

THE JRTC AND FORT POLK

# GUARDIAN

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## QUALITY OF LIFE LINES OF EFFORT



HOUSING



HEALTH CARE



CHILD CARE



SPOUSE  
EMPLOYMENT

## Corvias Property Management provides preventive maintenance

### PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

FORT POLK, La. — As a home owner or renter it can be tough to keep up with the long list of things to do when it comes to maintaining a home in good working order.

One of the benefits of living in Fort Polk housing is getting help with that list.

Corvias property management, according to <https://polk.corviaspm.com/>, takes a proactive approach to upkeep through its preventive maintenance program.

The idea is to help residents keep their properties looking great and running smoothly to extend their life span.

Corvias Property Management Does this by identifying features in each home to assess, remedy and extend the life cycle of homes.

That can save residents money, as well as improve their quality of life by keeping them happy and worry free.

Christian Gervaios, a Corvias maintenance supervisor, said the Preventative Maintenance Program involves inspection, repair or replacement of all life, health and safety items inside of the dwellings.

"We check things like fire extinguishers, carbon monoxide/smoke detectors or strobes where applicable. We also check wet locations (under sinks, around toilets, water heaters, etc.) to verify they operate correctly and identify and correct any potential health issues immediately," Gervais said.



ANGIE THORNE/EGUARDIAN

The maintenance team also replaces air conditioning filters, cleans the air conditioning coils and HVAC units where needed and inspects the dryer vents to verify they are free of blockage.

One small way residents can help their maintenance team is to stop by their neighborhood community center each month to pick up and replace their HVAC filter. The filters are free.

"We also like to visually inspect the electrical panel for any signs of arching, loose breakers or excess heat to identify any issues beforehand. Water heaters for temperature settings, to make sure they don't present a burn hazard to our residents, and a basic appliance check for leaks or damages that could present a hazard if not addressed," Gervais said. "It's a basic

walk-through of the home to verify there are no identified hazards present that need to be addressed at that moment."

By taking care of everything from 24-hour maintenance, landscaping and community support, to quality control and capital improvements, Corvias Property Management helps foster communities residents are proud to call "home."

Pam Self, Dogwood Terrace Community Center resident manager, said preventive maintenance is a game changer as far as improving quality of life for residents.

"Preventive maintenance takes care of upkeep before they become issues and if something does need repair, residents have access to 24-hour maintenance," Self said.

The 24-hour maintenance hotline is (866) 436-2047.



### JRTC and Fort Polk

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Gardner

JRTC and Fort Polk

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All editorial content of the Guardian is prepared, edited, provided and approved by the Public Affairs Office, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk.

For more information on Fort Polk units and happenings visit the [@JRTCandFortPolk](https://www.facebook.com/JRTCandFortPolk) Facebook page.



**Cover photo:** Two Fort Polk Soldiers with 1st Battalion, 5th Aviation Regiment sit atop a UH-60 Blackhawk to watch some of the action taking place at the 2023 Barksdale Defenders of Liberty Air Show March 25-26 at Barksdale Air Force Base in Bossier City. (Photo by CHUCK CANNON)

# Louisiana National Guard, BJACH all ears for hearing conservation

By JEAN CLAVETTE GRAVES  
BJACH PAO

FORT POLK, La. — The Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital Department of Public Health hosted the Louisiana National Guard March 20 and 21 for the hearing technician certification course and occupational hearing conservationist certification workshop at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk.

The two-part training consisted of four days of didactic coursework offered through Microsoft Teams from a team of audiologists supporting the Defense Centers for Public Health, Aberdeen, Maryland. That training was followed by the two-day audiometric and hearing protection practicum at BJACH.

The first phase of the course consisted of a hearing conservation overview, learning about audiometric testing, techniques, understanding regulations, records keeping, hearing protection and more.

During phase two, students learned to use audiometric equipment, conduct testing and interpret and document test results. They also learned to fit and assess six varieties of hearing protection.

Lt. Col. Leanne Battler, doctor of audiology and chief of public health for BJACH, said the second phase uses the Council for Accreditation in Occupational Hearing Conservation requirements.

Ryan Prazynski, certification manager, CAOHC said civilian certification is available for Soldiers in the course by taking a proctored exam with his organization for a nominal fee.

According to the CAOHC, certified occupational hearing conservationists play an integral role on the hearing conservation team. Even though the audiometric testing program must be supervised by an audiologist or physician, the CAOHC may be closely involved with noise-exposed workers and their activities.

It's important to have partnerships like this with the CAOHC and the National Guard.

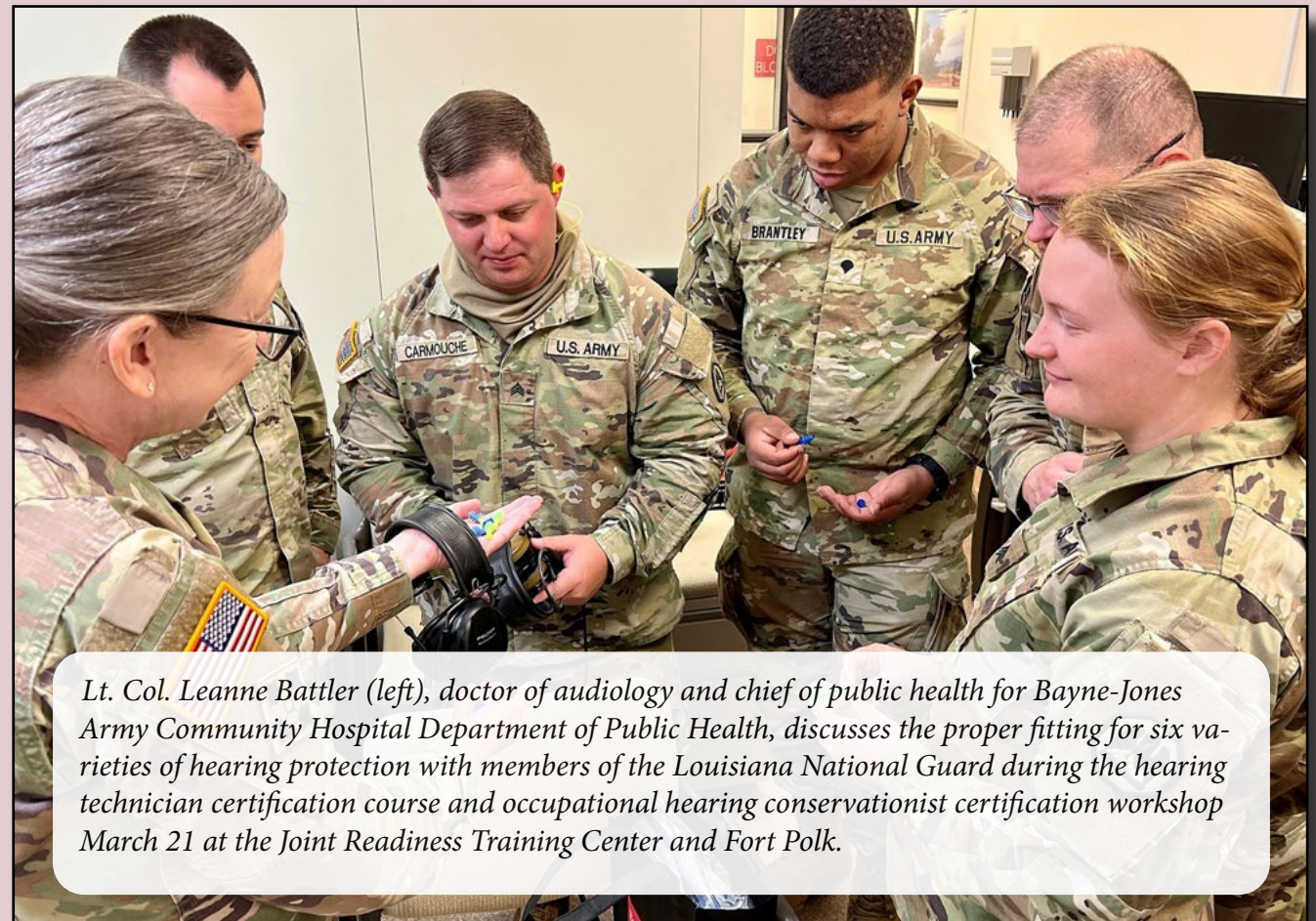
"It's part of the total Army concept. It is a privilege and honor for me to support and enhance the Louisiana National Guard's readiness," Battler said.

"This training will allow these guardsmen to provide support to their fellow Soldiers."

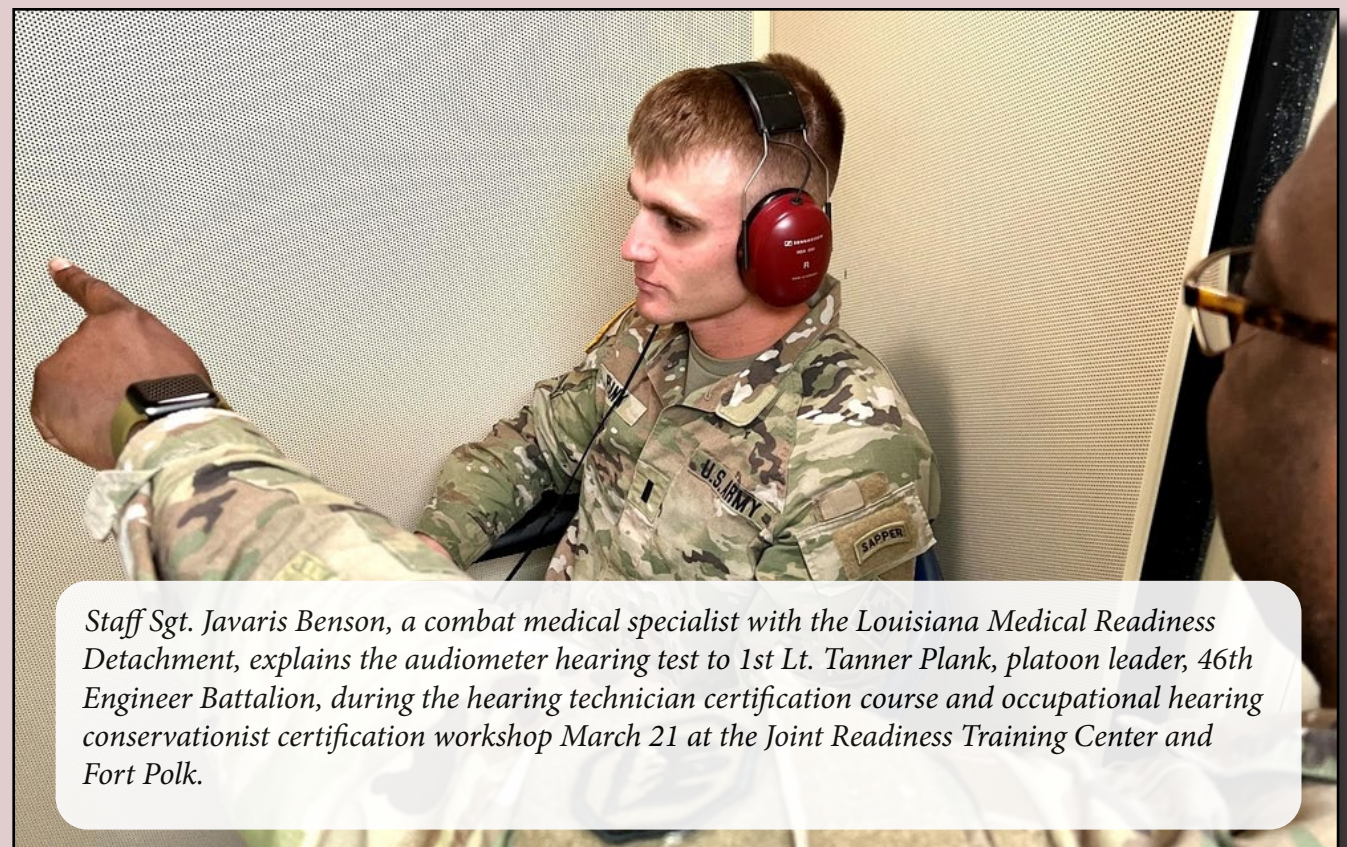
There is no longer an audiology technician military occupational specialty, but the necessity for trained personnel still exists.

Sgt. Jake Carmouche, a combat medical specialist, Louisiana Medical Readiness Detachment, said during drill weekends and annual training events they hire outside contractors to perform the hearing test for periodic health assessments and the Soldier Readiness Program.

"We manage the hearing program during the week for full time support of our active guard Soldiers and federal technicians," Carmouche said. "This training allows us to support our



*Lt. Col. Leanne Battler (left), doctor of audiology and chief of public health for Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital Department of Public Health, discusses the proper fitting for six varieties of hearing protection with members of the Louisiana National Guard during the hearing technician certification course and occupational hearing conservationist certification workshop March 21 at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk.*



*Staff Sgt. Javaris Benson, a combat medical specialist with the Louisiana Medical Readiness Detachment, explains the audiometer hearing test to 1st Lt. Tanner Plank, platoon leader, 46th Engineer Battalion, during the hearing technician certification course and occupational hearing conservationist certification workshop March 21 at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk.*

force and up our capabilities."

Carmouche said outside of drill they conduct more than 40 hearing tests each month between Camp Beauregard, Pineville, and Jackson Barracks, New Orleans.

1st Sgt. Christopher Castaneda, Louisiana Medical Readiness Detachment, said recertification every five years is required.

"We run Tier 3 periodic health assessment events for our full time recruitment and retention personnel. We must have certified technicians available to conduct those hearing exams," Castaneda said. "We used to do both the classroom and hands-on portion at Fort Polk, but this year we did a hybrid course."

Staff Sgt. Javaris Benson, combat medical specialist, Louisiana Medical Readiness Detachment, said his unit ensures medical readiness for the entire state.

"This training will give us more qualified Soldiers to support the rest of our unit," Benson said. "Attending this training and getting the certification is not a requirement. It's lagniappe (which means a little something extra) to support our National Guard mission."

Benson said this training opportunity allows him to give that back to his unit.

To learn more about the Council of Accreditation in Occupational Hearing Conservation visit their website at [www.caohc.org](http://www.caohc.org).

# Army veteran helps recruiting efforts in Lafayette

By JENNIFER VILLAUME  
Baton Rouge Recruiting Battalion

BATON ROUGE, La. — Ben Iles is a retired Army officer currently working as a civilian for the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk Operations Group Physical Security team.

Iles went back to his Soldier roots and stepped up to assist when the Army began publishing its recruiting struggles and needed support.

Iles demonstrated his patriotism and desire to help by sharing his own Army story highlighting the benefits to himself, his family and his country.

“I enlisted in the Army in 1982 at the age of 18. The Army lifted me from poverty, educated me and introduced me to a rich and diverse population. I also learned that if I applied myself, I could not only succeed, but also make a difference in the lives of others,” Iles said. “When I had nine years in service I applied for and was accepted to Officer Candidate School. I served my country for almost 25 years.”

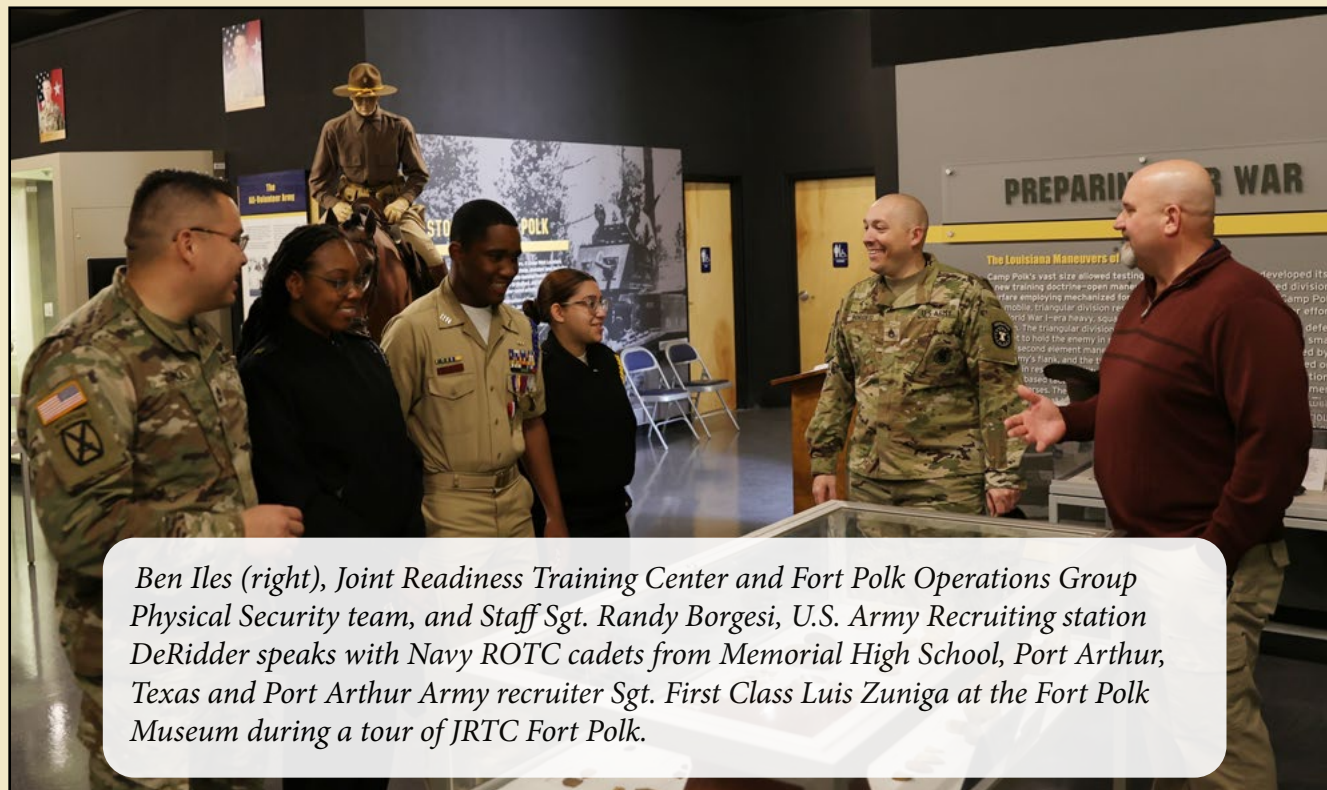
Iles saw Gen. Gary Brito, Training and Doctrine commanding general, on television talking about the recruitment issues facing the Army. Iles happened to know Brito as his tactical officer at Officer Candidate School, so he emailed him.

“I suggested that we retired Soldiers be allowed to assist recruitment efforts in the communities where we live. I have lived in the Fort Polk community since 2005. I am a member of the Lions Club, serve as a deacon in my church, am very active in the community and know many others who do the same,” Iles said. “I felt as though I could help with recruitment efforts locally. Gen. Brito agreed and sent my email to the commander of U.S. Army Recruiting Command, Maj. Gen. Johnny Davis. Davis and I just happened to have served as majors together in Iraq in 2006. He forwarded my email to Lt. Col. Marsh, the local battalion commander. Marsh just happened to have been an observer/controller/trainer at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, and we knew each other. It seemed like a great plan was coming together before our very eyes.”

Marsh put the Lafayette command team in touch with Iles soon after. Staff Sgt. Randy Borgesi, DeRidder Recruiting Station, arranged for Iles to speak with juniors and seniors at Anacoco High School. The school principal agreed, and a date was set for March.

Iles entered the auditorium singing a military cadence, explaining that the Army uses these cadences when marching and running.

“At the start of the discussion approximately two individuals raised their hands as interested in service, but by the end more than half the audience raised their hands and said they were now interested,” said Capt. Kevin Finerty, La-



*Ben Iles (right), Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk Operations Group Physical Security team, and Staff Sgt. Randy Borgesi, U.S. Army Recruiting station DeRidder speaks with Navy ROTC cadets from Memorial High School, Port Arthur, Texas and Port Arthur Army recruiter Sgt. First Class Luis Zuniga at the Fort Polk Museum during a tour of JRTC Fort Polk.*

fayette recruiting company commander.

Since that presentation, Anacoco High School has specifically requested Iles for future events with juniors and seniors and their parents or influencers to further discuss opportunities and benefits for their future.

“Mr. Iles was successful in helping us represent the United States Army and U.S. Army Recruiting Command. He is passionate about the military, and we are very grateful that he is willing to work with us to help in our recruiting efforts,” Borgesi said. “We are lucky to have people in our community who are willing to help talk to students and are passionate about the Army.”

Community partners and veterans can tell their stories with a unique perspective and experience to lend a hand to local recruiters and help them achieve the mission.

“He really has a unique Army story and can help provide invaluable feedback to our recruiters,” Finerty said. “He is helping rebound our DeRidder station, and infuse new and different energy in the schools.”

As for the future, Iles said he and other Veterans would love to step up and help the effort. Perhaps even having retired Soldiers assist in the stations as a Department of the Army civilian.

“The successes that I have enjoyed are a direct result of applying myself through the many opportunities that I received from the Army,” Iles said. “It’s hard to deny retired Soldiers can and are willing to assist in this worthwhile effort. The very defense of our nation and its way of life is dependent on recruiting efforts and the steady replacement of our greatest resource — America’s youth.”

## APRIL IS PEAK TORNADO SEASON AT FORT POLK



**Workplace employees should:**

- ☐ Review and understand the emergency action plan (EAP) or Mobilization and Contingency (MAC) Plan
- ☐ Participate in work emergency drills
- ☐ Know the on-site shelter-in-place locations
- ☐ Learn the warning signs of a tornado (know the difference between a tornado warning and a tornado watch)
- ☐ Pay attention to news of thunderstorms (weather apps, webpages, Facebook, etc.)

**If you find yourself outside of your workplace:**

- ☐ While driving, find a building, if there isn't one find an area with is noticeably lower than the roadway, like a ditch or a ravine, lie in that area and cover your head with your hands. Never stay in a vehicle during a tornado or try to outrun it. But if you find yourself in a vehicle in a tornado...
- ☐ Stay in the vehicle with the seat belt on, keep your head below the windows, and cover your head and neck with your hands or a blanket

 KALB WX  Mike's Weather Page  Meteorologist Nick Mikulas

# Vietnam vets honored with pinning at Post Exchange

By KAREN SAMPSON  
Public Affairs Office

FORT POLK, La. — Vietnam War veterans were honored for their service and sacrifices during a pinning ceremony hosted by the Fort Polk Army and Air Force Exchange Service on National Vietnam Veterans Day March 29.

March 29 marked the day the last American troops departed Vietnam in 1973 and the day Hanoi freed the remaining prisoners of war. The observance properly honors and welcomes home the millions of veterans who returned from the Vietnam War.

Approximately 2.7 million Americans served in the Vietnam War, according to guest speaker Mark Leslie, Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security director.

In addition, more than 58,000 service members were killed, 304,000 wounded and 1,500 are still missing in action, Leslie explained.

“We are privileged to have some of those Americans present,” Leslie said. “Those losses are the steep price of war, and no one knows this better than the veterans in this audience.”

Some of these veteran warriors forged the history of Fort Polk and its training environment.

During the Vietnam War, Fort Polk was known as the “Home of the Infantryman.” It served as the largest infantry training center in the country. A Fort Polk training area known as Tiger Land mimicked jungle terrain and offered real-world driven combat circumstances Soldiers would face in Vietnam’s operational theater.

Although the Vietnam War turned into a long conflict and the human costs were harsh for all involved, veterans shared the lessons they learned when they returned to the United States.

“The lessons taught were the basics of combat in the worst conditions and circumstances,” Leslie said.

He explained the veterans’ experiences in conflict in places such as Plieku, Hamburger Hill, Cau Mau, the Mekong Delta and countless others were not in vain.

“Today’s troops owe you all a mountain of gratitude,” Leslie said. “Nothing is more valuable to our troops than learning survival in the crucible of combat. This country, our Army and this installation are grateful for your service and sacrifice.”

Lisa Skinner, AAFES retail point of sales manager, attended the event. Her dad is a Vietnam veteran.

“My dad couldn’t be here today, but the event was important to me because it recognized his service,” Skinner said. “I think it would make him feel appreciated.”

The veterans can and do attend these events.

“I think they really appreciate the effort to recognize the struggles and hardships they



Mark Leslie, Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security director, was the guest speaker at the event celebrating Vietnam Veterans that took place March 29. Leslie pinned the veterans in attendance.



had to deal with during and after the war,” Skinner said.

She said she’s glad AAFES hosts events like the pinning ceremony because they show Vietnam veterans the military community cares and continues to acknowledge their service.

**Fort Polk SHARP Presents**

# STRIKE OUT SEXUAL ASSAULT



## WHAT: BOWLING

**WHERE:** JRTC AND FORT POLK BOWLING CENTER

**WHEN: 26 APRIL 1700 – 2000**

**WHY:** To build community trust anchored in dignity and respect with a focus on Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault Prevention through Interactive play and fun.

**COST: \$4.50 BUY 2 GAMES AND GET THIRD GAME FREE. \$2.00 SHOE RENTAL.**



**Dr. Roy Nafarrete**

**CAPT (USN), ret.**  
**Presents:**

## CHANGE THE CULTURE

**Location:**

### Bayou Theater Multiple Sessions:

18 April 23

0930-1030; 1100-1200

1330-1430

Open to All

19 April 23

0930-1030 and 1100-1200

Open to all

20 April 23

1100-Noon Senior Leaders  
BDE CMD Teams; MSG and  
above; GS11 and above

## We Change the Culture.



**Q:** How do we eliminate violence and destructive events in DoD?

**A:** We stop it before it starts by eliminating destructive behaviors

**For more information, contact the Installation SHARP Office @ 337-718-SARC (7272)**



**SHARP**  
SEXUAL HARASSMENT/ASSAULT  
RESPONSE AND PREVENTION

# NATIONAL DENIM DAY

## WHAT: NATIONAL DENIM DAY

WHERE: JRTC AND FORT POLK  
COMMUNITY

WHEN: 26 APRIL 2023

**WHY:** All personnel are encouraged to wear jeans in support of “Denim Day,” with a sticker that says, “What is Denim Day?”

(See your unit SARC or Victim Advocate for stickers and buttons)

Denim Day is an international movement responding to the Italian Supreme Court's overruling of a rape conviction in 1999. An Italian woman was raped, and when the case went to trial, the jury found her assailant guilty. The Supreme Court then overturned the ruling, saying that jeans are too difficult to remove, and the assailant could not have done so without the victim's help.

# BJACH hosts helpful hospital-wide skills fair

By JEAN CLAVETTE GRAVES  
BJACH PAO

FORT POLK, La. — Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital hosted a skills fair March 21-22 at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk. The purpose of the event was to provide hospital clinicians with state-of-the-art training and help military providers complete individual task list requirements.

Maj. Markeisha Hubbard is the chief of hospital education and staff development for BJACH. Her department coordinates quarterly training for providers, nurses and medical support staff.

“Our hope is that our medical providers are able to complete their competencies areas that are high risk, low volume at our facility,” Hubbard said. “We designed this fair to educate staff on things that they won’t encounter every day, but when they do it’s imperative they understand the processes and procedures necessary to ensure positive outcomes for our patients.”

Events like the skills fair are designed to give BJACH staff the knowledge, skills and abilities to provide the best care to patients.

Col. Aristotle Vaseliades, BJACH commander, said the skills fair was a huge success.

“We were able to complete more than 40 individual critical task list items in two days,” Vaseliades said. “As a result, our officers have the highest level completed to date. Everyone had a great time while learning new skills and brushing up on the ones not used regularly.”

Mark Schenk, business development manager for the U.S. Army, provided life-like simulators to enhance the realism of the training.

One of the simulators Schenk brought to the fair was the female technical combat casualty care simulator.

“We developed this 130 pound, 5-foot-4-inches tall female simulator for the Army because she is the mean height and weight of a 24-year-old female Soldier today,” Schenk said. “She is completely modular, with open and closed fractures. She breathes, bleeds, talks and can operate for about 10 hours on one battery charge.”

Schenk said it’s important for medics to practice on female simulators.

“What we’ve seen at all skill levels, from young medics to physicians, is that the female simulator doesn’t get a rapid trauma assessment,” Schenk said. “Historically battlefield casualties have been male. What we’ve discovered is a hesitancy to treat this simulator. With our male simulators, the cloths are cut off quickly and the medical providers get right to work. With first responders on a female simulator, hands immediately come back, they start asking permission to touch her and finding things to cover her with.”

Maj. Cody McDonald, clinical nurse in



charge of BJACH’s emergency department, conducted training on port access competencies during the skills fair.

“We want to provide this service to our community,” McDonald said. “Patients come to BJACH periodically with ports. They have ports because they must have multiple blood draws or medication administrations, so they opt to get a port to avoid multiple sticks on a continual basis. The port makes it easier for the patient to receive medications or have blood drawn.”

McDonald said it’s imperative clinicians understand what they are, how they are used and the importance of proper access to them.

“This is one of those things that is not a required competency, but it is a high-risk, low-utilization skill we should all have,” McDonald said. “There is a high risk for infection with ports, so we want to ensure we all know how to care for, clean, access and de-access them.”

Maj. Ashleigh Hartman, noncommissioned officer in charge of the operating room and sterile processing for BJACH, had a station that provided familiarization to a crash cart.

“We don’t open crash carts very frequently, so this station is for familiarization with it and what’s in it,” Hartman said. “In the event of a code, cardiac arrest or any significant event where a patient is downward trending and needs emergency intervention, the crash cart has IV starts, airway adjuncts, full intubations, medications, as well as test tubes, supplies for blood draws, specimen collections and more.”

April Williams, head nurse for the BJACH

obstetrics and gynecology clinic, managed the post-partum hemorrhage and code purple procedures station during the skills fair.

Schenk brought the birthing simulator, affectionally known as “real mama” for Williams portion of the event.

“We discussed the risk, signs and symptoms patients may display and what we need to do if we suspect a post-partum hemorrhage,” Williams said.

Williams tailored her training based on which department participants work in and what their scope of practice is.

“If they are in the family practice clinic, they won’t have a mom who is four hours post-delivery, but they may have a patient who comes in several days after delivery who hasn’t had their follow up yet who is bleeding a lot,” Williams said. “I gave them things to look for and questions to ask to determine if they need to go the emergency department.”

The event pulled resources from across the facility to teach a wide variety of topics.

“Our clinicians had the opportunity to learn more about traumatic brain injuries, treatment of massive hemorrhages, extended focused assessment with sonography, blood administration, blood born pathogens and tuberculosis skin testing,” Hubbard said. “We also coordinated with our department of industrial hygiene to knock out fit testing for those who use the N95 respirators and surgical masks.”

The event was well received and gave BJACH doctors, nurses and medical clinicians more tools to serve beneficiaries in emergency situations.

JEAN CLAVETTE GRAVES/BJACH PAO

# DPW, Housing work with residents to mitigate mold

By **CHUCK CANNON**

Public Affairs Office

FORT POLK, La. – Mold. This four-letter word is cause for consternation among those who have had the misfortune of having to deal with this naturally occurring microscopic fungi that can grow on indoor or outdoor surfaces and live in all environments, climates and seasons.

Mold needs oxygen, moisture and a nutrient source to grow. That makes Louisiana, with its year-long high humidity and abundant rainfall, the perfect breeding ground for mold and the often aesthetic or health problems it can bring.

To assist in the mitigation of mold and mildew issues affecting Fort Polk buildings, barracks and housing areas, the Installation Management Command issued Operations Order 23-007 — Operation Counter Mold. The goal of OPOD 23-007: Reframe how Soldiers, Family members and civilian employees look at mold.

To that end, IMCOM leadership points out mold is a normal part of our environment, and its prevention is the responsibility of every member of the Army community. Learning how to identify mold, taking quick action to clean or report mold once it's found, and countering it correctly is vital to managing mold effectively.

For Soldiers living in the barracks or those working in government buildings, the most effective way to report the presence of mold is through ArMA — the Army Maintenance Application. Soldiers can register at <https://www.armymaintenance.com/arma>. Simply take a photo of the suspected mold, login and report it.

"Mold is everywhere in the environment," said John West, Directorate of Public Works' Environmental and Natural Resource Management Division acting chief. "How you proactively identify, manage and remediate, that's where the key is."

West's staff in Indoor Air Quality Mold Management relies on occupants of facilities, facility managers and Soldiers who live in barracks to let them know if there is a potential mold problem.

"Inevitably, someone is going to see something they think might be mold and that's OK," West said. "Put in the ArMA work order, get us out there and we'll take a look at it. If it's mold, we'll take appropriate action, if not, if it's mildew, we'll let you know."

Dillon Everett, environmental engineer with IAQ, said "Mold Buster" cleaning kits are provided to barracks residents for cleaning small areas that contain mildew — less than 10 square feet. Larger areas the IAQ team will clean.

West said the recent barracks upgrades have addressed many of the mold issues, but in some cases Soldiers will turn thermostats too

*Col. Sam Smith, Fort Polk garrison commander, briefs members of the Tiger Team before an inspection of the 519th Military Police Battalion barracks. The team checks for mold, mildew and any other issues in the barracks.*



low, close off air flow or create other issues that can lead to mold if not monitored.

"Our first priority is education," West said. "Make sure people know what mold is, how it becomes a problem and what to do if it is a problem."

The IAQ team inspects Fort Polk barracks every six months to check for mold or other issues. In addition to individual rooms, they check hotspots such as electrical rooms and laundry areas.

"Every barracks gets inspected twice a year," Everett said. "Additionally, there are barracks town halls where we accompany leaders making note of any issues in the barracks."

For those who live on the installation in privatized housing, the Army Housing Office is where residents turn for help with mold issues.

Betty Beinkemper, Army Housing Office manager, said if there is a resident of privatized housing on Fort Polk concerned with mold, her staff will check it out.

"Usually if there is mold, there is a water issue — busted water pipe or leaking roof," Beinkemper said. "But the majority of the time it's not mold, it's mildew, and a lot of people confuse the two."

Mildew is usually where an area hasn't been cleaned properly, where mold is a water issue. Beinkemper said sometimes people leave their air conditioning on too low or leave their doors open, and condensation forms.

"Since 2019 we've had three true mold issues in housing," she said. "If mold is detected in a home or a Family believes they are having health issues from mold, then the guidance from IMCOM is the resident should see their healthcare provider, who will fill out a form and send it to public health, who in turn contacts us and we'll all go to the home and do a visit."

If it is determined there is mold, it's turned over to Corvias for repairs, such as replacing walls, carpet or other items. Mildew will get around the edges of bathtubs, sinks or windows, and cleaning takes care of that.

Both the housing office and Corvias remind newcomers the area has high humidity and

what they should do to help mitigate mold and mildew issues.

"If there is a problem, let us know about it," Beinkemper said. "We're constantly reminding residents about issues such as freezes that might cause pipes to burst or maintaining air conditioners at a reasonable temperature to avoid moisture issues. We also remind them to replace their air filters monthly."

If a resident is not happy with what they receive from Corvias, Beinkemper said her staff will check it out.

"If we find an issue, we'll have Corvias repair it," she said. "That's what we're here for, to make sure everything is OK in the home. If mold is causing health issues, then contact us. We'll come out and look at it, and if necessary, we'll call public health to come out."

Aaron Waterstraat, chief of industrial hygiene, Department of Public Health, said his office gets involved when there is a diagnosed respiratory condition that can be treated or diagnosed better with mold air sampling.

"If you see mold, you do a remediation," Waterstraat said. "There is no medical consensus or federal or state regulations on mold. What might affect one person, might not affect another."

If a person thinks there is mold, the first thing they should do is clean it. If it continues, Waterstraat said they should go to Corvias, and its incumbent on Corvias to repair or fix it.

"We get involved with complex indoor air quality issues," he said. "If a healthcare provider asks us to check, then we will. We're here to help. But most issues are not mold — it's mildew. We don't do the repairs — that's up to Corvias. We just provide assistance to determine if there is a problem."

If you live in on-post privatized housing and believe you have a mold problem, call the Fort Polk Housing Office at (337) 531-6000. For those who live in the barracks, contact DPW through ArMA, or call (337) 531-4701. If it is an emergency call (337) 531-1379. To sign out a Mold Buster cleaning kit visit the Self Help Store at 2700 Louisiana Ave., building 4541, or ENRMD, 1647 23rd St., building 2522.

# Learn about resources, benefits of SHARP program

By Spc. KELLY ACEVEDO  
Public Affairs Office

FORT POLK, La. — The Army implemented the Sexual Harassment/Assault Response Prevention program in September 2008 to help mitigate sexual assault and harassment. Each unit has representatives to advocate and facilitate getting survivors the help they need. Although the program is accessible, not everyone knows where to start. The Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk aims to change that by encouraging survivors to get the assistance they require by using the resources available.

Four phases were integrated with the program to meet organizational goals. Phase three is the current phase.

The theme is Achieving Cultural Change with the familiar acronym I. A.M. Strong — intervene, act and motivate.

Gustacia Gabriel is the installation supervisory Sexual Assault Response Coordinator. She can be found in the SHARP office, located in building 330 on Corps road by the Equal Opportunity Office. Her job includes supporting other SARCs, victim advocates and all victims. Gabriel believes it's important for all installations to have programs focused on response and prevention.

"The program was designed to give Soldiers a voice and encourage them to make a report and have options," Gabriel said.

Although she and other SARCs and VAs on the installation are not lawyers, counselors or doctors, they are the source to obtain external resources to assist survivors with getting through what happened to them.

"Our first job is to provide support. As advocates, we provide victims with information to help them access resources such as being screened by a medical provider, behavioral health or speaking to a chaplain," Gabriel said.

Survivors who are having a difficult time navigating their way past traumatic situations are not alone.

"Incidents are always taken very seriously and each case is looked at independently," Gabriel said.

Anyone can use this as a guide to narrow down their options independently if they are not ready to reach out for help just yet.

**Who can file a SHARP report and with who?**

Soldiers, Department of the Army civilians, contractors, family members who are at least 18 years old and other civilians who have a case where a Soldier is involved can file a report on the installation. Civilian minors must file with the Family Advocacy Program for case management, and the Louisiana Department of Family and Child Services will be notified.

A report can be made with Gabriel or any other credentialed SARC or VA. Soldiers can

The infographic is titled "SHARP Resources" and features the SHARP logo at the top, which includes a star in a hexagon and the text "SHARP SEXUAL HARASSMENT/ASSAULT RESPONSE AND PREVENTION". The infographic is organized into four horizontal sections: "JRTC & Fort Polk USAG SHARP", "Community", "State", and "National". Each section contains a QR code and a brief description of the resources available. The bottom of the infographic features the slogan "Forging Strong Communities" flanked by the U.S. Army and Airborne logos on the left and the Department of Defense and Department of the Army logos on the right.

**SHARP**  
SEXUAL HARASSMENT/ASSAULT  
RESPONSE AND PREVENTION

## SHARP Resources

**JRTC & Fort Polk  
USAG SHARP**

The SHARP program reinforces the Army's commitment to eliminate Sexual violence in our community.  
**24/7 Installation SHARP Hotline**  
(337) 531-1848

**Community**

Oasis- A Safe Haven for Survivors of Domestic and Sexual Violence  
**DIRECT LINE: (337) 494-7273**

STAR® provides supportive services to survivors to reduce their experience of trauma.  
**24/7 HOTLINE: (855) 435-STAR**

Project Celebration: Serving Survivors of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault & Child Abuse  
**SA HOTLINE: (318) 227-7900**

**State**

La Foundation Against Sexual Assault. LaFASA is committed to empowering survivors, engaging advocates, and changing systems and social norms to end sexual violence in Louisiana.  
**24/7 HOTLINE: (888) 372-8995**  
Chat via text at 225-351-7233

**National**

The DOD SafeHelpline is the sole secure, confidential, and anonymous crisis support service specially designed for members of the Department of Defense community affected by sexual assault.  
**24/7 HOTLINE: (877) 995-5247**

RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network) is the nation's largest anti-sexual violence organization.  
**24/7 HOTLINE: (800) 656-HOPE (4673)**

**Forging Strong Communities**

also file a report with SARCs or VAs from other units or branches. "Often, victims go to the hospital to file a report with Cathy Price," Gabriel said. Price is the SARC at Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital.

**What type of report will be filed? Will I maintain my privacy?**

There are two types of reports that can be filed, restricted and unrestricted. "Both reports are similar, but the biggest difference is law enforcement," Gabriel said.

**Restricted Reporting Option** — Can only be made to a SARC, VA or healthcare personnel. This type of reporting will not trigger an official investigative process or notify chain of command. This option is available to active-du-

ty personnel and Family members 18 years of age and up. Other civilians have only the unrestricted option. Victims can talk to chaplains, but chaplains can't take a restricted report.

**Unrestricted Reporting Option** — Can be made to a SARC, VA, military police, Criminal Investigative Division, healthcare personnel, chaplains, command, friend or roommate. This type of report will start the official investigative process and notify the chain of command.

Both reports aim to help survivors. Regardless of how someone files, survivors can attend behavioral health for sessions with a counselor and be evaluated for medication if needed.

Please see SHARP, page 10

# SHARP

Continued from page 9

Survivors who choose to go unrestricted do so to hold the perpetrator accountable and request an expedited transfer to another installation that may be closer to home for support. Expedited transfers are immediate. Survivors can request three duty stations and will be moved based on the needs of the Army.

"If you are in a low-density military occupation then you are limited when it comes to the duty stations you can move to. We try to work with the Soldier as much as we can to get them to a duty station where they will have support," Gabriel said.

All case information is given to others on a need-to-know basis. The survivor's privacy is respected.

"Once a report has been filed, SARCs and VAs contact the commander to inform them that a Soldier in their ranks filed a SHARP report and to provide information such as what resources they opted for," Gabriel said.

Commanders will not know the Soldiers identity when restricted.

**What can I do if I am ready to come forward?**

The first step after an incident is to get medically evaluated at the emergency room, especially if there was force involved, and to screen for sexually transmitted infections/diseases. The ER goes through special procedures when a victim is identified.

"The providers dispense prophylactics to prevent some of the most common STDs and STIs. Call a SARC to escort you, or the hospital can call one for you that is on call so they can talk to you about your options. The ER will also phone the on-call sexual assault medical forensics examiner and escort the victim to a private room to avoid waiting in the waiting area," Gabriel said.

Survivors are not obligated to talk to CID when restricted and can change their mind anytime to go from restricted to unrestricted. However, a report cannot be changed from unrestricted to restricted.

**What if an incident occurred off post?**

If an assault occurs on the installation, CID is the primary organization to handle the case. Incidents in which a Soldier is assaulted off post or a Soldier is involved in a case that occurred off post, are handled by civilian law enforcement but can be investigated by CID. Survivors can still file on post but they are required to contact the off-post law enforcement in charge of the area where the assault occurred if making an unrestricted report. "Most often CID takes the lead in these cases," Gabriel said.

**Who are mandated reporters?**

"All leaders are mandated reporters. If a private first class is in charge of a private then they are a mandated reporter," Gabriel said.



Civilians in leadership roles, teachers and law enforcement are also mandated reporters. Although commanders are mandated reporters, a recent change in the program now allows survivors to keep their report restricted if they choose to. Commanders must also submit a military protective order within six hours.

**Who can I file a report with? Does it have to be to someone in my unit?**

Soldiers can file restricted reports with any designated health care providers, credentialed SARCs or VAs on post or from different branches, and for unrestricted, commanders or CID.

"Survivors can choose who their VAs are, but the unit is responsible for case management such as keeping track of the investigation, providing updates and any external assistance that the soldier may need," Gabriel said.

**What is a Special Victims Counsel?**

An SVC is a legal representative for survivors who are unrestricted. SVCs support survivors during the case process, which gives them the opportunity to be heard.

The process of the case protects both the rights of the survivor and the constitutional rights of those accused. SVCs address allegations of retaliation against their clients, whether professional or social. An SVC is assigned to a survivor after filing unrestricted.

"When there is a conflict of interest with the SVC on post, the SVC will appoint an SVC from another installation to be an SVC for the victim," Gabriel said.

**Each brigade has a full time SARC and VA. Below are the listed representatives for units on the installation.**

•**3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division** (337) 531-1544 — SARC Sgt. 1st Class Mario Sanderson and VA Jeffrey Hannon

•**Bayne Jones Army Community Hospital** (337) 531-3419 — SARC Kathy Price and VA Sgt. Kylah Worthy

•**Operations Group** (337) 378-9057 — SARC Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Lee and VA Staff Sgt. Shelby Dickerson

•**United States Army Garrison** (337) 531-4656 — SARC Shantel Williams and VA Jamie Blum

•**46th Engineer Battalion** (337) 423-6092 — SARC Sgt. 1st Class Eric Barnhorst

•**519th Military Police Battalion** (337) 531-2176 — Staff Sgt. Joshua Lejune

•**1st Battalion, 5th Aviation Regiment** (904) 234-6511 — SARC Warrant Officer 1 Joseph Clark

"DOD (Department of Defense) thought fit to restructure the programs for all services with prevention still being part of the program but also a stand alone process in the program. We will be getting two additional prevention specific workforce personnel that will be assigned to the SHARP office," Gabriel said.

There is now a "3-D" campaign focused on prevention.

•**Direct** — Bystander intervention — tell someone directly to stop.

•**Delegate** — If you witness something, ask someone else to say something if you're uncomfortable.

•**Distract** — Cause a distraction without getting confrontational to diffuse a situation.

The Army fights against sexual assault and harassment, but it's everyone's duty to intervene when necessary.

For more information call the SHARP office at (337) 531-1788 or visit <https://home.army.mil/polk/index.php/contact/sexual-harassmentassault-respons-prevention-sharp>.

# Good Conduct Incentive Program



1st Battalion, 509th  
Infantry Regiment

HHC B Co  
C Co D Trp



519th Military  
Police Battalion

HHD 204 258 41  
383 91 50



1st Battalion, 5th  
Aviation Regiment

A Co B Co  
C Co



46th Engineer  
Battalion

573 FSC  
687



MEDDAC

MEDDAC Co



DENTAC

DENTAC Co



32nd Hospital Center

115th Field Hospital



2nd Battalion, 2nd  
Infantry Regiment

HHC B Co C Co  
D Co J Co



2nd Battalion, 4th  
Infantry Regiment

HHC C Co G Co



2nd Battalion, 30th  
Infantry Regiment

HHC HFSC  
A Co C Co



3rd Squadron, 89th  
Cavalry Regiment

HHC A Trp B Trp  
C Trp D Trp



5th Battalion, 25th  
Field Artillery

B Bat F Co



317th Engineer  
Battalion

HHC B Co C Co  
D Co E Co



710th Brigade  
Support Battalion

HHC B Co C Co

These companies  
have earned a  
three-day pass for  
good behavior  
over 30  
consecutive  
days.

# TEEN JOB FAIR

**APRIL 17-21**  
**4:15 PM-5:00 PM**

**APRIL 22**  
**9:00 AM-1:00 PM**

**Child Development Center**  
**Bldg 744**

Classes to Include: Resume Building, Dress for Success, Marketing Yourself For The Job You Want, and Mock Interviews and Feedback

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL (337) 531-1992**



# Summer Competitive SWIMMING



**AGES 5 TO 18 • COST: \$75**

**REGISTRATION**  
**APRIL 5 TO MAY 5**

**PARENT MEETING/SKILLS ASSESSMENT**  
**MAY 3 or MAY 5 @ 6 PM**

**SEASON**  
**MAY 9 to JULY 22**

Must be registered with CYS. A current sports physical must be on file for the duration of the season

If interested in coaching, or in need of more information, please call  
**337-531-6004**

# WE ARE UPGRADING OUR EQUIPMENT

## 2 FITNESS CENTERS, OVER 200 PIECES OF EQUIPMENT

**CANTRELL FITNESS CENTER**  
**MAIN FLOOR CLOSED**

**14-16 APRIL**

**ALL OTHER ROOMS WILL**  
**REMAIN OPEN.**

**WHELOCK FITNESS**  
**CENTER**

**ENTIRE FACILITY CLOSED**  
**14-20 APRIL**

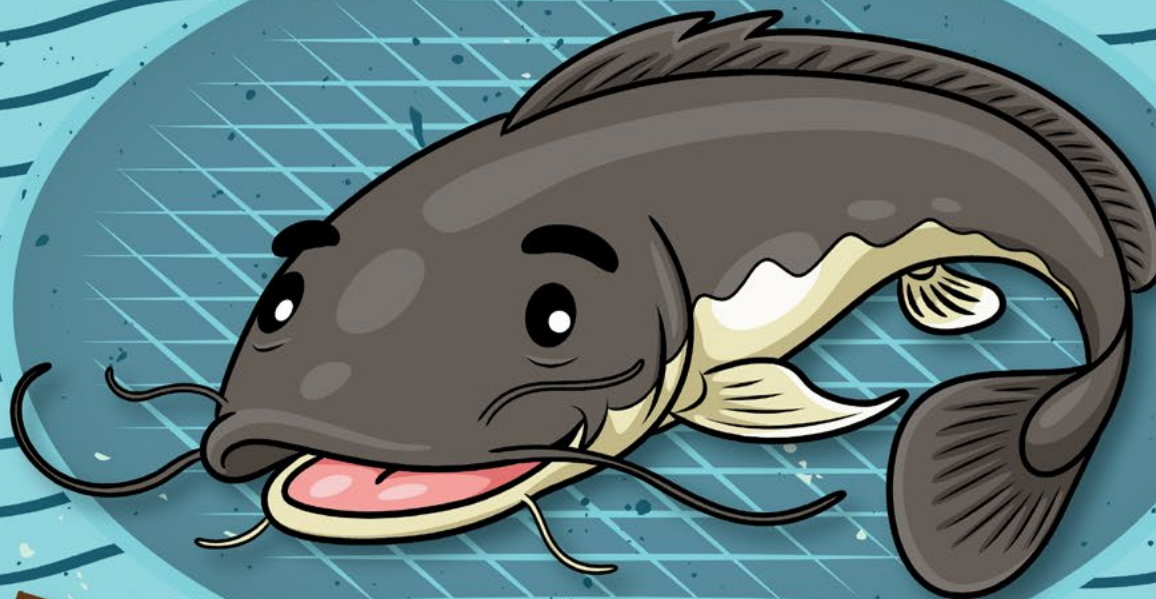
**AEROBICS CLASSES WILL**  
**BE HELD AS SCHEDULED.**

**ALL OTHER FITNESS CENTER WILL CONTINUE NORMAL OPERATIONS**



JRTC AND FORT POLK

# CATFISH DERBY



**April 22, 2023**

0700-1100

**Catfish Cove**

Fort Polk, Louisiana

- Activities •Fillet Demonstration •Raffle
- Games •Educational Booths •Prizes

Join the JRTC & Fort Polk as we celebrate the great outdoors with our Catfish Derby! Fishing will begin at precisely 0700 at Catfish Cove on April 22, 2023. Children ages 15 and under are allowed to fish. Persons 16 and over are allowed to assist children fishing. This even is open to the public. For more information please call Amy Brennan at (409) 504-2445.



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# Folk Polk Soldiers set up displays at Barksdale air show

By **CHUCK CANNON**  
Public Affairs Office

FORT POLK, La. — Soldiers with the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, and 1st Battalion, 5th Aviation Regiment, participated in the 2023 Barksdale Defenders of Liberty Air Show March 25-26 at Barksdale Air Force Base in Bossier City, Louisiana.

Vehicles, antitank weapons and a UH-72 Lakota helicopter were set up as static displays for air show attendees to get a close-up look at Army equipment. The display was next to the Shreveport Army Recruiting Company, providing an opportunity for those interested in an Army career to put hands on Army equipment and follow up with a visit to the recruiters.

Capt. Darren Owenby, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div provost marshal, said his unit was happy to be part of the air show.

“A lot of civilians don’t get the opportunity to interface with the Army,” Owenby said. “All they know about the Army is what they see on TV. It’s good to get out and show the equipment, who we are and what we do.”

Owenby said at venues such as the air show, civilians see Soldiers are people just like them. The Shreveport Army Recruiting Company reached out to the 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn and requested their attendance to assist with recruiting efforts.

“It’s the first time we’ve come up and done something like this,” Owenby said. “They’ve already got a few people who’ve shown an interest. Our guys are motivated and love to be here. They’re having fun, teaching the kids and adults about our equipment. They all have a smile on their face.”

One of those Soldiers, Pfc. Michael James, 5th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div, enjoyed interacting with air show attendees, both young and old.

“It gives people a chance to see what we do and learn about the Army as a whole, and how all jobs work together as a team for one goal,” James said. “We’ve had a few guys talk to us about joining the Army. We let them know what’s available.”

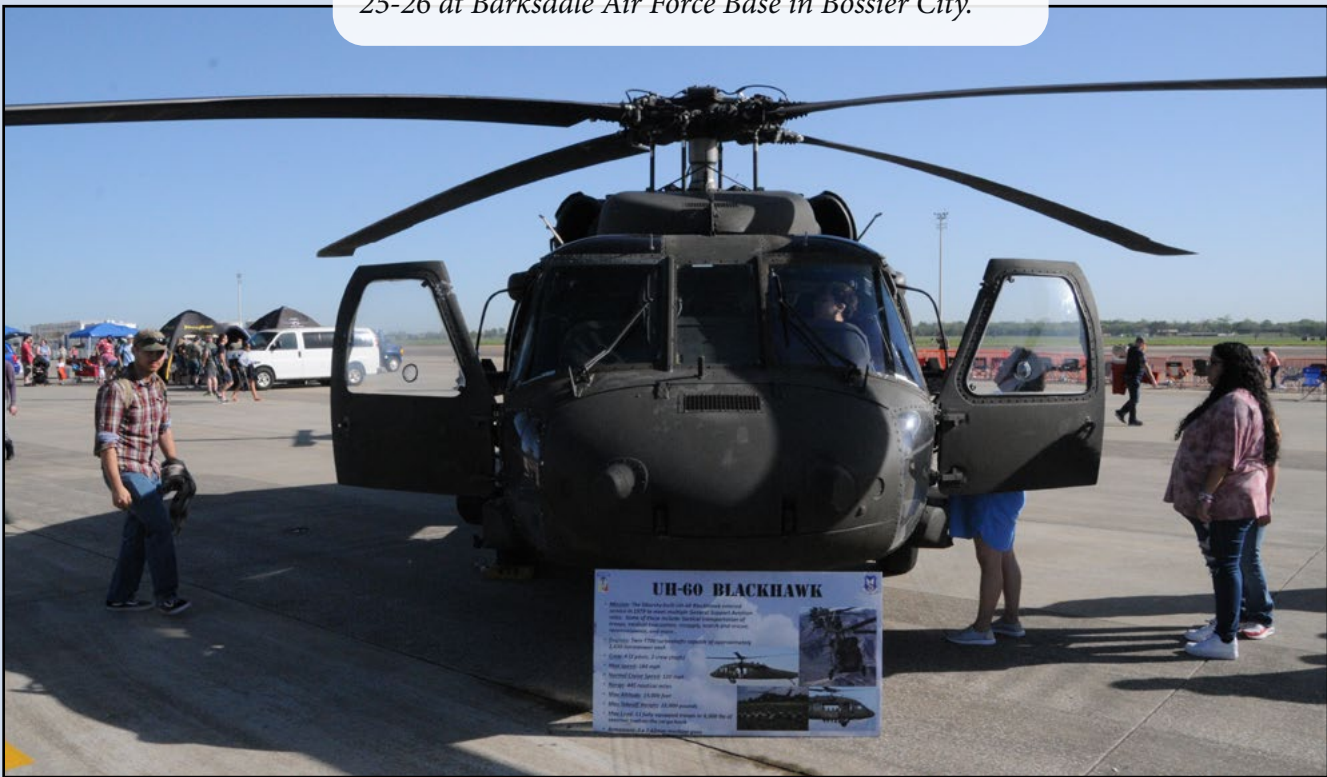
Staff Sgt. Chad Riner, an Army recruiter in Shreveport and formerly 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment — Geronimo — from Fort Polk, said having 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div Soldiers set up next to his recruiting team makes their job easier.

“It gives people a chance to see the average, everyday Soldier,” he said. “People visit with the Soldiers, put hands on the equipment, then stop by our tent and we can identify qualified candidates, and let them know what’s available.”

Jeff Laborde, who drove up from Alexandria with his sons Hayden, 13, and Liam 6, was continuing a family tradition he began with his



*Fast, fearless flights of air show fun were found at the Barksdale Defenders of Liberty Air Show March 25-26 at Barksdale Air Force Base in Bossier City.*



dad more than 40 years ago.

“It’s important to show my kids what our Soldiers are doing,” he said.

When asked if he thought about joining the Army one day, Hayden had a typical teenager answer.

“I did as soon as I got here, but then they told me that you had to do a lot of running. I don’t like to run.”

That was not a problem for his younger brother.

“I love to run, so I’ll be OK,” Liam said.

In addition to the Army static displays, the air show featured the Navy Blue Angels flight team, Red Bull Aviation, stunt pilot Rob Holland, and flyovers by Air Force aircraft such as B-52s, A-10s and a variety of other fighter and bomber aircraft.



Please see Air, page 14

# Air

Continued from page 13





TERRY NEWMAN/ISIS

### Celebrating military children

April is Month of the Military Child. To help celebrate, Brig. Gen. David W. Gardner, commanding general of JRTC and Fort Polk, attended the annual Month of the Military Child Heroes Breakfast at Faith Training Christian Academy April 1. The event honors these young Americans.

### Check VIN numbers

The Directorate of Emergency Services Traffic Division will release the following vehicles to Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation for disposal if they remain unclaimed. Vehicles are listed with the last four of their VIN. If one of these vehicles belongs to you, contact the Fort Polk Police Traffic Division at (337) 531-1806, 6675 or 2677.

2004	Ford	Mustang	4127
2008	BMW	328i	9559
2013	Audi	A6	7319
2007	BMW	650i	2192
2000	Honda	Accord	0717
2005	Kawasaki	M/C	0133
2010	Jeep	Patriot	0760
2005	Ford	Focus	4767
2006	Ford	Escape	3900
2009	Ford	Mustang	0250
2010	Dodge	Challenger	9430
2018	Chevrolet	Camaro	2576
2014	Kia	Optima	0324
2014	Dodge	Dart	5863
2011	Infiniti	2D	3365
2000	Chevrolet	Impala	8125
2011	Nissan	Altima	9341
2000	Honda	Civic	8929
2011	Cadillac	DTS	6891
1995	Jeep	Cherokee	9563
1999	Honda	Accord	5783
2012	Hyundai	Elantra	8154
2016	Mazda	3	5679



COURTESY VISUAL INFORMATION

### Signing proclamations

Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk leadership signed three proclamations recognizing Month of the Military Child, Child Abuse Prevention Month and Sexual Assault Prevention Month. After the proclamations were signed, children at the event played with and planted pinwheels in the ground in front of Fort Polk's Army Community Center highlighting Child Abuse Prevention Month.



## Story time

Fort Polk's Allen Memorial Library hosts Story Time each Tuesday at 11:30 a.m. Library staff, or a special guest, read a story to children from the Fort Polk community.

After listening, kids participate in a craft. The next Story Time is April 11. Call (337) 531-2665 to sign up today.

## Women's league

Nine, Wine and Dine is a new ladies golf league that takes place each Tuesday from 5-7 p.m. Women are invited to participate. It's a great opportunity to make new friends, enjoy a night of golf (nine holes) and then opting to have dinner and wine at the Forge Bar and Grill. The cost is \$22 for members and \$27 for nonmembers. The event takes place at the Warrior Hills Golf Course. The next Nine, Wine and Dine is April 11. For more information call 531-4661.

## Board game fun

Select from Allen Memorial Library's extensive collection of board games or bring your own and get your game on. Board game night takes place every third Thursday of the month. Board games are available anytime during open hours at the library. The next game night is April 20. For more information call (337) 531-2665.

## Bass tournament

The Toledo Bend Army Recreation Park's monthly Bass Tournament. The park is located at 1310 Army Recreation Road, Florien. The tournament takes place the first Saturday of each month. The next tournament takes place May 6 and is open to the public. Check in is at first light. Weigh in is at 3 p.m.

The entry fee is \$40 per boat and \$5 per person for big bass. For more information call (318) 565-4235/4484.

## Paint and chat

April is Sexual Assault and Awareness Month. This year's focus is building strong communities by encouraging everyone to do their part and intervene if you see harmful behaviors, and support those who have. Stop by the Fort Polk Arts and Crafts Center April 12 at 10 a.m. to discuss how to build and promote resilience and recovery for those who have experienced traumatic events. To register contact the SHARP office at (337) 531-4656/1549.

## MOMC Chalk the Walk

Stop by Honor Field with your youth to take part in the Chalk the Walk event taking place April 14 from 1-2 p.m. The walk is in honor of military children. Youth will be given chalk to let their creativity flourish on the Honor Field sidewalk. The cost is free and the event is hosted by the Exceptional Family Member Program.

# #FortPolkThingsToDo

**April 14-16:** Ponchatoula Strawberry Festival, Ponchatoula

Each April, the town of Ponchatoula puts on the state's largest free festival in honor of the beloved strawberry. Since 1972, the Ponchatoula Strawberry Festival has attracted visitors from near and far to celebrate its local strawberry farmers and the Ponchatoula community. The festival has flourished. Drop by for at least one of three days filled with time-honored traditions, amazing food and drinks, live music, rides and loads of family fun.

<https://www.lastrawberryfestival.com/>

**April 15:** Melrose Arts and Crafts Festival, Melrose

This is the 49th year for the Melrose Arts and Crafts Festival. Vendors from the Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas and beyond come to Melrose to sell their handcrafted items. Visitors from all over attend the festival to enjoy shopping, food, music and fun.

<http://www.melroseplantation.org/festivals>

**April 21:** Louisiana Forest Festival, Winn

The festival is a salute to timber and encompasses a wide variety of timber related activities. There are numerous forestry equipment displays and related exhibits. Professional lumberjack sports competitors come from all across the United States to participate in the show. There will be 13 lumberjack events to cheer on with six different chainsaw events. There are both historical and modern forestry and logging practices as the festival pays homage to local history and celebrates the future with deep roots in the forestry community. The festival also has excellent fun and food throughout the day. There will be a wide variety of vendors

and entertainers. The public is invited to join in the fun.

<https://www.laforestfestival.com/>

**April 22-23:** Baton Rouge Blues Festival, Baton Rouge

The festival returns April 22-23 in downtown Baton Rouge with stages planned at Galvez Plaza, North Boulevard, Lafayette Street and more. The event has become one of the nation's fastest growing blues festivals of its kind, consistently growing in attendance to more than 50,000 people ranging from ages 18 to 65. Produced by the Baton Rouge Blues Festival & Foundation, the festival is located in downtown Baton Rouge. Its mission is to encourage the promotion, preservation and advancement of the swamp blues music native to Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

<https://www.batonrougebluesfestival.org/>

**April 23:** Scottish Tartan Festival, Minden

The Festival is held from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Enjoy Scottish music and dance as well as demonstrations in falconry, weaving and more.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/scottishsocietylahielands>

**April 26:** Festival International de Louisiane, Lafayette

Festival International de Louisiane is an international music and arts festival known for bringing a variety of unique and emerging performers to Louisiana. The festival is free to the general public. The family-oriented event is held each year in downtown Lafayette.

<https://www.festivalinternational.org/>

**April 29-30:** Kite Fest Louisiane, Port Allen

Great family fun is always on tap at the annual Kite Fest Louisiané, where the skies are filled with kites of all sizes and shapes. A kite-mak-

ing workshop and kite designing are just some of the activities for children. Bring the entire family, lawn chairs and enjoy a day of kite flying, Louisiana food booths and indoor flying performed by indoor flying champions. Fireworks at dusk on April 29.

<https://westbatonrouge.net/>

**May 5-6:** Mayfest, Leesville

Mayfest is a free event with live music, food and fun held in historic downtown Leesville on the first weekend in May.

<https://www.vernonparish.org/events/mayfest>

**May 5-7:** Breaux Bridge Crawfish Festival, Breaux Bridge

The Crawfish Festival began in 1960 after the Louisiana Legislature named Breaux Bridge the Crawfish Capital of the World in 1959. Thousands of hungry people flock to Breaux Bridge each May to be part of the festivities. The festival has also become one of the largest gatherings of world-famous Cajun musicians. You can hear the melodic sounds of authentic Cajun, Zydeco and Swamp Pop music rising from the festival. Whether your musical taste is Cajun, Creole or you've never heard that music before, you can enjoy more than 30 bands as they perform during the three-day event. It's a perfect opportunity to see Louisiana's musical tradition passed from generation to generation.

<https://bbcrawfest.com/>

**May 5-6:** Frog Festival, Rayne

The 51st Frog Festival is held May 12-14 at the Frog Festival Pavilion at Gossen Memorial Park, 206 Frog Festival Dr., Rayne. There will be music, food, drinks, arts & craft, carnival rides, a frog cook-off and more!

<https://raynefrogfestival.com/>

# Commissaries remind potential customers of shopping privileges

By KEVIN L. ROBINSON  
DeCA public affairs specialist

FORT LEE, Va. — Knowledge is power, and the Defense Commissary Agency is on a mission to boost the economic security of every eligible patron with information about their commissary benefit.

That outreach includes the millions of disabled veterans, certified caregivers, Purple Heart recipients and former prisoners of war who were granted commissary, exchange and Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation retail shopping privileges Jan. 1, 2020, under the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018.

“We are working closely with military associations and advocate groups to reach more of our disabled veterans,” said Marine Sgt. Maj. Michael R. Saucedo, senior enlisted advisor to the DeCA director. “And as we spread the word on this much-needed benefit to all our eligible customers, we are striving to anticipate their needs, offer premier customer service and do what it takes to be their grocery provider of choice.”

Saucedo said some disabled veterans may not be aware of recent changes to commissaries that have made the benefit an even better deal than ever before. The biggest change occurred on Sept. 22, 2022, when the Department of Defense announced the “Taking Care of Service Members and Families” initiative to help improve the economic security and stability of the military community. As part of this effort, the department increased DeCA’s funding, which eliminates the need for commissaries to earn margin — through higher prices — to pay for part of their operating costs.



“This initiative has allowed us to reduce grocery prices across our product assortment, especially on food staples such as bread, eggs, milk and more,” Saucedo said. “Now we are able to achieve at least 25% savings against local grocery stores outside the gate.”

In addition to its regular savings, commissaries also offer the following options to help improve their patrons’ quality of life:

- Timely sales promotions as well as specific items highlighted on the biweekly sales flyer
- Commissary store brands with quality equivalent to or better than national brands with greater savings
- Convenience of online shopping and payment through Commissary CLICK2GO, offering custom shopping lists and curbside gro-

cery pickup

- Dietitian-approved labeling and recipes, on-the-go meals and snacks
- A sense of military community with more than 60% of DeCA’s workforce having a connection to the armed forces
- Clean and safe stores with staffs that offer premier customer service

“Commissaries are an insurance policy to help ensure our patrons’ food security,” Saucedo said. “We want all our customers, especially our disabled veterans, to take advantage of all their installation shopping benefits — commissary, base exchange and morale, welfare and recreation outlets — because they’ve earned them.”

For more information call (337) 531-2747.

*April Showers Brings May flowers Paint and Chat*

**April 12TH**  
**Fort Polk Arts and Crafts Center**  
**1000-Noon**

**FREE!**

Light Refreshments!

For more info, contact USAG SHARP Office at 337-531-4656/1549 or scan QR code below

A colorful poster for an event titled "April Showers Brings May flowers Paint and Chat". It features a painting of a red flower pot on an easel. The event is on April 12th at the Fort Polk Arts and Crafts Center from 1000-Noon. It is free and includes light refreshments. Logos for ACS, MWR, and SHARP are at the bottom.

**SCAVENGER HUNT**

**SATURDAY, APRIL 15TH**  
**ALLIGATOR LAKE**  
**10 AM–2 PM**

Join us at Alligator Lake as we venture on an Easter themed scavenger hunt in honor of Month of the Military Child!

**THIS IS A FREE EVENT!**  
**CALL (337)531-5350 FOR MORE INFO**

A poster for a "SCAVENGER HUNT" on Saturday, April 15th at Alligator Lake from 10 AM to 2 PM. It features a large, colorful Easter egg in the center. The text invites participants to join for an Easter-themed scavenger hunt in honor of the Month of the Military Child. It is a free event, and a phone number is provided for more info. Logos for various military organizations are at the top.

**FINANCIAL READINESS PROGRAM**

**THE BASICS OF CONTINUATION PAY**

**Class Dates**  
**APR 26**  
**OCT 25**  
**Classes start at 2 PM**

at **ACS**  
1591 Bell Richard Ave  
Bldg. 920  
Fort Polk, LA 71459

For more info please call  
**337-531-1957**

A poster for the "FINANCIAL READINESS PROGRAM" focusing on "THE BASICS OF CONTINUATION PAY". It shows a woman and a child looking at a document. The class dates are April 26 and October 25, starting at 2 PM. It is held at ACS, 1591 Bell Richard Ave, Bldg. 920, Fort Polk, LA 71459. A phone number 337-531-1957 is provided for more info. Logos for ACS, MWR, and SHARP are at the bottom.

# Venture into history at the Southern Forest Heritage Museum

By Spc. KELLY ACEVEDO  
Public Affairs Office

FORT POLK, La. — If you are looking for something fun and educational to do this month, consider visiting the Southern Forest Heritage Museum and Research Center in Long Leaf. The museum is a nonprofit historic museum that displays 12 exhibits and equipment dating back to the early 1900s. Known for maintaining and preserving the historic Long Leaf sawmill complex, the museum also promotes the South's forest history. In 2008 the museum was listed as a National Level of Significance.

The museum encourages guests to explore America's history. They feature the Civilian Conservation Corps, a WWII exhibit, and the Long Leaf sawmill and planer mill.

## Civilian Conservation Corps

The CCC was a public work relief program created by President Franklin D. Roosevelt during the Great Depression. The program gave millions of young men employment on environmental projects from 1933 to 1942. This helped unemployed single men between the ages of 18-25. The exhibit showcases the projects that came from the program. Workers planted more than 3 billion trees, fought forest wildfires and constructed trails and shelters in more than 800 parks nationwide. The program impacted men's lives and prepared them to defend the United States during World War II.

## The World War II exhibit

The war impacted Louisiana immensely. The exhibit showcases the Louisiana Maneuvers- Soldiers who maneuvered from Alexandria to Shreveport to train for the war. Originally known as Camp Polk, Fort Polk also served as a military prison for German soldiers captured during the war. Camp Claiborne and the Terrell WWII Collection are also featured as exhibits.

## Long Leaf sawmill and planer mill



ANGIE THORNE/EGUARDIAN

Long leaf was originally a sawmill town. The exhibit illustrates the "golden age of the lumber industry" and informs guests about the sustainable forestry practices that continue today. The museum features various steam-powered logging and milling equipment that was left from the era. You can expect to find essential equipment such as the McGiffert log loader, Clyde log skidder, Clyde double drum-cable outhaul log skidder, Corliss Steam engine and plenty more.

The museum is open Wednesday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and closed during major holidays. There is an entrance fee of eight dollars per person, five dollars for children 6-12 years old and children 5 and under may enter for free. For group tours, guests may contact the museum at (318) 748-8404.

Consider the Southern Forest Heritage Museum and Research Center in Long Leaf for your next group activity or outing.





# The Global BIG Latch On

HOSTED BY

**BJACH &  
MOM2MOM  
FORT POLK**

**Sunday, April 16, 2023, 2 - 3 p.m.**

**Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital, Entrance A**

THIS IS A WORLDWIDE PEER SUPPORT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT EVENT, IT AIMS TO STRENGTHEN NATIONAL AND GLOBAL SUPPORT FOR BREASTFEEDING AND TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF CHILDREN AND WOMEN AROUND THE WORLD.



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