

3rd ABCT assumes USNORTHCOM mission

Story by Staff Sgt. Lindsey Kibler
3rd ABCT Public Affairs Office

On March 1, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, became the United States Northern Command's (USNORTHCOM) regionally-aligned force to provide support for theater security cooperation efforts with America's allied countries in the region.

For nearly three decades, Soldiers of 3rd ABCT, 3rd ID, have deployed in support of operations throughout the world. As one of the most deployed brigades in the United States Army, Sledgehammer Soldiers have taken part in Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm, Iraqi

Freedom and deployed to Kuwait in support of the Global War on Terror. A proven globally-responsive unit, the brigade will now become a regionally-aligned force.

Since its inception Oct. 1, 2002, USNORTHCOM has provided command and control of Department of Defense homeland defense efforts and coordinated defense support of civilian authorities through its various subordinate units. One of those units, U.S. Army North (Fifth Army), or AR-NORTH, will be the newest higher headquarters for the Sledgehammer Brigade while the unit operates with partners to conduct homeland

defense, civil support and security cooperation to defend and secure the United States and its interests.

In the recent months, the brigade's battalions have been conducting classroom and field training in order to prepare for the various scenarios they may be called upon to react to in the future.

Providing relief support and coordinating with federal and local agencies using air, land, or sea support will all be contributions the brigade will make to the enduring, unified effort to defeat irregular threats targeting the homeland and the nation's vital interests.

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Rock's Support Soldiers focus on battery training



Soldiers assigned to 1st Battalion, 10th Field Artillery Regiment provide security during battery focus training, Jan. 6-10.

Story and photo by
Chief Warrant Officer 2 Robert Faris
1-10 FA Unit Public Affairs Rep.

Building a well-rounded force is critical to maintaining a professional, ready Army. Rock Support Soldiers with 1st Battalion, 10th Field Artillery, have a mission to provide

artillery fires in support of the 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team. To improve capabilities in other areas, including stability operations, the battalion conducted Battery Focus training Jan. 6 through 31 on Fort Benning.

The batteries trained on a variety of skill sets usually neglected while preparing for the types of missions they executed over the past year.

Battery A, "Automatic Steel," focused its training on operational site security, traffic control points and light infantry small-unit tactics to enhance its capabilities as an agile force.

Battery B, "Ragin' Bulls," practiced using non-lethal weapons,

patrolling techniques and site security. Both batteries' biggest event, however, was Chemical, Biological, Radiation, Nuclear, and Explosive training.

CBRNE refers to the Army's ability to detect, defend and decontaminate these types of unconventional threats. Soldiers practiced using their protective gear and operating detection equipment and kits for various chemical agents.

The battery focus events provided tough, realistic training to the Rock's Support Soldiers. Honoring perishable skills prepares them for any mission the Army throws at them.

203rd BSB trains on sling load ops



Soldiers assigned to the 203rd Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, conduct sling load and medical evacuation training at Fort Benning, Ga., Feb. 5-6. The Eagle Battalion Soldiers teamed with the 2-3 General Support Aviation Battalion, headquartered at Hunter Army Airfield in Savannah, Ga. The Eagle Battalion is focused on the rigorous training it takes to maintain mission readiness. (Photos by 1st Lt. Eileen Poole, 203rd BSB Unit Public Affairs Representative)

3-1 CAV says hello, goodbye to leaders



Capt. Jonathan Proctor, outgoing troop commander, Lt. Col. Paul Gunnison, squadron commander and Capt. Jonathan Mole, incoming troop commander, stand tall in front of the Soldiers of Troop B just after the troops' guidon exchange during the change of command ceremony on Sledgehammer Field, Fort Benning, Ga., Jan. 15.

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Commander's Corner



Col. Charles Costanza
Hammer 6

The beginning of the year started to heat up for the Sledgehammer Brigade despite some unusually cold temperatures here in Georgia.

The Soldiers returned from their holiday break refreshed and ready to begin a new year of training.

Most of the battalions participated in a series of Emergency Deployment Readiness Exercises (EDREs) which will prepare the brigade to respond to threats and contingencies. An EDRE focuses on movement plans for deployments to a designated location, and deployable units normally conduct the training annually.

The XVIII Airborne Corps, higher headquarters for 3rd Infantry Division, executes a highly demanding EDRE program to ensure all organizations can meet crisis response timelines.

In addition to EDREs, units either wrapped up or started their capstone field training exercises,



known to 3rd ID Soldiers as 'Focus' training events.

Soldiers of 2-69 Armor Regiment were first to complete its battalion focus, closing out the month with Panther Focus. Battalion-level focus training gives units the ability to become proficient in their mission-essential tasks.

In the upcoming weeks and months, units will continue to hone their skills during collective training events.

Sledgehammer Soldiers have always been at the tip of the spear when it comes to answering the nation's call, and the training we're conducting today will ensure we're able to build upon our legacy.

We know many of you have questions regarding the future of the brigade. Our battalion command teams have scheduled town hall and family readiness group meetings to answer any questions you may have.



Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Green
Hammer 7

The reason for our many success stories throughout the years is because the Sledgehammer families are the backbone of our brigade. It's important to keep an open line of communication with them.

Contact your battalion's Family Readiness Support Assistant or family readiness group leader for more information regarding these upcoming meetings.

Before you turn the page, we'd like to say thank you for your continued support of the brigade. We've only completed one full month of the year but we're excited to see what the rest of 2014 will hold.

SLEDGEHAMMER!!



Lt. Col. Scott Mueller



Command Sgt. Maj. Phil Barretto

After returning from the holiday break our battalion seamlessly transitioned back into the rigorous training regime we had put on hold during the break. Throughout January, we continued conducting tough, realistic training at a rapid pace.

Command Sgt. Maj. Barretto and I are proud to say that our Soldiers never cease to impress us with their dedication, motivation and innovation in accomplishing any and all tasks set before them.

While completing training ranging from a mortar live-fire exercise to “on-camera interviews” the “Can Do” Soldiers have proven themselves to be incredibly competent in switching gears to adapt to whatever role the situation requires.

This month, the key leaders from every company in the battalion were instructed on the do’s and don’ts for on-camera interviews. With media playing an ever increasing role in the way wars are fought and won it is necessary that our Soldiers learn how to effectively and appropriately deal with reporters and other media outlets that

may be present in the area in which they are operating. Now that we are fully equipped for the task, we expect to take on an active approach to media relations and seek out media sources to tell the Army and “Can Do” story.

Also in January, Soldiers from Crusader Company lent a helping hand to the community they proudly serve; they took their service to our nation’s people to another level in serving food to underprivileged Columbus area residents.

It goes without saying that Command Sgt. Maj. Barretto and I cannot be prouder that our Soldiers sought out this community service opportunity and showed the people of Columbus that our Soldiers strive to sincerely help the people in their community in addition to fighting and winning our nation’s wars.

In a more traditional training exercise, the Heavy Mortar Platoon from the Headquarters and Headquarters Company held a live fire exercise to sustain their proficiency in mortar operations. Meeting

expert standards, the Soldiers not only performed extremely well, they also trained several Joint Tactical Air Controllers from the 15th Air Support Operations Squadron, Detachment 1 located here on Fort Benning.

As the battalion prepares for a collective training event in February, the platoons and companies are continuing to train as teams, working to meld their individual tasks into a coordinated, combined effort. January has been full of company level field exercises; all of which have been very successful in demonstrating how well we have been able to integrate all the moving parts of each team, squad and platoon.

Command Sgt. Maj. Barretto and I are very grateful to be able to lead this group of outstanding Soldiers. Without each and every individual working tirelessly to support each other and the mission, our team would not be as exceptional as it is today.

Can Do!!

Fire in the hole: 1-15 Inf. launches mortars

**Story by 1st Lt. Cliff Parsons
1-15 Inf. Unit Public Affairs Rep.**

On Jan. 10, the heavy mortar platoon from 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, and Joint Tactical Air Controllers from the 15th Air Support Operations Squadron (ASOS), Detachment 1 conducted a live-fire mortar exercise at Red Cloud range. They kicked off training early in the morning and trained for most of the day on several complex mortar support techniques and exercises.

The 120 mm heavy mortar platoon consists of 20 Soldiers and two 120 mm mortars. Their role within the battalion is rather simple, as explained by platoon leader, 1st Lt. Stepan Provorov. "The Heavy mortar platoon is a battalion level asset under the direct control of the battalion commander."

The mission is to provide accurate, timely indirect fires in support of battalion maneuver elements. However, executing this seemingly simple mission is a very complex series of steps that depend upon one another in order to be successful.

The forward observers must first send a target to the Fire Direction Center, and then the FDC tells the mortars which adjustments to make to hit that target. Staff Sgt. Billy McCoy is the Mortar Fire Direction Center Chief for the battalion's headquarters company; he is the liaison between the FDC and the mortar section.

He describes the firing steps as "making lemonade...because it's a process and at the end it's sweet." The functionality of the mortar

section and how all the moving parts come together to complete the mission is McCoy's favorite part of being the FDC chief.

The purpose of the exercise was to sustain the proficiency of the wide range of tasks associated with mortar support. During the exercise, the mortar section completed several different types of firing scenarios. In some situations the mortar crews could see their target while in other scenarios they could not.

During simultaneous firing missions, each of the mortars was firing at a different target, requiring incredibly precise coordination between the FDC and the Mortar Section. Additionally, the mortars conducted a "hip shoot" drill in which the mortars were disassembled as if they were conducting movement to simulate receiving a call for fire mission while in transit.

To achieve the standard of "expert," when the FDC called the fire mission in to the mortar section, each gun crew was required to assemble their mortar and begin firing five immediate suppression rounds in just 60 seconds. Provorov praised his Soldier's performance and specifically stated, "squad leader Sgt. Jordan Goodman flawlessly executed the hip shoot mission."

While firing 500 FRPC (Full Range Practice Cartridges) Rounds, which provide a visible flash and smoke on impact to aid in accuracy the mortar platoon, fires support section, and JTACs were able to conduct sustained, quality training in mortar operations.

The Airmen from the 15th ASOS had the opportunity to get hands on training and have a full understanding of mortar capabilities. It

is very important that the JTACs integrate with their Army counterparts because they often deploy with Soldiers. The joint training exercise was an excellent opportunity for both services to work together to better the capabilities of their respective units.

When asked what his favorite aspect of being the heavy mortar platoon leader was, Provorov replied, "Leading a Platoon which has a unique mission, with Soldiers who have a very special skill set." The 1-15 Inf. does indeed have a unique mission and its Soldiers demonstrated their special skill set with expert proficiency during their live-fire exercise this month.



Photos by: 1st Lt. Cliff Parsons

Soldiers from the Heavy Mortar Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-15 Inf. Regt. conduct live fire training to sustain their proficiency in indirect fire support for the battalion. The battalion's two 120mm mortars fired five-hundred FRPC (Full Range Practice Cartridge) rounds which provide a visible flash and smoke cloud upon impact to aid in accuracy adjustments. 1-15 Inf. Regt. as well as Joint Tactical Air Controllers from the 15th Air Support Operations Squadron, Detachment participated in the joint training exercise.

Soldiers give back to community as way of saying ‘thank you’

Story and photos by
Sgt. Stephanie Woodson
3rd ABCT Public Affairs Office

Approximately 20 Soldiers with 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, helped prepare and serve the “Loaves and Fishes Meal” at the Howard Mott Center for Men in Columbus, Ga., Jan. 14.

The Soldiers, with Company C, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, saw the event as an important way to bond as a unit and give back to the community that supports the Sledgehammer Brigade.

The event was sponsored by the Valley Rescue Mission Center, which provides three meals a day as part of their “Loaves and Fishes Meal Ticket Program.”

“The center has been in existence for 50 years and has been serving the ‘Loaves and Fishes Meal’ on a daily basis regardless of the weather,” said Rhonda Mobley, the center’s executive director.

“This is a program that is open to anyone in the community.” This meal is critical because it may be the only meal they have to eat that day. It’s very important that it’s nutritious and healthy, she added. Nearly 21 percent of Columbus residents live in poverty.

Making ends meet is a huge struggle, but Howard Mott Center stands ready to meet those needs through their daily “Loaves and Fishes Meal Ticket Program.”

“It’s always a good feeling to give back to the community,” said Staff Sgt. Anthony Hill, an armored crewman assigned to the 1-15 Infantry Battalion, 3rd ABCT.

“A lot of the new soldiers coming haven’t experienced going down-



Soldiers from the 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division prepare to go plates for the people within the community to take with them during the ‘Loaves and Fishes Meal Ticket Program’ at the Howard Mott Center for Men, Columbus, Ga., Jan.14.



Soldiers assigned to 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, serve people in the community sweets at the Howard Mott Center for Men, in Columbus, Ga., Jan. 14. during the ‘Loaves and Fishes Meal’ daily meal dinner.

range and receiving a box or gift basket from people you don’t know who couldn’t afford to send it but sent it,” Hill said. “So, this is my way of saying ‘thank you’ to those who supported me.”

Hill said it brightens his day to see them smile and a great way for the Soldiers to come together as a team and give back to the community.

In addition to serving meals, the center provides emergency shelter and a goal-based addiction recovery program for men only.

It also has a transient program that allows men to stay short-term overnight, provides basic essentials to men in need and affords men the opportunity to enter a rehabilita-

tion program.

A program lasts between 90 days and 12 months, depending on individual needs. They do have a center available for women and children at a separate location.

“The Valley Rescue Mission Center is a nonprofit Christian organization that does not receive government funding; it relies solely on the generosity of the community,” said Mobley.

This program is free because of the generous monetary and food donations, Mobley added. To read more about the Valley Rescue Mission Center or discover ways to help, visit the website at www.valleyrescuemission.net.

MISSION from pg. 1

"This is a new mission for the Sledgehammer Brigade, one that we're very proud to take part in," said Col. Charlie Costanza, commander of the Sledgehammer Brigade. "Most of our Soldiers are used to deploying to the Middle East. We welcome the opportunity to serve our Nation right here in North America."

Costanza said the brigade's focus over the last few months has been on building and training a physically fit, disciplined and professional team of experts in fundamental Soldier skills, who will best represent the United States when

the brigade assumes its new role.

These skills range from individual to company-level tasks and drills. Each battalion completed a field training exercise that tested the Soldier's— and unit's— ability to rapidly employ a variety of operations relating to homeland defense, relief and civil support and theater security cooperation.

"We want to develop teams that are culturally and strategically aware so they are able to foster an improved partnership between the United States and partnered nations," he added.

On Feb. 20, Gen. Raymond Odierno, Army Chief of Staff, re-

leased his Vision and Strategic Priorities for the Army.

In this, Odierno spoke to the importance of globally-responsive and regionally-aligned units, stating its purpose is to "shape and set theaters for regional commanders employing unique Total Army characteristics and capabilities to influence the security environment, build trust, develop relationship and gain access through rotational forces, multilateral exercises...and other opportunities."

'Can Do' Soldiers conduct joint weapons training



Soldiers assigned to 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, get in position and prepare to fire the SCAR Heavy M17, during a joint training with the Air Force, at Fort Benning, Ga., Jan. 22.

Story and photos by
Sgt. Stephanie Woodson
3rd ABCT Public Affairs Office

Airmen from the 17th Special Tactics Squadron and more than 30 Soldiers assigned to 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, conducted joint weapons training Jan. 22.

The training focused on giving Soldiers the opportunity to fire the Glock 19, Special Forces Combat Assault Rifle Heavy 17 and Special Combat Assault Rifle Sniper M20.

"This is a beginning of a great relationship and a great chance for cross training," said Air Force Lt.

Col. John Traxler, commander of the 17th Special Tactics Squadron.

"This was truly a joint effort and a benefit to everyone involved," said Traxler. "We get from the Army all the time and now we have an opportunity to give back."

He said that he looks forward to future training.

Since 2011, the 17th Special Tactics Squadron has operated in locations aligned solely with the 75th Ranger Regiment.

The headquarters element is based at Fort Benning, Ga., but also supports the 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment; the 2nd Battal-

ion, 75th Ranger Regt. at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash.; and the 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regt., at Hunter Army Airfield located in Savannah, Ga.

"I'm excited to be training with another branch in the military and have the chance to fire other weapons besides the M4," said Pvt. Teagon Costello, an infantryman assigned to 1-15 Inf.

Costello said the SCAR heavy is the most advanced weapon he has fired. The opportunity to fire different weapons was well worth the wait in the 22-degree weather, he added.



Lt. Col. Dominick Edwards

2-69 AR



Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Reed

Through preparing for the field, deploying and executing the training and conducting recovery and maintenance of our Soldiers and equipment, the month of January was entirely “Panther Focus”.

Immediately upon return from celebrating our holiday leave, Panther Soldiers began to prepare for their upcoming field training events by updating Soldiers records, inspecting weapons and equipment, and rehearsing their plans.

Goodman joined the Panther team on Jan. 9, 2014, when he was handed the company guidon and proudly stood with 1st Sgt. Joseph J. McAuliffe and the rest of the Able Company Soldiers on Sledgehammer Field.

Capt. Goodman was ready to get his company prepared and deployed to his first field training exercise with the Panther Battalion.

Bayonet Company was the first company to practice alert and deployment procedures on January 21st.

The Soldiers of Bayonet Company, along with select members of the battalion staff had a few hours to report to Kelley Hill, drew

weapons and equipment, processed administrative requirements, and move out to their training area with the support of our logistical Soldiers in Renegade Company.

For the next three days, a new company was randomly alerted and tested on their ability to rapidly deploy with minimal notice.

As each company arrived to their training area in the early dark of each evening, the Soldiers and leaders were tested on their ability to secure an unknown piece of land or infrastructure quickly.

The companies were prepared to secure their area but also had another enemy they had not dealt with in a long time...the Georgia cold temperatures.

Throughout the FTX, each platoon was tested and evaluated on their ability to deal with a variety of situations.

In addition to basic Soldier skills, the platoons were required to interact with media personnel to test their composure in front of a camera and their ability to maintain operational security (OPSEC).

These media engagements typically took place after a large mob of

angry civilians would protest and possibly riot in front of the Soldier's fighting positions.

The platoons also negotiated another daunting task when they were tested on their ability to operate in a chemically contaminated environment.

Soldiers and leaders were challenged as they rapidly moved to the location of the chemical strike to protect civilians from the area.

Just to make it a little bit tougher, the Soldiers also had to deal with random attacks from small enemy groups wielding assault rifles.

Upon redeployment from the six-day FTX, the companies were reunited with their families after all Soldiers and weapons were accounted for.

We are all extremely proud and impressed with all that our great Speed and Power Soldiers accomplished in the month of January.

We thank everyone for their support and look forward to our next event as we prepare for Tank and Bradley gunnery in the coming months.

Speed and Power!!

Dwight H. Johnson platoon PT Challenge

Story and photo by Sgt. Jacob Stauber
2-69 AR Unit Public Affairs Rep.

On January 15th the Panther family honored one of their own Medal of Honor Recipients in the Spc. (5th Class Spc.) Dwight H. Johnson PT Challenge. Spc. Five Johnson is the sole tank crew member during the Vietnam War to earn the Medal of Honor.

Armed with only a .45 caliber pistol for majority of the engagement with enemy North Vietnamese Army, Johnson came to the aid of his fellow Soldiers in display of courage, well above the call of duty.

Johnson exited the safety of his M48 tank, firing an exposed exterior .50 Caliber Browning Machine Gun. His immobilized tank was placed in the midst of an intense fire fight, described as a "heavy volume of anti-tank rocket, small arms and automatic weapons fire," but Johnson repeatedly exposed himself to come to aid of fellow Panther Soldiers, as described in his Medal of Honor Citation below:

"Now weaponless, Johnson ignored the enemy fire around him, climbed into his platoon sergeant's tank, extricated a wounded crewmember and carried him to an armored personnel carrier.

He then returned to the same tank and assisted in firing the main gun until it jammed.

In a magnificent display of courage Johnson exited the tank and again armed only with a .45 caliber pistol, he engaged several North Vietnamese troops in close proximity to the vehicle."

The Spc. Dwight H. Johnson PT Challenge honors his gallant action by forming a team of five Panther



Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division powering through the cold to complete the 100 pull-ups during the Spc. fiveDwight Johnson Physical Training Challenge, Jan. 15, Fort Benning, Ga.

Soldiers and negotiating a one-mile IOTV run, 100 pull-ups, 200 sit-ups, 300 air squats, and finally, a second one-mile IOTV run.

To be considered "Dwight Johnson" certified a team had to complete the events in less than 28 minutes.

Each platoon in the Panther Battalion entered two five man teams, each led by the platoon leader and platoon sergeant, to compete for the coveted "Panther Hammer," awarded for excellence by Lt. Col. Edwards and Command Sgt. Maj. Reed at battalion level competitions.

The Panther Hammer was awarded to 3rd Platoon, Company B Bayonet for having the fastest combined team totals with a finishing average time of 25:57 The platoon is led by 1st Lt. Luke Syrek and Sgt. 1st Class Robert Nevels. The fastest team but not the overall combined platoon was 1st Lt. Neil Brabham's

team from 2nd Platoon, Bayonet Company, finishing in 25:00 minutes flat.

Shortly behind Brabham's team was 1st Lt. Estes's team from 3rd Platoon, Company C 'Cobra Company' with a time of 25:15 min. Bayonet Company took honors as the top company with the highest average among team times.

Spc. Hawthorne, who competed as part of Team One of the battalion fire support element said at the completion of his second trip around the one-mile IOTV run route "It was a fun strenuous physical challenge that brought us closer together as a team."

Four babies and a lady

Story by: Sgt. Stephanie Woodson
3rd ABCT Public Affairs Office

The home of Spc. John LaJoice, a Bradley Fighting Vehicle system maintainer, assigned to Company A, 2nd Battalion 69th Armor Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division and his wife, Tracie, has not been the same since the birth of their fraternal boy quadruplets who were born at the Midtown Medical Center, Nov. 13, 2013.

The LaJoice couple already has one daughter, Karie, who was born premature at 24 weeks. The four boys, Charlie, Korie, Hunter, and John II, were born at 32 weeks.

"My first thought during the ultrasound and seeing four babies was 'I need to start saving,'" said LaJoice.

"We were foster parents prior to having our own children, so we knew what to expect."

During delivery, each baby had at least three team members assigned to them. They were called the "quad squad." The teams were formed several weeks prior and performed mock deliveries in addition to being on call, according to doctors.

All the boys were not released at the same time due to medical reasons. Charlie and Hunter were the first to come home.

"We didn't know we were going to have all four boys home for Christmas, because Korie has acid reflux and the doctors wanted to get that straight before he came home," he said. "So [we had to] wait and see how his body adjust to the medication."

Acid reflux is a condition in which the stomach acids rise up into the esophagus because the valve that separates the stomach



Karie, and her four brothers, Hunter, Charlie, Korie, John II, are the children of Spc. John LaJoice, a Bradley Fighting Vehicle system maintainer, assigned to Company A, 2nd Battalion 69th Armor Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division and his wife, Tracie. They are originally from Florida but live in Phenix City, Ala. The LaJoice family has been stationed at Fort Benning for more than two years. (Courtesy Photo)

contents from the esophagus is faulty.

"Charlie and Hunter got released the same day and few days later John II came home. Dealing with them was pretty easy," said LaJoice. "They would wake up every three to four hours to eat and then they go back to sleep."

LaJoice calls Hunter his sleepy boy, because he can sleep through anything.

On the other hand, Charlie will definitely let you know when he is hungry.

"He has a voice on him and can scream his head off," LaJoice laughed.

"Korie was released from the hospital shortly before Christmas, so we were able to do last minute shopping," said LaJoice. "It was not easy wrapping 30 presents and taking care of five children and one having special needs," he added.

The family is originally from Florida but live in Phenix City, Ala. The LaJoice family has been stationed at Fort Benning for more

than two years, so they enjoyed the trip home for the holidays.

Both agreed the trip to Florida with the four boys and daughter was an adventure. The boys got hungry in the middle of the trip so they had to stop and find a restaurant to accommodate all four boys and their daughter.

"We stopped at Burger King in Tifton, Ga., where my daughter was able to play on the ground while we took care of the boys," said LaJoice. "The ride back we did the same."

The time spent with the family in Florida was a relief for all. Not only did they have help with the quadruplets but they were also able to spend more time with their daughter.

This New Year's was different with the four boys but the LaJoice routine stayed the same - they kiss each other and say "Happy New Year" then go to bed.



Lt. Col. Paul Gunnison

3-1 CAV



Sgt. Maj. Stevie Jones

The beginning of the year marked a time of change for the Blackhawks. We started off fast, having just come off of block leave, motivated and ready for the tough training and missions during a new calendar year.

The squadron rang in the New Year by conducting two troop level changes of command within two weeks of our return with a third scheduled for the end of the month.

The Bone Crusher Troop welcomed Capt. Jonathan Mole to their team Jan. 15, during a change of command ceremony on Sledgehammer Field.

Headhunter Troop welcomed Capt. Jonathan Proctor and his wife, Courtney, to their ranks Jan. 16, 2014, when he took command of the troop from Capt. Ryan Mabry. Proctor formerly commanded Bone Crusher Troop. Capt. Lance Rae took command of Comanche Troop Jan. 31, from Capt. Tom Flounders.

I have the utmost confidence in all our new commanders.

Regarding our departing commanders, Capt. Mabry is headed to the 4th Cavalry Bridge (ACRC),

Fort Knox, Ky., and Capt. Tom Flounders will move across post to serve as a small group instructor at the Maneuver Captains Career Course.

I would like to give special thanks and a job well done to Capt. Mabry, his wife Gloria, their two daughters, Elayna and Cora, and also to Capt. Tom Flounders and his wife, Jeanne. The Troopers appreciate the dedication these Families have shown to the Squadron and the Army. Erica and I will miss you all. Good luck in your future endeavors. "Til our next Post!"

Changing focus, the squadron conducted another emergency deployment readiness exercise (EDRE). This time we alerted the troops in the middle of the day to test recall systems when Soldiers are in many different locations.

The Desperado Troop continued maintenance on the squadron's vehicles. They worked very hard at keeping our fleet fully mission capable (FMC) and also installing newer and more updated equipment so the squadron would be ready for any mission assigned.

Additionally, Troops prepared for

Blackhawk Focus, a week and a half long field training exercise meant to test both the Soldier and leader in a wide array of tasks and skills.

Congratulations to 1st Lt. Marc Beaudoin for being selected as the division finalist for the Gen. MacArthur Leadership Award.

Additionally he and his wife, 1st Lt. Morghan Beaudoin, were both selected for the Army's Funded Legal Education Program (FLEP). They both will make great Army lawyers.

An awesome job by Sgt. 1st Class Ronald Lassiter, who coached our squadron's basketball team to win the pre-season title! We're looking forward to seeing the team clinch another trophy during Hammer Week March 31 to April 4.

Thanks to every Soldier and family member for your continued support and for what you do for the Blackhawks every day.

Courageous and Faithful!!

3-1 CAV wins Commander's Cup in preseason

Story and photo by: John W. Peeler
Fort Benning Bayonet & Saber

Fighting their way through the losers' bracket, the 3rd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, completed their preseason quest Wednesday by lifting the Commander's Cup Preseason Basketball Tournament trophy in victory at the Smith Fitness Center gym.

Following a win against perennial championship finalist US Army Medical Department Activity (MED-DAC) in the losers' bracket finals, 3-1 Cav. completed a two-game winning finale over 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 58-36 in Game 1 and 48-34 in Game 2 to win the championship.

In the Game 1 finals, 3-1 Cav. knotted the score at 13-13 and then went on a 22-point run to jump out on top 35-13 at the half.

The 22-point first half lead by 3-1 Cav. was key in the win, with both teams scoring 23 points in the second half to cap the scoring, which sent 3-1 Cav. and 3rd BSTB into a winner-take-all Game 2 championship. Fuquan Wilson led 3-1 Cav. with a team-high 11 points while 3rd BSTB had Anthony McMillian (11) and Christopher Flippin (10) both finish with double digits.

In Game 2, 3-1 Cav. and 3rd BSTB were neck and neck and with six minutes gone in the half were tied 11-11, but by the half 3-1 Cav. held a 32-21 lead.

By the 16 minute mark, 3rd BSTB battled back to within three points at 37-34, but 3-1 Cav. went on an 11-point run to close out the game 48-34 to win the preseason tournament.

3-1 Cav. coach Ronald Lassiter said the team showed a lot of heart in the final game of the championship. "Our legs were getting a little tired because we had already played two games previously," he said. "So, I have to say we were fatigued, but the guys really stuck it out."

Lassiter credited the team's success to the type of defense they played, and the easy looks they got on offense.

"We played a man-to-man defense and needed to pressure the ball," he said. "They were a lot bigger than we were so we needed that pressure to keep it up tempo."

He said the team got a few steals with the man-to-man defense and used the fast break to stay on top. As the second game neared its end and it appeared 3rd BSTB was drawing closer, Lassiter focused on the



Anthony McMillian (1) of 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, defends Marc Beaudion (12) of 3rd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, as he moves the ball down the court Wednesday in the Commander's Cup Preseason Basketball Tournament at the Smith Fitness Center gym.

BSTB player doing the most scoring.

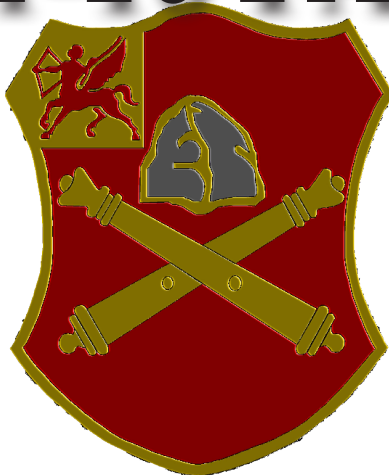
"I told our players we needed to box out better, especially against their No. 10 (Benyle Jordan)," he said. "He was killing us on the offensive glass, and I told them to get a body on him and keep him off the glass."

Leading 3-1 Cav. in scoring during Game 2 of the tournament was Fred McDonald with 16 points, while Jordan led 3rd BSTB with nine points.



Lt. Col. Kevin Capra

1-10 FA



Command Sgt. Maj. Donald Wilson

The Rock's Support hit the ground running in 2014. Coming back from some well-deserved leave, we picked up where we left off in December with our planning and training.

Battery Focus training exercises, rigorous physical training, and professional development rounded out our January. The battalion began the new year with a training symposium involving command teams, staff, and Family Readiness Group leadership to shape our long range training calendar for the next 18 months.

The importance of deconflicting critical missions with training opportunities and family events will go a long way to building a capable force as well as maintaining high resiliency in the months to come.

On Jan. 29, the FRG had their monthly coffee group at Ben's Chop House hosted by Brie Crisp. The Brigade honored several spouses for their dedication and volunteerism including our own Annette Faris, Arayna Randall, Michelle Spears, and Katie Wilkerson. Thank you, ladies, for your service to The Rock's Support!

The Headhunters spent the

month in preparation for upcoming training events. The staff conducted the training symposium whilst polishing plans for the Battalion's major training event, Rock Focus, next month. The Battery began a new physical fitness program with focus on road marching, combat-ives and CrossFit style workouts.

Alpha and Bravo Batteries conducted their Battery Focus training events in preparation for Rock Focus. One of the challenges of the training this month is the atrophy of some of these skills. Due to the missions that we performed in the past few years, Chemical, Biological, Radiation, Nuclear, Explosive defense, traffic control point (TCP) operations, and small-unit tactics were not a priority.

The Soldiers of Alpha and Bravo Batteries stepped up to the challenge and took these tasks head-on. Alpha Battery also took time out to give back to the community. On Jan. 9, they participated in a Habitat for Humanity build.

Great work being men and women of character and helping to provide for those less fortunate.

Golf Battery continued to enhance their ability to support the Battalion

this month. They practiced and honed their skill at helping units rapidly deploy.

The Spartans established a privately owned vehicle storage lot and worked hard at comprehensive vehicle services. This hard work will enable them to move a unit quickly and efficiently from recall to "wheels-up" in the event of an Emergency Deployment Readiness Exercise (EDRE) or real-world rapid deployment situation.

This month, Sgt. 1st Class Thompson of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery graduated the Master Gunners' Course Jan. 17, at Fort Sill, Okla. The Master Gunners' Course is one of the most challenging courses in the Army and we are all proud of his hard work.

The Rock's Support started 2014 right and we will keep on going strong. Next month we take to the field as a Battalion for Rock Focus and then continue with preparations to assume our new mission in March. We, as always, will stand ready to answer our nation's call.

The Rock Support!!

HHB, 1-10 FA tops Company C, 1-29 in OT



Adrienne Anderson Peter McNeill of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 10th Field Artillery Regiment, looks to take a shot in Monday's 54-50 win over Company C, 1st Battalion, 29th Infantry Regiment. McNeill's 19 points led all scorers.

Story and photo by Nick Duke Fort Benning Bayonet & Saber

In a back and forth affair that saw the two teams swap leads throughout before eventually going to overtime, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 10th Field Artillery Regiment, defeated Company, 1st Battalion, 29th Infantry Regiment, 54-50.

The game came down to the final seconds of overtime, as 1-29 was set to inbound the ball with less than 10 seconds left and down by just two points. The inbound pass was rolled up the floor to save time, but before a 1-29 player could pick it up, it was stolen by HHB 1-10, enabling HHB 1-10 to score the game's final basket on a layup. 1-29 jumped out to an early lead, building a 13-5 lead in the first half. HHB 1-10 responded, however, going on a 19-5 run to end the first half and take a 24-18 lead into halftime.

Peter McNeill, who led HHB 1-10 with 19 points, said the team switched to a 1-3-1 zone, which led to the 13-5 run. "We set our defense up in 1-3-1 zone and just turned up the intensity," McNeill said. "Defense leads to offense, and that's what worked for us."

The second half started much like the first, with 1-29 scoring the first six points to tie the game. HHB 1-10 then came firing back with a 7-0 run to retake the lead. 1-29 rallied yet again, however, going on a 10-0 run to

take a 34-31 lead. The two teams traded baskets for the rest of the second half, eventually ending regulation tied at 41. McNeill said the second half 1-29 scoring runs were due in large part to HHB 1-10's impatience on the offensive end of the floor.

"We got a little sloppy and were forcing shots and just generally being careless, but we'll work on that and we'll get better as the games go by," he said. McNeill's 19 points led all scorers.

"I just wanted to do everything I could and try my hardest for my team," he said. "That's what it's all about." Jaime Neira led 1-29 with 16 points in the loss.

Soldiers test policies, procedures for emergency readiness

Story by:

Staff Sgt. Lindsey Kibler

3rdABCT Public Affairs Office

It's 8 p.m. and most soldiers are winding down for the evening, but for a company of soldiers in 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, the ringing of a phone, Feb. 9, delivered the news they would be deploying in the upcoming hours—the relaxing would have to wait.

The Soldiers of Company A, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, gathered equipment; drew weapons and ammunition; loaded baggage onto pallets; and verified their personal data before loading vehicles and preparing to execute their mission.

The mission was not an actual deployment but an Emergency Deployment Readiness Exercise, or EDRE. An EDRE is designed as a realistic way to test the company's standing operating procedures (SOP) for similar scenarios it may encounter in the future.

Deployments can occur at any time leaving the deploying unit with little or no time to correct training deficiencies. Deployable units are required to conduct a periodic EDRE throughout the year in order to maintain readiness standards outlined in Army Field Manual 3-35, Army Deployment and Redeployment.

Companies and battalions train to meet unit and individual training requirements for deployment operations. In addition to Company A, other companies and battalions within the brigade have already conducted or are planning to conduct an EDRE in the upcoming months.



Photos by: 1st Lt. Cliff Parsons, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment Unit Public Affairs Rep.

Soldiers with Company A, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, load their gear on pallets, Feb. 10, during the company's Emergency Deployment Readiness Exercise, or EDRE, at Fort Benning, Ga.

After receiving the call Sunday evening, the soldiers immediately kicked into high-gear, as they had a short window of time to complete more than 15 tasks that would allow them to be ready to deploy.

"There are a lot of moving pieces to this exercise," explained Capt. Abraham Anderson, Company A, 1-15 Inf. Reg. commander. "From the time they were alerted, they have been on the move, preparing to deploy."

EDRE is a part of collective training the company has been preparing for over the previous months. The objective of collective deployment training is to implant the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and abilities so it becomes a reflex activity executed with precision.

Before the company could execute its EDRE, its readiness and reaction capabilities had to be certified by

the battalion. This certification is a testament to the company's ability to be ready to deploy in a quick, and efficient, manner.

"This EDRE is important because it reminds us that this could be any scenario, at any time," added the Bellows Falls, Vt., native.

The Soldiers, who stayed ahead of their scheduled timeline for the exercise, were packed and ready to roll the convoy of vehicles out before the sun set, Feb. 10.

But, as with any exercise, there are lessons to be learned. Those lessons, Anderson said, would be evaluated and incorporated into future training.

"We are going to take this exercise and use it as a place to build from for our sustainment training, use it to refine our SOPs and continue to ensure our Soldiers are maintaining the most accurate alert rosters—

those are key here,” said Anderson.

From another perspective, the exercise was the real-life execution of several months-worth of meticulous planning.

“It always looks so much different on paper compared to when you actually get out here and see the Soldiers executing,” said Maj. Carl Warren, the 3rd ABCT fire support officer and a planner from Uniontown, Ala.

“Planning it is one thing, but then you actually see it and sometimes it isn’t what you had thought or there are things here and there you would

want done differently next time, but that’s why we do this— to catch things,” Warren said.

The exercise was not without challenges, though.

“Keeping everybody motivated has been the biggest challenge,” said Anderson. By keeping Soldiers informed, he said the Soldiers remained motivated and looked toward completing each task.

“They [have done] an exceptional job with the exercise. I would say they are ready,” Anderson said.

Units must identify deployment as a mission essential task, annotate

it on their mission essential task list (METL) and gain and maintain proficiency, according to Chapter 2, Section 2-27, within FM 3-35. The company, and battalion, plan to conduct more EDREs throughout the training cycle as a way to incorporate lessons learned and, most importantly, to maintain proficiency.

In the meantime, Soldiers of Company A, 1-15 Inf. Regt., have proven their preparedness if they are called upon to defend the nation at a moment’s notice.



Soldiers with Company A, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, load a bus destined for a staged convoy during the company’s Emergency Deployment Readiness Exercise, Feb. 10. The Soldiers, who were alerted the night prior of a need to deploy on short notice, spent the night and early morning hours preparing their gear, drawing weapons and ammunition and loading pallets as part of the many short-notice tasks required during the EDRE.



Soldiers with Company A, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, find a moment to catch some sleep during the company’s Emergency Deployment Readiness Exercise, Feb. 10. The Soldiers, who were alerted the night prior of a need to deploy on short notice, spent the night and early morning hours preparing their gear, drawing weapons and ammunition and loading pallets before being placed in the holding area (pictured here) to conduct Soldier Processing Readiness and verify manifests. The exercise was designed as a realistic way to test the company’s standing operating procedures (SOP) for similar scenarios they may encounter in the future.



Lt. Col. Lenard Thomas II

BSTB



Command Sgt. Maj. Carmelo Cruz

Command Sgt. Maj. Cruz and I would like to thank you for your continued support that has extended into the new year.

All of the Soldiers returned safely from our holiday block leave and jumped right back into their jobs re-charged and ready for our upcoming training.

The month of January was focused on the preparations for our Buffalo Focus Field Training Exercise (FTX) that was conducted during the last week of the month.

Along with the Buffalo Focus FTX, Alpha Company participated in the Military Intelligence Gunnery and Simulation Exercise supported by the 3rd Brigade S2.

Bravo Company and Headquarters and Headquarters Company provided signal and sustainment support at multiple locations across Fort Benning. Additionally, the Brigade Headquarters and Headquarters Company exercised the Brigade Tactical Command Post.

In conjunction with our field training exercise we conducted small arms qualification ranges honing our marksmanship skill on the M4 rifle and M320 Grenade Launcher.

On Jan. 23, we conducted a battalion hail & farewell where we welcomed our new battalion S3, Maj. Mario Oliva along with 2nd Lt. William Bremner, who is serving as our military police platoon leader.

On a sad note, we bid farewell to two fine officers, Capt. Jamie Walton, former Chaos Company Commander, who is transitioning to Germany and 1st Lt. Samuel Anderson, Beast Company, who is moving to Korea. Both officers will be greatly missed and we wish them the best of luck in their new assignments.

Vigilance and Honor!!

Buffalo Brag



Photo by Sgt. Peter Holzer, 3ABCT Public Affairs

Micha McAndrew "pins" the rank of sergeant first class on the Army Combat Uniform of her husband, Matthew McAndrew, an unmanned aerial vehicle operator with Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, during a ceremony, Feb. 13, at the 3rd BSTB headquarters. McAndrew, a Gainesville, Fla., native, has been serving in the United States Army for 14 years. He has been in 3rd ABCT since October 2007. "This promotion would not have happened without the help and support of all the leaders I have had along the way," he said.

Buffalo's Mongolian hail and farewell

Story and photos by
1st Lt. Stephanie Haynes
3rd BSTB Unit Public Affairs Rep.

Soldiers and families of the 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division gathered at the battalion for a hail and farewell, Jan. 23.

A hail and farewell is an Army tradition that serves as an opportunity to say goodbye to those who are leaving and to introduce those who are coming in.

The event was held at the Mongolian Fire Pit in Columbus, Ga. Lt. Col. Thomas II began the evening welcoming Maj. Mario Oliva, 2nd Lt. William Bremner and their families. Both Oliva and Bremner were ushered into the Buffalo family with "tidbits" of information about their hobbies and interests to share with the group while their spouses were presented with a yellow rose to welcome their new friendship.

The hardest part of a hail and farewell comes with the time to bid farewell to friends and families who have served with the unit.

Capt. James Walton and his wife, Melissa, served with the battalion for over three years. Walton served in various positions and commanded Charlie Company during the deployment to Kuwait until October 2013.

He was presented with unit colors to remind him of his time spent with the Buffalo Battalion. Mrs. Walton was also recognized for her unwavering support to the Battalion and her service as the Charlie Company Family Readiness Leader during her husband's command.

She was presented with a red rose to signify the undying love the Buffalo family has for her. She was also awarded the Achievement Medal for Civilian Service, which is the civilian equivalent to the Army Achievement Medal.

Thomas also bid farewell 1st Lt. Samuel Anderson, a platoon leader in Charlie Company. He was also presented colors to remind him of his three years with the Battalion.



Lt. Col. Lenard Thomas shows the battalion colors that will be presented to the departing leaders of 3rd BSTB, 3rd ABCT, 3rd ID, at the Buffalo Battalion Hail and Farewell held the Mongolian Fire Pit in Columbus, Ga., Jan. 23.



First Lt. Samuel Anderson, Charlie Company, 3rd BSTB, 3rd ABCT, 3rd ID receives the battalion colors during the Buffalo Battalion Hail and Farewell held at the Mongolian Fire Pit in Columbus, Ga., Jan. 23.

Eagle Soldier recognized for substantial holiday contribution

Story by 1st Lt. Eileen Poole
203rd BSB Unit Public Affairs Rep.

A Soldier assigned to 203rd Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, was honored for contributing to the Fort Benning Santa's Castle this past holiday season at a ceremony held at Maj. Gen. Herbert McMaster's residence, Jan. 21.

Sgt. Jonathon Kistler and five friends from his motorcycle club collected more than 800 presents for the Fort Benning Santa's Castle.

Fort Benning Santa's Castle provides toys to the children of Fort Benning Soldiers (E-4 and below) who are facing financial hardships at Christmas. The Fort Benning Santa's Castle relies on donations to help provide these gifts to the Soldiers.

Kistler and his friends took the months before Christmas to talk with local businesses, schools, and organizations around the community to collect the large amount of gifts for donation. They were also directly responsible for ensuring that Soldiers were able to provide gifts to their children during the holiday season.

Soldiers help local students build trust

Story and photos by
Staff Sgt. Lindsey Kibler
3rd ABCT Public Affairs Office

While their classmates were learning how to divide mixed numbers or discovering the land of giants in Gulliver's Travels, 200 7th grade students from Muscogee County's Blackmon Road Middle School were given a rare opportunity to build skills they will carry with them for the rest of their lives, according to the school's assistant principal Eric Grigsby.

On Jan. 9, with unusually frigid southern temperatures hovering around 40 degrees --thanks, in part, to the polar vortex that hit the eastern United States--about 20 "Buffalo" soldiers from the 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, spent the morning with the students at the Army National Guard Warrior Training Center (WTC) on Harmony Church, where they were given the chance to test their physical and mental strength on a 12-station obstacle course not for the faint of heart.

The students were broken into 10 groups and, in true Army fashion, given their tasks, conditions and standards and a safety brief. Safety was the first priority, said 1st Lt. Robert Perez-Aleman, but motivation and determination were a requirement as well.

Perez-Aleman, the training officer with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd BSTB, spent nearly two months planning the event for the students. He said it was intended to accomplish three goals. "We wanted to show them

that they have leadership potential, that they have the determination to do the course and that they have the motivation to finish it," said the San Juan, Puerto Rico native. "We have a role to tutor, mentor and teach them our Army Values, and we take that very seriously."

The obstacle course, which is used during WTC Air Assault Courses offered at Fort Benning, included a low belly crawl; an incline climb; a confidence climb; high step over; and rope bridge.

"The worst was trying to crawl through that cold and wet dirt!" said Ariel Hill, 13, one of the 200 students who participated in the event. Hill isn't going to let a little bit of Georgia mud deter her from her dreams of joining the Army one day.

"I don't know what I would want to do [in the Army] yet, but I know that I want to serve when I am older," she said. "My granddad served 29 years. Well, 29 and a half--almost 30--and I want to do the same."

Blackmon Road Middle School is located in Columbus, Ga., and has a number of students whose parents are currently serving or have previously served in the military, said Grigsby, who has held the assistant principal position at Blackmon Road for the past two years.

"The partnership we have with the soldiers is beneficial in so many ways," Grigsby explained. "They are an integral part of our community. The students are building confidence. They are learning to trust in themselves, in their peers and in the [noncommissioned officers] who are out here helping them and mentoring them... We very much



Soldiers from the 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, spent the morning with the students at the Army National Guard Warrior Training Center (WTC) on Harmony Church, where they were given the chance to test their physical and mental strength on a 12-station obstacle course.

appreciate this opportunity, because many of the students have never had a chance to do this and many may never have the chance to do it again.

It's important that we build them up, allow them to trust in themselves and trust in others."

Grigsby was quick to emphasize the importance of trust between the students and the Soldiers, because it hasn't been earned in a day at an obstacle course.

"The soldiers come to the school and they tutor the kids. They have come out for career day, and they will tell them everything they know, answer every question, and show these kids what it means to contribute, to show honor and respect," said Grigsby.

“Our school has a saying, ‘One Blackmon.’ We have high expectations for our students... We tell them you are a part of something larger than yourself,” which is why the partnership with the 3rd BSTB is so fitting, Grigsby explained-- the unit and Army values mirror that of the school’s.

As the last rotation round horn rang, and the rain began to trickle, students gathered their belongings and did a “double time” to the bleachers, where Perez-Alemanly gave the students a quick after action report, much like what would follow any Army mission,

and a good job for a hard day’s work.

“We showed them that they could complete this if they put their mind to it, and they did,” said Perez-Alemanly. “Mission fulfilled.”

The 3rd BSTB and Blackmon Road Middle School participate in monthly partnership activities on Fort Benning and within Muscogee County as part of the “Partners in Education” program. The two have a well-established partnership, that has flourished over the last two years, said Perez-Alemanly.

According to the Columbus Chamber of Commerce, the Great-

er Columbus “Partners in Education” was established in 1987 as a joint venture of the Muscogee County School District and the Greater Columbus Chamber of Commerce.

It’s intended to improve education by “stimulating meaningful business and community involvement in public schools.” Through partnership, “public and private schools are now able to tap resources to meet the individual needs of each student body, provide excellent education programming, and recognize achievement.”



A Blackmon Road Middle School student pops her head up while taking a breather from doing the low belly crawl, Jan. 9. The entire 7th grade was invited to complete a 12-station obstacle course at the Army National Guard Warrior Training Center by soldiers with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. The 3rd BSTB and Blackmon Road Middle School are paired together in a program called “Partners for Education,” which brings the two groups together monthly for activities at the school, as well as around Fort Benning.

Columbus, Ga., native Pfc. Kaylana Norris, a Soldier with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, helps Ariel Hill, 13, a Blackmon Road Middle School student over a log and positions her onto a rope during one of 12 obstacles, Jan. 9, at the Army National Guard Warrior Training Center. Hill was one of the 200 7th grade students who spent the morning with 25 soldiers from HHC , 3rd BSTB, spent the morning at the obstacle course, which is typically used during Air Assault Courses.





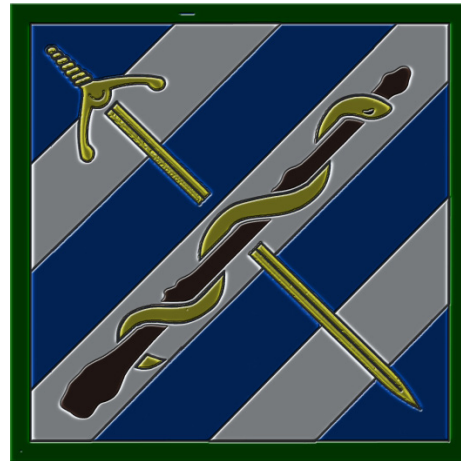
Lt. Col. Brent Coryell

It's been a pleasure to start the year off with such an outstanding group of Soldiers and families. We've had a great kick start to 2014 and I'm anticipating many excellent things as we soar ahead.

The Eagle focus for January has been equipment validation and soldier readiness in preparation for the upcoming Operation Eagle Focus. Soldiers have been focused on vehicle and equipment maintenance to ensure that all vehicles and equipment are mission ready. Soldiers have also been participating in weapons ranges to ensure a high degree of proficiency is maintained.

Operation Eagle Focus will be our validation tool for the Battalion Forward Logistics Element (FLE), which consists of approximately 80 Soldiers from across the companies and will support disaster relief in conjunction with other federal agencies when called upon. The purpose of the FLE validation is to rehearse rollout procedures, establish a support area, conduct sling load operations, and to practice for participation in potential Emergency Deployment Readiness Exercises (EDRE).

203rd BSB



Another large endeavor of the Eagle Battalion this month has been the five-year inspection services of the Heavy Equipment Transporter Systems (HETS) trailers belonging to 233rd. Jan. 22 through 24, 24 HETS trailers were inspected, which included 192 wheel end inspections and over 240 man hours to complete the inspections to standard. The five year inspection service for the HETS trailers consists of a thorough disassembly of almost the entire trailer.

The purpose of this disassembly is to clean the trailer, lubricate and rotate moving parts, and replace any broken parts. The services are expected to take until May to complete. The Eagle Battalion will also be saying goodbye to a few great leaders in the coming weeks, while at the same time welcoming the new faces and families of their successors. Charlie Company commander, Capt. Aaron Griffin, will be changing command with Capt. Erick Vines shortly. 1st Sgt. Jimmy Mathews of Alpha Company will be changing responsibility with 1st Sgt. Alvin Gardner next week. 1st Lt. Kevin McKague will shortly



Command Sgt. Maj. Kent Galvin

be switching out with 1st Lt. Berry as the Alpha Company Executive Officer.

There are a few upcoming events that you can mark on your calendars.

The Battalion Cookbook is complete and ready for purchase. They can be purchased from your company command team for \$15.

A special thank you goes out to Mrs. Jennifer Griffin for taking the lead on the project and collecting more than 100 recipes from Soldiers and spouses for the cookbook. Team Eagle held a Heart walk/run on Feb. 7 to raise awareness for Heart disease and to promote healthy life style changes.

As always, thank you for your continued support of the Eagle family. We appreciate everything that every Eagle soldier, spouse, and family member does to help this battalion run.

Spouses recognized for selfless service to Sledgehammer Brigade

Story and photos by
Staff Sgt. Lindsey Kibler
3ABCT Public Affairs

Work. Basketball practice. Dinner. Homework. Laundry. These are only a few things on a “to do” list for some military spouses— and that’s only one day.

For 27 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, spouses, the list also includes Family Readiness Group meetings, sending e-mail and making phone calls, and fundraising. It’s for these reasons they were recognized during a volunteer award ceremony, Jan. 24, at the Truscott Center on Kelley Hill.

Col. Charles D. Costanza, 3rd ABCT commander, hosted the quarterly event, which applauded the volunteer efforts of spouses in each of the brigade’s six battalions.

“I don’t know where [they] find the time to volunteer, because I know [they] don’t have it,” Costanza said. “Each of them has the heart to give something bigger than themselves and their families... These volunteers are really the backbone of this brigade.”

Costanza joked that some spouses had a basketball team-sized family but said, in all seriousness, the countless hours of work each of the women have dedicated to their respective unit’s FRG, and the brigade, is invaluable.

“You hear me say this about good and great leaders all the time, and what makes great leaders great is one of the traits of being 100 percent selfless,” he said. “Every one of the volunteers in this room is 100 percent selfless...and we don’t thank

[them] enough for what [they] do. Not just for this brigade and Kelley Hill, but for our Army and our soldiers and their families.”

For Kayleen Grider, a Cimarron, Kan., native who was honored at the ceremony, it’s not about the recognition.

Grider has been the FRG leader for Company C, 2nd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, since August 1, 2012. She dedicates nearly 30 hours a month organizing potlucks, fun runs and fundraising events, as well as manning concession stands for other brigade-wide events.

Much like her husband--Fort Worth, Texas, native Sgt. 1st Class James Grider, a platoon sergeant with 2-69 Armor Rgt.--ensures his Soldiers are taken care of, Mrs. Grider makes it her priority to support and inform their families.

“I love interacting with the wives and families, and knowing they have things taken care of,” she said. “It’s extremely rewarding.”

Grider was recognized for her “exemplary devotion and enthusiasm as a FRG leader,” as well as the countless hours she volunteered “in order to maintain unit readiness,” according the citation read by 1st Lt. Chelsea Taylor, the ceremony’s lead planner and narrator.

“It involved a lot of planning and coordination because there were so many people involved in making sure this ceremony could happen,” said the Washington, D.C., native, and strength management officer with the 203rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 3rd ABCT.

Despite some scheduling issues with the holidays, Taylor said the

ceremony was a success.

“It’s important that we recognize these volunteers because they have devoted so much of their own time to Soldiers and other families.

They are full-time wives, mothers, and volunteers and we want them to know just how much we appreciate them for making the battalions and the brigade a better place,” Taylor explained.

Costanza presented volunteers with a Certificate of Appreciation on behalf of himself and Command Sgt. Maj. Michael D. Green, the brigade command sergeant major.

“I’ve been in the Army for 27 years now, and the amount of volunteers on this Hill is amazing. [The volunteers] really do make Kelley Hill a neat and special place,” Costanza said.



Col. Charles D. Costanza, commander of the 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division “Sledgehammer” talks with Jamie Smith, a spouse and Family Ready Group leader with Company B, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, after presenting her a Certificate of Appreciation for her volunteer efforts, Jan. 24, at the quarterly Volunteer Award Ceremony. The ceremony recognized Smith, and 26 other volunteers from the brigade’s six battalions, for the countless hours they have devoted to the organization.

The following spouses were also recognized for their volunteer efforts

1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment

Michelle Allen	Trisha Howard
Tracy Bigham	Jamie Smith
Amanda Caldwell	Meredith Whithead
Marin Easter	

2nd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment

Michelle Box

3rd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment

Roxanne Arnold

1st Battalion, 10th Field Artillery Regiment

Annette Faris	Michelle Spears
Arayna Randall	Katie Wilkerson

3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion

Pamela Breland	Frances Perez
Xaviera Feliciano	Melissa Walton
Andrea Flagg	Lori Young
Emma Foudray	

203rd Brigade Support Battalion

Lauren Berry	Jennifer Moorman
Johanna Diaz	Ivette Moretta



Col. Charles D. Costanza, commander of the 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division "Sledgehammer" poses with Kayleen Grider, Family Readiness Group leader for Company C, 2nd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, after presenting her with a Certificate of Appreciation for her volunteer efforts, Jan. 24, at the quarterly Volunteer Award Ceremony. The ceremony recognized smith, and 26 other volunteers from the brigade's six battalions, for the countless hours they have devoted to the organization. "I don't [volunteer] for the recognition, but I am honored to receive the award. I love interacting with the wives and families, and knowing they have things taken care of," Grider said. Grider is the spouse of Sgt. 1st Class Jame Grider, a platoon sergeant with 2-69 Armor Rgt.



Col. Charles D. Costanza, commander of the 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division "Sledgehammer" shakes the hand of Jennifer Moorman while Johanna Diaz looks on, Jan. 24, at the brigade's volunteer award ceremony. Moorman was given a Certificate of Appreciation for her volunteer work with the 203rd Brigade Support Battalion's Family Readiness Group. Diaz also received a certificate for her commitment to the 203rd BSB FRG. "I don't know where [they] find the time to volunteer, because I know [they] don't have it," Costanza said. "We don't thank [them] enough for what [they] do."

FRSA

Family readiness support assistants serve as a vital link between the unit commander, the Soldier assigned to the unit, their families and community resources. FRSA duties include coordinating Family Readiness Group events, monthly meetings, childcare, and informational briefings to family members. FRSA's provide information on activities, trainings and events on post and the surrounding area. We assist Soldiers and families when making referrals to local agencies to include but not limited to ACS, Tri-care, and Family Advocacy.

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