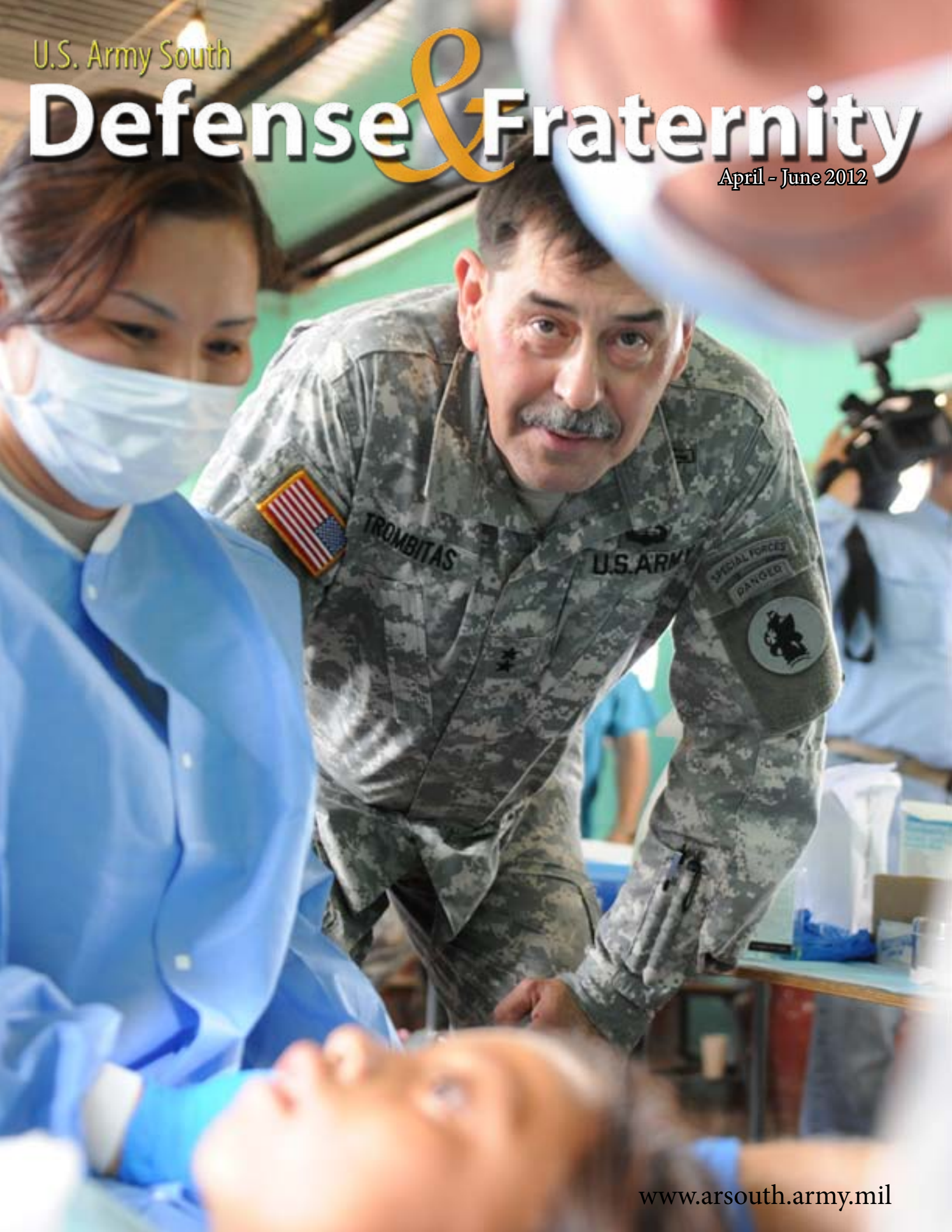


U.S. Army South

Defense & Fraternity

April - June 2012



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Front cover: Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, the U.S. Army South commanding general, looks in on a Guatemalan girl receiving dental treatment during a dental readiness training exercise near Pocola, Guatemala, June 27. (U.S. Army photo by Tamika Exom, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

Back cover: Spc. Julia Smith, a generator mechanic with Army South, adjusts her M-4 rifle June 12 during the 2012 U.S. Army South Best Warrior Competition at Camp Bullis, Texas. (U.S. Army photo by Miguel Negron, U.S. Army South Visual Information)

Command Corner

Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas
Commanding General

A little over a year ago and at my direction, the public affairs office began publishing this magazine to educate the command and the American people about U.S. Army South and the great work we do here every day.

My goal was for the reader to learn about the great things this command has done and is doing in building partner nation capacity, shaping the environment and conducting theater security cooperation.

Based on feedback, this publication has been a huge success in informing the command and our audiences about Army South's achievements.

As all of you know, my time here as your commander is nearing an end. My experiences, here as your commander, have been some of the most rewarding in my 34-year career. Therefore I would like to take a few minutes to thank the men and women of this command who helped make the last three years such a success for Army South.

This command is recognized not only by DoD, the U.S. Army, the U.S. State Department and other government agencies for its outstanding achievements, but our partner nation leaders are all immensely grateful for the great work we've done in the last few years.

I continue to be immensely proud of this command's success and the great work we've achieved in various activities throughout the region.

In the last few years, we've reached new levels of training and operational proficiency that have helped shape the environment in our area of responsibility (AOR), while continuing to be an important strategic asset to the commander of U.S. Southern Command.

I've had the privilege to travel a great deal throughout our AOR and every time I've met with senior civilian and military leaders they have expressed to me how much they are impressed by the professionalism of the men and women that make up Army South.



Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas (left), the U.S. Army South commanding general, speaks with Honduran army officers near San Pedro Sula, Honduras, June 25.

Shortly after I took command, the Army South headquarters successfully conducted a relief in place operation in which we assumed command of Joint Task Force Haiti as a part of Operation Unified Response.

Army South received an Army Superior Unit Award for the successful completion of that mission, we also received the Joint Meritorious Unit Award for our performance as the core of JTF-Haiti.

Following Haiti we continued to be extremely busy and innovative as we successfully planned and led numerous humanitarian exercises.



Exercises such as New Horizons (NH) in Haiti or Beyond the Horizon (BTH) in the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, provided excellent venues for training while providing humanitarian and civic assistance support to rural communities throughout our AOR. Incorporated in BTH/NH were dozens of Medical, Dental and Veterinary Readiness Training Exercises in our AOR resulting in the treatment of more than 200,000 people and tens of thousands of their animals.

Annually we also provide leadership and participate in the largest peacekeeping exercise in this hemisphere - Peacekeeping Operations Americas (PKO-A). Participating annually in PANAMAX, Fuerzas Alidas Humanitarias and Integrated Advance exercises the men and women of Army South provide an opportunity for our partner armies to improve interoperability while conducting complex operations throughout the region.

Today more countries within our AOR have the capacity to respond effectively to natural disasters and humanitarian crises, not only within their borders, but throughout the region, because of our comprehensive exercise program.

Our hard work in developing strong relationships and building partner nation capacity is paying great dividends with countries and armies in our AOR. Operation Martillo is a prime example of this success.

This operation, which began this year, includes dozens of our partner nations in the region working together to counter the threat of transnational criminal organizations.

Our allies and partner nations are also working together to find collaborative solutions to regional issues, such as how to deal with drug trafficking, terrorism and insurgent organizations that threaten the peace, security, trading, human rights and economic prosperity of this hemisphere.

We now have partner nation armies in our AOR who have contributed to efforts in Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and are supporting peacekeeping and security operations worldwide. These same professional armies along with their military and civilian leadership, respect the rule of civilian law, conduct peaceful and democratic transitions of power, obey and enforce human rights and contribute positively



(Left page) Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, the U.S. Army South commanding general, looks out the window during a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter flight. (Left) Trombitas speaks with Roberto Funes Ponce, the Honduran vice minister of defense, prior to a ribbon-cutting ceremony to open a new health clinic in Quimistan, Honduras, June 25. (Bottom) Trombitas thanks a group of ceremonial dancers following a ceremony to open a new health clinic in Quimistan, Honduras, June 25. (All photos by Eric R. Lucero, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

to security and prosperity in this hemisphere.

All of this success has not only made our country safer, but our region more secure, which gives all peace loving nations the opportunity for improved prosperity for their people. As I enter this last phase as your commander and begin the preparation to hand over the reins to my successor in September, Maj. Gen. Frederick S. Rudesheim, I ask that each of you continue to build on our success and work hard to support him, SOUTHCOM and our partner nations.

After serving here as your commander for almost three years, and having had previous tours of duty in our AOR, I'm convinced more than ever of the importance of this command, our mission and the need for our country to maintain an interest in ensuring all nations in this hemisphere, including the U.S., have the capacity to continue to increase their prosperity, while respecting the rule of law, security, personal freedoms and universal human rights.

I thank all of you for your professionalism and hard work. From our deployment to Haiti and re-deployment in 2010, to the planning and support for all of our exercises, subject matter expert engagements, Staff Talks and senior leader visits, I thank all individuals who helped make these events a success for us, the U.S. Army and SOUTHCOM.



Each of you should be proud of the work you do, this command and our important mission.

Kellie, Simeon, and I thank you, the Fort Sam Houston and Joint Base San Antonio community and the people who make up this great city, affectionately called "Military City USA," for the warm hospitality and support. Army South has been our family for three years and we will never forget the great men and women here.

I ask you to continue the hard work and innovation that has propelled this command to the forefront of Army organizations. Work together to continue Army South's long and successful history of conducting operational missions for the SOUTHCOM commander and Army leadership, while simultaneously conducting theater security cooperation, building partner nation capacity and shaping the environment.

God bless each of you, our great Army and this great nation. Army South is Army Strong!

Defense and Fraternity

Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas
Commanding General
U.S. Army South



Brig. Gen. Manuel Ortiz, the U.S. Army South deputy commanding general, waves goodbye to attendees at his retirement ceremony at MacArthur Parade Field May 4. (U.S. Army photo by Eric R. Lucero, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

Army South deputy commander retires, unlaces his boots after 42 years of service

Story by Eric R. Lucero
U.S. Army South Public Affairs

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas – Brig. Gen. Manuel Ortiz Jr., the assistant adjutant general – Army, Texas National Guard and the U.S. Army South deputy commanding general, called an end to more than 42 years of military service during a retirement ceremony at MacArthur Parade Field here May 4.

Ortiz served 10 years as an enlisted service member, followed by 32 years as a commissioned officer.

He received his first company command in September of 1985 with A Company, 2nd Battalion, 142nd Infantry Regiment followed by a tour as the commander of E Company, 2nd Battalion, 142nd Infantry Regiment in Wellington.

His third command began in September of

1989 with D Company, 2nd Battalion, 142nd Infantry Regiment in Lubbock.

After serving in several staff positions at battalion and brigade level, he served as the battalion commander of 3rd Battalion, 141st Infantry Regiment in Weslaco from September of 1997 to October 2000.

In September of 2004, following several brigade-level staff positions, Ortiz became the brigade commander of the 72nd Brigade Combat Team, 36th Infantry Division.

He joined Army South in 2007 and was appointed the deputy commanding general of the command. Also, during much of his time at Army South, he was dual-hatted as the assistant adjutant general – Army, Texas National Guard.

Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, the Army South commanding general, recapped Ortiz's importance

to Army South by playfully describing what he meant to each commander.

"He was the right-hand man for three different generals," said Trombitas. "And in that capacity, he not only did those things that we couldn't do, but quite frankly he did those things we didn't want to do. And I thank you for that," he added motioning toward Ortiz as the crowd laughed.

During his time at Army South, Ortiz traveled throughout the hemisphere to include trips to Argentina, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Nicaragua, Panama and Uruguay.

In Trombitas' absence during Army South's 2010 mission to support the humanitarian and disaster response mission in Haiti, Ortiz remained at the Army South headquarters and ensured that operations in 31 countries and 15 areas of special sovereignty continued seamlessly.

In describing his years with Army South, Ortiz showed the crowd a circular patch with a Spanish galleon on it; Army South's unit patch.

"It's a love story," he stated. "Throughout my

"He embodies all things that make our nation strong and I think as a citizen-Soldier, more so than the rest of us, he embodies our United States Army."

- Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, Army South commanding general

career, this patch kept crossing my path. I first saw it at Fort Benning as a young officer. I would see guys wearing it ... and it would make me think, 'who are these guys?'"

"I then saw it again later in my career in Bolivia and Panama and I didn't know it at the time, but someone was giving me a hint that someday this would be significant to me," Ortiz added. "I'm in love with this patch and to be able to retire with it really means a lot to me."

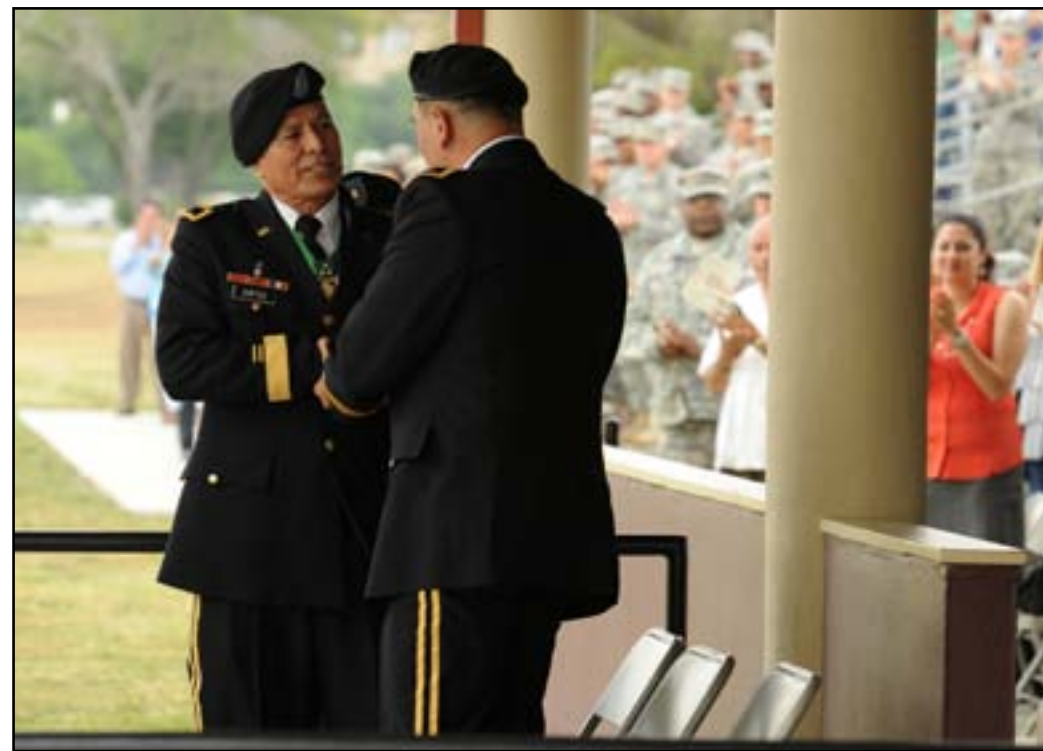
Despite enjoying his retirement ceremony May 4, Ortiz accepted one last mission on behalf of Army South and traveled to Chile as the command's senior representative at the

Peacekeeping Operations-Americas 2012 exercise.

PKO-A is a command-post exercise designed to test participants' abilities to implement and sustain U.N. Security Council peacekeeping standards.

Upon his return May 12, his retirement became official and he unlaced his boots for the final time.

"Manuel Ortiz is a remarkable man, who's had a remarkable career, and has had a remarkable life that will continue after he hangs up his uniform," said Trombitas. "He embodies all things that make our nation strong and I think as a citizen-Soldier, more so than the rest of us, he embodies our United States Army." 🇺🇸



Brig. Gen. Manuel Ortiz, the deputy commanding general of U.S. Army South, shakes hands with Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, the commanding general of Army South, during a retirement ceremony for Ortiz May 4 at MacArthur Parade Field. (U.S. Army photo by Master Sgt. Kevin Doheny, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)



Chilean Minister of Defense Andres Allamand speaks to senior leaders from participating countries during the Peacekeeping Operations-Americas Senior Leaders Seminar in Santiago, Chile, April 30. (U.S. Army photo by Kaye Richey, U.S. Army South Visual Information)

Army South, 15 partner nations complete PKO-Americas 2012

*Story by Robert R. Ramon
U.S. Army South Public Affairs*

SANTIAGO, Chile – Peacekeeping Operations-Americas (PKO-A) 2012 came to a successful conclusion as U.S. Army South, the Chilean army and 14 other partner nations marked the occasion during a closing ceremony here May 11.

“As partners in this hemisphere, we all share common interests and our concerns regarding security are closely aligned,” said Ambassador Alejandro Daniel Wolff, the U.S. Ambassador to Chile. “Natural disasters and humanitarian crises are a real threat, and challenges like these require that we have a committed and common focus. Joint work is key since it provides security and stability that is long lasting.”

Army South, as the Army service component command of U.S. Southern Command, conducts the annual PKO-A exercise in support of U.N. peacekeeping initiatives in Central and South America and the Caribbean.

“I’ve seen firsthand that U.S. Army South is proud to be the co-host of this exercise,” said Wolff. “The fact that Brig. Gen. Manuel Ortiz, who will retire from his 42-year career with this exercise, accomplishing such an important mission, is here

with us today shows the capability and dedication of U.S. Army South.”

PKO-A 2012 was conducted in four phases which took place this year in Chile and the Dominican Republic March 19-May 11. The first phase of PKO-A 2012 was a battalion-level training event conducted March 19-23 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

The second phase was a junior leaders’ training event April 2-6 in Fort Aguayo, Chile, and the third phase was a senior leader staff seminar in Santiago, Chile, April 30-May 2. The final phase was a command post exercise also conducted in Santiago from May 7-11.

Participants had an exceptional opportunity to train together with partner nations which included more than 300 representatives from Chile and the U.S. as well as Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay.

“Having representatives from throughout the region shows how well organized this exercise has been and how useful it is to conduct exercises of this kind,” said Chilean Minister of Defense Andrés Allamand. “When we talk about peacekeeping operations, we’re talking about preserving human

lives, a common desire for all of us.”

PKO-A also included observers and representatives from the U.N., the Conference of American Armies, the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, the Conference of Central American Armed Forces and individual representatives from the countries of Indonesia, Mongolia and Spain.

“The participation of advisors and experts from throughout the world have added a significant meaning to our efforts and together we have improved the preparation of our forces in a way that they can support peacekeeping operations in the future,” said Wolff.

Partnering with military counterparts from around the world was a highlight for many participants.

“Just the fact that we’re bringing together people from (various) nations like this is money in the bank as far as strengthening our partnerships and cooperating,” said Maj. Cris Simon, a U.S. Army officer assigned to the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation. “It’s a phenomenal exercise and you can tell by the participants’ professionalism that each country sends its best and brightest.”

Melding together teams comprised of representatives from throughout the hemisphere comes with inherent challenges. However, each team worked effectively together according to exercise leaders and participants.

“We have different cultures, different languages, different faiths and different personalities, but all the participants have come together and learned to work as an individual team,” said Chilean Col. Jose Urrutia, lead professor at the Chilean Army Staff College and co-director of the PKO-A CPX.

Guatemalan Maj. William Barrios, deputy director of the Central American Peace Operations Training Center in Coban, Guatemala, said the exchange of information and knowledge, especially on a personal level, was important.

“Working on a personal level really helps,” said Barrios who has deployed to peacekeeping operations in the Democratic Republic of Congo

and in Haiti. “While the U.N. doctrine might be common to us all, we each have our own doctrines that may differ. Even small things can create a challenge so we try to find a solution while we’re here. I have noticed a big improvement in our ability to work together since the start of the exercise.”

Barrios’ teammate, Brazilian army Col. Henrique Nolasco, agreed about the effectiveness of working side-by-side with partner nation counterparts.

“It’s very beneficial when we’re able to get together with our partners to do joint work while trying to react to common challenges,” said Nolasco. “Training together gives you more knowledge in order to be more effective at your job.”

The multinational exercise supports the U.S. Department of State’s Global Peace Operations Initiative, which encourages peacekeeping efforts in Central and South America and the Caribbean.

This initiative develops and enhances national training capabilities and equips potential peacekeeping units for deployment.

Col. Michael Stewart, PKO-A CPX co-director, U.S. Army South, said the strengthening of partnerships was palpable, not only during the exercise but during participants’ off-time as well.

“You see people interacting socially at night and in break areas throughout the day,” said Stewart. “There are some countries that historically may not necessarily have the best relations with each other; however, here interacting together on a personal level they are putting politics aside for the common good.”

Ultimately, exercises such as Peacekeeping Operations-Americas help build a strategic framework of relationships with partner nations in the region, while working to further improve interoperability, security and stability.

Wolff said the strengthening of partnerships during PKO-A builds capabilities, which increases stability and security for the region overall.

“Exercises like this offer the opportunity to learn from each other and to become more capable in our tasks to create a safer future for everybody,” said Wolff.



Brig. Gen. Manuel Ortiz, the deputy commanding general of Army South, speaks to the PKO-A 2012 attendees, May 7 in Santiago, Chile. (U.S. Army photo by Robert R. Ramon, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

Best Warrior 2012



(Top left) Staff Sgt. Edward Gribbins, a signals collector/analyst with the 717th Military Intelligence Battalion, conducts a patrol June 14 at Camp Bullis, Texas. (Top right) Sgt. Matthew G. Baker, an internment/resettlement specialist with the 193rd Military Police Company, 525th Military Police Battalion, assembles a .50 caliber machine gun June 14 at Camp Bullis, Texas. (Bottom right) Sgt. Javaris M. Cooper, a signals intelligence analyst with the 401st Military Intelligence Company, 470th Military Intelligence Brigade, provides security while on a patrol June 14 at Camp Bullis, Texas.

(Top left) Spc. Matthew J. Littrell, an internment/resettlement specialist with the 189th Military Police Company, performs a Modern Army Combatives technique June 13 at Camp Bullis, Texas. (Bottom left) Competitors step off at the beginning of the competition's last event, a 12-mile road march, June 14 at Camp Bullis, Texas. (Top right) Cooper adjusts his M-4 rifle June 12 at Camp Bullis, Texas. (All U.S. Army photos by Miguel Negron, U.S. Army South Visual Information)

Week-long competition names Army South's best of the best

Story by Sgt. Tamika Exom
U.S. Army South Public Affairs

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas - Sgt. Javaris M. Cooper, a signals intelligence analyst with the 401st Military Intelligence Company, 470th Military Intelligence Brigade, and Sgt. Matthew G. Baker, an internment/resettlement specialist with the 193rd Military Police Company, 525th Military Police Battalion, were the winners in the U.S. Army South Best Warrior Competition (BWC) held at Camp Bullis, Texas, June 10-16.

The two non-commissioned officers, along with five other Soldiers from U.S. Army South and subordinate units, participated in the BWC in order to determine which Soldier and NCO would represent all

Army South warriors and ultimately Army South during the U.S. Army Forces Command NCO and Soldier of the Year "Best Warrior" competition. Cooper, who was recently promoted to sergeant, won the Best Warrior of the Year in the Soldier category and Baker won Best Warrior of the Year in the NCO category.

The five-day competition included an Army physical fitness test, land navigation exercise, weapons qualification on the M-4 and M-9, various warrior tasks, a written examination, drill and ceremony and face-to-face time with a formal military board consisting of sergeants major from the command.

"These are the best Soldiers from Army South," said Command Sgt. Maj. Gabriel Cervantes, U.S.

Army South command sergeant major. "They are the A-team for Army South. The A-team is more than just an individual who is highly trained and highly skilled, but a team of the best warriors with the proper skills required of our Soldiers," said Cervantes.

"That land navigation course is really hard, especially when you live on an island that's only seven miles long," said Baker, who is currently working in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. "It was challenging and pushed me to my limits. It was fun and I actually learned a lot."

Out of all of the events that took place over the course of the competition, the Soldiers agreed that the land navigation was very challenging.

"That was the toughest land navigation course I've ever done," said Cooper. "Trying to dead recon in those woods was a no go."

Cooper and Baker were both presented with Army Commendation Medals for exceptional performance during the Army South BWC. In addition, they each received a trophy to commemorate their victories, and a commemorative knife to remind them to maintain

cutting edge mastery of their Army warrior skills.

"The Soldiers sitting here in front of you today, volunteered to do this because they wanted to be the best," said Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, the commanding general of U.S. Army South. "They took time to prove the mind set and superiority of the American Soldier, what we stand for and their ability to do their job anywhere, any time."

"The strength of our nation is our Army; the strength of our Army is our Soldiers, and I've seen no better demonstration of that than these Soldiers sitting here today," said Trombitas.

In addition to Cooper and Baker, Sgt. Edward Gribbins, a signals collector/analyst with the 717th Military Intelligence Battalion, Sgt. Gregory M. Lenski, a geospatial engineer with the 512th Engineering Detachment, Spc. Matthew J. Littrell, an internment/resettlement specialist with the 189th Military Police Company, Spc. Christian Lopez, an all wheel vehicle mechanic with the 1-228th Aviation Regiment, and Spc. Julia Smith, a generator mechanic with Army South, also participated in the competition.



Lt. Gen. Guillermo Porcile Arellano (left), the Chilean Military Defense attaché, and Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas (right), the commanding general of U.S. Army South, discuss the the history and mission of Army South at the Army South headquarters April 2.

U.S. Army South strengthens partnership during Chilean visit

*Story and photos by
Sgt. Tamika Exom
U.S. Army South Public Affairs*

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas – The Chilean Military Defense Attaché, Lt. Gen. Guillermo Porcile Arellano, visited U.S. Army South headquarters, Texas Military Forces at Camp Mabry and the city of San Antonio April 1-4 to further strengthen partnerships and to learn more about the command here, its mission and the culture of the area.

Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, the commandin general of Army South hosted the Chilean general and the Secretary of the Chilean Military Mission from the Chilean Embassy in

Washington, D.C., Col. John Griffiths, and they discussed the strong partnership between Chilean forces and U.S. forces and the mutual participation in past and future multinational exercises and operations.

“One of our priorities is building strong relationships, so anytime senior leaders can talk, it’s always good,” said Maj. Lance Awbrey, the executive officer to the Army South commanding general and former Southern Cone desk officer for Army South. “It was a really good opportunity for the Chilean general to understand exactly how Army South operates, what we execute down in South America, more specifically with Chile, and it’s also an opportunity to strengthen our bilateral vision of what we want to accomplish together.”

Army South, being the Army service component command for U.S. Southern Command, has an area of responsibility that encompasses 31 nations and 15 areas of special sovereignty in Central and South America, and the Caribbean, including Chile.

Porcile serves not only as a representative of the Chilean army, but also as a liaison between the Chilean military and the U.S.

“In order to further the relationship between our armies, it is very important for me to know the person who is dealing with the activities and making command decisions,” said Porcile, speaking of Trombitas. “It is very important to me to know the person I’m dealing with face to face.”

The first day started out with briefs by the Chilean foreign liaison officer for Army South, Col. Luis Chamorro, as well as a command brief and tour of Army South’s command center. Porcile was also briefed on Army South’s joint exercises and humanitarian operations conducted in Central and South America such as Peace Keeping Operations-Americas (PKO-A), PANAMAX, Fuerzas Aliadas Humanitarias (FAHUM) and Beyond the Horizon (BTH).

In addition, Army South has held annual bilateral Staff Talks with the Chilean army since 2006 and also conducts Staff Talks with Brazil, Colombia and El Salvador. Army South is a deployable headquarters with a contingency command post and also works with partner nations in its AOR to enhance hemispheric security and stability.

Chamorro, a Chilean army officer, and one of three foreign liaisons who work at Army South, stated that the exercises and operations have a primary focus of providing humanitarian or civic assistance, security and training for forces within the AOR of Army South and SOUTHCOM. In addition to Chamorro, the countries of Brazil and Colombia also have military liaisons working at

“One of our opportunities is building strong relationships, so anytime senior leaders can talk, it’s always good.”

*- Maj. Lance Awbrey,
executive officer to the Army South commanding general
(former Army South Southern Cone desk officer)*

Army South.

With this being Porcile’s first visit to San Antonio, the trip included more than just the standard mission briefs of how Army South operates. Following the tours and briefings at Army South headquarters, Porcile had the opportunity to learn about historic San Antonio through a guided tour of the Alamo as well as a boat ride along the River Walk. Porcile concluded the visit with a helicopter ride to Camp Mabry, located in Austin, where he met with Texas Military Forces.



Jesus A. Campos (left), an Alamo tour guide, explains the layout of the Alamo grounds to Army South staff members, Chilean Col. Luis R. Chamorro, the Chilean foreign liaison officer to Army South, and to Lt. Gen. Guillermo Porcile Arellano, the Chilean Military Defense attaché during a tour of the Alamo April 2.

When Porcile took over as the new military attaché for Chile to the United States in February 2012, he wanted the opportunity to familiarize himself with and gain an understanding of the capacities and capabilities of not only Army South, but also the Texas Military Forces, according to Chamorro.

Texas and Chile entered into a state partnership program in 2009, in which Texas Military Forces and Chilean army forces conduct professional

military exchanges, command and control exercises, consequence management, and emergency preparedness training. Porcile met with representatives from the Texas Military Forces to discuss future opportunities of mutual engagement.

“I was very pleased with my trip to San Antonio,” said Porcile. “I had a great time.” Porcile went on to express his gratitude for the warm reception of the staff at Army South. “This is a good working team that comes together to get the job done.”

Army South concludes staff talks with Brazil

*Story and photos by
Eric R. Lucero
U.S. Army South Public Affairs*

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas – U.S. Army South and a delegation of senior staff officers from the Brazilian army closed out the annual army-to-army staff talks between the two countries by signing the minutes to the meeting during a closing ceremony at the Army South headquarters May 3.

Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, Army South's commanding general, was joined by Maj. Gen. Luiz Guiherme Paul Cruz, the 5th deputy chief of staff of the Brazilian army and the head of the Brazilian delegation, for the week-long staff talks conference.

U.S. Army South conducts annual bilateral staff talks with the Brazilian army to strengthen professional partnerships and increase interaction between armies.

"Through this forum, we'll chart a course for our army-to-army activities and develop a plan that will strengthen our relationship with Brazil and allow us to become more interoperable," said Trombitas.

The U.S. Army has engaged in annual bilateral staff talks with Brazil since 2005. U.S. Army South, as the Army service component command for U.S. Southern Command, conducts staff talks on behalf of the Chief of Staff of the Army.

"The bilateral talks are an important forum to discuss our mutual interests and to share some insights about many subjects," said Cruz. "For us, it is very important to have those opportunities to enhance more and more the close relationships both armies have."

The staff talks have been instrumental in enhancing the interoperability and cooperation between the two armies, which contributes to increased security and stability in the region.

During the week-long conference, the two delegations drafted a list of 11 Agreed to Actions

(ATA) that covered a wide range of professional exchanges designed to improve the working relationship between the two armies.

Some of the ATAs include: enhancing operational readiness, force modernization, enhancing army engineer capabilities, strengthening special operations capabilities, and initiatives in support of national security of partner nations in which the U.S. Army and Brazil will co-host a conference on security cooperation for the Western hemisphere partner nations.

One of the major ATAs that made the list was improving military support to civilian authorities for global events. In addition to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief subject matter expert exchanges, a U.S. delegation will visit Brazil to observe the country's efforts in preparation of the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympics.

"These talks allow our armies to map out a course of training and assistance to each other in the next year," said Trombitas. "In this manner, we gain a greater understanding of each army's capabilities and the challenges we face."

Last year the staff talks were held in Brasilia, Brazil, and both armies have been conducting various events, training, exercises and exchanges together as a result of the agreements made in 2011.

"The U.S. and Brazilian armies have an enduring relationship that dates back as far as World War II, and was strengthened when we worked together during the Haitian earthquake relief in 2010," said Trombitas. "The Brazilian army is a very capable and a highly professional force and these staff talks help strengthen our close relationship."

In addition to Brazil, U.S. Army South conducts staff talks with the armies of Chile, Colombia and El Salvador on behalf of the Chief of Staff of the Army.



Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas (right), the U.S. Army South commanding general, and Brazilian Maj. Gen. Luiz Guiherme Paul Cruz (center), the 5th deputy chief of staff of the Brazilian army, pin a U.S. Army lieutenant colonel rank insignia on Brazilian Lt. Col. Marcos Americo during a promotion ceremony before the staff talks between the Brazilian army and Army South May 1.

Brazilian Maj. Gen. Luiz Guiherme Paul Cruz (right), the 5th deputy chief of staff of the Brazilian army and the head of the Brazilian delegation, presents a momento to mark the end of the staff talks to Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, the U.S. Army South commanding general, May 3 at the Army South headquarters.



Ambassador Alejandro D. Wolff (right), the U.S. Ambassador to Chile, cuts a ribbon with Chilean Rear Adm. Marco Amigo (center), the commander of the Chilean Marine Infantry Corps, to mark the opening of the new Military Operations on Urban Terrain site while Chilean Brig. Gen. Leonardo Martinez (left), the co-director of Peacekeeping Operations-Americas, looks on at Fort Aguayo, Chile, April 4.

Chile, U.S. dedicate MOUT site for peacekeeping training

*Story and photos by
Arwen Consaul
U.S. Army South Public Affairs*

FORT AGUAYO, Chile – More than 80 service members, representing 13 nations, attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the newly constructed Military Operations on Urban Terrain (MOUT) site here.

The MOUT site was a collaboration between the Department of State, U.S. Southern Command, U.S. Army South, and the Chilean armed forces. As part of the Department of State's Global Peace Operations Initiative, the MOUT site serves to help develop and enhance national training capabilities for potential peacekeeping deployments under the U.N.

"Since its inception in 2005, the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) has enabled the training of more than 170,000 peacekeeping members and has facilitated the deployment of 136,000 people from more than 30 countries supporting 19 operations of this nature," said Ambassador Alejandro D. Wolff, the U.S. Ambassador to Chile.

"Today we inaugurate this training center for military operations in urban areas, which aims to provide high quality training for military and law enforcement operations involved in peacekeeping and civil stability. Strengthening the capacity to perform maintenance of peace is a high priority for the United States."

The U.N. currently has 193 member states and

provides security and stability to four continents and more than 15 countries, that are torn by conflict or natural disaster, which create conditions for sustainable peace.

Twelve countries participate in GPOI with more than 4,100 service members deployed throughout South and Central America and the Caribbean.

The MOUT site was inaugurated during the Junior Leaders Training Course, a portion of the annual exercise, Peacekeeping Operations-Americas.

The Junior Leaders Training Course organizers invited more than 80 soldiers from Belize, Brazil, Chile, Canada, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay, to practice U.N. peacekeeping tactics, techniques, and procedures to ensure a shared understanding of U.N. peacekeeping initiatives in South and Central America and the Caribbean.

The MOUT site is a 2,800-square meter training facility, complete with eight buildings, sidewalks, walls and roads, built to simulate the living environment encountered by U.N. peacekeepers during their deployments abroad.

"This is very good training," said El Salvadoran 1st Lt. Rene Benitez, a platoon commander and student during the Junior Leaders Training Course. "I very much like the riot training at the MOUT site."

"The MOUT site gives realistic training. It allows us to show the students that we are not going to war, we are going to protect civilians."

*- Chilean Marine Corps Capt. Claudio Zanetti,
director of the Chilean Joint Center for Peace Operations*

I also enjoyed learning from the other countries on how they conduct U.N. operations, because we all learn it differently, but have to work together."

The MOUT site was the newest addition to the Junior Leaders Training portion of the Peacekeeping



Chilean Marine Corps Capt. Claudio Zanetti (center), the director of the Chilean Joint Center for Peace Operations, explains the details of the new MOUT site to Ambassador Wolff (red hat) April 4 in Fort Aguayo, Chile.

Operations-Americas exercise, a multinational exercise involving four different exercises with 17 nations focusing on interregional peacekeeping tactics, battalion and company level training and the exchange of information between multinational and joint forces.

The attendees at the Junior Leaders Training Course used the MOUT site to facilitate not only peacekeeping tactics, but non-government and interagency tactics as well.

"The biggest take away for the students is the use of force," said Chilean Marine Corps Capt. Claudio Zanetti, the director of the Chilean Joint Center for Peace Operations. "The MOUT site

gives realistic training. It allows us to show the students that we are not going to war, we are going to protect civilians."

The MOUT site was a three-month construction project at a cost of \$460,000 under GPOI. Army South designed the project in cooperation with the GPOI project manager and the Chilean armed forces.

"The facility is important because it demonstrates the

good work that can happen through cooperation," said Wolff. "These skills learned here will allow professional teams to apply their knowledge to the joint operations of security and stability throughout the hemisphere."

U.S. Army and Navy engineers join Guatemalan citizens in preparation for the El Rancho medical clinic ribbon-cutting ceremony June 26 near Coban, Guatemala. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Tamika Exom, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)



Beyond the Horizon Guatemala, Honduras strengthen bonds

*Story by Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service*

EL RANCHO, Guatemala – Celebration filled this tiny mountain town yesterday, as hundreds of residents pulled out all the stops to mark the opening of a new medical clinic and to thank the U.S. service members who built it as part of U.S. Southern Command's Beyond the Horizon 2012 mission.

Women and young children dressed in a rainbow of colors began gathering long before the ceremony, with the local men looking on proudly as they awaited a musical procession toward the balloon- and ribbon-decked clinic. Schoolchildren waved Guatemalan and U.S. flags as they led members of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 23 up a steep hill toward the gleaming blue-and-white structure the Seabees spent the last two and a half months building.

The Seabees -- Navy reservists based at Fort Belvoir, Va. -- are among almost 1,300 Soldiers, airmen and sailors who have brought engineering, construction and health care services to Guatemala and Honduras since Beyond the Horizon kicked off in April.

In Guatemala alone, they collectively built a school and two new medical clinics, including the one here. They also renovated two other schools and a medical clinic.

The troops also sponsored three medical readiness exercises, providing free medical care in three local communities.

Army Maj. Orlando Ortega, SOUTHCOM's lead planner for Beyond the Horizon and its New Horizons sister mission in Peru, called the comprehensive humanitarian civic assistance exercises an opportunity for U.S. service members to receive valuable engineering and medical training while fostering stronger partnerships in the region.



Villagers in the town of Coban, Guatemala, gather to thank U.S. military forces for their efforts in constructing a new medical clinic in the region June 27. U.S. servicemembers from the Army and Navy worked alongside Guatemalan army engineers to complete the clinic. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Tamika Exom, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

The 90-day exercises are SOUTHCOM's largest involving ground troops in its area of responsibility, which includes Central and South America and the Caribbean. Many of the participants have been National Guard Soldiers and airmen who served two to four-week rotations in Guatemala or Honduras.

"These are joint ventures, with all services in the United States and within the host nation participating together and learning from each other," Ortega said.

U.S. Army South is leading the Beyond the Horizon exercises in Honduras and Guatemala, and U.S. Air Forces Southern is leading New Horizons.

With each concrete block laid and each patient treated, the missions help build closer relationships between the United States and its regional partners while demonstrating long-term U.S. commitment, Ortega said.

"This is a win-win situation for everyone. Our troops get training. The host nation forces get training. And in doing so, they leave something very tangible behind," he said. "And the local people

appreciate that. You can see it on their faces, the fact that they know this is going to improve their communities."

Army Lt. Col. John Findley, a Missouri National Guardsman who served as commander of the Partnership of the Americas Cooperation and Collaboration Element overseeing the exercise in Guatemala, said the biggest reward was watching relationships unfold between the U.S. forces and the Guatemalans.

"The thing I really liked was the exchanging of experiences," he said. Guatemalan and U.S. doctors shared expertise as they treated cases that most medical staffs simply don't see in the United States. National Guard engineers, many of whom had focused predominantly on route-clearance operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, got a chance to return to basic engineering skills.

"Our biggest goal is to ensure that the Soldiers, airmen and Seabees got valuable training in their job specialties," Findley said. "But there's also been another huge takeaway: that sense of accomplishment that comes from doing something good for a community and seeing the real benefit of

that work."

Findley said he enjoyed watching the Guatemalan children grow attached to him and his troops. "At first, the kids were scared of us, but now it's all big smiles, high-fives and knuckle bumps," he said.

Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 23 experienced that growing acceptance as they put their skills to work on the 23-by-60-foot, concrete-block medical clinic here. It includes offices and a kitchen, and will serve 30,000 to 40,000 people in six communities.

The Seabees got so excited about the project that they took it the extra mile, also redoing the water and septic system that serves the facility and building a three-stall latrine, benches from scrap wood and a cooking pit, explained Navy Lt. Jeff Dong, the officer in charge.

"You know that you are making a sacrifice of your own time, but when you see how much it will do, it gives you a good, warm feeling," he said. "To be able to do something like this that will make such a difference for so many people is really rewarding."

Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Al Baldassarre, participating in his first humanitarian assistance mission, said he enjoyed watching the growing anticipation among the local residents as the clinic took shape.

While knowing he and his fellow Seabees were making a valuable contribution to the community, Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Jeff Ambrose, lead petty officer for the project, said the experience also underscored his unit's full range of capabilities.

"It reinforced that we actually are a mobile battalion, and that we can pick up and go anywhere and have the capability of doing our job," he said.

As Guatemalan community leaders expressed thanks to the United States and its

"By participating in this project, our Soldiers have gained valuable experiences and opportunities that will be a lasting legacy of our partnership together."

*- Lt. Col. John Findley,
commander of the Partnership of the Americas
Cooperation and Collaboration Element*

military during yesterday's ceremony, Findley said everyone ultimately benefited through the Beyond the Horizon experience.

"By participating in this project, our Soldiers have gained valuable experiences and opportunities that will be a lasting legacy of our partnership together," he told the group.

That sentiment is captured on a plaque affixed outside the front door of the new medical clinic: "This project was possible, thanks to the cooperation of the governments of Guatemala and the United States of America as a symbol of friendship between our countries."

"Beyond the Horizon is just part of the progress we can achieve together" as partners, Findley told yesterday's gathering. "I am confident that, working together, there is nothing we cannot achieve."



Navy Lt. Jeff Dong (left), Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 23, Lt. Col. John Findley (center), BTH Guatemala task force commander, and Julio Romero, San Cristobal, Verapaz mayor, cut a symbolic ribbon during a ceremony at the El Rancho medical clinic near Coban, Guatemala, June 27. (U.S. Army photo by Robert R. Ramon, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

U.S., Honduras end Beyond the Horizon

Closing ceremony puts wraps on annual U.S. Army South humanitarian mission for 2012

*Story by Sgt. Eric R. Lucero
U.S. Army South Public Affairs*

NACO, Honduras – Service members from the U.S. and Honduras joined together June 26 at Forward Operating Base, Naco, Honduras, for the closing ceremony for Beyond the Horizon Honduras 2012.

BTH Honduras 2012 is an Army South-led exercise deploying military engineers and medical professionals to Honduras for training, while providing services to rural communities. BTH is part of U.S. Southern Command's annual humanitarian and civic assistance program.

Working closely with host nation forces and civilian organizations, BTH teams participated in a valuable training opportunity and provided medical, dental and engineering support to the people of Honduras.

Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, the U.S. Army South commanding general, joined Roberto Funes Ponce, the Honduran vice minister of defense, Honduran Gen. Rene Arnoldo Osorio Canales, the Honduran commanding general of the armed forces, and several others to mark the end of the four-and-a-half month long project and to recognize deserving soldiers from both nations' armies.

During BTH Honduras, there was a daily average of approximately 250 U.S. military personnel participating, totaling more than 1,000 overall.

In cooperation with the government of Honduras, medical professionals from the U.S. provided general health care near San Pedro Sula, Honduras, and surrounding towns and villages.

Two new schools and clinics were constructed, as well as one school renovation, while more than 18,509 patients were provided with medical care and veterinarians treated more than 7,000 animals.

The U.S. and Honduran military have a long-standing relationship. Army South, working with SOUTHCOM, other military services and partner



Honduran soldiers salute the colors as the national anthems of the United States and Honduras are played during the closing ceremony for Beyond the Horizon Honduras 2012 June 26 at Forward Operating Base Naco, Honduras. (U.S. Army photo by Master Sgt. Kevin Doheny, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

nations, will continue to build strong partnerships in the region by engaging with allies, building partner nation capacity and providing humanitarian assistance.

"Beyond the Horizon represents a very important chance for every member nation participating to improve their professional capacity," said Ponce. "We hope to continue this relationship for the better of all. What we have is an unconditional alliance where one just has to extend a hand and the other will help."

Maj. Jeffery Lopez, the Army South Central American desk officer, agreed the BTH Honduras offered a valuable opportunity to work side-by-side with the Honduran armed forces.

"This exercise gives our service members the chance to develop professional, working relationships with the Honduran troops," said Lopez. "By developing and fostering those relationships

while providing invaluable aide to the people of Honduras, we will be better equipped to work together in the future."

For Trombitas, the ceremony offered him a chance to view first-hand the accomplishments of the U.S. troops deployed to BTH Honduras. He wasted no time in recognizing their efforts.

"To the members of Task Force Tropic, I want to say, job well done," Trombitas said. "The time you spent away from your families and civilian jobs was for a great cause. You've shown how the Army values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage are put to use in everyday situations."

As of the closing ceremony, the service members of BTH, in cooperation with their host nation partners, completed construction projects on 10 different sites to include building new medical clinics in Centro Salud Flores de Oriente, Honduras, and Centro Salud Quimistan. In addition, BTH service members also constructed two new two-room schools in local villages.

The medical teams that participated in BTH were responsible for conducting two medical



Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas (right), the commanding general of U.S. Army South, watches as two Soldiers assigned to the 912th Dental Company out of Twinsburg, Ohio, work on the teeth of a Honduran man June 25 at Forward Operating Base Naco, Honduras. (U.S. Army photo by Eric R. Lucero, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

readiness exercises (MEDRETE) and one dental readiness exercise (DENTRETE).

In San Juan del Sitio, BTH medical professionals treated more than 5,200 patients in a two-week span. At the San Marcos and Petoa MEDRETE, approximately 6,000 patients were seen in two weeks.

The DENTRETE, being held on FOB Naco, is expected to treat 1,000 Hondurans with minor dental problems to tooth extractions.

Trombitas left BTH impressed with both the work ethic and results displayed by the members of BTH Honduras.

"Their sacrifices have left a lasting impression on the people of Honduras, United States Southern Command and U.S. Army South. They are the best our nation has to offer."

Although the closing ceremony has already concluded, the Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen of BTH Honduras will continue working until early July putting the finishing touches on their construction projects and completing the DENTRETE.



Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, the Army South commanding general shakes hands with a Honduran army officer during the BTH Honduras closing ceremony June 26. (U.S. Army photo by Eric R. Lucero, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)



U.S. Army and Navy engineers dance along with Guatemalan army engineers and local children during a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the El Rancho medical clinic near Coban, Guatemala, June 26. (U.S. Army photo by Robert R. Ramon, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

Trombitas: Beyond the Horizon to have far-reaching impact

Story by Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

COBAN, Guatemala – Wrapping up a 90-day humanitarian and civic assistance mission here in Guatemala, the commander of U.S. Army South said the projects left behind represent hope and opportunity, and a closer partnership that will allow the United States and Guatemala to work together more effectively to address regional challenges.

Army Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas joined Guatemalan President Otto Perez Molina and Roberta Jacobson, U.S. assistant secretary

of state for western hemispheric affairs, during closing ceremonies here yesterday for Beyond the Horizons 2012 that highlighted the contributions of the U.S. and Guatemalan forces and the deep bonds between their two nations.

During the mission, which kicked off in April and will conclude July 7, soldiers, sailors and airmen conducted engineering and medical missions in rural areas of central Guatemala.

Working with their Guatemalan partners and medical personnel from Colombia and Canada, they built a school and two new medical clinics, renovated two other schools and a medical clinic, and provided medical and dental services to an

estimated 25,000 patients and veterinary services to more than 10,000 animals.

The closing ceremony for a second Beyond the Horizon mission, in Honduras, took place June 27. That mission included construction of two new schools and clinics, one school renovation, and medical care for more than 18,500 patients and veterinary care for more than 7,000 animals.

Speaking with American Forces Press Service before yesterday's closing ceremony at Guatemala's U.N. peacekeeper training base, Trombitas made clear the region's importance to the United States. "This is our southern flank," he said.

He emphasized the significance of the Beyond the Horizon clinics and projects, all conducted in very poor areas of the country. "This is an open demonstration that the government cares about them, that our countries are working together to better their lives," he said.

Strong regional governments and militaries are able to work effectively with the United States and other neighboring nations in the event of a natural disaster, he said.

U.S. Army South mobilized troops for the U.S. response to the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, where they worked hand-in-glove throughout the effort with a battalion of military police based at the U.N. peacekeeping school here, as well as the militaries of more than a dozen other regional nations, Trombitas noted.

In recent years, the United States also has worked with its regional partners during responses to floods and volcanoes in Guatemala, as well as earthquakes and storms in Haiti and elsewhere in the

"Education gives an alternative to a 12-year-old who can either pack drugs on his back or learn how to read and write and have a better life."

- Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas,
U.S. Army South commanding general

region.

"Our interoperability allows us to interact and be prepared to tackle these disasters and have a coherent, interoperable humanitarian response to anything that might happen in the region," Trombitas said.

The ability to work together, he said, helps regional partners confront the threat of illegal trafficking through the region. "The narcotics threat is a very real threat," Trombitas said, noting that 80 percent of the drugs that flow into the United States pass through Belize, Guatemala and Honduras.

"Anything we can do to bolster these governments in their fight against drugs helps us. So we work to strengthen the governments in Central and South America to help stop the flow of illegal persons, drugs and persons," he



Capt. Gloria Graham, with the U.S. Army Reserve's 352nd Combat Support Hospital in Mountain View, Calif., instructs Guatemalan children on proper brushing techniques near Pocola, Guatemala Jun. 27. (U.S. Army photo by Robert R. Ramon, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)



Col. Jeff Young (right), and Spec. Kelly Yi, both with the 143rd Medical Detachment from Denver, Colo., provide dental treatment to a local resident near Pocola, Guatemala, Jun. 27. (U.S. Army photo by Robert R. Ramon, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

said. “The more we can do to strengthen these governments and militaries here, the more we do to protect our southern flank.”

Every medical clinic and school built or renovated during Beyond the Horizons 2012 contributes to this effort by giving alternatives to poor residents in these regional countries, Trombitas said.

“Education gives an alternative to a 12-year-old who can either pack drugs on his back or learn how to read and write and have a better life,” he said. “So as we improve the government’s ability to give them better health, better learning, better opportunities, then we also help negate threats to our nation.”

Relationships strengthened through these efforts provide closer partnerships for dealing with other challenges.

Trombitas noted the U.S. partnership forged with El Salvador, and how that country has reciprocated by sending troops to 11 rotations in Iraq and two in Afghanistan.

“That is a byproduct of what we have done for their country,” he said.

Similarly, Colombia, which the United States has helped in its fight against drug traffickers and radical elements intent on overthrowing the government, has become a strong positive influence to other regional militaries, he said.

Colombia now serves as a regional training base to help other nations in their own counterdrug efforts, training Mexican pilots and sending mobile training teams to El Salvador, Panama and Costa Rica.

These initiatives promote the kind of multinational cooperation, which Trombitas called vital to dealing with regional challenges that cross national borders.

“Any solution we come to has to be a regional solution, and we have to all work together to negate the problems that we have with these porous boundaries,” he said.

“The more we work together, the more we ... are able to negate the threat through coordination, through talking to each other and through stopping the flow of illicit drugs, people and arms, not only in one country, but in a regional approach is where we are much more effective.

“And we can share that information between countries that assist us in stopping this illicit activity.”

As U.S. service members wrap up Beyond the Horizon 2012, Trombitas said they’ll take valuable training with them.

Working here along with their Guatemalan, Colombian and Canadian military counterparts, they shared experience and ideas that will benefit future operations, he said.

The mission also gave U.S. troops training in working with different cultures and operating in austere conditions that require flexibility and innovation.

Trombitas noted that simple things can become complex, as during medical readiness training exercises here that required translators to translate Mayan dialects that many of the local people speak into Spanish, then into English.

“Those are the kinds of things that we simply can’t replicate in training in the States,” he said, but that have a huge payoff in lessons learned.

“Small things like that make our Soldiers more flexible and adaptable when it comes to larger problem sets,” he said. “And that is part of what we gain by working in this region as well.”


Trombitas said he’s proud of the soldiers, airmen and sailors who made Beyond the Horizon such a success.

All the planned projects were completed ahead of schedule, a testament not only to their skill, but also their “desire to do good things,” he said.

And when troops finished their assigned tasks, they came up with additional ones – building benches and playgrounds out of leftover materials and even reworking the water and sanitary systems at a medical clinic they built.

These projects, and the medical services delivered during Beyond the Horizon, he said, will leave a lasting legacy for Guatemalans who will remember the U.S. troops who provide them.

“And that impression of the United States will be that [U.S. forces] are here to help,” Trombitas said.

He emphasized the value of the relationships U.S. troops forged with their Guatemalan partners during the exercise. “It’s demonstrative of the professionalism of our Soldiers, sailors and airmen, and their ability to make friends wherever they go in a manner that strengthens our relationship with nations that they serve in,” he said. 



Sgt. Jason Debaker, a Soldier assigned to the 56th Signal Battalion, 21st Signal Brigade, 7th Signal Command, attempts to call a Beyond the Horizon-Guatemala 2012 work site using a satellite phone after radio communications in the mountainous region were interrupted. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Anthony D. Jones, Task Force Arriero/BTH-Guatemala Public Affairs)

Army South's 56th Signal Battalion Soldiers raise communications for BTH-Guatemala 2012

Story by Cpl. Antony S. Lee
Task Force Arriero
BTH-Guatemala Public Affairs

COBAN, Guatemala – Active duty U.S. Army Soldiers have played an important role for Task Force Arriero in support of Beyond the Horizon (BTH) Guatemala 2012, a humanitarian exercise led by the Missouri National Guard.

A team of active duty signal Soldiers from the 56th Signal Battalion, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, provided communications and data services for the task force operations.

"We establish and maintain the data services and communication services, and we have tactical communications," said Staff Sgt. Vinson Hammonds, the non-commissioned officer in charge of the team.

The signal team is running two different sides

at the tactical operations center, Hammonds added.

On one side, the data team has established Internet capabilities and maintained networks.

On the other side, the radio team has maintained readiness as a secondary communication in the case of network failure.

The radio side has also been sending Soldiers out to work sites, where U.S. service members are building clinics and schools, to support communications for emergencies.

"My job here is to make sure the tactical satellite is operational and maintained," said Sgt. Jason Debaker, a senior radio operator maintainer.

Many of the Soldiers have been deployed to Central America before. The 56th Signal Battalion regularly provides communication support for overseas operations run by U.S. Army South.

Every year, they deploy to support operations such as BTH 2012.

"It's a great opportunity to see another country besides Afghanistan or Iraq," Hammonds said, adding that when they are not overseas, they are preparing for it. "When we're back in the United States, we do mission-readiness exercises. We are constantly setting up all of our equipment to make sure it's fully mission capable."

Last year, Hammonds spent four months in Haiti, where he was a part of the radio team.

This is his second time in Guatemala.

"We have had a good experience down here," Hammonds said. "We have a great relationship with the task force."

Debaker, who was in El Salvador on a similar

mission last year, said he has enjoyed his time in Guatemala. He said Guatemala is a "beautiful country" and that he has become good friends with many Guatemalans.

"They've been teaching me Spanish while I teach them English," Debaker said.

Sgt. Javier Rodriguez, an information systems operator, has taken advantage of his first trip to Guatemala and gone out to many of the construction sites.

"It was interesting to see how the kids and the locals reacted to us," he said.

His first time in the country has been smooth because of the task force, he added.

"The chain of command is helpful," Rodriguez said. "They support us which makes our job easier to support them."



A Soldier from the 56th Signal Battalion stands in a color guard with Guatemalan soldiers during the closing ceremony for Beyond the Horizon-Guatemala 2012 in Creompaz, Guatemala, June 28. (U.S. Army photo by Master Sgt. Kevin Doheny, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

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717th MI Battalion course develops junior leaders

*Story and photos by
Gregory Ripps
470th Military Intelligence Brigade Public Affairs*

CAMP BULLIS, Texas —As the sun starts to slip behind the conifer trees on Camp Bullis March 28, eight junior enlisted Soldiers of the 717th Military Intelligence Battalion begin trudging down one of the dusty, winding roads in the middle of Camp Bullis. Normally engaged in a 24/7, global, strategic intelligence mission on the Lackland Air Force Base Annex, today they are equipped with helmets, tactical vests, hydration systems and assault rifles — every bit like a squad ready for combat.

This is their fourth day on the installation and their third full day of training in the 717th Military Intelligence Battalion's week-long Junior Leader Development Course (JLDC). Their days begin early and last well into the evening.

By the third full day of the course they had performed convoy simulator training, completed the Leader reaction course, rehearsed numerous Army Warrior Tasks and Battle Drills, conducted basic and advanced rifle marksmanship and spent time on the firing range engaged in advanced reflexive fire (close-quarters combat) shooting techniques.

All day they executed battle drills and situational training exercises along the very road they now ruck-march along toward the vehicles that will carry them to the cantonment area and hot chow. Another training segment completed ... or so they think.

Just after the lead Soldiers pass over a rise in the road, shots ring out, shouts go up and Soldiers scramble for cover. Basic clock direction and distance is shouted along the line to focus the squad on their attackers. Suppressive fire begins as the current squad leader shouts commands to maneuver his fire teams to engage and defeat the ambush.

One Soldier points out a couple of figures barely visible behind a small island of trees nearby. It turns out to be two of the five-member, all-

noncommissioned officer training cadre. One of the pair is Sgt. Eric Neal, the NCO who planned, resourced and executed today's lane training exercises.

"Leader roles are rotated throughout the course," Neal explained. "This affords every Soldier the opportunity to experience the mantle of leadership and the decision-making process and then to demonstrate what they've learned. It also, from that perspective, gives them pause and reflection on how important it is to be a good follower when you are not leading.

"If I was taking this course, I would have felt cheated if I hadn't been ambushed at least one more time before this training day was over," said Neal.

As the action proceeded, the Soldiers suffered "casualties," but so did the attackers, played by five other, seasoned NCOs of the battalion. After the exercise abruptly halts and the students gather to conduct an after-action review, one of the role-players admitted the young Soldiers reacted audaciously, causing the ambush not to go as originally planned.

These Soldiers are fast learners who came here to develop their leadership potential with an eye toward becoming NCOs.

"This is my third battalion command sergeant major position, and as far as I know, this program is unique," said Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Sinnard. "It is the only one of its kind in the 470th MI Brigade, and one of only a few in the Intelligence and Security Command. Quite simply, I haven't seen another one like it.

"It is not designed to replicate or duplicate Warrior Leader Course [WLC] but to augment that experience when it comes," Sinnard continued. "We focus on situation-based, hands-on leadership events rather than classroom instruction. This forces the Soldier to understand the burden of leadership, the Military Decision Making Process and the aspects of teamwork when not in a leadership position.

The course is run by the battalion's most experienced NCOs, all with deployment experience



Junior Leader Development Course participants practice dry-fire Reflexive Fire transitions from primary to secondary weapons under the instruction of 1st Sgt. Billy Budd (center) at Camp Bullis, Texas, March 26.

under their belts and most with Special Operations Forces (SOF) backgrounds.

Sinnard noted that the 717th MI Battalion's JLDC is open to any Soldier in the 470th MI Brigade, of any rank, who has not yet attended WLC.

"Although extremely resource-intensive, we run this course for several reasons," said Sinnard. "The first reason is that it's 'the right thing to do.' Most of these Soldiers come to us straight out of the training pipeline and will serve here in a strategic environment for about three years. On completion of this tour, the majority of them will receive orders to tactical units after attaining NCO promotions. Providing this level of training now prevents future problems later when they find themselves in leadership roles within those tactical units."

"Second, it pays dividends to both the unit and the strategic enterprise we support by producing more capable and confident Soldiers within our formations and on the mission floor.

"And finally, we do it for the Soldier," Sinnard asserted. "We see a very high percentage of JLDC graduates go on to WLC and graduate with recognition on the commandant's list, as leadership award winners or as honor graduates."

The command sergeant major explained that since such recognition directly translates into promotion points for Soldiers under the new promotion points calculation process, the JLDC gives Soldiers a competitive advantage over their

A Soldier of the 717th Military Intelligence Battalion evacuates a simulated casualty during the Junior Leader Development Course capstone exercise.



Junior Leader Development Course participants plan a room-clearing operation during the capstone exercise of the 717th Military Intelligence Battalion's week-long JLDC March 29 at Camp Bullis, Texas.

peers at WLC.

Sgt. 1st Class Darrell Hudson, the NCOIC and overall JLDC coordinator, further explained that the goal of the course is to identify those privates and specialists on their way to becoming sergeants and to provide them with an introduction to, and basic grounding in, Army leadership both in the field as well as in garrison.

He said that the unit saw a need for more tactical training, especially for its youngest Soldiers who reported to the unit straight from Advanced Individual Training or from the Defense Language Institute.

This course supplements the Skills for Stripes program and sets the Soldiers up for success at the WLC.

"This is the battalion's investment in junior leadership development," Hudson said, noting that the 717th MI Battalion uses the Army's eight-step training model but constantly adapting to changes

and making the most of available resources and facilities.

Hudson said the battalion traditionally conducts the course twice a year but is looking to resource a third iteration while continuing to offer other units in the 470th MI Brigade an opportunity to participate.

"These Soldiers were recognized as performers ahead of their peers," said Hudson of the latest participants. "They were nominated through their companies by their first sergeants and

screened both medically and administratively."

Spc. Gerald Lott, one of the participants, said the course far exceeded his expectations.

"The NCOs have our best interests in mind," said Lott. "They correct us so that next time we can do better."

He said one important aspect of the training was

regular peer assessments, wherein each Soldier identifies one thing each other Soldier did well and one thing each other Soldier needs to improve.

"The hardest part of the course was assuming a leadership role in combat scenarios," said Lott, who transferred to the 717th MI Battalion last November. "We have not been through combat. The course built up our confidence."

Pfc. Matthew Miller, another relative newcomer to the battalion, had no doubt the course prepared him for leadership and what lies ahead at WLC.

"We received a lot of tactical and classroom

training to get us ready to be NCOs," said Miller. "The hardest part was the high operations tempo when we were in the field. From the peer assessments I learned what I need to work on."

"I learned so much," Miller concluded. "It's really good training."

Before the week of training ended, the Soldiers combined a multitude of what they had reviewed or learned in a "capstone exercise." Provided with a training mission scenario to acquire intelligence, they put their land navigation, first aid, communications and combat skills together with their newly honed leadership skills into an all-afternoon exercise that involved not only maneuvers in the natural areas of Camp Bullis but also infiltrating a mock village and clearing a building of "snipers."

"Some are natural leaders, others are capable of becoming leaders with the proper development," said Sinnard about the course participants. "In most cases it is 'in there.' We just help bring it to the surface. We expose them to opportunities to develop their unique leadership styles."


Sinnard said that promotion to sergeant, in which a junior enlisted Soldier first joins the NCO Corps, is easily the most important milestone in what will be the rest of his or her military career.

"This is their first transition from 'average Soldier' in the rank and file to leader," said Sinnard.



Soldiers of the 717th Military Intelligence Battalion negotiate an obstacle during the battalion's Junior Leader Development Course March 27 on Camp Bullis, Texas.

"The hardest transition troops face is moving from being a specialist (E4) to being an NCO (E5) and shouldering the responsibilities that come from being a leader.

"That move is a game changer. Some make it while others struggle. It is incumbent upon the current NCO Corps to prepare them for that transition," said Sinnard. "They should never forget the hard fact that the Army promotes them to NCOs and continues to promote them based on trust in their demonstrated leadership and continued leadership potential." 



Soldiers participating in the 717th Military Intelligence Battalion Junior Leader Development Course move cautiously as they conduct a foot patrol while their instructor evaluates them in the background on Camp Bullis, Texas, March 28.



*"Let the indomitable spirit of
Bataan and Corregidor lead on ..."*

-- Gen. Douglas MacArthur



Army South participates in Bataan Memorial Death March

*Story by Capt. Sharron Stewart
Company Commander for Operations Company,
Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion*

White Sands, N.M. – Some participated for the challenge, some for the glory, and others to honor veterans of the actual event. Whatever the reason for participating in the 23rd annual Bataan Memorial Death March (BMDM), none of the 31 Soldiers from U.S. Army South, who trekked the rugged 26.2 mile course here March 25, will ever be the same.

"Taking part in this was a personal accomplishment," said Staff Sgt. Adam Flores, operations sergeant for Army South's Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, Operations Company, and the Army South BMDM noncommissioned officer in charge.

More than 6,700 people participated, including service members from all branches of the U.S. armed forces and several participants from the armies of foreign countries.

Army South was represented by four heavy teams and three light teams. Both divisions required the Soldiers to wear Army combat uniforms, boots, patrol cap and

a portable water system.

The participants in the heavy division have an additional requirement to carry a 35-pound rucksack.

After the three-month Battle of Bataan in the Philippines during World War II, 76,000 American and Filipino prisoners of war were forced by the

Japanese army to march more than 80 miles in the scorching heat of the Philippine jungles. Thousands of prisoners died during the march.

Several of the original survivors were present at the opening and closing ceremonies at the BMDM and many shared their experiences with Soldiers and their family members.

"To read about an event such as this is one thing, but to shake the hands of Soldiers who went through such intense hardships; words can never express what I felt," said Flores. "I was honored to stand before such strong-minded gentlemen. Their memory, along with everyone else from 1942, will live forever in those 26.2 miles."

Flores said he started training his Soldiers for this event in November and eventually had to split his team into two because as the word got out more Soldiers throughout Army South wanted to



(Left to right) Sgt. Robert Pontious, Spc. Amianne Hartman, both from Army South's Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, Operations Company, and Sgt. David Diaz, 512th Engineer Battalion, participate in the military heavy division of the Bataan Memorial Death March. (Courtesy photo)



(Left to right) Sgt. 1st Class Wilson Astacio, Sgt. Christopher Rosenberger, Sgt. Renee Francis, Capt. Sharron Stewart and Sgt. 1st Class Latarsha Livingston, all with Army South's Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, Operations Company, cross the finish line during the 23rd Annual Bataan Memorial Death March in White Sands, N.M., March 26 (Courtesy photo)

participate.

A piece of the Army South legacy of "Defense and Fraternity" was left at White Sands Missile Range when an Army South commanding general's coin and an Army South battalion commander's coin were added to a special display featuring coins from all participating units. The coins were later added to the White Sands Museum Bataan Death March memorial section.

Spc. Branddon Kovall, an Army South team captain, said he was proud of his team's effort.

"Our team worked together well," said Kovall. "Throughout the march we motivated each other, made sure we were (all) hydrating and everyone was taking care of their feet."

Kovall, Spc. Marco Borrego and Sgt. Christopher Franklin, all with Army South's HHBN, Headquarters Support Company, embodied the spirit of the march by taking the time to help members of other teams along the way.

On the twenty-first mile, Borrego said he witnessed a Soldier from another unit collapse due to cramps in his legs and his back. Borrego immediately administered an IV to the ailing Soldier.


Not much farther ahead, Borrego said he came

upon another Soldier whose legs were trembling. The Soldier had run out of water and wasn't sweating. Fearing the Soldier was on the verge of heat exhaustion, Borrego and Kovall helped to lay the Soldier down and administered an IV.

Upon realizing that the Soldier didn't have any water, Franklin, dropped his 35-pound rucksack, ran ahead to the next point, filled his camelback with water and ran it back to where the Soldier was located in order to allow the Soldier to get fully hydrated. Fortunately Borrego and Kovall, both combat medics, incorporated the contents of their medic bags in their 35-pound rucksacks.

Kovall believes that the Bataan Memorial Death March was a grueling test of physical and mental limitations and was personally moved when he saw Wounded Warriors, many of whom were amputees, participate and go on to complete the entire 26.2 mile road march.

"Seeing the Wounded Warriors doing the march alongside us was a huge inspiration," said Kovall.

The BMDM has been held every year since 1989, except in 2003 due to mission requirements, in honor of the heroic service members who defended the Philippine Islands during World War II. 

Army South conducts command post exercise

Week-long mission tests humanitarian assistance/disaster relief capabilities

Story by Sgt. Tamika Exom
U.S. Army South Public Affairs

CAMP SWIFT, Texas - Soldiers from U.S. Army South packed up their bags and headed to Camp Swift to set up a contingency command post (CCP) during a field training exercise (FTX) May 12-17.

"Army South deployed to Camp Swift to exercise our ability to deploy into Central and South America to provide humanitarian and disaster relief efforts," said Col. Greg Maxton, the Deputy Commander for the CCP with Army South.

"It's one of our primary missions that we execute at Army South Headquarters."

Army South is the Army service component command for U.S. Southern Command and as such, conducts theater security cooperation with partner nations, in order to enhance hemispheric security and stability. SOUTHCOM's area of responsibility (AOR) encompasses 31 countries and 15 areas of special sovereignty in Central and South America, and the Caribbean.

"The purpose of the exercise was to better prepare Army South's Headquarters to react to incidents of humanitarian assistance or disaster relief when requested by our Latin American partners," said Maxton.

Being at Camp Swift gave the unit the opportunity to break contact with the day-to-day

operations at Fort Sam Houston. These training exercises provide a unique and challenging environment for Army South.

The unit has conducted this type of exercise here at Fort Sam Houston, at Camp Bullis and as far away as Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. This provided a unique and challenging environment for Army South.

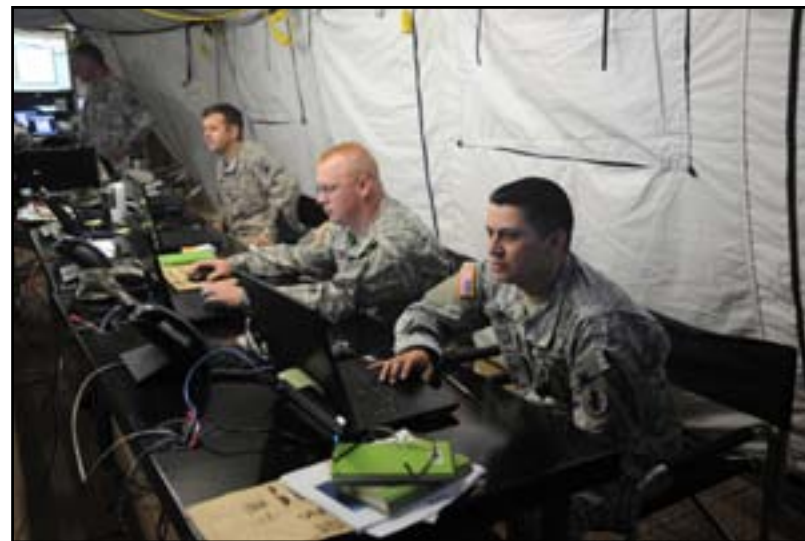
"Communications was a challenge for us since we didn't have the backbone of what's provided at Fort Sam Houston," said Maxton. "Soldiers were faced with the challenge of being by themselves, sustaining and training themselves, and keeping the focus on what we wanted to accomplish out there."

With hurricane season starting June 1, if a request were to come to the U.S. government requesting assistance, Army South would have little notice and would deploy the CCP as the unit did to Haiti during Operation Unified Response.

In January 2010, following the 7.0 magnitude earthquake that struck Haiti, U.S. Army South deployed as part of Joint Task Force-Haiti in Operation Unified Response, which provided military support to the international disaster relief efforts in Haiti.

"Through this FTX, we were able to deploy the command post, establish communications and

exercise staff processes to significantly improve our abilities. Additionally, we identified focus areas where we could continue to improve after the exercise and develop training plans to support this continued progress," said Maxton. "In the end, we will gain efficiency so we can all do our jobs better."



U.S. Army South Soldiers participate in a contingency command post exercise May 15 at Camp Swift, Texas. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Robert J. Quintero, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)



Story by Steven Anderson
U.S. Army South Safety Office

Swimming, boating, fishing and scuba diving are all fun water activities. U.S. Army South has Soldiers and civilians in several different locations. No matter where you are, the rules remain the same. When planning water activities, consider what the hazards are and what you can do to reduce the chance of a tragic event from happening.

Statistics: On average, every day in the U.S., 10 people die from unintentional drowning. Of these, at least two are children aged 14 or younger.

Drowning is the sixth leading cause of unintentional injury death for people of all ages, and the second leading cause of death for children ages 1-to-14-years old.

According to the Center for Disease Control, in 2009, the U.S. Coast Guard received reports for 4,730 boating incidents; 3,358 boaters were reported injured, and 736 died. Among those who drowned, 90 percent were not wearing life jackets.

Please contact your Unit Safety Officer at (210) 295-6879, or go to the Combat Readiness Center's web page, <https://safety.army.mil/SafetyCity/Pages/Water/WaterSafety.aspx>, for more safety guidance.

Precautions: These following rules will help you enjoy your favorite water activities with peace of mind.

- ❑ Learn cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and the Heimlich maneuver.
- ❑ Remove toys from the pool when kids are finished swimming to prevent them from trying to recover them when unsupervised.
- ❑ Keep a constant watch on your child when they are in or near the water.
- ❑ Stay within touching distance of young children at all times.
- ❑ Wear a personal protection device even if you can swim.
- ❑ Make sure the water is safe for diving. When in doubt, don't dive or jump.
- ❑ If you don't know how to swim well, find someone to teach you. Learn to float and to tread water for at least 10 minutes.
- ❑ Make sure your child learns to swim. Upgrade their swimming skills each year.
- ❑ Always swim, scuba dive, or snorkel with a buddy.
- ❑ Avoid alcohol before and during water activities.

Army South liaisons keep commands, staffs connected

*Story by Sgt. Tamika Exom
U.S. Army South Public Affairs*

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas - Merriam-Webster defines the word liaison as communication for establishing and maintaining mutual understanding and cooperation (as between parts of an armed force).

There are very few people who play a more vital role in the coordination between organizations than the military liaison officer (LNO).

At U.S. Army South, it is the most

commonly employed technique for establishing and maintaining close, continuous physical communication between commands. Commanders use LNO's during operations and with daily activities to help facilitate communication between organizations, preserve freedom of action, and maintain flexibility.

"I have been the Army South liaison officer for one year and have been privileged to work with almost every director and division chief here in this command to one extent or another," said Maj. Ruth Kane, Army South liaison officer to U.S. Southern Command.

Kane's job is to manage the flow of critical, time-sensitive information between SOUTHCOM and Army South.

The two organizations work together with partner nations within SOUTHCOM's area of responsibility to build partner nation capacity and conduct theater security cooperation.

Army South, as the Army service component command for SOUTHCOM, conducts theater security cooperation in order to enhance hemispheric security and stability, and on order, conducts contingency operations as directed by SOUTHCOM.

SOUTHCOM's area of responsibility encompasses 31 countries and 15 areas of special sovereignty in Central and South America, and the Caribbean.

"As the Army South LNO, I am extremely busy, and I am involved in the majority of plans, orders, contingencies, policies, exercises, and tasks undertaken by SOUTHCOM," said Kane. "I am also invited to just about every meeting in this command to represent the Army South commander and units."

While Kane represents Army South at SOUTHCOM in Miami, Lt. Col. Phillip Johnson represents Army South and advocates Army South interests and equities whenever possible at the Pentagon.

"The Army South LNO is also a two-way conduit of critical information between Army South and Headquarters, Department of the Army," said



Lt. Col. Phillip Johnson (right), the U.S. Army South liaison to the Pentagon, poses for a photo with Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, the Army South commanding general in an undated photo. (U.S. Army courtesy photo)



Maj. Ruth Kane (center), the U.S. Army South liaison to U.S. Southern Command, poses for a photo with Navy Capt. Pete Husta (left), the U.S. Naval Forces Southern LNO, Rear Adm. Kurt W. Tidd (second from left), the former commander of U.S. Naval Forces Southern, Air Force Lt. Col. Mario Guerrier (second from right), the Air Forces Southern LNO, and Coast Guard Cdr. Jeff Pashai (right), the Coast Guard theater cooperation agreement LNO, in an undated photo. (U.S. Army courtesy photo)

Johnson, who serves as the liaison officer for U.S. Army South to HQDA, which is composed of the Office of the Secretary of the Army, Office of the Chief of Staff of the Army, the Army Staff, and specifically designated staff support agencies.

Johnson, who along with Kane reports to the Army South chief of staff, constantly monitors issues and events that might impact U.S. Army South. He keeps the command informed of such "goings-on" on a daily basis and sometimes hourly basis through e-mails and phone calls.


The Army South LNO is always ready to assist any member of the command, not just the command group, and the LNO can also attend meetings in the building when a secure visual telecommunication (SVTC) connection is unavailable.

"I manage information between the organizations and many times-over, I have caught taskers, requests for information, and events that

have fallen through the cracks for various reasons," said Johnson. "I make it my business to know as many people in the Pentagon and Department of Defense as possible in order to be better prepared to know who to call for information or assistance at the eleventh hour."

Liaisons provide senior commanders with relevant information and answers to operational questions in order to ensure they remain aware of the tactical situation.

The position of LNO relies upon the clear and concise passage of information – providing the right information, to the right people, at the right time.

"Working as a liaison officer at a joint geographical combatant command is one of the best jobs a person could have in the Army, second to command," said Kane. "It gives one the opportunity to experience a vast range of leadership styles." 



(Left) Colombian Col. German Lopez, the Colombian foreign liaison officer at U.S. Army South, explains the background of the U.S. and Colombian military partnership and the bi-lateral staff talks at the start of this year's talks March 21 in Bogota, Colombia. (U.S. Army photo by Col. Jane Crichton, U.S. Army South Public Affairs) (Right) Chilean Col. Luis R. Chamorro gives a presentation during the annual army-to-army staff talks between Army South and the Chilean army Nov. 1. (U.S. Army photo by Eric R. Lucero, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

Army South foreign liaisons leave lasting impression

Story by Sgt. Tamika Exom
U.S. Army South Public Affairs

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas – The U.S. Armed Forces Joint Publication 3-16, on Multinational Operations, points out the importance of a program that facilitates understanding, coordination, interoperability enhancement, and contributes significantly to the mission.

It's because of this logic, foreign liaisons, as representatives of their countries, play a vital role at U.S. Southern Command and U.S. Army South, by providing cultural and operational insight, recommendations and perspective on key issues.

The Partner Nation Liaison Officer (PNLO) program was established by SOUTHCOM in 1998 to establish links and facilitate cooperation and mutual understanding between the U.S. Army and partner nations of Central and South America and the Caribbean.

A PNLO, also called a foreign liaison officer (FLO), is a foreign government military member or civilian employee who is authorized by his or her government, and is certified by a Department of the Army component in connection with programs, projects or agreements of interest to the governments.

"These countries are sending their top of the crop," said Lt. Col. Ed Lluberres, who oversees

the program. "The officers are well educated and experts in what they do. Many have gone on to become general officers or into high leadership roles after leaving here and returning to their countries."

Army South has three FLOs: Chilean Col. Luis R. Chamorro, Colombian Col. German Lopez Guerrero and Brazilian Lt. Col. Marcos Americo. All three work hand in hand on a daily basis with the other officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs) in the command here at Fort Sam Houston.

"One of the most important things they get out of this experience is an understanding of how SOUTHCOM and Army South work, from the staff process to our mission," said Lluberres. "It gives them a greater appreciation for what SOUTHCOM and the U.S. military do in our area of responsibility."

"The reason that we are working here is to strengthen partnerships between our two countries," said Chamorro. "In order to do that, we conduct many joint activities the best way we can in order to save on our resources."

As a liaison officer, Chamorro attends all Army South meetings related to the Chilean army. This gives the Army South staff valuable insights that are applied in its engagements throughout the theater.

"Being here makes it possible for me to handle any questions of the Chilean army and also gives

me the opportunity to be the spokesperson for Army South in my own country," said Chamorro. "I have to make contact with all of the organizations or people involved in any given activity."

Chamorro said he also has to call the Chilean side to let them know the unit will be doing a particular activity in order to accomplish that task successfully.

During their typical two-to-three year assignment, the program tries to integrate the FLOs throughout the staff to work alongside political-military affairs officers.

"Unfortunately, I have to leave in July since this is only a two-year assignment," said Chamorro. "My next assignment will be working with the Chilean commanding general as part of his personal staff."

"After returning home, these officers can use their expertise to influence their own militaries or become spokesmen for U.S. approaches," said Lluberres.

During a recent article, Air Force Gen. Douglass Fraser, commanding general for SOUTHCOM said, "This program is very important to the United States. The benefit we gain will pay us dividends in the future."

He also said, "We have learned a great deal from each other as we worked with the armed forces of their countries."

Both Chamorro and Lopez will leave Army South in July. Chamorro will continue on to join the Chilean commanding general's personal staff and Lopez will return to Colombia to serve in the Colombian army.

"I would like to take the opportunity to say thank you to the people who I've been working with here," said Chamorro. "I have learned a lot from them."

To reward them for their contributions to the command, Trombitas awarded both Chamorro and Lopez each a Meritorious Service Medal during a ceremony at the Army South headquarters July 11.



Locked and loaded for training ...

Sgt. Alex Krist, an infantryman for U.S. Army South's Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, instructs Soldiers on the proper use and handling of the M2 .50 caliber machine gun during a sergeants time training held at the HHBN headquarters April 12. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Tamika Exom, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

Fuerzas Amistosas

Guatemala, U.S. armies strengthen partnership

*Story by Lt. Col. Antwan C. Williams
U.S. Army South Public Affairs*

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas -- The conclusion in July of Beyond the Horizon 2012, a humanitarian and civic assistance exercise in Guatemala, marked a significant milestone in Guatemala and U.S. military forces relations as the two have increasingly in the last few years worked together in several joint exercises, subject matter expert exchanges and training events.

U.S. Army South, the Army component command for U.S. Southern Command, works with armies and military leaders throughout its area of responsibility in Central and South America and the Caribbean to strengthen relationships, support theater security cooperation and build partner nation capacity.

"Thanks to the relationships built and sustained with our Guatemalan partners through previous exercises and operations such as Peacekeeping Operations Americas and PANAMAX, we are able to build upon our training and interaction to enhance security and stability in the region, said Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, Army South commanding general.

The Guatemalan army is an active participant in the annual exercise PANAMAX, which focuses on working with Panama and more than 17 other partner nations, including the U.S. in providing security for the safe passage of ships and commerce through the Panama Canal and adjacent waterways.



A Guatemalan soldier provides security for his patrol during a land navigation course in Coban, Guatemala, Feb. 28. (U.S. Army photo by Miguel Negron, U.S. Army South Visual Information)

In addition, Guatemala participates in the humanitarian and peace exercises, Peace Keeping Operations-Americas (PKO-A) and Fuerzas Aliadas Humanitarias (FA-HUM). Guatemala is also an active participant in the Conference of American Armies (CAA) events.

Leading up to BTH exercise, which took place in the Guatemalan towns of Coban and San Marcos from April to July of this year, U.S. Army South personnel conducted two logistics professional development exchanges and a civil-military relations subject matter expert exchange in Guatemala City.

The first logistics PDE in January focused on improving Guatemalan military forces supply and engineer operations. The second logistics PDE in February focused on improving and exchanging best practices ideas with Guatemalan forces in the areas of physical security, weapons maintenance, and vehicle and boat maintenance.

The civil-military relationship exercise, which took place in April focused on working with Guatemalan forces in improving their abilities to conduct civil affairs and humanitarian operations.

"By providing these additional skill sets the partner nation [Guatemala] is able not only to conduct required tasks within the Beyond the Horizon exercise, but also for their mission essential task list at their unit level," said Arsenio de la Cruz, a civilian employee of Army South's

Operations Protectorate Directorate, who travelled to Guatemala to provide some of the training prior to BTH.



Sgt. 1st Class Andres Flores-Perez (center), a U.S. Soldier assigned to the Texas Army National Guard Personnel Recovery Operations Training Team based out of Austin, Texas, explains land navigation techniques to soldiers assigned to the 6th Guatemalan Army Brigade Feb. 28 in Coban, Guatemala. Flores-Perez conducted a subject matter expert exchange class to teach the Guatemalan soldiers how to navigate from a departure point to a last known location of an isolated person in order to support a search and rescue or personnel recovery mission. (U.S. Army photo by Miguel Negron, U.S. Army South Visual Information)

In cooperation with the government of Guatemala and working closely with their military forces, Army South along with personnel from all U.S. military services, conducted training while providing dental, medical and engineering support.

Personnel participating in BTH completed various construction projects including building and renovating schools and clinics. In addition, BTH personnel conducted several medical and dental readiness exercises where they treated thousands of Guatemalan citizens in rural communities.

"These projects and medical, dental and veterinary exercises have a significant impact on the people in these locations. In most cases they are receiving treatment and care that they would not otherwise have access to," said Maj. Jeffrey T. Lopez, Army South's Central America desk officer.

Ideally these areas are selected based on the needs of the people. It also demonstrates to the people our resolve to maintaining a solid relationship with the Host Nation Military."

A sign of the strength of the U.S. and Guatemalan military forces relationship and partnership was evident when Deputy U.S. Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, Roberta S. Jacobson, spoke at the BTH closing ceremony on June 28.

Jacobson said efforts like BTH support the U.S. Department of State's Central America Regional Security Initiative.

CARSI is part of a U.S. effort to work together with partner nations in Central America, through a whole of government concept approach, to find collaborative solutions to regional issues such as countering transnational criminal organizations and other emerging threats, while helping to improve the security, safety and health of the people in the region.

"Through efforts such as Beyond the Horizon, we were able to make the statement about the importance of regional efforts and that no country can do this alone," said Jacobson.



One person can make a difference!

Story by Lonnie L. Crook

U.S. Army South Operational Protection Directorate

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas – For a third year, the Army has designated August as Antiterrorism Awareness Month. The key word here is “awareness.” Designating August as Antiterrorism Awareness Month provides a chance for all of us to reinvigorate our awareness of the possible threats to our community, to our work places and to our homes.

This is a time to refresh our fundamental knowledge of the terrorist threat and also the measures to reduce vulnerabilities to terrorism. This is also an opportunity for the antiterrorism community to increase the awareness of commands, Soldiers, civilians, contractors and their families on how to prevent terrorism and protect our communities.

What is terrorism? The Army defines terrorism as “The calculated use of violence or threat of violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological.”

Although there are many variations to the definition of terrorism, a common factor to terrorism is the intent to create fear, perpetrated for an ideological goal, and deliberately target or disregard the safety of the civilian population. A terrorist is any individual that commits or threatens to commit these acts of violence. Terrorism is not new and acts of terrorism have been recorded throughout history.

When most of us hear the word terrorist or terrorism, we think of people like Osama bin Laden and organizations like Al-Qaeda.

There are many faces of terrorism. Faces like Colleen LaRose, aka Jihad Jane, an American

citizen who was raised in Texas and lived in Philadelphia. LaRose was arrested in 2009 and charged with terrorism-related crimes including conspiracy to commit murder and providing material support to terrorists and in 2011 pled guilty to all charges.

There are faces like Andrew Joseph Stack III, a software consultant from Austin, who in 2010 flew his single-engine airplane into a federal government building. Stack’s intended target was the IRS field office. Stack and the manager of the IRS field office were killed and 13 others were injured.

There are faces like Theodore Kaczynski, known by the codename “UNABOM.” Kaczynski was accepted to Harvard University at the age of 16, where he earned an undergraduate degree, and later earned a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan. From 1978 to 1995, Kaczynski carried out a mail bombing campaign sending 16 bombs to targets like universities and airlines, killing three people and injuring 23.

There are also faces like Timothy McVeigh, a U.S. Army veteran who earned the Bronze Star during Desert Storm. In 1995, McVeigh detonated a truck laden with 5,000 pounds of explosive materials, which he parked in front of a federal building in Oklahoma City, Okla., killing 168 people, including 19 children in the building’s day care center, and injuring more than 800.

August is a fitting month to remind ourselves that we must remain vigilant as we lead up to the anniversary of the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. The terrorist attacks of that day were the worse by far of any on U.S. soil.

As citizens of the U.S. we had become comfortable in our security. Yes there had been attacks against the U.S., but most of us were never

affected and didn’t know anyone that was. That comfort bred complacency, and as a society we were unaware of the actual threats facing us. In order to confront terrorism, we must be aware of those threats and what measures we as individuals must take.

The yearly Antiterrorism Level 1 training is more than just a requirement. It is an opportunity for every Soldier, civilian and contractor to take the time to refresh their focus on the threats that face our nation, our military and our families, and measures we can take to remain vigilant.


We must understand the terrorist threat, take actions to detect and deter terrorists, and report all suspicious activities.

Another way for individuals to maintain

antiterrorism awareness is the iWATCH program.

The two key components to the iWATCH program are “See Something” and “Say Something.”

When Pfc. Naser Jason Abdo, an AWOL Soldier from Fort Campbell, Ky., was planning an attack on Soldiers at Fort Hood, it was one concerned citizen that reported his suspicions to the police that prevented the attack. When six men were conspiring to “kill as many Soldiers as possible” at Fort Dix, N.J., it took one alert individual informing the local authorities to stop a terrorist attack.

One person can make a difference. With awareness, vigilance and your reporting of suspicious activities, we can prevent the terrorists from winning. 



A Single Report can lead to actions that may STOP a terrorist attack

THINK ABOUT THE POWER OF THAT. THE POWER OF iWATCH.

See Something Say Something



Always Ready, Always Alert
Because someone is depending on you



<https://www.us.army.mil/suite/page/605757>

U.S., Colombian Armies conclude annual Staff Talks

*Story by Col. Jane E. Crichton
U.S. Army South Public Affairs Director*

BOGOTA, Colombia – U.S. Army South and the Colombian army concluded their third annual bilateral staff talks here March 22 and agreed to conduct 19 activities over approximately the next 12 months.

Army South, as the U.S. Army's executive agent, conducts the bilateral talks with Colombia annually as a strategic forum to guide the armies' interaction for the upcoming year. The agreed-to-activities for 2012 include exchanges on humanitarian and disaster relief operations, and Colombian army participation in U.S. Southern Command sponsored exercises. Some activities may extend into 2013.

"I think we have developed a robust plan for engagement and training opportunities with the Colombian army for the next year or so," said Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, commanding general of Army South and head of the U.S. delegation. "We are exploiting the expertise and capacity of both armies and I know we will both benefit from working together through the agreed-to-activities."

Through the staff talks the U.S. and Colombian armies formalize their cooperation and relationship ensuring that both grow and endure.

"This third bilateral meeting was very important," said Maj. Gen. Manuel Guzman, Colombian army deputy commander and chief of staff. "Everyday our army becomes more professional and we have important work to do in 2012 such as building four joint task forces and revising our plans."

According to Guzman, the training and engagement opportunities agreed to in the talks will help the Colombian army to address current challenges as well as reach future goals. He credits the Colombian army's current high level of professionalism, in part, to the years of training and advice from the U.S. Army.

The relationship between the armies is more than just a professional military one, said Guzman. It is a relationship between friends and colleagues.

"We are stronger because of that (relationship),"



Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, the commanding general of U.S. Army South, and Colombian Maj. Gen. Manuel Guzman, the Colombian army deputy commander and chief of staff, sign the memorandum of understanding March 22 in Bogota, Colombia. (Photo by Andres Diaz, Colombian army)

Guzman said.

Prior to the final meeting in Bogota, working groups with representatives from both armies developed proposed activities that were then approved during this week's talks.

"Our working groups met in person and through VTC before this executive meeting so that we could present a validated list of activities to the key leaders of the armies," said Col. Jim K. Rose, Army South security cooperation division chief. "Working with our Colombian army counterparts has been outstanding throughout the whole process. Because we have such a strong and close relationship, we work very well together."

In addition to finalizing the agreed-to-activities for 2012, various subject matter experts presented briefings on subjects of interest to both delegations. The U.S. provided briefings on operational law, countering improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and development of the non-commissioned officer corps in the U.S. Army.

The Colombian army briefed on the army's operational plan for the next 24-48 months, army modernization and transformation, and the role and function of the army's command sergeant major.

This is the third round of staff talks conducted by Army South with the Colombian army. On behalf of the U.S. Army, Army South also conducts staff talks with three other countries in the region: El Salvador, Chile and Brazil. These staff talks were agreed to by the four countries through the diplomatic process and serve to enhance regional stability and security.

To see these videos below, go to Army South's Youtube page at www.youtube.com/usarmysouth.



To see Army South's new command video magazine, please visit www.youtube.com/usarmysouth or go to our homepage at www.arsouth.army.mil. The command video magazine is published monthly and is produced and edited by Army South Public Affairs broadcasters: Sgt. Robert Quintero, Sgt. Deylon Douglass, and Frederick Hoyt.



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