



# **MEDIA ADVISORY**

## **1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division and Fort Riley**

# **HOME OF THE BIG RED ONE**



**May 7, 2018**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

### **Secretary of the US Army visits Fort Riley, meets with 'Big Red One' Soldiers, spouses, civilians**

By Chad L. Simon  
1st Inf. Div. Public Affairs

The Secretary of the U.S. Army, Dr. Mark T. Esper, visited and spoke with Soldiers and spouses of the 1st Infantry Division as he toured Fort Riley, Kansas, May 4. The visit was Esper's first to the area since he was sworn in as the 23rd Secretary of the Army last November.

Esper started his busy day by joining Soldiers of the 1st Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Inf. Div., for a functional fitness PT session. Esper also met with officers, noncommissioned officers and spouses of the 1st CAB for breakfast before joining the 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Inf. Div., as the "Devil" brigade conducted live-fire training on one of the vast ranges offered at the post.

Esper fielded questions from Soldiers, spouses and civilians during a town hall meeting held at Barlow Theater. He also talked of how the Army is looking to gain approximately 15,000 Soldiers over the next three years. He expects more Soldiers will help improve the quality of life and dwell time for Soldiers between deployments.

Esper also spoke about the 1st Inf. Div. and U.S. Army's continued emphasis to build readiness.

"We are now focused on strategic competitors such as Russia and China," Esper said. "The 1st Infantry Division has a storied history. It is one of our great units and, if called upon in the future, I am confident that it will prevail once again. The 1st Inf. Div. needs to continue to build its readiness and enhance the lethality of the force as we move ahead."

The secretary said training with international allies — something the 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Inf. Div., is currently doing in Europe — is important.

“The fact that the ‘Big Red One’ can be over in Europe training with our allies not only builds that interoperability and partnership with our allies, but also provides reassurance to them that the United States will be there as a NATO treaty party should a conflict come,” he said.

In his day-long tour and visit of the historic 1st Inf. Div. and Fort Riley post, it was evident to Esper that the Soldiers here are willing and able to carry on with the fighting success of the Big Red One Soldiers that came before them.

“I saw professionalism, a commitment to service to our country and an interest in the direction of the Army,” Esper said of the Soldiers he met that day.

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Photos from Secretary Esper’s visit can be found at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/sec-army-pao/albums/72157696456136095>.

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