

THE JRTC AND FORT POLK

GUARDIAN

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Month of the Military Child

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School-Age Center offers kids fun, familiarity

By **CHRISTY GRAHAM**
Public Affairs Specialist

FORT POLK, La. — Military kids see a lot of transition. Permanent-change-of-station moves find kids in new towns, schools and daycares. But, at the School-Age Centers on Army installations, military children are afforded a sense of consistency and familiarity.

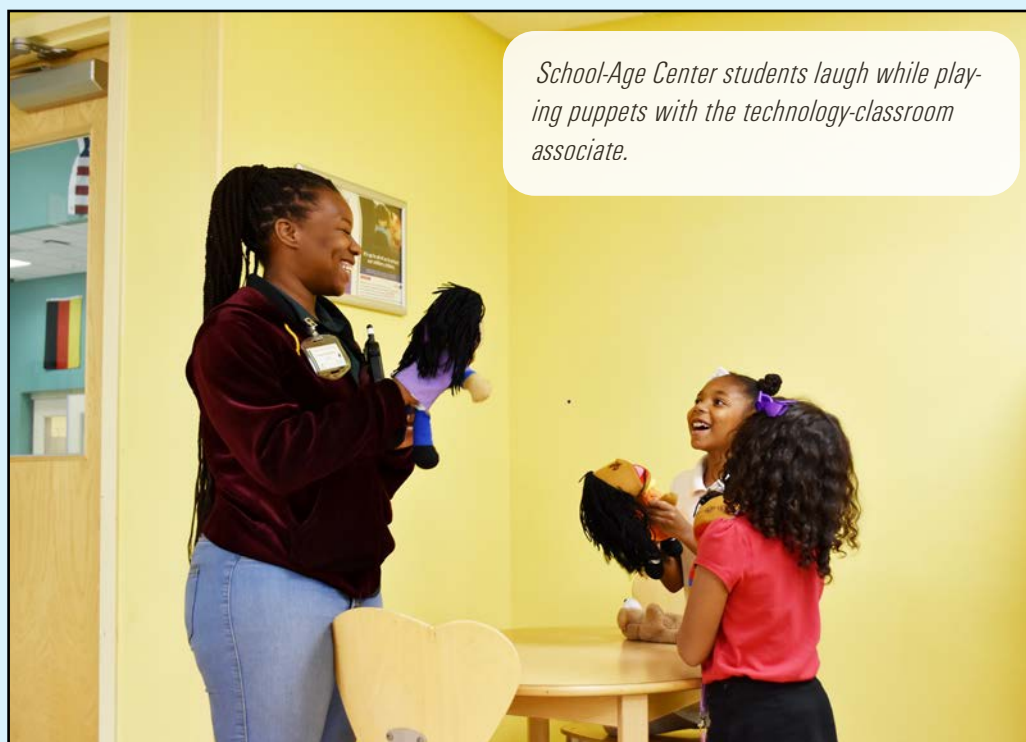
Michelle Thorman, Fort Polk SAC director, said that Army wide, SACs are designed to look and feel the same. Although the building orientation may sometimes be flipped, the classroom setups are largely the same across installations.

"After a PCS, kids have a new house and they're in a new location, but they're able to come into (the School-Age Center) and feel like it's home. It helps ease the process when PCSing to come somewhere familiar," she said.

As kids move across the globe, they are able to enter Army SACs and find the same areas in which to play and the same choice-board systems to use, she said.

Thorman said that Child and Youth Services also have Military Family Life Consultants throughout their programs.

"(The consultants) talk to the kids and support them, whether it's regarding anti-bullying or talking about deployments, they are able to provide emotional support when the kids need it," she said.



School-Age Center students laugh while playing puppets with the technology-classroom associate.

CHRISTY GRAHAM/GUARDIAN

Often, the staff working in the centers are also military connected, Thorman said, which bolsters the level of understanding between the kids and staff.

"Some of our staff were military children or they are military spouses — both active duty and retired — so they've either grown up or raised children in a military environment. That experience helps them relate to the children. They know what it's like to have a parent deployed, and they can hone in on that when kids are struggling and then give them support," she said.

Thorman said that Soldiers and Families can come in knowing that their children are in good hands. Each facility has cameras, large windows that look into the classrooms and staff that undergo an ex-

tensive vetting process before they are hired, she said.

"Our staff is also continually training on nights and weekends. They work more hours than people know, but that training ensures we provide high-quality care," Thorman said.

Thorman said SAC provides before- and after-school care for first through fifth grade students and offers summer-camp options as well as full-day care on all school-out days.

"(The School-Age Center) has eight self-contained classrooms, but the program is free-flowing, so the kids can choose where they want to go after school."

The curriculum comes from 4-H and the Boys and Girls Club of

Please see **Center**, page 3



Cover photo: Children run on the grounds of the School Age Center to find the perfect place to place their pinwheel in honor of Month of the Military Child. (Photo courtesy Child and Youth Services).



CHRISTY GRAHAM/GUARDIAN

Command signs MOMC proclamation

On April 4, JRTC and Fort Polk Leadership signed the Child Abuse Prevention Month and Month of the Military Child proclamations prior to joining children from the Fort Polk New Parent Support and Child and Youth Services programs in a pinwheel planting event at the Army Community Service building. The pinwheel is a national symbol for child abuse prevention, and it signifies innocence, playfulness, joy and childhood.



Center

Continued from page 2

America, and these programs are utilized Army-wide, buttressing the effort to provide consistency and familiarity for military-connected kids, Thorman said.

At SAC, kids can enjoy arts and crafts, design and build, technology, performing arts, computer lab, homework center, and science and arts classrooms; and they have a recreation zone, library and gym she said.

In the homework center, kids can get help with their homework, Thorman said.

"The homework associate is there each afternoon to help tutor. When homework is over, she is always playing learning games to help them with their multiplication and spelling words," said Thorman.

"We also have a life-skills classroom, where kids learn anything from sewing to how to tie their shoes. Recently, the kids learned how to change a tire and the chain on a bike."

The life-skills room is also home to SAC's award-winning guinea pigs, Kj and Cal, she said. The "mascots" were donated by the Fort Polk Military Police, and the kids learn how to take care of them by feeding them and cleaning their cages.

"We put (Kj and Cal) in the West Louisiana Forestry Festival Fair in October 2021, and they won three first-place ribbons, two second-place ribbons and three third-place ribbons for ap-

pearance and unique animal entry. The kids in sewing club made them little bowties and vests for their presentation at the fair," Thorman said. SAC also has outdoor play areas for the kids, including a backcourt, playground, gardening area and space for their creative sidewalk chalk art, she said.

"We do a lot of gardening — the kids grow their own vegetables, and then prepare and eat them in cooking club," said Thorman.

Thorman said that the program is predominately kid led and is based on several surveys the kids complete.

"Our activities are based on the kids' interests, within reason. They like gardening, so we built a garden; they wanted to work with wood, so we built corn-hole boards — it is definitely a kid-led program," she said.

For parents, Thorman said that CYC offers parent-education classes every month, ranging from potty training techniques to dealing with temper tantrums. Thorman added that the topics are based on parent requests.

"We sent out a survey in December and January, and the parents voted on what they wanted to learn. Our topic for April 28 is 'How to Raise a Child to be a Responsible Adult.' You can also take the class by viewing it online via the Polk CYC Facebook page," she said.

To top it off, Thorman said, parents earn

two participation points for each class they attend (in person or virtually). Ten participation points can be redeemed to reduce one month's child-care bill by 10%. Parents can also earn points by donating items the centers need, she said.

"For example, SAC is collecting plastic bottles for crafts planned for summer camp and for a recycled-art week during spring break this month, so parents can earn points for bringing clean, empty plastic bottles," said Thorman.

Thorman said that she loves the SAC program and believes that the students appreciate all the fun they try to provide.

"My favorite thing is that you can come here, see your friends and just have fun. There's so many things you can do," said Austin Rowlands, SAC student.

"My favorite part about SAC is that there's an arts and crafts room with paint, and I love the (technology) room because it has a lot of Legos," said Adalyn Scharf, SAC student.

The Fort Polk CYC offers programs and services for children of eligible military and civilian Families, including full and part-time care, before- and after-school care, camps and a free middle school and teen youth program. To begin the enrollment process, or if you have any questions about programs and services, call the Fort Polk CYC main office at (337) 531-1955.

BJACH plants pinwheel garden, commits to ending child abuse

By JEAN CLAVETTE GRAVES
BJACH PAO

FORT POLK, La. — Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital hosted a pinwheel planting and fellowship April 4 at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk.

During the event, three dozen purple pinwheels were planted in the ground near the hospital entrance by the Fort Polk Area Home-school Group.

Tiffany Koch, Fort Polk school liaison officer, said pinwheels are the national symbol for child abuse prevention because they represent playfulness and joy, serving as a physical reminder that all children deserve a great childhood.

Purple pinwheels were chosen because April is also the month of the military child. Koch said purple represents military children of all branches by combining the blue shades associated with the U.S. Air Force, Navy and Coast Guard along with Army green and Marine Corps red.

The event was a first for the hospital and the idea of Abigail Lust, Campbellsville University social work intern with the BJACH, behavioral health department.

Lust, a military spouse, said she has two kids who are experiencing unique difficulties early in their lives. She acknowledged that having a deployed parent is something non-military children cannot comprehend.

“As military families we deal with additional stressors that put kids in a higher risk category for abuse,” she said. “As a social work student my natural instinct is service and social justice. I wanted to do something to honor military kids and help prevent child abuse in my current position.”

Lust said hosting a pinwheel planting at BJACH was important because everyone in the hospital has an obligation to prevent child abuse so they are never in the position to use their mandated reporter status.

Trish Sheppard, licensed clinical social worker with the Child, Adolescent and Family behavioral health program at BJACH was the guest speaker for the event.

Sheppard, a military spouse and mother of five, said she understands the unique trials military family members go through and focused her remarks on the resources available to help combat stressors that can lead to child abuse.

“It is not uncommon for a military family member to be separated from their spouses and children for six, nine or 12 months at a time,” she said. “If you are feeling lost, alone or hurting and need help, there are many resources here on Fort Polk to help, no matter how big or small you think the problem is.”

Sheppard discussed parenting, marriage



Col. Kevin Goke, PMH-NP, chief, Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital Behavioral Health Department, plants pinwheels with Magnus (4), son of Sgt. 1st Class Peter Middleton, observer controller with Operations Group, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk.



Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital hosted a pinwheel planting and fellowship April 4 at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk. During the event, three dozen purple pinwheels were planted in the ground in honor of Child Abuse Prevention Month and the Month of the Military Child.

and finance classes available at Army Community Service, the New Parent Support Program and unit chaplains as helpful resources available within the Fort Polk community.

“Every one of the resources I’ve mentioned can provide training and skill that will reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect,” she said. “We are not all born with the skills needed to navigate a stressful military environment, let alone the skills for parenting. Kids do not come with a ‘how to book’, so having a supportive community that offers tools, services and guidance is amazing.”

Command Sgt. Maj. Shavonda Devereaux, senior enlisted advisor for BJACH, said the event was a huge success.

“Recognizing our children who suffer from child abuse is important,” she said. “This event

shows our community that we stand against abuse in all forms and are all in to end child abuse.”

Devereaux said the pinwheel garden at BJACH will be a reminder to the staff and patients throughout the month of April that the entire military community has a role to play in recognizing the signs of child abuse and neglect as well as the stressors that put parents at risk for committing abuse.

“All of us can do our part to prevent child abuse and neglect,” she said. “If someone you know feels unsafe at home you can and should take action to get them help.”

Editor’s note: To report suspected child abuse contact the Fort Polk Hope Line at (337) 531-4673 or contact the state of Louisiana at (855) 452-5437.

Ceremony honors those who served during Vietnam War

By **CHUCK CANNON**
Command Information Officer

FORT POLK, La. -- A ceremony honoring those who served during the Vietnam War was held March 29 at 10:30 a.m. at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk Main Post Exchange.

Vietnam veterans were treated to snacks and a goody bag. Col. Sam Smith, Fort Polk garrison commander, presented each veteran with a Vietnam lapel pin and a certificate signifying their service.

Smith gave the large crowd of Vietnam veterans and Family members a brief history of National Vietnam Veterans Day, started by presidential proclamation in 2012 and authorized by Congress in 2017.

"The purpose was to thank and honor our Nation's Vietnam veterans and their Families for their service and sacrifice," Smith said. "National Vietnam Veterans Day comes with the implicit promise that our Nation pledges our enduring respect, continuing care and everlasting commitment to every Vietnam veteran."

The war took place from 1954-1975 and pitted the communist government of North Vietnam and its allies in South Vietnam, known as the Viet Cong, against the government of South Vietnam and its principal ally, the United States.

The human costs of the long conflict were harsh for all involved. As many as 2 million civilians on both sides and some 1.1 million North Vietnamese and Viet Cong fighters perished. The U.S. military has estimated that between 200,000 and 250,000 South Vietnamese soldiers died in the war.

In 1982 the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was dedicated in Washington, D.C., inscribed with the names of 57,939 members of U.S. armed forces who had died or were missing as a result of the war. Over the following years, additions to the list have brought the total past 58,200.

Smith said it's no surprise March 29 was chosen as the date to honor Vietnam veterans.

"The answer is multi-faceted," Smith said. "March 29, 1973, was the day the last U.S. combat troops departed Vietnam, and the day Hanoi released the last of its acknowledged prisoners of war."

Smith then read the presidential proclamation establishing National Vietnam Veterans Day: "The Vietnam War is a story of ... Americans from every corner of our nation who left the warmth of family to serve the country they loved ... We cannot forget the 1,589 service members that are still considered missing in action. We continue the diligent work to fulfill our promise and bring them home to their families.

"So today, we gather here to humbly thank the Vietnam veterans living in our commu-



A pinning ceremony was held March 29 at the Main Post Exchange to honor and thank Vietnam Veterans for their selfless service.

nity," Smith said. "We also honor those who, in President Abraham Lincoln's words, gave their ... 'last, full measure of devotion.'"

Smith closed by thanking the Vietnam veterans and their Families.

"It's important to us that you know the prominent place you have in our Nation, and the remarkable measure of esteem in which you are held by friends, neighbors, our military and the community," he said. "Your service and sacrifice will never be forgotten."

Air Force veteran Thomas LeBlanc, who served in Vietnam from 1969-1970, said his branch didn't have it too bad, but his Army friends did.

"It took a long time for people to finally begin realizing we weren't the bad guys," he said. "I'm very appreciative of what they're doing for us now because it wasn't too good the first time."

Aristede Lemoine was an Army veteran who spent two tours in Vietnam. He recalled coming back to the U.S. after his second tour.

"I landed at Fort Ord, California and stayed there about six weeks," he said. "I finally got a flight to New Orleans."

He said the returning Soldiers were told to stand to the side outside of the terminal.

"They wouldn't let us go into the terminal because there was so much hatred toward us," Lemoine said. "We were walking along a chain-link fence and some long-haired dude threw a bag of feces at us and hit three of us. That was my homecoming."

Lemoine said ceremonies like the one held

at the Main PX help tremendously. "We really appreciate that we're finally being recognized in a positive light. Went in the first time in '65, got out the second time in '70.

Tonya Yancy, store manager for the Fort Polk Main PX, said events such as the pinning ceremony serve to fulfill part of her organization's mission: Family serving Families. She also said she was able to understand her father and uncle, both Vietnam veterans, after visiting with the veterans who attended the ceremony.

"I was thinking about the times I would notice the strange look on my dad's and uncle's face," she said. "When I was young, I didn't really understand what those looks were about. When you're young, and you go off to war, away from your family, the things that you see, at such a young age, can have an impact on you for the rest of your life."

Yancy said she also saw pride in their faces as well.

"I saw the sacrifice, them not being treated as heroes and I now understand the look, hearing these veterans' stories," she said. "I had one veteran come up to me and say this was the best ceremony that he's had in 50 years. It's hard to explain that look and I saw it today."

As a child, Yancy said she didn't really understand what it meant to be a young man or woman who left home to go to war.

"I just thought, 'My dad just came back from the war, and he's wearing his uniform proudly,'" she said. "What is wrong with fighting for your country and being proud? I was proud that my father served in the military."

CHUCK CANNON/GUARDIAN

12 Months of Monuments:

Take time to discover history packed monuments at Honor Field

By **CHRISTY GRAHAM**
Public affairs specialist

FORT POLK, La. — Today, Honor Field is commonly used for Army physical fitness tests, award ceremonies and often graced by the presence of helicopters used in Air Assault training, but COVID-19 restrictions, along with rising temperatures, caused an influx of visitors to utilize the track.

The field, located off Louisiana Highway 10, features a one-mile track, a thick tree-lined backdrop, pull-up bars, bleachers and a covered and tiered staging area — it also offers a bountiful history.

From 1943–1946, Honor Field was the site of a prisoner of war camp, housing German prisoners during World War II.

Between 1962 and 1972, the parade field saw more than 1 million infantrymen march across the parade field in graduation ceremonies.

The 5th Infantry Division dedicated the field to Medal of Honor recipients born in Louisiana on Sept. 2, 1972.

Also known as the Red Devils, the 5th Inf Div was reactivated and stationed at Fort Polk in the early 70s, after serving in World Wars I and II and Vietnam. The 5th Inf Div was inactivated for the final time in 1992.

Soldiers and civilian visitors can easily miss the several memorials at Honor Field.

Situated beside the parking lot is a memorial for Pfc. Milton Olive III, a Medal of Honor recipient who sacrificed his life by grabbing a live grenade and absorbing its blast to save his fellow Soldiers during combat in Vietnam.

To the left of Olive's memorial sits a gazebo containing a list of Louisiana-born Medal of Honor recipients who served during the Vietnam, Korean, WWII and Civil War campaigns.

Another dedication to Medal of Honor recipients in the gazebo lists Staff Sgt. Travis W. Atkins, 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor at the White House by President Donald Trump on March 27, 2019 for his service during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

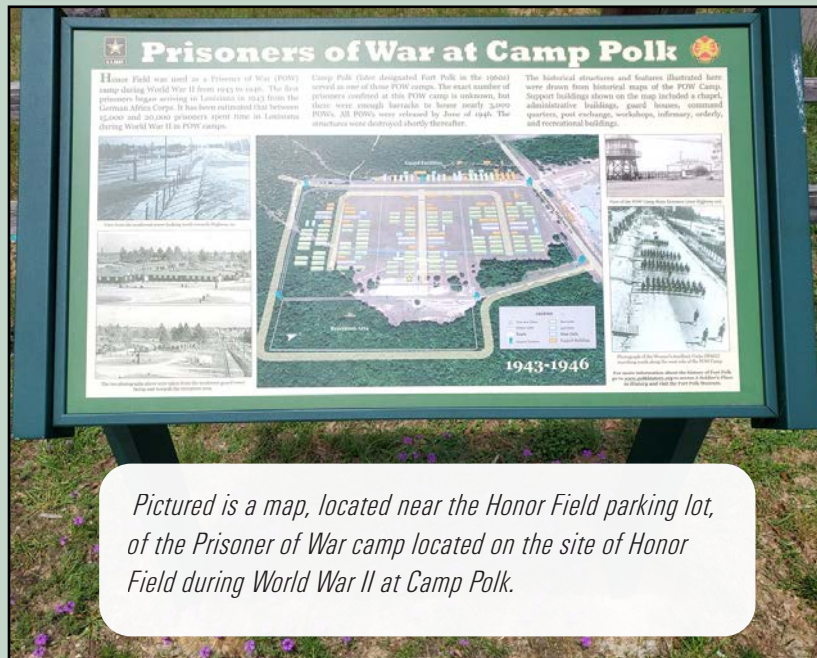
Capt. William Swenson, 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, received the Medal of Honor at the White House by President Barack Obama on Oct. 15, 2013 for his service during Operation Enduring Freedom.

Finally, the gazebo contains a POW and Missing in Action plaque dedicated to "all American Prisoners of War and Missing in Action, both living and deceased," by the 5th Inf Div and Fort Polk on Sept. 18, 1986.

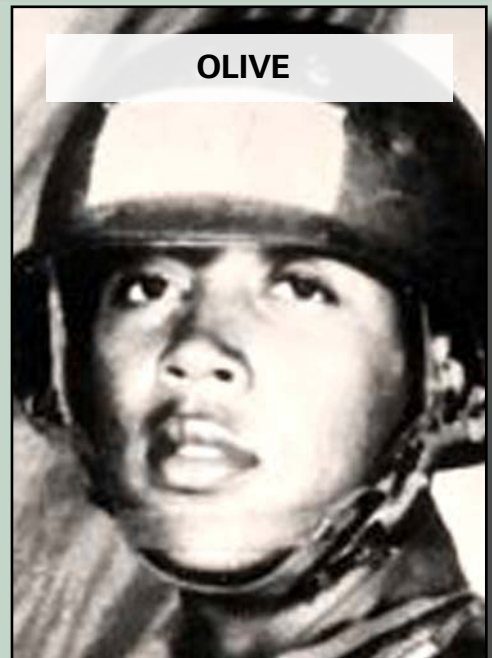
The next time you find yourself at Honor Field, either enjoying squad-level physical training or taking a stroll, stop to remember and honor those listed in these memorials — share in the field's history for just a moment.



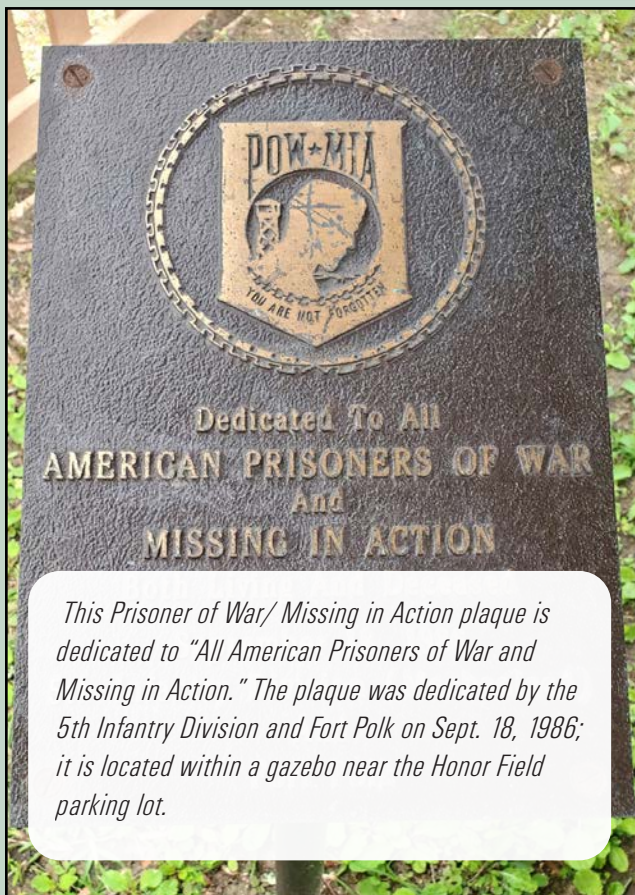
Stage area at Honor Field.



Pictured is a map, located near the Honor Field parking lot, of the Prisoner of War camp located on the site of Honor Field during World War II at Camp Polk.



OLIVE



This Prisoner of War/ Missing in Action plaque is dedicated to "All American Prisoners of War and Missing in Action." The plaque was dedicated by the 5th Infantry Division and Fort Polk on Sept. 18, 1986; it is located within a gazebo near the Honor Field parking lot.



An Honor Field memorial for Pfc. Milton L. Olive III who absorbed the shock of a live grenade, giving his life, to save the lives of his fellow Soldiers while serving in Vietnam.



Signing SHARP proclamation

On March 31, the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk command teams signed a proclamation for Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month, which is observed each April. This year's Army theme is "Prevention Starts With You," which builds on the concept of upholding what it means to be a member of an Army team. When it comes to sexual assault and sexual harassment, the only person responsible for committing the act is the perpetrator, but all members of the team have the ability to look out for each other's safety.

Wear denim in support of Sexual Assault Awareness Month's Denim Day

By Spc. KELLY ACEVEDO
Public affairs specialist

FORT POLK, La — Over the last decade, new perspectives have changed society's views on what's acceptable or not. Through education and prevention, the spread of awareness on sensitive topics has transformed the lives of many. April is Sexual Assault Awareness month, which means everyone is encouraged to wear denim on the last Wednesday of the month, April 27. This marks the 24th annual celebration of "Denim Day".

Organized by "Peace Over Violence," the movement combats victim blaming and educates others about sexual violence. The goal of the event is to start conversations about the destructive attitudes surrounding sexual assault. Through rape prevention education, the organization encourages community members, elected officials, businesses and students to make a social statement with their fashion. "Wearing jeans on this anniversary has become an international symbol of protest against erroneous and destructive attitudes about sexual violence," according to their website (<https://www.peaceoverviolence.org/>).

So what does wearing denim have to do with sexual assault? Although it may seem unrelated, denim is what sparked the start of the movement.

In 1998 an Italian Supreme Court overturned a rape conviction as a result of tight jeans worn by the victim.

The case began in 1992, when an 18-year-old girl reported she was raped by her 45-year-old driving instructor. The perpetrator



was arrested and prosecuted, but had the sentence appealed. The instructor argued that the incident was consensual. The case eventually landed in an Italian high court where the conviction was overturned, leading to the release of the alleged assaulter. The court argued that since the survivor wore tight jeans during the assault, they could only come off with her help to remove them. The court ruled that she must have helped the perpetrator remove them, no longer ruling the incident as rape but consensual sex. This became known throughout Italy as the "jeans alibi" verdict.

The court's decision enraged women in Italy, which motivated protests of women wearing



jeans to the Italian parliament, an unacceptable form of attire.

Awareness of the case was spread, eventually making its way from Italy to Los Angeles. Women around the world wore denim in support of the protest, thus beginning "Denim Day".

Although changes made throughout the years have encouraged victims to come forward, there is still an issue with victim blaming against survivors.

In 2020, Soldier Vanessa Guillen was murdered by a higher-ranking Soldier in her unit who sexually abused her. Guillen had in-

Please see **Denim**, page 8

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Denim

Continued from page 7

formed her mother about the incidents and made two reports within her unit of being sexually harassed before disappearing. After about two months of searching, Guillen's body was found.

Following the investigation, her family demanded reform. A total of 21 of Guillen's leaders were fired or suspended after an investigation dictating how sexual assault and harassment are handled in the unit.

One way the Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention program encourages units to spread awareness is through education. Discussions regarding SHARP, although at times uncomfortable, strengthen the climate in units. It is important for Soldiers to be aware of the severity that is sexual violence. Leaders who advocate the importance of the SHARP program, build a safe environment for Soldiers.

The "I am Vanessa Guillen Act" took effect Jan. 1, 2020, allowing survivors to report outside the military and offers protection against retaliation.

April is Sexual Assault Awareness month

Many survivors have reported feeling guilt, being ostracized and even blamed for what happened to them. Today, reporting sexual assault related incidents in the Army has changed because of Guillen. The stigma behind victim blaming discourages survivors to come forward, but prevention and intervention in the military will help create a secure environment to encourage survivors to come forward.

Denim Day is meant to spread awareness

about sexual violence. Whether you are a survivor, or have been a support system for someone, remember that Denim Day represents more than just a fashion statement. It is a representation that grassroots can transform into something big enough to change lives.

If you or anyone you know have been a victim of sexual assault, call the SHARP 24-hour emergency helpline at (831) 682-8746 or visit [safehelpline.org](https://www.safehelpline.org).

Soldier finds worth in challenges that made her who she is

By **Spc. KELLY ACEVEDO**
Public affairs specialist

Three years ago I made a decision that changed the future for my family and me.

At only 19 years old, I decided to do something bigger than myself and enlist in the United States Army. After taking the oath of enlistment I felt proud and different. I was proud because it was the beginning of a difficult journey that would begin and expedite the process for my parents to become citizens. I felt different because I would be the first woman in my family to join the military.

On March 4, 2019, I left Pasadena, Calif. and shipped out to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri for basic training as a combat engineer.

I said goodbye to my family and officially moved out, a difficult process considering I had never left home. With the decision to leave came reality and the need to grow up.

The day I graduated basic training, I shipped out to my first duty station, good old Fort Polk, La. After constantly being made fun of by my drill sergeants for having Fort Polk as my first duty station, being sent off quickly was definitely a thoughtful graduation gift from them.

Upon arriving to my unit, I noticed I stood out. I was one of two females in my platoon and one out of 11 females in the entire company.

“I’m not crazy. I’m an engineer.”
— Spc. Kelly Acevedo

Not only did I need to adapt to an environment that was male dominated, but the need to build relationships and a family away from home was immediately intimidating.

As a combat engineer you’re given guidance on how to train with your peers and win a war, but as a young woman in this type of atmosphere, I felt alone. At this point, feeling different wasn’t a good thing.

In time, I did find my Army family. It was definitely different and had a higher male to female ratio, but it felt just right. Within this family I gained role models, teachers and friends.

I soon learned that I was not the only female struggling to fit in. These Soldiers helped me realize that I did not have to be like my male counterparts to succeed, but was capable of thriving by being like myself instead. I watched women in my military occupation fail and succeed just as much as the males did. In time, I felt confident that what I offered was enough. I just wish I had realized this sooner.

As an E-3 I had the opportunity to lead a team of three to maneuver through an objective during a platoon live fire.



ACEVEDO

COURTESY Spc. KELLY ACEVEDO

The mission was difficult, yet for some reason my squad leader saw something in me that I didn’t see. During the practice runs I was hurting, physically and mentally.

I constantly wondered what the male Soldiers were doing to lead their team so well, while I failed mine.

My commander let me know I did a bad job. He even warned me to do better or become a mechanic for the company. Have you ever heard the joke about the two combat engineers who tried to fix — well anything? Me neither. I’m sure the joke is as bad as the repair.

I was so embarrassed. I had all the resources and knowledge to successfully lead a team, yet I struggled. I called my boyfriend when I had some downtime about how bad the training had gone.

That was when I realized, I had no confidence in the role I filled. I constantly second guessed my next move and wondered if I was doing as well as a male leader. That was the root of my failure.

I realized what I needed to do was actually simple. Stop feeling sorry for myself and just get the job done.

After countless failed attempts, my team performed impeccably. I dislocated my right knee and placed it back in place during the mission, feeling absolutely crazy yet dedicated.

Honestly, I never felt more alive. I promise I’m not crazy, I’m just an engineer. I left the field that night with two bad knees, bruised from my ankles to my thighs, a lovely remind-

er that my equipment would need some deep cleaning after looking at my muddy vest, and a sense of accomplishment.

I went on to become a team leader in my platoon as an E-4 and filled the role of a squad leader while most of my platoon was out for a hurricane relief mission. I filled these roles while pregnant and can honestly say I think I made my Soldiers proud.

When a Soldier would come to me with issues, military or non-military related, I knew I was doing just fine. I think I flourished so well because I stopped wondering what other Soldiers were doing better. Instead, I reflected on my own actions in order to improve for my Soldiers.

My time in the military has surely been far from easy, but an experience that I am grateful for. I gained confidence.

That allowed me to grow as a woman who struggled with self-doubt. I applied a new perspective to an environment that intimidated me, but forced me to come out of my shell.

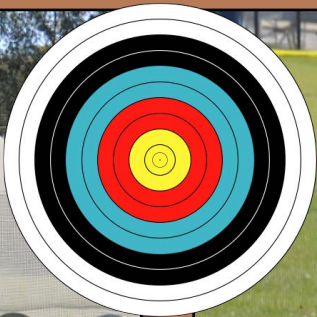
New service members often feel that there is no room for mistakes, but there is. The mistake is when you stop believing in yourself because you decided you can’t compete where you believe you don’t compare.

So what is my experience serving as a woman in the military?

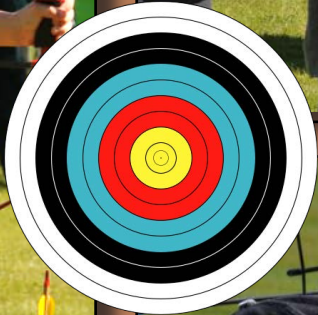
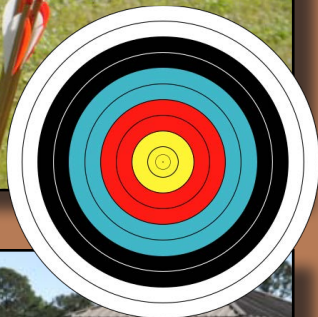
Well, it surely hasn’t been a walk in the park, but that’s okay.

The knowledge and wisdom I’ve gained has helped me grow and made me a better woman and Soldier.

Fort Polk youth take aim at Youth Archery Competition



The Fort Polk Child and Youth Services Youth Archery Competition took place March 26.



Fort Polk's annual Strongest Youth Competition tests kid's might



The Fort Polk Child and Youth Services Strongest Youth Competition took place March 19.





FORT POLK HYBRID HIRING EVENT

TRANSITION
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



IN-PERSON

21 April 2022

10 am - 1:00 pm

**Fort Polk Library and Education Center
7460 Colorado Avenue, Bldg. 660
Fort Polk, LA 71459**

VIRTUAL

21 April – 21 May 2022

**This a free registered event
transitioning Soldiers, Spouses, Veterans
and surrounding communities**



**Fort Polk Transition Assistance Program
to register or for more information at
(337)531-1594/4621**

usarmy.polk.id-readiness.mesg.tap@army.mil

**Over 4,000
nationwide
positions
available**



**Architecture &
Construction**



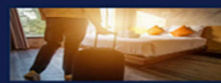
Energy



Finance



**Health &
Science**



**Hospitality &
Tourism**



**Information
Tech**



Manufacturing



**Science, Tech,
Engineering &**



**Tele-
Communication**



**Trans, Distro,
Logistics**



Briefs

Garrison innovation program

Do you have a good idea? Don't let it go to waste. The Plans, Analysis and Integration Office wants the Fort Polk community to know that the garrison team is not only listening, but also taking action on many of the great ideas that have already been submitted through the Garrison Innovation Program. Yours could be next. The program works by asking individuals to share their concepts to increase efficiency and enhance garrison processes for the Fort Polk community as a whole. Submit your ideas through the Fort Polk Interactive Customer Evaluation system.

ACP hours change

The Fort Polk community should take note of the following changes to Access Control Points taking place on Fort Polk as of April 11.

• **ACP 5 (La. Hwy 467 — south/post office gate)** — For a limited time, April 11-May 6, ACP 5's operational hours will be reduced Monday-Friday from 6 a.m.-6 p.m., Saturday 9 a.m.-4 p.m. and closed on federal holidays. The senior commander has determined the need to reevaluate the traffic demand of ACP 5 with reduced operational hours in a follow-up traffic study.

The results of the study will help determine the total traffic volume and demand, which influences manning and ACP hours.

Operational units that need access to training areas may contact DES at usarmy.polk.im-com.mesg.des-psi@army.mil or call (337) 531-1159/6988.

• **ACP 6 (Chaffee gate)** — The gate will see changes to weekend hours — opening Saturdays from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. and closed Sundays and federal holidays beginning April 11. This action is the result of the installation wide traffic study, which demonstrated a tapered demand after 10 a.m. and little to no activity after 6 p.m. on Saturdays.

There are no changes to the weekday operations for ACP 6, which will remain open Monday-Friday from 5 a.m.-9 p.m.

• **ACP 8 (Joint Readiness Training Center box gate)** — The gate will be closed indefinitely, Monday-Sunday and federal holidays, as of April 11. The action is also the result of the installation wide traffic study, which demonstrated low traffic volume.

Alabama Ave. closure

Beginning April 12, the segment of Alabama Avenue north of Louisiana Avenue will be closed

for one to two months pending weather. Motorists accessing facilities along Ninth, 10th, 11th, and 12th streets will be detoured to Mississippi Avenue. Fourth Street will remain open for through traffic. Facilities with access limited to Alabama Avenue will be accessed off of Georgia Avenue with flaggers or channelizing devices providing safe passage across the work zone (Alabama Avenue). Georgia Avenue will be converted to two-way traffic during this closure. Rough road conditions and loose aggregate are possible near these work zones. Motorists should anticipate traffic delays due to closures and flagging operations around the work zones and pedestrians are encouraged to stay clear of work zones.

Fire marshal class

A fire marshal class is held the second Tuesday of each month at 9 a.m. in the Main Fire Station. The next class is May 10. The Fort Polk Fire Prevention Division's goal is to provide fire protection services to prevent loss of life or personal injuries and reduce property loss to the lowest attainable level consistent with mission and sound engineering and economic principles. Contact fire inspector James McArthur for more information at (337) 531-0686 or (337) 378-9198.



Soldiers found guilty for UCMJ 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 the most recent examples of adverse legal actions for units within the Fort Polk jurisdiction.

- Five Soldiers from across the installation received permanently filed GOMORs for driving under the influence of alcohol.
- A sergeant assigned to 317th Brigade Engineer Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, received a field grade

Article 15 for maltreating a subordinate. They received a punishment of reduction to the rank of specialist, forfeiture of half of one month’s pay for two months, extra duty for 45 days, restriction to the limits of the company area for 45 days and an oral reprimand.

•A private first class assigned to 519th Military Police Battalion received a field grade Article 15 for wrongfully using tetrahydrocannabinol. They received a punishment of reduction to the rank of private and extra duty for 30 days.

Use of illegal substances requires initiation of administrative separation.

•Seven Soldiers assigned to 1st Battalion, 509th Infantry Regiment, were separated from the military with a general discharge for refusing to be vaccinated against COVID-19. A general discharge usually results in a loss of benefits and may lead to difficulty obtaining civilian employment.

•Three specialists assigned to 1st Battalion, 509th Infantry Regiment, received field grade Article 15s for wrongfully using cocaine. All three Soldiers were reduced to the rank of private. Use of illegal substances requires initiation of administrative separation.

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 Polk Police Traffic Division at (337) 531-1806, 6675 or 2677

2002	Honda	CRV	7722
1988	Chevrolet	3500	4195
2011	Dodge	Avenger	1373
2014	Nissan	Altima	6092
2005	Nissan	Altima	9465
2006	Dodge	Charger	5068
2000	Ford	Ranger	3852
1998	Honda	CRV	6564
1995	Ford	Crown Vic	4288
1995	BMW	530i	4287
2005	Chevrolet	Cobalt	1230
2009	Pontiac	G6	7014
2001	Kawasaki	650	0233
2011	Dodge	Durango	6226
2002	Ford	Mustang	1003
1979	Kawasaki	KZ650	5918
2013	Utility	trailer	3802
2007	Mitsubishi	Eclipse	2929
2001	Volkswagen	Jetta	9197
2002	Mitsubishi	Eclipse	4078
2016	Kia	Reo	5808
1992	BMW	4dr	7858
2005	Dodge	Magnum	9914
2016	Kia	Optima	8345
2001	Honda	Civic	5428
2008	Ford	Explorer	3754
2006	Ford	Escape	0697
2013	Dodge	Avenger	9243
2001	Volvo	S 40	1073
2001	Mercury	G. Marquis	1956
2013	Chevrolet	Camaro	0144
2007	Acura	RDX Turbo	1092
2017	Nissan	Sentra	5638
1995	Chevrolet	Caprice	3876
1999	GMC	1500	0147
2006	Hyundai	Sonata	3189
2008	Chevrolet	1500	0226
2008	Ford	Edge	1971

KLUBS & KARTS PICNIC DAY APRIL 16

1 - 8 P.M.

Bring your bagged lunch and enjoy
a free game of mini golf!

9th St, BLDG 1402 Fort Polk
(337)-531-5481

PLEASE JOIN US FOR

Easter

BRUNCH

AT THE WARRIOR CENTER
SUNDAY, APRIL 17
9:30 AM TO 1:30 PM

Join us for a special buffet of over 30 items,
featuring: carved ham with a honey
pineapple glaze, omelet, pancake and
waffle stations, a gourmet dessert table,
and much more!

Reservations are required and may be purchased
at a discount until April 14th

Seating times are 9:30 AM, 11:30 AM, and 1:30 PM

Ticket Prices

April 4 to 14

Adult \$35
Children (6-12) \$15
5 yrs and under
eat free

After April 15th

Adult \$40
Children (6-12) \$18
5 yrs and under
eat free

Alcohol for purchase. Gratuity not included

Got News?

Call the Guardian at 531-1416

JRTC & Fort Polk and MWR Presents

JASON DERULO

2022 FREEDOM FEST

Headquarters Field
Gates Open 4:30 p.m.
Vendors, Static Display, Music
and Firework Show!

polk.armymwr.com

JUNE 11

JRTC & FORT POLK PRESENTS
GARRISON COMMANDER'S
GOLF SCRAMBLE
AND SOCIAL

APR 15 @ 12 PM Warrior Hills Golf Course

Registration open at the Warrior Store until 8 AM event day

\$45
\$50 AFTER APR 14

PRICE INCLUDES
• GREEN FEE
• HALF CART
• AWARDS

DINNER & SOCIAL STARTS AT 4:30

Dinner will be served at completion of scramble

\$5 HOT DOG lunch special

PLEASE CALL
337-531-4661
FOR MORE INFORMATION

#FortPolkThingsToDo

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

FORT POLK, La. — #FortPolkThingsToDo is a listing of highlighted events taking place both on and off the installation that may be of interest to Fort Polk's Soldiers and Families. It is distributed every two weeks.

If you'd like to be on the distro list, please send your email address to kimberly.k.reischling.civ@mail.mil. The distro list is strictly voluntary. If you have any events that you know of within the communities (or on Fort Polk), please send an email.

For more information call (337) 531-1392

- April 14: Hiring event hosted by Army Community Service, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Family Readiness Center, bldg. 924. (337) 531-6922
- April 16: Klubs & Karts Picnic Day, 1-8 p.m. Bring your bagged lunch and enjoy a free game of mini golf. (337) 531-5481
- April 16: DFMWR hosts Dinner and Sunset Cruise at Toledo Bend Army Rec Site, 5-9 p.m. Cost is \$45 per person. Call (318) 565-4235.
- April 22: DFMWR hosts Movie Night at Headquarters Field. "Encanto." Concessions open at 7 p.m. Movie starts at 8 p.m.
- April 23-24: DeRidder High School Rodeo, Beauregard Covered Arena. April 23 at 7:30 p.m., April 24 at 10 a.m. Gate admission is \$10.
- April 23-24: Melrose Arts and Crafts Festival, near Natchitoches. Vendors from the Ark/La/Tex sell their handmade crafts. People come from all over to visit for festival week-

end to enjoy shopping, food, music, and fun.

<https://www.louisianatravel.com/events/festivals/melrose-arts-and-crafts-festival>

- April 26: "Nailed It! Youth Edition" pastry decorating contest. Warrior Center, at 6 p.m. Three categories: 3-7; 8-12; 13-17. Awards given to winners. Space is limited. Polk.armymwr.com
- April 27: Water safety class (for kids) 25-meter pool, 4:30 p.m.
- April 27-May 1: Festival International de Louisiane. multiple stages throughout downtown with musical acts from around the globe, vibrant arts and crafts, local and international food and other family-friendly activities. Festival International de Louisiane | Louisiana Travel
- April 28-May 8; Louisiana Pirate Festival, Lake Charles. The Louisiana Pirate Festival is a multi-day festival held on the grounds of the Lake Charles Civic Center and Seawall. Pirates take over the city for two weeks for Contra-band Days. The festival includes carnival rides, a car and bike show, bbq cook-off, parade, entertainment, and much more. <https://www.louisianatravel.com/events/cultural-events/louisiana-pirate-festival>
- April 29-May 8: New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival | Louisiana Travel
- April 30: Anacoco Spring Parade and Festival, 11 a.m. Main Street (337) 239-0215
- April 30: JRTC and Fort Polk Dye Hard 5K

Color Run. Starts at the Playtown and Café (former Showboat Theater) at 9 a.m. \$10. Pre-registration required. Register at polk.armymwr.com

- May 6-7: Mayfest in downtown Leesville.
- May 6-8: Breaux Bridge Crawfish Festival. The Breaux Bridge Crawfish Festival is devoted to the crawfish and our love of dancing. Hear live music during the festival including Cajun, zydeco, and swamp pop music on three stages. <https://www.louisianatravel.com/events/culinary-events/breaux-bridge-crawfish-festival>
- May 7: Louisiana Beer Festival, Lake Charles. If you enjoy a good brew, make your way to downtown Lake Charles for the annual Louisiana Beer Festival.

The 6th Annual (ish) beer-tasting event will feature over 100 different craft beers of the highest quality from a variety of American brewers. <https://www.louisianatravel.com/events/culinary-events/louisiana-beer-festival>

- May 14-15: Fifth Annual Baton Rouge Soul Festival. The 5th Annual Baton Rouge Soul Food Festival is two days of incredible food and great music. The family friendly event is free to the public and features blues, soul, R&B and gospel music, a Vendor's Village, a judged soul food cooking contest and Pioneer Award Presentation. Lawn seating so bring your chairs. <https://www.louisianatravel.com/events/culinary-events/5th-annual-baton-rouge-soul-food-festival>