had served as an Army surgeon at Walter Reed Army Medical Center during the height of the Iraq surge. He had seen it all working in orthopedic trauma: Soldiers who suffered burns in Iraq; Soldiers who needed their limbs removed; Soldiers in immense pain who knew their lives had forever been shaken by the war.

And they kept coming. Dozens, maybe hundreds of patients he treated, working around the clock performing amputations, treating torn muscles and fractures while battling invasive fungal infections. A seven-day work week often became the norm. Sometimes, the patients would die on the operating table.

"I can't think of what got me through that time," he said. "You try to keep your head down."

He'd rarely see his children — his two boys who shared his love of military service, and his youngest child Fionnuala, a girl who emulated her father's quiet demeanor and had his dark brown locks.

When Howard graduated from Tufts University School of Medicine in 2001, he proudly took the podium to receive his White Coat while cradling newborn Finn in his arms.

As a toddler, little Finn would climb aboard her father's back, and with a wide grin, he would carry her around the family's living room and up the stairs to her bedroom. He'd take his children to the movies when he could. When the family still lived in New Hampshire, he'd drive them to the ocean, where he'd teach his children to swim in the Atlantic's waters.

Those times became scarce

The family packed their belongings and moved to Bethesda, Maryland, a suburb of Washington D.C., where the Army assigned Howard as an emergency care physician.

Howard often logged 18-hour work days. He'd leave the family's house before the sun rose and often did not return until his children had fallen asleep.

"Sometimes he'd say he just came home to look at us," his wife said.



Fionnuala Mahoney, the Army's 2020 Military Child of the Year, overcame a lifelong battle with dyslexia and will attend Cornell University. She helped care for her father, retired Capt. Howard Mahoney, during his recovery from a training accident.

He would stand at the door of his children's bedrooms, watching them sleep. Sometimes, he'd kiss them goodnight.

"It was tough not getting to spend as much time with him as I used to," Finn said.

The limited time with his children weighed heavily upon him.

His drive to serve others had pushed him to endure the long hours. As a graduate student attending Cornell University, he had served as an emergency medical technician and volunteer firefighter. He saw the impact the job made on the Ithaca, New York, community and wanted to continue serving others on a larger scale after graduating from medical school.

He later commissioned into the Army as a general surgeon and eventually deployed to Germany in 2012, where he began training as a flight surgeon. A training accident, however, would cut his military career short.

The horrific memory still lingers. He received a reassignment to train as an Army flight doctor at Ansbach Army Base in central Germany. In 2013, he was riding on a Humvee during an exercise when it accidentally rolled over. The impact threw him from his seat inside the vehicle.

The effects of the accident left his jaw broken and his teeth collapsed. He also suffered a traumatic brain injury. The jarring accident shook him so profoundly that to this day he declines to talk about the details.

He initially received treatment for his wounds while in Germany, as fellow surgeons had to reconstruct his jaw.

He not only had to live in the devastating aftermath of his injuries, he exhibited post-traumatic stress disorder. For two years he spent time with other wounded vets in the Army's Warrior Transition Unit near the shores of the Potomac River at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. Together they worked on physical rehabilitation and the slow, difficult transition to recovery.

Adding to Howard's troubles, his roommate at Belvoir, an Army staff sergeant who had broken his arm in Iraq, committed suicide when he shot

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Operation Eagle Claw remembered 40 years later

By **KEITH MORROW**

Air operations officer

Editor's note: On Nov. 4, 1979, militant Iranian students stormed the U.S. embassy in Tehran and took 63 Americans hostage. Some of the hostages were released, but by April 1980, and after numerous failed negotiations, 53 remained. President Jimmy Carter approved a plan April 16, 1980 to rescue the hostages, using elements of all four branches of the military — Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines.

Pvt. Keith Morrow and the men of “Hard Rock” Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, along with Delta operators and several other personnel and aircraft deployed to Wadi Kena Egypt, an old abandoned Soviet air field, that became the staging base for the Iranian hostage rescue operation, code name “Operation Eagle Claw,” that was to kicked off on the evening of April 24. Morrow, who retired in 1999 as a sergeant first class and is currently Fort Polk’s air operations officer, recalls that day.

FORT POLK, La. — After almost 20 hours of flying in a cramped airplane with a bunch of Rangers and all their gear along with three in-flight refueling ops and a couple box meals, the big C-141 aircraft finally touched down. But this time it was different: When the ramp doors opened up, the first thing that hit you was the massive dry heat, like opening a big oven door.

While getting ready to offload the plane a man walked up the ramp and yelled, “Rangers Welcome to Egypt.” That’s when we knew this wasn’t going to be another training rehearsal; it was show time.

After almost five months of constant training and rehearsals, working out every possible scenario, the many hours of riding in C-130 aircraft doing low level flights, sitting on mattresses snap linked into the floor, hugging jeep and fuel bladders, conducting multiple night/air landings with our gun jeeps and bikes or doing low level paratroop operations on runways, cross training with Delta Force operators, conducting building clearing along with multiple live fire scenarios, the day had come: The mission was approved and we were ready.

Up until 1980, basic Rangering had not changed significantly in more than 225 years. Rangers were at home in the wild, able to move long distances on land, air or water. They operated with stealth and cunning, and executed reconnaissance, raids and ambushes much like our forefathers. Back then we still wore and used Vietnam era camo uniforms and equipment, and the patrol cap and black beret was our

trademark headgear. We carried M16A1, Car15, M21 or M14 rifles; our night vision devices were ANPVS 5 and ANPVS 2 starlight scopes.

But Eagle Claw changed all that. I was a brand new 18-year-old Soldier to the Army fresh out of basic, Airborne school and the Ranger Indoctrination Program, not fully understanding what I was getting into. Little did I know I was walking into history by being assigned to “Hard Rock Charlie” Company, 1st Bn, 75th Ranger Reg.

Nov. 4, 1979, had set the wheels for Eagle Claw in motion, and it will always be burned into my memory: That’s the day I signed in at the



Above: Helicopters deliver a response team in an attempt to free hostages during Operation Eagle Claw April 24, 1980.

Right: Rangers offload an aircraft on jeeps and motorcycles as part of Operation Eagle Claw.

Charlie company orderly room, my first duty assignment in the Army, and the day the Iranian students took our Americans hostage. The start of JTF 1-79 began.

My first company commander, Capt. David L. Grange, was a second-generation Ranger. His father fought in WWII, Korea and Vietnam. He jumped into Normandy on D-Day. He commanded the Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia, and retired as a lieutenant general. The senior Grange designed and established the Best Ranger Competition that’s conducted every spring.

Captain Grange served with Lima Company Rangers who were assigned to the 101st Airborne Division during Vietnam. He brought combat focused skills honed on the battlefield to everything he did. Some of our physical training would look similar to what is conducted today, but back then it was deemed nonstandard and frowned upon. We didn’t care that we were training for combat, so

pulling jeeps, running in combat gear, carrying ammo cases or water cans during long terrain runs became the norm

for us. I quickly learned to train as you fight.

To some our training events would seem odd because it had never been done before, but there was always a reason behind them. My favorite example was after returning from a mission, the commander called our platoon over to a C-130. He told the loadmaster to take the brakes off the plane and level the back ramp, then told us to push it. We starting with four men then added one at a time until finally we could make it start rolling. He told us we now knew it took 10 of us if we ever needed to push it out of the way.

It does seem odd to see what it takes to push a



big C-130, but on a desert runway, at night in the middle of enemy territory, we might just have to do that without using a large element.

When “Hard Rock Charlie” received the warning order for Eagle Claw, Grange brought the company into the day room. He wanted to know who drove off road vehicles, who owned motorcycles, who were the best snipers and machine gunners and who had mechanical experience or grew up on a farm and could keep equipment running using “bubble gum and bailing wire.” He was leveraging strengths we didn’t know we had and modifying our task organization for missions we had never seen.

We were issued Vietnam era M-151 Jeeps that were heavily modified for night operations and a capability to carry more than they were built for. Some carried six or seven Rangers, and all were armed to the teeth with at least two M60 machine guns, a 90-mm recoilless rifle, medic and sniper, along with several hundred rounds of ammo; we had to be able to sustain a fight for any length of time. We also modified dirt bikes that were bought at local stores with infrared lights and weapon racks to be used for recon and support.

I crossed trained on various weapons systems: M60 machine gun, MP 5 and Swedish K silenced sub machine guns, silenced .22 caliber or M1911 .45 caliber pistols, the M14 rifle and even the old grease gun. We needed weapons that were small,

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Commentary

Eagle

Continued from page 5

light and capable of doing the jump because there isn't much room on a Jeep.

Another hurdle we had to cross was creating ways to conduct rapid off- and on- loading of various aircraft under the cover of darkness using our night vision. This trial period was rough; we tried many different ways — some with bad results — but you could say we learned quickly that slow was fast and the C-130 loadmasters like that better.

We finally ended up with a method that held true for many years to follow; I used it again four years later while I was assigned to the newly activated 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment.

We also had to design various teams for a multitude of supporting missions from blocking teams, jump clearing teams, pathfinder ops, search and rescue, building clearing teams and a medical first aid team. Then we cross-trained each team so any one team could replace the other if needed.

Each team also trained on engaging troop concentrations, cutting electricity and phone lines, hot-wiring vehicles, operating heavy machinery along with integrating Air Force combat controllers, search and rescue techniques as well as survival, escape and evasion training.

We also needed to develop time warnings, equipment checks, communications checks and accountability procedures like using clipboards covered with luminous tape and grease pencils. All of this training was new and had never been conducted at this large of a scale before, so the learning curve was very short and quick.

We also found that the Army didn't have various items to help us, like personnel radios, IR paper (got that from the CIA), glint tape and storage racks, so we either bought them from local stores or designed and built what we needed. We did a lot of modifications, not only to the vehicles and equipment, but to our uniforms and I can see some still used today with our Soldiers.

The mission for the Rangers of Charlie Company during Operation Eagle claw was twofold: The first was providing security at the refueling site code name "Desert One" with local security during the refueling operation, having the C-130 aircraft top off the RH-53 helicopters with fuel bladders inside. The helos would depart to a hide site until dark then go into Teheran with the rescue teams.

Desert One location was along an old compacted road on the desert floor. The Ranger security team got busy that night; shortly after securing the location a small bus with a few people drove up — it was a group of desert nomads. Once the group was secured, they noticed a truck speeding toward them at a high rate of speed. Not knowing the intentions of the truck — and it not slowing down — the security leader yelled out, "we have to stop him," and a Ranger did by firing an anti-tank round into it, causing it to blow up (it happened to be a fuel truck used by thieves).

Me and the remaining Rangers in Wadi Kena were loaded, prepped and ready to go. We spent most of the day prepping gear, loading ammo and readying the vehicles for loading on planes. Once our final inspections were finished we went back to our cots to rest and wait for time to start.

Our mission was to secure the Manazaiyeh airfield just 35 miles from Teheran, Iran, the location for the transports to meet and cross load the



Above: Soldiers and Special Operations forces deplane in a Middle Eastern desert April 22, 1980, as part of Operation Eagle Claw to free American hostages held in Iran.

Right: A C-141 aircraft is loaded before heading out as part of Operation Eagle Claw.



Delta teams with American hostages onto awaiting C-141 aircraft and bring them to Wadi Kena.

We were ready to take down the airfield and any cost. Our jump teams were ready to parachute in and ensure it was clear to land. Once on the ground we would secure the airfield and defend it from any possible threat until the helos arrived with our Americans. Once the transfer was complete we would clean up the location and extract out and back to Egypt.

During this operation, I was on a Jeep team along with four bikes and a handful of Rangers ready to either jump or air land as a ground force. The first part of our mission was to stand by for possible search and rescue in the event another team had an issue prior to the actual assault onto the runway, then we would follow up with the rest of the Rangers and aircraft.

As we all know, the operation didn't get past the refueling site (Desert One) due to mechanical issues on a few helos so the mission was aborted, but during the extraction, one of the helos hit a parked C-130 while lifting off, unable to see from all the dust that drifted over. This event actually left five Air Force crewmen and three Marines dead.

Some would call this operation a complete failure, but was it really? Our challenges were new and difficult at all levels across the military, but our failure in Iran made us better. We established commands, units, relationships, mission sets and joint tactics, techniques and procedures that survive to this day. The lessons learned fixed a multitude of shortcomings and brought Joint Special Operations Forces into the 21st century.

Many of the Rangers from Charlie Company

went on to work in various Special Operations fields, helping building up units like the TF-160 night stalker aviation unit or with the Special Operations Delta Force.

Ultimately the lessons of Eagle Claw led to the establishment of U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM) as a functional combatant command with service-like responsibilities to man, train and equip Special Operations Forces from every service. Forty years after Eagle Claw, SOF owns the air, land and sea in the areas where they operate.

Not many people know about this operation and it was kept quiet for years. Even when we returned a couple days later, we were sworn to secrecy; friends would pick at us, asking questions but we couldn't answer. We were upset and somewhat hurt with the feeling we had left our Americans (hostages) there, but we kept our heads up and continued to lean forward because there was a second mission in the works.

At times I get a flashback at some of the things we did as part of the train up and when I tell a story about our techniques or some of the training we did in a conversation, most can't believe we did that with what we had. Well, we did and yes, it's true.

Being a plank holder in history to now a much larger organization is a somewhat somber feeling. I'm very proud to have been a part of this event and to have worked with the fine men of "Hard Rock" Charlie, 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment. But I know as for me and my fellow Company Rangers, it's still a heartache to this day knowing we trained so hard to get so close but still couldn't get our Americans home.

But at least we had the guts to try.

Family Advocacy Program focuses on Family, children fun, safety

By JOANNA GARCIA
FAP

FORT POLK, La. — April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. This year's theme is "Strong and Thriving Families."

The Fort Polk Family Advocacy Program focuses on military Families and how, during this time of uncertainty, anxiety, stress and fear, it can continue to develop and increase the skills for strong and thriving Families. FAP encourages parents to give every child a chance to succeed and grow up in a safe, stable and nurturing environment that is free from abuse and neglect.

FAP challenges you to look at COVID-19 as an opportunity to slow down the pace and focus on strengthening relationships with your children and within your families. For Soldiers and Families, this is the first time in many years that rotations, deployments, field exercises and TDYs/schools haven't overwhelmed every day life.

Remember that children have been cut off

from their friends, their regular school routine and their freedom of movement and are struggling to understand, just as parents are. Now, more than ever, children are looking to their parents to provide that sense of calm and reassurance.

The Family Advocacy Program suggests the following activities to do with your children:

- Go on walks around the golf course or Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital trail
- Have water balloon fights or blow bubbles outside
- Let your children be creative by painting on a canvas; even finger-painting!
- Make a meal together
- Watch a movie together (create a movie theater experience)
- Have a picnic outside
- Karaoke night
- Game night
- Like the Fort Polk Family Advocacy Program and the Fort Polk New Parent Support Program Facebook Pages for more ideas.

Tips to prevent child abuse and neglect

Never discipline your child when you are upset. It is important to give yourself time to calm down.

Ensure your children are in a safe place and step away, for a few minutes, if you have to do so.

Use privileges to encourage good behavior; the time-out method may help your child regain control.

Finally, the FAP would like every member of the Fort Polk community to remember APRIL:

- A — Always
- P — Protect
- R — Reach out to
- I — Inspire and
- L — Love children

If you suspect or know of a military child who may be a victim of abuse or neglect, call the Family Advocacy Program HOPELINE, 531-4673, to make a report.

The HOPELINE is answered 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Child

Continued from page 4

himself inside his truck.

When Howard returned to Bethesda, his family found him broken. He retreated to the basement of his family's house, often remaining there for days. He suffered from PTSD and spoke even less to his children.

"There's a certain, I don't want to say regret, but ... maybe a little bit of shame for feeling the way you do," he said. "At the same time you're dealing with a lot of emotions at times: Bursts of anger, bursts of rage ... long periods of depression."

He remained haunted by the accident, and by the hundreds of troops he had treated on the operating table.

The Army finally medically retired him in 2016, more than two years after the rollover injury.

He'd lost so much time

"It weighed on you," Howard said. "I never felt like I could ever catch up."

Finn was the soft-spoken daughter who had grown up in the shadow of her academically accomplished brothers, Howard Jr. and Cormac. Howard Jr. attends the U.S. Military Academy, while Cormac studies at Cornell. She had begun to get better grades and overcome her lifelong hurdles. Now she would help her father overcome his.

"He needed me," Finn said. "Because he spent a lot of his time alone and by himself."

A taste of 'normal'

In the summer of 2016, the family returned to their beach house on the New England shoreline. A hurricane had pounded North Hampton, New Hampshire, causing extensive damage to the house's infrastructure.

Howard had done simple home repairs before, but had never undertaken a home restoration project as extensive as this one.

He had to teach himself new skills: Learning how to remove water damage, perform light demolition, flooring, wiring and repainting.

He likened home restoration to working in the operating room, learning the anatomy of a house's infrastructure. Plumbing became intestinal and electrical wiring became nerves.

Howard found the labors therapeutic, as he used many of the same skills he utilized as a surgeon.

And he had finally bonded with his children in a way he had not since their childhood. Together they re-shingled the roof, painted the house and put in new tiles.

Dad became Dad again.

Like her father, Finn enjoyed hard work and immersing herself in a project. The family has returned to the home each summer since.

"It was hard to get the connection that we used to have," Finn said. "When we were working on the house, it brought us together again."

Making up lost time

Howard would also help his daughter in her schoolwork. Fionnuala shared her father's interest in science and medicine. He'd tutor her, helping with her science and chemistry homework. He'd help her with her pronunciation of Russian words.

They'd study at the family dining table, where father and daughter bonded again like they hadn't in years.

Finn had just begun her freshman year at Walt Whitman High School in Bethesda when the soft-spoken teen began to break her silence, joining the school's gymnastics and cheerleading teams. She surprised many, making the Vikings' varsity cheer squad in each of her four years. Unafraid, she took on the sport's most dangerous role, the flyer, and joyously soared through the air during football and basketball games.

The girl who once feared the gaze of her peers became fearless.

"She's always persevered," Howard said. "She'll be the one who'll take on (something) and say 'I can do it.'"

She replaced the Bs and Cs she received in elementary school with mostly As in high school, qualifying for advanced placement courses.

Now with the cash award earned from winning Operation Homefront's Military Child of the Year, she will attend Cornell following in the footsteps of older brother Cormac and her father. She hopes to pursue a career as a dietitian, or one in forensic science.



Fionnuala Mahoney has starred on the Walt Whitman High School varsity cheerleading team for four years.

COURTESY

Even in her elementary school years, tests revealed Finn possessed high intelligence, even though she had struggled with her grades.

In her senior year, Finn has undertaken graduate-level research with the National Institute of Health as she has worked with developing a Ketogenic diet to suppress tremors in patients who have Parkinson's disease.

Last month, during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mahoneys redirected the Ketogenic research toward boosting the immune system of Coronavirus patients and acute respiratory distress syndrome sufferers. She and her father share their research with scientists across the globe through teleconferencing.

She also teaches Wounded Warriors to kayak along the Potomac. Many of the veterans suffer from immobility or restricted movement. For a few fleeting moments, as they paddle along the river, they forget their limitations, and remember life before their injuries.

"I'd say it gave them freedom from their injuries," Finn said.

When Howard works on the family's New Hampshire home, or helps Finn with her schoolwork, the former surgeon said he rekindles a semblance of normal life.

The girl, who didn't let a learning disability stop her from reaching her academic potential, has now excelled.

"She found that inner strength," her father said.

And Fionnuala helped Dad find his.



Mayor Donna Duvall, Rosepine: "The town of Rosepine supports all our military personnel and their families. Much appreciation to our commander, Soldiers and Families for their selfless sacrifice to our community state and the nation. We salute you."



Dr. Chris Maggio, president, Northwestern State University: "Military personnel at Fort Polk and across the nation and world are invaluable and a source of strength and reinforcement for all of us in these uncertain circumstances. Most are separated from their own families in this time of crisis when the comfort of loved ones is needed more than ever. They are in our thoughts and prayers and truly deserve our respect and appreciation for their sacrifices and unselfish service."



Mayor Vickie Standifer, Simpson: "The Village of Simpson is so appreciative of our Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk Soldiers and Families. Not only do they serve our country, but they also proudly serve and love our local communities. Thank you from the Village of Simpson, for all you do!" (Standifer submitted a photo standing with Col. Ryan K. Roseberry, Fort Polk garrison commander).



Representative Mike Johnson, United States Congress, Louisiana District 4: "The coronavirus pandemic has created unprecedented challenges for our nation, and it has directly impacted our brave service members and their families, many of whom are currently confined to close quarters to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. We hope it is an encouragement to the men and women in uniform at Fort Polk — and those who sacrifice along with them every day to serve our country and preserve our freedom — to be reminded that they have our prayers and our highest gratitude and support. We will get through this difficult time, and we will remain the strongest nation in the world, in large part because of the strength and resolve of the U.S. military. May God be with you all."



Representative Charles Owen, Louisiana State House of Representatives, District 30: "Crises are not new to the American military. It's what we do and it's part of our culture. We never look for one, but when it comes, our Soldiers and Families know what to do. I'm thankful for the strength, character and commitment of our communities, including and especially our neighbors at Fort Polk."



Representative Clay Higgins, United States Congress, Louisiana District 3: "Thank you for your service and dedication to our country. America is solid. We'll make it through this challenge, and we'll emerge stronger as a nation. HOOAH!"



Senator Bill Cassidy, M.D., United States Senate: "The Army is always there to serve. We thank everyone at Fort Polk for being among them, whether on the battlefield, behind the lines, or in this case, among the civilian population, helping to combat the spread of disease, but being on call should you be needed further. We thank you, as always, for everything you do."



Mayor Keith Lewing, Anacoco (center left of flag): "We are proud to be part of the JRTC and Fort Polk community. We love our Soldiers, their Families and all of the retirees and veterans who choose to make the Village of Anacoco their home. We appreciate your sacrifices and look forward to having you visit us and spend time in our community when things get back to normal. (Lewing is joined by Soldiers, veterans, retirees and community members at a 2019 POW/MIA event)."

Please see **View**, page 9

Community

Celebrating purpose of Earth Day beyond April 22

GUARDIAN STAFF

FORT POLK, La. — The 50th anniversary of Earth Day was celebrated April 22.

As most of the world is under some form of stay-at-home-order, it was a quiet celebration without the usual fanfare. That doesn't mean the day or its meaning was forgotten.

Digital Earth Day events took place across the globe, according to www.earthday.org. The site encouraged people to find an event and participate through actions big and small.

The theme for Earth Day 2020 is climate action. The website distinguished the most pressing topic for the 50th anniversary as climate change, which represents a challenge to the future of humanity and the life-support systems that make the world habitable.

Alex A. Beehler, Department of the Army assistant secretary of the Army, said, "Army forests and wetlands are often the last refuge for some threatened and endangered

species. The Army protects 225 threatened and endangered species on its installations and training sites. Every effort taken to ensure our ecosystems thrive also provides realistic and resilient training grounds for our Soldiers."

The Fort Polk Environmental and Natural Resource Management Division works to protect the Fort Polk environment and the Red Cockaded Woodpecker — the only known federally-listed endangered species on Fort Polk.

The Army, according to <https://aec.army.mil>, sustains the environment by maintaining and enhancing natural and cultural resources and making certain the air and water is clean and safe. In sustaining the environment, the Army secures the mission by ensuring environmental infrastructure is managed in harmony and balance with readiness and modernization.

"This year the Army and our nation celebrate 50 years of Earth Day. From installations on the Chesapeake Bay to training sites in the

Mojave Desert, the Army has been managing some of the nation's most valuable environmental resources since before Earth Day became a national day of recognition," Beehler said. "Stewardship of our ecological treasures contributes to a quality environment and is an important part of military readiness."

Beehler said environmental stewardship is an investment in everyone's future.

"Every effort you take to lessen your effect on the environment, every time you use less water or energy, recycle or reuse products, or select products with less packaging rated as more environmentally friendly or energy efficient, you too are making a difference," he said. "By safeguarding the environment today, we can ensure cleaner land, water and air in the future."

At Fort Polk, you might think it would be a difficult in the middle of the COVID-19 stay-at-home order to participate in some way, environmentally speaking.

It's important to trying to figure

out how to help celebrate the earth from home, beyond its special day.

Listed below are a few things you might try. Items on the list can be purchased online or, locally, you can use a pickup or delivery service if available — all while maintaining social distancing guidelines.

- Purchase eco friendly products such as cleaners or lip balm and reusable products such as cloth alternatives to napkins and diapers and more.

- Plant a vegetable, herb or flower garden.

- Care for and maintain the shrubs, trees and grass in your yard in a way that is nontoxic.

- Pick up litter and recycle.

- During the stay-at-home order, take a moment to go outside and enjoy nature.

- When you find natural beauty, photograph it and share it with the world via social media.

- Take the time to research and learn more about environmental issues that are important to you and the place you live.

View

Continued from page 8



Representative Ralph Abraham, M.D., U.S. Congress, Louisiana District 5: "We are eternally grateful for the proud men and women in uniform who sacrifice each and every day to protect the American way of life. You are always in our thoughts and prayers. We will get through this difficult time together. (Pictured with color guard from 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division after the 2019 Memorial Day Ceremony at the Central Louisiana Veterans Cemetery in Leesville)



Sandra McQuain, Executive Director, England Airpark, Alexandria: A heartfelt thanks to our friends at JRTC and Fort Polk for all you do for our community and nation. We miss seeing you and your families at AEX. Stay safe."



Mayor Jeff Hall, Alexandria: "On behalf of myself and the citizens of Alexandria, I want to thank all of the brave men and women of Fort Polk, and all those who serve in our military and National Guard, for your selfless dedication to protecting our country. You are true heroes, and we appreciate your sacrifices and support. We're proud to have you as a neighbor."

Fort Polk Family appears on America's Funniest Home Videos

By 1st Lt. HOLLY RICKETT

C BTRY, 5-25 FAR Platoon Leader

FORT POLK, La. — Staff Sgt. Luis Lopez, a Howitzer section chief assigned to Charlie Battery, 5th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Regiment,

3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, and his wife, Takishia, were featured on America's Funniest Home Videos April 5 after placing third for their "Less Than Ideal, Gender Reveal" video.

The video shows Lopez, a San Diego, Califor-

nia native, and his Family's gender reveal via FaceTime, which was mirrored on their television screen here, with their family in California. Lopez's Family members had coordinated the

Please see **Videos**, page 10

Soldiers, Families can take advantage of tutor.com expanded eligibility

ARMY MWR LIBRARY

FORT POLK, La. — To help alleviate the academic stress experienced by Department of Defense-affiliated personnel and their Families due to COVID-19 disruptions, U.S. DoD Military Community and Family Policy (MC&FP) has temporarily expanded eligibility for the Tutor.com for U.S. Military Families program (Tutor.com/military).

The program provides on-demand academic support 24/7 online in more than 100 subjects for grades kindergarten through college students.

Students can get help in a wide range of courses under the headings of math, science, English, social studies, social science, world languages, business, computer literacy, test prep, nursing/allied health, study and life skill and more.

The program expansion announcement, eligibility details, expanded list of tutored subjects and more is available at www.tutor.com/client-caremil/outreach.

With the temporary program expansion, on-line tutoring and homework help is now available at no cost to any adult or child in a DoD civilian or active duty, National Guard, Reserve or Wounded Warrior military Family who is trying to continue learning while managing unexpected changes to their routines, including:

- Service members, civilian personnel, spouses and college-age children who are enrolled in a college or professional development course.
- Grades K-12 children who are now navigating at-home learning with less access to their teachers.
- ROTC, NROTC, and DoD service academy cadets who are wrapping up an academic year.

Full program eligibility details are posted at www.tutor.com/military/eligibility.

Grades K-12 children in active-duty military Families are still eligible to use Tutor.com/military as usual. Program access also continues unchanged for Coast Guard and civilian Family members, who are funded by Coast Guard Mutual Assistance.

Those who are newly eligible under the expansion should create a new account and those with continued eligibility should use their existing accounts.

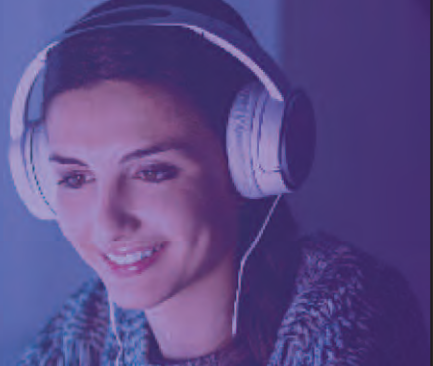
This program expansion for DoD-affiliated personnel and their Families comes at a time when learners of all ages may need extra support; having access to a patient and expert tutor on-demand can help to lessen the impact of school closures and other interruptions to daily routines. The website's tutors, who are available on-demand 24/7, can alleviate stress and build confidence by communicating anonymously with students in real-time, helping them understand and complete self-study assignments, online classes, homework, writing projects and more.

Those who turn to social media for news and resources can visit www.facebook.com/TutorDotComForMilitary to share posts.

Email questions to militarysupport@tutor.com or to Maureen Haney at maureen.haney@tutor.com.

K-12 through College NO-COST TUTORING

+ HOMEWORK HELP AND TEST PREP



Videos

Continued from page 9

gender reveal using a balloon, that when popped, would reveal the baby's gender using colored confetti.

As the balloon was popped, a phone call from Lopez's platoon sergeant blocked the viewing of the gender, causing immediate disarray in the Lopez household.

"I thought it was hilarious, because we were waiting to do the baby reveal for a few days," said Lopez. "When Smoke's call came in, all the buildup and anticipation went out the window."

His wife, Takishia, shared a similar sentiment. "I was shocked and disappointed at first," Takishia said. "I didn't know if we were having a boy or girl but that feeling only lasted a minute. I ended up loving that crazy moment that could never be planned and I think it is hilarious."

Takishia, 12 weeks pregnant at the time, submitted the video to AFV.

Their video was chosen among thousands submitted, and ultimately picked as one of the top three submissions. Back in early February, Lopez, Takishia and their two daughters, Sofia and Elena, were flown to Los Angeles for the show.

"Being on America's Funniest Home Videos was a dream come true," said Takishia. "I've watched the show since I was a kid and I never thought they would pick our clip to be a finalist."

"AFV treated us so well and we even got to see family and friends while on the brief visit to LA. The whole experience from start to finish was a blessing and my whole family is grateful for the once in a lifetime opportunity," she said.

Lopez and his Family are heavily involved



The Lopez Family poses with America's Funniest Home Videos host, Alfonso Ribeiro, (center) on the set of AFV.

within the battery, supporting Soldier and Family Readiness Group functions. His Family has hap-

pily announced their third daughter will be born this July.

Create account to present issues for Army Family Action Plan

By SARAH SEDLACEK

Outreach programs coordination

FORT POLK, La. — Have you been wondering what the Army Family Action Plan is?

The Army Family Action Plan is a process that allows active duty and reserve Soldiers, Department of Defense civilians, Family members, survivors and retirees to identify and voice quality of life concerns to Army senior leadership.

AFAP was the brainchild of a military spouse and since its inception in 1983 has been a vital connection between Army leadership and those that fall under their command and influence.

What has AFAP done for the military?

The following programs began as single issues being addressed at an installation level Army Family Action Plan conference:

- Thrift Savings Plan
- Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits for Family members
- Tricare for Life
- Paternity leave for married Soldiers
- Stabilization for Soldiers who have graduated high school seniors
- Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers program
- School liaison officers
- Full replacement costs for lost or damaged household goods.

How can you contribute?

First and foremost, viable issues need to be submitted.

Unlike the Interactive Customer Evaluation



(ICE) system, which addresses local issues, AFAP is looking for deeper, broader issues that affect the “Total Army Family.”

Submitted issues need to clearly define the perceived problem, discuss why it is a problem and whom it affects, and offer viable solutions that may correct the identified problem.

What happens next?

The AFAP coordinator will review each submitted issue to make sure it is complete and has not been addressed in the last three years. After making it through initial review, issues are presented at the AFAP conference, which is usually

held in October or November each year.

Viable issues that cannot be resolved locally continue to be elevated to the next level of command until the issue is resolved.

How can you submit an issue?

Once you create an account you may submit issues through the myarmyonesource.com website. You may also e-mail issues to the AFAP coordinator at sarah.e.sedlacek2.civ@mail.mil, or drop by Army Community Service, bldg 920 or 924 to pick up a submission tri-fold.

For further questions or concerns, contact the AFAP Coordinator at 531-1895.

Apps offer fun, inexpensive way to stay busy during pandemic

GUARDIAN STAFF

FORT POLK, La. — Brainstorming ways to keep busy or engaged while still maintaining social distancing and stay-at-home guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic has everyone looking into areas or options they might not have considered before.

While many people are enamored with smart phone apps available today, others might not be aware that there is a wide range of apps that are free. Here are a few app examples, listed by CNN that are free and might help you while away the hours:

- For chilling out — Stop, Breathe & Think. This meditation app, colored with cool blues and kind-eyed cartoon instructors, is designed to ease your mind the moment you open it.

Start by checking in and evaluating your physical and emotional state. The app scrambles those results and spits out activities — guided breathing, brief meditations or, on occasion, a calming compilation of cat videos — based on your evaluation.

Those activities are categorized by feelings like compassion, grief and equanimity, and they’re short enough to hold your attention but substantial enough to stave off anxiety. Let them wash over you like a wave of calm.

- For gaming — Heads Up! on Houseparty. You may be familiar with Heads Up! (the Ellen DeGeneres-backed game that’s kind of like a reverse charades), and you may be familiar with Houseparty (the video calling app that mashes all your friends together on one screen).

Here’s how to combine the two. First, download Houseparty.



Click the dice in the upper right corner. Heads Up! should appear in the drop-down column.

- For working out — Runkeeper. The app tracks your runs and measures your progress — and if you keep it up, you can earn rewards toward real-life training gear, too!

- For staying healthy and in-the-know — Apple’s Covid-19 app.

This one-stop shop collects everything you need to know about coronavirus in a neatly packaged and easy-to-navigate hub.

You can customize the information you want by state and screen your symptoms if you suspect you’ve become infected. It’s constantly up-

dated with verifiable information as it’s released.

- For silly, escapist fun — TikTok. Seriously, you’re not on TikTok yet? If you missed the boat, get on board with this bite-sized video platform.

If dancing lipsyncers aren’t for you, filter them out — they’re not the only ones using the app. TikTok is a platform for burgeoning comedians, wholesome families and sardonic activists — and somehow, there’s room for them all.

Cardi B, Reese Witherspoon and the World Health Organization have all found a home on the app, too. So scroll, laugh, learn about the global health crisis, then repeat.

Fort Polk Family makes masks together as community project

By **ANGIE THORNE**

Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. — The Bell Family are members of the Fort Polk community.

That sense of community is important to them, according to Courtney Bell. Bell and her spouse, Spc. James Bell, 46th Engineer Battalion, homeschool their children, and as part of the curriculum, they wanted their kids to perform a community project.

"We want to teach them that to be part of a community, they need to help that community. We are trying to instill good values in them," she said.

Bell said they left the choice of what project to the children.

"Making masks for the Soldiers and Families of Fort Polk was my children's idea," she said.

As a result, Antonio, 9, Gabriel, 5 (he will be 6 next month) and Christopher, 4, work with their mother to make different sized masks with varying designs, depending on who will wear the mask.

"We make masks for Soldiers, moms, dads, boys and girls," said Bell.

Bell said part of the motivation for making the masks came from a desire to see their extended family.

"We are from Texas and we normally spend Easter there with our Family. We couldn't go this year because of the stay-at-home-order," she said.

Bell said her children were disappointed they couldn't visit. She and James had to explain — in a way her young children could understand — why they couldn't make the trip this year.

"We told them that people were in danger of getting sick because of the coronavirus and we had to stay home to stay safe and keep others safe," she said.

Her boys took that information and in their minds came up with the solution of making the masks to not only help keep people from getting sick, but to also make it safe for them to visit their Family in Texas again.

Other than missing family visits in Texas, Bell said her kids are just like everyone else in that they feel a bit caged in at times due to the stay-at-home order.

However, she said a positive in this situation is more time with their dad.

"My boys are over the moon that their dad is home so much right now. So, though we have to work to stay safe, we have more time to spend together. That's a positive in such a challenging situation," she said.

In addition to fulfilling a community proj-



Courtney Bell works at her sewing machine as her children form an assembly line to feed her the pieces she needs to make masks. Antonio, 9, (right) irons mask fabric squares for Gabriel, 5, (left) who takes them and traces the mask outline on the fabric and stacks them so they can be cut out and pinned together. Christopher, 4, is on the floor pretending to measure uncut fabrics.

ect goal, Bell said her kids are learning skills they that will come in handy.

"They are learning about sewing, ironing, measuring and more. My husband took them outside to teach them how to read a measuring tape correctly to a 16th of an inch. That helped them measure the material so it would be correct depending on the different sizes for each mask," she said.

Bell said she and her boys had a little assembly line going while making the masks and, with practice, were getting faster at making them.

"I did the actual sewing and gave each of my boys a job based on their capabilities. My oldest, Antonio, cuts the pattern and pins the cloth together. Gabriel cuts the strips that tie the mask on your face and the littlest, Christopher, helps out where he can. He just likes to have fun and be part of everything," she said.

Bell said she has had special requests for their masks.

"We've had Fort Polk Families and units contact us and ask us to make their masks," she said.

In addition, the Bell Family has a goal to make masks for the larger Fort Polk community and leave them at Fort Polk's Army Community Service building, 920 Bell Richard Ave., for people to pick up.

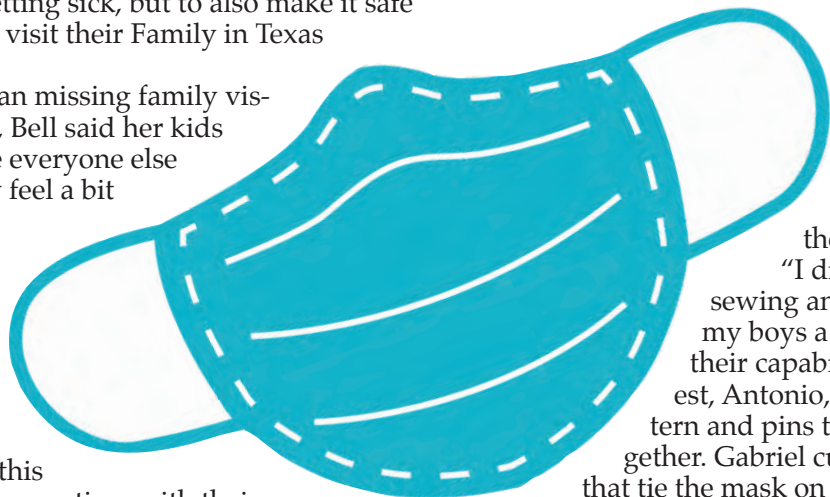
"We are going to attempt to drop off at least seven masks of each kind we make at ACS each Monday," she said.

Clarence Harmonson, ACS director, said the opportunity to support a military spouse and her children's endeavor to ensure Fort Polk Soldiers and Family members remain protected during the COVID-19 pandemic is a blessing.

"Individuals requesting protective masks are delighted when they see the assortment of patterns available in the Bell Family's children and adult-sized masks," Harmonson said. "Kids love wearing the tot-sized masks because they're adorned with the familiar faces of their favorite characters; Soldiers are grateful to obtain cloth face-coverings that adhere to Department of Defense guidance and are free-of-charge. The attention to detail and great amount of care that Courtney Bell, her spouse, James, and their sons, Antonio, Gabriel, Christopher, put into creating each mask is highly apparent and sincerely appreciated."

Bell said she feels no gesture is too small in a situation like this and is proud of the boys because she feels they are making a positive difference.

"We feel like we are doing our small part to help keep people safe," she said.



Close National Library Week, April 19-25, by opening good book

GUARDIAN STAFF

FORT POLK, La. — The theme for National Library Week, held April 19 through Saturday, is “Find your place at the library.” The theme was chosen well before the emergence of a global pandemic forced most libraries to temporarily close their facilities.

But reading is too important to give up just because you can’t physically visit the library to peruse its aisles upon aisles of bookshelves, wonderful though that may be.

Don’t despair: You can still find your place at the library because libraries are open for business online, providing virtual services and digital content to communities that need them more than ever.

Take advantage of a little screen time as you access ebooks, movies, music, video games and more — from the comfort of your home.

Locally, if you have a library card to Allen Memorial Library, you can visit: www.polk.armymwr.com/programs/allen-memorial-library to find a link to the general library information system, which includes most Army Family Morale, Welfare and Recreation libraries. The automated system allows a registered library user to have access to downloadable audio books and ebooks for free. First time users can click on “New to My Account” to acquire a pin number.

If you have library cards at the Vernon Parish (www.youseemore.com/VernonParish/) or Beau-

regard Parish (www.library.beau.org/) libraries, you can also use your library card number to access ebooks online from their website home pages.

According to **Healthline.com**, reading can positively affect your life. Benefits include:

- **Strengthening the brain** — using MRI scans, researchers have confirmed that reading involves a complex network of circuits and signals in the brain. As your reading ability matures, those networks also get stronger and more sophisticated.

- **Increasing empathy** — research shows that people who read fiction that delves into the lives of characters show an enhanced ability to understand the feelings and beliefs of others.

- **Building vocabulary** — students who begin reading at a young age tend to develop large vocabularies which can help with everything from test scores to job opportunities.

- **Preventing cognitive decline** — the National Institute on Aging recommends reading books and magazines as a way of keeping your mind engaged as you grow older. Seniors who read and solve math problems every day maintain and improve their cognitive functioning.

- **Reducing stress** — a study found that 30 minutes of reading lowers blood pressure, heart rate and feelings of psychological distress just as effectively as yoga and humor do.



- **Aiding sleep** — doctors at the Mayo Clinic suggest reading as part of a regular sleep routine. For best results, you may want to choose a print book rather than reading on a screen because the light emitted by your device could keep you awake and lead to other unwanted health outcomes.

- **Alleviating depression** — people with depression often feel isolated and estranged from others. That’s a feeling books can sometimes lessen. Reading fiction can allow a temporary escape from the trouble around you as you are swept up in the imagined experiences of the characters, while nonfiction self-help books can teach strategies that may help manage symptoms.

Research shows that when parent read to their kids, many of the same rewards, such as strengthening visual imagery, story comprehension, word meaning and social, emotional and character development, which can give them an advantage when they head to school.

So take a little of the extra Family time you have due to the stay-at-home-order to snuggle in with your kids, borrow a good book or two from your local e-libraries and read to relax, learn and bring a bit of joy to your life.

Books offer entertainment, escape, comfort during COVID-19 uncertainty

GUARDIAN STAFF

FORT POLK, La. — One of the most pleasant ways to while away the hours, especially in this age of stay-at-home and social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic, is to curl up with a good book, your favorite beverage and enjoy — whether the book is fiction or non-fiction.

The Boston Globe asked the staff at some of Beantown’s most popular book stores to send in their picks of the best books to keep a person company. Below are the reads they recommend for this era of social distancing and self-quarantine.

Fiction

- **“Magic for Liars”** by Sarah Gailey

“A noir detective story meets Harry Potter in this murder mystery at a magical high school in California.” — Marika McCoola, Porter Square Books

- **“Rat Rule 79”** By Rivka Galchen, Elena Megalos

“An inventive adventure full of wordplay, riddles and strangely wonderful characters, this book is an utter delight. For readers of all ages who love ‘The Phantom Tollbooth,’ ‘Haroun and the Sea of Stories’ and ‘Alice in Wonderland.’” — Marika McCoola, Porter Square Books

- **“North and South”** by Eliza-

beth Gaskell

“This lesser-known classic has the longing looks of Austen and the class commentary of Dickens. Also, there’s a several hour mini-series you can watch when you’re done.” — Amy Brabenec, Brookline Booksmith

- **“Magpie Murders”** by Anthony Horowitz

“‘Magpie Murders’ by Anthony Horowitz is an Agatha Christie-style British murder mystery, a book within a book and a pure, escapist delight.” — Rachel Cass, Harvard Book Store

- **“The Golden Age”** by Roxanne Moreil and Cyril Pedrosa

“An exiled princess is going to retake her throne and save the kingdom from power-hungry lords in one of the most gorgeous graphic novels to come out in recent years. Read it once to tear through the story then read it a second time to savor the artwork.” — Amy Brabenec, Brookline Booksmith

Nonfiction

- **“National Geographic Backyard Guides to the Birds of North America”** by Jonathan Alderfer

“This month we were already featuring a selection of books on birds, so I’d recommend picking up a bird guide like the ‘National Geographic Backyard Guides to the Birds of North America’ and making the most of time spent in your



own backyard or walking in nature on your own.” — Rachel Cass, Harvard Book Store

- **“Making Comics”** by Lynda Barry

“Sitting down with this book and materials available at any office supply shop, readers can work through Barry’s course, and learn about abilities they’d forgotten they had. A brilliant, accessible book from an extraordinary person.” — Marika McCoola, Porter Square Books

- **“A Cook’s Tour”** by Anthony Bourdain

“Bourdain’s collection of essays changed how I eat and how I travel. Like all the best travel writing, it is a way to escape the four walls of your room and indulge in the natural curiosity that makes travel so important and rewarding. I’ve read several of them many times so, for me, they bring the comfort of the familiar, while still celebrating the joy of discovery.” — Dina Mardell, Porter Square Books.

Estate planning important to family's future

By KEITH MILAM
OSJA

FORT POLK, La. — Estate planning is one of those essential personal checklist items that people prefer to avoid because it requires them to contemplate a very unpleasant circumstance — their death. Unfortunately, as Benjamin Franklin so aptly stated, “there are two things certain and unavoidable: Taxes and death.” Procrastination in planning for a person's demise can unnecessarily place their family in a precarious position. Fortunately, the legal assistance attorneys at the Fort Polk Office of the Staff Judge Advocate can help.

Often, when a loved one unexpectedly dies and there has been a lack of planning, the rest of the family not only suffers from the emotional upheaval of the loss, but also from financial turmoil. If you are an active-duty service member, a military dependent or a retiree, you can minimize the financial impact of your death with just a little planning and at absolutely no expense to you.

As the phrase suggests, estate planning is a personalized plan of what will happen with your minor children and property, including life insurance, after you die. You decide now about these important matters, while you are still capable of doing so.

By doing so, you avoid placing major decisions about your legal and financial affairs in the hands of a stranger, who may not have your — or your family's — best interests

at heart.

In addition, not only are you able to make provisions for your property, insurance and children, but you can instruct your heirs as to where you'd like be buried or cremated, with military honors if appropriate; direct your doctors and hospitals regarding life support if you become incapacitated; or designate a trusted friend or family member to handle your financial matters or to make medical decisions on your behalf, when you're not mentally or physically able to do so.

There are three primary documents to consider when doing your estate planning:

- **Last Will and Testament.** This is the document in which you declare who inherits your property when you die. Without it, the laws of your home state will dictate who will inherit your property. Not only does this document give you the freedom to choose who will get your property, but you can also designate an executor of your estate, a trusted person who will ensure that your wishes are carried out. You can even direct who will be entrusted with the care of your children, in the event both parents die.

- **Living Will.** If you develop a health condition that requires you to be placed on life support, and a medical determination is made that there is no hope for your recovery, a Living Will can direct your attending physician or hospital to disconnect you from the life support equipment and to allow you to die naturally. Not everyone chooses to have this as part of his or her port-



folio, but you should give it thoughtful consideration. Without it, doctors are legally required to keep you alive as long as medically possible.

- **Durable Power of Attorney.** This differs from the standard Power of Attorney in that you give the legal authority to a trusted and capable family member or a friend to act on your behalf when you are incapable of doing so. Durable Powers of Attorney remain valid only while you are alive and, as you would be incapacitated, the authority you grant can be misused. Nonetheless, it can authorize a trusted person to carry out routine legal matters, such as buying or selling a house or car; making or altering your financial arrangements; or communicate and make decisions

with doctors, insurance companies or government agencies. In the context of estate planning, a Durable Power of Attorney can be crucial for your family to be able to care and provide for you — and themselves — in your last days. Without it, most, if not all, of these various institutions will not discuss your personal and confidential matters with anyone.

If you are an active-duty service member, a dependent or a retiree, estate planning services and documents are provided to you, free of charge.

Visit the Legal Assistance Office located in the building of the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate at 7090 Alabama Ave., next to the Showboat Theater, or call 531-2580 for an appointment.

Punishment meted out to Soldiers for UCMJ violations

OSJA

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

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

Across Fort Polk, the following disciplinary issues continue to be prevalent: Breaking quarantine or isolation orders, violating General Order No. 1, driving under the influence of alcohol, wrongful use or possession of controlled substances, fraternization and sexual assault. Below are recent examples of adverse legal actions for units within the Fort Polk jurisdiction.

- A first lieutenant, assigned to 3rd Battalion, 353rd Regiment, Joint Readiness Training Center Operations Group, was issued a General Officer Memorandum of Reprimand for driving under

the influence of alcohol and refusing to complete a lawfully requested breathalyzer. The commanding general directed filing the reprimand in the Soldier's AMHRR.

- A staff sergeant, assigned to 3rd Bn, 353rd Reg, JRTC Ops Gp, was issued a General Officer Memorandum of Reprimand for driving under the influence of alcohol with a blood alcohol content of 0.129%. The commanding general directed filing the reprimand in the Soldier's AMHRR.

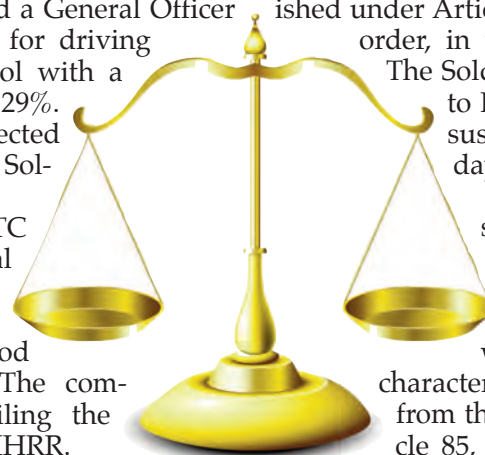
- A captain, assigned to JRTC Ops Gp, was issued a General Officer Memorandum of Reprimand for driving under the influence of alcohol with a blood alcohol content of 0.174%. The commanding general directed filing the reprimand in the Soldier's AMHRR.

- A first lieutenant, assigned to 5th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, was punished under Article 15 for disobeying a lawful order (breaking quarantine), in violation of Article

92, UCMJ. The Soldier was sentenced to a forfeiture of \$2,567 pay for 2 months, restriction for 14 days and a written reprimand.

- A sergeant, assigned to 317th Brigade Engineer Battalion, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div, was punished under Article 15 for violating a quarantine order, in violation of Article 92, UCMJ. The Soldier was sentenced to reduction to E-4 and forfeiture of \$1,332 pay, suspended for 180 days, and 45 days of extra duty.

- A private first class, assigned to 1st Battalion, 509th Infantry Regiment, JRTC Ops Gp, was administratively separated under Chapter 10, with an Other Than Honorable characterization of service for desertion from the US Army in violation of Article 85, UCMJ, and larceny of another servicemember's vehicle in violation of Article 121, UCMJ. Generally, an OTH characterization of service results in the loss of a majority of a service member's Veteran's Administration benefits.



Basic training taught lessons still valued today

By **CHUCK CANNON**

Command information officer

FORT POLK, La. — The COVID-19 pandemic has many of us teleworking. If you're like me, it also affords the opportunity to reminisce.

Often, I'll have thoughts run through the recesses of my mind as I try to sleep, and will come up with story or column ideas that, at the



Cannon

time, seem almost Pulitzer worthy. When I wake up the next morning and start to write down the thoughts I had the night before, I realize that not only were they not Pulitzer worthy, often they were not even worth the pa-

per they were written on.

However, recently I had a column thought bounce around my head as it lay on my pillow and decided the next morning it might even be worth jotting down.

First, let me ask a question: How many of you knew that Fort Polk once was a basic training site?

I know that Tiger Land has the reputation for being the training ground for infantry Soldiers headed to Vietnam in the 60s and early 70s, complete with mock villages much like those in the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk "box" that prepares units to deploy to battle fields across the globe. Most likely most of you know about the Tiger Land days.

But did you know other military occupational specialties also took

basic training at Fort Polk before heading out to their MOS producing schools?

As a Louisiana native, when I joined the Army in March 1974 following a discussion with my dad — a tale for another day — I was assigned to the Fort Polk Reception Station where I was then placed in D-1-1 for training.

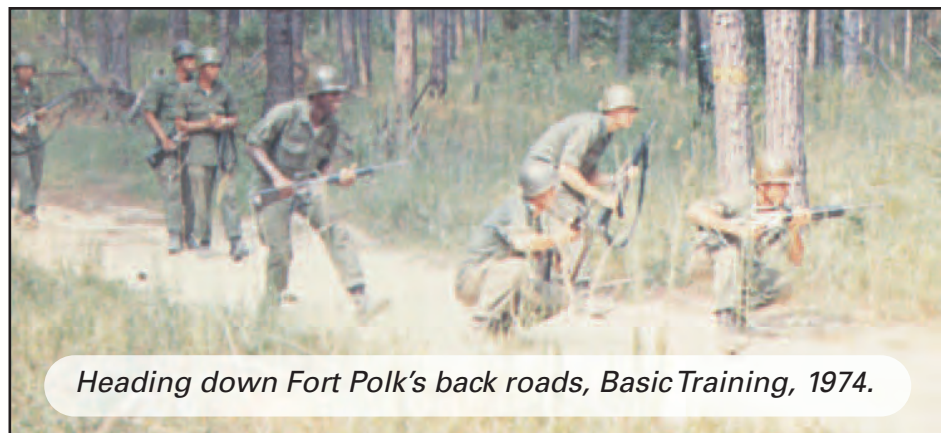
There are many things I remember about those eight weeks of training at Fort Polk: I went from a 40-inch waist and 250 pounds to a 32-inch waist and 210 pounds; I survived both the gas chamber and the grenade range, barely; and I learned that a human (barely) could allow a lizard to crawl down his throat, then pull it back out by a string tied to its tail.

I also learned two valuable lessons, both on the same bivouac to Fort Polk's training area: Sometimes it's best to keep your thoughts to yourself, and just because it seems like it might be a good idea, that's not necessarily the case.

So, keeping your thoughts to yourself:

My best friend in basic — and a friend still to this day — was Joe Hiller. Joe hailed from Helena, Montana. He was a bona fide cowboy and guitar player. In fact, Joe taught me most of the guitar skills I have during our days serving as military policemen in Kaiserslautern, Germany.

Sorry about that little sidetrack. Anyway, Joe and I usually stood next to each other in formation, and on this occasion we had marched out of the cantonment area and were headed to our bivouac site,



Heading down Fort Polk's back roads, Basic Training, 1974.

route stepping along a dirt road. As Joe and I were both musically inclined, we enjoyed the cadence songs we sang as we marched. Of course, with route step, there was no cadence, but that didn't keep my sharp mind from thinking of new songs to share.

One of the more popular cadences was, "If I had a low IQ, I could be a (fill in the blank with unit, MOS, or whatever) too." Joe was standing to my front and I said, "Hey Joe; I got a new cadence. If I had a low IQ, I could be a drill sergeant too."

I immediately felt a tap on my shoulder. Yep, it was Drill Sgt. Poulard, who had made it clear on the first day of basic that he didn't like anybody, not his wife, his children, and certainly not any of us blankety-blanks.

He said, "You think that's funny Cannon? Step back here with me."

As I fell out I told Joe, "Tell my mom I died with my boots on."

When we reached the back of the formation Poulard told me to do the following: Say "It's the enemy,"

then low crawl to the nearest cover. Once I reached the cover I was to yell, "bang bang," then stand up and continue through the woods. I was walking parallel to the road my fellow trainees

were walking on, but I was low crawling through mud, creeks, briars and stumps, all the while watching for spiders, snakes and other creepy crawlers.

This went on for what seemed like an eternity, when Poulard yelled, "Cannon, recover." He asked if I had any other cadences I'd like to share and I assured him I didn't. As I moved back into my spot behind Hiller, I could hear the Montana cowboy chuckling. I learned a valuable lesson: If it doesn't need to be said, don't say it.

The second lesson came on the third and final night of our bivouac. The rumor was we would be hit with tear gas while we were out. As this was the final night, if the rumors were true, we were going to be hit. Hiller and I were tent mates and decided the best way to avoid getting a snoot full of tear gas was to go to sleep with our masks on. We did.

At about 3 a.m., Hiller and I were awakened by a drill sergeant pulling us out of our tent by our boots.

As we looked around, we saw Soldiers running around like chickens with their heads cut off, trying to ward off the tear gas that permeated the area.

Hiller and I were oblivious to the mayhem as we stood with our gas masks on.

The drill sergeant ripped our masks off, and wouldn't let us put them back on.

We stood there like a couple of morons as everyone else donned their masks.

The drill sergeant then announced, "You might think you're being smart by sleeping with your masks on, however, if the enemy had really attacked, you'd be dead, like these two idiots, who would have been shot while sleeping with their masks on."

It seemed like a good idea at the time, but once again, I learned a valuable lesson: While it might seem logical at first, think it through before acting; your life might depend on it.

Commentary

Anacoco joins forces to feed those in need

By **DANA HORNTRUJILLO**

Protocol coordinator

FORT POLK, La. — COVID-19 has brought a lot of changes into our lives, but one thing will always remain the same for a little town nestled in the heart of Vernon Parish.

The Mayor of Anacoco, Keith Lewing, the Village Council, members of the Masonic Orange Lodge, Anacoco Fire Department, Waste Connections and Patrick Smyth (Dairy Queen), along with several volunteers, joined with a common goal to feed as many people throughout the community, young and old alike.

Commentary

Military, retirees and anyone else were welcomed. Taking certain precautions to ensure social distancing was maintained, individuals queued up in their vehicles and were handed — through their windows — meals of chicken dinners, hot dogs, sausage, hamburgers, chips, potato salad, beans and a variety of homemade desserts.

All parties shared in fellowship and a sense of civic devotion. Plans are in the works for round two on May 2.

The community of Anacoco truly embodies the phrase "Taking care of others." Come join us.

All are welcome.