



Peacemaker

The official magazine of the U.S. Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command (Airborne)

Spring 2012

Fort Bragg continues a holiday tradition

A new way to get Army strong

Trash cans, art, a brighter future

The Army's approach to your overall health

Peacemaker

it's your magazine

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usacapoc-pao@cie.army.mil



First Sgt. Thomas Tanner checks off names while getting accountability of all 1st TB, HHC personnel after a gunman stormed the HHC offices during Operation Lunar Eclipse, a simulated active shooter exercise, on Fort Bragg, N.C., Nov. 18, 2011. Read more at <http://1.usa.gov/1tbshooter>
U.S. Army photo by Spc. Katie Summerhill



Capt. Gloria Ortiz offers aide to Sgt. Rachel Page, while waiting for medics after a gunman stormed 1st TB, HHC offices. Page played the role of a PTSD sufferer during an active shooter exercise on Fort Bragg, N.C., Nov. 18, 2011. Read more at <http://1.usa.gov/1tbshooter>

U.S. Army photo by Spc. Katie Summerhill

Dear Joe,

STOP **CRYING!**
if your **UNIT** isn't in
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Story.

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Or don't,
we'll keep on covering those

units that do. Oh, when you figure it out,
You'll know where to find Us.



CAPOC Public Affairs

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Combat lifesaver course comes to USACAPOC(A)

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CA team gets dirty to help
Afghanistan Agriculture

This page: Soldiers from the 401st Civil Affairs Battalion learn how to use simple objects, like plastic bottles, to keep wheat dry and pest-free during Agricultural Development for Afghanistan Pre-Deployment Training (ADAPT) at California State University on January 26, 2012.

On the cover: Paratroopers prepare to board their aircraft in support of the 14th Annual Randy Oler Memorial Operation Toy Drop, Pope Army Air Field, N.C. Dec. 10. More than 1,500 paratroopers jumped over the course of the day, and more than 4,000 in the largest combined airborne jump in the world.

U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Thaddius Dawkins

U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Felix Fimbres

Commanding General

Maj. Gen. Jeffrey A. Jacobs

In the four months I've been in command, I've visited three of our four CACOM headquarters, units in six of our ten brigade-level commands, and one separate battalion.

Without doubt, our Soldiers are the most committed and professional Army Reserve Soldiers that I have seen in 33 years of service.

Let me share with you a couple of the points I make with our leaders as I travel around the command.

First, our first-line leaders – team sergeants, generally – are the key to our success. As I said in the last issue of Peacemaker, they've got to be leaders 24/7/365. This is

the only way we can train Soldiers to standard and prevent the issues that take too much of our time after the fact: lost equipment, failing to submit DTS travel vouchers, school no-shows, and the list goes on. Our AGRs and MILTECHs, as invaluable as they are, are not substitutes for the chain of command between battle assemblies.

Second, we need to get back to the basics of training and training management:

- Producing battalion and company METLs that reflect careful mission analysis, and identifying supporting collective and individual tasks;
- Developing realistic training plans with meaningful training

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Command Sergeant Major

Command Sgt. Maj. Dale R. Blosser

During the first CAPOC virtual town hall meeting a couple of weeks ago, I highlighted a couple of important changes that our NCOs and Soldiers who want to be NCOs must be aware of. If you didn't get a chance to watch the town hall live, you can see the archive at www.dvidshub.net/units/usacapoc.

The first is a proposed change in the Non-Commissioned Officer Education System. The system will no longer be select, promote, train – but go back to train, select, promote.

The proposed changes to AR 350-1 will require all RC Soldiers to be Professional Military Educationally qualified (PME) PRIOR to being considered for promotion to the next higher grade. The required qualifying levels of PME for RC NCO'S are WLC

to be considered for SGT, ALC for SSG, and SLC to be considered for SFC. Any Soldier who has previously promoted to a grade who does not meet the required PME qualifications as indicated MUST attend NCOES for his or her current grade before being considred for the next grade. Once this change is published, Soldiers will have 36 months to complete ALL levels of NCOES for their current grade. Soldiers who fail to become PME qualified will be considered for REMOVAL from the Army Reserve.

This means that you better get your education squared away before you are in the window for eligibility.

A related topic, is the requirements for Structured Self-Development or SSD – a mandated program that each of you needs to self enroll in now in order to get ahead of

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Peacemaker is produced by the U.S. Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command(Airborne)

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Story on Pg. 28



Spc. Thi Le, a civil affairs specialist with 352nd Civil Affairs Command, calls in a nine-line MEDEVAC during a simulated combat scenario during a Combat Life Saver Course, Dec. 6, 2011. The CLS Course is designed to help Soldiers improve their confidence levels when performing combat life saver skills under stress.

U.S. Army Photo by Pfc. Lalita Guenther



Technically and tactically proficient 310th PSYOP Co. fields new equipment

Story by Maj. David Schwartz
310th Tactical PSYOP Co.

TIFTON, Ga. -- Paratroopers from across the country went down to Georgia to participate in a multi-faceted, joint airborne operation which included U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers, Marines and Airmen on Jan. 8, 2012.

The 310th Psychological Operations Company (Airborne) deployed more than a hundred paratroopers from five states, a newly fielded Product Distribution Satellite (PDS-L), and other supplies from a C-130 Hercules aircraft.

The Product Development Detachment (PDD) from the 310th immediately put the PDS-L into operation at the Tifton Municipal Airport, and began transmitting; simulating a combat operation, said Sgt. 1st Class William Stalnaker, the primary jumpmaster for the mission,

Stalnaker feels that a PSYOP Soldier must be technically and tactically proficient, and this type of training



Spc. Stephan Taylor, a PSYOP specialist and PDS-L operator prepares for satellite communications link as other paratroopers begin rigging for their jump. U.S. Army photo courtesy of 310th PSYOP Co.

operation helps prepare them for the demanding battlefield tasks which are expected of them.

"We were able to gain connectivity right off the drop zone," said Stalnaker. "This system gives us the unique ability to use our reach back capability that PSYOP so critically needs."

Communication is critical to any mission the 310th performs. Staff Sgt. Ian Thigpen, the PDD noncommissioned officer in charge, was responsible for ensuring his PSYOP paratroopers could hit the ground and establish communications using the satellite as soon as possible.

"The PDS-L is easy for any Soldier to put together, and it is definitely something that will increase the tactical PSYOP teams' capabilities," said Thigpen. "This system enhances our ability to communicate what is going on in various populations that are in very remote locations."

Maj. David Schwartz, the commander of the 310th, stated that even with poor atmospheric conditions, the PDS-L worked well.

*Is your unit conducting training that's
PSYOP or CA related?*

*We want to know, email us at
usacapoc-pao@cie.army.mil*



Sgt. 1st Class William Stalnaker spots the drop zone approximately one minute from Tifton Georgia Airport before releasing his door bundle of the new PDS-L system. U.S. Army photo courtesy of 310th PSYOP Co.

PSYOP Expansion: Increased capabilities with unprecedented growth with challenges

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

Editor's note: this is part one of a two part series detailing PSYOP growth in USACAPOC. Part one below details the growth and restructuring of Army Reserve PSYOP forces. Part two will discuss some of the challenges caused by the expansion and the command's future PSYOP plans.

USACAPOC(A)'s PSYOP strength has dramatically increased since 2008, reaching a plateau in 2011 of more than 3,200 37 series Soldiers. This was the result of a major force design update that started in 2004 and came to fruition in 2011, according to Fran Landy, USACAPOC(A) Force Development.

"This unprecedented PSYOP growth started in 2008," said Landy. "We increased more than 1,200 authorizations in four years – almost exclusively tactical in nature."

These new Soldiers were absorbed into existing units and into new structure. "The command went from having 18 PSYOP companies in 2006 to 32," Landy stated. "10 of these were brand new companies, four were conversions." He explained that Enemy Prisoner of War (EPW) and Dissemination battalions and companies were converted to tactical battalions and companies with the exception of one Strategic Dissemination Company, the 306th SDC in Los Alamitos, Calif. which was retained for its capabilities in print and broadcast production.

Most of the growth, however, was in the form of expanding the size of PSYOP companies from 62 to 104 Soldiers and battalions from 48 to 67, according to Landy.

"It (the expansion) corresponded with a significant increase in the tactical PSYOP capabilities," said Lt. Col. Al Armonda, Deputy Commander of 2nd Psychological Operations Group, "and it ensured increased Reserve citizen-soldier representation into cities

and towns within which we have never before resided."

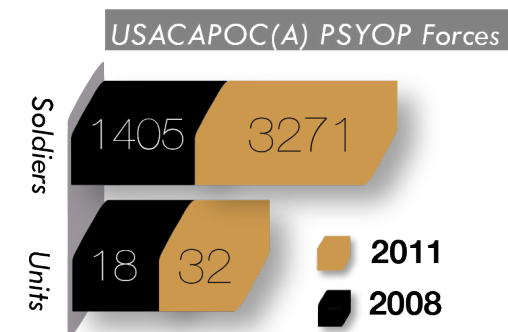
With the increased structure and unit activations, USACAPOC(A) initiated a relocation and realignment plan in 2007 in order to place structure where there was reasonable expectations to recruit qualified Soldiers and better align companies with battalions, brigades and the two groups geographically. Prior to this effort, units of the two groups were mixed.

"The expansion provided ranks of Spc. to Sgt. 1st Class significant opportunities for growth by adding over 100 critical NCO grades," remembers Armonda.

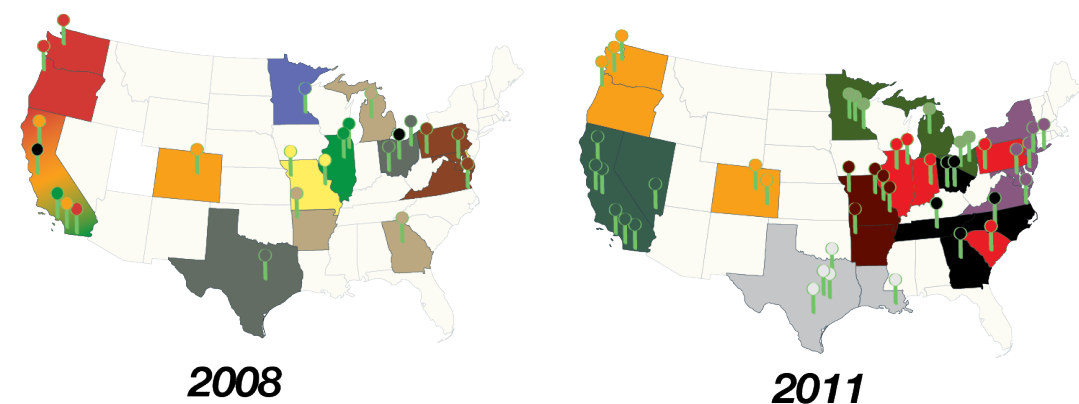
USACAPOC(A) established the 353rd PSYOP

Company in Las Vegas last year and converted three battalions and nine companies. As part of a separate series of actions, the command stood up the 1003d and 1005th Training Companies which contain both Civil Affairs and PYSOP structure. The next PSYOP structure scheduled to come online in the command will be an additional Strategic Dissemination Company sometime in Fiscal Year 2015 and will complete the transformation began in 2008.

"This will ultimately mean that there will be reduced demands on the sole SDC," stated Maj. Sheldon Rhoades, commander of the 306th SDC. "Another SDC will provide each PSYOP Group with those organic assets that are able to produce high quality print, audio, and audio-visual products to support operations worldwide." **Look for Part Two of this article in the next issue of Peacemaker.**



PSYOP unit restructuring



2008

2011

From the CG

Continued from page 4

objectives, reflected in detailed company training schedules, to train those tasks;

- Using the crawl-walk-run method, meaning that you can't train a collective task until all of the supporting individual tasks are trained to standard;
- Conducting company training meetings that focus solely on training and look six months out; and
- Preparing training – tasks, conditions, and standards – two to three months out and executing to standard.

The goal and the end result: trained Soldiers who will accomplish the mission on the battlefield and come home.

I will get out to see the rest of you in the coming months. Until then, keep up the great work. Charlie Mike – continue mission!

From the CSM

Continued from page 4

the power curve. It's online and gives you the training you need for the next level of NCO leadership. There is an article later in this magazine with more information and a link to the SSD Catalog that has all the registration information.

First line leaders – get engaged in mentoring, monitoring, and pushing your Soldiers to get these military education and development courses done, so we can get them promoted and welcome them as tomorrow's first line leaders.

Did you miss the townhall?
<http://bit.ly/capoctownhall>

Watch it on your
smartphone



Training connects Arizona teachers and U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers

Story by 1st Lt. Ray Ragan
351st CACOM PAO

BUCKEYE, Ariz. – In a quiet, empty classroom of an elementary school nestled in the Phoenix suburb of Buckeye, a teacher and four U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers sit down for a conversation on Jan. 20, 2012.

After all students were dismissed for the day, the long hallways echo footsteps of faculty as Soldiers from Charlie Company from the 492nd Civil Affairs Battalion introduce themselves and begin a conversation with 5th grade teacher, Christy N. Sartiano at the West Park Elementary School.

Sartiano quips cheerfully to Spc. Thaddeus D. Gushwa's questions, questions like, "do you have any problems with water or sanitation?"

While the questions may seem odd to ask in a modern school, they are important questions to ask for these Civil Affairs Soldiers. These Soldiers have a unique mission; they help rebuild civil capacity and infrastructure in developing and war-torn areas. Rebuilding civil capacity varies greatly, but frequently it involves helping with access to drinkable water, basic sanitation, self-governance and education.

However, well before the Soldiers came, a tremendous amount of coordination needed to happen first. That coordination started with Master Sgt. Jeffrey J. Rice, operations noncommissioned officer, 492nd Civil Affairs Battalion, based in Buckeye, Ariz.

Rice started coordination with the school's administration to make sure the training would not have an impact on the students or activities at the school.

For the full story and pictures, visit
<http://1.usa.gov/xwQxwM>

Two 443rd Civil Affairs Battalion Soldiers awarded Purple Heart

Story by Maj. Terrence Kelley
3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan—Two Soldiers received the Purple Heart Medal for injuries sustained July 13, 2011 when an enemy explosion rocked Combat Outpost Dash-e-Towp. The ceremony was held November 12, 2012.

Capt. Raphael D. Howard III of Worcester, Mass., and Staff Sgt. Christopher D. Carroll of Abilene, Texas were within 200 ft. of the blast that wounded dozens and demolished several buildings.

Both Soldiers are members of B Company, 443rd Civil Affairs Battalion, a U.S. Army Reserve unit based at Newport Navy Base, R.I. The team coordinates development for Chak district in Wardak province, according to Howard.

Howard was asleep when shattered glass severely wounded his left knee. "I didn't know I was hit until someone told me I was bleeding," Howard was evacuated to a larger base for treatment. As he went in for evaluation, Howard says he was worried about Carroll and another member of the team who had been nearby.

At the time of the blast, Carroll was on the phone with his mother in the base morale center. He suffered a traumatic brain injury and eventually required a week of bed rest. Carroll struggled to react in the aftermath. "The first thing is we got in the bunker. Then we were just trying to maintain security and get people to the medics." It was several hours before he was able to find a phone and tell his mother he was alive."

For the full story and pictures, visit
<http://bit.ly/wX4u3G>

The big Army shrinks, USACAPOC(A) grows east and west

410th Civil Affairs Bn Fort Bliss, Texas

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Siemion
USACAPOC(A) PAO Staff

FORT BLISS, Texas – While the rest of the Army downsizes, USACAPOC(A) continues to grow.

The Army Reserve expanded by one unit and 212 positions with the activation of the 410th Civil Affairs Battalion at Smith Bliss Field, Fort Bliss, Texas, Nov. 20, 2011.

The 410th joins the nearly 12,000 Soldier strong force of USACAPOC(A) after starting with just one Soldier, Capt. Rebecca Brawner. Brawner is now the plans officer for the battalion and was primarily responsible for piecing together the brand new battalion.

"The biggest struggle we had was adding 20 to 30 Soldiers every battle

assembly weekend and having to re-teach the same material to incoming Soldiers each battle assembly," explained Brawner. "Each battle assembly we had to train Soldiers what civil affairs is, what we do, what our mission is, and what your role is in our civil affairs battalion."

Over a ten-month period, the 410th went from one Soldier to 157. Though not at full-strength of 212, Brawner feels that the current number of personnel is a notable accomplishment.

"We went from being a gaggle of 13 people on the first battle assembly weekend to becoming a team," Brawner said. "We went from having a squad size formation, to a platoon, all the way up to the battalion you see here today."

Getting a new battalion to a functioning state is a daunting task, but Command Sgt. Maj. Larry E. Reid, command sergeant major for the 410th, feels it allows a unique opportunity of choice.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Siemion

"With an authorized strength of 212 Soldiers, getting the right Soldiers was one of the first challenges the 410th faced," explained Reid. "But, starting from the ground up allows you to get the right people for the job."

For the full story and pictures, visit
<http://bit.ly/410activation>

437th Civil Affairs Bn. Fort Story, Va.

Story by Staff Sgt. Felix Fimbres
USACAPOC(A) PAO Staff

FORT STORY, Va. – The 437th Civil Affairs Battalion held their activation ceremony at the Chapel Parade Field on Fort Story, Va., January 7, 2012.

As the newest Army civil affairs unit, the 437th started building their

U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Felix Fimbres



strength in June, 2011. The unit was at half-strength at the ceremony with more than 100 Soldiers.

"It is an amazing sight, in an era of drawdown to have a battalion stand up in less than a year," said Brig. Gen. Edward G. Burley. "Just a few months ago, we had three people assigned to this unit, and now we have more than 100 Soldiers standing in formation as part of the Army's newest civil affairs unit."

Burley feels the civilian experience Army Reserve Soldiers bring to the field helped in the civil affairs expansion.

"Commanders in the field have seen the value of the civil affairs force and the skills of its Soldiers, not only with their military skills, but also with the skills they bring from civilian life," said Burley.

As with many other units in USACAPOC(A), each Soldier brings unique skills; but because of the 437th's rare location for an Army unit on a base in the heart of Navy country - Virginia Beach, Va. - this unit will have a special opportunity to learn, grow and expand with its naval civil affairs counterparts.

Sgt. 1st Class John Tyvel, training noncommissioned officer for Alpha Company, is excited the unit's location provides joint training for his Soldiers and has already begun working with the Navy to coordinate training and share learning experiences.

"The training is going great," said Tyvel. "We're getting a lot of [prior-service] Soldiers from the Navy and we're getting new recruits coming in and we're also getting a lot of individual ready reserve Soldiers who are re-classing to civil affairs. There are a lot of moving pieces coming into play, but it is definitely a good and positive training aspect when you get to do this with your Soldiers."

For the full story and pictures, visit
<http://bit.ly/437activates>

For USACAPOC(A) retention or recruiting information, contact
(910) 432-8584

Students from Ecole de Quartier 5 School gather outside to listen to members of Civil Affairs Team 4902, 490th Civil Affairs Battalion, talk about the benefits of picking up trash around their school in Djibouti, Djibouti, December 6.

U.S. Air Force photo by 1st. Lt. Kathleen Atanasoff

Pitching in, one school at a time

Story by 1st Lt. Kathleen Atanasoff
Combined Joint Task Force -
Horn of Africa

DJIBOUTI, Djibouti – A team from the 490th Civil Affairs Battalion put its teaching skills to work, using artwork and colorful flip charts to encourage students to pitch in for their school and community.

Pitch in trash, that is.

The team launched a trash awareness program at Ecole de Quartier 5 School for the students in coordination with Djibouti City officials and the local Djiboutian trash company, OVD. The 490th CA Bn is deployed in support of the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti.

“This is a very good program in this school,” said Ilias Hassan Aden, director of Ecole de Quartier 5 School. “This program helps the environment, first of all, and then it helps [everything] from health, to students, to the teachers.”

Educating the students was the most important part of the program, said Capt. Justin Lev, the civil affairs team’s chief.

“We could have bought the trash cans and given them out that day and the project would’ve failed, because the kids wouldn’t have known what they were and OVD wouldn’t have been there,” Lev said.

Having OVD involved is essential for program sustainment, Lev and Aden explained, as the company is providing garbage bags and removing trash as cans fill up.

The team’s first phase was educating the students about the benefits of keeping their school and community clean with the help of large, colorful flip charts with pictures explaining the

concept of trash pick-up.

“We brought some trash cans with us and some trash bags and we flipped through each one of the charts with the kids,” said Lev. “There was no problem with them recognizing the bad with trash in their school versus having a trash can. We told them, ‘We’re going to come back and we’re going to collect some art you create.’”

The following week, the team returned as promised and collected students’ pictures depicting trash pick-up and clean surroundings. The team flipped through the charts again to reiterate the concept.

“All the kids did fantastic artwork that displayed exactly the mentality that we want the kids to have – that trash on

the ground is bad; picking up trash is good. It was hard to pick a winner,” Lev said.

From the pile of eco-friendly art, the team selected four students’ entries – two from the morning class and two from the afternoon class – for Spc. Tiffany Larriba, a member of the civil affairs team, to paint on four shiny, new trash cans.

“[The art contest] motivated all the students ... One day they heard there would be a little prize for the best drawings and they were very happy to hear about that and were very competitive,” said Aden.

The students had a chance to put their awareness into action when the team returned, this time with four colorful receptacles in tow. Lev and Larriba reviewed the charts one more time and then turned the trash cans to reveal the art contest winners.

“Now they own those trash cans, literally. Their artwork is on the side of it. OVD’s symbol is on the side of it,” Lev said.

“And ownership is what will make all the difference for the program’s future,” he continued.

“If they have that awareness of ‘trash is not good’ – to pollute the community – then it will have a lasting impact,” Lev said.

Planting this seed in youth will make a difference for Djibouti as a whole, said Mahamoud Omar Omir, deputy director of OVD.



Members of Civil Affairs Team 4902, 490th Civil Affairs Battalion, assigned to Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa, wheel new trash cans featuring art by Ecole de Quartier 5 School students’ art to the school in Djibouti, Djibouti, December 6, 2011 as part of a trash awareness program.

Spc. Tiffany Larriba, member of Civil Affairs Team 4902, 490th Civil Affairs Battalion, assigned to Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa, paints a picture originally drawn by an Ecole de Quartier 5 School student on a trash can at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, December 6, 2011.

U.S. Air Force photo by 1st. Lt. Kathleen Atanasoff



“When the kids learn the awareness program at a very young age, they will eventually bring it to their parents, this will help us to keep the city cleaner,” Omir said. “These kids will indirectly help make the city cleaner and they will put the trash in the garbage points that the OVD put in place.”

The plan is for the Community Action Volunteers at Camp Lemonnier to take the torch from the civil affairs team and spread the program to other schools throughout Djibouti.

“We have an additional 20 trash cans,” said Lev. “We’ll continue to spread this. If you take each school that has roughly 300 students – it’s a big impact. Those kids are going to go home to their families and talk to them about what they learned. They’re going to grow into the future of Djibouti – a brighter future of Djibouti.”



For the full story, visit
<http://1.usa.gov/xq8xLW>

Read more stories like this at
www.usacapoc.army.mil/news-archives



U.S. Air Force photo by 1st. Lt. Kathleen Atanasoff

Story by Spc. Katie Summerhill
USACAPOC(A) PAO Staff
Photos by Staff. Sgt. Felix Fimbres
USACAPOC(A) PAO Staff

ARMY PHYSICAL READINESS TRAINING

Resources:

New training standard as of August 2010: TC 3-22.20

Reference: GTA 07-08-003- PRT Exercises

www.armyprt.com (not an official DoD website)

PRT app for smartphones

[facebook.com/armyprt](https://www.facebook.com/armyprt)

YouTube videos of correct execution:

<http://w15d10>

What's next?

APRT in place of APFT: Long jump, rower, push-ups, shuttle sprint, 1.5-mile run

Still being tested

ACRT: tests combat readiness

Events and standards still being tested

Soldier will wear ACU and ACH and carry weapon to complete:

- 400-meter run
- hurdles
- high crawl
- casualty drag
- sprints
- other combat based movements

THE FORWARD LUNGE

THE SINGLE-LEG OVER

THE THIGH STRETCH

THE CROUCH RUN

THE ROWER

The key to the new APRT program is that it is broken down into different categories: preparation and recovery; strength; and endurance and mobility. This breaks down segments and types of work-outs to properly prepare the body for different routines and movements.

Even further, the APRT program is broken down into five phases, starting with training as an initial entry Soldier, to sustaining a level of fitness ready for deployment. Each phase recommends a different level of intensity for Soldiers to prevent injuries from improper training escalation.

When reading TC 3-22.20, a change everyone will notice is the idea around load-bearing work-outs. FM21-20 mainly referred to a fitness program to improve load-bearing capabilities for Soldiers during ruck marches. The new circular focuses around activities which can be done while wearing a full combat load. The goal is to not just prepare for a ruck march with a 40-lb. sack, but to get the body able to move normally with a protective vest, ACH, boots, a weapon and other personal protective equipment.

APRT is taking Soldier training to a new level and giving the Army a more prepared force. With less injuries and more completely trained troops, deploying units will be able to go into combat more comfortably in their gear and more confident in their body's movements.

The next step, which is still being tested, is the Army Physical Readiness Test and the Army Combat Readiness Test. These will replace the current Army Physical Fitness Test and are designed to give commanders a broader spectrum to judge physical readiness of their Soldiers, in both a garrison and combat environment.

Army physical training needed improvements and adjustments.

After more than a decade at war and seeing the level of physical readiness of today's Soldiers, TRADOC reviewed the Army training program and changed it, making it more applicable to today's warrior force.

Army Physical Readiness Training (APRT) and Training Circular 3-22.20 has replaced APFT and FM 21-20. The changeover took place in August, 2010 Army-wide.

APRT focuses on physical training to prepare for combat, not on training for the Army Physical Fitness Test. Now, Soldiers incorporate movements regularly used downrange, such as crouched running and short distance sprinting, into their daily physical training. The goal is to not only get a Soldier within fitness standards to pass physical tests and weight standards, but to also prepare a Soldier's body to perform in a combat environment without sustaining simple injuries, like pulled muscles or aching backs.

USACAPOC(A) enhances voluntary education program for Soldiers

Story by Staff Sgt. Amanda Smolinski
USACAPOC(A) PAO

It's a common chorus from commanders and 1st Sgts – "Take full advantage of your education benefits."

That all sounds great, but often the unheard refrain is "How?"

In an effort to help, USACAPOC(A) has directed that each company appoint a primary and alternate additional duty education officer or NCO with the intent that at least one of these be a member of the unit's full time staff.

These Soldiers will help educate unit members on education programs and benefits, assist in determining unique training, certification, and continuing education needs of USACAPOC(A) Soldiers, and track measures of effectiveness for the program.

Some soldiers have already been identified and have begun making a difference.

"I hope to instill my passion for lifelong learning in other Soldiers as a means to help them advance their careers through participation in voluntary education opportunities that also compliment their experiences in the Army," said Staff Sgt. Travis Hackney, voluntary education officer and company supply sergeant for the 10th PSYOP Battalion,

Using Tuition Assistance and veteran benefits, Hackney was able to finance and complete an undergraduate certificate in real estate management, a bachelor of arts degree in Spanish, a master of arts in political science, a graduate certificate in transportation and logistics management and is currently pursuing a Doctorate degree in business administration with a focus on transportation and logistics management concurrent with a master of science in general space studies.

Want more information? Contact your unit Education Officer or the Voluntary Education Program administrators at USACAPOC_VEP@cie.army.mil or at 910-643-9626.

Education expenses not covered by tuition assistance, the GI Bill, or other programs are tax deductible up to \$2,500 per year. These may include the costs of a backpack, computer, and books.

A detailed list of education programs specifically targeted to CA, PSYOP, and other specialty branches can be found at www.arsofeducation.com



Hackney and others appointed as education officers will liaise directly with the Voluntary Education Office at USACAPOC(A)'s 1st Training Brigade in order to stay up to date on the development of the program's unique education opportunities.

The VEP has identified and negotiated with institutions in order to maximize credit for specific training already earned, to provide efficient pathways from associate's through bachelors to masters degrees, and tailored programs that enhance PSYOP and Civil Affairs career progression including the popular Security, Stability, and Defense in Complex Operations course at the Naval Postgraduate School.

In addition, education officers will work closely with the command's education specialists to help with the tuition assistance, GI Bill questions, accreditation, entrance exams, GoArmyEd – the Army's education portal – and more.

In addition to Hackney, other Soldiers have received a full college education using several of the available benefits and additional schooling in combination at the partner military and civilian educational institutions such as NPS, Fayetteville Technical Community College and Norwich University.

USACAPOC(A) announced late last year that Kaplan University has agreed to accept all 65 transfer credits from the online or on-campus associates degree at FTCC and offers bachelor's degrees in disciplines to include criminal justice, business, and communications. Norwich University also accepts all 65 transfer credits from FTCC for their bachelor's degree in strategic studies and defense analysis.

Soldiers who have successfully utilized TA or VA benefits are encouraged to contact their chain of command and assume the additional duty of voluntary education officer for their unit in order to assist other Soldiers in creating a roadmap towards their pursuit of higher education.



A rigger prepares a parachute for Operation Toy Drop at Fort Bragg, N.C. on November 29, 2011.

Learn more at <http://1.usa.gov/otd14rig>



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Felix Fimbres



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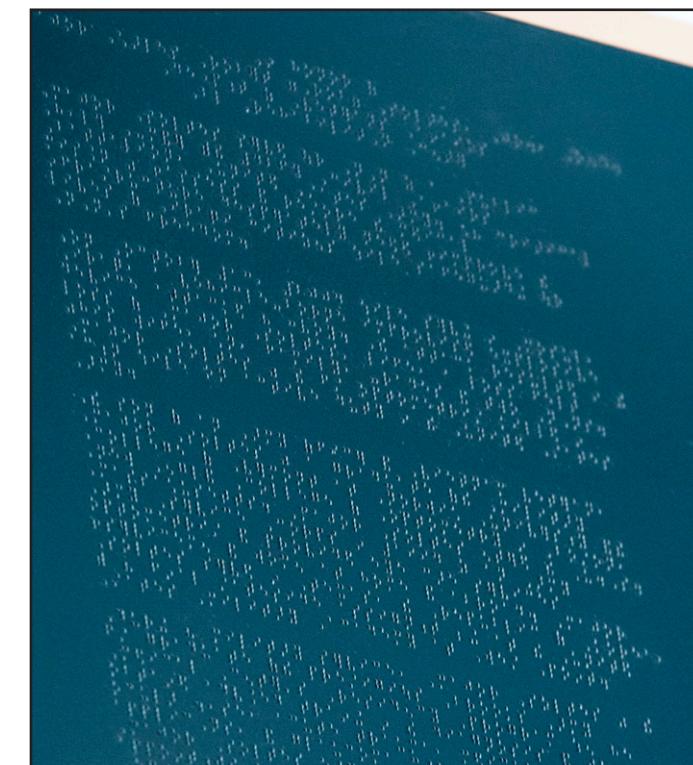
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Get the whole story at <https://www.bit.ly/soltes>



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Felix Fimbres

Toy Drop takes Texas

Story by Staff Sgt. April Evaro
USACAPOC(A) PAO Staff

LACKLAND AIRFORCE BASE, Texas -- The 341st Psychological Operations Company arrived like Santa Claus with Humvees full of toys to the Wilford Fisher House on Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas.

The first Fisher House began in 1991, when Fisher was on a business trip and noticed a sailor who had been sleeping in his car. Fisher asked the man why he was staying in his car and he said he couldn't afford a hotel room so Fisher paid for a room out of his pocket.

"We now have a total of 26 rooms here in San Antonio," said Ramona Lewis, manager of the San Antonio Fisher House. "All Fisher Houses provide a home away from home to care for all the military families; be it either a military member, family member or a spouse receiving care, and all veterans are welcome here."

This was the first year the 341st participated in the Randy Oler Memorial Operation Toy Drop, and they really grabbed hold of the mission.

"I was happy to participate because I wanted to give back to the local community and military families. Toy Drop helps to alleviate some of the stress of the holidays for parents who may not be able to give toys due to an illness, trauma or hardship" said Staff Sgt. Robert Sims of the 341st.

Soldiers jumped out of their Humvees and formed a single file line to unpack and pass out toys to the children anxiously waiting. There were puzzles, games, action figures, dolls and accessories for children ages 10 months to 18 years. As the Soldiers handed each child a toy, they were immediately met with smiles.

"I think this is so great that the Soldiers are giving to the children," said Stephanie Garza, the mother of 10-month-old Ryan Servin. "The children had such huge smiles on their faces. It was such a wonderful thing to be a part of, and it is really appreciated."

The Kids Wish Network, a national charitable organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for children who experience life-altering situations, donated the toys given at the Fisher House. Kids Wish Network approached Operation Toy Drop planners and wanted to donate and ship thousands of toys anywhere in the country in support of the operation. This allowed Operation Toy Drop to expand outside of the Fort Bragg area and include USACAPOC(A) units in eight additional cities.

"This will be the first time (my family) will not be together for Christmas and I am glad to be able to send these toys to them," explained Griselda Martinez, current resident of the Fisher House. "We are here because my baby had open heart surgery two months ago and my other children are with my husband's parents in New Mexico. The kids will be really happy to see these gifts. I want to thank (the Soldiers) for bringing the toys and giving them to the kids," Martinez said.

After the children received their toys, they ran outside and climbed into the Humvee while members of the 341st showed them how to use the turret. While the toys were a big hit, the biggest excitement came from seeing the Soldiers in full gear and being able to experience a small part of the military.

"My favorite part was getting in the Humvee because I've never been in a truck like that before," said Raven Vasquez.

Soldiers also took toys to the St. Pj's Children's Home and The Children's Shelter in the local San Antonio area.

"It was such a wonderful thing to be a part of, and it is really appreciated."

-Stephanie Garza
Mother of 10-month-old Ryan Servin

Toy Drop at a glance



Kids at the Fisher House in San Antonio enjoy HUMVEES and toys, courtesy of the 341st PSYOP BN and Kids Wish Network.



Representatives from Kids Wish Network, a major Toy Drop contributor, take their turn at calling ticket numbers at the lottery.



Soldiers from the 341st PSYOP BN say 'Thank you!' to Kids Wish Network for donating toys.



A paratrooper floats across the morning sky over Sicily Drop Zone.

Operation Toy Drop: 20,000 reasons why it's more than just foreign jumpwings

Story by Staff Sgt. Sharilyn Wells,
Staff Sgt. Felix R. Fimbres
and Spc. Katie Summerhill
USACAPOC(A) PAO Staff

FORT BRAGG, N.C. -- It was apparent, Dec. 9, 2011 at 6 a.m., when the first paratrooper got in line in front of Green Ramp on Pope Field, he wanted the chance to earn a pair of foreign jump wings. More importantly, he had a toy to donate.

Spc. Jermaion Jackson, 2nd Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, joked that it took a week of preparation in order to be the first in line, specifically a lot of push-ups and sit-ups and eating right. But in reality, he woke up really early, armed with a Captain America toy and tank.

"It's bitter sweet because I had a battle buddy who was parked right next to me and he was there since midnight actually and I showed up at 2 a.m. However, I figured instead of staying inside the car and staying warm and toasty, I decided go out and stand in front," said Jackson. "I think (Operation Toy Drop) is a beautiful idea. I like the idea that some kids out there are going to get squared away. I have two kids of my own and we already have our Christmas set up so it's good to do that for someone else."

More than 3,000 paratroopers donated toys ranging from Barbies to bikes

to MP3s players for the chance to jump in the 14th Annual Randy Oler Memorial Operation Toy Drop. The fact that only 300 parachutes were up for lottery didn't stop these Soldiers from ensuring that children across the country had a present under the tree. Those selected would join 3,700 others in the world's largest combined airborne operation.

Operation Toy Drop rolls community service, airborne operations

and international cooperation into one giant event. All toys collected were dispersed to children's homes and social service agencies.

The operation gives the military community the opportunity to help Families in need over the holiday season, and offers Soldiers a holiday treat of their own. Paratroopers who donated an unwrapped toy were entered for the opportunity to participate in airborne operations supervised by a foreign jumpmaster from one of ten countries: Canada, Chile, Germany, Thailand and Poland, Cambodia, Latvia, Ukraine, Uruguay and The Netherlands.

For Spc. James Hall, XVIII Airborne Corps, whose lottery number was called first, Operation Toy Drop was just another way to give back to the community.

"I just remember staring at my ticket trying to remember my number and as soon I heard it, I was stoked. My mom is the one who actually said that if you have you should give to those who don't have," explained Hall. "I was just hoping to get inside and get a slot, and the fact that I got the first slot is just crazy; never thought that would happen."

Hall brought a bicycle, helmet, elbow and knee pads to be donated

"Figured you couldn't ride a bicycle without the PPE (personal protective equipment)."

"Since the beginning (in 1998) we have collected over 56,000 toys, this is a

way for paratroopers to give back to our community," said Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Jacobs, USACAPOC(A) commanding general. "For someone like me who's been in the Army for 32 years and been around the airborne a long time it's always great to be around paratroopers, especially great to be part of an operation like this. Not only do these guys get to jump for fun, they get to give these toys to less fortunate children."

Operation Toy Drop continues to grow as more and more organizations and businesses jump to support the spirit of the event. In 2011, the toy count passed 20,000 due to the support of the local military and civilian community and national organizations like the Kids Wish Network.

Jacobs reflected back on the Soldier who started it all. "I jumped with Sgt. 1st Class Randy Oler way back in the day and I left USACAPOC before Toy Drop came about and it's great to be back," said Jacobs. "He loved doing two things, he loved jumping out of airplanes and loved putting smiles on little kids faces and Toy Drop gave him the opportunity to do both. His vision has grown; these guys and gals out here are doing both things and he would be very proud."

TOY DROP I, 1998

Aircraft: 2

PARTICIPATING UNITS: 2

PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES: 1

PARACHUTES FOR LOTTERY: no lottery

JUMPERS AT LOTTERY: no lottery

TOTAL JUMPERS: about 200

FINAL TOY COUNT: about 200

TOY DROP I4, 2011

Aircraft: 11

PARTICIPATING UNITS: 25

PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES: 11

PARACHUTES FOR LOTTERY: 300

JUMPERS AT LOTTERY: Over 2,000

TOTAL JUMPERS: 5,012

FINAL TOY COUNT: 20,993

USACAPOC(A), Carolina Panthers deliver on Operation Toy Drop

Story by Spc. Katie Summerhill
USACAPOC(A) PAO Staff

CHARLOTTE, N.C. -- As you walk through the main entrance of Levine Children's Hospital in Charlotte, N.C. light surrounds you. The hospital's prism design fills you with an unexpected sense of hope, as the hospital is home to 234 children ranging in age from newborn to 18 years old.

The children of Levine Children's Hospital suffer from serious illnesses including cancer and leukemia, yet were all smiles Dec. 19, 2011.

As part of the 14th Annual Randy Oler Memorial Operation Toy Drop, Levine Children's Hospital was one of many recipients of toys donated by participants of the charitable, airborne operation hosted by USACAPOC(A).

Service members from the Army and Air Force, and players from the Carolina Panthers, took toys and clothes to the hospital, in hopes of raising some holiday cheer.

The Panther players had the day off, but there was no hesitation from players to spend the day with these children.

"We kind of jumped at the opportunity to come out here," said Dan Conner, linebacker for the Carolina Panthers. "It is unbelievable when you see the kids' faces when they come in. You get to see them pick out a toy, meet some of the players and meet some Army guys. As a kid it has to be a great experience. It is something where you can put a smile on kids' faces who are in tough situations."

And those smiles are what keep some of the Soldiers coming back to Operation Toy Drop, year after year.

"This is the side of Toy Drop that very few people get to see," explained Master Sgt. James McCloskey, a retention noncommissioned officer at USACAPOC(A). "It's a special thing for me especially because I spent the first couple years of my life in the children's hospital in Philadelphia. So to come in here and understand the extent of what some of these kids are going through, it's an incredible feeling."

Levine Children's Hospital received a fraction of the 20,000 toys donated to Operation Toy Drop in 2011. The rest were distributed throughout the Carolinas and eight other locations to hospitals, children's homes, orphanages, and families in need.

"It's a special thing for me especially because I spent the first couple years of my life in the children's hospital..."

—Master Sgt. James McCloskey
USACAPOC(A) Retention NCO

For all Operation Toy Drop full stories and pictures, visit the Toy Drop webpage at www.optoydrop.net or the USACAPOC(A) Flickr <http://bit.ly/wAGTLR> or the Operation Toy Drop Facebook <http://on.fb.me/ydFkUN>

Toys are sorted in the USACAPOC(A) warehouse until it's their turn to find an owner and are delivered.

Scenes from Operation Toy Drop

Delivery to Levine Children's Hospital with the Carolina Panthers and NC ANG.

More than 3,000 paratroopers wait to hear their number called during the lottery.

Good to go, Jumpmaster!

Delivery to Levine Children's Hospital with the Carolina Panthers.

Toy Trot on runway at Pope Field, an Air Force tradition.

A paratrooper gets pinned with the crowd favorite Thai wings.

Parachutes fill the air over Sicily Drop Zone.

The Carolina Panthers' mascot keeps paratroopers' spirits up while they await their Toy Drop fate.

GERMAN ARMED FORCES MILITARY PROFICIENCY BADGE FORT BRAGG, NC DEC. 7-9, 2011



Sgt. 1st Class Joao Aguiar attempts the long jump during USACAPOC(A)'s German Armed Forces Military Proficiency Badge qualification event at Hendrick Stadium. Participants were challenged over a three-day period in physical fitness and marksmanship in hopes of earning either a gold, silver, or bronze badge. The type of badge is determined by the Soldier's weapons qualification and ruck-march time and distance required for their age group. U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Sharilyn Wells



The first day included track and field events like a 100-meter sprint, shot put, long and high jump, bench press, and others. The GAFB was part of USACAPOC(A)'s 14th Annual Randy Oler Memorial Operation Toy Drop, so participants donated a new, unwrapped toy. U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Sharilyn Wells



Find more pictures at
bit.ly/otdgafb



Participants of the German Armed Forces Military Proficiency Badge qualification event tested their marksmanship on the second day at Fort Bragg's Range 29. U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Sharilyn Wells

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RESILIENCY: THE ABILITY TO RECOVER READILY FROM ILLNESS, DEPRESSION, ADVERSITY OR THE LIKE; BOUYANCY

Let's talk about how you feel

Story by Spc. Katie Summerhill
USACAPOC(A) PAO Staff

When was the last time you or a fellow soldier just sat down and had a good cry? Or even just had a candid conversation about how you feel and why you feel that way?

Probably not recently, as the typical response to emotions in the military include “suck it up” and “drive on” – which may work in the short term, but leaves the underlying issues unresolved and even unnoticed.

Well, all of that is about to change.

Comprehensive Soldier Fitness is a program that covers all aspects of a Soldier's health: spiritual, physical, family, social – and yes, even emotional. These five dimensions of strength come together to complete a person and their health.

Too often, Soldiers ignore one or more of these dimensions because of stigma, stress, separation, or a variety of other reasons. But, with CSF, not only can a Soldier find out which area they need help in, they can figure out why, and get the help they need to build resiliency, which is the main theme of CSF.

“This is not a program to fix you,” said Col. Roger Cotton, USACAPOC(A)'s G1, and lead CSF master resiliency trainer for the command. “This is designed to help everyone improve to their max potential.”

Not every Soldier is broken and not every Soldier is facing issues right now. But, a fact of life is that at some point, for some reason, every person will experience stress, frustration and disruption to their life in one form or another. The purpose of CSF is not just to help identify current or past issues, but to also prepare Soldiers for the future.

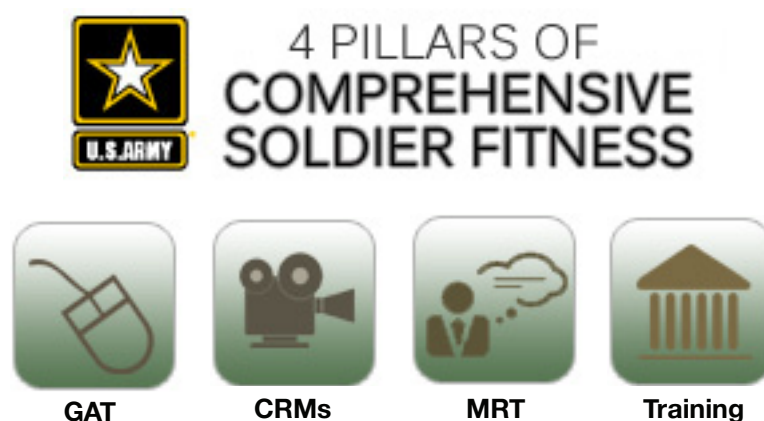
“The reality is we are all going to face stress in life,”

explained Cotton. “It can be a crumbling marriage, it can be a child that's going in the wrong direction, it can be career challenges, or it can be just a bad day at work. This helps equip all of us to better deal with stressors.”

The unique part about CSF is that while it is Comprehensive SOLDIER Fitness, the Army recognizes stress and the need for resiliency is not just with the Soldier. Families and Army civilians experience much of the same need for guidance, help and knowledge.

For this reason, CSF is not just for Soldiers, but really for anyone working for, with or alongside the Army.

CSF is broken down into four pillars: the Global Assessment Tool (GAT), Comprehensive Resilience Modules (CRMs), Master Resiliency Trainer (MRT), and Institutional Training.



The GAT is the first step for everyone, plus it is required for Soldiers to take annually. This is an online survey tool that helps assess the five dimensions of health. It is online and consists of 105 questions. At the end of the survey, users see their strength in each dimension, making it quick and easy to find out where they need some work and growth. The important thing to know about these results is that no one but you sees them, said Cotton.

“There's a fear at times that if I'm very candid and honest, my chain of command will know that I've got some challenges and they might immediately send me to the hospital, or send someone to see me,” he explained. “The only thing the chain of command can see is whether or not young specialist Cotton completed it [the GAT] or not. That's it. It's a self-assessment tool.”

Once a person takes the GAT and sees where they stand in each dimension, they get the option of taking Comprehensive Resilience Modules. Here, training in the form of visual and audio aids provides skills training, tips, and advice to help strengthen areas of weakness.

The third pillar of CSF is the Master Resiliency Trainer (MRT). Soldiers go through a 10-day high-paced, intense course at two locations: the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia or Victory University on Fort Jackson, S.C. During those ten days, Soldiers learn skills to deal with stress and problem-solving within the CSF framework. MRTs also learn how to coach other Soldiers to instill resiliency. After graduation, Soldiers have an additional skill identifier of 8R and are ready to help Soldiers build themselves in the five dimensions of health. Cotton found that he was able to relate his MRT training to not only his Army life, but his home life as well.

“A situation where I thought I was being a good dad, I

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was looking at my son's grades for his school online, and he was a bit offended. It ended up being a family conflict, and I didn't understand what was going on,” told Cotton. “As I took the time to talk to him later, I realized he was kind of upset that I wasn't looking with him, that I was looking on my own. He wanted to participate if I was looking at his grades. I wasn't really sensitive to that.”

Cotton pointed out one skill in particular taught at the MRT course. ATC: event Activation, Thoughts and Consequences. This is breaking down the specific reactions and thoughts that triggered a response. Cotton explained that by figuring out the thought that comes between the event and the response, or consequence, you manage to slow down and think about the actual situation. This helps to take control of your emotions, and realize you are responsible for your reactions.

The MRT's training and experience plays an important part in the final pillar of CSF, institutional training.

Once MRTs return to their units, they serve as advisors to unit commanders on what they learned at school and how to implement CSF training. This training is as simple as providing classes at the unit level, or going to an NCOES or OES and learning CSF skills there that reinforce what is taught at the unit level.

Cotton stressed that this is not a response to PTSD or other deployment related issues. CSF is just as much a proactive program as it is reactive.

“Reality is there will always be some kind of pressure beyond war,” said Cotton. “We prepare for war, but that is not the sum of life. Life is more than that; everyone has issues, challenges and stressors every, single day.

“Not only do you need resiliency so you can deal with those challenges, but in order for you to become a better leader.” Cotton explains it further, “even though you're not having issues, your troops might be. The person in the cubicle next you might be. This helps you understand other people, not just yourself, so you become a better leader through learning this.”

WEBSITES FOR INFORMATION:

www.milsuite.mil (CAC login required)

<http://on.fb.me/xSiPU>

www.csf.army.mil

Female Engagement Team helps uncover hardships facing rural Afghan women



Sgt. Kirstin Goehler, female engagement team noncommissioned officer in charge, Nangarhar PRT, (432nd CA Bn, Green Bay, Wisc.) holds an Afghan child after a female shura.
U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Jeff M. Nagan

By 1st Lt. Jeff M. Nagan
Regional Command-East
Public Affairs

In a rural village in southern Nangarhar Province, a teenage Afghan mother, weathered and weary beyond her years, cradles her nursing infant daughter, ignorant of the hardships her mother has had to endure. Looking down at her daughter's fragile form, the mother can only hope to somehow defy the odds and give her child the life she so desperately deserves.

The young mother was one of more than 150 women who attended an all-female shura, in Shinwar District,

“We here the men’s opinions, but we also needed to see the woman’s perspective.”

—Maj. Patricia Poindexter
Nangarhar PRT Female Engagement team leader

Dec. 4, 2011 which was hosted by the Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team, Agribusiness Development Team, and the individual district support team's female engagement team.

“There is often a disconnect between the government and those living in rural villages,” said U.S. Army Maj. Patricia Poindexter, Nangarhar PRT female engagement team leader.

“We weren’t sure we were getting a clear picture. We hear men’s opinions, but we also needed to see the woman’s perspective.”

During each shura, the team discussed with the women a variety of topics, including violence against women, women’s rights, female education, security and health care, said Poindexter, who is from Las Vegas. The

shuras offer an open forum for women to talk about their concerns with other women.

“One of the elder women in Rodat District called us the day after thanking us,” said Poindexter, who is a deployed U.S. Army reserve Soldier with the 405th Civil Affairs Battalion, Pleasant Grove, Utah. “She invited us back for a meal. She said she was thankful for the work we are doing trying to help women in Afghanistan.”

In order to fully understand the problems facing women, the team developed a multipage survey, which was handed out during the shuras. The results were then compiled to create several graphs, granting military leaders a snapshot of key women’s issues in Nangarhar.

“We wanted a systematic, quantitative approach to collecting information from women in each district,” said Poindexter. “This can only be achieved by using the same questions.”

Through the surveys, the team uncovered several alarming statistics. Despite schools, in three of the four districts the vast majority of women remain uneducated and illiterate.

“Just because there is a school doesn’t mean that it facilitates the education of women,” said Poindexter. “Girls going to school are still illiterate. In Shinwar the literacy rate was 10 percent although many of the girls had a fifth-grade education.”

Trying to determine why such an anomaly exists has proved difficult, said U.S. Army Sgt. Kristin Goehler, female engagement team

noncommissioned officer in charge, with the PRT. The possible reasons include a lack of female attendance in school, low or no emphasis on the value of education or a shortage of female

“We wanted a systematic, quantitative approach to collecting information from women in each district, this can only be achieved by using the same questions.”

—Maj. Patricia Poindexter
Nangarhar PRT Female Engagement team leader

teachers.

“Education plays an important role in our life,” said an 18-year old living in Rodat. “Whenever our education stops, problems will increase.”

Many women cannot continue their education beyond the fifth grade because there is a cultural emphasis on raising children and taking care of the home, said Goehler, who is from Milwaukee. According to the survey, the average age for a woman to marry is 16,

“Education plays an important role in our life, whenever our education stops, problems will increase.”

—18 year old Afghan woman living in Rodat

while bearing the first child at 18.

“In Kuz Kunar the average age for women to marry was 14, while in Shinwar it was only 12-years old,” said Poindexter.

According to the survey, in Mohmand Dara, Kama and Rodat Districts, women marry at around 18-years old. Although Mohmand Dara neighbors Shinwar, the difference is more indicative of the tribe than location, said Goehler. Conversely, despite being adjacent to Kuz Kunar,

Kama is likely influenced by its closer proximity to Jalalabad, the provincial capital and largest population center in Nangarhar.

Despite the hardships uncovered by the survey the women in each district were glad to participate in the shuras, said Goehler, “One of first things we tell the women is that we are there to give them a voice,” said Poindexter. “And the women want their voices heard.”

The information the female engagement team is compiling from each district will be provided to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan officials, which includes the provincial governor, in an effort to promote change, said Poindexter.

“Ultimately, we want to bring about a positive change here in Afghanistan,” said Poindexter. “We won’t see this while we are here, but this is a critical start.”

Although women continue to struggle, most understand the important role they have in developing the future of Afghanistan, said Goehler. Bringing women together only amplifies their voices and strengthens their resolve.

“We want to be self sufficient,” said a 30-year-old teacher living in Rodat. “We must have authority of our own so we can defend our oppressed sisters.”



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USACAPOC(A) answers the cry for help

Story by Pfc. Lalita Guenther
USACAPOC(A) PAO Staff

FORT BRAGG, N.C. -- "Help me! Help me! I'm going to die! Please, help me!"

These words were cried out in simulated agony as a casualty lies on one side of a wooded trail.

The casualty immediately received treatment for severe hemorrhaging and one amputated limb, as Soldiers circled the area to ensure safety and proper medical treatment.

This was all part of a culminating exercise for USACAPOC(A) Soldiers participating in a Combat Life Saver Course, Dec. 3 through Dec. 6, 2011.

"Our goals are to ensure Soldiers are being trained to the current standard based on tactical combat casualty care guidelines," stated Don Heath, a CLS trainer from Tactical Element Incorporated.

"The best way to achieve this goal is by bringing the Soldiers' confidence levels to the same level as the skill sets," Heath said. "When that degree of training and skills are brought together, that is when Soldiers will competently deliver casualty care to either themselves or their battle buddies."

"It is because of this, we have seen a drop in the number of casualties on the battlefield," said Heath.

The course enforced these skill sets by focusing on the three preventable causes of death on the battlefield: bleeding from extremities, recognizing tension pneumothorax (a collapsed lung), and managing the airway of the unconscious Soldier.

"When we focus on those three areas and we bring the skill sets and the confidence level to standard, that

is when we successfully save lives on the battlefield," explained Heath. "My favorite thing about this class is seeing the success of the Soldiers."

Heath and other instructors with Tactical Element Inc. teach the course once every week all over the country, and sometimes in multiple locations at the same time. With approximately 50 instructors and four mobile training teams employed through Tactical Element Inc., it's easy to ensure the education is available to everyone at almost any time.

Each instructor is able to teach up to eight students at a time, explained Heath. This makes it easier to give the Soldiers as much one-on-one time as necessary.

This CLS class hosted several German Armed Forces Military Proficiency Badge participants who were required to take the course in order to qualify for the badge.

"In my six-year active duty career, I only met two people with the award and it was something I had always wanted to do," stated Sgt. Coty Ferguson, a civil affairs specialist with Charlie Company, 422nd Civil Affairs



Spc. Elena Wicks, a parachute rigger with the 824th Quartermaster Company, inserts a nasopharyngeal airway into the nose of Sgt. Coty Ferguson, a civil affairs specialist with Charlie Company, 422nd Civil Affairs Battalion, during the Combat Life Saver Course held on Fort Bragg, N.C., Dec. 6, 2011.

U.S. Army Photo by Pfc. Lalita Guenther

Battalion, in Greensboro, N.C.

Finally getting the chance to compete for the GAFB, Ferguson jumped to meet all of the requirements, including CLS. The class kept Ferguson engaged and alert at all times.

"This is, hands down, the best CLS class I have ever been in," said Ferguson excitedly. "I've done CLS

classes where I have practiced things on dummies before, but we just did this obstacle course event with a Skedco (rescue stretcher), and I have never done anything like that."

"Knowing in theory how to do (the process) is one thing, but actually getting into action and getting hands on with real world scenarios is another," stated Ferguson. "GAFB is mostly physical fitness, so getting out there and doing these obstacle courses really contributes to the physical fitness element of GAFB."

"This is a great opportunity for the German Military to run an exercise with non-airborne personnel or Soldiers who may be off jump status now," said Ferguson. "It presents another element for Soldiers who otherwise would not be able to participate in Operation Toy Drop."

"My favorite thing about this class is seeing the success of the Soldiers."

—Don Heath

CLS Trainer, Tactical Element Inc.

—USACAPOC(A) has a 100% CLS qualification requirement. Make sure your Soldiers are up-to-date on their CLS requirements! Don't be 'that guy'!



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www.usacapoc.army.mil



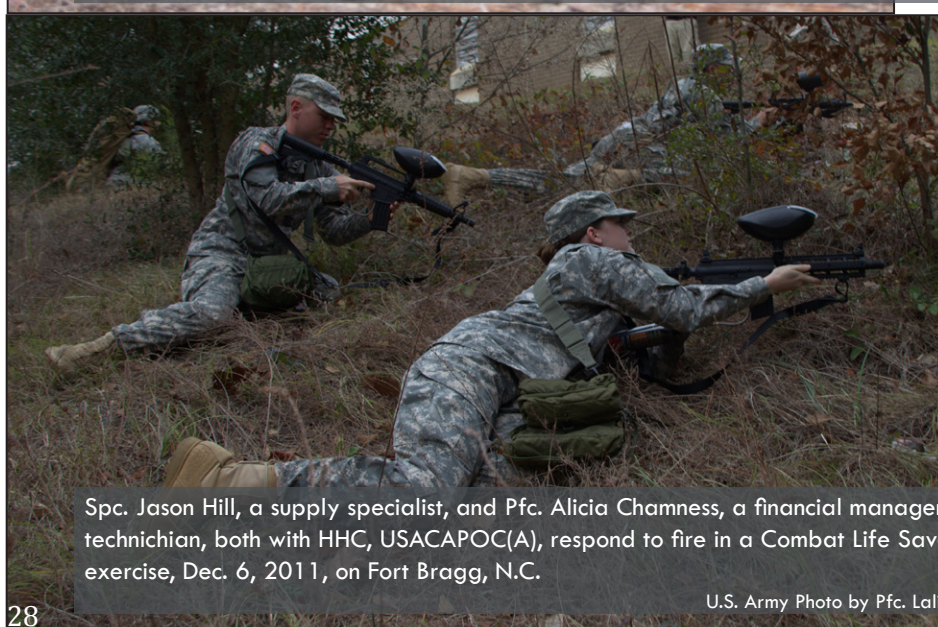
Soldiers evacuate a smokey woodland with a casualty during a simulated combat scenario as part of a Combat Life Saver Course, Dec. 6, 2011, on Fort Bragg, N.C.

U.S. Army Photo by Pfc. Lalita Guenther



Sgt. Christina Schwartz, a mental health specialist with HHC, USACAPOC(A), cries for help during a simulated combat scenario for the Combat Life Saver Course, Dec. 6, 2011, on Fort Bragg, N.C.

U.S. Army Photo by Pfc. Lalita Guenther



Spc. Jason Hill, a supply specialist, and Pfc. Alicia Chamness, a financial management technician, both with HHC, USACAPOC(A), respond to fire in a Combat Life Saver Course exercise, Dec. 6, 2011, on Fort Bragg, N.C.

U.S. Army Photo by Pfc. Lalita Guenther

401st Civil Affairs Battalion gets ADAPT-ed

Story by Staff Sgt. Felix R. Fimbres
USACAPOC(A) PAO Staff

FRESNO, Calif. — In Afghanistan, agriculture is the culture.

Soldiers of the 401st Civil Affairs Battalion, from Rochester, N.Y., hope to solidify their roles as cultural experts with the help of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and some of America's top agricultural universities.

"Civil affairs is there to help them, to work with them, or draw them to resources they may not have had access to," said Capt. Nathan Neuman, from Buffalo, N.Y., who is a civil affairs team leader.

Ryan Brewster, with the USDA's Fragile Market Economies Division, said that about a year ago, Marines returning from Afghanistan came to the USDA and requested standardized training for people working in agriculture in Afghanistan.

That's when the USDA developed ADAPT, or Agricultural Development for Afghanistan Pre-Deployment Training.

The USDA hopes that by developing a unified agricultural solution for the nation where 85-90 percent of its inhabitants are farmers, civil affairs teams can help improve the economy and livelihoods of many Afghans, as well as build trust and confidence in the Afghan government.

The intense training took place at California State University Fresno and was taught by professors who are not only experts in their field, but have practical experience in Afghanistan and many other countries. This iteration of the course brought together the 401st and Marines from the 3rd Marine Civil Affairs Group from Camp Pendleton to learn how to improve the Afghan way of farming.

The instructors are familiar with Afghan farming practices, having seen it first hand, and according to USDA officials that is a key contributing factor to the success of this course. In the past, solutions have been short lived because they were unsustainable.

Hany Khalil, a professor at California Polytechnic with experience in Afghanistan, explained that simple western solutions like water pumps for irrigation seem like an easy fix at face value, but the reality is much different.

"They don't have the spare parts, and when they break down they can't fix them, and then you have all this equipment that we've bought rusting and no one is using them because it wasn't a sustainable solution," said Khalil who has extensive experience in Afghanistan.

Paul Sommers, program manager for the Afghanistan Pre-Deployment Training (ADAPT) at California State University, Fresno, goes over plant identification on Jan. 25, 2012.

U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Felix Fimbres



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Felix Fimbres

Khalil and his colleagues have been working together to create sustainable solutions for Afghans, which are tailored to each region of the country.

"They have to be Afghan solutions, it can't be a U.S. solution," Khalil stressed. "And that's a difficult task to do, because here we know what to do and it's easy to assume everything on the ground is operational. It takes a lot of time to make the right interventions that will be sustainable in the long term."

By examining each region separately with a panel of subject matter experts who have first-hand experience there, identifying sustainable solutions for Afghan farmers becomes an easier proposition.

"Sometimes it's using solar dryers, or introducing a different variety of vegetables or crops," said Khalil.

The instructors call these solutions "easy wins" because they can help the civil affairs teams earn some credibility.

Paul Sommers, the program manager for ADAPT has 35 years of experience in 55 countries, including Afghanistan, and knows that these civil affairs teams will need to earn the trust of the Afghan's before they can even begin to hope to make change.

"Farmers all over the world may not know the latest computer applications, but they know their land, and they can tell right away if you know what you're talking about or not," said Sommers.

The instructors showed the students that something as simple as using a chain link fence with a heavy

chain on top will help till the soil, which will greatly increase the chances of seedlings sprouting, yielding a much larger harvest.

"The Afghan farmers are some of the poorest on earth in an unbelievably difficult farming environment. Finding little changes or tweaking something they already do can have big results for Afghans," added Sommers.

Whatever the specific solution may be, the training

"They have to be Afghan solutions, it can't be a U.S. solution."

*—Hany Khalil
California Polytechnic professor and ADAPT instructor*



Staff Sgt. Destiny Deterville, Soldier with the 401st Civil Affairs Battalion, practices tree planting during Afghanistan Pre-Deployment Training (ADAPT) at California State University, Fresno on Jan. 25, 2012.
U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Felix Fimbres

also emphasized that civil affairs teams don't necessarily have to be agricultural experts like the professors from whom they are learning. A simple introduction to the wide gamut of already available resources will go a long way.

California may seem like an odd choice to host a training program which is focused on Afghan farming, but the number one fruit and vegetable producing state in the U.S. is closer to the war torn country than one might think, agriculturally speaking that is.

Fresno's terrain mimics the Helmand Province area and Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo, simulates the more mountainous eastern regions of

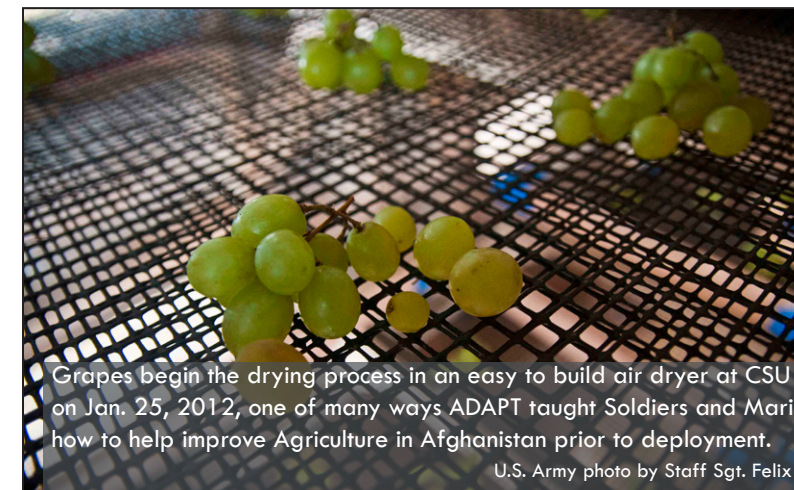
Afghanistan, explained Khalil.

"There are a lot of programs doing what we are doing across the country, but because California really simulates what goes on in Afghanistan, I think we have a huge advantage in terms of showing them the practical components. While the lecture components may be very similar, being able to go out into the field into conditions which are very similar to Afghanistan, I feel, gives us the upper hand in this kind of training," said Khalil.

For more pictures, visit <http://bit.ly/yzl5Yw>

See the video at <http://bit.ly/401adapt>

If you are a civil affairs unit that is interested in attending the course, please contact Ryan Brewster of the USDA at ryan.brewster@fas.USDA.gov



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Felix Fimbres

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