



DESERT VOICE

Summer 2017



AIR ASSAULT IN KUWAIT
PG. 11

GERMAN ARMED FORCES BADGE
PG. 17



U.S. ARMY CENTRAL

Summer 2017



<<On the Front Cover

U.S. Army Spc. Caleb Choate, a patriot fire control enhanced operator/maintainer, 108th Air Defense Artillery Brigade, prepares to descend down the rappel tower at U.S. Army Central's first Air Assault Course, April 12, 2017, at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. The Air Assault Course is a 12-day class that allows U.S. military personnel in the U.S. Army Central area of operations the unique opportunity to become air assault qualified, while deployed outside the continental United States. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Tom Wade)

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Lucky 6: On Point

It is nearly a year since Headquarters USARCENT transitioned to the 5.4 MTOE. I cannot stress enough how far this unit has come and how honored I am to command it. I see institutional change and growth at all levels of this unique organization with every battlefield circulation; and I'm proud to see our vision coming to fruition across the theater.

These gains are due in no small part to the dedication of our staff and all units across the theater. I'd like to welcome Maj. Gen. McKenrick, our new Deputy Commanding General, as well as the new G4, Brig. Gen. McCollum, the new G3, COL (P) Morrissey, our new G8, Brig. Gen. Hubbard, and Brig. Gen. Raymer our new Chief of Staff and Maj. Gen. Braden and the 35th Infantry Division to the USARCENT family. I am excited about our new team and I look forward to the opportunity to continue our important work in the days ahead, with fresh eyes and fresh leadership.

In my last periodic assessment I mentioned that the mission in our area of operations led to the revamp of the HQ's mission command infrastructure and the addition of the division headquarters as Task Force Spartan. As part of that revamp we curtailed our forward command post and focused our staff on operational and theater-strategic tasks. With the regional support group replacing the augmentation detachment we are again revamping the size of our staff footprint forward.

With these changes the staff has designed a more efficient battle rhythm, which flattens our organization; something I stressed in my 100 day assessment. With this new battle rhythm in effect, over the coming months, we need to

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tighten the shot group to ensure continuity of operations and information flow.

We will also update the USARCENT Staff SOP and Terms of Reference. Additionally we will codify the gains we've made as a staff and the lessons learned from the deployment of the 29th ID and 35th ID as Task Force Spartan.

Our civilian workforce is critical; they are our knowledge longevity and our source of continuity. We must fill our authorized civilian slots with quality individuals and grow their experience, perpetuating our gains by, with and through them. Green suiters will come and go, it's our civilian workforce that bridges the gap.

A while back I said that transition is internal, external and constant. This remains and will always remain the same in our theater. As we capture lessons learned from the standup of Task Force Spartan, so too must we capture the lessons learned from the transitions between Division HQs.

We've exerted significant energy in supporting and ensuring that an effective TOA takes place; we need to capture what we've done that guarantees success, codify it, and pass it along to future rotations. We must make certain that constant transition doesn't become a constant obstacle.

We've come a long way in the last year, with an ever shrinking headquarters. I thank each of you that are working together each and every day to make it all possible.

Do not ease up thinking the shore is in sight. When I took command I promised you I would wake up and give you my best effort every day and expect nothing less in return – this has not changed.

Patton's Own – Third Always First! ♦



Lucky 7: From My Foxhole

As we continue to grow the Army, retention continues to be an important issue that each command must face.

Our ability to retain fully qualified Soldiers ensures that we continue to develop our professional force of young leaders.

Company Commanders and First Sergeants must dutifully counsel our young Soldiers and ensure they are aware of the opportunities available while serving our nation.

One opportunity that has recently developed is working in one of the newly created Security Force Assistance Brigades (SFAB).

The SFAB is looking for volunteers that are willing to undergo extensive training to include some language and instructor training. NCO volunteers must meet minimum requirements and possess the same attributes associated with serving as a Drill Sergeant or other instructor.

Chains of command are encouraged to support all interested Soldiers for these challenging and career enhancing positions.

For more information contact your career counselor.

Another area of concern that is closely related to our growing Army, is our ability to board and promote Sergeants.

We are not meeting our required end strength in our Junior NCO ranks. This has become such a problem that the Army is looking at policy changes to solve this shortage.

It is perceived that we are not recommending Specialists for a board appearance once they become eligible.

We absolutely must ensure our young leaders are competent and prepared for their roles and responsibilities, but we must also understand that the

promotion to Sergeant is based upon their potential to lead.

We cannot place any artificial requirements to go to a promotion board (APFT scores, Soldier of the Month appearance, etc).

Once a Soldier is fully eligible, and meet established Army Standards, they should be sent to the board or counseled on where to improve.

As an example: Once a Sergeant 1st Class is fully qualified for promotion, their records go before a promotion board for Master Sergeant. We do not place any additional requirements upon them before being boarded, so why would we do this to our Specialists?

The last area I want to touch upon is Select, Train, Educate, Promote (STEP). This is the professional development model used for our Noncommissioned Officers to ensure that NCOs are educated in their roles prior to being promoted.

STEP has caused much concern for our young leaders especially those deployed to our AO.

All requirements will remain for those deployed, so we must do our best to ensure they receive the required training. In many circumstances, this may require us to send Soldiers back to the continental U.S. advanced leaders course or senior leaders course. We will continue to maximize basic leaders course in Kuwait, and are working hard to increase the amount of seats offered during each class.

Bottom line is STEP is here to stay.

Leaders must understand policy, enforce standards, and ensure those standards are understood across the force. We can fix these issues, but it takes engaged leaders, committed to the development of our Soldiers.

Continue to keep Third always First. Patton's Own!" ♦

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Unit transitions around the AO



Lt. Gen. Michael Garrett, right, commanding general, U.S. Army Central, passes the unit's colors to Brig. Gen. John Phillips, commander, 335th Signal Command (Theater) (Provisional), left, which signifies the passing of his trust and the responsibility of the unit to Phillips during 335th's change of command ceremony at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, June 26, 2017. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Sandra Richards)



Col. Bruce Syvinski (right), the commander of the 86th Combat Support Hospital, and Command Sgt. Maj. Daryl Forsythe, the command sergeant major for the 86th CSH, uncases the unit's colors, during the transfer of authority ceremony in the Zone 1 Fitness Center, Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, May 5. The ceremony marked the last deployment for the 86th CSH, as it will re-designate into a field hospital when it returns from this rotation. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Bethany Huff)



Maj. Gen. Victor Braden (left), commanding general, 35th Infantry Division-Task Force Spartan, and Command Sgt. Maj. Timothy Newton, uncase their division's colors during a Transfer of Authority Ceremony for Task Force Spartan, July 13, at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. The 29th Infantry Division transferred authority of TF Spartan to the 35th. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Scott Campbell)



Col. Jeffrey Merenkov (right), outgoing commander of Area Support Group-Qatar, hands off the ASG-Qatar's colors during his change of command and responsibility ceremony, May 25, 2017, Camp As Sayliyah, Qatar. Merenkov passed command of ASG-Qatar to Col. Robert Kuth. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Kimberly Browne)

Greywolf troopers train with international partners, build interoperability

By Staff Sgt. Leah Kilpatrick
3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team
1st Cavalry Division

The Greywolf Brigade spent the last two weeks embracing international interoperability during their nine-month deployment to Kuwait.

Soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, served as the opposing force during the training exercise Eagle Resolve.

"Eagle Resolve is a joint training exercise with Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and American forces," said Capt. David Hale, commander of Company B "Battle," 3-8 CAV. "Bravo Company is tasked to defend key nodes and infrastructure to disrupt Kuwaiti special operations elements in our area of operations."

While Gulf Cooperation Council elements were inserted into various scenarios like clearing buildings, rescuing hostages and retaking key infrastructure, the Soldiers of Battle Company played the role of bad guys, firing blanks at allied forces.

As two helicopters landed on a farm in the Kuwaiti desert, a cloud of dust kicked up from rotating rotor blades provided cover for the swarm of international special operations troops that poured out. The bevy of uniformed personnel immediately took up an offensive position alongside two mine-resistant, ambush-protected vehicles as they made their way toward their objective with weapons drawn.

Meanwhile, Battle Company Soldiers held their ground and defended their territory against the approaching assault.

"We've done numerous partnership missions with the Kuwaiti forces where we worked to integrate with them

and kind of see how they do their thing," said Staff Sgt. Andy Anderson, platoon sergeant assigned to Battle Company.

In the midst of retaking the farm, the Gulf Cooperation Council forces were able to exercise an array of skills, from clearing rooms to combat casualty care to detainee operations all while working together seamlessly.

In a vehicle board, search and seizure scenario, two waves of GCC forces were inserted onto an oil tanker. The first wave rappelled in from helicopters; the second approached via speedboat right up to the side of the vessel and mounted the stairs, all with weapons at the ready.

They shot, moved and communicated as they made their way from room to room, detaining the opposition forces and rescuing hostages.

In a scenario located in a warehouse complex in Subhan Army Base, teams of GCC elements rolled into the complex in mine-resistant, ambush-protected vehicles, while other teams poured through an opening in the fence, stacked up alongside the warehouses, tossed M84 stun grenades into the open doors, waited for them to detonate, then cleared each warehouse.

Once they set up a perimeter around the warehouses, more teams rolled up in black SUVs, sirens blaring, to the final objective of the scenario, a row of trailers at the back of the complex. Again the GCC forces worked together to clear the final buildings, neutralizing the threats, and conducting detainee operations.

Along with special operations forces from the GCC, U.S. Marines, Navy and Air Force played roles in the execution of the scenarios; "We've been able to work with the United States Air Force, U.S. Marines, the Navy, as well as the Army's special (operations) forces units, so it's a great experience that a lot of my tankers have not had the chance to do," Hale said. "It's also a chance for my tankers to get some experience in dismounted operations. Essentially, a lot of the dismounted tactics that we use translate over to the mounted world, so we're actually able to teach mounted tactics dismounted. It's been a great learning experience from the top down. I think all of us are taking a lot from this." ♦



A team of multinational special operations forces leads the opposing force away. Soldiers from Company B, 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division played the opposing force for a joint training exercise between U.S. special operations forces and SOF elements from Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Leah R. Kilpatrick)



Combined Joint Rescue Training commences

By Sgt. Christopher Bigelow
1st Theater Support Command

Joint Rescue and Isolated Personnel Recovery operations were conducted in a training exercise at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait's Patriot Airfield, May 8, 2017.

The training, hosted by Soldiers from the 86th Combat Support Hospital, Marines from the Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron - 364 (VMM-364) and Emergency Response Technicians from Area Support Group - Kuwait, Joint Emergency Services.

Service members and their civilian EMS counterparts rehearsed MV-22 Osprey casualty loading and offloading procedures to develop Joint Service cohesion and collectively review the standard operating procedures of casualty transportation throughout the U.S. Central Command's area of responsibility.

"It's important for each member to be familiar with standard operating procedures so that when an actual event occurs, there is no confusion or safety compromise," said U.S. Navy Cmdr. Rudolph Herrera, the surgeon with Combined Joint Task Force - Operation Inherent Resolve.

Sgt. 1st Class, Adam Hendrickson, a combat medic with the 86th CSH, stated that Joint Service training ensures that Emergency Response Personnel remains relevant within their current areas of operation.

United States Military Hospital-Kuwait staff is responsible for ensuring that persons in an emergency situation are evaluated and treated promptly.

"The entire crew, both in the aircraft and on the ground have to be able to work together. The aircrews manage all aspects of safety and crew coordination in flight. 'From receiving the patient or survivor from the battlefield to authentication of the survivor.' The teams on the ground provide safe reception of the patient, and themselves while entering and exiting the aircraft, for transfer to the medical facility," said Herrera.

After rehearsing for several hours, air and ground crews developed a safe and fluid patient transition from the aircraft to the Medical Facility Transport.

"We role played this particular scenario to the fullest of our

capability to work out any issues that came up and mitigate as much confusion as possible. Our goal was to ensure that our Soldiers and civilian EMS counterparts were able to load and unload any litter casualty off of the MV-22 Osprey," said Hendrickson.

Herrera mentioned this type of collaborative training maintains the "one-team, one-fight" mentality.

"I would like to offer a special thank you to VMM-364, ASG-K JES and the 86th CSH for holding the training. This valuable, real-world training, is needed in today's fight. The VMM-364 have always been at the forefront of Casualty Evacuations from the CH-46 Sea Knight days in Operation Iraqi Freedom to now with the MV-22 Osprey," said Herrera. ♦



U.S. Army combat medics, with the 86th Combat Support Hospital, and Emergency Medical Technicians, with Area Support Group - Kuwait Joint Emergency Service, approach a MV-22 Osprey during a joint training exercise with Marines from Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron - 364 (VMM-364), at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, May 8, 2017. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Dalton Smith)



U.S. Army combat medics, with the 86th Combat Support Hospital, carry a simulated casualty off of a MV-22 Osprey during a joint training exercise with Marines from Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron - 364 (VMM-364), at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, May 8, 2017. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Dalton Smith)

HIMARS gunnery validates war fighters

By Sgt. Kimberly Browne
U.S. Army Central

U.S. Army Soldiers operate a high mobility artillery rocket system (HIMARS) in support of ground forces in Afghanistan May 5, 2017. (U.S. Navy Combat Camera photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Sean Furey)

Part of achieving the standard as a Soldier is qualifying on an assigned weapon and or weapon system. These qualifications begin at the individual's weapon, such as an M9 pistol or an M4 carbine. But, there are some Soldiers who have to qualify on a weapon's system and as a member of a functioning team.

Thus, to accommodate this standard, Soldiers with Battery B "Berserkers," 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery Regiment, participated in a High Mobility Artillery Rocket System table VI gunnery qualification, March 29, Udairi Range Complex, Kuwait.

To those participating in this qualification, it is the validation of a three Soldier team; the driver, gunner, and launcher chief. Where the team has to test yearly on several functional areas of the HIMARS.

"There are different certification levels we do every year, so table V and table VI are certification lanes. And then table VI is the actual live-fire, so we test our crews to make sure they can actually go out and employ the weapons systems in combat," said Capt. Timber Toste, commander of Battery B, 3-157th. "They have to shoot three types of fire missions; an 'at my command,' a 'when ready,' and a 'time on target.'"

"At my command," is a fire command given to the HIMARS and prohibits them from firing until directed by the Fire Direction Center. "When ready," allows the section chief to give a fire command to his team once they have received the target's coordinates. And "time on target," is a means for the Fire Direction Officer, who is in a different location than the HIMARS team, to control when the rounds will hit the target.

Even though the HIMARS fire commands are very

similar to other gunneries, the weapon's system is actually very different.

"A lot of people are calling them the long range sniper rifle," Toste said. "When you pick out a target and give it a grid, it's going to hit that grid. With HIMARS you can build a target packet in a relatively built up area and ... you can drop that building right where it stands and not have any collateral effects on the surrounding buildings."

This "long range sniper rifle" or HIMARS is set up on a M1140 Family of Medium Tactical Vehicles Army 5-ton and contains one "Pod." The Pod can include six M31 Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System rounds or one Army Tactical Missile System. One M31 round weighs 54 pounds and has a range of 15 to 84kms. Whereas, the ATACMS weighs 500 pounds with a range of 70 to 300kms. The empty Pod weighs approximately 5,100 pounds. And a fully loaded HIMARS can weigh more than 34,000 pounds.

Nevertheless, the qualification went off without a hitch. Aside from a few camels causing random "cease fires" on the range, this validation and controlling a HIMARS proves worthy to a launcher chief and his crew.

"It's a good part of my life, I enjoy it," Bentley said. "It's a great experience. I wouldn't change anything and I would do it all over again."

As the qualification toiled on in the dry deserts of Kuwait, the commander, in an understood "you" type of meaning, mentioned how he was pleased with his battery.

"Rounds are going down range and are landing where they're supposed to, so that's what we do," he said. ♦

Lucky 6 surprises with combat patch



By Sgt. Bethany Huff, U.S. Army Central

Lt. Gen. Michael Garrett, the commanding general of U.S. Army Central, presents Spc. Benjamin Baldwin, a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter crew chief, for Company A, 2nd General Support Aviation Battalion, 149th Aviation Regiment, with his first combat patch, during an impromptu combat patch ceremony on the helicopter landing pad, at Ali Al Salem Air Base, Kuwait, May 20, 2017. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Bethany Huff)

The patches placed on the right shoulder sleeve signify wartime service, often called combat patches.

These patches are a rarity for Soldiers who's first deployment is in Kuwait, as Kuwait is not considered a combat zone. However, Soldiers with Company A, 2nd General Support Aviation Battalion, 149th Aviation Regiment, have a unique opportunity to receive their combat patches.

"When required, we go to combat zones to do a number of things," said 1st Lt. Benjamin Gonzalez, the platoon leader for A Co., who went on to state that the UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters transport supplies to troops in combat zones.

One of the many other things that the unit provides for the units within the U.S. Army Central footprint, is providing air transportation for distinguished visitors such as the commanding general of U.S. Army Central, Lt. Gen. Michael Garrett.

On Garrett's most recent battlefield circulations, Gonzalez arranged for two of his UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter crew chiefs to receive their very first combat patch in a very special way.

"It was such a surprise!" said Spc. Benjamin Baldwin, a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter crew chief, for A Company, 2nd General Support Aviation Battalion, 149th Aviation Regiment. "I've flown with the general before, but never expected him to present us with our combat patches."

While the Soldiers were initially confused at the sudden

change of plans, Garrett started talking to them and getting them ready to receive their combat patches.

"For these guys, the patch is a piece of cloth for them that they earned," said Gonzales, a native of Little Rock, Arkansas. "But it's not just a patch, [Garrett] sent them words of encouragement and motivation to continue to do the work that they're doing."

Humbled and stunned, the crew chiefs stood next to their aircraft soaking up Garrett's story of how he received his first combat patch and what it meant to him.

"It is such an honor," said Spc. Jesus Santiago, a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter crew chief, for A Company, 2nd General Support Aviation Battalion, 149th Aviation Regiment. "I never thought that a three star, especially my own commander, would ever take the time to place my combat patch on my shoulder."

The Soldiers performed more than 60 hours of flight time in and out of combat zones, while ensuring that their aircrafts are well maintained. The Soldiers are attached to the crews that move passengers and cargo within the U.S. Army Central footprint.

"I wanted to recognize the two Soldiers because they're younger guys, hard workers," said Gonzalez, who went on to describe each Soldier. "I'm proud to say that I work for a commander willing to take time out of his day to meet with them. Those two specialists will remember that day for the rest of their lives." ♦

First Air Assault Course survives the desert of Kuwait

Story and photos by Sgt. Tom Wade
U.S. Army Central



U.S. service members rappelling out of UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters during day nine of U.S. Army Central's first Air Assault Course, April 13, 2017 at Camp Beuhring, Kuwait. The Air Assault Course is a 12-day class that allows U.S. military personnel in the USARCENT area of operations the unique opportunity to become air assault qualified while deployed outside the continental United States. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Tom Wade)



After 12 days of little rest and multiple exams, military personnel in the U.S. Army Central area of operations made it to graduation day. For these students, it means they have earned the right to the identifier and badge of ‘Air Assault.’

U.S. service members attended USARCENT’s first Air Assault Course from April 3 to 14, at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. Where, the course gave 269 U.S. service members the unique opportunity to become air assault qualified, while deployed outside the continental United States.

The Army National Guard Warrior Training Center, from Fort Benning, Ga., provided the instructors, who were given the task of training, guiding and mentoring the applicants.

“Today’s graduation was a culminating event of what some called the 10 toughest days in the Army,” said U.S. Army Col. Roger Davis, chief of training, United States Army Central. “This was the first ever air assault school conducted in the U.S. Army Central area of operations ... which went extremely smooth due to all the different units coming together.”

This Air Assault Course was conducted in three phases; combat assault operations, sling load operations and rappelling. During day zero, candidates had to complete a two-mile run and a nine-event obstacle course.

“The obstacle course was very difficult because it challenges you to be ready for the heights you are about to encounter” said U.S. Army 1st Lt. Katlyn Lehmann, human resource officer, 258th Human Resource Company. “As a support branch officer, I want to make sure I have all the tools needed to lead soldiers, the best way possible.”

Those who make the day zero cuts moved onward to phase one, which consisted of a six-mile road march, written exams, and a hand and arm signal test.

“Each phase was challenging in its own way,” said U.S. Army Capt. James Lamoureux, military police officer, 368th Engineer Battalion, 176th Engineer Brigade. “Phase one was more physical compared to future phases, which required a lot of memorization and required one to finish strong.”

(Left) U.S. Army Spc. Dylan Gustaitis, radiology specialist, 215th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, rappels off a tower at Kuwait’s first Air Assault Course, April 12, 2017, at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. Rappelling off a 50-foot tower is one of several tests students have to pass within in the three phases of the course. The Air Assault Course is a 12-day class that allows U.S. military personnel in the U.S. Army Central area of operations the unique opportunity to become air assault qualified, while deployed outside the continental United States. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Tom Wade)

(Right) U.S. Army Maj. Gen. William Hickman (right), U.S. Army Central deputy commanding general, pins air assault wings on one of the Air Assault Course’s honor graduates Sgt. Carl Howard, combat medic, 215th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, during graduation day, April 14, 2017, at Camp Beuhring, Kuwait. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Tom Wade)

Hundreds of Soldiers, Airmen and Marines made it to phase two, where they had to complete a four-mile run, sling load inspections test and another written exam.

“Phase two was the more difficult phase, as far as memorizing all the material needed for sling loads and the practical hands on exercises,” said U.S. Army Spc. Matthew Dawson, infantryman, Company A, 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. “The challenges were further complicated when the Humvee and different cargo bags were introduced.”

The students who made it through phase two’s challenges moved onward to phase three, which consists of a swiss seat test, a rappel test and a three-hour 12-mile road march.

“Students, during phase three, are tested on items like the 15 second hook up test, where they have to properly hook-up ... and get into the ready position within that allotted time,” said U.S. Army Sgt. Cruiser Barnes, cavalry scout and Air Assault instructor, attached to Army National Guard Warrior Training Center. “Those students are also tested on how to properly tie a hip rappel seat, which has to be completed within 90 seconds. If they fail either of those the first time, they get retrained ... and then retested.”

Barnes also stated Soldiers who fail events in phase two or three can reapply for the air assault course and begin right away in the failed phase; as long as it is within six months. If the perspective candidate misses that time frame, they will have to restart the entire course, passing each phase.

The course concluded with a 12-mile ruck march, where students had to carry a minimum of 35 pounds and finish within three hours.

Col. Roger Davis said the ruck march is an important event to have at the end of the course work, because “it is a good gut check proving the toughness of the air assault Soldier.”

Nevertheless, the dust settled from the ruck march and 213 students remained to graduate USARCENT’s first Air Assault School.

“Physical fitness should be second nature, to someone considering attending a course like air assault,” said U.S. Army Sgt. Carl Howard, combat medic, 215th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division. “Come determined and motivated to work within a team ... for that will be the key to your success here.”◆



Multinational forces wrap-up exercise Eagle Resolve 2017

By Maj. Angel Jackson
U.S. Army Central

U.S. and Gulf Cooperation Council forces regain control of Kuwait's Shuwaikh Port in the final event of exercise Eagle Resolve, April 6. Eagle Resolve is the premier multinational exercise in the Gulf region. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Frank O'Brien)

U.S. and Gulf Cooperation Council forces stormed Kuwait's Shuwaikh Port in a demonstration of interoperability, April 6, in the final event of exercise Eagle Resolve 2017.

The culminating event involved land, air, and maritime forces and included tactical demonstrations of search and seizure, countering a chemical threat, and border security.

Maj. Gen. Ralph H. Groover, III, U.S. Central Command's director of exercises and training directorate, said the benefits of Eagle Resolve 2017 began over a year ago when the U.S. and GCC nations planned for the exercise.

"Working together, understanding one another, understanding each other's tactics, techniques and procedures for responding to threats enhances all of our capabilities," said Groover.

Since 1999, Eagle Resolve has become the leading engagement between the U.S. and GCC nations to collectively address the regional challenges associated with asymmetric warfare in a low-risk setting.

"We dealt with reality in accordance with the environment around us and countering terrorism," said Lt. Gen. Mohammed Khaled Al-Khader, Kuwait's military chief of general staff. He added the exercise was an opportunity to exchange experiences with an army of history and legacy.

More than 3,000 forces from Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and the U.S. participated in the three-week exercise. This year's scenarios ranged from air defense concepts, border security

operations, counterterrorism operations and procedures to consequence management.

"We are concerned about defending our gulf, defending ourselves, our states and our nations," said Al-Khader. "What is important for us is our continuous training so we can achieve the required level of fighting readiness."

While participating nations may have varying reasons for supporting Eagle Resolve, there is one common theme: regional security.

"This exercise is all about building capacity and capability of each of our nations that are participating," said Groover. "We are stronger together as a group than we are individually. This was just another demonstration of how we can come together and act as a force of one." ♦



U.S. and Gulf Cooperation Council special operations forces conduct the culminating field-training event of exercise Eagle Resolve 2017, April 6, in Kuwait's Shuwaikh Port. Eagle Resolve is the premier multinational exercise in the Gulf region. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Frank O'Brien)

USARCENT STRENGTHENS TIES THROUGH LAND FORCES SYMPOSIUM

By Sgt. Matt Kuzara
U.S. Army Central



Maj. Gen. Terrence McKenrick, deputy commanding general, U.S. Army Central, introduces Gen. Joseph Votel, commander, U.S. Central Command, to the participants of the USARCENT CASA Land Forces Symposium in Alexandria, Va., June 19-22, 2017. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Matt Kuzara)

U.S. Army Central's senior leadership assembled for a four-day conference with six partner nations from Central and South Asia for the USARCENT Land Forces Symposium in Alexandria, Virginia, June 19-22.

The symposium gave senior leaders, such as Lt. Gen. Michael Garrett, commanding general, USARCENT, as well as military representatives from USARCENT's partner nations in the region an opportunity to hear from civilian and military experts on issues of importance to global and regional security.

Leading off the symposium, Garrett spoke on the need to use the event to come together and develop the solutions to today's challenges in the region.

"While some would say that the easy answer is to simply shut-down borders and to live in isolation, the asymmetric threats that we all face in our current operating environment make this option both infeasible and unobtainable. As hard as it may be in some cases, the better answer is build relationships and to cooperate with each other," said Garrett.

With that goal, the experts spoke on topics ranging from defeating ISIS, understanding Iranian malign influence in the region, and what a post-conflict Syria and Iraq will look like.

Dr. Rod Schoonover, Director of Environmental and Natural Resources for the National Intelligence Council who spoke on how changes to global temperature, water scarcity, deforestation, and overfishing can affect the U.S. and our partner nations in the region, adding to the diversity of ideas.

"Countries that are most vulnerable to such stresses are those with weak political institutions, poor economic conditions, and existing political strife. Addressing instability would require not only understanding and mitigating the environmental stresses directly but also through strengthening the political and social institutions

within a given state," said Schoonover.

While it may be useful to have civilian and military experts from the U.S. speak, the learning was not a one-way affair. In fact, one of the benefits of gathering the partner nation representatives was gaining their insights into the region through open discussion and during the one-on-one bilateral meetings that also took place during the symposium.

The USARCENT 20-country area of operation includes the Levant, Central Asia and the Arabian Peninsula. It is a unique, dynamic and complex operating environment. And while the symposium's focus was on the Central and South Asian region, the knowledge gained can have a broader usefulness across globe. Knowledge means the individual understands the nature of the area, knows how best to fight the enemy and how to protect against threats.

This reality holds true with the partner nation representatives as well. Knowing more about the concerns of your neighboring country, whether those concerns are security, economic, political, or even environmental, can have a large impact.

"I think what was very useful for all the nations in the Central Asian Region, is that they have to know what is going on in the region and that they have to come together to help each other to fight against terrorists like Al Qaida and ISIS," said Col. Abdul Hadi Barakzai of the Afghan National Army, "I think this was a pretty good experience and everybody got to speak their view about the region."

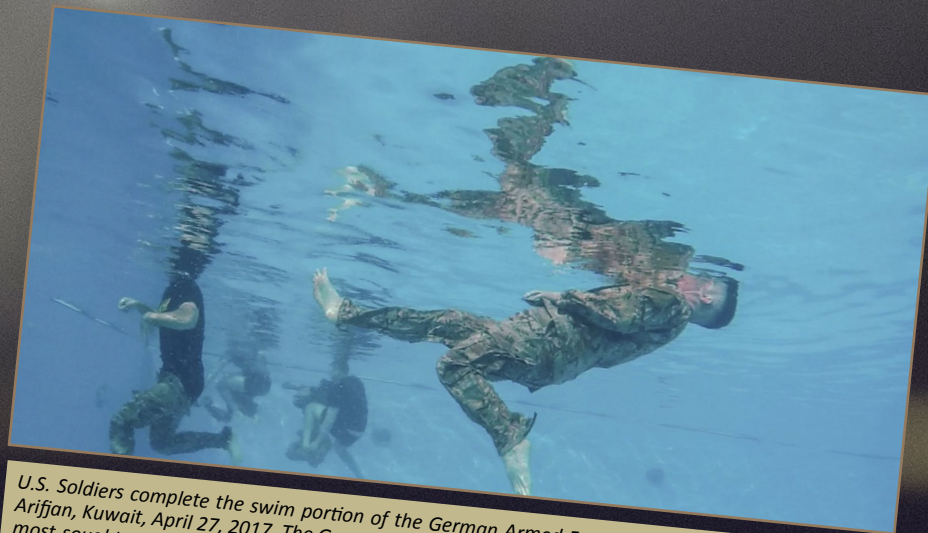
USARCENT demonstrates its enduring commitment to its partners by continuing to build on existing relationships and understanding the culture of the region. The command plans on continuing to help ensure that the countries in the region can work together to meet security challenges. ♦



Staff Sgt. Arnold Rojas, the admin manager for the Iraqi Train and Equipment Fund section with the 316th Expeditionary Sustainment Command, exits the pool after completing the swim portion of the German Armed Forces Badge qualification. The German Armed Forces Badge for Military Proficiency is one of the most sought after foreign awards in the United States Army. The 316th Expeditionary Sustainment Command and the 1st Theater Sustainment Command had the privilege of hosting the award qualifications at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait April 27, 2017. (U.S. Army Photo by Sgt. Christopher Bigelow)



A German officer supervises as U.S. Army Central Command Soldiers fire the M9 pistol during the marksmanship portion of the German Armed Forces Badge qualification. The German Armed Forces Badge for Military Proficiency is one of the most sought after foreign awards in the United States Army. The 316th Expeditionary Sustainment Command and the 1st Theater Sustainment Command had the privilege of hosting the award qualifications at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait April 27, 2017. (U.S. Army Photo by Sgt. Christopher Bigelow)



U.S. Soldiers complete the swim portion of the German Armed Forces Badge qualification at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, April 27, 2017. The German Armed Forces Badge for Military Proficiency is one of the most sought after foreign awards in the United States Army. The 316th Expeditionary Sustainment Command and the 1st Theater Sustainment Command had the privilege of hosting the award qualifications. (U.S. Army Photo by Sgt. Christopher Bigelow)

Soldiers compete for German Armed Forces Badge



Photos By Sgt. Christopher Bigelow
1st Theater Sustainment Command

Chief Warrent Officer 3 Raul Echevarria, the property book officer with the 369th Sustainment Brigade, marches during the ruck march portion of the German Armed Forces Badge qualification. The German Armed Forces Badge for Military Proficiency is one of the most sought after foreign awards in the United States Army. The 316th Expeditionary Sustainment Command and the 1st Theater Sustainment Command had the privilege of hosting the award qualifications at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait April 27, 2017. (U.S. Army Photo by Sgt. Christopher Bigelow)



Greywolf kicks up dust, builds partnership in multinational exercise

By Staff Sgt. Leah Kilpatrick
3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cav. Div.

On a hilltop in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the calm morning silence is broken when two F-16 Fighting Falcons drop their explosive pay load. As a cloud of powdery dust and shrapnel rise from the target area, the engines of five M1A2 Abrams Main Battle Tanks roar to life and move into position atop a hill overlooking a ravine.

A radio crackles as a platoon leader's voice pours from the speakers.

"Alpha, get ready. Top hat. Top hat. Top hat." Two 62-ton behemoths maneuver forward of the berm. "3. 2. 1. Fire!" With a deafening boom, bursts of flame leap from the main guns.

This was the scene at the culminating combined arms live-fire exercise during Eager Lion 2017, a two-week-long multinational combined training exercise. Soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment "Warhorse," 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division spent that time building interoperability with their partners.

"Eager Lion is a fantastic exercise," said Lt. Col. Brian McCarthy, commander of the Warhorse Battalion. "We've been here about two weeks, and it's been a great exercise to test both the interoperability between the American Army, American Marine Corps, Italian forces, and of course, our hosts, the Jordanians. It's been a great opportunity for us to increase our lethality and develop some great relationships."

The seventh iteration of the annual exercise began for the Warhorse Soldiers May 7, when they convoyed with their equipment from a logistics support area in Wadi Shadiya to a vast training area, where they would spend the next 10 days conducting mounted maneuvers with tanks and M2A3 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicles, dismounted maneuvers with infantry Soldiers, a live-fire accuracy screening test range, an unknown distance live-fire range, and a squad live-fire.

Company A commander, Capt. Colby Burkhart, said his primary training objective was direct fire control measures, but during the course of the training, he managed to get more learning opportunities than he anticipated.

"I think we have a newfound understanding of how to incorporate the required control measures," said the armor officer and Glendale, Arizona native. "I think we learned it's definitely a different environment. The weather always plays a factor. We can have all the technology in the world, and a

cloud of dust can degrade your ability to fight. It affects your lasers. It affects visibility for driving. We just learned how to fight through all of the different elements that were thrown at us."

While the company is usually organized into three tank platoons, the task organization was augmented for this mission, integrating an infantry platoon with two tank platoons. This allowed for a true combined arms experience and an additional challenge for Burkhart and his platoon leaders.

"There was a bit of a learning curve, but we definitely validated that it is possible and that we can effectively incorporate the infantry and the Brads with a tank company," Burkhart said. "The dismounts were primarily used for any kind of a dismounted objective where we would need to enter and clear a building or to clear any type of dead space.

We used all the capabilities that they have. We got to shoot Javelins out here. We got to shoot AT-4s out here. That's one of the capabilities that the tank company does not have. It was definitely a challenge. I'd say I learned a lot just incorporating the different skill sets that each platoon brings to the fight."

Through joint, combined cooperation, the troops – U.S., Italian, and Jordanian – learned the differences and similarities in each other's tactic, practices, vehicles and weapon systems. Working together, bridging the language gap, and learning about their brothers-in-arms helped to build camaraderie, cohesion and understanding, strengthening relationships not only company to company, platoon to platoon, or squad to squad, but also Soldier to Soldier.

"I think [my Soldiers] gained an appreciation for other services and other nations, other militaries, simple stuff, like communicating with a significant language gap," said 1st Lt. Kevin Northrop, platoon leader, 3rd Platoon, Company C, 3-8 CAV. "For one thing, whenever you deploy, you're not going to deploy to a region and just be working with American Soldiers or just the Army. You're going to be working with the Marines or other services. Most likely, you'll be working with other nations. That's hard to replicate, so [it's good] for the [Soldiers] to get to do that on their level where they don't really see it that much. I think this is the first time for most of them where they got to work with other nations. I think that was a big takeaway and one of the reasons this was really important for them to experience."

"[My Soldiers] gained better cohesion and teamwork," said Staff Sgt. Patrick Robitaille, a tank commander assigned to Co. A, 3-8 CAV. "They've learned valuable experience on working with another nation and just how to put tactics together and implement everything that we operate."

Additionally, the Warhorse Soldiers wrapped up their crew, squad and platoon mounted and dismounted training with a company-level CALFEX, incorporating the two tank platoons and a Bradley platoon with dismounts armed with M4 carbines, M249 Squad Automatic Weapons, AT-4s and Javelins.

The company CALFEX validated Burkhart's integration of armor and infantry, and gave the Soldiers a glimpse of how all the puzzle pieces fit together to create a lethal force on the battlefield.

There has always been a friendly rivalry between the armor and infantry communities, and while the Soldiers still jab at each other, many of them developed newfound appreciations.

"The tanks have a lot of firepower, for as much as we rag on them," said Northrop, an infantry officer from Fair Lawn, New Jersey. "They bring a lot to the fight, especially with the CALFEX, where we were able to have the tanks up supporting us against those armored threats, allowing my Bradleys to move up and set in position. They were suppressing while my dismounts moved out. So those larger pieces of support that don't always get worked in when you're doing platoon or smaller training really allowed us to train those pieces. How all those things are incorporated is something you don't get to do a lot, so being able to do that, and to do that in a foreign country, was really a cool experience."

"I thought it was a great overall experience for [the Soldiers]

to be part of this [combined] operation that we had," said Robitaille, a native of Carbondale, Kansas. "I think it opens it more for them to see the big picture, not just that tanks go in, shoot, cause destruction. But if you've got Bradleys and dismounts tagging along with them, it provides another aspect along with it. We go in and secure a site, and the dismounts with the Bradleys will come up and use different tools that might be necessary for a mission that maybe a tank wouldn't be able to accomplish. Since they are integrated with us in the company, they can actually witness the additional capabilities of the dismounts."

All the planning, coordination, and joint and combined training, culminated in the CALFEX.

"I think it's amazing that we were able to come and be a part of that combined arms live-fire, because we learned a lot about how other countries operate and also their culture, just integrating with them with their tactics and ours and maneuvering our tanks in another country, learning the terrain and letting our Soldiers learn as well," said 1st Lt. Henry Rodriquez, platoon leader, 3rd Platoon, Co. A, 3-8 CAV.

Smoke and dust filled the air as targets were engaged from all directions from mortars, light armored vehicles, tanks, and dismounted infantrymen.

"We were out on the far western side," said Rodriquez, an armor officer and native of Artesia, New Mexico. "We were blasting away in our four tanks and also our commander's tank. He gave a fire command. We'd all fire at the same time, utilizing our fires, the Jordanian fires, their weapon systems, mortars, tanks. We had F-16s going off. And just using all these different munitions and seeing how lethal we are all together was amazing and definitely something I will always remember." ♦



Pfc. Mikel Chamen, an infantryman from San Diego, Calif., assigned to Company A, 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, engages a target with an FGM-148 Javelin Portable Anti-Tank Missile at a company-level combined arms live-fire exercise May 14 in Wadi Shadiya, Jordan as part of Exercise Eager Lion 2017. Eager Lion was a two-week-long multinational exercise with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, in order to exchange military expertise and improve interoperability among partner nations. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Leah R. Kilpatrick)

Greywolf trains for urban combat

Photos by Staff Sgt. Leah Kilpatrick
3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team
1st Cavalry Division



Spc. Tyler Lam, an infantryman assigned to Company B, 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, lays down suppressive fire during a major military exercise in southwest Asia. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Leah R. Kilpatrick)



Soldiers of 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, practice using tanks and infantry fighting vehicles for cover when approaching an urban target during a major military exercise in southwest Asia. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Leah R. Kilpatrick)



Sgt. Brian Richardson, an infantryman assigned to Company B, 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, engages targets at a reflexive fire range during a major military exercise in southwest Asia. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Leah R. Kilpatrick)



Under cover of smoke, cavalry scouts from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division maneuver a stairwell during the offensive phase of a major military exercise in southwest Asia. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Leah R. Kilpatrick)

For the love of the sea

Soldier spotlight

By Sgt. Kimberly Browne, U.S. Army Central

Sailing the high seas or transporting cargo with an ocean vessel, are not actions typically associated with the U.S. Army. However, with more than 150 military occupational specialties; operating and manning a logistics support vessel and transporting cargo by means of the sea falls within an MOS, and the scope of the 411th Transportation Detachment.

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Sarah Stone, is a Soldier who chose to pursue a career on the open water. Stone is the 2nd mate navigational officer for the Logistics Support Vessel-5, Maj. Gen. Charles P. Gross, where she ensures operational readiness of the equipment, personnel and functioning aspects of cargo transportation and ports.

Initially, Stone, a 13 year Soldier, entered the U.S. Army as a watercraft operator at the suggestion of a recruiter.

“I thought it sounded like a very interesting job,” the Woodbridge, Virginia, native said. “I like to be outside and travel the world ... I enjoy being on the ocean.”

As the daughter of a Marine officer, she wanted to follow in his footsteps and pursue a commission. But her feelings for her job got in the way.



“I love our field so much,” she said. “It’s such an amazing job and rewarding.”

Therefore, Stone went through an eight month warrant officer basic course about three years ago.

Today, Stone is the 2nd mate and navigational officer of a 1,600 ton vessel, the LSV-5 MG Charles P. Gross. A vessel capable of hauling 2,000 short tons of weight, and is maintained by a 31 person crew, whose morale falls in the capable hands of Stone.

“She cares a lot for the Soldiers,” said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Patrick Thompson, the 1st mate and executive officer of the MG Charles P. Gross and 411th Transportation Detachment. “She’s a very hard charger, does not like being told no, very proactive and does not let any obstacles stand in her way when getting something accomplished.”

Stone expressed her own feelings about the Soldiers as well.

“I am very proud to be a member of this crew,” she said. “We have an excellent crew, just a group of really good Soldiers and good personalities that mesh well together.”

Nevertheless, besides her Soldiers, Stone has a love for the ocean that goes hand-in-hand with her passion for her job.

“I enjoy being on the ocean,” she said. “It is absolutely beautiful and you’re away from everything else. It’s hard to explain but it’s probably one of the best jobs in the Army.”

Moreover, even as much as she enjoys her job, her job is essential to hauling cargo and military equipment. Thus, the nomenclature of her vessel, logistics support vessel.

“We are a transportation asset, we can move large amounts of cargo for a very inexpensive price,” said Stone. “The only down side to us, as to why we will not be utilized is predominately, time, we’re slow moving.”

Ultimately, Stone has an affinity for her job and makes sure to tell all she can about it.

“I love it. You’re always learning, you never stop learning in this job,” she said. “There’s always technology changing or just something you didn’t know, you get to develop yourself more on a constant basis, it never stops.” ♦

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Sarah Stone, 2nd mate and navigational officer of the LSV-5 Maj. Gen. Charles P. Gross, looks over a digital map of the area before debarking on a container swap mission, June 13, at Kuwait Naval Base, Kuwait. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Kimberly Browne)

U.S. ARMY CENTRAL NAMES BEST WARRIOR NCO



By Sgt. Kelly Gary, Task Force Spartan

Soldiers from across the U.S. Army Central area of Operations came together for the USARCENT Best Warrior Competition, at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, May 22-25.

The competition was broken down into a Soldier category for E-4 and below and noncommissioned officer category for E-5 to E-7. Despite two Soldiers falling out due to medical reasons, 17 pulled through to the last event.

The first day tested the competitor’s knowledge and written skills with an exam and an essay. Fitness and fortitude was put to the test on the second day when participants took an Army Physical Fitness Test, then traversed the air assault obstacle course.

Master Sgt. Ernesto Castaneda, noncommissioned officer-in-charge for Physical Challenge I, said the task is daunting on a multitude of levels. The Physical Challenge I consists of obstacles such as a rope confidence climb, barbed-wire low crawl, and weaving over-under beams.

“A lot of people, when they think about the obstacle course, they only think of the physical aspect,” said Castaneda. “Yet, it is also very mental, often the fear of heights or confidence in strength presents more challenges.”

On day three Soldiers got up before dawn to start the first leg of the 12-mile ruck march. Each competitor made the march under three hours and then immediately geared up for the range. Due to a severe dust storm and low visibility the range was not able to open and left the competitors minus one event.

The last day, all of the participants were eager to find out who had clinched the winning titles and would go on to the U.S. Northern Command Best Warrior.

Staff Sgt. Blake Owens, a squad leader with Company B, 1st Battalion, 148th Infantry Regiment, said he was on pins and needles when he heard his name announced as the Best Warrior NCO.

“It was a sigh of relief, almost disbelief,” said Owens.

“There were a lot of excellent competitors here.”

Owens admitted that although his qualifications brought him to being selected, it was also his NCO leadership that aided in making the opportunity and training a reality. Owens felt confident when it came to the Army Physical Fitness Test, but admitted he struggled with certain portions of the competition, namely the 12-mile ruck march.

“I came in strong the first eight miles and then my body said you are not as good as you thought you were,” said Owens. “But I persevered through it.”

USARCENT Command Sgt. Maj. Eric Dostie expressed his belief that the U.S. Army thrives on constructive competition.

“I can think of no other event like the best warrior to bring out the individual excellence in all that compete,” said Dostie. “The best warrior competition recognizes Soldiers that demonstrate commitment to army values, embody the warrior ethos, and represent the force of the future.”

Owens agreed these Soldiers are the upcoming leaders of the Army and encouraged both lower enlisted and NCOs of all walks to strive to better themselves. He expressed that one of his main motivations is to show the nine Soldiers under his charge what can be accomplished with hard work and perseverance.

“This competition was about showing my Soldiers it could be done, especially from a National Guard standpoint,” said Owens. “This is just one way I am trying to lead from the front.”

Dostie expressed that through the series of mentally and physically exhausting events, the warriors pushed themselves harder over the past few days than many Soldiers ever will.

“They will return to their units better trained, more proficient at warrior tasks and skills,” said Dostie. “They will be more confident in their ability to be effective as Soldiers and leaders.” ♦

HERE IT COMES



WARFIGHTER SLEEP MANAGEMENT

A Soldier's performance is enhanced by 7-8 hours of quality sleep – but that is not always possible in the Army. As a rule of thumb, Soldiers should get as much sleep as much as they can, when they can.

Leaders and Soldiers can implement the following strategies to manage Soldiers' sleep debt:

GARRISON SLEEP QUALITY

Ensure dark, quiet, comfortable sleep environment and address conditions in barracks/family housing that interrupt quality sleep (e.g., garbage pick-up at 4 a.m.; routine fire alarms at night)

REVERSE CYCLE PHYSICAL TRAINING

Delay start of duty day (e.g., until 8 am) and conduct PT in the afternoon instead of morning to synchronize with Soldiers' circadian rhythms, reduce stress, and increase cognitive functioning

SLEEP BANKING

Plan ahead and increase your daily amount of sleep up to two weeks prior a period of limited sleep

TACTICAL NAPS

During sustained operations take a short nap when opportunities allow

"NAPPUCCINOS"

Drink 12 oz of coffee and then take a 30 min nap; must be able to fall asleep quickly.

CAFFEINE

Can help short-term alertness at the proper dose and frequency for the situation – see article for doses*

* see <https://safety.army.mil/shrinklink/152>

READY ...OR NOT?

Ready ... or Not is a call to action for leaders, Soldiers, Army Civilians and Family members to assess their readiness for what lies ahead - both the known and unknown.

Throughout our professional and personal lives, events happen all around us. We are often able to shape the outcome of those events, but many times we're not. Navigating life's challenges is all about decision-making. #Armysafety

The U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center has the tools to keep you and your Soldiers safe, both on and off duty. Visit us online at <https://safety.army.mil>.

So are **YOU** ready ... or not?



Strategies provided by the Army Public Health Center (APHC) and Office of the Surgeon General. For more information go to the Performance Triad app

<https://safety.army.mil>