

Ready tonight

In Third Army one of our primary missions is to be Ready Tonight. When the commanding general says that, he means that we are ready to send Soldiers and equipment anywhere in our area of operations with little notice. In the region of the world where this command and its subordinate units operate, these no-notice missions can range from combat to disaster relief to humanitarian assistance. When the call comes, we no longer have time to plan and prepare. We must immediately execute the mission given to us.

Take a look at Haiti – after that devastating earthquake, Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines almost immediately deployed to assist to victims there. Their efforts have saved countless Haitian lives, brought comfort, food and water to thousands of victims, and reinforced the positive image of the U.S. military. They did not have the time to conduct a mission rehearsal exercise or a combat training center rotation to practice disaster relief. They were needed immediately and immediately performed.

We could find ourselves in the same situation with no advance warning – Ready Tonight is exactly what it means. Countries in our AOR cross many fault lines and earthquakes are not uncommon. We have assisted our partner nations in the past with disaster relief. Like those military personnel who went to Haiti, we will not have time to get ourselves into shape, get to a weapons range, or manage personal affairs if the call comes. Those Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines were ready at a moment's notice to move out and fulfill their mission. Not only were they ready as individuals, their equipment was serviceable, ready and waiting for any contingency. We must meet the same standard.

For those of us in Kuwait, we occupy a unique position. We are deployed, but due to Third Army's mission, we are still preparing to possibly deploy elsewhere in the AOR. We all met the deployment criteria to come here, but now are challenged by long work hours and uncertain schedules to maintain our physical fitness and tactical proficiency. Among our many responsibilities in sustaining two combat theaters, we need to maintain the vehicles and equipment required for our deployable command posts.

What can get left by the wayside in all this is our personal readiness. It is the responsibility of every leader and service member to ensure that their deployment requirements and personal affairs are up to date. Set the example for readiness, don't be the example for the unprepared. Our equipment is only as good as our ability to operate and maintain it. Physically and mentally fit personnel are required for successful missions.

Let's make the focus of Ready Tonight as much about the people as we do about the vehicles and equipment required to accomplish the mission. Prepare yourselves physically and mentally for the challenges that may arise at a moment's notice. Make sure that each of you has the endurance to go the distance when the call comes to Go Tonight, and not just be Ready.