



The Official Magazine of The U.S. Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command (Airborne)

PEACEMAKER

Fall 2012

Leapfest!

CAPOC Soldiers compete for airborne bragging rights.

Super Team

No offense to the Avengers, but Earth's mightiest heroes might be in Africa.



PEACEMAKER



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On the cover: Spc. Ciera Terry, U.S. Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command (Airborne), pulls her parachute while attempting to touch the target at Leapfest 2012 on Castle Drop Zone, West Kingston, R.I. The 10 mph wind made it difficult for those who landed past the target, forcing Terry and others to pull their parachute upwind to reach their mark.
(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Andy Yoshimura)

◀ Soldiers from the 405th Civil Affairs Battalion survey the view from the top of Turtle Head Peak, Nev. 6,324ft above sea level. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Vincent Bonacci, 405th CA Bn. Unit Public Affairs Representative)



Maj. Gen. Jeffrey A. Jacobs

—USACAPOC(A) Commanding General

On Saturday, August 25, I transferred responsibility as the USACAPOC(A) command sergeant major from CSM Dale Blosser to CSM Harry Bennett. Change is a constant in the Army, but change is tough, and it is tough to bid farewell to CSM Blosser. In his 31 months as the USACAPOC(A) command sergeant major, CSM Blosser made a tremendous impact on the command. Every officer has a sergeant, and CSM Blosser has been my sergeant since I took command my battle buddy and my stick buddy. The command, and I, wish him success and the best of luck as he tackles his next challenge.

We also welcomed CSM Harry Bennett to the USACAPOC(A) headquarters. He is certainly no stranger to the command, having served as the command sergeant major of the 450th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne), the 354th Civil Affairs Brigade, and the 352d Civil Affairs Command. CSM Bennett is the right NCO for the job, and I welcome him as my new battle buddy.

As I said at the change of responsibility ceremony, NCOs are the key to our success. You can have a good unit without good officers, but you cannot have a good unit without good NCOs. To be sure, a great unit requires both a good officer and NCO corps, but a good NCO corps is an absolute necessity for the success of any unit - regardless of the quality of its officers.

So what constitutes a good NCO corps? From this officer's perspective: Live the NCO Creed. As it applies to being an NCO in the Army Reserve, I believe you need to pay particular attention to the following: "My two basic responsibilities will always be uppermost in my mind—accomplishment of my mission and the welfare of my Soldiers."

When we're not deployed, an NCO's mission is to train his or her Soldiers. Sitting in a civil affairs battalion or a PSYOP company drill hall and conducting a lecture is not effective

training. The most effective training happens when a civil affairs or tactical PSYOP team sergeant, or an S-1 or S-4 NCO, or a motor sergeant, conducts battle-focused individual training on METL-based tasks found in the appropriate Soldier's Manual, under the appropriate conditions, to standard.

Assuring the welfare of our Soldiers means NCOs must be leaders 24/7, whether they are TPU or AGR. Do you, as an NCO, have a leader book containing all of your Soldiers' information - address, cell phone number, birth month audit info, date of next required APFT, next available Warrior Leader Course dates, etc.? Do you call or text your Soldiers between battle assemblies to check on them, to ensure that they have the latest information, and to make sure they are keeping up with their personal PT programs? Do you check their government travel card bills to ensure that they are using the GTC properly and submitting their DTS vouchers? Do you draw your team's weapons out of the arms room on your own initiative so that your Soldiers can clean and maintain them? From my foxhole, this is what it means to take care of Soldiers in the Army Reserve.

I have asked CSM Bennett to ensure that our NCO support channel is working and that our NCOs are accomplishing the mission and looking out for the welfare of our Soldiers. If you are doing these two things, then our NCO corps truly is "The Backbone of the Army." Do not forget, and don't allow your comrades to forget, that you are professionals, Noncommissioned Officers, leaders!

Army Strong!



Command Sgt. Maj. Harry Bennett

—USACAPOC(A) Command Sgt. Maj.

As I settle into my position here at USACAPOC (A), one of my priorities is the “re-bluing” of our NCO Corps. After years of the high OPTEMPO of deployments, we now have a reduction of forces in Afghanistan and the chance to “take a knee” and do an “azimuth check.” It is time we get back to the NCO basics and remember our responsibilities.

Physical fitness training and marksmanship are NCO responsibilities. Enforcing standards is an NCO responsibility. Maintenance is an NCO responsibility. Remember that ALL training is an NCO responsibility. In order to take care of our NCO responsibilities, we must manage time. And right now, we have more time to place more focus on training that includes unit DMOSQ, NCOES, Warrior Tasks, hip pocket training, individual training and collective training. As we “re-blue” ourselves, we will strengthen our NCO Corps and the Soldiers we lead. This will make us more prepared and more successful for the battlefield of tomorrow. The success of USACAPOC (A) is directly related to the quality noncommissioned officers among our ranks.

As a starting point, I’d like to remind our Soldiers about the roles of officers and NCOs in the Army. The Army’s Field Manual on Military Leadership states the following on Officer/NCO responsibilities:

“The officer commands, establishes policy, plans and programs the work of the Army; concentrates on collective training which will enable the unit to accomplish its mission; is primarily involved with unit operations, training, and related activities; concentrates on unit effectiveness and unit readiness; pays particular attention to the standards of performance, training, and professional development of NCOs; creates conditions-makes time and other resources available-so the NCO can do his job.

The NCO conducts the daily business of the Army within

established orders, directives, and policies; concentrates on individual and team training which develops the capacity to accomplish the mission; is primarily involved with training individual Soldiers and teams; concentrates on each subordinate NCO and Soldier and on the small teams of the unit-to ensure that each is well trained, highly motivated, ready, and functioning; concentrates on standards of performance, training, and professional development of NCOs and enlisted personnel; gets the job done.”

In closing, I’d like to thank everyone who made the Change of Responsibility a success. I am honored both to be here in this position and to be able to serve the Soldiers and families of USACAPOC (A), and the nation. I also know that serving in a leadership position is a privilege, and that I have been given a special trust and confidence as your Command Sergeant Major.

**All the Way!
CSM B**

“The American soldier is a proud one and he demands professional competence in his leaders. In battle, he wants to know that the job is going to be done right, with no unnecessary casualties. The noncommissioned officer wearing the chevron is supposed to be the best soldier in the platoon and he is supposed to know how to perform all the duties expected of him. The American soldier expects his sergeant to be able to teach him how to do his job. And he expects even more from his officers.”

— **General of the Army Omar N. Bradley**

Making a lasting impact

Army Reserve Soldier named by Military Times "Soldier of the Year" learns that becoming a part of his community was its own reward.

By Staff Sgt. Felix R. Fimbres, USACAPOC(A) Public Affairs

“I think there are thousands of other soldiers who deserve this more than me, and as Soldier of the Year I’m just trying to honor them,” said Sgt. Steven B. Davidson, an Army Reserve soldier from Grand Prairie, Texas.

He was one of five service members honored at an event in Washington, for service not only to their countries but their communities as well.

Davidson deployed with the 490th Civil Affairs Battalion to the Horn of Africa in 2011, and in that time took action to save a life, as a corporal filled the role of a senior NCO, and routinely performed community service after his workday in order to help the people in the nearby by city of Djibouti. Upon his return Davidson did not stop to take a break, but continued to reach out to his community as a big brother and helped mentored at risk kids at schools in his area.

“I am humbled to have won this award, but I think USACAPOC(A) deserves this recognition,” said Davidson to the Command Sergeant Major of the U.S. Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command (Airborne),

“No, no, no. Today is not about CAPOC, it’s about you, and it’s about your training and you using it,” rebutted Command Sgt. Maj. Dale Blosser.

Davidson could only smile and say thank you. The scene repeated again and again, with generals and the top senior



Sgt. Steven B. Davidson with Rep. Kay Granger, Texas 12th District at the Cannon House Office Building in Washington. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Felix R. Fimbres)

see more photos on flickr at bit.ly/490davidson



Sgt. Steven B. Davidson is congratulated by Lt. Gen. Jeffrey Talley, Chief of the Army Reserve, at the Cannon House Office Building in Washington. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Felix R. Fimbres)

enlisted leaders from all branches of the military congratulating him. The leaders were joined by members of congress, including Davidson's district representative, Kay Granger, Texas 12th District, and democratic house minority leader, Nancy Pelosi.

Before the accolades, Davidson was just a kid from Texas. He first began honing his basic medical skills when he was an underclassman at Northwest High School in Justin, Texas. Under the tutelage of Scott Fletcher, the head athletic trainer, Davidson learned how to take care of a myriad of sports injuries. "I absolutely loved it," he said. "I loved wrapping ankles and taking care of minor injuries."

What Davidson didn't love was the bullying he received from the other kids at school for being "the waterboy" and in his junior year decided to quit being a trainer.

"It was one of my biggest regrets," said Davidson, "Because I was self-conscious about it, I quit doing what I loved to do."

When Davidson joined the Army and was assigned to the 490th as a human resource specialist, it was his experience as a trainer that made combat life saver

training old hat. He was comfortable with medical scissors and tape, and he was all too aware of the effects the environment can have on performance thanks to his time as an athletic trainer. Then came the deployment.

When a Soldier went down after a nine hour ruck march through the African desert, Davidson didn't take it lightly and jumped into action. Davidson and his fellow Soldiers had been participating in a French desert survival course, and the culmination event was an arduous trek through the desert.

When the soldier fell out and was unresponsive, Davidson knew something serious had happened.

"I think because we were so depleted, being so close to the end, that people's reaction times were just slower," said Davidson. "I grabbed my ruck sack and ran up to him. I grabbed my scissors and began cutting off his pants, boots and top. We cut his pants into little strips and dipped them in the water we had left," recalled Davidson who applied the bandages. It was all he could do because no one had brought along a combat life saver kit.

"We expected the French to have that capability, but they didn't. They were able to call in a MEDEVAC,



Sgt. Steven B. Davidson gets a thumbs up from Maj. Gen. Jeffrey A. Jacobs, Commanding General, USACAPOC(A) at the Cannon House Office Building in Washington. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Felix R. Fimbres)

but they told us it would take two hours to get there. We didn't think he would make it.”

After about 20 minutes, the Soldier woke up violently, confused and disoriented. His fellow soldiers held him down, but many just began to ask him if he was okay. Davidson knew that wasn't helping, “I asked them to stop and started asking about his kids and family, he then began to respond in a more positive manner.”

Before the MEDEVAC had arrived, the French medics arrived and asked everyone to leave. But Davidson could see the French medics were having a hard time communicating with the injured Soldier. “The French medics didn't know any English and none of us spoke any French. They couldn't tell him how to put on the oxygen masks, or that he was going to get an IV, I felt like I had to step back in, to let the Soldier know what was going on,” said Davidson. Thanks to his CLS training and his experiences as a trainer he knew what the medics were trying to do. Together they were able to stabilize the Soldier until the MEDEVAC arrived.

“It's the little things and how they come full circle,” said Davidson, who felt that any of his peers could have done the same as he.



Sgt. Steven B. Davidson shakes hands with Command Sgt. Major Raymond F. Chandler, Sgt. Major of the Army at the Cannon House Office Building in Washington. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Felix R. Fimbres)

Davidson had once given up what he loved because of bullies, but it was because of his training he was able to help save a Soldier's life. And so when Davidson talks to kids, he tells them not to listen to other people putting you down. "It was the technical proficiencies that I learned as a trainer that I was able to save a life in the desert that night. You shouldn't let other people tell you what to do; it's about doing what you love."

And what Davidson loves doing now is helping community kids who might need a little extra attention. He first started volunteering with the 490th.

"My commander encouraged all his Soldiers to go out into the community and help, regardless whether we were civil affairs trained or not," said Davidson who feels he was able to make an impact in his own way by bonding with locals, helping them learn English, and discovered a newfound appreciation for what he had. "A family I worked with was expecting a baby, I asked if it was a boy or a girl, and the husband said 'only God can know' which really struck me. Things like ultrasounds which we take for granted are rare or unknown in most parts of the world so I feel really blessed to have what I have."

Since being home in Texas, Davidson has reached out to numerous schools, talking with teachers, and making connections. "Even though teachers change out, when you go back to a school you used to go to, bonds with new teachers can be made. For



the first few months I would just go and sit with a third grade class and just have lunch with them," said Davidson. There are so many kids who are looking for someone to look up to and not many service members know how influential they can be. But I was able to build relationships with teachers, kids, and parents. I was invited to school functions and was the guest of

honor during their Activity Day."

But perhaps the biggest gesture Davidson has made to his community was when he gave his medal for saving a soldier's life to his mentor in high school, athletic trainer Fletcher. Davidson feels that he wouldn't have earned it without a teacher taking the time to mentor him.

Sgt. Steven B. Davidson talks with Rep. Kay Granger, Texas 12th District at the Cannon House Office Building in Washington. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Felix R. Fimbres)

For Davidson, giving is its own reward, and he plans to continue to do so as long as he can.

Check-up

Civil Affairs teams and CJTF-HOA come together to help Djiboutians

**Story by Staff Sgt. Andrew Caya,
Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa**

Soldiers from the 448th and 490th Civil Affairs Battalions, Task Force Raptor and other members stationed at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, facilitated a Medical Civic Action Program with Djiboutian medical providers.

“MEDCAPs are very important because we are giving the Djiboutian population here the tools that they need to take care of their own medical needs in the future,” said Maj. Gen. Jeffrey A. Jacobs, commanding general of U.S. Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command(Airborne).

“We are supporting the host nation doctors with best practices,” said Capt. Justin Lev, Civil Affairs Team 4902 team chief. More than 350

Djiboutian patients were treated by a Djiboutian medical provider with Americans assisting in treatment and prescribing medications, he said.

“You are helping my people,” said Abdoul Shahid, Damerjog regional government representative. He said because of this MEDCAP, many people received medication and treatment. “The only thing I can say is thank you.”

The Djiboutian doctors are gaining knowledge of how to do the medical treatment and how to control the patient flow, said Lev. “By providing them these medications and by sharing these best practices with the doctors, we’re really building true



A Djiboutian dentist examines a villager's mouth during a Medical Civic Action Program. The Djiboutian patients were treated by a Djiboutian medical provider while Americans assisted with treatment and prescribing medications (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Andrew Caya)



Maj. Sean Keenan is part of a Medical Civic Action Program team helping Djiboutians with medical aid. Keenan is a radiologist in his hometown, Fort Riley, Kan., But on this mission he ensures patients receive the right medicine with the help of a Djiboutian translator.

relationships.”

“I love it; that’s why I joined civil affairs,” said Spc. Adam Linden, Joint Civil Affairs Team 4481 medic. He said he enjoys being able to interact with people on a very personal level, not only helping them with medical concerns, but with other issues that affect their daily lives, such as drilling wells and constructing schools. “It’s pretty

rewarding,” he said.

“These are my Soldiers, and they’re doing a great job,” said Jacobs. “It’s very rewarding to see my soldiers doing the job they’ve trained to do since they’ve been in the Army, and they are really making a difference here in Djibouti.”

See more stories like these at www.usacapoc.army.mil

Soldiers from the 350th CACOM fly over Blountstown, Fl. during a three day Disaster Relief Humanitarian and Assistance Mission Training Exercise. The training exercise was based on a scenario in which Blountstown was hit by a high category hurricane. The 350th conducted Civil Military Operations (CMO) in order to supply Disaster Relief and Humanitarian Assistance. (U.S. Army photo by Lt. Col. Rodney Fant, 350th CACOM Unit Public Affairs Representative)



Soldiers from the 404th Civil Affairs Battalion conduct pre-jump training at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J. on. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Parker Gyokeres)



(From left to right) Staff Sgt. Monica Vasquez, Pfc. Aunreanna White, Sgt. Gregory Gutierrez, Master Sgt. Terrence Crayton of the 490th Civil Affairs Bn. set up a OE254 Army omnidirectional Antenna at White Settlement Texas on . The Antenna allows Civil Affairs teams to communicate with leadership while on patrol. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Cassie DiVincenzo, 490th Civil Affairs Unit Public Affairs Representative)



Suicide success story – one company’s real approach

by Lt. Col. Gerald Ostlund, USACAPOC(A) Public Affairs

You read about it online, in PowerPoint presentations, or through impersonal emails attempting to focus attention on the high rate of suicide, attempted suicide, and suicidal ideations in the U.S. military.

But until someone close to you attempts suicide or openly thinks about it, it is understandable to be somewhat detached from the subject. For Capt. Katherine Kennedy, commander of the 320th PSYOP Company, suicide isn’t a subject far from top-of-mind. Kennedy has had four Soldiers with suicidal ideations and has taken direct, hands-on ownership of the suicide prevention program within the unit. In addition, she said “I make my guys own it.”

Peacemaker talked with Kennedy about the lessons she’s learned.

PM: You have taken a “hands-on” approach to suicide prevention

– can you explain that?

Kennedy: A couple of examples. First is a Soldier whom we found out through the PHA process might be having an issue. When my unit mobilization officer followed-up with the Soldier, he said he was depressed and wanted to hurt himself. I contacted the

“Just say OWN IT, seriously own it. It’s not girlie, it’s not dumb, it’s real.”

– Capt. Katherine Kennedy, Commander 320th PSYOP CO.

Soldier myself and after some point blank questions, immediately dispatched a couple of trusted NCOs to go to his home. I also called the local police department to conduct a health and welfare check. The second is the suicide prevention training and stand-down. We were already doing a stand-down because one of my AGR guys had his sister kill herself the previous Monday, so I’d been hit with ‘suicide’ twice in a seven-day period and it was time, time to let my guys know I am there for them, again. I had the standard presentation – but started with the question, how many of you have been touched by suicide please raise your hand, a friend, family member, teammate, etc. The majority of

them raised their hands. I asked how many of you are sick of suicide briefings? 100% hands raise....why? And so the two hour discussion began. Notice I didn’t say brief. One of the Soldiers I helped spoke up and, in front of the group, said he had come forward and his situation had been taken care of and his career and progression hasn’t been affected. I asked if he knew I had told the chain of command and he said yes, and I asked him, did he feel anything come down from them or did they contact him in any way that wasn’t authorized through me and he said no, the only interaction he had was with me, the Soldiers helping him and the outside help we got him. I couldn’t have asked for a better example!! The one word we are hinging our talks on is trust.

PM: What happened with the Soldier in your first example after your NCOs arrived at his house?

Kennedy: I had my two Soldiers take him to the closest active duty hospital where they kept him for the night but were told that he could not get help because he was not on active duty. The active duty hospital indicated that it would not help even if he was put on 29 day AT orders, they would need at least a minimum of six months. I brought him down to the VA medical center near my unit

because I have had success with them in the past. They took him in and kept him for two nights. I kept a Soldier at the hospital at all times with him except when he was sleeping. I wanted him to know we were there for him.

PM: What resources did you uncover as part of this or other cases?

Kennedy: Military One Source is only for immediate care to make someone seek help. They are not long-term care. I was largely disappointed in that they said if the Soldier already has a psych profile or is on medication that they cannot help them. They did recommend a site called www.giveanhour.com and my Soldier is currently looking into it; he is having a weekly visit with the VA medical center here and is going to a support group once a week. The chaplain has been awesome, no matter what time he is there for me and my guys. What I uncovered is that we aren’t prepared for suicide. Master Sgt. Christopher Hecker, in the USACAPOC(A) G-1, has been a tremendous help and it is great that the command has someone on the staff available to Soldiers and leaders for assistance in finding resources.

PM: What advice would you give to other leaders about managing incidents involving suicide attempts or

ideas?

Kennedy: *Don't take 'no' for an answer. When people said they couldn't or wouldn't help me I would ask to speak to their manager, I let my chain of command know, I threw red flags because I was pissed. Own suicide prevention in your unit, don't just make it something*

you do when the group commander or CAPOC

commander dictates it, and even more I

make my guys own it. This isn't on me, this isn't my program, this is OUR program, OUR plan, OUR opportunity to make it what we want.

PM: *How have you made it everyone's program?*

Kennedy: *During the discussion, I kept reiterating that this isn't a check-the-block brief, we aren't going to go through a 50 slide slide-show. Here are a couple things that THEY came up with:*

Team Time. *All of my Soldiers asked for time to bond as a team. So, we're going to set aside four hours a week for the teams - no meetings, no taskings, etc. during that time.*

Suicide Prevention Training. *We decided that the next suicide prevention briefing is going to be held at the detachment level. I am going to give them a few topics to pick from and they are going to meet as a group*

on or off base and talk.

Suicide Prevention while Deployed. *I know I have two ASSIST [Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training] trained Soldiers but my company wants to self select one person per detachment to be their suicide prevention rep. It's one person in the detachment that they can go talk to.*

They want a safe person to go to. Stigma is huge and they want to be able to bring up depression, fears, anger and not be labeled with PTSD. There are

other things too - but the bottom line is the whole company is committed to ensuring we have the resources and support to take care of each other.

PM: *Any last thoughts you would like to share with the command?*

Kennedy: *OWN IT, seriously own it. It's not girlie, it's not dumb, it's real. I helped with the aftermath of a suicide in another unit and it is REAL. One guy said for a follow up discussion [at the 320th's suicide prevention briefing] they would like a family member from a suicide come in and speak and everyone said "NO" really loud, and I asked why, they said because it was too "REAL." Why are we so scared of 'real'? I plan to carefully select someone to come talk, in their time and in my Soldiers' time - it is uncomfortable and we'll probably tear up, but I think we need to really think about it and not just watch a video. Psyop is all about face to face, so let's really engage.*

If you or a loved one needs help, alert your chain of command and/or let these organizations help.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Army suicide prevention, offers links, hotlines, Soldier support information, Soldier training, and leader messages.

bit.ly/armysuicideprevention

Leaders resource, Leaders resource: Master Sgt. Christopher M. Hecker, Suicide Prevention Coordinator at

(910) 908-4538

christopher.hecker@usar.army.mil

Give an hour, is a nation wide network with providers who offer free services to military members

www.giveanhour.org

Not Alone, offers support nationwide to Soldiers and families through web-based support groups, interaction, and contract with providers for services.

www.notalone.com

Super Team

No offense to the Avengers, but earth's mightiest heroes might be in Africa.

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Felix R. Fimbres, USACAPOC(A) Public Affairs

(From left to right) Spc. Alissa Anderson, Spc. Anthony Serna, Construction Battalion Petty Officer 3rd Class Kasey Dotson, will tackle a myriad of challenges facing the people of Dire Dawa. The team will work side by side with the locals in an effort to rebuild infrastructure to help stabilize the region.

Civil affairs and military information support soldiers, alongside Navy “Seabees,” have formed teams capable of just about anything.

Five teams from the 448th Civil Affairs Battalion have recently arrived in the Horn of Africa and replaced Soldiers from the 490th Civil Affairs Battalion, and with them came an experimental team concept.

A typical civil affairs team brings with it five civil affairs soldiers, often with a wide gamut of experience, but the new joint civil affairs team concept underway here incorporates two additional members. The first is a military information support Soldier who specializes in communicating with the local populace and identifying cause and effect relationships. The second is a Navy construction battalion ‘Seabee’ sailor who specializes in engineering.

According to the 490th leadership this is an unprecedented mixture of expertise to help people in need. But if the plan plays out, other functional specialists may find themselves on the team as well.

“We are planning on adding Seabees, special operations Soldiers, (and)



Spc. Alissa Anderson, a civil affairs specialist listens as local Dire Dawa children talk to her about their summer plans outside of their newly renovated school.

see more photos on facebook at www.on.fb.me/Q1sren



Desks sit inside a recently renovated school house in Dire Dawa. It's projects like these the 448th hopes will have a lasting impact on the people of Ethiopia.

medics, so we can have a mini functional specialty cell embedded in each CA team, which will expand our capabilities," said Sgt. 1st Class Kyle Asplund, the non-commissioned officer in charge of planning for the 448th.

"In years past, there was a big push to build, but we over saturated the area. So now we have wells drilled but capped off and not being utilized. If instead we can go in to an area and make small improvements in a lot of areas, it'll result in a large improvement in the overall area," added Asplund.

Asplund knows first hand the impact a civil affairs team can have on an area, having deployed to Mahmadia, Iraq, in 2005 and again to Mosul in 2008. In Mosul, Asplund was responsible for more than \$3 million of construction to help rebuild and stabilize the area. But he also understands what a military information support soldier, the other half of the U.S. Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command (Airborne), can bring to the table and is confident military information support

Soldiers can not only enhance the mission in Ethiopia, but beyond.

But what kind of impact can one soldier have? Military information support teams normally deploy as a tight-knit group of three soldiers with a specific objective; but Maj. Asa Pearson, commander of the 490th Civil Affairs Battalion and former military information support Soldier himself, believes that one Soldier can have a significant impact on a civil affairs team.

“As fellow ambassadors in uniform and communication specialists, they (the MISO soldiers) are able to bring the large, Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa messages, to the ground level and help refine the communications the civil affairs teams are having with the local community, military and government officials.” Pearson said.

Spc. Anthony Serna, of the 345th Tactical Psychological Operations Company (Airborne), is also optimistic about his ability to bring a new facet to the team.

“One of the biggest things I want to accomplish before I leave is to get the local media involved; where traditionally I would put out a mission directly. I want to bring the reporters to the local Medical Civic Action Programs (MEDCAPS) and Veterinary Civic Action Programs (VETCAPS) so they can tell their people in their own words



Construction Battalion Petty Officer 3rd Class Kasey Dotson listens to kids [not pictured] talk about their summer vacation plans outside their school.



Spc. Anthony Serna, has been learning from his civil affairs counterparts that their mission isn't too different from his own.

with their own feelings,” explained Serna. “A lot of the local papers tend to focus on feel good stories, so I think we can put our face on that as well to show we are working with the local government to make Ethiopia a leader in the Horn of Africa as it historically has been.”

Regardless of the impact, a secondary effect of this experiment could be a relief in tensions between the two sister components of USACAPOC(A).

“There is a lot of misunderstanding between the MOSs [military occupational specialties] in CAPOC. I’ve always thought of civil affairs as the guys who hand out money and dig wells. But there is a lot more that goes into their jobs. And it’s a lot closer to my job than I originally thought,” said Serna.

Spc. Alissa Anderson, a civil affairs specialist with the same civil affairs team agreed. Until she met Serna and her other teammate Construction Battalion Petty Officer 3rd Class Kasey Dotson, she didn’t know what military information support operations did, let

alone anything about a Navy Seabee.

“It’s been interesting because I’ve never worked with any other branch of the military,” said Anderson. “Now, I’m able to work with military information support, a job I never understood, and a Seabee as well. I feel that now I’m getting the full spectrum of what the military can do.”

But this cross training goes beyond just learning what each other can do - it can also have in impact on improving their own skills and understanding the secondary and tertiary effects of their actions.

Dotson added, “In a way I’ve learned how to do my job better, because Seabees are half CA, half construction. When we are in places doing construction in horrible conditions, it can make us unhappy campers. That attitude can rub off on the local population, which is something I learned from Serna. That negative attitude and agitation that we get from our jobs can really have an effect on the overall mission of CJTF-HOA.”

The far reaching impact of this team’s actions is having on the Horn of Africa and maybe beyond into the Army and Navy doctrine is still unknown, but what is known is that this experiment is being played out one conversation at a time.

Anderson asked a small boy outside of a school in Dire Dawa, Ethiopia, the team

was visiting.

“*Construction,*” a small boy responds.

“*Oh like her,*” Anderson says as she points to CB3 Dotson. The boy nods his head and smiles.

“*I paint,*” another boy says as he points to the freshly painted walls on the schoolhouse which was a civil affairs



project.

“*You painted this?*” Anderson asks.

“*Yes,*” the boy responds.

“*I need to paint my room,*” Anderson says.

“*I will paint it for you!*” the boy says with a huge smile. The group shares a laugh and builds a bond.

A Soldier from the 448th Civil Affairs Battalion plays basketball with a local child behind a recently reconstructed school house.

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marks the spot

*Paratroopers compete for
airborne bragging rights.*

**Story and photos by Sgt. 1st
Class Andy Yoshimura,
USACAPOC(A)
Public Affairs**

◀ **Staff Sgt. Stanley Meyer, 352nd Civil Affairs Command, gathers his parachute after hitting the target at Leapfest. The two-day competition brought 64 teams from across the world to Castle Drop Zone in West Kingston, R.I.**

Paratroopers from around the world waited for the dense fog to clear. As they performed their sustained airborne training, the thumping sounds of the blades of a CH-47 Chinook helicopter echoed through the trees.

As the fog began to break, paratroopers were ready to start one of the largest, longest standing, international static line parachute training events and competitions: Leapfest.

More than 250 paratroopers, including nine foreign jump teams, participated in the competition August 3rd and 4th on Castle Drop Zone, located behind West Kingston Elementary School, West Kingston, R.I. Seven teams from the U.S. Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) took

to the air alongside their airborne comrades. "Being in this competition is a great experience; it's something that I would never have the opportunity to do had I not been in USACAPOC(A)," said Sgt. 1st Class Edward Dutch of the 450th Civil Affairs Battalion, Riverdale, Md.

The competition's objective: get all four team members out of the helicopter at 1,500 feet and get to the finish line in the quickest time possible; and beat out the other teams. Each competitor was strapped to a MCr-1C/D static line, steerable, parabolic parachute. Competitors were timed from the moment he or she lands until reaching the orange "X" in the middle of the drop zone. After three jumps, each team's combined total was calculated with the shortest time earning top team honors.

"My strategy for this competition was to not go over the target," said Spc. Ciera

A Paratrooper glides down through the air toward the target during Leapfest. The two-day competition brought 64 teams from across the world to Castle Drop Zone in West Kingston, R.I.



Terry of USACAPOC(A).
“I plan on landing before the target and dumping air when I am about 200 feet.”

Dumping air allows the paratrooper to descend faster to hit the target accurately.

Terry is one of four paratroopers who made up an all-female team comprised of 1st Lt. Laurie Hawkins, Staff Sgt. Lisa Dodd and Sgt. Heather Manley all from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, USACAPOC(A).

As the only female team, the media spotlight shined on these paratroopers as they floated down from the bright Rhode Island sky.

“I am having a great time here meeting different paratroopers. Maybe other units can take from the opportunity that you can bring female jumpers,” added Terry.

Organized by the Rhode Island National Guard, this marks the 30th year of the

competition.

“The difference from about 25 years ago is that they are now using the CH-47’s and a different parachute system,” said Col. Terrell Parker, Chief of Staff, USACAPOC(A) who had previously jumped out of a UH-1 Iroquois “Huey” helicopter with an unsteerable T-10 parachute.

“The scope of the operation is much larger drawing in a bigger crowd with more media attention. Even though we might not win, there is nothing bad about this operation.”

And there was nothing bad about Capt. Lance Jensen’s performance. Jensen, a civil affairs officer from the 404th Civil Affairs Battalion, finished first in the individual category with a total time of 15.5 seconds.

“I landed a few feet of the target, grabbed my risers and slung them around my body, running after the canopy towards the target,” said Jensen who was not anticipating coming in first against more seasoned paratroopers from around the world. “Events like this bring cohesion, esprit-de-corps and camaraderie with jumpers.”



Sgt. Tellef Klemet, a Soldier with the Defense Logistics Agency, dives for the finish point, marked as a giant “X”, during Leapfest. The two-day competition brought 64 teams from across the world to Castle Drop Zone in West Kingston, R.I.

“I am having a great time here meeting different paratroopers. Maybe other units can take from the opportunity that you can bring female jumpers.”

- Spc. Ciera Terry, USACAPOC(A) HHC

◀ **(From Left to right) Staff Sgt. Lisa Dodd, Spc. Ciera Terry, Sgt. Heather Manley, and 1st Lt. Laurie Hawkins**
In 30 years of Leapfest, this was the second time an all-female team participated.



Changing of the guard

USACAPOC(A) welcomes new Command Sergeant Major

**Story by Pfc. Lalita Guenther,
USACAPOC(A) Public Affairs**

The U.S. Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) bid farewell to Command Sgt. Maj. Dale Blosser and welcomed its new Command Sergeant Major, Command Sgt. Maj. Harry Bennett at Fort Bragg, N.C. Bennett is new to the position but not new to the command, having just left his position as the command sergeant major of the 352nd's Civil Affairs Command, Fort Meade, Md.

“Command Sgt. Major Blosser has consistently demonstrated the ability to get things done, and leaves a legacy of instilling discipline, enforcing standards, and taking care of soldiers who will not soon be forgotten,” boasted Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Jacobs, the commanding general of USACAPOC(A). “It is with deep appreciation that we, USACAPOC(A), say farewell to Command Sgt. Major Blosser, today.”

Blosser has been USACAPOC(A)’s Command Sergeant Major since 2010.

“I cannot believe two and a half years have come and gone as fast as it has,” said Blosser. “This is a great unit, and when I came here,



(Top) Command Sgt. Maj. Harry Bennett accepts the noncommissioned officer sword from Maj. Gen. Jeffrey A. Jacobs during the U.S. Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) Change of Responsibility at Fort Bragg, N.C. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Felix R. Fimbres)



(Left) Command Sgt. Maj. Dale R. Blosser passes the noncommissioned officer sword to Maj. Gen. Jeffrey A. Jacobs (U.S. Felix R. Fimbres)

it felt like I was coming home. Some of the greatest memories I have, have been here at CAPOC.”

Bennett has some large boots to fill according to Jacobs.

“I selected him, because I know he can fill them. He has vast experience in both the active duty and reserve components and also in garrison and in combat. Bennett has excelled everywhere he has served.”

Bennett’s motivation is apparent as he assumes responsibility over the command. Bennett said he looks forward to working in his new position at USACAPOC(A).

“The motivation and drive is still in me just as much as when I first came to Fort Bragg. I am looking forward to the challenge of getting the noncommissioned officer corps back to basics. A lot of our training has been mission-focused, and we have let our other NCO skills go to the side. We’re at a point now where we have an opportunity to rebuild ourselves.”

Saying goodbye to a close unit is never easy. Blosser leaves knowing he will miss the camaraderie and the experiences he has had with the soldiers.

“What I will miss the most is watching our soldiers in action,” said Blosser with a proud smile on his face. “I enjoyed watching how they did their jobs and going out and observing their missions. I will miss the soldiers, the camaraderie, and the operations we do here.”

Training as they pray

Chaplains and assistants train to help Soldiers through war and peace.

**By Staff Sgt. April Evaro,
USACAPOC(A) Public Affairs**

Sometimes, it is the small things in combat that can make all the difference to Soldiers. A care package, a letter from home or a prayer group can be what provides the strength for a Soldier's heart and mind during difficult times.

Chaplains and their assistants gathered to prepare religious assessments for the command at the 9th annual U.S. Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) Unit Ministry Team.

Army chaplains and chaplain assistants are trained to be the support that Soldiers need and are a vital tool for the commander to assess a Soldier in a stressful environment.

“This event was designed to better prepare our UMTs in advising our commanders in world religions and to emphasize the impact these religious groups may have to the Commander's operational capabilities,” said Master Sgt. Edward Quantrell, the USACAPOC(A)



Chaplains and their assistants from Headquarters and Headquarters Company U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) gather to prepare religious assessments for the command at the 9th Annual USACAPOC(A) Unit Ministry Team event.



Chaplains and their assistants from Headquarters and Headquarters Company U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) gather to prepare religious assessments for the command at the 9th Annual USACAPOC(A) Unit Ministry Team.

Headquarters and Headquarters Company chaplain's assistant.

With the presence of American Soldiers in foreign countries, it is important for the Soldier to understand the cultural and spiritual aspect of the people they encounter.

It is a chaplain's responsibility to inform the commander and troops of the system of beliefs and practices that give meaning and purpose to the peoples of the host nations. The task of the UMT is to understand and assess these practices while remaining objective.

Once a chaplain deploys into a theater, he does not necessarily stay with the unit or command he deployed with. The theater commander can utilize the chaplain to fill the needs of the theater, which is why the UMT training is so vital.

"This training is important in so many ways; we [command chaplain and his staff] take a look at the Commanding General's yearly training guidance and our Chief of Chaplains training guidance, see what role we play as a UMT in their vision, and then provide the training to our UMTs that will support that," said Quantrell. "Secondly, it provides the much needed face time that we don't get due to geographical restraints which results in better cohesion amongst our UMT members."

Chaplain assistant and former e-commerce project manager for a large retail company, Spc. Stephanie Fast-Peterson, of the 407th Civil Affairs Battalion, used her civilian management, marketing and organization skills to help plan the event.

“My goal is to help the chaplain and senior chaplain assistants this year while I am mobilized,” said Peterson. “In order to help get the word out, organization and a strong presence make all the difference.”

“The UMT program is challenging because not many Soldiers know that we are here. Our Soldier skills need to be up-to-date. I make sure that we walk around and talk to the Soldiers and I make sure the Soldiers see that we are available to them and that we are approachable.”

Capt. Elizabeth A. Le’Clair, chaplain for the 443rd Civil Affairs Battalion, aided in the preparation of the UMT event from the planning stage to completion.

“This [UMT] training gives chaplains and assistants actual products to bring back with them to their units,” said Le’Clair. “I really appreciate the religious area assessments, and understanding what needs the command has and how to fulfill those needs.”

The UMT’s feel they learned the skills necessary to implement programs they can utilize in different situations.



Chaplains and their assistants from Headquarters and Headquarters Company U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) gather to prepare religious assessments for the command at the 9th Annual USACAPOC(A) Unit Ministry Team.

Remembering the fallen

*Two Soldiers memorialized with
Army Reserve's newest facilities*

**Story and photo by Sgt. 1st Class
Andy Yoshimura, USACAPOC(A)
Public Affairs**

The Army Reserve opened its newest facilities in the remote town of Yakima, Wash. The newly built buildings on the Yakima Training Center house more than 400 Soldiers from both the Army National Guard and the Army Reserve. For Victoria Johnson and Loren Clevenger, these are more than just buildings, they are reminders of loved ones that they lost in Iraq.

“This cements the fact that he will not be forgotten for his sacrifices,” said Victoria, who lost her husband, Maj. Alan Johnson, Jan. 26, 2007. He served as a civil affairs officer with the 402nd Civil Affairs Battalion in Iraq. Alan, 44, died from wounds sustained when an improvised explosive device detonated near his Humvee in the town of Muqdadiyah. Johnson served with both the North Dakota National Guard and the Army Reserve and was commissioned after being an enlisted Soldier first.

“He never gave up being a Soldier. He



*Victoria Johnson unveiled the plaque dedicating
the building to her husband.*

would be out there at the wash racks and performing maintenance on vehicles with his Soldiers,” added Victoria.

The Alan R. Johnson Maintenance Facility houses a multiple-bay area for training, maintenance and administrative support. Victoria said that when they were looking for someone to name the facility after, they looked for a Soldier who never gave up and had a win-win attitude. “My husband always gave it 100 percent.”

Located next to the maintenance facility is the Sergeant Ross A. Clevenger Armed Forces Reserve Center named after the combat engineer who lost his life after his route clearing vehicle was hit by an explosive attack in Iraq’s Anbar province just west of Baghdad in February of 2007.

“We always knew that Ross did great things,” said Loren Clevenger, father of Sgt. Clevenger. “He always liked to make people happy.” Clevenger served with the Army Reserve’s 321st Engineer Battalion.

“The courage and bravery he displayed was a credit to his upbringing as a man and a warrior,” stated 1st Sgt. Roy Smith, who was with Clevenger during the attack. “I hope that those who perform duty in this building will take time to know more about Ross who is a son, a brother and a hero. We will never forget his sacrifice.”

Moving these units under one roof not only saves costs but provides the 400 Soldiers and federal employees direct access to state-of-the-art facilities consisting of classrooms, administrative areas, a library, a learning center, a computer lab and storage space.



New Army Reserve facility in Yakima, Wash. This new building located on the training center houses more than 400 Soldiers.

“This new complex also signals a long-term commitment by the U.S. Army Reserve to the city of Yakima and its citizens,” said Brig. Gen. Alton G. Berry, commanding General of the 88th Regional Support Command. Berry feels that this building is the focal point for training and readiness. “Our men

and women will learn the skills to be effective Soldiers in this ever changing environment, where we must adapt quickly to emerging global threats.”

Money, money, money

Finance technicians pay it forward in training exercise

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Amanda Smolinski, USACAPOC(A) Public Affairs



“There are two things that will motivate people: one is time off, and the other is money,” said Sgt. 1st Class Jose Evaro, U.S. Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) Budget noncommissioned officer.

Financial Management Technicians, from USACAPOC(A), attended Diamond Saber, a two-week annual training exercise held at Fort McCoy, Wisc. This was the first year that USACAPOC(A) finance management Soldiers were able to attend the joint exercise hosted by the U.S. Army Reserve Command.

Diamond Saber is the Army’s only multi-echelon, theater specific financial management exercise that provides various mission scenarios based upon current policy and actual downrange experiences in order to enhance deployment readiness. During the exercise, USACAPOC(A) Soldiers acted as a detachment on their own forward operating base, conducting business as a finance office. Each day throughout the two weeks, role players acted as customers in order to operate a fully-functioning cashier, contract vending services, disbursing, and customer service office.

Each Soldier was able to play the role of a customer throughout the exercise in order for the different offices to experience real-world scenarios.

“I played the role of a Soldier with a pay inquiry, saying, ‘Hey, I am having this issue, can you fix it’,” said Spc. Rebecca Maye, assistant budget analyst, USACAPOC(A) G8.

Other scenarios included the exchange of foreign currencies, adding dependents to a military record, pay inquiries, and cashing checks.

“Financial management Soldiers are extremely important to the mission of USACAPOC(A),” explained Lt. Col. Rosetta Pride, USACAPOC(A) comptroller. “Without these Soldiers to pay you, or to pay contractors, everything stops. These Soldiers are critical to the unit.”

“If your money is not right, you will not want to be in the fight,” explained Evaro. “We keep Soldiers happy because we make sure they are paid.

Pride plans to bring the lessons learned back to USACAPOC(A) and implement them into their training schedules during battle assemblies.

“We don’t have many opportunities to act as a fully functioning finance office, so this hands-on training is very important,” said Pride.

Spc. Rebecca Maye participates in the annual Diamond Saber training exercise at Fort McCoy, Wis. Diamond Saber is a theater-specific financial management exercise designed to enhance deployment readiness.





Speaking Egyptian

Story by Staff Sgt. Jacob Boyer, 352nd CACOM Public Affairs

The 2012 Egypt-United States Military Information Exchange, hosted by the 352nd Civil Affairs Command (Airborne), 3rd Army/Army Central Command and the 2nd Psychological Operations Group, focused on support to civil authorities and disaster response. Five members of the Egyptian military, led by

Egyptian Navy Commodore Alaa Eldin Mokhtar Abouzeid, Egypt's deputy chief of civil affairs and psychological operations, attended.

The theater security cooperation effort was an opportunity to strengthen the ties between the two

Egyptian Navy Commodore Alaa Eldin Mokhtar Abouzeid, deputy chief of civil affairs and psychological operations for the Egyptian military.

militaries, said Brig. Gen. Burley, commander of the 352nd CACOM. TSC is an important mission for the CACOM, which is regionally aligned with the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility, he said.

"It's absolutely vital," he said. "As we

complete an era of persistent conflict with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and fighting al-Qaida across four continents, we need to make sure that on the other side of this that we reinforce our relationships with our allies. This week's information exchange is a key part of that strategy."

The week was characterized by briefings on a wide range of topics that evolved into discussions between those involved, said Lt. Col. Bert Robbins, an operations officer with U.S. Army Reserve Central Command Civil-Military Operations.

"It's been a very open discussion," he said. "That was our intent. It's been very clear from the beginning that it really wasn't a class. There are presentations with the intent of generating discussions. We want to know how they do it. They want to know how we do it."

Both militaries brought lessons for each other to those discussions. Burley, who has a background in Military Information Support Operations, said he was surprised by the level at which Egypt's MISO component operates.

"The level of sophistication of Egyptian military information support operations surprised everyone," he said. "Their understanding is extremely sophisticated. The questions they asked showed the breadth of their knowledge and intelligence."

Robbins pointed to a discussion of civil-

military operations centers as an example of the discussions that were generated.

“We just had a briefing on Civil Military Operations Centers: how we bring the military and civilian components together to answer a humanitarian need,” he said. “We had probably 20 minutes of discussion after the presentation. The Egyptians were comfortable enough to open up and they were able and willing to discuss their perspectives.”

In addition to a variety of CA and MISO topics, the Egyptian delegation traveled to the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the U.S. Army Research Institute to discuss civil support with the agencies that would direct those missions. Abouzeid said his delegation got important information from those briefings.

“I believe those types of organizations are supporting elements for CA and psychological operations people,” he said. “It’s important to know how they work, who they work for and what they need when they connect to the military. How are we going to coordinate our work in the future? Are there opportunities for us to help them or them to help us in our work? They are the most famous organizations in the U.S. concerning crisis management and dealing with whatever conflicts there are. This is important to us.”

Egyptian Army Lt. Col. Essam Abdalla Sayed Ahmed Abdelfattah asks a question during a briefing at the U.S. Army Research Institute during the 2012 Egypt-United States Military Information Exchange at Fort Belvoir, Va. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jacob Boyer)



Both the 352nd CACOM and the 2nd POG are U.S. Army Reserve units. Abouzeid said that while Egypt handles its reserve elements differently from the U.S., he saw value to the way the Army Reserve does business.

“I see two things,” he said. “You keep your civilian jobs. This is a good thing. You also give soldiers time to take care of things with their families. We don’t have that kind of thing in Egypt. The reserve is full time. The only difference is the amount of time they serve in the

military. Egyptian reservists work every day. I believe the reserve system in the U.S. is very good.”

Burley said the reservists who attended the event impressed his Egyptian counterparts.

“I think one of the things that may have surprised them a little was the knowledge and sophistication of our reserve soldiers. Their civilian expertise often comes into play in demonstrating their military skills. A great example was some of our

MISO soldiers who bring marketing and sales skills to use in psychological operations or MISO.”

The exchange, supported by U.S. Army Central Command, the 352nd Civil Affairs Command and the 2nd Psychological Operations Group, brought together civil affairs and military information support operations personnel from the two nations to discuss civil support and disaster response.

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