



The **DOUBLE EAGLE**

"Twice the Citizen! Army Strong!"

MARCH 2017, Vol. 5 No. 12



BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

- U.S. Army Reserve, Miami-Dade Fire Rescue
build relationships during joint CBRN exercise

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FREEZE FRAME

U.S. Army Reserve Soldier, Sgt. Juan Padilla, flanks an enemy position during the 91st Training Division Best Warrior Competition at Fort Hunter Liggett, Calif., Feb. 8. Padilla flanked the position of a simulated enemy in order to provide protection for his other team members.

Photo by Spc. ERIC UNWIN
91st Training Division







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FORGING RELATIONSHIPS

U.S. Army Reserve, Miami-Dade Fire Rescue train together during CBRN exercise

LEADING OFF: Lethal C.R.O.W.S. U.S. Army Reserve MPs get more Humvee firepower. **12**

WWI Centennial From Reserve Corps and National Army to today's U.S. Army Reserve. **16**

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COVER and THIS PAGE - U.S. Army Reserve Sgt. Landon P. Jezek, with the 329th Chemical Company based in Orlando, Fla., participated in a joint hazard material exercise with the U.S. Army and the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department at the Port of Miami, Feb. 18. The

329th CBRN, the U.S. Army Reserve's 469th Ground Ambulance Company, from Wichita, Kan., and the Florida National Guard's Civil Support Team, trained with the MDRF firefighters (Photo by Master Sgt. Marisol Walker/Office of the Chief, U.S. Army Reserve)



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**CLICK HERE for
Double Eagle back issues.**

Looking back, leaning forward

With this edition of the "Double Eagle", the online publication of the U.S. Army Reserve Command headquarters at Fort Bragg, N.C. we complete our fifth year of publication.

During this time, we have produced 57 issues, including a few special sections, that highlight our outstanding U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers and civilians.

Published through the Defense Video & Imagery Distribution System (<https://www.dvidshub.net/publication/451/double-eagle>), the "Double Eagle" has been viewed or downloaded 32,285 times for a 566-time monthly average - far surpassing many of our Army's component or sister service publications posted on DVIDS.

This past year, we featured a wide variety of topics to include: the 1,000 U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers participating in Exercise Anakonda in Poland - the largest multi-national military exercise held in the country since the end of WWII; the U.S. Army Reserve helping the Lenoir County Sheriff's Office after Hurricane Matthew flooded their courthouse; the dedicated and solemn work of U.S. Army Reserve mortuary affairs specialists; and the U.S. Army Drill Sgt. of the Year and Noncommissioned Officer of the Year winners - Sgt. Ryan Moldovan and Sgt. 1st Class Jason Moeller - both U.S. Army Reserve NCOs.

As the U.S. Army Reserve positions itself as a combat-ready and lethal Federal Reserve force, future articles in the Double Eagle will showcase the contributions of the men and women, serving in our ranks, who are working to achieve these goals. They are the names and faces of the U.S. Army Reserve; the individuals who wrap themselves in the cloth of our nation to protect and defend and deserve to have their stories told.

As we prepare to enter our sixth year, we can only imagine what the future holds. Thank you for your loyal readership and story ideas. Each one of you have helped make the "Double Eagle" a success. 



Timothy L. Hale
Editor

U.S. Army Reserve, Miami-Dade Fire Rescue build relationships during joint CBRN exercise

Story & photos by Master Sgt. MARK BELL
U.S. Army Reserve Command

MIAMI – [U.S. Army Reserve](#) Soldiers, [National Guard](#), [Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department](#), several local law enforcement agencies and [PortMiami](#) authorities partnered together to train for something each hope to never put into action.

U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers assigned to the Orlando-based [329th Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear \(CBRN\) Company \(Reconnaissance and Surveillance\)](#), supported by the U.S. Army Reserve's [469th Ground Ambulance Company](#) from Wichita, Kansas, and the [Florida National Guard's Civil Support Team](#), were assigned the mission to mobilize and deploy to assess and/or mitigate a suspected weapon of mass destruction within the Miami port authority property during the training event held Feb. 18.

Miami is among America's busiest ports. Both container and cruise ships come in and out of the port carrying thousands of shipping containers and more than 4 million passengers each year.

The port is shadowed by dozens of skyscrapers in nearby downtown Miami and more than 5 million people who live in the surrounding area.

"I couldn't think of a better training environment than one of the busiest ports," said Lt. Alvaro Tonanez, the Hazardous Material (HAZMAT) lead trainer for one of the largest fire departments in America, with more than 3,000 personnel assigned to MDFRD. "To put our firefighters and the Army Reserve unit into a realistic scenario where we could use the assistance in a real-world situation is a win-win for both sides."

Sponsored by [Department of Defense's U.S. Northern Command](#) and hosted by the MDFRD, the hazardous material exercise was the second joint-training event between a large municipality and the [Defense CBRN Force](#), according to Thomas Frankhouser, a senior survey analyst with [U.S. Army North](#), based at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

Established in 2002, USNORTHCOM's mission is to command and control DoD homeland defense efforts and to coordinate defense support of civil authorities. USNORTHCOM is based at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado.

Frankhouser and other ARNORTH staff spent months planning the exercise with the MDFRD staff to ensure the best training opportunity for all organizations involved. During the event, ARNORTH Observers, Coach/Trainers closely watched unit personnel as they integrated into the training and provided guidance for Soldiers and civil authorities.

Frankhouser said, when needed, the 329th CBRN Company can assist civilian responders at a scene and provide capabilities that may not be available for the civilian incident commander. Like local fire departments and HAZMAT teams, the 329th CBRN Company has the capability to identify and analyze certain toxic chemicals and materials with advanced equipment and can provide that critical support to an incident commander.

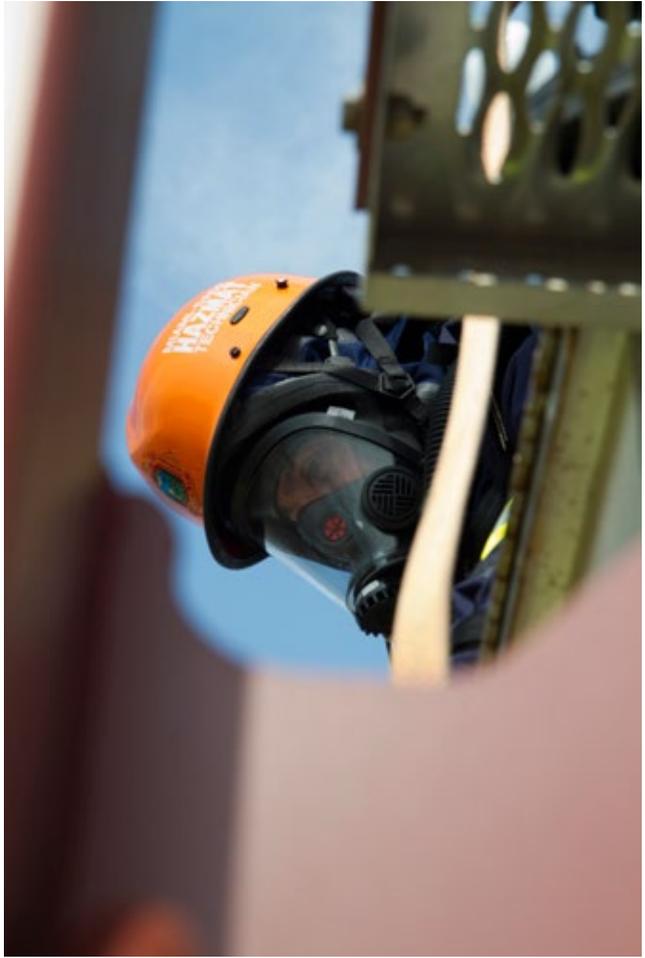
Aside from the hands-on training, Frankhouser said the important take away from the training exercise was simply to build relationships.

Lt. Christopher Pecori, opposite page, a flight medic with the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department (MDFR), watches U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers patching a hole in a simulated hazardous material container at the Port of Miami during a joint hazard material exercise with the Army Reserve's 329th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) Company (Reconnaissance and Surveillance), Feb. 18, in Miami, Fla. The 329th CBRN Company, from Orlando, Fla., the Army Reserve's 469th Ground Ambulance Company, from Wichita, Kan., and the Florida National Guard's Civil Support Team, spent the day training with MDFR firefighters during a sustainment training exercise that combines civil authorities and Defense CBRN Response Force. The Miami event was the second training exercise of its kind for Northern Command. The first exercise held with a municipality was in New York City. The 329th CBRN Company is the only chemical company on the DCRF. The DCRF mission is to save lives, mitigate human suffering and facilitate recovery operations in a CBRN environment. The DCRF consists of 5,200 personnel to include Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and civilians from active-duty and reserve component units. The DCRF is a scalable force that is part of a larger collaborative response capability between local, state, tribal and federal agencies. DCRF assets are used to support the primary agency in the event of a CBRN incident.





**MIAMI-DADE
FIRE RESCUE**



He said one of the goals of these types of joint training events is to ensure local responders and the U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers understand each other's responsibilities during an emergency or catastrophic incident. When the time comes to combine resources in a real-world event, both organizations already have those established connections and common language to be successful.

"We build relationships prior to an incident in preparation for an incident to make sure that understanding is across the board," he said.

Col. Mike Vail, Chief, Homeland Operations Division for the U.S. Army Reserve, said the 329th CBRN Company is currently one of two Army Reserve units supporting the Defense CBRN

Response Force for the CBRN Response Enterprise.

The DCRF mission is to save lives, mitigate human suffering and facilitate recovery operations in a CBRN environment. More than 5,200 Soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and civilians from active-duty and reserve component units make up the scalable force which can respond to local, state, tribal or federal agencies to support efforts in the event of a CBRN incident.

Vail said the key component for a successful response to a disaster or emergency is developing partnerships with civil authorities, first responders and the National Guard.

"As a Federal Response Partner, the U.S. Army Reserve seeks training events with local, state and



(Opposite page, top left) U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers and firefighters assigned to the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department (MDFR) work together to seal a hole in tank containing simulated hazardous material during joint training with the MDFR at the Port of Miami on Feb. 18. (Army Reserve photo by Master Sgt. Mark Bell / Released)

(Opposite page, top right) Capt. Jeff Suarez, the Air Rescue Bureau Manager with the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department (MDFR), assists U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers. (Army Reserve photo by Master Sgt. Mark Bell / Released)

(Opposite page, bottom) An Army Reserve Soldier uses a multiple gas monitor on a Soldier who has returned from a simulated contaminated shipping container through the decontamination site during the joint training. (Army Reserve photo by Master Sgt. Mark Bell / Released)

(This page) Capt. Jeff Suarez, the Air Rescue Bureau Manager with the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department (MDFR), begins the decontamination process. (Army Reserve photo by Master Sgt. Mark Bell / Released)



federal agencies to better hone our skills and to further develop symbiotic training relationships,” he said.

During the training exercise, Army Reserve Soldiers worked side-by-side MDFRD firefighters to provide joint reconnaissance operations on a suspected weapon of mass destruction. Vail said after the training, he hoped Miami civil authorities understand the unique capabilities the Army Reserve can provide to assist in the event of a catastrophic incident or accident that overwhelms local and state assets.

Most importantly, Vail said he hoped both the Army Reserve Soldiers and MDFRD personnel walked away with a better understanding of each other’s mission and capabilities to provide an enhanced partnership during an actual disaster or accident.

“We also seek to learn from each other so we may improve our emergency response tactics, techniques and procedures,” he said.

Tonanez spent the day before training Soldiers with the tools and techniques his team would use in a maritime HAZMAT emergency.

“We want both the Soldiers and our firefighters to benefit from the training,” he said. “We both have something in common. We serve the communities we live in and protect those in need during an emergency or incident where lives are in danger.”

Whether training in Miami or deploying in harm’s way to Afghanistan or Iraq, the U.S. Army Reserve’s nearly 200,000 Soldiers are working around the world in 20 time zones. [LTG Charles D. Luckey](#), U.S. Army Reserve Command commanding general, said, “The sun never sets on America’s Army Reserve.”

The six time zones covering the United States are especially important to the U.S. Army Reserve as citizen Soldiers have a critical role in protecting America’s homeland.

USARC can provide specialized units and trained Soldiers who rapidly deploy or respond to incidents and assist in search and extraction, decontamination, aviation, engineering, logistics and emergency response capabilities

[Brig. Gen. Alberto Rosende](#), Commanding General of the [1st Mission Support Command](#),

based at Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico, spent part of the day watching the training. Although none of his Soldiers were participating in the exercise, Rosende, who lives in the Miami area, said he wanted to spend his weekend with Soldiers.

“When I heard of this training going on in Miami, I had to come see the U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers in my own backyard,” he said. “Who wouldn’t want to be here?”

Rosende said municipality-integrated training is the benchmark for training excellence in the U.S. Army Reserve.

“We must be able to integrate with local responders and deliver our capability,” he said. “In this scenario, we are providing a capability they need and want. At the end of the day, if we can’t integrate with our local partners, we can’t operate.”

Rosende said this exercise was a unique opportunity to match both Soldiers and first responders’ capabilities to meet a common objective.

“It multiplies the effect you are putting out there,” he said. “The fact that we are able to do that successfully, we are helping our communities. That’s just amazing.”

He said commanders must continue to pursue opportunities with local first responders in their own communities or surrounding areas. Most importantly, he said it gives the U.S. Army Reserve’s young leaders an opportunity to excel and make a difference in their units and communities around the country.

“These young Soldiers are specialists and sergeants doing the work here,” he said. “These are not senior noncommissioned officers or officers integrating with first responders. Most important to remember is that our young Soldiers understand the spirit of collaboration. At the end of the day, it’s going to benefit the communities we serve.” 

**VIEW MORE IMAGES FROM MIAMI-DADE
AT THESE DVIDS LINKS:**

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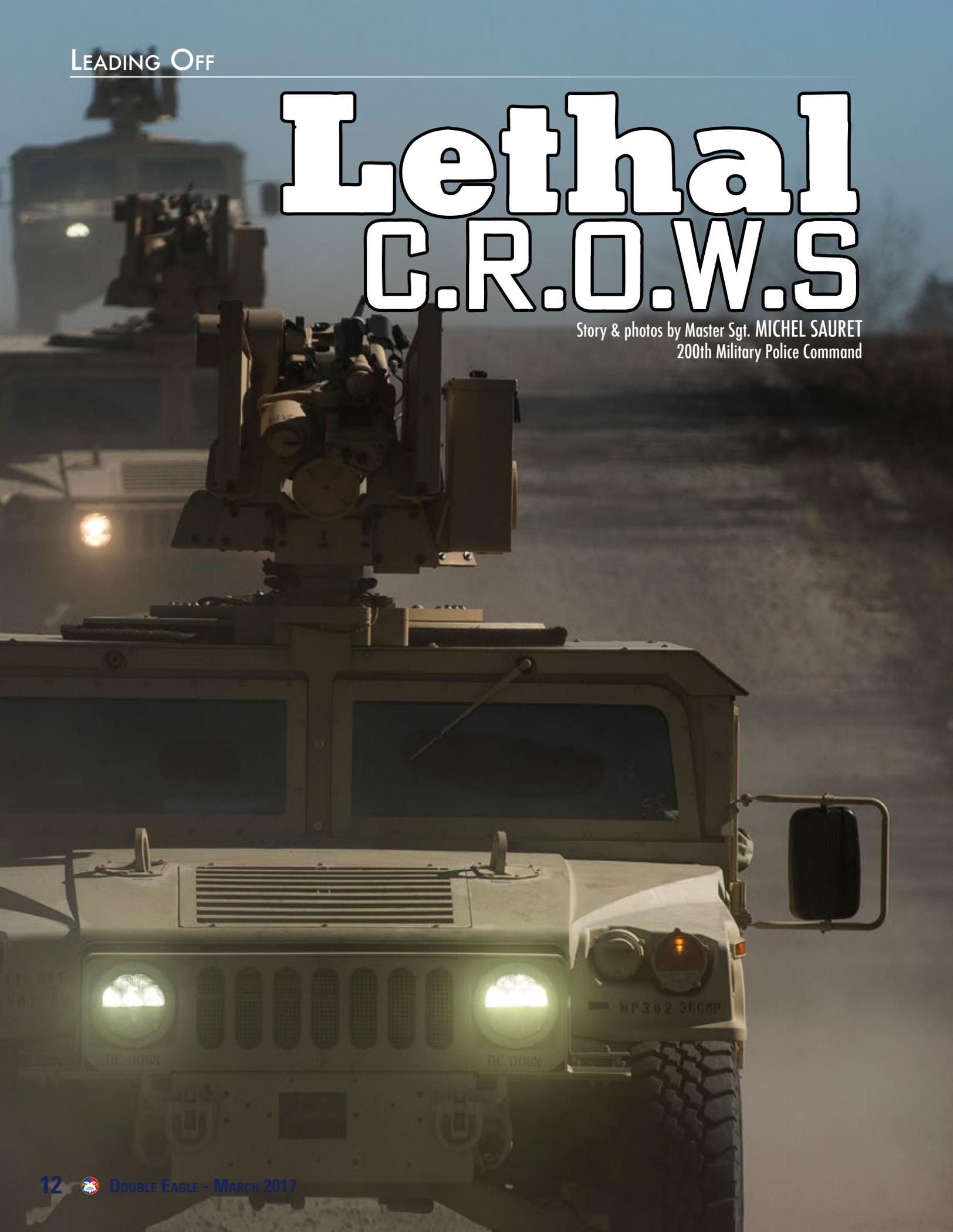
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[HTTP://DVIDSHUB.NET/R/CPALVI](http://DVIDSHUB.NET/R/CPALVI)

(Opposite page) A U.S. Army Reserve Soldier with the 329th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) Company (Reconnaissance and Surveillance) uses a multiple gas monitor near suspected hazardous material inside a large shipping container.

Lethal C.R.O.W.S

Story & photos by Master Sgt. MICHEL SAURET
200th Military Police Command



FORT CHAFFEE, Ark. – Sitting “shotgun” is moving to the backseat in the U.S. Army Reserve, and Soldiers are better off because of it.

Traditionally gunners have sat up in the vehicle’s turret during convoys, exposing themselves to gunfire, explosions, and making them the most vulnerable crew member in a vehicle roll over.

But now the U.S. Army Reserve is receiving a weapon technology known as the CROWS, allowing the gunner to sit safely in the back seat.

CROWS stands for Common Remotely Operated Weapon Station. It’s a big hunk of steel mounted to the top of a vehicle, equipped with daytime and thermal cameras, able to rotate 360 degrees, see up to 1,500 meters (nearly 1,700 yards) away,

and compatible with four major crew weapon systems.

“I love the fact that you have now removed one of our fellow Soldiers out of harm’s way. They’re inside the protection of the vehicle, and they can still get 360-degree view by traversing the turret ... They’re not up there in the turret with their heads sticking out ... where the enemy sniper can engage them easier,” said Sgt. Michael Whitaker, **U.S. Army**

Reserve Soldier with the 346th Military Police Company, of Fort Riley, Kansas.

Although the CROWS is not new technology to the Army – it has been around in one form or another since 2001 – this is the first major fielding program heavily focused on the U.S. Army Reserve. The first Reserve units to receive CROWS this fiscal year are military police and chemical companies. In all, it’s estimated



(Opposite page) Common Remotely Operated Weapon Stations (CROWS) are mounted on top of a convoy of High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles during a fielding to U.S. Army Reserve units at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, Jan. 27. The CROWS is a remote-controlled system compatible with four major crew-serve weapons, and it was developed to keep gunners safe within the vehicle while engaging enemy targets.

Sgt. Ivan Salazar, left, a U.S. Army Reserve Soldier with the 340th Chemical Company, of Houston, Texas, performs a boresight alignment on an M240B.

LEADING OFF

that 27 companies will receive the units, 19 of which are military police.

“It’s keeping our number one asset protected: which is our Soldiers. It’s bringing our brothers and sisters home at the end of their deployment,” said Whitaker.

The U.S. Army Reserve fielding process is taking place in four stages at military installations in Arkansas, New Jersey, and South Carolina. For each fielding, a team of instructors and installers spends about two weeks training Soldiers how to use their new weapon. The full two weeks is dedicated to noncommissioned officers who will become CROWS instructors. One of the two weeks focuses strictly on operators. The instructors then become certified to train as many CROWS operators as required.

Additionally, the program offers a one-week maintenance course for Army mechanics.

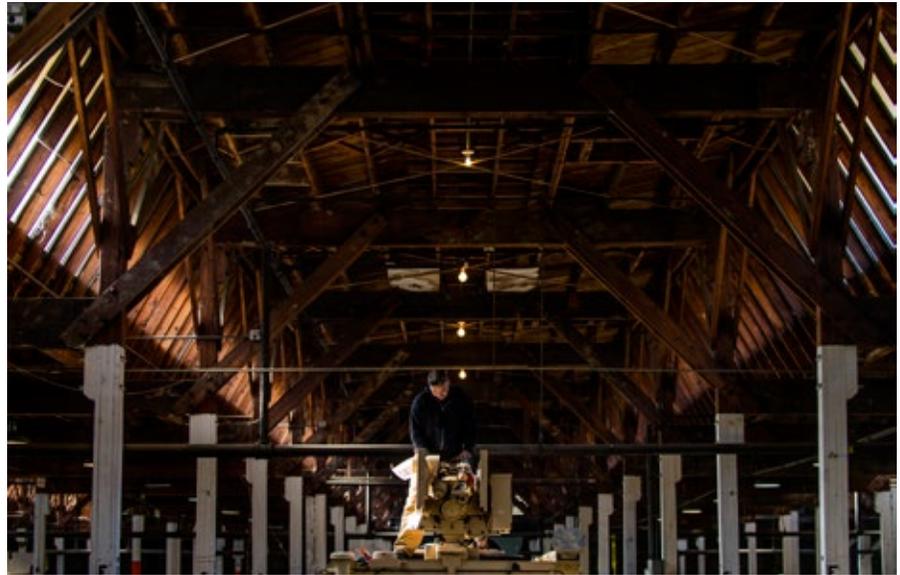
In 2016, 10 Army Reserve units received the CROWS, but the fielding process wasn’t a concentrated effort on the Army Reserve the way it has been this year.

The system feels a bit like a video game, taking away the rattling recoil from the gunner, though it can still be heard and felt from above the vehicle.

(FROM TOP) The Common Remotely Operated Weapon Station (CROWS) is mounted on top of a High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle.

Pablo Flores, an installer and instructor for the Materiel Fielding & Training Team, installs a Common Remotely Operated Weapon Station (CROWS).

A row of basic issue items used to mount weapons to the Common Remotely Operated Weapon Station (CROWS) is laid out on crates during the installation process.



Gunners control the CROWS using a joystick while watching a small screen surrounded by buttons and switches.

“What you see on the screen is just like the real thing. It’s just really neat how smooth it is to operate and how simple it is, really,” said Whitaker.

The screen has a digital crosshair for aiming, and once calibrated, the CROWS is estimated to have a 95 percent accuracy rate. It absorbs about 80 percent of the recoil, bringing the weapon back on target faster after each burst of fire. It’s equipped with a laser rangefinder that measures the distance of a target. Gunners can aim and control the CROWS manually, but it also has tracking capability to stay with a target traveling up to 25 miles per hour, even if it moves behind objects.

“It’s awesome. It’s very, very accurate. On point,” said Spc. Ethan Moe, U.S. Army Reserve military police Soldier with the 800th MP Co., of Little Rock, Arkansas. “Just about every time you pull the trigger, it goes (back to) the same place. The stabilization, (allows you to) shoot on the move.



Sgt. 1st Class Monty Hearod, U.S. Army Reserve Soldier with the 370th Chemical Company, Fort Worth, Texas, trains on a CROWS.

Thermal imaging, see at night, temperatures, easily pick out targets, tracking, leading, all that.”

Also, even if the gunner vehicle moves across rough terrain, the CROWS remains completely stable and on target.

“Before, when you were in the gunner’s hatch, (if) the truck’s bouncing, you’re bouncing. You’re all over the place. It was harder to maintain a good target,” said Whitaker.

This means the CROWS not only makes war fighting safer for American Soldiers but more lethal against their enemies.

The first Soldiers to receive the CROWS in the Army were Infantry and Stryker Brigade Combat Teams. The system is so versatile that it can be mounted on nearly any vehicle with a turret: Humvees, large trucks, tanks, watercraft and more. It’s also compatible with the M2 .50-cal machine gun, the MK19 automatic grenade launcher, the M240B rifle, and the M249 squad automatic weapon. It comes with a large ammo box able to feed a massive amount of firepower into the weapon: 96 rounds for the MK19, 400 rounds for the M2, 1,000 rounds for the M240B and 1,600 rounds for the M249.

“That’s a lot of rounds you can put down range,” said Moe.

The fielding is managed by PM Soldier Weapons, a program that specializes in developing and procuring new technology to Soldiers.

“It’s going to improve the accuracy of how we fight. It’s going to reduce the number of casualties that the Army takes. It’s going to improve on our accuracy of finding the enemy,” said Arquelio Gillespie, fielding manager for the Matériel Fielding & Training Team for the [Tank Automotive Command](#).

There was a bigger push to put CROWS on turrets in Iraq and Afghanistan from 2005 to 2009. These units, however, were intended for temporary use. Soldiers turned them back in as they returned home. Shortly after, however, the CROWS became what is known in the logistics world as a “program of record,” meaning it was approved as an official weapon assigned to units long-term.

This means all of the benefits the CROWS has to offer are here to stay and improve the Army Reserve for the long haul. 🇺🇸



1917 - DISTINCTIVE INSIGNIA - 1919 AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES



ARMIES



CORPS



DIVISIONS



SPECIAL UNITS



OFFICE CHIEF OF ENGINEERS - U.S. ARMY - TROOP DIVISION

World War I helped shape America's Reserve Corps and National Army into today's U.S. Army Reserve

Story by **JENNIFER FRIEND**

Museum Specialist, Office of Army Reserve History

World War I was tagged as the war to end all wars, however, it was also the beginning of military and civilian technologies as well as the beginning of social changes that would reshape and rethink the hearts and minds of all Americans.

Steel helmets were used for the first time as protective gear for Soldiers.

Chemical weapons in the form of deadly poison gases were used for the first time, which led to the development of the first gas masks.

Tanks were introduced and

machine guns were commonly used for the first time, changing the battlefield forever.

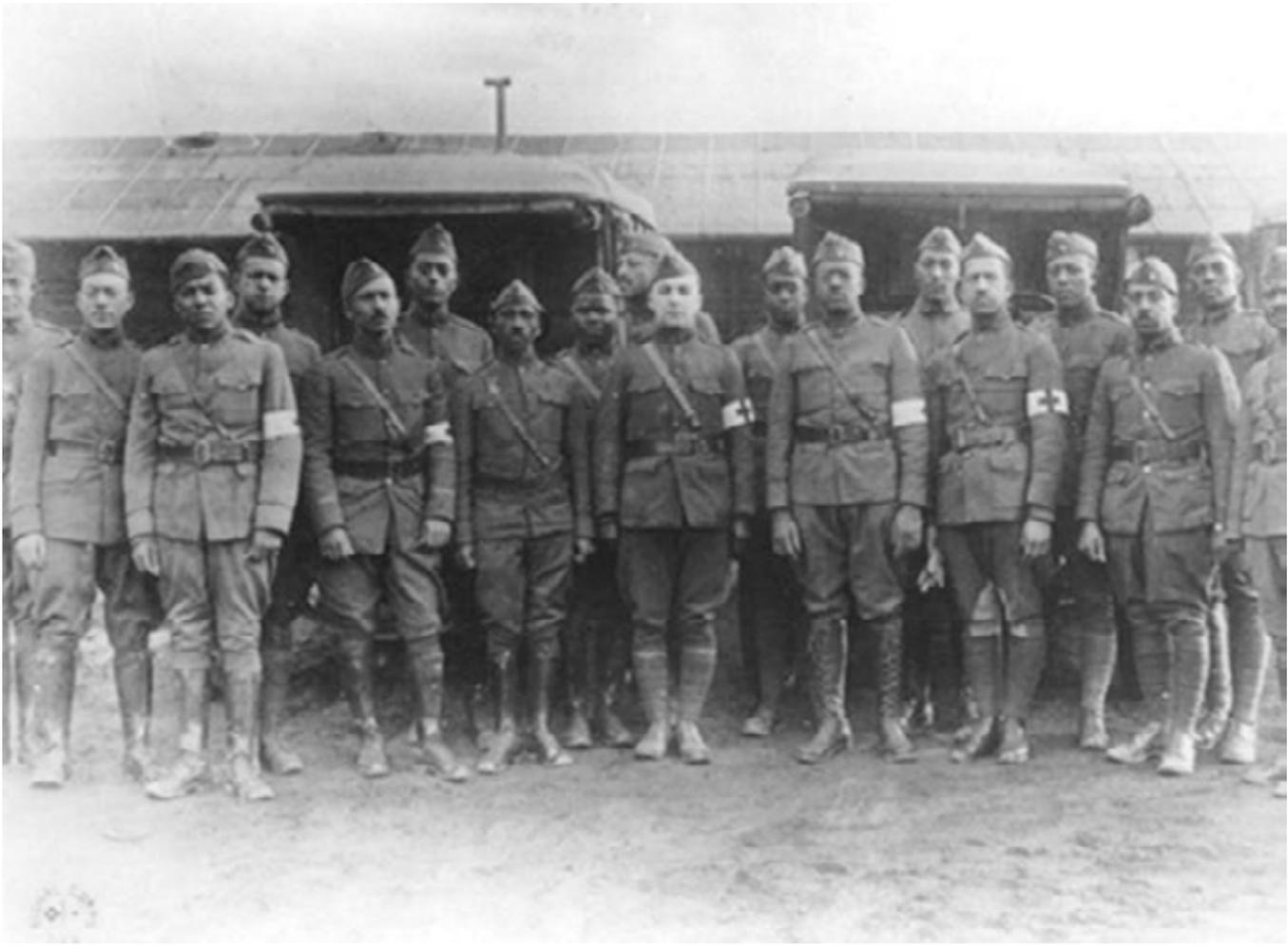
Aircraft were utilized in war on a massive scale for the first time, for both air-to-air combat and reconnaissance missions.

Blood banks were created for



(Opposite page) An American Expeditionary Forces poster from 1919 showing many of the units still present in today's U.S. Army Reserve. The poster was produced by the Engineer Reproduction Plant, U.S. Army, Washington, D.C. (Courtesy U.C. Berkeley, Bancroft Library)

(Above) Reserve Soldiers writing messages for carrier pigeon delivery in the trenches of France, 1918. (Courtesy U.S. Army Signal Center via Office of Army Reserve History)



The Dental Reserve Corps, which was part of the Medical Reserve Corps, offered opportunities for African-American dentists. African-Americans have been part of the Army Reserve since World War I. In 1917, history notes, 639 "colored" Reserve officers (as the segregated Army then designated them) were commissioned from the Officers' Training Camp at Fort Des Moines, Iowa. (Courtesy U.S. Army Signal Center via Office of Army Reserve History)

the first time to help stabilize the wounded.

It was the first time the United States government mobilized the entire nation for war; to include both black and white Americans on an equal field. The government demanded "100% Americanism" — the draft was instituted.

World War I not only began to reshape future technologies and social changes, it was also the beginning of how the Army began to utilize the Reserve force in large numbers that would eventually form the U.S. Army Reserve of today.

The National Defense Act

of 1916 defined the Army of the United States as the "Regular Army, the Volunteer Army, the Officers' Reserve Corps, the Enlisted Reserve Corps ... while in the service of the United States, and such other land forces as are now or may hereafter be authorized by law."

The Officers' Reserve Corps, the Enlisted Reserve Corps, and the Reserve Officers Training Corps were also established statutorily. The comprehensive Federal Reserve Force was finally authorized.

In April 1917, as the United States prepared to enter World

War I on the side of the Allied Powers, Medical Reserve Corps officers transferred to the Organized Reserve Corps, totaling 21,543 officers by June 30.

The Enlisted Reserve Corps rapidly grew to 55,000 men by October. It was with this nucleus of trained reserve officers and reserve enlisted men with special skills that the United States entered World War I. By war's end in November 1918, the Medical Department had over 350,000 personnel that included nurses, dentists, doctors, veterinarians, ambulance drivers, and numerous other medical specialists.

One of the greatest achievements at this time was medical contributions of the reserve force.

Thousands of doctors, nurses, hospital corps, and other reserve Soldiers established base hospitals and ambulance units to care for the wounded.

The first primary mission of the Medical Reserve Corps physicians was to screen thousands of new recruits for tuberculosis. The Veterinary Reserve Corps was equally busy due to the U.S. Army divisions acquiring thousands of horses and mules since they were not motorized yet.

The newly established Sanitary Corps (June 1917) used non-medical reserve Soldiers to establish and maintain the overall health of Soldiers in camps and in the trenches.

Furthermore, according to the Adjutant General, nine engineer regiments were organized for railway work, 27 field signal battalions, 12 telegraph battalions, and six depot companies were formed from the Enlisted Reserve Corps.

Additionally, they provided men for 235 wagon companies, 106 auto-truck companies, 20 bakery companies, 24 pack-train companies. More than 80,000 Enlisted Reserve Corps, or Regular Army Reserve Soldiers, served in World War I; more than 170,000 Reserve Soldiers in total.

The wartime demand for officers and men were not enough, additional combat divisions were needed. The United States Army found itself building the reserve structure it had failed to create before the war.

In 1917, the United States created the American

Expeditionary Force (AEF) of fighting divisions and corps.

The new divisions were formed from three components that are still in existence today: the Regular Army, which incorporated the active duty regiments of the Army; the National Guard, composed of the state regiments; and a new

component, the National Army, a reserve force created from volunteers and conscripts drafted under the Selective Service Act.

Reserve Soldiers served in every division of the AEF during World War I, whether those divisions were Regular Army, National Guard, or National Army; making the U.S. Army Reserve's involvement in World War I one of great impact to the total war effort.

By 1920, an amendment to the National Defense Act of 1916, further defined and streamlined the Army, "Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

That the Army of the United States shall consist of the Regular Army, the National Guard while in the service of the United States, and the Organized Reserves, including the Officers' Reserve Corps and the Enlisted Reserve Corps."

The Organized Reserves was interchangeably called the Organized Reserve Corps from 1920 until 1952 when the organization changed once again.

During the Korean Conflict, Congress began making significant changes in the structure and role of the Organized Reserves, resulting in the Armed Forces Reserve Act of 1952, and the transformation of the Organized Reserves to what is now known as the United States Army Reserve. 🇺🇸





81st “Wildcat” Division: *The Army’s first shoulder sleeve patch*

Story by ALLEN SKINNER

81st Regional Support Command Historian

Ask a Soldier today to describe their unit or combat patch (in official Army vernacular, the Shoulder Sleeve Insignia or SSI) and you will likely get a good story.

Ask the same Soldier to name the oldest patch in the Army, and you may get a response of “The Big Red One, 1st Infantry Division” or perhaps “The All-American, 82nd Airborne Division.”

Although not well known today, the creation of the first officially recognized patch of the Army is connected with the formation of the National Army (the forerunner of today’s U.S. Army Reserve) in 1917.

As the United States Army organized for war in 1917, individual commanders adopted distinctive

nicknames and insignia to help identify unit equipment.

The 81st Division, activated at Camp Jackson, South Carolina and initially formed from southern draftees, adopted the nickname of the “Stonewall Division.” The division adopted a wildcat for the division insignia, perhaps for the division’s bivouac site by Wildcat Creek, or in homage to a Carolina wildcat mascot. Regardless of origin, the wildcat symbol proved so popular that it quickly supplanted the “Stonewall” nickname, and eventually was adopted as the official symbol of the 81st Division in May 1918.



The black wildcat headquarters patch is clearly visible on Maj. Gen. Charles J. Bailey at a review in France after the war. Bailey was responsible for the use of shoulder patches in the U.S. Army. (Photo courtesy of Clarence W. Johnson, *The History of the 321st Infantry*. Columbia SC: The R.L. Bryan Company, 1919)



While touring the Western Front in early 1918, Brig. Gen. Charles J. Bailey, the commander of the 81st Division, noticed the use of unique uniform emblems by Allied soldiers. Upon his return to Camp Jackson, Bailey polled his officers for thoughts on creating a unique 81st Division emblem. Col. Frank Halstead, commander of the 321st Infantry, logically proposed a wildcat symbol.

Created from a concept sketch by Sgt. Dan Silverman, also of the 321st Infantry, was a circular olive drab cloth patch, showing a wildcat silhouette surrounded by a black border. Specific colors were assigned to elements of the 81st Division: black for the divisional headquarters and machine gun troops; red for the divisional artillery; orange for the signal battalion; and so on.

Bailey was so pleased with the idea that he authorized the creation and wear of the wildcat patches for the 28,000 men in his command.

Bailey's good intentions, although popular with his troops, soon ran into the unyielding Army bureaucracy at the port of New York City. The port commander not only ordered Bailey's men to remove the insignia, but reported the breach of uniform regulations to the War Department. By the time the War Department bureaucracy reacted to the violation, the 81st Division had already sailed for Europe. Once at sea, Bailey cheekily ordered his men to restore the wildcat patches to their uniforms.

Still, the matter of the patch was not settled, when a risqué French newspaper cartoon brought the matter to the attention of the Army brass.

Even as the 81st Division was beginning their first combat operations in September 1918, Bailey was ordered by a frosty War Department telegram, which to "furnish authority, if any, for wearing the 'wildcat' in cloth on both the left sleeve and overseas cap...it is gathered that no previous authority was officially given to any organization for this addition to the uniform." Bailey sent the telegram,

along with an endorsement to Gen. John Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) admitting that "no official sanction had been given for the wearing of the emblem on the uniform. Bailey continued his endorsement by explaining in detail the events "leading up to the adoption...of the distinguishing symbol...and the advantages of the usage of such as symbol."

Bailey then drove to AEF headquarters to personally defend his decision to Pershing. As the story goes, Bailey won over Pershing by his eloquent appeal to boosting morale in the division. Pershing reportedly approved the use by saying "all right, go ahead and wear it; and see to it that you live up to it."



Regardless of the facts surrounding the story, Pershing liked the idea of the shoulder insignia enough to order its use by the entire AEF.

Each division commander was ordered to submit a sleeve insignia design for review and approval. As soon as the order was received, the 81st Division requested and received confirmation of their existing wildcat design on Oct. 19, 1918, thus establishing the 81st Division's wildcat patch as the first divisional patch of the United

States Army.

Bailey's efforts in bucking the system in order to improve the morale of his men resulted in an Army tradition that has continued unbroken for the last 99 years.

In 1922, the War Department approved the final version of the Wildcat patch, a black cat on an olive drab disc within a black circle. Except for one minor variation — a tan desert wildcat for wear on the Desert Combat Uniform (DCU) — the design has remained the same.

Furthermore, the black cat on green 81st wildcat patch appears the same whether worn on field or dress uniform.

Today, the 81st Regional Support Command, U.S. Army Reserve, wears the wildcat shoulder sleeve insignia as a means of perpetuating the rich 99 year history of the 81st Division. 🇺🇸

Calming the madness

By 1ST LT. PHILL WALLER
Chaplain Candidate, USARC UAU

March is known for many things: Spring, flowers blooming, Lent, Daylight savings time, St. Patrick's Day, and March Madness.

If you are like me and basketball season is not a big deal, stick with me – this is not really about basketball.

I am a Florida State fan so I am really vocal during football season, as we win a lot. Most years during basketball season I am quiet as our basketball team is less than spectacular. This year is different as we have a good team and for a change, I get to be excited for March Madness.

March Madness is the loving way to refer to the annual multi-city, single elimination, 68 team tournament at the end of the college basketball season to determine the National Champion.

This meticulously designed bracket usually descends into

chaos by the second round as powerhouse programs are defeated by upstart "Cinderella" teams, star players get hurt and exhaustion leads to mistakes that make headlines for the sports section of the newspaper.

While reflecting on this I realized how similar it is to this world we live in. This world is crazy, unpredictable, and appears to be completely uncontrolled madness.

But like the tournament bracket, it didn't start out that way.

The Bible explains in the book of Genesis that God's original plan was a perfect kingdom, ruled by a perfect King (Himself) with humans as perfectly obedient subjects. Just like the bracket, that lasted until the human element was introduced, and Adam and Eve rebelled sending the world into chaos.

All analogies breakdown. Though many will pray for

divine intervention during the tournament, and some will claim that is the reason for victories – the winner is decided by humans.

In the larger world, the madness is too much to be saved by human means and the ending will be determined by the Divine.

So what are we, as participants in this madness supposed to do?

Hit social media and post things that only those who agree with us will read? Waste time griping about how this world is broken? Bury your head in the sand and pretend all is hunky dory?

Let me suggest an alternative: don't sit around complaining about the world being messed up. Acknowledge that it is and do your best to navigate it while honoring the God who made it.

Then the madness will seem less chaotic, and hope will shine in the darkness. 🙏

FORSCOM/USARC Christian Bible Study

**U.S. Army Forces Command and U.S. Army Reserve Command
hosts a weekly Christian Bible study.**

**Studies are held each Tuesday,
starting at 11:30 a.m., Room 1901 near the USARC G-4.**

Please come and share a time of fellowship and worship with us.

**“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching,
for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that
the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.”**

2nd Timothy 3:16-17



Do you qualify for the Post 9/11 GI Bill?

Story by **TEDDI EMBREY**
Team Lead, Army HRC GI Bill

More than 200,000 U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers who have Active Duty Training, Active Duty Special Work, or Active Duty Operational Support—Reserve Component - service after Sept. 10, 2001 may now be eligible for the Post 9/11 GI Bill (PGIB) and for the Transfer of Education Benefits (TEB).

Beginning Oct. 1, 2016, U.S. Army Human Resources Command began recognizing ADT, ADSW, and ADOS-RC performed after Sept. 10, 2001, as qualifying service for the PGIB and TEB.

Previous interpretation of this law, included 10 USC 12301(d) mobilization, contingency, ADOS-Active Component, and Contingency Operations-ADOS-AC service only.

Under this change in interpretation, more Soldiers and Veterans may be eligible for the PGIB and TEB.

According to Public Laws 110-252 and 111-377, the following service performed honorably after Sept. 10, 2001 qualifies for PGIB and TEB:

- ✓ Regular Component service
- ✓ Service performed by Reserve Component Service Members under 10 USC Sections 688, 12301(a), 12301(d), 12301(g), 12302, and 12304
- ✓ Service performed by Active Guard/Reserve Soldiers under title 10 with the U.S. Army Reserve and the U.S. Air Force Reserve, and equivalent for the U.S. Navy Reserve, U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, and the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve
- ✓ Service performed by Army National Guard and Air National Guard Service Members under 32 USC Section 502(f) as Active Guard/Reserve, or between Sept. 11 2001 and 31 May 31, 2002 for Operation Noble Eagle

Soldier eligibility requires a minimum of 90 qualifying days of stated service after Sept. 10, 2001.

Transferring education benefits to dependents requires the Soldier to be PGIB eligible, have at least six years (50+ points/year) of service, and have no negative action flag. They must also commit to a four-year service obligation from the TEB request date.

Soldiers may review their orders for the above Title

10 and Title 32 authorities and their DD Forms 214 to determine whether they have qualifying service.

Soldiers can review their ADT, ADSW, and ADOS-RC in the Reserve Component Manpower System Self-Service site at <https://selfservice.rcms.usar.army.mil/>.

They should not provide orders to the HRC Education Incentives Team.

For records updates contact your Unit Administrator or Reserve Personnel Administration Center.

Anyone wanting to verify the status of their PGIB eligibility may visit the eBenefits website at <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/manage/education>.

Contact the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs website, www.benefits.va.gov/gibill, for more information on how to submit a PGIB request.

For more information, see Military Personnel (MILPER) Message 17-059 on the HRC website, www.hrc.army.mil and <https://www.hrc.army.mil/content/The%20Post%20911%20GI%20Bill>.

ADDITIONAL CONTACT INFORMATION

Soldiers and Veterans claiming to have served more ADT, ADSW, and ADOS-RC after Sept. 10, 2001 than documented in the RCMS ADOS table will submit their orders and pay account documentation for review/update to one of the following based on status:

- ✓ Troop Program Unit (TPU) status: Unit Administrator (UA), S-1, or Reserve Personnel Administration Center (RPAC).
 - ✓ Enlisted Individual Ready Reserve (IRR), Individual Mobilization Augmentee (IMA), or Retired Reserve status: usarmy.knox.hrc.mbx.epmd-pab-irr-ima-ret@mail.mil or (502)613-5977.
 - ✓ Enlisted Active Guard/Reserve (AGR) status: usarmy.knox.hrc.mbx.epmd-pab-agr@mail.mil or (502)613-5964.
 - ✓ Officer IRR, IMA, AGR, or Retired Reserve status: usarmy.knox.hrc.mbx.opmd/idd-pabt@mail.mil or (502)613-6727.
 - ✓ Officer Health Services IRR/AGR status: usarmy.knox.hrc.mbx.opmd-hs-psb@mail.mil or (502)613-6846.
 - ✓ Officer Health Services IMA status: usarmy.knox.hrc.mbx.opmd-hs-psb@mail.mil or (502)613-6846.
 - ✓ Discharged Veteran status: usarmy.knox.hrc.mbx.tagd_ask-hrc@mail.mil or 1-800-army-hrc or 1-800-276-9472.
- All categories age 59 or older status: usarmy.knox.hrc.mbx.tagd_ask-hrc@mail.mil or (502)613-8950.

Orlando hosts Operation Love Letter event

Story & photos by Contributing Writer

ORLANDO, Fla. – “It is foolish and wrong to mourn the men who died. Rather we should thank God such men lived”- George S. Patton.

The sentiments of Army Gen. George S. Patton served as a guiding theme for Families, friends, and Soldiers as they took part in the annual Operation Love Letter event February 18-19.

Operation Love Letters is a Survivors driven event, for Survivors of Fallen service members who gather during the month of February to coincide with Valentine’s Day and its distinction as the “month of love”, allowing them to celebrate their Fallen service members “Love of Country” through letter writing and story sharing.

Formed as a collaborative effort between the Orlando Army Reserve Survivor Outreach Services and surviving Family members of the Orlando and Tampa area, OLL provides the platform for those who shared a common loss to gain support with each other and remain connected to the Army Reserve community.

“My wife actually helped get Operation Love Letters started in Orlando area four years ago, and it means a lot to people because this is for our heroes, and we don’t ever want to forget,” said Craig Gross, father of Cpl. Frank Robert Gross, killed in action 16, July 2011.

“It’s all about legacy, keeping our son’s name alive” Gross said. “There’s a saying, Rich is the nation who has heroes, and poor is the nation who forgets them.”

As a means to remember the sacrifice of their heroes, Army Reserve Family Programs coordinators and Survivor Outreach Services program staff brainstormed a way to commemorate the Fallen while providing a healing outlet for Survivors.

“Shinekqua Baines and Gwendolyn Hannah wanted to do something to remember our Soldiers for Valentine’s Day, and Shinekqua came up with the idea for Operation Love Letters, calling me at 2 o’clock in the morning. That’s how excited they were,” said Janice Williams, mother of Army Reserve Pfc. Ashley Williams.

“We didn’t know how it was going to go, but I said let’s do it. The first one was out here on the patio,

and it was cold and brisk, but it was good,” Williams said. “This meant I can still say things that’s on my heart, to Ashley.”

OLL has grown every year since that inaugural event and program staff continue to reach out and include new Families in the community of support.

“This is great. I really appreciate the outreach because I feel without it so many people would be left out, alone, with no one to talk to,” said Barbara Wade, mother of Staff Sgt. Maurice Tucker, killed in action June 25, 2016.

“I’ve been in contact with the Reserve Center and Ms. Gwen Hannah, and she brought me on board, helped get me some counseling and people to talk to because I was new in the area,” Wade said.

OLL became an outlet for many who needed the opportunity to feel surrounded by those who share what they share.

“It’s a healing for me, because I’ve been holding so much in trying to stay strong for Ashley’s sons,” Williams said.

“More and more people are coming out and I believe they feel the same way. They try to be strong for their Family when we’re actually not,” Williams said.

When people can express themselves and feeling truly unfiltered they begin to heal according to Williams.

“New participants come and they say wait a minute, I didn’t realize that there are others out here who can relate to what I’m experiencing,” said Lori Fleming, mother of Sgt. Terry M. Lisk. “I got to say my child’s or husband’s name. I cried and they cried with me.”

“Even with good friends, when I say “Terry”, they say, “Oh God, she’s going to cry again.” They don’t mean it, but they can’t understand,” Fleming said.

One of the biggest benefits of OLL is the support network of like-minded individuals.

“I have one friend who has said to me, “Aren’t you over that yet?” Fleming said.

“I have news for you, I’ll never be over it. There is always a hole in your heart because someone is missing” Fleming said. “I know we’re all going to die eventually, but I was supposed to die first.”

While the event does bring Families together through their shared experiences, part of the process is remembering the good times, and the sad.

"You watch television and you see the military members coming up to the Soldier's Family's house to tell them about the death of a loved one. I never ever thought it would happen to me, and at 6:20 in the morning they were knocking at my door and that just devastated me," Wade said.

"I said no! This is not real, this only happens on television" She added.

Tears and those comforting individuals who were crying was a natural occurrence during the event, the difference for many being they were not alone when doing so.

"When you are by yourself, many strange things go through your mind and you get in depress mode. I was finding myself there until the outreach center reached out to me," Wade said.

The participants laughed and cried together, resembling a Family reunion as they shared stories one by one.

"Ashley was a student at South Carolina State University, and I remember when she called me and said, mama I'm going to join the Army," Williams recalled. "I said you going to do what!? She was like a diva, a prissy diva."

"I didn't believe until they came and picked her up" Williams said.

Others, like Barbara Wade, expressed the bond they shared with their Fallen.

"I would talk to him about anything and everything, and I miss that. He was my best friend," Wade said.

OLL holds a significant meaning for all those in attendance, especially the signature portion of the event where Survivors wrote private messages to their Fallen and tied them to balloons for a release in the sky.

"To me it (OLL) means that my son knows how

much I appreciate him having been my son" Gross said. "It means a lot to be able to make a note, attach it to a balloon, let it go up in the air and say Frankie I love you, I miss you and I can't wait to see you again."

Gross and his wife paid tribute to their son, not only by releasing their message attached to the balloon, but providing catering services for the Tampa OLL event, with food from their restaurant named in honor of their son.

"I opened Frankie's Patriot Barbeque four years ago. My son loved my barbeque" Gross said.

"The restaurant in and of itself has become a legacy of my sons name," Gross added.

Even though OLL served as a way to help each individual heal, the participants couldn't help but to focus their attention on others who may be facing what they have faced, hoping they too join the event in the future.

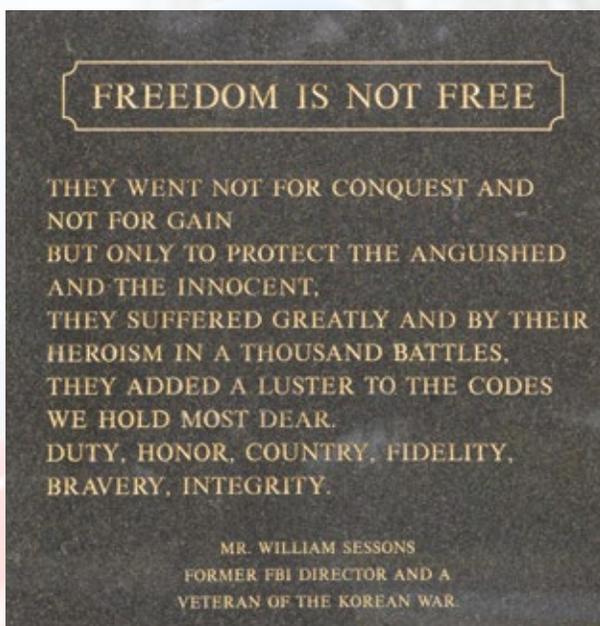
"You have to take the first step, and getting together with other parents brings a lot of comfort. We are all cut now from the same cloth, and we belong to a club that none of us really wanted to join," Gross said.

"Just come one time. Experience it one time and give it a try," Williams said. "I think it would give them peace of mind."

OLL continues to align with the Army Reserve's mission of supporting Survivors in staying connected to the Army for as long as they desire, closest to where they reside, at select locations throughout the U.S. Army Reserve Footprint.

"I grew up in the military. My dad did 31 years in the Army and I feel more connected to the military now than I ever had, because of my sons sacrifice" Gross said.

Survivor Outreach Services and events like OLL are open to all service branches, active or reserve, and family members who have lost a service member at home or in the line of duty. 🇺🇸



Conboy addresses Military Affairs Council



Story & photos by **LISA RAY**
U.S. Army Forces Command

Maj. Gen. David Conboy, deputy commanding general, U.S. Army Reserve Command, addresses the audience during the Military Affairs Council breakfast hosted by the Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce, March 2, in Fayetteville, N.C.

In addition to Conboy, city officials heard military updates from Fort Bragg leaders including Maj. Gen. Paul LaCamera, deputy commanding general, XVIII Airborne Corps; Maj. Gen. Clayton Hutmacher, deputy commanding general, U.S. Army Special Operations Command; and Maj. Gen. Leopoldo Quintas, U.S. Army Forces Command director for Operations, Plans and Training.

The mission of the Military Affairs Council is to enhance relationships and foster a heightened understanding between council members and the military community from Fort Bragg and Pope Army Air Field. 🇺🇸





Army OCS Alumni reunion slated for May

The [Army Officer Candidate School Alumni Association](#) 2017 Reunion is scheduled May 7-11, in Columbus, Georgia.

The association represents all Army officers commissioned through any Officer Candidate School, regardless of previous locations or branch affiliation.

There will be demonstrations and briefings highlighting developments related to the OCS program.

The itinerary includes the OCS Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, OCS Alumni Banquet at the [National Infantry Museum, Little White House](#) tour, Reunion Dinner, and OCS Memorial dedication.

The reunion will be conducted at the [Columbus Marriott Hotel](#), 800 Front Avenue, Columbus, Ga. 31901, 1-706-324-1800.

Reservations for the "OCS Alumni Reunion" are being accepted at a special rate prior to April 15.

For more information, contact Nancy Ionoff, (813) 917-4309 or <https://www.ocsalumni.org/events/cart.php?id=1>.

Drivers continue to find road bumpy after answering automobile ads



DALLAS – An individual or individuals using the “Exchange Inc.” name to handle vehicle purchases has once again been placing advertisements in auto magazines and commercial newspapers, leading [Army & Air Force Exchange Service](#) shoppers to believe they’re purchasing a vehicle through the Department of Defense (DoD) retailer.

“This has been an ongoing issue for several years now, and it has surfaced once again where someone is using the Exchange’s trademarked logo and name without permission to purportedly handle vehicles transactions in the United States on behalf of private sellers,” said Eric Stewart, the Exchange’s loss prevention vice president. “Unfortunately, some have sent money only to receive nothing in return.”

Despite the fact that military exchanges do not have the authority to sell vehicles or represent private sellers in completing transactions in the continental United States, the individuals responsible for these advertisements have left consumers with the impression they are doing business with the DoD’s oldest and largest exchange service.

“This type of fraud has proliferated with the use of the Internet and continues to be a challenge because oftentimes the perpetrator cannot be identified as the methods they utilize are not traceable back to any individual,” Stewart said. “In fact, in one case, money wired by an individual was picked up in Bangladesh, indicating this crime goes well beyond U.S. borders.”

Shoppers who believe that they may have been taken advantage of can file a complaint through the Internet Crime Complaint Center at www.ic3.gov.

Exchange facilities are located solely on military installations. While the Exchange does have mail order and Internet offerings, the Exchange does not advertise in civilian outlets such as metropolitan newspapers or automobile sales magazines. All advertisements for legitimate Exchange offerings are published in outlets whose audiences are mostly composed of military members.

The Army & Air Force Exchange Service goes where Soldiers, Airmen and their families go to improve the quality of their lives through goods and services provided. Exchange earnings provide dividends to support military morale, welfare and recreation programs. The Exchange is part of the Department of Defense and is directed by a Board of Directors, responsible to the Secretaries of the Army and Air Force through the Chiefs of Staff. To find out more about the Exchange history and mission or to view recent press releases please visit our Web site at <http://www.aafes.com/about-exchange/public-affairs/press-releases.htm> or follow us on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/ExchangePAO>.

For the sake of the snake

Story by JONELLE KIMBROUGH

U.S. Army Reserve Sustainability Programs

FORT BUCHANAN, Puerto Rico - Actor Nicolas Cage once quipped, “Every great story seems to begin with a snake.”

At [Fort Buchanan](#), the story of wildlife conservation begins with the Puerto Rican boa.

The Caribbean Islands host some of the most biologically critical and diverse snakes on Earth. The [Puerto Rican boa](#), also known as [Epicrates inornatus](#), is important to the environment and natural heritage of Puerto Rico. However, the [United States Fish and Wildlife Service \(USFWS\)](#) has listed the snake as endangered since 1970.

Fortunately for the boa, the [U.S. Army Reserve](#) “has its six.” Fort Buchanan – an Army Reserve-funded installation near San Juan – is leading the charge for its protection.

The Puerto Rican boa is crucial in its habitat, the lush forests of limestone hills called mogotes. Adult snakes prey on pests such as rats and invasive reptiles such as green iguanas. Boas are vital components of the food chains of island birds including the Puerto Rican lizard cuckoo and red-tailed hawk.

As necessary as it is to the island’s ecological balance, the Puerto Rican boa is vulnerable to some formidable threats.

Introduced, non-native animals such as mongooses and other snakes are competing with the boa for habitat and food. In some cases, the interlopers are turning Puerto Rican boas into meals.

Deforestation, urban encroachment and pollution have damaged the boa’s environment. As an island species, habitat loss is especially troubling for the snake. Quite simply, they have no other place to go. “Its limited geographical distribution makes the Puerto Rican boa prone to extirpation by any change created by humans or natural causes,” said Victor Rodriguez-Cruz, an Environmental Protection Specialist with the Directorate of Public Works (DPW) at Fort Buchanan.

Furthermore, poaching has contributed to the boa’s

decline. Hunters have coveted the snake for its meat and skin. As early as the 1700s, Puerto Rico exported the oil from the snake’s fat as a major commodity. “[The boa was] hunted and killed due to the belief that snake oil provided relief for aching joints,” Rodriguez-Cruz explained.

If the boa faced extinction, the biological diversity on Puerto Rico would be imperiled. Natural cycles would be disrupted, and the environment would certainly suffer. Nevertheless, the people of Fort Buchanan are working to ensure a hopeful future for the snake.

Initiated in 2013 and guided by a Memorandum of Understanding with the USFWS, Fort Buchanan’s comprehensive, ambitious boa program includes the management of both the species and the land on which it lives. The Installation’s DPW and its partner agencies are capturing, measuring and tagging boas, and they are performing other monitoring activities that help wildlife biologists determine boa populations, activity patterns and habitat uses. They are also enhancing the boa’s environment through reforestation and native plant restoration initiatives.

Innovative projects are driving boa conservation forward.

For instance, Fort Buchanan is investigating the use of an advanced technology called a [Passive Integrated Transponder \(PIT\)](#) tag to study the boa. A PIT tag for a boa is similar to a microchip for a dog. It is essentially a “barcode” for an individual animal that can electronically transmit information on snake growth, migration and survivorship to the biologists participating in the studies.

Also, the [Department of Defense Environmental Security Technology Certification Program \(ESTCP\)](#) recently issued a grant to the [United States Army Corps of Engineers’ Research and Development Center Laboratory](#) to examine “soft release” for snakes that require trans-location at Fort Buchanan. According to Rodriguez-Cruz, Puerto Rican boas





The Puerto Rican boa, also known as *Epicrates inornatus*, is important to the environment and natural heritage of Puerto Rico but has been on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service endangered list since 1970. Thanks to the efforts of the U.S. Army Reserve, Fort Buchanan's Directorate of Public Works and the USFWS have developed a comprehensive, ambitious boa program that includes the management of both the species and the land on which it lives. (Photo courtesy of Fort Buchanan DPW)

have very cryptic habits. People rarely see them, but they occasionally venture into urban areas. Wildlife biologists must trans-locate the wayward snakes. With the soft release method, biologists capture boas in urban areas and move them to designated forests. There, the boas briefly live in man-made pens prior to their full release into the wild. Soft release allows the snakes to gradually acclimate to the forests and thus raises their probabilities for success. Rodriguez-Cruz said that the ESTCP project has the potential to increase the effectiveness of capture and trans-location efforts and to reduce snake-human encounters. The Installation could also benefit financially since the ESTCP grant would cover all expenses associated with the soft release demonstration.

Outreach and awareness are essential components of Fort Buchanan's boa conservation program, too. "By educating the public, we are eliminating a lot of misconceptions about snakes in general and especially the boa," said Rodriguez-Cruz. The Installation is identifying snake habitat with signage, encouraging its residents to report boa sightings, and training contractors who work on the post on boa protection

procedures – to name only a few of the efforts.

Committed to the protection of its largest indigenous snake, Fort Buchanan serves as an example of conservation to the Caribbean as well as to the entire Army Reserve and active Army, both of which play a critical role in the stewardship of our military's lands and the world's precious natural resources. "What we do inside of the Installation for Puerto Rican boa conservation, if deemed efficient, can be useful to the management of the snake outside of the Installation," Rodriguez-Cruz said.

The environmentally essential Puerto Rican boa has managed to survive despite the forces that jeopardize its very existence. With the U.S. Army Reserve in its corner, the snake now has the chance to thrive, and its story will be great for generations to come.

Visit usarsustainability.com for more information on Army Reserve environmental programs. Like us on Facebook at [facebook.com/USARSustainability](https://www.facebook.com/USARSustainability) and follow us on Twitter [@SustainableUSAR](https://twitter.com/SustainableUSAR).

EDITOR'S NOTE: Eneilis Mulero Oliveras, Directorate of Public Works, Fort Buchanan, contributed to this story. 🌍

HERE IT COMES

Distracted Driving

Any activity that diverts a driver's attention puts that driver, their passengers and everyone else on the road at serious risk. Why chance it?

The National Highway Transportation Safety Administration reports that in 2014, that nearly 3,200 people were killed and 431,000 were injured in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers.



READY ...OR NOT?

Ready ... or Not is a call to action for leaders, Soldiers, Army Civilians and Family members to assess their readiness for what lies ahead — both the known and unknown. #ArmySafety

Throughout our professional and personal lives, events happen all around us. We are often able to shape the outcomes of those events, but many times we're not. Navigating life's challenges is all about decision-making.

The U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center has the tools to keep you and your Soldiers safe, both on and off duty. Visit us online at <https://safety.army.mil>.

So are **YOU** ready ... or not?



<https://safety.army.mil>