

ADVOCATE **DRUM**



Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization

MARCH 2019

In This Issue . . .

**Executive
Director's Report** page 1

Chair's Corner page 2

**Fort Drum Joint
Land Use Study (JLUS):
Development
Authority of the
North Country** page 3

**North Country
Honors The
Mountain** page 4-5

**River Community
Wellness Program** page 5

**Watertown NY
Guitars for
Vets Chapter** page 6

**Vets to Farmers:
Cornell Cooperative
Extension of
Jefferson County** page 7

Upcoming Events page 8



Edward "Fritz" Keel

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

This past fall, we learned that the North Country-Fort Drum region was selected by the Association of Defense Communities (ADC) as a Great American Defense Community for 2019. ADC receives submissions from across the nation and all branches of our Armed Forces and selected five communities that support the servicemen and women, the civilians, and family members who live and work on the installations within those communities. I first learned of this program shortly after beginning my role as your Executive Director at the ADC National Summit in Washington D.C. this past June. The Great American Defense Communities program shines a light on the regions and individuals that are making a difference. The program was designed to recognize and celebrate communities with an exceptional commitment to improving the lives of service members, veterans and their families. As I listened to the stories of support highlighted in 2018, I immediately recognized that the North Country is just as deserving of this recognition.

For nearly 35 years now, the North Country and Fort Drum have enjoyed a strong bond of mutual support. Unlike other installations, Fort Drum relies on our community hospitals and schools for healthcare and education services, and the community has equally benefited from the increase in available health services, expanded course offerings, and cultural diversity in our schools. This relationship is unique in the Department of Defense and is part of what makes our community special.

As we put together the application, there were many examples of projects and initiatives that our community has developed to continually support Fort Drum. We chose to dedicate this newsletter to five of those initiatives that highlight these wonderful programs. In the coming months, we will announce various events to celebrate our recognition as a Great American Defense Community. We look forward to celebrating this award with all of you! Thank you for all that you do, every day, to Advocate Drum.

Fritz



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**Chair's Corner**

By: Tom Carman

What an honor for the North Country to be named as one of five "Great American Defense Communities" from across the country. This award recognizes military communities and regions that help improve the quality of life for service members and military families. Further, the Association for Defense Communities, the official sponsor of this award, notes that communities selected represent the "best examples of what communities can do to create great places for our military families to live and work".

Receiving an award such as this is the result of the long term commitment and dedication of organizations such as Advocate Drum, Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization, that have focused their mission on the needs of our Soldiers and families and ways to improve this region for the benefit of Soldiers and families, which in turn has enriched the lives of all of us that call the North Country Home.

While there were a handful of programs that were used for the purpose of the application and highlighted in this newsletter, there are countless examples of programs and services offered by businesses, agencies, groups of interested citizens and individuals that have made this region a better place to live. This is a time for all of us to be proud of what we have done, the benefits that these efforts have created for our region and now to receive the recognition that is so well deserved.

My hat goes off to the citizens of the North Country that have embraced our Soldiers and military families and have made this a better place to live. Thank you, to each and every one of you, for whatever role you have played in this effort. I suspect that most of us do this without the expectation of recognition, but it is nice to receive this recognition on a national stage. The North Country is a special place to live.

I encourage you to look for future announcements about ways that we can celebrate this accomplishment throughout the tri-county region.

Fort Drum Joint Land Use Study (JLUS)

Development Authority of the North Country

Hartley Bonisteel-Schweitzer

The Fort Drum Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) is the result of a two-year collaborative stakeholder process between Fort Drum and surrounding communities in Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence counties. The Development Authority of the North Country received a grant from the Office of Economic Adjustment in order to complete the study and is currently working with Fort Drum and surrounding communities to implement recommendations with additional OEA funding.

The goal of the Fort Drum JLUS is to reduce potential conflicts between Fort Drum and the surrounding communities while accommodating new growth and economic development, sustaining economic vitality, protecting public health and safety, and protecting the operational missions of Fort Drum.

Since the completion of the study, the Fort Drum Compatibility Committee has been created comprised of municipal elected officials, local and county planning offices and organizations, and Fort Drum Garrison. The committee shares information pertaining to land uses and development around Fort Drum, while assisting in the implementation of recommendations from the study. Fort Drum invited the committee on a tour of the installation in September 2018 which resulted in an open dialogue between the Army and civilians regarding current and future mission requirements.

In addition, the Development Authority has created www.FortDrumCompatibility.org in order to provide municipal leaders, developers and others with information and data pertaining to land uses surrounding Fort Drum. The site includes a GIS portal that provides data that includes, among others, endangered species and flight corridors.

In 2017, the Development Authority entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Fort Drum Garrison to utilize its Community Planner as a liaison between Fort Drum and the surrounding communities when it comes to planning. The Community Planner works closely with communities as they identify projects that might result in encroachment, and serves as a bridge, bringing Fort Drum to the table to review the projects early in the development process. This process has allowed communities to make much more informed decisions when reviewing site plans.

In the coming months, a consultant has been hired to draft templates for municipal ordinances that relate to specific encroachment issues like vertical obstructions and dark sky compliance, among others. These will be available to all municipalities to utilize.

The JLUS study was the beginning, however the work continues to mitigate encroachment in order to protect Fort Drum's mission while growing our communities.





The North Country Honors the Mountain

Gilbert Pearsall, Jr.

The North Country Honors the Mountain Monument was designed, built and unveiled on July 1, 2016 by the North Country community as an enduring statement of the community's gratitude for the sacrifice and service of the 10th Mountain Division's Soldiers, their Family Members and the Fort Drum Civilian Work Force. Since its reactivation at Fort Drum in 1985, the 10th Mountain Division has been the most deployed Division in the US Army. The monument stands as a lasting tribute to the Division's history and legacy for generations to come.

The Honor the Mountain Monument was built in Tower Square, the center-piece of historic and beautiful Thompson Park, a Fredrick Olmstead designed park, in Watertown, NY. It is an important addition to the community and a visible reminder of the unique relationship the North Country community have with our military neighbors at Fort Drum.

The monument has four sides and is shaped like a mountain rising from the ground with rough cut edges and jagged peaks. It serves as a fitting tribute to the men and women who have sacrificed so much for our freedoms. Through bronze reliefs and interpretive signage, the monument tells the story of the 10th Mountain Division's history from its activation in 1943 to present day:



Monument's First Side (see photo left) Its activation in 1943; training at Camp Hale, Colorado; and the Division's combat operations at Riva Ridge, Mount Belvedere and in the Po River Valley in Italy in 1945 during World War Two;

people to south Florida in the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew; to its humanitarian and combat operations deployments to Somalia, Haiti and Balkans through 2001;

Monument's Second Side (see photo right) The 1985 Reactivation of the Division at Ft Drum, New York; its manning, equipping and training for combat readiness; its first major operation in support of the





Monument's Third Side (see photo left) And most recently, the Division's more than 40 combat deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq from 2001 until present day.

We intentionally left the **Monument's Fourth Side** (see photo right) blank without a bronze relief. While 2016 celebrates the 31st year since the 1985 reactivation of the Division at Fort Drum, the year 2035 will mark the 50th anniversary of



the reactivation. We hope that a future generation of North Country citizens will commemorate that milestone anniversary with a fourth bronze relief depicting the Division's continued history so that the next generation can fully appreciate and understand how much we here today cherish our relationship with the 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum. Additionally, they can unearth the time capsule that was planted under the fourth side.

In September 2018, the inaugural Climb to Glory Memorial to Monument run was held. The nearly 11-mile course started in Memorial Park on Fort Drum and finished at the Honor the Mountain Monument in Thompson Park, Watertown, NY. It was organized through a collaborative effort by the Fort Drum Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) office and the City of Watertown Parks and Recreation Department. The event also served as the official hand over-over to the City of Watertown the Honor the Mountain Monument built by the businesses and residents of the North Country. The gift represents the enduring support of the Soldiers, Civilians, and family members who live and work at Fort Drum.



Photo courtesy of David Sommerstein

River Community Wellness Program

River Hospital, Alexandria Bay
Brad Frey, Therapy Program Director

River Community Wellness Program (RCWP) at River Hospital operates a Partial Hospitalization Program (PHP) for Active Duty Service Members who have been diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Service Members are referred by Fort Drum Behavioral Health providers for intensive treatment. Soldiers admitted to the program attend treatment five days per week from 9:00-2:00 daily. Length of stay in the program is 8-10 weeks based on the individual needs.

PHP staff provide intensive trauma focused treatment using the Cognitive Processing Therapy Protocol. It is a group focused program where Soldiers bond with other Soldiers who have had similar experiences. Soldiers also receive individual therapy sessions as well as symptom surveillance and medication management by a prescriber. Cognitive Processing Therapy is augmented with other groups such as emotion regulation, mindfulness, wellness, health education and addictions.

Continued on Page 7



Watertown, NY Guitars for Vets Chapter

James and Mary Corriveau

Guitars for Vets (G4V) is a national program that, through local chapters, provides guitars and guitar instruction at no cost to Veterans with combat or service related physical or emotional issues, particularly post-traumatic stress. G4V partners closely with the local Veterans Administration (VA) and is a program wherein VA care providers refer Veterans whom they anticipate would benefit.

In early 2017, James and Mary Corriveau learned about Guitars for Vets (G4V) and did some outreach to determine where the closest chapter was to our area. Discovering that it was more than 6 hours away, they decided to start a local chapter to share the healing power of music with Veterans within our community.



The Watertown Chapter of Guitars for Vets offers private, individualized weekly lessons; and monthly group workshops that all students are invited to attend. The student lessons are tailored to each participant's skills and abilities based on a curriculum designed to help students learn, at their own pace. Veterans are provided with student guitars, a lesson book and accessories to use during the 10 weekly lessons.

Upon completion of the 10 lesson program the student guitars are returned to the Chapter and each Veteran receives a brand new and better acoustic guitar, gig bag, strap, tuner, strings, picks, capo, music book, lesson CD and a guitar stand. Local sponsors are invited to participate in the graduation and present the guitars to the Veterans. Graduate students are encouraged to continue their participation at the monthly workshops. These workshops provide Veterans with a setting to make music collectively as well as listen to professional musicians describe their musical journey.

The Watertown Chapter began group lessons in November 2017 and in March 2018 was authorized by G4V National to begin giving individual lessons. With donated studio space and the help of three volunteer instructors, 16 Veterans have graduated from Watertown's program in the past year. The Chapter currently has 8 Veterans actively taking lessons, and there are another 11 Veterans on the waiting list to begin their lessons. Recruiting additional volunteer instructors to help meet the growing demand for this program is a primary focus for the coming year.

Success at Guitars for Vets is not measured in the number of Veterans who become great guitarists, but rather simply helping Veterans find a healthy outlet for individual expression as well as a refuge for solace. And that's what Guitars for Vets is all about, putting the healing power of music in the hands of heroes.

Barbara Crowe, past president of the National Association for Music Therapy said, "Music therapy can make the difference between withdrawal and awareness, between isolation and interaction, between chronic pain and comfort -- between demoralization and dignity. Wrapping your arms around a guitar, playing even the simplest tune and engaging some comradery with fellow Veteran student guitarists is a special place."



River Community Wellness Program

Continued from Page 5

Currently the PHP operates a Combat Trauma Group which is for Soldiers with traumatic experiences resulting from combat. The Combat Group has a rolling admission allowing us to admit a Soldier whenever it is needed. We also operate a Non-Combat Trauma Group which is designed for Soldiers with childhood trauma, Military Sexual Trauma or rape. The Non-Combat Trauma Group is a closed cohort. These Soldiers will go through the treatment program together allowing them to gain trust that they need to open up and begin to heal.

RCWP also operates an Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) for Veterans who have been referred for treatment of PTSD. The IOP runs Monday through Thursday from 9:00-12:00 and goes for 8 weeks. Again, Cognitive Processing Therapy is the main treatment modality augmented with other groups such as emotion regulation, mindfulness, wellness, health education and addictions.

Since the program began in February 2013 over 550 Soldiers and Veterans have graduated from the program. River Hospital is the only civilian-run outpatient program for Soldiers with PTSD in the nation. Countless Soldiers have benefited from this off-post treatment program that has created a safe environment for Soldiers and Veterans to heal the invisible wounds of war.

Vets to Farmers

Cornell Cooperative Extension
of Jefferson County
Kevin J. Jordan

In 2014, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County began collaborating with Cornell University's Small Farm/Beginning Farmer Program. The goal was to encourage veterans and service members transitioning out of the Army from Fort Drum to enter agricultural careers. The concept made sense. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recognized that the one percent of the population that feeds America was quickly aging (average age 57) and not being replaced by younger farmers. In addition, there seemed to be many synergies between farming and the military culture; the one percent of the population that defends American freedoms, like the one percent who feeds us, are mission driven, used to hard work, employ ingenuity and are value driven.

Efforts to introduce veterans and Fort Drum soldiers transitioning out of the military to farming gained traction but quickly expanded to include the rich opportunities and diverse careers in the agriculture industry. Many skill sets learned while serving translate into highly desirable competencies. Example include flying drones, diesel mechanics, management skills, and computer technologies.

Since 2014 the project has evolved significantly. One of the biggest challenges is educating the support personnel helping transitioning soldiers and veterans about the full range of employment opportunities agriculture has to offer. To achieve this the project has cultivated multiple networks fostering ties with military, education, social services, business, health, nonprofit and government agencies and resources. Once directed to the Small Farms Program veterans and transitioning soldiers have many opportunities to learn about agriculture through conferences, online workshops, webinars, and immersion programs. They can also communicate with other veterans through listservs.

As the project in Jefferson County matures CCE has expanded opportunities to the entire military family. Along with a host of workshops and educational opportunities, Cornell Cooperative Extension links transitioning soldiers and veterans and their families with farmer-veterans by organizing tours of their farm or agri-business. Hearing how other veterans have made their way into agriculture offers powerful testimonies. But most importantly, being able to explore agricultural careers with your family reinforces that farming is still a family business.



Veteran farmer, James Babcock, presents to a group at J.B. Acres



Veteran farmer, John Anderson, presents to a group at Lake Effect Farm

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★★★★ **UPCOMING EVENTS** ★★★★★

To celebrate the partnership between the North Country and Fort Drum:

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| May 14 | Fort Drum Day Albany |
| May 17 | Armed Forces Day Luncheon Hilton Garden Inn, Watertown |
| May 18 | Armed Forces Day Parade &
Great American Defense Community Award Presentation
Watertown |
| June 28 | Block Party &
Great American Defense Community Celebration
Watertown |
| July 2 | Concert in the Park Watertown |