FORGING THE



WARRIOR SPIRIT

THEJRTC & FORT POLK GUARDIAN

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Home of Heroes @ Fort Polk, LA

Aug. 2, 2019



Fort Polk Chaplain Corps Soldiers build teamwork, celebrate heritage Teams carry litters with 160-pound mannequins around Warrior Hills Golf Course during a team building event held July 26 in honor of the 244th anniversary of the Chaplains Corps. The

Weekend weather



SCHOOL DAYS RETURN TO VERNON, BEAUREGARD PARISHES The 2019-2020 school year kicks off in Vernon Parish Aug. 9 while Beauregard Parish students begin classes Aug. 14. Motorists are reminded to use caution and watch for students loading and unloading school buses. The Guardian staff wishes Fort Polk students a successful school year.

Viewpoint

In our víew

Guardian staff asked Fort Polk community members, **"What annoys you the most?"** Here are their responses:

Amanda Rupeck: "Bad drivers. People drive differently here."





Sgt. Wendpouire Dakoure: "Loud noises because they give me a headache." AIRBORNE

Guardian

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Spc. George Esparza: "The pot holes and cracks in the roads because they're so bad for my car. I'm glad they are working on them."





strong: "Helicopter flyovers. They are distracting. Also, I work at a child development center and they sometimes scare the kids."

Lorenda Arm-

Sgt. Deonta Keys: "Gnats. They move fast and I can't kill them. They fly around and drive me crazy."





"Rude people. For example, saying hello or speaking to someone and them not even acknowledging you."

Ricky Thomas:

Staff Sgt. Cherice Moore: "Hot weather and being dirty. I don't like dirt in general."





Pfc Stephanie Aubin: "I hate when drivers in front of me don't use their turn signals."

Newscope

Briefs

DFAC closure

The Patriot Inn Dining Facility is closed through Sunday. It will reopen Monday at 7:30 a.m. During the closure, the Guardian Inn, bldg 2382, will operate as the post dining facility, serving scheduled meals of breakfast, lunch an dinner through today, and brunch and supper meals Saturday and Sunday.

Benefits briefing

A Social Security Benefits briefing is scheduled for Aug. 19, from 9-10:30 a.m. at Bayou Theater, 7830 Mississippi Ave. A Social Security Administration employee will discuss program benefits, disability, benefits calculations, eligibility, Medicare and special veterans benefits. Call (337) 531-1799 for more information.

TSP brief

A Thrift Savings Plan benefits briefing is held Sept. 5 at Bayou Theater, 7830 Mississippi Ave. Two separate sessions are held from 8:30-11 a.m. and 1-3:30 p.m. A TSP Investment Board training specialist will brief employees and military service members on making smart decisions with their TSP savings. Participants will learn how TSP contributions work, the difference between traditional and Roth contributions, TSP withdrawal options and death benefits, various retirement options and how to manage their accounts. Appropriated fund civil service employees and military members are welcome to attend. Call 531-1799 for more information.

DAV assistance

Chapter No. 20 of the Disabled American Veterans, located behind the Vernon Parish Courthouse in the Railroad Suite on La. Hwy 468, has claims officers available by appointment. Call John at (337) 244-5613 or Robert at (337) 317-6947 to set up an appointment.

GI Bill extension

The Office of the Undersecretary of Defense has issued an extension to the deadline date on the limits of transferability of education benefits for service members with greater than 16 years of service. Previously, the policy was to go into effect July 12, but an extension was issued until Jan. 12. Official guidance from Human Resource Command is pending and will be distributed when received. Should Soldiers have questions, they can contact their retention officer or visit or call the Education Center in bldg 660, Colorado Avenue, at 531-5269.



Spouses wait in line to talk to employers at Fort Polk's military and community hiring fair held July 26 at the Child and Youth Services Gym, bldg 2070.

Hiring fair brings Soldiers, spouses, employers together

By ANGIE THORNE

Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. — Finding a job is part preparation and part luck, but it's always challenging, especially in a tough job market. Military spouses probably know that better than anyone because they have to start from scratch in a new job market after every permanent change of station move.

That's why an event like the Military and Community Spouses Hiring Fair, held at Fort Polk's Child and Youth Services Gym, bldg 2070, July 26, is so important to the military community as a whole. The event hosted 30 employers and four service organizations on the hunt for good employees. A total of 126 job seekers attended the event. The day saw 93 resumes accepted, 63 interviews conducted and 30 tentative job offers made — a new record for Fort Polk hiring events.

Dan Smith, senior manager for the Hiring Our Heroes Military Spouse Program, said in hard economic times, it's outstanding for an installation like Fort Polk to post these kinds of numbers.

"In fact, the Fort Polk hiring fair has had the highest military spouse preregistered job seeker numbers for the past three years," he said.

Smith said he couldn't be happier with the success of the job fair, in large part thanks to Fort Polk's Stacey Delgado, Employment Readiness Program manager, and her team at Fort Polk's Army Community Service.

"We received a lot of support when it came to organizing this event. Stacey and her team reached out to local chambers of commerce and employers willing to take part in the job fair and I think we've had a great turn out," he said.

Smith said it's essential to give spouses and transitioning Soldiers an opportunity to talk to employers and discover jobs that might be right for them.

"Job seekers show up at an event like this and may only plan to talk to one or two employers. But then they see all these other opportunities that they never would have had otherwise and their chances of finding a job expand exponentially," he said.

Col. Ryan K. Roseberry, Fort Polk garrison commander, said Fort Polk spouses are a treasured asset to the area.

"This is a diverse group of well educated individuals who have learned to manage stress and overcome the multiple challenges of being a military spouses. They are strong, dedicated, self assured, demonstrate loyalty and are premier employment candidates for the employers of Central Louisiana," he said.

Tanja Ortwein, a military spouse attending the fair, moved to Fort Polk recently from Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Ortwein had a child a few months ago and said she felt like she was ready to get back to work.

"I saw the information about the job fair on Facebook and decided to sign up to see what the fair had to offer," she said.

Ortwein said her employment background is in banking and insurance, but this is her first job fair and she was open to something different.

"I was a bit intimidated by all the employers, but after the first positive interview I realized I

Please see **Hiring**, page 7



<u>Army news</u>

Army looks at cadets to bolster Army space force

By THOMAS BRADING

Army News Service

FORT MEADE, Md. — As the Army steadily grows its space force with current Soldiers, a path is now being offered to help cadets quickly become Functional Area 40 space operations officers.

Since its inception in 2008, FA40 has "developed billets and found technically qualified individuals to fill them," said Mike Connolly, Army Space Personnel Development Office director.

The Army currently has about 3,000 billets in its force of space-qualified professionals, including 285 active component FA40 space operations officers. The increased need for space operations expertise within Army formations is resulting in further growth of Army's space force, officials said.

As the core of the Army space force, FA40s provide in-depth expertise and experience to leverage space-related assets. They also deliver space capabilities to the warfighter and have the ability to integrate space capabilities into the future, according to a news release.

The goal is to recruit and fill a rapidly increasing demand for Army officers into the FA40 career field each year, Connolly said, with initially 10 of these officers transferring as cadets through the Assured Functional Area Transfer program.

Assured functional area transfer

A more guaranteed route for officers to transfer into the Army space force begins before they commission under the A-FAT program. Upon commissioning into their operational basic branch, selected cadets with STEM degrees science, technology, engineering and mathematics — will be assured a transfer into FA40 Space Operations at the four-year mark in their career.

While in their basic branch, the officers must remain in good military standing, and if selected, sign a contract to transfer into the Army space force as a space operations officer.

Once selected, FA40 officers attend the Space Operations Officer Qualification Course, which includes the National Security Space Institute, the Space 200 course, and seven weeks of Armyfocused space training provided by the Space and Missile Defense Command's Space and Missile Defense School.

Voluntary transfer incentive program

The Voluntary Transfer Incentive Program is also accepting applications from eligible officers for a branch transfer into the Army space force at the four-year mark in their career. VTIP is the primary means of balancing branches and functional areas within the Army.

Once applications are received, officers are vetted from the current career field into the Army space operator career field. Subject-matter experts within the respective careers determine the best fit for the Army by deciding which career best suits the applicant. In addition to technical abilities, applicants are vetted based on their values and leadership abilities.

Due to the needs of the Army, the VTIP pro-



gram is not a guaranteed process for all applicants hoping to transfer into the Army's space force, Connolly said.

THESE REPORTS STATE FOR STATE

The Army remains the largest user of spacebased assets within the Defense Department, and nearly every piece of equipment Soldiers use "on a day-to-day basis" such as GPS devices and cell

phones are space enabled, Connolly said.

In the future, he said, the Army's prevalence toward space and need for more officers within Army's space force will continue to grow.

Individuals interested in becoming an FA40 officer should visit the Space Knowledge Management System for additional information.

Briefs

Museum takes shape

FORT BELVOIR, Va. — With doors expected to open next year, the National Museum of the United States Army is quickly coming to life.

Located on an 84-acre hilltop site at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, just south of the nation's capital, the 185,000-square-foot gleaming, stainless-steel structure will offer free admission to the public and give a comprehensive look at more than 240 years of Army history.

The museum's goal is "telling the Army's story to an estimated 750,000 visitors every year," said Tammy E. Call, museum director, and "creating new opportunities for the public to connect with the American Soldier."

The museum is also dedicated to "remembering and honoring their legacies," Call said, of Soldiers and veterans.

"This will be America's Army museum," she added, "telling the Soldier's story 364 days a year."

The museum will immerse visitors into "what it means to be a Soldier" in times of war and peace throughout American history.

Martin new VCS

WASHINGTON — Experience on the battlefield helped earn Gen. Joseph Martin the nomination to the Army's second highest military rank.

Martin was sworn in as the Army's 37th vice chief of staff in a Pentagon ceremony July 26 following a steady progression of the service's senior leadership into higher positions within the Department of Defense.

Gen. Mark A. Milley, the Army's chief of staff, said Martin's extensive time in combat during several deployments amply qualified him for the job.

"This is probably one of the top two, maybe three, general officers with combat experience," said Milley, who presided over the ceremony.

"He has been in combat at every level of command. This guy's got five combat tours. He's got over 40 months in combat. It's an amazing combat record."

A 1986 graduate of West Point, Martin deployed to Iraq five times.



RMY ADAY



Clockwise from top left: Relay runs, low crawls and team sit ups were part of the Chaplain's ruck/team building event held July 26 in honor of the 244th anniversary of the Chaplains Corps.



Pro Deo Et Patria (For God and Country)

Fort Polk chaplains, assistants, mark 244th anniversary of corps

By JEAN DUBIEL

Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. — As long as armies have existed, military chaplains have served alongside Soldiers, providing for their spiritual needs, working to improve morale and aiding the wounded. The Bible tells of the early Israelites bringing their priests into battle with them. Pagan priests accompanied the Roman legions during their conquests. As Christianity became the predominant religion of the Roman Empire, Christian chaplains administered to Roman soldiers. In fact, the word chaplain is derived from cappa, the Latin word for cloak.

The U.S. Army Chaplain Corps is one of the oldest and smallest branches of the Army. The Chaplain Corps dates back to July 29, 1775, when the Continental Congress authorized one chaplain for each regiment of the Continental Army, with pay equaling that of a captain. In addition

to chaplains serving in Continental regiments, many militia regiments counted chaplains among their ranks.

Today, some 1,300 active duty Army chaplains and 1,200 in the reserve components, representing five major faiths groups (Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim and Buddhist) and more than 120 denominations, administer to Soldiers and their Families.

In honor of the 244th anniversary of the Chaplains Corps, chaplains and chaplain's assistants from across Fort Polk gathered at the Main Post Chapel July 26 for a team building event that not only tested their knowledge of Corps history but also reinforced their skills as Soldiers.

The group broke into teams and donned rucksacks to traverse the walking path around Warrior Hills Golf Course just after reveille. Along the way they encountered stations where they had to perform a physical task, listen to a narrative about Chaplain Corps history, answer a question about the narrative and, if they could not answer the question, perform an additional physical task.

Chap. (Lt. Col.) Derrick Riggs, installation chaplain, said the event was important to build camaraderie between members of the unit ministry teams. "We are all working together to take care of Soldiers and their Families, to make them stronger and resilient," he said. "Military life can be challenging, and we, as unit ministry team members, have 244 years of dedicating ourselves, our lives and our service to helping Army Families face those challenges and be successful."

The physical tasks were meant to reinforce the idea that each one of the unit ministry team members is also a Soldier, said Riggs.

"One of the ways that we earn our identity with the Soldiers in our units is to go out and do what they do," he said. "We walk the lines, dig

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Chaplains Continued from page 5

foxholes, carry rucks, go on runs ... and this morning we did what every other Soldier would normally train for, from carrying litters to executing Soldier skills. The event was a good reminder that we are Soldiers too. We are chaplains and religious affairs specialists or NCOs, but we are part of the fraternity of Soldiers."

Pfc. Brenden Doyle has been in the Army just under a year. He serves on the unit ministry team for the 5th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division. He said the event was a good balance of mental and physical exercises. "Two-plus miles with a ruck, and most of us ran it," he said. "We carried the litter, we did a low crawl and they asked us questions to test our mental acuity. The litter carry was a bit challenging, but the low crawl was the most fun. It gets you dirty, makes you feel good and it's a good way to start the morning.

Editor's note: Information for this article came from www.armyhistory.mil.

The ministry teams listen to a narrative about Chaplain Corps history before performing a Soldier task July 26 during a Chaplains Corps 244th anniversary ruck.





A team prepares to lift a litter that they will carry for part of their trek around the Warrior Hills Golf Course July 26 during a Chaplains Corps 244th anniversary ruck.



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War Horse leaders refine operations planning

By Maj. RICHARD BARKER

2nd BCT Public Affairs

FORT POLK, La. — More than 250 leaders and staff with the 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, "War Horse" brigade from Fort Carson, Colorado, attended a leadership training program in late July at Fort Polk where they learned to coordinate as teams through the military decision making process to produce a brigade combat operations order.

The training was facilitated by LTP (Leader Training Program) coaches who are retired military with previous experience in the key brigade leadership positions that contribute to planning and building an order.

"Most brigade staffs are formed, developed and dispersed within a three-year time period," said Bo Balcavage, the brigade operations coach for LTP. "As a result, what LTP does is accelerate the brigade's understanding and execution of MDMP (Military Decision-Making Progress) during the forming stage of the staff."

Leaders attending the training include primary brigade staff officers and senior NCOs, along with battalion command teams. A majority of the participants are new to their positions, and the training program is the first time they have conducted planning in their respective roles.

"This training provided an opportunity to take what I recently learned in school and apply it in a real unit with other staff I will be working with for the next few years," said Maj. Jaime Sanjuan, the fire support officer for the brigade. "LTP provides us an opportunity to train in an environment free of daily distractions. I feel the uninterrupted environment was beneficial and allowed us to focus on learning the processes."

The training is an initial step for the brigade that is a part of a series of combat training exercises. The training will culminate with the brigade returning to Fort Polk to train at the Joint Readiness Training Center in November.

"The exercise placed a lot of stress on the staff which helped us grow mentally, through focused coaching, and realize the larger picture of the planning process," said Sanjuan. "Overcoming

Leaders and staff of the 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, "War Horse" brigade from Fort Carson, Colorado, participate in a leadership training program at Fort Polk.

the stressful environment here as a staff made me realize the importance of time during planning. After this training I feel our fire support cell is more effective and conscious of time while synchronizing efforts and integrating resources."

Part of the orders process includes a combined arms rehearsal where lead planners demonstrate their unit or staff section's involvement in the operation in relation to the rest of the team. The demonstration takes place inside a large sandbox, or sand table, which is a giant, meticulously crafted map that represents the location of the operation.

"The War Horse Brigade has impressed us as a

learning organization," said Balcavage. "We witnessed the staff take advantage of the tools and resources we provided, which to me is a sign of a professional unit."

At the end of the training the brigade produced a 700-page order that coordinates the movement and maneuver of more than 4,500 Soldiers and 3,000 pieces of equipment across multiple days in an attack against an ever-changing enemy on an area about the size of Rhode Island.

With new planning skills in hand, the War Horse Brigade is looking ahead to their field training exercises planned at Fort Carson, Colorado, in August and September.

Hiring-Continued from page 3

was having fun making new connections and discovering my options," she said.

As an employer attending the job fair, Leon Lagneaux, Amerisafe senior vice president of recruitment and development said his organization is a strong supporter of the military.

"We realize how difficult it must be for spouses to find a job when they have to move so often. We don't let that stop us from hiring them. We will take a military spouse for two or three years because we know we are going to get a quality employee, not to mention helping military families however we can," he said.

Sgt. Tyler Leye, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, said he is trying to find a job because he will be transitioning out of the military.

"I think this job fair is pretty cool. Trying to find a job can be difficult. I've been searching for a while now, so this is a great opportunity for me," he said. "I've talked to a couple of employers I'm interested in working for, but there are a lot more that I want to talk to. I'm excited to see what other opportunities the job fair offers.

Kassandra Coppola, spouse of Pvt. Ryan Coppola, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 509th Infantry Regiment, said she was tired of sitting at home with nothing to do so she attended the job fair to find work. Her experience is in the medical field, but she said she was open to other types of employment.

"The job fair is amazing. It showcases the jobs available in the area. You can't really find that kind of information online," she said.

Coppola said it's much better when employers come to you.

"It gives me a chance to get out and talk to the people that might hire me face to face in one place. I love that," she said.

Ryan was there to cheer Kassandra on as she went from one employer to the next.

"She left everything — her job and family to be here (Fort Polk) for me. I came with her to encourage her in her efforts to find a job. I want to support her like she supports me every day. It's the least I can do," he said.

Sandra Herzog works for GC&E Systems Group, an IT company that has a contract on Fort Polk providing services to the installation. Herzog said a fair like this is helpful in finding employees when they have job openings.

"We like to support the Fort Polk community by filling those jobs with former Soldiers and spouses. An event like this is helpful because it gives us access to a wide range of people from different backgrounds and experiences. That provides a multitude of opportunities for success ours as well as potential employee's," she said.

For more information about the military spouses professional network visit www.hiringourheroes.org/military-spousesprofessional-network/.

Soldiers with 82nd Airborne complete training at JRTC

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

FORT POLK, La. — Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division completed their crucible training at the Joint Readiness Training Center for Rotation 19-08.5 in late July. See page 9 for more photos.













Rotation Continued from page 8











West wins Triple Crown award

Matt West, a Fort Polk employee, receives the Triple Crown, awarded to a Veterans of Foreign Wars post commander that has achieved All American at the post, district and department level, at the VFW National Convention held July 20-24 in Orlando, Florida.

> Guardian Aug. 2, 2019

Community



Vernon Parish elementary students participate in a Summer Fun Book Club hosted by the Vernon Parish School Board. More than 250 students participated in the event.

Vernon Parish students read for fun

By MISTY BASS

Special to the Guardian

LEESVILLE, La. — The Vernon Parish School Board's Summer Fun Book Club program was a huge success. The schools participating were North Polk, Parkway, Rosepine, Pickering, Anacoco, West Leesville, East Leesville, Hornbeck and Simpson elementaries.

The program's purpose was two-fold: Fill learning gaps in reading and writing before moving to the next grade level and prevent regression in those skills over the summer.

Throughout the past nine weeks, students had an opportunity to read independently, work in small groups and engage in meaningful writing activities while integrating STEM — science, technology, engineering and mathematics — into their learning.

On the last day of the program, teachers celebrated their students' success.

Vernon Parish School Board Curriculum Supervisor Carolyn Bosley released the following statement about the program:

"The most recent DoDEA (Department of Defense Education Activity) grant has allowed us the wonderful opportunity of providing a summer reading program for our kindergarten through second grade students. Research indicates that students lose 25-30 percent of their school year learning during the summer.

"This can be especially harmful to younger students who are learning to read. Our goal this summer was to immerse our students in



fun reading activities that would help prevent this summer slide. Our data indicates that students maintained their current reading level, while skills improved for more than 50 percent of students. "I believe we can say the program was suc-

^{*}I believe we can say the program was successful. We look forward to growing the Summer Fun Book Club next summer and reaching even more students.

"This summer we added a reading challenge component to the K-2 summer reading program, which has allowed students accepting the challenge to participate from home. Students were challenged to read 50 books and present weekly reports on a book of their choice. Students who complete the challenge will be awarded prizes, including a book in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the first moon landing. We have more than 250 students participating in the challenge."

There are already plans to make the program an even greater success for VPSB students next year, she said.

Briefs

Commissary closure

The Fort Polk commissary is closed Aug. 11 and 12 for formal inventory. The commissary will reopen Aug. 13 at 9 a.m.

Youth sports

Fort Polk Child and Youth Services Youth Sports is accepting applications for tackle football, cheerleading and fall soccer through Aug. 15. Specifics for each activity are:

• Tackle football — ages 7-15, parent meeting and skills assessment Wednesday or Aug. 9, 6 p.m., cost is \$75, season runs Sept. 14-Nov. 2.

• Tackle football cheerleading — ages 7-15, parent meeting and skills assessment Wednesday or Aug. 9, 6 p.m., cost is \$50, season runs Sept. 14-Nov. 2.

• Fall soccer — ages 5-18, parent meeting and skills assessment, Tuesday or Thursday, 6 p.m., cost is \$55, season runs Sept. 14-Oct. 26.

• Fall pee wee soccer — ages 3-4, parent meeting and skills assessment Tuesday or Thursday, 5:30 p.m., cost is \$25, season runs Sept. 14-Oct. 26.

A current physical must be on file at Youth Sports for the duration of the sports season. Coaches are always needed. To volunteer call 531-6004 or stop by Youth Sports, bldg 400, 6880 Radio Road. Call 531-1955 for more information.

BJACH workshop

Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital's Physical Therapy section hosts a foam rolling workshop Aug. 21 from 6-7 p.m. at Warrior Fitness Center, 8314 Alabama Ave. Learn how to increase your mobility and decrease injuries. The class is first-come, first-served and open to health-care beneficiaries 18 and older. Participants should wear appropriate and comfortable gym attire, and register at https://www.event brite.com/e/foam-rolling-workshop-registration-64565567350. Call 531-3203 for more information.

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 through Aug. 31. 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. Shoppers can visit the Fort Polk Exchange for more information.

Fort Polk kids have fun, learn skills at soccer camp

By ANGIE THORNE Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. — A group of Fort Polk youth spent July 22-26 at Challenger International Soccer Camp learning how to keep control of a soccer ball while running by tapping, dragging or rolling it, using the head to pass, shoot, block or otherwise control the ball, make a pass with backspin and more. The camp took place at Fort

Polk's Perez Field. Helen Smith, Directorate of Family Morale, Welfare and Recreation's Child and Youth Services program associate, said the kids loved every minute of their time spent on the field.

"The camp offers them the chance to learn and perfect more soccer skills than we can teach them," she said.

Smith said skills are taught by talented instructors — Aaron O'Dowd, of Dublin, Ireland, and Tom Ashton, of Manchester, England — who have played soccer all their lives and are trained to teach campers the soccer skills they need to succeed.

"Aaron and Tom are awesome, energetic and work well with the kids. They entertain them almost as much as they teach them," she said.

O'Dowd said he and Ashton trained with Challenger Sports to become instructors and will travel to different states teaching soccer camps.

O'Dowd said he obviously has a passion for soccer.

"When the opportunity to come to the United States to teach the sport I love presented itself, I jumped at the chance. I also wanted to observe the culture on this side of the world," he said.

O'Dowd said he is excited about his experience so far.

"I've done camps in Texas and this is my first in Louisiana. Though it's been really hot, I've loved the weather. Coming from Ireland, I appreciate the sunshine every day. It's been perfect for playing soccer," he said.

It is definitely a culture shock when you first get here, said Ashton.

"The thing I've enjoyed most is getting to meet all the different people and enjoying the scenery," he said.

As far as Louisiana food is concerned, Ashton said jambalaya was his favorite.

"It was so nice," he said.

O'Dowd said he enjoyed every food he tried.

"It's hard to pick one thing because it's all so good," he said.

As for teaching soccer, O'Dowd said the Fort Polk kids are enthusiastic about coming to camp.

"They have so much energy and it's fun. This could be their first experience playing soccer and if they enjoy it, they may sign up to play on a team. A camp like this can spark an interest in a sport for a beginner," he said. "More experienced campers are developing new skills and honing the ones they already have."

Ashton said he enjoyed watching the campers develop their soccer skills.

"They have gotten more confident in themselves," he said

Ashton said he also thought being military kids made a difference as well.

"They were more mature than our average camper. They were always well behaved and respectful," he said. "It's been a pleasure teaching them."

A soccer league veteran, Jacob Webber, 11, said



Mayhem ensues as Tom Ashton, soccer instructor, (center) jumps into a game held July 26 at Perez Field on the last day of Fort Polk's Challenger International Soccer Camp.



Aaron O'Dowd, soccer instructor, (left) gets his team — Team Ireland — pumped up before their match against Team England July 26 at Fort Polk's Challenger International Soccer Camp.

he attended camp because he loves soccer and it gives him a chance to practice his moves.

"I've learned a lot of new tricks for the upcoming season that I want to try," he said.

First-time camp attendee, Grace Strzelecki, 10, said she loves soccer and wanted to see what camp was like.

"Î'm really good at it, but I want to get better. The scrimmage drills helped me learn some new skills. Rosie Tritten, 8, said she played soccer for the first time last year and liked it so she wanted to attend camp and learn more. Tritten said she learned a lot, but loved the "just for fun" parts of camp too. "It was funny when we were all trying to learn how to balance the ball on the back of our necks," she said.

All the campers said they enjoyed the fun games they played in between scrimmages and drills.

Head back to school safer, healthier this year

CDC

ATLANTA — Heading back to school is an exciting time of year for students and families. As students go back to school, it is important that they eat healthy and stay active, are up to date on their immunizations and know the signs of bullying for a healthier and safer school year.

Eat healthy and stay active

Children spend the vast majority of their day at school, so it's a place that can have a big impact in every aspect of their lives. Schools can help students learn about the importance of eating healthier and being more physically active, which can lower the risk of becoming obese and developing related diseases.

Prevention works. The health of students — what they eat and how much physical activity they get — is linked to their academic success. Early research is also starting to show that healthy school lunches may help to lower obesity rates. Health and academics are linked — so time spent for health is also time spent for learning.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that children and adolescents limit their intake of solid fats, cholesterol, sodium, added sugars and refined grains. Eating a healthy breakfast is associated with improved cognitive function. Young people ages 6-17 should participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. Research shows that physical activity can help cognitive skills, attitudes, concentration, attention and improve classroom behavior — so students are ready to learn.

Get vaccinated

Getting children and teens ready to go back to school is the perfect time to make sure they are up-todate with their immunizations. Vaccination protects students from diseases and keeps them healthy.

The recommended immunizations for children birth through 6-18 years old can be found at w w w . c d c . g o v / . Bullying

Bullying is a form of youth violence and can result in physical injury and social and emotional distress. In 2011, 20 percent of high school students reported being bullied on school property and 16 percent reported being bullied electronically through technology, also known as electronic aggression (bullying that occurs through email, a chat room, instant messaging, a website, text messaging or videos or pictures posted on websites or sent through cell phones) or cyberbullying.



Victimized youth are at increased risk for mental health problems, including depression and anxiety, psychosomatic complaints such as headaches and poor school adjustment. Youth who bully others are at increased risk for substance use, academic problems and violence later in adolescence and adulthood.

The ultimate goal is to stop bullying before it starts. Some schoolbased prevention methods include a

whole school anti-bullying policy, promoting cooperation, improving supervision of students and using school rules and behavior management techniques in the classroom and throughout the school to detect and address bullying and providing consequences for bulling.

For more tips on heading back to school, please visit the CDC Features page at https://www.cdc.gov /features/index.html.

Concussion care should top every youth sports playbook

NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL

WASHINGTON — Brain injury is more common than you might think.

Being struck by another person or object is the leading cause of unintentional injury for teens and young adults ages 15 to 24, according to Injury Facts, and sports-related concussions are a significant contributor.

Don't think it's just football players — or boys — who bang their heads. Girls actually suffer a higher percentage of concussions, according to a report by Safe Kids Worldwide that analyzed sports-related emergency room injury data for children ages 6 to 19 in basketball, cheerleading, football, soccer and 11 other sports.

An estimated 1.6 to 3.8 million athletes annually suffer concussion, according to the Brain Injury Research Institute. Often, cases are underreported and undiagnosed. A study by the American Academy of Pediatrics shows the number of sports-related concussions is highest in high school athletes, but they are significant and on the rise in younger athletes.

Most concussions occur during games, not practices. Few result in loss of consciousness. Protect The Brain breaks down sports concussion facts for all age groups:

• 10 percent of all contact-sport athletes sustain concussions yearly

• Football injuries associated with the brain occur at a rate of one in every 5.5 games

• 5 percent of soccer players sustain brain injuries

• The head is involved in more baseball injuries than any other body part; almost half of injuries involve a child's head, face, mouth or eyes

• An athlete who sustains concussion is 4-6 times more likely to sustain a second concussion

Heady stuff: Life lessons and warning signs

If your child gets hit on the head, do not assume he just had his bell rung, or she was just dinged.

Concussions are serious and always require medical attention. Signs and symptoms of concussion include confusion, forgetfulness, glassy eyes, disorientation, clumsiness or poor balance, slowed speech or changes in mood, behavior or personality

Research indicates most children and teens that have a concussion feel better within a couple of weeks.

However, for some, symptoms may last for months or longer and can lead to short- and long-term problems affecting how they think, act, learn and feel.

Following a concussion, athletes of all ages are advised to undergo a series of steps before returning to play: Rest, then light exercise and sport-specific training. Only then should they be cleared to resume contact drills.

Make sure all coaches know how to recognize the signs of a concussion and have a plan in case of emergency.

Sometimes the cost of winning is too high

Healthcare professionals, the media and even Hollywood are advancing the discussion about sports-related concussion and its long-term impact. In the motion picture Concussion, which is based on a true story, actor Will Smith portrays a neuropathologist who identified chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) in a retired National Football League star.

In her blog, Debra Houry, an emergency department physician and director of the Injury Center at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, wrote about broadening the conversation and suggested ways to prevent sports-related head injuries, including changing the winat-all-cost mentality. She said young athletes deserve a chance to play sports in a culture that celebrates hard work, dedication and teamwork in a safe environment.

The CDC's HEADS UP campaign is aimed at putting educational materials into the hands of coaches, parents, athletes and school and health care professionals nationwide. The HEADS UP website, https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/, offers survivor advocate stories, such as "Coach Saves Wrestler's Life by Knowing Concussion Signs and Symptoms."

From sports, children learn values they carry throughout their lives, including discipline, teamwork and how to handle winning and losing. A few bumps and bruises are to be expected, but head injuries should never be ignored.



Soldiers, Families save at Exchange Mall through Aug.11

MAIN EXCHANGE

FORT POLK, La. — The Fort Polk Exchange is partnering with its mall vendors to offer a host of back-to-school deals for military shoppers through Aug. 11.

"We want to make top marks with our backto-school sales," said Ronald McDuffie, Exchange general manager. "The Fort Polk Exchange has put together this event to support the best customers in the world in preparing for the busy school year in style — while saving big on top brands and merchandise."

Select Fort Polk Exchange restaurants and concessionaires are offering deals and activities, including:

• Petal & Blooms — first day of school gifts for teachers through Aug. 11.

• Optical Shop — enter to win a pair of glasses up to \$150. Also enter for a chance to win a backpack filled with back to school goodies through Tuesday.

• Stylique Salon — 10 percent off kids haircut (12 and under) through Tuesday.

• Back to school fashion show at the main store — Saturday from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

There will also be a back to school coloring contest at the main store Aug. 17 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Those who take advantage of their Military Star Card can see additional savings through Thursday. Shoppers will receive 10 percent off children's, women's and men's apparel purchases of \$100 or more when they use their Military Star card at the Fort Polk Exchange.

"The Exchange is making back-to-school shopping easier for the Fort Polk community," said McDuffie. "This limit-

McDuffie. "This limited-time offer is one of many promotions Military Star cardholders earn throughout the year."

Benefits of the Military Star card include:

• Ten percent discount on all first-day purchases.

• Two points per dollar on purchases, and a \$20 gift card after every 2,000 points earned.

• The lowest flatrate APR (12.49 percent) among store cards — rate is offered to all cardholders upon account approval.

• No annual, late or over-limit fees.

• Reduced-interest deployment plan with

no payments required for eligible customers. Additionally, Fort Polk Soldiers and their Families looking to save on back-to-school shopping



can receive 15 percent off by opening a new Military Star card account from Aug 15 to 29.

During this time, Fort Polk Exchange shoppers will receive 15 percent off their first day's pur-

chases instead of the 10 percent discount regularly offered. The discount will appear as a credit on the first monthly billing statement.

Cardholders receive two points for every dollar spent with Military Star and automatically earn a \$20 rewards card every 2,000 points. In 2018, shoppers earned \$34.6 million in rewards cards.

The Military Star program generated \$471 million in value for cardholders in 2018 through savings, discounts, financing offers and cardholder-friendly terms and conditions.

The Military Star card is administered by the

Army and Air Force Exchange Service and is accepted at all military exchanges and commissaries. For more information, visit **MyECP.com**.

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Slow down: Back to school means sharing road

NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL

WASHINGTON - School days bring congestion: School buses are picking up their passen-gers, kids on bikes are hurrying to get to school before the bell rings, harried parents are trying to drop their kids off before work. It's never more important for drivers to slow down and pay attention than when kids are present — especially before and after school.

If you're dropping off

Schools often have very specific drop-off procedures. Make sure you know them for the safety of all kids. The following apply to school zones:

• Don't double park; it blocks visibility for other children and vehicles

• Don't load or unload children across the street from the school

• Carpool to reduce the number of vehicles at the school

Sharing the road with young pedestrians

According to research by the National Safety Council, most of the children who lose their lives in bus-related incidents are 4 to 7 years old, and they're walking. They are hit by the bus or by a motorist illegally passing a stopped bus. A few precautions go a long way toward keeping children safe:

• Don't block the crosswalk when stopped at a red light or waiting to make a turn, forcing pedestrians to go around you; this could put them in the path of moving traffic

• In a school zone when flashers are blinking, stop and yield to pedestrians crossing the crosswalk or intersection

• Take extra care to look out for children in school zones, near playgrounds and parks and in all residential areas

 Don't honk or rev your engine to scare a pedestrian, even if you have the right of way

- Never pass a vehicle stopped for pedestrians
- Always use extreme caution to avoid strik-

ing pedestrians wherever they may be, no matter who has the right of way

Sharing the road with school buses

If you're driving behind a bus, allow a greater following distance than if you were driving behind a car. It will give you more time to stop once the yellow lights start flashing. It is illegal in all 50 states to pass a school bus that is stopped to load or unload children.

• Never pass a bus from behind — or from either direction if you're on an undivided road if it is stopped to load or unload children

• If the yellow or red lights are flashing and the stop arm is extended, traffic must stop

• The area 10 feet around a school bus is the most dangerous for children; stop far enough back to allow them space to safely enter and exit the bus

• Be alert; children often are unpredictable, and they tend to ignore hazards and take risks

Sharing the road with bicyclists

On most roads, bicyclists have the same rights and responsibilities as vehicles, but bikes can be hard to see. Children riding bikes create special problems for drivers because usually they are not able to properly determine traffic conditions. The most common cause of collision is a driver turning left in front of a bicyclist.

• When passing a bicyclist, proceed in the same direction slowly and leave 3 feet between your car and the cyclist

• When turning left and a bicyclist is approaching in the opposite direction, wait for the rider to pass

• If you're turning right and a bicyclists is approaching from behind on the right, let the rider go through the intersection first and always use your turn signals

• Watch for bike riders turning in front of you without looking or signaling; children especially have a tendency to do this

• Be extra vigilant in school zones and resi-

dential neighborhoods

 Watch for bikes coming from driveways or behind parked cars

Check side mirrors before opening your door

The hard facts about school bus safety

School buses are the safest way to get children to and from school, but injuries can occur if kids are not careful when getting on and off the school bus. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration recommends the following tips for school bus riders and their families:

• Walk with your young kids to the bus stop and wait with them until it arrives. Make sure drivers can see the kids at your bus stop.

• Teach kids to stand at least three giant steps back from the curb as the bus approaches and board the bus one at a time.

• Teach kids to wait for the school bus to come to a complete stop before getting off and not to walk behind the bus.

• If your child needs to cross the street after exiting the bus, he or she should take five giant steps in front of the bus, make eye contact with the bus driver and cross when the driver indicates it's safe. Teach kids to look left, right and left again before crossing the street.

• Instruct younger kids to use handrails when boarding or exiting the bus. Be careful of straps or drawstrings that could get caught in the door. If your child drops something, they should tell the bus driver and make sure the bus driver is able to see them before they pick it up.

• Drivers should follow the speed limit and slow down in school zones and near bus stops. Remember to stay alert and look for kids who may be trying to get to or from the school bus.

• Slow down and stop if you're driving near a school bus that is flashing yellow or red lights. This means the bus is either preparing to stop (yellow) or already stopped (red), and children are getting on or off.



Corvias enters final phase of energy improvements

CORVIAS

FORT POLK, La. — Corvias, a long-term solutions and management partner to the U.S. military, announced it has entered the final phase of its geothermal installation and energy upgrades effort at Fort Polk.

The milestone, once complete, will not only modernize the aging infrastructure but save the Army significant money and benefit military families.

Part of the U.S. Military Housing Privatization Initiative (MHPI), a program through which the Department of Defense works with the private sector to revitalize military family housing, the work includes the installation of geothermal heat pumps and ENERGY STAR electric and water saving devices.

Upgrades associated with this project, which began in 2018, are

slated to be completed in early 2020 and will significantly reduce the community's carbon footprint.

To date, Corvias has installed:

• 100 percent of 1,130 residences received water and energy conservation fixtures, including low-flow faucets, shower heads and toilets.

• 63 percent of 3,772 ENERGY STAR certified Nest Learning Thermostats.

• 60 percent of the 2,400 planned geothermal heat pumps (and is on schedule for the remaining residences).

The geothermal project received approval in 2015 following the conclusion of a previous contract. Corvias raised \$34 million to implement operational efficiencies, create cost savings and replace and upgrade outdated infrastructure within Fort Polk's housing portfolio.

The program is estimated to average \$1.5 million in energy savings

and operational cost avoidance annually totaling more than \$40 million in savings throughout the remaining years of the Corvias program.

In addition to the energy and money savings, water upgrades will save 71,000 gallons of water annually, the equivalent of 7 average-sized swimming pools.





New phone system to aid BJACH patients

BJACH

FORT POLK, La. — On July 29, 2019, Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital implemented a new automated clinic directory telephone system to connect patients to specific health clinics more efficiently.

The phone menu allows patients to be transferred to the most frequently called clinics in the hospital. Patients are encouraged to listen to the entire menu before making their selection when calling BJACH at (337) 531-3118.

Option 1: Call center (appointment line)

Option 2: Pharmacy Option 3: Radiology Option 4: Eye, ear, nose and

throat

Option 5: Behavioral health **Option 6:** Laboratory

Option 7: BJACH team member (front desk)

The system improves the patient experience via the telephone by decreasing the number of call transfers.

"At BJACH, we pride ourselves on providing the best," said Sgt. Dawn Peterson, BJACH medical laboratory NCOIC. "Using this technology will give our patients options to reach us in a fast and hassle-free process."



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Lagniappe

BOSS

• Beach bash

Fort Polk's Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers hosts its annual BOSS Beach Bash summer celebration today from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at Toledo Bend Army Recreation Site. This event is for single Soldiers only.

There will be free food, a live DJ, games, boat rides and free giveaways. A shuttle service is provided from the Home of Heroes Recreation Center, 2165 Ninth St.

• Skydiving trip

BOSS hosts a skydiving trip to Houston, Texas Aug. 17. Departure time for the trip is 8 a.m. from the Home of Heroes Recreation Center. Single Soldiers only. The cost is \$200 per person and covers transportation, hotel and ticket. Register by Aug. 9 by calling 531-1948.

• Cosmic bowling

BOSS invites single Soldiers to a night of bowling Aug. 24 at 9 p.m. at the Strike Zone Bowling Center. The event is free and sure to be lots of fun. Limited space is available. Call 531-1948 to register.

• Lemon lot

Trying to sell your vehicle? Bring it to the BOSS Lemon Lot. Registration is \$5 for 30 days. Cars that are not registered will be towed. Register at the Home of Heroes Recreation Center.

• Volunteer opportunity

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

For more information call 531-1948.

Festivals

• Satchmo Summerfest

This annual festival, held today through Sunday, celebrates Louis Armstrong's life, legacy and music. The festival is held at the New Orleans Jazz Museum at the Mint, 400 Esplanade Ave., New Orleans.

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itation. This specific offer is not available in CO, NY; call 1-800-969-4781 o licy P150 (GA: P150GA; NY: P150NY; OK: P150OK; TN: P150TN) The festivities include a seminar series, jazz exhibits, a jazz mass and second-line parade, fantastic food and a host of star-studded performers. Daily admission is \$6 per person. For more information visit https://satchmosummerfest.org/.

• 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. Sample dishes from local chefs, each preparing a unique seafood dish representative of their cuisine's styles. For more information visit **www.artscouncilswla**.org.

• Shrimp festival

The Delcambre Shrimp Festival takes place Aug. 14-18. Delcambre is a little over two and a half hours from Fort Polk, about 20 miles south of Lafayette. The festival has gained it's popularity by providing a variety of delicious dishes and top notch entertainment including national recording artists. Enjoy signature shrimp dishes like boiled shrimp, fried shrimp, shrimp sauce piquante, shrimp salad and many more. For more information visit **www.shrimpfestival.net**.

• Duck festival

If you love to hunt fowl, you won't want to miss this festival focused on everything to do with hunting ducks. The Gueydan Duck Festival takes place Aug. 22-25, at 404 Dallas Guidry Road, Gueydan, about two hours south of Fort Polk. The event offers opportunities to enjoy a duck and goose calling contest, skeet shooting, dog trials and decoy carving. This is in addition to great food, live bands, cooking contests and a carnival. For more information visit **www.duckfestival.org**.

Miscellaneous

• Alexandria Zoological Park

If you love animals, summer is the perfect time to pack up the family and head to the Alexandria Zoo, 3016 Masonic Drive. The zoo is open from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. daily. Admission is \$7.50 per person ages 13-64. Admission for children ages 4-12 is \$5.50. Admission for seniors 64 and older is \$4.50. Children three and under get in free.

For more information visit **www.thealexan**driazoo.com.

• Visit plantations

Take time to explore historic homes where generations of the same families of owners and workers, enslaved and tenant, lived for more than 200 years. The Cane River Creole Park tells their stories and preserves the cultural landscape of Oakland and Magnolia Plantations, two of the most intact Creole cotton plantations in the United States.

These historic plantations have original outbuildings still remaining. They include pigeonniers, an overseer's house, massive roofed log corn crib, carriage house, mule barn that was originally a smokehouse, carpenter's shop and cabins.

The plantations, located in Cane River Creole National Park, 4386 La. Hwy 494, Natchez, are open daily from 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Admission is free. For more information call (318) 356-8441 or visit **www.nps.gov/cari/in-dex.htm**.

• Barksdale museum

Visit the Barksdale Global Power Museum, 88 Shreveport Road, Barksdale Airforce Base, Bossier City. Take an exciting journey through the past and discover the dynamic history of strategic bombardment at the home of the 2nd Bomb Wing, the mighty 8th Air Force and the new Air Force Global Strike Command.

See vintage aircraft like the venerable B-17 and B-24 bombers of World War II along with their best "Little Friend" the P-51 Mustang. You can also see Cold War heroes such as the B-52D and B-52G Stratofortress.

You will see the highest and fastest flying jet aircraft ever — the MACH 3, SR-71 Blackbird. There are many more on display in the air park to enjoy.

The museum is open from 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m., Monday through Saturday except Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years Day.

For more information visit **www.barksdaleglobalpowermuseum.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. The next meeting is Tuesday. The August tournament takes place at Sam Rayburn Reservoir, just north of Jasper, Texas, Aug. 10. The entry fee is \$40. For more information visit **www.fortpolkcommunitybassmasters.com**.

• Lose weight

Join Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS) every Thursday at the Vernon Parish Library meeting room. Weigh in is from 5-5:50 p.m. The meeting starts at 5:50 p.m. For more information call (337) 208-0896.







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