



# FORGING THE

# WARRIOR SPIRIT

## THE JRTC & FORT POLK GUARDIAN

Vol. 47, No. 18

Home of Heroes @ Fort Polk, LA

May 1, 2020



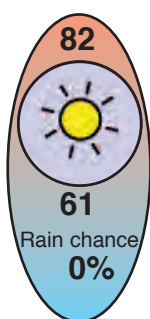
CHRISTY GRAHAM / GUARDIAN

### Forging the Warrior Spirit

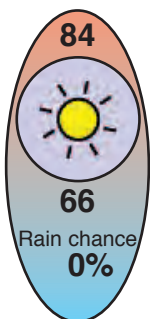
**From left:** Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher M. Ausbun, garrison command sergeant major; Chevina Phillips, education services officer; Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk commanding general; Larry Piwko, Directorate of Human Resources; and Col. Ryan K. Roseberry, Fort Polk gar-

rison commander, place a "Forging the Warrior Spirit" anvil in front of the Fort Polk Education Center on Colorado Avenue April 28. It's appropriate an anvil is placed at the entrance to the education center as education is a major tenant of Forging the Warrior Spirit, says Roseberry.

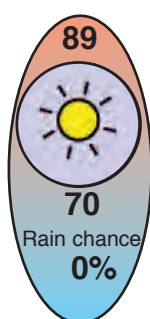
### Weekend weather



Friday



Saturday



Sunday

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# Viewpoint

## In our view

Guardian staff asked local graduating seniors, "What have you been doing during the stay-at-home order and what are your plans for the future?" Here are their responses:



**Ashlynn Moretti, Leesville High School:** "During the stay-at-home order I started painting again, which I haven't done in a long time. I've also been keeping up with my friends through social media and FaceTime. After graduation, I'm hoping the lockdown will be lifted, so I can visit some of my friends before I start college. I will be attending Pitt University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to major in biology — biomedical or ecology."



**Keremi Stander, Leesville High School:** "I've been pursuing personal interests such as drawing, dancing and playing video and family games like Monopoly, phase 10, dominoes, kickball, volleyball and football. I've also been working with my dad around the house. I plan to enjoy the rest of the summer with my family before attending the University of Louisiana-Lafayette, in the fall, to start my trek toward a degree in kinesiology."



**Jayln Kern, Rosepine High School:** "I've been working but also keeping my distance from people. I miss having something to do every day, seeing my favorite teachers; but I have still managed to keep in touch with my friends. After graduation, I plan to attend college to become a labor and delivery nurse."



**Chandler Bevins, Abeka Christian Academy:** "I'm homeschooled, so COVID-19 didn't affect me as badly as some seniors. I've done a lot of fishing; and after graduation, I plan to become an electrician."



**Troyvon Jackson, Leesville High School:** "I don't miss school specifically. I cherish the memories of the friendly auras of most of the teachers, staff and a good handful of the students. As far as celebrations go, my family is still happily celebrating my graduation. I'm receiving items from generous family members and teachers I've known during my school year. I'm happy to know they care and will always appreciate their kind-hearted efforts and kindred minds and souls."



**Angel Martin, Pickering High School:** "I feel like I wasn't given the chance to really experience being a senior. I understand the virus and how serious it is, but I feel robbed of my last year before I endure the real world. After graduation, I plan to get my license and become a correctional officer; or I may pursue cosmetology school."

Please see **Seniors**, page 6



## 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 town hall

The Fort Polk team is invited to attend the COVID-19 live-streamed Face book town hall today at noon.

The town hall, the 10th in a series of informative briefings about COVID-19, can be viewed live on the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk Face book page at <https://www.facebook.com/JRT-CandFortPolk>.

The town hall is hosted by Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, commander of the JRTC and Fort Polk, and also features Col. Ryan Roseberry, garrison commander, and Col. Jody Dugai, commander of Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital.

### SSA inventory

The Supply Support Activity, (AY3), located in bldg 4374, will be closed to conduct annual inventory from May 11-15. Customers are asked to plan accordingly. The SSA reopens for normal business May 18.

For more information call Bonnie Edwards at 531-0950 or Darrian Gailes at 531-2243.

### Passport applications

The Fort Polk passport office has resumed passport application processing on a limited basis. Applications are subject to the following restrictions:

- Applications accepted by appointment only on Wednesdays. No walk-ins.
- Applicants must have valid, hard copy orders with report date in May, June or July listing a destination requiring a passport.
- Applicants Must have accurate and complete passport application and original required documents such as birth certificate. Applicants with incomplete applications or paperwork will be asked to reschedule their appointment.
- Passport processing cannot be expedited at this time. Applications will be processed on a routine basis.

One individual applicant or family will be admitted into the office at a time for passport processing.

Applicants are asked to wear face masks to include children who are old enough to safely wear a mask. Service members will need to bring or wear a civilian shirt. If you are sick please reschedule your appointment.

Call 531-1602/1307/2857 for appointments, questions or concerns and additional instructions.



Cpt. David Forrester, the officer in charge of the 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment's Unbreakable Warrior program, works a Yoga pose prior to a workout.



1ST LT. SCOTT KERCHBERGER / 2ND BN, 4TH INF REG, 3RD BCT, 10TH MTN DIV

## COVID-19 challenges increase PT competition

By 1st Lt. SCOTT KERCHBERGER

2nd Bn, 4th Inf Reg, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div

*"PT might not be the most important thing you do that day, but it is the most important thing you do every day,"* Retired Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel Dailey.

FORT POLK, La. — Dailey's words find a more important meaning during the COVID-19 climate. Without the ability to conduct squad-level physical training, leaders across the Army are working through ways to keep their forces physically fit, despite athletic facility closures.

Capt. William Vuylsteke, an assistant operations officer assigned to 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, attributes the issue to motivation.

"PT is not hard," said Vuylsteke. "In fact, it's easy.

"A good PT plan is just one YouTube or Instagram search away. You just have to get off the couch and do it."

With social-distancing restrictions, the Army faces new challenges in keeping Soldiers physically engaged. Soldiers are constantly battling urges to sleep through mornings and play Xbox for hours.

Many Soldiers do have the individual discipline to work out on their own; but, when it comes to combat, each team is only as strong as its weakest link.

Vuylsteke's unit — 2nd Bn, 4th Inf Reg — has attacked this problem with two new initiatives.

The Unbreakable Warrior Program is the first initiative, led by Capt. David Forrester, the officer in charge of 2nd Bn, 4th Inf Reg.

The program provides information to Soldiers that will improve their fitness techniques and levels and posts videos to the battalion Facebook page featuring Forrester's lessons on fitness topics such as proper lifting techniques, recovery, stretches and nutritional guidelines.

"The Unbreakable Warrior Program is making strides," said Forrester. "However, the challenge is continuing to help Warriors recover while maintaining social-distancing in these unprecedented times."

In addition to improving overall fitness through the UBW program, the Warrior battalion leadership challenges Soldiers to compete in the Warrior Workout of the Week competition, which constitutes the second initiative.

On Mondays, a new challenge testing the strength or endurance of a different set of muscles is posted to the battalion's Facebook page. At the end of the week, two awards are given: One is for the fastest time or most weight moved, and the other is for the Soldier who shows true resilience.

Spc. Cole Lang, an infantryman assigned to 2nd Bn 4th Inf Reg, won the first competition by completing 50 burpee pull-ups in 4 minutes and 31 seconds, while wearing a plate carrier. Pfc. Carmelo Rodriguez and Pvt. Daniel Lozano, 2nd Bn 4th Inf Reg, came in second behind Lang.

"I'm excited for more," Rodriguez said. "I like the challenge because it is tough."

These Soldiers share a renewed excitement to compete and win. Their zeal as infantrymen feeds a desire to push their physical limits.

For more information on the Unbreakable Warrior Program and the Warrior Workout of the Week, visit the 2nd Bn, 4th Inf Reg on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/2ndBN4thIN/>.



# Army news

## DoD plans for resumption of normal operations after pandemic

By JIM GARAMONE

Army News Service

WASHINGTON — Defense Department planners are working on how to resume normal military operations following the coronavirus pandemic, Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Rath Hoffman said.

Because defense is a full-time necessity, the military cannot shut down, Hoffman said at a Pentagon news conference held April 24. Still, officials curtailed exercises, limited training, stopped military moves and took other measures to flatten the curve of coronavirus infections.

"We'll be evaluating many different areas," Hoffman said. "One is training — how are we protecting our trainees and keeping the pipeline full? We're continuing to look at that, continuing to adopt and adapt so that we can pursue full training classes in the future."

Defense Secretary Dr. Mark T. Esper is also closely following the stop-movement order. The order goes until June 30. "But once it is lifted — and the secretary is reevaluating that every 15 days — how are we going to deal with the backlog of individuals that need to move throughout the world?" Hoffman said.

This is a complex issue, and the planners at the U.S. Transportation Command have the lead for the department.

The DoD has done a good job of protecting strategic forces, but officials are still going to look at the process to see if there are better ways to do this in the future, Hoffman said.

Even if there is a return to normal, the virus will still be around. DoD planners are looking at the testing program; and officials are putting the final touches on the system it will employ and getting the supplies that will be needed. DoD scientists and doctors are also heavily involved in developing a vaccine and the treatment protocols



Staff Sgt. JACK SANDERS / U.S. AIR FORCE

*Jonathan Rath Hoffman, assistant to the secretary of defense for public affairs, holds a news conference on COVID-19 efforts at the Pentagon, April 24.*

for COVID-19, Hoffman said. "We're going to be doing that for months and months going forward," he added.

Finally, the department is looking at the industrial base with an eye to replenishing the DoD stockpile, in the event of future crises, and producing more equipment for the coronavirus fight, he said.

Hoffman said the Navy hospital ship USNS Comfort left New York City April 30. It will return to its homeport of Norfolk, Virginia, to restock and get ready for another mission, if needed. "We'll be looking to (the Federal Emergency Management Agency) to identify where that next

location is; they are the federal government's lead on this, and so they're the ones who will be tasking us," he said.

Hoffman cited "modest progress" in mitigating the virus in the nation's hardest-hit city, calling that "a welcome sign." The rate of infections in New York is declining, he noted, adding that there are still many places where this is not the case, and that the department stands ready to assist.

"As of today, we have more than 60,000 personnel deployed nationwide, including 4,400 medical professionals on the front lines," Hoffman said.

## USO offers virtual visits, gaming during COVID quarantine

By KATIE LANGE

Defense.gov

WASHINGTON — Entertainment in the age of the new coronavirus has turned virtual, and that has the USO adapting as well.

The USO traditionally holds live shows and tours across the world featuring celebrities who entertain U.S. service members. The shows have been a staple of military service for nearly 80 years. Due to social-distancing guidelines, those live shows and meet-and-greets were put on hold in late March.

"The USO has always been by the side of our military and their families, and COVID-19 does not change this," said USO Chief Operating Officer Alan Reyes. "Our mission of connection is more critical than ever before ... to boost morale during the pandemic."

Nearly 62,000 Defense Department personnel, including active-duty medical staff, National Guardsmen and the Army Corps of Engineers, have been called to support COVID relief efforts across the country. The USO wanted to continue

its programming to support them, so it did some rearranging.

With help from industry leaders, the USO has quickly shifted to virtual programming and engagements for troops and military families. To express gratitude for the efforts of the military community, celebrities are doing virtual-base visits and making one-on-one calls to service members.

Prescreening events, online workshops, classes and question-and-answer sessions will be available through June.

A USO channel, set to launch this summer on the gaming system Twitch, will let NBA and NFL players stream live and play video games with service members.

Upcoming engagements include virtual events with novel writer Gillian Flynn, comedians Sarah Silverman and Craig Robinson and singers Ciara, Trace Adkins and Ne-Yo.

So far, the virtual entertainment has included:

- Actor David Boreanaz, of the CBS show "SEAL Team," took part in video calls with service members at USO, Al Asad, Iraq.

- Grammy award-winning musicians The Chainsmokers held a live stream question and answer session with service members in Southwest Asia.

- Comedian Iliza Shlesinger spoke with service members across USO West and Hawaii about her new Netflix series, "The Iliza Shlesinger Sketch Show."

- Culinary icon Martha Stewart hosted a cookie decorating session from her own kitchen for military Families on Facebook Live, supporting the Month of the Military Child.

- Actor Miles Teller and director Joseph Kosinski, who worked together on the "Top Gun: Maverick" sequel, set to come out in December, took part in a live stream question and answer session with service members in Bahrain.

- Recent USO tour veterans are also recording video messages of gratitude that will be shared with the military communities with whom they interacted.

For more information on the USO's virtual programming, check out the organization's Facebook, Twitter and Instagram or visit [uso.org](https://www.uso.org).



# Latest SFAB activates, prepares for Afghanistan mission

By SEAN KIMMONS

Army News Service

FORT CARSON, Colo. —In a rare, virtual ceremony, the Army's latest security-force assistance brigade to stand up officially activated April 28 as it prepares to deploy to Afghanistan this fall.

The 4th SFAB, based at Fort Carson and slated to conduct the next rotation at the Joint Readiness Training Center in Fort Polk, Louisiana, is the fifth of six similar units to stand up since the first one activated in 2018, as part of a re-focused train, assist and advise strategy, envisioning the specialized units in hotspots around the world.

The SFABs serve as permanent organizations that provide a more concerted effort than previous ad hoc formations, such as military transition teams or security-force assistance advisory teams.

To create the previous units, the Army pulled from conventional brigade combat teams; which, at the time, reduced effectiveness.

"Though necessary at the time, all of this had a long-term, negative impact on total force readiness," said Gen. Michael Garrett, commander of U.S. Army Forces Command. "We treated security-force assistance as a peripheral task when, in fact, it is central to the National Defense Strategy and our Army's mission."

Since 2018, SFABs have deployed to assist foreign partners in Afghanistan, Iraq and Africa. Members of an SFAB train, deploy and redeploy together. Resetting back at home, the teams deployed together, again.

Security-force assistance is not a new concept, the general said. The heritage can be traced back to the Military Assistance Command-Vietnam, created in the 1960s.

The general said there is an increasing need for combat advisors, which free up brigade combat teams to better prepare for large-scale ground combat with near-peer adversaries.

"They are Soldiers who can build teams, solve complex problems and succeed in uncertain environments," he said.

The newest combat advisors have already learned specialized skills from the Military Advisor Training Academy; advanced medical training; survival, evasion, resistance, and escape training; and foreign weapons training.

It will be "the first one out of the shoot as we work to figure out how we maintain readiness, as we adjust to the new normal," Garrett said.

Brig. Gen. Mark Landes, commander of the Security Force Assistance Command at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, dialed in via videoconference for the ceremony, which had Garrett and a few others spaced 6 feet apart with the unit's guidon inside a large conference room.

Landes called the ceremony "historic and atypical," but noted, while the ongoing threat from the virus has changed how the Army operates, it has not changed its essence.

"COVID-19 has allowed us another opportunity to showcase our character, our capability and our adaptability," he said.

The ceremony signified 4th SFAB's transformation into a trained and deployable formation, he said, adding, he was impressed with its growth since January 2019.

"Every person in the unity and victory formation was selected and relocated to the unit," Landes said, referring to the unit's motto. "Every



*Soldiers with the 4th Security Force Assistance Brigade conduct routine training Jan. 9. The 4th SFAB, based at Fort Carson, Colo., is the fifth of six similar units to activate after the Army stood up the first one in early 2018, as part of a re-focused train, assist and advise strategy that envisioned the specialized units in hotspots around the world.*

ARMY NEWS SERVICE



*Soldiers with the 4th Security Force Assistance Brigade conduct medical training Feb. 27.*

pencil and piece of paper had to be obtained using systems and processes that also had to be developed and incorporated."

The 5th SFAB, out of Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, will be the last SFAB to stand up later this summer. The 54th SFAB, a collection of National Guard Soldiers from several states, activated in March.

With about 800 Soldiers, the 4th SFAB is scheduled to replace the 3rd SFAB and continue the mission in Afghanistan.

"These SFABs are advising, assisting and de-

veloping professional organized militaries that can fight for themselves," Landes said.

Its commander, Col. James Dooghan, said he was confident each advisor is fully trained and equipped with the best tools to tackle the challenge.

"We selected the right people, in the right positions, to be ready and effective in assessing, advising, mentoring and assisting our international partners," he said. "We're proud to officially announce our activation, and we look forward to this mission."



# Seniors

Continued from page 2



**Tyler Chapman, Leesville High School:** "During this time at home, I am getting ready for my five AP (advanced placement) exams. College board has made tons of study sessions with teachers all over the country. Since the exam has changed for this year, I am spending as much time as I can getting ready for the online tests. I am also working on college stuff, sending out last minute scholarship information and doing Zoom workshops with Florida State University. I will head to FSU and start at the School of Engineering this fall. I already have a roommate and we are waiting to hear which dorm we got. I am extremely excited for the next



**Lionel Williams, Leesville High School:** "I've been very bored but I was able to get closer to family. I've been able to go out and help my mom by getting groceries and essentials for the house. I miss school because I made a lot of close friends, and I was an athlete, so I miss playing sports. I plan to join the Army after graduation."



**Sam Brocato, Leesville High School:** "I do miss school because becoming a senior is a rite of passage — roaming the halls, 'mentoring' freshmen, and dodging responsibility. I miss teachers like Mr. Rindahl, Ms. Peters, Ms. Godwin and even Coach Chambers. Not seeing friends is hard because I have a truly outstanding circle of friends. Talking on the phone or texting isn't the same as seeing them in person. I am a student worker at Parkway Elementary School, and I absolutely miss my first- through fourth-grade friends. I have accepted an invitation to play soccer for the Peninsula College Pirates in Washington. I will be moving in July for pre-season training. I am excited and humbled to join other amazing players from across the U.S. and overseas on the pitch."



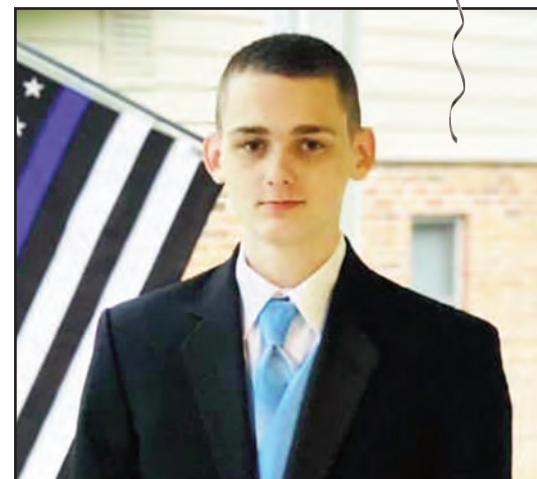
# Congratulations!



**Sylvia Cini, Rosepine High School:** "I miss school, my teachers and my friends because I have known them for so many years. Not being able to say goodbye before I go to college is emotional. We have had so many great memories together, and it is sad for it to end this way. After graduation, I am going to Louisiana State University-Shreveport and will major in pre-med."



**Keegan Morgan, Leesville High School:** "I personally haven't been too bothered by the stay-at-home order, I've been playing video games, talking and texting with friends to keep in touch and reading and studying for my AP exams to pass the time. I will be attending Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, Texas, in the fall. I'll be majoring in mechanical engineering and participating in the Mustang Marching



**Tyler Wood, Leesville High School:** "I'm sad because the year has ended. I like school, and I looked forward to walking with my graduating class. I have been working every day at a gas station, so I am an essential worker. I plan to attend Louisiana Technical College this fall."

**Editor's note:** For more on these seniors see story on page 9.



# Soldiers receive punishment, separated for UCMJ violations

## OSJA

FORT POLK, La. — At the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, the commanding General and subordinate commanders take good order and discipline seriously.

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

Across Fort Polk, certain 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 posses-

sion of controlled substances, fraternization and sexual assault.

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

A specialist, assigned to 5th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, was punished under Article 15 for disobeying two lawful orders (breaking quarantine, traveling outside the 50-mile radius), in violation of Articles 90 and 91, Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ).

The servicemember was sentenced to a reduction to E-3, forfeiture of \$1,085, extra duty for 45 days, restriction for 45 days and a written reprimand.

A specialist, assigned to 710th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd

Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, was punished under Article 15 for wrongful use of a controlled substance, in violation of Article 112a.

The servicemember was sentenced to a reduction to E-1, forfeiture of \$866, extra duty for 45 days and restriction for 45 days.

A specialist, assigned to 3rd Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, was administratively separated under Chapter 14-12b (Patterns of Misconduct), with a General (Under Honorable Conditions) characterization of service for a pattern of misconduct.

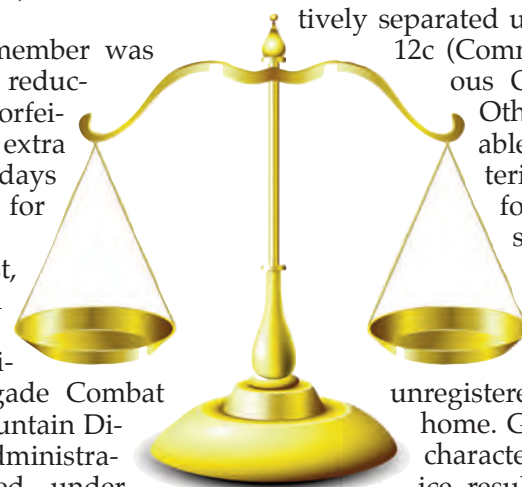
Generally, this characterization of service results in the loss of a servicemember's educational benefits.


A private first class, assigned to 710th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, was found not guilty at a General Officer Article 15 reading.

A private (E-1), assigned to 2nd Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, was administratively separated under Chapter 14-12c (Commission of a Serious Offense), with an Other Than Honorable (OTH) characterization of service for assaulting, strangling and communicating a threat to his spouse, as well as possessing an unregistered firearm in his home. Generally, an OTH characterization of service results in the loss of several of the servicemember's VA benefits.

A private (E-1), assigned to 519th Military Police Battalion, United States Army Garrison, was punished under Article 15 for disobeying a lawful order (breaking quarantine), in violation of Article 90, Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ).

The servicemember was sentenced to a forfeiture of \$866, extra duty for 14 days, restriction for 14 days and a written reprimand.





JOINT READINESS TRAINING CENTER AND FORT POLK  
FORCE HEALTH PROTECTION

## UCMJ SUMMARY


ON 20 APR 20, AN E-1, 41<sup>st</sup> TC, 519<sup>th</sup> MP BN WAS PUNISHED UNDER


### GENERAL OFFICER ARTICLE 15

FOR VIOLATING A LAWFUL GENERAL ORDER TO REMAIN IN QUARANTINE,  
IN VIOLATION OF ARTICLE 90, UNIFORM CODE OF MILITARY JUSTICE.  
THE COMMANDING GENERAL SENTENCED THE SOLDIER TO:

- Forfeiture of \$866.00 pay for 1 month
- Restriction for 14 days
- Extra-Duty for 14 days
- Written Reprimand

**\*\*Quarantine and isolation orders are for your safety and the safety of the Fort Polk community\*\***





JOINT READINESS TRAINING CENTER AND FORT POLK  
FORCE HEALTH PROTECTION

## UCMJ SUMMARY


ON 16 APR 20, AN O-2, HHB, 5-25 FA, 3/10 BCT WAS PUNISHED UNDER


### GENERAL OFFICER ARTICLE 15

FOR VIOLATING A LAWFUL GENERAL ORDER TO REMAIN IN QUARANTINE,  
IN VIOLATION OF ARTICLE 90, UNIFORM CODE OF MILITARY JUSTICE.  
THE COMMANDING GENERAL SENTENCED THE OFFICER TO:

- Forfeiture of \$2,567 pay for 2 mos.
- Restriction for 14 days
- Written Reprimand

**\*\*Quarantine and isolation orders are for your safety and the safety of the Fort Polk community\*\***





JOINT READINESS TRAINING CENTER AND FORT POLK  
FORCE HEALTH PROTECTION

## UCMJ SUMMARY


ON 23 APR 20, AN E-4, A BTRY, 5-25 FA, 3/10 WAS PUNISHED UNDER

### GENERAL OFFICER ARTICLE 15

FOR VIOLATING A LAWFUL GENERAL ORDER TO REMAIN IN QUARANTINE,  
IN VIOLATION OF ARTICLES 90 AND 91, UNIFORM CODE OF MILITARY JUSTICE.  
THE COMMANDING GENERAL SENTENCED THE SOLDIER TO:

- Reduction to E-3
- Forfeiture of \$1085.00 pay for 1 month
- Restriction for 45 days
- Extra-Duty for 45 days
- Written Reprimand

**\*\*Quarantine and isolation orders are for your safety and the safety of the Fort Polk community\*\***



## Seasonal flu remains threat

### MILITARY HEALTH SYSTEM

WASHINGTON — The COVID-19 pandemic has emerged as the most significant public health emergency in this century.

As individuals around the globe race for treatment options and take preventive measures against COVID-19, those living in the Southern Hemisphere are also preparing for another virus — seasonal influenza.

The flu typically takes hold from April through September in the Southern Hemisphere and impacts service members and their beneficiaries on military orders in places south of the equator, such as New Zealand, Australia, southern parts of Africa and South America as well as Indonesia.

Before 2020, a Federal Drug Administration-approved Southern Hemisphere influenza vaccine was not available for military personnel or beneficiaries. Service members received the Northern Hemisphere flu vaccine during the Northern Hemisphere season, which runs October to March.

Once the FDA approved a Southern Hemisphere influenza vaccine, the combatant commands quickly engaged with the Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs' Health Readiness Policy and

Oversight and Defense Health Agency to get access for their personnel.

"The vaccination will be made available at designated medical treatment facilities in May," according to Tara Reavey, chief of policy and program management for DHA's Immunization Healthcare Division.

"Symptoms of the Northern Hemisphere and Southern Hemisphere seasonal influenzas are similar," said Dr. Jay Montgomery, medical director of the Immunization Healthcare Division's North Atlantic Region Vaccine Safety Hub. "Typical flu symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, and muscle aches, but in severe cases may result in hospitalization or death.

"The common strains identified in the Northern and Southern Hemisphere differ about 60% of the time." He said the challenge to support force readiness became apparent as DoD members experienced flu-like symptoms when traveling to the Southern Hemisphere flu zone after receiving the Northern Hemisphere vaccine.

"Obviously if we don't have the right virus strains in the vaccine, people are not going to get protection against those strains," said Montgomery.



# Army moves to reclaim lost time in modernization programs

By SEAN KIMMONS

Army News Service

WASHINGTON — Signature modernization programs remain on track to deliver capabilities to Soldiers, despite facing delays due to the coronavirus, Army leaders said April 23.

Some of the more than 30 programs have already postponed tests, including Soldier-input events, as a result of safety concerns and supply chain challenges.

The service, though, plans to make up for lost time to stay on schedule, said Gen. John M. Murray, commander of Army Futures Command.

“What I believe is the most important thing is when we promised our Soldiers we would deliver that capability,” he said during a press briefing. “The current estimate is we will deliver the capability by the time we said we would deliver that capability to our Soldiers, which is first unit equipped.”

Soldier touch-points, which have allowed Soldiers to play a critical role in the development of new equipment, have varied depending on the location of the event.

The 1st Infantry Division’s 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team is now conducting Soldier touch-points at Fort Riley, Kansas, for the Future Tactical Unmanned Aerial System capability demonstration.

To do this, Soldiers are wearing personal protective equipment along with practicing social distancing and good hygiene, Murray said.

The demonstration consists of five brigades across the country that will test technology that may lead to a replacement for the RQ-7 Shadow.

The 101st Airborne Division’s, 2nd Brigade Combat Team at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, is slated to begin its touch-points for the demonstration after a slight delay, he said, adding these events depend on local conditions.

“We consult, but ultimately we will defer to the local commander on the ground to make those types of decisions about the health of the force and what they can and cannot do,” he said.

The pandemic has led the Army to postpone similar events, particularly for the Integrated Visual Augmentation System, a heads-up display designed to increase situational awareness in combat and for training.

The device’s third iteration for Soldier input is critical since it will be the first time they will test hundreds of sets of the military form factor, a ruggedized version with integrated, low-light and thermal sensors.

While the tests had been scheduled for this summer, they were postponed to the fall after manufacturing delays, Murray said.

A subcontractor for Microsoft, which received the contract, should be operational again this week or early next week, he said.

“We have plans in place to make that time up and maintain first unit equipped like we promised all along,” he added.

Bruce D. Jette, assistant Army secretary for acquisition, logistics and technology, explained that companies may have to shut down for a 14-day quarantine if a worker tests positive for the virus.

BAE Systems, for example, had to briefly halt operations at their plant in York, Pennsylvania.

“You can’t do assembly of armored vehicles by telephone or computer; you’ve got to have welders and people in there and sometimes they’re in close proximity to each other,” he said.



PROGRAM EXECUTIVE OFFICE AVIATION

*Spc. Christopher McCoy, assigned to 1st Engineer Battalion, 1st Infantry Division, conducts an engine start on the JUMP 20, as part of a Soldier touch-point for the Future Tactical Unmanned Aerial System capability demonstration at Fort Riley, Kansas, April 8. The Army’s signature modernization programs remain on track to deliver capabilities to Soldiers, despite facing delays due to the coronavirus, Army leaders said April 23.*



*Spc. Nicholas Miller, 1st Engineer Battalion, 1st Infantry Division, conducts flight operations through a laptop-based ground control station, as part of a Soldier touchpoint for the Future Tactical Unmanned Aerial System capability demonstration at Fort Riley, Kansas, April 8.*

“They went back and rescrubbed their entire procedures and they took care of their people, as we encourage them (to do).”

Boeing also had to temporarily close a plant in Philadelphia until it was safe to reopen.

“The companies that were closed for any period of time have reopened,” Jette said.

Each priority program, Murray said, affords a bit of wiggle room for unforeseen circumstances, which the Army will now be able to use to meet timelines.

In “every individual program, there are little places where we’re massaging and working to make back time,” the general said. “We’re not really cutting anything out. We’re just moving faster than we originally planned to go from prototype delivery into the hands of Soldiers.”

An example is with the Next-Generation Squad Weapon, which currently faces a six-week delay for three vendors to deliver prototypes. Once they get delivered, the Army plans to speed up the time it takes to get them out to units for testing.

“We will get weapons into the hands of Soldiers, under current conditions, two weeks after we take delivery of the prototypes,” Murray said. “That used to be a longer process. We’ll get four of those six weeks back right away by accelerating the time.”

Army Secretary Ryan D. McCarthy said the Army was grateful for how resilient industry has been to keep programs moving.

“It’s amazing how quickly they’ve adapted, kept their workforce engaged and are protecting cost schedule and performance on these weapons systems,” he said at the briefing.

He also credited Army modernization and acquisition officials in working progress payments for manufacturers, helping with small business loans and managing second- and third-tier suppliers.

“We’ve been very supportive of our industry base and their supply chains to ensure that they continue to go down the path of recapitalizing existing weapons systems, as well as the development of the new ones,” he said.



# Community



## Class of 2020 speaks out about missed milestones

By **JEAN CLAVETTE GRAVES**

Public Affairs Specialist

Fort Polk, La. — Being a senior in high school, with the final moments of youth culminating in graduation, is a major milestone in the lives of teenagers across the country. It's the pinnacle moment when the last chapter of a child's life ends, and the first chapter of an adult's life begins.

The occasion is marked with a ceremony, robe clad teens and a march to "Pomp and Circumstance," in front of family and friends, to receive their diplomas.

The valedictorian gives a heartfelt speech designed to inspire fellow graduates as they set off on new adventures, while mortarboards and tassels fly through the air in a celebratory toss.

Parties with family and friends follow as the graduates are honored for their accomplishments and years of hard work. It is an emotional day for students, teachers and parents alike.

This year, things are different. Amidst this year's COVID-19 pandemic, as families across the country have hunkered down to slow the spread, schools have closed and seniors have lost the last moments of their high school experience. Due to social-distancing measures, the graduation for this year's seniors will be different. For those who have graduated from high school, it's difficult to imagine the myriad emotions the Class of 2020 is feeling.

Their collective experience will mark their graduation memories in a way most will never experience or understand.

The last day of school for students in Vernon and Beauregard parishes was March 13. That day, it was business as usual until dismissal, when kids learned that schools would be closed

until April 13. As the days turned into weeks, the closures were extended, and uncertainty spread throughout the community. On April 15, Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards, at the request of the Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, extended the closure of school facilities for the remainder of the academic year.

Ashlynn Moretti, a senior at Leesville High School, said she was torn when the school year ended early. On one hand, she was glad the academic year was over; but, on the other, she was sad to see the school year end.

"It all seems so unreal to me. I am heart broken that March 13 was the last time I would be walking the hallways as a current student. It hurts knowing that I didn't get the chance to say goodbye to all of my teachers, coaches and friends. I missed out on all the milestones and key things in high school, such as prom, senior awards day, JROTC change of command, senior skip day, senior prank and a traditional graduation ceremony," said Moretti.

In addition to graduation, students missed several important events during the last months of their senior high school year.

Sylvia Cini, Rosepine High School, said, "I am a little upset because I did not get a full senior year, which is the last year I get to spend time with friends and teachers before I go to college."

When schools closed, the ripple effect of cancelled events was felt far and wide. For seniors, these events would have been their last during their high school career. Sports seasons were cut short, dances cancelled, field trips and championship tournaments were no longer taking place.

"I missed out on senior prom, senior awards

Please see **Class**, page 10

## Briefs

### 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](mailto:FortPolk@RedCross.org) for more information or to schedule the training.

### Patriot Pet Contest

Pets are great companions during the long weeks at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This May, pets can fetch 10 lucky military shoppers a combined \$3,000 in Army & Air Force Exchange Service gift cards — without having to set paw outside the house.

From May 1-31, authorized shoppers at Fort Polk, and Exchanges worldwide, can send in a patriotic-themed picture of their four-legged friends for a chance to win the Patriot Pet, Just Say "Treat," Photo Contest. Two grand-prize winners will each receive a \$500 gift card, while eight second-place winners will each receive a \$250 gift card.

Authorized Exchange shoppers, aged 18 or older, can find complete contest rules and enter to win at [www.shopmyexchange.com/Sweepstakes](http://www.shopmyexchange.com/Sweepstakes). Winners will be selected on or about June 15.

### 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](http://ShopMyExchange.com) and pick up their purchases at the curb.

Authorized military shoppers with installation access can visit [ShopMyExchange.com](http://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.

### 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.



# Early detection support for troops during COVID-19

## ARMED FORCES HEALTH SURVEILLANCE DIVISION

FALLS CHURCH, Va. — The quick spread of COVID-19 has caused many health organizations, including the Defense Health Agency's Armed Forces Health Surveillance Division, to innovate using resources readily available in their arsenal.

One example of this innovation lies within AFHSD's Global Emerging Infections Surveillance (GEIS) program. The team funded the production of Research-Use-Only testing kits and sent them to GEIS laboratory partners located across the globe targeting countries with high totals of positive COVID-19 cases. Navy mobile laboratories embedded on military ships, such as the USS Theodore Roosevelt, received these kits. Military commanders then used the kits as respiratory surveillance tools on their sailors and Marines.

The Department of Defense funds the GEIS's network of 16 medical research laboratories. This funding allowed the teams to quickly reach out to their partners and use their capabilities, such as the quick production of research assays, to support forces.

Assays are an investigative procedure in laboratory medicine that assess or measure the presence, amount or activity of a military-relevant pathogen — in this case, the novel coronavirus. This assay is similar to those created by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"By rapidly distributing the RUO assays to our global partners and to three Navy mobile laboratories on shipboard settings, we were able to provide a much needed testing capability for this emerging pathogen in an operational environment," explained U.S. Public Health Service Cmdr. (Dr.) Mark Scheckelhoff, who leads the respiratory infections focus area for GEIS. This

assay supports surveillance studies only and not the clinical management of cases.

"The ability to procure and distribute the CDC RUO assay outside of a clinical laboratory setting provided a rapid and reliable source of COVID-19 testing and detection materials that were distributed to all of our network laboratories and allowed rapid implementation of testing activities," said Scheckelhoff.

"As the COVID-19 cases began to increase around the world, military commanders in an operational environment had these RUO resources to conduct respiratory surveillance for COVID-19 exposure," said Sean Friendly, chief of administration and operations at the AFHSD.

One recent example involved the Marine Corps Recruit Depot at Parris Island, South Carolina.

"Our partner, the Naval Health Research Center laboratory, was able to use their surveillance capabilities to provide the assistance to detect the first cases," said Friendly. He recounted a report from Dr. Chris Myers at NHRC in San Diego, California; the lab collected samples from the recruit population of Parris Island. GEIS-funded respiratory surveillance projects at NHRC provided the capability and personnel to test the recruits and quickly identify COVID-19.

GEIS has worked with the NHRC for several years and supported ongoing surveillance of respiratory diseases among recruits and trainees. This network of health partners continues to grow and evolve as GEIS coordinates with NHRC as well as other network partners. The network's ability to integrate the priorities identified by the combatant commands into its mission creates an agile organization ready to respond to needs as they occur.

Since 1997, GEIS has funded key laboratory and epidemiological work across the Department



Seaman JONATHAN BEHLER/U.S. NAVY

*Lt. Cmdr. Danett Bishop tests respiratory samples in the biological safety lab of amphibious assault ship USS America.*

of Defense. It has also coordinated crucial infectious disease surveillance projects that could impact military operations. GEIS uses key DoD medical research laboratories — such as the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute for Infectious Diseases, the Navy Medical Research Center, the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research's global lab enterprise in Maryland and the Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine in Dayton, Ohio — to establish an integrated network that studies the impact of infectious diseases and respond to outbreaks and epidemics.

"In lay terms, GEIS's projects and activities have allowed DoD to maintain world-wide critical surveillance capabilities that continue to provide crucial support during events of public health concern like the COVID-19 pandemic," stated Navy Capt. Guillermo Pimentel, GEIS chief.

## Class

Continued from page 9

day, senior ditch day, and I also was supposed to go to state for several clubs that I am in," said Cini.

Kremi Stander, Leesville High School, said he missed out on an opportunity of a lifetime.

"This was my third year of running track. I miss my teammates. We had just placed first in the state and we were looking forward to keeping that torch burning and finishing the season strong," Stander said.

A promenade dance, commonly referred to as prom, is a semi-formal, black tie event commonly celebrated at the end of the school year.

Prom is popular and a major event for most high school students. Social media sites, like TikTok, are doing prom-at-home videos during the current pandemic; but for most kids, this is an event they are sad to have missed with school closures.

Angel Martin, Pickering High School, said, "I feel like I have missed out on very important milestones, such as prom. I still plan to take prom pictures; but, as for the celebration of graduating, I don't plan on doing anything. To me it's just another wake-up call that the life ahead of me is beginning, and it's beginning very fast."

Despite the uncertainty, the Class of 2020 has shown their resiliency by staying positive and connected during the stay-at-home order.

Sam Brocato, Leesville High School, said, "My family takes the threat seriously so we are practicing the recommended measures to stay virus-free. I find myself well-rested; watching the sunset as a sunrise, and the sunrise as a sunset; running and exercising daily; playing soccer with my sister; doing school work online; and playing lots of FIFA with friends on Xbox Live." Brocato admits he is tired of only seeing his mom, sister and dog, and that he is looking forward to a haircut, a pedicure and a meal at Mexico Lindo.

In both Vernon and Beauregard parishes, the plans for graduation are still in limbo. All decisions made will hinge upon recommendations from the governor's office. Keegan Morgan, Leesville High School, said he was not entirely sure what a virtual graduation would look like if they have one.

"I do feel like I've missed out on several important milestones, such as prom and my final concert for band and walking across the stage for graduation. These were all major events I was looking forward to at the end of the year," he said.

Army Families are used to change and are adaptable to life situations as they present themselves.

This is no different; the students are preparing to graduate and making the best of the situation,

while holding their heads high and looking forward to the future.

Tyler Chapman, Leesville High School, said, "My mom is busy decorating our house for graduation. We have a big sign outside, and our dining room is a shrine to my accomplishments. We were supposed to go on a trip, but that will have to wait until next summer. My grandparents were supposed to come, but we will travel to Florida to see them the second it is safe to do so. It's hard to be an Army Family in times like this. I have tons of family all over the country, so it would be hard for them to travel here under normal circumstances — it was always going to be a small celebration. The best part is that my mom and grandma always make everything extra special. It is still going to be fun."

The collective experience of the Class of 2020 is as unique as each student. The mutual care and consideration these students have taken to slow the spread of this virus, through the sacrifice of milestones, is something on which to remark. Although the circumstances remain disappointing and unfair, these young adults have helped countless citizens by staying home, staying healthy and doing their collective part to battle the virus.

Congratulations Class of 2020; go forth and do great things. The future is yours.



# Check Out Fort Polk Hurricane Preparedness Week, Alert System

By **TOMMY J. MORRIS**  
DPTMS

FORT POLK, La. — Hurricane Preparedness week is Monday through May 9. It's your time to prepare for a potential land-falling tropical storm or hurricane. It only takes one storm to change your life and community.

Tropical cyclones are among nature's most powerful and destructive phenomena. They can be catastrophic to coastlines and impact those living several hundred miles inland.

They have the potential to bring violent thunderstorms, waves, winds exceeding 155 mph and tornadoes.

Hurricane season begins June 1 and ends Nov. 30.

## Daily themes for Hurricane Preparedness Week:

- Sunday — Determine Your Risk
- Monday — Develop an Evacuation Plan
- Tuesday — Assemble Disaster Supplies
- Wednesday — Get an Insurance Checkup
- Thursday — Strengthen Your Home
- May 8 — Help Your Neighbor
- May 9 — Complete a Written Plan

Begin preparations and identify the types of wind and water hazards that are relevant to your neighborhood, and plan accordingly for each hazard. Determine if you live in a storm-surge hurricane evacuation zone or in a home that would be unsafe during a hurricane. If necessary, identify a safe secondary location as your evacuation destination, such as someone else's home. Be sure to learn the safest routes to get there if told to evacuate. Don't forget to account for your pets' accommodations, as most local shelters do not permit them.

If you plan to ride out the storm in your home, make sure it is in good repair and up to local hurricane building-code specifications. Have the proper plywood, steel or aluminum panels to board up the windows and doors. The garage door is the most vulnerable part of the home, so ensure that it is able to withstand the winds.

During your planning, you will need to consider supplies to help you get through the storm and its aftermath. Stock enough non-perishable food, water and medicine to last a minimum of three days for each person in your family. Electricity and water could be out for at least that long.

You will also need extra cash, a battery-powered radio and flashlights. Also, consider a portable crank or solar powered USB charger

to charge cell phones.

Call your insurance company to request an insurance check-up, verifying that you have enough homeowners insurance to repair or replace your home. Keep in mind that standard homeowners insurance doesn't cover flooding. Likewise, check the insurance coverage for your car, boat or other recreational vehicles.

Preemptive actions for imminent, severe weather begin with ensuring family members are familiar with the safest interior room in the home, such as a bathroom, hallway or closet, on the lowest floor, away from windows and exterior walls.

Knowing the difference between a tornado watch and a tornado warning is vital. A tornado watch indicates that a tornado is possible. Stay tuned to a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration weather radio or TV for more information, and be prepared to seek shelter if necessary. A tornado warning signifies that a tornado is expected or occurring. Take shelter immediately.

Be familiar with tornado warning signs. For example, an approaching cloud of debris can mark the location of a tornado, even if a funnel is not visible. Dark, towering and threatening clouds; greenish skies; large hail; rotating, low-lying clouds; and loud roars, similar to trains, are common warning signs.

During a storm, quickly go into an interior room, avoiding windows, corners and places with wide-span roofs. Get under a sturdy table or similar piece of furniture, and cover your head with your arms. If in a mobile home, get out and find shelter in a nearby building. If time permits, put on sturdy shoes. If a shelter is not available, or there is no time to get indoors, lie in a ditch or crouch near a strong building and cover your head with your arms.

After the storm, stay tuned to local radio or TV for updated information. Refrain from entering damaged buildings, and do not return to evacuation zones until authorities declare the area safe.

When reviewing damages, check walls, roofs, foundations, electrical systems and water lines. Be mindful of hazardous materials, such as broken glass, exposed nails and downed power lines. Evacuate the house or building if you smell gas or chemical fumes.

Many Americans rely on their neighbors after a disaster, but there are also ways you can help your neighbors before a hurricane approaches. Learn about the different actions you and your neighbors can take to prepare and recover from a hurricane.



The time to prepare for a hurricane is before the season begins, when there is ample time and no pressure. Waiting until a hurricane is on your doorstep increases the likelihood that you'll be under duress when making vital decisions.

Take this time to write down your hurricane plan. Know where you will ride out the storm and gather any necessary supplies before the season begins.

Being prepared before a hurricane threatens makes you resilient to the impacts of a hurricane. It will mean the difference between being a hurricane victim and a hurricane survivor.

## Fort Polk Mass Warning Notification System

Fort Polk conducts routine live tests on the Mass Warning Notification System. When the system is tested, message one will broadcast on twelve giant voice towers across South and North Fort Polk. In the event of severe weather, message two through eight will broadcast followed by message nine, signifying the emergency condition has passed. Along with the messages, refer to local radio and television stations for updated information.

•**Message 1:** "This is a test. This is a test of the Fort Polk emergency warning system. This is only a test."

•**Message 2:** "Warning! Warning! This is a severe weather alert. The national weather service has issued a tornado watch for Vernon Parish and Fort Polk. Tune to the local radio or television stations for further updates."

•**Message 3:** "Warning! Warning! This is a severe weather alert. The national weather service has issued a tornado warning for Vernon Parish and Fort Polk. Take shelter immediately. Tune to the local radio or television stations for further updates."

•**Message 4:** "Warning! Warning! This is a severe weather alert. The national weather service has issued a severe thunderstorm warning with high winds and damaging hail

for Vernon Parish and Fort Polk. Tune to the local radio or television stations for further updates."

•**Message 5:** "Warning! Warning! This is a severe weather alert. The national weather service has issued a hurricane warning for Vernon Parish and Fort Polk. Tune to the local radio or television stations for further updates."

•**Message 6:** "Warning! Warning! This is a severe weather alert. The national weather service has issued a flash flood watch for Vernon Parish and Fort Polk. Tune to the local radio or television stations for further updates."

•**Message 7:** "This is an official alert. All military personnel report to your units immediately. Repeat, this is an official alert. All military personnel report to your units immediately."

•**Message 8:** "Warning! Warning! This is a hazardous material alert. Remain indoors until all clear is sounded."

•**Message 9:** "All clear, all clear. The emergency condition has ended. All clear, all clear. The emergency condition has ended."

Additional information will be provided through ALERT Notification, Fort Polk All Users emails, and posted on social media (Fort Polk Facebook).

If you are a CAC user, register to receive ALERT notifications by clicking on the arrow in your taskbar; double-clicking on the blue exclamation mark icon, clicking on "Edit Contact Info;" and adding any phone number you wish to receive the alerts.

Some suggested weather applications available to download on your mobile device include the Weather Channel, KALB WX, KPLC 7 First Alert Weather, Weather Bug, Weather Mate, AccuWeather and Weather Underground.

For more information, contact Tommy J. Morris, DPTMS, Chief, Protection Branch, emergency manager, at 531-4875 or email [tommy.j.morris2.civ@mail.mil](mailto:tommy.j.morris2.civ@mail.mil)