

BlueDevil II

88th Regional Readiness Command Spring/Summer 2003 Vol. VIII, No. 1



CG's Corner

Brig. Gen. Michael W. Beasley



I had intended to focus this column on our welcome home ceremonies for our overseas troops, and the efforts we need to address in the reconstitution of our military force. Unfortunately, we are getting daily reminders that the war in Iraq, and its sometimes sad results, continues.

As I now write these words, I am reviewing the circumstances of our first combat death from hostile fire in Iraq. Sgt. 1st Class Dan Gabrielson, 652nd Engineer Company, Ellsworth, Wis., gave the ultimate sacrifice of his life while serving in a vehicle convoy in Tikrit, Iraq, on July 9, 2003. The convoy, operating in support of the 4th Infantry Division, was attacked by a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) round during routine operations.

First and foremost, our thoughts and prayers go out to the family of SFC Gabrielson, including his wife, three children, parents and sister.

Also injured in the attack were Staff Sgt. Mark Chilson of the 652nd, and Capt. Kenneth Jacobs of the 863rd Eng. Co., other Blue Devils serving their country proudly.

Any time a soldier is killed in combat, senior leaders face the inevitable reflections of the awesome responsibilities of leadership and command. Was the soldier well trained, and equipped for combat? Was the preparation for the mission adequate? Was the unit, and was the soldier, ready for defending against and defeating the enemy?

We truly have the most powerful, technologically proficient, well-trained and equipped, and best led military fighting force in history. Nonetheless, so much comes down to the single soldier, the single mission, and the single incident... and no two circumstances are identical. We learn anew from each and every war, and each and every such tragic event in the course of the war.

Thus, the next time that you and your unit are performing "routine" (some say "boring") tactical training on vehicle convoy operations, remember SFC Gabrielson

— and the vital importance of your combat training. What you learn today, quite simply and demonstrably, may indeed save your life, and that of your fellow soldiers, tomorrow.

We remain in the busiest of military environments. We continue to closely monitor and support our 5,000 soldiers deployed overseas in locations as diverse as Afghanistan, Korea, Qatar, Guantanamo, Bosnia, Germany, Kosovo and, yes, Iraq. At the same time, we have units awaiting deployment in mobilization stations around the United States, and still more units at home station preparing for additional and future missions.

But that's not the end of the story. Annual training, exercises and monthly IDT continue unabated, and with even more focus and urgency; while leadership and duty MOS qualification schools continue in an unending effort to prepare and improve the continuing military readiness of our command.

We also are in the midst of welcome home ceremonies, as hundreds of soldiers who have served in the active component with pride, dedication and utmost professionalism come home to their families and begin a period of adjustment to Reserve and civilian life. It is crucial that we continue to honor and celebrate their superb service.

This past May, in our 88th RSC Commanders' Conference, we celebrated and honored the proud tradition of the Blue Devils soldiers of World Wars I and II. Sixteen of those soldiers from World War II and the post-war reconstruction period in Italy joined us, and were delighted in the recognition and remembrances that they were given.

I can assure you that they were even prouder, and enormously grateful, that today's Blue Devils soldiers have added to the illustrious heritage and accomplishments of their own military wartime service.

- *Go Blue Devils!*

BlueDevil II

Vol. VIII, No. 1 Spring/Summer 2003

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Command Sgt. Maj. John Werner

From the Top

The war is over. Now what? I suspect every Reservist and family member is asking that question.

Unfortunately, it's not easily answered. While the fighting may have stopped there is still a long way to go before we get back to our "other" lives.

Some deployed soldiers will be coming home sooner than others. Some units will remain under strength as they wait for their members to return. Soldiers who are coming home and the family members who greet them face a period of adjustment. Some soldiers will immediately make decisions about their military careers. In all these cases patience and flexibility is needed.

No doubt, people will view the demobilization process as painfully slower than mobilization. While we

want our soldiers to return home as soon as possible, the pre-war urgency is obviously gone. Delays happen. For soldiers this can bring on frustration, impatience and complacency. NCO's need to keep their soldiers focused on the work that still needs to be done and prevent unsafe acts.

Family support groups will continue to be vitally important. It's imperative to keep the communication channels open, even after soldiers have come home. Talking to other spouses who have experienced homecomings from long deployments or to chaplains can be helpful. Addressing expectations and fears beforehand can go a long way to softening what ironically can be a stressful period.

Once home, some soldiers jump to decisions that affect their military careers. I've seen some soldiers elect

to transfer to active duty because of a positive deployment experience, while others decide to end their career as soon as possible. In either case, I urge soldiers to stop and think about their future. Talk to your commander, first sergeant, retention NCO, and, most importantly, your family before making a snap decision that may be regretted later on.

Many of us have made sacrifices over these past few months of conflict and tension and some will continue to do so. It hasn't been easy, but all of us volunteered knowing our country would someday ask us to do our duty. To all of you I offer my thanks for doing a great job and making your friends, family, leaders and all of America proud.

-Take the point!

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On the cover

Soldiers from the 909th Forward Surgical Team treat a patient while deployed in Afghanistan.

U.S. Army photo

On the back

A burning tank on the side of the road is just one of the sights many 88th RRC soldiers deployed to Iraq encounter.

U.S. Army photo

From the editor

The *Blue Devil II* is for soldiers, DA civilians and family members. We invite readers' views.

Please stay fewer than 150 words and include your name, rank and address. Anonymous letters will generally not be used. We may condense your views because of space. We can't publish or answer every one, but we'll use representative views. Write to: Letters, *Blue Devil II*, 506 Roeder Circle, Fort Snelling, MN 55111-4009, or email: 88PAO@usarc-emh2.army.mil

News from Afghanistan

People are asking, "Why do we still have troops in Afghanistan? Aren't we done fighting?"

I spent six days in Afghanistan during May visiting troops who do not see chaplains on a regular basis. I can't give you details or precise locations, but let me tell you about what I saw.

I visited a hospital on the order of the old M.A.S.H. TV show. It sits in the middle of the desert against the background of huge, rugged, beautiful mountains. It is staffed by the Jordanian army but supported and supplied by the U.S. military. Each day, hundreds of Afghans get to that hospital any way they can: on foot, by donkey or horse, or in a taxi. Some need a few stitches or a prescription. Others have deformities and life-threatening diseases. Hundreds come each day... thousands each week... hundreds of thousands have been helped.

I visited with a soldiers who spent thirty days living on a hillside. They spent each day setting off explosives that were found stashed in mountain caves. After thirty days, they still had a lot of ammunition to bring back with them. This is presumably ammunition that was in the control of terrorists. The

world is safer because of their work.

In six days, I saw only a few of the challenges Afghanistan has to overcome. I saw only a little of what the Americans are doing to help them. But I say, "God bless all the individuals who are making these sacrifices! God bless

the military and government officials who decided to help! God bless the taxpayers who are footing the bills! And ... God bless America!"!

Chaplain (Major) Kaibel is the 645th ASG Chaplain currently on active duty in Uzbekistan

COMMENTARY: A civilian remembers the fallen

WASHINGTON (Special to Army News Service, May 20, 2003) — For some, this Memorial Day weekend will mean watching parades or gathering for the season's first family picnics. Some will go to parks, while others will go to the beach. A lot of us will be having fun and eating our fill.

And some will even remember what this weekend is really about.

This Memorial Day, a lot of families across this nation will be remembering their loved ones who went off to war and died in some distant land. They will be visiting national cemeteries to place a flag upon the grave, next to a weathered headstone. But...

Some of them won't be able to, for the graves are too new. Instead, they will see their loved ones' graves marked only with a small stake and a piece of paper that is hard to read through tear-filled eyes. This is because their loved ones served in "Operation Iraqi Freedom" and the names of the fallen have not yet been engraved upon a white stone.

These fallen ones died for my freedom.

Theirs is a gift that is hard for me to return. After all, I did not have to put my life and everything I hold dear on the line. I did not have to make the supreme sacrifice. As a young man, I registered for the draft, but my cerebral palsy prevented me from being called to serve. Today, I'm too old to serve in uniform anyway. And so, I do what I can do: I support our troops.

For those who care, this is truly easier said than done. When I had heard of our first casualty, I felt as if

some one from some place just hit me square in the head. I did not know whether to cry or deny a military action I fully supported. I knew I had to do something for these men and women who marched to battle with my support and encouragement.

You may ask, why? No one in the military has ever heard of me, but that is not the point. Whether you are a private citizen or a public official, whatever you say and do has an impact. I had to do something to bring about recognition to all those military people who lost their lives protecting my freedom.

I found that the best way I could honor our troops and give them the recognition they deserve was by posting the names of the fallen in the Iraqi campaign in a lobby display at my New York City building. It is my small way of letting them know I appreciate their sacrifices on my behalf.

When Memorial Day comes this year, I will spend some time thinking of the families left behind. I will pray in my own way that all will be comforted. That their grief may be short lived. And their memories will be many and live forever.

And, when a slight breeze passes me by, I will think of it as one of the fallen ones just passing through on his or her way home.

(Editor's note: Thomas William O'Connell Jr., an employee of Empire City Subway Company, Ltd., evacuated from his workplace near the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, 2001 and witnessed the collapse of the Twin Towers.)

by Thomas William O'Connell Jr.

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM

Rock drills prepare soldiers

The 419th Transportation Battalion isn't letting any delays in travel overseas interfere with their plans to become fully battle-ready. When the unit's originally scheduled departure date of Feb 3, from Ft. McCoy, Wis., to Central Command (CENTCOM) theater was changed, they came together and created a plan to refine and hone their staff planning, coordination and supervision skills.

Lt. Col. Todd Burch, Commander, 419th Transportation Battalion, directed the staff to come up with a training plan to make use of their unexpected extra time to create a more skilled, cohesive team. A scenario was developed, and they used a crawl, walk, run method of complicating the conditions under which the training took place. The crawl, walk, run method is a tool used to teach new skills to soldiers by first introducing them to it and letting them learn about it, then walking them through it, and when they are practiced enough, to actually do it and let it become second nature to them.

The training was designed to benefit all members of the unit. Every member of the unit had a role to play. The non-commissioned officer in charge (NCOIC) of nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) training integrated chemical alarm drills, NBC reporting and unmasking procedures into the staff exercise. A significant portion of the train-

ing was conducted in protective mask posture.

Master Sgt. Dennis Jones, 419th operations sergeant, emphasized individual skills of the soldiers in the Tactical Operations Center (TOC). The specialists in the S-3 (battalion-level operations) contributed to the staff planning and trained on the basic tasks that keep a TOC going.

"The commander needs to know what is going on," said Jones. "He needs to be able to come into the TOC and know how to tell the status of the truck companies, where the journal and incoming messages are, and know the situation map is correct. It's my job to supervise the soldiers so that the commander and S-3 can do their part."

All soldiers were also invited to help with a rock drill. First Lt. Paul Fryrear, the Headquarters Detachment Commander, played one of the truck company commanders. Spc. Jon Oberg, a driver for the S-4 (battalion-level logistics) section, played several roles, including company commander, and operator of the port.

"It was confusing just to read the op-order," said Oberg, "but when I saw how everything moved, it made it all much clearer."

The 419th also used the rock drill to create a plan for four truck companies to move cargo around a battlefield. Using blocks, crayons, masking tape and paper, they rehearsed a plan to accomplish the movement. With every-

one involved, and plenty of practice, the plan was firmly established. The entire staff now sees the value of using a rock drill as a tool to assist in the military decision making process.

"While we didn't plan on being here this long, this training has been great," said 419th Executive Officer, Maj. Ken Morey. "We're fully ready to go OCONUS and handle any truck mission that could come our way." ♣

**By Maj. John Swanke,
419th Transportation
Battalion, Bartonville, Ill.**



The 419th Transportation Company uses rock drills to keep sharp while waiting to deploy overseas.



OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

Iraqis thirst for more than water

MPs aid Iraqi civilians and POWs

SAFAT, KUWAIT — “This is O-P one — does anyone have comms back to the command?” Sgt. John-Paul Kilanski asks the mouthpiece of his radio. “I’ve got a nightmare out here.”

Kilanski, an Army Reservist with the 822nd Military Police Company from Arlington Heights, Ill., is kidding about the nightmare — sort of. As the sergeant in charge of security today at the front gate of Camp Bucca, the coalition’s new internment facility for all Enemy Prisoners of War captured in Operation Iraqi Freedom, his job is supposed to be pretty simple: guard the gate. Protect the EPWs — and the U.S. Army Reservists charged with

their care — from the forces of Saddam Hussein outside.

But the war is almost over and in the nearby Iraqi port of Umm Qasar, locals have defaced portraits of Hussein with red spray paint. The enemy doesn’t come around much anymore.

What Kilanski is dealing with right now is more of an occupational hazard: a crowd of several dozen Iraqi men, women and children, peaceful but insistent, who have come to the gate of Camp Bucca for information about family and loved ones inside. And the tall, slightly gangly firefighter-turned-soldier from Algonquin Lake is the only face they have for the mysterious U.S. Army inside.

“One of them says he has a letter from a colonel promising them information about who they’re looking for,” Kilanski says. “I’m trying to get somebody to come out. But they’ve got to stay away from the gate. I don’t want a vehicle driving out and running one of them over.” He squints out, and shakes his head.

“This is where I do the ugly part of the job... Back up! Please! Back up!” Kilanski said, as he heads out to meet his petitioners, and is quickly should-

An Iraqi boy drinks from a bottle of water given to him by Sgt. John-Paul Kilanski of the Arlington Heights, Ill.-based 822nd MP Co. The 822nd is providing perimeter security for the U.S. Army Reserve-run Enemy Prisoner of War internment facility near Umm Qasar, Iraq.

der-deep in headdresses, dish-dashas and dress shirts, his hands waving above the throng.

“He loves this stuff,” Pfc. Preston Tolliver says, chuckling from behind the sandbag wall and Squad Assault Weapon he mans in case Saddam Hussein’s men — or anyone else looking to staunch the flow of regime intelligence into U.S. hands — do come calling. “He’s trying to act tough, but watch — he’s a soft touch in the end.”

There has been some response from inside the camp — a translator with the Free Iraqi Forces has emerged with language skills and three bottles of water. But for this group, in this sun, three bottles is merely a lesson in scarcity. Tolliver gazes out from his post and clucks his tongue. “All those men took that water, and that little boy didn’t get any of it.” Then he wipes his brow. “Hundred and five in the shade. Sure would be a nice day for a barbecue.”

Out on the community-relations front lines, the translator has gone back into the camp, and Kilanski, talking with an English-speaking Iraqi who has emerged as a spokesman for the group, is still trying to lay down some ground rules.

“I’m trying to get in touch with someone who can help you, but this is my section of the post. And if Saddam is stupid enough to try something here” — the name, and Kilanski’s comic expression, draws a ripple of laughter from the crowd — “I’m here





Sgt. John-Paul Kilanski of the Arlington Heights, Ill.-based 822nd MP Co. does his best to deal with a crowd of Iraqi civilians outside the U.S. Army Reserve-run Enemy Prisoner of War internment facility near Umm Qasar, Iraq. The 822nd is providing perimeter security for the facility, and the crowd of Iraqis is seeking information about family members who may be inside.

to protect your loved ones inside. And I'm here to protect you too. You've just got to stay back behind this sign. We have a lot of traffic here, and I don't want anyone getting hurt. OK?"

Tolliver was right about his sergeant. Kilanski has been able to convince his immediate superior, Staff

Sgt. Daina Carauskas, to join him at the gate – and bring a few more bottles of the unit's own limited supply of water with her. Soon the little boy is guzzling happily, and Kilanski, Carauskas, and the spokesman are in deep conversation, two Chicago accents and one in Arabic-tinted English tango in the day's oven-door breeze. Kilanski has decided the best he can do is explain to these civilians a little of what is going on inside the gate.

Six thousand prisoners – at last count, in a camp still being changed over from British to American control — means six thousand faces to photograph, six thousand identification tags to make. The 6,000 International Red Cross family notification cards that will, eventually, be mailed out will

Staff Sgt. Daina Carauskas of the Arlington Heights, Ill.-based 822nd Military Police Company daubs at the chin of an Iraqi girl suffering from dehydration outside the gates of the U.S. Army Reserve-run Enemy Prisoner of War internment facility near Umm Qasar, Iraq, where the 822nd is providing perimeter security.

let concerned Iraqis like these outside know their loved ones are alive, well and getting the care that the Geneva Convention calls for.

"I can tell you that whoever is inside is being cared for," Carauskas tells the leader. "They're getting food, water, medical care. They're being treated well. But the notification process takes time. We're doing our best." She pauses. "Here – take some paper. Write down the names of the people you want to know about, and I'll make sure it gets inside." He turns and shouts a few words of Arabic, and the throng transforms into an unruly but discernible line. The paper quickly darkens with carefully printed names.

But as the day wears on, the list is not enough. More in the crowd ask for food, and more urgently for water; with war-torn Umm Qasar just beginning to get the supplies it needs, this group has not come prepared for a day of waiting in the relentless mid-day sun. Carauskas is torn.

Iraqis thirst
continued page 8



Iraqis thirst continued from page 7

“I understand these people’s plight,” says the Naperville, Ill. native. “They’re hungry, they’re thirsty. They want to know if their missing family members are in here or not, whether they’re alive or dead. And promises aren’t going to help.”

“But we’re all out in the middle of the desert too. I have only the water they give me for my soldiers. We don’t have enough for everybody. It’s just a shame,” she notes.

Suddenly, there is shouting from the back; the crowd melts away to reveal a man sitting on the ground, cradling a small girl’s head in his lap. Carauskas strides up and bends over her. “She’s dehydrated,” she says, and motions to her father. “Come with me.”

This exception to Kilanski’s ground rules, the crowd seems to understand — as Carauskas, Kilanski and the father and daughter hurry to the shade of Tolliver’s wall of sandbags, only the de facto spokesman follows. The father sits his daughter on the ground, and Kilanski ducks into the guard post to dig out a bottle of water from his and Tolliver’s allotment for their 12-hour shift. Carauskas produces a battery-powered fan and turns it on the girl’s face while her father puts the bottle to her tiny lips. The spokesman stands back and watches, turning occasionally to gesture reassurances

“They want to know if their missing family members are in here or not, whether they’re alive or dead. And promises aren’t going to help.”

to the crowd down the road. The girl, apparently, will be fine. Kilanski heads back down the road to deal with the crowd.

An hour later, Kilanski’s “nightmare” is not over. The Iraqis are still thirsty, for water and for information. The sergeant and the private on guard at the gate are still stuck in the middle between a temporarily bottlenecked EPW operation and a civilian population that seems to expect the dominant coalition fighting force to be omnipotent in all other ways as well. “I wish we could do more,” he says. “But there just isn’t enough for everyone inside and all of them out here too,” he says. “At least not yet.” ♦

Story and photos by Sgt. Frank N. Pellegrini, U.S. Army Reserve PAO, Atlanta, Georgia



Desert DJ

Soldier helps prisoners deal with captivity

UMM QASR, Iraq — Ben Watkins was a disc jockey mixing music tracks for his local state college’s radio station at this time last year. These days, Watkins is still mixing tracks — but for the Enemy Prisoners of War camp in Iraq instead.

Watkins, an Army Reserve specialist from Mankato, Minn., is part of the 13th Psychological Operations Battalion from Arden Hills, Minn. His primary mission in the EPW camp is to help the prisoners learn and follow the rules of the camp by recording simple instructional messages in their native tongue.

The specialist had already learned a lot about his current job from his civilian job as a DJ, as well as a natural interest in electrical components.

“I was a DJ for weddings, parties, and the college,” Watkins said. “I also did radio advertising. Growing up in the nineties helped too, because you learned half of this stuff just plugging in video game consoles and stereo equipment.”

He records tracks of his own voice in Arabic telling the prisoners what to do, where to go during the day, and the correct actions to take in case of an emergency. He also helps design posters and handbills so the prisoners have a graphic tool to learn from.

The messages have to sound convincing and help calm the prisoners down in their new quarters.

Watkins majored in theater at college, which is another reason he is suited for his current situation. The soldier had first thought about the Army when one of his fellow actor friends said he would be perfect for psychological operations.

His friend was a recruiter for the Army who commented that with Watkins’ talents in audio and theater he could easily fit the bill.

After Watkins graduated from college, he went to basic training and his Advanced Individual Training school the same summer. Two weeks after he returned home, he was deployed to Kuwait to help out in the war effort.

plays for Iraqi POWs

“My civilian training in theater has helped tremendously. You need to understand the audience you’re catering to,” he said.

His unit agrees they have benefited from Watkins’ skills.

“In this type of field, his skills from theater, audio technology, and especially his grasp of audio editing help out the group a lot,” said Staff Sgt. Joe Boz. “Not only that, but he does his job with enthusiasm too, and that’s great.”

The soldier said he is interested in his job because he is helping out the prisoners by taking care of them in his own way. The messages, he says, aren’t about controlling the prisoners, but about relieving the stress and anxiety of finding themselves in an unfamiliar place.

Watkins has had some problems

being in a place he is unaccustomed to as well, but the specialist says he is making do with what he has.

“I’m pretty content with what I’ve been given. I’m grateful. I could have no shower, no three meals a day, and no air conditioning in this small studio,” he said.

He’s also been using his resources to help out the soldiers in his group. Watkins is designing a slide show video on his computer to send back home to the families of his battalion so they can know what it is like in Iraq.

At night, he helps out morale running a makeshift movie theater. Watkins and others have pooled all their movies together, and play them outdoors at night on a projection screen with speakers so the American and British soldiers can relax and

enjoy a show.

The specialist said he’s trying to be optimistic about being in the desert. “I’ve always liked camping. I just try to think about this as an extended camping trip.”

He may be a world away from jockeying music at parties and acting in plays, but Watkins is using knowledge from those same talents to make life easier and more peaceful for the prisoners in Iraq. He said he couldn’t think of anything more rewarding – and of course there’s nothing a born performer likes more than a captive audience. ♣

Story and photo by Spc. Cory Meyman, U.S. Army Reserve PAO, Atlanta, Georgia



Army Reserve Spc. Ben Watkins, from Mankato, Minn., of the 13th Psychological Operations Battalion, dubs a tape the Enemy Prisoner of War camp in Iraq will use to disseminate information to the detainees. His mission is to help the prisoners understand the guidelines and practices of living within the camp.



OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM

Town honors mobilized unit Jackson show of support prompts hugs and tears

JACKSON, Mich. – Flags, candles and signs showing support for the soldiers were all that could be seen in Jackson, Mich., the night of March 22.

Along a three-mile route people stood shoulder to shoulder showing their appreciation as members of the 323rd Military Police (CID) were paraded through town before leaving for their mobilization site.

Martin J. Griffin, mayor of Jackson, said he planned the parade for the soldiers to let them know what kind of town they are from – what kind of town they are fighting for.

The only snag in the plan was the bus scheduled to take the soldiers to the mobilization site would not arrive in time for the parade.

Instead of giving up on the parade, Ted Brezezinski, a member of the Michigan Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, called in a favor.

Three fire engines from the Parma-Sandstone Fire Department quickly arrived to load up the soldiers and

parade them through town, lights blazing. With a full police escort that included officers and cars from state, county and city departments, the show must, and did go on.

When the unit passed the fire station in Jackson, they were honored by a color guard representing every fire station in the county, 16 in all. Fire engines were parked on both sides of the street facing the center with ladders extended over the road. Draped from one of the ladders were the stars and stripes. The biggest American Flag in the county was lit up in light for the soldiers to pass under.

CWO Edward E. Mize, commander of the 323rd, explained that even though Jackson, Mich., is no small town, the parade was as personal as only a small town could be.

The unit left early the next morning for its mobilization site, Fort Campbell, Ky. ♣

Story and photo by Spc. Tony M. Lindback, 88th RRC, Det. 1, PAO, Fort Snelling, Minn.

Firefighters from 16 fire stations took part in a parade honoring soldiers from the 323rd Military Police Detachment mobilizing in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.





Spc. David Johnson holds a two-by-four while Spc. Billy Gibbs saws a piece for a brace in the roof of a Seahut.

Budget battles

Repair and utility section saves task force money

Former British Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill once said, in reference to Royal Air Force pilots who won the Battle of Britain over the vaunted German Luftwaffe, “Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.” On a smaller scale, a similar statement can be made about the Repair and Utility section of the 785th Military Police Battalion at Camp America.

This group of seven soldiers has a mission that keeps them about as busy as a colony of ants. Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Ferdinande, a construction supervisor and noncommissioned officer-in-charge of the R and U section, noted that versatility and a “can do” attitude have combined to keep their services in demand.

“We maintain as high a percentage of operational capacity as possible within Camp America. We perform small building projects, minor construction, repairs on the cell blocks and many other tasks,” he said. “We also coordinate with the contractors to come in and do some of the repairs which we don’t have the resources

to accomplish.

“Every morning we collect our work orders that were submitted from the previous shift, and then we’ll go out that very day and address the issue. If it’s something we can fix on the spot, we’ll go ahead and take care of it that day. If it’s something that requires some parts, we may have to schedule it later in the week.”

Ferdinande has a great deal of confidence in his unit’s overall ability to make short order of most of its tasks. “For the most part, when a work order is submitted, unless it’s for soccer balls, we can get to it that day.”

The R and U section is made up of carpenters, electricians and plumbers whose civilian backgrounds are slightly different than their military occupational specialties. Included in this diverse group are a skilled trade worker, an autoworker, a networking and computer line estimator, a beverage salesman, and a student.

A plumber in the unit transferred from the nuclear, biological and chemical field, which impressed Ferdinande. “He’s working out really well as a plumber,” he said. “We’re really

happy with the type of work he’s doing within the camp.”

Overall, Ferdinande is quite proud of his troops’ commitment to taking care of business in a professional manner. “They’re extremely dedicated to accomplishing the mission,” he said. “They don’t let anything get in the way of getting the job done. We work in rain, crawl in mud and bake in the sun to ensure that the camp, or other areas around the camp, are in the best possible condition.”

Teamwork and cohesiveness are two of the main factors that have contributed to the near-legendary effectiveness that the R and U section has displayed. “We’ve been together for about two years in the same reserve unit,” said Ferdinande. “We’ve taken that opportunity to put everybody together and work as a well-oiled machine. Everybody lives together, they work together, and in their off-duty hours they spend time together as well.”

While the “magnificent seven’s” work record is outstanding, their efforts have added up to a small fortune in savings. Ferdinande maintains that the estimated savings for each individual work order is about \$200 or \$300, which adds up quickly given the section’s workload. “We’re averaging about 400 work orders per month at an estimated savings on work order costs alone of about \$50,000 to \$60,000 per month,” he said. “The larger scale savings is estimated to be about \$400,000 per month.”

Ferdinande stated that the six-figure savings is being put right back into making things better for the soldiers on the ground at Camp America. The R and U section may not be fighting the Battle of Britain, but they are making a major contribution to the Battle of the Budget. ♦

Story and photo by Sgt. Bob Mitchell, JTF GTMO, Camp America, Cuba

When the Firing Stops

Combat stress specialists assist transition to home

(FORT SNELLING, Minn.) – When the last shot is fired and it’s time to go home, soldiers pack up and move out with great haste. For some, the visions of grand homecoming celebrations may float through their minds, others may simply wish to be casting out into their favorite fishing hole looking for the big one. Whatever the dream is for their return, not everyone realizes that life may not be the same as they left it. There may be some very real changes in work, in play and in relationships.

The 88th Regional Readiness Command has recognized that during a deployment life goes on and things change in soldiers’ lives whether they are here to realize those changes or not. It can be very difficult for a soldier to integrate into their own lives and deal with the changes in it when they had no say in the changes that were made. Being the first to offer Combat/Operational Stress Control (COSC) services at the RRC level for support of reserve units, soldiers, and their families, the 88th RRC is showing its care for the soldiers by helping them in their two-part lives – citizens and soldiers.

Some of the key assets of the COSC are soldiers like Lt. Col. Mary W. Erickson, a combat/operational stress control officer with the 88th RRC. Erickson is an occupational therapist in the civilian world. She also has had training in holistic approaches to health and wellness. Erickson believes by providing soldiers and their families with tools to help them balance their physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health they are more likely to develop the resilience to adapt to difficult times.

“Educational, spiritual, and psychological resources help to develop mission-capable soldiers and self-reliant families,” Erickson said. “Family separation during mobilization can be particularly stressful. Soldiers and their families are better prepared to manage this stress when they have an awareness of the common emotional and behavioral responses they may experience throughout the deployment. The homecoming briefing emphasizes the importance of communication and re-negotiation of roles and responsibilities.”

Erickson continued by saying, “Change occurs throughout the mobilization and may be more evident to the returning soldier who was not present to see children’s milestones passed or new skills developed in his family members.

“In WWI, WWII and the Korean Conflict, soldiers returned home on ships which provided a natural separation time between their presence on the battlefield (or training ground) and their return home to decompress and adapt. With the short duration of today’s conflicts and the rapid return home, soldiers, and particularly reservists, do not have the opportunity to fully readjust to being a citizen soldier prior to returning to their loved ones. Therefore, it is essential that both the soldier and their loved ones learn

what to expect and how to manage this adjustment period successfully.”

Erickson finished off by saying, “The Homecoming Briefing is one of the tools the COSC team is providing for soldiers and their families to help them successfully navigate this path



back home.”

The 88th has recognized that the conflict isn’t over when the firing stops. The real ‘Shock and Awe’ could be when the soldier gets home. The COSC consists of combined mental health assets with chaplains, family readiness services and community resources. With the help of the COSC going out to the units as they demobilize, the battle to fit back in should be kept to a minimum.

Any questions or concerns on what the COSC has to offer can be answered by calling the 88th RRC Surgeon’s Office – Combat/Operational Stress Control Team, Lt. Col. Susan S. Whiteaker, a licensed family therapist who is also a combat/operational stress officer, or Lt. Col. Mary W. Erickson at 1-800-THE-ARMY ext. 3254 and 3255 or Surgeon Ops. at ext. 3882. ♦

By Spc. Tony M. Lindback, 88th RRC PAO, Fort Snelling, Minn.

FAMILY READINESS SERVICES

The 88th RSC Family Readiness Program is designed to provide a framework for soldiers' families to work together to achieve the common goal of reducing stressors imposed by military life and becoming more self-sufficient and self-reliant through a dynamic mutual support network.

Family members receive information, moral support, and assistance with problem solving through the following services:

- ❑ **Family Academies** designed to train family members for volunteer leadership positions
- ❑ **Information and Referral**
- ❑ **Social activities** for the unit and its family group to enhance cohesiveness and morale
- ❑ **Pre-deployment Assistance**
 - ❑ Family/unit celebrations and fund-raisers
 - ❑ Chain of concern/telephone tree to answer questions
 - ❑ Assistance obtaining information and resources such as I.D. cards.
 - ❑ Education on the emotional cycle of deployment
- ❑ **Mobilization/Sustainment Assistance**
 - ❑ Organized efforts to support families of deployed/absent soldiers
 - ❑ Supporting coping strategies and maintaining relationships within the family groups
 - ❑ Preparing and supporting families for the unexpected
- ❑ **Post-deployment/Reunification Assistance**
 - ❑ Supporting soldiers and families with reintegration and stabilization

Resources

In case of a life-threatening emergency by an individual such as a suicide threat or attempt contact 911 or your local hospital crisis unit.

❖ **OPERATIONAL STRESS CONTROL**

Assistance to Commanders and to unit Family Support Groups or their members can be requested by coordinating with the 88th RSC Surgeon Stress Control Team. They can arrange contact with the Combat Stress Control Company or Detachment near you.

- ❑ **Stress Control Unit** at the 88th RSC Surgeon's office, Ft Snelling, MN at **1-800-THE ARMYx3882**
- ❑ **330th Medical Brigade** at Ft Sheridan, IL
- ❑ **785th Medical Company (COSC)** Fort Snelling, MN
- ❑ **55th Medical Company (COSC)** Indianapolis, IN
- ❑ **467th Medical Detachment (COSC)** Madison, WI

❖ **FAMILY READINESS PROGRAMS**

Contact your Family Readiness Program at your unit or call the 88th RSC at **1-800-THE ARMYx3955/3521**. Or locate us at www.usarc.army.mil/88thrc

❖ **CHAPLAIN SERVICES**

If your unit chaplain is unavailable, contact the 88th RSC Chaplain's office. They will put you in touch with a chaplain who is assigned in your area: **1-800-THE ARMYx3021/3938**

88th Regional Support Command ,Surgeon
Combat Operational Stress Control
506 Roeder Circle
Ft Snelling, MN 55111-4009

OPERATIONAL STRESS CONTROL PROGRAMS IN THE 88TH REGIONAL SUPPORT COMMAND



*Our Mission is to provide
an integrated program
of spiritual, psychological and
educational assistance designed
to promote resiliency in soldiers
and their families.*

PLAN OF OPERATION

THE INTENT OF THIS PAMPHLET IS TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON THE MANY SERVICES AVAILABLE TO UNIT COMMANDERS, SOLDIERS AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS IN SUPPORT OF SOLDIER AND FAMILY READINESS.

The implementation of an integrated operational stress management program is an essential element in producing secure and resilient soldiers and their families prepared to withstand the rigors of military separations and combat operations as well as the more routine stressors common to the military lifestyle.

A team of dedicated professionals consisting of representatives from the Chaplaincy, the Stress Control units, the Family Readiness Support Groups and when possible assets from community resources, works together to provide support for soldiers and their families.



THE GOAL: RAPID RESPONSE

The goal is to provide soldiers and their families with educational, spiritual and psychological resources which strengthen the basic bond essential to high morale and good order.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Soldiers who can depart for training or long term missions confident that their families are prepared and supported are more likely to resist the debilitating effects of long-term operational stress.

Families that know that their soldiers have a solid Base of preparation and training feel more secure sending their soldiers out to serve and are more likely to support the soldier's decision to make the Army a career.

MISSION CAPABLE SOLDIERS **SELF-RELIANT FAMILIES**



STRESS RESILIENT

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CONFIDENT

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SECURE

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SUPPORTED

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HEALTHY

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Spiritually Emotionally

Physically Psychologically

THE FOLLOWING SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE TO ALL RSC UNIT MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES REGARDLESS OF DEPLOYMENT STATUS

CHAPLAIN SERVICES

- ✘ Specialized **Guidance** on individual religious issues
- ✘ Information on **Suicide Prevention** and counseling soldiers who are contemplating suicide
- ✘ Provide **Pastoral Care** through counseling
- ✘ Offering **Religious Sacraments** and conducting worship services
- ✘ **Acting as Church/Community/Family Liaison**

OPERATIONAL STRESS SERVICES

✘ **COMBAT STRESS AND BATTLE FATIGUE PREVENTION**

Training for leaders and units on Prevention, Identification and Management of combat and high-intensity training stress and battle fatigue: leader actions, buddy-aid and self-care techniques

- ✘ **Command Consultation Support** assistance in identifying unit issues related to communication and morale
- ✘ **Crisis Intervention**
- ✘ **CISD** - critical incident stress debriefing: professionally guided reconstruction of traumatic events to provide all individuals with a mechanism for safely evaluating a traumatic event to reduce PTSD
- ✘ **Psychiatric Clearances and Evaluations** to determine Fitness for Duty
 - ✘ **Chemical Dependency Evaluations, Brief Interventions and Referral**
 - ✘ **Mental Health Consultation** including treatment, referral, information and recommendations for additional services
- ✘ **FAMILY STRESS SUPPORT SERVICES**
 - ✘ Pre-and post-deployment briefings on the emotional effects of deployment on soldiers and families
 - ✘ Linking CSC assets with Family Readiness Groups when possible to assist with stress Management, couple dynamics, children's issues and preparation for reunification

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

BUCKEYES in the Desert

CAMP ANNACONDA, BALAD, Iraq – Sun Devil stadium was filled with Ohio State Buckeye fans who made the trek to watch the team win the Fiesta Bowl and the national championship of college football in January. Taverns, pubs, and sports lounges throughout Ohio and the Midwest were filled to the brim with scarlet-and-gray-clad revelers.

At Army mobilization stations, however, many Buckeye fans were not eating tasty food or able to enjoy the game.

They were preparing for war.

Proceed seven months into the infernal heat of summer in the Iraqi desert. Recollections remain from that winter night. Ohio nights: cold, snowy, cloudy.

In Iraq, winter is not over – it never occurs. The sun mercilessly bludgeons soldiers into the sand.

Ohio citizen soldiers still serve in Iraq and Kuwait, and many hold on to fond, national championship memories of that winter night and their beloved Ohio State Buckeyes.

“I’m just glad I did not get sent over until the game was over,” said Master Sgt. Alan J. Kaufman. Kaufman is a chemical non-commissioned officer with the 21st Theater Support Command out of Indianapolis, but a resident of Westerville, Ohio. Kaufman watched the game from Fort Knox, Ky., while preparing to deploy.

“I was in a room full of Miami fans, too,” added Kaufman. “They were crying at the end of the game.”

More Ohio units, like the 705th Transportation Company from Dayton, and the 1001st Quartermaster Company from Columbus and Chillicothe are located in Balad, Iraq. The 656th and 705th perform bulk fuel hauling missions. The 1001st performs uniform

repairs, laundry services and operates showers for soldiers.

Ohio State flags hang in their tents and banners decorate cots in sleeping areas where Ohio’s soldiers rest between guard duty shifts and running their missions that support Operation Iraqi Freedom. Occasionally, the soldiers, surrounded by Buckeye memorabilia, even catch some much-needed sleep in their cramped living space.

“I want to see the Bucks repeat,” said Spc. Terry Pickens, a laundry and bath specialist from the 1001st and a resident of Columbus, Ohio.

The Ohio soldiers have performed their missions admirably, and are prepared to stay as long as needed.

However, all the soldiers in unison expressed their hopes of being home in time for the football season. ♦

Story and photo by Master Sgt. Dave Johnson, 367th MPAD, Columbus, Ohio



Soldiers from the 1001st Quartermaster Company from Columbus and Chillicothe, Ohio, pose with their Ohio State Buckeyes flag in the Iraqi desert.



OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM

From Bagram to Forward Operating Base Salerno, the 909th FST has lived their motto of...

Semper Gumbby

FORT SNELLING, Minn. – The characters on the long-running television show M*A*S*H brought humor and a little understanding of Army surgical hospitals into homes across America. In reality, the outstanding work of authentic M*A*S*H units was no laughing matter. The medical professionals that worked in those units took their work very seriously.

After the Korean and Vietnam conflicts, the Army Medical Department and Army leadership changed the organizational structure of the medical units from large

medical facilities like a Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (MASH) to more mobile, smaller medical units.

The MASH evolved into the MUST and evacuation hospitals, which were the workhorses of field hospitals during the '60s and 70's. The next generation of soldiers during the '80s and 90's saw the introduction of the Deployable Medical Systems (DEPMEDS)-type of hospital.

The DEPMEDS were a major change from the smaller and more mobile field hospitals it replaced. Taking up over 25 acres of land and requiring tremendous lift as-

Col. John D. Wassner, commander of the 909th Forward Surgical Team, treats an Afghani man's injuries.

U.S. Army photo



sets, the Army Medical Department soon realized the need for a smaller, more mobile and agile medical unit which would be located far forward in the combat zone – closer to the fight – still existed. The Forward Surgical Team (FST) was born to provide more rapid and immediate medical care within the “Golden Hour” the hour after an injury occurs where immediate treatment greatly increases the chance for survival.

The 909th FST is one of today’s medical teams that is lighter, faster and more mobile. The 909th FST mobilized in mid October to Bagram, Afghanistan, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, then later moved to the Forward Operating Base Salerno, near the city of Khost.

They have treated several casualties since arriving in Salerno. Most of the casualties have been Afghans, but some were U.S. soldiers. The 909th has a mission to resuscitate and stabilize casualties, then evacuate them to Bagram.

“We’ve had some remarkable successes,” said the 909th’s commander, Col. John D. Wassner. “Some of the most devastating injuries are from the numerous land mines in this country. In addition to civilians and soldiers stepping on the mines, the antitank mines destroy vehicles, badly injuring the occupants, and in many cases, the mines are found and brought to a home, where they explode, injuring whole families.”

“In addition to civilians and soldiers stepping on the mines the antitank mines destroy vehicles, badly injuring the occupants, and in many cases the mines are found and brought to a home where they explode, injuring whole families.”

The care for the Afghans doesn’t stop after operating. The 909th is also involved with the health care in the city of Khost. Wassner along with other members of the unit have visited the local civilian hospital, as well as the military hospital, trying to do their part to help.

“Conditions at the hospitals were austere, and the doctors and nurses were making do with very little,” said Wassner. “The 909th FST was able to give the hospital director numerous boxes of children’s clothes and shoes, generously donated by the team’s families and friends.”

The soldiers have found time to continue training amidst all the other activities they’ve been involved with. With classes offered on a nearly daily basis, the 909th has concluded Basic Trauma Life Support certification, and has undertaken the 91W bridge course, which will lead to EMT-B certification.

“We remain flexible,” said Wassner. “Our motto has always been, ‘SEMPER GUMBY!’ I’ve tried to instill in my team the spirit of the Boy Scout Motto, ‘Be Prepared!’ When people asked Lord Baden-Powell, the founder of the Boy Scouts, what he meant his Scouts to be prepared for, he replied, ‘...for anything!’ I like to think that the 909th Forward Surgical Team is prepared for anything.” ♣

By Spc. Tony M. Lindback, 88th RRC PAO, Fort Snelling, Minn.



Sgt. Shaun Penn, NCOIC of the 909th FST operating room, evaluates an Afghani man wounded in the face by enemy gunfire.

U.S. Army photo



OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM

Soldiers returning from Afghanistan succumb to the...

Soldiers from the 329th Adjutant General Company announce "Let's play hockey" to start the March 23 Minnesota Wild game.



Story and photo by Spc. Tony M. Lindback, 88th RRC PAO, Fort Snelling, Minn.

call of the Wild

FORT SNELLING, Minn. – Soldiers from the 329th Adjutant General Company, Fort Snelling, Minn., were invited by the Minnesota Wild to announce “Let’s play hockey” to start the game against the Detroit Red Wings on March 23. Sgt. Charles N. Kriss, Spc. Samuel F. Nixa, Spc. Graham Byrdzyiak and Spc. Neil Hario answered the call of the Wild.

After stepping out of their cars at the Excel Energy Center, the soldiers immediately started attracting attention from the public. The soldiers were accompanied by the unit’s commander Capt. David M. Wilson, 88th

RRC Command Sgt. Maj. John S. Werner, and 847th Personnel Services Battalion Command Sgt. Maj. Richard H. Hillard.

Dressed in desert battle dress uniforms, the soldiers caught the eyes of nearly everyone they encountered. A few cheers and words of support were shouted toward the soldiers as the group made its way into the arena.

After meeting with Bill Freeman, a special events coordinator with the Wild, the group was lead to the press box and given a quick briefing on what was coming up and what their role was.

The four soldiers were escorted to a platform overlooking the arena just

before the national anthem was played. After the anthem, and after dropping their salutes to the flag, the soldiers were introduced as having just come back from Bagram, Afghanistan, where they served in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The crowd of 18,568 people roared their approval and sent the noise level through the roof.

“It was crazy!,” Kriss said. “All you could hear was the crowd. That’s what you want to see now days. Forget protestors, forget pro-war – Pro-soldiers! That’s what we need right now. That’s what we’ve got.”

Feeling the event was a huge suc-

cess, Werner expressed his pride of being a soldier in today's Army.

"It was really beautiful," said Werner. "I got spit on for my last war. So, it's nice to be cheered. I've never been ashamed of being a soldier, or doing my duty, but stuff like this makes me especially proud."

After the soldiers said, "Let's play hockey," the puck was dropped to start the game. Only 21 seconds into the game Matt Johnson of the Minnesota Wild put one in the back of the net, setting a franchise record for the quickest goal in a Wild game.

Holding the shutout, the Wild defeated the Red Wings 4-0, clinching their admission into the playoffs.

When asked about his quick goal Johnson said the Wild used the Army's approach, namely making a quick strike, catching the other team off guard, and setting them back on their heels.

The team feeds off the energy of the crowd, Johnson said. With all the energy in the air during and right after the announcement by the soldiers, there was enough to feed a record-setting goal that put the Wild on its way to victory.

Being a Wild fan and having been to several of the games in the past, Wilson came up with the idea for the event while sitting at home watching the Wild. He contacted Mr. Freeman and coordinated the very public welcome home.

"I used to work in the night club scene about 10 years ago," Wilson said. "So I always think about promoting. I thought, why should the Army be any different? We should promote our soldiers.

"I felt great when I saw the enormous reaction from the crowd. It was the 'Shock and Awe' welcome home soldiers dream about. It was great that they could get recognition for their hard work. It's well deserved." ♦

Story and photo by Spc. Tony M. Lindback, 88th RRC PAO, Fort Snelling, Minn.

Spring/Summer 2003

The pitch heard round the world

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. – The traditional ceremonial first pitch was anything but traditional this year. The typical 90-foot lob from the pitcher's mound to home plate was not to be what brought the Twin's home game season into action this year. Instead, the toss was coming from the arm of a soldier in Kuwait.

The sold out crowd at the Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome, in Minneapolis, looked to the giant screen of the Jumbo-tron to see Spc. Josh Tverberg, a public affairs broadcast journalist assigned to the 318th Public Affairs Detachment, toss out the season opener's first pitch. Catching the opening pitch for Tverberg was Spc. Greta Lind, also a public affairs broadcast journalist assigned to the 318th, while Col. Guy Shields, Lt. Col. Mike Walton, Master Sgt. Betsey Depoint, Spc. Kirby Oaks, and Spc. Jim Oleen, other soldiers from Minnesota serving in the area, looked on.

More than 48,000 fans were on their feet cheering as the pitch was thrown, the first ever to be brought to the Metrodome via satellite. The pitch had been referred to as "The pitch heard around the world," by Mark Rosen, a sports reporter with the Twin Cities WCCO channel four news.

With the soldier's families standing just in front of the pitcher's mound, the soldiers addressed them with heartfelt messages live from Kuwait City, Kuwait.

According to the Minnesota Twins, this was the first time that the home season opener was ever started with a pitch that had to be fed via satellite. This season's opener emphasized the appreciation that the Minnesota Twins organization felt toward the men and women of the United States armed forces. While the pitch that Tverberg started the season with wouldn't sting the most gentle of hands, it was strong enough to be felt from 6,270 miles away. ♦

By Spc. Tony M. Lindback, 88th RRC PAO, Fort Snelling, Minn.

Video of Spc. Josh Tverberg throwing the opening pitch of the Minnesota Twins baseball season to Spc. Greta Lind live via satellite from Kuwait City, Kuwait, fills the Jumbotron at the HHH Metrodome in Minneapolis.

U.S. Army photo





OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM

Army found training opportunities at School of... Hard Knocks

FORT RILEY, Kan. – Despite a proven system for training its soldiers, even the Army has learned from the School of Hard Knocks. While still nursing the wounds, literally, from the ambushed convoy of the 507th Ordnance Maintenance Company from Fort Bliss, Texas, the Army drew up new training doctrines, changed standard operating procedures, and started training soldiers on how to better react to the tactics that the enemy is using today.

On March 23 a convoy of the 507th was ambushed near Nasiriyah, Iraq. On April 1 Pfc. Jessica Lynch, a supply clerk in the 507th who was captured in the ambush, was rescued. By the morning of April 7, the Army was already starting a test run of new training at Fort Riley, Kan., to help deploying units avoid the fate suffered by the 507th.

With the dry run of training done the week before, the instructors from the 2nd of the 383rd Training Battalion, 75th Division were ready to lead the soldiers of the 1008th Quartermaster Company, from Wood River, Ill., through the next week of training.

Following the Army’s traditional “crawl-walk-run” concept, the members of the 1008th participated in classroom instruction the first day. On day two and three, the soldiers got down and dirty with the first hands-on experience of the week. Doing enemy prisoner of war searches, reacting to civilians on the battlefield, conducting a convoy, firing blanks, reacting to fire and getting a basic familiarization of what the modern battlefield is like kept the soldiers constantly busy.

The fourth day of training split the unit into two groups. The mission for one group was, while armed with M-16s and wearing multiple integrated engagement system (MILES) gear, to conduct a convoy. The convoy faced many challenges such as roadblocks, ambushes and sniper fire.

Meanwhile, the other group was learning how to provide security and engage targets while bouncing along in the back of a vehicle. Only firing blanks on day four, the soldiers gained a better understanding that the purpose of firing from a moving vehicle isn’t to necessarily kill, but to suppress enemy targets.



From right to left, Spc. Daniel Hilty and Spc. Brandon Ryznar exit their vehicle after it came under attack during an ambush while on a convoy exercise.



Spc. Lamar McKinney drags Spc. Franklin Lee to an aid station. Lee was playing an enemy casualty during an enemy prisoner of war exercise.

Training wrapped up on day five with the soldiers doing some training on the single channel ground and airborne radio system (SINCGARS) and running through a live-fire version of what they saw on day four. With the sound of a .50 caliber simulator thumping away, the soldiers locked and loaded 5.56 mm live rounds into the chambers of their M-16s and tried to engage pop-up targets while riding at only five to ten miles per hour.

Spc. Shannon Bibbee, a laundry shower and renovation specialist with the 1008th said, “It’s hard to hit a stationary target when you’re riding in the back of a deuce and a half. We were only doing about five miles per hour. I can’t imagine trying to hit something while going 40 or 45, when you’re really trying to get the heck out of Dodge.”

“This is the best training I’ve

received since basic,” said Bibbee. “We’re not infantry, we understand that. Our goal is to suppress the enemy.”

While she didn’t think shooting out the side of a truck while sitting cross legged and moving only five miles per hour was very realistic, Spc. Amber L. Perkins, also a laundry shower and renovation specialist with the 1008th said, “Overall I think the training was good. It would help if we were ever in that situation (referring to the situation the 507th found itself in).”

“It was neat for me to see the soldiers E-4 and below integrate their training in a combat environment,” said 1st Lt. Todd E. Gore, an officer with the 1008th. “Mostly I think we learned how to avoid potentially bad situations, but if something were to happen, how to react better and faster. The soldiers learn to immediately return fire.

“It proved the importance of cleaning your weapon, the training stresses PMCS, and really drives home to the soldiers that there is more to the mission than just doing your job,” Gore added. “As reservists, we tend to be very technically proficient, but sometimes not as tactically proficient.”

The training is focused on getting all soldiers up to snuff on fighting tactics for the modern battlefield. Lynch is simply a supply clerk in an ordnance maintenance company. In several articles it’s been written that she used to downplay the likelihood of seeing combat because of her job. She is living proof that anyone, at anytime, with any job can be attacked.

The instructors at America’s Warfighting Center (Fort Riley) are putting it back into the heads of their students that they are soldiers first. ♣

Story and photos by Spc. Tony M. Lindback, 88th RRC PAO

Spc. Amy Cain administers first aid to Spc. Franklin Lee during an enemy prisoner of war exercise.



Officer Candidate School: Choose your path

This is the third installment in the series of four articles addressing the options to becoming a commissioned officer. As a follow-up to the Spring 2002 “Wanted: Commissioned Officers” and the November 2002 “Direct commissions; unraveling the myth” articles, the 88th Regional Readiness Command (RRC) continues to look for qualified soldiers seeking a commission in the United States Army Reserve. This article focuses on a commissioning program with a proud and rich history – Officer Candidate School.

There are presently four unique paths a soldier may follow in order to accomplish the same end result:

the United States Military Academy, West Point, N.Y., Reserve Officer’s Training Corps (ROTC), federal or state Officer Candidate School (OCS), and Direct Appointment.

While all four programs may ultimately lead to a commissioning ceremony, OCS is the one route that presents the soldier with a variety of unique challenges and provides the foundation for important leadership skills that will serve the soldier well throughout a career. In addition, the OCS

program is flexible and offers the soldier with more than one program to attain the gold bar. Presently, there are three options under the OCS program umbrella: Federal, State, and Accelerated Course 501.

Fort Benning, Georgia is the traditional home of the OCS program and

has run the Federal service school since its inception in 1941. Typically, the active duty program offers nine different classes throughout the fiscal year. The duration of the active resident school program is fourteen weeks. This is a particularly attractive option for the soldier with a flexible schedule and a desire to complete



the program quickly. Unknown to most soldiers, the active duty Federal school is offered to those Army Reserve soldiers wishing to exercise that option.

If, for whatever reason, a soldier cannot afford the time to attend the Federal program, (s)he may find that

post that offers the State OCS program.

The second attractive feature about State OCS is that the soldier is able to attend the school with a negligible interruption to civilian life. The State OCS option is approximately a 15-month course of instruction consisting of four phases conducted through

IDT weekends and two annual training periods. The course is conducted from April to June of the following year.

For those soldiers unable to attend the Federal or State OCS courses, there is yet a third

program option – Accelerated Course 501. This is a relatively new option and it combines some of the features from the Federal and State OCS programs.

Operated through the National Guard Bureau, Accelerated Course 501 offers a combination of the attractive features

from both the Federal and State program. The Accelerated Course 501 program offers the structure and rigorous training of

OCS is the one route that presents the soldier with a variety of unique challenges and provides the foundation for important leadership skills that will serve the soldier well throughout a career.

the State program is a more viable option. While this program takes longer to complete than the active duty Federal school, it provides more options for the soldier.

One attractive feature about the State OCS program is that each state within the 88th RRC has a resident

the State program, while at the same time providing the shorter course length analogous with the Federal program.

In addition, Accelerated Course 501 provides the soldier an opportunity to train at multiple installations during the instruction course. The

Accelerated 501 program is a challenging 8-week, three-phase program offered at Camp Ripley, MN (Phase 0); Fort Meade, MD (Phases I and II); and Fort Lewis, WA (Phase III and Graduation). It is conducted only once a year during the summer months of June through August.

Prior to departing for the Accelerated Course 501 program, the soldier needs to choose a branch and a company of appointment. The company or battalion commander should be able to assist the soldier with this decision.

In addition to the diverse paths a soldier may choose through the program, there are also other tangible benefits to becoming an officer via the OCS route. IAW AR 135-7, officer candidates are eligible for tuition assistance and Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) benefits. In addition, officer candidates are also eligible for E-6 pay for the period they are an officer candidate in one of the three school options.

The OCS program is an excellent opportunity for qualified soldiers wishing to improve their leadership skills and contribute more to the United States Army Reserves. Following the traditional route to becoming an officer will provide many unique challenges and provide the foundation for leadership skills that will serve the soldier throughout a career as an officer.

For more information on the OCS program, please contact Major Daniel Forsberg; 612.713.3858; daniel.forsberg@usarc-emh2.army.mil or Captain Rob Schryver; rob.schryver@usarc-emh2.army.mil. The soldier may also obtain more information at the following 88th RRC link:

http://www.usarc.army.mil/88thrc/resources/officer_mgt/officer_accessions/ ♦

By Capt. Rob Schryver, 88th RRC G-1, Ft. Snelling, Minn.

Officer material? Meet these standards first

While the OCS program offers individual schedule flexibility and attractive options, there are still requirements in accordance with Army Regulations 135-100 and 140-50 that the soldier must meet in order to apply. The soldier must:

- be a U.S. citizen
- have completed credit for at least two years of a four-year college degree program or at least 90 credits completed
- be eligible for enlistment or enrollment in a military unit
- completed Army basic training with one year in a TPU to include one AT or 12 weeks ADT, AD or IADT including basic training
- achieve an ASVAB GT score equal to or greater than 110. While this requirement cannot be waived, applicants may retest to attempt a better score
- be at least 18 years old and no older than 30 years of age at the time of enrollment; this is waivable up to 32 years and 6 months at the time of commissioning. There is no waiver for Federal OCS
- possess a SECRET security clearance or provide documentation to prove possession of an interim clearance prior to submitting the application packet
- prove a lieutenant position vacancy or projected vacancy
- possess enough remaining service time to complete the OCS course
- possess a physical profile of at least 222221
- pass a Type "A" medical examination within one year of the OCS reporting date
- meet the minimum height/weight requirements and APFT standards
- not be disqualified under any of the provisions of AR 140-50 paragraph, 2-2
- obtain documentation showing a minimum ACT score of 19 or a minimum SAT score of 850 if the candidate does not possess a baccalaureate degree. Test results may not be older than 6 years old. ♦

New TRICARE policies for family members of National Guard and Reserves announced

Dr. William Winkenwerder, Jr., assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, and Thomas F. Hall, assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs, announced policy changes that will enhance the Tricare Prime and Tricare Prime Remote (TPR) programs for Reservists and their family members.

Since March 10, 2003, Reservist's family members, if their sponsor is on active duty (federal) orders for more than 30 days, are eligible to enroll in Tricare Prime and enjoy the access standards and cost shares associated with the Prime benefit.

"Previously, sponsors had to be eligible in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) and activated for 179 days or more before family members were eligible to enroll in Tricare Prime," Winkenwerder said. "Our commitment is to continue making improvements to the Tricare benefit to enhance access and quality of care these families receive."

Reservist's family members who reside with their sponsors, in a Tricare Prime Remote location at the time of

the sponsor's activation can now enroll in the Tricare Prime Remote for Active Duty Family Members (TPRADFM) program. For family members to be eligible to enroll in the TPRADFM program, sponsors and their family members must reside at a location that is at least 50 miles or more in distance, or approximately a one-hour drive from the nearest military treatment facility (MTF). Sponsors and family members also must be identified as eligible in DEERS.

"It's important that we take care of the families of our Reserve Component members," Hall said. "We want to ensure that our mobilized National Guard and Reserve members aren't worried about who's caring for their families while they're gone, and to return them to families whose health care needs have been met by the Military Health System."

Contract changes are underway at Tricare Management Activity to implement the new TPRADFM policy. Once the changes are accomplished, family members of the Reserve sponsors activated for more than 30 days may start using the

TPRADFM benefit, which has no co-payments, deductibles or claim forms to file, and which offers providers who meet rigorous standards for providing quality health care.

Reservist's family members who choose not to enroll in either the Tricare Prime or TPRADFM program may still use the Tricare Standard and Extra benefits, with applicable cost shares and deductibles.

Reserve sponsors need to verify that DEERS information for themselves and their family members is accurate and up-to-date. They are encouraged to contact DEERS at the Defense Manpower Data Center Support Office toll free at (800) 538-9552. Sponsors and family members may also update their addresses in DEERS on the Tricare Web site at <http://www.tricare.osd.mil/DEERSAddress/>.

Future updates regarding benefits for Reservists and their family members will be posted on the Tricare Web site at <http://www.tricare.osd.mil/reserve>. ♦

Hometown news releases needed

When a soldier receives an award, is promoted, or deploys, fill out a hometown news release form (DD Form 2266) and send it to the 88th Regional Readiness Command Public Affairs Office, 506 Roeder Circle, Fort Snelling, MN 55111.

Hometown news releases give soldiers well-deserved recognition and help educate the public as to what the military is all about. With less than 5 percent of those under 60 years of age having served in the military, this takes on ever-increasing importance. Educating the public is crucial to maintaining military readiness. A public uneducated about military affairs will not support the military. ♦

Mobilized Reservists Should Check Child Support Rules

Guard and Reserve members who have child support obligations and whose civilian income is larger than their military one should review their rights before they get orders. The Defense Finance and Accounting Service's Garnishment Operations Directorate has been working with the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement to address child support payment issues related to activated reservists. Reservists who need relief have to ask for a review and modification of the child support obligation from their appropriate state child support agency, he said. For more infor-

mation, visit state child support enforcement agencies gateways at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/extinf.htm#exta>, and the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement Information Memorandum (IM)-01-09 at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/pol/im-01-09.htm>. DoD guidance is also provided under "Family Law Matters" at the secure Website operated by the Army Judge Advocate General's Office at <https://www.jagcnet.army.mil/Legal>. For more on deployment benefits, as well as guides and checklists, see <http://www.military.com/deployment> ♦

Absences could end MGIB-SR

When soldiers do not meet their contractual obligations, recoupment actions may occur

Selectd Reserve members who use government-provided education benefits under the Montgomery GI Bill-Selected Reserve but fail to participate satisfactorily during their obligated period of service will have to refund their unearned benefits. Examples of this include service members who excessively fail to attend scheduled training, fail the physical fitness testing or do not complete required military courses.

Congress enacted the Montgomery GI Bill in July 1985 as a recruiting and retention tool for military services. This program continues to be a tremendous incentive program for the services and a valuable benefit for the service members. It provides the services to better educate service members while assisting members in the pursuit of higher education.

Reserve component members who enlist, re-enlist or extend in the Selected Reserve for a six-year contract, possess a high school or equivalent diploma and have successfully completed Initial Active Duty for Training are authorized Montgomery GI Bill benefits. However, the law establishes eligibility for MGIB-SR benefits, requiring continuous satisfactory membership in the Selected Reserve during the period of eligibility.

Selected Reserve members are eligible for up to 36 months of MGIB-SR educational benefits once they complete initial active duty for training. They have 10 years to use the benefits but must remain a Selected Reserve member in order to participate in the program. The MGIB-SR program is funded by the reserve components, not the service members themselves. This differs from the

MGIB-Active Duty Program, as Congress provides funding to the Department of Veteran Affairs for the program. Additionally, active duty members must elect to participate in the program and are required to have their pay reduced by \$100 for the first 12 months of their active duty service.

Most people identify members of the Selected Reserve as service members who typically have attended training one weekend each month and two weeks a year. Reservists who accrue nine or more unauthorized absences from drills over a one-year period are placed into the "unsatisfactory" category. After due process by the commander these members may be transferred to the Individual Ready Reserve and may lose their eligibility for educational assistance under the MGIB-SR.

Because they are no longer members of the Selected Reserve, their entitlements to the Montgomery GI Bill benefits are normally terminated. Such a penalty is specified in law and is a provision of the contract Guard and Reserve members sign when joining the Selected Reserve. When circumstances prevent a service member from continuing in the Selected Reserve through no fault of the member's, such as civilian job requirements or relocation, family health issues, a one-year absence from the Selected Reserve may be authorized. However, if the service member fails to re-affiliate with the Selected Reserve within the one year, MGIB-SR benefits are terminated and recoupment action, if necessary, will proceed. Once benefits are terminated, they cannot be reinstated.

The collection of GI Bill payments

to affected service members started Oct. 1. The collection action, when necessary, will be through the Defense Finance and Accounting Services and could involve garnishment of wages and assistance from the Internal Revenue Service as part of the collection process.

Improved personnel data management systems and new interagency agreements now enable all the reserve components to better identify, track and request refund of unearned benefits paid to reservists who do not fulfill their contractual obligation. The Naval Reserve has processed these actions manually for some time.

Effective Oct. 1, Selected Reserve members going to school full time under the Montgomery GI Bill receive \$276 per month. Reservists who've used all or part of their educational benefits but failed to complete their service obligation and now have to repay them could owe thousands of dollars, depending on how much of their service obligation they completed.

The intent of MGIB-SR recoupment is to ensure that the service member refunds, as required by law, any MGIB-SR educational benefits not entitled to, based on failure to meet contractual obligations in the Selected Reserve. Rather than recouping the money, the services would prefer to have service members remain in the Selected Reserve and complete their obligation.

By Col. Henry L. Payne, USA, assistant director for military personnel programs, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs [Manpower and Personnel], Special to the American Forces Press Service

Support the troops

The Department of Defense has asked the general public to stop sending unsolicited letters and packages to service members in Iraq. Instead, DoD suggests: (1) sending e-mail or donating a prepaid calling card to members at www.defendamerica.mil/support_troops.html; (2) donating \$25 to Operation USO Care Package by calling 866-USO-GIVE (866-876-4483) or visiting www.usocares.org; (3) supporting families of service members by calling the local American Red Cross chapter or visiting www.redcross.org; (4) sending a \$10 or \$20 "Gifts from the Homefront" certificate that troops can use at post exchanges by calling 1-877-770-GIFT or visiting www.aafes.com/docs/homefront.htm; (5) visiting veterans under care at Veterans Affairs hospitals in your area; or (6) sending donations to one or more of the service relief organizations: Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society at www.nmcrcs.org/iraqwar.html; Air Force Aid Society at www.afas.org; Army Emergency Relief at www.aerhq.org; and Coast Guard Mutual Assistance, www.cgmahq.org ♦

Women veterans FAQ

The VA has published a pamphlet which answers 25 common questions asked by women veterans regarding health. Topics covered include filing disability claims, stress disorder treatment programs, and information on women veteran health studies and research. The pamphlet is in Microsoft Word format and can be found online at http://www.va.gov/womenvet/docs/25_most_frequently_asked_questions_and_responses.doc More information on women veteran programs can be found at http://www.military.com/Resources/ResourceFileView?file=Veterans_Women.htm ♦

Military mail crackdown

Nearly all of the military mail arriving from overseas is now being checked by U.S. Customs agents because of recent increases in contraband. The Air Force's chief of postal policy, Bob Eichholz, said all packages coming from overseas locations are always subject to inspections by customs agents, but recent discoveries have necessitated a closer look. "U.S. Customs in Chicago started identifying nonmailable items coming through the mail from overseas post offices," said Eichholz. "The more they found, the more they started keying in on Army and Air Force post offices in the contingency areas," he added. According to Eichholz, customs agents have found items that violate customs laws, postal regulations and military regulations. Eichholz said part of the problem may be that military members are not aware of the rules. Additionally, he said, knowing what paperwork to use can be key to ensuring items make it to their destination. ♦

Long term care insurance

Long Term Care Insurance helps cover costs when an illness or disability requires home care or a nursing home stay. With average costs of a nursing home stay rising annually, long term care insurance can ensure that you can afford quality care for yourself, your spouse or parents. While the Federal government offers a Long Term Care plan to servicemembers, retirees, federal employees and their qualified family members, it is not the only LTC option available. Servicemembers can compare insurance plans online, and get more information on the value of long term care at Military.com. http://www.military.com/NewContent?file=LTC_Index ♦

New Army G-1

Army News Service reports that the Army will create a single command to perform the functions of the current U.S. Total Army Personnel Command in Alexandria, Va., and U.S. Army Reserve Personnel Command in St. Louis, Mo. PERSCOM and AR-PERSCOM will retain their respective names and unit insignia until a date to be determined, Army officials said. The new command will integrate the two existing organizations as a multi-component field operating agency under the Army G-1. The Army National Guard will integrate functions, where possible, and the Civilian Personnel Operations Center Management Agency will realign into this FOA at a later date, officials said. ♦

AGR accession process

U.S. Army Reserve Personnel Command (AR-PERSCOM) reports that soldiers no longer have to wait from six to 10 months to find out if they made the grade for the AGR program. A streamlined AGR transitioning process has established a 90-day turnaround time as the goal for notifying soldiers they are selected for the AGR program. AR-PERSCOM officials expect to conduct the first AGR Entrance Board under the new AGR packet requirements by June 2003. Interested soldiers must submit AGR entrance packets that are 100 percent complete to: Commander, AR-PERSCOM, ATTN: ARPC-PSV-BB (AGR Entrance Board), 1 Reserve Way, St. Louis, MO 63132-5200. For more information on the AGR program or to request an application packet, visit the 2Xcitizen Website at <https://www.2xcitizen.usar.army.mil/portal/> or call 1(800) 325-4118. For further details on the new changes, see <http://www.army.mil/usar/news/2003/02feb/streamline.html> ♦

Surviving a hostile environment

The term hostile environment seems to be a bit misunderstood. As the Command's Military Equal Opportunity Specialist, I speak with soldiers and civilians everyday. Many of the conversations and requests for advice are directly related to this topic. Given the increase workload and stress since the events of 9/11, many have been subjected to fits of anger, frustration, anxiety, and outbursts in the workplace. Although upsetting and normally unprofessional, this is not a hostile environment as far as equal opportunity regulations are concerned.

According to AR 600-20, Army Command Policy, hostile environment occurs when soldiers or civilians are subjected to offensive, unwanted and unsolicited comments or behaviors of a sexual nature. If the behaviors **unreasonably** interfere with their performance, then the environment is classified as hostile. It normally includes nonviolent sexual behaviors

that are gender-biased. Examples include use of derogatory gender-biased terms, comments about body parts, suggestive pictures, explicit jokes and unwanted touching.

Every soldier and civilian has a responsibility to question, check, and oppose behavior that is counter productive, especially if the behavior is sexual in nature. There are several techniques for dealing with a sexually harassing hostile environment. **1. Direct approach.** Confront the harasser and tell him/her that the behavior is not appreciated, not welcomed and that it must stop. Stay focused on the behavior and it's impact. Use common courtesy. Write down your thoughts before approaching the individual involved. **2. Indirect approach.** Send a letter to the harasser stating the facts, personal feelings about the inappropriate behavior and expected resolution. **3. Third party.** Request assistance from another per-

son. Ask someone else to talk to the harasser, to accompany the victim, or to intervene on behalf of the victim to resolve the conflict. **4. Chain of Command.** Report the behavior to your immediate supervisor or others in the chain of command and ask for assistance in resolving the situation. **5. File a formal complaint.**

As adults, most of us know what behaviors are and are not acceptable. The 88th RRC is full of outstanding soldiers and civilians. However, every organization has a few folks that just don't get it or feel they need to test the system. If you think you're in a hostile environment that is sexual in nature, depending on the severity, question, check, and oppose the behavior by trying the techniques shown above. You, your organization and the 88th RRC will be a better place for it. Thanks. ♣

Richard (Rich) Cox, Equal Opportunity Specialist, 88th RRC

Army Activates Family Assistance Hotline

Armey News Service reports that the U.S. Army has established a toll-free Family Assistance Hotline for Operation Iraqi Freedom at (800) 833-6622. The hotline was established by the U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center, in conjunction with the Army Family Liaison Office staff to provide referrals and information to the families of deployed or activated soldiers. The hotline is toll free when called from the continental United States, Hawaii, Alaska, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Virgin Islands. The hotline staff will answer calls from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily Eastern Standard Time to answer family support-related questions. Emergency assistance will be provided between the hours of 8 p.m. and 8 a.m. EST, officials said.

The hotline is intended for use only by family members of soldiers on active duty as well as those in the Army National Guard and the Army Reserve called to active duty. After hearing a short, recorded message, callers will be able to speak to hotline staff members who have access to extensive reference materials. Staff will be unable to answer questions about casualties or soldiers wounded or missing in action. The 88th Regional Readiness Command also operates an assistance line, at 1-800-THE ARMY ext. 1-HELP-1. Information is also available at <http://www.army.mil/usar>. For more on deployment issues and benefits, see <http://www.military.com/deployment?ESRC=mr.txt> ♣

Sailors and Soldiers' Civil Relief Act

If you are a Reserve or Guard member who has been called to active duty, the Sailors and Soldiers' Civil Relief Act (SSCRA) could help. This act provides for legal and financial protection should you be mobilized, and covers issues such as rental agreements, security deposits, eviction, installment contracts, credit card interest rates, mortgage interest rates, mortgage foreclosure, civil judicial proceedings and income tax payments. The Edcomm group has put together a complete presentation on this act. To access it, visit the Deployment Center at <http://www.military.com/deployment>, where you find the latest deployment news and benefits updates, and click on the "What You Need to Know About SSCRA" feature. ♣



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