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Home of the Arctic Warriors

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Military Working Dog teams prepare for certification

Staff Sgt. Trish McMurphy,
USARAK PAO

Effective communication, training and hard work is required for a bond to form between a canine and its handler. Additionally, extra time and effort is needed to help prepare the dogs for real-world scenarios through various exercises.

As handler and dog become a team, they constantly train to improve and advance their skill level. They start with the basics in detection and patrol work, then add in more complex tasks and harder training scenarios.

Staff Sgt. Ben Wilburn, a senior dog handler with the 549th Military Working Dog Detachment, detailed some of the main tasks performed by the dog teams and how they can be utilized on post and during a deployment.

"The dogs can be used in a lot of different ways," said Wilburn. "Military working dogs are trained to find explosives, narcotics or bad guys in order to enhance mission readiness and assist commanders in evaluating their unit's overall readiness.

"You can use the military working dogs for health and welfare [inspections], narcotics searches, VIP missions, explosives sweeps and bomb threats," he said. "Also, the dogs save lives by finding bombs, weapons and bad guys."

Before a dog team can be used in the day-to-day, real-world missions they must pass validation and then be certified by a trained third-party certification official. Teams must recertify every year.

Sgt. Brittany Grimes, a patrol explosives detection dog handler with the 549th MWD Detachment, and her dog Ttebow attended this month's validation in preparation for their upcoming recertification.

"Validation is very important because it shows the certification authority if you are ready to go to the next step," said Grimes.

As a certified PEDD team, Grimes and her dog can be called upon to perform any of the required dog-team tasks, whether it is detection or patrol tasks, and must be proficient in those tasks.

Military police officers are trained to elevate their use of force toward their suspects depending on the level of threat being used by the suspect. In some cases military working dogs can be used where other levels of force are not working.

"If a suspect runs into a building, we send the dog in," said Grimes. "It's almost like a hide-and-seek game for the dog and once they find them we go through the phases to apprehend the suspect."

Sometimes suspects attempt to fight or flee from the police; this is when the military working-dog team becomes an invaluable asset.

Unlike bullets, military working dogs can turn corners and jump walls to hit their target. Sometimes just the dog's presence or the suspects' knowledge of this fact is enough to make them more compliant.

"If somebody is running and they decide they can't outrun the dog and they just stop, the dogs are trained to stop on our command when we tell them to," said Grimes.

This is known as the standoff.

During the standoff, after the

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Sgt. Stanley Daniels works with his military working dog Gina to find explosive training aids during the first day of validation training. Handler and dog must work as a team and show they are ready to do so during validation to move on to the next level, which is certification. Each team that certifies is put to work in real-world conditions, whether it is local law-enforcement missions or deployments. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Trish McMurphy, USARAK PAO)

Army brings new attention to DoD issued Gold Star, next-of-kin lapel pins



The Gold Star lapel pin (left) is presented to the Families of service members who lose their lives while engaged in action against an enemy of the United States. The Next-of-Kin of Deceased Personnel Lapel pin (right) honors those who lose their lives while serving on active duty or while assigned in a Reserve or National Guard unit in a drill status. They are normally presented to eligible Family members prior to the military funeral service. They are not meant as awards, but as symbols of honor. (Courtesy photo)

Allen Shaw,
Fort Wainwright PAO

The first of three public service announcements was aired before Super Bowl XLVIII, Feb. 2, to increase awareness of the Department of Defense-issued Gold Star and next-of-kin lapel pins.

The pins signify the loss of a loved one in support of the nation and although they have been in existence for decades, many people are not aware of their meaning. The PSAs were developed to educate the public.

"It's heartbreaking to think that a mom wearing a Gold Star might have someone ask her, 'What a beautiful pin, where do I get one?'," said Donna Engeman, a Gold Star wife who manages the Survivor Outreach Services program for the Army. We decided we had to do something to ensure the nation, the world, recognizes what that pin really signifies."

In addition to the Installation Management Command making it a mission to educate the public, the Army has updated a policy adopted in 2005. The new policy states that Soldiers who have lost an immediate Family member in combat are authorized to wear the Gold Star lapel pin on the Army green and blue uniforms.

An immediate Family member is defined as a spouse, mother, father, stepparents, children, including stepchildren, sisters, including stepsisters, brothers, including stepbrothers, a person in loco parentis and only living blood relatives.

Jeniffer Hutchinson-Wilson, operations manager, Alaska Casualty Assistance Center at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, said, "The program is a wonderful program. I think that it is fantastic that the Army stepped it up another notch and authorized the wear of the Gold Stars on the Army blue uniforms for the immediate Family members of those who died in combat. By allowing this, fellow Soldiers will recognize there are active duty Family members that are serving who have lost a loved one."

Gary Sinise, Academy-Award-nominated actor, who has visited Fort Wainwright several times, does the voice-overs for the PSAs which are documentary-style interviews and narrative stories from real survivors.

"We're committed to our survivors," said Lt. Gen. Mike Ferriter, IMCOM commander. "We owe it to them to ensure they get the support and service they deserve for as long as they need it. Educating the public on the meaning behind the Gold Star pins is simply another way to reaffirm to our survivors that we understand and honor the sacrifices they've made for our country."

According to IMCOM statistics, the Army's Survivor Outreach Services program currently supports more than 55,900 surviving military Family members.

Hal Snyder, chief of IMCOM's Wounded and Fallen Support Services Office, said, "The more people who see these, the greater the opportunity to recognize and honor Families of the fallen."

The Army plans an extensive outreach effort through social media and partnerships with corporate America.

Spartans hone Arctic warrior skills during winter FTX

Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Smith,
JBER PAO

Paratroopers with the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division, along with various units and enablers from across Alaska worked together to demonstrate their unique ability to carry out combat, as well as safety and security operations, while operating in an arctic environment during their winter field training exercise Jan. 28 through Feb. 5 at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.

More than 3,000 service members participated in the event. It all started with a forced entry airborne insertion Jan. 28.

Situational Training Exercises (STX), to include mounted and dismounted live-fire action and gunneries, along with Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) surveillance of the battlefield, 105mm howitzer artillery crew certifications and firings, air assaults and mounted and dismounted security patrols were some of the skills paratroopers executed during the event.

Due to regular deployment rotations in support of the Global War on Terrorism, the winter FTX was a first for the Spartan Brigade since its inception in 2008.

The Spartan paratroopers received invaluable training while planning and executing missions, further validating the unit's abilities to respond to contingencies and humanitarian relief efforts in the Asia-Pacific Theater. In addition, the FTX helps ready the Spartan Brigade as they prepare for their upcoming rotation to the Joint Readiness Training Center in Fort Polk, La.

Battalion commanders were pleased with their units' accomplishments and with the support of the outside enabling units that contributed to the training's success.

"I am real proud of how we, as a

See SPARTANS on page 7



More than 3,000 service members participated in a winter field training exercise Jan. 28 through Feb. 5 at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. It all started with a forced entry airborne insertion Jan. 28. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Smith, JBER PAO)

WEEKEND WEATHER

Friday
Mostly cloudy with occ. flurries; Highs around -12
Lows around -24
NE winds 5 to 15 mph

Saturday
Mostly cloudy with a chance of snow
Highs around -3
Lows around -10

Sunday
Mostly cloudy with a chance of snow
Highs around -5
Lows around -20

BRIEFS

Health fair

Community members, a free health fair from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the North Haven community center located at 4268 Neely Road on Fort Wainwright. There are fees for some tests. More information is available at www.alaskahelathfair.org. Active duty, military retirees, military families and civilians who have base access are welcome.

Correction

There was an error in the top story last week. The headline should have read: Paratrooper's death appears unrelated to training jump. The Alaska Post staff deeply regrets the error.

EEO, affirmative action, and diversity: What's the difference?

Tora R. Henry,
EEO Manager

Many of us have heard of the terms equal employment opportunity, affirmative action and diversity. But how many of us truly understand these principles and why they exist?

Equal employment opportunities (EEO) means eliminating barriers to ensure that all employees, former employees, applicants for employment and certain contractors are considered for the employment of their choice and have an opportunity to perform at their maximum potential. Through EEO and effective diversity strategies, United States Army Garrison Fort Wainwright can be the premier location to work.

EEO means freedom from discrimination on the basis of national origin, race, religion, reprisal, disability, age, color, sex and Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA). EEO rights are guaranteed by federal and state fair employment laws and are enforced by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and its state counterparts.

Affirmative action plans (AAP) are legal requirements and mandated by executive orders and judicial decisions. They take positive legal steps to remove discriminatory barriers to equal employment opportunities. Affirmative action plans are often temporary actions and remedies designed to overcome discrimination, focused on changing the participation rates of groups in the workforce. Affirmative action does not mean that managers are expected to hire unqualified applicants; it is not a quota objective. Affirmative action is usually implemented as a voluntary goal-oriented program. The implementation of quotas must be ordered by a court of law. A true quota situation has rarely occurred across the United States. It is the policy of the United States to have a federal workforce that is reflective of our nation's diversity, and affirmative employment initiatives do just that.

Diversity is a voluntary proactive initiative that recognizes and values differences in people, leadership, communication, lifestyles and views. The focus is not aimed at increasing participation rates of groups in the workforce; however, when embraced, it brings about a workforce that is relatable, relevant and multifaceted.

In all hiring situations, EEO principles should be applied to every vacancy being filled. Remember, while there is a difference between EEO and AAP, they do have one thing in common: Promoting parity.

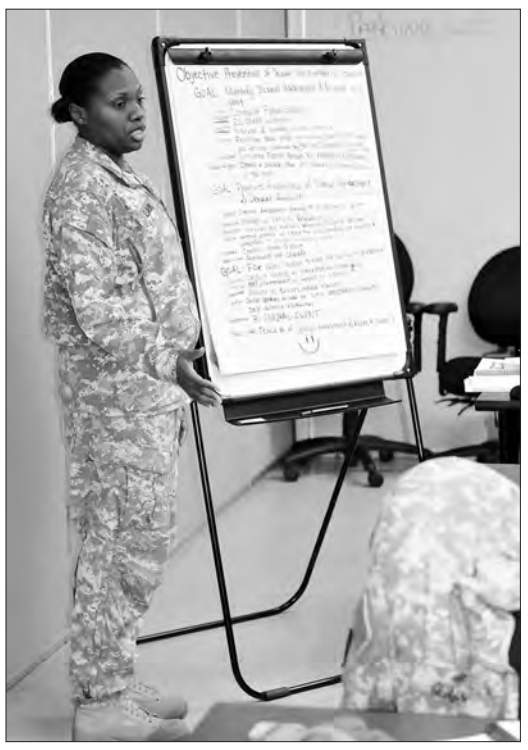
What a powerful combination! With EEO, AAPs and diversity initiatives, an organization creates opportunities for cultural inclusion, acceptance, respect for differences and quality for all employees.

Black History Month is the one month of the year that has been set aside so that all Americans can honor the past of a people who were brought to this country in political bondage. Although this month is mainly established to celebrate and honor the contributions of African-Americans, it also signifies unity and recognition cutting across racial and geographical barriers. Black History Month is a special time where we all come together in celebration of what "can be" if we as a society are open and willing to honor the past and embrace the future.



Tora R. Henry

SHARP victim advocacy program to assist victims of sexual harassment and assault



1st Sgt. Renata Clark, Distribution Company, 25th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, briefs fellow classmates on her team's goals to prevent sexual assault and harrassment in their unit during this month's SHARP course at Fort Wainwright's Mission Training Complex. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Trish McMurphy, USARAK PAO)

Staff Sgt. Trish McMurphy,
USARAK PAO

To help defeat sexual harassment and assault more than 20 Soldiers participated in a Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention course from Jan. 27 – Feb. 7 at Fort Wainwright's Mission Training Complex.

The intent of the Army's SHARP program is to prevent sexual harassment and sexual assault before they occur, with the goal of eliminating sexual harassment and assault by creating a command climate that respects every member of the Army.

"We have noticed a lot of victims don't come forward or don't talk about it because they don't know what services they can get or who is there to help them," said Sgt. 1st Class Aretha Garrett, U.S. Army Alaska equal opportunity advisor. "Since the SHARP program [became] a priority for the military, we have seen that more victims are now coming forward and talking about it."

The SHARP course, a two-week instructional course, gives participants basic guidelines on how to operate and function as unit victim advocates or SHARP representatives for their units with duties that include, but are not limited to, coordinating medical assistance for the victim, coordinating chaplain's assistance, proper notification procedures, proper reporting procedures, and of course, training. They must be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"They are taking the training and what they learned is that they did not know [certain things fall under] sexual harassment," said Garrett. "Now they know."

The Army continues to face the battle with sexual harassment and sexual assault head-on by taking responsibility for the good, bad and ugly of related incidents. Students who complete the course will go back to their units and take on the task of being a company or brigade-level SHARP representative.

Having victim advocates at brigade and company levels gives victims someone they can interact with when they don't feel comfortable talking with someone they don't know. The victims can talk with the advocates at their units and gain more information on how to report sexual assault and harassment cases, and the advocates are there for the victims every step of the way and ensure the victims get whatever help they need.

The course has not only taught these victim advocates how to help victims now, but also prepared some for possible future roles they may encounter during their military careers, like 1st Lt. Jacob Ford, platoon leader with the 73rd Engineer Company, Brigade Troops Battalion, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division.

"It definitely gives me a broader scope of sexual harassment cases and sexual assault cases, and now I know what to expect from my victim advocates and SHARP specialists on the brigade level and also the responsibilities of a commander at my level," said Ford. "So if it ever comes down to me making a determination on how to prosecute these cases I feel I will be more informed now and understand the process better.

"The biggest take-away for me other than getting a broad scope of what to do during those situations was how difficult it can be to interact with victims and I took away a lot of good techniques to deal with those situations," he added.

The victim advocates can help commanders provide an open, safe climate within their units. This provides additional resources for victims and helps to increase education within the unit.

"It was a good class," Ford said. "I would recommend it for those that have the desire to be a SHARP specialist."

To find out more about the Army's SHARP program and learn how to get involved, log on to: *http://www.sexualassault.army.mil/* .

Arctic sharpshooters go to Fort Benning for Army Small Arms Championship

Sgt. Michael Blalack,
1-25 SBCT PAO

A team of sharpshooters from 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, competed in the 2014 All Army Small Arms Championship at Fort Benning, Ga. Jan. 27 to Feb. 1.

With short notice that they would be competing, and bad weather closing the ranges, the team only had two days of shooting to prepare.

"We spent as much time as we could shooting from positions we don't normally shoot from," said Spc. Scott Nuth, a combat medic with Headquarters Company. "It was really a learning experience, being exposed to shooting styles that aren't exactly textbook but have real combat applications."

The team of five joined more than 220 soldiers to compete in rifle, pistol, combined and multi-gun categories in four skill levels.

"The battalion commander knew that this was above all, a training event," said 1st Lt. Christopher Harpster, a platoon leader in B Company, 1-24, "and wanted to expose good leaders to the event so they could pass this experience on to their guys."

Harpster was joined by Nuth, a gun and shooting enthusiast his whole life, Spc. Troy Megee and Spc. Ryan Healy, snipers with B Company and Headquarters Company respectively, and Pfc. Jacob Jancoscko, a team leader in C Company.

Once at Fort Benning, the team practiced with other teams from all over the Army, sharing tips and techniques with each other.

"There were a few teams there, mostly [National Guard] or [Army Reserve], who this is what they do," said Harpster. "Everyone was working together, teaching each other what we knew and sharing our experiences. We learned something from every team."

In addition to practicing with other teams, classes were also available for the competitors.

"I actually learned a lot from the ballistics classes they had there," said Harpster, who was recommended for the competition by his company commander. "Also the weapons maintenance techniques, how to calm yourself down after running, tips on zeroing your weapon, and developing a good pre-shoot routine, going through the same checklist of things every time before you pull the trigger, moving it to muscle memory."

This was the team's first time entering the event; they competed in the novice class against more than 100 other individuals.

Megee placed first out of all active duty specialist and below, and the team placed 18th overall out of 33 teams.

"Now that we understand the events better we can be a lot more competitive," said Harpster. "Next year we'll be in the open class."

Soldiers celebrate Super Bowl while at NTC

Staff Sgt. Mylinda Durousseau,
1-25 SBCT PAO

For most Americans the Super Bowl is about gathering with friends, enjoying their favorite snack foods and cheering for their team. During Super Bowl XLVIII, more than 200 Arctic Wolf Soldiers from 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division did just that as they took a break from the Enhanced Leader Training Program at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, Calif., Feb. 2.

"It's a good way to get to know people," said Michael Otey, a forward observer with 1/25 SBCT from St. Louis, Ohio.

The room was filled with cheering and laughter as Soldiers were able to come together as friends and spend the afternoon away from work.

"It's important for people to get together away from work, to get to spend time together, get to know each other a little better and just enjoy being together," said Chaplain (Maj.) Kevin Wainwright, 1/25 SBCT chaplain.

For those who didn't have a team in the game there was Super Bowl bingo, trivia, nachos and the often highly anticipated commercials.

"It's unique and it's fun. Everyone is interacting," said Sgt. 1st Class Jon Schneider, 1/25 SBCT aviation operations sergeant.

After the Seahawks were declared champions and the bingo prizes were awarded, the Soldiers went back to the job at hand, getting ready for the simulation exercise, the final phase of the ELTP.

"I think it's great training," Wainwright said of the upcoming simulation. "It makes you realize what great people you work with."

Many of the Soldiers expressed confidence in the week's preparations for the final battle.

"I'm pretty confident in what is going to happen tomorrow," said Otey.

At the end of the day the Soldiers came together as a team to face the training challenge together.

ALASKA POST

Home of the Arctic Warriors

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The ALASKA POST – Home of the Arctic Warriors

Stryker brigade prepares for missions at world-class training center

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Mylinda DuRousseau,
1-25 SBCT PAO

"We can't wing it, we have to use the capabilities we have," said Maj. Gen. Ted Martin, National Training Center and Fort Irwin commanding general.

With this sentiment more than 200 Soldiers from 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team 25th Infantry Division began more than a week of enhanced leader training program at Fort Irwin, Calif., Jan. 24 through Feb. 4.

The training, designed to prepare brigade and battalion commanders, staff members and command sergeants major how to execute their war-fighting duties, not only tested the brigade's existing capabilities but provided mentorship and guidance on how they could improve, helping to eliminate the need to wing it.

"(The program) provides training for the leadership on the military decision-making process," said Col. Steven Adams, the program's chief. "It gives staffs a realistic repetition of going through the planning process with coaches that can mentor them."

A coaching staff consisting of four former brigade commanders and eight former battalion commanders with a variety of combat experience facilitated training sessions they characterize as intense and fast-paced.

"We take our job title as coaches very seriously; the only reason we exist is to help units improve their processes and procedures and learn," said Tim Decker, a retired Army lieutenant colonel and brigade staff coach during the training.

Brigade staff members came together to create a clear picture of their political and physical environment and developed multiple possible courses of action, which were then presented to the brigade commander. Once a decision was made the battalion command teams refined the steps they would take to execute the commander's plan before moving Soldiers.

"I think we did a very thorough military decision-making process plan," said Maj. Matt Hammons, brigade fires support officer.

As the exercise came to an end Soldiers said they learned something new, even those who had been there before.

"I learned a lot," said Sgt. 1st Class Jon Schneider, aviation operations sergeant for the brigade. "(The first time) I did the tactical side, this time I'm doing the officer side."



More than 200 Soldiers from the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division trained at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif. Jan. 24 through Feb. 4. The Enhanced Leader Training, designed to prepare brigade and battalion commanders, staff members and command sergeants major how to execute their war fighting duties, not only tested the brigade's existing capabilities but provided mentorship and guidance on how they could improve.

From the beginning to the end the hard work of everyone involved paid off.

"We've seen, both at the brigade headquarters and at the battalions, a great deal of growth from the first day we started to today," said Decker. "The brigade and the battalions have done very well."

Competition continues in Sochi, Arctic Winter Games come together at home

Allen Shaw,
Fort Wainwright PAO

As the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, have captured the thrill and camaraderie of athletic competition on a worldwide level, the 2014 Arctic Winter Games scheduled for March 15 through 22 in Fairbanks are coming together.

Ashley Johnston, volunteer manager, said, "There is a lot of excitement buzzing around the office this week. Our more than 70 committees are connecting with the volunteers interested in their area of the games and scheduling volunteers into the thousands of shifts needed for the week of the games."

There are 2685 adults (15 and older) and 211 youth (10 to 14 years old) currently registered as volunteers with the 2014 Arctic Winter Games. "Our registration goal was 2500 volunteers, so we are delighted to have surpassed our goal," she said. We have actually closed the general volunteer registration, but if you are still interested in volunteering we encourage you to get in touch as we may have other ways for you to get involved."

For readers new to Fort Wainwright or the Alaska Post who may have missed a few previous issues, the newspaper has been previewing what to expect between March15 through 22. So far the contingents highlighted have been Greenland, the most northerly of the jurisdictions involved in the Arctic Winter Games; Sapmi which is made up of the Sami indigenous peoples of northern Scandinavia and Yamal, one of the subjects (similar to a province or state) within the Russian Federation.

More than 2,000 athletes between the ages of 11 and 18, plus coaches, cultural delegates and family members from nine circumpolar regions will be visiting our town in the spirit of cooperation and competition.

This is the third time since the games began in 1970 that they've been held in the Interior. They were in Fairbanks in 1982 and 1988.

According to information provided by the Arctic Winter Games International Committee, before 2002 Team Nunavut participated in every Arctic Winter Games as part of the Northwest Territories contingent. Since then it has become a permanent member in its own right. They hosted the games in Iqaluit, along with Nuuk, Greenland, in 2002. Nuunavut is Canada's newest territory, created from the division of the Northwest Territories in 1999. Nunavut is an area characterized by vast tracts of Canadian Shield and tundra, as well as most of Canada's Arctic Archipelago. Like Greenland, some of the islands in archipelago, including Baffin Island and Ellesmere Island, have permanent ice caps and coastlines cut by scenic fjords. No trees grow on any of the islands due to low temperatures that prevail even during the summer months.

Along with the arctic and other outdoor sporting events, Team Nunavut will also play indoor soccer, badminton, basketball, volleyball, wrestling and gymnastics.

For more on the 2014 Arctic Winter Games, check out next week's Alaska Post, visit *http://www.awg2014.org* or call 456 -2014.

Tickets for the Fairbanks 2014 Arctic Winter Games are now available for purchase online though Ticketmaster.com and at the AWG retail store, 330 Barnette Street, Monday through Saturday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.



Along with the arctic and other outdoor sporting events, the nine circumpolar contingents in the 2014 Arctic Winter Games will also be competing at indoor soccer, badminton, basketball, volleyball, wrestling and gymnastics. (Photo by Cathie Archbould, AWG)

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Telling a story, sharing a life, preserving history

Brian Schlumbohm,
Fort Wainwright PAO



Jesse Hensel, a Fairbanks North Star Borough School District teacher at Arctic Light Elementary School on Fort Wainwright, saw possibilities in a project called Military Voices Initiative which had put out inquiries late last year to Anchorage.

Produced by StoryCorps, an independent nonprofit organization, the Military Voices Initiative is a program that provides opportunities for military, retirees, veterans and their families to record, share and preserve their stories.

He immediately thought of the rich history of military ties with Fairbanks and surrounding areas and requested that StoryCorps come to Fairbanks and hear our stories.

Working with the Arctic Light Elementary School principle, school district offices and Fort Wainwright's School Liaison Officer Michael Campbell, Hensel headed up the groundwork of reserving space, creating an online sign-up site and scheduling times for storytellers to come in for recordings.

Hensel said he is very excited to be a part of this and will be acting as a liaison, along with Campbell, between participants and StoryCorps during the recordings which begin Sunday and end Tuesday.

"For me the most interesting and important thing is that we get the voice of our community out there," Hensel said. "The military is definitely a key part of the culture of this place."

To tell the story of military life and experiences, Arctic Light Elementary School will be the location for this project. A crew based out of Washington, D.C., will create a recording area with microphones and a setting for two individuals to sit and ask questions of one another and converse about their experiences. Questions are supplied as well to help in keeping the dialogue going.

Each conversation is recorded and edited, and if consent is given to use the recordings, a free CD is given to the participants.

All recordings, when given permission, will have the opportunity of being heard online at *http://storycorps.org/listen/* or played on NPR's Morning Edition weekly radio broadcast. A copy of the entire recording is given to local host KUAC radio and television and also sent to be archived at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

Growing up in Fairbanks, Hensel understands the history it shares with military, retirees, veterans and their families.

Hensel said the adventure of being assigned to the area through the military is what brings many to Fairbanks and they end up staying and becoming part of the community.

"Not only a unique place to serve," Hensel said, "but…a story that should be shared about what makes this community everything that it is."

Recording sessions start Sunday and last till Tuesday at Arctic Light Elementary School, building 4167 on Fort Wainwright.

If interested in participating, contact Jesse Hensel, between 3 and 5 p.m. today at (907) 699-2109 for any remaining times.

Love and hockey



You needn't love hockey but the enthusiasm can be infectious and there are plenty of opportunities for Soldiers and Families to check out the sport in the coming weeks. The Fairbanks Ice Dogs will host their military appreciation games at 7:30 p.m. in the Big Dipper Ice Arena Feb. 21 and 22. The Ice Dogs will be playing the Kenai River Brown Bears for both military appreciation games. The Army versus Air Force hockey game – a battle for the commander's cup – is set for 1:30 p.m. Feb. 28 at the University of Alaska Fairbanks' Patty Center. The two teams consist of Alaska-based Soldiers and Airmen who not only represent their units and service branches, but are also members of the Interior Alaskan community. Admission is free for the Army versus Air Force game. The commander's cup will be presented to the winner of the Army versus Air Force game during a break in the UAF Nanooks hockey game (also a military appreciation event) Feb. 28 at the Carlson Center; the puck drops at 7 p.m. There are plenty of opportunities for spectators and players to check out the games and decide if hockey is lovable. See next week's Alaska Post newspaper for details on the three hockey events. (File photo by Brian Schlumbohm, Fort Wainwright PAO)

Army family member wins bronze in new Olympic team figure skating

Story and photos by Gary Sheftick,
Army News

Before receiving a bronze medal in the inaugural Olympic team figure-skating event, Ashley Wagner spent more than 20 years as an Army family member and said the experience helped strengthen her skating.

Growing up with the military broadened her horizons and exposed her to many different people, she explained, and some of those folks helped sharpen her skating skills. They also helped instill a competitive spirit, stamina and determination, especially after she moved nine times as a youth.

Wagner, 22, was born in Heidelberg, Germany, and began skating at age 5 in Arkansas. Her mother offered her the choice between ballet lessons or skating and Wagner told other media she "never liked the pink tutus," so she picked ice skating.

Installations where she lived as a youth include Campbell Barracks, Germany, and Fort Leavenworth, Kan. She's now a student at Saddleback Community College in Mission Viejo, Calif.

Her father is a retired lieutenant colonel who worked at the Pentagon during the 9/11 terrorist attack, and he still lives in Alexandria, Va.

Her dad has always supported her in skating, she said, and he's in Sochi watching the competition.

"It's the thrill of a lifetime," Wagner said about earning an Olympic medal. "It's what I've always dreamed about."

She was selected for the Olympic Winter Games in Sochi despite falling twice on the ice during her free skate at the National Championships in Boston and ending up in fourth place. Members of the national governing body for figure skating reportedly took her overall winning record into consideration.

She was the "Four Continents" champion in 2012 and finished fourth in the World Championships that year in Nice, France. Last year she finished fifth in the World Championships and second in the Grand Prix in Sochi.

Over the past month, Wagner said she has stepped up her training routine, working harder than ever.

On Feb. 8, here in Sochi, she finished fourth in the Ladies Team Short Program, with an overall score of 63.10, earning Team USA a total of 7 points. That score put the USA among the top five teams and enabled Gracie Gold to continue the next night in free skating.

Gold finished second Feb. 9, in free skating, scoring 67.49 to earn 9 points and guarantee a bronze medal for Team USA.

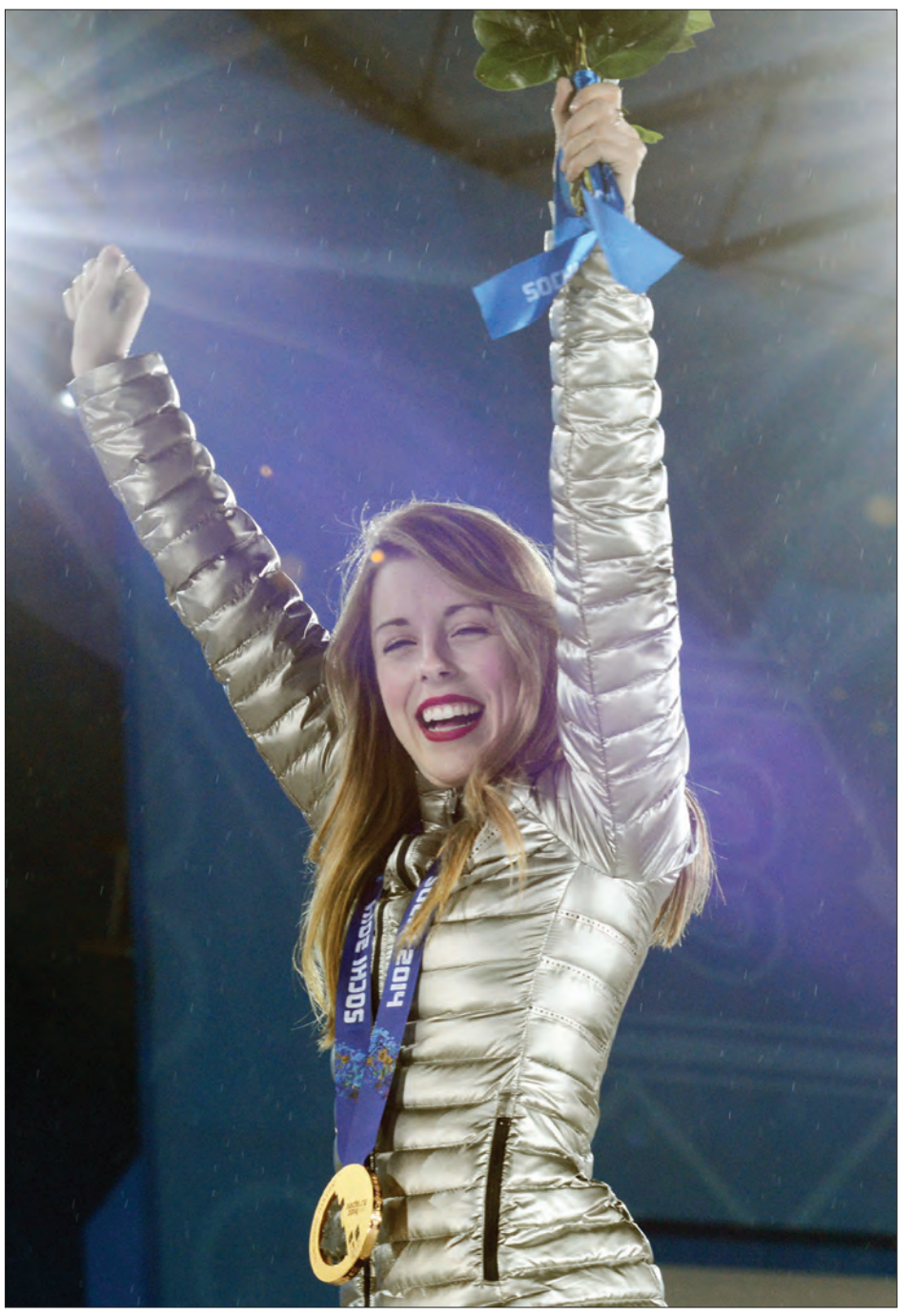
The team competition includes four events: men's singles, women's singles, pairs and ice dancing. The USA ice-dancing duo of Meryl Davis and Charlie White scored 114.34 during the final team competition Feb. 9, earning 10 points for the USA and setting a new record for ice dancing.

This was the first Olympics for the team event in figure skating. Russia took the gold with a total score of 75. Canada took silver with 65 points, and Team USA finished with a total of 60 points. Italy trailed in fourth place with 52 and Japan was fifth with 51.

The last time a new event was added to Olympic figure skating was in 1976, officials said, when ice dancing was introduced.

This means that a competitor can now win more than one medal in figure skating at an Olympic Winter Games for the first time in 78 years. In 1936, Ernst Baier from Germany won gold in the pairs event and silver in the men's singles.

Wagner will strive to tie that record of two medals next week when she returns to the Sochi ice to compete in women's singles, Feb. 19.



Army family member Ashley Wagner raises her flowers in jubilation at Victory Plaza after receiving an Olympic Bronze Medal for Team Figure Skating in Sochi, Russia, Feb. 10. This is the first Olympic Winter Games for Team Figure Skating as a medal sport.





Army family member Ashley Wagner practices on the ice in Socci, Russia, Feb. 10, just hours before she and Team USA receive the first-ever Olympic bronze medal for Team Figure Skating.



The eight members of the USA sqaud that took bronze in the first-ever Olympic team figure-skating competition stand on stage in Victory Plaza at end of the awards ceremony Feb. 10, 2014 in Sochi, Russia. Army family member Ashley Wagner stands second from left.

Friday – 14th

Training Holiday – Valentine's Day

FALL FAME FITNESS SESSIONS, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 9:15 to 10:15 a.m. and 10:45 to 11:45 a.m., Melaven Fitness Center, building 3452. Child care sessions begin 15 minutes prior to Fame Fitness times and are $35 per month, per child, per session. Pre-registration begins the 20th of the month prior to the next month's sessions. Call 353-7713 for more information.

LUNCHTIME PIN PLATOON BOWLING, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Nugget Lanes Bowling Center, building 3702. Call 353-2654.

NEW PARENT'S SUPPORT PROGRAM: INFANT MASSAGE, 1 to 2 p.m., ACS building 3401, Room 242. Call 353-7515.

AFTERNOON FUN WITH HEAD-PIN BOWLING, 1 to 6 p.m., Nugget Lanes Bowling Center, building 3702. Call 353-2654.

STORY HOUR AND CRAFTS, FRIENDSHIP: 4 p.m., Post Library, building 3700. No cost. Call 353-2642.

OPEN RECREATIONAL SKATING, 5:30 to 7:45 p.m., Physical Fitness Center, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

IT'S A MASQUERADE PARTY, 6 to 8 p.m., Youth Center, building 4109. Call 361-5437.

SWEETHEART BOWL, 11 a.m. to 1 a.m., Nugget Lanes Bowling Center, building 3702. Call 353-4137.

Saturday – 15th

COMPEAU'S TRAIL SNOWMACHINE RUN, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Outdoor Recreation Center, building 4050. Cost is $75. Call 361-6349.

HEARTBREAK HILL SPIN CLASS, 10 a.m. to noon, Physical Fitness Center, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

GROUP CYCLING, 10 to 11 a.m., Physical Fitness Center, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

ZUMBA, 11 a.m. to noon, Physical Fitness Center ice rink, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

OPEN RECREATIONAL SKATING, 1:30 to 4 p.m., Physical Fitness Center ice rink, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

WINTER SERIES OF POKER, 7 p.m., The Warrior Zone, building 3205. Sign-ups begin at 6 p.m., open to all DoD cardholders 18 and older. Call 353-1087.

COSMIC BOWLING, 8 p.m. to 1 a.m., Nugget Lanes Bowling Center, building 3702. Call 353-4137

Sunday – 16th

RECREATIONAL SKATING, 1:30 to 4 p.m., Physical Fitness Center ice rink building 3709. Call 353-7223.

WINTERIZATION CLINIC, 3 to 6 p.m., Auto Skill Center, building 3730. Call 353-7436.

RECREATIONAL HOCKEY, 4:15 to 6 p.m., Physical Fitness Center ice rink building 3709. Call 353-7223.

Monday – 17th FEDERAL HOLIDAY

All Family and MWR Facilities are closed with the exception of Birch Hill, PFC, ice rink and the Warrior Zone.

Tuesday – 18th

GROUP CYCLING CLASS, 6:30 to 7:30 a.m.; 9:15 to 10:15 a.m., 5 to 6 p.m., Physical Fitness Center, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

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Birch Hill special event



Monday is Customer Appreciation Day at the Birch Hill Ski and Snowboard Area, building 1172. The event is from noon to 7:30 p.m. Free complimentary hotdogs, soda and cake will be served. Door prizes include lift passes, ski lessons and tubing passes. Grand prize includes a snowboard and goggles. Music will be provided by V-Max. For additional information, call 353-1998 or 353-6795. (File photo by Brian Schlumbohm, Fort Wainwright PAO)

LUNCH-HOUR STICK HOCKEY, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Physical Fitness Center ice rink, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

HOUR OF POWER GROUP STRENGTH CLASS, noon to 12:45 p.m., Physical Fitness Center, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

NEW PARENT'S SUPPORT PROGRAM: BROWN BAG LUNCH SERIES, noon to 1 p.m., ACS building 3401 Room 242. Call 353-7515.

ZUMBA, 6:15 to 7:15 p.m., Physical Fitness Center, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

Wednesday - 19th

PRESCHOOL CHILD FIND DEVELOPMENT SCREENINGS, FNSB School District. For more information, call EFMP at 353-4243 or FNSB School District at 452-2000 ext 11445.

FALL FAME FITNESS SESSIONS, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 9:15 to 10:15 a.m. and 10:45 to 11:45 a.m., Melaven Fitness Center, building 3452. Child care sessions begin 15 minutes prior to Fame Fitness times and are $35 per month, per child, per session. Pre-registration begins the 20th of the month prior to the next month's sessions. Call 353-7713 for more information.

LUNCHTIME PIN PLATOON BOWLING, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Nugget Lanes Bowling Center, building 3702. Call 353-2654.

LUNCH-HOUR RECREATIONAL SKATING, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Physical Fitness Center ice rink, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

GROUP CYCLING CLASS, noon to 1 p.m., Physical Fitness Center, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

AFTERNOON FUN WITH HEAD-PIN BOWLING, 1 to 6 p.m., Nugget Lanes Bowling Center, building 3702. Call 353-2654.

FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT, 5:30 to 7 p.m., Last Frontier Community Activity Center, building 1044. Call 353-7755.

KARAOKE WEDNESDAYS, 7 to 10 p.m., Nugget Lanes Bowling Center, building 3702. Call 353-2654.

Thursday – 20th

GROUP CYCLING CLASS, 6:30 to 7:30 a.m.; 5 to 6 p.m., Physical Fitness Center, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

BABY SIGNS: SIGN, SING, AND PLAY CLASSES, 9 to 9:30 a.m., Last Frontier Community Activity Center, building 1044. No cost. Call 353-7372.

ROMP AND STOMP PLAYGROUP, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., Last Frontier Community Activity Center, building 1044. No cost. Call 353-7372.

LUNCHTIME PIN PLATOON BOWLING, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Nugget Lanes Bowling Center, building 3702. Call 353-2654.

LUNCH-HOUR STICK HOCKEY, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Physical Fitness Center ice rink, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

HOUR OF POWER GROUP STRENGTH CLASS, noon to 12:45 p.m., Physical Fitness Center, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

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AFTERNOON FUN WITH HEAD-PIN BOWLING, 1 to 6 p.m., Nugget Lanes Bowling Center, building 3702. Call 353-2654.

TODDLER ACTIVITIES, 6 to 7:30 p.m., CDC I, building 4024. Call 353-7713.

ZUMBA, 6:15 to 7:15 p.m., Physical Fitness Center, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

Friday – 21st

FALL FAME FITNESS SESSIONS, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 9:15 to 10:15 a.m. and 10:45 to 11:45 a.m., Melaven Fitness Center, building 3452. Child care sessions begin 15 minutes prior to Fame Fitness times and are $35 per month, per child, per session. Pre-registration begins the 20th of the month prior to the next month's sessions. Call 353-7713 for more information.

LUNCHTIME PIN PLATOON BOWLING, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Nugget Lanes Bowling Center, building 3702. Call 353-2654.

NEW PARENT'S SUPPORT PROGRAM: INFANT MASSAGE, 1 to 2 p.m., ACS building 3401 Room 242. Call 353-7515.

AFTERNOON FUN WITH HEAD-PIN BOWLING, 1 to 6 p.m., Nugget Lanes Bowling Center, building 3702. Call 353-2654.

STORY HOUR AND CRAFTS, I LOVE MY LIBRARY: 4 p.m., Post Library, building 3700. No cost. Call 353-2642.

RECREATIONAL SKATING, 5:30 to 7:45 p.m., Physical Fitness Center ice rink, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

COSMIC BOWLING, 8 p.m. to 1 a.m., Nugget Lanes Bowling Center, building 3702. Call 353-4137.

Saturday – 22nd

ICE CLIMBING, 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., Outdoor Recreation Center, building 4050. Cost is $30. Call 361-6349.

SUPER SATURDAY CARE, 9 a.m. to 1p.m., Must preregister by Feb 13. CDC I, building 4166. Call 353-7713.

INTRO BELAY/CLIMBING CLASS, 9:30 to 11 a.m., Outdoor Recreation Center, building 4050. The class is free but requires pre-registration. Call 361-6349.

GROUP CYCLING, 10 to 11 a.m., Physical Fitness Center, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

ZUMBA, 11 a.m. to noon, Physical Fitness Center ice rink, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

OPEN RECREATIONAL SKATING, 1:30 to 4 p.m., Physical Fitness Center ice rink, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

WINTER SERIES OF POKER, 7 p.m., The Warrior Zone, building 3205. Sign-ups begin at 6 p.m., open to all DoD cardholders 18 and older. Call 353-1087.

COSMIC BOWLING, 8 p.m. to 1 a.m., Nugget Lanes Bowling Center, building 3702. Call 353-4137.

Sunday – 23rd

RECREATIONAL SKATING, 1:30 to 4 p.m., Physical Fitness Center ice rink building 3709. Call 353-7223.

ESTATE NOTICE

Anyone having claims against, or is indebted to the estate of Pvt. Ryan Brewton of Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 5th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, may contact 1st Lt. Kenneth Green by phone at 353-4264.

In brief

NEW OPTION FOR GLASSES

The Bassett Army Community Hospital's Optometry Clinic is now open for Family members and retirees to acquire prescriptions for glasses and contact lenses. Retirees or dependents can then take prescriptions to their provider for ordering. For more information, call 361-5212.

SNOW REMOVAL

Parking lot snow removal is ongoing at Fort Wainwright. Yellow signs indicating scheduled snow removal will be placed out approximately three days prior to when snow removal is to occur. All vehicles must be removed,; if they are not, then snow removal may not happen due to concerns with safety and damage to property.

HEART-HEALTHY HABITS

Learn more about controlling high blood pressure or high cholesterol through lifestyle changes during a class offered Tuesday from 10 a.m. to noon at Preventive Medicine, building 4077 Neely Road. To sign up for a class or to get more information, call 361-4148.

SKIING THE GOLF COURSE

Cross-country skiing trails are open to the public at the Chena Bend Golf Course area. Trails are groomed regularly and free for use. Anyone needing private lessons or equipment rental can contact the Outdoor Recreation Center, building 4050, for more information at 361-6349.

Health Fair on post



North Haven's Community Health Fair

Saturday, February 15 • 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
North Haven Community Center, 4268 Neely Road, Fort Wainwright

All active duty, retirees, civilians and families welcome!

For more information, log on to www.nhcalaska.com/go/healthfair

North Haven Communities will host a health fair from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday at the North Haven Community Center, building 4268. The fair is open to active and retired military, their families and civilian personnel. In addition to free screenings, the health fair will also offer the following tests for a cost: comprehensive blood tests, (fasting test) 27 tests panel includes CBC, CMP and Lipids; thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH); prostrate specific antigen (PSA); estimated glucose antigen (A1C); vitamin D levels and ABO/RH blood typing. For more information call 374-6853 or go to *http://www.alaskahealthfair.org*.

Spartans: Hone skills during winter FTX; a success, challenge

Continued from page 1

squadron, as a troop, all the way down to the platoon, at the section and squad level have performed up to this point," said Lt. Col. Richard Scott, commander of the 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment. "The guys on the ground performed the way that I expected recon scouts to perform; dismounted recon scouts. I think there is a level of discipline that you need to come into an environment like this, and to this point we have had no issues."

The commander of the 3rd Battalion, 509th Infantry Regiment, Lt. Col. Patrick Altenburg, said, "This is the first big arctic FTX the brigade has ever done since it stood up, and dealing with the arctic cold, and how to operate.

"I think it is going really well. I think the key is the planning and rehearsing, and when they plan and rehearse, it all comes together, so each day they are getting better."

Working together internally and externally with outside enablers was a key piece of the training.

"This is great training. The best part of the training for us though, is the enabler support that we've had, both from our brothers up at Fort Wainwright and 6-17 Cav. We had the 'Sugar Bear' element ... and then today from the Alaska National Guard providing support with the UH-60s, and then our own brigade enabler support with the 'Shadows,' MPs, and human contact teams," said Lt. Col. Tobin Magsig, commander of the 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry Regiment.

Flexibility is essential for military units as they conduct operations in today's world, said Magsig.

"We're focusing on how the battalion is able to seamlessly transition and react and operate in a permissive, semi-permissive and non-permissive environment," said Magsig. "Our ability to rapidly transition between those three operating environments is really what we are getting after during the last week and a half and into the end of this week."

Lt. Col. Christopher Ward, commander of the 2nd Battalion, 377th Parachute Field Artillery Regiment, said his artillerymen benefited from the tough arctic conditions.

"We've trained pretty hard in all of the core artillery proficiency tasks that we have, here last summer and the fall, but now we are doing those same skill sets in an arctic environment. It just increases the level of difficulty," said Ward. "Obviously, colder weather, having more gear on, the mobility is not the same. So just being able to maintain that level of proficiency that we had several months ago in a different environment is always a challenge, and our guys are doing a great job of getting after it!"

Combat support and combat service support elements of the brigade played essential key roles during the FTX.

Lt. Col. Peter Crandall, the commander of the 725th Brigade Support Battalion, said, "I believe this is an outstanding event. It's the first time the brigade as a BCT has come to the field. So, as a support battalion, with co-locating all of the FSCs (forward support companies) here with us, and integrating them into synching logistics for the brigade, we've never done this before, so I think going forward, for any exercise, be it Fort Polk, or we deploy to any other country in the PACOM AOR (Pacific Command area of responsibility) will greatly enhance the TTPs (tactics, techniques, and procedures) that we have."

In all, the FTX was a success and integrated systems not often seen and experienced, such as the incorporation of battlefield surveillance provided by one of the brigade's newest assets, the RQ7 "Shadow" unmanned aircraft system.

The paratroopers gained proficiency and knowledge while operating in the arctic conditions, and they will carry that experience forward as they continue to train and execute orders handed down to them.

"When push comes to shove, what we're doing, they're (Spartan paratroopers) really excited to do, and it's a challenge," said Lt. Col. Kevin Perera, the commander of the 425th Brigade Special Troops Battalion. "They have distinct pride in the fact that nobody else in the Army comes and hangs out in the field and does combat training like this, in, you know, seven degrees!"

In addition to the upcoming rotation to JRTC, the Spartan Brigade continues to train and conduct missions across the Pacific region with recent operations in Australia for the Talisman Saber 2013 mission and the upcoming mission to the Kingdom of Thailand for Exercise Cobra Gold 2014.



"This is great training," said Lt. Col. Patrick Altenburg, commander of the 3rd Battalion, 509th Infantry Regiment. "I think it is going really well. I think the key is the planning and rehearsing, and when they plan and rehearse, it all comes together, so each day they are getting better." The best part of the training for us though is the enabler support that we've had, both from our brothers up at Fort Wainwright and the Alaska National Guard and our own brigade enabler support. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Smith, JBER PAO)

Canines: Benefit the military

Continued from page 1

suspect surrenders and the dog is called off the attack, the dog is trained to remain near the suspect and guard him or her until the handler takes the suspect into custody. They are taught to guard the suspect throughout the search and the escort to the police vehicle.

If the suspect decides to flee again or fight at any point, the dog is trained to attack without the command in order to protect the handler and apprehend the suspect.

Depending on the situation and the surrounding environment, the handler will decide on the action to take.

"The standoff is probably the most difficult and most critical tasks that we do," said Grimes. "If we send a dog after a suspect and a little kid runs in the way or something we can actually stop the dog. So we can go up and grab our dog and figure out how we are going to find this person rather than just releasing the dog."

For Soldiers and commanders who have worked with the canine counterparts, the benefits of military working dogs and their handlers are clear.



Sgt. Brittany Grimes, military police working-dog handler, gives presentations to her MWD, Ttebow, a patrol explosives detector dog, during a week-long validation process with scenario-based training problems like this one at the Fort Wainwright Central Issue Facility Feb. 3. Validation allows the teams to show they are ready to move ahead to the next level where they become a certified team and are put to work in real-world missions. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Trish McMurphy, USARAK PAO)

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FAIRBANKS CURLING CLUB
ALASKA POST/OLYMPIC
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Kansas City children send love to Arctic Warriors











Eddie Kennison, member of the Armed Forces Tour of National Football League players, cheerleaders and mascots who visited Fort Wainwright during Super Bowl week, set up more than 100 Valentine's Day cards and posters for Soldiers at the Warrior Zone on post, Feb. 2. Kennison, a former wide receiver for the Kansas City Chiefs, has a son who attends one of the Canterbury Preparatory Schools in Kansas City, Kans., who made the items in hopes they would get to lonely Soldiers and make them smile. Marie Kissick, director of the school said, "We are always doing things for Soldiers and Family members in our community, like candy drives and gathering items to help our brothers overseas. When the kids found out Eddie was going on this trip they got extremely excited about the project." She said children from six different schools, between 2-1/2 to 7-years-old participated in the project. While everyone got involved in the cutting and gluing, Kissick said, "some of the older children created the special messages on their own." (Photos by Ann Binford/Fort Wainwright DFMWR)

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