

DUTY



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FIRST!

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Leading the Way

Leadership conference speaks
to past while planning for future

- Division's culinary team serves up winners at competition
- Big Red One's brigades share recent undertakings

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 BRO 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.

April 2011 | www.riley.army.mil

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COVER: Four 1st Infantry Division Soldiers stand ready to present the colors at the formal dinner of Senior Leaders Conference that was held at the Cantigny Visitors Center on March 7.

PHOTO BY SGT. KEVIN PARRY, 1ST DIVISION PAO

CONTENTS

Departments

Danger 6
Soldiers forging a path
to continued success **2**

Danger 7
SMAs continue to act as
positive role models

Features

Cantigny bound
Leaders flock to event
at Cantigny museum **4**

Cooking up winners
Big Red One culinary
team tastes victory **8**



28

3



Division News

1st HBCT
Maintenance unit helps keep
Iraqi Army rolling forward **12**

2nd HBCT
Fire-range exercises
sharpening reflexes **16**

3rd IBCT
Task Force Rakkasan transfers
command to Task Force Duke **18**

4th IBCT
Soldier talks Kansas Heritage
with elementary students **20**

CAB
Brigade returns from second
deployment in 5 years **22**

1st SB
G.I. Jane event keeps
spouses locked and loaded **24**

4th MEB
Army chief of staff praises
Fort Leonard Wood efforts **26**

75th Fires
"Best By" competition makes
triumphant return

Soldiers—Forging the path

Maj. Gen. Vincent Brooks

Soldiers, NCOs and officers of the 1st Infantry Division, what you do every day is a credit and inspiration to the United States Army, the Flint Hills Region, the entire state of Kansas, and indeed, to America.

Our successes have been noted throughout history and written in the halls of victory. To this very day, whether the sun rises on the U.S. flags of Forts Riley, Leonard Wood, Sill, and Knox or over the heads of our deployed brothers and sisters in Afghanistan or Iraq, every success that our great division accomplishes is laid at the feet of Lady Victory, and she smiles.

Some of our greatest recent successes are by the aviators of the “Demon” brigade who have just returned home from a year long deployment, and 1st Sustainment Brigade, who are also preparing to come home.

While some celebrate and reunite with their families and friends who awaited



their return, many of our fellow Big Red One warriors are heading out the door to continue the work of democracy and peace. We are certain they will accomplish many great things and add to our legacy of honor for future generations.

As you flip through these pages,

you’ll experience what it means to be a member of the 1st Inf. Div.

You’ll find examples from each of our brigades, here and abroad, on what they do and the missions they take pride in.

We are the Big Red One, remembered throughout history as our Nation’s first and oldest Division; the One who leads from the front, and is the first to thirst for a fight; as the one who is the “toast of the Army, the favorite son”; and the One who can be counted on to bring success, ever-moving forward into where there is simply no other option than victory.

Enjoy the enclosed stories of our division’s successes and know this is just a small sample of the great things the Big Red One is accomplishing every day, with that ever resounding motto in our ears and in our hearts.

No Mission Too Difficult, No Sacrifice Too Great ... Duty First! 

Leading by example

Division Command Sgt. Maj. Jim Champagne

The Big Red One, don’t you just love it? The pride that swells day in and day out as we hear about the great things our Soldiers in the 1st Infantry Division are accomplishing on a daily basis is phenomenal.

Whether here at Fort Riley, Fort Leonard Wood, Fort Sill, Fort Knox, or currently deployed overseas, our men and women are in the constant search of “Mission Success,” and everyday they’re finding it, effectively continuing the historic legacy of Victory that our division knows so well.

Such consistent victory not only swells my own pride, but it shows the kind of leadership present in each of our units, the kind of leadership that can often be found in today’s non-commissioned officer, who illustrates consistent professionalism, competence and love for their time-honored corps, exemplified by outgoing Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth Preston.

Sworn in as the 13th SMA in 2004, I want to personally thank SMA Preston for his dedication and leadership that every NCO can aspire to.

During his time spent as the Army Chief of Staff personal adviser on all enlisted-related matters, particularly in



areas affecting Soldier training and quality of life, we can all see the efforts of his labor during his tenure as SMA before retiring March 1, making him the longest to serve in the position.

With SMA Preston stepping down, I want to congratulate and wish the same amount of success upon new SMA Raymond Chandler III.

Chandler already has accomplished much in his 30 years of service to this great nation, one of which was serving in a forward position with the Big Red One. Such experience further illustrates that his leadership qualities will make

our NCOs on the ground, the backbone of the Army, ever stronger.

Chandler is not the first Big Red One Soldier to reach the position. Known to be the protocol equivalent of a three-star lieutenant general, he joins former SMA William Wooldridge, who led his 1st Inf. Div. troopers in both World War II and Vietnam before taking up his position as the first Sergeant Major of the Army in July 1966 to August 1968.

SMA William Bainbridge was the next BRO alumnus to assume the title in July 1975 through June 1979, followed by SMA Glen Morrell in July 1983, before handing over the position in July 1987.

Soldiers, we are doing great things. It is clearly illustrated that no matter the year, leadership, duty and honor flow through the hearts of the men and women serving in the ranks of the 1st Inf. Div. Indeed, those three words continue to influence those of our ranks, from the junior NCO all the way to the senior enlisted member of the Army, the Sergeant Major of the Army.

Keep at it, keep aspiring for daily success and lead from the front.

Now ... get after it! 

Members of the 'Victory Five' and former veterans of the 1st Inf. Div. pose for a photo, March 8 at the 1st Division Museum at Cantigny in Chicago, Ill. The "Victory Five" participated in the museum's program, "A Date with History" which features discussions with authors, historians and special guest speakers.



taking the Lead

Big Red One leaders remember unit's past to build for its future

Stories & photos by Stephanie Hoff

AN ARABIAN PROVERB STATES, "Every day of your life is a page of your history." For the Soldiers of the 1st Infantry Division, those pages date back nearly 94 years when the division, commonly known as the "Big Red One," was formed.

More than 80 senior leaders of the 1st Inf. Div., accompanied by local Fort Riley community leaders, traveled to Chicago, Ill., March 6 to 9 to participate in a Senior Leaders' Conference at the 1st Division Museum at Cantigny Park.

The conference was designed to allow attendees the opportunity to not only review the rich history of the division featured in the museum, but also to evaluate the recent experiences that occurred during the deployment of the division's headquarters to Iraq that concluded in January.

"This is ... a remarkable museum, and we thought this would be a great place for us to come, off site from Fort Riley, and reassemble much of the team

This [1st Division] is history that lives. This provides an opportunity to look ahead and look backward and capture lessons from our recent experiences, and then to chart a course for the next four to five years for the Big Red One"

**— Maj. Gen. Vincent Brooks,
commanding general of the 1st Infantry Division and Fort Riley**

that served together in Iraq, including some of our other government agency friends and those who've already changed station to other assignments," said Maj. Gen. Vincent Brooks, commanding general of the 1st Inf. Div. and Fort Riley. "This is history that lives. This provides an opportunity to look

ahead and look backward and capture lessons from our recent experiences, and then to chart a course for the next four to five years for the Big Red One."

The 1st Division Museum, located on 500 acres of land known as Cantigny Park, features military equipment and
(continued on page 6)

(continued from page 5)

statues honoring the division, as well as the former home of the late Col. Robert McCormick, who named the facilities after a life-defining battle, the Battle of Cantigny in France, the first American victory during World War I.

The grounds now house the division's museum, which features displays of every major conflict the Big Red One has served in.

"Other than Fort Riley, there is no other place more important to the Big Red One (than Cantigny Park)," said Paul Herbert, the museum's executive director. "We're proud of the great tradition of having military at Cantigny. It's more than a museum—it's an active, live relationship with the museum and the Big Red One."

During their visit to the museum, the leaders participated in working groups focused on topics including Family concerns during deployments; communication between units serving in theater and at home; and partnerships with Fort Riley's local communities.

"Not everybody was on the same page during this last year (when the division's headquarters deployed). There are all these pieces of the puzzle that may or may not fall into place. Fort Riley's influence is far greater than just Junction City or just Manhattan or even the other surrounding communities," said Ben Bennett, Geary County commissioner. "I think now we have a better understanding of why there were some communication problems between the communities and the fort."

In keeping with the history of the division the museum honors, the unit's leadership donated several artifacts from its recent deployment to the museum, including a flag flown over the top of the division headquarters and rocket shells the unit recovered after attacks.

The "Victory Five" participated in the museum's program, "A Date with History" on the last evening of their visit.

Typically featuring discussions with



RIGHT: Brig. Gen. David Petersen, deputy commanding general of the 1st Inf. Div.—rear, poses for a picture with 12-year-old James Imundo on March 8 at the 1st Division Museum at Cantigny Park, in Chicago Ill. ABOVE: Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Timothy Mallard of Division Headquarters and Headquarters Co., 1st Inf. Div. speaks to spouses at Cantigny Park. More than 80 senior leaders of the 1st Inf. Div., accompanied by local Fort Riley community leaders, traveled to the museum to participate in a Senior Leaders' Conference at the 1st Division Museum at Cantigny Park.

authors, historians and special guest speakers, the forum featured the division's top leaders providing personal accounts of the deployment and fielding questions from those in attendance.

For 12-year-old James Imundo, who plans on one day joining the military, the chance to listen to the leaders talk about the deployment and meet Brooks, as well as Brig. Gen. David Petersen, 1st Inf. Div.'s deputy commanding general—rear, the experience was one he said he will remember for years to come.

"This has been a great experience for him," said James' mother, Kim. "Getting to talk personally with the generals and hearing about their experiences during the deployment meant a great deal to him."

Whether it was reviewing nearly century-old artifacts or discussing topics that occurred within the past year,



the division's senior leaders said they took away valuable lessons to help build a bigger and brighter future for their historic unit.

"Right now our mission is to reset and prepare for our next mission, but we've just come off a great deployment in southern Iraq," Brooks said. "Every deployment, for a unit, is an addition to the history that already exists ... to come back and renew our friendships and relationships and deposit our piece of history at (the 1st Division Museum); it has just been a tremendous experience." 

Brooks addresses leaders

Tells elite forum about BRO's recent deployment to Iraq

Maj. Gen. Vincent Brooks, commanding general of the 1st Infantry Division and Fort Riley, joined the ranks of an elite group of individuals when he took to the podium at the Union League Club of Chicago on March 9.

Brooks served as the guest speaker for the club's popular morning civic affairs series, Breakfast@65West.

Launched in 2006, the forums feature top policymakers and expert panels who examine and discuss a wide range of policy issues. The club recently has featured visits by former President George W. Bush and Medal of Honor Recipient, Staff Sgt. Salvatore Giunta.

"The general is known for how brilliant he is as a speaker and I'm privileged to hear him talk," said Art Degroat, director of military affairs for Kansas State University. "He's like looking at a good diamond. You just keep seeing the different facets of information. It's not redundant; you get different perspectives of what he's telling us about his experience. It's compelling every single time."

Brooks spoke to a packed house of approximately 200 individuals about the recent deployment of the division's headquarters. On Feb. 2, 2010, the division's headquarters assumed authority for United States Division-South, Iraq, an area roughly the size of the state of Washington that encompasses nine provinces.

"We had a wide array of responsibilities over an area that was very large," Brooks said. "The Big Red One as U.S. Division-South was that of a trusted partner and that's with real validity. We were advise and assisting. We had to be a partner to U.S. entities and Iraq entities," he continued, adding that with the start of Operation New Dawn, beginning in September 2010, the unit was able to physically witness the shift from conducting combat operations to their new Iraqi Security Forces advise and assist roles.

"We saw considerable improvement to security operations, certainly far less violence than what we experienced in our previous deployments there, significantly less," Brooks said.

While great strides have been achieved in Iraq, Brooks stressed that there are still advances that need to be made in the country. Small counter insurgencies are still being experienced but are very localized and



Maj. Gen. Vincent Brooks, commanding general of the 1st Inf. Div. and Fort Riley, speaks at the Union League Club of Chicago on March 9. Brooks was the guest speaker for the club's elite program, Breakfast@65West, which features prominent guests who discuss a wide range of policy issues. Brooks shared experiences during the recent deployment of the division's headquarters.

not on a broad spectrum like it had been during previous deployments.

"Our Soldiers never had the opportunity to forget that they were in a dangerous place. We were often reminded of that by the adversaries of the United States and the adversaries of Iraq. Our Soldiers always kept their edge and did remarkably well. We saw Iraq move forward; particularly in southern Iraq. Some describe that the progress made there is a year or so ahead of the rest of the country. In southern Iraq there is a brightness, there is a sense of hope that things are really starting to get happening and they really want to have a relationship with the United States."

The country of Iraq has experienced a change for the better, has established the groundwork for the country to continue to move forward and has the prospective for a bright future.

"(Iraq) has so much extraordinary potential that it's difficult to describe it," Brooks said. "We want them to be our friends. We've committed blood and treasure to them; they know that. It's a remarkable piece of history and a remarkable experience to be a part of." 



FROM LEFT: Spc. Deryl McDaniel helps put on the finishing touches to a batch of gumbo-stuffed chicken breasts; Spc. Bradley Barta cooks up his best work; and Spc. Adam Berry prepares his appetizer, all during the Field Competition on March 7 during the 36th Annual Culinary Arts Competition held in Fort Lee, Va., Feb. 26 to March 11. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** Sgt. 1st Class William McGinley, Big Red One Fort Riley Culinary Team manager, continues to work on his fish and seaweed design during the ice sculpting competition March 6.

servicing up SUCCESS

Big Red One culinary team takes silver in Field Competition

Stories & photos by Jordan Chapman

THE SMELLS OF SUCCESS HAD A MARDI GRAS flavor to it March 7, wafting out of an army containerized kitchen housing five of the Big Red One Fort Riley Culinary Team's Soldiers, cooking away as they prepared a three course meal for 80 while the remaining team members prepared the tables, coordinated their serving plan and generally, had fun.

Otherwise known as the Field Competition at the 36th Annual Culinary Arts Competition held in Fort Lee, Va., the 1st Infantry Division chefs tackled the challenge by whipping up a panko crusted crab cake with red chili mayo and a shrimp beignet and tomato salad with honey vinaigrette for an appetizer, a gumbo stuffed chicken breast with quinoa jambalaya, stewed okra and whiskey crawfish sauce for the main course and vanilla custard with red velvet, chocolate and white cake puffs, chocolate lattice and raspberry sauce for dessert.

Not only was the food accepted with vigor from their guests, thanking the Soldiers later for the tasteful adventure into the south's finest delights, but each plate served was prepared as though coming out of the kitchen of the finest restaurant.

No easy feat, these Soldiers know what it takes, and they received a silver medal for it.

Spc. Bradley Barta and Pfc. Karl Houtz handled the entrée, Spc. Deryl McDaniel and Spc. Jonathan Rice prepared the desserts and Spc. Adam Berry, team captain, took care of the appetizers.

Though the three course meal was delegated out to run more efficiently, teamwork and a crossover of tasks was evident as each cook could be seen chipping in appetizer, entrée or dessert work if their portion of the meal had been finished.

The secret to handling the chaos of tight quarters and a massive amount of food that needs to be aesthetically organized on plates before the scrutiny of judges? The team captain has the answer.

"We all want to produce the same meal, get it out, but we also want to have fun doing it and not get stressed out, not panic, not lose our cool or make mistakes," Berry said, who seemed to be

(continued on page 10)



Beauty is in 'ice' of the beholder Big Red One culinary manager carves out a bronze

Every 10 to 15 minutes Sgt. 1st Class William McGinley, Big Red One Fort Riley Culinary team manager, would stand up, walk over to a table holding a chainsaw and many other ice cutting tools, trade out safety glasses for a pair that weren't all fogged up, wipe his face with a paper towel and ball his hands into fists, effectively wringing his gloves free of the ice cold water they so eagerly soaked up. He was cold and wet, but such is the price of art.

Starting with a nothing more than an approximate 300 pound block of ice, which immediately began to melt in the 60 degree weather, McGinley started his sculpture by taking a drill and free handing a rough sketch on the front of the ice to act as a guide for his initial cuts.

The goal, a fish swimming past three stocks of seaweed. "Basically what I want to do is do something with a lot of 'movement' to it," McGinley said, describing why he chose the

fish for this year's ice sculpting competition. "With the fish I can make the fins curve and wilt over. I want to pick something real challenging," he said, hoping a flawless sculpture with a high difficulty level could earn him a gold medal. Not everyone has the vision to see a block of ice and make it into something pleasing to the eye. For

those that can, there are many ways to go about it.

One way is to take paper that has the design on it and place it on the front of the ice to give guidelines for the initial cuts, a technique McGinley didn't employ this time, but could be seen used by others.

"Since I have done this (sculpture) before, I just free hand drew it. Then what you want to do is take your chainsaw and take your big pieces of ice out of the way so you can get to where you can actually start carving and shaping (the ice)," he explained.

Each competitor had three hours to complete their sculpture, but McGinley noted afterward he usually finished his sculpture within about two hours.

The left over time was needed in this event, as not everything went completely to plan. The warm weather caused the ice to melt quicker than it normally does this time of year in Kansas and, hence, not hold together as well as it should.

Toward the end of the sculpting process, a piece of seaweed behind the fish was jarred loose, which McGinley tried to mend, but which later fell again, taking off the tail of the fish.

"I was making my tail really thin and was putting some movement in it when it broke," McGinley said. Every good artist can fix his work when disaster strikes, though.

"I had to improvise, had to use some CPR to get it going again," he laughed. "The sculpture has some seaweed coming up behind it so I just turned that (seaweed) into the tail that fell off. It kind of looked like the tail was curling around (the back)," he described. "It was super fun for me."

McGinley received a bronze medal for his creation.

Division takes gold in student team skills

The five Soldiers making up the Big Red One Fort Riley Culinary team's Student Skills group had only been practicing together for about a month, but that didn't stop them from taking home the gold at the largest culinary competition in the United States on March 6.

An event within the 36th Annual Culinary Arts Competition reserved for junior team members and apprentices of an E-5 rank and below, the Student Skills competition consists of two phases that tests the basic culinary skills and abilities of participants while challenging them to complete a four course meal.

Spc. Bradley Barta, team captain, Sgt. Akos Szimandel, Spc. Susan Hohensee, Pfc. Karl Houtz and Pfc. Martha Cobble were more than up for the challenge. They completed an 80 minute relay-style event where each team member had to race against time in completing a randomly drawn task, to include meat butchery, fish filleting, classic vegetable knife cuts and pastry techniques.

They were then tasked with preparing and serving a four course meal within 90 minutes in a kitchen that was, more or less, standing room only.

The cramped quarters didn't stop them. Instead, with "Big Red One" style, they overcame and used the disadvantage to pull together ever closer.

Houtz joked that it helped communication. "You didn't have to talk very loud to be heard," he laughed. "It's very small. We were bumping in to each other but stress levels didn't shoot up too high. We all kept our cool and the teamwork was great."

"I think we did awesome," Houtz continued, echoed later by Barta who felt they did everything correctly.

"We took a team who hadn't

been together very long and not had a lot of time to practice and we worked together in some way that I've never seen before," he said, clearly still running high on adrenaline after his team was announced as a gold medal finisher.

Though the work inside the kitchen was 100 percent skill, Barta felt their team got lucky when the time

came for each team member to randomly draw which skills task they would be working with: meat, fish, vegetable or pastries.

"Everyone drew their strongest point ... and that just set the tone for the rest of the competition," he said, noting that he drew the pastries card, Szimandel was tasked with fish filleting, Hohensee took on the meat butchery and Houtz faced the classic, though reportedly dreaded, vegetable knife cuts.

"It's a miracle," Barta said smiling. "We did great."

Everyone was ecstatic about the win, but education is still at the heart of the competition, something that wasn't short on hand with professional judges circling the tables, sometimes seen offering tips and pointers to the many Soldiers laboring behind the counters.

"Throughout the entire culinary world you always need your specific skills," Hohensee said, describing the skills tested within the Student Skills competition as areas in the cooking world that a good chef will always need to have mastered. 

(continued from page 9)

everywhere at once, but admittedly, in his element.

"I love to multitask. If I'm standing around, I feel like I'm not doing anything. So that's how I've always been in the kitchen, it's been a really good experience," he said, explaining they had four hours to prepare the meal.

"Four hours is not a lot of time, especially with this quantity of people," Berry continued, noting that the containerized kitchen's equipment is different than what they're used to. With



the pots and pans being more robust in nature, the heating and cooking time can be extended.

"It's an art, it's backwards planning," Barta said in regards to making sure the meal is finished at the right time.

The team's demonstration meal, a replica of the competition dish served to 1st Infantry Division Leaders Feb. 17, helped in that respect.

"The demo showed us what we were getting ourselves into," Rice said. "Eighty people is totally different than 20, so we knew what we were heading for," he continued, wishing that it wasn't just special events that they are allowed to cook like this for Soldiers. "A meal like this is possible any time."

The culinary team found that at the end of every competition day there was some reason for celebration. On the evening of March 7, it was the Field Competition Team that could rest easy.

"All of our team worked together as they should have been and we did a great job ... if any of us had a free moment they would help someone that was struggling or needed something done, that's kind of how we work. We're very good at that. We don't have to be told what to do, we just do it," Berry said. "I'm very proud of the team."

Culinary team sets a medal-winning table

These men and women wear white coats, spend countless hours working beneath the lights paying attention to every single detail of their subject matter. Their hands are steady and their purpose clear, they're the Soldiers of the Big Red One Fort Riley Culinary Team, taking their talent to the 36th Annual Culinary Arts Competition held at Fort Lee, Va., Feb. 26 to March 11.

The nine Soldiers making up the 1st Infantry Division team spent March 4 and 5 putting together their "Wizard of Oz" themed table display for the competition. They aren't doctors, but considering their attire and their attention to detail, perhaps they should be.

Complete with Hors d' Oeuvres, six appetizers, a meat platter, a five-course meal, a seafood platter, six desserts, petit flors and an "Oz" themed edible creation centering each display within the whole table display, there isn't much question why many visitors to the Fort Lee Post Field house lingered around the 1st Inf. Div. table.

"Fort Riley really brought it this year," one passing gentlemen stated to his colleague, while another bent down to a plate to get a closer look at Pfc. Martha Cobble's intricately designed chocolate covered cherries.

"I think the table was spectacular, I was really impressed," stated CW5 David Longstaff, competition judge. "Sometimes a sleeper comes along and when you see it, it's impressive," he continued, explaining the different aspects the judges need to look into to accurately judge a table.

"As a table as a whole, we look to see if they are in compliance with the rules. Did they understand what the competition is all about ... once we determine that, we look at technique. Is it food you want to eat," he asked, saying they then look to see if the food was prepared correctly and if it was displayed correctly.

Taking the time to prepare the food and set up the display correctly was key.

"We started yesterday morning (March 4)," said Sgt. 1st Class William McGinley, team manager, the morning of March 5. "When we had our demo at Fort Riley (Feb. 17) we had all the way up to 11:30 a.m. when everyone arrived, so we had a lot more time then. Here, we had to start moving things over at four in the morning," he explained. "By 6:30 (a.m.), we were done."

The night was long, and teammates came in to see how they placed, congratulating each other with high-fives and tired smiles before retreating back to their hotels for a few hours rest. "It was a long night," McGinley said, explaining that most of the night was spent in their own private kitchen, provided to each of the 20 teams during the competition.

Half the challenge is getting the food moved over to the field house without it falling apart.

"The petit flors, it's really hard because those are super delicate. We try to carry (everything) into a van and slowly drive it over. Any little bump could break any piece of that," McGinley said, noting they made a lot of extra pieces to plan for such mishaps.

One area that did cause some trouble was the mirror underneath the meat platter.

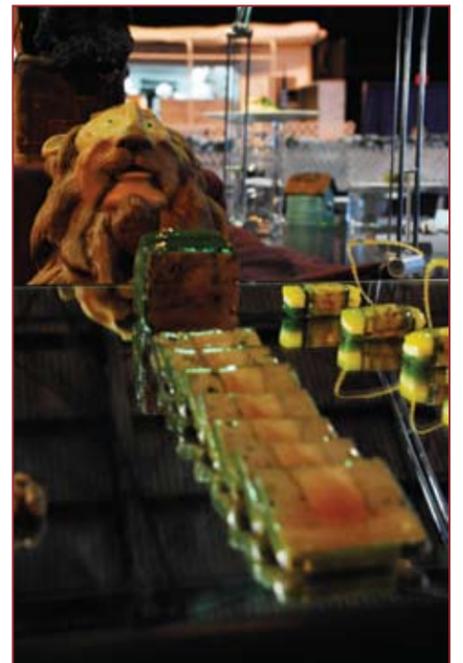
"That got shaken up on the way here and slid ... and smudged the mirror. We had to take everything off, clean the mirror and put everything back on," he said.

The trouble was worth the pay off. Every Soldier but one walked away from the table with a medal.

Cobble came away with a Gold medal for her work on the petit flors, small desserts that must all look the same, later taking home the Best in Show trophy for her tiny creations.

FORT RILEY CULINARY ARTS TEAM MEDALS

- Sgt. 1st Class William McGinley - 1 Gold, 2 Bronze
- Sgt. Akos Szimandel - 1 Gold, 1 Silver
- Spc. Susan Hohensee - 1 Gold, 1 Silver, 1 Bronze
- Spc. Bradley Barta - 1 Gold, 1 Bronze
- Spc. Adam Berry - 1 Silver, 2 Bronze
- Spc. Deryl McDaniel - 3 Bronze, 1 Silver
- Spc. Jonathan Rice - 3 Bronze, 1 Silver
- Pfc. Martha Cobble - 2 Gold and Best in Show Trophy (Petit Flors)
- Pfc. Karl Houtz - 1 Gold, 1 Bronze, 1 Silver



OPPOSITE PAGE: From left, Pfc. Martha Cobble, Pfc. Karl Houtz, Sgt. Akos Szimandel, Spc. Susan Hohensee and Spc. Bradley Barta, pose before the start of the Student Skills team competition March 6 at the 36th Annual Culinary Arts Competition held at Fort Lee, Va. **ABOVE:** A portion of Spc. Jonathan Rice's meat platter sits on display during the Big Red One Fort Riley Culinary team's table display.

"It's like a dessert shrunk down," she said. "The difficulty level, oh my, getting everything to look exactly the same, they all have to be a mirror of each other," she stated, exasperated and excited.

"In the beginning, it took me one week just to do one. So last night, I was struggling to get all of them done, but I got it together," she continued, grateful to her team for all their support and advice throughout training and the competition. 



COURTESY PHOTO

U.S. Soldiers of 1st AATF taught Iraqi soldiers, like the soldier shown above, to maintain their vehicles and equipment as part of an ongoing effort by 101st BSB to improve 12th Iraq Army Division's logistics and maintenance capabilities. Soldiers of 101st BSB regularly support the Security Transition Team Soldiers providing additional resources and subject matter experts to assist the Soldiers of the Iraqi logistics battalion.

STAYING ROADWORTHY

Maintenance unit trains Iraqi mechanics to help keep 12th Iraqi Army Division a self-sustaining force

*Pfc. Alyxandra McChesney
1st AATF PAO*

KIRKUK, Iraq—Iraqi noncommissioned officers and warrant officers issued commands as their mechanics worked to change the tire on an armored Humvee at Kirkuk Iraqi Military Base on Jan. 20.

Soldiers of Company A, 101st Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, supervised the training of the Iraqi mechanics as part of U.S. forces' mission to advise, train and assist Iraqi Army units in support of Operation New Dawn.

"The objective of the training is to allow the 12th Iraqi Army Division to become self-sustaining when it comes to logistics and maintenance," said Maj. Edward Huddleston, operations officer, 101st BSB, 101st AATF.

"The 12th Iraqi Army Division's logistics and transportation units have come a long way in just the few months that we've been advising them," said Huddleston, a Springfield, Ill. native. "Already they are recovering vehicles on their own when they break down. They used to just wait for us to help them, now they do it themselves."

“The 12th Iraqi Army Division's logistics and transportation units have come a long way in just the few months that we've been advising them.”

**— Maj. Edward Huddleston, operations officer
101st BSB, 101st AATF**

(continued on page 14)



COURTESY PHOTO

Iraqi mechanics watched and learned as senior Iraqi NCOs and warrant officers showed the proper way to change fuel filters and half-shaft bolts on a drive shaft of a Humvee's front differential.

(continued from page 13)

U.S. Soldiers of 1st AATF taught Iraqi soldiers to maintain their vehicles and equipment as part of an ongoing effort by 101st BSB to improve 12th IA Div.'s logistics and maintenance capabilities.

Soldiers of 101st BSB regularly support the Security Transition Team Soldiers providing additional resources and subject matter experts to assist the Soldiers of the Iraqi logistics battalion.

Iraqi mechanics watched and learned as senior Iraqi NCOs and warrant officers showed the proper way to change fuel filters and half-shaft bolts on a drive shaft of a Humvee's front differential.

According to the U.S. advisory team, Maj. Hashen, commander, Iraqi Maintenance Company, 49th Brigade, 12th IA Div., transformed the unit into a cohesive and effective support element.

"Maj. Hashen has done really great things with this company, and I'm excited every day to work with him," said Staff Sgt. Zebulon Dannar, a member of the 12th STT advisory team. "His leadership reflects in the attitude of this company's soldiers."

The Iraqi soldiers are proud of their unit and perform for their commander, said Dannar, who hails from Chadron, Neb.

Hashen supervised the training as the commander, putting his NCOs and warrant officers in charge of teaching mechanics specific tasks.

"A good unit must empower its NCO and its warrant officers," Hashen said.

"Having worked with the American forces in 2005 and 2007, I see this as a great strength of (the U.S.) Army," he said. "Before in the Iraqi Army, too much was centered on the officers—giving the NCOs and warrant officers

more training and more authority is something that we have adopted from the Americans."

In addition to supervising the training, Hashen said he would like the advisory team to provide tactical training for the maintenance company support teams.

"I am very grateful for the training and support that the Americans have given us here," Hashen said. "We will do whatever we have to do to accomplish the mission."

"In the past we would have a flat tire and no jack to lift the vehicle. So we would pile rocks under the axle and dig a hole deep enough under the wheel to remove it," Hashen said. "Now, with American help, we have more resources and training and our job is easier—but we will still do everything in our power to keep our vehicles operational." ▀

A meeting of new, old

'Devil' Brigade, Iraqi army forming sound partnership

Spc. Kandi Huggins
1st AATF PAO

CONTINGENCY OPERATING SITE WARRIOR, Iraq—The 12th Iraqi Army Division, under the command of staff Brig. Gen. Sameer Abdul Kareen, hosted a partnership luncheon with the "Devil" Brigade, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, from Fort Riley, Kan., at the 12th Iraqi Army Division Headquarters.

The luncheon provided an opportunity for the two units to strengthen the relationship built between the 12th IA Div. and its partner American unit.

From a historical perspective, the units' partnership is somewhat ironic.

The 12th IA Div. is the newest division in the Iraqi Army; while the Devil Brigade is the oldest continually active unit in the U.S. Army.

Col. Eric Welsh, commander, 1st AATF, 1st Inf. Div., concluded the luncheon by presenting Sameer and his staff with brigade coins.

Welsh used the opportunity as a chance to explain the history of the Army's oldest brigade.

"While this is just a piece of metal that can be made by anyone, the significance of this coin is what is important," said Welsh. "This signifies the Devil Brigade as being the Army's oldest continually active unit—and a unit that has never retreated from any challenge in its long history."

He explained the Devil Brigade earned its namesake in the trenches of World War I, when German soldiers witnessed the brigade's continuous attacks despite being hit with poison gas, artillery and machinegun fire.

The Germans believed that only devils could survive in such an environment as the American Soldiers continued to advance. Upon hearing this the brigade soon adopted the moniker for its own as a source of pride.

"Today," said Welsh, "both Americans and Iraqis have endured sacrifices to uphold the freedoms we believe in, and I present this to you as a small token of the sacrifices your people have endured."

"There is no mission too difficult, and there is no sacrifice too great," concluded Welsh, referencing the motto of the 1st Inf. Div.

In addition to the luncheon providing a chance to talk about unit history, the event also gave both staffs the op-



SPC. KANDI HUGGINS, 1ST AATF PAO, 1ST INF. DIV., USD-N

TOP: Col. Eric Welsh, commander, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, from Fort Riley, Kan., presents staff Brig. Gen. Sameer Abdul Kareen, commander of the 12th Iraqi Army Division, with a "Devil" Brigade coin after a luncheon between the two staffs at the 12th IA Div. Headquarters, Kirkuk, Iraq. **ABOVE:** Staff Brig. Gen. Sameer Abdul Kareen, left, hosts a luncheon for the command and staff of 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, at the 12th Iraqi Army Division Headquarters, Kirkuk, Iraq.

portunity to meet each other and discuss ways to improve their respective units.

"I think this is a great opportunity to meet in an informal setting and exchange ideas about how to be better staff officers," said Maj. Danny Cazier, who advises the Iraqi public relations and information operations officers of the 12th IA Div.

"Sometimes the best ideas don't get talked about inside an office," he said. "Often it's when we are sitting down at lunch or drinking chai." ▀



It's all in the Reflexes

'Griffin' Battalion Soldiers conduct reflexive fire range to enhance urban combat abilities

By Sgt. Michallie K. Harrison
2nd AAB PAO

BAGHDAD—Soldiers with Company B, Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division—Center conducted reflexive fire training with their M-4 and M-16 rifles and M-9 pistols at Caughman Range at Camp Liberty, Iraq.

The Soldiers followed zeroing their weapons with the reflexive fire portion of the range. A reflexive fire range is different than a typical qualification range, in that Soldiers are taught to quickly engage close-range targets to prepare properly for close-quarters battle in an urban environment. The Soldiers also practiced changing weapon magazines and transitioning from rifle to pistol.

"During reflexive fire I learned to (acquire) my target in minimal time," said Pfc. Patrick Smith, a signal support systems specialist with STB, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div. and a Cedar Rapids, Iowa, native. "Quick reactions are essential in (combat) and this exercise gave me practice."

For many of the STB Soldiers, this was their first time participating in a reflexive fire in theater, and for others, their first time firing an M-9.

"I had a great time at the range," said Pfc. Darrick Jones, a signal support systems specialist with STB, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div. and a Newport News, Va., native. "Shooting the M-9 was my favorite part because it was a new experience."

Soldiers also practiced distinguishing hostile targets from friendly personnel by utilizing various shapes and colors on the targets. For each round, 1st Sgt. David Rieckmann, first sergeant of Company B, STB, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div. and a White Bluff, Tenn., native, called out Soldiers to their targets and gave the Soldiers approximately five seconds to raise their weapon and fire.

"The rationale for the Army conducting these types of ranges is to transform Soldiers into advanced marksmen and to raise proficiency and confidence in (their) marksmanship (abilities)," said 1st Lt. Billy Murphy, executive officer of Company B, STB, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div. and the range officer-in-charge. "This range was a welcome change of pace from the usual zero and qualification range." 

PFC. DARRICK JONES, 2ND AAB, 1ST INF. DIV., USD-C

FROM TOP: Spc. Shakida Boddy, left, a supply specialist with Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center and a Columbus, Ga., native, acquires a target during a reflexive fire at Camp Liberty, Iraq; Soldiers with Company B, Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center participate in a reflexive fire range; Soldiers with Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center acquire targets before firing their M-9 pistols.



31BCT



SP4 TOBEY WHITE, 3RD IBCT



SGT BENJAMIN NAVRATIL, U.S. ARMY STAFF

LEFT: U.S. Army Col. Viet Luong, commander of the 3rd BCT, 101st Airborne Div., and a resident of Fort Campbell, Ky., left, and U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Gregory Patton, a resident of Fort Campbell, Ky., right, case their brigade colors during a transfer of authority ceremony held in Khowst Province, Afghanistan. **RIGHT:** U.S. Army Col. Christopher Toner, a Topeka, Kan., native and commander of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, speaks at a Transfer of Authority ceremony held at Forward Operating Base Salerno, Afghanistan. TF Duke, based out of Fort Knox, Ky., will be operating in eastern Afghanistan for the next year.

a command Performance

Task Force Rakkasan hands over command to Task Force Duke

By Staff Sgt. Ben K. Navratil
3rd IBCT PAO

KHOWST PROVINCE, Afghanistan—The 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, Task Force Rakkasan, handed over command of the Khowst and Paktya provinces to the 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke, from Fort Knox, Ky., during a Jan. 30 transfer of authority ceremony at in the Khowst Province.

Task Force Rakkasan also cased its colors in preparation for its return to its home base at Fort Campbell, Ky., while the 3rd IBCT, 1st Inf. Div., uncased its own.

The ceremony was attended by Task Force Duke and Rakkasan Soldiers; Brig. Gen. Stephen Townsend, deputy commanding general of Combined Joint Task Force-101; Abdul Jabbar Naeemi, Khowst gov-

ernor; and several members of the Afghan national security forces. The outgoing Rakkasans wore Army Combat Uniforms, while the Duke Soldiers wore the newer multi-camouflage uniforms.

“The hard work, the sacrifice, the blood of the ANSF and coalition partners have helped meet the conditions for stability in the region,” Naeemi said, “and the enemy forces can no longer move freely.”

Rakkasan commander U.S. Army Col. Viet X. Luong, Fort Campbell, Ky., emphasized the progress made during his unit’s rotation.

“During the early moments of this rotation, the Taliban was winning in our provinces,” he said. “But this summer, our combined actions started to produce remarkable results. We began to take many enemies out of the fight. The security conditions improved, and we

began turning the tide against the Taliban.”

Speaking in both English and Pashto, U.S. Army Col. Christopher Toner, commander of Task Force Duke and a native of Topeka, Kan., thanked the Rakkasans for their service and sacrifices and pledged his assistance to the ANSF.

“Our brothers in the ANSF, we embrace you with a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation,” he said. “We are here now to continue the support the Rakkasans have given you over the past 12 months.”

As the ceremony drew to a close, Toner promised he and his Soldiers would help the Afghan people in their fight for their country.

“The Soldiers of the Duke Brigade are committed to using everything in their power to build Afghan capacity for providing security and stability to the region,” he said. 

Army’s Vice Chief talks TBI, PTSD

Chiarelli: Critical to eliminate stigma associated with disorders

By Maj. Travis Dettmer
3rd IBCT PAO

FORT KNOX, Ky.—Shortly before deploying to Afghanistan, leaders with the 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, met Dec. 12 with Gen. Peter W. Chiarelli, vice chief of staff of the Army, during a video teleconference at Skidgel Hall, Fort Knox.

The meeting addressed two common modern-day battlefield injuries—traumatic brain injury and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

PTSD and TBI are the signature wounds of this war, Chiarelli said, adding that 65 percent of all battlefield injuries fall into these two categories.

Although the number of Soldiers seeking medical treatment for these wounds has increased in recent years, Chiarelli said some Soldiers have been reluctant to report their injuries out of fear of being “pulled from the fight” or being viewed as weak.

“It is absolutely critical to eliminate the longstanding stigma of seeking help for these types of wounds,” said Chiarelli, who also said reporting these injuries will not only help the individual Soldier prevent compounding the effects of these wounds, but also preserve combat power on the battlefield.

According to Chiarelli, new battlefield protocols developed to deal with TBI and PTSD allow most Soldiers to receive treatment on their forward operating bases rather than be evacuated to Germany or the United States to be treated, which was a common practice until recently.

For example, Soldiers exposed to an improvised explosive device detonation or traumatic events are evaluated by base medical staff immediately upon



MAJ. TRAVIS DETTMER, 3RD IBCT

Soldiers with the 3rd IBCT, 1st Inf. Div., listen as Gen. Peter W. Chiarelli, vice chief of staff of the Army, talks to them via video teleconference about new battlefield protocols instituted for mitigating the effects of TBI and PTSD on deployed Soldiers. According to Chiarelli, these protocols are preserving combat power by allowing the majority of Soldiers who experience battlefield events common among sufferers of TBI and PTSD to “recover down range,” instead of being evacuated to Germany or the United States for treatment.

returning to the FOB to check for signs of a concussion and other non-visible injuries.

Those Soldiers suffering from possible concussions are prevented from conducting more missions for at least 24 hours and could be subject to further evaluation, depending on the severity of their symptoms. Taking these measures helps avoid the compounding effects that multiple concussions can have in a short period—effects that can increase the likelihood of lasting TBI in Soldiers.

When it comes to preventing PTSD, Soldiers are offered virtual treatment networks to help deal with the non-visible effects of traumatic events. Soldiers deal with these potential issues immediately in theater instead of waiting until they begin to exhibit signs several months, or even years, later.

“The majority (of Soldiers) are recovering down range,” said Chiarelli, who also stressed treating problems associated with TBI and PTSD is only possible when Soldiers who recognize

the signs seek help and take proactive measures.

Chiarelli also called on commanders to recognize that Soldiers with combat injuries like TBI deserve the Purple Heart.

“The fact is, if the Soldier meets the standards of the regulation, they are entitled to (the Purple Heart),” Chiarelli said, adding there are still commanders who are reluctant to put Soldiers in for a Purple Heart for lack of physical evidence of the injury.

“You don’t have that choice,” Chiarelli said.

In closing, Chiarelli addressed the Dukes directly and charged them to “look out for one another and help those who exhibit the signs of TBI and PTSD.” He also said it is important for family members to recognize the signs as well and take measures to help their Soldier.

“(It’s) all about the stigma. If families feel they can help identify the problem ... we will turn the corner on this,” Chiarelli said. 



SGT. GENE ARNOLD, 4TH IBCT PAO

LEFT: Capt. Jeremy White, logistics officer for 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, talks to students at Garfield Elementary School in Clay Center, Kan., about the Army's presence in Kansas during the school's Kansas Heritage Day. **ABOVE:** White describes the embellishments on his Stetson for the children at Garfield Elementary School.

Military history subject for day

*Dragon Brigade
Soldier talks
Kansas Heritage
with students*

By Sgt. Gene Arnold
4th IBCT PAO

CLAY CENTER, Kan. — In honor of the 150th year that Kansas has been a state, Garfield Elementary School in Clay Center, Kan., held a Kansas Heritage Day celebration.

Capt. Jeremy White, a logistical officer with Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, gave the students a presentation of the military's history in Kansas.

"I felt pretty honored when (I was told) that (the school) needed someone to come here; so, I volunteered to go," White said.

During White's slide show presentation, he told stories of how cavalry Soldiers wore their uniform, and showed the

students props such as a replica sword, riding boots, ammunition belt with sword hook, a uniform with Stetson and gauntlet gloves. He also gave a brief history on the purpose of Fort Riley and the Big Red One.

"Kansas Heritage Day is something that we've been doing to celebrate our state's birthday," said Connie Frigon, a fourth-grade teacher at Garfield Elementary School. "This is a way that we can celebrate and learn about our past and appreciate our heritage."

Fort Riley has been an intricate part of the surrounding communities for many years. This event is one of many that will help foster positive community relations needed to make an unbreakable bond.

"We have a lot of students in this building whose parents are deployed," said Beth Catlin, a fourth-grade teacher

at Garfield Elementary School. "I think it's very reassuring for them to know that their parents are being supported even though they are not here."

"Getting in touch with the kids is really important," White said. "It establishes a good foundation and trust. So, when they grow older and want to join the military they saw someone that showed them a good example."

In addition, the students were able to experience a wide variety of examples of what life would have been like as a child 150 years ago. The students were given a presentation about Native Americans present in Kansas during the Indian Wars, held a make-believe campfire and sang "Home on the Range." They also learned about different instruments, made homemade bread from scratch, hand-churned butter and made home remedies used before the creation of antibiotics. 🍪

Women get tips on maintaining resiliency during deployments

Sgt. Gene A. Arnold
4th IBCT PAO

FORT RILEY, Kan. — The spouses and loved ones of deployed Soldiers received tips on how to overcome the stresses of deployment during the fourth annual Women's Conference held at Riley's Conference Center Jan. 28.

The conference "is a good way to empower and inform the women of Fort Riley," said Kaitlin Krebs, wife of 1st Lt. Kyle Krebs, the executive officer of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division. "I also feel that it's a safe place because there are other women around who have been through what you are going through to share your concerns."

During the conference, the women asked questions to a panel of spouses about common concerns and received advice they could use in the future.



SGT. GENE ARNOLD, 4TH IBCT PAO

Kelly Kreis, the wife of Lt. Col. Paul Kreis, the deputy commander of the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, shares different ways to communicate with a loved one during deployment in a "Tips to Triumph and Grow during Deployment" class of Fort Riley's fourth-annual Women's Conference held at Riley's Conference Center.

"To me, (the conference) is kind of a spouse's form of Comprehensive Soldier Fitness," said Kelly Kreis, the wife of Lt. Col. Paul Kreis, the deputy commander for the Dragon brigade.

"It's about knowing what's out there for you," Kreis added. "It's going to date me, but I flash back to the 70s cartoons 'Knowledge is power' but that's what it is. It's knowledge of the programs and services out there that help you become more resilient."

The fourth-annual Women's Conference provided the women knowledge and information about the resources and agencies available to them on post and in the surrounding communities during deployments and reintegration.

The conference also offered a series of classes that were geared toward making a physical fitness routine and starting and maintaining a successful relationship during deployment. It also gave ways to maintain a positive outlook during that stressful time.

The conference "helps provide some insight, observation and personal experiences to our spouses," said Col. Joseph D. Wawro, the Dragon brigade commander, "which will then help them cope, provide better understanding, build resiliency and make them stronger." 🍪

Flying its last missions

Aviation brigade sees an Iraqi nation having 'turned the corner'

By Spc. Roland Hale
CAB PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq—The Army's last active-duty aviation brigade in Iraq is heading home after a yearlong deployment in support of operations Iraqi Freedom and New Dawn.

The enhanced Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division deployed from Fort Riley, Kan., last March, and quickly became a key player in U.S. Forces-Iraq's mission.

When it first arrived, the unit was one of four aviation brigades in Iraq. Over the course of the deployment, however, it assumed responsibility for all Army aviation operations in the country. It is now the Army's only aviation brigade in Iraq—bolstered to meet that charge with increased numbers of troops and aircraft.

With about 4,000 troops and more than 200 helicopters, the brigade is double the size of a normal aviation brigade. The increased numbers make it the Army's first and only enhanced aviation brigade.

The brigade has made good use of every aircraft. It leaves Iraq having flown about 125,000 hours in support of USF-I's mission.

"The statistics are an indication of what we've done to support the mission," said Col. Frank Muth, the brigade's commander. "What's behind the numbers are the hundreds more hours that Soldiers are turning wrenches to make the aircraft fly, supporting the mission."

The brigade's primary mission is the support of U.S. ground forces, which involves freedom of maneuver, counter indirect fire, route clearance, and con-



SPC. ROLAND HALE, CAB PAO

An Army UH-60 Black Hawk hovers above Taji Army Airfield on Feb. 13 before launching for a mission near Baghdad. The aircraft belongs to the Army's sole aviation brigade here, the CAB. With double the usual number of troops and aircraft, the unit is the Army's first and only enhanced combat aviation brigade.

voy security. It leaves with that mission accomplished, Muth said.

"We're ensuring we leave behind a safe and secure environment that allows the Iraqi government to flourish," Muth said.

The brigade's AH-64 Apache provided security above Iraqi cities while the country held its second set of parliamentary elections last March. After nine months of political deadlock following the inconclusive elections, the brigade watched the Iraqi parliament approve a new government.

The brigade also played its part in providing troops with air transportation between bases as much as possible. With improvised explosive devices as one of the leading killers of service members in Iraq, keeping U.S. forces off of the roads was one of

We're ensuring we leave behind a safe and secure environment that allows the Iraqi government to flourish."

— Col. Frank Muth
Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division

the brigade's top missions.

The brigade has transported about 300,000 personnel and 10 million pounds of cargo this deployment.

In addition to fulfilling the unit's mission, the brigade has seen drastic improvements in Iraq overall, Muth said.

"The Iraqi nation has turned a corner," Muth said. "What I see is more lights on, more commerce taking place, more traffic on the road, people moving around to do business."

The brigade also has invested its time in training with its Iraqi aviation counterparts.

At Camp Taji, one of the brigade's battalions has flown several partnership missions with an Iraqi squadron, as well as helped train Iraqi air traffic controllers. The brigade also has assisted ground forces in training Iraqis in air to ground integration operations.

The brigade is scheduled to end its mission in Iraq in March, when it will pass its mission to the California National Guard's 40th Combat Aviation Brigade.

The unit's overall impact in Iraq will depend on how well it prepares the 40th CAB to continue that mission, Muth said.

"The mark of a good unit leaving is when you hand off that mission to the new unit, the unit doesn't skip a beat. The mission isn't affected, and it's a smooth transition," Muth said. ▀

JORDAN CHAPMAN, DUTY FIRST! MAGAZINE

FROM LEFT: A happy family captures the moment after the first hugs and kisses following the first main body redeployment ceremony for the Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, early Feb. 22; Spc. Jonathan Terry holds 8-month old son, Christian, following the return of about 150 Combat Aviation Brigade Soldiers early Feb. 13.



Repeat defenders back home

CAB returns returns from second Iraqi deployment in last five years

By Jordan Chapman
Duty First! Magazine

For about 150 families and spouses on Fort Riley, Valentine's Day started at 3:30 a.m. Jan. 13, as they reunited with their Soldiers who had dedicated another yearlong deployment with the Enhanced Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division.

No one was happier, though, than 8-month-old Christian Terry, who was all wiggles and smiles as he and his mother, Allison, waited for Spc. Jonathan Terry, 601st Aviation Support Battalion, to walk through the door in building 88312.

Little Christian nearly didn't make the homecoming. Born prematurely, his mother explained he had been in and out of the hospital and had just been released that day after being admitted for a lung infection.

"He just got out in time ... he's excited for daddy to come home," She laughed as her son smiled, covered in a shirt reading "My daddy is my Hero," complete with a shirt underneath sporting a Big Red One patch.

In regards to how she felt about her

son being healthy, her husband coming home and the upcoming day for love, she was simply at a loss for words.

"I'm just glad that he (Christian) can really meet his daddy. When he first met him he only weighed about five pounds, was a month old, so he technically wasn't born yet. Right now is the first time they're really meeting," Allison said, explaining that the next few days are plan-free and prime for relaxation. "I just want a nap for Valentine's Day," she laughed again.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 (retired) Brenda Werner was also present to see her husband home. Though in good spirits and excited to see her husband, as an aviator, she explained she would much rather be seeing her husband home in the hangars, citing more space for parking, guests and a better lit facility as the perfect reasons for these homecomings.

"We have our house, send us home to our house," she stated.

The 1st Inf. Div. and Fort Riley welcomed in almost 4,000 troops and more than 200 helicopters between February

and March, though they deployed from Kansas in March 2010 with 2,800 Soldiers and almost 120 aircraft. The brigade grew in number as they increased their coverage over Iraq.

The CAB was one of four aviation brigades providing aerial support to ground troops in Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom. However, with the drawdown of U.S. troops, and the start of Operation New Dawn, the "Demon" brigade became an Enhanced Combat Aviation Brigade, the U.S. Army's sole aviation asset in the country with an area of operations covering land approximately the size of California.

During their year in Iraq the CAB flew close to 140,000 hours performing aerial reconnaissance and security for convoys and ground troops, as well as keeping troops and equipment off the IED littered roads. They also transported about 300,000 passengers and over 10 million pounds of cargo.

The end of this tour marks the CAB's second deployment to Iraq since the unit stood up at Fort Riley in August of 2006. ▀



MRS. PATRICIA VERSCHAGE, 541ST CSSB FRSA

From left, Dorothy Cates and Kelly Boernsen, STB FRSA, were the winner and runner-up of the marksmanship competition planned by the 1st Sustainment Brigade, the Task Force Durable Public Affairs Office and its Battalion's Family readiness support assistants.

Locked & Loaded

Spouses shoot up range at inaugural G. I. Jane affair

By Patricia Verschage
541st CSSB

Spouses, civilians and Soldiers of the 1st Sustainment Brigade participated in a fun-filled training event planned by 1st Sust. Bde., the Task Force Durable Public Affairs Office and its Battalion's Family readiness support assistants at the Digital Range Training Center.

The "G.I. Jane" event was initially planned for the spouses of deployed Soldiers of the brigade as a hands-on experience of how Soldiers train to prepare for deployment.

Many spouses from the 541st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion came out to enjoy an evening away from their routine, taking turns learning the correct way to hold and fire the simulation weapons as well as loading and unloading a magazine quickly with weapons such as the M4 assault rifle, M204 grenade launcher and M249 squad automatic weapon.

Spouses said the G.I. Jane event exceeded their expectations and enhanced the esprit de corps.

"I thoroughly enjoyed my experience at the training center," said Jessica Kramer, wife of Sgt. Kyle Kramer, 541st CSSB, responding with a huge smile when asked about the weapons she was able to handle. "I can't believe how heavy those guns were. I think I have a new

appreciation for the Soldiers that have to carry them around," she said.

Spouses fired the weapons at the video screen that filled one side of the room and participated in about 10 different scenarios covering urban environments, tropical jungles, snow-covered valleys and the desert that lasted between one minute to more than five minutes.

The simulation center also allowed the spouses to shoot during a turkey shoot scenario, tracking the number of hits and misses each participant fired during each scenario, consequently creating a healthy competitive atmosphere for the evening.

The fun wasn't over. At the end of the evening, a contest was held between the spouses of the Special Troops Battalion and the "Pacesetter" spouses of the 541st CSSB.

The first place award and top shooter award was given to Dorothy Cates, wife of the Capt. Adam Cates, 165th Movement Control Team, 541st CSSB commander while the 1st Sust. Bde. Task Force Durable Public Affairs Officer Maj. Howard Adlam presented the second place award to the STB FRSA, Kelly Boernsen.

"I had a fantastic time," Cates said. "It was great to participate in the same training our Soldiers do and visit with and get to know other spouses in the brigade."

A smoking event

1st SB hosts post-wide boxing smoker

By Capt. Y. Daniel Hosaka
1st Sus. Bde. PAO

CAMP ARIFJAN — The 1st Sustainment Brigade. hosted a post-wide boxing smoker at Camp Arifjan, to promote physical fitness and resiliency throughout the brigade.

The smoker was organized by veteran boxers Sgt. 1st Class Luis De La Rocha, brigade fleet manager, and Sgt. 1st Class Nelson Rivas, brigade transportation non-commissioned officer in charge. They spent three months organizing the event, while training the fighters for the smoker. The fighters came from across the brigade's formation for the competition.

"We trained them for two months," said Rivas, "De La Rocha always builds up a good boxing foundation by training on the boxing basics and I always emphasize on their conditioning. He also had them spar quite a bit to get a better feeling for getting hit and throwing punches against something that hits back."

"The training consisted of not only boxing basics but conditioning as well, coordinated by Rivas," said De La Rocha. "I worked the technique portion and Rivas mainly concentrated on the conditioning portion."

Six bouts were fought that night. Several weight classes and a female class were represented. De La Rocha

and Rivas paired each fighter according to their skill level and weight class.

"We had 14 Soldiers fight," said De La Rocha. "Thirteen of the Soldiers were from the brigade. We had service members from the Air Force, to the transportation units, to the Special Troops Battalion. We also had one Soldier from Surface Deployment and Distribution Command."

This was the sixth boxing smoker that De La Rocha and Rivas have organized. They organize these fights to put on a good show for the Soldiers and Airmen and promote physical resiliency throughout the unit.

"I think that helped to raise individual morale and unit cohesion," said De La Rocha, "The units were really getting behind their Soldiers showing them a lot of support and cheering them on. Even after the smoker, the fighters will be greeted with, 'Hey, good fight.' It is something they can be proud of. Plus, it shows the units that are staying here that events like this really support Soldier morale and resiliency."

The Camp Arifjan Zone 6 TAC building was filled with approximately 300 service members throughout the post for the event. According to De La Rocha, this is the largest event they've organized.



FROM TOP: Spc. Roberto A. Macias and Senior Airman Platt fight at the 1st Sustainment Brigade boxing smoker held on Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. The two fighters trained for three months to display their fighting spirit during the event; Esmeralda L. Soto and Tiffany A. Herrera fight at the 1st Sustainment Brigade boxing smoker; Sgt. Keenan M. Jackson, right, waits to fight the next round of the 1st SB boxing smoker.

COURTESY PHOTO

4th MEB part of CCMRF mission

Officers: Exciting to see progress made by installation staff

By Sgt. Heather Denby
4th MEB PAO

FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo.—A major U.S. Northern Command-directed exercise that demonstrated the 4th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade's Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and high yield Explosives Consequence Management Response Force mission, took place March 11–20.

The CCMRF mission was spearheaded by Joint Task Force-Civil Support which is comprised of active and reserve members from all five branches of the armed forces, as well as civilian personnel, who stand ready to aid civil authorities in managing the consequences of a domestic CBRNE accident or incident requiring federal assistance as directed by the president.

Soldiers from the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th MEB, along with 193rd Brigade Support Battalion comprise one of three task forces that fall under JTF-CS.

Key leaders of the task force operational staff are working with Fort Leonard Wood garrison staff and the U.S. Army Installation Command to synchronize standard operating procedures, which will ensure a smooth, rapid deployment of U.S. Army Forces Command assets from Fort Leonard Wood whenever the Nation calls upon them.

"We've been working with the Fort Leonard Wood installation staff on rapid deployments for a while and it's very exciting to see the progress that we have made," said Maj. Levi Sutton, the 4th MEB chief planning officer. "You don't always get the feeling of progress when you're sitting in meetings, on the telephone, or behind a computer, but then an event like this happens, and you realize that we've made tremendous progress in just a few short months."

Recently, Sutton and other post agency representatives conducted a Rehearsal of Concept (ROC) drill shutting down a portion of the post and staging several stations post-wide in order to support a large-scale 4th MEB deployment such as the CCMRF Vibrant Response exercise scheduled to be held at Camp Atterbury, Ind., later this month.

"At the end of the day, the country expects us to get these [Soldiers] out of here because they have consequence management, they've got world-wide responsibilities to deploy and take care of our nation's mission," said Maj. Gen. David E. Quantock, the Maneuver Support Center of Excellence and Fort Leonard Wood commanding general. "It really is important ... that we meet the 4th MEB's requirements to get them off installation [to] where they need to go."

"We're going to give them 100 percent of our time and effort because ultimately, their success is our success," he added.

Editor's Note: This drill is the second to be completed with the support of Fort

Leonard Wood agencies in conjunction with the 4th MEB's domestic disaster response force. 



COURTESY PHOTO

TOP: Col. Frank Y. Rangel Jr., the 4th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade and Task Force Operations commander, speaks with Maj. Gen. David E. Quantock, the Maneuver Support Center of Excellence and Fort Leonard Wood commanding general, on the logistics of conducting a full-scale deployment from the post air field March 1 during a Rehearsal of Concept drill. **ABOVE:** Maj. Gen. David E. Quantock, the Maneuver Support Center of Excellence and Fort Leonard Wood commanding general, speaks with key leaders of the 4th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade and Fort Leonard Wood garrison team about the importance of providing support to local Forces Command assets during deployment at the 94th Engineer Battalion motorpool March 1 during a Rehearsal of Concept drill.



SGT. HEATHER DENBY, 4TH MEB PAO

Army Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey Jr., observes damage caused to military housing during a tornado that struck Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. More than 100 families were affected by the storm.

Army chief of staff praises Fort Leonard Wood

By Sgt. Heather Denby
4th MEB PAO

FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo.—Hours after a devastating tornado struck Family housing at Fort Leonard Wood, the local community drew together offering assistance to Families in need. Weeks later, their dedication to each other continues.

Gen. George W. Casey Jr., U.S. Army chief of staff, visited the post Jan. 4 to get a firsthand look at the damages caused by the storm and to see what the community needed to aid in its recovery.

"I've been in the Army over 40 years, and I don't remember an Army installation being hit by a natural disaster of this magnitude," Casey said. "As I went around today and drove the path of the tornado, the things that I really saw were resilience and teamwork."

The team, coordinated largely by the support of Army Community Service, established a Family Assistance Center offering claims support, as well as the Red Cross, who provided other types of assistance and personal support.

ACS collaborated with the Fort Leonard Wood USO to provide a donation hub, staffed with more than 50 volunteers for donation drop-offs and distribution.

"We've had 23 Families come in today with items they need for either temporary lodging or their new government quarters," said Kelly Brownfield, Fort Leonard Wood USO facilities manager.

Items at the USO range from dish soap to flat screen televisions, all free of charge for any Family displaced by the storm.

"Everyone is just so willing to help,"

said Capt. Erik Dubois, military police officer, 701st Military Police Battalion.

Dubois' wife, also a Soldier, is seven weeks pregnant and was one of four people injured during the tornado.

"I'm grateful for the quick medical attention my wife received and the support from service members in and out of our chain of commands," Dubois said. "A soldier I didn't even know lent me his car."

While the donations continue to pour in through different venues, displaced Soldiers and their Family members still have a long way to go in recreating their new homes.

"We may not have our home, but we know one thing for sure: the Army will take care of us," said Dubois.

Fort Leonard Wood is home to the 4th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, 1st Infantry Division. 



STAFF SGT. WILLIAM SALLETTE, 75TH FIRES BDE. PAO

TOP: Lt. Col. Samuel Saine, 2nd Battalion, 18th Field Artillery Regiment commander, presents Cpt. Benjamin Culver, Charlie Battery commander, with a streamer for his Battery Operation Center crew during the Best By competition at Fort Sill, Okla. **ABOVE:** Saine presents Staff Sgt. Earl Emerson with his Army Achievement Medal for winning the best Battery Operations Center during the Best By competition.

BEST OF THE BEST

75 Fires reinstates 'Best By' competition

By Staff Sgt. William Sallette
75th Fires Bde. PAO

FORT SILL, Okla.—Being the best in a job or duty comes with a certain amount of pride. Soldiers at Fort Sill had the opportunity to show how their crews stood out as the best among their peers during early 2011.

The 2nd Battalion, 18th Field Artillery Regiment, 75th Fires Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, reinstated an all but forgotten tradition of the "Best By" competition. The Best By test is an event in which individual crews within the battalion compete with each other to find out who is the "best of the best." The three-day competition tested the crew's ability during six different events, to find the best ammunition team, Battery Operations Center and Multiple Launch Rocket System crew.

"We want to create a sense of pride, responsibility and camaraderie throughout the sections and give them the opportunity to set themselves apart from their peers to be the best," said Lt. Col. Samuel Saine, 2nd Bn., 18th FA Regt. commander.

Phase One, the testing phase, started with a brief from the commander. The crews were then moved to the education center for a 50-question written test, which tested the Soldiers' Military Occupational Specialty knowledge. The test was followed by a round-robin event of basic warrior tasks and a physical fitness test.

During Phase Two, the crews had the opportunity to show what all their training was for. Each crew conducted uploading and downloading of ammunition, fire-mission processing, reloading the launcher and fire-direction operations. Time restraints and safety were scrutinized during the day's events, considering the scores tallied during the day counted as 50 percent of the crews overall score. Each event of the competition was worth 10 percent of the scoring, except for Phase Two.

"It was great to see all of our training come

into action and work exactly like it should," said Staff Sgt. Michael McGill, 2nd Bn., 18th FA Regt. Multiple Launch Rocket System launcher chief.

Phase Three, "The Gut Check Phase," started early at Lake Elmer Thomas Recreation Area, where the crews conducted a 20-kilometer ruck sack march through Fort Sill's training area back to the battalion area. This portion of the competition was not just a physical test, but also a mental test. Each team was required to keep crew integrity throughout the march, making motivation and morale key elements during the event.

The competition concluded on Friday with a reception and barbecue, as well as an awards ceremony where the results were tallied and released. The overall winners for the event were: launcher crew—Staff Sgt. Aron Maggard, Sgt. Samuel Rasmussen and Spc. Andrew Stebonic; ammunitions crew—Pfc. Michael Patterson and Pfc. Tucker Favreau; and battery operations center crew—Staff Sgt. Earl Emerson, Sgt. Matthew Johnson, Spc. Ryan Valentin, Spc. David Rouse, Pfc. Brian Howard, Pfc. Michael Burkett, Pvt. Mackenzie Lewis and Pvt. Drake Farley. Each first-place crew received an Army Achievement Medal and a miniature guidon to hang from their vehicle antenna.

The competition, along with other training events the battalion has scheduled, is meant to prepare the unit's Soldiers for an upcoming training event in Wyoming this spring.

"We want to create a sense of pride, responsibility and camaraderie throughout the sections and give them the opportunity to set themselves apart from their peers to be the best."

— Lt. Col. Samuel Saine
commander, 2nd Bn., 18th FA Regt.



1

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