

April 2008
Volume 1, Number 2

Duty **1** First!

Leadership Edition



**Diamondbacks
Move Troops**

**Oak Tree
Counseling**

Leader Meets

**Welcome
Home
Dragons**

SPO Nation

The Big Red One Creed

TEAMWORK is the foundation of the Big Red One. I shall never fail my team, for I maintain the standard. My conduct and self-discipline sets the example for others to follow.

HONOR is what I stand for—an American Soldier on duty for my country. My loyalty is intense. I display care for my fellow Soldiers and my chain-of-command through courage, respect, integrity and compassion.

I have learned to **E**NDURE, to thrive in adversity. The harsh reality of combat gives me the enthusiasm for realistic training. I am physically and mentally strong to meet the demanding situations my unit encounters.

We are one in the Big Red One. Our **B**ROTHERHOOD gives us strength to fight on to any objective and accomplish the mission as our veterans have done before us. I live the legacy of my division.

READINESS is my priority. To be ready for any mission, anytime, anywhere. My business is first-class training and living high standards of care and equipment, weaponry and tactical and technical competence.

My **O**RGANIZATION is my strength. The BRO is bigger than any one individual. It gives me purpose, self-confidence, competitive spirit, intestinal fortitude and the desire to fight with all my heart.



No Mission too Difficult. No Sacrifice too Great.

April 2008 www.lid.army.mil

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The Duty First is an unofficial publication produced under the provisions of AR 360-1, published by Soldiers of the 1st Infantry Division. Editorial views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Department of Defense, the Army or the 1st Infantry Division. All photos are Army photos unless otherwise noted. Circulation is 6,000 per issue, printed quarterly.

Story and photos submissions are welcome and should be sent to:

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Commanding General Danger 6

Leadership...an extension of caring

Maj. Gen. Robert Durbin

Last month, I talked about caring. Command Sgt. Maj. Savitski talked about leading. I think it's important to understand that leading is really an extension of caring. If you genuinely care about your Soldiers, you will be an effective leader.

Leadership means first knowing your Soldiers; not only knowing your Soldiers as Soldiers, but as young men and women who are learning, growing and maturing before your eyes. Good leaders believe in their Soldiers, and know that when one of them makes a mistake, it probably isn't because they are trying to make a mistake.

A good leader knows that a string of problems with a Soldier usually means the Soldier has personal problems. The leader must get involved to help resolve those personal problems.

One of the most important aspects of leadership is to know your Soldiers well enough to know when they are in real trouble, i.e. contemplating suicide. Suicide is a terrible killer of Soldiers today, and good leaders are always on the lookout for signs.

Pay attention to suicide awareness training and know your Soldiers well enough to intervene aggressively when needed. Soldiers in trouble need strong, positive leaders – leaders who believe in them. Be that leader.

As a leader at any level, you must focus your efforts toward developing our junior leaders - Soldiers, noncommissioned officers and officers. Our young Soldiers and leaders have performed extremely well

on the battlefield, but our focus and commitment there have left gaps in their professional development.

Knowing your Soldiers is very important. But just as important is taking action when it's needed. As Command Sgt. Maj. Savitski points out in his explanation of Oak Tree Counseling, sometimes leaders know, but they fail to act. That wink and a nod will get your Soldiers killed -- you must,

at a minimum, forge a verbal contract with your Soldier that mitigates the risks. This is the essence of Oak Tree Counseling. Read the article on page 19 of this issue for a fuller explanation.

I don't want anyone to think that counseling is negative. It isn't. Counseling is "Caring" in action at the ground level. Read Danger 7's great article on what Oak Tree Counseling is, and I think you'll begin to understand the value and importance of counseling and of caring, and of positive actions to mitigate risks.

Great leadership is truly "caring" in action. It is motivating men and women to do their best, to accomplish the mission, to achieve, to reach their potential. Leadership is caring for Soldiers – knowing when one of yours is in trouble and taking positive action to help them.

Great leaders have a passion for this great Army and our great Soldiers, and that passion drives excellence.

Great leaders live our Division motto:

*No mission too difficult.
No Sacrifice too great.
Duty First!*



My four cornerstones of leadership at the ground level are:

1. **Lead, don't "manage" Soldiers.** Be compassionate and understanding, yet firm when necessary, providing solid guidance.
2. **Build character.** Do what's right, every time. Don't ever cut a corner. And don't let your Soldiers cut corners. It'll catch up and kill you and your Soldiers.
3. **Motivate!** Praise constantly. Condemn wrong actions, not the Soldier. Motivate by example, by leading with rewards, and with punishment when necessary.
4. **Plan ahead.** Spend 15 minutes each day with your feet kicked up on the desk; burn some brain fuel. Think near-term and long-range. Anticipate problems and requirements, and then figure out how to meet and beat them.

Command Sergeant Major Danger 7

Leadership...Through Oak Tree Counseling

Command Sgt. Maj. James Savitski (Acting 1st Infantry Division Command Sgt. Maj.)

Leaders, you more than anyone know what your Soldiers are doing after work and on the weekends. My challenge to you is don't just know what they are doing; help them to do what's right.

In this issue Danger 6 tells you how to know when Soldiers are in trouble, and I will tell you as leaders how to keep them out of trouble. Let me paint you a picture.

Think back to your last company-level safety briefing. The company commander and first sergeant stood there in front of that company formation and lectured for a few minutes about being safe and not drinking and driving and have a designated driver, and nobody listened because everyone had heard it all before.

No one paid attention, so no one's behavior or plans changed. And someone had a DUI that weekend, or someone was killed.

That's why I'm re-introducing all Big Red One leaders and Soldiers to Oak Tree Counseling.

Oak Tree Counseling is an informal, paperless counseling between leaders at the lowest level and the Soldiers who work for them every day. It's leaders taking a few minutes to see what their Soldiers are doing and helping them see and plan for all the risks inherent therein. When leaders and their Soldiers lay out the risks, and Soldiers explain how and agree to take steps to mitigate those risks – designate a DD now, or sleep for five or six hours before starting that 15-hour drive home after a full duty day – they created a verbal contract that keeps the Soldier safe and lets Soldiers know their leaders care about them.

The company-level safety briefing should reinforce the conversations leaders have already had with their Soldiers.

Leaders, make your Soldiers tell you their plans. Don't just check the block. Don't let Soldiers tell you they have no plans for the weekend. Don't accept that, because you know it's not true. You know who is going to the club. You know who's getting off work at 1700 and driving 15-hours straight. So call them on it, and then do more than tell them to be safe and don't drink and drive or take several rest breaks on their long drive.

Lay out what could happen and make them tell you how they are going to ensure they stay safe. Get specific; make them tell you their DD's name. Shake on it. Verbally agree on it, and when you see them the next duty day, make sure they did what you agreed on. But whatever you do, don't let them leave for the weekend, the night or on leave until you are both sure what's going to happen.

That verbal contract is essential in Oak Tree Counseling because it holds both of you accountable.

We as leaders – NCOs and officers at all levels – must engage our Soldiers and let Oak Tree Counseling trickle down so that it is a way of life. You can read more about Oak Tree Counseling on page 19.

The next time we hear that a Soldier got drunk, drove and was killed, we won't say, "Yeah, Soldiers will be Soldiers, and there is always going to be someone who thinks they are invincible." We will instead think, "I wonder if someone sat down with that Soldier and really talked with him." Then we will go sit down with our Soldiers and talk to them, just to

make sure they know and think about risks.

Oak Tree Counseling is about changing culture to take care of our Soldiers. That takes time. Leaders, let it start with you.

I'll be around and I'll be asking your Soldiers if you sat down with them. I'll be asking you what your Soldiers are doing this weekend or next weekend or the next holiday. And when I see that SIR where a Soldier was killed or injured in a preventable accident, I'll be calling down and asking who conducted his or her Oak Tree Counseling and what was the verbal agreement. It could only take a few minutes to save a Soldier's life.

Take the time ... Make the time.

Know what your Soldiers are doing and let them know you are holding them accountable.

Danger 7, Out. 





US Army Photo

Leader Meets: Transition Team Training with the Devil Brigade

Spc. Dustin Roberts
1st BDE PAO

FORT RILEY, Kan. - You are a Transition Team member; your team's job is to advise and mentor an Afghan National Army brigade commander.

In a meeting with your Afghan counterpart, the local village police chief, the village mayor and an interpreter, a dilemma is thrown your way.

The mayor and police chief are worried about their local citizens and have reason to believe that ANA soldiers are destroying homes, shooting people and stealing items; pretty much raising havoc in the town.

There is no proof that your counterpart's soldiers are responsible for the destruction, and the brigade commander does not see eye-to-eye with the village leaders. After an exchange of argumentative words between the Afghans in a language you don't understand, your counterpart angrily walks out of the meeting.

Do you stay and find out the underlying issues between the mayor and the police chief, or do you

also walk out on them and support your counterpart?

This is one of 10 scenarios used in "leader meets," a Transition Team training, part of the 60-day training cycle on Forward Operating Base Army Strong at Fort Riley.

Leader meets are one-hour long, staged conversations between Transition Teams and Afghan or Iraqi role-players, who act as host-nation government officials or military commanders.

"There are a few scenarios that really get the servicemembers to think on the spot," said Staff Sgt. Ross Frey, an observer/controller/trainer with the Directorate of Cultural Awareness and Counterinsurgency, 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division.

The training is designed to strengthen five skills essential to building rapport with the team's counterparts:

- cultural awareness
- negotiation skills
- understanding the role as advisors
- interpreter skills
- team dynamics

"Because of the training here, our servicemembers

are able to communicate better with their counterparts over there [Iraq or Afghanistan]," said Staff Sgt. Oscar Bonano, also an observer/controller/trainer with the DCC. "They even develop better relationships with them."

Part of gaining trust and friendship with the host-nation's counterpart is knowing and understanding their culture.

An example of this is when U.S. servicemembers are offered tea in a meeting; they are supposed to drink before the host starts drinking.

"At the time of first scenario, they hardly even use the [host] language; they sometimes won't even use even a simple greeting," said Bonano. "By the time that they start developing into the later meetings, they start to get comfortable with the language."

As cultural awareness in TT training is essential, developing negotiation skills make a difference in successful leader meets, added Bonano.

"We really challenge their negotiation skills, and that helps them understand their role as an advisor," he said.

Some TT members think they are going to Iraq or Afghanistan to solve problems, and according to the DCC, that is not their job.

"The mission as an advisor is to help the counterpart fix the problems, not fix the problem yourself," Bonano said.

The TT members use interpreters during leader meets here, just as they will when helping solve problems in the country they will be advising.

One of the most important pieces about using the interpreter to advantage is where he or she will be



"The mission as an advisor is to help the counterpart fix the problems, not fix the problem yourself."

- Staff Sgt. Oscar Bonano

positioned in the meeting. Placing them between the team leader and another team member has worked efficiently, said Frey.

"This way the conversation doesn't have to go across the table," he said. "One thing we've also noticed is teams like to use eye to eye contact with the interpreter; that way the respect for them shows."

Using the interpreter correctly means speaking slower and using shorter sentences.

"You might get a level one [interpreter] in theater, which is a local civilian; instead of a level two, which is someone who comes from the United States," Frey added. "They might not understand a lot of English, and they are certainly not going to understand

the big five-dollar words that servicemembers like to use."

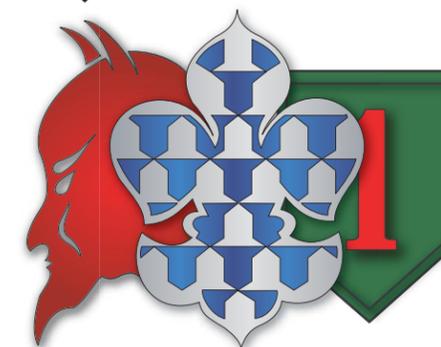
The DCC also teaches TT members to avoid acronyms and slang.

Team dynamics are among the most heavily trained aspects of a successful leader meet.

"Teamwork is really something they improve on throughout the leader meets," Frey said. "These meetings are geared towards building advisor skills as a team, not as individual. When everyone puts their heads together, that's when the good ideas start rolling."

Since July 2006, leader meets at Fort Riley have given TT members the head start they need for developing trust, respect and a stronger alliance with the leaders they will be advising in Iraq or Afghanistan.

"The feedback we get from the team members is that leader meets are the most important training they get here," said Frey. "After those 10 meetings they know how to build friendships, and that's what it's all about." 



Bulldog Leadership



Capt. Ryan Cripps, Commander, HHC, 3rd HBCT, shakes the hand of newly promoted Spc. Andrew Lothes

Stokes makes sure non-commissioned officers and platoon sergeants are keeping Soldiers informed and looking out for their health and well-being.

“I look out for them like they are my own nieces and nephews and try to help Soldiers improve their day-to-day activities,” said Stokes.

It is his job to make sure that all information is being passed down to the lowest level.

Another part of being the company first sergeant is keeping Soldiers informed about their educational opportunities. Stokes makes sure Soldiers know about continuing their education through correspondence courses and eArmyU.

“I let them know all the programs that are available for them and their Family members.”

Cripps said his missions include:

1. To ensure my Soldiers are ready for combat.
2. I am in charge of the Soldiers’ welfare and well-being including their Families.
3. I am responsible for taking care of Uniform Code of Military Justice Actions involving my Soldiers.

“It is my job to make sure my Soldiers are taken care of. I provide training for my Soldiers to make

Sgt. Brian Tierce,
2nd HBCT PAO

FORT RILEY, Kan. - Imagine if you can that your immediate family is made up of more than 180 men and women from all walks of life. Their ages range from 17 to over 50, and you are responsible for making sure they are all taken care of. This is the daily reality for a company commander and first sergeant.

The job of a commander and first sergeant is not an easy one, but early each morning Capt. Ryan Cripps, commander, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Heavy Brigade, 1st Armored Division and 1st Sgt. Manuel Stokes, HHC, first sergeant, come to work to take charge and provide for their Soldiers.

Stokes’ responsibility is to be the senior enlisted advisor to the commander and on all Soldiers’ actions.

For example, he keeps track of those going to promotion boards, schools and is in charge of the company physical training program, said Stokes.

He advises the commander of disciplinary actions for the company.



Capt. Ryan Cripps (center), Commander, HHC 3rd HBCT, passes the guidon to 1st Sgt. Manuel Stokes (right) during a recent change of responsibility ceremony.

sure we can all shoot and that we all know our MOS (Military Occupation Specialty), and we know how to perform our job in a field environment as in garrison,” he said.

Cripps is in charge of making sure the Family Readiness Group runs successfully.

“This means keeping our Families informed as well as single Soldiers and their Families.”

Along with morale and welfare comes safety, said Cripps, “I make sure my Soldiers are doing the right thing at all times and are in proper uniform. When we are out training, they are wearing their helmets (kevlar) and IBAs (interceptor-ballistic armor).”

Both Cripps and Stokes are motivated by seeing their Soldiers succeed.

It’s not about being self-rewarded, they both agreed, it’s about knowing that Soldiers’ are getting awarded or promoted for the accomplishments they have achieved.

Editor’s Note: This article was submitted prior the the brigade’s re-flagging.



Capt. Ryan Cripps, HHC 3rd HBCT, looks as Col. Norbert Jocz, Commander, 3rd HBCT 1 AD, puts the 180 day DUI and Alcohol free streamer on the unit’s banner during a recent ceremony.

Bulldogs to Daggers

On March 28, 2008, the First Infantry Division and Fort Riley said goodbye to the 3rd Heavy Brigade, 1st Armored Division “Bulldogs” and welcomed the newly christened 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team 1st Infantry Division “Daggers”. Though the change does not affect the unit’s Soldiers or mission, it does consolidate yet another 1st Infantry Division Brigade to Fort Riley, bringing the total number of 1 ID Brigades on Fort Riley to five (1BCT, 2HBCT, 4IBCT, 1st CAB and 1st SB).

The 2nd HBCT is scheduled to train at the National Training Center in the early summer to validate its readiness for future deployments in support of the War on Terror.

Currently the Brigade has approx. 3,700 Soldiers assigned and is conducting numerous training events to prepare Soldiers for future missions.

As of March 28, the brigade’s composition is as follows:

- 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry Regiment, is now 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment “Vanguards”
- 2nd Battalion, 70th Armor Regiment, is now 1st Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment “First Lightning”
- 1st Squadron, 13th Cavalry Regiment, is now 5th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment
- 4th Battalion, 1st Field Artillery Regiment, is now 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment
- 125th Brigade Support Battalion is now 299th Brigade Support Battalion “On Call to Serve”
- 3/1 AD Special Troops Battalion is now 2/1 ID Special Troops Battalion

The keynote speaker for the re-flagging event was Maj. Gen Robert E. Durbin, Commander, 1st Infantry Division and Fort Riley. The birgade commander also spoke at the event and thanked the units Soldiers for their flexibility in a time of such change and non-stop training.

Lastly, the brigade mascot, Cpl. Chester D. Gunner will remain with the unit and go by his middle name, which just so happens to be “Dagger.”



Today's Leaders: Dukes Train for Tomorrow's Challenges

Maj. Chevelle Thomas
3rd IBCT PAO

FORT HOOD, Texas - The Leader Development Education for Sustained Peace seminar came to Fort Hood, Texas Feb. 27-29 to train leaders of the 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, on current United States objectives and regional geopolitical and cultural framework.

This type of training helps leaders prepare for upcoming deployments to areas like Iraq and Afghanistan by giving them insight into different ways of handling their mission for a specific operational environment.

The mission for today's Soldier ranges anywhere from peacetime operations to combat operations or even stability operations with a variety of coalition or multinational partners, agencies and civil authorities. This is a dynamic battlefield that demonstrates many leadership challenges for Soldiers to face.

"So, we must understand our environment [Iraq and Afghanistan], and this comes down to being able to fight without making more enemies. Every time we use force

it impacts the environment around us. This is one of the pieces of the puzzle to help us down to the lowest level: 'the shoot or no shoot decision making,' that we have to make every day," Col. John Spiszer, brigade commander said.

"We have found and I have seen the transition in the last four years from commanders, leaders and Soldiers that used to sit in the class and say 'Why are we here' and now sit in the class and say 'I wish I had this information when I first deployed.' I have really seen the growth in our leaders to accept the challenge that lies before us," Robert Tomasovic, LDESP program manager said.

Some of the Soldiers were very excited about the seminar.

"It was the most informational intelligence back brief that I have ever gotten in my military history or career. The professionals actually came in; you know people who are actually of the ethnic group or country," Staff Sgt. Michael Williams Jr., Troop C, 6th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, team leader said.

"I liked it because it [negotiations class] brought some things that I didn't think about, for example, how not to lay everything out on the table. I think a lot of us are used to saying, well this is what I can bring, this is what I

want to do, but we need to learn to hold our cards closer sometimes. Let the other person do more talking first, so that we can get a better idea of what both parties can bring to the table," said Sgt. 1st Class David Jessup, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 6-4 Cav, squadron effects noncommissioned officer.

The leadership challenge is how to use the seminar to better educate Soldiers. For some, the answer was simple and for others it required some thought.

Williams felt that just knowing some of the motivations of the Afghan or Iraqi people, their habits and how they think would help him to be more culturally aware and therefore understand his operational environment. Jessup felt it was all about changing a thought process.

"As fire supporters, a young 13F, engrained in you is to call for fire. You go out there after receiving a grid mission, and you put steel on target. So now, we have to try and change that view and say, 'Look, that might

not be our best means to accomplish the mission.' It's going to be a non-lethal fight that we need to worry about. It's the Information Operations campaign, and I need to get that focus down to my most junior Soldiers to make sure they understand," Jessup said.

"Yeah, there is going to definitely be times when they need to call for fire, call in the combat air support or call in close combat aviation. But I would say probably majority of the times it's going to be the non-lethal fight that they need to be more involved in and make sure that their platoons understand. Because it is going to be that one bad call for indirect fire that goes in on that one village that takes out a heard of sheep, and we lose the whole village," Jessup continued.

These are just a few of the challenges that the "Dukes," leaders were thinking about during the LDESP seminar, which consist of three phases: distance learning, seminar education and a bi-weekly news update.

To find out more information about the LDESP program located at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, Calif. check out the website at

www.ldesp.org/public/home.cfm 



Leaders of the 3rd IBCT, 1st Inf. Div., listen to Mr. Phillip J. Halton, give a lecture on Anti-Afghanistan Forces during the Leader Development Education for Sustained Peace seminar at Fort Hood, Texas.



Photos by Sgt Christopher Goodman



★ Task Force Dragon - has seen substantial success and progress in the Rashid Security District of Southern Baghdad. In 10 brigade-level operations conducted since Mar. 7, 175 named targets have been captured, with 27 of those being at one time ranked in the brigade's top-10 high value individual list. More than 1,700 detainees have been successfully processed for long-term detention based on evidence gathered on their activities.

★ In May 2007, anticoalition/enemy attacks were at a deployment high of 928 events, averaging more than 30 per day. In Feb. 2008, there

have been just 61 enemy-initiated events with a projected total of 80 for the month.

★ The brigade has completed more than 220 essential services projects ranging from the construction and/or repair of key infrastructure, electricity, education, water, sewage and trash collection. Markets across the district are now more secure thanks to the use of temporary barriers and the improved security situation, with 32 markets and an estimated 3,969 stores. The Dora Market, which had just three stores open for business as a result of sectarian violence in late Dec. 2006, now has more than 600 flourishing shops. 🇮🇶



Welcome Home Dragons!

Well Done!



'Diamondbacks' Move Troops



Maj. Enrique T. Vasquez
1st CAB, PAO

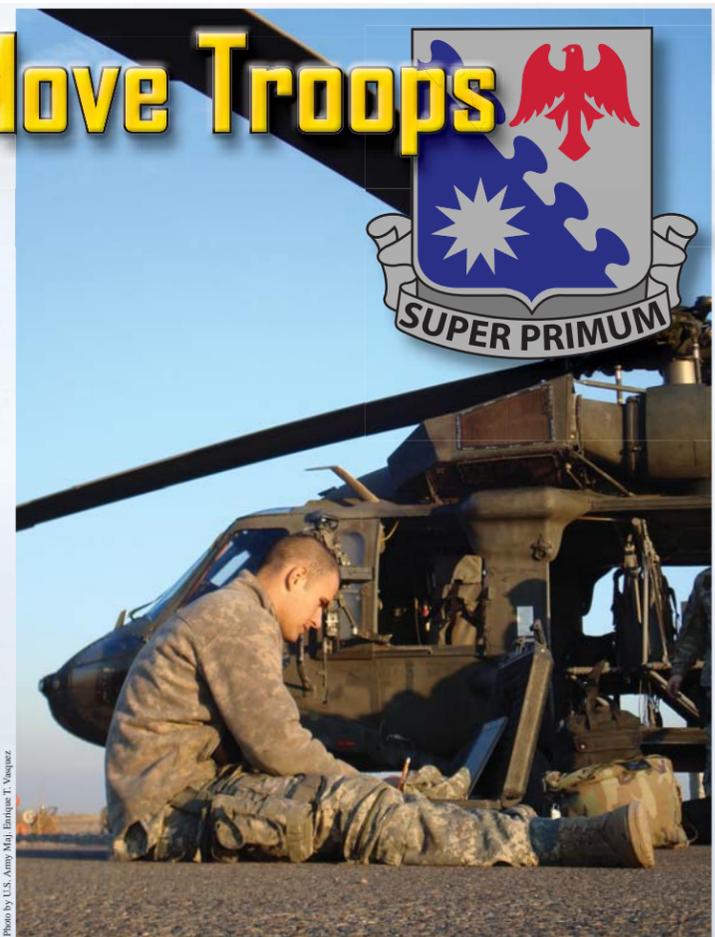
CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq - In northern Iraq, when American Soldiers step onto a new outpost or move to a critical part of the battlefield they often arrive via the UH-60 Black Hawk, a medium lift utility helicopter and the workhorse of Army aviation.

Managing and operating these highly sophisticated marvels of modern avionics are the men and women of the 3rd Assault Helicopter Battalion, 1st Aviation Regiment. Known as the "Nightmares," these air and ground crews work all hours of the day and night, moving troops to various destinations as part of the Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division's sustained air operations effort.

Before any mission takes off, 3-1 Avn. Regt. crews check and verify each integral component of their aircraft, ensuring it is safe to fly.

"We conduct pre-flight checks, looking for show-stoppers and for deficiencies that might keep the aircraft from flying. The pilots do the run-ups," said Sgt. Charles Ceideburg, Company B, 3-1 Avn. Regt.

"They get the APU (auxiliary power unit) going and load the fills radio codes and check the radios. The pilots turn the



Sgt. Charles Ceideburg, 3-1 Avn. Regt., enters data into a laptop used to manage maintenance records for a UH-60 Black Hawk before a mission.

Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Isaac Class/Jeff Truitt



Pfc. James Nally of Company B, 3-1 Avn. Regt., keeps watch as his UH-60 Black Hawk ferries troops across northern Iraq.

Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Isaac Class/Jeff Truitt



An infantry squad disembarks a UH-60 Black Hawk Helicopter at Forward Operating Base Warhorse, Iraq. The Black Hawk belongs to the 3rd Assault Helicopter Battalion, 1st Aviation Regiment, stationed at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, and part of the Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, which is in charge of all aviation assets in northern Iraq.

Photo by Sgt. Isaac Class/Jeff Truitt

blades, do an engine HIT (health indicator test) check and get ready to fly," he said.

After the Black Hawk pilots are satisfied, the crew chiefs take over and ensure passengers safely board the aircraft.

"We make sure those approaching don't endanger themselves while boarding, so we make sure they enter and exit from the three and the nine o'clock position. We then make sure everybody is secure with seatbelts fastened that and nobody is going to fall out of the aircraft," said Ceideburg.

"Passenger safety is not really an issue with us as long as they get their seatbelt on and follow the directions of the crew chief," said Spc. Jacob Norotsky, Co. B, 3-1 Avn. Regt.

Unlike flight attendants back home, a crew chief is trained to protect his or her passengers.

"Everybody here is qualified to fire their weapon ... for the security of passengers," said Norotsky. "So, you might as well be getting in your van back home and going to the grocery store; we are going to keep you that safe."

Crew chiefs must remain proficient with their door guns, since they often have to stand ready to support combat missions outside the wire.

"Air assaults are something we do to bring the fight to the insurgents instead of them bringing it to us" said Sgt. Fredrick Benuzzi, a crew chief with Co. B. "I have great respect for the guys we're dropping off, because they are really doing an awesome job."

Another facet of the Nightmares' battlefield mission is the transport of injured Soldiers.

"We also conduct casualty evacuation and medical evacuation, which are pretty important (missions) in moving Soldiers off the battlefield and getting them to hospitals," said Benuzzi.

Using Black Hawks to move troops has two major advantages over ground transport.

"The aviation mission is one of the most important on the battlefield right now because we move Soldiers rapidly, and it is safer, than traveling on the ground. By flying, Soldiers avoid IEDs," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Kenneth Biddulph, pilot, Co. B.

Overall, moving Soldiers in Iraq via the Black Hawk benefits the Army and the Soldier.

"If I can pick up a Soldier, regardless of what their mission is or regardless where they have to go on the battlefield, that brings down their stress level. This is also an asset to the Army because by flying we lose fewer Soldiers," Biddulph said.



A UH-60 Black Hawk from 3rd Assault Helicopter Battalion, 1st Aviation Regiment, flies over the Iraqi countryside transporting troops from COB Speicher to Balad in northern Iraq.

Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Isaac Class/Jeff Truitt

Sustainment Brigade: SPO Nation, Driving to Perfection

*Staff Sgt. Bryant Maude
1st SB, PAO*

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Inside the 1st Sustainment Brigade headquarters and dispersed among the various battalions in its organization, there is a group of Soldiers, non-commissioned officers and officers who pride themselves as members of “SPO Nation.”

“SPO Nation is a mental state of being,” says Lt. Col Hielke “Hike” Welling, the officer in charge for support operations at the 1st SB. “It’s a collective group of officers, NCOs and Soldiers whose mission is to be combat multipliers for the warfighter, where we try to do everything right the first time.”

The term SPO Nation was first coined by Maj. Christopher Dexter, the deputy support operations officer for the 1st SB, at Fort Riley, Kan., prior to their departure for Iraq.

“I was looking for some kind of team name,” Welling said. “He was talking about living the dream and SPO Nation because of the size of the organization, so I put it out there and it wasn’t long before it caught on with the Soldiers.”

If you look at SPO Nation, you will find out quickly that this mindset has produced exceptional results in a short period of time. These results were not a product of luck, happenstance or accident, they were the result of very precise, purposeful planning that started back in Fort Riley several months prior to their deployment, said Wellington.

In November 2006, before the 1st Infantry Division Support Command transformed into the 1st SB, Welling and his team were in contact with the in-theater brigade, the 15th Sustainment Brigade. In April, they joined several of the soon-to-be subordinate commanders in an exercise at Fort Bragg, N.C., where they could put faces to names. There the seeds of change were planted that yielded the type of



Moving product out of the Class 1 yard on VBC

productivity gains Welling was striving for.

“At this point we had no ideas of changing things, it was more of a time to gain insight as to how we’d support 19 brigades in the area of operation,” Welling said.

After hitting the ground in September 2007, the group began its investigation; learning about the support process and asking the hard questions like “How do we do things better?” and “How do we improve the process?”

“Again, that SPO Nation mindset led us to peeling back the onion, and we found things that didn’t look right, things that could be done better,” said Welling. “We wanted to know why it was being done this way.”

This line of questioning guided them to develop initiatives. In these initiatives SPO Nation set out to improve the 10 sections underneath them - everything from contracting, services and supply to distribution management and planning.

SPO Nation saw immediate results in some areas. The first success was changing the distribution mission at Forward Operating Base Hammer.

“When we arrived, Hammer was getting their support from Camp Taji and Balad and that didn’t make sense from a time and distance factor,” Welling said. “At the time, there was a 13-day wait for a part to



arrive, and this was affecting combat power rates.”

The challenge to providing support at FOB Hammer was location; it’s one of few bases east of the Euphrates River. After careful analysis, it was determined that the Soldiers would be better served out of Victory Base Complex and BIAP (Sether Airfield) rather than Camp Taji.

Welling reached out to the 168th Brigade Support Battalion at VBC with the idea of shifting the mission to them.

“We were excited to get the mission,” said Maj. Paul Sanders, the support operations officer for the “Make It Happen” battalion. “There were a lot of innovations made by us early on in supporting some of our other FOBs, and this freed up some of our assets so we used those assets to support FOB Hammer.”

One area affected by the change was the Supply Support Activity at FOB Hammer. Chief Warrant Officer 3, Pandora Searls, the supplies systems technician for Company A, 203rd Brigade Support Battalion, was having issues getting unserviceable repair parts retrograded from Hammer back into the Army supply system.

“The 168th was very responsive to our need to get the retrograde back into the Army supply system,” said Searls. “They are not only dropping supplies off, but are also picking up five to six containers of retrograde a week.”

Staff Sgt. Franklin Stoner, Class I non-commissioned officer in charge, stands in the middle of over a half million bottles of water destined for Soldiers, civilians and contractors serving in Multi-National Division-Baghdad.



This reduced wait time from 13 days to eight days. The customers at Hammer were happy to get their stuff faster, combat rates went up and that’s what’s important to the members of SPO Nation.

A second group of initiatives took place in the Consolidated Receiving and Shipping Point (CRSP) yards at VBC and Camp Taji.

“Reports weren’t standardized, databases were antique and people weren’t watching things to the level one, so we started building new reports and organizing the process,” said Welling “Staff Sgt. Cresse and Chief Johnson were instrumental in this process.”

By improving the flow of data, the time for moving product in and out of the yard went from a nine-day average to one and a half days in Taji and three days at Victory Base Complex.

There were other initiatives that SPO Nation worked on, like the creation of visual products to aid in the understanding of product movement and doubling air movements. Even small things like the daily delivery of the Stars and Stripes did not elude their attention.

“I looked at operations at Taji where we don’t have an airfield, and I thought, ‘What the heck? Why can’t we get newspapers and supplies everyday?’” said Welling.

He looked at what Corps was doing at Taji with its four-times a week Joint Military Terminal run to Taji from Balad and thought “Why not piggy back off what they’re doing?” The idea was simple: embed some of

1st SB’s assets into JMT logistic patrols and make existing, three times per week, CLP runs on alternate days to establish daily service.

The added bonus was that this transportation arrangement didn’t cost any more resources. It was simply the synchronization of operations that led to a smarter, more efficient way of doing business - the SPO Nation way of doing business. 

'Redlegs' Deploy



Kevin Young
Fort Sill PAO

2nd Lt. Jon Short, HHB, 75th Fires Bde., battery executive officer, salutes, and three spouses wave, as the aircraft taxis toward the flight line.

FORT SILL, Okla. - Rinehart Fitness Center was packed to capacity Tuesday afternoon as Fort Sill bid farewell to one of its major tenant units.

The post held a deployment ceremony for the Headquarters and Headquarters Battery of the 75th Fires Brigade as it prepared to join the Multi-National Division North in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

To mark the deployment, Maj. Gen. Peter M. Vangjel, commanding general of the U.S. Fires Center of Excellence and Fort Sill, made official remarks during the ceremony.

"They are probably the most capable fighting force this country has ever assembled," Vangjel said. "They have answered the call, and they will serve with 'Redleg' pride and distinction."

Vangjel said the unit will be responsible for controlling lethal fires in their area of operation, deliberate fire planning, targeting and sensor management for more than 70 different radar systems

They will also be responsible for coordinating air space management and providing critical information to the division commander about insurgent indirect fires and IEDs - which is going to keep our Soldiers alive because they will be studying, analyzing and providing information on the latest tactics, techniques and procedures of our enemies."

According to brigade commander, Col. Dominic E. Pompelia Jr., the brigade cleared the final hurdle to deployment when it completed a mission readiness

exercise in December and was certified "mission capable" by evaluators from the 1st Infantry Division.

"Our mission is going to be the forward support artillery headquarters for the Multi-national Division North," Pompelia said, "and that includes synchronizing all lethal and non-lethal effects to achieve the division commander's objectives."

Pompelia said the non-lethal aspect of the mission will require the staff to recommend protective measures for Soldiers and also become familiar with Iraqis in their area to enhance civilian and military coordination between the division and Iraqis.

The deployment marks the third deployment of the unit to Iraq. The unit continues a tradition of flexibility because its focus during its first deployment to Iraq was the search for weapons of mass destruction.



Sgt. 1st Class Walter Wall (right) 75th Fires Bde., sensor management NCOIC takes a thank you from a Veteran during the 75th Force Field Artillery departure ceremony.

1st Infantry Division at War



1st Infantry Division

Oldest continuously serving division in the United States Army. Over 7,500 Soldiers in three brigades and multiple subordinate units deployed.

Primarily located in Fort Riley, Kan.: training responsibility extends to three other states, Kentucky, Oklahoma and Texas.

Preparing for modularization in summer/fall FY09, with deployment thereafter.

1st Brigade, Fort Riley

Trains transition team. So far more than 7,000 servicemembers trained and deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan and more than 1,200 redeployed.

Transition Teams live and work with Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), the Afghan National Army (ANA).

Scheduled to modularize FY09.

3rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), Fort Knox

Returned from deployment in fall 2006.

Provide theater logistics command and control for the theater commander supporting the Army Forces (ARFOR) and Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) mission.

Scheduled to deploy in summer/fall FY08.

75th Fires Brigade, Fort Sill

Integrate attached ground and air maneuver forces and on order function as a maneuver headquarters in support of full spectrum operations.

Separate battalions currently deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Fort Hood

One of the Army's newest brigades, recently returned from the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, Calif.

Deploys in support of Operation Enduring Freedom June 2008.

2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Fort Riley

Preparation for rotation to the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, Calif., in early summer 2008.

Scheduled to deploy in summer/fall 2008.

4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Iraq

Currently conducting combat and civil military operations in conjunction with Iraqi Army and Police in the Rashid District of Baghdad to restore and ensure long term peace and stability in that region.

Re-deployed from support of Operation Iraqi Freedom April/May 2008.

1st Sustainment Brigade, Iraq

Provides logistic, human resource and financial management for 80,000 Soldiers and 20,000 civilians and contractors throughout Multi-National Division-Baghdad and area support for Multi-National Division-Central.

Deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom September 2007.

1st Combat Aviation Brigade Combat Team, Iraq

Conducts 360-degree battlefield operations with cutting edge technology to support ground troops.

Deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom October 2007.

OAK TREE COUNSELING

Communication Matters



By Spc. Dustin Roberts
1st Inf. Div. PAO

Counseling between noncommissioned officers and their Soldiers is a tool of communication to help self development.

The key word is communication. If NCOs and subordinates have trouble communicating, chances are the job won't get done as smoothly as it should.

"Counseling allows Soldiers to discover their strengths and weaknesses," said 1st Sgt. Archie Smith, Headquarters, 1st Infantry Division. "It lets the Soldiers know where they stand in their job performance and productivity within the organization."

Most Soldiers know the Department of the Army form 4856 is used for things like initial, event-oriented, negative and positive counseling statements.

What the DA 4856 doesn't do is allow an NCO get to know their Soldiers and what's going on in their day-to-day lives.

That's where "under the oak tree" counseling comes into play.

"Under the oak tree" means for an NCO to sit down and communicate with Soldiers – find out who they are personally.

"Under the oak tree counseling is not formal," Smith said. "That's how we (NCOs) find out really what the Soldiers are thinking and where they are coming from – and this so we can help them. If we just wait until a formal counseling, we are missing what they are really going through in life."

Some believe under the oak tree counseling should be done before weekends, so NCOs are more informed about what Soldiers have planned in their off-duty hours.

"We don't just wait till Friday – Under the oak tree counseling is everyday," Smith said. "In my eyes, Soldiers will respect NCOs more if they know the NCO is honest and sincere."



Honesty is a huge factor in communication.

"You must call a spade a spade and be the honest broker when counseling Soldiers," said Smith. "Tell the Soldiers when they are doing right and following the correct guidance (and) at the same time, have the personal courage to correct them when they're wrong."

Soldiers respect an honest NCO. Soldiers also respect a listening NCO.

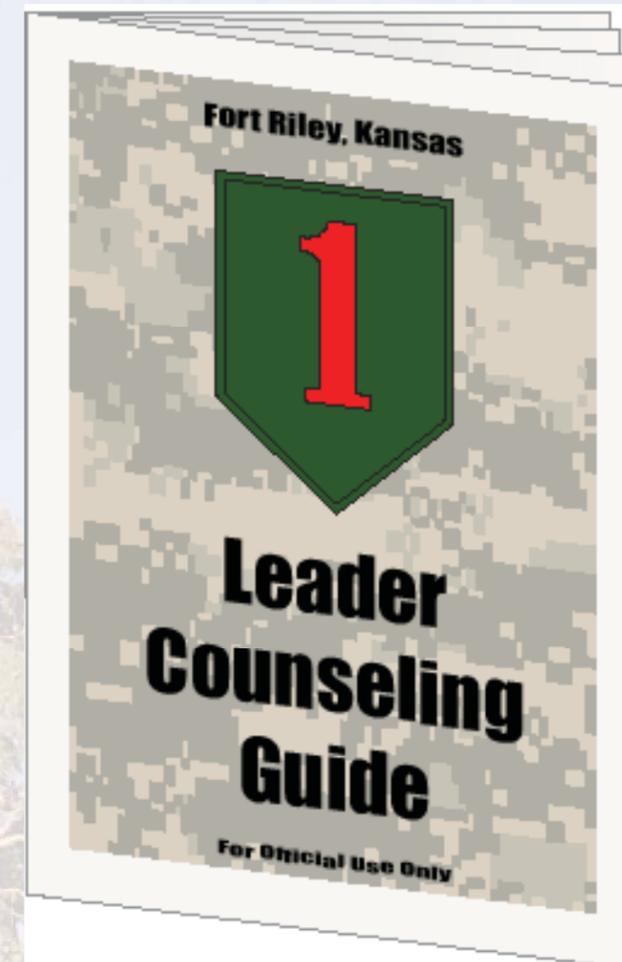
"Soldiers should be more involved with counseling," said Smith. "This way you can see the Soldiers' views and verbally show them what right looks like."

NCOs also must be evaluated in their leadership. If an NCO doesn't know how to properly counsel a Soldier, then his or her superior has to show them how. Soldiers learn from NCOs, but first the NCO must know how to properly teach.

"Senior NCOs need to spot check NCOs and make sure they are counseling properly," Smith said. "The main focus is to ensure Soldiers understand what they are being counseled for, why they are being counseled and the credibility of the individual."

Counseling properly is how Soldiers communicate. In a war-fighting and professional machine like the U.S. Army, communication between seniors and subordinates has to be a priority.

"Be an active listener. Respond and ask questions," said Smith. "But what is most important is that you know your Soldier through and through." 



For complete information go to: www.1id.army.mil

Oak Tree Counseling in a Nutshell

WHO:

Generally NCO leaders (immediate supervisors)

WHAT:

Informal, leader-to-led talks to coach/teach/mentor

WHY:

This is THE BEST WAY to relate to your people
... sincere, personal discussions work!

WHEN:

About weekly, at an opportune time

WHERE:

Chow halls, barracks, parking lots, transitioning somewhere, cool down after PT, similar places

TIME REQUIRED:

Less than 5 min.

HOW:

1. Know ahead of time what you want to talk about
2. Can be one-on-one or very small group (3-4)
3. Can be mission/work-related or off duty/recreation-oriented
4. Keep it short, simple (one main topic), and constructive (how to do the right thing)
5. Tailor it to the individual
6. Get eye contact, get agreement
7. Sample topics might include
 - Weekend activities
 - Off duty driving plans
 - On duty driving
 - PT or sports
 - Weapons handling
 - Any unsatisfactory, unsafe behavior

Note: Most accidents are due to one or more of the following:
indiscipline, complacency, overconfidence, and lack of training

TT MISSION

*“As the Iraqis stand up, we’ll stand down.”
- George W. Bush, United States President*

Transition Teams advise, teach, and mentor Iraqi Security Forces and the Afghan National Army

Transition Teams provide direct access to Coalition capabilities such as air support, artillery, medical evacuation, and intelligence gathering.

Transition Teams are critical to the transfer of security responsibility to the Iraqi and Afghan governments.

Dedicating the 1st Infantry Division Headquarters and one of the Division’s Brigades to the Transition Team mission demonstrates full commitment by the US Army.

The consolidation of training at Fort Riley provides standardization of high quality training and effective use of resources.



Green - To - Gold K-State SCHOLARSHIPS

*Spc. Francisca Vega
1st Inf. Div. PAO*

MANHATTAN, Kan. - Spring is closing in, bringing along with it the close of college semesters. As classes wind down and students plan for the summer break, enlisted Soldiers are afforded an opportunity to further their education through the Green-to-Gold program.

Three basic scholarships are available to Soldiers across the Army who want to further their education and careers as officers.

The Scholarship, Non-Scholarship and Active Duty options all have different deadlines and offer different benefits.

For Soldiers with time-in-service and about half their bachelor’s degree completed, the Active Duty option may be best. It is offered for a maximum of two years and continues to pay the Soldier at his current rate of pay and allows him all benefits. While under this option, the Soldier’s work responsibilities are shifted to that of a full-time student. With this option, however, the Soldier has to pick up the tab for associated expenses like tuition and books.

Active Duty is the option most applied for, said James Porter, admissions officer in the Department of Military Science at Kansas State University. But only 200 slots are available each year.

Soldiers lacking the amount of necessary credits for the Active Duty option can opt for the Scholarship option. The soldier will be relieved of his current military service contract to go to the school of his choice. This scholarship is available for up to four years. The scholarship will pay either tuition and fees or room and board.

While most Soldiers apply for the Active Duty option, the majority are awarded scholarships, Porter said. Soldiers can indicate if they’d accept a scholarship if they’re not approved for the Active Duty option.

For Soldiers who want neither of the previous options, there is a non-scholarship option, in which the Soldier is relieved from his current contract-of-service and is allowed to attend school on his own dime. Unlike the other options, this opportunity is open year round.

Green-to-Gold has more available scholarship spots than applicants, said Porter.

“I’ve been doing this for four years now and I have never seen a Soldier that was eligible denied for a scholarship,” Porter said. “We’ve even helped forward-deployed Soldiers with their packets.”

With so many accommodating and flexible factors with Green-to-Gold, there seems little reason not to go out and complete an education and progress in the Army. 



Find out what your Division is doing: www.lid.army.mil