The Knox County Joint Veterans Council are looking for volunteers!!!

The Knox County Joint Veterans Council is located at the Knox County Veterans Service Office located at 105 E Chestnut St. Mount Vernon, Ohio. The post conducts regular meetings on the third Thursday of each month. The meeting time is 7:00 P.M. Contact Carol Riley @ 740-504-3264 to schedule services. Contact Eddie Stage@ 740-504-1597 if you are interested in volunteering. Thank you!



They stand guard silently, vigilantly through whatever Mother Nature dares throw at them. They do so with great pride to honor one of their own. And they do this without thought of payment. For them, honoring a fallen brother-in-arms is compensation enough.

For the families of the deceased soldier, they are the ever-watchful sentinels, and their selfless act is a much-appreciated tribute.

They are the Joint Veterans Council.

The Most Accurate Ways to Assess Body Fat and Lean Muscle Mass

Many enjoy a fitness "bulking phase" in the winter season. Getting in the gym and lifting more is a great way to spend the year's colder months. However, gaining weight can go wrong, and you find you are putting on more fat than muscle. But are the tools you use to assess your gains accurate? That is the big question a reader has about his own weight-gain cycle:

With several methods available that track body fat/lean muscle mass, you must understand that not all provide accurate assessments of your body composition. There is a hierarchy of fat assessment tools, and your home scale is likely not high on the accuracy list. Since you mentioned feeling pleased with your overall weight and strength gains, could the discrepancy be the assessment tool and not your progress? Yes, very likely.

The top three that are considered the most accurate are the following:

According to WedMD and a variety of studies, the DEXA scan is the gold standard, using low-dose X-rays to measure lean muscle mass, body fat percentage and bone density and offering a comprehensive understanding of your physique.

Hydrostatic weighing is another option with high accuracy marks, but it is challenging to find. It requires specialized facilities that use underwater displacement measurements to measure body fat percentage accurately.

Air displacement plethysmography (ADP), known as the Bod Pod, effectively measures body volume with an error range of 1%-2%. This is a good option to measure body composition. (study)

At-home assessments, such as the body fat scales utilizing bioelectrical impedance analysis (BIA), skin calipers and the Body Mass Index (BMI) equation are convenient, but they can be significantly incorrect because of factors such as hydration levels and technique. These tend to overestimate body fat percentages and underestimate (or ignore) lean muscle mass.

Ultimately, as you continue your weight gain endeavors, it may be beneficial to consult more accurate body composition measurement methods for clarity. My advice is to keep lifting, start reducing caloric intake to normal amounts (2,000/day) and start progressing with cardio each week as spring approaches. Then you can do a calisthenics and cardio cycle to rip it back up again. Keep pushing yourself and find ways to train different components of fitness, versus only getting bigger.

Arlington Horses Are Getting Improvements After Deaths. But Other Army Animals Also Face Poor Conditions

The Army said Wednesday it has a long-term plan to rehabilitate the horse platoon tasked with funeral services for fallen service members following the deaths of four animals last year. But a recent service-wide Army review also found poor conditions for horses, mules and donkeys maintained at various facilities across the country -- the latest revelation following a May 1, 45-day suspension of the famous Arlington National Cemetery caisson platoon. The deaths in the caisson unit all occurred since February 2022. The documents obtained Wednesday by Military.com via the Freedom of Information Act show images of apparently emaciated animals, some with chipped hooves and lesions from poor tack fitting. In some cases, the review also found poorly designed and dilapidated facilities peppered with safety issues like barrels of hydrochloric acid stored next to horse feed. The Army created a task force to address the well-being of horses, mules and donkeys at 12 installations last year after troubles with horse health in the Arlington unit, also known as the Army Caisson Platoon of the 3rd Infantry Regiment, or the "Old Guard."

On Wednesday, the service unveiled a five-point plan for the suspended unit in an effort to improve the care and health of the horses, including reduction of the caisson weight that the horses have to pull and improvements to the fit of equipment to avoid injuries. "The challenges we are facing in our caisson program jump from a number of cumulative issues resulting from a lack of adequate facilities, pasture space, diet and nutrition, and poor herd management that can date back many years since at least 2010," Maj. Gen. Allan M. Pepin, commanding general of the Military District of Washington, which is in charge of the Old Guard, told reporters Wednesday. "Internally, it was an easy decision to make because it is the right decision to take care of the horses," Pepin added. "It's a difficult execution because now we have families that are affected by this decision -- but it's the right decision." The service explained that 200 families of service members with planned funeral honors now have the option of services without the horses due to the suspension of the unit. Army officials said that Arlington National Cemetery was able to contact 199 of the 200 affected families to inform them of the suspension. Only six so far have requested to reschedule. Those that do not reschedule will have their loved ones transported by a hearse car instead of a horse-led caisson, according to Army spokesperson Cynthia Smith. But the caisson platoon is not the only Army unit on the hook for improvements. The service keeps donkeys, mules and horses, referred to in a group as equids, that it uses for everything from pageantry-steeped traditions to training.

The servicewide review documents -- provided to Military.com by the Army the same day it announced the plan for the caisson unit -- show varying levels of care for the 267 Army equids housed across the country. The task force that performed the review was created in May 2022, a month after CNN reported issues happening in the caisson platoon. Some, like the Fort Cavazos, Texas, herd, scored highly -- 86% or higher -- in categories that ranged from communication between leaders to feed quality to facility management. Others, like Fort Gordon, Georgia, and Fort Polk, Louisiana -- which has only seven donkeys -- scored low, according to the Army's assessment, which was completed in November 2022 and did not define specific grading parameters.The assessment included photos of "thin, poorly muscled" animals. However, it was unclear in the documents which units the pictures were from. Other images showed barbed wire fencing around horse turnout areas, washed-out pastures, stalls with concrete floors that may be harmful to horse hooves, and a horse eating sawdust shavings due to "lack of appropriate nutrition and feed availability." Some notes listed in the individual installation assessments -- which include West Point, Forts Carson, Gordon, Hood (now Cavazos), Huachuca, Irwin, Polk, Riley, Sill, Myer, Belvoir, and Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston -- showed positive comments like collaborative relationships between the veterinarians and leadership at Fort Irwin, for example. Other notes were negative, and focused on more tangible issues affecting herds across the Army. Fort Riley's feed was stored next to chemicals, and the base had small stalls. There was a lack of runoff at Fort Sill's pasture sheds. The waterers at Fort Belvoir's pasture were dirty and "too few," and rat poison was kept on top of donkey supplements at Fort Polk.

The documents -- and Army comments during a Wednesday press conference -- reveal a sometimes dwindling knowledge-base for animals that haven't been used widely across the U.S. Army since World War I, despite some limited utilization in modern wars such as special operations use of equines during the initial invasion of Afghanistan. The 28-page assessment listed "enterprise-wide" issues that showed horses taking a back seat in funding, feed and leadership attention. The assessment listed poor communication; inattentiveness to veterinary care and welfare expertise; a lack of feed and nutrition knowledge; unresolved facility inspection findings; and "dangerous or inappropriate" facilities.

One item the assessment pointed to as a primary issue for the management of horses was the lack of a Pentagon-wide policy or doctrine used to manage horses. "There were areas and gaps in the execution of appropriate herd management, feed and nutrition, ability to have the right facilities -- potentially in some locations because they were in older locations that needed to be upgraded," Army Veterinary Corps Chief and Task Force Military Working Equids lead Col. Deborah Whitmer said Wednesday. "All of these issues … were found in various locations to one extent or another," Whitmer said. For the caisson platoon, the review documents come after months of trying to fix the issue. Leadership told reporters Wednesday that the unit has hired a new herd manager, improved feed quality, and received $15 million in funding from Congress. The unit has struggled with space for its now 49-horse herd -- a 27% decrease, as some have been adopted out of the unit since last February -- which were confined to under 10 acres until the unit began rotating some to plots in Lorton, Virginia.Now, the Army is eyeing 50 acres for the caisson herd, according to Pepin.

The Army originally told Military.com last month that the suspension of the caisson unit was a temporary pause that will be "conditions-based, and will not impact military honors, dependent honors services or any other military funeral honors elements," according to a statement from a service spokesperson.

What to Know About Fort Knox's Gold Depository

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — President Donald Trump says Elon Musk will be looking at Fort Knox, the legendary depository in Kentucky for American gold reserves, to make sure the gold is still there. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent says there is an audit every year and that “all the gold is present and accounted for.”

The United States Bullion Depository at Fort Knox has stored precious metal bullion reserves for the United States since 1937 and has become synonymous for secure and well protected. Along with protecting gold reserves, Fort Knox is currently also used as the Army's human resources command center, and it hosts the Army's largest annual training event each summer.

“We’re going to open up the the doors. We’re going to inspect Fort Knox,” Trump said in a speech to Republican governors Thursday evening. “I don’t want to open it and the cupboards are bare,” he added.

The Army post is about 35 miles south of Louisville and encompasses 109,000 acres in three Kentucky counties — Bullitt, Hardin, and Mead.

Camp Knox was established during World War I and became an artillery training center, according to the Army post's website. It was made a permanent installation in 1932 and has been known since then as Fort Knox. The first gold arrived at Fort Knox in 1937 with the 1st Cavalry Regiment called on to guard the shipment. With the outbreak of World War II in Europe, the Army created the Armored Force at Fort Knox, and thousands of soldiers were ordered there and introduced to the tank. For nearly 80 years, the post was known as the “Home of Cavalry and Armor.”

In 2005, the Army decided to move the Armor Center and School to Fort Benning, Georgia, and the Human Resource Command Center of Excellence was established at Fort Knox. In 2013, ROTC Cadet Summer Training was consolidated at Fort Knox. The post hosts the Army's largest annual training event each summer.

According to the U.S. Mint, current gold holdings at the US Bullion Depository at Fort Knox are 147.3 million ounces. About half of the Treasury’s stored gold is kept at Fort Knox. Has the gold ever been removed? The Mint says only very small quantities have been removed to test the purity of the gold during regularly scheduled audits. Except for these samples, no gold has been transferred to or from the depository for many years. The gold's book value is $42.22 per ounce.

The depository is very secure. The actual structure and content of the facility is known by only a few, and no one person knows all the procedures to open the vault. What is known publicly is that the facility was built in 1936 using 16,000 cubic feet of granite, 4,200 cubic yards of concrete, 750 tons of reinforcing steel and 670 tons of structural steel. The facility is heavily guarded and has broken its strict policy of not allowing visitors only three times.

In 1974, the US Mint opened the vaults to a group of journalists and a congressional delegation so they could see the gold reserves. The Treasury secretary allowed the visit after persistent rumors that the gold had been removed. Until then, the only person other than authorized personnel to access the vaults was President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Since then, the vaults have been opened one other time: In 2017, Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin visited with Kentucky Gov. Matt Bevin and congressional representatives. Current Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has said he would happily arrange an inspection for any senator who is interested in seeing the vaults.

The gold depository at Fort Knox has a reputation for being impenetrable, which has gained it a place in popular culture. As early as 1952, a Looney Tunes cartoon featured Bugs Bunny and Yosemite Sam digging for gold Fort Knox. Fort Knox has also been featured in the plot of movies such as the 1964 James Bond spy thriller “Goldfinger” and the 1981 comedy “Stripes,” which was partially filmed at the post.



Pictures of the Month



The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard cutter Polar Star enjoys ice liberty during Operation Deep Freeze in McMurdo Sound, Antarctica, Jan. 7, 2025.



Sailors assigned to the USS Carl Vinson participate in search and rescue training with an MH-60S Sea Hawk helicopter in the Celebes Sea, Feb. 7, 2025.