

# Up and Down the Hill

Serving the Fort A. P. Hill Community

## Expanding the purple horizon ALZ enhances joint training capabilities

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

Service members convoy down its roads, navigate through its woods, and bridge its waterways. Soon, they'll have another avenue of approach.

Fort A.P. Hill is set to re-open its assault landing zone (ALZ), further expanding its capabilities as a joint training center. The post's current airfield, Hill Army Airfield, is limited to rotary-wing traffic.

"We pride ourselves at Fort A.P. Hill as being 'purple.' We're a great training center for all services, not just Army green. The ALZ offers an opportunity for Air Force and other service air assets to train on combat insertions. It will benefit both the aviators and the warriors on-board who are using the aircraft as a means of infiltration," said Lt. Col. James Mis, Fort A.P. Hill's commander.

Air Force C-130 and C-17 aircraft, as well as smaller fixed wing aircraft, will be able to land on post once the Air Force certifies the ALZ, Mis said.

"We had to meet all the necessary Air Force regulations and requirements for such an endeavor. The last step was a site survey conducted in July by the 21<sup>st</sup> Combat Control Team (CCT) from Pope Air Force Base, N.C.," Mis said.

Mike Brandt, Fort A.P. Hill's plans officer, said the CCT inspected the airfield, took measurements and evaluated drainage, compaction and obstructions, such as trees and towers.

Brandt said the CCT completed a draft survey and sent it to the tactics division at Pope AFB for



The refurbished assault landing strip (ALZ) on Fort A.P. Hill adds another dimension to the joint service training center. The ALZ will be capable of supporting large cargo and transport planes such as C-130s and C-17s.

review. The Air Mobility Command at Scott Air Force Base, Ill. has final approving authority, Brandt said. The process normally takes about 45 days.

The landing zone was built and certified in 1981 and was used for C-130 landings according to Milton Cecil, the post's facility manager and chief of the Engineering, Research and Management Division.

"Standards change and the certification wasn't good any more. New standards required a wider and more sophisticated runway. Compaction and soil stability in the area was also an issue," Cecil said.

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In 2000, the 38<sup>th</sup> Engineers from Fort Bragg, N.C., assisted with reconstruction efforts on the ALZ. It was widened, lengthened and a liquid hardener used to get the compaction required to support the weight of aircraft. Cecil said the soil and wet weather during construction thwarted the rehabilitation effort.

The project was re-vitalized in 2003, with visits to local quarries to obtain the proper soil mixture.

“After visiting several quarries and feeling and testing the soils, we finally settled on something that would work; an aggregate or mixture of fines vs. coarse and medium grade materials,” Cecil said.

Allan Chenault, engineer equipment foreman, Directorate of Public Works, said compression tests were done throughout the process to make sure the ALZ would meet certification standards.

“We built test strips to make sure we were getting what we wanted before executing the project on a large scale. We’ve come back in with a 16-inch layer of material; a compaction of stone that replaced the sandy-clay dirt in the area that wasn’t suitable,” Chenault said.

Other changes were made to bring the landing strip up to current day standards. The slope of the runway’s shoulders changed from 10 percent to a more gradual 2 percent to accommodate aircraft deviating from the runway.

“We brought it up to today’s specs. We widened it, put in two turn-arounds, added erosion control protection and upgraded some of the roads. There are fill basins and catch basins that we didn’t have before,” Chenault said.

Constructing the runway was a complicated process requiring proper soil and compression, along with attention to its elevation and contour.

“We put down geo-textile fabric and used three different types of aggregate to construct the surface. A 6-inch layer of aggregate was put down, compressed and tested before continuing with the next layer. Layers were rolled and watered for compaction,” Chenault said.

“More than 40,000 tons of aggregate were brought in and over 50,000 cubic yards of material were moved to make this (project) happen,” Cecil said.



Finding the right aggregate for proper compaction on the ALZ was a challenge. Workers brought in more than 40,000 tons of aggregate and moved 50,000 cubic yards of earth to bring the ALZ up to current standards for air fields.

The airfield renovation began in August 2003, with dozens of DPW workers putting in 10-hour shifts, six days a week. Work halted briefly during the winter and wrapped up in July, Chenault said. They also allowed for expansion of the runway.

Workers continue to do some minor work on the site, such as re-seeding and repairing winter erosion damage.

“The installation needed an airfield like this and we always wanted to get it certified for training the troops. A contractor could have done the project for two or three million dollars, but we did it for a lot less. The Army got the most bang for its buck here,” Cecil said.

Chenault is proud of the ALZ and the post-wide team that worked so hard to make it happen.

“Employees went above and beyond their duties, working from 6-6 to keep the trucks rolling and they did it professionally. Everybody just did what they needed to do to make it happen,” Chenault said.

Mis said the ALZ project shows the staff’s unwavering dedication to warriors.”

Cecil agrees and eagerly looks forward to the day the first aircraft lands on the refurbished ALZ.

“I’m just going to be happy when they say ‘ok it’s ready to go.’ I’m going to feel really good about it,” Cecil said.

# Collecting and sharing

## Tractors linked to farm heritage

Story and Photos by Ken Perrotte  
Fort A.P. Hill Public Affairs Office

The rural vistas of gentle, rolling fields brimming with bales of freshly cut hay are annual reminders of the rich farming tradition in the area surrounding Fort A.P. Hill.

For Utilities Shop Foreman Billy Cecil, summer and autumn are times to climb aboard his vintage tractors and get a little work done, harvesting winter feed for his beloved horse Cool.

Cecil grew up on a 550-acre farm near Gether, the seventh of eight children raised by his parents Brooking and Annie. He recalls his father as the type of man who'd be in the field at sun-up and work until sunset, tending tobacco and other crops such as tomatoes, corn, soybeans, cucumbers and more.

The highlight of the family's year was leaving the farm and spending time at the Virginia State Fair, which had a strong agricultural focus in the 1950's.

Cecil developed a love for farm equipment, especially tractors, and carried that passion with him to adulthood.

His dad was a Ford and Farmall man when it came to tractors.

"He never owned a John Deere, but all the neighbors did," Cecil said. "I used to sit there at night and listen to the John Deeres putt-putting in the fields. I just wanted to have one."

Cecil eventually made his dream a reality, collecting four vintage Deere tractors. But first he paid homage to his family's Ford tradition, buying his father's 1956 Model 600 in the early 1980's.

His father bought the tractor from Pratt Implements, a former Port Royal dealership that resided on the corner now occupied by Horne's restaurant and gas station.

"He paid \$1,800 for that tractor and the implements that went with it. I paid him \$2,500. That tractor will never go out of my family if I have anything to do with it and my daughter Ann says



Billy Cecil, Fort A.P. Hill's utilities shop foreman, holds a miniature tractor from his collection. Cecil also owns an assortment of real tractors, which he proudly displays at community events.

she'll ensure that those wishes are followed," he said

Cecil also owns a 1951 Ford 8N and a 1994 Ford Jubilee. His John Deere models range from two 1951 machines to a 1958 Model 620. He found his 1953 Model 40T sitting, unused, besides a barn and he made an offer.

"The first tractor we bought after dad's was in pretty good shape, but the rest were a little rough," he said. He works on them a little at a time and the only one he hasn't fully restored is a 1951 Model M.

Besides collecting the real deals, Cecil also has accumulated hundreds of die-cast miniature replicas of tractors and farm equipment, most assembled and painted with precise detail.

Today, the distinctive green of his John Deere fleet and the red and tan of his Fords are fixtures in area parades and festivals. In the Bowling Green Christmas Parade, he'll usually drive one

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tractor, while letting older youngsters affiliated with his church, drive the others.

Cecil, in many respects, is representative of the diverse civilian employees of Fort A.P. Hill. A sizeable number grew up in the local area. Some left for a while, but returned. Others relocated for employment at the post, fell in love with the region and its people, and now call the area home.

Lt. Col. James Mis, the post commander, says these employees are, simultaneously, area residents actively engaged in their communities as well as ambassadors within those communities, representing the people who work to support the thousands of Soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines that train on post.

Cecil's love of tractors has led him to coordinate for the last several years the large antique and vintage tractor display at Bowling Green's annual Harvest Festival in October. He works with 40 to 50 owners of these pieces of Americana to make the exhibition one of the largest outside of the state fair.

The Harvest Festival draws several thousand people to Bowling Green's Main Street.

"The people who own this old equipment like this show, always asking, 'When is the show in Bowling Green?' It has really gotten a good reputation," Cecil said.

He explained that exhibitors not only get to spend time with fellow tractor and farm equipment enthusiasts, they also get to explain the farming heritage to people who might not understand how deep its roots sink in this region.

Cecil says he is quick to tell the people looking at his tractors that he is a Fort A.P. Hill employee.

"I'm extremely proud to work at Fort A.P. Hill. I'll do anything I can to get our job done, whether it's 2 p.m. or 2 a.m. – anything I can do to take care of the Soldiers."

He spent a couple years in uniform himself. Work as a young man with the Rappahannock



Cecil has a passion for collecting tractors and sharing his farm heritage with others. Cecil and his wife Vicky (left) will display some of the tractor collection at Bowling Green's Harvest Festival in October.

Electric Cooperative was interrupted in 1968-69 for a tour of duty in the Army, including a year in Vietnam.

"I was an 11 Bravo, an infantryman, a ground-pounder, with the 198<sup>th</sup> Brigade. We moved around quite a bit from base-to-base. I was sure glad when it came time to come home," he said.

He also worked for the U.S. Postal Service for several years before taking a position as a high voltage electrician on post, relying on the skills he'd learned with the co-op.

Looking back on his 56 years and diverse experiences, he believes the hardest he ever worked were those days as a boy on the family farm.

"Mom cooked everything over a wood stove and we raised just about everything we ate. The family grocery bill for an entire year only totaled about \$100," he recalls.

The work may have been hard, but the memories are pleasant and the happiest time of the year for Billy and his family was harvest season.

"That's probably one reason why I really like the Bowling Green festival; it's the 'Harvest' Festival," he said.

This year's Harvest Festival won't be quite the same, though, for the Cecil family. In what he described as one of the toughest things he ever felt compelled to do, Billy had his "two best buddies," Pembroke Welsh Corgis Rusty and Rhonda, "put to sleep" when it became clear crippling pain was wracking the aged dogs' bodies.

"They went everywhere Vicky (his wife) and I went," he said. "They used to love to ride those tractors with me."

# Philanthropy and horseshoes

## Donating can be both rewarding...and fun

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Last year Department of Defense personnel around the world pledged more than \$249 million in CFC contributions. They aren't wealthy philanthropists, but citizens who care...



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

There probably won't be any Rockefellers or other renowned philanthropists at the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) kickoff celebration at Fort A.P. Hill. But, there will be plenty of "everyday" people who want to make a difference within their communities and improve the quality of life for others.

The post's first ever CFC celebration will be held Sept. 16 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at the post picnic area. The event is open to the public and will feature a variety of information booths providing details on charitable organizations.

Fun and entertainment are also on the agenda. Singer Anthony Campbell, who has appeared on the NBC Today Show, will perform. Food vendors will be on hand offering an array of treats, plus there will be a dunking booth and a horseshoe tournament. An assortment of prizes will also be given away during the event.

The Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) is a fund-raising drive conducted by federal employees in their workplace. Each year federal employees and military personnel raise millions of dollars for thousands of non-profit charities.

"Over 1,500 local, national and international charities are eligible to receive donations through the CFC. Contributions provide help for education expenses, disaster relief, research for cures from life threatening diseases, medical services,

care for the environment and services to various ethnic communities," said Katrina Hunter, post CFC representative.

The CFC promotes philanthropy amongst federal employees. Hunter said members of the public will also have an opportunity to participate.

"Many non-federal employees still like to participate in creating a better community. They will be able to make a one time donation. We will have a table set up for them at the kick off," said Hunter.

The campaign is conducted during a 6-week period between Sept. 1- Dec. 15 each year at military installations and Federal agencies around the world.

Donations can be made by check, electronic transfer, or by payroll allotment. The minimum amount of an allotment is one dollar per payday, with no restriction in the size of the increment above that minimum.

The CFC website ([www.opm.gov/cfc](http://www.opm.gov/cfc)) has an electronic brochure listing charitable agencies and other information on donations. Local CFC representatives also distribute hard copies of the brochure to all federal employees annually.

# Army aviation's soaring changes

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Marsha Triggs  
Army News Service

*(Editor's note: General Richard Cody  
now serves as Army Vice Chief of Staff.)*

The Army's aviation fleet is undergoing a total overhaul, and the main priority is increasing survivability to protect the aircraft and the Soldiers it carries.

Aviators, crewmen, commanders and the technology community gathered to unfold the Army's aviation transformation plan during the Army Aviation Association of America Annual Convention in Nashville, Tenn.

By 2011, the Army will purchase 903 new aircraft, upgrade the current fleet to be more survivable, lethal and agile and work with the sister services to develop a Joint Multi-Role Helicopter.

## Aviation Brigades Examined

During a four-and-a-half month study, members on the Army Aviation Task Force made more than 120 recommendations on how to turn aviation brigades into joint and expeditionary forces that are modular units of action. The total bill comes out to \$12.8 billion, the Pentagon official said.

"We're going to ask industry what weapon systems our potential adversaries may have, and we're going to be very innovative in how we deal with those threats," said Lt. Gen. Richard Cody, the Deputy Chief of Staff of Operations, G3.

Out of the recommendations came the idea to develop three new aircraft -- a light utility helicopter, an armored reconnaissance helicopter and a cargo aircraft.

"It would be premature to talk about what the helicopters are going to look like. Right now we're in the capabilities phase," Cody said.

In a concerted effort Fort Rucker, Ala., Training and Doctrine Command and the Headquarters Department of the Army Staff will decide on the capabilities they want, and then let industry meet the niche, Cody said.

## Eye in the Sky

A more immediate addition to the aviation ranks will be unmanned aerial vehicles. The Army

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— Lt. Gen. Richard Cody,

was given three I-GNAT UAVs as a congressional plus up and right now two are deployed to Iraq.

It's not just about I-GNAT, UAVs in general are a great contribution to the war fighter, the Pentagon official said. They perform reconnaissance and surveillance missions, and are becoming more and more important, the official added.

The Army will spend \$390 million toward UAV acceleration. Currently in the Central Command area there are Ravens, which are tactical UAVs used at the platoon level. The smaller UAVs are referred to as Shadow and the larger ones, I-GNAT and Hunter, are used at division and brigade level.

The Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Peter Schoomaker advised the Aviation Task Force to improve survivability, increase deployability, optimize capabilities and shorten the logistics tail, the Pentagon official said.

## Common Cockpit

Now the aviation field is following the infantry's example of the Stryker by creating a "common cockpit." Like the Stryker, which has 10 variants but same or similar parts, helicopters will share the same hardware and software.

In 2003, the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, Fort Campbell, Ky., implemented their version of "common cockpit" referred to as the Common Avionics Architecture System or CAAS.

By placing common hardware and software in three of the regiment's aircraft, training was simplified and the logistics demands on the unit were reduced, the G3 official said. The open avionics

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architecture also will make it easier to upgrade the aircraft with third-party vendor software.

The use of CAAS by the conventional Army is one initiative that will be adopted from the Special Operations community, Cody said.

“We always want the 160th to be the premier aviation force in the Army,” Cody said. “We always want them well ahead of the conventional force.”

Schoomaker, who has served with both conventional and Special Operations forces, challenges the aviation community to use Special Operations initiatives that can be sustained and resourced, Cody said.



*Department of Defense Photo*

A Predator unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) prepares for a simulated Navy aerial reconnaissance mission. It provides near, real-time infrared and color video to analysts and controllers on the ground and at sea. The Army plans to spend \$390 million on UAVs as part of its transformation.

### Aviation Evolution

In an interview at Fort Rucker, Schoomaker said that in the future there will be a closer relationship between what's occurring in Special Operations aviation and conventional aviation. Army Aviation in the conventional sense will move to another level, a higher level. At the same time it allows the 160th to move to an even higher-level capability, he added.

The need to purchase and upgrade the current fleet is the reason behind the Comanche termination, officials said.

“Had we not terminated the Comanche, I would be absolutely concerned,” Cody said. “By 2011 we would have had to cut our aviation fleet by a sizable number.”

At the termination of the Comanche, only two aircraft had been built, and \$6.9 billion spent since 1983, said the Pentagon official. If the Army had continued to fund the program it would cost \$14.6 billion more to purchase 121 aircraft by 2011 and up to \$2 billion more to add the survivability equipment that is being added to the rest of the Army's fleet, the official added.

However, the technology that was developed for the Comanche will not be lost, but will be harvested in other Army aviation programs.

“We needed a place where we could take the Comanche technology and ensure that it was retained,” the Pentagon official said.

The goal is to work through a joint solution with the sister services and decide on a new rotorcraft by 2020 or 2025, the official added.

Transformation plans for the aviation field complement the combined arms fight, Cody said. If you take any one weapon system, a Bradley, Abrams or UAV and put it up against an enemy, the enemy will learn to deal with it, the official said. It's a combination of all those weapon systems, the official added.



*Photo by Debra Bingham*

A Blackhawk helicopter carries cargo. A recent Army aviation study calls for development of three new aircraft; a light utility helicopter, an armored reconnaissance helicopter; and a cargo aircraft. The Army plans to purchase 903 new aircraft to upgrade its fleet by 2011.

# Post employees of the year named

Photos by Ken Perrotte



Rose Brown receives a commander's coin from Maj. Gen. Galen Jackman, commanding general of the U.S. Army MDW. Brown, an MWR staff member, was named the post's employee of the year.



The post's senior employee of the year is Sheila Rivera, who works in DPW. Maj. Gen. Galen Jackman, commanding general of the U.S. Army MDW congratulated Rivera during a ceremony on August 19.

# Employee of the year nominees

Photos by Ken Perrotte

Just being nominated is an honor when it comes to the post's employee of the year competition. The nominees demonstrated professionalism, expertise, enthusiasm and commitment to excellence. They are all invaluable members of the Fort A.P. Hill team.

Lt. Col. James Mis, Fort A.P. Hill's commander, congratulated the nominees and presented them with certificates of achievement during the Women's Equality Day luncheon on August 26.



Yvonne Smith, DES



Barbara Pitts, DPTMS



Lisa Skinner, RMO



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Lt. Ronald Henson, DES



Officer Ralph Wade, DES



Beth Hayes, DOL

# Officer nabs yard of the month award

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

Christopher Maine, a Department of Army police officer, received Yard of the Month honors for August.

Maine credits his wife, Lucy, with the beautiful flowers surrounding their quarters.

“She did all the planting, I did the rotor tilling,” Maine said.

Command Sgt. Maj. Gary Carr presented Main with a certificate of achievement and gift coupons from AAFES for the win.



Christopher Maine receives an award from post Command Sgt. Maj. Gary Carr for winning the August yard of the month competition. Maine credited his wife’s green thumb for the win.

## Commander's Corner



Lt. Col. James M. Mis  
Fort A.P. Hill Commander

### Command Labor Day Safety Message

The American worker has created a nation where we enjoy the highest standard of living and the greatest production the world has ever known and has brought us closer to the realization of our traditional ideals of economic and political democracy. It is appropriate, therefore, that we pay tribute on Labor Day to the creator of so much of our nation's strength, freedom, and leadership.

Labor Day also marks the close of our 101 Days of Summer Safety Campaign. I congratulate all of our workers and leaders on conducting a very successful campaign. This summer we had no major accidents or lost work time injuries. This is a direct result of your commitment to the Fort A.P. Hill Safety Program.

While we were successful with our work place safety program, we must remember that safety in the off-duty environment continues to be our most challenging area. Seeing the Fort A.P. Hill gates in your rear view mirror must not be a sign to drop your guard. Regardless of where you are or what you are doing, you must remain vigilant.

As you plan your holiday activities, please keep safety in mind. If you plan to use the long weekend to work on your house, don't forget to apply your work safety skills there too. If you plan to travel over the weekend, take time to make sure both you and your car are in top shape for the road. If your holiday activities include alcoholic beverages, make plans for somebody else to get you home like designated drivers or taxicabs. If your plans include sports or other outdoor activities, identify the hazards and find ways to protect you and your loved ones from those dangers.

I charge every worker on Fort A.P. Hill with the responsibility of preparing yourselves, your peers and your families for this upcoming Labor Day weekend. I expect all of you to be safety leaders on and off the job. Make it your goal not to allow a single Soldier, civilian or family member to be injured or killed on your watch.

Each of you epitomizes all the great and noble qualities of the American labor force. I thank each and every one of you for your service to our nation. I thank each and every one of you for the support and comfort you bring to our nation's Soldiers. I wish all of you a safe and happy Labor Day.

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

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Commander: LTC. James M. Mis

Deputy to the Commander: Charles A. Munson

Public Affairs Officer: Ken Perrotte

Public Affairs Specialist and Editor: Debra R. Bingham

Please direct questions or comments concerning this publication to the Fort A. P. Hill Public Affairs Office at (804) 633-8120 or e-mail [Debra.Bingham@Belvoir.Army.Mil](mailto:Debra.Bingham@Belvoir.Army.Mil)