

THE NGO JOURNAL

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A MONTHLY FORUM FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



EMOTIONAL & PHYSICAL

RESILIENCE

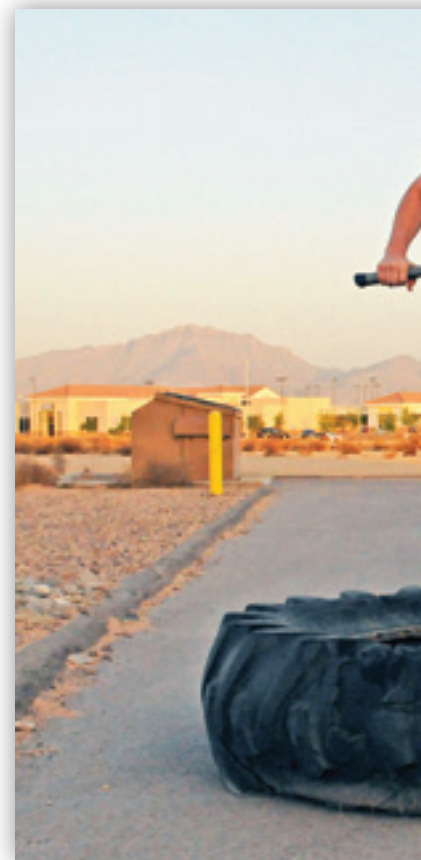


ON THE COVER

A Soldier with B Troop, 1st Squadron, 113th Cavalry Regiment, Task Force Redhorse, scans a nearby hilltop during a February search of Qual-e Jala village, Afghanistan.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Ashlee Lolkus

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ROLL CALL

We honor the men and women who have sacrificed their lives in current operations around the world.



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‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ repeal certified by President Obama

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

Based on recommendations from military leaders, President Barack Obama has certified to Congress that the U.S. armed forces are prepared for repeal of the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” law.

There is a 60-day waiting period before the repeal goes into effect, and the law will come off the books Sept. 20.

The president signed the certification and delivered it to Congress on July 22.

Congress passed the repeal law in December. The legislation gave the military time to prepare the force and said repeal would happen only after the president, the defense secretary and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff certified the force as ready for repeal.

The Defense Department chartered a repeal implementation team to coordinate the necessary changes to policy and regulations, and to provide education and training to service members. The team worked to ensure the smoothest possible transition for the U.S. military to accommodate and implement this important and necessary change, Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta said.

“Today, as a result of strong leadership and proactive education throughout the force, we can take the next step in this process,” Panetta said. “The president, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and I have certified that the implementation of repeal of ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ is consistent with the standards of military readiness, military effectiveness, unit cohesion, recruiting and retention of the armed forces.”

Panetta said he believes the repeal is essential to the effectiveness of our force.

“All men and women who serve this nation in uniform — no matter their race, color, creed, religion or sexual orientation — do so with great dignity, bravery and dedication,” he said in a written statement on certification.

“They put their lives on the line for America, and that’s what really matters,” he said. “Thanks to the professionalism and leadership of the U.S. military, we are closer to achieving the goal that is at the foundation of America — equality and dignity for all.”

The services put together training courses for the force, and more than 1.9 million service members have now received that training.

Defense Department and service officials also looked at regulatory and legal changes the repeal entailed.

“I am comfortable that we have used the findings of the Comprehensive Review Working Group to mitigate areas of concern,” Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said in a written statement.

Certification is not the end of the road. The department, the services and the combatant commands must work “to train the remainder of the joint force, to monitor our performance as we do so and to adjust policy where and when needed,” Mullen said.

The “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” law went into effect in 1993. It allowed gay and

lesbian personnel to serve in the military as long as they were not open about their sexual orientation.

On Feb. 2, 2010, Mullen testified to the Senate Armed Services Committee that he believed it was time to repeal the law.

“It is my personal belief that allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly would be the right thing to do,” Mullen told the committee. “No matter how I look at the issue, I cannot escape being troubled by the fact that we have in place a policy that forces young men and women to lie about who they are in order to defend their fellow citizens. For me, personally, it comes down to integrity — theirs as individuals and ours as an institution.”

Mullen said he believes service members can handle the changes.

“My confidence in our ability to accomplish this work rests primarily on the fact that our people are capable, well-led and thoroughly professional,” he said in his written statement. “I have never served with finer men and women. They will, I am certain, carry out repeal and continue to serve this country with the same high standards and dignity that have defined the U.S. military throughout our history.”



White House photo by Pete Souza

President Barack Obama signs the certification July 22 in the Oval Office stating the statutory requirements for repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” have been met. From left are: Brian Bond, deputy director of the office of public engagement; Kathleen Hartnett, associate counsel to the president; Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta; Kathryn Ruemmler, counsel to the president; Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Adm. Mike Mullen; and Vice President Joe Biden.

9-month deployments to begin in 2012

By Rob McIlvane
Army News Service

Beginning Jan. 1, most Soldiers will deploy for nine months, giving them more time at home between deployments, Army officials announced Aug. 5.

Army Secretary John M. McHugh signed a directive Aug. 5 instituting a nine-month “boots on the ground” policy for deployed Soldiers, providing more dwell time at home for Soldiers and their families.

“Implementation of this change is based on the projected demand for Army forces, and remains contingent on global security conditions and combatant commanders’ requirements,” said Lt. Col. Peggy Kageleiry, an Army spokeswoman.

Corps units and above, and individual augmentee deployments, will remain at 12-month deployments, officials said, adding that the goal for the corps units is eventually to get to nine-month deployments as well.

Most augmentees — those with particular skills or those in low-density skill sets and grades — will remain on 12-month deployments.

This change in policy, to be implemented fully by April 1, will affect Soldiers in all named operations, including Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, Operation Noble Guardian in Kosovo and Multinational Forces Sinai in Egypt.

Reserve and National Guard unit tour lengths will be the same as active duty — nine months. Though in their case, officials noted, deployment and mobilization are two different time frames. Even though these units may still be mobilized for 12 or more months, they will spend only nine months of that mobilization deployed.

It is clear to Army senior leadership that there are still issues tied to Guard and Reserve forces that will need to be worked out, Kageleiry said.

Soldiers deploying under the change in policy will not be granted environmental morale leave, known as R&R. However, commanders will retain the option of granting emergency leave and leave for special circumstances, according to Army



Photo by Spc. Sye Ellis

Soldiers of the 530th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion board an airplane after their deployment ceremony.

regulations and local policy.

“This policy will enhance operational success by reducing the friction that comes with having 10 percent of a commander’s personnel being away on leave in the middle of a deployment,” Kageleiry said. “Operational continuity is enhanced and risk to the individual Soldier is reduced by not having to move a warrior around on the battlefield to go on leave.”

Also, Kageleiry said, the reduced deployment length potentially could improve quality of life for Soldiers and their families while continuing to meet operational requirements, and is an important step in sustaining the all-volunteer force.

The policy’s goal, officials said, is to reduce the amount of time Soldiers are deployed and provide more time for them to spend with their families, depending on

the needs of the combatant commander and the potential of decreased operations. Units deployed before the policy takes effect in January will continue to have 12-month deployments.

Currently, deployments have been for 12 months, with a goal of 24 months at home.

Kageleiry said the Army will continue to review how to increase the amount of time Soldiers spend at home, depending on the amount of time they are deployed.

“We are constantly analyzing all range of policies to address the issues of the mission, Soldiers and families,” she said. “We believe that the current operational environment allows us to adjust the deployment policy in a way that meets all mission requirements and better serve our Soldiers and families.”

Army releases modernization plan

By Brian Gebhart
Army News Service

The Army released its Modernization Plan 2012 in early July, an in-depth explanation of how next year's budget request aims to move the Army toward achieving its objectives to equip the force.

The goal of the "Strategy to Equip the Army in the 21st Century" is to develop and provide an affordable and versatile mix of the best equipment available to Soldiers and units to succeed in current and future military operations. Modernization Plan 2012 lays out the Army's fiscal year 2012 priorities and programs to help achieve the strategic goal. The plan also provides an overview of the strategy, including steps to adapt institutional processes to get the best value and right equipment for Soldiers.

"As you look forward to the strategic environment we think we are going to see in the first half of the 21st century, it's characterized by four things: persistent conflict, an uncertain operational environment, decreasing access to resources, and increased cost of labor and material," said Brig. Gen. Edward P. Donnelly, the Army's director for joint and futures within the office of the deputy chief of staff, G-8.

"You need to set priorities for the characteristics of the force that's going to operate in that environment," Donnelly said. "And then you need to develop, approve and resource requirements for the equipment that a force with those characteristics needs to be successful in that environment."

The plan describes three main-inter-related priorities. They are networking the force; protecting and empowering Soldiers; and deterring and defeating hybrid threats.

Donnelly said networking the force allows the exchange of information all the way from the garrison, to the forward edge, to individual Soldiers.

"I think in the case of 'protect and empower Soldiers,' it's a recognition that the American Soldier is really the dominant force on the battlefield for the operational environment today and in the

WHAT'S NEW

- **The Joint Tactical Radio System** will provide simultaneous data, video and voice communications to dismounted troops, aircraft and watercraft.
- **The Warfighter Information Network-Tactical** will provide the broadband backbone communications necessary for operational forces.
- **The Ground Combat Vehicle** is the Army's replacement program for the Infantry Fighting Vehicle in heavy brigade combat teams and is the centerpiece of the Army's overall Combat Vehicle Modernization Strategy.
- **The Distributed Common Ground System-Army** will provide integrated intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance data to airborne and ground sensor platforms.
- **Joint Battle Command-Platforms** will enable a widely dispersed command and control capability across all formations and the entire spectrum of joint military operations.
- **Paladin Integrated Management** will fund readily available low-risk upgrades that enhance the responsiveness, force protection, survivability and operational readiness of the self-propelled howitzer fleet.
- **The OH-58 Kiowa model upgrade** will convert D models to F models with enhanced cockpit sensor upgrades.

foreseeable future," Donnelly said. "What we want to do is take the greatest advantage we can of that individual, protecting them and empowering them through the means of the network."

The third priority, deter and defeat hybrid threats, is also essential to the modernization plan because these threats are a characteristic of those uncertain operational environments, he said.

"Asymmetry is a characteristic of both the present and the future battlefield because we are facing enemies who are not able to compete with us symmetrically," Donnelly said. "They are going to come at us differently."

Along with the three priorities, the modernization plan also highlights seven systems, which are identified as critical to the Army's success in operations — current and future.

"The equipment that we're asking for is a blend of versatility and affordability," Donnelly said. "It meets requirements of the FY12 budget while maintaining balance between current and future needs."

The plan reflects the designed budget against the roles, missions and tasks that the Army could possibly face in the current strategy while keeping future operations in mind.

"If there's a change in the strategy that recasts the role of the Army, then we might need more or we might need less," Donnelly said. "But the key is ensuring that our strategy to equip the Army is both nested within the security strategies and concepts, and balanced in terms of capabilities and resources."

A link to the plan can be found at the top of the Army's G-8 website at <https://www.g8.army.mil>.

DoD seeks energy revolution

By Karen Parrish
American Forces Press Service

Advances in energy technology that increase warfighter capability not only help the Defense Department protect the nation, but also accomplish two other important objectives, Deputy Defense Secretary William J. Lynn III said.

“They boost the competitiveness of American industry, and they raise our nation’s overall energy efficiency,” Lynn said during a keynote speech at the Army and Air Force Energy Forum July 19 in Washington, D.C.

The Defense Department accounts for 80 percent of the federal government’s energy use and about 1 percent of the nation’s, Lynn said.

“Last year, we spent \$15 billion on energy,” he said. “We are spending 225 percent more on gasoline than we did a decade ago.”

The military’s energy strategy addresses both increasing energy costs and the need for better energy efficiency, he said.

A 1-megawatt microgrid project started up at Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan, he said.

Chains of “fuel-hogging generators” at forward operating bases are a major source of energy waste, he said.

“Rather than efficiently distributing right-sized generators across a FOB, everyone often brings their own, resulting in tremendous overcapacity and waste,” he said. “The microgrid project at Bagram will replace 22 existing generators with just four energy-efficient ones, yielding a 30 percent savings in fuel.”

Permanent military installations also offer opportunities for better energy management, Lynn said.

Those installations draw 99 percent of their power from commercial power grids, which are vulnerable to disruption, he said.

“This vulnerability highlights the importance of the fuel cell backup systems we are installing with Department of Energy’s help,” he added.

The Defense Department spends \$4 billion a year buying energy for its facilities, Lynn noted.

“Our strategy must lower our energy bills while improving the energy security of our installations,” he said.

The Defense Department’s work force has already retrofitted fuel-efficient

lighting, windows and heating and cooling systems in many existing facilities, and is transforming rooftops, Lynn said.

“In Hawaii, the 6,000 units of privatized Army family housing featuring rooftop solar panels make it the largest such project in the world,” he said, noting even-greater opportunities to generate energy at a lower cost are on the horizon.

Military installations are an ideal proving ground for next-generation energy technologies, Lynn said.

He added department experts estimate those technologies could save 50 percent of current energy costs in existing buildings and 70 percent in new construction.

The Defense Department has spurred developments over the decades in nuclear power, the Internet, microelectronics and high-performance computing, he said.

“The department has a proven track record of leveraging our [research and development] funds and buying power to seed new industries,” Lynn said.

Because Defense Department facilities draw power from commercial grids, innovations achieved in-house can directly transfer to the rest of the economy.

Energy industries’ response to the Defense Department’s test-bed program has been dramatic, Lynn said.

“Our latest solicitation generated 600 proposals for technology demonstration projects,” he added.

While change is always difficult, Lynn said the military’s commitment to efficient energy is firm.

“With energy supplies tightening and costs increasing, we have no choice but to make its efficient operational use a core part of fighting and winning the nation’s wars,” he said.

“This does not mean the energy revolution we are trying to foster will come easily,” Lynn added. “But it does mean we have the winds of change at our back.”



Photo by Wayne V. Hall

The U.S. Army Tank Automotive Research, Development and Engineering Center unveiled its Fuel Efficient Ground Vehicle Demonstrator Alpha to employees July 12 at the Pentagon.

Army forbids using meds after 6 months

By Brandy Gill
Carl R. Darnall AMC

Soldiers who take their prescription medications six months after dispensation and pop positive on a urinalysis test could see their careers suffer.

Changes made to Army Medical Command Regulation 40-51, issued by the surgeon general via an All Army Activities message Feb. 23, announced that controlled substances could only be used up to six months from the issuance date.

This announcement may seem minor, but it potentially could be a career-ender for any Soldier who has prescription medicines, said Col.

Kimberly Kesling, deputy commander for clinical services at Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center at Fort Hood, Texas.

All it would take is a positive urinalysis test.

“A positive urinalysis that occurs after the prescription dispensing date may result in a no-legitimate-use finding and subsequent Uniformed Code of Military Justice action,” Kesling said.

This is a major change from how positive urinalysis tests due to prescribed controlled substances were handled in the past, said Lt. Col. Gwendolyn Thompson, CRDAMC’s pharmacy chief.

“Previously, if a Soldier had a positive urinalysis test, all they had to do was present their medication profile showing they were prescribed the controlled substance drug within that year and a valid use would be assumed,” she added. “But now, after six months from the dispensing date, it’s no longer considered valid use.”

Some of the most commonly prescribed controlled substances dispensed at Army pharmacies are Percocet, OxyContin, Vicodin, Xanax, Ambien and Lunesta, among others, including generics that Soldiers should be aware of, too.



Photo by Brandy Gill

Spc. Felipe Carreno picks up his prescription from pharmacist Stephanie Kohan at Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center at Fort Hood, Texas.

Anyone who receives a controlled substance medication from an Army pharmacy should be fully aware of it before he or she leaves the facility, Kesling said.

“Controlled substance medications are classified by the Drug Enforcement Agency as a medication with the potential for abuse,” she said. “These medications are easily identifiable when dispensed at your pharmacy because a signature for receipt will be required and a pharmacist will counsel you that the medication is a controlled substance.”

Army pharmacists are also handing out letters to prescription holders on the change in policy and including a list of the most commonly prescribed controlled substances, Thompson said.

In addition, prescription bottles will be marked with distinct red warning labels, which state, “Do not use six months after dispensing date. May result in ‘NO LEGITIMATE USE’ on urinalysis.”

Providers and pharmacies are limiting prescription quantities for those types of medications to a 30-day supply maximum for acute conditions, too.

However, Soldiers with a chronic condition can still get the medications they

need. But instead of one large prescription that would last for several months, they will now get an initial 30-day supply with up to five 30-day refills.

Providers can still write 90-day prescriptions for controlled substance medications that treat attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, and deploying Soldiers will continue to receive a six-month supply of their medications before they deploy.

Providers and pharmacies are required to follow these new rules. However, responsibility falls on Soldiers to make sure they are in compliance, Thompson said.

“We all have medicine cabinets or shelves full of prescription medications,” she said. “Soldiers tend to keep medications that are for pain if they don’t use it all initially.

“A year later the Soldier has trouble with pain again and goes to the medicine cabinet and grabs the controlled substance,” she explained. “That’s what’s going to get them in trouble. They have to read the labels and pay very close attention to the dispense date.”

Soldiers can avoid this situation by safely disposing of the prescribed medication once the six-month grace period ends.

Army warns of new designer drugs

By Rhonda Apple
The Pentagon

“Bath salts” are the new designer drug, becoming increasingly popular on the streets.

Designer drugs are created to get around existing drug laws, said Chris Miller, chief of detectives at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, Va.

“Unlike Spice (another designer drug), we want to be ahead of the game with bath salts,” Miller said. “We’ve talked to the local police departments, and they’re seeing it. It’s only a matter of time before we see it here.”

Miller said police surveillance will be conducted at shops where Spice was sold to find out whether bath salts are available at these same locations.

In May, the Drug Enforcement Agency exercised executive power to make Spice illegal to sell, distribute, possess and use.

“With bath salts, the packaging states, ‘Not fit for human consumption,’ the same as packaging for Spice,” he said. Miller also said packaging instructions include directions to use bath salts in baths to make one feel better, to have a nice aroma while taking a bath and to relax from the aroma of bath salts in hot water.

“None of this is true,” Miller added. “Bath salts are believed to be a synthetic form of cocaine. It’s 100 percent man-made. Altered compounds within a chemical formula happen, and they

give the body the same effect [as cocaine].”

“A common symptom is flashbacks,” Miller said. He stressed that bath salts, which are usually snorted, “appear to be extremely addictive.”

Side effects include increased heart rate, agitation, insomnia, increased alertness, anxiety, fits and delusions, nosebleeds and nose burns, muscle spasms, blood circulation problems, increased blood pressure, kidney failure, seizures, risk of renal failure, hallucinations, aggression, severe paranoia, panic attacks, fluctuation in body temperature, muscle tension and twitches, jaw grinding, dilated pupils, violent rage, hot flashes, dysphoria, loss of bowel control, breathing difficulties, cravings, vasoconstriction, hypertension, chest pain, headache, and suicidal thoughts.

“It’s being bought and sold the same as the traditional form of cocaine or ecstasy, in a powder form enclosed in foil packages,” Miller said.

“The cost is between \$20 and \$60 a gram, which would be traditional for a regular drug on the street,” Miller said.

“Spice took us a bit by surprise on the base, so we want to be ahead of the game with bath salts,” Miller said. “Commanders and first sergeants need to remind Soldiers that taking a designer drug is against Army regulations.”

Miller said common brand names for bath salts include: Ivory Wave, Red Dove, Vanilla Sky, Bliss, White Lightning, Hurricane Charlie, Cloud 9, Ocean, Scarface, Bubbles, Purple Rain, Mint Mania, Recharge and Fly.

GI Bill changes include actual cost for in-state tuition

Army News Service

The Department of Veterans Affairs is reaching out to inform veterans of recent changes made by Congress to the Post-9/11 GI Bill that take effect this year.

“The Post-9/11 GI Bill is incredibly important because it reduces the financial burdens of higher education so that veterans have an opportunity to achieve their education goals,” said Gen. Allison Hickey, undersecretary of veterans affairs for benefits. “The VA believes it is important for veterans to be aware of changes to the GI Bill this year and learn more about how these changes may affect them.”

Hickey said more than 537,000 students have received more than \$11.5 billion in GI Bill benefits to help them take charge of their future.

Changes to the Post-9/11 GI Bill, which became effective in August, include paying the actual net cost of all public in-state tuition and fees rather than basing payments upon the highest in-state tuition and fee rates for every state.

Another change involves capping private and foreign tuition at \$17,500 per academic year, as well as ending pay-

ments during certain school breaks to preserve veterans’ entitlement for future academic semesters.

Additionally, certain students attending private schools in select states can now continue to receive benefits at the same rate payable during the previous academic year.

Beginning Oct. 1, eligible individuals will be able to use the Post-9/11 GI Bill for programs such as non-college degrees, on-the-job training, and correspondence courses. They will also be eligible to receive a portion of the national monthly housing allowance rate when enrolled only in distance learning courses.

The VA is implementing the latest round of changes to the Post-9/11 GI Bill and has already begun processing fall 2011 enrollment certifications.

Outreach by VA has helped to increase participation by colleges and universities in the Yellow Ribbon program, which helps students avoid out-of-pocket costs that may exceed the benefit. Today, more than 2,600 schools are participating in the Yellow Ribbon program.

“VA is committed to ensuring veterans have the information and tools they need to succeed,” Hickey said.

RESILIENCE

MASTERING RESILIENCY

The Trainer Course

**STORY BY
JENNIFER MATTSO**

A Soldier in a convoy headed to the next forward operating base hears an improvised explosive device detonate nearby and suddenly everyone is on high alert. The next stop is still five hours away, and by the time the unit reaches it, the Soldier is exhausted from the strain of being on edge. He tries to phone home, but after the fourth time calling without an answer, he gives up.

How Soldiers cope with stressful situations defines not only their professional lives but their personal ones as well. Instead of leaving Soldiers alone to cope with whatever mechanisms they have, the Army is looking at ways to promote personal growth despite the rigors of combat.

6 CORE COMPETENCIES

- 1 SELF-AWARENESS**
Identify thoughts, emotions, behaviors and patterns.
- 2 SELF-REGULATION**
Regulate impulses, emotions and behaviors to achieve goals.
- 3 OPTIMISM**
Hunt for what is good, remain realistic, maintain hope and have confidence in self and team.
- 4 MENTAL AGILITY**
Think flexibly and accurately take other perspectives.
- 5 STRENGTHS OF CHARACTER**
Knowledge of top strengths and how to use them to overcome challenges and meet goals
- 6 CONNECTIONS**
Strong relationships, effective communication, empathy, a willingness to ask for help and help those you lead.

Below: Staff Sgt. John Kremer of "Creek" Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, pauses between missions in the Tangi Valley, Wardak province, Afghanistan.

Photo by Spc. Chase Steely

Bouncing Back

The ability to bounce back from life's adversities will enable Soldiers to continue to serve and can positively affect their lives at home.

Sgt. 1st Class Blanca Rosado, a licensed practical nurse, teaches Master Resilience Training at Keller Army Community Hospital at West Point, N.Y.

After attending the Master Resilience Trainer Course at Fort Jackson, S.C., in April 2010, she found that Soldiers' biggest takeaway was the abilities to help break down communication barriers, enhance communication within the unit and provide personal insight through self-discovery using MRT's 24 characteristics.

"I'm able to utilize it every day in every department and every area," Rosado said. "[MRT has] helped me and the unit communicate more effectively."

The University of Pennsylvania's Positive Psychology Department, which had conducted extensive research on emotional resiliency, brought its work to the Army in 2009.

Originally designed to help children and young adults adapt to the rigors of stress and prepare them to bounce back as adults, the course had the potential to apply to Army Soldiers, their family members and Department of the Army civilians.

The two-week course is offered by the Leader Development Division of the Training Support and Schools Directorate

at Fort Jackson (formerly Victory University); at the University of Pennsylvania; and by mobile instructor training teams that travel to units in the continental United States, Germany, Korea and Hawaii.

Sgt. Maj. Brian Washington, sergeant major of the Master Resilience course at Fort Jackson, said the course is revolutionary for the Army and its application extends beyond Army work life.

"It's a proactive course," Washington said. "It allows you to provide the leaders with the skills necessary to better help Soldiers and family members to deal with their issues."

Since it started in 2009, the MRT course at Fort Jackson has graduated more than 1,200 students, including Soldiers, family members and Army civilians. The skills the MRT course teaches not only enable participants to deal with their professional issues, but their personal ones as well.

"It provides Soldiers with the skills to be able to handle situations in a manner that makes them more productive in the Army or with their families," Washington said.

Promoting Post-Traumatic Growth

Sgt. 1st Class Jessica Ernst, a facilitator with the MRT course, said that though the course isn't designed to combat post-traumatic stress disorder, it has the potential to have that effect.



“The course is designed to teach basic resilience skills to help Soldiers bounce back from adversity — life’s little challenges and its big challenges — to help promote post-traumatic growth versus post-traumatic stress,” Ernst said.

Units benefit from this program because it helps build resilient, stronger Soldiers who are able to bounce back from adversity and stay in the fight, Ernst said.

“They can build mentally tough, prepared units because what we have right now isn’t working. The residual effects of 11 years of war is there. We’re feeling it and it’s hurting,” Ernst said. “We need to build not just our Soldiers but noncommissioned officers, officers, leaders — sergeants major down to privates, generals down to lieutenants. We need to build everyone to be mentally tough to be able to bounce back from adversity rather than recoiling from these challenges that we’ve been facing. They aren’t just the challenges of going to war, but the challenges that we face at home.”

The effects of the Master Resilience course and associated unit training can be seen both in the deployed environment and at home. The contrast, though, is most stark in the fog of war.

Soldiers have written back to course instructors to tell how, after adopting MRT skills into their unit, they were able to change the mindset of not just one individual but whole platoons, companies, battalions and even brigades, Ernst said.

“It totally changed their units,” Ernst said. “A unit from Afghanistan was requesting material and telling us how this has changed their mental-health referral. A lot of times people have an incident and don’t know how to respond. This teaches you how you think.”

The Master Resilience course is a great tool to have in the leadership toolbox, Ernst said.

“Once you have it and you’re a senior leader, you can take it with you, and you can teach your Soldiers about it,” Ernst said. “The biggest thing about it is it empowers Soldiers. It allows Soldiers to take care of themselves. When we teach people that, we do empower them. It’s not always coming to me and saying, ‘Hey, drill sergeant, what should I think?’ or, ‘Hey, sergeant, what should I do?’ It’s you thinking for yourself.”

The skills can also be taught in any environment, which makes them effective, Ernst said.

“They’re portable,” Ernst said. “Anyone can learn them.”

Keep an Open Mind

Sgt. 1st Class Ana Hernandezsanchez, an MRT course facilitator at Fort Jackson, said it’s important to keep an open mind and acknowledge the course has potential.

Hernandezsanchez was an Advanced Individual Training platoon sergeant when her sergeant major called her in the field and asked if she could pass a PT test.

“He said ‘Good,’ and then he hung up the phone,” Hernandezsanchez said.

Later, her first sergeant told her she would be attending a Master Fitness Trainer class at the University of Pennsylvania. She first protested the assignment, saying she had a new class that was close to graduating. However after arriving at the university, she realized the course was not about physical fitness.

The November 2009 MRT class had about 160 students. Of those, 30 to 40 thought they were being assigned to learn more about PT, Hernandezsanchez said. From her own experience, Hernandezsanchez said she can understand why some Soldiers don’t open up to the course right away.

“When I went through the course in 2009, I didn’t believe in the course. I thought it was a bunch of mushy stuff,” Hernandezsanchez said. “I didn’t think it was going to work. It wasn’t until probably about three or four weeks after I left, when I decided to try one of the skills that I had learned, that it actually worked in the situation. So I thought I’d try something else in a different situation. It got to the point where I was trying different skills in different situations, and it was working. That’s when it started to make sense to me. So I tell [the students to] keep an open mind. Even if you don’t understand it or you don’t think it’s going to work, keep an open mind. Try the skills first before you decide that it doesn’t work.”

Hernandezsanchez said that when she tried using more skills, her leaders started to notice.

“I still did what I had to do, I just did it in a different way,” Hernandezsanchez said. “And they noticed that I was han-



Above: A student with 11th Air Defense Artillery Brigade learns MRT Aug. 4 at Fort Bliss, Texas.

Photo by Spc. David M. Gafford

12 MRT SKILLS

- 1 ATC (ACTIVATING EVENT, THOUGHTS & CONSEQUENCES)**
- 2 AVOIDING THINKING TRAPS**
- 3 DETECT ICEBERGS**
- 4 ENERGY MANAGEMENT**
- 5 PROBLEM SOLVING**
- 6 PUT IT IN PERSPECTIVE**
- 7 REAL-TIME RESILIENCE**
- 8 IDENTIFY STRENGTHS IN SELF AND OTHERS**
- 9 USE STRENGTHS IN CHALLENGES**
- 10 ACTIVE, CONSTRUCTIVE, RESPONDING AND PRAISE**
- 11 EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**
- 12 HUNT THE GOOD STUFF**



Above: Soldiers from A Company, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, pray before a mission Feb. 24, 2010, at Camp Taji, Iraq.

Photo by Spc. Advin Illa-Medina

Opposite page: Students at the Master Resilience Trainer Course at Fort Jackson, S.C., take notes in the classroom. The class of 60 is broken into groups of 30, then into smaller groups of five or six Soldiers. Through each interaction they learn more about a particular MRT skill.

Photo by Jennifer Mattson

dling it differently, and it was working.”

Resilience is something that everyone has to make a conscious effort to work on every day, Hernandezsanchez said.

“Resilience is a process,” Hernandezsanchez said. “It’s not a destination.”

Alvin Shrum, MRT course manager at Fort Jackson, said the course is unlike any other in the Army. It requires students to open up, discuss the different parts of resilience within small groups and share life experiences that can help Soldiers become more resilient.

Since the MRT course is so new, it’s important that unit MRT trainers model and train the MRT skills.

“It’s continuous, it’s ongoing,” Shrum said. “It doesn’t mean that they can take a knee and stop training. They continue to train because personnel [transition]. You’ve got incoming and outgoing personnel, so the training is never complete.”

The training course at Fort Jackson is also continuous, with 32 courses held each year to train almost 2,000 students annually.

The goal is to eventually have one MRT per battalion, approximately 5,400 MRTs Armywide. But that’s a moving

target: As more battalions receive MRTs, the Army will add additional ones to battalions to accommodate companies, Shrum said.

“It will change the way we think, our culture, with positive outcomes,” Shrum said.

Graduates receive an 8R additional skill identifier upon completion of the course. Since the course trains the trainers, students also learn how to teach resilience training assistants to provide additional support in their units.

Perception is Reality

Dr. Randy Williams, a primary instructor for the Master Resilience Trainer Course, said the University of Pennsylvania piloted the program.

The Positive Psychology Department studied the effects of resilience on the younger generation. It incorporated its empirical research to develop a course that was then tailored for the Army.

“Psychologically, those people who are more resilient are realistic in the way they perceive their life. They’re more accurate,” Williams said. “They have much lower stress level; they typically have

more meaningful connections, relationships with a substantial social network and a supportive network. It increases, the ... motivation, engagement, quality of life — all those things. And those are not just professionally, but personally as well.”

The course was developed to teach 12 basic skills that match up with different personalities and situations. The skills allow individuals to think more flexibly about the information they’re receiving as well as to perceive facts more accurately, Williams said.

“These 12 skills do a very good job at targeting specific issues,” Williams said. “When you’re thinking accurately, you’re much better able to problem-solve. When you’re thinking flexibly, then you’re much more amenable to different perspectives and points of view. When you choose to exercise control of your thinking, it is more accurate, more flexible and more intentional.”

To help learn these skills, students at the MRT course start out in a 60-person classroom. A skill is presented to the large class. They then break into two groups of 30 students, and students review the material presented in the large classroom. They then split into tables of five or six Soldiers for small-group discussion.

“It’s a dynamic course. It’s not monologue, it’s a dialogue,” Williams said. “Participants are extremely engaged, and that is the expectation.”

While participation is the norm and most students become comfortable talking through the skills within the first couple of days, there has been some pushback from students who are skeptical that the program works, Williams said.

“Most of the pushback circles around a preconceived idea that in most cases is erroneous. [We’re not] tiptoeing through the tulips singing ‘Kumbaya’ and putting a smile on your face, pretending that life is good when in fact it’s not,” Williams said. “This course is not based on fantasy.”

Most students understand after the first week how important the course can be for their Soldiers, Williams said.

“The course is designed to help develop resiliency in individuals who may be deficient. But it’s also designed to enhance, maintain and build upon the resilience that already exists in most of our Soldiers,” Williams said.

To take the course, Soldiers must be at least staff sergeants, though exceptions are made for sergeants on drill sergeant duty.

“There are no prerequisites for coming to this course other than a real want to learn this and help Soldiers put it in place,” Williams said.

Wide Range of Application

Stan Johnson, an MRT trainer at Fort Jackson, was a sergeant major at Training and Doctrine Command headquarters when MRT was first announced by Army Chief of Staff Gen. George Casey, who wanted a program that could better assist Army leaders in dealing with adversity.

The first wave of instruction targeted platoon sergeants because they work most closely with Soldiers.

After the pilot in August 2009, Casey visited the students and asked what they didn’t like about the course or what needed to be improved. He wanted NCOs to embrace the program, Johnson said.

Casey learned Soldiers find value in their own self-awareness and in a self-aware leadership, Johnson said.

“The Soldiers were saying things like, ‘I wish I had this a long time ago,’” Johnson said. “It really demonstrated the value and the powerfulness of the skills.”

He said that at first, his job was to be skeptical of the process. But after

3 PHASES OF THE MRT COURSE

- 1 PREPARE**
Students learn the six competencies and 12 skills.
- 2 SUSTAIN**
Students learn about deployment-cycle training for units — knowing when MRT skills aren’t enough and knowing when to refer Soldiers to other resources.
- 3 ENHANCEMENT**
Students learn about goal setting and energy management.

learning more about positive psychology and the University of Pennsylvania program, and from talking with other Soldiers, Johnson said he was convinced it would work.

“These programs are not just something that the Army needs, but something we all need from the basic trainee coming in to the most senior leader,” Johnson said.

Johnson oversaw the course implementation at Fort Jackson. Johnson and his wife, Nikki, then a command sergeant major in a transportation battalion, saw the start of the train-the-trainer

program and its facilities at Fort Jackson in 2009.

Both retired from the Army and became trainers at Fort Jackson’s MRT course.

They work side-by-side and help students understand the concepts that are taught by the primary instructors.

“They think they’re learning from us, but we’re learning from them,” Stan Johnson said. “It’s always looking for a way to make this place better.”

Nikki Johnson said teaching at the Leader Development Division has been one of the most rewarding experiences she’s had with the Army.

“Next to being a first sergeant, this is the most rewarding job I’ve had,” she said.

While the facilitators learn more about the course with each cycle that goes through, the course itself is already a well-honed training tool that has undergone rigorous evaluation, Stan Johnson said.

Students should trust that the program is effective because the underlying skills it teaches really do work, Nikki Johnson said.

“What I tell the students is, ‘This cake is baked. All you have to do is slice it and serve it,’ because the skills work,” she said. “It’s all about you making a conscious effort to use them.” **J**

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STAYING FIT

Army Physical
Fitness Research
Institute offers
versatile, flexible ideas



Sgt. Maj. Marshall Peterson performs a complex of exercises during an Army Physical Fitness Research Institute course for Class 61 of the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CLIFFORD KYLE JONES

Keeping yourself combat-ready can be difficult when you're downrange. No gyms. Not much equipment. Maybe even less time. That's why the Army Physical Fitness Research Institute annex at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas, has unveiled a fresh perspective on maintaining physical fitness under even the toughest conditions, said Dwayne Lofton, an exercise physiologist with APFRI.

APFRI, a U.S. Army War College program, is a leader-development program committed to promoting resiliency, health and fitness to ensure professional and operational readiness.

In three-day Soldier-Athlete Program training workshops, APFRI began educating USASMA Class 61 students to conduct "outside the box" training that focused on conditioning, strength, coordination and flexibility — all using minimal equipment and in a minimal amount of time.

The course emphasized sound movement patterns and exercise techniques for familiar and unfamiliar exercises and implements, including easily transportable equipment — such as Total-body Resistance Exercise, or TRX, suspension train-

ers and kettlebells — and equipment that is readily accessible wherever you may be — sandbags, makeshift medicine balls and slosh pipes.

The course, which incorporates research-based training principles and an emphasis on the Army's new physical standards, was designed



BARBELLS One of the first implements covered in the Soldier-Athlete Program was the barbell. Although barbells might not be readily available in a deployment setting, the principles involved in properly using the barbell can be translated to many other nontraditional implements, such as sandbags, tires and slosh pipes. Here, Sgts. Maj. Clifton Fields and Lisa Piette-Edwards do deadlifts as APFRI exercise physiologist Dwayne Lofton checks their techniques.

to help NCOs keep themselves and their Soldiers in shape during deployments. But course instructors Lofton and Manu Peeni, also an APFRI exercise physiologist, said the workouts being taught are also valuable for preparing for the new Army Physical Readiness Test, which is still being piloted to determine standards.

"The problem is that it's not one of those things that you can train for two weeks out," Peeni said of the new APRT. "That's why we're showing you these new and different exercises — because when it comes to the 60-yard shuttle run, if you don't continuously train, do agility-type drills and strength train, you can easily sprain an ankle, pull a muscle, or something similar. It's a lot more vigorous than a 2-mile run."

In addition to the shuttle run, the new APRT will test Soldiers on the rower, for one minute; a standing long jump; push-ups, for one minute without pausing; and a 1.5-mile run.

One of the criticisms of the current Army Physical Fitness Test — two minutes of push-ups,

two minutes of sit-ups and a 2-mile run — is that it is not representative of Soldiers' physical needs for combat, Lt. Gen. Mark Hertling said when he was the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command's deputy commanding general for Initial Military Training. The five events of the new APRT test strength, endurance and mobility throughout the entire body, upper and lower, he told *The NCO Journal* earlier this year. The result is a better assessment of Soldiers' capacity to endure physical demands downrange.

"The APFT that was established in the late 1970s and incorporated in the early 1980s was meant to be just a snapshot," Hertling said. "It was not meant to be linked to what we were trying to do to prepare our Soldiers for combat. Unfortunately, in some cases, it's become a be-all, end-all — if you could train to the test and pass the test, gosh, you must be in great shape! But none of the current things we do in the APFT are linked to the kinds of stresses we put ourselves through in combat."

APFRI's Soldier-Athlete Program focuses on overall fitness and combat readiness, not just passing the APFT. It is designed to keep Soldiers in shape and physically fit for combat, regardless of location or circumstance.

The APFRI course concentrates on good technique — and imagination.

After a warm-up of dynamic range-of-motion exercises, which Lofton described as "using fluid movements to warm the body up and stretch the body out," the first day of instruction included some newly popular and easily transportable workout implements: the TRX system and kettlebells.

The TRX is a lightweight suspension training system consisting of straps and handles that can be used for a range of exercises. Though some are unique to the TRX, many are simply modifications of familiar exercises. Members of USASMA's Class 61, for instance, used the TRX to perform push-ups. "It's a basic push-up," Lofton told the class. "But it's on the TRX, so it gives it a little bit of a different flair."

The TRX is sold commercially with a variety of exercise routine plans and accessories. Lofton noted, however, that



TIRES A variety of exercises can be done using tires of varying sizes, which are often readily available at a forward operating base or other deployment setting. Tires can be used in conjunction with sledgehammers as objects to jump on and off, and in and out of, or as implements to throw. Here, Sgt. Maj. Lisa Piette-Edwards does a side-throw with a tire, which can provide a solid core workout.

Soldiers can make their own system with ropes or tie-down straps. As simple as it is, a TRX or similar implement can provide a range of difficulty levels.

"With any exercise on the TRX, to make it more difficult you go lower to the floor," Lofton told the students. "To make it easier, you come higher. So if you find it too difficult ... then you would shorten the TRX and bring your body more upright."

Kettlebells come in a variety of weights and look like cannonballs with handles. They have become popular

workout devices in recent years and, like the TRX, can be effective in a variety of settings. Because of this, Lofton made sure the course covered the proper use of kettlebells.

"That's part of the reason that we're here," Lofton said. "That [kettlebell] is something that people see all the time, something they're using all the time. But they're not necessarily using it right."

Because they're smaller and more portable than traditional weights, kettlebells can be an effective way to add resistance to your workout no matter where you are.

After another round of dynamic range-of-motion warm-ups, the next day's instruction started with proper weightlifting techniques. Although barbells may be scarce downrange, the principles involved can carry over to a variety of implements, such as tires, sandbags and slosh pipes.

"The reason why we cover the deadlifts and the barbell exercises first is because they translate into what you can do with real-world stuff," Peeni told the students.

One of Peeni's suggestions was to fill an extra duffle bag with sand or rocks to use for lifting.

"Even if you buy the rock and sand," Peeni said, "it'll cost you about \$14. If you go buy a commercially made one ... it'll cost you anywhere from \$80 to \$150 for just the bag. If you want to use sandbags for training with your Soldiers, it can be pretty cheap to do."

Sandbags are also versatile, Lofton noted. "APFRI gives you just a small sample of the exercises you can do with that sandbag," Lofton said. "You can do 'get-ups' by laying flat on the ground on your back, placing the sandbag on either shoulder and standing while keeping the sandbag on your shoulder. Or you can do presses, you can do squats, you can do a lot of different exercises. ... You can get a lot of dexterity, a lot of good use, out of something as simple as a sandbag when you're downrange. It's something that's easy to put together. Everybody has a duffle bag; everybody can buy an extra duffle bag."

It's easy to track your workout and the amount of resistance you're using, too.

"To simply and easily change the



SLOSH PIPES Among the nontraditional implements covered in the Soldier-Athlete Program are slosh pipes, which are partially filled with water. Here, an APFRI exercise physiologist demonstrates one of the many lifting exercises they can be used for.

weight, you can have weight increments in Ziploc bags,” Lofton suggested. “If you want to make it 10 pounds lighter, you take a Ziploc bag out. If you want to make it heavier, you put another Ziploc bag in.”

Medicine balls also can be cheaply constructed downrange by filling a punctured volleyball or basketball with sand and then taping up the hole.

The final day of instruction largely took place outside and started with items easy to find at almost any forward operating base — tires and sledgehammers.

“You will have some of this available if you’re back in a FOB,” Lofton said. “With a tire and sledgehammer, you can get in a great upper body workout and good conditioning by doing workouts for time or doing tire flips for distance. You can also make the workout a little bit more explosive by adding jumps, hops or sprints.”

In addition to hitting the tire straight on (Lofton recommends using the flat side of the sledgehammer to provide more control), Class 61 students did short complexes and combinations, such as hitting the tire with the sledgehammer, jumping inside the tire, then out of the tire, then striking the tire again.

Lofton and Peeni stressed that combinations and complexes — a series of exercises performed back to back, often with a weight or other implement that never leaves your hands — are a great way to overcome a lack of time, space or equipment. They also help prevent overtraining on a particular exercise, break up monotony and are particularly effective for improving anaerobic capacity — a key fitness component the new APRT is designed to test. Complexes involve multiple repetitions of one exercise before moving onto the next one, and combinations involve doing each exercise once before moving onto the next. Once each of the exercises in a combination has been completed, it counts as one rep.

The final day of the course also included football-style athletic-agility drills in which Class 61 students wended their way around orange safety cones, as well as a dry run of the new APRT’s shuttle run.

Class 61 students were given a brief manual containing fitness training principles, sample training programs, and exercise ideas and descriptions.

Peeni also offered Class 61 students suggestions on preparing their Soldiers for

the new test. “When it comes to preparing for the APRT, inform your Soldiers to not just train for the 60-yard shuttle,” he said. “Do a lot of those other things that are going to challenge them differently as well,” such as 300- or 100-yard shuttles or zig-zags through the cones. In addition to helping train for the 60-yard shuttle run, this training “is all going to improve that 1.5-mile time, which is actually a really fast run.”

Although APFRI’s Soldier-Athlete Program was presented to USASMA’s Class 61, Maj. Mae Cisneroz, APFRI USASMA’s deputy director, said the training is intended to filter down to all levels of the Army, because it can help all Soldiers maintain a high level of fitness and combat readiness year-round.

After completing the APFRI Soldier-Athlete Program, one sergeant major was already seeing the benefits. “It’s not what I’m used to,” Class 61 student Marshall Peterson said. “It’s different, which is good, because I’m getting tired of what I’m doing right now.” 📺

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The Soldier-Athlete Perspective

Courtesy of APFRI

For the Soldier-Athlete, the goal should be to train for performance and not appearance. When training for physical performance, exercise selection needs to be specific to the activities to be encountered. Those activities will include moving under load and carrying, running and sprinting, jumping and landing, pulling and lifting, and pushing movement patterns. The similarities among these movement patterns are their multi-joint and multi-directional natures. Keeping these needs in mind, at right is a list of exercises that are highly beneficial to Soldiers. Although the exercises are grouped into categories, benefits of the exercises are wide-ranging and will carry over into the performance of other activities. The rates of injuries from sports and physical training are significant in the Army, and a few examples of common mistakes associated with the exercises are also presented. Whether training in-garrison or downrange (where time for exercises may be limited), focus on exercises that will provide the most “bang for your buck” (i.e., multi-joint and multi-directional exercises).

Fatigue vs. failure

A lack of understanding comes into play concerning the body’s underlying physiology, biomechanics, anatomy, etc., that you will not find in your favorite magazine or websites. Many problems can be addressed, but APFRI’s focus is on the difference between acute muscle fatigue and acute muscle failure as it relates to a structured exercise program.

▶ **Muscle fatigue:** The point where the weight is no longer able to be lifted or lowered under control or without aid, because the muscle cannot produce enough force. At this point, technique breaks down, injury potential increases, and the activity should cease. However in this case, providing a rest interval (with or without decreasing the load) before the next set will allow execution of the desired number of repetitions.

▶ **Muscle failure:** When you have worked past the point of muscle fatigue but are continuing to perform repetitions through the aid of “forced reps” (not to be confused with spotting for safety) with a partner or “cheat reps” on your own. When you have continued to exercise beyond the point where muscles are not producing sufficient force, your tendons and ligaments are doing the brunt of the work. Repetitive use and micro-trauma injuries can creep in and limit a Soldier’s physical readiness.



APFRI exercise physiologist Manu Peeni demonstrates proper barbell technique to Sgt. Maj. Clifton Fields, a student in Class 61 of the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy.

Sample combo: Barbell

- ▶ Conventional deadlift (1)
- ▶ Romanian deadlift (1)
- ▶ Bent over row (1)
- ▶ High pull (1)
- ▶ Power clean (1)
- ▶ Front squat (1)
- ▶ Push press (1)
- ▶ Back squat (1)

Sample complex: Sandbag

- ▶ Cleans (6)
- ▶ Overhead press (6)
- ▶ Zercher squat (6)
- ▶ Shouldering (6) — 3 left and 3 right,
- ▶ bringing bag from floor to shoulder.
- ▶ Shoulder lunges (6) — 3 left, 3 right.
- ▶ Bent over row (6)

Sample Exercise Selection

PULLING, LIFTING

- ▶ Dead-lift (all types)
- ▶ Pull-ups
- ▶ Dumbbell rows
- ▶ Sandbag shouldering

JUMPING, LANDING

- ▶ Squats
- ▶ Squat jumps
- ▶ Box jumps (jumps to box)
- ▶ Depth jumps (jumps from box)

RUNNING, SPRINTING

- ▶ Lunges (all types)
- ▶ Explosive step-ups
- ▶ Running mechanics drills
- ▶ Long slow duration runs
- ▶ Interval runs (i.e., 400m)
- ▶ Repetition sprints (i.e., 10 yards)

PUSHING

- ▶ Standing overhead press (strict)
- ▶ Push press
- ▶ Plyometric push-ups
- ▶ Single-arm press

Sample Exercise Do's and Don'ts

Bad technique is possibly enemy No. 1 to effective training and physical readiness. Many

Soldiers may believe their exercise techniques are correct. However, in practice this is often not the case.

Two common mistakes are poor upper body posture and poor lower body movement patterns. The posture of the upper body should mimic standing at attention. Lower body exercises should be dominated through the flexion and extension of the hips and not the knees, ankles and lower back.



Deadlift

- ▶ **DO** pull your shoulders blades together, flatten or slightly arch your back, tighten your abdominals, and use your joints. Drive with the hips to full hip and knee extension standing tall with the bar resting against the hips or thighs.
- ▶ **DO NOT** overextend (i.e., hyperextend) the hips or low back at the top of the movement (will look like backward bending or leaning).



Box jumps

- ▶ **DO** perform a short and rapid dip to triple (full) extension of the hips, knees and ankles to jump vertically. Land softly and quietly by making first contact with the toes and balls of the foot while flexing the ankles, knees and hips to absorb the force. Stand up, step down, and repeat.
- ▶ **DO NOT** land flat-footed or heel first.
- ▶ **DO NOT** continually spring back and forth from the box with flexed hips (using only the ankles and knees to jump) while making contact with only the top edge of the box.



Forward lunge

- ▶ **DO** keep the chest "big" (think military posture/position of attention), stay tall, take an exaggerated (long) step forward, and plant the entire foot flat on the floor. Keep the toes pointed straight ahead, come to a slight pause in the movement, then push through the mid-foot and heel of the lead leg to return to the starting position.
- ▶ **DO NOT** have your weight distributed onto the balls or toes of the lead foot when the foot is planted or when pushing off to return to the start position.
- ▶ **DO NOT** slouch, lean forward, short step, or keep the heel of the lead foot elevated when stepping out.



Overhead press

- ▶ **DO** stand with the feet hip width to shoulder width apart facing the bar. Grasp the bar with a slightly wider than shoulder width grip. Push the elbows forward and up so that the barbell rests across the shoulders and upper chest. With the knees slightly flexed, press the bar up and around the face while maintaining an upright posture. Finish with the bar directly overhead (i.e., arms in line with the ears) and with the arms fully extended.
- ▶ **DO NOT** press the bar up and out, lean back or excessively arch the back to finish the movement. This is a sign that the load is too heavy.



The New Phase of the

AIT Platoon Sergeant Course

Story by
Jennifer Mattson

After drill sergeants take care of the early work of turning civilians into Army Soldiers, Advanced Individual Training platoon sergeants step in, take the reins and help Soldiers become successful in the operational Army.



Staff Sgt. Demond Thomas has been serving as an Advanced Individual Training platoon sergeant at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., helping 88M (motor transport operator) Soldiers in AIT since January 2011. He originally took the AIT Platoon Sergeant Course in October 2010 at Fort Jackson, S.C. As an AIT platoon sergeant with D Company, 58th Transportation Battalion, he said the job has the ability to affect Soldiers' lives.

"I like being a positive influence on Soldiers, on the privates who we deal with, because we're the last in our field who they see until they get to their unit station," Thomas said. "We play a major part in their development as far as who they expect an NCO to be, to look like, to act."

After six deployments to Iraq, Bosnia and Egypt, Thomas said he is able to bring the tools necessary to train new Soldiers so they'll be ready once they report to a Forces Command unit.

"That knowledge allows them to know what to expect when they go to that FORSCOM unit," Thomas said.

Platoon sergeants like Thomas began appearing in AIT installations around 2007. In 2006, drill sergeant hats started to disappear at AIT as drill sergeants were

Previous pages: Staff Sgt. Bernie Mullen, who represented the 194th Armor Brigade, Fort Knox, Ky., leads physical training on a softball field at Fort Monroe, Va., during the 2009 AIT Platoon Sergeant of the Year Competition.

Photo by Sgt. Angelica Golindano

Above: Staff Sgt. Luis Duran demonstrates techniques used to teach Basic Rifle Marksmanship at AIT to future AIT platoon sergeants at Fort Jackson, S.C.

Photo by Jennifer Mattson

authorized only at Basic Combat Training.

Training and Doctrine Command, the higher command behind the change, made the decision to put platoon sergeants in AIT to help Soldiers adjust faster to the structure of the operational Army.

In addition, since AIT instructors teaching at AIT-specific schoolhouses were already a separate group from drill sergeants, by replacing drill sergeants there with AIT platoon sergeants, the Army went to a culture that reflected the one Soldiers would see at their first FORSCOM unit.

Staff Sgt. Luis Duran, the 2009 U.S. Army AIT Platoon Sergeant of the Year and an instructor at the AIT Platoon Sergeant Course at Fort Jackson, said the changes were made to help prepare new Soldiers for their first unit of assignment.

"They were finding out that Soldiers were arriving to their units and when they didn't see that 'brown round,' Soldiers weren't adapting quick enough to the lead-

Prerequisites for AIT platoon sergeant instructors

1. Nominated by Leader Development Division leadership
2. Identified as a stellar performer in the classroom and in the field
3. Prior experience as an AIT platoon sergeant
4. Interview with LDD cadre and staff
5. In the ranks of sergeant first class or staff sergeant with at least two years in grade

All Soldiers must meet the prerequisites outlined in AR 614-200, *Enlisted Assignments and Utilization Management*.

Average day for an AIT platoon sergeant

0500-0545	Arrive, prep for day/formation
0545-0600	Conduct formation and sick call
0600-0700	Physical training
0700-0830	Breakfast, inspect living and common areas
0830-1130	Counseling and administrative tasks
1130-1300	Lunch
1300-1645	Observe training
1645-1700	Conduct formation
1700-1800	Dinner
1800-	Rest/prep for the next day

ership,” Duran said. “They didn’t understand the command structure. By removing the drill sergeant, the platoon sergeant is replicating [what’s in the] operational Army.”

In 2006, five AIT installations conducted a pilot test to the effects removing drill sergeants had on discipline, physical fitness, training, standards and military occupational skills proficiency.

The five installations reported that standards weren’t lowered because NCOs continued to hold Soldiers accountable for their actions.

Jacqueline Ortiz, deputy director of the Leader Development Division of the Training Support and Schools Directorate at Fort Jackson (formerly Victory University), which oversees the AIT Platoon Sergeant Course,

said the transition from drill sergeants to platoon sergeants in August 2006 was a big culture change but was necessary to help new Soldiers adapt to the operational Army.

“The drill sergeant in basic training is transforming that civilian into a Soldier. So the initial-level training that has to occur is learn-

ing how the Army works and understanding that culture. That’s the total-control concept that the drill sergeant has,” Ortiz said. “In AIT now, that platoon sergeant wants to emulate what the operational Army is. We’ve got to teach the Soldiers that their actions have consequences. We’re preparing them, so that when they go to that first unit of assignment, they’re ready to deploy with that first unit of assignment.”

In June 2007, the AIT Platoon Sergeant Course started at Fort Jackson. Originally designed as a three-week course, it has gone through multiple revisions and is now two weeks and includes about 100 hours of instructional time as well as a three-day field training exercise.

“Our goal here is, when a person is

selected to become an AIT platoon sergeant, to provide them the entire curriculum prior to their arrival,” Ortiz said.

To that end, students are being issued iPads this summer to use as training tools while at the schoolhouse.

Changes to the course come from a critical-task site selection board, which recruits leaders from each of the 27 AIT sites. The board asks AIT brigade command teams, battalion command teams, company command teams and the AIT platoon sergeants for input on how AIT platoon sergeants are enhancing the AIT culture and what more they need to be trained on before being sent to the AIT installation. Their comments are taken into consideration for updating the course, and the course continues to incorporate the board’s findings, Ortiz said.

While the board critiques what is taught at the course, the course focuses on the critical tasks needed to be future AIT platoon sergeants, said Staff Sgt. Aaron Price, an instructor at the AIT Platoon Sergeant Course.

“In two weeks, we can’t teach them how to be an NCO,” Price said. “That’s not what we’re here for; we’re here to teach them the skills they need to be suc-

Below: Sgt. 1st Class Ingrid Turner, an AIT platoon sergeant with A Company, 554th Engineer Battalion at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. gives corrections, guidance and instruction to her platoon.

Photo by Nichole Black



The Average AIT platoon sergeant

- ▶ Has spent 14 years in the Army
- ▶ Has 26 months of deployment experience
- ▶ Is about 36 years old
- ▶ Is a senior NCO (usually staff sergeants promotable or sergeants first class)
- ▶ 80% have children
- ▶ 100% have some form of college
- ▶ 80% have attended the Senior Leader Course

Course scope

1. Apply TRADOC's training guidance and investment strategy
2. Effectively educate and train other Initial Entry Training leaders
3. Enforce wellness and fitness in AIT
4. Demonstrate competency in Warrior Tasks and Battle Drills
5. Lead squad- and platoon-size elements in AIT
6. Manage and mitigate risks by using composite risk management
7. Differentiate IET components and utilize support systems to produce quality Soldiers

There's an app for that

The AIT Platoon Sergeant handbook is available for Android devices, iPhones and iPads at www.milsuite.mil/book/groups/ait-platoon-sergeant-course.



successful as an AIT platoon sergeant. A lot of NCOs come here and have never had Soldiers under them. They come here thinking we're going to teach them how to be that, and that's not what we do. We're here to give them all the tools they need to be successful in the AIT environment."

While the qualifications for attending the AIT Platoon Sergeant course are similar to those required to attend the U.S. Army Drill Sergeants School, also at Fort Jackson, the classroom atmosphere is very different, Price said. The instructors work to create a dialogue with students with modules that prior drill instructors and AIT platoon sergeants teach. The instructors then open the floor for a classroom discussion. In addition, while the AIT platoon sergeant course is two weeks, drill sergeants undergo 10 weeks of instruction.

"We treat the AIT platoon sergeants the same way we treat the Soldiers, whether we're doing [Physical Readiness Training] or drill and ceremony," Price said. "We want to treat them the same way that they should treat those Soldiers in training. They can't be hard on the Soldiers continuously. They have to care. Caring is part of being an NCO. If they don't care, then they don't need to be in the job."

The difference in the instruction between AIT Platoon Sergeant Course and Drill Sergeant School carries over to the different role AIT platoon sergeants play versus their drill sergeant counterparts. While drill sergeants are an integral part of training and instructing new recruits, AIT platoon sergeants monitor and manage AIT instructors and act as operational platoon sergeants, taking care of Soldier issues. Price, a former basic training drill sergeant, said it's important Soldiers in training learn to recognize the authority of NCOs rather than the drill sergeant hat.

Placing platoon sergeants in AIT "allows that Soldier to recognize the rank, not that drill sergeant hat," Price said. "Discipline is the backbone of the Army, and NCOs are supposed to instill discipline and lead by example — not by screaming or yelling, but by teaching, coaching, mentoring," Price said.

Sgt. 1st Class Paul Gahl, an AIT platoon sergeant at the Fires Center of Excellence at Fort Sill, Okla., said his prior experience working in a battalion headquarters provided him with the skills

he needed to be an AIT platoon sergeant.

Knowing the battalion staff structure, Gahl knows who to visit to help him take care of the administrative issues of his AIT Soldiers. Even though Gahl helps new Soldiers with personal issues, he said the Army encourages Soldiers to learn how to self-regulate.

"Now we're encouraging self-discipline in the Soldier," Gahl said, "We allow people to make mistakes and use positive reinforcement. We give them the ability to take care of their own issues."

Sgt. 1st Class Johnny Akins, an instructor at Fort Jackson with the AIT Platoon Sergeant Course, said drill sergeants and AIT platoon sergeants are held to the same standards. Indeed, sometimes AIT platoon sergeants are held to higher ones. Both AIT platoon sergeants and drill sergeants must pass a background check, have no record of disciplinary action, not be flagged, have no speech impediment, and meet height and weight standards.

AIT platoon sergeants, though, must be at least the rank of a staff sergeant and the majority are sergeants first class. Both careers are tracked by the same Human Resource Command branch manager, who works hard to place AIT platoon sergeants in their MOS or career field. There are 27 AIT locations where an AIT platoon sergeant could be potentially placed. HRC can't guarantee that AIT platoon sergeants will be placed at the schoolhouse of their MOS, but the command will try to place them at the installation where the platoon sergeants' branches are, Akins said.

"MOS is immaterial. Being a platoon sergeant, your main job, your main function, is to take care of Soldiers," Akins said. "You handle all of their problems so that when they get to school, they won't be thinking about anything but class."

In the two-week instructional period, the AIT Platoon Sergeant Course covers advanced rifle marksmanship, the role of the platoon sergeant in AIT, families in AIT, Warrior Tasks and Battle Drills trained in AIT, health issues, nutrition, injury prevention, PRT, prohibited practices, foot marching and suicide prevention.

"One of the most positive things about this job is that you are affecting every new Soldier," Duran said. "They get to know you, you meet them, you motivate them, you mold them. You're investing in

the welfare of these Soldiers. You'll run back into them in the operational Army."

Staff Sgt. Keric Foster, an instructor at the AIT Platoon Sergeant Course, said being an AIT platoon sergeant is one of those challenging assignments with long hours but huge dividends.

"It's an awesome experience," Foster said. "The

Army's small, and you're going to put your thumbprint on these Soldiers. You're going to see them again, and they're going to remember you."

When fully staffed, the Army will have 700 AIT platoon sergeants within TRADOC. Though they will continue to train various MOSs, drill sergeants will continue to fill One-Station Unit Training slots, including those that train new infantry, armor, combat engineer and military police Soldiers, Foster said.

"I totally understand the fear factor of that drill sergeant hat. But as platoon sergeants, you have to instill that discipline from day one," Foster said. "The hat or badge doesn't make you a leader. When you put those chevrons on, that makes you a leader."

The AIT Platoon Sergeant Course typically trains 32 NCOs each cycle. Currently, the course has roughly five or six Soldiers per course volunteering for AIT platoon sergeant duty; the others are Department of the Army selected for AIT duty. The two-week course is offered at least once a month, Foster said.

AIT platoon sergeants bring a unique perspective to the AIT environment, Foster said.

"[AIT platoon sergeants] bring the experience of having deployed. They can tie in that experience when Soldiers ask those questions," Foster said.



It's important to bring that experience to the AIT environment by having AIT platoon sergeants who are able to help turn basic combat trainees into operational Army Soldiers, Duran said.

"If you want to run into those squared-away Soldiers in the future, you've got to produce those squared-away Soldiers now," Duran said.

The average AIT platoon can consist of anywhere from 60 to 125 Soldiers in training. But one of the biggest challenges is when those Soldiers haven't yet started their schoolhouse training. Akins said with those Soldiers, it's important for them to do training that reinforces Warrior Tasks and Battle Drills to maximize face-to-face

Above: Staff Sgt. Luis Duran teaches Pvt. Paul Nielsen effective marksmanship techniques as part of the 2009 Platoon Sergeant of the Year Competition at Fort Monroe, Va.

Photo by Patrick Buffett

time with the instructor.

"It just comes down to, how badly do you want to train your Soldiers and how much time are you willing to spend with your Soldiers?" Akins said.

After AIT platoon sergeants complete the course they move on to take the Master Resilience Trainer course across the street. **J**

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Graduation Requirements

- ▶ Prepare a leadership philosophy
- ▶ Prepare a research paper
- ▶ Attend all classroom instruction and training events
- ▶ Complete all five practical exercises
- ▶ Pass two written exams (on Training Regulation 350-6, the training manual for AIT platoon sergeants, and general subjects)
- ▶ Conduct Physical Readiness Training
- ▶ Conduct unit formations/drill and ceremonies
- ▶ Conduct Warrior Tasks and Battle Drills
- ▶ Plan and conduct a foot march
- ▶ Plan and conduct a field training exercise
- ▶ Receive a satisfactory rating while serving in a tactical leadership position

FIRST BATTLE IN WORLD WAR I • FIRST ACRO



A Division

F 1 R S

STORIES BY JONATHAN (JAY) KOESTER

FIRST INTO SICILY • FIRST ON OMAHA BEA

David Sterling looks at an exhibit about Operation Iraqi Freedom at the 1st Infantry Division Museum at Fort Riley, Kan. Sterling was awarded the Silver Star and two Purple Hearts while serving with the 1st Infantry Division during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Sterling retired from the Army in 2004 as a sergeant after losing his right hand when he was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade just outside of Ramadi, Iraq. "Being part of the First was great," Sterling said. "They always say, 'If you're going to be one, be a Big Red One.'"

Photo by Jonathan (Jay) Koester



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Photo courtesy 1st Infantry Division Museum

Soldiers from the 1st Infantry Division search German prisoners of war May 28, 1918, in Cantigny, France. The 1st Infantry Division proved itself during its first victory at Cantigny, and “Cantigny” has been synonymous with the division ever since.



Image courtesy Library of Congress

A Service Series poster from 1918 promotes the 1st Infantry Division.

Of all the firsts claimed by the 1st Infantry Division, one stands above the others: duty. “No mission too difficult, No sacrifice too great — Duty First!” isn’t just a historical adage that gets dusted off for special occasions. It’s a motto that Soldiers of the 1st Infantry Division live by today.

“Duty First” is often the first thing Soldiers hear upon driving onto post at Fort Riley, Kan., where the division is headquartered. And it’s a motto 1st Infantry Division NCOs make sure new Soldiers immediately understand.

“It’s something we try to live by here at the 1st Infantry Division; it’s our legacy,” said Command Sgt. Maj. James Champagne, the division’s command sergeant major. “We tell all the newcomers ... if you do your best, then no mission is

too difficult. And when no mission is too difficult, no sacrifice is too great, because you’re focused on accomplishing a mission. With ‘Duty First,’ we talk about their sense of duty to the division. A lot of folks ... don’t understand that it falls in line with all the values that we have in the 1st Infantry Division and the United States Army.”

First Sgt. Richard Wilhelmy of the 3rd Assault Helicopter Battalion, 1st Aviation Regiment, Combat Aviation Brigade,

1st Infantry Division, said the ethic embodied by the motto permeates life at Fort Riley.

“As a young Soldier and a young NCO, you hear about the Army values: duty, honor, country,” Wilhelmy said. “But for everything to truly be built around that is completely different, and this division has that. Everything we are told the Army is supposed to be about is lived here on a daily basis. It makes a guy feel good to be a part of it, it really does.”

WORLD WAR I

The lineage of the 1st Infantry Division started in 1917, making it the oldest division still active in the U.S. Army. In April 1917, when the United States declared war on Germany, President Woodrow Wilson wanted to send a message to America’s French and British allies that the United States was serious about the war by sending a division of troops to boost morale, said Bob Smith, director of the 1st Infantry Division Museum at Fort Riley.

“In 1917, morale was pretty low on the Western Front,” Smith said. “The French had taken horrendous casualties at Verdun, and they experienced a mutiny in 1917, a military mutiny. So they really needed a morale boost. The Brits were pretty much carrying the war at that point. They had suffered huge casualties in Somme in 1916.”

Wilson quickly put together the 1st Expeditionary Division by gathering small units in service along the Mexican border and at various posts throughout the country. The division was put under the direction of Gen. John J. “Black Jack” Pershing.

Division troops began arriving in France in June, and on July 4, 1917, members of the division paraded through the streets of Paris in an attempt to boost French spirits. During that parade, a member of Pershing’s staff, Lt. Col. Charles Stanton, proclaimed, “Lafayette, we are here!” at the tomb of the Marquis de Lafayette, who helped lead American forces during the Revolu-

tionary War. Two days later, the 1st Expeditionary Division was redesignated the 1st Infantry Division.

The division was the first into France and suffered the first American casualties of the war on Oct. 25, 1917. But the 1st Infantry Division’s real baptism by fire came at Cantigny. The French and British weren’t confident that the American troops would be able to put up a proper fight. But after the French and British trained the Americans in trench warfare, the 1st Infantry Division troops proved their worth there in May 1918, Smith said.

“It was a small battle. But what it did was prove to our British and French allies that the Americans could take on the German army, fight and win,” Smith said.

To this day, Cantigny is synonymous with the 1st Infantry Division. There is a Cantigny Dining Facility at Fort Riley and at Fort Knox, Ky., where its 3rd Brigade Combat Team is stationed. In addition to the 1st Infantry Division Museum at Fort Riley, there is The First Division Museum at Cantigny, at Cantigny Park in Chicago. Col. Robert McCormick, the late editor and publisher of the *Chicago Tribune*, owned the property. After his service with the division during World War I, he renamed his estate Cantigny.

“We wet our stripes on the battlefields of Cantigny in 1918,” Champagne said. “And since then, the traditions of the noncommissioned officers in the 1st Infantry Division have been well-known.”

The 1st Infantry Division was the first to cross the Rhine into occupied Germany, where division troops remained until the peace treaty was signed in November 1918.

“The 1st Division was the first division sent over in World War I, and it was the last to come home,” Smith said. “It was actually chosen for occupation duties in Germany in late 1918–1919.”

By the end of World War I, the division had suffered 22,668 casualties and had five Medal of Honor

1ID Timeline

- **MAY 1917:** The 1st Expeditionary Division is organized from Army units in service on the Mexican border and at various Army posts. It becomes the 1st Infantry Division when Soldiers arrive in France in June.
- **MAY 1918:** The Battle of Cantigny, the first U.S. victory of World War I, fought by Soldiers of the 28th Infantry Regiment.
- **NOVEMBER 1918:** Armistice declared.
- **1922:** The 1st Infantry Division headquarters is established at Fort Hamilton, N.Y. It remained there until World War II.
- **MAY 1940:** The 1st Infantry Division takes part in Louisiana Maneuvers in preparation for possible involvement in World War II.
- **NOVEMBER 1942:** The 1st Infantry Division takes part in Operation Torch, the invasion of North Africa.
- **JULY 1943:** The division takes part in Operation Husky, the invasion of Sicily.
- **JUNE 1944:** The 1st Infantry Division takes part in Operation Overlord, the invasion of Normandy.
- **OCTOBER 1944:** The 1st Infantry Division accepts the surrender of the first major German city, Aachen.
- **1945–1955:** The 1st Infantry Division serves on occupation duty in Germany.
- **NOVEMBER 1955:** The 1st Infantry Division’s headquarters moves to Fort Riley, Kan.
- **JUNE 1965:** The 1st Infantry Division begins deployment to the Republic of South Vietnam.
- **APRIL 1970:** The 1st Infantry Division returns to Fort Riley.
- **FALL 1970:** 1st Infantry Division elements stationed in West Germany take part in Reforger, an annual exercise intended to ensure West Germany was protected during the Cold War.
- **FEBRUARY 1991:** The 1st Infantry Division spearheads the armor attack into Iraq.
- **1996:** The 1st Infantry Division headquarters moves to Würzburg, Germany.
- **JUNE 1999:** 1st Infantry Division troops deploy for peace support operations in Kosovo.
- **SEPTEMBER 2003:** The 1st “Devil” Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, deploys to provide support to the 82nd Airborne Division in Iraq.
- **AUGUST 2006:** 1st Infantry Division headquarters returns to Fort Riley.

From gutter puppy to 1st Infantry Division mascot

Military working dogs are a large part of Army lore. They are well-trained, born-and-bred warriors.

But Rags, the mascot of the 1st Infantry Division, is a different story: He was an untrained, homeless Cairn terrier picked up on the streets of Paris whose bravery under fire ended up making him a hero of World War I.

Rags became an accidental recruit into the Army when Pvt. James Donovan got lost after Bastille Day ceremonies in Paris in early July 1918. Donovan spotted Rags about the same time three American military policemen spotted Donovan away from his unit without a pass. The private, showing the quick thinking and smarts that would soon get him promoted to sergeant, came up with the excuse that the dog was the missing mascot of the 1st Division. When the MPs accepted the excuse and escorted the two back, the little lie soon became the truth.

Donovan was a signalman, and as he prepared for the battles ahead, he tried to leave Rags behind but the dog would not leave his side, according to a book written about the dog, *Rags: The Story of a Dog Who Went to War* by Jack Rohan, published in 1930. So Donovan instead tried to find a way to make the little terrier useful.

“Rags, the sergeant had noticed, did not take kindly to learning tricks,” Rohan wrote. “But he judged that, if the terrier could be taught there was some good

reason for carrying messages, he might in a pinch get one through. ... Eventually he taught Rags that when a paper was given to him, he was to bring it to Donovan, and that when Donovan placed a paper in Rag’s teeth and said ‘Go find,’ the dog was to carry it toward the guns until he found someone who would take it from him.”

In addition, Rags quickly proved useful as an early-warning system for approaching shell-fire.

“By some special canine sense he could catch the approach of a shell before the Soldiers heard it,” Rohan wrote. “It became the habit of Donovan — and any others who were about — to watch Rags and take cover at his warning. The dog always gave a growling little bark before ducking to safety. By the night of July 19th (1918), Rags was a thoroughly fire-seasoned veteran.”

SKILL DISCOVERED

Rags’ first mission he discovered on his own. With Donovan in the heat of the battle and the communication wires having been down for hours, Rags came upon a second lieutenant who had been killed before he could deliver his urgent message. Rags, knowing Donovan liked to have papers delivered, grabbed the message from the man’s hand and delivered it to the sergeant. The sergeant used Rags more often after that display of skill.

Their final mission together would

be on Oct. 9, 1918. The pair was in the Argonne Forest when an important message needed to be sent.

“After a final futile effort to telephone the message, Donovan decided to waste no more time on the wires,” Rohan wrote. “He would carry the message through. He realized that the purpose of the enemy fire curtain had been to tear communications to pieces.

“Quickly memorizing the positions, Donovan tied the note he had made from the infantry message to Rags’ collar and started the dog toward the guns. A terrific blast sent both of them sprawling.”

Both Rags and Donovan were blasted and gassed, but Rags got the message through. Rags had been cut by shrapnel, and though he healed quickly, he would be blind in his right eye and deaf in his right ear for the rest of his life.

GONE WEST

Rags and Donovan were evacuated together to Fort Sheridan, Ill. Rags would wait each day outside the hospital door until someone would let him in to visit Donovan’s bed. Donovan’s lungs, however, never recovered from the gassing, and he died in 1919. Rags continued to try to enter the hospital until a Soldier realized Rags needed to understand that the sergeant was gone forever.

“The Soldier placed the terrier on the cot. He spoke almost in a whisper, extending his hands in a gesture of despair,”

recipients, according to the Society of the First Infantry Division website.

THE PATCH

The division’s distinctive insignia was created during World War I. According to the 1st Infantry Division Museum, it all began with a joke.

During the war, supply truck drivers painted big “1”s on their trucks. Headquarters wanted a divisional insignia

and created a design that was a long red “1” that ran from the shoulder of the left sleeve all the way to the elbow.

“A colonel from one of the regiments showed up with one of these, and Lt. Herbert M. Stoops made a wisecrack about his red underwear showing through,” a museum display reads. “His battery commander suggested the lieutenant come up with a better design or be quiet.”

Stoops decided to take that advice.

His design used the red stripe from a German infantry fatigue cap to create a bright vermilion “1” on a gray background.

Because gray cloth was hard to come by at the time, an olive background, the same color as the uniforms, was eventually used instead.

The division’s nickname, the “Big Red One,” came from the Germans who saw the patch during World War II. The nickname supplemented the one already in



Photo courtesy U.S. Army Signal Corps

Rags stands with an unidentified first sergeant at Fort Hamilton, N.Y., in the 1920s. Rags became a minor celebrity when he returned to the States after his service in World War I, and NCOs and officers often asked to pose for pictures with him.

Rohan wrote. “Donovan’s gone west, Rags,” he explained. “You won’t see him anymore. Gone west!”

“Rags moaned and whimpered, but so lowly that the men scarcely heard him. He sniffed, stretched himself, with forepaws extended and nose buried between them,

and lay motionless for more than a minute. Then, without another sound, he jumped off the bed and moved toward the exit.”

But Rags stayed at Fort Sheridan. Though all knew him, nobody owned him, and he wandered about as he pleased.

In 1920, Rags found a permanent caretaker when Maj. Raymond Hardenberg, along with his wife and two daughters, arrived at Fort Sheridan. Rags visited the girls often, and it was decided that Rags would be better cared for by one family instead of having free rein.

A DIVISION DOG

Rags then moved several times with the Hardenberg family, eventually landing at Governor’s Island in New York Harbor, where the 16th Infantry Regiment of the 1st Division and other 1st Division troops were stationed. Men of the 16th Regiment started treating Rags as their own, but “Rags recognized the symptoms,” Rohan wrote. “He began distributing his patronage impartially over the entire garrison.”

Men of the 18th Regiment eventually took him in for a couple of days.

“For two days the men of the Eighteenth had been dinning into them (the 16th Regiment) the news that Rags had settled the question of his status. No regiment could claim him — much less any company. He was a division dog. And that was that.”

Rags became quite a celebrity in New York, with high-ranking brass always stopping to take a photo with him. Soldiers from the 1st Division fought to get him a place in a dog show despite his unknown heritage. When Rags died on March 22, 1936, he merited a long obituary in *The New York Times*, which began this way:

“Rags, the self-made hero who began as a gutter puppy in Paris, lived through some startling experiences in the World War and later found it infinitely harder to get into a dog show than into the affections of the First Division, is dead.”

use at the time, “The Fighting First.”

Soldiers of The Fighting First usually wear their Army combat uniforms with the “subdued” patch, which has a black “1.” But they find many special occasions to bring out the Big Red One. Getting to wear the division patch is a proud moment for many, said Command Sgt. Maj. Jim Thomson, the command sergeant major of the 1st Infantry Division’s Combat Aviation Brigade. He talked about the May

2010 patch ceremony he participated in while the brigade was deployed to Iraq.

“When we donned our red 1s, we took a minute to think about the footsteps that Big Red One Soldiers of the Fighting First have taken through all the battles, and here we are taking them through the sands of Iraq,” Thomson said.

WORLD WAR II

The 1st Infantry Division was not

deactivated in the interwar period, and after World War II broke out in Europe, the division began training in November 1939 in preparation for possible U.S. involvement.

“In 1940–41, the 1st Infantry Division trained in amphibious landings, and it was the first Army division to be trained in amphibious maneuvers,” Smith said. When the U.S. entered the war, “the 1st Infantry Division was immediately sent to England

and then subsequently to North Africa. It was chosen because it had this amphibious training and could land on a hostile beach. The 1st Infantry Division was the first Army division in World War II to make an amphibious landing in November of 1942 in North Africa.”

The division participated in three amphibious operations during World War II — North Africa, Sicily and, on June 6, 1944, the D-Day landing at Omaha Beach, Normandy.

The horrors of D-Day are well-known. Lt. Gen. Omar Bradley, as quoted in *The Fighting First: The Untold Story of the Big Red One on D-Day* by Flint Whitlock, said it was the training and effort of the 1st Division Soldiers that saved the day.

“Had a less experienced division than the 1st Infantry stumbled into this crack resistance, it might easily have been thrown back in the Channel,” Bradley said. “Unjust though it was, my choice of the First to spearhead the invasion probably saved us Omaha Beach and a catastrophe on the landing.”

Master Sgt. Lewis Bayles of 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, said this history of the 1st Division moved him even when he was young.

“I grew up watching the movie *The Big Red One*,” Bayles said. “You watch stuff on the Discovery Channel and the History Channel, and when you think of the Big Red One, you think of coming on the beach and seeing the guys fall. A lot of people just fell one right after another on that beach from the Big Red One. When I think of the Big Red One, I think of the blood that was spilled on that beach.”

1st Infantry Division troops then liberated Liege, Belgium, and pushed to the German border. The division captured the



Photo courtesy 1st Infantry Division Museum
A 1st Infantry Division Soldier wades through water in Vietnam during Operation Junction City in 1967.

and the war with Germany ended on May 8, 1945. The division suffered 21,023 casualties during World War II and 16 1st Infantry Division Soldiers received the Medal of Honor.

Just as in World War I, the 1st Infantry Division was the first over and the last out in World War II. The division was chosen to be part of the occupation force, and the division stayed in Europe until 1955.

In 1955, the 1st Infantry Division came home as part of Operation Gyroscope. During the operation, the 1st Infantry Division switched places with the 10th Infantry Division, sending the 10th to Europe and the 1st to Fort Riley.

VIETNAM

On July 12, 1965, the 1st Infantry Division became the first divisional unit into Vietnam, with the 2nd Brigade landing at Cam Ranh Bay and Vung Tau.

The Big Red One participated in many operations in Vietnam, and several of the operations took their names from the division’s Kansas home. Operation Junction City, named after Junction City, Kan., the city next to Fort Riley, included 52 continuous days of pounding enemy forces. Operation Manhattan, named after Manhattan, Kan., located about 12 miles from Fort Riley, uncovered one of the largest weapons caches of the war. Both operations took place in 1967.

In April 1970, the 1st Infantry Division returned to Fort Riley as a battle-hardened group.

“For nearly five years, the 1st Infantry Division Soldiers battled against an aggressive enemy who made expert use of the dense jungles and inaccessible countryside,” the Society of the First Infantry Division writes in

its history. “During this conflict, the 1st Infantry Division had mastered the use of helicopters as one of the best means of countering the jungle and the lack of

The March

Capt. Donald T. Kellett composed the lyrics and music of “The Big Red One” march in 1943 while he was hospitalized and recovering from wounds suffered in El Guettar, Algeria. The song was dedicated to Maj. Gen. Terry Allen, who commanded the division in North Africa and Sicily, and who awarded Kellett the Silver Star at Kasserine Pass, Tunisia.

**Toast of the Army,
Favorite son! Hail to the brave Big Red One!
Always the first to thirst for a fight.
No foe shall challenge our right to victory.
We take the field, A grand sight to see.
Pride of the infantry.
Men of a great division,
Courage is our tradition,
Forward the Big Red One!**

Allies’ first major German city, Aachen, in October 1944, Smith said. The division destroyed hundreds of German tanks during the Battle of the Bulge in December,

roads; gained significant experience in resupply operations, medical evacuation and the tactics of the air mobile assault; instituted numerous other tactical innovations; and provided extensive civic action support to the South Vietnamese people.”

The division suffered 20,770 casualties during the Vietnam War, and 11 Big Red One Soldiers received the Medal of Honor for actions during the conflict.

DESERT STORM, BALKANS

Compared to previous conflicts, the Big Red One’s participation in Operation Desert Storm was short-lived. Arriving in late 1990, the division was the first across the berm into Iraq, Smith said. By February 1991, a cease-fire was called, and in May, the division was back at Fort Riley.

When the Dayton Peace Accord was signed in 1995, 1st Infantry Division troops were the first into Bosnia to help keep the peace among ethnic factions in the former Yugoslavia. That duty ended in 1997.

In 1999, the 1st Infantry Division returned to the Balkans to conduct peace support operations in Kosovo. There, the division established Base Camps Monteith and Bondsteel, both named after 1st Division Medal of Honor recipients. In June 2000, the Big Red One handed over its responsibilities to the 1st Armored Division.

Since 2003, the 1st Infantry Division has been heavily involved in the Global War on Terrorism, and that history is still being written.

THE SONG

The NCOs of the 1st Infantry Division readily admit to a malady common to Soldiers who didn’t grow up singing in the church choir: shyness in singing the division song. But it’s not long before the spirit comes over the Soldiers, and they each try to sing louder than the Soldier standing next to him or her.

“Singing the song was hard, because I had never done that anywhere before coming here,” Bayles said. “And now it flows.”

“Soldiers know it,” Champagne added. “They sing the song every morning at 6:30 a.m. reveille; it plays in the housing areas. We have family members out there singing it. I’ll walk in the commissary, and a lady will be there by herself with a full



Photo courtesy 1st Infantry Division Museum

A 1st Infantry Division Soldier points to the sign that many saw on their way into Iraq during Operation Desert Storm. The division arrived in Iraq in late 1990 and made quick work of the Iraqi Republican Guard. A cease-fire was called by February 1991.

cart, humming the song. So there’s a sense of pride not only with the Soldiers, but with the family members as well.”

STILL MEANINGFUL

Senior NCOs of the 1st Infantry Division are rightly proud and well-versed in their division’s history. But the most important idea most NCOs try to pass along to their Soldiers is that the division’s history is alive today.

“Two years ago, I took a color guard to Belgium to commemorate the 65th anniversary of the liberation of Belgium by the Big Red One,” Thomson said. “We marched down the cobblestone streets of this little town in Belgium, and afterward they hosted seven Soldiers, me and the color guard. These ladies were coming up and hugging these young Soldiers and giving them flowers and thanking them for liberating them 65 years ago.

“So if you think we’re not connected, you’re wrong,” he said. “We’re absolutely connected in their eyes and in their hearts. It was very moving for the Soldiers to realize that’s what they are a part of.”

That spirit of keeping the division history alive is also found in a quote from Staff Sgt. David Bellavia that is posted in the 1st Infantry Division Museum. Bellavia was awarded the Silver Star for

his actions during the Second Battle of Fallujah in November 2004 during Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was a member of A Company, Task Force 2-2, 1st Infantry Division.

“In Diyala, (Iraq) on April 9, 2004, we’re in full battle rattle,” Bellavia wrote. “The high intensity urban fighting we’ve practiced since basic training is now finally allowed to be unleashed on our enemy. There is no [person] to hold back on our reins. We are again the 1st Infantry Division of Vietnam and the beaches of Normandy.”

“Duty First,” Champagne reminds his Soldiers, is taken from a long line of historical firsts for the division. He expects that history to guide and inspire their careers.

“I tell the young Soldiers we’re a division of firsts,” Champagne said. “First battle in World War I. First into North Africa. First into Sicily. First on Omaha Beach. First across the Rhine. First into Vietnam. First across the berm in the Gulf War. You are part of the 1st Division. You’re not the 4th Infantry Division; you’re not the 82nd Airborne Division; you’re not the 101st. You’re the *First* Infantry Division. Remember that.”

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NCO Stories

A selection of Valor



France bestows high honors on National Guard, active-duty Green Berets

By Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill
National Guard Bureau

They are men used to seeing their deeds pass as unrecognized as their stealth battlefield movements, but on July 25 one active-duty and five National Guard Special Forces Soldiers took the limelight in Washington, D.C., to receive a French award roughly equivalent to the Silver Star.

The six were honored with the Croix de la Valeur Militaire in a private ceremony at the French ambassador's residence attended by senior leaders including Gen. Martin Dempsey, the Army chief of staff who is expected to take the position of chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Oct. 1, and Maj. Gen. Timothy Kadavy, deputy director of the Army National Guard.

"I am deeply honored to pay tribute to six most outstanding American Soldiers from the United States Army and the Army National Guard who distinguished themselves while



fighting the Taliban and al-Qaida elements in Afghanistan," said François Delattre, France's ambassador to the United States.

"Through their outstanding bravery and engagement in combat, they fought at the risk of their own lives to assist French soldiers, their brothers in arms, who experienced a barrage of fire from the enemy."

The five National Guard Soldiers supported a French regiment executing a mission in and around the Uzbein Valley in Afghanistan in 2009. The active-duty Soldier was recognized for similarly heroic action in the same region a year earlier.

"They were trying to get at the French operating in the valley," said Army National Guard Capt. Thomas Harper, one of the awardees. "We prevented that from happening, allowing them to conduct their mission."

Created in 1956 by the French government to reward extraordinary deeds of bravery carried out as part of security and law enforcement

operations, the Croix de la Valeur Militaire — or French Cross of Military Valor — is one of the most respected decorations in the French military, Delattre said.

Those recognized were Maj. Richard Nessel of the 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), Fort Carson, Colo., Capt. Thomas Harper, Master Sgt. David Nuemer, Sgt. 1st Class Ryan Ahern, Staff Sgt. Casey Roberts and Sgt. Ryan Meister, all Army National Guard Soldiers with the 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne) out of Birmingham, Ala.

“You demonstrated the highest military qualities and sense of duty,” Delattre told them. “You distinguished yourselves. Your outstanding conduct alongside French forces, your remarkable bravery in the face of danger in the combat zone, and your superb combatant qualities deserve to be commended.”

“It’s a huge honor for all of us,” Harper said. “[Our families are] completely overwhelmed. We don’t normally look for this kind of recognition. I don’t think they’ve ever even been to one of my military school graduations.”

The recognition of the Guard members reflects the Guard’s contributions to the total force, Dempsey said.

“The last three award ceremonies I’ve been to happen to have been [for] National Guard Soldiers,” he said. “We’re really one Army. It’s a signal that, as we go forward in a new fiscal environment, we have to maintain faith with all three components of our Army — active, Guard and Reserve.”

“It’s a great credit to the young men and women who serve,” he said. “I couldn’t be more proud of our Army in general. But tonight is a night for five of these six Soldiers in particular who happen to be National Guard.”

The National Guard has Special Forces in 18 states. While they train and deploy like active-duty Soldiers, Guard members must also balance civilian lives and careers.

“We’re in the right place at the wrong time,” quipped Army National Guard Brig. Gen. Steven Duff, the deputy commander of U.S. Army Special Forces Command. “We’re everywhere. We can do whatever is necessary, and it shows that the caliber of our Soldiers are just as good as anybody else’s.”



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill
Francois Delattre, France’s ambassador to the United States, awards the Croix de la Valeur Militaire, roughly equivalent to the Silver Star, to Army National Guard Sgt. Ryan Meister of the 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne) during a private ceremony July 25 at the French ambassador’s residence in Washington, D.C.

“We are part of the operational force,” he said. “Given the proper predictability in our force generation model, we can accomplish any mission that’s given.”

“It says a lot about our units, our dedication to duty and the training that we’ve undergone, as well as the maturity of our Soldiers,” Harper said.

“It’s a great honor,” said Ahern, a laser physicist in his civilian career who has spent four of the last 10 years deployed or recovering from combat-related injuries.

Ahern’s parents, wife and daughter accompanied him.

“They see the newspaper stories,” he said. “They hear abstract descriptions of what you’ve done. But they don’t really see it firsthand, nor do they see recognition, so this is a really good opportunity.”

“We had kind of a tough fight those last few days in Afghanistan,” Harper said. “We were just happy to be alive. We really didn’t expect this kind of honor. It’s pretty overwhelming, I’ll tell you.”

“We’re very quiet in what we do,” he said. “We don’t expect recognition. We don’t look for it. This has been a little much for us today, but we’re happy that we could be here and that the French felt they could give us this extreme honor.”

Recruiter saves life on interstate

By Len Butler
Dallas Recruiting Battalion

When Staff Sgt. Marcus A. Stone, a recruiter in Denton, Texas, saw cars braking and swerving suddenly ahead of him on Interstate 35E in Dallas, he knew something bad had just happened.

In the minutes that followed, Stone prevented the accident from becoming deadly when he pulled a victim from a burning vehicle.

Those actions that day last December prompted Stone's commanding officer to nominate Stone for the Noncommissioned Officers Association of the United States of America Military Vanguard award that was presented during the week of July 11. The award, presented annually to recognize one noncommissioned officer or petty officer from each of the uniformed services for acts of heroism, honors those individuals who have performed a particularly heroic act that resulted in the saving of a life or the prevention of serious injury.

Stone, 28, was driving an Army applicant through the Dallas suburb of Farmers Branch to the Denton Recruiting Station when he saw the accident. Moving to the high-occupancy-vehicle lane, he got around the stopped cars and saw several crashed vehicles with one of them emitting flames and leaking gasoline.

"I was in the HOV lane and I saw the [burning] car facing oncoming traffic," Stone said. "I got out of my [government-owned vehicle] to go see if everyone was all right. That's when I noticed the flames underneath the car. Then I noticed the dripping fluid, and I realized that, sooner or later, that car was going to blow up."

Stone said the first thing he wanted to do was get all the motorists away from the immediate area. Some of them refused, preferring to stay with their cars or not wanting to move their cars to safety until police arrived.

"I told them, 'Look, this is what's going on over there,' pointing to the burning car," he said. "Once they realized there



Photo by Len Butler

Staff Sgt. Marcus A. Stone, a Denton, Texas, recruiter, saved a life and was honored with a Noncommissioned Officers Association of the United States of America Military Vanguard award in July.

could be more damage to their cars if the flames got out of control, in addition to their own personal safety, they started moving."

Stone said that's when he noticed that there was still a passenger in the burning car. The driver had just gotten out, but Stone could see the passenger wasn't moving.

"The first thing I thought of was, 'Why is this guy not making an effort to get out of the car?'" he said. "I ran back to my GOV to get the fire extinguisher, and when I turned around to go back, I heard a loud 'Whoosh!' and the fire had spread to engulf the front of the car as well as underneath it."

Stone ran back to the burning car and the helpless man inside. Flames kept him from going around to the passenger side of the car, so he had to reach into the car and grab the man from the driver's side. In spite of the danger, Stone said all he wanted to do was help the victim.

"The passenger was somewhat conscious, but it was obvious he was

traumatized from the accident and had a possible head injury," Stone said. "I knew he needed to get out of that car, whether he was going to help me or not. I certainly couldn't just allow him to burn in there."

With flames all around the car, Stone grabbed the man by his arm and pulled him out. Another motorist came to Stone's aid and helped pull the victim to safety. Almost immediately after Stone pulled the victim out of the burning vehicle, the car was completely engulfed in flames. Moments later, the fire department and police arrived.

Stone learned later from the investigating police officer that the victim was in good condition at a hospital and was expected to recover.

Officer Susan Sharp, from the Farmers Branch Police Department, was the investigating officer that day. Once firefighter, police and paramedics arrived, Stone gave the victim his recruiter business card and left the scene. It was only after Sharp compiled the various statements from witnesses and drivers involved in the accident, people who referred to Stone as "that Army guy," did she realize how crucial a role Stone played, Sharp said.

"Had Sgt. Stone not extricated (the victim), he would have burned to death within a minute or two," Sharp said. "Stone didn't just save a life. He was the difference between a group of bystanders seeing a man rescued by one of America's heroic Soldiers versus seeing the man die a horrific death, burning right before their eyes."

Stone, an Iraq combat veteran, said his Army training played a crucial role in his actions to save the man that day. His experience downrange, he explained, helped in that he was much calmer because he had already been exposed to pressure-packed situations in Iraq.

"It just comes down to being at the right place at the right time," he said. "I'm just glad that somebody was able to continue their life, and I'm thankful that I was able to help someone in that capacity."

MP's actions in Afghanistan save lives, earn Silver Star

By Don Kramer
Fort Lewis' Northwest Guardian

Equal parts instinct and training demonstrated by a military police team leader saved the lives of scores of people in 2007 near the provincial capital of Jalalabad in Afghanistan.

That NCO received the Silver Star July 14, 2008, in front of his company and family at Fort Lewis, Wash.

Sgt. Michael A. Espejo Jr. of the 66th MP Company switched from Good Samaritan to combatant Sept. 27, 2007, the instant he realized the Afghan policeman he had stopped to medically assist was an insurgent who wore a suicide vest under his clothes.

In the process, he protected the lives of his squad mates, two State Department civilians accompanying the patrol and a number of local citizens in the area.

Espejo and the rest of 1st Squad, 1st Platoon, 66th MP Company, were returning from a combat logistics patrol outside of Forward Operating Base Torkham when they came upon the smoldering wreckage of a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device that was later determined to have been prematurely detonated. An apparent Afghan National Police officer lay nearby, struggling to regain his senses after the blast.

Espejo went to his aid while another team leader ran for medical supplies.

As he helped the "policeman" to his feet, Espejo felt suspicious bulk under the man's clothes around his chest and torso. At the same time, Espejo saw a wire coming from the man's sleeve into one hand.

"I threw him off of me, and started backing away from him," Espejo said.

He took cover and ordered the insurgent in Pashto and English to raise his hands. At first, the bomber complied, but dropped his arms and moved his hands together as if to detonate the bomb. At that point, Espejo fired his weapon, delivering

a killing shot that prevented the insurgent from taking the lives of the Soldiers and civilians in the vicinity.

In the aftermath, explosive ordnance disposal personnel spent hours defusing the bomb and lending perspective to the incident.

"[EOD] took great pains in recovering it," said Capt. Christopher Hormel, commander of the 66th MP Company. "They had the robot out there cutting it off. They said it was the largest one they had seen."

The I Corps commanding general sees the event as a symbol of the skills necessary in the complex and confusing environment of the war on terrorism.

"Sgt. Espejo's actions ... perfectly capture the essence, the prototype of an American Soldier in a counterinsurgency," said Lt. Gen. Charles H. Jacoby Jr. in his remarks before he pinned on the Silver Star. "Sgt. Espejo noticed an apparent friend, an ally, wounded on the side of the road and in need. Just as he would do for any American Soldier, Sgt. Espejo moved to that individual to provide aid and pro-

tection, (demonstrating) a willingness to trust and take risks."

When he recognized the threat, Jacoby said, "he deftly reversed roles from the concerned friend to the determined combatant. This distinction is vital in a counterinsurgency fight."

Despite the chaos of the battlefield, Jacoby said Espejo was "instantly able to observe, assess and act, transforming from a perceived ally's best friend into a hostile insurgent's worst enemy. It's exactly what we need of every Soldier and every leader in the fight that we're facing today."

It was an important day for the unit as well as Espejo, his commander said.

"Everybody is proud of him," Hormel said. "His actions on that day, being level-headed and keeping his wits with him during the whole event, saved everybody's life and everybody knows it."

"I've got lots of heroes like that in the formation," Hormel said. "This one, the circumstances were such that we were able to highlight it. But I've got a whole unit of nothing but heroes."



Photo by Don Kramer

Sgt. Michael A. Espejo Jr. of the 66th Military Police Company receives the Silver Star on July 14, 2008, from Lt. Gen. Charles H. Jacoby Jr., commanding general of I Corps and Fort Lewis, Wash., as Espejo's wife, Rosa, and Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Grippe, I Corps command sergeant major, look on.



FIGHTING FOR THE BELT

Hundreds compete at all-Army Combatives Championship

By Sgt. Eric J. Glassey
4th Public Affairs Detachment

Soldiers from around the globe swarmed to Central Texas to compete in the 2011 U.S. Army Combatives Championship July 21–23 at Abrams Physical Fitness Center at Fort Hood, Texas.

This year is the first time since its inception in 2004 that the U.S. Army Combatives Championship has been hosted outside of Fort Benning, Ga. It was hosted at Fort Hood because the III Corps squad took last year's championship.

"The number of competitors is equal to when Fort Benning hosts, so there is no

loss of competition with Fort Hood hosting," said Kristopher Perkins, combatives director for III Corps. "The 36th Engineers Brigade and the Fort Benning fieldhouse staff have put in a lot of work into making this a success. Overall, this [tournament] is going really smoothly."

This year, 410 Soldiers hailing from as close as Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio to as far away as Vicenza, Italy, came to the fight.

"It's not the distance, but the competition that matters," said Lt. Col. Bo Stuart, a middleweight competitor from U.S. Army Garrison-Vicenza. "We're mostly paratroopers at Vicenza, so we're all pretty

competitive. We've brought the best."

Vicenza held its own combatives tournament and selected its 14 best competitors to head to Texas.

"We're looking good, and we're from one of the smallest posts competing in the event," Stuart said. "I love it."

The tournament featured eight weight classes, from bantamweight at 110 pounds and less (for men) to heavyweight at 206 pounds and more (men).

The event is not gender specific and pitted men against women in their weight classes. Thirty-four female Soldiers participated.

Women are allowed additional weight

2011 U.S. Army Combatives Champions

BANTAMWEIGHT (110 lbs.)

1st Lt. David Mason,
III Corps, Fort Hood (unanimous decision)

FLYWEIGHT (125 lbs.)

Sgt. 1st Class Jesse Thorton,
III Corps

LIGHTWEIGHT (140 lbs.)

Pvt. Joseph Sanstrom,
1st Infantry Division, Fort Riley (unanimous decision)

WELTERWEIGHT (155 lbs.)

Sgt. Jess Hertzog,
Fort Bragg (unanimous decision)

MIDDLEWEIGHT (170 lbs.)

2nd Lt. Matthew Kyler,
Fort Benning (unanimous decision)

CRUISERWEIGHT (185 lbs.)

Capt. Brandon Bear,
Fort Riley

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT (205 lbs.)

Sgt. 1st Class James Stelley,
5th Special Forces Group (unanimous decision)

HEAVYWEIGHT (206+ lbs.)

Spc. Aaron Jackson,
Joint Base Lewis-McChord

in each class to allow an even match against their male counterparts.

“There is a 12 percent weight advantage for females,” said Staff Sgt. James Hanson, chief trainer for the U.S. Army Combatives School at Fort Benning.

Spc. Viktoriya Varpakhovich competed as a flyweight. The Fort Wadsworth, N.Y., competitor won her first bout by submission.

“I heard a crack when I did the arm bar,” she said. “I hope she is alright, but I really didn’t want to lose.”

Varpakhovich entered without a team and without the support, encouragement and coaching a team provides. In addition, Varpakhovich is new to the combatives community.

Despite having only finished Combatives level 2 training in May and only minimal martial arts training outside the military, the flyweight was determined to compete among the best the Army has to offer, she said.

“I just started doing combatives this year and I took a little jiu-jitsu, as well,” Varpakhovich said. “I’ll enjoy the experience even if I lose. I wanted to fight a guy [first] since it would be more of a challenge.”

She lost her next match by submission to 2010 flyweight champion 1st Lt. David Mason from the III Corps squad.

The fighters competed under basic rules on the first day, progressed to intermediate rules on the second day and fought under advanced rules in the finals.

However, the tournament is not about mimicking MMA events, Hanson said.



Photos by Daniel Cernero

Above: Fort Sill, Okla., competitor Pfc. Fred Conde winds up for a punch while on top of Staff Sgt. Elmer Argulles of Fort Carson, Colo., in a bantamweight bout July 23. Argulles defeated Conde by unanimous decision to win third place in the lightweight division.

Opposite page: Staff Sgt. Shane Lees of III Corps at Fort Hood, Texas, throws a left-handed punch at Lt. Matt Volnoski of the 1st Infantry Division at Fort Riley, Kan., during a bout July 23. Lees defeated Volnoski by a tapout to win the exhibition bout.

Instead, it’s about showing off Soldiers’ combat prowess.

“Everybody looks at the U.S. Army Combatives Championship and thinks MMA,” Hanson said. “However, these Soldiers practice in full gear. Everything they do here, they can do on the battlefield.”

The winners of each weight class

were awarded champion belts. The Fort Hood team, which earned the most points, earned an engraved marker on the Tournament’s Staff Sgt. Pedro Lacerda Cup.

Lacerda, who died May 2010, was instrumental in developing the 75th Ranger Regiment and Army combatives programs. He won the welterweight title during the 2009 championship.

*Former soldier in Saddam's army
is now a U.S. Soldier helping improve Iraq:*

'The uniform I'm wearing, I wear first for my people.'

By Sgt. David Bryant
36th Infantry Division

Decisions can be painful to make, and sometimes choices can alter the entire course of a person's life. For one 36th Infantry Division Soldier, the tormenting decisions he was forced to make would lead him to a life fraught with danger, isolation and a journey that he never expected.

Sgt. Mahad Ahmed, a 36th Infantry Division translator working as a mayor's cell noncommissioned officer in Headquarters and Support Company, Special Troops Battalion, was born in Baghdad in 1976, three years before Saddam Hussein officially took control. His father, a pharmacist, was not a big fan of the new regime, although they continued to live and work in the nation's capital. With all of his siblings either in college or working respectable jobs, his father stayed silent to ensure their survival.

It was the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003 that forced Ahmed, like so many others, to make the decisions that would lead him down a new, perilous path.

"I was a corporal in the Iraqi army stationed at a place called Taji. I was always paying money to not go anywhere," he said. "The corruption in the Iraqi army at the time was very well known — you pay money, you don't have to go out on patrol; you pay money, and you don't have to do guard duty. Then when the war started, I couldn't do that anymore and I

had to stay there for a couple of weeks. I almost died three times."

The first incident occurred when two of his friends were attempting to see who could clear his AK-47 assault rifle the fastest. The charging handle on the rifle they were using for the competition had been pulled back so hard that it caused a hair-trigger. One went to pick up the rifle and touched the trigger, setting off the rifle and putting a bullet through the other's back.

"We took him to the hospital, but he died a few minutes before we made it there," Ahmed said.

Two days later, a second brush with death shook the corporal, who was serving as a physical fitness instructor in Saddam's army.

"We were digging holes for shelters. I was outside the hole and some of my friends were inside it, and we were talking. They stopped talking and started looking at something behind me," Ahmed said. "I was like, 'What's going on? Why are [you] guys not saying anything?' The next thing I know, I'm flying through the air and dropping onto them. A rocket landed about half a mile behind me. Lucky for me it didn't blow up, but the shockwave from the hit threw me into the shelter hole."

After that he'd had enough, he said, and simply dropped his weapon and walked away.

"I figured, I don't like the government, don't like anyone in it, so why am I holding a weapon and just waiting to die?" he said. "And when I left, I looked behind and there were about 40 soldiers coming

after me; they were leaving too.

"I took a bus back to Baghdad, and when I got there I couldn't find my family. They had run north to Diyala, which was a place the U.S. Army didn't bomb at that time."

For a time, Ahmed said he just stayed in Baghdad and watched the war. Soon after, an incident occurred that would land him a new job.

"There were two guys walking around my neighborhood, posing as followers of Hussein, a respected Shia imam," Ahmed recalled. "Two brothers who were also Shia invited them to lunch. The guys told them to go away. The brothers were like, 'We just invited you to lunch, why do you have to be so mean about it?' One of the followers pulled out a 9 mm handgun, and the other a grenade. We found out they were not Shia followers — they were Syrians — not even Iraqi. They were members of Saddam Hussein's Fedayeen, 'the Sacrificers.'

"The guy with the 9 mm ran through an alley and was caught by Iraqis and beaten to death. The guy with the grenade, though, got inside the alley but wasn't fast enough," Ahmed said. "The people trapped him in the middle of the alley, all armed with AK's. The guy couldn't go anywhere, so he swallowed the grenade and blew himself up.

"We checked the body and saw a letter saying, 'Kill nine Shia and you will go to heaven. If you kill no one and come back home, you will be killed. If you get captured, kill yourself,' which is what he

did. At the bottom was the signature of his mom and dad. We checked the body, and his passport was Syrian. The people were outraged and spit on his body. We dragged the body to a garden area we had in the middle of our houses and buried him there. That's how my story with the U.S. Army started."

A platoon of American Soldiers came by and wanted to know what happened. Ahmed explained to the lieutenant in charge everything that had happened.

"The L.T. asked, 'Where are you from?' I said, 'I'm from here. That's my house right there.' He said, 'No, you're not from here. You're lying. Where in the States are you from?'" Ahmed said. "I told him that I'm not from the States and had never been there. My house was right here. They didn't believe it because of my accent.

"I spoke English since I was 15 years old. I learned it by myself, watching movies. Instead of just watching movies with sound, I would mute the sound and read

the translations at the bottom and just try to speak it."

The incident ended with an offer to become a translator for the U.S. Army. His father was against it, as Saddam had not yet been caught, and he feared Saddam still had a chance of returning to power. His mother and siblings helped convince his father to allow it, however, and Ahmed soon began working at a forward operating base outside of Tarmiyah, just north of Baghdad.

"Tarmiyah is the most dangerous place, not just in Iraq, but also in the world," Ahmed explained. "Al-Qaida called Tarmiyah the capital of the Islamic Iraq, because all the bad guys, all the al-Qaida people, went there from other countries such as Jordan, Syria and Saudi Arabia. From there they would be spread out across the country."

His first week on the job brought home just how dangerous it was. On a trip to visit the local police chief, a meeting known only to the Soldiers and the police

chief himself, he had his first experience with an improvised explosive device. The highway leading to Tarmiyah — one he said was normally quite busy — was deserted. A sport utility vehicle was blocking traffic a few miles ahead of the convoy, and a media crew from Al Jazeera was waiting on the side of the road.

"The gunner spotted the first IED, and we had to call EOD (explosive ordnance disposal) since there wasn't really any [quick reaction force] back then," he said. "We found out it was a string of seven IEDs linked together. They were waiting for us to get into the middle of the chain to blow it up. The SUV blocking the highway took off and we were unable to find them. Al Jazeera was videotaping and everything. That night in the news, they reported that two Bradleys had been burned and one U.S. Soldier had been killed. They made it look like we lost a lot, and the IED never even went off. At first I thought, 'Maybe that's in another place.' Until they said it occurred in Tarmiyah."



Photo by Sgt. David Bryant

Sgt. Mahad Ahmed, a translator working as a mayor's cell noncommissioned officer in Headquarters and Support Company, Special Troops Battalion, 36th Infantry Division, oversees Iraqi crews clearing out a section of Contingency Operating Base Basra as part of the transition of U.S. forces out of Iraq.

For a while, Ahmed said he got along well with the people of Tarmiyah, helping them relate to the American forces. They still received a constant barrage of mortar and rocket-propelled grenade fire, but it didn't bother him because he was helping his people.

One day, while American troops were in the middle of rebuilding the police station after a fire, a mortar round meant for the Americans overshot the police station and landed on a house, killing the entire family within except for one son. The survivor immediately went before the tribal elders for vengeance, and the following morning, came to Ahmed.

"He said, 'My dad's blood is on you.' I looked at him and asked, 'Why?' He told me I was the only Iraqi there with the U.S. Army, so I was the one bringing them here," Ahmed said. "I said, 'No, sir, you got that totally wrong. I'm here helping rebuild the police station, and the people who killed your family are the bad guys.' He told me, 'I don't know the bad guys. I know you.'"

From that moment on, Ahmed said he was marked for death in that city. The unit he was working for took him home

would be restricted to the FOB.

"The bad guys had worked a deal with an Iraqi army guy to invite me to lunch and kill me. They were waiting for me there and in Tarmiyah, so I could not go back anymore," he said. "The Iraqi army guy was going to get paid \$100,000 for inviting me to lunch. And the bad guys somehow knew where I was working at. Fortunately, the intel made it to my unit first. The one who was supposed to invite me to lunch was killed a week later.

"I had to live on base and be a stranger in my own country, be a foreigner in my own country. [I couldn't] save my family from all of this if I went back home; they wouldn't just kill me, they would kill my whole family," Ahmed added. "So I was safe if I was away from my family. We got rid of the bad guys, and then along came the Mehdi Army, and same thing: They wanted me for working with the U.S. Army. Everyone was looking for me."

"I have a saying," said Ahmed, who was nominally raised a Muslim but does not consider himself one. "'God brought me to life, so God can take my life whenever he wants.' So whenever I went on a mission outside the wire, I'd put my body

about anything else."

Time passed, always under the threat of death. Ahmed said his boss finally approached him and asked him how long he intended to stay.

"I said, 'I don't know. Until everything gets OK, I guess?' He said, 'No. Congress signed the Special Immigrant Visa program. You need to go do it,'" Ahmed said. "I asked him what that was. He said, 'You are a U.S. Army employee, so when you go to the States, you'll have all the rights of a resident green-card holder. You won't have to apply for anything; you will automatically have everything a citizen does.'"

His family was sad he would be leaving, but also happy he finally had a way out. His unit helped him get all the paperwork together, and the two-star general in charge of northern Iraq who Ahmed had been translating for immediately signed it and sent it forward with his recommendation. It was the very beginning of the SIV program, and his paperwork was approved within three months. His next step would be the interview to grant his visa.

The interview was originally set up at the U.S. Embassy in Jordan, a country he had already been banned from entering at the whim of a border guard who didn't like his looks. He rescheduled it for Syria, which would prove to be nearly as dangerous as Iraq for Ahmed.

The political climate in Syria was actively hostile to anyone associated with the American military, and those Iraqis who had chosen to work for the U.S. Army were hated the most. The landlord of the apartment Ahmed rented while he went through the interview process for his visa continuously fished for information about his reason for coming to Syria. So he came up with a believable lie.

"I told them that my mom had kidney failure and that I was doing all the tests and interviews in hopes to take my mom to the States, or Canada or Germany, to have the surgery where I could donate one of my kidneys to her," he said. "They respected that. And, as usual, I was always talking bad about the U.S. Army. It was the only way to stay alive."

Ahmed finally completed his interviews and was called in to get his visa. The embassy employee who gave him the visa told him he needed to get a plane

"We got rid of the bad guys, and then along came the Mehdi Army, and same thing: They wanted me for working with the U.S. Army. Everyone was looking for me."

to Baghdad and informed him he needed to go straight to the FOB the next day, bypassing Tarmiyah. He could continue going on missions anywhere else, but that would be one city forever closed to him.

Not long after that, however, his unit informed him he could no longer go to his home in Baghdad either. They had received an intelligence report of a plot to kill Ahmed, and for his own safety he

armor on, but I'd have no plates in it. I got my butt chewed many times by the first sergeant, but I didn't listen. I did whatever I wanted to do," Ahmed said. "A lot of Soldiers were afraid to be near me because of possible snipers, but I didn't care. I kept doing it anyway, because what I was doing I was doing for my people. I can die for my people; I would give everything for my people and my family. I don't care

ticket to the States immediately and should get out of the country as fast as he could.

"I asked him what was up, and he told me that there had been four of us to come to the embassy under the SIV program. I was the only one to show up for my visa," Ahmed said. "I asked him about the three others, but he said they were still looking for them. I heard later that one had been beaten to death, and the two others had been taken by Syrian intelligence. The one who had been beaten to death had been living in a hotel, and he had told a janitor that he was a U.S. Army employee. The janitor was an Iraqi, and he called the Syrian authorities on him. The other two had relatives call the Syrian authorities on them; their own family turned them in."

When he arrived in the States at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York, Ahmed carried a large sealed envelope with all of his paperwork. The customs officials had been expecting him, but he said they were unsure of what to do with him; he was the first person to arrive in the U.S. under the SIV program. He was led to the immigrant interview room, told to have a seat, and instructed to hand the paperwork to the person behind the desk.

"Not one minute later, a lieutenant came in. He called my name, and I was scared to death, thinking maybe I had done something wrong," Ahmed recalled. "He said, 'Welcome to the States.' I said, 'That's it?' He said, 'Yeah, that's it. Welcome to the States.' I signed my visa, did my fingerprint and walked out the door. But, I was the only one on the plane who had no one there. So I just stood there, looking left and right, wondering where I was going to go."

Unsure of his future, he said he wound up calling a woman he'd met online who lived in Tucson, Ariz. She was excited he'd made it to America and immediately invited him to come out and stay with her.

The only things Ahmed said he could think of when he arrived were food and sleep. He stayed at his friend's house for two weeks and then called an Iraqi friend at the FOB where he had worked in Iraq. The friend gave him a number for an uncle who lived in Dallas, Texas.

"I called his uncle, who told me he'd

been waiting for me to call," Ahmed said. "He asked me where I was, and when I told him Tucson, he told me, 'Hang up and wait for 10 minutes.' Literally 10 minutes later, I got a call from another person, who asked me what address I was at. He said to get my bags ready because he'd be there in 15 minutes."

The man who came and picked him up turned out to be one of the richest men

came out to visit Ahmed with another Soldier in the translator military occupational specialty, 09L. After discussing it with them for a while, he decided to join, and not just for the educational benefits.

"I did it to prove a point: All Iraqis are not bad guys," Ahmed said.

After completing basic training and Advanced Individual Training, Ahmed worked for a time assisting recruiters in

"Iraqis were victims, trapped in a cage for 35 years under Saddam Hussein. But the U.S. Army, we came and opened that cage wide open."

in Tucson, a native Iraqi who became a U.S. citizen and used his doctorate in economics to become a real estate mogul. He and the friend's uncle in Dallas knew each other when both left Iraq during the rise of Saddam in the 1970s. Both ended up staying in the U.S. after losing family members to Saddam's brutal reign.

Ahmed stayed with his friend's uncle for a few weeks before finally getting his own apartment and a job at a printing company. The pay was only \$8 an hour, but it paid the bills. He kept in contact with his former bosses in Iraq, and it was his former commander, a National Guard Soldier, who convinced him to go enlist in the Texas Army National Guard.

"He knew that my dad's dream was for me to finish my education, get a master's degree or something from the United States. He used that on me; he said, 'Are you going to let your dad down? Are you going to keep working for \$8 an hour? How are you going to study?'" Ahmed said. "I kept telling him that I'd think about it, and he eventually convinced me."

The captain in charge of recruiting at Camp Mabry, the headquarters of all Texas Military Forces, located in Austin, Texas,

finding more translators. He was soon deployed with the 56th Infantry Brigade Combat Team to his native country, where he served as a translator a mere 15 miles from his old home.

Finding a job after he returned to Texas proved difficult, and he soon had no money to live on and would go days without eating, he said. The opportunity to deploy with the 36th Infantry Division headquarters for Operation New Dawn came as a blessing. He moved to Austin for the unit's pre-mobilization and is now serving a second tour in his native land as a liaison between U.S. Division-South and local Iraqi contractors, assisting in the transition of U.S. forces out of Iraq.

Ahmed's love for his people led him down a long, dangerous road; a road that is still not safe for him, he said. He's not always happy with the path his native country takes, but he feels he's done his part to give his fellow Iraqis the freedom they need to become a truly great nation.

"Iraqis were victims, trapped in a cage for 35 years under Saddam Hussein," he said. "But the U.S. Army, we came and opened that cage wide open. The uniform I'm wearing, I wear first for my people."

PHOTO JOURNAL



Sgt. John Martek of D Company, 2nd Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, tries to locate enemy positions after being fired upon by insurgents May 10 in the village of Mereget, Kherwar district, Logar province, Afghanistan.

Photo by Sgt. Sean P. Casey



PHOTO JOURNAL



▲ Sgt. 1st Class Jeffrey Cesaitis secures a grape-drying house May 8 before a visit from members of Provincial Reconstruction Team Zabul and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to a village near the city of Qalat, Zabul province, Afghanistan.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Brian Ferguson

► Staff Sgt. Travis Brown, a flight medic assigned to C Company, Task Force Lobos, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, lowers to the ground with a German soldier, who is part of a German extrication team, while latched to a jungle penetrator July 16 at Camp Marmal, Afghanistan. The purpose of the training was to familiarize the German extrication team with use of the aircraft hoist.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Joe Armas



▶ Paratroopers with the 173rd Brigade Combat Team's "Battle" Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, parachute out of a C-130 Hercules into the Ukraine sky Aug. 5. This marks the first time the "Sky Soldiers" of the 173rd have jumped in Ukraine, where they conducted multinational airborne operations.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Travis Surber



◀ Staff Sgt. James Allen conducts a dismounted patrol of the Sharana District Center bazaar Aug. 6 with his platoon's Afghan Uniformed Police partners. Allen, a squad leader with B Company, 3rd Battalion, 66th Armor Regiment, 1st Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, out of Grafenwoehr, Germany, built strong ties with his AUP counterparts after the platoon assumed control of part of Paktika province, Afghanistan.

Photo by Sgt. Charles Crail



◀ Sgt. Patrick Pitts, a Soldier with the Security Forces Platoon, 1st Cavalry Division, at Forward Operating Base Lightning, teaches a Polish soldier the proper clearing procedures of an M16A2 rifle Aug. 5 east of Gardez village, Paktika province, Afghanistan.

Photo by Sgt. Kim Browne

▲ Soldiers from 5th Battalion, 3rd Field Artillery Regiment, fire two rounds from their High Mobility Artillery Rocket systems May 24 at Yakima Training Center, Wash., as part of a fire coordination exercise for 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division.

Photo by Sgt. Christopher Gaylord

Roll Call

OF THE FALLEN

Operation New Dawn

Spc. Nathan R. Beyers, 24, Littleton, Colo., July 7, 2011
Sgt. Mark A. Cofield, 25, Colorado Springs, Colo., July 17, 2011
Spc. Daniel L. Elliott, 21, Youngsville, N.C., July 15, 2011
Spc. Nicholas W. Newby, 20, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, July 7, 2011
Sgt. Steven L. Talamantez, 34, Laredo, Texas, July 10, 2011

Operation Enduring Freedom

Cpl. Raphael R. Arruda, 21, Ogden, Utah, July 16, 2011
Pfc. Cody G. Baker, 19, Holton, Kan., Aug. 3, 2011
Sgt. Alexander J. Bennett, 24, Tacoma, Wash., Aug. 6, 2011
Chief Warrant Officer 4 David R. Carter, 47, Centennial, Colo., Aug. 6, 2011
Staff Sgt. James M. Christen, 29, Loomis, Calif., July 19, 2011
Spc. Mark J. Downer, 23, Warner Robins, Ga., Aug. 5, 2011
Spc. Spencer C. Duncan, 21, Olathe, Kan., Aug. 6, 2011
Sgt. 1st Class Kenneth B. Eklwell, 33, Holland, Pa., July 17, 2011
2nd Lt. Jered W. Ewy, 33, Edmond, Okla., July 29, 2011
Staff Sgt. Wyatt A. Goldsmith, 28, Colville, Wash., July 15, 2011
Spc. Frank R. Gross, 25, Oldsmar, Fla., July 16, 2011
Sgt. William B. GrossPaniagua, 28, Daly City, Calif., July 31, 2011
Staff Sgt. Patrick D. Hamburger, 30, Lincoln, Neb., Aug. 6, 2011
Sgt. Omar A. Jones, 28, Crook, Colo., July 18, 2011
Sgt. Edward W. Koehler, 47, Lebanon, Pa., July 18, 2011
Spc. Jinsu Lee, 34, Chatsworth, Calif., Aug. 5, 2011
Sgt. Lex L. Lewis, 40, Rapid City, S.D., July 15, 2011
Spc. Augustus J. Vicari, 22, Broken Arrow, Okla., July 29, 2011
Sgt. Jacob Molina, 27, Houston, Texas, July 19, 2011
Pfc. Gil I. Morales Del Valle, 21, Jacksonville, Fla., Aug. 3, 2011
Sgt. Brian K. Mowery, 49, Halifax, Pa., July 18, 2011
Chief Warrant Officer 2 Bryan J. Nichols, 31, Hays, Kan., Aug. 6, 2011
Spc. Rafael A. Nieves Jr., 22, Albany, N.Y., July 10, 2011
Staff Sgt. Kirk A. Owen, 37, Sapulpa, Okla., Aug. 2, 2011
Sgt. 1st Class Terryl L. Pasker, 39, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, July 9, 2011
Sgt. Anthony Del Mar Peterson, 24, Chelsea, Okla., Aug. 4, 2011
Sgt. Alessandro L. Plutino, 28, Pitman, N.J., Aug. 8, 2011
Spc. Barun Rai, 24, Silver Spring, Md., Aug. 3, 2011
Capt. Waid C. Ramsey, 41, Red Bay, Ala., Aug. 4, 2011
Pfc. Brice M. Scott, 22, Columbus, Ga., July 31, 2011
Sgt. Christopher P. Soderlund, 23, Pineville, La., July 9, 2011
Pfc. Tyler M. Springman, 19, Hartland, Maine, July 17, 2011
Master Sgt. Benjamin A. Stevenson, 36, Canyon Lake, Texas, July 21, 2011
Sgt. Jeremy R. Summers, 27, Mount Olivet, Ky., July 14, 2011
Staff Sgt. Kenneth R. Vangiesen, 30, Erie, Pa., July 18, 2011

You are not forgotten

Editor's note: This is a continuation of a list that was started in the October 2003 issue of The NCO Journal and contains those names released by the Department of Defense between July 9, 2011, and August 12, 2011.

SOLDIERS LEADERS
CIVILIANS FAMILIES

Take 5

before the run!

It's a Stretch

- Wear loose, light-colored clothing and comfortable shoes
- Stretch before and after running
- Stay hydrated and avoid drinks with high sugar concentrations
- Run in the shade whenever possible; heat is an issue even if you're not in the direct sun
- Know your limits. Start with a short run and build on it over time



What Have You Done,
to Save a Life Today?



ARMY SAFE
IS ARMY STRONG



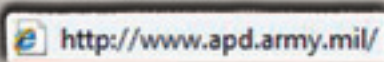
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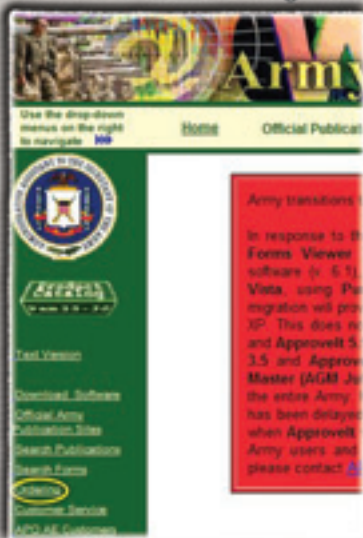
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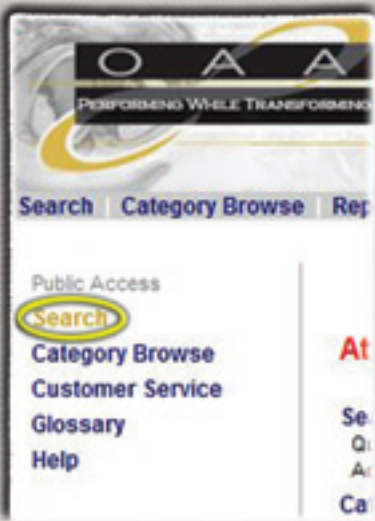
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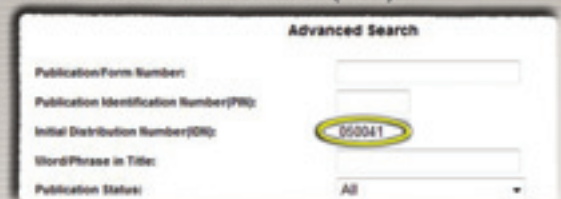
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