

# The CACOM Courier

## Panetta on sequestration: People our most important asset

*Before he was replaced by Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, Leon Panetta wrote a letter to Defense Department personnel detailing efforts being taken to prepare for sequestration and any possible furloughs associated with it. Please read below.*

### To All Department of Defense Personnel:

For more than a year and a half, the president, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and I have repeatedly voiced our deep concerns over the half a trillion dollars in automatic across-the-board cuts that would be imposed under sequestration and the severe damage that would do both to this department and to our national defense.

The administration continues to work with Congress to reach agreement on a balanced deficit reduction plan to avoid these cuts. Meanwhile, because another trigger for sequestration is approaching on March 1, the department's leadership has begun extensive planning on how to implement the required spending reductions. Those cuts will be magnified because the department has been forced to operate under a six-month continuing resolution that has already compelled us to take steps to reduce

spending.

In the event of sequestration we will do everything we can to be able to continue to perform our core mission of providing for the security of the United States, but there is no mistaking that the rigid nature of the cuts forced upon this department, and their scale, will result in a serious erosion of readiness across the force.



**Former Secretary of Defense  
Leon Panetta**

but we have no legal authority to exempt civilian personnel funding from reductions. As a result, should sequestration occur and continue for a substantial period, DoD will be forced to place the vast majority of its civilian workforce on administrative furlough.

Today, I notified Congress that furloughs could occur under sequestration. I can assure you that, if we have to implement furloughs, all affected employees will be provided at

I have also been deeply concerned about the potential direct impact of sequestration on you and your families. We are doing everything possible to limit the worst effects on DoD personnel -- but I regret that our flexibility within the law is extremely limited. The president has used his legal authority to exempt military personnel funding from sequestration,



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least 30 days' notice prior to executing a furlough and your benefits will be protected to the maximum extent possible. We also will work to ensure that furloughs are executed in a consistent and appropriate manner, and we will also continue to engage in discussions with employee unions as appropriate.

Working with your component heads and supervisors, the department's leaders will continue to keep you informed. As we deal with these difficult issues, I want to thank you for your patience, your hard work, and your continued dedication to our mission of protecting the country.

Our most important asset at the department is our world-class personnel. You are fighting every day to keep our country strong and secure, and rest assured that the leaders of this department will continue to fight with you and for you.



A driver and gunner gaze into the Mojave Desert in the early morning hours during a rotation at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif. Photo by Master Sgt. Dave Johnson.

## Above and Beyond

# *412th CA Bn. Soldiers seize opportunities at NTC*

By Master Sgt. Dave Johnson

412th Civil Affairs Battalion

FORT IRWIN, Calif. -- Soldiers are often required to step up in combat situations to perform in positions above their pay grades.

They are frequently asked to do the same thing during training, in case that responsibility falls to them at a critical time.

In that spirit, several Soldiers in Company D, 412th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne) of Columbus, Ohio, performed above their current rank during a rotation at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif.

Those who have trained there can attest that NTC rotations are vigorous and demanding. The 412th Soldiers who

deployed and have tactical civil affairs experience used their knowledge and coaching from higher leaders to provide an immediate impact in their civil affairs teams, in the Civil-Military Operations Center or the Civil Liaison Team.

Sgt. Daniel Hilton worked as future operations cell liaison, a position normally held by an experienced commissioned officer.

"I get to work with the S9, decipher data and plan civil affairs operations missions for the CAT teams," Hilton said.

"He's a great NCO," said Capt. Angel Guzman, an observer-controller during this NTC rotation. "I saw his performance in Afghanistan, too, during a recent deployment. He brings valuable combat experience and capabilities to the CMOC."

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**Staff Sgt. Leah Fitch and Capt. Karren Roddy-Spikes interact with a role-player during a key leader engagement meeting. The 412th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne) trained at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, Calif. Photo by Master Sgt. Dave Johnson.**

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Another junior Soldier who performed many tasks is Spc. Christopher Corder. He worked as a civil affairs sergeant as well as a specialist.

"I get to work with battalion security officers and inform battalion commanders how their actions affect civilian populations," Corder said. "Also, I make recommendations how to mitigate civilian interference in the communities and ensure smooth relations between military and civilians."

The planning and civil affairs assessments are complex jobs requiring knowledge and experience. Basic skills still must be accomplished to support the CAT teams.

"I get to do all my routine civil affairs specialist jobs, too," Corder said. After a trying day doing NCO work, I perform radio and Humvee maintenance before I go to sleep."

Spc. Corder became Sgt. Corder on the last day of the NTC rotation.

Many of Corder's fellow 412th Soldiers wore multiple hats at NTC. Staff Sgt. Leah Fitch, who has deployed twice, worked as team sergeant and served as team leader, a captain's position.

"She has great rapport with the maneuver element and all members of her team," Guzman said. "She keeps morale up and team members prepared for all their missions."

Guzman noted how effective many 412th NCOs are regarding tactical civil affairs applications.

"Their knowledge brings a lot to the table," Guzman said. "This training is enhanced by the capabilities of 412th

junior Soldiers and NCOs.

"And the junior officers are showing strong leadership during key leader engagements and planning critical missions," Guzman added.

Some of the 412th Soldiers at NTC are new to the civil affairs arena, so this was their first exposure to the high operational level of civil affairs engagement.

"I came here as the medic," said Staff Sgt. Francis Regan, from Company D, 412th. "I have learned so much by working in multiple areas, I have a better knowledge of CA [so] that when I attend civil affairs school, I will perform well."

Because Regan performed as a team sergeant in some instances, he also developed some knowledge of battle staff requirements.

1st Lt. Bradley Taylor is also new to civil affairs.

"From Day 1 in the box until now, he has applied his experience to learn civil affairs at an amazing pace," said Staff Sgt. John Howe, an observer-controller assigned to the 312th Psychological Operations Company, based in Upper Marlboro, Md.

"Our Soldiers stepped into every position and performed well," said Maj. Ronnie Deweese, commander of Company D, 412th, and working as the S9 during the rotation. "Teamwork has been exemplary, and their efforts stand out in our evaluations of how proficient the 412th is."



**Painted rocks rest outside the main gate entrance to the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, Calif. The rocks are painted by volunteers to honor the commands and units that have trained at Fort Irwin. Courtesy photo.**



# Civil Affairs officer was first American woman in remote Afghan village

By Master Sgt. Dave Johnson  
422nd Civil Affairs Battalion

AFGHANISTAN – First Lt. Laura Starin, a civil affairs officer with the 412<sup>th</sup> Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne), based in Columbus, Ohio, worked with children and women in remote villages during her deployment to Afghanistan.

On October 3, 2011, Starin was on a civil affairs mission in the remote village in the Sangar Valley, Laghman province, Afghanistan.

Starin requested through permission to speak with local children and women her interpreter.

“The interpreter had a digital camera,” Starin said. “He took pictures of the children.”

Starin then showed the pictures to the children.

Army Staff Sgt. Brad Hahn, the squad leader, took a picture of Starin showing the locals what digital pictures look like.

“Everyone I questioned in the valley stated to the effect that they knew the United States armed forces were present in Afghanistan looking for the Taliban, but before our specific mission to their valley and villages, they had not seen a U.S. Soldier unless they went to a large city,” Starin said. “And I was the first American woman they had ever seen.”

Starin graduated from Ohio State University and was commissioned into the Army Reserve on the same day, June 14, 2009.

She deployed with Company A, 489<sup>th</sup> Civil Affairs Battalion, based in Knoxville, Tenn., to Afghanistan from July 2011, to May 2012.

Starin was the team leader of a maneuver civil affairs team. She was attached to 1st Platoon, Company C, 1st Battalion, 179th Infantry Regiment, 485 Infantry Brigade, 451<sup>st</sup> Brigade Combat Team during the deployment.



1st Lt. Laura Starin shows digital pictures to children in the Sangar Valley, Laghman Province, Afghanistan. Photo by Staff Sgt. Brad Hahn.





**Lt. Col. Robert Cooley, commander of the 422nd Civil Affairs Battalion, aims at a target during a simulated exercise. Goal setting and attention control are some of the things that are evaluated during the Comprehensive Soldier & Family Fitness-Performance and Resilience Program. Cooley's unit is the first Army Reserve unit to participate in this program. Photo by Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Andy Yoshimura.**

## Established program gets new audience

By **Capt. Saska Ball**  
*USACAPOC(A) Public Affairs*

GREENSBORO, N.C.-- Since the launch of the Comprehensive Soldier & Family Fitness-Performance and Resilience Program in 2006, only active-duty Soldiers have participated. But on Jan. 5, the first Army Reserve Soldiers had the privilege of starting on their year-long journey to total fitness.

Soldiers of the 422nd Civil Affairs Battalion in Greensboro, N.C., received their first of six classes on mental skills foundations, followed by practical application while using the engagement skills trainer that applied what they learned to maintain mental sharpness in a stressful environment.

"The reserve Soldier can really gain value from this program because

we're both citizens and Soldiers at the same time, so these skill sets are transferable on the military and civilian side," said Lt. Col. Robert Cooley, battalion commander for the 422nd. "Soldiers become better in their school work or civilian jobs, they become crisper and better on the military side, this is a win-win on many different levels."

For one weekend a month from January to July, the Soldiers will have lessons incorporated into their battle assembly training schedule, learning confidence building, attention control, energy management, goal setting and integrating imagery.

They will have a culmination event during their two-week annual training where they will be evaluated on all the lessons learned.

While the first six months of training occurs, leaders and trainers will discuss and plan how to adapt the program to Army Reserve Soldiers. They want to make it a one-year program, which the same amount of time an active-duty unit goes through the program.

"Army Reserve Soldiers have different backgrounds, but we know from research that what we do applies to all performances in life," said Joshua Orr, program specialist. "Where an active-duty Soldier is going to focus on their basic [military occupation specialty]-related tasks, applying these things and maybe a little bit on the side, the Army Reserve Soldiers can go and apply these things in their civilian jobs just as much as while they are here."

## *Dancing in Iraq, at home*

# Civil affairs officer rekindles love of dance

By Sgt. Erick Yates

352nd CACOM Public Affairs

FORT MEADE, Md. – The benefits of dancing for recreation have put a new spin on life for one Army Reserve officer and Howard County, Md., resident.

Lt. Col. Anne Marie Theriault, a civil affairs officer with the 352nd Civil Affairs Command, said she has had a love for dance since she was a child.

"I took dancing as a child, and then when I grew up, I did a little bit more social dancing," she said. "About two years ago, I started taking formal ballroom dancing lessons."

Theriault's beginning in dance was more than just a passing childhood phase. She said that her early experience included ballet, modern and jazz dance styles.

Theriault's interest in ballroom dancing started after she returned from a deployment to Iraq. She said that while she was deployed, she had opportunities to take part in dancing events like salsa at the forward operating base she was assigned to.

"Now it's strictly ballroom," Theriault said with excitement in her voice. She takes ballroom lessons at studios in Columbia and Silver Spring, Md., in a variety of styles.

"Smooth and rhythm are the styles I practice," she said. "They include the waltz, tango, cha-cha and rhaba, while the rhythm part includes American-style ballroom."

Since renewing her dancing passion, Theriault has competed nationally and locally.

"I do an annual competition in Las Vegas, and also did competitions in New York and Virginia last year," she said.



**Col. Anne Marie Theriault, a civil affairs officer with the 352nd Civil Affairs Command, demonstrates her ballroom dancing moves with the help of disc jockey Kamal Cagri, during the command's dining out in April 2012. Theriault's interest in ballroom dancing began when she deployed to Iraq. Photo by Sgt. Erick Yates**

Theriault, who said she has finished close to the top in her competitions, said it makes her feel good to be able to compete and perform at her level, especially given that some of her competitors have been competing a lot longer than her.

As Theriault's interest in ballroom dancing grew after her deployment, she said there was one particular factor that increased her enjoyment and participation: She uses it as a key component of her fitness routine.

"I joined Weight Watchers and lost about 30 pounds while doing normal exercise routines like running and aerobics, but decided to try ballroom dancing after the deployment," she said.

Since she incorporated ballroom dance into her life, Theriault said she has seen pleasing improvements.

"It's one thing to lose the weight, but maintaining the weight loss is

more challenging," she said.

Theriault said her flexibility has also improved and strength in her core muscles has increased.

Stew Smith, a former Navy SEAL and fitness author certified as a strength and conditioning specialist with the National Strength and Conditioning Association, said he agrees that dancing is a good routine to stay fit.

"Anything that you can find that you enjoy that keeps you active, I highly recommend it," he said. "Keeping fit does not have to be kept in the standard forms or routines of working out. With dance you get speed, agility and balance. You can get more out of it than people realize."

Theriault quoted Jennifer Hudson in relation to her quest to stay fit.

"Nobody's perfect," she said. "Even in keeping fit, you still have to live."





## Stay Low!!!!

431st Civil Affairs Battalion Soldiers low crawl to an objective during individual movement technique training at the unit's March battle assembly. Photo courtesy of the 431st CA Bn.

# 412th NCO speaks at DLA MRAP ceremony

By Master Sgt. Dan Johnson

412th Civil Affairs Battalion

COLUMBUS, Ohio. -- Army Sgt. 1st Class Chad Clark spoke at the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle ceremony for Defense Logistics Agency Land and Maritime in Columbus, Ohio.

Clark is a noncommissioned officer in the 412th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne), based in Columbus. His story about earning a Bronze Service Medal for valor has been published in several Ohio cities.

Because of Clark's local celebrity and the fact an MRAP vehicle saved his life, DLA leaders selected him to greet local media and share his story.

Clark survived a 200-pound improvised explosive device blast in Afghanistan while riding in an MRAP.

MRAPs were developed to provide increased survivability to counter the threat of IEDs. At the height of the vehicles' production, 150 people worked on the project at DLA.

"Saving lives is what MRAP was intended to do," said David K. Hansen, MRAP joint-program manager at DLA. "The mission is a success."

"Had I been in a Humvee when we hit the IED, I would not be here," Clark said.

MRAPs are built wider and higher off the ground than Humvees for improved protection. Most IEDs explode up through the floor of vehicles.

With many in attendance, Clark described in detail the events that occurred in Afghanistan on June 27, 2010.

"The blast sent our MRAP ten feet in the air," Clark said. "We all came out bruised and beat up, but we all walked away."

The safety and survivability of MRAPs is well documented. The vehicles have enabled Clark and other Soldiers to return home. Clark and his wife have two daughters, both of whom were born since he returned safely to Ohio in 2010.

"MRAPs have saved warfighters' lives around the world," said Rear Adm. David Pimpo, commander of DLA Land and Maritime.

Because MRAPs provide improved protection to Soldiers, U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command Soldiers are able to carry out their missions safely. Civil affairs missions require team members to travel into remote, often dangerous, locations to meet with community leaders.

"It is an honor to represent USACAPOC, a command whose Soldiers have done so much to help people and fight in the wars against global terrorism," Clark said.

## A look around the CACOM



Left: Lt. Col. Scott Perry, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 352nd Civil Affairs Command, practices firing a 9 mm pistol on an electronic skills trainer March 9 at the Gunpowder National Guard Reservation in Glen Arm, Md. The training helps Soldiers prepare for weapons qualifications scheduled for April. Photo by Sgt. Erick Yates.



Left: U.S. Army Lt. Col. Mark Martin, left, civil affairs team leader for Provincial Reconstruction Team Farah, and Ray Sudweeks, right, State Department representative in Farah, pass out toys and school supplies to Afghan children Feb. 9 during a visit to a returnee and refugee village. PRT Farah visited the returnee and refugee village on the outskirts of Farah City to conduct a site survey and deliver humanitarian assistance. PRT Farah's mission is to train, advise and assist Afghan government leaders at the municipal, district and provincial levels in Farah province, Afghanistan. Photo by Navy Master Chief Petty Officer Josh Ives.

Right: Brig. Gen. Raymond Jacobson, Maj. Gen. Milton Pilcher, Brig Gen. Dennis Wilke and Col. Wendell Hodgkins, all retired, pose for a photograph after Pilcher and Hodgkins were honored by the Civil Affairs Association as Distinguished Members of the Regiment Oct. 14 at Fort Meade, Md. Photo by Sgt. Erick Yates.





## A look around the CACOM



Above: Soldiers with Company B, 422nd Civil Affairs Battalion provide civil affairs support to the 37th Canadian Brigade Group and the Royal British Marine Commandos at Exercise Southern Raider March 6 at Fort Pickett, Va. Photo courtesy of the 422nd CA Bn.

Right: Soldiers with the 422nd Civil Affairs Battalion fire 9 mm pistols on a qualification range at the unit's February battle assembly. Photo courtesy of the 422nd CA Bn.



**352nd Civil Affairs  
Command**

Commanding General  
Brig. Gen. Ed Burley

Deputy Commander  
Col. Qunicy Handy

Command Sergeant Major  
Command Sgt. Maj. Earl Rocca

Public Affairs Officer  
Lt. Col. Lenora Hutchinson  
lenora.hutchinson@va.gov

Public Affairs NCOIC/Editor  
Staff Sgt. Jacob Boyer  
jacob.w.boyer.mil@mail.mil

Public Affairs NCO  
Sgt. Erick Yates  
erick.c.yates.mil@mail.mil

PAO Phone Numbers  
301-833-6729  
301-833-6730

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# Where's *My* Unit?

The **CACOM Courier** runs stories and pictures of **Soldiers** and units throughout the **352nd Civil Affairs Command**, but the staff can't run material we don't have. Did your unit conduct some interesting or unusual training over battle assembly? Has someone in your company distinguished herself in either her military or civilian careers? Please submit stories and photos to **LTC Hutchinson, SSG Boyer or SGT Yates** and we will do what we can to get them into the next issue! The **Courier** is a quarterly newsletter that runs in **March, June, September and December**, so please make submissions by the **15th** of the month prior to publication. Additionally, if you have stories that you would like us to try to tell, please submit requests for coverage using the attached form. We want to tell your story!



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