

Duty **1** First!



ARE FORGIVEN And The BRO Life Cycle



The Big Red One Creed

Teamwork is the foundation of the Big Red One. I shall never fail my team, for I maintain the standard. My conduct and self-discipline sets the example for others to follow.

Honor is what I stand for—an American Soldier on duty for my country. My loyalty is intense. I display care for my fellow Soldiers and my chain-of-command through courage, respect, integrity and compassion.

I have learned to **E**ndure, to thrive in adversity. The harsh reality of combat gives me the enthusiasm for realistic training. I am physically and mentally strong to meet the demanding situations my unit encounters.

We are one in the Big Red One. Our **B**rotherhood gives us strength to fight on to any objective and accomplish the mission as our veterans have done before us. I live the legacy of my division.

Readiness is my priority. To be ready for any mission, anytime, anywhere. My business is first-class training and living high standards of care and equipment, weaponry and tactical and technical competence.

My **O**rganization is my strength. The BRD is bigger than any one individual. It gives me purpose, self-confidence, competitive spirit, intestinal fortitude and the desire to fight with all my heart.



Duty First!

No Mission too Difficult. No Sacrifice too Great.

October 2008

www.1id.army.mil

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Commanding General **Danger 6**

SABER...

Brig. Gen. Perry Wiggins

Throughout our nation's history and to the present day, the United States military has repeatedly ranked first as the most respected institution in American society. This respect has been earned by generations of Soldiers and upheld by you, the Soldiers of the Big Red One. But when it comes to drinking and driving, we have not been living up to that standard. Recently, we've had a spike to an already alarming number of DUI's by soldiers of the Big Red One. This is unacceptable.

How can a Soldier raise his or her right hand and volunteer, courageously serve in combat overseas, only to come back and after a few drinks strap on a 5,000 lb bullet in the form of an automobile and endanger the very citizenry he or she has sworn to defend? This dangerous behavior – so contradictory to our sworn duty – is inexcusable, irresponsible, and dangerous. You have seen the wrecked vehicles and screen displays identifying units with DUIs at the gates; the purpose of this is to demonstrate that there are dire consequences to such behavior. But The Big Red One also needs to recognize those Soldiers and units doing the right thing, day in and day out, which is why I am taking this opportunity to unveil the Division's SABER program. We will be implementing SABER (Sober Armies Bravely Expedite Readiness) programs across the Division.



SABER is an incentive rewards program designed to reward companies or troops for adhering to ASAP (Army Substance Abuse Program) regulations and ultimately reduce the number of alcohol and drug related incidents across the division. Striving for the SABER and SABER streamers will take a team effort; responsible decisions and safe behavior by every Soldier in the unit – especially when they drink!

Units will be required to meet urinalysis testing requirements with no rejections and not have any alcohol or drug-related MP blotter incidents during a quarter. Each Soldier will also have to complete one hour of prevention training each quarter. There are some additional requirements that each company/troop will have to meet, but those who are successful will receive a red SABER Streamer from me during a formal quarterly awards ceremony.

Twice each year, quarterly winners will compete for the ultimate prize: 'The SABER cavalry sword. The company or troop to achieve this honor will be recognized in a formal ceremony, where I will present the SABER, a gold SABER streamer for the colors, coins for the commander and first sergeant, t-shirts to demonstrate your pride, and a well earned three-day weekend for all Soldiers! The unit will also be featured in the Post newspaper. The unit will then have to compete again, to reclaim or relinquish the SABER to another unit in the next ceremony!

Danger 7 and I intend to reverse this shameful trend, but we need your help! While there will still be dire consequences for those who choose to drink and drive, we want to reward our Big Red One Soldiers who hold themselves – and their unit – to a higher standard. These are the types of Soldiers who live our motto.

No Mission too Difficult.

No Sacrifice too Great.

Duty First!



Command Sergeant Major **Danger 7**

Counterinsurgency!

Division Command Sgt. Maj. James Champagne

The Army has made great strides in how it selects and trains transition teams of combat advisers destined for Iraq and Afghanistan.

The requirement for combat advisers is going to be a lasting need. This is not just the United States military exit strategy both in Iraq and Afghanistan but is likely to remain an enduring requirement for the wars of the 21st century.

The most important contribution we as Soldiers of the 1st Infantry Division can make to the war will not be the fighting we do ourselves but teaching our allies to fight and defend themselves and their people, much like transition teams were designed to do. When you as members of the BRO team deploy, focus on protecting the people you are there to defend. Focus on respect for these people.

History has proven that it is almost impossible for an outside power to defeat an insurgency and that's what we're fighting. What an outside power can do, however is enable local forces to defeat the local insurgency. You have the ability to dramatically increase the effectiveness, responsiveness and also the respect for law and respect for human rights of the national security forces you will work with. You can do this by respecting them, mentoring them, helping them become better Soldiers and police officers, and by setting a good example for them to follow.

It's been said that a squad of Soldiers can not win the war, but that same squad can certainly lose it or in the case of Abu Ghrib, turn public opinion against it.

How many insurgents did that incident create? How many Soldiers were wounded or killed as a result of that small group of Soldiers doing what they did?

NCOs are the role models to Soldiers and as such should set the example when it comes time to deal with counterinsurgency. We won't win this war by killing bad guys but by helping the good guys overcome the enormous difficulties they face on a day to day basis. Those difficulties are huge.

The challenges that spur the growth of terror in

insurgencies are poor government, lack of education, lack of hope, poor economic opportunity and religious radicalism. These pillars of despair are not necessarily military problems but to defeat those elements, we need to be aware and sensitive to them. Thus, it is essential to use force as carefully and with as much discrimination as possible.

Always consider the long-term effects of operations in a counterinsurgency environment. Killing an insurgent today may be satisfying, but if in doing so you convince all the members of his clan to fight you to the death, you've actually taken three steps backwards.

Counterinsurgency is often described as a mix of offensive, defensive and stability operations. We as members of the 1st Infantry Division must adapt and become nation builders, we must provide humanitarian assistance and build trust with the local population. Everything we do, every action we make is viewed by the local population and judged. How you are judged while you're deployed could save someone's life in the future.

We have to understand the nature of the war we are fighting and also understand the drivers of behavior in the population. Unemployment in many areas approaches 70 percent and many of the insurgents we're fighting have to choose between their family starving to death or setting an improvised explosive device for money to buy food, so they set an IED. They, like us, try to take care of their family. That basic loyalty would come first.

It is important to understand the culture and not just have cultural awareness, you need to understand how different people think and what they value. Only then, by knowing the people of Iraq and Afghanistan, can you as leaders in the 1st Infantry Division, set the stage for a safer deployment.

Now...get after it!

Duty First!





ARMY FRG

Helping Military Families

By Anna Staatz
Duty First! Magazine

When it comes to Families, information is key, Col. Ricky Gibbs, 1st Infantry Division Chief of Staff, told a collection of Illinois organizations at a conference Aug 8. and 9 in Lillse, Ill.

About 45 military and community organizations participated in the conference, aimed at finding ways to address the needs of military Families before, during and after deployments.

Gibbs, guest speaker at the conference, told attendees that spouses were often the last to ask for help, which made using all available information channels a priority in reaching them.

"It's an information warfare campaign that you have to wage to make sure these wonderful ladies and men get the word," Gibbs said. "Because they won't call you until they really need help. And they may not even call you then. You have to keep flooding them."

Gibbs outlined his recent command of the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Inf. Div. The brigade was originally slated to stand up and train military transition teams, but had its mission changed to an Iraq deployment. Once they learned the brigade would deploy, Gibbs said the initial mission was to provide security to convoys. However, when he arrived in Kuwait, he was sent straight to Baghdad, where he was told the brigade would assume responsibility of the Rashid District.

"We had the toughest spot in Baghdad," Gibbs said. "I lost five Soldiers in the first week."

The Families of Soldiers in the brigade faced several

challenges, Gibbs said. The unit was stood up from scratch, so information networks and family readiness groups also had to be built from the ground up.

"Most organizations in the Army, the commander changes or a Soldier moves and goes to an organization that pretty much has all those systems in place," Gibbs said. "We built that FRG from scratch."



Col. Ricky Gibbs, 1st Inf. Div. chief of staff speaks at a conference about families and information.

The second challenge was the conflicting information on whether the brigade would deploy. With the initial training mission, many Families chose to focus on things at home and not worry about attending FRG meetings.

"In the beginning, it was 'we're okay, we're not deploying,'" Gibbs said. "Then we go to the NTC and people start to get interested at the end of October because everyone knows if you go to the National Training Center, you're probably going to deploy."

Rear Detachment

Gibbs said one of the keys to successfully taking

care of Families was having an organized rear detachment.

"In my mind, a rear detachment is a uniformed figure which can make decisions," Gibbs said. "The old Army days, you had a lot of Family members trying to do this and Family members can do great things, but they can't yield power and make decisions and bring resources in like a rear detachment can."

The brigade had a central rear detachment office, with a detachment from each battalion addressing the needs of the Families.

Family Readiness Groups

Gibbs said the "crisis" mode in the brigade's FRGs happened 90 days before units deployed, 90 days immediately following deployment and then the 90 days before and after redeployment.

"The Family network is critical to our success, absolutely critical," Gibbs said.

He noted that it was important to keep FRGs focused on the needs they were in place to meet – to help inform and network spouses.

"FRGs educate spouses and provide a network for spouses to get together and share common problems," Gibbs said. "You have a lot of rumors in FRGs - they're dangerous, but you have them. You're always going to have them"

Gibbs said good relationships between the uniformed rear detachment and FRG leaders were essential to stopping harmful rumors. Another important element of support was the brigade and battalion family readiness support assistants. An FRSA is a paid civilian position that acts as an administrative assistant



to FRG groups. The FRSA answers to the unit commander and acts as a liaison between the commander and FRG.

"This is a paid civilian – it used to be a volunteer," Gibbs said. "But this person is paid to work for me and the rear detachment commander to help take care of Families."

The last FRG tools Gibbs noted were the virtual FRG Web sites.

"Each of my battalions had a FRG Web site spouses could check for information," Gibbs said. "It's even more key for the Fort Riley's military transition team mission. We bring Soldiers – Army, Navy, Air Force and National Guard and Reserve members to Fort Riley for training as a transition team. The connection for their spouses is through this virtual FRG site."

Community Relationships

Relationships with community groups and agencies were the third element supporting Families, Gibbs said.

He outlined groups and businesses from the greater Fort Riley community who adopted a unit during the brigade's deployment.

Fort Riley, Gibbs said, has exceptional ties with surrounding communities. He noted the Warrior Internship Network program which was developed at Fort Riley. The program places Soldiers who suffered injuries in combat and are facing a medical review board the opportunity to intern with local businesses, schools or government bodies and gain real-world job experience to help them make informed decisions about a career outside the Army.

Fort Riley also has monthly community partnership conferences, which bring state and local government officials, school representatives and business leaders together to discuss issues affecting the area at large.

1st Infantry Division at War

1st Infantry Division

Oldest continuously serving division in the United States Army. Over 8,000 Soldiers in three brigades and multiple subordinate units deployed.

Primarily located in Fort Riley, Kan.; training responsibility extends to three other states: Kentucky, Oklahoma and Texas.

Converted to a modular headquarters September 2008.

1st Brigade, Fort Riley

Trains transition team. So far more than 7,000 servicemembers trained and deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan and more than 1,200 redeployed.

Transition Teams live and work with Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and the Afghan National Army (ANA).

Scheduled to modularize FY09.

3rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), Iraq

Provide theater logistics command and control for the theater commander supporting the Army Forces (ARFOR) and Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) mission.

Deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom May 2008.

75th Fires Brigade, Fort Sill

Integrates attached ground and air maneuver forces and on order functions as a maneuver headquarters in support of full spectrum operations.

Separate battalions currently deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

1st Combat Aviation Brigade Combat Team, Iraq

Conducts 360-degree battlefield operations with cutting edge technology to support ground troops.

Deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom October 2007.

1st Sustainment Brigade, Iraq

Provides logistic, human resource and financial management for 80,000 Soldiers and 20,000 civilians and contractors throughout Multi-National Division-Baghdad and area support for Multi-National Division-Central.

Deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom September 2007.

4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Iraq

Re-deployed from support of Operation Iraqi Freedom April 2008.

Recently completed combat and civil military operations in conjunction with Iraqi Army and Police in the Rashid District of Baghdad to restore and ensure long term peace and stability in that region.

3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Afghanistan

One of the Army's newest brigades.

Deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom June 2008.

2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, Fort Riley

Completed rotation to the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, Calif., in June 2008.

Scheduled to deploy in Oct-Nov 2008.



Careless Keystrokes

Can Kill

Don't let your e-mails or blogs make someone a target



Operation Security (OPSEC)

1ST BDE Role Players

By **Gary Skidmore**
Duty First! Magazine

Tom Von Seggern doesn't wear a dress, but he has nearly 240 men and women he supervises who do every day.

Von Seggern is the supervisor for role play in support of the Transition Team training mission on Fort Riley.

"We fill two missions," said Von Seggern. "One, as civilians on the battlefield, and the other as security forces. Depending on the mission, we play either Iraq or Afghanistan police and army."

According to Von Seggern, there are nine villages in the training areas of Fort Riley. Depending on the sort of mission and the mission requirements, the civilians on the battlefield may be peaceful or could turn aggressive.

"We strive for realism," said Von Seggern. It's the key to our training. When the Soldiers crash through the door of a home looking for insurgents or walk through a peaceful village, we'll be there to greet them and react accordingly."

Tammy Brown is a one of the team leads and uses her ability to speak Arabic to train not only Transition Team Soldiers, but her team of role players

"It's our job as role players to help train the Army going to Iraq and Afghanistan," said Brown. "We challenge them, we force them to work through their interpreters, we over react when they do something they shouldn't like have a male search a woman so they learn not to do that again, we play passive villagers and can riot when it calls for it. We want to make sure they get it right when they deploy, that's where this training counts."

The six-year veteran role player began role playing at Fort Polk, La., where her mother and father are role players.

"I took the job at first because it looked like fun," said Brown. "But then, I really wanted to learn the language so I could be a better role player and use that to teach the Soldiers what to do and what not to do. You know... little cultural things that could keep them out of trouble when they deploy."

Von Seggern said the mock ISF teams pull double duty as Iraq and Afghanistan security forces, depending on the training scenario.

"They play the foreign security forces and travel with the transition teams from village to village, interacting with the villagers and the different scenarios."

Von Seggern said the missions vary from day to day for the teams.

"There are escalation of force missions that have the villagers react negatively when the transition teams arrive in the village. The scenario may call for a family to have lost a son during a raid, or have had a child killed by mistake," he said. All are real life possibilities when they deploy.

"There are days our role players don't wear a costume at all and play casualties for a mass casualty exercise."

During the mass casualty scenario, role players act as Soldiers who have been injured in a simulated mortar attack on a dining facility. Chairs are overturned and smoke fills the air. To make things more confusing for the teams, the lights are

turned off and music blasts through loud speakers. It's the job of each team to locate the dead and wounded, evacuate them and assess and treat their simulated wounds. During the exercise, teams rush into the smoky blackness and evacuate the wounded. Screams and moans from the role players are often the only way team members first locate survivors.

For some, like Alicia Thomas, being located is easy, she screams, hollers, moans and cries so well spectators from surrounding buildings poke their heads out to see what's taking place.

"We've got to make it real for them," Thomas said. "If we don't make it hard and make them work, then we're cheating them, and they could get hurt wherever they're going if this happens over there."

Brown, like many of the role players training the teams, often receive compliments from returning team members. "It's our job," said Brown. "But it's nice knowing that our little bit of training is doing some good. I do sleep better knowing I'm doing something to help them have a better deployment." 



ARFORGEN

By Gary Skidmore
Duty First! Magazine

Army Force Generation is not a new term in the Army. It has been around for approximately six years and was originally designed to better manage the life cycle of Army units and provide unit manning through a three-year period.

"The idea was we needed to grow the number of brigades to about 72 active, Reserve and National Guard brigades," said Maj. Nathan Bond, 1st Infantry Division public affairs officer.

"The concept is that it will manage the life cycle of these units and make the stability of Families and Soldiers more predictable throughout their career.

"In theory, a Soldier could come to the 1st Infantry Division as a private and stay his entire career here," said Bond.

According to Bond, the brigade is the new building block of the Army. He said divisions are not war-fighting headquarters like in the past, but rather coordinating headquarters, more an operational level headquarters, like corps use to be.

He said corps still plays a vital role but the divisions are taking on more and more of the operational fight.

"It used to be the division, and long before that, it was the corps that was the war fighting headquarters. We've now gone to modernization," said Bond. "So, when the Army mans a unit, they do it at the brigade level. Divisions get a separate manning."

Bond did say there is a glitch to the whole system.

"The one hiccup, the challenge we're facing as an Army and at the 1st Infantry Division, is we went to war at the same time we're trying to do this modernization. This brigade centric Army is necessary in order to fight the type of war we're fighting," said Bond. He makes the analogy that the Army is building an airplane while in flight.

Bond said the officer corps and the senior NCO corps is putting forth a "Herculean" effort to build that airplane, and the turmoil it's causing is tremendous, but the leadership they provide to the Army to get through all the turmoil is phenomenal.

According to Bond, Families at Fort Riley are being taken care of very well despite ARFORGEN not having reached its goal of a three year rotation of units.

"Here at Fort Riley you see more of an understanding that we need to take care of Families," he said. "Families are impacted greatly by the war, by this need to modernize units, and there's an effort within the 1st Infantry Division that is really fantastic in the way we're changing how we look at taking care of Families while they're here."

According to Bond, the way ARFORGEN is supposed to work the first year is a brigade that returns from deployment resets equipment and personnel. The brigade should be receiving Soldiers and making sure they have received their individual schools and individual training.

During year two, training moves to a more collective type, beginning with platoon and working all the way up to brigade level when they deploy to one of the national training centers.

In year three, the unit deploys to a theater of operation.

"That's the idea behind ARFORGEN," said Bond. "What's happening right now because of the constraints on the global war on terrorism, the war in Iraq and Afghanistan and our deployments to other parts of the world is we have a compressed life cycle," said Bond.

"Instead of the three year model, we're trying to get to, we're trying to do all of that in a 12 month period... and it's making life very difficult on the Army, on Soldiers and on their Families."

Bond said in order to maintain an all-volunteer Army and retain the quality Soldiers we have in the Big Red One, the 1st

Infantry Division is investing into programs for Families and Soldiers.

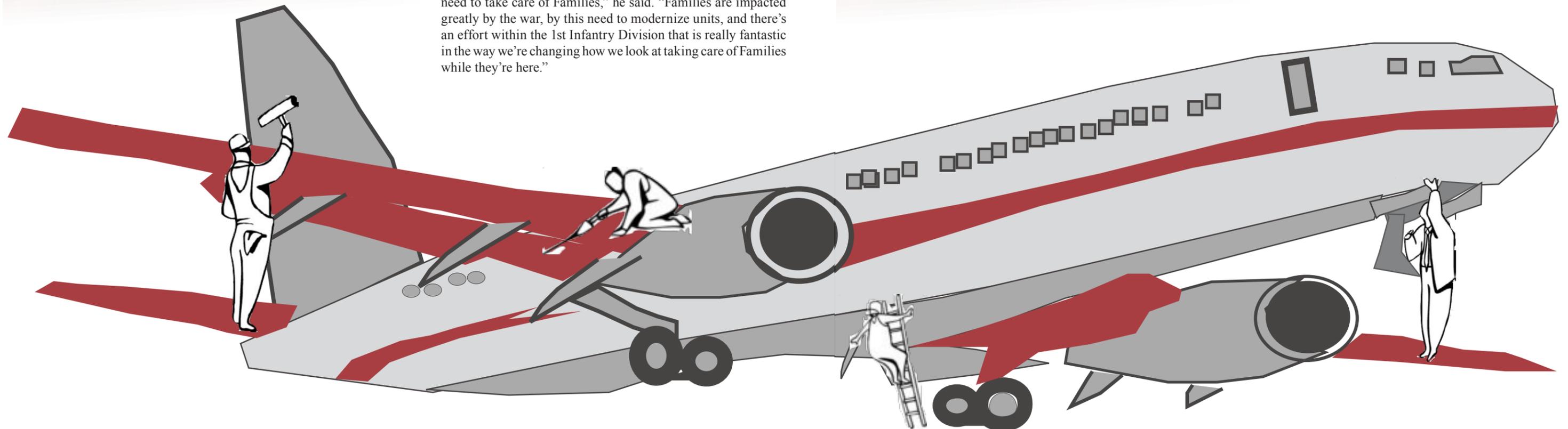
"We have to change the way we provide education to Soldiers; the cooperative extension programs with universities and colleges around the country need to change the way they offer classes," said Bond.

Bond said when Big Red One Soldiers are back during the reset phase in this compressed cycle, which is about six months, classes need to be available to the Soldiers at that time. Fort Riley is beginning to recognize this and is making strides in accomplishing it, he said.

"It means changing the way they do business. Changing the models and getting out of the old mind-set of providing the class every year and that's it.

"That class may need to be offered four or five times a year now," he said.

With the ARFORGEN cycle, the Big Red One will get to the point where there can be increases in time between deployments and that's really what ARFORGEN comes down too. 



History of the Big Red One Vietnam

By Anna Staats
Duty First! Magazine

It was the battle that no one won. The Battle of Ong Thanh – not one of Vietnam’s most well known skirmishes, draws its name from a nearby river. Units fighting with the 271st Viet Cong Regiment, one of the most experienced regiments in Vietnam, dug into the area during the week prior to the battle, waiting mostly for new food supplies.

Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 28th Inf. Regiment, 1st Infantry Division, had been engaged in search and destroy missions in the area, encountering elements of the 271st VC Regt. as part of Operation Shenandoah II.

Oct. 16, 1967, the Black Lions engaged the Viet Cong, suffering few injuries and a solo casualty. The battalion commander, Lt. Col. Terry Allen, Jr., ordered units into a full attack the next day.

The two Black Lion companies which fought in the Battle of Ong Thanh were under strength, consisting of about 150 Soldiers. Unbeknownst to them, the entire 271st VC was dug in – about 1,200 Soldiers, along with an additional unit consisting of about 200 Soldiers.

Sgt. Ray Albin

Ray Albin enlisted in the Army in November 1966 at the age of 19, volunteering for the infantry.

“I don’t know why I did that,” he said. “I guess I was looking for a challenge. I was very athletic and thought I would do well at it. But I really had no concept of combat outside of movies.”

In May 1967, he went to Vietnam, where he was assigned to Charlie Company, 2nd Bn., 28th Inf. Regt. In July, the battalion added Delta Co., to include a mortar platoon, and Albin was assigned to it.

Albin said he saw his “fair share” of combat in the four months he was in Vietnam before the Battle of Ong Thanh. Usually, much of his job was with the mortar platoon, providing indirect fire support to the infantry platoons.

Lt. Clark Welch

Clark Welch enlisted in the Army for three years just days after graduating high school in Durham, N.H.

“I joined the Army to get into whatever was happening in the world outside my little town,” Welch said. “And to be a paratrooper and somehow participate in our president’s strategy to ‘contain communism.’”

He had a varied training experience, from airborne and

reconnaissance to a stint at a nuclear missile site. He worked his way up the enlisted ranks, becoming the top non-commissioned officer for a special forces team deployed to several areas around the world. When he received orders to report to Vietnam in April 1967, he had nine years as an NCO and one year as an officer under his belt. He was to report to a special forces group in Vietnam, but inexplicably was reassigned to 2nd Bn., 28th Inf. Regt., when he arrived in country. He became the reconnaissance platoon leader, which made contact with the Viet Cong often, although he never lost any of his men. Welch was quickly told he would command the yet-to-be-formed fourth rifle company. He had one week to assemble a bare bones staff ahead of the arrival of about 150 Soldiers.

Early in July 1967, Welch met his men on the beach at Vung Tao. From the beach, they flew to the Lai Khe base camp. There, Welch had 30 days to train his rifle company.

After a few perimeter patrols, the company was declared ready and began conducting operations with the battalion. In early October, the battalion left Lai Khe, going west in its entirety except for one company. It set up at a night defensive position and conducted company-sized search and destroy patrols. Each day, Welch said there was more and more enemy contact. After several days, the battalion marched through hot, wet conditions to a new NDP near the small river of Ong Thanh. Through Oct. 16, Welch said that his company made contact every day.

“The feeling was that we were getting close to something big,” Welch said. “We knew that we and everyone else in Shenandoah II were looking for the famed 271st Viet Cong Regiment. We thought we might be getting closer to some of the smaller elements of that regiment.”

Oct. 16, 1967

The battle plan for Oct. 16 was for Delta Co. to lead, followed by Bravo Co., on a search and destroy mission. Albin and the mortar platoon stayed at the NDP, where they would wait for Welch and the platoon commander to call back coordinates.

The rifle companies left the NDP about 8 a.m., and after moving a few kilometers, sighted the enemy first.

Welch said the company quickly gained fire superiority, dealing deep blows to the Viet Cong. They then moved into a fortified area where they found quite a bit of material and weapons. As Bravo Co. moved up in support of Welch and his men, both units were ordered to return to the NDP.

The units on the field that day lost one casualty, a captain, and had 13 wounded.

“On Oct. 16,” Welch said, “We did exactly what a rifle company should do.”

Albin agreed, noting that in terms of battle, everything had gone very well.

“We had contact, but that day, everything worked out,” Albin said. “It was a good day for us.”

That night, Welch said he walked through his Soldiers and spoke with them about the day and plans for the next day.

“I talked with them about what a great job they had done that day and that we would probably lead the battalion into a big fight tomorrow,” Welch said.

Welch was surprised when he was called to the battalion headquarters to receive orders for the next day and learned that Delta Co. would not lead the battalion. Welch was also unhappy that the next day’s plan did not include preparatory fires and that the units would be moving south from the NDP into what looked like the center of enemy contacts made during the past weeks.

When he returned and outlined the orders, Welch said there was apprehension among his men, but no dissention. Everyone settled in for some sleep to the sound of soft, drizzling rain.

“That night we slept as we could,” Welch said. “I kept expecting to hear the sounds and light of heavy guns or bombers hitting the enemy, but we heard nothing that night.”

Oct. 17, 1967

A restless night gave way to an uneasy morning. Because of the contact with the Viet Cong the day before, Albin said everyone was apprehensive.

“Everyone knew it was going to be a very difficult day,” Albin said. “I remember one of the commanders saying ‘bring all the ammo you can carry.’ That was the only time I ever heard someone reiterate that with such force right before a mission.”

At 8 a.m., Alpha Co. left the NDP, with Delta Co. following a few minutes later. The battalion’s command group, including Allen, was also on the ground with the two companies.

Shortly before 10 a.m., Alpha Co. reported seeing six Viet Cong running down the trail to the West. Welch said he ordered his Soldiers to get into defensive positions around the battalion command group.

“I knew if there was six, then there must be 60,” Welch said.

At 10 a.m., Viet Cong forces opened up with devastating fire on the two Black Lion companies. The first wave of fire was directed primarily at Alpha Co., Welch said. What he could

Continued on page 15



1st Inf. Museum photo
Lt. Clark Welch and Pfc. Ben Dunn in Vietnam.

see of the lead company "did not look good."

"There were a lot of bodies on the ground and not much fire from the Americans," he said.

Back at the NDP, Albin could hear the battle, both in the distance and over the radios, which were right next to him.

"It started out as a pop, pop, pop," Albin said. "Then ratchet that up times 10, times 20, times 30. It wasn't very long before it reached a crescendo."

Welch was ordered by Allen to go and find out what happened to Alpha Co. Running forward with one of his lieutenants, Welch quickly saw there was no more Alpha Co.

"I am able to get a few survivors and some weapons from A Co., but the enemy fire is very heavy and there didn't seem to be anyone alive still in the area," he said.

Welch returned to Allen to report on Alpha Co., then told his men to dig in and fight, since maneuvering was out of the question with the large number of Alpha Co. casualties and the need to protect the battalion command group.

Welch was also frustrated because supporting artillery units had been told only to fire for the lead company and the battalion S3 ordered Albin's mortar platoon to not fire for fear of hitting their own Soldiers.

"There were numerous examples of unbelievable courage and self-sacrifice shown by my men," Welch said. "They gave each other their last bandage, their last water, their last ammo. Machine gunners, who were special targets, were quickly shot. But another man would crawl over to fire that machine gun until he, too, was shot."

Welch crawled from platoon to platoon along the perimeter and then back to Allen to give reports. He was shot several times, and grew weaker and weaker.

"At one time, I knew I was going to pass out, so I told Lt. Stroup, the third platoon leader, to hold D Co. together and keep them safe," Welch said.

The last thing he saw before he passed out was Allen get shot and killed. The entire battalion command group died that day, along with most of Delta Company's medics and machine gunners.

The Viet Cong withdrew from the area about noon, with little remaining of the American forces.

After the Battle

Albin said Charlie Co., 2nd Bn., 28th Inf. Regt., was called in and started asking for volunteers to go out to the battle location and bring back the wounded and dead.



Submitted photo

Delta Company preparing to go out on a mission.

"It was the worst thing I've ever seen in my life," Albin said. "Just complete and total devastation. And the loss of vitality. I had just seen all those guys leave a couple hours ago, then I got out there, and there's just nothing."

Albin and whomever was able, spent the rest of the day evacuating bodies. The next day, everyone who was left was flown out of the area and back to Lai Khe.

Albin said after Oct. 17, he never expected to get out of Vietnam alive. He took a mid-tour leave and went to Australia, where he "ate steaks every day." He spent the rest of his tour with the Black Lions' Delta Co.

"Nothing, thank God, was ever like that day," Albin said.

Welch said he does not remember getting out of the battle. He woke up once in Lai Khe, then he went on to a field hospital near Saigon and then to a general hospital in Yokohama, Japan.

"There I became fully conscious, but was badly hurt," Welch said. "I could not get any information about what had happened to my men – who died, who survived and what hospital they were in. That complete lack of information or contact with other Delta Co. survivors about killed me."

Welch stayed in the Army and retired as a lieutenant colonel. After he recovered from the injuries he sustained during the Battle of Ong Thanh, he flew back to Vietnam and reported for duty with the 5th Special Forces Group. He worked with the group on a special project until he was assigned to the Ranger Camp in Florida.

"I always tried to fix things so an Oct. 17, 1967, would never happen again," Welch said. "Gave me headaches. ... I still have headaches."

After Vietnam

Albin said since Vietnam, he's been very thankful for life. He went back to college when he got out of the Army and obtained a master's degree in history, which he taught in junior high and in junior college for 31 years. The Battle of Ong Thanh was detailed in the book, "They Marched Into Sunlight," by David Maraniss.

"Before the book, whenever October rolled around, I would think back to that day," Albin said. "But I had successfully dealt with it and put it behind me. After the book was published, I found out a lot more about that day and I started thinking about the battle almost every day. I think about how fortunate I was. I have regret for all those guys who never got to live a full life like I did."

Albin, like Welch, had little to do with some of the battle decisions made above them the day of Oct. 17. But they both said they regretted the decisions that had cost so many lives.

"I loved those men," Welch said. "I would give anything to have them back with us. Some say 'they gave up their lives for their country.' Not true. I saw them; they did not 'give up their lives,' they had their lives torn from them as they fought to protect themselves and their friends."

Welch had the opportunity in 2002 to return to Vietnam, where he met with Col. Vo Minh Triet, who commanded the 271st Viet Cong Regt. that the Black Lions battled that day. Triet told Welch how he had hid and dug in about 1,200 members of the regiment between Oct. 12 and 17th, about one kilometer away from the Black Lions' NDP. Welch and Triet retraced their steps on the battlefield together.

"That day," Triet told Welch, "no one won." ▾

2ND HBCT

Brotherhood



By Anna Staatz
Duty First! Magazine

Often the bond that forms between Soldiers is called a brotherhood. Sometimes, though, that bond is literal instead of figurative.

Staff Sgt. Michael Tucker, and his brother, Sgt. 1st Class James Tucker, III, are the fourth generation of their family to serve in the Army. They last saw each other in March 2003, the day before the initial push toward Baghdad while serving with the 4th Infantry Division out of Fort Carson, Colo. They saw each other one other time a few days later and have spent the last several years trading deployments.

"I haven't seen him since," said Michael, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Bn., 63rd Armor Regt., 2nd Brigade Heavy Combat Team. "We've been high-fiving on deployments ever since."

Michael said it was somewhat of a Family expectation that he would join the Army. His father was medically retired from the Army after serving 15 years and his step-father retired from the Army after 22 years. One of Tucker's great-grandfathers immigrated to the United States from Germany as a child and fought and died with the Army at the Battle of the Bulge.

The brothers were both assigned to the same brigade in the 4th Inf. Div., James to a tanker battalion and Michael to an infantry unit. They deployed together for what Michael called a "nerve racking" year for his mother.

"We were her only two sons, so they had us on a list and in the event one of us was hurt, the other would be pulled out," Michael said. "It was definitely a little different being there at the same time with him."



In early 2007, Michael was on a deployment to Africa while his brother was in the Middle East. "I got a phone call from someone back at camp," he said. "They just said 'call your mom.'"

James' vehicle had been hit by a rocket propelled grenade, injuring one of his legs.

"His tank had been hit, and he was hurt pretty bad," Michael said. "But eventually, he healed and went back to combat with his unit."

Their time with the Army has also set the tone for their relationship as adults.

Michael said his older brother picked on him growing up, but that changed as they got older.

"We talk on the phone a lot," Michael said. "Now that we're in the military, we talk a lot about it, stuff we're doing, stuff going on in the Army."

As Michael prepares for a 12-month deployment with 2nd Brigade, 1st Inf. Div., his brother has recently PCS'd to Fort Knox, Ky.

For the Tucker brothers, the Army was a Family expectation. For Capt. John Fitzgerald and four of his brothers, the military is fast becoming a Family standard.

Fitzgerald, commander, Troop A, 5th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regt., was the first of his brothers to join the Army. Three of his seven brothers are currently serving in the Army, and a fourth, Daniel, is a junior ROTC student.

Commissioned as an officer in 2001, Fitzgerald got out of the Army in 2005, then decided to rejoin.

"I really missed the camaraderie," he said. "And I couldn't find the job satisfaction I'd had in the Army."

Capt. Brendan Fitzgerald, a year younger than John, went to West Point. Their younger brother, Tim, a 1st lieutenant, followed John's footsteps at Niagara University, as is Daniel. Kevin chose to enlist after tiring of working in the civilian sector.

"My dad has been very supportive of our choices to join the Army," John said. "When I first joined, my mom thought it was great. That was before OIF (Operation Iraqi Freedom) had kicked off and she supports us, but she never thought all of us would join the Army. She definitely worries about us."

In all different branches, John said he and his brothers stay in touch by phone and email, since deployments make getting together difficult.

"We share different experiences and pass along lessons learned," John said.

After all, that's what brothers are for. ▾



1ST SB

Improvement In Communications

By Spc. Andrea Merritt
1st Sus. Bde. PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – As the Iraqi Army continues to grow, their forces continue to make significant improvements in different areas. The most recent advancement for Iraqi forces on Camp Taji was in the area of communications.

In March, U.S. Forces began an initiative to field 12,500 military radio systems to the Iraqi Army. Since the first fielding April 23, the Iraqi Army has received approximately 4,500 systems.

The radios, which are Single-Channel Ground and Air Radio Systems, provide secure, encrypted communications and allow the Iraqi Soldiers to communicate at a range they had never been able to before.

“At the time, the Iraqis wanted to get away from commercial systems to military-grade communications. We have seen much improved communications at the tactical level, and we will no doubt see improvement in their tactical command and control capability” said U.S. Marine Capt. Steven Eckdahl, a radio communications officer with Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq.

In mid-July, Iraqi Soldiers completed their first-ever Warfighter exercise. The culminating event was a battalion cordon and search into the village, and they incorporated the SINCGARS into the exercise.

“For the first time ever really, they had long-range tactical, secure communications to reach back to battalion and brigade headquarters. They could do battle tracking, and they knew where their units were on the field,” said 1st Lt. Nathan Spreitler, an advisor with the Coalition Army Training Team.

“They could communicate internally and externally in a range they had never been able to do before. Now, they have that tactical command and control piece to keep that battlefield situational awareness of where their units are and what their status is,” added Spreitler.

Although the new systems have proven beneficial to the Iraqi Army, achieving this significant milestone did not come



without challenges.

“There were lots of challenges. We’ve had challenges in getting the training accomplished, but the Iraqi Signal School and their combat colonel have really stepped up,” Spreitler said.

In the last four months, the Iraqi Signal School has trained more than 300 Iraqi Soldiers to be radio operators. Also, in an effort to aid in the training, Multi-National Division – Baghdad sent a mobile training team with Iraqi officers who have gone through the advanced training at the signal school to go out and train the divisions.

“Getting all that coordinated was challenging, but it happened and now we have an excess of 1,000 operators that have been trained in the Iraqi Army,” Spreitler stated.

In May, Coalition Forces handed control of the radio installation and repair to Col. Mohammed Nassir. The weight of supplying Iraqi Security Forces with secure communications rests on his shoulders.

“I am very thankful and grateful for all efforts from the American teams and the American officers for their help for us to rebuild our Army and our facilities,” Mohammed said.

“The radio sets now are different than the radio sets we used in the past,” Mohammed said. “This radio is very useful in armored tanks and armored vehicle. We can use base stations and man pack stations with our Soldiers, so it’s very important.”

With the fielding of the SINCGARS, the Iraqi Army was able to improve their communications capabilities and come one step closer to becoming a strong and stable fighting force for their country.

“I’ve been here at Taji for seven or eight months now, involved in the training of the signal school Soldiers and the basic trainees. For them to have the equipment was one thing, but after we went through that Warfighter exercise that we were the observer controllers

for and to see them be able to use those systems was pretty rewarding,” Spreitler said.

“They have the capability to be a world-class army and this is just one of those steps to give them those tools to allow those battlefield commanders to take control of their own sectors,” Spreitler concluded. 

3RD IBCT Soldiers Welcome New Police Chief

By Staff Sgt. Adora Medina
3rd BCT, 1st ID, PAO

Nuristan Province Afghanistan - Buried deep within the center of mountainous terrain, lies a Forward Operating Base, new home to the Centaurs of 1st Battalion, 6th Field Artillery, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division. Not far from the FOB, up a winding road, is the Nurgaram District Center, where the Afghan National Police train and live.

On July 26, Centaurs and Soldiers with the 527th Military Police Company, H o h e n f e l s , Germany, took a trip to the center, to meet the new police chief of Nuristan, Ana Tullah.

“We had a very strong relationship with the previous chief, Aktar Mohammad, who was very proactive and very helpful in terms of the counterinsurgency and the Improvised Explosive Device training and identification for the local populace,” said Raymond Anderson, law enforcement professional, with Task Force Paladin.

“Chief Aktar Mohammed was great. He always supported anything that we needed and vice-versa. If he needed something, we tried to help him out 100 percent to make the training, as well as the relationship with the Soldiers and the ANP go very well,” Sgt. Nasico Lightner, 527th MP, said.

“We want to keep the same type of relationship that we had with Aktar going, so that there’ll be no issues and no concerns,” Lightner said. “Just like when a new unit comes, we want to get them settled in as well, we want to do the same with the new police chief.”

For the past five and half months, the MPs have conducted emersion training with the ANP, teaching them law enforcement techniques to include, patrols, searches, building seizures and traffic accidents.

“The Soldiers have enjoyed going down there, training with them, and the ANP soldiers pick up a lot of new things that they didn’t learn at their ANP academy,” Lightner said.

Though the MPs are all too familiar with the center, this isn’t the case for the Centaurs, who are just starting to familiarize themselves with the area. During the visit they were able

to answer any questions and formally introduce themselves to the new police chief, as well as the ANP. The Soldiers were also given a short tour of the facility where they learned of ongoing construction projects to improve the camp grounds, and were able to personally meet both old and new recruits.

“Since it’s a new chief, he’s going to bring in his new administration, his new officers, so

it’s important for us to know who they are so we can check their background and make sure that they are good, upstanding officers and that they understand, basically, the relationship that we have with them in terms of them getting their resources that they need and the direction that we’re looking to go in terms of their training,” Anderson said.

With the focus on turning the Afghan people toward the government, fighting the Taliban and winning the war on terror, working hand-in-hand with the Nuristan police chief, and the ANP is beneficial to the success of the region. 



3RD ESC

Eagle Express

“I like this company, and I trust my leadership,” continued Hyacinth, who was assigned to his present duty station directly out of advanced individual training, and is currently serving his second combat tour with the company.

Although the world of transportation may not be as glamorous as kicking in doors or lobbing artillery shells downrange, the Soldiers of the 68th nevertheless approach their mission with a sense of duty, earnestness, tenacity and calm determination.

Just before rolling out the gate on a recent mission to move needed supplies from one area of the battlefield to another, mission commander Staff Sgt. George Barnhart walked from truck to truck checking on the Soldiers in his charge, and disseminating last-minute information. “There has been recent enemy activity along our route, but medical evacuation status is good, so we’re ok to roll,” he said in a matter-of-fact manner.

If the serious prospect of driving into a firefight was a source of fear for the Soldiers assigned to the mission, none of them showed any outward signs of it; the various drivers and truck commanders reacted to Barnhart’s words of caution with the same quiet readiness with which they were issued.

By Sgt. Aaron LeBlanc
165th CSSB, 1st Sust. Bde.

CAMP TAJI – The 68th Transportation Company, out of Manheim, Germany, known as the “Eagle Express,” is playing a critical role as part of the heavy-lift capacity of the largest battalion in Iraq.

The company, commanded by Capt. Donna Johnson of Columbus, Ohio, is currently operating out of Camp Taji, Iraq and is attached to the 165th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade.

Traveling exclusively at night, the men and women of the 68th are responsible for moving everything from beans and bullets to Humvees and radio towers down some of the most dangerous roads in the world.

“I love my truck,” said Spc. Sam Hyacinth of his M-915, the Army’s version of a semi-truck. “She may not look very pretty on the outside, but it’s what’s on the inside that counts. This truck will get up and go. Plus the AC will freeze you out; that’s a must in the desert, even at night.”



4TH IBCT

Schools

By Anna Staats
Duty First! Magazine

In the early days of reset in the Army’s deployment cycle, things tend to get a little hectic. Most importantly, there is the challenge of obtaining the needed Soldiers and making sure they receive the training they need to do their jobs to the best of their ability.

After the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team returned from a 15 month deployment earlier this year, the past months have been spent resetting equipment and acquiring Soldiers to fill the holes left by those who PCS’d to another post. For the Soldiers who were new and the Soldiers who remained, there was lots of training to be done.

The brigade sent Soldiers to numerous Army training schools, with the highest enrollment going to the Pathfinder s, sniper, and Ranger schools and the Long Range Surveillance Course.

Soldiers also trained in the RAVEN and UAV operators’ course, Joint Firepower Observer Course and the EMT-B and Combat Lifesavers courses. For the most part, Soldiers were recommended for training bases on their duty position and Order of Merit lists within units.

Capt. Thomas Brenton, brigade S3, said some of the more “elite” schools Soldiers try to get to are the Ranger, Pathfinder, Sniper and Sapper courses. Members of the brigade’s

engineer company who do not already have Sapper tabs are slotted to go to the course soon.

“The Dragon brigade has some of the most outstanding combat experienced Soldiers in the world, who directly contributed to the surge success in Iraq,” Brenton said. “We will continue to build upon our previous success and continue to provide the best training possible to America’s finest Soldiers.”

Command Sgt. Major Michael McCoy said beyond the schools viewed as “elite,” some of the most important schools were also some of the most basic.

“We’ve sent a lot of guys to the Warrior Leader Course, Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course and the Advanced Noncommissioned Officers Course,” McCoy said. “The schools

that they need to retain their rank and keep moving up.”

McCoy said schools are an important part of a Soldier’s individual training.

“They help keep everyone on the same sheet of music and in tune with the Army standards,” McCoy said. “We teach and counsel them on skills, but the schools are where they really get evaluated on their abilities.”

The brigade retained about 60 percent of its Soldiers following its deployment, McCoy said, and is receiving about 50 Soldiers a month. Individual and team ranges have started to kick into gear, signaling the start of preparation for a potential deployment.



Community Covenant

By Anna Staatz
Duty First! Magazine

Really, it was names scrawled with markers. However, what those scrawlings signified will influence military Families long into the future.

Fort Riley leaders joined with members of the Kansas congressional delegation, the state's governor, Kathleen Sebelius, and representatives from the surrounding communities to sign the Army Community Covenant on Aug. 20.

An initiative designed to formalize partnerships between the military, communities and states, the Army Community Covenant both recognizes the strengths of Army Families and pushes support in areas such as employment, education and communication.

"Why are we here today? To say thank you," said Pete Geren, secretary of the Army, who spoke at the event. "Thank you to those Soldiers. Thank you to those Families. Thank you to those children. We are also here to say thank you for the extraordinary support we get from the entire Kansas community."

Specifically, the Army Community Covenant outlines eight areas essential to supporting military Families: communication, education, employment, Family support, financial, state government support, needs of surviving spouses and the needs of wounded warriors.

Geren noted that less than 2.4 million United States citizens are members of the military, either in an active status or in the Reserves and National Guard.

"Less than 1 percent of our nation is carrying this very heavy burden, not just for all of us as Americans, but a heavy burden for much of the free world," Geren said.

Brig. Gen. Perry Wiggins, commanding general of the 1st Infantry Division and Fort Riley, said the post has always had a strong relationship with local communities and state and national lawmakers.

"The outstanding reputation enjoyed by the Big Red One is due in large part to the herculean efforts of our partners," Wiggins said.

"We are indeed fortunate here at Fort Riley to have a community that shares a genuine concern for our Soldiers and their Families." Sebelius noted in her remarks that Kansas has historically been ahead of the curve in finding ways to make the state "military friendly." She pointed to the state's military strategic planning commission, and efforts in key quality of life areas which began

before the Base Realignment and Closure Commission had even announced the Big Red One would return to Fort Riley. Kansas also has a military bill of rights, granting tax and tuition credits, along with other benefits to members of the military. The state was the first in the nation to sign the Military Children Education Compact, which is designed to ease and streamline the transition to a new school following a change in duty station.

Such moves, said Congressman Jerry Moran, were because Kansans were genuinely interested in caring about military members and their Families.

"The thing that came home time and time again [in the BRAC process] was that Kansans cared about Soldiers and their Families," Moran said. "By signing this covenant today, all we're doing is reaffirming the way we've lived our lives in Kansas."

Sen. Pat Roberts said that the community spirit in Kansas of helping one another was often taken for granted. However, for the military, he said, the community their Families were in meant a lot.

"Community is what lets our military sleep well at night," Roberts said. "It allows them to do their jobs without worrying if their Families are being taken care of. And they are being taken care of at Fort Riley. For those who serve our country in uniform, the men and women of the surrounding communities represented here could not be more supportive."

The ceremony included a reception for distinguished guests and local community leaders and a musical presentation by the 1st Inf. Div. Band and Spring Valley Elementary School.



Duty First!/Skidmore

An Elementary school student signs the covenant.



By Gary Skidmore
Duty First! Magazine

Paul Satlowski was wounded in Vietnam on April 26, 1966. He was shot in the shoulder by a sniper.

"I was an M60 machine gun operator and was heading to the tree line when I was wounded.

Satlowski, from Brooklyn, Mich., is approximately 5 feet 11 inches tall. He was attending the Society of the 1st Infantry Division reunion several years ago and telling a fellow 2nd Battalion, 18th Infantry veteran, Bob Ready, about his experience when Ready stopped him cold and finished the story for him.

"I was the one who carried him out," said Ready, a 5 foot 6 inch veteran.

"We were going on one of our missions around the Fishhook when we ran into a little trouble, and Paul got shot," said Ready.

"I was literally hiding in the open, but the sniper couldn't get his rifle turned my way far enough to get a shot off.

"We had to evac Paul out, so I picked him up and threw him over my shoulder and carried him and his machine gun 100 or so yards to a more secure area where I had the doc work on him," he said. Ready walks with a slight bend these days and laughingly blames Satlowski. "We both weighed about 135 then," said Ready. "We both weigh 'slightly' more these days."

"I didn't even know his name until the reunion," said Satlowski. "Now, we keep in contact all the time."

According to Jen Sanford, Society of the 1st Infantry Division administrator, "The reunions give our members a chance to see each other each year and to re-live some of the most significant times in their lives with the people they shared those times with.

Sanford said 981 veterans and spouses, friends and family members attended this year's reunion in Colorado Springs, Colo. Aug. 20-23.

At this year's reunion, 13 members of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry found each other after nearly 40 years.

"We're all from the same company and all served at the same time in Vietnam," said Lou Francis, who was a member of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry. "It's a great time for us."

For Francis, Satlowski and Ready, coming to the annual BRO reunion is like coming home to family.

"It's like finding a missing brother after 40 years," said Charles Shay, a WWII veteran. Shay, who landed on Normandy Beach, said although there weren't a lot of WWII veterans around, he was having a great time talking to the ones who made it to the reunion.

CSM (Ret.) Bill Ryan was another WWII vet happy to be at the reunion.

There aren't a lot of us around anymore," said Ryan. "But those who are, are like walking history books. We are trying to share as many of our stories as we can with current Soldiers of the Big Red One here at the reunion.

The 1st Infantry Division sent about 200 active duty Soldiers to the reunion said Brig. Gen. Perry Wiggins, commanding general, 1st Infantry Division and Fort Riley.

"We brought our Soldiers here because they are our messengers back to the division of about 17,000 strong," he said.

"What we want them to do is go back and relay the stories you told them to one of their buddies, and they tell the story with the same passion, the same intensity you did to them, and that story will be relayed over and over and over again.

"What the sergeant major and I plan to do is motivate our Soldiers to become something bigger than themselves because when you do that, you create an organization that is better than it could have been on its own."

For those wishing to join the Society of the 1st Division, they can go to their website www.1stID.org, or call 215-661-1969, 1-888-324-4733.



Duty First!/Skidmore

Paul Satlowski (left) and Bob Ready attend the 2008 BRO Reunion.

1ST CAB

Devils Deliver Water To Hell

By Maj. Enrique T. Vasquez
CAB, 1st Inf. Div. PAO

Tikrit, Iraq – A Coalition Forces unit known as Fires “Hell” Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, conducting combat operations on June 20 in an area near Abu Sayta, Iraq began to take on casualties as Soldiers started to succumb to the desert heat. The ground commander radioed his situation and within minutes Coalition Forces helicopters responded to pick-up the injured.

However, the ground units required more than just medical evacuations; the relief troops could not resupply water to those Soldiers in forward positions without exposing themselves to hostile fire from insurgents. As the situation became more critical two AH-64D Apache Longbow attack weapons teams in the area, overheard the radio chatter and decided to take action. Pilots from Company A, “Devils,” 1st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Aviation Regiment, responded by delivering water to the stranded troops.

“We were flying in support of operations when we determined several groups of troops on the ground were becoming heat casualties. It was then, when we decided to return to Forward Operating Base Warhorse and bring these Soldiers some water,” said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jason Mawhirter, pilot with Co. A, 1-1 ARB.

Apache gunships don’t normally deliver cargo due to the limited space onboard the aircraft, however in an unprecedented act, the AH64 pilots flying in support of Coalition Forces did just that. They delivered a load of water.

“To be able to deliver water to coalition forces with this aircraft is quite an achievement in itself.



CAB/Vasquez

Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Boyle, demonstrates the cargo capacity of the AH-64D Apache helicopter gunship.



CAB/Vasquez

Right, Spc. Jedidah Cooke (left), and Spc. David Scantlin demonstrates the cargo capacity of the AH-64D Apache helicopter gunship.

Left, Spc. Jedidah Cooke (left), and Spc. David Scantlin demonstrates the cargo capacity of the AH-64D Apache helicopter gunship.

These aircraft normally have no more than 10 cubic feet of storage space, “ said Sgt.1st Class Christopher Boyle, platoon sergeant for Co. A.

The use of the aft compartments and compartments beside the cockpit to move water is remarkable, recounted Boyle.

The area of Abu Sayta where the troops were located is heavily populated with dense groves of palm trees, making it difficult for helicopters to easily land. Knowing this, one of the Apache pilots planned ahead.

“As we filled up the survival bays (aft compartments) one of the pilots, Chief Porter decided to put some water bottles inside his cockpit. Upon our return to the field site, we landed the aircraft and dropped off several cases of water to the troops,” said 1st Lt. Philip Heiss, pilot for Co. A.

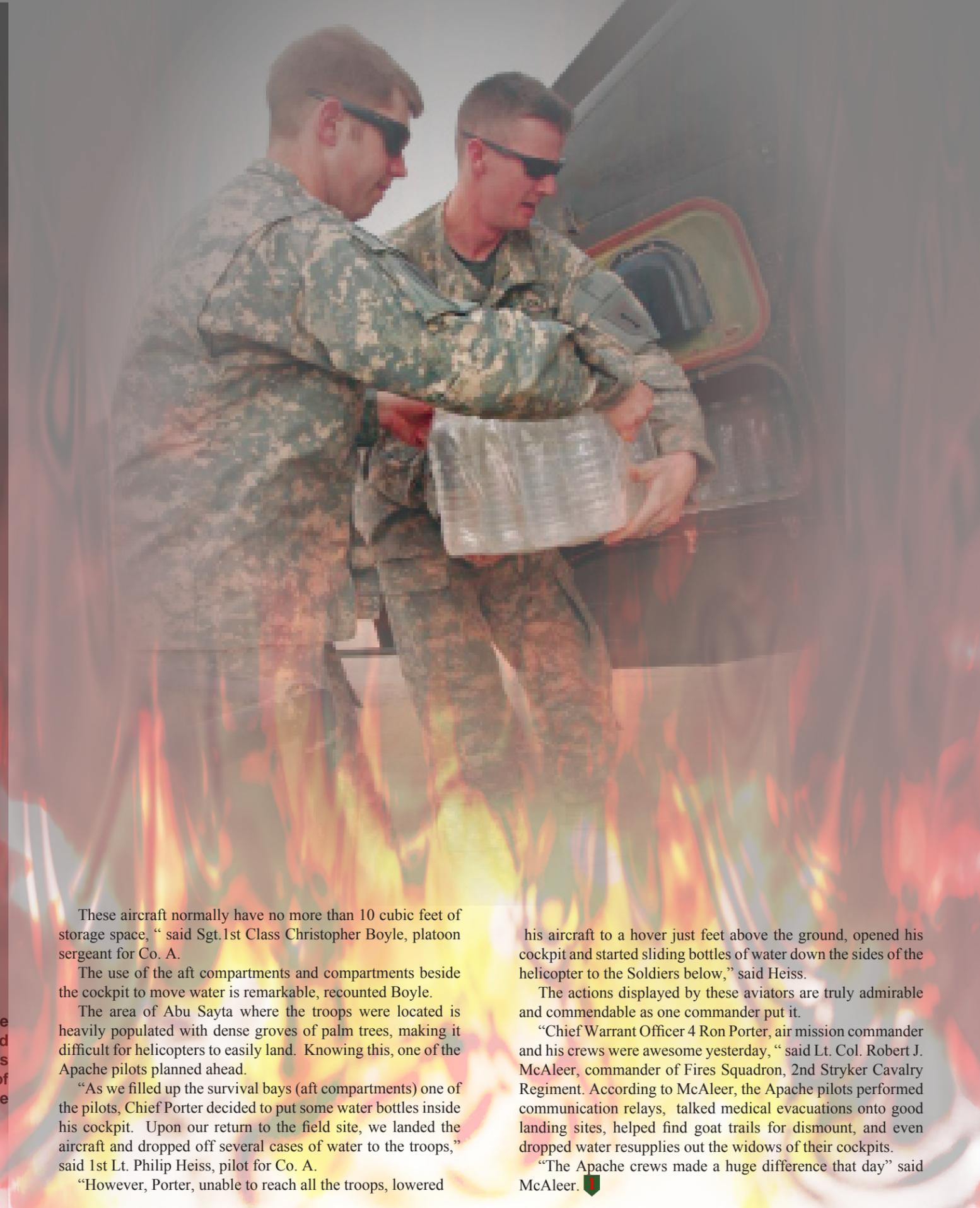
“However, Porter, unable to reach all the troops, lowered

his aircraft to a hover just feet above the ground, opened his cockpit and started sliding bottles of water down the sides of the helicopter to the Soldiers below,” said Heiss.

The actions displayed by these aviators are truly admirable and commendable as one commander put it.

“Chief Warrant Officer 4 Ron Porter, air mission commander and his crews were awesome yesterday,” said Lt. Col. Robert J. McAleer, commander of Fires Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment. According to McAleer, the Apache pilots performed communication relays, talked medical evacuations onto good landing sites, helped find goat trails for dismount, and even dropped water resupplies out the widows of their cockpits.

“The Apache crews made a huge difference that day” said McAleer. 



Hiring Heroes

By Gary Skidmore
Duty First! Magazine

Staff Sgt. Christian Curtright is in limbo. Due to a medical condition, he was forced to leave his deployment rotation early. Now home, he is pending the outcome of a medical evaluation to determine if he will stay in the Army or have to get out due to his injuries.

"I'm going through the medical process right now," said Curtright. "I have a family, so I need to have a plan for after

from the Fort Riley Civilian Personnel Advisory Center and coordinator of the fair.

According to McDiffett, she and a small army of staff and volunteers divided the fair into two days.

Day one was designed to help Soldiers and their Families prepare resumes.

"We had 14 computer stations for one-on-one resume writing assistance" said McDiffitt. "The stations were manned by people from the CPAC, Kansas Department of Commerce, Army Community Services, and the Equal Employment Opportunity

"We offered workshops for everything from interviewing techniques to dressing for success and special programs and employment opportunities," said McDiffitt.

McDiffitt said many of the Soldiers and their spouses coming through the doors to the fair were not sure what the future held for them. "Some of them don't know what's going to happen in their future, some are pending their medical board evaluations and some won't be getting out for six weeks or more, but they're here trying to get an idea of what's available to them," said McDiffitt.

Brig. Gen. Perry Wiggins, commanding general, 1st Infantry Division and Fort Riley told the employers and vendors that the fair was the most important fair that had ever been hosted on Fort Riley.

"The wounded warriors you meet today are the strength of our Army," said Wiggins. "You, the business and government leaders are the strength of our nation."

"These wounded Soldiers that you'll see are representative of what we believe to be the next greatest generation" he said.

"The same traits and leadership skills that you're seeking to maintain as market leaders are the same values invested, instilled and taught with each of these Soldiers."

"They are disciplined, they are builders of teams, they have managed large organizations, they're innovative, they demonstrate confidence, they are prudent risk takers, effective communicators and they have a life long learning mind set, and they want to work," said Wiggins. "Most of all, they are essential members of the team. They are members of the Army Strong team. These same Warriors can apply the same skill

sets and can make dynamic contributions to your organization tomorrow".

Approximately 80 vendors who attended the fair offered opportunities from working for the PartyLite Gifts, Inc as a consultant to being a Saline County Corrections officer to being an over the road trucker.

Debbie Ortega representing the Northrop Grumman Corp was a first time vendor on Fort Riley but was excited about the potential employees who passed by her booth.

"There are so many benefits to hiring a Soldier," said Ortega. "The work ethics that they bring to an organization, their discipline and the fact that these young men and women know our products, who better to bring on-board and bring their great talents with them."

Victor Mathews came from Colorado Springs, Colo., to represent his culinary arts school.

"Soldiers fit in well in our industry," said Mathews. "Many of them don't know that yet. Soldiers perform well under pressure, the job requires focus and an extreme level of professionalism, and

it requires someone who can organize and command his unit well," said Mathews. "That's exactly what these guys have to do for years."

"Our servicemembers don't back away from anything," said Roland Unipeg, a civilian recruiter for the Department of Defense.

"The love to be challenged. They love to excel, and they love to complete their tasks, whatever they may be, and they never quit," he said. "Veterans are an asset that all of us are beginning to understand. When you get a veteran, you're getting a quality employee."



Stewart Drum at KBR speaks to a group of Soldiers at the Job Fair.

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the military should I have to get out."

That's why he and more than 450 Soldiers and their Family members assigned to the Warrior Transition Battalion, attended the Wounded Warriors Job Fair July 28 and 29.

"The fair was targeted at wounded Soldiers and their Families," said Callie McDiffett, Human Resource specialist

office, just to mention a few. You can see there were plenty of helpers from a wide cross-section of personnel experts," she said. "It was a combined effort."

Additionally, McDiffitt said when Soldiers and Families weren't creating their resumes; they had the opportunity to attend one of several workshops available.



Spc. Nicholas Curnutt, A Co., WTB receives help from Paul Ghent, a resume advisor from the Civilian Personnel Center on Fort Riley.

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