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New barracks enhances Soldiers' quality of life

By ANGIE THORNE Public Affairs Office

FORT POLK, La. — A ribbon cutting took place Nov. 17 in front of the newly completed 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division barracks, building 2277, at Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk.

The barracks renovation project is a Fort Polk quality of life initiative aimed at improving facilities across the installation.

The contract was awarded to Sauer Inc. in 2018 as a design build project by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Brig. Gen. David W. Gardner, JRTC and Fort Polk commanding general, was the key note speaker for the ceremony.

Gardner's top priorities are taking care of people and building readiness.

"Those two things can't be done without the other. We can't build readiness without taking care of people. We are continuing to work on the quality of life at JRTC and Fort Polk for our people and Families so they can excel at their jobs, build successful careers and lives in the Army, thereby increasing our ability to fight and win on tomorrow's battlefield," Gardner said.

Over the last 10 years JRTC and Fort Polk began a \$500 million dollar project to restore 34 barracks. There are 26 completed. This is the 27th, and the final seven are



Fort Polk leadership and representatives of the Directorate of Public Works, Sauer Inc. and more gather to cut the ribbon in front of the new 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division barracks Nov. 17.

scheduled to be completed over the next few months.

"It's a good day when we open a barracks. Cutting this ribbon gives our Soldiers a great place to live," Gardner said. "These types of projects matter and make a difference in our Soldiers lives and are among the top priorities on this installation. This is where the rubber meets the road when we say Fort Polk is a quality of life installation. What we are doing here and within the Army to modernize our facilities and improve the quality of life for our Soldiers proves that."

The barracks was a \$17 million dollar renovation project. It consisted of raising the ceilings, improving the lighting and converting existing two-bedroom areas to larger one-bedroom suites.

Other improvements included removing and replacing the roof,

new exterior walls, windows, fire protection systems, interior walls, doors, insulation, interior finishes, floors, ceilings, plumbing and more.

"The new furniture is going in, and soon we will have Soldiers moving into these barracks," Gardner said.

Brandon Furlow, Fort Polk Directorate of Public Works engineer and project manager, said the barracks project was a complete renovation down to the concrete masonry unit walls.

"The magnitude of the project and sheer work that went into gutting the barracks was tough, but it was worth it. We built it back while improving the finished product," Furlow said.

The construction on the barracks project took roughly two years.

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JRTC and Fort Polk Brig. Gen. David W. Gardner Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk

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Cover photo: Retired Lt. Col. Mark S. Leslie, Fort Polk Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security director, and Col. Lee C. Freeman, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk deputy commander, place the wreath at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk Veterans Day Ceremony held Nov. 10. (Photo by Angie Thorne)

Army Family Action Plan conference completes mission

By ANGIE THORNE Public Affairs Office

FORT POLK, La. — Fort Polk's Army Community Service hosted its Army Family Action Plan conference at the Warrior Center Nov. 15-16.

AFAP is the voice of the customer. It's a way for Soldiers, Family members, survivors, retirees and Department of the Army civilian employees to communicate with Army leadership about what works, what doesn't and what they think will resolve the issues they have observed.

Delegates discussed and worked on not only fine-tuning the issues, but also possible solutions before presenting them to Fort Polk leadership at the conclusion of the two-day event.

Lucianne Buch, ACS mobilization, deployment and stability support operations program manager, was the lead on the conference.

"The delegates at this year's AFAP Conference were challenged by a lot of great issues that were submitted by the Fort Polk community. They really dug in, worked hard and came up with some great recommendations for improvements, not only to the installation but to big Army as well," Buch said. "I'm really very proud of what they accomplished."

A few issues discussed are listed below:

• **Issue:** Lack of knowledge of access to public computers for service members

Scope: Service members are unable to print personal documents and are limited to two areas on post to use public computers. Unit command teams are not referring service members to appropriate locations/agencies to facilitate the needs of units.

Recommendation: Unit leadership needs to provide time for service members to print necessary documents within their unit footprint. Education of additional locations/agencies where service members can utilize public computers on Fort Polk. The information can be briefed during in-processing.



Master Sgt. Charles Raines, 1st Battalion, 5th Aviation Regiment, was a delegate at the Army Family Action Plan conference held Nov. 15-16. Raines explained one of the issues submitted to the AFAP conference to Fort Polk command Nov. 16.

• **Issue:** Safety concerns of post housing area streets

Scope: Residents park their vehicles and leave trash cans on sidewalks, causing safety hazards. Children and pedestrians must walk in the street due to obstructions.

Recommendation: Implement a policy to enforce trash can removal within a timely manner or pay a fine. Implement a policy regarding vehicle limitations by using parking pass registration of owner vehicles per household.

• **Issue:** Immigration challenges for service members and dependents

Scope: Upon enlistment, service members should be identified if they need immigration services. Paperwork should be processed/ tracked in a timely manner. Current policy is outdated to meet the needs of Soldiers and Family members.

Recommendation: Immigration applications should be initiated at the beginning of advanced individual training and only processed upon successful completion of AIT. A

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tracking system/database should be developed and implemented to ensue packets are fully processed at the new installation Staff Judge Advocate and the unit should have access to this database to ensure completion of citizenship requirements are completed in a timely manners.

Every installation should be required to have an immigration attorney on staff and a subject matter expert to assist Soldiers and Family members with immigration challenges. Brigade/battalion level command teams should assign a SME as an immigration point of contact to assist with any challenges that occur during this process.

The first two issues are listed as installation issues, which means Fort Polk leadership will look into the issues at the local level. The last issue is an Army issue that is applicable beyond the local level. These issues are sent to Installation Management Command and Head-

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New

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"I believe it was awarded in 2018, but COVID-19 pushed it back," Furlow said. Furlow said he is proud to work at Fort Polk.

"These kinds of projects are why I work at Fort Polk. I want to help Soldiers and their Families improve their quality of life. Helping provide them with top-of-the-line, high-quality living quarters is what it's all about," Furlow said.

In closing, Gardner thanked all who helped make the barracks a reality.



Fort Polk ceremony focuses on thanking valiant veterans

By ANGIE THORNE Public Affairs Office

FORT POLK, La. — There were 2,395,993 military personnel in the five branches of the armed forces in 2020. The U.S. population at the time was 329.5 million. That means the percentage of the population serving in the military was 0.727 percent, according to <u>www.</u> thesoldiersproject.org.

That's a lot of numbers that mean those who choose to serve in the military are comparatively few, which is why Veterans Day is so significant. It's the one day set aside to observe, remember and appreciate those who have and are serving the nation through Family sacrifices, injury, illness, training, deployments and more.

The Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk Veterans Day Ceremony took place Nov. 10 at the 1st Battalion, 5th Aviation Regiment hangar.

Retired Lt. Col. Mark S. Leslie, Fort Polk Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security director, spoke at the event and told the audience that his heroes aren't doctors, athletes or actors, but his fellow veterans.

"I saw them do incredible things at great personal risk, not for money or fame, but for all of us," Leslie said.

Veterans day is about the living veteran and those that he or she served with, Leslie said.

"Veterans have a bond forged through shared hardship and sacrifice. There is no greater feeling than to be part of something larger than oneself. It defines military service and the meaning of Veterans Day," Leslie said. "So when you think about the sacrifices that veterans have made, the loss they may have experienced and the things they may have had to endure, say thank you with love, humility, gratitude and understanding," Leslie said.

Part of that appreciation means not forgetting active-duty service members. "These Soldiers continue to stand ready in harm's way so that others may have a chance to find freedom, peace and happiness," Leslie said. "Thank you for what you do every day and the sacrifices you continue to make. You do so with honor, courage and competence," Leslie said.

The keynote speaker at the ceremony was Col. Lee C. Freeman, JRTC and Fort Polk deputy commander.

Freeman shared some of the history of Veterans Day.

On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918, World War I ended. Due to the conclusion of "the war to end all wars," Nov. 11 became a universally recognized day of celebration. Eight years after the end of World War I, the day was declared Armistice Day and honored only the veterans of that war.

"In 1954, after World War II and the Korean War, it was renamed Veterans Day to honor all



Col. Lee C. Freeman, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk deputy commander, was the key note speaker at the

JRTC and Fort Polk Veterans Day ceremony held Nov. 10 at the 1st Battalion, 5th Aviation Regiment hangar.

veterans who unselfishly placed their lives on the line for our freedom," Freeman said.

Freeman said the 19 million veterans alive today are service members who never thought of themselves as brave or special, instead believing they're just doing their jobs.

"Military duty demands a special kind of sacrifice. For the time you spend in uniform, the interests of the nation must always come first," Freeman said.

The efforts of veterans have protected the citizens of the United States and maintained freedom.

"They have liberated hundreds of thousands of people from tyranny across multiple continents and in different generations. The veterans of the United States military have not only fought wars, but they also deserve our gratitude for preventing them," Freeman said. "There is no mystery behind the endurance and the success of American liberty. It is because in every generation has had brave Americans step forward and serve honorably in the Armed Forces of the United States. Every one of them deserves the thanks and the admiration of our entire country," Freeman said.

Roughly one percent of the population serves in the military.

"Consider the impact those individuals have had on the world, defending freedom and protecting democracy. Generations of patriots have dedicated themselves to the defense of our country to make us stronger and more resilient as a nation," Freeman said. "Thank you

for your service and sacrifice. I share the pride you feel in being able to count yourselves among that one percent — the greatest military in the world."

Cadet Pvt. Mila Black, a member of the Leesville High School Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps, and her fellow cadets handed out programs at the ceremony. As a possible future member of that one percent who serve, she said it was amazing to see those who have and are serving the country at the event.

"It's important to honor them and their service," Black said.

Veterans can be humble and sometimes it might be hard for them to accept thanks.

After serving for 26 years in the U.S. Army, retired Command Sgt. Maj. Matthew J. West, JRTC and Fort Polk G3 chief of operations, said he used to feel awkward when people said, "Thank you for your service."

"However, while working through and with amazing veteran service organizations, I have come up with a reply and give the appreciation right back by saying 'Thank you for your support,'" West said.

West attended the Fort Polk Veterans Day observance.

"In my life every day is Veterans Day. However, I do appreciate being honored, as I too try to honor all that served this nation," West said.

Regardless of the military branch in which the veterans have served — Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines or Coast Guard — this day belongs to all of them.

Polk continues Army mandate to improve barracks life

By CHUCK CANNON Public Affairs Office

FORT POLK, La. — In late 2019 the Army selected three installations for quality of life assessments to determine how it could improve services and increase the readiness and morale of Soldiers and their Families. They included Fort Polk, Fort Irwin, California, and Fort Wainwright, Alaska. In 2020, a fourth installation, Fort Hood, Texas, was added.

One of the areas targeted for revitalization and renovation was barracks. At Fort Polk, eight large-scale renovation efforts are nearing completion in the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division footprint.

Construction was completed on the first rennovated barracks Nov. 17. The Directorate of Public Works aims to have the other seven barracks completed by early spring.

"Recognizing that our Soldiers, civilians and Families should have the best quality of life possible, the Army is reviewing the full range of its care, support and enrichment programs, with an initial focus upon housing and barracks," said Col. Sam Smith, commander, U.S. Army Garrison Fort Polk. "Work on the project began in the fall of 2020 to improve housing conditions for Soldiers."

The barracks renovation includes site and drainage improvements. The barracks is designed and constructed to house one soldier per room. The renovations will raise ceilings, improve lighting, and convert existing two-bedroom areas into larger one-bedroom suites.

Barracks and quality of life are among the top priorities for the installation. To that end, the Army instructed senior leaders at every installation to conduct walk-through inspections of property at their sites to identify requirements for the annual Facility Investment Plan wargame in San Antonio in January 2023.

Barracks are a subset of the overall real property assessments to ensure planners, as part of the scheduled annual FIP process, have the most up-to-date information on all infrastructure to validate and prioritize requirements during the FIP wargame -- from barracks and office buildings to motor pools and quality of life facilities such as child development centers.

Fort Polk Garrison Command Sgt. Maj. Stephen Nielson said the quality of Soldier barracks is an important component of the Army's people priority and the walk-throughs will emphasize barracks as key to the overall infrastructure with Army leaders physically inspecting all barracks rooms, focusing on mold, and assessing any other health, safety or functionality issues that require immediate correction.

"We want to ensure healthy environments for Soldiers and will immediately take action on any issues that are adversely affecting Soldier



readiness, resilience and quality of life," Nielson said.

Betty Beinkemper, Fort Polk Housing Assistance Office chief, said the 100 percent room inspections are all-inclusive.

"We'll look at structural conditions of walls, ceilings and doors; infrastructure assessments like electrical and plumbing; as well as environmental issues such as temperature, insects/ pests, and mold/mildew," Beinkemper said. "In addition, we will speak with the Soldiers in the barracks to address any concerns."

During the inspections, the use of the Army Maintenance Application (ArMA) to submit work orders for immediate response any time a hazard is found within installation infrastructure will be stressed.

"It's very user friendly for Soldiers and it's the quickest way to get a work order put in for a problem," Neilson said. "Of course, if it's a major problem, we'll get on that immediately." In addition to the 100 percent inspection of all property on an installation, Fort Polk conducts monthly "tiger team" inspections of barracks, where each room in a particular barracks is looked at and its occupants interviewed to isolate any problems.

"This let's us know if there are particular problems that might be occurring across the board, and let's us address them in a timely manner," Neilson said.

Funds have been approved to begin construction on three new barracks after the renovation efforts on the eight current barracks are complete, which would give the installation enough barracks space to provide every single Soldier with a private room.

"Fort Polk has received \$180 million for barracks improvements or construction," Beinkemper said. "We want to make sure our Soldiers are well cared for and have the quality of life they deserve."

Ribbon cutting makes Toledo Bend accessible to public

By Spc. KELLY ACEVEDO Public Affairs Office

FORT POLK, La. — The Toledo Bend Army Recreation Center has been a pillar for Soldiers and military families of Fort Polk for years.

The recreation site has been a place for events that built friendships, introduced fishing to those foreign to the hobby and brought a community together through kayaking and boating. Beginning Nov. 18, the site will be open to the public.

A ribbon cutting ceremony was held to commence the beginning of a new chapter for the site. Fort Polk garrison commander Col. Sam Smith thanked and recognized community representatives, legislators, Directorate of Public Works, Directorate of Emergency Services staff and the Toledo Bend employees for their hard work and coordination.

"Thank you for helping us achieve our goal, which we have tried to do for a long time to create and enhance relations," said Smith.

Known for support and leisure services, the Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation program is one of many to use Toledo Bend as a place for fun events.

Jonathan Cole, director of Fort Polk's FMWR, was pleased about the site extending its estate to the public.

"Toledo Bend has been a hidden gem in our region for decades. As we strive to continuously foster community relations, United States Army Garrison Fort Polk felt it would be a neighborly gesture to extend the use of our fantastic recreational area to the public," said Cole.

A monthly event hosted by FMWR is the bass tournament. The public is welcome to compete in the tournament held on the first Saturday of the month. A \$40 dollar entry fee is required per boat as well as a \$5 fee per person for a big bass. The winner will receive 80 percent of the total entry fees collected.

New visitors seeking for a place to host their own events can use the outdoor pavilion,



which accommodates 200 people, or the meeting room that houses up to 100 people.

Guests can check out the new welcome center on their way in from the gate. Inside they will find an indoor café that serves pizzas, sandwiches, wings and drinks. In case any supplies are forgotten, the Toledo Bend General Store can be found down the road. Lake attire, fishing supplies, ice, beer, sodas, snacks and charcoal can be found inside.

The cozy cabins and outdoorsy yurts are available to rent. The cabins sleep up to five people and have air conditioning, ceiling fans, full baths and well-resourced kitchens. Each cabin has a grill and fire pit to use. The yurts have a small grill that can be placed on top of a fire pit.

The recreation site provides an opportunity for people to safely operate all types of motor-

ized watercraft on the marina. The process is easy for anyone and everyone. An online boating safety course is available. Proof of completion of the course must be present prior to attending a lake orientation.

"The largest man-made body of water partially in both Louisiana and Texas, the largest in the South, and the fifth largest by surface acreage in the United States. The Reservoir offers an unlimited opportunity for year-round recreation. The U.S. Army Recreation Park available for swimming, boating, picnicking, fishing, camping, play areas, and sightseeing," as stated on the website.

There is nothing better than when a community comes together and bonds through well-rounded activities or hobbies. When looking for where to go or what to do to for fun, consider Toledo bend as the place to visit next.

AFAP

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quarters, Department of the Army for further consideration.

Spc. Jheanelle Faulkner, 46th Engineer Battalion, was a delegate at the conference. The immigration issue was near to her heart having immigrated herself.

"Not a lot of people understand what a person goes through when it comes to immigration, but I feel like I helped educate some people about the topic and everyone's feedback was encouraging," Faulkner said. "The issue is

vital, but then all the issues we discussed were important."

Brig. Gen. David W. Gardner, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk commanding general, said some of the issues presented at the conference were already being worked on.

"But they were great suggestions that validate we are moving in the right direction," Gardner said. "I appreciate you guys bringing these issues forward because we want to know where you stand. Keep letting us know what issues are important to you."

Gardner said, overall, he thinks there are some great things happening at Fort Polk.

"But if you have an issue, don't wait for the next AFAP conference. Tell us," Gardner said.

Though this year's conference has concluded, AFAP issues may be submitted year round to Fort Polk's ACS or online via the issue management system at <u>https://ims.armyfamilywebportal.com/</u>.



EACH FOOTLOCKER CONTAINS RELEASE 3 FEATURES FOR ACCESS:

R3 LEADERS- All Managers https://www.youtube.com/watch ?v=_LuHmhdkjaY HR PRO- Unit S1/DA Civilians https://ipps-a.army.mil/ SELF SERVICE- All Soldiers https://ipps-a.army.mil/ IPPS-A Release 3 TAKEAWAYS: Mark your calendars for BROWNOUT, **10 November 2022**

HR PROs- Start making final preparations by completing any outstanding PRRs, SGLV/DD93s, and ensure 100% accountability of personnel. Ensure your unit is using analog tracker provided by G1

CONTACT YOUR JRTC & FORT POLK G1 FOR MORE INFORMATION: USARMY-FT-POLK-G1@army.mil G1 will provide Over The Shoulder Support to Unit S1s pre & post Go-LIVE

Pay attention to pediatricians, parents about potentially dangerous virus

By Spc. KELLY ACEVEDO Public Affairs Office

FORT POLK, La. — Fall is here. With the season comes fun holiday festivities and delicious comfort foods. There are so many reasons to gather and celebrate. However, that doesn't mean things are all sunshine and falling leaves. One of the dangers that comes with the change of season and cooling temperatures is a slew of dangerous illnesses such as respiratory syncytial virus.

RSV is a common respiratory infection that causes mild flu-like symptoms in the fall, winter and spring. Although the virus may not appear as a serious threat, that's not the case when it comes to children under two years of age. The Fort Polk community has gathered to share safety and prevention measures for those dealing with RSV or seeking guidance to prevent the risk of infection.

Capt. Michael Zimmerman, a pediatrician at Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital, shared preventative measures and remedies with the community to help parents and guardians prepare for the season. "Good hand washing is the mainstay of prevention. Teach children to cover their mouth when coughing or sneezing. Avoid sharing drinking glasses or other objects and stay away from sick individuals as able," said Zimmerman.

Unfortunately, there is no medication or cure for RSV. However, at home remedies can help. For instance, hydration, vitamins and staying up to date with vaccines may make a difference. Children diagnosed should recover at home, away from other kids. "Antibiotics are not able to treat viral illnesses. Our immune system must fight off the infection, but supportive care measures can help manage the symptoms and make children more comfortable," said Zimmerman.

Humidifiers are helpful for anyone with RSV. They add moisture to the air which helps children breathe easier. Nasal saline spray and suctions are great for breaking down thick secretion and removing mucus for children that are not able to blow their nose.

Different factors determine how children recover. For example, a child two years of age may recover faster than an infant born with health issues. "Treatments depend on the age of the patient, but they generally include Tylenol for fever or Ibuprofen if over 6 months old. Hydration should be closely monitored. Maintaining normal wet diapers is the best sign they are hydrated," said Zimmerman.

Through experience, Sgt. Mathew Sheppard, a watch officer with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, United States Army Garrison, has learned the do's and don'ts regarding RSV. His son Samuel Jeremiah, known as SJ, was diagnosed with RSV. As scary as the time was, Sheppard learned a lot as a father



and about the severity of contracting RSV.

SJ was diagnosed with RSV when he was two months old. He was born premature and spent two weeks in the neonatal intensive care unit. While at the NICU, SJ was diagnosed with failure to thrive and newborn jaundice. Although most kids diagnosed with RSV are under the age of two, children born with health issues may have a challenging time with recovery, like SJ. However, children can still live normal healthy lives after RSV.

It is difficult to distinguish RSV with other illnesses, even allergies. Sheppard believed his son's symptoms were due to seasonal allergies since he and his wife were experiencing similar symptoms.

Many don't know the difference in illnesses since symptoms like coughing, sneezing, congestion, etc., can be anything. However, observing the breathing pattern of a child can help determine whether a visit to the doctor is urgent.

Sheppard and his wife took SJ to the emergency room to be examined. While there, SJ was diagnosed with RSV and was admitted. Sheppard and his wife took shifts staying with SJ. While at home, Sheppard's wife called him and said SJ wasn't breathing. "For her it was extremely terrifying. I felt horrible," Sheppard said.

His advice to parents is to take the illness seriously and take action. "Don't be afraid to

see a doctor. I know parents feel apprehensive about taking their kids to see a doctor because they don't want to be seen as those parents that go to the E.R. for everything. I'd rather take him to the E.R. seven days a week and know he's okay than not go one day and see him on oxygen again," Sheppard said.

Sheppard wondered if SJ may have contracted RSV through meeting family members who kissed him on the face. Parents may not always feel comfortable asking family to not kiss their newborns, but some discomfort could be all it takes to protect your kids.

He recommended routinely cleaning surfaces and toys, rescheduling play dates with kids who are noticeably ill and making handwashing fun.

"We got SJ soap that looks like paint so when he washes his hands he also plays. He loves doing it. When we get home he asks to wash his hands. We'll sing 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star' twice for time. We give him fruits and veggies to boost his immune system plus lots of vitamins," Sheppard said.

For parents returning to work after having their little ones, it's suggested to look at many daycares to ensure employees facilitate the needs of a child. The childcare services on Fort Polk do their best to fight against illnesses among children. However, it is expected children will become ill when around other chil-



Join the Patient and Family Partnership Council (PFPC)

How can you help the council?

When you or your family member visited our one of our clinics, did you think there were things we could have done better? Do you have specific suggestions that would improve patients' experiences?

Do you have ideas about the kind of information that would be helpful to receive prior to a hospital visit?

If you are interested in joining or for more information:

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Usarmy.polk.medcom-bjach.list.patient-advocate@health.mil.

(POC: BJACH Patient Advocate 531-3880/531-3628)

We Work Best When We Work Together!

Virus

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dren since they are still learning basic skills.

Angela Magee, a nurse consultant with child youth services, assured parents there are sanitary measures taken by all the child daycares on post. "Facilities are cleaned daily by contractor services. Throughout the day, the staff continuously cleans, sanitizes and disinfects. These measures are identified in IMCOM 608-10-1 and TBMED 521. There's a closing checklist which identifies specific cleaning procedures to ensure rooms are ready for care the following morning," Magee said.

When asked if there are preventative measures against RSV and other illnesses, Magee shared the protocols followed by faculty. "The staff conducts daily health screenings on each child for signs of illness such as drainage from eyes, vomiting, diarrhea and complaints of feeling sick or in pain. Temperature is not routinely taken unless the child appears sick. If a fever is detected, then dismissal from daycare is required. Children and staff wash their hands with soap and water when they enter the room, before and after eating, after the restroom, after diaper changes, before and after participating in any activities and when they come in contact with bodily fluids such as sneezing or coughing on their hands," Magee said.

For parents wondering how the child development centers handle a situation where a child meets the criteria for dismissal, Magee clarified the staff does not diagnose.

Parents are contacted immediately to pick

up their child and have them evaluated by a physician.

Depending on the circumstances, a note from a physician to return to daycare may be required. Also, when a child is hospitalized, a note to return to daycare is required. An exposure notice is posted on classroom doors for other parents to be aware of possible exposure within the facility.

No one wants to see their loved ones go through a difficult time due to RSV. Remember, this illness can be prevented. It is important for everyone to do their part to keep children and everyone around them safe.

By no means should anyone delay seeing a doctor when experiencing serious symptoms or health issues.

FOR SERVICE MEMBERS

ARE YOU AN ACTIVE DUTY OR GUARD/RESERVE MEMBER? YOU'RE REQUIRED TO GET THE FLU VACCINE.

3 OPTIONS FOR GETTING THE FLU VACCINE

ALWAYS CALL AHEAD TO MAKE SURE THE FLU VACCINE IS AVAILABLE

MILITARY HOSPITAL OR CLINIC

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HOICE

- You have priority at military hospitals and clinics.
- Call to make sure it is available.

PARTICIPATING NETWORK PHARMACY

- You can also get vaccines at participating retail network pharmacies. Not all network pharmacies participate in giving vaccines. Call ahead to confirm.
- Be sure to get your vaccine from the pharmacist, not from a health provider in a pharmacy clinic, to avoid possible out-of-pocket costs.
- If you go to a participating network pharmacy, you won't have any cost-shares or copayments if the flu vaccine is administered by a pharmacist. You can also go to a TRICARE-authorized provider at a participating network onsite clinic.

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TRICARE-AUTHORIZED PROVIDER

- If seeing a provider other than your Primary Care manager (PCM), you must have a referral from your PCM.
- In addition, you may have to pay copayments or cost-shares for the office visit.

AVOID HAVING TO GET THE SHOT TWICE! SAVE YOUR RECEIPT.

FOR YOUR RECORDS

WHEN YOU GET A FLU VACCINE FROM A PARTICIPATING NETWORK PHARMACY OR A TRICARE-AUTHORIZED PROVIDER, FOLLOW YOUR SERVICE POLICY GUIDANCE FOR RECORDING THE VACCINE IN YOUR SHOT RECORD. YOU'LL NEED THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

- THE DATE THE VACCINE WAS GIVEN
- THE VACCINE NAME OR CODE

- MANUFACTURER
- LOT NUMBER



TRICARE.mil/flu

Maple Terrace Housing Town Hall



A Housing Town Hall was held Nov. 15 in the Maple Terrace neighborhood. Installation leadership, housing officials and unit and organization representatives were able to talk to residents as they shared their housing concerns and asked questions. The town hall is a way for Fort Polk leadership and the community to maintain a positive connection through open communication.





www.denix.osd.mil/uxo

Save a Life PREVENT SUICIDE

Suicide is a public health crisis, accounting for one death every 11 minutes, and nearly 46,000 deaths in 2020. You can save a life and contribute to a healthier community by being aware of the warning signs of suicide in colleagues, friends, and loved ones, as well as by supporting others in seeking mental health treatment.

Possible Warning Signs of Suicide

- Talking about feelings of hopelessness, or lack of desire to live
- Increased usage of alcohol or drugs
- Withdrawal from activity or isolation
- Extreme mood swings
- Speaking of a desire to die or hurt themselves
- Impulsive or reckless behavior
- Depression, or being in a constant state of anxiety or worry
- Saying goodbye to loved ones
- Giving away possessions
- Self harm/injury

Helpful Resources

- <u>Preventing Suicide: A Technical</u> <u>Package of Policy, Programs</u> <u>and Practices</u>
- <u>988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline</u>
- <u>The American Foundation for</u> <u>Suicide Prevention</u>
- <u>The National Institute of Mental</u> <u>Health</u>



Ways to Help Others

- Ask others how they are feeling or if they are contemplating suicide
- Encourage colleagues to seek professional help and utilize their agency <u>Employee Assistance</u> <u>Program</u>
- Provide a system of support to let others know they are not alone
- Stay connected and check in regularly
- Provide a listening ear



U.S. Office of Personnel Management Contact us at <u>worklife@opm.gov</u>

Medical Readiness commander focuses on readiness during Fort Polk tour

By JEAN CLAVETTE GRAVES BJACH PAO

FORT POLK, La. — Brig. Gen. E. Darrin Cox, commanding general, Medical Readiness Command, West, paid a visit to Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital Nov. 3 and engaged with post and medical leaders at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk.

Cox, a certified general and thoracic surgeon, took command of MRCW June 23 and this was his first visit to the installation.

BJACH planned a full day of activities for Cox that included briefings, an office call with Brig. Gen. David W. Gardner, JRTC commanding general, leadership development sessions and more.

Col. Aristotle Vaseliades, BJACH commander, provided Cox with an overview of the organization's mission and vision, on- and off-post medical capabilities, positive relationships with National Guard, Reserve units and local recruiting offices and readiness.

Cox attended the BJACH morning ready, reliable care leadership huddle and addressed department heads.

"I think meetings like this are critically important to get a common operating picture," Cox said. "This one compared to others I've attended functions quite well with the right people in the room providing the right information."

The RRC meeting is designed to illustrate leadership commitment at all levels while developing a culture of safety that advances innovated patient center improvements within the organization.

"I appreciate how you are building readiness by taking care of patients in the worldclass manner that you do," Cox said.

During his meeting with Gardner, the two leaders discussed Army Best Medic planning.

"The BJACH team has done a phenomenal job and has the full support of the installation for the upcoming Army Best Medic competition," Gardner said. "As the Army's premier combat training center, I have no doubt this competition will be world-class."

Cox thanked Gardner and said he looked forward to returning in January to see the MRCW team win the competition.

"I appreciate BJACH and the Joint Readiness Center for hosting the Army Best Medic competition at Fort Polk," he said. "It is a great way to highlight the excellence of this organization and the installation."

Gardner, who first met Cox during a Winning the Fight for Talent trip to San Antonio in October, said health care is an important factor when Soldiers decide to come to Fort Polk.

"We very much appreciate the continued dialogue on how to care for our families at Fort Polk, especially those in the Exceptional Family Member Program," he said. Col. Aristotle Vaseliades, Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital commander, left, discuses organizational capabilities and challenges with Brig. Gen. E. Darrin Cox, commanding general, Medical Readiness Command, West, Nov. 3 during a visit to the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk.

R: 0





Brig. Gen. E. Darrin Cox, commanding general, Medical Readiness Command, West, (left) and Sgt. Andres Perez, operating room specialist from Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital look out the door of a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter during an orientation flight over the training areas at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk Nov. 3.

Cox toured the hospital's main campus, Soldier Centered Medical Home, embedded behavioral health clinic, Chesser Dental Clinic and had an aerial orientation of the Fullerton, Peason and Kurthwood training areas.

Cox said he was particularly impressed by the cooperation between the hospital and 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division. "The amount of synergy and teamwork between our two teams is phenomenal," he said.

As the commanding general of MRCW, Cox said his focus and priority is on readiness.

"With our pivot toward readiness, developing the correct way and correct type of metrics to measure our readiness is imperative to ensure we are building ready medical forces," he said.

BJACH exercise forges ready medical forces at JRTC

By JEAN CLAVETTE GRAVES BJACH PAO

FORT POLK, La. — Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital conducted the bi-annual Forge Training Exercise Oct. 27-29 at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk.

This was the third FTX conducted since Col. Aristotle Vaseliades took command of BJACH in June 2021.

Vaseliades said while Soldiers can use the hospital as a training platform to hone their medical skills daily, the FTX adds another element.

"We utilize the Forge events to put Soldiers in austere environments that are more like what they would face in a war time scenario," he said. "It's imperative for Soldiers to be able to perform their war time mission under any conditions in order to support Army requirements."

The mission of BJACH is to maintain a medically ready and ready medical force by providing training and support to JRTC and Fort Polk, and all beneficiaries through a responsive force focused on enhanced readiness, force health protection and providing health service support.

"Medically ready means we are physically ready to deploy if needed. Soldiers have completed their personal medical readiness (health assessments, immunizations, and hearing tests)," he said. "A ready medical force is one that is trained and proficient in their respective military occupational specialty or area of concentration critical tasks. These are the things they are expected to perform in a war time environment. It also implies that Soldiers can survive on the battlefield and execute basic Soldier skills."

For this FTX, the focus was on Army Warrior Tasks.

"If a medical Soldier cannot first survive on the battlefield, they won't be able to treat a casualty and perform their medical mission," Vaseliades said.

Sgt. 1st Class Brady Kornelis, noncommissioned officer in charge of the BJACH Emergency Department was instrumental in the coordination and execution of the Forge.

"My biggest challenge in coordinating this event was predicting and having contingencies in place for bad weather," Kornelis said. "For the next event I will establish a stricter timeline for getting supplies, personnel and tasks locked in."

The event was planned as a competition.

"The competition encompassed all Soldiers broken down into 13 squads. They were tested against 13 Army Warrior Tasks, land navigation and a rucksack inspection to verify if they followed the packing list," he said. "Each activity was worth 100 points, for a total of 1500 points for the whole competition, but I cannot Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital conducted the Forge Training Exercise Oct. 27-29 at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk. The event was planned as a competition focusing on Army Warrior Tasks.



reveal the winners yet."

Kornelis said the event not only tested skills but built esprit-de-corps.

"The squads were broken down by rank and where individuals worked," he said. "The Forge had personnel from the hospital, the veterinary and both dental clinics participating. The squads were split up to encourage everyone to get out and meet other Soldiers who they may have not worked with before. To me this was the most valuable aspect of the training."

Capt. Aaron Judson, chief of Louisiana Branch Veterinary Services attended the BJACH Forge.

"I thought it was a well planned and executed event," he said. "It was valuable training and I look forward to participating in the future."

Judson said as a veterinarian it's important to get out and do field training exercises.

"It is important for all medical personnel to be more proficient in our Army Warrior Tasks," he said. "It is also important to familiarize ourselves with performing our normal medical tasks in combat situations with our fellow medical providers and the medical community."

Judson said the Army Warrior Task lanes was his favorite part of the FTX.

Command Sgt. Maj. Shavonda Devereaux, mo

senior enlisted advisor for BJACH, said the event was well received by all.

"The professionalism and high standards set forth by Sgt. 1st Class Kornelis, NCOIC, and Capt. Kelvin Cook, officer in charge, were the reason for the success of the BJACH Forge," she said. "The relevance and realism that was inserted into this exercise ensured our Soldiers left with an optimal training experience."

Devereaux said Kornelis is a true professional.

"He understood the commander's intent and executed training based on regulatory guidance and principles," she said. "As an NCO and trainer of Soldiers, he clearly organized, resourced and executed this event above and beyond the standard."

Devereaux said she is proud of her Soldiers.

"Our Soldiers love to train, especially outside of the hospital," she said. "I heard nothing but positive feedback from every Soldier I spoke to. Our Soldiers truly understand that U.S. Army Medical Command is a premier organization that is relevant and responsive. These Soldiers are unique in the sense that they all possess skills that save lives. Practicing those skills in a training environment outside of the fixed facility is paramount to bringing the warfighters home."

Devereaux said her Soldiers train to shoot, move, medicate and survive on the battlefield.



BJACH RAD Tech earns nationally recognized certification

By JEAN CLAVETTE GRAVES BJACH PAO

FORT POLK, La. — Sgt. Darrell Antonetty-Torres, radiology specialist at Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital, passed the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists examination and earned his radiologic technician credentials Oct. 7 in Shreveport, Louisiana.

According to <u>www.arrt.org</u>, the ARRT is the world's largest organization offering credentials in medical imaging, interventional procedures, and radiation therapy. The organization certifies and registers technologists in a variety of disciplines through the oversight and administration of education, ethics, and examination requirements.

Antonetty and two other radiology specialists from BJACH made the decision to pursue the registry in May.

"In the civilian world, as soon as you complete your degree you can challenge the registry," Antonetty said. "For me, I was still four college courses short of my associate degree upon completion of my advanced individual training. Once I finished my associate degree I was eligible to take the exam."

The ARRT requires registry applicants to have an associate degree or higher from a regionally accredited college or university along with the successful completion of an educational program that demonstrates competencies in didactic coursework and clinical procedures.

According to their website, the ARRT recognizes education through the U.S. military in radiography and nuclear medicine offered at the Medical Education and Training Campus, Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

Antonetty said earning his credentials and acceptance on the registry was his goal since he started AIT.

"Earning the ARRT credentials is not a requirement for me while I'm on active duty. However, it is recognized by civilian hospitals," he said. "Being listed on the registry will help me pursue a civilian career in radiology when I leave the military." Antonetty joined the Army for a sense of purpose.

"I tried a semester of college immediately after high school, but it wasn't for me," he said. "I didn't really know what I wanted to do, and it didn't make sense to take college courses with no clearly defined goals. My dad was in Army, and I wanted to be like him, so I decided to join."

Antonetty said the Army was an easy choice because he was familiar with it growing up as a military child.

"I didn't have any prior experience with X-ray specifically when I decided to enlist," he said. "But my family is either Army or medical. My mom is a phlebotomist, my stepmom is an emergency room nurse and my aunt is a pharmacist, so I was knew I wanted to be in the medical field."

Antonetty's dad helped him decide which military occupational specialty to pursue by discussing the options with him.

Antonetty attended METC in San Antonio, Texas, for the didactic portion of his training.

"I chose radiology because it seemed interesting to me," he said. "Between basic training and AIT, I spent more than a year in school preparing for my job. During AIT, we had six months of classroom training followed by six more months of on-the-job training. I did my clinical rotation at William Beaumont Army Medical Center, Fort Bliss, Texas."

According to Lisa Braun, METC Public Affairs Officer, upon completing the program, Army Radiology Specialists only require two additional classes (oral and written communication) to earn an associate degree. The degree is not automatic and is conferred at established times throughout the year.

"We have a degree bridge program that allows students to earn college credit for their training and work experience through partnerships with civilian colleges and universities across the country," Braun said. "Students can receive credit toward associate, bachelor's and master's degrees. We are also a branch campus of the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences College of Allied Health."



Sgt. Darrell Antonetty-Torres, radiology specialist at Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, passed the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists examination and earned his radiologic technician credentials Oct. 7 in Shreveport, Louisiana.

The METC Degree Bridge Program provides a way for active-duty, National Guard, Reserve service members and veterans to successfully transition to a civilian career by earning college credit from participating schools for their military service and training without having to retake courses already completed.

The Later

Antonetty completed the requirements for and graduated with his associate degree in 2021.

"I didn't try for the registry right away because I had gotten focused on military promotions, schools and other stuff," he said. "I didn't think I had the time to devote my full attention to the registry until now. As my priorities, shifted I knew it was time to get serious about the registry."

Antonetty took the test on Oct. 7.

"I rescheduled three times because I wasn't quite ready and I wanted to be fully prepared for the exam," he said. "We have three opportunities to take and pass the registry examination, but I wanted to pass it the first time."

Ântonetty said he likes being an X-ray tech.

"I plan to reenlist. I perform X-rays and CT scans. After I reenlist, I plan to challenge the registry again for CT," he said. "The registry is important, but I think I probably have more hands-on experience than most people who already have their credentials. I have five years of X-ray experience in addition to the certification."

Dawn Carter, imaging supervisor for the BJACH Radiology Department, said it has been more than five years since the last military radiology specialist in her department successfully challenged the ARRT.

"Passing this registry is important because now Sgt. Antonetty is a nationally registered technologist," Carter said. "He has completed the education equivalent to his civilian counterparts for this achievement. Our beneficiaries will benefit from his knowledge and expertise in this field."

Army radiology specialists are not required to obtain this certification.

"Taking it upon himself to earn this certification shows that Sgt.

Please see Tech, page 15



Home based business market

The Fort Polk community stopped by Army Community Service Nov. 5-6 to support spouses who own home based businesses at the Pumpkin Spice Market.



Tech

Continued from page 14

Antonetty had great dedication to study and pass the examination necessary to be added to the registry," Carter said. "Once he leaves the Army, he can apply to any civilian hospital and be able to get hired on quickly."

Carter said the entire department is extremely proud of Antonetty and his accomplishments.

Immediately following his success credentialing with the ARRT, Antonetty attended master resiliency training.

"I enjoy radiology and performance," he said. "I just returned from MRT and I really enjoyed it. The Army has given me a lot of opportunities to try and experience different things that I may not have otherwise."

Antonetty is undecided on the course of study he will pursue for his bachelor's degree, however MRT has piqued his interest in sports psychology.

Service members and veterans can visit <u>www.metc.mil/Academics/De-</u> <u>gree-Bridge-Programs</u> for more information about available degrees by using filters to choose a training department, program name and degree, or credential level.

Links to colleges and universities can also be found within the program.



Touring CDCs



Col. Sam Smith, Fort Polk garrison commander, inspected child development centers Nov. 10. The inspection is part of an oversight the Army has to ensure CDCs are safe, effective and resourced to provide for Soldiers and Families.



Health Promotion Team — serving Fort Polk, surrounding communities

By Maj. AERI HODGES

JRTC Command Surgeon

FORT POLK, La. — If the thought of increasing physical and mental performance ever crossed your mind, then you have taken the first step toward a better lifestyle. In order to support your wellness journey the Fort Polk and Joint Readiness Training Center Health Promotion Team is available to guide you to the right path.

It has been a successful year for the HPT thanks to the partnership they have with Fort Polk and the surrounding communities. Raising awareness through collaboration is one of many things HPT is after. The team collaborated with the Family Readiness Group Super Sign-Up event where they set up an awareness booth on North Fort in August to promote the importance of health awareness, tobacco-free living, healthy eating habits, dangers of energy drinks and supplements, blood pressure awareness, and the performance triad. The team had the opportunity to collaborate with members of Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital Department of Public Health for the annual Mud Run event in September where they set up an information booth to raise awareness on childhood obesity, nutrition, PTSD, self check on breast exams, nutritional options for children, harmful effects of energy drinks, and healthy eating habits. There were also a variety of giveaways for children, which were wonderful. The same awareness activity continued during the September time frame by

setting up information booths at various locations to include the Post Exchange.

Collaborating with post Morale, Welfare and Recreation events, the team set up an information booth at the Louisiana Hayride event in October where they were able to provide over 400 health awareness information bags filled with resources.

During the month of October, the team collaborated and supported the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division with the Breast Cancer Awareness Pink Out Run. This event was very powerful and touching due to the fact a lot of participants were running in remembrance of breast cancer survivors or Family and friends who have lost their battles to breast cancer. This was an emotional event for the team because they had lost their very own team member the year prior. It was important to the team and the 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div FRG members everyone in the audience knew about the importance of early detection of breast cancer, and the care they can provide to the survivors.

Physical and mental health is a lifelong journey involving many different types of terrain. Don't feel you need to take that journey alone. The Health Promotion Team (Geneva Meridith, Veronica Alexander and Lenny Rhodes) is here to support every step of the way. There are monthly health promotion events you can be a part of and it is never too late to come sign up for one!

For more information call Army Public Health at (337) 531-6131.

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From left to right: 1st Lt. Felicia Drah, Dekonti Morkonmana, Veronica Alexander and Geneva Meridith make up part of the Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital's Health Promotion Team.



JRTC & Fort Polk QOL CONFERENCE SURVEY

- 1. What is your primary Quality of Life concern?
- 2. What amenity or activity would have the most significant impact on the Quality of Life at JRTC & Fort Polk?
- 3. Which additional QOL projects would you like to see at JRTC & Fort Polk in the future?
- 4. What platform do you recommend utilizing to distribute information regarding Quality of Life across the installation?
- 5. What amenity on Fort Polk do you utilize the most?
- 6. What is your rank?
- 7. What is your gender?
- 8. How many children are in your household?
- 9. What is your marital status?



JRTC & Fort Polk Quality of Life Initiatives











Commanding General's Quality of Life Priorities: Education • Housing • Child Care • Health Care • Army Spouse Employment • MWR - Recreation

Care for Our People • Build Readiness • Succeed in our JRTC & Fort Polk Campaigns Commanding General's Priorities

First in Fitness fun

Fort Polk hosted a First in Fitness competition Nov. 4. Approximately 270 kids from five Vernon Parish schools and Fort Polk's Child and Youth Services Homeschool Physical Education group gathered in a community setting to promote fitness and celebrate athletic success.









To Register call 337-531-7669 or visit polk.armymwr.com

WIDOW Dead trees or limbs, especially those that have broken off and hang suspended in a tree after a major storm. In a breeze they can come crashing down with lethal force. People standing beneath them have no time to react.

Safety Chris says, Keep your head on a swivel 'cause it sucks to die!

31-SAFE



Celebrate Native American Heritage Month in November

By KEVIN STUART BJACH Military Ombudsman

FORT POLK, La. — Congress sets aside the entire month of November each year to celebrate National Native American Heritage Month.

It's a unique opportunity to celebrate Native American culture. I believe all people, regardless of their heritage, can gain from studying and embracing the ways of our Native American ancestors.

Native American Heritage Month celebrates the diversity of Native American peoples throughout history and highlights their successes, especially in regard to their commitment to the environment and the support of all people.

This month is a time to recognize the outstanding contributions and achievements Native Americans have made to our country and world.

It is commonly accepted that perceptions form our reality and shape our world view. What happens when people who perceive things differently meet? Their realities collide and conflict can result, unless the gap which exists between their worlds is bridged.

Our history is full of examples in which perceptions tainted by fear, prejudice and misunderstanding resulted in tragic consequences. This has never been truer than in the case of the Native Americans.

The Native American culture is perhaps one

of the most misunderstood cultures that exist today. I believe much of what is known about their culture has been acquired

from television westerns, which are more concerned with action than historical content.

Many people don't even realize why Native Americans were called Indians. The term is based on another misconception. Christopher Columbus coined the phrase because he thought he landed in the East Indies of Asia in 1492. Columbus did not realize he had reached the Bahamas. While sailing along the coasts of present-day Cuba and Haiti, he encountered villages of naked Arawankan-speaking people. Columbus called the island natives Los Indies, or "Indians" thus fastening that name on the population of all indigenous nations of the Western Hemisphere.

According to Tall Oak, a member of the Narragansett tribe, "When the first European arrived, Columbus and his crew called us Indians, because of obvious reasons. He thought he was lost in India. Prior to Columbus arriving, we called ourselves Ninuog, or the people (human beings). So when the pilgrims arrived, we knew who we were, but we did not know who they were. So we called them Awaunaageesuck, or the strangers, because they were the people we did not know, but we knew each other and we were the human beings."

For years, American history books talked about the ancestors of modern day Native Americans as if they were one race, and often as if they were one nation. However, the 2017 U.S. Bureau of Census statistics show that Native Americans comprise only about two percent of our population. According to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Native Americans speak approximately 150 Native North American languages, and currently have 574 federally recognized tribes and more than 100 state recognized tribes.

Native Americans have a long history of service and contributions to our country. They have provided exceptional support to our military while serving in every major conflict from the battlefields of the Revolutionary War to the front lines of today. Native Americans such as U.S. Army Cpl. Mitchell Red Cloud, a Winnebago Indian who distinguished himself during the Korean War, received the Medal of Honor for heroism. Army Camp Red Cloud in South Korea is named after him.

Suzan Shown Harjo, a Hodulgee Muscogee/ Southern Cheyenne, was a determined activist, poet and journalist, who fought for Native Americans sovereignty rights for more than 40 years. Harjo worked to protect sacred sites, religious freedom and treaty rights and championed the removal of Native American mascots and language revitalization. She also worked as the President of the National Congress of

> American Indians and was a special assistant for Indian legislation during President Carter's administration. In 2014, Harjo received

the Presidential Medal of Freedom for her exceptional contributions.

Mary G. Ross, Cherokee Nation, is considered the first Native American female engineer, as well as the first female engineer in the history of Lockheed. She is also considered one of NASA's "hidden figures" whose contributions to America's space age remained largely unknown for years. She earned an undergraduate and graduate degree in mathematics and eventually worked as the first female engineer in the Lockheed programs. In 1952, her work with Lockheed's top-secret program was crucial and played an important part in their Apollo program. She also authored and helped to author several prominent works, including the NASA Planetary Flight Handbook Vol. III about space travel to Mars and Venus.

Sacagawea, Shoshone tribe, assisted the Lewis and Clark expedition as an interpreter during their successful Pacific Northwest journey. She is the first and only Native American to have an image on united states currency, the U.S. coin dollar.

The code talkers were instrumental in suc-

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cessfully transmitting secret messages for the military during both World War I and II. The Choctaw and Cherokee tribes were utilized as code talkers during World War I, while the Navajo tribe were successful during World War II and the Korean War. The code talkers were able to encrypt and decrypt messages for the military without ever being exposed.

Jim Thorpe, Sac and Fox Nation, was the first Native American to earn an Olympic medal. He won two gold medals during the decathlon and pentathlon of the 1912 Olympics, and in 1950 was called one of the greatest athletes of the first half of the 20th century by american sports writers.

Wilma Mankiller, Cherokee tribe, became the first female Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation in 1985. She had worked several years as a leading advocate for the Cherokee people, improving the Cherokee Nation's health care, education system and government.

These are just a few of the many Native Americans who significantly contributed to our country. The numerous contributions Native Americans have made to our nation are immeasurable. From art to agriculture, to science and military service, many Americans have learned and benefited from the Native peoples, whether they know it or not.

Eliminating barriers that constrain cultural, educational, economic and intellectual partnerships can help America's transition into a more diverse nation. I believe it is crucially important we honor and respect our environment, and show respect, honor and mercy for each other as Native Americans have always done. After all, each of us plays a part in building a diverse society.

COMMENTARY

Stormwater: what it is, how to help prevent it

DIRECTORATE OF PUBLIC WORKS

FORT POLK, La. — The next time you are outside in the rain look at what is flowing from the street into the gutters and storm drains.

It is not just rainwater you will see — there may be litter, food waste, automotive fluids and yard waste mixed with the stormwater.

Stormwater comes from rain, snow and ice melt that flows over impervious surfaces such as streets, parking lots and sidewalks. It will eventually reach a storm drain and discharge directly into the surrounding environment without the benefit of any treatment to filter out pollutants.

Activities often contaminate stormwater runoff, such as over-applicating fertilizers for yard maintenance and not picking up after pets. These activities contribute to excessive nutrients entering the water system, such as nitrogen and phosphorus, and harmful bacteria from pet waste. Urban and suburban areas produce more stormwater runoff due to the number of impervious surfaces.

Here are measures you can take to help prevent stormwater pollution:

• Apply fertilizers to your yard following the manufacturer's specifications

Pick up pet waste and dispose of it properly

•Conduct vehicle washing at a commercial carwash

•Recycle used motor and cooking oil

•Dispose of trash properly In undeveloped areas, precipitation typically soaks into the ground. When buildings, parking lots, roads and other hard surfaces are added to the landscape,

the ground cannot absorb the water.

Green infrastructure can be used to address issues from stormwater runoff and



sewer overflows. Green infrastructure works by slowing down the runoff, spreading it over the land, and slowly soaking it into the ground. In some cases, water is captured and reused onsite.

Green infrastructure, also referred to as low impact development, uses the natural landscape to help remove pollutants from runoff. For instance, native plants and grasses are maintained to filter pollutants as the water slowly infiltrates the ground. Other green infrastructure techniques include rain gardens, pervious pavement, rain barrels, and green roofs.





Fort Polk's garrison commander recognizes you have great ideas to share and is looking for innovation from Soldiers, Families and civilians to increase efficiency and enhance garrison processes and quality of life.

ICE link: https://ice.disa.mil/index.cfm?fa=card&sp=144893&s=257

Submit your innovative ideas through the Interactive Customers Evaluation system under the Plans, Analysis and Integration Office Garrison Innovation Program by the clicking the link above.



Story Time

Bring your little ones to Allen Memorial Library Nov. 22 at 11:30 a.m. to enjoy stories and crafts. Share the wonders of imagination with your child as a story takes them to other worlds. If you are interested, call (337) 531-2665 to register.

Learn to tidy up

If you are tired of clutter, Army Community Service offers The Magic of Tidying Nov. 28 from 9-10 a.m. You will learn life changing skills to keep your space neat and uncluttered. For more information call (337) 531-1941.

Volunteer classes

Army Community Service, 1591 Bell Richard Ave., building 920, hosts Volunteer Management Information System classes.

Classes are scheduled for the first Friday of each month from 10-11 a.m. The focus will be on teaching how to create necessary accounts, find volunteer positions and track your hours. The next class is Dec. 2.

For more information call (337) 531-1941.

Fort Polk pet care

The Veterinary Treatment Facility is open Monday through Wednesday from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. and Friday from 8 a.m.-3 p.m. All pets on post are to be registered and microchipped.

Register in person or by email. Your pets should also be up to date on all mandatory and recommended vaccines. For more information call (337) 531-1322.

Anger management

Fort Polk Army Community Service, 1591 Bell Richard Ave., building 920, hosts an Anger, Stress and Crisis Management class.

The class helps people learn to identify triggers and potential stressors, along with positive methods of coping. The next class is 11 a.m.noon Dec. 12. If you are interested, call (337) 531-0636/1938.

Career classes

Fort Polk Army Community Service, 1591 Bell Richard Ave., building 920, hosts the Stars Are Lined Up For Military Spouses For Federal Careers classes.

The next class is Dec. 6. from 10-11:30 a.m. If you are interested, call (337) 531-6922 to register.





Nov. 26: Rockets over the Red Fireworks Festival, Shreveport.

Celebrate the holiday season with Christmas music, food trucks, Santa Claus and fireworks over the heart of the sister cities. The Tree lighting will take place at 5:30 p.m. and the fireworks and bridge light show will begin at 7 p.m.

https://www.louisianatravel.com/events/ festivals/rockets-over-red-fireworks-festival

Nov. 28-Dec. 31: Victorian Christmas at the Joseph Jefferson Home and Rip Van Winkle Gardens, New Iberia.

Celebrate the holiday season at the Joseph Jefferson home, built as a hunting lodge on Jefferson Island in 1870. He was an actor and played the part of Rip Van Winkle on stage more than 4,500 times. That is where the island got it's name: Rip Van Winkle Gardens on Jefferson Island. Tours of the Joseph Jefferson Home and Rip Van Winkle Gardens are decorated for the holiday Season.

https://ripvanwinklegardens.com/

Dec. 1-31: Shadows Holiday Harvest Home and Garden, New Iberia.

You could make a day of it in New Iberia and take both the Jefferson and Shadows tours. The Shadows offers a special holiday home and garden tour which explores what the holiday season meant to both the Weeks family and those enslaved on the family's plantations.

https://www.shadowsontheteche.org/

Holiday House, Sulphur.

Sulphur jumps into the Christmas spirit with "snow" and festive events. Experience Sulphur's Christmas Under the Oaks Festival, located at the Brimstone Museum Complex, 923 Ruth Street, at Heritage Square where music, carnival rides and holiday shopping are at their height. Festival dates are Dec. 2-3, with shopping available at the Holiday House both days. The Holiday House will feature nearly 40 "shops" with a wide range of Christmas gift ideas. Shopping hours are 10 a.m. - 8 p.m. Entry into the Holiday House on Friday and Saturday is \$5 per person.

https://www.visitlakecharles.org/event/ christmas-under-the-oaks-%26-holidayhouse/41850/

Dec. 9-11: Festival of the Bonfires, Lutcher.

Experience a prelude to the famous Christmas Eve Bonfires. A tradition unique to St. James Parish. Enjoy great food, live entertainment, crafts, Santa's Very Merry Forest and carnival rides throughout the weekend. Each night will be highlighted with a single bonfire lighting!

http://festivalofthebonfires.org/

Through Jan. 6: Natchitoches Christmas Festival, Natchitoches.

Named after a Native American tribe, Natchitoches (pronounced Nack-a-tish) is the oldest permanent settlement in the Louisiana

Dec. 2-3: Christmas Under the Oaks and Purchase Territory. Since 1927, its been home to one of the oldest community-based holiday celebrations in the country. Starting as a oneday festival, the Natchitoches Christmas Festival has evolved into a six-week long Christmas Season event.

> The Festival begins on the Saturday before Thanksgiving and concludes on Jan. 6, the Epiphany. More than 300,000 lights and 100 plus set pieces are on display every night at dusk.

https://www.natchitocheschristmas.com/

Through Dec. 25: Dark Woods Christmas, Natchitoches.

Dark Woods Christmas in the Park provides the perfect setting for family holiday memories. This event runs select dates from Black Friday through Christmas Day.

Experience the sights, sounds and smells of a hometown holiday while taking a leisurely stroll through more than 250,000 dazzling LED twinkling lights.

Gather the whole family for homemade doughnuts and gourmet hot chocolate. Plus, enjoy other seasonal favorites like caramel apples, campfire s'mores, Natchitoches meat pies and other delectable treats. There is interactive fun for kids, uplifting holiday music, nightly entertainment including special meet and greet locations for the kids to see Mr. and Mrs. Claus and other holiday character favorites.

https://www.darkwoodschristmas.com/



Thrifty tips for tasteful Thanksgiving table

By Spc. KELLY ACEVEDO Public Affairs Office

FORT POLK, La. — This year don't break the bank with purchases of beautiful center pieces, pre-folded affluent napkins or expensive plates used only on Thanksgiving day. Instead, consider getting creative with do-it-yourself decorative pieces for Thanksgiving dinner.

Start off by making a template. Envision how the dinner table should be put together. It's understandable to have a difficult time pic-

turing what to place where when there's so much already going on. Creating a vision board ahead of time can inspire a theme. A vision board can

help narrow

down a specific plan/idea through pictures. Pinterest is a great platform to check out for inspirational photos.

Once set on a theme or style for the table, shop your home! Yes, shopping can fun, but also pricey.

Consider whatever is needed may already be at home. This is important when budget-

ing because it will limit excess purchases. If there are items to use, but they stand out in color,

there's nothing that nontoxic spray paint or colored paper can't fix.

If the food will be placed on the table, ensure the table is not overcrowded and adorn around the food.

COMMENTARY

Minimalistic décor can look beautiful when other items are emphasized. For example, if on hand, use matching cooking sets to set your food on since they are the same color. Place small pots next to bigger ones.

The difference in size will compliment each other and avoid an overloaded look. Napkins can be folded elegantly for a refined look. Inspiration can be found on Instagram pages like life of glow for easy, yet aesthetically pleasing napkin folding.

Anyone not placing food on the table and arranging for guests to serve themselves elsewhere can DIY a centerpiece. It's as simple as adding different sized pumpkins with complimenting colors, placing candles around and greenery across the table. Any decorations inside that were used for Halloween may tie in with the table setting theme.

If candle sticks or any candles are to be used, it's best to stick with fake candles to prevent accidents. Set up a kids' table with safe décor to prevent choking or spills. Be mindful of pets

> wanting to eat or chew on dangerous decorations.

For guests waiting for the food to be ready, a charcuterie board is a great addition for the gathering. This snack plate can be elegantly or playful assembled. Whatever the preference, it's best to make it prior to cooking and store it in the fridge for guests who arrive early to indulge.

Despite all the tips given to avoid shopping for new items, if there is a certain piece that will fit the table best, invest in a versatile item. Remember, people can get messy when eating so consider that food stains could land on the item.

People will be moving food and plates around the table which can cause glass to tip over and break. Regardless, if this piece can be used on other occasions, then it's a win!

Enjoy thanksgiving and don't stress too much on preparation for the day. Appreciate time spent with loved ones and be present in the moment. Happy Thanksgiving and happy holidays!

Take advantage of holiday savings in nick of time

DEFENSE COMMISSARY AGENCY

FORT LEE, Va. — Just in time for the holidays, commissary customers worldwide are now seeing new lower prices on popular items across store inventories to help them achieve at least 25 percent savings compared to off-post grocers.

The price reductions also include an updated version of the "Your Everyday Savings" (YES!) Program, which now also goes to overseas customers. DeCA is broadening price reductions (https://commissaries.com/our-agency/newsroom/news-releases/even-more-savingsyour-commissaries-dod-invests-extra-funding) thanks to the Department of Defense's recent "Taking Care of Service Members and Families" initiative.

DOD's increase of commissary funding allows the agency to reduce prices across its product assortment, especially on food staples such as milk, eggs, butter, ground beef, baby products and more, said DeCA Director and CEO Bill Moore.

"We're slashing prices on the items that families need every day and increasing their overall commissary savings across the enterprise to at least 25 percent against commercial stores outside the gate," he said. "With these savings, we're improving the economic security of our customers. For example, they can save at least \$50 on a \$200 grocery bill if, and only if, they shop their commissary."

Blue signage points the way to lower prices throughout the store, while orange signs highlight specific savings on core items that commercial retailers often reduce through periodic sales promotions. The price on YES! items in the commissary are on sale over the course of the year.

As commissaries lower their prices, it's vital that all eligible patrons are aware of their benefit and its gateway to savings and healthy options, said Marine Sgt. Maj. Michael Saucedo, senior enlisted advisor to the DeCA director.

"A lot of people don't really understand that the commissary benefit is congressionally mandated and regulated by the National Defense Authorization Act," Saucedo said. "I run into people every day, disabled veterans and active duty service members alike, who just don't know that they have earned these savings."

"My job as the director's senior enlisted advisor is to help promote benefit awareness, and that's critical, especially now for our younger

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service members and their families," he added. "They're experiencing the challenges of inflation, and the commissaries' savings are a great way to help these families out."

With the approaching holidays, DeCA continues to execute a transformation game plan to lower prices on the items that matter most, improve a supply chain still beset with tremendous labor challenges and improve customer service.

"It's a vitally important benefit, probably more important now than ever in these days of unprecedented inflation," Moore said. "Getting this benefit as good as we can get it, enabling as much savings as resources allow is vitally important for our patrons as they deal with food and economic insecurities.

Click <u>https://commissaries.com</u> to find out more information on commissary savings programs.

Impress the table on Thanksgiving, unique, easy recipes

Many can expect traditional dishes to be served at Thanksgiving dinner. The person known for baking the best desert will bring their sweet confection, while the person known to whip up the best mashed potatoes will bring that. Although nostalgic, traditional food served at thanksgiving dinner doesn't have to be the same every year. This year, have some fun and get creative with what is shared at the table. Here are some easy recipes to follow.



$G {\sf REEN} \; B {\sf EAN} \; B {\sf UNDLES}$

INGREDIENTS:

11/4 lbs. green beans6 slices of bacon cut inhalf1 tsp. garlic salt1/4 cup melted butter

2 tbsp. brown sugar 1/2 tsp. pepper 1tbsp. chopped parsley Cooking spray

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Place bacon on sheet and bake for seven minutes. Trim ends of green beans. Bring a pot of salted water to boil. Place green beans in pot and cook for two to three minutes. Drain and place in ice water to stop cooking process. Pat green beans dry. In small bowl, mix garlic salt, butter, brown sugar and pepper. Pour over green beans. Toss to coat. Wrap 8-10 beans with bacon. Secure with a toothpick. Bake 15-20 minutes. Sprinkle with parsley and serve.

PUMPKIN DUMP CAKE

INGREDIENTS:

1/2 sticks of unsalted butter 1 can of pumpkin puree

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Layout rolls into baking dish. Add condensed milk on top of rolls. Add the pumpkin puree. Add the cake mix. Don't mix the ingredients. Cut the butter into thin slices and lay them on top of the rest of the ingredients. Place dish into oven for 45 minutes.





CHURRO CHEESECAKE

INGREDIENTS:

2 cans Pillsbury Cresent dinner rolls (butter flake) 2 packages of 8 oz. cream cheese, softened 1 tsp. vanilla extract 1 large egg slightly beaten 1 cup sugar divided 2 tbsp. ground cinnamon

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Beat cream cheese, vanilla, egg and 1/2 cup of sugar until smooth. Mix remaining sugar and cinnamon. Set aside. Spray 9X13 baking dish with cooking spray. Sprinkle half cinnamon and sugar on bottom of pan. Roll out crescent dough to fit pan and place on top of sugar mixture. Spread cheesecake evenly on dough. Unroll second can of crescent dough on top. Make sure all seams are sealed. Sprinkle top with remaining sugar mixture. Bake for 30-35 minutes until golden...

RECIPE: PUMPKIN PIE CAKE POPS

INGREDIENTS:

Pumpkin pie	
Melted chocolate	
ce cream scoop	
Foothpicks	

DIRECTIONS:

Mash pumpkin pie in a bowl. Use ice cream scooper to scoop out small cake pop balls. Once all the cake pops are laid out, place them in the refrigerator for an hour. Insert toothpicks into the pops and then dip the cake pop into the melted chocolate. Let sit until chocolate hardens. Store in the refrigerator until time to serve.

GARLIC PARMESEAN ROASTED SWEET POTATOES INGREDIENTS:

2 sweet peeled potatoes fresh thyme 1 tbsp. olive oil 2 tbsp. melted butter 2 tsp. minced garlic

4 tbsp. grated parmesan_ 1/2 tsp. garlic salt 1/2 tsp. fresh cracked pepper_____

1/2 tsp. Italian seasoning

DIRECTIONS:

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Preheat oven to 400 °F. Cut the sweet potatoes into thin slices. Place the sweet potato slices into a reusable bag. Throw in the rest of the ingredients into the bag except for the fresh thyme and shake until potatoes are well coated. Lightly butter abaking dish and place the coated sweet potatoes to bake. Sprinkle on fresh thyme and more parmesan to your liking. Bake for 30-35 minutes and sprinkle on more fresh thyme.





Fort Polk holiday fun

From command serving a Thanksgiving meal to Soldiers to Soldiers and Family members participating in a ruck march to donate toys to Operation Homefront, it's all about giving back and getting into the spirit of the season.











Fort Polk Soldiers found guilty for UCMJ violations

OFFICE of the STAFF JUDGE ADVOCATE

FORT POLK, La. — The preamble to the Manual for Courts-Martial states, "The purpose of military law is to promote justice, to assist in maintaining good order and discipline in the armed forces, to promote efficiency and effectiveness in the military establishment, and thereby strengthen the national security of the United States." At the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, the commanding general and subordinate commanders take good order and discipline seriously.

Across Fort Polk, the following disciplinary issues continue to be prevalent: driving under the influence of alcohol, wrongful use/possession of controlled substances, fraternization, sexual assault and underage drinking.

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

• A private assigned to 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment was separated from the Army with an other than honorable conditions discharge after being convicted in civilian court of committing a lewd act upon a minor. The discharge may result in a loss of benefits and could cause significant difficulty in obtaining civilian employment.

•A specialist assigned to 115th Field Hospital received a field grade Article 15 for wrongful use of tetrahydrocannabinol. They received a punishment of reduction to the grade of E-2, 45 days of extra duty and 45 days of restriction.

•Three Soldiers assigned to 519th Military Police Battalion were separated from the Army with a general discharge for wrongful use of tetrahydrocannabinol.

• A specialist assigned to 1st Battalion, 509th Infantry Regiment was separated from the Army with a general discharge for wrongful use of cocaine.

• A specialist assigned to 1st Battalion, 509th Infantry Regiment was separated from the Army with a general discharge for domestic violence. •A sSpecialist assigned 317th Brigade Engineer Battalion received a Field Grade Article 15 for wrongfully using a controlled substance. They received a punishment of reduction to E-3, 30 days extra duty and an oral reprimand.

•A Specialist in B Company, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment received a Field Grade Article 15 for wrongfully using a controlled substance. They received a punishment of reduction to E-1, 45 days extra duty and 45 days restriction.

• A private first class in B Company, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment received a Field Grade Article 15 for wrongfully using a controlled substance. They received a punishment of reduction to E-1, 45 days extra duty and 45 days restriction.

•A private first class in Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 5th Battalion, 25th Artillery Regiment, received a Summarized Article 15 for violating a general regulation. They received a punishment of 14 days extra duty and 14 days restriction.



Check VIN numbers

The Directorate of Emergency Services Traffic Division will release the following vehicles to Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation for disposal if they remain unclaimed. Vehicles are listed with the last four of their VIN. If one of these vehicles belongs to you, please contact the Fort Polk Police Traffic Division at (337) 531-1806, 6675 or 2677.

2010	Nissan	Altima	6499
2016	Chevrolet	Malibu	5420
2002	Dodge	1500	7497
2015	Ford	Escape	8502
2004	Infinity	Q35	8469
2012	Kia	Optima	1405
2011	Nissan	Sentra	4417
2009	Honda	Civic	3562
2016	Jeep	Cherokee	7660
2006	Ford	Focus	5525
2020	Kia	Sorento	5641
2018	Toyota	Corolla	9110
2000	Dodge	Durango	1293
2012	Chevrolet	Malibu	7822
2004	Chevrolet	1500	1742
2008	Mitsubishi	Galant	1159
2013	Dodge	Dart	1997
2015	Kia	Cadenza	1160
2003	Honda	Accord	6673
2003	Jeep	Liberty	3545
2001	Ford	F150	0450
2004	Ford	Mustang	4127
2004	Harley	MC	D569
2008	BMW	328i	9559
1999	Toyota	Corolla	6433
2007	Audi	A4	6439
2013	Audi	A6	7319
2011	Hyundai	Elantra	4018
2007	BMW	650i	2192
2000	Honda	Accord	0717
2005	Kawasaki	M/C	0133
2010	Jeep	Patriot	0760
2005	Ford	Focus	4767

