

The Fort Sill Tribune

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Home of the Fires Center of Excellence

May 16, 2019

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Post access

As a reminder, unless otherwise stated, people attending any post ceremony who don't have a Department of Defense ID card must go to the Visitor Control Center (VCC), Bldg. T6701 Sheridan Road, to obtain a visitor access pass. The VCC is on the southeast side of Bentley Gate and open from 5 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mondays through Fridays and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on weekends. For more information, call 580-442-9604.

Change of command

A change of command ceremony for 1st Battalion, 19th Field Artillery is May 29, at 9 a.m. at Polo Field. Battalion personnel will bid farewell to Lt. Col. Elliott Harris and welcome Lt. Col. Mark Larson as their new commander. An award presentation precedes the ceremony at 8:45 a.m. near the Polo Club.

Ceremony of honors

A Memorial Day ceremony is May 27, at 11:45 a.m. at the post cemetery. Dress is Army Service Uniform for military and business casual for civilians.

Asian celebration

The Asian American/Pacific Islander Heritage Month Luncheon is today, at noon in the Patriot Club Ballroom, 700 Upton Road. The speaker will be Dr. Ella Foley, wife of Fires Center of Excellence and Fort Sill Command Sgt. Maj. John Foley.

Security Force recruit briefing

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A gun crew from A Battery, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Field Artillery works together during a fire mission on an M119 howitzer May 9, at Firing Point 103 here. Two gun crews from the battery were supporting the training of FA Basic Officer Leader Course students who were further downrange at Observation Point Andrews learning their roles as forward observers.

Battery supports training of artillerymen

Story, photos
By Tribune Staff

Gun crews from A Battery, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Field Artillery fired their 105mm howitzers here last week in a mission to support the training of FA Basic Officer Leader Course students.

Two gun crews fired 200 105mm rounds from Firing Point 103 off Punchbowl Road. The rounds landed in impact areas as far as 5,800 meters away as FA BOLC students at Observation Point Andrews judged the accuracy of the fire.

The live fire provided training for the battery's gun crews, and facilitated the learning of BOLC students, said 2nd Lt. Mason Kumashiro, A2/2nd FA fire direction officer. Fire mission support is something the battery performs regularly.

"This is something that we do about three times a week supporting the BOLC, the ATT (Advanced Individual Training) students, and we'll support the Marines as well,"



Powdeman Pfc. Samuel Williams, A/2-2nd FA, holds up two powder bags which tells the gun section chief the 105mm round is charged with five bags during a live fire exercise May 9, here.

Kumashiro said, "Today, we're firing 200 rounds, but some days we'll get 380 rounds."

The battery's gun crew of about eight artillerymen per section get a lot of training on firing live ammu-

nition. It's an opportunity they wouldn't have at other units, the lot of training on firing live ammu- See BATTERY, Page 4A

Writer tells of Sill Soldier's rise to top

Story, photos
By Mitch Meador

If nice guys finish last, then the late Gen. John Shalikashvili was the exception that proves the rule.

Despite taking the bargain-basement route to becoming an Army officer, he rose to the armed forces' loftiest position, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, where he served from Oct. 25, 1993, to Sept. 30, 1997.

The alumni association of the Field Artillery Officer Candidate School (FAOCS) that operated on Fort Sill from 1941 to 1973 esteems Shalikashvili as its highest-ranking graduate.

Now his story is about to be told in "The Boy on the Bridge," a biography by Dr. Andrew Marble that was nine years in the making.

University Press of Kentucky plans to announce its publication as part of its American Warrior Series in October, during the annual Association of the United States Army (AUSA) conference in Washington, D.C.

But on May 9, Marble read excerpts from his book to FAOCS alumni here at Fort Sill for their annual reunion. Afterward he fielded questions from the audience and chatted with one alum from Ohio who served with then Maj. Shalikashvili at Fort Lewis, Wash.

After hearing part of the general's astounding history, one audience member asked Marble how many languages Shalikashvili spoke. The author repeated the same self-deprecating reply Shali used early in his career: "Fluently, none."

His forebears on both sides were of noble birth, Georgian on his father's and Russian on his mother's. His paternal great-grandfather earned the right to be called "Ivan the Brave" for serving with distinction in the Crimean War. His maternal grandmother was a lady-in-waiting to Alexandra, Russia's last tsarina. His mother was born in the winter palace in St. Petersburg. Another ancestor was the first Russian admiral



Dr. Andrew Marble reads from "The Boy on the Bridge," his biography of former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. John Shalikashvili, the highest-ranking graduate of Fort Sill's Field Artillery Officer Candidate School May 9, during a reunion of the FAOCS Alumni Association here.

in the navy to circumnavigate the planet.

Yet his parents had to flee to Poland following the twin revolutions of 1917. During the Warsaw Uprising a dive-bomber reduced their apartment there to rubble. For five or six weeks the family's only home was the cellars and sewers of Warsaw.

Once the uprising was over, the family gathered up what belongings they could carry and in October 1944 headed to the Bavarian village of Pappenheim in southern Germany. For eight years, the penniless family had to depend on the charity of relatives to survive. Worse, their three children

were stateless. No European country would grant their children citizenship because they were born in Poland to parents who weren't Polish.

The United States was the only nation that offered them the hope of a homeland, but here John Shalikashvili faced a torturous uphill climb. In 1959 he signed up for FAOCS, which one grad has described as the worst form of institutionalized hazing ever practiced in the Army.

The best way to survive it was not to stand out. Unfortunately, Shalikashvili stood out like a sore thumb. His last name was too long to fit the standard nametag, so for the first day he didn't have one. When one was issued, people joked that it filled up his whole uniform or called him "Lt. Alphabet." Back at boot camp on Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., one exasperated drill sergeant had shortened his unpronounceable surname to "Shali," and it stuck.

Worse, when he spoke, his American peers thought he was German — not a good thing to be in the U.S. Army of 1959.

Slowly, people began to revise their view of him. Marble said he interviewed close to 50 OCS alums for his book, and over and over, they had noticed Shali quietly helping others. If someone collapsed from exhaustion, he was there to pick up their things and lift them up.

See SHALIKASHVILI, Page 2A

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Shalikashvili

From Page 1A

Setting a good example, doing the right thing, standing up for what's right, taking time for others — these were lifelong habits of the general, which Marble attributed to his aristocratic roots and being a penniless refugee in war-torn Europe.

As Colin Powell said when he chose Shalikashvili to be his successor, "He's a quiet, decent man, and a very hard worker. There is a mistaken notion that you have to have Patton-esque qualities to be a great general. You don't need to rant and rave or be an arrogant jerk to be successful. Shali showed that."

Marble, who has a doctorate in political science from Brown University, was working as an editor for the National Bureau of Asian

Marble approached Shali's son first, and after getting the general's permission to do the authorized biography he quit his job in the fall of 2010, and spent two weeks interviewing Shali, his wife, and his son in early 2011. That was just the beginning of his extensive research, which took him to 30 cities in 12 states, three countries, and two continents. About halfway through his cross-country trek from Seattle to D.C., he stopped by the FAOCS Hall of Fame and has been in contact with its caretakers, Randy and Penny Dunham, ever since. He's now interviewed well over 300 people, many of them multiple times.

Although the book's formal launch isn't until October, Marble said it's possible to get a 30 percent discount by pre-ordering on the University Press of Kentucky website.

When Wes Jetter of Greenville, Ohio, decided to attend a Field Artillery Officer Candidate School (FAOCS) reunion for the first time this year, he didn't realize the biographer of his former comrade-in-arm would be among the scheduled speakers.

Alumnus recalls Major 'Shali'

Story photo
By Mich Meador

When he saw Dr. Andrew Marble would give a public reading from his forthcoming book, "The Boy on the Bridge," he knew that was one event he couldn't miss.

Afterward, Jetter got a chance to meet the author and relate his own story about Gen. John Shalikashvili.

As a young first lieutenant, Jetter served in 2nd Battalion, 18th Artillery at Fort Lewis, Wash., when then Maj. John Shalikashvili was its executive officer.

"I had come in from Greece, where I'd been assigned out of OCS. I had managed to graduate No. 1 in my class, so I got to select what I was doing. And I was in special weapons, which is a nice term for tactical nukes. And the battalion had just failed a trial inspection for that particular purpose.

"So they saw what my background was. (Lt.) Col. Stoddard and Maj. Shali, who was the XO, grabbed me and said, 'Here. We don't know anything about this. We're Vietnam people. We're artillery people. We're not special weapons.'

"So I was thrown into the breach. And then the Department of Energy came in and inspected our battalion, and we passed without any gigs at all. So I always say I saved Maj. Shali's career. I was pretty much golden from that point on."

The battalion commander wanted to become a full

colonel, and he wanted to retire out of Japan. He was able to do both. Jetter stayed in touch with him, and Stoddard wrote a strong letter of recommendation for Jetter when he graduated from his MBA program at Fletcher. Jetter said he still has that letter.

"He's the person I stayed in touch with, not Maj. Shali. Maj. Shali was an enigma. He was not the same as everyone else. He wasn't just one of the commandants. You could tell right then he was on a trajectory. But I'm not a military person, so I circled back when I saw his picture."

It wasn't until he saw Shali's picture on the front page of USA Today that he learned the former major was a four-star general serving as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Jetter was reminded that he had served in Greece with another major who eventually became chairman of the joint chiefs of the Greek military.

"So here I was a lieutenant for a couple of years, and I was privileged to serve with two officers who rose to the very top of their individual country's military," Jetter said.

Jetter said he was in graduate school when he got his draft notice. He told officials at the Selective Service System he had already applied for admission to FAOCS, and they agreed to hold off on drafting him until he found out whether he'd been accepted. He was with the aforementioned results. He said that back then, both Greece and Vietnam were considered hardship assignments, and Army policy was that a Soldier could not go directly from one hardship assignment to another, so that's how he was able to finish his two-year hitch at Fort Lewis.

Jetter told Marble he's very anxious to read his book, "The Boy on the Bridge," when it comes out, and he wants the author to autograph it for him.



Dr. Andrew Marble, author of the authorized biography of Gen. John Shalikashvili, the highest-ranking graduate of the Field Artillery Officer Candidate School (FAOCS), chats with Penny Dunham prior to his public reading to the FAOCS Alumni Association members back for their annual reunion here May 9. Penny and her husband Randy are caretakers of the FAOCS Hall of Fame in Durham Hall.

Briefs

From Page 1A

Brigade is seeking Soldiers from over 60 military occupational specialties, and 20 career fields. The SFAB trains, advises, and assists host nations' conventional forces in infantry, armor, cavalry engineering, artillery, and combined arms warfare. An SFAB recruiting team will be at Burleson Hall today at 10 a.m., 1 p.m., and 3 p.m. to meet with interested Soldiers for more information, visit goarmy.com/sfb. Burleson Hall is Bldg. 707, at the intersection of Randolph and Condon roads.

Education survey

The 2019 Fort Sill Educational Needs Assessment Survey is open for responses. All installation personnel, Soldiers, family members, and civilians are highly encouraged to complete the survey. It is available online at <http://bit.ly/2ZVTRZN> through May 23.

The assessment is a continuous and systematic analysis of the Army's requirements for educational programs at the installation level and Army-wide, with results providing data integral to the Army's planning and budgeting process.

Fort Sill is required to conduct a general overall needs assessment triennially to assess the impact of changes in the character or demographic profile of Fort Sill personnel, units, or mission.

Assessment efforts are intended to determine whether or not new providers are needed to offer desired programs on Fort Sill and to project Army-wide requirements for distance learning programs.

For more information about the survey, call the Education Services Division at 580-442-3201, Bldg. 4700, fifth floor.

TDS services

Due to the May 24 training holiday, the Trial Defense Services office, Bldg. 652 Hamilton Road Suite 100, will have walk-in services May 23 at 9 a.m. For Soldiers pending administrative separation and 1 p.m. for Soldiers pending Article 15s. For more information, call 580-442-1494.

Other surveys

Residents in the Army's privatized housing are encouraged to take the Residential Communities Initiative survey to help leaders make improvements to facilities and services, and provide a better quality of life for Army families. All responses will be kept confidential. Residents should have received the survey in an email by April 26. Fort Sill residents who haven't received their email should call their community centers at Buffalo Soldier Acres, 580-581-2147; Old Cavalry Post, 580-581-2140; or Southern Plains: 580-581-2142.

The Federal Employees Viewpoint Survey

is under way. Employees may participate until the survey close out date of June 25. It is for full- or part-time employees in permanent, nonseasonal appropriated fund positions who've been a federal employee as of October 2018. Employees will receive an email invitation, though because it originated from the Office of Personnel Management, it will trigger the "Non-DoD Source" in subject line. Survey results provide insights to senior leaders on the strengths of the civilian workforce along with areas for potential improvement and current challenges. It should take about 20-25 minutes to complete.

Heed Mr. Paisley

For those who enjoy the Fort Sill outdoors, check YOURSELf for ticks. These carriers of Lyme disease are out and about.



Two people with ties to the late Gen. John Shalikashvili, biographer Dr. Andrew Marble and Wes Jetter, a former first lieutenant who served with Shalikashvili when he was a major at Fort Lewis, Wash., get to know one another May 9, following a public reading from Marble's book for a reunion here of Field Artillery Officer Candidate School alumni.

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