

STRIKE NEWS

USING NEW TOOLS IN A TRADITIONAL WAR

Capt. Keith Hickox

For the past decade, U.S. forces have been engaged in unconventional, non-linear warfare in Iraq and Afghanistan. With that, most training had shifted towards focusing on that type of mission.

Now that U.S. forces have completed the mission in Iraq and talk continues of implementing an exit strategy in Afghanistan, military leaders want to shift training focus back to traditional, force-on-force training.

"This was the first exercise in years where the operational scenario was not counterinsurgency-based," said Col. George Schwartz, commander, 55th Heavy Brigade Combat Team.

The 55th Brigade joined 28th Infantry Division headquarters to participate in III Corps' war-fighter exercise in June 2012. This was the first corps-level, full-spectrum, force-on-force war-fighter exercise in the last 10 years.

"It was challenging to relearn some of the skills involved with full-spectrum, high-intensity operations that we have not exercised in a number of years. We have grown tremendously from the exercise," said Schwartz.

What have also changed a lot during the past 10 years are the tools and systems used to plan and track the battle. Modern systems, such as the Unmanned Aerial Vehicles conducting surveillance and the computer networks sharing vital information throughout the units, are very useful in both scenarios but must be used differently to have the greatest result.

"This war-fighter exercise has been a great opportunity for us to train on our staff processes in a very realistic environment. It allowed us to sharpen our staff skills and synchronize our process utilizing a realistic operational scenario," said Schwartz.

Simulating the realistic battlefield disbursement, III Corps was conducting their operations out of Fort Hood, Texas, with the other divisions, while 28th ID was conducting their operations out of Fort Leavenworth Kan. Despite the geographic separation, all units were able to plan, coordinate and conduct operations seamlessly between adjacent units on the battlefield.

"It's about training, and this was an outstanding training event," said Maj. Gen. Randall R. Marchi, commander, 28th Infantry Division, at the after-action review of the event. "We take back what we learned here and continue improving on that."

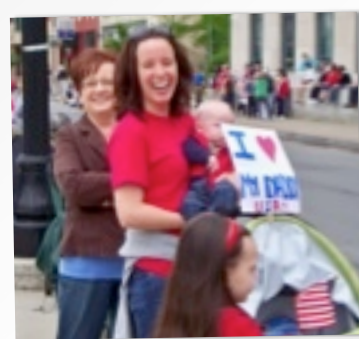
Additionally, by participating in this full-spectrum training exercise, the brigade is helping the Army evaluate the changes it has made regarding personnel, logistics and doctrine over the past decade.



WATER PURIFICATION - PG 6



DIRTY GIRLS - PG 7



ARMED FORCES DAY - P 2

SCRANTON ARMED FORCES DAY PARADE

“Honoring the Past - Saluting the Future”



PHOTOS BY PV2 HECKARD

PV2 Ashley E. Heckard,

The citizens of Scranton, Pa. are lined up on both sides of the street awaiting the start of the Armed Forces Day Parade. Some are dressed for the occasion in the colors of our country, while others are flourishing our flag back and forth in support for both veterans and current active members of our armed forces.

Capt. William Dunn announced the array of supporting elements in the parade. A representation of each branch in the military marched past showcasing Marines, Army, Coast Guard, Navy and Air Force. Antique automobiles, High School marching bands, the police and fire departments, the Scranton Wilkes-Barre Yankees mascot “Champ”, boy and girl scouts, ladies auxilliary’s from various VFW’s,

motorcycles and many other supporters marched in the parade. The 55th Heavy Brigade Combat Team Headquarters were also present.

As each veteran passes by, the look of true pride that emanates on their face can be sensed to viewers as some raise their right hand in a salute.

Each year this parade is held in honor of those who served and still serve selflessly to protect and uphold the constitution and our freedom. Although it lacks in the ‘pizazz’ of huge parades with big balloons and eye catching stunts, it makes up with the appreciation, admiration and love for such a small portion of our community, but so detrimental to everyday life. The soldier, the marine, the sailor and the airman...I salute you.



William Roberts, this year’s honorary veteran, who turns 100 in July, is escorted by Spc. Corey Chorba. Robert’s is a purple heart recipient who served in World War II in Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, and Central Europe as a tank gunner.



COMMANDER'S COLUMN



The Only Constant is Change

To the Terrific Soldiers of the Mighty 55th,

Thank you for your continued dedication to all of the missions that the brigade is challenged with. I know that it has been a tough couple years since March 2010 when we received the notice of sourcing for our deployment to Kuwait. We have lived through an unprecedented amount of change. But you have all shown remarkable resilience and adaptability throughout these trying times.

I have a new change to inform you about. In August, I will be turning over command of the 55th Heavy Brigade Combat Team to the Deputy Commanding Officer, COL Mike Konzman. I will leave the team feeling like I did not fulfill my

mission because I was never able to get anyone mobilized! I know that these decisions were beyond my control, however, and I move on proud of all of the great things we accomplished.

Throughout 2011 especially, we accomplished a tremendous amount of training, schools and new equipment fielding in preparation for the mobilization. We also answered the Governor's call several times throughout that year, including weeks of state active duty for Tropical Storm Lee.

Many of you know "Colonel K," so I don't have to tell you that the brigade is in good hands. I expect that the change of command will go smoothly despite the impending mobilization. We are less than 90 days away from M-day now, and

while changes to the mobilization are still possible, I suspect that our current manning structure is very close to the final requirement.

I have served in several different organizations in the Regular Army, the USAR and the Guard, but I have and always will consider the 55th to be my home in the Army. There is a special spirit in this unit that I expect will always endure. It has been my distinct honor to serve as your commander. I expect to hear of more great things from the brigade in the future.

I hope you will always reach far, STRIKE HARD, and be victorious!

George M. Schwartz

Colonel
Commanding



1st Sgt. Kevin Bittenbender (right photo) led a team of Wounded Warriors (left photo) on a 5 day bike ride from the Vietnam Memorial in Washington DC and ended at the Independence Day Parade in Lewisburg, PA. Bittenbender is the recent recipient of the MAJ Octavius Catto Award and 1st Sgt. of the Military Intelligence Company, 55th Brigade Special Troops Battalion. Photos curtesy: Capt. Robert Watts

ARMY'S 237TH BIRTHDAY



The First Troop Philadelphia City Cavalry sent a mounted color guard (top and middle) which led the procession of units, future enlistees, and other participants from the Constitution Center towards Independence Hall where the formal ceremony took place for the 237th Army Birthday Celebration in Philadelphia (bottom). They made the very special event even better and their presence was fitting given their lineage and connection to Philadelphia, the founding of our nation and escorting General Washington to assume command of our Continental Army.

Photos by: Maj Todd Sowinski





Yellow Ribbon Pre-Deployment Events

Yellow Ribbon Pre-Deployment Event have been scheduled for all soldiers deploying within 55th Brigade.

All family members attending are asked to sign up through JSS. A few locations do have babysitting available, it will tell you on JSS what is available for each event.

The scheduled dates and locations are as follows:

July 14th at 9 AM: E/228BSB in Lock Haven
 July 22nd at 9 AM: C/I-109IN in Jim Thorpe
 July 22nd at 2 PM: D/I-109IN in Jim Thorpe
 Aug. 3rd at 6 PM 12: 228BSB in Allentown
 Aug. 11th at 9 AM: HHC/I-109IN in Scranton
 Aug. 11th at 2 PM: A/I-109IN in Scranton
 Aug. 12th at 9 AM: B/I-109IN in Tobyhanna
 Aug. 12th at 2 PM I-109FA and 55BSTB in Scranton
 Aug. 18th at 9 AM: 3-103AR in Williamsport
 Aug 25th at 1 PM: C/I-104CAV and D/228BSB in FTIG
 Aug 26 at 8 AM: I-104CAV and C/55BSTB in Philadelphia

Get your Unit and your
Soldiers recognized!

UPARS

Unit Public Affairs
Representatives.

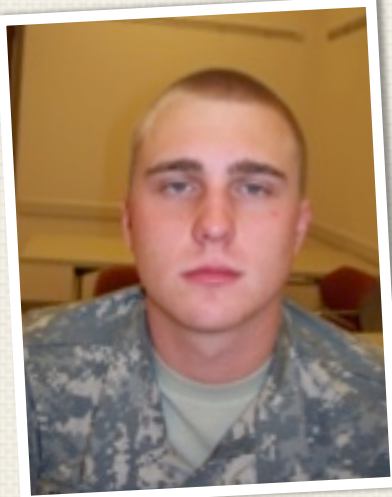
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ASK A JOE

What does it mean to you to be a Soldier?



Pv2 Justin
Schermerhorn

HHC 55th HBCT

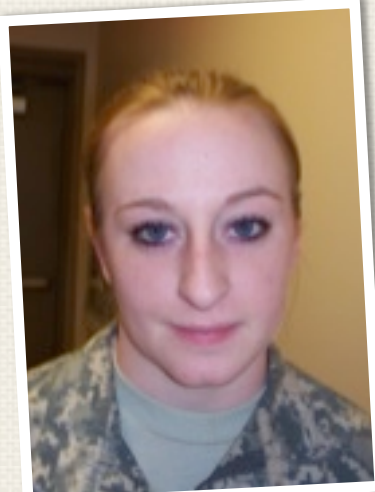
“To have pride in what I do, and hold myself to a higher standard than others would and just be proud of what I do everyday.”



Pv2 Tyler Kulp

Scout Platoon, HHC 109th Infantry

“For me to do my part and to ensure my family’s safety and help out for other’s where I can. To just be a part of something great.”



Spec. Maria Stivala

HHC 55th BSTB

“It means a lot to me because my family is military so I like doing if for the loyalty and responsibility.

Indiantown Gap Pond Receives Special Military 'Treatment'

PV2. Ashley E. Heckard

Pollution is everywhere, more so now than ever before. Therefore, purifying water is crucial for everyday survival. The 228th Brigade Support Battalion plays a gratifying role in dispensing clean, potable water to the soldiers of Pennsylvania's National Guard.

"It's important to have potable water because people can't survive without it," said Spc. Robert Sall, water purification specialist. "For soldiers, they need water just for daily tasks; drinking, showering, even eating. Water is used for everything and to not have clean water, soldiers can get sick."

The 228th is equipped with approximately 16 Tactical Water Purification Systems and Lightweight Water Purification Systems to aid the soldiers in their tasks. The LWPS

Horner. "It is like the osmosis effect. The water is sucked through hoses to a bag of non-potable water. That is then filtered through the system and the filtration separates the good stuff from the bad. The 'bad' goes back into the water source and the 'good' goes to a separate container that will soon be able to be put to use."

It sounds simple enough, however there are many complicated electrical and chemical processes involved, as well as maintenance. The hoses and cords that connect power and currents each have a specific place, and if they are not positioned properly, it could ruin the filtration system and the path that the water has to take in order to be potable.

"These 92Ws are professionals," said Capt. Rob Perino, the officer in charge of the training, in reference to Army water treatment specialists. "They are very tactical and proficient when it comes to deploying the TWPS or LWPS. For the past three

months, these soldiers have been reviewing the tasks, conditions and standards for this collective training. They have performed PMCS (Preventative Maintenance Checks and Service) on their equipment, making sure the water purification system is serviceable. They have to identify the needs of the brigade, they also need to be aware and seek out an



Spc. Robert Sall of the 228th Brigade Support Battalion tosses a vacuum hose into pond during a water-treatment exercise June 23, 2012, at Fort Indiantown Gap. Photo by Pvt. Ashley Heckard

acceptable water source."

Precision and accuracy are vital to the water purification process. Everything, from reading the chemical intake to dispensing and distributing the water correctly is crucial. With our military currently deployed to arid regions, it is even more important for these water purification specialists to know and execute their role to perfection.

"The best part about the training is how energized and enthusiastic these soldiers become when it comes to working on the equipment that they were trained for," said Perino. "With the knowledge and expertise of these soldiers we are able to sustain the whole brigade."



Soldiers from the 228th Brigade Support Battalion regulate the purification process during a water-treatment exercise June 23, 2012, at Fort Indiantown Gap. Photo by Pvt. Ashley Heckard

pumps about 125 gallons of water per hour, while the TWPS can pump 1,500 gallons per hour and is used primarily for bottling and transporting. The purification process removes the contaminants from untreated water to produce water that is pure enough for the most critical of its intended uses, usually for human consumption. Substances that are removed during the process include suspended solids, bacteria, algae, viruses, fungi, and minerals such as iron, sulfur and other chemical pollutants such as fertilizer.

"Think of it as a semi-permeable membrane," said Sgt 1st Class Timothy



Sgt. 1st Class Timothy Horner of the 228th Brigade Support Battalion gets elbow-deep in pond water during a water-treatment exercise June 23, 2012, at Fort Indiantown Gap. Photo by Pvt. Ashley Heckard

STRIKE SPORTS

'Dirty Girls' Run for Clean Purpose

PV2 Ashley E. Heckard,

In a military unit where men outnumber women by a ratio of five to one, it is important for females to stick together.

The Headquarters Company of the 55th Brigade Special Troops Battalion recently found a unique way to foster that camaraderie. Nearly all of the female leaders of the company trained for and participated in The Dirty Girl Mud Run, an event specifically for females that donates a percent of their funds from registration fees to breast cancer awareness.

Participants run through 3.2 miles of sticky, grimy, nasty mud as they climb, jump, crawl, slide, and hurdle different obstacles.

"Learning that the race was women-only, in support of the Susan Komen fund, I thought that it would be a great idea to involve the female leaders from our company," said Capt. Kafi Joseph, commander of the 55th Brigade Special Troops Battalion. "As a result, we used a play on words for the team name. Since our company's call sign is 'HEROES', we decided to name our team '[S]HEROES.' Overall the NCOs on-board were super excited about the idea."

Pennsylvania's Dirty Girl was held in Moosic, on Montage Mountain, on May 5, 2012. More than 80,000 women from all over the northeastern United States ran and supported the event.

The obstacles that participants have to go through include hay bales, tires, climbing wood and rope walls up to 50

feet, low-crawling under wire, crawling through cylinders, and of course running through the mud and dirty water, most of the time uphill.

"This was definitely a team-building experience," said Joseph. "We started and ended as a team and completed the three-mile obstacle course in 40 minutes. We had decided to participate in the event almost three months out, so we had all been working towards completing the event. Throughout the train-up process, many of us had also accomplished personal goals as well. We were able to have fun with the event and made team shirts with nicknames and also donned pink tutus, which is a far stretch from our usual straight laced, ACU appearance," she said, referring to the Army's gray digital camouflage uniform.

Like many other mud runs that have become popular over the last five years, the course is open to the public. Unlike the other runs, this course requires that you have the right assets and female attributes. No boys allowed.

"As a result of our participation in the Dirty Girl, The HHC 55 BSTB [S]HEROES will field an Army Ten Miler team this October," said Joseph, "Although not everyone on our team brands themselves as a runner, as a commander I find it absolutely rewarding that a team-building event, such as the Dirty Girl, has motivated individuals to want to complete more and more similar events. I hope that this motivation spreads across the unit and we continue to set an example for those we lead."



COURTESY CAPT. KAFI JOSEPH