

Senior Leaders
Combat Hazing

PAGE 12

Sgt. Audie Murphy &
Sgt. Morales Clubs

PAGE 20

NCO JOURNAL

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NCO
BRINGS
HOME
GOLD

PAGE 32



September 2012

FEATURES

- 12 Senior leaders combat hazing ▲**
Though extreme cases may make the headlines, there are other instances that constitute hazing, which continues to occur in the Army despite being against policy.
BY JENNIFER MATTSON
- 20 'You lead from the front'**
For many, Audie Murphy personified the best of the Army. Today's members of the Sgt. Audie Murphy Club strive to live up to his ideals. **BY CLIFFORD KYLE JONES**
- 26 A club for all Europe's NCOs**
Sgt. Morales may have existed only in myth. But the professionalism he represents for the members of his namesake club is very much real. **BY MICHAEL L. LEWIS**
- 32 Bringing home gold**
The 46 gold medals Team USA won at the Summer Olympic Games in London included one by an NCO for record-setting marksmanship. **BY JENNIFER MATTSON**

DEPARTMENTS

- 3 From the CSM**
Suicide prevention is a team effort
BY COMMAND SGT. MAJ. RONNIE R. KELLEY
- 4 In Front**
- 38 In Action**
- 46 From the Field**
- 51 Final Salutes**

ON THE COVER: Sgt. Vincent C. Hancock gestures after being presented with a gold medal July 31 for winning the men's skeet shooting event at the 2012 Olympics in London.
PHOTO BY TIM HIPPS, BACKGROUND IMAGE BY MARK HILLARY, PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY MICHAEL L. LEWIS

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Suicide prevention is a team effort

BY COMMAND SGT. MAJ. RONNIE R. KELLEY 1st Armored Division

FROM THE CSM

The Fort Bliss military community — service members, spouses and civilian employees — was recognized July 26 for training more than 11,000 personnel during the past nine years with Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training. Jerry Swanner, the U.S. executive director for LivingWorks Education, which developed the ASIST curriculum, said, “No other community on the planet comes close to Fort Bliss’ numbers. The closest is a Canadian province with half of Fort Bliss’ numbers.”

It’s a good standard to start. But we can do better.

Good leaders have been allowing their Soldiers to attend this top notch training, but I also encourage leaders to keep the discussion going themselves. Put some time into your schedule to talk to your Soldiers. Get a group together and just be honest with one another — what do *you* think about suicide?

Of the seven Army Values we have, personal courage requires you to speak your mind professionally about how you feel about suicide. This embodies the basis of “knowing your Soldiers.” One thing ASIST teaches is simply to listen; the hope is to understand.

Before combat, we assess the mission, determine what success is, then develop a hardcore, realistic training plan to educate Soldiers on how to accomplish this mission. The training is developed into Warrior Tasks and Battle Drills, which leaders have their Soldiers commit to muscle memory. Then we test them during a Mission Rehearsal Exercise prior to deployment.

Like a combat crew drill, your reaction can be a matter of a fellow Soldier’s life and death. Losing a Soldier can affect the outcome of the overall mission.

Do a self-assessment right now: If a Soldier is at risk of suicide, how would you intervene?

We train combat lifesavers to treat injuries, so consider depression as an injury. How would *you* treat a Soldier with suicidal ideations? Dr. Bill Lang, the co-founder of LivingWorks, summed it up: “You don’t do it alone!”

Survival determines success, and as a team, you can develop the training plan. This discussion can bring some

insight into the “readiness” of your team and your leadership ability. But at the end of the discussion, develop a plan of action together — who and when to call.

Leaders taking care of Soldiers is a comprehensive task. So who takes care of leaders? What about spouses, our neighbors, someone crying on a park bench and so on?

The answer is we have to take care of one another, and taking care of someone may simply be to listen to them.

Some discussion tools we already use are “under the



Command Sgt. Maj. Ronnie R. Kelley speaks with Soldiers from the 1st Armored Division at Fort Bliss, Texas, in May. PHOTO BY MASTER SGT. KELLY MCCARGO

oak tree” counseling, professional development forums, commander’s/NCO call or even organization days. What about a 20- to 30-minute round table discussion on a Friday afternoon prior to the commander’s safety briefing?

Many do these discussions already. But have *you* assessed your “intervention readiness?” It’s all about knowing your Soldier, your neighbor, your citizen — your fellow human being. ♡

Command Sgt. Maj. Ronnie R. Kelley is the command sergeant major of the 1st Armored Division and Fort Bliss, Texas.

News and
information
NCOs need to

**BE,
KNOW,
DO**

NCO JOURNAL



DoD braces for sequestration

Panetta: Mandatory cuts would be a 'disaster'

NCO Journal wire reports

Though the Defense Department can foresee the harmful effects of sequestration, the nature of the impending legislative mechanism makes it impossible to devise a plan that eliminates or substantially mitigates those effects, Deputy Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter told Congress on Aug. 1.

Testifying before the House Armed Services Committee, Carter explained the law's effect on the defense budget and overall strategy. "Sequestration" refers to a mechanism built into the Budget Control Act enacted by Congress last year that would trigger an additional \$500 billion across-the-board cut in defense spending during the next decade if Congress doesn't identify alternative spending cuts by January.

"We're working with [the Office of Management and Budget] to understand this complex legislation, and we are, as I described, assessing impacts," Carter said. "But we're still [months] from January. I'm hop-

ing, to quote [Defense] Secretary [Leon E.] Panetta, that Congress — both Republicans and Democrats — will exercise the necessary leadership to make sure that sequestration is de-triggered. In the unfortunate event that sequestration is actually triggered, we will work with OMB, and like all the federal agencies affected by this law, we will be ready to implement it."

Carter also discussed the unintentional effects of the mechanism if it isn't "de-triggered" in a reasonable amount of time.

"While we'll not fail to prepare for sequestration, we're equally worried about a different type of error," he said. "This would occur if sequestration does not happen, but we end up triggering some of its bad effects anyway.

"For example, we do not want to un-

▲ **Sgt. Kenneth Strong and his fellow Soldiers from 4th Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, exit a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter July 2, 2006, during an aerial traffic control point mission near Tal Afar, Iraq.** PHOTO BY AIR FORCE STAFF SGT. JACOB N. BAILEY

necessarily alarm employees by announcing adverse personnel actions or by suggesting that such actions are likely,” he continued. “For efficiency reasons, we do not want to hold back on the obligation of funds, either for weapons projects or operating programs, that would have been obligated in the absence of a possible sequestration.”

The prospect of sequestration-mandated cuts would be “a disaster” not only for national defense, but also for defense communities, Panetta said Aug. 6.

In remarks at an Association of Defense Communities conference in Monterey, Calif., Panetta said the Pentagon’s new strategy and budget decisions reflect the need to bring the government’s budget under control.

“There is a strategic and fiscal imperative that is driving the department to a smaller, ... leaner and more agile force — that’s the reality,” Panetta said. “It would be irresponsible not to reduce the budget and do our role in confronting the fiscal challenges facing this country.”

Noting that he has to “put every area of the defense budget on the table,” Panetta acknowledged the challenges that stem from assessing major areas such as compensation, which he said has increased by 80 percent.

“Unless we confront the costs in that area, we’re going to find ourselves cutting our national defense in order to deal with tremendously increased health care costs.” But at the same time, he said, the Defense Department must “keep faith” with the military.

“We’ve got to make sure we stand by the promises that were made to them and to their families,” Panetta said.

The half-trillion dollars in spending cuts during the next decade that the sequestration mechanism would trigger would “hollow out the military,” Panetta said.

“I’ve made it clear, and I’ll continue to do so, that if sequestration is allowed to go into effect, it’ll be a disaster for national defense and it would be a disaster, frankly, for defense communities as well,” he said.

Panetta called sequestration “an indiscriminate formula” that was never meant to take effect.

“It was never designed to be implemented,” he said. “It was designed to trigger such untold damage that it would force people

to do the right thing.”

In his testimony to Congress, Carter noted that the Defense Department hopes to avoid cutting back on training, which would harm military readiness as the nation faces a complex array of national security challenges.

Private companies that constitute “important members of our national security team” also need to make decisions on issues related to sequestration, he said. Carter said a number of these private companies have expressed alarm at “such a wasteful and disruptive way” of managing taxpayers’ money and their employees’ talent.

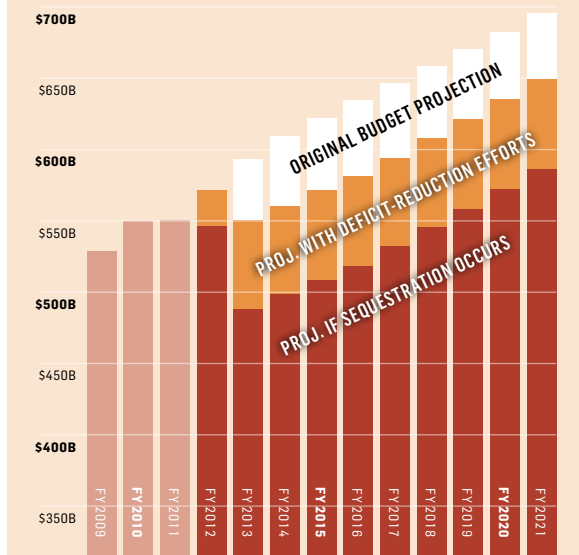
Carter said Americans, the nation’s allies and even its enemies need to know the U.S. government has the political will to implement the defense strategy that has been put forth by its leaders.

“The men and women of our department, and their families, need to know with certainty that we’ll meet our commitments to them,” he said. “Our partners in defense industry, and their employees, need to know that we’re going to have the resources to procure the world-class capabilities they can provide, and that we can do so efficiently.”

Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone C. Marshall Jr. and Amaani Lyle of the American Forces Press Service contributed to this report.

BY THE NUMBERS

Under the sequestration mechanism built into the Budget Control Act enacted by Congress last year, the Defense Department will suffer more than \$500 billion in across-the-board cuts during the next decade: — DEFENSE.GOV



Board to review justice in deployed areas

Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta has asked an independent board to review the application of military justice in deployed areas. A subcommittee of the newly established Defense Legal Policy Board will examine instances in which service members are alleged to have committed offenses against civilians in combat zones. The abuses, Panetta said, “have been rare among our professional fighting force,” but he said they became huge flash points that threatened to undermine the U.S. mission and relations with other countries. The board will review instances going back to October 2001 — the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. More: <http://j.mp/se12just>

Army prohibits use of marijuana substitutes

Soldiers face a new drug threat in the form of Salvia Divinorum and “Spice,” two substances that have been on the rise as marijuana substitutes. Recent changes in federal law make it illegal to possess most forms of Spice. Similarly, all marijuana substitutes are illegal in the Army and may subject the Soldier to court-martial, nonjudicial punishment or separation. Salvia Divinorum is a naturally occurring hallucinogenic plant compound from the mint family. Spice is a synthetic cannabinoid made up of many different compounds. Both have been misused by Soldiers for their mind-altering effects. More: <http://j.mp/se12spice>

Army tightens body fat standards for recruits

All male recruits age 17–20 who enlisted after May 16 must now have a body fat percentage of 24 or less before they begin basic training. For female recruits in that age category, their body fat must be at 30 percent or less. The body fat percentage allow-

BRIEFS CONT. ON PAGE 7 →

Leaders' visits gauge health of the force

'Pockets of excellence' discovered, but more work to be done

BY C. TODD LOPEZ Army News Service

Vice Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Lloyd Austin and Sgt. Maj. of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III capped off a weeklong series of visits to several Army bases with a final visit July 27 to Fort Riley, Kan. The tour was billed as part of an effort to develop a better understanding of the "health of the force."

During the trip, which also included visits to Fort Bragg, N.C.; Fort Hood, Texas; Fort Benning, Ga.; Fort Stewart, Ga.; and Fort Gordon, Ga., the team talked to senior leaders about the Integrated Disability Evaluation System, sexual assault, sexual harassment and assault prevention, suicide prevention and wounded warrior care. Helping find the resources for leaders to take care of their Soldiers was one of the goals of the visits, Austin said.

"The policy changes that need to be made, we'll endeavor to make those policy changes — to speed up processes, to improve the quality of delivery of service," Austin said. "We'll look at getting more resources out to the field as well. We'll also endeavor to share best practices."

Chandler said it was important for Soldiers to see leaders from the highest levels of the Army — whom they rarely interact with — tackling problems that affect them.

"Soldiers really want to know their leaders are doing

everything they can — including from a Department of the Army level, who they really don't hear too much from — and that they are working on these issues diligently and aggressively as can be," Chandler said. "I think they wanted to hear from the folks here that we are engaged, we are working this and we are going to help them in many of the areas we talked about."

Austin said the solutions many installations are working on in areas such as suicide, sexual assault and sexual harassment prevention warrant a further look for use across the force.

"We've had the opportunity to meet with and talk with leaders and commanders and health professionals and others," Austin said. "What these discussions have confirmed for me is that we've made progress in a number of areas. Indeed, there are pockets of excellence at every installation."

Still, the Army has a way to go to eliminate friction points in delivering services to Soldiers and their families, he said. "We will do what is necessary, because this is about taking care of our most precious asset, and that is our people," Austin said.

A key goal of the trip was to ask leaders what tools they need to help fight the suicide trend in the Army. Austin said suicide "is the toughest enemy I've ever faced."

Brig. Gen. Donald M. MacWillie, the senior commander of Fort Riley, said his installation is attacking suicide on "four fronts." The first of those is to simply engage with Soldiers.

"We're letting them know that life is good," he said. "And with that, it takes courage and strength when you come forward and say you need some help. If we can break through that, that very bottom level, we see success."

Fort Riley has positioned 214 behavioral health providers on post who are "integrated down to the lowest level, down to where the Soldiers see that be-



◀ Sgt. Maj. of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III listens as Gen. Lloyd Austin, the Army vice chief of staff, speaks July 27 at Fort Riley, Kan., at the conclusion of a weeklong trip to six Army installations as part of an effort to develop a better understanding of the "health of the force." PHOTO

BY C. TODD LOPEZ

havioral health provider,” MacWillie said.

A difficult time for Soldiers — and one potentially at the center of the very problems Austin said he was investigating during his visits — is when they transition from one installation to another. Helping them make that transition is something the Army is working to get a better handle on, said Lt. Gen. Michael Ferriter, commander of U.S. Army Installation Management Command and the Army’s assistant chief of staff for installation management. He was part of the team that accompanied Austin on the tour.

“A lot of the issues that we have today occur in those first couple months of that transition,” Ferriter said. It’s important that Soldiers, as they move around the Army, stay connected to the Army and to retain a sense of belonging, he said.

The Army has a sponsorship program that

helps make that possible, Ferriter said. Last November, the Army published a requirement that all Soldiers transitioning to a new installation must have a sponsor that will help them integrate into their new unit.

Austin said if the Army is going to tackle the problems it faces with suicide, sexual assault, behavioral health issues and Soldier care, it must involve improved communication at all echelons.

To really get at the problem, Austin said, requires getting down to the lowest levels.

“Take a knee beside that commander, and say, ‘Tell me what’s going on specifically and what resources do you need to better fight that fight.’

“That’s worked for me in every fight I’ve been in, never failed me, and every time I’ve seen us get our leadership focused on a specific issue, we’re successful,” he said. ♡

Army working to standardize diagnosis, treatment of PTS

BY DAVID VERGUN Army News Service

The Army, along with the other military services and the Department of Veterans Affairs, is standardizing the diagnosis and treatment of post-traumatic stress.

“No matter where Soldiers are getting care or seeking help for PTS or any other medical issue, we want to ensure we are doing it the same way,” said Lt. Col. Christopher Warner, the Army surgeon general’s psychiatric consultant and deputy commander for clinical services at Bassett Army Community Hospital, Fort Wainwright, Alaska. He said that standardization increases a Soldier’s level of trust and the level of fairness in the system.

The Army medical community is now being trained on guidelines spelled out in Army Medical Command Policy Memo 12-035, “Policy Guidance on the Assessment and Treatment of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder,” Warner said.

“The majority of service members with PTS do not seek treatment, and many who do seek treatment drop out before they can benefit,” the memo says. “Lack of trust in military behavioral health professionals has been identified as one important predictor of service members not utilizing services. Therefore, it is critical that Army behavioral health professionals do everything they can to advocate for and provide care in a patient-centered manner that reassures patients that they will not be judged and that their primary concerns will be addressed.

“Patient-centered care within a culture of trust requires that care providers focus on patients’ primary concerns, and these diagnoses, when inappropriately used, can damage therapeutic rapport and interfere with successful care,” the memo continues.

In the past, some medical commands have supplemented this approach with forensic psychiatry, which incorporates the medical practice of psychiatry with the legal field to conduct administrative reviews for medical boards, Warner said.

The approach is similar to the workman’s compensation model that, though not utilized inappropriately, did not provide a standardized, Armywide process, he said. ♡

← BRIEFS CONT. FROM PAGE 5

ance for trainees of that age category had previously been two percentage points higher for both genders. But new rules spelled out in an All-Army Activity message, ALARACT 113/2012, have set those standards back to pre-2005 levels: 24 percent for male recruits and 30 percent for female recruits. Standards have not changed for older age categories or for those already in the active and reserve components.

More: <http://j.mp/se12fat>

New financial guidance may help moving troops

The Army Training Network achieved a significant milestone in July, surpassing 5 million clicks since it went live in April 2009. The network is the Army’s first-stop online portal to help units and leaders plan and conduct their unit training. It offers doctrine, tools, resources, products and videos, and now includes a Noncommissioned Officer Corner. The heart of ATN is Unit Training Management, which is the expansion of Army training doctrine found in the soon-to-be published ADP 7-0 and ADRP 7-0, “Training Units and Developing Leaders.”

More: <http://j.mp/se12atn>

New website honors service members’ valor

The Defense Department unveiled a new website in July that honors service members’ highest acts of valor. The site, *valor.defense.gov*, is designed to raise awareness of service members’ heroism and to help deter those who falsely claim military honors, officials said. Ultimately, the intent of the website is to honor Soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines who received the highest valor awards in operations since Sept. 11, 2001. The site launched with a complete listing of Medal of Honor recipients and in August added those who have received services crosses.

More: <http://j.mp/se12valor>

NCOs getting back barracks oversight

New program makes it easier to hold Soldiers accountable

BY JENNIFER MATTSON NCO Journal

Soldiers be warned — first sergeants are coming into your barracks.

Installation Management Command is rolling out the First Sergeant Barracks Program 2020, which holds the company commander and first sergeant accountable for the barracks where their Soldiers live.

Installations across the Army are participating in FSBP 2020, including Fort Bliss, Texas, where Command Sgt. Maj. Phillip Pandey, command sergeant major of the Fort Bliss garrison, is working with the 1st Armored Division and other resident units to implement the changes.

“Basically FSBP 2020 has units at the battalion level and below sign for their barracks,” Pandey said.

a request to contractors who would do the maintenance. The entire process could happen without ever holding the individual Soldier accountable because the commander or first sergeant might never know a work order was issued, Pandey said.

“With the old FSBP, there was the perception that the barracks belonged to [the contractors],” Pandey said. “That was not necessarily true; NCOs and those leaders were never told to get out of the barracks business. But for some reason, some units did better than others in being engaged in the issues that came from the barracks.”

The new system replaces contractors, who acted as managers of the barracks, with Soldiers and NCOs.

“The company commander now ‘owns’ that property,” Pandey said. “The Soldier now signs for it through his NCO channels.”

Each brigade will have a housing support team consisting of a sergeant first class and, depending on the size of the brigade, four to five junior Soldiers. They will assign and move Soldiers to the barracks, and some will be delegated to conduct inspections.

“The NCOs and leaders involved have direct responsibility to ensure that there is good order and discipline in the barracks,” Pandey said.

Under the old system, it was possible for Soldiers to damage Army equipment and not face any consequences. With rapid deployments and brigades on the move because of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Act, many Soldiers weren’t being held responsible for the damages in their barracks.

“We’re in a better position now. If the barracks are being misused, we’re in a better place to hold that Soldier accountable,” Pandey said.

At some installations, Soldiers will have to move to new barracks, so that battalions and brigades can consolidate their footprints.

The plan should not require any additional strain on the company first sergeants, though brigade housing support teams will need additional training to conduct their new missions.

“There are no additional duties,” Pandey said. “[NCOs] should’ve been in the barracks, anyway. If there was ever a perception that we weren’t in the barracks as NCOs and as first sergeants, this — commanders and leaders signing for property — reminds us that [that perception] doesn’t exist. It is our business, and we need to be involved and engaged and make sure our Soldiers are doing right in the barracks.” ♡



By signing for their barracks, first sergeants and company commanders will be more involved, Pandey said.

“The NCOs and leaders involved will have direct oversight in signing out the rooms, maintaining the rooms, checking the room,” Pandey said. “This is something [NCOs] should have been doing the entire time. But we weren’t.”

Under the old system, if a Soldier had a maintenance issue, the Soldier would call the work order hotline to send

▲ Command Sgt. Maj. John Simmons, command sergeant major of the 142nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, conducts a barracks inspection of Spc. Stephanie McAllister’s room Aug. 1 at Fort Bliss, Texas.

PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. CASEY MCGEORGE

Army, NFL team up on TBI helmet sensors

BY KATIE E. NELSON Army News Service

The National Football League is looking to put into the helmets of its players the same type of sensors used by the Army to evaluate concussive events that could lead to traumatic brain injury.

The Army is working with the NFL to help the league develop ways to protect football players from traumatic brain injury in much the same way the service hopes to protect its own Soldiers from TBI, said Lt. Col. Frank Lozano, product manager of Soldier protection with Program Executive Office Soldier.

There are similarities between the head injuries suffered by football players and those suffered by Soldiers, he said. “The NFL is very interested in having a similar type of capability that would aid doctors in diagnosing and understanding football players’ expe-

rience of concussions and blunt force trauma on the football field so that they can better offer medical aid at the appropriate time to those players,” he said.

Officials from the NFL and the Army meet periodically to discuss new ways to prevent and treat TBI, as well as to swap information and treatment tactics, Lozano said. “A lot of Soldiers are football fans, and a lot of football players and teams in the NFL are large supporters of the armed forces,” he said. “So it’s kind of a natural fit.”

The helmet sensors are used to measure the severity of impact to a Soldier’s head after a concussive event, such as an explosion. Later, that data can be used to further understand the relationship between concussive events and traumatic brain injury.

About 10,000 helmets have so far been introduced to troops in theater, Lozano said. ♡

Expert Infantryman Badge forum addresses relevancy

BY VINCE LITTLE Fort Benning Bayonet

Senior enlisted and civilian leaders from Army installations worldwide gathered at Fort Benning, Ga., in early August for a two-day Expert Infantryman Badge symposium. Subject-matter experts within the infantry community came to give their insight and feedback on maintaining rigorous, mission-focused and standards-based testing for Expert Infantryman Badge tasks across the force, Maneuver Center of Excellence officials said.

“The intent behind this was to bring in elements from the operational force to ensure we are training on the most relevant tasks,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Steven McClafflin, the U.S. Army Infantry School’s command sergeant major. “It also gives them the ability to tailor the EIB to train on the tasks that are most relevant to the operational environment they’re going to be in.”

The badge is a measure of individual soldiering skills and considered by many to be the hallmark of an infantryman’s career, officials said. It’s only awarded to infantry and Special Forces personnel.

Tasks, requirements and procedures can vary among units and from post to post. However, the test generally includes the Army Physical Fitness Test, day and night land navigation, a 12-mile foot march, and missions along urban, patrol and traffic-control point lanes that mimic what a Soldier might typically face in combat.

Sgt. Maj. Terry Easter, operations sergeant major for

the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, at Fort Campbell, Ky., called the Expert Infantryman Badge a coveted award that infantry Soldiers have always used to mark their excellence.

“It is our job as senior leaders to ensure it’s competitive, it shows true competency and it is an award of a true expert,” he said. “With the integration of new equipment, we’ve got to ensure our testing and training standards are evolving as fast as the new equipment is arriving. That is the only way to truly measure an expert infantry Soldier.”

Changes aren’t necessarily forthcoming or imminent to any EIB procedures, said Command Sgt. Maj. Dennis Zavodsky of the 7th Army Joint Multinational Training Command in Grafenwöhr, Germany.

“Each time, we get a little better. That’s why I don’t know if we necessarily want to throw the baby out with the bath water and say it doesn’t work,” he said. “You look at our young leaders today, and there are some increased capabilities. Our Soldiers have 10 years of combat experience. They’re smarter, [and] they’re better educated. How do we leverage the skills that are inherently present in all our Soldiers to get the most out of training, and still recognize experts?” ♡



TOOLKIT

Helping prevent Soldier suicides

BY JENNIFER MATTSON NCO Journal

The number of suicides has dramatically increased since the start of the United States' involvement in Afghanistan in 2001.

In fiscal year 2009, the Army reported 239 suicides across the reserve and active components of the Army. In that same time, 1,713 Soldiers attempted suicide. In fiscal year 2010, the number of suicides increased. But as the Army has stepped up its suicide prevention training, those numbers have slowly dropped.

In an effort to continue to see those numbers decrease, Vice Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III has ordered a suicide "stand down" day, scheduled for Sept. 27, at installations across the Army.

Many factors contribute to Soldiers considering suicide, according to the *Army Health Promotion Risk Reduction Suicide Prevention Report 2010* published by Gen. Peter Chiarelli, then the vice chief of staff of the Army. Soldiers, more than the American population at

large, often condone or participate in high-risk behavior. In addition, with multiple deployments during the past 11 years, many Soldiers and their families feel the stress and strain of combat.

Staff Sgt. Timothy Warden, an infantryman with 1st Battalion, 393rd Infantry Regiment, 479th Field Artillery Brigade, Division West, First U.S. Army, used his suicide prevention training Oct. 9, 2011, when he recognized warning signs in a fellow Soldier.

"We were at the 24/7 Shoppette, and I was getting ready to go to the range," Warden said. "An individual approached me and started talking about how it was over, how he was done. I asked if he was getting out or what he was doing, and he said, 'No, I'm done — if you know what I mean.'"

When Warden recognized the despair in the Soldier's voice, the alcohol on his breath and the cut marks on his wrists, he stepped outside to call the military police. Knowing such signs is important for all Soldiers and NCOs to help prevent suicides, he said. When a

Soldier feels hopelessness or helplessness, focuses only on the negative, or abuses alcohol or other substances that Soldier needs help.

"We need to be aware of our Soldiers and pay attention," Warden said. "I could have easily walked out and not paid attention, but I noticed the signs. We all need to be aware of what to look for."

In his report, Chiarelli outlined the stressors in the Army that can lead to suicide and how NCOs can help Soldiers cope with those stressors.

"We must identify our Soldiers who are at-risk, mitigate their stress and, if necessary, personally intervene to assist them," Chiarelli wrote. "By working

◀ A senior NCO examines the *Army Suicide Awareness Guide for Leaders*, a comprehensive, quick reference for identifying Soldiers at risk and connecting them to suicide-intervention resources. PHOTO BY

C. TODD LOPEZ



Warning Signs

The more alert Soldiers are to detecting potential suicides, the better able they'll be to prevent them. Below are some warning signs that are red flags a Soldier might need help:

-  **TALK OF SUICIDE**, including references in casual conversation or mentioning killing someone.
-  **FINALIZING PERSONAL AFFAIRS**, including writing a will or discussing his or her funeral.
-  **GIVING AWAY PROPERTY** or showing disregard for what happens to one's things.
-  **RELATIONSHIP ISSUES**, including problems with a boyfriend, girlfriend or spouse.
-  **WITHDRAWAL** from friends or usual activities, or showing a lack of interest.
-  **BIZARRE BEHAVIOR** or showing unusual behavior in a person you know well.
-  **PLANNING TO KILL**, including acquiring the means or talking about how they would.
-  **MISCONDUCT**, including Soldiers in trouble with an Article 15 or UCMJ action.
-  **OBSESSION WITH DEATH**, including music or art that references suicide.
-  **FINANCIAL PROBLEMS**, including not being able to pay monthly bills.

ACE: How to intervene

- A** **ASK YOUR BUDDY** about whether he or she is planning to commit suicide, and have the courage to stay calm and ask directly, "Are you thinking of killing yourself?"
- C** **CARE FOR YOUR BUDDY** by calmly controlling the situation, staying safe and not using force. Actively listen to what he or she says and provide relief. Remove items that can be used for suicide.
- E** **ESCORT YOUR BUDDY** to your chain of command, a chaplain, behavioral health professional or primary care provider or call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.

Suicide prevention: Army resources

- ▶ **1-800-273 TALK (8255)**: the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is available 24/7; Soldiers can press 1 for specialized military and veteran assistance. They may also visit the website, www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org
- ▶ **PREVENTSUICIDE.ARMY.MIL**: the Army's Suicide Prevention Program.
- ▶ **AR 600-24, Health Promotion, Risk Reduction and Suicide Prevention**: the Army's regulation governing how Army leaders should handle potential suicides. The publication may be downloaded at: <http://j.mp/AR600-24>
- ▶ **THE DEFENSE CENTER OF EXCELLENCE** for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury Outreach Center: info available at www.dcoe.health.mil, or by phone at 1-800-342-9647
- ▶ **AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION**: www.afsp.org
- ▶ **SUICIDE PREVENTION RESOURCE COUNCIL**: www.sprc.org/index.asp

SOURCE: OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF LEGISLATIVE LIAISON, APRIL 2012

together, we can provide holistic care for help-seeking Soldiers while acting firmly to reduce the high-risk population."

In his visits with Soldiers and NCOs around the Army, Sgt. Maj. of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III has emphasized what needs to be done to prevent suicide.

"It is a devastating loss when one of our own dies from suicide," Chandler said in his suicide prevention and stigma reduction message video. "We continue to implement programs, policies and services aimed at raising awareness, reducing risk

and providing support for those who need help."

Preventing suicide goes along with being a good leader, knowing your Soldiers and ensuring that they're taken care of, Chandler said.

"I'm calling on our noncommissioned officers to make a difference," Chandler said. "As the backbone of our Army, you are in the best position to be in the first line of defense." ♡

▶ **NEXT MONTH: CORRECTIVE ACTION**

SENIOR LEADERS COM

HIA



BAT

ZING

NCOs lead the charge to stop abuse within the ranks

BY JENNIFER MATTSON NCO Journal

A gang of U.S. service members in Europe inducts its new members by beating them, and one of the initiations results in a death. In Korea, a staff sergeant initiates new Soldiers by hitting them on the upper legs as they perform pushups. In Iraq, a Soldier suspected of trying to kill himself is found in the latrine and ordered to stand at parade rest for two hours in the sun. At yet another base, a Soldier is chided with racial slurs and decides to take his own life.

Though extreme cases like these may make the headlines, there are other instances that constitute hazing, which continues to occur in the Army despite being against Army and Department of Defense policy. Though many Soldiers do not realize it, hazing includes striking a newly promoted NCO's rank insignia repeatedly, "blood pinnings" and retaliatory "smoke sessions."

AR 600-20, *Army Command Policy*, includes a definition of hazing. By Army standards, hazing is cruel, abusive, oppressive or harmful behavior that may or may not include physical, emotional or psychological acts and can occur at any function where Soldiers are present.

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III speaks to Soldiers from D Battery, 5th Battalion, 7th Air Defense Artillery, March 22 during his visit to Rhine Ordnance Barracks, Germany. While there, Chandler denounced hazing in the armed forces. PHOTO BY RICK SCAVETTA



Sgt. Maj. of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III said the Army has to move away from all forms of hazing, including those that are recognized as traditions during a promotion or pinning ceremony.

“When you do blood stripes or blood wings, those are in fact examples of hazing,” Chandler said. “A way to recognize that professionalism or accomplishment that is not hazing would be to have a ceremony that recognizes that accomplishment and recognizes the individual’s professionalism by that specific event.

“Things like a spur ride, which are intended to show camaraderie, enhance the profession and recognize the history of the organization — those are not hazing events,” Chandler said. “The difference is that you aren’t doing cruel, abusive, oppres-

Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Bryan Battaglia, the senior enlisted advisor to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, discusses issues with Soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines on June 28 in Afghanistan. PHOTO BY MASTER SGT. TERRENCE HAYES

sive or harmful activities. That’s a very significant difference. When you pierce someone’s skin, in any manner, that is without a doubt an example of hazing.”

Chandler acknowledged that, in the past, hazing was condoned by commanders and NCOs. But he said the Army is moving away from that. Sec-

retary of the Army Leon Panetta and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin E. Dempsey developed a task force earlier this year to take a look at the policy, training and culture in order to make recommendations about any needed changes, Chandler said.

“There was a time and place where what we now consider hazing was accepted in our Army. We need to learn from that, and part of our responsibility now is to treat everybody with dignity and respect and to be professionals.”

— SGT. MAJ. OF THE ARMY RAYMOND F. CHANDLER III

“There was a time and place where what we now consider hazing was accepted in our Army,” Chandler said. “We need to learn from that, and part of our responsibility now is to treat everybody with dignity and respect and to be professionals.”

Changing the tradition of hazing

Hazing, in all of its forms, needs to be eradicated from the Army, as it is incompatible with Army values, tradition and leadership, Chandler said.

“Hazing can be something as simple as a gantlet, where you may have a Soldier who has been recognized for something outstanding or been promoted,” Chandler said. “His platoon would line up on either side of him, and then he would walk down the middle and be punched in the shoulder as hard as they could. That’s an example of hazing.

“It could be anything as simple as that to forcing someone to lie on the ground doing flutter kicks until whoever has ordered him to do that tells him to recover. Minor forms of correction are acceptable. But when it’s excessive, that’s when it becomes hazing.”

Sgt. Maj. Ralph L. Phillips wrote an ethics paper on hazing in the Army in 2008 while a Sergeants Major Course student at the U.S. Army Sergeants

THE ARMY’S HAZING POLICY

AR 600-20, *Army Command Policy*, updated Aug. 4, 2011, outlines the Army’s hazing policy. It states, “The Army has been and continues to be a values-based organization where everyone is encouraged to do what is right by treating others as they should be treated — with dignity and respect. Hazing is fundamentally in opposition to our values and is prohibited.” Hazing is considered as **one service member causing another to suffer or be exposed to activity that is cruel, abusive, oppressive or harmful**. Hazing includes:

- ▶ Any form of initiation, “rite of passage” or congratulatory acts that demean, demoralize or abuse Soldiers
- ▶ Physically striking another to inflict pain
- ▶ Piercing another’s skin in any manner
- ▶ Forcing or requiring the consumption of excessive amounts of food, alcohol, drugs or other substances
- ▶ Encouraging others to engage in illegal, harmful, or demeaning acts
- ▶ Verbal or psychological abuse

Those who violate the Army’s hazing policy may be prosecuted under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, to include: Article 92, failure to obey a lawful general order or regulation; Article 80, attempts; Article 81, conspiracy; Article 93, cruelty and maltreatment; Article 124, maiming; Article 128, assault; Article 133, conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman; and Article 134, drunk and disorderly conduct and/or soliciting another to commit an offense.

Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas. In the paper, he discussed some of the ethical implications of having to stop certain types of hazing that he himself had witnessed.

In one such instance, Phillips recounted when a Soldier was promoted to sergeant. The first sergeant of the unit had all of the NCOs in the unit line up and take their turn at striking

the new NCO. The hitting became a competition among the 40 NCOs to see who could hit the new NCO the hardest. No one stopped the process; however, a few NCOs chose not to hit the Soldier as forcefully, seeing that he was already in pain. To stop that type of behavior, Phillips ensured that all his junior Soldiers knew that striking a Soldier was never acceptable.

“Before a promotion ceremony and advancing a Soldier to the next grade, the first sergeant should state that striking or punching the new rank of the Soldier is, by definition, hazing,” Phillips wrote. “If Soldiers hear this at every



Sgt. Maj. of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III addresses students of Sergeants Major Course Class 63 on Aug. 16 at Fort Bliss, Texas. PHOTO BY JENNIFER MATTSO



Battaglia has spoken out about hazing in the military and seeks to help NCOs address it at the unit level. PHOTO BY MASTER SGT. TERRENCE HAYES

monthly promotion ceremony, then we are using effective leadership, enforcing standards and teaching what right looks like.”

All NCOs need to understand Army policy and uphold it as their standard in their units, Phillips said.

“NCOs are the standard-bearers, and when [they are] trained properly and led properly, standards will always be enforced,” Phillips said. “There are many leaders around today who [witnessed] one form or another of traditional (nonharmful) or nontraditional (harmful) hazing. It is simply a fact that our leaders before us did not fully enforce the official policy on hazing and, thus, did not show the force ‘what right looks like.’

“Those days are past, and as our Army moves forward today, NCOs are being trained properly on the Army’s policy on hazing and understand there is no tolerance,” he said. “The hazing policy is effectively being enforced today through effective

leadership. When violations do occur, those responsible will be reported, and the chain of command will take the appropriate action.”

DoD condemns hazing for all branches

Hazing is not tolerated among any of the services, said Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Bryan Battaglia, the senior enlisted advisor to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Panetta and Dempsey take the issue of hazing very

seriously and travel to DoD bases to speak about the military as a profession, Battaglia said. The NCO Corps is uniquely positioned to address the issue of hazing, he added.

“The majority of incidents where hazing takes place are probably in the enlisted force, only because the numbers of our enlisted are so much larger. But when a hazing incident — albeit isolated — may occur, there’s probably an NCO or petty officer who has either indirect knowledge or is not too far away,” Battaglia said. “We have to instill in our young leaders that when they see, witness, hear or experience any inkling of hazing taking place, they immediately step in.”

It is the responsibility of noncommissioned officers to hold their troops accountable and speak out when they witness acts of hazing, Battaglia said.

“We want our leaders to learn from what happened and to educate their subordinates that the treatment of their men and women is all about dignity and respect,” Battaglia said. “If we say our most important asset is our young men and women, then we must practice what we preach. If we don’t, then the noncommissioned officer has become part of the problem.”

Hazing can include acts of initiation, physical abuse or psychological abuse, Battaglia said. An example of psychological abuse may be a leader approving a young service member’s leave request only to cancel it at the last minute. This can inflict psychological harm on a young troop, Battaglia said.

“These unethical and illegal acts are

“Building esprit de corps at the platoon and squad level will stop this behavior. It all has to be about growth, not about demoralizing Soldiers. All service members are duty-bound to report hazing.”

— COMMAND SGT. MAJ. BERNIE KNIGHT

not going to be tolerated in our Armed Forces,” Battaglia said. “There are ways to celebrate with our young men and women and recognize the accomplishments of those who exceed and meet the standard, and we’re going to remain respectful and smart about how we execute those celebratory events.”

How hazing starts

Command Sgt. Maj. Bernie Knight, command sergeant major of U.S. Army Alaska, said hazing can start when junior noncommissioned officers mimic hazing behaviors that they themselves experienced.

“In most cases when you find hazing, you have an NCO in charge of it, and he has followers,” Knight said. “Soldiers follow their leaders, their noncommissioned officers. Sometimes an NCO is really good in combat, in training. But then these Soldiers follow him though he has a flaw and wants to go and haze a Soldier. A lot of times a Soldier will go along with it because they haven’t been in the Army long

“If we say our most important asset is our young men and women, then we must practice what we preach. If we don’t, then the noncommissioned officer has become part of the problem.”

— MARINE CORPS SGT. MAJ. BRYAN BATTAGLIA,
SENIOR ENLISTED ADVISOR TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

enough to fully develop our values, or they’re scared themselves. That’s how it starts.”

Knight said the way to stop hazing at the unit level is to build pride in the unit and cohesion as a team.

“Building esprit de corps at the platoon and squad level will stop this behavior,” Knight said. “It all has to be about growth, not about demoralizing Soldiers. All service members are duty-bound to report hazing.”

When platoon or squad leadership fails, it’s up to senior leaders to point

out what right looks like and to hold those conducting hazing activities accountable, Knight said.

“We have the Uniform Code of Military Justice that will hold folks accountable who have committed such acts,” Knight said. “It’s important that leaders catch it and apply the appropriate action or punishment deserving of the offense.”

Creating a professional environment

At U.S. Army Alaska, the command group uses resources from the Center for Army Profession and Ethic to conduct scenario-based training as well as develop guidelines for their junior noncommissioned officers to train on how to identify and combat hazing, Knight said.

The Center for the Army Profession and Ethic, headquartered at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., proactively seeks to develop the character of all Army leaders.

Sgt. Maj. David L. Stewart, the senior enlisted advisor for CAPE, said his organization is focused on the Army as a profession and what it means to be a professional. New emerging doctrine lists the five essential characteristics of the Army profession as trust, military expertise, honorable service, esprit de corps and stewardship of the profession. It is that first characteristic — trust — that NCOs need to focus on the most to combat hazing, Stewart said.

“Trust is the bedrock of our profession,” Stewart said. “If we cannot stop hazing each other, bullying each other or calling each other names, then how can we trust each other as an organization?”

CAPE produces virtual training,

THE DIFFERENCE: HAZING VS. CORRECTIVE ACTION	
Often, the line between corrective action and hazing is blurred. As a rule of thumb, corrective action should always be directly related to training the Soldier ; punishment should be left to the discretion of the commander:	
UNACCEPTABLE	ACCEPTABLE
After failing to bring all required gear for a mission, a Soldier is ordered to be in full combat uniform 24 hours a day for a week.	The Soldier is ordered to participate in uniform inspections in different uniforms three or four times a day for three days.
After failing to fasten his seat belt, a Soldier is ordered to stand at the gate with a sign stating, “Fasten your seat belt or this could be you.”	The Soldier is ordered to be posted at the entry to the company parking lot to conduct a seat belt check as personnel leave for the day.
After being found asleep at work, a Soldier is ordered to pull consecutive shifts for two days without sleep.	The Soldier is supervised going to bed nightly for a week and referred to a medical professional if the problem continues.
Because he was out of uniform, a Soldier is ordered to wear gloves and eye protection 24-hours a day, including showers and sleep	The Soldier is ordered to prepare a briefing covering the proper wear and necessity of gloves and eye protection.

“We rely on trust and respect as a profession to operate in the rigors of combat. If we can’t squelch these things, then we’re obviously going to have problems with people trusting our leaders and with trust between Soldiers. That affects the mission downrange.”

— SGT. MAJ. DAVID L. STEWART

online videos and case scenarios to help Soldiers understand the Army as a profession. The lessons can be accessed at <http://cape.army.mil>. In addition, CAPE is rolling out a Master Army Profession Ethics Trainer course, in which commanders can designate sergeants first class or above to assist them by holding character development training for a unit.

CAPE is designed to foster an Army environment that exhibits and respects professionalism, Stewart said. Part of that mission includes up-

dating doctrine, training and policy. It also means helping leaders implement changes in the unit’s culture to make hazing as unacceptable as stealing in the barracks is, Stewart said, citing a recent analogy made by the SMA.

“People who commit hazing are kind of like a barracks thief,” Stewart

said. “They steal something as precious to the Army as the trust of our subordinates and our leaders. [They violate] one of our core values — stealing respect from us. That person should be [removed from the ranks] much like a barracks thief.”

Stopping hazing is vital for unit morale and for accomplishing the mission downrange, Stewart said.

“We rely on trust and respect as a profession to operate in the rigors of combat,” Stewart said. “If we can’t squelch these things, then we’re obviously going to have problems with people trusting our leaders and with trust between Soldiers. That affects the mission downrange.”

To contact Jennifer Mattson, email jennifer.mattson@us.army.mil.

Spc. Kathleen Gatts, a female engagement team member with 2nd Squadron, 38th Cavalry Regiment, 504th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, answers a question posed to her by Chandler, who spoke April 4 at Forward Operating Base Spin Boldak, Afghanistan, about the importance of the Army’s anti-hazing and sexual assault policies. PHOTO BY SPC. SCOTT MATHESON



No place for bullying, hazing in the Army

BY DAVID VERGUN Army News Service

All service members have a personal responsibility to intervene in and stop any occurrences of hazing or bullying, said Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, in a recent statement.

"[This behavior] undermines our values, tarnishes our profession and erodes the trust that bonds us," Dempsey said.

A recent letter signed by Secretary of the Army John M. McHugh, Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Ray Odierno and Sgt. Maj. of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III, underscores the chairman's position.

"The very foundation of what we do depends on trust, and trust depends on the treatment of all Soldiers with dignity and respect by fellow Soldiers and leaders," the letter reads. "Without this, our profession is placed in jeopardy, our readiness suffers and our mission success is at risk."

The Army's senior leadership said that hazing or bullying has no place in any component of the Army, amongst Soldiers or civilians.

Hazing, a type of bullying that is usually tied to organizational initiation rituals, can be both physical and mental, said Dr. Rene Robichaux, the Army's Social Work program manager.

Robichaux said hazing often occurs in "elite" military units, and that much of it is psychological and directed at newcomers. Hazing is often rationalized as necessary for one to become "hardened" or "inoculated" for the rigors of combat, he said.

There is a gray area between what is considered effective training and what may cross the line into hazing-related bullying.

Robichaux became aware first-hand of ritualized hazing during his college fraternity days, he said. He experienced it again in 1967, while going through qualifications on a Navy submarine.

"I knew it was definitely hazing, and that it was time-limited, and completely tied to the time that it took to become proficient on that submarine," Robichaux said.

The best way to curtail hazing is for unit leaders to get involved and not turn a blind eye to this behavior, he said.

Though hazing often happens in elite military units as a form of initiation, bullying can occur in any unit and even within Soldiers' families.

"Bullies were often once bullied themselves as children and some are not even aware that they are bullying," Robichaux said. "The abusive behavior can be physical, but more often is psychological, talking down to someone, treating them as inferior or inadequate, constantly criticizing and controlling their behavior."

Both bullying and hazing can result in psychological stress, depression and in some cases, "could result in a longer term response that would fit the diagnostic requirements of post-traumatic stress disorder," Robichaux said.

Bullies often had childhoods marked by abuse, he said.

"They often have experienced abuse and neglect as children," Robichaux said. "The negative behavior of their parents may have been unpredictable. Perhaps they came home late after a night of drinking and meted out punishment in unexpected or inappropriate ways."

The military often can provide the predictability such individuals did not have when they were younger.

"The military structure seen in basic training and [advanced individual training] is appealing because of the predictability and routine," Robichaux said. "For the Soldier coming from a chaotic background that equates to safety. You're told what to do and when to do it."

"After a year or two, however, they often get into a marital relationship, move off base, get into financial difficulties or have relationship problems, and the bullying and abusive behaviors begin to emerge."

Bullies can also be found higher up in the ranks. Although leaders are supposed to look out for the welfare of their Soldiers, they are sometimes the ones who do the bullying.

"I worked in a section once where the department supervisor, a very large and intimidating colonel, would verbally threaten people and get right in their face," Robichaux said. "In today's organizational climate, he would have been removed and forced to retire. Fifteen years ago the leadership elected to move his victims to safe locations, while allowing him to continue his abusive behavior until he retired after 30 years of service."

In cases where supervisors are themselves the bullies, Robichaux advised going up the chain of command to the supervisor's boss to report the abuse. If that person's supervisor doesn't act, then the inspector general, or in some cases the equal employment opportunity representative, should be notified as bullies rarely self-report, he said.

"Unfortunately, I've never known a case of a bully voluntarily seeking help," he said.

For Soldiers and family members suffering from abuse, there is help available. Army social workers are in an excellent position to assist. Social workers can be found in family advocacy, where they investigate child abuse and domestic violence.

Others assist in direct support of wounded warriors or practice in primary care, behavior health, and marriage and family therapy. Other professionals can help as well, including chaplains, counselors and first sergeants.

Robichaux said he's seen fewer cases of hazing and abuse during the last 10 to 15 years.

"We as a society have become more aware of the problem and are less tolerant of these types of behaviors," he said. "Plus, the Army culture has changed over time." ❧

'YOU LEAD FROM THE FRONT'

Clubs keep Audie Murphy's
legacy alive in Army

STORY BY CLIFFORD KYLE JONES
NCO Journal

Staff Sgt. Melissa Snow displays her Sgt.
Audie Murphy Club Membership Medallion
at Joint Base Lewis-McChord after her
induction ceremony. PHOTO BY DAVID POE





First Sgt. Torland Edwards, president of the Fort Hood, Texas, Sgt. Audie Murphy Club, holds up a design for the club's new polo at a meeting of the group. PHOTO BY CLIFFORD KYLE JONES

The most decorated Soldier in history was more than an example to his fellow service members. For many in the United States and across the world, Audie Murphy personified all that was best about the U.S. Army. Today's members of his namesake, the Sgt. Audie Murphy Club, strive to live up to his ideals. The original SAMC started in 1986 at Fort Hood, Texas, home to III Corps and the 1st Cavalry Division. It was a fitting tribute to Murphy — the man who became the most famous veteran of World War II, an accomplished author, popular songwriter and a Hollywood movie star was born and raised in Kingston, Texas, just a few hours away from Fort Hood.

As the organization grew at Fort Hood and more of the post's most exemplary noncommissioned officers became members, SAMCs would eventually spread throughout III Corps, then to all of U.S. Army Forces Command, and in 1994, Armywide. Several thousand NCOs now proudly claim membership in SAMCs at posts and commands throughout the United States. The original organization at Fort Hood has remained a pillar at the post and a beacon to other Audie Murphy clubs, Fort Hood SAMC members said.

"We are the best club in the Army," said 1st Sgt. Torland Edwards, first sergeant of Bravo Battery, 1st Battalion, 21st Field Artillery Regiment, 41st Fires Brigade, and president of Fort Hood's SAMC. "We get calls from

Fort Bliss, Fort Sill, fort whatever, asking how we conduct business. We definitely lead the way as far as the Sgt. Audie Murphy Club.”

While Edwards’ claim to have “the best club” may be up for debate at some other post’s SAMCs, club members Armywide would agree that the club’s membership typifies everything that’s best about the United States’ NCO Corps. And it all starts with the club’s motto, taken from a quote by Murphy: “You lead from the front.” It’s a phrase so common in the Army today, it’s easy to forget what it meant to Murphy and his Soldiers. And it’s an ethos that is nowhere more apparent than in the actions that earned Murphy his Medal of Honor.

In January 1945, during the battle for Holtzwihr, France, Murphy’s unit of 128 Soldiers had sustained attacks that cut its effective strength to 19. Murphy, who was the company commander (Staff Sgt. Murphy had received a battlefield commission in October 1944), sent all of his men to the rear while he held off the attacking Germans with his M1 carbine. When he ran out of ammunition, Murphy climbed atop a disabled and burning enemy M10 tank destroyer and used its .50-caliber machine gun to fend off a company of German infantry. He was able to use a telephone line to call in artillery strikes, and despite being wounded in the leg, held the enemy at bay for almost an hour. When what remained of his unit moved forward to his position, he organized a counterattack and drove the Germans from Holtzwihr.

The Medal of Honor was the capstone of his combat career, most of which took place while Murphy was an enlisted Soldier, that included every medal for valor that the United States bestowed at the time, including the Distinguished Service Cross, two Silver Stars, the Legion of Merit and two Bronze Stars with “V” devices.

His other awards include three Purple Hearts, three awards from France and one from Belgium. In total, for his actions during his less than two years in combat, he received 33 U.S. and foreign awards.

Murphy enlisted in the Army in

June 1942, but didn’t see combat until July 1943, when he and the rest of the 3rd Infantry Division invaded Italy. He was promoted to first lieutenant in August 1945 and was given a liaison role. After leaving active duty, he continued his service in the Reserve Corps and joined the Texas National Guard when the United States entered the Korean War. However, his unit was never deployed, and he never saw combat again.

About Audie Murphy

▶ **Audie Leon Murphy was a legend in his own time — a war hero, movie actor, writer of country and Western songs, and poet.**

▶ **Murphy was born June 20, 1924, on a sharecropper’s farm in North Texas. As a boy, he chopped cotton for \$1 a day and was noted for his feats of derring-do and accuracy with a gun. He had only five years of schooling and was orphaned at age 16.**

▶ **After being refused enlistment during World War II**

in both the Marines and Army Paratroopers for being too small (5’5”) and underweight (110 lbs.), he enlisted in the U.S. Army a few days after his 18th birthday.

▶ **Murphy was assigned to the 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, and fought in North Africa, Sicily, Italy, France and Germany.**

▶ **He earned a battlefield commission for his courage and leadership ability, as well as citations and decorations including every medal for valor that America gives. He is the highest decorated Soldier in American history.**

▶ **Discharged from the Army on Sept.**

21, 1945, Murphy went to Hollywood at the invitation of movie star James Cagney. He remained in California for the rest of his life and worked as an actor and a producer.

▶ **He acted in 44 films, starring in 39 of them. His best known film is “To Hell and Back,” adapted from the best-selling book of his war experiences. Most of his movies were Westerns.**

▶ **In 1955, he was voted the Most Popular Western Actor in America by the Motion Picture Exhibitors.**

▶ **He wrote the lyrics to 16 country and Western songs, the most popular of which was “Shutters and Boards,” written with Scott Turner in 1962. The song was recorded by over 30 pop singers, including Jerry Wallace, Dean Martin and Porter Wagoner.**

▶ **In 1950, Murphy joined the 36th Infantry Division (“T-Patchers”) of the Texas National Guard and served with the unit until 1966.**

▶ **Murphy died May 28, 1971, in a plane crash on a mountaintop near Roanoke, Va. His body was recovered two days later on Memorial Day.**

SOURCE: SGT. AUDIE MURPHY CLUB STUDY GUIDE



“What Audie accomplished during this period is most significant and probably will never be repeated by another Soldier, given today’s high-tech type of warfare,” says the official Audie L. Murphy Memorial Website, audiemurphy.com. “The U.S. Army has always declared that there will never be another Audie Murphy.”

Yet his courage and dedication to his Soldiers live on among SAMC members, even if they can never

expect to receive his level of recognition.

"I think the club is all about excellence among the NCO ranks," Edwards said. "It's a very distinguished and prestigious club, and it's known across the Army. Every Soldier, every NCO — especially NCOs — knows about it."

Edwards initially joined the SAMC in 2003 when he was with the Eighth U.S. Army in South Korea. He has been with the Fort Hood organization since being stationed at the post about two years ago. The Fort Hood group has about 200 members, about 50 of whom Edwards said are active with the club.

As the Army began to draw down its forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, the professional development and community outreach functions of SAMC became more important to the post's mission, and the Fort Hood commander — Lt. Gen. Donald M. Campbell Jr., commanding general of III Corps — and its command sergeant major — Command Sgt. Maj. Arthur L. Coleman Jr., command sergeant major of III Corps — have worked to ensure that the SAMC thrives, Edwards said.

"Here [the club] is driven by Gen. Campbell and Command Sgt. Maj. Coleman," Edwards said. "They push the club a lot. ... We have very good top cover and support."

By making the SAMC a priority, the post's leadership has cleared the way for NCOs to take a lead role at the post, and Fort Hood knows that it can count on the SAMC's members to represent the post at events and functions.

"Whenever Command Sgt. Maj. Coleman wants to send the best representation for Fort Hood, he looks toward the Sgt. Audie Murphy Club," said Master Sgt. Wayne B. Barnes, the NCO in charge of the SAMC color guard and the brigade operations sergeant for the 48th Chemical Brigade. "Whenever he wants to put his best

History of SAMC

► **The original club was started at Fort Hood, Texas, in 1986. There were several key people at Fort Hood — officer, enlisted, civil service and a Killeen civilian — who were instrumental in getting the club up and running.**

► **Leading the effort were Lt. Gen. Crosbie Saint, then the III Corps commander; his command sergeant major, Command Sgt. Maj. George L. Horvath; III Corps' awards clerk, Jean Crisp; and Don Moore, a Killeen artist who assisted with designing the club's logo and awards.**

► **In 1991, then-III Corps Commander Lt. Gen. Pete Taylor and Command Sgt. Maj. Richard B. Cayton expanded the Fort Hood installation club to include all of III Corps. This included Fort Riley, Kansas; Fort Sill, Okla.; Fort Bliss, Texas; Fort Polk, La.; and Fort Carson, Colo.**

► **In 1993, Cayton was voted into the Sgt. Audie Murphy Club by the membership before being named the Forces Command command sergeant major. Soon thereafter, the club became FORSCOM-wide, including the Army Reserve and National Guard.**

► **In 1994 at conference hosted by the sergeant major of the Army, the Sgt. Audie Murphy Club spread Armywide to all commands, with installations retaining the selection process for their own NCOs.**

foot forward, it's the SAMC that goes to do it."

Club members represent the post at a wide array of functions. "We support, well, everything," Edwards said, including change of command ceremonies, fundraisers, community events and charitable outreach work.

"Not only are we military-oriented, but we're also community-oriented," said 1st Sgt. Carol Hymes, secretary of the Fort Hood SAMC and first sergeant of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 57th Expeditionary Signal Battalion, 11th Signal Brigade. "We do a lot of community service, a lot of volunteer hours throughout the community. ... Wherever they call for us, we'll go. And we support any color guard — posting of the colors anywhere — graduations, basketball games, hockey games, college events. We work with the youth at the JROTC Academy at Waco."

Much as Audie Murphy became one of the most recognizable faces of the Army after World War II through his appearances in 44 films, many of them Westerns, and his highly successful autobiography, *To Hell And Back* (which would later become a movie in which he starred), the members of SAMC have become one of the most visible faces of the U.S. NCO Corps through their appearances at high-profile military events and involvement in their communities. It's this charitable work that has given members some of their best memories as part of the Fort Hood SAMC.

Hymes said visiting wounded veterans at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio has been among the most rewarding events of her time in the SAMC, and she was proud the club has worked to improve living conditions for homeless veterans. Edwards agreed.

"Everything that has to do with the vets is really the key, because they know what the club means and what it's

all about," he said. "It's more pride, coming from me, to go and visit those wounded warriors and veterans."

Other outreach efforts by the Fort Hood SAMC were particularly notable to Barnes, who entered the Fort Hood club in 2000 and has been with the post's group off and on for eight years.

"One of the previous two times I was here in the club, we did a lot of community work," he said. "During the holidays, we collected toys for underprivileged children, as well as giving out Thanksgiving baskets. Just being able to help people at the time of the year when they need it the most was pretty rewarding."

Staff Sgt. Jermaine Watkins, a squad leader in a transportation platoon for A Company, 15th Brigade Support Battalion, and a member of the SAMC's color guard team, is one of the Fort Hood SAMC's newest members. Though he was inducted just this sum-

mer, he has already been active with the group long enough to appreciate what it does for the community.

“One of the most rewarding things I’ve done since being in the club was going out to the Boys & Girls Center out in Killeen and helping them restore their facility and providing them with some sports equipment so they could feel special, feel like someone actually cares about them,” he said. “And we let our presence be felt out in the community at the same time.”

Watkins, who passed his boards to become a member of the Fort Hood SAMC in May, felt proud to be accepted into the exclusive club and said he was looking forward to continuing the good work his group has done in the Army and in the community.

“It means that I’m a member, along with these other senior NCOs who perform excellently and became members of this club to support this community, which is something that I would like to continue to do,” he said about his admission to the club. “It also gives me a sense of pride to know that I was chosen by these senior NCOs to become a member of the organization.”

Becoming a member of the SAMC is a rigorous process, and starts with a recommendation from a Soldier’s chain of command. Members of the SAMC conduct boards to determine admission, and nominees must be prepared to present information about themselves and their knowledge of Army regulations, field manuals and training publications. They also must be intimately familiar with the Audie Murphy story, and be able to identify qualities that they share with Murphy, as well as answering situational questions about leadership. Only NCOs are eligible for membership.

“I look for an NCO who exceeds the standards,” Edwards said. “We have bylaws that we set for an NCO to submit a packet to come to the board. But before that, we expect that NCO to have been screened by his or her leadership — by the sergeant major at the battalion or brigade level. And we only accept the best of the best.”

Hymes had a few other attributes she looked for in potential members of



Staff Sgts. Ernest Smith III and David Gann (wearing medallions) receive congratulations from well-wishers after a Sergeant Audie Murphy Club induction ceremony Nov. 20, 2009, at Gunners Inn, Fort Sill, Okla. PHOTO BY JEFF CRAWLEY

the club: “well-rounded, highly motivated, self-starter.”

Hymes said she looks for a Soldier who “is willing to teach, coach and mentor, both up the ranks and down; is not afraid to stand up for what they believe in; has no problems when it comes to discipline; ... and is a true believer in what Audie Murphy stood for, which is leading from the front.”

Being accepted into the club is only the beginning of a member’s education in leadership and what Audie Murphy stood for. Members of the Fort Hood SAMC said one of the most valuable things about the club is being able to learn about leadership from their peers and mentors in the SAMC.

“Our senior mentors provide us with that leadership development to help us toward our next job or next step, whether it be in the military or civilian,” Barnes said.

That professional development isn’t limited to members of the SAMC; it helps Soldiers throughout the Army.

“Through the coaching and mentoring that we’ve received from our senior mentors in the Audie Murphy Club, I’ve also learned how to engage all Soldiers and become a better mentor,” Hymes said. “I take what I’ve learned and I share it with [my Soldiers], so it’s

broadening the knowledge. ... We’re able to share the knowledge of our areas of expertise, so it truly helped me out. One [of the members] would have experienced something that I’ve never experienced, but they’ve shared it with me. So when I did experience it, I knew exactly how to attack it.”

Because the members of his SAMC come from a variety of military occupational specialties and roles, Edwards has found that the club has helped him and the other SAMC members make Fort Hood, known as “The Great Place,” an even better place to be.

“Being that this club is mostly senior NCOs, me, as a first sergeant, I kind of needed this club here, because I was boxed in down there in B Battery, and now I get to branch out,” Edwards said. “I would never have probably met 1st Sgt. Hymes or Master Sgt. Barnes and built a work rapport with them if I wasn’t a part of this club, because The Great Place is so big, and we are going 100 miles an hour in different directions. ... But we have relationships now, so it definitely builds relationships among senior NCOs, and young junior NCOs, as well.” ♡

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A CLUB FOR ALL EUROPE'S BEST

Club models the traits of
the archetypal NCO

STORY & PHOTOS BY MICHAEL L. LEWIS
NCO Journal

Sgt. 1st Class Jesus Serrano, the president of the 7th Army/Joint Multinational Training Command chapter of the Sgt. Morales Club, shows off his membership medallion after an induction ceremony June 1 in Vilseck, Germany.



Command Sgt. Maj. David Davenport, command sergeant major of U.S. Army Europe, offers advice to new members of the Sgt. Morales Club on June 1 after an induction ceremony in Vilseck, Germany.

Sgt. Morales may have existed only in myth. But the dedication to duty, professionalism and mentoring of Soldiers that he represents for the members of his namesake club is very much real. And nearly 40 years after the first Sgt. Morales Club was established, it is still the paragon of leadership for the NCOs of U.S. Army Europe.

“This club is near and dear to my heart,” said Sgt. 1st Class Jesus Serrano, an instructor at the 7th U.S. Army/Joint Multinational Training Command NCO Academy at Grafenwöhr, Germany, and the president of the JMTC chapter of the club. “We often talk about NCO development, professionalism, training our Soldiers and

mentorship, and that’s exactly what our club stands for.”

The medallion that is a symbol both of club membership and the demanding application process is a sign of excellence that any NCO should strive for, said Command Sgt. Maj. David Davenport, the command sergeant major of USAREUR.

“When you wear that medallion around your neck, it’s a tangible reference that defines professionalism,” he said. “For some, the mark that you are an expert in your craft is earning the Expert Infantryman Badge or the Expert Field Medical Badge. For Soldiers in other [military occupational specialties], it could be getting your Airborne wings or your Air Assault wings — something that says I stepped up to the challenge and accomplished

something. The Sgt. Morales Club does that for the entire NCO Corps. It includes everybody; it doesn't segregate you by MOS. It's about your skills, your attributes, your leadership in taking care of Soldiers and their families. That's how you get recognized in the Sgt. Morales Club."

The club was the brainchild of Lt. Gen. George S. Blanchard, who in 1973 became the commander of VII Corps in Germany. Having served as a sergeant in the coast artillery during World War II, he knew what was required to be an effective NCO. But in the shadow of the Vietnam War, he felt the American NCOs serving in Europe were not living up to those expectations, Serrano said.

"Blanchard noticed a general decrease in efficiency, morale and performance in the NCO Corps," he said. "He wanted to establish a club that would bring [pride] back and bring brothers-in-arms together."

Seeking a model who would personify the hallmark traits of NCOs and their ability to overcome adversity, Blanchard invented the archetypal "Sgt. Morales." A squad leader in an engineer battalion, Morales was described as a "98-pound weakling" who entered the Army from his native Puerto Rico with only limited command of English and a GED.

But Morales had plenty of drive, determination and grit. Always looking out for his Soldiers and never shy to get his hands dirty, he would volunteer to cut his squad members' hair when they couldn't afford it at the end of the month. He hosted his Soldiers and their families at his quarters for informal social gatherings once a month — prototypical Family Readiness Groups — and in his three years as squad leader, never had a Soldier go AWOL.

"Sgt. Morales had a lot in his favor, but no special privileges," the club's official biography says. "He just worked hard at his job to the best of his ability. He was an exemplary leader in whom his Soldiers believed."

In the four decades since, more than 350 NCOs have been inducted into the club, all hoping to be real-life examples of the legendary NCO's integrity and professionalism.

"How do we train our Soldiers to be competent noncommissioned officers? Members of the Sgt. Morales Club exemplify that," Serrano said. "Junior NCOs see Sgt. Morales Club members doing that — leading by example, training from experience. Members are well-rounded NCOs who are creative and innovative thinkers. That's who [junior NCOs] want to emulate."

Like the similar Sgt. Audie Murphy Club that was later created for NCOs stationed in the United States, the Sgt. Morales Club is well known for helping others, said Sgt. 1st Class Paul Fluharty, a fire support observer/controller trainer at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center at Hohenfels, Germany. Fluharty was inducted into the JMTC chapter as an honorary member in June. As an Audie Murphy member, Fluharty said he applied for honorary membership in the Morales club so he could stay active in his community.

"I wanted to help out more with the Sgt. Morales Club while I'm over here stationed in Europe," he said. "Seeing as I'm away from Sgt. Audie Murphy Club chapters here, I can still do my part over here alongside these guys

while I'm stationed here."

Fluharty said he hopes to become a full-fledged member of the Morales club someday, just as Serrano, a former honorary member, did. Honorary members participate in club activities, but do not receive the medallion or other tokens of membership.

"I came [to Europe] as a Sgt. Audie Murphy Club member already, and I asked about the club to get involved in the community," Serrano said. "But I didn't want to be just an honorary member, knowing I was capable to go through the same process. I wanted to be able to mentor other people and say, 'Hey, if I can do it, so can you.'"

Serrano said the most important benefit of membership in the club is representing the NCO Corps throughout U.S. Army Europe.

"Once members are inducted, they are advocates and participants in the community," Serrano said. "Some of the things we've done in the Grafenwöhr area are a toy drive for one of the local orphanages, and we serve meals during holidays like Thanksgiving and Christmas. We have Sgt. Morales Club members out there, up front, in the

Becoming a member

Membership in the Sgt. Morales Club is open to corporals through sergeants first class who are assigned or attached to a U.S. Army Europe command, or who are an NCO in the army of a partner nation. Prospective members must mentor at least two Soldiers, display proficiency in their MOS, and possess excellent marksmanship and physical fitness scores. The selection process has four phases:

▶ **In the first phase, an NCO is identified by his or her first sergeant, who compiles a nomination packet. "The first sergeant identifies that NCO who goes above and beyond just meeting the standard," said Sgt. 1st Class Jesus Serrano, president of the 7th Army/Joint Multinational Training Command chapter of the club.**

▶ **Phase two consists of an initial selection board held at the battalion level. There, a panel of senior noncom-**

missioned officers scrutinize the NCO's uniform and appearance, and ask basic soldiering questions.

▶ **Those who pass the initial board advance to the third phase, an intermediate selection board held at the brigade level. There, a panel of command sergeants major ask rigorous situational and experience-based questions based on doctrine, policies and regulations. "They really hand-pick exceptional noncommissioned officers to move on to the final phase," Serrano said.**

▶ **Phase four is at the installation level. Again, a panel of command sergeants major comprises the board. This board ultimately approves membership into the club.**

Selection boards are held about once every quarter, Serrano said. Though membership was formerly for life, it can now be revoked for behavior that does not uphold the club's standards.

serving lines, just trying to give back something to Soldiers so they can see the epitome of noncommissioned officers and what NCOs do.”

That role, leading by example, is what led Sgt. 1st Class Ponce Palomino, an infantryman with Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, to apply for membership. Like Fluharty, he was inducted in June.

“I’ve wanted to join this club since

I first became a sergeant in 2002, because I saw that most of the senior NCOs who I worked with had done it,” he said. “It shows Soldiers and junior NCOs what to strive for.”

Palomino initially applied in 2009, but because of deployments did not make his final board appearance until this year.

“I kept at it because it’s a privilege to be a part of this,” he said. “I think it will help me improve my influence on

my Soldiers, show them what they can achieve.”

With increasing numbers of international soldiers being trained at USAREUR facilities, the time is ripe to broaden the club’s reach, Davenport said. In June, he and USAREUR’s commander, Lt. Gen. Mark Hertling, announced that NCOs from European armies will now be considered for membership.

“Gen. Hertling and I were attending an induction ceremony this summer, and I looked at him and asked, ‘Why don’t we have our partners up here on stage with our Soldiers?’” Davenport said. “And he said, ‘I was thinking the exact same thing.’”

“I really want to re-energize the club,” he said. “In our Army, this sets [these] noncommissioned officers apart from other NCOs. This is one of the ways we identify who is the best.”

Serrano said NCOs from partner nations will be a perfect fit in the Europe-centric club.

“The club was established to promote the highest ideals of integrity, professionalism and leadership for the enlisted force serving Europe,” he said. “The club is unique to Europe; it is the only club that signifies that level of NCO professionalism and excellence.”

However, induction into the club is not intended to be the end goal, Serrano said. Membership has both its privileges and its responsibilities.

“This club is a lot more than just a process or a medallion,” he said. “It doesn’t stop here. This is just the beginning of a whole new way of people viewing you, the way you carry yourself, the way you’re exposed to the community.”

“NCOs who put forth the effort to get inducted, they show they are willing to go the extra mile as a leader,” Fluharty said. “When you get inducted, it’s not about what happened up to this point, it’s about starting now and what you do after.” ♡

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Lt. Gen. Mark Hertling, commander of U.S. Army Europe, places a Sgt. Morales Club medallion on the neck of Sgt. 1st Class Jeffrey Lena on June 1 during the induction ceremony.





Soldiers prepare to lay a wreath at the gravesite of World War II hero Sgt. Audie Murphy at Arlington National Cemetery on June 20, the Medal of Honor recipient's birthday. PHOTO BY JIM DRESBACH

Club members gather to honor Murphy on his birthday

BY SGT. 1ST CLASS TYRONE C. MARSHALL JR.
Armed Forces Press Service

Sgt. Audie Murphy Club members from across the country gathered June 20 at the grave of America's most-decorated Soldier for a wreath-laying ceremony on what would have been the Medal of Honor recipient's 88th birthday.

Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Bryan B. Battaglia, senior enlisted advisor to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, joined Soldiers from the Military District of Washington Sgt. Audie Murphy Club at Arlington National Cemetery in honoring the club's namesake.

"Eighty-eight years ago today, we see a young man like Audie Leon Murphy, who would become such a great American hero ... through his life — especially the life he served protecting our nation," Battaglia said. "[It's] quite impressive."

Battaglia noted that Murphy attained the rank of staff sergeant just a year and a half after joining the Army. He received a battlefield commission in October 1944, and rose to the rank of major.

"Audie may have been the last American war hero," said the chapter's treasurer, Staff Sgt. Tanner Welch. "He was the best combat Soldier in the 200-plus year

history of the United States."

Battaglia said Audie Murphy is buried next to "thousands and thousands of great American service men and women," but is special in his own right.

"I think his service in the Army goes beyond just in the Army," he said after the ceremony, reflecting on Murphy's legacy. "I'd like it to resonate throughout all the services. He wasn't worried about awards and decorations. The man was there to accomplish a mission, he was there to protect his country, and he was there to protect his men and women. And that's all he really cared about."

Master Sgt. Flora McKnight, operations officer for the Military District of Washington, said the entire club strives to emulate Murphy's example.

"We do this in order to honor [him]," she said. "Through his abilities as a noncommissioned officer, he took care of Soldiers, and that's what we do — we take care of Soldiers and give back to the community."

"Through selflessness ... we have an opportunity to give back to others and to show others the correct way doing that," McKnight continued. "The selflessness comes from us giving back to our community — not only the military community, but our civilian community — because we all form a bond." ❧



BRINGING HOME GOLD

The 46 gold medals Team USA won at the Summer Olympic Games in London included one by an NCO for record-setting marksmanship.

BY JENNIFER MATTSON NCO Journal



Juggling training for the Olympics and training Soldiers can be a tall order, but **Sgt. Vincent C. Hancock** did just that—and did it so well, he brought home the Olympic gold for Team USA.

Hancock, who is assigned to the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit at Fort Benning, Ga., brought home his second career Olympic gold medal after winning the men's skeet shooting event July 31 at the 2012 Summer Olympics in London.

"Representing my country on a stage like this is an opportunity to showcase our Soldier skills," Hancock said. "The Army has taught me so much about dedication, to take hold of opportunities and to run with them, because as Soldiers, we have to do whatever we can to make things work. They've helped me progress as a husband, as a father, as an athlete and as a person."

Hancock set the bar high for the next Olympics. This year, he became the first shotgun shooter to win gold at two Olympics, and he beat the record he set at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, scor-



Sgt. Vincent C. Hancock shows off his gold medal July 31 after winning the men's skeet shooting event at the 2012 Olympics in London.

PHOTO BY TIM HIPPS



Hancock takes aim at a target July 31 during the final round of competition. He beat the record he set in 2008 at the Beijing Olympics by scoring a 148 in London. PHOTO BY TIM HIPPS

ing a qualifying score of 123 and a final total score of 148.

"London was an absolutely amazing experience," Hancock said. "Being able to go to London — it being my second Olympics, I knew what to expect."

What Hancock said he didn't expect was all the recognition that followed his winning the gold. On Sept. 14, Hancock will meet the president at the White House along with other members of the U.S. Olympic Team. And on Labor Day weekend, Hancock will represent the Army at a NASCAR race in Atlanta.

Though he's now a hero in the shooting world, Hancock almost didn't make it to this year's Olympics.

"The middle of last year, I had thought about quitting the sport," he said. "I wasn't enjoying myself anymore, and I just really didn't want to go out to competitions."

"I didn't have any goals set after the 2008 Olympics. I was going without a purpose. Last year, about the middle of the year, my wife sat down with me and said,

'Look, if you aren't enjoying yourself anymore, I want you to find something else.'"

With his family's support, Hancock said he decided to give the sport his all.

"This is my true passion. This is my true love. This is what I want to do," Hancock said. "I'm going to go out there, reset goals and do my best every single time to get medals and build my legacy. In the future, I want to pass on my knowledge to youth or to anyone who wants to shoot."

Rededicated to skeet shooting, Hancock said he went about his training with a newfound purpose. He trained five days a week, going to the range for three to six hours a day, he said.

"Being able to reset my goals, knowing what I wanted to do and having a new sense of purpose, that's what really changed my training for the Olympics. That's what made me successful," Hancock said. "The Army has helped me do that because they helped develop me as a person. They helped me mature over the last six years that I've been in. Having something

to work for and wanting it again, that's what makes a champion."

Hancock joined the Army in 2006, when the top four U.S. skeet shooters were recruited to work at the Army Marksmanship Unit. At the onset, Hancock's focus was winning medals and competing on national and global stages. Now, however, he balances his time preparing for the next competition and training troops. Mentorship is something Hancock said he enjoys, and he sees parallels in how he trains for the Olympics to what NCOs do every day.

"As an NCO, you have people under you who you have to watch out for, to keep safe and to make sure they're doing the right things," Hancock said. "Being on a stage as grand as the Olympics, you have to know that people are watching you and that you influence so many different people by doing the right things, setting the right example for people."

After leaving the Army this November, he plans to finish his college degree and open a shooting academy in Georgia with his dad, who is also his coach.

"There are only a couple of things that are more important to me than going out there and competing at my best," Hancock said. "And that's faith, family and friends. Of course, God is the one who has helped me get to the position I'm in now, and I could never do it without Him. And having my wife here day in and day out supporting me, even though I'm gone so much every month — those are the difference-makers for me."

Though the 2012 Olympics are over, Hancock said he remains focused on his next goal — competing in the invitational World Cup Final in Slovenia this month, and in the Shotgun Selection Match for the USA Nationals in Kerrville, Texas, Oct. 1–9. In addition, he said he hopes to win again as a civilian on Team USA at the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro.

"There's always going to be someone out there who's training, who's trying to knock you off the top," Hancock said. "If I keep training, I keep building. I keep learning new things. Every time I go out to the range, I try to learn something. Then I can stay ahead of everyone else who's trying to catch up to me." ❧

Race-walker finishes 50K with personal best

BY GARY SHEFTICK Army News Service



Staff Sgt. John Nunn finished 43rd in the Olympic 50-kilometer race-walk Aug. 11 with a personal-best time of 4 hours, 3 minutes, 28 seconds.

Nunn, a two-time Olympian in the U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program, progressively worked his way forward in the field of 63 competitors after passing the five-kilometer mark in 59th place. While other fatigued walkers dropped from the race, Nunn surged back and gained nine positions during the final 10 kilometers.

"There were guys dropping right and left around me," said Nunn, 34. "So I thought, well, this is good; we can keep [passing] some people."

Russia's Sergey Kiryapkin eclipsed the Olympic 50k record by more than a minute and won the gold medal with a time of 3:35:59. Australia's Jarrod Talent took the silver in 3:36:53. China's Si Tianfeng claimed the bronze in 3:37:16.

Race-walking was one of the few Olympic events that could be attended without an expensive ticket, and thousands of spectators lined the course, a two-kilometer loop that passed in front of Buckingham Palace.

The 25-lap course began taking its toll on several of the race-walkers about two-thirds of the way through the race, which covered just more than 31 miles. Eight walkers were disqualified from the race, and four others did not finish.

"The 50k is absolutely the most grueling track and field event there is," Nunn said. In race-walking, one foot must remain in contact with the ground at all times. The second rule is the front leg must remain straight when it touches the ground and stay that way until the body passes over it.

Nunn said many Americans poke fun at the sport, not realizing its level of difficulty. He said if they just tried it, they would sing a different tune.

"I mean, it is an absolutely grueling event," he said. "It is very, very hard to get the feel for it, to understand, and your body is in a lot of pain."

To prove the point, on two different occasions in London, Nunn invited NBC correspondents to try to race-walk.

Top: Staff Sgt. John Nunn races past the Victoria Memorial in front of Buckingham Palace on Aug. 11 during the 50k race-walk event. PHOTO BY MICHAEL MOLINARO

Right: Nunn explains the finer points of race-walking July 28 to NBC's *Today Show* cast at London's Land's End stadium. PHOTO BY GARY SHEFTICK

On a *Today Show* segment that aired July 30, six co-hosts of the program tried to learn the sport. "I find this very difficult," co-host Matt Lauer said.

A couple days later, Ryan Seacrest reportedly complained his shins "were on fire" after attempting the race-walk.

Nunn said race walking involves muscles that are not used very often by most people, including other athletes. But he plans to continue the sport as long as he can and hopes to compete in the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro. ♡



World champion ends wrestler's medal hopes

BY TIM HIPPS Installation Management Command



Greco-Roman wrestler **Sgt. 1st Class Dremiel Byers** was eliminated from the Olympic heavy-weight tournament after splitting two matches Aug. 6 at the ExCel Arena in London.

Byers defeated Uzbekistan's Muminjon Abdullaev, 1-0, 2-0, before losing 0-1, 0-1 to reigning world champion Riza Kayaalp of Turkey in the quarterfinals.

Byers could not lift or turn Kayaalp from the *par terre* position in the first period. Then Byers was pushed out of bounds and, essentially, out of the tournament in the second period.

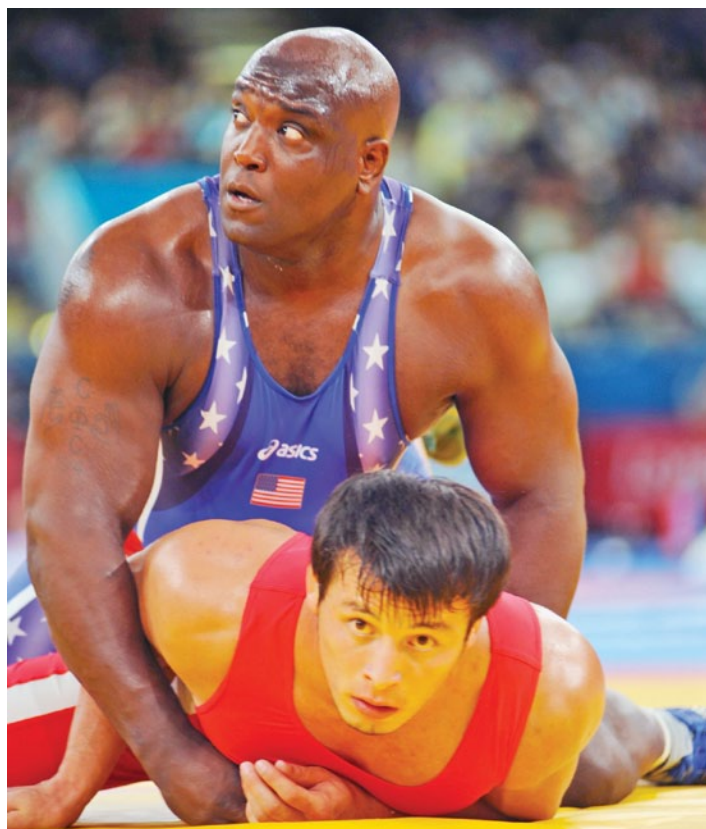
"That's what he does," Byers said. "So that's what I trained for, and I was supposed to have been able to stop that. ... I knew what kind of match to expect. I trained for it. I was expecting it to be settled on the feet."

Four years ago in Beijing, Byers said he might have waited too long to make his moves. His final match in London somewhat resembled a case of *déjà vu*.

"I didn't fire as much as I wanted to, especially when I was on top," Byers said. "It just didn't work out the way I needed it to. I tried to leave it out there, but I just came up short."

Another four years of preparation, however, was not totally lost, Byers said.

"I gained a lot of hometown love and support," Byers said. "None of this would be possible for me without the Army. ... It's so wonderful to know that I've got people around me wearing the same uniform as me to support me as much as they do and teaching me to be a better person every day." ♡



Sgt. 1st Class Dremiel Byers wrestles to a 1-0, 2-0 victory over Muminjon Abdullaev of Uzbekistan on Aug. 6 in the Olympic men's Greco-Roman heavyweight wrestling tournament. PHOTO BY TIM HIPPS

Sergeant stopped by silver, bronze medalists



Russia's Mingiyan Semenov turns Sgt. Spenser Mango en route to a 2-0, 1-0 victory Aug. 5 during the Olympic Greco-Roman wrestling tournament in London. PHOTO BY TIM HIPPS

BY TIM HIPPS Installation Management Command



Sgt. Spenser Mango learned in London that he must train harder if he wants to medal at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. Mango finished ninth Aug. 5 in the Olympic Greco-Roman 55-kilogram/121-pound division.

"I've got to work hard," said Mango, 26. "That's all I can do if I want to make it back in 2016. I'll just go back and work hard in the practice room and come back next time and give it another shot. I'm going to keep going. I can't retire. I love doing this."

Mango opened in London with a victory over Egypt's Mohamed Said Abouhalima before losing to silver medalist Rovshan Bayramov of Azerbaijan and bronze medalist Mingiyan Semenov of Russia.

"All I can do is go out there and give my best," Mango said. "I did that today, and it wasn't my day. It's not so much better wrestlers — anybody can be beat on any given day. Nobody comes in already with the gold medal around their neck." ♡

Millimeters keep shooters from medal round

BY MICHAEL MOLINARO Army Marksmanship Unit



The difference between shooting for an Olympic medal and watching from the stands came down to fractions of an inch for two U.S. Soldiers competing Aug. 3 in the 50-meter prone rifle event at the Royal Artillery Barracks in London.

Staff Sgt. Michael McPhail lost his chance to compete in the final by three-tenths of a point in a shoot-off after qualifying with a score of 395. Teammate **Sgt. 1st Class Eric Uptagrafft** came just one point away from getting into the shoot-off, scoring a 394 in his second Olympic games.

"With the level of talent out there, you can't have an off day," McPhail said. "Shooting is no different than any other sport. If you want to be Super Bowl champ, NBA champ, you have to get some bounces, and I didn't get the bounce in my favor today.

"I missed making the final by a millimeter, that's it," McPhail said. "I am not disappointed in the way I shot. Out of 65 shots, maybe one of those I would take back. There's not a lot more you can ask for."

Uptagrafft suffered nearly the same fate as his teammate. Though not as dramatic as losing in a shoot-off, the two-time Olympian posted two 9.9s in qualification, meaning two of his shots were also millimeters from being 10s and a score of 396, good enough to make the final.

"I wanted to come in and shoot a good match and whatever happens, happens," said Uptagrafft. "I came in, shot a decent match and didn't make the final."

Tricky winds wreaked havoc on the field except for one shooter, Belarus' Sergei Martynov. He tied the world record in qualification with a perfect score of 600 and followed that up with a final-round score of 105.5, setting new world and Olympic records on his way to the gold medal.

Meanwhile, four-time Olympian **Sgt. 1st Class Jason Parker** advanced to the third round of the Olympic three-positions rifle competition Aug. 6, but scored just one shot out of medal contention, finishing 30th. Parker was unable to overcome a rough start in the kneeling position and failed to qualify for the final round.

"I just couldn't figure out what was going wrong," Parker said. "That was a really bad streak in there at the beginning of kneeling."

After reeling off 12 consecutive nines, Parker stepped off the line, unhooked his jacket, and headed straight for his coach, Team USA and U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program rifle coach Maj. Dave Johnson.

Parker tried to dig himself out of the hole, but it wasn't enough during a match that saw two Olympic records set by Italy's gold-

medal-winner, Nicco Campriani, who shot a qualification score of 1,180 and an overall score of 1,278.5, both new standards in the event.

"I wanted to come represent the Army and the U.S. the best I could; that was number one," Parker said. "And then, obviously, I wanted to come home with a gold medal. I had high expectations to make the final and be a contender for a medal. It's really disappointing."

Sgt. 1st Class Daryl Szarenski competed Aug. 5 in the men's 50-meter free pistol competition, his last event in the Olympics.

The four-time Olympian finished in 28th place in the match after shooting a 550. This came on the heels of a 23rd-place finish in the men's 10-meter air pistol event July 28.

"It wasn't a terrible score," Szarenski said after the 10-meter



Sgt. 1st Class Jason Parker pauses during his qualification round Aug. 6 in the men's three-positions rifle event at the Royal Artillery Barracks in London. PHOTO BY MICHAEL MOLINARO

event. "It wasn't like trash, but yeah, it's the Olympics. You've got to have a smoker. It took a 583 to get into the final and that's a hard score.

"You had to have your 'A' game on. When the second string started falling apart, I didn't pick it up fast enough. It seems like a slow sport but everything's going so fast, mentally, that when you come off the line it's like, 'Hey, what went wrong?' I don't know."

After pulling the trigger in the Olympics for the last time at the London games, Szarenski said he was happy to have competed on such a world stage four times. Though he said he enjoyed London as a whole, the results just didn't hit the target.

"I worked really hard for this one, and I had much higher expectations," Szarenski said. "It didn't work out. I'm going sailing."

Szarenski plans to close out his 20-year military career and retire from the Army next year. ♡



ACTION

Stories of NCOs
**LEADING,
TRAINING,
MAINTAINING,
& CARING**

NCOJOURNAL

Flight medic's valor recognized

NCO receives Distinguished Flying Cross for rescuing 6 wounded Soldiers amid hostile fire

BY STAFF SGT. TODD L. POULIOT
10th Combat Aviation Brigade

When Army helicopters arrive overhead during a firefight below, friendly forces are filled with a surge of confidence, Maj. Gen. Mark A. Milley, the commanding general of the 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum, N.Y., said at an award ceremony June 29.

"When you're in a firefight, you call for God, and you call for Army aviation," Milley said. "Our aviators change the dynamic of the fight. Now, you as the infantry know you're going to win; [you] know you're going to live."

During the ceremony at Fort Drum's Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield, Milley presented awards for valor to 18 aviators from the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade for their brave actions in Afghanistan.

Staff Sgt. Brian D. Cammack, a flight medic with C Company, 3rd General Support Aviation Battalion, 10th Aviation Regiment, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, received the Distinguished

Flying Cross for his bravery during an evacuation and recovery mission last year.

On March 29, 2011, Cammack's crew received a call to pick up casualties at two separate locations. At the first location, Cammack was lowered by hoist to assess the injured and prepare them for extraction.

On the ground, Cammack treated the wounded while two critically wounded Soldiers were evacuated to a nearby medical facility. Meanwhile, Cammack and his unit continued to take hostile fire from several directions.

"I had so much adrenaline going through me, I didn't feel much until after the mission," Cammack said.

Once all of the casualties at the first location had been evacuated, Cammack and his crew went to the second site — the roof of



a mud building occupied by U.S. troops. Under hostile fire, the helicopter landed on the roof, and the casualty was pulled on board to be taken to the medical facility.

In all, Cammack was responsible for the extraction of six critically wounded Soldiers and the retrieval of three Soldiers who were killed in action that day.

"We were able to make a difference that day," Cammack said. "They were pinned down, taking fire from all directions. They took many casualties."

At the ceremony, Cammack credited his fellow crew members for the success of the operation and added that he would never forget those who died in the firefight.

"The colonel and the general had amazing things to say, but I'm still humbled because Soldiers lost their lives that day because of the enemy contact," Cammack said. "I'm humbled. I'm proud. But I'd definitely give it back if even one of those Soldiers could come back."

Col. Pedro G. Almeida, commander of the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, said that despite the numerous awards presented to the unit's aviators, it must not be forgotten what the Soldiers are asked to do almost daily in combat.

"It's so common that we often forget what we're asking them to do," Almeida said. "These aviators have shown uncommon valor and represent the best."

The Distinguished Flying Cross is the fourth-highest award for valor in the U.S. armed forces. Within the Army, it is awarded to aviators who distinguish themselves by heroism while participating in an aerial flight.

In addition to the award presented to Cammack, 17 other Soldiers were presented Air Medals with "V" devices for valor at the ceremony. Their heroic actions included safely flying an aircraft damaged by a rocket-propelled grenade, providing aerial cover to ground units under hostile fire, and operating a medevac hoist multiple times while receiving fire. ♡

◀ Maj. Gen. Mark A. Milley, commander of the 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum, N.Y., pins the Distinguished Flying Cross on the uniform of Staff Sgt. Brian D. Cammack on June 29 during a ceremony at Fort Drum's Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield, as Col. Pedro Almeida, commander of the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, looks on. PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. TODD L. POULIOT



NCO receives Air Medal from SMA, congressman

BY SGT. JENNIFER C. JOHNSON Military District of Washington

Staff Sgt. Neil T. Percifull, assigned to the U.S. Army Priority Air Transport Command, Army Air Operations Group, U.S. Army Military District of Washington, was presented the Air Medal with "V" device for valor July 18 at the U.S. Capitol building. Rep. C.W. Bill Young of Florida and Sgt. Maj. of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III awarded Percifull the medal for successfully defending his helicopter against enemy forces' hostile fire during an Oct. 27, 2008, mission in Afghanistan.

Percifull was then a crew chief of a UH-60L Black Hawk in C Company, 5th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, 101st Combat Aviation Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, and was conducting a daily passenger mission.

"We were flying from Bagram Air Base to several forward operating bases," Percifull said. "We noticed a checkpoint on the main highway that was unusual because none of the personnel was in any type of uniform. We reported the situation to ground forces and pressed on."

"On our way back, we saw the suspected checkpoint and noticed 40 to 45 people hanging out," Percifull said. "As soon as we flew over them, they scattered. We made several passes over top, and saw Afghan [soldiers] shooting at the group from the top of a house. After the fourth pass over, we took fire from about 30 different people from all directions [and] were shot with a [rocket-propelled grenade]. We crashed and set up a perimeter around the downed helicopter and defended ourselves until we were picked up."

"Staff Sgt. Percifull is an exceptional NCO who has served his country with distinction," said Col. Scott E. Sanborn, the commander of the Army Air Operations Group. "I am glad we were able to recognize him."

"The situation was crazy," Percifull said at the ceremony. "But we all made it back alive and well." ♡

▲ Staff Sgt. Neil T. Percifull (center) is presented the Air Medal with "V" device for valor by Rep. C.W. Bill Young of Florida and Sgt. Maj. of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III on July 18 at the U.S. Capitol. PHOTO BY SGT. JENNIFER C. JOHNSON

Guardsmen honored for their gallantry

NCO's actions likely saved American and French troops' lives

NCO Journal staff and wire reports

As Sgt. 1st Class Ryan Ahern was honored with the Silver Star for “gallantry in action,” he took the time to thank all those who sacrifice for their country. But most importantly, he acknowledged his wife and daughter.

“I want to thank my wife,” Ahern said during the ceremony May 19 at the Pritzker Military Library in downtown Chicago. “She had the joy of receiving the telephone call from her husband. I had just been wounded, coming out of surgery and recovery, so I’m groggy and they hand me a phone — ‘Hey, your wife is on the phone. Tell her you’re OK.’ So she got one of my favorite lines: ‘I’m OK, honey. I just got shot a little bit.’”

Ahern joined Capt. Thomas Bozzay in receiving the Silver Star at the ceremony. Both serve with the Illinois National Guard’s A Company, 2nd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne).

Ahern received the Silver Star for his valorous actions Dec. 17, 2009, in Afghanistan. Ahern’s company was providing support to a French regiment executing a mission in the Uzbeen Valley when they came under attack from a large enemy force.

“Sgt. 1st Class Ahern was rendered unconscious when

the unit received effective mortar and machine-gun fire, which wounded him and four others,” Ahern’s award citation reads. “After regaining consciousness from the blast, Sgt. 1st Class Ahern quickly identified the location of the enemy and successfully fired numerous high-explosive recoilless rifle rounds at the enemy’s position, suppressing their fire long enough to allow other members of the unit to reinforce their positions. Sgt. 1st Class Ahern’s actions contributed to saving the lives of his injured teammates.”

At the ceremony, Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, praised the two Soldiers’ actions.

“Everybody who agrees to serve their country in a time of war has heroic qualities,” Dempsey said. “But not everybody is a hero. These guys are heroes.”

Ahern spoke about the “band of brothers” whom he served with and how much that camaraderie and trust meant to him and the nation.

“I think you can rest easy knowing there is a corps of men out there who will do anything, anytime, anyplace to get the job done, without question,” Ahern said.

Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn noted at the ceremony that Ahern and Bozzay were the first Illinois National Guardsmen to receive a Silver Star since World War II.

“As we honor our military heroes on Armed Services Day, we must never forget their sacrifices,” Quinn said. “Sgt. 1st Class Ahern and Capt. Bozzay are genuine heroes and a shining example of Illinois’ best.”

During the ceremony, Ahern talked about leaving behind his 2-year-old daughter to be deployed to Afghanistan. After training in Wyoming, he had a quick chance to see her before deployment.

“When I got in the car she exclaimed, ‘Oh Daddy, I found you! I thought I had lost you,’” Ahern said. “So in her 2-year-old mind, she simply thought I had been misplaced, that she had lost me.

“I remember the whole ride home from the airport, she held my hand because she didn’t want to lose me again. Unfortunately, I had to go away again for a few more months. But now Daddy is home.”

For his efforts protecting the French regiment, Ahern, along with five others from his company, was also awarded the Croix de la Valeur Militaire, a French award roughly equivalent to the Silver Star, in July 2011. ♡

◀ Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, awards Sgt. 1st Class Ryan Ahern the Silver Star on May 19 at the Pritzker Military Library in Chicago. Capt. Thomas Bozzay (right) also received the Silver Star at the ceremony. PHOTO BY SPC. CHRISTOPHER A. GARIBAY



BY EXAMPLE

Keeping all forces strong

It's Sgt. 1st Class Dawna Brown's job to counsel Soldiers — all day, every day — as a career counselor

Sgt. 1st Class Dawna Brown has served on active duty, in the Army Reserve and in the National Guard. She is currently a career counselor at Fort Carson, Colo., and helps Soldiers transition from active duty to the Reserve. Brown joined the Army in March 2001 after working in sales and as a part-time cosmologist in western Pennsylvania.

Why have you continued to serve as an NCO?

My job is what I like most about the military. I like talking with Soldiers; I like helping them out. A lot of Soldiers who come to me don't have a plan and have only been in for a couple of years. They think they're going to get this big-paying job when they separate, but they haven't planned for it or really don't have the training. So I give them direction and guidance.

How does your job impact the big Army?

It keeps all the forces strong. With the Soldiers I see, sometimes I send them back to active duty, and they re-enlist there. The Reserve, they are still staying strong, and I'm helping to put people in there. The slots are so limited in the Reserve and National Guard, so we have to screen people well. If a Soldier isn't running fast enough or shooting fast enough, it's all going to affect them and their opportunities down the line.

What's challenging about your job?

When Soldiers come to me, they've talked to their whole command about re-enlistment. You have to listen to them. It's not about you; it's about them. They all have a reason — and usually it's not the military — why they're getting out. Most Soldiers, if you really listen and talk to them, aren't getting out because they don't like the Army. It's usually always something else that you can work through.

What advice do you have for other NCOs?

As NCOs, we have to be there for Soldiers. We can't leave it up to the first sergeants or the commanders. We, the first-line leaders, have to talk to these Soldiers and get to know them on an individual level — not just what their job is.

How do you lead Soldiers?

It takes being the example. If you're out in front of people, you have to live it every day. You can't take the easy road, because you're being watched by younger Soldiers. You always have to be an example. We have



to take care of Soldiers. Someone's going to replace us, so we have to take care of them and train them. In my job, the ones I train have to help the ones who are the best to re-enlist.

What promotion or career advice do you have for junior Soldiers?

They have to look more outside the military, and they have to get civilian education as well. We all have a job, and we're all expected to do it well. That alone is not going to put you among the best to get promoted; deployments and things of that nature, that's still part of us being a Soldier. So you have to do something that will be recognized — whether it's competitions or going ahead with more military training and civilian education than is expected of your rank.

Who is an example of a Soldier you mentored?

There was a girl I recruited back in 2006; I still talk with her today. At the time, she couldn't meet the standards to get into the military; she was overweight. She wanted to be a Soldier so much, but she wasn't there. So I took her to the gym every day, even when it wasn't pleasant for me to go. And finally, she made it, and she's an officer today.

— INTERVIEW BY JENNIFER MATTSON

▲ Sgt. 1st Class Dawna Brown conducts career counseling April 30 in her office at Fort Carson, Colo.

PHOTO BY JENNIFER MATTSON

THIS MONTH IN NCO HISTORY

September 11, 2001

Staff Sgt. Christopher D. Braman was working in the General Officer's Mess at the Pentagon on the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, when the hijacked American Airlines Flight 77 crashed into the western side of the massive building, unleashing an earth-shaking explosion and searing inferno.

Despite the threat of the flames and billowing smoke, Braman rushed toward the hole in the building the plane had made so he could search for survivors. Armed with only a hand-held fire extinguisher, Braman bravely entered the impact area after hearing a woman crying out for help. Discovering her, he led her to safety. He then directly disobeyed a three-star general's order not to go back, so he could look for others.

"I believe you should never leave a fallen comrade," he later told the *Army Times*.

In a ceremony two months later to honor the heroes of that tragic day, Braman was one of 19 to receive the Soldier's Medal. In his remarks, Gen. John Keane,

then the vice chief of the Army, paid tribute to their acts of selfless service.

"Soldiers and civilians demonstrated on Sept. 11 what I have been in awe of all my life — a willingness to put at risk everything they have in life ... for what? To save another for the simple sake of duty. ... You can't put a price on that."

The impact area where Braman and others had valiantly searched for survivors was rebuilt within a year, and came to include a memorial chapel and park to honor the 125 Pentagon employees and 59 passengers and crew on the plane who died in the attack.

— COMPILED BY MICHAEL L. LEWIS



Braman

2 Ranger NCOs earn Silver Star

BY TRACY A. BAILEY 75th Ranger Regiment

Rangers from 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, gathered July 12 at Fort Benning, Ga., to honor several of their own for heroic actions in 2011 and 2012.

"If you ask anyone of them, they would downplay the events of that day," said Lt. Col. Marcus Evans, commander of the battalion. "But as you hear the narratives and read what these Rangers did, you cannot help but feel a sense

of pride and comfort that these warriors will deploy again and selflessly display the same tenacity and courage under fire that they have done on so many occasions."

The Silver Star Medal, the nation's third-highest award for valor, was presented to Staff Sgt. Scott Anderson and to Staff Sgt.

James Wilbur for their valiant actions during the battalion's 2011 spring deployment.

While conducting combat operations March 8, 2011, in northern Afghanistan, Anderson led his squad on an assault against a fortified compound that housed heavily armed enemy combatants.

Though outnumbered and facing intense enemy fire from close range, Anderson selflessly remained in exposed positions several times throughout the mission, putting himself at risk in order to engage and destroy the enemy. His fearless actions ensured the safety of Afghan civilians and his fellow Rangers and resulted in the elimination of the entrenched enemy combatants, including two senior-level Taliban commanders.

"Rangers are unique and have a lot of capabilities," Anderson said. "We play a large role in what's going on in Afghanistan and around the world."

During combat operations April 27, 2011, Wilbur led his squad in an assault on heavily armed enemy combatants in which he eliminated multiple combatants who were engaging the assault force.

While braving enemy fire from extremely close range from multiple locations, Wilbur continued to close in on and destroy the enemy while maneuvering his squad through complex terrain. His actions resulted in the elimination of the enemy fighters and prevented the enemy from inflicting any casualties on the assault force.

"My actions are a representation of the rest of the unit, and I was in the right place at the right time," Wilbur said.

Additional awards included a Joint Service Commendation Medal with "V" device for valor to Staff Sgt. Ryan Flora for his actions Jan. 15, and an Army Commendation Medal with "V" device to Cpl. Ian T. Seymour. ♡



Anderson



Wilbur

Top Soldier: Giving back is best reward

Military Times lauds sergeant's quick thinking, volunteerism

BY FELIX FIMBRES

Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command

An Army Reserve Soldier who in July was named the 2012 *Military Times* Soldier of the Year said mentoring others has been his biggest reward.

"I think there are thousands of other Soldiers who deserve this more than me, and as Soldier of the Year, I'm just trying to honor them," said Sgt. Steven B. Davidson, one of five service members who were honored as the top representatives of their respective services at a July 17 event in Washington, D.C.

Davidson deployed with the 490th Civil Affairs Battalion, 321st Civil Affairs Brigade, 350th Civil Affairs Command, to the Horn of Africa in 2011. As a corporal filling the role of a senior NCO, he recalls putting his training to work to save a life and routinely performing community service after his workday in order to help people in nearby Djibouti.

"I am humbled to have won this award, but I think [U.S. Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command (Airborne)] deserves this recognition," Davidson said to Command Sgt. Maj. Dale R. Blosser, command sergeant major of USACAPOC, at the July event. Blosser quickly rebutted, "No, no, no. Today is not about CAPOC, it's about you, and it's about your training and you using it."

Before joining the Army, Davidson first honed his basic medical skills as a student at Northwest High School in Justin, Texas. Under the tutelage of Scott Fletcher, the head athletic trainer, Davidson learned how to take care of myriad sports injuries.

"I absolutely loved it," he said. "I loved wrapping ankles and taking care of minor injuries."

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

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

When Davidson joined the Army and was assigned to the 490th Civil Affairs Battalion as a human resource specialist, it was his experience as a trainer that made Combat Life Saver training old hat, he said. He was comfortable with medical scissors and tape, and he was all too aware of the effects the environment can have on performance.

Then came his deployment.

Davidson and his fellow Soldiers were participating

in the French desert survival course and its culminating event — an arduous trek through the desert.

"People had been falling down all night," he said.

But when a Soldier fell out during a 9-hour ruck march and became unresponsive, Davidson knew something serious had happened.

"I grabbed my ruck sack and ran up to him. I grabbed my scissors and began cutting off his pants, boots and top. We cut his pants into little strips and dipped them in the



water we had left," Davidson said. It was all he could do because no one had brought along a Combat Life Saver kit. "We expected the French to have that capability, but they didn't. They were able to call in a medevac, but they told us it would take two hours to get there. We didn't think he would make it."

After about 20 minutes, the Soldier woke up violent, confused and disoriented. His fellow Soldiers held him

SOLDIER OF THE YEAR CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE →

▲ Maj. Gen. Jeffrey A. Jacobs, former commander of the 350th Civil Affairs Command, congratulates Sgt. Steven B. Davidson on July 17 after a ceremony at the Cannon House Office Building in Washington, D.C., where Davidson was named the 2012 *Military Times* Soldier of the Year. PHOTO BY

FELIX FIMBRES

Center named after NCO killed in action

BY AMY NEWCOMB Fort Leonard Wood Guidon

The Training Support Center at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., was dedicated in a ceremony July 23 to honor the service of Sgt. Amanda Pinson, Missouri's first female Soldier killed in action due to hostile fire. Pinson was killed March 16, 2006, in Tikrit, Iraq, when a mortar round exploded near the division headquarters. She was 21.

At the ceremony, Pinson's aunt, Sandy Campbell, spoke about how special her niece was to her family.

"Amanda was the outgoing little miss personality of our family, the one who became known for her famous hugs and smiles," Campbell said. "When she enlisted in the Army, we knew she would do well and, from what we have learned, she excelled in her field and was passionate about doing her job."

Campbell read a few excerpts from a letter that was sent to Pinson's mother from an officer Pinson worked with at Fort Campbell, Ky., and in Iraq. Campbell said she reads the letter often.

"Amanda worked tirelessly and often put in extra hours at work," the letter reads. "She was one of the best signal intelligence analysts I have ever worked with. In my 16 years of service, finding the talent she had is somewhat challenging. She was truly a professional."

Col. William Pfeffer, Fort Leonard Wood's garrison commander, explained during the ceremony how Pinson began her training at the post and continued her career in military intelligence as a cryptologist.

"Amanda was a true hero, serving with our Army for three years and having a great impact in a very short period of time," Pfeffer said. "Amanda was a member of a truly elite group of Americans, not because she was in the intel field, but because she was a Soldier."



Pinson

Pfeffer said there was no greater Soldier, American or Missourian whom the Army could have memorialized to be the namesake of the TSC than Pinson.

"Fort Leonard Wood's mission has grown over the last several years and so has its training load across the components," Pfeffer said. "Fort Leonard Wood's Training Support Center is the single source of training support service for the regular Army, the Army Reserve, the Army National Guard, ROTC and interservice units located on Fort Leonard Wood and for the rest of Missouri and the southern half of Illinois." ♡

← **SOLDIER OF THE YEAR CONT. FROM PREVIOUS PAGE**
down, with many just asking him if he was OK. Davidson knew that wasn't helping.

"I asked them to stop and started asking about his kids and family. He then began to respond in a more positive manner," he said.

French medics arrived soon after and asked everyone to leave. But Davidson could see they were having a hard

time communicating with the injured Soldier.

"The French medics didn't know any English. ... They couldn't tell him how to put on the oxygen masks, or that he was going to get an IV," Davidson said. "I felt like I had to step back in to let the Soldier know what was going on."

Thanks to his CLS training and his experiences as a trainer, he knew what the medics were trying to do. Together they were able to stabilize the Soldier until he was able to be evacuated.

"It's the little things and how they come full circle," Davidson said.

Davidson had once given up what he loved because of bullies, but he said it was because of his training that he

was able to help save a Soldier's life. So when Davidson talks to kids during his volunteer visits, he tells them not to listen to other people putting you down.

"It was [because of] the technical proficiencies I learned as a trainer that I was able to save a life in the desert that night. You shouldn't let other people tell you what to do; it's about doing what you love."

And what Davidson loves doing now is helping children in his hometown of Grand Prairie, Texas, who might need a little extra attention. He first started volunteering when he was deployed to Africa with the 490th.

"My commander encouraged all his Soldiers to go out into the community and help, whether we were civil affairs-trained or not," Davidson said. He said that he feels he was able to make an impact in his own way by bonding with locals and helping them learn English, and that he discovered a newfound appreciation for what he had.

Since returning home, Davidson has reached out to numerous schools, talking with teachers and students.

"There are so many kids who are looking for someone to look up to, and not many service members know how influential they can be," he said.

Perhaps the biggest gesture Davidson has made to the community he came from was when he gave his medal for saving the Soldier's life to his mentor in high school — Fletcher, his athletic trainer. Davidson said he feels that he wouldn't have earned the award without a teacher taking the time to mentor him. ♡

“There are so many kids who are looking for someone to look up to, and not many service members know how influential they can be.”

— SGT. STEVEN B. DAVIDSON



Inspection

▲ Sgt. 1st Class Michael Nelson (right) of the Alaska National Guard, a security force member of Provincial Reconstruction Team Farah, inspects a member of his team May 26 while providing security during a mission in Farah City, Farah province, Afghanistan. PHOTO BY LT. BENJAMIN ADDISON

Silver Star, Bronze Star awarded 67 years late

BY ANDREA SUTHERLAND Fort Carson

Master Sgt. John Krajeski says he is finally at peace.

"I think I sleep better at night, now," he said, chuckling. "I wanted at least this recognition. It was something I needed to do before I went to my grave."

For years, Krajeski, 86, had been trying to receive the Silver Star and Bronze Star medals he had been promised 67 years earlier after performing heroic actions on the island of Okinawa, Japan. His lieutenant wrote up the paperwork for the citation, but Krajeski stored it in a duffel bag with the rest of his Army paperwork. The bag remained in his mother's basement until 1980 when Krajeski found it while helping his mother move.

More than 60 years after the original citation was written, Krajeski began his quest to receive the medals, writing hundreds of letters and making dozens of phone calls to members of Congress and officials within the Army.

In a formal ceremony July 11 at the 4th Infantry Division headquarters at Fort Carson, Colo., Krajeski — dressed in his wool Eisenhower-era uniform — was at last pinned with the honors by Maj. Gen. Joseph Anderson, the division's commanding general.

"It's [because of] guys like [Krajeski] why we are the greatest country," Anderson said during the ceremony. "Most of our heroes who earn these awards say, 'I was just doing my job,' and I know he would say the same thing. Today is about recognizing bravery and courage." ❧

Saving lives from up above

UAS bring game-changing abilities to troops on the ground

BY KRIS OSBORN Army News Service

Sgt. Christopher Harris was conducting a routine reconnaissance mission in Kunar province, Afghanistan, in 2009, when the Puma unmanned aircraft system he was operating showed real-time footage of insurgents planting an improvised explosive device along a U.S. Army convoy route.

"These guys had set an IED two kilometers away from us," Harris said, recalling the incident. "They were waiting for us to drive by for what looked like a planned IED-initiated ambush."

The Puma UAS is a 13-pound, portable, hand-launched aircraft with a wingspan of 9.2-feet and electro-optical/infrared, or EO/IR, sensors able to beam back real-time imagery from combat-relevant locations.

The EO/IR sensors on Harris' Puma showed live, real-time images of the insurgent activity on his one system remote video terminal, or OSRVT. The OSRVT is a laptop-like display screen and antenna that give Soldiers like Har-

ris advance warning of nearby threats.

Using the UAS technology, Harris was able to pinpoint the exact location of the insurgents and the house they were operating out of within five meters. Then, after carefully checking the area to ensure there were no nearby civilians or additional structures, Harris called in an artillery strike, destroying the house and ensuring safe passage for his unit's convoy.

"I was able to observe rounds directly hitting the target," explained Harris, who was serving as an infantryman with the 2nd Infantry Division at Fort Lewis, Wash. "During our battle damage assessment, we saw that the house was destroyed. Explosive ordnance disposal teams were then called in to deal with the IED."

There have been hundreds, if not thousands of instances similar to this throughout the past ten years of war in Iraq and Afghanistan, where UAS technology has brought a game-changing, life-saving capability to forces in combat. In fact, the number of UAS in theater has grown exponentially since the start of the wars, expanding from a handful of systems in 2002 to more than 4,500 UAS aircraft in service today.

The UAS systems currently being used span a range of capability, from larger, medium-altitude systems such as the Gray Eagle and Shadow to small, hand-launched UAS such as the Puma and Raven systems.

In each instance, UAS provide Soldiers on the ground with critical intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance abilities, providing electronic "eyes" able to spot danger over a hill or around a corner, thus keeping more Soldiers out of harms' way.

"I am able to tell my lieutenant if we are about to go up a hill, 'Let's toss a bird up there and see what we've got — just a quick recon without sending anybody up.' If there is nothing dangerous on the mountain, we proceed," Harris said. "Using UAS in this way saves time and energy by not sending Soldiers up there, and you save lives by not endangering somebody."

UAS are a dominant weapons system on today's battlefield, said Warrant Officer Mike Gray, a UAS program manager.



▲ A Soldier with the 82nd Airborne Division's 1st Brigade Combat Team launches a Puma unmanned aircraft system June 25 in Ghazni Province, Afghanistan. The UAS was used for reconnaissance for troops on the ground.

PHOTO BY SGT. MICHAEL J. MACLEOD

“We go everywhere and provide overwatch,” Gray said. “We can put a UAS up 3,000 feet to watch a convoy. We often fly our UAS missions along routes after route-clearance missions have gone through to make sure routes remain safe for convoys.”

UAS such as the Shadow provided overwatch security during the Iraqi elections in January 2009, ensuring the important historic activities would not be sabotaged by insurgent attacks, said Staff Sgt. Catalina Avalos of the Washington National Guard.

“We provided 24-hour overwatch on site to be sure there was no insurgent activity, no IEDs being planted, and no suspicious occurrences,” Avalos said. “In some instances, we have been able to see personnel actually digging holes for IEDs and laying down the wires.”

Avalos added that the electro-optical cameras do not need to catch insurgents in the act of planting an IED for it to be detected. UAS infrared sensors can observe temperature changes in the ground that can sometimes indicate a roadside bomb has recently been planted.

“We are able to see a difference in ground that has been freshly dug, versus something that has been there a while. So, when you see that, you then have EOD

units go to the site to verify if it is, in fact, an IED,” Avalos said.

Avalos said UAS have revolutionized combat in ways that are unbelievable.

“Commanders now know almost everything that goes on in their battle space,” Avalos said. “We fly aircraft longer than enemies can stay awake.”

UAS also assist with what is called

“Using UAS in this way saves time and energy by not sending Soldiers up there, and you save lives by not endangering somebody.”

— SGT. CHRISTOPHER HARRIS

“negative terrain analysis,” wherein operators look to see whether elements of the terrain have changed, Avalos added.

Avalos said many of her skills using UAS in combat were sharpened during a six-month training course for UAS operators at Fort Huachuca, Ariz. Avalos graduated from the training in 2008.

UAS training spans the entire gamut of activity, from systems engineering, UAS sensors, deployment and interference training, Avalos said. Though UAS operators have a slightly different role compared to UAS maintainers, each student learns every skill during training so as to ensure students are aware of all the nuances involved in UAS deployment.

“I love this career and would not trade it for the world. I loved coming out of the schoolhouse and going downrange because everything I learned in the schoolhouse could be applied downrange,” Avalos said. “Lives were saved downrange.”



‘Big Red One’ Soldiers learn to fly smallest UAS

BY PAMELA REDFORD Fort Riley

A mobile training team arrived at Fort Riley, Kan., June 7 to teach 15 1st Infantry Division Soldiers how to fly one of the smallest unmanned aerial systems used by the U.S. Army — the RQ-11B Raven, a hand-launched UAS powered by a lithium-ion battery.

“We’re here to provide Fort Riley with a valuable asset,” said Staff Sgt. Jeremy Galusha, an instructor from 2nd Battalion, 29th Infantry Regiment, 197th Infantry Brigade, at Fort Benning, Ga. His team took “Big Red One” Soldiers through a two-week operator class, followed by one week of master training.

But not all of the students will make it to the master training level, Galusha said.

“The challenge is to absorb the information that gets put out,” he said. “There is a lot of information in a short period of time. ... They have to know all of the emergency procedures in the air and be able to react. There’s so much that can go wrong.”

The Raven can fly for a duration of 60 to 90 minutes and travel anywhere from 30 to 60 miles per hour at an altitude of up to 500 feet above ground level, instructors said. The Raven’s wingspan is 4.2 feet, and it weighs a little more than four pounds.

The aircraft’s payload consists of a high-resolution day and night camera and a thermal imager. ♡

▲ Pvt. Patrick Hernandez of 1st Battalion, 5th Artillery Regiment, 1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, practices launching a RQ-11B Raven on June 12 at Fort Riley, Kan. PHOTO BY PAMELA REDFORD

Tournament finds combatives champs

Fort Hood team tops Fort Stewart's at All-Army competition

BY SPC. ERIK ANDERSON

3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division

Soldiers stationed around the world descended on Fort Hood, Texas, July 25 to fight for top honors at the 2012 All-Army Combatives Tournament.

For the fighters, the competition represented the culmination of many hours of training and honing their skills.

"It takes a lot of hard work and dedication," said Staff Sgt. Tony Lee, combatives NCO in charge for the 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division,

tre, an instructor assigned to 2nd Battalion, 29th Infantry Regiment, U.S. Army Combatives School, at Fort Benning, Ga. "It's all about positions and holds."

After hundreds of bouts, the winning fighters moved on to day two — and a new set of rules.

"Intermediate rules allow punches to the body, slaps to the head and kicking," Mestre said.

With the finals one day closer, fighters gave it their all for the chance to earn a championship bout in the octagon. On July 28, the field house was transformed with a full light show, thumping music and spectators surrounding the eight-sided ring.

"Advanced rules are similar to a mixed martial arts bout," Mestre said. "The only differences are the fighters can't spike their opponents on their head, strike the back of the head or use knees for blows to the face."

For the competitors, the road to the tournament is about more than one week of bouts. The skills honed while training are useful in combat and beyond.

"It was the '06-'07 time frame; I was in Iraq," said Spc. Nathaniel Freeman, the 2012 Heavyweight Champion from the 1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. "I had a gentleman pull a knife and almost stab me with it. If it wasn't for combatives, I wouldn't have been able to keep myself disengaged, disarm him, and take him down without hurting myself or him."

"With the Modern Army Combatives Program, it teaches combat along with teaching you to be healthy and be safe,"

Freeman said. "The longer you keep working at it, it clears any doubt in the back of your head about your ability to complete the mission."

With the most — eight fighters — in the finals, including five in third-place bouts and three in championship bouts, Fort Hood's III Corps Combatives Team won the 2012 championship, the team's third-straight championship. Though the team had no individual champions, III Corps came from behind on the final day of competition to pass the 3rd Infantry Division team.

"You can't place in this tournament as an individual; you need teams to help you train," said Staff Sgt. Shane Lees of the III Corps Combatives Team, who lost his light-



at Fort Stewart, Ga. "For the last three and a half months, our Soldiers have been training every day, 8 hours a day, to make it here."

The tournament kicked off with medical checks and weigh-ins July 25, and the first round of fighting started the following day.

"We start out with grappling," said Staff Sgt. Alex Mes-

▲ Spc. Nathaniel Freeman (top) of Fort Stewart, Ga., and Sgt. Jason Reyes of Fort Hood, Texas, fight in the heavyweight championship bout July 28 during the finals of the 2012 U.S. Army Combatives Championship at Fort Hood. Freeman won after the referee stopped the match in the second round. PHOTO BY DANIEL CERNERO

2012 All-Army Combatives Tournament results

BANTAMWEIGHT: Championship Fight: Sgt. 1st Class Jonathan Mejil of Fort Sill, Okla., defeated Spc. Sean Stebbins of the Minnesota National Guard with a submission in the first round. **3rd-place fight:** Spc. Larry Jackson of Fort Hood, Texas, defeated Sgt. Robert Mitchell of Fort Bragg, N.C., by judge's decision after three rounds.

FLYWEIGHT: Championship Fight: Staff Sgt. Francisco Mercado of Fort Bragg was awarded first-place after an injury forfeit from Sgt. 1st Class William Haggerty of Fort Bragg. **3rd-place fight:** Staff Sgt. Aaron Riley of Fort Hood defeated Pfc. Joshua Young of Fort Stewart, Ga., after referee stoppage in the first round.

LIGHTWEIGHT: Championship Fight: Staff Sgt. Glenn Garrison of Fort Carson, Colo., defeated Staff Sgt. Shane Lees of Fort Hood by judge's decision after three rounds. **3rd-place fight:** Sgt. Jesse Hertzog of Fort Bragg defeated Spc. Blaze Schubert of Fort Campbell, Ky., after referee stoppage in the first round.

WELTERWEIGHT: Championship Fight: 1st Lt. Matthew Kyler of Fort Carson defeated 2nd Lt. Nick Shafer of Fort Hood by judge's decision after three rounds. **3rd-place fight:** Sgt. Philip Platt of Fort Hood defeated Spc. Hobert Wilmott of the 5th Special Forces Group, Fort Campbell, Ky., by a judge's decision after three rounds.

MIDDLEWEIGHT: Championship Fight: Capt. Jon Anderson of Fort Carson defeated Pfc. Vincent Fairbairn of Fort Stewart with a submission in the first round. **3rd-place fight:** Capt. Jason Norwood of Fort Hood defeated Tech Sgt. Christopher Davis of Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., after referee stoppage in the third round.

CRUISERWEIGHT: Championship Fight: 1st Lt. Daniel Midgett of the 5th Special Forces Group defeated Staff Sgt. Ashten Richardson of Camp Casey, South Korea, after referee stoppage in the first round. **3rd-place fight:** Staff Sgt. Patrick Miller of Fort Benning, Ga., was awarded third place after a forfeit by Staff Sgt. Andrew McLauchlan of Fort Stewart.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: Championship Fight: Sgt. 1st Class James Stelly of the 5th Special Forces Group defeated Spc. Carlie Williams of Fort Drum, N.Y., with a submission in the first round. **3rd-place fight:** Sgt. Jose Espinosa of Fort Hood defeated Spc. Julio De la Cruz of Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., with a submission in the third round.

HEAVYWEIGHT: Championship Fight: Spc. Nathaniel Freeman of Fort Stewart defeated Sgt. Jason Reyes of Fort Hood after referee stoppage in the second round. **3rd-place fight:** Staff Sgt. Lonnie Kincaid of Fort Riley, Kan., defeated Sgt. 1st Class William Smith of Fort Carson after referee stoppage in the first round.

weight championship fight. "For three months, we bleed, we sweat, we get injured, and we got each other's back the whole time. Even though some of us came up short [individually], we still pulled together for a three-peat."

Though Lees was one of three Fort Hood fighters to lose championship fights, the team's five consolation finalists all won third-place trophies, which helped the "Phantom Warriors" come from behind to beat Fort Stewart.

In the light heavyweight division, Sgt. 1st Class James Stelly of the 5th Special Forces Group, at Fort Campbell, Ky., joined an exclusive group of competitors, winning his third All-Army title. Tim Kennedy, now a staff sergeant in the National Guard, and Staff Sgt. Brandon Sayles, an instructor at the U.S. Army Combatives School, are the other two fighters to accomplish such a feat.

Stelly found himself in hot water early on his bout, falling to the ground after a heavy right hand from Spc. Carlie Williams of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, at Fort Drum, N.Y.

"I kind of just went back to my instincts," Stelly said of how he kept his composure. "He hit me, ... and I just achieved the clinch. That's all that was going through my mind: 'You're not going to knock me out.'"

► Sgt. Jesse Hertzog (top) of Fort Bragg, N.C., and Spc. Blaze Schubert of Fort Campbell, Ky., fight July 28 during the third-place bout of the lightweight division. Hertzog won the match after referee stoppage in the first round.

PHOTO BY DANIEL CERNERO

Stelly recovered, eventually gaining a side mount, then working a rear choke for a submission victory.

He said being a three-time champion was a blessing. "Just to be alongside Tim Kennedy as two of the best guys, maybe, to be in the All-Army tournament, I really consider myself lucky." ❧

Daniel Cernero of III Corps and Fort Hood Public Affairs, and Kevin Posival of the Fort Hood Herald contributed to this story.



Training, because ‘we all get rusty’

Collaborative STX helps develop aviators’ muscle memory

BY SPC. JENNIFER ANDERSSON
159th Combat Aviation Brigade

For the first time in five deployment cycles, all seven companies of 7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, 159th Combat Aviation Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, trained together during a collaborative situational training exercise at Fort Campbell, Ky.

The week-long training event, which began July 16, also included Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division. In various “crawl-phase” exercise scenarios, “Eagle Lift” aviators provided air assault support to more than 400 infantrymen, all while they assessed the readiness of their own elements and mission-essential tasks.

“One portion of the objective is to assist the [502nd] in the ability to upload and offload on aircraft formations,” said Staff Sgt. David Sanchez, an aviation operations NCO with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 7th Bat-

talion, 101st Aviation Regiment. “It also helps our crews to show them how to move [passengers] in and out of objectives very quickly.”

Sgt. Jeffery Miller, an aviation operations specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, said brushing up on skills with an organic unit prevents soldiering skills from being forgotten and builds a stronger team mindset after five off-cycle deployments.

“This training seems very repetitive and very monotonous. But it has to be done, [with] the understanding that we all get rusty, and [rehearsal] is very important,” Sanchez said.

Though 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, planned their own scenarios, Eagle Lift handled air activity, transporting troops from the pickup or medevac zones.

“For us, it was more ‘react to combat,’” said Staff Sgt. Justin Faucher, the intelligence NCO in charge for 7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment. Much of what was

rehearsed was based loosely on experiences gleaned from actual situations in Afghanistan, he said.

During the last deployment cycle, Eagle Lift worked with the Afghan National Army doing, among other things, cold-load training. With the engine off, Soldiers practice aircraft entering and exiting procedures.

“When you’re at a hot [landing zone], you have to know the exact angles and the exact speed to jump out of an aircraft so you don’t get hit by its rotor wash, its exhaust, or, if you’re headed the wrong direction, the blade itself,” Sanchez said. “So, they have to practice that.”

There is no such thing as too much practice when it comes to Soldier training, Faucher said. Rehearsals of theoretical scenarios prepare Soldiers for real-life situations when they deploy.

“As far as what they were doing today, it definitely goes hand-in-hand with daily operations downrange,” he said.

Having the motions down pat can mean the difference between life and death, Sanchez said.

“When seconds matter on the ground, this is where it pays off. When these guys jump out, ... this becomes muscle memory for them.”



▲ Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, load a “casualty” July 19 during medevac training with 7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, 159th Combat Aviation Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, at Fort Campbell, Ky. PHOTO BY SPC. JENNIFER ANDERSSON

Roll Call OF THE FALLEN

FINAL SALUTES

1ST SGT. RUSSELL R. BELL, 37
Tyler, Texas, Aug. 2, 2012

PFC. JOSE OSCAR BELMONTES, 28
La Verne, Calif., July 28, 2012

STAFF SGT. RICHARD L. BERRY, 27
Scottsdale, Ariz., July 22, 2012

PFC. JULIAN L. COLVIN, 21
Birmingham, Ala., July 22, 2012

SGT. 1ST CLASS BOBBY L. ESTLE, 38
Lebanon, Ohio, July 28, 2012

SPC. KRYSTAL M. FITTS, 26
Houston, Texas, July 17, 2012

PFC. THEODORE M. GLENDE, 23
Rochester, N.Y., July 27, 2012

COMMAND SGT. MAJ. KEVIN J. GRIFFIN, 45
Laramie, Wyo., Aug. 8, 2012

STAFF SGT. CARL E. HAMMAR, 24
Lake Havasu City, Ariz., July 14, 2012

SGT. JOHN E. HANSEN, 41
Austin, Texas, Aug. 1, 2012

SPC. DARRION T. HICKS, 21
Raleigh, N.C., July 19, 2012

1ST LT. SEAN R. JACOBS, 23
Redding, Calif., July 27, 2012

MAJ. THOMAS E. KENNEDY, 35
West Point, N.Y., Aug. 8, 2012

1ST LT. TODD W. LAMBKA, 25
Fraser, Mich., Aug. 1, 2012

PFC. JESUS J. LOPEZ, 22
San Bernardino, Calif., Aug. 1, 2012

SPC. ETHAN J. MARTIN, 22
Lewiston, Idaho, Aug. 7, 2012

SGT. ERIK N. MAY, 26
Independence, Kan., July 14, 2012

SPC. KYLE B. MCCLAIN, 25
Rochester Hills, Mich., Aug. 1, 2012

STAFF SGT. BRANDON R. PEPPER, 31
York, Pa., July 21, 2012

SPC. SERGIO E. PEREZ JR., 21
Crown Point, Ind., July 16, 2012

SPC. BENJAMIN C. PLEITEZ, 25
Turlock, Calif., July 27, 2012

SGT. JOSE J. REYES, 24
San Lorenzo, Puerto Rico, July 18, 2012

PFC. JEFFREY L. RICE, 24
Troy, Ohio, July 19, 2012

SGT. MICHAEL E. RISTAU, 25
Rockford, Ill., July 13, 2012

SGT. DANIEL A. RODRIGUEZ, 28
Baltimore, Md., July 18, 2012

PFC. ADAM C. ROSS, 19
Lyman, S.C., July 24, 2012

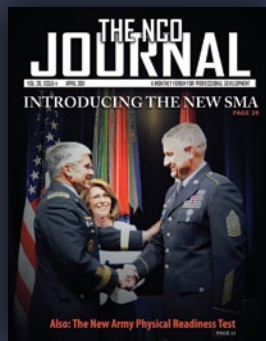
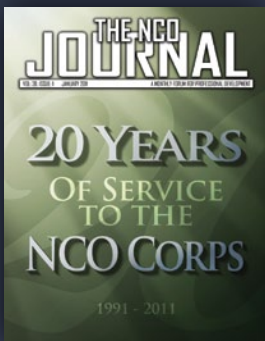
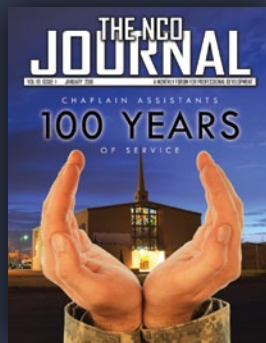
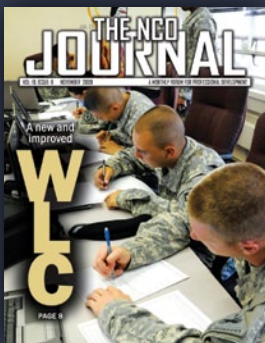
STAFF SGT. MATTHEW S. SITTON, 26
Largo, Fla., Aug. 2, 2012

SPC. NICHOLAS A. TAYLOR, 20
Berne, Ind., July 16, 2012

SGT. ERIC E. WILLIAMS, 27
Murrieta, Calif., July 23, 2012

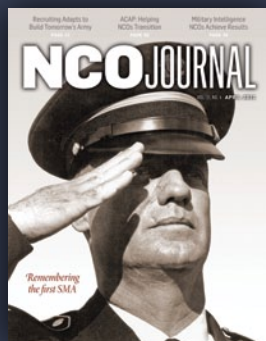
YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN

This is a continuation of a list that began in the October 2003 issue of The NCO Journal and contains names released by the Department of Defense between July 14, 2012, and August 10, 2012.



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