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Saturday  High:50 Low:23	Sunday  High:44 Low:19

FRIDAY

Fort Riley Post




December 6, 2002 America's Warfighting Center Vol. 45, No. 49

Brigade prepared, ready to fight at NTC

By Staff Reports

The culmination of 3rd Brigade Combat Team's company level training exercises, Gauntlet force on force, Brigade Battle Simulation exercise and gunnery exercises, began Tuesday with the third phase of Gauntlet.

That third phase, the Combined Arms Live Fire Exercise, gives the 3rd BCT an opportunity for the combined arms team to synchronize fires and operations. This will enable them to deliver a decisive blow against the enemy, said Capt. Brian Vogt, assistant operations officer, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd BCT.

The CALFEX will conclude today.

"The combined arms team include tanks, Bradley Fighting Vehicles, dismounted infantrymen, scouts, Paladins, mortars, Bradley Stinger Fighting Vehicles, Sapper squads and engineer vehicles. They also include Military Police High Mobility Multi-purpose Wheeled Vehicles, just to name a few," said Vogt.

Wednesday, Task Force 1st Battalion, 13th Armor honed their skills during their CALFEX. The task force consisted of three armor companies, an infantry company and other support elements.

Capt. Aaron Cichocki, commander, Company B, 1st Bn, 13th Armor, was in charge of 10 tanks and four Bradleys during the exercise, and he emphasized the importance of training with combined arms.

"The Bradleys enhance our operation by getting dismounted personnel in places that tanks can't go," he said.

Throughout the live fire exercise, which began at the Multi-Purpose Range Complex, infantrymen cleared tree lines and tankers cautiously but forcefully rolled toward the enemy.

"It went very well today," said Cichocki. "The coordination we conducted between three different companies within the battalion solidified our unity. It ensured that we're all working together, and reinforced all the things we've been training over the past couple of weeks."

"We are ready for the National Training Center. This has been an excellent experience for us," he added.

The brigade is deploying to the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, Calif., in January where it will conduct similar training exercises. The rotation is scheduled to last approximately 30 days.

The Gauntlet training exercises conducted on Fort Riley over the



A tank from Task Force 1st Battalion, 13th Armor engages targets during the 3rd Brigade's Combined Arms Live Fire Exercise Wednesday. The CALFEX will conclude today.

Bell receives fourth star, leaves Fort Hood for Europe

By Charles Goff
Fort Hood Sentinel

Lt. Gen. B. B. Bell relinquished command of the III Armored Corps to Maj. Gen. Robert Wilson, commander of the 7th Infantry Division, Fort Carson, Colo., at a ceremony Nov. 26 at Abrams Physical Fitness Center. Wilson will command III Corps until a replacement for Bell arrives.

Bell and his wife, Katie, were presented with a variety of awards. Bell was given the Legion of Merit for dedicated service to III Corps.

After the passing of the III Corps colors and awards, Bell was then promoted to the rank of general. He was selected in October by President George W. Bush to command U.S. Army Europe and 7th Army.

Commenting on the fact that this was a relinquishment of command, awards and promotion ceremony Gen. Larry R. Ellis, commander of U.S. Forces Command, said, "What a day for Fort Hood and what a great day for the Army."

In his remarks, Bell commented that the weather had forced the ceremony indoors.

He asked the soldiers of III Corps to welcome the new commander with an outdoor ceremony to show the honor and patronage of III Corps.

"Until then, our great Corps will be under the expert command of Maj. Gen. Bob Wilson. He will command the III Corps while still holding a steady job at Fort Carson with 7th (Infantry) Division," said Bell.

Bell went on to thank the family readiness groups, the surrounding communities and his staff for their contributions during his tenure.

He then gave a special thank you to his wife for her support and



Gen. B. B. Bell receives his fourth star from Gen. Larry R. Ellis, commander Forces Command, during a recent III Corps ceremony.

led III Corps past the Sept. 11 tragedy, through Warfighter exercise and through Joint Exercise/Experiment, Millennium Challenge.

"B.B. and Katie rest assured you will be missed at the Great Place," said Ellis.

Wilson held a variety of positions prior to being commander of 7th Inf. Div. including deputy commanding general of United States Army Recruiting Command, Fort Knox, Ky., deputy commanding general of the United States Army Armor Center, Fort Knox, Ky. and executive officer of the commanding general, United States Army Training and Doctrine Command, Fort Monroe, Va.

His awards and decorations include the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit with four Oak Leaf Clusters, the Bronze Star Medal with "V" Device, the Bronze Star with one Oak Leaf Cluster, the Purple Heart, the Meritorious Service Medal with two Oak Leaf clusters and the Air Medal with "V" Device.

"If you were in III Corps for the past 15 months, you have felt Gen. Bell's presence and reflected his ideals," said Wilson.

"I am honored to be here as the commander of III Corps, and look forward to working with these outstanding leaders," he said.

"This is an outstanding opportunity."

"I will cherish the time I have spent here at Fort Hood," said Bell. "Service to this Corps will be my most cherished experience in the Army."

"God bless our forces and God bless our nation," he said. "This is Phantom Six signing off."

Afghanistan, Iraq see combat action

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press

A B-52 Stratofortress dropped precision-guided munitions in support of U.S. special operations forces that came under attack Dec. 1 in Afghanistan.

There were also two incidents in Iraq, said DoD officials. In Afghanistan, U.S. troops were patrolling outside Shindand in Herat Province, near the border with Iran. A group of armed Afghans opened fire on the patrol. The special operators returned fire and called for close-air support. The B-52 dropped seven 2,000-pound bombs, and the patrol broke contact. There were no American casualties.

In another incident, six rockets or rocket-propelled grenades impacted near the air field at Forward Operating Base Salerno. All were duds. Soldiers investigating found a truck with a rocket-launching rack. They detained five people in the vicinity for further questioning.

Operation Northern Watch aircraft dropped precision-guided bombs Dec. 2 on elements of the Iraqi air defense system after Iraqi gunners fired on coalition patrol aircraft.

The U.S. and British planes hit an anti-aircraft artillery site 10 miles east of Mosul. All aircraft returned safely. The last incident in the north was Nov. 28. Since January, Operation Northern Watch aircraft have flown 99 days and been shot at on 78 of them. Coalition aircraft have replied to the Iraqi provocation 17 times.

Operation Northern Watch enforcement continues.

In the Southern No-fly Zone, Iraqi gunners fired on coalition aircraft on Dec. 1. Coalition aircraft dropped precision-guided weapons on Iraqi air defense facilities located between Tallil, 170 miles southeast of Baghdad and al-Basrah, approximately 240 miles southeast of Baghdad.

Authorization Act means big pay increase

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press

The National Defense Authorization Act for 2003 funds the military portion of the global war on terror and the continuing transformation of the U.S. military to face the threats of the 21st century.

President Bush signed the bill into law Dec. 2 during a ceremony at the Pentagon. The act actually allows DoD to spend money released under the 2003 National Defense Appropriations Act, which Bush signed Oct. 23.

Under the two bills, service members will receive at least a 4.1 percent pay raise beginning Jan. 1, 2003. Many mid-level NCOs and officers will receive a pay jump of between 5.5 percent to 6.5 percent.

The bills call for an increase in the basic allowance for housing to cut out-of-pocket expenses to 7.5 percent. The bill puts elimination of this financial inequity to service members on course for fiscal 2005.

The act also deals with the hot button issue of concurrent receipt. Currently, military retirees who receive Department of Veterans Affairs disability payments have their retired pay reduced dollar-for-dollar by the VA payment.

The act authorizes an enhanced special compensation for military retirees who "incurred a qualifying combat-related disability."

The retiree must have received the Purple Heart for the injury or have a service-connected disability of 60 percent or higher incurred as a direct result of combat or training for combat.

Other personnel portions of the act include a National Service Plan. The new program encourages volunteers to enlist in the military and serve 15 months on active duty, followed by either an additional active-duty period or 24 months in the Selected Reserve. If time remains on service commitments, it may be spent on active duty, in the reserves or serving in organizations such as the Peace Corps or Americorps.

Those who qualify may receive one of the following incentives: \$5,000 payable after completing the initial 15 months of active duty; repayment of student loans up to \$18,000; an education allowance at the Montgomery GI Bill monthly rate for one year; or an educational allowance of one-half the Montgomery GI Bill rate for three years.

The act continues special pays and bonuses for active duty and reserve personnel and expands special pays given to high-demand military specialties. It also increases the bonus awarded to prior-service personnel.

The act makes medical improvements a high priority. The legislation calls on the Defense Department and the Department of Veterans Affairs to share assets, especially in regards to pharmacy benefits.

Congress continues to improve the TRICARE program. The legislation expands TRICARE Prime Remote to cover dependents who remain in remote locations when they cannot accompany sponsors. An example of this is a dependent who stays in a remote location while a spouse is assigned to Korea on an unaccompanied tour.

Congress also expressed concern over the stability of the TRICARE provider networks. Many providers complain that claim processing takes too long. Under the legislation, the requirements for TRICARE and Medicare will be the same.

The budget supports an active-duty end strength of 1,389,700 with the Army set at 480,000, the Navy at 375,700, the Marines up slightly to 175,000 and the Air Force pegged at 359,000. The overall strength of the reserve components is unchanged from fiscal 2002 at 864,558.

The legislation expands the size of the service academies from 4,000 to 4,400 students beginning in the 2003-2004 school year.

In the authorization act, the legislators say they "believe that active-duty end strength needs to be increased in the long term."

The act authorizes \$7.3 billion for counterterrorism programs throughout the services. Much of this is channeled into biological warfare defense and chemical and

See Pay Raise Page 2



Education Center changes name, offers 'one stop shopping'

By William Biles
Staff Writer

After a year of planning, Fort Riley University officially opened with a ribbon cutting ceremony outside its doors at building 217, in the chilly morning air, Nov. 19. Col. Thomas Luebker, assistant division commander (support), cut the ribbon that marked the beginning of a more customer friendly educational service. "It's one stop shopping," said Col. John Simpson, garrison com-

mander. "But this is just the start." FRU now provides a single source for information on all educational and training programs on Fort Riley. "We plan to automate enrollment processes, classroom scheduling and a number of other functions, which will provide a one-stop center for training and education information," said Kay Gatzka, chief of student services. FRU brings together on-post schools, off-post schools, the museum, the library and the Army Career Alumni Program, as well

as its educational services. "Taking the notion of putting these educational resources and capabilities into one organization, makes it very convenient and very simple for our soldiers to be able to improve themselves," said Luebker. Programs are offered to help soldiers with college, leadership development, basic skills, languages and military related skills. Anytime an organization does anything in this world full of challenges that will help people improve themselves personally

through education, it will enable them to be better soldiers, said Luebker. More importantly, it enables them to be better citizens, he said. Through FRU, students can earn anything from a certificate to a master's degree, all of which are attainable through on-post and distance learning classes. All of the schools under FRU are accredited, including Barton Community College, Central Texas College, Upper Iowa University, Kansas State University and Central Michigan University.

"This is the beginning, and we look forward to having many more people walk through these doors and be able to graduate in the ceremonies here," concluded Luebker at the ceremony.

Pay Raise continued from page 1

biological detection, protection and decontamination. The programs also cover the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction program. The Senate and House approved \$417 million for this counterproliferation activity. The act directs DoD to set up National Guard civil support teams in all states and territories. The teams provide medical and technical advice in the event of a terrorist attack involving weapons of mass destruction. In readiness accounts the act fully funds President Bush's request of \$78.4 billion. This covers such items as steaming days, flying hours, tank miles and depot maintenance. Modernizing the force is a large part of the budget. In aircraft the bill authorizes 23 F-22 Raptors this year and 27 in fiscal 2004.

The act also funds \$3.4 billion for Air Force-Navy research on the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program. The act allots \$3.7 billion for 12 C-17 Globemaster III air transports. The act also provides funds to upgrade F-15 and F-16 fighter aircraft. The Army's Comanche helicopter program will receive \$910 million for engineering and manufacturing development. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld cancelled the Army's Crusader artillery system. The act authorizes DoD to shift funding from that program to other indirect fire programs. A total of \$673 million will be split among six promising technologies. The act authorizes two new Arleigh Burke-class destroyers and close to \$1 billion for research and advance procurement for Navy aircraft carriers.

The authorization act can be a grab bag of initiatives. Included in this year's budget are calls for DoD's senior-level Joint Requirement Oversight Council to study missile defense programs and report on their progress before the programs may be fielded. Also included is authorization to create the new positions of undersecretary of defense for intelligence and assistant secretary of defense for homeland security. It also exempts the military from portions of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Provisions allow servicemembers to train more realistically at their stations while expanding buffer zones around training areas. Finally, the 2003 budget buys the Army's last Abrams tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles. The request funds \$376.3 million for

103 tanks and \$397 million for 138 Bradleys. In a sign of things to come, the budget authorizes \$788 million for the Stryker Armored Vehicle and \$759 million for research on the Army's Future Combat System.

Grunt *By Wayne Ulden*

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Newest Murphy, Walker inductees honored at ceremony

By William Biles
Staff Writer

The Sergeant Audie Murphy Club held an Induction Ceremony for the newest members to be added to its ranks at Normandy Theater Nov. 22.

Eleven noncommissioned officers, from Sgt. to Sgt. 1st Class, received the honor of being the best the NCO corps has to offer.

"It's a very hard process to become a Sgt. Audie Murphy Inductee," said Staff Sgt. Steve Newman, vice president, Sgt. Audie Murphy Club. "Candidates are weeded out through attending a battalion board, a brigade board and then a post board." The NCOs need to pass each board to reach the next one. Once they pass the brigade board, candidates are elected to go before the president of the Audie Murphy Club and the Command Sergeant Major, 24th Inf. Div. and Fort Riley, Staff Sgt. (P) Torrance Beck, noncommissioned officer in charge, Primary Care Clinic No. 1, Medical Activity, is the current club president.

Command Sgt. Maj. Richard

Hearon is currently Command Sgt. Maj., 24th Inf. Div. and Fort Riley. Both preside over the board. Potential inductees must pass this last board to become a member, said Newman.

There is no better honor to an NCO than to become a member of this club, Newman said. The distinction is awarded to the NCOs who set the standard for excellence and leadership, he said.

According to the story of Audie Murphy, when read at the ceremony, he could very well be the last American war hero. He was the greatest combat soldier in the 200-year history of the Army.

Murphy enlisted in the Army in June 1942 and shortly after receiving his advanced individual training at Fort Meade, Md. He was sent overseas where he was assigned to the 15th Infantry.

While overseas, Murphy spent 400 days on the front lines and earned 33 military awards, citations and decorations, to include every American medal for valor.

Murphy earned a battlefield commission for his courage and leadership abilities.

By the time Murphy was discharged from the Army, he was the most decorated soldier in American history.

Before the story about Murphy was told at the induction ceremony, there was a tribute to the NCO. During the tribute, soldiers dressed in various styles of Army uniforms dating from the Revolutionary War through present-day.

The inductees were introduced to those present by the soldiers they supervise. One-by-one, as the NCOs stood on stage at the position of attention, their soldiers, with a tone of pride in their voices, introduced them to the seated audience. During the introduction, the soldiers stated what they liked most about their sergeants and stated reasons they felt NCOs were above the standard.

The NCOs who received the award were Sgt. 1st Class Donald S. Timm, 24th Transportation Battalion; Staff Sgt. James H. Cassell, Jr. Company C, 1st Battalion, 34th Armor; Staff Sgt. Venancio O. Castro, 172nd Chem-

ical Company, 541st Maint. Bn.; Staff Sgt. Michael S. Huitema, 924th Military Police Battalion; Staff Sgt. Richard M. Jones, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry; Staff Sgt. Matthew C. Mayo, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 70th Armor; Staff Sgt. Neil J. Watkins, Medical Department Activity; Staff Sgt. Cedric O. White, 568th Engineer Group; Sgt. Otto Chapman, Headquarters and Headquarters, 1st Battalion, 13th Armor; Sgt. Nicholas J. Flowers, Company A, 1st Bn., 34th Arm.

and Sgt. 1st Class Bridgette L. Scott, 2nd Battalion, 291st Regiment.

After the Murphy induction ceremony, a ceremony was held to present Dr. Mary E. Walker awards to several military spouses for their volunteer actions and outstanding contributions to Fort Riley.

Walker was a volunteer field surgeon during the Civil War. She was captured by confederate troops when she stayed behind to tend to the wounded during a union retirement.

Walker spent four months as a prisoner of war in various prisons before she was exchanged for a

confederate surgeon the union had as prisoner.

Following the war, President Andrew Johnson awarded Dr. Walker the Medal of Honor.

Today, she remains on record as the sole female recipient of the Medal of Honor.

The awardees for the Walker award were: Vicky Paulino, nominated by the 82nd Medical Company, LaVerne Pope, nominated by Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 24th Infantry Division and Christy Sickinger, nominated by the 924th Military Police Battalion.

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Briefs

NCO/Soldier of the Quarter

The Fort Riley Noncommissioned Officer/Soldier of the Quarter Board for first quarter was held Oct. 29. The board's selection for NCO of the Quarter was Sgt. Eric Cullen, 937th Eng. Group, 977th Military Police Company. Selected as Soldier of the Quarter was Spc. James Welch, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Engineer Battalion, 1st Brigade.

Holiday Tree Lighting

Holiday cheer will illuminate Fort Riley today when Col. (P) Frank Helmick lights up Fort Riley's Christmas Tree in front of the headquarters building. The annual Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony begins at 4:45 p.m. on Ware Parade Field and will include holiday music, the arrival of Santa Claus and warm beverages and holiday cookies. Parking is available at Riley's Convention Center and shuttle buses will be available from 4 p.m. until 45 minutes after the conclusion of the ceremony.

Combined Federal Campaign

The deadline for all CFC donations is today. For more information about the CFC, call Dori Farrow at 239-3467.

HASFR Celebration

The Historical and Archeological Society of Fort Riley will be having a celebration of a Prairie Christmas for its members Sunday, 3 - 5 p.m., at Custer House.

Holiday frontier customs of the mid-west will be the theme for the celebration. There will also be a guest speaker dressed as Maj. Gen. George A. Custer's wife, Libby.

'Libby' will speak on how the settlers of her day celebrated Christmas, said Rachelle Boslego, president, HASFR.

During the celebration, members will also sing Christmas carols while a mandolin player strings out the melodies. Light refreshments will be served, as well as light snacks.

If you would like to go to the celebration, call Boslego at 717 - 2818 to find out more on how to

become a member of HASFR to be able to attend.

Office Closure

The Directorate of Information Management will be closed on Dec. 13, 11:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. for an employee organizational event.

School Physicals

The deadline for children under eight attending Kansas schools for the first time to have their required physicals was Dec. 1.

School records are audited to make sure that this law is complied with, said Deb Gustafson, principal, Ware Elementary. Parents have been notified if their child needs a physical, she said. Most of the children at Ware who do not have completed physicals have appointments scheduled. As of Monday, if no arrangements have been made with the school, the child will not be allowed back to class. If parents contact the school, the school will work with the parents to keep the child in school, said Gustafson.

Military families with children who need their physical can call the TRICARE appointment line at

784-1200 to make an appointment.

Appointments are made according to availability on a day-to-day basis, said Capt. Timothy Bergeron, Chief of Clinical Support Division, Irwin Army Community Hospital. If an appointment cannot be made that will fit a parent's schedule, a determination will be made, based on when the physical is due, whether or not to refer to an outside doctor, said Bergeron. If a referral is made, TRICARE will cover the cost of the physical. Any lab work that may need to be done is referred back to IACH, said Bergeron.

Blood Drive

Fort Riley's 24th Infantry Division, Medical Activity and Dental Activity are sponsoring a Red Cross Blood Drive Wednesday, Thursday, at King Field House.

The hours will be 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. and blood donors must be 17-years-old, weigh 110 pounds and be in general good health. Most medications do not cause a donor to be unable to give blood.

For more information, call Central Plains Blood Region in Wichita, 1-800-719-8929 or the

Red Cross office on Fort Riley, 239-1887.

Recruit the Recruiter

The rewards for recruiters are many. Volunteers have the option of selecting three companies within the Recruiting Command under the New Assignment Incentive Program. Not only can you earn the Recruiter Badge, sergeants and staff sergeants in a promotable status who earn the Recruiter Ring during their 36-month tour, are also eligible for meritorious promotions.

Briefing will be held on the challenges, benefits and opportunities to become Recruiters. Attendance by all E-4's through E-7 is highly encouraged. Briefings will be held Tuesday and Wednesday, 9:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., at the 937th Engineer Group classroom, building 8060. More information can be found at web site www.usarec.army.mil/hq/recruiter or you can contact Sgt. 1st Class Perez at (502) 626-0465 or DSN: 536-0465. For information regarding the briefing contact Staff Sgt. Uzzle-Carter at Fort Riley Personnel Services Battalion Soldiers Action Center, 239-

EFMP Celebration

The Exceptional Family Member Program will be hosting the EFMP Holiday Celebration Tuesday, 6 p.m. - 9 p.m. at the Riley's Conference Center, building 446, Seitz Drive. Santa Claus will visit just in time to hear each child's Christmas list.

For information, call Laurie McCauley, Exceptional Family Member Program manager, 239-9435.

Birthday Party

A Jesus' Birthday Party will be tomorrow, 3 - 4:30 p.m. at Jefferson Elementary School. For information, call Robin Ann Tobin, 717-1565, Main Post Chapel; Toya Wise, 717-2871, Chapel Service; Karla Moody, 784-4608, Contemporary Service; Kathy Wood, 784-4226, Kapaun Chapel or Anna Sherman, 784-4266, St. Mary's Chapel. Please bring optional gifts for Operation Christmas Child. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

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More Briefs

Mail training

Unit Mailroom Service Training will be conducted Wednesday, 8 a.m. - 4:30, building 319, CPAC. Official Mail Training will be conducted Tuesday, building 319, CPAC, and Dec. 16 at building 808, conference room. Pre-enrollment is required. Call 239-5411 for enrollment.

Renovations

Fort Riley is planning to renovate building 228, which is located within the Main Post Historic District. The Main Post Historic District is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. For more information about this project, please contact Fort Riley's Historic Architect by calling 239-0443 or by sending an e-mail to rhorhant@dynamac.com

Thrift Shop

The holidays are here and the Thrift Shop is a great place to buy

special gifts for your family and friends at a reasonable price! The Thrift Shop has a wide selection of clothing, crafts, electronics, furniture, sporting goods and more. The Thrift Shop is located in building 267, Stuart Ave. The Thrift Shop will be open two Saturdays in December for your shopping convenience, tomorrow and Dec. 14, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Both Civilian and Military welcome.

The Shoppe

Thanks to everyone who stopped by during the Christmas Open House at The Shoppe. The Shoppe had a great day of sales and lots of fun, as well. There are still many holiday items left, so remember The Shoppe when decorating for this season.

The Shoppe will be open on Monday and again Dec. 16 and is located in building 259, Stuart Ave.

Call 785-239-2783, for more information.

Support Group

The Pregnancy Loss and Infant Death Support Group meets monthly, every third Thursday, 6 p.m., at Kapauu Chapel. The next meeting will be held Dec. 19, 6 p.m. Parents who have experienced miscarriage and infant death are invited to come. Call Chaplain Mike Wood, 239-7872, for more information.

Operation Santa Claus

Santa's elves are gearing up for the Christmas holiday with Operation Santa Claus. It will be in operation through Jan. 15, 2003. Santa's workshop is located in building 222 on Main Post. Soldiers, family members, civilian employees and organizations from Fort Riley and surrounding communities may make donations of toys and supplies, as well as cash contributions. Volunteers are needed to wrap gifts. To help, call 239-6944/6945.

Toy March helps bring troops together

By Jamie Bender
Staff writer

The annual Kodiak Toy March is scheduled to begin at 9 a.m. Dec. 13, in front of the 70th Engineer Battalion, building 8025 on Custer Hill. It will end at building 222, Operation Santa Clause headquarters, on the main post.

"The annual Toy March is one of the major events that the 70th Engineers, the "Kodiak" battalion, has established in order to attempt to give back to the Fort Riley community," said Capt. Cesar Lopez, assistant S-3, plans, 70th Eng. Bn. "The ultimate goal of the toy march is to allow the Kodiak community to participate in donating gifts into the Operation Santa Claus toy program as a family."

The Kodiak Toy March has been a 70th Eng. Bn. tradition for at least eight years said Capt. Nikki Tomlin, adjutant, 70th Eng. Bn. Over 300 soldiers will participate in the five-mile road march to benefit local communities, said Tomlin. "Soldiers across the battalion willingly share their good fortune with those less fortunate. No one is required to donate, but soldiers are motivated by what they have to share, and do so willingly," she said.

The march benefits the soldiers as well as those who will receive the donations. "The biggest benefit to (the soldiers) is the tremendous sense of fulfillment that one enjoys when contributing to a great cause," said Lopez. "They know that they are making a difference in a child's life for at least a moment and bringing joy in the form of a toy to someone that may otherwise have gone without this holiday. They are also keenly aware that they may be helping one of their fellow soldiers in the battalion who may have trouble making ends meet during this time of year."

The Toy March has grown over the past eight years. "We have also had numerous outside agencies supporting us throughout the years," said Lopez. "It really would be selfish to say that it is strictly a Kodiak Battalion function anymore. We can now depend on the annual support of the Fort Riley Public Affairs office, who does a great job of communicating this event to the community at large, the commanding general's mounted color guard, which always participates with its team of riders, and this year they will be towing our battalion Santa Claus in a wagon."

Family members as well as soldiers participate in the march. Anyone who wishes to participate in the march is invited to attend, said Tomlin. "Anyone is welcome to show up at the PT field and fall in with us," she added.

Last year the 70th Eng. Bn. donated over 400 gifts of unwrapped toys valued at around \$4,500, said Lt. Col. Bjarne Iverson, 70th Engineer Commander. "This is our contribution to our community."

Gauntlet

continued from page 1

past few weeks have prepared the brigade for their upcoming deployment, but Vogt added, "Gauntlet is not just a train-up for NTC; it is a focal point for everything the BCT does every day, which is geared to prepare soldiers to perform combat operations."

"We train to hone our skills in case we are called upon to go to war," he said.

Spec. Adam Kurtz, 1st Bn., 13th Armor, said his adrenaline was pumping at the conclusion of Wednesday's exercise.

"The adrenaline is going because we shoot live fire rounds, and this is what we do... This is

what we joined the Army for - to fight these tanks, to be combat soldiers and to serve our country the best way we can.

Kurtz said, "The only way we can serve our country the best way we can is to be the best at what we do," he said.

The soldiers will be challenged at the NTC by an opposing force.

"The opposition force there is more aggressive and better trained than any foe we will ever face on the battlefield," said Vogt.

"At NTC, soldiers put their training to the test as part of a tremendous team of over 5,000 personnel," he added.

Following Wednesday's exer-

cise, each company commander addressed one of their unit's strengths and one area that they thought needed improvement.

That assessment allows their leaders to know where to focus their future training, said Vogt.

Overall, the brigade and battalion commanders who observed the training were very pleased with the Task Force's completion of the mission, and they agreed their unit was ready for deployment.

"Our BCT has been training very hard over the past several months in preparation for the NTC rotation," Vogt said.

Vogt added, "It is very evident that the time the soldiers have spent in the field, away from their family and friends, has made this BCT a much better fighting force."

"The soldiers of 3rd BCT will give the OPFOR a fight for their life," Vogt concluded.

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E-mail holiday greetings to U.S. troops abroad

By Marcia Triggs
Army News Service

With the click of a mouse, heartfelt messages have been sent to thousands of deployed troops this holiday season.

"Your bravery and sacrifices are deeply appreciated by this American family, and our flag and the flags of hundreds of other families in our community are flying proudly in your honor," wrote Steve and Ellie Earnhart from Vandalia, Ohio.

The Earnharts posted that message using <http://anyservicemember.navy.mil>, which is the online version of the holiday letter-campaign dubbed "Operation Dear Abby."

When the "Dear Abby" and "Any Servicemember" mail programs were suspended last year because of the anthrax mail attacks, Web sites sprung up to give an alternative to people who want to show support to troops during the holiday season, officials said.

The Web site <http://www.anyservicemember.org/> is another place where greetings can be read such as, "I am grateful for the opportunity to send this message to you and tell you how proud I am of our U.S. soldiers," written by Chris D.

Even though "Any Servicemember" mail was suspended, family members and friends can still send loved ones letters and packages overseas by using name, rank and APO address. The Christmas mailing deadline was Wednesday for parcel airlift mail and is next Wednesday for first-class and priority mail, letters and cards.

For those who want to send sentimental notes to unknown service members, though, the only authorized way is through e-mail said an official from the Military Postal Service Agency.

Anyone can read or post a message for troops. Many have expressed their feelings for the troops that have left their family behind to fight for America's freedoms.

"Good luck against the Taliban. I hope you beat the Taliban's butt," wrote Jamie from New Berlin, U.S. Virgin Islands.

"You brave souls, march onwards my friends," wrote Maria Lambrinos from Adelaide, Australia.



Internet Cafe opens doors, welcomes all soldiers

By William Biles
Staff Writer

The 937th Engineer Group officially opened their Internet Cafe for business Nov. 27 with a ribbon cutting ceremony outside the establishment located in building 8067, Normandy Dr.

At the opening the group also honored the individuals who assisted in making the project a success by presenting them with awards prior to the cafe's grand opening.

"The Internet Cafe is the result of the hard work from soldiers, contractors and various post agencies," said Capt. Barbara Mancari, construction section, 937th Engineer Group. "In the end, these soldiers logged over 5,000 labor hours and saved Fort Riley \$80,000."

Although the cafe was conceived and constructed by the 937th Eng. Group, it is open to all

of the soldiers on Fort Riley.

The cafe features 10 computers, all of which have free Internet access, a comfortable waiting area within the computer room, a video arcade room, pool table, foosball table, CD jukebox, state-of-the-art dartboard, as well as vending machines and a cooking area.

"When I talk about an Internet Cafe, what I'm really talking about is a 21st century dayroom, and I think when you see it you'll see that we reached that level of quality," said Col. Marc Hildenbrand, commander, 937th Eng. Group.

The facility also has a dining area where soldiers can eat their food and socialize with each other.

The cafe's hours of operation are: Monday - Thursday, 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.; Friday, 5 p.m. - midnight and weekends and holidays, 11 a.m. - midnight.



(From right to left) Col. (P) Frank Helmick, assistant division commander, 24th Infantry Division and Fort Riley, Col. Marc Hildenbrand, commander, 937th Engineer Group, Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Hearron, 24th Inf. Div. and Fort Riley, and Command Sgt. Maj. Roland Holland, (in back) 937th Eng. Group, take part in cutting the ribbon to mark the group's Grand Opening of their Internet Cafe.



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Stop-loss freezes mobilized reservists

By Joe Burlas
Army News Service

The Army's newest Stop-Loss measure will keep all mobilized Reserve and National Guard soldiers in the Army until at least 90 days after their unit demobilizes.

The latest of six Stop-Loss announcements since the first measure was implemented a year ago was sent to the field by an "All Army Activities" message Nov. 4. Specific implementing instructions went out Nov. 21 via Military Personnel messages 03-040 and 03-041.

"This is a unit-based Stop-Loss versus the previous individual-skill announcements," said Lt. Col. Bob Ortiz, chief of Enlisted Distribution and Readiness

Branch, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G1. "Basically, the reserve leadership asked for some help in preventing readiness degradation of RC units when mobilized."

The measure takes effect upon Reserve and National Guard soldiers the day their units are alerted for mobilization.

Mobilized reservists impacted by previous Stop-Loss announcements must remain in the Army in a Ready-Reserve status for 90 days after if their unit demobilizes or for one year after their skill was identified as critical to the needs of the Army by a Stop-Loss message, whichever is later. This part of the newest measure impacts about 25,000 reservists, Ortiz said.

The Army will continue to

assess its manpower needs on a monthly basis and make appropriate Stop-Loss decisions as necessary, Ortiz said.

Stop-Loss does not impact involuntary separations or mandatory retirements.

MILPER messages 03-040 and 03-041 can be viewed via the Total Army Personnel Command Homepage, <https://www.perscom.army.mil> from a link at the center of the page.

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Korea 50 years ago - Bitter cold freezes front

By Jim Caldwell
Army News Service

Most of the combat took place in the skies over Korea 50 years ago this week, because sub-zero temperatures on the ground had troops on both sides struggling to keep from freezing.

Nov. 28 - Dec. 3, 1952 — An unreported number of B-29 Superfortresses bomb airfields and communications sites near the Yalu River in northwestern Korea Nov. 28, the day after Thanksgiving. On Dec. 2 the big bombers hit military barracks near Wonsan and railroad yards and a military school near Pyongyang. They return the next day and strike the same Pyongyang targets.

Fifth Air Force reports Nov. 29 that during the week ending Nov. 28, F-86 pilots shot down three or four MiGs, while one Sabre was lost. Two other F-86s were lost to other causes.

Two Chinese companies come out of caves and tunnels near Sniper Ridge Dec. 2 to attack Republic-of-Korea soldiers of the 9th Infantry Division on Pinpoint Hill. In bitter cold, the enemy takes possession of the crest. Intense allied mortar and artillery fire force them to withdraw, though, and the South Koreans move back into their old positions.

The Chinese launch another attack, which gets close enough that both sides trade grenades. The ROK soldiers are forced to withdraw again.

On Dec. 3, two 9th ID platoons counterattack and engage in a seven-hour fight with the Reds. At the end, the South Koreans regain Pinpoint Hill.

Throughout December the Chi-

nese will make 114 armed probes of the entire Eighth Army line, but 105 of them will be against the 9th ID.

U.N. officers report Dec. 2 that intensity of communist artillery and mortar fire in November was half that of October. In October about 638,000 rounds were fired on the Eighth Army line and around 310,000 in November.

Nov. 28 - 29 — South Korean Home Minister Chang Suk Yoon announces Nov. 28 that his government is willing to give citizenship to 33,862 non-communist Korean POWs without an armistice. He says the government doesn't believe the prisoners, who have been screened by U.N. officials, present a security risk.

This group of prisoners will be in addition to the 38,000 South Korean POWs who were accepted as citizens earlier in the year.

The U.N. categories of prisoners include 9,124 civilians thought to be pro-communist, 82,316 Korean Reds and 5,787 Chinese communists. There are 14,281 anti-communist Chinese in the camps.

South Korean President Syngman Rhee's Liberal Party announces that during President-elect Dwight Eisenhower's visit to Korea he will be asked to support a five-point plan that will unify Korea by retaining American forces in Korea, building up Allied and ROK forces, increasing U.S. aid to South Korea and having the United States adopt a

less conciliatory policy towards communists.

On Nov. 29 the International Red Cross reports that since the war began 13,814 communist prisoners had died after being taken by U.N. forces. However, the IRC said most of them died of wounds suffered before being captured.

Nov. 28 - Dec. 1 — The Air Force creates an investigation team Nov. 28 to look into causes of a recent rash of fatal accidents involving cargo aircraft/troop aircraft in the United States and Korea.

On the same day, a C-54 bringing troops and their families back from Alaska crashes when the pilot tries to land in a fog south of Tacoma, Wash. The crash kills 37 people, including seven women and eight children. Two of the women were Air Force members.

On Dec. 1, a C-47 crashes in the San Bernardino Mountains 10 miles north of Fontana, Calif. It kills 13 Air Force men. It is the 10th crash in the series of tragedies and brings the death toll to 233.

Dec. 2 — President-elect Dwight D. Eisenhower secretly arrives in South Korea on Dec. 2. Gen. Hoyt S. Vandenberg, Air Force chief of staff, tells reporters in Washington, D.C., Dec. 2 that the communists have 800-900 MiG-15s in Manchuria, more than three times the Air Force has of all types in the theater. But F-86 pilots hold an 8-1 edge over communist pilots, he says, because of

superior training and aircraft. Communist pilots are becoming more and more reluctant to engage Americans in dogfights.

Dec. 3 — The Defense Department announces that it will no longer call men killed, wounded and missing in Korea casualties because there is a "popularly accepted impression that 'casualty' means 'fatality.'" The department will continue to issue weekly reports on the number of Americans who are killed, wounded or missing after next of kin have been notified. A spokesman said on Nov. 29 the overall total is up to 127,383.

India's compromise peace plan is adopted as the U.N.'s solution to the prisoner of war issue Dec. 3. The vote for the plan in the General Assembly was 54-5, with only the Soviet Bloc against it.

It is a compromise plan because it had to be changed to accommodate the United States' demands that no prisoners will be forced to return to their home countries upon release. Then there had to be a last-minute change because the Soviets were spreading propaganda that their plan was the best because it was the only one that called for a cease-fire. The change was inserted before the vote.

The Soviet plan was then defeated in the Assembly by a vote of 40-5, again with only the Soviet bloc voting for it. The number of votes opposing the plan is diminished, however, by the number of countries that abstained from voting against the communists.

Fort Riley continues to be a Korean War Commemorative Community through 2003.



Commissary website offers food safety advice

By Rick Brink
DeCA

The latest enhancement to the Defense Commissary Agency's food safety program is a tiny Web site button that customers can use to get more information about product recalls.

The "Food Safety Information" button on <http://www.commissaries.com> takes visitors to a section that publicizes pertinent food safety alerts and product recalls. It also features links to other Web sites offering a wealth of food safety information.

Most of what DeCA does to ensure food safety goes unnoticed by customers, said Col. Mark Wolken, DeCA's chief of public health, safety and security. Recalls are a part of the safety chain that can involve customer action and can be confusing at times, so DeCA is using the Internet to help ensure the broadest dissemination of accurate information possible.

DeCA is an integral part of DOD's extensive food safety network, which, among other things, monitors acquisition and transportation processes to ensure military members have access to the best and safest possible products the food industry has to offer. If viewed as a chain that has several links to monitor food safety, publicizing information on the Internet is the latest link.

The emphasis is on "may affect" shoppers because most times recalled products are removed from supply systems before they are sold to customers. Recalls are usually local or regional in nature and receive adequate regional publicity, but with almost 280 commissaries worldwide, DeCA can't be exactly certain that's always the case, hence the extra measure of Internet publicity through the Web site, Wolken said. Customers can return recalled products to their commissary for a refund.

"Food safety and cleanliness are critical aspects in the service we provide our customers. This is yet another way we can assure our customers that they are getting the best and safest food products, which they count on us to deliver as part of their commissary benefit," Wolken said.

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