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3rd Brigade Combat Team

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WELCOME HOME!

American and Canadian Paratroopers conduct Joint Operations Access Exercise as a coalition force

Story by [Sgt. Joseph Guenther](#)

FORT BRAGG, N.C. – A signature element of the war on terrorism that many Americans and citizens around the world are familiar with what has been the United States working hand-in-hand with our allies in the U.N. to build a coalition force. This unity allows multiple nations to bring together both manpower and a variety of ideas to the battlefield, creating an edge against terrorists and hostile nations.

The leadership of the 82nd Airborne Division and its 3rd Brigade Combat Team recognize the value of this type of international team building, and are going to great lengths to train their own Paratroopers in this concept by deeply integrating Paratroopers of Company M, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Royal Canadian Regiment, located at Canadian Forces Base Petawawa, in Ontario.

More than 140 Canadian troopers have been tightly involved in every facet of Paratrooper life in the 82nd Airborne from physical training, to Basic Airborne Refresher training, to the Joint Operations Access Exercise (JOAX) on Feb. 12, 2012.

“The purpose of the JOAX is to exercise our ability as a joint force to seize and establish a lodgment for U.S. operations,” said Lt. Col. David Gardner, the commander of 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team.



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Andy Kin

U.S. Army Soldiers assigned to the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Pope Field, Fort Bragg, N.C., and members of the 3rd Royal Canadian Regiment, Light Infantry Battalion, Canadian Forces, prepare for a static line jump from a U.S. Air Force Globemaster III aircraft during a in-flight rigging mission while participating in Large Package Week (LPW) Feb. 9, 2012, Pope Field, Fort Bragg, N.C. LPW is an exercise that utilizes several Air Force C-130 Hercules and C-17A Globemaster III aircraft to strategically airdrop troops and cargo.

“We made them a company in the battalion,” said Maj. Jeffery Burroughs, the operations officer for 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment. “The day they showed up, they started attending meetings just as if they were another company.”

“We were treated like family as soon as we got here,” said Maj. Kris Reeves, the commander of Company M, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Royal Canadian Regiment. “We trained with them, the loadmasters here looked at our equipment so they would know how to load it properly, and we went to training

meetings where we were a part of the team. I briefed the commander as if I were another company in the battalion.”

“Some of our guys don’t even want to go back,” Reeves continued.

One element of military life that every leader in the 82nd Airborne Division feels very strongly about is physical training, not only as a force multiplier, but also for its team building elements. Burroughs explained that on a rotational basis, platoons from Company M, 3rd RCR reported to 2-505th companies for

accountability and PT.

They cross-trained in each others styles of leadership and development, giving Paratroopers at every level an opportunity to learn how military operations are conducted on both sides of the border.

The Paratroopers of the 3rd RCR even participated the XVIII Airborne Corps Run on Feb. 2, 2012, as a clear show of deep integration.

Burroughs added that in addition to bringing added manpower to the battlefield, the 3rd RCR brings other added capabilities such as scouts, pathfinders, and joint terminal attack controllers, as well as weapons that the 2-505th doesn't possess such as recoilless rifles.

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“The Canadian participation in JOAX cuts both ways,” said Capt. Raphael Mackenzie, the second in command for Company M. “It gives us an opportunity to participate in airborne exercises at the battalion, brigade, and division level, which is something we can't replicate in Canada.”

The inability to replicate large airborne operations isn't due to a lack of equipment, manpower, or facilities, said Reeves. It's instead due to the structure of the Canadian army. Unlike the

American Army, which has entire battalions who are fully airborne qualified, the Canadians have battalions whose capabilities are mixed based on modes of delivery of manpower and equipment. This mixture usually only requires one airborne company in a battalion, normally called a Parachute Company Group, said Reeves.

In addition to cross-training Paratroopers of the two nations, it gives the 82nd Airborne Division the opportunity to train in the integration of coalition forces for the Global Response Force, said Mackenzie.

The two weeks of integration and planning and training demonstrated its value in the early morning hours during the JOAX Feb. 12, 2012, as Canadian forces parachuted into 3rd BCT's area of operations with their 2-505th counterparts, and assisted in assaulting objectives across the battlefield.

Among those objectives were seizing notional high value targets played by “opposing forces” by other 82nd Paratroopers within hours of the initial assault from villages several miles away, and evacuating other Paratroopers who were playing civilians from a nearby set of buildings representing an embassy.

Due to an early weather decision to delay the JOAX by 24 hours, several aircraft were no longer able to participate, and many of the jumpers were flown onto the area of operations hours later. Despite setbacks, the JOAX was a success due largely to the efforts of every Paratrooper on the ground American and Canadian, said Gardner.

Gardner explained, “They performed outstanding. From the

3RD BCT COMMAND TEAM

COL Carl Alex

SGM Jason Schmidt

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

SGT Joseph Guenther

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COVER PHOTO

Paratroopers with 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team returned here from Afghaistan in the early morning hours of Feb. 19, 2012 at Green Ramp. Emotions ran high as Soldiers were finally with their parents, spouses, and children. (Photo by Sgt. Joseph Guenther)

initial jumper to making the airfield operational, they did an outstanding job.”

“It is no small feat to be able to drop on a drop zone that half of the force had never seen before in the middle of the night and accomplish all their missions that they had not done specifically before on a JOAX, and still have aircraft landing on time with no major issue, that's success. That's outstanding.” Gardner said.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER TRAINING CONTINUES



Photo by Spc. Terrance Payton

Warrant Officer Brian Scheuring, the Accountable Officer at 3rd Brigade Combat Teams Supply Support Activity, gives the brigade executive officers a block of instruction during XO Class. The purpose of this quarters XO Class was to give an overview of the reconciliation process, which keeps track of the purchases made by each unit.

PARATROOPERS OF ONE PANTHER RETURN HOME:



Photo by Sgt. Joseph Guenther



Photo by Sgt. Joseph Guenther

A Paratrooper with 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team embraces his daughter at Green Ramp Feb. 19, 2012 after redeploying from a nine month tour of Afghanistan. Emotions ran high as Soldiers were finally reunited with their parents, spouses, and children.



PANTHER BRIGADE CHANGES OF COMMAND

Photo Illustration by Spc. Terrance Payton



Photo by Spc. Terrance Payton

Above: The Paratroopers of 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion stand in formation at Fort Bragg's Pike Field as they witness the passing of command from Lt. Col. Michael L. Davidson to the new commander Lt. Col. Matthew T. Nilson Feb. 23, 2012.

Left: Lt. Col. Michael L. Davidson, the former commander of 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, passes the battalion colors to Col. Carl A. Alex, the commander of 3rd Brigade Combat Team, symbolizing the end of his time as the battalion's commander. The colors were then passed to Lt. Col. Matthew T. Nilson, the 3rd BSTB incoming commander, symbolizing the beginning of his command of the battalion.

Nilson is a native of Hartford, Mich. He is a 1993 graduate of the United States Military Academy where he received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Mechanical Engineering. After receiving his commission as a second lieutenant, he attended the Infantry Officer Basic Course and Mechanized Infantry Leader's Course at Fort Benning, Ga.

Right: The colors of 5th Squadron, 73rd Airborne Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, are passed from the brigade commander, Col. Alex, to the incoming battalion commander Lt. Col. Scott M. Naumann as part of a change of command ceremony at Pike Field Feb. 23, 2012. Naumann succeeds Lt. Col. Brian K. Flood as the commander of 5-73rd.

Naumann received his commission as an infantry officer from the United States Military Academy in 1996. His first assignment was with the 3rd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division as a rifle platoon leader, company executive officer, and finally S3 Air officer. In 1999, he was assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 82nd Airborne Division and served as the Aide-de-Camp to the Deputy Commanding General for Operations.



Photo by 2nd Lt. Allison Shok



Photo by 2nd Lt. Allison Shok

COL ALEX'S FINAL 3RD BCT RUN



Photo by Sgt. Joseph Guenther

Above: Col. Carl A. Alex, 3rd Brigade Combat Team commander and legendary runner, leads his formation down Fort Bragg's Ardennes street as part of a six mile run for the last time in the early morning hours of Feb. 24, 2012. Alex will relenquish command of the brigade in a change of command ceremony at Pike Field March 1, 2012.



Photo by Sgt. Joseph Guenther



Photo by Spc. Terrance Payton



Photo by Spc. Terrance Payton

COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR

Above: Sgt. Maj. Jason Schmidt, the former operations sergeant major outgoing acting command sergeant major of 3rd Brigade Combat Team is joined by his family in the "N+2" conference room at Ridgeway Hall as he is appointed to Command Sergeant Major before his permanent change of station for Fort Bliss, Texas.



Photo by Spc. Terrance Payton