

THE JRTC AND FORT POLK

GUARDIAN

Thursday, Sept. 16, 2021 Vol. 48, No. 37



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When waters rise, will you know what to do?

DPTMS

FORT POLK, La. — As Fort Polk continues its severe weather preparedness posture to minimize the impact and effects of a disaster, it is important to know and be prepared for heavy rain fall that could cause flooding. Floods are among the most common weather hazards in the United States. They can happen anywhere at any time of year.

Flooding is a coast-to-coast threat to the United States and its territories all year long.

Flooding typically occurs when prolonged rain falls over several days; when intense rain falls over a short period of time or when an ice or debris jam causes a river or stream to overflow onto the surrounding area.

Flooding can also result from the failure of a water control structure, such as a levee or dam. The most common cause of flooding is water due to rain and/or snowmelt that accumulates faster than soils can absorb it or rivers can carry it away. Approximately 75% of all presidential disaster declarations are associated with flooding.

Densely populated areas have a higher risk for flash floods than rural areas. Flash floods can occur within minutes or hours of a heavy rainfall, and waters can rise as high as 30 feet or more.

Even small streams and creeks can flood rapidly and cause damage. Flash floods are usually caused by slow-moving thunderstorms.

According to the National Weather Service, flash floods are short-term events occurring within six hours of the causative event (heavy rain, dam break, levee failure, rapid snowmelt and ice jams) and often within two hours of the start of high-intensity rainfall.



COURTESY

Flash floods can move homes and cars, uproot trees and destroy bridges. Because floods happen with little to no warning, residents in low-lying areas are particularly at risk. According to the American Red Cross, flash floods are the No. 1 weather-related killer in the U.S.

Don't drown, turn around

Each year, more deaths occur due to flooding than from any other thunderstorm related hazard. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that more than half of all flood-related drownings occur when a vehicle is driven into hazardous flood water. The next highest percentage of flood-related deaths is due to walking into or near flood waters.

People underestimate the force and power of water. Many of the deaths occur in cars swept downstream. Many of these drownings are preventable. Never drive around the barriers blocking a flooded road. The road may have collapsed under that water. A mere 6 inches of fast-moving flood water can knock over an adult. It takes just 12 inches of rushing water to carry away most cars and just 2 feet of rushing water can carry away sport utility vehicles and trucks.

It is never safe to drive or walk into flood waters. Almost half of all flash flood fatalities are vehicle related, according to the National Weather Service. If you're driving and approach a water-covered road, turn around.

Here are some other tips to stay high and dry:

- Know your proximity to rivers, streams and dams.
- During heavy rain, avoid underpasses, underground parking garages and basements.
- Avoid hiking or camping if thunderstorms are predicted.
- Develop an evacuation plan for your family.
- Don't walk in water above your ankles; you can be swept off your feet in as little as six inches of rushing water.
- Turn off the electricity and other utilities

Know the difference between a flood watch and a flood warning issued by the National Weather Service.

Flash flood warning: A warning is issued when a flash flood is imminent or occurring. If you are in a flood prone area move immediately to high ground. A flash flood is a

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The Guardian is published by the Public Affairs Office, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk.

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For more information on Fort Polk units and happenings visit the following Facebook pages:
@JRTCOperationsGrp, **@BayneJonesACH** or **@fortpolkmwr**.



Cover Photo: Joint Readiness Training Center Commanding General, David S. Doyle, (second from right) and Fort Polk Command Sergeant Major, Command Sgt. Maj. Michael C. Henry, (right) stand and salute a wreath honoring the fallen of 9/11 at the Patriot Day Never Forget 9/11/2021 observance held Sept. 11 at Fort Polk's Fire Station. (Photo credit: Angie Thorne, Public Affairs and Communication)

Fort Polk honors sacrifices on 20th anniversary of 9/11

By **ANGIE THORNE**

Public Affairs and Communication

FORT POLK, La — It's said that time heals all wounds. Possibly, but maybe it's more about how the wounds are dealt with over days, months and years that makes the real difference.

It would be difficult to cope with the unimaginable happening without reflection and the insight that remembering can bring.

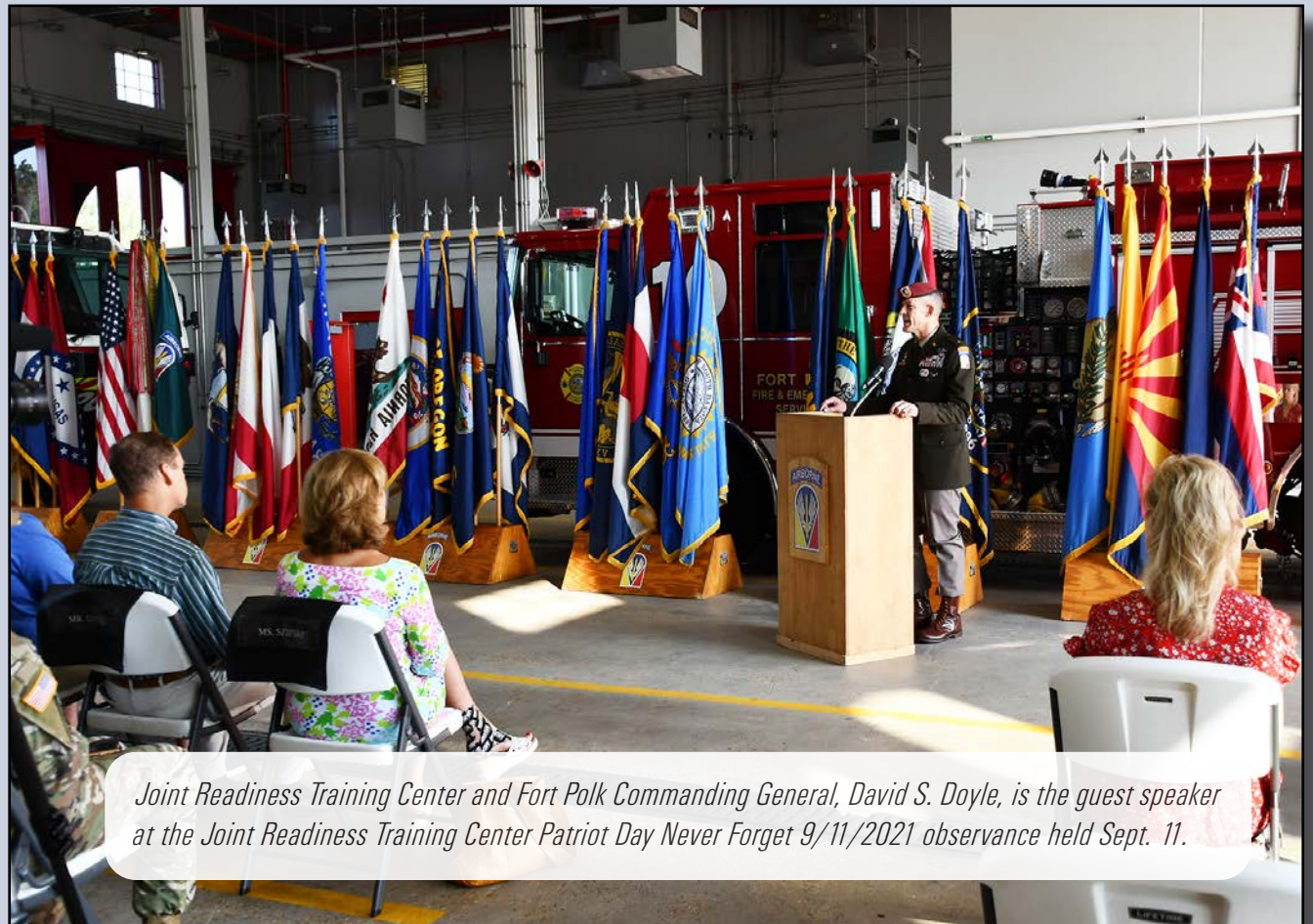
That's why Fort Polk, together with ceremonies held across the country, paid homage to those lost on 9/11 and beyond at the Joint Readiness Training Center Patriot Day Never Forget 9/11/01 ceremony at the Fort Polk Fire Station Sept. 11.

After the audience participated in a silent tribute and listened to the Pickering and Rosepine High School Bands as they performed the national anthem, JRTC and Fort Polk Commander, Brig. Gen. David S. Doyle, reflected on the fact that 20 years have passed since the events of 9/11 — a day that changed America in dramatic and enduring ways.

"The attacks in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania remain seared in our national memory. That momentous day served as a true test of the American spirit," he said. "Today we observe Patriot Day and all that it represents — we honor the value of life, remember those who we loved and lost and reflect upon our country's resilience and the strength of the American spirit."

Doyle said this is the time to pause and recall the true heroes of those first harrowing days — first responders including firefighters, police officers, emergency medical technicians and paramedics.

"These heroes raced into the suffocating smoke and rubble. At Ground Zero, the world



Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk Commanding General, David S. Doyle, is the guest speaker at the Joint Readiness Training Center Patriot Day Never Forget 9/11/2021 observance held Sept. 11.

ANGIE THORNE/GUARDIAN

witnessed the miracle of American courage and sacrifice," he said. "As ash rained down into the streets of New York City, first responders ran into the fires of hell. On that first day, more than 400 first responders lost their lives. Today, we honor their extraordinary sacrifice."

Doyle said it was also a time to salute Fort Polk's police officers, fire fighters and EMTs, as well as the first responders from neighboring communities.

"Thank you for your unwavering efforts as you put yourselves in danger to keep Fort Polk, our Soldiers and their Families safe — we truly appreciate your sacrifices," he said.

Doyle said eventually, heroic first respond-

ers passed the fight against those who attacked the United States to those in military uniforms as the nation struck globally at the entities that had planned and conducted the 9/11 attacks. He said men and women of all backgrounds continue to selflessly serve this great nation, ready to deploy, fight and win decisively against any enemy, anytime and anywhere.

"Our Army continues to build on its long history of defending the United States, through strong leadership, the commitment and courage of Soldiers and our willingness to train diligently to deter our adversaries," said Doyle.

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Briefs

Vaccine clinic

The Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk hosts a walk-in COVID-19 vaccination clinic at the Post Exchange (7742 Colorado Avenue) Saturday from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Both the Moderna and Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines will be available to Soldiers, Family members and Department of Defense employees and contractors. Remember to bring your vaccination card if this is your second dose.

COVID vaccines

Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital Immunization Clinic has COVID-19 vaccines available by appointment ev-

ery Tuesday and Thursday. The Moderna COVID-19 vaccine is authorized for Soldiers, Family members and retirees 18-years and older. The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is available for beneficiaries who are 12 years and older. Call 531.3011 to schedule your appointment or schedule online at tricareonline.com.

ASP inventory

The Ammunition Supply Point will be closed to conduct quarterly inventory Tuesday through Thursday. The ASP will re-open for business on Sept. 24 at 7:30 a.m. Customers are asked to plan accordingly. For more information call Bonnie J. Edwards at 531.0950 or Jerry Jacobs at 531.4793.

Get tested

If you have been exposed to someone

who has tested positive for COVID-19 or are experiencing symptoms, visit the Louisiana Department of Health COVID-19 information page to find a testing location near you. <https://www.ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/3934>.

Additional dose

Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital understands that Fort Polk's immunocompromised population is especially vulnerable to prolonged illness from COVID-19.

BJACH is now offering an additional dose of the vaccine for moderately to severely immunocompromised beneficiaries in accordance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Guidelines. If you answer yes to any of the following questions you may qualify for a third COVID-19 vaccine

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Saving Soldiers from Suicide:

Battle buddy saves despondent Soldier's life

By **KIMBERLY REISCHLING**
Public Affairs and Communication

Editor's note: This updated article is based on the experiences of a Fort Polk Soldier once stationed here who was gracious enough to tell his story: A story of despair, the love of a battle buddy and the concern and support from his chain of command. Names have been changed to protect privacy.

FORT POLK, La. — The phone call devastated his world, crumbling to dust his hopes and dreams for the future.

Several days elapsed, days filled with the mind-numbing grief that follows the end of a once-loving marriage. He felt helpless; thousands of miles away, deployed to a combat theater, there was little he could do. He somehow got through those days, unthinkingly making the motions because his mind was elsewhere.

To rid himself of the physical memories, he placed the items she had sent in a box, each gift, each letter summoning a memory that magnified his loss. The wedding ring was the last to go. As he twisted it off his finger, something snapped inside. What snapped? It's hard to define.

Perhaps he was overwhelmed by the mistaken belief that his burdens had become insurmountable, that life was no longer worth living.

In that instant he made an irrevocable decision. Grabbing his rifle, Spc. Mike Mason placed the muzzle against his throat and pulled the trigger.

More than 44,834 people in the United States committed suicide in 2020 — that year, in fact, suicide was the 10th leading cause of death. For every one of those deaths, an estimated 12-25 people attempted suicide, according to the National Institute of Mental Health.

Suicide rates are rising, and that holds true even within the Army. The Army reported that the active-duty suicide rate rose in 2020. In 2021, research found that 30,177 active duty personnel and veterans who served in the military after 9/11 have died by suicide — compared to the 7,057 service members killed in combat in those same 20 years.

The Army is taking a proactive stance to combat suicide.

Chief of Staff Gen. James C. McConville cited suicides as one of the three most difficult issues currently faced by the Army. The other two are sexual harassment/assault and extremism. McConville called suicides the "hardest" problem to solve among the three.

"One of my biggest concerns is that we have young men and women who think things have gotten so bad that they don't want to live," Mc-



Emergency Resources

- **Local Emergency Resources (Dial 911)**
- **Military Police/Civilian Police**
- **Your chain of command**
- **Hotlines--trained people 24/7/365**
 - **Military Crisis Line (National Suicide Prevention Lifeline)**
 - **800-273-TALK (8255) press 1 ; Text 838255**
 - <http://www.veteranscrisisline.net> (online chat)



Conville said. All of us go through adversity in life. And all of us need a helping hand. All of us fail. When people fail, you've got to be there for them."

McConville said responsibility falls upon each Soldier to recognize suicide warning signs. Among them are financial problems and a lack of interest in work tasks.

A high-velocity bullet entering the brain almost always causes massive, irreversible damage, but that wasn't the case for Mason. He survived his attempted suicide because his M-4 failed to fire.

Mason said he immediately went into "Soldier mode. I had to know why my weapon malfunctioned, so I took it apart and discovered the firing pin was missing," he said.

Mason confronted the only other person who had access to the weapon: His roommate and battle buddy, Spc. Ron Adams. "I asked Adams if he knew where the firing pin was and he told me he had taken it out. Then Adams asked me, 'How do you know I took it out?'"

With that question, a flood of emotions

spilled from Mason — grief and despair over his failed marriage; anger over what he perceived as a betrayal by his battle buddy; shock at being alive when only moments ago he was facing death. Sobbing, Mason confessed to his battle buddy that he had tried to take his own life. Adams immediately called for a medic.

Adams' vigilance saved Mason's life.

"After the phone call from his wife, Mike grew distant," Adams said. "He started talking about killing himself while on guard duty. He said it jokingly, and I really didn't think he was serious. But it weighed on me. So while he was out one night, I took the firing pin out of his weapon as a precaution. I questioned myself about doing that, but I felt it was necessary," Adams said.

Mason received the intensive counseling and support he needed.

"There was no prejudice against me because of what I had done," Mason said. "Maybe I was just lucky, but my chain of command was very helpful. There was no doubt that they

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"Twenty years ago, our lives changed on September 11. A generation not yet born would also be forever impacted by the events of that day. Today, we must continue to remember and serve the Families of our fallen, and we must never forget how special it is to live in the United States of America."

Pvt. Esmeralda Diaz attended the event and said it should never be questioned why Americans continue to remember the events of 9/11.

"It's sad, but I think it's about respect. We can't ever forget what our country went through," she said.

Amanda Lincoln, a parent to one of the high school band members playing at the ceremony, looked at the pictures displayed along the walkway leading into the Fire Station with tears in her eyes.

"It's hard for me to look at the pictures. It's just heartbreaking. I was pregnant with my son when it happened and I was terrified about what I was bringing my son into," she said. "It doesn't seem like it's been 20 years. I remember vividly every detail of that morning. It's something I'll never forget."

Louisiana State Senator Mike Reese, District 30, said commemorating the events of 9/11 is essential.

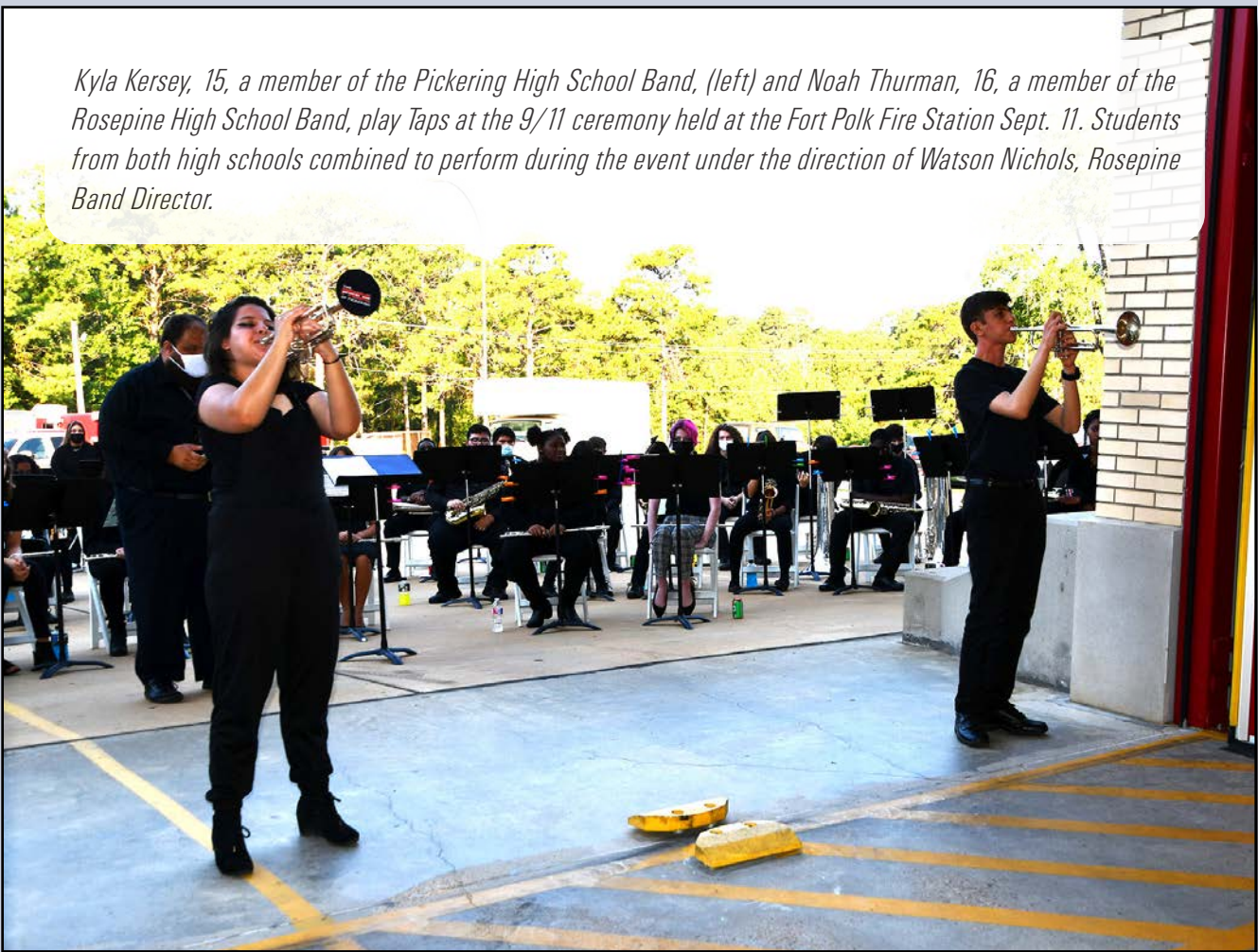
"It's not only vital to remember and honor those that lost their lives that fateful day, but in the shadow of Fort Polk we should also bear in mind the service and sacrifice of the thousands of Soldiers that went through the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk and trained to fulfill the promises made in response to 9/11," he said.

Also attending the anniversary, Louisiana State Representative, Charles Owen, District 30, said it was critical to continue to look back at the events of 20 years ago.

"Our country came together and took care of each other. We continue to do that as we commemorate the sacrifices made by our Soldiers, first responders and civilians during and since this tragic event," he said.



A large audience attended the Patriot Day Never Forget 9/11/2021 program held Sept. 11.



Kyla Kersey, 15, a member of the Pickering High School Band, (left) and Noah Thurman, 16, a member of the Rosepine High School Band, play Taps at the 9/11 ceremony held at the Fort Polk Fire Station Sept. 11. Students from both high schools combined to perform during the event under the direction of Watson Nichols, Rosepine Band Director.



Amanda Lincoln, the parent of a band student playing at the Patriot Day Never Forget 9/11/2021 event, gazes at the pictures of 9/11 that lined the sidewalk leading to the ceremony seating area.



Those in attendance at the 9/11 ceremony bowed their heads during a moment of silence Sept. 11.

Waters

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sudden violent flood that can take from minutes to hours to develop. It is even possible to experience a flash flood in areas not immediately receiving rain. Flash flood warnings are changing to an impact-based format to improve public response.

Flood warning: Take action! A warning is issued when the hazardous weather event is imminent or already happening. A flood warning is issued when flooding is imminent or occurring.

Flood watch: Be prepared. A watch is issued when conditions are favorable for a specific hazardous weather event to occur. A flood watch is issued when conditions are favorable for flooding. It does not mean flooding will occur, but it is possible.

Flood advisory: Be aware. An advisory is issued when a specific weather event that is forecast to occur may become a nuisance. A flood advisory is issued when flooding is not expected to be bad enough to issue a warning. However, it may cause significant inconvenience, and if caution is not exercised, it could lead to situations that may threaten life and property.

Before a flood

Sometimes floods develop slowly and forecasters can anticipate where a flood will happen days or weeks before it occurs. Often flash floods can occur within minutes and sometimes without any sign of rain. Being prepared can save your life and give you peace of mind.

- Create a communications plan
- Assemble an emergency kit
- Know your risk
- Sign up for notifications
- Prepare your home
- Prepare your family and pets
- Charge your essential electronics

• Leave — if it is likely your home will flood, don't wait to be ordered to leave; evacuate. Make alternative plans for a place to stay. If you have pets, take them with you or make arrangements to board them at a facility well away from the flooding danger.

During a flood

During a flood, water levels and the rate the water is flowing can quickly change. Remain aware and monitor local radio and television outlets. Avoid flood waters at all costs and evacuate immediately when water starts to rise. Don't wait until it's too late.

Stay informed: Listen to the radio and television, including National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration weather radio and, if possible, check the internet and social media for information and updates.

Get to higher ground: If you live in a flood prone area or are camping in a low lying area, get to higher ground immediately.

Obey evacuation orders: If told to evacuate,



do so immediately. Lock your home when you leave. If you have time, disconnect utilities and appliances.

Practice electrical safety: Don't go into a basement, or any room, if water covers the electrical outlets or if cords are submerged. If you see sparks or hear buzzing, crackling, snapping or popping noises — get out! Stay out of water that may have electricity in it!

Avoid flood waters: Don't walk through flood waters. It only takes 6 inches of moving water to knock you off your feet. If you are trapped by moving water, move to the highest possible point and call 911 if possible. Do not drive into flooded roadways or around a barricade; turn around, don't drown!

Water may be deeper than it appears and can hide hazards such as sharp objects, washed out road surfaces, electrical wires and chemicals. A vehicle caught in swiftly moving water can be swept away in seconds, 12 inches of water can float a car or small SUV, 18 inches of water can carry away large vehicles.

After a flood

When flood waters recede, the damage left behind can be devastating and present many dangers. Images of flood destruction depict destroyed homes and buildings, damaged possessions, and decimated roadways. However, what you can't see can be just as dangerous. Floodwaters often become contaminated with sewage or chemicals. Gas leaks and live power lines can be deadly, but are not obvious at first glance.

Stay informed: Stay tuned to your local news for updated information on road conditions. Ensure water is safe to drink, cook or clean with after a flood. Authorities may ask you to boil water for a while after a flood. Utility companies often have apps to update you on getting service back. Carbon monoxide poi-

soning is one of the leading causes of death after storms when areas are dealing with power outages.

Never use a portable generator inside your home or garage. Review generator safety.

Avoid flood waters: Standing water hides many dangers including toxins and chemicals. There may be sharp objects under the water or the road could have collapsed.

If it is likely your home will flood, don't wait for an evacuation order, get out! Talk to friends and family about emergency visits. If you have pets, take them with you or get them somewhere safe.

Avoid disaster areas: Do not visit disaster areas. Your presence may hamper rescue and other emergency operations.

Heed road closed and cautionary signs: Road closure and other cautionary signs are put in place for your safety. Pay attention to them!

Wait for the all clear: Do not enter a flood damaged home or building until you're given the all clear by authorities. If you enter a flood damaged building, be extremely careful. Water can cause floors to collapse and ceilings to fall. Make sure the electrical system has been turned off.

Have the power company or a qualified electrician fix wires. Contact your insurance agent to discuss property damage. If you have a generator, follow proper safety procedures.

Contact your family and loved ones: Let your family and close friends know that you're okay so they can help spread the word. Register with or search the American Red Cross's Safe and Well listing.

For more information on how to plan and prepare for all disasters or hazards, contact Emergency Manager, Tommy J. Morris, at 531.4875 or tommy.j.morris2.civ@mail.mil.

Don't forget Soldiers suffering invisible wounds

By MARK LESLIE
DPTMS

Editor's note: This article previously ran in the Fort Polk Guardian on Dec. 14, 2018.

FORT POLK, La. — Let me precede this piece by saying that I am not a behavioral health specialist, a medical professional nor do I claim to be. But with more than 30 years in the Army from private to senior NCO, to lieutenant colonel, I think this gives me a unique perspective on Soldiers and their behavior.

A few weeks ago I found out that a friend of mine, a senior leader in our Army, had taken his own life. Sadly, this was not anything new; it seems that every few months I learn similar news from my circle of friends.

Less than 1% of a nation of roughly 350 million people has served in uniform. That is an amazing statistic.

To me, that makes that less than 1% an elite and special class of American citizens. Those veterans are the less than 1% that are willing to put their lives on the line and the prosperity of their families and endure the less than predictable life style of the military for the other 99% of the nation. They shoulder the load — often silently and without complaint — of the nation's security for others and do so willingly and without an expectation of adulation or entitlement from those they serve. The veteran is a special breed of citizen that expects nothing in return but the acknowledgment and respect from a citizenry that, at times, seems ignorant of their sacrifice and apathetic to their contributions.

According to the last Veterans Administration study, there are about 22 veteran suicides a day, including active duty Soldiers (statistics are from 2018). This averages out to about one every 65 minutes.

While that statistic is staggering enough, it is hard to visualize. So, let's put in perspective to Fort Polk: That means in about a year every active-duty Soldier on Fort Polk would be dead. That is quite shocking; in about a year, with no action by the enemy, criminal acts, traffic accidents, disease or natural causes, the Army loses an entire brigade combat team, the cream of the corps with Operations Group, a top notch

MP battalion, an engineer battalion with specialized skills that we desperately need and a host of special medical professionals from BJACH along with a number of other



NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS

MHS Military Health System
health.mil



CONNECT TO PROTECT

specialized MOSs that take years to train. Think about that for a minute. In less than a year, every active-duty Soldier on Fort Polk is dead.

What is the point of these statistics? To make you think about the enormity of the problem. Invisible wounds are present in our ranks and they are as important to address as visible wounds.

After this most recent tragedy, I informed my employees. Many had known this Soldier and considered him a solid leader and family man with a bright future, set to retire and enjoy the fruits of his labor.

While none of us are behavioral health specialists, we are retired senior leaders in the Army, know Soldiers and know the struggles veterans face. This "sit-down" wasn't scripted or planned, but it was probably the best suicide prevention discussion I ever had. There was no script, no slides and no agenda — it was off the cuff, honest talk from the heart and

from men who were sick with sorrow and desperation to find a way to suspend this wave of suicides of America's finest. We had known warriors that had taken their

own life and were affected by it. Traumatized by the haunting feeling of "what did I miss, what could I have done?"

There was a common theme that emerged: Continued engagement by leadership, by leaders closest to the problem that knew them and what they had been through.

This continued engagement did not just apply to active-duty leaders; it is a persistent obligation — for life — with those we have served with in trying times. When you change command, have a change of responsibility, ETS, retire or hang up the uniform, it doesn't mean that you stop leading.

Once you have led men, they will always see you that

way; you're stuck with it.

As their commander or leader, it is an honor and a compliment.

I have driven to Texas in the middle of the night on a work week, sent money, bought plane tickets, hosted Soldiers in my home for days, called friends to do a QRF and yes, even called the police to make sure one of my men was safe, long after my time as their commander was over.

To lead in combat and bring them back



LESLIE

COMMENTARY

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Wounds

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only to lose them years later is devastating, not only to the victim's immediate family, but their Army family as well.

Leaders and friends have to live with that loss, and it is no less traumatic as a combat loss. Regardless of method, a loss is still a loss, and to me, a loss due to suicide is more traumatic than a combat loss. They were alone and we weren't there when they needed us most.

What our group deduced, is that there is no magic bullet. Soldiers in today's war live through attacks that they would have never previously lived through due to advances in protection. But that does not mean they have no wounds. There are invisible wounds that may take years to resonate, form or evolve.

For all our toughness, the one thing you can't make tougher or more resilient is the brain. If the brain is scrambled like a shaken egg in an IED blast, it may be years before a symptom or behavior is present.

This war had changed my thoughts on suicide. Before, I thought only weaklings and those unprepared for the reality of combat — and life —

chose suicide. But this war has changed that. Some of the bravest and toughest men I know, men I have personally seen exhibit Herculean acts in combat, who have saved my life at the expense of their own flesh and blood have struggled with this. They are not weak; they are wounded, and I feel just as obligated today to care for and lead them as I did then.

Army leaders have to be tough, but you can also exercise empathy, compassion and caring. Obligation as a leader never ends; that's the way they see us — it's the burden we bear.

I think we owe it to them. They did the extraordinary for us, we are in their debt for life, to lead them and if necessary, save them.

When I heard of the recent passing of my friend, I had the urge to call one of my former Soldiers who struggled with what we had experienced.

This Soldier had been my personal security when I was an advisor. This job was nothing ordinary and we experienced our share of horror. He had been medically retired as



a result of his injuries, against his wishes. When I called, he was sitting in a parking lot in the early morning with a loaded weapon in his car.

He said he had no intention of using it. I changed my plans that day and drove several hours to meet him and have a cup of coffee and reassure him that he was still a man, still a warrior and still had a lot to contribute.

I ask every leader in our Army — present and past — to reach out to the warriors they think may be suffering from invisible wounds. Do it today, tomorrow, next week and beyond. It is a life-long commitment. Reassure

them and remind them of some of their finest hours and contributions. Let them know they still have a place, and of their self-worth.

Let them know they are important, that they matter and still have more to give. Let them know that what they did — and continue to do — matters. Someone cares, we care, and the Army family cares. I think you will be glad you did. Consider it a Christmas gift to humanity.

If you or someone you know is contemplating suicide call the Fort Polk Main Post Chapel at 531.2669 or the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 800.273.8255.

Suicide

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were concerned about my welfare."

Soldiers can overcome fear from failure in their military careers or home life with the support of their squads in the Army or in life, said Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael A. Grinston.

"Don't be afraid to go through tough times," Grinston said. "It's going to make us stronger."

Grinston said during his first weekend of active duty at what is now Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, fellow Soldiers invited him and others living in the barracks to go skiing in the mountains. He said he could count on his fellow Soldiers to uplift him and said that today's Soldiers should do the same.

"That's the value of life," he said. "And it's not what I want or what I don't have. It's what

I have right in front of me. And every day, it's there. We just have to sometimes show each other what it means to be alive."

So, no. It wasn't just luck for Mason. The Army climate is proactive. Open communication and positive encouragement by command at all levels is the key to stemming the rise in suicidal behaviors, said Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III. "One loss by suicide is too many. While we're working hard on this problem, we have a lot more to do."

Addressing the problem must start with reducing the stigma associated with seeking help for mental issues, he said. "Mental health is health, period." Austin said that getting help to those suffering from mental health issues

must be done with compassion and professionalism, not stigma. "So if you're hurting, there are resources available," he said.

After receiving help, Mason's Army career flourished. He offered the hope that his story would encourage other Soldiers not to be embarrassed or ashamed to get help.

"If I can help one Soldier out there, then telling my story publicly is well worth it. Getting help is the strong thing to do. It takes courage to speak out instead of hiding those emotions away," he said.

"I get to be here today. I get to someday become a great husband and a father. I get to lead Soldiers. I get to do what I love to do because of my battle buddy, because he saw the signs that

Toby Keith rocks crowd at Fort Polk's Salute to Troops

By BELLA ARCAND
DFMWR marketing

FORT POLK, La. — Country music legend Toby Keith turned up the bass and lit up the crowd Sept. 10, at the Fort Polk "Salute to the Troops" concert. The Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk welcomed Keith to perform for more than 5,000 Soldiers, Families and Department of Defense civilians.

The Fort Polk Directorate of Family Morale, Welfare and Recreation Special Events Team hosted this year's "Salute To The Troops" to say "thank you" to the Fort Polk community.

"The Salute To The Troops concert was a great Quality of Life win for this installation, executed with team effort behind the scenes," said Director of DFMWR, Wayne K. Bardell. "It was a memorable experience, watching country music superstar Toby Keith perform for our community, here at Fort Polk."

The gates opened at 5 p.m sharp and visitors packed the area in front of the stage, socializing, cheering and patiently waiting for the event to start.

Before and during the concert, guests were able to meet event sponsors, shop from Fort Polk's finest home-based businesses and indulge in a variety of local delights, carnival favorites and flavorful international treats from local food vendors.

JRTC and Fort Polk commanding general, Brig. Gen. David S. Doyle, opened the event with a few words to the troops and their Families. DFMWR Chief of Non-Appropriate Funds Support, Roy Mosby sang the national anthem. "It was a great honor to perform the national anthem at this event," said Mr. Roy Mosby. "Not only did it give me joy and pleasure, but also some goosebumps and a sense of pride."

The United States Army Special Operations Command Black Daggers performed a parachute demonstration. The team consisted of representatives of every regiment of the Army Special Operations — Special Forces, Civil Affairs, Psychological Operations and the Army Special Operations

Aviation Regiment.

Sgt. 1st Class Jeff Menda, Special Forces Weapon Sergeant from 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne), Fort Bragg, N.C., opened the demonstration with the JRTC flag. Master Sgt. Archie Titus from Fort Bragg's 95th Civil Affairs Brigade dared to plunge second, proudly holding the POW/MIA flag. Last but not least, Sgt. 1st Class Roger Ross, from Fort Campbell's 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), paid homage to the nation by holding the American flag.

The concert wasn't the only big event that day. The announcement of the COVID-19 Lottery had many Fort Polk DoD ID card holders anxiously waiting.

Fort Polk's Garrison Commander, Col. Sam P. Smith Jr., took the stage to end the wait and to congratulate the lucky winners.

The MWR Special Events Team partnered with Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital to promote health and support ending the ongoing pandemic by offering COVID vaccinations at the Main Post Exchange. Vaccinated Fort Polk DoD ID card holders were able to throw their name into the lottery for the chance to win a truck, sponsored by Benoit Motors, a M1 Garand Rifle, sponsored by First Command, or a \$1,000 savings account, sponsored by Barksdale Federal Credit Union.

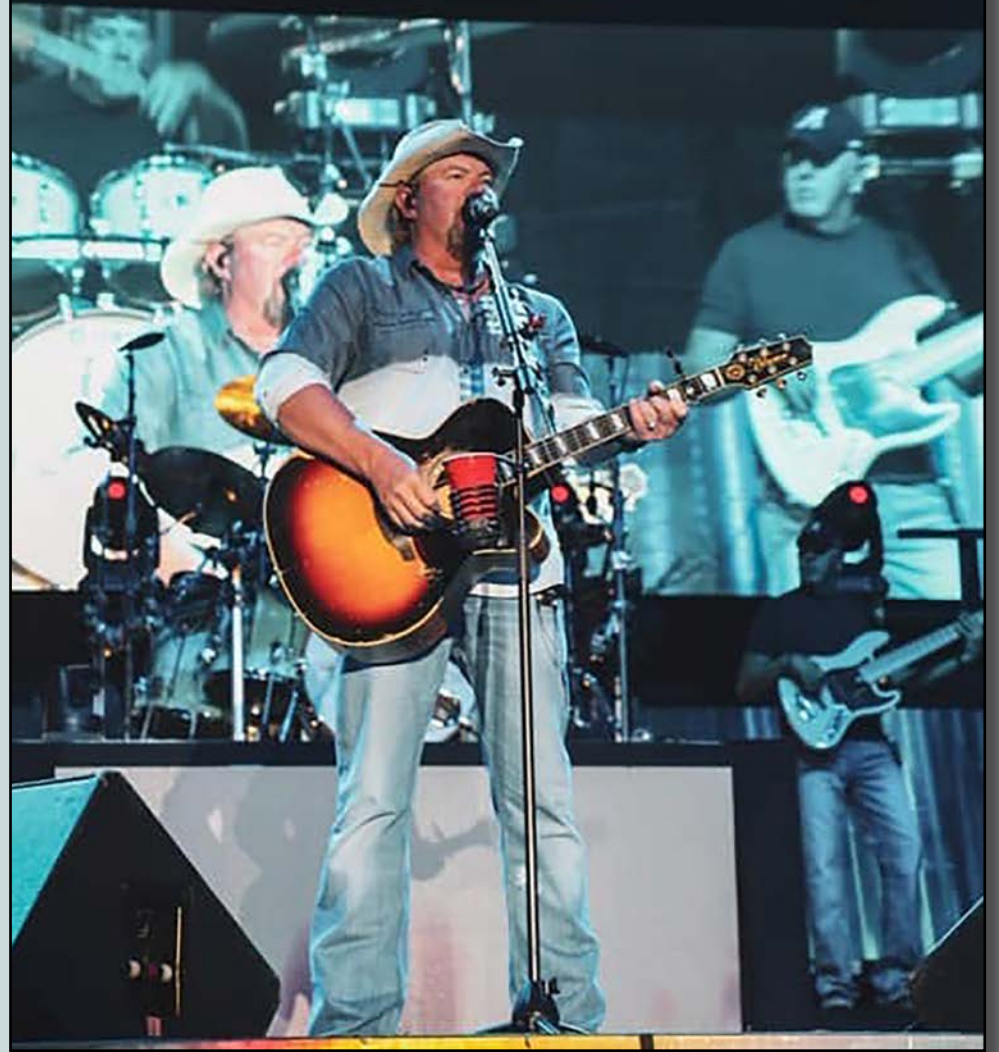
Tristin Adam's name was pulled for a chance to win the truck from Benoit Motors. To win, he had to throw a football through the open windows of the truck. It wasn't meant to be, but Adams walked away with a \$1,500 consolation cash prize.

"The health protection of our force is a top priority. I am very pleased with the numbers of individuals that have been vaccinated," said Smith. "Special thanks to those who participated and helped promote the vaccine to protect our Soldiers, Families, workforce, community and to preserve readiness."

Jackson Dean, the opening act, rocked the stage and got the crowd ready for Keith.

Keith has produced multiple top 10 hits and earned more than one award in numerous categories. The song "Courtesy of Red,

Toby Keith performs at Fort Polk's Salute to the Troops, hosted by the Directorate of Family Morale, Welfare and Recreation Sept. 10.



SHELBY WARYAS/COMMAND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

White and Blue," from the album "Unleashed" was released in 2002, and is a patriotic-themed song. The single shot to number one on the Billboard Hot Country Singles and Tracks charts, while climbing up to place 25 on the Billboard Charts and was designated platinum. This song has a very special meaning to Keith, who wrote this song in response to the events of 09/11, honoring his late father, a United States Army veteran.

"Toby Keith put on an amazing show," said U.S. Army spouse Mariana Martinkoski. "I was very excited to see the performers and enjoy a night out with my husband. We are blessed with great events here at Fort Polk."

Louisiana is known for its lively mentality and many festivals held across the state, but Fort Polk has a reputation for outdoing itself when it comes to special events. Each year the MWR Special Events Team goes above and beyond to guarantee quality of life and lots of fun for young and old.

"I am new to Fort Polk," said MWR Marketing Manager

Jon Lee. "Being able to partake in and experience an event of such character was incredible. I am very excited for future events."

Every year, on the last Saturday of the month of September, Munich is ringing in the official start of Oktoberfest. In accordance with German tradition, Toledo Bend Army Recreation Park will be ringing in its very own Oktoberfest, known as "Dinner and Sunset Cruise" on Toledo Bend Lake.

October would not be October without the smell of freshly cut hay bales and country fair food. The Louisiana Hayride will be held at Fort Polk Oct. 2 and will have lots of activities for all ages.

A special highlight this year will be a cardboard boat regatta, held at the 25 Meter pool. October is also known for spooky vibes. Get ready for the ultimate experience at the famous MWR Halloween drive-thru. Cosmic golf and a movie night are other must-visit events. For more information about MWR events visit the special events section of polk.armymwr.com.



Fort Polk Soldiers charged with violations

OSJA

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

Across Fort Polk, the following disciplinary issues continue to be prevalent: Driving under the influence of alcohol, wrongful use/possession of controlled substances, fraternization, sexual assault and underage drinking. Below are recent examples of adverse legal actions for units within the Fort Polk jurisdiction.

- A staff sergeant, assigned to the 3rd Bat-

talion, 353rd Regiment, was separated under Chapter 14-12c (Commission of a Serious offense) for receiving two DUIs. The Soldier was issued a General (under honorable conditions) characterization of service. Generally, this characterization of service results in the loss of a service member’s educational benefits.

- A specialist, assigned to 115th Field Hospital, was separated under Chapter 5-8 (Involuntary Separation due to Parenthood) for failing to obtain an adequate family care plan. The Soldier was issued an honorable characterization of service.

- A specialist, in 519th Military Police Battalion, was separated under Chapter 14-12c for receiving a DUI. The Soldier was issued a General (under honorable conditions) characterization of service. Generally, this characterization of service results in the loss of a service member’s educational benefits.

Briefs

Continued from page 3

shot at this time:

- Have you been receiving active cancer treatment for tumors or cancers of the blood?
- Have you received an organ transplant and are taking medicine to suppress the immune system?
- Have you received a stem cell transplant within the last two years or are taking medicine to suppress the immune system?
- Do you have moderate or severe primary immunodeficiency (such as DiGeorge syndrome, Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome)?
- Do you have advanced or untreated HIV infection?
- Are you currently on an active treatment with high-dose corticosteroids or other drugs that may suppress your immune response?

If you would like to get an additional dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, call 531.3011

for a telehealth appointment to discuss whether getting an additional dose is appropriate for you.

24/7 prescription center

The Script Center machine located at Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital’s Entrance A, is available 24/7 for non-refrigerated prescription refills. It’s quick, easy and hassle free: Call in a prescription refill to 531.3785. Select Option 2 or request a refill at tricareonline.com.

Prescriptions will be available after noon the next business day. For first time users, bring your Department of Defense ID card and prescription number to register with the Script Center machine.

Once registered, the Script Center can be used 24/7 to pick up refill prescriptions with ID card, username and password or fingerprint login. For more information visit <https://bayne-jones>.

Check VIN numbers

The Directorate of Emergency Services Traffic Division will release the following vehicles to the Directorate of Family Morale, Welfare and Recreation if they remain unclaimed. Vehicles are listed with the last four numbers of their VIN number. If one of these vehicles belongs to you, please contact the Fort Polk Police Traffic Section at 531.1806/6675/2677. You may also report in person to the traffic division at 1668 22nd St., bldg 2396. Office hours are Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

2006	Ford	Mustang	2407
2011	Toyota	Prius	9170
2011	Chevrolet	Cruz	7126
2011	BMW	4DSD	3071
2002	Chevrolet	Tahoe	0440
1977	GMC	K2500	1813
1998	Toyota	Avalon	1668
2001	Buick	Park Ave	7941
2004	Cadillac	CTS	2634
1998	Ford	Taurus	8440
2017	Nissan	Versa	1496
2004	Infinity	G35	4539
UNK	Sportrailer	trailer	UNK
1991	Tidecraft	V15	F191
2011	Chevrolet	Impala	0135
2002	Ford	Escape	5409
1999	Chevrolet	Suburban	3573
1996	Ford	F150	6750
1996	Acura	4dr	3406
1984	Chevrolet	Corvette	9704
2000	Chevrolet	2500	0222
2005	Honda	Civic	2048
2000	Toyota	Tacoma	0294
2005	Toyota	4dr	8911
1993	Honda	2dr	0478
2017	Ford	Fiesta	9660
2009	Chevrolet	Equinox	7783
2002	Honda	CR-V	7722
2014	Nissan	Maxima	0131
1988	Chevrolet	3500	4195
2005	Mercury	Sable	9544
2011	Chevrolet	Equinox	3730
2014	Chevrolet	Malibu	9771
2009	Chevrolet	Cobalt	8756
2006	Hyundai	Elantra	4769
2019	KIA	Forte	0634

Poutou relinquishes responsibility to **Devereaux** as senior BJACH NCO

By JEAN CLAVETTE GRAVES
BJACH PAO

FORT POLK, La. — Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital, has a new senior enlisted advisor following a 10 a.m. change of responsibility ceremony at Fort Polk's Spike Field Sept. 9.

The outgoing, Command Sgt. Maj. Alexander Poutou, relinquished his responsibilities to Command Sgt. Maj. Shavonda Devereaux, in front of military leaders, the BJACH team, local network partners, family and friends.

The change of responsibility is rich in symbolism and tradition. The passing of the unit colors is the key to the ceremony.

The colors represent the lineage and honors of the unit but also the loyalty and unity of its Soldiers.

The unit's command sergeant major is the custodian of the colors and is the senior enlisted member of the unit and principal advisor to the commander.

During the ceremony Poutou passed the unit colors to Col. Aristotle Vaseliades, BJACH commander, indicative of relinquishing his responsibilities.

Vaseliades then passed the colors to Devereaux placing his trust and confidence in her as the command sergeant major of the unit.

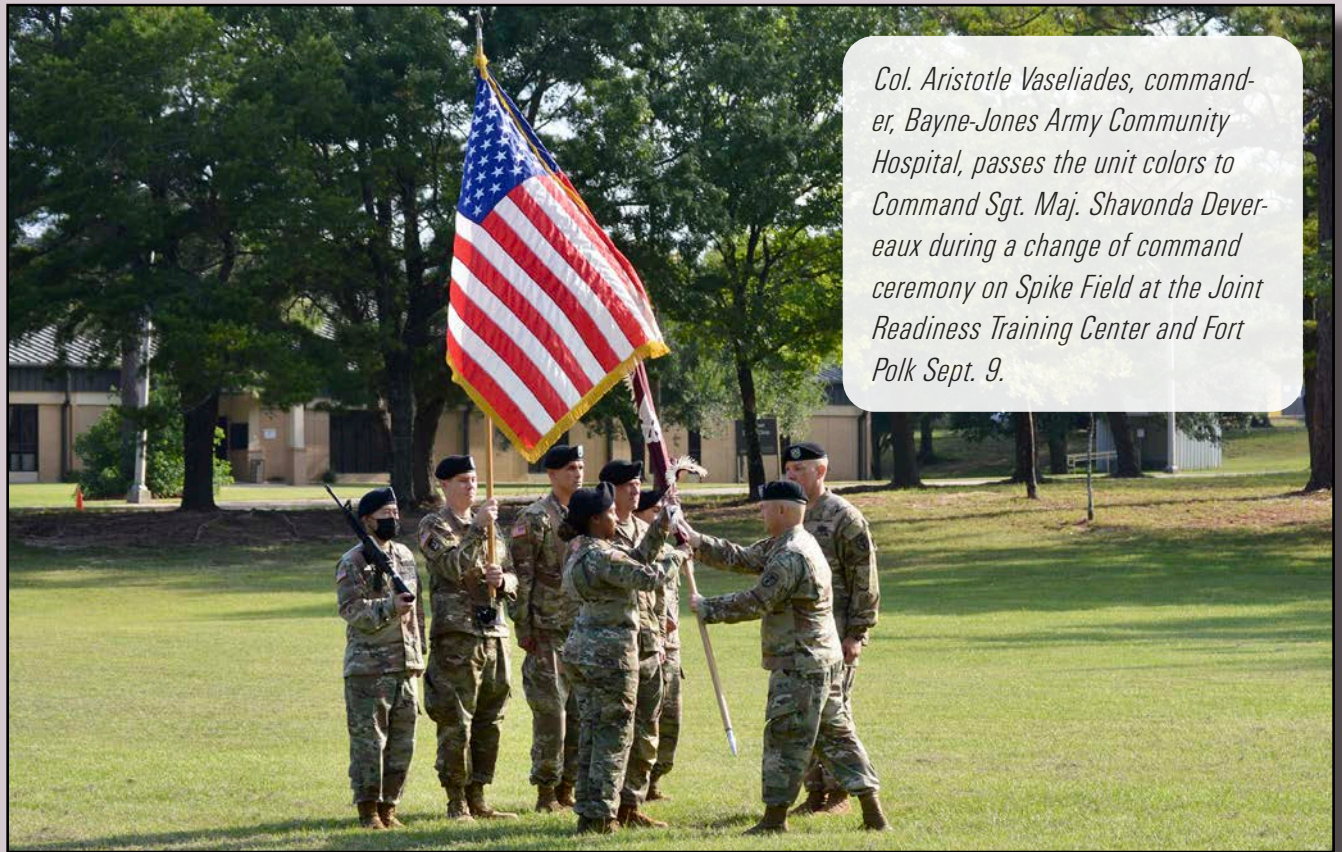
Vaseliades said he was deployed twice with Poutou in the past and marveled at his accomplishments despite the adversity he faced during his tenure as the BJACH command sergeant major.

"What do you call it in the military, when a leader who has faced, engaged and dealt with challenges such as a tornado, two hurricanes, a seldom seen ice storm, a global pandemic, The Joint Commission and College of American Pathology surveys, all while serving with three different commanders," he asked. "He is a champion for cause, team and, most importantly, people when it comes to BJACH, the Fort Polk community, Army and country," he said.

Vaseliades went on to say that Poutou is a visible, compassionate and inspirational leader who treats everyone with dignity and respect.

"He builds a fire in you to be the best leader you can be. He is a team builder and has created an environment for others to do the same," he said. "

Vaseliades recited an extensive list of Poutou's accomplishments during his address.



Col. Aristotle Vaseliades, commander, Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital, passes the unit colors to Command Sgt. Maj. Shavonda Devereaux during a change of command ceremony on Spike Field at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk Sept. 9.

"He continually drives home the idea that it is a privilege and an honor to wear this uniform. His impact on this organization has been phenomenal."

Vaseliades officially welcomed Devereaux and her family to BJACH.

"You are joining a team at BJACH that will bend over backwards to support the people of this community," he said. "I have no doubt in my mind that you will continue to improve our fox hole and make us not just the standard bearer for our region, but all of Army Medicine."

Poutou said it has been his privilege to serve as the hospital command sergeant major for the past 29 months.

"I will miss Fort Polk, especially my BJACH team. I wish you all the best," he said. "I will be watching from afar as you continue to strive for excellence under the leadership of Colonel Vaseliades and Command Sergeant Major Devereaux."

Poutou acknowledged Devereaux and said she was the right leader at the right time for BJACH.

He thanked his colleagues, family and friends. Poutou gave all the accolades to those around him for his success.

"An Army leader is anyone who by virtue of assumed roles or assigned responsibilities inspires and influences people to accomplish organization goals. Army leaders motivate people both in and outside the chain of command to pursue actions, focus thinking and shape decisions for the greater good of the organization," he said. "You all motivate me every single day, from the



Command Sgt. Maj. Shavonda Devereaux assumes the role of the senior enlisted member of Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital and principal advisor to the hospital commander during a change of responsibility ceremony.

time I walk through the door until I depart for the evening."

Devereaux said she began her military career 21 years ago at BJACH and she never imagined that one day she would be serving in her current role.

"To whom much is given, much is required. There are so many great leaders who have stood before me in this very position," she said. To the Soldiers of this great organization, you can expect me to be a leader of character, a leader who is fully committed to the mission and the team and someone who will serve as a guide, mentor and inspiration."

Following her brief remarks, Devereaux took over the formation and was directed to take charge of her unit.

Visitor Control Center, access points keeps Fort Polk safe

DES

FORT POLK, La. — The Visitor Control Center performs a vital function in support of the security of JRTC and Fort Polk, and is the first link in ensuring the security of the installation.

VCC personnel accomplish this by confirming the identity of visitors through valid acceptable documentation (state issued drivers license, ID, DoD ID card or passports), or through electronic communication with the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System.

Once an individual's identity has been verified, a criminal history check is performed against 11 disqualifying factors. These factors include: Any history of the commission of a felony; terrorist watch lists; active wants and warrants; sexual offenses; espionage; registered sex offenders; drug possession and any other areas that may impact the good order and discipline of the installation.

The VCC personnel also screen each visitor against Fort Polk debarment lists; other Army installation debarment lists; Be On the Look Out lists; as well as those personnel that have been placed on the suspended driver's license list. Personnel at the VCC then ask the nature of the visit, and who the individual may be visiting to validate the reason for entering the installation.

These tasks, and the day-to-day process of entering the installation may seem mundane to most people, but consider the following: over the past two weeks, the VCC has issued 2,325 passes; performed 887 background checks; intercepted 258 felony violators and found seven active warrants for arrest.

In that same time frame, Access Control Points processed 152,340 vehicles; performed 568 random anti-terrorism inspections and found 18 violations. They did all this, while performing six response battle drills designed to defeat threat vehicles, active shooters and the deployment of active vehicle barriers. These procedures are part of the installation layered defense, of which all of us play a part.

As you can see, there is a need to ensure that qualified personnel are employed at VCC and ACPs. Because of the need to focus efforts the Directorate of Emergency Services will be reducing the hours of operations of the VCC from 24 hours a day to 5 a.m.-9 p.m. daily, Monday through Sunday. This change will be effective Oct. 10.



ANGIE THORNE/GUARDIAN

DES performed a workload demand study and found that between the hours of 9 p.m.-5 a.m. the VCC issues on average two passes per hour. The DES found that the demand for access passes was not great enough to commit two personnel for that time frame and would ensure that qualified personnel were always present at the VCC.

Personnel will need to plan ahead when having guests arrive after 9 p.m. daily. Personnel that are hosting special events will need to plan ahead and arrange for early access as well.

Personnel that require access to the installation can pick up passes at the VCC prior to closure. Personnel are encouraged to meet their guests at the VCC after 9 p.m. and escort them onto the installation when picking up a pass early is not an option.

Changes in VCC hours of operation does not affect personnel that are being escorted by authorized sponsors or personnel that already have an access control pass or card.

General questions about access control should be directed to the VCC staff at 531.0830. Special access control situations can be addressed by the Chief of Guards at 531.1159.



COURTESY ACS

Volunteer of month

The recipient for the Volunteer of the Month for August 2021 is Spc. Bryhaurey Dunkinsell from 115 Field Hospital. In August, Dunkinsell volunteered for 78 hours under 32nd Hospital Center. Dunkinsell volunteers as a mentor for youth with the Big Brother Organization and with the local youth at Leesville High School. Whether mentoring or helping set up for events, Dunkinsell is willing to lend a helping hand.

FAMILY AND MWR PRESENTS

LOUISIANA HAYRIDE

OCTOBER 2ND | 11 AM-4PM

HOME OF HEROES PARKING LOT

INFLATABLES, PUMPKIN DECORATING, HAYRIDE, FREE MINI GOLF AND GO-KARTS, PHOTO BOOTH, FOOD VENDORS, AND MORE!

GEICO

SWB, K&R FURNITURE, A&B, Academy, Taboo, HARLEY-DAVIDSON, Barksdale Federal Credit Union, UPPER IOWA, Convia's, CHRISTUS, PAPA JOHN'S, US FAMILY, BENITO, USAA

CARDBOARD BOAT REGATTA

SPONSORSHIP DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT BY THE U.S. ARMY AND/OR BY JRTC & FORT POLK

JRTC & Fort Polk

Civilian Fitness & Health Promotion Program

Upcoming EVENTS

Check out our upcoming Education and Wellness Events

SEP 20
Education & Information Fair
1591 Bell Richard Avenue Bldg. 920
1300 - 1600

OCT 4
Wellness & Nutrition
7960 Mississippi Ave. Bldg. 924
1100 - 1200

NOV 1
Weight Management
7960 Mississippi Ave. Bldg. 924
1100 - 1200

DEC 4
Diabetes Awareness & Education
7960 Mississippi Ave. Bldg. 924
1100 - 1200

JAN 10
Mind Over Body
7960 Mississippi Ave. Bldg. 924
1100 - 1200

HEALTHY SNACKS WILL BE PROVIDED

Scan QR code for Program Packet or contact Mrs. Hannon @ 337.531.1191 / 337.353.5382 or Luewana.L.Hannon.civ@mail.mil

Toledo Bend Recreation Park

Rental Pricing

Rental Pricing & Availability subject to change without notice

For Reservations, Please Call 318-565-4484

Be the first on the water! Early morning boat rental now available! For an additional \$20 pick up your boat keys the night before. Keys are available 30 minutes before closing on the day prior. By appointment only.

Pontoon Boat: \$180 Per Day • \$450 Two Day Overnight Rental
Bass Boat: \$65 Half Day • \$95 Full Day • \$250 Two Day Overnight Rental
Canoes, Kayaks and Paddle Boards: \$10 Half Day • \$20 Full Day
Dry Boat Storage: \$50 Per Month • \$500 Per Year
Boat Slip (On The Water): \$10 Per Day • \$50 Per Week
Boat Launch: \$5 Daily • \$125 Year Pass

*Louisiana State Boaters Licenses & MWR Boater Safety Course Required to Rent Boats.
Boater Safety Course: Tuesday, 4 p.m. & Saturday, 9 a.m. - \$15 (No Cost for Active Duty)
\$25 Fee to Conduct Safety Course Outside Designated Times

UNCLASSIFIED//FOUO

+ SAFETY / FIRST AID AWARENESS MONTH +

The First Rule of First Aid

FIRST AID

Whenever you encounter a first aid situation the first step is to get control of yourself so you can calmly assess the situation, provide direction, and make decisions with a cool head. If the injured person is conscious, help keep him or her calm with reassurance that he or she will be all right and that help is on the way. If you provide any first aid, tell the injured person what you are going to do and why.

Prepared to Help

Make sure you know the location of first aid kits so that they are easily found during an emergency

Garrison Safety Office / 337-531-SAFE / usarmy.polk.imcom.mbx.garrison-safety@mail.mil

WARRIOR MUD RUN 5K



Alligator Lake

Saturday
October 9



polk.armymwr.com

337-531-7669



28 SEPTEMBER 2021
Session 1: 1000 Session 2: 1300
Bayou Theater
Only attend one session

SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM
PRESENTS:

TY HOWARD



- ✓ Best-Selling Author
- ✓ Entrepreneur & Business Leader
- ✓ Motivational Speaker
- ✓ Veteran
- ✓ Community Humanitarian

This presentation is one of hope, optimism, and strength. Mr. Howard will provide simple, yet powerful tools to help you bounce back from life's roadblocks.



Masks required upon entry

For More Information Call
337-531-6187

Presentation meets AR 350-1
requirement for Suicide Prevention



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FORT POLK YOUTH SPORTS WARRIOR RUNNING CLUB

FRIDAYS AT PEREZ FIELD
5:30PM - 6:30PM

1ST - 12TH
GRADES

\$10 ENROLLMENT FEE

CHILD MUST BE REGISTERED WITH CYS
AND HAVE A CURRENT SPORTS PHYSICAL



\$10 OFF FOR FT. POLK Discount Code: POLK 21



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