

# HAMMER HEAT

3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division

March, 2013

*Deployment in Review*



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# Sledgehammer Brigade assumes mission in Kuwait

Story and photos by  
Sgt. Christopher Johnston  
3rd ABCT, 3rd ID  
Public Affairs NCOIC

As one brigade completes its mission and its mark in history, another brigade begins the journey to make a mark of its own.

An assumption of mission ceremony was held June 29, between the Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, based out of Fort Hood, Texas, and the Soldiers of the 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, based out of Fort Benning, Ga.

As part of the ceremony, Col. Scott L. Efflandt and Command Sgt. Maj. Robert F. Leimer, commander and sergeant major, respectively, of 1st BCT, 1st Cav.,



Color guards from 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division and 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division present arms during the assumption of mission ceremony held at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, June 29. As the Ironhorse Brigade ended its mission in Kuwait, the Sledgehammer Brigade continues the longstanding U.S. relationship with

cased their colors, representing the end of the Ironhorse Brigade's mission in Kuwait.

“The best part of this color casing ceremony, beside the eminent return to our families,” said Effandt. “Is that forward progress will continue; the Sledgehammer Brigade will no doubt continue to build what we have started here.”

The Ironhorse Brigade deployed in July 2011 to Iraq as an advise and assist brigade focused on building Iraq's military capabilities and ensuring adequate security of Iraq by the Iraqi Security Forces. The unit ended America's mission in Iraq as the last brigade to exit the country in December 2011.

The Ironhorse Brigade then redeployed to Kuwait in support of Third Army/U.S. Army Central.

After the casing of the Ironhorse Brigade's colors, Col. Johnnie L. Johnson Jr. and Command Sgt. Maj. Brian D. Harrison, commander and sergeant major,



respectively, of 3rd ABCT, uncased the Sledgehammer Brigade's colors, assuming Ironhorse's mission in Kuwait.

“This is truly an exciting day for the Sledgehammer Brigade,” said Johnson. “Our deployment to the [Central Command] area of responsibility marks the

culmination of many months of training and preparation.”

The Sledgehammer Brigade will conduct training and joint exercises with its Kuwaiti counterparts and continue the military-to-military cooperation with Kuwait and other regional partners.

Col. Johnnie L. Johnson Jr. and Command Sgt. Maj. Brian D. Harrison, command team for 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, uncased the Sledgehammer Brigade's colors during an assumption of mission ceremony June 29, at Camp Buehring, Kuwait.



Col. Scott L. Efflandt and Command Sgt. Maj. Robert F. Leimer, command team for 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, prepare to case their colors during an assumption of mission ceremony June 29, at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. The casing of colors represents the end of the Ironhorse Brigade's mission in Kuwait, as they prepare to return home to Fort Hood, Texas.





Sgt. 1st Class Kevin A. Gardner (left) and Spc. Kevin A. Gardner Jr., both of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 203rd Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, stand side-by-side during 203rd BSB's patch ceremony at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, July 6. The father and son duo deployed together with the Eagle Battalion to support the Sledgehammer Brigade's mission promoting regional security in the Middle East. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Garrick Guico)



3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division

# Like father like son

Story by  
Sgt. Christopher Johnston  
3rd ABCT, 3rd ID  
Public Affairs NCOIC

For two soldiers currently deployed to Camp Buehring, Kuwait, they're living a life normally reserved for television and movie storylines. Sgt. 1st Class Kevin A. Gardner and Spc. Kevin A. Gardner Jr., both of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 203rd Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, are father and son experiencing Gardner Jr.'s first deployment, together.

Gardner Sr., a maintenance supervisor and Cleveland native, joined the Army Reserves in September 1992 and switched to active duty July 1993.

He recalls being at work and receiving a phone call from his son almost three years ago.



“Can you come down to the recruiter to help me pick my job?’ I was there in about five minutes,” said the elder Gardner. “I always wanted my son to go to college, but he told me that school was not for him.”

“I had mixed emotions about him joining the Army, but when he graduated from basic training at Fort Sill, Okla., I couldn’t

be more proud of my son,” said the elder Gardner.

Their career paths crossed for the first time at Camp Casey, Korea, where Gardner Jr. was ending his rotation in Korea, and his father was beginning his. A year later, they crossed again at Fort Benning, Ga.

“It was the luck of the draw,” said the elder Gardner. “Neither of us requested to be sent to the same unit.”

“People always told me they had never heard of a father and son at the same unit,” said the younger Gardner, an automated logistical specialist and Savannah, Ga., native. “Let alone deploy together.”

However, in June 2012, the father and son team boarded a plane; destination, Kuwait.

Deploying with your father can have its ups and downs. For the younger Gardner, his father is a role model and family support, but sometimes the younger Gardner is the target of a few friendly jests from his peers.

“I hear it all,” said the younger Gardner. “Like, ‘you know your dad is just a phone call away.’ And, ‘if you mess up I’m gonna tell your daddy.’” With an offhanded smile he explains, “There was no getting around that, but my dad isn’t always watching over my shoulder.”

“I try not to overdo it,” said the elder Gardner. “I try to let him be his own man, allow him to experience life and the Army on his own.”

Although the father and son duo give each other their space, there has always been friendly family competition between them, whether out on the basketball court, or taking the Army Physical Fitness Test.

“At the moment, I am currently the PT (Physical Training) King,” said the younger Gardner.

They looked at each other with identical smiles, “My son can run faster than me, but I don’t know about out doing me in PT.”

During the 203rd BSB patch ceremony at Camp Buehring, the younger Gardner received his patch from his father.

“This isn’t the only thing you are gonna pin on me,” the younger Gardner said as he plans to attend next month’s promotion board to get promoted to sergeant.

“I couldn’t tell you how proud that made me feel,” said the elder Gardner. “Knowing he was in it for the long haul.”

With the elder Gardner approaching retirement, the family military torch will soon be handed over to his son.

“I love my son, and I know he loves me,” said the elder Gardner. “I am experiencing something a lot of fathers dream of. They wish they were there to see their son grow and become a man. I am here experiencing it.”



Spc. Kevin A. Gardner Jr. smiles as his father, Sgt. 1st Class Kevin A. Gardner prepares to place the 3rd Infantry Division shoulder sleeve insignia on his son's right shoulder during a patch ceremony at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, July 6. Gardner, a Cleveland native, and Gardner Jr., of Savannah, Ga., share a unique opportunity to work together as both are assigned to 203rd Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. Gardner Jr. plans to attend the August promotion board to become a noncommissioned officer like his father. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Garrick Guico)



# Citizenship through service

Story and photos by  
Sgt. Christopher Johnston  
3rd ABCT, 3rd ID  
Public Affairs NCOIC

To many, citizenship is more than a status. Citizenship is action; it is something you do. It was Andrew Jackson who said, “Every good citizen makes his country’s honor his own, and cherishes it not only as precious but as sacred. He is willing to risk his life in its defense and is conscious that he gains protection while he gives it.”

Spc. Yamilet Terry, a motor transport operator with the 203rd Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, is not a U.S. citizen, but swore to “support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic.”

Spc. Yamilet Terry, assigned to the 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, raises her right hand and recites the Oath of Citizenship of the United States of America during the Third Army/ARCENT Naturalization ceremony held at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Sept. 19. Terry was one of seven soldiers from seven different countries who became U.S. citizens at the ceremony.



Terry is one of many soldiers who are pursuing their citizenship by becoming “a guardian of freedom and the American way of life.”

Terry was born in Acapulco, Mexico, Nov. 5, 1983, and lived there until she was

8 years old. Her family moved to Colorado Springs, Colo., where her father received his citizenship and the rest of her family received their Green Cards.

Her uncle, Army Sgt. George Lopez, visited her and her family just after the

3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division

events of 9/11. He expressed how much he loved the Army and the pride it gave him. Having listened to her uncle she felt it was her duty to serve the country she already felt a part of. She entered the Army’s Delayed Entry Program, not yet old enough to enlist, and on Feb. 2, 2004, she joined the Army.

Terry attended basic training at Fort Jackson, S.C., and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. After AIT, she was assigned to 64th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, at Fort Carson, Colo. Her unit deployed to Taji, Iraq, in November 2008.

Terry volunteered for many convoy missions, which were high risk assignments due to improvised explosive devices, throughout Iraq. Her Palletized Load System vehicle was hit by three separate IEDs throughout the day, during one of her missions.

“The first one was on the right side of my PLS and it hit us from underneath,”



said Terry. “The second hit a few inches away from my cab. The IED was placed in between two barriers. The last one, I was on my way to drop the barriers we were delivering, and it literally felt like we went up and came back down; the doors swung open; we started getting small arms fire.”

Medics asked Terry if she could drive her vehicle to safety, and she said yes.

“All I could think was I needed to get

back to where my platoon was,” said Terry. “I felt safe there.”

Terry received an Army Commendation Medal with Valor Device for her actions.

Terry, now assigned to 203rd BSB, 3rd ABCT, 3rd ID, Fort Benning Ga., began the paperwork to receive her citizenship prior to the unit’s National Training Center rotation at Fort Irwin, Calif.

Terry was told she was deploying to Kuwait and thought her application would be delayed for another year.

“When we got to Kuwait, I asked my NCO if there was any way I can still get my citizenship papers,” said Terry. “That is when I was linked up with Staff Sgt. Davis.”

“I was glad to help Spc. Terry,” said Staff Sgt. Gregory L. Davis, an intelligence analyst with 203rd BSB. “She is a hard charger and great at her job.”

Davis contacted Third Army/U.S. Army Central’s operations office, at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, where Terry filled out her Application for Naturalization, submitted her fingerprints, and took pictures for her citizenship.

“He helped me out so much,” Terry said of Davis. “There are a lot of people out there that don’t know that we get help with this in the military, and that it is free!”

“When I got the word that my application had been approved and that I will be going to Arifjan Sept. 19, to become a U.S. citizen, my roommate and I were so

Spc. Yamilet Terry, a motor transport operator from Acapulco, Mexico, assigned to the 203rd Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, prepares to drive to located points on a map during a mounted land navigation training exercise at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. Terry is scheduled to attend a naturalization ceremony at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Sept. 19, where she will become a U.S. citizen



excited, we were screaming and jumping up and down,” said Terry.

With the presidential elections rapidly approaching, Terry is looking forward to being able to vote for the first time.

“Being able to vote is very important to me,” said Terry. “I believe that every vote counts and I want my vote to count.”

On Feb. 2, 2004, Terry swore to “obey the orders of the President of the United States” and this year she will have a say in who those orders will come from.



Spc. Yamilet Terry, a motor transport operator from Acapulco, Mexico, assigned to the 203rd Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, stands next to Staff Sgt. Gregory L. Davis, an intelligence analyst also assigned to 203rd BSB at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. Terry is scheduled to attend a naturalization ceremony, Sept. 19, at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, to become a U.S. citizen. Davis assisted Terry with processing her paperwork while she is deployed.



# M1A2 Abrams crews train on the move in Kuwait

Story and photos by  
Sgt. Christopher Johnston  
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Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, conducted a Table VI tank gunnery exercise in their M1A2 Abrams Main Battle Tanks at the Udairi Range Complex, near Camp Buehring, Kuwait.

Tank crews fired their main gun, a 120 mm smoothbore gun, of their M1A2 System Enhancement Package V2 down range during their training. The crews fired two different types of rounds during the range, Sabot and High Explosive Anti-Tank.

“Sabot is essentially a penetrator, think

of a very hard and sharp spear,” said Capt. Stephen Harmon, Destroyer Company commander, 1-15th Infantry, 3rd ABCT, 3rd ID. “We generally reserve the Sabots for enemy main battle tanks, as they are most likely to penetrate over any other round. The HEAT is used to destroy armored personnel carriers and light trucks; really any type of vehicle.”

The M1A2, which has been battle tested during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, can reach speed in excess of 40 miles per hour, and its main gun has a range in excess of 2 miles.

“We have proven on the battle field that we can engage targets out to extreme ranges

with this vehicle,” said Harmon. “We can do it exceptionally fast, we can do it in bad weather, we can do it at night, and we can do it on the move.”

A total of 29 crews from Crusader and Destroyer Companies conducted the

training in preparation for Table VIII, the qualification range.

“We know that these soldiers have already proven their proficiency at gunnery, they have done that in the States,” said Harmon. “But what we have been



An M1A2 System Enhancement Package V2 Abrams Main Battle Tank fires its 120 mm main gun while on the move during a Table VI tank gunnery at the Udairi Range Complex, near Camp Buehring, Kuwait.. Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, are scheduled to begin training with their Kuwaiti partners in the near future.



able to do is take these armored vehicles, bring them out here and learn to fight in this environment.”

The M1A2 Abrams crews fired their main guns from both the stationary position and on the move. After each set of tanks completed their run through Table VI, they immediately received feedback on how they performed during their run.

“I had a blast, me and my whole crew are ready to go see if we scored high enough to make Top Tank,” said Cpl. William Delaney, assigned to Destroyer Company.

“The big thing with the American Army is the proficiency of the crews,” said



An M1A2 System Enhancement Package V2 Abrams Main Battle Tank fires its 120 mm main gun while on the move during a Table VI tank gunnery at the Udairi Range Complex, near Camp Buehring, Kuwait.



An M1A2 System Enhancement Package V2 Abrams Main Battle Tank fires its 120 mm main gun from a stationary position during a Table VI tank gunnery at the Udairi Range Complex, near Camp Buehring, Kuwait. Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, fired Sabot rounds and High Explosive Anti-Tank rounds from the stationary position as well as on the move during the gunnery.

Harmon. “If we take one of the best tanks in the world and mix it with the best armored crew member in the world we are always going to have a successful engagement.”

Soldiers of 1-15 Infantry are scheduled to begin training alongside their Kuwaiti

counterparts in the near future. The combined training is in accordance with the United States’ partnership with the Kuwaiti military which promotes peace and stability in the region.



# A new Top Gun in Kuwait

Story and photos by  
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Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 10th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, competed for the bragging rights of Top Gun at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, at the nearby Udairi Range Complex from Sept. 3 through Sept. 13.

Sixteen M109A6 Paladin crews from Alpha and Bravo Batteries contended for the highest cumulative score in events including physical fitness, artillery skills proficiency and section live-fire exercises.

The Top Gun competition began with cannon crews shooting 40 rounds from



(Left to right) Pfc. Ronnie F. Payton, Spc. Kenneth L. Russell, Sgt. Eden H. Calhoun, Spc. Joshua E. Kloss, Pfc. Austin L. Pickett and Staff Sgt. Melvin A. Moss assigned to Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, 10th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, proudly display the Top Gun muzzle cover on their M109A6 Paladin after being named 1-10 FA's Top Gun crew Sept. 18, at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. The crew beat 15 other Paladin crews in a competition testing every aspect of their military occupation specialties, as well as physical fitness and individual weapons qualification.

each of their M4 carbine rifles, followed by an Army Physical Fitness Test.

“The competition isn’t just who can

shoot the best,” said Pfc. Anthony M. Ellingsworth, a cannon crew member assigned to Alpha Battery, 1-10 FA. “It’s an overall competition of us as Soldiers and

breech was my favorite part,” said Pfc. Ronnie F. Payton, a cannon crew member assigned to Alpha Battery, 1-10 FA. “Me and my driver excel at it, we always strive

3rd Armored Brigade Combat

how we perform in our jobs.”

Crews conducted multiple hands on events including the disassembly and assembly of their .50-caliber machine gun, Mk 19 automatic grenade launcher, and the breech of the 155 mm Howitzer cannon.

“Breaking down the



to be the best.”  
The finale of the competition was the Paladin live-fire exercises at the Udairi range.

Coming out on top with a combined score of 1,035 points out of 1,100 was the crew consisting of Staff Sgt. Melvin A.

Moss, Sgt. Eden H. Calhoun, Spc. Joshua E. Kloss, Spc. Kenneth L. Russell, Pfc. Ronnie F. Payton, and Pfc. Austin L. Pickett of Alpha Battery.

“Every crew did an exceptional job,” said Lt. Col. James E. Willard, 1-10 FA commander. “Only a small amount of

points separated first place from last.”

Willard presented the ceremonial red muzzle cover,



An M109A6 Paladin fires at a target, Sept. 12, at the Udairi Range Complex near Camp Buehring, Kuwait, during the 1st Battalion, 10th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division's Top Gun competition. Sixteen Paladin crews from Alpha and Bravo Batteries competed for the honors of 1-10 FA's Top Gun title which is awarded every six months to the crew with the highest cumulative score.



Spc. Kirk E. West, a cannon crew member and Lancaster, Mo., native assigned to Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, 10th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, reassembles the breech of the 155 mm Howitzer inside his M109A6 Paladin during the 1-10 FA's Top Gun competition, Sept. 11 at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. Sixteen crews competed for the honor of Top Gun which showcased their knowledge and ability to perform multiple tasks within their military occupation specialties.

with Top Gun and the 1-10 FA crest painted on it, to Moss and his crew.

“It stands out and lets everyone know who is the best,” said Payton. “We trained hard for six months, we came out and executed.”

Moss and his crew will retain the honors of Top Gun for the next six months.

The Paladin crews of A and B Batteries will continue to train during their deployment in Kuwait. Crew members said they will constantly strive to be the best in order to remain ready for any mission the Army presents them, as well as preparing for the next Top Gun competition.



# US, Kuwaiti soldiers bond in the gas chamber

Story and photos by Sgt. Christopher Johnston  
3rd ABCT, 3rd ID Public Affairs NCOIC

Kuwaiti and U.S. soldiers enter a gas chamber during a chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear partnership training exercise held between soldiers of the 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, and the 94th Brigade, Kuwaiti Land Forces, Oct. 4, at a training area near Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. Soldiers from the 3rd ABCT will continue partnership training, strengthening military ties with regional counterparts throughout the duration of their deployment.



Soldiers of the 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, alongside Kuwaiti soldiers from the 94th Brigade, Kuwaiti Land Forces, conducted chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear training Oct. 3-4, near Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

Partnership training is conducted regularly, building military ties and promoting security and stability in the region.

The training between the 94th Brigade and 3rd ABCT included proper wear of their chemical suits and protective gas masks, and a trip into a CS gas chamber to ensure their equipment worked effectively. CBRN training is standard training the Army conducts annually for familiarization and re-certification purposes.

Staff Sgt. Charles A. Marvel, a chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear specialist assigned to 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 3rd ABCT, 3rd ID, explained that CS gas, a common form of tear gas used for riot control, reacts with the moisture in the skin and eyes causing an instant and intense burning sensation,

severe coughing, drastic nasal discharge, restricted breathing, dizziness and disorientation.

Some of the soldiers expressed nervous comments and shared “are they serious?” looks as Marvel described what they could expect in the chamber.

One Kuwaiti soldier jokingly asked if he could be excused from going into the chamber due to an alleged medical condition. Although the medical condition was not specified, he gestured toward his throat and breathing. His fellow soldier handed him a bottle of cough syrup and the classroom erupted in laughter. Even in the midst of training, soldiers displayed high morale and a sense of humor.

The morning of Oct. 4, U.S. and Kuwaiti soldiers gathered near a tent at a training area in the vicinity of Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

“There’s a little language barrier, but with hand signals and gestures we could understand each other enough to interact,” said Spc. Henry Rios, a fire support spe-



cialist assigned to 3rd BSTB, 3rd ABCT, 3rd ID, who participated in the gas chamber training.

Anticipation rose as soldiers from both nations put their chemical suits and gas masks on. The Kuwaiti commander and U.S. non-commissioned officer in charge ensured that all soldiers' gas masks fit properly and that their suits were on correctly.

With gas masked donned, Marvel and several other U.S. soldiers entered the tent and set off the CS gas tablets.

The soldiers awaiting instructions to enter the gas chamber got a pat on the shoulder, a thumbs up, and a come on in.

As the flap to the chamber opened and the first group of soldiers filed in, CS gas could be seen in the light spilling through the cracks and seams of the tent.

Some of the soldiers bumped into each other as they scrambled through the entryway. They couldn't see well with their masks on. The Kuwaiti and U.S. leaders in

charge shouted muffled orders, "You go this way," while another soldier shouted, "You go that way." Amidst the chaos, soldiers packed shoulder to shoulder and waited.

At the signal from their leaders, soldiers removed their masks, and took a deep breath of the CS gas.

"There was absolutely no difference, as soon as they break the seal on their pro mask reality hits them, as well as the gas," said Sgt. James-Ryan Varner, an imagery analyst assigned to 3rd BSTB, 3rd ABCT, 3rd ID. "Everyone was choking, drooling and coughing. We can't ask them to do anything we won't do so when we took our masks off, we couldn't stand to be in there any longer than they could."

"With all their gear they were fine, we showed them it works," said 1st Lt. Jose Solis, assigned to 3rd BSTB, 3rd ABCT, 3rd ID. "But once they took it off, just like us, they kind of freaked out. They said their names and they were out of there quick."

After exiting the chamber, both U.S.

and Kuwaiti soldiers walked around with their eyes shut and noses running waiting for the effects of the CS gas to wear off.

As quickly as the effects wore off, laughter and joking ensued.

"I hate CS gas, I hate it!" said Spc. Derrick Ramey, a public affairs broadcast specialist for the Sledgehammer Brigade. "You come running out, your skin on fire, and you squeeze open an eye to see another

soldier no better off than you and the first thing you do is smile. It's amazing how easily people turn to laughter and friendship in terrible circumstances."

"The importance of this training is to show them that the equipment they have works," said Solis. "This gets them comfortable with their equipment and if the need comes they know it works and they will be proficient with it."



Cpl. Arthur A. Ramirez, a chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear specialist assigned to 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, battles the effects of CS gas after conducting partnership training with the 94th Brigade, Kuwaiti Land Forces, near Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Oct. 4. Both Kuwaiti and U.S. soldiers took part in CBRN training aimed at familiarization with their equipment, and proving to soldiers that their equipment works by entering a gas chamber filled with CS gas.



# Hammer Strike

## Showcasing Sledgehammer Brigade's lethal firepower

Story and photos by Sgt. Christopher Johnston  
3rd ABCT, 3rd ID Public Affairs NCOIC



Infantrymen assigned to the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, stack before clearing and securing a building, one of the final tasks of Hammer Strike, a brigade level exercise conducted at the Udairi Range Complex near Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Nov. 6. Hammer Strike featured the capabilities of an armored brigade and highlighted the soldiers and vehicles of the Sledgehammer Brigade to its Kuwaiti counterparts who were on hand to view the exercise. The Sledgehammer Brigade has been participating in joint training exercises with the Kuwaitis during their deployment.

Soldiers of the 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, conducted a brigade live-fire exercise at the Udairi Range Complex, Nov. 7, near Camp Buehring, Kuwait. The exercise, named Hammer Strike, showcased the brigade's firepower and capabilities.

The unit's Kuwaiti counterparts attended the event to witness the Sledgehammer Brigade's combat power and coordination of multiple combat systems conducting simultaneous missions to across the battlefield.

Among those missions was the complex task of breaching an obstacle.

“Breaching is one of the most dangerous operations an Army unit can do,” said Capt. Stephen Harmon, commander of Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd ABCT, 3rd ID. “Historically we've used many different vehicles to conduct a breach. Here we were able to utilize the Assault Breaching Vehicle and it can fill several key roles for us.”

Breaching an obstacle such as barbed wire or a minefield in the past was a time consuming and extremely dangerous task. Soldiers were required to dismount from their vehicle, and either manually probe for mines, or toss a grappling hook out into the minefield and try to detonate mines as they reel in the hook.

The ABV, the Sledgehammer Brigade's newest vehicle, puts an end to these practices. The ABV has an Abrams Main Battle Tank chassis, a 15-foot wide plow attached to the front, and is equipped with M58 MICLIC (Mine Clearing Line Charges). The MICLIC can shoot up to 150 meters, and is armed with C-4 explosives that are then detonated from within the ABV, keeping all personnel protected inside their vehicles.

Hammer Strike displayed the 3rd ABCT's overall lethal firepower starting with High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems launching rockets onto the battlefield combined with close air support provided by AH-64 Apache helicopters from the 35th Combat Aviation Brigade. Immediately after, an Abrams Main Battle Tank platoon maneuvered to a position to provide supporting fire, engaging and destroying enemy targets located near a minefield surrounded by concertina razor wire. With continuous suppressive fire bombarding the enemy, an engineer platoon, comprised of five Bradleys and an ABV, traversed the sandy landscape toward the minefield.

When the brigade command post confirmed that air space was clear, the ABV fired its missile, armed with C-4, across the minefield. The engineers then detonated the MICLIC, clearing a path wide enough for vehicles to safely pass through the minefield.

Once the engineer platoon breached the obstacle and clearly marked the lane for advancing forces, a second tank platoon followed while artillery and Apache heli-



copters continuously destroyed targets. A third platoon, consisting of Bradleys, raced across the desert toward two houses on the battlefield.

The back ramps lowered on two of the vehicles and infantrymen inside dismounted, cleared and secured the two houses. During the assault, the scenario called for two soldiers to sustain combat related injuries which required medical evacuations to occur.

Combat medics drove to the sight of the injured soldiers and provided immediate treatment before evacuating them to a nearby medical facility. Medical teams then loaded the patients onto a Black Hawk helicopter, escorted by two Apache helicopters, to be flown away from the battlefield.

Meanwhile, still being protected by continuous suppressive fire from ground forces and artillery, combined with support from two Air Force F-15 Eagles, the infantry squad continued to obtain their target and secure the two houses. With the target detained, the Sledgehammer soldiers left the site, ending the Hammer Strike exercise.

During the exercise the brigade fired more than 1,300 25 mm rounds and nearly 150 high explosive anti-tank, and armor piercing sabot rounds at enemy targets.

Sledgehammer soldiers have been training throughout the past four months for this event. They started with individual and squad training, and then conducted platoon and company level missions, followed by battalion sized exercises.

“There is one big plan, but it all comes down to the platoon level,” said Cpl. Logan Steinbach, assigned to Destroyer Company, 1-15 Infantry, 3rd ABCT, 3rd ID. “Everyone knows what’s going on and everyone has their part, and it’s all lower level that gets this done.”

“What we saw today was a synchronization of Soldiers, a synchronization of war fighters,” said Harmon. “Whether we are on this equipment or whether they are in the sky, we can synchronize and we came together to deliver a tremendous amount of combat power on the battlefield.”

The Hammer Strike exercise demon-

A High Mobility Artillery Rocket System from Company C, 3rd Battalion, 5th Field Artillery Regiment, attached to 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, launches a rocket during a Hammer Strike rehearsal at the Udairi Range Complex near Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Nov. 6. Hammer Strike was a brigade exercise showcasing the firepower and capabilities of the Sledgehammer Brigade to the unit’s Kuwaiti counterparts in attendance. The brigade’s regional presence and operations promote security and stability and support mutual interests in the region.

3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division



Abrams Main Battle Tank platoons position themselves on the battlefield in order to lay suppressive fire during Hammer Strike, a brigade level live-fire exercise conducted by the 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, at the Udairi Range Complex near Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Nov. 7. During the mission, the brigade combined ground maneuver, field artillery, attack aviation and Air Force assets to engage and destroy targets, displaying its lethal firepower to the many Kuwait military counterparts on hand. Hammer Strike was a culmination of the training the Sledgehammer Brigade and their Kuwaiti counterparts have been conducting for the past four months.



strated the armored brigade’s abilities to its Kuwaiti counterparts. One of the goals of conducting this event for the Kuwaiti military was to build upon the strong alliance between the U.S. and Kuwaiti forces which promotes peace and stability within the region.

“I would do whatever I could to keep that from coming my way if I were the enemy,” said Staff Sgt. John Bittig, an infantryman assigned to 1-15 IN, 3rd ABCD, 3rd ID. “I said to my guys, ‘anyone on the receiving end of this isn’t gonna make it out alive.’”

A Paladin M109A6 fires artillery rounds as initial suppressive fire during Hammer Strike rehearsals, a brigade level exercise conducted by the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, at the Udairi Range Complex near Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Nov. 6. The Sledgehammer Brigade showcased their lethal firepower and maneuverability to its Kuwaiti counterparts in attendance for the event.



An Assault Breacher Vehicle detonates a mine clearing line charge (MICLIC) in order to breach a simulated minefield during Hammer Strike, a brigade exercise conducted by the 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division at the Udairi Range Complex near Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Nov. 7. The ABV is the brigade’s newest vehicle that can breach obstacles faster and safer than previous tactics.



An M1A2 Abrams Main Battle Tank fires suppressive rounds at targets during Hammer Strike, a brigade level live fire exercise conducted by the 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, at the Udairi Range Complex near Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Nov. 7. The operation showcased the Sledgehammer Brigade’s firepower and soldiers’ training to the unit’s Kuwaiti counterparts who were present for the mission. The Sledgehammer Brigade’s deployment to Kuwait is aimed at enhancing capabilities between the U.S. and the Kuwaiti forces in order to promote security and stabilization in the region.



# US, Kuwaitis conduct defensive exercise ‘together’

Story and photos by  
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Soldiers assigned to Company B and Company C, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, and Kuwaiti soldiers assigned to the 15th Mubarak Brigade conducted Saweyan Shield, a live fire exercise, at the Udairi Range Complex near Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Nov. 28.

Saweyan is the Arabic word for “together” or “unity”.

The soldiers from both brigades have been training together for several weeks, beginning with basic skills such as land navigation and first aid, then progressing to more complex skills such as urban operations.

“It is great to have the opportunity to work with them,” Capt. Donald Bigham, Company B commander, 1-15 IN said of the Kuwaitis. “They are very experienced soldiers, they are very good tactically, and they have good weapon systems that allow them to do their mission.”

The live-fire exercise began with more than a dozen Kuwaiti M-84 tanks and four Bradley Fighting Vehicles in a defensive position. Kuwaiti F-18 Hornets then initiated contact with targets using close air support strikes followed by Kuwaiti AH-64 Apache helicopters providing close combat attacks.

“This is how they fight, this is what they train for,” said Maj. Joe Ruzicka, operations officer for 1-15 IN. “What we saw today was that they are truly capable of defending their country if need be.”

The main element of the defensive position made a call to Baker Team, comprised of U.S. Bradley Fighting Vehicles, M1A2 tanks, and Kuwaiti M-84

tanks, for reinforcement.

Bigham said the greatest part of the exercise was by working together, training and rehearsing as one team, they were able to operate as a single entity to maneuver and destroy the targets effectively.

Baker Team, maintaining spacing and maximizing frontal coverage, moved forward within two kilometers of the targets before laying down suppressive fire. Baker Team then continued to the forward line of troops and eliminated the targets.

Bigham said their partnership with the



Lt. Gen. Vincent K. Brooks, Third Army/ARCENT commanding general, receives a gift from Staff Col. Bassel Ahmed Al-Suwaidi, 15th Mubarak Brigade commander after observing the defensive live fire exercise, Saweyan Shield, at the Udairi Range Complex near Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Nov. 28. Saweyan Shield, named after the Arabic word for “together”, was a partnership training exercise between the 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division and the Kuwaiti 15th Mubarak Brigade, continuing to strengthen military ties and promoting security in the region.



15th Mubarak Brigade allowed soldiers on both sides to get to know each other on a more personal level enabling them to grow tactically to become stronger military allies.

Lt. Gen. Vincent K. Brooks, Third

Army/ARCENT commanding general, Maj. Gen. Gary H. Cheek, Third Army/ARCENT deputy commanding general, Col. Johnnie L. Johnson Jr., 3rd ABCT commander, and Staff Col. Bassel Ahmed Al-Suwaidi, 15th Mubarak Brigade com-

mander were on hand to observe the event.

“When we talk about partnership in the future, this is how I envision it,” said Ruzicka. “Whenever we do a training

event here in Kuwait we should have the Kuwaiti Land Forces here with us and vice versa, so we can really build upon what we have established here and take it to the next step.”



A Kuwaiti M-84 tank and U.S. Bradley Fighting Vehicles advance toward the objective during Saweyan Shield, a defensive live fire exercise at the Udairi Range Complex near Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Nov. 28. Saweyan is the Arabic word for “together”. The exercise was part of the ongoing training between the 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division and Kuwaiti Land Forces, which continues to build upon their military ties in order to promote peace and stability in the region.



An M1A2 Main Battle Tank fires at a target during Saweyan Shield, a defensive live fire exercise, at the Udairi Range Complex near Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Nov. 28. Saweyan is the Arabic word for “together”. Soldiers assigned to 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division have been conducting partnership training with Kuwaiti Land Forces since deploying to Kuwait nearly six months ago, building upon the military ties between Kuwait and the U.S.



# Soldiers set sail on the Persian Gulf

Story and photos by  
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Waves crash over the side of United States Army Vessel Churubusco on the Persian Gulf, Jan. 9, during a training mission named Operation Spartan Mariner. The mission, conducted by 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, 47th Transportation Company, 420th Movement Control Battalion and 316th Expeditionary Sustainment Command, consisted of 19 vehicles being loaded on four USAVs to take part in multiple drills and exercises at sea.



On the cold windy morning of Jan. 8, at the Kuwaiti Naval Base, Soldiers of the 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division began a mission most had never performed before.

At 6 a.m. Sledgehammer Soldiers, along with Soldiers of the 47th Transportation Company and 316th Expeditionary Sustainment Command, began offloading 12 Bradley Fighting Vehicles, four Paladins and three support vehicles from flatbed trailers onto a loading ramp at the KNB.

The 47th Transportation Company transported the vehicles from Camp Buehring, Kuwait to the naval base a day prior to the mission. The vehicles were then driven onto the decks of four United States Army vessels of the 420th Movement Control Battalion in preparation of Operation Spartan Mariner.

“The purpose of this training mission is to enhance interoperability between adjacent units,” said 1st Lt. Anthony Rea, executive officer of Alpha Company 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd ABCT. “It gives us the opportunity to conduct training both logistically and tactically that

probably only occurs once in a lifetime for Army forces.”

The morning of Jan. 9, USAV Churubusco, Five Forks, Maj. Gen. Robert Smalls and Maj. Gen. Charles P. Gross set sail on the Persian Gulf.

“I was surprised at first that the Army actually had boats,” said Spc. Daniel Desisto, an infantryman assigned to Alpha Company, 1-15 IN, 3rd ABCT. “It was an honor to be part of this mission. I was told this is the first time Bradleys had seen the water in a very long time.”

The units’ training did not end once they were underway. Soldiers conducted radio communications, as well as man overboard and fire drills.

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Vernon Slaughter, vessel master of USAV Churubusco, explained that these vessels generally cruise at 12 knots even with six Bradleys, weighing over 150 tons, on board.

With three to six foot seas crashing over the side of the vessels, the flat bottomed

Churubusco began to vigorously rock from side to side.

“It started out as a blast, for about the first hour while we were docked, without getting hit by the waves,” laughed Desisto. “Once we got out to sea and the waves started hitting us, it was rough. A lot of us got seasick, but I was glad to be part of this mission. It is something I will never forget.”

The vessels sailed two hours out and returned, giving the Soldiers from the different units time to interact, cross train and bond.

“Because of coordination with supporting units, particularly the 47th Transportation Company, the execution portion of



loading and unloading the vehicles went smoothly,” said Rea.

The exercise demonstrated the ability to rapidly transport vehicles for any possible contingency in the region explained Rea.

“I think the Soldiers really got a feel for how big of a deal this training event was with so many people out and about to witness the execution portion,” said Rea. “It gave them something to be proud about.”