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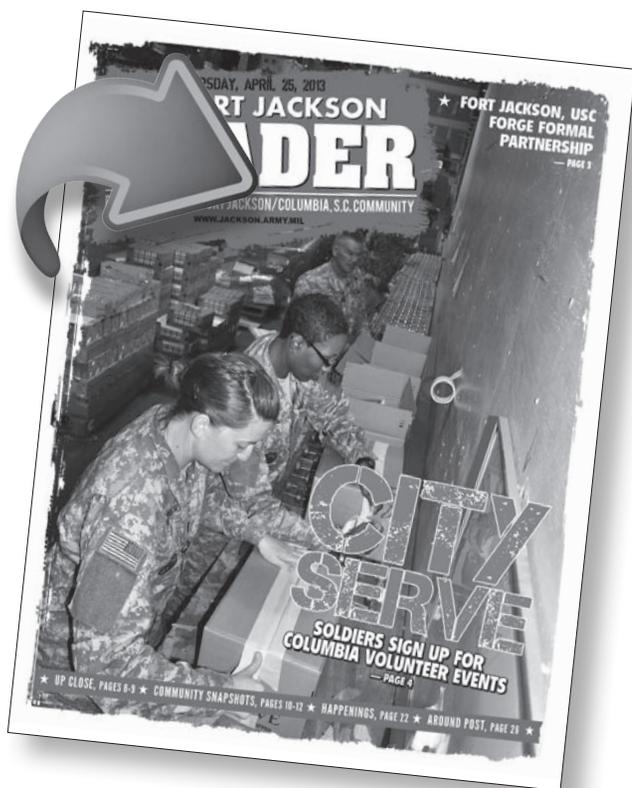
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COMMANDER'S CALL

The Spirit to Serve

Celebrating volunteer contributions

It's no secret that volunteers are a key component of our success at Fort Jackson. This post could not function without the time and labor contributed by its volunteers. In the last year, more than 1,000 volunteers gave of their personal time and put countless hours of hard work toward making sure we meet and exceed our vision of being the best duty station, post and community where its team members have ever served.

overcoming unusual obstacles through consistent selfless acts of service. There will be four categories of awardees for Volunteer of the Year: Active Duty Volunteer of the Year; Youth Volunteer of the Year; Retiree Volunteer of the Year; and Family Member/Civilian Volunteer of the Year.

**By BRIG. GEN.
BRYAN T. ROBERTS**

Fort Jackson
Commanding General

We will also recognize another elite group of volunteers — the inductees to the Volunteer Hall of Fame. This special group has met the following eligibility

ON THE COVER

Photo by WALLACE McBRIDE

Fort Jackson Soldiers take part in this week's One Columbia CityServe Volunteer Support, an intensive week of service designed to involve thousands of Columbia citizens. **SEE PAGE 4.**



Fort Jackson, South Carolina 29207

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SPIRIT OF VOLUNTEERISM ALIVE AND WELL

I am inspired when I hear about members of Team Jackson taking an active role in our community. To me it signifies that the spirit of volunteerism is alive and well at Fort Jackson. If you've had any kind of need for services and support on post, then chances are you've met some of our community volunteers and didn't even know it.

Volunteerism is a characteristic that epitomizes one's sense of duty to seek, identify and then resolve the problems that exist. It defines a community and allows us to operate in accordance with our priorities, which are centrally focused on our People. I could not be any prouder of all our volunteers who have made and continue to make a tremendous impact all over this post and the Midlands area. Without their tireless support and determined passion we could not assist our military Families and community the way we currently do.

NOT SPOTLIGHT RANGERS, BUT WORTHY OF RECOGNITION

If you were to speak to the host of volunteers, many of them are unaware of the magnitude of their contributions. They are not "Spotlight Rangers" who try to call attention to themselves; they only want to help wherever their help is needed.

We're fortunate to have an abundance of volunteers from our units and organizations from inside as well as outside our gates. Throughout the fiscal year, I have the pleasure of meeting and recognizing many of these selfless servants at my quarterly Helping Hands ceremony. Tomorrow at 10 a.m., we will host our annual Fort Jackson Volunteer Recognition Ceremony. At this event we will get the opportunity to specifically recognize the nominees for The Volunteer of the Year Awards and the Volunteer Hall of Fame.

WHAT MAKES A VOLUNTEER AWARD RECIPIENT?

The Volunteer of the Year Award will be given to the individuals who have demonstrated exemplary volunteer service to a Fort Jackson agency. These people have a gone above and beyond in order to meet the needs of the community;

requirements:

- Volunteered at Fort Jackson for a minimum of two years.
- Demonstrated continuous, outstanding volunteer service to one or more agencies/organizations throughout the Fort Jackson community.
- Demonstrated a pattern of excellence and achievement to the agency or community that improved the well being at Fort Jackson.
- Service and/or achievement resulted in tangible benefits to the agency or community.

INDICTMENT TO SERVE

Once again, I am thankful for all the hours of service given by our volunteers to the betterment of Fort Jackson and the surrounding community. The reality is that we cannot afford to pay the cost of their contributions. Even still, I encourage everyone to take a look at our post — the services and facilities — to see where there is a need and once you identify the need, let's do something about it. Let's all make our identity as members of Team Jackson be synonymous with the spirit of volunteerism because when we identify problems that affect our post and community, we set out to resolve them. That is who we are and that is why "Victory Starts Here!"

Thank you to all of our Fort Jackson Volunteers from the bottom of my heart.

Victory 6



Photo by WALLACE McBRIDE

Maggie Knowles, left, director of compliance for Harvest Hope Food Bank, gets Soldiers from Fort Jackson started Tuesday morning during their day of volunteer service at the facility.



Follow Brig. Gen. Bryan T. Roberts at www.facebook.com/FortJacksonCommandingGeneral

Post, USC expand partnership

By WALLACE McBRIDE
Fort Jackson Leader

Fort Jackson has a long-standing, if unofficial, partnership with the University of South Carolina. Last Friday, though, the two institutions made their relationship a formal one.

Fort Jackson Commanding General Brig. Gen. Bryan Roberts and USC President Harris Pastides signed a memorandum of understanding during a leadership forum at the Officers' Club. The goal is to thoroughly explore how the installation and the university could fully benefit each other.

"What we would like to do is make sure this partnership becomes more mutually beneficial as we sign the MOA today and decide the way forward," Roberts said during Friday's event. "We're all excited about the possibilities to collaborate with the university in research and development on various topics, and the opportunity to build and strengthen the relationships that we've already started."

"We're here to learn as much as we are to contribute," Pastides said. "We're two of the largest employers in the Midlands. Your welfare is ours, and ours is yours."

Faculty and administrators from both institutions met in break-out sessions Friday to begin discussions about topics such as training, education and quality of life. These are areas that have occasionally brought the university and post into contact with each other, but never for any extended efforts.

"We already have great partnership with USC. They've been spectacular in supporting Soldiers," said Mike Ryan, Fort Jackson's strategic planner. "This forum really solidified the relationship, and created a five-year partnership agreement to look at strengthening our partnership across the board."

"I think it's a good start in defining where we want to go," said Col. Michael Graese, Fort Jackson garrison commander. "We need to define where we want to go, and some of the experts here will enable us to determine what that timeline will look like."

Until Friday, the USC-Fort Jackson partnership was built on individual, informal relationships, Roberts said.

"They're based on someone knowing an email address or phone number," he said. "There's nothing it writing, and it's very informal. What we're doing ... is putting pen to paper and making a firm commitment that we're going to partner and have goals we'll achieve together."

Dr. Prakash Nagarkatti, vice president for research at USC, said South Carolina cannot afford to wait for outside agencies to take an interest in the state's well being.

"There's a common saying that, 'If you build it, they will come.' I would like to state that we should have this concept that, 'They will not come, so you have to build,'" Nagarkatti said. "What I mean by that is that scientists or faculty members working at Harvard, Duke or Johns Hopkins are doing cutting-edge research, but they will not come here to the state of South Carolina to solve our problems. We need to have established partnerships so that we work together and try to solve problems and challenges that are unique to our state and region."

Maybe then, he said, local efforts will begin to attract outside interest.

Pastides said the variety of skill and talent represented by administrators and faculty at last week's meeting will prove to be invaluable to the state. That impact might even



Photo by ANDREW McINTYRE

Brig. Gen. Bryan Roberts, Fort Jackson's commanding general, and Harris Pastides, president of the University of South Carolina, shake hands after signing a memorandum of agreement that formalizes the partnership between Fort Jackson and USC, Friday at the Officers' Club.

have more widespread repercussions, though. USC was represented in discussions by chemical engineers, social workers and professional educators, whereas Fort Jackson was represented by experts in leadership, finance and medicine.

"Everyone in this room is a teacher, a researcher and a scholar," Pastides said. "There are three other major training commands for the Army. Let's make this one the model for a command and flagship public university relationship. Not because we want to brag about it, but because we can spread what we do here to the other Army commands and other great universities."

The post and university are also working along similar lines in regards to energy conservation, said Col. Stephen Yackley, deputy commander of Fort Jackson.

"We're looking at environmental stewardship and energy conservation," he said. "Those are all things that USC is working on, and (a collaboration) can help benefit us in those areas, too."

DENTAC Commander Col. Jamie Houston said he looks forward to collaborative efforts in future medical interests.

"We have a one-year residency program here that we're anxious to talk with the USC science program about, and have (faculty) serve as evaluators for our national competition," he said. "The combining of resources is very important. We don't want duplication of effort if we can avoid it.

We want to combine resources and come up with a product that is better than what we would have had without USC, or vice versa."

Current plans call for the creation of a committee to meet regularly to discuss the post and university's vested interests.

"We need to meet on a regular basis," said Nagarkatti. "It's not enough that we sign the memorandum of understanding and maybe come back next year or two years later. What we've decided to do is form an advisory committee which will have representation from USC and representation from the leadership of Fort Jackson. The committee will meet (regularly) so that whenever there are opportunities or challenges (people) can contact this committee and (the committee members) will find out how they can help."

"We're going to meet every other month and develop a more formalized way to track what we're doing and build on Friday's momentum," Ryan said.

Pastides said the Army's value to the nation extends beyond overseas combat.

"You will be every bit as important to our nation's welfare when we're not fighting wars as when we are," he said. "You have so much to offer our communities and young people in particular, many of whom are aching for the kind of leadership development that you demonstrate here."

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Photos by WALLACE McBRIDE

Volunteer groups from Task Force Marshall and the 120th Adjutant General Battalion (Reception) build boxes Tuesday morning at the Harvest Hope Food Bank. Later, they filled those boxes with food that would later be delivered to needy families in the region.

Soldiers support CityServe volunteer events

By WALLACE McBRIDE
Fort Jackson Leader

Soldiers from Fort Jackson pitched in this week to support a variety of charitable efforts around the Midlands.

It's all part of the One Columbia CityServe Volunteer Support effort, an intensive week of service designed to involve thousands of Columbia citizens across all city domains. Soldiers from Fort Jackson made appearances at a number of CityServe events this week, such as helping to sort books at a Richland County Public Library branch and boxing food at Harvest Hope Food Bank.

"We asked units to find a volunteer effort that matched their interests," said Lt. Col. Charles Krumwiede, Fort Jackson operations officer. "The units and organizations are able to select what they wanted to volunteer and support. That's how you sustain that volunteer spirit — by matching your interest. Maybe members of the units that participated will do it next time and continue that volunteer relationship."

Last weekend, 42 Soldiers with the 187th Ordnance Battalion supported the Bridges Clubhouse at the National Alliance on Mental Illness Walk, while U.S. Army Training Center command helped to shelve and sort books at the Cooper Branch of the Richland County Public Library at the start of the week.

Tuesday afternoon, Soldiers helped to pack dozens of food boxes for Harvest Hope Food Bank. The organization



Sgt. 1st Class Keaton Mintz and Sgt. 1st Class William Nelson, of Task Force Marshall, prepare food delivery boxes at a local food bank.

feeds the hungry in 20 counties of South Carolina, and has distributed more than 28 million pounds of food last year to an estimated 38,000 people a week.

Volunteer groups from Task Force Marshall and the 120th Adjutant General Battalion (Reception) were combined into a single volunteer unit at the food bank.

"This group is packing boxes for our mobile food pantry program," said Maggie Knowles, director of compliance for Harvest Hope Food Bank. "These boxes will go into rural

South Carolina to feed families who cannot get into a food pantry or soup kitchen, usually because of travel problems. Gas is very expensive, and quite often they don't have cars or transportation to get to other service areas."

Soldiers were expected to pack and ship 400 food boxes, she said. The Soldiers were among dozens of volunteers pitching in Tuesday who spent the day sorting through food donations, bagging dried beans, boxing canned goods, helping to complete the day's tasks.

"We don't have enough paid staff," Knowles said. "Volunteers really let us get things done."

"We were told that our company had the chance to help out in the local community," said Sgt. 1st Class Tuesday Swanner, of Task Force Marshall. "We brought as many people from our company as were available to help out."

"We were asked if we wanted to participate, and I just jumped on board," said Staff Sgt. April Rhodes, of Task Force Marshall. "It's interesting to see where the food comes from."

This weekend, volunteers with the 4th Battalion, 10th Infantry Regiment will provide operational support for the U.S.M.C. Mud Run, a benefit run for the Greater Columbia Marine Foundation, which raises money, awareness and support for Marines, veterans, and their families in the Columbia area, the state of South Carolina, and across the nation who have been wounded or killed while serving on active duty.

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Court martial

U.S. V. DIAZ

A military judge accepted Staff Sgt. Raymond Diaz' guilty plea to one charge of failing to obey a lawful regulation (TRADOC 350-6) during a special court-martial April 23.

Diaz was sentenced to 165 days confinement, reduction in rank to E2, and to be reprimanded. Diaz was assigned as a drill sergeant to the 1st Battalion, 13th Infantry Regiment.

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for "Fort Jackson Leader."

Retiree Appreciation Days set

Leader Staff Report

Fort Jackson's annual Retiree Appreciation Days are scheduled for May 16-18.

The event will begin with a continental breakfast at the Officers' Club at 7:30 a.m., May 16. Free refreshments will be served, and buses are available to shuttle participants to Hilton Field for the Salute to Retirees ceremony, which begins at 9 a.m. The ceremony will be part of that day's Basic Combat Training graduation festivities.

The guest speaker at the ceremony will be retired Maj. Gen. Abraham Turner, former commanding general of Fort

Jackson. Retirees who register in advance may also participate in the pass in review.

A golf tournament is scheduled to begin 9 a.m., May 17. That day will also feature an in-store special sale at the Main Exchange from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. and a case lot sale at the Commissary from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Both sales will continue during the same hours May 18.

The annual retiree health and benefits expo is scheduled from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., May 18. Moncrief Army Community Hospital will provide health screening and counseling booths, including blood pressure screening and men's and women's health counseling. A number of oth-

er agencies will be represented as well. Retirees can also take advantage of the ID card services offered at the expo. For more information on ID card services, call 751-3411.

Victory Bingo will offer a special session that includes a free buffet at 1:30 p.m.

A no-tap bowling tournament concludes the festivities. The tournament is scheduled to start 6 p.m. at Century Lanes Bowling Center. Participants can register from 5 to 6 p.m. For more information, call 751-6138.

For more information on Fort Jackson's Retiree Appreciation Days, call 751-6715.

NFL great visits post

Former National Football League and University of Georgia running back Herschel Walker signs a football for Sgt. 1st Class Kareem Mills during Family Day activities Wednesday. Walker visited Fort Jackson to share his personal story and experience with mental illness while delivering the message, 'There is no shame in asking for help, I did.' Walker also addressed community members at the Post Theater and visited Soldiers with the Warrior Transition Unit during his visit.

Photo by ANDREW McINTYRE



SKIES offers unlimited learning, fun

By **KIM WHEELER**
Special to the Leader

When Henry Van Patten gives children swimming lessons, he doesn't think of it as an extracurricular activity — he considers it a matter of life and death.

"These kids are learning a life skill and a life-saving skill," said Van Patten, who has been a water safety instructor on Fort Jackson for seven years and teaches swimming classes to children of all ages through the post's Schools of Knowledge, Inspiration, Exploration and Skill Unlimited program, or SKIESUnlimited. "They learn water safety in conjunction with how to swim."

Van Patten said his students learn swimming fundamentals, but they also learn the American Red Cross's Whale Tales, which include water safety lessons like the importance of wearing a life jacket, identifying safe places to swim, and how to recognize and help a swimmer in trouble.

"Water safety is the first thing I teach, and I give them constant reminding of safety while they are swimming," Van Patten said, adding that all of his lessons are conducted in accordance with ARC standards.

Swimming is not the SKIESUnlimited program's only life-saving class, however. Pam Sorrells, an instructor of

the SKIESUnlimited karate class, credits its martial arts for keeping her alive. The black belt owner said she had heart problems when she began training five years ago. She not only regained her health through karate but also a new direction in life — she and her family bought the dojo where they had trained and now own and operate the Columbia School of Karate.

Sorrells said the Fort Jackson classes offer post children the chance to learn "world-class karate at a great price," but also provide important life lessons.

"(The children) learn discipline, flexibility, mind and body focus, manners, character and integrity," she said. "We walk alongside their parents, who sometimes come to us with issues like grades and discipline problems at home, and help to lead the child."

Sorrells' 19-year-old son, James, trained for 12 years and is the school's primary instructor.

"Character and leadership are part of the requirements here, and if you don't have it, you don't move up," James said. "We are building character and prudence — these are things they will need later in life."

This emphasis on lifelong skills and character development is part of every class offered through Fort Jackson's SKIESUnlimited program, according to its director, Pamela Johnson.

"Through SKIESUnlimited, Fort Jackson children and youth all have equal access to opportunities that expand their knowledge, inspire them, allow them to explore and acquire new skills," Johnson said.

The classes can also provide mili-



Photos by **KIM WHEELER**

Henry Van Patten, water safety instructor for Fort Jackson's SKIESUnlimited program, instructs Serena Martinez, 5, during a swim class at Knight Pool.

tary children the opportunity to connect with each other and offer a sense of stability and continuity — things that are significant in the light of the unique challenges Army families face, Johnson said.

"They deal with frequent moves, deployed parents, as well as parents with non-traditional work hours," she said. "These children and youth can benefit from the SKIESUnlimited programs, because student involvement in a structured out-of-school instructional program is beneficial at all levels in promoting their intellectual development."

SKIESUnlimited's current list of classes includes: Bright SKIES Academy Beginner, Karate, Lil Kickers (Karate), Jujitsu, Tumble Tots, Gymnastics, Pre-Ballet, Creative Movements, Cheer, Dance Combo, Tennis, Swimming, Drivers Education, Golf, and weekly Smart Start sports

classes for 3- to 5-year-olds.

Johnson said classes are continuously added, and the program welcomes suggestions and feedback from community members about classes they would like to see in the future.

SKIESUnlimited classes are open to dependents of active-duty military, National Guard, Reserve, Department of Defense civilians, employees of DoD contractors working on Fort Jackson and retirees. Children must first be registered with Child, Youth and School Services to enroll in a SKIESUnlimited class. Summer classes are open for enrollment.

Call Parent Central at 751-4865 or 751-4824 to register for CYS Services or enroll in a SKIESUnlimited class. Registered children may also sign up for classes online at <https://webtrac.mwr.army.mil/webtrac/Jacksoncym.html>.



Norris Cantrell warms up before a Lil' Kickers karate class. SKIESUnlimited also offers classes in jujitsu, gymnastics, cheer and many other areas.



Brown-belt instructor Shahnaz Sorrells teaches students rising blocks during a SKIESUnlimited Lil' Kickers karate class. Karate is one of many classes offered to Fort Jackson children through SKIESUnlimited.



Photos by ANDREW McINTYRE

Veterans take Honor Flight

Veterans of World War II and the Korean War were greeted by crowds at the Columbia Metropolitan Airport April 17 after returning from a trip to visit the war memorials in Washington. The flight was organized by Honor Flight of South Carolina, a donation-based organization that allows veterans to travel on a daylong trip to Washington free of charge. The veterans were accompanied by volunteer guardians and medical personnel on the trip.



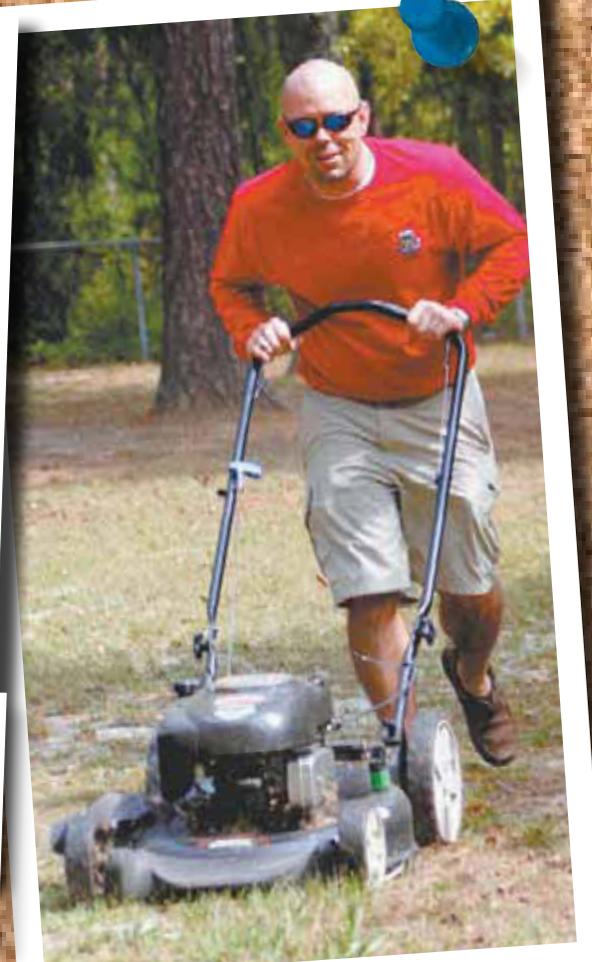
COMMUNITY SNAPSHOTS



Being of service

Courtesy photos

Students with the Adjutant General Warrant Officer Basic Course conduct a community project at one of Fort Jackson's cemeteries. Above, from left, Warrant Officers Michael Seymour, Kha Nguyen and Christina Matlock rake leaves to clear the cemetery's entrance. Right, Warrant Officer Dustin Robinson mows the cemetery lawn.



Spring fling

Scott Benjamin drives the ball down the fairway during the fourth annual 'Spring Fling' golf tournament hosted by the Carolina Chapter of the Adjutant General Corps Regiment, April 12 at the Fort Jackson Golf Course. Nine teams of four players participated in the tournament. The winning team featured, Col. Todd Garlick, commander of the Soldier Support Institute; retired Col. Mike Molosso; retired Col. Al Whatley; and Lt. Col. Ed Allen, director of training at the Adjutant General School.

Courtesy photo

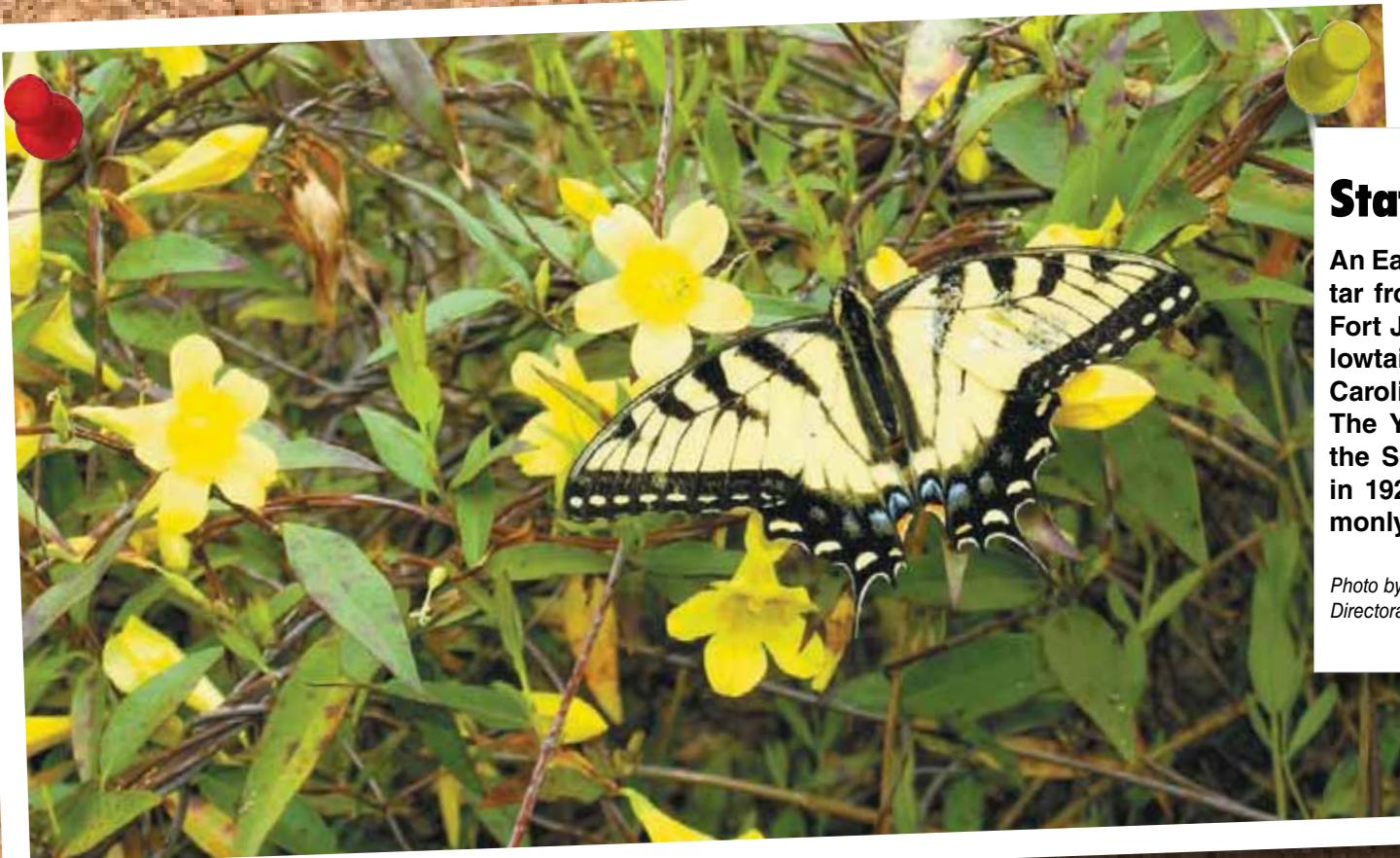
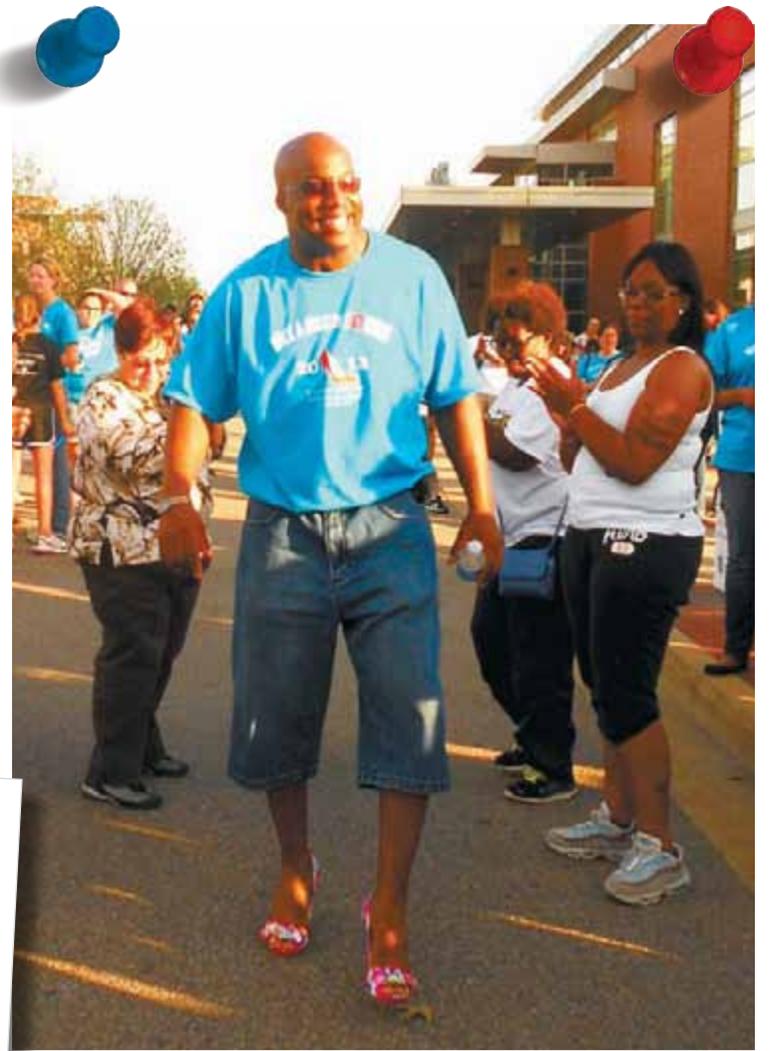
COMMUNITY SNAPSHOTS



Photos by SGT. 1ST CLASS DONNEL CABANOS, Equal Opportunity Office

Walking in her shoes

Above, Soldiers from Fort Jackson show off their footwear during the Walk a Mile in Her Shoes event April 18 in Columbia. During the event, which raises awareness about sexual violence, men complete a walk in women's shoes. Right, Sgt. 1st Class Murphy Terry, the Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention program manager for the Soldier Support Institute, is on his way to pick up the 'Wobblest Walk Award.'



State treasures

An Eastern Swallowtail sips nectar from a Yellow Jessamine on Fort Jackson. The Eastern Swallowtail was adopted as the South Carolina state butterfly in 1994. The Yellow Jessamine became the South Carolina state flower in 1924. Both species are commonly found on Fort Jackson.

*Photo by STANLEY RIKARD,
Directorate of Public Works, Wildlife Branch*

Be vigilant to reduce terror risk

From the Directorate of Emergency Services

Vigilance refers to a condition during which attention must be maintained over a period of time. For those who live and work on Fort Jackson, vigilance means everyday situational awareness.

Terrorists can strike anytime and anywhere. They look for soft targets. A soft target is a person, information source or facility that presents a terrorist with a good chance of a successful attack and low risk of interference by security forces.

People who remain vigilant, practice good personal security habits and alert the proper authorities of suspicious behavior can minimize the chance of a successful attack.

What can people do to reduce the risk of becoming a victim of terrorism? Individual protection and personal safety begins with a proactive mindset about the security environment where a person lives, works, goes to school and travels. Personal security habits that will help prevent you from becoming a victim include understanding the risks associated with your activities and locations, and taking proactive measures to enhance your own safety.

Do not discuss personal information or military mis-

sions in public, on the telephone or on the Internet. Take extra precautions with social media networks (such as Facebook, Twitter and blogs) — avoid posting or providing personal information.

Criminals and terrorists are known to use these forums for open source information gathering and for recruitment. Social media networks do not provide secure communications.

Basic security begins with the home. Make sure your doors and windows lock and exterior lighting functions properly. Children should keep doors and windows locked when home alone.

Be prepared for an emergency that may require your family to “shelter-in-place” or relocate on short notice. Make a family emergency plan and make sure all family members understand what to do in different scenarios.

Participate in a neighborhood watch program to establish a shared responsibility for the safety and security of your community. Maintain situational awareness of your surroundings at all times. Pay particular attention to activity happening around you in order to identify anything unusual.

Above all, remember — if you see something, say something. To report suspicious behavior on Fort Jackson, call the Directorate of Emergency Services at 751-3113/3114/3115.

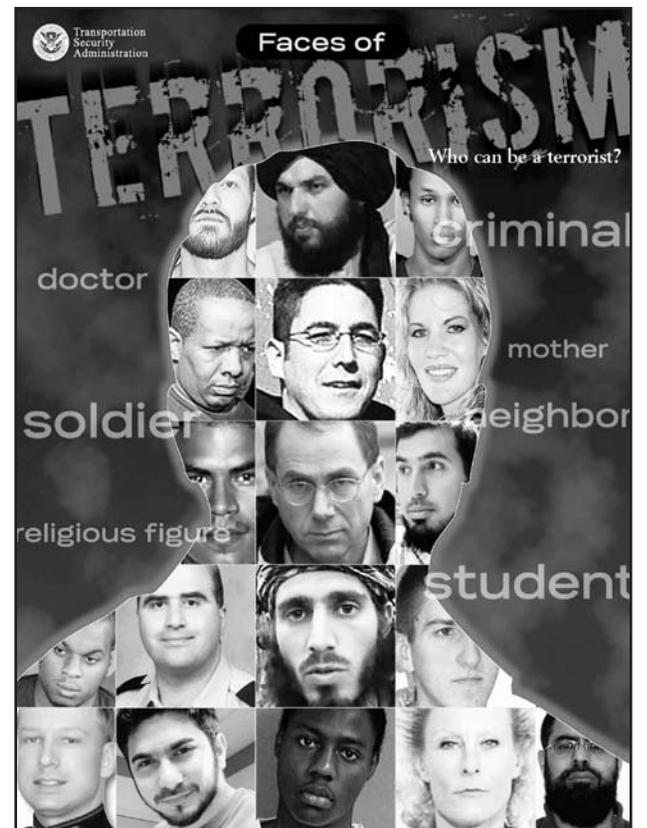


Photo by ANDREW McINTYRE

Roadrunners reunion

Veterans who fought with the 1st Battalion, 61st Infantry Regiment in Vietnam are honored during the battalion's Basic Combat Training graduation April 18 at Hilton Field. During their visit, the veterans also observed training events and met with installation leaders.

Native grasses reintroduced to post

By **STANLEY RIKARD**

Directorate of Public Works, Wildlife Branch

Since European settlers began to colonize North America, humans have converted native warm-season grasslands into crop production and have introduced cool-season grasses such as red fescue and annual ryegrass. In particular, across the southeastern United States, there has been a significant decrease in native grassland ecosystems.

Acres of native longleaf pine with warm-season grassland understories have significantly diminished with remaining areas being highly fragmented. It is estimated that since Europeans arrived, old growth longleaf pine habitat has decreased from 90 million acres to approximately 3 million acres. Along with this loss of habitat, extensive areas that once supported native grassland understories have disappeared.

Native warm-season grasses are naturally adapted to the local climate and are better suited for soils and rainfall conditions in the Southeast. These species require less water and fertilizer than cool-season grasses and are more resistant to diseases. In addition, these grasses provide food and shelter for many reptiles, songbirds, and other game animals, such as fox squirrels, eastern wild turkeys, northern bobwhites and white-tailed deer.

In addition to providing food and cover for animal species, native grasses with their deep root systems are ideal for holding soil in place. They help prevent erosion by decreasing storm water runoff and allow for water to seep into the soil replenishing ground water. Once established, these plants reseed and prorogate themselves.

Native warm-season grasses provide a relatively low-maintenance land cover alternative that is extremely beneficial to both landowners and wildlife. The benefits to wildlife from warm-season grasses far surpass the initial investment of time and money to plant and establish them.

Biologists in the Fort Jackson Wildlife Branch recognized the importance and decline of warm-season grasslands and decided to start a program to plant these species on the installation. Sites were selected primarily on an absence of competing vegetation beneath existing pine overstory and where soils had been exposed from timber management practices.

In Training Areas 26 and 27, a recent timber thinning operation left log loading decks and timber skid trails barren of groundcover vegetation. The pines had been



Photo by STANLEY RIKARD, Directorate of Public Works, Wildlife Branch

Caleb Gaston, a wildlife technician with the Directorate of Public Works, prepares to apply seeds of native grasses in one of Fort Jackson's training areas. The planting was part of an effort to improve Fort Jackson's vegetation by reintroducing native grasses to the installation.

thinned allowing ample sunlight to penetrate to the forest floor. Areas of bare soil had been exposed making a suitable seed bed for native warm-season grass seed.

"We carefully selected a seed mixture that contained native species found in our region," explained Nicole Hawkins, a wildlife biologist with the Directorate of Public Works. "Some of these species included little bluestem, indiagrass, Virginia wildrye, purpletop, switchgrass and big bluestem. Also included in the mix were lanceleaf coreopsis, spotted beebalm, and blackeyed Susan to add some native wildflowers for pollinators."

Broadcasting the seed onto the selected sites was accomplished using a cyclone seed spreader mounted on the back of an all-terrain vehicle. The seed was measured by weight and applied at a rate of five pounds per acre. All

applications were made in mid to late April within days of rainfall.

"We used equipment that was already owned by the Wildlife Branch, so nothing other than the seed mix itself needed to be purchased," said Caleb Gaston, DPW wildlife technician. "At first, we had difficulty getting the light fluffy seed to pass through the seed spreader. Through experimentation we learned that mixing the seed with pelletized lime allowed the mixture to pass through the spreader at an even broadcast rate."

All sites were mapped using GPS, and photos were taken for reference purposes. The peak growth periods of these mostly perennial bunch grasses are from June through August. During this time period, each planted site will be revisited to observe and record plant growth.

VA expedites long-standing claims

From the Department of Veterans Affairs

WASHINGTON — The Veterans Affairs Department is expediting compensation claims decisions for veterans who have waited one year or longer, VA officials announced Friday.

Effective last Monday, VA claims raters will make provisional decisions on the oldest claims on hand, officials said, which will allow veterans to begin collecting compensation benefits more quickly, if eligible.

Veterans will be able to submit additional evidence for consideration a full year after the provisional rating, before VA issues a final decision.

“Too many veterans wait too long for a decision, and this has never been acceptable,” said VA Secretary Eric Shinseki. “That is why we are implementing an aggressive plan to eliminate the backlog in 2015. This initiative is the right thing to do now for veterans who have waited the longest.”

Provisional decisions will be based on all evidence provided to date by the veteran or obtained on his or her behalf by VA. If a VA medical examination is needed to decide the claim, it will be ordered and expedited.

“Issuing provisional decisions not only provides

veterans with applicable benefits much more quickly, but also gives them an additional one-year safety net to submit further evidence should it become available,” said Allison Hickey, VA’s undersecretary for benefits. “Our door will remain open, and if a veteran has additional evidence, (the) case will be fast-tracked.”

If any increase is determined to be warranted based on the additional evidence received, benefits will be retroactive to the date the claim was initially filed. The initiative protects the veteran’s right to appeal the decision. If no further evidence is received within that year, VA’s Veterans Benefits Administration will inform the veteran that the rating is final and will provide information on the standard appeals process.

VA will continue to prioritize claims for homeless veterans and those claiming financial hardship, the terminally ill, former prisoners of war, Medal of Honor recipients and veterans filing fully developed claims.

Claims for wounded warriors separating from the military for medical reasons will continue to be handled separately and on a priority basis with the Defense Department through the Integrated Disability Evaluation System. Wounded warriors separating through IDES currently receive VA compensation benefits in an average

of 61 days following their separation from service.

As a result of this initiative, metrics used to track benefits claims will experience significant fluctuations, officials said. The focus on processing the oldest claims will cause the overall measure of the average length of time to complete a claim — currently 286 days — to skew, rising significantly in the near term because of the number of old claims that will be completed, they explained.

Over time, they added, as the backlog of oldest claims is cleared and more of the incoming claims are processed electronically through VA’s new paperless processing system, VA’s average time to complete claims will improve significantly. In addition, the “average days pending” metric — or the average age of a claim in the inventory — will decrease, because the oldest claims will no longer be part of the inventory.

While compensation claims are pending, eligible veterans are able to receive health care and other benefits from VA. Veterans who have served in recent conflicts are eligible for five years of free health care from VA. More than 55 percent of returning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans are using VA health care, officials said, a rate greater than that of previous generations of veterans.

LEADER DEADLINES

Article submissions are due two weeks before publication.

For example, an article for the May 9 Leader must be submitted by today.

Announcement submissions are due one week before publication.

For example, an announcement for the May 9 Leader must be submitted by May 2.

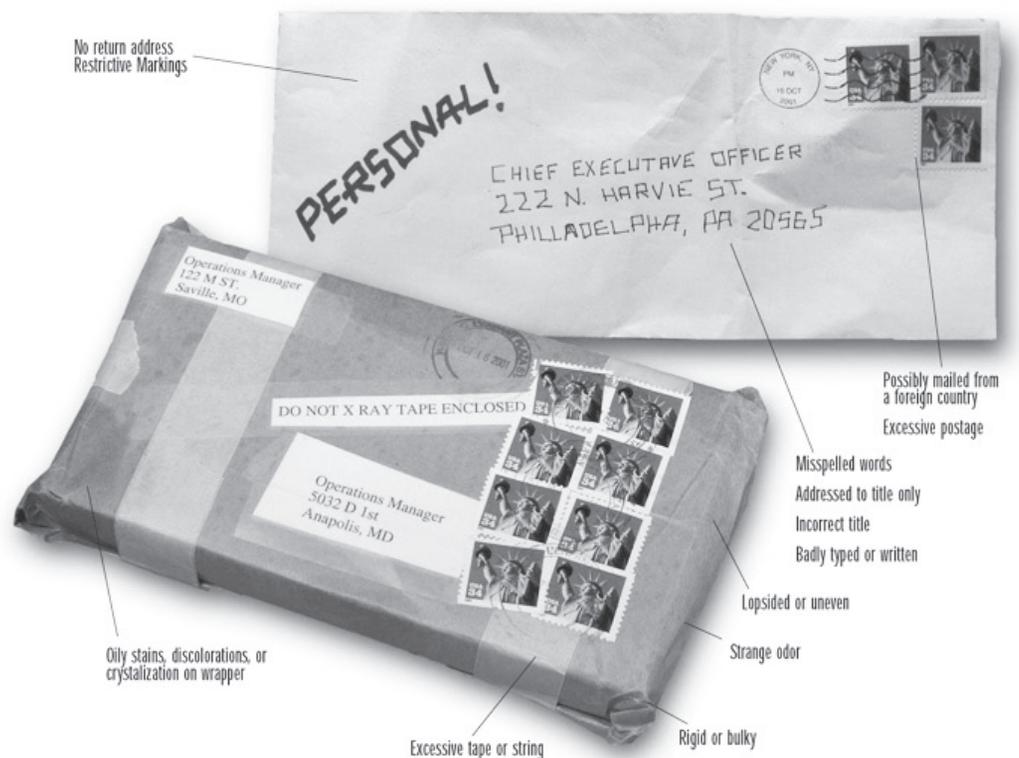
Send your submissions to FJLeader@gmail.com.

For more information, call 751-7045.



FORCE PROTECTION THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

If you receive a suspicious letter or package:



- 1 Handle with care. Don't shake or bump.
- 2 Isolate it immediately
- 3 Don't open, smell, touch or taste.
- 4 Treat it as suspect. Call local law enforcement authorities

If a parcel is open and/or a threat is identified . . .

For a Bomb:

Evacuate Immediately
Call Police
Contact Postal Inspectors
Call Local Fire Department/HAZMAT Unit

For Radiological:

Limit Exposure - Don't Handle
Evacuate Area
Shield Yourself From Object
Call Police
Contact Postal Inspectors
Call Local Fire Department/HAZMAT Unit

For Biological or Chemical:

Isolate - Don't Handle
Evacuate Immediate Area
Wash Your Hands With Soap and Warm Water
Call Police
Contact Postal Inspectors
Call Local Fire Department/HAZMAT Unit

Academic help is only a mouse click away

From www.tutor.com

The pressure is on for military students and their parents as we reach the final months of school and everything that comes with them — standardized tests, end-of-term papers and final exams. One way to decrease your family's stress levels and improve your children's grades is with personalized tutoring offered online and at no cost to children in military families.

All Kindergarten through Grade 12 students in eligible U.S. military families can access Tutor.com for U.S. Military Families (www.tutor.com/military), an official Department of Defense authorized program.

Available any time, any day, this DoD-funded re-

source provides expert tutoring in all core school subjects. Tutor.com allows students to work one-to-one with a live tutor online for help with homework, studying, test preparation, proofreading, essay-writing and more. Instant, on-demand expert support is available in all core subjects, including algebra, geometry, calculus, physics, earth science, language arts, history and AP-level courses.

Tutor.com is staffed by more than 2,500 carefully-screened experts who are available to work one-to-one with a student online. With an Internet-enabled computer or handheld mobile device, students can connect to a tutor any time, any day from anywhere — no appointment needed. The student and tutor work together in a secure

and anonymous online classroom that features an interactive whiteboard, file sharing and instant messaging.

Students of all skill levels can benefit from using Tutor.com. Students can work with tutors for step-by-step help with homework assignments or simply ask a tutor to double-check their work. Parents of younger students can log in to Tutor.com and work alongside their children. Advanced students can get help with more challenging classes. Feedback collected from Tutor.com users shows that students who use Tutor.com are more confident in their schoolwork, complete more homework assignments and are improving their grades.

For more information and to create an account, visit www.tutor.com/military.

Career day

Sgt. Maj. Christopher Fletcher, Third Army/ARCENT public affairs sergeant major, talks to students at Lakewood High School in Sumter. Educators from the school invited local professionals to participate in the second annual Ninth Grade High School Assessment Program, April 16.

Photo by
SPC. SHARMAIN BURCH,
Third Army/ARCENT



Calendar

Friday

Volunteer Recognition Reception

10 a.m., Solomon Center
Volunteers will be recognized in four categories, Youth, Retiree, Active Duty Military and Family Member/Civilian, and a Hall of Fame member will be inducted.

Sergeant Audie Murphy Club Induction ceremony

1:30 p.m., Post Theater

Saturday

National Prescription Drug Take Back Day

10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Main Exchange
Members of the Fort Jackson community can dispose of unused or expired prescription drugs during National Prescription Drug Take Back Day.

Tuesday

Motivational speaker at luncheon

11:30 a.m., Officers' Club
Ridley Barron, author and motivational speaker, will address the community at a luncheon. Tickets are free and limited. For tickets, see your unit ministry team, your unit sergeant major or call 751-4778/4173.

Thursday, May 2

HIRE! Apprenticeship program Orientation and interest meeting

6 to 7:30 p.m., Youth Center
For more information, visit www.fortjacksonmwr.com/yss/hired or call 751-1136.

Wednesday, May 8

Fort Jackson Retired Officers Wives Luncheon

11:30 a.m., Officers' Club.
Reservations and cancellations must be completed by May 3. Call 783-1220 or 788-5084 for more information.

Sunday, May 12

American Girl in Paris tea party

2 to 4 p.m., Joe E. Mann Center.
For more information and to make reservations, call 751-3053.

Monday, May 13

Military Spouse Appreciation Day

11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Solomon Center.
Military spouses are treated to a spa day that includes mini makeovers, mini manicures, gifts, lunch and the performance of the skit, "The Basic Black Dress." For more information, call 751-7220.

Announcements

FCC PROVIDERS NEEDED

The Family Child Care office is accepting applications for FCC providers. The program is recruiting the best-qualified applicants, especially those willing to provide full-time care for children younger than 2. Military spouses living on Fort Jackson and off-post providers registered with the Department of Social Services

may apply. For more information, call 751-6234.

4-10TH ORGANIZATION DAY

The 4th Battalion, 10th Infantry Regiment's organization day is scheduled from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., May 3 at Weston Lake. Soldiers and families are invited to attend.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS VOLUNTEERS

Fort Jackson will host the Special Olympics Summer Games on May 3-4, and volunteers are needed. Volunteer opportunities are available for youth, retirees, family members, civilians and active duty military. Visit www.so.sc.org for more information.

SPORTS BRIEFS

■ Volleyball: The men's active duty championship games are scheduled for 6:15 and 6:45 p.m., Monday at Coleman Gym. The co-ed championship game is scheduled for 7:45 p.m., Wednesday at Coleman Gym.

■ A softball captains' meeting is scheduled for 5 p.m., Wednesday at the Hilton Field Softball Complex.

■ The strongman/strongwoman competition is scheduled for 6 p.m., May 16 at Hilton Field Softball Complex. All participants must weigh in from 3 to 4 p.m., May 15.

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

The Virginia Military Institute Foundation, through the 100th Infantry Division/Henry Williams Jr., is offering two scholarships awards to qualifying Soldiers. If you are an active duty career NCO (E5 or E6) and you are stationed at Fort Jackson, get an application from the Army Education Center, Building 4600, Room A100, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Applications must be submitted no later than June 1.

RETIREMENT CEREMONY

The next Third Army/ARCENT Retirement ceremony takes place 2 p.m. today at Patton Hall.

MEMBERSHIP LUNCHEON

The Association of the U.S. Army, Fort Jackson — Palmetto State Chapter, will host a membership luncheon noon, May 20, at the Officers' Club. The cost for lunch is \$10, and Lt. Col. Vincent K. Brooks will be guest speaker. For reservations, contact Sylvia Butler at sbbutler@bellsouth.net.

SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

Fort Jackson is supporting Sexual Assault Awareness Month by hosting a Denim Day walk from 11:40 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Friday at Semmes Lake.

CHAPTER SEEKS MEMBERS

The newest chapter of the Transportation Corps Regimental Association (Patton Chapter) is currently being organized in South Carolina and Georgia. For more information, email Clifford.K.Crawford.

mil@mail.mil or Stacy.K.Mebane.mil@mail.mil.

TARP BRIEFINGS

Annual Threat Awareness and Reporting Program briefings will be offered the third Tuesday of every month at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. at the Post Theater. For more information, call 751-7852/3366/3802.

RICHLAND ONE TRANSFERS

Parents requesting a student transfer to a new school in Richland One School District must apply by Wednesday. For more information, call 231-6944 or visit www.richlandone.org.

RED CROSS SUMMER YOUTH CHAIR

The Fort Jackson Red Cross station is looking for a summer youth chairperson. The position begins in mid-May and ends in early August. For more information, call 751-4329 or email jacksonredcross@yahoo.com.

PAALS VIP PROGRAM

Palmetto Animal Assisted Life Services (PAALS) is offering trained dogs for adoption by veterans. These will not be public access service dogs. For more information, call 920-0042.

SAT, ACT TESTING

The Fort Jackson Education Center will administer SAT testing May 3 and June 7. ACT testing is scheduled for May 10 and June 14. Testing is available to eligible service members only. For more information and to register, call 751-5341.

LIFEGUARD CLASSES

Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation is offering lifeguard certification classes every month. For more information, call Amanda Orduno at 751-4796.

FREE CAREER TEST

Every Tuesday in April, military spouses can visit the ACS Employment Readiness Office and meet with a certified global career development facilitator to talk about career and education goals. Contact 751-4862 for more information.

CAREER AWARENESS EXPO

A Career Awareness Expo will be held 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., Tuesday at Room B-110 of the Education Center. To preregister for the event, call 751-4862.

THRIFT SHOP NEWS

■ Summer hire applications may be turned in through May 16.

■ The Golden Carriage Program provides free ball gowns for spouses of active-duty service members E5 and below.

■ The Thrift Shop is looking for new board members for the 2013-2014 year. The commitment is for one year, with board meetings scheduled once each month.

RED CROSS YOUTH VOLUNTEERS

The Fort Jackson Red Cross station is accepting applications for summer youth volunteers. Applications can be picked up

at the Red Cross office from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., weekdays. For more information, call 751-4329 or email Jacksonredcross@yahoo.com.

Visit the community calendar at www.jackson.army.mil for a full listing of calendar events. Send your announcements to fjleader@gmail.com. Announcements are due one week before the publication date.

For more information, call 751-7045.

Community announcements may be edited to comply with Leader style.

Housing happenings

HOME BASED BUSINESSES

Approval from Balfour Beatty and Directorate of Emergency Services Solicitor's Permit is required in order to operate a home-based business on post. Depending on your business, a state license might be required.

AGREEMENT TO LEASE

An agreement to lease should include the amount of rent to be paid, the date of the payment and rights and obligations of the tenant and the landlord. It is illegal to include any conditions that require the tenant to give up any rights under the law. To have your lease reviewed by a housing counselor, call 751-5788/7566/9323.

NEIGHBORHOOD HUDDLE

A neighborhood huddle with the garrison commander for residents of Pierce Terrace 1 through 4 and PT 6 is scheduled for noon to 1 p.m., today at the Community Center. Lunch will be provided.

YARD OF THE MONTH

This year's Yard of the Month program will begin Wednesday. Winning homeowners will be publicly recognized and are eligible for prizes. Visit the Self Help Center to check out lawn and garden tools. The center is located on Ivy Road and is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. For more information, call 787-6416

TIKI THURSDAY

Purchase a 2013 Palmetto Falls Water Park Pass 4 to 7 p.m., Wednesday at 2011 prices at the Tiki Thursday Summer kick-off event at the Community Center. The offer is only good for active duty Soldiers, retirees and DoD civilians.

RECYCLING

Glass cannot be disposed of in blue recycle bins and must be placed in white igloos located throughout housing.

HOUSING FOR RETIREES, CIVILIANS

Military retirees and DoD retirees are eligible to live in on-post housing. For more information, call 738-8275.

MAYORS NEEDED

The Mayoral Council is looking for volunteers to serve as mayors in the housing community. Child care is provided while performing mayoral duties. Interested residents should call Vicki Greer at 751-7567.

Saluting this Basic Combat Training cycle's honorees

DRILL SERGEANTS OF THE CYCLE



**Staff Sgt.
Ryan Smith**
Company A
2nd Battalion,
13th Infantry Regiment

**SOLDIER LEADER
OF THE CYCLE**

Pvt. Jasmine Jenkins

SOLDIER OF THE CYCLE

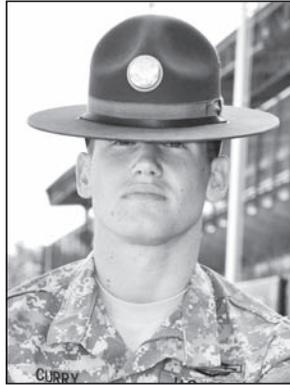
Spc. Michael Fuelling

HIGH APFT SCORE

Pfc. Amber Miller

HIGH BRM

Pvt. Kristopher Gomon



**Staff Sgt.
Paul Curry**
Company B
2nd Battalion,
13th Infantry Regiment

**SOLDIER LEADER
OF THE CYCLE**

Pvt. Chaniva Christopher

SOLDIER OF THE CYCLE

Pvt. Monique Larrieu

HIGH APFT SCORE

Pvt. Joseph Jervell

HIGH BRM

Pfc. Jacob Whetham



**Sgt. 1st Class
Charles Vaughn**
Company C
2nd Battalion,
13th Infantry Regiment

**SOLDIER LEADER
OF THE CYCLE**

Pfc. Kathryn Turner

SOLDIER OF THE CYCLE

Pvt. Anthoni Rubal

HIGH APFT SCORE

Pvt. Anthoni Rubal

HIGH BRM

Pvt. Dustin McDonnell



**Sgt. 1st Class
Tarras Ray**
Company D
2nd Battalion,
13th Infantry Regiment

**SOLDIER LEADER
OF THE CYCLE**

Pfc. Melvin Edmondson

SOLDIER OF THE CYCLE

Pvt. Matthew Schweizer

HIGH APFT SCORE

Pvt. Jonathan Parker

HIGH BRM

Pfc. Nikolaus Mowrer



**Staff Sgt.
Henry Daniel**
Company E
2nd Battalion,
13th Infantry Regiment

**SOLDIER LEADER
OF THE CYCLE**

Pvt. Jace Zeeman

SOLDIER OF THE CYCLE

Pfc. Ebony Delli

HIGH APFT SCORE

Pvt. Jace Zeeman

HIGH BRM

Pfc. Ebony Delli



**Sgt. 1st Class
William Harley III**
Company F
2nd Battalion,
13th Infantry Regiment

**SOLDIER LEADER
OF THE CYCLE**

Spc. Timothy Savidge

SOLDIER OF THE CYCLE

Pvt. Cowden Farley

HIGH APFT SCORE

Pvt. Jennifer Apel

HIGH BRM

Spc. Timothy Savidge

Weekly honors



PRIETO

**Spc.
Sandra Prieto**
Soldier of the week
Third Army/ARCENT

**Staff Sgt.
Bradford Griffith**
Drill sergeant of the cycle
Company A
Task Force Marshall



HOWE

**Staff Sgt.
Charles Howe**
Range cadre of the week
4th Battalion, 10th Infantry Regiment

**Sgt. 1st Class
Rex Towery**
Drill sergeant of the cycle
Company B
Task Force Marshall



GRIFFITH

**Staff Sgt.
Shanell Garrett**
Drill sergeant leader of the cycle
Drill Sergeant School

**Staff Sgt.
Jeffrey Ellis**
Distinguished honor graduate
Drill Sergeant School



TOWERY

**Staff Sgt.
Christian Budeshesky**
Leadership and physical fitness
awards
Drill Sergeant School



GARRETT



ELLIS



BUDESHEFSKY

Follow the Leader on Twitter at www.twitter.com/fortjacksonpao.