



The Official Magazine of The U.S. Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command (Airborne)

# PEACEMAKER

Spring 2015

USACAPOC(A)'s

## BEST WARRIOR

### *A Soldier Never Quits*

PSYOP Soldier Wounded in blast overcomes injuries to keep moving forward

### *Training the Best*

Soldiers learn new skills through the CA and PSYOP Transition Course



# PEACEMAKER

## What's inside

<b>Students Take Classroom Knowledge to Field</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Squeezing Information About Citrus</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>A Soldier Never Quits</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Medical Knowledge Exchange</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Training the Best</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Hook Up &amp; Push Out</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Training for Reality</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Rounding Up Warriors</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Confidence is Everything</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Sponsors</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Reunited Again</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Soldier Earns Direct Commission</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Change of Command</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Beyond the Horizon</b>	<b>40</b>

### **Medical Knowledge Exchange**

U.S. Army Lt. Col. Joshua Hawley-Molloy, Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, 404th Civil Affairs Battalion, functional specialties team physician, takes a look at a patient's throat during a pediatric examination as part of the Djibouti Ministry of Health Medical Caravan to the Yoboki Medical Clinic, Mar 17, 2015. The caravan brought together medical providers from CJTF-HOA, Djibouti Ministry of Health and United States Agency for International Development, to provide medical care to patients that don't get the opportunity to see the specialists these events can provide. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Carlin Leslie)  
(Read more on Pg. 14)



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**On the cover:** U.S. Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) Best Warrior competitors continued their second day of tasks being flown in on a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter to complete their Army Warrior Tasks during a mystery event on Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey, April 13, 2015. Competitors had to negotiate through an urban environment and rescue (simulated) downed and injured pilots. They had to get the injured to a landing zone to be medically evacuated. (U.S. Army Photo by Staff Sgt. Sharilyn Well)

**Read more on pg. 22**

**On this page:** Soldiers wait to board a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter March 2, 2015 at St. Mere Eglise Drop Zone on Fort Bragg, N.C. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Saska Ball)

**See more on pg. 18**

## Layout and Design

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# LETTER *from the* COMMANDING GENERAL



Maj. Gen. Daniel R. Ammerman

As we continue to execute our training plan for the current training year and start preparing for next training year, I would like to take this opportunity to continue to provide you with what my focus is as the Commanding General of this organization. We will deliver the readiness levels that the Army expects of us and more.

The Army, primarily through the geographically aligned Army Service Component Commands, requires us to deliver manned, trained and ready units. Our units need to provide the supported commands with civil affairs, psychological operations, and information operations capabilities.

The foundation of a ready unit is having Soldiers that are qualified in their MOS (DMOSQ). That is because when units are called upon to deploy, they typically can only take qualified Soldiers. And of course, those Soldiers must also be ready in other areas so we will continue to emphasize unit training and the health of the force. While leader development must be part of everything we do, that is especially true of unit training. Unit training provides the opportunity for mission command as well as coaching and mentoring opportunities as subordinate leaders do their own planning and execution.

Between now and year end, I am asking Soldiers who are not DMOSQ or who still need PME to push to get these completed so you can be a contributing member of your unit. Both of these are important so you can improve your technical skills as a Soldier and increase your abilities as a leader so you can continue to progress toward your full potential. We have the funds to send many of our Soldiers to DMOSQ and PME schools now and the situation might not be so favorable next year. Toward this goal, we need Soldiers to expeditiously complete their distance learning modules of their courses, and first line leaders to assist them with this goal as well as ensuring Soldiers receive their earned compensation for DL.

In regards to providing ready units for the Army, our units have been heavily engaged in recent months with support to a number of major activities worldwide. Our PSYOP and CA Soldiers continue

to excel. Our PSYOP Groups have just recently returned from successful training exercises in South Korea and Japan, working with our partners to grow our mutual capabilities of influence operations. The 353rd Civil Affairs Command and 404th Civil Affairs Battalion continue to support Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa and recently supported a seminar with the Djiboutian military on Populace and Resource Control. The 490th Civil Affairs Battalion just completed a successful humanitarian assistance mission with the Belize Defense Force. The 321st Civil Affairs Brigade just completed working with the El Salvador military on a medical and veterinary exercise. The 352nd Civil Affairs Command continues to provide Civil-Military planning support for operations in the Middle East. 351st Civil Affairs Command recently returned from a successful Corps level exercise in South Korea. The Civil Information Management section at our headquarters continues to provide reach-back analysis and reporting for commands that our CACOM's are supporting, as well as their unified partners.

I also would like to take this opportunity to recognize some of our great Soldiers. I want to recognize two of our best; Staff Sgt. Keeton Tucker, of the 7th Psychological Operations Group, and Spc. Bryce Parker, with the 351st Civil Affairs Command, they earned the titles of USACAPOC(A) Best NCO of the Year and Best Warrior of the Year respectively. I also want to highlight the recent announcement that HQ USACAPOC(A) has earned the Chief of Staff, Army, Deployment Excellence Award. Congratulations to the team that made this happen. Congratulations to our great Public Affairs Soldiers, USACAPOC(A) was also recently recognized and was awarded 1st Place by the Department of the Army for Outstanding Initiative in New Media. USACAPOC(A) has just gained a new member of the command team with the recent announcement that Chief Warrant Officer<sup>4</sup> Michael Rich will be its first Command Chief Warrant Officer.

Unfortunately, we must bid farewell to a couple of our senior leaders within USACAPOC(A). Col. Jeff Scott, 7th POG Commander and Col. Ken Kops, USACAPOC(A) Chief of Staff will soon be retiring. These two exceptionally talented leaders will be greatly missed.

Lastly, congratulations to Brig. Gen.(P) Hugh Van Roosen, Col.(P) John Hussey, and Col.(P) Rich Sele on their recent selection for promotion and upcoming new assignments.

In closing, I continue to appreciate the talent, commitment and service of our Soldiers and Families. Thank you for continuing to proudly serve in the Army Reserve for the security of our Country.





# LETTER *from the* COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR

I am proud to announce that Spc. Bryce Parker of the 492nd Civil Affairs Battalion is the 2015 U.S. Army Reserve Best Warrior! He received the title in early May at Fort Bragg, North Carolina after competing against Soldiers from other U.S. Army Reserve Command units in numerous tough, realistic, and standards-based events. Spc. Parker will represent USACAPOC (A) and our entire 205,000 Army Reserve force when he competes at Fort Lee, Virginia in the Department of the Army competition this October.

Spc. Parker and Staff Sgt. Keeton Tucker of the 320th Psychological Operations Company earned the titles of USACAPOC (A) Soldier of the Year and Noncommissioned officer of the Year after several grueling days of events at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey. The events challenged the Soldiers both mentally and physically on their Army skills in tasks such as urban orienteering, land navigation, board interviews, warrior tasks, battle drills, and weapons qualification. Both Spc. Parker and Staff Sgt. Tucker were not only physically fit, but also highly motivated; their hard work and efforts to master individual Soldier skills during training paid off.

This year is the third year in a row that USACAPOC (A) has earned one of the top titles at the Army Reserve Best Warrior Competition. In 2014, Spc. Keegan Carlson of the 440th Civil Affairs Battalion was the Soldier of the Year. In 2013, Sgt. 1st class Jason Manella of the 445th Civil Affairs Battalion was the NCO of the Year, and Spc. Zachary Sharpe of the 414th Civil Affairs Battalion was the runner-up for Soldier of the Year. Sgt. 1st class Manella won at the DA level and became the NCO of the Year for the U.S. Army. All of this is impressive.

Our Best Warrior Competition program has come a long way. While there is no doubt that these Soldiers earned every bit of their title, our program provides a great platform that ensures our best competitor moves on to compete and win. We are quick to applaud the individual efforts of the competitors, but we must also recognize the efforts and support of others along the way. Our Command Sergeants Major and the NCO Corps are key to making all of this happen successfully. The BWC is planned, prepared, resourced, and executed by NCOs. Our cadre ensures that the tasks and events are relevant to today's operating environment and are completed to standard and in a safe manner. Before our competition even happens, NCOs in our

units across America are ensuring that individual training is being done and we are focusing on readiness. Throughout this entire process, we also are developing tomorrow's leaders.

When Spc. Parker competes this fall, he will be representing both USACAPOC (A) and the USAR. He will represent all of our Soldiers, regardless of MOS, regardless of unit. This includes those that are deployed to the Horn of Africa or Kuwait, supporting the relief efforts in Nepal, or building partnerships on missions to support U.S. Pacific Command, U.S. Northern Command, and U.S. Southern Command. It also includes our Soldiers training to maintain readiness at home station, providing Civil Information Management support, and those that are training at the Joint Readiness Training Center and the National Training Center. He represents all of USACAPOC (A)'s Soldiers who are supporting our Army and the Joint Force with strategic, operational, and tactical Civil Affairs, Military Information Support, and Information Operations capabilities. As he represents us, he gets our message out.

Join me in wishing Spc. Parker the best of luck as he moves forward to compete and represent us at the DA level this upcoming fall. Maj. Gen. Ammerman and I are proud of him and all of our Soldiers who trained and competed along the way, as well as those who supported the efforts of our USACAPOC (A) Best Warrior Competition Program.



Command Sgt. Maj. Harry Bennett



# LETTER *from the* CHAPLAIN

By Chaplain Peter Strong  
Deputy Command Chaplain

The American public holds the Soldier in high regard. Many times, when we are out in public, someone will come up to us and say, "Thank you for your service!" Their intentions are good but not every Soldier feels this is necessary or appropriate. There are strong opinions on both sides of this issue. Nowhere does this subject become more pronounced than on Memorial Day.

**This is the one time...  
Veterans should not  
stand up and be  
recognized!**

During Memorial weekend, you may be at a place of worship, a ball game, or some other public event and inevitably Veterans will be asked to stand and be recognized for their service to our country. This is the one time where it is universally agreed that Veterans should not stand up and be recognized!

Memorial Day is a day to honor the brave men and women who died for our country. On this sacred day, we remember and give our respects to those in uniform who paid the ultimate sacrifice for our nation. For service members who are still alive, we have a day set aside for recognition in November; it is called Veterans Day. Memorial Day is not our day to receive applause and expressions of gratitude—that special praise belongs only to those who are the true American Heroes.

A few years ago, I had the privilege of visiting the Civil War Battlefield in Sharpsburg, Maryland, better known as the Battle of Antietam. On September 17, 1862, more American lives were lost on that one day alone than ever before, and no day since has had more. On that, the bloodiest day in American history, we have to ask ourselves the question, "Why?" Why would these Soldiers from the North and the South leave behind family and friends, jobs and homes, to give their lives in battle?

I found the answer to that question in the Antietam Cemetery, just a short distance from Miller's Cornfield and Bloody Lane. In a quiet arbor, the final resting place for thousands of Soldiers from both the Union and the Confederacy, there is a monument of a Soldier. When you gaze upon the Soldier, you cannot tell whether he is a Yankee or a Rebel and this is by design. That becomes clear when you read the inscription at the base of the monument, "Not for themselves but for their country."

When we stand at attention and salute our flag, we pay respect to the brave men and women who gave their lives for the freedoms we enjoy. Men and women who loved their country enough to shed their blood on foreign soil. Memorial Day is not our day, it is their day. And on that sacred day, we give honor where honor is due.

Let us remember all those who have died in war and give thanks for their sacrifice. Let us pray for their families and dedicate ourselves to continuing on with their legacy of honorable service and selfless sacrifice. Fellow Soldiers, let us take a moment of silence, think of our fallen comrades and say, "Thank you for your service and your sacrifice."

**Memorial Day is not  
our day, it is their day.**





## Students take classroom knowledge to the field

*By Angela Woodard, The Globe*

When Point Park Humanities and Human Sciences professor Sean Martin volunteered his time and expertise last year to a local Army Reserve Company, he had no way of knowing that his desire to show his appreciation for the men and women dedicated to military service would turn into an out-of-classroom learning experience for his students.

In March, Martin took a group of students that included undergraduates, military veterans and graduate student alum of the criminal justice and intelligence studies program to McGarity Army Reserve Center in Coraopolis, Pennsylvania, to participate in a training exercise with the 303rd Psychological Operations Company.

Martin began volunteering as a civilian instructor with the 303rd when one of his students, Ryan Vickers, a senior national security and intelligence major and active drilling member of the company, saw the value of the coursework for his fellow soldiers and introduced Martin to the company's operations officer.

"The military is very big on training, while academia is very big on education; I think to be a master of anything you need both," Vickers said in a phone interview. "I just thought it was a great opportunity to bring both together."

As part of the Psychological Operations and Misinformation course that Martin developed and teaches for Point Park, students learn psychological aspects of communicating effectively to accomplish a variety of goals. In preparing for the exercise, students participated in the development of scenarios following guidelines set forth by Martin.

"We set up four scenarios involving humanitarian missions and the types of realistic situations that the soldiers might find themselves in when deployed; trying to foster cooperation between local populations and the Army," Martin said.

Some examples of the types of humanitarian scenarios that were developed and enacted with the Soldiers included setting up vaccination stations, introducing clean water supplies where the water had been contaminated, and cooperating with local leaders

of whatever communities the soldiers may be deployed in order to foster goodwill.

The scenarios are devised to simulate potential obstacles that may be posed by suspicion, or differing cultural perspectives that might make people resistant to help. Through role-playing, participants seek to find common ground.


The students took on the roles of the resistant populace and were positioned at various locations around the base. Soldiers came in groups and would take turns engaging them in conversations while contending with distractions such as loud music or entrusting the accuracy of an interpreter, explained Martin.

"One of the main objectives of our training was to get the Soldiers to practice being open-minded, not to get frustrated, to be adaptable, to adjust to different perspectives and not be frustrated when they faced obstacles," Martin said.

After the Psychological Operations training exercise was completed, students participated in a feedback and question and answer dialogue session with the 303rd. Soldiers who had already been overseas shared with the group some of the details of their experiences, and how their training in psychological operations was used in building relationships while deployed.

"Most people think that our military in Afghanistan is widely unpopular, but the people establish good relationships with them, a Soldier was telling me how an Afghan family would have them over for dinner sometime," Megan Potter, a sophomore Intelligence and National Security major, said. "We had the chance to meet amazing people; we established great connections while we were there."

Operations Officer Capt. Michael Schville said in a phone interview, "Overwhelmingly the Soldiers liked the interaction with the students...and said they wanted to work with the students again."

According to Schville, plans are being looked into to continue to expand opportunities and partnership between the 303rd and Point Park.  Reprinted by the permission of *The Globe*.



Squeezing information about

# CITRUS

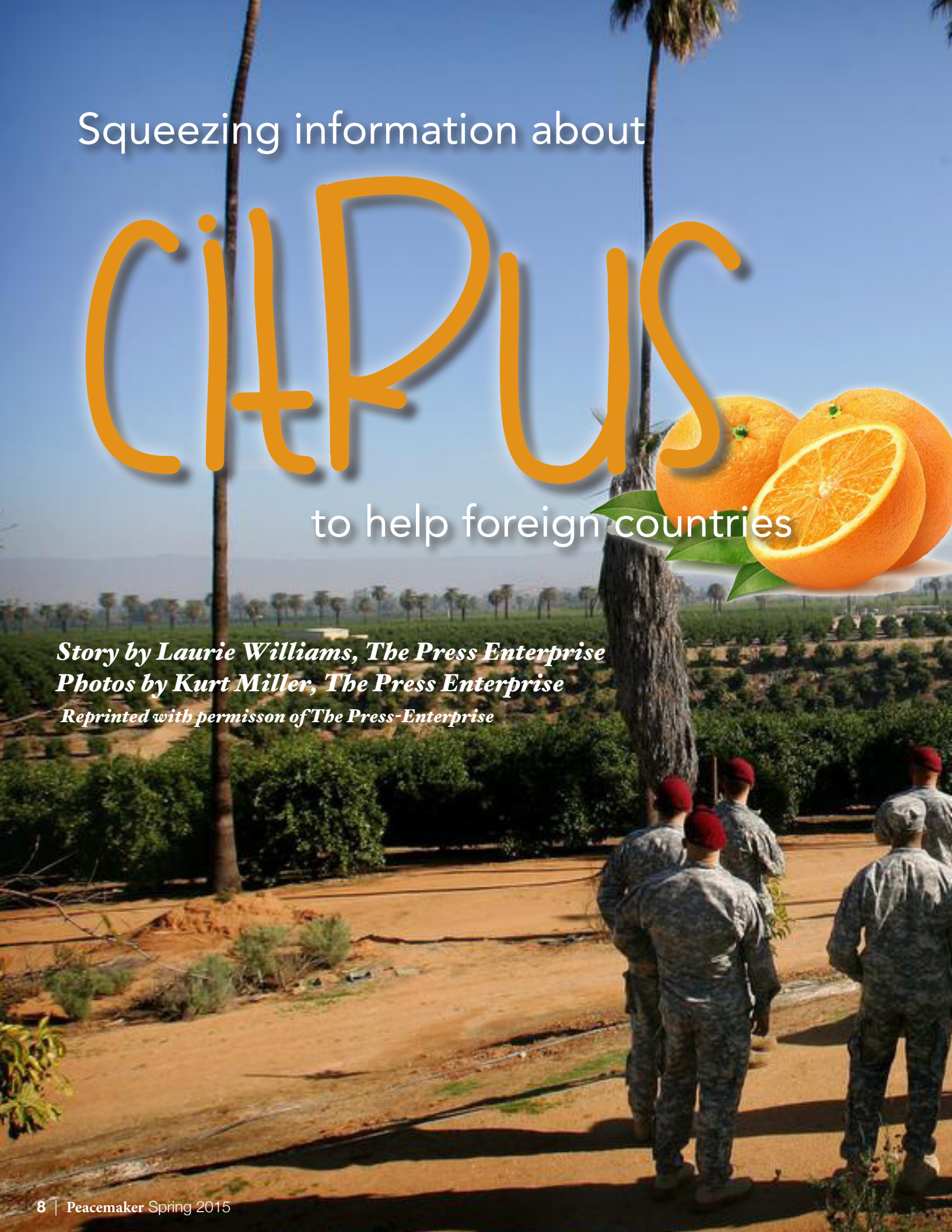
to help foreign countries



*Story by Laurie Williams, The Press Enterprise*

*Photos by Kurt Miller, The Press Enterprise*

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## The 426th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne) recently toured the state citrus park in Riverside aim to use their knowledge to help foreign farmers.

**T**heir missions abroad require planes and parachutes, but for a recent training session 32 members of the 426th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne) simply drove a few miles down the freeway to the California State Citrus Historic Park in Riverside.

The training goal for Soldiers of the Upland-based Charlie Company was to learn everything they could about citrus and how it grows. They were gleaning knowledge they can use when they go out to help disaster-struck communities anywhere in the U.S. Army's Pacific region of operations.

"These guys don't bomb stuff," said park docent Joe Hamlin, who helped give these Reserve Soldiers the citrus basics. "They build things."

The Soldiers toured the park's museum before breaking up into groups to ramble through the groves, learning from docents and tasting as they went. The park boasts nearly 200 acres of commercial groves, with nearly 25,000 trees.

The star of the show was the Washington navel orange, which in the late 1800s made Riverside the richest city in the nation and – along with other citrus crops – gave Southern California a reputation for being a land of sunshine and opportunities.

In the 28-acre area devoted to Washington navel trees, docent Jeff Kwiecien picked an orange, sliced it and handed the segments around to the eight Soldiers in his grove tour group.

"Just taste that," he said as the Soldiers smiled and



**RIVERSIDE, Calif.**

Volunteer tour guide Jeff Kwiecien, right, shows Upland-based Army Reserve Soldiers visiting the working grove at California State Citrus Historic Park. U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers from the 426th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne) spent time at the park in Riverside to learn about citrus so they can help farmers in other countries.





**Above:** Major Tony Arredondo, a Los Angeles resident, samples citrus during a tour of the California State Citrus Historic Park.



**Left:** Volunteer tour guide Jeff Kwiecien, right, leads a tour of the California State Citrus Historic Park as Army Reserve Lt. Alex Burton, an Eastvale resident, has a sample. The 426th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne) spent time at the park in Riverside to learn about citrus so they can help farmers in other countries.

**Right:** A table of citrus for the Army Reserve Soldiers to sample during a tour of the California State Citrus Historic Park.





nodded appreciatively. “It’s perfectly ripe, sweet, and seedless. There simply is no better fruit than this.”

Kwiecien talked about the steps of propagating the orange, which requires grafting budwood from one tree to another because the fruit has no seeds to plant.

“It’s a mutation, of course,” he said. “How do we know that? This was the

1800s – did we have the technology to create seedless anything?”

Cross-pollination is also a big part of the citrus story, Kwiecien said: making new varieties of lemons, limes, oranges, tangerines and grapefruits has kept the industry vibrant. He kept the Soldiers moving and tasting as he talked during their Saturday, Feb. 7, 2015 visit, cutting up fruit and asking them to compare the varieties.


The Soldiers inspected some of the old smudge pots once used to keep the trees warm during freezes. Kwiecien showed them the wind machines that do the same job now – with a lot less soot.

At the highest elevation in the park, he asked the Soldiers to look out on the vista below, and pointed out the path of the Gage Canal as it brings water from the San Bernardino

Mountains to make commercial agriculture possible in relatively arid Riverside.

Along with their agricultural tutorial, the Soldiers soaked up quite a bit of Riverside history.

Park docent Peggy Walton, who led the party through the museum, told stories of Eliza and Luther Tibbetts and their role in popularizing the Washington navel across the country, and of Matthew Gage’s ambitious irrigation project, and of the busy packing houses and their now-collectible citrus crate labels.

After the tours, the Soldiers asked technical questions of docent Bob Lynn, whose family has been in the citrus business since his grandfather’s time. Lynn also talked about learning to do the various grove jobs when he was a boy. 





# A SOLDIER NEVER QUILTS

Story & photos by Spc. Lalita Hazelett



Retired Staff Sgt. Daniel Burgess with the U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) and his wife, Genette, walk the All American five kilometer race.

**I** have the knees of a 90-year old man, my doctor told me,” he explained. “So I have been instructed to take it easy and not run as much anymore. For this reason, I will be walking the All-American five-kilometer race. Between my prosthetic right leg and my reconstructed left leg, it’s just not feasible for me to run in it.”

Retired Staff Sgt. Daniel Burgess, like many Soldiers, participates regularly in military-hosted races all over the country, to include this year’s All-American 5K which took place here March 22, 2015.

Burgess survived a near-death explosion while deployed to Afghanistan in 2011 while serving as a psychological operations specialist with the 350th Psychological Operations Company, a U.S. Army Reserve unit based out of Twinsburg, Ohio, a subordinate unit of the U.S. Army

Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command (Airborne). Burgess sustained multiple injuries including an amputated right leg from the knee down, an operation to salvage his left leg, traumatic brain injury and permanent lung damage. He has been and is, well on his way to healing and helping many more Soldiers like him get the support they and their Families deserve.

Finishing at approximately 1 hour, 30 minutes, Burgess smiled with pride as he crossed the finish line. However, Burgess is going one step further than just merely participating in these races. His goal is to start a nonprofit group named “Team Burgess,” which will be aimed at supporting other injured Soldiers and to make sure their Families are involved as well.

“Over the past few years, I’ve been able to recover and achieve my goals such as finishing these races, and now I feel like it’s my turn to help other people achieve their goals and be their support.”

Choosing the All-American 5K may have been what was best for him physically, but Burgess made it known to all that these races are not about the speed or pace of the race, but about finishing and helping others finish.

“By walking, and not running,” added his wife, Genette. “We’re able to help more people, and ultimately that is the goal we’re trying to achieve.”

“After I got blown up,” Burgess explained, “I was in the hospital and everybody was coming in saying, ‘Oh hey, you should run the Army Ten-Miler,’ and I thought they were crazy. Then, U.S. Army Reserve Command Sgt. Maj. Michael D. Schultz challenged me. I was there in D.C. in 2012 when he ran the ATM, and after he ran the race, he gave me his challenge coin from the race and said, ‘Here, this is

your motivation for next year. You will be crossing the finish line with me.’ That’s kind of how it all started.”

In 2013, Burgess ran the ATM and finished in approximately 2 hours and 50 minutes. In 2014, he ran it for the second time and finished in three hours and 10 minutes. At around mile marker seven, Burgess noticed a double amputee struggling. Staying true to the Warrior Ethos of never quitting, never accepting defeat and never leaving a fallen comrade, Burgess decided to support his fellow Wounded Warrior for the last three miles of the race.

“We slowed down to take care of him,” said Burgess, “because it was his first time and he was not getting on the vehicle to get a ride back.”

Despite being medically retired in 2014, Burgess is dedicated to serving others. His ability to bounce back has motivated him to help others reach their maximum potential despite their injuries.

“He calls it his mission; to help others through what he’s learned. He went through his therapy, and is very resilient and he wants to help others get to where he’s at right now,” boasted Maj. John Colburn, commander for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, USACAPOC(A), who walked the All-American 5k alongside Burgess.

“Maybe you can run a five-kilometer race in 20 minutes,” said Burgess. “but the guy you’re trying to help out – they’re looking at maybe taking an hour. It may be an extra 40 minutes for you, but regardless of anything you’re there by their side pushing them along the way and helping them out. It’s that motivation you’re providing for them every step of the way.”

The role of Team Burgess support will run deeper than just calling on the phone and checking up or motivating that



# FORT BRAGG, N.C.

Retired Staff Sgt. Daniel Burgess with the U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) swipes a cup of electrolyte drink from a volunteer while walking the All American five kilometer race. Burgess has recently started a nonprofit team to help injured veterans and their families all over the country.



Soldier, but to sometimes actually being there at the races to not only cheer them on, but to stand by them and help them cross that finish line and in the end you become family.


“While I was doing my recovery,” said Burgess, “so many organizations were there to help out the injured and sick. They paid for flights and hotels for so many of us to go do these races and events, but the caregivers and immediate family members; the spouses, the moms, the kids ... they’re kind of left at home. So our

thing is, we want to be able to help out the entire ‘package.’”

Since 2013, Team Burgess has grown rapidly over the past couple of years as they “expand their family.” They have plans for more races and events in the future, to include the Army Ten-Miler in October, 2015, and the Bataan Death March in March, 2016.

At the end of the day it’s about showing the enemy that you will never accept defeat, you will never quit, and you will never leave a fallen comrade.

“If I don’t do anything,” Burgess remarked, “‘they’ win. I’m not going to sit around and pity myself, because that’s ‘their’ ultimate goal and as long as I’m still going, I’m still beating ‘them.’”

“There are people behind him, supporting him,” said Genette. “And along the way he’s supporting others. He couldn’t run the Army Ten-Miler last year, but by not running it, they were able to support another amputee along the way who was trying his best to finish it; and that is the ultimate goal in it all.” 



## YOBOKI, Djibouti

# MEDICAL

*Story & photos by Staff Sgt. Carlin Leslie,  
USAF AFRICOM CJTF-HOA PAO*

Understanding the medical capabilities of any environment or rural area is vital to providing the best medical care to patients in a city, region or nation. One method to develop this understanding is to learn about medical care challenges and best practices through regional cooperation and the use of medical caravans.

Djiboutian medical providers in coordination with the Djibouti Ministry of Health, United States Agency for International Development and the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa's 404th Civil Affairs

Battalion functional specialties team took part in the Dikhil Region Medical Caravan. The event included specialists in the fields of ophthalmology, pediatrics, and obstetrics and gynecology, to provide medical treatment and medications to over one hundred villagers in Yoboki, Djibouti, Mar. 17, 2015.

"This is the first time we have held an event like this in the past year here and it is a door-opener for future events and future partnerships with the Ministry of Health," said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Joshua Hawley-Molloy, 404th CA BN, functional specialties team physician. "We are hoping in the future to involve a dental element and a veterinary element so these caravans can be a full spectrum of health care

capacity building working relationships with the Djiboutian Government."

Developing these medical caravans will further the growth of medical care in the region, and will enable the communities to develop solutions for East African issues during these partnership-building events.

Through the cooperative efforts of all agencies involved, the caravans have the chance to grow relationships within the local communities and improve the villager's healthcare awareness by learning what to look for in the early stages of malnutrition, malaria, complications in pregnancy and basic sanitation.

"The doctors and medical staff of the Dikhil region and Yoboki medical clinic are grateful of the opportunity

Dr. Ahmed Robleh, Hospital Peetier pediatrician, performs a medical examination on a young patient in Yoboki, Djibouti. Robleh is one of the Djibouti Ministry of Health Medical Caravan health providers that treated patients as part of the Djibouti Ministry of Health Medical Caravan at the Yoboki Medical Clinic.





# KNOWLEDGE

# EXCHANGE



The medical and support staff of the Djibouti Ministry of Health Medical Caravan pose for a photo after the successful medical visit to the Yoboki Medical Clinic in the Dikhil Region of Djibouti. The medical staff included physicians from Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, Djibouti Ministry of Health and United States Agency for International Development, providing medical care to include, pediatrics, gynecology, obstetrics and ophthalmology.

to share knowledge with CJTF-HOA, USAID and Djibouti Ministry of Health,” said Moustapha Amin Mohamed, Dikhil region doctor. “With the efforts of everyone involved we are able to make an impact on a village that doesn’t normally see this level of care.”


According to Mansour Ahmed, USAID health program management specialist, this caravan is important to these residents as they do not get normal medical care, due to the remote locations of their villages. The patients that are seen during these caravans normally will wait until the last minute to seek medical care, or almost be into the delivering stage of a pregnancy. These events can mean saving someone’s life by early detection of a disease or other health issues.

“Our colleagues from CJTF-HOA are supporting Ministry of Health and USAID in conducting a medical caravan to serve the rural population in this particular area of the Dikhil Region,” said Ahmed. “This caravan allows them to find early detection of problems, because these specialists from CJTF-HOA, USAID and MOH are identifying the problem, advising patients and issuing medicines or referring

them to a higher level of medical care when need be.”

According to Hawley-Molloy, through building partnerships like this, it secures CJTF-HOA’s stance with our East African partner nations and prepares the CA battalion to help local and military personnel to understand the care that is available in the local regions of operations. This understanding allows the Ministry of Health to refer patients to the medical facility that can provide the best care.

The medical caravan is just the beginning of the relationship and will hopefully grow into eventually training the Djiboutian nurses and doctors on a variety of medical topics.

“We were there to support them as partners, in helping with the cost of medications but additionally to allow the medical providers here at CJTF-HOA to learn more about the Djiboutian Health System and ways that we can partner with them in the future,” Hawley-Molloy said. “By learning their skill sets, we may be able to improve our skill sets to better accommodate the local community.” 



# TRAINING the BEST



**FORT HUNTER LIGGETT, Calif.**

As part of the Adaptive Thinking and Leadership training, students are placed in high-pace and high-stress scenarios at Fort Hunter Liggett's Urban Reaction Facility, which tests the students' ability to react quickly when faced with legal and moral dilemmas.





Thirty-three Soldiers from across the nation successfully completed the Field Training Exercise portion of the Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Military Occupational Specialty Transition Course. The course is hosted by the 102nd TASS Training Center at Fort Hunter Liggett, Calif.

Soldiers learn new skills through the Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Transition Course

## *Story & photos by Michael Guterl, Fort Hunter Liggett PAO*

Thirty-three Soldiers from across the nation successfully completed the Field Training Exercise portion of the Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Military Occupational Specialty Transition Course Jan. 31 - Feb. 4, 2015, hosted by the 102nd TASS Training Center at Fort Hunter Liggett.

"The Civil Affairs course exceeded my high expectations. Not only were we trained in military operations, but my instructors put forth a vehement effort to ensure my copious success," said Staff Sgt. Raymond Amezano, with the 518th Sustainment Brigade based in Knightdale, North Carolina. "I am so incredibly confident to return to my unit so that I may utilize my newly-acquired skills in civil affairs."

According to the Army website, "Civil affairs specialists identify critical requirements needed by local citizens

in combat or crisis situations." PSYOP Soldiers "are primarily responsible for the analysis, development and distribution of intelligence use for information and psychological effect."

This course is designed for Soldiers transitioning from their current MOS to the Civil Affairs (38B) or Psychological Operations (37F) MOS.

"The training covers operational and tactical aspects to understand various cultures and groups to advise commanders on how current actions or inactions can affect or influence the people in the operation area," said Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Ruhl, PSYOP instructor with the 4th Battalion/104th Regiment Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations based in Mountain View, California.

Participants' skills are tested during three rigorous exercises - a Combined Training Exercise, a Situational

Training Exercise and a Field Training Exercise as part of their MOS-qualifying course.

As part of the Adaptive Thinking and Leadership training, students are placed in high-pace and high-stress scenarios at Fort Hunter Liggett's Urban Reaction Facility, which tests the students' ability to react quickly when faced with legal and moral dilemmas. The scenarios are based on real-world situations faced by CA and PSYOP Soldiers from multiple theaters.

"The PSYOP Transition course provided me an academic and hands-on overview of how we influence various cultures and can make a difference during peace, crisis and conflict throughout the world," said Spc. Andrew Weikel with the 310th PSYOP Company based at Fort Gillem, Georgia.



**FORT BRAGG, N.C.**



Soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, U.S. Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) are walked out to a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter March 2, 2015 at St. Mere Eglise Drop Zone on Fort Bragg, N.C.

# HOOAH UP & PUSH OUT!

*Photos by Capt. Saska Ball*





1st Lt. Michelle Marchiano, of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, U.S. Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) waits aboard a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter.

"I had never been on a plane until I joined the Army," said Sgt. Joshua Daniels of the 824th Quartermaster Company. "The second time I was on a plane was at airborne school." Daniels, receives his Master Parachutist Badge from the Commanding General of the U.S. Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command (Airborne), Maj. Gen. Daniel Ammerman March 2, 2015 at St. Mere Eglise Drop Zone on Fort Bragg, N.C., after completing his 74th jump.



Master Sgt. Christopher Hecker, of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, U.S. Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) waits aboard a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter prior to performing an airborne operation March 2, 2015 at St. Mere Eglise Drop Zone on Fort Bragg, N.C.



Staff Sgt. Adam Vinglas, of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, U.S. Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command (Airborne), inspects a Soldier prior to conducting an airborne operation from a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter.

Maj. Heather Fonseca, of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, U.S. Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) pulls static lines back into a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter.





# Training for Reality

*Three Civil Affairs Soldiers acknowledged for life-saving skills during a catastrophic motor vehicle accident.*

Sgt. Robert Hames, Spc. Rawan Abudahrieh and Sgt 1st Class Geoffrey Bright, were awarded the U.S. Army Commendation medal. The three Soldiers received the medal for providing medical care to a French service member during a catastrophic motor vehicle accident.



*Story & photos by Staff Sgt Carlin Leslie, CJTF-HOA*

Training and proficiency in certain skills are key to military life and job status. All U.S. service members receive some form of Self-Aid and Buddy Care instruction during their career; and such lifesaving tools allow service members to provide stabilizing care to fellow Soldiers on the modern battlefield.

During combat lifesaver training, students are presented with scenarios that test their knowledge, ranging from a patient in shock, to an individual with other life threatening injuries. Consider the following example.

Scenario: You and two other service members are driving back to your operating base after just completing a successful mission. The traffic on this given day is extremely dense and vehicles are frequently

cutting through traffic. The next thing you witness is an individual on a four-wheeler who attempts to pass another vehicle and catch up with fellow motorcycle riders. While the individual is passing traffic on the four-wheeler, their motorcycle is hit in a head-on collision with an oncoming pick-up truck.

Stopping to provide assistance, you find that the patient shows signs of shock, possible head injury, two broken legs, a compound arm fracture and is unresponsive. What action do you take?

Response: This is the exact scenario that 404th Civil Affairs Battalion service members, Sgt. 1st Class Geoffrey Bright, Spc. Rawan Abudahrieh and Sgt. Robert Hames, responded to and were awarded the U.S. Army Commendation medal for

on Feb. 27, 2015 when they provided medical care to a French service member during a catastrophic motor vehicle accident on Feb. 14, 2015.

"A soldier is alive today and his family can hug him because these Soldiers understood the importance of staying proficient on their basic Soldiering skills," said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Tim Brennan, 404th Civil Affairs Battalion commander. "They followed standard operating procedures, the rehearsed reactionary drills and when called they were ready to perform. I could not be more proud of them."

According to Abudahrieh, her team members all performed to the best that anyone could have asked of them, and they will tell you that they owe it to the training they have received.

"When we were put in the situation to respond to the accident,



# CAMP LEMONNIER, Djibouti

we immediately went back to the training we completed many times. The outcome of our response to the accident was a direct result of all of the training we paid such close attention to,” said Abudahrieh.

Although service members can prepare for the unexpected, having the necessary skill-sets as a team is vital. Each individual knows their specific duties in the occurring situation, allowing for things to work as trained.

“These individuals were in the right place, at the right time and with the right training,” said U.S. Army Col. Tim Connors, Theater Security Co-

operation director. “We never know when we are going to need these skills and this is the reason why we work hard to learn as much as we can.”

According to Brennan, even while deployed and conducting day-to-day missions, we can and must increase our readiness to be prepared for the unseen circumstances we may encounter.

“When extreme, chaotic, and terrible situations occur, true leaders and warriors shine through and rise above,” Brennan said. “They showed what true teamwork is and are an example of why our military has the best trained Soldiers in the world.”

The French soldier, who is recovering in a military hospital in Paris, is a member of the French Armored Company, 5th Marines. The soldier’s commander attended the presentation ceremony to offer his thanks to the civil affairs members.

“On behalf of the entire French Marine Regiment, I would like to thank the three individuals who saved the life of our soldier,” said French Captain Benoit-Marie Huet, French Armored Company commander, 5th Marines. “I would like to thank all of you for the way you behaved and helped this French soldier to be alive now.”



Left: U.S. Army Col. Tim Connors, Theater Security Cooperation Hive director, presents Sgt. 1st Class Geoffrey Bright with the Army Commendation Medal at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti.

*“On behalf of the entire French Marine Regiment, I would like to thank the three individuals who saved the life of our soldier,” said French Capt. Benoit-Marie Huet, French Armored Company commander, 5th Marines.*





**JOINT BASE MCGUIRE-DIX-LAKEHURST, N.J.**



# **Rounding up WARRIORS**





*Story by Spc. Kimber Gillus*

U.S. Army Photo by Staff Sgt. Sharilyn Wells

**W**hile the 2015 U.S. Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) Best Warrior Competition saw some great competitors, two U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers were able to stand tall above the rest.

“All of the competitors should feel proud, but as they say, in the end there can be only one,” said USACAPOC(A)’s Command Sergeant Major, Command Sgt. Maj. Harry Bennett.

There are two categories in the competition, one for junior enlisted and the other for non-commissioned officers. Over the course of the three-day contest,

Soldiers apply their skills to a number of different tasks.

Staff Sgt. Keeton Tucker of the 320th Tactical Psychological Operations Company, located in Clackamas, Oregon, a subordinate unit of the 7th Psychological Operations Group took home the honor of top Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year.

Spc. Bryce Parker, with the 492nd Civil Affairs Battalion in Buckeye, Arizona, a subordinate unit of the 351st Civil Affairs Command, won Soldier of the Year.

**The USACAPOC(A) Best Warrior Competition**



U.S. Army Photo by Spc. Kimber Gillus

U.S. Army Photo by Staff Sgt. Sharilyn Wells







U.S. Army Photo by Spc. Kimber Gillus



U.S. Army Photo by Staff Sgt. Sharilyn Wells



U.S. Army Photo by Spc. Kimber Gillus



U.S. Army Photo by Spc. Kimber Gillus

puts Soldiers through physically and mentally taxing challenges in order to push them to their limits and test their endurance and Army knowledge.

Many participants happily anticipated the daunting events, such as the 10K ruck-march, and litter drags that went on for hundreds of meters.

There is an equal balance of knowledge tests, such as a written exam and an oral board. These events don't just evaluate Soldiers' depth of knowledge about a subject, but also their military bearing and professionalism when interacting with others.

Training and support staff also arranged a series of mystery events into the competition schedule. The

most notable event was a simulated rescue mission where Soldiers rode in a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter to a mission site.

"My favorite event was the air-operation," said Parker, who trained for months in preparation for the competition.

Tucker spent six months training for the competition, doing things like weapons training at civilian ranges and even practicing land navigation with a local National Guard unit.

"Because this is the [Army Reserve], it's about fitting things into your schedule," said Tucker. The commitment needed to prepare for the competition is immense. Luckily, Tucker's civilian employer is retired military. "Every

single time I had to step away to do something Army related, he is immediately behind me, supporting me. It really helps having a boss that is so supportive," he said.

Last year's USACAPOC(A) Soldier of the Year, Sgt. Keegan Carlson, went on to become U.S. Army Reserve Soldier of the Year. In 2013, Sgt. 1st Class Jason Manella, went all the way and became the U.S. Army's Best NCO of the Year.

The expectation for this year's winners is understandably high. Tucker said he is prepared to move forward to the next level of competition; vying in the U.S. Reserve Best Warrior Competition held at Fort Bragg, North Carolina in May.





U.S. Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) Best Warrior competitors continued their second day of tasks; being flown in on a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter to complete their Army Warrior Tasks during a mystery event on Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey, April 13, 2015. Competitors had to negotiate through an urban environment and rescue (simulated) downed and injured pilots. They had to get the injured to a landing zone to be medically evacuated. Soldiers also had to complete a 10K road march, on the morning of April 14, after completing their night land navigation earlier in the morning.

U.S. Army Photos by Staff Sgt. Sharilyn Wells



U.S. Army Photo by Staff Sgt. Sharilyn Wells



U.S. Army Photo by Spc. Kimber Gillus



# CONFIDENCE IS EVERYTHING

## A Soldier's Rise to the Top

*Story by Staff Sgt. Sharilyn Wells*

**I** am competing for the right to be called the best non-commissioned officer of the year," Staff Sgt. Keeton Tucker, 320th Tactical Psychological Operations Company, confidently said after completing a troop leading test for the U.S. Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) Best Warrior Competition located here.

Whether he was foreshadowing his soon-to-be future or if it was just his confidence, on April 15, 2015, Tucker was named the USACAPOC(A) NCO of the Year. The prior infantry Soldier was shocked when his name was called at the awards ceremony held at the Washington Crossing Inn, in Washington Crossing, Pennsylvania.

"I am blown away. This is easily the most prestigious thing I've ever been a part of in my nine years of Army service," Tucker said humbly.

Tucker served on active-duty for seven-and-a-half years. He made the switch to the U.S. Army Reserve a year-and-a-half ago, becoming a psychological operations specialist. He is originally from Southeast Texas but now resides in Corvallis, Oregon and attends battle assembly near Portland. After being selected by his

company to compete, and winning the 12th Psychological Operations Battalion competition, Tucker had around six months to prepare for the USACAPOC(A) competition.

"I did a lot of studying and using flash cards. It's a struggle, balancing it between school and civilian job — full time on both. I did a lot of piggyback training with a National Guard unit with things like land navigation, a lot of shooting on my own with my own (weapons) at civilian ranges."

The hardest part preparing for the competition for Tucker was balancing his other responsibilities. A full-time history major at Oregon State University and a full-time bartender, Tucker had to squeeze in his Army studying whenever he could.

"Because this is the [Army Reserve], it's about fitting things into your schedule. The owner of the bar I work at full time, a retired Lieutenant Colonel, Chris Erick, really supported me on this," explained Tucker. "Every single time I had to step away to do something Army related, he was and still is immediately behind me supporting me. It really helps having a boss that is that supportive."

Continuing to the next level, the


U.S. Army Reserve Command Best Warrior Competition in May held at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, Tucker is as confident as ever.

"Mentally prepared, I'm there. I am absolutely ready," said Tucker. "Mentally I could walk into this tomorrow, but there are a few things I need to improve upon as far as what the events will be. I need to always be working on my PT (physical training). Regardless if it's the Army Physical Fitness Test, ruck marching or just general conditioning, you can always use more PT. Also, need to study more ... the oral board is usually the biggest way to set yourself apart from your peers. As far as soldiering skills for other events, I'm squared."

Out of all the events the competitors were testing on, Tucker was most looking forward to the oral board; something that most competitors fear.

"It's a chance to get your face seen by the USACAPOC(A) Command Sergeant Major and it's really driven by him," explained Tucker. "I interact really well with senior leadership. I think that's one of my finest points, my ability to interact and not give into fear or lack of confidence."





Staff Sgt. Keeton Tucker directs Soldiers during a troop leading test that involved simulating the rescue of a downed pilot on Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J. (U.S. Army Photo by Spc. Kimber Gillus)

**JOINT BASE MCGUIRE-DIX-LAKEHURST, N.J.**





Staff Sgt. Keeton Tucker crosses a bridge during the 10K road march. U.S. Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) Best Warrior competitors continue their jam packed third day of tasks with a 10K road march on Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., April 14, 2015. (U.S. Army Photo by Staff Sgt. Sharilyn Wells)



**"THIS ISN'T  
THE AVERAGE  
WARRIOR  
COMPETITION;  
THIS IS THE BEST  
WARRIOR  
COMPETITION.  
THERE'S A HUGE  
DIFFERENCE."**

— Staff Sgt. Keeton Tucker





Maj. Gen. Daniel R. Ammerman, Commanding General of USACAPOC(A), congratulates Staff Sgt. Keeton Tucker on winning Best NCO of the Year. Soldiers from the U.S. Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) gathered at the Washington Crossing Inn in Washington Crossing, Pa., to honor and name the Best Warriors of the command. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Kimber Gillus)

The USACAPOC(A) competition for Tucker was grueling but not unexpected as he had a secret weapon — his sponsor, Staff Sgt. Brandon Lockhart, who was the runner-up USACAPOC(A) NCO of the year 2014.

“I honestly feel that Staff Sgt. Lockhart was absolutely paramount to my success in the competition. Anything I needed or wanted during the events, he was there for me,” said Tucker. “He could have been easily sleeping while I was doing the events, but he stayed up and provided the support and motivation for me to keep going on.”

“The competition was pretty much what I expected coming into it, other than I didn’t exactly expect winning,” smiled Tucker. “Once you get here and start going through the events, you really don’t know who you’re up against or who will come out on top. It’s anyone’s game when you walk into it, you can kind of see how it’s going in the middle, but you don’t know how it’s going to turn out until the end.”

Along with the support of his unit and sponsor, Tucker spoke of the relationship between the competitors.

“Honestly we are competing against each other, but there is no dirty-man syndrome of ‘I want to make this guy do worse,’”

explained Tucker. “Part of the idea is that we’re all going out there to do our best and we don’t see how we compare to the others until the final day. So, you just go out there and do the best you can. You don’t care how they did, you just do the best you can.

I’ve met a couple of cool people here that were in the same MOS (military occupation specialty) as I was when I was active-duty and it’s really a great time.”

Giving advice for future competitors, Tucker reiterated the importance of preparing for a monumental event such as the Best Warrior competition.

“Prepare. This isn’t the average warrior competition; this is the best warrior competition. There’s a huge difference,” Tucker said firmly. “You shouldn’t just come in here with your basic soldiering skills, at the very least, if you’re a junior enlisted Soldier you need to be prepared to step into the shoes of a non-commissioned officer. If you’re an NCO, you better be prepared to step into the shoes of the next level above you. And above anything, you just need to try harder. If there is anything at all you start slipping on, pick yourself up and drive on. That’s what it’s really about — driving on and being prepared.”



# Sponsors:

## A Best Warrior Competitor's Life Line

*Story and photos by Spc. Kimber Gillus*

Sgt. 1st Class Angel Lechuga, part of the support staff for 2015's U.S. Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) Best Warrior Competition, slid the written tests across the tables one by one, "Don't turn these over," he said.

Lechuga's energy was already strained. He had been up since the early morning hours coordinating with the command group as the competitors arrived from their flights. When it came time for the written test, it was 9:00pm.

Lechuga spotted someone turning over a test paper and yelled "I said don't turn these over yet! Everyone has a pen, right?" One Soldier in the back raised his hand. His pack was still on the chartered bus and in the rush to the classroom, he didn't grab a pen.

Lechuga shook his head, the look on his face was half disapproval and half mirth. "Not a good sign, this early on."

Another Soldier, Staff Sgt. Martin

Mann, pointed out that since travel was delayed competitors were relying on their sponsors to handle their belongings. Sponsors—sergeants that mentor Soldiers in the competition and provide them support are an important lifeline during the challenging events.

Lechuga has witnessed a lot of Best Warrior Competitions at USACAPOC(A). He understands the relationship between sponsors and competitors better than most.

"I'll tell you right now," Lechuga said, slapping the last of the papers in his hand down on the table repeatedly. "If you make it past this level, to [U.S. Army Reserve] competition, you will not see your sponsors. Last year, they wouldn't let us even bring our Soldiers drinks. Nothing. Prepare yourselves."

Pfc. Kelly Dixon, with the 350th Civil Affairs Command based in Pensacola, Florida, the lowest ranking Soldier in this year's competition, told his sponsor about

the schoolwork he had to do during Best Warrior. He wasn't alone. Many of the competitors are full-time college students.

Overhearing Dixon's words, Lechuga smirked and shook his head. "If you have homework now, good luck with that," he said.

Lechuga's extensive experience is well known among sponsors. "I overheard a lot of people saying that they were glad Sgt. Lechuga was here this year," said Sgt. Maj. Hugh Careu, non-commissioned officer in charge of the competition.

Careu is a man about his work, taking his tasks seriously but occasionally cutting in with a joke or two. "This is the only day I'm going to be nice to you," he told competing Soldiers on day 0.

"Tomorrow, I'm going to yell at you. I'm probably going to yell for the rest of your time here."

That's exactly what Soldiers in the competition expect. Best Warrior takes one to their physical and mental limits,





Sgt. 1st Class Miguel Cruz gives final instructions to Staff Sgt. Mann before Mann is to report the President of the Board of sergeants major.

## JOINT BASE MCGUIRE-DIX-LAKEHURST, N.J.





Sponsors provide support and encouragement throughout the competition for their Soldiers. They also ensure their Soldiers take the proper precautions throughout the competition and make sure they eat to keep their energy up.





demanding competitors to complete tasks to standard under pressure. For three days, there is a constant barrage of drills and tests. The days are long. Sleep is a luxury.

As Reserve Soldiers, that pressure is doubled because they have to take time off from their civilian lives to vie for the title of Best Warrior. They must balance things such as studying, completing soldiering tasks, and maintaining fitness training along with their civilian lives and occupations. That is, if they even want to stand a chance in the competition.

It would be easy for even the toughest of service members to become demoralized in a situation such as this one. That's why they have sponsors. The role of a Best Warrior Competition sponsor is part advisor, part coach, part advocate.

Sponsors seem almost like sports agents or trainers, representing a prized athlete during playoff season. There aren't any fans or cheerleaders around, though. It's just dirt and sweat—and the possible reward of recognition across the U.S. Army. Last year's Soldier of the Year at the USACAPOC(A) level, Sgt. Keegan Carlson, also won U.S. Army Reserve Soldier of the Year.

The year before that, Sgt. 1st Class Jason Manella went all the way, and became U.S. Army NCO of the Year. Manella was also a winner at the USACAPOC(A) level. Both Keegan and Manella's names are known throughout USACAPOC(A), and Soldiers in the competition want the same recognition.

But they can't do it alone. So, after each draining event, the sponsors are on the scene, asking if their Soldier is hydrated or feeling any pain.

New Jersey weather wasn't kind on Day 2, which started with a night land navigation exercise at 1 a.m. The rain started before the sun rose, and by 11 a.m. the competitors were completing a 10-kilometer ruck march with 40-pound ruck-sacks.

Staff Sgt. Leah Serrano stood in the

rain as she waited for her sponsored Soldier, Staff Sgt. Daniel Dills of the 443rd Civil Affairs Battalion located in Newport, Rhode Island. It had been an hour since the march began.

One of the competitors came around the curve of the trail, as fast as they could move with the weight of his pack. "Are you Dills?," she shouted.

The Soldier came closer. It wasn't Dills. "Well, we'll pretend you are Dills," she said while laughing.

In the aftermath, Serrano sought out Dills, finding him sitting on the ground. "Are you okay?," Serrano asked. Dills's boots were pulled off. He and the other competitors, drenched in sweat, were eating what little food they had the space to carry in their packs. Some Soldiers were hurt, trying to power through their injuries and exhaustion.

A few steps away, the rucks were being weighed post-march for event qualification. Even the slightest change in weight, and points would be deducted. Such a penalty could cost a competitor dearly.

Serrano pulled out a plastic bag and placed Dills' worn out boots inside. "I'll take these. Rest yourself," she said. The next event would start in less than an hour.

Some sponsors have long-standing relationships with the Soldiers they foster. Some don't really know them at all.

The latter is how one could describe Sgt. 1st Class Miguel Cruz and his sponsored Soldier, Spc. Richard Elliott from the 412th Civil Affairs Battalion based in Columbus, Ohio.

On the day of the ruck-march, Cruz looked on as Elliott was taken aside by medical personnel. Elliott sprinted the last quarter-mile of the course. The blood from his feet had seeped through his boots, coloring them a bright shade of red.

"I do not know him very well at all, I just met him here at the competition," Cruz said later of Elliott. "But during the ruck-march, he proved himself

to be a good Soldier; very strong and determined to finish what he starts," said Cruz.

Sponsors must walk a fine line as evaluators try to limit their time with competitors during events. As fierce as the desire is to guide their Soldiers and correct their mistakes, the sponsors must keep their distance.

"No one can tell you what you're doing wrong," said Careu, his voice booming over the cluster of tired yet attentive competitors. "This isn't training. This is a competition."


The most awe-inspiring thing about these competitors from USACAPOC(A) is their determination, not just in the spirit of competition but also in what their efforts to become Best Warrior mean to their fellow Soldiers at home.

"I want to become a sponsor myself, for Soldiers in my command that want to compete," said Spc. Chad Shockley. Like Dills, he is also from the 443rd CA Bn.. "It's a good experience for Soldiers to train their minds and know their limits," he said.

As the contest came to a close, both sponsors and competing Soldiers walked away with a better idea of their personal limits and valuable experience to pass on to other enlisted Reserve Soldiers.

The overall winner for 2015 USACAPOC(A) Non-Commissioned Officer of the year, Staff Sgt. Keeton Tucker of the 320th Tactical Psychological Operations Company, Clackamas, Oregon, smiled through the shock and relief. Anticipating the challenges to come at the U.S. Army Reserve level of the competition, he credited his sponsor for keeping his morale high.

"I honestly feel that my sponsor was absolutely paramount to my success in the competition," said Tucker.

"He could have been sleeping while I was doing the events, but he stayed up and provided the support and motivation for me to keep going on," he said. 



# Reunited again

nurse reunited with afghan children she helped

*Story by Associated Press*



Courtesy  
Photos

The last time Lynette Austin saw the Afghan children, they were weak, wounded and broken.

But when the nurse was reunited with them on at Shriners Hospital For Children, she found two cheerful 8-year-olds who had learned to speak English and to walk and even paint with artificial limbs.

They looked “healthy and so grown up,” she said in a telephone interview.

In 2013, Abdul Wahid was working with his family in the garden of his home in a remote, war-torn area when a rocket exploded, killing his brother, taking his right leg and badly damaging his other leg.

Shah Bibi Tarakhail lost most of her right arm and her right eye when she mistook a discarded grenade outside her home for a rock, and it exploded, ripping her body with shrapnel and killing her brother.

The children were taken to a NATO hospital in Kabul. Austin, who at the time was a U.S. Army civil affairs officer, saw them there. She brought them a DVD player and some Disney movies, along with what comfort she could.

“Capt. Sam,” as she was known, also linked up with the nonprofit Los Angeles-based group Children of





**Above:** Shah Bibi, right, shows Capt. Lynette "Sam" Austin how she holds a paint brush to paint with her prosthetic arm.

**Left:** Capt. Lynette "Sam" Austin poses with Abdul Wahid and Shah Bibi next to a poster of Shah Bibi's paintings.

**Bottom left:** Abdul Wahid shows Capt. Lynette "Sam" Austin his prosthetic leg. Austin was extremely happy to see Abdul walking. (Courtesy photos)



War and arranged for the children to be flown to Southern California for treatment and therapy. The children stayed with foster families.

On Friday, Austin, who is now an operating room nurse in Virginia, finally saw the children again.

She received hugs, smiles, and even a drawing of a heart from Abdul.

"I love Sam and she's a good lady...she was there for me always," he said in a telephone interview.

"I'm happy when I see her," Shah Bibi said. "I say thank you for everything: you take me outside, you take me inside, you tell me stories, give me candy."

Austin remembered Abdul as "unwaveringly smiling and singing" in the Afghanistan hospital but he had a surprise for her.

"To see Abdul walk was amazing," she said. "To see his smile again, and the joy that he has. His spirit is so good."

As for Shah Bibi, she was traumatized and could barely talk, Austin said.

Now, Austin marveled, the girl not only spoke but has learned to skillfully paint with her prosthetic arm.

Both children have completed their treatments and are scheduled to return soon to their Afghan homes.

It won't be easy for them.

"They're going back to a war zone," said Ilaha Omar, director of international outreach for Children of War.

Shah Bibi went home briefly last year but word of her painting aroused the wrath of militants. Word spread to her family that she would be killed for adopting Western ways, and for a time the family had to flee its small home on the Pakistani border.

"She actually is worried about getting killed. She doesn't want to go back," Omar said, but added: "Her family wants her back."

"Now it's time that she's reunited," Omar said. "But you know, we're going to keep a close eye on her."  *Reprinted with permission of the AP.*



# Soldier earns Direct Commission, gives back to his New Country

*Story by Tech. Sgt. Ian Dean, CJTF-HOA*

The United States is known as “The Land of Opportunity.” American history has many stories of people who immigrated to the U. S. with little or nothing in search of a better life. For one man, the tales of the American Dream inspired him to do just that.

U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Komi Afetse, a U.S. Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command Soldier deployed to Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, Djibouti, earned his commission through the Army Reserve Officer Accession Program on Feb. 14, 2015.

Although, earning a commission in the U.S. military is an admirable achievement on its own. Afetse had to overcome the odds to fulfill a dream that started as a young man more than 6,000 miles away from U.S. soil.

Afetse was born in Togo, a small nation of seven million people in West Africa. With high unemployment and poverty rates, Afetse knew that the opportunities were limited in his home country. When he first learned about America, Afetse began to dream about the chance to make a better life.

“I learned about the U.S. in high school history and geography classes,” Afetse recalled. “The teacher shared what he knew about the U.S. from books and movies. I was 15 when I heard this and thought, ‘The U.S. must be a great place.’ American movies also played a huge role. I was amazed by what I saw in these movies. I said to myself, ‘I must see this place. One day, I’m going to go to America.’”

While attending college in Togo, Afetse determined to satisfy this curiosity. In 2001, He applied for a student visa

through the U.S. Embassy in Togo.

He was not accepted.

This rejection did not deter Afetse from his goal though.

“I first interviewed for a student visa in December 2001, but I was told I wasn’t qualified. I didn’t give up though. I applied again in 2002 and 2003 and they kept denying me,” Afetse said. “Finally, in 2004 the U.S. Embassy granted my student visa. My persistence paid off.”

Afetse was granted a student visa and so his journey began. He made his way to the U.S., with \$165 in his pocket, three pairs of jeans, four shirts and three pairs of shoes. Afetse had a dream and faith that he could create a better life for himself in this strange land. It soon became clear that he would need to overcome multiple challenges.

According to Afetse, when he arrived in the U.S. he could not even spell his name in English. He knew the ability to communicate was critical and he would have to conquer the language barrier in order to be successful in America. He set out to learn the language the best way he knew how.

“I started watching cartoons,” Afetse said. “Cartoons are designed for children to learn. They slow down the speech and focus on pronunciation.”

Afetse continued learning English through watching English news and watching movies. Movies have a narrative you must follow to understand what is happening, which Afetse said helped him to become conversational in the English language.

Afetse began attending Montgomery College in Silver Springs, Maryland. It was

immediately clear that supporting himself and paying for school would not be an easy task. Afetse said that college tuition for international students can be up to three times more than what American students pay. Financial aid was not available since he was not an American citizen.

Afetse held two and sometimes three jobs just to get by. Between working and attending classes, he had very little time, sometimes only four hours a day, to complete schoolwork and sleep. Afetse admits that the pace was overwhelming. He dropped out of college after one year. He was not defeated though. Instead, he used this time to reevaluate the best way to achieve his goal.

“I knew exactly what I wanted to do,” declared Afetse. “Sometimes you have to take a step back, figure out how you are going to attack the problem, and work gradually towards your goal,”

A setback such as this would discourage most people, but Afetse found strength in the stories of other immigrants overcoming the odds to realize their dream.

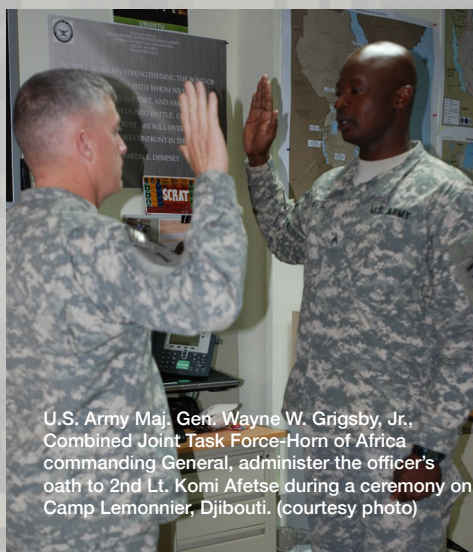
“I read about other people who came to the U.S. and made it,” Afetse stated. “Where I come from, the opportunities are limited. In the U.S., if you know where you want to go or at least have something in mind about what you want to be, you can work your way to it.”

Afetse knew in his heart that, in the Land of Opportunity, he could still make his dream a reality.

“There is no law banning you from achieving something if you want to do it,” Afetse continued. “The opportunity is there if you work your way to it. I see



# CAMP LEMONNIER, Djibouti



U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Wayne W. Grigsby, Jr., Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa commanding General, administer the officer's oath to 2nd Lt. Komi Afetse during a ceremony on Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti. (courtesy photo)



2nd Lt. Komi Afetse, Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, and Ambassador Dawn Liberi, U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Burundi, pose for a photo during the 239th Marine Corps Birthday Celebration in Bujumbura, Burundi, Nov. 8, 2014. Afetse immigrated to the U.S. from Togo, and earned his commission through the Army Reserve Officer Accession Program. (U.S. Navy photo by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Allison Pittam)

people that came before me in similar conditions made it. If anything is going to prevent me from reaching my goal it is me. I'm not going to prevent myself from becoming better."

It was during this reassessment that Afetse learned about the Army Reserve. He had gained permanent resident status and learned what the Army Reserves could do to help him with more than just his education.

"The Army Reserves not only paid for school, but if you are a legal U.S. resident, they will speed up the citizenship process. I got my education and my citizenship just by raising my hand and saying I want to serve," Afetse said.

Afetse joined the Army Reserves in 2010 as a motor transport operator. He cross-trained to become a civil affairs specialist in 2012 and quickly reached the rank of sergeant. He enrolled in college once again and graduated with a bachelor's degree in international relations in 2013.

Afetse had achieved his dream of earning his college degree, but he wasn't stopping there.

In 2014, Afetse applied for Direct Commission.

"It is already a privilege to be a non-commissioned officer and to serve," Afetse acknowledged. "If I can go to the next level, then why not? The Army paid for my

education. If I can put myself into more service by becoming an officer, then I want to do it. It's also a challenge for me. I want to see how far I can push this dream, how far I can go."

Once again, dedication and persistence paid off and on Feb. 14, while deployed to CJTF-HOA, Afetse received notice that his direct commission was approved.

"I screamed when I got back to my room," Afetse admitted. "I got the notice while I was at my office. I couldn't believe it. When I went back to my room after work I had to shout. I couldn't believe it was true. I was now a commissioned officer."

Afetse has already achieved more than he had ever dreamed, but he is not stopping here.

He is scheduled to take the Foreign Service Officer examination in October 2015. Whatever the results, Afetse says he will continue to serve his new country and hopes his experience will allow him to contribute to his home continent.

"I hope that I can work for U.S. Africa Command or for the Department of State somewhere in Africa," Afetse said. "I am familiar with the languages, people and cultures. Using my experience would be the perfect way to repay the country that has given me the life I have today."

Whatever the future holds for Afetse, he says he will do whatever it takes to repay the country that has provided opportunities to create a better life.

"I am in this awesome country thinking, what can I do?" Afetse asked. "Here I am today, wearing this uniform, traveling; I couldn't pay for all this if I was back in Togo. I'm working, serving my country and getting life experience, seeing different things and going places that I couldn't go on my own. It's a win-win. You are serving your country while creating a life for yourself."

Afetse's hopes his story will serve as inspiration and encouragement to others who come to America in search of better opportunities. For those who are just starting a new life in the U.S. he passes on some words of wisdom.

"First, learn the language," said Afetse. "It's ok to hold onto your culture, but communication is the key that opens doors. You have to learn English in order to do that. Second, pick your area of interest and focus on that. If you want to be a mechanic, then be the best mechanic. If you want to be a photographer, take the best shot anyone has ever seen. Lastly, have a plan and stick to it. Picture where you want to be in one, two and five years. Work your hardest to reach those goals and you will do it."



# Into the fold

*USACAPOC(A) welcomes the 152nd Theater  
Information Operations Group to the command*

152





Col. Janet Tsao, the Commanding General of the 76th Operational Response Command, gives a speech as she assumes command of the 152nd Information Operations Group during its change-of-command ceremony at Camp Park, Calif., March 15, 2015. Maj. Gen. Daniel York oversaw the ceremony. In attendance was also Maj. Gen. Daniel Ammerman, commanding general of the U.S. Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command (Airborne). The change of command ceremony signifies not only a change of leadership but also a new command relationship that will take effect October 1, 2015 when the 152nd TIOG will no longer be a subordinate unit of the 76th ORC but will become part of USACAPOC(A). (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Saskia Ball)



152nd Theater Information Operations Group held a change-of-command ceremony at Camp Park, Calif., March 15, 2015. Col John Spear relinquished command to Col. Janet Tsao, the Commanding General of the 76th Operational Response Command, Maj. Gen. Daniel York oversaw the ceremony. In attendance was also Maj. Gen. Daniel Ammerman, commanding general of the U.S. Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command (Airborne). The change of command ceremony signifies not only a change of leadership but also a new command relationship that will take effect October 1, 2015 when the 152nd TIOG will no longer be a subordinate unit of the 76th ORC but will become part of USACAPOC(A). (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Saskia Ball, USACAPOC(A) PAO)





(U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Scott Griffin)



U.S. Army Sgt. David Arrieta, of Houston, with the 451st Civil Affairs battalion out of Houston, and U.S. Army Sgt. Bruce Downer, from San Antonio, with the 399th Tactical Psychological Operations Company out of San Marcos, Texas, collaborate with the La Magdalena community leader to arrange transportation of local citizens to the Medical Readiness Training Exercise in El Coco. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Lindsey A. Schulte)

# BEYOND THE HORIZON



U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class David A. Hefner, 451st Civil Affairs Battalion out of Houston, paints a child's face as part of the activities at the opening ceremony for Beyond the Horizon 2015. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. True Thao)

Above: Soldiers from the U.S. Army Reserve 399th Tactical Psychological Operations Company out of San Marcos, Texas, interface with local residents of El Coco, El Salvador, during a medical readiness training exercise organized for their benefit as part of Beyond the Horizon 2015. For Beyond the Horizon 2015, the 399th soldiers have conducted an information campaign to educate locals about the benefits and free services provided at the MEDRETE as well as organizing transportation for many residents who would otherwise have been incapable of traveling to the event.

The MEDRETE is located in a town next to La Magdalena and provides medical treatment to the Salvadoran populace as part of the Beyond the Horizon mission to provide medical and civic assistance to the people of El Salvador through June.

BTH15 is a humanitarian and civic assistance exercise that lasts for several months and provides construction and medical assistance to the people of El Salvador.

Members of the 399th Tactical Psychological Operations Company hand out flyers for the Medical Readiness Training Exercise in El Coco to families celebrating the beginning of the soccer season (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Lindsey A. Schulte)





# Beware of Phishing Scams



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