



FORGING THE

WARRIOR SPIRIT

The JRTC and Fort Polk Guardian

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Home of Heroes @ Fort Polk, LA

Jan. 15, 2021

Fort Polk honors 80 years of successful training

By **ANGIE THORNE**
Public affairs specialist

FORT POLK, La., — The Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk's 80th birthday ceremony was held at the Fort Polk Museum Jan. 14. State, local and Fort Polk leadership, along with members of the Fort Polk community, gathered to celebrate the installation's history from Jan. 10, 1941 — the day Camp Polk was established — to today.

Throughout those 80 years, Fort Polk has continued its mission to train Soldiers for every major war and conflict the United States has faced.

Brig. Gen. David S. Doyle, JRTC and Fort Polk commanding general, was the guest speaker at the event.

Doyle said Fort Polk Soldiers were proud to serve at an installation with such a rich history — one that has been at the forefront of the Army's premier training for 80 years.

"Today, we recognize the JRTC and Fort Polk legacy of training the men and women in uniform who have served our Army and our nation throughout the last 80 years," he said.

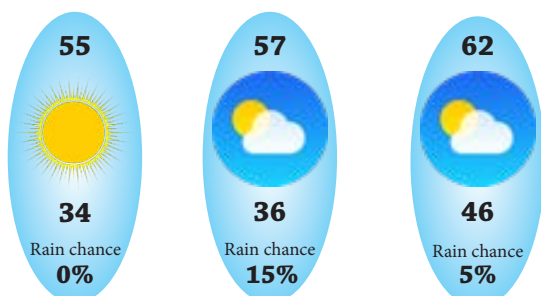
Doyle touched on Fort Polk's impact on
Please see **Celebration**, page 7



Brig. Gen. David S. Doyle, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk commanding general, was the guest speaker at the Fort Polk 80th birthday ceremony held Jan. 14 on the grounds of the Fort Polk Museum.

ANGIE THORNE/GUARDIAN

Weekend weather



Inside the Guardian

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Viewpoint

In our view

Guardian staff asked the JRTC and Fort Polk community, "What is your favorite Disney movie and why?"

Here are their responses:



Sgt. Jonathan Jones: "The 'Lion King,' because I like the idea of Simba having to go through some rough challenges and stay true to himself."



Maria Smith: "I like 'Aladdin,' mainly because my granddaughter and I watch it all the time. I also like Robin Williams as the Genie."



Pfc. Juan Hughes: "I really liked 'Soul.' It was good animation. It also taught you to follow your dreams and inspired you to be what you want to be, not what others want you to be."

Krystal Oser: "I really like the original, animated 'Mulan.' I love the music and the fact that Mulan was fierce. I watched the new live-action version, and I was really disappointed."



Buddy Graham: "Easily, my favorite would be 'The Incredibles.' It is like a light-hearted, animated version of a James Bond movie."



Peyton Sharp, 10: "I like 'Aladdin.' I think it's cool when Aladdin jumps around on buildings like parkour. I also like Genie and the monkey."



Ayla Sharp: "I love 'The Little Mermaid.' As a teen, I could relate to her parental issues and rebellion growing up, but I also love all the songs. I still sing them today."



Pvt. Nabil Virani: "The 'Lion King,' because it's one of the first movies I can remember, and I loved watching Scar. He was an interesting bad guy."



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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 following Facebook pages: **@JRTCOperationsGrp**, **@BayneJonesACH** or **@fortpolkmwr**.

Briefs

BJACH holiday hours

The Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital outpatient clinics, pharmacy, laboratory, radiology and dining facility will be closed Monday in observance of the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday.

The BJACH emergency room and inpatient services remain open.

ScriptCenter is open for registered beneficiaries to pick up refill prescriptions.

Career fair

The Pollock Federal Correctional Complex (1000 Airbase Road, Pollock) is hiring correctional officers at a career fair held Jan. 20 and 21 from 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Those interested should send a resume to **POL-PersonnelSecurity-S** prior to the hiring event.

The salary ranges from \$43,495 to \$66,119. The base rate does not include shift differential, overtime, holidays and more.

The job offers 10 paid holidays, life insurance options, 401K with 5% matching, safe work environment and more. For more information call (318) 561-5300.

CIF inventory

The Central Issue Facility, located in bldg 4374, will be closed to conduct inventory from Jan. 22-29.

During this period, Soldiers will continue to clear.

Emergencies will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Customers are asked to plan accordingly. CIF reopens for business at 7:30 a.m. Feb. 1. For more information call 531-0950 or 531-2883.

Unit highlight

The Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk's Public Affairs Office wants to highlight tenant units on the installation. PAO's intent is to cover Leader's Time Training weekly, featuring a different unit each time. If interested, please contact the Guardian editor at 531-1416 or by emailing christy.a.graham7.civ@mail.mil.



Sandra Murray-Campbell, licensed practical nurse, administers the COVID-19 vaccine to Capt. Bryana Fournier, a registered nurse for the Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital emergency department and the first pregnant Soldier to receive the shot at BJACH, Jan. 7.

JEAN GRAVES/BJACH PAO

BJACH gives COVID vaccine to pregnant Soldier

By JEAN GRAVES
BJACH PAO

FORT POLK, La. — Capt. Bryana Fournier, a registered clinical nurse for the Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital emergency department, volunteered to receive the COVID-19 vaccine Jan. 7. Fournier is the first pregnant Soldier from the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk to receive the vaccination.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, there are no specific risks to receiving a Messenger RNA Covid-19 vaccine while pregnant.

The Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine recommends that pregnant women who are eligible should receive the vaccine. The SMFA published a statement regarding the SARS-CoV-2 vaccination on Dec. 1 stating that pregnant and lactating women, who are otherwise eligible, should be offered the vaccine.

Fournier admitted she did not discuss the vaccination with her doctor before making her decision to volunteer. She said she did extensive research on her own and decided it was the best decision for her. She said she reviewed the CDC, ACOG and SMFA recommendations before volunteering for the vaccine. Fournier recommends that all pregnant women interested in getting vac-

inated should do their research or talk to their doctor.

"Ultimately it is a personal decision," she said.

"Based on my research and understanding of what the mRNA vaccine is and what it does, I'm not concerned or afraid of negative side effects," Fournier said. "I know that I am not getting any part of the virus and there is no risk of me getting the virus from the vaccine."

According to the CDC, the mRNA vaccine is a new type of vaccine that teaches the body to make a protein triggering an immune response, which then produces antibodies. The antibodies will protect an individual from getting infected if exposed to the virus.

"As a nurse in the emergency room, I am exposed to a lot of different people," she said.

"I understand that 40% of those with COVID-19 experience no symptoms and, at any point throughout my shift, I could be interacting with someone infected with the virus who isn't aware of it."

Fournier said she wanted to get vaccinated to protect herself, her family, her baby and her patients.

"Getting vaccinated was important to me because, with the baby, I feel safer visiting and interacting with my extended Family," she said. "I want to protect my older Family members at a greatest risk and my baby."

DoD launches 'My MilLife Guide' to boost wellness

HEALTH.MIL

WASHINGTON — Finding the right support to ease the stress of navigating daily COVID-19-related challenges can be a challenge itself.

To support the military community, the Department of Defense recently launched "My MilLife Guide."

This new program sends text messages designed to help the military community boost overall wellness while navigating stresses related to COVID-19. The program is only available for a limited time in early 2021 and allows service members and spouses to directly receive motivational messages and helpful resources on their phones.

My MilLife Guide was developed by one of the military's flagship support programs, Military OneSource, in partnership with the Military Health System.

From now until Feb. 12, users can opt in to receive messages four times a week, for a total of eight weeks. To sign up, service members can text "MilLife SM" and spouses can text "MilLife Spouse" to GOV311, or they can visit [MilitaryOneSource.mil/texts](https://militaryonesource.mil/texts).

My MilLife Guide starts each week with



a text asking users to set a small goal, such as accomplishing a task on their to-do list or taking a small step to improve their sleeping habits. Topics covered over the course of the eight-week program include:

- Stress relief
- Sleeping soundly
- Self-care

- Virtual health tools
- Strengthening relationships
- Managing finances
- Getting support
- Prepping for the future

These text messages are specifically tailored for navigating the unique circum-

Please see **MilLife**, page 5

101-year-old Army veteran survives two pandemics

By THOMAS BRADING
Army News Service

PRESCOTT, Ariz — At 101 years old, Milton Zaczek, a World War II veteran, has done something few have: He survived two global pandemics.

In November, the centenarian tested positive for COVID-19 after checking in at the Northern Arizona Health Care System's emergency department in Prescott, Arizona, shortly after his birthday.

To date, there have been more than half a million coronavirus cases in Arizona, which has resulted in 10,000 deaths.

For Zaczek, it was a battle he was already familiar with fighting.

The recent diagnosis went full-circle to the early days of his childhood — when he was less than a year old — and he survived

the Spanish flu in 1919.

"My brother was taking care of me while my parents were working," he said, recalling his first bout with a global pandemic. "My brother was 20 years old, and I was sick. He wrapped me in a blanket and rushed me to the clinic down the block."

World War II

Years later, Zaczek grew up in Maryland, where his daughter still lives, and occupied his early years with softball and sports, he said. It wasn't until the early 1940s when he left home, under the cloth of the Army.

From 1941 to 1945, Zaczek served as an infantryman, fighting on the frontlines of World War II, a role he looks back on "like it was yesterday," he said.

"I clearly remember fighting against the Japanese," he added. "They opened up with a machine gun on my squad. The guy



Milton Zaczek, a 101-year-old Spanish flu and COVID-19 survivor, is pictured while serving with the 158th Infantry Regiment during World War II.

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Survivor

Continued from page 4

next to me was shot, and I pulled him out of the line of fire and did what I could until the medics arrived." Once the Soldier was pulled to safety, Zaczek applied a tourniquet on him until medics arrived, he said. Years later, the wounded Soldier thanked Zaczek for saving his life.

In addition to his tour in Japan, he also served in Australia, New Guinea, the Panama Canal, Germany and the Philippines.

While in the Philippines, Zaczek and the 158th Infantry Regiment — nicknamed "The Bushmasters" — were ordered to overtake an enemy's mountainside position under heavy artillery fire.

With the deck stacked against them, the Bushmasters took the huge mountain, he said, regarding the mission in the Philippines. "Our team completed the mission and saved a nearby village. My unit received a presidential citation for our actions."

COVID-19

Recently, the veteran was planning to spend time with a friend before feeling unwell. Despite taking precautions to avoid the airborne threat, he came down with the coronavirus.

Although falling sick with COVID-19 can be scary for anyone, he said, he remained optimistic. "I do not fear anything, because

Milton Zaczek, a 101-year-old Army veteran, sits on his front porch. Zaczek has survived two global pandemics — the Spanish flu and COVID-19.



COURTESY

I put my trust in the Lord."

In fact, Dr. Kara Johnson, his primary care provider, said she "loved working with him (because) he has given me hope. He has helped me see that we all can push through and live our lives."

"People are fragile in their everyday lives and feel like they have to do it alone, but they don't," Zaczek said. "They can ask for help, hang in there and hope for the best. Many people have a defeated attitude, but there is hope."

MilLife

Continued from page 4

stances of service members and spouses as they aim to improve their physical and emotional health.

"We are excited to begin 2021 by offering a new way for service members and spouses to get support for easing stress and navigating COVID-19-related challenges texted directly to their phones," said Lee Kelley, director of Military Community Support Programs for Military Community and Family Policy.

"My MilLife Guide is like a portable health and wellness coach, supporting service members and spouses as they take care of themselves and their Families."

"Our service members and their Families deserve the best possible care. I want to utilize all available tools to ensure their health, wellness and readiness records are easily accessible," said Army Col. (Dr.) Neil Page, deputy and military chief, Clinical Support

Division, Medical Affairs at the Defense Health Agency. "The COVID-19 pandemic showed us that, sometimes, these tools are best provided through digital health services.

"The Military Health System is excited to partner with Military OneSource to provide a text-based wellness program that puts valuable resources at our beneficiaries' fingertips."

My MilLife Guide participants are encouraged to provide feedback on the program.

The DoD will use this insight to help inform the development of possible future evolutions of similar text-based initiatives.

Part of the DoD, Military Community and Family Policy offers a suite of programs, tools, and services including the My Military OneSource app and MilitaryOneSource.mil, which connects the military

community to resources they can use every day.

These initiatives contribute to force readiness and quality of life by providing policies and programs that advance the well-being of service members, their Families, survivors and other eligible members of the military community.

Military OneSource is a DoD-funded program, which is both a call center and a website providing comprehensive information, resources and assistance on every aspect of military life.

Service members and their Families of active duty, National Guard and reserve (regardless of activation status), Coast Guard members when activated for the Navy, DoD expeditionary civilians and survivors are eligible for Military OneSource services. These services are available, worldwide, 24 hours a day, at no cost to the user.

BJACH Motorcycle Mentorship Program rides into 2021

By JEAN CLAVETTE GRAVES
BJACH PAO

FORT POLK, La. — Soldiers and civilian employees from Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital set out on the first motorcycle mentorship ride of 2021. The group travelled from the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk to Lafayette, La., Jan. 8.

The Motorcycle Mentorship Program is a voluntary unit or installation-level organization where inexperienced and seasoned motorcycle riders are paired to create a supportive environment, promoting safe and responsible riding.

Sgt. First Class Nathan Tormala, rehabilitation department non-commissioned officer-in-charge, is the senior mentor for BJACH. He said, as a mentor, he strives to give new riders the purpose, direction and motivation to ride safely and responsibly within a supportive environment.

"I don't want to lose a Soldier from our formation," Tormala said. "Accidents that are minor in a car can be catastrophic or fatal on a motorcycle. If I can influence Soldiers to ride within their capabilities and respond appropriately to the environment when riding — I'm winning."

Tormala volunteered to serve as the senior mentor for the program because he wanted to ensure all of his Soldiers and colleagues from the hospital ride safely. Each month, the BJACH Motorcycle mentorship program conducts rides with 10 to 30 riders from the hospital.

"As an NCO and the senior mentor for the program at BJACH, I coordinate and participate in every ride," he said. "I want Soldiers and junior riders to embrace this amazing program; and by being out there with them, I'm not just paying it lip service. I'm showing them what right looks like when it comes to motorcycle safety."

Tormala said a motorcycle accident can have a tremendous impact on unit readiness. He said by conducting monthly rides, he can reinforce the importance of safety among BJACH motorcycle enthusiasts and maintain organizational readiness.

"During each ride, mentors are able to observe and provide feedback to new riders. We conduct classroom training during our lunch break, which covers a wide array of safety topics," he said. "The rides also foster esprit-de-corps and camaraderie between the Soldiers and civilian teammates from the hospital."



Jeff Stuhlman, a health systems assistant for BJACH, has been around motorcycles since he was a kid and rides his to work every day. He enjoys connecting with other motorcycle enthusiasts by serving as a mentor for BJACH's program.

"In the motorcycle world, there is more than just getting on the bike and pulling back the throttle," he said. "You have to be aware of your surroundings. The first thing I tell new riders is to stay vigilant and aware of the vehicles around you. We must anticipate what other drivers will do and be prepared to react."

He said the monthly safety rides at BJACH allow experienced riders to teach others how to ride solo or in groups safely.

The Army recognizes May as Motorcycle Safety Month, but with the mild temperatures year-round in Louisiana, the BJACH motorcycle mentorship program coordinates rides regardless of the weather.

"We respect our community and fellow riders. We ride under beautiful sunny skies, when it's hot and humid, windy, drizzling or in freezing temperatures," Tormala said. "We ride in the day and into the night. The more we do this in a variety of conditions, the more comfortable our riders become, regardless of the elements."

The Fort Polk Garrison Safety Office Manager, Shane Denning, said motorcycle safety classes are offered several times each month.

"This program is a vital part of keeping our riders safe by introducing new riders to more experienced riders," he said. "This allows the direct conveyance of experiences

between motorcycle riding enthusiasts."

Denning said the classes offered include Motorcycle Basic Rider, Experienced Rider and Military Sports Bike Rider courses. Soldiers should talk to their unit or battalion level senior motorcycle mentor to register for training.

Editor's note: For more program information, visit the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center's website at <https://safety.army.mil>.

Job announcement: Security guard

Responsibilities include:

- Checking identification and vehicles to ensure only authorized personnel are allowed access.
- Advises visitors to assist them in compliance with security procedures and requirements.
- Conducts inspections of vehicles, personnel or buildings to ensure compliance with regulations.
- Inspects items such as containers, personal property or vehicle documents to ensure compliance with security policies and procedures.
- Implements enhanced security measures when warranted by events or threats.
- Denies access to unauthorized personnel in accordance with stand operation procedures.

To review the full job listing or apply, visit www.usajobs.gov.



ANGIE THORNE/GUARDIAN

Snowflake Festival recognition ceremony

Brig. Gen. David S. Doyle (center), Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk commanding general, stands with Soldiers and civilians that were recognized, Jan. 13, for their efforts to make the Snowflake Festival, held Dec. 4, a success. The festival included

an ice-skating rink, COVID-friendly Santa visit and home-based business vendors. Doyle presented each person with a coin to thank them for making the holiday event safe and fun, despite the challenges posed by COVID-19.

Celebration

Continued from page 1

training Soldiers during the Louisiana Maneuvers as they prepared for World War II, then the Korean and Vietnam wars up through Sept. 11, 2001 and beyond.

Doyle said the Joint Readiness Training Center moved from Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, to Fort Polk in 1993, thus beginning the installation's modern and current role as the Army's premier Combat Training Center.

"The overarching theme of the JRTC is that 'we want our Soldiers' worst day to be here, rather than in a combat theater,' — a reminder that Fort Polk's mission endures now — and has since 1941," he said.

"As the Army prepares to face the challenges related to potential large scale combat operations, Fort Polk is adapting — adjusting how we prepare rotational units and continuing the mission to support deployable forces from the XVIII Airborne Corps, III Corps and the Army's Medical Command."

Beyond training Soldiers, Doyle said Fort Polk honors communities throughout Louisiana who have supported the Army from the Louisiana Maneuvers to today's operations.

"This celebration is for you, too. Your patriotism and the caring you've shown to our Soldiers and Families for 80 years, has helped us grow and maintain the JRTC and Fort Polk's reputation for excellence," he said. "Thank you to our service members and the community. You have helped en-

sure that Camp Polk, and now Fort Polk, is a thriving installation focused on people first and preparing to fight and win in combat."

Chuck Owens, Louisiana state representative, District 30, said Fort Polk and its mission is a reflection of the stability of our community, state and nation.

"We appreciate Fort Polk and everything they do," he said.

Tiffany Koch, Fort Polk's school liaison officer, said children who live in the area will study World War II and the Vietnam war, but may not realize the impact Fort Polk had on the Soldiers fighting in those conflicts.

"A ceremony highlighting 80 years of Fort Polk history is important because learning that history preserves interest in the area and improves the support and partnership between the installation and the Families in our community," she said.

Mike Reese, Louisiana state senator for District 30, said he thinks it's tremendously important to pause and recognize the 80th anniversary of Fort Polk.

"You have to think back to the local community's contribution to the creation of Fort Polk and honor our heritage Families that vacated their property as Fort Polk stood up. They did so out of patriotism to their country and support for our military," he said.

"Our local community has great pride

in what Fort Polk represents, the work that they do here to train and the history and linkage we have between the community and foundation of this installation."

Reese said the military today does exactly what they were engaged to do in 1941 — train the nation's service men and women so that they are successful defending freedom around the world.

"In those 80 years, there has been immense sacrifice, not only by the community but also the Soldiers that train and put their life on the line to defend our freedom," he said.

Keith Lewing, Anacoco mayor, and his spouse, Carol, toured the museum after the conclusion of the ceremony.

As they walked through the museum, viewing pictures and pieces of Fort Polk's past, Lewing said it reminded him that the installation has been a part of his life since he was a small child.

"I remember my dad talking about Fort Polk during one of its closures. He said Leesville was a ghost town, which goes to show the positive financial impact the post has on our communities," he said. "Once they reopened, I worked at Fort Polk as a young man."

Lewing said Fort Polk is simply the centerpiece of the surrounding community.

"Soldiers get the best training here, and 80 years of tremendous history proves it," he said.

Total Force Fitness: Emotional, behavioral, social fitness

By JEAN CLAVETTE GRAVES
BJACH PAO

FORT POLK, La. — The COVID-19 pandemic created several new stressors and took away many of the stress-relief activities Soldiers and Families used. According to the Military Health System, the Total Force Fitness approach to wellness is particularly beneficial in the current climate, giving military communities a way to optimize fitness and resilience, even when access to traditional models is limited. An individual's social and psychological fitness is even more important during these unprecedented times.

Psychological fitness is defined as the ability to integrate and improve cognitive, emotional and behavioral practices. The MHS describes social fitness as the ability to engage in productive personal and professional relationships, positively interact with unit and command networks and use resources that promote overall wellbeing.

Lt. Col. Kevin Goke, a psychiatric nurse practitioner and the chief of behavioral health for Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital, said psychological health takes practice and training. Just like any other part of your body, the more you exercise it, the stronger and more resilient it gets. He said psychological fitness is the mental capability to endure, adapt to and overcome any positive or negative stressor.

"Psychological fitness requires daily and, sometimes, in-the-moment attention. Much like physical fitness, mental or psychological fitness requires thoughtful and intentional actions and understanding," Goke



said. "A person must plan or exercise positive coping strategies; so when they face a stressful moment, they will maintain logical mechanisms to grapple with it. Stress naturally elicits emotions." He said mental health and toughness are not binary options with an "on and off switch" — they exist on a spectrum, and individuals can train the mind and learn skills to improve.

"Psychological fitness is the ability to utilize rational decision making and coping strategies during potentially negative situations and stressors. Psychological fitness is not about what someone shouldn't do; rather, it's about being prepared with solutions in certain situations," Goke said. "It is about changing the lens with which we discuss and view things."

He said, in behavioral health terms, there is a shift in the language and thought process about psychological fitness. The Army used to talk about "suicide prevention," for example. Now, Soldiers are learning about "A Life worth Living."

Goke said this is bigger than preventing suicide, it's about giving individuals something to look forward to, motivation and the skills to reach their full potential.

Sgt. Ana Gomez, a behavioral health specialist at BJACH, assists social workers and psychologists during therapy sessions with triage and administering medications. She said psychological fitness is hinged on a person's internal motivations.

"Finding your anchor, figuring out what
Please see TFF, page 9

Corvias urges residents to complete survey, offers prizes

CORVIAS

Fort Polk, La. — On-post housing residents now have the opportunity to complete the 2020 Department of Defense Tenant Satisfaction Housing Survey. The survey gives residents an opportunity to provide feedback to the Army and Corvias. Then, that feedback is used to evaluate the current state of the partnership and guides future improvements to the housing facilities and residential services.

Residents of Fort Polk who complete the survey have the opportunity to win prizes. The third-party survey vendor will hold three drawings throughout the survey period, each for a \$25 gift card.

Residents who moved in prior to Nov. 10 received a survey from ArmyHousingSurvey@CELAssociates.com on Dec. 2. Residents who did not receive a survey should contact ArmyHousingSurvey@CELAssociates.com with their installation name and address. The local garrison housing office and Corvias community offices are also available to assist with any concerns.

The survey takes less than 10 minutes to complete. Questions assess the residents' evaluation of their present home, community amenities, resident activities, the community maintenance team and property management team.

"The results we collect from the survey will be instrumental in helping us achieve

our goal to provide residents with the best service and quality, on-post living," said Wil Motta, operations director for Corvias. "Previous surveys helped identify areas requiring change and implement new customer service initiatives based on the feedback."

From 2019 survey data, Corvias has overlaid roofs in Dogwood Terrace and paved 3 miles of road at Maple Terrace.

The survey is administered by CEL and Associates Incorporated, an independent, third-party group. All survey answers are strictly confidential, and residents are urged to offer honest responses. Personal data is not tabulated, and the survey does not identify the resident in any way.

Continued from page 8

you look forward to everyday is what psychological fitness means to me," Gomez said. "My anchor and internal drive is to become a nurse."

She said she ensures her responsibilities at work and home are taken care of so she can focus on her education.

Gomez said reflecting on personal or professional goals and creating a path to achieve them is one way to develop intrinsic motivation and build psychological fitness.

She admitted that being focused on one thing can cause a person to fall in to a routine. For her, that monotony motivated her to find other outlets and ways to spend her time outside of work and class. Volunteering and social activities in the community helped keep her life in balance.

"Even though things at work and school were going well, I felt like something was missing, and I wanted to give back," she said. "I volunteered as a youth soccer coach to help other people. While volunteering, I learned about an adult soccer league in Deridder from other coaches. I just completed a winter indoor soccer season with my team."

The MHS says having robust, fulfilling and healthy relationships with friends, Family and coworkers are critical to many areas of wellness and can enhance mental health.

Sgt. Carlos Soto, a behavioral health specialist at BJACH, also coaches youth soccer with Gomez. He said social fitness is personal to each individual. He describes himself as an introvert.

"I am perfectly content being alone with my thoughts. Socializing with other people isn't something that I enjoy that much," Soto said. "I began volunteering because my friend asked me to join. The more I coached, the more comfortable I became with it, which made it more enjoyable."

He said interacting with the kids, parents, other coaches and referees forced him out of his comfort zone in a positive way. He admitted that through his volunteer experience, he has improved his psychological and social fitness.

"At the end of the day, when I reach my limit socially, I need to recharge on my own," Soto said. "There are a lot of ways for Soldiers to have a healthy social life at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk. We can find activities, events, play



games and stay connected with our friends and Families."

He said Soldiers are able to use their phones, computers and gaming systems to find things to do and interact with people around the world.

Sgt. Jesus Gonzalez, a medical maintenance technician for BJACH, describes himself as a social person. He said every time he volunteers for a different activity, he helps contribute to his community. Gonzalez says being part of a larger community is important to his social fitness because he is always learning from others.

"When I arrived at Fort Polk, I participated in the Expert Field Medical Badge competition. Although I did not earn the badge this time around, I did meet the BJACH Better Opportunity for Single Soldiers representative who told me about volunteer opportunities with Child and Youth Services," he said. "That conversation got me interested and involved as a kids gymnastics coach."

He said he strengthens his social fitness through his personal interactions with others. By putting himself out there and challenging himself, he builds his social network and becomes part of the larger community.

Gomez, Soto and Gonzales all agree that each of the eight dimensions of TFF are important and that, when one area is weak, the other areas suffer.

Gomez said it's important that Soldiers manage all dimensions for holistic health and wellbeing.

"Honestly, I believe diet and nutrition is the most important dimension," she said. "Without a healthy diet, your physical, mental and social fitness will suffer. Psy-

chologically, a person cannot function well if they aren't eating well."

She said eating well and staying grounded spiritually helps her maintain a balanced and healthy life, physically, emotionally and psychologically.

"If I could give other Soldiers advice, I would tell them to find their anchor. Find something to look forward to each day. Find something to motivate you to accomplish your goals each day," Gomez said.

"If you have a bump in the road, take the time to reflect. Ask yourself if you can do anything about it. If you can, figure out the appropriate and respectful channels to change the outcome. If you can't, don't dwell on it and move on."

Editor's note: This is the second in a series of articles about Total Force Fitness, the first line effort in the National Defense Strategy to build a more lethal force.

The concept focuses on a Soldier's health throughout their career, connecting eight dimensions (physical, environmental, medical/dental preventive care, nutritional, ideological/spiritual, psychological, social and financial) of fitness to enhance health, performance and readiness holistically. This article focuses on psychological and social well-being.

To learn more visit about TFF visit the Military [Health System website](https://www.health.mil).

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Fort Polk OSJA highlights family support regulations

OSJA

FORT POLK, La. — “What happens if my civilian spouse and I separate due to difficulties in our marriage? What are my financial responsibilities? When do they begin? How much am I required to pay?”

These questions are frequently asked at Fort Polk’s Soldier and Family Services legal division. The answer to these questions and others can be found in Army Regulation 608-99, “Family Support, Child Custody, and Paternity.”

Under AR 608-99, a Soldier is required to support his or her dependents. When a Soldier and their non-service-member spouse separate, the Soldier is required to pay enhanced interim financial support. Enhanced interim is 25% of the Basic Allowance for Housing-With Dependents Rate.

If the spouse lives in the United States, this is a one-time payment due in the first 30 days after separation.

If the spouse lives outside the U.S., this payment continues until the spouse has access to a state court that can order spousal support.

This support cannot be in the form of in-kind payment and is due to the spouse even if the spouse continues to live in on-base housing.

The Soldier also has a monthly support obligation. In determining the monthly support obligation, the first question to be asked and resolved is whether a civilian court of law has ordered you to pay a certain amount of support to any dependents.

If the answer to that question is yes, then the Soldier should follow that court order. Failing to do so puts the Soldier at peril, not only with the judge who issued that order, but with their commanding officer.

A family court judge can hold the Soldier in contempt for not complying with the court order and sentence the Soldier to serve jail time, pay a fine or both.

In addition to whatever punishment the judge decides to order, the Soldier may also be subject to prosecution under the Uniform Code of Military Justice and face possible military administrative action.

If there is not a court order requiring support payments, then the next question is whether the Soldier and spouse have a written agreement regarding the amount of support to be paid.

Usually this agreement is a notarized document in the form of a separation agreement, which typically incorporates a num-



ber of other marital issues besides financial support, such as child custody, visitation, distribution of property and debts.

This agreement can be prepared by one of the attorneys at Soldier and Family Services.

The agreement does not have to be a notarized separation agreement. It can be any writing signed by both spouses or a series of emails between the Soldier and spouse, as long as it accurately and unambiguously reflects the true intent of both parties.

Once the agreement becomes a legally enforceable document, the Soldier is then required to pay the amount agreed upon and detailed within the separation agreement, unless and until a court of law directs otherwise.

Also, the Soldier and spouse may elect that no support will be paid or, perhaps, an agreement to an amount lower than what is required by AR 608-99 can be chosen, as long as both parties agree, the agreement is put into writing and the Soldier complies with the terms of the agreement.

Absent a lawful court order or a binding written agreement, AR 608-99 requires that Soldiers pay support to any dependents in such amounts as set out in the schedule entitled, “Non-Locality BAH rates, BAH Reserve Component/Transit with Dependents.”

The amount that Soldiers are required to pay is based exclusively upon their rank. It doesn’t matter if they are not receiving BAH, and the amount that they are required to pay does not depend on the number of dependents.

Soldiers are required to pay according to the schedule, whether they have one or a dozen dependents. However, if the dependents live in government housing, Soldiers will not be expected or mandated to make any other support payments.

If the Soldier is providing non-government housing for their dependents, such as making the rental or mortgage payments on

a residence, then they are entitled to a credit towards the financial obligation mandated by AR 608-99.

Soldiers will not receive credit for paying cell phone charges, monthly cable bills, car loan payments, insurance, credit card invoices or any other recurring debts.

If your family support payments are ordered by a court of law, then the Soldier will begin making those payments on the date mandated in the judgment.

If a Soldier has a written agreement, then they will begin on the date that is indicated in the document.

Otherwise, Soldiers will begin making monthly support payments on the date the Soldier and spouse ceased residing together, no later than the first day of the following month.

Soldiers can make these payments in cash, check, money order or even through allotments.

Regardless of which method is chosen, always keep a record of these payments, such as signed receipts, bank records, cancelled checks or pay records.

This protects the Soldier if anyone alleges they failed to make the required support payment — the records provide sufficient proof of payment.

Without these documents, it will be presumed that the Soldier’s payments were never made.

Keep in mind that marital fault on the part of the civilian spouse, such as adultery or desertion, as a general rule, will neither bar a claim for spousal support nor relieve you of any obligation to make these payments, especially in civil court proceedings.

Under certain, limited circumstances, if there is not a court order, Soldiers may be entitled to make a request for a waiver through their battalion commanders.

Please visit or contact the Soldier and Family Services legal division at 7090 Alabama Ave. (next to the Show Boat Theater) or at 531-2580.

Soldiers punished, separated for UCMJ violations

OSJA

FORT POLK, La. —At the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, the commanding general and subordinate commanders take good order and discipline seriously. However, certain disciplinary issues continue to be prevalent across Fort Polk such as breaking quarantine/isolation orders, violating General Order No. 1, driving under the influence of alcohol, wrongful use/possession of controlled substances, fraternization, and sexual assault.

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

- A private, assigned to 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, was separated under Chapter 14-12c (Commission of a Serious Offense) for being absent with-

out leave. The Soldier was issued a General under Honorable conditions characterization of service.

Generally, this characterization of service results in the loss of a service member's educational benefits.

- A sergeant, assigned to 5th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div, was punished under Article 15 for disobeying a lawful order to social distance, in violation of Article 92, Uniform Code of Military Justice.

The Soldier was sentenced to a reduction to E-4; forfeiture of \$1,373 each month for two months; extra duty for 45 days; 45 days of restriction; and an oral reprimand.

- A specialist, assigned to 3rd Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div, was punished under Article 15 for wrongful use of a controlled substance, in violation of Article 112a, UCMJ.

The Soldier was sentenced to a reduction to E-1; forfeiture of \$866 each month for two months; extra duty for 45 days; and 45 days of restriction.

- A specialist, assigned to 3rd Battalion, 353rd Regiment, Security Force Assistance Command, was punished under Article 15 for wrongfully using their Government Travel Charge Card during a non-travel period, which was not related to official government travel, in violation of Article 92, UCMJ.

The Soldier was sentenced to extra duty for seven days; and seven days of restriction.

- A private, assigned to 3rd Sqn, 89th Cav Reg, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn Div, was punished under Article 15 for unlawfully striking another service member, in violation of Article 128, UCMJ. The Soldier was sentenced to extra duty for two days.



SAFETY CORNER

Beat the Silent Killer

make sure your household is safe from carbon monoxide poisoning

Carbon Monoxide: The Facts

What is it? A gas that is:

- Odorless
- Colorless
- Tasteless

Who is at risk?

- Carbon Monoxide can affect anyone including pets

Where is it in my home?

- Space Heaters
- Ducted Heating Systems
- Hot Water Systems
- Gas Ovens
- BBQs
- Portable Stoves
- Cars
- Gas or Wood Fires

Symptoms:

Not every single symptom will always be present

- Headaches
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Breathlessness
- Collapse and loss of consciousness

Tips

- Install a CO alarm
- Ventilation is key
- Chimney checks
- Professional repairs

In an Emergency:

- Move the victim to an open area with fresh air
- Open all windows and doors
- Switch off the appliance



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Mentoring builds strong bonds, support network

HEALTH.MIL

WASHINGTON — Mentoring plays a vital role within the military and the Military Health System.

“Mentoring fills a void in people,” said Army Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Gragg, Defense Health Agency senior enlisted leader. “The mentor is inherently telling you: ‘I’ve been there before, and I’ve been in your shoes.’”

“One of the best things a mentor can do is listen and pull back so the mentee can have the experience themselves. My experience helps me to know my place in that dynamic.”

January serves as National Mentoring Month, so some MHS members are sharing their stories of both being a mentee and a mentor. Mentoring forges bonds for each successive generation of health providers and enables a strong network of support.

Gragg said he had three formal mentors during his career, but probably 25 informal mentors whom he watched and emulated. “Both types were just as impactful, but some had no clue I was learning from them,” he noted. “Someone is counting on you for their development,

growth and decision-making,” he said. “It’s the yoke of responsibility that falls on every leader.”

“The smallest things can come back full circle,” Gragg noted while recounting an event during flight medic school in 1993, as a newly promoted sergeant. “We were meeting people in the school, and this young kid who was a private introduced himself as ‘I’m just Pvt. X.’ ‘I said, ‘No, you aren’t just private X — You are a Soldier in the United States Army, and you are here to make a difference.’”

“That same Soldier ran into me years later and said, ‘Thank you — you gave me value, meaning and changed my whole perception of myself in the Army,’” Gragg said.

“I should’ve thank him for telling me that. His feedback made me realize that every interaction I had with others could have a lasting impact. This helped me to be more cognizant of how I communicate and affect people every day.”

Gragg said he learned that a gesture — no matter how small — “could be life changing or affirming. That’s why I try to leave things on a positive note, even if it’s a negative situation because my choices may have



Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Gragg (center), senior enlisted leader at the Defense Health Agency, mentors Airmen at Joint Base Langley-Eustis in Hampton, Virginia Sept. 23.

ARMY STAFF SGT. CHRISTIAN OLIVAREZ/DHA

short-term, long-term or permanent consequences.”

Recognizing younger Sailors, Soldiers, Airmen and Marines for their abilities or accomplishments is another tool used in mentorship.

Two senior enlisted airmen at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas, Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Robert Wick and Air Force Master Sgt. Antonio Cruz, helped Air Force Maj. Lena Williams Cox, a former section commander for the 959th Medical Operations Squadron at BAMC.

She said they created a blended culture that took full advantage of the different training received by Air Force medical technicians and their Army

counterparts, while preserving Air Force culture at the country’s largest military medical treatment facility.

“Before our efforts, enlisted medics were like multi-tools — they were used only for cutting,” Cox said. “We helped the clinical sections understand the Airmen’s capabilities and showed them how to maximize their potential.”

As a team, they initiated leadership rounds and moved the squadron’s command team into the main BAMC building.

Wick and Cruz “helped me grow as an officer,” and helped enlisted personnel improve their morale, Cox said. “Listen to your enlisted forces, they have a lot of knowledge to share.”

Tax record tips: How long should I keep my records?

By GREG SALOOM
Attorney advisor

FORT POLK, La. — The length of time you should keep a document depends on the action, expense or event which the document records.

You must keep records that support an item of income, deduction or credit shown on your tax return until the period of limitations for that tax return runs out. The period of limitations is the time in which you can amend your tax return to claim a credit, refund or the

Internal Revenue Service can assess additional tax.

The information below reflects the periods of limitations that apply to income tax returns, although other time limits may apply depending on certain filing types, such as those dealing with property, securities and employment. See your tax specialists for details on these filing types. Unless otherwise stated, the years listed below refer to the period after the return was filed. Returns filed before the due date are treated as filed on the due date.

- One year — keep pay stubs for at least a year until you check them against your W-2s. Some tax experts, however, suggest that you keep employment tax records for at least four years after the date that the tax becomes due or is paid, whichever is later.

- Three years — you should hold onto documents that support any income, deductions and credits claimed on your tax return for at least three years after the tax-filing deadline.

- Six years — the IRS has up to six years to initiate an audit

if you didn’t report necessary income, and if you’ve neglected to report at least 25% of your income.

- Indefinitely — keep records indefinitely if you do not file a return, or if you file a fraudulent return. Also, keep copies of your filed tax returns. They help in preparing future tax returns and making computations for amended returns.

The minimum amount of time you should maintain your tax records is six years. Failure to keep records may result in civil and criminal penalties.

Take opportunity to admire Louisiana outdoors while refreshing perspective

GUARDIAN STAFF

FORT POLK, La. — Louisiana is filled with natural beauty that is meant to be enjoyed. If you are feeling cooped up and need fresh air, you can still safely enjoy that splendor while following all COVID-19 mitigation measures. Just get in your vehicle and travel to one the following Louisiana lakes, reservoirs or even the Gulf of Mexico. No matter the time of day, these locations may reset your New Year with a positive perspective and a chance for calm introspection and appreciation of everything Mother Nature has to offer.

1. **Alligator Lake** — this peaceful location offers the Fort Polk community a chance to soak up the environment in all its glory as well as making use of canoe and paddle boat rentals if they want to explore the lake. Alligator Lake is located at 430 Alligator Lake Loop, Fort Polk. Hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Saturday from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. and Sunday from noon-5 p.m.

2. **Anacoco Lake** — the lake is also known as Anacoco Reservoir. It is a man-made lake in Vernon Parish, 10 miles west of Leesville. The lake was created in 1951, the result of impounding Anacoco, Caney, Prairie and Sandy Creeks, for the purpose of water supply and recreation.

3. **Vernon Lake** — Vernon Lake is also a man-made lake. The lake was created in 1963 by the impounding of Anacoco Creek, creating a 4,200-acre lake for water supply and recreation. The lake is five miles west of Leesville, and eight miles north of Anacoco Lake.

4. **Toledo Bend Recreation Site** — the recreation site, 1310 Army recreation Road, Florien, is a place for Soldiers and Family members to relax and have fun. It's located 45 miles northwest of Fort Polk at the largest man-made reservoir in the South and the fifth largest in the country. If you want to get away for more than an hour or two, the site has cabins and yurts available for rent. Cabins sleep up to five people and have central air, ceiling fans, full baths and fully-equipped kitchens. Renters must bring their own towels and bedding. Yurts are tucked into a quiet forest setting.

Recreational vehicles and camping spots are also available. There's a beach for swimming, as well as restrooms and showers for the convenience of visitors.

The site's hours of operation are Thursday through Monday from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. The site is closed Tuesday and Wednesday.



Sunset on Toledo Bend during a Morale Welfare and Recreation dinner cruise that took place before the COVID-19 pandemic.

CHUCK CANNON/GUARDIAN



Alligator Lake is a great place for Soldiers and Family members to go to soak in some nature.

CHUCK CANNON/GUARDIAN

5. **Calcasieu Lake** — Travel a little farther and enjoy the beautiful waters of Calcasieu Lake while fishing, canoeing or admiring the scenic area. You can enjoy the view from anywhere along the lake or head to Calcasieu Point Landing, 3955 Henry Pugh Road, Lake Charles — a boat launch and gateway to inland saltwater fishing in Southwest Louisiana. The landing is open Monday through Thursday from 6 a.m.-11 p.m. and Friday through Sunday from 6 a.m.-2 p.m.

6. **Prien Lake** — a great way to enjoy the beauty of Prien Lake is to visit Prien Lake Park, 3700 West Prien Lake Road, Lake Charles. The 29-acre park overlooks Indian Bay on the eastern shore of Prien Lake, a waterway where 19th century schooners once sailed. Visitors can not only enjoy the beautiful landscaping of the park while walking its pathways, but also the sweeping view of the lake, I-210 bridge and may-

be, if timed right, a magnificent sunset over the water. The park is open from 5 a.m.-11 p.m. each day.

7. **Holly Beach** — Holly Beach, also known as the "Cajun Riviera," is a coastal community in Cameron Parish. The beach isn't known for fancy hotels and restaurants, but it's a great place for long quiet walks along the Gulf Coast.

8. **Caddo Lake** — if you head north from Fort Polk to Caddo Lake, a 25,400-acre lake and wetland located on the border between Texas and Louisiana, in Louisiana's western Caddo Parish, you will find an internationally protected wetland featuring the largest Cypress forest in the world, according to lakesonline.com. The lake is named after the Southeastern culture of Native Americans called Caddoans or Caddo, who lived in the area until their expulsion in the 19th century.