



# Paraglide

## **Safety, Security Priority on Fort Bragg**

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Crime rates are cyclical, according to the Fort Bragg provost marshal. As the weather improves with the coming of summer, more criminals may take the opportunity afforded by the warmer, dryer days to victimize Fort Bragg residents. However, steps are being taken by the military police - and can be taken by everyone - to help deter or reduce criminal acts.

“No community is immune from crime,” said Lt. Col. Susan Danielsen, Fort Bragg provost marshal. “That’s just a sad fact of life. What we’re trying to do is balance proactive measures with really good investigative techniques.” Danielsen said that MPs aren’t the only people on Fort Bragg who can help prevent and deter crime.”

“There are a lot of people who play roles in preventing crime and keeping the community safe,” she said. “Of course there’s law enforcement, which plays a role in preventing crime through deterrence, proactive patrolling and a lot of community outreach that we do. We have security officers at the gate to help prevent crime from coming on to the installation, and residents themselves are responsible for protecting themselves from becoming victims.”

Although some crimes may spike in times of good weather, criminal activity isn’t on the increase on Fort Bragg, Danielsen said.

“As a whole, if you compare the crime rate this year to recent years, there’s not a noticeable increase in crime in general,” she said. “Fort Bragg is a pretty safe place.” Greg Jackson, deputy director, Public Safety Business Center, agreed. “I wouldn’t say that we have a crime problem,” he said. “We have crime challenges in different areas, but ‘crime problem’ gives the connotation that crime is running rampant and all of our efforts are failing to prevent crime. That’s not the case.” Danielsen said that certain crimes are more prevalent than others, however, because of the ease and speed with which they can be committed.

“A common crime that we have on Fort Bragg is called the smash-and-grab,” she said. “It got that name for a reason - the smash-and-grab is usually when a vehicle’s window is smashed out and the valuables inside are grabbed. So you’ve got the damage to the vehicle and you’ve got the larceny of the property.” Danielsen added that smash-and-grabs often happen because the thief sees a tempting target.

Danielsen also cautioned that certain types of vehicles are attractive to thieves. “Car theft is not as popular as motorcycle theft,” she said. “There are certain motorcycles that are more popular with thieves. Generally, they’re the foreign-made motorcycles known for speed, commonly called crotch-rockets.”

Danielsen said that there are ways to deter motorcycle thieves. “Lock your bike and secure it to a fixed object,” she said. “Most motorcycles are owned by single Soldiers living in the barracks, so having a (charge of quarters Soldier) make a check of the parking area would be a great deterrent, not only for motorcycle thefts, but also for smash-and-grabs.”

Danielsen said that violent crimes are much less common on post than property crimes. “If I were living on Fort Bragg, violent crime would be the least of my concerns,” she said. “The stranger assaults where someone you’ve never seen before attacks you - we don’t have those. Property crimes are the most common.” Danielsen said that there are many ways for individual Soldiers to either prevent crimes or assist MPs in solving those that do occur.

“Secure your valuables, and keep a record of your valuables,” Danielsen said. She added that once a piece of property is stolen, it is put into a national database, which assists law-enforcement agencies in locating the owner no matter when or where the stolen property is recovered.

Danielsen also stressed that it is important to keep valuables stored out of sight when in vehicles, and to never leave children or pets unattended in vehicles. If an individual is victimized, the MPs should be notified immediately, Danielsen said. She also stressed that there are ways that victims can aid law enforcement in making an investigation.

“If, for instance, your car is broken into, don’t touch anything,” she said. “The car has become a crime scene, and we can collect evidence from it. Have a list and pictures of your valuables. If a piece of property comes without a serial number, engrave it with something that identifies it as yours.”

Unit commanders can also help deter crime, Danielsen said. “(Commanders should) enforce good physical security rules,” she said. “Keep doors and windows locked. Keep records of Soldiers’ valuables and conduct periodic health-and-welfare inspections. That’s a great deterrent.” Danielsen said that organized neighborhood watches can also help prevent criminal activity.

“Neighborhood watches have proven across the United States to be effective in deterring crime,” she said. “But it has to be neighbors really looking after neighbors, caring for each other and having a good relationship with law enforcement.” Danielsen said that the most important thing people can do to prevent being victimized is simply being aware of their surroundings. “Whether you live in the barracks or the neighborhoods, it’s

important to know what's usual in you area," she said. "If you know what's usual, it's easy to detect what's unusual." Jackson agreed.

"The key is being aware of your environment, wherever that may be," he said. "Watch after each other. If something seems out of place or doesn't look right, report it."