

GUARDIAN EAST



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Soldiers 'Dash for Cash' around the world



Left: Maj. Lee Pearson speaks to a group of Soldiers about the legacy of Capt. Christopher S. Cash, a fallen NCNG company commander from a previous deployment, before the Reindeer Dash for Cash shadow run held Dec. 6, at Camp Bondsteel in Cash's honor. (Photo by Sgt. Gina Russell) **Top Right:** Soldiers from the MNBG-E Forward Command Post take off running at the start of the Reindeer Dash for Cash shadow run at Camp Marechal de Lattre de Tassigny. (Photo by Sgt. Erick Yates) **Bottom Right:** NNCNG Soldiers charge toward the finish line at the Dash for Cash race Greenville, North Carolina. (Photo by Sgt. Ason Forsyth)

By Sgt. Gina Russell

Multinational Battle Group-East

When more than 1,200 runners took off on the annual Reindeer Dash for Cash 5K and 10-mile races, held Dec. 6 in Greenville, North Carolina, they were joined in spirit by groups of North Carolina National Guard Soldiers running shadow races across the globe.

The race is held in honor of U.S. Army Capt. Christopher S. Cash, a NCNG Soldier who was killed in action in 2004 while serving as a company commander in Iraq.

The NCNG units that remember Cash as one of their own—1st Combined Arms Battalion, 120th Infantry Regiment and its higher-headquarters 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team—took part in the race and coordinated the world-wide effort to honor the fallen Soldier and his family.

"The foundation started about a year after his death," said Sgt. Michael Todd, a NCNG Soldier serving in Kosovo with the 1-120th's sister battalion, the 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 252nd Armor Regiment. "It was driven out of his passion for running and his physical fitness and nutrition degrees he earned throughout his military career."

Cash's love for running and living a healthy lifestyle only bolstered his reputation as a well-respected U.S.

Army and North Carolina National Guard officer.

"I never had the privilege of knowing [Cash], but everything I have heard about him has lived on for the past 11 years," said Todd, who has helped with the Dash for Cash since 2007 and wanted to continue with a shadow run for 30th ABCT Soldiers in Kosovo.

Several of today's deployed 30th ABCT officers did serve alongside Cash in Iraq, including Maj. Max Stroud and Maj. Chris Padgett, who are both in Kosovo as operations and plans officers with the 30th ABCT and MNBG-E headquarters.

On the day of the fight, Stroud said his platoon of Bradley Fighting Vehicles were attacked while rumbling toward Mufrek traffic circle in western Baqubah on a mission to clear improvised explosive devices.

"Within seconds, the crescendo and accuracy of fire told me that my Soldiers and I faced the fight of our lives," Stroud said.

Cash, who commanded the 1-120th Infantry Regiment's A Company, led three platoons on the tour where his Soldiers supported and protected Iraqi citizens. On June 24, 2004, he gave the ultimate sacrifice while serving his country and protecting his Soldiers.

"He was extremely competitive, but always smiling and cracking jokes as he would challenge Soldiers to be more physically fit and run more," Stroud said. "But he loved his Soldiers, and his country and he always put their needs before his own."

"He was not just my commander," Stroud said. "He was my friend."

30th ABCT Soldiers in Kosovo held two simultaneous shadow runs at their deployed locations, at Camps Bondsteel and Marechal de Lattre de Tassigny.

"It started out just [the 1-252nd] doing it, but before long we had a shadow run everywhere the 30th ABCT is deployed, with T-shirts and medals," Todd said.

"I know what it means to lose Soldiers, and having an event to honor them is very significant," said Maj. Lee Pearson, who worked with Todd and organized the Camp Bondsteel race.

"The event was well-received by all on our camps," Pearson said. "We even contacted our units deployed to Jordan and Kuwait, and together shadow runs were organized there."

Back in North Carolina, today's 1-120th Infantry Regiment Soldiers took turns carrying their unit's guidon across the Dash for Cash finish line, honoring Cash's service.

Runner Kate Mo, who was interviewed by the local WNCT news station after the race, said she drove from Wilmington and participates in the race every year.

"To honor all fallen heroes, whether it be someone we lost last week or at home, it's important to honor all of them," Mo said.

Deployed Soldiers laugh their way toward resiliency



Soldiers watch an installment of the “Laugh Your Way to a Better Marriage” video series, hosted by the MNBG-E Chaplain team throughout November.

Story and photo by Sgt. Gina Russell

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Soldiers at Camp Bondsteel recently entered the sixth month of their overseas deployment, and the forces’ chaplain team is working to bolster resiliency as they enter the final winter months.

Throughout November, groups of Soldiers came together to laugh and discuss the relationships that they’re nurturing while serving their country 5,000 miles across the ocean. Using the “Laugh Your Way to a Better Marriage” video series by Mark Gungor as a platform, the Soldiers found new perspectives to strengthening their relationships.

“We were looking for a video series that would captivate the Soldiers and keep them not only interested but coming back each week,” said Staff Sgt. Sara Ward, the MNBG-E Chaplain’s assistant.

“Why a ‘laughter’ approach? One simple reason: To overcome the male objection to a seminar,” she said.

“Let’s be honest, a marriage seminar isn’t the first thing a guy thinks of when he thinks of a fun way to spend a week night off,” Ward said. “Gungor’s take on marriage issues is refreshingly free of both churchy and psychological lingo, and shows the reality that relationships between men and women are very down-to-earth.”

OPSEC doesn’t take the holidays off—and neither should you!

By Capt. Timothy Haga

MNMG-E Judge Advocate, Ops Law and Legal Assistance

With the holidays here, social media plays a big role in keeping in touch with family and friends. While it is a great way to update those back home, it can come at a cost. OPSEC and discipline issues can both rear their ugly head when social media is used incorrectly. OPSEC works for both the mission here as well as protecting folks back home.

As to discipline, a recent article by a sergeant major discussed how comments that used to be made in the barracks, stayed in the barracks. Now, anything posted on social media, stays there—and therefore, in public.

We have resources in our MNBG-E JAG public folder on social media, as well as Policy Letter #12, “Social Media Policy and Posting of Information on the Internet.”



U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Edison Ramos (right), from the 345th Combat Support Hospital, instructs Soldiers with the MNBG-E Task Force-Medical on taking positions during a dismounted patrol, Dec. 2, 2015, on Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo. (Photo by Sgt. Gina Russell)

Bavarian Thunder goes red for multinational readiness in Kosovo



Polish and Hungarian Soldiers face off during Bavarian Thunder, a crowd and riot control training exercise held Dec. 3, 2015, at Camp Maréchal de Lattre de Tassigny, Kosovo. The training was coordinated by the FCP’s German maneuver company in order to build interoperability between the multinational forces.

Story and photo by Sgt. Erick Yates

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Clouds of red smoke cover a crowd and riot control training area as multinational Soldiers—assigned to the Kosovo Force peace support mission—trained with fierce intent during Bavarian Thunder, a training exercise held Dec. 3 at Camp Maréchal de Lattre de Tassigny, Kosovo.

The exercise was held to maintain continued readiness for the peacekeeping forces, should they be needed to assist local authorities in ensuring safety, security or freedom of movement in Kosovo.

Polish Soldiers who recently arrived in Kosovo joined German and Hungarian soldiers assigned to the Multinational Battle Group-East’s Forward Command Post for the intense exercise, where Hungarian and German security teams worked together to control unruly protesters acted out by the Polish contingent.

The exercise not only trained the forces on crowd and riot control tactics, but also built interoperabil-

ity between the FCP’s multinational forces.

“Our task for the exercise was to provide support to the Hungarian security team, who were tasked to control the protesters,” said the German commander in charge of the security element, who assisted their Hungarian partners during the exercise.

“The intent was to train with other international forces and learn how to communicate,” he said.

During the exercise, the Hungarian and German security elements rehearsed non-lethal measures, such as positioning their vehicles and throwing smoke grenades to simulate tear gas. To make the exercise life-like, the soldiers donned gas masks, and security elements dispatched medical teams to carry troops with simulated injuries toward proper treatment.

“It is important to improve skill sets for this type of training and know the tactics used by other forces as well,” said the German commander. “This training is needed to maintain a high level of readiness and become more proficient.”



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