

# YANK

**THE ARMY**  **NEWSPAPER**



*By the Soldiers  
for the Soldiers  
in the service*  
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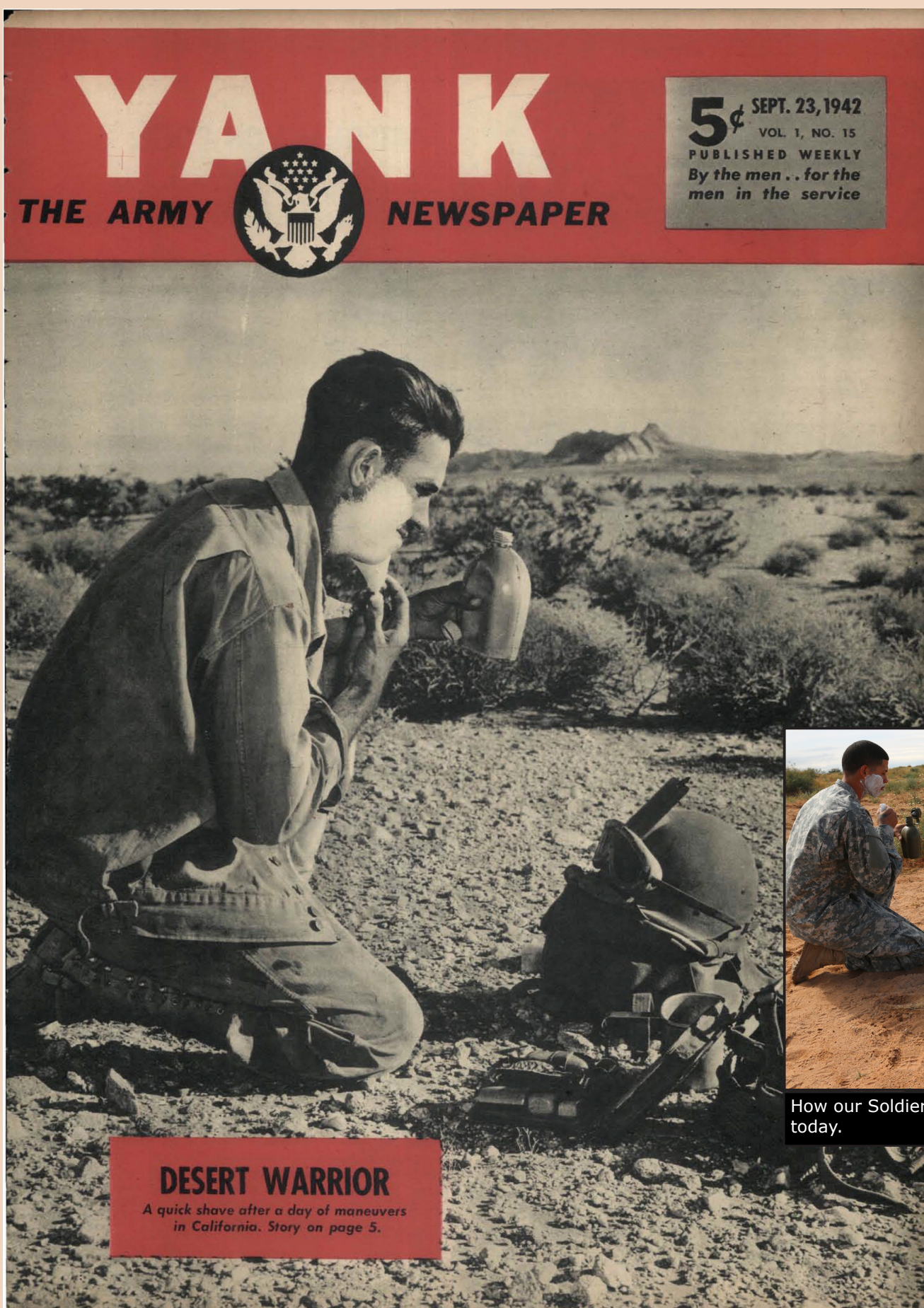
**DESERT WARRIOR**

A quick shave after a day of maneuvers  
in California. Story on page 2.

Original YANK cover photo, published  
Sept 23, 1942.

## READY FIRST Soldiers: Desert Warriors of Fort Bliss





How our Soldiers make due in the field today.

Cover photo:  
Sgt. Derek Calderon, a stryker mechanic with Golf Company, 1st Battalion, 36th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, and a native of Carolina, Puerto Rico, poses in a field on Fort Bliss to recreate a photo from the YANK, Sept. 23, 1942.

Photo by:  
Staff Sgt. Kristen Duus, 1/1 AD PAO

No Soldiers were harmed in the recreation of this photo.

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# TO THE ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES

*Colonel Coffman discusses RAF,  
the holidays, and NTC.*

## **The READY FIRST Combat Team Headquarters Fort Bliss, Texas**

November 20, 2014

In 45 days time, the READY FIRST brigade will assume its mission as the Northern Command (NORTHCOM) regionally aligned force (RAF), which means we will work side by side with our brothers in arms in Canada, Mexico and the Bahamas. As we enter the holiday season, I want each and every READY FIRST Soldier to understand that this holiday season is special.

Please use this time to rest and relax, spend time with friends and family, and come back safe next January as we begin our very long and hard training cycle that culminates with the National Training Center this summer. NTC provides our Army a capability that is unmatched anywhere in the world. The professional staff and leaders of NTC can turn up or down the rheostat based on our capabilities. Our capabilities and our talents are then improved incrementally across our formation and across all of our warfighting functions. The NTC terrain, opposing force (OPFOR), and the professional observer controllers (O/Cs) all provide a niche capability so when you enter NTC good, you leave there 10 times better. I expect us to leave NTC 10 times better than we enter.

I am extremely proud to be a part of your team. Each of you is part of the transitional generation of Soldiers and leaders that will take our Army into the future and enable us to fight both combined arms maneuver and wide area security. Our nation will demand more of your generation in the future than you may expect. You will carry the lessons learned from my generation and of those past, to future Soldiers and leaders. Your country is asking a lot from you- we are asking you to understand and apply all the lessons learned from the last 13 years of conflict and beyond.

So, as we move forward in the next three months of training, I need you to become experts in your warrior tasks and drills and your MOS proficiency. Your Soldiers deserve it and the Soldiers you lead in the future will require your expertise to maintain our Army as the best in the world.

READY FIRST – Iron Soldiers!

Richard R. Coffman  
33rd Colonel of the READY FIRST



# Fort Bliss Soldiers vie for Best Medic

2nd Lt. Samuel Brown, 1-36 IN

Designed to challenge soldiers both mentally and physically, the Best Medic Competition does just that. The Fort Bliss Best Medic Competition commenced at Forward Operating Base Freedom, Fort Bliss, Texas, Oct. 14. Soldiers fighting for the title of Best Medic found themselves utilizing their medical training and physical fitness skills to finish each event to the best of their ability. The Soldiers were cheered-on, supported, and encouraged by the units that each team represented.

Charlie Company, 501st Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division hosted the competition. Eleven teams, with two Soldiers each, vied for the title. Starting at 4:00 pm, Tuesday, the competition took nearly 72 hours to complete. Every event presented a different and more challenging task for the medic Soldiers to complete.

The events consisted of a day- and night-land navigation, M4 stress-shoot, M9 marksmanship qualification, medic stakes, a 3-mile buddy-team

run, an Army Physical Fitness Test, a written test, and concluded with a 12-mile road march Friday. Finishing the eight events in less than three days was stressful for each competing team.

Despite the stress, Soldiers found the events to be a great example of the power of teamwork. Sgt. James Wilcox and Spc. George Myers, who represented 1st Battalion, 36th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, won two of the events, the buddy-team run and the 12-mile road march.

"Best Medic was one of the most challenging and rewarding experiences I have had so far in my military career," said Wilcox. "It brought the best of Fort Bliss together."

The road march was the culminating event of the competition. A 12-mile road march is difficult, but the difficulty was increased due to the multiple events that came before. The challenge did not deter Wilcox or Myers.

Both Wilcox and Myers admitted they would compete again in a heartbeat, if given the opportunity.

At the conclusion of the events, points from each team were calculated.

Sgts. Zane Beach and Brian Guillen, both from 4th Brigade, 1st Armored Division, were the winners of the competition, earning the coveted title of Fort Bliss' Best Medics. This team will now represent Fort Bliss when they head to Fort Sam Houston, in San Antonio, to compete in the Army-wide Best Medic Competition. This competition will consist of Soldier Medics from across the country considered by their respective posts as their "Best Medics." Beach and Guillen will be supported by all Fort Bliss Soldiers as they battle to bring home the winning title for our Iron Soldiers.



**Top left:** Spc. George Myers, a medic with 1st Battalion, 36th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, completes the road march, the final task in the Best Medic Competition at Fort Bliss, Oct. 17. Myers and his teammate placed first overall in the road march. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Kristen Duus, 1/1 AD PAO)

**Bottom left:** Spc. George Myers and Sgt. James Wilcox, both medics with 1-36 IN, compete in the buddy run portion of the Best Medic Competition, Oct. 15. Myers and Wilcox placed first in the buddy run. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Kristen Duus, 1/1 AD PAO)

**Bottom right:** Spc. George Myers and Sgt. James Wilcox participate in the road march, the final event in the Best Medic Competition, Oct. 17, at Fort Bliss. (Photo by 1st Lt. Miguel De Jesus, 1-36 IN)



# Home is where you make it

*1LT Christopher A. Rabichaud, 3-41 IN*

After weeks of preparation, Rifle Move is finally happening. Soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 41st Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, moved the battalion headquarters, companies, and motorpool footprints to its new home. When 1st Squadron, 13th Cavalry, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st AD, cased its colors, the Rifles battalion, 3-41 IN, received notification to move across the installation and reestablish their headquarters in a new area of operations.

Preparation for the move occurred throughout November to meet the battalion's aggressive goal of occupying the new footprint and barracks, moving all Soldiers and equipment and handing over the current footprint prior to the end of November.

Leadership at every level, from team to battalion, established a solid plan to quickly occupy the new battalion space while still focusing on critical areas of safety and accountability. Prior to moving, leadership across the battalion conducted a quick reconnaissance confirming office space, supply-cage layouts and company motor pool lines.

Each Company within the Battalion ensured all of its equipment successfully moved across the bridge while senior non-commissioned officers planned and adjusted barracks space for single Soldiers. This became paramount in establishing company integrity and unit pride within the new barracks.

The battalion's move has been a very dedicated and deliberate process, from the battalion commander all the way down to the newest Soldier. The Rifle team worked closely together to accomplish this difficult but critical move.

Spc. Jeffrey Mihlfeld, a Soldier with Bravo Company, 3-41 IN, and a native of Simla, Colorado, said, "I think things will be a little weird at first and might take a little bit to get use too, but overall I think this will be great for the unit."

"I believe that this move will be a great way to get all of our company's systems into place," said Capt. Leo T. Krystof, Bravo Company commander. "This move will help us prepare for future collective training to better prepare us for the National Training Center and ultimately to quickly deploy in an expeditionary manner."

Change is not always bad: morale throughout the battalion is definitely on the rise. Rifle Soldiers always remember and embrace, "Home is where the Army says it is." RIFLES!



**Top:** Soldiers load gear onto the back of an LMTV to prepare for 3rd Battalion, 41st Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division's move to another side of Fort Bliss. The Rifle Battalion is one of seven battalions within the brigade moving to a new location. (Photo by 3-41 IN)

**Bottom:** Pfc. David Henson, an infantryman in 3-41 IN, and a native of Cincinnati, Ohio, packs boxes to prepare for his battalion's move across Fort Bliss. (Photo by 3-41 IN)



# Buffalo Soldiers participate in NIE 15.1

*1st Lt. Ramon Carmona, 4-17 IN*

Soldiers from the 4th Battalion 17th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, participated in Network Integration Exercise (NIE) 15.1 while attached to 2nd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, in October 2014. Through the wind, rain, heat and cold the Chihuahuan Desert had to offer during the month of October, nothing stopped the Buffalos from training.

This was the second NIE iteration for the Buffalo battalion and was a great opportunity to test Army equipment for 30 days while simultaneously conducting realistic training missions. Platoon-, company-, and battalion-level missions were conducted throughout the duration of NIE 15.1, giving the platoon leaders, platoon sergeants, company commanders and first sergeants a chance to train their Soldiers.

Missions included reconnaissance, raids, air assaults, key leader engagements (KLEs), indirect fire engagements, deliberate and hasty attacks and defensive lanes against the 1st Battalion, 35th Armored Regiment, 2/1 AD, opposition force (OPFOR) at Fort Bliss and the White Sand Missile Range.

The first phase of NIE 15.1 was COIN focused Platoon STX Lanes. During this phase, Buffalo platoons focused on troop leading procedures (TLPs), rehearsals, pre-combat checks, inspections and sensitive site exploitation at the lowest level. Everything was done meticulously with ample time built in to ensure mission success. Young squad leaders were given blocks

of time to breakdown Operations Orders and explain to their team leaders and junior Soldiers the importance of the operations order process. Throughout Platoon STX missions, platoon leaders were given the opportunity to conduct KLEs which were facilitated and evaluated by external observers and controllers.

The second phase of NIE 15.1 was Decisive Action, focusing company lanes. During this phase READY FIRST companies shifted from platoon-level missions to company-level operations with command and control at the battalion level. Company commanders from 4-17 IN had the opportunity to break down battalion level operations orders, company level rehearsals and company level mission command. Company air assaults, area defensive lanes and raids were some of the missions that each Company would rotate through during Phase 2. These missions allowed company commanders to mission command battle track platoon size elements, utilize enablers such as Air Weapons Teams (AWT), the Mobile Gun System (MGS) and reconnaissance elements to enhance combat power.

NIE 15.1 afforded 4-17 IN Battalion the opportunity to train the entire unit in the vast training area that Fort Bliss and White Sands Missile Range has to offer.

"Two rotations of NIE has given the Buffalo Battalion the opportunity to train on real world scenarios," said 1st Lt. Elena Cherepanova, the battalion's assistant S-2, and a native of Indianapolis, Indiana.



**Left:** Sgt. Joseph Dukes, a sniper with 4th Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, provides support to a wide range of missions during Network Integration Evaluation 15.1. Dukes, a native of Jackson, Georgia, has been in the Army for five years and has been a sniper for three.

**Right:** Snipers from 4th Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, Sgt. Joseph Dukes and Spc. Sean Atkinson, pose during Network Integration Evaluation 15.1, at Fort Bliss, Texas.  
(Photos by Sgt. Drake Francis, 2/1 AD)



# Blackhawks train for Operation Cold Harbor

*Maj. Ben Ferguson, 6-1 CAV*

Hundreds of Soldiers of the Blackhawk Squadron headed for the pass between the Oro Grande Mountains to defeat the fictional enemies of the United States during a field training exercise, October 21-30.

While most of Fort Bliss focused on the NIE exercise, 6th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, focused on Operation Cold Harbor, named after an American Civil War battlefield from the units storied past. The 10-day exercise put together the individual skills that the Soldiers from 6-1 CAV had been training on for months, including maneuvering through the rough desert flora, engaging targets while dismounted and in concert with their Stryker vehicles. The exercise continued after Halloween for an additional week with a mounted gunnery.

The exercise came during an important time in the unit's train-up, which is currently slated to perform duties within the United States in the coming year while assigned to U.S. Northern Command. The unit returned from Afghanistan in September 2013, and has been focused on developing and honing its skills and expertise at traditional scout and cavalry missions as it now transitions to learning about defense support to civil authorities.

Each of the squadron's troops of roughly 90 Soldiers had a list of objectives, but it was their

troop commanders who had individually planned, coordinated and conducted the training for their Stryker cavalry units. They had numerous successes, especially on squad live fires, which focused directly on building confidence in leadership, teammates and each Soldier's ability with their personal weapons. The Soldiers endured cold and dusty conditions to negotiate the lanes using the combat skills and tactics they had been rehearsing throughout the summer.

The Stryker reconnaissance vehicles they used were quick to cover ground on the many unimproved roads that cross through Fort Bliss, and yet were surprisingly quiet, which led to great training opportunities as the Soldiers conducted missions against other Soldiers in force-on-force training.

During the exercise, Soldiers from the brigade's military intelligence company worked with the squadron, conducting integration of many of their technical capabilities and remotely operated aircraft.

The squadron's mortars also got in on the action, shooting nearly 600 120mm mortar rounds during their certification. The mortar system enables the Stryker-mounted mortars to acquire and engage targets for the squadron under any condition, day or night. Throughout the exercise, Blackhawk Soldiers demonstrated their proficiency at their craft, and showed they will be ready to lead their brigade, wherever and whenever it may need to go.



**Top and Right:** Soldiers from 6th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, participate in "Operation Cold Harbor," at Fort Bliss, Texas in October. The exercise, named after an American Civil War battlefield, tested individual skills that Blackhawk Soldiers had been training on for months. (Photos by Pfc. Michael Hess, 6-1 CAV)





# Gunners participate in Operation Hustler Trough

2nd Lt. Kendall Howell, 2-3 FA

The thunder of the M777 Howitzer's exploding ordinance perfectly complemented the roars of the A-10 Warthog engines. Operation Hustler Trough was commencing - the Gunners of Alpha Battery, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, were providing accurate 155mm artillery rounds in support of the Airmen of 66th Weapons Squadron, based out of Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada.

This exercise was truly one of a kind. To date, no field artillery unit in 1st Armored Division's history had ever completed a mission such as this. Operation Hustler Trough synchronized multi-platform fires, enabling leadership to realize and execute the broad capabilities 1st AD can provide in the warfighting function of fire support.

"Field exercises like this are invaluable to our Soldiers' preparation for future battles," said 1st Lt. Thomas Redmond, 2nd Platoon platoon leader. "For most of our Soldiers, this is the first time they have ever supported fixed-wing aircraft with artillery."

The planning required complex coordination between multiple echelons within 1st AD and their sister branches of the military.

"This mission is much more different than anything we have ever done," said 2nd Lt. Lukasz Michalowicz, 2nd Platoon fire direction officer (FDO). "As an FDO, I worked closely with the pilots to make sure we were on the same page and that my FDC (Fire Direction Center) provided the support [the pilots] needed throughout the mission."

Delivering artillery rounds typically begins with a call for fire generated by an observer on the ground identifying a target. Throughout Operation Hustler Trough, however, the calls for fire were delivered directly to the Fire Direction Center from pilots flying through the skies above. They identified a series of four targets, provided a grid to the targets' respective location, and conducted battle

damage assessments.

Additionally, the A-10s strafed the targets with their 30mm cannons, combining the firepower and capabilities of both land-based artillery and close-air support. In all, the operation provided yet another alternative for 1st AD to deliver lethal fires to the battlefield.



As the battlefield evolves over time, exercises such as Operation Hustler Trough will grow in importance.

"Our Soldiers need to broaden their perspective on what deployments can entail," said Redmond. "We don't know who we will be fighting next and it is imperative that we be prepared to fight any type of battle."

"Alpha Battery continues to accept missions that put us outside of our comfort zone," said Capt. Wendell Robinson, the battery's commander. "We have got a ways to go in terms of training, but I am happy with the direction we are taking. We are finding new ways we can deliver fires and eagerly await the next challenge."



**Top:** Alpha Battery "Gunners" of 2nd Battalion, 3rd Field Artillery Regiment, DIVARTY, reunited with Air Force A-10 Warthog aircraft pilots from Nellis Airforce Base after a successful mission that week from Nov. 3-6.

**Left:** Air Force Warthog Pilots gave Alpha Battery "Gunners" a tour of their A-10 Warthog Aircraft at the Fort Bliss Air Strip.

**Right:** Pfc. Blake Hill, 1st Platoon Gunner and native of Denver, Colorado, had a chance to take a sneak peak of what's inside an A-10 Warthog Aircraft.

(Photos by Capt. Tobias Duncan, 2-3 FA)



# Seeing the Battlefield - 16th Engineers Integrate Reconnaissance

*Capt. Kenneth King, 16 EN*

Integrating enablers into a combined arms fight is challenging... no buckets of ice required. That is a major reason why 6th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, and Delta Company (Military Intelligence), 16th Engineer Battalion, 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, combined efforts early in their training cycles to practice this skill set.

Over a nine day period, the troops of 6-1CAV worked with the different low level voice intercept (LLVI) teams in a force-on-force scenario. The training was realistic, difficult and mutually beneficial to each unit involved in the counter-reconnaissance fight.

The training began with Delta Company's platoon and team leadership participation in the squadron's initial planning, orders production process and rehearsals. Being involved at this step in the process is critical for enablers, especially when the two units are just beginning to work together.

"Expectation management and understanding capabilities is a big part of the planning process for LLVI," said Sgt. Hassan Alzubady, a LLVI team leader, and native of Goodyear, Arizona. "A lot of Blackhawks have worked with SIGINT which made the process fairly smooth."

Prior to the combined arms rehearsal, the LLVI teams conducted a capabilities brief with the troop commanders and platoon leaders and participated in each troops' troop leading procedure process. All of this preparation was key but the actual training event definitely developed a much better understanding between the troops and LLVI team of how each unit can best operate.

The troops of 6-1 CAV allocated two teams or two platoons, depending on the mission, as a zone reconnaissance force and the other as a screening element in a force-on-force scenario. LLVI teams were validated by Delta Company leadership prior to the exercise, but placing the teams in a difficult scenario where other units were depending on them raised the bar.

Some missions were more successful than others as the teams intercepted communications and produced lines of bearing to opposing forces (OPFOR) while in the zone reconnaissance and the screen, on the move and stationary.

"We weren't successful intercepting during every mission, but there were a few we hit out of the park and really helped the Scout team find the enemy," said Sgt. Benjamin MacDonald, an LLVI team leader, and native of Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Integration at this level, when both units are still learning and with an open dialogue, made both units better. The LLVI teams will continue to progress and learned a lot from the exercise about their own system's capabilities that they had not tested prior.

The training helped both units move forward as the units commented on each other's competencies

during the after action reviews. Collection during movement to and from locations was something the LLVIs had not considered executing but would have been valuable. Conversely, the LLVI teams noted that



Sgt. Hassan Alzubady, a native of Goodyear, Arizona, and Sgt. Dillon Gray, and a native of Oologah, Oklahoma, both cryptologic linguists with the Military Intelligence Company, 16th Engineer Battalion, 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, mount a SIGINT sensor to a Stryker vehicle during a zone reconnaissance mission.

*(Photo by 16th EN)*

use of more phase line names and pro-words would disguise the Scouts' positions better to enemy listening in.

Overall the training objectives of both units were met and two separate organizations within READY FIRST worked alongside each other successfully to create a more lethal brigade. Integration of enablers need to be trained just like anyone else and waiting until a brigade exercise would be disastrous. This is why the scouts and LLVI teams will continue to collaborate together in the future to prepare themselves for their upcoming National Training Center rotation and future deployments.



# Charlie Medics Practice with MASCAL During Gunnery Field Exercise

*Staff Sgt. Mike Carrigan, 501st BSB*

The Providers of 501st Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, took to the field in the Fort Bliss desert, Oct. 22, 2014, to conduct supply and support operations for READY FIRST's gunnery training. One of the aspects of the Providers is the medical support provided by Charlie Company. Charlie's Roll 2 Aid Station was able to provide medical, x-ray, dental and physical therapy to the Soldiers in the field.

While in the field it is important that all aspects of a Soldier's and unit's mission are trained and tested. This was certainly true for Charlie Company when a mass-casualty exercise was held to give the medics some realistic combat training. Casualties were set up at the entry point to the training area simulating a car bomb, with other casualties spread within the training area, simulating that the perimeter was breached by a small-armed team of insurgents.

Once the call went out Charlie medics adjusted the staffing of the aid station from regular treatment



On arrival at the aid station all Soldiers were triaged and assigned a category: Delayed, Immediate, Minimal and Expectant. Immediate refers to a Soldier who needs immediate care to save their life, Delayed

refers to Soldiers who still need major care but are not as severe as Immediate. Minimal refers to Soldiers who can wait on treatment until all other serious cases are handled. Lastly is Expectant, which is for Soldiers who are so severe that there is a chance that any life saving measures may not help and attempting to treat them could cause delays that will prevent other Soldiers who have a higher chance of survival from receiving treatment.

The training was designed to help ensure the medics understood the flow and dynamics of the environment, the aid station layout and everyone's roles during the event. Platoon sergeants become "traffic cops," directing the flow of casualties in and around the aid station or supervising areas such as the evacuation section. Orderly room Soldiers became radio operators to keep in contact with headquarters, and even the dentist worked triage with the first sergeant.

"This exercise was a great new experience," said Spc. Renee Villasenor, who recently reclassified from a cook to medic.

READY FIRST Soldiers can rest assured that Charlie Company is well trained, experienced and ready to provide top-notch care to our Soldiers.

**Top:** Spc. Joshua Cook, medic with Charlie Company, 501st Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division provides field medical care to a training casualty Oct. 29, at Fort Bliss, Texas. Cook is a native of Bel Air, Maryland.

**Bottom:** Spc. Renee Villasenor, medic with Charlie Company, 501st Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, bandages a casualty during the MASCAL training exercise at Fort Bliss, Texas, on Oct. 29. Villasenor is a native of Dinuba, California.

*(Photos by Staff Sgt. Mike Carrigan, 501st BSB)*



to mass casualty (MASCAL) operations and sent out recovery vehicles to casualty collection points. These collection points were staged in the training area to allow for a consolidation of all injured Soldiers in the area to one central spot for the medics to pickup and transport to the aid station. Spc. Joshua Cook, a medic with Charlie Company, was one of the Soldiers moving out to the collection points to provide first care and bring the casualties back to the aid station.

"This was my first time using the Stryker on the evacuation team and it was a good learning experience," said Cook. "It was a good exercise and everything gelled."







Want a voice in the YANK?  
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during World War II. The  
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