

THE ORIENT SHIELD

ORIENT SHIELD 2004

FINAL EDITION

ISSUE NO. 3, NOV. 10, 2003

AT-4, M203 Training Explosive

by Dennis Lopic

OYANOHARA, Japan – After a few practice rounds U.S. Army and Japan Ground Self Defense Force soldiers instinctively move back as the “real deal” is loaded into the shoulder-held AT-4 – one of the world’s most effective anti-tank weapons. The soldiers head for the brush and safety of the 100-meter mark – well out of the back-blast area.

Soldiers from A-Co., 2nd Battalion, 27th Regiment, 25th Infantry Division, are preparing to demonstrate the massive power of the AT-4 while training bilaterally at Orient Shield ‘04 here.

The soldiers are silent as the demonstrators talk soldiers through the launch sequence.

“Cradle it like a baby. Now you can open up the sight. Now take off the safety,” said Staff Sgt. Franklin Davila, A-Co, 2-27 Infantry.

He instructs the soldier holding the AT-4 to aim at a piece of wood against a concrete wall about 150 meters away.

Davila is a safety. He is standing to the right, but a little ahead of the soldier hold-

ing the launcher. He’s there to observe and ensure safe AT-4 operation, but he also ensures the AT-4 back blast doesn’t burn him.

He continues his instruction as anticipation mounts for the launch.

“Now turn your head and yell ‘back blast area clear,’” said Davila.

As the soldier yells out the command, the other soldiers get ready for the launch, but not everyone is prepared for the deafening



by Dennis Lopic

Staff Sgt. Franklin Davila instructs Pfc. Benjamin Gendron both of A-Co., 2-27th Infantry, how to fire the AT-4.

“boom” and the bright flash of light, as the missile streaks then crashes into its target.

(see AT-4 page 4)



by Marty Collins

Light reflects on a lone soldier walking in a torrential downpour at “tent city.”

Chemical Warfare: *It’s in the Air*

by Dave Jennings

OYANOHARA, Japan—An eerie scene no one wants to find themselves in is soldiers in full chemical protective gear spraying a poisoned area with decontamination solution while

a chemical alarm splits the air. It’s the exact scenario soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 27th Regiment, 25th Infantry Division, were simulating with their Japanese counterparts from

the 43rd Regiment of the Japanese Ground Self Defense Force.

1st Lt. John Carver, 2-27th Infantry, presides over the bilateral drill.

“This is a demonstration of nuclear, biological, and chemical equipment,”

he said.

“Our equipment includes the M-22 ACADA which detects gas downwind. The ICAM detects beta and gamma rays on a person, and the VDR-13 [the newest piece of equipment] detects

radiation in the area,” he said.

Carver says their Japanese counterparts have been very interested in learning how the U.S. systems operate. The train-

“It’s important for all soldiers to know how to protect themselves from it.”

ing is going very well, and it’s beneficial for both sides to learn how each other’s equipment works.

“Overall, there is a high chemical threat in the world today. It’s impor-

(see NBC page 3)

BCC: Orient Shield Nerve Center

by Kirk Wilson

OYANOHARA, Japan – A camouflaged tent set off to the side of a dusty, gravel road houses the bilateral command cell. Inside the tent it feels like a sauna, and soldiers work at break neck speed. The command of “ALL QUIET IN THE BCC” stops the hectic work pace as Japanese and American soldiers receive updates of the day’s scenario. The work continues when the brief ends.

This is the bilateral command cell, or BCC, and it’s the central nerve center of training at Orient Shield ‘04. Everyone from the battalion executive officer

to the command sergeant major come to the BCC to receive scenario updates.

“The function of the BCC is to coordinate training for both the 43rd regiment and 2-27th task force, as well as tactical scenarios, and serving as the tactical operations center or TOC for both forces,” said Capt. Rob Atienza, training officer, 2nd Battalion, 27th Regiment, 25th Infantry Division.

Operation orders blare over several different radios in various languages, American and Japanese soldiers pound away at keyboards, adjusting

(see *BCC* page 5)



by Kirk Wilson

Soldiers from the 2-27th and JGSDF check grid coordinates on a map at the bilateral command cell.

Arm Wrestling Upset

by Dave Jennings

OYANOHARA, Japan—The volume was high and so were the emotions that filled the warm air inside Friendship Hall. It was a bilateral arm-wrestling tournament extraordinaire, and each soldier from the “wolfhounds” 2nd Battalion, 27th Regiment, 25th Infantry Division and the 43rd Regiment, Japan Ground Self Defense Force, was anxious and eager to go over the top to win the championship.

In this single-elimination tournament, 26 soldiers, U.S. and

Japanese, locked hands in at battle of strength and will. The eventual undisputed bilateral arm-wrestling champion was Pvt. Masayoshi Tateiwa, 43rd Reg., JGSDF. The runner-up was Sgt. James Lopez, A-Co., 2-27th Infantry.

The events of the evening proceeded from anticipation through the elimination of 24 contenders to a fevered crescendo, and culminated in the awarding of first and second place certificates with special ‘Orient Shield ‘04’ coins.

Tateiwa said he felt good about his final victory.

Runner-up Lopez was surprised he didn’t win. “Nobody’s ever beaten me before,” he said. ❖

Wolfhound ‘Warrior’ Re-enlists

by Chris Coleman

OYANOHARA, Japan – After drinking a small glass of sake, the warrior bows his head as he receives the “katana” – a Japanese sword – from the commander. Placing the blade at his side the warrior completes the ceremony recognizing his loyalty and willingness to defend his homeland.

Sgt. Dimitrius Garcia has just re-enlisted in the U.S. Army.

During Orient Shield ‘04 the soldiers from A-Co., 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division saw one of their own re-enlist, only he did so by taking part in a modern adaptation of a traditional Japa-

nese warrior ritual.

During the ceremony, Garcia recited his re-enlistment oath before taking part in the warrior rite.

Garcia said the experience was an indescribable honor.

“By far, this is something I never thought would happen. I feel so privileged to have participated,” said Garcia.

According to 2-27th Infantry, re-enlistment non-commissioned officer Staff Sgt Michael Smith, the ceremony was a good way to both recognize a soldier’s dedication and allow soldiers to gain

(see *Re-enlistment* page 3)



by Marty Collins

1st Lt. Jermaine Hampton administers the enlistment oath to Sgt. Dimitrius Garcia.

The Orient Shield is published in support of Orient Shield 2004, at Oyanohara Training Area, Japan, under provisions of the Department of the Army, by the 354th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, 99th Regional Readiness Command, U.S. Army Reserve, Coraopolis, Pennsylvania. The opinions and articles published in The Orient Shield are not necessarily reflective of official stances or policies of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense or U.S Government. Circulation 250

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The Chaplain's Field Kit



Chaplain Joseph Caldwell
35th Supply and Service - USARJ

What have you gained confidence in while you were here? Maybe you have a new assurance that your weapon will not let you down. You may be leaving with a certainty that your squad or section can handle

any mission the army may give them. Perhaps you have a greater respect for your command or a stronger sense of yourself as a soldier.

Regardless of what it is that you are leaving here with confidence in, one thing is certain, you did not gain that confidence without a lot of hard work and training.

The same thing is true of our spirituality. Many of us believe

that there is a God. We may even pray when things get bad or bargain when things are not going our way, but somehow God still feels distant and unresponsive. We lack confidence in God's ability to stand beside us, lift us up and protect us. Our confidence in

God like our confidence in our combat skills is directly connected to the amount of time we

take working on our relationship to God. The more we pray, study holy writings, worship and fellowship with others of like belief the closer we become to the object of our worship. We grow in our certainty that God is present, real and active in our lives.

Perhaps this exercise has strengthened your relationship with God or maybe you have wondered further away. As we depart why not recommit to work hard on your relationship with God. In the same way that hard training brings confidence in your combat skills. Concert worship brings confidence in the object of our faith. Let me start the way I began: What have you gained confidence in while you were here? ♦

***“The Lord is my rock,
and my fortress, and
my deliverer; my God,
my strength, in whom I
will trust; my buckler,
and the horn of my
salvation, and my
high tower”***

Psalm 18:2

(Re-enlistment continued from page 2)

appreciation of a foreign culture.

“We wanted to do a re-enlistment in Japan that incorporated Japanese culture,” said Smith.

After the ceremony Col. Akira Kawasaki, commander, 43rd Regiment, 8th Division, Japanese Ground Self Defense Force, presented a personal gift to Garcia. Kawasaki said the gift, a traditional Japanese folding fan with “happiness” inscribed on it in Kanji, symbolizes the internal happiness a dedicated soldier feels.

“To receive a personal gift from their regimental commander was overwhelming.

I’ll never forget this,” Garcia said.

During the ceremony Lt. Col. Walter Piatt, commander 2-27th Infantry, presented a small glass of sake to Garcia.

“This ceremony is symbolic of what Sergeant Garcia has committed his life to. Garcia has committed his life to being a warrior. This is for the warrior in you,” Piatt said, handing the sake to Garcia.

Before handing Garcia the blade, Kawasaki said the sword symbolized Garcia’s essence.

“I give you this katana – the spirit of a warrior – to a man dedicated to committing himself to the U.S. Army and the United States of America,” said Kawasaki.

Recognizing the potential for future deployments, soldiers said they respected the decision and they said Garcia’s re-enlistment was a sign of his integrity.

“It shows the character and quality person that Sergeant Garcia is. I’m thankful there are people like Sergeant Garcia in the Army,” said 1st Lt. Jermaine Hampton, executive officer, A-Co., 2-27th Infantry.

After the ceremony and gift from Kawasaki, 1st Sgt. Sean Bradley, first sergeant, A-Co., 2-27th Infantry, offered a toast to the recently recommitted warrior.

“Here’s to us and those like us. Damn few left. Warriors one and all. Kanpai,” he said. ♦

(NBC from page 1)

tant for all soldiers to know how to protect themselves from it,” he said.

The soldiers go through a total of seven stations for the nuclear, chemical biological training. As the torrential rain intensified, the soldiers continued through the rest of the training stations, in spite of the blustery weather conditions.

Cpl. Michael Spurlock is the nuclear, biological, chemical non-commissioned officer for 2-27th Infantry. He explains how the classes are progressing amid deteriorating weather conditions.

“This is basically an ex-

change of NBC equipment information. The Japanese equipment includes a hand-operated spray pump that dispenses an agent for vehicle decontamination. The training is good,” he said.

As the wind whipped and the rain became a torrent, the soldiers continued rotating through the stations.

One truth became evident: Both the U.S. and Japanese are very serious about dealing with the NBC threat. ♦



by Dave Jennings

Sgt. Hanemaru Hitoshi, 43rd Reg., JGSDF, simulates rear security.

Orient Shield is Bautista's farewell

by Chris Coleman

OYANOHARA, Japan – Sgt. Maj. Bert R. Bautista has a rack of ribbons, a combat-infantryman's badge and a 29-year military career that has seen the once diminutive private rise to assume his place as command sergeant major of the fierce wolfhounds from the 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division.

It is a career that has spanned decades, encountered deployments and reached its zenith at the bilateral training exercise Orient Shield '04 here.

This exercise will be the last of Bautista's career.

"This is my last deployment – and it is one of the best because of the bilateral training with the Japanese," he said.

Bautista said that Orient Shield is a tremendous training opportunity for his soldiers.

"This training is great. We are able to exchange doctrine, ideas and techniques. The Japanese soldiers are intelligent and disciplined and it is beneficial to work with them," he said.

Bautista cited the cultural awareness soldiers gain by training on foreign soil with foreign soldiers as another benefit.

"The cultural exchange has been a wonderful experience. The Japanese are gracious hosts and I'm thankful to have had this opportunity," he said.

While the Japanese have been courte-

ous hosts, Bautista was part of a team that returned the generosity by visiting the Holy Family Home orphanage in Osaka, Japan before the exercise began.

It is a tradition that was started by Hugh O'Reilly in 1949, a former 27th Regiment sergeant major, and Bautista said that he planned to continue his relationship with the orphanage after he retires.

Although retirement is just around the corner for Bautista, he said he was extremely confident in the competency of the wolfhound soldiers who will fill his shoes and honor the legacy of the soldiers who have built the wolfhounds into one of the world's finest fighting teams.

"This battalion is well trained and ready for any situation. These soldiers should go to combat confident. They have great NCOs (non-commissioned officers) and great officers," he said.

One of the reasons that Bautista said he was confident about the wolfhound soldiers was the performance of the soldiers who were already called to serve in Iraq.

"Although many of them were serving outside of their MOS (military occupational specialty) they were magnificent, and they're already sharing the lessons they learned with their fellow soldiers," he said.

Bautista said his assessment of why the soldiers were successful in Iraq is also advice for those who haven't been deployed.



Command Sgt. Maj. Bert R. Bautista
2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry
Regiment, 25th Infantry Division

"Once you get assigned a task you must excel at that task by performing it at the best of your abilities," he said.

Looking at retirement Bautista said he will always consider himself a wolfhound, and that he will miss serving.

"I'm going to miss the Army. I'm going to miss the soldiers ... the training. I feel attached to the soldiers, NCOs and officers from this battalion," he said. ❖

(AT-4 continued from page 1)

While the sound of the first blast fades into the valley below, a second missile is launched downrange. This demonstration of American military technology continues for nearly an hour until the ammunition is expended.

Then soldiers train with the target-practice rounds (TPT) for the M-203 grenade launchers. The TPTs are M-203 rounds containing florescent paint instead of high explosive.

Soldiers from A-Co., 2-27th Infantry and the 35th S&S Bn., line up and fire practice rounds at the concrete wall on the hill opposing the AT-4 range.

The destructive force of practice M-203 grenades isn't nearly as dominant as the previously fired AT-4 rounds, but today's training allows soldiers hands-on experience with a critical weapon.

Among the grenadiers is Maj. Kazuhiro Fukuoka, com-

mander, 1-Co., 43rd Infantry Regiment, JGSDF.

He listens intently as a translator explains the procedures for firing the weapon then takes up the weapon. He aims carefully with a first-timer's hesitation and fires, his first round missing the target.

By the end of the training, he arcs direct hits onto his target, eliciting smiles from the onlookers.

With Fukuoka's success, other soldiers are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the grenade launcher.

"It was great, they loved it," said Sgt. 1st Class Adrian Brown, first sergeant, 35th S&S Bn. Brown has three soldiers assigned an M-203 in his unit.

"They had 25 rounds to practice with," said Brown. "It gave them the opportunity to familiarize," he said. ❖

(2nd Lt. Christopher Coleman contributed to this report.)



by Dennis Lopic

Pfc. Benjamin Gendron, rifleman, 2-27th Infantry,
uses weeds to camouflage his kevlar helmet.

Wolfhounds Prowl 9mm Range



by Dave Jennings

OYANOHARA, Japan—Seven silhouettes stand helplessly 25-meters away from the firing line. Over 1500-9mm rounds are about to assail the paper enemy as 28 soldiers prepare to qualify with the M9 weapon system.

2nd Lt. William Curtis, medic platoon leader and range officer in charge, 2nd Battalion, 27th Regiment, 25th Infantry Division, gives the command to move the selector lever from safe to fire.

The range erupts in blazing gunfire for 21 seconds as 49 bullets rip through their targets. This scene repeats itself many times over the next few hours until the ammunition is spent.

“Overall, it was a good day of training. It’s an easy range and the soldiers like it a lot,” said Curtis.

Spc. Billy Gomez, medic, 2-27th Infantry, sits by the ammunition, counting, sorting and distributing it.

“Twenty-eight people shot today. We went through more than 1500 rounds,” he said.

The popular place to be was at the target counting station where everyone could find out their score.

Cpl. Wilder Smith, medic, 2-27th Infantry, counts everyone’s score and records it.

“Twenty-three people qualified today. It was a good learning experience,” he said.

Some people on the range had never fired the M9 before, and were pleasantly surprised by their results.

Pfc. Michael Geyman, line medic, 2-27th Infantry, was exuberant about his performance today.

“I’m happy I made sharpshooter. It’s my very first time shooting the M9. I think what we’re doing is important because we might need to defend ourselves in a real-world situation,” he said.

Not everyone who shot was a medic. Some were infantrymen, others were journalists, and one was even a translator.

Some people qualified expert. One hawkeye was Capt. Michael Rowley, doctor, 354th Combat Support Hospital, Jacksonville, Fl.

“I’ve shot it before. People cannot underestimate the importance of maintaining their weapons,” he said. ❖

by Marty Collins

2nd Lt. Will Curtis and Sgt. 1st Class Reginald Hall keep their eyes focused on soldiers qualifying on the nine millimeter range.

(BCC continued from page 2)

soldier’s movements on a computer screen and a giant acetate map.

Even though this training has many facets, both sides have a common goal in sight. Japan has been one of the United States’ closest allies for the past 50 years and the two nations will probably continue to work together given the recent shifting sands of both nations’ security interests.

“We’re learning some things from the Japanese as far as planning and preparation. I’m sure we’ll see them again out on some distant battlefield in the near future,” said 2nd Lt. Wiliulfo Gonzalez, assistant operations officer, 2-27th Infantry.

During the exercise, the two forces exchange tactics, training and procedures, as well as parts of doctrines and anything

that would help ensure success as a military organization.

“I wish I was out there shootin’ and movin’ with the guys, but being here at headquarters definitely has an important role, and it’s taught me a lot as far as how a battalion operates in the field, it’s a great experience,” said Staff Sgt. Mathew Anthony Chong, tasking non-commissioned officer, 2-27th Infantry.

Training together allows both contingents to incorporate different techniques into their battle rhythm and prepares the two for potential deployments.

“I’ve trained with several foreign countries before. I have never seen this level of support from any other unit before. They go out of their way to make sure we have everything we need to train. They’re really a pleasure to be around,” said Atienza. ❖



by Marty Collins

Fun Fact

According to mythology, Japan’s history began when the

sun goddess, Amaterasu, sent one of her descendants down to the island of Kyushu to unify the people of Japan. Japan was once connected to the Asian mainland by a landbridge. ❖

Soldiers enjoy Japanese delicacies

by Dave Jennings

OYANOHARA, Japan – Chomp, chomp, snarf. Mmm...good. This is typical of what you'll hear at mealtime from the soldiers at Orient Shield '04. Many infantry soldiers haven't had the unusual privilege that the "wolfhounds" of 2nd Battalion, 27th Regiment, 25th Infantry Division, Hawaii, have had while training here.

While others might delight in meals ready to eat during their field exercises. The wolfhounds are afforded the opportunity to eat traditional Japanese fare while they train bilaterally here.

Noodle bowls, pork, chicken, beef barbeque and shish kabobs are some of the culinary targets in the wolfhound's sites.

Pfc. Chad Owen, forward observer, 2-27 Infantry, hovers over his bowl of instant noodles deftly choosing his bites with chopsticks.

"In the field artillery we really don't have much of a chance to eat like this," he said.

"For the most part it's good, but I don't like to eat the squid and octopus," Owen said, after inhaling another mouthful of noodles.

Owen says he is impressed by the cornucopia of Japanese tastes and says the Army should offer this type of cultural food more often because it's good and it's different.



by Chris Coleman

Spc. Celso Beltran, A- Co., 2-27th Infantry, tests his skill with chopsticks while enjoying a lunch time favorite, a noodle bowl.

"I like the barbeque pork, it's off the chain," he said.

Pfc. David White, forward observer, 2-27 Infantry, eats his barbeque skewers in the little picnic area adjacent to the barbeque kitchen.

"It's very good. I'm not a big noodle

fan, but the barbeque, I love. I think the food booths are great, and the vendors are really nice and helpful," he said.

Koichi Hirakawa owns the food stands here in addition to a chain of 30 others on Kyushu Island. His recipes call for substituting honey for sugar in his barbeque sauce or "tare" because he believes sugar is not as good for people as honey.

His menu items consist of beef, pork, free-range chicken, and "tsukune" (meatballs) all skewered on a wooden stick. When he flame broils them over an open grill, soldiers line up to eat them.

"I am impressed by the U.S. soldiers because they wait patiently in line like gentlemen and never complain about waiting. Fried chicken skewers are the most popular with the soldiers," he said.

The unique meals of spiced and skewered chicken, pork and beef available to soldiers could not be possible without prior coordination to emplace the Japanese food vendors.

Capt. Mark Young, site support commander, 35th Supply and Service Battalion, Sagami Depot, Japan, was at the final planning conference and coordinated with the Japanese Ground Self Defense Force to have local food vendors.

"It was a good opportunity to increase bilateral relations and give the infantry soldiers a taste of Japan," he said. ❖

Oversized Sand Table Brings Map to Life

by Dave Jennings

OYANOHARA, Japan—What's 36 feet by 24 feet, and divided into 24 squares? It's the training model at the bottom of the hill by the bilateral command cell, tent city. It's sectioned off with string and represents the Oyanohara training area. This model, sometimes called a 'sand table,' is used for rehearsals or 'rock drills'. They are for use by commanders to visualize the progression of an exercise. These models are also used for combat service and support rehearsals.

Presently, the model is set up to represent 2nd Battalion, 27th Regiment, 25th Infantry Division, and the 43rd Regiment, Japanese Ground Self Defense Force company styx.

The objectives are named and represented on the training model with small signs. Rally points and other locations, such as buildings, are also identified in order to map out just where the movement of troops and equipment is or should be. In this way, different strategies can be plotted, tried, revamped and improved.

The inclusion of pieces such as small model tanks and soldiers lend the feel of a giant chess game being played out; first on the training model, then in reality. ❖



by Dennis Lopic

Soldiers from 2-27th Infantry and 43rd Regiment, JGSDF, rehearse the troop movements in the square training model. The model represents Oyanohara training area.

