



FORGING THE

WARRIOR SPIRIT

THE JRTC & FORT POLK GUARDIAN

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Home of Heroes @ Fort Polk, LA

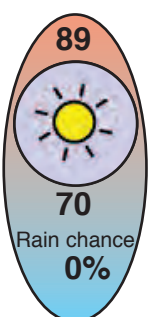
June 14, 2019



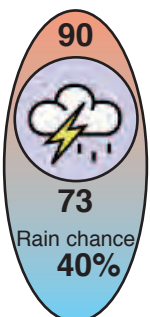
Roseberry takes command
During a garrison change of command ceremony held at Warrior Field June 13, outgoing commander Col. Jarrett A. Thomas II relinquished command to Col. Ryan K. Roseberry as Brenda Lee McCullough, director, IMCOM-Readiness, served as the officiating party. See page 5 for full story.

JEAN DUBIEL / GUARDIAN

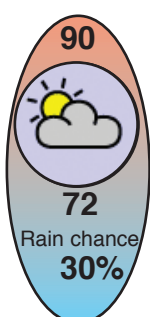
Weekend weather



Today



Saturday



Sunday

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Viewpoint

Political activity guidelines addressed by Secretary of Defense

By **PATRICK M. SHANAHAN**

Acting Secretary of Defense

WASHINGTON — Department of Defense personnel — both service members and civilian employees — swear an oath to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. Those of us privileged to serve our nation, in and out of uniform in the DoD, must be the epitome of American values and ethics. Our mission, to protect and defend the nation is apolitical.

DoD has a long-standing policy of encouraging its personnel to carry out the obligations of citizenship, which includes permitting certain political activities.

However, our policy and tradition also limit active partisan political activities or actions that could appear to imply DoD sponsorship, approval or endorsement of a political candidate, campaign or cause.

Service members should familiarize themselves with the policy in DoD Directive 1344.10.

While many civilian DoD employees may take an active part in certain political activities, the extent and nature of their participation is limited by the Hatch Act and DoD policy.

Regardless of whether civilian employees may engage in political activity, they may never engage in such activity while on duty or in a federal building.

I call on leaders at all levels in the DoD to reinforce the apolitical nature of military and civilian service and professionalism, while ensuring all personnel remain free to exercise the responsibilities of citizenship as laws and regulations allow.

Message

In our view

Guardian staff asked Fort Polk community members, "What plans do you have for summer vacation?" Here are their responses:

Spc. Nicholas Glass: "I plan to work toward getting promoted, going to school and then go home to spend some time with my stepmom."



Spc. Rashard Pringle: "I want to do lots of fishing, barbecuing and camping on the beach."



Erika Acosta: "We will probably have a staycation filled with grilling, pool trips and home projects."



Spc. Clay Jackson: "I'm mostly going to fish and boar hunt with my family."



Guardian

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Briefs

Pharmacy closure

The Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital pharmacy is closed today through Monday to move back to its newly renovated state-of-the-art location inside BJACH Entrance B.

Refills called in to the ScriptCenter, inside Entrance A, are available during the closure, but you must be registered to use the service. The outpatient pharmacy will reopen Tuesday at 7:30 a.m. inside Entrance B.

Corvias portal

The Corvias Resident Portal, available in a mobile app and web browser, enables Fort Polk housing residents to issue and track maintenance requests, upload photos and provide feedback on service performance.

The portal is accessible via the Corvias installation page, while the app is available to both Apple and Android users. Visit www.fortpolkcorvias.residentportal.com/ to sign up.

Instagram news

The Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk is now on Instagram: @Fort_Polk.

Road repairs

The contract to repair Fourth Street and Mississippi Avenue has a required completion date of July 29.

Work requirements include shoulder repairs, removing (milling) the asphalt and repaving with a new asphalt overlay and pavement markings.

Construction continues on Fourth Street and Mississippi Avenue to repair base failures, diamond grinding and spall repairs. These are required prior to the mobilization of the milling and paving equipment for the repaving operations.

The contractor is scheduled to mobilize milling and paving equipment today and begin these efforts starting on Fourth Street.

The asphalt placement (paving) operations are projected to start Wednesday at Fourth Street and Colorado Avenue and will progress towards Mississippi and Louisiana avenues.

The work requires closures, detours and flagging operations to complete the repairs while ensuring safety for motorists and construction crews. Alternate routes are encouraged to minimize delays and traffic congestion.



JEAN DUBIEL / GUARDIAN

Lt. Col. Melissa Tucker accepts the unit colors, and thereby command, of the Fort Polk Dental Health Activity, from Col. Rafael Caraballo, commander, Dental Health Command-Central, during a change of command ceremony held June 7 at Honor Field.

Dental Health Activity welcomes new commander

By JEAN DUBIEL
Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. — The next chapter in the history of Fort Polk's Dental Health Activity began on Warrior Field June 7, as outgoing commander Lt. Col. Paul M. Colthirst relinquished command to incoming commander Lt. Col. Melissa F. Tucker.

Col. Rafael Caraballo, commander, Dental Health Command-Central, served as host commander during the ceremony. He said that as Colthirst departs from the unit, he leaves behind a legacy of service, dedication and success few can equal.

"The Fort Polk team's accomplishments over the last three years are a direct reflection of (Colthirst's) leadership and commitment to the Soldiers, NCOs, civilians and Families of this organization and the Fort Polk community," Caraballo said. "The DENTAC stands tall and proud here today thanks to (his) effort and dedication. As a commander, (Colthirst) has upheld the traditions, customs and history of the command to the highest standard. It takes a great leader to forge a cohesive and highly accomplished team."

Caraballo welcomed Tucker to the team, and

said he could not have asked for a better commander to take on the leadership of the Dental Health Activity.

"As the new commander, you must bear the mantle of perpetuating the customs, traditions and rich history of the unit," he said. "Lieutenant Colonel Tucker understands that readiness is our No. 1 priority, and she is fully committed to preserve dental readiness to sustain the combat power of all Army components — active, Guard and Reserve."

Colthirst said he was pleased to announce the Fort Polk DENTAC is healthy and fully mission capable.

"The DENTAC is made up of Soldiers and civilians who have dedicated themselves for the last three years to ensure the Soldiers of the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk are deployable worldwide," said Colthirst. "The success of

the DENTAC did not occur in a vacuum — it is directly correlated to the support of the commander, sergeants major and first sergeants of the units throughout the installation."

Tucker, who comes to Fort Polk from Fort Sill, Okla., said she was honored to become a member of the Fort Polk team and will strive to uphold the standards set by her predecessor.



Tucker

CSM Michael Grinston selected as 16th SMA

ARMY PUBLIC AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON — Secretary of the Army Dr. Mark T. Esper and Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Milley, announced June 11 that Command Sgt. Maj. Michael A. Grinston will assume responsibilities as the 16th sergeant major of the Army (SMA).

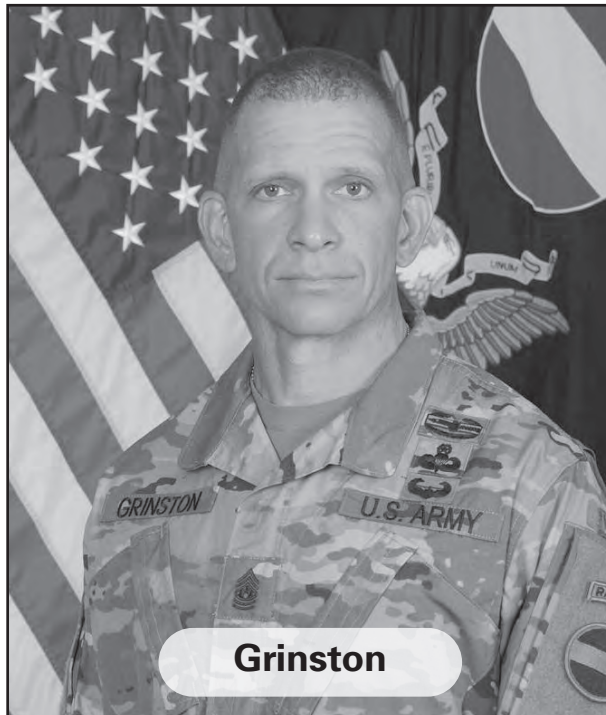
"I look forward to working with Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Grinston," Esper said. "The Army is in the midst of a renaissance, and he is a great choice to carry on our readiness, modernization and reform efforts."

Grinston currently serves as the senior enlisted leader for U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) — the U.S. Army's largest command and provider of expeditionary land forces. He is a combat veteran who has served in every leadership position from team leader to division command sergeant major.

His deployments include two tours each to Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, as well as Desert Shield, Desert Storm and Kosovo. Grinston also served as the senior enlisted leader for the Army's first deployment of a division headquarters, with 1st Infantry Division, in support of Operation Inherent Resolve from October 2014 to June 2015.

"Congratulations to Command Sgt. Maj. Grinston and his family," Milley said. "He is a world class leader who stands out among our exceptional Noncommissioned Officer Corps. He is the right noncommissioned officer to lead our Army into the future."

As the FORSCOM command sergeant major, Grinston played a key role in the development of



Grinston

training and preparation of combat units as a globally responsive force as the Army simultaneously builds and sustains readiness to meet the needs of national defense.

He will succeed Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel A. Dailey, who has served in that position since January 2015.

"Command Sgt. Maj. Grinston is the right leader," Dailey said. "He possesses all of the character and leadership qualities necessary to lead our NCO Corps into the future, and he will continue to serve the best interests of our Sol-

diers, their Families and the Army."

The 16th SMA will serve as the Army chief of staff's personal adviser on matters affecting the enlisted force. Much of the sergeant major of the Army's time is spent traveling throughout the Army to observe training, and talk to Soldiers and their Families.

The SMA recommends quality-of-life improvements to Army leadership and sits on numerous councils that make decisions affecting Army Families. The sergeant major of the Army also routinely testifies before Congress on these issues. Additionally, Grinston will serve as the public face of the Army's NCO Corps to the American people, in the media and through business and community engagements.

"I am honored to have the opportunity to continue to serve the great Soldiers and Families of the United States Army," Grinston said.

Grinston will be sworn in as the 16th SMA during a ceremony at the Pentagon on Aug. 16.

His awards and decorations include the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit (2), and 5 Bronze Stars (2 with 'V' devices). He has earned the Ranger tab, Master Parachutist badge, Air Assault badge, Drill Sergeant Identification badge, and the Combat Action Badge. He has attended every level of the Noncommissioned Officer Education System, and is a graduate of Ranger, Airborne and Air Assault Schools. He's also a graduate of the U.S. Army Drill Sergeant School and the Equal Opportunity Course.

Grinston possesses a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Administration from the University of Maryland University College. He is married and has two daughters.

1st SFAB Soldiers hone combat skills on Army's newest virtual trainer

By PATTI BIELLING

Synthetic Training Environment CFT

ORLANDO, Fla. — A combat advisor team from the 1st Security Force Assistance Brigade was the first unit of its type to train for an upcoming deployment using one of the Army's recently-fielded virtual trainers at Fort Benning, Georgia.

The Soldiers of Combat Advisor Team 1133 conducted key-leader engagement and insider-threat training in early June using the Squad Advanced Marksmanship Training system to help them prepare for their overseas combat advisory role.

The SAMT provides a realistic training environment for Soldiers, fire teams and squads to hone their skills on close combat tasks, enabling them to conduct critical tasks repetitively to improve target identification, decision-making, and shooting skills.

"With SAMT, you can get as many reps as you want with minimal cost to your logistics," said Sgt. 1st Class Silvestre Marrufo, team non-commissioned officer in charge, Combat Advisor Team 1133, 1st Battalion, 1st SFAB. "Day or night, rain or snow, you can come in here and do any kind of training. It's whatever you and the tech-

nician can think of, so it's pretty beneficial."

A combination of new and improved technologies increases the realism of the training, said Tim Sayers, a capability developer for the Army's Synthetic Training Environment. The replica M4 rifles and M9 and Glock 19 pistols are designed to approximate the form, fit and function of the weapons Soldiers use every day, he said. Magazines filled with compressed air actions the bolts and produces a recoil effect without requiring external cables.

Soldiers say they like the improved realism.

"This system allows us to do a lot more. I could have my whole team in here instead of having half of them serve as actors," said Capt. Karis Farrar, team leader for Combat Advisor Team 1133, 1st Battalion, 1st SFAB. "All the weapons are bluetooth, so it allows the Soldiers to actually work with their equipment. They're not tethered to anything -- it feels like you're in a room."

The system offers a myriad of drills that allow Soldiers to practice advanced marksmanship skills such as firing with non-dominant hand and firing on the move as they transition between rifle and sidearm, Sayers said. This type of training is critical because marksmanship is a perishable skill.

"The SAMT trains Soldiers in decision-making," Sayers said. "They have to quickly identify targets and decide whether to engage while being consistently aware of their surroundings."

Fort Benning is one of nine Army sites that now boast the SAMT. The capability was installed first in March at Fort Drum, New York, with additional fieldings completed at other major installations including Fort Polk, Louisiana; Fort Riley, Kansas; Fort Hood, Texas; and Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

By fall, the trainer will be operational at more than 20 locations in the United States, Sayers said.

Insights gained from SAMT usage will inform development of a future immersive marksmanship capability known as the Soldier/Squad Virtual Trainer, Sayers added.

For now, the SAMT is helping 1st SFAB Soldiers at Fort Benning better prepare for potential deployment later this year.

"We've talked to the operators and they've started working on a couple of different scenarios...all things that will add to the stress a little bit while you're still picking up on the triggers while having a conversation with the principle," said Staff Sgt. James Elliott, Senior Support Advisor, Combat Advisor Team 1133.

Fort Polk welcomes Roseberry as new garrison commander

By **JEAN DUBIEL**

Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. — One chapter in the history of Fort Polk came to its inevitable end at Warrior Field June 14 as Col. Jarrett A. Thomas II relinquished his command of the U.S. Army Garrison Fort Polk to Col. Ryan K. Roseberry, thereby launching the next phase in the legacy of the Home of Heroes.

Brenda Lee McCullough, director, Installation Management Command-Readiness, served as the officiating party for the change of command ceremony.

She said the Army no longer views installations solely as a home for its Soldiers, but as strategic readiness platforms, required to expedite the unit and warfighter momentum to rapidly deploy while facing continued fiscal challenges.

"This makes commanding a garrison in today's Army tough business," she said.

"General officers commonly refer to garrison command as the most difficult 06 level command in the Army. But it is not without its personal benefits and learning opportunities. Colonel Thomas told me that he has developed several new hobbies during his command: First, he became a fire chief overtime inspector; second, a real estate developer to acquire a \$55 million capital investment in the Fort Polk housing portfolio; and lastly, a water treatment specialist obtaining a green sand filtration system for Fort Polk."

McCullough said Thomas' leadership and strategic vision drove his ability to blanket more than 32,000 Soldiers, civilians, Family members and retirees with genuine care and compassion.

"(Thomas) also meticulously managed a \$130 million budget while being the primary caretaker for over 240,000 acres of training and cantonment lands. His work on the Intergovernmental Service Agreements enabled Fort Polk to receive the Army Community Partnership Award," said McCullough.

"Throughout it all, Colonel Thomas was the most patient and professional leader, who handled considerable pressure with a level of grace that would make any senior leader proud — especially me."

McCullough said Roseberry is, like Thomas, a proven leader and well suited to lead the Fort Polk team.

"I am fully confident that (Roseberry) will invest the same professionalism, passion, pride and expertise into the garrison that (Thomas) did every day."

Thomas said he chose to come to

Fort Polk because he knew of the world class training that is provided at Fort Polk, and that the garrison here helped enable that training.

"However, I am leaving with a greater appreciation for what it takes to handle that critical mission. It takes the entire community. I have never seen the kind of community support like I have seen here," he said.

"Our success is your (the community's) success, and we are your Army."

Thomas said his team of Soldiers, civilians and contractors helped him take care of the Soldiers and Families at Fort Polk. He also had words of praise for his successor.

"The Army could not have selected a better qualified garrison commander for Fort Polk," he said.

"Fort Polk is in great hands, and I am excited to see what the future holds for (you)."

As a final act, Thomas presented keys to Fort Polk to Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, commanding general of the JRTC and Fort Polk; Command Sgt. Maj. David Bass, JRTC and Fort Polk command sergeant major; Command Sgt. Maj. Ray Rocco, IMCOM-readiness command sergeant major, and McCullough, because, "... these are the people who provided wise counsel to me over the past two years," said Thomas.

Roseberry said he was honored to be the new garrison commander because he and his family love the Army and have ties to Fort Polk.

"We owe the Army everything, and Fort Polk is where we want to be as it is somewhat of a homecoming for us.

"As a young Geronimo lieutenant, Fort Polk is where I learned to fight and how to lead, and it is where (my wife and I) began our married life," he said.

"To lead means to serve, and for the next 24 months, 24-hours a day, my family and I pledge to give 110 percent to ensure Soldiers are ready to fight, knowing that their Families are being cared for. We are excited and humbled to serve."

Fort Polk's incoming U.S. Army Garrison Commander, Col. Ryan K. Roseberry (left), accepts the flag and thereby command of the garrison from Brenda Lee McCullough, director, Installation Management Command-Readiness, as outgoing commander Col. Jarrett A. Thomas II looks on during the garrison change of command ceremony held June 13 at Warrior Field.



JEAN DUBIEL / GUARDIAN



One of DENTAC's best attends AMEDD leadership course

By **ANGIE THORNE**

Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. — Sgt. 1st Class Jerry L. McMillian, Fort Polk Dental Health Activity, senior enlisted advisor, attended the Army Medical Department Junior Leadership Course in Washington D.C. from April 29-May 3.

The AMEDD Junior Leadership Course identifies outstanding active and Reserve component leaders who have made significant contributions to the AMEDD mission and performed in an exceptionally outstanding manner and prepares them to be future leaders of the Army Medical Department.

The nomination process is rigorous, said McMillian, who had to meet tough criteria highlighting his accomplishments throughout his military career.

"There were 30 applicants. There is a stringent process in place as the packets are reviewed. They only select 10 Soldiers for this course and I was selected to participate. That made me the first person in the history of the Army Dental Corps to attend," said McMillian.

Lt. Col. Paul M. Colthirst, Fort Polk DENTAC, former commander, said he knew McMillian's packet was outstanding and he would be a good candidate for this course.

"He has a very strategic mindset and understands the big picture. Having someone of his caliber selected enabled him to attend the course, learn all he could and come back to help us shape the future of Fort Polk DENTAC and DENTAC overall," said Colthirst.

McMillian said a host of generals and senior leaders led the course. Topics discussed included new health-care provisions, improving the administration of medical treatment facilities, focusing on individual critical task lists for Soldiers, virtual health and more.

"The main focus was to teach us what we need to know now, so as current leaders retire, we are prepared to step up and take their place, ensuring we have a sustainable readiness model of the future operational environment," McMillian said. "We have to understand our role, not only as Soldiers, but also as health care providers taking care of Soldiers ready to deploy."

Participating in a course led by AMEDD's highest level of command, said McMillian, has made him feel like he needs to champion the way ahead. "From my personal perspective, I have to take what I learned and get this information to my senior leaders. I've talked to my peers and colleagues and explained there are changes taking place that will impact us and that gives them a better understanding of where the future of AMEDD is headed. I feel like they are depending on me to get that message out," he said.

McMillian said he was ecstatic about this experience.



ANGIE THORNE / GUARDIAN

Sgt. 1st Class Jerry L. McMillian, Fort Polk Dental Health Activity, senior enlisted advisor, attended the Army Medical Department Junior Leadership Course in Washington D.C. from April 29-May 3. McMillian and those who participated in the leadership course were awarded a trophy. McMillian says he is proud of the award because it personifies accomplishment for him.

"I have gained so much knowledge and information from this course. It has given me a broader understanding of what I need to do as a leader. This class also taught me to no longer think outside the box, but to think without the box," he said.

One of the leading concepts of the future of health care is virtual health, McMillian said.

"It's the way of the future. Using technology such as cameras, computers and bandwidth or internet, as a provider (or health care professional) I am able to work with another provider in another country or state to assist in an exam or procedure, possibly one that needs to be done on the battlefield," he said.

Since his return from the Junior Leadership Course, McMillian has shared and worked with the dental activity team on this concept here at Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk creating a proof of concept for Dental Virtual Health.

"We explained our proof of concept to a board. Not only were they impressed with what we came up with, but also awarded us with money we requested for the project and asked if we needed more. I think we did a good job. It's still in the infancy stages, but the concept has moved up to the highest AMEDD commands," he said.

Colthirst said with McMillian's guidance Fort Polk's DENTAC is far ahead of other DENTACs in regards to their proof of concept of virtual health.

"He learned how the medical side of the house is doing virtual health and has come up with a hybrid program that works for DENTAC and is continuing to refine that process. I believe it will be a very successful program," said Colthirst.

McMillian said the program focuses on caring for patients in remote locations, which can save the Army large amounts of money and time lost to travel.

For example, instead of a Soldier traveling for a day to a specialist two states away for a 30 minute appointment and then turning around to travel back, with the proper bandwidth and equipment, the consultation can be taken care of here at Fort Polk.

McMillian said virtual health also has the ability to impact capability in the JRTC training area as well as downrange.

"Imagine its use in a battlefield situation. For example, a Soldier has been the victim of an improvised explosive device. The Soldier makes it back to the forward operating base and needs additional care beyond the skills of the health care provider. This provider can access virtual health care by calling a subject matter expert to consult with and get the best care for the Soldier using the technology available," he said. "It's a big part of our future. Our plan is to work toward making JRTC and Fort Polk, which is already a world-class training platform, an official dental virtual health-training site. Will that happen? We don't know, but that is a goal we are striving for."

519th Military Police Battalion Soldiers sweep SHARP boards

By **ANGIE THORNE**

Guardian staff writer

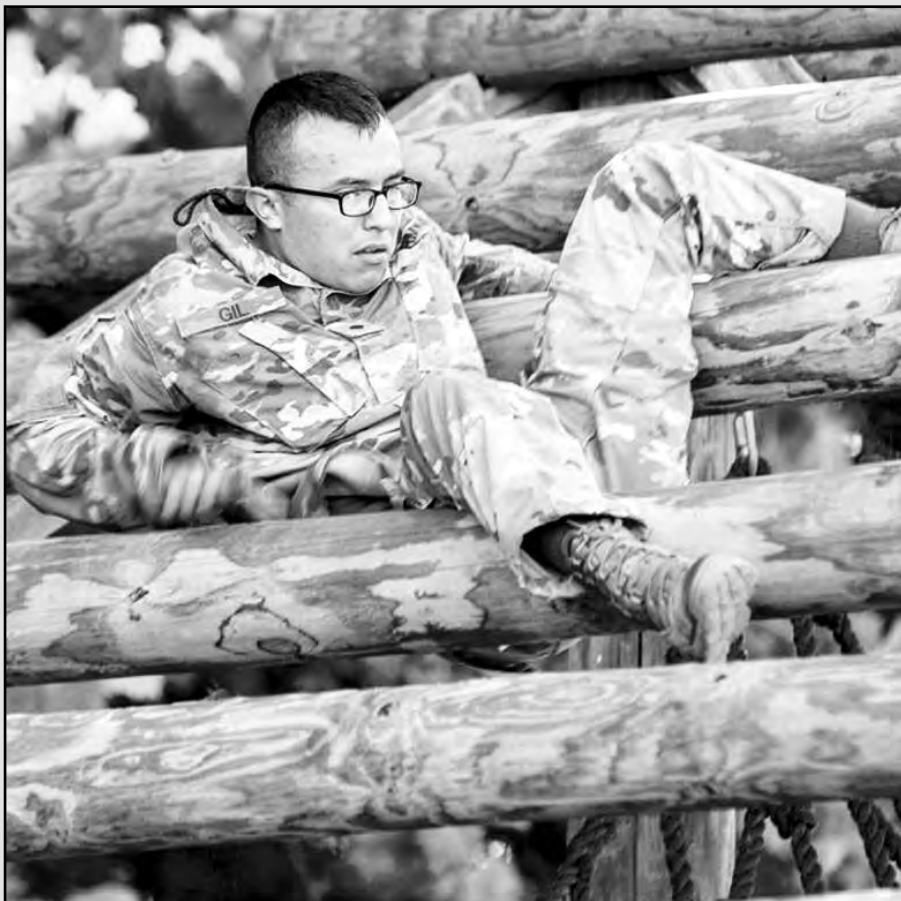
FORT POLK, La. — Army boards promote knowledge and encourage a Soldier's thirst to succeed by garnering promotion points and fostering a competitive spirit. But the Sexual Harassment Assault Response and Prevention Warrior Board also teaches Soldiers the importance of looking out for one another when sexual harassment or assault occurs.

The winners of this year's SHARP Warrior Board are both members of the 519th Military Police Battalion — Staff Sgt. James Gilman won first

place in the noncommissioned officer board and Spc. Whitten Stoverink won first place for the lower enlisted board.

This is the second year the SHARP Board winners were chosen from the ranks of the 519th MP Bn. Col. Sonja Whitehead, 519th MP Bn commander.

Please see **SHARP**, page 7



Sgt. ASHLEY M. MORRIS/UNITED STATES ARMY

Air Assault effort

U.S. Army Soldiers and U.S. Air Force Airmen from across Fort Polk began day one of the 10th Mountain Division Light Fighters School Air Assault Course hosted by 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division at Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, June 7. Candidates wishing to obtain the coveted Air Assault Badge must successfully complete a majority of the nine stations of the air assault obstacle course.

SHARP

Continued from page 6

mander, attributed that success to a climate of camaraderie within the unit and a trust and regard for the SHARP program's principles.

"This MP unit lives and breathes prevention and stomping out sexual harassment and assault wherever they go," she said.

Gilman and Stoverink were presented with certificates, Army commendation medals, coins and gift cards during the 519th formation June 7.

Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk commanding general, and Command Sgt. Maj. David W. Bass, Fort Polk command sergeant major, were in attendance to congratulate the winners and present their awards.

Frank said it's no surprise that these two Soldiers come from the 519th MP Bn.

"Sexual harassment and assault happen everywhere. It's all around us. It's in our formations, barracks and homes. It's right in front of us. You see it, you stop it and you have the confidence to encourage other bystanders to step forward. These two guys have the confidence to do that," said Frank.

"They have done an exceptional job. When you look at them, you can tell they are leaders."

Gilman said he chose to participate in the SHARP Warrior Board because he likes the competitiveness of boards.

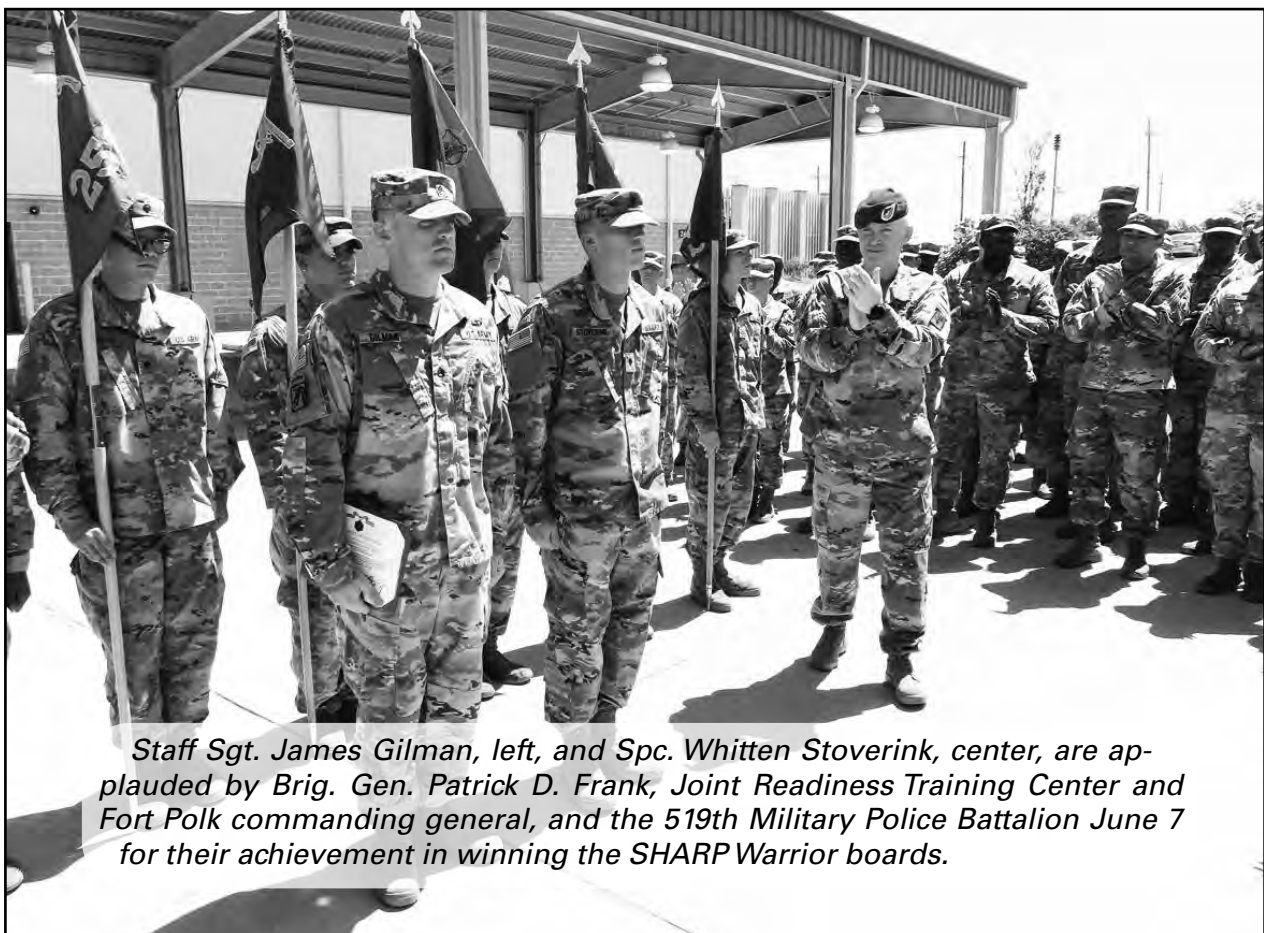
"I've participated in several boards and I like to challenge myself as well as represent my battalion and what we stand for," he said. "SHARP is a huge focus for us."

Gilman said sexual harassment and assault isn't welcome in the ranks. It affects unit morale, causes problems throughout the chain of command and damages trust.

"So, knowing the steps to eliminate it and prevent it before it starts is important," he said.

It always feels good to win, said Gilman.

"I just want to represent the battalion and our



Staff Sgt. James Gilman, left, and Spc. Whitten Stoverink, center, are applauded by Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk commanding general, and the 519th Military Police Battalion June 7 for their achievement in winning the SHARP Warrior boards.

MPs to the best of my ability," he said.

For Stoverink, the whole point of the board is to try to win, but also show that he has a good understanding of the SHARP program.

"I wanted to succeed and prove that I can help stop SHARP incidents within our community," he said. "If we don't have people within our ranks who are willing to step forward in a SHARP situation then those incidents will go unreported and hurt the Army as a whole."

Stoverink said winning has given him the confidence to know he can participate in other boards and be successful.

"Preparing for the board was tough but worth it.

"Once you begin the board it's nerve-racking but if you have studied and prepared to the best of your ability and go into the board with confidence, you have a good chance of winning," he said.

About a million motorcycles are stationed in parking lots and access roads surrounding the Pentagon in Washington D.C. during the Rolling Thunder ride held over Memorial Day weekend.



'It's as if your soul takes in a deep breath'

Polk chaplain resets spirit during journey

By JEAN DUBIEL

Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. — Feet propped up on the porch, coffee in hand, sun creeping up over the horizon and the morning song of birds — this sounds like a formula to reset the spirit and feel that all is right with the world. But for Chap. (Lt. Col.) Derrick Riggs, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk installation chaplain, that spiritual reset sounded more like thunder on the horizon, not from storm clouds but from a million motorcycles.

Over the Memorial Day weekend May 24-27, a motorcycle run called Rolling Thunder took place in the nation's capitol. Event organizers describe it as a demonstration and protest to bring awareness and accountability for American prisoners of war and missing in action personnel left behind. The first run was held in 1988 with roughly 2,500 riders in attendance. The event has grown over the years and may have become too much for local law enforcement and community to handle, which is why this year's event was billed as the last one.

Riggs was among the gathered throng of supporters.

"Rolling Thunder is the largest single-day motorcycle rally in the world, and it's only a 30-minute ride from the Pentagon to the Vietnam Memorial Wall," he said. "It may not be the last one after all, but it may be moved out of Washington D.C. I think they are looking at either Philadelphia or Dallas for next year."

Riggs described the number of motorcycles in attendance this year as astonishing.

"The first Rolling Thunder I participated in was in 2005. They had about 425,000 bikes there at the north parking lot of the Pentagon. The second one I did was in 2008 and there were just under 700,000," he said. "Because this one (2019) was supposed to be the last one, there was greater participation — more than a million riders showed up. Every parking lot at the Pentagon and every access road to get to the Pentagon, was full of parked motorcycles."

While the opportunity to participate in such a massive ride to bring awareness to the plight of POWs and MIAs was an honor in itself, Riggs said he had additional reasons for making the long journey from Fort Polk to Washington.

Riggs explained that motorcycle riders usually group up for long-distance rides, and this was no exception. He teamed up with a few gentlemen he has ridden with before, and was in good company: Former assistant secretary of the Air Force



Lt. Col. DERRICK RIGGS

Chap. (Lt. Col.) Derrick Riggs, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk installation chaplain, sits astride his Harley Davison during a lengthy road trip from Fort Polk to Washington, D.C., to participate in Rolling Thunder, an annual event held to bring awareness to the plight of American prisoners of war and those missing in action.

Terry Yonkers; retired Gen. Phillip Breedlove, former Supreme Allied Commander-Europe; and Air Force Chap. (Col.) George Youstra, command chaplain for U.S. Special Operations Command.

"When Breedlove, Yonkers, Youstra and I were talking about doing the ride — and we had talked about it for months leading up to it — we all had different reasons why we wanted to do it. But one common goal for us was to visit a Seal Team 6 Operator that was recently badly wound-

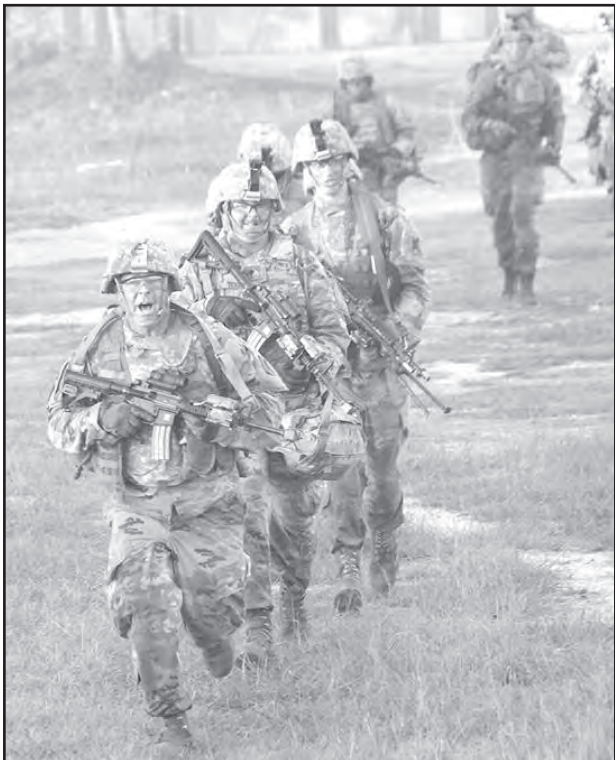
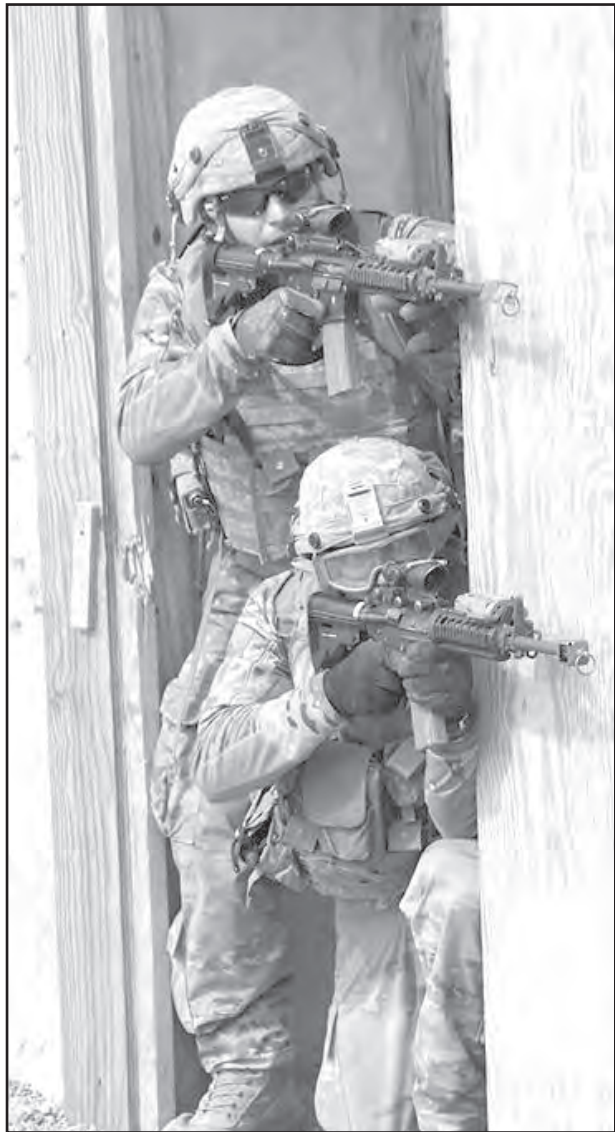
ed and is recovering in Bethesda Medical Center (Maryland)," said Riggs. "He was the No. 1 man in a door stack, and after they blew the door, he went in and took several bullets to his chest plate, but also two in his side and one that cut his femoral artery, plus grenade fragments. He died three times — twice on the plane taking him to the hospital — but somehow managed to come

Please see **Spirit**, page 10

JRTC Rotation 19-08 kicks off with live fire exercise

GUARDIAN STAFF

FORT POLK, La. — Soldiers assigned to 156th Infantry Regiment, 256th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Louisiana National Guard, conducted live fire rehearsal at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk's Peason Ridge training area, during Rotation 19-08. The photos on this page show the Soldiers going through their paces as they prepare to face the crucible that is the JRTC.



JRTC OPS GROUP

Spirit

Continued from page 8

back. We went to see him the morning of the ride. He had lost 40 pounds since his injuries, so he looked very gaunt, but he was in such phenomenal spirits. The medics that first cared for him and the doctors at the hospital saved his life. He has had 20 surgeries since May 9, but the doctors say he may get back to his team in a year."

Seeing a warrior that survived such horrible injuries was a first for Riggs.

"That was my first time to ever see a service member alive after a hit like that. I've always had my hands in the blood, and I've prayed with Soldiers that were badly shot up as they lay dying — but this man was the first one I have seen that survived."

Riggs has been on active duty for 22 years, with 46 months in combat spread over five deployments: Two with 5th Special Forces Group to Afghanistan and Iraq; two brigade deployments with the 82nd Airborne Division into Iraq; and the fifth as Special Operations Command chaplain into Afghanistan.

Riggs began riding in 2003, but it wasn't until 2010 that he decided to undertake a long-distance ride.

"When I came back after the fourth deployment in 2010, I told my mom and dad I was not coming home for block leave. I'd been through a lot of combat and saw many things, and by the grace of God I've never lost any sleep or experienced nightmares or flashbacks,



(From left) Air Force Chap. (Col.) George Youstra, command chaplain for U.S. Special Operations Command; retired Gen. Phillip Breedlove, former Supreme Allied Commander-Europe; former assistant secretary of the Air Force Terry Yonkers; and Chap. (Lt. Col.) Derrick Riggs, JRTC and Fort Polk installation chaplain, stand amid a mass of motorcycles during Rolling Thunder in Washington, D.C.

LT COL. DERRICK RIGGS

but after that deployment I felt a disconnect. I felt spiritually dried up, and I needed to get away and just be me for a bit," said Riggs.

"So I got on the motorcycle, started out in Fayetteville, North Carolina, and ended up in Oxnard Beach, California, then turned around and came back. That trip was my first long-distance ride, and that was when I realized that riding a motorcycle is therapeutic for me. Every Soldier has to find a mechanism to regain their grasp on home again and riding is mine. It lets me recon-

nect with the country I have been fighting for, and when you see it from the back of a bike, it's considerably different than seeing it from a car."

Riggs explained how riding a motorcycle allows him to physically experience his surroundings.

"I can feel the temperature change when I move from sunlight to shadow. I can smell the fresh cut hay in a farmer's field or catch a whiff of someone's barbecue or even an unseen skunk or road kill off in some ditch," he said. "You feel everything on a bike. It's as if your soul takes a deep breath. Riding clears my mind and directs my attention to things you just don't notice in a car. I love my country, and riding always lets me see it a little clearer, and brings me a little closer to it."

The Memorial Day weekend ride took on an additional significance for Riggs when he received a phone call from his physician the day he left on his Harley.

"The morning of May 21, the day I was beginning my road trip, I got a phone call from my doctor to let me know that that biopsies taken for speculation of prostate cancer came back negative. So I spent my first eight hours on the road just singing and thanking God, and it gave me an even greater reason to enjoy this ride, and it was wonderful!" said Riggs.

"I felt that I could now live my life without that worry. When I got to Breedlove's house in Florida that night, we were talking about what we were looking forward to on this ride. We wanted to 1) enjoy riding, 2) clear our heads and think, 3) participate in the Rolling Thunder

event and 4) for me, I wanted to experience that reconnect with my country and with God, and enjoy this good news about my health."

Riggs wears the patches of the 82nd Airborne Division and Special Forces, the two units with which he served in combat, on his motorcycle vest. As a result, people often approach him when he stops to refuel his bike, either to thank him for his service or to share a military-connected story.

"There are a lot of veterans in the motorcycle community and we always seem to find each other at a rest stop or gas station, or even if you pull off to the side of the road because you just need to give your body a break after riding 150 miles. Some other rider will see you sitting on the side of the road and stop to see if you're OK, and you end up talking and sharing stories. It's a great way to be proud of being a Soldier and of everything you have done — sharing that pride with someone else who has been there."

During the 10-day journey, Riggs travelled 3,283 miles, replaced one water pump, and reset his mind to return refreshed, re-energized and rejuvenated.

"Every motorcycle rider knows that when you get on the back of your bike, that is your sanity. That is your decompression. Give a rider about an hour on a winding road, and all the cares of work, people, bills, life — whatever — it all just falls away," Riggs said. "When you ride, you are feeling your body lean into turns, the force of the wind and gravity, the texture of the road underneath you ... it is — and I'm a chaplain, so I'd know — a 'spiritual' experience."

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Army making improvements to Family Readiness Groups

By **JOE LACDAN**

Army News Service

FORT MEADE, Md. — The Army recently made some of the most significant changes to Family Readiness Groups since their creation following the first Gulf War.

The groups have been re-named “Soldier and Family Readiness Groups” or SFRGs.

This designation links Soldier readiness to the Family, and clarifies the role of the SFRG to be more inclusive to Soldiers who are single, are single parents or have non-traditional Families, said Steve Yearwood, program analyst for the Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management.

The groups help ease the burden of home life, allowing Soldiers to focus on mission objectives, Yearwood said. He added the recent publication of Army Directive 2019-17 shifted the focus of SFRGs away from social activities and fundraising to a core and essential task of creating a network of communication and support for all Soldiers and Family members to enable readiness.

The goals and objectives for commanders in executing the SFRG include: Serve as an extension of the unit command in providing official and accurate command information to Soldiers and their Families; connect Soldiers and Families to the chain of command; connect SFRG members to available on-and off-post community resources and offer a network of mutual support.”

Soldier and Family Readiness Groups are important for morale, Yearwood said.

“It goes back to the Soldier knowing that his Family is taken care of, and the spouse is not feeling alone because there is a support network that the spouse can go to,” he said.

Families today are interconnected 24-hours a day and the SFRG needs to be able to leverage social media to sustain the command connection and network with Soldiers and Families, he said.

“I think that now as we look at our current environment, we have a different population,” he said.

“You’ve got younger spouses — more than 50 percent of the military are married. You have a younger generation that’s receiving information differently.”

No longer are newsletters and mailed correspondence the preferred methods of SFRG communication, he pointed out.

“You’ve got a lot more people on social media and communicating differently,” he said.

In recognition that commanders may still have a need to fundraise to support events and activities that enhance readiness, the directive provides greater flexibility for fundraising by reducing restrictions on informal funds.

Army Secretary Dr. Mark T. Esper has pushed for changes to improve Soldiers’ quality of life, including upgrades to child care, spouse employment and credentialing, and Soldier and Family Readiness Groups.

Army senior leaders attended a working group at the Pentagon in May focused on SFRGs and the new Army directive. Spouses of senior leaders met with other Army spouses and representatives from different major commands to review the changes of the Army directive and discuss improvements.

Senior leaders also hosted town hall meetings in recent months to gather feedback from Soldiers and Families.



ARMY NEWS SERVICE

Spc. Zachary Cross, a tank system maintainer assigned to the 1st Battalion, 67th Armor Regiment “Death Dealers”, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, reunites with his family during a homecoming ceremony inside the Silas L. Copeland Arrival/Departure Airfield Control Group June 7 on Fort Bliss, Texas. Cross and his fellow Soldiers returned home after a nine-month tour in the Republic of Korea.

Since the Army formed the first FRGs in the 1980s, the program has had significant impacts on Soldiers’ lives. During the Gulf War, U.S. forces deployed 540,000 troops for extended periods, affecting thousands of Families and single Soldiers.

Today, the groups continue to help Soldiers and Families cope with extended periods of separation during deployments. As the Army becomes more mobile in preparation for future conflicts, SFRGs provide needed referrals to support

groups and organizations.

The groups also act as a direct conduit between commanders and Soldiers going on deployment or on missions.

Deployments are “tough for the Soldier,” said Yearwood, who served 22 years in the Army.

“If the Soldier has a mission to accomplish, regardless of what that mission is, if that Family’s not taken care of, then that Soldier can’t focus on the mission, so it impacts readiness,” Yearwood said.

Army briefs

Longer tours

WASHINGTON — The Army is adding a year to overseas tours for some Soldiers heading to Europe and Japan, as part of an effort to boost readiness and reduce moves.

Under the new policy, which applies to permanent change-of-station orders published after June 14, tours for Soldiers who have no dependents and are not married to other service members will extend from 24 to 36 months. Tours for Soldiers accompanied by dependents will remain at 36 months.

An estimated 3,000 to 5,000 Soldiers could be affected by the policy each year.

Future combat

LONG BEACH, Calif. — The Army plans to bring newer, more powerful satellites into its tactical network within 10 years, an Army

official told industry partners June 7.

The service looks to leverage innovative programs, such as the Medium Earth Orbit and Low Earth Orbit satellite constellations, as the need for bandwidth and top application performance continues to grow. Some commercial companies already use MEO satellites and some LEO satellites have been launched into orbit.

Maj. Gen. David Bassett, Program Executive Officer for Command, Control and Communications-Tactical, or PEO C3T, said the service expects initial experimentation by 2023 and could possibly field the technology around 2025-2027.

Creating a more resilient, secure network could be crucial to ensure the success of the Army’s ambitious modernization goals, which include plans to spend \$8.4 billion over the next five years to modernize its network.

Community

JRTC, Fort Polk host FreedomFest 2019

GUARDIAN STAFF

FORT POLK, LA. — If you're looking for great entertainment, good food and family fun, look no further than the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk FreedomFest, slated for June 22 at 5 p.m. on the installation's Headquarters Field. The event is free and open to the public and features fireworks, food vendors, a salute to the nation, static displays and musical guests Lady Antebellum and Everette.

Since teaming up in 2006, Lady Antebellum has had nine No. 1 singles on the country charts. They have won seven Grammy awards including both Record and Song of the Year in 2010.

There is no on-site parking, but shuttles begin running at 4:30 p.m.

Parking for non-Department of Defense ID cardholders will be at Honor Field on La. Hwy 10. Directional signs from both north and south on U.S. Hwy 171 will direct you to designated shuttle bus parking. Honor Field is about 2 miles once you turn on to La. Hwy 10 from U.S. Hwy 171.

Military police will be on-site to assist with parking and loading the correct shuttle bus. Shuttle buses are air-conditioned. Please have a government or state issued ID card when you arrive at Honor Field for anyone over the age of 16. All persons entering a federal installation are subject to search.

If you need handicapped parking, use Fort Polk's main gate off of U.S. Hwy 171. Limited handicap parking will be on-site at Headquarters Field. All shuttle bus locations will have handicapped parking available.

DoD ID cardholders can access Fort Polk from any gate. You will be directed to the nearest shuttle bus parking lot: Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital, Allen Memorial Library/Education Center, Fort Polk Commissary/Exchange and the Mission Training Center.

Items that can be brought include: Blankets,



Lady Antebellum



Everette

lawn chairs, cash (ATMs will be on-site), sunscreen, strollers and small insulated cooler for infant formula or water and diaper bags.

Prohibited items include: Pets, tents, canopies, coolers, outside food or beverages, alcohol, glass bottles, weapons, video cameras, backpacks or large bags, professional cameras with telephoto lenses and personal fireworks.

For more information, to include maps of parking areas and biographies on Lady Antebellum and Everette, visit the JRTC and Fort Polk website at <https://home.army.mil/polk/> and click on the blue banner announcing FreedomFest 2019 or call 531-1959.

Danger of UXOs highlighted on Polk

By IRMA L. BRAVO

HydroGeoLogic Inc. Phenix

FORT POLK, La. — Safety is one of the Army's important responsibilities. To address explosives safety, the Army developed the Department of Defense's 3Rs (Recognize, Retreat, Report) Explosives Safety Education Program.

The Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Environment, Safety and Occupational Health developed the Army's 3Rs Program in 2000 after a teenager was killed and another critically injured when an anti-tank projectile they removed from an operational range detonated.

The 3Rs Program educates Soldiers, Family members, workers and communities about the dangers associated with munitions and the actions to take if they encounter or suspect they have encountered a munition. The 3Rs Program's

message is simple:

- **RECOGNIZE** — when you see a munition that it is dangerous;
- **RETREAT** — do not touch it, but carefully leave the area;
- **REPORT** — call 9-1-1 to tell the police what you saw and where you saw it.

In its 244-year history, the U.S. armed forces has conducted live-fire training to defend the nation. This training involves the use of munitions including bombs, artillery projectiles, grenades, mines, rockets and simulators. Some munitions do not explode or function as intended. These are called unexploded ordnance or UXO.

In some cases, property the military once used for training has transferred from the military's control to public uses such as parks or has become private property. Given its past military

Please see **Three Rs**, page 15

Briefs

Cafeteria conversation

The sixth annual Back to School Cafeteria Conversation and Resource Fair is held Aug. 1 from 5-7 p.m. at Parkway Elementary School, 3585 University Parkway, Leesville. Vernon Parish School District and local agencies will present their resources, special programs and educational opportunities. Participants can visit with Vernon Parish school principals and counselors. For more information call 531-1617.

The Back to School Brigade will offer eligible Families free school supplies during the event, to include post 9/11 wounded, ill or injured service members of any rank, either currently serving or no longer serving, as well as active-duty E-1 through E-6. Register at OperationHomefront.org/event.list during the third week of June.

Exchange events

The Fort Polk Main Exchange hosts the following activities in June:

- Special savings on the Army's birthday. Those using their MILITARY STAR card today receive these savings:
 - 10 cents a gallon on gas at Exchange fuel locations
 - 15 percent off at Exchange restaurants
 - \$10 off a purchase of \$25 or more from Exchange vendors
- Additionally, shoppers can receive 20 percent off select tactical gear from today through Thursday and an additional 5 percent exclusively at ShopMyExchange.com today and Saturday, by using the online code MILPRIDE19.
- Give and Get Back campaign. From today through Tuesday shoppers can donate to Army Emergency Relief at Fort Polk Exchange registers. For every \$5 donated, shoppers will receive an Exchange coupon for \$5 off a \$25 purchase. Shoppers can also donate online at ShopMyExchange.com.

Essay contest

The DeRidder Police Department hosts an essay contest for junior high and high school students in honor of National Night Out, an annual community-building campaign that promotes strong police-community partnerships. Essays must be submitted by June 30. Junior high winners receive \$50 for first place, \$30 for second place and \$15 for third place. High school winners receive \$75 for first place, \$50 for second place and \$30 for third place. Finalists will be notified by Aug. 1 and winners receive their prize at National Night Out activities Aug. 6 at the DeRidder Fairgrounds. For more information and rules call (337) 462-8914.

Camp Warrior youngsters spend week at North Toledo Bend

By **CHUCK CANNON**

Command information officer

NORTH TOLEDO BEND STATE PARK, La. — Campers ages 8 to 12 returned to Fort Polk today after spending a week at North Toledo Bend State Park near Zwolle, Louisiana participating in Child and Youth Services annual Camp Warrior.

John Stromberg, who runs the camp for Fort Polk's CYS, said the event offers youngsters an opportunity to build leadership and teamwork skills, as well as enjoy the outdoor adventure that Louisiana offers.

"The campers were able to canoe, kayak, swim, participate in archery and spend time at a beach," Stromberg said.

"It gets them out of the house and away from the computer for a week and lets them enjoy the outdoors."

Faith Kelly, 11, daughter of Jake and Rachel Kelly, said the campers had an exercise where they learned the dangers of being drunk. The

campers went around in circles until they were dizzy, then tried to ride a large tricycle.

"I was dizzy for a few seconds then almost fell off the bike," Faith said.

She said she was attending the camp for multiple reasons.

"I thought I would make more friends and being here without my family would give me more responsibility. Camp already feels like a second home for me."

Keegan Bross, son of 1st Sgt. Kevin and Heather Bross, said this was his first time to attend Camp Warrior.

"It's pretty fun," the 9-year-old said. "I was a little dizzy when I got on the tricycle and felt like I was going to run into a tree. I definitely don't want to get drunk."

Leon Misholr, 10, said he was able to handle the dizziness experienced during the exercise.

"I was dizzy and wavy a bit, but I'm good at dizziness so I was OK," the child of Mitchell and Mel Misholr said.

Sgt. Jessica Alvarez, Bayne-Jones Army Com-

munity Hospital, was one of the volunteers working with the children.

"This is my second year to attend," she said. "It's fun to see kids participate outdoors. It takes about a day for them to warm up to it, but by the time the camp is coming to end, they don't want to leave."

Nine-year-old Jordan Ellison, son of Crystal and Antonio Ellison, said he enjoyed kayaking — for the second year in a row.

"I went last year and had a lot of fun," he said. "It's why I came back this year. I enjoy doing the activities with my friends."

The next iteration of Camp Warrior is July 29-Aug. 2 for those in grades six and up, and Stromberg said there are still slots available — but they're filling up fast.

"This is an adventure for these kids," he said. "They're making friends and are out in the woods with nature. They don't get that a lot."

To sign up for Camp Warrior 2 go by and register with CYS at bldg 400, Radio Road. Call 531-1955/1956 for more information.



Clockwise, from above: Faith Kelly, 11, daughter of Jake and Rachel Kelly, rides a tricycle at Camp Warrior during an exercise that shows the lack of control a person has when they are drunk; campers make themselves dizzy by spinning around a broom handle before riding a tricycle; Camp Warrior participants head out in kayaks and canoes on Toledo Bend Reservoir at North Toledo Bend State Park for a morning of fun and exercise.

CHUCK CANNON / GUARDIAN

Please see **Warrior**, page 14



Clockwise, from above: Camp Warrior participants paddle toward their campsite at North Toledo Bend State Park after a morning on the water June 12; two campers head to shore after spending the morning enjoying the blue water and mild temperature of North Toledo Bend State Park; Sgt. Jessica Alvarez, a volunteer from Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital, assists a camper during an exercise at Camp Warrior June 11; Keegan Bross, 9, son of 1st Sgt. Kevin and Heather Bross, takes off on a tricycle during an exercise at Camp Warrior June 11.

Three Rs

Continued from page 12

use, munitions may be encountered within property the military no longer controls or uses.

Munitions are dangerous, even decades after they were used or made. Civil War cannonballs, which are often collected as souvenirs, may contain an explosive fill that if subjected to a spark, fire or heat will explode. Other munitions kept as souvenirs may be more dangerous, even if kept and handled for years. Because munitions may be encountered anywhere, it is important to learn and follow the 3Rs of explosives safety.

Munitions may not look like a bullet or bomb. They may look harmless, shiny, rusty, clean or dirty. Regardless of what they look like, munitions should be considered dangerous.

Do not approach, touch, pick up or move a munition or suspect munition. Even if a munition was disturbed or moved once, it may explode.

Call 9-1-1 and let police request support from DoD Explosives Ordnance Disposal personnel to locate and dispose of the munition safely.

By learning and following the 3Rs of explosives safety, everyone can protect themselves, their family, friends and community from the

dangers associated with munitions.

The Army is executing a 3Rs program at both active Army installations and formerly used defense sites to enhance and increase the effectiveness of the 3Rs message. The goal is to expand the 3Rs education and awareness initiative and support installations in assessments, customizing outreach material, conducting training workshops, assessing program effectiveness and sharing lessons learned.

Additionally, the Army and its contractors provides staff support at public outreach events supplying booths equipped with games, educational resources and mascot performers to publicize further the 3Rs message.

The 3Rs Program currently assists the following 10 active installations: Camp Shelby, Mississippi; Fort Benning, Georgia; Fort Bliss, Texas; Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Fort Campbell, Kentucky; Fort Hood, Texas; Fort Irwin, California; Fort Polk, Louisiana; Fort Riley, Kansas; and White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico. In the future, the 3Rs Program will expand to assist additional installations.

For more information about the 3Rs, including videos and other educational resources

Explosives Safety Awareness

Do You Know What These Items Have In Common?




They are unexploded ordnance (UXO), military munitions that failed to function properly. UXO are dangerous no matter their age or size. If approached, touched, moved, or disturbed, they can injure or kill children and adults unaware of the dangers. Learn and follow the 3Rs of Explosives Safety – **Recognize, Retreat, Report** – to protect yourself, your family, and your community. Find out more at 3Rs.mil.

Recognize Retreat Report  **3Rs.mil**

that can be used to teach everyone about the 3Rs Program, visit 3Rs.mil.

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Experts say employers play key role in managing fatigue

By SARAH TROTTO

Garrison Safety Office

FORT POLK, La. — When his first daughter was born, Steve Marks was juggling two jobs.

From 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Marks was a nurse manager at a casino medical unit. When his shift ended, he slept an hour or two before moving on to his other job as a hospital supervisor from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. two nights a week. Afterward, he drove back to his first job, where he curled up under his desk for an hour-long nap.

“When you’ve got bills to pay and things that have to be done, children or parents or other things keeping you up, sleep is the last thing that gets paid attention to,” he said. “It’s like, ‘All right, I can deal with this. Let me just close my eyes for a couple minutes and I’ll get back to it.’ That doesn’t make up for the loss (of sleep).”

After two years, Marks decided to stop working two jobs. Now administrator of health and safety services at Viking Yachts in New Gretna, New Jersey, he shares his stories to educate people about occupational fatigue.

Kim Olszewski — vice president of Lewisburg, Pennsylvania-based Mid-State Occupational Health Services — also understands fatigue after working the night shift in health care. She, alongside Marks, participates in presentations on occupational fatigue.

Employers are becoming increasingly aware that fatigue is a safety issue, Olszewski said, and they, along with workers, play a role in tackling the problem.

“The key is the proactive piece, driving it from the top down, talking about fatigue, how it can be managed, how can it impact all aspects of life — not just work,” she said.

Causes and effects

A 2012 guidance statement from the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine defines fatigue as the body’s response to sleep deprivation or lengthy physical or mental hard work. Risk factors related to occupational fatigue include long work hours, a heavy workload, lack of sleep, environmental factors and medical conditions.

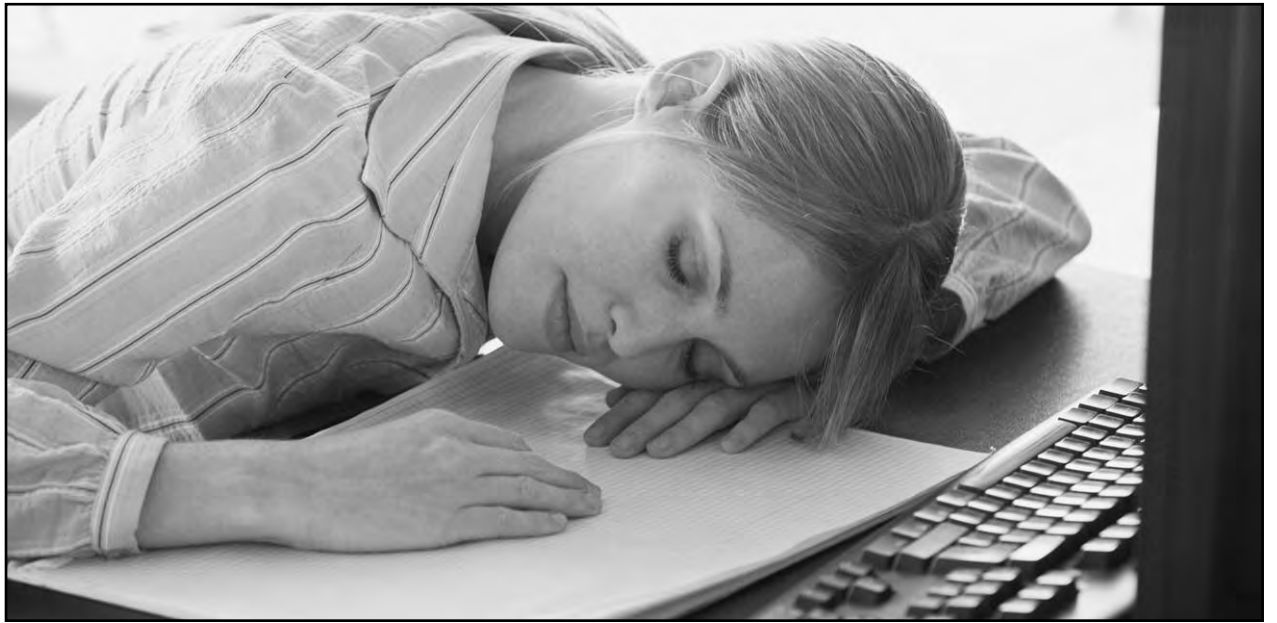
Even dealing with other people can result in fatigue, one researcher notes.

“You can be fatigued simply if you go to work and have really poor social interactions with your co-workers — it’s not just about how much sleep you get,” said Matthew Hallowell, associate professor of construction engineering at the University of Colorado Boulder.

Hallowell led a review of literature about causes and outcomes of occupational fatigue, which was published in the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* in October.

Effects of fatigue can include slower reaction time, more errors and decreased cognitive ability. Fatigue can occur in all industries, but numerous studies have focused on its effects on shift workers, health care workers and drivers.

“The industries that are at highest risk would be those where people are working long hours, overtime, many days in a row, when they’re exposed to harsh environmental conditions, like working outside in the rain and snow,” Hallowell said. “Environmental conditions can include things like noise or vibration or heavy mental task loads for long periods of time. You can extend to what industries that defines, like electrical transmission and distribution line workers, or people who drive snowplows.”



In addition, many people work multiple jobs, leaving them vulnerable to fatigue. People who work several jobs get 40 minutes less sleep per day than those who work one job, according to David Lombardi, principal research scientist at the Center for Injury Epidemiology at the Liberty Mutual Research Institute for Safety in Hopkinton, Massachusetts.

“Fatigue is an increasing health and safety problem in our daily lives due to the 24-hour society with decreasing emphasis on sleep,” Lombardi said.

Lombardi and researcher Simon Folkard, of the Université Paris Descartes, have published a risk index to estimate injury risk related to work schedules. Type of shift, number of consecutive shifts, hours worked per shift and rest breaks influence risk, Lombardi said. Risk was 31 percent higher among night shift workers than morning shift workers; by the fourth consecutive night shift, risk was 36 percent higher than on the first night, and risk nearly doubled by the 12th hour of work. However, injury risk decreased by nearly 50 percent after any length of rest break.

“An important message of our approach is that various features of a shift work schedule — beyond only working hours — need to be considered in combination when assessing the safety of a given work schedule,” Lombardi said.

The estimated annual injury incidence rate per 100 workers is 7.89 for U.S. workers who usually sleep less than five hours per day, compared with 2.27 per 100 workers among those who tend to sleep between seven and eight hours, according to research from Lombardi and others, using data from the National Health Interview Survey.

Fatigue risk management systems

Medical and lifestyle interventions, as well as work organization factors, can help promote alertness, according to a 2012 American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine guidance statement on fatigue risk management in the workplace. Organizations in which employees work long hours or at night — especially those with safety-sensitive jobs, such as in the energy, health care and transportation industries — can benefit from addressing fatigue.

ACOEM outlines the following key features of a fatigue risk management system:

- Supported by peer-reviewed science
- Decisions determined by data collection and analysis
- Designed by stakeholders
- System-wide use of tools, systems, policies

and procedures

- Constructed into the corporate safety and health management systems
- Continuous improvement
- Budgeted
- Senior leaders take ownership

Other critical elements include a safety management policy, risk management, reporting, incident investigation, training and education and auditing.

Key defenses of a fatigue risk management system are:

- Balancing workload and staffing
- Shift scheduling
- Training for employees on fatigue and managing sleep disorders
- Workplace design
- Monitoring of fatigue

Although workers are responsible for being well rested, managers should provide information, motivation and resources, ACOEM states. In addition, workers should be educated about issues such as fatigue-related hazards; sleep disorders; how to get adequate and quality sleep; how to recognize fatigue; the importance of diet, exercise and other health conditions; and alertness strategies, including designing workplaces with bright light, cool temperature, non-monotonous noise and low humidity.

Taking the initiative

The National Safety Council has launched an initiative on occupational fatigue. “Aside from just an increase in workplace risk, there’s also long-term economic consequences,” said Emily Whitcomb, senior program manager of the initiative. “NSC is tackling fatigue because as we’re working toward eliminating preventable deaths, fatigue is one of the larger issues.”

NSC has gathered research with the aim of identifying best practices; conducting a national survey; and releasing a cost calculator, policy toolkit and other educational resources.

The council’s review of literature includes several findings:

- About 38 percent of U.S. workers sleep less than seven hours a night, according to a 2016 study from NIOSH.
- Several studies state that workers who have a sleeping disorder are more likely to be involved in a workplace safety incident.
- Fatigue-related productivity losses cost almost \$2,000 per worker each year, according to estimates from a 2010 study conducted by Cu-

Please see **Fatigue**, page 17



Splash, swim safely during summer swim season

BJACH PREVENTIVE MEDICINE

FORT POLK, La. — Healthy swimming behaviors from the Centers for Disease Control will help protect you and your kids from recreational water illnesses and stop germs from getting in the pool in the first place.

Here are the three basic steps that promote healthy swimming:

1) Keep germs from causing recreational water illnesses:

- Don't swim when you have diarrhea. You can spread germs in the water and make other people sick.

- Don't swallow the pool water. Avoid getting water in your mouth.

- Practice good hygiene. Shower with soap before swimming and wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers. Germs on your body end up in the water.

2) Take precautions when swimming in fresh or marine water:

- Do not swim before inspecting the beach and the water for trash, oil slicks, drainage pipes or other hazards.
- Do not swim after heavy rains as this can wash concentrated pollutants and dangerous debris into the water.

3) Keep germs out of the pool:

- Take your kids on bathroom breaks or check diapers often. Waiting to hear, "I have to go," may mean that it's too late.
- Change diapers in a bathroom or a diaper-changing area and not at poolside. Germs can spread in and around the pool.
- Wash your child thoroughly (especially the rear end) with soap and water before swimming. Invisible amounts of fecal matter can end up in the pool.

For more information on healthy swimming, contact the Department of Preventive Medicine at 531-3402.

Follow these tips to stay cool, beat Louisiana's oppressive heat

BJACH PREVENTIVE MEDICINE

FORT POLK, La. — With summer officially only days away, the thermometer is already rising steadily. Anyone can be at risk for heat injuries, not just Soldiers.

The best defense is prevention. Here are some prevention tips:

- Drink more fluids (nonalcoholic), regardless of your activity level. Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink.
- Don't drink liquids that contain alcohol or large amounts of sugar and caffeine—energy drinks. These

actually cause you to lose more body fluid. Also, avoid very cold drinks, because they can cause stomach cramps. Water or a sports drink, like Gatorade, are the best options.

- Children are especially vulnerable, since they tend not to drink as much as they should. Make sure chil-

dren drink before, during and after activity to replace fluids lost through sweat.

- Stay indoors and, if at all possible, stay in an air-conditioned place. Electric fans may provide comfort, but when the temperature is in the high 90s, fans will not prevent heat-related illness. Taking a cool shower or bath, or moving to an air-conditioned place is a much better way to

cool off.

- Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing.
- Never leave pets or children in a vehicle.
- Protect yourself from the sun by wearing a wide-brimmed hat (also keeps you cooler) and sunglasses and by putting on sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher (the most effective products say "broad spectrum" or "UVA/UVB protection" on their labels).

For more heat injury prevention information, call Preventive Medicine at 531-3402.



Fatigue

Continued from page 16

pertino, California-based Alertness Solutions.

"Fatigue has always been a problem — there's always been shift work, people have always not gotten their full night's rest," Whitcomb said. "It has started to come to light more in the past 20 years, when the research really started showing it was causing unsafe work practices, when it was increasing risk in the workplace.

"Probably in the last 10 years, as we've looked more at wellness in the workplace, it's gotten a lot more attention. A lot more employers are

wanting to address fatigue in the workplace because they're starting to see those increased risks and lack of productivity from those employees who are fatigued."

Possible solutions

Although workers can help prevent fatigue through measures such as taking breaks and adopting better sleep habits, employers also can help combat the issue.

A report from RAND Europe, part of the non-profit research organization RAND Corp., con-

cluded that lack of sleep results in a 13 percent increased risk of death and the loss of 1.2 million work days per year in the United States. The report offers the following recommendations for employers:

- Understand the importance of sleep and promote it.
- Create brighter workplaces with settings for naps.
- Deter lengthy use of electronic devices after work.

Celebrate July 4 by sending gift cards to warfighters

AAFES

FORT POLK, La. — Members of the public can show support for service members and their Families this Fourth of July by sending gift cards from the Army and Air Force

Exchange Service website, **ShopMyExchange.com**.

The Exchange offers two types of gift cards. E-gift cards may be redeemed online only at **ShopMyExchange.com**. Physical gift cards can be used at any Army, Air Force,

Navy or Marine Corps exchange, including contingency locations in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as at **ShopMyExchange.com**, **MyNavyExchange.com** and **ShopCGX.com**.

Military shoppers may use the gift cards to purchase snacks, electronics, books, clothing and more.

"Our nation's heroes protect our independence with their service," said Beth Pritchard, Fort Polk Exchange general manager.

"Exchange gift cards make it easy for civilians to show appreciation

for the sacrifices of service members and their families."

Veterans who have signed up for their lifelong Exchange online benefit can also use gift cards to shop the online exchanges. Veterans can verify their eligibility at **ShopMyExchange.com/Vets**.

Civilians can purchase gift cards ranging from \$10 to \$500 addressed to a specific Airman, retiree or veteran by visiting **ShopMyExchange.com** and clicking "Purchase Gift Cards" at the bottom of the page.

Authorized shoppers can also purchase gift cards through their **ShopMyExchange.com** accounts.



Weekly golf tip for beginners

Leave the driver in the bag

Start your practice sessions with your pitching wedge and move through your bag of clubs mastering each one as you go. Avoid using a longer and more difficult club until you are consistently and confidently hitting the shorter ones. Many golfers would do better to avoid the driver for at least the first 18 months of playing. A great place to practice and check on your progress is Warrior Hills Golf Course on Fort Polk. The driving range offers plenty of space to work on your alignment, then test your skills on the 18-hole course that will challenge each club in your bag. Call 531-4661 about scheduling a lesson to fine tune your game or check on the specials rates for semi-annual and annual memberships.



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Take pick of Fourth of July fireworks fun

GUARDIAN STAFF

FORT POLK, La. — It's the time of year when summer heat means barbecues, watermelon, fireworks and celebrating the nation's freedom. You have plenty of opportunities to pick the event that's right for you and your family. The following are a few of your choices.

• **Old Fashion Fourth of July** — enjoy free hamburgers and watermelon July 4 from 7-9 p.m. in De-Ridder. Bring your lawn chairs, and snag a prime spot to enjoy food, fun and fireworks. It's a great atmosphere and great for the whole family to enjoy. Location to be determined. For more information call (337) 462-8900.

• **Fireworks Over Buhlow** — spend July 3 celebrating Independence Day with fireworks, food, music and fun, then celebrate the fourth with your family. Visit Buhlow Lake, Alexandria, to dance the night away to the live music of Draft Day, out of New Orleans. Gates open at 4:30 p.m. Bring your

lawn chairs, but no pets or ice chests/outside food or drink. Fireworks start around 9:35 p.m.

• **Celebration on the Cane** — celebrate this all-American holiday in the oldest settlement in the Louisiana Purchase Territory. All events take place along the scenic Cane River Lake in the Landmark Historic District, 780 Front St., Natchitoches. Fireworks begin at 9 p.m. Bring your lawn chairs and blankets. No ice chests are allowed. Free admission, plenty of free parking. Admission is free and there is plenty of free parking. For more information call (800) 259-1714.

• **Red, White, Blue and You** — celebrate history, veterans who fought for this country's freedom and active-duty Soldiers who now protect it at the Red, White, Blue and You celebration, Lake Charles. The event kicks off with a star-spangled street parade at 6 p.m. The celebration continues at the Lake Charles Civic Center Arcade Pavilion, 900 Lakeshore Drive, Lake Charles, with conces-



sions, face painting and a patriotic program beginning at 6:45 p.m. with the sounds of Bluesiana RED.

The Lake Charles Community Band, along with the Louisiana Choral Foundation and friends, will also take the stage featuring a sing-a-long and a salute to the U.S. Armed Forces. Audience members are encouraged to bring their blankets or lawn chairs. The program will close with a fireworks extravaganza, beginning at 9:15 p.m.

In the event of inclement weather, the concerts will be held inside the Lake Charles Civic Center. No pets or outside beverages

are permitted on site.

For more information call (337) 491-9159 or go to www.CityOfLakeCharles.com.

• **KTBS-3 Independence Day Festival** — In honor of the United States military, this all day Fourth of July celebration features a B52 flyover, music, live entertainment, delicious food, kids' area at Sciport, fireworks and fun for the whole community in downtown Shreveport.

The fireworks take place on the riverfront over the Red River at Festival Plaza, 101 Crockett St., Shreveport. For more information visit www.ktbs.com/freedomfest.

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For more information call 531-1948.

• Volunteer opportunity

The BOSS program encourages you to donate your time to those in need. BOSS lends a helping hand at the DeRidder Soup Kitchen each Monday and Wednesday. Departure time is 4 p.m. from the Home of Heroes Recreation Center. For more information call 531-1948.

Festivals

• Peach Festival

There's nothing like a ripe, juicy peach to make your summer treats complete. That's the perfect reason to attend the Louisiana Peach Festival June 21-22 in downtown Ruston.

Overflowing with fun and deliciously sweet peaches, the festival has something for everyone to enjoy including arts and crafts shows, 5K Dawg Dash, kid's fishing tournament, peach cookery contest, peach eating contest, festival parade, rodeo and more.

Take Interstate 20, exit 85, turn onto U.S. Hwy 167 South and follow the crowd into downtown Ruston for the 69th Annual Louisiana Peach Festival.

• Watermelon Fest

The Beauregard Watermelon Festival, DeRidder, celebrates the harvest of local Sugartown Watermelons June 28-29.

The festival, held at the Beauregard Parish Fairgrounds — 506 West Drive — offers carnival rides, jackpot livestock show, retail and craft vendors, watermelon eating and seed spitting contests, Watermelon Idol talent competition, watermelon carving contest, food booths and more.

Bring your dancing shoes and sway the night away to some of Louisiana's best entertainers. Plan to attend the Beauregard Watermelon Festival for Louisiana fun and sweet melons.

For more information visit www.beauregardwatermelonfestival.com.

• Watermelon 5K

In conjunction with the Watermelon Festival, registration is open for the 14th annual Watermelon 5K run/walk. The event takes place at 7 a.m. June 29.

Those who register by June 14 will receive a t-shirt. Participants can also register the morning of the 5K from 6-6:45 a.m., but won't get a T-shirt. The 5K begins at the Beauregard Baptist Association office, 735 West Drive, DeRidder.

Registration forms are available at www.beauregardwatermelonfestival.com. For more information call (337) 463-4451.

• Shrimp/jazz fest

If you're looking for a celebration of Louisiana food, jazz music and culture, you'll find it at the Gulf Coast Shrimp and Jazz Festival,

Lake Charles Civic Center, 900 Lakeshore Drive, June 22. Gates open at 11 a.m. and close at 8 p.m.

A free jazz workshop is held from 9-11 a.m., followed by live music acts, a jazz exhibit and of course, the shrimp dish cook-off. Don't miss "Jazz After Dark, An Evening to Remember", starting at 7 p.m.

For more information visit www.gcshrimpnjazzfest.com.

Miscellaneous

• Summer pops

The Lake Charles Symphony opens its 62nd season with its Summer Pops, an annual event that brings fun orchestral music to first time symphony goers by allowing the symphony to perform with non-classical artists.

This year's Summer Pops is Dancing Queen — The Music of ABBA, July 13 at the Lake Charles Civic Center Coliseum, 900 Lakeshore Drive, Lake Charles. Doors open at 6 p.m. and the concert begins at 7 p.m.

Take a chance on this fun night as Jeans 'n Classics — a group of musicians committed to help in the building of younger, loyal audiences for symphony orchestras — joins the Lake Charles Symphony as they thank the iconic disco pop sensations for the music, featuring all the hits you know and love, from "Dancing Queen" to "Waterloo" and more. A variety of family food favorites, such as pizza, hotdogs, nachos and frozen pops and ice cream will be available for purchase. Don your bell

bottoms and platforms and don't let this fabulous evening slip through your fingers.

For more information visit www.lcsymphony.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 7 p.m. at the New Llano American Legion, Post 387, 500 Vernon St., New Llano. The next meeting is July 2.

The July tournament takes place at Toledo Bend July 6. The entry fee is \$40. For more information visit www.fortpolkcommunitybassmasters.com.

• Lose weight

Join Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS) every Thursday at the Vernon Parish Library meeting room. Weigh in is from 5-5:50 p.m.

The meeting starts at 5:50 p.m. For more information call (337) 208-0896.

• Toastmasters

Do you want to become a confident public speaker and strong leader? If so, there is a Toastmasters Club located at Fort Polk called Speak and Grow Toastmasters. The club encourages anyone interested to stop by and visit with them. The club meets the first and third Wednesday of the month at the Education Center, Room 208 from noon-1 p.m. The next meeting is Wednesday. For more information call LaVersa Wiltz at (337) 208-8557.

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