

Up and Down the Hill

Serving the Fort A. P. Hill Community

Feeding The Troops

In the field and on post; TISA delivers

The military depends on its logisticians to keep the troops fed. The Troop Issue Subsistence Agency on Fort A.P. Hill does that job better than most...

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

A Marine and a sailor training at the Defense Information School eat burgers at Fort Meade's dining facility. Soldiers from the 7th Transportation Group at Fort Eustis eat warm teriyaki chicken for dinner, after a lunch of MREs in the field. The food made its way to their plates—and pouches—courtesy of the Troop Issue Subsistence Activity, or TISA, at Fort A.P. Hill.

Fort A.P. Hill's TISA provides rations for dining facilities on posts from Maryland to North Carolina. According to Charles Munson, the post's deputy commander, TISA is expanding its support as part of a cost saving process conceived by the post's Directorate of Logistics and supported by the Army's Northeast Region Installation Management Office, or IMA.

The Northeast Region IMA supports Army readiness and quality of life initiatives for Soldiers and families on more 28 military installations in the region.



Gregory Torres, a materiel handler, loads a pallet of food onto the back of a military cargo truck. Units conducting training at Fort A.P. Hill order and pick up their rations at TISA's loading dock.

Saving Money

A broad objective of IMA is to lower costs and increase operational efficiency. One way of meeting that goal included regionalizing some operations, including food service operations. The Fort A.P. Hill TISA was unique; it had years of experience supporting not only dining facilities, but field training units as well.

"This consolidation has created a cost avoidance of approximately \$500,000. As more installations transition to our TISA, the cost avoidance

Food from Page 1

will grow, eventually saving approximately \$900,000 per annum," said Munson.

TISA orders food for garrison dining facilities at forts McNair, Myers, and Belvoir in Virginia; and for Eustis, and Story in Virginia. It also provides rations for Fort Meade and Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland.

The warehouse facilities TISA maintains enable it to accommodate transient units training on post with bulk issue of field rations, Munson said.

"TISA has the space to store, break down and re-issue large orders of rations. They've also provided logistical units training on post with what they need to conduct their supply operations in the field. We've also given them an opportunity to run a TISA as well," Munson said.

Gail Wallace, troop issue officer for Fort A.P. Hill's TISA, said the 8-person staff orders and processes Unitized Group Rations (UGR-A), Meals Ready to Eat (MRE), and the Unitized B Ration (UBR,) used mainly by the Marine Corps.

"Our main task is to make sure that all the units training at Fort A.P. Hill are fed. We have five dining facilities on post and we make sure they all get rations," Wallace said.

Following The Food

The process begins when the dining facility manager puts together a production schedule or menu, including the number of people being fed and when. The menu is programmed into a computer and a printout lists all the items needed—down to individual sugar packets, according to Staff Sgt. Anthony Rose, a food operations sergeant, 7th Transportation Group, Fort Eustis, Va.

"That list of items goes to TISA, which takes it, and all the others received from dining facilities across post and other forts, and compiles a list for the prime vendor," Rose said.



Rations are readied for issue to military members training at Fort A.P. Hill. TISA supports Army and Marine units training on post and orders rations for many Army dining facilities in the region.

"Orders come through here and are processed using the Army Food Management Information System (AFMIS) and the System Total Orders and Receive Electronic System (STORES.) If an order is put in on Monday, delivery is on Wednesday. They pick up everything from MREs to ice," Wallace said.

A contracted supply source, or prime vendor, fills the order and trucks it directly to the requesting dining facility in garrison.

Rose was picking up rations for his unit training on post. He said he contacted TISA and told them his requirements; they ordered the rations, had it delivered on post, sorted and ready when he arrived.

"It works perfectly. We work hand-in-hand; we get orders to them on time and they get us what we need. If we have a problem, TISA always works with us," Rose said.

Field Cuisine

During field training, several small units may share a dining facility on post. Wallace makes sure they all have the same menu, since there's only a single kitchen being used to prepare the food.

"They submit their paperwork 30 days in advance. We actually have a menu that is posted on a calendar once the units get here, so they already know what they're going to get," Wallace said.

Sgt. Steven Holden, a cook for the 7th Transportation Group, directed a cargo truck to the TISA loading dock. A TISA material handler loaded a pallet of UGR-As onto the truck, while Holden checked a pallet of milk, bread and other perishable items.

TISA issues rations on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Once the day's supplies have been picked up, TISA starts pulling items for the next issue day," Wallace said.

Food from Page 2

“Once the unit gets here they check into the front office. We pull everything up to the front, check it off and load it on their trucks. Right now we have Marines in here who are feeding 100, but when their main body comes in there will be 1,000 eating UGR-As,” Wallace said.

“It works perfectly. We work hand and hand; we get the orders to them on time and they get us what we need. If we have a problem, TISA always works with us.”

Staff Sgt. Timothy Rose

Boosting Morale

Holden’s unit was in the field conducting convoy live-fire training in the rain and mud. Holden, and three other cooks, will serve the Soldiers a hot breakfast and dinner. It will take 2 to 3 hours for the cooks to prepare a meal for 100 people. Additional Soldiers from the unit will act as “KPs” to help with serving and clean up. The cooks know the impact hot chow has on a Soldier’s morale.

“The first meal they’ll get is chicken teriyaki for dinner, and sausage and eggs for breakfast. All we do is sign for the dining facility, pick up the rations, cook and serve,” said Holden.

Meals In A Box

A UGR-A module contains semi-perishable food items, plus perishable/frozen type entrees, which provide a bit of “luxury” to Soldiers in the field. There are 7 breakfast and 14 lunch/dinner menus available. Each meal module has three boxes and weighs a total of about 86 pounds.

The chicken teriyaki meal has a box with the perishable chicken; a box with dried rice, cans of peas and carrots, and cake; and a box containing cans of pears, drink powder and paper products.

UGR-As are configured into individual meal modules to simplify ordering, distribution, and preparation. One module feeds 50 people and includes cups, trays, utensils, trash bags and cooking instruction sheets, Wallace said.

TISA also orders the mandatory supplements that accompany the meals, such as bread, milk, cold cereal, and optional enhancements like fresh fruit, vegetables, and salad, Wallace said.

Breakfast meals come in orange coded boxes, while dinner lunch/meals are in blue coded boxes. The UGR-As changed the ration issue operation dramatically Wallace said.

“We use to stock everything from applesauce to vinegar and they’d have to go down each aisle and pull items. They don’t have to worry about getting enough rations now, because this one box has everything in it,” Wallace said.



TISA staff pull and palletize UGR-A rations for cooks from the 7th Transportation Group based at Fort Eustis, Va. The cooks will prepare the food at a dining facility at Camp Wilcox.



Each UGR-A meal module contains three boxes and feeds 50 people. This box contained hash brown potatoes, grape drink mix, condiments, trash bags and paper products.

Finding The Army's Best

Competition demands Ivy and Major League skills

Each year Soldiers spend hours studying military regulations, expanding their common task skills, practicing communication techniques, and pushing their bodies to excel on the Army's physical fitness test. These Soldiers take it to the next level.

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

Sweltering heat, unrelenting rain, and assorted flying and crawling vermin; it's enough to keep most people inside, but for a Soldier it's all in a day's work. But, add to that the rigors of navigating for miles through dense woods in the dark, the pressure of knowing all the answers and performing every task perfectly. That's the day of a Soldier vying to be called the Army's best.

Top Soldiers from Washington, D.C based commands gathered on post July 26-28 to compete in the National Capital Region's (NCR) Soldier and NCO of the Year competition. Winners go on to represent the region at the Department of Army competition in September at Fort Lee, Va.

During the three-day competition, Soldiers faced an assortment of mentally and physically challenging events testing their military knowledge, combat skills and physical endurance.

Participants accumulate points for performance on a physical fitness test, weapons qualification range, and day and night land navigation courses. A 10-station CTT event, set up in the woods near the Combat Village, assessed the Soldiers' combat survival skills with challenging hands-on testing.



Spec. Jennifer Damp, 704th Military Intelligence Brigade, prepares a range card during the National Capital Region's Soldier of the Year competition

Soldiers also completed a written examination, an essay, and faced a board of senior enlisted members who evaluated their military knowledge and bearing. They also had some surprise "mystery" tasks and a road march.

Soldiers came from as far away as Alaska, Europe and Korea to compete after being winning a succession of local boards.

Top Soldiers Selected

Staff Sgt. John Thompson, a military police officer assigned to the Installation Management Agency, or IMA, earned the NCO of the Year title. IMA manages Army installations around the world. Thompson serves as a military police officer at Chievres Air Base, Belgium.

Soldiers from Page 4

The NCR's Soldier of the Year is Pfc. Karen Antonyan, a heavy equipment operator assigned to the 12th Aviation Battalion, MDW Engineer Company, Fort Belvoir, Va. The 22-year-old Soldier was born in Donetsk, Ukraine, into a family of coal miners.

Antonyan said he joined the Army for the college benefits and went to the board to "prove to myself I could do it," he said.

1st Lt. Brendan Mullen is Antonyan's platoon leader in the Urban Technical Rescue Unit. He proudly describes Antonyan as "a machine; an incredibly disciplined and intelligent machine."

"I believe his background, of growing up in the Ukraine and having to live the first 19 years of his life in an incredibly tough state, has given him a perspective most American Soldiers have never seen," Mullen said.

Mullen said Antonyan understands the Army offers opportunities unavailable in Russia and he "exploits his blessings with everything in his heart."

Antonyan said he is focused on the "final and biggest step—to win the Army's Soldier of the Year board."

"It's a process that takes a lot of time, discipline and desire. I study all the time and never forget about the physical part of being a Soldier," Antonyan said.

For Staff Sgt. Stacy Scarborough, a network switching systems operator, White House Communications Agency, Camp David, Maryland, the competition represents more than an individual win or loss.

"It's not necessarily the boards that are important; it's the soldier skills that are important, they're perishable if you don't use them and train on them. It's about making leaders," Scarborough said.

Spec. Jennifer Damp, 704th Military Intelligence Brigade, Fort Meade, Maryland, has been in the Army almost two years. She started competing in boards to get promoted and said the boards themselves are educational.

"It's a process that takes a lot of time, discipline and desire."

*Spec. Karen Antonyan
NCR's Soldier of the Year*

"I learned so much. If I deploy I feel a lot more prepared than I did before doing the boards. It makes you learn tasks by doing hands on training, instead of observing in a group, like in sergeant's time," Damp said.

During the common task phase, Damp faced another challenge; preparing a range card. The sergeants grading the event said few Soldiers received a "go" on the event.

"The courses are incredibly difficult. The land navigation course was insanely hard. There were a lot of creeks and things to cross

and it was pouring yesterday. These tasks are one step higher than the last ones were," Damp said.

Although Damp and Scarborough won't be at the Army competition this year, don't count them out for next year. Both found the experience of competing rewarding.

"It is such a good experience and you learn so much. Even if you don't win, the experience will build your confidence. It is very good experience," Damp said.

"You get new ideas on ways to teach and train your soldiers and learn how to integrate it back in your unit. You get experience in reading, writing, public speaking, and presenting yourself. That's all part of being a Soldier," Scarborough said.

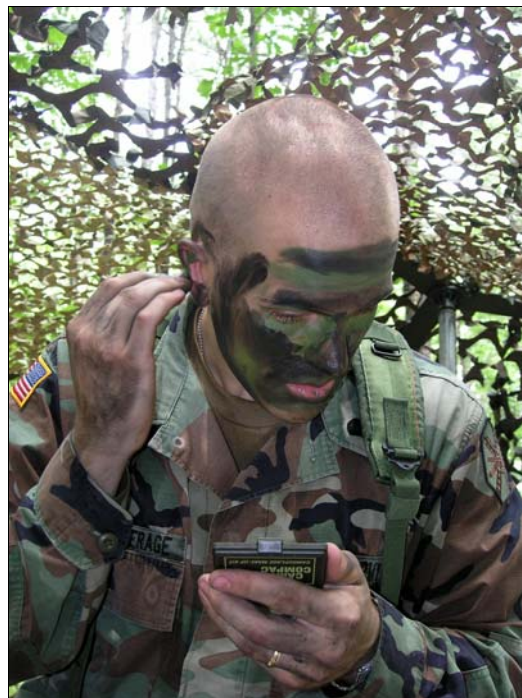


Spec. Jennifer Damp, 704th Military Intelligence Brigade, receives instructions from an evaluator (right) during the CTT phase of the competition.

SOLDIER SKILLS



ABOVE: Pfc. Karen Antonyan, a heavy equipment operator from Fort Belvoir, Va., evaluates a “casualty” during the National Capital Region’s Soldier and NCO of the year competition held on post July 26-28. Antonyan, a native of the Ukraine, captured the title and moves on to the Army-level competition in September at Fort Lee, Va.



RIGHT: Spec. Kyle Deatherage, a fire-fighter from Fort Wainwright, Alaska, applies camouflage during the common task testing phase of the competition. After applying the “make up,” Soldiers try to avoid detection by concealing themselves in the woods. Deatherage was runner-up in the competition.

SKILLED SOLDIERS

Futuristic Technology For Today's Soldiers

Getting innovative technology into the hands of war fighters quickly is essential. That's the goal of the Army's "Current To Future Force" initiative.

*Story by Gary Sheftick
Army News Service*

The "Current to Future Force" initiative is about more than accelerating futuristic technology for use in today's Army, according to a leader of the task force.

"We're creating a new way of doing business," said Ed Mazzanti, deputy of the Capabilities Development Directorate at the Training and Doctrine Command's 'Future Center.'

Mazzanti and his focus area task force identify promising capabilities under development and attempt to "rapidly spiral" them for use in the current force. They are looking closely at certain aspects of the Future Combat Systems, such as unmanned aerial vehicles and robotics.

The UAVs and robots brought into use today may not have the "threshold capabilities" intended for 2010, Mazzanti said, but they will provide current leaders an opportunity to experience application of the technologies while research continues.

"It really gives us a jump-start toward bringing that future to being," Mazzanti said.

Lessons Shape Future Force

His task force also examines "lessons learned" from Iraq, Afghanistan and other operations to help steer development of future capabilities to what is needed.

"It's really a continuation of Army transformation," Mazzanti said. "It embraces the notion of adjusting the Army's transformation to what has occurred in the operational environment," especially after Sept. 11, 2001.

This is something Mazzanti's task force calls "current to future," which differs in principle from the "future to current" acceleration of technology.



Photo by Timothy Rider

A Packbot searches for booby traps on a vehicle. The Packbot is an example of technology being accelerated for use in the current force.

"Today's Army is very capable, well proven," Mazzanti said, explaining that proven capabilities deserve to stay around for the future. For instance, he said the M-1 Abrams tank will be around for "decades into the future."

Capturing What Works

The third function of his task force is to look at "current to current" capabilities, Mazzanti said. This means finding capabilities being used successfully in one corner of the Army and adapting them for wider application. Mazzanti said this includes some battle command initiatives fielded to forces in Iraq.

Every six months, his task force -- with members from the Pentagon, Army Materiel Command, Joint Forces Command, Army Testing and Evaluation Command, TRADOC and elsewhere -- will team up to conduct a "capabilities assessment" and determine what technologies are ripe for fielding.

"We're casting a very wide net," Mazzanti said, explaining that his group not only has "tentacles across the Army," but is also looking at academia and foreign armies, such as a South African mine detection capability.

The task force is also looking at a Counter Mine Change Detection Work Station which would

Change from Page 7

process information collected by infra-red imagery, cameras and other sensors and analyze the terrain to determine if it has been disturbed. The software will alert forces to the probability of land mines being present.

They are looking at a lightweight mortar radar that can be disassembled and carried by two Soldiers.

Active Protective Systems for combat vehicles are being examined, but not necessarily for near-term fielding, Mazzanti said. APS could sense incoming rounds or missiles and enable countermeasures, Mazzanti said. He said this type of capability could eventually be added to current combat vehicles, once it is developed further.

Fast Fielding Equipment

One way Mazzanti's task force aims to accelerate the fielding of technology is to "team early"

the research and development folks with the acquisition corps.

"The intent is to accelerate," Mazzanti said, "but there are certain statutory requirements in acquisition. We still have to operate within the statutory requirements," Mazzanti said.

He also stressed that change is never recommended for the sake of change itself.

"You have to be careful about the pace of change," Mazzanti said. He said that the task force weighs the added capability of a change to ensure it merits the turbulence it will create.

Change affects materiel, doctrine and the way units conduct business, Mazzanti said. He said the task force constantly balances risk between today and tomorrow.

"It's a mindset," Mazzanti said, "a continuum of activity that pushes the Army toward the future."

(Editor's Note: This is an article in a series on the Army chief of staff's immediate focus areas.)

NEWS BRIEFS

Ethics Training

Don't miss the mandatory ethics training class August 18 at Heth School. Attend either the 11 a.m. or 1 p.m. session. A town hall meeting will be held in conjunction with the class.

**CFC Kick Off**

The Fort A.P. Hill Combined Federal Campaign kicks off September 16 at the picnic area. Stop by and learn how your contribution can make a difference. A variety of organizations will be on hand with information.

**Army Campaign Plan**

All Soldiers, civilians, contractors and family members must keep informed about the future direction of the Army. Mandatory ACP training is available on line: <http://www.army.mil/thewayahead/acp.html>. The training must be completed by August 11. Those who attended the May 12 class at Heth School do not need to complete the on-line training.

**Safety Training**

Stress management is the training topic for August. Training must be completed by August 27. Submit rosters to DHR by September 1.

**Class Change**

Fire extinguisher training classes scheduled for Thursdays at 10 a.m. are now being held on Wednesdays. Classes are held at the picnic area. Call 633-8317 for more information.



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