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QUARTERLY



Sledgehammer Times

"NOT FANCY, JUST TOUGH"



The 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division

Mission Statement:

3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division re-generates combat power and deploys on order to conduct Full Spectrum Operations to defeat enemy forces, control land areas, and secure populations and resources in support of US national interests.

Command Team

- 3rd BCT Commander - Col. Michael J. Simmering
- 3rd BCT Command Sgt. Maj. - CSM Samuel Roark

Newsletter Staff

- 3rd BCT Public Affairs Staff Writer/Editor - Staff Sgt. Aaron Knowles

The Sledgehammer Times is published in the interest of the Service Members of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. The Sledgehammer Times is an Army-funded newsletter authorized for members of the U.S. Army under the provisions of AR 360-1. Contents of the Sledgehammer Times are not necessarily the official views of, nor endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Army. The Sledgehammer Times welcomes columns, commentaries, articles, and letters from our readers. Send submissions or comments to pao.sledgehammer.bde@gmail.com The editorial staff reserves the right to edit for security, accuracy, propriety, policy, clarity and space.

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Commanders Corner

A word from Col. Michael Simmering, the 3rd Brigade Combat Team Commander.

The great efforts of this Brigade over the last few months will have a lasting impact on our Army. From providing equipment to the remainder of the Army to developing junior leaders who understand what it takes to be a Soldier, SLEDGEHAMMER Soldiers continued to make an impact. Obviously, the great training event the Brigade executed to prepare 2/3 IBCT for their JRTC rotation in mid-August served as one of our most significant contributions. Because of the efforts of your Soldiers, and thanks to your support, other members of this Division are now prepared more than ever to execute the missions before them. With that said, our mission is not over - these are extremely busy times for our Army.

More importantly, these are tough times for the U.S. Army. The ongoing effects of sequestration continue to cascade throughout our Army. Combine an increasingly smaller budget with increasing missions in the Ukraine, Iraq and elsewhere, and something has to give. In July, the Brigade stood witness to one of the greatest effects of these cascading events as the Army announced 3/3 BCT's pending deactivation as well as the deactivation of 4/25 BCT in Alaska. Combined, this force structure announcement will decrease the size of the Army from 490,000 to 450,000 by September of 2017. While the Brigade will ultimately transform into a 1050 Soldier Battalion-sized Task Force, the effect of this decision will be felt by every individual and Family member that is part of the Sledgehammer Team.

Going forward, I would like for each and every Soldier, leader and Family member to understand that taking care of YOU while accomplishing this mission stands out as our primary focus. You have each sacrificed parts of your lives to become part of the Army team, and we owe you not only a debt of gratitude, but, also, we owe you the best possible effort to ensure that you can continue to contribute to the future of this Army and our Nation.

In the coming weeks and months, the Brigade will sort through the individual needs of EVERY member of our great team. We will ask what your preferences are. We will ask you what your concerns are. We will ask you what else can we do to make this transition as easy on you as possible. In every case, we will do our utmost to

ensure that the needs of the Army are met while simultaneously meeting your needs. Simply put, with your help, we will leave behind the best possible Task Force sized element on Kelley Hill while simultaneously taking the best possible care of the 2600 personnel who will move from Kelley Hill to other formations throughout the Army team. We will leave behind the legacy of a first class organization that always did what the Army asked and ALWAYS did its best to care for the most important part of the formation - it's people.

Whether you are a member of the 1050 Soldier Task Force that remains behind or you are a member of the SLEDGEHAMMER Team that will be moving on to new and exciting assignments, YOU will be our focus. The Army has said many times, "The Strength of our Nation is our Army; the Strength of our Army is our Soldiers; the Strength of our Soldiers is their Families....that is what makes us Army Strong." We're going to prove that to Fort Benning and the rest of the world in coming months that SLEDGEHAMMER will be remembered as the standard for an "Army Strong" unit - all because of great people like you. We're not Fancy...Just Tough. And we will do this right...for you, and for our Nation.





The Sledgehammer BDE gains Engineering Battalion

Photos and Story by Staff Sgt. Aaron Knowles

The 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, welcomed a new organization into the brigade on Engineer Field, Fort Benning, GA, 28 May.

The 11th Engineer Battalion, formerly a part of the 20th Engineer Brigade, donned the 3rd Infantry Division 'Marne' Patch, as the unit transitioned under the 3rd ABCT, with a patching ceremony marking the change.

"This is the first of several ceremonies and events that will mark the conversion of the Sledgehammer Brigade from an Armored Brigade Combat Team, to an Infantry Brigade Combat Team," said Col. Charles Costanza, the brigade commander for the 3rd ABCT, 3rd ID.

The command team for the 11th En BN is Lt. Col. Jayson Putnam, and Command Sgt. Maj. Roderick White.

"It's kind of like coming home," said Putnam. "A few years ago, the 11th En were under 1st Brigade down at Fort Stewart. So it'll be good."

The biggest differences the Soldiers will see is their mission going from a construction focus, to more of a Sapper focus, said Putnam.

The ceremony concluded with the Soldiers of the 11th En, 3rd ABCT singing the Dog-Faced Soldier song for the first time, and then the Army Song.





Rock Support Soldiers validate with new Howitzers

Story and Photos by Staff Sgt. Aaron Knowles



Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 10th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, fired, validated and verified the new Howitzer M119A3 weapon systems on Red Diamond Range, May 21, the culmination of the 19-day process in terms of receiving the guns, training on them, and conducting a live fire.

The new weapon systems, now with an increased amount of digital components, is a lot different than what “The Rock Support” Soldiers are used to, said 1st Lt. Justin Schaaf, platoon leader for 2nd Platoon, Bravo Battery, 1st Bn., 10th FA.

With the 3rd ABCT transitioning from an armored brigade combat team to an Infantry brigade combat team, 1st Bn., 10th FA is having to change as well, said Sgt. 1st Class Joshua Jones, platoon sergeant. With the change, the battalion went from primarily using Paladins to adopting these new Howitzers as their main weapon system.

Even though the systems are similar across the board, with this new equipment the Soldiers are having to get used to 105 mm rounds versus a larger 155 mm round, said Schaaf. It’s definitely different, but a lot of the same concepts still apply.

“The digital elements make this a far more seamless process,” Schaaf said.

“There is far less confusion, things happen more rapidly, we are more precise with our firing, and it allows for rounds to get downrange a lot faster.”

“The new digital systems take a lot of the math out of the process of firing,” said Jones. “The system itself is responsible for more mathematical calculations now. This does not mean that the crews do not practice these calculations, but while the system is active, it makes firing the weapon a

lot quicker.”

Civilian contractors came from Fort Sill, Oklahoma, home of the Field Artillery Center of Excellence, to train the Soldiers on the new systems. “These guys; this is all they do,” said Schaaf. “They only work with this piece. They know all of the ins and outs, and there is even a portion of them that are a part of producing these weapon systems. They are here to give us that knowledge so that we can retain it and then ourselves, become subject matter experts.”

“We need to be able to push that knowledge down to our Soldiers, and then use it in a combat scenario,” said Schaaf.

SPC Bryan Glass, an Ammo Team Chief, with Alpha Battery, was out on the range firing the Howitzers for the first time in his career.

“Switching to a Howitzer system is definitely something new and exciting,” said Glass. “And anytime we get to come out here and do our job, it is a good day.”

“Our guys have been anxiously awaiting this day to put rounds in the tube and get ‘steel on steel’ as we call it around here,” said Schaaf.

“The rush from doing this is like no other,” Glass said. “Your heart is pumping and your mind is racing. You’re trying to get those rounds downrange as quick as possible.”

“It’s an exciting time to be a part of 1st Bn., 10th FA, the 3rd Infantry Division artillery, and to be here to fire them,” said Schaaf. “As an Army, we are a team. We all have our roles in the field, just like a football team. We provide a certain element to the team and I am confident with this new weapon system, that we will be a better part of making this team work”



Sledgehammer BDE hosts leadership symposium

Story and Photos by Staff Sgt. Aaron Knowles

The 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, held a leadership symposium for its command teams, at the Kelley Hill Recreation Center, here, from June 9-11.

Each command team, from company, troop, and battery level, continuing up to the battalion level were invited to participate, said Col. Michael J. Simmering, the commander of the 3rd ABCT, 3rd ID.

“Right now, we are in the middle of a transition from an armored brigade to an infantry brigade,” said Simmering. “In order to focus the brigade for the future, we have to use this leadership symposium to focus our training efforts, our leadership development efforts, our maintenance efforts, and our efforts to care for Soldiers and Families in a common direction to help build unit readiness.”

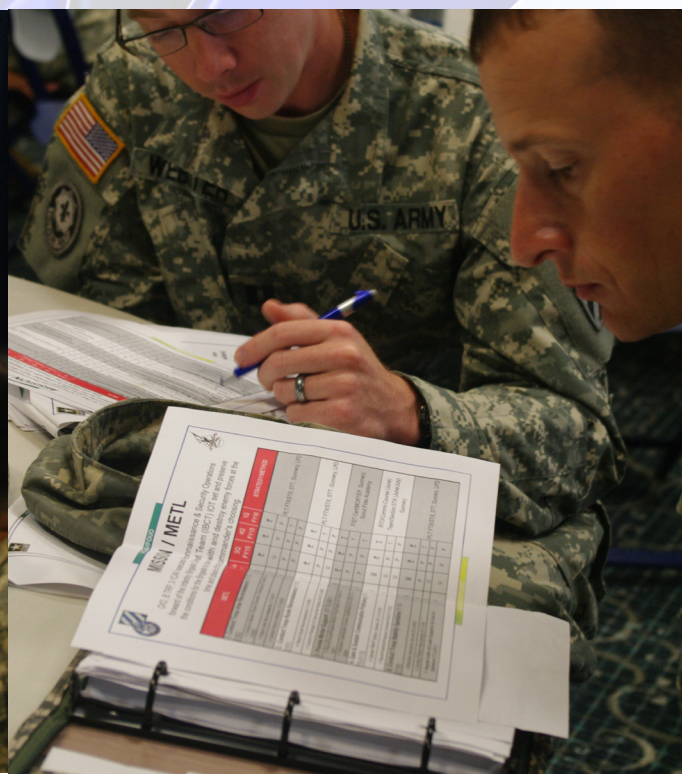
According to Simmering, the best way to approach challenges that the Sledgehammer Brigade will face is by using communication, working as a team, and developing competent leaders.

“We are going to talk about why you focus on leader development, what problems there typically are within organizations, and what communication issues organizations typically face,” said Simmering. “We are all trying to move in the same direction.”

Throughout the symposium, the command teams were given group tasks and asked questions that would make them think about leader development, said Simmering. The intent was to create cross-talk amongst the battalions.

“The purpose of the symposium is to get all of the brigade’s leadership online with the way that we are going forward with our training and for the future of the brigade,” said First Sgt. Mark L. Daniel, the senior noncommissioned officer of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 69th Armored Regiment, 3rd ABCT, 3rd ID.

“This symposium has given us a whole new outlook on how other command teams are doing things,” said Daniel. “It’s always better to





get good ideas from other people because your ideas may not always be the best ideas.”

“It’s very easy to come into an organization as a leader, and give the impression that you stand in your office or stand out on a parade field and tell Soldiers to go from point a to point b,” said Simmering, who recently became the brigade commander on May 29. “In order to truly build an effective team, that’s not really the way things work. You have to get buy-in from your organization.”

“If you can’t get buy-in, people do what you want them to do because it’s an order,” Simmering continued. “I don’t necessarily want that. I want them to do it because they believe that it is the right thing for the organization, for the Army, and for us to accomplish our mission, whatever that may be.”

Beginning several months ago, the 3rd ABCT began to transition into an IBCT, said Simmering. He is using the symposium to create a clear road ahead for his Soldiers and Leaders.

“Now we know the brigade commanders intent, and how he sees our training going forward,” said Daniel. “It makes it easier for the junior leaders to prepare for what he wants and how he sees us as an IBCT”

“These are not necessarily my expectations,” said Simmering. “These are the Army’s expectations of any good infantry brigade combat team.”

“When this symposium is complete, from the brigade level and down through the platoon level, we will know the critical collective tasks that we have to focus on in order to be successful as an IBCT in a decisive action environment,” Simmering said. “Additionally, what we will know are exactly what types of leaders we need at each echelon; team leader, squad leader, platoon leader, platoon sergeant, etc., and what capabilities those leaders will need to have in order to help accomplish those tasks and lead their Soldiers in that environment. That’s the outcome.”

“The symposium will tell us what we have to do over the next year” said Simmering. “It doesn’t tell us how to do it. That is part of the commander’s dialogue, the training management process, and an overall greater process. But just to have the ability to set the focus for the organization, with everybody walking out going, ‘alright, I know what I am expected to do,’ is pretty powerful.”

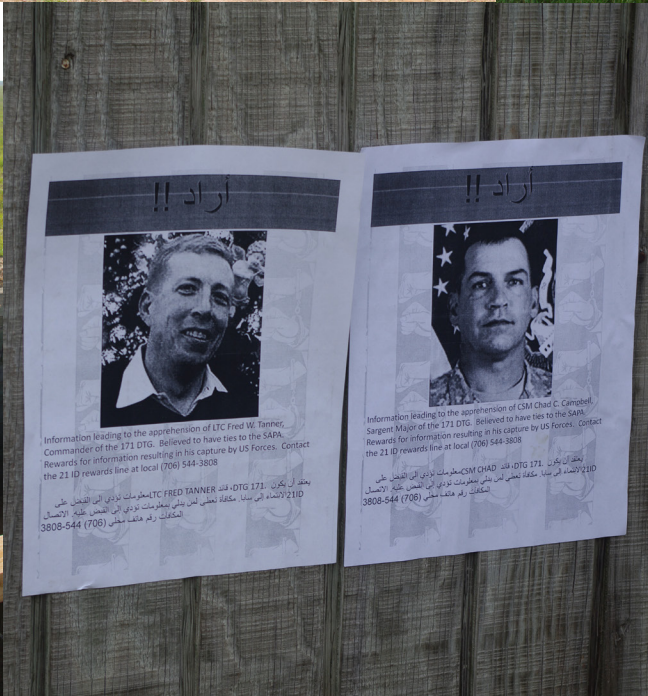
June 14, 2015 was a special day at the Gibson Dining Facility!





Marne Focus: The Sledgehammer's trip to Fort Stewart and Back





The Ministry Minute

Hi, I'm your Brigade Chaplain. Our Brigade Unit Ministry Team, along with the other 3BDE Battalion UMT's, are here to assist you in facing the various challenges of your life, connect you with valuable support agencies, and offer you pastoral and spiritual care. Our chaplains can provide you marriage counseling, personal counseling, and spiritual guidance in an absolute confidential setting. Further, we are devoted to connecting you with the religious support you seek. Please do not hesitate to contact us for support.

FOCUS ON THE DETAILS

Erma Bombeck was a famous newspaper columnist during the last century. She was noted for dispensing wisdom for the common American. Some of her famous quotes include, "never lend your car to anyone to whom you have given birth," "the odds of going to the store for a loaf of bread and coming out with only a loaf of bread are three billion to one," and, "my wedding ring has done its job, it has reminded my husband numerous times at parties that it's time to go home."

Perhaps my favorite Bombeck quote is the following: "never go to a doctor whose office plants have died." The inference being that good doctors take care of small details. Attention to detail in even the smallest of tasks is often indicative of how we respond to even larger responsibilities. The little things we do matter. Think about this principle in terms of your close relationships. It's the daily care and the "watering" of your relationship that makes it thrive. It's saying and doing the small special things that will strengthen bonds of family and friendship. A friend once shared with me a practice that greatly strengthened her marriage. She said that at least twice each day, she and her husband would say I love you to each other. They sustained this practice during the good times as well as the rough times.

I encourage you to once again focus on the details. Give emphasis to the daily care of making a relationship grow. Make time to meet unexpectedly for lunch, write a note of support, bake your kids a special treat, or bring flowers home to your sweetheart. Continual acts of kindness such as these help sustain and revive relationships. Galatians 6:9 reminds us: And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

CH (MAJ) Loren Hutsell

