

# FREEDOM FEST

July 2 ★ 4-10 pm

Admission is Free



- ★ Fireworks
  - ★ 98th Army Silver Wings Band
  - ★ Local & Regional Vendors
  - ★ Food & Activities
  - ★ Static Displays
  - ★ Rides & Children's Inflatables
- (Tickets and ambands are available for purchase.)*

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC—GATE ACCESS BADGE REQUIRED

ARMY FLYER





PHOTO BY NATHAN PFAU

Sgt. Ted E. Bear shows off his patriotism right before Freedom Fest. For more on Bear's history, see Pages 14-15.

# ARMYFLIER

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# Freedom Fest

## Schedule of Events

(all times are approximate)

### Vendor Field

4-10 p.m. – Food and craft vendors open

### Rides Field

4-10 p.m. – Rides operate (fees vary, some activities may close early)

### Kids Fun Zone

4-9 p.m. – Kids Confidence Course (free)

4-9 p.m. – Inflatable Fun World (fees apply)

### Main Stage Field

7 p.m. – Opening remarks

7 p.m. – Historic and national colors posted, and national anthem

7:10 p.m. – Commanding general's welcome

7:15 p.m. – Tribute to Fallen Heroes

7:20-8 p.m. – 98th Army "Silver Wings" Band first set

8:10-9 p.m. – 98th Army "Silver Wings" Band patriotic concert

9 p.m. – Fireworks

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# Freedom Fest features food, fun, music

By **Jeremy Henderson**  
Army Flier Staff Writer

Freedom Fest returns to the Fort Rucker Festival Fields July 2 with food, live music, fun for all ages and one of the best fireworks displays in the Wiregrass.

Kristi Fink, Directorate of Family, and Morale, Welfare and Recreation special events coordinator, said the annual event is the perfect opportunity for Soldiers and families to celebrate the nation's independence and experience a full day of local entertainment.

"It's an awesome event," she said. "There is something for everyone to enjoy, from the kids' activities to the static displays to the 98th Army Band – and we'll finish it off with a spectacular fireworks display."

Activities begin at 4 p.m. and the 30-minute fireworks display begins around 9 p.m. The event's opening remarks are scheduled for 7 p.m. and the 98th Army "Silver Wings" Band is scheduled to take the stage at 7:10 p.m.

W01 Daniel Parker, 98th Army Band com-

mander, said the band's performance will contain a little bit of everything.

"The band has two diverse sets of great popular music to entertain the crowd," he said. "The first set will feature country, classic rock, pop and funk hits from the Vietnam Era to present day. To energize the crowd and honor our nation, the second set will feature a variety of patriotic tunes leading up to fireworks. The whole evening will be a true production celebrating the rich heritage and bright future of this great nation."

For more on the band, see Page 6.

According to Fink, attendees can play laser tag this year and view new static displays in addition to the usual full plate of family-friendly activities.

"We have kids' activities like zip line, laser tag, pony rides, inflatables, etc.," she said. "The Fun World contains 16 different inflatables that patrons can purchase tickets for at a cost of \$1 each, or armbands for \$10 each or \$8 each if two or more are purchased."

Food vendors range from funnel cakes and fried Oreos to roasted corn and barbecue,



PHOTO BY NATHAN PFAU

The 98th Army "Silver Wings" Band performs at last year's Freedom Fest.

Fink said.

Freedom Fest is open to the public, but a post access badge is required for those with no military ID.

Also, there are certain items that are prohibited from being brought onto the installation during Freedom Fest, which include: coolers, backpacks, pets, fireworks of any

kind, glass containers, weapons of any kind, bicycles, scooters and skateboards.

Family members with medical needs or small children and babies will be allowed to bring bags for medical items or baby care items, which will be checked and tagged before entering the festival fields.

For more information, call 255-1749.

## FORT RUCKER AREA Job Fair

The 12th annual Fort Rucker Area Job Fair will be held July 15 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Enterprise High School Gymnasium. This event will be hosted by Fort Rucker Soldier for Life Transition Assistance and Fort Rucker Army Community Service.

The fair is open to the public and free to all job seekers. Representatives from government contractors, employment agencies, the federal government and local companies will be there.


Workshops will be conducted prior to job fair, including: resume writing, interviewing skills and personal branding. Bring your resumes, be prepared to

be interviewed, and dress for success.


For more information, call 255-2558 or 255-1117.




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# SAFETY 1ST

## *Post access rules change to keep Fort Rucker secure*

By **Nathan Pfau**  
Army Flier Staff Writer

As thousands in the Wiregrass prepare to celebrate the nation's independence this year, new security measures on Fort Rucker will change the way folks access post during one of the most popular events of the year – Freedom Fest.

Freedom Fest is scheduled for July 2 from 4-10 p.m. at the Fort Rucker Festival Fields. And as military installations across the U.S. increase force protection measures, Fort Rucker is no exception, said Chief Marcel Dumais, Fort Rucker chief of police, adding that safety is the main priority.

"As it stands right now, people who will be allowed to enter the installation during Freedom Fest are going to be Department of Defense ID card holders and anyone

who possesses a pass," said the police chief. "There will not be any visitor control center operations that day (July 2), and it won't be like it was in years past where we open up entry procedures for the Wiregrass community to come on."

Dumais said the increased security is due to the increased security across Army installations, and although Fort Rucker has no direct threat, he said the precautions are necessary.

"Safety comes first. The force protection level being raised is based on a threat level that's been determined, which tells us that we need to increase our security posture," he said. "There is no directed or targeted threat to Fort Rucker, but a general threat-level increase across Army installations, so we're being prudent and upping our security measures."

Normal security measures that have been in place in the past will also remain in place. The event will have police patrols across the installation, as well as increased security throughout the venue to ensure the site is secure for the day of festivities, said Dumais. Emergency Medical Service and the Fort Rucker Fire Department will also be on hand as a response team in the event of an emergency.

To help ensure a safe and secure Freedom Fest, Dumais also asked that people remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity.

"If you see something, say something," he said. "If something looks suspicious or doesn't look quite right, don't just drive away or walk away without saying something.

Give us a call and we'll send someone out there to see what it is. It's always better to be safe than sorry."

Understanding there is a new step in visiting the installation this year, post officials hope that won't keep folks from coming out.

"We're looking forward to a great Freedom Fest this year, and hope the Wiregrass will come out to enjoy the band and the fireworks like they do every year," he said.

"We ask that anyone who will be coming out to celebrate safely," said Dumais. "We truly want all the people who join us in celebrating our Nation's Birthday to come and have a good time."

To report suspicious activity, call 255-2222.

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PHOTO BY NATHAN PFAU

Warrant officer candidates from the Warrant Officer Career College help a child through an obstacle at the WOCC confidence course set up at last year's Freedom Fest.



**SPLASH!**

PHOTO BY NATHAN PFAU

Before Freedom Fest, check out Fort Rucker's SPLASH! Pool and Spray Park. SPLASH! Pool and Spray Park is open 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Daily and season passes can be purchased at SPLASH!, MWR Central and the Fort Rucker physical fitness centers. SPLASH! is open to the public. SPLASH! is also available for parties from 5:30-9:30 p.m., with a two-hour minimum. For more information, call 255-9162.

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# 2 FOR 1

## *Band set to celebrate USA*

**Army Flier**  
*Staff Report*

It's time for Freedom Fest, complete with funnel cakes, bouncy houses and fireworks show, and the musical aspect of the day is warming up horns and drums to ensure the show July 2 is one to remember.

Members of the 98th Army "Silver Wings" Band say they are ready to put on a spectacular show on the festival fields for all to enjoy, and they hope people will have as much fun as they will, because they love what they do.

The 98th Army "Silver Wings" Band takes the stage at 7 p.m. to entertain the crowd until the fireworks begin. W01 Daniel Parker, 98th Army Band commander, said the band's performance will contain a little bit of everything.

"The band has two diverse sets of great popular music to entertain the crowd," he said. "The first set will feature country, classic rock, pop and funk hits from the Vietnam

Era to present day. To energize the crowd and honor our nation, the second set will feature a variety of patriotic tunes leading up to fireworks. The whole evening will be a true production celebrating the rich heritage and bright future of this great nation."

Staff Sgt. Christine Permenter, 98th Army Band vocalist, said Freedom Fest is always a special opportunity for the band.

"Freedom Fest is the 'Silver Wings' Band's most visible and well-attended musical engagement, drawing concert-goers from Fort Rucker and all throughout the Wiregrass," she said. "It's always an honor to entertain so many people in the area."

Sgt. James Old, 98th Army Band vocalist, guitarist and trumpet player, said a great deal of time is dedicated to perfecting the band's performance for Freedom Fest.

"Preparing for Freedom Fest entails a tremendous amount of time, planning, and rehearsals for both musical and non-

SEE BAND, PAGE A7



PHOTOS BY SPC. KALEB FULK

Staff Sgt. Christine Permenter, 98th "Silver Wings" Army Band vocalist, rehearses for the upcoming 2015 Freedom Fest performance.



Sgt. Shanti Champan, keyboardist, rehearses for the upcoming 2015 Freedom Fest performance.

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# Band: Performance

## honors Gold Star Families

*Continued from Page 6*

musical aspects of the production,” he said. “Preparation began nearly six months ago, with all phases of the process conceived and implemented by the Soldier musicians on stage. Band members spend countless hours not only selecting and practicing music for the show, but also conceptualizing and executing several other ideas like staging, lighting, sound and video.”

The band’s performance will also contain its annual salute to Gold Star Families.

“Each year, Survivor Outreach Services sets aside a moment in the program for a

tribute to the ‘Gold Star Families’ in attendance,” he said. “These families and their fallen loved ones paid the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. The 98th Army ‘Silver Wings’ Band is honored to have the opportunity to pay tribute to these families through music. This year’s musical selection honors those families and the memories of their loved ones in uniform.”

For more information on the band and future performances, visit [www.facebook.com/98thArmyBand](http://www.facebook.com/98thArmyBand).

Freedom Fest is open to the public, but a post access badge is required for those with no military ID.



PHOTO BY SPC. KALEB FULK

Sgt. Tomas Reyes, 98th "Silver Wings" Army Band guitarist, practices his licks for the upcoming 2015 Freedom Fest performance.



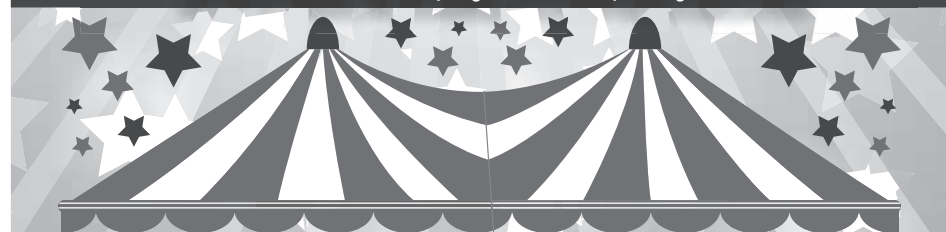
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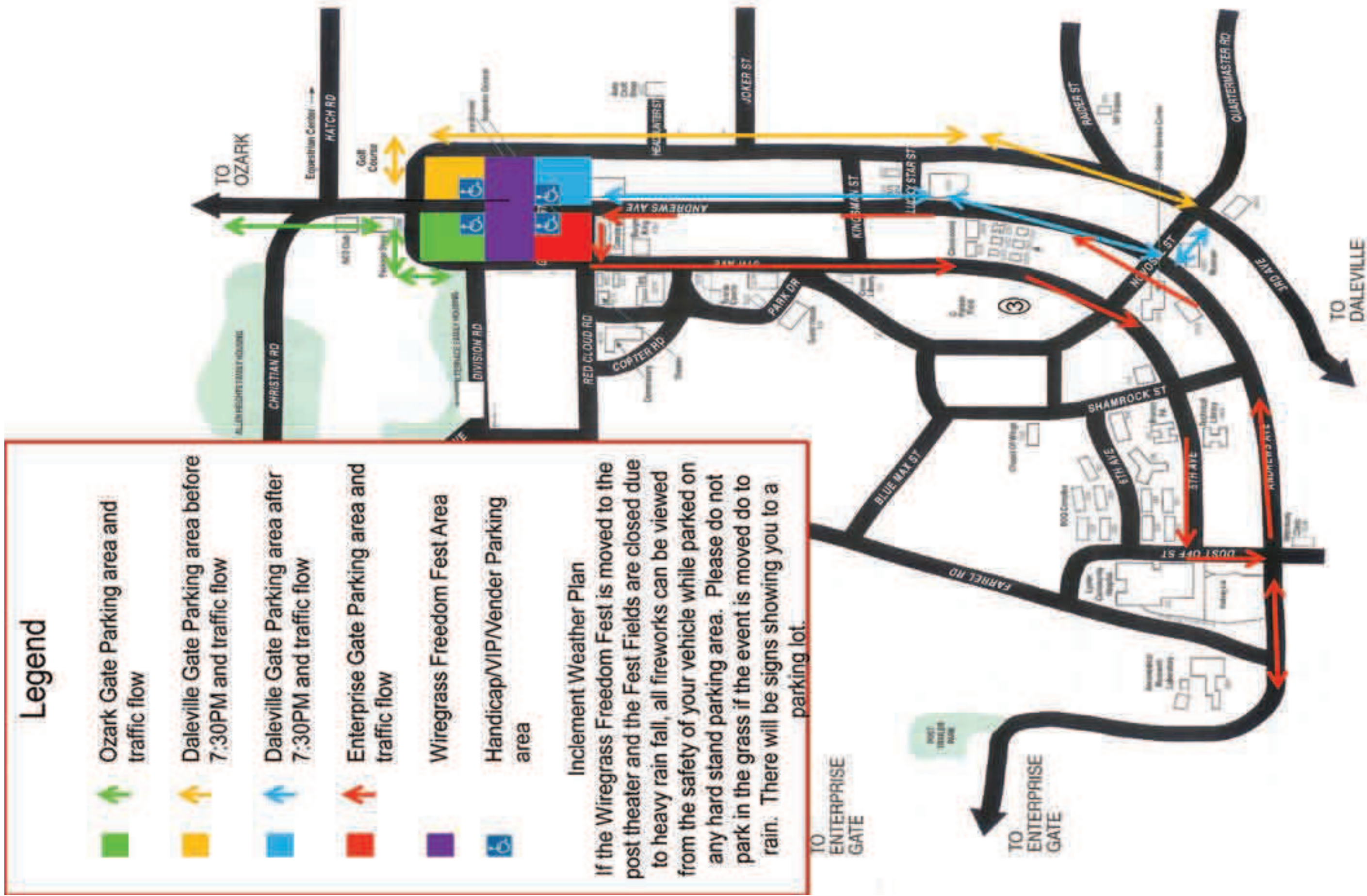
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# FREEDOM FEST 2015 PARKING



## Legend

- Ozark Gate Parking area and traffic flow
- Daleville Gate Parking area before 7:30PM and traffic flow
- Daleville Gate Parking area after 7:30PM and traffic flow
- Enterprise Gate Parking area and traffic flow
- Wiregrass Freedom Fest Area
- Handicap/VIP/Vender Parking area

### Inclement Weather Plan

If the Wiregrass Freedom Fest is moved to the post theater and the Fest Fields are closed due to heavy rain fall, all fireworks can be viewed from the safety of your vehicle while parked on any hard stand parking area. Please do not park in the grass if the event is moved do to rain. There will be signs showing you to a parking lot.

## Prohibited items

- Cell phone use is prohibited when operating a vehicle on post without the use of a hands-free device. Drivers must safely exit the roadway to a hard stand area to use the cell phone if driving without a hands free device.
- No coolers, tote bags, backpacks and containers are allowed on the grounds except for medical and baby care items.
- Fireworks of any kind are prohibited on post.
- Glass containers are prohibited at the event.
- Pets are not allowed due to safety concerns.
- Weapons of any kind, including guns, knives, mace and pepper spray are prohibited.
- No roller blades, bicycles, skateboards or scooters are allowed at the event.



# Have fun, stay safe during holiday weekend

**Army Flier**  
Staff Report

While thousands are expected to descend upon Fort Rucker to celebrate America's Independence, such a happy time is no time to push safety onto the backburner.

Summertime and the 4th of July festivities are often eagerly looked forward to by many, but it can also be one of the most dangerous times for Soldiers and their families.

Between vacationing, traveling and people not being aware of their surroundings and their own bodies, there is increased risk for physical injury, according to Fort Rucker safety officials.

In order to stay safe during the Independence Day holiday they recommend a few simple tips.

- Have recommended maintenance conducted on vehicles.
- Have an emergency kit and an emergency set of car keys.

SEE SAFETY, PAGE 11



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# Safety: Simple steps help people enjoy summer

Continued from Page 10

- Be sure to have a full gas tank.
- Keep in mind that the use of cell phones and texting while driving are illegal on Fort Rucker. Follow the posted speed limit signs and adhere to police directing traffic.

People participating in other activities during the July 4 celebration and the rest of the summer should pay attention to hot temperatures and sun exposure to avoid heat related injuries.

Here are a few ways to protect against accidents over Independence Day week-end and throughout the year.

## Sun and heat safety

- Hydrate. Be sure to drink plenty of water and encourage children to do the same. Drinking soda, tea, coffee and alcohol can dehydrate you.
- Individuals planning to be outside should apply sunscreen and reapply it as necessary.
- Know the signs of heat exhaustion – clammy or pale skin, dizziness, excessive or no sweating.
- Don't take unnecessary risks during this holiday weekend.
- Stay in the shade to prevent sunburn and heat injuries.
- Children and adults should wear sunglasses and hats.

The results of not wearing sunglasses, hats and sunscreen probably won't catch up to people until they get older, when skin cancers start appearing. So, reduce your family's chances of cancer by covering up and reducing your exposure, according to safety officials.

## Swimming tips

- Know your limitations.
- Swim with a friend.
- - Supervise children while in the water.
- Know how to identify rip tides and know what to do if caught in one.
- Pay attention to the warning flags that are flown at the beach:
  - » **Red** — Stay out of the water;
  - » **Yellow** — Use caution, some undertow and riptides possible; and



» **Blue** – Calm water.

## Grilling tips

- Use grills in well-ventilated areas away from standing structures.
- Make sure grills are stable.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions.
- Use long-handled utensils.
- Do not mishandle lighter fluid.
- Make sure the gas grill lid is open before lighting it.

Most grilling injuries take place in the month of July and consist of thermal burns. Make sure you keep children at least three feet away from a grill and don't set the grill in an area that's close to where people are socializing, officials added.

## Fireworks

- Fort Rucker officials prohibit the use of fireworks on post.
- Read the instructions for the proper use of fireworks off post.
- Don't allow children to use fireworks, unless supervised by an adult.
- Do not use fireworks while under the influence of alcohol.
- Do not point fireworks at people, animals or buildings.
- - Do not horseplay with fireworks.

Although they can be exciting, festive and fun, it's important to remember that

according to safety officials.

## Alcohol consumption

- Have a designated driver.
- Drink water to keep hydrated while consuming alcohol.
- Don't swim, drive, boat, or fish while under the influence.
- Keep track of how much alcohol has been consumed.
- Drink water or a hydrating liquid between alcoholic beverages.

Keep in mind that fatalities aren't only caused while driving a vehicle while under the influence, but also while boating and swimming, safety officials warn, adding that alcohol is involved in approximately 38 percent of drownings."

All of these safety tips are small things to remember, but any one of them ignored can put a damper on a summer trip or festival, and some can affect lives forever. Take full advantage of the summer festivities Fort Rucker has to offer, but keep safety at the forefront.

fireworks are also dangerous. The safest way to enjoy 4th of July celebrations is to attend a public fireworks display,

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# SWGC Blue Course reopens after 'facelift'

By Nathan Pfau  
Army Flier Staff Writer

After more than a year, dozens of explosions and thousands of pounds of munitions removed, Silver Wings Golf Course's Blue Course is open for play once again.

SWGC is back in its full 27-hole championship facility form after the Blue Course officially reopened June 6 with a tournament.

"We're excited that we're finally getting to reopen the course and our members are really excited. They should be very pleased with the results," said Chet Hallman, SWGC business manager, before the tournament.

And many were impressed, including Marcus Smith, SWGC member who played in the opening tournament.

"I'm glad to see the course back up," Smith said. "It's been a long time and there aren't too many places in the area that you can enjoy a 27-hole course. It

makes me happy to see it back up and running, so that I can spend more of my time out here."

"All I can say is it's about time," said Jamie Smith, another SWGC member. "I'm just so glad to see it's back up. It's almost like we're playing on a completely new course."

The reason behind the renovations of the Blue Course was due to munitions removal, of which a total of 1,545 items were recovered – more than 62,000 pounds of munitions debris and 35,000 pounds of scrap metal, Hallman said.

The area was used as an antitank range and rocket-propelled grenade range during the World War II era, he added, so a lot of old munitions were buried in the ground throughout the course and in the surrounding area.

The entire process took about a year and a half, coming to an end in November. As a result of the process, Hallman said the course has been renovated and improved.



PHOTO BY NATHAN PFAU

Golfers compete in the Silver Wings Golf Course Blue Course Reopening Tournament June 6.

"We have done some extensive improvements to the course," he said. "The greens on Holes 1-6 have been stripped of their existing sod, the ranges were re-contoured and new turf was put down.

"We've renovated all the bunkers, new tee complexes were added on Holes 6-9, and we did some drainage work," he continued. "The layout of the course is the same. The best way to describe it is that the course got a facelift. Most of the holes

out here are close to 50 years old, so we gave them a fresh look."

Along with the opening of the course, new membership rates also went into effect recently, said Hallman. Annual membership rates are: \$528 for E-1 to E6 and juniors ages 12-17; \$858 for E-7 and up and Department of Defense civilians; and \$924 for members of the public. Family rates are also available.

For more information, call 598-2449.

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# SGT. TED E. BEAR

## *Fort Rucker home to famous sergeant*

**Army Flier**  
*Staff Report*

In many cities across America, mascots can be found that promote esprit de corps.

Dothan has its peanut statues. Louisville, Kentucky, has its horses. Cherokee, North Carolina, has its bears.

Count Fort Rucker as one of them, as well, as promoting morale is one of the things that Fort Rucker's Sgt. Ted E. Bear does best.

Located at the corner of Andrews and Novosel, Bear has dutifully watched over Fort Rucker for the last 50-plus years. Standing watch over the installation near the Daleville Gate, he observes the thousands of people passing by him every day, said J. Patrick Hughes, Aviation Branch historian.

"People have fun with that bear," he said. "He was originally designed in Panama City (Florida) by Lee Koplin, but he was built here and he will stay here. He is now a Fort Rucker icon."

Bear was originally erected as an emblem of the 2nd Battle Group, 31st Infantry Regiment, also known as the Polar Bear Regiment. Construction was commissioned in 1961 by Col. Bennett L. Jackson to commemorate the action the unit saw while attempting to keep the Trans-Siberian Railroad open during World War I in Murmansk, Russia.

It was that operation that earned the regiment the nickname "the Polar Bears," and Bennett received the nickname "Bear," said Hughes.

The regiment even incorporated the polar bear into its crest, he added.

"Smokey" was originally located next to the 46th Engineer Battalion building after the 31st Infantry Regiment was reas-

signed to Fort Benning, Georgia, in 1966.

Over the years, Bear has donned many outfits as part of his provided care, ranging from bunny and penguin suits to flight suits. He has also sported superhero costumes and a variety of other seasonable ensembles.

Bear overshadows all of his fellow sergeants, if not by age then by dimensions. At 15 feet high, Bear weighs 2,000 pounds (mostly made of solid concrete), with his weight steadily growing with each outfit he dons.

Eventually, the responsibility of caring for Bear passed to 1st Battalion, 210th Aviation Regiment in 1994, when the bulk of the engineer battalion relocated to Fort Polk, Louisiana, and he was then reassigned to the Warrant Officer Career College in 1997.

"With his reassignment to the 210th, he received his new orders, rank and name – Pfc. Ted E. Bear," said Hughes, adding that Bear even received official orders.

He was promoted to sergeant Sept. 19, 2007, in an official ceremony approved by Maj. Gen. Virgil L. Packett II, then U.S. Army Aviation Warfighting Center and Fort Rucker commanding general, and at the time it was stated that his weight issues kept him from being promoted higher.

In 2008, Bear was moved from his original home on Ruf Avenue to his new home near the U.S. Army Aviation Museum, where he bravely and quietly watches over passing traffic.

"People would notice if he was moved or removed in a heartbeat," said the historian. "It was somewhat controversial when they moved him to his new post. Can you imagine what would happen if he was taken down permanently?"



PHOTO BY NATHAN PFAU

Sgt. Ted E. Bear's area received a facelift earlier this year, complete with a digital marquee.

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SEE SERGEANT, PAGE 15

# Sergeant: Bear serves as colorful community bulletin board

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"Many Soldiers return to 'Mother Rucker,'" he added. "If Bear could not be found, it would be like losing a friend you always expect to see when you return home."

In a real sense, Bear serves as a colorful community bulletin board, and many organizations have upped the ante when it comes to decorating him – giving him 3D accessories like banners, hats, sporting equipment and other polar bear-sized props.

It is uncommon for military installations to have a single mascot, something Hughes said made Fort Rucker stand out, or over, 15 feet exactly, others.

"Countless generations of Aviators have come through here and seen him.

He has always been a very prominent figure in the community," he said. "Aviators see him and they identify with him, and I know it is usually one of the first things families notice when they arrive here.

"He is now part of the tradition of being at Fort Rucker, even though his origins do not lie in Aviation. He is part of the experience of becoming an Army Aviator," he continued.

People across the area can only wonder what fashion statements Bear will reveal next and when he will be promoted to staff sergeant, because he is surely the most famous sergeant in the lower 49 states. He has been featured in local newspapers more than 10 times, and his likeness is now featured as a trophy at the Fort Rucker Arts and Crafts Center.

But people should exercise care when

taking photos with Bear. Although he loves the attention, is dressed to impress, is wearing a smile and his arms are open

to receive hugs, he is a 2,000 pound carnivorous infantryman, and the intersection he is by is a high traffic area.



FILE PHOTO

Sgt. Ted E. Bear makes a permanent change of station from his home outside the 46th Engineer Battalion building to a new place of residence near the U.S. Army Aviation Museum in 2008. Bear is said to have bravely and quietly served Fort Rucker for more than 50 years.

## Inclement weather during event

The show will go on! *However,* if a thunderstorm occurs and there is lightning, we ask visitors to go to their cars to wait for further announcements.



*Saluting the men and women at Fort Rucker*

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