

U.S. Army South

Defense & Fraternity

July - September 2012



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Front cover: Maj. Gen. Frederick S. Rudesheim (left), the incoming U.S. Army South commanding general, takes the command's colors from Air Force Gen. Douglas Fraser, the commander of U.S. Southern Command, during a change of command ceremony at MacArthur Parade Field on Fort Sam Houston, Sept. 14. (U.S. Army photo by Eric R. Lucero, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

Back cover: A Chilean soldier stands at attention shortly after rendering honors to the command group visitors from U.S. Army South at the Escuela de Montaña, near Portillo, Chile, Aug. 7. (U.S. Army photo by Eric R. Lucero, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

Command Corner

Maj. Gen. Frederick S. Rudesheim
Commanding General

I am truly honored to take command of U.S. Army South and to continue this organization's long tradition of building and sustaining partner nation capacity in Central and South America and the Caribbean. I thank all of you for the warm welcome you provided me and my family as we settled into our new home here in San Antonio.

I grew up with Army South – literally. I was born and raised in the Republic of Panama where the U.S. had troops and the Army South headquarters was located for 95 years. My father was a businessman who lived in Panama for 55 years. Texas became my home when I left Panama for college.

I'm a University of Texas at Austin Army ROTC graduate and having previous assignments at Fort Hood to include commanding a company and a battalion there and serving as the deputy commander for support in the 1st Cavalry Division, Texas is coming home.

I look forward to working with each of you as we support the Commander of U.S. Southern Command and the U.S. Army in our area of responsibility by continuing to conduct theater security cooperation and counter transnational criminal organizations.

Army South has a proud and respected history of more than 100 years operating in the SOUTHCOM AOR. With the command's successful deployment to Haiti in 2010 and numerous multinational exercises and operations you conduct each year, Army South has a great reputation in building and sustaining partner capacity and shaping the environment. I congratulate you and Maj. Gen. Simeon Trombitas on maintaining that great reputation.

Having served as the Chief, Central Caribbean-South American Division and the Deputy Director for Politico-Military Affairs for the Western Hemisphere in the J-5 in Washington D.C., I am well familiar with our mission and the great work Army South does on a daily basis in our AOR.

Having lived in Panama and taught at the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) at Fort Benning, Georgia, I look forward to travelling back in the AOR again to meet old friends and to make many new friends with our partner nations, while also being able to use my Spanish language skills again and work on my Portuguese.

From supporting operations such as Just Cause in Panama in 1989 and Unified Response in 2010, Army South has been a pioneer in successfully shaping the environment and working



Maj. Gen. Frederick S. Rudesheim (left), U.S. Army South commanding general, conducts an interview with Honduran military personnel at the Honduras joint staff headquarters in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, Oct. 4.

with partner nations in conducting operations in our AOR.

My intent is to continue to work with our partner nations in training and preparing for any contingency, while being agile, responsive and effective for the SOUTHCOM commander. We will continue to develop the command to meet the needs of the future Army 2020 as part of Joint Force 2020.

I expect everyone to continue to train and to be prepared to conduct contingency operations, while promoting a command climate of mutual respect, professionalism and hard work.

As the Chief of Staff of the Army outlined in his Marching Orders published earlier this year, our training must allow us to remain prepared to handle today's challenges and tomorrow's uncertain conflicts by being able to rapidly dominate the operational environment and to successfully complete the full range of missions expected of today's Army: deterring and defeating aggression; providing humanitarian assistance; engaging with our allies while building and sustaining partner capacity; facilitating strategic access to other armies; and supporting civil authorities at home and abroad.

We will remain ready and prepared to support SOUTHCOM in countering transnational criminal organizations and conducting contingency, humanitarian, and disaster response and security operations at a moment's notice.

Again thank you for the wonderful welcome here and I look forward to meeting all of you in the headquarters and visiting our subordinate and aligned units.

Defense and Fraternity

Maj. Gen. Frederick S. Rudesheim
Commanding General
U.S. Army South

*Change at
the top*





Air Force Gen. Douglas Fraser (left) the commander of U.S. Southern Command, speaks to Maj. Gen. Frederick S. Rudesheim (center), the U.S. Army South incoming commanding general, and Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas (right), the outgoing Army South commanding general, during a ceremony Sept. 14 on Fort Sam Houston, Texas. (U.S. Army photo by Eric R. Lucero, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

U.S. Army South welcomes new commanding general

Trombitas bids farewell after nearly three years in charge

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

Maj. Gen. Frederick S. Rudesheim assumed command of U.S. Army South from Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas during a change of command ceremony Sept. 14 at MacArthur Parade Field at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

Rudesheim took over command of Army South following an assignment as the deputy director for

joint and coalition warfighting, joint civil-military operations, the Joint Staff in Suffolk, Va.

Air Force Gen. Douglas Fraser, the commander of U.S. Southern Command, hosted the ceremony. Fraser reflected upon his relationship with Trombitas, who had commanded Army South since November 2009, and the mission that Rudesheim will undertake.

“During his time in command, Simeon has provided strong leadership, direct advice, honest counsel, and constant outreach to our partners and our counterparts,” said Fraser. “In addition, he skillfully directed his Soldiers to accomplish key

tasks across the spectrum of U.S. Southern Command’s mission.”

“Gen. Rudesheim brings a wealth of experience and knowledge of the region and is ready to build upon the strong relationships that Simeon has built during his time here,” Fraser said. “Fred is ready to lead this command to new heights. He brings the right mix of experience leadership regional insight and vision to this important job. He has a passion for this mission and region and I can’t think of a better person to take command of Army South from Simeon than him.”

During the ceremony, Trombitas introduced Rudesheim to Army South.

“I first met Frederick at Fort Carson and I’ll tell



Sgt. 1st Class Lloyd Kuykendoll (left), a senior fire control sergeant with Army South, presents Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas (center), the outgoing Army South commanding general, an artillery casing from the last shell fired under his command during a change of command ceremony Sept. 14 at MacArthur Parade Field at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. (U.S. Army photo by Eric R. Lucero, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

you without a doubt, he is the best general officer in our Army to take this command,” said Trombitas. “I know he’ll take this command to the next level, and he’ll have a lot of fun doing it.”

Following his introduction, Rudesheim expressed his excitement for joining Army South here in Texas, and assuming the command’s mission in Central and South America and the Caribbean, a region he used to call home.

He was born and raised in Panama, where he lived for 18 years before leaving for college.


Rudesheim is also a 1981 Army ROTC graduate of the University of Texas.

He stated that he is honored to be able to command a unit in Texas that is responsible for a region where he grew up.

“I love this region, I love what we do and I have a passion for our mission,” said Rudesheim. “For me and my family, this is coming home.”

“And now, for me and the Soldiers of Army South, it’s manos a la obra (all hands to work).”

U.S. Army South is the Army Service Component Command of U.S. Southern Command.

SOUTHCOM’s area of responsibility encompasses 31 countries and 15 areas of special sovereignty in Central and South America, and the Caribbean and covers about 15.6 million square miles. 



Maj. Gen. Frederick S. Rudesheim (center), the incoming Army South commanding general, receives the colors from Air Force Gen. Douglas Fraser (left) the commander of U.S. Southern Command, Sept. 14 at MacArthur Parade Field. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Tamika Exom, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

Maj. Roy Davis (saluting), executive officer for Army South's Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, renders a salute during the battalion's change of command ceremony on Fort Sam Houston, Texas, July 13.



Col. Steven Woods (right), the former Army South deputy commander for support, hands the HHBN colors to Lt. Col. Jeffrey C. Knight, the incoming HHBN commander, during the battalion's change of command ceremony July 13.

Changing of the guard

Army South's Headquarters Battalion hails new commander

*Story and photos by
Master Sgt. Kevin Doherty
U.S. Army South Public Affairs*

Soldiers of U.S. Army South Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion came out to MacArthur Parade Field here to pay tribute to Lt. Col. Charles A. Walters Jr., who after two eventful years of service to Army South, relinquished command to Lt. Col. Jeffrey C. Knight during a change of command ceremony held July 13.

"To command at Army South has been an absolute honor and pleasure," said Walters. "It's a great city and it's a great organization. The mission is so diverse with the area of responsibility that Army South supports."

The change of command ceremony, a long-standing military tradition, serves the dual purpose of rendering honors to the departing commander and providing official recognition for the transfer of authority and responsibility for the Soldiers, equipment, and the mission of the unit to the new commander. The passing of colors from Walters to Knight ensures that the unit and its Soldiers are never without official leadership and also signifies an allegiance of Soldiers to their unit's commander.

During the ceremony, both the incoming and outgoing commanders had the opportunity to conduct an inspection of troops as music played from the band. The inspection gives the commander the opportunity to inspect the fitness and readiness of his Soldiers and in turn allows

the Soldiers to display their excellence for their leader.

As Knight inspected his new battalion, the narrator gave a rundown of the unit's rich history. From the construction of the unit in 1943 in the United States Army as the Headquarters company, Sixth Army, to the present day reactivated Headquarters Support Company with the addition of two provisional companies which provide administrative and supply support for all assigned and attached Soldiers of Army South.

"Walters did a phenomenal job. He's got things running really well," said Knight. "I think my best option is improve and tweak what he has done and not try and reinvent the wheel."

When asked about the legacy Walters would leave behind at Army South, he said, "I hope that in the end, the number one legacy that I leave is taking care of Soldiers, developing subordinates, helping my first sergeants and commanders, senior noncommissioned officers and junior leaders develop an environment in which they didn't feel like they couldn't make a mistake. I hope that I have enabled them to take the initiative to feel like they have the authority and responsibility that they needed to accomplish their mission." 🌟

SOUTHCOM commander visits FSH, Army South

Fraser encourages more joint, multinational operations

Story and photo by
Master Sgt. Kevin Doherty
U.S. Army South Public Affairs

Less than a week after a brief trip to Fort Sam Houston, Texas during the annual PANAMAX exercise, Gen. Douglas Fraser, commander, U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), returned to address the entire U.S. Army South command during a townhall briefing Aug. 22.

Hundreds of Soldiers and civilians gathered inside Evans Theater to listen to Fraser discuss key topics affecting SOUTHCOM and Army South.

Fraser began his meeting by talking about his appreciation for Army South's effort in assisting with security and stability within the SOUTHCOM area of responsibility, which includes Central and South America, and the Caribbean.

Army South, as the Army component command to SOUTHCOM, focuses on the 31 countries and 15 areas of special sovereignty in these areas.

"What you do day in and day out to sustain the security in the region is very important," said Fraser. "Our country is very connected to this hemisphere, and we need to continue to engage with our partner nations to keep connected and to understand how each other operate."

Fraser then took the opportunity to applaud the Army South effort during their portion of the recent PANAMAX exercise, which took place at Fort Sam Houston Aug. 6-17.

PANAMAX is an annual SOUTHCOM – sponsored, multinational exercise series that is focused on ensuring the defense of the Panama Canal. Personnel from 17 nations, including the United States, participate in simulated training scenarios from various U.S. locations.

"I'm proud of the work you all did supporting and assisting Colombia and other partner nations during PANAMAX," he said.

He also discussed the benefits of such training exercises for the future and the importance of continuing to work alongside everyone in the joint and multinational environment.

Fraser said that Army South needs to be comfortable going outside Army lanes conducting interagency operations and working closely with our other service components, partner nations and agencies.

Fraser emphasized the importance of continuing the

command's efforts to counter transnational crimes and to support partner nations within the region in combating illicit trafficking.

"A key issue for our security is countering transnational organized crime...it impacts our nation and our partner nations," he said.

He made it a point, while wrapping up the townhall briefing, to re-enforce his belief that the joint and interagency environment is the way of the future and that everyone should get on board for it to be successful.

"Haiti was a big wake-up call for us and we've come a long way with working with interagencies, the U.N., and partner nations, and being able to respond effectively to natural disasters," said Fraser. "We sustain our successes with partner nations with both building partner nation capacity, but also military to military engagement."

Fraser was referring to the Army South deployment to Haiti in 2010 where the command provided security, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief following the devastating 7.0 magnitude earthquake that struck that country on January 12. The major earthquake was considered Haiti's most severe natural disaster in more than 200 years.


Fraser congratulated Army South and SOUTHCOM on the deployment and the success in building partner capacity during his tenure as the SOUTHCOM commander; however, he wants to see more military to military engagements.

He also mentioned that when the command conducts activities that build capacity in the future, we should also look at ways to sustain that capacity with partner nations.

"We need to build capacity and sustain capacity with partner nations," Fraser said.

Fraser closed the meeting by thanking Army South personnel for the hard work during his time as commander. Fraser is slated to relinquish his command on Nov. 19 to Marine Lt. Gen. John F. Kelly, who has been nominated for a fourth star and is currently serving as the Senior Military Advisor to U.S. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta.

Fraser wanted to take the opportunity to show his gratitude for the hard work and dedication of the hundreds of Soldiers and civilians within Army South.

"It has been an honor and a privilege to be associated with Army South and each and every one of you." 

Gen. Douglas Fraser, the commander of U.S. Southern Command, speaks to Soldiers and civilians of U.S. Army South during a townhall meeting at Evans Theater on Fort Sam Houston, Texas, Aug. 22.





Brig. Gen. Thomas E. Ayres, the commandant and commanding general of the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General's Legal Center and School, speaks to attendees during the opening ceremony of the 2012 Conference of the American Armies Legal Conference in San Antonio July 16.

Army South hosts legal conference for Conference of American Armies

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

U.S. Army South hosted representatives from 15 partner-nation armies during the Conference of American Armies Legal Conference July 16-19 in San Antonio.

The purpose of the conference was to bring together military legal practitioners from the CAA partner armies and discuss operational law lessons learned in disaster relief and peacekeeping operations, and discuss mechanisms by which to enhance information sharing between CAA partners.

This year's Legal Conference marks the first time the U.S. Army and Army South hosted and organized an event of this nature for the CAA.

The Commandant and Commanding General of the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General's Legal Center and School, Brig. Gen. Thomas E. Ayres chaired the conference and stated partner nations of CAA will benefit from participating in this gathering.

"Partner nation members' ability to improve

interoperability and understand common legal issues that occur when responding to disasters or while executing peacekeeping operations is beneficial to all armies that are part of CAA," said Ayres.

Lt. Col. Luis O. Rodriguez, the former Army South command judge advocate general, said this conference was vital to Army South's efforts toward building partner nation capacity within the Western Hemisphere and establishing and re-affirming existing friendships that prove to be valuable when conducting multinational operations within the region.

"It is important because the CAA recognizes that there are many legal aspects in peacekeeping and disaster relief operations that can be shared to improve interoperability," said Rodriguez.

Rodriguez is confident the conference will pave the way for a more streamlined and universal approach to dealing with legal issues in the face of humanitarian and disaster relief operations.

"CAA partners will now have better legal tools as a result of this conference," said Rodriguez. "For

instance, the CAA Rules of Engagement Manual and the CAA Operational Law Guide will get updated in the conference, and we hope to set up a website where CAA partners can post and share legal lessons learned in operations. The various CAA legal tools discussed, developed and implemented through this conference will enhance CAA partner armies' effectiveness and interoperability."

By focusing efforts and working on collaborative solutions to regional issues, the participants' aim was to achieve a long-term decisive effect for a safer and more secure region where crime and natural disasters no longer wield the power to destabilize governments or threaten national and regional security.

"It's very important in legal conferences like this that we are able to speak about the different aspects of operational law," said Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, the former commanding general of U.S. Army South. "It's very important because we know that in the world we face today, we're not going to tackle any situation alone. We'll work with allies and friendly nations especially as we meet those emerging threats in our region."

Brazilian Col. Altair Jose Polsin, a Brazilian representative to the CAA Legal Conference, who also commanded a Brazilian army battalion during peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations in Haiti in 2010, spoke to the CAA members about the legal challenges involved in a major shift in operations and how his troops were able to meet that challenge in Haiti.

Polsin said the Legal Conference was an important opportunity for each country to provide valuable input and to be able to work toward a collaborative solution to the present-day challenges in the Western Hemisphere.

"As our armies seek to become better at interoperability in order to face common threats, whether natural or man-made, they need to first and foremost to understand the legal framework and issues inherent in those threats."

- Lt. Col. Luis O. Rodriguez,
former U.S. Army South command judge advocate general

"The most important opportunity that we had during this conference was the chance to visit with the other armies and exchange experiences so that we have the chance to be on the same page," said Polsin. "If we have the same legal regulations and we have the same ideas, we already know how each other operate. This makes it easier to focus on the mission objective."


Like Polsin, Rodriguez feels the conference will go a long way toward establishing a common blueprint for implementing legal practices for military forces.

However, Rodriguez also believes the work completed by the participants will serve to strengthen the reputation and professionalism of each participating army as well.

"As our armies seek to become better at

interoperability in order to face common threats, whether natural or man-made, they need first and foremost to understand the legal framework and issues inherent in those threats," said Rodriguez. "It is crucial for an army to maintain its credibility, transparency and legitimacy in any operation it undertakes; in fact, it is an essential task."

The CAA provides a forum for regional chiefs of armies to strengthen integration and cooperation, study

problems of mutual interest, establish, and contribute to hemispheric security, protect against all threats to peace, democracy and freedom and enhance interpersonal relationships. 



Axel Martinez, a political military analyst for Army South's international military affairs section, briefs attendees during the opening ceremony of the 2012 Conference of the American Armies Legal Conference in San Antonio July 16.



Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas (right), the former U.S. Army South commanding general, presents Eric Herr (center), the Army South mortuary affairs officer, and Chief Warrant Officer 4 Luis Lozano (left), the Army South mortuary affairs reporting officer, with a command coin at the Army South headquarters Sept. 4. (U.S. Army photo by Robert R. Ramon, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

Mortuary affairs ensures dignity for fallen

*Story by Eric Herr
U.S. Army South Mortuary Affairs*

Since the stand up of the Mortuary Affairs “Fly Away” Team in January 2012, Eric Herr, the G4 (Logistics) mortuary affairs officer, and Chief Warrant Officer 4 Luis Lozano, G1 (Personnel) reporting officer have responded to two deaths, which happened within weeks of each other.

The team was prepared and reacted quickly and flawlessly to ensure the Soldiers were swiftly repatriated. Their quick reaction and knowledge was crucial to the repatriation process.

U.S. Southern Command and its Army component, U.S. Army South's area of responsibility includes 31 countries and 15 areas of special sovereignty within Latin America and the Caribbean. Each of these countries has its own laws and jurisdiction and different ways of handling the deceased.

When someone dies, the country where the accident occurs has jurisdiction; this means the deceased are taken to the local mortuary until final disposition instructions are routed through appropriate channels.

The laws of these nations, along with the paperwork, reporting, and coordination, can make the repatriation of military members very difficult, timely, and sometimes political. Past cases have been difficult due to delayed reporting, host country laws, autopsies, embalming

requirements, and a host of other legal issues.

To solve these problems and ensure military members are taken care of with reverence and respect, Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, the former Army South commanding general, created a Mortuary Affairs “Fly Away” Team. This team consists of a G1 reporting officer and a G4 mortuary affairs officer.

The team's mission is to fly anywhere within the Army South AOR and ensure the deceased member is treated with reverence, dignity, and respect, and that all mortuary affairs reporting actions are taken care of efficiently and in a timely manner.

The team's mission once it is alerted is to coordinate with the Casualty Assistance Center in Puerto Rico about personnel actions, coordinate post mortem actions through the Armed Forces Medical Examiner's Office, ensure autopsies and embalming are within the regulation, communicate procedures with all involved, assist the embassy's military group mortuary affairs office, and to help facilitate repatriation.

The team brings a wealth of knowledge to assist the MILGP's with search and recovery of remains, identification, customs issues, and assist with any mortuary affairs regulatory requirements.

The creation of the team was the right thing to do and it shows the level of commitment Army South has to the fallen and their families. [f](#)



Maj. Mario Castro (right), Army South Southern Cone desk officer, visits with Colombian Command and General Staff College students at the U.S. Army South headquarters building Aug. 21.

Colombian CGSC students visit Army South

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

U.S. Army South hosted students from Colombia's Command and General Staff College here Aug. 21 in an effort to maintain a strong regional partnership.

“This visit is important because we get to know, in person, the future leaders of one of our most important partners in the region,” said Maj. Mario Castro, Army South Southern Cone desk officer. “These types of personal interaction and relation building activities facilitate our mission.”

More than 38 students from the Colombian army, navy and air force participated in the visit that highlighted Army South's major exercises and operations as well as specific aspects of its mission that are important to Colombia.

The Colombian CGSC is similar to the U.S. Army CGSC whose mission is to educate and develop leaders for full spectrum joint, interagency and multinational operations.

The Colombian CGSC students are required to complete the one-year course before they can be promoted to the next level.

Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, the former U.S.

Army South commanding general, welcomed Colombian CGSC faculty member Brig. Gen. Hector J. Pachon and the students at his headquarters just before Robert L. Pelegreen, Army South Security Cooperation Division deputy director, conducted a command overview briefing.

Castro said the Colombian students left a positive impression on the Army South staff during their visit.

“The CGSC students demonstrated a high level of professionalism and selfless service,” said Castro. “They are the future leaders in their army and we look forward to working together with them in the future.”

During their visit the students toured Army South's headquarters where they received briefings and presentations by several staff directorates within the command.

After their visit with Army South, Castro said the Colombian students visited Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

The visit to Army South was well received according to the Colombian students.

“It's a great experience to see how they do things here,” said Colombian Air Force Maj. Nestor Cortes, a Colombian CGSC student. “We want to find ways that we can better work together in the future since these are our partners and we share many common concerns.” [f](#)

Army South, 1st MSC assist demining effort in Ecuador

*Story by
Sgt. Jose Babilonia
1st Mission Support Command*

A detachment of Soldiers assigned to the 471st Engineer Company, 1st Mission Support Command, U.S. Army Reserve Puerto Rico, trained 30 soldiers from the Ecuadorian army on humanitarian demining operations, in coordination with the U.S. Army South July 15 to Aug. 3 in Quito, Ecuador.

The troops assigned to the 1st MSC, whose ability to speak Spanish proved to be crucial during this mission, trained their Ecuadorian counterparts in landmine clearance, mine risk education, and victim assistance.

"I think we are blessed to be bilingual and have the opportunity of joining the U.S. Army," said Sgt. Gustavo Burgos, who has served in the U.S. Army Reserve-Puerto Rico for 21 years.

According to the U.S. Department of Defense, Ecuador has anti-personnel landmines along its 79 kilometer border with Peru, a result of a long-standing border dispute that escalated into a brief war in 1995.

As of Dec. 31, 2008, 6,113 mines over an area of 517,312 square meters remained to be cleared. The area affected by mines is sparsely populated; however the mines significantly affect indigenous tribes' access to their traditional farming and hunting land.

The challenges to mine clearance operations include the steep terrain, lack of road access, and frequent flooding.

"We go to the States, we receive the best training in English, and we bring it back, we take it to Latin American countries and make it available in Spanish. That is something extraordinary, because we are contributing, maybe a little bit, to improve other people's lives. I think this is what it is about, to save lives and that everyone has a better life, that's what is important," said Burgos.

By participating in this mission, the Soldiers from the largest U.S. Army Reserve command in the Caribbean help implement the U.S. government humanitarian mine action program, which provides increased humanitarian mine action assistance to countries suffering from the presence of persistent landmines. [f](#)



Ecuadorian army Pfc. Darwin Valverde, from the demining command in General Marco Aurelio Subian Martinez Military Fort at La Balvina Quito, Ecuador, uses an F3 minelab mine detector during a practical exercise on Aug. 1 while Sgt. Miguel Rolon, from the 471 Engineer Company in Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico, supervises. (U.S. Army photo by Miguel Negron, U.S. Army South Visual Information)



(Top) An Ecuadorian soldier uses an F3 minelab mine detector to scan for simulated explosives as he works his way toward a simulated casualty while a U.S. Soldier supervises Aug. 1 near the General Marco Aurelio Subian Martinez Military Fort at La Balvina Quito, Ecuador.



(Left) Ecuadorian army Pvt. Juan Pablo Diaz, from the demining command in General Marco Aurelio Subian Martinez Military Fort at La Balvina Quito, Ecuador, uses a probe to find and mark a simulated mine during a one-man drill Aug. 1 while a U.S. Soldier gives instructions. (U.S. Army photos by Miguel Negron, U.S. Army South Visual Information)

PANAMAX '12 bolsters canal defense capacity

Army South, partner nations conclude annual exercise

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

U.S. Army South along with armed and security forces from 17 nations officially concluded the annual U.S. Southern Command sponsored Fuerzas Aliadas PANAMAX exercise that took place simultaneously here in San Antonio, Miami, Fla., Suffolk, Va., and in Panama Aug. 17.

Commonly known as PANAMAX, the exercise brings together sea, air and land forces in a joint and combined operation focused on defending the Panama Canal from attacks by a violent extremist organization as well as responding to natural disasters and pandemic outbreaks in various locations.

More than 50 Colombian military personnel travelled here to Fort Sam Houston, and led the land component portion of the exercise for the second year in a row. Army South led this portion every year prior to 2011.

Brazilian military forces led the maritime component portion for the first time this year.

This year, in addition to the United States, Brazil and Colombia, hundreds of participants from Argentina, Belize, Canada, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay and Peru took part in the overall exercise.

“The multinational staff shows the full interoperability of our forces and partner nations,” said Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, the former U.S. Army South commanding general.

The simulated land component portion of the exercise took place here at Army South’s headquarters, while other portions of the

exercise took place in Florida, Virginia and Panama.

In addition to SOUTHCOM and Army South, other U.S. armed forces commands that participated in the exercise included Marine Forces South, Special Operations Command South and Naval Forces Southern Command with ships and a contingent of ordnance, mobile diving, logistics and security forces personnel.

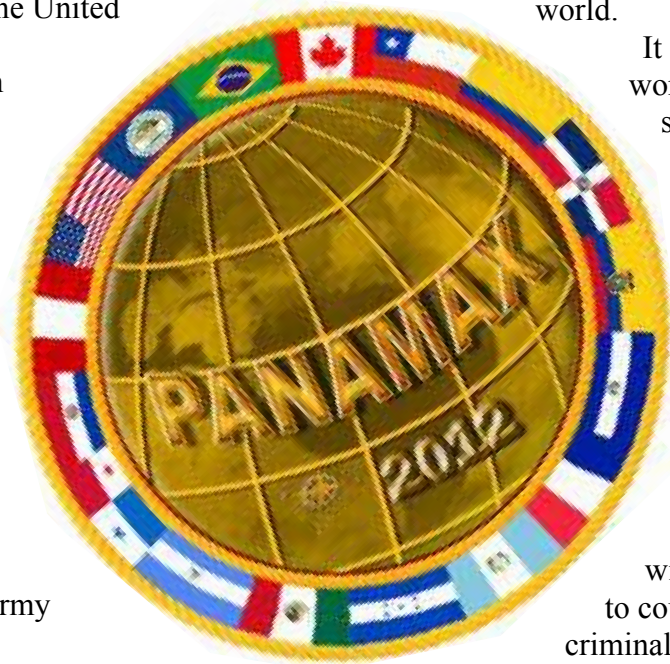
“PANAMAX develops and sustains relationships that improve the capacity of our emerging and enduring partners’ security forces to achieve common desired goals,” said Trombitas. “This annual exercise fosters mutual cooperation and understanding among participating nations.”

The Panama Canal is considered one of the most strategically and economically crucial pieces of infrastructure in the world.

It is critical to the free flow of trade worldwide and the region’s economic stability is largely dependent on the safe transport of several million tons of cargo through the canal each year.

This major multinational exercise has grown dramatically since 2003, when Panama, Chile and the United States conducted the first exercise.

PANAMAX provides opportunities for the participating nations, along with Army South to join efforts to counter threats from transnational criminal organizations, while providing for humanitarian relief and security of the Panama Canal as deemed necessary by the government of Panama and other nations in the region.



(Top) A U.S. Soldier assists partner nation soldiers from Colombia, Chile and Peru in plotting map coordinates during Fuerzas Aliadas PANAMAX 2012 at the Coalition Forces Land Component Command headquarters at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, Aug. 14. (U.S. Army photo by Eric R. Lucero, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

(Above) Brig. Gen. Orlando Salinas, the U.S. Army South deputy commanding general, speaks to U.S. and partner nation service members at the CFLCC Aug. 16. (U.S. Army photo by Master Sgt. Kevin Doheny, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)



(Right) Air Force Gen. Douglas Fraser (left), the commander of U.S. Southern Command, speaks with Colombian Maj. Gen. Pedro Leon Soto Suarez, the Colombian army inspector general, about PANAMAX 2012 at the CFLCC Aug. 15. (U.S. Army photo by Master Sgt. Kevin Doheny, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)



Colombian Maj. Gen. Pedro Leon Soto Suarez (right), the Colombian army inspector general, briefs members of the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce during their visit to the Fuerzas Aliadas PANAMAX 2012 Coalition Forces Land Component Command headquarters at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, Aug. 15.

S.A. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, ROTC cadets tour Army South, PANAMAX

Story and photo by
Eric R. Lucero

U.S. Army South Public Affairs

A group of approximately 30 individuals comprised of members of the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and cadets from the Reserve Officers' Training Corps from St. Mary's University's Rattler Battalion visited U.S. Army South's headquarters building Aug. 14 to familiarize themselves with the command and its programs.

Visitors were greeted by Brig. Gen. Orlando Salinas, the Army South deputy commanding general, who led a command brief that explained the history, mission and accomplishments of Army South.

During the presentation, Salinas explained to the group how Army South's programs and initiatives enhance theater security and stability throughout the Western Hemisphere.

After receiving the brief, the group toured the

Fuerzas Aliadas PANAMAX 2012 Coalition Forces Land Component Command exercise headquarters here. PANAMAX is an annual U.S. Southern Command-sponsored, multinational exercise series that is focused on ensuring the defense of the Panama Canal. Personnel from 17 nations, including the United States, participate in simulated training scenarios from various U.S. locations.

The group's tour of the CFLCC gave them a chance to see the extent of Army South's efforts at building partner nation capacity through professional exchanges and a chance to work side-by-side with other nations' armies.

This year, for the second consecutive year, Colombian officers were in charge of the CFLCC.

For many of the group's visitors, the visit was an opportunity to learn the programs and policies behind the Army's initiatives within the Western Hemisphere.

"I've heard about Army South, but my experience

prior to today had been quite limited," said Joseph Carrizales, a San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce board member and sales and service manager for Wells Fargo. "I learned a lot today. Far too many people do not understand what the command does. To be able to take what I've learned today and pass it along to others how great Army South is doing is going to be a true challenge to myself."

While Carrizales came into the visit with limited exposure to Army South's mission and programs, one other visitor had years of experience dealing with the command.

Ambassador James F. Creagan, the director of the Center for International Studies, ambassador in residence and the current holder of the Amy Freeman Lee Chair of Humanities at the University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio, formerly held numerous diplomatic positions in Latin America to include a position as the U.S. ambassador to Honduras. It was in Honduras where Creagan was able to utilize Army South's 1st Battalion, 228th Aviation Regiment assigned to Joint Task Force-Bravo in Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras.

Creagan's experience in the region and with Army South enabled him to serve as a testimonial to the command's efforts and effectiveness in the region.


"I think today's visit was excellent," said Creagan.

"It's really an overwhelming experience to see how well our military works with so many foreign countries for the same mission in protecting our environment and countries."

*- Joseph Carrizales,
S.A. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce board member*

"People will hear about PANAMAX, but to be able to experience it in this way and to see the Colombian general running the exercise was great. It's very important for this group to be able to learn in this setting."

After receiving a brief and tour of the CFLCC by Colombian Maj. Gen. Pedro Leon Soto Suarez, the Colombian army inspector general and PANAMAX CFLCC commander, the group departed with a new understanding of how a local command, with its headquarters in San Antonio, can drastically improve international relations throughout the entire Western Hemisphere.

"It's inspiring to see what our military does," said Carrizales. "It's really an overwhelming experience to see how well our military works with so many foreign countries for the same mission in protecting our environment and countries. This is something we need to do more of." 

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* U.S. Army South Command App coming soon!



Dominican army Col. (Dr.) Arturo Aquino Espinal, the chief of ophthalmology at the Central Hospital of the Armed Forces in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, conducts an eye surgery on a patient July 25. Espinal worked alongside U.S. Soldiers during a medical readiness training exercise July 10-27.

Seeing past borders



MEDCOM, Army South mission improves Dominicans' eyesight

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

A U.S. Army South and U.S. Medical Command annual cataract medical readiness training exercise concluded in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic July 27. The purpose of this exercise was to help build partner nation capacity, while providing humanitarian services and improving eyesight for hundreds of Dominican citizens.

The cataract medical mission planned by MEDCOM and working with Army South was led by Col. Darrel "Casey" Carlton, an ophthalmologist from Madigan Healthcare System, Fort Lewis, Wash.

This was Carlton's third time leading a medical mission in the Dominican Republic.

He said the major difference this year was more

host nation physicians leading and participating in much of the effort.

"What we've been doing here for the last few years has not only improved the eyesight of countless Dominicans, it has truly helped build and sustain partner nation capacity because we now have, more than ever before, host nation physicians who are trained and providing much of the care during this exercise," he said.

Col. (Dr.) Dan Berliner, the former Army South command surgeon and deputy chief of staff for medical, said missions like this one support U.S. Southern Command's theater security cooperation by, "improving the lives of people in our region by giving them sight," while working alongside host nation physicians to help improve interoperability, "to build partner nation capacity and provide positive images to partner nations in the



Spc. Robert Larkin (left), an operating room specialist, and Col. (Dr.) Darrel K. "Casey" Carlton, an ophthalmologist, conduct an eye surgery on a Dominican patient July 25 at the Central Hospital of the Armed Forces in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Both Soldiers are stationed with the Madigan Health Care System in Fort Lewis, Wash.

SOUTHCOM area of responsibility.”

SOUTHCOM and Army South’s area of responsibility includes 31 nations and 15 areas of special sovereignty in Central and South America and the Caribbean. The two commands have conducted dozens of medical readiness and training exercises in its AOR each year over the last decade.

These MEDRETEs have not only provided basic healthcare to rural populations in various countries, but are an excellent vehicle for medical personnel to receive training often in austere and difficult environments that are not easily replicated anywhere else, explained Carlton.

U.S. Army ophthalmologist, Maj. (Dr.) Eric Weber, from Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., who was on his first MEDRETE, echoed Carlton’s view of training.

“I see more patients here with strabismus in a two-week mission than I would in an entire year of



Dominican army 2nd Lt. Avila Lopez, a physician, prepares a Dominican boy for his eye surgery July 23.

practice back home.”

Strabismus is a type of surgical procedure on the extra ocular muscles to correct the misalignment of the eyes. Of the more than 350 eye surgeries the team conducted in two weeks, about 20 percent of them were for strabismus.

The remaining procedures were primarily for cataract, refractive and nonrefractive and droopy eyelid issues or procedures.

Weber said there is no other training environment like this one where you gain so much experience in such a short period of time, while also working closely with host-nation medical colleagues.

Dominican Col. (Dr.) Arturo Aquino Espinal, chief of the ophthalmology department at the Central Hospital of the Armed Forces in Santo Domingo, where the two-week mission took place said, “Building relationships

among our colleagues from both countries has been amazing.”

“Working alongside the U.S. doctors, I’ve done more than a dozen eye surgeries in two days,” said Espinal.

In addition Espinal said, “The U.S. and Dominican ophthalmologists share medical and surgical experiences with each other, which help improve our skill set.”

One example Espinal provided was when he took Carlton one night to meet with a local group of Dominican physicians to share new concepts in eye treatments.

“Sharing experiences, meeting with colleagues and helping poor people are the most beautiful and rewarding experiences,” said Espinal.

Carlton added, treating Dominican citizens, “which is most important,” also builds relationships with our colleagues and helps build and sustain their capacity



Raul H. Yzaguirre, the U.S. ambassador to the Dominican Republic (center), and Col. (Dr.) Darrel K. "Casey" Carlton, an ophthalmologist from the Madigan Health Care System in Fort Lewis, Wash., speak with Dominican patients waiting to undergo eye surgery at the Central Hospital of the Armed Forces July 23 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

to conduct various new surgical procedures.

“I met Espinal last year at the Society of Military Ophthalmology in Orlando, Fla., and now we are here together sharing this experience,” Carlton said.

The medical mission also provided an opportunity for Dominican doctors, third and fourth-year medical residents, to train and conduct surgery alongside U.S. military ophthalmologists.

“The willingness of the American doctors to teach them [the residents] the techniques and let them work hands on, so they are really happy about it,” said Lt. Col. (Dr.) Robert Risk, a Dominican army ophthalmologist.

Marcela Mejia, a Dominican physician and fourth-year medical resident, conducted several eye procedures during the MEDRETE, while working alongside U.S. ophthalmologists. “It has been amazing. They have been super nice...they teach you the techniques they use,” said Mejia.

A further testament to the success and importance of the medical mission was when U.S. Ambassador to the Dominican Republic, Raul H. Yzaguirre showed up at the hospital on July 23 to thank the medical team and meet with patients.

Col. (Dr.) Kevin Winkle, from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, and the rest of the medical team were very appreciative of the ambassador coming by to thank the team.

The ambassador’s visit and the satisfaction of seeing parents smile after a procedure has dramatically improved their children’s eyes have been some of the most rewarding experiences, said Winkle.

“There is nothing more satisfying than seeing the look on a parent’s face when you made their child’s eyes straight or certainly the look on somebody’s face who couldn’t see and the next day the light of day has kind of dawned on them in a new and personal way,” said Winkle. 🌟

James Breaux, U.S. Army South personnel recovery, tries to take a blade from Sgt. 1st Class Kim Lofton, an Army South chaplain's assistant, during captivity avoidance training at the STW Krav Maga gym in San Antonio July 16.



Army South takes on Krav Maga, trains for captivity avoidance

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

The initial, normal, human reaction under stress in an urban warfare environment was the basis of self defense tactics taught to a group of U.S. Army South Soldiers during a three-day captivity avoidance course held July 16-18 at the STW Krav Maga gym in San Antonio.

The only rule in this extremely aggressive self defense program is to go home safe.

Krav Maga, a Hebrew word meaning “contact combat,” is a non-competitive defensive tactic system developed and used by the Israeli Defense Forces to be able to come up with an instinctive reaction defense so that regardless of age, gender or level of fitness, a person can learn this system in a relatively short period of time, about 10-12 weeks.

“Army South has an area of responsibility that gives them a work commute into Central and South America and the Caribbean,” said Col. (Ret.) Rick Bassett, a student instructor who recently retired from Army South as the chief of staff and after 30 years of service to the Army. “These Soldiers become targets for captivity whether they want to be or not.”

One of the principles to Krav Maga is to end a fight as quickly as possible and therefore is known for its focus on real-world situations and extremely efficient, brutal counter-attacks to the face, neck, groin, knees and eyes as well as constantly striking and kicking to get loose from an attacker.

Krav Maga teaches students how to defend against attacks from behind, while blindfolded

and in tight, confined spaces such as vehicles and up against walls.

The system is comprised of eight progressively difficult levels.

Training for level one can be completed in about 10-12 weeks.

According to Pete Hardy, owner and chief instructor of the STW Krav Maga Gym, this particular class is ideal for any government employee who is going to go out of the country and into a hostile environment, armed or unarmed, to give them skills that if they are possibly a target for being kidnapped, they have the skills to prevent that from happening.

“This class enhances SERE (Survival Evade Resist Escape) training, its survival and resistance,” said Doug

Sanders, personnel recovery for Army South. “It’s a great workout and it keeps you on your toes. I hope I never have to use it, but if I do, it will be instinct.”

Hardy is extremely passionate about his job and he teaches every day. Over his past 15 years as an instructor, people have come back to him to let him know they had to use these techniques, which saved their life.

“Showing people they have the ability to get out of a dark place, like a survivor, saves lives by giving them a level of confidence that they’ve never had before,” said Hardy.

“The message I want to get out about Krav Maga is that we are not a sport system, we are a survival system,” said Hardy. “We put no limitations on you whatsoever on how to survive an attack where it’s probably going to be an attack that’s going to put you in the hospital or end your life.”



Johnny Donald (left), a U.S. Army South command security manager, and Maj. David Steele, an Army South logistics officer, practice self defense techniques during captivity avoidance training at the STW Krav Maga gym in San Antonio July 16.



Army South strengthens ties with Colombian, Chilean armies

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

U.S. Army South's former commanding general traveled to Colombia and Chile July 31-Aug. 9 as part of Army South's effort to strengthen partner nation capacity through engagement and personal exchanges.

Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas traveled to Bogota, Colombia, where he discussed ways to enhance regional security and stability with Maj. Gen. Pedro L. Soto, the Colombian army inspector general, Maj. Gen. Javier E. Rey, the Colombian army director of army plans, and Maj. Gen. Jaime Esguerra, the Colombian army operations officer.

"We have a strong and enduring relationship with the Colombian army," said Trombitas. "As a strategic ally and global partner, we share many common security concerns."

This was especially apparent during the Fuerzas Aliadas PANAMAX exercises in 2011 and 2012 where more than 50 Colombian military personnel travelled to Army South's headquarters to lead the land component portion of the exercise. Army South led this portion every year prior to 2011.


After a series of meetings with key leaders, Trombitas visited the UH-60 Helicopter Mechanics School in Tolomaida, Colombia, and the Tactical Aviation Field

Team and Regional Helicopter Training Center in Melgar, Colombia.

Trombitas then made his way to Santiago, Chile, where he met Gen. Juan Miguel Fuente-Alba, the Chilean army commander, Lt. Gen. Hernán Mardones, the chief of the Chilean joint general staff, Maj. Gen. Alejandro Arancibia, the director of international relations for the Chilean army, and Maj. Gen. Humberto Oviedo, the Chilean Military Attaché to Washington, D.C. The meetings focused on regional security cooperation and the need for strong partnerships which enable partner nation armies to enhance hemispheric stability.

"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."

Trombitas closed out the trip with visits to the Chilean Escuela de Montana (Mountain School) in Portillo, Chile, and the Military Operations on Urban Terrain training facility in Fort Aguayo.

"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 Colombian and Chilean armies are two of our strongest allies." 



Chilean Col. Javier Assadi, a Chilean foreign liaison officer at U.S. Army South, gives a presentation about Chile to Soldiers and civilians at the Army South headquarters Sept. 17. In addition to Chile's culture, the presentation highlighted the country's beaches, rivers and mountains.

Army South observes Chilean heritage, recognizes independence, armed forces day

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

Soldiers and civilians of U.S. Army South, along with their new commanding general, Maj. Gen. Frederick S. Rudesheim, joined partner nation, Chile in commemorating the country's Independence Day and Armed Forces Day in a celebration held here Sept. 17.

The observance, presented by Col. Javier Assadi, the Chilean foreign liaison officer at Army South, included a presentation, and according to Assadi, highlighted some of Chile's many enticing attractions: the country's sun kissed beaches, rivers and lakes as well as snow capped mountains, glaciers, geysers and volcanoes, just to name a few.

Chile traditionally celebrates its Independence Day and Armed Forces Day consecutively with big fanfare, love of culture, dancing, and food sampling that is described as a four-day-long party that begins with an Inauguration of the Funda by the president of Chile.

Funda refers to the place where the people go to dance, taste food and party from Friday until Monday.

Chile celebrates its independence from Spain on the date the country's fight for freedom began, Sept. 18, 1810. The country celebrates Armed Forces Day the day after its Independence Day.

In Chile, Día de las Glorias del Ejército (Glories of the Army Day) is a national holiday celebrated every year on Sept. 19, with the "Parada Militar," a parade where all the branches of the armed forces display some of their troops and equipment in a special part of "Parque O'Higgins" in Santiago.

Other smaller parades can be seen in other cities throughout country, as well as air displays by the air force.

The fiestas patrias (translated as "patriotic parties") are a time for all Chileans to gather together and celebrate their country, culture and independence. Celebrations of all things Chilean center on its Independence Day.

"Independence Day is a time to feel freedom and feel respect for the sovereign borders of Chile," said Assadi. "It is a time to have feelings of patriotism to our flag and its symbolism."

Assadi was honored to give the presentation to the senior leaders of Army South who were in attendance as he shared some facts about Chile that he feels make his country great.

"Thank you for allowing me to share this information with you, hoping that we continue to strengthen our relationship and friendship between our two armies," Assadi said as he concluded the celebration. 🇨🇱



Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas (left), the former U.S. Army South commanding general, thanks Brazilian Lt. Col. Marcos Americo, the Brazilian foreign liaison officer to Army South, during an observance celebration at the Army South headquarters Sept. 7.

Army South celebrates Brazil's independence, foreign liaison officer gives presentation

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

The Independence Day of Brazil, also called Sete de Setembro (7th of September) or Dia de Patria (Nation's Day) celebrates Brazil's declaration of independence from Portugal, Sept. 7, 1822.

This year, Brazil celebrates 190 years of independence from Portugal.

In keeping with the tradition of strengthening partner nation relations, Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, the former commanding general of U.S. Army South, along with more than 70 Army South Soldiers and civilians, joined in celebrating Brazil's Independence Day with an observance celebration held here and hosted by Brazilian Lt. Col. Marcos Americo, Army South foreign liaison officer.

Americo, whose wife, Renatta was in attendance, gave a video presentation which included traditional Brazilian Independence Day celebration activities as well as some sights and highlighted facts about Brazil.

This year, Brazil chimed in as the sixth largest economy in the world, claiming the U.K.'s spot. France remains in fifth place behind Germany, Japan, China and the U.S.

In the last 20 years, Brazil has become the world's

largest producer of sugarcane, coffee, tropical fruits, and has the world's largest commercial cattle herd of nearly 170 million animals, 50 percent more than the U.S. according to Brazil's finance minister, Guido Mantega.

Independence Day is a public holiday, consisting of picnics, military and civil parades and lots of outdoor events like air shows, musical events, fireworks and patriotic displays in most Brazilian cities.

Thousands of Brazilians gather in the streets to celebrate with streamers, banners and balloons while proudly flying their flag.

In Brasilia, the capital of Brazil, the national holiday brings approximately 30,000 people to Ministries Esplanade, where a military parade marches in view of the President of Brazil.

In New York City, Brazilian Day is held annually near Times Square, spanning 25 blocks and drawing a crowd of more than one million people.

The Brazilian Day concert, the main event, features Brazilian musicians and is aired in Brazil and more than 115 countries by the Brazilian television network Globo. Similar events are held in other major cities such as Los Angeles, San Diego, Toronto and London.

"Independence Day is a day to reinforce feelings of love for our country and to reinforce the desire to serve our country and our people," said Americo. 🇧🇷

Two are better than one ...

Story by Chaplain (Maj.) Charles J. Atanasio
U.S. Army South, Operations Chaplain

Time waits for no one. Fall has begun. Soon, many of us will participate in many holidays and traditions such as Sukkot, Eid al-Adha, Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas and New Year's to name just a few celebrations. In a previous issue of *Defense & Fraternity*, I noted that the holidays can be such a joyous time for a lot of people. It is a time to create great memories. It is an opportunity to reflect upon the divine and the eternal—of what matters most and lasts longest. Friends, family and faith are important.

It is an occasion to spend quality time with those people we love and cherish. But, for other people, the holidays are not moments of celebration. The holidays can be incredibly stressful for them for many different reasons.

The holidays can also be a season when people experience depression and rather than celebrate events with friends and family, they may live isolated from others. The words of a pop song suggests that, "One is the loneliest number."

Tragically, in 2011, a total of 283 Soldiers took their own lives. In order to prevent suicide, each of us must become more involved (sometimes much more involved) with the lives of family, friends, neighbors and co-workers. Maria Gallegos, Brooke Army Medical Center Public Affairs writes: "Ask, Care, Escort, or ACE, provides suicide prevention and awareness training for all Soldiers, staff, Civilians and their Family members.

This Army-approved program teaches participants to recognize suicidal behavior and the warning signs associated with suicide. The course also provides an opportunity to discuss and participate in realistic scenarios, and to practice communication and intervention skills to increase an individual's confidence to ask if someone is thinking about suicide."

In a recent presentation on leader intervention with suicide given at Evans Theater, Lt. Col. Marshal Smith, deputy chief for the department of behavioral health at San Antonio Military Medical Center noted the great importance of using the Buddy System to prevent suicide.

Lloyd D. Newell has delivered a devotional entitled "The Buddy System," which echoes the general sentiments of Lt. Col. Smith. The Buddy System is very practical; we already use it in a variety of day-to-day



Chaplain (Col.) Mitchell I. Lewis, the U.S. Army South chaplain, provides the invocation prior to the Army South change of command ceremony on Fort Sam Houston, Texas, Sept. 14. (U.S. Army photo by Eric R. Lucero, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

situations. Newell presents one such situation where the Buddy System saves lives.


A pair of beginning scuba divers was exploring an underwater cave when one of the divers accidentally lost his mouthpiece. Because he was inexperienced, he panicked and was not able to retrieve the mouthpiece. Desperate for air, he gave his partner a signal that let him know he was in trouble.

His partner responded according to emergency procedures he'd learned in class. He gave away his own mouthpiece; then found his backup for himself. When they safely reached the surface, the two divers embraced and laughed like children. Were it not for what those scuba divers called the buddy system, the struggling diver might not have survived.

Although friends are rarely needed to protect us from peril in our everyday lives, we may need them to help us with ordinary difficulties. A good friend is willing to labor with us when a physical challenge is beyond our capacity. There are many jobs that are too much for one person. When our judgment is lacking on a particular issue, a wise friend can offer insightful suggestions.

Friends can help us see our struggles objectively from a perspective we never thought of before. And just when it seems as though nobody in the world cares about us, a loyal friend may show up on our doorstep and prove otherwise.

Two are better than one. Friends often have the ability to lift us up in ways we cannot do by ourselves. The Buddy System is a lot more than just a good safeguard for scuba divers. It's a way of life.

Two are better than one. Use the Buddy System. Ask your buddy. Care for your buddy. Escort your buddy. Stand up for life. 



Life

means nothing to the enemy



Protect Your Family. Report Suspicious Activity.

The Army community is a target for terrorism. Specific targets have included Army installations and facilities. Restaurants, retail stores, schools, and playgrounds are also at risk. We don't know where or when terrorists might strike. Therefore we must *make vigilance our focus*. Make it your focus. Be aware of your surroundings both on and off post and report suspicious activity whenever you see it. Do that and you help make the Army community a *formidable obstacle* to terrorism.

Always Ready, Always Alert
Because someone is depending on you



Holiday Safety

Thanksgiving and Christmas are holidays that bring friends and family together to share a good meal, conversation and laughter. But they also come with several hazards, including an increased chance of fires, food poisoning, and travel accidents. Take a few minutes to review these Holiday safety tips, and enjoy them without worry.

Food Poisoning. Follow these steps to ensure your holiday feasts stay safe:

- Safely cooking a turkey starts with correct defrosting. The turkey can be thawed in the refrigerator, submerged in water in leak-proof packaging, or in a microwave.
- Cook the turkey immediately after thawing. Don't slow cook or partially cook the turkey. Always check the temperature with a meat thermometer.
- Leftovers need to be put away within two hours after serving the food.
- Food should be stored in shallow containers. Meat should be removed from the bone before being put away.

Fire. The average number of cooking fires doubles during the holiday season. Here are several easy ways to avoid fires:

- Don't leave the kitchen while frying and grilling. If deep frying a turkey, keep the fryer outside, away from walls, fences and other structures.
- Keep the fryer away from moisture to avoid burns from steam and spattering oil.
- Use a timer and do kitchen checks when simmering, baking, broiling and roasting.
- Keep pot holders and food wrappers three feet away from the stove or other hot surfaces. Kids should stay three feet away too. Make sure the handles of pots and pans are facing inward.
- Avoid loose clothes, especially those with long sleeves, while cooking.
- Make sure all candles and smoking materials are put out after the guests leave.

Holiday Travel Safety. Follow these holiday travel tips to keep everyone safe on the road:

- Pack an emergency road kit in case of a breakdown or accident. Make sure to include a flashlight, shovel, first aid kit, flares, pen, and paper. Also, don't forget a blanket to stay warm, and bring some non-refrigerated, pre-packaged food (just in case).
- Make sure to have a copy of your car insurance card in your glove box and/or wallet/purse.
- Don't forget to pack your cell phone and car charger - you never know if you are going to get caught in traffic.
- Buckle up and watch your speed! Law enforcement will be out in full force during the holidays, so make sure to take your time getting to your destination, and be sure to buckle up - it can help save your life!
- Fuel up, don't fill up. During the day people tend to overeat, causing many to become sleepy. If you have a long trip home, make sure to give your food plenty of time to digest and fill up your travel mug with some coffee.
- Don't drink and drive!

Don't let this holiday season end in tragedy. Follow these safety tips and have a joyous holiday season for all!

To see these videos below, go to Army South's Youtube page at www.youtube.com/usarmysouth.



To see Army South's new command video magazine, please visit www.youtube.com/usarmysouth or go to our homepage at www.arsouth.army.mil.

The command video magazine is published monthly and is produced and edited by Army South Public Affairs broadcasters: Sgt. Robert Quintero, Sgt. Deylon Douglass, and Frederick Hoyt.



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