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Sledgehammer Times

"NOT FANCY, JUST TOUGH"



In this edition:

- The China Room: A look at 1-15th IN History
 - Sledgehammer Brigade Life Skills Expo
 - Keys to a SUCCESSFUL move with ACS

The 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division

Mission Statement:

3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division regenerates combat power and deploys on order to conduct Full Spectrum Operations to defeat enemy forces, control land areas, and secure populations and resources in support of US national interests.

Command Team

- 3rd BCT Commander - Col. Michael J. Simmering
- 3rd BCT Command Sgt. Maj. - CSM Samuel Roark

Newsletter Staff

- 3rd BCT Public Affairs Staff Writer/Editor - Staff Sgt. Aaron Knowles
- 3rd BCT Public Affairs Officer - 1st Lt. Joseph Hall

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The Sledgehammer Times is published in the interest of the Service Members of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. The Sledgehammer Times is an Army-funded newsletter authorized for members of the U.S. Army under the provisions of AR 360-1. Contents of the Sledgehammer Times are not necessarily the official views of, nor endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Army. The Sledgehammer Times welcomes columns, commentaries, articles, and letters from our readers. Send submissions or comments to pao.sledgehammer.bde@gmail.com The editorial staff reserves the right to edit for security, accuracy, propriety, policy, clarity and space.

The Commander's Corner



On 22 Sep 15, the Brigade officially received our inactivation orders from Army Forces Command. As planned, units will inactivate beginning in mid-December. By 15 April, 2016, all units within the Brigade with the exception of a single Task Force (1-15 Infantry) will execute inactivation. Our ability as a Brigade to lean forward has helped ease the transition for everyone. However, at this point, Soldiers are being notified, as planned, that they are being placed on orders by Army Human Resources Command. These orders were fully expected. As we move forward, I have directed the chain of command to make themselves available at all times to each and every Soldier to ensure that we do our best to address any resulting issues. As always, our focus is on taking care of you and your Family. We will continue to strive to do our best as leaders to balance Army requirements with your personal goals and desires.

In the coming month, Soldiers identified to move to the remaining Task Force will begin

transitioning to their new unit. Soldiers from 1-15 IN that will ultimately PCS, will move out of the Task Force to be left behind. From here, our paths will begin to split. 1-15 IN will focus on training and preparation for JRTC. The remainder of the Brigade will focus on turning in equipment and turning over facilities. The result will be a high level of activity going on throughout Kelly Hill. We all expect issues and questions

to arise. We will help our Soldiers work through every challenge. However, one thing will remain constant - people are the main effort. We will take care of them. We will leave behind the best Task Force possible. We will absolutely pass Soldiers and leaders on to the remainder of the Army that are prepared to accomplish their job at their next duty station. We will safeguard the legacy of this great Brigade by passing onto the rest of the Army and our Nation, the best possible Soldiers, Leaders and Families prepared for duty when our Nation calls.

- Col. Michael J. Simmering, 3rd Brigade Combat Team Commander, 3rd Infantry Division



Sledgehammer Leaders Academy



Soldiers of the 3rd Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, participate in leadership training on Kelley Hill, Fort Benning, GA, from 24 Aug. to 28 Aug. The Week long academy was held throughout the Sledgehammer BDE, in order to strengthen the skills of leaders throughout the organization.

(Story and Photos by Staff Sgt. Aaron Knowles, 3rd ABCT, 3rd ID)

Soldiers of the 203rd Brigade Support Battalion and the 3rd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, participated in a Leader's Academy here, from 24 to 28 August.

The academy was a plan executed on behalf of Col. Michael Simmering, the 3rd ABCT, 3rd ID commander, said Lt. Col. Eric McCoy, the battalion commander for the 203rd BSB, 3rd ABCT, 3rd ID. It was an opportunity to build on the fundamentals of junior leadership within the brigade.

"What we tried to look at was how, in the operational domain of leader development, we could bridge the gap of things that our Soldiers may not get until they get to professional military education or subjects that aren't delved into in such great detail," said McCoy.

The academy was set over the course of a week. Each day was filled with classes that leaders, from their respective battalions, participated in by taking part in hands-on learning and executing missions out in the field. Classes included land navigation, preventive maintenance procedures, and even reaching out to the Inspector General's office for advice.

Lt. Col. McCoy was very intent on facilitating

classes that would make a difference in his Soldiers operating environment.

"In order to choose what would be taught, we formed focus groups comprised of leaders from all over the brigade," said McCoy. "Then we put together desired programs of instruction for that. From there, each battalion's quarterly training guidance was to conduct a team or squad leader academy before the 1st of October."

"This academy was exactly what I needed," said Sgt. Angela Nails, an unmanned aerial vehicle maintainer with the Military Intelligence Company, 3-1 CAV, 3rd ABCT, 3rd ID. "I can apply everything to my leadership methods and I learned how to push my Soldiers to become better leaders."

"I have learned a lot," said Nails. "It is a lot of stuff that I haven't done, and a great refresher for the skills that I have." Lt. Col. McCoy is personally invested in the idea that during the transitions that the 3rd ABCT, 3rd ID is currently facing, taking care of Soldiers and equipment are the most important missions.

"The proper divestiture of equipment and taking care of Soldiers are the two main priorities during this brigade's transition, so the materials that we covered during this class allow them to do these two things more effectively," said McCoy.

Leadership Academy (continued):

“As the brigade transitions, any shortcomings that these leaders face will allow us to figure out what to add to the next iteration of the leader’s academy,” said McCoy. “It’s not where you instantly go, ‘hey, I am right, wrong or indifferent,’ but you think about how you can become a better leader. Often times, as people think about that consciously and say I am going to improve a little bit each day as a Soldier or as a leader, if every member of the formation takes that attitude, I think that we can permeate long term change across the organization.”



A tip from you Army Community Service Financial Readiness Rep.

The key to a successful move:

Whether it’s your first move as a member of the Army, or one of many as a career Soldier; the key to being prepared is knowing the resources available to you before, during and after the move.

It is best to have savings to meet these resource needs. As long as you are a member of the Armed Forces, you should be financially prepared to meet expected, as well as unexpected financial obligations. A part of your ethos is being always prepared; that includes being financially prepared.

The key to financial preparedness is having a cash reserve; a savings account or an emergency fund. Start with a goal of establishing a cash reserve budget to determine how much surplus cash you have monthly; then take the surplus and feed the cash reserve until it is three to six times your monthly financial needs. Control your debt load to be sure you have money to save.

During the move, savings can be used to offset the costs of your move and doing so makes you more financially sound at the end of your move.

Talk to the specialists at the ACS Financial Readiness Program for assistance with setting in place a financial plan. Always have a plan and work the plan.

For more information regarding Financial Readiness, contact ACS Financial Readiness Team at 706-545-7517.

Sledgehammer Life Skills Expo

Sgt. 1st Class Charles Bailey, medical operations non-commissioned officer, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, explains the Life Skills Expo's purpose to Soldiers at Freedom Hall Aug. 7. The Life Skills Expo was an opportunity to bring Soldiers and various on-post agencies together to improve Soldiers' knowledge on how they can help make Soldiers' lives easier.



(Story and Photos by Staff Sgt. Aaron Knowles, 3rd ABCT, 3rd ID)

Soldiers of the 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, gathered for a day of classes and interactive training Aug. 7 at Freedom Hall. The Sledgehammer Soldiers gathered to participate in a Battalion Life Skills Expo, put together by the Sledgehammer Brigade, in cooperation with several helpful organizations from around the installation.

"We got a bunch of the services from around the community, here on Fort Benning, to come and speak to Soldiers about what those services provide," said Sgt. 1st Class Charles Bailey, the 3rd ABCT medical operations non-commissioned officer.

Classes that were provided during the Life Skills Expo included teaching Soldiers how to read their LESs, where to seek legal aid, about the Chaplains programs, about

Soldier for Life and even about Veteran's Affairs program classes, said Bailey. Also in attendance were representatives of the Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation program who coordinated several giveaways for the Soldiers throughout the week.

"I've already learned some pretty helpful stuff," said Spc. Joseph Jackson, 11th Brigade Engineering Battalion, 3rd ABCT.

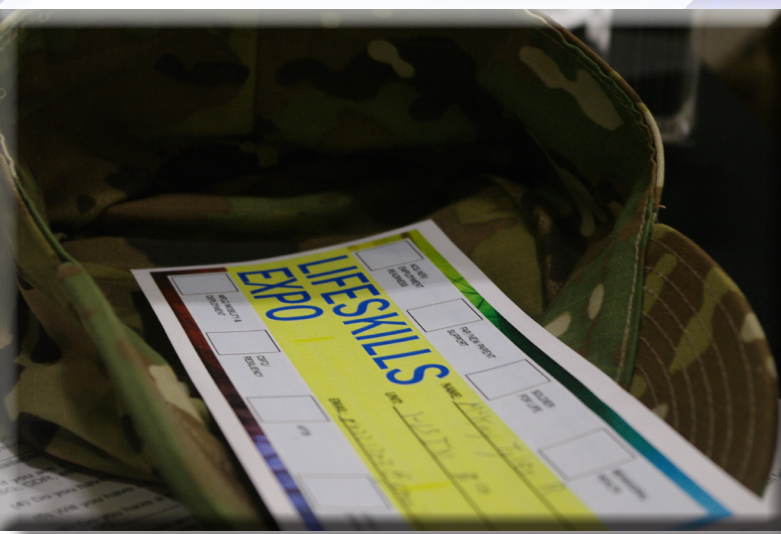
"The most important intent of this event is to make Soldiers and their Families aware of what is locally available to them for support," Bailey said. "We even invited the Families to come along with their Soldiers to participate and learn. The Soldiers and their Families need to know where they can go for help when they need it."

Jackson was gathering information to take home to his spouse.

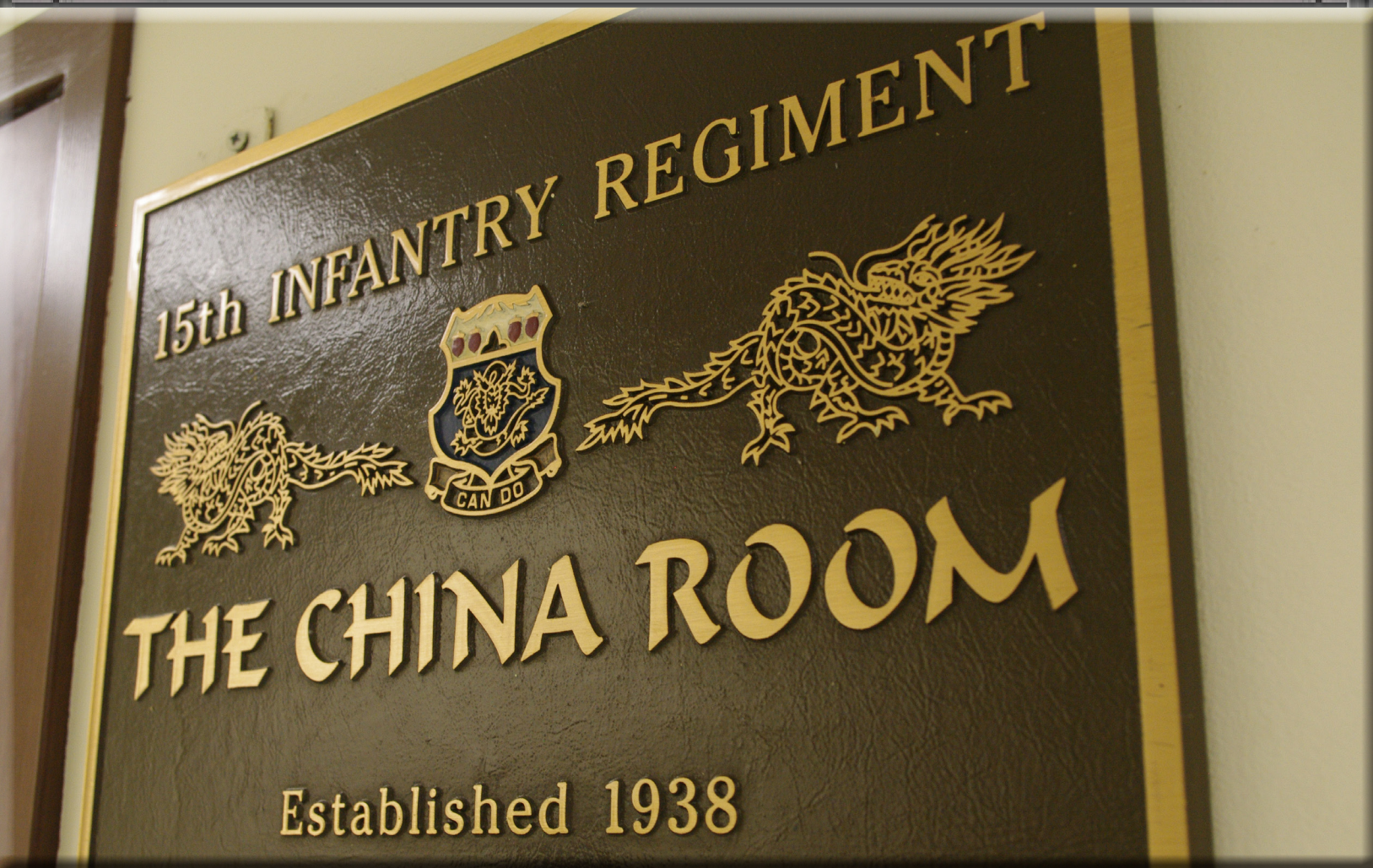
"The (Army Community Services) program is also very helpful," Jackson said. "I now know that they are there in case my Family or I get into any kind of predicament financially."

The target audience of the event was the young Soldier who doesn't know what to do or where to go, Bailey said. "Sometimes Soldiers are embarrassed to ask for help from their senior leaders, this event puts the resources right at their fingertips," Bailey said.

Jackson plans on staying in the military to become an NCO and said he plans on keeping this information with him to assist the Soldiers that he may lead in the future.



A closer look at history



(Story and Photos by Staff Sgt. Aaron Knowles, 3rd ABCT, 3rd ID)

There are few units in the Army with the history and honor that the 15th Infantry Regiment has earned.

1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, has been intent on keeping that rich history alive and accessible for many years. Located on Kelley Hill, Fort Benning, GA and within the headquarters of the 1-15th IN, is a place known as the China Room. It is not top-secret and it is not locked away from the world, but rather open to anyone that is interested in learning this unit's important history.

Spc. Robert Vance, an intelligence analyst with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-15th IN, 3rd ABCT, 3rd ID, holds the additional duty as curator and maintainer of what is known as The China Room.

"The China Room is a museum that details the history of the 15th Infantry Regiment dating back to the Civil War," said Vance.

Vance has been curating and showing off the room for more than two and a half years and is considered to be the unit's

'subject matter expert'.

The China Room is home to many pieces of history that would be found in places like the Smithsonian, said Vance. A lot of the items are on loan from the 15th INF Society, but many have been donated by 15th IN Soldiers alumni.

Around the China Room, are guidons used throughout the history of the 15th IN, as well as flags, helmets, foreign uniforms and even Imperial Swords. These swords were given to Soldiers of the unit by the Chinese Imperial Family as tokens of appreciation.

One of the most impressive pieces though, is a massive silver punch bowl accompanied by 40 silver cups that was gifted to the organization when Soldiers assisted a merchant in China.

According to Vance, the merchant had been robbed by bandits. The Soldiers of the 15th IN caught the bandits and returned to goods to the merchant, and in return he crafted and gifted the punch bowl which is used in formal events by the organization. The last appraisal estimated the value of the

History (continued):
punch bowl at over \$75,000.

"I personally think that is important that everyone understands what this unit has done and where this unit has come from and how the unit has evolved over time," said Vance.

One of the most notable Soldiers to have a part in the history of the 15th IN is Sgt. Audie Murphy.

Located within the China Room, you can find photos, paintings, and even pieces of actual equipment from some of Murphy's most notable moments with the unit.

"Whenever I open this room up for promotion ceremonies or award ceremonies and you have people fresh out of basic training come in here, you can see the awe that they experience," Vance said. "They think to themselves that they are part of a unit that has done some amazing things."

"I think it is interesting that we have this and that it's so accessible to anyone that wants to be here and wants to learn about the unit," continued Vance. "It's important to remember where we came from and the things that people before us have done."

Right and Below: Paintings, photos and awards of Sgt. Audie Murphy, a Soldier of the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, are amongst historical items on display in the China Room, located in the headquarters of the 1-15th IN, on Fort Benning, GA, 2 Sept.



Patriot Day with Dexter Elem.

Students of Dexter Elementary and Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 10th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, gathered together at the on-post school for a remembrance ceremony Sept. 11.

Students, Soldiers and first-responders from Fort Benning spent the day participating in organized events that recalled the power of the tragic events that occurred 14 years ago.

“Today is important to remember because of the people who died when the buildings collapsed,” said Camdyn and Devyn Harper, two students of Dexter Elementary. “It is important to remember the heroes who lost their lives on that day.”

Edwina Smith, the principle of Dexter Elementary, spoke about the day’s events during a ceremony that followed the raising of the American Flag and then lowering it to half-mast.

“Each adult here can remember where they were and what they were doing when they heard or received the tragic news,” Smith said. “On that day, regardless of age, creed or ethnicity [many] went through a number of emotions - shock, fear, anger, hopelessness. But, out of such a tragedy came unity that had not been seen in a



(Story and Photos by Staff Sgt. Aaron Knowles, 3rd ABCT, 3rd ID)

number of decades.”

Students of Dexter Elementary followed up Smith’s speech by reading poetry from famous authors about 9/11. They later moved into the school’s auditorium to watch a short video presentation and then sang songs dedicated to the Fallen.

“So, today we want to take a moment of silence to remember the lives that were lost on 9/11 and the countless lives that have been lost fighting the war on terror,” Smith said. “Let’s take this time to remember our military Families, our wounded warriors and, especially, our military connected children.”



The Ministry Minute

Uncertainty

Written by CH (CPT) Brian Phipps, the chaplain for the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division.

When we come to a time of change or uncertainty in our lives, many people begin to question God, their personal decisions or possibly even the goals they set for themselves long ago.

Many times, when we are able to evaluate ourselves we find things that need to be changed, weeded out, or simply life factors which are holding us back.

Sometimes the uncertainty we may be feeling is due to unresolved circumstances. Or it may be due to a change in your life that you did not expect to happen for another year or two. You may even feel that setting goals only serves as a limitation, but goals force us to examine ourselves honestly. In farmlands and forest areas, each year farmers and Forest Rangers set what is called a prescribed fire. A prescribed fire which is intentionally used to keep fields open and to destroy underbrush and small trees in that area.

Underbrush and small trees continuing to grow in a forest area causes the bigger trees to compete for water and nutrients. If the underbrush is not dealt with, it will eventually overgrow the area and choke out the healthy trees.

Underbrush also acts as a fuel source when lightning strikes a tree. A spark can cause underbrush to become an accelerant resulting in huge forest fires. To keep this from happening, Forest Rangers intentionally set fires to burn out the undergrowth. These fires also put nutrients back in the ground thus producing bigger, healthier and more successful trees.

In the same way, we must examine ourselves to see what underbrush we have that is keeping us from succeeding. For some it is the fear of success and for others, the struggle is deciding where to begin. This is where goals come in to play.

Goals first force us to look at ourselves and honestly assess our failures and necessity to changes. Many goals that people set are unrealistic or wishful thinking, but the exercise of examining ourselves forces us to see where we are falling short.

David, in Psalm 139:23 prays to God and ask Him to "Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts."

With God's help, we can be truly honest with ourselves and make changes that are necessary in our lives. The second purpose of goals is to turn us back to God. Anyone that has set a goal knows that it can be very hard to keep that goal, never the less David tells us in Psalm 28:3,

"The Lord is my strength and my shield; My heart trusts in Him, and I am helped."

When it becomes difficult to keep our goals God is there to help us succeed. We simply have to trust and depend on Him.

I pray that you find the strength necessary to keep your goals and know that God will help you through all times of uncertainty.

As the 1-15 IN Battalion Chaplain, and a member of the 3BDE Unit Ministry Teams, please know that we are here to assist you in facing the various challenges of life, connect you with valuable support agencies, and offer you pastoral and spiritual care. Please do not hesitate to contact us for support.

