



# FORGING THE

# WARRIOR SPIRIT

## THE JRTC & FORT POLK GUARDIAN

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Home of Heroes @ Fort Polk, LA

June 28, 2019



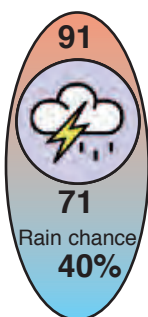
COURTESY OF LADY ANTEBELLUM

### Lady Antebellum thrills FreedomFest fans

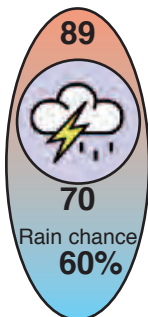
Lady Antebellum entertained fans with its brand of country music during the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk's annual FreedomFest celebration June 22 at the installation's Head-

quarters Field. Country duet Everette kicked off the music and plenty of food and fun was had. For more photos of FreedomFest see page 10 of today's Guardian.

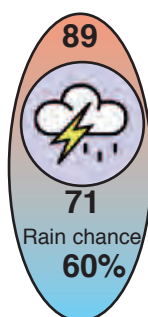
### Weekend weather



Today



Saturday



Sunday

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# Viewpoint

## In our view

Guardian staff asked Fort Polk Soldiers, "If you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be and why?" Here are their responses:



**Sgt. Steven Gibbs:** "Dubai because the scenery is beautiful."



**Sgt. Telvin Lain** "Amsterdam because of its architecture, beauty and history."



**Wannisha Phillips:** "Florida because that's where I'm from and I love the beaches."

**Spc. Akeim Thompson:** "North Carolina because that's where my wife is from and I want her to be close to her family."



**Shantasia Stewart:** "I think I would like to live in New York City. I love the night life and shopping. There is always something to do."



**Spc. Haley Guzman:** "Puerto Rico because it's a beautiful tropical paradise and I love the culture."



**Spc. Hunter Crygier:** "Boca Raton, Florida. It's my home, but it also has beaches, modern amenities and lots to do."



**Spc. Gariean Curry:** "Egypt because it is rich in history and culture and I want to travel outside the United States."



## Guardian

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## 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 resources, special programs and educational opportunities. Participants can visit with Vernon Parish School District 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](http://OperationHomefront.org/event.list).

### 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.

### AAFES discounts

To help military Families stay on budget while preparing for the school year, the Army and Air Force Exchange Service is expanding its layaway program to include computers, tablets and more from Monday to Aug. 31. Electronics that support educational excellence are not usually eligible for the Exchange layaway program, but Soldiers and their Families can enjoy the expanded program before the school year.

A \$3 service fee and a 15 percent deposit are required to place these and other items on layaway, and the items must be picked up by Aug. 31.



*Col. David Gardner, Joint Readiness Training Center Operations Group commander, passes the colors to Lt. Col. Henry Moltz, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 509th Infantry Regiment commander, June 26 at a change of command ceremony held at Fort Polk's Spike Field.*

## Geronimo hosts change of command

By **ANGIE THORNE**

Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. — A change of command for 1st Battalion (Airborne), 509th Infantry Regiment took place at Fort Polk's Spike Field June 26 as Lt. Col. Jimmy Hathaway, outgoing commander, passed the colors to Lt. Col. Henry Moltz.

Col. David Gardner, Joint Readiness Training Center Operations Group commander, said there is no battalion more feared, no name more respected, no Soldier more disciplined and no outfit more lethal than the 1st Battalion of the 509th (Geronimos).

"You can see the fear in the eyes of the forces that rotate through the JRTC each month. No foe has taken on more mythical proportions. Units that come here understand you must respect Geronimo if you have a chance at beating them," he said.

Gardner said nobody was more perfectly suited to lead this battalion over the last two years than Hathaway.

"He cares about each man and woman on the field, but more importantly for this line of work, he cares about winning. When he is winning, he is gracious and generous to the units that train at JRTC. When he is losing, he's downright ornery. Thankfully, Jimmy and Geronimo are usually winning," he said.

Gardner said Hathaway could now take his place on the wall of distinguished former Geronimo commanders.

"Hopefully, you understand the impact you have had, not only on this battalion, but on the Army as a whole. Thank you for your hard work," he said.

Hathaway thanked his leadership for all they did to help him during his tenure. He praised the efforts of everyone from company commanders to platoon sergeants for working tirelessly, taking his vision and turning it into a viable plan.

Hathaway also praised the paratroopers

standing in formation as some of the most lethal warriors the Army has to offer.

"These are some of the most dedicated, hard-working, trustworthy men and women I could ever hope to be associated with. They work and outthink every rotational unit that comes to the JRTC. On the attack, they are unstoppable. It is these Soldiers who are the heartbeat of, not only the battalion, but Operations Group and JRTC," he said.

Hathaway said as he moves to his next post, a part of him will always be here with this group of men and women.

"They are a special breed and Geronimo will always have a special spot in my heart, always a part of me," he said.

He encouraged the Soldiers to continue to "own" the box during rotations.

"Geronimo, continue to fight, win and be devils. Your reputation as the most hated unit in the Army is well deserved because you are the best," said Hathaway.

Gardner said the Army is fortunate that Moltz has stepped up to lead this great battalion to the next level.

"Your background is perfect to build upon those that have come before you and sustain the greatness that is Geronimo," he said. "Remember, winning isn't everything, unless you are Geronimo, in which case winning is the only thing."

Moltz thanked the Geronimos in formation for the hard work they put into rehearsals and said he appreciated their efforts to make the ceremony a success. "It shows you have professionalism and pride in your unit. It's impressive to see," he said.

You are known as a great fighting force, said Moltz.

"I think it's true that we stand on the shoulders of our history and you've earned that credibility and I'm proud to be here to serve with you. All the way, Airborne," he said.



## Pentagon inducts first living Iraq war vet into Hall of Heroes

By THOMAS BRADING

Army News Service

WASHINGTON — Former Staff Sgt. David Bellavia took his place Wednesday with more than 3,460 Medal of Honor recipients currently listed in the Pentagon's most sacred place: The Hall of Heroes.

A day after he received the Medal of Honor from President Donald J. Trump, his name was enshrined forever in the Hall of Heroes.

Bellavia displayed great bravery while serving as a squad leader in support of Operation Phantom Fury during the second battle of Fallujah, Nov. 10, 2004, according to a White House statement.

### Sharing honor

Defense officials, including David Norquist, acting deputy secretary of Defense; Ryan McCarthy, senior defense official performing duties of the secretary of the Army; and Gen. James McConville, vice chief of staff of the Army, all participated in the dedication ceremony.

Bellavia joins a select group, McCarthy said, for demonstrating the willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty.

"We are humbled to have Soldiers of this stature among our ranks," McCarthy said.

The Hall of Heroes is intended to celebrate the nation's most honored service members with dignity and respect, Norquist said, adding Bellavia's rightful place is among them.

"Today we reflect on the true meaning of courage, service, and selflessness," Norquist said, and "honor a rare person who embodies them all."

However, Bellavia insisted the honor wasn't just his. On multiple occasions, he dedicated his Medal of Honor to his fellow Soldiers.

"It's for them," he said.

### Actions under fire

While serving as a squad leader in Fallujah, Bellavia exposed himself to a storm of enemy bullets to save his platoon after they became pinned down by heavy machine-gun fire.

"The Soldiers took casualties" and others were trapped inside, McConville said, adding Bellavia "recognized the danger and took immediate action."

Bellavia, then with A Company, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, provided suppressive fire so his Soldiers had a chance to slip out of the house. Although he and his Soldiers escaped, the insurgents continued firing a barrage of gunfire.

During the second part of the battle, Bellavia called in a Bradley Fighting Vehicle for support, but its 25 mm caliber rounds were unable to penetrate the enemy-controlled building.

"Not knowing how many insurgents were still alive, David reacted with his M16," McConville said.

After assessing the situation, he reentered the darkened building. He knew he had to "destroy the enemy to protect his Soldiers," McConville said. "And that's exactly what he did."

The room was pitch black when he initially



From left: David Norquist, acting deputy secretary of Defense; Ryan McCarthy, senior defense official performing duties of the secretary of the Army; former Staff Sgt. David Bellavia, Medal of Honor recipient; and Gen. James McConville, vice chief of staff of the Army, unveil Bellavia's place among the Pentagon's Hall of Heroes, June 26.

killed one insurgent as they were reloading their RPG launcher. Then shortly after, he shot and wounded a second insurgent as they fired at him from the kitchen.

Bellavia acted on "determination and instincts," McConville said. He killed multiple other enemy insurgents in close combat.

He is credited for saving American Soldiers' lives and clearing an insurgent stronghold that night, above and beyond the call of duty. He is the first living service member from the war in Iraq to receive the nation's highest honor.

### His own words

"We defend, we avenge, we sacrifice, we bleed and we are willing to die for this unique creation, the United States of America," Bellavia said, ad-

ressing the audience.

With his Medal of Honor on his chest, he continued to honor his fallen brothers during his speech.

"They gave their lives for me, for you and for the countless citizens who will never know them," he said.

As he concluded his address, he reminded the audience why "we fight."

"We fight so that anyone out there thinking about raising arms against our citizens or our allies realize the futility of attrition against a disciplined, professional and lethal force built to withstand anything you can dream of throwing at us," he said. Americans want this kind of country, he said, and stand ready to defend it.

## Army brief

### Academic credentialing

WASHINGTON -- The Army could add to its record retention numbers by providing more incentive for Soldiers to stay on duty, the service's top enlisted leader said Wednesday.

The Army has been testing a pilot program for academic credentialing at Fort Hood, Texas, and plans to extend the program to several major installations by the end of 2019,

said Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel Dailey.

The Army plans to spread the program to all installations in fiscal year 2020.

The Army provided 110 bachelor's degrees to senior noncommissioned officers who attended the Sergeant Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas, June 21.

Dailey said the Army will be providing Soldiers with some college credit or professional credentialing for each level of NCO training.

# Full-scale exercise tests response, coordination at JRTC, Fort Polk

By JEAN DUBIEL

Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. — When a community is affected by disaster, an effective and timely response speeds recovery, offers reassurance to those impacted by the crisis and hastens a return to normalcy. At Fort Polk, the Crisis Action Team, or CAT, consisting of civilians and major subordinate command Soldiers, was tested on its disaster response plans during a full-scale exercise held June 25-26.

The exercise scenario began at 5:38 a.m. June 25 with a report of a downed aircraft and 12 injured personnel at the Geronimo Drop Zone in the Joint Readiness Training Center training area.

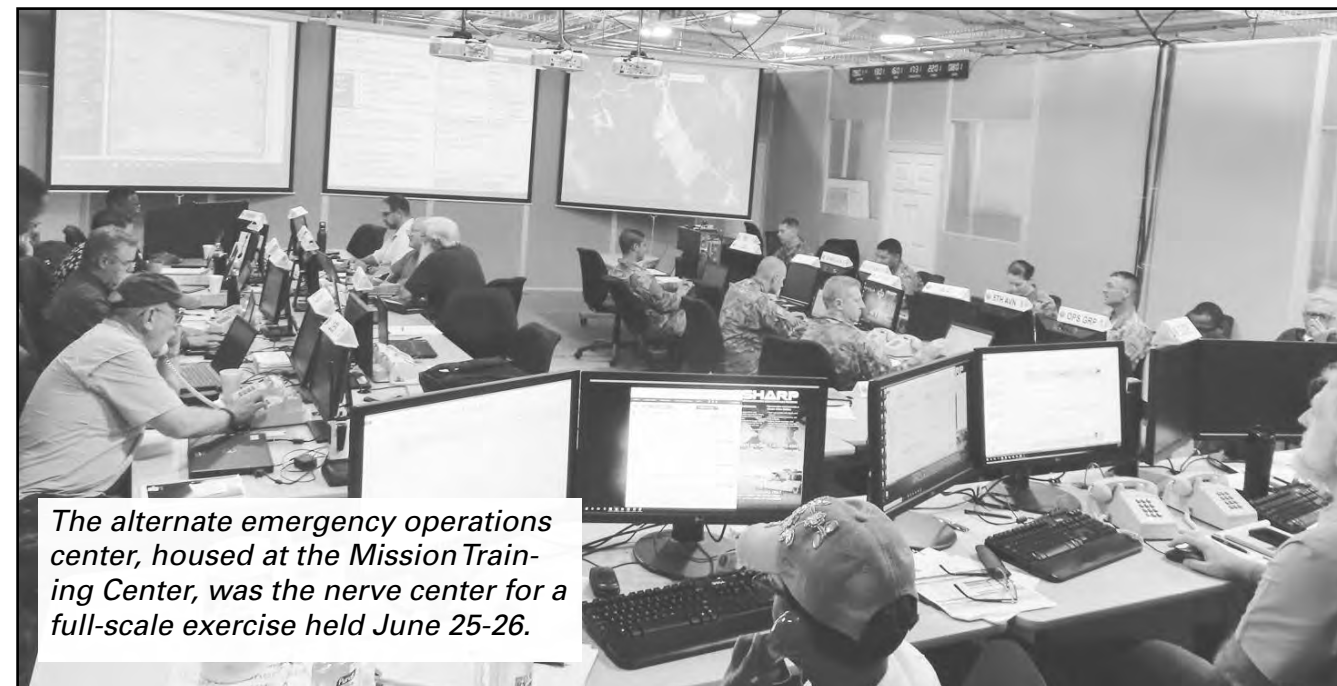
This report prompted the activation of the CAT, who could not meet at the usual location (the emergency operations center in bldg 350) because of a notional fire that caused damage to that facility. The CAT members set up shop at the Mission Training Center and began implementing their individual and team battle drills. As the situation “developed,” CAT members had to report their efforts, document their actions, answer requests for information and brief each other and the command at regular intervals to keep the flow of communication open.

**“With all the activities that we do on post — both in the box and in garrison — this team is prepared for any emergency.”**

**Brig. Gen. PATRICK D. FRANK**  
Commander, JRTC and Fort Polk

The Red Cross used the 36-hour exercise to test their volunteer system as well, and Fort Polk’s casualty affairs worked with the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System and Casualty and Mortuary Affairs Operations Division to exercise their interoperability.

Col. Ryan K. Roseberry, Fort Polk garrison commander, said



*The alternate emergency operations center, housed at the Mission Training Center, was the nerve center for a full-scale exercise held June 25-26.*

the value of a full-scale exercise is in getting units and post agencies to communicate and work together.

“Each unit has its own mission and we’re all going in different directions throughout the regular work week,” he said.

“But when an event like this happens, be it a downed aircraft, tornado or other emergency, we have to be ready to stop what we’re doing, come together and respond to take care of our Soldiers and Families here on the installation. We’ve got to know immediately what to do.”

Roseberry said the exercise is only held annually, so it is important to take advantage of every moment.

“We don’t get the opportunity to do this often, so when we do have the chance, we need to take it seriously,” said Roseberry. “I hope the CAT team comes away from this exercise knowing exactly what to do to take care of their area and that they understand how important it is for the garrison to respond quickly and get life back to normal as soon as possible.”

Ken Lavalley, exercise director, said he hopes exercise participants use the event as an opportunity to build confidence in themselves as they see their battle drills at work, and to learn about what other entities have to do in a crisis.

“The tough part for an installation is synchronizing the assets and getting them to the right place at the right time,” he said. “Each CAT member plays an integral part in the operation. Each



*From left, Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, commanding general of JRTC and Fort Polk; Col. Ryan Roseberry, Fort Polk garrison commander; Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Ausbun, Fort Polk garrison command sergeant major; and Johnny Bevers, Fort Polk deputy garrison commander attend a commander's update brief at the alternate EOC during a full-scale exercise held June 25-26.*



*Soldiers recover a downed aircraft hull during the exercise.*

cell brings a special ability to the team.”

Mark Leslie, exercise lead, said full-scale exercises are usually held once a year, but exercises are

held to some degree on a monthly basis to go over staff functions.

“This (event) was challenging

Please see **FSE**, page 9



# Louisiana VFW state commander reflects back on successful year

By **ANGIE THORNE**

Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. — Matthew West, chief of operations, G-3, a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 3619, DeRidder, concludes his year as Department of Louisiana VFW state commander this Sunday. He will then transition directly into the quartermaster position at his post, which is equivalent to being the chief financial officer.

West said his goal as state commander was to represent the Department of Louisiana VFW in a professional manner and serve as the voice for the VFW in Louisiana, as well as nationally, during his year of service.

One of West's main goals as commander was to tackle the issue of declining membership in Louisiana VFWs. According to the Veterans Administration and the census, said West, there are about 223,000 combat veterans in the state of Louisiana. Louisiana VFWs combined only have 12,393 members, some of whom aren't active, he said.

"Those potential new members are out there and one of my biggest goals this year was to increase our membership through recruitment and retention. My objective was to reach at least 14,000 members," said West.

Although he was unable to reach that goal, West said he did exceed the 2018 membership of 12,393. As of June 27, West said Louisiana membership was at 12,403.

He said the challenge in recruiting new members has to do with branding or how people perceive the VFW.

"People think the VFW is beer and bingo. They believe it's just a place old guys sit around and tell war stories. Though there's some truth to that statement, it's not our whole story," said West.

As far as bingo goes, it pays the bills, said West.

"Being a nonprofit organization, we have a 60/40 split when it comes to the money we raise. We have to give away 60 percent of the money we earn to keep our nonprofit status. The remaining 40 percent is for operating costs and budget. Much of what we make goes to help veterans in need," he said.

The bar and beer is also a benefit many members enjoy, said West.

"The bar pays for itself and offers a place for people to get together and connect. There are things that I can talk to other veterans about that I may not be able to discuss with my wife," he said.

West said many don't understand how much the VFW does in the community.

"The VFW isn't known for its self promotion. We don't like to brag. Most military folks don't," said West.

An important part of what the VFW does is advocate for veterans when it comes to new laws.

"We have a seat at the table in front of the Veterans Affairs Committee. However, membership is what dictates that. We have more than a million members nationwide and that gets us a seat at the table," he said.

West cautions if that number drops below a million members, the VFW could lose that seat and end up talking to a staffer in the back room instead of directly to congressmen and senators.



*Matthew West, chief of operations, G-3, is a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 3619, DeRidder, who is concluding his year as Department of Louisiana VFW state commander, speaks at a luncheon June 6.*

"That's huge because you get a lot of sway that you are able to push issues important to veterans. Numbers are power," said West.

The VFW is also there to lend a helping hand to veterans with financial assistance.

"We have to be judicious about the aid we give. After all, a post is run like a business because you have bills and responsibilities. For example if a veteran requests financial aid because they don't have enough money to pay their electric bill, there is a procedure we follow. If they qualify for aid — proof is required that the person asking for aid is a veteran — then we tell them to bring in the bill and we can pay it," he said.

Though they can't always pay the entire bill, West said they try to help as much as they can, especially if it's a member in need.

West said the VFW also gives back by visiting veteran's homes like the one in Jennings.

"In September, the posts in our district (district five) get together to cook and serve the residents a barbecue lunch. Then in December, the DeRidder post collects needed hygiene items like socks, slippers, toothpaste and more. We average anywhere from \$4,000 to \$8,000 worth of merchandise to donate to the home. We also have kids from the local school make the residents Christmas cards. We pass them out to the residents and sing Christmas Carols. It's just a great thing to do," he said.

Though it is open to all services, the VFW is an exclusive club in that you have to show proof that you are a veteran, said West.

"People are sometimes offended when they

can't join, but the focus of the club is in our name — Veterans of Foreign Wars. You have to have been deployed," he said.

There are also some misconceptions about when you can join.

"Many service members don't realize they are eligible to join while they are still on active duty. They think they aren't a veteran until they get out. Nothing could be further from the truth. After 30 days of boots on the ground, you are qualified," he said.

West said one of his biggest challenges as commander was getting people to stay motivated to work toward the ultimate goal of recruiting new members.

"I would get folks fired up about membership, but many didn't follow through. So I began recruiting because I'm not going to ask someone to do something I'm not willing to do myself," he said.

The VFW is a volunteer organization, said West.

The most gratifying aspect of his role as commander came about due to the growth of young leaders at the post and district commander level, said West.

"They want to take on leadership roles within VFW and that makes all the hard work worthwhile because now you have young leaders that want to step up to make positive impacts in this organization," he said.

West sees the future of the VFW in young veterans.

Please see **VFW**, page 7

# Take note of important Veterans of Foreign Wars facts

The following information was found at [www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org).

The VFW has testified before Congress 23 times in the last 12 months and has been instrumental in virtually every major legislative victory for veterans in the 20th and 21st centuries.

The VFW assisted more than 109,000 veterans in submitting Veteran Affairs claims in 2018.

The VFW contributes 9.4 million volunteer hours annually.

1899 was the year the VFW started to fight for veterans, service members and their families.

More than \$11.3 billion in financial assistance was awarded to military families since 2004 to help cover basic needs in times of crisis.

There are more than 1.6 million VFW and auxiliary members.

The VFW donates \$44.1 million annually to local community service projects by VFW members

9.3 million "Buddy" poppies were distributed by the VFW in 2018, raising \$12 million for veterans in need.

The VFW has awarded \$3 million in scholarships, monetary awards and other incentives to high school students through patriotic essay competitions.

Scholarships in the amount of \$6.5 million have been awarded to more than 1,452 veterans and service members through the VFW since 2014.

More than 40,000 high school students competed in the 2018-19 VFW Voice of Democracy competition.

The VFW helped veterans recoup more than \$8.3 billion in disability compensation and pension benefits. That includes the \$1.4 billion in new benefits paid to veterans in 2018.

## VFW

Continued from page 6

"I would love to get our current generation of veterans involved. Even if that means changing the culture of the VFW to make it a good fit for them. Since 2001, we have deployed more than three million people. Many have done multiple tours. They should all be members of the VFW, but they aren't. Why? What's the magic formula for this generation? We have to make the VFW something they want to be part of and show them what this organization can do for them," he said.

West thinks one thing that needs to happen is a transition to a more tech savvy organization. "Today's vets require a more technological and social media friendly environment," he said.

West said it's a transitional process that means finding a balance between what the VFW can offer young veterans and what they can give back by volunteering and getting more involved in the community.

West said the top four officer positions at his post would soon be filled with Iraq or Afghanistan veterans.

"That's huge. We are in the process of trying to make the post more family friendly with events like our annual Trunk or Treat at Halloween. One year we had 75 cars decorated, with people in costumes and handing out candy. It's a safe environment for the kids and a service to the community. It's those little things that attract younger members with families," he said.



**Matthew West, (right) chief of operations, G-3, member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 3619, DeRidder, and outgoing Department of Louisiana VFW state commander, installs Mickey Carroll (left) as the new State Commander for 2019-2020 June 9.**

The ultimate goal is keeping the VFW alive and well into the future. "Many VFW posts are closing across the nation. I'm proud to say we opened a new post in Louisiana this year. That's a huge success and there are two more possible posts that could open in the next year," he said.

"The VFW needs veterans almost as much as they need the VFW. We are a veteran's service organization, but we are also a community service organization. As a VFW post if you aren't doing both those things, you are doing a disservice to your post, members and community.





# 'Steel Spike' Battalion holds annual muster

By JEAN DUBIEL  
Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. — Fort Polk's 46th Engineer Battalion held its annual Engineer Muster at Spike Field June 20. The event featured a 2-mile run, group photo in the shape of the classic engineer castle, signing a roll book and enjoying cake. The event also marked the 244th birthday of the Engineer Corps.



JEAN DUBIEL / GUARDIAN





# Fort Polk Soldiers rescue migrants from waters at U.S. border

## U.S. NORTHERN COMMAND

EL PASO, Texas — Two Fort Polk Soldiers rescued two migrants from canal waters on the U.S.-Mexico border in El Paso, Texas, June 20.

The Soldiers are assigned to 3rd Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division and are part of a Mobile Surveillance Team assisting Customs and Border Protection on the Southwest border. During the performance of their duties June 20, they saw a migrant family enter the canal.

They observed a woman and her child struggling in the water and then submerge completely.

Staff Sgt. Michael Mathews jumped into the water to rescue the woman and her child while 1st Lt. Samuel Mueller used his shirt as a makeshift lifeline to pull them out until U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents arrived and threw



*First Lt. Samuel Mueller (left) and Staff Sgt. Michael Mathews, both with 3rd Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, rescued a migrant woman and her child from drowning in a canal in El Paso, Texas June 20.*

them a rescue line.

"My team leader reacted deci-

sively and without hesitation," said Mueller.

"He jumped into the canal in full uniform and boots to help a woman and her child in need."

The Soldiers and CBP safely recovered the migrants and no injuries were reported.

"I'm glad the woman and her child are OK. I think it was a great victory for the joint U.S. Army-CBP team," said Mathews.

"Though we have very specific instructions to ensure CBP forces are in the lead to interact with immigrants crossing the border, I made it clear to my Soldiers that they are authorized in every case to help when they feel human life is at stake," said Lt. Col. Will Canda, commander 3rd Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment.

Department of Defense support to CBP is led by U.S. Northern Command with U.S. Army North as the forward operational command for the Southwest Border support mission.

## FSE

Continued from page 5

because we had some conditions levied on us that replicated real life, such as working in multiple shifts over 24 hours and the environmental conditions (rain)," he said. "I think the installation did well overall with just a couple of areas we need to work on."

Cooperation was one of the areas that needed "work," according to Leslie.

"We knew (at the beginning) one of the challenges would be interoperability between the emergency operations center and the Emergency Family Assistance Center. Prior to this exercise, we looked at a couple of after action reviews from major disasters from across the Army, and one of the key elements for success was EFAC operations."

The EFAC, which is managed by the Directorate of Family Morale, Welfare and Recreation, strengthened its capability to respond to a crisis during the exercise, said Leslie.

"While we know our directorate of emergency services can respond to any incident and mitigate risk and damage, the challenge is in the follow-on actions, which includes taking care of the Families of the Soldiers. The EFAC plays a big role in that. So the EOC and the EFAC need to be nested better so we're a little more efficient," said Leslie.

Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, commanding general, JRTC and Fort Polk, said this kind of exercise is crucial to future mission success in the event of a crisis.

"It's important to have that repetition (of exercise tasks) so if an emergency does happen, all the key leaders that have been associated with the exercise this week have a foundation in how we will approach that emergency," he said.

"With all the activities that we do on post —



*The Crisis Action Team, exercise controllers and other key players attend a commander's update brief June 26 at the alternate emergency operation center, housed in the Mission Training Center. The exercise centered around a downed helicopter with multiple fatalities and injuries.*

both in the box (JRTC training area) and in garrison — this team is prepared for any emergency. This exercise has moved them one step closer to developing that proficiency."

Lavalley said the annual exercise is not the only one Fort Polk conducts.

"This is the fourth one we've done this year,

each with a different problem set that we believe we are most likely to encounter here at Fort Polk, and I have absolute, 100 percent confidence in the Fort Polk team's ability to respond to any situation that may happen in our community," he said. "And I think the community can share that confidence."



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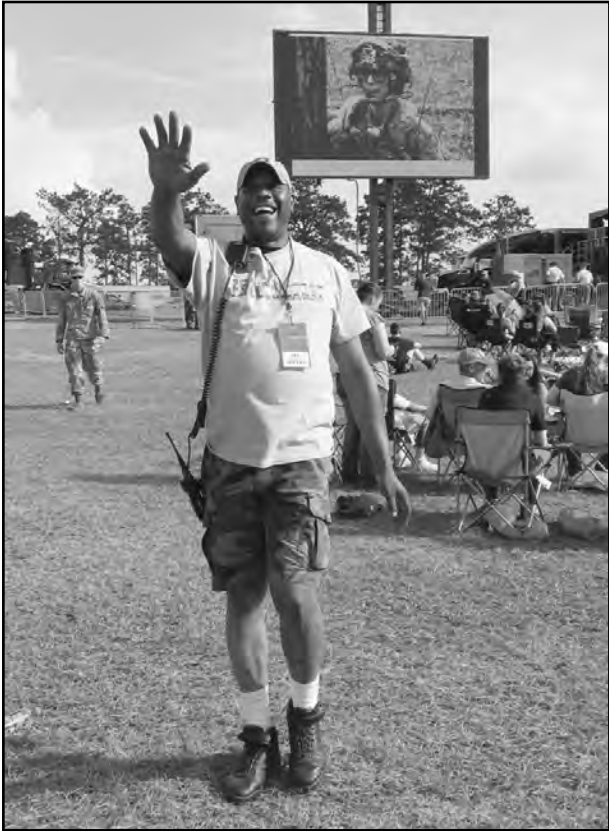


Please see **FreedomFest**, page 11



# FreedomFest

Continued from page 10



JEAN DUBIEL / GUARDIAN



Please see **FreedomFest**, page 12



# FreedomFest

Continued from page 11



Soldiers wearing FreedomFest T-shirts stand just off stage, ready to move equipment between sets during FreedomFest June 22.



JEAN DUBIEL / GUARDIAN





# Community

## Briefs

### Library fun

Fort Polk's Allen Memorial Library hosts the following events:

- Legos Duplo for children up to 4 years of age, Wednesday at 4:30 p.m. The activity develops motor skills and creativity.
- Story time and a movie, "The Lion King," July 9, 5 p.m. Enjoy the Disney classic and make a craft with your child.

Register for these events at the library, located on Colorado Avenue at the Education Center. Call 531-2665 for more information.

### Golf scramble

Fort Polk's Warrior Hills Golf Course hosts a four-person scramble with a shotgun start July 12 at 11:30 a.m. Cost is \$35 for members and \$45 for non-members. Save \$5 if you register by July 10. Price includes golf, range balls, cart, lunch and prizes. Call 531-4661 for more information.

### Sports activities

The following sporting events are hosted by Fort Polk Intramural Sports:

- Three on three basketball tournament, July 23, 6 p.m., Warrior Fitness Center. Three-four player teams. Register at [eventbrite.com](http://eventbrite.com).
- Dodgeball tournament, July 30, 6 p.m. Warrior Fitness Center. Teams of up to eight players.

For info call 531-2056. Open to active duty, Family members, retirees and Department of Defense civilians 18 and over.

### Movie night

Enjoy "Mary Poppins Returns" at the next Fort Polk movie night, July 27, on Warrior Field. The event is free and hosted by the Fort Polk Directorate of Family Morale, Welfare and Recreation. Concessions begin at 8 p.m. Movie starts at 8:30 p.m.

### 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 Sunday. 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 call (337) 462-8914 or email [jherrington@cityofderidder.org](mailto:jherrington@cityofderidder.org).



Stacey Delgado, Employment Readiness Program manager (right) speaks to an Army spouse about building a resume.

GUARDIAN STAFF

## Resume prep important when job searching

### EMPLOYMENT READINESS PROGRAM

FORT POLK, La. — The Employment Readiness Program (ERP) is providing military spouses with some helpful tips to get ready for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Hiring Our Heroes Military Spouse Hiring Fair scheduled for July 25, from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Fort Polk Youth Services Gym.

"Hiring events can be intimidating and overwhelming," said Stacey Delgado, ERP manager. "Especially if folks are new to the process. Even seasoned job seekers may feel a little out of sorts if they have been out of the job market for a while. That's why the ERP will be running articles such as this during the weeks prior to the event."

Most employers have job seekers fill out an online application, so potential employees should ask themselves, "Does this apply to a hiring event?" Delgado said it does and recommends job seekers register at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Hiring Our Heroes website ([www.hiringourheroes.org/](http://www.hiringourheroes.org/)) so that they can start a plan of which employers they would like to see during the event.

"The website will provide job seekers with the names of employers who have already registered and will be attending," said Delgado. "By planning ahead, job seekers can view the open positions, and prepare to apply."

Once job seekers have decided which employers they would like to submit an application to, the next step in the plan is to have their resumes reviewed prior to submitting their online application.

"Some questions you should ask yourself: 'Have I tailored the resume to the job?' and 'Have I included all that I think is necessary for the employer to see my skills?'" said Delgado.

Having someone review your resume, not only for an event like this, but also prior to submitting it to any open vacancy, is important.

"Remember, this is the first contact that you and the employer will make with each other," said Delgado. "Ensuring that your resume is top notch; that it has no misspellings, or inaccurate

punctuation is extremely important. The ERP can provide resume review and assist with building the right resume for the job."

Once job seekers have their resume reviewed, they should print a copy to hand to the employer the day of the event.

"Making a few notes on a separate piece of paper of questions you would like to ask the employer is always helpful," said Delgado. "Also, having the company name and position you applied for will help jog the employer's memory of your online application."

Delgado added the resume is what gets job seekers the interview, and the interview is what gets job seekers the job. "ERP can provide one-on-one counseling for resume assistance to help job seekers prepare for the event," she said. "The ERP has a computer lab with three computers, as well as resume paper for job seekers to print out their resumes to hand out at the event."

The ERP office is located at the Family Readiness Center, bldg 924, BellRichard Road. Military spouses can call to make an appointment at 531-6922. Walk-ins are always welcome.

## Hiring fair slated for July 25

### ERP

FORT POLK, La. — A Military Community and Spouse Hiring Fair takes place July 25 from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at Fort Polk's Youth Services Gym, 1882, 16th St., bldg 2070. Attendees can network with vetted employers, community leaders, senior military spouses and other job seekers. Take free professional head photographs for your LinkedIn profile and discover the best websites to work on your resume. For more information or to register visit [hiringourheroes.org/events](http://hiringourheroes.org/events).

# Hurricane season runs through Nov. 30: Be prepared

WWW.READY.GOV

FORT POLK, La. — It's time to gear up for the Atlantic hurricane season, which began June 1 and continues through Nov. 30.

Knowing you have a plan in place when you receive a hurricane watch or warning alert from the National Weather Service can bring you peace of mind and keep you and your family safe.

Here are a few tips on what to do before, during and after a hurricane.

## Hurricane basics

If you don't already know, hurricanes are massive storm systems that form over water and move toward land. Threats from hurricanes include high winds, heavy rainfall, storm surge, coastal and inland flooding, rip currents and tornadoes. These large storms are called typhoons in the North Pacific Ocean and cyclones in other parts of the world.

Each year, many parts of the United States experience heavy rains, strong winds, floods and coastal storm surges from tropical storms and hurricanes. Affected areas include all Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coastal areas and areas more than 100 miles inland, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Hawaii, parts of the Southwest, the Pacific Coast, and the U.S. territories in the Pacific. A significant percent of fatalities occur outside of landfall counties due to inland flooding.

## Watches and warnings

Hurricane warnings indicate that hurricane conditions (sustained winds of 74 mph or higher) are expected somewhere within the specified area. Because hurricane preparedness activities become difficult once winds reach tropical storm force (sustained winds of 39 to 73 mph), the hurricane warning is issued 36 hours in advance of the anticipated onset of tropical-storm-force winds to allow for important preparation.

During a hurricane warning, complete storm preparations and immediately leave the threatened area if directed by local officials.

A hurricane watch means that hurricane conditions (sustained winds of 74 mph or higher) are possible within the specified area. A hurricane



watch is issued 48 hours in advance of the anticipated onset of tropical-storm-force winds in an area.

During a hurricane watch, you should prepare your home and review your plan for evacuation in case a hurricane or tropical storm warning is issued. Listen closely to instructions from local officials.

## Basic preparedness tips

Know where to go. If you are ordered to evacuate, know the local hurricane evacuation route(s) to take and have a plan for where you can stay. Contact your local emergency management agency for more information.

Put together a go-bag: Disaster supply kit, in-

cluding a flashlight, batteries, cash, first aid supplies, medications and copies of your critical information if you need to evacuate

If you are not in an area that is advised to evacuate and you decide to stay in your home, plan for adequate supplies in case you lose power and water for several days and you are not able to leave due to flooding or blocked roads.

## Preparing your home

Hurricane winds can cause trees and branches to fall, so trim or remove damaged trees and limbs to keep you and your property safe.

Secure loose rain gutters and downspouts and clear any clogged areas or debris to prevent water damage to your property.

Reduce property damage by retrofitting to secure and reinforce the roof, windows and doors, including the garage doors.

Purchase a portable generator or install a generator for use during power outages. Remember to keep generators and other alternate power sources outside, at least 20 feet away from windows and doors and protected from moisture; and never try to power the house wiring by plugging a generator into a wall outlet.

For more information about what to do during and after a hurricane hits, go to [www.ready.gov/hurricanes](http://www.ready.gov/hurricanes).

## Make family plan before disaster strikes

WWW.READY.GOV

FORT POLK, La. — Making a plan now can help your family during a disaster. Use these steps to put together a plan:

**Step 1:** Answer these four questions with your family to start your emergency plan:

- How will you receive emergency alerts and warnings?
  - What is your shelter plan?
  - What is your evacuation route?
  - What is your family communication plan?
- Step 2:** Consider specific needs in your

household. Tailor plans and supplies that fit your daily living needs and responsibilities. Create your own personal network for specific areas where you need assistance.

Discuss your needs and responsibilities and how people in your network can assist each other with communication, care of children, business, pets or the operation of durable medical equipment.

**Step 3:** Download and fill out a family emergency plan from [www.ready.gov/make-a-plan](http://www.ready.gov/make-a-plan) or use it as a guide to create your own.

**Step 4:** Practice your plan with your family.

# Storm water pollutes streams, lakes, drinking water

ENRMD

FORT POLK, La. — Storm water runoff is rainfall or snowmelt that flows over the ground or man-made impervious surfaces. It is created when rain falls on roads, driveways, parking lots, rooftops and other surfaces that do not allow the rainfall to percolate and be absorbed into the ground.

Storm water runoff can be the number one cause to stream impairments in some urbanized areas. The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality has provided a list of allowable storm water discharges permitted by the Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Permit issued to the installation



by LDEQ. If an item is not listed below, it does not belong in storm drains:

- Discharges or flows from firefighting activities (excludes predictable and controllable discharges from a firefighting training facility)
- Fire hydrant flushings
- Potable water including water line flushings using potable water, drinking fountain overflows, lawn watering runoff and similar sources of potable water
- Uncontaminated air conditioning or compressor condensate
- Residual street wash water and pavement wash waters where no detergents are used and no spills or leaks of toxic

or hazardous materials have occurred (unless all spilled material has been removed)

- Routine external building wash down which does not use detergents
- Drainage from landscape watering
- Rising ground waters
- Uncontaminated ground water infiltration
- Uncontaminated pumped ground water
- Foundation drains
- Irrigation water
- Uncontaminated spring water
- Water from crawl space pumps
- Footing drains
- Water from individual residential car washing
- Flows from riparian habitats and wetlands
- Dechlorinated swimming pool discharges
- Other similar occasional incidental discharges (for example, non-commercial or charity car washes) where such discharges will not cause a problem either due to the nature of the discharge or controls the MS4 places on the discharge.



# Consider these nine tips for improving men's health

By Lt. Col. CHRISTOPHER W. BUNT, M.D.  
Air Force Reserve

WASHINGTON — Let's face it, men are often hesitant to talk about their health concerns or visit the doctor. That needs to change. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, men die at higher rates than women from heart disease, cancer, diabetes, influenza/pneumonia, kidney disease, accidents and suicides. Early detection and treatment can improve your odds of surviving illnesses.

Many of the major health risks that men face can be prevented with a healthy lifestyle, and a healthy lifestyle can start with one small choice. Make your first one today! Here are nine tips to get you started:

- **Move.** Men need at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity, or 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity, each week. Moderate activities include brisk walking and mowing the lawn.

You should still be able to have a conversation while doing these activities, but not quite hold an extended musical note of your favorite song. Vigorous activities include running, swimming laps, singles tennis, bicycling at least 10 mph or jumping rope. Add strength and resistance training exercises (body weight or gravity alone is fine) at least twice a week, and include all major muscle groups, doing one set of 10 repetitions per exercise.

- **Say no to tobacco.** Quitting smoking improves your health and lowers your risk of heart disease,

cancer, lung disease and other smoking-related illness. Avoid secondhand smoke. Don't vape, chew tobacco or use other tobacco products. They all increase your risk of cancer.

- **Control stress.** Stress is part of life. Focus on taking care of yourself. Talk to friends and loved ones. Let them know how you're feeling and how they can help. Don't use drugs or alcohol in an attempt to deal with your stress. They create more problems than they solve.

- **Eat better.** Reduce your consumption of processed and packaged foods. Stick to shopping for what's on the outside aisles of the grocery store. Pick one dietary indiscretion — something you don't need to eat — and cut back. Eat more fruits, vegetables and nuts. Instead of beef, try fish, chicken, turkey or pork.

- **Drink water.** Increase your water intake when you are more physically active in hot or cold climates, running a fever or have diarrhea or are vomiting. If your urine is clear, you're appropriately hydrated. Carry a reusable water bottle throughout the day and sip from it regularly. Refill it when empty. When eating out, substitute water with a wedge of lemon or lime for a sugar-sweetened beverage.

- **Get plenty of sleep.** Sleep hygiene is crucial. Go to bed and get up around the same time every day. Sleep in a cool, quiet, dark place. Don't watch TV or use your phone in bed. Aim for seven or eight hours of sleep per night.



- **Prevention first.** Cancer screening tests can spot disease early, when it's easier to treat. And immunizations can prevent many illnesses from impacting you at all. If you have any concerns, visit your doctor before they become major issues.

- **Nurture positive relationships.** Be present with your loved ones. Stop staring at electronic screens and live in the moment with those around you. Help others. Be kind.

Smile and laugh more. Complain less.

- **Use mindfulness.** Consider activities that allow for self-reflection. Mindfulness apps can help start you on this process.

Meditation, yoga and other "centering" activities can further expand your mind. At the end of your day, reflect about something you learned and how you can use that to improve your tomorrow.

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# Practice yoga to stimulate mind, body, spirit

## MILITARY HEALTH SYSTEMS

WASHINGTON — Two programs that incorporate yoga at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, demonstrate the ability of the ancient practice to help heal the mind and body.

"The word 'yoga' in Sanskrit means 'to yoke together,' and the idea is to bind together our mind, body and spirit, and not just to bind, but to create a balance among the three aspects," explained Dr. Bhagwan Bahroo, a psychiatrist in the Psychiatry Continuity Service program at Walter Reed.

"Having personally realized the significance of yoga, I wish to share the many benefits with our service members."

Bahroo grew up practicing yoga in India and re-connected with it 10 years ago when asked to integrate the practice into Walter Reed's behavioral health program.

Today he teaches a one-hour class for up to 12 participants once a week using basic poses and various breathing techniques, finishing each session with Laughter Yoga, an ancient practice now seeing a resurgence worldwide, according to Bahroo.

"A good yoga session not only improves muscle tone, adds strength and improves flexibility of the joints, but also helps bring peace of mind, reduces anxiety and improves mood," he explained, noting that laughter is contagious and lightens the heart and mind.

Given the nature of yoga, not all patients are willing participants.

"You wouldn't believe the excuses I get from patients," Bahroo chuckled.

Over the years, he has adapted his approach, now inviting patients to observe and then to join in as they feel ready.

"Eight out of 10 come to the mat eventually. If they have any type of pain, I'm able to show them how to modify poses for maximum benefit," he said.

Bahroo described one patient who began adamantly opposed to join his yoga class, and reluctantly joined after wary observation.

"Upon finishing his 5-week program he said, 'I wish I had known about yoga earlier in my life.' This is why I teach yoga and why I'd love to bring it to a wider population in our hospital if I could," Bahroo said.

Another patient population benefiting from yoga practice includes service members undergoing treatment for traumatic brain injury at the National Intrepid Center of Excellence, also in Bethesda next to Walter Reed. The center's integrative approach includes tailored treatment plans that focus on mind, body and spirit. Allison Winters, wellness coordinator, is a certified yoga instructor and dance/movement therapist who invites patients to participate at their own comfort level. Feedback after completion of the program has been positive.

"More yoga' is what I've been hearing, so now we offer yoga as part of the structured intensive-outpatient and outpatient programs," she said. "We have added three optional classes each week, all of which are always well-attended."

Winters focuses on gentle and restorative postures. She teaches a maximum of six patients per class and is able to tune in to their individual issues.

"I love being able to teach yoga here," she said. "With our patients, my teaching is much more individualized and I am able to connect better with them."

Winters said she is convinced yoga provides a critical mind-body connection for her patients. She believes that part of their healing is a discovery process as they experience the rhythmic and repetitive practice of yoga, incorporated with breathing. They gain flexibility as they tune in to their breath.

"I want their yoga practice to be a tool to use post-rehabilitation to manage stress and transitions when they return to work and home, and also provide a means of working toward performance goals and returning to readiness," Winters said, adding that she likes to teach a classic sun salutation sequence because it provides a familiar basis for future practice, and includes an adaptable set of poses that anyone can do anywhere.



Dr. Bhagwan Bahroo, staff psychiatrist, demonstrates a deep-breathing posture during a yoga class at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

"With its focus on breath and movement, the sun salutation can be modified for any level of practitioner," said Winters, who acknowledges that yoga practice isn't the only means of making a mind-body connection. She teaches her patients how they can incorporate moving intentionally with their breath in any activity they enjoy. While yoga is commonly associated with relaxation, Winters said different types of yoga can offer an array of benefits.

"Yoga has been around for more than 5,000 years," she said. "There is wisdom to the practice of bringing mindful attention to our breath and bodies and anyone, regardless of age or physical fitness, can do it in its many forms, whether retiring from service or preparing for the next deployment."

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AW19-1034

## Weekly golf tip

### Leave the driver in the bag

Start with 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 be better to avoid the driver for at least the first 18 months of playing. Call 531-4661 to check on the special rates for semi-annual and annual Warrior Hills Golf Course memberships.

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# Pull over for emergency vehicles or be pulled over

By CHAD ESTES

Fort Polk FES

FORT POLK, La. — Every second counts when emergency vehicles are responding to a call. For a safe and timely arrival, fire, police and EMS personnel rely on other drivers to do their part — pull over and stop.

When you are driving and see an emergency vehicle approaching with lights and sirens, move as far to the right as possible and stop. If you can't come to a complete stop move to the right and slow down as much as possible unless it's at an intersection. At an intersection no matter what color your light may be, you need to come to a complete stop. You don't know which direction the emergency vehicle is coming from.

Remember to look for multiple emergency vehicles. Stay to the right until you know for sure that all emergency vehicles have passed. Deadly accidents have occurred when the first emergency vehicle goes past and the driver of a personally owned vehicle pulls out in front of another responding unit.

When approaching an emergency vehicle on the side of the road with its lights on, safely move over and reduce your speed. This isn't just for the safety of the emergency personnel — it's also the law.

Louisiana Law RS 32:125 states that upon the immediate approach of an authorized emergency vehicle properly using an audible or visual signals, or of a police vehicle properly using an audible signal only, the driver of every other vehicle shall yield the right-of-way and immediately drive to a position parallel and as close as possible



COURTESY PHOTO

to the right hand edge or curb of the highway clear of any intersection and shall stop and remain in such position until the authorized emergency vehicle has passed. Motorists on a highway must make a lane change, if possible, when any emergency vehicle with flashing lights is stopped on the shoulder. If motorists cannot switch lanes, they are to slow down.

Distracted drivers also cause problems for emergency vehicles. Drivers are less aware of ap-

proaching emergency vehicles due to texting or talking on a cell phone, eating, changing radio stations or because their music is turned up to loud. Put away cell phones; turn down the music and just drive.

Do your part during an emergency response. Help first responders safely and timely get to those they are trying to help. You never know, they might be responding to help someone you care about.

## Prior planning can make summer trips fun, safe, worry free

NHTSA

WASHINGTON — Of the many great things about summer, few match the fun of a family road trip. Before you hook up that new boat or camper, or hit the road with your family or friends in your car, SUV, pickup or RV, take the time to review these summer travel safety tips from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Prevention and planning may take a little time up front, but will spare you from dealing with the consequences of a breakdown — or worse yet, a highway crash — later.

Before you go:

- Get your car serviced. Regular maintenance such as tune-ups, oil changes, battery checks, and tire rotations go a long way toward preventing breakdowns. If your vehicle has been serviced according to the manufacturer's recommendations, it should be in good condition to travel. If not — or you don't know the service history of the vehicle you plan to drive — schedule a preventive maintenance checkup with your mechanic right away.

- Check for recalls. Owners may not always know that their vehicle has been recalled and needs to be repaired. NHTSA's Vehicle Identification Number look-up tool lets you enter a VIN to quickly learn if a specific vehicle has not been repaired as part of a safety recall in the last 15 years. Check for recalls on your vehicle by searching [NHTSA.gov/Recalls](http://NHTSA.gov/Recalls). Sign up for email alerts at [NHTSA.gov/Alerts](http://NHTSA.gov/Alerts).

- Go over your vehicle safety checklist.

Check your vehicle's tire inflation pressure at least once a month and when your tires are cold (when the car hasn't been driven for three hours or more) — and don't forget to check your spare, if your vehicle is equipped with one. The correct pressure for your tires is listed on a label on the driver's door pillar or doorframe or in the vehicle owner's manual — the correct pressure for your vehicle is not the number listed on the tire itself. A tire doesn't have to be punctured to lose air. All tires naturally lose some air over time and become underinflated. In fact, underinflation is the leading cause of tire failure.

Also, take 5 minutes to inspect your tires for signs of excessive or uneven wear. If the tread is worn down to 2/32 of an inch, it's time to replace your tires. Look for the built-in wear bar indicators on your tires or use the "penny test" to determine when it's time to replace your tires. Place a penny in the tread with Lincoln's head upside down. If you can see the top of Lincoln's head, your vehicle needs new tires. If you find uneven wear across the tires' tread, it means your tires need rotation or your wheels need to be aligned before you travel.

See and be seen! Make sure all the lights on your vehicle are in working order. Check your headlights, brake lights, turn signals, emergency flashers and interior lights. Towing a trailer? Be sure to also check your trailer including brake lights and turn signals. A failure of the trailer light connection is a common problem and a seri-

ous safety hazard.

The radiator in your vehicle needs water and antifreeze (coolant) to keep your engine functioning properly. When your car hasn't been running and the engine is completely cool, carefully check your coolant level to make sure the reservoir is full. In addition, if your coolant is clear, looks rusty, or has particles floating in it, it is time to have your cooling system flushed and refilled. If your coolant looks sludgy or oily, immediately take your vehicle to a mechanic.

Check your vehicle's oil level periodically. As with coolant, if it's time or even nearly time to have the oil changed, now would be a good time to do it. In addition, check the following fluid levels: Brake, automatic transmission or clutch, power steering, and windshield washer. Make sure each reservoir is full; if you see any signs of fluid leakage, take your vehicle in to be serviced.

Look under the hood and inspect belts and hoses to make sure there are no signs of bulges, blisters, cracks or cuts in the rubber. High summer temperatures accelerate the rate at which rubber belts and hoses degrade, so it's best to replace them if they show signs of obvious wear. While you're at it, check all hose connections to make sure they're secure.

Like rubber belts and hoses, wiper blades are vulnerable to the summer heat and may need to be replaced.

For more tips on how to avoid problems on the road during your family's summer travels visit [www.nhtsa.gov/summer-driving-tips-2019](http://www.nhtsa.gov/summer-driving-tips-2019).

## MILITARY HEALTH SYSTEMS

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**DEFENSE AND VETERAN BRAIN INJURY CENTER**



# Experts say sleep banking improves stamina for Soldiers, runners

By DOUGLAS HOLL  
USAPHC

**ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md.** — Training for a demanding race like the Army 10-miler requires focus, determination and a solid nine to 10 hours of sleep every night, according to sleep experts at Walter Reed Army Institute of Research and the Army Office of the Surgeon General. Sleep is one of the three pillars of the Performance Triad, which also includes nutrition and activity.

"Sleep allows our bodies to focus on recovery and restores both our mind and muscles," said Army Lt. Col. T Scott Burch, Army System for Health Performance Triad sleep lead, OSTG. "Following a particularly strenuous training day, our body may need more time to recover and the good news is that our body will often give us signs that we need additional sleep, so plan go to bed a little earlier following high intensity workouts or post-race."

Sleep is good recovery for the brain, said Dr. Tom Balkin, a sleep expert and senior scientist at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research.

"Aim for as much sleep as you can possibly squeeze in," said Balkin. "Seven to eight hours of sleep is average, but more is even better."

Both Balkin and Burch recommend using sleep banking as a strategy to reach peak performance before a strenuous event. Sleeping an extra one to two hours leading up to the race will "bank" extra energy, stamina and focus.

"Consider this part of your training," said Balkin. "It's not something you would do every day in your normal life, but the week before you run a marathon, get all the sleep you can. Think of it like money. The more you get, it doesn't matter when the money shows up in your bank account. The next day, the money is still in your account."

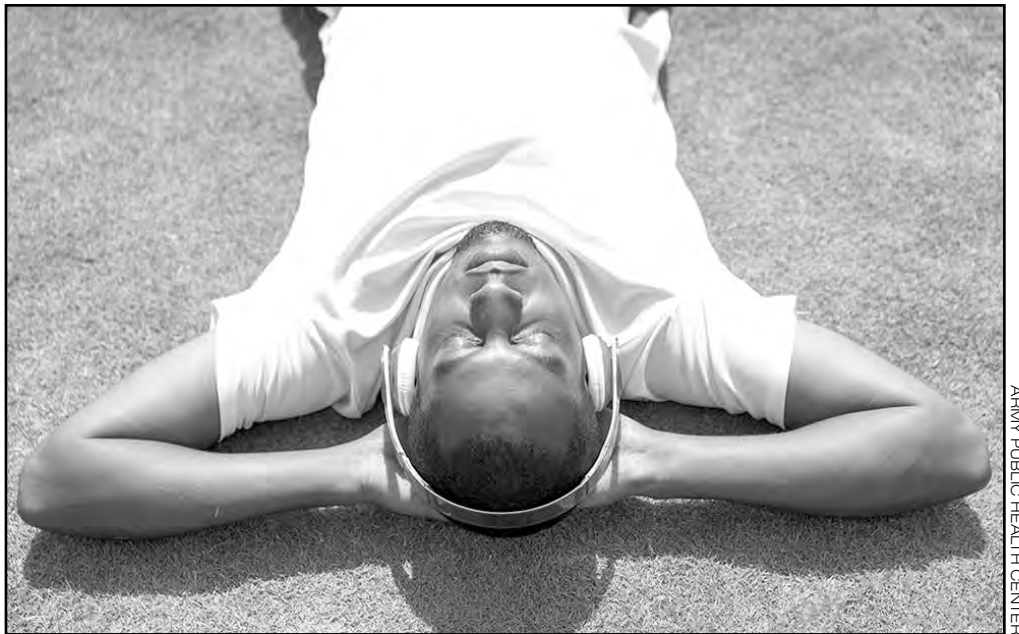
It's the goal of the Performance Triad to enable leaders to set conditions for Soldiers to optimize their sleep, activity and nutrition to improve the overall readiness of the Army, said Col. Hope Williamson-Younce, director of the Army System for Health and deputy chief of staff for public health, Army Office of the Surgeon General.

Failing to optimize sleep can lead to significant reductions in physical and cognitive performance.

"The Army has improved significantly in recognizing that sleep is a key component of a healthy lifestyle and healthy culture," said Burch. "If your duties are precluding you from optimal sleep talk, with your chain of command, encourage them to talk to local subject matter experts at Army Wellness Centers and see how they can not only improve your ability to obtain optimal sleep but how they improve the physical performance of the entire unit, while also reducing injuries and having a higher percentage of Soldiers medically ready and prepared for battle."

At Fort Riley, Kansas, sleep banking was put into practice by an armored brigade combat unit, said Williamson-Younce. Prior to a week-long field training exercise for gunnery tables, Soldiers attended a sleep education session and participated in a "reverse PT schedule," during which the Soldiers arrived at 9 a.m. and conducted physical training at 4 p.m. This led to dramatic improvements in their Gunnery Table results. They went from an average score of 756 (qualified) without banking to an average score of 919 (distinguished) with sleep banking.

For people who have difficulty falling asleep, Burch recommends refining basic routines. Have a routine bedtime schedule, wind down



ARMY PUBLIC HEALTH CENTER

the night in a calm manner by warm shower, reading and meditation. Turn off all "screens" at least an hour before bedtime and ensure the bedroom is a cool, relaxing sanctuary for a good night's rest.

"There's a great saying, make time for wellness, or you will be forced to make time for illness," said Burch. "Sleep is a critical component of our wellness. Often individuals try to manage with reduced sleep; however it comes at the detriment of your physical and cognitive performance."

The Performance Triad Website, <https://p3.amedd.army.mil>, has great resources for individuals, said Burch. He also encourages any Soldier, Soldier for Life or Family member to contact their local Army

Wellness Center, which has excellent personnel and resources for sleep, stress management, nutrition and physical conditioning to help everyone perform their best and reduce risk for musculoskeletal injuries.

For AWC tips and strategies go to: <https://phc.amedd.army.mil/topics/healthyliving/al/Pages/Army-WellnessCenters.aspx>.

The Army Public Health Center focuses on promoting healthy people, communities, animals and workplaces through the prevention of disease, injury and disability of Soldiers, military retirees, their Families, veterans, Army civilian employees and animals through studies, surveys and technical consultations.

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## Festivals

### • Watermelon Fest

The Beauregard Watermelon Festival, DeRidder, celebrates the harvest of local Sugartown Watermelons today and Saturday.

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.

In conjunction with the Watermelon Festival, registration is open for the Watermelon 5K run/walk.

The event takes place at 7 a.m. Saturday. Participants can 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.

For more information visit [www.beauregardwatermelonfestival.com](http://www.beauregardwatermelonfestival.com).

### • Cajun festival

The Cajun Music and Food Festival celebrates the preservation and promotion of Cajun music and heritage July 19-20 at the Burton Coliseum, 7001 Gulf Hwy., Lake Charles.

The festival does this with con-

tinuous live Cajun music, traditional Cajun foods, arts and crafts, Cajun waltz and two-step dance contests and children's activities.

Admission is \$8 per person. Children under 12 get in free. The festival starts at 4 p.m. July 19 and 9 a.m. July 20. The festival ends at 11 p.m. each night.

For more information visit <http://cfmalakecharles.com>.

### • Arts & Crabs

Check out the Arts & Crabs Festival that highlights the ties between Louisiana's seafood and culture Aug. 17 at Burton Coliseum, 7001 Gulf Hwy., Lake Charles. Attendees sample from an extensive tasting featuring the best local chefs, each preparing a unique seafood dish representative of their cuisine's styles. Ticket price to be announced.

For more information visit [www.artscouncilswla.org](http://www.artscouncilswla.org).

Civic Center Coliseum, 900 Lakeshore Drive, Lake Charles. Doors open at 6 p.m. and the concert begins at 7 p.m.

For more information visit [www.lcsymphony.com](http://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](http://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

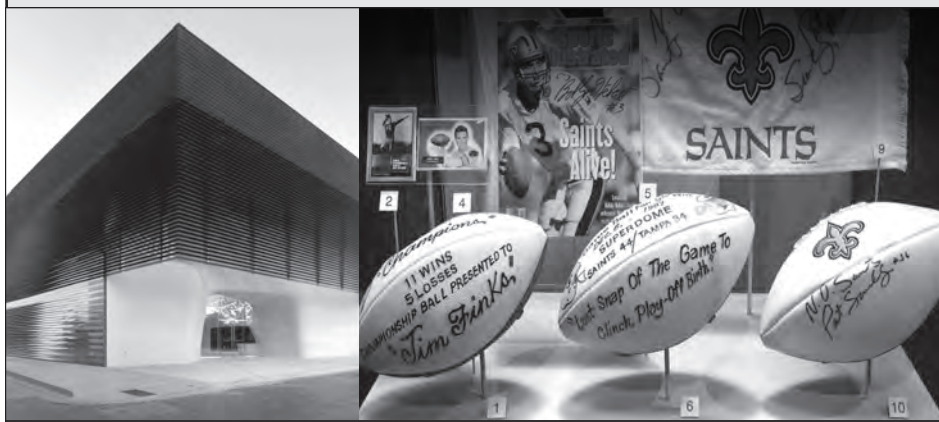
The Fort Polk Toastmasters Club, called Speak and Grow Toastmasters, meets the first and third Wednesday of the month at the Education Center, room 208 from noon-1 p.m. The next meeting is July 3. For more information call (337) 208-8557.

## Miscellaneous

### • Summer pops

The Lake Charles Symphony opens its 62nd season with 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



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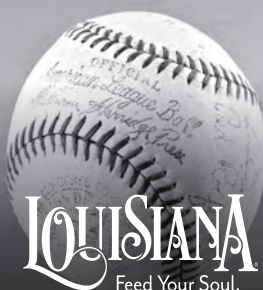
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