

Up and Down the Hill

Serving the Fort A. P. Hill Community

Targeted Service: Range Staff Aims to Please

*Story and Photos by Debra Bingham
Fort A.P. Hill Public Affairs Office*

A Soldier presses his cheek against a sun-warmed weapon and takes aim. Dust rises as another Soldier moves a sandbag to adjust his firing position. A dozen Soldiers wait for the commence fire command on the M16 range. Most are unaware of the careful orchestration of events on Fort A.P. Hill that made this training possible.

Fort A.P. Hill, located 72 miles south of Washington, D.C., has 44,000-acres of training and maneuver areas. Units training at the 76,000-acre installation refer to it as “one of the military’s best kept secrets.” It’s a secret the post aims to change.

Fort A.P. Hill has served as a major training and mobilization site for military troops since World War II, according to Master Sgt. Donald Freeman, the range control section’s non-commissioned officer-in-charge.

Freeman said the post’s 30 training and maneuver areas make it a force-multiplier that he hopes all service branches, active and reserve, will take advantage of.

The range complex includes 36 direct fire and 42 indirect fire ranges and can accommodate everything from small arms fire to mortar, artillery and aviation gunnery, Freeman said. There are infantry, engineer, mortar, scout and tow lanes for individual and collective training.

In addition, the post has more than 30 separate, fixed training facilities, including land navigation and obstacle courses, an NBC chamber, rappel towers, a combat village, and a leader’s reaction course.

Soldiers from 302nd Signal Battalion based at Fort Belvoir, Va., are conducting M16 weapons qualification training on this hot day in late May.



Staff Sgt. Derek Dotson, range safety inspector, checks the firing order on an M16 range accompanied by the officer in charge of the range.

A voice in the tower on range 35 asks: “Ready on the right?” Soldiers serving as range safety instructors make a final check of the firers poised in foxholes before relaying a ‘ready’ signal to the tower.

Puffs of dust rise near targets down range as Soldiers begin firing. Brass casings bounce off the sandbags and scatter into the dirt around the foxholes.

The post’s Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security (DPTMS) schedules ranges and training sites. Fran Sibley, a scheduler, said units can request training by accessing a form on the post’s website and faxing it back.

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Requests must be made 60 days in advance of the training date and are prioritized by the date they are received, Sibley said. Once a request is received, schedulers enter the data into the Range Facility Management Support System, or RFMSS. The automated system schedules ranges and also indicates date conflicts and matches weaponry to specific ranges, said Sibley.

Requests for logistical support, such as billeting, fuel, food and ammunition are also processed and relayed to the Directorate of Logistics.

DPTMS works with 831 units on a regular basis. If scheduling conflicts arise, DPTMS works to resolve them or helps arrange a joint-usage agreement or 'piggyback' with the unit that has already reserved the range.

Freeman said they also try to accommodate special training requests and have even created ranges for customers. All requests are reviewed to ensure units operate in accordance with Army safety regulations.

"Weapons qualifications are basic stuff and the ranges are set up for it. If a unit wants to do something outside of what a range is geared to do, they have to provide a SDZ (safety danger zone) with the right and left limits and the maximum effective range of the weapons system. We'll evaluate it and work to approve it," Freeman said.



Chief Warrant Officer Kevin Payne (*right*) and Sgt. 1st Class Kenneth Rudd (*center*) from HHC, 1-126 Aviation Battalion (CSAB) based in Rhode Island, discuss their training with Staff Sgt. Derek Dotson, range safety inspector, at range control.



Staff Sgt. Derek Dotson, range safety inspector, checks the ammunition point on an M16 range. Dotson's job is to make sure units train safely.

The post recently opened a convoy live fire course, designed and built in cooperation with the U.S. Army Transportation School, Fort Eustis, Va. The course simulates a variety of real-world scenarios convoys face, such as attacks from small arms fire, ambushes and roadside bombs.

The post is also developing a range replicating a gated entrance to an installation, where guards would react to the approach of hostiles in a vehicle, Freeman said.

The range staff is rich in military experience, said Richard Pickens, a fire desk operator. That experience translates into an added measure of responsiveness and commitment to customers.

"We have Marines, Special Forces, Navy Seals and other retired military personnel using their experience. If you come down here and tell us what you plan on doing, someone in here can give you guidance on how to do it," said Pickens.

"New ideas come from the force itself--from the need. We can replicate what you're going to do out there on the battlefield right here on Fort A.P. Hill," Freeman said.

As the Soldiers head down to look at their targets on the M16 range, Staff Sgt. Derek Dotson, a post range safety inspector, arrives to conduct a spot check. Before a unit occupies a range it goes to range control for a briefing on procedures and safety, Dotson said.

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“We don’t want to harass them or stop training; we just want to make sure they are training safe,” Dotson said.

Dotson finds the officer-in-charge, or OIC, of the range who joins him during the inspection. After talking with the medic and radio operator, Dotson walks down the firing line with to the OIC.

“We can replicate what you’re going to do out there on the battlefield right here on Fort A.P. Hill.”

Master Sgt. Donald Freeman

“We usually find only small deficiencies. The biggest problem is failure to monitor the radio and do hourly radio checks. They don’t understand how important it is,” Dotson said.

That point is readily apparent in the fire desk operations section at range control where Richard Pickens keeps an eye on operations within the range complex, at times monitoring 20 ranges with 1,500 to 2,000 Soldiers.

“The most challenging thing is safety and making sure everyone is on the same sheet of music. We have to know where everyone is at when something is going on. It’s a big area and it can get pretty busy when you’re talking about 20 ranges being hot,” Pickens said.

When the unit completes the safety briefing, fire operations personnel direct them to the range by using a computerized mapping system. The system helps them clear routes and monitor units as they drive to a range.

Each unit receives a map with turning or transition points marked on it. During the drive to the range, units keep in contact with range control via radio, said Freeman.

“The unit will call in and say ‘I’m on road one making a turn onto road two.’ Range control will either say ‘Check,’ or direct them to another road. Staying on track is critical since they could be traveling through an impact area,” Freeman said.



Richard Pickens (*above*) monitors activity on the range complex from the fire desk operations center. A Soldier (*below*) prepares to fire from a foxhole.



Pickens sits at the base of a large screen displaying the range complex overlaid with a series of grids marking the impact areas. He keeps a close watch on the screen while listening to four different radios used to communicate with units traveling through and occupying the ranges.

“The computer is monitoring all the ranges. Once they turn red (the grids) that means the range is hot. Range 25 is shooting now. Demo site 71 Alpha is occupied. Range 35 is occupied,” Pickens explained.

Soldiers are policing up brass, packing up equipment and checking their scores at the M16 range. Most have qualified, but a few will have to re-fire the next day.

Once range 35 is cleared, the OIC directs his radio operator to contact range control for permission to vacate the range.

“Range 35 this is range control. Permission granted. Over,” Pickens responds.

Army Policy Addresses Sexual Assault

By Sgt. 1st Class Marsha Triggs
Army News Service

The Army is devising a policy that will re-emphasize that all offenses of sexual assault must be reported to the Criminal Investigation Command, officials have announced.

A task force spent 90 days conducting a detailed review of the Army's current policies and programs on sexual assault. One of the findings was that while all commanders had taken action against assailants accused of sexual assault, not all were going through the proper investigation channels, said Darlene Sullivan, a task force member.

The task force was assembled from various Army organizations and began looking into how the Army addresses matters of sexual assault in February. Acting Secretary of the Army Les Brownlee authorized the task force.

The task force recommendations were approved by Brownlee, and were briefed to the House Armed Services Committee June 3 by Reginald J. Brown, the assistant secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs.

Shortfalls Found

There were nine shortfalls the task force noted in its 80-page report. One major finding pointed out there was no standard way of handling sexual assault cases, making it hard to collect data and keep track of what services had been rendered to victims.

There were 24 recommendations made to improve the system. One was to develop a sexual assault policy for inclusion in Army Regulation 600-20, Army Command Policy. The chief of personnel, Army G-1 is responsible for the overall sexual assault policy.

The policy will define sexual assault as alleged offenses of rape, forcible sodomy, assault with intent to commit rape or sodomy, indecent assault or an attempt to commit any of these offenses, Sullivan said. The definition is the same one used by the Department of Defense in its recent report "Care for Victims of Sexual Assault."

"Commanders must create a command climate where victims feel comfortable reporting acts of sexual assault."

Lt. Col. John McPhaul

The roles and responsibilities of commanders from major command to the unit level will be addressed in the new policy and become a part of AR 600-20, said Lt. Col. John McPhaul of Army G-1.

"Commanders must create a command climate where victims feel comfortable reporting acts of sexual assault," said Sullivan. "Rape is one of the most unreported crimes nationwide.

Leadership Responsibility

"As a first sergeant, if you don't know your Soldier was attacked or raped, how can you protect that Soldier? What if you put that Soldier on guard duty with his or her attacker? It's imperative that leaders know that prevention, training and assistance are a commander's responsibility."

Company commanders will no longer have the authority to sign the disciplinary paperwork for Soldiers who are accused of a sexual offense, when the cases don't go to court. The battalion commander's signature will be required, Sullivan said.

Department of the Army form 4833, Commander's Report of Disciplinary or Administrative Action, is a permanent record that states what a Soldier was accused of, and what action was taken against him.

Sullivan said the task force found that about 20 percent of the commanders had not filled out the form because of operational tempo. Another

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recommendation of the task force is to alter the form, so that instead of stating that administrative action was taken against a Soldier, his or her specific punishments will be listed on the form.

Commanders alone cannot round out a successful program to prevent sexual assault, according to the task force. Commanders alone cannot be the judge, juror and prosecutor.

“We are developing a mechanism that gets all of the agencies in concert with each other by establishing that deals with sexual assault not only in garrison, but in a deployed setting as well.”

Lt. Col. John McPhaul

In AR 600-20 one of the responsibilities commanders will have is to assign a unit victim advocate to support victims of sexual assault. It is important to keep the victim and the chain of command informed of all case actions as they occur with the case. The unit victim advocate will work to provide emotional support to victims while assisting them in the step-by-step processes involved, McPhaul said.

Agencies Involved

Other agencies whose roles will be outlined in the chapter will include CID, the Provost Marshal, the Surgeon General, Staff Judge Advocate and Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management (Community and Family Support Center), McPhaul said.

“The Army agencies already have some procedures in place and know what to do, and are doing it, if an act of sexual assault occurs,” McPhaul said, “but we must develop comprehensive policy of dealing with sexual assault from awareness/prevention, to victim support and data collection.

“We are developing a mechanism that gets all the agencies in concert with each other by establishing a policy that deals with sexual assault not only in garrison but in a deployed setting as well,” McPhaul said.

Training Spelled Out

Training requirements will also be addressed in the regulation, McPhaul said. Within the next 60 to 90 days, new chapters will be added to the regulation and staffed with the field, he added.

Training and Doctrine Command is currently devising lesson plans on the prevention of sexual assault to be included in all professional development schools, refresher courses at the unit level and additional training for law enforcement, medical and legal personnel, Sullivan said.

Research Guides Policy

When looking for ways to improve the Army’s policies and programs, the task force sought advice from outside agencies to include Department of Veteran Affairs; National Organization of Victim Assistance; Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN); The Miles Foundation, Navy, Coast Guard and the University of Arizona and Purdue University in Indiana.

Both universities were given grants from the Department of Justice for their prevention programs, Sullivan said. The age category for the Soldiers who report the assaults and their assailants are in the same age category as the university students, she added. Nearly 84 percent of alleged perpetrators were identified as junior Soldiers, and 95 percent of the victims were in the rank of staff sergeant and below, according the task force report.



Community Leaders Visit Is A “Blast”

Story and Photos by Debra Bingham
Fort A. P. Hill Public Affairs Office

The birthday guests ate cake and had a blast—a real ammunition-type blast. Fort A.P. Hill celebrated the Army’s 229th Birthday a bit early, by inviting local government officials and civic leaders for a “battlefield luncheon” and post tour on June 8.

After meeting with the post commander, Col. James Balocki, guests boarded a bus and headed to a training range to observe 116th Infantry Regiment, 29th Infantry Division Soldiers training.

On the range, visitors donned earplugs and watched a daytime fireworks display as Soldiers fired anti-tank weapons. At lunch the visitors dined Army-style on MREs with the Soldiers.

Linda Worrell, Fredericksburg Regional Chamber of Commerce president, listened closely as Pfc. William Gaddy explained how Soldiers swap packets and mix ingredients to create favorites like “Ranger pudding.”

“The whole is greater than the sum of the parts,” Gaddy explained. “All the stuff by itself is OK, but when you mix it together you get something good. It tastes like a peanut butter cup,” Gaddy said.

Worrell watched as Gaddy opened a packet of cocoa beverage powder and mixed it with dried coffee creamer, breadcrumbs and water. Once the “pudding” reached the desired consistency, Gaddy added peanut butter and passed the treat around for a taste test.

“It’s not bad. This is a great way for us to learn about Soldiers,” Worrell said.

Those who found the pudding concoction unappealing had another dessert option. In Army tradition, the oldest Soldier, 59-year-old Staff Sgt. Gary Schoolcraft, and the youngest, 19-year-old Pvt. Mark Smith, cut the Army birthday cake.

The group received a briefing at the Counter Mine and Humanitarian De-mining facility at Demolition Site 71 Alpha and watched the detonation of several types of land mines. They also heard about operations at the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms National Center for Training and Explosives Research.

After the tour, the group attended a social hour and swapped stories about the day and what they’d learned about the post and Soldiers.



Mike Manns (above) gets an up close look at an AT4 anti-tank weapon during a tour of the post. Soldiers (below) show the visitors the art of preparing, mixing and “cooking” MREs.



Joyce Pitts tastes “Ranger pudding.”

Swords and Dance Asian Pacific Style

Story and Photos by Debra Bingham
Fort A.P. Hill Public Affairs Office

It's not often that a person invites you to hit them with a stick, but that's just what Akiro Kurihara did at the Asian Pacific Observance on Fort A.P. Hill. Kurihara is a martial arts instructor and the invitation was part of his demonstration.

The event included a performance by the Thailand Blessing Dance Troop and a lecture by Lufta Haseen, an instructor at Virginia State University, on the culture and history of Bangladesh.

Kurihara, a petite gentleman standing slightly over 5-foot tall, wore a martial arts uniform, or "dogi." He spoke enthusiastically about his lifelong passion for the art of Japanese Samurai swordsmanship called Kendo.

The martial art of Kendo requires discipline and training, Kurihara said. Students learn the basics of Kendo etiquette, postures and footwork, and how to properly swing a sword. Kurihara said the training prepares students for the final phase of working with armor or "bogu."

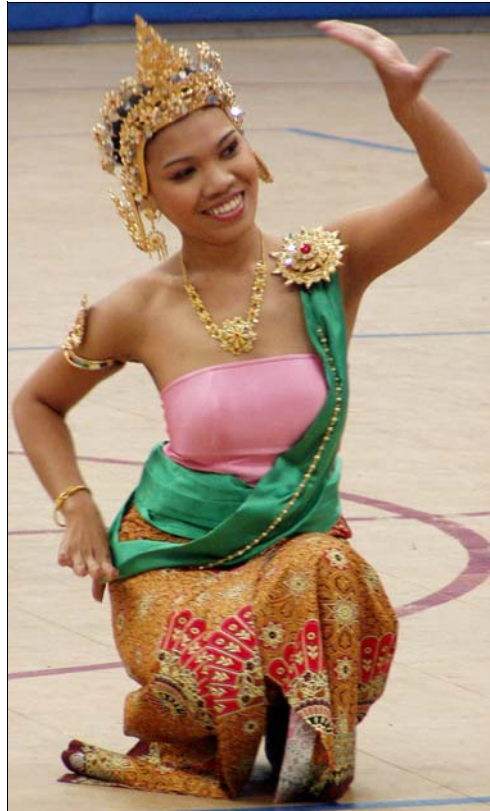
After suiting up in a helmet, body protector and gloves, Kurihara did his best to entice audience members to participate in a full-contact sparring exercise using bamboo and leather poles.

"Won't you come up and take the stick and strike me? Come up," Kurihara asked.

Despite his best attempts, no one in the audience would oblige. Kurihara laughed and bowed in thanks, as a trio of colorfully costumed dancers prepared for their performance.

A dancer, dressed in a pink top, silk emerald sash and slender skirt of orange, red and gold, moved gracefully to traditional Thai music. Her elaborate headdress and gold necklace sparkled as she performed a blessing dance.

The dancer used expressive hand, head and body movements to tell a story—one the audience may not have understood, but seemed to appreciate anyway.



NEWS BRIEFS



Happy Birthday Army
Since its birth on June 14, 1775, the United States Army has played a vital role in the growth and development of our nation. Soldiers have fought more than 10 wars, from the American Revolution to the current Global War on Terrorism. This 229th Birthday recognizes the Army's history, traditions, and service to the Nation.



FEGLI Open Season

The Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance Program open season is September 1-30, 2004. Contact the Civilian Personnel Center for details.



Discount Tickets

Treat your family to a day of fun at Paramount's Kings Dominion. The Community Activity Center has discount tickets to the park and to a variety of NASCAR events. Call 633-8219 for more information.



Access Benefit Information

Employee Benefit Information System (EBIS) allows civilian employees access personal benefit information and conduct electronic transactions using a computer. Log on to EBIS via the

web at <https://www.abc.army.mil>

Chill Out, Cool Off At The Post Pool

By Debra R. Bingham
Fort A. P. Hill Public Affairs Office

The opening of local community pools marks the unofficial start of summer for many people. The Fort A.P. Hill pool opened on Memorial Day and will be open daily until September 6.

Susan Botkin, DPCA program manager, said swimmers must check into the Community Activity Center and scan their identification card into the RecTrec system before entering the pool. A qualified lifeguard will be on duty to monitor swimmers, she said.

"All the lifeguards who work at the post swimming pool must complete the American Red Cross Lifeguard Course. The course consists of learning a variety of rescue techniques, swimming 500 meters, spinal injury management, basic first aid and CPR," Botkin said.

An adult must accompany children under age 12 at the pool. Children, age 12 and above, who can pass a swimming test will be allowed to stay



The post pool is open daily from 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

at the pool unaccompanied. Botkin said the test includes treading water and swimming the length of the pool and is administered by the lifeguard on duty.

"Swimming lessons will be available July for a fee. These lessons will be American Red Cross lessons for beginner and intermediate," Botkin said.

Lifeguard Phillip Knode said business at the pool is a bit slow right now since kids are still in school.

"After kids go home, drop off backpacks and head over here, then it gets busy," Knode said.

That may change once the "official" start of summer for kids begins--when the school year ends and summer break begins.

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