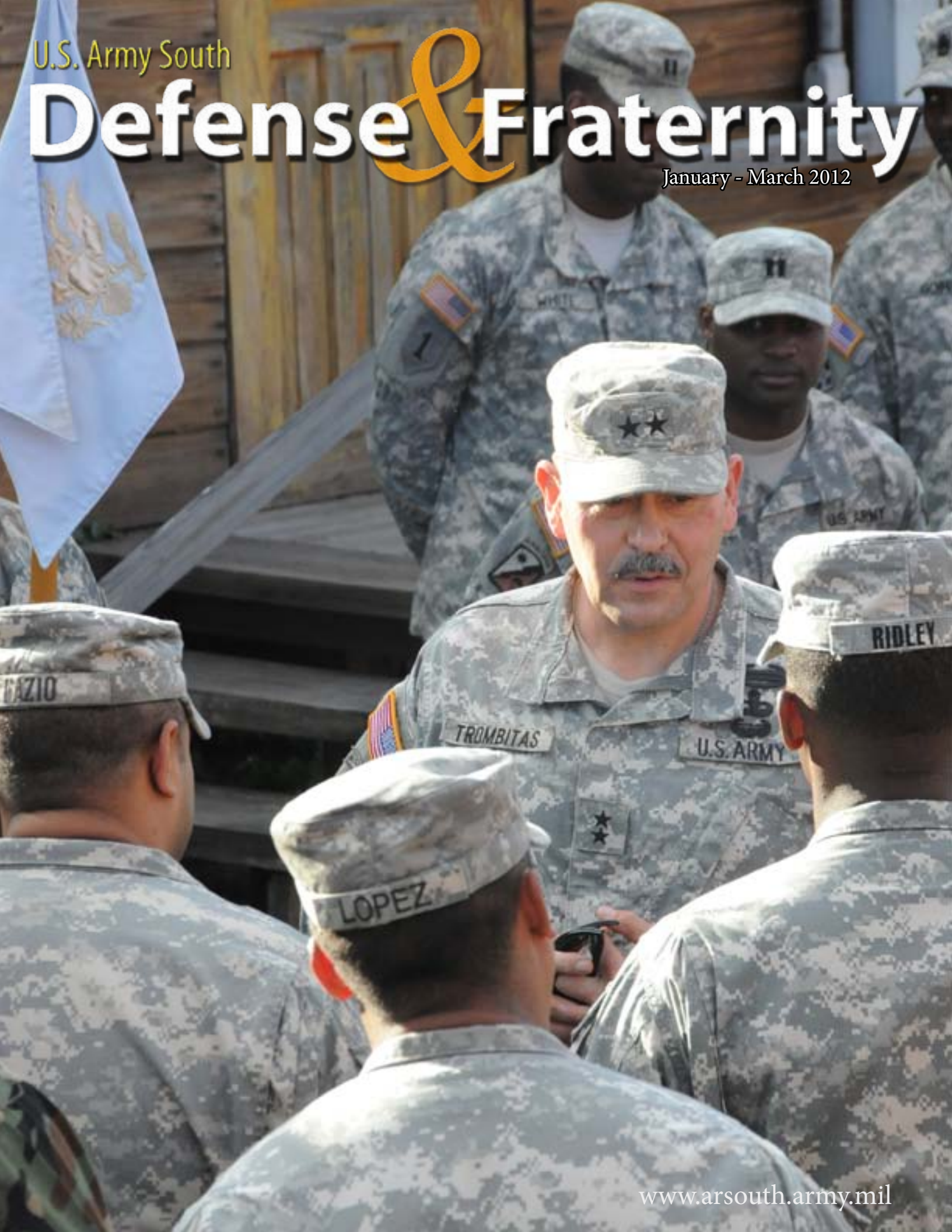


U.S. Army South

Defense & Fraternity

January - March 2012



U.S. Army South

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*Front cover: Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, the U.S. Army South command-
ing general, briefs Soldiers assigned to Joint Task Force-Bravo during his visit
to Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras, Jan. 24. (U.S. Army photo by Eric R. Lucero,
U.S. Army South Public Affairs)*

*Back cover: Arsenio De La Cruz (right), a personnel recovery planner and
Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape instructor with U.S. Army South,
talks about survival training to a group of Guatemalan soldiers from the 6th Army
Brigade during a Subject Matter Expert Exchange in Coban, Guatemala, Feb.
28. (U.S. Army photo by Miguel A. Negron, U.S. Army South Visual Information)*

Command Corner

Col. Richard C. Bassett
Chief of Staff



*Col. Richard C. Bassett (right), U.S. Army South chief of staff,
speaks to Dan Meyer, Army South deputy chief of staff, prior to a
staff synch meeting March 7 at the Army South headquarters.*

Some inside and others outside the Army believe this examination is required because the Army is broken. I disagree; instead, I believe our Army is stronger than ever. However, I do believe that the Army has, at times, failed to make decisions for our long term success, choosing instead to make decisions for short term expediency. A few examples include deferring commissioned officers and non-commissioned officers from professional development schooling; relaxing the standards for tattoos; and ignoring height, weight, and physical fitness standards for the sake of combat deployments.

Recognizing these deficiencies, the Army is now either emphasizing enforcement of the standards, or raising the standards. Soldiers and leaders must make the adjustment and meet the standards, or they will suffer the consequences. How do we adjust to this “new” environment? After almost 30 years of Army service, I offer the following solution for Soldiers and leaders:

All Soldiers must be fit, disciplined, and motivated. Fitness entails the four-legged stool of mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being. Mental function is how we think, emotional function is how we feel; physical function is how our body works, and spiritual function is understanding our place in the universe, and how we communicate with our higher power. Discipline entails Soldiers doing what is right no matter the circumstance. Motivation entails Soldiers being satisfied with the circumstances of their service.

All leaders must be competent, confident, and quietly professional. Competence entails leaders knowing their subordinates’ jobs, as well as their own. Leaders must be confident in their abilities, and the abilities of their organization. Leaders must be quietly professional, allowing their actions to speak for them, by leading through their professional example.

I used these behavior standards to communicate my vision to my Soldiers and leaders as a battalion and brigade commander with great success. As the Army looks to collectively adjust our profession to meet the changing world and its challenges, we as Soldiers must individually do the same. By doing so, we’ll ensure our Army is poised to meet the challenges of the future, and remain the best Army in the world. Army Strong!

Defense and Fraternity

Col. Richard C. Bassett
Chief of Staff
U.S. Army South



1-228th Aviation provides real-world mission support

*Story and photos by
Eric R. Lucero
U.S. Army South Public Affairs*

SOTO CANO AIR BASE, Honduras – Roughly 3,000 feet above sea level in the mountainous valleys of Honduras, there is a familiar, rhythmic thumping that can be heard. Sometimes faint, and sometimes boisterous, the sound is unmistakable and it is something the residents of Honduras not only tolerate, but have also come to appreciate.

The thumping belongs to the helicopters assigned to the 1st Battalion, 228th Aviation Regiment, a subordinate command of U.S. Army South. The unit is responsible for promoting and executing aviation operations to facilitate U.S. Southern Command's strategy of engagement and security in theater.

As the only forward-deployed aviation asset in theater,

the Winged Warriors of the 1-228th have a crucial mission. Partnering with the militaries and law enforcement agencies of the other countries within the Central American region to detect, deter and disrupt common security challenges, the unit is a major factor in enhancing regional security and stability while building partner nation capacity.

"Our mission is to support all the rotary requirements to Joint Task Force-Bravo within the Central America area of operations," said Maj. Ryan C. Hedberg, the 1-228th Aviation Regiment's operations officer. "We support all of the medical readiness exercises that our Medical Element unit executes here. In addition, we support humanitarian relief and disaster response operations within the Central America area. Our unit has even gone as far as Haiti in response to the 2010 earthquake."

In 2011 the 1-228th, working with JTF-Bravo, supported 15 medical readiness exercises that treated more than 41,000 patients throughout Central America. In addition, 1-228th conducted support to other aviation missions, which included counter illicit trafficking operations, personnel recovery, humanitarian disaster responses and other operations for U.S. and partner nation personnel in Honduras and surrounding area.

The U.S. and Honduran forces have worked together for many years. The opportunities offered by having U.S. forces at Soto Cano Air Base provide the ability to conduct invaluable training and daily real-world operations. This year, U.S. Army South will plan and conduct a series of Beyond the Horizon exercises in Honduras and Guatemala utilizing the Winged Warriors of the 1-228th as a major tool in completion of that mission.

A crew chief assigned to the 1-228th Aviation Regiment stands watch near his UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter as a CH-47D Chinook helicopter prepares to take off in the background at Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras, Jan. 25. To see more photos from this story and the commanding general's visit to Joint Task Force-Bravo, click [here](#).



“Every single time we fly off post here, whether flying in adverse weather, jungles or mountains, the training we receive lends itself to creating an environment essential to maintaining safety and awareness and really being on your game.”

- Chief Warrant Officer 2 Ryan Rooks, 1-228th Aviation Regiment pilot

To complete their myriad of missions, the men and women of the 1-228th place an emphasis on working efficiently to maintain their fleet of aircraft. The unit consists of only 14 UH-60 Blackhawks and four CH-47D Chinooks.

“One of the biggest parts of our mission here is aircraft maintenance to ensure safety in

the air,” said Hedberg. “Last year, we logged more than 3,900 flight hours as a battalion. That’s pretty significant for the size of our unit.”

The flight hours also ensure readiness and training for the Soldiers and keep them primed to conduct contingency operations at a moment’s notice.

Through cooperative operations, exercises and activities with Honduran forces,

the Soldiers of the 1-228th receive excellent training opportunities while improving conditions for communities in partner nation countries, something the Hondurans have surely recognized.

“Our relationship with the Hondurans is very warm,” said Spc. Justin Finch, a UH-60 Blackhawk crew chief assigned

to Alpha Company, 1-228th Aviation Regiment. “We interact with different organizations and people, and when we train with them, it’s very smooth. The Hondurans are always glad to see us and they always wave as we fly by. Every time we land somewhere the locals always want to take pictures with us.”

“I’ve been in small villages and moderate cities. When we



1st Lt. Jimmyvan Cogles, a UH-60 Blackhawk pilot assigned to the 1-228th Aviation Regiment, prepares for a flight at Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras, Jan. 25.

arrive, the people know exactly why we are there and they greet us with open arms,” said Staff Sgt. Michael E. Tomlinson, a crew chief instructor assigned to Bravo Company, 1-228th Aviation Regiment. “Any kind of positive interaction we have with the people definitely helps them out and I’m sure they’re spreading the word to their friends and family.”

In addition to building relationships and capacity with host nations in the region, the service members of the 1-228th have a unique chance to combine annual training requirements with real-world missions in one of the most challenging environments on the planet.

“You can’t go more than an hour in any direction without running into a completely different environment, whether it’s the ocean, triple canopy jungle or flatland,” said Tomlinson. “It’s extremely unique and it builds a

lot of different training challenges for us.”

While the terrain poses its own challenges, Hedberg adds that it’s not the only obstacle to flying the Honduran skies.

“This is an extremely challenging environment to fly in due to the semi-tropical terrain and the weather patterns we get here,” Hedberg said. “Because of where we are located in the hemisphere, we get a lot of weather patterns from the Caribbean and the Pacific that collide here.”

Although there is accurate weather forecasting near Soto Cano Air Base and around many of the major cities, Hedberg maintains that the challenge for the crews of the 1-228th comes when they reach the in-between points, where there are little to no weather assets capable of providing accurate, up-to-date reports.


“Sometimes you can leave here and think you have great weather, until you cross the next ridgeline and it can be a completely different story,” Hedberg said. “It teaches a lot of hard lessons first hand. It teaches the pilots and crews to be cognizant of the weather and how to read it.”

Despite difficult conditions to fly in, the Soldiers of the 1-228th realize that the training hours they put in and the missions they complete while in Honduras are crucial to their professional development as they move on with their careers.

“Every single time we fly off post here, whether flying in adverse weather, jungles or mountains, the training we receive lends itself to creating

an environment essential to maintaining safety and awareness and really being on your game,” said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Ryan Rooks, a pilot with the 1-228th Aviation Regiment. “I think this is a great place to come down to if you’re looking for real-world opportunities.”

“There is a mission down here and it’s been ongoing for many years,” said Hedberg. “It’s a very challenging mission and very rewarding mission.”

For the Soldiers assigned to Soto Cano Air Base, each sunrise presents another set of missions and opportunities to keep them sharp. For the residents of Honduras, each morning presents another day filled with thumping noises from above and the reassurance that the Winged Warriors of the 1-228th Aviation Regiment are flying over them, contributing to the effort for a safe and secure region. 



Spc. Justin Finch, a UH-60 Blackhawk crew chief assigned to the 1-228th Aviation Regiment, communicates with his pilots prior to a flight at Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras, Jan. 25.

A Soldier assigned to the 525th Military Police Battalion and Joint Task Force Guantanamo watches a detainee eat in his cell at Camp 5. (JTF Guantanamo photo by U.S. Navy Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Kilho Park)



INSIDE THE WIRE WITH GTMO'S GUARDS

Army South's 525th MPs guard most dangerous individuals

*Story by Eric R. Lucero
U.S. Army South Public Affairs*

GUANTANAMO BAY, Cuba – Terrorist trainers, financiers, recruiters, facilitators, bomb makers and even Osama bin Laden's bodyguards ... these individuals are considered to be among some of the most dangerous people in the world.

The task of guarding these individuals at one of the most secure detention facilities on the planet falls on the shoulders of the 525th Military Police Battalion, a subordinate unit of U.S. Army South.

The unique and important mission of the battalion is to provide command, control, and operational support to high-risk detention operations at Guantanamo Bay in support of the Joint Detention Group and Joint Task Force – Guantanamo in order to support the Global War on Terror.

The men and women of the 525th do this by conducting safe, humane, legal and transparent care

and custody of detainees, including those convicted by military commission.

To do that, the Soldiers assigned to the unit undergo specialized, in-depth training before deploying to Guantanamo Bay. In addition to the pre-deployment training, the Soldiers of the 525th also receive on-the-job training upon arrival to Guantanamo Bay that is conducted in mock facilities and actual detention facilities.

That training includes classes in foreign language and cultural sensitivity to ensure the personnel deployed to Guantanamo Bay understand each detainee's cultural and religious practices to include allowing the detainees appropriate time and opportunity to pray and to also be mindful of dietary commitments during religious holy periods.

The Soldiers of the 525th must maintain the highest attention to detail in performance of their day-to-day duties. Adhering to strict standard operating procedures is crucial to the successful completion of





A Soldier assigned to the 525th Military Police Battalion (right) explains his method for monitoring detainees to Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas (left), the Army South commanding general. (JTF Guantanamo photo by U.S. Navy Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Kilho Park)



Guards assigned to Joint Task Force Guantanamo walk a detainee to his cell at Camp 5. (JTF Guantanamo photo by U.S. Navy Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Kilho Park)

the daily mission.

"The mission is very important. Our Soldiers understand the importance of the mission and we do it to the best of our ability every single day," said Lt. Col. Christopher V. Wynder, the commanding officer of the 525th. "We uphold the highest of standards and professionalism and treat the detainees with dignity and respect so we may complete our mission within U.S. law, DoD directives and the Joint Detention Group Standard Operating Procedures."

Whether it is inspecting living quarters, preparing and delivering meals to detainees or conducting detainee checks at least every three minutes, every action performed by the guards is specifically outlined in the SOP, a vital fact that ensures that both detainees and guards operate in the safest manner possible.

"Everything we do here is driven by the SOP," said Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel F. Borrero, the 525th command sergeant major. "The only thing the Soldiers need to continue to master is their ability to develop their interpersonal communication skills. Understanding patience is crucial because our Soldiers can leave here and move on to another facility and apply what they have learned here."

This rigid devotion to procedures requires a workforce capable of performing the stressful duties associated with detainee operations while displaying the highest levels of professionalism, something that is stressed by all members of the 525th.

"Being professional comes naturally to a Soldier because it is instilled in us," said Sgt. Barbara J. Grgurich, a Soldier assigned to the 525th. "We treat all the detainees with dignity and respect."

The professional mindset is something that is displayed by every member of the 525th, whether they work inside or outside of the detention facilities.

"We believe strongly in engaged leadership from myself, down to the lowest levels to ensure our Soldiers understand their mission inside and outside of the camp, and they are executing it the right way every single day," said Wynder.

Detention of enemy forces is a matter of security and military necessity and is recognized as legitimate under international law. The detention of these individuals eliminates the chance of them returning to the battlefield and engaging in further conflict against civilians and U.S. military forces and their allies.

"I'm proud of my job here. The 525th is family and we take care of each other here," said Grgurich. "We support each other on and off the shift. When we go onto a shift, we get things done right so that everyone comes home safe."

In spite of Guantanamo Bay's seemingly isolated location, the facilities receive regular visits by media outlets and commissions. In the 10 years since the facility has been in operation, more than 3,100 news media representatives have visited Guantanamo Bay.

In 2010 alone, more than 215 news media representatives from more than 175 media outlets visited.

Despite working at such a high-profile detention facility, the Soldiers assigned to the 525th do not let the stress levels get to them. On the contrary, they seem to thrive on it.

"We believe strongly in engaged leadership from myself, down to the lowest levels to ensure our Soldiers understand their mission inside and outside of the camp, and they are executing it the right way every single day."

**- Lt. Col. Christopher V. Wynder,
525th MP Bn. commander**

"Our Soldiers take pride in being vigilant warriors," said Wynder. "And they take pride in the importance of the security interests of the United States."

"The Soldiers here have ensured that this has been one of my greatest assignments," said Borrero. "Everyday I wake up and see what they are doing and the way they excel at it and that motivates me."



Guards assigned to Joint Task Force Guantanamo secure a detainee in his cell at Camp 5. (JTF Guantanamo photo by U.S. Navy Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Kilho Park)

Army South Soldiers march to the Alamo in preparation for Bataan Memorial Death March

*Story and photos by
Eric R. Lucero
U.S. Army South Public Affairs*

SAN ANTONIO – While most people in San Antonio slept comfortably in their beds, approximately 10 Soldiers from U.S. Army South donned heavy rucksacks and hit the road Feb. 23 at 5:30 a.m. for an 18-mile training road march that took them from Fort Sam Houston to the steps of the Alamo and back.

The group represented a small portion of a team of nearly 35 Soldiers that will make their way March 25 to White Sands Missile Range, N.M., to participate in the 23rd Annual Bataan Memorial Death March. The event in New Mexico will be a 26.2 mile-long journey meant to pay homage to the service members who fought and died defending the Philippine Islands during World War II. This year's event marks the 70th anniversary of the original march that claimed the lives of tens of thousands of service members during the course of the four-day journey.

On April 9, 1942 approximately 76,000 American and Philippine troops surrendered to Japanese forces after fighting in terrible conditions with limited supplies.

Once surrendered, the prisoners were forced to march nearly 80 miles through the Philippine jungles with little to no food and water.

While also suffering from exhaustion, malnourishment, and numerous jungle diseases,

the prisoners also endured physical abuse and violence along the way.

Although the event in New Mexico will never replicate the actual conditions of the original horrific march, the Soldiers participating in this year's march understand the importance of the annual tribute.

"After researching the history of the Bataan Death March, participating in this event has come to mean a lot more to me," said Capt. Eric T. Corbett, U.S. Army South medical plans and operations officer. "Beyond building team work and camaraderie with the team, it also gives me a deep appreciation of the sacrifices and selfless courage that makes our Army and its Soldiers the best in the world."

For other Army South Soldiers, the event holds personal meaning.

"One of my Soldiers had a great-grandfather who was in the Bataan Death March, so that encouraged us to get more people involved and learn the history of the event," said Staff Sgt. Adam Flores, the Army South non-commissioned officer in charge of the training teams.

Although the number of Bataan survivors dwindles every year, the veterans remain the highlight of the annual New Mexico event.

"At the event there will be several of the survivors of the original Bataan Death March,"

said Corbett. "The stories and perspectives that these veterans can share with today's Soldiers is surely the most valuable means of passing on our military legacy."



Army South Soldiers march in front of the Alamo in downtown San Antonio during their 18-mile training road march Feb. 23.



Sgt. Gregory Lanski (left), a non-commissioned officer assigned to Army South's 512th Engineer Detachment, and Sgt. David Diaz, an NCO assigned to Army South's Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, pause for a quick break in front of the Alamo in downtown San Antonio during their 18-mile training road march Feb. 23. To watch a video about this story, click [here](#).

"By completing the event, we hope to experience a small token of what they went through, and hopefully we get to meet some of the survivors while out at the event in New Mexico," said Flores, whose previous duty assignment was with the 31st Infantry Regiment, one of the units that was forced to walk in the original Bataan Death March.

For the past three months, Flores has been in charge of planning and executing a training regimen to ensure the Army South Soldiers are prepared for the task at hand. Along with reading about the original death march and discussing it during training, the Army South teams underwent several physical training sessions specifically designed to build up endurance for the event.

These sessions began in December and included road marches of 10, 16, 18 and 20 miles while carrying loads of up to 35 pounds. In addition, the Army South teams underwent training seminars that included classes with a sports nutritionist and an exercise physiologist.

The commitment and work ethic of the Soldiers participating in this year's march have not gone unnoticed by their command.

"It's a very humble feeling to have Soldiers that are willing to voluntarily undergo hardships in order to pay respect to the service members who fought and died before them," said Command Sgt Maj. Luis Gonzalez, Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion command sergeant major. "I'm very proud of them for accepting this challenge."

Understanding the history of the original march and not losing sight of the thousands of service members that did not survive the journey, Corbett and the Soldiers of Army South have built a sense of camaraderie that they maintain will help push them through this challenge.

"Marching 26 miles through the desert with a 30-pound ruck on your back and boots on your feet is no small achievement," said Corbett, "However, the greater achievement is ensuring that every member of the team that starts the march finishes safely." 🇺🇸



Jungle MEDEVAC

Belize soldiers accompany Army South medics in jungle

*Story and photos by
Eric R. Lucero
U.S. Army South Public Affairs*

BELMOPAN, Belize – Deep in the jungle of Belize, five U.S. Army medics, accompanied by soldiers from the Belize Defense Force, moved through unfamiliar terrain, struggling to move their casualty patient more than 200 yards due to the uneven ground and rough climate. The clock was ticking for their patient and they knew it.

Sensing they were running out of time, the medics chopped their way through thick vegetation, rappelled down steep cliffs, crossed rapid rivers, and made their way through dark caves. Once they reached their objective, the unusual happened. Their patient stood up, smiled and praised them on a job well done.

The Army medics were participating in a two-week, U.S. Army South-sponsored Subject Matter Expert Exchange (SMEE) with the Belize Defense Force and the Belize Coast Guard Service. The exchange required the U.S. Soldiers to step outside their comfort zones and slither through the jungle and rivers of Belize, all while staying focused on properly executing their skills.

With the stability and security of the U.S. and partner nations dependent upon their ability to work together to detect, deter and disrupt common security challenges, conducting exchanges with partner nations ensures the Army's regional partners are ready and able to meet potential threats.

During the two-week exchange, the Belizeans trained the U.S. Soldiers in various elements of high-difficulty casualty evacuations.

Sgt. Matthew Archilla (center), a medic assigned to the 228th Combat Support Hospital, works with members of the Belize Defense Force to steady rappel lines attached to a basket with a simulated casualty during a high angle casualty evacuation near Belmopan, Belize, Feb. 11. To see more photos from this story, click [here](#).

"There has been no other training that I have seen that has been able to replicate something like this."

**- Sgt. Christopher Pizano,
Army South HHBN medical NCOIC**

Whether it was rappelling down sheer cliffs, using ropes to cross swift rivers, or crawling into confined spaces during cave rescues, the scenarios and terrain provided by the Belizean soldiers offered their U.S. counterparts an unparalleled training opportunity.

"The most important part of an opportunity like this is it gets the Soldiers out in an environment that they would otherwise not have," said Maj. Al Brown, U.S. Army South G-3 operations officer. "Back home, the conditions are not quite as challenging as you have here in the jungle. To get this deep into a jungle environment and train is pretty hard to do."

Being able to treat a wound in a brick building with sound security and a working air conditioner may seem ideal, but being able to overcome exhaustion, sweltering heat and unfavorable terrain can quickly turn the situation from ideal to deadly if unprepared.

"As medics, we may find ourselves in a jungle or cave environment and it's our duty to be able to go in there and extract that patient safely," said Sgt. Eric Chappell, a medic assigned to the 228th Combat Support Hospital in San Antonio. "Any U.S. Soldier that comes through this program will be able to take this training back with them and use it effectively. There's no question in my mind that this course has been tough."

Sgt. Matthew Archilla, a medic assigned to the 228th Combat Support Hospital, believes the training he received in Belize has the ability to pay immediate dividends.

"A lot of the rappel training they gave us is really relevant," said Archilla. "Our current situation in Afghanistan has us operating in a lot of mountainous terrain. Allowing a medic to get in there and learn how to package a patient in that type of terrain is extremely beneficial."

While the Belize Defense Force is a relatively small military, only consisting of approximately 1,000 troops, the experience its service members have operating in a jungle environment makes their training invaluable to partner nations seeking to improve their own capabilities.

"It's good to see how other armies handle different situations," said Spc. Marco Borrego, a health care specialist assigned to Army South's Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion. "We can learn from them just as much as they can learn from us."

After successfully making their way through the jungle, the U.S. Soldiers reciprocated the training by providing the Belizeans with medical care classes designed to improve the host nation's ability to effectively treat casualties in hostile situations.

"We taught them trauma casualty care, a step above the

combat lifesaver course," said Sgt. 1st Class Efrem Dicochea, a medical operations non-commissioned officer assigned to Army South. "This will assist the Belizeans in developing the skills needed to be able to treat and evacuate casualties in a combat environment. It's important because it gives the host nation confidence in their medics so they can operate in an austere environment away from definitive care."

Since the Belizean soldiers participating already had basic medical skills, the U.S. medics provided medical training to the host nation soldiers in how to treat casualties under fire.

"The majority of the rescuers and military here already have the rescue side down," said Cpl. Wendy Garcia, a combat medic with the Belize Defense Force. "The medical training is what we really needed to help us expand more on our medical knowledge. An exchange like this really helps us stay up-to-date on real-world changes in the medical world."

"This is very important for us," said Capt. Elfryn Reyes, the force medical officer for the Belize



Sgt. 1st Class Efrem Dicochea (right), a medical operations non-commissioned officer assigned to Army South, listens to instructions from a Belize Defense Force soldier during a high river crossing casualty evacuation scenario near Belmopan, Belize, Feb. 11.

Defense Force. "We are always very happy when we get support from partner countries like the U.S. It is very important to keep this relationship because we complement each other. We hope this relationship can continue and grow."

In addition to the formal training, both groups spent some time enjoying the intricacies of the jungle during a 24-hour jungle immersion exercise.

"It was awesome living off the jungle," said Chappell. "You just had to go into the jungle, chop your way in and build a hut and live in that with absolutely nothing except some bread and water. We even ate termites."

"This has been a great experience," said Sgt. Christopher Pizano, the NCOIC for the medical section of Army South's HHBN. "Everyone brings their own expertise to the group and it's been a great experience working with them. They have taught us a lot about how to survive in the jungle. There has been no other training that I have seen that has been able to replicate something like this."

While the U.S. medics and their Belizean counterparts parted ways, the experience and training each group received will prove to be crucial toward building partner nation capacity and improving abilities to successfully work side-by-side on any future operations or exercises.

"If I'm out there working on a rescue and there is a Belizean soldier working alongside me, we both know the same information," said Archilla. "We're both tying the same knots; we're doing the same battlefield tactical combat casualty care. It just allows for a continuity and better cohesion."



Sgt. Eric Chappell, a medic assigned to the 228th Combat Support Hospital, Spc. Marco Borrego, a health care specialist assigned to Army South's Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, and a member of the Belize Coast Guard Service steady a rappel line during a simulated high angle casualty evacuation near Belmopan, Belize, Feb. 11.



Sgt. Maj. of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III (left) speaks to U.S. Army South Soldiers and civilians about upcoming policy changes within the Army during his visit to U.S. Army South and Fort Sam Houston, Texas, Jan. 6. To watch a video about this story, click [here](#). To see more photos from this story, click [here](#).

SMA Chandler visits Army South, speaks to Soldiers

*Story and photos by
Sgt. Tamika Exom
U.S. Army South Public Affairs*

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas – Sgt. Maj. of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III visited U.S. Army South Headquarters, conducted a town hall meeting with more than 300 enlisted Soldiers at Blesse Auditorium, and spoke about possible upcoming policy changes here Jan. 6.

Chandler, hosted by Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, Army South commander, received a mission brief from Command Sgt. Maj. Gabriel Cervantes, Army South command sergeant major, before holding the town hall with the Soldiers.

Army South, the Army service component command of U.S. Southern Command, conducts theater security cooperation in order to enhance hemispheric security and stability.

“I was pleased to have the opportunity to inform the sergeant major of the Army of the great things we are doing here at Army South within our area of responsibility, and how we are relevant to the future of the U.S. Army,” said Cervantes.

Army South conducts training exercises and subject matter expert engagements with partner nations in Central and South America and the Caribbean. The command has the capability to conduct contingency operations and a variety of missions, which include defeating conventional threats, providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief; and supporting civil authorities in countering illicit trafficking and transnational organized crime.

Chandler later addressed the Soldiers of Army South about professionalism in a forum focused on discussing possible upcoming policy changes.

The Army may be faced with possible changes in size and composition after more than a decade of fighting two simultaneous wars. Chandler spoke about the importance of character, competence and commitment to remaining in the Army asking, “Are you that person demonstrating excellence?”

Chandler addressed several issues Soldiers will be faced with in a realigning Army, to include changes in retention, recruiting, uniforms, the noncommissioned officer education system (NCOES), and changes to the Army physical readiness test (APRT).

According to Chandler, recruiting and retention for both enlisted and officers will see changes. A small percentage of recruits come in with waivers for various reasons. The plan is to reduce the number of waivers coming into the Army, particularly for those exceeding body mass index (BMI) standards for basic training. Currently, Soldiers are able to attend basic training with a waiver if they are within six percent of the BMI. The plan is to lessen that percentage.

Both enlisted and officers have seen changes in retention control points (RCP’s). RCP’s require individuals to be promoted within a certain time frame during the career or they must separate from service.

There are a few options being considered for the new Army combat uniform (ACU) pattern, none of which include the current ACU pattern. Three uniform patterns being considered are the woodland, desert and the transitional pattern. In addition, an alternate cut uniform, that was originally made with the female Soldier in mind, but is a unisex uniform for both males and females, is being considered for a more professional look. Other changes are still being considered to the ACU itself, such as replacing some of the velcro with zippers, and possibly removing the elastic drawstring from the current cargo pockets. Discussions to weigh the options with senior leaders are slated for this year.

The Army physical fitness uniform (APFU) is also up for review. According to Chandler, the lack of reflective material on the APFU requires Soldiers to also wear a reflective belt with the uniform. Soldiers have added names, rank, and other unit insignias on the reflective belts, making the force less uniform. Possible changes to the APFU include adding antimicrobial properties, better reflection, and better sizing. Also, look for the new APRT policy this fiscal year.

When asked if early retirement options would be considered as part of the realignment of the force, Chandler replied “We don’t want to do that yet,” adding that would only be used as a last resort. As of now, no changes have been made to the Army’s current retirement benefits.

Chandler wrapped up his visit to Army South with lunch at the Sam Houston Club with Army Chief of Staff Gen. Raymond Odierno and installation leaders. After the luncheon, Chandler was asked, and took a few moments to host an Army South Soldier’s promotion ceremony.

Sgt. Shinita Ward, an Army South cable systems installer/maintainer, was promoted into the noncommissioned officer corps to the rank of sergeant.

Upon the conclusion of Chandler’s visit to Army South, the sergeant major of the Army wrapped up his trip to Fort Sam Houston with visits to Brooke Army Medical Center and the Center for the Intrepid, a rehabilitation facility for OIF/OEF casualties who have sustained amputation, burns or functional limb loss. [📷](#)



Sgt. Maj. of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III (left) presents Staff Sgt. Adam B. Flores (right), the operations platoon sergeant for Operations Company, Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, with a coin during his visit to U.S. Army South and Fort Sam Houston, Texas, Jan. 6.



The Judge Advocate General of the Army, Lt. Gen. Dana K. Chipman (left), presented Charles P. Koutras (right), Army South chief of legal assistance, with the 2010 Legal Assistance for Military Personnel award during a State of the Corps address with the Soldiers of the JAG community at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, Jan. 26. To watch a video about this story, click [here](#).

Army South attorney receives American Bar Association award

*Stories and photo by
Sgt. Tamika Exom
U.S. Army South Public Affairs*

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas – The Judge Advocate General of the Army, Lt. Gen. Dana K. Chipman visited U.S. Army South headquarters after holding a forum with approximately 100 JAG Soldiers and civilians at Woodard Auditorium, and presenting an Army South employee with a distinguished service award, during his visit here Jan. 24-26.

Chipman presented Charles “Chuck” P. Koutras, chief of legal assistance, U.S. Army South, with the 2010 American Bar Association’s Legal Assistance for Military Personnel (LAMP) award during the

State of the Corps forum, “For your excellence in legal assistance,” said Chipman.

U.S. Army South, as the Army component command to U.S. Southern Command, conducts Theater Security Cooperation in order to enhance hemispheric security and stability and on order conducts contingency operations as directed by U.S. Southern Command.

The LAMP award, as an individual award is in recognition of a major legal assistance innovation or rendering exceptional service or support to the military legal assistance effort. Koutras, a former Navy Judge Advocate, was recruited by Tom Johnston, the supervisory attorney for Army South in 2007, to assist with the implementation of the new Army South Legal Assistance Program.

The program provides on-site legal assistance services to DOD personnel forward deployed within Army South’s area of responsibility.

“The [JAG] program that we run in Central and South America and the Caribbean is not duplicated anywhere else in the world,” said Koutras. “It’s a unique program, run by one person and requires that person to constantly be on top of all of the needs of the military members throughout the area of responsibility.”

Koutras received the LAMP Award for providing significant innovation, superior effort, and exceptional service in the on-site delivery of the full-spectrum legal assistance services to U.S.

Armed Forces in 32 countries throughout Central America, South America, and the Caribbean Basin, an area covering 1/16th of the Earth’s surface that in the past had no legal assistance services. Koutras was selected for the award in 2011 for recognized efforts in 2010.

The Office of the Staff Judge Advocate provides operational and international law advice to personnel of U.S. Army South. The legal advice the office offers pertains to all of the core legal competencies and includes aid to civil authorities, disaster relief, and humanitarian assistance, legal status of deployed personnel in other nations, rules of engagement, and applicability of host nation law.

Army South JAG office provides theater support

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas – The Judge Advocate General (JAG) is probably most known for providing military justice support for commanders and military law enforcement by providing expert advice on things like Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) actions and chapter or separation hearings.

U.S. Army South Judge Advocates not only advise the command locally, but they also provide legal support to Judge Advocates who are deployed within the command’s area of responsibility (AOR).

Also, the jurisdiction extends to Soldiers assigned to Army South, its subordinate units and Soldiers within the AOR.

Comprised of six Soldiers, seven officers, one chief warrant officer and five civilians, this directorate serves as the legal support team.

“I am always proud of the hard work our team of great professionals do every day supporting the commander, staff and our subordinate units,” said Lt. Col. Luis O. Rodriguez, Army South’s staff judge advocate.

The legal support team practices six legal disciplines of the Army.

These disciplines are military justice, international and operational law, administrative and civil law, contract and fiscal law, legal assistance, and claims.

Army South has a mission to deploy at a moment’s notice and the JAG team must always be ready to respond to any number of legal challenges that arise.

“Our lawyers and staff participate in all command exercises and operations providing advice, legal support and guidance. We also travel often in support of the command’s security cooperation efforts, strengthening ties with JAGs throughout Latin America,” said Rodriguez.

The legal advice pertains to all of the core legal competencies and includes providing guidance on disaster relief, civil affairs, humanitarian assistance, detainees, legal status of deployed personnel in other nations, rules of engagement, fiscal law and the applicability of host nation laws.

U.S. Southern Command’s (SOUTHCOM) AOR includes 31 nations and 10 territories in Central and South America, and the Caribbean and covers about 15.6 million square miles.

Army South, as the Army Service Component Command for SOUTHCOM, conducts theater security cooperation in order to enhance hemispheric security and stability. On order, Army South conducts contingency operations as directed by SOUTHCOM.

The command’s SJA also provides Army South personnel and Department of Defense personnel and their families throughout the AOR with pre-deployment and emergency legal assistance. These services include wills, powers of attorney, and notarizations. For other legal services, Soldiers and family members should make an appointment with the Joint Base San Antonio Fort Sam Houston garrison legal assistance office in Building 134 on Stanley Road or by calling (210) 808-0169.



Spc. Justin M. Vines (right), an armorer assigned to U.S. Army South, issues a rifle to a Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion Soldier during a rapid deployment exercise Feb. 7-9. To watch a video about this story, click [here](#). To see more photos from this story, click [here](#).

Army South Soldiers conduct deployment readiness exercise

*Story and photos by
Sgt. Tamika Exom
U.S. Army South Public Affairs*

SAN ANTONIO – In January 2010, following the devastating 7.0 magnitude earthquake that struck the country of Haiti, U.S. Army South personnel deployed to support Operation Unified Response and helped U.S. Southern Command form Joint Task Force - Haiti.

At the request of the Haitian government and on order from President Barack Obama, thousands of U.S. troops and civilians formed Joint Task Force - Haiti and along with Army South provided humanitarian assistance and logistical support.

Even before 2010, the mission of Army South was to be prepared to deploy to support any

contingency operation as directed by SOUTHCOM.

Army South, as the Army Service component command for SOUTHCOM, supports an area of responsibility that includes 31 nations and 10 territories in Central and South America, and the Caribbean.

Army South Soldiers must be able and ready to deploy to any number of those places for contingency operations or to provide humanitarian support in the event of a natural disaster. In order to be prepared to support Army South's mission, 40 Soldiers from Army South's Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion received phone calls in the early morning hours of Feb. 8. They were instructed to report within two hours, with bags packed and ready to deploy.

This emergency deployment readiness exercise tested the ability of the Soldiers to deploy a Contingency Command Post (CCP) within 72 hours of notification.

"It was a complete success. These Soldiers proved during the exercise they were prepared for successful accomplishment of any mission," said Maj. Ed Otero, chief of operations, HHBN and officer in charge of the exercise. "We couldn't have done it without the participation of the Army South directors. Every director sent Soldiers to serve as augmentees to support the CCP. I believe it was a good team effort."


In addition to setting up the CCP, Soldiers were certified or trained on unit movement operations, pallet building, and the proper handling of hazardous materials. The exercise also tested the ability of Army South staff to support the deployment of the command post.

"We had to have folks go through and pick up their weapons, do the Soldier readiness processing (SRP), and do all those activities that are required for deployment," said Lt. Col. Charles A. Walters, the HHBN commander. "For the headquarters battalion, it was a good learning experience for us. I think we made the process better."



Soldiers assigned to Army South's Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion count cargo during a rapid deployment exercise Feb. 7-9.

The purpose of any training exercise is to prepare or be prepared for deployment. This deployment exercise was no different. Army South Soldiers were given a similar scenario to the actual Operation Unified Response deployment to Haiti. Army South Soldiers practiced skills such as pallet building and unit movement operations.

"We conducted an after action review every day during this four-day exercise," said Otero. "We had our hiccups and that's the purpose of this exercise, to identify deficiencies and correct them so that we remain prepared to respond to natural disasters and other contingency operations." 



Soldiers and a civilian inspect staged cargo pallets awaiting transport during a rapid deployment exercise Feb. 7-9.



Peruvian army commander, Victor Manuel Ripalda (center left), greets Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas (center right), U.S. Army South commanding general, at the Peruvian army headquarters Feb. 7. To watch a video about this story, click [here](#). (U.S. Army photo by Col. Jane E. Crichton, U.S. Army South Public Affairs Director)

Army South commander visits Peru, meets with senior leaders

Story by Col. Jane E. Crichton
U.S. Army South Public Affairs Director

LIMA, Peru – Army South commanding general, Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, visited with military partners in Peru Feb. 7 – 10 gaining valuable insights into challenges facing the Peruvian military and strengthening military relationships between the United States and the South American country.

“The Peruvian military is a valued partner for us,” Trombitas said. “During this visit, I was able to talk with key military leaders, gain increased understanding of their operations and identify areas where we can work together to increase the capacity of both of our armies.”

Trombitas also met with U.S. Ambassador Rose Likins and Deputy Chief of Mission Mike

Fitzpatrick, and received a modified country team brief that outlined U.S. interagency efforts to assist the Peruvian government in countering narcotics production and trafficking, and U.S. support in other areas of mutual concern.

The Senior Defense Official, Capt. John Ries and Military Advisory and Assistance Group Commander, Col. Carlos Berrios, also briefed Trombitas on military support and cooperation between the U.S. and Peruvian militaries.

Meetings with Peruvian officials included the Peruvian army commander, Gen. Victor Manuel Ripalda, and commander of the Joint Forces Command, Gen. Luis Ricardo Howell, whose staff briefed Trombitas on military operations against the Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) in the Valley of the Apurimac and Ene Rivers (VRAE) and



(Left) Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, U.S. Army South commanding general, receives an honor guard just prior to going on a tour of the Escuela de Guerra del Ejército (the Peruvian Army War College) in Lima Feb. 9. (U.S. Army photo by Col. Jane E. Crichton, U.S. Army South Public Affairs Director)

(Below) Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, U.S. Army South commanding general, speaks to a Peruvian National Police helicopter pilot prior to boarding a flight to tour the valley of the Apurimac and Ene Rivers in Peru Feb. 8. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Thomas Givens, U.S. Army South)



Upper Huallaga Valley. The Shining Path, considered by the U.S. to be a terrorist organization, has increased its links to narcotics trafficking which has brought additional security and stability challenges to the Peruvian government.

Trombitas got a firsthand look at operations in the VRAE on Feb. 8 when he toured the area and army operations there.

“The area is challenging for military operations because it is mountainous and the vegetation is quite thick,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Gabriel Cervantes, Army South senior enlisted advisor who traveled with Trombitas. “I was impressed with the skill and professionalism of the Peruvian soldiers we met, especially considering the harsh environment they operate in.”

The visit continued on Feb. 9 with presentations at the Comando de Educación y Doctrina del Ejército (Army Training and Doctrine Command) and a tour of the Escuela Superior de Guerra del Ejército (Army War College) where Trombitas spoke to approximately 40 international students about the U.S. Army’s strategy for the future.

The final stop was the Peruvian army’s 1st Aviation Brigade where the brigade commander, Brig. Gen. Daniel Augusto Forno briefed Trombitas on the brigade’s capabilities and provided a tour of its facilities and equipment.

“One of the areas that we have identified as an area in which we can assist the Peruvian army is aviation training,” Trombitas said. “It was good for me to get on the ground and see their equipment and facilities and have a face-to-face discussion with the aviation brigade commander about

how we can work together to build their aviation capacity.”

At the request of the Peruvian army, Army South is spearheading an aviation seminar to be held in Peru in March to coordinate aviation training that will provide the Peruvian army with the techniques, tactics and procedures it needs to build its aviation capacity both operationally and logistically.

Exchanges such as the aviation seminar and visits to key leaders in Peru are just some of the ways Army South continues to enhance the army-to-army relationship with Peru and to share and promote professional military activities. Peru has also participated in U.S. Southern Command exercises such as PANAMAX and Fuerzas Alidas Humanitarias (FAHUM), and partnered with SOUTHCOM in support of more than 60 humanitarian assistance and disaster preparedness projects since 2009.

“The U.S. and Peru are developing a strong partnership and cooperation on security matters,” Trombitas said. “We will continue to build on that relationship and learn valuable lessons from each other through exchanges, exercises and other training opportunities.”



Brig. Gen. Manuel Ortiz, the U.S. Army South deputy commanding general, strengthens community relations by speaking to a group of political science students at the University of Texas at San Antonio Feb. 2. To watch a video about this story, click [here](#).

Army South deputy commanding general speaks to UTSA students

Story and photo by
Sgt. Tamika Exom
U.S. Army South Public Affairs

SAN ANTONIO – As part of an outreach to strengthen community relations, Brig. Gen. Manuel Ortiz, deputy commanding general, U.S. Army South, addressed a group of approximately 30 political science students at the University of Texas at San Antonio Feb. 2.

Ortiz spoke to the students about Army South's mission, vision and area of responsibility, which focuses on humanitarian assistance and strengthening relationships with partner nations.

Alexander Barrera, a political science and international business major at UTSA, interested in Latin America, studied abroad last summer in Argentina and found the presentation informative.

"When I found out about [this speaking engagement], it piqued my interest immediately," said Barrera. "In a sense of what you all do, I'm more informed about the area you all cover. Before today, I didn't even know there was an Army South."

Army South is the Army component command of U.S. Southern Command. SOUTHCOM's area of responsibility includes 31 nations in Central and South America, and the Caribbean which covers

approximately 15.6 million square miles.

Army South conducts theater security cooperation in order to enhance hemispheric security and stability and on order, conducts contingency operations as directed by SOUTHCOM. Army South works with army and security forces in its area of responsibility to build partner nation capacity by conducting various humanitarian, security, medical and engineer training exercises.

"I've seen it firsthand, the U.S. helping out," said Gina Conti, a Colombian political science and international business law major at UTSA. "I didn't know it was Army South, but I knew they were helping out with Colombia and of course the terrorism and the narcoterrorism. It was very educational."

Ortiz also spoke to the students about the future of the Army and how the force will be reduced after more than a decade of fighting two wars.

"It is how we reduce that will be critical," said Ortiz. "As we transition to a leaner more agile Army, we must do it at a pace that allows us to retain a high quality, all-volunteer force that is lethal, versatile and ready to deploy with the ability to expand as required."

Brazilian delegation visits Army South, prepares for bilateral staff talks

Story by Eric R. Lucero
U.S. Army South Public Affairs

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas – Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, the commanding general of U.S. Army South, hosted Brazilian Lt. Gen. Paulo Humberto, the second deputy chief of the Brazilian army's land operations command, and his delegation for a three-day visit to the Army South headquarters Dec. 7-9.

While in the United States, the delegation also visited U.S. Southern Command and Special Operations Command South in Miami, and U.S. Army North here.

According to Brazilian Lt. Col. Washington Triani, the foreign liaison officer to Army South, "the main purpose of the trip was for the Brazilian army to gain a better understanding of how the U.S. Army plans and conducts operations and exercises as a joint command with interagency, intergovernmental and multinational organizations."

"We took the opportunity of the delegation being in town to open up more contact with Army South since we have a Brazilian foreign liaison here and, on behalf of the chief of staff of the Army, conduct annual Staff Talks with the Brazilian army," said Col. Brian McNaughton, U.S. Army South deputy commander for operations.

During the visit to Army South, the delegation received a command brief, and an update brief on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief exercises,

which include Beyond the Horizon and Fuerzas Aliadas Humanitarias, and Peacekeeping Operations – Americas, an exercise that Brazil hosted in early 2011.

"The Brazilian congress is discussing a law to regulate how the armed forces can support civil authorities, such as other agencies and organizations concerning disaster relief," said Triani. "This visit is important because Brazil is going to host major events in the following years such as the World Cup in 2014 and the Olympic Games in 2016 and the Brazilian army has to be prepared to work with other agencies."

According to Triani, Humberto and the rest of the Brazilian delegation had an outstanding impression of Army South.

The visit was very productive and Humberto foresees the possibility of the Brazilian army increasing its participation in Army South exercises in order to enhance the Brazilian army's capability to work together with the U.S. Army and other partner nations.

"Mutual understanding is always enhanced when we can interact face-to-face," said

McNaughton. "This is even more so when we have high-level general officer visits with individuals who are the key decision makers in security cooperation and partnership opportunities."

The next round of formal Staff Talks between the Brazilian army and U.S. Army South is scheduled for May 2012.



Brazilian Lt. Gen. Paulo Humberto (left), the second deputy chief of the Brazilian army's land operations command, speaks with Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, the commanding general for Army South, and Jonathan Stitt, the Brazilian desk officer at Army South, during a visit to Army South's headquarters to discuss upcoming Staff Talks between the two armies. Dec. 8. (U.S. Army photo by Jose Saez, U.S. Army South Visual Information)



Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas (center), the U.S. Army South commanding general, tours the Chilean Education and Doctrine Command in December 2011 in Chile along with Lt. Gen. Bosco Pesse (right), the commander of the Chilean army Education and Doctrine Command. To see more photos from this story, click [here](#). (Photo courtesy of the Chilean army)

U.S. Army South strengthens partnership with Chilean army

Story by Robert R. Ramon
U.S. Army South Public Affairs

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas – U.S. Army South’s commanding general traveled to Chile as part of Army South’s effort to build partner nation capacity through engagement and personal exchanges.

Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, the Army South commanding general, accompanied by Chilean Col. Luis R. Chamorro, a foreign liaison officer assigned to U.S. Army South’s headquarters here, made the visit to Chile this past December.

“Strong regional partnerships enable U.S. Army South and partner nation armies to enhance hemispheric stability and security,” said Trombitas. “There is strength in partnership and the Chilean army is one of our strongest allies.”

During the week-long trip, Trombitas visited

with Gen. Juan Miguel Fuente-Alba, the Chilean army commander; Lt. Gen. Bosco Pesse, the Chilean army Education and Doctrine Command commander; Maj. Gen. Alejandro Arancibia, the Chilean army International Relations Division director; Maj. Gen. Alberto Gonzalez, the Chilean army secretary general; and Maj. Gen. Luis Zegpi, the Chilean army V Division commander.

Chamorro said the visit was important to the Chilean leaders as well.

“The U.S. Army is one of our closest partners and maintaining a strong bilateral relationship with them is a top priority,” said Chamorro. “During the past few years, our relationship has grown into a close friendship in which we’re able to talk frankly about common security challenges.”

Trombitas toured the Chilean Education and Doctrine Command, the Chilean army V Division headquarters, and the Reinforced Regiment No. 5

“Lanceros” headquarters.


“During his visit to each installation, Major General Trombitas had the opportunity to learn more about the way we plan the instruction and the training of Chilean soldiers by seeing it firsthand,” said Chamorro.

Overall, the visit was essential to strengthen our relationship, according to Trombitas and the Chilean army leadership.

“The stability and security of the U.S. and partner nations hinge upon our ability to work together to address common security challenges,” said Trombitas. “Personal contact with partner nation army leaders strengthens our bonds and makes us more effective than before.”

“The Chilean commanders who had the opportunity to interact with Major General Trombitas considered his visit a success and a benefit to both of our armies,” said Chamorro. “Anytime we have the opportunity to exchange information and best practices, it contributes to

fostering a closer bond between our nations.”

The purpose of the visit was to strengthen bilateral relations and visit Chilean army installations in southern Chile to expand the understanding of the operational environment. 



Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas (left), the U.S. Army South commanding general, is greeted by a Chilean army officer during his visit to Chile in December 2011. (Photo courtesy of the Chilean army)



Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas (on tank), the U.S. Army South commanding general, rides on an older model Chilean tank during his visit to Chile in December 2011. (Photo courtesy of the Chilean army)



Soldiers from U.S. Army South's Intelligence (G-2) directorate attend a briefing Feb. 23 at the Army South headquarters.

Intelligence directorate provides command with essential support

*Story and photo by
Robert R. Ramon
U.S. Army South Public Affairs*

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas – U.S. Army South's Intelligence (G-2) directorate provides a wide range of services and relevant staff support that is critical to achieving the command's mission, as an Army component command for U.S. Southern Command, of conducting theater security

cooperation to enhance hemispheric security and stability and being prepared to deploy and conduct contingency operations. Army South's area of responsibility is Central and South America and the Caribbean.

"The Army South Intelligence team is a very diverse, dedicated and professional multi-functional team-of-teams comprised of joint military, civilian, and contractor personnel," said Col. Jerome W. Jackson, the Army South deputy

chief of staff for intelligence. "We are the only permanently joint directorate within the main command post and contingency command post, since our U.S. Air Force Staff Weather Office is permanently assigned to us and always integrated."

The Intelligence directorate's mission is to plan, direct, integrate, and provide effective intelligence, weather, and security support to U.S. Army South and its subordinate organizations. The G-2 also conducts Theater

Army Intelligence Security Cooperation in Army South's area of responsibility by helping the command to shape the environment by building partner nation capacity and engaging with our allies. The directorate is organized into five principal divisions: Operations; Control (Plans and Exercises); G2X (Counterintelligence and Human Intelligence); Support and Security; and the Analysis and Control Element (ACE). With approximately 50 personnel, including uniformed service members and civilians, assigned to the directorate, the team relies on direct support elements from the 470th Military Intelligence Brigade, which are under G-2's daily operational control.

This mainly includes the ACE, from the 401st MI Company, which is comprised of more than 100 Soldiers, Army civilians, and contractors.

"Continuous support from the 470th Military Intelligence Brigade is a vital part of our overall team," said Jackson.

While all aspects of its robust mission are important, the Intelligence directorate has identified key priorities on which it mainly focuses.

"The team strives everyday to maximize quality intelligence and staff support to the command and is currently focused on a few top priorities," said Jackson. "These include sustaining our expeditionary intelligence capabilities for contingencies and improving proficiency as the core for a Joint Task Force/ Multi-National Force Intelligence section; simultaneously sustaining critical intel requirements while transforming Theater Army Intelligence and enabling key partner nations to improve regional security

and stability through the implementation of effective and efficient Theater Intelligence Security Cooperation initiatives."


The directorate is also focused on training and readiness. The G-2 recently conducted an internal intelligence readiness train-up and rehearsal exercise.

"The main objective of this event was to train and integrate new personnel and improve collective readiness for the contingency command post intel section and other critical enabling augmentation teams," said Jackson. "We will use key lessons learned from this event to continue to improve our readiness and prepare for the major upcoming internal CCP exercises and validation events in support of theater contingency operations."

The directorate leadership stresses that it is due to the the high quality of its staff that the mission is successfully accomplished.

"In order to best support these priorities, we are always focused on investing in and taking care of our people," said Jackson. "This is accomplished by maintaining the right balance between people and mission, and maximizing the technical proficiency and quality of the force."

The effort to ensure people are taken care of has been noted at all echelons within the directorate.

"We're a pretty tight group," said Staff Sgt. Juan Varela, an Intelligence Analyst within the directorate. "We do a lot of hard work and that keeps us close to each other. Our leaders here respect us and we respect them, so it makes for a great environment." 

VIDEOS

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470th Military Intelligence Brigade Soldiers (left) role-play as villagers during a brigade-supported exercise of the 201st Battlefield Surveillance Battalion on Camp Bullis in November and December. (U.S. Army photo by Gregory Ripps, 470th Military Intelligence Brigade Public Affairs)

470th MI trains Soldiers from Washington

*Story and photo
by Gregory Ripps
470th Military Intelligence Brigade Public Affairs*

CAMP BULLIS, Texas – Throughout the last two months of 2011, the 470th Military Intelligence Brigade played a key role in training elements of the 201st Battlefield Surveillance Brigade.

The training tested 201st BfSB Soldiers' individual and collective skills conducting intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance operations in field-like conditions on Camp Bullis.

The 201st BfSB, consisting of the 109th MI Battalion and 502nd MI Battalion, rotated teams of Soldiers from its home at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., in and out of Camp Bullis every two weeks for two five-day exercises.

"The training focused on small teams with collective events that required Soldiers to exercise their skills in their respective Military Occupational Specialty," said Lt. Col. Kevin Hosier, S3 (operations and training officer) for the 470th MI Brigade. "The

training centered around signals intelligence and human intelligence collection tasks and took place at several mock villages in the training area and at the IDTF."

The IDTF, which stands for Intelligence and Security Command (INSCOM) Detention Training Facility, simulates facilities used overseas for questioning detainees and analyzing information. The 470th MI Brigade operates the IDTF on behalf of INSCOM. In addition to running the IDTF and the overall battlefield surveillance training event, the Fort Sam Houston-based brigade also provided role-players and observer-controllers, and logistical and general support.

"The training scenarios were designed to train Soldiers in their individual skill sets, in tactics, techniques and procedures, and with their equipment to prepare them for deployments 'down range,'" Hosier explained. "The scenarios were also designed to encourage them to 'make the mission happen' at team level and force them to think on

their feet when faced with the unexpected."

Maj. Chad Wetherill, 470th MI Brigade's assistant S3 and senior observer-controller for the exercise, explained that each scenario was designed to test all aspects of mission command as well as the individual and collective intelligence tasks.

"Each multi-functional team [MFT] leader had to plan, prepare and execute specific missions and figure out how to integrate the team's capabilities into

the mission of the ground commander they were supporting," said Wetherill. "This type of training gave these young lieutenants and their teams invaluable experience conducting troop-leading procedures and complex collective tasks that are hard to replicate at their home station."

A daily exercise for Soldiers of the 201st BfSB began with orders for a team of about 12 Soldiers to conduct an intelligence mission in the training area, which could take place in a mock village or en route to one. The intelligence mission might consist of obtaining information about a weapons cache or hostile activity. The team members would have to question villagers, provide "tactical site exploitation" and positive identification of high-value individuals to the ground commander,

and make recommendations on whether or not suspect individuals should be detained for further questioning, according to Wetherill.

After a team arrived at the IDTF with detainees, team members exercised their interrogation skills, analyzed the intelligence gathered, filling

intelligence gaps and answering information requirements. After processing and producing the intelligence, they practiced dissemination of that intelligence


"This type of training is invaluable when preparing your unit for a deployment."

*- Maj. Chad Wetherill,
470th MI Brigade assistant S-3 officer*

to higher headquarters.

"These Soldiers went to schools to train with their equipment and in their skills, but they hadn't interacted with Soldiers in other MI skill sets," said Hosier. "This training [at Camp Bullis] was their first opportunity to do their jobs in a training environment together."

Wetherill added that the exercise not only enabled MFTs to exercise collective tasks but also gave each unit commander better understanding of what the remainder of their pre-deployment training should focus on to get their teams mission-ready.

"From a commander's perspective, this exercise was a huge success," Wetherill said. "This type of training is invaluable when preparing your unit for a deployment." 

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Sgt. 1st Class Robert Montez, a squad leader for Company A, 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment, receives his Purple Heart medal while his family looks on at the Warrior Family Support Center on Fort Sam Houston, Texas, Dec. 16. Montez is one of more than 45,000 U.S. service members who have been awarded the Purple Heart since 2001. To watch a video about this story, click [here](#). (U.S. Army photo by Lori Newman, News Leader)

CG honors Purple Heart veterans, briefs command mission, CSA guidance

Story by Lt. Col. Antwan C. Williams
U.S. Army South Public Affairs

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas – Honoring recipients of the Purple Heart and discussing the history of the award and his command's mission, Army South's commanding general spoke at the annual founders day dinner for the Alamo chapter of the Military Order of the Purple Heart Feb. 17 at the Fort Sam Houston Golf Club.

The Alamo chapter is part of a nation-wide non-profit organization that supports veterans. The chapter, one of the oldest in the nation, boasts a membership of more than 700 in the San Antonio area.

Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, Army South's commanding general, spoke to an audience of more than 200 who were gathered at the Fort Sam Houston Golf Club to celebrate the founder of the Purple Heart and his birth-



day, President George Washington.

President Washington established the Purple Heart award, originally known as the Badge of Military Merit, in 1782 during the Revolutionary War. Since then the award has evolved through various changes in regulations, policies and style. However, more than 1.9 million service members have been awarded the Purple Heart.

"General Washington wanted an award that would honor and recognize military merit and bravery of Soldiers, specifically enlisted men, in combat," said Trombitas. "For our military the Purple Heart signifies that a grateful nation recognizes the great sacrifices of those wounded in combat."

Today, the Purple Heart is awarded when a member of the armed forces of the United States is wounded by an instrument of war at the hands of the enemy. It may also be awarded post-

humously to the next of kin in the name of those who died of wounds received in action.

"All of our veterans should be proud of what they've accomplished," said Trombitas.

Trombitas estimated that more than 1.2 million Purple Hearts were awarded in World War II and Korea and 200,000 during the Vietnam War.

"Today, our nation, rightfully so, recognizes these great Vietnam veteran patriots for their tremendous sacrifice and courage," said Trombitas.

Trombitas stated that 45,000 veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars have earned Purple Hearts and that today's generation of service members displays the same loyalty and courage of troops in previous conflicts.

"Many of the men and women [in today's Army], have served not one, or two or three tours of duty, but have five, six or more tours in Iraq and Afghanistan," said Trombitas. "Many of these same young people signed up after 9/11, knowing that they will, more than likely, be sent into harm's way."

Trombitas closed by outlining the Army's future strategic guidance which was published in January on behalf of the new Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA), Gen. Raymond T. Odierno. The CSA's guidance or "Marching Orders" is called "America's Force of Decisive Action."

The CSA's vision is guided by three principles and interconnected roles: prevent conflict; shape the environment; and decisively win our Nation's wars.

According to the CSA's "Marching Orders," the Army prevents conflicts by maintaining credibility based on capacity, readiness and modernization. It averts miscalculations by potential adversaries. The Army shapes the environment by sustaining strong relationships with other Armies, building their capacity, and facilitating strategic access. If



More than 45,000 Iraq and Afghanistan veterans have earned the Purple Heart award for wounds suffered due to an instrument of war at the hands of the enemy. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Curt Cashour)

prevention fails, the Army rapidly applies its combined arms capabilities to dominate the environment and win decisively.

"My command, Army South, supports this current strategy," said Trombitas. "Army South is strongly engaged and we have forces working with our partner nation armies in countries such as Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Honduras, El Salvador and the Dominican Republic."

Army South's exercises and operations with partner nations in the command's area of responsibility of Central and South America and the Caribbean are already following the CSA's principles.


"We are prepared to rapidly dominate any operational environment and we are able to conduct a full range of missions to include: deterring and defeating transnational crime and terrorism; rapidly providing humanitarian assistance, as we did in

Haiti two years ago; engaging with our allies, building partner nation capacity to counter the flow of drugs into our nation; facilitating strategic access to other armies; and supporting civil authorities at home and broad," said Trombitas.

Trombitas used the analogy of the CSA's prevent, shape and win principles to recognize the Alamo chapter's service to veterans and the San Antonio community.

"You work with and prevent veterans, wounded warriors and

their families from falling through the cracks, you shape the environment through your charitable actions and education initiatives with wounded warriors and your organization is decisively winning by helping veterans and their families every day," said Trombitas.

In demonstrating this commitment to service, the Alamo chapter, as an example of Trombitas' analogy, recognized six San Antonio police officers who were injured in the line of duty by presenting them with certificates of appreciation. 

DA recognizes Army South for best protection program

Command acknowledged for personnel recovery, antiterrorism efforts

*Story by Lt. Col. Antwan C. Williams
U.S. Army South Public Affairs*

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas – In January 2012 U.S. Army South was awarded U.S. Army's best protection program of any command and the best antiterrorism (AT) program runner-up for a major subordinate command following a 2011 assessment by the Department of the Army's Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, Plans and Transformation, the Provost Marshal General's Office and the DA Protection Directorates.

Army South received the recognition because in four specific areas the command was singled out as an Army best practice.

Two of the areas include personnel recovery (PR) in Army South's G-3 directorate (operations) and the country study team program in the G-2 directorate (intelligence). Army South's AT program received the other two best practice recognitions for being thoroughly integrated with mission planning and operations and for developing two checklists that exceeded the standard in form and function during pre-deployment assessments.

The Louisiana Army National Guard also received the 2011 Army best antiterrorism program runner-up award in the category of deployed unit for its support to Army South and U.S. Southern Command during the New Horizons exercise Task Force Bon Voizen in Haiti.

Task Force Bon Voizen was a Louisiana National Guard-led and Army South-sponsored operation that provided humanitarian relief to Haiti, as part of SOUTHCOM's New Horizons exercise in 2011. Task Force Bon Voizen—translated “good neighbor”—provided medical, dental and veterinary care to more than 32,000 people and 2,100 animals. In addition to and during the two months of providing medical, dental and veterinary care,



Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas (left), the Army South commanding general, presents Col. James A. Peterson, Army South deputy chief of staff for the operational protection directorate, with an award on behalf of the Department of the Army Feb. 14 at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. (U.S. Army photo by Robert R. Ramon, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

the Louisiana National Guard built a three-room school, two medical clinics and restroom facilities in Haiti.

Army South commanding general, Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, nominated the Louisiana Army National Guard for the prestigious recognition because the guard's AT plans not only exceeded established standards, but because they were so effectively embedded with the command's AT program while deployed to Haiti.

According to Trombitas, who officially recognized the staff directorates and honorees at a command town hall meeting here on Feb. 14, the Louisiana Army National Guard's antiterrorism program exceeded DoD and DA standards and the Guard units were instrumental in the successful execution of Task Force Bon Voizen.

Trombitas further stated that he was very proud of the hard work of the Louisiana Army National Guard and Army South personnel for achieving high standards of excellence and receiving recognition from DA for the command's protection, AT and personnel recovery programs.

The DA Protection Program, which falls under the headquarters Army Protection Directorate (G-34) and with assistance from the DA staff, assesses each Army command, Army service component

command and direct reporting units every three years in the areas of AT, intelligence, physical security, law enforcement, military working dogs, high-risk personnel, information operations, information assurance, computer network defense, continuity of operations, emergency management, force health protection, critical infrastructure risk management and fire and emergency services.

According to a letter sent to Trombitas from Lt. Gen. John F. Campbell, Army deputy chief of staff for plans, operations and transformation (G-3/5/7), in January 2012, Army South ranked highest of the six commands assessed in 2011.

“You clearly set a high standard of excellence through your program's outstanding performance,” wrote Campbell in the letter.

In a separate letter sent to Trombitas in Janu-

ary 2012, Maj. Gen. David E. Quantock, the Army's Provost Marshal General, wrote he was “honored to recognize” Army South's “distinct dedication in establishing an excellent Antiterrorism Protection Program for Fiscal Year 2011.”

Col. James A. Peterson, Army South's deputy chief of staff for the operational protection directorate, which oversees the AT and Army protection programs, thanked his staff, the command and DA for the recognition.

“Maintaining the highest antiterrorism and force protection measures is critical to the command and the staff, so that each of us is able to synchronize unity of effort and effectively complete our mission,” said Peterson. “These awards and recognition demonstrate the dedication of all of our personnel and I congratulate every member of our team.”



Husband, wife first sergeants team retire together

Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas (left), the U.S. Army South commanding general, shares a moment of laughter as he prepares to present certificates of appreciation to 1st Sgt. Darin J. Schartner (center), the non-commissioned officer in charge of the Warrior Family Support Center on Fort Sam Houston, Texas, and his wife, 1st Sgt. Jeannette I. Schartner (right), the first sergeant for Army South's Headquarters and Service Company, during the Joint Base San Antonio Fort Sam Houston Monthly Retirement and Awards Ceremony at the Quadrangle here Feb. 23. Both Schartners retired during the ceremony and each was honored not only for their service to the Army, but also for their unwavering support to each other as an Army Soldier and spouse. (U.S. Army photo by Robert R. Ramon, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)



Doug B. Sanders, director of Army South's Personnel Recovery Coordination Cell, gives a presentation to the Warrior's Corner attendees at the Association of the United States Army symposium in Washington, D.C., Oct. 12. (U.S. Army photo by Robert R. Ramon, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

DA designates Army South as executive agent for reintegration

Story by Lt. Col. Antwan C. Williams
U.S. Army South Public Affairs

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas – U.S. Army South's Personnel Recovery Coordination Cell (PRCC), part of the command's G-3 (operations) directorate, received best practice recognition from the Department of the Army and was recently designated as the executive agent for planning, leading and coordinating reintegration efforts Army-wide.

In March 2011, DA conducted an assessment of Army South's personnel recovery office and in January 2012 named it as an Army best practice program.

Reintegration is a process that begins when service members, civilians or contractors return after being separated from

friendly forces. Reintegration is a proven process that provides recovered personnel with the necessary tools to effectively resume normal professional, family, and community activities, with minimal physical and emotional complications.

Since 2003, Army South has planned, rehearsed and participated in the reintegration efforts of six personnel, who have either been held as hostages, went missing or were separated from friendly forces.

Army South was originally designated by the commander of U.S. Southern Command and also DA to execute post captivity reintegration responsibilities. With the successful establishment of the program here, Army South, working with Joint Base San Antonio, is also being considered as the primary DoD location for all

services.

The U.S. Navy formally designated Joint Base San Antonio and Brooke Army Medical Center as one of its reintegration locations for its service members and asked for Army South's assistance during a future reintegration mission.

"Army South being designated as the DA executive agent for planning, leading and coordinating reintegration efforts is a testament to our hard work, our training methodology and having successfully executed this operation four times before," said Doug B. Sanders, director of Army South's PRCC.

In addition to leading reintegration efforts, Army South's primary mission as the Army service component command for SOUTHCOM is to conduct theater security cooperation to en-

hance hemispheric security and stability, and build partner nation capacity. Army South is also prepared to deploy and conduct contingency operations in its area of responsibility. Army South's AOR is Central and South America, and the Caribbean.

Army South's PRCC is also responsible for pre-deployment training of personnel travelling in the AOR. Army South was the first Army command with a full-time PRCC staff dedicated to leading an organized approach to reintegrating personnel, said Sanders.

The PRCC staff first executed a reintegration operation in August 2007, when an American (Department of the Army) contractor held in Ethiopia for almost three months was returned to friendly forces. The second time was in 2008 when Marc Gonsalves, Thomas Howes and Keith Stansell, Army contractors who were held in captivity in Colombia for more than five years, were returned.

The third reunion took place in 2010 when a DA Army civilian held in captivity for two months in Iraq was returned safely. In January of this year Army South's PRCC assisted with the successful reintegration of a U.S. airman, who was kidnapped and held in Venezuela.

Army South's PRCC conducts formal reintegration training for the staff and all joint and inter-agency organizations involved in the process at least twice a year here. In addition, the PRCC incorporates training scenarios into Army South and SOUTHCOM exercises.

The training includes family assistance teams, medical personnel, public affairs officers, security specialists, chaplains, at-

torneys, logisticians, personnel, finance, federal bureau investigators, State department representatives, government contractors, DoD civilians and joint military personnel from Lackland Air Force Base and Fort Sam Houston.

According to Sanders, the process takes place in three major phases and is based on Joint Publication 3-50, *Personnel Recovery* doctrine as well as DoD and Army personnel recovery regulations and policies.

Phase one, called, accepting custody (originally called initial phase) starts when personnel are returned to U.S. control. An individual recovered in this phase receives an initial medical examination and a psychological assessment.



Dr. Thomas McNish (left), a former Air Force prisoner of war from September 1966 to March 1973, speaks at Army South's reintegration training Dec. 14 about his experiences as a Vietnam POW. (U.S. Army photo by Robert R. Ramon, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

The second phase, called decompression, is when the returnee receives additional specific medical care, formal debriefings and thorough psychological decompression therapy at a major military medical facility as needed.

The third and last phase is called transition (originally called home phase) and begins with a Yellow Ribbon Ceremony. During this phase a returnee is formally

reunited with family members and is reintroduced publicly to society. If the individual is reintegrated at Joint Base San Antonio, this phase is programmed to take place at the San Antonio Military Medical Center here (formerly known as Brooke Army Medical Center).

During the third phase and Yellow Ribbon Ceremony, members of the media may have the opportunity to receive information about the medical care the returnee received at SAMMC. In addition, military and government specialists or reintegration leaders may discuss the returnee's captivity status and progress.

According to Sanders, the success of Army South's program has led to replications throughout DoD at other major facilities and commands. Army South's PRCC is responsible for advising and leading other commands on reintegration.

Sanders has been running the fully-staffed PRCC office under Army South's G-3 since its inception and has become DoD and the Army's in-resident expert on reintegration efforts. As a result of his work and the recognized success of the program and his staff, Army South continues to be the designated consultant for lessons learned for DoD.

"Personnel recovery has always been a priority mission for DoD with the long-standing belief to never leave a fallen comrade," said Sanders. "The PRCC builds on this long-standing tradition by providing the planned and established phases for the returnees to move through for proper reintegration into society and with their family members."

Army South's next scheduled formal PRCC training will take place here June 26-28.

Foreign area officers receive orientation, prepare for duties in command's AOR

*Story and photo by
Robert R. Ramon
U.S. Army South Public Affairs*

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas – U.S. Army South hosted the annual U.S. Army Section Chief and Military Personnel Exchange Program Conference at the Army South headquarters here March 4-9.

The conference gathered ARSECs stationed in more than 25 countries from throughout U.S. Southern Command's area of responsibility and representatives from U.S. military organizations within the United States.

"I think the most important thing about this forum is that it allows U.S. military representatives in various countries to speak face-to-face with each other," said Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, the Army South commanding general.

Conference participants have an opportunity to better understand how to synchronize their efforts in support of the Army South mission and the ARSEC's partner nation army programs and activities while gaining regional focus and insight and the ability to facilitate future coordination.

ARSECs are foreign area officers assigned to partner nation countries to act as a direct link between the U.S. Army and partner nation militaries and to serve as a singular point of contact within American embassy country teams to coordinate and deliver all army-to-army assistance.

They are typically selected as foreign area officers after serving approximately seven years in their respective career fields.

Once selected, they undergo up to four years of specialized training to ensure they have the language, and foreign area cultural and technical skills to perform the tasks requested of them.

Once training is complete, they begin their two-to-three-year assignment as an ARSEC.

Given the remote nature of their assignment, the ARSEC/MPEP conference offers the participants a chance to gather valuable networking and situational awareness training to carry out the Army South mission, commander's intent, and address regional issues with key agency resources and officials.


"(They) can become isolated within each country and this conference gives everyone a chance to have a better regional perspective as to what we do collectively and to find solutions to common challenges," said Trombitas.

Trombitas said his headquarters staff also finds the conference advantageous, especially during the "synchronization station" portion that facilitates one-on-one interaction in order to synchronize projected activities and responsibilities.

"It's very beneficial not only to the ARSECs but to our headquarters staff who are able to sit face-to-face with the individuals down range and learn firsthand about any issues they're having," said

Trombitas.

The conference included round table discussions with Army South staff participation to promote regional situational awareness, provided a forum for ARSECs and MPEPs to interact directly with the commanding general and garner more insight into his strategic vision and priorities and to coordinate a forum for staff and key agencies to brief their duties, functions and organization to participants.

A new addition to this year's ARSEC/MPEP conference included Self Defense/Captivity Avoidance Training in which the conference participants learned to defend against common chokes, grabs, and bearhugs, as well as weapons such as guns and knives. 



Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, the Army South commanding general, sits with members of his staff and ARSEC/MPEP conference attendees during a briefing at the Army South headquarters March 5. To watch a video about this story, click [here](#).



Dr. Isaac Hampton II, the Army South command historian, discusses United States history and black history events with 5th grade children at Stone Oak Elementary School March 1 in San Antonio. To see more photos from this story, click [here](#).

Historian collects lessons learned, maintains institutional knowledge

*Story and photo by
Robert R. Ramon
U.S. Army South Public Affairs*

SAN ANTONIO – As the U.S. Army South historian, Dr. Isaac Hampton II is responsible for keeping the institutional memory of Army South, the Army Service Component Command of U.S. Southern Command, by collecting historically significant records and conducting oral history interviews of military and civilian personnel for lessons learned and historical posterity.

"Dr. Hampton provides valuable assistance in helping public affairs research historical information when preparing speeches and remarks for the commanding general and senior leaders and when we write news stories," said Lt. Col. Antwan C. Williams, chief of command information, media relations and community relations for the Army South Public Affairs Office.

In addition, he advises the commanding general on the requirements levied by the Department of the Army and SOUTHCOM's historical programs


to include all matters relating to military history and its integration into operations and training at Army South.

"I enjoy being the command historian because it allows me to support our Soldiers and the mission with a usable history," said Hampton.

As an example of his appreciation for history, Hampton visited 5th graders at Stone Oak Elementary in support of Black History Month March 1 in San Antonio.

Hampton spent several hours with the children discussing various topics related to the contributions of African-Americans throughout the nation's history.

The children also spent time making individual presentations to Hampton about the history of slavery leading up to the U.S. Civil War.

"Everything our Army does is based on what it learned yesterday. You're always better off knowing what happened in the past so you can make historically informed decisions in the present," said Hampton. 



Sgt. Tamika Exom, a public affairs non-commissioned officer for U.S. Army South's Public Affairs Office, demonstrates the proper use of approved personal protective equipment as she rides her motorcycle in front of the Army South headquarters March 1. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Deylon Douglass, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

DA publishes new motorcycle rules

Story by Sgt. Tamika Exom
U.S. Army South Public Affairs

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas - In 2011 the Army revised the safety regulation for motorcycle riders, which includes new and sustainment training requirements that exceeds most states' minimum requirements.

The Army requires personnel to conduct sustainment training as part of a life-learning process in the rapid action revision of the Army Safety Program regulation 385-10 for motorcycle riders effective Oct. 1 of last year.

According to Army Regulation (AR) 385-10, the new and sustained training is also a tool used to support any three-year period of inactivity or the acquisition of, or change in motorcycles.

According to the U.S. Army Safety Center, statistical data showed many motorcycle accidents were a result of individuals acquiring bad habits,

due to lack of refresher training.

Army accident data show a significant number of fatal motorcycle accidents are due to rider indiscipline, not lack of skills. Speeding, loss of control and alcohol are among the top three factors cited in indiscipline-related accident reports.

According to preliminary loss reports, during last fiscal year, 46 Soldiers died in motorcycle fatalities, a 16 percent increase compared to 38 fatalities in fiscal year 2010.

Of those reports, leaders in the rank of sergeant to major accounted for 64 percent, according to Steven Anderson, the safety director for U.S. Army South. Several of those fatalities involved speeds of greater than 90 miles per hour. Fatal motorcycle accidents, 40 percent of the time, can usually be attributed to "indiscipline."

"Indiscipline is never excusable," said Command Sgt. Maj. Rick Stidley, command sergeant major for the U.S. Army Combat Readiness /Safety

Center. "Rank doesn't matter when it comes to safety. No Soldier is more or less accountable than another, and we should foster a culture where corrective actions may be made without fear of retribution."

When speed is not cited as a factor, but loss of control is, it is rarely because of road conditions like gravel or wet surfaces. Motorcycle riders tend to exceed their ability to control the bike under normal circumstances, according to the Motorcycle Safety Foundation. Skills such as negotiating curves and knowing how to properly and fully apply the brakes when necessary are successfully taught in the Military Sport Bike Rider Course (MSRC) and the Experienced Rider Course (ERC).

The Progressive Motorcycle Program (PMP) now requires several different classes to be taken at specific intervals that are spelled out in AR 385-10. The PMP addresses rider behavior, teaches basic skills, and builds and improves rider attitude and control throughout an individual's riding life. The program is designed to continually re-engage riders while promoting safe behaviors and refreshing rider skills. The PMP consists of the Basic Riders Course (BRC), the ERC, the MSRC and the Motorcycle Refresher Training (MRT).

Soldiers are now required to take an appropriate BRC course prior to operating any motorcycle, even if that Soldier is already licensed by the state or local jurisdiction. Based on the type of motorcycle (sport bike, cruiser, etc...), Soldiers will then complete either the ERC course for cruiser riders or the MSRC for sport bike riders within 12 months of completing the BRC.

Every three years, following completion of the ERC or the MSRC, operators shall complete motorcycle sustainment training.

Sustainment training is designed to mirror the previous basic, experienced and sport bike course selection.

The BRC is designed for students with no riding experience, as well as those who have been riding with a learner's permit to those with some riding experience who would like to obtain additional basic riding skills in a secure environment away from traffic and other distractions. The program consists of classroom and hands-on motorcycle operator training.

The ERC is designed for a licensed experienced rider who wants to sharpen his or her skills and should be taken by those who ride cruisers instead of sport bikes. For riders who already have basic skills, the ERC is similar to the BRC except

the speeds are higher and riders are now required to provide their own motorcycle for training. ERC is also an excellent refresher course for practicing and renewing basic riding skills.

The MSRC is a "next-level" training course designed specifically for experienced motorcyclists that ride sport bikes and have completed either the experienced or basic rider courses.

MSRC is a one-day course that complements a rider's basic skills and helps with personal risk assessment. The training enhances both basic skills and crash avoidance skills. Improving braking and cornering finesse is also emphasized. The course is beneficial for riders on any type of street motorcycle. The MSRC is mandatory for licensed military sport bike riders within 12 months of completing the BRC.

One provision of the PMP allows for Soldiers to take an advanced motorcycle riding course, however, the government will not cover the cost for this alternative sustainment training. Visit <https://safety.army.mil/povmotorcyclesafety/MOTORCYCLE/AdvancedMotorcycleTraining/tabid/2194/Default.aspx> for a list of advanced level courses.

Whether or not the rider is a Soldier or civilian, one thing that has not changed about motorcycle safety is the required use of personal protective equipment (PPE) while riding on post. Soldiers, however, must wear proper PPE whenever operating a motorcycle, both on or off post and regardless of the states helmet law. PPE requirements are outlined in AR 385-10.

Army South Soldiers must sign the Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion (HHBN) Motorcycle Safety Agreement acknowledging required compliance of the army regulation and safety policies.

Soldiers not in compliance with the regulation may find themselves unable to ride their motorcycles on post. Some regulation violations can even result in adverse actions under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

If a Soldier is involved in an accident or fatality, it may be determined to be "not in the line of duty, due to own misconduct." This determination could result in the loss of medical benefits and in the event of a fatality, loss of casualty and insurance benefits for the next of kin.

For more information about motorcycle safety, resources and local training classes, contact Tom Howes, the Joint Base San Antonio Fort Sam Houston motorcycle safety coordinator at (210) 221-3846 or visit <https://safety.army.mil/>.



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