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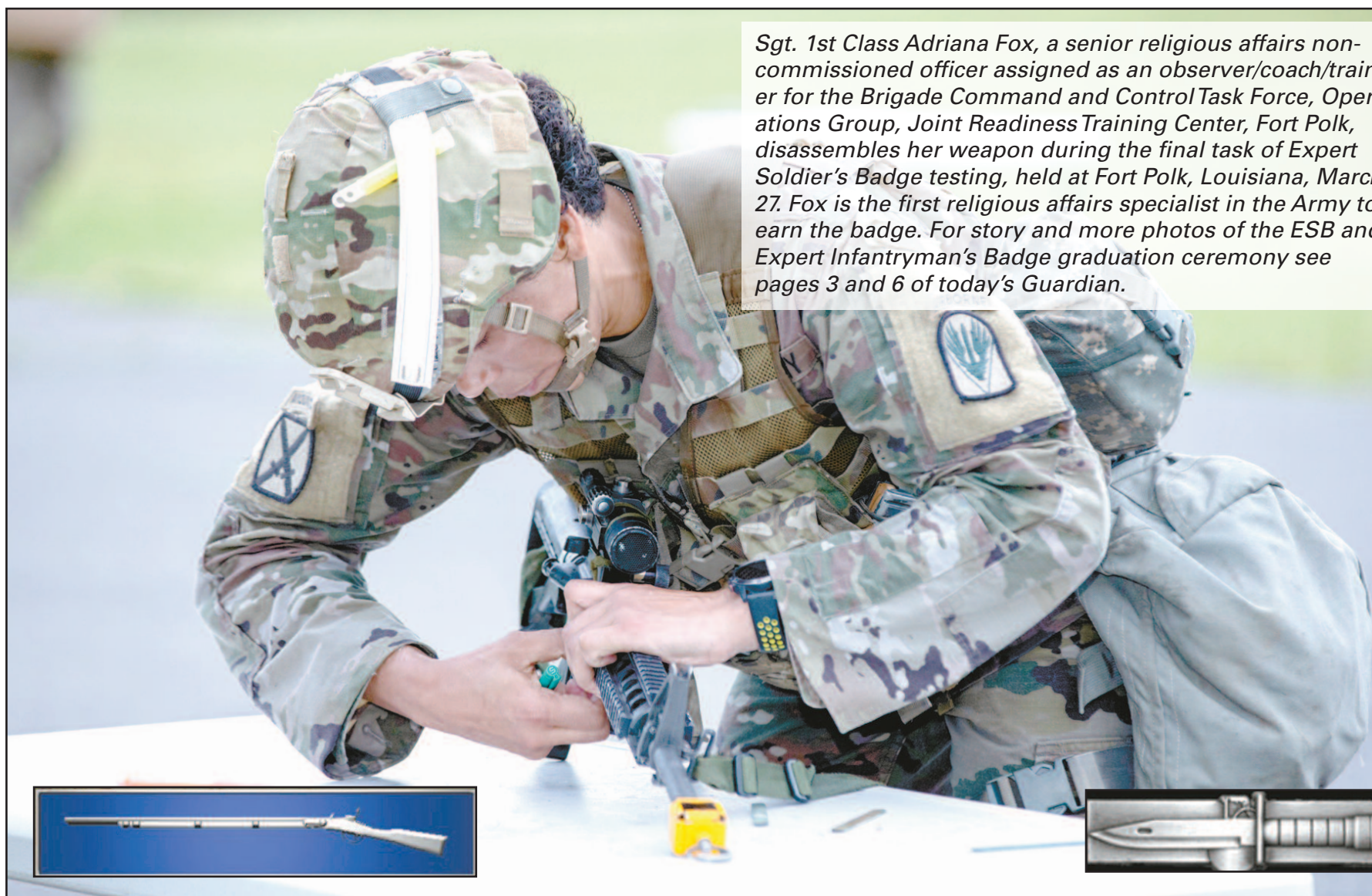
WARRIOR SPIRIT

THE JRTC & FORT POLK GUARDIAN

Vol. 47, No. 14

Home of Heroes @ Fort Polk, LA

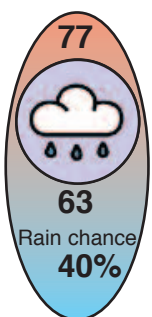
April 3, 2020



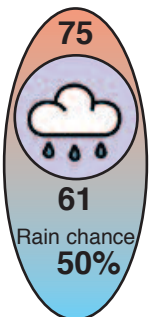
Sgt. 1st Class Adriana Fox, a senior religious affairs non-commissioned officer assigned as an observer/coach/trainer for the Brigade Command and Control Task Force, Operations Group, Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, disassembles her weapon during the final task of Expert Soldier's Badge testing, held at Fort Polk, Louisiana, March 27. Fox is the first religious affairs specialist in the Army to earn the badge. For story and more photos of the ESB and Expert Infantryman's Badge graduation ceremony see pages 3 and 6 of today's Guardian.

STAFF SGT. ASHLEY MORRIS / 3RD BCT, 10TH MTN DIV, P&O

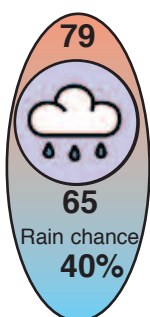
Weekend weather



Friday



Saturday



Sunday

Inside the Guardian

The Fort Polk Guardian is suspending its printing operations. For the time being, the Guardian will be published as an e-edition only. Each week, we'll

send a link and run-down of contents via all users-email, as to where you can read the paper. We hope to start printing again soon!

Viewpoint

In our view

Guardian staff asked the Fort Polk community, "What are some things you have done while staying at home?" Here are their responses:



Mason Chapman: "I'm using this time to play video games with my friends on XBOX live."



Alex Chopper: "My dad is teaching me to change the brakes on the car while my mom supervises."



Sara Cannon: "To stay busy during this time, my daughter (Alayna) is painting her daddy's (Todd) toe nails. Don't tell his company!"



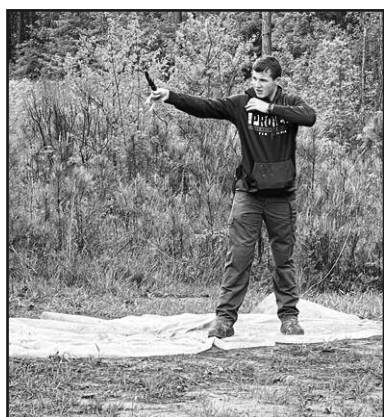
Terrance Carter: "I've got my kids helping me with some projects around the house. We got a new puppy, named Droopy, and the time off allows my daughter Marrion plenty of time to train him."



Deborah Moretti: "Here we are crafting and preparing for a move that will come eventually. Walking or running when weather is on our side. Praising God that we have life filled with hope no matter what it looks like now. My teenager refuses to let me take her picture, but here is a collage of some of the crafts we've done."



Sgt. 1st Class Ramsey Street: "With a house of six we definitely have to be creative in ways to stay entertained during this COVID-19 social distancing. We have been spending a lot of time playing basketball, volleyball, riding bikes, putting puzzles together and playing board games."



Baker Graves: "I'm teaching myself to throw knives like the character Lee Christmas from the movie, The Expendables."



Col. Kendall Clark, his wife Veronica and their daughter Jazmine: "Fitness has been our family's event of choice. Practicing self-care, resiliency, flexibility while social distancing."



Staff Sgt. Amy Puckett (Pictured with sons Caleb, Austin and Steven): "There is a lot of lawn work being done, we play board games and have an occasional pillow fight. The last pillow fight led to a sewing lesson."



Guardian

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Briefs

Student personal items

Vernon Parish Schools will now open their schools from 9 a.m.-noon on Tuesday to allow parents to pick up their student's personal items.

If you need an essential item from school call on Tuesday between 9 a.m.-noon to set up an appointment to come in during the given hours. You may also email your principal. Email addresses can be found on the vpsb.us website directory.

Principals are asking that only one parent enter the school with their child and that items retrieved should be essential items such as medication, prescription glasses, or high value items.

Absentee voting

If you want to vote absentee visit FVAP.gov or stop by the Fort Polk Installation Voting Office at 920 Bell Ricard Ave. Capt. Justin Smith is the installation voting assistance officer.

Call him at 531-0886 or email justin.m.smith.12.mil@mail.mil.

Resilience module

The American Red Cross offers a free virtual resilience module titled "Stress Management and Relaxation" to anyone who lives or works on Fort Polk.

Contact the American Red Cross on Fort Polk at FortPolk@RedCross.org for more information of to schedule the training.

Family Life chaplains

Soldiers, dependents and Department of Defense civilians can set up virtual teleconferences with the Fort Polk Family Chaplain from the comfort of home.

Send an email to everett.e.zachary.mil@mail.mil or call 531-1161 to request a time and day that works best for you.

You will be sent a URL link by email. Click the link to begin a confidential counseling session. All you need is an adequate internet connection, a computer or smart phone and current military identification to get started.

The Chaplain Family Life Center provides faith sensitive counseling and trauma therapy to military individuals, couples and families in need.

Family life teletherapy is end-to-end encrypted confidential communication that is Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) compliant for securing your protected health information (PHI), and is pastoral and clinically based for meeting behavioral, relational and spiritual needs.



CHUCK CANNON / GUARDIAN

First Lt. Preston Bentley, Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, is the first Soldier to cross the finish line of the 12-mile foot march, the final event in the Expert Infantryman's Badge and Expert Soldier's Badge testing March 27 at Fort Polk's Honor Field.

Newest EIB, ESB graduates pin on badges

By **CHUCK CANNON**

Guardian editor

FORT POLK, La. — More than 500 Soldiers began testing for the Expert Infantryman Badge and Expert Soldier Badge March 23 on the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk after a two-week train up.

On March 27, 160 EIB candidates and 17 ESB candidates "survived" to compete in the final event — a 12-mile foot march in the heat and humidity of Louisiana.

When the 3-hour time limit for the march expired, 143 Soldiers had earned the EIB and 13 the ESB. The graduates received their badges in a ceremony on Fort Polk's Honor Field that was streamed live on the JRTC and Fort Polk Facebook page due to social distancing constraints necessitated by COVID-19 concerns.

Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, commander, JRTC and Fort Polk, joined the candidates for the march and said their willingness to conquer the grueling 12-mile foot march over an extremely difficult route and in energy-sapping humidity was a great professional accomplishment.

"I'm very proud of them, both EIB and ESB," Frank said. "It was outstanding vision by the Army to bring ESB in with EIB. Our next step

will be to bring EFMB into this also — all three together."

Frank said comments from those who took part in the testing say volumes about the non-commissioned officers on JRTC and Fort Polk.

"As you went around the site, what you saw were professional noncommissioned officers all across JRTC and Fort Polk," he said. "It was a total effort across the installation."

As for why he showed up at 3 a.m. to join the Soldiers for the foot march, Frank said the answer was easy: "I love being with our Soldiers. This is the essence of the Army this morning — to come out and do a 12-mile foot march with these Soldiers and to see them out there cheering each other on. They're congratulating each other; it's the camaraderie of being a Soldier. You gotta love it."

First Lt. Preston Bentley, Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, was the first EIB Soldier to cross the finish line. He said when he saw he had finished the foot march in less than 3 hours it was a great feeling.

"I never have to do this again," he said.

Bentley said the key for him was hydrating the

Please see **EIB**, page 5

Army news

Army seeks retired medical Soldiers to support COVID-19 efforts

By DEVON SUITS

Army News Service

WASHINGTON — More than 14,000 retired Soldiers have already shown interest in returning to active duty after the Army recently reached out to more than 800,000 of them to assist in the COVID-19 pandemic response, G-1 officials said March 27.

"The U.S. Army is actively seeking retired officers, noncommissioned officers and other Soldiers to assist with COVID-19 pandemic response efforts," officials said in a statement.

"When the nation called, they have answered, and now that call has come again. This extraordinary challenge requires equally extraordinary solutions."

The Army is currently looking for the following medical specialties:

- Critical care officers, 60F
- Anesthesiologist, 60N
- Nurse anesthetist, 66F
- Critical care nurse, 66S
- Nurse practitioner, 66P
- Emergency room nurse, 66T
- Respiratory specialist, 68V
- Medic, 68W

Medical support

Army Chief of Staff Gen. James McConville also announced March 26 that two Army hospitals are in New York and treating non-COVID-19 patients as part of an interagency approach to help decrease the burden on state healthcare facilities.

The 531st Hospital Center at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, and the 9th Hospital from Fort Hood, Texas, are set up at the Javits Center, McConville said during a Pentagon press briefing.

Soldiers with the 627th Hospital at Fort Carson, Colorado, are also deployed to Washington state, McConville added.

An advance party arrived in the state March 25 and started coordinating with local officials to determine a suitable hospital location. Overall, the units will provide close to 300 hospital beds in New York and about 250 beds in Washington, he said.

"Soldiers that are called upon to deploy — in this case here to support the government and our nation — we look at cross leveling within (Army) Medical Command," said Army Surgeon General Lt. Gen. Scott Dingle.

With portions of the active-duty force de-



SENIOR AIRMAN SEAN MADSEN/ARMY NEWS SERVICE

New York Army National Guard Soldiers with the 133rd Composite Supply Company demonstrate assembling a cot at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center in New York City March 26. The convention center will be an alternate care site to ease the bed shortage of New York hospitals as part of the state response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

ployed, the Army looks to leverage the recalled volunteers and its reserve force to support impacted medical treatment facilities to ensure the readiness of the force.

Protecting U.S. citizens from COVID-19 requires a vital call to action, Army officials said in a separate message to the retired Soldiers.

Return to service

Former active and Army Reserve Soldiers who have been retired for less than five years must meet the necessary certifications and eligibility criteria before returning to service, officials said.

By law, retirees currently serving in key medical positions cannot be recalled into service, as their absence could impact current state medical operations.

If a Soldier is selected to return to service, their retirement pay will stop, as the Army places them on active-duty pay. A Soldier's length of tour and location would be based on the needs of the force, officials said. Recalled Soldiers will not

be eligible for promotion, and the Army will consider waivers for those who cannot meet current height and weight requirements, officials said. Uniforms will be determined at a later date, as Army leaders continue to develop an onboarding process for returned personnel.

Once a Soldier's service is complete, their years of service would be recalculated, which could increase their retirement pay.

"We're asking our 'Soldier for Life' family to once again answer the call to duty and rejoin our ranks for this noble cause," officials said. "If you are interested in becoming an important part of the solution against this pandemic, please visit the Army Human Resources Command website (<https://www.hrc.army.mil/>) for more information and to apply. It would be our honor to have you on the Army team again."

For more information see the retiree recall at <https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/Surveys/RetireeRecall/RetireeRecall.aspx>.

U.S. Army updates promotion and retention policies in response to COVID-19

U.S. ARMY PUBLIC AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Army has made important changes to enlisted promotion and retention policies due to the current COVID-19 pandemic to take care of its Soldiers and maintain a ready force.

Changes to enlisted promotion policy include the opportunity for battalion commanders to authorize virtual promotion boards, suspension of the one-year expiration date for the Army Physical Fitness Test (the APFT will be maintained as a

promotion eligibility requirement), suspension of the two-year expiration of the weapons qualification, and suspension of pin-on requirements for the Advanced Leader Course and the Senior Leader Course.

Soldiers may request to reenlist or extend for a period of three to 23 months with approval from their immediate commanders. Battalion commanders will have the option to authorize either virtual promotion boards or they may recognize recommendations for promotion based off the input of the chain of command and the NCO sup-

port channel. "We are taking unprecedented and immediate action to keep the right people in the right rank when we need them the most," said Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Grinston. "Force health protection is the Army's top priority. We are constantly assessing the situation and refining guidance to the force. It's going to take the whole Army working together and adapting as we go, but we will kill the virus."

For more information on reenlistments and extensions, Soldiers should contact their career counselors.

Continued from page 3

day before the foot march.

"It was pretty hot and humid, and I was sweating like crazy," he said. "You've got to drink plenty of fluids and make sure your gear is tight and squared away. I know I'll be grinning for a while."

Sgt. 1st Class Luke Katz, 2nd Battalion, 134th Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Division, Nebraska National Guard, said he and four fellow Soldiers from his unit were offered slots in the EIB testing.

"The training was immaculate," he said. "I loved it. You couldn't ask for any better instructors or training; it was incredible. I can't wait to take it back to Nebraska."

Katz said the foot march was difficult.

"This ain't Nebraska weather," Katz said of the heat and humidity. "The humidity was definitely intense. The training was awesome. I could not have had a better day."

Cpl. Jason Cisneros, 2nd Bn, 4th Inf Reg, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div, said that by the two-mile marker he was pouring sweat.

"It was one of the hardest 12-milers I've done," he said. "I don't ever have to do this again. The next time I'll be on the other side of the table doing the grading."

First Lt. Travis Meservy, Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div, said that because of the intense humidity, he was concerned he wasn't making adequate time during the march.

"It was pretty humid and I kept looking at my watch and wasn't making as good a time as I had hoped," he said. "It was also super dark so that made it hard to go quick. (Earning the EIB) is something I've been looking forward to. Last time I didn't pass, but I made it this time."

Col. Kendall Clarke, commander, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div, said his unit had about 200 Soldiers hoping to earn the EIB.

"It was an absolutely incredible performance from our Patriots, Ops Group and other partners from other installations," he said. "Today took me back to when I got my EIB in 1997. Conditions were a little different; I got mine in Egypt and it was 99 degrees, but there wasn't humidity like there was this morning."

As he looked at the smiles on the faces of those who conquered the EIB or ESB crucible, Clarke said it brought back memories.

"I'm still smiling from when I crossed the finish line as a young second lieutenant. It's very euphoric. To be a part of this is a pleasure."

Clarke said he was not surprised that Frank joined the Soldiers in the march.

"The CG, on Fortress Polk, is the senior action figure," Clarke said. "The CG is not a Soldier — he is an action figure. You see the CG in the commissary, in our housing areas, in our barracks, out doing PT, so he is everywhere our Soldiers and Families are, so we're used to having him around. But it's refreshing to see him up front leading the pack, and showing the Soldiers what right looks like from privates to brigadier generals."

JRTC Ops Group Command Sgt. Maj. Jason Wilson said the EIB and ESB are badges of honor that designate their wearers as professional Soldiers.

"(If a Soldier wears the EIB or ESB) I don't have to worry about a machine gun not firing in combat because someone doesn't know how to



CHUCK CANNON / GUARDIAN

Above: A Soldier steps across the finish line of the 12-mile foot march on Fort Polk's Honor Field March 27 in less than 3 hours to earn his Expert Infantryman's Badge. In the background another Soldier goes through a final check on his M4 rifle before crossing the finish line. After completing the foot march, Soldiers had to disassemble, re-assemble and perform a functions check on their M4 to complete the testing and earn the coveted EIB.

Right: Two Soldiers approach the finish line of the 12-mile foot march March 27 at Fort Polk's Honor Field, finishing well within the 3-hour time limit.



properly load it, or how to reduce stoppage or correct a malfunction," he said. "They've been trained, tested and proved their knowledge."

Wilson said as he watched Soldiers tackle the foot march, he remembered what it was like as a private 22 years ago when he earned his EIB.

"You quickly put yourself in their situation," he said. "You can't let a 12-mile foot march keep you from this. When you reach that goal, you don't take the smile off your face for a long time."

Fort Polk female Soldiers earn Expert Soldier Badges

By Staff Sgt. ASHLEY MORRIS

3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div PAO

FORT POLK, La. — Two female Soldiers, out of 13 finalists, were awarded the Expert Soldier's Badge at a ceremony held at Honor Field on Fort Polk March 27.

First Lt. Hannah Whitney, a platoon leader assigned to Alpha Troop, 3rd Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division and Sgt. 1st Class Adriana Fox, a senior religious affairs noncommissioned officer assigned as an observer/coach/trainer for the Brigade Command and Control Task Force, Operations Group, Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, both earned the coveted ESB after two weeks of training and one week of testing.

Expert Soldier's Badge training and testing, hosted by 3rd Brigade Combat Team, was held concurrently with Expert Infantryman's Badge training and testing. More than 1,000 Soldiers began the training phase on March 9 for both EIB and ESB. Only 484 EIB candidates and 41 ESB candidates were able to advance to the testing phase for the badges.

Out of those 41 ESB candidates, six of them were women.

When Fox first heard about the opportunity to earn the ESB on Fort Polk, she jumped at the chance to attend the training.

"As a sergeant first class, I never thought I would be able to get this experience," Fox said. "We were in our January rotation when we heard that 3rd Brigade postponed EIB so they could conduct ESB at the same time. We had to coordinate with our task force to make sure we would be able to complete the training during JRTC rotation training."

"I wish I would have prepared more for the ruck march. It was very challenging. I had never done a ruck march for 12 miles. With the gravel and sand, it was really hard. A few times I wanted to quit ... There was no way I would have finished by myself. It was definitely a team effort."

First Lt. HANNAH WHITNEY

3rd Sqd, 89th Cav Reg, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div

At the beginning of the training, Soldiers are given a diagnostic Army Physical Fitness Test. They needed to score at least an 80% for their age and gender to advance to the next training event, land navigation.

The land navigation event is broken down into two tasks: Day and night land navigation. For both tasks, candidates have three hours to correctly locate three out of four points using a compass, 1:50,000 scale map and protractor.

The rest of the events include patrol, medical and weapons lanes in which Soldiers are only



STAFF SGT. ASHLEY MORRIS / 3RD BCT, 10TH MTN DIV PAO

First Lt. Hannah Whitney, center, a platoon leader assigned to Alpha Troop, 3rd Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, crosses the finish line of a 12-mile foot march in less than 3 hours to earn her Expert Soldier's Badge March 27 on Fort Polk's Honor Field.

permitted to receive one "no-go" for all of the events, to include land navigation.

The testing phase is conducted the same way, but with more constraints due to COVID-19 precautionary measures. Instructors and Soldiers had to make sure they were practicing proper hygiene, and maintaining social distancing requirements. Shared training equipment was wiped down in-between uses.

Despite the extra obstacles, Whitney and Fox remained diligent in their efforts to obtain the badge. Training outside of the established training schedule is key to being successful during Expert Soldier's Badge testing, said Whitney.

"Once I got the book, I started studying," Whitney said. "Anytime I had free time, I would open the book. There were a lot of things I was already familiar with from prior training, but some things I needed help with."

Although Soldiers must complete each task individually, for both Whitney and Fox, ESB felt more like a team event.

Whitney said being able to draw weapons at her troop and having her Soldiers help her train on the different weapon systems allowed her to be successful during the weapons lane.

For Fox, it was the instructors who had the biggest impact. The task she struggled with the most was the hand grenade.

"It's one of those skills we don't use often, so I had to reach deep in order to keep on going," Fox said. "The instructors took the time to break down the sequences and performance tasks to help us understand why it's done the way they are teaching us. All of the instructors were amazing!"

Testing to receive the Expert Soldier's Badge does not stop until candidates complete the 12-mile ruck march event within three hours or less.

Candidates must carry a rucksack weighing 35 lbs. After crossing the finish line, Soldiers must complete the final task of clearing, disassembling, assembling and performing a functions check on their M4 carbine rifle.

"I wish I would have prepared more for the ruck march," Whitney said. "It was very challenging. I had never done a ruck march for 12 miles. With all of the gravel and sand, it was really hard. A few times I wanted to quit."

Keeping with the teamwork mentality, Whitney attributed her success during the ruck march to three other officers and one NCO from her troop.

"I was with them a majority of the time," said Whitney. "There was no way I would have finished by myself. It was definitely a team effort."

"The ruck march really showed how passionate we all are to be here," Fox said. "Between the temperature and the humidity, after the first half-mile, I think we all realized this is what we want to do."

When the ruck march began, the temperature was 71 degrees with 87% humidity.

At a time when it seems like women in the Army are being monitored more closely than in the past, Fox said she hopes she inspires not only females but everyone to try and earn the coveted badge.

Fox is the first religious affairs specialist to earn the expert soldier badge. Whitney said that anyone who is able should try out for the badge.

"There was no bias," said Whitney. "It was an even playing field. This was some of the best training I have received in a very long time."

Due to COVID-19 social distancing requirements, family and friends were not allowed to attend the ceremony. The ceremony was live-streamed on Facebook.

Fighting alcoholism: One person's insight into numbing pain

By **ANGIE THORNE**

Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. — Alcoholism doesn't happen overnight. There are many factors — layered one upon the other over time — that can prompt a person to succumb. Alcoholism is a familiar story, yet unique to each individual as they strive to reach a false sense of peace by desensitizing their personal pain.

April is national Alcohol Awareness Month. The observance focuses on the public health program organized by the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence as a way of increasing outreach and education regarding the dangers of alcoholism and issues related to alcohol, according to www.alcohol.org.

With that in mind, it seemed fitting to shed light on the chronic disease of alcoholism locally. A member of the Fort Polk community has stepped forward to bravely share his battle with this condition.

We'll call him J.D. to protect his privacy.

In the beginning

At first, J.D. said his drinking was a gradually increasing issue that he didn't realize had become an addiction. He said he grew up in a culture where drinking alcohol was the norm — making it even harder to distinguish when his habit became too much.

"Drinking is socially acceptable. You go to a social event like a barbecue and beer flows like water. You can buy liquor 24-hours a day at most convenience or grocery stores or head to a bar to get your fix. That easy access only made it harder to differentiate between fun and flagrant. The common place usage made it tough to acknowledge when I had crossed the line from social drinking to addiction," he said.

Family

J.D.'s alcoholism put a strain on family relationships. His drinking made him pull away from them. Because he was drinking as soon as he got home from work, there were things he couldn't do like go out to dinner with his wife. There weren't a lot of extracurricular activities happening.

"It was more like 'I'm home, I'm done, and it's my time.' It wasn't my time, it was the alcohol's time," he said.

The biggest impact on his family is that there was no real togetherness and he said he lost their trust.

"You make promises to your kids and you don't follow through because there is a bigger priority in your life — alcohol. At the time, you don't realize you are doing it. Looking back I can see it so clearly. My life wasn't about spending time with my wife and kids, it was about worrying when I could get my next drink," he said.

I have a problem

J.D. said his drinking had ebbed and flowed all of his life. Looking back, he said the last couple of years began a quiet downward spiral that came to a head in January. That's when he said he began to realize he might have a serious problem.

"I was dealing with depression and post-traumatic stress disorder nightmares. The drinking had gone from a way to relax after a hard day at work to self-medicating that helped dull the pain. It became a crutch," he said. "The way I looked at it, the alcohol was helping me control the nightmares, but ultimately it ended up feed-

ing the dreams and my addiction because I needed to drink more and more to numb myself. By the time I took a hard look at myself in the mirror and admitted that I had an issue, I was no longer drinking for a reason (to socialize or celebrate). The reason I drank was that it was 5:30 p.m. and I had access to a bottle of vodka."

J.D. was at his breaking point and knew he needed treatment under medical care. He had a rough and emotional week and had been drinking to the point that things were quickly getting out of hand.

"I hadn't reached rock bottom, but at that pivotal moment in my life I knew if I didn't get help it wouldn't be long before I would. My thoughts weren't right; my mind wasn't right; nothing was right. That was the trigger that made me think, 'What are you doing?'" he said.

J.D. went to an emergency room and by the next morning he was in a rehabilitation center's detox program.

Rehab

The first thing you do in rehab is detox. J.D. said the first three days of detox he shook so much that he didn't have the coordination to shuffle a pack of cards. Concentration was difficult to come by.

"I was so jittery. I never realized that alcohol had that much control over me. It took me 12 days to completely detox and get the alcohol out of my system," he said.

Then the rehabilitation process began. The program J.D. participated in was for veterans and their family members.

"Everyone I was in there with was a veteran. It was an eye opener as to how many veterans are suffering," he said.

J.D. said his every moment was dictated by someone else and you don't go anywhere without somebody locking and unlocking a door for you.

He said group session discussions center around triggers, emotional reasons why you use and other typical substance abuse counseling measures.

"All this and more is normal for in-patient therapy," he said.

J.D. said though he no longer had the physical cravings for alcohol, undoing the years of mental habits that came with drinking was the bigger task.

"This is something I did every day. It's 5:30 p.m. and why don't I have a drink in my hand? You learn to deal with these issues right along with everyone else in rehab. After another two weeks, I was better but I knew if I walked out that door I wasn't ready. It would be so easy to pick up a bottle and start drinking again," he said.

He knew he still had work to do. He said he still had to learn how to deal with all the implications and repercussions of his addictions.

"When you come out of that process you are stronger for it and it helps you make better decisions every minute of the day to continue in the direction you want to go. Without going through a program like this, you will never see the big picture and realize what you have done to yourself through alcoholism."

Looking back, J.D. said the hardest thing about being in rehab was knowing that he needed to be there.

J.D. said overall his rehab was a positive experience. He said it made him realize he's not alone

April is

**Alcohol
Awareness
Month**

and yet he knew it was his battle to fight.

"From your family, friends and coworkers to the doctors, mental health technicians and other patients, you have a support system in place to get you through this experience and set you on a course to be strong enough to face your demons," he said. "Even though you aren't alone, nobody else can do it for you."

After rehab

J.D. said when he first went to the hospital, his kids were angry with him, but they and his spouse were also supportive.

They visited and saw where he was living and J.D. believes it was a reality check for his boys that if they follow down the path their dad did, they could end up in the same kind of place.

He said that has opened the way for more personal conversations with his family.

"There's more family social interaction and spending time with my kids. I'm catching up on all the time I missed. What I'm seeing is a rebuilding of relationships that weren't necessarily broken, but were strained and damaged due to my alcoholism," he said. "I feel healthier. I have more energy. I have more drive and desire to accomplish the little things that, before, I didn't care about. I am simply happier in my personal and professional life."

J.D. said there were other positive effects on his kids after they watched him own up to his struggles. He said he saw a rise in responsibility levels.

"They talk to me about what happens in their lives and own up about things they shouldn't have done. Their trust has grown as our communication levels have risen," he said.

His alcoholism had a huge negative affect on his family, but J.D. hopes that having tackled his issues openly and honestly through rehabilitation will lead to a positive long-term affect on them and the decisions they make in the future.

Motivation

J.D. said though alcoholism is something he realizes he will have to continue to deal with for the rest of his life, he feels he is up to the challenge of fighting that very personal battle and he will come out on top.

"My alcoholism was a failure, but I can learn from that and turn it into a success. In my mind, I ask, 'why can't you beat this?' I recently went to an event and the only beverages being served were alcoholic. I thought that was going to be a struggle, but I told myself 'you don't drink anymore. Get something else to drink.' So I faced that temptation and my personal motivation is to beat that temptation every time it presents itself," he said. "I face that challenge every day and I know that I have the strength of will to beat it."

Please see **Pain**, page 8

Soldiers receive punishment for UCMJ violations

OSJA

FORT POLK, La. — The preamble to the Manual for Courts-Martial reads that the purpose of military law is to promote justice, assist in maintaining good order and discipline in the armed forces, 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, wrongful use or possession of controlled substances, sexual assault, fraternization, inappropriate relationships and domestic violence.

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

A staff sergeant, assigned to 519th Military Police Battalion, was issued a General Officer Memorandum of Reprimand for driving under the influence of alcohol with a blood alcohol content of 0.111%. The Commanding General directed filing the reprimand in the Soldier's Army Military Human Resources Record.

A specialist, assigned to 710th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, was punished under Article 15 for wrongful use of a controlled substance, in violation of Article 112a, Uniform Code of Military Justice. The Soldier was sentenced to a reduction

to E-2; forfeiture of \$971 pay, suspended for 180 days; and extra-duty for 45 days.

A specialist, assigned to 2nd Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div, was administratively separated under Chapter 14-12c, with a General (Under Honorable Conditions) characterization of service for assaulting his spouse. Generally, this characterization of service results in the loss of a servicemember's educational benefits.

A private first class, assigned to 3rd Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div, was punished under Article 15 for wrongful use of a controlled substance, in violation of Article 112a (UCMJ). The Soldier was sentenced to a reduction to E-2; forfeiture of \$971 pay for 2 months; extra-duty for 45 days; and restriction for 45 days.

A private first class, assigned to 1st Battalion, 509th Infantry Regiment, Operations Group, was administratively separated under Chapter 10, with an Other Than Honorable conditions characterization of service for assaulting a child under the age of 16 years. Generally, this characterization of service results in the loss of a majority of a servicemember's veterans benefits.

A private, assigned to 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div, was administratively separated under Chapter 14-12c(2), with a General (Under Honorable Conditions) characterization of service for wrongful use of a controlled substance. Generally, this characterization of service results in the loss of a service member's educational benefits.

Pain

Continued from page 7

J.D. said his other motivation is his family.

"I want to be around for all those moments that I'm lucky enough to still get to spend with my wife, teenagers, their older siblings and my grandchildren," he said. "If all else fails, I have to do it for them."

Get help

J.D. said his advice to people is to take a deep look at themselves and acknowledge when they might have an issue, even before it becomes a problem. He said he got medical help before things got worse, but he could have reached out even sooner.

"I think if you or others notice a trend of excessive drinking or you are making excuses to drink or any kind of substance abuse for that matter, you have to acknowledge it. I know that is extremely difficult, but you need to get help," he said. "Talk to someone who has been where you are or a professional that can help you."

J.D. said not to wait to get help, especially if they are Soldiers.

"Call the Army Substance Abuse Program, explain your situation and get ahead of your issues before the alcohol is controlling your life. Don't wait until you are at your breaking point. The sooner you address it, the better off you will be," he said.

For more information call ASAP at 531-2031/1964.

Community

Be informed: Learn cyberattack tips to secure home networks

GUARDIAN STAFF

FORT POLK, La. — With more of the community at home and online either for work, school or entertainment during the COVID-19 crisis, it's important to pay attention to cybersecurity.

Cybersecurity involves preventing, detecting and responding to cyberattacks that can have wide ranging effects on individuals, organizations, communities and the national level.

Cyberattacks are malicious attempts to access or damage a computer system. Cyberattacks can lead to loss of money, theft of personal information and damage to your reputation and safety. Cyberattacks are malicious attempts to access or damage a computer system. You are the first defense against cyberattacks. Following guidelines at www.ready.gov can go a long way in protecting your home network and online identity.

Before a cyberattack

You can increase your chances of avoiding cyber risks by setting up proper controls. The following are things you can do to protect yourself, your family and property before a cyberattack occurs:

- Keep software and operating systems up-to-date
- Use strong passwords that are 12 characters or longer. Use upper and lowercase letters, numbers and special characters. Use a password manager.
- Use a stronger authentication such as a PIN or password that only you would know. Consider using a separate device that can receive a code or uses a biometric scan such as a fingerprint scanner.
- Watch for suspicious activity that asks you to do something right away, offers something that sounds too good to be true or needs your personal information. Think before you click.
- Check your account statements and credit reports regularly.
- Use secure internet communications.
- Use sites that use HTTPS if you access or provide any personal information. Do not use sites with invalid certificates. Use a Virtual Private Network (VPN) that creates a secure connection.
- Use antivirus solutions, malware and firewalls to block threats.
- Regularly back up your files in an encrypted file or encrypted file storage device.
- Limit the personal information you share online. Change privacy settings and do not use location features.
- Protect your home network by changing the administrative and Wi-Fi passwords regularly.

When configuring your router, choose the Wi-Fi Protected Access 2 (WPA2) Advanced Encryption Standard (AES) setting, which is the strongest encryption option.

During a cyberattack

- Limit the damage. Look for unexplained



charges, strange accounts on your credit report, unexpected denial of your credit card, posts you did not make showing up on your social networks and people receiving emails you never sent.

- Immediately change passwords for all of your online accounts.
- Scan and clean your device.
- Consider turning off the device. Take it to a professional to scan and fix.
- Let work, school or other system owners know.
- Contact banks, credit card companies and other financial accounts. You may need to place holds on accounts that have been attacked. Close any unauthorized credit or charge accounts. Report that someone may be using your identity.
- Run a scan to make sure your system is not infected or acting suspiciously.
- If you find a problem, disconnect your device from the internet and perform a full system restore.
- If in a public setting, immediately inform a librarian, teacher or manager in charge to contact their IT department.

After a cyberattack

- File a report with the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) if you think someone is illegally using your Social Security number. OIG reviews cases of waste, fraud and abuse.
- File a complaint with the FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3). They will review the complaint and refer it to the appropriate agency.
- File a report with the local police so there is an official record of the incident.



- Report identity theft to the Federal Trade Commission.
- Contact additional agencies depending on what information was stolen. Examples include contacting the Social Security Administration (800) 269- 0271 if your Social Security Number was compromised or the Department of Motor Vehicles if your driver's license or car registration has been stolen.
- Report online crime or fraud to your local United States Secret Service (USSS) Electronic Crimes Task Force or the Internet Crime Complaint Center.

For further information on preventing and identifying threats, visit US-CERT's Alerts and Tips page at www.us-cert.gov/ncas.

Exercise builds resiliency, healthy body, peace of mind

By JEAN CLAVETTE GRAVES

Public affairs specialist

FORT POLK, La. — A year ago a friend suggested we train for a half marathon. As an overweight and out of shape female on the verge of 50, I agreed. I was starting to feel old, and knew I needed to make some changes.

We found an online half-marathon training program for beginners and set out on a journey that has changed my life for the better. Our first run was only 30 seconds and we built up from there. We completed our first half-marathon (13.1 miles), on Dec. 14 and ran another on March 8 just before the COVID-19 pandemic hit our area.

Running may not be for everyone, but exercise is. Regular exercise can have a profoundly positive impact on a person. It relieves stress, improves memory, helps with sleep and boosts overall mood. Studies suggest 15 to 30 minutes of moderate exercise five days a week are all it takes to get a mental boost.

Our commander talks a lot about resiliency for our Soldiers, but what exactly is resiliency and how can daily physical exercise improve it? Dr. Karen Doll in an article titled “23 Resilience Building Tools and Exercises (+ Mental Toughness Test),” published on positivepsychology.com, says resilience is the ability to recover from setbacks and adapt to challenging circumstances and is required to thrive and flourish. It is a foundational psychological tool that empowers us to feel effective and capable of handling uncertainty. She says experts confirm resilience is a quality and skill that can be enhanced, yet requires effort and consistency.

Building resiliency and fitness are tools to be used and developed to enhance overall well-being.

According to [Mayoclinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org) the intensity of a workout can be gauged by how a person feels during their exercise session. Moderate activity feels somewhat hard, breathing quickens, a light sweat develops after 10 minutes of activity and you can carry on a conversation. Most experts suggest this is the sweet spot for mental health benefits.

Some barriers to beginning an exercise program are the very same barriers that will be overcome once physical activity becomes part of a daily routine. Feeling overwhelmed, hopeless, bad about yourself and in

pain are barriers that most people face when beginning a new exercise program.

- **Feeling overwhelmed.** With everything going on in the world and the children home all day, the idea of working out might seem like one more thing to add to an already busy or hectic schedule. Carve out a little time in the day for yourself and find an activity you like to do and get started. Take baby steps, set realistic goals and soon you will see that physical activity helps us do everything better. You will still be busy, but the energy benefits from a daily dose of exercise will help you tackle your day.

- **Feeling hopeless.** Start slowly, keep it simple. Go for a walk, gradually increase your distance and duration. Remember, 30 seconds of running on day one, led to achieving a goal of running a half marathon in seven months.

- **Feeling bad about yourself.** Everyone starts somewhere and we are always going to be our own worst critics. Find bloggers who can inspire you to be the best you can be. No matter weight, age or fitness level, there are others out there trying to be the best they can be and learning that exercise is the key.

- **Feeling pain.** Don't ignore pain. Discuss with your health-care provider about ways to safely exercise when you are able. In the meantime, find activities that don't hurt and do those. Limit your physical activity to short 10- or 15-minute sessions two or three times per day. Try low impact activities like yoga.

With the uncertainty in our world today, now more than ever is great time to start exercising to prevent anxiety and depression. It's OK to start small; in fact, it's smart. Don't set unrealistic goals for yourself.

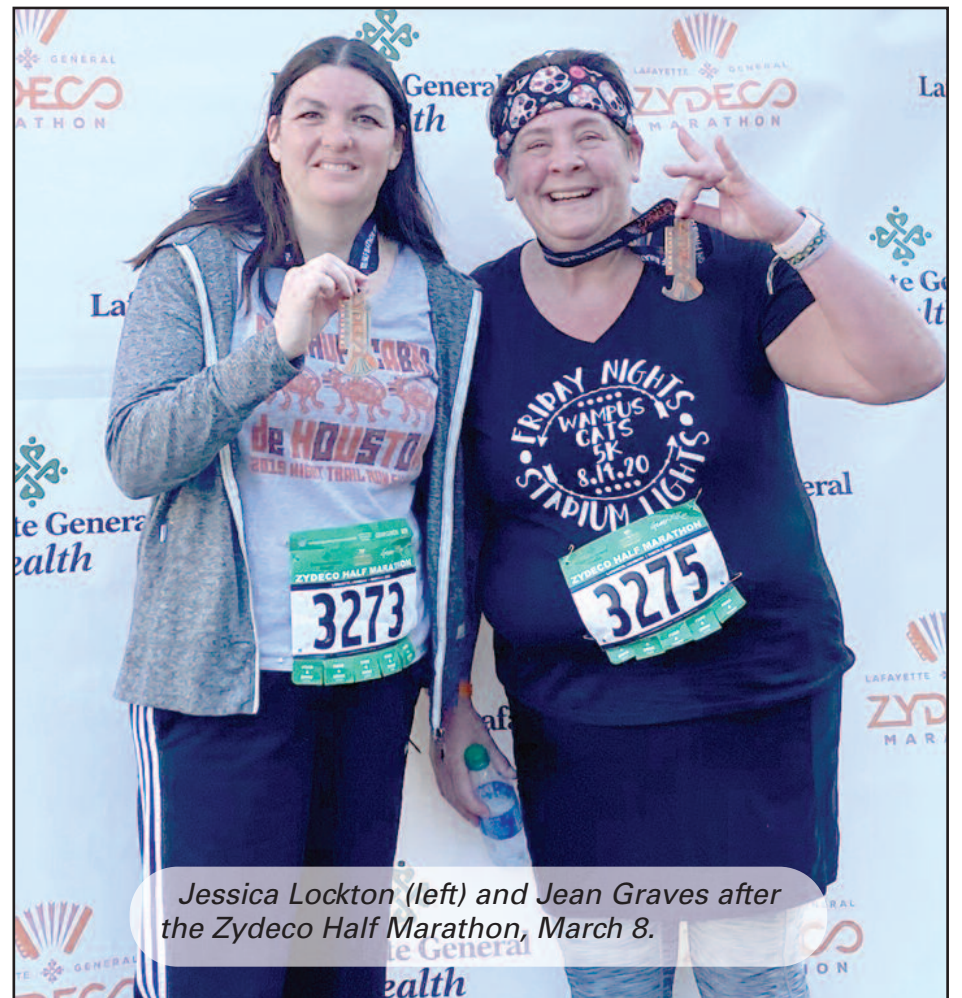
Find a time of day where your energy is highest and get started with

something simple and build on it as you become stronger and fit.

Where to start?

With social distancing and staying home, the norm for the foreseeable future going to the gym, joining a work out group or swimming laps at the pool are out of the question, but there are many ways to get started even during this uncertain time.

- **Focus on activities you enjoy,** just get moving. Walk your dog, ride your bike, play Frisbee, catch or tag with your kids. Tackle a home improvement project or start a garden. The more you start to move, the better you will feel and the more you will want to move.



Jessica Lockton (left) and Jean Graves after the Zydeco Half Marathon, March 8.

- **Be comfortable.** Find a place to exercise where you are relaxed and comfortable. Walk one of the trails on post, enjoy nature, do yoga in your back yard, do an exercise video in your living room.

- **Reward yourself.** Have an indulgent treat, soak in a bubble bath, download a new workout and upgrade your running shoes or pedometer. Set a goal and reward yourself when you've completed it.

- **Make exercise a social activity.** Maybe exercising with friends is out of the question right now, but what about your immediate family? Work out and upload a post work out photo to your favorite social media platform. Many fitness watches have a social setting where you can share your workouts with friends.

Even as we practice social distancing we are not alone. Join an online group of like-minded individuals who are working toward similar goals.

- **Make it fun.** Turn up the music while you clean your house, wash your car or tend to your garden. Play tag and run around the house and yard with your kids. Rough-house with your dog. Walk or ride your bike places when possible.

Soldiers have been directed to continue doing daily physical training on their own. Remaining ready and resilient during the current crisis is crucial. If it's important for our Soldiers, it should be important for everyone who supports a Soldier.

If you are the spouse or child of a Soldier or an employee on Fort Polk who supports the Soldiers stationed here, you have an obligation to remain physically, mentally and emotionally fit as well.

Why not get up with your Soldier and exercise with them? I've seen Soldiers across post ruck marching with their spouses, running on Marion Bonner Trail pushing jogging strollers or Families out for bike rides.

If you are a civilian employee teleworking or going to the office each day, get up a little early and exercise, walk the golf course during your lunch break or download a workout to do in the evenings.

A lot of runners like to run for medals and race swag. There are virtual challenges out there for walkers, runners and cyclists to help keep you motivated and moving. I am personally signed up for an 82.1 mile “Find Big Foot” virtual race.

Every time I run I log in my mileage, I've completed 50 miles of running since March 13 and when I reach the finish line, I will be sent a medal.

Maybe it's not the same as participating in a big race with thousands of people, but it's keeping me focused, keeping me moving and helping me to stay mentally, emotionally and physically healthy while practicing social distancing measures.

What are you going to do?



JRTC AND FORT POLK AAFES, COMMISSARY AND MWR COVID-19 SERVICES UPDATE

As of March 30

Commissary purchasing limits 30 Mar

LIMIT (1) PER CUSTOMER

- Package of toilet paper
- Package of paper
- Bag or box of plain rice
- Club pack wipes



LIMIT (2) PER CUSTOMER

- Antibacterial hand gels, wipes, and sprays
- Hygienic or baby wipes
- Hand soap
- Bleach
- Facial Tissues
- Pasta Sauce
- Dried Pasta
- Loaves of bread
- Milk (WIC excluded)
- Eggs (WIC excluded)
- Bagged potatoes
- Bagged onions
- Bagged apples
- Banana bunches
- 24pk Bottled water

LIMIT (3) PER CUSTOMER

- Fresh Chicken – to include ground chicken, chicken breasts, whole chicken, etc.

- **Limit to (4) Per Customer - Gallon containers of water**

"ONE TEAM - ONE FIGHT"

For the latest updates, please visit the JRTC and Fort Polk Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/JRTCandFortPolk> and Fort Polk Family MWR at <https://www.facebook.com/fortpolkmwr>



JRTC, Fort Polk adjusts to provide Soldier, Family services

GUARDIAN STAFF

FORT POLK, La. — As the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk adjusts its schedules and services to support social distancing necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the installation's organizations have followed suit.

Fort Polk's Army Community Service offers the following programs that are operating remotely:

- Army Emergency Relief, AER, contact Jessica Ballard at 531-6561 or email jessica.e.ballard2.civ@mail.mil

- Army Family Team Building, AFTB, contact Sarah Sedlacek at 531-1895 or email sarah.e.sedlacek2.civ@mail.mil

- Army Volunteer Corps, AVC, contact Sarah Sedlacek at 531-1895 or email sarah.e.sedlacek2.civ@mail.mil

- Employment Readiness Program, ERP, contact Stacey Delgado at 531-6922 or email Stacey.r.delgado.civ@mail.mil

- Exceptional Family Member Program, EFMP, contact Marie Shultz at 531-2840 or email sonya.m.shultz.civ@mail.mil

- Family Member Resiliency, contact Mike Buterbaugh at 531-7087 or email Michel.e.buterbaugh.civ@mail.mil

- Financial Readiness Program, contact Jessica Ballard at 531-6561 or email jessica.e.ballard2.civ@mail.mil

- Information and Referral, contact Stacy Puzon at 531-6066 or email stacy.a.puzon.civ@mail.mil

- Mobilization and Deployment Readiness, MDR, contact Mike Buterbaugh at 531-7087 or email Michel.e.buterbaugh.civ@mail.mil

- New Parent Support Program, contact Anne Bollinger at 531-9573 or email ellice.a.bollinger.civ@mail.mil

- Outreach Services, contact Sarah Sedlacek at 531-1895 or email sarah.e.sedlacek2.civ@mail.mil

- Victim Advocacy Program, VAP, contact Mandie Walsh, contact 531-7977 or email aman-dalea.r.walsh.civ@mail.mil

ACS also offers these in-office programs:

- Military Life Family Counselors — Belinda Edwards, (228) 313-7205; Randy Haley, (318) 592-9601; Adrian Todd, (318) 592-9671

- Relocation Readiness Program's Lending Locker — Clarence Harmonson, (337) 208-4900 or email Clarence.l.harmonson.civ@mail.mil

- Family Advocacy Program — Kristina England, 531-4653 or email Kristina.j.england.civ@mail.mil

- Report suspected or known domestic violence, child abuse or neglect — Hope Line 531-4673, 24 hours a day, seven days a week

- Victim Advocacy Program hotline — 424-7494, 24 hours a day, seven days a week

ACS offers the following after-hours assistance:

- ACS, contact Clarence Harmonson, (337) 208-4900 or email Clarence.l.harmonson.civ@mail.mil or Mike Buterbaugh at 531-7087 or email Michel.e.buterbaugh.civ@mail.mil

- AER via the American Red Cross, contact the Red Cross Hero Care Center at (337) 423-6227 or AER Army Operations Center at (703) 423-6227

In addition to the ACS programs listed, Soldiers, military dependents and Department of Defense civilians can set up visual tele-conferences with the Fort Polk Family Life Chaplain from the comfort of home. Send an email request to Everett.e.zachary.mil@mail.mil or call 531-1161 to request a convenient time and date. You will be sent a URL link by email. Click the link to begin a confidential counseling session. All that is needed is an adequate internet connection, computer or smart phone and current military identification.

Please see **Services**, page 15

Telework offers chance for writer to reminisce

By **CHUCK CANNON**

Command information officer

FORT POLK, La. — With spring's arrival, and as a result of COVID-19 necessitating telework and thus more time at home with my spouse, this not-so-young writer finds his thoughts returning to the day my lovely bride Susan and I tied the knot.

To say we had an atypical wedding would be an understatement. But that's putting the proverbial cart before the horse, or in this case, the wedding before the proposal.

We met in a barracks stairwell at

Fort Devens, Massachusetts, where we were both students in the U.S. Army's Intelligence School. I was

taking advantage of the acoustics in the stairwell, while Susan was taking advantage of the fact that she had a great alto voice and was easy on the eyes.

Before long, we were, uhm, making sweet music together and I asked Susan to marry me while we were on leave during Christmas 1979.

Our first duty assignment after school was the Japanese island of Okinawa in the East China Sea.

Before we could tie the knot, we had to go through the Army's version of pre-marriage counseling. In those days, the Army was of the opinion that if they wanted you to have a spouse, they would have issued you one.

I tried to convince the chaplain on Okinawa's Torii Station that Susan had in fact been issued to me — and vice versa — but he wasn't buying it.

Instead, he made sure to point out all of the wonderful things we could expect from our future mate — things like bad morning breath, scratching, snoring, no makeup, and

various other "fun" things.

It was a horrifying prospect, however Susan and I decided we would continue down the road to what we hoped would be wedded bliss.

Once the counseling and blood tests were completed, we had to get our commander's approval — much like a young man is supposed to ask a father for permission to marry his daughter.

Our commander was a devout Mormon who took his job seriously — especially when it came to making sure the men and women in his company were sincere about the

"'til death do us part" portion of traditional wedding vows.

Convinced of our sincerity, the commander gave

his blessing in the form of a signature on a Department of the Army Form 2496 and all that remained was for Susan and me to get hitched.

When deciding the next step, we both agreed we didn't need a big fancy wedding — especially since no one from our families could afford to fly halfway around the world to Okinawa for the ceremony. We decided to head to the American Consulate's office in Naha City one morning after working a midnight shift.

The morning of Feb. 6, 1981, arrived and we changed out of our military fatigues and into blue jeans and T-shirts. We caught a cab at Torii Station's main gate and took the 15-minute ride to the Consulate. There, we filled out a bunch of paperwork and assumed that would be it. It wasn't.

We were told we had to take the paperwork to the Naha City Mayor's Office, get a stamp of approval and have our license translated into Japanese.

Another 15-minute cab ride



U.S. ARMY PHOTO

found us the only Americans in an office full of Japanese officials. We handed our paperwork to a lady sitting at a desk; she smiled and motioned for us to have a seat.

An hour later, she returned with our paperwork stamped and much to our delight, a Japanese marriage license — suitable for framing. The lady even took the time to show us where our names appeared in Kanji — the elegant script used by the Japanese.

From there it was a cab ride back to the Consulate where they asked us to "swear that everything you've filled out on the papers is true, so help you God."

We did and that was it. We asked

the person who waited on us at the Consulate when we actually got married. He told us the marriage was "official" when we received our marriage license from the Mayor of Naha.

That was more than 39 years ago. We've weathered some pretty tumultuous storms in our time together — not the least of which was having our youngest son do tours of combat in Afghanistan and Iraq. But the key word is "weathered."

It's not all been bliss, but to quote Susan, "There were times I might not have liked you very much, but I've always loved you."

Susan, I think we would have made our commander proud.

Fighting tedium through cooking, eating way through stay at home order

By **ANGIE THORNE**

Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. — Like many of you sitting at home day-in and day-out, I have to have a strategy of distraction to hold off two things — anxiety and boredom. It seems like if you aren't fighting one, you are wrangling the other.

Lets tackle anxiety first.

How can you not be stressed, fearful and upset as you read the news on a daily basis about everything COVID-19?

The reality is you need to keep yourself informed about what's going on so you can better protect yourself and those you love with the latest changing information available about the virus that threatens to consume our every waking thought. Meeting the challenges of this time of crisis with intelligence and calm is the goal, but if you are like me, things could easily slip over into the category of a fixation with news feeds of every kind.

That's why I try to make it a rule that after I've updated myself

with the very latest details, I have to stop reading and watching the news. I really believe it's literally bad for my mental and physical well-being if I don't.

Then there's boredom.

If I'm not watching the news, what do I do? Sure. There are a plethora of ideas out there from cleaning the house to working out in the yard, walking and more. In fact, the options can be as overwhelming as doing nothing to the point that I have sometimes find myself twiddling my thumbs in indecision.

It seems as though folks are so used to leaving the house to work and interact that we don't know quite what to do with that time behind our own front doors.

If you are teleworking, that can take up some of your time in a positive, constructive way. Those not working from home may have additional financial worries to add to the mix. Then there are the parents that have to factor in kids to this equation. If it's anything like when my child was young, and I only had the one, then it may be less about boredom and more about finding quiet time to relax for just a moment.

How each of us handles these trying times, is as unique as our individual personalities.

To help myself out and lessen the added stress of selecting a task from a profusion of choices, I try to make a short list of things I can do and choose from just that list — even if it's only in my head.

Of course, the things I love to do most keep ending up on the that list and the new things that would take me out of my comfort zone, force me to learn something or things like chores and the like keep getting left off. How strange.

Some things that will always make my list include reading, listening to music, puttering in my yard and cooking.

I've been cooking — a lot. My pantry is, thankfully, well stocked. That means all those new recipes I've been wanting to try (you know, the ones pinned on your Pinterest boards) are being made in my kitchen on an almost daily basis.

The bourbon walnut banana bread and the almond biscotti with dark chocolate drizzle were yummy. Oh, and the black bean hummus was delightful. I could go on. I'll tackle any new recipe that catches my interest, but I especially love to bake.

At this point my kitchen looks like what a mad scientist's lab might resemble if they had a sweet tooth.

I've found that can be downright dangerous when you don't have anyone to share the finished product with. It can be really bad for your waistline, especially when you've been trying to eat healthy and exercise to create optimum levels of immunity.

What to do? What to do?

I know, share. But how do I do that with social distancing? Well, I've kind of opted for a kitchen fairy approach — it's kind of like being a tooth fairy except instead of leaving money under your pillow I leave containers of homemade treats at friends and relatives front doors and then text them to go outside and get their goodies. I've also connected with folks feeding others in this time of need and have volunteered to bake things for them.

I look at it as a win/win. I don't have to eat everything I cook and most of the recipients of my culinary forays have told me they have enjoyed them immensely.

Oh, and all the cooking makes me feel useful, distracts, centers and relaxes me while tiring me out so that I can get a good night's sleep — yet another recommendation for better immunity.

In the end, no matter what you do — stay informed, stay safe and try to be kind to yourself. By all indications, we are in this — together — for the long haul.

Finding something that distracts you and makes you happy, even for just a little while each day, is probably going to be essential to your well being.



Commentary

From front lines to home front, military medicine always ready

By Lt. Gen. RON PLACE

DHA director

WASHINGTON — Who would have imagined this? We've stopped almost everything else we were doing and turned our energies toward fighting this pandemic. As the specific impacts take shape within the United States, the Military Health System is surging forward, implementing standing plans and showing agility in responding to events that some believed were unthinkable even a few short months ago.

Federal and state officials are requesting military medical forces to assist in stemming the spread of infection both directly and indirectly. Hundreds of thou-

sands of professionals who are supported by the relatively young Defense

Health Agency are reinforcing our civilian medical capabilities. Just as we've done throughout our history, when the U.S. military is called in times of crisis and natural disaster, we answer.

Military medicine is providing assistance in unprecedented ways. Already, two hospital ships, the USNS Mercy and the USNS Comfort, are positioned in Los Angeles and New York City, respectively, providing much needed additional medical capability to civilian medical facilities overwhelmed with COVID-19 patients. The Army has also established field hospitals in New York and is increasing bed space elsewhere with the phenomenal work of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It's the right thing to do, right now.

In the best of times, the primary

mission of the Military Health System is to maintain a medically ready force and a ready medical force.

This means we must ensure American Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen are medically ready to deploy anywhere, anytime to defend the nation. It also means we must develop and sustain our own medical teams to be trained and ready to support the force. Shifting focus from this primary mission carries risk; however, after two decades of conflict, we are well prepared to both identify risk and develop strategies to mitigate it.

This is not theoretical. We're taking actions with tangible effects. For

Commentary

instance, we are rapidly shifting as many physicians, nurses and other medical

professionals as we

can from administrative duties to direct patient care. We're plowing new ground by graduating new doctors and nurses months early from the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, the military's medical school, so they can join the fight — now. In our military hospitals and clinics, we've limited elective medical and dental procedures, so we can decrease surgical inpatient needs, shift clinical staffing toward COVID-19 response, and conserve medical resources for the COVID-19 fight.

Additionally, we're identifying patient bed space on military installations and planning how to quickly convert — or return to use — unused space, with all of the needed equipment and supplies. That

Please see **Ready**, page 16

IPPS-A provides improved visibility, aiding coronavirus response

By DEVON L. SUITS

Army News Service

WASHINGTON — With implementation of the Integrated Personnel and Pay System-Army across the National Guard in all 54 states and territories, Army leaders now have improved visibility as the Guard continues to support COVID-19 operations nationwide.

The new system, integrated on March 24, is a "game changer," said Roy Wallace, the assistant deputy chief of staff for personnel Army G-1.

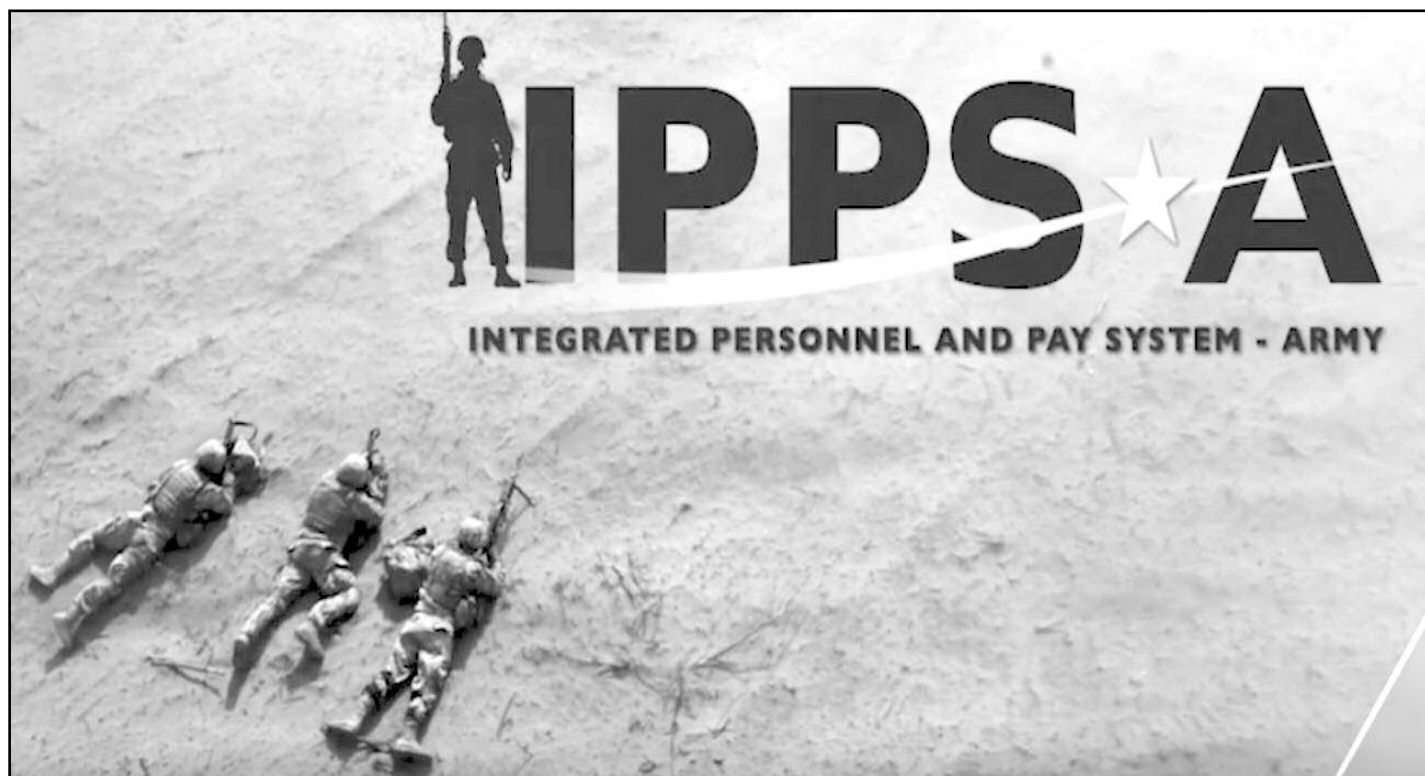
For the first time, the National Guard can manage a wide range of human resources and pay actions under one secure web-based application.

"As COVID-19 operations have gained speed over the last month, it is important that we have one centralized system," said Col. Gregory Johnson, director of IPPS-A's functional management division. "Now, we can see what's happening (across) the entire Guard."

Moving forward, program officials are working to integrate IPPS-A across the Army Reserve and active-duty force by December 2021. The program will later incorporate all of the Army's payroll applications under the system, scheduled for completion in May 2025.

With more than 200 personnel and pay systems across the force, full IPPS-A integration will eliminate close to 40 HR systems by 2025, officials said.

Through IPPS-A, Army leaders will have visibility of the entire force once fielded across all components, Wallace said. Army leaders will have the ability to identify and manage their talent. The system is



ARMY NEWS SERVICE

also fully auditable, providing improved accountability and oversight.

"The Army is committed to its people. They are the cornerstone of everything we do and ... are the centerpiece of the Army," Wallace said.

Before IPPS-A, the Guard operated under a wide array of systems, which stifled the Guard's ability to manage HR or pay actions effectively, or provide support under one centralized application, said Lt. Col. June Copeland, chief IPPS-A National Guard liaison.

During Hurricane Harvey in 2017, for example, the force had a difficult time managing an abundance of personnel across multiple states, as the Guard mobilized to provide support, Copeland said.

As Guard personnel continue to be activated in support of state or federal government's COVID-19 efforts, IPPS-A will ease the mobilization processes of all Guard personnel, Johnson said.

"Under IPPS-A, with 54 states

and territories merged under one system and it is now a lot easier," Copeland said.

"We are now able to reach out and figure out what the states and territories are doing to provide support."



JRTC AND FORT POLK AAFES AND MWR COVID19 SERVICES UPDATE

BEAUREGARD PARISH SCHOOLS

LUNCH PROGRAM

- The Beauregard Parish School System has a grab-and-go lunch and breakfast program. The program starts Friday, April 3, 2020. Anyone 18 year olds and younger will be able to pick-up 5 breakfast/5 lunch packages. PICK-UP LOCATIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:
- Carver Elementary School (DeRidder, Louisiana)
- DeRidder Junior High School (DeRidder, Louisiana)
- East Beauregard Elementary (DeRidder/Sugartown/Dry Creek, Louisiana area)
- South Beauregard Elementary (Longville, Louisiana)
- Merryville High School (Merryville, Louisiana)
- Singer High School (Singer, Louisiana)

For additional information please visit: <https://www.beau.k12.la.us>

*This program is sponsored by the USDA, Louisiana Department of Education (lunches/breakfast are no cost to the students/guardians)

For the latest updates, please visit the JRTC and Fort Polk Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/JRTCandFortPolk> and Fort Polk Family MWR a <https://www.facebook.com/fortpolkmwr>



Soldiers ‘tip of spear’

By SEAN KIMMONS
Army News Service

LANDOVER, Md. — In the shadow of the Washington Redskins football stadium, a group of Soldiers shielded a section of the parking lot filled with tents serving as testing centers for the COVID-19 virus.

Part of the Maryland National Guard’s response, the site is one of several that continue to stand up across the country as Soldiers swap their weapons for masks and gloves.

“They are at the tip of the spear in this fight,” Army Secretary Ryan D. McCarthy said Tuesday after visiting with Soldiers at the site. “We are fighting for our neighborhoods. We are fighting to endure a very difficult and invisible enemy.”

More than 10,000 Guard members have already been mobilized to assist state and national agencies stem the spread of the virus. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has also found over 100 sites it could retrofit to help local hospitals deal with patient overflow.

For full story visit www.army.mil.

Services

Continued from page 11

The Soldier for Life — Transition Assistance Program offers telephone counseling. SFL-TAP contractor employees are providing one-on-one counseling via telephone Monday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m.- 5 p.m. and Friday from 8 a.m.- 4 p.m.

Transitioning Soldiers can contact SFL-TAP at 531-1591 or 531-8792 during the hours given above.

Points of contact:
Janice Breland, Transition Servic-

es manager, janice.l.breland.civ@mail.mil

Ernest McClinton, Transition Services specialist, (337) 531-4621

Naomi Woods, Contract Installation manager (337) 531-4959

If unable to contact someone at the Fort Polk SFL-TAP Center, the Virtual Center is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at (800) 325-4715. SFL-TAP services will resume around April 13.

Ready

Continued from page 16

means, in some cases, converting office space once used as patient rooms back to treatment areas. No good idea is off the table.

Every medical provider in our system is a generalist. While many of our health care providers normally do focus on specific diseases or specialties, they are trained to treat patients across the range of needs wherever they’re called to serve.

Facing multiple challenges is nothing new for us. Together we can

do this. We can play a significant part in caring for citizens in need, while still ensuring our military forces are medically ready to defend our nation.

With the support of the 9.5 million beneficiaries who depend on us for their health care, our defense health team is surging thousands of service members to the front lines, meeting our obligation to the nation’s sons and daughters who volunteered to defend them.