

Up and Down the Hill

Serving the Fort A. P. Hill Community

Defending the installation



Police officers manning access control points are the post's first line of defense. Their ability to respond quickly and appropriately to threats is critical. A new range on Fort A.P. Hill helps them accomplish that mission...

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

A delivery truck approaches a military installation. As it nears the entrance gate it speeds up and attempts to crash through security barriers. The guards manning the access control point must react quickly, decisively and appropriately to the threat. If they fail, the security of the post's personnel and its mission are in jeopardy.

It's a scenario that could become reality for military and Department of Defense police officers that serve as front line defense for installations. Now officers have a new weapon to help thwart attacks.

The Access Control Point Live Fire Range (ACPLF) at Fort A.P. Hill opened June 30. The range, the first one of its kind on a military base in the U.S., was designed to train the post's civilian

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“Officers find that they don’t have much reaction time to make decisions: this kind of training gives them a great advantage.”

—Hank Hanrahan



Above: A Department of Defense police officer manning an access control point takes aim on the silhouette of a truck. During the training scenario, a vehicle rapidly approaches the checkpoint and fires on the position.

Left: Lt. Ron Henson, an instructor from the post’s Provost Marshal Office, watches as officer Tony Rhyne responds to an attack during training on the new Access Control Point Live Fire Range. The range provides realistic training to military and civilian law enforcement officers.



police force. Personnel from Fort A.P. Hill, Eustis and other local law enforcement agencies have sharpened their skills on the ACPLF range, said David Vaughan, director of emergency services on post.

“The range gives access control guards, Department of Army police, and security guards a realistic simulation of what they could experience in real life,” Vaughan said. The automated live fire

range challenges the guards’ responses to a series of rapidly changing threats and tracks hits on targets.

The concept for the range came from one in Kuwait being used to train security personnel, said Hank Hanrahan, director of Plans, Training Mobilization and Security.

“We took the idea and improved on it. We’re looking at it as a way of defeating any kind of threat to the base. Officers find that they don’t have much reaction time to make decisions: this kind of training gives them a great advantage,” Hanrahan said.

At the ACPLF range, Vance Dunlap, training coordinator, Provost Marshal Office, briefed a group of new officers on what to expect and outlined the procedures they’d take as the “vehicle” moved from 500 meters to 35 meters away. Dunlap monitored the officers’ responses and gave directions during the “attack.”

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As training began, officers spotted the silhouette of an approaching truck accompanied by the sound of AK-47 weapons fire. They return fire as the “vehicle” continues its advance through a succession of berms.

“The third vehicle is coming closer. That’s why you’ve got to square your rounds. Don’t waste rounds. The first thing you’ve got to do is try to slow them down,” Dunlap cautioned.

The vehicle is disabled, but the attackers continue the assault on foot. An officer aims at the life-size silhouettes “approaching” on the left and right. Puffs of sand rise up around the targets as the rounds impact.

“You don’t have a lot of time to play. Things move quickly and you don’t have much time. You have to react.”

—*Lt. Ron Henson*

Sweat dripped from officer Billy Randall’s face as he holstered his weapon. Randall joined the force June 14 after serving as a tanker in the Army. He said the range was a new experience for him.

“Next time I’ve got to get my rounds off a little bit faster. This scenario really helps us familiarize ourselves with the types of weapons we use,” Randall said.

Dennis Hodges, Integrated Training Area Management coordinator, helped design the ACPLF range. He said the post strives to be responsive to real-world training requirements, while making the most of available assets.

“It’s one of the most cost effective ranges we have here on post. We used all in-house assets and inventory to construct it,” said Hodges



Officer Randy Thompson, a Department of Defense police officer, crouches behind a barrier for cover as he fires an M16 at a vehicle attempting to crash through an access control point. Thompson was training on Fort A.P. Hill’s new ACPLF range.

Range personnel also plan to incorporate a hostage scenario and other possible contingencies into the ACPLF range.

“One of the things we’re looking at doing is putting a dual monorail system in, so the vehicle’s speed could be adjusted and an additional vehicle added,” Hodges said.

Lt. Ron Henson, a PMO instructor, said the range not only tests the officers’ marksmanship skills, it also challenges their decision-making ability.

“You don’t have a lot of time to play. Things move quickly and you don’t have much time. You have to react,” Henson said.

Shaping a combat ready force

Commander says training areas are crucial

“Our Army is in the midst of the most sweeping transformations since World War II to significantly increase the number of deployable Soldiers and units available around the world.”

—R.L. Brownlee, A-SECARMY
Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker, CSA

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

As the Army moves from the current force to the future force, with a joint service and expeditionary mindset, its combat training centers will provide Soldiers with the tools they need to remain relevant and ready. It's a mission Fort A.P. Hill's new commander is eager to take on.

Lt. Col. James Mis, a Special Forces officer, took command of the installation on July 12, 2004. For those familiar with military culture, Special Forces conjures images of secrecy and a brand of Army “hooah” that's a bit removed from the mainstream.

“There used to be a stigma about Special Forces officers. They were supposed to be the snake eaters. That was something the conventional Army folks, with starched uniforms, didn't want to be associated with,” Mis said.

That stigma has passed, Mis said, as the Army transforms itself into smaller, agile and adaptive fighting brigade and battalion combat teams.

“We see the Army becoming more and more special operations oriented and fighting that way. The enemies we face right now, in the global war on terrorism, aren't using conventional warfare.



Courtesy Photo

Lt. Col. James Mis (right) steers a boat during training with members of SFODA 331, 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) off the coast of North Carolina in 1993.

Special Forces uses unconventional warfare; being innovative, adapting and always remaining one-step ahead of the enemy,” Mis said.

Tactical Perspective

Mis said his background offers a perspective that will serve him well as commander of “an innovative training center.”

“My tactical background really made me aware of what's going on in the force right now. I can apply that to this post. I'm reaching out to special operations forces and aviation units to come here to train, but some customers may not want the word to get out,” Mis said.

Mis said Fort A.P. Hill is a training center with a very low tenant population. That means units don't compete for range time, like at Forts Bragg and Drum where divisions are based. He said the quality of the ranges and training areas and the vision of the post's work force translate into satisfied, repeat customers.

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“You may not be pulling the trigger, but you’re training the trigger pullers.”

—Lt. Col. James Mis
Commander, Fort A.P. Hill

“Great ranges and great people attract great units to come here and train. We are responsive to the needs of the force. We recently added a convoy live fire range and an access control point range to meet real-world demands, plus maneuver corridors are being developed for the Stryker brigade,” Mis said.

Mis’s last assignment was at Fort Bragg, N.C., known as the “home of the Airborne and Special Forces.” Fort Bragg, with more than 45,000 military personnel, and neighboring Pope Air Force Base, form one of the largest military complexes in the world.

Although Fort A.P. Hill has considerably less personnel, Mis said its mission is vital and he is happy to be here.

“The Soldiers and other warriors training here are at the tip of the spear. Their success can be directly correlated back to the training they’ve had, whether it’s at Fort A.P. Hill, Fort Bragg, or Fort Drum. We have an effect on battlefields in Afghanistan, Iraq, or wherever our forces fight,” Mis said.

Vital Mission

Mis said his goal is to have the “best power readiness platform in the Department of Defense.”

“We are not only a Reserve or National Guard training base that falls asleep in September and wakes up in May. We are developing power projection units; service members come here to sharpen their combat skills so they’re ready when they go to combat. You may not be pulling the trigger, but you’re training the trigger pullers,” Mis said.



Photo by Debra Bingham

Lt. Col. James Mis presents a certificate of appreciation to Krystal Taylor. Taylor, a college student, worked in the Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security during the summer as part of the Fort A.P. Hill “team.”

Mis sharpened his combat skills on post back in 1998 when he was assigned to the 3rd Special Forces Group based at Fort Bragg. He said one of the things he misses most is “jumping out of airplanes,” but admits turning 40-years old sent the message “it’s time to take a break.”

Mis isn’t one to dwell on the past, he is enthusiastic and proud when he talks about his current assignment. He said he wouldn’t take a job where he didn’t feel like he was accomplishing something on a daily basis.

“As a Special Forces battalion commander, I could influence the lives of 250-300 soldiers. Here, at Fort A.P. Hill, I am influencing, with the rest of my team, more than 50,000 warriors coming through here each year,” Mis said.

Throughout his career Mis said he has had “a great sense of camaraderie and fulfillment” and knew what he was doing was worthwhile. That feeling hasn’t diminished.

“As the commander of Fort A.P. Hill, I still work with great NCOs and great civilians who are dedicated to the mission,” Mis said.

Input Valued

The “one team and one fight” concept is part of Mis’s leadership philosophy. He said the best ideas come from “the ground up,” from staff

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—Lt. Col. James Mis

members who do the jobs that keep the installation running. They are the ones who have a clear picture of how to improve productivity, effectiveness and customer satisfaction, Mis said.

Mis wants ideas to filter up through the supervisory chain.

“I expect leaders at every level to listen, take ideas and absorb them. If they are good ideas, bring them up the chain of command for implementation, or if it cannot be implemented, give

feedback so there is this constant sense of cooperation. We will make this post the premier training center in the United States Army,” Mis said.

A Good Fit

During his career, Mis deployed around the globe to Egypt, Panama, Bosnia, Afghanistan and dozens of other remote destinations. Mis grew up in Staten Island, New York, but spent his entire military career stationed in the southeast, in “small town America.” He said the small community on post and the rural setting of Caroline County are “conducive to my job as the post commander and for my family life, as well.”

“It’s a small community and people are willing to help each other. The lack of distractions makes it a great living and work environment. I don’t see how anyone working here could go home in a bad mood,” Mis said.

Goodbye summer “team”

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

Most will continue their education; some will return to high school and others will head off to college. A few will join the workforce and begin careers in their communities. All will be missed in the sections where they worked and generated smiles with their youthful energy and enthusiasm.

Lt. Col. James Mis, Fort A.P. Hill commander, presented ten of the post’s departing summer workforce members with certificates of appreciation during a ceremony on August 12.

“We don’t call them ‘summer hires.’ They are part of the Fort A.P. Hill team and they’re great young Americans who’ve contributed to our mission,” Mis said.

The group also received vouchers for a free lunch at Dolly Hill Guesthouse and tee shirts from the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Branch.

Mis said they also have a standing invitation to return to the post “team” next summer.



Fort A.P. Hill’s summer “team” gathered for a farewell ceremony on August 12. They each received a certificate of appreciation, a commander’s coin, a tee shirts and a coupon for a free lunch.

Back, left to right: John Thompson, Andrew Quade, Tim Spurley, Howard Roper, and Jacob Wolsey.

Front, left to right: Brooks Beasley, Markia Steward, Krysal Taylor, Jessica Cornelius and Ashlee McDearmon.

MDW Activates Joint Force Headquarters

Story by Tom Mani
MDW News Service

A new command took its shakedown cruise in early August, when the National Capital Region headquarters unveiled a major command and control system.

The fully networked Joint Operations Center (JOC) and an integrated Mobile Command Center (MCC) form a command and control system and will serve as the Joint Force Headquarters, National Capital Region (JFHQ, NCR.)

A joint team of service members will man the center and have the mission of safeguarding the people and institutions in the seat of government.

“This represents the center of the flagship,” Maj. Gen. Galen B. Jackman, the commanding general of JFHQ-NCR, told staff members gathered in the new Joint Operations Center for the afternoon ribbon cutting.

Jackman, who commands U.S. Army Military District of Washington and serves as Fort A.P. Hill’s senior mission commander, praised the teamwork of G3/J3 and the Naval Air Warfare Center.

New Capabilities

The system provides a new operational capability with a JOC, whose finishing touches were still being applied even as it was coming on line in the Global War Against Terror, and a Mobile Command Center parked alongside the site on Fort McNair building that houses the JOC.

The JOC and MCC will be used during Determined Promise 2004, a U.S. Northern Command readiness exercise that will serve as a validation exercise for JFHQ-NCR. The JFHQ-NCR was formed last October and set to achieve “full operational capability” by this October.

“This is our piece of transformation, taking an Army administrative headquarters focused on ceremonies and base support, and transforming it into a joint and interagency operational command.”

Col. James Bartran

“This is our piece of transformation, taking an Army administrative headquarters focused on ceremonies and base support, and transforming it into a joint and interagency operational command,” said Col. James Bartran, MDW’s Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans, Operations & Security.

“It’s all starting to come alive now in this exercise,” Bartran said. “The people, the equipment, the tools. There’s a lot of energy here and it’s the first chance to stand up and do what we are expected to do to execute our new mission.”

Joint Operations Center

The JOC has over 50 workstations with both secure and non-secure network access from each station. Every desk has secure and non-secure phones and there is secure and non-secure video teleconferencing, plus around-the-clock radio and watch-desk operations.

The JOC has network links with law enforcement and civilian agencies, as well as integration with Northcom’s secure communications systems. It also has Geospatial Information System capability, “red phone” hookup, and satellite communications to and from the Mobile Command Center and a smaller communications vehicle nicknamed “Dagger.”

Mobile Control Center

The 41-foot-long MCC was built on a commercially available 10-wheel Freightliner truck chassis. Inside, the vehicle is uniquely designed with one task in mind--to fully integrate with the JOC.

The terrorist attacks on September 11 showed the importance of linking the military services for joint defense of the homeland nationally, with U.S. Northern Command and the North American Air Defense Command and with a military and political nerve center—the Joint Force Headquarters in the National Capital Region.

Jackman challenged the MDW and JFHQ-NCR staff to “leverage these tools to the maximum.”



Connections



Empowering the workforce with information

Courtesy of the Directorate of Human Resources Office

FEGLI News

The Office of Personnel Management recently announced the first open season for the Federal Employee's Group Life Insurance Program (FEGLI) since 1999.

The FEGLI Open Season is being conducted to celebrate the program's 50th anniversary and is scheduled for Sept. 1-30.

The FEGLI program consists of basic life insurance coverage and three options that include coverage for up to five times an employee's base salary, plus coverage for family members. In most cases, a new federal employee is automatically covered by basic life insurance. The types and amounts of the coverage available are not changing.

During the open season, Federal employees in eligible positions, can enroll in the FEGLI program or increase or change current coverage without having a physical or answering any questions about their health. The earliest that newly elected coverage will be effective is Sept. 1, 2005.

OPM will have special FEGLI 2004 Open Season Web site set up before open season begins which will contain an election form and more information about the program.

Contact Us

If you have questions or concerns about your civilian employment, give DHR a call at 633-8326/8185.

NEWS BRIEFS

CFC Kick Off

The Fort A.P. Hill Combined Federal Campaign kick off is Sept. 16 from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. at the post picnic area. A variety of charitable organizations will be on hand with information on how your contribution can make a difference. Singer Anthony Campbell, who has appeared on the NBC Today Show, will perform. There will be food and fun for all ages, including a dunking booth, a horse shoe tournament and prizes being given away.



Housing Meeting

The Fort A.P. Hill Housing Office invites residents of Hopemont housing area and the Greenland Mobile Home Park to a meeting Aug. 26 at 6 p.m. at Tuckers Inn. Childcare will be available at Dolly Hill Guesthouse. Find out about services offered by variety of agencies on post, such as housing and MWR. This is a great opportunity to meet with the installation commander and discuss issues of concern. Refreshments will be provided.



Fort A.P. Hill Force Protection Condition - Alpha+

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