

Duty First!



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 set 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 **ENDURE**, 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 **BROTHERHOOD** 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 **ORGANIZATION** 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 **1** First!

No Mission too Difficult. No Sacrifice too Great.

March 2009

www.1id.army.mil

1st Infantry Division
Commander
Brig. Gen. Perry Wiggins

1st Infantry Division CSM
Command Sgt. Maj. Jim
Champagne

1st Infantry Division PAO
Lt. Col. Matt Hackathorn

Editor
Gary Skidmore

Staff Writers
Ty Abney
Anna Staatz

Illustrator
Tammy Dinger

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1st Infantry Division
Public Affairs Office
ATTN: Editor
Bldg. 580
RM 317
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Telephone number
COM 239-8857
DSN 856-2257
or visit Duty First online at
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contents

Command

Danger 6 3
Danger 7 4

Brigades

1st BDE....6
4th IBCT.....11
3rd ESC...15
1st CAB.... 17
1st SB.... 19
2nd HBCT.....20
1ID at War....21
3rd IBCT 22

Features

AUSA Year Of The NCO....7
NCO Takes Pride In His Soldiers.....8
Sergeant Audie Murphy Club.....9
SAMC Members Give Back To Army.....10
School Project Brings Hope.....12
BRO History...13
Culinary Competition23
President Vows Not To Waver....25

Commanding General **Danger 6** Year Of The NCO

Brig. Gen. Perry Wiggins



In 2009, we are celebrating our Army's most precious resource – its Soldiers. This year has been designated as the “Year of the NCO.” What it means is we'll be recognizing the roles, accomplishments, courage and dedication of noncommissioned officers throughout history and today.

Every officer fresh from the basic course remembers his first NCO leader – because that NCO had the experience under his belt and the wisdom to help train the young officer. Throughout the history of our Army, senior NCOs have helped young lieutenants accomplish missions in the field and given advice on how to care for Soldiers – because that is one of the primary tasks of an NCO.

I will never forget one NCO in particular who helped mentor me as a cadet at Mercer University. One day while conducting an in-ranks inspection, he had me remove one of my boots. I must admit I was puzzled by the fact that he said nothing, just walked away with my boot in hand. The next day he came by my dorm room and delivered my boot. It looked like a mirror. He said the next inspection I needed to have the other boot matching this boot. He expected more from me. I worked for a solid week on that boot. I learned a wealth of valuable lessons from Sgt. 1st Class Brown that I have carried with me throughout my career. The time he spent on that one cadet made a long-lasting impression. I only hope he is proud of the officer he helped me become. As officers, we know that we could not accomplish our missions without the solid leadership of our NCOs.



We look to our NCOs to make it happen.

NCOs are also looked to by junior enlisted Soldiers. An NCO's two basic and most important responsibilities are mission accomplishment and the welfare of their Soldiers.

As an NCO, your primary focus should always be on your Soldiers down the chain. They want to know that you're not concerned about yourself and pinning on another stripe. They need to know that they can trust you. They want to know that you care. Sometimes showing them you care means steering them in the right direction, recognizing mistakes and showing those Soldiers how to learn from their mistakes. I guarantee you, it won't be easy. If being a good NCO was easy, they would have given the job to us officers!

Noncommissioned officers serve as role models for more than just Soldiers. Any person in a position of leadership can look to an NCO to see how to lead from the front. Our division is full of these types of leaders with an unmatched work ethic. You can see examples of them in every rank – from young buck sergeants all the way up to command sergeants major.

I want to say thank you to all of our noncommissioned officers serving in the 1st Infantry Division and on Fort Riley. Your service, day in and day out, truly exemplifies our division motto: No Mission too Difficult. No Sacrifice too Great.

Duty First!

Command Sergeant Major **Danger 7** Year Of The NCO

Division Command Sgt. Maj. Jim Champagne

The 1st Infantry Division was the first division organized in the United States Army. Our division was the first to cross into France, the first to cross the German border in World War I, and the first to North Africa, Sicily and the beaches of Normandy in World War II. We were the first division to deploy to Vietnam. We spearheaded the attack in Desert Storm. The Big Red One has always been the best-trained, most highly-motivated and the most competently-led unit from the top down. Our legacy has always been to lead from the front and our noncommissioned officers have always led the way.

Two former Big Red One NCOs who have spent their lives leading the way are William O. Woolridge and William G. Bainbridge.

Woolridge was the first Sergeant Major of the Army and was sworn in on July 11, 1966. He'd spent much of his time with the 1st Inf. Div., and honed his skills as a leader in the Big Red One.

He was first assigned to the Big Red One in 1944 and took part in the D-Day landings. He also fought in the Battle of the Bulge.

He left the division for a short time and returned as a first sergeant of Company K, 26th Infantry Regiment.

In 1954, he was assigned as first sergeant of Company D, 26th Inf. Regt.

He was appointed command sergeant major of the 3rd Battalion, 26th Infantry Regt. in 1956. After another short spell away from the division, he once again returned as sergeant major of 1st Brigade, then took the division to Vietnam as the division command sergeant major.

CSM Bainbridge was the 5th Sergeant Major of the Army.

He entered the Army in June 1943 and left the Army after World War II. In 1951, he was recalled to active duty and served at numerous installations, including Fort Riley.

In 1962, Bainbridge returned to Fort Riley where he served with the 1st Inf. Div. as command sergeant major of the 1st Battle Group, 28th Inf. Regt., later reorganized as 1st Battalion, 28th Inf. Regt. In 1965, he took the battalion to Vietnam where he served under Woolridge.

As noncommissioned officers in the Big Red One, it is not enough to meet the standard. In the 1st Inf. Div., exceeding the standard is the standard.



Big Red One NCOs are the best in the Army. It is our duty as NCOs to ensure our Soldiers receive the best training and leadership available, so they too will carry on our legacy. Anything less would be unworthy of the commitment those Soldiers make, and unworthy of the sacrifice of our predecessors who fought and died while wearing the Big Red One on their left shoulder.

It was Rudyard Kipling who famously called the noncommissioned officer corps the “backbone of the Army.” At that time, noncommissioned officers were drawn almost exclusively from the upper ranks of society and as can be expected, had far different duties than contemporary NCOs.

The role of the NCO was greatly expanded under the direction of General-Baron Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben, the German who was appointed second inspector general of Washington's army in 1778.

In the early days of the American Revolution there was little standardization of NCO responsibilities. In 1778, during the long, hard winter at Valley Forge, von Steuben standardized NCO duties and responsibilities. He emphasized the importance of selecting quality Soldiers for NCO positions.

There are many great Soldiers who are alumni of the 1st Infantry Division.

Soldiers like Staff Sgt. Walt Ehlers, a squad leader in the 18th Inf. Regt. during World War II, who in an early morning

attack, found his company pinned down in an open field by fire from machine-gun nests and two mortar pits. He not only destroyed the machine-gun nests and their crews, but on the way killed a four-man patrol. Later, his squad was assigned to cover the company's withdrawal from the area when he was wounded by a sniper round. More concerned about his men than his own safety, he refused to be evacuated. His wounds treated and bandaged, he returned to his squad. He later said he didn't want any of his men to be hurt or killed, and he felt his obligation was to be there to lead and protect them. Ehlers received the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions that day.

Another great Big Red One Soldier was Staff Sgt. James



Continued on Page 5

Danger 7

Continued from Page 4

Bondsteel, 2nd Bn., 2nd Inf. Regt., who was serving as a platoon sergeant near Lang Sau, Vietnam.

His company was directed to assist a friendly unit endangered by intense fire from a North Vietnamese battalion located in a heavily fortified base camp.

Bondsteel organized his platoon and spearheaded the attack by destroying four enemy-occupied bunkers. Although wounded by an enemy grenade, he refused medical attention and continued his assault by destroying two more enemy bunkers.

He continued to rally his men and led them through the entrenched enemy until his company was relieved.

Bondsteel is credited with personally destroying 10 enemy bunkers.

Never before in military history have NCOs, who deal at the lowest tactical level where operational success or failure is determined, been so critical. This is because of the changing nature of conflict.

As the age of mass-infantry warfare closes and the battlefield disperses and empties out over vast deserts, jungles and poor, sprawling cities, armies increasingly operate unconventionally in small, autonomous units, at the level of the platoon and below, where sergeants reign supreme.

We have been at war for more than eight years and continue to fight unconventionally in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Big Red One NCOs have honed their skills and are now key to ensuring our Soldiers are prepared for the fight, not only now but in the future.

Secretary of the Army Pete Geren declared 2009 the Year of the NCO. He spoke in Washington, D.C. in October and told the crowd, "If you want to see what right looks like, then ask an NCO, or better yet, watch an NCO."

He said NCOs lead the way in education, in training and discipline. And they share their strength of character with every Soldier they lead, every officer they support and every civilian with whom they serve.

The secretary is right. As NCOs, you lead the way. As Kipling wrote, you are the backbone of the Army, and as many Big Red One officers will testify, NCOs are the heart and soul of the 1st Inf. Div.

The 1st Inf. Div. does have the best NCOs in the Army. It's true, you do more than meet the standard and you take your mission of preparing your Soldiers for war seriously. Being an NCO is not always easy. There are lots of long days ahead. Many of those days will turn into long nights. But in the end, when you finally go home, you should do so knowing you have done your best to exceed the standard.

Now ... get after it! 

History of The NCO Creed



The creed has existed in different versions for a number of years. Long into their careers, sergeants remember reciting the NCO Creed during their induction into the NCO Corps. Many NCO's offices or homes have a copy hanging on a wall. Some have intricate etchings in metal on a wooden plaque, or printed in fine calligraphy. But take a quick glance at any copy of the NCO Creed and you will see no author's name at the bottom. The origin of the NCO Creed is a story of its own.

In 1973, the Army was in turmoil. Of the post-Vietnam developments in American military policy, the most influential in shaping the Army was the advent of the modern volunteer army. With the inception of the Noncommissioned Officer Candidate Course, many young sergeants were not the skilled trainers of the past and were only trained to perform a specific job – that of squad leader in Vietnam. The noncommissioned officer system was under development and the Army was rewriting its Field Manual 22-100, Leadership, to set a road map for leaders to follow.

Of those working on the challenges at hand, one of the only NCO-pure instructional departments at the U.S Army Infantry School at Fort Benning, Ga., was the NCO Subcommittee of the Command and Leadership Committee in the Leadership Department. Besides training Soldiers at the Noncommissioned Officers Academy, these NCOs also developed instructional material and worked as part of the team developing model leadership programs of instruction.

During one brainstorming session, Sgt. 1st Class Earle Brigham recalls writing three letters on a plain white sheet of paper... N-C-O. From those three letters they began to build the NCO Creed. The idea behind developing a creed was to give noncommissioned officers a "yardstick by which to measure themselves."

When it was ultimately approved, the NCO Creed was printed on the inside cover of the special texts issued to students attending the NCO courses at Fort Benning, beginning in 1974. Though the NCO Creed was submitted higher for approval and distribution Army-wide, it was not formalized by an official Army publication until 11 years later.

Though it has been rewritten in different ways, the NCO Creed still begins its paragraphs with those three letters: N-C-O. It continues to guide and reinforce the values of each new generation of noncommissioned officers. 

1ST BDE Leading Is A Way Of Life

By Tyler Abney
Duty First! Magazine

For the past 12 years, the US Army has not only provided a job, but a way of life for Staff Sgt. Stephen Sims, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Brigade Combat Team.

The 37-year-old Sims was stationed at Camp Casey, Korea, Camp Monteith, Kosovo; and recently saw combat in Iraq. In addition to his international travels, Sims served stints at Fort Carson, Colo., Fort Benning, Ga. and finally here at Fort Riley – a long way from home for a guy raised on NASCAR, Southeastern Conference football and southern hospitality.

"I grew up in the south, in the woods playing G.I. Joe, hunting and was around race trucks," Sims said. "My uncle used to drive a dirt car and when I was at Fort Benning, I helped him out. My other uncle had a mud truck."

"When I was about 24, I got in a bad situation," Sims said. "The way I was heading, I was either going to prison, or I was going to be killed. So I decided to go into the military. I just got mixed up with the wrong crowd doing the wrong thing. I was 24, divorced and wild."

"The Army got my head screwed on straight and showed me there was more to life than what I was doing," said Sims. "Besides my family, it's been one of the biggest parts of my life."

Although he initially thought he would join the Marine Corps, Sims is happy with his commitment to the Army – one he solidified when he re-enlisted indefinitely on Jan. 9, 2009. Sims said after his first six-year enlistment, he took a year long break, but decided he missed the job and traveling.

Over time, Sims advanced and became an NCO, a job he said has both challenges and rewards.

Sims fought in Iraq from 2003 to 2004 and said he loved playing the motivator. He said he had no problem yelling in difficult situations if it meant Soldiers would push the limits



and get the mission accomplished. Sims may have raised his voice, but he said fellow Soldiers always knew they could count on him.

"The best part [of being an NCO] is the look on their faces when they accomplish something they didn't think they could do," Sims said. "An NCO is the grunt – the guy that does most of the dirty work and gets little credit. The one that has to translate from the officer to the Soldier, the one that accomplishes the mission."

Currently, Sims works as an improvised explosive device instructor at Camp Funston, teaching Iraq and Afghanistan-bound Soldiers what they need to know about explosives. Sims takes great pride in knowing he has a hand in better preparing Soldiers for their pending deployments.

He said one of the best things to ever happen to him on the job was when a woman in the Navy approached him during a break and told him she was scared to deploy – just what Sims wanted. Some instructors at the IED course conduct their classes as most teachers do. Show the slides, give the information and hope everyone understands. Not Sims. His goal is to put enough fear in students' minds so they won't ever forget what he had to say.

"IEDs weren't really heard of when we went, so we didn't get any [training]," Sims said. But now it's more focused on IED training, which is better, especially when they go search houses or cars.

"The main thing we try to do is not just locate the IED, but also teach them to locate the components of the IED, so when they go into a house they can say, 'This guy is an IED maker or a possible IED maker.'"

"To me, it's always been my duty as an American to help protect what's here," he said. "I know it's not for everybody and the military is what you make it. Overall, I definitely suggest people come in for at least two or three years. It's a good experience and helps you grow up and see different things." 



Duty First!/Abney

Staff Sgt. Stephen Sims, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Brigade Combat Team, shows the different components of an IED during a training course at Camp Funston.

Geren Announces Year Of The NCO

By **Gary Skidmore**
Duty First! Magazine

Most Soldiers know it, it's mentioned at most ceremonies and now leaders at the highest levels of the Army have recognized it. Noncommissioned officers are the backbone of the United States Army.

Secretary of the Army Pete Geren declared 2009 as "the Year of the Noncommissioned Officer" during his keynote address at the 2008 AUSA annual meeting and exposition, Oct. 6-8.

"At the front of every Army mission in the United States or overseas, you'll find a noncommissioned officer," he said. "They know their mission, but most importantly, they know their Soldiers."

"Today's NCO operates autonomously, and always with confidence and competence," he said. "Our NCOs are trusted like no other NCO in the world."

Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. George W. Casey echoed Geren by saying the noncommissioned officer corps is what keeps the Army together.



"As I travel around the Army, it's clear to me that it is our noncommissioned officer corps that is providing the glue that's not only holding this force together at a difficult time, but enabling us to accomplish the near impossible every day," he said.

Casey said the Army will accelerate NCO development of strategic initiatives, develop new initiatives that enhance the training, education, capability, and use of the NCO corps, and showcase the NCO story to the Army and the American people.

"If you want to see what right looks like, ask an NCO, or better yet, watch an NCO," said Geren. "They are the keepers of our standards, a lofty phrase that has substantive meaning on the grounds in every place around the world where you find an American Soldier."

"From the recruiting station to basic training, over a career of service from Benning to Baghdad, combat, civil affairs, medics, logisticians, natural disasters at home, graveside at Arlington, Active Guard and Reserve, our NCOs lead," he said.

"And our NCOs lead the way in education, in training, and discipline. And they share their strength of character with every Soldier they lead, every officer they support, and every civilian with whom they serve." 



Courtesy Photo

(Left to right) Secretary of the Army Pete Geren, U.S. Congressman Silvestre Reyes, Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. George W. Casey Jr., and Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth O. Preston announce the Year of the Noncommissioned Officer during a press conference Jan. 5, at the Sergeants Major Academy, Fort Bliss, Texas.

NCO Takes Pride In His Soldiers

By **Anna Staatz**
Duty First! Magazine

When Staff Sgt. Randy Hubbard joined the Army in 1994, it was to be a tanker. He never would have imagined that his path in the Army would include a trip past the presidential reviewing stand on inauguration day 2009.

Hubbard worked as a tanker from 1994-2000, spending the entire time in Vilsek, Germany. He was medically discharged after his hand was pinched while working on a tank.

"I lost a lot of the sensation in my hand because of that injury," he said.

Hubbard didn't leave the Army willingly. For five years, he fought his medical discharge until it was finally overturned.

"I love what I do," Hubbard said. "There is nothing better to me than being a Soldier."

He re-entered the Army in 2005 as a transportation management coordinator and was stationed at Camp Darby, Italy. He deployed to Afghanistan with the 10th Mountain Division in 2006. After returning from deployment, Hubbard got the first stateside assignment of his career: Fort Riley, Kan.

While in-processing at Fort Riley, Hubbard heard a briefing from the former 1st Sergeant of the Commanding General's Mounted Color Guard.

"He said they had a platoon sergeant slot and because there's not a lot of platoon sergeant jobs available in my MOS, I thought coming here was an excellent opportunity to get some leadership time," Hubbard said.



Dealing with horses and training Soldiers to ride for many of the parades, competitions and public events the color guard participates in is a far cry from the duties of most noncommissioned officers. The unit is one of the most often-seen Army units in the Midwest.

The unit learned in late 2008 that it had been accepted to participate in the parade following the presidential inauguration in January 2009, and quickly began preparation.

Saddles and sabers were polished and the unit had several special practices to help acclimate its horses to an urban environment with lots of noise and people. Fourteen of the unit's Soldiers rode in formation during the parade.

"I am extremely proud of each one of my Soldiers, their perseverance under the circumstances and their dedication," Hubbard said of a very long and cold inauguration day. The Soldiers' day started at 3 a.m. The parade – scheduled to start at 2 p.m.— was delayed by several hours. The unit passed the reviewing stand about 7 p.m.

"These guys were cold and hungry, and they just did what they needed to do, and they looked good doing it," Hubbard said.

It's hard to miss the pride Hubbard has in his Soldiers when he talks about them.

"As an NCO, the greatest reflection of what I do isn't in me," Hubbard said. "It's in my Soldiers. If they succeed, I am successful. If they fail, it's my fault."

Hubbard has about six months left in his time with the CGMCG. Once that time is up, he hopes to be able to take a slot in Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, 1st Inf. Div., and deploy. 



Duty First!/Staatz

Staff Sgt. Randy Hubbard works with his horse, Winchester, prior to a practice for the inaugural parade on Jan. 12.

Sergeant Audie Murphy Club

By Anna Staatz
Duty First! Magazine

Only a few noncommissioned officers in the Army become members of the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club, and in the 1st Infantry Division, the number of club members is growing.

The club was set up in the 1980s to honor the legendary Audie Murphy, who was also an actor, songwriter and poet. Murphy was the son of sharecroppers, and was the most decorated combat Soldier of World War II.

He received more than 33 awards and decorations, including the Medal of Honor, and was credited with killing more than 240 enemy Soldiers and wounding many others. Murphy was wounded three times while participating in nine major campaigns across the European Theater. After he completed his military service, Murphy went on to several creative endeavors, including the big screen, where he starred in his own autobiographical movie, "To Hell and Back."

The club to commemorate Murphy and honor noncommissioned officers began at Fort Hood 23 years ago and spread across the Army. In 1991, then - III Corps Commander, Lt. Gen. Pete Taylor and Command Sgt. Maj. Richard B. Cayton expanded the Fort Hood installation club to include all of III Corps. This included Fort Riley,

Kan.; Fort Sill, Okla.; Fort Bliss, Texas; Fort Polk, La.; and Fort Carson, Colo.

In 1993, Cayton was voted into the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club by the membership and then became the Forces Command, command sergeant major. Soon thereafter, the club became



FORSCOM wide, including the Reserves and National Guard, with installations retaining the selection process for their own NCOs. In 1998, it was estimated that the club membership was more than 3,000 Soldiers.

The SAMC at Fort Riley has been in existence for more than 10 years, and currently has more than 40 members.

"The Audie Murphy club is an organization that doesn't just recognize the top 1 percent of noncommissioned officers, it's an organization that gives back to the community and the installations that they are assigned to," said Command Sgt. Maj. Jim Champagne, division command sergeant major. "It takes an extraordinary individual and noncommissioned officer to be able to do everything they do in the Army and then turn around and volunteer their time to their community and their installation. They have to juggle a lot of balls to be able to accomplish that."

The club meets at noon on the first and third Tuesday of every month at the 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team dining facility.

Membership is open to sergeants between the ranks of E-5 and E-7. They must be sponsored by a current SAMC member and pass a board process in order to be inducted. Once in, they are members for life.

Champagne said membership in the SAMC continues to increase. He tasks incoming club members with mentoring one sergeant to become a club member within 12 months of their induction.

"I challenge all our noncommissioned officers to seek to be a SAMC member," Champagne said.



Twenty-two Soldiers were inducted into Fort Riley's Sgt. Audie Murphy Club June 30 during a ceremony at 1st Division Headquarters.

Duty First!/Staatz

SAMC Members Give Back To Army, Community

By Anna Staatz
Duty First! Magazine

To some, being a member of the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club means being one of the Army's best noncommissioned officers. Each member pursues the medallion for various reasons, but all have a desire to be extremely proficient at what they do.

1st Sgt. Brian Sowder

First Sgt. Brian Sowder joined the Army 19 years ago for the benefits of the GI Bill and to travel around the world. It wasn't long before he found the Army was "his calling." Sowder, Company D, 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, didn't join the SAMC until his recent deployment to Iraq.

Sowder said he always knew about the club, but never had the opportunity to go to the board before coming to Fort Riley. He balanced combat demands with studying for the board and was selected while in Baghdad.

"I am pretty sure my driver and gunner were proficient with the Audie Murphy biography and could recite it in their sleep while I was studying for the selection board," Sowder said. "I would have them check for errors in my memory before and after every patrol."

Sowder decided to go to the selection board because all of his squad leaders wanted to go.

"As a platoon sergeant, I wanted to understand the pressure my men were under and help them prepare for the selection board," Sowder said.

The benefits are two-fold, Sowder said. First, it gives NCOs



1st Sgt. Brian Sowder participates in a field training exercise at Fort Riley. Sowder joined the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club while deployed to Iraq with 2nd Bn., 16th Inf. Regt., 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

Courtesy Photo



the opportunity to share knowledge and expertise with each other. It also gives them a chance to be involved and help local communities. The Fort Riley SAMC participates in the Adopt-a-Highway program; provides local youth a scholarship opportunity and sets up and conducts the annual Dr. Mary E. Walker volunteer recognition ceremony.

"I would encourage all NCOs who think they have what it takes to be a member of the SAMC to see their chain of command and start to go through the selection process," Sowder said.

Staff Sgt. Liela Moser

Staff Sgt. Liela Moser, Fort Riley Dental Activity, was recently selected for the SAMC. Moser said she always wanted to be part of the SAMC because the members she has come in contact with during her time in the Army have all been people she has looked up to.

Moser was first acquainted with the SAMC at Fort Riley when she helped 1st Sgt. Ray Chase with a ceremony. Chase, a SAMC member, told Moser she should look into the club. Moser pursued studying and going to the selection board through her chain of command.

"It is a tough and challenging board," Moser said. "You have to be on point; there is no room for mistakes."

Moser said she gained a lot from preparing for the board and knows that expectations are high of SAMC members.

"Every time I meet an NCO who is part of the club, the expectations are high, and I look up to them," Moser said. They are knowledgeable and squared away. I have gained so much knowledge just from preparing for the board."

Moser added that she also looks forward to opportunities to give back to the very supportive local communities.



Duty First!/Abney

Staff Sgt. Liela Moser, DENTAC, proudly displays her promotion certificate. Moser was recently selected for the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club.

responsibilities will always be uppermost in my mind -- accomplishment of my mission and the welfare of my soldiers. I will strive to remain

4TH IBCT Hungry And Humble

By Anna Staatz
Duty First! Magazine

As a boy, 1st Sgt. Phillip Mays, 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, remembers his Irish grandfather talking about politics and the military.

His grandfather served in World War II, earning the Combat Infantryman Badge.

"He said it wasn't he himself who earned it, but collectively he and his fellow comrades, his brothers in arms, did," Mays said. "He died when I was young, and I knew at an early age I would join the Army and test myself as he did."

Mays was an 18-year-old newlywed when he enlisted in the Army. His first assignment was at Fort Campbell, Ky., where he served with 2nd Bn., 502nd Inf. Regt., as a rifleman, SAW gunner, team leader and squad leader. After four and a half years at Fort Campbell with the 101st Airborne Division, Mays was assigned to Fort Lewis, Wash., serving as a squad leader and platoon sergeant. From Fort Lewis, Mays went to Fort Benning, Ga., for two years, where he was a drill sergeant and senior drill sergeant.

His fourth assignment was Fort Riley. Mays has served with the "Ranger" battalion since he arrived at Fort Riley, deploying in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom with the rest of the 4th IBCT in 2007.

Mays' time in the Army has been on the fast track. The transition from young Soldier to NCO and then senior NCO and 1st Sergeant happened during a quick 13 years.

Looking back, he said his initial transition to a junior noncommissioned officer was a huge wakeup call, and he compared it to mortar rounds jarring a combat outpost.

"Here I am, 21 years old and now responsible for the lives of three other men," Mays said. "I now have to lead, train and motivate other men. As an NCO, you directly impact the lives of many men throughout



your career. My success as a junior NCO stemmed from the coaching, teaching and mentoring of the senior NCOs who 'raised' me."

As a squad leader, Mays thrived. Even though he said it was an honor to be moved to a senior position in which he was responsible for more Soldiers, he is quick to say that he misses being in the middle of all the action.

"My transition from NCO to senior NCO was bittersweet," Mays said. "There is no greater honor than to lead men in combat, but my kinetic door kicking days were over. Sure, I am still in the thick of things as the platoon or company senior assault leader, but I am no longer the tip of the spear. In the Army, the infantry specifically, the position of squad leader is the best job in the world. You have a great level of responsibility, yet you are always in the thick of things. Squad leaders have the biggest and most direct impact and influence on our young Soldiers."

Mays said the current combat environments require Soldiers and NCOs to be creative and think outside the box. Preparation is everything, he noted, commenting that the last thing he wanted was junior NCOs on a plane, flying over an ocean, wondering if they had done everything they possibly could to prepare themselves and their men for what they will face in combat.

"I hope what my Soldiers learn from me is to remain hungry and humble," Mays said. "We are rough and tough men who are asked sometimes to do the unthinkable. It is paramount that we take care of each other as we would a blood brother."

Mays will remain with the "Rangers" as the unit trains during the coming months and will deploy with it and the remainder of the 4th IBCT when it leaves Fort Riley later this year.

"Being an NCO, a leader of Soldiers, is an undisputed honor which I will cherish for the rest of my life," Mays said. "My passion in life is to deploy, fight and win, bringing everyone home from our future endeavors." 



Courtesy Photo

1st Sgt. Phillip Mays, in Baghdad during a recent deployment to Iraq. Mays, 2nd Bn., 16th Inf. Regt., 4th Inf. Brigade Combat Team, deployed for 15 months from February 2007 to April 2008.

School Project Brings Hope, Education To Nangarhar

By USAF Capt. Dustin Hart
3rd IBCT PAO

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan — Members of the Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team demonstrated their commitment to furthering education during a Jan. 11 ground-breaking ceremony for the Maliki Surial girls' school in Behsood District.

Soldiers in the 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team are responsible for security in the Nangarhar area, where the school is located.

"Currently, the girls attend an open-air school where they sit outdoors," said Capt. Elisabeth Leon, Nangarhar PRT lead engineer. "When the weather turns bad, they simply can't go to school."

The new school will feature 10 classrooms for more than 1,400 girls. The school is expected to be completed in the next

nine months.

"Education is very important for girls," said Gulali Jamal Zai, Maliki Surial's headmistress. "Females are responsible for the household and can in turn educate their children and husbands within the house."

Before the Taliban government was defeated in 2001, less than one million children attended school in Afghanistan, virtually none were females. Since then, the number has grown to more than six million children, with 35 percent of these students being female according to International Security Assistance Force-Afghanistan statistics.

"This school is a sign that the hopes, opportunities and dreams of Afghan females are coming true," said Leon.

The PRT is currently working with the Ministry of Education on 15 boys and girls school projects throughout Nangarhar province. These are part of 50 projects, worth more than \$70 million, that the PRT is working throughout the province. 



Capt. Elisabeth Leon, Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team lead engineer, joins Maliki Surial School headmistress Gulali Jamal Zai in placing a ceremonial brick.



3rd IBCT PAO/Hart

Members of the Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team are welcomed by school girls dressed in traditional Afghan clothing during the groundbreaking ceremony for a girls school in Behsood District.

tactically and technically proficient. I am aware of my role as a Noncommissioned Officer. I will fulfill my responsibilities inherent in that role.

History Of The Big Red One



NCO



By Anna Staatz
Duty First! Magazine

The history of the noncommissioned officer traces back to the birth of the Continental Army. In the beginning, like many traditions of the Army, the noncommissioned officer had a blended background from the French and British military traditions. As time has gone on, however, the Army noncommissioned officer has evolved from those early European roots and proven to be the strongest and toughest when it comes to accomplishing victory on the battlefield. Command Sgt. Maj. Jim Champagne, 1st Infantry Division command sergeant major, listed six high points of NCO history.



Friedrich von Steuben

In 1778, during the winter at Valley Forge, Inspector General Friedrich von Steuben was tasked by Gen. George Washington to outline the duties and responsibilities of a new rank within the U.S. Army, the sergeant.

"If you go back and read the original order," said Champagne, "you will see that we are still using some the same concepts as noncommissioned officers today."

From the American Revolution to World War II, the noncommissioned officer received his promotion from the regimental commander.



The NCO Chevrons

In 1821, the War Department made the first mention of noncommissioned officer chevrons. A general order directed that sergeants major and quartermaster sergeants wear a worsted chevron on each arm below the elbow and corporals wear one on the right arm above the elbow.

In 1902, the chevron was turned point up and reduced in size. The former chevrons worn by sergeants were 10 inches and as uniforms became more form-fitting and smaller, the chevrons worn were adjusted as well.

The Women's Army Corps

Champagne said another high point in the history of the NCO was the creation of the women's Army Corps during World War

II. For the most part, women served in administrative, technical, vehicle, food, supply, communications, mechanical and electrical positions.

"This is the first time in the Army's history that we now have female NCOs, in World War II, when they started the Women's Army Corps," Champagne said.

Sergeant Major of the Army

In 1966, the Army Chief of Staff announced the position of Sergeant Major of the Army. The first person to hold the position was Command Sergeant Major William Woolridge, who was also a former "Danger 7," serving as the Big Red One's top NCO in 1965.

"We as a division have the distinct honor to have had the first sergeant major of the Army come from our ranks," Champagne said.

NCOES System

In 1971, the noncommissioned officer's education system kicked off, offering school opportunities pertinent to Soldiers advancing in their fields. Schools such as WLC, BNCOC, ANCO and the sergeant's major academy are all part of the NCOES.

"We really have to credit Sergeant Major of the Army [William] Bainbridge with procuring the money to really develop and grow the system," Champagne said, noting that Bainbridge was a former "Black Lion" sergeant major.

The Present Noncommissioned Officer

Noncommissioned officers handle a much different set of responsibilities than they did in 1778.

"What the present day noncommissioned officer is doing on the battlefield is absolutely incredible," Champagne said. "He is expected to do today what field grade officers were doing in World War II and Korea."

The responsibility of NCOs continues to increase, Champagne said, with young sergeants leading Soldiers in combat zones. "At my level, it's all about how I set the example for the junior noncommissioned officers who will lead our Soldiers into combat," Champagne said. "I'm very proud to be a noncommissioned officer. In 1982, when I came in the Army at 17 years old, I never thought I would be a division command sergeant major. I have to credit all the leaders and Soldiers I've had in the past that have helped me get to this position."



CSM John D. Fourhman
2005-2008

3RD ESC

Iraqis, Sustainers, PRT, Cavalry Troopers Join Forces To Build Economic Momentum Near Balad

Compiled by 3rd ESC PAO

BALAD, Iraq – In a combined effort to boost the local economy, Iraqi business owners hosted coalition forces and members of the Balad Provincial Reconstruction Team recently to discuss expansion of local businesses using Iraqi trucking initiatives.

The owner of the Balad Canning Factory provided leaders from 3rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary); 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment; Multi-National Corps-Iraq; Multi-National Forces-Iraq and the Salah ad Din PRT a tour of his business and a local market to better understand the potential for growth in the Balad area. The ultimate objective was to forge a partnership that harnesses the 3rd ESC's logistics expertise of national and regional Iraqi trucking initiatives to rapidly expand existing local businesses by allowing them

to market and distribute their products throughout Iraq.

"As you increase your ability to distribute your products, your customers will be able to come to you to purchase goods – and you can increase your production by shipping throughout Iraq. I think your products can go a lot further by increasing the trucking capability," said Col. Curt Higdon, 3rd ESC assistant chief of staff G3, during an exchange with Ahmed Ibrahim Aghab, owner of the Balad Canning Factory.

According to Higdon, the Balad Canning Factory is a prime example of an existing Iraqi business that could rapidly expand if partnered with national distribution efforts such as the Iraqi Trucking Network or regional ones like Iraqi Trucking Companies. Higdon hopes to couple the ESC's logistics and distribution expertise, the local PRT's economic knowledge, and 3rd Sqdn. 4th Cav. Regt.'s community engagement skills to help determined Iraqi business owners continue their economic momentum.

Currently, the factory is operating only four of 12 production lines due to a lack of trucking assets and ongoing renovation. The factory has new boilers and is capable of producing bagged snacks, bottled water and milk, in addition to canned goods. Adding a reliable trucking partnership will allow the factory to reach its potential, bringing jobs and a reliable buyer of fresh local produce to the community.

"Some of these folks don't have the means to move their goods," said Lt. Col. David M. Hodne, commander of 3rd Sqdn, 4th Cav. Regt. Later this spring, Hodne and his cavalry troopers plan to work with farmers in rural areas around Balad and the canning factory to expand markets for local agricultural products to multiple regions across Iraq.

Balad Satellite Provincial Reconstruction Team Leader Joe Pinon added that investments such as those made at the canning factory are critical for building economic momentum.

Iraqis need to be educated on the importance of investing in their own economy to sustain future growth, Pinon said.

The opportunity to partner with the canning factory surfaced during an Iraqi Business Industrial Zone meeting where members of the 3rd ESC in discussion with the local PRT realized too few jobs were being created that would provide for long term economic gain of the local populace.

The independently owned and operated canning factory employs approximately 150 - 200 people but has the potential to expand production and provide another 1,000 jobs with the right partnerships.

All partners hope future planning efforts between eager Iraqis, battle space owners, logistics experts – coupled with the PRT's ability to organize businessmen and local political leaders – will provide the opportunity for increased agriculture and economic development throughout the region. 



Ahmed Ibrahim Aghab, owner of Balad Canning Factory, gives a tour of his business in Balad, Iraq, to Dr. Frank R. Gunter, chief of economics, Multi-National Corps-Iraq; Lt. Col. David M. Hodne, commander of 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment; members of 3rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and the Balad Satellite Provincial Reconstruction Team on Jan. 17.



Photos by Brian Barbour

Ahmed Ibrahim Aghab, owner of the Balad Canning Factory discusses with Dr. Frank R. Gunter, chief of economics for Multi-National Corps-Iraq the new boiler recently installed at the factory. The BCF currently has four of 12 production lines in renovation with the aid of grant funds through the U.S. Agency for International Development's Inma Agribusiness Program.

my own. I will communicate consistently with my soldiers and never leave them uninformed. I will be fair and impartial when recommending

1ST CAB Aircraft Come Home

By Anna Statz
Duty First! Magazine

For Soldiers in the 1st Combat Aviation Brigade, the low rumble of six Apache helicopters approaching Marshall Army Airfield Jan. 17 wasn't just about welcoming aircraft back to Fort Riley. The Apaches' landing signified the safe completion of a combat deployment.

"This is a big step," said Staff Sgt. Roland Irizarry, a maintenance supervisor in the brigade. "We were one of the last brigades to do a 15-month tour ensuring freedom for the Iraqi people, and this means we've done it and completed it [our mission] safely."

The 1st CAB deployed from Fort Riley in September 2007 and began returning to the post in November 2008 without a single combat death, something the brigade's former commander, Col. Jess Farrington, said was a "major accomplishment." He also

lauded the brigade's part in reducing enemy activity in their assigned area of Iraq while deployed.

"There was almost a 70 percent reduction in enemy activity during our tour," Farrington said. "That frames where we have just come from."

Bringing the aircraft back to Fort Riley signifies not only the completion of one mission, but also the beginning of another for the "Demon" Brigade.

"Bringing them [the helicopters] back to Fort Riley is great," Farrington said. "It's good to be back in the Kansas area, and the Fort Riley area. ...It also means getting back into the training mode, which is the next phase for us, to train this brigade again for whatever our nation calls upon us to do."

During its deployment, the brigade oversaw the operation and maintenance of 200 manned and unmanned aircraft. The unit's helicopters logged more than 170,000 hours in flight time during the deployment.

While in Iraq, the brigade's Soldiers conducted nearly 18,000 missions, identifying and engaging enemy targets 300 times. CAB Soldiers were also responsible for the discovery or defeat of 56 improvised explosive devices and the destruction of more than 125 insurgent vehicles and structures. In addition, the brigade was responsible for transporting more than 91,000 personnel and about 4,000 tons of cargo around Multi-National Division North.

A second flight of Apaches and a single Black Hawk helicopter arrived later Jan. 17. The brigade will eventually have Kiowa, Apache, Black Hawk and Chinook helicopters at Fort Riley. It is anticipated that all of the unit's aircraft will be at Fort Riley by mid-summer.



The first flight of helicopters to return to Fort Riley following the 1st Combat Aviation Brigade's deployment to Iraq settle on Marshall Army Airfield after their flight home.



The first flight of helicopters to return to Fort Riley following the 1st Combat Aviation Brigade's deployment to Iraq approach Marshall Army Airfield on Jan. 17.



Apache crews prepare to park and disembark from their aircraft. The helicopters were the first of the 1st Combat Aviation Brigade's aircraft to return to Fort Riley.

Duty First! /Statz

both rewards and punishment. Officers of my unit will have maximum time to accomplish their duties; they will not have to accomplish mine. |

1ST SB Uncasing Colors

By Tyler Abney
Duty First! Magazine

A giant American flag covered the wall at King Field House as Soldiers, Families and local community leaders gathered to welcome the 1st Sustainment Brigade back to Fort Riley.

The Jan. 29 ceremony marked the official return of the brigade. The unit's colors were uncased as its 305 Soldiers were able to close the book on a 15-month deployment.

"This is truly an exciting day for not only the 1st Sustainment Brigade, but also the 1st Infantry Division," Brig. Gen. Perry Wiggins, commanding general, 1st Infantry Division and Fort Riley said. "The men and women standing before you in formation are truly the best we have in America. They are dedicated, disciplined and professional Soldiers who spent 15 months bravely standing on-point for this nation...through your untiring efforts, you've penned another proud chapter in the storied history of the 1st Infantry Division."

During their deployment, the unit commanded seven battalions, providing food, water and supplies to Soldiers in Baghdad.

In addition, the brigade conducted maintenance operations, financial management, human resource support and convoy security. They issued and delivered 200 million gallons of fuel, 6.6 million rounds of ammunition, 170,000 meals, and 12 million cases of bottled water.

Wiggins said training an Army to fight is much easier than training an Army to sustain itself and logistical capability is the ultimate marker of a mature and professional Army.

Following Wiggins' remarks, Col. Kevin O'Connell, brigade commander addressed the Soldiers of the brigade.

"The CG talked about the myriad of accomplishments the brigade conducted while deployed down range," O'Connell said. "But let me say this as humbly and modestly as possible. What you're looking at, in the formation here today, represents the premier sustainment brigade in the Army. Never before has a sustainment brigade supported on the scale, scope, complexity and magnitude or had such a strategic impact as the 1st Sustainment Brigade over our 15-month deployment.

"As you know, Baghdad is the capitol of Iraq and the seat

of government. The population center results in a safer Iraq's ability in the Middle East and a safer world that we live in. I couldn't be more proud of our Soldiers' incredible performance." 



1st Sustainment Brigade, Commander Col. Kevin O'Connell and Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Cardoza uncasing the brigade's colors during a welcome home ceremony Jan. 29 at King Field House. The unit returned home from Baghdad, in December 2008, after a 15-month deployment.

2ND HBCT Dagger Brigade Hosts Media Roundtable

By Spc. Dustin Roberts
2nd HBCT PAO

BAGHDAD – Photographers and journalists from numerous Baghdad media outlets attended an Arabic media roundtable Jan. 11, hosted by the 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team.

The discussion, led by Col. Joseph Martin, commander of 2nd HBCT, informed local media of the Dagger Brigade's mission, sparked story ideas and answered specific questions from the media.

"It is very important that the public, who read Iraqi newspapers and watch Iraqi television, are informed on not only the mission of coalition forces, but specifically the mission of the Dagger Brigade," said Mohammed Asadi, Arabic media coordinator for the "Dagger" Brigade. "I think the best way to inform the public is to bring the local media to the brigade and inform them about the mission."

Some of the press were interested in the role the Dagger Brigade played on election day and how the new security agreement, enacted Jan. 1, will affect the security of the population. "These two events are very large milestones for the history of Iraq," Asadi said. "I know that the people are wondering how coalition forces will be involved from now on."

Martin said the Dagger Brigade and Iraqi security forces carefully planned the details of patrols and searches to ensure election day was safe.

Another question asked was if the Soldiers have ever put thought into fighting terrorism not only physically but by providing services and jobs to the people in the Dagger Brigade's areas of operation.

"What we are doing about these issues is working closely with the Iraqi government and the belladiyah to continue to foster an environment of normalcy," Martin said. "Economic growth, more money and more jobs for people are all direct results of a foundation of good security." 



2nd HBCT/Roberts

A journalist from the Iraqi publication *Politics Today*, reads over notes during a media roundtable with the 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, Multi-National Division – Baghdad at Forward Operating Base Prosperity Jan. 11. The purpose of the session was to inform media of the brigade's mission in northwest Baghdad.

will earn their respect and confidence as well as that of my soldiers. I will be loyal to those with whom I serve; seniors, peers, and subordinates

1st Infantry Division at War

1st Infantry Division

Oldest continuously serving division in the United States Army. Over 7,000 Soldiers from two brigades are deployed.

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

The Division modularized in fall 2008.

1st Brigade, Fort Riley

Trains transition teams. So far more than 11,000 servicemembers have trained and deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan and more than 1,800 have 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.

4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Fort Riley

Currently resting at Fort Riley, Kan., the brigade is training for a second deployment to Iraq. The Department of Defense issued deployment orders for 2008.

2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, Iraq

The brigade departed Fort Riley, Kan., in October 2008 on a scheduled 12-month deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

1st Combat Aviation Brigade Combat Team, Iraq

Completed a 15 month deployment to Iraq and is redeployed to Fort Riley, Kan.

1st Sustainment Brigade, Iraq

Provided 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. The brigade redeployed to Fort Riley, Kan., in December 2008.

3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Afghanistan

Deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in June 2008. The deployment is scheduled to last 12 months, during which Soldiers will conduct counterinsurgency and stability operations.

4th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, Fort Leonard Wood

The MEB is a new concept in area operations and stability operations. The 4th MEB unique staff is composed of engineer, military police, and chemical cells and organically has a brigade support battalion and a signal company. The brigade was activated at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., in October 2008.

3RD IBCT Combined Forces Boost Security In Nangarhar Province

By Sgt. Charles Brice
3rd IBCT PAO

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – The Soldiers of Company A, Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, are teaming up with the Afghan National Police to boost security and provide supplies for the local Afghans of Khogyani and Shirazad Districts, in the Nangarhar province of northeastern Afghanistan.

The planning and coordination of improvements is accomplished through key leader engagements conducted by both parties.

“We conduct these visits with the leadership to make sure they are taken care of on supplies and issues,” said Sgt. 1st Class Albert Huggins, 1st Platoon leader of Co. A.

Huggins said measures toward protecting local citizens around voter registration sites were emphasized at a recent meeting between key leaders.

ANP leaders also talked about supplies needed in order to

maintain jobs during the winter months and plan ahead for the spring.

“Things are okay over here with the district center,” said Abdul Haq, sub-governor of the Shirazad District. “Taliban comes from Pakistan during the spring time and attacks the local villages. Now that the mountains have snowed over, the attacks are down to a minimum.”

The newly-constructed walls of the district center play a small role in the security of the area, which has improved significantly in the past few months.

“The locals of the area are much happier because of the security boost,” Haq said. “Along with the help of the Americans, our forces in the area have improved on their actions.”

As the relationship between the two forces builds, locals in the area are beginning to see progress.

“We are here to support the ANP in the Shirazad District in order to make things better for the people,” Huggins said. “Safety, security and the welfare of the people are our main concern.”



Soldiers of Co. A, Special Troops Battalion, conduct a key leader engagement at the Shirazad District Center, meeting with Sub-Governor Abdul Haq. During the meeting they discussed the security and welfare of the Afghan people.



Soldiers of Co. A, Special Troops Battalion, discuss the security and welfare of the Afghan locals with the executive officer and captain of the ANP.

Culinary Competition

By Sgt. Cody Harding
1st Inf. Div. PAO

The feeling in the air was tense as five students from Johnson County Community College stood side-by-side with the Big Red One's hand-picked team. Both teams listened closely as a line in the proverbial sand was drawn.

The two teams didn't face each other with pistols or blades, but with utensils and seasonings. The first 1st Infantry Division culinary competition was about to begin.

The contest served two purposes for both the college and the Soldiers of the Big Red One. For the students, it was practice to help them prepare before traveling to Chicago for a region-wide contest, said John Head, culinary instructor at JCCC.

"It's not a competition against the Fort Riley team," Head said. "It's a competition against the professional standards of the American Culinary Federation."

For the Soldiers, the contest is only the first part of the 1st Inf. Div. culinary competition, which is separated into various events. The contest is scheduled to take place in various months during 2009, said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Travis Smith, the division's command food advisor.

"The purpose of these competitions is to showcase what the cooks do on a daily basis," said Smith. "The public can see what they do, as well as provide an environment where the cook is challenged to provide a higher standard."



Spc. Thao Vangsoua prepares a Sole fish at the 1st Infantry Division Culinary competition here Jan. 22.

Three respected chefs, including Steven Giunta, one of 50 certified master chefs in the world, evaluated the teams in two areas: standard skills and the food itself.

As with any gourmet meal, the first step was preparation. Teams had to prove they were ready to step up to the grill with the proper utensils and ingredients.

After the judges evaluated their preparation performance,

the true test began, creating a four-course meal meeting the standards of the American Culinary Federation. The teams went head-to-head in their preparation of a dish featuring fish. The other dishes were up to them. Each team made a salad, an entrée, and a dessert to finish the three remaining courses.

Since both teams had relatively little experience, the cook-off was a good starting point and exercise in teamwork. "Even when stuff slips away, or when something messes up, the team is always there to back you up and make you feel better," said first-year culinary team member Megan Fatseas.

Pvt. Bradley Barta, a member of the 701st Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, joined the team after redeploying from Iraq. He enjoyed the high-pressure environment of his first competition.

"I'm having a blast," Barta said.

After both teams presented their dishes and the judges made their observations, there was a small break to clean up before the three judges congratulated both teams for their work. The judges based their critique on practical information, instead of assigning scores.

"We're not going to get into points," said Giunta. "Because if you really want to hear numbers from us, you're going to miss the key points in the food and what we saw."

At the end of the contest, both teams were admired for their professionalism, dedication and persistence in their craft. Since the competition was a scrimmage, there were no winners or losers.

The contest serves as practice for the 1st Inf. Div. team, which will go to Fort Lee, Va., in March to take place in an Army-wide culinary competition.



1st Inf. Div. PAO/ Harding

From the left, chef Martin Heuser, certified master chef Stephen Giunta, and chef Felix Sturmer test the entries of the 1st Infantry Division culinary contest. The chefs have "nearly a century's worth of experience" between them, said Giunta.

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will not forget, nor will I allow my comrades to forget that we are professionals, Noncommissioned Officers, leaders!

President Vows Not To Waver In America's Defense

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – President Barack Obama pledged a “prudent use” of military power as the nation works toward “ushering in a new era of peace” Jan. 20 in his inaugural address to the nation.

“Our security emanates from the justness of our cause, the force of our example, the tempering qualities of humility and restraint,” he said from the west side of the Capitol after taking the oath of office as the 44th president. An estimated two million people crowded the National Mall and surrounding area to hear his address.

The use of these principles will allow America to develop greater understanding of other nations and greater cooperation against common threats from them, he said.

“We will begin to responsibly leave Iraq to its people and forge a hard-earned peace in Afghanistan,” Obama said. “With old friends and former foes, we’ll work tirelessly to lessen the nuclear threat and roll back the specter of a warming planet.”

Obama said Americans will not apologize for their way of life, nor waver in its defense. “And for those who seek to advance their aims by inducing terror and slaughtering innocents, we say to you now that our spirit is stronger and cannot be broken; you cannot outlast us, and we will defeat you,” he said.

America is a country of doers and risk-takers;

it is an immigrant country where each generation worked hard to provide for the next, he said.

“For us, they packed up their few worldly possessions and traveled across oceans in search of a new life,” Obama said. “For us, they toiled in sweatshops and settled the West, endured the lash of the whip and plowed the hard earth.

“For us, they fought and died in places like Concord and Gettysburg, Normandy and Khe Sahn,” he continued. “Time and again, these men and women struggled and sacrificed and worked till their hands were raw so that we might live a better life. They saw America as bigger than the sum of our individual ambitions, greater than all the differences of birth or wealth or faction.”

Americans today must continue this journey, he said. It is time for hard decisions and a time of change. “Our time of standing pat, of protecting narrow interests and putting off unpleasant decisions, that time has surely passed,” he said. “Starting today, we must pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and begin again the work of remaking America.”

Obama rejected the idea that the nation has to choose between its safety and its ideals. “Our Founding Fathers – faced with perils that we can scarcely imagine – drafted a charter to assure the rule of law and the rights of man, a charter expanded by the blood of generations. Those ideals still light the world, and we will not give them up for expedience’s sake.”

In the United States, all languages

are spoken, all religions are practiced, and all good people are welcomed, he said. “And because we have tasted the bitter swill of civil war and segregation and emerged from that dark chapter stronger and more united, we cannot help but believe that the old hatreds shall someday pass; that the lines of tribe shall soon dissolve; that as the world grows smaller, our common humanity shall reveal itself and that America must play its role in ushering in a new era of peace,” he said.

Obama reached out to the nations of the world in his speech. He told them that America “is a friend of each nation, and every man, woman and child who seeks a future of peace and dignity, and that we are ready to lead once more.”

He also spoke to the Muslim world, saying America seeks a new way forward, based on mutual interest and respect.

“As we consider the road that unfolds before us, we remember with humble gratitude those brave Americans who, at this very hour, patrol far-off deserts and distant mountains,” the president said. “They have something to tell us, just as the fallen heroes who lie in Arlington (National Cemetery) whisper through the ages. We honor them not only because they are guardians of our liberty, but because they embody the spirit of service; a willingness to find meaning in something greater than themselves.”

He called on all Americans to shoulder that burden of service. He said it is the faith and determination of the American people upon which this nation relies.

“Greatness is never a given. It must be earned,” he said. “Our journey has never been one of shortcuts or settling for less. It has not been the path for the faint-hearted – for those who prefer leisure over work, or seek only the pleasures of riches and fame.”

The faith and determination of Americans can serve the nation well in a time rife with challenges.

“Our nation is at war against a far-reaching network of violence and hatred,” the president said. “Our economy is badly weakened, a consequence of greed and irresponsibility

on the part of some, but also our collective failure to make hard choices and prepare the nation for a new age.”

Americans have lost their homes, their jobs, their businesses and health care is too costly, he said. Schools are failing too many, and the American energy policy plays into the hands of the nation’s enemies.

“These are the indicators of crisis, subject to data and statistics,” he said.

These are disturbing, but more disturbing is a sapping of confidence and the fear that with this decline the next generation must lower its sights, he said.

“Today I say to you that the challenges we face are real,” the president said. “They are serious, and they are many. They will not be met easily or in a short span of time. But know this, America: They will be met.”

While the challenges of this age are new, the values that have seen the country

through in the past will best serve the nation, Obama said. “Honesty and hard work, courage and fair play, tolerance and curiosity, loyalty and patriotism -- these things are old, but these things are true,” he said.

America must return to these truths, he said. “What is required of us now is a new era of responsibility -- a recognition on the part of every American that we have duties to ourselves, our nation and the world, duties that we do not grudgingly accept but rather seize gladly, firm in the knowledge that there is nothing so satisfying to the spirit, so defining of our character, than giving our all to a difficult task,” Obama said.

“This is the price and the promise of citizenship,” he said. “This is the source of our confidence, the knowledge that God calls on us to shape an uncertain destiny.”

If Americans seize this responsibility, then the challenges will be surmounted, he said.

“Let it be said by our children’s children that when we were tested we refused to let this journey end, that we did not turn back nor did we falter; and with eyes fixed on the horizon and God’s grace upon us, we carried forth that great gift of freedom and delivered it safely to future generations,” Obama said. 



Photos by David McNew

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