

U.S. Army South

Defense & Fraternity

July - September 2011



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U.S. Army South

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Contents

July — September 2011



4

Under Secretary of the Army tours Central, South America

8

Army South wraps up El Salvador army-to-army Staff Talks



10

Fuerzas Aliadas PANAMAX 2011



Inside this issue:

El Salvador MEDRETE brings sight to seeing impaired	12
Pentagon 9/11 survivor shares memories from attack	14
Smokin' hot marriages	19
470th MI supports CERTEX	20
Colombian War College officers tour ARSOUTH	23
ARSOUTH Brazilian foreign liaison officer	24
Legal pre-deployment checks	26
Motorist safety	27

Front cover: The Under Secretary of the Army, Dr. Joseph W. Westphal (left), greets Maj. Sandra Rygalski, Army South CG's executive officer, upon arriving at Soto Cano Air Base in Honduras on July 24. Westphal was in the region conducting a four-nation visit to Central and South America that included stops in Honduras, Guatemala, Colombia and El Salvador. (U.S. Army photo by Col. Jane E. Crichton, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

Back cover: (Left) Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, Army South commanding general, speaks with a female soldier assigned to field artillery in the Salvadoran army on July 22. (U.S. Army photo by Col. Jane E. Crichton, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)



Command Corner

Command Sgt. Maj. Gabriel Cervantes
Command Sergeant Major



Command Sgt. Maj. Gabriel Cervantes (left), ARSOUTH command sergeant major, speaks with a Salvadoran soldier during the U.S. and El Salvador army Staff Talks July 22 in El Salvador. (U.S. Army photo by Col. Jane E. Crichton, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

As the Army Service Component Command for U.S. Southern Command, U.S. Army South's mission of conducting theater security cooperation in order to enhance hemispheric security and stability within Central and South America and the Caribbean is as important as ever to the U.S. Army overall.

This was especially apparent this summer as the Under Secretary of the Army spent a week in Central and South America visiting key U.S. Department of State officials and partner nation military leaders in Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador and Colombia. During his visit, Dr. Joseph W. Westphal witnessed the importance of our mission and the value of the contributions made by the U.S. Army South team.

Army South's junior enlisted Soldiers and noncommissioned officers are a large part of the reason Army South remains one of the premiere commands within the Army.

The Under Secretary saw this first hand as he visited with Soldiers of Joint Task Force – Bravo and the 228th Aviation Battalion at Soto Cano Air Base in Honduras.

As the “backbone” of U.S. Army South, our professional NCOs motivate the team by setting the example, exemplifying the Army Values and remaining committed to our mission while earning the admiration of our officers, enlisted and civilians in the process.

In addition to our strong NCO leadership, the contributions of our junior enlisted Soldiers are integral to the successful completion of our mission and cannot be ignored. I would like to as-

sure our junior enlisted force that we appreciate your hard work and dedication and know that without you, our important mission could not be accomplished.

I thank each of you for all that you do. The stories that follow in this magazine are a testament to the outstanding effort you put forth each and every day.

Defense and Fraternity

Command Sgt. Maj. Gabriel Cervantes
Command Sergeant Major
U.S. Army South



Under Secretary of the Army complete four-nation visit to

Story by Col. Jane E. Crichton
U.S. Army South Public Affairs

BOGOTA, Colombia – The Under Secretary of the Army completed his week-long visit to Central and South America July 30 after visits to key U.S. Department of State officials and partner nation military leaders in Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador and Colombia.

Dr. Joseph W. Westphal toured the region in order to understand the missions and operations of the U.S. Army in partner nations and become familiar with partner nation capabilities in order to ensure the Army is supporting efforts to promote security

and stability in Central and South America.

“My main objective for the trip was to familiarize, and in some cases re-familiarize, myself with the security situation of each nation so that I could better advise the Secretary of the Army and use that information when considering Army support and resources for our activities in Central and South America,” Westphal said. “I also wanted to understand the security priorities and concerns of each nation to ensure that our armies are working together for our mutual benefit in terms of security and stability operations.”

During the visits, he was accompanied by Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, commander U.S.



e Army, ARSOUTH CG o Central and South America

Army South. Army South is the Army Service Component Command for U.S. Southern Command and is responsible for conducting theater security cooperation activities in Central and South America and the Caribbean.

"We started the Under Secretary's visit with Joint Task Force Bravo in Honduras so that he could talk with service members and get a sense of the missions that the U.S. military does in the region every day," said Trombitas. "JTF-B, with its missions to counter illicit narcotics trafficking, assist with humanitarian and disaster relief, and also build partner nation capacity, provides an excellent example of the type of missions we're doing in the region."

After Honduras, Westphal traveled to Guatemala and met with Ambassador Stephen G. McFarland, and the Guatemalan Minister of Defense Maj. Gen. Jose Ruiz Morales and other key military leaders.

El Salvador was the next stop on Westphal's trip where he met with Ambassador Mari Carmen Aponte and received a country team briefing from key embassy officers. Col. Carlos Figueroa, commander of the U.S. Military Group in El Salvador, also provided the Under Secretary with an update on the group's activities and partnership with the El Salvadoran military.

U.S. Army South

Defense & Fraternity 5



Under Secretary of the Army, Dr. Joseph W. Westphal (right), talks with Soldiers from Company A, 1st Battalion, 228th Aviation Regiment at Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras July 24. (U.S. Army photo by Col. Jane E. Crichton, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

Westphal also met with the El Salvadoran Minister of Defense Maj. Gen. Payes and Army Chief of Staff Brig. Gen. César Adonay Acosta Bonilla. They discussed the close partnership and cooperation between the El Salvadoran and U.S. militaries and discussed future opportunities for both nations to work together. El Salvador supported U.S. and coalition efforts in Iraq by sending 11 rotations of soldiers as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Westphal began the final leg of his trip July 28 in Bogota, Colombia, where he was greeted with military honors at the Colombian army headquarters. Gen. Alejandro Navas welcomed Westphal to the headquarters where they discussed the Colombian-U.S. military partnership and Navas expressed his appreciation for U.S. support. Navas also awarded Westphal the Fe en La Causa medal for his support of Colombian military efforts.

Previous page photo illustration: (Left to right) Under Secretary of the Army, Dr. Joseph W. Westphal, Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, commander of U.S. Army South, and Col. Pedro Orona, senior U.S. Defense Official in Guatemala, salute troops upon the Under Secretary's arrival at La Aurora Air Force Base in Guatemala City, Guatemala, on July 26. (U.S. Army photo by Miguel Negron, U.S. Army South Visual Information)

Westphal also met with the Colombian Vice Minister of Defense, Yanneth Giha Tovar, and the commander of the air force, Gen. Julio Alberto Gonzalez Ruiz.

On July 29, the vice minister of defense escorted Westphal to the Colombian air base at Melgar where he toured the Joint Initial Entry Rotary Wing Training Center. He attended the graduation ceremony for the first class of Colombian OH-58 helicopter pilots and spoke with the new pilots about their training.

The Department of Defense, through the Aviation Training Assistance Field Team, has assisted Colombia with its rotary wing training program since 2001. The team trains Colombian pilots to be trainers, assists with developing training programs, provides quality control to ensure training is to standard and also assists with maintenance issues.

The rotary wing program has reached such a high level of excellence that students from other countries in the region now attend the OH-58 helicopter pilot training course.

After Melgar, Westphal flew to the Tolemaida National Training Center, the main Colombian army training base. Brig. Gen. Diego Yesid Sanchez, training center commander, escorted Westphal

around the center and explained the center's mission and the training conducted there.

Tolemaida is home to the Lancero School which is very similar to the Army's Ranger School. Soldiers receive training in irregular warfare operations in both mountain and jungle terrain.

The Lanceros put on a demonstration of their skills for Westphal, rappelling from three different towers using the full range of rappel techniques. After the demonstration, Westphal congratulated them on their dedication to excellence and the security of their country, to a loud cheer of "Lancero!"

Westphal then toured the Fe en La Causa training lane where soldiers are trained on human rights, ethics, values, honor and dedication to their profession and country.

Soldiers briefed Westphal on the training conducted on the lane and the importance of instilling values and ethical behavior. The soldiers also provided examples of ethical behavior in a series of vignettes that posed ethical, professional or human rights dilemmas. The week-long trip ended with the three U.S. exchange Soldiers in Colombia talking with Westphal about their roles as members of the Military Personnel Exchange Program.

Maj. Harry White, Capt. Julio Rivera and Sgt.

1st Class Francisco Mendez explained their duties and activities to Westphal as well as the importance of the exchange program. Each works in a different organization in the Colombian army: White in the Colombian joint special operations command, Rivera in the Lancero school and Mendez in the Center of Military Education.

There are Colombian soldiers in the U.S. performing similar roles as exchange officers since the program is on a one-for-one basis.

"I was very impressed with how well our military forces are working together with our partner nation forces," Westphal said. "In each country I visited, I saw how close cooperation and partnership can greatly assist our common goal to ensure stability and security in the region."

Starting and ending with the chance to talk with Soldiers, Westphal's trip to Central and South America provided him with an opportunity to see Army operations in an important region of the world.

"The trip was very successful as the Under Secretary was able to meet with some of our key partners in the region, understand the capabilities of each nation, and gain firsthand knowledge of the activities we are conducting with our partners," said Trombitas.



Under Secretary of the Army, Dr. Joseph W. Westphal (right), talks with a Honduran soldier on July 26 during his visit to Central and South America that included stops in Honduras, Guatemala, Colombia and El Salvador. (U.S. Army photo by Col. Jane E. Crichton, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)



Brig. Gen. Cesar Acosta (left), Salvadoran army commander, and Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas (center), U.S. Army South commander, enter the opening ceremony of the U.S. and El Salvador army Staff Talks July 20.

U.S., El Salvador conduct annual army-to-army bilateral Staff Talks

**Story and photos
by Col. Jane E. Crichton**
U.S. Army South Public Affairs

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador – U.S. Army South and the El Salvadoran army completed annual Staff Talks here July 21 with the heads of the delegations signing the approved agreement covering bilateral activities for the next year.

“I’m very pleased with the results of these Staff Talks,” said Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, commander of Army South and head of the U.S. delegation. “The approved exchanges and activities for the next year will help both of our armies expand our capabilities and interoperability. We continue to raise our partnership and cooperation to the strategic level.”

Brig. Gen. Cesar Adonay Acosta Bonilla,

El Salvadoran army chief of staff and army commander, echoed Trombitas’ remarks.

“These Staff Talks are of great importance to us,” Acosta said. “This is the fifth year we have done this and we’ve dealt with important issues for both countries.”

Acosta went on to say that the Salvadoran army not only feels satisfied with the results of the talks, but also feels very proud to have these talks with a professional army such as the U.S. Army.

“I believe that these Staff Talks help strengthen and enhance our relationship with U.S. Army South in such a way that we can better address the problems that we face,” Acosta said.

The Staff Talks were the culmination of several months of work by officers from both armies to develop the activities that were

approved by Trombitas and Acosta at the end of the talks. A total of 13 activities were approved.

According to Orlando Fernandez, representative for Headquarters, Department of the Army, staff talks are one of the means by which the Army ensures operational success with our allies.

"We conduct Staff Talks to ensure that our allies can function seamlessly with us in any number of situations," he said.

In addition to finalizing plans for next year's engagements, the Staff Talks also allowed the delegates to exchange professional information and strengthen personal ties.

Lt. Col. Diane Roberts and Lt. Col. Ralph Huber from the New Hampshire National Guard attended the Staff Talks to share Information on National Guard capabilities and continue to build upon its state's more than 10-year relationship with El Salvador. New Hampshire is a state partner with El Salvador as part of the State Partnership Program established by the National Guard Bureau to link states with partner nations worldwide.

According to Maj. Gen William N. Reddel, III, Adjutant General for the state of New Hampshire, the partnership between the

state and El Salvador has been a "rich and mutually beneficial experience."

"Our relationship, which began through exchanges of military-to-military encounters, has expanded to include assistance through governmental organizations and civilian institutions," he said. "In itself, the state partnership program exemplifies the community connection that our citizen Soldiers and airmen are committed to supporting."

At the request of the Salvadoran army delegation, Huber, the NHNG deputy joint operations officer, provided a presentation during the Staff Talks on NHNG capabilities and local response to natural disasters.

The delegates were also briefed on bilateral and multilateral initiatives concerning security challenges in Central America, and the role of the Salvadoran army in public security from Salvadoran delegates.

The Staff Talks set the course for another year of successful cooperation and partnership for the U.S. and El Salvadoran armies.

"I believe our armies understand each other very well which enhances our capability to work together in order to benefit world peace," said Acosta.



(Top and bottom) U.S. Army South and Salvadoran army delegates prepare for the start of the army-to-army Staff Talks in El Salvador, July 20.



Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas (center), ARSOUTH commander, sights in on his target during a sniper weapons demonstration July 22 after the Staff Talks in El Salvador.

U.S. Army South



Members of the Colombian army work with a U.S. Army South Soldier to organize scenario maps during Fuerzas Aliadas PANAMAX 2011 at the Coalition Forces Land Component Command headquarters Aug. 19. (U.S. Army photo by Eric R. Lucero, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

ARSOUTH, partner nations complete PANAMAX 2011

Story by Robert R. Ramon
U.S. Army South Public Affairs

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas – U.S. Army South and representatives from several partner nations marked the successful completion of Fuerzas Aliadas PANAMAX 2011 as the 12-day exercise came to a close here Aug. 26.

Armed and security forces from 17 nations took part in the annual U.S. Southern Command and U.S. Army South sponsored PANAMAX 2011 that took place at Fort Sam Houston, Miami, Naval Station Mayport, Fla., Stennis, Miss., and off the coasts of Panama from Aug. 15 – 26.

PANAMAX 2011 brings together sea, air and land forces in a joint and combined operation focused on defending the Panama Canal from attacks by an organized terrorist group as well as responding to natural disasters and pandemic outbreaks in various locations.

“One of the most important benefits of the PANAMAX exercise is that all participants are able to exchange their experiences and expertise,” said Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, U.S. Army South commanding general. “The countries participating in this exercise share common interests and PANAMAX enhances those links by fostering friendly, mutual cooperation and understanding between participating



nations.”

This year’s PANAMAX exercise was notable in that it was the first time the land component was led by the Colombian military here at Fort Sam Houston, rather than by U.S. Army South.

“Having them lead the land component portion of the exercise is a testament to our strong partnership with Colombia and represents the great professionalism, strength and expertise of their military leadership,” said Trombitas. “It also shows the full interoperability of our forces and partner nations.”

Since its inception in 2003, PANAMAX has grown into one of the largest multinational training exercises in the world.

“The PANAMAX exercises have grown with each passing year,” said Cmdr. Belsio G. Gonzalez Sanchez, director for the National Aeronaval Service in the Republic of Panama. “The initiative, which was begun in 2003 by the United States, Chile and Panama, now welcomes 17 countries to participate in one of the largest and most modern training exercises carried out anywhere in the world.”

Representatives from 10 nations, who supported both the multinational headquarters and land component staff, worked side-by-side here with the Army South staff.

“Working with the great officers of our partner nations sent here for the exercise has been a highlight for many of us,” said Col. John J. Donoghue, U.S. Army South operations officer. “Not only do exercises like PANAMAX make us all better professionally and more interoperable as military forces, but we also have the opportunity to make lasting professional and personal connections at the individual level too.”

This year, in addition to the United States, participants from Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay and Peru took part in the exercise.



Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas (left), ARSOUTH commander, and Peruvian Brig. Gen. Gustavo Velarde Zegarra, deputy commander Multi-National Forces South during PANAMAX 2011, field questions from reporters during a mock exercise press conference Aug. 19. (U.S. Army photo by Jose Saez, U.S. Army South Visual Information)



(Above) Two Colombian soldiers work on a computer-based scenario during PANAMAX 2011 at the CFLCC headquarters here Aug. 19. (U.S. Army photo by Eric R. Lucero, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)



Lt. Col. Darrell Carlton (right), an ophthalmologist based out of Womack Army Medical Center in Fort Bragg, N.C., briefs a group of Salvadoran delegates and Col. Daniel S. Berliner (center), Army South command surgeon, on the mission of the MEDRETE at the Santa Gertrudis Hospital in San Vicente Aug. 26. (Courtesy photo)

MEDRETE trains U.S. Soldiers, provides sight to vision impaired

Story by Eric R. Lucero
U.S. Army South Public Affairs

SAN VICENTE, El Salvador – During the early morning hours of Aug. 26, 92-year-old Maria Josefa Aguillon Hernandez made her way to the hospital as the sun rose for millions of other people, but not her. For Hernandez, the world was still dim. She, along with hundreds of other Salvadorans who visited the Santa Gertrudis Hospital in San Vicente that day, suffered from impaired vision due to cataracts.

However, this day was special. She was scheduled for surgery to correct her condition. For Hernandez, this would be the last day the sun would rise and she would not see it.

Six U.S. Army doctors were waiting for her at the hospital as part of the U.S. Army South-led medical readiness training exercise (MEDRETE) eye surgical team. The team, which completed its mission Aug. 31, was composed of active duty

medical personnel from the U.S. Army Medical Command as well as Reserve Soldiers from the 807th Medical Command (Deployment Support).

While typical MEDRETEs can focus on anything ranging from general care, to dental and veterinary medicine, this mission focused on ophthalmology. Specifically, the eye surgical team targeted patients with sight-impaired disabilities due to cataracts.

The patients were selected by Salvadoran ophthalmologists, who then referred them to the U.S. doctors. Once selected, the patients were screened by an advance party of the MEDRETE team to ensure they were viable candidates for cataract surgery.

Upon arriving in El Salvador, the Army doctors had 253 eager Salvadorans waiting for them. The MEDRETE team determined 133 patients were considered viable candidates for surgery. The patients ranged in age from 15 to 92 years.

“The mission provided a permanent medi-

cal solution to a condition that El Salvador does not have enough of a capability or capacity to fix, given the number of people with a cataract problem,” said Lt. Col. Chad Nelson, U.S. Army South medical operations and plans. “It also provided an opportunity for the Salvadoran hospital staff as well as some of its military medical professionals to work alongside U.S. Army medical staff during the entire exercise.”

The MEDRETE team understood how important its mission was in regard to improving the quality of life for the patients, but it also wanted to reduce the impact on its Salvadoran counterparts as well. With most surgeries, follow-on care can prove to be just as important as the procedure itself. To alleviate the need for follow-up care, the team performed a surgical technique that would benefit both the patients and the Salvadoran doctors.

The procedure, known as small incision sutureless cataract surgery, proved to be ideal for the MEDRETE mission due to its need for minimal follow-up appointments and care.

“Sutures cause problems,” said Col. William R. Wilson, chief of the eye surgical team based out of Walter Reed Medical Center in Washington. “They take time to heal, and there’s always risk of infection. When we leave, we want to make sure the problem is gone and we don’t leave behind a larger burden.”

With less risk of infections, and a reduced need for follow on care, the MEDRETE was able

to provide maximum care during a short time with limited resources while leaving behind a lasting legacy for the people of El Salvador.

“The mission was a significant training opportunity for the personnel that deployed to El Salvador,” said Nelson. “This is just one of the many types of activities that are tools in the medical engagement strategy that strengthens our relationships with partner nations in the ARSOUTH area of responsibility.”

According to Wilson, prior to the surgical team arriving, many of the patients could only see some light, while some could not even see their own hand in front of them. After receiving care, most patients’ vision was restored to 20/20.

“You always know when the surgery went well,” said Wilson. “When you take off the

bandage and you see a huge smile on the patient’s face, you know it’s a good outcome.”

With plenty of smiles on the faces of its patients, the legacy left behind by the surgical team will have a profound impact on the 15-year-old who can now see his friends, the 92-year-old who can finally see her great-grandchildren, and everyone in between.

For Hernandez, being able to see the sun rise brings a bright, new outlook on life.

“Restoring sight to the blind is a very powerful humanitarian action,” said Wilson. “I am sure this mission has left a very favorable impression of the United States. I like to think of this as medical diplomacy.”

“This mission was a significant training opportunity for the personnel that deployed to El Salvador.”

*-Lt. Col. Chad Nelson,
ARSOUTH medical operations and plans*



10 years of memories

ARSOUTH officer recalls tragic day for first time since attack

Story by Lt. Col. Antwan C. Williams
U.S. Army South Public Affairs

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas — Although it has been 10 years, I can still remember that day like it was yesterday. I can still remember exactly what I did that morning and all the people I greeted in the hallways and offices. I was oblivious to what was about to happen and it never crossed my mind that it would be the last time I would speak to many of them.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the 9/11 tragedy. For the first time, I have decided to talk about my experience that morning working in the Pentagon.

I was a young captain working in the Pentagon for Lt. Gen. Timothy J. Maude, the Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel and working directly for Brig. Gen. William P. Heilman, as his executive and public affairs officer.

It was a sunny September day in Washington, D.C., with very few clouds in the sky. I arrived at work on that Tuesday at about 6 a.m. I started my day as most public affairs officers do across the Army, by going online, reading the early bird and scouring the news for headlines and to get caught up on any major Department of Defense issues in the media. That morning, I was specifically looking for issues affecting Army personnel management.

By the time I finished checking and reading the major headlines and issues for the day, my boss arrived and I started working on the packets for the General Officer Steering Committee meeting we were planning to have later in the week. I knew I had to deliver the packets to dozens of offices in the

Pentagon later in the morning, so the General officers and Senior Executive Services civilians attending our meeting would have the read-ahead information.

At about 8:50 a.m., for some reason, I decided to check the headlines again online and I noticed a story about a plane or something had hit one of the World Trade Center's towers. I did not think much of it at first, except maybe it was an accident or small commuter plane pilot error.

I did think it was news worthy enough to inform my boss, so I printed off a copy and handed it to Heilman. I went back to working on the packets and then at about 9:15 a.m., I checked the headlines again to see if there was an update on what was happening in New York City. I was still confident that it was just probably a tragic accident. When I went to the online news site, it was a new update saying a second plane hit the World Center towers.

At the moment, I knew something more than an accident was occurring. However, I knew I still needed to take care of delivering the packets, so I told my boss I was heading out to start making the deliveries to the other offices and that I would stop by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Public Affairs office and see if I could get more information.

My first stop delivering the packets was Maude's front office. It must have been about 9:30 a.m. because I was talking to Deborah A. Ramsaur, Maude's secretary. I handed her the packet and I still remember Ramsaur's friendly smile and she asked me if I was going to go to the Executive Officer's meeting taking place across the hall. I told her I couldn't attend the meeting today, because I really



Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Brandon W. Schulze

needed to deliver the read ahead packets. I remember she joked with me and said, "It must be nice being a captain and getting to choose which meetings you want to go to." And in her typical, playful demeanor she said, "Just kidding, I know you are very busy today," and gave me her friendly smile.

And about at the same time she was making those comments, Maj. Ron Milam and Gary Smith walked into the office. They were scheduled to meet with Maude. Smith, a retired lieutenant colonel, worked at the Army Human Resources Command as the Chief of Retirement Services. I worked with Smith on previous projects and I remember reminding him that morning about the upcoming Well Being GOSC meeting. I remember Smith was always helpful and knowledgeable about personnel and the Army retirement program.

All that summer, Milam and I had been saying we need to do lunch and finally that day in Maude's office we agreed to have lunch later in the week. At that moment I turned to leave the office and I remember Maude walked right by me, I greeted him and he said, "good morning," and I believe he walked out into the main hallway. I was

not sure where he was going, but I remember thinking he must be going to check on what's happening in New York City and was delaying his meeting with Smith and Milam for a few minutes.

As I walked out the door I remember catching a glimpse of Spc. Craig S. Amundson, Sgt. Tamara C. Thurman and Edmond G. Young, Jr. Amundson and Thurman worked in the front office for Maude and Young was a civilian contractor computer technician.

It is interesting how when I think back about that morning and all of my co-workers, I remember how friendly and nice everyone treated each other. From Ramsaur with her great smile, to Amundson and Thurman always being helpful, to Young who could always be trusted to work on a computer issue until he figured out the problem. Small things like a friendly office environment and everyone being professional, you take for granted and don't think about it until it's too late.

As I walked out, I remember seeing people in the hallway and at their cubicles talking about what was happening in New York City and then I remembered I should go to my old office in the Chairman's public affairs office and then stop by the Office of the

Secretary of Defense public affairs office and see what was going on.

I left Maude's office and within four or five minutes, I arrived at the Chairman's public affairs office on the other side of the Pentagon. As soon as I walked through the door, someone came running down the hallway and shouted, "A plane hit the building!"

I never felt the impact and honestly at that moment, I really did not believe a plane hit the building. I remember about two weeks earlier there was a small fire in one of the Pentagon dining rooms or kitchens and maybe that is what was happening and we were having another fire drill.

Even so, I immediately took off running at full speed back to my office, to tell my boss and for some reason I took the long way back to the office. I

still to this day do not know why I went the long way back, but had I taken the short way back I would have run right into the wall of flames.

As soon as I arrived at my office, Heilman and his deputy, Col. Arnold Smith, told me to, "Get your stuff and get out of the building." I grabbed my hat and bag and followed right be-



File photo: Pentagon immediately after attacks of Sept. 11, 2001

hind Smith and Heilman.

The Pentagon security officers were shouting at everyone to leave the building and they were not letting anyone go back into the Pentagon. As soon as I came out of the Pentagon on the north parking lot side, I could see a tower of smoke coming from the Pentagon on the other side.

I could not believe what I was seeing. On this beautiful sunny day our country was experiencing a tragic nightmare. I remember looking around for people from my office and somehow I lost track of Heilman and A. Smith. Security personnel began telling everyone to get in their cars and leave the Pentagon parking lot.

I remember getting in my car and driving home. At that time I only lived about 10 minutes from the Pentagon, but there was traffic everywhere. As soon as I arrived at home, I turned on the television and could not believe what I was seeing. One side of the wall of the Pentagon was engulfed in flames.

At the time I had no clue that it was the part of the Pentagon, where my colleagues worked and that just a few minutes earlier I was standing right in the direct impact path of the plane.

I tried calling friends and family members,

but my cell phone and home phone lines were both busy. Eventually, later that day I reached my boss, Heilman and I asked him, "What part of the building did it hit?" Heilman said, "It looks like it hit right where Maude's office was located." Then I asked him, "Have you seen Lt. Gen. Maude? Is he okay?" I remember Heilman saying, "It's been two or three hours and we have not seen him."

I was still hoping that he was incorrect and that the plane hit another part of the building. I told him I remembered seeing Maude leave his office and walk into the hallway minutes before the plane hit the building. Maybe he didn't make it back to his office by the time the plane hit or maybe he was injured somewhere.

Heilman again said, "It has been a few hours and the fire and flames are too strong."

I felt hopeless.

There was nothing I could do, but watch the news. I told Heilman I wanted to go back and work in the Army operations center or go work temporarily in the Army Public Affairs office because I knew they would need some help. I was told to wait at home until we received confirmation we could go back into the Pentagon. All the bridges in Washington, D.C., were closed and police and FBI were not letting people move around or get close to the Pentagon. I had to stay where I was and watch the news and tragic events unfold.

For the next couple of days we worked out of the Army Human Resources Command located a few miles from the Pentagon in Alexandria, Va. Later that week, I was allowed to go back to the Pentagon and I worked night shifts in the Army Operations Center. I had the job of accounting for personnel and fielding the Pentagon hotline for people who were looking for loved ones and co-workers.

For the next several days and weeks I worked the night shift in the Pentagon, running down every lead possible on missing persons or individuals presumed to have worked in the Pentagon. We worked on a list of hundreds of people until we verified they did not work there or they did and they were unaccounted for. Later, once remains were identified, I worked on the coordination team to set up casualty mortuary, memorials and funerals for those killed in the attack. From a list of hundreds, we worked it down to 184, including the men, women and children on American Airlines Flight 77 that hit the Pentagon.

Probably some of the saddest days were

coming in to work and getting the information of remains identified of one of my co-workers and then working to set up memorials. Even after days or weeks, the human spirit always tries to keep hope alive, that maybe there was a mix up and Deborah, Ron, Edmond, Craig, Tamara, Gary or Lt. Gen. Maude or someone would be found somewhere alive.

However, that never happened. All those individuals I saw that morning and especially for the individuals in Maude's office, I believe I was the last person to see them that's still alive today.

I am not sure what led me to leave Maude's office and that not only did I leave the exact impact area, but by the time the plane hit, four or five minutes later, I was on the opposite side of the Pentagon. Also, when I ran back to my office, I still do not

know why I took the long way back. Had I taken the shorter route, I would surely have been injured by the wall of flames.

For months and even years after 9/11, I suffered from survivor's guilt and I questioned why I was spared that morning.

I do not regret working in the Pentagon after 9/11 and although it was a grim task in maintain-

ing the casualty log and coordinating memorials for my friends, co-workers and colleagues, it was the least that I could do. They suffered the ultimate sacrifice for our country and I wanted to at least honor their memories.

Today, 10 years later, I try to appreciate my office peers and colleagues I work with and get to know them better. One thing I have learned is that your life can truly change in an instant and you should appreciate friends and family, so I take every day as a gift.

I often think of my 26 co-workers and friends I lost that day. On my desk, I keep a rock from the destroyed wall of the Pentagon to always remind me of them. I believe the best way I can honor them is not forgetting them, treating my colleagues and co-workers with respect and being the best officer and American citizen I can be. I am Army Strong.

Lt. Col. Antwan C. Williams is the Chief of Media Relations and Command Information in the Army South Public Affairs Office. He enlisted in the Army Reserves while still a senior in high school and later graduated from Southern University's Reserve Officer Training Corps program with a degree in journalism. He began his Army officer career in the Adjutant General's branch in 1991 and started working in public affairs in 1998. He holds a masters degree in international relations and a juris doctorate, law degree, from George Washington University.



File photo: The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial today



Two ladder trucks from the San Antonio Fire Department drape the colors in front of Alamo Plaza during a commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks on the United States. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Keith Anderson, U.S. Army North Public Affairs)

Military, civic leaders gather for anniversary of 9/11 attacks

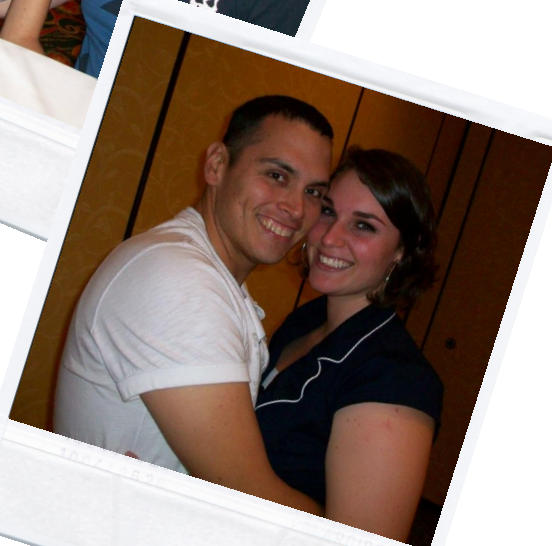
SAN ANTONIO — Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, U.S. Army South commander, represented ARSOUTH during a 9/11 tenth anniversary remembrance ceremony at the hallowed grounds of the Alamo here Sept. 11.

Trombitas joined U.S. Army North's commanding general, Lt. Gen. Guy Swan III, along with other elected officials and community leaders to honor the heroes who lost their lives that day and reflect on the 10 years that have since passed.



Approximately 500 people attended the 90 minute ceremony during which four periods of silence were observed; each timed to coincide with the exact moments of the airplane crashes 10 years ago at the World Trade Center in New York, the Pentagon and Pennsylvania.

Loudspeakers broke the silence as initial news reports from ten years ago flowed through the air as a vivid reminder of the feeling that swept the nation that day.



Smokin' hot marriages!

Story and photos
by Chaplain (Maj.) Charles J. Atanasio
U.S. Army South, Operations Chaplain

MARBLE FALLS, Texas — During July 28 - 30, 18 couples from U.S. Army South and the 56th Signal Battalion put extra zing in their marriages by attending the U.S. Army South Command Chaplain's Marriage Enrichment Training at the luxurious accommodations of the Horseshoe Bay Resort by Marriott in Marble Falls, Texas.

During the seminar, couples received training in the Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program. PREP is one of the most well-respected relationship-strengthening packages in the world. PREP is solidly built upon the most current research in the areas of couple relationships, psychology, sociology and education.

Couples participated in group exercises and instructions which included the following concepts and principles: communication danger signs, conflict management, identifying hidden issues in relationships, friendship and fun in marriage, expectations in relationships, stress management, problem-solving and applying

forgiveness.

The couples enhanced their interpersonal skills and strengthened their marriage relationship by participating in the training sessions and creating their own quality time together by eating great meals, swimming in outdoor pools, relaxing in hot tubs, enjoying water sports and other local attractions.

According to post-seminar evaluations, couples overwhelmingly perceived the Marriage Enrichment Training as a useful, productive and worthwhile event to attend. 100 percent of the couples rated the hotel/location and seminar topics with a positive rating and 96 percent of the couples rated the "Forgiveness" component with at least a positive rating.

The Strong Bonds Program teaches relationship enhancement skills. The training is a command program and it is designed to improve the quality of life and mission readiness for Soldiers, couples, and Family Members so that they may remain resilient, spiritually fit and productive.

Ask your commander or first sergeant about attending the next training seminar for singles or couples!

U.S. Army South



A Soldier on a signals intelligence team takes a position during a certification exercise on Camp Bullis in late May. (U.S. Army photo by Gregory Ripps, 470th Military Intelligence Public Affairs)



470th Military Intelligence Brigade supports certification exercise for signals intelligence teams

Story by David Sula
470th Military Intelligence Brigade

CAMP BULLIS, Texas — After three months of non-stop activity, five signals intelligence teams completed their training during a certification exercise in May with the support of the 470th Military Intelligence Brigade and the Intelligence and Security Command Detention Training Facility (IDTF) it operates at Camp Bullis, Texas.

The four-member teams consisted of Soldiers from the 297th Military Intelligence Battalion from Fort Gordon, Ga., who will soon deploy to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

These teams were required to fulfill both the Low Level Voice Intercept (LLVI) and SIGINT Terminal Guidance (STG) mission sets. LLVI teams are responsible for monitoring radio traffic, direction finding and providing early warning and force protection to supported combat units. STG teams utilize sophisticated collection equipment to locate and target high-value individuals.

During the seven-day exercise, the teams honed their skills on the use of multiple collection and communication systems in realistic tactical conditions. Six observer-trainers from the brigade's 717th MI Battalion, based on Lackland Air Force Base, worked with the teams around the clock to share their experience and monitor their actions during the exercise.

"The 717th Soldiers who were out here did a great job working with the teams and making sure they are ready for this deployment," said Lt. Col. William Conner, 297th MI Battalion commander. "They are a big part of the success we had here."

On a typical day, teams would move from three to 10 kilometers over difficult terrain, with rucksacks weighing up to 100 pounds, to reach their collection sites. They would then spend anywhere from six to 24 hours monitoring radio traffic and reporting any intelligence gathered to their Tactical Operations Center. After returning to their "base" next to the IDTF, the teams had just a few hours to

submit collection reports to the center and conduct resupply before they received their next mission and moved out again.

“The more they learn here, the better off they will be down range,” said Capt. Andrew Fulton, company commander of the 297th MI Battalion Soldiers participating in the exercise. “This is the first time the teams have been able to use a lot of this equipment and work with interpreters.”

Prior to arriving at Camp Bullis, the team members had never trained with interpreters. This added a whole new level of complexity to the mission and planning for the Soldiers, as the interpreter

must be able to move with the teams.

This was the second time that the IDTF has conducted a collective SIGINT training event on Camp Bullis.

“We provided a realistic threat and signals environment for the teams to conduct their intelligence operations,” said Mark Stanley, who leads the IDTF staff. Each exercise is tailored to the training unit and is designed to be as realistic as possible, even recording all of the radio traffic in the native language. The 297th MI Battalion has already begun making plans for their next training event in conjunction with the 470th MI Brigade.



Left: A Soldier on a signals intelligence team checks map coordinates during a certification exercise on Camp Bullis in late May. (U.S. Army photo by Gregory Ripps, 470th Military Intelligence Public Affairs)

Right: A Soldier on a signals intelligence team takes a position during a certification exercise on Camp Bullis in late May. (U.S. Army photo by Gregory Ripps, 470th Military Intelligence Public Affairs)





Colombian War College students arrive at U.S. Army South headquarters to receive a brief on ARSOUTH's mission Aug. 31.

Colombia War College students visit ARSOUTH, 470th MI Brigade

Story and photo
by Robert R. Ramon
U.S. Army South Public Affairs

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas – U.S. Army South hosted students from the Colombia War College here on Aug. 31 in an effort to maintain strong regional partnerships with an important partner nation army.

More than 41 students, from the Colombian Army, Navy and Air Force, participated in the visit which highlighted Army South's major exercises and operations as well as specific aspects of their mission that are important to Colombia.

Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, U.S. Army South commanding general, welcomed the students at his headquarters just before Robert L. Pelegreen, Army South Security Cooperation Division deputy director, conducted a command overview briefing.

"This is a significant command-sponsored relationship engagement," said Pelegreen. "We've had a longstanding relationship with the Colombians and we want to continue fostering a good relationship with them as a partner nation."

During their visit, the students toured Army South's operations center, where they re-

ceived a briefing on current operations, and the 470th Military Intelligence Brigade headquarters, an Army South supporting unit.

U.S. Army South knows well the benefits of these types of engagements with partner nation militaries.

"It's important to get that exchange of information," said Maj. Carlos I. Martinez, Army South Andean Ridge desk officer. "Although the visit only lasts a short time, it's very constructive not only to their development as war college students, but to the strengthening of our relationships."

Prior to visiting Army South, Martinez said the Colombian students also visited Fort Hood, Texas and Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. The visit to Army South was well received according to the Colombian students.

"Their facilities are amazing," said Colombian Air Force Maj. Alexander Celis, a Colombian War College student. "We conduct many joint operations with Army South so it's very important for us to be here and see first hand what it is that they do here. The support of the U.S. Army is very important to us and although they are from another country, these are our brothers."

U.S. Army South



Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, commander, U.S. Army South, promotes Brazilian Maj. Washington R. Triani, foreign liaison officer to U.S. Army South, to the rank of lieutenant colonel at a ceremony in Goiania, Brazil, during a visit to the Brazilian Special Operations Brigade April 29. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Maj. Rick Black, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

Brazilian foreign liaison officer prepares to leave ARSOUTH

Story by Eric R. Lucero
U.S. Army South Public Affairs

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas — Of all the recurring themes surrounding the mission of U.S. Army South, one seems to stand out; strength through partnership. Being able to develop relationships with foreign armies for the mutual benefit of the Western Hemisphere is crucial to the success of every mission.

The foreign liaison officers assigned to ARSOUTH provide the necessary link between the U.S. Army and their respective countries.

Currently, the command has a FLO from Colombia, Chile and Brazil on staff.

"The foreign liaison officer position is an important facet of ARSOUTH's relationship with key army partners in the region," said Col. Brian McNaughton, Army South director of the security cooperation division. "For a liaison position to be justified, we must maintain a relatively high level of activity with that army."

Lt. Col. Washington R. Triani has been performing his duties as a FLO for nearly a year and will leave ARSOUTH in January to return to Brazil. Triani believes the mission of the foreign liaison is beneficial for both armies involved. Through each liaison, both armies enjoy a conduit through which to share information to expedite the decision making process.

"It is an excellent point of contact that helps to facilitate our engagements," said Triani. "The FLO program is an important channel to make sure communication is clear and productive. The relationships we build here improve our capacity to solve problems."

The duties associated with the position include: providing a direct liaison to foster combined operations between partner nation military forces and the ARSOUTH staff during exercises, engagements and conferences; deploying and serving as a coordinator for ARSOUTH for joint tactical exercises that include partner na-

tion forces; promoting regional cooperative security initiatives and closer interaction between countries; and providing direct communication with the partner nation staff, coordinating assets and facilitating operations and assisting with in-country logistics.

"The liaisons that the partner nations send to us are typically the cream of the crop and Lt. Col. Triani is no exception," said McNaughton. "He is a consummate professional with expertise and a work ethic that makes him an invaluable asset to the ARSOUTH team."

Triani believes the most important duty a FLO can accomplish is to develop strong, working relationships with other staff members from ARSOUTH and other countries.

"One of the greatest parts of this job is the ability to get to know various officers from other countries," said Triani. "No one works alone. Sometimes, you need to pick up the telephone and ask for help. It's nice to know the voice on the other side of the phone. It helps to

expedite a process to solve solutions in this international environment."

Upon selection for the Army South liaison program, each Brazilian officer attends the Command General Staff College at Ft. Leavenworth, Kan. Triani feels his experiences at the

Staff College and working in an international environment have allowed him to grow professionally.

"It's an amazing experience for me. It allowed me to learn new concepts that would permit me to improve my capacity," said Triani. "The ex-

perience gained here at ARSOUTH makes me a greater asset to my army in providing direction and advice to my command."

The experience Triani gained will go a long way in assisting ARSOUTH and the Brazilian army in developing new concepts and evaluating past engagements to determine ways to improve upon them.

Triani will leave ARSOUTH Jan. 12 to assume the duties within the cabinet of the Brazilian army commander in Brasilia, Brazil.

"The FLO program is an important channel to make sure communication is clear and productive. The relationships we build here improve our capacity to solve problems."

*-Brazil army Lt. Col. Washington R. Triani,
ARSOUTH Brazil foreign liaison officer*

Report Suspicious Activity or Behavior



**iWATCH
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See Something

Say Something

U.S. Army South

Defense & Fraternity 25

Legal: Pre-deployment checks

Story by 1st Lt. Nhu T. Tran

U.S. Army South Office of the Staff Judge Advocate

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas — A deployment is a stressful time both for those deploying and their Families. Waiting until the last minute to get personal and financial affairs in order significantly adds to this stress. Take advantage of the assets available to you to assist in getting your affairs in order now.

Joint Base San Antonio provides a Legal Assistance Office, staffed with Attorneys, to assist you in pre-deployment preparation, such as in obtaining a Power of Attorney and preparing a Will. The Legal Assistance Office is located at 2270 Rattlesnake, Temp Building #2, off of Wilson Street. U.S. Army South personnel stationed in the San Antonio area are encouraged to make an appointment by calling 210-808-

0169. Soldiers and all other Department of Defense personnel currently stationed or deployed in Central America, South America, or the Caribbean Basin should contact Mr. Chuck Koutras at Charles.koutras@us.army.mil. Mr. Koutras provides on-site Legal Assistance to DOD personnel stationed throughout the Southern Command area of operations.

A Power of Attorney is a written authorization that allows a person to act on your behalf in a business, personal, or other legal matter. There are two types of Powers of Attorney: General and Specific. A General Power of Attorney designates a person (representative) to act on your behalf regarding all of your affairs, including financial, just as if you yourself took the action. A Specific Power of Attorney designates a person (representative) to act on your behalf regarding a specific (single) matter or transaction, just as if you yourself took the action.

There can be significant consequences in granting a person a General Power of Attorney. There have been instances where a Soldier granted

a General Power of Attorney to an individual and returned home from a deployment to find bank accounts depleted and material possessions sold. To prevent this from occurring, ensure that that your relationship with the individual is well-grounded and established prior to providing a General Power of Attorney, and discuss with the Legal Assistance Attorney exactly what you want the Power of Attorney to accomplish. In deciding to grant a Power of Attorney, a Specific Power of Attorney is preferred because it limits the individual's authority to specific transactions, such as closing on a home, signing a

specific contract, enrolling a child in school, or traveling with your child to a foreign country when the other parent is not traveling.

A Will is a legal declaration by which a person names one person (Executor) to manage his or her estate and provides for

the transfer of all property at death. It is the most important estate planning document. A Will allows you to dictate who inherits your property and, if you have underage children, to name their guardians. Dying without a Will allows the State to dictate how your estate will be divided and name the guardians of your children. There is a misconception that single Soldiers or Soldiers with little to no assets do not need a Will and that Wills are only necessary when deployed. Everyone needs a Will, regardless of assets and whether or not they are deployed.

In addition to a Will, the following table lists 25 documents you should consider. Pay particular attention to the health care documents (Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare; Living Will; Do Not Resuscitate Order) to that ensure your wishes (as to specific actions and as to who will make specific decisions regarding your healthcare) will be carried out should you become incompetent or incapacitated. Again, discuss these matters with the Legal Assistance Attorney.

The financial consequences of not having all your documents in order can be devastating. If your



U.S. Army South Soldiers and civilians board an airplane at Kelly Airfield here Feb. 5 in support of Integrated Advance 2011 in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. (U.S. Army photo by Robert R. Ramon, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

family does not have knowledge of your assets, there is a chance they will never find out about them. For example, if your family is not provided your bank account information, the funds in your account may become dormant from a lack of deposits and withdrawals. Funds in a dormant account become property of the State. As such, it is not enough for you to create a Will and other documents establishing an estate plan. You will also need to make your heirs aware of these documents and leave them where they can find them. Maintain a comprehensive folder which contains these documents and inform Family Members, your Executor, your Attorney, and/or anyone else you deem appropriate of the documents location.

In addition, keep your SGLI (or any other insurance policies) current to ensure your intent is carried out. For example, if the SGLI

beneficiary designation still has the name of a Soldier's ex-spouse as the beneficiary and the Soldier remarried, the former spouse will be the recipient of the payout. The current spouse will have no legal right to the proceeds. Update SGLI (or any other insurance policies) after significant life changes such as marriage, childbirth, adoption, or divorce to ensure that it reflects your intent as to how the proceeds should be distributed.

U.S. Army South personnel must be prepared, at a moment's notice, to provide humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and conduct contingency operations. As such, it is imperative that your financial and personal affairs are in order well in advance of a deployment. Take the time to consult with a Legal Assistance Attorney. You deserve the peace of mind in

knowing that your loved ones will be taken care of and that your directions will be carried out.

The Essentials	Bank Accounts	Marriage and Divorce
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will • Letter of instruction • Trust related documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of all bank accounts • List of all user names and passwords • List of all safe-deposit boxes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marriage License • Divorce Papers
Proof of Ownership	Health Care	Life Insurance and Retirement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing, land, and cemetery deeds • Escrow mortgage accounts • Proof of loans made and debts owed • Vehicle titles • Stock certificates, savings bonds and brokerage accounts • Partnership and corporate operating agreements • Tax Returns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal and family medical history • Durable health-care power of attorney • Authorization to release health care information • Living Will • Do-not-resuscitate order 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life Insurance Policies • Individual Retirement Accounts • 401(k) accounts • Thrift Savings Plan • Pension Documents • Annuity Contracts

Soldier POV fatality rates still high

Story by
U.S. Army South Safety Office

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas — Privately owned vehicles continue to be the number one cause of accident related fatalities within the Army. So far this fiscal year, 92 Soldiers died in POV related accidents. Motorcycles, while a much smaller population, account for just over 43 percent of the total POV fatalities with 40 dying as of July 5.

The Army attempts to combat this continuing trend through education and training. The main program for educating all drivers is the Army Traffic Safety Training Program. Motorcycle riders receive additional training through a mandatory Motorcycle Safety Foundation based course.

The ATSTP consists of three courses that are designed to build upon each other. Phase one is the introductory course received by all personnel during Advanced Individual Training. Phase two is the Local Area Hazard course which is developed locally and provided by the gaining installation or unit. Phase IIIA is mandatory for all newly assigned personnel under 26 years old and is provided by the installation.

Supervisors or training officers may schedule the ATSTP IIIA course for Soldiers at Fort Sam

Houston by calling (210) 221-5239 or 3846. Ensure this training is annotated in the Soldiers training record. All Soldiers who want to ride motorcycles must complete the MSF based basic riders course. The course is free and can be scheduled through <http://www.militarysafepmv.com>. After accessing the site, select "San Antonio" from the top menu to see a list of courses and the dates they are offered. Ensure you coordinate with your supervisor for this training.

Over the last 10 years, the Army has lost a company of Soldiers every year due to POV accidents. While alcohol, speeding and distracted driving are a few of the contributing factors, many accidents could have been survivable if the occupant would have been wearing his or her seatbelt. The disturbing trend is the lack of seatbelt use is actually increasing. Young Soldiers and even seasoned leaders are being killed by violating basic safety rules in vehicles and while riding motorcycles. Leaders must ensure they always set the standard through the proper use of personal protective equipment and adherence to safe operating practices.

For questions or comments regarding this article, contact the ARSOUTH Safety Office at (210) 295-6879 or 5928.



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directly to our
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U.S. Army South

Defense & Fraternity

July - September 2011