

DV The Desert Voice

United States Army Central
"Transforming to Full-Spectrum Operations"



October 8, 2008



Arctic Warriors ...

Direct hit!

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On the cover

Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion 8th Field Artillery, 1st Brigade-25th Infantry Division fire M777 A2 howitzers at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Oct. 2. (Photo by Pfc. Alicia Torbush) For the full story, see page 6.

Contact us

Comments, questions, suggestions story ideas? Call the Desert Voice editor at 430-6334 or e-mail at desertvoice@arifjan.arcent.army.mil.



Soldier Accountability

Webster's dictionary defines accountability as being obliged to answer for one's acts; in other words, be responsible for one's behavior.

Experience, and the Army's expectations of its leaders and Soldiers, has taught us that we must stand accountable for our every action and decision.

Leaders are held accountable for the actions of their Soldiers, and it falls on leaders to ensure that Soldiers at every echelon understand and adhere to standards. This does not preclude Soldier's personal responsibility for their actions and decisions. Each generation bears their own cultural characteristics and standards of behavior, but we need to be careful that we don't let social trends and expectations replace adherence to, and enforcement of, Army standards.

We are Soldiers at all times, and accountability must permeate our Army culture, so that even in our off-duty lives, Soldiers maintain the same standards of conduct and behavior expected of us on duty. Indiscipline is a formidable foe and is the primary cause of unnecessary risky behavior.

We have to be vigilant that standards are maintained within our ranks to prevent the erosion of Army culture. Young adults learn by what they see and, if even once, they see that substandard behavior is acceptable, further deterioration of good order and discipline can be expected.

Positive safety operations require development, implementation and enforcement of standards. Where there is no enforcement indiscipline can take root. If leaders turn a blind eye to infractions or negative behaviors, Soldiers will most likely get the impression that their substandard actions are acceptable.

Leaders must ensure that standards are understood and enforced at every echelon. That means that violators must be held accountable for substandard actions and behavior. Holding Soldiers accountable may not win you many friends, but that's why it's called "leadership," not "likership".

For some young Soldiers, the Army might be the first time in their lives they are in an environment of discipline. They might not know what right looks like and they are looking for guidance and leader mentorship to help them mature in the Army culture. Engaged leaders develop not only great Soldiers, but also great citizens.

I thank you for your commitment to mentoring and developing the world's finest military force and helping them become the disciplined, model Soldiers that America needs and expects. 

Col. Glenn W. Harp
Deputy Commander
U.S. Army Combat Readiness and Safety Center



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Overloaded Power Strips & Extension Cords

The image below is from a previous incident at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait involving an overloaded power strip and extension cords.



Here are a few tips to consider when using power strips and extension cords:

- Polarized plugs have one blade wider than the other, which means there is only one way they can be safely inserted into an outlet. If the plug doesn't fit, resist the temptation to "get a bigger hammer." Instead, consult a certified electrician as it may be necessary to replace your obsolete receptacle.
- When you are finished using a small electrical appliance or power tool, unplug it.
- Pull a plug from a wall socket by gripping the plug itself, not by yanking the cord.
- Inspect cords for serviceability prior to use and replace any that are cracked or frayed.
- Untangle any twisted cords.
- Keep cords off steam pipes, furnaces, heaters or other hot surfaces.
- Don't run cords where people walk or under rugs or furniture.
- Insert plugs fully. The prongs should not be exposed when the extension cord is in use.
- Only use cords outdoors that are marked for outdoor use. Use threepronged, grounded, heavy-duty extension cords.
- Do not overload a circuit. As a general rule, don't plug appliances into the same circuit if the combined wattage exceeds 1500 watts. If the wattage rating isn't on the product, multiply the amps by 125.
- To avoid extension cord overload, add up the wattage rating of all the products plugged into the cord and compare it to the cord's wattage rating.

NCOERs ... tracking your career as a leader

Story by

Pfc. Howard Ketter

Desert Voice Staff Writer

Department of the Army Form 2166-8 is a non-commissioned officer evaluation report, used to rate the performance of NCOs in the rank of sergeant through command sergeant major.

NCOERs are vital to an NCO's career. They display an evaluation of overall performance and promotion potential along with recommended duty positions at the next level. NCOs are rated in five different categories; competence, physical fitness and military bearing, leadership, training, and responsibility and accountability.

Rating chains consist of four individuals; the rated NCO, rater, senior rater and reviewer.

The rated NCO is the Soldier receiving the evaluation for their job performance. The Soldier's first line supervisor is the rater; senior rater is the Soldier who oversees the rater; and reviewer is the Soldier who is ultimately responsible for the timeliness and

accuracy of the report.

There are seven different types of NCOERs. The most common ones are annual, which are given each year to the NCO and change of rater, which occurs when an NCO or rater leaves the unit.

Counseling is also a major part of the evaluation process.

"Counseling informs Soldiers of strengths, areas that need improvement and also informs them of the standards and expectations," said Master Sgt. Andre R. Richardson, replacement operations, U.S. Army Central.

DA Form 2166-8-1, NCO counseling checklist and record, is used to let the Soldier being evaluated know about their progress and what they need improvement on in the future. During the initial counseling, the rater will tell what is expected of the NCO during the rating period. The DA 2166-8-1 is used quarterly as a counseling tool and also to help build the NCOER when it is due.

If performed correctly and consistently throughout the Soldier's time in a unit, the NCOER coun-

seling checklist can provide accurate information and accomplishments which can be implemented directly into the NCOER.

"If you sit down with your Soldier and go over what they need to do within a six month or one year time period, an NCOER writes itself," said Sgt. Maj. Henry W. Johnson, Reserve Affairs, USARCENT.

"NCOERs are the primary source document used for the selection of sergeant first class through sergeant major promotions, command sergeant major appointment, schooling and assignments," said Richardson.

It is important that new NCOs receive initial NCOER counseling and quarterly counselings on schedule.

NCOs should take initiative by ensuring that they receive, as well as administer NCOERs properly and on schedule. Soldiers can reference Army Regulation 623-3, DA Pamphlet 623-3 or ask senior NCOs for more information. 



Camp Arifjan

Re-up, you're crazy ... or maybe not

Story by
Spc. Elayseah Woodard-Hinton
Desert Voice Staff Writer

"Should I stay or should I go?" This is a question that all servicemembers ask themselves, at one point, when their contract nears an end.

For some, there may be a simple answer to that question. But for those who are not quite sure on which direction to go, the U.S. Army Central Retention office offers a few reasons on why re-enlisting is worthwhile.

"You can't fight a war without Soldiers," said Sgt. Major Mark Mayo, retention, USARCENT.

Mayo, an Alford, Fla., native explains that one of the main reasons Soldiers choose not to re-enlist is because of deployments that keep them away from their families.

"I always make sure Soldiers understand I appreciate what they do and I understand where they are coming from," said Mayo.

Although Mayo, who is married with six children, understands the struggle Soldiers face when choosing between duty to their family and duty to their country, he asks those Soldiers who can afford to sacrifice a little more of their time to consider re-enlisting.

The country is at war and a Soldier's sacrifice helps make the world a better place for their families, said Mayo.

For Spc. Jessica Williams, 14th Human Resources Support Command, family was one of the main reasons she decided to re-enlist for three additional years.

"I basically did it for my son," said Williams. "I just want more for him. I have a little man, so I am going to do everything I can to make his life easier as far as going to school, benefits and things like that."

Soldiers who choose to re-enlist are often eligible for re-enlistment options that can help benefit their family, career or financial situation.

Some of the most common re-enlistment options available are stabilization at current station or unit, which allows a Soldier to stay at their current duty station for up to an additional 12-months; relocation to a new duty station of choice; re-classification into another military occupation specialty and re-enlistment bonuses, which are tax free for Soldiers who re-enlist while deployed.

Although it is the overall mission of the retention group to keep Soldiers, one of the major focuses for the USARCENT retention team is helping Soldiers advance their careers.

"I don't just talk to you about re-up and re-enlisting, I talk to you about where you want to go with your career and how to manage to get you to where you want to go," said Mayo.

Mayo feels that this part of the retention team's mission is important because the Army's future leaders are those Soldiers who are currently serving and have gained tactical and technical experience in the military.

"We are keeping the people who already have the experience," said Mayo. "That's going to carry the Army to the next step."

Good leaders are what sealed the deal for Williams when she chose to re-enlist. She gives credit to Sgt. Ebony Harris and Maj. Kimberly Mercy, G1, USARCENT, for being good leaders and said that they played a major role in her deciding to stay and work even harder toward advancing her career so that she too can become a good leader.

"Just don't give up," was the advice Williams gave for servicemembers who are debating re-enlisting.

"It took a lot for me to say 'ok, I am going to go ahead and re-enlist,'" said Williams who was ready to get out after this deployment. "But it's not a matter of giving up, it's a matter of pushing forward to become a better person and just go for it." **A**



Spc. Jessica Williams, 14th Human Resources Support Command, shakes hands with Maj. Kimberly Mercy during Williams' reenlistment ceremony, Sept. 23.

Alaska Soldiers complete tra



Two Soldiers from 2-8 FA use an M94 Chronograph to measure the muzzle velocity of the M777 A2 howitzer in order to calibrate and improve the accuracy of the weapon.



2-8 FA Soldiers race to load an M777 A2 round.



Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion 8th Field Artillery, 1st Brigade-25th Infantry Division fire an M777 A2 howitzer, Oct. 2. The calibration took place at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, and was the last requirement for the Stryker Brigade Combat Team to complete before heading into Iraq.

Story and photos by
Pfc. Alicia Torbush
Desert Voice Staff Writer

Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division fired M777A2 howitzers, at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Oct. 2. Calibrating the artillery piece

and improving accuracy, the firing crew uses an M94 chronograph to measure the muzzle velocity of the weapons, explained, Maj. Jon Sowards, executive officer, 2-8 FA.

“The crew then subtracts that measurement from the standard velocity and makes adjustments to improve the accuracy of the weapon,” added Sowards.

The SBCT is assigned to Fort

Wainwright, Alaska, and has been at Camp Buehring to complete training, while adjusting to the environment.

The equipment had to undergo a thorough maintenance when it arrived in country, said Sowards, a Bowling Green, Ky., native. The fluid and nitrogen levels had to be adjusted because of the condition.

Safety is also important when

Training before movement north



howitzer. The A2 howitzer fires a 155mm



Soldiers turned to cover their ears as the M777 A2 howitzer is fired.

firing a weapon of any kind.

Having a forward observer, while firing the howitzers, is a requirement so that safety is ensured, said 1st Lt. Drew Maney, platoon leader.

In Alaska, the unit had to deal with a hard, frozen ground and working with bulky gloves, added Maney. In Kuwait, the Soldiers are dealing with the sand and dust,

which gets into the equipment.

“The weather also has a lot of impact on firing,” said Maney. “The wind picks up the sand and that limits visibility.”

Despite adjusting to the different conditions, the 2-8 FA accomplished the mission in preparation for movement up north.

“We’ve been doing some pretty good training,” said Maney, a

Shalimar, Fla., native, whose unit has also conducted various trainings at Camp Buehring, including: close quarter marksmanship, counter improvised explosives device and HMMWV Egress Assistance trainings.

The calibration was the last requirement for 2-8 FA to complete before the 1-25th SBCT heads into Iraq. [A](#)

"IRON WRANGLERS" CO.



Sgt. 1st Class Terry Strong, 4th Sustainment Brigade, encourages 1st Lt. Laura Lane, a member of the 546th Transportation Company, during the push-up portion of the Iron Wrangler competition.

*Story and photo by
Sgt. Tracy Ellingsen
311th Sustainment Command*

After watching the Olympics this summer, the 4th Sustainment Brigade still had a taste for athletic competition.

But without a million dollar budget and Beijing-sized crowds, the brigade imported its own style of head-to-head games from Fort Hood, Texas, to the Middle East.

The "Iron Wrangler" competition consists of a standard Army Physical Training test; push-ups,

sit-ups and a two-mile run. In order to add some "iron" to the event, participants also competed in pull-ups and arm dips. The 4th SB has held the Iron Wrangler in the past, but the Sept. 20 competition was the first since the unit deployed to Kuwait in early March.

At 4 a.m., 20 competitors, along with dozens of supporters, gathered at the camp's half-mile track; a haphazardly shaped asphalt strip that surrounds a softball diamond in an otherwise empty field.

The only light came from the generator-powered floodlights that dot the camp and the occasional

flash from a camera.

Spc. Thomas Dean, an armorer with the 10th Transportation Company, cleared the bar 15 times, exactly the standard set for males competing in Iron Wrangler.

The first female competitor to approach the pull-up bar was 1st Lt. Laura B. Lane, a platoon leader and convoy commander with the 546th Transportation Company.

At 5 feet, 6 inches tall, and 125 pounds, Lane might not seem a formidable competitor, but a hush fell over the crowd as the 24-year-old cleared the bar 13 times; performing more pull-ups than

COMPETE FOR GOLD

4th Sustainment Brigade hold PT-style event



any other female competitor, and exceeding the standard by eight.

"I felt pretty confident after the pull-ups," said Lane, a New Albany, Ind., native, whose confidence carried her through the other four events and ultimately to the highest score of the competition.

After her performance at the pull-up bar and her subsequent feat of 50 push-ups, Lane quickly became a crowd favorite, especially among the female spectators.

Lane said she was appreciative for her new-found opportunity to display her physical prowess.

"I've been here 14 and a half

months," she said. "The 4th SB has only been here six months, but I've seen a new emphasis placed on physical fitness."

Sgt. Maj. Rodney Felder, operations, 4th SB, organized the event and helped get the servicemembers motivated to participate. He sent out "countdown" e-mails to remind competitors of the impending contest.

"Most of them think they are competing against each other," said Felder. "But they're actually competing against themselves and the standard."

In order for a servicemember to

qualify as an Iron Wrangler, they must score at least 90 points in every event. For the push-ups, sit-ups and two mile run, the 90-point mark differs with age and gender. For the pull-ups and bar-dips, there is a set standard for males, regardless of age, and another for females.

Eleven of the 20 competitors achieved the gold standard and each was rewarded with an Iron Wrangler T-shirt, 4th SB coin and the coveted Wrangler belt buckle.

"We're going to do this every month," said Felder. "It builds camaraderie and esprit de corps." ^A

Military motorcyclist rally for safety

Story by
Sgt. 1st Class Danette Rodesky-
Flores
First Army PAO

U.S. Army Central hosted the Atlanta Area Military Motorcycle Safety Rally at Fort Gillem, Ga., Sept. 25-26.

With the a growing interest in motorcycle culture these days, Chief Warrant Officer 5 Robert Reynolds, safety officer and motorcycle program manager for USARCENT, thought military riders in the Atlanta area would enjoy a gathering of this nature.

“The overarching thing for me is to provide an event for Soldiers, all riders, that our senior leadership here and across our commands, understand the issues in the motorcycle arena,” said Reynolds. “We’re working to engage Soldiers in this annual safety event.”

Fort Gillem and Fort McPherson Garrison Commander, Col. Deborah B. Grays, who also rides, opened the two-day rally, saying she was proud to be a part of the event.

“We’re here for one reason, and that is to keep safety first and prominent as we go through the next few days of this event,” commented Gray.

Guest speaker Mr. Troy Gilleland, Deputy G-1 at Forces Command, who oversees the Safety Program at FORSCOM, presented some statistics to the group.

“There’s a misperception that riders are young and inexperienced,” said Gilleland. “What’s actually being reported is that most [military] motorcycle fatalities involve E-4s through E-6s, with six to eight years time in service.”

“There are a lot of of events going on around the Army, to include rider clubs and [Motorcycle Mentorship Programs],” said Gilleland. “It’s important for our Soldiers to learn proper riding skills and to be safe riders.”

One of the foremost MMPs in the Army is at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

Eight riders from the Fort Sam Houston Regimental Riders group made the journey to help promote motorcycle safety. They have not had an accident in over three years.

Sgt. Major Juan “Moe” Morales, the group’s vice president, mentioned that their Motorcycle Mentorship Program is successful because they have created their group to work as a family.

“We have fun, there is enjoyment in what we do. This is our hobby, with safety in mind,” said Morales.

A duo that is becoming quite active in the Army motorcycle safety scene is the Motorcycle Police Team from Fort Polk, La. Officers Randy Pruitt, 30, and 25-year old Troy Slate. The duo attends the rallies and entertains the crowd with their motorcycle maneuver skills performance.

The Army Combat Readiness Center provided two Safe Motorcyclist Awareness and Recognition Trainers, or SMART systems, for riders to tackle. The computerized motorcycle simulator contains all of the major components on a bike; the

handle bars with throttle, clutch and hand brake, a seat, gear shifter and foot brake.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Earnest Eakins, CRC, said the SMART trainer is great for new riders.

“It helps bring people back to a standard without putting them on the street and in dangerous situations,” explained Eakins.

The second day of the event featured a group ride to Indian Springs State Park, near Jackson, Ga., and included a barbecue lunch.

A prominent leader in the pack this day was Brig. Gen. William H. Forrester, Director of Army Safety and Commanding General, U.S. Army Combat Readiness and Safety Center.

“Events like this help to raise the awareness, but more importantly is that we are creating a sort of band of brothers out here,” said Forrester. “We are great at creating cohesive units that do well together when faced with adversity. It’s the core values that are the foundation of all we practice and that basis keeps them going and keeps them strong.”^A



Sgt 1st Class Trevor Stereaty, 73rd Ordnance Battalion at Fort Gordon, Ga., and Randy Pruitt, a mounted police officer with the Fort Polk Police Department, discuss riding tips before Stereaty attempts to navigate the safety course set up at Fort Gillem, Ga. The safety course was set up for the Atlanta Area Military Motorcycle Safety Rally held at Fort Gillem Sept. 25-26.

National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

October has been designated as National Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

According to AstraZeneca HealthCare Foundation, the first National Breast Cancer Awareness Month program took place in October 1985.

The week-long event was a push by public service organizations, government agencies and professional medical associations to communicate to the public the need for early detection of breast cancer.

Just One Question ...

"Why is it important to support breast cancer awareness?"



"I think that it is important so that women and men know the dangers and recognize it early so that it can save your life."

Sgt. Jaime Gorecki
TAMP AVCRAD
Aviation Logistics Specialist
Groton, Conn.



"Women don't think about it until later in life, by then it may be too late."

1st Lt. Kelley Boak
MARCENT
Logistics Liaison
Roseburg, Ore.



"The more you know about a disease, the better able a person is to detect it early."

Spc. Matthew Maynard
243rd Air Defense Artillery
Patriot Air Defender
Coon Rapids, Minn.

Why I Serve:

Chief Petty Officer J.C. Miller
Navy Customs; Customs Inspector



The Lerona, W. Va., native explains why he chose to join the military.

"Guys before me served, fought and made America strong. I feel like I should do that for the next generation."



"It is important to prevent, to minimize and to reach a point so that there is no more breast cancer."

PO 2nd Class F.J. Lopez
Navy Customs
Customs Inspector
Reno, Nev.



"When you have a month contributed to that type of disease, it brings home the importance of regular check-ups for women."

1st Lt. Elizabeth Davis
243rd Air Defense Artillery
Battery Executive Officer
Harrisonburg, Va.

What's happening around USARCENT



Photo by Pfc. Alicia Torbush

Scott Stapp Concert

Scott Stapp, the voice of Creed, performed with his new band, in Zone 6 at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Oct. 2. "We just wanted to let the troops know that they are true heroes," said Stapp after the show.

3rd MDSC Uncased!

Command Sgt. Maj. James Lambert, and Commanding General, Maj. Gen. Dean Sienko, 3rd Medical Command Deployment Support, uncased the unit's colors during an assumption of responsibility ceremony held in the Zone 1 Chapel at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Oct. 4.



Photo by Sgt. Brooks Fletcher

Did you know ...

In Operation Desert Thunder I, when Saddam Hussein blocked United Nations weapons inspections, testing the resolve of coalition commitment, Gen. Anthony C. Zinni, Commander-in-Chief, Central Command, established a Coalition and Joint Task Force Headquarters at Camp Doha, Kuwait. C-JTF was commanded by Lt. Gen. Tommy R. Franks, commanding general, U.S. Army Central.

"Patton's Own!"