



FORGING THE

WARRIOR SPIRIT

THE JRTC & FORT POLK GUARDIAN

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Home of Heroes @ Fort Polk, LA

March 13, 2020

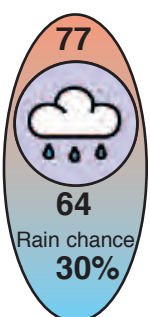


Clockwise from left: Whether its a new walking trail, housing improvements, artificial turf for sports and training or a Disney tea party for the installation's children, quality of life is at the forefront of the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk. See page 5 for story.

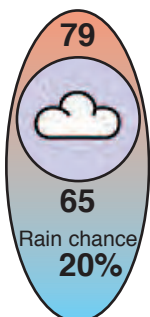


Quality of Life at JRTC and Fort Polk!

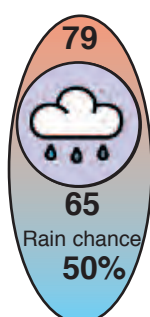
Weekend weather



Friday



Saturday



Sunday

Inside the Guardian

Women's Expo	3	Keep kids safe	10
COVID-19 update	6	Book nook fun	11
3/10 visits vet	7	Enjoy surf, sun	13

Viewpoint

Five priorities bring quality of life to Fort Polk

By **CHUCK CANNON**

Command information officer

FORT POLK, La. — Quality of life.

Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, commander, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, said quality of life is important for an installation like the JRTC and Fort Polk, where Soldiers from across the Army are trained to fight the na-



Cannon

Soldiers the Army has to offer to serve as observer/controller/trainers. Frank said the way to do that is to make Fort Polk an installation where Soldiers and their Families want to come.

Quality of life.

Those words have become a mantra not only at Fort Polk, but across the Army as leadership has opened its collective eyes to the importance of providing "quality of life" to not only Soldiers, but to Family members and the civilian work force as well.

While the Army is focused on

tion's wars and help maintain peace around the globe.

To provide the best training and forge the Warrior Spirit, JRTC and Fort Polk needs the most qualified

quality of life at every installation, Fort Polk is one of three Army posts that have been singled out for "quality of life" improvements, along with Fort Irwin, California, home of the National Training Center, and Fort Wainwright, Alaska.

Army leaders have identified five priorities to improve quality of life for Soldiers, veterans and their Families: Housing, health care, child care, spouse employment and permanent change of station moves. Their stated hope is that by taking care of Soldiers, they will perform better, stay longer and help make the Army stronger.

Already, Fort Polk has seen the effects of the focus on quality of life.

Investments have been made to remodel and build new housing units on the installation. Additionally, road and sidewalk improvements and construction have helped to nurture a more neighborhood-friendly atmosphere.

Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital continues to provide top-notch care, and according to latest reports, is not among the Army hospitals slated for closure or diminished services.

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service has committed to investing in upgrades to the Main Exchange and eating establishments in the Food Court.

The Commissary continues to improve its selection of goods and has provided higher quality produce and other perishable goods.

Even seemingly insignificant im-

provements such as a lighted trail through the woods that provides a safer, shorter path for Soldiers walking from the barracks to the PX area is a sign of leadership's focus on improving quality of life.

Col. Ryan K. Roseberry, Fort Polk garrison commander, has stated quality of life improvements should be an area everyone focuses on. He said it's the least we can do for the men and women who put their lives on the line every day. He also said it's important those same men and women know their Families are taken care of when they are deployed.

Over the next few months the Fort Polk Family will continue to see quality of life improvements to the "Home of Heroes." On March 27 there is a DoD Military Spouse Career Empowerment Expo at the Warrior Center. Residents and visitors can expect to see upgrades in housing, roads and services, all to increase the quality of life.

If you follow some of the Facebook or satire military sites, you might see people taking digs at a Fort Polk assignment. I urge you to disregard those posts from people who base their judgment on what they've heard or perhaps saw in years past.

Instead, look at what the installation has to offer today. The quality of life at Fort Polk is better than it's ever been, and is improving daily. An assignment to the "Best Hometown in the Army" is a great career move. Just ask those who are here today.

Commentary

In our view

Guardian staff asked Fort Polk community members, "What is the biggest issue you face as a military spouse?" Here are their responses:



Rachel Vasen: "Relocating, resettling and getting kids into new schools."



Ralna Burbank: "Getting connected and getting out of your comfort zone."



Gaye Smith: "Being okay with not having control of where my family will live."



Katarina Patterson: "Pursuing employment. Licensing is a continuous and expensive process."



Guardian

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Briefs

Driver caution

The daylight saving time change has caused a unique hazard for Fort Polk motorists: It's still dark while students and parents are waiting for school buses. Ensure vehicle headlights are off when parked at bus stops during periods of darkness so as not to blind other motorists. Educate children on the dangers and proper procedures for interacting with moving traffic: Look left, look right, then look again before crossing.

DFAC hours

Patriot Inn Dining Facility will close Saturday through Monday for quarterly cleaning and to prep for the upcoming Phillip A. Connelly inspection. Guardian Inn DFAC will be open during the following times:

- Saturday — Brunch, 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m.; Dinner, 4-5:30 p.m.
- Sunday — Brunch, 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m.; Dinner, 4-5:30 p.m.
- Monday — Breakfast, 7:30-9 a.m.; Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.; Dinner, 5-6:30 p.m.

Both DFACs will resume normal business hours Tuesday starting with breakfast. Call 531-7557 for more information.

Ranger demonstration

The U.S. Army Ranger Association invites former Rangers to attend Ranger Class graduation and a "Rangers in Action" demonstration at Fort Benning, Georgia, May 1. Call (832) 216-7141 information.

Off limits areas

The Armed Forces Disciplinary Control Board of the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk has placed off limits restrictions on the following establishments in the Fort Polk, Leesville, Barksdale Air Force Base and Shreveport:

- Blackhawks Motorcycle Club, 2463 VFW Road, Leesville
- The Venue, 11810 Lake Charles Highway, Leesville
- American Legion Post 510, 703 North Gladys St., Leesville
- Banshees Motorcycle Club, 1330 and 1340 Rapides Ave., Alexandria
- BEAST Motorcycle Club, 3149 Davis Road, West Lake
- Pipes Emporium, 1304 Centenary Blvd., Shreveport
- Kokopellis, 400 Commerce St., Shreveport
- Lotus, 2001 East Texas St., Suite 3, Bossier City

American Legion Post 510 is the only American Legion Post designated as off limits.



MILITARY SPOUSE CAREER EMPOWERMENT EXPO

ONE DAY EVENT IN FORT POLK, LOUISIANA

Military spouses – meet in person with employers who are ready to hire!
FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 2020 • 9 A.M. TO 3 P.M. CT

At this free one-day hiring expo, you can:

- Meet face-to-face with SECO career coaches, Military OneSource consultants and employment readiness personnel.
- Prepare for your next job with resume tips, networking guidance and education options.
- Attend sessions around being your own boss and the federal hiring process, as well as the best ways to navigate a job search and self-care.

Expo perks perfect for you:

- Free child care available for attendees
- Lunch provided
- Opportunity for LinkedIn headshots and a free one year upgrade to LinkedIn Premium
- Hiring fair with Military Spouse Employment Partnership employers and local businesses

Register now: <https://einvitations.afit.edu/inv/index.cfm?i=522310&k=0763400A7A57>

The Empowerment Expo is exclusively for spouses of Active Duty, Guard and Reserve service members assigned to Fort Polk. Registration is free and you will have to show your I.D. to enter.

EXPO LOCATION

Fort Polk, Louisiana



Military Spouse Empowerment focus of expo

By **T. C. BRADFORD**

Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. – Military spouses are a powerful force when it comes to the workplace. They are educated and highly motivated workers, however, many Military spouses face career challenges. Spouses follow their Soldiers from post to post, moving every two to three years. That can make it more difficult for spouses to focus on building careers. The Department of Defense recognizes this as a quality of life issue and is placing emphasis on making it easier for spouses to move from installation to installation.

In October of 2019, the Office of the Secretary of Defense announced a series of military spouse "roadshows" with the goal of leveraging connections to enhance military spouses' education, employment and wellness. The Military Spouse Career Empowerment Expo takes place March 27 at

the Warrior Center from 9 a.m.-3p.m. The expo is limited to spouses of active duty, Guard and Reserve service members assigned to Fort Polk. You will need to show your dependent ID card to gain entrance.

Preregistration is important. Preregistered attendees will receive lunch and an opportunity to attend panels and breakout sessions throughout the day. If you show up and have not registered, you can register that morning, but attendance has been capped at 250 attendees.

Doors open at 8:30 a.m. Events include a welcome and introduction; a DoD program overview; panel discussions with representatives of Google, Amazon, federal employment and more.

These events will be followed by a series of keynote speakers taking the event to the lunch

Please see **Expo**, page 9

Army news

U.S. Army celebrates women's contributions, service

U.S. ARMY PUBLIC AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON — As the nation celebrates Women's History Month, the U.S. Army extends its gratitude to the women who have served, and continue to serve, in its ranks. Women have played vital roles in the U.S. Army since the Revolutionary War, and today's women — Soldiers, veterans, family members and civilian employees — are critical members of the Army team.

"More than 181,000 women serve in the Army today, from enlisted personnel to general officers," said Ryan McCarthy, secretary of the Army. "The Army is proud of our women Soldiers, who serve with distinction as role models as they exemplify our highest values."

Women Soldiers make up 18% of the regular Army, the Army National Guard and Army Reserve, and 36% of the Army's civilian workforce is female.

Today's women serve in every career field in the Army. Nearly 1,500 female Soldiers have accessed into infantry, armor and fire-support occupations; 42 women have graduated from Ranger School, and five have been assigned to the Ranger Regiment; and Brig. Gen. Laura Yeager became the first

woman to command an Army infantry division in June.

The Army continues to integrate female Soldiers into all units and occupations, and has adopted gender-neutral standards for all occupational specialties. "The Army is people and the incredible contributions and achievements of our female Soldiers contribute significantly to the strength of America's Army," said Gen. James McConville, chief of staff of the Army. "Our diversity and commitment to selecting the best-qualified people, regardless of gender, for each job in the Army makes the all-volunteer force the most-ready and powerful in the world."

From the 21,000 women who served in the



U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Ryan DeBooy

Pfc. Tess Sandoval, an attack helicopter repairer assigned to 2nd Squadron, 6th Cavalry Regiment, 25th Combat Aviation Brigade, located on Wheeler Army Airfield, Hawaii, Aug. 25, 2019.

Army Nurse Corps during WWI, to the 150,000 who served in the Women's Army Corps during WWII, to the 181,000 who proudly serve today — the Army salutes women Soldiers.

DoD establishes privatized housing tenant bill of rights

By **BERNADINE LENAHAN**

OSJA

FORT POLK, La. — The Department of Defense is fully committed to ensuring our Nation's most valued resource — its military service members and their families — have access to safe, quality and well-maintained homes and communities on DoD installations.

The Department of Defense, through each of its Military Departments, will work diligently and expeditiously to develop the processes and procedures needed to implement tenant rights. DoD is committed to providing the full benefit of the following rights by May 1 and incorporate these rights and procedures into any lease agreement.

Rights are as follows:

- The right to reside in a housing unit and a community that meets applicable health and environmental standards.
- The right to reside in a housing unit that has working fixtures, appliances and utilities and to reside in a community with well-maintained common areas and amenity spaces.
- The right to a written lease with clearly defined rental terms to establish tenancy in a housing unit, including any addendums and other regulations imposed by the landlord regarding occupancy of the housing unit and use of common areas.
- The right to a plain-language briefing, before signing a lease and 30 days after move-in, by the installation housing office on all rights and responsibilities associated with tenancy of the housing unit, including information regarding the existence of any additional fees authorized by the lease, any utilities payments, the pro-

cedures for submitting and tracking work orders, the identity of the military tenant advocate and the dispute resolution process.

- The right to have sufficient time and opportunity to prepare and be present for move-in and move-out inspections, including an opportunity to obtain and complete necessary paperwork.

- The right to report inadequate housing standards or deficits in habitability of the housing unit to the landlord, the chain of command and housing management office without fear of reprisal or retaliation, including reprisal or retaliation in the following forms: Unlawful recovery of, or attempt to recover, possession of the housing unit; unlawfully increasing the rent, decreasing services or increasing the obligations of a tenant; interference with a tenant's right to privacy; harassment of a tenant; refusal to honor the terms of the lease; or interference with the career of a tenant.

- The right of access to a military tenant advocate or a military legal assistance attorney, through the housing management office of the installation of the department at which the housing unit is located to assist in the preparation of requests to initiate dispute resolution.

- The right to receive property management services provided by a landlord that meet or exceed industry standards and that are performed by professionally and appropriately trained, responsive and courteous customer service and maintenance staff.

- The right to have multiple, convenient methods to communicate directly with the Landlord maintenance staff and receive consistently honest, accurate, straightforward and responsive communications.

- The right to have access to an electronic

work order system through which a tenant may request maintenance or repairs of a housing unit and track the progress of the work.

- With respect to maintenance and repairs to a housing unit, the right to the following: Prompt and professional maintenance and repair; to be informed of the required time frame for maintenance or repairs when a maintenance request is submitted; and in the case of maintenance or repairs necessary to ensure habitability of a housing unit, to prompt relocation into suitable lodging or other housing at no cost to the tenant until the maintenance or repairs are completed.

- The right to receive advice from military legal assistance on procedures involving mechanisms for resolving disputes with the property management company or property manager to include mediation, arbitration and filing claims against a landlord.

- The right to have reasonable, advance notice of any entrance by a landlord, installation housing staff or chain of command into the housing unit, except in the case of an emergency or abandonment of the housing unit.

- The right to not pay non-refundable fees or have application of rent credits arbitrarily held.

- The right to expect common documents, forms and processes for housing units will be the same for all installations of the department, to the maximum extent applicable without violating local, state and federal regulations.

Tenants seeking assistance should engage the housing office, installation legal assistance office, installation leadership or chain of command. The Fort Polk Legal Assistance Office can be contacted at 531-2580 to schedule an appointment with one of the attorneys.

'Quality of life' issues at forefront of Fort Polk focus

GUARDIAN STAFF

FORT POLK, La. — When the Army initiated a pilot program that targeted quality-of-life improvements at Fort Irwin, California; Fort Polk, Louisiana; and Fort Wainwright, Alaska, Fort Polk leadership hit the ground running.

"Fort Irwin and Fort Polk are ... austere, but it is where we do all of our (brigade combat team) training. We send our best leaders at all levels that go train our BCTs ... to places that don't have a lot of quality of life," Gen. Gus Perna, commanding general, Army Materiel Command said in announcing the initiative.

Among the quality of life improvements made at Fort Polk since Perna's directive are:

- A refurbished walking trail for Soldiers living in barracks along Mississippi Avenue in the 1st Battalion, 509th Infantry Regiment (Airborne) footprint, providing a safer, shorter trip for visits to the Main Post Exchange area.

Geronimo Trail, which cuts a path through the woods between Bayou Theater and the Main Exchange, has been widened, brush removed, aggregate placed, bridge repaired, lighting installed and footing improved which makes the trail less dangerous.

"Soldiers have always walked this trail, but it had fallen into a terrible state," Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, commander, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, said. "Thousands of Soldiers will walk this enhanced trail; you can already see Soldiers using the new sidewalks that allow them to walk from the northern end of Main Post Polk to use the Golf Course Trail and transition over to the new sidewalk. It improves safety."

- More than 25 couples gathered in the Fort Polk Army Community Service ballroom to renew their marriage vows on Feb. 14 — Valentine's Day.

The date night event, hosted by ACS' Family Advocacy Program, included dining, games, dancing, door prizes and free childcare, in addition to the vow renewal.

Kristina England, FAP manager, said date nights are held quarterly.

"We wanted to do a vow renewal around Valentine's Day," she said. "We have such a high-tempo at Fort Polk, so we wanted to give Soldiers and their spouses some time to themselves to recommit and renew."

Fort Polk Garrison Commander Col. Ryan K. Roseberry said date night events are great for Soldiers and their Families because they're free.

"This is something we can do for our Families that is very low cost," Roseberry said. "These are quality of life events we should be doing for our Soldiers and their Families. This is what the garrison does to take care of Families."

- A new artificial turf field which provides a quality surface for both physical training and testing and athletic events was opened Feb. 24.

Frank said as Soldiers ran past the field over the last few months during physical training they witnessed a transformation. He said the field used to be an old beat up block with a PT field that had all sorts of depressions that could have caused injuries to Soldiers.

"It was a pretty rough field. What we see now is a state of the art platform for our Soldiers to get ready for the Army Combat Fitness Test, PT and combat. It's unbelievable," he said.



Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, commander, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, presents a trophy to members of the Fort Polk soccer team on Anvil Field, the new artificial sports and fitness surface on Fort Polk.

ANGIE THORNE / GUARDIAN

Frank said garrison command is working out the details of putting a second turf field on the southern end of Fort Polk.

"We would like to have two PT fields for our Soldiers as they continue to forge the Warrior Spirit here at JRTC and Fort Polk," he said.

In addition to Soldier training, Frank said the field would be available for off duty activities.

"Soldiers are going to be drawn to this field like a magnet. There will be all sorts of pick up games out here including soccer, flag football and more. It will just be Soldiers enjoying a little bit of camaraderie and fun at Anvil Field," he said. "That's what this thing was designed for, both professional and personal use to ensure our Soldiers have a better quality of life."

- Fort Polk housing remains a top priority for the installation's command team — a quality of life initiative that impacts Soldier and Family Readiness. Issues with military housing have prompted Congressional hearings and headlines in news media across the country.

Changes and improvements have been implemented on Fort Polk, including inspections of all housing, to include barracks, and an infusion of millions of dollars for renovations and construction of 70 new homes.

- Education is pivotal to the quality of life of the Soldiers and Families of Fort Polk and, in turn, the success of its mission.

That's why parents of school age children were invited to an education discussion Feb. 20 at the Fort Polk Warrior Center's Commanding General's Pub.

Edith K. Pickens, a Highly Qualified Expert to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs and senior advisor for Workforce Development and Integration, led the event and encouraged parents to discuss their concerns.

Prior to the education discussion, Pickens spent time touring and observing local schools including Pickering High and Elementary schools, Rosepine High and Elementary schools, Parkway Elementary, Leesville High School,

Leesville Junior High, Vernon Middle School and North Polk Elementary.

In addition to the tours, Pickens talked to school administrators, teachers and military students to get a better picture of the education available to Fort Polk's military families and the challenges they face.

Kim Moltz, an occupational therapist who works with military children, attended the event to advocate for special needs families.

"I think this is a great opportunity to share what we see every day when it comes to military children and the education they receive. I think this is a great opportunity for Families to make things better," said Moltz.

- Skate time, hosted by Fort Polk's Child and Youth Services Sports and Fitness Program gave youngsters — and those young at heart — a chance to lace up skates and enjoy family time.

Jenna Mallon, a CYS sports and fitness program specialist, said she and her coworkers are always brainstorming ideas to provide kids with safe, fun and inexpensive opportunities to play.

"Skating seemed like the perfect activity. Then we had to come up with fun themes for them and their families to enjoy while skating," she said.

Mallon said events like this are especially important because it means Fort Polk Families don't have to travel off post to have a good time.

"At CYS, we specialize in children, but this event is the perfect opportunity for Families to spend time together, too."

- Keeping with the family theme, the Main Exchange hosted a Disney Tea Party, featuring popular characters from Disney films and providing an opportunity for area "princesses" to take photos with the stars, showing that quality of life activities are important not only to adults, but to youngsters as well.

Fort Polk Soldiers and Family members will continue to see quality of life improvements as the Army and local leadership strive to make the installation a station of choice for the Army's best.

Coronavirus: What you need to know to protect yourself, family

By CHRISTOPHER LARSEN

Regional Health Command Pacific

JOINT BASE LEWIS-McCHORD, Wash. — Novel coronavirus, known as COVID-19, continues to spread worldwide.

As COVID-19 spreads, so does information about the disease. If one surfs the Internet, everything from scientifically-proven medical information about the virus to debunked conspiracy theories can be found.

More than 133,000 cases have been reported worldwide, and COVID-19 has killed more than 4,900 people, mostly in mainland China.

The disease has spread wider in Washington state, where 10 people have died. A 71-year-old man in California with underlying health conditions passed away from the disease this week, bringing the nationwide death total to 38.

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee declared a state of emergency on Feb. 29, a number of school districts have cancelled classes, and more than 50 people in a Seattle-area nursing facility are being tested for the virus.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, there were more than 1,200 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the U.S. and 38 deaths as of March 11. The disease has spread to 44 U.S. states. The Louisiana State Department of Health reported 14 cases in the state as of March 12.

Among the information circulating online are lists of items people "should buy" — surgical masks, exam gloves, gallons of disinfectant — but epidemiologists and preventive medicine practitioners say that's not exactly the case.

While there is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19 and no specific antiviral treatment for the disease, Lt. Gen. Ronald J. Place, director of the Defense Health Agency, stated in a March 5 email to the force that "Each of you can take actions to help respond to this emerging public health threat."

Place's email also stated, "The CDC has produced more than 23 guidance documents on infection control, hospital preparedness assessments, personal protective equipment supply planning, and clinical evaluation and management."

According to the CDC, symptoms of COVID-19 can include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. The CDC believes that symptoms of the disease may appear in as little as two days or up to 14 days after someone has been exposed.

The CDC based this estimate on previous incubation periods for Middle East Respiratory Syndrome, another type of coronavirus, first reported in 2012.

The CDC said there are simple actions people can take to prevent contracting or spreading COVID-19.

The best way to keep from getting sick, according to the CDC, is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

The Department of Defense issued guidance in January, mirroring that of the CDC. The DoD guidance recommended that people should also avoid close contact with those who are sick; avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands; and washing your hands often with soap and water.

The CDC recommends washing hands for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, after blowing one's nose, coughing or sneezing.



Although news stories and images contain many reports of people wearing surgical masks to ward off the virus, that's not recommended, according to top officials of the U.S. Public Health Service.

The U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Jerome Adams, even went so far as to post a message on Twitter.

"Seriously people — STOP BUYING MASKS!" Adams tweeted.

"They are NOT effective in preventing general public from catching #Coronavirus, but if healthcare providers can't get them to care for sick patients, it puts them and our communities at risk!"

The CDC and DoD also recommend using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that is at least 60 percent alcohol if soap and water aren't available.

The spread of coronavirus has led to a shortage of hand sanitizers and disinfectants in stores, and Army and Air Force Exchange Service locations haven't been spared.

Chris Ward, senior public affairs manager at AAFES headquarters in Dallas, said in an email that the entire supply chain for hand sanitizer products and masks has been severely constrained.

"Like other retailers, the Exchange has experienced shortages of hygiene items due to a surge in demand due to COVID-19," the email stated.

Ward's email went on to state that AAFES is "aggressively working to procure additional inventory to expedite shipment to locations impacted by COVID-19," and recommended following the CDC guidance stating that hand washing is the best defense to preventing the spread of infection.

But what if someone contracts COVID-19? What should they do?

Above all, said the CDC, anyone sick with COVID-19, or if one suspects they are infected, should follow these steps:

- **Stay home, except to get medical care:** Restrict activities outside your home, except for getting medical care. Do not go to work, school, or public areas. Avoid using public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.

- **Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home:** As much as possible, stay in a specific room and away from other people in

the home. Also, use a separate bathroom, if available.

- **Call ahead before visiting your doctor:** Call the healthcare provider and tell them that you have or may have COVID-19. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.

- **Cover your coughs and sneezes:** Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can. Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

- **Clean your hands often:** Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.

- **Avoid sharing personal household items:** Don't share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people or pets in your home. After using these items, they should be washed thoroughly with soap and water.

- **Clean all "high-touch" surfaces every day:** High touch surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets and bedside tables. Clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool or body fluids on them. Use a household cleaning spray or wipe, according to the label instructions.

- **Monitor your symptoms:** Seek prompt medical attention if your illness is worsening, such as if you have difficulty breathing. Before seeking care, call your healthcare provider and tell them that you have, or are being evaluated for, COVID-19.

The CDC also said those patients with confirmed COVID-19 should remain under home isolation precautions until the risk of secondary transmission to others is thought to be low. The decision to discontinue home isolation precautions should be made on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.

For the most up-to-date information on COVID-19, visit the CDC's website. Specific Military Health System information about COVID-19 can be found at health.mil/News/In-the-Spotlight/Coronavirus or www.cdc.gov/.

Alvarez sets example for 5-25 Soldiers to emulate

By **Spc. KAY EDWARDS**

3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div

FORT POLK, La. — Sgt. Jessica Alvarez has been in the Army for less than a year but has already proved why she's a valuable Soldier.

"I've only been doing field artillery since January," said Alvarez, a fire control specialist assigned to Charlie Battery, 5th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division. "But I qualified on a big safety test that allowed my unit to certify."

Alvarez made a 90% on the Fire Direction Center safety exam which tests the proficiency of Soldiers to perform their duties as FDC computers and section sergeants, an impressive achievement for a new Soldier.

In 2011, after graduating from high school, Alvarez joined the Navy. However, after eight years of serving, she decided that she wanted a change.

"I wanted more of a physical challenge and I wanted to go boots on the ground," said Alvarez.

She turned to the Blue to Green program where she switched from the Navy to the Army at the completion of her contract.

"Some days are good, some days are bad, but I don't regret my decision," said Alvarez. "It's definitely been challenging, especially when it comes to the physical part because I've never been a good runner."

"Running all of the time in the Army, and rucking, definitely challenges me."

To meet the standards set by 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div Commander Col. Kendall Clarke's intent, Alvarez's company performs several rucks in preparation for the quarterly 12-mile ruck. However, she's no stranger to pushing herself to her physical limits.

Sgt. Jessica Alvarez, a fire control specialist assigned to Charlie Battery, 5th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10 Mountain Division, operates an Advanced Field Artillery Tactical Data System while in the back of a HMMWV on March 6 at Fort Polk. The AFATDS is used to provide automated support for planning, coordinating, controlling and executing fires and effects."

"I was a competitive weightlifter in high school and undefeated in my city," said Alvarez. "I did a couple of competitions for the Navy, just for fun, but I don't compete anymore."

"Now I like to just go to the gym and work on getting more fit, focusing on preparing myself for the Army Combat Fitness Test, which is definitely going to challenge me."

Although Alvarez was confident about her decision to go into the artillery field and got a lot of encouragement, she was also faced with some skepticism.

"When I went to basic training, and in AIT, people were surprised to see females in the artillery field, because that's something new that recently came about within the last five years I believe," said Alvarez. "I actually enjoy it."

Alvarez may soon be taking on more responsibility within her unit.

"I'm about to be the only female NCO in my section because my current chief and the other NO's are leaving," said Alvarez. "I might have to fill his chief spot, so that'll be something challenging, but I'm ready to take it on."

Geronimo celebrates 100th birthday of 509th WWII veteran

By **Capt. MATHEW SULLIVAN**

1st Bn (Abn), 509th Inf Reg

FORT POLK, La. — On Feb. 22, three paratroopers from the 1st Battalion (Airborne), 509th Infantry Regiment traveled to Monticello, Florida, to celebrate WWII veteran Thomas Wimberly's 100th birthday.

Thomas Wimberly was born in Cochran, Georgia, on Feb. 22, 1920, and was 21 years old when he enlisted in the United States Army on Sept. 11, 1941. He completed basic training in Texas and volunteered to become a paratrooper, receiving his airborne wings on Mar. 7, 1942.

Three months later, he traveled by train to New York to board the Queen Elizabeth. During the next two years, he participated in both the Algeria-French Morocco and Tunisia campaigns. A highlight from his service was his part in Operation Torch, the Anglo-American invasion of French North Africa.

On Nov. 15, 1942, he jumped with the 2nd Battalion, 509th Infantry

Regiment into the Youks Les Baines, Tunisia. The unit's mission was the seizure of the airfield at Youks Les Baines, which later played a critical part in the fight against the Nazi Afrika Korps.

Staff Sgt. Shane Bowers, Staff Sgt. Dino Paren, and Pvt. Thomas Harrell spent two hours at a church in Monticello, Florida, celebrating Wimberly's birthday with friends, family and people from the local community, many of whom were also veterans. They enjoyed stories of Wimberly's time in the Army, to include the time he had to jump out of a plane at only 300 feet.

"It's great to support World War II veterans, and he was very appreciative to see representatives from the 509th," said Bowers, a squad leader from 1st Platoon, Able Company.

"As the number of World War II veterans lessens, getting the opportunity to spend time with Mr. Wimberly was a rare and rewarding experience for Geronimo."



Staff Sgt. Shane Bowers (left), Pvt. Thomas Harrell (third from left) and Staff Sgt. Dino Paren present a plaque to 509th Infantry Regiment and World War II veteran Thomas Wimberly on his 100th birthday Feb. 22 in Monticello, Fla.

Despite being 100 years old, He can often be seen mowing the Wimberly leads an active lifestyle. lawn of his Monticello home.

DPTMS team learns CPR, AED operation

By JEAN DUBIEL
DPTMS

FORT POLK, La. — Most people have seen an AED, or automatic external defibrillator, mounted on a wall at an airport, bus stop, school, casino, gymnasium, shopping mall or other public area. Have you ever wondered if you could use one? Would you be able to read the directions fast enough to save a life?

AEDs are designed to be used by non-medical personnel, such as firefighters, police officers, lifeguards, flight attendants, security guards, teachers and family members of high-risk persons. These people usually get training on how to use the device along with cardiopulmonary resuscitation, or CPR, to offer aid to a victim of sudden cardiac arrest (SCA).

The Fort Polk Warrior Operations Center, or WOC, will soon install an AED so the Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Readiness team received CPR and AED training at the Berry Mission Training Complex March 11.

Mark Leslie, acting DPTMS director, said the AED machine is an important step in protecting the work force.

"You never know when something may happen," he said. "We are minutes away from response and Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital, but every second counts when the life of a teammate is on the line. If something terrible happens, we will have the equipment to address the issue and the training needed to potentially preserve the life of a teammate."

David Dancer, DPTMS Plans and Operations chief, agreed.

"The WOC fills up with people quickly during an emergency because everyone is responding to the crisis, even in the middle of the night," he said. "You can't predict what may happen when people experience stress and high tension — that may impact someone's health. If someone experiences SCA in the WOC, we want to have the equipment and trained personnel on hand to offer immediate assistance."

The DPTMS team learned how to determine if a person is experiencing SCA: Victims are generally unresponsive, lack a pulse and are not breathing. If that is the case, one person should call 911 while someone else begins CPR.

"I think it is critical for the DPTMS team to have this training as a force protection measure."

MARK LESLIE
Acting DPTMS director

CPR is a first-aid technique that can keep someone alive until medical professionals arrive to take over. It keeps blood pumping through the body to maintain vital organ function, and oxygen flowing in and out of the lungs. Chest compressions are delivered by placing the heel of one hand on the person's chest, and the other hand on top of it, then pressing down about 2 inches deep at a rate of 100-120 beats per minute. Rescue breathing, the process of pinching the nose closed while breathing air into the victim's



Vincent Engel performs CPR on a test dummy as David Dancer observes during a Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security CPR and AED class March 11 at Fort Polk's Berry Mission Training Center.

mouth, is delivered at a rate of two breaths per every 30 chest compressions.

While a rescuer is performing CPR, someone else should be removing the AED from its mount and bringing it to the victim's side. This is where teamwork can play a vital role.

"While one person continues CPR, another person can be attaching the pads," said Chad Estes, firefighter with the Directorate of Emergency Services and CPR/AED trainer. "The machine will diagnose the heart rhythm of the victim and tell you whether or not to initiate the shock. It prompts you with audio commands and text prompts on the LED screen."

The AED will also warn responders to stay clear of the victim while it performs a victim analysis and when the shock is delivered. If CPR is indicated, the AED will instruct the rescuer to continue performing CPR.

AEDs play an important role in stabilizing a heart's rhythm by delivering an electric pulse, or shock, to the victim. Similar to a computer reboot, the shock is a way to reset the natural cadence of the heart.

Once professional medical personnel arrive on

the scene, they will take over from the responders.

Tommy Morris, DPTMS emergency manager, attended the class and said the training was outstanding.

"This a good refresher for those of us who have had CPR training before," he said. "I feel confident that I can use the AED if I needed to."

Jeff Sweeney, antiterrorism officer, said he was glad to take the class.

"I think the training was well worth the time," he said. "I never used a CPR dummy that had light indicators to guide your rhythm. I found that very helpful."

Leslie said the training benefits the entire Fort Polk team.

"I think it is critical for the DPTMS team to have this training as a force protection measure," said Leslie. "We have an aging workforce and having employees trained to use this life-saving equipment is vital in the first few minutes of a cardiac crisis. We want to ensure we have prepared and done all we can to make the work place as safe as it can be and protect all our employees."



Soldiers train hard

Soldiers train both physically (left) and mentally (above) during Expert Infantry Badge train up to prepare them for the tasks they will have to accomplish during the upcoming EIB test which begins March 23.

CHUCK CANNON / GUARDIAN

UCMJ violations result in reprimands, punishment

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.

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

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

- A staff sergeant assigned to 519th Military Police Battalion, was convicted by a military judge of three specifications of assault in violation of Article 120, UCMJ. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, confined for 8 months and discharged from service with a bad conduct discharge.
- A sergeant assigned to 1st Battalion, 5th Avia-

tion Regiment, was issued a General Officer Memorandum of Reprimand for driving under the influence with a blood alcohol content of 0.149%. The commanding general directed this reprimand be placed permanently in the Soldier's AMHRR.

- A specialist assigned to 317th Brigade Engineer Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, was administratively separated under Chapter 14-12b, 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 service member's educational benefits.

- A specialist assigned to 519th MP Bn, was administratively separated under Chapter 14-12c(2), with a General (Under Honorable Conditions) characterization of service for wrongfully using tetrahydrocannabinol (CBP oil specifically). Generally, this characterization of service results in the loss of a service member's educational benefits.

- A private first class assigned to 519th MP Bn, was administratively separated under Chapter 14-12c, with a General (Under Honorable Conditions) characterization of service for operating a vehicle while intoxicated. Generally, this characterization of service results in the loss of a service member's educational benefits.

- A private assigned to 710th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div, was administratively separated under Chapter 14-12c, with a General (Under Honorable Conditions) characterization of service for making abusive sexual contact with another Soldier. Generally, this characterization of service results in the loss of a service member's educational benefits.

- A private, assigned to 710th BSB, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div, was punished under Article 15 for wrongful use of a controlled substance, in violation of Article 112a. The service member was sentenced to reduction to E-1; forfeiture of \$866 pay, which was suspended for 180 days; and extra-duty for 45 days.

Expo

Continued from page 3

break. The afternoon sessions consist of the hiring fair and resource booths with representatives from the Army and Air Force Exchange Service, Manpower Group, United Rentals, Amazon, Google, American Job Centers, the Department of Veteran Affairs, the Coca-Cola Company, Home Depot, Walmart and more.

Lunch and learn sessions are available. Topics include "Presenting the Best You at a Hiring Fair;" "Be Your Own Boss;" "The Federal Hiring Process;" "Not Finished Learning Yet;" "Let's Get to Work;" and "Self Care."

Attendees can meet employers interested in

their skills, conduct job interviews, draft resumes, attend workshops and find employment. While there is no guarantee, at past events, employers have hired people on the spot.

Attendees will be able to meet with a spouse education and career opportunities coach, representatives from Military One Source and Fort Polk's Employment Readiness personnel. Free child care and lunch are available for those who preregister.

There will be an opportunity to get a professional head shot from LinkedIn and a free one-year upgrade to premium LinkedIn.

Attendees should dress for success in appropriate business attire and are advised to work on a 30 second elevator speech. Imagine you are on an elevator with someone who has the power to hire you. You need to sell your best qualities and suitability for the job by the time the elevator ride is over. It is suggested that you write it, edit and then rehearse. The better prepared you are to sell yourself to a prospective employee, the greater your chance to make a good first impression and land the job. Visit <https://einvitations.afit.edu/inv/index.cfm?i=522310&k=0763400A7A57> to register for the event.

Community



Royals enjoy tea

On March 7 the Fort Polk Main Post Exchange hosted a Princess Tea Party. Young princesses were afforded the opportunity to meet with the Disney princess crew and enjoy snacks, color-



Counter dangers to children using Internet

By JOANNA GARCIA

Family Advocacy Program

The Internet continues to be a useful source for all ages. The Internet can be wonderful for kids to learn educational content, communicate with friends, watch learning videos and play interactive games. However, with online access can come great risks, such as inappropriate content, cyberbullying and online predators. Applications such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Snapchat and more are known to be used by children as young as 8. Using apps and websites where kids interact becomes an easy access for predators who may pose as a child, or teens looking to making a new friend. These predators may prod the child to provide personal information, such as their phone number, home address, and at times send explicit pictures of themselves. Therefore, as a parent what can be done? The FBI suggests the following:

- Monitor your children's use of the Internet; keep your Internet computer in an open, common room of the house.
- Tell your kids why it's important not to disclose personal information online.
- Check your kids' profiles and what they post online.
- Read and follow the safety tips provided on the sites. Report inappropriate activity to the website or law enforcement immediately.
- Explain to your kids that once images are posted online they lose control of them and can never get them back.
- Only allow your kids to post photos or any identifying information on websites with your knowledge and consent.
- Instruct your kids to use privacy settings to restrict access to profiles so only the individuals on their contact lists are able to view their profiles.
- Remind kids to only add people they know in real life to their contact lists.
- Encourage kids to choose appropriate screen names or nicknames.

- Talk to your kids about creating strong passwords.
- Visit social networking websites with your kids, and exchange ideas about acceptable versus potentially risky websites.
- Ask your kids about the people they are communicating with online.
- Make it a rule with your kids that they can never give out personal information or meet anyone in person without your prior knowledge and consent. If you agree to a meeting between your child and someone they met online, talk to the parents/guardians of the other individual first and accompany your kids to the meeting in a public place.
- Encourage your kids to consider whether a message is harmful, dangerous, hurtful or rude before posting or sending it online, and teach your kids not to respond to any rude or harassing remarks or messages that make them feel scared, uncomfortable, or confused and to show you the messages instead.
- Educate yourself on the websites, software, and apps that your child uses.
- Don't forget cell phones. They often have almost all the functionality of a computer.
- In addition, the "bark" app is one of the 10 best parental control apps of 2020. This app "monitors text messages, YouTube, emails, and 24 different social networks for potential safety concerns, so busy parents can save time and gain peace of mind."

For more information on how to keep your children safe online, check out the following sources:

- **FBI.gov**
- Children Internet Safety by the United States Department of Justice (www.Justice.gov)
- **Bark app**

For more information on parenting prevention and education classes, please call: Army Community Service/Family Advocacy Program at (337) 531-1938, or if you know or suspect child abuse/child neglect or spouse/ intimate partner violence, please call: (337) 531-HOPE/4673.

Briefs

School lunch menu

The following school lunch menu is for Vernon Parish schools for Monday through March 20. Meals are served with salad bar and choice of milk:

Monday: Hamburger on whole wheat bun, French fries, ranch style beans, lettuce/tomato/pickle cup, orange wedges.

Tuesday: Chicken and sausage gumbo, steamed rice, potato salad, seasoned green beans, peach crunch, ice cream, crackers.

Wednesday: Barbecue beef on whole wheat bun, potato rounds, green Lima beans, fruit.

Thursday: Chili con carne, fluffy whole grain rice, mustard greens, orange wedges, whole wheat cornbread.

March 20: Cheese nachos, corn on the cob, ranch style beans, apple wedges.

Women's history

A Women's History Month observance is held at noon, Wednesday, at Fort Polk's Bayou Theater. This year's theme is "We Can Do It and She DID." The program is hosted by the 32nd Hospital Center. Call 531-1911 for more information.

Preschool signup

Enrollment for Vernon Parish preschool programs (Head Start and LA4) for the 2020-21 school year opens Wednesday. Families with children ages 3 and 4 who are interested in preschool should attend. Visit the school of your choice to register between 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. Wednesday. The following documents are required: Birth certificate, shot record, Social Security card, proof of residency and proof of income (most two recent documents). Call your school of choice for additional information.

Women veterans brunch

A Women Veterans Brunch, hosted by Veterans of Foreign Wars District 5, is held March 21 from 10 a.m.-noon at VFW Post 3106 in Leesville. Guest speaker is Command Sgt. Major Ruth Drewitt, Joint Readiness Training Center Operations Group, Task Force Sustainment. Groundbreaking for a Women Veterans Memorial is held at noon. Space is limited. Contact your local VFW to sign up. Active duty Soldiers can call (337) 353-9136.

Red Cross

American Red Cross, in partnership with Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital, hosts its annual summer youth volunteer program from June 1 to July 10. For more information on how to sign up call 531-4783 or email fortpolk@redcross.org.

Finding good books gets easier thanks to book nook

By **ANGIE THORNE**

Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. — Books give readers the chance to become part of a world they might not otherwise experience, to open their minds and learn new things.

These are just a few of the reasons Lindsey Custer, a Fort Polk spouse and mother, loves books. The joy she gets from books is part of what motivated her to start a “book nook.”

Custer said the slogan that is often associated with book nooks best explains their purpose.

“The catch phrase, ‘need a book, take a book, have a book, leave a book’ says it all.

“I thought I might tackle that idea when my husband retired and we got out of the Army. I always liked the idea of having a neighborhood book nook.”

Custer got a book for Christmas that moved up her “maybe later” date.

“I really enjoyed my book and I thought, maybe I don’t have to wait. Maybe I can do this now. That’s how my book nook came to be,” she said.

First, Custer got permission from Corvias to place the book nook in her neighborhood.

Once she had the OK, she needed a place to house the books, so she called the Beauregard Daily News and they gave her an old newspaper vending machine which she cleaned up and decorated.

She filled it with books for adults and children and the book nook was open for business.

Custer said there are no rules; it’s just a good way to get books out there for people to enjoy.

“If anybody wants to grab one, it’s just a fun way to get their hands on new reading material,” she said.

Custer said the book nook provides a sense of community, which she said is already strong at Fort Polk.

“As a community, people keep an eye on the nook and help keep it filled. If people see it (the nook) is getting low and they have a book to share, they will and that’s great,” she said. “The book nook gives people a reason to get out and talk to their neighbors about the latest book they read and couldn’t put down. It brings people together through reading.”

Custer said, ultimately, she would love for the book nook to spark an interest in reading for both children and adults.

“We have three young boys who are all learning to read and I’m try-

ing to make books part of their lives, not just devices (phones, computers and televisions),” she said.

Custer said she’s seen kids from her neighborhood stop by and pick a book from the book nook.

“To see them walking home with books or putting them in the basket on their bikes is wonderful,” she said.

Mylene Keil, 9, said she uses the book nook all the time.

“Books are awesome,” she said. “Using the book nook in my neighborhood and makes finding a good book fast and easy.”

Custer said she isn’t trying to pull people away from the library. Instead, her hope is the book nook motivates a thirst for reading so great that it can only be fully quenched at a library.

“My family loves the library here on post. I think any way you can encourage easy access to books is important,” she said.

Custer said when her mother, who lives in Ohio, found out about her efforts to find a newspaper dispenser to house her book nook, she found one that she is planning to bring with her on her next visit.

“The BDN also just gave me a couple more dispensers. Looks like I might be able to expand the project. I don’t know where I would put a



ANGIE THORNE / GUARDIAN

Mylene Keil, 9, (left) looks on as Chloe Dunkin, 7, picks out a new book at her neighborhood book nook.

new book nook, but I would love to know where people would like to see another one,” she said. “Eventually, I would love the book nook idea to grow and spread to each neighborhood. I think it would be great to see them next to the community mailboxes or playgrounds in housing. I would love that.” Custer said if anyone is interested in finding out more about book nooks to contact her at lcuster24@gmail.com.

353rd Armor Regiment Soldier referees games in spare time

By **ANGIE THORNE**

Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. — Most Soldiers put a great deal of focus and time into training. But they do have interests and hobbies outside of their Army-fueled life. Sgt. 1st Class Donnell Macklin, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 353rd Armor Regiment, acting first sergeant, said he handles a lot of the administrative duties for his unit. That includes everything from combat readiness and training slides to taskings and more.

But when his day as a Soldier is done, Macklin puts on a different uniform. He has a life-long love of sports, especially football, which he has played since a child. That passion has given him the desire to work in sports. Macklin took that enthusiasm and channeled it into a job as a sports referee in his spare time. He said he feels his work as an official could help him transition from the Army and possibly into a career he will love as his retirement date draws near.

“My long term goal is to get into college officiating. After I get out (of the Army), I would probably start at the high school level, move into junior colleges and then work my way up to conference level play like in the Southeastern Conference,” he said.

Even though Macklin said football has his heart, he also calls games in basketball, baseball and softball.

That means he never takes a break.

“Those sports carry me throughout the year. It

keeps me busy,” he said.

Macklin said his Family isn’t with him at Fort Polk, so he has plenty of time to focus on being a referee or umpire, depending on the sport.

“From the time I get off work, I stay busy with refereeing. I keep a calendar for my Army work commitments and a separate calendar for my sporting obligations. It makes my weekends go by fast and I love it,” he said.

Macklin originally thought he might go into coaching, but since he began refereeing a year ago he said his perspective changed. He said he enjoys being part of the action.

“Being an official puts me right in the heart of the game watching plays breakdown in real time. It’s probably a little more exciting than being a coach that only gets the sideline view of things,” he said.

Macklin is a member of different officiating associations that cover a wide range of games in multiple parishes including Vernon, Beauregard, Rapides and more. “The farthest I’ve traveled so far has been Tyler, Texas for a youth football tournament,” he said.

Macklin said distance doesn’t matter and he likes to stay busy.

“I tell all my associations and the assignment secretaries — the people that make the assignments — that that when I’m not at work, I’m always available to call a game,” he said. “That’s because I like staying busy, as well as seeing and experiencing new places. It’s an adventure.”

Another reason Macklin said he loves being an official is because of his interaction with youth



COURTESY

Sgt. 1st Class Donnell Macklin, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 353rd Armor Regiment, acting first sergeant, referees a girls basketball game.

and the passion they put into their sport.

“I think the drive that keeps me doing this is seeing the progression of kids learning and growing through sports. It’s something like what we do here in the Army by molding civilians into Soldiers. Coaches say they tell kids to do something a hundred times, but until an official tells them, it doesn’t always stick,” he said. “I like the idea of sharing in a small part of that kid’s success and then following them from youth sports to, possibly, college recruitment,” he said.

Macklin said at the end of the day, he feels like what he does also helps local communities in a small way.

“If you don’t have people willing to step up and call games, they aren’t going to happen,” he said.

Avoid tax errors, make appointment with Fort Polk Installation Tax Office

By 1st Lt. MICHAEL W. MOORE

JA OIC Fort Polk Installation Tax Office

FORT POLK, La. — The Fort Polk Installation Tax Center is open for business from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Wednesday and Friday, 11:30 to 7 p.m. on Thursday and 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday at bldg 1455, 2165 Ninth Street. Call 531-1040 to schedule an appointment. Walk-ins are welcomed, but appointments will take priority.

The tax center offers the following tips when filing taxes:

- In the Army, combat is a part of the job. Many Soldiers deploy during the year and receive combat pay. When they are filing taxes they have questions about how to treat their combat pay, especially if they usually get an earned income tax credit or could potentially receive an earned income credit.

If you or a friend fall into this category the following will provide you guidance:

The Earned Income Tax Credit, EITC or EIC, is a benefit for working people with low to moderate income. To qualify, you must meet certain requirements and file a tax return, even if you do not owe any

tax or are not required to file. EITC reduces the amount of tax you owe and may give you a refund.

EITC has special rules that apply for members of the military. Below are tips for Soldiers who have combat pay.

- You do not have to report nontaxable pay you receive as a member of the armed forces as earned income on your tax return. Examples of nontaxable military pay are combat pay, the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH), and the Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS). The amount of your nontaxable combat pay is on your Form W-2, in box 12, with code Q.

- But, you and your spouse can each choose to have your nontaxable combat pay included in your earned income for purposes of the EITC. Including it as earned income may decrease the amount of tax you owe and may mean a larger refund. Calculate your taxes both with the nontaxable combat pay as earned income and without the nontaxable combat pay as earned income to find out what's best for you.

- If you make the election, you must include in earned income all

nontaxable combat pay you received. You can't choose to include only a part of the nontaxable combat pay in earned income.

Find the areas considered combat zones at www.irs.gov/newsroom/combat-zones.

Find questions and answers on more combat zone provisions at www.irs.gov/newsroom/micellaneuous-provisions-combat-zone-service.

One of the most annoying things during tax season is not having your refund processed in a timely fashion because of a simple mistake. To prevent this from happening, file your tax return electronically. Electronic filing reduces errors because the tax software does the math, flags common errors and prompts taxpayers for missing information.

Using a reputable tax preparer — such as provided at the Fort Polk Tax Center — can also help avoid errors.

Here are some common errors to avoid when preparing a tax return:

- Missing or inaccurate Social Security numbers. Each SSN on a tax return should appear exactly as printed on the Social Security card.

- Misspelled names. Likewise, a name listed on a tax return should match the name on that person's Social Security card.

- Incorrect filing status. Some taxpayers choose the wrong filing status. The Interactive Tax Assistant on IRS.gov can help taxpayers choose the correct status especially

if more than one filing status applies.

- Math mistakes. Math errors are one of the most common mistakes. They range from simple addition and subtraction to more complex calculations. Taxpayers should always double check their math.

- Incorrect bank account numbers. Taxpayers who are due a refund should choose direct deposit. This is the fastest way for a taxpayer to get their money. However, taxpayers need to make sure they use the correct routing and account numbers on their tax return.

- Filing with an expired individual tax identification number. If a taxpayer's number is expired, they should go ahead and file using the expired number. The IRS will process that return and treat it as a return filed on time. However, the IRS won't allow any exemptions or credits to a return filed with an expired ITIN. Taxpayers will receive a notice telling the taxpayer to renew their number. Once the taxpayer renews the ITIN, the IRS will process return normally.

When you are getting your taxes prepared the preparer will go over your information with you. When they do it is very important to pay attention to ensure that your basic information is correct.

Know your rights, and if you have any questions please stop by and see someone at the Fort Polk Installation Tax Center or the Legal Assistance Office.

Clean stormwater important for all

By EMILY McGRUDER

DPW-ENRMD-CMB

FORT POLK, La. — Louisiana is noted for its freshwater and saltwater fisheries, which make up one of the state's largest industries. Louisiana has the biggest and most diversified freshwater fisheries production in America. The state is the leader in the nation's production of shrimp, blue crab, oyster, crawfish, tuna, red snapper, wild catfish and many other types.

Stormwater affects life on the planet, from the rivers and lakes, to the wildlife and plants that occupy the state's waterways. Eventually every drop of oil, chemical and trash that come in contact with stormwater systems show up in local water ways. The pollutants are not only washed into local waterways, but so is sediment. Sediment harms fish by clogging and abrading their gills and smothering their eggs. Pollutants can also harm aquatic life due to changes in water chemistry and habitat loss.

Louisiana's commercial fishing

industry produces 25% of all the seafood in America, both in the wild and farm raised. Chronic pollution can cause disruptions in the region's fishing industry, as well as other recreational activities such as fishing, swimming and boating.

Polluted stormwater can have adverse effects on not just fish; but also plants, animals and people. Excess nutrients can cause algae blooms. When algae dies it decomposes in a process that removes oxygen from the water.

Bacteria can wash into swimming areas and create health hazards. Debris can be washed into waterways and choke, suffocate or disable aquatic life such as ducks, fish and birds.

Household hazardous wastes like pesticides, used motor oil and other auto fluids can poison aquatic life. Land animals and people can become sick from eating diseased fish and shellfish. Polluted stormwater often affects drinking water sources. This, in turn, can affect health and increase drinking water treatment costs.

K-9 Veterans Day
Celebrating the life of Atos and all Military Working Dogs
March 14th, 2020

MARCH 14TH, 2020
12 PM – 3 PM
HATCHET BREWERY

SOUTHERN PINES CROSSFIT HOSTS "ATOS" WORKOUT
AT 7AM, 8AM, 9AM, 10AM THE DAY OF THE EVENT

Tough Stump Technologies, in partnership with Hexagon
US Federal, is sponsoring a fundraiser to raise \$25,000
for K9s For Warriors. This is the cost to train and pair a
service dog with a warrior in need. Come celebrate and
honor the life of Atos, a military working dog K.I.A.
December 24, 2007; and all working dogs that give their
all for us without reservation.

To donate, visit support.k9sforwarriors.org/goto/ATOS
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make checks payable to: "K9s For Warriors"

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/13

Take your pick of exciting MWR events, programs, facilities

DFMWR

FORT POLK, La. —Fort Polk's Directorate of Family Morale, Welfare and Recreation offers a wide array of programs and events for every member of the Family. Don't miss your chance to experience the fun to be had over the next few months.

Strongest Youth Competition

Does your child love to compete and show their strength? If so, sign them up for the Child and Youth Services Strongest Youth Competition held March 21 at 10 a.m. at Perez Field. Each age division competes for one youth to prove themselves the strongest of the group through a series of challenges.

Challenges include a tire flip, flexed arm hang, log toss and more. Prizes are awarded to the champion of each age division and the runner up of the division, not per event.

This event is free and open to the public. Registration begins the day of the event at 9 a.m. at Perez Field.

For more information, call (337) 531-6004.

Movie Night

The return of Movie Night is quickly approaching. Join the Fort Polk community at Headquarters Field March 28 for another great outdoor movie featuring "Frozen 2."

There will be free popcorn, candy, hot dogs, nachos, drinks and the signature MWR light up bracelets.

Concessions open at 6:30 p.m. and the movie

begins at 7:30 p.m. Be there early to grab your goodies and get a great seat.

Amazing Race

Join the fun as the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk stages its version of the Amazing Race March 28 beginning at 8 a.m. at Showboat Theatre. Participants will race around South Fort Polk and perform activities for clues to the next destination. Challenges include physical fitness and critical thinking activities. Register at the Allen Memorial Library or the Home of Heroes Recreation Center. For more information call 531-2665.

Save the date for FreedomFest 2020!

The Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk's FreedomFest will be held July 18. Country music superstar Toby Keith will headline the event, which includes fireworks, static displays, salute to the nation, food vendors and children's activities.

Warrior Store

Don't forget to check out the Warrior Store. You'll find everything from Fort Polk hoodies, shirts and glassware to beautiful home decor. The boutique atmosphere offers something for everyone and new items are added monthly. The Warrior Store is open seven days a week, Thursday through Tuesday from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. and Wednesdays from 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Warrior Lanes/Anvil Bar

As many of you know, the Warrior Lanes Bowling Center is still closed for repairs. However, the Anvil Bar is back in business.



The bar offers a variety of Louisiana themed specialty drinks for you to enjoy while you watch your favorite sports on one of the many big screen TVs.

The Anvil often hosts UFC Fights and other championship sporting events with no cover charge. The Anvil Bar is open Monday through Thursday from 4:30-10 p.m., Friday 4:30 p.m.- 1 a.m., Saturday from 11-1 a.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m.-10 p.m.

Follow the Anvil Bar on Facebook to keep up with the latest events happening at the bar.

For more information follow MWR on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, or visit www.polk.armymwr.com.



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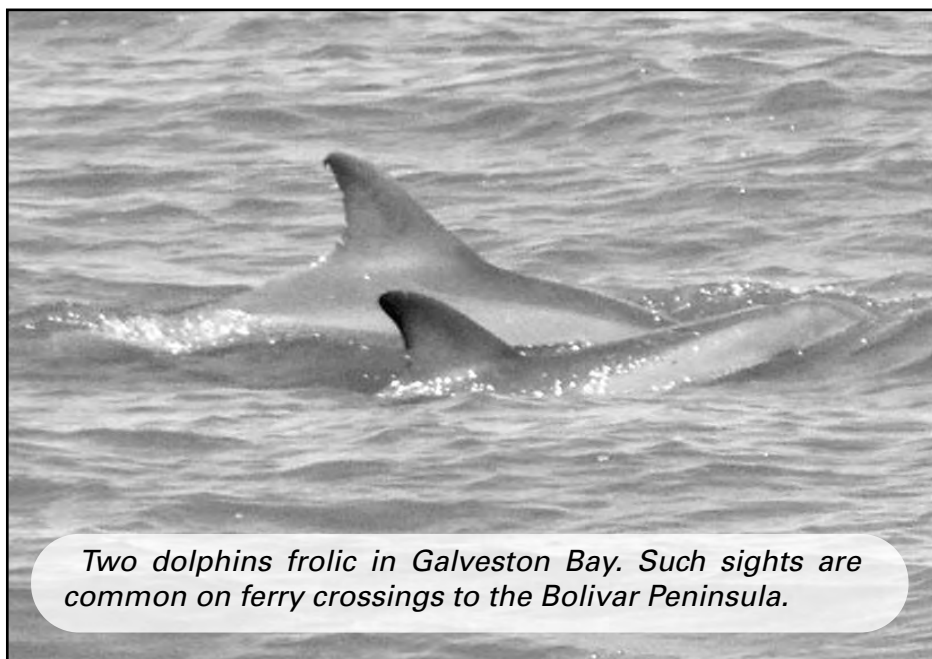
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Alexandria, LA 71303
318.266.4615

Covington
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Covington, LA 70434
985.900.2356

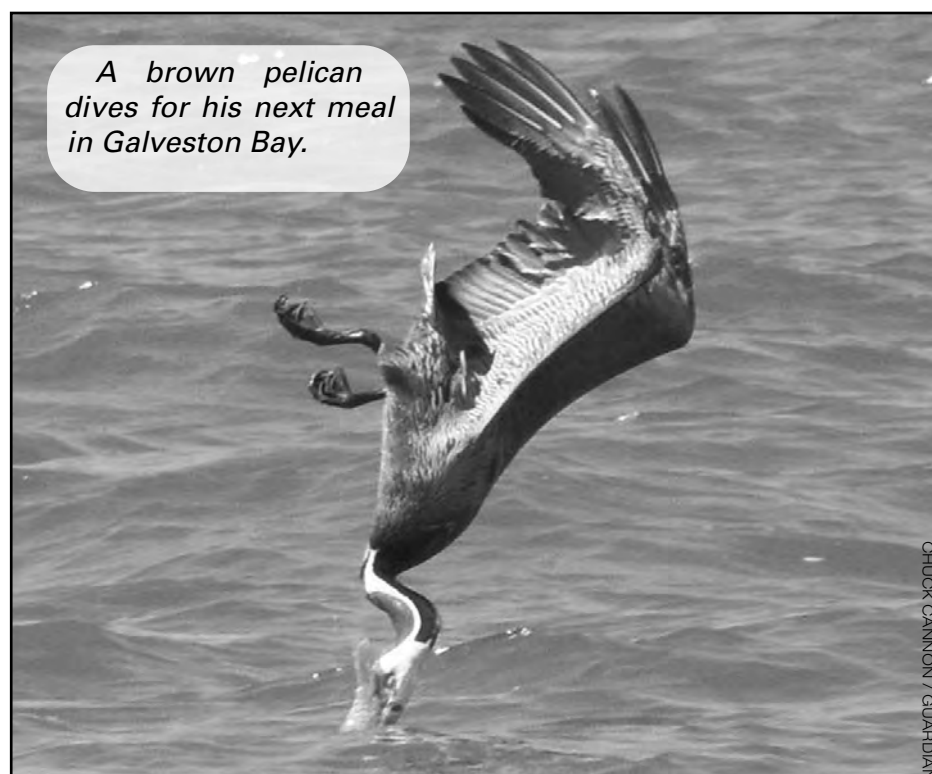
www.methodistfostercare.org

Galveston

Continued from page 13



Two dolphins frolic in Galveston Bay. Such sights are common on ferry crossings to the Bolivar Peninsula.



A brown pelican dives for his next meal in Galveston Bay.



A female alligator stands watch over her young on the Creole Nature Trail.



Stay in Louisiana this weekend and catch some Zydeco, Swamp Pop or Cajun music. Visit LouisianaStaycation.com to rediscover your state.

LOUISIANA
Feed Your Soul.

Coordinated Enrollment for Vernon Parish Pre-school Programs (Head Start and LA4) for the 2020-21 school year will open on March 18. We encourage all families with age 3 and 4 year old children who are interested in preschool to attend. Please visit the school of your choice to register between 8:00 am and 1:00 pm on March 18. Required documents: Birth certificate, shot record, social security card, proof of residency, proof of income (most 2 recent documents). Call the local school site of your choice if you have any additional questions regarding information pertaining to Coordinated Enrollment in your area.

Lagniappe

Festivals

• Black Heritage Festival

The annual Black Heritage Festival takes place Saturday at the Lake Charles Civic Center, 900 Lakeshore Drive. The festival features live entertainment, mouthwatering food and great family fun. The focus is to bring together the cultures of Africa and Southwest Louisiana and highlight the best in the community by celebrating diversity, culture and education.

For more information call (337) 436-9588.

• Iowa Rabbit Festival

Celebrating the economic and culinary impact rabbits have in Southwest Louisiana, the annual Iowa Rabbit Festival — held March 20-21 — is a one-of-a-kind event.

This family-friendly festival has it all: Great food, live music and tasty cook-offs. Don't miss this hare-raising good time at the Burton Coliseum Complex, 7001 Gulf Hwy, Lake Charles. Admission is \$10 per person.

For more information visit www.iowarabbit-festival.org.

• Film festival

The annual Cane River Film Festival takes place at Northwestern State University's Russell Hall, 175 Sam Sibley Drive, Natchitoches, March 20-21. The mission of the festival is to showcase, nurture and support emerging creative filmmakers. The festival builds a unique and powerful hub for filmmakers all over the world. This year's event highlights the work of international and national student/independent filmmakers and Natchitoches' contribution to the film industry.

For more information visit www.caneriver-filmfestival.com.

• Crawfish festival

The Crawfish & Music Festival takes place at the Lake Charles Civic Center, 900 Lake Shore Drive, March 28 from 11 a.m.-9 p.m.

This festival brings you the best of Louisiana culture with great food, wonderful people and live music as you eat and dance the day away. This year the festival spices things up with a

zydeco jam session. Bring your taste buds as there will be more than just crawfish, including your favorite Cajun treats and dishes available from various food vendors.

The admission-free carnival will be in full swing, offering fun for the entire family. There will be a kids zone and plenty of shopping opportunities for adults.

Tickets are \$12.24 per person. For more information or to purchase tickets visit www.eventbrite.com/e/crawfish-music-festival-tickets.

Miscellaneous

• Mansfield presentation

Of all the general officers produced during the American Civil War, perhaps none was as intriguing as Prince Camille Armand de Polignac, of France.

The life of this notable figure is featured in a special presentation at Mansfield State Historic Site, 15149 La. Hwy 175, three miles south of Mansfield, Saturday at 2 p.m.

Polignac was a royal soldier of fortune and adventurer who excelled in mathematics, science, and the art of war. He was part of the Confederate army and led a division of Louisiana troops at the battles of Mansfield and Pleasant Hill in April 1864.

Admission is \$4 per person ages 4-61. Seniors over 62 and children under 4 are admitted free. For more information call (888) 677-6267

• Cotile Trade Days

This two-day shopping event, located in the Cotile Lake Recreation Park, 200 Cotile Lake Road, Boyce, (about 20 miles west of Alexandria), takes place March 28-29. Shoppers can browse and buy art, antiques, airbrush work, clothes, tools, jewelry, plants, flowers and more, as well as enjoy food from a variety of vendors.

This is a family friendly event. Trade Days hours are 8 a.m.-5 p.m. March 28 and 9 a.m.-5 p.m. March 29. For more information visit cotiletradedays.org.

• St. Patrick's Day parade

Check out the 35th annual Wearin' of the Green St. Patrick's Day parade held Saturday from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., 1800 South Acadian Thruway, Baton Rouge. There will be marching bands, bagpipers, festive floats, marching groups, dignitaries and more. For more information visit www.visitbatonrouge.com.

Clubs/groups

• Bass Masters

Join the Fort Polk Community Bass Masters. The club meets monthly on the Tuesday before each tournament. Meetings are held at 6 p.m. at the New Llano American Legion, Post 387, 500 Vernon St.

The next meeting takes place March 24. The March tournament takes place at Sam Rayburn Lake March 28. The entry fee is \$40. For more information visit www.fortpolkcommunity-bassmasters.com.

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18X80 MOBILE HOME, \$8000 negotiable. **2017 HIGHLANDER**, payoff, non-negotiable. **2015 NISAN FRONTIER**, payoff, non-negotiable. Contact Ed White, 337-378-2101, if no answer, leave message. PCSing.

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