

DESERT MONTHLY

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How much baggage do you carry?

pg 6

Desert Monthly

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Contents

- 3 U.S. Army Central photographs
- 4 Marines escort EOD Soldiers in Iraq
- 5 Louisiana Guard trains medics
- 6 A deeper look into Army EO training
- 7 CBRN Soldiers train for worst case scenarios
- 8 Soldiers participate in Best Warrior Competition

Top: An Iraqi army noncommissioned officer directs Iraqi army soldiers during squad movement training Jan. 15 at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq. (Photo by Sgt. William White)

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TOP LEFT: U.S. Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Abdula N. Alhawash, administrative clerk, Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force - Crisis Response - Central Command, performs a vertical knee as part of Marine Corps Martial Arts Program training in the U.S. Central Command area of operations, Jan. 28, 2015. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Skyler E. Treverrow)



TOP RIGHT: Spc. Daniel Huntley, assigned to the 97th Transportation Company (Heavy Boat), 10th Transportation Battalion, 7th Transportation Brigade (Expeditionary), controls the direction of a fire hose while Pfc. Samantha Van Leer and Sgt. Douglas Henry, brace their teammate during a simulated fire drill aboard the Landing Craft Utility Corinth at Kuwait Naval Base, Jan. 24. (U.S. Army photos by Staff Sgt. Gene Arnold, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

BOTTOM LEFT: Fire Controlman 2nd Class Andrew Thayer mans a M2HB .50-caliber machine gun aboard the guided-missile destroyer USS Gridley (DDG-101). Gridley is deployed in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations supporting Operation Inherent Resolve. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Bryan Jackson/released)

CENTER: Capt. John Halbert with Headquarters Battery, 17th Field Artillery Brigade, 7th Infantry Division, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., smiles and reunites with his wife and son during the redeployment ceremony at JBLM, Jan. 12, 2015, wrapping up a successful nine-month deployment to Kuwait. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Quanesha Deloach, 17th FA BDE Public Affairs)

BOTTOM RIGHT: U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Kenneth F. McKenzie, commander, Marine Corps Forces Central Command speaks to Marines with Command Element Marine Corps Forces Central Command Forward aboard Naval Support Activity Bahrain Jan. 28, 2015. McKenzie was travelling around the Central Command area of responsibility to visit his forward deployed units and speak with Marines, sailors and civilians. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by CE MARFOR CENTCOM FWD Cpl. Sean Searfus/ Released)





Rocket Men: Marines and Soldiers learn rocket science of a different kind

STORY AND PHOTOS BY

Marine Cpl. Carson Gramley

Marines with Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force - Crisis Response - Central Command, Task Force Al Asad, conducted a patrol at Al Asad Airbase, Iraq, Jan. 4 to help find remnants of 122 mm rockets fired at coalition forces.

Marines escorted members of a U.S. Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company, TF Al Asad, around the base to find and examine the impact sites.

"We're looking at the [fragmentation] pattern that was left and can tell us the direction it came in from and give us a back azimuth so that they can track that back and find where they think it launched from,"

said Army Staff Sgt. Steve Fitzpatrick, EOD Company, TF Al Asad.

Fitzpatrick said this has its uses but, due to the inaccuracy of the rockets, it's not an exact science. However, they have other ways of finding the launch sites.

Aside from finding the launch site directly, coalition forces have to consider finding where the rockets are manufactured, said Cpl. Joshua Whitley, a team leader.

"The EOD guys will take [the rocket back] and analyze anything that needs to be analyzed that might show who they come from," said Whitley.

Fortunately, none of the rockets have caused any major damage or casualties to coalition forces, but safety remains a concern even after the impacts have happened because

not all the rockets explode on impact, said Fitzpatrick.

Aside from finding and analyzing the fired rockets they also conduct controlled detonations for any unexploded ordnance they find, said Whitley. EOD does a good job coordinating to find where the rockets are coming from, helping to keep the coalition forces safe, he added.

"This whole base is a unified base. We have the Army, Marines, [partnering nations], the Air Force is here with their fire trucks, so we're all working together for one common goal."

Top: U.S. Marine Cpl. Michael Bumanglag (left) and Lance Cpl. Erik Delgadillo (right), search for the impact site of a 122 mm rocket at Al Asad Airbase, Iraq, Jan. 4, 2015.

Train to Save: National Guard medics take part in clinic care exercise

STORY AND PHOTOS BY

Spc. Clarissa Lester

Spc. Leroy Offord has served in the Louisiana National Guard for three years. Sixty-five days of those years were spent in an emergency room at the Camp Arifjan, Kuwait medical clinic.

Fortunately, his time was part of a medical exercise to develop skills needed to provide effective care to patients.

“The medical training has given me the opportunity to go through and widen my perspective on what healthcare encompasses,” said Offord, a resident of Pineville, La. “This training has allowed me to work with a variety of people and learn the different ways to provide care to patients.”

The exercise also included five days in a troop medical clinic, five days in a laboratory and five days in physical therapy.

“As the senior leader for the combat medics, the hospital training has provided my Soldiers new experiences within the medical field. They were given the opportunity to expand upon the information that they initially learned in combat medic school. These experiences have vastly contributed to the professional development of my medical team,” said Cpt. John L. Lenfant, the officer in charge of medics in the 528th Engineer Battalion.

Soldiers participating in the exercise were assigned to the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 528th Eng. Bn. and the 1038th Engineer Company out of Little Rock, Ark.

“This experience has made me more confident and has helped me to be able to communicate better with patients,” said Pfc. Kiarra Johns, a combat medic for the 1038th Eng. Co. and a native of Jonesboro, Ark.

Offord seconded John’s take, saying the training gave him the knowledge and confidence to apply for the Army Inter-service Physician Assistance Program.



The IPAP provides medics with an opportunity to become a physician

assistant in the US Army.

Spc. Justin Lain, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 528th Eng. Bn. explains to the patient what is about to occur to keep the patient aware as he renders the proper care to the patient in the Troop Medical Clinic (TMC).

Spc. Leroy Offord, a medic from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 528th Eng. Bn. from Monroe, La. checks the heart rate of a patient he received during rotation training in the emergency room.



EO leaders turn tables to look at their own perceptions

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
Sgt. Cody Quinn

A life boat is slowly sinking somewhere off the coast of Kuwait, and unless one person goes overboard, everyone will drown.

The passengers are a doctor, hairdresser, housewife and college student.

How would you decide who gets to stay or go? Would knowing that the individuals are a racist, homosexual, has four children or is handicapped affect your decision?

Noncommissioned officers were asked this very question during an Equal Opportunity Leaders Course at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Jan. 28.

The mental exercise was part of a 60-hour course that brought to bear some of the many issues common in the EO environment.

Soldiers participated in a series of role-playing activities, classroom discussions and conflict management exercises that culminated in a 45-minute presentation similar to the type of class they would give to their unit.

"A lot of things we discuss happened to me personally, so I was looking forward to it," said Staff Sgt.

Tommy Jones, a motor transport operator with the 32nd Composite Truck Company, 3rd Sustainment

Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, Ga. "It helps me get things out so I can be a better and more effective EO advisor."

The Army has its own EO branch that boasts a mission to "sustain a comprehensive program to maximize human potential and ensure fair treatment for military personnel, family members, and civilians without regard to race, color, gender, religion, or national origin, and provide an environment free of unlawful discrimination and offensive behavior."

"You come across all kinds of situations and people that haven't been



exposed to certain backgrounds or racism or cultural shock," Jones said. "In order to be an effective EO advisor you need to have an open mind, first and foremost."

However, this goal is often complicated by cultural differences and preconceived notions that many don't even realize they have.

"A lot of times Soldiers are so bottled up they don't realize they're carrying so much baggage as a leader. In order to be an effective leader you need to know your own

"If you have false perceptions about your Soldiers, you're going to treat them differently. You're not going to give every Soldier the care they're entitled to, and you're not going to mentor every Soldier the way they're entitled to. Soldiers emulate the way you are."

NCOs graduating from the class will be called upon to combat discrimination and ensure all Soldiers are given equal opportunities throughout their careers, Farmer said.

"When they go back to their units they're going to be an asset to their commanders," said Farmer,

the Army Central Command Equal Opportunity advisor and class instructor.

"They will be able to do everything from looking at the climate of the unit, help address issues at the command and company level, conduct observance and teach diversity classes," he said.

In order to be an effective leader, you need to know your own baggage.

baggage," said Sgt. 1st class Anthony Farmer, the Army Central Command Equal Opportunity advisor and class instructor.

"Some of the baggage can take the form of racism or casual discrimination."

For Staff Sgt. Breanna Carder, a participant in the EOL course, the class made her aware of some of the preconceived notions people still hold to this day.

"Some perceptions and stereotypes are still out there and I didn't realize it," said Carder, a movement supervisor with the 458th Movement Control Team, Belleville, Ill.

Top: Staff Sgt. Tommy Jones shares his experiences with racism during an Equal Opportunity discussion class Jan. 28.

Chemical unit trains for worst-case scenarios

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
3rd MCDS

The 71st Chemical Company and the 581st Area Support Medical Company, under the umbrella of the 3rd Medical Command Deployment Support, Operational Command Post (Forward) conducted a three-day chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear – decontamination training exercise on Jan. 8 2015.

The exercise focused on the rapid responsiveness to various chemical attacks that they may face from terrorist group threats. The scenario-based training focused on three main chemical agents: chlorine, mustard and sarin gases.

The training was a big hit within U.S. Army Central (USARCENT) leadership, the medical community, and all in attendance.

“The training conducted was realistic and intuitive. It embodied the essentials of mission command by building cohesive teams and synchronizing efforts to accomplish a mission,” said Brig. Gen. Timothy M. McKeithen, the chief of logistics for Combined Joint Task Force – Operation Inherent Resolve / Coalition Forces Land Component Command/USARCENT. “The two commanders, Capt. York and Capt. Brown seamlessly coordinated efforts and completed the training, thriving off each other. The training was conducted with a strategic mindset for a tactical level execution; very well thought out and realistic.”

Capt. Craig L. Brown, commander of the 71st Chemical Company stated, “I think the training was a huge success in validating the unit’s readiness in support of OIR. We were able to provide tough, realistic training that tested the company’s ability to plan, resource and execute [mass casualty] decontamination operations. The ability to train with the 581st ASMC provided the opportunity to test and refine our [tactics, techniques and procedures]. Their expertise allowed for a greater understanding of the level of detail and care required to medically treat patients during MASCAL operations.”

“The leaders of 581st could not be happier with the professionalism of both companies during the planning and execution of the operation,” echoed 1st Lt. Richard K. Anthony, the acting commander of 581st ASMC.

The 581st ASMC prepared for the exercise by researching possible chemical agents and the effects of the agents only after learning that they had not trained for it previously. This required them to be prepared on short notice.

“This training proved the flexibility of the unit and the soldiers to adapt to different medical treatment scenarios,” Anthony added. “Being an area support medical company we must be flexible enough to provide the best medical care possible for a vast number of possible contingencies throughout theater in support of OIR.”

“While conducting training with the 71st Chemical Company we successfully overcame environmental obstacles, the challenge of working with a new unit and the unpredictable nature of a chemical attack in order to successfully provide chemical decontamination, treatment, and mitigate human suffering,” said Spc. Joseph Lugo, a healthcare specialist with 581 ASMC.

The training consisted of realistic wound make-up and props from different chemical agents, use of litters and causalities. The variety of injuries and realistic wounds, forced the Soldiers from both companies to respond as closely as they would in a real situation.

“During our mass casualty exercise we experienced a more realistic way of training by incorporating the medical piece into our scenario,” said Spc. Julie Ann Ra-

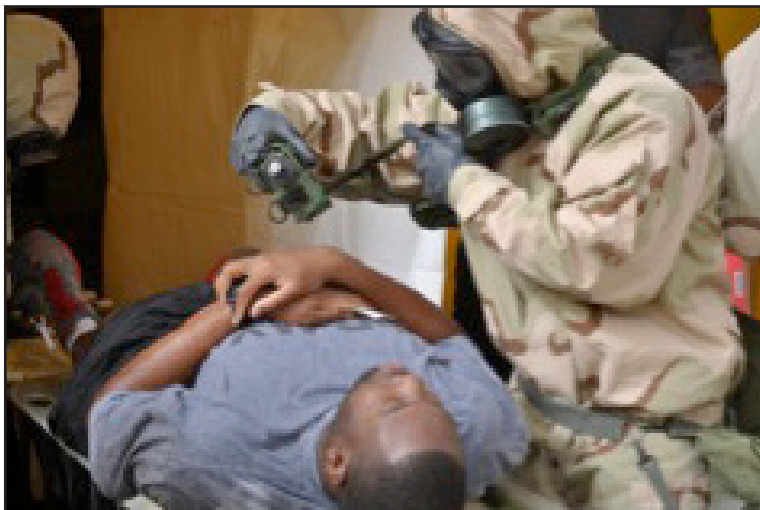
mos, a CBRN specialist, with 71st Chemical Company. “I found that it took the company as a whole to be able to perform our mission to the best.”

Both Lugo and Ramos stood out above others during the training exercise, and for their performances were both given a commander’s challenge coin by 3rd MCDS OCP (FWD) commander Col. Nelson G. Rosen.

Weeks of planning and hard work by the soldiers from the 3rd MCDS OCP (FWD) made an event like this happen, and they are planning another CBRN-DECON MASCAL exercise in the future to include medical evacuation operations. Replicating the most accurate warfare threats, prepare Soldiers for the current combat environment.

“We take pride in our ability to conduct CBRN operation allowing our higher headquarters to meet the Army’s objectives. The command team’s goal remains to grow this organization from good to great by providing the best CBRN support possible to the war fighter. I am proud of the many accomplishments of the leaders and Soldiers in this organization and especially to those who made this training possible,” said Brown.

Below: Soldiers of the 71st Chemical Company performing cutout procedures on a contaminated casualty during a mass casualty decontamination training exercise at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait Jan. 8. (Photo by Maj. Levon Edwards)



Sinai Soldiers test their mettle

STORY BY

Army Sgt. Jeremy Odom

PHOTOS BY

Army Sgt. Alexander Oliver

No one is more professional than I!" These words echoed through the U.S. Army's 1st Support Battalion headquarters building during the inaugural Task Force Sinai Best Warrior Competition held in the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt Monday.

"The intention of this event was to foster esprit de corps, offer training and development to our future leaders and to recognize our Soldiers for their hard work," said Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Rogers, senior enlisted adviser for the 757th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion.

Out of approximately 700 U.S. Soldiers deployed in support of the Multinational Force and Observers, each unit selected the competitor that would best represent their organization.

While the search for the most talented noncommissioned officers within each formation was difficult for some, selecting Sgt. Fernando Lopez to represent the 4th Squadron, 3rd Cavalry Regiment deployed out of Fort Hood, TX was a "no brainer" for his supervisors.

"It was an easy choice for me," said Staff Sgt. Joshua Thompson, North Camp Response Team Platoon Sergeant. "Sgt. Lopez is by far one of the best NCOs I have had the pleasure to work with because he is an example of what every NCO in the Army should be."

Although the selection may have come easy for Lopez's leadership, the train-up and preparation for the competition was not.

With a typical workday

spanning more than 12 hours, each participant sacrificed personal time, effort and sleep to prepare for the unknown.

Altogether, the peacekeepers were responsible for memorizing and reciting in front of a board of senior noncommissioned officers the regulations, guidelines and procedures from more than 30 different topics ranging from weapons to survival techniques.

To make the day more stressful, each Soldier and noncommissioned officer was tested on five separate situational training lanes that included tactical field care for a wounded Soldier, reporting a 9-line medevac and issuing a warning order. Each competitor received points for their performance which was later added to their scores from the Army physical fitness test and weapons range.

"It was truly a test of each competitor's physical and mental toughness," said Sgt. Thomas Duval, Task Force Sinai Public Affairs noncommissioned officer. "If you want to compete with the best you have to

eat, train and study like the best and that means physically and mentally pushing yourself to the edge and then some."

Like Lopez and Duval, all the competitors pushed themselves to the limits and their efforts did not go unnoticed.

"The Soldiers and NCOs all put forth maximum effort and did an excellent job representing their battalions and TF Sinai," Rogers said. "I am very proud of them for setting high standards and I hope more personnel will lean forward to accept the challenge in the future."

Despite each competitor giving their all, in the end there could only be one "Best Warrior."

Lopez, a military policeman, took home top honors in the noncommissioned officer group and Spc. Daniel Mwangi, an airframe repairer with the Aviation Company, 1st Support Battalion, stayed strong and came out on top in the Soldier group.

"When I heard my name called as the winner, I felt a relief inside



Spc. Daniel Mwangi, an airframe repairer assigned to Aviation Company, 1st Support Battalion, Task Force Sinai, sits in front of a panel of senior noncommissioned officers during the inaugural Task Force Sinai Best Warrior Competition held on North Camp, Sinai, Egypt, Jan. 19.



Top: U.S. Army Sgt. Thomas Duval, a public affairs specialist assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, Task Force Sinai performs first aid on a casualty January 19.

and thought to myself, ‘all that hard work really paid off’,” Lopez, a Texas native said. “This was an event that I will never forget.”

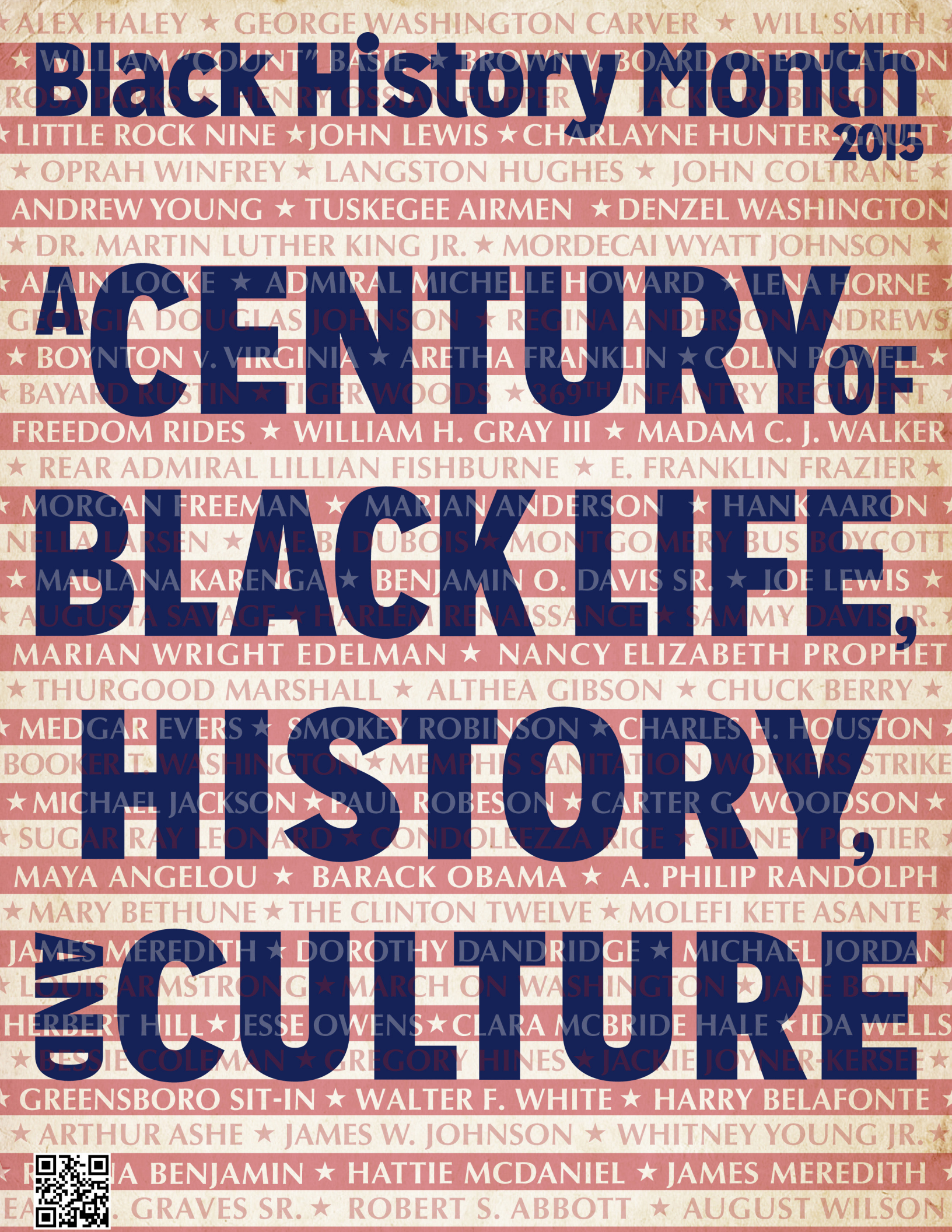
Although his achievement was a defining moment for himself and his unit, Lopez said he could not have done it without the constant support he received from his wife and four sons who encouraged him along the way.

Regardless of who won and who didn’t, each Soldier walked away with their own personal victories and a new respect for the competition and its competitors.

“After I got to know the competitors throughout the different events, I realized that we were all deserving and I became more humble just to be in the mix competing with such great leaders,” Duval said.

Bottom: Spc. Daniel Mwangi calls in a situation report during the inaugural Task Force Sinai Best Warrior Competition January 19.





ALEX HALEY ★ GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER ★ WILL SMITH ★
★ WILLIAM "COUNT" BASIE ★ BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION
ROSA PARKS ★ HENRY OSSIAN FLIPPER ★ JACKIE ROBINSON ★
★ LITTLE ROCK NINE ★ JOHN LEWIS ★ CHARLAYNE HUNTER-GAUDET ★
★ OPRAH WINFREY ★ LANGSTON HUGHES ★ JOHN COLTRANE ★
ANDREW YOUNG ★ TUSKEGEE AIRMEN ★ DENZEL WASHINGTON ★
★ DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. ★ MORDECAI WYATT JOHNSON ★
ALAIN LOCKE ★ ADMIRAL MICHELLE HOWARD ★ LENA HORNE ★
★ GEORGIA DOUGLAS JOHNSON ★ REGINA ANDERSON ANDREWS ★
★ BOYNTON V. VIRGINIA ★ ARETHA FRANKLIN ★ COLIN POWELL ★
★ BAYARD RUSTIN ★ TIGER WOODS ★ 369TH INFANTRY REGIMENT ★
FREEDOM RIDES ★ WILLIAM H. GRAY III ★ MADAM C. J. WALKER ★
★ REAR ADMIRAL LILLIAN FISHBURNE ★ E. FRANKLIN FRAZIER ★
★ MORGAN FREEMAN ★ MARIAN ANDERSON ★ HANK AARON ★
NELLA LARSEN ★ W.E.B. DUBOIS ★ MONTGOMERY BUS BOYCOTT ★
★ MAULANA KARENGA ★ BENJAMIN O. DAVIS SR. ★ JOE LEWIS ★
★ AUGUSTA SAVAGE ★ HARLEM RENAISSANCE ★ SAMMY DAVIS JR. ★
★ MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN ★ NANCY ELIZABETH PROPHET ★
★ THURGOOD MARSHALL ★ ALTHEA GIBSON ★ CHUCK BERRY ★
★ MEDGAR EVERS ★ SMOKEY ROBINSON ★ CHARLES H. HOUSTON ★
★ BOOKER T. WASHINGTON ★ MEMPHIS SANITATION WORKERS STRIKE ★
★ MICHAEL JACKSON ★ PAUL ROBESON ★ CARTER G. WOODSON ★
★ SUGAR RAY LEONARD ★ CONDOLEEZZA RICE ★ SIDNEY POITIER ★
★ MAYA ANGELOU ★ BARACK OBAMA ★ A. PHILIP RANDOLPH ★
★ MARY BETHUNE ★ THE CLINTON TWELVE ★ MOLEFI KETE ASANTE ★
★ JAMES MEREDITH ★ DOROTHY DANDRIDGE ★ MICHAEL JORDAN ★
★ LOUIS ARMSTRONG ★ MARCH ON WASHINGTON ★ JANE BOLIN ★
★ HERBERT HILL ★ JESSE OWENS ★ CLARA MCBRIDE HALE ★ IDA WELLS ★
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HISTORY,

AND CULTURE

