

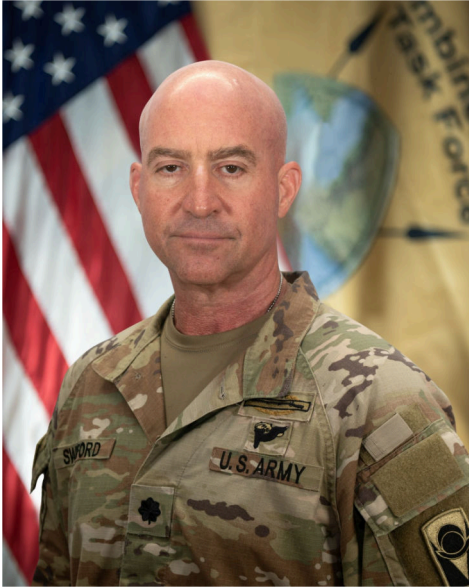
THE SEMINOLE STANDARD



Volume 6 | August, 2026

THE COMMANDER'S COUNCIL OAK

One Task Force, Always Ready to Respond



This month, I continue to be extremely impressed by the outstanding performance and professionalism displayed by all nine companies across the Task Force. Your collective efforts, dedication, and attention to detail remain the foundation of our success here in the Horn of Africa.

The highlight of the month was the East Africa Response Force (EARF) training exercise and Emergency Deployment Readiness Exercise (EDRE) to Kismayo, Somalia. The EARF Platoon executed pre-deployment preparation, loaded a C-130, and successfully deployed to Kismayo to augment security forces and conduct a Base Defense Exercise in coordination with the joint force on the ground.

Special recognition goes to the outstanding leadership and coordination between the forward and rear elements. The EARF element linked up seamlessly with the team at Kismayo led by MAJ John Crawford and SFC

David Castro from the Mayor's Cell, along with 1LT Adam Kuh and SFC Austin Doughty from Blackhawk Company. The on-ground execution was specifically noted by MG Shane Morgan who was on ground for observation.

1LT Ethan White delivered an exceptional briefing of his ground tactical plan directly to the Commanding General and J-3, CJTF-HOA. Following the brief, he and 1LT Kuh's team on the ground integrated flawlessly, resulting in highly effective and realistic Base Defense Training. Their performance was professional, precise, and reflected the very best of our Infantry Task Force.

Equally impressive was the great work being done at Chabelley Airfield by CPT Dan Gilbert and 1SG Jeffery Haney and the Blackjack Company team in coordination with CPT John Clark and 1SG Zack Lewis and the Nasty Dawg Company operating out of Camp Lemonnier. These units have repeatedly demonstrated exceptional coordination and rapid reaction during multiple real-world events. Their ability to quickly synchronize efforts in a complex, joint environment highlights the importance of the rigorous pre-mobilization training and the ongoing training being conducted by all of our units across the Horn of Africa. These real-world successes validate the investment we continue to make in maintaining a high state of readiness.

This month's exercises and operations once again validated the readiness and rapid response capability of the EARF and reinforced the critical nature of our mission in support of CJTF-HOA. Every Soldier in this Task Force should take pride in what we are accomplishing together.

Thank you all for your continued hard work, professionalism, and commitment to the mission. Keep pushing forward.

With pride,
LTC Ryan M. Swinford
Seminole 6

NEVER SURRENDER!

THE WARPATH

This Month's Focus: Sustaining the Edge and Finishing the Fight



We have pushed well past the mid-tour mark and are now entering the final phase of our deployment across the Horn of Africa. Over the past several months, Task Force Seminole has demonstrated exceptional resilience, discipline, and operational capability across our dispersed footprint. However, as we enter the final third of our time in theater, a dangerous mindset can take root: looking past today's requirements and focusing on the return flight home.

In this Task Force, we will not check out early, and we will not let our foot off the gas. Sustaining the fight through this final phase demands relentless focus on the fundamentals. The harsh environment across our operational area continues to test our weapons, vehicles, optics, and communications platforms. Now is not the time to pencil-whip maintenance or let supply accountability slide. Every piece of equipment must remain 100% mission

capable. The gear you maintain to standard today guarantees our readiness to respond to any contingency tomorrow and ensures we set the incoming unit up for success when the time comes.

This critical period comes down to the two tenets we have stood by since day one: discipline and professionalism. Don't start counting days on a calendar; make every single day count. Whether you are conducting perimeter security, executing logistics, or conducting physical training, maintain the exact same standard of excellence you brought on Day 1. Complacency during the homestretch is how mistakes happen, and our off-duty conduct must remain just as uncompromising as our tactical posture.

To our NCO Corps: this is your time to drive the standard home. Inspect what you expect, remain aggressively engaged, and lead from the front every single day. Do not allow your Soldiers to slip into routine or lose their edge. To every Soldier in Task Force Seminole: stay locked in on your mission, take care of your battle buddy, and keep improving your foxhole until the final guidon is cased. We are going to finish this deployment strong, professional, and unified.

I'd also like to take the opportunity to recognize some outstanding junior leaders within our formation. CPL Cruz-Lopez (Hatchet Company), SPC Cribbs (Comanche Company), CPL Reyes Lopez (Comanche Company), and SPC Moller (Apache Company) all successfully completed the Marine Corps Corporals Course. This course provided a unique opportunity for our junior leaders to work alongside joint services and learn key leader development skills. These Soldiers voluntarily stepped forward to attend this demanding two-week course and excelled alongside Marines and sister-service counterparts. Congratulations to these Seminole Soldiers on leading from the front!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan D. Pletcher".

CSM Jonathan D. Pletcher
Seminole 7

NEVER SURRENDER!

AROUND THE AREA OF OPERATIONS



APACHE COMPANY

The month of August progressed at a rapid pace, but Apache Company showed no signs of slowing down. Throughout the month, Apache Soldiers remained engaged across multiple lines of effort, conducting security patrols, strengthening relationships with local communities and partner forces, and hosting key leaders throughout the company's area of responsibility.

That commitment extended into combined civil-military engagements involving Soldiers from Apache, Nasty Dawg, and Combat companies alongside U.S. Civil Affairs personnel and host-nation partners. Together, the team constructed a clean-water tank at a local school, helping address an important infrastructure need for students and staff.

Apache Company also welcomed LTC Ryan Swinford and CSM Jonathan Pletcher during their battlefield circulation. The visit provided the Task Force command team an opportunity to see Apache's operations firsthand, assess conditions on the ground, and speak directly with the Soldiers executing the mission each day. Face-to-face engagement at the tactical level gives leaders context that cannot always be captured through reports and briefings, while also providing an opportunity to assess readiness, Soldier welfare, and standards across the formation.

Joint partnership was also on display as Apache Company co-hosted "First Friday," an event recognizing outstanding service members from both the Army and Air Force. Among those recognized was SSG Leslie Lewis, who was selected as NCO of the Month by Apache's Air Force partners for the professionalism and dedication he has demonstrated throughout his time with the company. His recognition reflects not only individual achievement, but also the strong relationships Apache Soldiers have built with their joint-service teammates during the deployment.

This month we'd also like to recognize SGT David Strider, whose adaptability and initiative have made him an invaluable member of Apache Company. When the company's assigned 25U Signal Support Systems Specialist was placed on medical leave, Strider stepped into the additional role without hesitation, taking charge of the communications section, establishing accountability of organic and theater-provided Air Force communications systems, and quickly resolving several critical network issues. His willingness to assume responsibilities outside his normal duties helped ensure Apache maintained the communications capabilities necessary to continue executing its mission. Beyond his technical contributions, Strider drew on his experience as a competitive powerlifter to spearhead the 500- and 1,000-Pound Club events at Manda Bay, promoting physical fitness, friendly competition, and esprit de corps across the installation. Through his technical expertise, initiative, and commitment to those

around him, Strider has strengthened Apache Company's readiness and morale throughout the deployment.

Whether working alongside local partners, engaging with Task Force leadership, or strengthening relationships across the joint force, Apache Company continued to demonstrate the professionalism and adaptability required to accomplish the mission. As the deployment moves forward, the company remains focused on sustaining its operational readiness and carrying the same standard of performance through the remainder of its mission in the Horn of Africa.



SSG Leslie Lewis, assigned to Apache Company, Task Force Seminole, poses for a photo after being selected as the 475th Expeditionary Air Base Squadron's NCO of the Month at Manda Bay, Kenya, 7 August 2026. (U.S. Army photo by SGT Jake Anico)

BLACKHAWK COMPANY

Throughout August, Soldiers from Blackhawk Company continued building readiness while executing security force operations and training at BMA. As the company maintained its operational responsibilities, Soldiers balanced mission requirements with opportunities to sharpen individual and collective skills, rehearse contingency responses, and challenge themselves through demanding physical training. This combination of continuous security operations and focused training ensured Soldiers remained engaged in the daily mission while continuing to develop the capabilities necessary to respond to changing conditions across the installation.

The month began with BMA tryouts for the French Desert Commando Course on Aug. 1. The demanding selection event tested Soldiers' physical fitness, endurance, and determination through a five-mile run in uniform and boots, followed by a three-mile ruck march and sprint, rope climb, and additional physical challenges. Soldiers pushed themselves throughout the competition for one of six opportunities to advance to Camp Lemonnier and participate in the French Desert Commando Course. Beyond identifying the installation's top competitors, the event challenged participants to demonstrate the physical and mental resilience required to perform under demanding conditions. The tryouts also provided Soldiers an opportunity to compete alongside their peers and push beyond their normal physical training requirements while representing Blackhawk Company and BMA.

Training continued Aug. 6 as Soldiers conducted a live-fire exercise utilizing the M240 machine gun. The exercise reinforced weapons proficiency while providing Soldiers an opportunity to practice the emplacement and occupation of fighting positions. By integrating crew-served weapons employment with the establishment of defensive positions, Soldiers rehearsed critical tasks directly applicable to their security mission and strengthened the company's ability to respond effectively to potential threats. Training under live-fire conditions also reinforced weapons handling, communication, and teamwork while allowing Soldiers to build confidence in their equipment and one another. These repetitions help ensure the fundamentals practiced during training remain familiar when Soldiers are required to execute them during real-world operations.

Emergency Action Plan training and rehearsals remained another priority throughout August as Blackhawk Soldiers balanced contingency preparation with the daily security requirements necessary to protect BMA and its personnel. Repetition of these procedures reinforced individual and collective responsibilities during emergency situations

while giving leaders opportunities to identify potential gaps and refine the company's response.

From demanding physical challenges to live-fire training and emergency response rehearsals, Blackhawk Company continued investing in the fundamentals that underpin its security mission. Each training opportunity builds upon the experience Soldiers gain through their daily operational responsibilities, strengthening both individual proficiency and the company's collective ability to respond to contingencies.



SPC Ethan Fedkiw, assigned to Blackhawk Company, Task Force Seminole, completes the run event of the French Desert Commando Course tryouts in the Horn of Africa, Aug. 1, 2026. (U.S. Army photo by SPC Jacob McCaslin)

BLACKJACK COMPANY

Throughout August, Blackjack Company balanced their security mission with opportunities to strengthen international partnerships, sharpen tactical and medical skills, and improve quality of life across the installation.

Blackjack Soldiers strengthened relationships with German military partners through a series of German Armed Forces qualification events. On July 26, service members tested their marksmanship during the German Armed Forces Badge for Weapons Proficiency qualification, followed by an Aug. 7 ceremony recognizing those who successfully completed the marksmanship and physical proficiency requirements. Qualification events continued Aug. 19 with German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge assessments, including a basic fitness evaluation, timed weighted ruck march, and 200-meter swim. Together, the events challenged participants to demonstrate marksmanship, strength, endurance, and determination while building camaraderie and strengthening relationships with allied partners.

Medical readiness also remained a priority throughout August. During the Tactical Combat Casualty Care Rodeo on Aug. 7, medical and non-medical personnel worked through practical scenarios designed to test their ability to provide lifesaving care under simulated combat conditions. Participants practiced Care Under Fire, Tactical Field Care, and Tactical Evacuation while reinforcing the skills necessary to respond effectively during a real-world emergency.

Blackjack medics expanded those capabilities Aug. 18 during a K-9 medical class focused on trauma care for military working dogs. The course covered canine trauma triage, hemorrhage control, airway management, and intravenous access, providing medics with specialized skills to stabilize injured working dogs operating alongside service members in austere environments.



A U.S. Army Soldier assigned to Task Force Seminole fires an M4 carbine during the German Armed Forces Badge for Weapons Proficiency qualification event at Chabelley Airfield, Djibouti, July 26, 2026. (U.S. Army photo by SSG Marshall Verkler)



1LT Buchan, assigned to Blackjack Company, 1-167th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Seminole, poses for a photo with a vegetable garden he built as a personal passion project at Chabelley Airfield, Djibouti, Aug. 5, 2026. (U.S. Army photo by SSG Marshall Verkler)

Outside of training, the first sprouts emerged Aug. 5 from a vegetable garden built by 1st Lt. Buchan as a personal passion project. With tomatoes, okra, and carrots planned for the garden, the project provides a small piece of home in an austere environment while offering another way to build morale and community among the men and women at Chabelley Airfield.

Through multinational training, medical readiness, tactical development, and efforts to improve quality of life, Blackjack Company continued developing its Soldiers and strengthening partnerships while remaining focused on its mission at Chabelley Airfield.

COMANCHE COMPANY



1LT Ethan White, an EARF platoon leader assigned to Comanche Company, Task Force Seminole, disembarks a C-130 Hercules during a base defense exercise in Kismayo, Somalia, Aug. 17, 2026. (U.S. Air Force photo by SSgt. Abigail Duell)

Throughout August, Soldiers assigned to Comanche Company, 2nd Battalion, 124th Infantry Regiment, continued building readiness through individual and collective training, multinational partnerships, physical challenges and events that strengthened the company as part of the East Africa Response Force (EARF).

Renegade Platoon conducted training in map reading, ruck packing, Call for Fire, internal battle briefs and physical training at the Gunfighter Gym. The platoon also participated in an extensive EARF spin-up drill, reinforcing fundamental infantry tasks and preparing Soldiers for potential response missions. Jabari Platoon focused on physical and mental readiness, with

SPC Jevon Webb leading a “Pillars of Health” class and SPC Taylon Marks conducting a “Mental Psychology Readiness” class. Jabari Soldiers also conducted nighttime close-quarters battle training, UAS familiarization, marksmanship training and physical training at the Gunfighter Gym.

Lightweight Platoon spent much of August preparing for Operation Bull Shark, a multinational exercise scheduled for October. Leaders joined representatives from French and Japanese forces, the Djiboutian Coast Guard, Djiboutian Rapid Intervention Battalion (BIR), and adjacent U.S. forces to synchronize the ground tactical portion of the exercise. Representing Lightweight were 2LT Cole Murray, SSG Christopher Baumgartner, SGT Joshua Dey, SGT Camden Renckert and CPL Stephen Nix, who served as maneuver subject-matter experts during the planning process.

During Bull Shark, Lightweight is scheduled to conduct a combined amphibious assault alongside the BIR and participate in mass-casualty training with French partner forces. The platoon also participated in the monthly EARF spin-up drill, palletizing mission-essential equipment and preparing for the incoming EARF’s Pre-Deployment Site Survey.

Physical readiness provided another challenge as Soldiers from all three platoons completed the Vierdaagse Nijmegen, a 100-mile ruck march conducted over four days. Lightweight participants included CPL Stephen Nix, SPC Karson Gammons and SPC Jayson Marino. Renegade participants were 1LT Ethan White, SSG Jean Rodriguez-Hernandez, SGT Connor Kirby, SGT Sammy Faris, CPL Matthew Bristowe and SPC Tyler Cribbs. Jabari participants included SPC Jacob Bradley, SPC Boaz Brower, SPC Justin Roman, SPC Brima Smart, SSG Nicholas Hubert, SFC Sylvester Gomes and 2LT Christian Mejica. Their completion brought Jabari Platoon’s cumulative Nijmegen total to 1,580 miles and demonstrated the teamwork and mental endurance required to push through four days of physical strain.

Outside formal training, Headquarters, Lightweight, Renegade and Jabari Platoons competed against one another in the Comanche Cup, providing an opportunity for friendly competition and camaraderie across the company.

From EARF readiness and multinational planning to tactical training and physical challenges, Comanche Soldiers continued developing individually and collectively throughout August. With Operation Bull Shark approaching in October, the company remains focused on building upon that momentum and preparing for the missions ahead.

COMBAT COMPANY



SPC Trevon Williams, assigned to 1st Battalion, 124th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Seminole, fires a Carl Gustaf recoilless rifle during weapons training in the Horn of Africa, July 24, 2026. (U.S. Army photo by SGT Manuel Valle)

Throughout August, Combat Company continued strengthening readiness through tactical training and joint-force cooperation, ensuring Soldiers remained prepared to execute their mission across a range of operational scenarios. From reinforcing proficiency with key weapons systems to improving critical infrastructure, Combat Soldiers and their attached personnel remained focused on building capabilities that directly support the company and the broader Task Force Seminole mission.

During a recent training event led by SGT Connor Coleman, Combat Soldiers focused on increasing proficiency with heavy weapons systems and reinforcing the fundamentals necessary to effectively employ them. A highlight of the training came as SPC Williams successfully employed the Carl Gustaf recoilless rifle, demonstrating the technical proficiency and confidence required to operate the system. Hands-on repetitions with systems like the Carl Gustaf give Soldiers an opportunity to build familiarity with their equipment while reinforcing the individual and collective skills necessary to integrate those capabilities into tactical operations.

The training also emphasized the importance of maintaining proficiency throughout the deployment. Continued repetitions allow leaders to evaluate their Soldiers, identify areas for

improvement, and ensure critical skills remain sharp. Through realistic training opportunities, SGT Coleman and Combat Company's NCOs continue developing Soldiers who are adaptable and prepared to respond when called upon.

Readiness efforts extended beyond tactical training as engineers attached to Combat Company partnered with U.S. Air Force civil engineers to replace a deteriorating tower. Recognizing the safety concerns and operational limitations associated with the aging structure, the joint team combined personnel, equipment, and technical expertise to safely dismantle the existing tower and construct a newer, more stable platform.

Cooperation between Army and Air Force engineers proved essential to completing the project efficiently. By pooling resources, the team gained access to the specialized equipment required for construction while providing personnel from both services an opportunity to work alongside one another and share their respective expertise. The project demonstrated how joint capabilities can be integrated at the tactical level to solve practical problems and directly improve conditions for service members operating throughout the Horn of Africa.

With the new tower complete, Combat Company and its partners improved both the safety and reliability of infrastructure supporting ongoing operations. Whether building proficiency on weapons systems or working alongside joint partners to improve the operational environment, Combat Company continues investing in the people, equipment, and capabilities necessary to remain ready throughout the remainder of the mission.

NASTY DAWG COMPANY

Throughout the month, Nasty Dawg Company Soldiers continued balancing real-world force protection requirements with tactical training, community engagement, and professional development across the Horn of Africa. Operating from multiple locations, the company's four platoons remained focused on strengthening individual and collective readiness while supporting the security of their respective installations.

At Manda Bay, 1st Platoon "Roosters" participated in a joint Civil Affairs water infrastructure project supporting the community of Magumba, Kenya. Working alongside partner organizations, the project helped improve access to clean drinking water while strengthening relationships with the surrounding community. The platoon simultaneously maintained its force protection responsibilities, responding to a real-world UAS incident near the installation perimeter and supporting efforts to secure the area. Rooster Soldiers further developed their capabilities through counter-UAS instruction and Tactical Combat Casualty Care training alongside Marine Forces Special Operations Command personnel.

Second Platoon's Quick Reaction Force in Somalia also maintained a demanding training and security schedule. Soldiers participated in train-the-trainer marksmanship instruction with Special Forces personnel and conducted close-quarters battle training alongside the SECFOR Recon/Sniper Section. The platoon also responded to periods of heightened security by reinforcing defensive positions while continuing routine patrols, UAS reconnaissance, Emergency Action Plan rehearsals, and installation-wide exercises. Together, these activities ensured the QRF remained prepared to rapidly respond while continuing to refine its tactical capabilities alongside joint partners.

At Camp Lemonnier, 3rd Platoon focused on increasing crew depth and maintaining the personnel and equipment necessary to execute its QRF mission. Newly assigned Soldiers completed qualification on M-ATVs and organic weapons systems, expanding the number of personnel capable of operating the platoon's tactical platforms. Soldiers also received instruction on updated communication procedures and succession-of-command protocols, helping ensure the platoon can maintain continuity during demanding or degraded operating conditions.

Fourth Platoon maintained its own QRF responsibilities at Camp Lemonnier while continuing hands-on training and

classroom instruction focused on essential battle drills. Beyond force protection, Soldiers supported the installation's Independence Day activities by providing event security and displaying their M-ATVs during the celebration. Third and 4th Platoon Soldiers also participated in company activities surrounding the holiday, providing opportunities to strengthen camaraderie and maintain morale alongside their demanding operational responsibilities.

Across multiple locations and mission sets, Nasty Dawg Company continued demonstrating the adaptability required to operate throughout the Task Force Seminole area of responsibility. From community engagement and joint training to force protection and rapid-



U.S. Army Soldiers assigned to Nasty Dawg Company, Task Force Seminole, conduct individual movement techniques and bunker-clearing drills at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, Aug. 19, 2026. (U.S. Air Force Photo by SSgt. Nicholas Ross)

DISCO COMPANY



CPL Chase Sandlin, assigned to Disco Company, 1st Battalion, 167th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Seminole, emplaces an M240 machine gun during a base defense exercise at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, Aug. 14, 2026. (U.S. Army photo by CPT Dakota Burr)

Throughout August, Disco Company expanded its training horizons, taking advantage of unique opportunities available throughout the Horn of Africa while remaining focused on its primary mission. From machine gun live-fire and forensic analysis to demanding physical assessments and contingency rehearsals, Disco Soldiers continued developing the individual and collective skills necessary to remain ready for current and future operations.

Fourth Platoon took advantage of the new range complex at Chabelley Airfield to conduct machine gun live-fire training under challenging environmental conditions. Despite extreme temperatures, high winds and blowing sand, Soldiers practiced engaging targets and maintaining continuous suppressive fire through the employment of “talking guns.” The technique

requires machine gun teams to alternate fires, maintaining suppression while reducing gaps that could allow an opposing force to react. The training reinforced weapons proficiency, communication and teamwork while giving gunners valuable experience employing their systems in the harsh conditions common throughout the region.

Other Disco Soldiers received a different perspective on battlefield operations during a tour of the Joint Theater Forensic Analysis Center. Soldiers learned how sensitive site exploitation and forensic analysis can help investigators develop battlefield intelligence following an incident. The visit introduced them to capabilities including explosives and DNA analysis as well as electronic systems reconstruction, providing insight into how evidence collected at the tactical level can contribute to a broader understanding of the operational environment.

Physical readiness was also put to the test as Disco hosted an internal Ranger Physical Fitness Assessment for Soldiers interested in attending U.S. Army Ranger School following the deployment. The demanding event included two 800-meter runs, sandbag throws, individual movement techniques, sled drags, a four-mile run and a nine-mile ruck march. The assessment provided Soldiers an opportunity to measure their current fitness against the demands of Ranger School while demonstrating the progress they have made throughout the deployment.

Disco Company also recognized the professional development of eight Soldiers through promotions during August. CPT Cesar Warren, CPT Guy Griffies, SSG Harper Chiaranda, SSG Owen Ritsema, SGT Brennan Cypher, SGT Joshua Wright, SGT Samuel Kelly and SPC Keondre Mathis each advanced in rank, recognizing their continued hard work, leadership and dedication to the company, Task Force Seminole and the Army.

Alongside these opportunities, Disco continued rehearsing responses to increased threats, progressively adding complexity as Soldiers demonstrated proficiency in established procedures. Scenarios challenged the formation to respond rapidly while simultaneously evacuating casualties and maintaining a heightened defensive posture. Increasing the difficulty of these rehearsals ensures Soldiers are not simply repeating established battle drills, but learning to adapt those procedures as conditions change.

Through tactical training, professional development and increasingly complex rehearsals, Disco Company continued raising its standard throughout August. These opportunities strengthened individual Soldiers while ensuring the company remains prepared to respond effectively to the demands of its mission in the Horn of Africa.

HATCHET COMPANY



2LT McKenzie Niedfeldt, a maintenance platoon leader assigned to Hatchet Company, Task Force Seminole, is promoted to the rank of 1LT during a ceremony at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, July 27, 2026. (U.S. Army photo by 1LT John DiCampi Jr.)

Throughout August, Hatchet Company Soldiers continued distinguishing themselves through mission support, multinational training, volunteer service, physical challenges and professional development. Building on momentum from July, Soldiers contributed hundreds of volunteer hours while pursuing demanding opportunities such as the Norwegian Foot March, Friends of Africa events and training alongside the Djiboutian Rapid Intervention Battalion (BIR). As the deployment moves into its later months, Hatchet Soldiers continue finding opportunities to challenge themselves while supporting Task Force Seminole's mission throughout the Horn of Africa.

Hatchet Company's maintenance

section remained a critical source of support across the Task Force, maintaining and repairing equipment while sharing technical expertise with partner forces. Soldiers trained members of the BIR on properly inspecting and gauging 60mm mortars, strengthening the partner force's ability to maintain its own equipment. The section also completed a complex maintenance task by swapping the cab of a Light Medium Tactical Vehicle, demonstrating the technical proficiency and problem-solving required to keep Task Force equipment operational in an austere environment.

The company's distribution platoon continued sustaining operations across the area of operations by facilitating baggage movements for service members and assisting with the palletization of supplies destined for units throughout the Task Force. While these efforts often occur behind the scenes, reliable movement of personnel, equipment and supplies remains essential to sustaining geographically dispersed operations. The platoon's continued support helps ensure units throughout the area of operations have the resources necessary to accomplish their missions.

Hatchet Soldiers were also recognized for their contributions to the Camp Lemonnier community. Early in the month, six Soldiers received Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals after supporting the installation commanding officer and command master chief with the refurbishment of fitness equipment across Camp Lemonnier. Their efforts improved resources available to service members while demonstrating Hatchet Company's commitment to supporting the broader installation community.

August also brought several individual milestones. 2LT Mckenzie Niedfedlt was promoted to first lieutenant, while SSG Rodrigo Espana was promoted to sergeant first class, recognizing their continued growth and increased responsibilities as Army leaders. CPL Anabelen Cruz-Lopez also received an Army Achievement Medal following her successful graduation from the U.S. Marine Corps Corporals Course. Cruz-Lopez was the only Task Force Seminole Soldier to volunteer for and complete the course, demonstrating her initiative and commitment to professional development while taking advantage of a unique joint-service training opportunity.

TOMAHAWK COMPANY

Throughout August, Tomahawk Company continued supporting Task Force Seminole through medical readiness, intelligence, operational planning and multinational engagement. Across the company's staff sections, Soldiers balanced their daily responsibilities with opportunities to develop partner capabilities, strengthen interoperability and prepare the Task Force for upcoming missions and exercises throughout the Horn of Africa.

CPT Ashlyn Spurgeon, 1LT Mary Dykens, SGT Moya Laboy, SPC Sandreka Jarrett and SPC Tahaylia Thompson joined members of the Djiboutian Coast Guard's Sea Sisters and the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force for a multinational medical training exercise. The training established foundational proficiency in lifesaving battlefield trauma techniques using standardized Tactical Combat Casualty Care guidance. Working through TCCC principles alongside international partners provided participants an opportunity to exchange knowledge, strengthen interoperability and improve the ability of partner forces to provide trauma care in operational environments.

Task Force Seminole combat medics continued building on those capabilities throughout August, completing more



CPT Dakota Burr, a public affairs officer assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Task Force Seminole, is recognized as the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa Company Grade Officer of the Month at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, Aug. 31, 2026. (U.S. Air Force photo by SSgt. Nicholas Ross)

than 30 hours of 68W Table Training led by SGT Ryan McLaughlin and SGT Kayla Bailey. Training emphasized airway management, massive hemorrhage control, intravenous fluid resuscitation and pharmacology before challenging medics with more complex casualty scenarios. Participants reviewed and executed protocols involving triage, mass-casualty management and treatment of special populations, reinforcing the technical proficiency required to provide lifesaving trauma care when resources or evacuation options may be limited.

The S2 section finally has an accomplishment it is permitted to discuss. In August, SSG Garion Adkins, a cyber subject-matter expert, briefed the CJTF-HOA commanding general and other key leaders on an intelligence deep dive examining

People's Republic of China geopolitics and the cyberspace domain. Hosted by the CJ-2, the briefing provided senior leaders with analysis of an increasingly important component of the regional operating environment. As for the rest of the details, S2 will have to keep those to itself.

Meanwhile, the S3 section continued preparing for Bull Shark, a multinational and joint-force exercise hosted by the Djiboutian Armed Forces. 1LT Dykens continued leading operational planning for Task Force Seminole's participation, helping synchronize the personnel and capabilities involved in the upcoming exercise. Bull Shark will provide another opportunity for Task Force Soldiers to train alongside regional and international partners while strengthening the relationships necessary to operate effectively together.

CPT Guenther and the S3 team also supported physical readiness opportunities across the force by executing another gateway ruck for the Norwegian Foot March and facilitating the Royal Danish Air Force March, or Flyvermarchen. Combined, the two events drew more than 1,000 participants, giving service members and partners an opportunity to challenge themselves physically while building camaraderie across the joint and multinational community.

From battlefield medicine and intelligence analysis to multinational exercise planning and physical readiness, Tomahawk Company continued providing the staff expertise and support necessary to keep Task Force Seminole

SOLDIER SPOTLIGHT

Meet Sergeant Jeremy Hooks



Hometown: Cullman, AL

MOS: 11B Infantryman

Favorite MRE: Buffalo Chicken

Favorite Movie: Range 15

Hobby: Hunting & Shooting

For SGT Jeremy Hooks, nine years in the Army National Guard have taken him from training alongside international partners in Greece, supporting presidential security missions at home, and now leading Soldiers in the Horn of Africa.

A native of Cullman, Alabama, Hooks joined the National Guard looking for an opportunity to do something different. Already interested in the outdoors and firearms, the infantry seemed like a natural fit, although he quickly learned Army life was not quite what he had seen in the movies.

Today, Hooks serves as an 11B Infantryman with Disco Company, 1st Battalion, 167th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Seminole. As a Sergeant of the Guard, he oversees Soldiers conducting entry control point operations and other security requirements that directly support force protection across the installation.

Throughout his career, Hooks has participated in several unique assignments and training opportunities. Among his favorites were supporting presidential security operations during President Joe Biden's administration and completing a two-week annual training exercise in Greece, where he trained alongside members of the Greek Armed Forces.

Hooks considers becoming a noncommissioned officer his proudest accomplishment. Now eligible for promotion to SSG, he looks forward to continuing his progression as an NCO and taking on greater leadership responsibilities.

He credits SFC Edwards and SSG Goddard with helping shape his approach to leadership.

"They've shown me what right looks like and helped me along the way," Hooks said.

That leadership development now extends to the Soldiers he leads. As the deployment continues, Hooks is looking forward to continued training and giving his Soldiers opportunities to take charge during drills and develop their own leadership abilities.

Outside of the Army, Hooks works in underground construction and fiber optics. His interests closely reflect what originally attracted him to the infantry: hunting, shooting and working with firearms.

As Task Force Seminole continues its mission across the Horn of Africa, Hooks remains focused on force protection while preparing the next group of Soldiers to assume greater responsibility. With nine years of service behind him and promotion to SSG on the horizon, he continues developing as an NCO while giving his Soldiers opportunities to do the same.

SOLDIER SPOTLIGHT

Meet First Lieutenant Tamary Massena



Hometown: Palm Beach, FL

MOS: 90A Logistics Officer

Favorite MRE: Tuna

Favorite Book: The Alchemist

Hobby: Gym, Basketball, Painting

1LT Tamary Massena joined the Army National Guard five years ago. Born in France and of Haitian heritage, Massena saw the National Guard as an opportunity to continue school while gaining practical leadership experience.

“I’ve always been passionate about leading, and I knew the Army National Guard would provide me with the experience to expand my leadership attributes and skills,” Massena said.

Today, Massena serves as a 90A Logistics Officer and the Headquarters and Headquarters Company Executive Officer for 2nd Battalion, 124th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Seminole. As the HHC XO, she supports the battalion staff through the administrative and logistical management of the company, including equipment accountability and other requirements that keep the headquarters operating.

Among her accomplishments in the Army, Massena is most proud of graduating from State Officer Candidate School. The 18-month program provided some of her most demanding training as well as some of her favorite Army memories.

During the first phase of OCS in South Carolina, officer candidates formed up before chow before running .87 miles and completing 10 push-ups and 10 pull-ups. The routine represented the gold “butter bar”

they were working toward earning at the completion of OCS and remains one of Massena’s favorite memories from the program.

Massena also considers training at the National Training Center one of her favorite experiences in the Army.

During the current deployment, her position has given her the opportunity to see Soldiers develop throughout the formation. For Massena, watching that progression has been one of the most rewarding parts of the mission.

“Watching junior enlisted Soldiers grow and develop into stronger leaders, especially as they promote into becoming NCOs, has been the most rewarding part,” Massena said.

Outside of the Army, Massena serves as a police officer. In her free time, she enjoys going to the gym, playing basketball and pickleball, and painting. Drawing and painting are also talents many Soldiers may not know she has.

As Task Force Seminole continues its mission across the Horn of Africa, Massena remains focused on supporting the headquarters. Her approach to leadership is reflected in a principle she carries with her throughout her career.

“The rank you earn on your chest is not for you,” Massena said. “It is for the battle buddies to the left and right of you.”

SEMINOLE STRENGTH

Building strength, endurance and readiness — Never Surrender!

★ WORKOUT OF THE MONTH ★

THE FIELD CIRCUIT

★ MOVE FAST. STAY STRONG. ★

★ 5 ROUNDS ★	
	400-METER RUN
	15 SANDBAG CLEANS
	20 HAND-RELEASE PUSH-UPS
	25 AIR SQUATS
	REST 60 SECONDS

★ CHALLENGE ★
COMPLETE ALL 5 ROUNDS FOR TIME WHILE MAINTAINING PROPER FORM.
★
MODIFY THE WEIGHT OR REPETITIONS AS NEEDED.

BUILD READINESS. FINISH STRONG.
— TASK FORCE SEMINOLE —



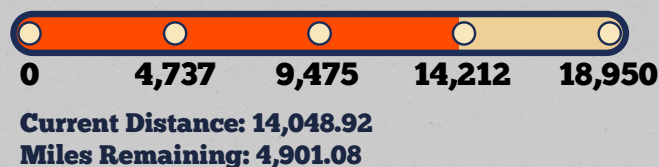
Ruck Around Africa

The Task Force Seminole Ruck Around Africa Challenge made tremendous progress during August, with Soldiers logging an additional 7,304 miles across the formation. Combined with previous months, the task force has now accumulated 14,048.92 miles toward its 18,950-mile journey around Africa's coastline.

With nearly three-quarters of the route now complete, Task Force Seminole has completed 74.14% of the challenge, leaving only 4,901.08 miles remaining. The significant increase in mileage reflects the formation's continued commitment to physical readiness.

A significant portion of August's mileage came from Soldiers participating in the Nijmegen March, Royal Danish Flyver March and Norwegian Foot March. These events allowed participants to pursue prestigious foreign military awards while contributing thousands of miles to the overall challenge and building endurance, resilience and esprit de corps across the task force.

With the finish line now within reach, every mile brings Task Force Seminole one step closer to circumnavigating Africa.



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Roots & Fruits

Chaplain Jason Fletcher



When you look at a tree, what do you notice? The fruit! But there is an entire part of that tree you cannot see—the roots. In fact, what you see above the ground is determined by what has been happening beneath it. A healthy tree doesn't begin with healthy fruit. It begins with healthy roots.

Fruit begins with roots. The same is true for us. Just like a tree, what happens beneath the surface eventually shows up above the surface.

Scripture paints this picture beautifully: “Take root downward, and bear fruit upward.” (Isaiah 37:31)

Interestingly, those words were originally spoken during a time of tremendous uncertainty. Jerusalem was facing the threat of the Assyrian army wiping them out. Yet in the middle of the crisis, God

promised they would take root and flourish. Spoiler alert, He did.

There is something powerful about that image for the military community. Military life brings its own uncertainty and storms: deployments, separations, long hours, missed birthdays and anniversaries, and the constant pressure of accomplishing the mission.

That is why we must intentionally develop what no one else sees—our roots. Strengthen your marriage, build relationships with your children, develop friendships with people who will challenge and encourage you, guard what you allow to shape your thinking, and take care of yourself spiritually.

Paul said, “And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord...let your roots grow down into Him” (Colossians 2:6-7). Our deepest root is not simply resilience or positive thinking; it is remaining connected to Christ. As we abide in Him, He develops something within us that eventually becomes visible through us the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5).

So, the real question isn't: “What kind of fruit is my life producing?”

The better question is: “What am I rooted in?”

So wherever you are today—at home, deployed, or supporting someone who is—take care of your roots. Because long before anyone sees the fruit, something has already been growing beneath the surface.

Take root downward. Bear fruit upward.

PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD





U.S. Army SPC Preston Ragan, a combat medic assigned to Disco Company, 1st Battalion, 167th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Seminole, responds to a simulated casualty during a base defense exercise at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, Aug. 14, 2026. (U.S. Army photo by CPT Dakota Burr)



U.S. Army SPC Preston Ragan and CPL Ethan English, assigned to Disco Company, 1st Battalion, 167th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Seminole, evacuate a simulated casualty for further treatment during a base defense exercise at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, Aug. 14, 2026. (U.S. Army photo by CPT Dakota Burr)



MAJ John Crawford and SFC Class David Castro, assigned to Task Force Seminole, prepare to present Norwegian Foot March Badges during an award ceremony in Kismayo, Somalia, Aug. 15, 2026. (U.S. Air Force photo by SSgt. Abigail Duell)



1LT Adam Kuh, assigned to Blackhawk Company, Task Force Seminole, receives the Norwegian Foot March Badge during an award ceremony in Kismayo, Somalia, Aug. 15, 2026. (U.S. Air Force photo by SSgt. Abigail Duell)



A U.S. Army Soldier assigned to Blackjack Company, 1st Battalion, 167th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Seminole, conducts rappel training at Chabelley Airfield, Djibouti, 2026. (U.S. Army photo by SSG Marshall Verkler)



U.S. Army SGT Leonardo Garcia, assigned to Combat Company, Task Force Seminole, installs a water tank at Manda Bay, Kenya, Aug. 12, 2026. (U.S. Army photo by SGT Jake Anico).



U.S. Army SGT Leonardo Garcia, assigned to Combat Company, Task Force Seminole, installs a water tank at Manda Bay, Kenya, Aug. 12, 2026. (U.S.Army photo by SGT Jake Anico).



U.S. Army Soldiers assigned to Task Force Seminole, civil affairs personnel and U.S. Air Force Airmen install a water tank at Manda Bay, Kenya, Aug. 12, 2026. (U.S.Army photo by SGT Jake Anico).

MASTHEAD

The Seminole Standard

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Disclaimer:

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