

Duke Dispatch

Vol. 3



Duke Brigade
prepares for
combat at NTC

Suicide Prevention
tips and resources

September 2010

Table of Contents

- 2 Commander's Corner**
September to focus on suicide awareness
- 3 Voice of the CSM**
Team effort needed to combat suicide
- 4 Chaplain's Word**
Be aware of the resources for mental health in the brigade
- 5 BSB keeps motors running**
201st BSB fulfills key role in keeping the Duke Brigade well supplied
- 6 Friends of Fort Knox**
Fort Knox community leaders visit Duke Brigade at NTC
- 7 Medics receive training**
3/1 IBCT medics get the opportunity to hone their skills on cadavers
- 9 Duke Brigade returns**
STB reflects on training in Fort Irwin, Calif.
- 11 Duke Brigade trains at NTC**
Soldiers work to become disciplined, competent, and confident through training
- 15 Combating sexual assault**
Sexual assault policy and options for reporting an assault
- 16 FRG/ Suicide prevention**
Calendar of upcoming events.
Suicide prevention resources



Photo by Spc. Tobey White

A Soldier grabs a drink in the dining facility during supper at Forward Operating Base Denver, Fort Irwin, Calif., Aug. 10. Soldiers from the 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division based at Fort Knox, Ky., trained at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin during August in preparation for their upcoming deployment to Afghanistan.

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Commander's Corner

Col. Christopher Toner
3/1 IBCT, Commander

Returning from a successful rotation at the National Training Center last month reinforced to me what a privilege it is to command the Duke Brigade. Not a day goes by when I don't consider how fortunate I am to lead this disciplined group of highly competent and confident Soldiers preparing for deployment to Afghanistan. Still, there are some duties that

remain challenging and quite sad, chief among them being those that involve the death of a Soldier

The Army, along with our country, recognizes that this is National Suicide Prevention Month. We address the issue not only because the problem of Soldiers and others taking their own lives is very real, but also because those left behind are permanently affected as well. How real is the problem?



Photo by Spc. Tobey White

Soldiers from the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division sit down to dinner with role players acting as Afghan National Army Soldiers Tuesday, Aug. 10 in the mock town of Shar-e Tiefert at the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, Calif.

In the Army alone there were 162 Soldiers who committed suicide in 2009, continuing a somber five-year trend. The numbers for 2010 also remain very high. Obviously I don't have the answer, nor does anyone in the Army know exactly all the reasons why these numbers continue to grow. We are committed to doing what we can to curb the problem, however, and it will involve a team effort to identify, treat and deal with this tragic problem.

Depression that leads to suicide isn't simply a matter of being deployed far away from Family members and other close friends. Problems can surface

even after returning from a deployment, compounded by reintegration with Family members and others. Many of the suicides in recent years actually involved Soldiers who had never deployed. With that being said, the issue becomes one of how to mitigate the alarming numbers and trends, especially when the Duke Brigade must handle the rigors of combat and the isolation from Family.

Can you imagine the Soldier to your right or left suddenly removed from the planned mission for the next day, a victim of suicide? It's devastating to those left behind to think about what they might have done differently, if anything, to prevent the needless death of a comrade.

The Army has many outlets and resources to go to if you or someone you know appears to be suffering from unusual amounts of depression. If you don't know the answer yourself or just need somebody to talk to, feel free to approach your chain of command or your command's chaplain. They will ask the right questions to ensure the needed help is obtained. Chaplain Nishimura, our brigade chaplain, offers some tips on how to recognize potential suicide victims and avenues to mitigate that potential on page 4. Our Military Family Life Consultant, Patrick Chimenti, can



provide counseling and point you in the right direction for additional help where necessary.

At the unit level, ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) qualified representatives are invaluable, embedded resources to provide immediate assistance to Soldiers in need. Most importantly, always be observant in your interaction with others and look out for any troubling signs in your fellow Soldiers. Remember there are no second chances to intervene after a suicide.

As we ready for deployment remember that our Duke Brigade is a tightly-woven fabric, depending on the sum of our individual parts for its overall strength. We depend on our fellow Soldiers for support, companionship and possibly even our lives.

It's very comforting to know the person you trained with and trust will be there for you should danger arise during a mission or if you need help with depression. I remain convinced that by working together as part of the big Army team we can significantly reduce the tragic numbers we presently see across our force.

The Duke Brigade and Fort Knox is resourced to provide assistance for suicide prevention training, counseling, and assistance. We are proactively engaged, along with the rest of the Army, in combating this problem.

I'm hopeful that our observation of National Suicide Prevention Month will prompt us all to reflect on the importance that we ourselves, as Soldiers on the Duke Brigade team and valued members of our own individual families, bring collectively to our organization. Duke Brigade Soldiers and Families are our most precious resource.

Duty First! ■

Voice of the CSM

Command Sgt. Maj. Drew Pumarejo
3/1 IBCT Command Sgt. Maj.

Strength Starts Here.” It’s a popular saying around Fort Knox these days, and you’ve probably noticed the signs at the checkpoints proclaiming as much, among other places scattered around post. But have you ever taken the time to think what it might refer to, or more importantly, whether it has multiple meanings? As the Army recognizes National Suicide Prevention Month in September, that saying becomes even more relevant and timely. I’ll attempt to add another perspective to those issues raised earlier by Col. Toner as we all try to curb some very tragic numbers and trends.

Many people think the saying refers to combat strength, teamwork, military firepower, etc., and that is largely correct. It also hits the nail on the head, however, on how we recognize, approach and mitigate the ongoing problem of suicides among Soldiers. This problem has escalated in recent years despite tremendous resources being directed toward it, so much so that in 2009 the Army saw 162 Active-duty Soldiers take their own lives. The numbers for 2010

remain at unacceptable levels as well. Don’t get me wrong. I’m not saying even one Soldier suicide compared to current levels is acceptable, but we must redouble our efforts to reverse these troubling trends that have affected our Army.

You might think it’s easier said than done, but being Army Strong also means finding the strength to help not only yourself in troubling times, but looking out for other Soldiers who may be suffering as well. Like any problem we may encounter in life, it’s important to first recognize there is a problem needing to be addressed. While it may be unpleasant to admit that, it is a crucial first step in seeking the necessary treatment and counseling.

Do you feel more depressed, edgy or lifeless than usual? Have you noticed these or similar behaviors in anyone you know? If so, I encourage you to seek help for yourself or others. There are some who might think Soldiers asking for help is a sign of weakness or cowardice. After all, the images in the movies of macho, fearless and indestructible U.S. Army Soldiers enduring their fate silently has been around since the days of John Wayne, and probably even before that. The reality, however, is that seeking



help when feeling down or depressed is a sign of great strength and courage. Helping a depressed fellow Soldier is also extremely laudable, and illustrates that we do look out for each other.

Please remember that a Soldier in need of help doesn’t stand alone. There is always someone to listen or help, you just have to know where to look. The Army is doing what it can to make that looking a whole lot easier. Whether it’s your battle buddy, NCO or commanding officer, Chaplain, behavioral health specialist or Family member, please talk to someone immediately. I think you’d be surprised to learn they are interested in helping, and if they can’t, they’ll certainly put you in touch with someone who can. Suicide is final, with no chance to correct the past. The Army stands ready to hold ourselves accountable for any suicide prevention shortcomings in the past, and ardently committed to doing what we can to overcome them.

Suicide doesn’t just affect those Soldiers on deployment, far away from Families and friends. Many times it occurs even in loving home environments surrounded by those who care the most deeply. Regardless, it’s equally tragic wherever a life comes to an untimely end through suicide, and the aftermath leaves painful and lasting scars on those left behind, always left to wonder if they could have intervened beforehand somehow. As the Army and our nation recognize National Suicide Prevention Month this September, let us do what we can before tragedy strikes needlessly. Preventing suicide is truly a team effort, and “Strength Starts Here” can and should be a rallying cry for all of us to do what’s needed to curb this most serious problem.

Duty First! ■

Chaplain’s Word

Lend a hand to others when times get tough

Chaplain (Maj.) Mike Nishimura
3/1 IBCT Brigade Chaplain

The Army has experienced an unfortunate increase in suicides recently. As Col. Toner stated in his column, fiscal year 2009 saw 162 suicides of active-duty soldiers alone. The entire Army, however, lost 239 Soldiers. Additionally, there were 146 active-duty deaths related to high-risk behavior, including 74 drug overdoses. Perhaps even more alarming is the fact there were 1,713 attempted suicides reported in the same period. Failed relationships, history of suicide in one’s Family and past suicide attempts are three leading contributors.

According to the 2010 Army Health Promotion/Risk Reduction/Suicide Prevention report, a direct link to increased life stressors and increased risk behavior was discovered when the circumstances behind

these deaths were examined.

The Army has a great suicide intervention program called ACE—Ask, Care, and Escort. If you suspect a person might be contemplating suicide, you need to ask if he is having suicidal thoughts. This takes courage, but you need to ask directly. Contrary to popular belief, you will not plant a thought in someone’s mind. It’s already there. Asking directly and clearly will establish the fact we are dealing with suicide and that it’s all right to talk about it. The person at risk will then feel valued and may begin to open up. You need to care for that person by staying calm, but still taking control of the situation. Use active listening skills to show your understanding, and try not to judge. This will produce relief in the person at risk. Then remove any means that could be used for self-injury. Never leave the person alone, escorting them through



the chain of command, Chaplain, Military Family Life Consultant (MFLC), behavioral health provider, or primary care provider. You can also call the National Suicide Prevention Line at 1-800-273-8255 (TALK). MilitaryOneSource.com or 1-800-342-9647 is also available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. More suicide information can be found on page 16.

The Army is launching a tremendous effort to increase resiliency in our Soldiers who continue to serve under a high operational tempo, and also help their Families. The good news, in that treatment is being sought, is the number of Soldiers who seek help through behavioral health providers is increasing. The stigma attached to seeking behavioral health care assistance is slowly fading. We need to continue to foster an environment where Soldiers and Families are encouraged to seek needed help. At the same time, we need to encourage them to be resilient, both emotionally and spiritually.

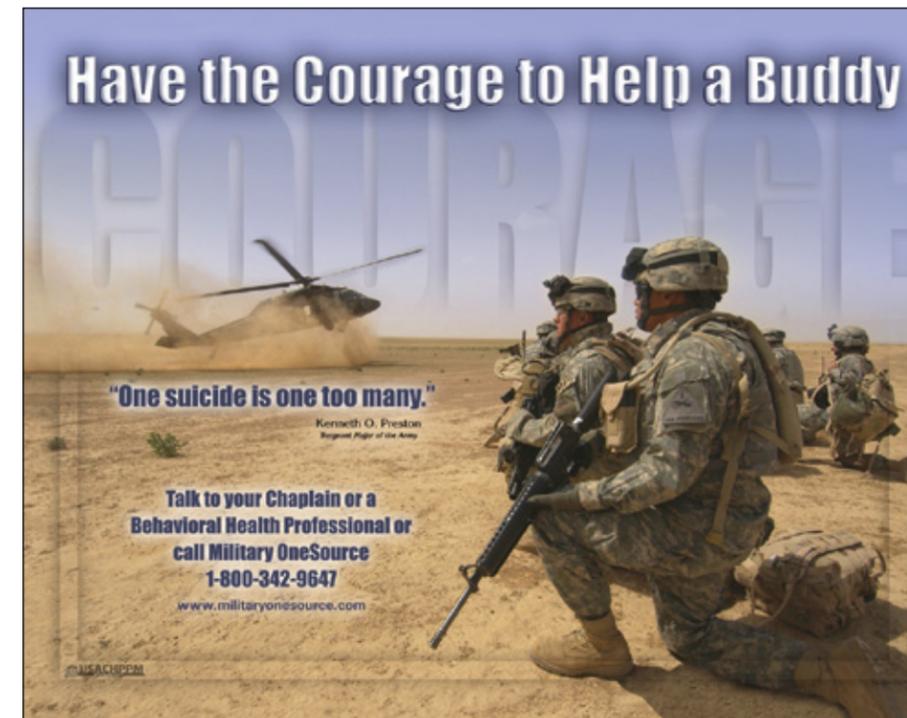
Everyone faces challenges from time to time while going through life, and even feels down in the dumps on occasion. The issue is how we bounce back when faced with such difficult obstacles, and identifying what can be done to regain our sense of wholeness so that suicide never rears its ugly head. Don’t hesitate to lean upon your Family or fellow Soldiers when the chips are down. Neither your Army Family or your Family at home can afford to lose your support, knowledge or companionship when deployed or in garrison.

As I previously discussed in this space, I encourage you to continue your spiritual journey. The more you put in, the more you will be able to receive in return. God bless and happy trails to you. ■



Photo by Staff Sgt. Ben K. Navratil

Gen. John Abizaid (ret.) (left), former commander of Central Command, discusses his experiences in Afghanistan with Col. Christopher Toner (center) and Command Sgt. Maj. Drew Pumarejo (right), commander and command sergeant major, respectively, of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., Aug. 14.



A convoy carrying Soldiers and supplies rumbles through the desert at the National Training Center on Fort Irwin, Calif., Aug. 6. Troops of the Fort Knox, Ky.-based 201st Brigade Support Battalion were busy supplying other Soldiers in the command with supplies as varied as food, water and gasoline during the two week exercise.



Photo by Maj. Travis Dettmer

BSB keeps motors running

Story by Sgt. John Zumer
3/1 IBCT
Public Affairs

California. The name alone conjures exotic images of sun, sand, surfing, Beach Boys music and movie stars. Soldiers from Fort Knox, Ky., spending the month of August at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., have found the picture to be a little different. Oh, there's still plenty of sun and sand, but the focus at NTC is getting ready for a challenging and dangerous mission overseas, Afghanistan-style.

The success of that, or any mission, is dependent on supplying Soldiers with the tools needed to wage successful operations against the enemy. For Alpha and Bravo companies, 201st Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division keeping the troops supplied is what they do. Their distribution and supply support capabilities are crucial in keeping troops fed, hydrated and vehicles running. An overnight mission spanning August 8-9 not only showed how important the 201st is to the big picture, but how so-called normal driving conditions and working hours are seldom normal in wartime.

Gasoline is crucial in warfare, and the

201st was entrusted with making a supply run to outlying Forward Operating Bases King and Seattle. Once settled in-theater, a similar supply run would probably be made a couple times a week, according to Sgt. Larry Parker II, a water purification specialist with Bravo Company. Initially, however, transportation demands would be somewhat greater.

"When a unit first arrives to theater, (a convoy would be required) maybe three times a week because of the larger number of storage containers that must be delivered," said Parker.

Items transported on this occasion included fuel, water, and Gatorade. While the combat at NTC may be simulated, the need to get supplies to Soldiers is as real as ever. Despite a few delays along the way the long mission came to a successful early-morning end. Happily, there were no accidents or injuries along the way, perhaps attributable to the numerous safety checks and mission briefings that 201st leadership conducted before, during and after the convoy. Staff Sgt. Gregory Dunbar, the section sergeant of the gun truck platoon, said the time spent at NTC is very relevant for a couple additional reasons.

"It gets the Soldiers in the proper battle rhythm," he said. Opportunities to practice

with the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle, specifically vehicle recovery and treatment of casualties, were other benefits of coming to NTC.

Parker agreed the training environment is very beneficial, citing better familiarity with communications equipment and greater attention to detail while driving as examples.

The 201st will participate in additional training exercises upon their return to Fort Knox that will better prepare them for deployment to Afghanistan. Those exercises will include medical evacuation and explosive ordnance disposal issues largely pertaining to the perils of IEDs, etc. That's what it's all about anyway, as far as Parker is concerned.

"You want to do everything you can to bring your Soldiers back," he said. "You can't get complacent."

Training will continue in California until the latter part of August, but it's unlikely the Soldiers from the 201st will come across any Hollywood celebrities out in the Mojave Desert. And while their days here may have been long and the nights even longer, they remain certain of at least one thing. Namely, their tireless efforts under the blazing desert sun and bright moonlight helped to keep their comrades at NTC fed, hydrated, and most importantly, alive.



Photo left: Jerldean Howard, a realtor, and Eileen Pickett, senior vice president of Greater Louisville Inc., open a Meal-Ready-to-Eat during their visit with the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Thursday, Aug. 12 at the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, Calif. Photo Below: Soldiers from the 3/1 IBCT eat dinner with community leaders from Fort Knox Bottom Photo: Community leaders from Fort Knox visit the 3/1 IBCT at Forward Operating Base Denver Thursday, Aug. 12 at NTC in Fort Irwin, Calif.



Photos by Spc. Tobey White



Friends of Fort Knox visit NTC

Story by Spc. Tobey White
3/1 IBCT, Public Affairs

The rapid fire of M-4s, and the thunderous roar of mortars reverberate through the air as Soldiers move in tactical formations toward their objective. It is a sight reminiscent of battle and one not many civilians have the chance to safely see, but for a few community leaders from areas surrounding Fort Knox, Ky. the experience was one that helped them understand the amount and quality of training the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division was undergoing before deployment.

The seven representatives from the Fort Knox area were given a greater understanding of the Duke Brigade's preparation for deployment when they visited the brigade at the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, Calif. Aug. 10-13.

During the visit, they received a tour of the NTC training area and attended various classes, including ones covering the making of improvised explosives devices and the methods the enemy uses to disguise them. Combat trainers also explained the training Soldiers go through while at NTC.

The community leaders watched as Soldiers ran through a situational training exercise in which they came under attack by enemy insurgents, said Jerldean Howard, a realtor and the treasurer for the Radcliff Chamber of Commerce.

"I had no idea the Soldiers put this much into training. They didn't do everything right the first time, but they would continue to train until they get it," Howard said, referencing the fact that NTC's goal is to coach Soldiers until they are proficient

After touring NTC, the group ate lunch and was given a class on how to eat a Meal-Ready-to-Eat. A MRE is a prepackaged meal Soldiers can eat when hot chow is not readily available. After lunch,

they toured the 3/1 IBCT tactical operations center and had the chance to eat dinner with Soldiers from 3/1 IBCT.

"The trip gave me a chance to get a first hand view of how Soldiers train for battle," said Bob Swope, the owner of Swope Auto Dealers. "In addition, I got a chance to meet Soldiers and let them know how much I appreciate what they are doing."

For Steve Castleton, an internet strategist for the United Service Organizations, the trip was a chance to experience the same climate and conditions his two sons had gone through when they previously attended NTC. The visit brought him closer to them, Castleton said.

"Being in the same room they had been in and eating the same food they had, was incredibly exciting," Castleton said.

Part of the objective of NTC was to make training realistic to the conditions in Afghanistan. Pashto and Dari speaking role-players are employed to play civilians, insurgents, and Afghan soldiers and police. They even had fruit at the market stands and used pyrotechnics that smell real, said Castleton.

"It's unbelievable how realistic it is. Even my sons said stuff they picked up at NTC they use downrange. They say 'Dad, we already know a lot of this stuff from NTC,'" said Castleton.

Among those who attended were: Jerldean Howard, of Howard Homes and Realty, Jo Emary with the Radcliff Chamber of Commerce, Wendall Lawrence, executive director of the Lincoln Trail Area, Eileen Pickett, the senior vice president of Greater Louisville Inc., Kendra Stewart, president of the Radcliff Chamber of Commerce, Bob Swope, owner of Swope Auto Dealers, and Steve Castleton, president of Dionysus Consulting.

As the community leaders boarded a bus bound for their hotel at the end of the day, they did so with a better grasp of the training a 3/1 IBCT Soldier undergoes when getting ready for deployment.

Medics receive hands-on training



Story by Sgt. Brandon Sandefur
3/1 IBCT Public Affairs

You don't want their first experience to be when they're in combat trying to save someone's life."

Medics from the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division learned about the other side of combat last week through a unique partnership with the University of Louisville's school of medicine, thanks to Capt. Charles Asher, Duke Brigade surgeon. Asher believed the training was good and also a rare opportunity for the 3/1 Soldiers involved.



Photo by Spc. Tobey White

1st Lt. Jean Paul Montreuil, a physician's assistant for the 6th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, Capt. Chris Larson, a physician's assistant for the 1st Battalion, 6th Field Artillery and Sgt. Daniel Osborne, a medic for the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment gather medical instruments they will need to teach their Soldiers suturing Friday, July 9 at the University of Louisville's Anatomical Sciences School of Medicine

"It's good that the Soldiers get to practice lifesaving procedures on actual human bodies," said Asher.

"For them to experience the initial shock of seeing a body here is better."

Soldiers performed several procedures throughout the training. The procedures weren't the standard IV sticks or a tourniquet application. They included suturing wounds, inserting chest tubes and surgical airways, and administering fluids intravenously and intraosseously (through the bones). Asher noted that medics are very grateful when this type of training surfaces.

"Medics frequently tell me this is the best training they've received in the Army," he said.

Soldiers were able to use medical equipment that many of them have never seen before. During one of the surgical procedures Soldiers had to make an opening in the cadaver's throat to insert a surgical airway. Sgt. Daniel Osborne, a medic with the 2nd Battalion 2nd Infantry Regiment and Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran noted the importance of this training for medics.

"I've been a medic for eight years and I've deployed once to Iraq," said Osborne. "This is a confidence builder for Soldiers. It lets them reassure basic medical skills. This is the best stuff to get Soldiers trained to support operations in Afghanistan and Iraq."

For many of the younger Soldiers present, the training provided a chance to learn new skills. Many of them felt training like this helped them because they trained on real bodies that provided challenges other training aids do not.

"This was a great experience because you get to train on real bodies using the correct procedures. This is a big difference compared to a mannequin," said Cpl. Carlos Rosas, a medic with 2-2 IN.

"Working on real bodies you get the element of difficulty that you don't get with a mannequin. It gives you confidence because you're doing it on a real person and you get to see the tough procedures," he added.

Asher said half of the brigade's medics have gone through the cadaver training already, and he anticipates training 120 of the brigade's medics before the partnership concludes.

While it remains to be seen whether this training can be repeated in the future, the Soldiers present didn't act as if they'd be opposed to such an idea. Besides, one large fringe benefit was that Soldiers weren't exposed to such problems for the first time under the stress and strain of combat, which had been the original training goal.

"This is the closest training you can get without actually losing a Soldier to combat," said Osborne.

Photo by Spc. Tobey White

Photo on page 7: Montreuil demonstrates how to suture a wound on Friday, July 9 at the University of Louisville's Anatomical Sciences School of Medicine. One of the purposes of the training was to enable the medics to respond to the stress of a combat situation.

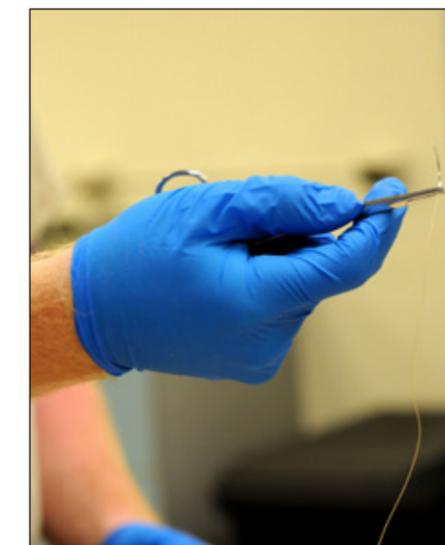


Photo by Spc. Tobey White

Larson demonstrates how to hold a needle while suturing on Friday, July 9 at the University of Louisville's Anatomical Sciences School of Medicine. For many of the Soldiers this was the first time they worked with human tissue.

STB reflects Duke Brigade returns home

Photo by Spc. Thomas Mort
The Soldiers spent two weeks in the "box" conducting training for an upcoming deployment.



Photo by Maj. Travis Dettmer

Soldiers of Alpha Troop, 6th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment line up their vehicles and conduct final inspections prior to moving out to the training area at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif. Thursday, Aug. 15.

Story by Sgt. John Zumer
3/1 IBCT Public Affairs

Depending on who you talk to, a month at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., can mean different things. For senior military leaders, it's an invaluable month to hone combat skills in a challenging environment, away from the frequent distractions of garrison life. For others, the time spent learning and practicing crucial skills in the hot, dusty Mojave Desert, an environment meant to simulate conditions in the uncertain reaches of Afghanistan, can provide three important things. It prepares them for working in realistic wartime conditions, helps them work closely with their fellow Soldiers, and starts to get them accustomed to being separated from Family and friends.

Regardless of how it's looked at, however, the recently concluded mission at NTC for the Fort Knox, Ky.-based 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division provided many valuable lessons. The Duke Brigade spent most of August preparing for their upcoming deployment to Afghanistan, and while the mission was hot and often tiring, many were quick to remark on the vital lessons learned.

"It was the first chance and the finest chance to see all enablers across the brigade working together," said Lt. Col. Ryan Janovic, commander of the Special Troops Battalion.

An enabler is a specialty skill, or military occupation specialty that lets everybody get their job done. Examples include water purification specialists and fuel truck drivers, and their importance isn't lost on those in the know.

"The brigade won't be able to function without the enablers," said Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Richardson of the STB.

The foundation for the Brigade's success at NTC had already been laid back in Kentucky, said Janovic, citing the hard work and training done at Fort Knox that paid dividends at NTC.

Richardson agreed, mentioning how training in the desert made things easier in many ways.

"NTC allowed us to put Soldiers in scenarios without the distractions back home," said Richardson.

Richardson echoed the sentiments of Janovic, that relevant classes and training at Fort Knox were crucial to the success at NTC. Most importantly, Soldiers made progress on the most important thing of all: staying alive and helping their buddies stay alive.

"A large percentage of the battalion improved their war fighting experience at NTC," said Richardson.

As the STB prepares for deployment to Afghanistan this winter, Janovic sees challenges that must be overcome before going overseas. These include shipping large amounts of equipment overseas, cultural challenges that Soldiers must learn and adapt to, and putting in place all the necessary personnel, including civilian interpreters and contractors. As for Soldiers arriving to and leaving the unit, as they do in units throughout the Army, Richardson is confident the STB is ready to roll.

"We should be very close to what we should be," said Richardson, speaking about the brigade staffing levels as the deployment nears.

Numbers aside, Janovic feels the NTC experience bodes well for the Soldiers of the STB and Duke Brigade.

"The Soldiers I came across were very warrior focused, intense and had a desire to improve their war fighting skills," said Janovic.

With the training completed, the NTC experience was handed over to the logistics experts. Flying more than 3,000 Soldiers cross-country is never easy, especially when those Soldiers are champing at the bit to see loved ones. Still, the plane ride home saw many ready-to-relax Soldiers reflecting on the last month, knowing that in a few short months they'll face the ultimate test. Those thoughts were put aside, however, once the plane touched down in Louisville, and the Soldiers were reunited with their loved ones they'd been away from for so long.

"It feels great to be back in Kentucky again to see my Family," said Spc. Kyle Czerniejewski, a member of Alpha Company, STB, who was making his first visit to NTC after having already been deployed to Afghanistan.

"It's nice to be back to the simple things we take for granted sometimes," said Czerniejewski.



Photo by Spc. Thomas Mort

Soldiers from Charlie Company 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment scan the horizon for potential enemies Monday, Aug. 23 at the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, Calif.



Photo by Spc. Tobey White

Sgt. William Parris, Bravo Company, Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division talks on his radio during a preflight check of the Shadow Unmanned Aerial Vehicle on Tuesday, July 27 at Godman Airfield on Fort Knox. The UAV was key in surveillance and reconnaissance operations in the Mojave Desert.



Soldiers from the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division disembark in Victorville, Calif. July 31. The Soldiers were on their way to the National Training Center, located at Fort Irwin, Calif. for a pre-deployment exercise.

Story by Sgt. John Zumer
3/1 IBCT Public Affairs

A cross-country trip to California is never easy to plan even under ideal circumstances. Just ask any parent trying to put the finishing touches on that family vacation, yet still balancing air line reservations, transportation and lodging once they arrive. But if that same trip involves making arrangements for thousands of Soldiers, loading scores of vehicles onto railcars for cross-country shipment and transporting untold amounts of other equipment, it starts to border on the near-impossible. Regardless of the daunting challenges, however, it's very much a reality for Col. Christopher Toner, commander of the 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division.

Toner and the bulk of his Fort Knox, Ky.-based Duke Brigade spent most of August at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., in the Mojave Desert. The NTC serves as a proving ground for units preparing for overseas deployments, giving them a chance to hone skills ranging from maneuver, marksmanship, cooperating with Coalition forces and relationship-building with local nationals. The Duke Brigade, or 3/1, will begin a one-year deployment to Afghanistan later this year, but preparation began long before their NTC rotation.

"The brigade has been training hard for months for our upcoming deployment to Afghanistan," said Toner. That training at Fort Knox centered on numerous exercises and repeated trips to gunnery and maneuver ranges focusing on individual, team and unit proficiency. Such proficiency included knowing how to call for artillery support, launch a flanking attack, and clearing houses of insurgents. According to Toner, the mission to NTC will validate the training 3/1 has conducted to date, and allow them to fully employ combat assets in an operational and terrain environment closely replicating Afghanistan.

What does all of this military jargon really mean? It means that 3/1 will partner and work with other units and individuals acting as host nation security forces and government leaders, joint forces, interagency forces, intergovernmental forces, and multinational forces during their time at NTC. Quite simply, the entire experience will attempt to mimic life in Afghanistan as realistically as possible so there will be fewer surprises, better acclimation to the country and culture, and improved safety once downrange.

"Just about every element or enabler (contractor, interpreter, etc.) that we will have in Afghanistan will be employed by us at the National Training Center," said Toner.

Before Soldiers actually start their training in the designated area of NTC known as "The Box," the flip-side of what it took to make it to California happens. Namely, vehicles that had been shipped have to be picked up at the nearby rail depot, dozens of flights for

Sun, sand, sweat, training

Photo by Spc. Tobey White

NTC



Photo by Spc. Tobey White

Soldiers must be scheduled and delivered safely, and freshly-arrived equipment containers have to be unloaded. Perhaps most important for the success of the war games, Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System equipment must be distributed and installed for the participating Soldiers and their vehicles. MILES equipment allows Soldiers to fire their weapons using blank ammunition, and their "hits" to be tallied electronically so that senior leaders can see how accurate that firing was. Short of actually firing at someone else and them firing back, it's arguably one of the most realistic training devices available.

NTC uses combat trainers, formerly known as Observer/Controllers, who have studied operations in Afghanistan. Realistic training scenarios for participating units have been developed based on input received from senior leaders previously and currently serving there. This input can include analyzing battlefield trends and implementing some of the countermeasures necessary to deal with an active and innovative enemy in Afghanistan.

"Combat trainers will help coach and mentor all of the brigade's units and staff sections down to the Soldier-level throughout the rotation, and allow us to improve daily," said Toner.

Those at that most crucial level readily acknowledge the importance of the NTC coaching and mentoring that takes place under the hot California sun.

"I think it's a good experience for younger Soldiers to get to see what it's like overseas," said Spc. Anthony Holbrook, an infantryman with Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 3/1.

Holbrook has spent almost three years in the Army, but this was his first trip to NTC. He deployed to Afghanistan previously with 3/1 after joining the unit only three weeks before their July 2008 deployment to southern Afghanistan.

Soldiers from the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division rise before dawn to load gear onto their vehicles on Tuesday, Aug. 3 at the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, Calif.

"It was scary as Hell learning everything on the job," said Holbrook. NTC provides the chance to learn how members of a squad work together and improve combat skills before deployment, he added, thankful that many new Soldiers will experience training opportunities on this rotation that he didn't have previously.

Sgt. Jason Kavgazoff, an infantryman with Bravo Company, 2-2, echoed the invaluable lessons to be had at NTC.

"It gives Soldiers the opportunity to experience the desert firsthand," he said, adding that NTC is very large scale, with more training area and training aids than Fort Knox could offer. The most important of those training aids include a larger OPFOR (opposing force, as depicted by role players) to serve as adversaries and the ability to employ more air power assets, allowing for what the Army calls "Full Spectrum Operations," according to Kavgazoff.

"We're still expecting to bring more guys into the unit up to deployment," he added, emphasizing that Soldiers with NTC experience will be able to better mentor those who didn't or couldn't attend.

For Command Sgt. Major Michael Campbell of the NTC Operations Group, the mentoring aspect is what the whole NTC experience boils down to anyway.

"We combat train to success," he said, adding that it may seem like a significant emotional event to endure in the climate and succeed in the training, but there is a higher, non-debatable goal.

That goal, according to Campbell, is to ensure that everything is done to train 3/1 to succeed in Afghanistan.

So while there was plenty of sun and sand at NTC, it was hardly a family vacation for 3/1 Soldiers. Thoughts of Families left behind



Photo by Spc. Thomas Mort



Photo by Spc. Thomas Mort

Top Left- Soldiers from Charlie Company, Special Troops Battalion take a few minutes to sit in the shade Wednesday, Aug 4 in the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif.

Top Right- Spc. Brandon Wells, a topographic analyst with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division helps attach a boot wall to the back of his vehicle at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif. Sunday, Aug. 1.

Bottom- Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment prepare to conduct a patrol to seek out insurgents during training at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif. Aug 14.



Photo by Spc. Tobey White

at Fort Knox were constant, however, making the Family support planning done beforehand all the more important.

One such event, the Family/Soldier Readiness Program, held July 23, was a family-oriented series of briefings and presentations, explaining to the Soldiers and their Families what to expect during the deployment and how to prepare.

"Events like this give 3/1 Families the assurances we are working to give them every opportunity possible to take care of those necessary and important family tasks before the unit deploys," said Toner.

The renewed Army emphasis placed on Family life and other support mechanisms, exemplified in the Army Family Covenant signed in 2007 at Fort Knox, acknowledges that strong and ready Families are the hallmark of a successful unit support structure when Soldiers are deployed.

Toner couldn't agree more, noting that every effort was made before NTC to ensure Families didn't incur any additional stress or hardship. The same will hold true when 3/1 deploys later this year. Conversely, mission effectiveness and morale is greatly enhanced when Soldiers don't have to worry about their Families when separated by thousands of miles and eight time zones. Regular updates to the 3/1 page on Facebook provided pictures and tidbits of what was happening at NTC, and ways to improve those updates will continue to be studied and implemented leading up to the coming deployment.

"When a Duke Soldier returns from Afghanistan, they will know that their Family was well cared for while we were deployed," said Toner.

And that's the kind of California Dreamin' every 3/1 Soldier can relate to.

Combating sexual assault

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Andrew Kretz
3rd Brigade Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

Sexual Assault! Not in our brigade. Soldiers and leaders need to know and understand the policy the Army and the brigade is pushing down to the units and whom they can speak to if they are assaulted. The Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program reinforces the Army's commitment to eliminate incidents of sexual assault through a comprehensive policy that centers on awareness and prevention, training and education, victim advocacy, response, reporting, and accountability. Army policy promotes sensitive care and confidential reporting for victims of sexual assault and accountability for those who commit these crimes, according to Army policy.

If you have been a victim of sexual assault, know that you have two different reporting methods. Unrestricted reporting, gives a Soldier medical treatment, counseling and an official investigation of the crime. When selecting unrestricted reporting, you should use your current reporting channels such as chain of command, law enforcement, or report it to the Deployable Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (DSARC) and Unit Victim Advocates (UVAs). The restricted reporting option is for victims of sexual assault who wish to confidentially disclose the crime to specifically identified individuals and receive medical treatment and counseling without triggering the official investigative process. Service members who are sexually assaulted and desire restricted reporting under this policy must report the assault to a DSARC, UVA, a healthcare provider or chaplain.

Know your DSARC and the UVAs in the Brigade:

3rd Brigade DSARC: SFC Andrew Kretz 624-5361	3/1 BSTB UVAs SSG Tod Hook SSG Darcella Marshall SSG Beverly Morgan
1/26 IN UVAs: SSG Jerry Bryant SSG Bradford Hamblen SSG Sofia Wade	SSG Patrick Sullivan SSG Gary Wolford 201 BSB SSG Shelia Anthony
2/2 IN UVAs: SFC Trent Winge 2LT Jason Briscoe SSG Tameka Jackson	SSG Jamie Bidwell SSG Leroy Carlton SSG Gregory Dunbar SSG Charles Taylor
6/4 CAV UVAs: SSG Lee Helms	

Duke retention starts new fiscal year

Story by Master Sgt. David Burgoon
3/1 IBCT Retention

On October 1, the new fiscal year will start, and with that will come a new retention mission and new opportunities for the Soldiers of the Duke Brigade to continue their careers.

The Duke Brigade closed out the current fiscal year's active component retention mission in early July. This coincided with the Deployment Enlistment Incentive Program payment levels dropping from the \$500 level to \$350. More than enough Duke Brigade Soldiers made the commitment from May to July to deploy with the brigade and accept incentive pay that the retention mission was easily exceeded.

With the new year, the Duke retention team is looking to turn those DEIP extensions into down range reenlistments for bonuses, assignment and training to enhance and continue the careers of Duke Warriors. Some of the specific incentives are tax free bonuses. Under the current bonus message (MILPER 10-027, check your unit retention board in the COF), there are specific MOS bonuses and a bonus for deployed Soldiers. Also, assignments will be available for those Soldiers who are looking to take their experiences to other units or simply want to find a location where they can take a knee. Army training will be available for those who qualify; anything from a new MOS, Drill Sergeant, recruiter or airborne school. Also, the Commander's education incentive is still on the table for Soldiers who reenlist to stabilize with the DUKE Brigade at Knox.

Any Soldiers who will be in their reenlistment window while the Brigade is down range needs to see their Career Counselor very soon. Some options will require the Soldier to have verification of previous training, security clearances or other prerequisites. Now is the time to find out what the Soldier will need down range! Even if the Soldier doesn't think they will take another tour of duty after this enlistment, they owe it to themselves to explore their options.

The Duke retention team is located in building 2374, across from brigade headquarters. See your unit retention board for specific numbers to call or just stop in.

6-REUP

3/1 IBCT Family Readiness News

On Thursday, July 15, the brigade held its first Volunteer Recognition Ceremony. Outstanding volunteers were recognized for their hard work and dedication in areas including Family Readiness, Youth Sports, and Community programs.

Volunteers were also recognized for supporting the Afghan Children's Clothing Drive. Recipients received a Commanders Certificate of Appreciation and a Lady Victory or Army Spouse pin presented by Col. and Mrs. Toner and Command Sgt. Maj. and Mrs. Pumarejo.

On July 22 and 23, the brigade hosted NTC Pre-deployment

Briefings and an informational fair. Over 1450 Soldiers and Family Members attended the briefings which provided information about the NTC rotation to Ft. Irwin, Calif. An information fair with representatives from over 25 agencies was available for Families to ask specific questions and gather information and brochures in areas covering deployment and Family needs.

At Ireland Army Community Hospital the brigade hosted a 5-day walk-in medical clinic to provide Families an opportunity to receive school physicals, sports physicals and immunizations without having to make an appointment.

Upcoming Events:

September

- 21 Sep Spouses Newcomers Orientation
0900-1600 hrs
Leaders Club
- 28 Sep Community Information Exchange (CIE)
0930-1030 hrs
Leaders Club

October

- 2-10 Oct School Fall Break (most districts)
- 8-11 Oct Columbus Day Training Holiday
- 14 Oct BDE Volunteer Ceremony
0900 hrs
3/1 BDE Classrooms
- 15 Oct St. Barbara's Day Ball
1700 Hrs
Crowne Plaza Hotel
- 22 Oct 201st BSB Battalion Ball
1700 hrs
Paroquet Springs
- 28 Oct 3/1 BSTB Battalion Ball
1700 hrs
Paroquet Springs

November

- 3-5 Nov Army Family Action plan Conference
0830-1630 hrs
Leaders Club
- 4 Nov National Infantry Association Ball
1730 hrs
Crowne Plaza Louisville Airport

- 5 Nov DONSA (Day of No Scheduled Activity)
- 10 Nov Family Deployment Information Fair
1000-1900 hrs
3/1 BDE Classrooms
- 11-14 Nov Veteran's Day Holiday 4-day weekend
- 25-28 Nov Thanksgiving Holiday 4-day weekend

Suicide prevention resources

Suicide prevention and helping Soldiers contemplating suicide is a matter taken very seriously by the Duke Brigade. If you are thinking about suicide, or you suspect someone you know is, please do not hesitate to contact any of the following suicide prevention resources in the Fort Knox area.

Post Suicide Hotline – (502) 624-HELP (4357)

Post duty-chaplain (24 hours) – (502) 624-5151/3132

Post Behavioral health clinic – (502) 624-9960

Hardin County Communicare – (270) 769-1304

National Crisis Help Line – 1-800-784-2433

Post Civilian Employees Assistance Help Line – (502) 624-8361

Ireland Army Community Hospital emergency room – (502) 624-9000/9001

Military Police desk – (502) 624-6847/2111 or 911

Military and Family Life Consulting (MFLC)
Patrick Chimenti (270)206-0856

3/1 IBCT Chaplain (Maj.) Mike Nishimura (502)626-9616

Looking for the Duke Brigade?

Find us @

 <http://www.knox.army.mil/forscom/3ibct/>

 <http://www.facebook.com/3rdBrigade1stInfantryDivison>

 <https://twitter.com/3rdBCT11D>



Photo illustration by Spc. Thomas Mort

Soldiers from Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment secure a ridge during training at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif. The rotation, which was the first Afghanistan-based scenario conducted by a U.S. combat brigade in over a year, was also one of the largest; and mirrored real-world operations by incorporating separate units operating under the 3/1 IBCT's command and control. These included the 3rd Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, Fort Campbell, Ky.; 8th Engineer Battalion, Fort Hood, Texas; 389th Engineer Battalion, Dubuque, Iowa; 319th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, Miami, Ok.; 1st Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group, Huntsville, Ala.; and small support elements from the Air Force and Marines.