



READY FIRST REPORT

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Col. Swift Takes Command

By Pfc. Alyse Cooke
1 BCT, 1 AD Public Affairs

On June 15, the Command of the 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division passed from Col. Emmett M. Schaill to Col. Larry Swift, during a Change of Command Ceremony on the Ready First Field.

Before the ceremony began, Schaill and his wife Andrea were honored by Lt. Gen. Rick Lynch, Commanding General of III Corps at Ft. Hood. Mrs. Schaill received the Commander's Award for Public Service and a Yellow Rose of Texas for her community service efforts. Col. Schaill was then awarded with a Meritorious Service Medal for his service to the Army and his unit.

With the challenges that come



Photos by Pfc. Alyse Cooke

Col. Larry Swift passes the brigade colors to Command Sgt. Maj. James P. Daniels, the 1/1 Brigade Command Sergeant Major, and accepts his new role as the 1/1 Brigade Commander in front of the brigade during the change of command ceremony.

with standing-up a brigade such as limited resources, Schaill has lead 1/1 through the process in a short amount of time by training Soldiers at every opportunity and focusing on families, said Lynch.

"The changes I have seen since fall are nothing short of amazing," said Lynch. "I am proud of Ready First and proud of Emmett's leadership."

Lynch also said that he is "excited that Swift has joined the Ready First Brigade," and looks forward to working with him. He

spoke of Swift's achievements and said he is "another great commander taking the brigade to NTC and theater."

Now with about 4,500 trained Soldiers and Swift commanding the unit, Schaill believes 1/1 is in good hands and will be more than prepared for NTC and Iraq.

At the ceremony, Swift officially assumed command for the unit with the Passing of the Colors. Swift, Lynch and Schaill then inspected the brigade in formation.

"We have a difficult road ahead as we prepare for combat," said Swift. "I am humble, honored and grateful to represent this unit."



Col. Larry Swift, the incoming Brigade Commander of 1/1, Col. Emmett Schaill, outgoing Commander and Lt. Gen. Rick Lynch, Commanding General of III Corps at Ft. Hood inspect the brigade in a formation during the Change of Command ceremony.

Teammates -

I want to tell you that I am honored, humbled, and profoundly grateful for the opportunity to command this brigade and I look forward to serving with you all. You have accomplished so much in the build of this BCT in a short time and it has rightly been the focus of your efforts. It is however time to change that focus. While there is still much to do in building and training this organization as a Heavy BCT, our looming deployment to Iraq requires us to shift away from the build focus to the deployment focus.

This means that from now on our focus will be manning, training, equipping, and preparing our families for our deployment to Iraq. This means we shift away from High Intensity Combat (HIC) to Counter Insurgency (COIN), away from Abrams, Bradleys, and Paladins to MRAPS and Up Armored Hummers, away from gunnery and mounted maneuver in wide open spaces to individual marksmanship and dis-mounted maneuver in confined urban settings.

Even as this requires many troops to train in a way they never have before, even outside their MOS, all training must focus on our Directed Mission Essential Task List (DMETL). Every activity has to contribute to this effort or we will not be ready to deploy and face a still dangerous enemy. If we needed a reminder, the recent truck bombings in our future AO of Kirkuk should remind us that Iraq is still a very dangerous place. We have a long road ahead and much to do before we deploy. With the proper focus though I know we will deploy ready and rested. I look forward to meeting the challenges together. **READY FIRST!!**



Col. Larry Swift
Brigade Commander
1st HBCT, 1st AD

We are at the end of gunnery and rolling into collective training. NTC is quickly approaching and I ask that we continue to be safe and take care of our Soldiers. The 3rd Quarter FY09 continues to be outstanding as the Spartans conducted a mass reenlistment and we continue reenlist great Soldiers in our Army and part of the IRON SOLDIER family. We continue to prosper and bring a winning spirit as we participate in all Sporting events. We were honored to have Spc. Meldrum, STB and Cpl. Molinares, 1-36, represent the Brigade in the Soldier/NCO of the Year competition, in which Molinares was crowned Fort Bliss NCO of the Year. We will continue to improve quality life, take advantage of resources here at Fort Bliss and continue to build our team.



CSM James P. Daniels
Brigade Command Sergeant Major
1st HBCT, 1st AD

Ready First Report

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Provider Sergeants Enter NCO Corps

By Pfc. Alyse Cooke
1 BCT, 1 AD Public Affairs

“It is the Year of the Noncommissioned Officer and today we will be celebrating that in fashion,” said guest speaker, Command Sgt. Maj. James P. Daniels, brigade command sergeant major of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division.

An NCO Induction Ceremony for the 501st Brigade Support Battalion of 1/1 was held at the Stayton Theater, here. Twenty-seven sergeants, most who have been recently promoted, were honored by being inducted into the NCO Corps June 16.

NCO’s are considered the backbone of the Army, but are more importantly known for training, leading and taking care of Soldiers. When Soldiers earn the ranks of corporal or sergeant, they become recognized as leaders and Soldiers who can be looked at as an example to others, said Daniels.

For Sgt. Robert Ruiz of A Co., 501st BSB, who is a squad leader

for 12 Soldiers, being an NCO is about “being able to give Soldiers the knowledge to help our Army move forward in training and so one day they may step into leadership.”

During the ceremony, Daniels spoke of the four pillars that NCO’s should abide by. “Leading, training, maintaining and taking care of Soldiers,” he said. “Do this correctly and you can be successful in anything you do.”

The ceremony depicted the value and traditions of NCO’s throughout American history from World War 1 through Vietnam, honoring those who served past and present.

Being inducted into the NCO Corps is “a great honor and tradition because I’m following in the footsteps of the Soldiers before me,” said Ruiz. His grandfather and brothers have also served the Army NCO Corps, which makes it all the more tradition for him.

The inductees passed through the 501st Providers archway one by one, entering the corps. From there,



Photos by Pfc. Alyse Cooke
Sgt. Robert Ruiz is called into the Providers archway awaiting his official induction into the NCO Corps.

Command Sgt. Maj. Ramon Caisido, 501st BSB command sergeant major, asked who the sponsor was for each NCO being inducted. The sponsor replied and the inductee moved to the signing table where they officially entered the corps with a handshake from Caisido.

Once each NCO passed through, they were sworn in then proudly recited the NCO Creed.

“No one is more professional than I. I am a Noncommissioned Officer, a leader of soldiers,” the sergeants began. A candle was lit for each paragraph of the creed and the new members of the corps were introduced to the unit, closing the ceremony.

As Daniels said, “Noncommissioned Officers lead the way, Hooah!”



The NCO’s who have just been inducted are sworn into the NCO Corps during the ceremony. Entering into the NCO Corps is a milestone for enlisted servicemembers in all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Troopers Qualify at Bradley Training

By Pfc. Alyse Cooke
1 BCT, 1 AD Public Affairs

From June 1 through 5, Alpha Troop of the 6th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, participated in their first Bradley training and qualifications at the Fort Bliss McGregor Range.

The Troop was arranged into 13 crews consisting of a Bradley Commander, Gunner, Driver and Loader for each Cavalry Fighting Vehicle. During the continuous operations training, each crew worked side-by-side to accomplish their missions while focusing on teamwork.

“If we don’t work as a team, we fail, said Staff Sgt. Thomas Christian, a Bradley Commander during the training. “There’s no individual here...we have an awesome crew, I couldn’t ask for a better one.”

The training began with dry-fire during Table Two and then the troop moved into Tables Six and Seven for live crew development where they practiced their engagements, said Christian.

The live crew development was harder, Christian explained, “because the targets are smaller and there is a wider range of targets to hit.” It added more stress so that during the qualifications the crews have already mastered the difficult requirements.

After days and nights of preparing, Table eight which is qualifications, began in the early morning of June 4. In order to



Photos by Pfc. Alyse Cooke
Staff Sgt. Thomas Christian dismounts the Bradley after completing the qualification course.

qualify, the crew needed to destroy at least seven of ten targets, said David Patterson, one of 15 instructors from BAE Systems. During the training, instructors were able to monitor the audio and sights to critique point of aim and targets for each Bradley Crew, said Patterson.

Capt. Karl Hoempler, Commander of HHT, 6/1 and Officer in Charge worked from the control tower and controlled the range. In doing so, he tracked the flow of vehicles entering and exiting the range, controlled the pop-up targets and monitored if the targets were hit, said Hoempler.

The course of the qualifications took about 40 minutes to complete. The crew had about eight seconds to shoot the troop targets and about 20 seconds to shoot vehicle targets, said Butler.

“They’re graded on fire commands and ability to engage and destroy targets,” said Hoempler. “But what’s important

is going through the range in the time allocated.”

On the last day, the troop was able to recover from the week of training they completed. They also participated in After Action Reviews where Patterson and Hoempler were able to show the recorded material for further education, said Hoempler.

“There’s a mixture of experience within the troop, about eighty percent of them had no experience with the Bradley’s,” said Patterson. “But from what I’ve seen, they’ve done real good.”



Pfc. William Butler receives instructions from his Bradley Commander, Staff Sgt. Thomas Christian.

1-36 'Spartans' Set Post Wide Standards for Re-Enlistments

Pfc. Jason B. Aglietti
1-36 IN, 1 BCT, 1 AD

With multiple deployments, retention is sometimes a challenge for many military organizations. With incentives such as fiscal bonuses disappearing quickly, some units have had to come up with alternative incentives to help retain quality Soldiers in the Army. But this struggle to retain Soldiers has been far from a challenge for the 1st Battalion, 36th 'Spartan' Infantry Regiment who has recently earned recognition as 'Top Battalion' for retention on Fort Bliss for the first two quarters of 2009.

High morale and unit esprit de corps have been the major decision-makers for the Spartans, leaving them yearning to raise their right hand before the flag and fellow Soldiers months before their deployment.

Those involved with the retention program credit a mixture of circumstances leading Soldiers of the unit to stay even with diminishing incentives.

"The commanders are all involved," said Staff Sgt. John Baker, the retention NCO for the Spartans. "[This has] created an atmosphere that allows Soldiers to see how much their leaders want them to stay with us, in the unit and the Army."

Staff Sgt. Baker joined the battalion in November 2008 as a career counselor. During his time, commanders have credited the outstanding success of the retention numbers to Baker's



Photo by Pfc. Jason B. Aglietti
Left: Cpt. Mitch Kusmier re-enlists Cpl. Tim Sweeza of 1st Battalion, 36th Infantry Regiment during gunnery at Dona Ana Base Camp prior to moving to M1 gunnery Range 50.

enthusiasm and dedication to the program. Baker is recognized as a seasoned Soldier, trained to advise other Soldiers on their career opportunities in the Army. Not only is he charged with the responsibilities of re-enlistments, but he also helps Soldiers explore their opportunities for military schools and assignments to Army units around the world.

Reasons for high moral can also be attributed to the successful bonding experiences. Each company has conducted family barbeques, new field training, battalion sporting events and recently returned from a month of gunnery qualifications that both challenged and fused the Spartans into an extremely cohesive, loyal and disciplined battalion.

"I think that the high moral, mixed with good leadership, makes

Soldiers want to stay," Baker said. "They train together, and none of them want to leave their buddies or this unit."

In order to further show support for Soldiers and their dedication to the unit and this country, Commanders reward each Soldier that re-enlists with a number of incentives such as four day passes and duty roster exemptions.

Retention for the Battalion sits comfortably at the 133% mark for Fiscal Year 2009 and those involved with the program have stated that they expect to see this number rise as the end of fiscal year draws nearer.

"I expect that we are going to continue to re-enlist a lot of Soldiers," said Baker. "They want to stay and deploy with our team."

'Bandit' Battalion Welcomes Lt. Col. Catlett as Commander

By Spc. Courtney J. Turner
1-37 AR, 1 BCT, 1 AD

On June 10, the 1st Battalion, 37th Armor Regiment, 1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, held its Change of Command Ceremony for outgoing Commander Lt. Col. Elmer Speights Jr. and the incoming Commander Lt. Col. Geoffrey Catlett.

"Before you stands the perfect example of the new army. A combined arms team, fit and capable of reeking destruction on any battlefield, anywhere in the world and at the same time rebuilding communities and relationships on the next block. They are the Bandits of 1-37 Armor with historical and battle lineage that ties to the 'Kings of Armor' Abrams and Rommel," said Speights.

Speights assumed command of 1-37 Armor in July of 2008. Though the brigade was small and short on personnel, Speights used the resources he had to help create one of the largest



Photos by Spc. Courtney J. Turner
Lt. Col. Geoffrey Catlett, incoming commander of 1-37, 1/1 AD, takes command of the Bandit Battalion from Col. Emmett Schaille, Brigade Commander, during the passing of the colors.

battalions of 1/1 AD.

In a tearful farewell speech, Speights thanked friends, family and Soldiers for their loyalty and respect throughout his tenure as the 1-37 Battalion Commander.

"Remember to have fun every day," said Speights. "If you are not having fun, you are doing something wrong."

His work for Fort Bliss is not over. He will assume the duties as the G3 for Post.

But as one Soldier transitions out, another Soldier transitions in.

Lt. Col. Catlett, who is changing stations from the 10th Mountain Division, is fully capable of taking the reins of responsibility from Speights.

"It is truly an honor and a privilege to take command of this great battalion. It is a tremendous responsibility and I am humbled by the faith that this army and chain of command has shown in me to do this job," said Catlett.

Throughout his speech, Catlett made a promise to the Soldiers of the Bandit battalion. "It is my first and only task here to make a pledge to you, the soldiers of the 'Bandit' battalion, that I will give you the best that I have to offer and that I will constantly seek out your welfare, your concerns and your success throughout my tenure as you commander."



1/1 Soldiers Serve El Paso

By Staff Sgt. Christina Turnipseed
1 BCT, 1 AD Public Affairs

About 70 Soldiers from 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division joined El Paso City employees in beautifying El Paso June 11, as part of a 'Noncommissioned Officer Community Service Day'.

The team split in two groups and toiled in the hot Texas sun as sweat dripped and backs groaned while Soldiers tossed or passed large rocks to each other, placing them meticulously to give the appearance of a small river running through the middle of Viscount Blvd. near Montwood Dr.

Every Soldier seemed happy working hard for the simple feeling of knowing they were doing something to improve the face of their community.

"I think it's important for Soldiers to take part in the community because we live here. It shows we care," said Cpl. Colin S. Cyr, of B Company, 501st Brigade Support Battalion.

"When they said community service, I said 'Where?' because I am an El Paso native," said Sgt. Jesus I. Salazar, of A Co., 1-36 Infantry.

Many of the 1/1 Soldiers who volunteered wanted a practical way to reach out or connect with the community.

"I love the community, [I love] to be able to get that cohesion between the community and the Army," said Sgt. Scott M. Shoemaker of 2/3 Fires.

"It gives the civilian community a better outlook of Soldiers," said Sgt. Joshua P. Sears of A Co., 1-36.

Sgt. 1st Class Eugene R. Degraffinreid, of HHC 501st stated, "I'll help build a bridge between the community and the Army. Other than just serving on the front line, it gives us the opportunity to give back in a different way."

The group included a young boy, Jametrius A. Wolfe, who followed his father, Staff Sgt. James E. Wolfe Jr., of B Co. 501st, to the community service activities of 1/1. Instead of swimming or engaging in some other boyish summer fun, Jametrius helped Soldiers like his father prepare the mediums and place rocks into position.

"We're spending our father/son time doing community service because we care," said Wolfe.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Christina Turnipseed
Staff Sgt. James E. Wolfe Jr. of B Co., 501st receives a rock that his son Jametrius passed to him during 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division's NCOs Community Service Day. "We're spending our father/son time doing community service because we care," said Wolfe.

There was a lot of NCO pride flourishing as the dusty, hot work continued.

"I volunteered to let everyone see that NCOs make it happen!" said Staff Sgt. Alma J. Jennings of A Co., 501st.

In addition to NCO pride, father/son time and community connections, volunteer activities are always good for getting to know new people.

"We just PCS'd [moved] here," said Staff. Sgt. Richard S. Harvey of B Co., 501st. We're new to the area, it was a good way to get out and meet people."

"I think it's an awesome job what they are doing for the community," said Valarie, from Case and Associate. "I thanked a couple of them. They ask for nothing in return. It was something we could do to just offer them lunch."

STB Gets Sneak Peek at NTC

By Pfc. Laura Suzuki
STB, 1 BCT, 1 AD

During a recent training event, Soldiers of the Special Troops Battalion of 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division here, supported the warriors of 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division from Fort Riley, Kansas.

Three engineers from Charlie Company in STB provided unblinking feedback as Observer/Controllers to the 1st Engineer Battalion, 1st ID and aided them in seeing themselves as they are at the National Training Center in Calif.

"This was vital for the unit in that it allowed them to train in a real world environment on warrior skills and tasks that will be essential to their mission success," said Sgt. 1st Class E. David Whitley of C Co. STB, who recently returned from the NTC training. Whitley was trained as a subject matter expert for the before his unit trains in September.

This early training event was a great experience for the NCO's of C Co. in that it allowed each of them to not only help the 1st Engineer Battalion but also allowed each to bring back great Tactics, Techniques and Procedures and lessons learned in

order to help each of the different units within the STB to improve and get ready for their own NTC experience.

"Sending SM's to NTC early will give us an edge and allows the main unit body to hit the ground running," said Staff Sgt. Noel Harris. "It'll be good for us because this is where the rubber meets the road and is the pointy end of the spear. This will allow us to hone our war fighting skills."

"For the engineers," said Whitley, "the lessons learned would be to hone your route clearance skills and be ready and able to perform other tasks such as detainee operations as well as training of Iraqi Army engineer units to one day take over your mission."

STB has other Soldiers who have also learned their own lessons about NTC.

"Soldiers need to become acclimatized for the heat (in Southern CA)," said Master Sgt. Jose Thomas of HHC Bde., who has been to NTC twice. "Soldiers should be wearing their gear (on Post) to get used to wearing it because the climate at NTC will be 100-plus degrees and that (type of heat) takes some getting used to."

"The training was outstanding (at NTC) and is tailored to the environment that we will be going to," said Harris. "I liked the realism of the training."



Photo by Staff Sgt. Christina Turnipseed

Lt. Col. Patricia A. Sellers and Command Sgt. Maj. Dana S. Mason, commanders of the STB, 1/1 AD lead their battalion during a post-wide Buffalo Soldier Run on Fort Bliss. The run started at Noel Field in front of the Welcome Center and went to the turnaround point at the Buffalo Soldier Statue near the Robert E. Lee gate June 11.

One Nation, Indivisible: Is It History?

By William Booth
Washington Post
Staff Writer

Submitted by
SFC Gerald W. Meineke
Brigade EO

At the beginning of this century, as steamers poured into American ports, their steerages filled with European immigrants, a Jew from England named Israel Zangwill penned a play whose story line has long been forgotten, but whose central theme has not. His production was entitled "The Melting Pot" and its message still holds a tremendous power on the national imagination – the promise that all immigrants can be transformed into Americans,

a new alloy forged in a crucible of democracy, freedom and civic responsibility.

In 1908, when the play opened in Washington, the United States was in the middle of absorbing the largest influx of immigrants in its history – Irish and Germans, followed by Italians and East Europeans, Catholics and Jews – some 18 million new citizens between 1890 and 1920.

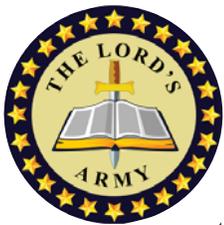
Today, the United States is experiencing its second great wave of im-

migration, a movement of people that has profound implications for a society that by tradition pays homage to its immigrant roots at the same time it confronts complex and deeply ingrained ethnic and racial divisions.

The immigrants of today come not from Europe but overwhelmingly from the still developing world of Asia and Latin America. They are driving a demographic shift so rapid that within the lifetimes of today's teenagers, no one ethnic group – including whites of European descent – will comprise a majority of the nation's population.

Chaplain's Corner

Maj. Henry D. McCain
Brigade Chaplain



In July, we will be celebrating the birth of our nation. It has lasted long upon the earth as we

have remembered the God that created this nation and who continues to allow it to be a shining example of freedom. We see that opportunities continue to grow to those who are willing to work and sacrifice for America.

The opening sentence of the Declaration asserts as a matter of Natural Law, the capability of a populace to take on political self-determination and acknowledges that the grounds for such independence must be equitable, therefore reasonable, and ought to be explained.

When in the Course of human

events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature's and God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

It is also a statement of what is known as the right to revolution, that is, people have certain rights, and when a government violates these rights the people have the right to "alter or abolish" that government.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive

of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed.

But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.



Soldier Spotlight: Faces of the First Brigade



Photo by Pfc. Alyse Cooke



Photo by Pfc. Jason B. Aglietti



Photo by Pfc. Alyse Cooke



Photo by Staff Sgt. Christina Turnipseed



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