

COMMUNITY CORNER

Energy conservation no longer commodity, now necessity

By Col. William Clark
GARRISON COMMANDER

Sustainability – it's not just an Army buzz word, it is a part of daily operations at Fort Riley.

We talk about sustainability in terms of our workforce or infrastructure, but I'd like to address, specifically, our sustainability efforts in the area of energy conservation.

The Department of Defense is the largest consumer of energy in the U.S. As such, it has made saving energy a priority in everything it does – and so has Fort Riley.

Energy conservation is no longer a commodity; it is a necessity. In our new fiscal reality of budget constraints and financial uncertainty, it is our duty and responsibility to lower energy costs. The fact of the matter is: We can't afford not to.

WHAT FORT RILEY IS DOING

LEED

All newly constructed buildings at Fort Riley are required to meet strict Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design standards and obtain a minimum rating of silver

through the accreditation system.

The LEED certification system is a third party, green-building certification process, where points are awarded when specific conservation practices are implemented in the building designs of a project.

Examples include installing low-flow fixtures in sinks and showers; utilizing water-efficient toilets; installing water-efficient appliances; and numerous other water-conserving practices.

LEED rankings, from lowest to highest, are certified silver, gold and platinum.

In addition to new construction projects, updated building projects include the use of water-efficient fixtures and appliances as well. Since 2012, all federal buildings must have meters that will allow individuals to monitor and control systems like heating and cooling. This includes Fort Riley.

Picrre

Picrre Military Housing,



Col. Clark

the on-post housing contractor, has several programs that encourage energy conservation.

One of the largest is its participating, since 2009, in the Department of Defense Resident Responsibility Utility Program. The program monitors resident utility usage and compares it to the usage in similar homes. Those homes that use more than the baseline set each month receive a bill for the extra usage. Those residents who are under the baseline receive a rebate.

Additionally, each new home that is built meets or exceeds Energy Star standards, a government program created to save money and protect the environment through energy-efficient products and practices. All appliances purchased and construction practices used are Energy Star-rated.

Intergovernmental Support Partnerships

A new alliance is in the beginning stages between Fort Riley and surrounding communities: Intergovernmental Support Partnerships. Six working groups were initiated, including public works, emergency services, recreation, business operations/finance/procurement, transit and human capital. The

public works group likely will identify areas where Fort Riley and surrounding communities can work together to lower energy usage.

These partnerships are about making Fort Riley more efficient to take care of the constituency across the Central Flint Hills Region. With the recent fiscal challenges facing the nation, opportunities for new ways of gaining efficiencies are being introduced for the mutual benefit of federal, state and local governments.

Net Zero Water Installation

Fort Riley was designated a Net Zero water installation in 2011. A Net Zero Water installation is defined as one which limits the consumption of fresh water and returns water back to the same watershed, so as not to deplete the groundwater and surface water resources of that region in quantity or quality.

Fort Riley, along with the other installations, will become centers of environmental and energy excellence. Furthermore, they will establish a framework of reduction, re-purposing, recycling and composting, energy recovery and disposal to guide them toward achieving net zero in an environmentally

responsible, cost-effective and efficient manner.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

The above are just a few examples of Fort Riley's efforts in reducing our energy consumption. But Fort Riley also needs your help. One of the biggest ways you can help, in general, is to reduce your own energy usage. In your homes and places of work, think of ways you can make a small difference that, when added together, may mean significant savings in our energy bills. When we all work together, we can accomplish our goals.

The Department of Energy offers a few examples of ways to conserve energy

- Turning off lights in unoccupied rooms or when sufficient daylight is coming in through windows.

- Turn items off when you are not in the room, like televisions, entertainment systems, computers, monitors, printers and copiers.

- Plug electronics like televisions and DVD players into power strips; turn the power strips off when the equipment is not in use.

- In your offices, unplug personal refrigerators, coffee makers and other appliances

and use community appliances in a break room instead.

- Replacing incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs.

- Install a programmable thermostat, if permitted, to lower utility bills and manage your heating and cooling systems efficiently.

- Check to see that windows and doors are closed when heating or cooling your home.

- Lower the thermostat on your water heater to 120°F.

- Air dry your dishes instead of using your dishwasher's drying cycle.

- Take short showers instead of baths and use low-flow showerheads for additional energy savings.

- Wash only full loads of dishes and clothes.

- Air dry clothes.

- For more energy-saving ideas and recommendations, visit www.energysavers.gov.

If you would like to comment on this article, or suggest a topic for a future Community Corner, email usarmy.riley.incom.mbx.post-newspaper@gmail.com.

Buffalo Soldier: Local man shares story of his service

Curley talks about Army career

Editor's note: In observance of Black History Month, the newspaper is profiling Albert Curley, a former "Buffalo Soldier" and current local resident with first-hand experience of military life for African Americans in the 1900s.

By Julie Fiedler
1ST INF. DIV. POST

When Albert Curley was a noncommissioned officer in the Army, he taught his Soldiers to take advantage of opportunities to better themselves.

"Nothing is given to you," said Curley, a retired first sergeant. "You've got to earn it."

Curley remembers the days of segregation when the Officers' Club was all white simply because there were no African American officers.

"The biggest change now is you have qualified black officers and they'll get promoted," Curley said. "We have qualified black officers as generals now."

Into his 90s, Curley has continued to share his experience as a Buffalo Soldier, a member of one of the all African-American cavalry and infantry units activated between the late 1800s and the mid-1900s, in the hopes that others will seize opportunities to better themselves.

"The opportunity is there if you're qualified," he said.

Curley joined the Army in 1940. Drawn in by a sign hanging in the post office that advertised a wage of 50 cents a day, Curley and several friends went to the recruiter.

"We couldn't find a job for 50 cents a day," Curley remembered. "We got free housing. We got free food. We got free clothing. So that's why we joined the Army."

Curley, fresh out of 11th grade, had to get parental consent to join.

"My mother wouldn't – she refused to sign, saying I shouldn't go to the Army; I should finish high school," Curley said. "But my older brother signed the papers."

"He forged my mother's signature," he added. "She chewed him out, but it was too late then."

Curley and his friends were shipped by bus from their hometown of Helena, Ark., to Kansas – first Fort Leavenworth and then Fort Riley. To Curley it may as well have been a whole different world.

"They put us up in tents," Curley remembered.

Curley had to pass literacy tests and a physical before being sworn in.

"They swore us in and they put us in Troop A of the 9th Cavalry (Regiment) at Fort Riley. And this is the horse cavalry. Now it was more horses and mules out there than there was Soldiers," Curley said.

As a member of the 9th Cavalry, Curley became one of the storied Buffalo Soldiers.

"The Indians gave 'em the name the Buffalo Soldier because the buffalo was hard to kill and the horse cavalry – the Soldiers – was hard (to kill) ... and because their hair was similar to the manes on the buffalo," Curley said.

When asked if he had a sense that he was part of history, Curley shook his head.

"We just went along with it," he said.

Curley remembered his early days at Fort Riley being separate, but equal.

"It was all segregated then," he said. "You was treated as a Soldier."

From equipment to food to clothing, "you didn't get any different from the white Soldiers," Curley said.



Julie Fiedler | POST

A photo in his basement depicts a young Albert Curley in uniform. Curley is one of the last remaining members of the storied Buffalo Soldiers from Fort Riley's 9th Cav. Regt.

Like any Soldier, Curley remembered following orders and staying out of trouble.

"We went where we was told to go and we followed orders," he said.

In 1943, Curley was sent to Italy to fight in World War II.

"Wherever they needed you, they would ship you. And you would remain there. It wasn't no year rotation. You stayed with that unit," Curley said.

In Italy, Curley was wounded in action while clearing an enemy machine-gun nest. He was sent to a hospital, recovered and returned to the front.

"If you was wounded, and they can patch you up, they'd ship you back to the front," Curley said. "So I went back to the front."

As the war in Europe ended, and in Japan continued to rage on. Curley went directly from Italy to Japan to finish out the war, before returning to the

See CURLEY, page 16

Curleys to celebrate 70 years of marriage this September

By Julie Fiedler
1ST INF. DIV. POST

In his early years at Fort Riley, Albert Curley met Connie Wells, a Junction City High School student who attended dances regularly on post.

"Connie would dance and dance, and I would sit," Curley recalled.

Curley, who said he wasn't a good dancer, asked Connie if she would teach him.

"All I wanted to do was learn to dance," Curley said.

As the pair got to know each other, Curley wanted to take the relationship further. He asked for permission to marry her – not from her family, but from the Army.

At the time, officers would investigate romantic partners, Curley said.

"They would go to school, every place. Then they give the permission to ask the Family," Curley said.

Once his company commander gave approval, Curley went to Connie's family to ask for permission.

"Mrs. Wells – her mother – was washing on the back porch. And I say, 'Mrs. Wells, I would like to get permission



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Connie Curley, left, and Albert Curley, right, pose for a photo Jan. 28 at the couple's home in Junction City. The Curleys will celebrate their 70th wedding anniversary in September

to marry Connie.' And she almost fell in the washtub," Curley said.

Shortly after Curley and Connie married in 1943, Curley was sent to Italy to fight in World War II, and the couple only had infrequent letters to keep them connected.

It took a while for letters to go back and forth, Curley said.

"They had to catch up with you," he said.

After nearly four years of separation, Curley and Con-

nie were reunited in 1947. It was the first time Curley saw their son.

During that time, Connie kept charge of the household, writing checks and keeping accounts.

"She's the boss," Curley said.

Today, Curley and Connie live in Junction City. Connie remains the boss of the house, according to Curley. This September will mark the couple's 70th wedding anniversary.

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