

93rd Engineers take Net Zero Waste mandate to heart

By **CHUCK CANNON**
After Hours editor

Editor's note: This is another in a series of articles about Fort Polk's Net Zero Heroes — community members who go above and beyond to make the post a more environmentally green place to live. Net Zero is an initiative to eliminate waste created by the community. If there is someone you would like to nominate as a Net Zero Hero, contact Kimberly Reischling at 531-1392.

FORT POLK, La. — As The Guardian continues to recognize individuals who do their best to lessen their carbon footprint and follow the Army's Net Zero Waste goal of eliminating all landfill waste and becoming energy independent by the year 2020, it's been pointed out that sometimes an entire unit or organization should receive a pat on the back.

Such is the case with Fort Polk's 93rd Engineer Company, 46th Engineer Battalion, 1st Maneuver Enhancement Brigade. The unit's Soldiers recently saved Fort Polk's coffers more than \$200,000 by recycling useable material and taking on a job that ordinarily would have been completed by contractors.

Abi Franklin, sustainability coordinator for Fort Polk, said the project completed by the 93rd



Franklin

Eng Co — refurbishing an access control point building at the intersection of K Street and Artillery Road on North Fort — was a perfect example of what the Net Zero Waste program is all about.

"The Net Zero program is about the five Rs — reduce, reuse, recycle, recover and reculture," Franklin said.

"Not only was this project good for the environment by keeping waste out of landfills and not consuming more resources and new materials, there was also a cost avoidance factor that saved the post real dollars."

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CHUCK CANNON / GUARDIAN

First Lt. Jacob Brakeman, third platoon leader, 93rd Engineer Company, 46th Engineer Battalion, points out repurposed angle iron used on window frames in a recently refurbished access control point building at K Street and Artillery Road on North Fort Polk. The unit saved the Army more than \$200,000.

First Lt. Jacob Brakeman, 3rd platoon leader for 93rd Eng Co, said it took a little investigation, but his unit was able to find items that could be repurposed instead of purchasing new materials for the building.

"We talked to real property at DPW (Directorate of Public Works) and got a door and water fountain from an old building on 22nd Street that was being demolished," he said. "That alone saved about \$1,600."

Brakeman said they were also able to scavenge pieces of angle iron from the unit's motor pool.

"The angle iron had been cut up and we got them out of the dumpster before they were carried off," he said. "We saved a total of about \$2,000 by reusing these items."

But that wasn't the only savings.

"We built the building for a little less than \$25,000," Brakeman said. "DES (Directorate of Emergency Services) looked at contracting it out and the cost would have been about \$250,000. We saved them a good chunk of change and got

great training out of it at the same time."

Other cash and landfill savings came in preparing the site for the building.

"We had to raise the ground level up by four feet," Brakeman said. "We took repurposed material from around post, a total of about 80 yards of fill material, which is not cheap."



Brakeman

Franklin said the project was a great example of a unit following Army guidelines with its Net Zero Waste program.

"We have our recycling program, which is wonderful, but the only savings we get is not having to pay to put it into a landfill," she said. "There are cost savings associated with that, but in addition to not putting this into a landfill, we also didn't have to buy new materials, so the savings are even greater."

Brakeman said an added benefit was the valu-

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Commissary recycling nets \$5.3 million for surcharge

By JESSICA NEWBY

DeCA mass communications specialist

FORT LEE, Va. — Recycling cardboard to the tune of 63,000 tons a year helps save the environment and build new commissaries.

Here's how. Cardboard used to ship products to commissaries isn't thrown away. Instead, it's collected by storeworkers and sold to recycling companies. Money generated from those sales — \$5.33 million in fiscal 2012 — goes to the Defense Commissary Agency's surcharge fund. This fund then goes directly into building and renovating commissaries.

"It's a great ecosystem," said Joseph H. Jeu, DeCA director and chief executive officer.

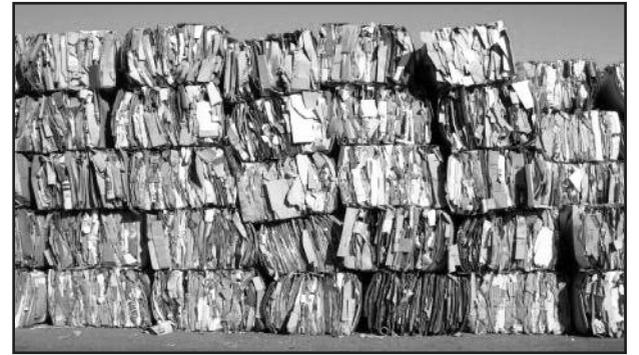
"As a Department of Defense agency, good environmental stewardship is a big part of the mission of providing the commissary benefit. These recycling efforts directly benefit customers through the surcharge funds generated because they help

maintain commissaries around the world."

The process used by commissaries in fiscal 2012 was 70 percent efficient, meaning that 70 percent of all recyclable material brought into stores got recycled, according to Mark Leeper, a DeCA environmental engineer. It surpassed the agency's recycling goal of 55 percent and its stretch goal of 60,000 tons.

Leeper said the increase in the amount recycled is the result of the overall awareness of the program among commissary employees and the benefit it provides. Also, the agency is using an improved reporting system, which allows DeCA to capture more data on the recycling efforts at all commissaries worldwide.

"This reflects the culture in which DeCA operates, one that takes into consideration the big picture of benefits gained through environmentally friendly actions," Leeper said. "The stores, and the diligent efforts of their employees who have caught the vision, make the program work."



Public invited to review range documents

By CATHY KROPP

U.S. Army Environmental Command

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas — The Army announces the availability of the Programmatic Environmental Assessment and Draft Finding of No Significant Impact for Modernizing and Operating Training Ranges on Previous or Existing Range Sites on Army Training Areas and invites the public to provide comments.

The Army needs to modernize many of its training ranges to meet future wartime requirements and provide facilities better aligned to changes in training, doctrine and weapons systems. To streamline the documentation process, a programmatic environmental assessment has been prepared to analyze the effects of constructing a variety of types of ranges that would dis-

turb less than 40 acres of military grounds that currently or previously have been used as a military training range.

All interested members of the public, federally-recognized Indian Tribes, Native Alaskans, Native Hawaiian groups, federal, state, and local agencies are invited to review and provide comments on the National Environmental Policy Act documentation titled Programmatic Environmental Assessment and Draft Finding of No Significant Impact for Range Construction of up to 40 acres on Previously Disturbed Sites.

Interested parties may view or download a copy from the U.S. Army Environmental Command website at <http://aec.army.mil/usaec/nepa/topics00.html>.

U.S. Army Environmental Command will accept written comments until Jan. 11, 2013.

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able training the unit's Soldiers received.

"That's a hidden cost we can't really capture," he said. "It was great training. We used skills we don't normally use, like the masonry work. We don't do that too often. And in looking for materials for this project, we were able to get other materials from around post to use for training."

In the days to come, Franklin said more units will be called on to follow the 93rd Eng Co's lead as the post moves toward net zero waste.

"We have this mandate from the Army to

go Net Zero," Franklin said. "Budget wise, these types of projects make sense; it would be crazy not to do this."

Franklin said if people on Fort Polk do their part, the post could reach the Army's goal of net zero waste by the year 2020.

"We are asking everyone to reduce the waste they're producing," she said. "If everyone would take advantage of the recycling programs available across post, we can reach our goal of net zero waste and save the Army money at the same time. That's good for each of us, the environment and the Army."