

158th

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tially contemplated turning down the job. However, he said, “While looking through an Army Magazine, shortly after my notification, I saw an advertisement for the Fisher House Foundation. The Fisher House Foundation advertisement depicted a photo of a Soldier who could not have been more than 19 years-old.

“He was a double amputee who lost both legs in combat and had one arm in a cast. In the photo, kneeling next to his wheelchair was his father, who was looking at his son with sheer love, pride and admiration in his eyes for his young son who had given so much for his nation and our freedom.

“That photo has driven me every day in command to ensure we do our very best training Soldiers for combat.”

During Forbes’ outgoing remarks, he highlighted some of his accomplishments during his tenure and credited his Soldiers, civilians and their Families for his success.

He said, “I came to this command from Afghanistan with a goal of improving training for our Soldiers, and I think we have done that. My Family and I will always

look back at our time in Hattiesburg with the fondest of memories. Not only was this a professionally rewarding assignment, but an enriching one as well. The friends and memories we made here in the local community, schools, little league baseball, and church will be some of our very best.”

Forbes concluded his speech by thanking his entire Family including his wife, the installation partners and First Army Division East.

Kreis, the incoming commander, said he was excited to join the Camp Shelby team.

Prior to coming to Camp Shelby, Kreis served as the Executive Officer to the Commanding General, Third Army / U.S. Army Central Command. Kreis is married to the former Kelly Price. They have two sons, Nicholas and Joshua. Kreis said he looks forward to working with Team Shelby and others on the First Army team and continue making a difference to our nation.

Leichenauer, the interim senior enlisted noncommissioned officer in the 158th Infantry Brigade acknowledged his gratitude as he passed his responsibilities to Sligh, the incoming senior enlisted advisor. Leichenauer has been “dual-hatted,” working as the senior enlisted advisor for the 3-315th Regiment and

the 158th Infantry Brigade for several months.

“This is a great place to train and live. It is nice to be part of an outstanding team consisting of the Hattiesburg community, the Camp Shelby team, and 177th Spearhead Brigade. The Soldiers who make up the Warrior Brigade are some of the finest leaders, trainers and mentors our Army has to offer. It will always be a humbling experience to have served alongside them,” said Leichenauer.

Sligh, a native of South Carolina, comes to First Army Division East from his most recent assignment as command sergeant major of 1st Battalion, 77th Field Artillery, Schweinfurt, Germany. Sligh is married to the former Patricia Glover. They have two daughters, Kalyn and Kenya.

The 158th Infantry Brigade, part of First Army Division East, mobilizes, trains, validates and deploys Reserve Component units to support overseas military operations. Along with Reserve component units, the division’s trainer/mentors prepare and deploy sailors and airmen, along with selected members of the interagency and intergovernmental departments, to provide trained and ready forces across a full-spectrum of operations to regional combatant commanders worldwide.

mobilize worldwide, the 256th IBCT received the most current, realistic, and up-to-date training.

“One of the significant benefits of having the trainer/mentors from First Army Division East is that it enabled us to train collectively without further reducing our own footprint by taking assets out of hide to evaluate our own training,” said Rachal.

Each First Army Division East trainer/mentor team provided immediate feedback to the 256th team leaders as well as an in-depth after action review each day.

“We interacted primarily with the 256th IBCT leadership team in the truest sense of the word mentor. Our own goals were to quickly figure out how to best communicate with our National Guard counterparts and help them improve,” said Sgt. 1st Class Patrick Stivers, trainer/mentor of the 157th Infantry Brigade, First Army Division East.

Having most recently returned from a deployment providing security for Operation Iraqi Freedom, much of the past annual training exercises of the 256th IBCT focused on counterinsurgency operations and smaller scale readiness requirements such as Soldier readiness processing and warrior tasks.

“For this AT, our goal was to get back into light infantry tactics, starting off at the squad level tactic, techniques and procedures, using the live fire exercises, and then focus our efforts on platoon level proficiency using the maneuver lanes,” said Rachal.

Firing more than 700

105mm howitzer rounds down range was a highlight for both the artillery batteries of the 256th IBCT as well as the artillery trainer/mentors from the 157th Infantry Brigade.

“The field artillery leadership were willing to listen to our input and adjusted their tactics, techniques and procedures. It was awesome to see how quickly they became a cohesive team,” said Stivers.

“One of the biggest lessons learned from this annual training is that our leadership got a chance to see the capabilities of the Soldiers and their equipment. It is so important to actually practice the whole process rather than it being academic in a classroom. We got an appreciation to see how quickly our Soldiers can put steel on a target,” said Rachal.

According to Rachel, a critical aspect of any training exercise is identifying trends to maintain strengths, and identifying areas needing adjustment.

“We are more confident we are a solid unit with our current model, due in no small part to our Soldiers and the ability of the 157th Infantry Brigade to allow our own leadership to take part in the training by serving as T/Ms,” said Rachal.

The 157th Infantry Brigade trains and mentors Reserve Component units to prepare those forces for deployment and contingency operations by providing realistic and relevant, complex operational environment based training reflecting the most current conditions Soldiers will face in theater.

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