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THE CAVALRY CHARGE

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER SERVING THE SOLDIERS OF
THE FIRST TEAM

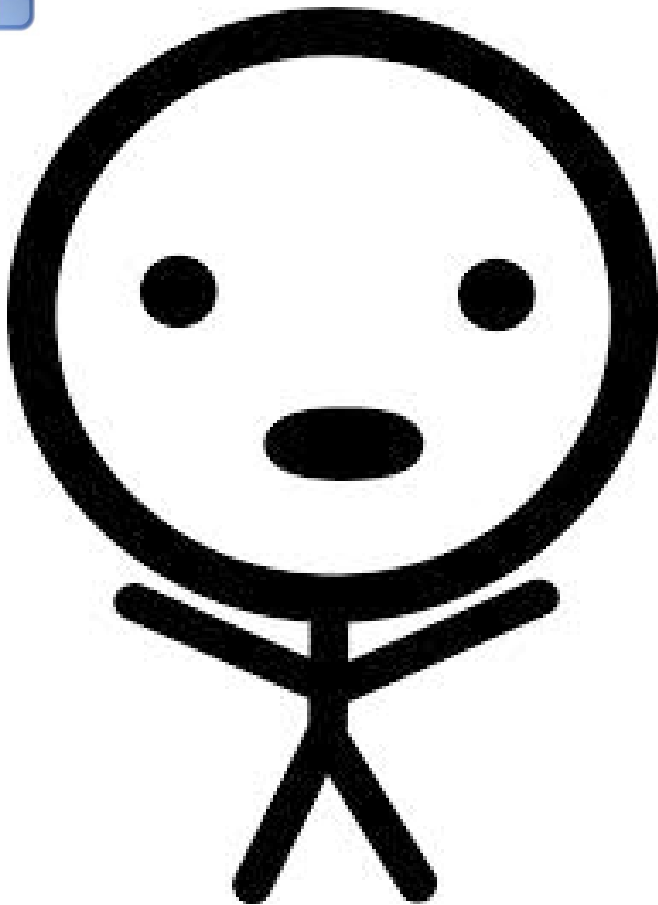
First Team welcomes
new commander
Page 3

3rd BCT Troopers train to save lives
Page 4





Cover photo by Staff Sgt. Leah R. Kilpatrick
Full story, page 3



WHAT'S CAV TALKING ABOUT?

3 First Team welcomes new commander

Maj. Gen. Anthony Ierardi relinquishes command of the division to Brig. Gen. Michael Bills

4 3rd BCT troopers train to save lives

Grey Wolf Soldiers attend First Responders Course

5 Cav Troops can stand heat

Operation Iraqi Freedom Dining Facility wins title of best DFAC on post

6 Four Cav Soldiers receive Medal of Honor

President Barack Obama awards the nation's highest medal to former division troopers

8 1st Air Cav pilot lives childhood dream: aviator

Company commander sought career as pilot despite humble beginnings

9 Cav Life: Cookin' with Cav

A lifestyle column featuring recipes, travel stories, and fun things to do around Killeen



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Pegasus 6



U.S. Army photo by Capt. John Farmer

Brig. Gen. Michael Bills, left, the new 1st Cavalry Division commander, accepts the guidon from Lt. Gen. Mark Milley, the III Corps commander, at the 1st Cavalry Division change of command ceremony on Fort Hood, Texas, March 4. Maj. Gen. Anthony Ierardi relinquished command of the 1st Cav to Brig. Gen. Michael Bills.

First Team welcomes new commander

By Sgt. Angel Turner

1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs Office

Friends, Families and Troopers gathered on 1st Cavalry Division's Cooper Field to witness the reins of America's First Team change hands.

Brig. Gen. Michael Bills took command of the 1st Cav. Div. from Maj. Gen. Anthony Ierardi during a ceremony March 4.

"Command at any level is not only a critical responsibility, but a sacred privilege," Bills said. "Being honored with command of one of the United States Army's most storied units, the 1st Cavalry Division is a duty I accept with the utmost devotion and dedication."

Bills join the First Team following his tenure as the acting senior commander of 4th Infantry Division and Fort Carson.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Angel Turner

The 1st Cavalry Division honor guard along with 1st Cav. Div. brigade and battalion command teams prepare for the transferring of command during a change of command ceremony on Cooper Field at Fort Hood, Texas March 4.

This is Bills' first assignment with the 1st Cav. Div., but not his first time at The Great Place.

Bills served as the 72nd colonel of the 3rd Cavalry Regiment from 2006 to 2009.

During the ceremony, outgoing commander, Maj. Gen. Anthony Ierardi, passed the division colors to Lt. Gen. Mark A. Milley, commander, III Corps and Fort Hood,

who in turn handed the division colors to Bills, officially signifying the start of Bill's command. "I really appreciate being able to pass the colors between two great Soldiers," Milley said. "I have complete confidence in Mike Bills that he will carry on the 1st Cavalry Division's tradition of excellence."

"I am honored to serve beside you," Bills said to the

Troopers gathered on the field.

"I look forward to accomplishing our missions, caring for our Families and doing the nation's bidding together."

Ierardi will become the deputy commanding general of III Corps until his next assignment is announced this summer.

Ierardi took command of the First Team in June 2012, and during his time in command he spent half of that in a dual role as the senior mission commander of Fort Hood while III Corps was deployed to Afghanistan.

"I will miss everyone of you who has served and helped make the 1st Cavalry Division such a proud and unique unit with such a storied history," Ierardi said during his departing remarks. "As I stand here today, nothing can truly convey the enormous pride I have in all of you."

Cav Troopers train to save lives

By Sgt. Brandon Banzhaf
3rd BCT PAO, 1st Cav. Div.

A squad of Soldiers enter through a doorway, and chaos begins to surround them.

Yelling and gunfire envelops them as they move through the room.

Lights flicker sporadically. Smoke engulfs the room. Despite the chaos, the squad must complete its mission – treat and evacuate the casualties.

Troopers with the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division participated in the Pegasus First Responder Course at the Medical Simulation Training Center here March 3.

Not unlike the Combat Life Saver Course, which focuses on basic self-aid and buddy-aid medical techniques, PFR adds additional skills into the mix.

“There are more tasks involved with PFR than with the traditional Combat Life Saver Course,” said Sgt. 1st Class Wilder Smith, the primary instructor at the MSTC assigned to the Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center. “It incorporates a better grasp on CLS skills and gives more in-depth instructions and hands-on experience with them.”

The course implements the Tactical Combat Casualty Care guidelines, which explains how to treat the wounded, in addition to preventing additional Soldiers from getting injured while completing their mission.

Phase one of the TC3, providing care under fire, begins on the first day of the weeklong course. Students learn that 90 percent of all combat deaths occur before the casualty reaches a medical treatment facility.

“The fate of the injured often lies in the hands of the Soldier who provides care to the casualty first,” said Spc. Roland Franks, an instructor at the MSTC from 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd BCT.

Since the most preventable deaths on the battlefield are hemorrhage, or loss of blood, one of the first steps after neutralizing the enemy is to stop the bleeding.

“We provide step-by-step instructions and have them practice on the mannequins and each other,” said Franks, a Houston native. “Then we give them 60 seconds to apply a tourniquet to emphasize the importance of time in treating a heavily bleeding wound.”

Throughout the course, students must demonstrate the application of what they have just learned.

“I learn the most from the hands-on portions,” said Pfc. Joshua Belleci, a human resources clerk assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 3rd BCT. “As we are putting what we just learned from the classroom to use, the instructors gave us pointers



Sgt. Matthew Foster (left), an information assurance security officer, and Sgt. John Hornsby (right), an infantryman, both from the Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, practice inserting a decompression needle into a simulated casualty at the Medical Simulation Training Center March 3, at Fort Hood, Texas.

“The fate of the injured often lies in the hands of the Soldier who provides care to the casualty first.”

*—Spc. Roland Franks,
an instructor at the MSTC from 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd BCT*

on making the treatment as effective as possible.”

After students learn about care under fire, tactical field care is the next phase on the agenda.

“In this phase, students are taught what wounds need to be treated first,” said Smith, a Kaneohe, Hawaii, native.

Soldiers learn to control heavy bleeding first, establish an open airway, look for and treat any respiration problems, consistently check circulation, identify heat injuries, and treat non-life-threatening injuries.

“I like the importance they place on packing the wound and wrapping it properly,” said Sgt. John Hornsby, an infantryman assigned to HHT. “These are basic skills everyone needs to know and be good at.”

To show students how to properly emplace a nasopharyngeal airway, a plastic tube that is inserted into a patient’s nostril to help them breathe, Hornsby volunteered to have a Soldier insert the tube into his nostril.

“I know some Soldiers get overwhelmed providing care to their team members,” Franks said. “To avoid Soldiers from forgetting what to do, we try to get them to commit the mate-

rial to muscle memory.”

After training for tactical field care, they move along to tactical evacuation. This phase is where Soldiers learn the procedures and techniques involved in moving an injured Soldier to the closest MTF.

Evacuating includes different ways of lifting, carrying and dragging the casualty from one place to another. The use of improvised litters and the proper way to prepare a casualty for an airlift evacuation are also included into this phase of training.

In the final two days of the course, the students take a written test and must maneuver through a simulation lane.

“We were put through some exhausting tasks throughout the lanes,” Belleci said. “I had to get inside of a tank and pull a dummy out.”

Squads were tested mentally and physically as they navigated through an obstacle course with simulated gunfire and screaming piped into the facility through loud speakers.

“This is the stuff that saves lives,” Belleci said. “Regardless of who gets injured, every Soldier should have the ability to be a combat life saver.”

First Team cooks take heat

By Sgt. Brandon Banzhaf
3rd BCT PAO, 1st Cav. Div.

Before the sun ascends over the horizon and the major arteries of the post become flooded with vehicles, flames start to flicker on the stovetops, and the ovens start producing an intense heat.

Soldiers wearing white aprons mix, stir, bake and sauté to feed hungry service members their three daily meals.

The Operation Iraqi Freedom Dining Facility, which is run by the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, won the Philip A. Connelly Award for best DFAC on the installation March 4.

The Philip A. Connelly Award is an annual competition to recognize the best dining facility in a garrison environment and the best tactical kitchen in the field environment.

“We were inspected on how well the food was prepared, cooked and served,” said Sgt. Kenyaroy Boyd, a supervisor at the OIF DFAC.

The leadership within the DFAC had the cooks produce the same meals for the competition as they would for any regular day. The goal was to avoid any new recipes or unpracticed styles of cooking.

“It was like any other day from open to close,” Boyd said. “We practiced and practiced until we perfected the recipes. It also helps when the Soldiers are passionate about the food they produce.”

The Soldiers are inspected every morning to ensure they are ready for the day’s meals.

“The supervisors look to see if the Soldiers are clean shaven, have their hair within regulation, and if their uniforms were to standard,” said Staff Sgt. Rene Arana, the administrative non-commissioned officer in charge of the OIF dining facility. “On inspection day, everyone was ready. They got haircuts, had their uniforms pressed, and were ready to work.”

The cooks are informed which foods have to be out and when,



Spc. Sylvia Miller, a Baltimore native and food service specialist from the 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, checks the temperature of sausage patties ensuring they are cooked properly at the Operation Iraqi Freedom Din-

and they are each assigned menu items to produce.

After receiving directions, the cooks go to the ration noncommissioned officer who determines the exact amount of what ingredients they need for their recipes.

“From there, they follow their recipe cards,” Arana said. “They follow the step-by-step instructions. If one part of the recipe is messed up, then the whole batch will be bad.”

Just like in home kitchens everywhere, cooking and serving food creates messes and clutter, but the OIF DFAC staff practices a “clean as you go” work ethic, which maintains cleanliness throughout the day. Cleanliness is not only part of the Connelly inspection, but an important part of running a kitchen.

“It’s very hard to keep the DFAC clean when you are serving more than 2,000 Soldiers,” Arana said. “Having a clean area helps maintain a sanitized work environment and prevents us from having a bigger mess to clean at the end of the day.”

Following regulations and standard operating procedures is what helped the DFAC win the Connelly Award.

“Our leadership is great, because they enforce the standards,” Boyd said. “They care about the product and ensure NCOs do their job. When we point out deficiencies, the Soldiers learn. Our leadership knows that paying attention to detail is how the Soldiers learn to become better at what they do.”

During the inspection, food preparation and serving made up one of the focus points.

“We try each other’s food, so we can provide feedback, helping everyone perfect the recipes,” Arana said.

The rations office also played a role in winning the award. The rations office personnel issue food, keep track of what is in stock, and ensure ingredients are always available.

“We provide the exact amount of food necessary for the upcoming meals to make sure nothing is wasted,” said Spc. Ross More-

house, a food service specialist who works in the rations office at the OIF DFAC. “We keep accountability of everything.”

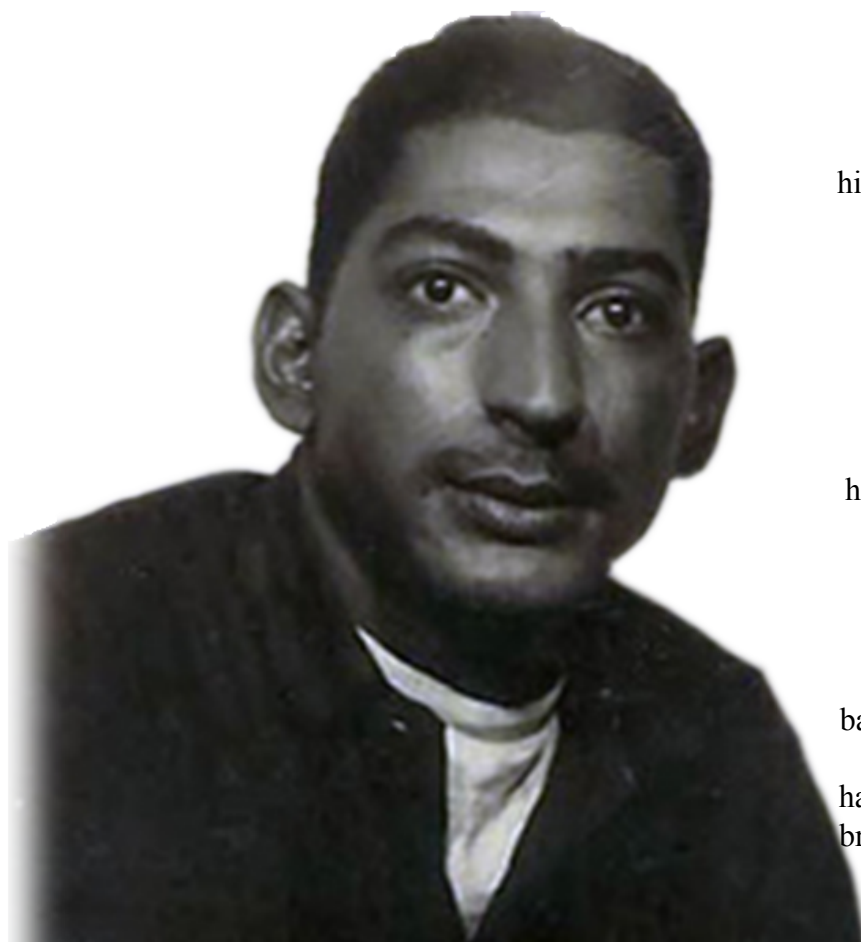
Lastly, the administration office was inspected and this involves the finances of the DFAC.

“The hard part about it is making sure the amount of food that gets cooked matches the money that comes in from the head count,” Arana said. “We need for the paperwork to match the amount of food used.”

Regardless if the food is served, used in another meal or thrown away after expiration, the cooks are responsible for tracking where it goes and reporting that to the administration office.

“If the Soldier preparing the food makes a mistake and ends up throwing it away, they are responsible for paying it back,” Arana said. “They see me fill out the necessary paperwork, and then they pay for it.”

The OIF DFAC is scheduled to compete against other DFACs on other installations throughout the nation.



Spc. Leonard Alvarado

Company D, 2nd Battalion, 17th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), Aug. 12, 1969, For extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam: Spc.4 Leonard L. Alvarado distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions, Aug. 12, 1969, while serving as a rifleman during a mission to relieve a beleaguered sister platoon in Phuoc Long Province, Vietnam.

As he and other members of the small reaction force moved through dense jungle, Alvarado detected enemy movement and opened fire. Despite his quick reaction, he and his comrades were quickly pinned down by the hostile force that blocked the path to the trapped platoon.

Alvarado quickly moved forward through the hostile machine-gun fire in order to engage the enemy troops. Suddenly, an enemy grenade exploded nearby, wounding and momentarily stunning him. Retaliating immediately, he killed the grenadier just as another enemy barrage wounded him again. He crawled forward through the fusillade to pull several comrades back within the hastily-formed perimeter. Realizing that his element must break away from the hostile force, he began maneuvering forward alone. Though repeatedly thrown to the ground by exploding satchel charges, he continued advancing and firing, silencing several emplacements, including one enemy machine-gun position. From his dangerous forward position, he persistently laid suppressive fire on the hostile forces, and after the enemy troops had broken contact, his comrades discovered that he had succumbed to his wounds.



Sgt. Jesus S. Duran

Company E, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), Republic of Vietnam, April 10, 1968

For extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force, in the Republic of Vietnam: Spc.4 Jesus S. Duran distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions, April 10, 1969, as a machine-gunner on a search-and-clear operation.

The reconnaissance platoon was moving into an elaborate enemy bunker complex when the lead elements began taking concentrated ambush fire from every side. With an M-60 machine-gun blazing from his hip, Duran rushed forward and assumed a defensive position near the command post. As the hostile forces stormed the post, he stood tall in a cloud of dust being raised by impacting rounds and bursting grenades aimed at him and thwarted the chargers with devastating streams of machine-gun fire. Learning that two seriously wounded troopers lay helplessly pinned down under harassing fire, he assaulted the suppressive enemy positions, firing deadly bursts on the run. Mounting a log, he fired directly into the enemy's foxholes and eliminated four of them and several others as they fled. He then continued to pour effective fire on the disorganized and fleeing enemy.



Sgt. 1st Class Eduardo Corral Gomez

Company I, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, Sept. 3, 1950

While readying defensive positions, his company was ruthlessly attacked at approximately 1 a.m., by a hostile force comprised of an infantry regiment and spearheaded by two T-34 tanks, the foremost of which moved to within 75 yards of the command post before it was immobilized by rocket fire, but its main battery and machine-guns continued to rake the company perimeter with devastating fire. Realizing the tank posed a serious threat to the entire perimeter, Gomez voluntarily, and fully aware of the odds against him, crawled thirty yards across an open rice field vulnerable to enemy observation and fire, boarded the tank, and, prying open one of the hatches on the turret, dropped an activated grenade into the hull, killing the crew. Wounded in the left side while returning to his position, he refused to be evacuated. Observing that the tripod of a .30 caliber machine-gun was rendered inoperable by enemy fire, he cradled the weapon in his arms, returned to the forward defensive positions, and swept the assaulting force with withering fire. Although his weapon overheated and burned his hands and his painful wound still bled, he maintained his stand and, upon orders to withdraw in the face of overwhelming enemy superiority, remained to provide protective fire. Then, retiring slowly, he continued to pour accurate fire into the ranks of the enemy, which exacted a heavy toll in casualties and retarded the enemy's advance. Gomez would not consent to leave his post for medical attention until the company established a new defensive position.

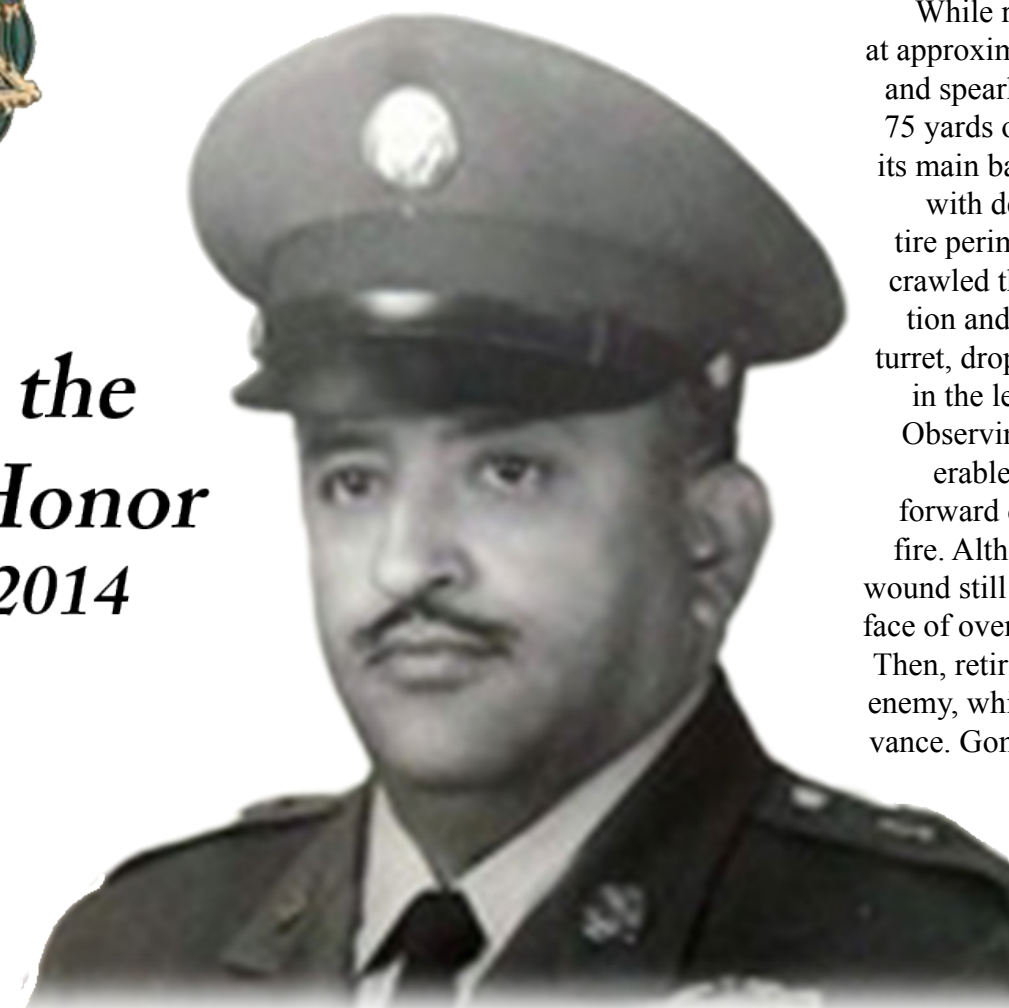
Master Sgt. Mike C. Pena

Company F, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment (Infantry), 1st Cavalry Division, Sept. 4, 1950.

Pena distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in action against enemy aggressor forces in the vicinity of Wae-gwan, Korea, Sept. 4, 1950. On that date, at approximately 11 p.m., an enemy battalion moved up to within a few yards of Pena's platoon, under cover of darkness and an obscuring mist. Observing the enemy, Pena and his men immediately opened fire, but the sudden, point-blank fire of the hostile forces made it necessary for the friendly troops to withdraw. Rapidly reorganizing his men, Pena led them in a counter-attack, regained the lost positions, and attempted to hold back the enemy. Despite the devastating fire laid down by the friendly troops, the enemy continued to hurl themselves at the defenses in overwhelming numbers. Realizing that a scarcity of ammunition would soon make the positions untenable, Pena ordered his men to fall back, manning a machine-gun to cover their withdrawal. Single-handedly, he held back the enemy until the early hours of the following morning when his position was overrun, and he was killed.



*Awarded the
Medal of Honor
March 18, 2014*





Capt. April Santos, a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter pilot and commander of the Company B “Jokers,” 3rd Assault Helicopter Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, sits behind the controls of a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter at Hood Army Airfield at Fort Hood, Texas, March 20.



Capt. April Santos, a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter pilot and commander of the Co. B “Jokers,” 3rd Assault Helicopter Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, poses for a photo outside of a UH-60 Blackhawk at Hood Army Airfield at Fort Hood, Texas, March 20.

1st Air Cav pilot lives childhood dream: aviator

By Sgt. Christopher A. Calvert
1st ACB PAO, 1st Cav. Div.

For Capt. April Santos, the road to fulfilling her childhood dream hasn’t always been smooth.

However, she fought to become the one thing she felt destined to be since the first time she ever saw an aircraft – an Army pilot.

“My brother took to me to see Army helicopters for the first time when he was in the Guard,” the Houston native said. “Since that day, that’s always remained in the back of my mind. I knew right then that I wanted to fly and serve my country.”

Santos, a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter pilot and commander of the Company B “Jokers,” 3rd Assault Helicopter Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, is no stranger to the military.

Her father served honorably as an infantryman, and her two brothers served in the National Guard. Growing up alongside them further fueled her dream to join, she said.

“I wanted to be a Soldier so bad,” Santos said. “I would always try on my brothers’ uniforms, and one year for Halloween I pretended I was G.I. Joe, not G.I. Jane.”

After high school, Santos attended college but quickly ran short on funds.

Then 9/11 happened.

“I couldn’t afford college for a whole year, and I wanted to serve my country, so I enlisted as a 52 charlie [utilities equipment repairer],” she said. “After serving five years, I put in my Green to Gold packet [for an ROTC scholar-

ship], completed my Associates of Arts in criminal justice at Methodist College in Fayetteville, N.C., and was picked up for flight school at Fort Rucker in 2007.”

Flight school brought its own set of challenges. During the two-year course, Santos would spend days away from her son, Demetrius, who was then only 2 years old.

“It took a lot of friends and child care sitters to help raise my son while I was learning to fly,” she said. “I only saw him during the night, as he was already asleep during the week when I would get home. All the while, I was going through a divorce. It wasn’t easy.”

“It was rough,” she added. “I knew it would be a struggle, but the rewards would be worth it in the end. You do what you have to do to make it happen, and that’s what I did.”

After completing flight school and receiving her commission, Santos deployed with the 2nd General Support Aviation Battalion, 1st Infantry Division, to Camp Taji, Iraq, for a year in 2010.

Despite being halfway across the world, she and her fellow troops make the best of it, and Santos found a way to stay connected with then kindergarten-age Demetrius.

“Our unit kept its morale up during the deployment by playing practical jokes on each other to lighten the mood; we had the best water fights,” she said with a smile.

“Demetrius and I bonded together over Skype, as my dinner time was his breakfast time, so we ate Lucky Charms together. It was our way of staying connected.”

Now flying with the Air Cav, Santos said she’s living her childhood dream every time

she laces up her boots and dons her aviator helmet.

“Females have come a long way in the military,” she said. “I’m the first female commander this company has ever had, and the only female in the company. This battalion alone has four female commanders. That really shows the strides we’ve made.”

Santos has no intention of slowing down, as she puts in extra effort outside of duty hours to ensure she’s physically capable to keep up with the fittest of Soldiers, while doing her part to help those in need.

“I run an hour every night to keep up with my younger Soldiers during PT,” she said. “I also find it easy to help Soldiers with their problems. Most of the time, if they have an issue with finances or relationships, I can relate to them and use my experiences to help. That’s part of the reason I joined – to help Soldiers.”

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Penny Johnson, an electronic warfare technician with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Air Cav. Bde., can relate to Santos.

“Captain Santos is a very strong woman to say the least,” Johnson said. “Trying to raise a child as a single mother in the military ... gives her a lot to offer to her Soldiers.”

Looking back, Santos said everything she overcame was worth it.

“Back then, I couldn’t imagine having the opportunity to attend flight school,” Santos said.

“Now, here I am. It’s just like I tell my Soldiers; never give up, because we all have something special to offer.”



CAV LIFE

COOKIN' WITH CAV

By Staff Sgt. Leah R. Kilpatrick
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs Office

With the gift-giving season behind us, I see no reason not to prepare for the upcoming holiday season. But I don't do this by hitting the outlets malls and accruing a ton of debt. I have a huge family and simply can't afford to purchase something for everyone. I choose instead to give gifts I made with my own loving hands. By the time the holidays are in full swing, I'll have a full stock of jams, pickles, and spice rubs, which, by the way, are great gifts any time of the year. They make great hostess gifts when you're invited to someone's home or a just-because-I-was-thinking-about-you type of gift, but I usually do this with the holidays in mind. At the last minute, I make cakes and cookies, but I'll leave those for another issue. One of my favorites is blackberry jam. This one will add a special homemade touch to your usual peanut butter and jelly sandwiches.

Blackberry Jam

3 pounds fresh blackberries
1 package powdered pectin
¼ cup lemon juice
3 cups sugar
12 half pint jars

Wash the jars and bands in hot soapy water. Wash all your canning equipment also, including your funnel and ladle. Fill your boiling water canner with enough water to cover everything. Bring the water to a boil. Reduce it to a simmer, and place your equipment (jars, funnel, ladle, bands) into the water until ready to use.

NOTE: Do not place jar lids into boiling water. They contain an adhesive that helps your jars to seal. They only need a short (maybe 5 minute) soak in hot water before they go on the filled jars.

Wash the blackberries. Pulse in a food processor about three or four times, so that the berries are broken up, but you still have some texture. Don't go crazy with it. You're not making blackberry soup, unless you're into that sort of thing.

Put the berries, pectin and lemon juice into a large stockpot and bring to a boil. Cook for one minute, stirring. Add the sugar, stirring to combine, and return it to a boil. Boil furiously for one minute, while stirring. Remove from the heat and let stand for five minutes, stirring every 30 seconds. Seriously, stir every 30 seconds. This stuff sets up quickly.

Ladle the hot jam into the canning jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Remove air bubbles by running a clean butter knife around the inside edge of the jars. Wipe the rims with a clean tea towel, place the lids on the jars and screw on the bands until they are just fingertip tight.

Place the jars in the canner, ensuring there is at least an inch of water covering the tops of the jars. Once the water returns to a boil, process for 10 minutes. Remove the jars from the canner. Cool.

After 24 hours, ensure to inspect the jars to ensure they have all sealed. If you push the little circle in the middle of the lids and it moves up and down, your jar isn't sealed and will have to be stored in the refrigerator. All the sealed jars are now shelf stable and should keep for about a year.

