

General updates Manhattan leaders on events, plans at Fort Riley

By Shandi Dix
STAFF WRITER

"Move on and move quickly," said Maj. Gen. Vincent Brooks, 1st Infantry Division and Fort Riley commanding general, jokingly about what his wife tells him.

Brooks was the guest speaker at the Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce Military Relations Committee lunch Aug. 5 at the Manhattan Country Club.

He spoke to community leaders and area business representatives about what is and will be going on at Fort Riley.

He began talking about the recent Victory Week. The week was filled with many events including sports, warrior skills and a memorial ceremony. The memorial ceremony recognized the 53 1st Inf. Div. Soldiers who lost their lives over the last year. Many Families of the fallen Soldiers were in attendance for the ceremony.

The old Infantry Parade Field was the site of the Division Review, which Brooks noted will probably be the final event on that field due to housing growth at the location.

Veterans of the 1st Infantry Division gathered in Dearborn, Mich., for the "Big Red One" Reunion. Brooks and others were to leave Aug. 6 for this event.

After a rundown of recent, past and upcoming events Brooks gave the group an update on each of the brigades at Fort Riley.

He began with the 1st Brigade, which is in charge of training foreign security force transition teams.

"That's a long title," Brooks said. "That means that they're the ones who've been training all of our combat advisors for Iraq and Afghanistan, very important work."

Their mission is about to change. In September their responsibilities will be transferred to Fort Polk, La., so the brigade can prepare for deployment in September 2010. The brigade grew from 900 Soldiers to 2,440 since April when Brooks took command.

The 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team is deployed in Iraq and due back to Fort Riley in October. A ceremony is expected on Oct. 22.

The 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team just completed its mission in Afghanistan. The brigade will be relocating from Fort Hood, Texas, to Fort Knox, Ky., this fall.

According to Brooks the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team has completed training and is ready to serve anywhere in the world. They are due to deploy within two weeks after casing their colors during a ceremony Aug. 13.

Two groups of 1,000 Soldiers of the Combat Aviation Brigade currently are working on three missions. The groups are working in Fort Irwin, Calif., and Fort Polk, La., in support of other brigades.



Maj. Gen. Vincent Brooks, 1st Inf. Div. and Fort Riley commanding general, speaks at the Aug. 5 Manhattan Military Relations Committee lunch at the Manhattan Country Club. Brooks spoke to leaders about upcoming events and growth at Fort Riley.

Shandi Dix
POST

"They still have a longer clock before they deploy as a brigade overseas," Brooks said. "That will happen in the first quarter of the calendar year next year."

They continue to modernize themselves and receive new equipment, Brooks said.

Unlike the other brigades, the 1st Sustainment Brigade has small units constantly rotating in and out of deployed areas all over the world. "They are doing terrific work on helping us find equipment for example," Brooks said.

The final unit highlighted by Brooks was the Division Headquarters. It is on a pathway to serve as Multi-National Division - South. They will be responsible for the southeastern corner of Iraq including seven provinces. The 1st Inf. Div. Headquarters will take the mission over from the 34th Infantry Division, an Army National Guard unit. They are set to deploy in January to take the mission over in February.

Brooks explained what will happen when the Division Headquarters deploys to Iraq. About 800 of 15,000 or so people will be deployed with the headquarters.

"Nevertheless, it's the leadership that we're talking about," Brooks said. "I will take my leaders, the Victory 5, the staff so ably lead by Col. (Richard) Piscal and we will go and take over that mission in Iraq."

A deputy commanding general will be left behind who is a supportive commander to Brooks. That person, who has yet to be named, is set to arrive this fall and will take over Brooks' responsibilities at Fort Riley.

The Mission Support Element will be in place to support the deputy commanding general taking over in Brooks' absence. This element is provided by Army Forces Command out of Atlanta. Mostly civilians with significant military experience and some current serving military will make up the MSE staff.

A different face will stand up at ceremonies on Fort Riley but some faces will remain the same.

"You'll still see Carol; she'll still be there," Brooks said of his wife. "She'll still be the first lady of Fort Riley. She will not be married to that other person."

Events will still be the same. Soldiers will still be welcomed home and things will still be celebrated. Brooks said that brigade commanders may be seen more. "Additionally the growth at Fort Riley will not stop," Brooks said.

In 2010 and 2011 the average Soldier strength will be 10,500 at Fort Riley. About 18,000 Soldiers will be assigned; that's up from the current 15,000 assigned to Fort Riley.

During 2010 there will be two spikes in population up to 13,200. Those will be short-term jumps of about two months to occur around January and February and again in September and October.

In 2011, there will be a high average strength of 11,000 Soldiers. There will be a dip in population for about six weeks due to the 1st and 2nd brigades both being deployed. This also will occur around the time the Division Headquarters returns. About 7,900 Soldiers will be on post at this time.

By the end of 2011, the highest level of Soldiers on Fort Riley will be seen. An estimated 15,000 Soldiers will be on post at that time.

The final thing that Brooks was asked about was the lodging on post. He said the Private Military Lodging will be taken over by the Inter-Continental Hotels beginning Aug. 15. They will have their own brands to go into the temporary lodging on Fort Riley.

A new hotel will begin construction in 2011. While that construction is going on, temporary lodging will be moved off post.

Temporary lodging is used by those visiting Fort Riley for a short period of time, those being transferred while their belongings are moved to their new duty station or those coming in awaiting the arrival of their belongings.

The next meeting will be Sept. 2 at the Holiday Inn at the Campus with Col. Kevin Brown, garrison commander, as the speaker.

COMMUNITY CORNER

Drive safely on, off Fort Riley

By Col. Kevin Brown
GARRISON COMMANDER



Col. Brown

Everyone loves to get home at the end of a long day. However, on some routes home - particularly K-18 between Ogden and Manhattan - our chances of not making it home increase.

We've all driven down K-18 and had cars zooming by in the left lane going well over the speed limit. We've also all sat with our feet on the brakes as we waited to inch past an accident scene. That's a scenario that has happened all too often.

Just a few weeks ago one of our Fort Riley employees lost his life when his motorcycle was hit by a mini van near Scenic Drive. A few weeks before that, it was a semi truck and a bus tangled on the road. These accidents don't have to happen if we slow down and pay attention. The police regularly write speeding citations along this stretch of road for drivers going in excess of 80 miles per hour. That is ridiculous. We don't need to be anywhere in such a hurry that we risk our lives.

The Riley County Police Department receives daily complaints about driver's failing to signal their lane changes, following too closely and speeding. The police are providing extra patrols along the corridor to help deter these violations. They also are planning a large-scale traffic enforcement operation.

Besides issuing violations for speeding, officers also will be looking for those breaking a recently passed Kansas law. The new law requires drivers on multi-lane roads outside of a city to drive in the right-hand lane unless they are overtaking and passing another vehicle; preparing to make a proper left turn; otherwise directed by official traffic-control devices; or otherwise required by other provisions of law. Through June 30, 2010,

officers will only issue warnings for violations of this law. Tickets will be issued for all other violations.

While it's not Kansas law, on Fort Riley drivers are required to pull over to the side of the road while talking on a cell phone or use a hands-free device. That should be your practice off of Fort Riley also. Talking on the phone is a dangerous distraction. Also, eating in the car, changing the radio station and talking to passengers are all actions that divert our focus from safe driving. Keep your eyes on the road.

Besides taking our time getting around and paying attention to our driving, remember to always wear your seat belt. According to the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Safety Center, in Fiscal Year 2008 the Army lost 74 Soldiers in privately owned vehicle accidents. Of those Soldiers, 15 percent weren't buckled in. We might still have those Army Family members if they'd taken the couple of seconds it takes to put on a seat belt.

For motorcycle riders on the installation, the Defense Department has guidelines mapped out for your safety. The requirements apply to all military personnel at any time, on or off a DoD installation; all DoD civilian personnel in a duty status, on or off a DoD installation; all persons in or on a DoD-owned motor vehicle; and all persons at any time on a DoD installation. And, before operating a motorcycle, riders must successfully complete an approved rider course. Training is provided free to military and DoD civilian personnel. Call the Garrison Safety Office at 785-239-3391 for more information on motorcycle classes on post.

The following personal protective equipment also is mandatory while operating a motorcycle or riding as a passenger whether on or off Fort Riley:

• Helmets - Certified to meet DOT standards, properly fastened under the chin.

• Goggles and face shields - Impact or shatter resistant goggles or full-face shield properly attached to helmet. A windshield or eyeglasses alone are not proper eye protection.

• Sturdy footwear - Sturdy footwear is mandatory. Leather boots or over-the-ankle shoes are strongly encouraged.

• Clothing - Long sleeved shirt or jacket, long trousers, and full-fingered gloves or mittens designed for use on a motorcycle.

• Garment visibility - A brightly colored outer upper garment during the day and a reflective outer garment during the night. Outer upper garment must be clearly visible and not covered.

• Whether on a motorcycle, or in a car or truck, let's be part of the solution, not the problem. Tonight, instead of hurrying home, slow down and get there safely.

If you have ideas as to how we can make this stretch of K-18 - from Ogden to Manhattan - less dangerous, I urge you to share with us. Join me in a discussion group on www.facebook.com/FortRiley on the garrison commander's blog. On the commander's blog you can talk directly to me about issues that are of concern to you and Fort Riley.

If you would like to comment on this article or suggest a topic for the Community Corner, e-mail rita.post.newspaper@conus.army.mil. And don't forget to join in the garrison commander's blog at www.facebook.com/FortRiley. Share your comments where they can make a difference.

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