

# Up and Down the Hill

Serving the Fort A.P. Hill Community

## Guide Provides Wildfire Management Tool

By Ken Perrotte  
Fort A.P. Hill Public Affairs Office

Tracer rounds zipping toward targets at a distant wood line, white phosphorous flares drifting under tiny parachutes in the night sky, high-explosive warheads detonating courtesy of artillery fire — things can really get hot at Fort A.P. Hill even when summer temperatures aren't blistering the landscape.

Wildfire management, especially south of U.S. 301 where most flashes and bangs that can start a blaze take place, is serious business for post range and infrastructure managers, and installation firefighters.

With the "Visual Guide to Forest Fuels and Fire Hazard on Fort A.P. Hill," they now have a new tool that can help them better understand and communicate the fire threat.

Developed by Jason Applegate, a long-time contracted team member in the Public Works' Environmental Division, the spiral bound 20-page booklet shows examples of various habitats found on Fort A.P. Hill with a corresponding fire hazard rating based on worst case scenarios, such as drought and high winds.

Hurricanes, ice storms, insects and more contribute to downed trees, limbs and twigs creating "coarse woody debris" and "fine woody debris" — or "fuel" as a fire may know it.

Fallen leaves, snags (dead trees still standing) and the density of the forest understory such as shrubs and saplings are also factors in the ability of a wildfire to spread.

"The Visual Guide was developed in-house by Range and Training Land Assessment (RTLA) as a means of communicating wildfire hazard to range/training, and fire-fighting personnel. This came out

of a larger forest fuels assessment conducted in 2005 by RTLA," Applegate explained.

Applegate worked with Installation Foresters Larry Capelle and Anne Ulrey on the fire hazard ratings associated with the different habitat conditions.

Applegate said the U.S. Forest Service has requested copies of the booklet.

"Much of my work involves regular coordination with the Forest Service because we utilize their techniques here in terms of assessing land condition. We routinely share findings of a technical nature with them to demonstrate how we use their methodology," he added.

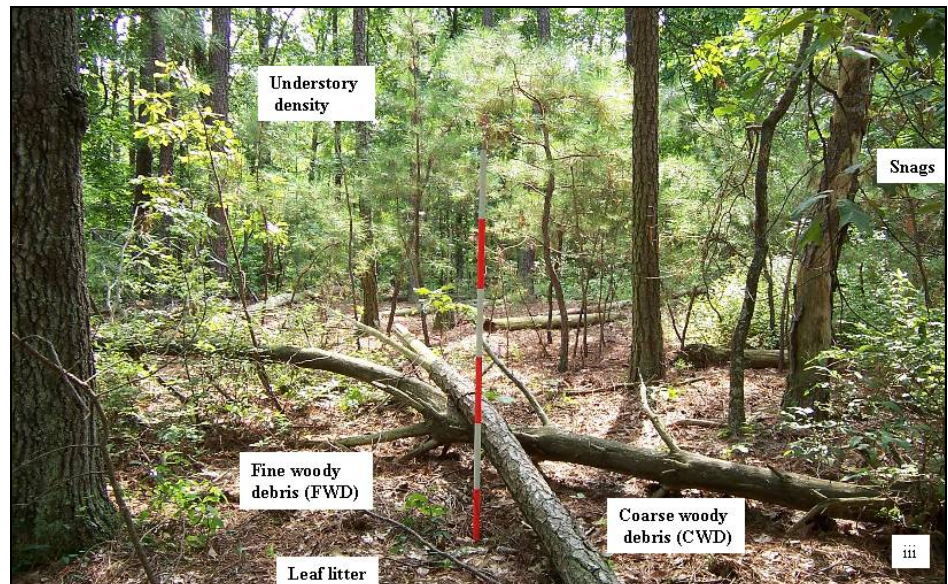
This transfer and sharing of technology and technical information dates to 1998 when a cooperative agreement was established between Fort A.P. Hill and the Forest Service.

The document will be posted on the

Reimbursable Programs Tracking System as a technical reference for other installations looking to perform similar work and on the Defense Environmental Information Exchange (DENIX) as part of a DOD Fire Learning Network

Fort A.P. Hill has long used controlled burns as a tool to consume forest fuels on the installation's terms versus the whims of Mother Nature and the inherent risks posed by military training. That practice, along with careful maintenance of a series of firebreaks throughout the range complex helps mitigate the opportunity for wildfires. The Visual Guide gives managers one more tool in the box.

Applegate is presenting a seminar on assessing wildfire hazards to the Army Integrated Training Area Workshop next week at Fort Riley, Kan.



This photo shows the various types of forest fuels assessed in the Visual Guide to Forest Fuels and Fire Hazard on Fort A.P. Hill.

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## News & Info Shorts

### Training Conference Preps Warriors

Representatives from 20 military units and two contractors attended the Fort A.P. Hill semi-annual training conference July 21 at the Heth Schoolhouse. The day-long conference gives units that have scheduled a training event an opportunity to hear first hand from installation leaders about how they can best prepare to have a successful deployment to A.P. Hill.

Ben Allen of the Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security coordinated the session.

### Marines Wrap Up Intensive Training

More than 1,500 Marines from the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit, based at Camp Lejeune, N.C., just finished three weeks of intensive training here as part of a pre-deployment work-up.

The training marked the MEU's first opportunity to work together in a "real field environment" for the first time this year. Among the MEU components here were the Battalion Landing Team, a Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron-264 (Reinforced), the Combat Logistics Battalion, and the Command Element

The Marines covered the A.P. Hill deployment extensively through article and photos on [www.marine.com](http://www.marine.com). In the wrap up article, Marine journalists reported that, "The MEU chose to train at A.P. Hill because it offered a distraction-free environment and extensive training ranges, said Capt. Shawn A. Rickrode, the 26th MEU's anti-terrorism force protection officer, and the MEU's action officer during the training.

"The MEU put nearly all of its ground, air and logistics capabilities into action during its time at A.P. Hill in an array of scenarios, including non-combatant evacuation operations, mass casualty evacuations, and helicopter delivery of supplies.

"These operations were accomplished in the face of intense heat, logistics and communications issues, and long hours, said Lt. Col. Christopher A. Arantz, commanding officer of CLB-26.

"We had a lot to accomplish at A.P. Hill, and the Marines and Sailors were up to the challenge," he said.

"Bringing the MEU's diverse elements into a single-bodied, effective fighting force was the primary focus of the training, said Rickrode.

"We wanted to build a 26th MEU team," said Arantz. "We accomplished that."

### Fish Being Redistributed to Improve Health

Fort A.P. Hill fisheries and wildlife staff members have been conducting electro-fishing activities at Fish Hook Lake to thin out thousands of channel catfish that were stocked after the NSJ by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

To alleviate overcrowding in Fish Hook Lake, some fish are being relocated to Beaverdam and Buzzards Roost Ponds to provide more balanced channel catfish populations and to improve the health of those catfish remaining in Fish Hook Lake.

Nearly 1,200 catfish have been collected and restocked. Most of these fish are in the 12-inch range, according to Lee. Beaver-

dam and Buzzard Roosts also has a number of fish that were stocked in 2005 at weights from 2-4 pounds, he added.

### Chamber Crab Feast Slated Here Again

The Caroline County Chamber of Commerce's annual Crab Feast is again scheduled for Fort A.P. Hill's picnic area. The date is Sept. 18. Ticket details are not finalized yet, but tickets will be available for installation employees in the Public Affairs Office for this limited sale event.

### Salutes, Hails & Farewells

The team members of the Public Works Forestry Section were recognized during the recent Safety and Occupational Health Council Meeting as the Safety Stalwarts for the last three months. They were commended for their continuous focus on improving safety in their daily actions.

## HOT—Ain't It?

**One training memoir  
from early 1940's shows  
some things change;  
others stay the same**



*Editor's note: Fort A.P. Hill was among many installations assembled to prepare a vast Army mobilizing for World War II. It is interesting seeing references to the post in various memoirs of Soldiers and units from that area. The following is from one unit history of the 76th Infantry Division. The specific author is unknown.*

"By July the division was ready for more advanced training and moved to A.P. Hill Military Reservation near Fredericksburg, Virginia. There, living under field conditions, the men experienced three months of rugged outdoor unit training. Combat problems were splendidly conducted over more than 80,000 acres of rocky, sandy, sweltering Virginia countryside.

What was A.P. Hill like? Well, it was like an oven, and any place you went it was out of the frying pan and into the fire. During training hours you cooked in sweat, and when you ate, everything tasted salty from your own perspiration. At night the tents were still hot from the sun. You rolled up the flaps but the wind was even too weak to penetrate the mosquito netting. If you rolled the netting you still didn't sleep; those who don't believe in monstrous dragons, able both to fly and bite, have never been to any place like A.P. Hill.

Yes, there were passes, and it was possible to get to Washington. Generally that was tried only once. By the time you and a million other GI's could board, first, a bus and then one of those coal-burning jobs with insufficient coaches, packed aisles, and enough coal dust to heat the whole of Germany, you were such a wilted, filthy mess in what were once sun-tans, that Mauldin would have seemed a fashion plate by comparison. But A.P. Hill was a splendid training ground for every member of the division, and we were a pretty cocky fighting outfit by the time those three months were up . . ."