

53RD INFANTRY BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM



THE DUSTY GATOR

VOLUME 1

ISSUE 2



Commanders' Comments



Col. Richard Gallant

Gator Brigade Families,

We have completed one month of our tour, and it feels like we have been at it for much longer. We have a well established

battle rhythm (routine), and the improvements that we are making are already evident. Across the Brigade our Soldiers are doing tremendous work. From Qatar to Iraq and at all of the base camps in Kuwait, our Soldiers have assumed the mission with a great sense of purpose and professionalism. I had the great pleasure last week of riding along with a couple convoy escort teams as they moved supplies and equipment in and out of Iraq. The level of professional competence in our Staff Sergeants, Sergeants and Soldiers is awe inspiring. These guys (and girls) get it, and they are getting it done.

It remains a dangerous, demanding, and difficult mission. We are focused on integrating safety into all of our missions, and leaders at all levels are making sure that we mitigate the risks and ensure that our Soldiers are properly prepared for any situa-

tion. Now, we look forward to the weather getting hotter, the missions getting busier, and our Soldiers getting better every day. We will start our leave cycle this week, and will be sending home about ten percent of the Brigade at a time. I know everyone, both here and back home, is anxiously awaiting the time they will get to spend at home. Enjoy the time you have with your Soldiers!

Great news for the Florida National Guard... Governor Crist has named Major General Titshaw to replace Maj General Burnet as the Adjutant General. The change of command is June 26th at Camp Blanding. The 53 IBCT congratulates MajGen Titshaw, welcomes him back to Florida, and wishes him the best as he assumes his new duties as our Adjutant General.

"From the Front"

Command Sgt. Maj. Comments

We are at the 30-day mark since the official start of our mission. Our organization is now starting to get into a battle rhythm; our day to day activities and our time at Fort Hood is now well behind us.

Over the last week or two we have received several Soldiers from the IRR (Inactive Ready Reserve). These Soldiers will be supplementing our ranks for the duration of our deployment. They come from throughout the United States with varying job skills. Some are just off active duty, for others it has been years since wearing the uniform. We welcome them and their families into the Gator Brigade.

As we look forward to the remainder of the deployment, we should reflect upon and capture the historic events we are endeavoring upon. We were here when this war began and we are the protectors as we near its conclusion, in the "Re-

sponsible Drawdown." Our Soldiers need to capture this story and pass it on to our family members for the future and for the organizational history before those memories and achievements are quickly forgotten.

Part of establishing "the sustainment phase" of our mission is our units working with the Family Readiness Teams at home --with regular communication, updates and meetings, including the rear detachment and its team members. This will be vital in mitigating any issues that may arise at the front and back home.

As we rack up massive amounts of miles, increase our tempo, and begin R&R leave, our focus this month is on safety. Take your time; mitigate the risk prior to commencing the task and think before you put something into action!

"From the Front"

--Gator 7



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On the Cover:



Soldiers with the 2nd Battalion 124th Infantry Regiment wait to receive their 53rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team patches signifying their participation in Operation Iraqi Freedom. (Army photo by Pfc. Lindsey E. Jones)

The Dusty Gator is an authorized publication for and in the interest of the personnel of the 53rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team and their Families. The editorial content of this publication is the responsibility of *The Dusty Gator* staff and not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, and the Department of the Army or the Army National Guard.

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Photos must be in either JPEG or TIFF format. Please include information identifying who is in the photo, what they're doing, why, when, where, and who took the photo.

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53RD INFANTRY BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM



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CAMPARIFJAN, Kuwait -- Soldiers from the Kuwait National Guard, review the information that was gathered from the testing at the Host Nation Training at the Sea Port of Debarkation/ Embarkation, April 14.

Host Nation Training with the 62nd

**Story and Photos By: Army
Spc. Karen L. Kozub**

CAMPARIFJAN, Kuwait --The 62nd Chemical Company from Ft. Lewis, Washington, completed a Host Nation training exercise with the Kuwait National Guard at the Sea Point of Debarkation/ Embarkation here, April 14.

The 62nd prepared for this event and co-trained with the Kuwait National Guard for approximately three months. This exercise originally started with one platoon and a small element of the Kuwait National Guard. As time progressed and more planning went into the event, it bloomed into the entire 62nd Chemical Company, a battalion of the Kuwait National Guard, the 1108th Explosive Ordnance Disposal team, from the New York

Army National Guard, and SPOD Fire Department.

To start off the exercise the reconnaissance platoon from the 62nd Chemical Company conducted a reconnaissance of the area for possible contaminated areas and safe avenues of approach. Once the safe and unsafe areas were established, the 1108th EOD team began their initial entry into the site where they discovered an improvised chemical device leaking. From there they assessed the ICD and rendered the area safe of explosive hazards. The EOD soldiers then received personal decontamination while the chemical sample team and radiological team were sent to process samples of the ICD. The teams then moved toward the decon-



CAMPARIFJAN, Kuwait— The 62nd Chemical Company Host a training event with the Kuwaiti National Guard at the Sea Port of Debarkation/ Embarkation, April 12. The 62nd Decontaminate a connex and its surrounding area after discovering a leaking improvised chemical device.

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CAMPARIFJAN, Kuwait -- The 62nd Chemical Company suits up in a protective suit (top) to reconnoiter the area of contamination, at the Host Nation Training, April 14.



CAMPARIFJAN, Kuwait -- Soldiers from the Kuwaiti National Guard decontaminate each other at a Host Nation Training Event put on by the 62nd Chemical Company at the Sea Port of Deportation, April 14.

tamination lanes to ensure proper removal of contamination from surfaces and individual soldiers.

The next course of action was to perform a decontamination of the area. Once the contaminant was rendered safe, the Kuwaiti National Guard provided aid by decontaminating all of the equipment.

The day's events concluded with friendly interactions between Kuwaiti and American forces with important lessons learned and shared between the groups.

"The training was very successful and went well," said Capt. Vance M. Brunner, Company Commander of the 62nd Chemical Company. 🇰🇼



CAMPARIFJAN, Kuwait -- The 62nd Chemical Company work side by side with the 1108th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team at a Host Nation Training event with the Kuwaiti National Guard at the Sea Port of Deportation, April 14.



CAMP AS SAYLIYAH, Qatar-- U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Josh Adams, from Gulf Breeze, Fla., performs a radio check here, April 19, 2010. Adams is deployed with the 53rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, the largest Army National Guard unit in Florida. The Calvary scout is a veteran of Iraq, 2003, and volunteered for orders to Afghanistan 2005. Since 9/11, thousands of soldiers from the Florida National Guard have served on federal orders supporting overseas contingency operations. Many volunteer for deployments.

Florida Guard Upholds Federal Readiness

Story and Photos by Dustin Senger
Area Support Group Qatar Public
Affairs Office

CAMP AS SAYLIYAH, Qatar -- Army National Guard Soldiers exercised an ability to quickly reinforce active forces by abruptly separating from their main movement while deploying to the Middle East. A reliance on defense contractors for base security needed to be severed by April 1.

The 53rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, the largest Army National Guard unit in Florida, reported for duty at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, in early March. Third Army/U.S. Army Central forward headquarters requested the Brigade Commander send a

detachment to a base in Qatar, roughly 350 miles southeast, along the Arabian Peninsula.

Bravo Troop, 1st Squadron, 153rd Cavalry Regiment, 53rd IBCT Soldiers quickly departed to take over force protection from contracting firms at Camp As Sayliyah, Qatar. The brigade saved the government millions of dollars in annual contractual negotiations.

"We've pretty much mirrored the operation performed by the contractors," said Staff Sgt. Corey Baldwin, Bravo Troop squad leader, explaining an entry control point. "We just tweaked it for military specifics. Double- and triple-redundant security measures were already in place

-- many of the contractors had a military background."

The Army National Guard began an increasingly larger role overseas after Operation Desert Storm in 1991. A conversion plan altered combat force structure to improved resourcing, equipping and training guardsmen and women to support federal war-time missions.

Since 9/11, thousands of Soldiers from the Florida Army National Guard have served on federal orders supporting overseas contingency operations. Many volunteer for deployments.

"I've pretty much been on federal orders ever since joining

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CAMP AS SAYLIYAH, Qatar--Spc. Joshua Green, from Orange Park, Fla., scans badges, April 13, 2010. Green volunteered for the 53rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team less than a month after returning home from Iraq. The 53rd IBCT, the largest Army National Guard unit in Florida, reported for duty at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, in early March. Third Army/U.S. Army Central forward headquarters requested the brigade commander send a detachment to Qatar, roughly 350 miles southeast, along the Arabian Peninsula.

the National Guard,” said U.S. Army Spc. Joshua Green, from Orange Park, Fla., while starting another 12-hour shift ensuring base security at Camp As Sayliyah.

Green, 21, first deployed overseas with 83rd Troop Command, 146th Signal Battalion in October 2008. A one-year assignment required satellite communications support around Basra, Iraq. He wasn’t looking forward to an upcoming two-year stabilization period and searched for another deploying unit.

He asked about serving with the 53rd IBCT after hearing about an expected deployment to Afghanistan. During the summer, the unit’s focus switched to Kuwait.

Green volunteered for the 53rd IBCT less than a month after returning home from Iraq. The Guardsman immediately started a month of combat training at the Camp Blanding Joint Training Center near Jacksonville, Fla.,

Oct. 21, 2009.

Prior to heading back to Southwest Asia, the Soldier gathered with family and friends to celebrate Thanksgiving, a 21st birthday, Christmas and New Year’s Eve.

“I joined the Army for patriotic reasons,” says Green. “I believe in my country and want to protect my country. It’s easy to find a National Guard unit that’s deploying.”

Guardsmen like Green are called “deployment chasers” by some 53rd IBCT Soldiers.

Capt. Dewitt Revels, Bravo Troop commander, calls them “motivated.”

“Soldiers who come in and volunteer for deployments make missions like this unique,” says Revels, from Jacksonville, Fla. “In the past, Bravo Troop has deployed organically with only infantry Soldiers. For this deployment, I have specialties from across the Army -- this never happened when I was on active

duty.”

Revels served two years enlisted in active duty status before earning his commission. He finished four more years, as an infantry officer, and then transferred to the Army National Guard to attend law school.

“Everyone is going to be enriched by this experience,” he said, due to a widespread sharing of tactics and procedures covering numerous military occupations.

Bravo Troop is a combination of military and civilian experience providing force protection duties. The unit contains Soldiers trained in combat engineering, communications, maintenance, supply, motor transportation, artillery and infantry. Civilian experience ranges from law enforcement to retail; several are college students.

“I’d say 90 percent of our squadron’s leadership has combat experience,” said Baldwin, from Clearwater, Fla. In 2006, he completed a one-year deployment controlling thousands of confiscated weapons with the 53rd IBCT in Afghanistan. Baldwin volunteered for a second one-year rotation with his replacement brigade, the 41st IBCT from the

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U.S. Army Capt. Dewitt Revels and Pfc. Toney Bradley, both from Jacksonville, Fla., discuss installation security procedures at Camp As Sayliyah, Qatar, April 19, 2010.



CAMPAS SAYLIYAH, Qatar--U.S. Army Capt. Dewitt Revels, from Jacksonville, Fla., meets with a Qatari soldier at, April 19. The 53rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, the largest Army National Guard unit in Florida, reported for duty at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, in early March. Bravo Troop, 1st Squadron, 153rd Cavalry Regiment, 53rd IBCT soldiers quickly departed the following week to take over force protection from contracting firms at Camp As Sayliyah. "Everyone is going to be enriched by this experience," said Dewitt, Bravo Troop commander.

Oregon Army National Guard.

"Afghanistan doesn't have the humidity of Qatar," said Baldwin, "When you perspire, you feel cooler. I also don't feel the altitude. It's a lot cleaner here too."

"Qatar feels like Florida," says Baldwin, "other than all the sand -- it's like a huge beach, but no ocean."

Baldwin joined the Florida Army National Guard in July 1988. He says the customary two-days-per-month and two-weeks-per-year is a minimum requirement for service.

"National Guard is a career," says Baldwin, who has received numerous state activations, mostly assisting hurricane relief efforts. "We must maintain

the same standards as the active Army."

"Sometimes I complain about being here," said Green, while sharing a couple pounds of deer jerky sent from his grandmother. "The usual stuff -- food and housing -- but I volunteered for this and my family reminds me of that."

"I've gained so much experience with satellite equipment," said Green. "It would have taken a long time to get the training, knowledge and experience I have now in the civilian world."

After Qatar, Green plans on staying in Florida for a year. He looks forward to roaming through the groomed trails in the Ocala National Forest on his four-

wheel, 660cc Yamaha Raptor. He purchased the vehicle online during his deployment to Iraq -- his father had it ready to ride when he returned home.

Green is considering ways to use his service-earned college tuition assistance. Enrollment in an automobile technician's course could help him finish rebuilding his Chevy Blazer.

The Guradsman also plans on training as a combat engineer soon. He has worked several commercial construction jobs around Jacksonville and enjoys "building and blowing up stuff."

"Everyone is paid the same in the Army," says Green, "So it's about finding what's the most fun." 🇺🇸

New York TAG visits Soldiers



CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait -- Brig Gen. Pat Murphy, The 52nd Adjutant General of the NY Army and Air National Guard visited the 1108th Explosives Ordinance Team here April 5.



CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait -- The 1108th Explosives Ordinance Disposal Team came together with Brig Gen. Pat Murphy, the 52nd Adjutant General of the NY Army and Air National Guard here April 5. Prior to coming to Camp Arifjan he visited NY National Guard Soldiers in Talil, and Basra, Iraq.

Story and Photos by Army Spc. Karen Kozub

CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait -- The 1108th Explosives Ordinance Disposal Team welcomed Brig. Gen. Pat Murphy, the 52nd Adjutant General of the New York Army and Air National Guard here April 5.

To demonstrate their capabilities, the 1108th EOD conducted a training exercise for a suspicious package outside of a building. The team tested the package with an EOD robot. After testing the package with the robot the team highlighted their many capabilities by sending Sgt. John Conley, an EOD technician from Pleasantville, N.Y., to the suspicious

package in a bomb disposal suit to plant the disposal charge. After the detonation they assessed the situation with the robot and concluded the exercise.

The 1108th's mission is to conduct EOD responses on Camp Arifjan to ensure the safety of transient and permanent party soldiers. They also conduct training on explosive safety and awareness to U.S. and coalition forces. Brig. Gen. Murphy's visit to the EOD team was the third and final stop before heading back to N.Y. Prior to visiting here, he and Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Van Pelt visited New York National Guard Soldiers in Talil, and Basra, Iraq. 🇮🇶



Taking care of buisness

Story and Photos by Pfc.
Lindsey E. Jones

Most Soldiers aren't really sure what to think when they see her hammer in hand, beating the bags of ice into submission. She looks a bit crazed as she dumps the ice into the cambros and tears into the cardboard boxes of water like they are made of tissue paper. For this non-commissioned officer it's simply one of the ways she takes care of the troops that are staying in the transient tents here.

Staff Sgt. Charlyn Smith, from Niceville Fla., is one of the pad managers for Headquarters and Headquarters Company 53rd Brigade Support Battalion. She joined the military in 1994 with the Mississippi Army National Guard. After she received her degree in criminal justice with a minor in psychology in 1998, she moved to Florida where she worked as a waitress, a case work-



CAMP VIRGINIA, Kuwait—After loading approximately 70 bags of ice Staff Sgt. Charlyn Smith, from Niceville, Fla., with the Headquarters and Headquarters 53rd Brigade Support Battalion starts up her vehicle to begin her route here April 1.



CAMP VIRGINIA, Kuwait—As part of her duties Staff Sgt. Charlyn Smith, from Niceville, Fla., with the Headquarters and Headquarters 53rd Brigade Support Battalion unloads water bottles from her vehicle here April 1. She checks twice a day to make sure the troops staying here have cold water to drink.

er for the mentally ill and attended the police academy. She became a Florida State Trooper and part of the 53rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team in 2001.

“We complete work orders and deal with any maintenance issues that come about. We also inspect the generators, the tents, the latrines and flushables. If we go through and see any damaged equipment, we do a work order on it to get it fixed or replaced,” said Smith. “We also supply the troops with water and ice every morning and sometimes in the evenings if it’s needed.”

Smith said she believes that she is a good NCO because she is a natural caretaker and watches over people. It’s because of that she can tell when a Soldier needs someone to talk to or even a little guidance.

“I want junior enlisted Soldiers to become an NCO like me as far as taking care of the Sol-

diers and making sure the mission gets done,” said Smith.

Capt. Laruen Holley, from Tampa, Fla., with HHC 53rd BSB, said she has worked with Smith for almost two years. “Smith is the best NCO ever! She is hardworking; anything you ask her she will be completely honest about.”

According to Holley they are both Victims’ Advocates and she has seen how sensitive and caring Smith is for servicemembers staying on Camp Virginia.

Holley said, “Smith tries to be the best NCO that she can be; she tries to guide less experienced Soldiers to help them maximize their potential. She is honest and loyal and does as much as she can to take care of the troops staying at Camp Virginia,” Holley added. 🇺🇸

Returned for the call of duty

Story and Photos by Spc. Spencer Rhodes

As a standard procedure for most deployments, units often receive recalled Inactive Ready Reserve Soldiers to supplement their mission. The 53rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team recently received over 200 IRR Soldiers for the 2010 deployment in Kuwait.

Each battalion in the brigade received reactivated IRR Soldiers, all of whom were called from numerous regions across the country to support their missions. Upon arriving they were greeted by Col. Richard Gallant, 53rd IBCT Commander, thanking them for answering the call to active



A group of newly re-activated Inactive Ready Reserve Soldiers groups together for a photo while waiting to meet Command Sgt. Maj. Steven Corrow, the brigade Command Sgt. Maj. The Soldiers spent over a month at Camp Shelby, MS, in training, before joining the 1st Battalion, 124th Infantry Regiment at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Sunday April 11th.



Inactive Ready Reserves recently called to active duty are welcomed to the 53rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team by Command Sgt. Maj. Steven Corrow. These 1st Battalion Soldiers are being teamed up with Combat Escort Teams heading into Iraq for escort missions at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. Command Sgt. Maj. Corrow briefs them on the importance of the mission and what exactly it entails, Tuesday, April 13th.

duty and welcoming them into the brigade at their initial in-theater briefing at Camp Buehring, Kuwait.

For many of the activated IRR Soldiers the call to duty was an unexpected one, some having been out of the Army for over six years, others having left barely a year ago. Donovan Christensen, an IRR Soldier and full time college student says he sees some positive facts about his unexpected deployment.

"Originally I used up all of my Montgomery G.I. Bill for college, but since being re-activated I'm now eligible for the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill and will be able to receive all new funds for college. I'm pretty happy about that," said Christensen.

For the IRR Soldiers in the 1st Battalion, 124th Infantry Regiment, they were given a safety briefing and interactive training on weapons they may not have used before by various members of 1st Battalion Soldiers.

Sgt. Major William Sanchez, the Operations Sgt. Maj. for the 1-124th, says that an important reason for the interactive class on weapons and proper usage was to provide them with an additional chance to meet people and feel involved.

"I want their transition into the battalion to be as smooth as possible," said Sanchez.

In addition to their interactive class, the new IRR Soldiers were also greeted by Command Sgt. Maj. Steven Corrow, Brigade Command Sgt. Major who answered questions and gave them a quick overview on the 53rd IBCT's mission in Kuwait.

"By supplementing our brigade they will allow us to better complete our mission here in Kuwait," said Corrow. 🇸🇦



Camp Arifjan, Kuwait--Soldiers from the Brigade Special Troops Battalion stand in formation at the Florida flag raising ceremony held here March 11.



Special Troops Battalion Commander Col. Donald Mason and Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Zakrzewski, part of the 53rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, raise the Florida flag at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

Elected as mayor for zone six

Story and Photos by Pfc. Lindsey E. Jones

Soldiers of the 53rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion arrived in early March eager to take command of the Zone Six Mayor Cell here.

BSTB began the relief in place process as soon as they arrived under the guidance of the 115th Fires Brigade, said Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Zakrzewski of the BSTB, Zone Six senior enlisted advisor. The 115th FiB, based out of Wyoming, left in late March after completing the RIP process and participating in the transfer of authority ceremony held here March 17th.

"The great benefit that we had is the RIP," said Zakrzewski. "Part of this was learning who the key people are, who you have to

talk to, and who you have to make friends with to accomplish something."

The intent of the Zone Six Mayor Cell is to sustain and improve the living conditions for all the troops whether they are transient or tenants here, said Zakrzewski.

Col. Donald Mason, BSTB Commander and Commander of Arifjan Zone Six, stated their goals include continuing the projects the 115th FiB began as well as finding their own projects to improve the Zone Six transient and tenant living areas.

"We're building a new tactical operation center; it will be two large tents and one smaller tent," Mason said. "We're also improving the drainage in the Triad TOC area."

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“Due to the drawdown in Iraq there will be a lot of transient troops moving through Zone Six and they could be here anywhere from one week to three months,” said Zakrzewski.

Mason said that the camp population is approximately 6,500 and they anticipate around 5,500 to 7,000 transient troops a month throughout the deployment with a variety of different units.

“One of the keys to success for us and this has been emphasized from the brigade command throughout the mobilization, is flexibility,” said Zakrzewski. “The Soldiers in this battalion have been very flexible when it comes to any requirements that they have and any changes.”

Zakrzewski attributes the ability to be so flexible to the professionalism and the quality of the mid-level NCOs that they have in the BSTB.

BSTB has their work cut out for them during this deployment however, Zakrzewski and Mason are both very confident in their Soldiers’ ability to handle any challenges they may face as well as complete any tasks that may come their way. 🇺🇸



CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait—Spc. Timothy Stroud, from Tampa, Fla., a network technician for the Brigade Special Troops Battalion with the 53rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, checks the network connectivity here April 8.



CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait—Staff Sgt. Stephen Richards (left), from Tampa Fla., Fire and Safety non-commissioned officer for 53rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, based out of Florida, and Pfc. Robert Roy, from Davenport, Fla., fire and safety inspector for BSTB, conduct an inventory of items that have been confiscated because they increase the fire risks in the living and working areas.

Chaplain's Corner

What's In a Name?

Over the last few weeks, 53D IBCT units have been conducting the "Combat Patch Ceremonies." For Soldiers who have never deployed before, this is a significant event whereby they are admitted into the brotherhood and sisterhood of those who have placed their personal lives aside in order to serve our Nation. To all who see it, the patch is a reminder of the honor, selfless service and sacrifices a deployment demands. It says something about the experience of the Soldier, the unit with which he or she served and gives us a brief glimpse into his or her story.

While waiting for the commander to place the patch on my right shoulder, I started thinking about the other patches on my uniform and what they convey to those who see them. The "U.S. Army" patch says I took an oath to protect my country and I belong to the branch that fights my

country's land wars. It connects me to hundreds of thousands who have fought side by side for our Nation's pride, freedom and ideals.

The left shoulder patch signifies the authority under which I serve. It connects me to a group of Soldiers who have trained, fought and grown together and brings to mind a sense of pride and history of the specific community the insignia represents.

The center patch denotes rank. It tells people about my responsibilities, the level of trust I hold and the potential for leadership. It connects me to a smaller group of individuals the higher I go.

However, no patch is as significant as my name. My name patch literally identifies me as one of thousands. The other patches place me in a group, a brotherhood or chain of command. My name marks my contribution to that group,

brotherhood or command. It's the single most important patch on my uniform that separates me from all others.

The other patches may give me credibility...but my name either adds to that credibility or diminishes it. When people see my name, they see a sample of that branch, unit and rank. And all the actions performed in my name represent the ultimate test of my integrity – my commitment to what all the other patches mean.

I now have a combat patch, but I've always had a name. What's in a name? Everything!

"A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold." – Proverbs 22:1

Chaplain Finch
Brigade Chaplain

Messages from the S1

The 2010 National Defense Authorization Act amendments to the Family Medical Leave Act provide that an eligible employee may take FMLA leave for any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is on (or has been notified of an impending call to) "covered active duty" in the Armed Forces.

"Covered active duty" for members of the Reserve Components of the Armed Forces (members of the U.S. National Guard and Reserves) means duty during deployment of the member with the Armed Forces to a foreign country under a call or order

to active duty in a contingency operation as defined in section 101(a)(13)(B) of title 10, United States Code.

Leave may be taken:

- To address any issue that may arise from a Short-notice deployment.
- To attend military events and related activities (ceremonies, family readiness briefings, etc).
- To arrange for any additional childcare and school activities required because of the deployment.
- Make or address any financial

arrangements arising from the deployment.

-Attend counseling

-Spend time with a covered military member who is on short-term, temporary, rest and recuperation leave during the period of deployment.

-Attend post-deployment activities

Visit <http://www.dol.gov/whd/fmla/2010ndaa.htm> for more information

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.....*More from the S1*

2009 Active Military Combat Duty Grant

“While you fight for us ... We’ll fight to help you here at home”

Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners have voted to continue a policy to offer a financial grant for active duty military members to assist them in the maintenance and support of their family and home while serving in combat.

Hillsborough County Veterans Affairs Office, “Serving Those Who Served Us”, is now accepting applications for the 2009 Military Combat Duty Grant, Surviving Spouse Grant, and Disabled Veteran Combat Duty Grant. Applications must be received by the Veterans Affairs Office no later than Decem-

ber 31st, two years after the end of the respective Grant Year for which the application is being submitted.

Active Military Combat Duty Grant – available to military members who recently deployed to a combat zone more than 45 days in a calendar year. The grant pays up to \$1,500 to military members who own homesteaded property within Hillsborough County. The 2009 Grant Year will continue to include the municipalities of the City of Tampa, Temple Terrace, and Plant City.

Disabled Veteran Combat Duty Grant - assists with paying property taxes for up to five years to military members who receive a formal disability rating from the VA due to injuries while serving in a recent combat zone.

Surviving Spouse Grant - assists with paying property taxes for up to five years to help a surviving spouse of an active duty

military member who died while serving in a recent combat zone.

Since these types of grants were established in 2005, each year almost 600 Hillsborough County military families have applied and qualified for them. This is just one way Hillsborough County can thank the men and women who sacrifice their lives each day.

For more information on the application process and exact requirements please contact us at **(813) 975-2181** or visit our website at **www.hillsboroughcounty.org/veteransaffairs**.

**Veteran Affairs Office
10119 Windhorst Rd.
Tampa, FL 33619
813-975-2181**

Puerto Rico Birth Certificates

Under a new law all Puerto Rico birth certificates issued before July 1, 2010, will be invalidated. New more secure certificates will be issued.

On July 1, 2010, the Puerto Rico Health Department’s Vital Statistics Record Office will begin issuing new birth certificates incorporating technology to limit the possibility of document forgery.

The government of Puerto Rico recommends that only people who have a specific need for their birth certificate related to the usage of this document for official purposes (such as passport ap-

plication, etc.) request a new birth certificate. Those people who want to obtain a copy of the new birth certificates for their records are encouraged to do so at a later date to prevent an unnecessary rush. Citizens born in Puerto Rico but residing elsewhere may obtain a copy of the new birth certificate by filling out a Birth Certificate Application form from the Puerto Rico Vital Statistics Record office on or after July 1, 2010. Additional information can be obtained at: www.prfaa.com/birthcertificates.

Transactions previously requiring a birth certificate (security clearances, passports, etc.) will not be invalidated. Dependents currently enrolled in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) will remain enrolled.

Equal Opportunity

May is Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month

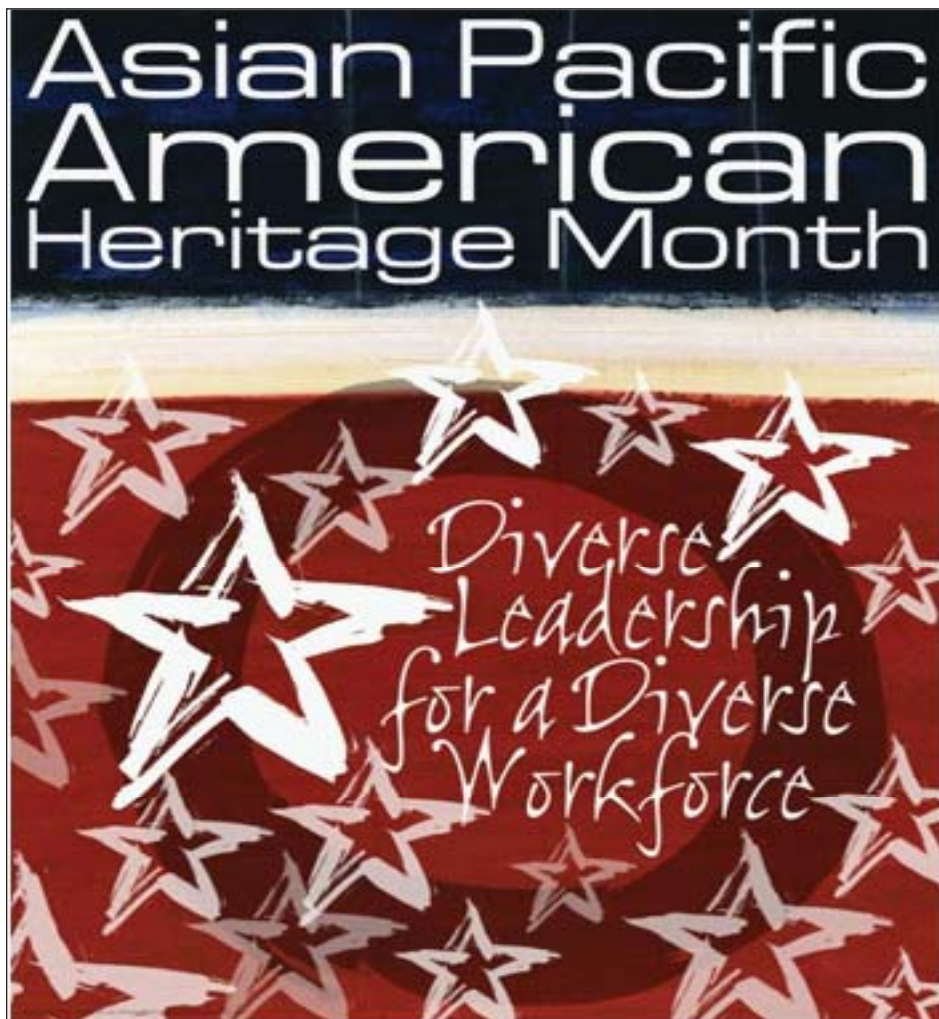
Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month – is a celebration of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States. A rather broad term, Asian-Pacific encompasses all of the Asian continent and the Pacific islands of Melanesia (New Guinea, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Fiji and the Solomon Islands), Micronesia (Marianas, Guam, Wake Island, Palau, Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Nauru and the Federated States of Micronesia) and Polynesia (New Zealand, Hawaiian Islands, Rotuma, Midway Islands, Samoa, American Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Cook Islands, French Polynesia and Easter Island).

Like most commemorative months, Asian-Pacific Heritage Month originated in a congressional bill. In June 1977, Reps. Frank Horton of New York and Norman Y. Mineta of California introduced a House resolution that called upon the president to proclaim the first ten days of May as Asian-Pacific Heritage Week. The following month, senators Daniel Inouye and Spark Matsunaga introduced a similar bill in the Senate. Both were passed. On October 5, 1978, President Jimmy Carter signed a Joint Resolution designating the annual celebration. Twelve years later, President

George H.W. Bush signed an extension making the week-long celebration into a month-long celebration. In 1992, the official designation of May as Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month was signed into law.

The month of May was chosen to commemorate the immigration of the first Japanese to the United States on May 7, 1843, and to mark the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869. The majority of the workers who laid the tracks were Chinese immigrants.

Source: <http://asianpacificheritage.gov/about.html>



"Lighting the Past, Present and Future"

The theme for Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month is selected annually by the Federal Asian Pacific American Council, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization organized exclusively for educational purposes to promote equal opportunity and cultural diversity for Asian Pacific Americans within in the federal and D.C. governments.

Source: Federal Asian Pacific American Council website:

<https://www.fapac.org>

BDE EOA

**Capt. Cassandra Peck
9983-2535**

Legal Advice

Naturalization Information for 53rd IBCT Soldiers

If you are a member of the 53rd IBCT and are interested in becoming a U.S. citizen, you may be eligible to apply for citizenship under special provisions provided for in the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). Recent changes in the relevant sections of the INA (Sections 328 and 329) make it easier for qualified military personnel to become U.S. citizens if they choose to file a naturalization application. In addition, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has created a stream-lined process specifically for military personnel serving in active-duty.

Do You Qualify?

There are general requirements and qualifications that must be met in order for you to become a US citizen. These include:

- **Demonstrating that you have good moral character;**

- **Demonstrating knowledge of the English language;**
- **Demonstrating knowledge of U.S. government and history (“civics”); and,**
- **Demonstrating attachment to the U.S. by taking an oath of allegiance to the U.S. Constitution.**

As a member of the military there are other naturalization requirements that you may be excepted from, including the required residency and physical presence in the United States.

These exceptions are outlined in Sections 328 and 329 of the INA.

Section 329, INA
This section applies to members of the U.S. Armed Forces who serve in active-duty status during authorized periods of conflict as

outlined in the INA or any additional period designated by the President in an Executive Order.*

*** Recently, the President signed an Executive Order identifying September 11, 2001 and after as an authorized period of conflict.**

☐ Have you served honorably in the U.S. Armed Forces during an authorized period of conflict?

☐ After enlistment, were you lawfully admitted as a permanent resident of the United States, OR at the time of enlistment, reenlistment, or induction were you physically present in the United States or Qualifying territory?

The 53rd IBCT Legal Team is preparing the presentation and all applicable documents necessary for naturalization. In the very near future, pending IBCT Commander approval, the Legal Team will be announcing dates for an all encompassing naturalization seminar at 53rd

Pictures from the front



Continued on page 18





