

# Iron Brigade

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## Magazine



**Eager Lion 2018**





Above: A Jordanian instructor as part of the Jordanian Operational Engagement Program inspects a M2 machine gun after the combined arms live fire exercise as part of Eager Lion 18.

# Iron Brigade Magazine

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COVER: M1 Abrams tanks in the foreground with bradleys in the background take part in a combined CALFEX with their Jordanian Armed Forces counterparts during Eager Lion 18.



# Greetings from Strike 6 & 7



The Iron Brigade is moving into the home stretch of our support for Operation Spartan Shield (OSS) and Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR). These transitions can be very positive and an opportunity for renewal; to take a look at where we've been, where we are and where we're going.

The brigade recently completed our capstone event in OSS, Eager Lion 2018. This combined and joint exercise is the largest in the U.S. Central Command's (CENTCOM) area of responsibility (AOR) and it allowed the brigade and our Jordanian partners to exercise our combined arms capabilities and better address common regional security challenges.

Eager Lion provides U.S. forces and Jordan Armed Forces the opportunity to improve their collective ability to plan and operate in a coalition-type environment. A wide variety of scenarios – from maritime security operations and aviation support to a ground force attack of a regional adversary – occurred throughout Jordan during the exercise.

The Iron Brigade comprised the largest portion of the U.S. ground forces during Eager Lion. The

brigade was represented by 1-6 IN, 1-184 IN, 1-244 AHB, 40 BEB and 47 BSB with a wide variety of capabilities and elements of the brigade headquarters, which participated in both live combined training and the combined command post exercise. The capstone event for Eager Lion was the Combined Arms Live Fire Exercise (CALFEX) with our Jordanian partners from the 90th Mechanized Brigade. Seeing our Soldiers in that tough environment, doing an amazing job and working shoulder to shoulder with the Jordanians was one of our proudest moments as a Brigade command team. We learned many lessons and became friends in the short time we spent together.

With a few exceptions, the last major operation we have is the redeployment of the brigade from Kuwait and other locations in the CENTCOM AOR. Looking back on the past few months we gained greater respect for the critical role our brigade serves as the CENTCOM theater reserve in this region. Our partners have enriched our Soldiers at every level through our professional interactions and cultural exchange. We learned that unless you get in those repetitions with your partners and develop those critical relationships the goal of interoperability is just a slogan. We have built readiness, deterred our adversaries and developed true interoperability during our time in the region. As we move into the home stretch and focus on the redeployment of our major equipment, don't get complacent. Our time in this region has taught us that this is a tough neighborhood and we never know when our partners in the region will look to us for assistance.



This will be the last Command Team message as both CSM Kevin DaGraca and I change out before the next issue. We are both honored and humbled as we look back on the immense responsibilities and unbelievable experiences. It seems like yesterday for both of us that we stepped into our positions. We enjoyed every day as we observed Soldiers working hard, with pride, in service to our nation. We are just grateful to have gone on this journey with each of you.

Though we are coming to the end of this chapter of the Brigade's history, the future for the Brigade looks very bright. I know COL Chalfont and CSM Williams will take the brigade to new heights with new challenges for the future. We have both grown deeply attached to the Soldiers of the brigade and we know they will continue to meet these challenges with the same perseverance and enthusiasm that we saw on their faces everyday here in Kuwait, at NTC and back home at Fort Bliss. We still have work to do and we will drive on until our last day here.

**STRIKE HARD!**



# Iron Brigade at Eager Lion 2018



About 3,600 U.S. service members will partner with Jordanian military forces in Jordan April 15-26 during Exercise Eager Lion 18, one of U.S. Central Command's premier exercises.

Eager Lion is an annual U.S. Central Command exercise in Jordan designed to strengthen military-to-military relationships between the U.S., Jordan and other international partners.

The Iron Brigade was a largest portion of the U.S. Army contingent and it was instrumental in several key portions of the exercise, such as the command post exercise, aviation partnership, and the combined arms live fire exercise (CALFEX) which was the capstone event for the entire exercise.

1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment partnered with the 'Princess Basam' Battalion, 90th Mechanized Brigade through out the exercise. The two





battalions with other Jordanian elements took part in an urban assault operation as well as platoon and company lanes. Their culminating event was the CALFEX, which incorporated elements from 1-184th IN, 4-27th FA and 40th BEB.

The CALFEX was also the culminating event in the Jordanian Operational Engagement Program run by 1-184th IN. Their partner unit, the 11th Border Guard Forces, took part in a holistic training program that focused on individual as well collective infantry tasks.

Beyond the ground forces, 1-244 AHB took part in a aerial medical evacuation event and also partnered with the Jordanian Air Force to assist with the integration of new UH-60M Backhawks.

A large part of the overall exercise was the command post exercise (CPX), which allows the U.S. and Jordan Armed Forces to improve their collective ability to plan and operate in a coalition-type environment. The CPX allows the chain of command of exercise mission command from the operational to the tactical level.

Beyond focusing on the professional aspects of partnership, one of most enjoyable portions of Eager Lion 18 was the opportunity to get to know our hosts and their culture. Numerous opportunities to share food and entertainment were made possible through formal and informal events.







# Jordanian, U.S. forces practice mortar fires together

Story and Photos by Sgt. David Nye, U.S. Army Central

Jordanian and U.S. soldiers traded infantry tactics and protocols during bilateral training at Jordan's Joint Training Center near Amman, Jordan, April 11, 2018.

While the training is part of the Jordan Operational Engagement Program, or JOEP, the units involved in the training are building interoperability that will likely benefit them in the upcoming Eager Lion 2018 exercise that is scheduled for April 15-26 but separate from JOEP.

"Today we're training with 4th Company from the Jordanian 11th [Mechanized]," said Staff

Sgt. Allen Loretz, a noncommissioned officer with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment., also known as 1-184 IR. "They're here in the JOEP program."

"It just so happens that the unit that we're training now, one of the companies will be participating in Eager Lion," Loretz said.

At the April 11 training event, U.S. and Jordanian soldiers traded infantry tactics related to calling for fire support, clearing buildings, conducting mortar fires, entry control point procedures, and other key maneuver tasks.

"What we're doing on our lane here is we give them vari-

ous scenarios for them to roll through," Loretz said while describing the entry control point, or ECP, procedures training that the bilateral force engaged in. "Today we did a border crossing. We did unruly civilians trying to get through your ECP, and then different scenarios. It was pretty good training."

For the indirect fire infantrymen conducting training on mortars, it was important for the U.S. Soldiers and Jordanians to learn about each force's equipment and procedures to ensure accuracy and safety on the range.

"There's always a little bit of a learning curve, but our linguists are on point," Sgt. John Brennan, battalion mortar sections



noncommissioned officer, 1-184 IR. “Most of the guys get the concepts, and the guys who are a little stronger with it, they go back and they help teach those guys, make sure they’re sped up.”

“Communication’s extremely important, especially on the mortar line,” said Brennan. “Deflection data, any data that we get from fire direction control, needs to be spot on, needs to be accurate. It translates into accuracy downrange. One mil of difference at 1,000 meters is a big deal, so we definitely stress accuracy.”

For U.S. indirect fire infantryman Spc. Vincent Cortez, B Company, 1-184 IR, the experience has allowed him to both learn techniques that other militaries use and practice a little Arabic.



“As we’ve been training with them, they’ve been trying to pick up words that we use and we’ve been trying to learn what they use,” said Cortez, “and, for the most part, we kind of generally understand each other just with body language and the small amount of words that we both

know.”

“Really humbling experience here,” he continued. “I’ve learned a lot from them as they’ve learned from me. For the most part, we all just have a good time training here.”





# Fires Come Together at FCX

Story By: SSG Adriana Diaz

Months of training were essential to ensure the Soldiers of the Iron Brigade were prepared and ready to successfully execute the Fire Coordination Exercise or FCX.

Commanders of the 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team gathered at the observation point in Udairi range complex on May 8th to observe the close coordination between maneuver elements and the various elements of fire support.

The exercise was the combined effort of 1st Battalion, 37th Armored Regiment, the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 40th Brigade Engineer Battalion and the 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment.

The Fire Coordination Exercise provided an excellent opportunity for members of the Brigade, to plan, synchronize, and rehearse a breach operation supported by Fires. This was the first collective staff training event for many of the senior leaders due to recent transitions.

The rehearsals allowed the Brigade to validate their Tactical Standard Operating Procedures, and refine its planning processes. Dry and live execution at Udairi Range allowed Company Commanders, with their attached Fire Support Officers, to execute mounted maneuver while synchronizing direct and indirect fires in support of breach operation.

“The Fire Control Exercise provided Company level Armor and Infantry Commanders the ability to focus on fires planning and execution with their assigned Fire

Support Teams. This enabled Company leaders to experience the real employment of fires supporting a scheme of maneuver,” said Lt. Col David Smith, commander of the 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment.

The FCX was a mounted "walk-and-shoot" which allowed M1A2 Tanks and M2A3 Bradley Fight Vehicles to maneuver on a lane while employing live artillery and mortar fires.

"This FCX was an exceptional opportunity to build upon the smaller live fire exercises the battalion conducted during this deployment," said Lt. Kris Howell, commander of the 1st Battalion, 37th Armored Regiment.

The purpose of the exercise was to teach the leaders of the brigade what capabilities they have in a combat zone and to provide a live-fire training environment for commanders to practice the necessary steps of working multiple fire support elements safely and concisely.

"Integrating 4-27 FA and the BDE TAC resulted in a great exercise for not only the ground maneuver elements but also multiple echelons of command posts," said LT. Col. Howell.

By accurately responding to requests and providing fire support in a timely manner, it allowed each support element the opportunity to train on their mission and gain greater proficiency with their equipment.

Despite the Iron Soldiers preparation, not everything went according

to plan. High winds and poor visibility impacted the ability of observers to identify targets. Despite all these challenges, 1-37 AR was able to fight through and execute the mission during two iterations.

"Poor visibility from blowing dust and high winds enabled my battalion to employ our Q50 Radar as an artillery observer. It provided accurate information of where shells were landing, despite the poor visibility," said Lt. Col. Smith.





# A Visit from Congress



In May, the Iron Brigade was honored to receive a visit from two members of the U.S. House of Representatives from the state of Texas. Rep. John Carter from the 31st District of Texas and Representative Roger Williams from the 25th District of Texas.

The Representatives received a briefing from the brigade staff and met with Soldiers. They toured some of the brigade's facilities and ended their visit having lunch with some Iron Soldiers.

Trips such as these are known as Congressional Delegations or CODELs. The purpose of these visits is to provide access to members of the U.S. Congress so they may hear from the military directly and better assess the military's mission and its needs. CODELs also give the members of Congress an opportunity to meet with Soldiers and Leaders face to face and hear how about their service in an unfiltered manner.





# Engineer Week Builds Partnership



Story By: 2LT Terry Lee

The 'Battering Rams' of the 40th Brigade Engineer Battalion (BEB) conducted Engineer Week activities with the Kuwait Land Forces Institute (KLFI) Engineers. Engineer week served as a forum where engineer leaders from both countries could exchange knowledge and experiences.

In support of this objective, the three-day exercise was split into three separate events. Through interoperability a greater appreciation of counterpart tactics and doctrine has been fostered between US and Kuwaiti Engineers, benefit both forces for future combined operations.

The 'Battering Rams' hosted the first and second days, beginning with a Leader Professional Development (LPD) session on engineer tactics and battalion level engineer planning. Next, Bravo Company's Route Clearance Platoon (RCP), and gap crossing capabilities spearheaded by Alpha Company's Engineer Support Platoon (ESP) treated the audience to a demonstration of basic

route clearance procedures. Bravo Company's RCP provided a short live demonstration of these techniques.

Later in the afternoon, Kuwaiti Soldiers learned firsthand about the engineer's role in the Military Decision-Making Process (MDMP) and Engagement Area development. A question and answer session followed each brief, allowing Kuwaiti officers to sharpen their understanding of US Engineer tactics and contributed to a more inclusive atmosphere.

The Battering Rams began the second day by facilitating Counter-IED (C-IED) lanes training at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. The lanes simulated different types of IED attacks, ranging in complexity.

The Soldiers came away from this event with a greater understanding of the threat IEDs pose to troops in theater. Due to exposure to not only the training itself but also the thought processes of counterparts as related to the IED threat, Kuwaiti and US forces are more likely to be able to inte-



grate each other into their IED threat mitigation procedures.

“It was a really rewarding experience collaborating with our counterparts in the Kuwaiti Army. Events like this are crucial in maintaining a proper partnership between friendly nations”, said 1LT Crain, an Alpha Company Platoon Leader overseeing the lane.

Kuwaiti Engineers led the final day of Engineer Week, starting with breakfast at KLF I Engineer Headquarters, featuring an assortment of familiar dishes and unique Kuwaiti cuisine. After experiencing the gracious hospitality of the KLF I, the Battering Rams were given a tour of the KLF I Museum, which featured an expansive collection from the last 60 years of world conflict. The Kuwaiti Engineers then briefed the Battering Rams on the



history, structure, and capabilities of their Engineer Regiment, which emphasized the similarities of the two nations engineers.

“There are two key components to combined forces training, partnership and relationship. Partnership wins wars and relationships win hearts and minds. Engineer week was a great success in that we accomplished both,” said MAJ Cassandra McGinnis, 40th BEB’s Operations Officer.

40th BEB’s combined Engineer Week program with the KLF I Engineers accomplished the effect of promoting interoperability. LTC Noble summarized the three-day program: “Engineers have to be able to provide the necessary expertise to increase protection for maneuver forces. To accomplish this, we continue to be on top of our tactical and technical game through combined exercises, information sharing, and engagements with our Kuwaiti Army Engineer partners. This week is just the latest opportunity to showcase our capabilities.”

Both forces came away from the three-day program with a greater appreciation for each other’s engineer capabilities and how we can assist each other in future operations.





# *JOEP concludes with Eager Lion 18*

Story by 1st Lt. Matthew French,  
1st Battalion, 184th Infantry

Soldiers from Bravo Company 'Bushmasters', from the California Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment, recently celebrated the Jordanian 11th Border Guard Forces Jordan Operational Engagement Program graduation at the Peace Operations Training Center near Amman, Jordan.

The Jordan Operational Engagement Program, commonly referred to as JOEP, is the largest training program funded by the Counter Terrorism Partnership Fund. It focuses on regional security, partnership building, and increasing the capability of the Jordan Armed Forces to better defend their country against regional threats.

The 11th Border Guard Forces began their ten-week training rotation on February 18th, 2018. The training focused on individual tasks, and rapidly built to team, squad, and company level collective tasks. Several weeks of the rotation saw US and Jordanian troops conducting buddy team and squad sized live fire exercises side-by-side.

Speaking on the interoperability of the 11th BGF and Bushmasters during this JOEP rotation, Lt. Col. Phillip "Joel" Armstrong, Battalion Commander of the 1-184 Infantry, remarked, "As guests of King Abdulla II, we

train alongside our partners of the 11th BGF with honor and pride as we build capacity."

The culminating event of the training rotation was the execution of Eager Lion 2018, with 1st Company of the 11th BGF paired with the 3rd Platoon Bushmasters. Both elements embedded inside a trench, and repelled a simulated enemy attack on the Jordanian border using small arms, heavy machine guns, and 60 and 81 mm mortar systems. Several high ranking Jordanian and US leaders, including reporters

from CNN, observed the results of the partnership fostered by the 11th BGF and Bushmasters during Eager Lion.

While JOEP focuses on the building of infantry related tasks, the friendships built between the Bushmasters and the 11th BGF during their rotation were noteworthy. Bushmaster Soldiers were treated to several traditional Middle Eastern breakfast meals by their counterparts. Additionally, a senior leader engagement barbeque that consisted of lamb, flat bread, fresh vegetables, and beverages was





enjoyed mid-way through the rotation.

Camaraderie quickly built throughout the cycle, as both US and Jordanian troops proudly traded and wore each other's unit patches on their tactical gear and uniforms. Gifts were exchanged during the recent graduation ceremony to show the appreciation of each other's hard work and dedication during the rotation.



The 11th BGF and Bushmasters continue to train together after the JOEP rotation has officially ended. CBRN survival tasks, machine gun familiarization fires, basic rifle marksmanship, and the employment of hand grenades are all on the training schedule. It is bittersweet for both elements, as the 11th BGF will eventually be re-tasked for their traditional mission of bor-

der security, and the Bushmasters will begin preparing for a new JOEP rotation and eventual re-deployment operations.

The Bushmasters recently hosted the 11th BGF leadership for a final traditional American barbeque at the Joint Training Center to say good-bye. Complete with hamburgers with all the fixings, macaroni salad, and

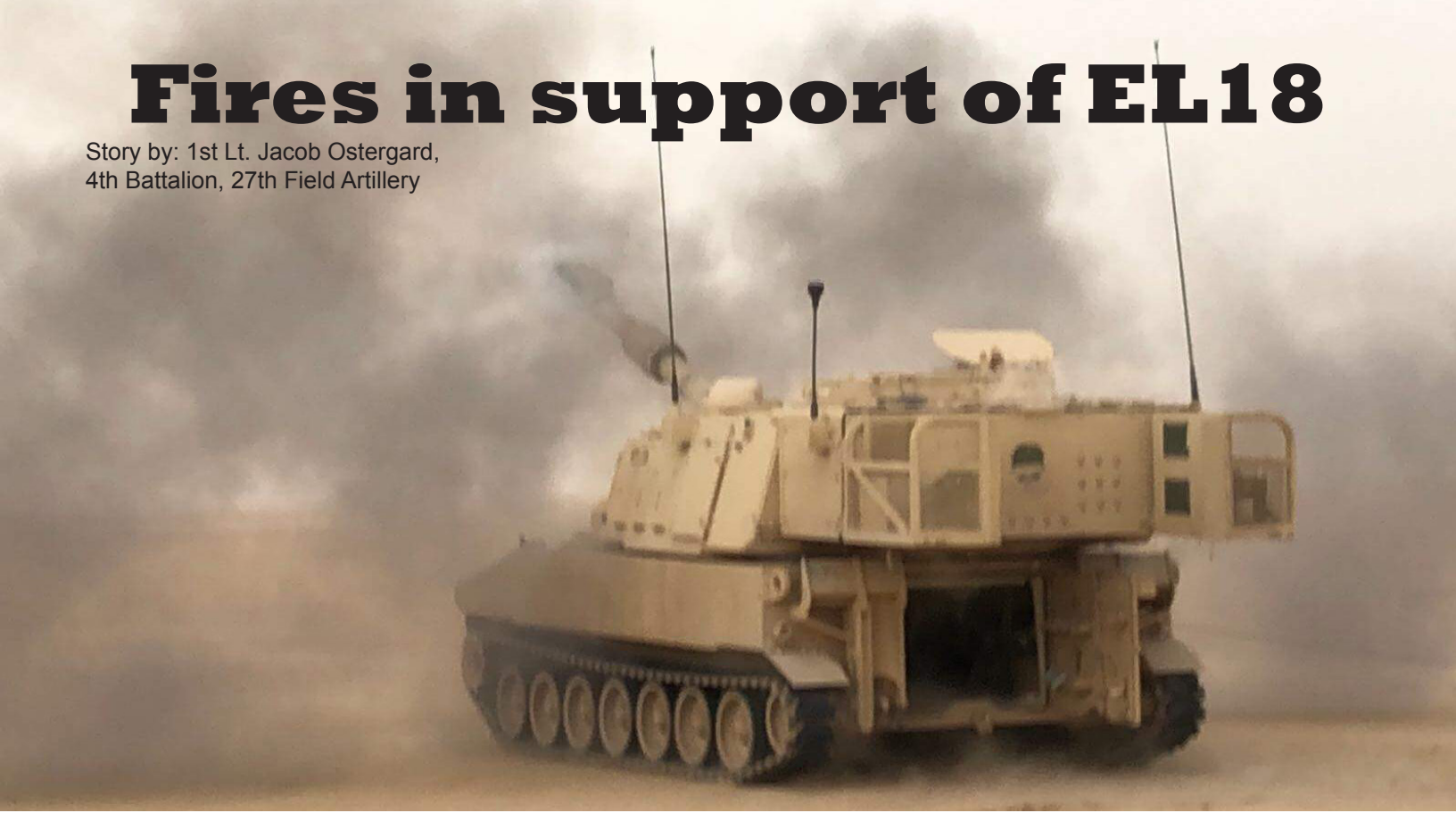
soft drinks, the Soldiers traded stories, laughter, and memories. Looking back on the last ten weeks, LTC Armstrong said, "Both 11th BGF and 1-184 IN are better trained and prepared for follow-on missions. We also have made lifelong friends through training within our Profession of Arms."





# Fires in support of EL18

Story by: 1st Lt. Jacob Ostergard,  
4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery



Soldiers from 4th Battalion 27th Field Artillery Regiment, Alpha Battery supported Operation Eager Lion in a partnership exercise. During this time, Soldiers were granted the opportunity to train with Jordanians and were able to see some of the local sites.

Henderson, Graham, 1LT Alpha Battery 1st Platoon Leader. Henderson was deployed in support to Eager Lion in Jordan and described it as, “an awesome experience. We were able to co-locate with the Jordan artillery battery and conduct numerous cross training events that culminated in Joint Combined live fire.” Soldiers also were able to enjoy a traditional Jordanian meal with our counter parts and learned some Jordanian dances. He summarized, “by far the most rewarding experience as a platoon while supporting OSS.”

SGT Curtis had the chance to attend training using the older Paladin systems that the Jordanian army utilizes and got to see how they run fire missions with their guns. At the same time, they got a chance to see what our weapon systems were like.

“Training-wise we got to show them how we train, we got to talk to their mechanics, and see how

they PMCS their vehicles. There is nothing electrical in their vehicles, it’s all manual,” said SGT Curtis.

He also had high praise for their counter parts, “the Jordanians were professionals, they make





do with less equipment but their fires were accurate. They were very friendly and gave us a tour of their vehicles. We got a chance to learn how they did their crew drills and they got a chance to see our crew drills."

PFC Lopez, Andy, 1st Platoon Number 1 man cannoneer. "The most memorable thing for me was being able to share a meal. It was some kind of chicken and rice with a yogurt based goat's milk. It was fun eating the food with our hands with them off this huge plate. Being able to sit with them and talk about our differences and experience new things. We got a chance to understand their backgrounds and music."

Some Soldiers were able to take some time to see the local sites. SPC Pairez, Kevin, 1st Platoon, driver. "The most



memorable experience was seeing one of the Seven Wonders of the World, Petra. You got a chance to see the history and the culture that used to be there. Being in Jordan was a great experience. The culture shock was amazing. The view was amazing and it was a once in lifetime experience."

While experiences differed between Soldiers, they all had a common connection between them of working together, having a chance to see and understand one another, and getting the chance to wind down.



# Strike Best Medic Competition

Story and photos by U.S. Army 1st Lt. Rebecca Horn, 47th Brigade Support Battalion



Twelve Soldiers from across the 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team competed in two-Soldier Teams through 13 events to earn the title of Strike Best Medic during a grueling 24-hour, non-stop competition on March 28th in temperatures that reached 103 F at Camp Buehring, Kuwait.

The teams were challenged both physically and mentally, testing their tactical and medical proficiency, physical fitness, Soldier skills, and leadership ability.

"It was the most physically challenging event I've done in the Army, but I'm glad I did it," said CPL McBride from the 4-27 FA team, "It was great to see teams from across the Brigade go through it together and support each other."

The demanding day started at

0330 on 28 March with a World War II style physical fitness test, followed by the obstacle course, air movement by UH-60, live hand grenade range, M9 stress shoot, Tactical Combat Casualty Lane, 39 foot open-faced rappel tower, Medical Treatment Lane, combatives, and culminated with a six mile ruck march that started at 0100 on 29 March.

"It was both challenging and rewarding, I'd like to try it again," remarked PFC Osborne from the 47th BSB Team, "I learned how to work under stress and the importance of being prepared."

The event tested the Soldiers' skills and knowledge in a high intensity environment to simulate real life scenario stress as close as possible. The event also had several exciting activities such as the Black Hawk movement to and from

the range and the open-faced rappel.

Resourcing, planning, and over-seeing the event required every Soldier in Charlie Company to have a dedicated role in facilitating the competition. "It was awesome to see the medics in action. Watching them, I knew they could save my life. I'm glad I could be a part it," said SPC Garcia, a 92Y from Charlie who operated the simulated explosives during the Trauma Lane.

Each team put forth an incredible amount of effort as they completed the challenges, but ultimately SGT Anthony Waters and SPC Jonah Capelle, of the 1-6 Infantry Regiment, pulled ahead to claim the overall title of







## Strike Best Medic.

They excelled on the medical lanes, displaying tactical and medical expertise as they conducted trauma care for the simulated casualties, conducting interventions to include tracheotomy, nasal pharyngeal airway, and achieving intravenous access with precision. They negotiated the obstacle course with speed and skill, completing with the fastest time of 7:05 and they both achieved Expert marksmanship on the M9 Stress shoot.



SGT Waters commented on their training plan, “We rucked a lot in preparation, we also practiced different trauma scenarios to improve our communication and teamwork.”

Best Medic is about more than competition and bragging rights. Best Medic is about the ultimate test for Army medical personnel: Saving lives on the battlefield. It requires Soldiers to hone their medical and tactical skills, and share that excellence and knowledge with their units by testing their proficiency under high stress and exhaustion.





# 1-1 CAV Attacks the Sullivan Cup

Story by: SSG Adriana Diaz and 1LT Michael Wells

Soldiers with the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT), Task Force Spartan, took their place in front of their peers and leaders as they were named the top tank crew to represent the 'Iron Brigade' at the 2018 Sullivan Cup.

The two-day qualifying competition was held on Feb 27-28 at Udairi Range, Kuwait and featured tank crews from each battalion and squadron who competed for the title of the best tank crew in the brigade. Crews conducted a variety of events such as an armored crewman physical fitness test, range shoot-off, vehicle and ammo identification and a land navigation written test.

"The 2nd ABCT organized and ran a very tough and realistic competition that gave crews a good mix of physically and academically challenging events," said Sgt. 1st Class Dustin Harris, master gunner for the 1-1 CAV. "At the end of the day, teamwork and execution is what set the 1-1 CAV tank crew above their peers in the brigade best tank competition."

The qualifying 'Iron Brigade' team consisted of Staff Sgt. Carlos Holguin, tank commander; Cpl. Jason Kilbourn, gunner; Spc. Carlos Martinez, loader; and Pfc. Matthew Floresortega, driver. This was the first time any of these soldiers have participated in the Sullivan Cup competition, which took place from April 30 to May 4 at Fort





Benning, Georgia.

“All the crews brought their A-game, but ultimately 1-1 CAV came out on top. I’m really happy with the quality of crews our battalions are producing and competitions like this serve to enhance the qualities of all the crews participating,” said Elkins.

The crew will train together over the next few months under the direction of Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Elkins, master gunner the 2nd ABCT, and Harris.

Elkins explained the soldiers will not only be judged on whether or not they hit the target, but also on the overall performance of the crew – determined by a number of factors.

“Now the hard part starts,” Elkins said. “The winning crew will now transition to a physically and mentally demanding training path that will include our Kuwaiti Partners in order to further hone their lethality.”

The Sullivan Cup provides a realistic and challenging tank crew competition that seeks to build esprit de corps within the Armor Force and return the pride of Mobile Protected Firepower gunnery to its rightful place in the mounted force’s mindset.

The 2018 Sullivan Cup Best Tank Crew Competition was hosted by the Maneuver Center of Excellence, the U.S. Army Armor School and the 316th Cavalry Brigade.

The competition was a physically and mentally demanding world-class event that rigorously tests U.S. Army Soldiers, Marines, and International Partners in tank crew maneuver, sustainment and gunnery skills.



“I am expecting a rough competition since this is a world-wide event. We expect a tough fight and I know our team will be training hard and training to win, so that we can bring the Sullivan Cup home to the Iron Brigade,” said Holguin.

Each four-man team cycled through events including a physical challenge; adjusting and aligning the tank’s sites; gunnery and offense and defensive maneuvering on the Closed Combat Tactical Trainer. They received points based on their time, precision and ability to complete the event.

“Competition breeds excellence, and this year’s Sullivan Cup Competition has already stoked fires behind some really great tank teams across the formation. I’m excited for our team’s chance to compete on this stage, and I am very impressed with the collective performance and drive of our winning team,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Drury, former command sergeant major for the 1-1 CAV.

The Blackhawk tank crew came out strong placing in the top 5 consistently throughout the first days of the competition, but with two days left in the competition, the crew suffered injuries while changing the track on their tank. While the crew pushed through and competed where they could, these injuries prevented the crew from competing in the last two events.

“Despite all the injuries my crew wanted to continue on and finish strong. Regardless of the outcome I could not be any more proud of my crew and what they have accomplished” said Holguin about the conclusion of the competition.

The crew placed ninth at the conclusion of the competition. Their standing while dealing with the injuries was a testament to their hard work and perseverance throughout the competition.

The Kuwaiti Team also finished strong with 11th place being only one of two international teams that qualified for the Sullivan Cup competition.



# Conquerors advise and assist the 9th IA



Story by 2nd LT Malay Pigford, 1-35 AR

No challenges could stop the Conquerors of 1st Battalion, 35th Armored Regiment from accomplishing their mission. After moving from Camp Buehring, Kuwait in February for their new home in Camp Taji, Iraq, the Conquerors worked non-stop and accomplished much in a short time.

Task Force Conqueror's current mission is to advise and assist the 9th Iraqi Army Division (9th IA). The fifty person task force is responsible for enabling the 9th IA during their division reset period after four years of Counter-ISIS fighting. TF Conqueror will provide training and logistical support throughout this period.

A large portion of this task is for TF Conqueror to actively create and build partnerships through Joint/Coalition Forces and civilian entities to prepare the 9th IA for future combat and stability operations.

"Working with the 9th Iraqi Army has been one of the best experiences of my career. They exemplify the spirit of Armor and have quickly set the standard as a premier armor division capable of fighting and conducting joint operations," said the commander of the 1st Battalion, 35th Armored Regiment, Lt. Col. Alexis RiveraEspada.

Over the last three months the task force has aligned its Lines of Effort into strategic goals to build the 9th IA's capability and capacity. The task force has been successful in assisting with a division medical training plan, reintegration of the 9th IA into Iraqi Ground Forces Command Sustainment synchronization efforts, and accurately providing real time data on the divisions current capacity, capabilities, and resources.

These efforts have increased the Division's ability to better prepare themselves for future operations by building training and equipment readiness.





Active coordination is already being conducted by the task force for the establishment of a new division headquarters, motor pool, and maintenance training through NATO forces for a myriad of equipment owned by the 9th IA to prepare for future operations.

Additional improvements to facilities and infrastructure are still needed but the 9th IA now has a strong baseline that will continue to improve over time stated Murray.

“The 9th IA has made considerable progress while transitioning from combat operations to re-setting the division’s equipment by taking an active approach in repairing their facilities and equipment over time to prepare for future operations,” said Capt Mitchell R. Murray, commander of the Forward Support Company, 1st Battalion, 35th Armored Regiment.

The division is focused of repairing their combat platforms by utilizing echeloned maintenance in order to regenerate combat power.

The task force current priorities are focused on the division level reset for manning and the rebuilding of long term infrastructure development for the division through Joint and Coalition partners throughout the Iraq Area of Operations.

“Task Force Conqueror has effectively open doors to expanded coalition partnership with the 9th IA. Conqueror has also effected strategic clear lines of communication and open dialog with senior coalition leaders with

the 9th IA,” said Capt. James S. Gibbs, the commander of the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 35th Armored Regiment.





# 1-37 AR Trains Individual Skills



Story by: 1LT Jeff Steele, C Co.  
1-37 AR

As the deployment winds to an end, some units may rest on their laurels and solely focus on preparing for redeployment. The 1st Battalion, 37th Armored Regiment, 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, the “Bandit Battalion”, is not one of those units. Throughout the month of April, and into May, Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 37th Armored Regiment, “Cobra King Company”, executed Cobra King Focus, an individual tasks training event loosely based on the Expert Infantryman Badge Test. Encompassing an enormous portion of the skills that an Infantryman in the Bandit Battalion must possess, Cobra King Focus covered three core areas: Patrolling, Weapons, and the Bradley Fighting Vehicle. Each focus area was instructed and tested over the course of one week each. Initial instruc-

tion was followed by hands-on training and, ultimately, a “Go/No-Go” testing session. Instruction of each class was planned and executed by junior leaders

and Soldiers from across the company, which resulted in peer-to-peer training.

“It was great training, as well as a great experience, teaching my section throughout Cobra King Focus. It was also a great experience teaching the company about the M242 [the Bradley Fighting Vehicle receiver/feeder assembly]. Myself and Bravo Section enjoyed every bit of the training,” stated Corporal Paul DiSanto – a Bradley section leader in 3rd Platoon, Charlie Company.

The event began with Patrolling Week, planned and resourced by 2nd Platoon, Charlie Company. Events ranged from individual movement techniques, to programming an ASIP ra-





dio, to applying camouflage paint. Drawing inspiration from “Ranger Stakes,” an event at the prestigious Army Ranger School, 2nd Platoon developed a training event that would ensure that each Soldier left more of an expert than they arrived. Whether the Soldiers were running through the correct steps of claymore emplacement or memorizing the characteristics of a topographical map, the Soldiers were engaged and excited.

Following Patrolling Week, Cobra King Focus transitioned into Weapons Week. 1st Platoon, Charlie Company’s Weapons Week enforced the exact standard that is required while competing for the EIB. Soldiers repeated, in sequence, the correct actions in order to accomplish tasks such as disassembly and reassembly of the M500 Shotgun, clear a malfunction from a M240L machine gun, and performing a functions check on a M249 Squad Automatic Weapon. By far, the most

difficult task of the week was the annotation of a Range Card, instructed by Corporal Gabriel Shaw and Specialist Misael Espinoza. The task required each individual to complete a range card of an assigned sector of fire, a necessary skill for any Infantryman.

The event concluded with Bradley Week, which is similar to Patrolling Week and Weapons Week. Bradley Week utilized the basic tasks required by the Gunnery Skills Testing. 3rd Platoon, Charlie Company developed a well-rounded training program, classroom-style, on Bradley specifications and theory with the similar hands-on training that the previous weeks had executed. Tasks for Bradley Week included disassembling and reassembling the M242 receiver/feeder, uploading and downloading ammunition, and conducting a pre-fire checklist. The Bradley being the primary weapon system of the mechanized infantry company,

each Soldier enthusiastically approached the training. The rifle squads that had rarely, if ever been inside the turret were instructed on the techniques and procedures that make their mounted counterparts successful.

Charlie Company Commander, Captain Stein Thorbeck, said of the training, “My experience has shown me that units who really focus on executing ‘the basics’ to an uncommon standard tend to build great teams. Demonstrating mastery in these basics enhances confidence and identity. For us, incorporating the Bradley Fighting Vehicle into an infantry skills event was a no-brainer. Cobra King Focus provided a great way to build our mechanized infantry identity in a competitive learning environment, rewarding hard work and merit across a broad set of required skills.”

Cobra King Focus culminated with every Soldier having learned something that directly applied to their chosen profession. In the end, it is ever the Infantryman’s ideal day to be doing Infantry things. Regarding Cobra King getting back to their basics, Lieutenant Colonel Kristopher Howell, Commander of 1-37 AR, stated, “Mastering the basics enable units to do the complex elements required of war-fighting. I am proud of Cobra King and the work they have done to master the basics and create holistic and competent Infantry Soldiers and formations.”





# TF Javelin Supporting Above and beyond



Story by: SGT Devin A. Fleming

1st Battalion, 244th Aviation Regiment (Assault) supports the local area of operations by providing a multitude of assets. This includes, but is not limited to, VIP mission support, assisting ground forces with the transportation of personnel and equipment to remote locations that are inaccessible or impractical for ground movement, and providing a primary and secondary MEDEVAC team.

Pilots conduct a variety of different training exercises like Deck Landing Qualifications that help maintain the skills and readiness to pilot the UH-60M Black Hawk. DLQ training familiarizes Soldiers and Sailors with the proper techniques that are used to transport cargo and personnel to naval vessels. This training also strengthens interopera-

bility between the U.S Army and the U.S Navy supporting Operation Spartan Shield.

To provide medical support of ground force operations within Kuwait, Charlie MED is the sole element responsible for 24/7 MEDEVAC coverage. Since arriving in theatre, CMED has

flown 27 missions and serviced 43 patients with a total of 350 flight hours. MAJ. Brenton Groeneveld, the Commander of CMED, stressed that there is a boundless importance of ongoing training with pilots to stay proficient in piloting at low illumination, operating the aircraft while wearing Night Vision





Goggles, and using the surrounding environment to remain as versatile as possible.

The Flight Medics recreate real-world scenarios that can develop a soldier into performing quickly and efficiently in the cramped conditions of the rear cabin of the UH-60L Black Hawk. For example, conducting training in the rear cabin at low light simulates a night mission and helps to familiarize soldiers with the aircraft loading and unloading procedures. CMED is constantly going above and beyond to properly execute the mission successfully. CMED's Commander stated "we make it our mission to make our training as realistic as possible so that when we are called upon to assist in saving a life, we can do so expertly and without hesitation"

For the past few months, leadership of the 1st Battalion, 244th Aviation Regiment (Assault) and the Royal Jordanian Air Force have been working to form a partnership for the first time in history. Working side-by-side, soldiers from Task Force Voodoo and the RJAF conducted a thorough overview of the UH-60A Black Hawk. The primary goal during the month of April was to provide hands-on training and establish proper steps to PMCS aircraft.

Subject matter experts led a walkthrough of how to implement and launch flight operations, as well as provide the tools and resources to properly manage an Aviation budget. The soldiers from Task Force Voodoo were eager to provide





input in expanding the Jordanian's knowledge of PMI's. This input comes from a collection of experience that can only be acquired through years of familiarity, involvement, and practice within Aviation. Task Force Voodoo looks forward to working with the Royal Jordanian Air Force in future collaboration and partnerships.

1-244th AHB created a deployable task force to provide real-world MEDEVAC coverage in the country of Jordan in support of Operation Eager Lion, a coalition joint-training exercise during the month of April. This elite task force was comprised of pilots, critical-care Flight Medics, Physician Assistants, crew chiefs, aircraft maintainers, flight operations, and expert communication personnel. With the assistance and coordination of the CENTCOM Surgeon Cell, proper medical evacuation guidelines for the exercise training were established.

With the help of the Royal Jordanian Air Force, our pilots were able to familiarize themselves with the surrounding environment after receiving local orientation flights. After solidifying mission SOP's, the team established themselves within the area of operations. After final preparations, the team conducted internal MEDEVAC training which not only tested their reaction time but also the SOP's, battle drills, and communication plans. After the task force completed validation, the twelve day coalition training exercise commenced, providing 24/7 coverage to all operation participants.







# ‘Regular’ Mechanics in the fight

Story by: 2LT Cameron C. Taylor,  
HHC 1-6 IN

As temperature’s peaked this past month in the hundreds, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment’s maintainers and support personnel grinded out a regular maintenance and logistics schedule to prep equipment for redeployment back to Ft. Bliss.

Often overlooked during our day-to-day activities in the Battalion, is the hard-work put in by the logisticians who do an excellent job at maintaining the Battalion’s fleet of tracked and wheeled vehicles. The maintainers in the Battalion regularly conduct annual checks and repairs on the Bradley Fighting Vehicles, M1A2 Abrams Tanks, and wheeled vehicles like the LMTV, M-ATV, HMMWV, and Fuelers. By doing this, they ensure that our equipment is always ready for the soldiers of the Battalion to train and fight.

While they don’t have the cool guy explosions and firepower training of the infantrymen and tankers, you’d be hard pressed to find a mechan-

ic or logistician in the motor pool who doesn’t have dirt and grime on his or her hands from a hard day’s work. The work of the maintainers is crucial to the overall mission of the Battalion and help consistently improve our readiness.

On a regular Monday, you can find the entire Battalion down in the motor pool getting its hands dirty, conducting preventive maintenance checks







and services (PMCS) and almost always with each crew is a mechanic available to help identify faults in the vehicle and aid in reparations.

Recently, the Invaders of India Company, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment have tested a reverse schedule that has seen them conducting maintenance cycles during the night to avoid heat related injuries.

“Limited visibility has an effect on the platoon, but it didn’t deter them from completing their mission

and they remained confident in keeping vehicles combat ready,” said 2LT Emerald Stanford, the maintenance platoon leader for India Company, when asked about the challenges of working reverse cycle.

She joked, “Thanks to the awesome invention of the headlamp, which some argue to be the greatest invention since sliced bread, my soldiers were able to adapt and overcome this challenge.”

Another issue is the splitting of manpower across multiple countries and military installations. Some of the maintenance Soldiers remained in Jordan following the completion of the Eager Lion exercise to help prepare vehicles for their return to the United States. Those that were in Kuwait were spread across two different installations, one group at Camp Buehring, and another was at Kuwaiti Naval Base to assist in washing another battalion’s vehicles for redeployment.

“No matter the challenges they will overcome them in order to keep 1-6 IN mission ready,” said 2LT Stanford.





# Chaplain's Message

Strike Soldiers and family members,

After a forest fire in Yellowstone National Park, forest rangers began their trek through the mountainous area to assess the inferno's damage. As they walked through the charred remains of a once-proud forest, one ranger found a bird—literally petrified in blackish-gray ash—perched statuesquely on the ground at the base of a tree. Somewhat sickened but transfixed by this eerie sight, he bent down to knock the bird over with his walking stick. When he gently struck it, it fell apart, and three tiny chicks scurried from under their dead mother's wings.

The loving mother, keenly aware of impending disaster, had carried her offspring to the base of the tree and had gathered them under her wings, instinctively knowing that the toxic smoke would rise. She could have flown to safety, but had refused to abandon her babies. Then the blaze arrived and the heat had scorched her small body but the mother had remained steadfast. Because she had been willing to die, those under the cover of her wings lived. The ranger picked up the birds and placed them in the big cargo pocket of his backpack. They were now his to care for. Being loved this much should make a difference in your life. Loving others this much could make a difference for all eternity.

This is the kind of loving sacrifice that is carried out by many mothers in our Iron Brigade today. With their spouses deployed to protect our nation's freedoms, these amazing mothers have been taking care of their children, many of whom are working full time and going to school to ensure a better life for their family. In addition, there are mothers within Iron Brigade who are serving our country on active duty while deployed down range doing great things for our nation and helping to strengthen the force. The mother of King Lemuel taught him the priceless value of mothers with these words,

is far above rubies. She . . . worketh willingly with her hands. She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household. She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed. . . . Strength and honor are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come. She . . . eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up, and call her blessed. . . . A woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. (See Proverbs 31:10, 13, 15, 21, 25, 27-28, 30)

So to all of you mothers of Iron Brigade, whether you are a civilian or a service member, may God bless you for your service, your commitment to your family, your unit, and our great nation!

— Chaplain Troy Blan



"Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price



