

JRTC AND FORT JOHNSON

MAY 12 VOL. 52, NO. 10

GUARDIAN

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COVER PHOTO

A truck explosion gives participants in the April 25 Joint Readiness Training Center Operations Group Box Tour a chance to see how Soldiers train before being deployed. (U.S. Army photo courtesy Operations Group)



5 Quality of Life Conference



JRTC AND FORT JOHNSON

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Commanding General
Col. CJ Lopez
Garrison Commander

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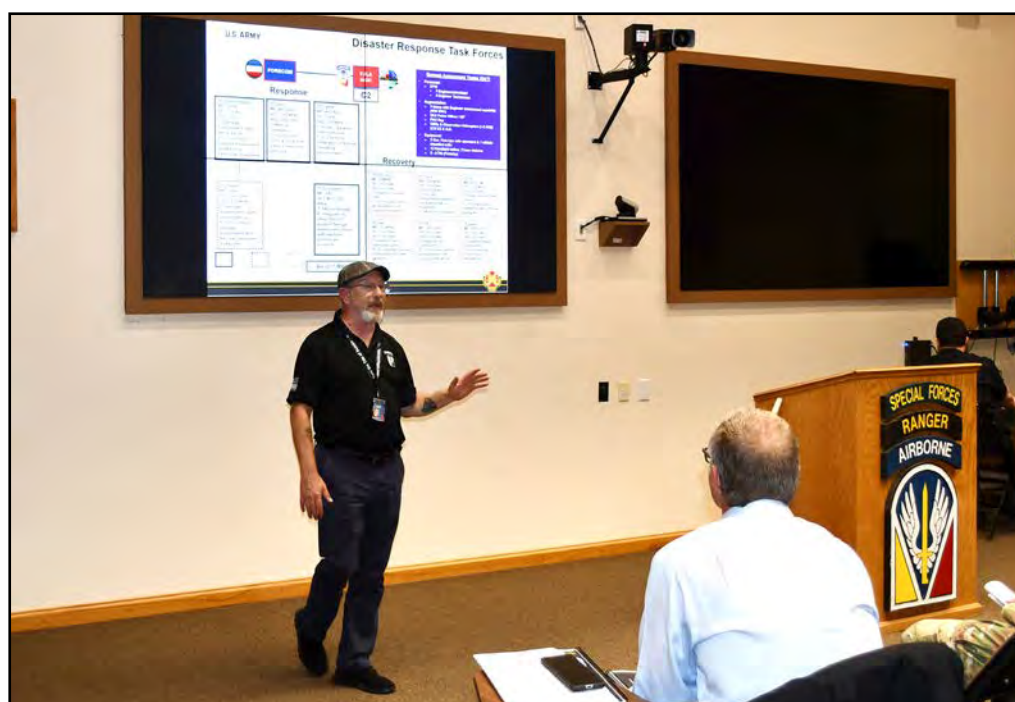
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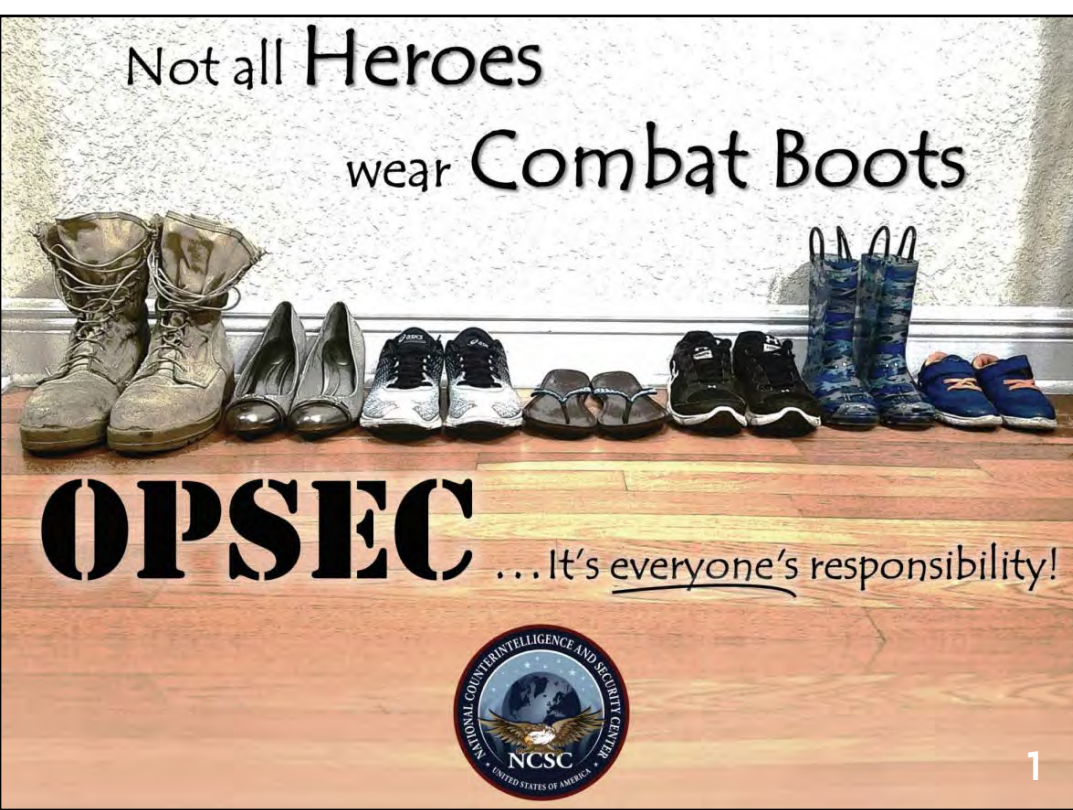
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For additional information, please visit the @JRTCandFortJohnson Facebook page.



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ON POST

Upcoming Events



Movie Night

May 16, 7 p.m. at Headquarters Field

Join us on Headquarters Field for a free showing of Moana 2 on the big screen! Free popcorn and drinks will be available.



Armed Forces Kids Run

May 17, 9 a.m. at Perez Field

As part of Armed Forces Day activities in May each year, U.S. Armed Forces military dependants around the world will participate in America's Kids Run. This event is free and open to the public. Ages 5-13 are invited to participate. First 100 kids get a FREE t-shirt! Distances are 1/2 mile, 1 mile or 2 miles.

[Click here to register](#)



The Murph

May 24, 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at
Home of Heroes Fitness Center

Join The Murph challenge at Home of Heroes Fitness Center and show off your strength! The Murph Challenge is not just a physical test, but also a mental and emotional one. The Murph Challenge is a powerful reminder of the sacrifices made by our military and a testament to the strength and resilience of the human spirit.



Glow Pool Party

May 31, 8-10 p.m. at Sgt. 1st Class Guess Jr. Pool

The ultimate glow-to party! Snacks, games, glowsticks and more will be provided! Cost is \$5 per person.



OFF POST

EVENTS



17
May

Veterans' Brunch
DERIDDER, LA.

[Click for more info](#)



23-25
May

Mudbug Madness
SHREVEPORT, LA.

[Click for more info](#)



23-1
May-June

Cajun Heartland State Fair
LAFAYETTE, LA.

[Click for more info](#)



31
May

World Otter Day
ALEXANDRIA, LA.

[Click for more info](#)



7
June

Louisiana Peach Festival
RUSTON, LA.

[Click for more info](#)

NO ARMY OR FEDERAL ENDORSEMENT IMPLIED.



Fort Johnson community gathers to focus on quality of life issues

By Chuck Cannon

Fort Johnson Garrison Public Affairs Office

FORT JOHNSON, La. — The Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Johnson hosted its semi-annual Quality of Life Conference May 5 at the installation's Warrior Center.

More than 100 Soldiers, Family members and Department of the Army civilians attended the conference which highlighted advancements made in the JRTC and Fort Johnson's quality of life, as well as a look ahead at other projects slated for the post identified as one of four Army installations to receive special quality of life improvements.

The event also elicited suggestions from those in attendance on ways to improve the quality of life at Fort Johnson.

Brig. Gen. Jason A. Curl, JRTC and Fort Johnson commander, shared with those in attendance his quality-of-life priorities: Education, housing, childcare, health care, Army spouse employment and Family Morale, Welfare and Recreation.

They support his personal priorities: Care for people, build readiness and succeed in JRTC and Fort Johnson campaigns.

"These quality of life conferences — where you bring up issues that need to be fixed — help us make better decisions across the installation," Curl said. "Some things we already know about, and we're working on them, although probably not as fast as you — or we — would like. But continuing to bring it up is helpful, because some things might have slipped from our consciousness. They're still important, but maybe we haven't thought about them in a couple of months. Bringing it back up is helpful."

Curl said there are issues the installation team is already tracking and are probably not going to be fixed for several reasons outside of the team's control.

"But some of the issues, are things we've never heard before," he said. "At these forums there always seems to be a couple of things that we'll look at each other and ask, 'Really? That's going on here at Fort Johnson?'"

Curl addressed the upcoming gate closures

and explained the need to get borrowed manpower back to units for training.

He also spoke about the new household goods system and said work continues to make it better for Soldiers across the Army.

Presentations covered childcare, education, housing — to include privatized accompanied housing and barracks, infrastructure and strategic partnerships.

Breakout sessions after each presentation allowed groups of five to eight attendees the opportunity to discuss the specific areas and come up with suggestions for improvements. The groups then shared their suggestions with leadership, who acknowledged the suggestions and promised to see which might be viable.

"I believe the quality of life conference serves two functions," Col. C.J. Lopez, Fort Johnson garrison commander, said. "The primary one is it gives us an avenue for all the citizens of Fort Johnson to directly communicate with the

people that prioritize the resources and develop the strategic plan to evolve Fort Johnson into tomorrow."

Lopez said he wants to give the voice of the citizens of Fort Johnson — Soldiers, Department of the Army civilians and Family members — an avenue to inject suggestions into the installation's strategic plans.

"Simply put, I want to hear from them, and I want our guys to chew on what they say and see if it's a better idea for Fort Johnson tomorrow," Lopez said.

The garrison commander said the conference also serves as a reverse engineer of the primary function.

"Not a lot of people are aware of the volume of things that we do for the installation, so this serves to inform them and creates stakeholders when we give them the mic," he said. "We received some good feedback and are reviewing what was said to determine how we can prioritize the ideas, programs and initiatives with

the resourcing," Lopez said.

Logan Morris, civilian aide to the Secretary of the Army, was in attendance and said these types of conferences are important to the Secretary of the Army.

"Most civilian aides are not co-located with an installation and very few get the granular feedback on Army policies that impact installations," Morris said. "Since the secretary wants to know what we're missing in the secret sauce that makes the Army a good place to live and work, these quality of life conferences provide direct feedback on Army programming, not only from a Soldier, family and DoD civilian level, but also with a partnership in the local community."

Morris said, for him, the conference also provides a better understanding about why a certain policy is what it is — why it does or doesn't work, and how to help the installation command team vector that up to big Army to impact the changes that need to happen to improve the quality of life for everyone that lives here.

Morris highlighted two important aspects of the conference for CASAs.

"First, the access to certain services or amenities on the installation may be a challenge," he said. "We might be missing the mark in terms of what we think Soldiers and their families should have versus what they actually have."

The second aspect was his realization that the Army's messaging and communications systems are a little disjointed.

"There are assets and services available that people don't know how to get to," he said. "There are a disparate number of ways the Army attempts to do that. We probably want to look at fixing those communication modes to better reach their intended audiences so that people think and know the Army is here to take care of them."

Fort Johnson hosts two Quality of Life Conferences each year — in the spring and fall. The event allows Soldiers, civilians, retirees and family members to participate and provide feedback or suggestions on the state of quality of life on Fort Johnson.



Frozen propellers and short-lived batteries are just some of the challenges these grunts faced during training in Europe.

A U.S. Soldier assigned to 3rd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division sets up a Ghost drone to conduct surveillance during a live fire exercise at the 7th Army Training Command's Grafenwoehr Training Area, Germany, Feb. 25. (U.S. Army photo by Kevin Sterling Payne)

Chilling effects:

What one Army unit learned about cold-weather drone warfare

By Lauren C. Williams
Defense One senior editor

GERMANY — If small drones are critical to the Army's future fight, what happens when you run out of batteries?

That's one of the questions the 10th Mountain Division's 3rd Brigade Combat Team tackled during a recent rotation at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Germany.

"We learned a lot of lessons about battery power. For example, the exercise that we conducted was in the wintertime in Germany, so it was below freezing conditions and pretty adverse weather conditions. And what we found was battery life was significantly degraded in the cold and affected the flight time and the ability of us to employ some of our drones," 3rd Brigade commander Col. Joshua Glonek told reporters Friday.

The Army gave the brigade more than 150 unmanned aerial systems, from sensor drones to one-way attack munitions. Form factors ranged from small quadcopters to me-

dium-range reconnaissance drones that can weigh up to 50 pounds and fly 10 kilometers.

Seeking to get "a good sense of what drones were able to do," Glonek said, the unit flew in heavy cloud cover, freezing rain, sleet, and snow. Propellers iced over. Some drones broke and needed repairs. Others crashed. And the freezing temperatures would cut flight times in half, Glonek told Defense One.

"There's a need for more power generation out on the battlefield," Glonek said. "All this new technology, for the most part, is powered by batteries—rechargeable batteries."

The unit has recommended that the Army "explore additional power generation capabilities, specifically those that could be brought further forward, closer to the front lines," Glonek said. "Because every time a drone comes out of the sky, the first thing we need to do is to detach the batteries and put them on a charger [to] get the drone back up."

The Army has been looking for ways to extend battery life and reduce reliance on towed and fuel-thirsty generators in the field.

"We also tested, for the first time, a prototype of the [Infantry Squad Vehicle]-Heavy—a hybrid-[diesel] powered truck that contained enough onboard battery power to run our brigade command post for 24 hours without having to run external generators," Glonek said.

The two ISV-Heavy prototypes tested were mainly used for command and control, Glonek said, which allowed the units to move quickly and undetected.

"It was part of our brigade tactical command post, and I used that to have a very rapidly mobile C2 node that I can move around the battlefield," he said. "You drive silently...all of the power that you need for command-and-control systems is built into the vehicle, so it didn't require external generators or other power sources. And we were able to move in a very, very small package into areas where we could stay hidden from the opposing force."

The Army also ordered electric-powered versions of the ISV but is pivoting to focus on hybrids only as part of a larger shift away from clean energy initiatives.



Antiterrorism Active Shooter Community Response



Coping with an Active Shooter

- Be aware of your environment & possible dangers
- Take note of the two nearest exits in any facility you visit
- If in an office at time of shooting, stay there & secure the door
- If in a hallway or common area, get into a room & secure the door
- As a last resort, fight to disarm/disable the shooter

Run • Hide • Fight

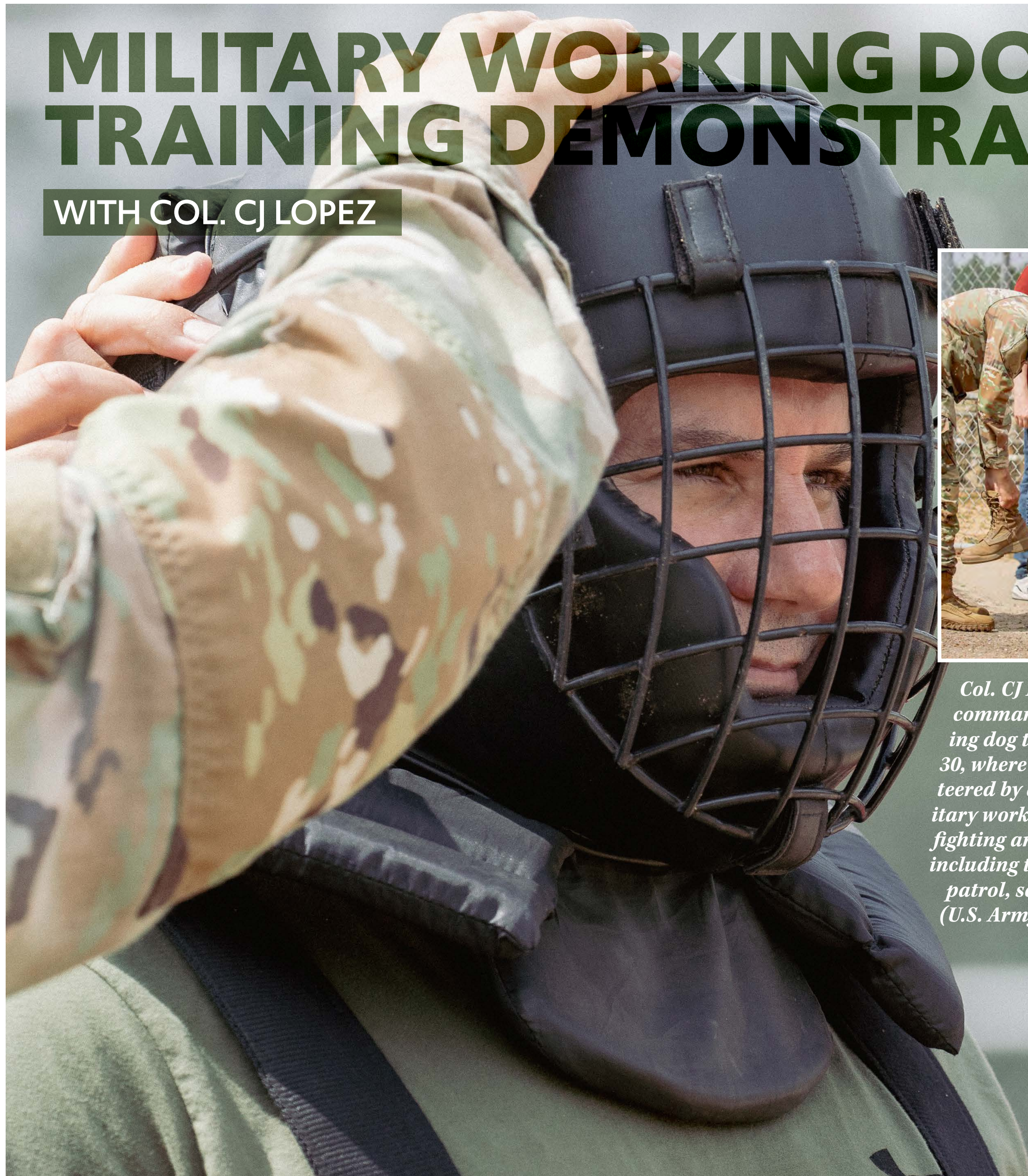


Always Ready, Always Alert
Because someone is depending on you



MILITARY WORKING DOG TRAINING DEMONSTRATION

WITH COL. CJ LOPEZ



Col. CJ Lopez, Fort Johnson garrison commander, visited a military working dog training demonstration April 30, where he and other Soldiers volunteered by dressing up in bite suits. Military working dogs aid Soldiers in war-fighting and are trained for many jobs, including tracking, explosive detection, patrol, search and rescue and attack. (U.S. Army photos by Porsha Auzenne)





Thousands of Moon Pies headed to Fort Johnson to sweeten troop support

By USO

Fort Johnson, La. — The United Service Organizations Louisiana-Mississippi, USO Southeast Region, is excited to announce the upcoming delivery of approximately 13,900 Moon Pies to Fort Johnson on May 15. The delivery is part of the regional “Patriotic Pies” campaign, a community-driven effort that brings a taste of home to service members and their families.

Made possible through a unique school-based fundraising initiative, Patriotic Pies allows supporters to purchase Moon Pies and opt to donate them directly to the troops. This heartfelt program connects communities with the military in a meaningful and tangible way, giving service members a sweet reminder that they are appreciated and remembered.

The shipment will be delivered

to the future USO center at Fort Johnson, which is scheduled to open in October. Ahead of the grand opening, the pies will be distributed to troops and their families through USO Mobile team activations during five upcoming support windows throughout the installation.

“This generous donation is more than just a treat, it’s a powerful show of support from communities across the country,” said Jason Burkett, Executive Director of USO Louisiana-Mississippi. “We’re honored to deliver these Moon Pies on behalf of those who gave so thoughtfully, and we look forward to sharing them with the incredible service members and families of Fort Johnson.”

For more background on the Patriotic Pies program and the spirit behind this sweet salute to the troops, visit: www.patrioticpies.com.

For the people who serve



FOR THE PEOPLE WHO SERVE.™

ADVANCE YOUR MILITARY CAREER!

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USO.org/ServiceMemberSupport

Education • Navigate Installation Support
Financial Wellness • Mentorship Opportunities

USO TRANSITION PROGRAM

The USO is a not-for-profit organization and not part of the Department of Defense (DOD).

PREPARING FORT JOHNSON FOR WEATHER'S WORST STORMS

By Angie Thorne
Fort Johnson Public Affairs Office

Fort Johnson, La. — Dangerous weather can happen at any time. Fort Johnson has already seen the possibility of everything from high winds and rain to flooding and tornadoes this year. With the upcoming hurricane season about to begin June 1, there's even more reason to make plans and be prepared. The 2025 hurricane season is expected to be more active than normal, with as many as 17 storms expected — nine of them potentially becoming hurricanes. These weather events have the potential to cause widespread damage and endanger lives.

To help prepare for hurricanes and any number of other critical weather situations, a severe weather brief was held May 7 at Fort Johnson's After-Action Review theater. Command, unit leadership and key organizations integral to emergencies were briefed on things like the monthly weather threat overview, outlook for Atlantic tropical weather, wildfire risk index, mitigation CON-PLANS, disaster response task forces, federal, state and local staging contingency and more.

Mark Leslie, Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security director, briefed at the meeting. He said the severe weather brief is one of the most important things DPTMS does all year because it enables them to preserve mission readiness and protect the community.

"This brief shares the installation plan with all the units, directorates, agencies and organizations on post, as well as with our local and state partners, so we can plan for and mitigate risk ahead of a crisis. Plus, if we do have a severe weather incident, everyone knows their part in the plan, and we can initiate that plan rapidly to restore services to the Fort Johnson community. Just like units

deploying have a "road to war" plan, this installation has a "road to weather war" plan every year so we can mitigate the risk to the community and sustain capability so the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Johnson can continue to fulfill its obligations to the Army," Leslie said.

Nathan Jernigan, Director of Public Works, also briefed the audience in attendance. He said the importance of DPW and how they react during a severe weather emergency is woven into the fabric of Fort Johnson teamwork and planning.

"The Severe Weather Brief has been proven as one of the most critical briefs provided to the installation leadership. DPTMS professionals pull together stakeholders from across the installation and develop a product that doesn't just brief well, but is fully executable. We have proven over and over, through hurricanes, tornadoes and wildfires, that the plan works," Jernigan said.

Jernigan said the part DPW plays in the severe weather plan is imperative because reliable, resilient and redundant power transmission and distribution infrastructure is the life source for the installation.

"Without power, critical facility system functions such as water, wastewater, communication networks, heating and air conditioning are inoperable. Our PACE (Primary/Alternate/Contingency/Emergency) Plan, as briefed, outlines the installation's posture from the day-to-day power grid operation to the execution of our facility generator plan during extended power outages," Jernigan said.

Leslie said the brief is important, but the many hours of intellectual energy invested in collaboration, synchronization, contingency plan development and analysis for just about everything you can think of is the foundation the plans are built on.

"This is really an "all-hazards" plan.

By the time we give the brief, the staff that developed it, knows the plan and every contingency inside and out. They know the risks, the risk windows, the forecast and the installation's capabilities. The brief is just icing on the cake and we disseminate that information to everyone, which instills confidence in the command that we have a solid plan to protect JRTC and Fort Johnson from a very unpredictable hazard — mother nature," Leslie said.

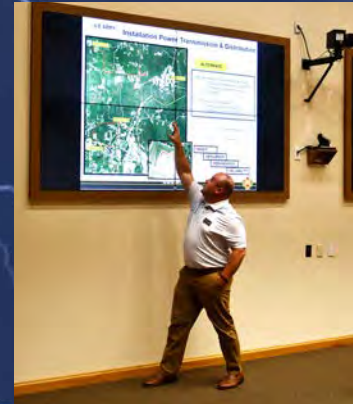
He said the Fort Johnson community should know and take comfort that this installation is prepared.

"In my opinion, we likely have the best plan in the world for severe weather. This is a team of very talented, dedicated individuals from across the installation that are devoted to ensuring our community's safety. We will do everything possible to ensure they are informed before, during and after a crisis," Leslie said. "The plan we briefed is available for all to see on the JRTC & Fort Johnson home page and I encourage everyone to take a minute to check it out. I also encourage everyone in the Fort Johnson community to take some personal responsibility and prepare yourself and your family for severe weather season, June 1 – Nov. 30.

Available resources:
<https://ready.army.mil/> and
<https://www.fema.gov/>

Fort Johnson Facebook

My Army Post App
Fort Johnson 2025 Severe Weather Podcast on the JRTC & Fort Johnson YouTube channel here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nAUWBGBSs-l&nt-b=1&msockid=43510b2d2c4a-11f0a359ac672a94ed69>



Are you receiving Fort Johnson Alerts?

When Soldiers and Civilians (with a CAC) change duty station, they must make the update in the system themselves. If they do not, they will not receive Fort Johnson alerts. Soldiers and Civilians with a CAC can add family members to the alert system. Family members without a CAC cannot independently sign up for Fort Johnson alerts.

It's easy to set up!

- Go to the ALERTS homepage: <https://alert.csd.disa.mil/AlertSplashPage> (CAC Login)
- Once logged in, the client dashboard will display.
- Enter/Update Personal Information
- Enter/Update/Select "Associations" (military location, command, YOUR addresses (work/home) and "Additional Attributes")
"Additional Attributes" define your preferred/required "notifications" lists
- Under "contact information" once you add your primary numbers, ensure you check the "Receives Text Messages" box.
- Family Members is NOT required (optional only)

My Army Post App

Step 1: Download the app

Step 2: Select your base

Step 3: Stay in the know!

WE ARE THE ARMY'S HOME | [HOME.ARMY.MIL](https://home.army.mil) | [ARMYMWR.COM](https://armymwr.com)

U.S. ARMY Resources

Learning to take OPSEC seriously protects everyone

By Angie Thorne
Fort Johnson Public Affairs Office

Fort Johnson, La. — May is National Operations Security Awareness Month. OPSEC, put simply, is what keeps sensitive information from getting into the wrong hands. Practicing OPSEC is essential to the success of the mission and the lives of U.S. service members, Department of Defense employees, contractors and Family members. This is done by identifying Critical Information and implementing safeguards for protection. OPSEC is a never-ending process and it can include simple things nobody even thinks about.

Sherry Johnson, Security Specialist with Fort Johnson's Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security, said you can have a bunch of unclassified information that were put out in different social media posts and individually they are harmless, but together those things can result in someone gathering classified information.

"That can create a vulnerability. We really want to protect the installation, its Soldiers and its people. That's our number one priority," Johnson said.

Kenneth Smith, DPTMS operations security officer, said OPSEC is a shared responsibility.

"It's people coming together as a community to encourage individuals to take responsibility for their actions and the actions of others, which can enhance trust and cooperation," Smith said. "Helping people realize they are part of a larger community that fosters a sense of belonging and connection when it comes to protecting each other is crucial to the OPSEC mission," Smith said.

How do you protect critical information in your everyday life? Even small actions can keep yourself and others safe. Smith gives a few examples of easy ways to do that.

- * Be cautious about discussing sensitive information in public places.

- * Be aware of your surroundings and avoid talking about personal details.

- * Protect your personal information and be mindful of your digital exposure.

- * Safeguard your privacy from prying eyes and cyber-criminals.

Keep It to yourself — How many times have you overheard a conversation from someone saying how they just won some money from the lottery? Or how they just bought a big new screen TV? I overheard someone talking very loudly on their cell phone one day about how they just got paid \$1,000 and they were planning to go down to the club later to spend it all. Someone with evil intentions could easily take advantage of that person.



Shred personal documents and packages

— You'd be surprised how many people might go through trash to get valuable information such as your banking or credit statements. Shred any documents with any personal information or account numbers on them and, if you can, place those shreds in different trash cans.

Be aware of suspicious packages

— Speaking of packages, if you're not expecting a package, be very wary of it. Did you hear about the package bombings that took place in Austin, Texas? Packages were sent to completely random addresses across Austin and when they were opened, they were killed on impact.

Ditch bumper stickers — I constantly see people with stickers plastered all over their vehicle representing their beliefs, what organizations they're apart of and more. This is not the smartest thing to do. This is one of those things that should be kept to yourself. For example,

the whole world doesn't need to know what you support the NRA.

Mix it up — People case houses, buildings and workplaces looking for routines to take advantage of. Do you come and go at the same time every day? People have the same routine, but it might be a good idea to try to switch the routes that you use to get to work. Do your best to try to mix up your everyday routine. Even small changes such as leaving a few minutes later or earlier can throw off an adversary. Think about your daily routine and see what could be mixed up to throw anyone watching off.

For more information about OPSEC, check out the Fort Johnson OPSEC podcast at <https://www.bing.com/videos/riverview/relatedvideo?q=youtube+at+fort+johnson+podcast&mid=41E81331492A3C06A-25B41E81331492A3C06A25B&FORM=VIRE>

Garrison Headquarters and Headquarters Company hosts change of command ceremony

A change of command ceremony was held for Fort Johnson Garrison Headquarter and Headquarters Company May 9 at the 1st Battalion, 5th Aviation Regiment hangar at Meks Army Airfield. The outgoing commander, Capt. Kody W. Hoadley, was presented with a meritorious achievement medal and commemorative gift before passing the colors and command to incoming commander, Capt. Victor A. Davila Jr. (U.S. Army photos by Angie Thorne)



Soldiers and family members took part in Fort Johnson's Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month Rally



Public Affairs Intern soaks up experience, finds true purpose

By Elena Pigg
Northwestern State University student

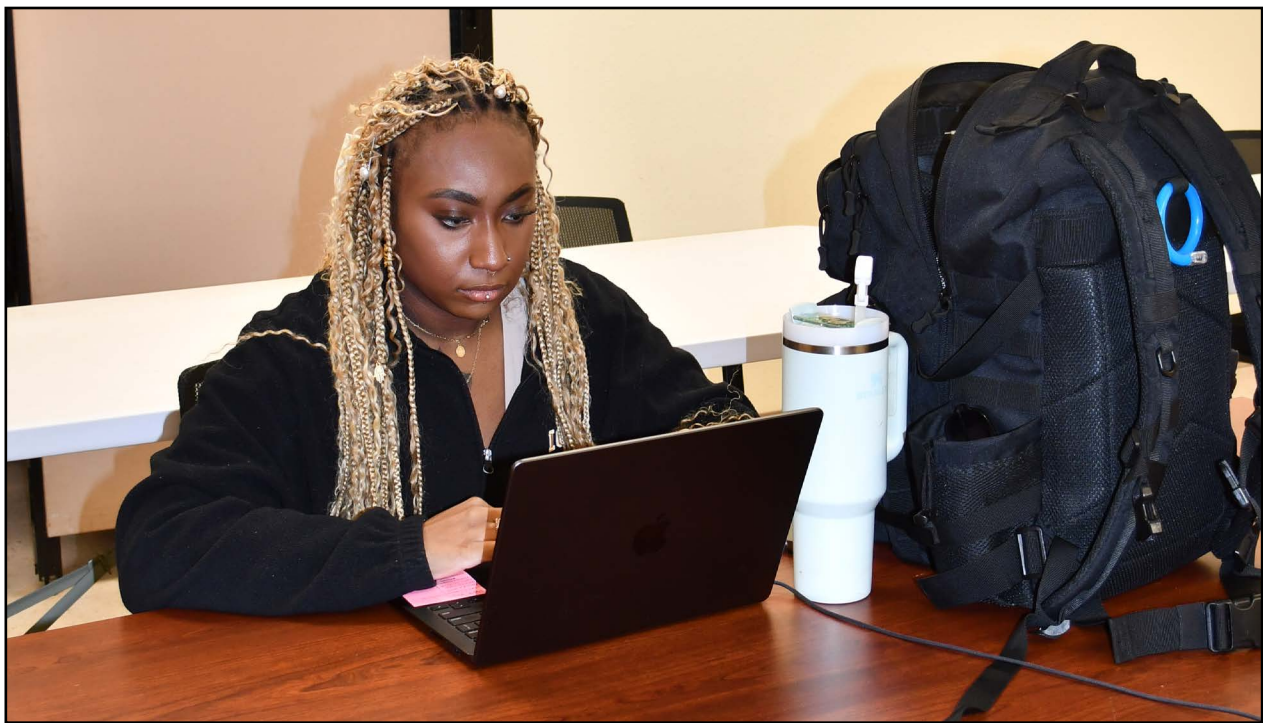
FORT JOHNSON, La. — When I was a little girl, I dreamed of growing up to be an Army ranger. I always thought the things they did were sooo cool. I also loved that Army Soldiers seemed like normal, everyday people, with extraordinarily important jobs. It felt like my dream was almost within my reach.

Then reality smacked me in the face. Now that I've grown up, I've had to accept a hard truth about myself: You can't love eating Raising Cane's and still be ranger fit and ready. The yummy goodness that calls to me has become a game changer for my career choices.

So, for now, I'll settle for doing something ranger adjacent — being an intern at Fort Johnson's Public Affairs Office. My name is Elena Pigg and I'm a soon to be, May 15, Northwestern State University graduate. I'm also a barrel racer and a self-declared professional drama queen — a unique combination that somehow led me here, to a position many might overlook, but one I've found to be anything but ordinary. Dare I say, to me, it might be just as cool as being a ranger. Okay, it's a close second.

Throughout college, I've worn many hats — reporter, radio DJ, sports commentator and swim coach to name a few — but none of them spoke to my spirit quite like this role.

Working at Fort Johnson isn't just a job. It feels like a calling — one that echoes louder than the applause of any rodeo or the buzz of a live broadcast.



Elena Pigg, Northwestern State University student and Fort Johnson Public Affairs Office intern, works on an assignment to create an in-house graphic. (U.S. Army photo by Angie Thorne)

I knew I was home the moment my boss lit a cigarette, exhaled his past into the air and spoke of the job he loved like a story he never got tired of telling.

It was as if NSU had gently confirmed I was home. It wasn't going to be easy — and Keith Houin, Fort Johnson Deputy Public Affairs Officer, made that clear the moment I walked through the door. He was right.

It took grit. I had to get up before the sun rose and smear on makeup — don't judge — on the mornings I traveled from Natchitoches to Fort Johnson to work at the Garrison Public Affairs Office. Oh, that whole makeup thing, might be another reason I wasn't completely Ranger material. Anyway, driving more than an hour, to and from Natchitoches, twice a week on Louisiana's crumbling backroads, as I completed the last few months of my college career, was intense. But I'd do it all again — without hesitation — because of the people I worked with at PAO and the Soldiers and families I was lucky enough to meet in my time at Fort Johnson.

I want to take a moment to thank them for their kindness, acceptance, patience, humor and their unwavering commitment to what they do. Because of you, I was able to capture the heart of Fort Johnson through pictures and video — and show the world what I feel is one of the installation's greatest strengths, family.

I've always felt like I carried the heart of a patriot. As a child, I sat wide-eyed in my father's constitutional law class at Louisiana Tech, lis-

tening as he read me the Constitution like scripture — each word a promise, each amendment a gift. He reminded me we were lucky to have those promises. That little girl, cradled in the rhythm of founding ideals, grew into a teenager who dreamed of glory — of boots on foreign soil, of medals and legacy and becoming a war hero, forever etched into the fabric of history.

However, life has a way of revealing our true purpose. For me, it wasn't through battlefields, but through the quiet power of placement. Instead, heroism wasn't found in ranger school, but behind the lens and pen, at Fort Johnson's Public Affairs Office — on a military installation where stories matter, and voices are honored.

So many people search for their purpose. They wander through their graduations in cap and gown with the questions of their future weighing heavier than their diplomas.

Graduates step into the world with trembling hands, uncertain of their path, unsure of their place.

But I am not one of them. Yes, the thought of taking that final step into adulthood stirs a quiet fear in me — but beneath that fear is clarity. I know where I'm meant to stand, who I'm meant to serve — the military community, steadfast and resilient.

And I know why — because their stories deserve to be seen, their voices heard, and that's what Public Affairs does for the community at Fort Johnson.

Thank you NSU, for helping me connect with the intelligent, funny, talented and caring people of Fort Johnson's PAO, who have mentored me and helped me "Be All I Can Be."

Commentary



Exchange expands Home Depot assortment beyond major appliances

AAFES

DALLAS — The Army & Air Force Exchange Service and The Home Depot are significantly expanding access to military-exclusive pricing and tax-free savings on nearly every home improvement product available.

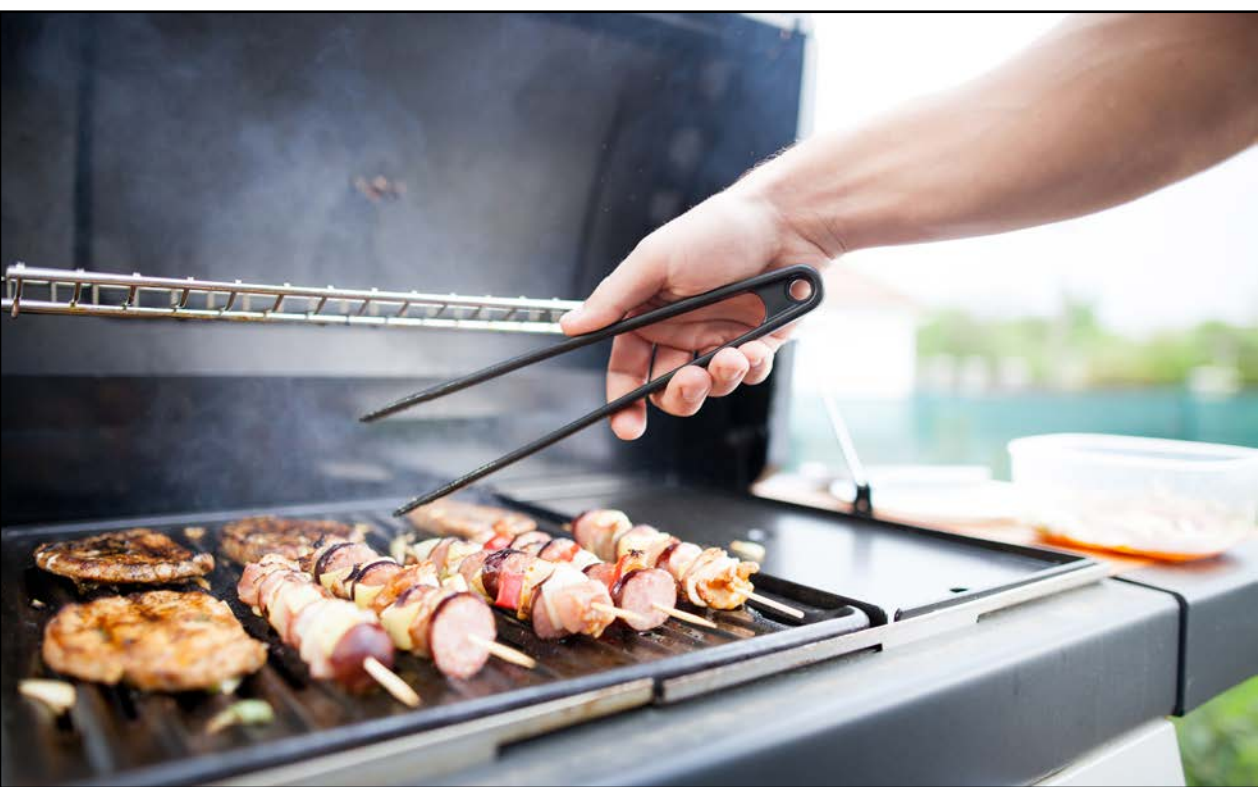
Authorized Exchange shoppers in CONUS can now access The Home Depot's branded online page at ShopMyExchange.com.

The expanded assortment includes power tool sets, outdoor power equipment, grills, garden tools, ceiling fans and much more.

"This is a major Quality-of-Life enhancement for our Nation's Soldiers, Airmen, Guardians and their families," said Exchange Director/CEO Tom Shull. "Offering an expanded assortment of discounted products from The Home Depot is a force multiplier for our heroes who have earned tax-free savings and military-exclusive pricing for life using their ShopMyExchange.com benefit."

Shopping The Home Depot through the Exchange provides tax-free savings, in addition to a 1% discount on major appliances and 10% off all other merchandise.

Shoppers may also use their MILITARY STAR card to purchase The Home Depot



products and receive free standard shipping (shoppers using another form of payment receive free standard shipping on orders totaling \$49 or more).

All active-duty service members, dependents, retirees, Department of Defense civilians and retirees and honorably discharged Veterans who have confirmed their eligibility

can now shop The Home Depot tax-free at ShopMyExchange.com.

[ShopMyExchange.com](https://www.shopmyexchange.com) offers free standard shipping on all orders made using a MILITARY STAR card. Shoppers using another form of payment receive free standard shipping on all Military Clothing orders; or orders totaling \$49 or more.

The Safe Helpline is available 24/7 for victims of sexual assault.

Talk to someone who understands:

safehelpline.org



Box tour gives attendees peek into how Soldiers train

Soldiers, family members and the local community signed up to attend the 2025 Joint Readiness Training Center Operations Group Box Tour held April 25 at Fort Johnson. (U.S. Army photos by Capt. Jay Branch, 1st Lt. Meya Morse, and 1st Lt. Zachary Hafele)



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE



We are grateful for all you do to protect and serve our country.

We are proud to honor our service members and their families with these savings.

Fort Johnson Commissary SIDEWALK SALE

JOIN US FOR 3 DAYS OF FUN & SAVINGS!

MAY 29 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.

MAY 30 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.

MAY 31 9:30 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Check your local commissary for dates and time of sales.

www.commissaries.com



A Fort Johnson Color Guard and a few words from Col. CJ Lopez, Fort Johnson garrison commander, helped kickoff the 2025 MayFest, held May 2-3 at the Vernon Parish Faigrounds. (Photos courtesy Rick Smith, Vernon Parish School Board Media Relations)



Capt. Alexandria Federico, left, 548th Combat Training Squadron, loads a bin with paper products to shred during Fort Johnson's annual Shred Day May 1. Mark Anderson, right, chief, Military Personnel Division, brings a bin full of paper products to shred. (U.S. Army photos by Chuck Cannon)

LET US HELP MAKE A DIFFERENCE WITH THE

TENANT SATISFACTION SURVEY

OPEN TO SOLDIERS IN BOTH ACCOMPANIED AND UNACCOMPANIED HOUSING.

TENANT SURVEY

✓ _____
 ✓ _____
 ✓ _____
 ✗ _____

YOUR OPINION MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE IN THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ARMY FAMILIES

First responder appreciation lunch

Soldier and civilian first responders stop by The Forge back patio May 9 to enjoy a free lunch. Volunteers cooked and served a menu including hamburgers and sausage links with all the sides and drinks. The lunch was a thank you for their dedication and hard work as they keep the Fort Johnson community safe and sound. (U.S. Army photos by Angie Thorne)



HOME OF HEROES RECREATION

MOVIE NIGHT

1ST AND 3RD FRIDAY
OF EVERY MONTH @ 7PM

ACTIVE DUTY
SOLDIERS ONLY

FREE

POP CORN

(337)531-5870

LAST DAY OF SCHOOL BASH

MAY 16, 2025
4:30PM - 6PM

JOIN MST FOR A AFTERNOON FULL
OF FUN AND GAMES CELEBRATING THE
LAST DAY OF SCHOOL!

CALL MST AT 337-531-1992
FOR MORE INFORMATION!



MWR
summer
fun

MAY Youth Fitness Calendar

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
10 am - 10:30 am Parent & Child Play Fit (1yr-3yrs) Building 2070	4 pm - 5 pm Open Gym (All Ages) Building 2070	4 pm - 5 pm Open Gym (All Ages) Building 2070	9:30 am - 10:30 am Homeschool PE & Fitness (5yrs-6yrs) Building 2070 \$10 MONTHLY FEE	9:30 am - 10 am Parent & Child Play Fit (1yr-3yrs) Building 2070
10:30 am - 11 am Parent & Child Play Fit (1yr-3yrs) Building 2070		5 pm - 6 pm Weight Training (Grade 6-12) Building 2070	10:30 am - 11:30 am Homeschool PE & Fitness (7yrs-9yrs) Building 2070 \$10 MONTHLY FEE	10 am - 10:45 am Parent & Child Start Smart Play Fit (3yr-6yrs) Building 2070
11 am - 11:30 am Parent & Child Play Fit (1yr-3yrs) Building 2070			11:30 am - 12:30 pm Homeschool PE & Fitness (10yrs+) Building 2070 \$10 MONTHLY FEE	10:45 am - 12 pm Open Gym (All Ages) Building 2070
4:15 pm - 5 pm Kids Cross Training (7yrs-11yrs) Building 2070				4:15 pm - 5 pm Kids Cross Training (7yrs-11yrs) Building 2070
5 pm - 6 pm Weight Training (Grade 6-12) Building 2070				5:30 pm - 6:30 pm **Running Club** (7yrs+) Perez Field MAY 2 & 16 ONLY!

DODGEBALL TOURNAMENT MAY 30, 2025

ALL CLASSES WILL END MAY 16, 2025!
HOMESCHOOL PE \$10 MONTHLY FEE

Call 337-531-6004 for more information
Participants must be registered with Child and Youth Services

LEADERSHIP ADVENTURE CAMP WARRIOR FORT JOHNSON TEAMWORK

YOUTH RESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP CAMP
AT NORTH TOLEDO BEND STATE PARK
REGISTER AT PARENT CENTRAL SERVICES
7960 MISSISSIPPI AVENUE, BLDG. 924
OPEN REGISTRATION MAY 1 - JULY 7

GRADES 4 - 6
JUNE 16 - 20

GRADES 6 - 12
JULY 14 - 18

\$150
PER CHILD
(NON REFUNDABLE)

ALL PARTICIPANTS MUST BE REGISTERED WITH CYS AND HAVE A CURRENT SPORTS PHYSICAL
CALL 337-531-6004 FOR INFORMATION

CYS YOUTH SPORTS DODGEBALL TOURNAMENT

YOUTH GYM BLDG 2070
MAY 30, 2025
5:30PM - 6PM

REGISTER ON SITE: 5:30 PM
(REGISTER AS A TEAM OF 5 OR INDIVIDUALLY)

AGE GROUPS:
8-10 | 11-13 | 14-16

\$5 PER
PLAYER
(CASH ONLY)

TROPHIES AWARDED TO
CHAMPION & RUNNER UP
TEAMS IN EACH AGE GROUP

FOR MORE INFORMATION
CALL 337-531-6004



JR LIFEGUARD COURSE

**MAY 19-23
2025**

SFC GUESS JR POOL
AGE RANGE 12-14 YEARS OLD

\$100 PER PERSON
INCLUDES CERTIFICATE
AND CPR MASK!

10AM
-
6:30PM
EACH DAY

IN ORDER TO ENROLL INTO A SESSION
THEY MUST FIRST
PASS THE LIFEGUARD PRE-TEST BY
MAY 16, 2025

THE LIFEGUARD PRE-TEST

- AGE VERIFICATION
- 50 METER SWIM(25 METER
FRONT CRAWL + 25 METER
BREAST STROKE!)
- WATER TREADING(1 MINUTE)

FOR MORE INFORMATION
CALL 337-531-1988

Sign up to compete and have a great time!

BOSS 22 RIFLE SHOOTING EVENT



**MAY 17, 2025
1PM
MWR SHOOTING RANGE**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION
CALL (726) 780-1353**

ORGANIZATION DAY

MAY 23, 2025

**ALL MWR FACILITIES WILL BE CLOSED
FROM THE HOURS OF
2 PM TO 4 PM
FOR QUESTIONS CALL 337-531-7421**



MAY 24, 2025

THE MURPH

The Murph Challenge

- 1 Mile Run
- 100 Pull-Ups
- 200 Push-Ups
- 300 Squats
- 1 Mile Run

Weighted Vest Not Provided

HOME OF HEROES FITNESS CENTER

9:30 AM - 1 PM

Free to the community!

**CALL FOR MORE INFORMATION
(337) 531-4337**

2025 STRONG BANDS

STRONG B.A.N.D.S. 2025

MAY 1, 2025 - JUNE 7, 2025

GARRISON WIDE EVENT

BALANCE:
ARMY 10 MILER TIME TRIAL (MAY 1)
SUPPORTS HEARTS APART ACS PROGRAM (MAY 9)
INFLATABLE RACE (MAY 10)

ACTIVITY:
INTRAMURAL SOFTBALL (MAY 11-17)
PAINTBALL EXPERIENCE (MAY 17)

NUTRITION:
JR. LIFE GUARDING COURSE (MAY 19)
THE MURPH (MAY 24)

DETERMINATION:
500/1000LB CLUB AT WHELOCK & CANTRELL (ALL YEAR)

STRENGTH:
ARMY 10 MILER TIME TRIAL (MAY 6)
SLIP N SLIDE KICKBALL (MAY 7)

#STRONGBANDS

STEP 1 Attend featured fitness events at your garrison

STEP 2 Wear your STRONG B.A.N.D.S. wristband throughout May to show your commitment to a healthy lifestyle

STEP 3 Gain valuable fitness tips throughout May by visiting ArmyMWR.com/STRONGBANDS



Bass Fishing Tournaments



ARMY OUTDOOR RECREATION

APR 5 MAY 3 JUN 7 JUL 5 AUG 2

AT TOLEDO BEND

REGISTRATION IS FROM 6:30AM - 7AM. FISHING BEGINS AT 7AM & ENDS AT 11AM.
\$20.00 FEE WITH 80% PAYBACK FOR LARGEST TOTAL BASS CAUGHT (UP TO 5 FISH).
BIG BASS SIDE POT \$5.00 WITH 100% PAYBACK.

CALL (520) 692-3472 FOR MORE INFORMATION

GARRISON COMMANDERS

GOLF SCRAMBLE

9 AM TEE OFF!

1ST FRIDAY OF EVERY MONTH!



Warrior Hills GOLF COURSE

JRTC & FORT JOHNSON

BENOIT HIXSON

MOCKLER BEVERAGE

BATON ROUGE • HOUMA • LAKE CHARLES

ALEXANDRIA • LEEVILLE

Barksdale Federal Credit Union

\$50

\$55 DAY OF EVENT

PRICE INCLUDES

- GREEN FEE
- HALF CART
- AWARDS
- DINNER

CALL (337) 531-4661 FOR MORE INFORMATION

Check VIN numbers

The Directorate of Emergency Services Traffic Division will release the following vehicles to MWR for disposal if they remain unclaimed. Vehicles are listed with the last four of their VIN number. If one of these vehicles belongs to you, please contact the Fort Johnson Police Traffic Division at 337-531-1806, 6675 or 2675.



2016	Yamaha	R3	2153
UNK	UNK	Boat trailer	N/A
UNK	UNK	Kayak trailer	N/A
UNK	McClain	Boat trailer	N/A
2001	Ford	F150	0450
2000	Ford	Ranger	3852
2006	Nissan	350Z	4586
2004	Cadillac	Escalade	5765
2003	Ford	Crown Victoria	2046
2011	Chevrolet	Cruz	6489
2012	Land Rover	Land Ranger	2214
2005	Honda	Civic	6295
1994	GEO	Tracker	0139
2007	Ford	F150	7785

THE CITY OF LAKE CHARLES PRESENTS

25TH ANNUAL
DOWNTOWN at SUNDOWN
LAKE CHARLES, LA

MAY 23
BAYOU RHYTHMS

LOUISIANA'S KINGFISH
6 PM - 7:15 PM

MASON TRAIL & THE ZYDECO RHYTHM
7:30 PM - 9 PM

MAY 30
URBAN COWBOY

SOUTHERN TRAGEDY
6 PM - 7:15 PM

BUDDY ANDREWS & THE BRANDED
7:30 PM - 9 PM

JUNE 6
ROCK N' SOUL

DEAD MATADORS
6 PM - 7:15 PM

THE GOOD DUDES
7:30 PM - 9 PM

JUNE 13
CAMPUS CONNECTION

THE DEBTORS
6 PM - 7:15 PM

ZACH EDWARDS & THE MEDICINE
7:30 PM - 9 PM

AFTER GLOW SHOW
DJ SECRET STACHE - 9 PM

ART MARKET * FOOD, BEER, WINE*
FAMILY-FRIENDLY * GAMES & ACTIVITIES

AT THE 1000 BLOCK OF RYAN STREET DOWNTOWN

Army Community Service
and Prevention Center

GRAND
OPENING

You are invited!

June 9, 2025
10 a.m.

The newly defined Army Community Service and Prevention Center (ACSPC) combines all things prevention and puts them under one roof in an easy to access center for Soldiers and Families.

Come join Brig. Gen. Jason P. Curl, Installation Commander, and the prevention staff to honor this celebratory event.

Joint Readiness Training Center & Fort Johnson

U.S. ARMY

ARMY COMMUNITY SERVICE
ACS
Real-Life Solutions for Successful Army Living

and Prevention Center

Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital



Protect Military Kids from Measles Schedule Their MMR Vaccine

Measles is highly contagious but preventable.

One infected person can expose up to 90% of
unvaccinated people near by.

The MMR vaccine (Measles, Mumps, and Rubella) is safe, effective,
and essential for school-aged children.

- Children 12 months and older
- Typically administered during well-child
- Adults unsure of vaccination history may also be eligible

How Effective Is It?

- 1 dose = 93% protection against measles
- 2 doses = 97% protection
- Also protects against mumps and rubella

How to Schedule at BJACH

- Call: 726-780-2175
- Visit: <https://patientportal.mhsgenesis.health.mil>
- Clinic Hours: Monday - Friday, 6:40 a.m. - 3:20 p.m.
- Location: BJACH Immunizations Clinic, Primary Care Area

This April, during Month of the Military Child, let's
keep our kids healthy, protected, and mission-ready.

#geauxBJACH | #weprovidebest | #StopMeasles | #vaccineswork

From civilian nurse to Army leader: 1st Lt. Crystal Absher answers the call

By Jean Clavette Graves
BJACH PAO

FORT JOHNSON, La. — 1st Lt. Crystal Absher knows what it means to serve those who serve.

After years working as a civilian nurse and building her career while supporting her Family through military life, she now wears the uniform at Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital.

As an Army nurse in the emergency department, Absher delivers expert care and steady leadership, supporting mission readiness and providing comfort to Soldiers and Families across the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Johnson.

Nursing wasn't always part of Absher's plan. Originally from Dallas, Texas, her path to the profession began as a military spouse searching for meaningful work that could move with her Family.

From her first experiences as a certified nursing assistant in North Carolina to pursuing advanced degrees across the country, nursing quickly became a passion and a calling.

"I enjoy helping others and being the rock for someone in need," Absher said. "As a nurse, I finally found a career that fit my life and fulfilled me."

Over the years, Absher expanded her skills and embraced opportunities to grow in the field. She earned her associate, bachelor's, and master's degrees in nursing while balancing military life and raising a Family. Along the way, she found her home in the fast-paced environment of emergency nursing.

"I've worked everywhere; from Level 1 trauma centers in Baltimore to community hospitals," she said. "I enjoy the unknown of the ER. I like adapting to illness or injury that comes through the doors and being the steady presence, my patients need in critical moments."

Despite a successful civilian career, joining the Army remained a personal goal, according to Absher.

"Joining the Army had always been something I wanted to do," Absher said. "We prioritized my husband's career and our Family for many years, but once our kids got older and my husband began thinking about retirement, it finally felt like my turn."

With her Family's support, Absher applied for and was selected for a direct commission into the Army Nurse Corps. Returning to BJACH in uniform gave her the opportunity to continue serving a community she already knew well —



1st Lt. Crystal Absher, a registered nurse at Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital, talks with Sgt. 1st Class Chip Allen while checking his blood pressure in the emergency department May 5. (U.S. Army photo by Jean Clavette Graves)

this time as both a nurse and an Army officer.

"Everyone deserves access to quality healthcare, and that includes the Soldiers and families who serve our nation," said Staff Sgt. Kirby Sharbono, a recruiter with the U.S. Army Shreveport Medical Recruiting Station. "Direct commissioning offers who are experienced healthcare professionals, like 1st Lt. Crystal Absher, give them the opportunity to bring their skills to the Army team and make a meaningful difference."

In the ER, Absher embraces her role as both a leader and caregiver. She understands that Soldiers and their families often face emergencies without nearby relatives or support systems. Nurses, she said, fill that gap.

"Our patients come to us scared, hurt or uncertain," Absher said. "We are their advocates, their steady voice, and often, an extension of family when they need it most."

"Emergency department nurses are the unsung heroes of military healthcare," said Maj. Tynika Reese, clinical nursing officer in charge of BJACH's emergency department. "Every day, they deliver rapid, lifesaving care while also standing beside patients and families in

their most vulnerable moments. At BJACH, our nurses support a mission that never stops — ensuring Soldiers, families, and rotational units are cared for so they can stay focused and ready."

Absher's path from civilian nurse to active-duty officer reflects the critical role nurses play across military medicine — and why the Army seeks passionate, driven professionals to join its ranks.

"1st Lt. Crystal Absher brings everything the Army Nurse Corps needs — trauma expertise, passion and a unique perspective shaped by her experiences as a civilian nurse, military spouse and now an officer," Reese said. "She is a shining example of how diverse nursing paths strengthen our team and help drive Army Medicine forward."

For Absher, donning the Army uniform is more than a career milestone — it's a personal commitment to serve alongside those she has long supported. Whether providing urgent care in the emergency room or offering steady reassurance during life's most difficult moments, she brings a wealth of passion, knowledge and commitment to the mission at Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital.

For more information about Army healthcare opportunities, contact Staff Sgt. Kirby Sharbono at 913-205-1795 or visit <https://recruiting.army.mil/mrb/>.



Teen Center grand opening!

Located at 5538 University Parkway



Hours of operation:

Monday — 2:30-7 p.m.

Tuesday — 2:30-7 p.m.

Wednesday — 2:30-7 p.m.

Thursday — 2:30-7 p.m.

Friday — 2:30-10 p.m.

Saturday — 2:30-10 p.m.

Sunday — Closed

For more information call 337-531-1992

(U.S. Army photo by Antoine Aaron)

Have you taken the Army housing survey?

Win Gift Cards up to \$750 in value!



It would be unbearable if we didn't hear from you.



Corvias
PROPERTY MANAGEMENT



Be rolling in it.

Win gift cards up to \$750 in value!

• Take the Army housing survey today!



Corvias
PROPERTY MANAGEMENT



TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Talking Point #1

Q: What is TAP?

A: The Transition Assistance Program is a commander's program and a Soldier's responsibility.

TAP provides information and training to ensure transitioning Soldiers, Department of Army civilians, retirees, Soldiers' family members and caregivers are prepared for their next step in life – whether pursuing additional education, finding a job in the public or private sector or starting their own business. TAP is administered locally at JRTC and Fort Johnson at the Education Center, 7460 Colorado Ave., building 660, or the Army's 24/7 Virtual Center if a Soldier is located more than 50 miles from a TAP center. The mandatory components of TAP are applicable for Soldiers who have at least 180 continuous days or more on active duty; this includes National Guard and Reservist serving on Title 10 status.



TRANSITION
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Find out more at
armytap.army.mil

IT TAKES THE COURAGE AND STRENGTH OF A WARRIOR TO ASK FOR HELP



24/7 Chaplain: 337-208-2868
Crisis Line: (phone) 988, press 1 or text 838255
BJACH Emergency Room: (337) 531-3368/3369
Military Crisis Line/ National Suicide Prevention
Lifeline: (800) 273-8255, press 1; or text 838255
Combat Vets Call Center: (877) 927-8387

TURN AROUND DON'T DROWN



Six inches of moving water can knock you down



One foot of moving water can sweep your vehicle away



Munitions are designed to be dangerous. Military personnel use our lands and waters across the United States for live-fire training and testing to defend our nation. As a result, ammo may be present on both land and in the water. No matter what you call it — ammo, explosives, UXO, duds or souvenirs — remember munitions are dangerous and can explode if approached, touched, moved or disturbed. By visiting the 3Rs website, learning and following the 3Rs (Recognize, Retreat, Report) of Explosives Safety, you will help protect yourself, your family, friends and community from the potential dangers associated with the presence of munitions.



Call the Garrison Safety Office at (726)780-1087 if you have any questions or concerns

UXO, Dud, Training Round, War Trophy, Souvenir
NO MATTER WHAT YOU CALL THEM! THEY CAN BE DEADLY!



If you **did not**
drop it,
do not
pick it up!

Learn and Follow
the **3Rs**

RECOGNIZE: The danger that a munition
presents to yourself,
your family and your neighbors
RETREAT: Do not disturb, touch or move it
Do not give or throw it away
REPORT: Call local authorities



<https://3Rs.mil>

Hurricane season starts June 1, are you prepared?

Hurricane Preparedness

weather.gov/hurricane

Know Your Risk: Water & Wind



Consider your threats: storm surge, flooding from heavy rain, strong winds, tornadoes, rip currents



Determine if you live in a flood-prone area



Find out if you live in an evacuation zone



Identify your home's structural risks (mobile homes & basements can be especially vulnerable)



Hurricane Preparedness

weather.gov/hurricane

Understand Forecast Information



Rely on forecasts from the National Hurricane Center & your local NWS office



Know your alerts & the difference between a Watch and Warning



Focus on potential impacts, regardless of storm size or category



Know that deadly hazards occur well outside of the Forecast Cone



Hurricane Preparedness

weather.gov/hurricane

Prepare Before Hurricane Season



Develop an evacuation plan



Assemble disaster supplies: food, water, batteries, charger, radio, cash



Get an insurance checkup and document your possessions



Create a communication plan with a hand-written list of contacts



Strengthen your home



ATTENTION

Starting **June 1**, there will be **changes made to access control points (ACPs)** across the installation. This change is not made lightly—it directly supports our priority to build lethal, trained, and ready warfighters. By realigning gate operations, we are able to return Soldiers to the line where they belong: training, leading, and preparing to fight and win our Nation's wars. Every Soldier we free from non-combat duties is another step toward greater readiness and lethality across our formations.

We understand changes like this can impact your daily routines, and we appreciate your flexibility and continued support. Fort Johnson remains committed to balancing access and security with the critical mission of preparing America's premier combat training force.

Thank you for standing with us as we remain focused on what matters most—warfighting and readiness.

VCC — 6 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Friday; Closed weekends and federal holidays

ACP (gate) standard hours:

ACP 1 (main gate) — Open 24/7 and all federal holidays.

ACP 2 (University Parkway and Highway 467 North) — Open from 6 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Friday; closed on weekends and federal holidays.

ACP 5 (Highway 467 South and Highway 10) — Open from 6 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday- Friday; closed on weekends and federal holidays.

ACP 6 (Chaffee Road at North Fort housing) — Permanently closed.

ACP 7 (K Avenue and Alligator Lake) — Open 24/7 and on all federal holidays.

ACP 8 — Closed

41

42