

Crossed Sabers

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"Telling the First Team's Story"

Monday, June 5, 2006



(Photo by Sgt. Paula Taylor, 4th BCT Public Affairs)

Eyes Open

An Abrams tank crew, from 4th Brigade Combat Team's 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, makes its way off Fort Bliss' Doña Ana Range after completing their qualification table using the new common Remotely Operated Weapons Station. The CROWS allows a tank crew to fire a remote weapon system from inside the tank without the gunner hatch open. See complete story on Page 21.

Realistic Training

'Grey Wolf' Explodes Onto Lanes

By Pfc. Ryan Stroud
3rd BCT Public Affairs

FORT POLK, La. — With improvised explosive devices, townspeople screaming at the top of their lungs, Soldiers administered aid where they could and regained control of a hostile village during a combat logistic patrol lane here.

Soldiers of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division experienced what they might see on an everyday convoy trip in Iraq.

The Combat Logistic Patrol lane is just one of the lanes Soldiers of the "Grey Wolf" Brigade will face during their month-long deployment at the Joint

Readiness Training Center.

"We completed the combat logistic patrol in preparation for what we, as a unit, might see if we deploy to Iraq," said Sgt. Danny McGee, a Soldier with Co. A, 2-82 FA after completing the lane May 7.

"[The lane] included convoy movement, reacting to enemy fire and dealing with a hostile environment," McGee added.

To prepare for the training the unit participated in, the Soldiers began preparations May 6 to take advantage of some extra battle rehearsal drills. The next morning, they were up a 4 a.m. preparing to roll out and conquer their mission.

McGee said it was a hard morning waking up early but his guys were up to the

challenge of going out and completing their lane training.

"In the morning we did convoy maneuvers as a unit, responding to problems we faced as we traveled down the road," said McGee. "If we came under attack, our squad leader would give us information of what he wanted us to do. If it was to dismount, we did and started our patrol."

As the Soldiers continued their training, they came across a hostile village filled with yelling, chanting and fighting by the local populous. The Soldiers approached in their vehicles and dismount-

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Soldiers Should Live the Division's Legend

Summer is typically a time of year when Soldiers and their families move to new duty assignments, and this one is no exception.

If you are newly assigned here, you've arrived to what we commonly refer to as the "Great Place" and I'm sure you will soon understand this well deserved nickname. The fantastic folks of central Texas have always been very supportive and generous toward the military.

If this is your first assignment to the cavalry, get ready for the experience of a lifetime. You now have the privilege of experiencing the traditions and panache of the cavalry. For those of you returning to the Cav, welcome home.

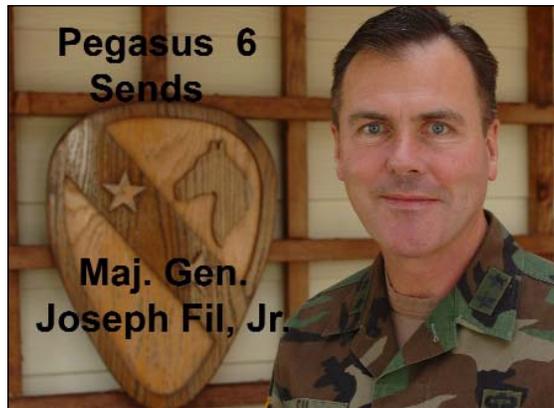
My charge to all of you is simply this – "Live the Legend" of the 1st Cavalry Division.

This division was established in 1921 at Fort Bliss, Texas. From its beginning, the "First Team" has been a premiere example of America's military might. The expectation on all of us is to measure up to the high standards set by those who went before us and to carry forward that tradition of excellence.

On the east end of this division's parade field, you will find a monument. This monument testifies to the selfless service and sacrifice of First Team troopers during their last major action, a year-long tour in Iraq which brought about the first democratic national election to the people of Iraq in January 2005.

During that year, First Team troopers fought insurgents and terrorists, helped create and train an Iraqi army, and worked tirelessly on civil-military projects to improve the lives of the residents in the Iraqi capital city.

That memorial stands as a testament to the 168 troopers who laid down their lives



during that honorable campaign in the cause of freedom.

I encourage all of you to visit that site, and to take a few moments and remember those soldiers, their families, and the many sacrifices and contributions they made to

this war on terror.

This division prepares today to deploy again. Two of our brigades, the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade and the 15th Support Brigade, already have deployment orders to return to Iraq. The rest of us are preparing for that same mission.

We must take our training to heart, prepare ourselves mentally and physically for the rigors ahead, and ready our families for the eventuality of deployment.

I thank you and your families for choosing the profession of the military and for continuing to serve during this time of war that we live in.

It's a great team, it's our team, it's the First Team. God bless you all and God bless this great nation of ours.



Preventing POV Accidents



When riding your motorcycle, remember the following –

- In addition to your helmet, wear eye and face protection.
- Wear long pants, gloves, boots, and a durable long-sleeved jacket.
- Wear brightly colored clothing



Don't forget maintenance!

→ **First Team** ←

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The 1st Cavalry Division
would like to thank our Soldiers
for their continued service.



Have you thanked a Soldier today?

DSTB Convoy Ends With a Bang

By Pfc. Jeffrey Ledesma
1st Ca. Div. Public Affairs

The burning sun's rays scorched down on the convoy as the vehicles moved along the dirt road. Rusted barbed wire traced the boundary of a town. With their weapons drawn, the troops, sweating in full armor, cautiously approached the settlement's outskirts. The Soldiers' mission was to pick up the Iraqi president and drop off supplies at an Iraqi police station as quickly and safely as possible.

It was Baghdad, or a place very close to it.

Soldiers with Company A and Headquarters Service Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division conducted these convoy exercises at a Military Operations in Urban Terrain site in north Fort Hood May 18.

"Prior to conducting the lane training our soldiers went through cultural awareness, reacting to an improvised explosive device, convoy operations, interacting with local leaders, reacting to indirect fire, entry and traffic control point operations, and combat lifesaver training," the DSTB executive officer Maj. Christopher Cox said.

Christopher Kendall, a satellite communication system operator with the Extension Detachment, Co. A, DSTB, 1st Cav. Div., said that the classroom instruction was informative, actually going out there and performing the convoy exercise was a better learning experience.

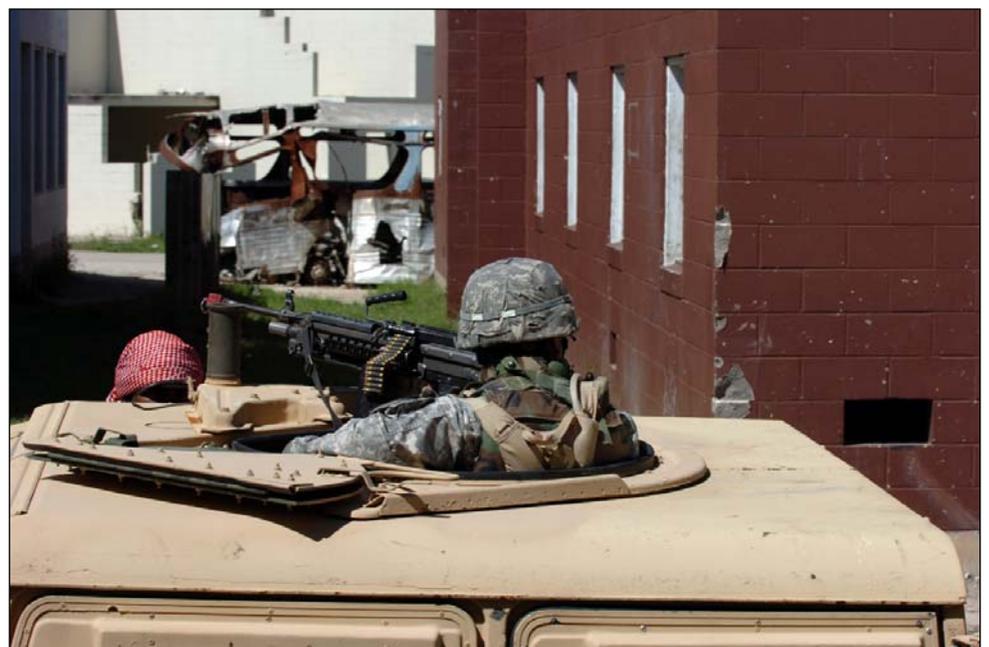
After rehearsing, it was time to put theory into action. Cautiously, the platoon set out on a convoy to the MOUT site. Doing what they were trained to do, they spotted an unidentifiable object that seemed out of place.

The classroom lessons came into action like a light switch being turned on. The Soldiers immediately called in an explosive ordnance disposal team to



(Photos by Pfc. Jeffrey Ledesma, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Riding in the first Humvee, Spc. Tyler Iversen with Company A, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division provides security with a M249 during a convoy training lane at a Military Operations in Urban Terrain site in north Fort Hood May 18.



Spc. Tyler Iversen with Company A, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, leads the way as he mans M249 on top of a Humvee during a convoy training lane at a Military Operations in Urban Terrain site in north Fort Hood May 18.

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Training Prepares Soldiers for Convoys

Convoy

From Page 4

clear the path of what was later identified as an IED. Only then did they continue their mission through the mock city.

As the troops rolled through the dusty city streets, they came in contact, not with insurgents, but with civilians.

Spc. Carmine Moon, a chemical operations specialist with Co. A, DSTB, 1st Cav. Div., said that having to deal with the aggressive behavior of the civilians will pay off in the end because that's what it will be like in Iraq.

"The aggressive Iraqi civilians were hard to handle, but we knew we had to be assertive," Kendall said. "If we weren't, they could hold up the mission and at that point they become an obstacle you have to overcome."

Kendall said because everything so far in the exercise had gone smoothly, he knew something was coming.

Shots rained down on the convoy as they turned the corner, it was an ambush by acting insurgents.

"When it happened, I knew what I had to do and we got out of there as fast as we could," said Kendall. "At the time, the possibility of getting hurt in a real convoy didn't register with me because my mind instantly shifted into automatic gear because of the training we went through."

After the convoy rolled away clear of danger, Soldiers dismounted and huddled around a sand table map of the city, made with dirt and rocks, in one of the buildings. They went over each step of the convoy operation from the time they started the engines to the second they dismounted their Humvees.

Cox said, as part of the two-week field training exercise, "the convoy through the mock Baghdad city was designed for Soldiers to be able to make mistakes and learn from those mistakes to become better prepared as they get closer to deployment."

Kendall said high-speed training like that doesn't happen everyday and he feels more prepared because of it.



(Photos by Pfc. Jeffrey Ledesma, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

From left to right, Spc. Christopher Kendall, Sgt. Andrew Rawlings, and Pfc. Alex Kaufmann, all with Company A, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, post up against their High-Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle at a Military Operations in Urban Terrain site in north Fort Hood during a convoy lanes training exercise May 18. The convoy stopped to pick up the acting Iraqi president.



Sgt. Terry High with Company A, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division attempts to keep the crowd of civilians surrounding him from imposing the mission at a Military Operations in Urban Terrain site in north Fort Hood during a convoy lanes training exercise May 18.



(Photos by Pfc. Jeffrey Ledesma, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Chaplain assistants zero their mock M16 rifles prior to conducting virtual urban combat scenarios at the Engagement Skills Trainer facility on Fort Hood May 11. The rifle stimulator was a part of a two-day training exercise emphasizing close-quarter countermeasures and marksmanship.

Chaplain Assistants Prepare For Combat

By Pfc. Jeffrey Ledesma
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

The warm Texas beat down on the Engagement Skills Trainer facility where the Soldiers split off into two separate groups. One group went over real-life sce-

narios pulled from different place such as Bosnia and Somalia, while the second stepped into a virtual urban combat world and dealt with 'shoot or don't shoot' scenarios.

Chaplain assistants from the 1st Cavalry Division joined their post-wide

counterparts for a two-day training exercise emphasizing close quarter countermeasures and marksmanship at various locations on Fort Hood May 11 and 12.

"It is great training, not only for chaplain assistants, but for all Soldiers," said Master Sgt. Lorrie Nichols, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the First Team's chaplain's office. "If every Soldier could experience the stimulator it may make them think a little differently before shooting the wrong person or placing other Soldier's lives in danger."

Nichols said the urban combat 'shoot or don't shoot' techniques they learned were invaluable.

"The stimulator was the most realistic urban combat environment I've seen besides actually being in a combat zone," said Sgt. 1st Class Craig Gardner,

The chaplain's operations sergeant with Headquarters Company, 1st Cavalry Division. Combat situations flashed on the screen in the stimulator's arcade-like dark room.

"In addition to attempting to shoot moving targets we had to deal with the



Spc. Phillip Barry, a chaplain assistant with 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, protects his acting chaplain, Sgt. 1st Class Craig Gardner, the chaplain's operations sergeant for Headquarters Company, 1st Cavalry Division during an evaluation lane May 12.

Soldiers Practice Protecting Chaplains

Protect

From Page 6

real-life scenarios, which gave the exercise a stronger sense of realism," he said. "Obviously, the people who designed it knew what they were doing."

As dawn seeped through the colored mosaic glass windows of the Old Post Chapel on day two, the Soldiers returned for a one hour refresher class before going out to continue their training.

The chaplain assistants paired up, then repetitively went over moving off the line and practiced weapons retention, and weapons disarming techniques.

Hypothetical scenarios were conducted as the Soldiers were asked how they would deal with the situations. The most challenging of the scenarios were the ones dealing with children.

"Worrying about kids in an urban combat environment is something you have to do," Gardner said. "One of the biggest mistakes you can make is harm a child, accidental or not, it has the capability to destroy every bit of good will and trust you built from the ground up in an area."

When deployed, chaplain assistants are engaged in urban operations such as visiting religious leaders and in some situations they will be the only security that might be provided for the chaplain. Although there will be other Soldiers in the area their focus is not on protecting the chaplain.

"The job to protect the only non-combatant on the battlefield is completely critical to the Army; so you must have



(Photos by Pfc. Jeffrey Ledesma, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Sgt. 1st Class Craig Gardner, the chaplain's operations sergeant for Headquarters Company, 1st Cavalry Division, prevents Staff Sgt. Venon Hicks, a fellow First Team chaplain assistant, from taking his weapon by performing the barrel roll technique.



Sgt. 1st Class Craig Gardner, the operations sergeant for the 1st Cavalry Division chaplain's office, strikes through Staff Sgt. Venon Hicks, a chaplain assistant with Headquarters Company, 1st Cavalry Division, left shoulder to throw him off his center of gravity on the field in front of the Old Post Chapel during a urban combat training exercise May 12.

close combat skills," said Staff assistant with Headquarters "Protecting the chaplain is our
Sgt. Daniel Hill, a chaplain Company, III Corps. focus."



(Photo by Sgt. Jon Cupp, 1st BCT Public Affairs)

Soldiers of the 115th Brigade Support Battalion retrieve one of their M88 Track Recovery Vehicles this week at a railhead in Fort Polk, La. prior to their beginning the Joint Readiness Training Center's rigorous training events.

Troopers Leave for Training Center

By Sgt. Jon Cupp
1st BCT Public Affairs

Soldiers from the 1st Cavalry Division's 1st Brigade Combat Team will soon be experiencing what has been labeled "the most realistic, most stressful" training that troops on the ground will ever face.

More than 4,500 troops from Fort Hood's 1st Brigade Combat team departed for training exercises at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) at Fort Polk, La.. The training comes on the heels of April's Ironhorse Rampage exercise which prepared the brigade for tasks which they would most likely perform during a future deployment to Iraq.

"During JRTC, we obviously want to build on the recent Ironhorse Rampage event," said Maj. Pete

Andrysiak, 1st BCT executive officer. "We want to give our Soldiers confidence not only in individual skills but collective skills as well."

"This is a capstone event which will prepare our troops for any future deployments. It places them in an operational environment which puts stresses on them unlike any others they have ever experienced in any previous exercise," Andrysiak said.

"The goals of which are to ensure that they can handle any kinds of stressful situations that will come their way while operating in the wartime environment," he added.

Along with many standard training events such as combat patrol lanes, search and attack lanes and combat convoy lanes and mortar live-fires Soldiers will also take part in realistic training scenarios which

involve role-players representing Iraqi forces, the civilian media, protesting crowds, insurgents, and other enemy combatants.

Soldiers will take part in several scenarios including tackling the threats of terrorism, evading and detecting improvised explosive devices, crowd control, aiding in the training of Iraqi forces, humanitarian aid, community projects for the "Iraqi" people, rebuilding infrastructure and fighting insurgents and capturing enemy combatants.

The training will culminate in a brigade size force on force experience that models the entire war fighting environment simulating everything Soldiers may see on the streets of Baghdad, from snipers to protesters, to sites simulating forward operations bases from which U.S. units conduct their

wartime missions.

JRTC training will also give the brigade staff and its senior leaders the tools they need to make better decisions and have better command and control while fighting the Global War on Terrorism in Iraq, according to Andrysiak. Some of those tools will involve the employment of information operations and cultural engagement training and include concepts such as the effects based.

Many soldiers said they look forward to the types of training they will experience during their one-month long deployment to JRTC.

Sgt. Rodolfo Rojas, a heavy wheeled vehicle operator for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 115th

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JRTC Rotation Helps Soldiers Prepare

JRTC

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Brigade Support Battalion, has previously deployed to Iraq and encountered many challenging experiences—one of which involved small arms fire and a vehicle in his convoy being destroyed by an impro-



(Photo by Sft. Jon Cupp, 1st BCT Public Affairs)

Sgt. John Bell of Troop Alpha, 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment unchains a truck on a train at the Fort Polk railhead.

vised explosive device.

Rojas says he understands the importance of getting Soldiers trained, using venues such as JRTC, to prepare for a possible deployment to Iraq.

“Young Soldiers involved in this need to see it as an opportunity to take advantage of all the training they can, especially if they find themselves deployed to Iraq the near future,” said Rojas. “I guess one of the best pieces of advice to give them would be to pay attention to your surroundings, and don’t get complacent. That’s one of the reasons this training is so important.”

Pvt. Stephen Caudle, a fueler for Company A (Distribution), 115th Brigade Support Battalion, has never really deployed to the wartime environment but sees JRTC as the opportunity to learn something new.

“It will definitely give me a better understanding of what I’ll do when I’m deployed, and how my platoon will work together if we go to war,” said Caudle. “Any opportunity I can get to learn better ways to do my job means a lot to me, espe-

cially in a time of war, when one of those things I learned might mean the difference between life or death.”

Capt. Amada Gerding, the brigade’s provost marshal, will work detention facility operations which include the detainment and proper treatment of captured insurgents during JRTC scenarios. She will also work on Iraqi police and security force training assessments.

“As we transition from U.S. to Iraqi security forces taking charge of more areas of responsibility in Iraq, the better off we are, and a lot of what we’ll be doing at JRTC will be our gearing up for that,” said Gerding.

Following JRTC, Andrysiak said he hopes 1st BCT troopers have the knowledge they need to tackle and avoid any crises that can arise while deployed to Iraq.

“We want our Soldiers to know they’re well-equipped, prepared and trained,” said Andrysiak. “The last thing you want if your Soldier rolls out to Iraq is for him to question whether he has everything he needs to be successful out there.”

Soldier’s Ambition Helps Support Family Overseas

By Spc. Sheena Reyes
1st BCT Public Affairs

A year ago, Army recruiters from Guam made their annual visit to the small island of Palau. Staying for just a week, they gave the usual Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test which lead to the enlistment of Pvt. Kayla Obeketang, a fueler petroleum specialist from Company A, 115th Brigade Support Battalion. Even though she passed her test and had been thinking about the military for quite awhile she had mixed emotions about leaving her home.

“I wanted something better for myself, my family and my son but I knew that it would be

hard to leave them all,” said Obeketang. “I knew that my parents wouldn’t have been able to afford for my college classes. If I had stayed I probably would’ve dropped out of college and gotten a job working at a little store and that’s not what I wanted.”

So nine months ago, Obeketang made her way to the states with a determination to succeed not only for her future but for the future of her son whom she had to leave in Palau.

“It’s very hard to be without my son but I know that through the Army, I can ensure that he has everything that he needs. I’m thankful for that,” said Obeketang.

Being from such a small

community, Obeketang explained some of the differences she noticed coming to America.

“We don’t have malls or anything in Palau and things are much more expensive here than on the island,” said Obeketang. “And there are so many cultures here that you can learn from and experience. I enjoy my job as a fueler because I enjoy working outside instead of at a desk.”

Obeketang plans on making the Army her career, retiring and going back home to be with her son and family.

“The Army has helped me develop myself professionally and has taught me to have the motivation and drive to get through hard times,” said

Obeketang. “So even though I can’t be with my family right now, I know this is for the best so it is well worth it.”



(Photo by Spc. Sheena Reyes, 1st BCT Public Affairs)

Pvt. Kayla Obeketang saw the Army as a way to a better life.



(Photo by Spc. Robert Yde, 2nd BCT Public Affairs)

2nd Brigade Combat Team commander, Col. Bryan Roberts and Command Sgt. Major James Lee take a moment of silence as the brigade observed an early Memorial Day at the division's Operation Iraqi Freedom Memorial May 11. The white wreath was placed in front of the monument by the brigade's placard. The early observance took place due to the brigade's movement to the NTC over the Memorial Day holiday.

Black Jack Remembers Comrades

By Spc. Robert Yde
2nd BCT Public Affairs

As the Soldiers of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division made their final preparations last week for their deployment to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., they took some time to remember fallen comrades during an early Memorial Day ceremony May 11.

The "Black Jack" Brigade's main body flights departs from Robert Gray Army Airfield May 17 and will

spend the holiday deployed, returning to Fort Hood at the end of June.

After leading his Soldiers on a brigade cohesion run, Black Jack's commander, Col. Bryan Roberts spoke about the significance of Memorial Day. Standing in front of the First Team's Iraqi Memorial, Roberts said of our country's service members, "They don't go for glory, honor or fame. They go because they believe in freedom and the commitment they made."

Stressing the need for his Soldiers to remember that

commitment, he added, "Our fallen comrades have demonstrated that love – that is what Memorial Day is all about."

Roberts asked his Soldiers to kneel upon their right knee, as he and Black Jack Command Sgt. Major James Lee placed a white wreath with the words "Never Forget" in front of the monument, which lists the names of 168 Soldiers killed during Operation Iraqi Freedom II, 31 of which were Black Jack troopers.

"[Command] Sgt. Major Lee and I lay this wreath, this decoration, to help

bring a shining light upon their names," Roberts said. "Remember, as we go to the NTC ... our commitment to win the fight against terrorism and finish what they started."

Roberts said importance of the training that Black Jack Soldiers will receive during their NTC rotation over the course of the next month cannot be overstated.

"This is the cornerstone for our preparation for Iraq," Roberts explained, "We will go out and be a disciplined unit that learns and gets better every day."

Black Jack Soldiers Focus on Fundamentals

By Spc. Alexis Harrison
2nd BCT Public Affairs

FORT IRWIN, Calif. - A little more than a week separates the 1st Cavalry Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team's arrival here from its journey into the training area known as "The Box." During this period of time, Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment take time to keep familiar with what could arguably be the most important piece of equipment they carry - their weapons.

After eating morning chow and conducting personal hygiene, Soldiers from Company A, 1-8 Cav., gathered themselves in a shady area to zero in the Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement Systems gear and refresh their skills on their standard-issue M-16A2 and M-4 rifles.

"For the infantry, it's life or death. A Soldier's weapon is quintessential to his mission," said Sgt. Scott Snyder, a dis-

mount team leader with Co. A, 1-8 Cav.

Snyder watched as each of the Soldiers in his team fired on the zeroing target about 50 meters away from them. Afterward, he made minor adjustments to the MILES gear attached to the weapon to ensure his teammates were shooting straight.

Snyder then went through the same process with his own weapon to make sure it shot straight.

"We keep in mind the fundamentals of marksmanship like breathing, trigger squeeze and sight picture," said Snyder. "We perform function checks. We're constantly disassembling and reassembling our weapons. We have a lot of new privates that have never used weapons like this before. Training like this helps with the basic understanding of equipment. It also helps reinforce having faith in your equipment to perform when you need it to."

"Your weapon is important because it

protects you at any given time," said Pvt. Mathew Metter, a San Diego native who's now a Squad Automatic Weapon gunner with Co. A. "You don't necessarily even need to shoot it. We try to make it muscle memory or second nature. It's part of our job to dismantle our weapon, put it back together and know it inside out."

The "Wolf Pack" Platoon still had several days before it rolled out to "The Box," however, the Soldiers eagerly awaited what challenges that lay ahead.

"When we go out to 'The Box', privates will engage the enemy, and they'll hear the MILES gear going off," said Snyder. "It's a moral booster to see the fruits of their labor."

"Training can seem boring sometimes, but when we actually get out into the field and actually start our assaults it makes it all worthwhile," said Metters. "It's good to be back in Cali' to get the training we need for when we do go back to Iraq."



(Photo by Spc. Alexis Harrison, 2nd BCT, Public Affairs)

Sgt. Scott Snyder takes aim at a zeroing target while his assistant team leader, Spc. David Schrauger, prepares to make any adjustments to the MILES gear attached to his weapon. Soldiers from Company A, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, took a portion of the day May 24, to zero, and maintain their weapons before their departure for The Box while at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif.

Black Jack Charges into NTC

By Spc. Alexis Harrison
2nd BCT Public Affairs

FORT IRWIN, Calif. - Bags were packed and vehicles were loaded with equipment, as Soldiers said goodbye to their families. Within days, more than 3,500 troops landed in the arid California desert for a month-long stay.

The 1st Cavalry Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team arrived at the National Training Center in Fort Irwin May 17.

While in California the brigade will be training and preparing for its next possible rotation to Iraq.

Hundreds of vehicles made the journey by rail, while Soldiers with bags in tow took to the skies to arrive at their dusty destination.

"Everything went correctly. There



(Photos By Spc. Robert Yde, 2nd BCT Public Affairs)

A Soldier from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team helps stake down a part of the 2nd BCT's Tactical Operations Center May 18. The main body of the Black Jack Brigade arrived to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., the day prior for a month-long training exercise.

were no missing Soldiers, no missing equipment and no missing sensitive items," said 1st Sgt. Randel Bettger, Headquarters Company, 2nd BCT. "This is my fourth rotation into NTC, and it's one of the smoothest transitions I've ever been a part of."

For this rotation into the huge, desolate training area known as "The Box", Black Jack Soldiers will face a rotation that will be like none before.

The training will be using a new format, which, instead of a major confrontational conflict, will center more on Forward Operating Bases, said Sgt. Major James Lee, Black Jack's senior enlisted trooper.

This FOB-based training format will help familiarize soldiers with procedures for Iraqi deployment operations. From the new tents being used to the updated computer systems and advanced communication capabilities, never before has there been such a technological advancement in the equipment used during an NTC rotation.

The 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment

will be role playing as the opposing force while the Black Jack Brigade is in the field.

"Everybody is excited to see what the 11th ACR will throw at them," Bettger said, "We'll see what happens."

For many of the brigade's warriors, a trip to the Mojave Desert for a month is nothing new, however, for many it means time away from their families.

"Sacrifice and struggle is the core to life," said Cpl. John Androski, a mortarman with headquarters company, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment. "If I wasn't in the Army I'd be away on business, so it's no big deal. My wife and I have to bridge the gap between us and find common ground. It's tough sometimes, but she understands."

During their rotation at the training center the Soldiers of the Black Jack Brigade will face challenges such as direct and indirect fire, riots, improvised explosive devices, and foreign claims, over the next several weeks as they prepare for possible deployment later this year.

(Editor's note: Cpl. Jeff Jackson contributed to this article.)



Vehicles move down a dusty road outside Fort Irwin, Calif., on their way to the National Training Center here. Several convoys coming off the rails from Fort Hood, signaled the arrival the 1st Cavalry Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team to NTC May 17.

NTC Offers Real-life MP Training

By Spc. Robert Yde
2nd BCT Public Affairs

FORT IRWIN, Calif. – Sitting in the gunner's hatch of his Humvee, Pvt. Adrian Velazquez scans the horizon as his platoon makes final preparations for the day's mission.

"It's going to be a hostile environment – I'm expecting shots fired and IED's (improvised explosive devices) on the road," the San Antonio native said. "Even if there isn't, it's always good to be prepared."

And so another day of training begins at the National Training Center for the military police officers of the 1st Cavalry Division's 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion.

Since the "Black Jack" Brigade arrived at Forward Operating Base Detroit, the MPs have been busy.

"There have been nights where we went to bed at 12 a.m. and were back up by 3 a.m.," explained Spc. Jon-Erik Bradford, an MP platoon driver.

However, for most of these Soldiers, the long hours are just part of the job.

"I enjoy being in the field more than in the rear," added Bradford, whose father was also an MP in both the Army and Marine Corps.

After several days of running escort missions and various types of lane training, May 30 marked the platoon's first opportunity to plan and execute a raid mission.

"It's a platoon size raid on Wadi Al Ra'id to intercept the movement of a weapon cache," Staff Sgt. Jeff Chovan said, explaining the day's mission.

The MPs convoyed for an hour and a half along the dusty desert roads before reaching the outskirts of the village.

Before entering the village, a recon, which included the platoon and squad leaders, was sent out to survey the scene. Based upon their observations, the MPs were able to make adjustments to their initial plan before converging on the village.

While Soldiers from the platoon's 1st squad led the raid, clearing buildings and apprehending several suspects, Soldiers



(Photo by Spc. Robert Yde, 2nd BCT Public Affairs)

Military Police Officers with the 1st Cavalry Division's, 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion fill out and review evidence forms at a detainee holding area at Fort Irwin, Calif.

from the 2nd squad set up a detainee holding area and prepared to collect evidence.

As detainees were brought in, they were searched for contraband, briefly questioned and photographed.

"We look for any kind of intel – papers with caches written on them, as well as explosives, weapons, or propaganda," said Sgt. Rebekah Withers, a team leader with 2nd squad.

"We photograph the search so they can't say that we did this or that to them," explained Bradford, who, along with his driving duties also served on the crime scene investigation team.

"The CSI team is designed to come in after a building is cleared to document the people and the evidence," added Spc. Shane Allen, a 2nd squad gunner.

Anything that is taken from a detainee is annotated on an evidence form.

"That way they can't say we confiscated something and did not give it back," Withers said.

As the 1st squad continued to secure building after building, the MPs eventually completed their mission, unearthing the large weapon cache that they had been sent to find.

"From what we've been told this is very realistic to what we will be doing in

Iraq," Chovan, the platoon sergeant, said after the raid.

For many of the Soldiers in Chovan's platoon this was the first time that they had the chance to conduct this type of mission.

"It was a good experience of working together – first time clearing buildings together," said Velazquez, who has been with the platoon for just three months.

In the short time that he has been with the unit, Velazquez says he has learned a lot.

"They're always on me – not because they don't like me, but they want me to learn," he explained. "In this platoon, everybody helps you no matter what."

"The new Soldiers are learning the way it happens," Chovan said of his younger Soldiers.

Not only are his Soldiers learning their individual roles, but the platoon is learning to operate as a collective unit, Chovan explained. The mission was a success, but Chovan quickly pointed out that there were many aspects that there were many aspects that could be improved but acknowledged that training is all about practice, evaluation and improvement.

"Today was a great training event," Chovan said. "Everybody got better – everybody learned something."

Troopers Focus on 'Little' Tasks Before Missions

By Staff Sgt. Kap Kim
2nd BCT Public Affairs

FORT IRWIN, Calif – Sgt. Gonzalo Casarobles, a squad leader with Troop C, 4th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, wakes up every morning and goes one-by-one as he checks each of his Soldiers' personal equipment.

The El Monte, Calif. native will check to see if they have all of their weapons, night optical devices, and enough water in their hydration system. He said he ensures each of his Soldiers have everything they need to operate at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin. It is all a part of what his unit does to get ready for their daily missions known as the pre-combat checks and pre-combat inspections.

"I have to check ... to make sure no equipment is lost," Casarobles said. "I have to do this until it's almost muscle memory – get them into the habit of always checking their equipment."

After making sure his Soldiers are OK, Casarobles and the crew will go to their motor pool and start their preventive maintenance checks and services.

For his driver, Pvt. Justin Blackmon, the job is to check almost the entire 1064A2 Mortar Track Vehicle's performance.

According to Blackmon, his checks include almost 100 different items, and if any of the track's components are not in working order, he said he will immediately have one of the unit's mechanics fix the deficiency.

Casarobles' crew spends almost a couple of hours every-day inspecting all of the track's components.

"We check, and then sometimes we double check," Casarobles said. "We do this so when we roll out, we have everything we need and nothing is breaking or falling off."

The unit's message of their PCCs and PCIs resonates to the lowest level. Pvt. Josiah Whittingham, a Troop C, 4-9 Cav. mortarman, said he fully understands that performing the sometimes tedious task of making sure all of his sensitive items are "dummy corded" and that all of the equipment is functional is one of the most

important tasks of the day.

"It's the little things that count," the Canton, N.Y. native said. "Our platoon sergeant makes us know that everything little thing counts, and that we have to know it."

According to 2nd Lt. Juan Cantu, a platoon leader assigned to Troop C, 4-9 Cav, all the checks they perform always have mission accomplishment in mind.

"All this is very important," the Houston native said. "You want to make sure you don't forget anything when you go to war – when you go to combat. So you can perform the mission."

Whittingham also said the

mission is the only thing on his mind when he checks his equipment.

"When it comes down to it, things have to be combat ready. It eliminates the stress," Whittingham said. "When we go to war, we need to focus on our mission and not our equipment. We can't compromise the mission."

Aside from the mission, Cantu also added that force protection is paramount when it comes to the attention-to-detail checks.

"You just can't put time or a price on anyone's life," Cantu said. "This is one of those things you have to train to standard."



(Photo by By Staff Sgt. Kap Kim, 2nd BCT Public Affairs)

Pvt. Justin Blackmon (left) and Pvt. Josiah Whittingham, with Troop C, 4th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, make sure their 1064A2 Mortar Track Vehicle's M67 Sight is in proper working order during their pre-combat checks and pre-combat inspections.

Cultural Awareness Educates Soldiers

By Pfc. Ryan Stroud
3rd BCT Public Affairs

FORT POLK, La. – Soldiers from the 3rd Brigade Combat Team have been participating in Iraqi Cultural Awareness Training since their arrival to the Joint Readiness Training Center April 27.

The training, which teaches Soldiers about the customs and courtesies of the Iraqi culture and country, helps prepare Soldiers for the interactions they will encounter in “the Box,” the training area where Soldiers will experience situations similar to what they would see if deployed.

“We want to win the mind and hearts of the people of Iraq, we don’t want to turn them against us,” said the Iraqi cultural advisor who taught the class. “That is why I teach this class, to give a better understanding to our Soldiers.”

The five-section course covers many important issues including language, culture and traditions of the Iraqi people, said the advisor.

The classes also teach Soldiers phrases they can use when coming in contact

with the Iraqi people.

“We teach them about basic everyday things in Iraqi life,” she said. “We teach the Soldiers phrases they can use while interacting with the Iraqi Culture.”

“We feel it’s also important to teach about numbers so Soldiers can find address to homes or businesses,” she added.

Another important lesson Soldiers must learn is the interaction with family leaders, the advisor said.

“We don’t want the Soldiers to accidentally disgrace the family in any way, so we give pointers on how to approach a situation with the family leader,” she said.

“These classes help the Soldiers when they are working a check point or when they are searching homes,” the advisor added. “They can be used at any time.”

The advisor also added she felt it was important to teach Soldiers about the history of Iraq and locations and sights of the Iraqi landscape.

“[The Soldiers] are going into a different country and we want them to know a little about Iraq’s past,” she said. “If they see an old ruin, we want them to know

what that is and why it’s there, why it’s important to the Iraqi people.”

Soldiers who attended the class also realize the importance of the class.

“I think we need to see more of these classes” said Staff Sgt. Luis Carter, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion. “They are helpful and informative.”

“I enjoy taking these classes because you always learn something new, they’re interesting and they help you become more prepared for what you might see or deal with while in Iraq,” said Pfc. Andrea Guai, HHC, 3rd BSTB.

The advisor, who said she was impressed at how much impact the classes have in a field environment, said she enjoys teaching and working with Soldiers.

“The Soldiers are doing a major thing helping [the Iraqi people] out,” said the advisor. “They are sacrificing their lives to give Iraqi civilians democracy. That’s a wonderful thing.”



(Photos by Pfc. Ryan Stroud, 3rd BCT Public Affairs)

Soldiers of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, ask questions to the Iraqi Culture Advisor about customs, languages and beliefs of the Iraqi civilization during a class at the Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, La., May 3.



Staff Sgt. Luis Carter, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Brigade Support Troops Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, enjoys a snack as he listens to the class on Iraqi culture.

Broke-down Bus...

Community Opens Arms to Soldiers

By Sgt. Serena Hayden
3rd BCT Public Affairs

ETOILE, Texas – After a month-long deployment to the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, La., going home to family and friends was on the minds of many “Greywolf” Soldiers as they began redeployment operations.

The morning of May 23, Soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, loaded busses and prepared for the approximately six-hour bus ride home.

However, for a group of 56 Soldiers, the six-hour ride turned into 16.

After driving for about three hours, the bus began to overheat. After cooling down twice and trying to continue home, it finally broke down near the town of Etoile, Texas.

The thermostat and water pump had gone out.

The Soldiers were stranded – or so they thought.

“Why me? Why my luck?” were some of the thoughts Sgt. 1st Class Jamie Favreau said crossed his mind as the bus broke down — until he and the Soldiers met Lori Maner, an Etoile resident who turned the unfortunate breakdown into a blessing in disguise.

Shortly after the bus broke down, Maner walked outside her house and noticed the group of Soldiers.

Little did the Soldiers know, they were a blessing in disguise for her, too.

Easter Sunday, Maner’s 19-year-old son, Kody, was killed in a car accident close to where the bus broke down. He

was a commissioned fire fighter, working with the Etoile Fire Department.

“My son was a hero and so are each and every one of [the Soldiers],” Maner said. “It made me feel like my son sent me 56 hugs.”

Introducing herself, Maner offered to help the Soldiers if they could make it a few more miles to the Etoile fire station.

“I knew if I could get them there, I could get them home,” Maner said.

After the Soldiers arrived at the fire station, Richard Lenius, Kody’s boss, and Kevin Holden, a fire-fighter, began arranging for a new bus and coordinating with the local elementary school so the Soldiers could feel more comfortable, more at home.

The Soldiers were transported on the town’s school bus from the fire station to the school. It took three trips to move the Soldiers and all their gear.

With their rucksacks and weapons, the Soldiers filed into the school cafeteria.

The Soldiers spent the day interacting with the students – playing football, teaching them about the Army and helping teachers pack their classrooms for the end of the school year.

Meanwhile, Maner, the Ladies Auxiliary Club and other members of the community met at the fire station to make a home-cooked meal for the Soldiers.

They brought the food to the school and served it in the cafeteria line.

“They made us feel at home. The town opened up their arms for all of us,”



(Photo by Sgt. Serena Hayden, 3rd BCT Public Affairs)

Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, are served a home-cooked meal made after their bus broke down in Etoile, Texas, May 23.

Favreau said as he bragged about the spaghetti, peach cobbler and cakes the town provided for them. “It overwhelmed me that people would do that for so many of us.”

Although it overwhelmed Favreau and the other Soldiers, the citizens of Etoile said they didn’t think they were doing anything unusual.

“[The Soldiers] take care of us, why shouldn’t we take care of them?” Maner said. “There is no way any of us could turn our backs on them.”

“These guys serve for us every day,” Lenius said. “It was just a pleasure to be able to help

out.”

After about six hours, the new bus arrived and the Soldiers continued their journey home.

For both the Soldiers and the citizens of Etoile, Texas, it was a memorable day.

Since the Soldiers left, Lenius said his 10-year-old son has been planning his military career and studying the Soldiers’ manual he was given.

“I’ll never forget them,” Favreau said. “I will never forget the people of that town. If there is any place to break down, it’s definitely Etoile, Texas.”

Hostile Villagers, IEDs Test Soldiers' Skills

Convoy

From Page 1

ed to help make peace in the village. They worked side-by-side with the Iraqi Police and Iraqi Army.

Just then, explosions from IEDs and rocket propelled grenades started to go off. The townspeople screamed, scrambled away and took cover wherever they could. Shots were fired and the Soldiers took action, returning fire in the direction of their attackers.

Soldiers moved through the village searching buildings and vehicles for any other possible enemy while others tended to the wounded. Injured Soldiers and Iraqis were evacuated to a safe zone where they could be treated.

Interpreters with the unit were speaking in Arabic, trying to find out information from the villagers. The Soldiers moved quickly to help the interpreters who were in need of assistance.

After re-establishing peace in conjunction with Iraqi forces, the mission ended and the Soldiers continued their learning process through an after action review.

During the AAR, Maj. John Van Hook, JRTC Combat Service Support and observ-



(Photos by Pfc. Ryan Stroud, 3rd BCT Public Affairs)

Soldiers of A Company, 2nd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, pull their HMMWV off the road to security for a possible attack and to provide a secure lane for passing vehicles at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, La.

er controller for the lane, said the Soldiers worked well and he was proud.

"The guys did great. I am very pleased with their action through the lane," said Van Hook. "They defeated five snipers that were hidden in the village. Because of their actions, they couldn't be defeated.

"Out of all the units that I have seen come through, these guys were the second best unit out of all of them, and I've seen a lot," Van Hook added.

After the training was complete,

Soldiers gathered back into the vehicles, talking about the experiences they just had and how real they felt.

"It's the most realistic I have ever seen," said Spc. Robert Gamet, Co. A, 2-82 FA. "I was at JRTC two years ago and it's even more realistic and better now."

It was a different feeling to be hit by an explosive device and to be knocked out of the scenario, he said, but all of the Soldiers learned from the experience and will be better prepared and ready for the next time.

For those who have been to Iraq in past deployments, the lane was a reminder of what things were like at time overseas. For those who have not deployed, it was a wake up call, said McGee

"I feel it was good training for those who have never been to Iraq," said McGee. "It gave those Soldiers a chance to see life over there. It gave them a better insight.

"The training was very useful. It even gave the new leadership a good amount of training and learning. Some of them were leading for the first time and stepped up to the challenge," he said.

"With this training, it makes me more comfortable to take the newer guys to Iraq with us," said Garnet. "Now they have seen what problems they might have to face and deal with. We all now know what we have to do."



Soldiers from C Troop, 6th Battalion, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, along with members of the Iraqi Army, try to calm citizens after a vehicle born improvised explosive device detonates in the village of Mosalah, May 9 during the Combat Logistics Patrol lane at the Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, La.

Security Detachment Conducts Live Fire

By Pfc. Ben Fox
3rd BCT Public Affairs

FORT POLK, La. – The Soldiers locked and loaded live rounds. There were no range fans. The area of fire was wherever the “enemy” was. This was as real as it could get, but it wasn’t real.

The Soldiers of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team Personal Security Detachment, 1st Cavalry Division, conducted a convoy live-fire exercise to enhance their warrior skills during the Brigade’s Joint Readiness Training Center rotation at Fort Polk, La.

“The more you do it [train], the more it becomes instinct,” said Cpl. Daniel Lopez, a PSD team leader.

The range had a 360 degree range-of-fire to make the scenarios as realistic as possible. The lane also had advanced pyrotechnics and pneumatic machine guns to simulate incoming enemy fire.

Vehicle born improvised explosive devices, “enemy” contact left and right, air support and casualty evacuations were all integrated into scenarios within the course.

Spc. Clarence Spencer said this was the first convoy live-fire exercise he had been on and it helped him to identify what he needs to work on as a Soldier.

Lopez said the lane taught him that



Soldiers from the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division pull security while other members of their unit evacuate a “casualty” from the battle field at a convoy live-fire range at the Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, La.

even though the team started with a plan of action, they had to improvise based on their situations. The team was placed in chaotic situations to see how they would react.

In one scenario, a vehicle broke down and had to be towed out of the kill zone, causing the convoy to stop and pull securi-

ty while they worked on the vehicle.

Combat Patrol, Search and Attack, and Area Reconnaissance lanes were also conducted during Grey Wolf’s deployment to JRTC.



(Photos by Pfc. Ben Fox, 3rd BCT Public Affairs)

Soldiers from the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division evacuate a “casualty” from the battle field at a convoy live-fire range at the Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, La. The live-fire exercise had a 360 degree range fan, making the experience as realistic as possible.



Soldiers from the 3rd Brigade Combat Team receive “enemy” fire at the convoy live fire range at the Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, La. The range included advanced pyrotechnics to simulate an actual battlefield experience.

First Time in U.S.**Cavalry Fires Tank-mounted CROWS**

**By Sgt. Paula Taylor
4th BCT Public Affairs**

FORT BLISS, Texas – What could be safer than rolling across the battlefield in a steel tank? How about being able to fire a remote weapon system from inside the tank without the gunner hatch open?

For members of Company D, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, this system has arrived. It's called the Common Remotely Operated Weapons Station. The 2-12 Cavalry is the first unit in the U.S. to have this system and is the only unit in the world to have it mounted on Abrams tanks.

"The CROWS mount on the tank gives an urban advantage so the tank commander doesn't have to stick out of the hatch," said 2nd Lt. Sean Henley, a platoon leader with Co. D, 2-12 Cavalry.

Improved safety is a major feature of the new weapon mounting system. It allows a tank commander remain inside the tank, permitting him to see more of what's going on inside the turret, said Staff Sgt.

Zachary Balancier, a tank commander with 2-12 Cav. By being inside the tank, a tank commander can watch their gunner and loader and communicate with them directly versus relying solely on the intercom system, he added.

Another benefit of the CROWS system is its accuracy.

"You can put the first four or five rounds on target versus the old system where you had to walk your rounds into the target," Balancier said.

To keep the weapon steady and assist with accuracy, the system has two axis-stabilized mounts. It also has a sensor suite and fire control software to allow on-the-move target acquisition and first-burst target engagement. The sensor suite permits target engagements under day and night conditions and includes a daytime video camera, a thermal weapon sight and laser range finder.

"The laser range finder sends a signal out and back to the CROWS, which allows a good ballistic solution and range to tar-

get," said Henley. "It uses a joystick to maneuver left and right. You can also zoom in and out to see the targets."

Ceramic plating is used to protect the CROWS from 7.62 mm rounds and blasts from improvised explosive devices, Henley said.

In addition to being accurate and durable, Henley said the new system can hold five times as many 50-caliber machine gun rounds as the old system.

CROWS can also support are the MK19 grenade launcher, M249 semi-automatic weapon and the M240B machine gun.

"There are units in Iraq that have the CROWS mounted on HMMWVs, but our unit is the only one to field it on the Abrams tanks," said Balancier. "The designers are taking a lot of feedback from us in this gunnery. They are going to use us to set the standards for the other tanks that get the CROWS system."



Staff Sgt. Zachary Balancier, range safety officer with 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, climbs atop an Abrams tank at Doña Ana Range after its crew completed their gunnery. Balancier is checking to ensure the weapons systems are clear before allowing the tank to leave the range at Fort Bliss, Texas.



(Photos by Sgt. Paula Taylor, 4th BCT Public Affairs)

An Abrams tank crewman in Company C, 2-12 Cavalry fires a 50-caliber machine gun during gunnery training on Doña Ana Range at Fort Bliss, Texas. One of the weapons systems being fired for the first time at the range is the CROWS system.

“Long Knife” Hones Planning Skills at NTC

By Maj. Roderick R. Cunningham
4th BCT Public Affairs Officer

“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act, but a habit.” — Aristotle

FORT IRWIN, Calif. – Commanders and staff from the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division varied their standard collective training regimen of operation planning, assault drills and house clearing at Fort Bliss by participating in a Leadership Training Program, 14-22 May.

Brigade leadership received instruction and critique during a nine-day deployment to the National Training Center [NTC] at Fort Irwin to prepare for an upcoming NTC rotation in August and future deployment.

The mission of the Leadership Training Program is to simultaneously coach, teach, and mentor brigade staffs, battalion staffs and company commanders in order to set conditions for their NTC rotation, to support time-constrained mission planning and trends reversal, said Maj. Scott Patton, Leadership Training Program Chief.

LTP focus is to maximize time constrained military decision-making process [MDMP], train integrated staffs without the friction of actual combat situations, and focus on baseline doctrine and “best practices from theatre”, said Patton.

We also attempt to reverse trends from Iraq and Afghanistan, set the conditions for a successful NTC rotation and deployment to Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation Enduring Freedom, and build the team, he said.

“As the movement officer of this operation, I quickly became aware of the inherent challenges of deploying the brigade’s staff and equipment,” said CPT William Hamilton, Brigade Assistant S3.

“This is a great experience, it allowed the staff to integrate and develop as a team and allow us to create new standard operating procedures [SOP] and validate our current SOPs,” he said.

The staff received several classes on subjects such as cultural awareness, joint



(Photo by Maj. Roderick R. Cunningham, 4th BCT Public Affairs)

Major Richard Root, 4th Brigade Combat Team intelligence officer, briefs the enemy situation to the 4th BCT commander using a sand table, a replication of the battle space for the Combined Arms Rehearsal at the Leadership Training Program on Fort Irwin, May 20.

effects, improvised explosive devices, logistics management, trends in NTC and Iraq, targeting, understanding the enemy, and IED prevention to name a few.

The staff faced multiple challenges throughout the nine-day exercise. They worked 18-hour days conducting several staff battle drills, accelerated MDMP, orders preparation, battle tracking, combined arms rehearsal, combat service support rehearsal, and conducted a recon of the battle space within NTC.

“This exercise allowed us to come out of the crawl phase and enter the walk phase as a staff. It allowed the battalions and brigade to have better internal and external connectivity,” said CPT Brian Bauer, Bravo Company, Special Troops Battalion.

“Brigade can’t communicate without my unit’s Enhanced Position Location Radio System [EPLAR] and Re-transmis-

sion assets,” he said. “This experience solidified my role within the brigade.”

The Leadership Training Program culminates with the battalions’ and brigade’s leadership and staff conducting combat operations using the Joint Combined Arms Training System. The computer system fights the battle digitally forcing the unit’s leadership to respond to various scenarios.

Following the JCATS combat operations the LTP coaches conduct an all inclusive after action review, flushing out the shortcomings and success of the Long Knife Brigade.

“Overall training provided by the LTP staff solidified my staff operating processes, as well as, upper and lower coordination,” said LTC David Whitaker, 27 Brigade Support Battalion Commander. “This experience was absolutely worth the time and effort, invaluable,” he said.

Before You Can Walk ...

Aviation Troops Crawl Through Convoy Training

**By Spc. Nathan J. Hoskins
1st ACB Public Affairs**

The convoy had made it more than halfway through its journey with no incidents, but that was about to change.

With increasing insurgent activity in the area surrounding the forward operating base, the Soldiers were on high alert.

Upon heading back to the FOB, the forward air support fails to see some insurgents hiding in wait for the convoy. The insurgents wait to attack until the last vehicle makes its way through their path. They attack it with ferocity and kill everyone.

The other vehicles hear the attack, but what should they do? What do you do?

These are some of the

questions that should be answered in training before units head “down range” to Iraq. Training scenarios like this one, are all part of deployment preparations for the Soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division.

The morning of May 12 was the beginning of convoy operations training for the soldiers, headed up by instructors Sgt. 1st Class Noe Barrera, the 1st ACB supply noncommissioned-officer-in-charge, and Sgt. 1st Class Mark Jackson, the brigade’s senior human resources manager.

The initial training the Soldiers receive is very basic, considered the crawl phase, with more intense and complex

training slated for the near future, said Barrera.

The training included simulated air support, communications, battle drills, weapons clearing procedures for forward operating bases and more, said Jackson.

The crawl phase is basically a starting point for the new Soldier who hasn’t been deployed yet and a refresher for those who have already deployed, said Barrera.

This training stressed situational awareness and communication skills between the tactical operations center, the air support and within the convoy itself, said Jackson.

“The Soldiers were very receptive to the training they received. Everyone took the simulation seriously,” said

Jackson.

“This training lets you get a feel for what it’s really like to have more than one vehicle communicating between each other at the same time,” said Spc. Heriberto Rodriguez, from 1st ACB operations. “Communication is key while in a real convoy.”

Rodriguez has already deployed to Iraq with his previous unit. Even though he had already been in live convoys, Rodriguez said he found the training beneficial.

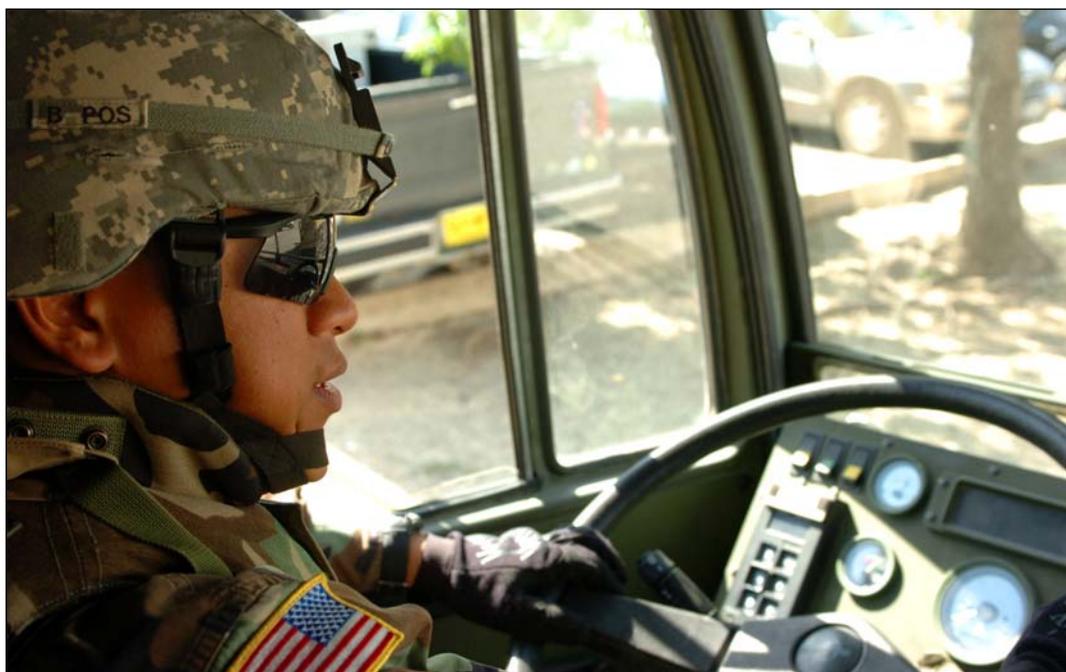
Pvt. Nichell Sauls, an intelligence analyst for the brigade, has only been in the Army for one year and has not deployed yet.

“This training is actually pretty fun,” said Sauls. “The last time I received any convoy training was in basic training and it was very brief. This training was great because I know how to communicate with the rest of the convoy.”

“These training activities nurture confidence in the individuals so that they become better Soldiers,” said Barrera. “I would rather the Soldiers make wrong decisions now, while we are training, than later on when we get down range.”

Although the crawl phase of convoy training is over, the walk and run phases are fast on the Soldiers’ heels. The next two phases will test the Soldiers more and better prepare them for Iraq, said Barrera.

The 1st Air Cavalry Brigade is one of two brigade elements in the 1st Cavalry Division currently on deployment orders. They are scheduled to deploy sometime in late summer.



(Photo by Spc. Nathan J. Hoskins, 1st ACB Public Affairs)

Pfc. Teofilo Lumabao, an operations Soldier from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, heads out in a light medium tactical vehicle as a part of a convoy operations training mission May 12 on Fort Hood. Soldiers received training on how to react to improvised explosive devices, blocked routes and disabled vehicles.



(Photo by Sgt. Robert J. Strain, 1st ACB Public Affairs)

Wasko High School junior Jessica Kilgore slips into the water after the boards supporting her collapse at Fort Hood's Leadership Reaction Course May 18. The goal for Kilgore and her team is to cross the obstacle without touching the water or anything painted red.

Aviators Help Students Build Leadership

By Sgt. Robert J. Strain
1st ACB Public Affairs

For 35 students from Belton's Wasko High School, a well deserved break meant putting in some hard work with members of the 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment of the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division at Fort Hood's Leadership Reaction Course May 18.

It was a well deserved break from the day-to-day routine of classes, said Wayne Cummings, the Communities-in-School manager for the high school.

But it wasn't all fun and games. According to Cummings, the students must

have points in leadership in order to graduate – and completing the LRC is one way to earn those points.

For the Soldiers of the 3-227th, as well as Fort Hood, it was a way to show the surrounding communities some of the things Soldiers do, said Lt. Col. Michael Shenk, the commander of the 3-227th. "It's a way to break down the fences between us."

In addition to building good relations with the surrounding communities, the interaction builds foundations for recruiting future Soldiers into the Army, said 1st Lt. Samuel Wilbourn, the officer in charge of the course.

It has been two or three years since the

school had been through the LRC, and there were one or two students that have done it before, explained Cummings.

"They're learning the meaning of being a team player, and how to work as a team," said Cummings. "They don't know it, but they are learning a little about leading too."

The course, which was run by volunteers from the 3-227th, is designed so that an obstacle cannot be completed alone, the students are given an obstacle and some items with which to cross the obstacle, and

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Students

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it is up to them to figure out how.

One of the school's seniors has been looking forward to completing the course since his brother came home talking about it the last time the school was here.

"I've been looking forward to this for a while," said Jonathan Abshier.

All of the obstacles completed by the students had water underneath them to add to the difficulty.

The murky green water didn't bother the students too much, however.

"A day like today – you just want to get in the water," said Abshier, referring to the warm temperatures and clear skies.

(Right)

Three students from Wasko High School in Belton demonstrate their ability to work together and attempt to hoist the crate to the top of the wall at the Leadership Reaction Course on Fort Hood. About 35 students from the high school negotiated the course May 18 while learning about leadership and working as a team.

(Below)

Janette Curtis, a senior at Wasko High School in Belton, checks out a M-4 carbine rifle during a break from the Leadership Reaction Course May 18 on Fort Hood. About 35 students from the high school came out to the course to build teamwork and leadership skills.



(Photo by Sgt. Robert J. Strain, 1st ACB Public Affairs)

"First Attack" Prepares For JRTC

By Sgt. Robert J. Strain
1st ACB Public Affairs

Soldiers from the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade's 1st Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment recently got a chance to train up on their skills – both flying and ground skills.

The 1-227th Soldiers participated in a field training exercise with the 1st Cavalry Division's 1st Brigade Combat Team to prepare the 1-277th for their rotation to the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, La., and later for their deployment to Iraq.

The training focused around the dismounted operations, which are operations outside of the battalion's flight duties, such as convoy skills, weapons training, cultural awareness and media interaction.

"Every single Soldier is going to be affected by Iraqi culture," said Lt. Col. Christopher Walach, the 1-227th commander. "Every Soldier needs to know how to respond and talk to the media in their lane."

"We went out there for the sole purpose of honing our skills on the dismounted side and forward operating base operations as we were working with the ground brigade," Walach said.

The battalion's Soldiers tried to do everything as closely as possible to future missions, including being set up near a ground brigade, such as the 1st BCT, Walach said.

"It was a model of what we're going to do in Iraq," he added.

While Soldiers trained on operations on the ground, pilots took to the air, flying several types of missions.

The pilots flew convoy escorts, aerial reconnaissance and attack missions, said Capt. Ryan Welch, an AH-64D Apache Longbow helicopter pilot and commander of Company B of 1-227th.

"Any time we get to work with ground units, it's an added benefit for aircrews and the ground personnel," Welch said. "Because when it comes down to it, we are always the supporting effort for the ground troops."

"The familiarity and the brotherhood that you build between air and ground strengthens your combat capability," Welch said.



(Photo by Brent Green, Round Rock Express)

Strike

Cpt. Ovid Villarreal, Jr., 1st Battalion 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, throws the first pitch before the Round Rock Express home game, May 31 at Round Rock, Texas. The pitch, an inside corner strike to a right-handed batter, didn't help the Houston Astros Triple-A club in their loss to the Memphis Redbirds.

The Sound of Success

By Spc. Nathan J. Hoskins
1st ACB Public Affairs

With an upbeat tempo to her walk, Pfc. Kimberly Taylor brightens people's lives everywhere she goes. This same attitude flows over into her talent for singing.

"I'm humble, but I'm ambitious and I'm energetic," said Taylor, a signal support systems specialist from Headquarters Support Company, 615th Aviation Support Battalion, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division. "I know I have what it takes to do whatever needs to be done to accomplish any mission, and inspire whomever, whenever."

After attending five different high schools as a "regular adopted kid," Taylor graduated and joined the Army right away. With the war on terror raging, a quiet life in her home town of Shreveport, Louisiana, would have been easier. However, Taylor said she chose to join the Army because something deep down inside inspired her to do so.

"I had dreams about being in the Army," she said. "I wanted to give it everything I had."

Growing up singing since she was seven years old, 12 years later she is still at it and going stronger than ever.

"I write songs, I make music," said Taylor. "It's what I do."

Taylor was not shy about her goals either. With the First Team being her first assignment, it didn't take long for her to audition for the 1st Cavalry Division Band.

"My NCO told me that the 1st Cav. Band was at the Warrior Way PX," she said. "I went there and sung for them on the spot."

In no time at all Taylor had set up an audition. She sang for Chief Warrant Officer Three Glen Nardin, the 1st Cavalry Division Band commander, and walked away with an acceptance letter.

"I was walking around with a big Kool-Aid smile that day," she said.

With her new assignment coming up within the week, Taylor is still looking towards her other goals.

"I do plan on joining the Soldier



(Photo by Spc. Nathan J. Hoskins, 1st ACB Public Affairs)

Pfc. Kimberly Taylor is a signal support systems specialist with Headquarters Support Company, 615th Aviation Support Battalion, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division.

Show," Taylor said. "I really, really want to do that before I get out of the Army." Taylor's said her ultimate goal is to become a contemporary Gospel artist.

Taylor said being a part of the First Team has inspired her. Taylor said she has enjoyed her experience since being here and likes being part of such a legendary division.

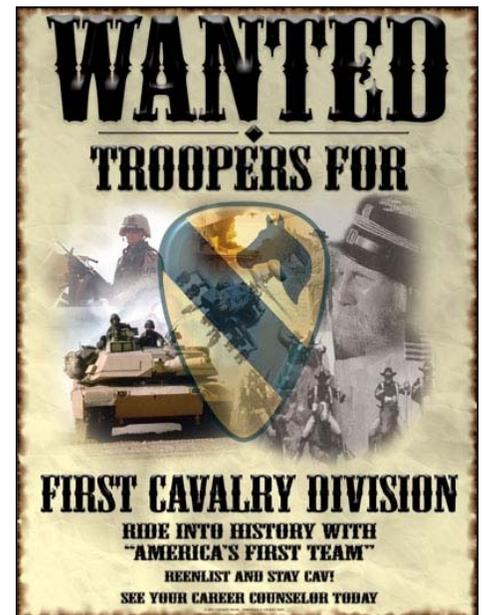
"There is something special about being in the Cav," she said. "It's like they have so much support, so much love for their Soldiers."

With a possible upcoming deployment, Taylor hopes that sharing her talents while over in Iraq will help the morale of many Soldiers.

"To think that you can be in front of all those Soldiers that are in Iraq, in the heat, working on guard shifts for hours, that you can change their mood just by getting up there – doing what you love, what you're good at – is a great feeling," said Taylor.

Well on her way to accomplishing her goals, Taylor is not selfish or arrogant.

Actually, she is quite the opposite. Taylor said she plans on spreading her joy with the rest of the Soldiers she comes in contact with and the people she meets beyond the Army.



A Decade of Service for Love and Money

By Spc. Joshua McPhie
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

When he first joined the Army, Sgt. Paul Baker saw the military as a way to get some money. Now he said he sees it as a career.

Before Baker enlisted in the Army he was a poor college student attending Navarro Jr. College near Corsicana, Texas and studying to be an English teacher. After a few years of college he realized he couldn't afford to get married.

"Originally I came in the Army because I wanted to get married," he said. "We couldn't get married because I didn't have any income."

Baker started his Army career working in a post office and discovered that he liked Army life. He later changed jobs, and now works for the systems automation section 1st Cavalry Division's headquarter.

Now after three reenlistments and 10 years in the Army, the 33-year-old Riverside, Texas native said he likes being a Soldier and doesn't see any reason to get out.

"If I didn't like my job I wouldn't stay in," he said. "You've got to look at the positive. There's fun somewhere in your job, you've just got to know where to look. If you're not having fun, then the military is



(Photo by Spc. Joshua McPhie, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Sgt. Paul Baker, a software analyst with the 1st Cavalry Division's systems automation section, initially joined the Army to be able to afford a wedding. A decade later, he now looks forward to another decade of service.

not for you."

He said he sees the military not only as something fun but as a good way to support

his family. He not only has a good job and marketable skills, he has also been married for ten years.

"The military has given me everything I have," he said.

Baker and his wife, Julie, have four children, ranging from ages 10 to eight months. He said Army life has exposed them to diversity.

"We've been all over the world and seen just about anything you can imagine," he said.

With at least another decade to go in the Army, Baker still has a few places he would like to go.

"I wouldn't mind going back to Germany again," he said. He also said he would like to go to Fort Lewis, Wash. "I figure I've got Washington D.C., so I might as well go to the other side of the country."

Even though it is still years away, Baker is looking at ways the Army will continue to help him when he gets out. One program that interests him is Troops to Teachers, but he hopes he won't need it.

"Hopefully, by the time I get out of the Army I'll have my degree," he said.

Baker still carries the dream of teaching although he is now considering teaching computers instead of English.

"I want to teach something," he said. "I'll probably teach what I know."



(Photo by Sgt. Colby Hauser, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Thanks

Wendy Fil, the first lady of the 1st Cavalry Division, presents a certificate of appreciation to Kestin Joslin, for the Fort Hood Thrift Shop's donation of \$2000 to the 1st Cavalry Division Layette Volunteers Program May 17. The Layette program delivers a gift bag to each First Team baby born at Darnell Army Community Center.

The Quiet Professional**Info Ops NCO Finds Army a Good Fit**

**By Sgt. Colby Hauser
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs**

A long time ago, in a town far from Fort Hood, a quiet professional was born. Like many young Americans, the Army was an answer to a calling and a solution to an age old problem.

"I wanted to serve my country," Master Sgt. Craig Coleman, the 1st Cavalry Division's information operations noncommissioned officer in charge, said.

"But, I also didn't want to end up in a dead end town with a dead end job," he added.

For over 13 years Coleman has reaped the rewards of one of the Army's most unusual but

critical professions.

"When I went to the recruiter, he showed me a film of PSYOPS [psychological operations] in the field and said 'these guys mess with people's heads,'" he said.

"So I figured that's the place for me," Coleman added.

It also afforded him other unusual opportunities, like jumping out of planes.

"I really wanted to go Airborne, so it was a good fit," he said.

Upon joining the ranks, Coleman began the quest of becoming a part of one of the special operations trinity. This has afforded him many opportunities to deploy and practice his craft.

From Joint Task Force Assured Response, which provided emergency evacuation of the American Embassy in Liberia, to Operation Enduring Freedom in the Philippines, he has put his skills to work, waging the information war in every environment around the world.

"They [the public] think everything happened in Afghanistan but it didn't," he said.

Still, Coleman said his favorite operation was one of greater importance, though not well known.

"When I was with Special Operations Command, Pacific, East Timor was separating from Indonesia," he said.

Coleman said while deployed, he was able to conceptualize, plan, implement and see the mission all the way through to the country's first democratic election.

"The programs we had started were taking place on television and radio," he said. "To see something I had planned from start to finish felt pretty good."

Now, Coleman is preparing for yet another deployment. And so this quiet professional begins again the process of waging an information war.

"PsyOps products, if used correctly and in a timely manner, are a lifesaver for both our side and the enemy's side," he said. "That's why I serve."



(Photo by Sgt. Colby Hauser, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Master Sgt. Craig Coleman, a native of Waverly, N.Y., is the 1st Cavalry Division's information operations noncommissioned officer in charge. As a psychological operations planner, Coleman is responsible for providing PsyOps planning for the division.

First Team Fights Against Sexual Assault

By Pfc. Jeffrey Ledesma
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

“Sexual Assault is not only an individual’s problem, but it quickly becomes a readiness issue,” said Sgt. 1st Class Celetia Carroll, the 1st Cavalry Division’s Sexual Assault Response Coordinator.

Luckily, the division has in place a team of Soldiers and civilians to help prevent, deal with, and overcome the effects of sexual assault through the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program.

“Coming up in the ranks, I’ve seen so much of it,” Carroll said. “I’ve watched people allow incidents to go unreported because they did not know what services were available to them or they were too embarrassed to do anything.”

A key in the fight against sexual assault starts with awareness and education. One of SAPRP’s prime purposes is to educate Soldiers about sexual assault and the agencies available to assist them.

Sexual assault training is now a quarterly training requirement to re-emphasize simply things such as keeping doors locked, being aware of your surroundings, and paying attention to what you drink and how much you drink, because although some of the things may seem obvious, often people suppress their instincts and let their guard down, she added.

“Classes are designed to instill the ability to possibly recognize signs before things get to the point of a sexual assault,” she said. “In the classroom we are trying to get away from basic slide show presenta-

tions and get soldiers more involved by performing skits to get a better understanding.”

In addition, each brigade has an assigned deployable SARC and conducts leadership training in an Executive Seminar.

Carroll said there is a Sexual Assault segment in the Executive Seminar that provides leadership with an awareness of the program, preventive measures, reporting procedures and basic guidelines of what to do when an incident is reported. The seminars also emphasize ways to avoid re-victimizing the victim.

One of the major purposes of the program is to get victims to come forth and report assaults and to obtain the help they need, she said.

SAPRP offers two ways to report an incident of sexual assault, restricted and unrestricted reporting. Restricted reporting allows victims to confidentially disclose the details of the assault to the SARC or a health provider, and be able to receive medical treatment, counseling, and victim advocacy without prompting an official investigation. Even though a victim may chose restricted reporting, they may elect to switch to unrestricted reporting at anytime.

“It’s important for victims to know someone is there to help see them through to the end,” she said. “We don’t make decisions for them, all we do is make their options known and let them tell us what they want to do.”

Besides getting medical attention for the victims, victim advocates also point them in the right direction to deal with psychological issues through

social work services and chaplains.

“A big part of recovery for sexual assault victims is to be able to gain some means of self-determination,” Maj. Jason Duckworth, the deputy division chaplain, said. “It is very important for victims of sexual assault to take back the control in their lives and to do that they need to be self-driven.”

Serving two main functions in dealing with the aftermath of sexual assault incidences, the chaplain office offers counseling and refers victims to other resources.

“When sexual assault happens a victim is more than likely to be physically, emotionally and spiritually effected by the occurrence and counseling helps address all those issues,” Duckworth said.

“You don’t fix sexual assault issues in five minutes,” he said. “The ultimate or ideal long range goal is to transform a victim into a survivor and then into a thriver – someone who thrives for life.”

In addition to the counseling services, chaplains are a good source of references to other services such as legal.

“Depending on the severity of what has occurred a full range of actions are available, from no action to adverse administration action to a court-martial.” Capt. Daniel Everett, a 1st Cavalry Division senior trial counsel, said.

Everett said if a crime is substantiated, a command will likely pursue punitive actions and that the facts and circumstances determine what the proper charge should be.

Sexual Assault is incompatible with Army Values and the Warrior Ethos



The Army’s Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

For more information or to report an incident,
contact your local Sexual Assault Response

Coordinator (SARC) at: 702-4953



Athletes Reveal Human Spirit

By Pfc. Jeffrey Ledesma
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

The Texas sun settled down to a dim orange glow. With the wind whistling through the flags that lined the edges of the track, a torch was passed and used to light the Greek pillar signifying the start of the games. Athletes from 12 central Texas counties were introduced as an echo of cheering followed.

Spc. Jonte Scott, the Better Opportunity for Single Soldiers representative with Headquarters Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division exchanged her free time for the satisfaction of volunteering at the Area 12 Texas Special Olympics May 5 and 6.

"It's important for the Army to be here to show Soldiers care about the surrounding communities," Scott said.

Scott held the flag from the Virgin Islands on the first day during the opening ceremony. As she marched out onto the track she heard some of the excited athletes claim the different flags as where they

were from, which brought a smile to her face, Scott said.

Judy Kilpatrick, the director of the Area 12 Texas Special Olympics, said watching the flags blow in the wind and hearing the audience cheer as the athletes walked down the track made the opening ceremony one of her favorite parts of the whole 2-day event.

On the second day of activities, Scott was cheering on the sidelines and assisting in the awards ceremonies.

Taking time to cheer for the athletes wasn't hard for this former high school cheerleader.

"Volunteering my time is worth the smiles on their faces when they get their shinning moment," Scott said. "It's inspiring to watch all the hard work these athletes put in pay off in the end as they stand on the podium to receive their medals."

She said when she wasn't placing a medal around an athlete's neck or organizing awards on a display tray, she was soaking in the competitive atmosphere.

Scott said when she watched the ath-

letes run around the all-weather track she flashed back to high school when she ran track herself.

Scott remembered all the training that went into competing in the 4x1, 4x4, 200-meter dash and 100-meter dash.

"Just like in the real Olympics, these athletes have trained really hard to be here. Along with the other criteria prior to getting here they had to compete in other meets," Kilpatrick said.

"Through these athletes' human spirit and competitive drive I've learned no matter what odds are against you, you can still excel," Scott said. "And the drive to excel is human nature."



(Photos by Pfc. Jeffrey Ledesma, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

A group of athletes danced the lunch hour away on Hood Stadium's all-weather track during a noon-time get down at the Area 12 Texas Special Olympics May 6. The Area 12 Texas Special Olympics took place May 5 and 6.



After congratulating Kalyn Kopech of Midway, Texas, for winning her silver medal, Spc. Jonte Scott posed for a picture with the silver medalist at the Area 12 Texas Special Olympics at Fort Hood May 6. Kopech won her silver medal in the 25-meter assisted walk.