



**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

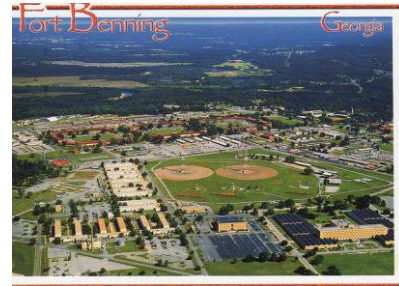
<b>EVENT</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>PART 1</b>			
<b>ENLISTMENT</b>			
Basic Combat and Advance Infantry Training	Fort Benning, Georgia	11-Mar-97	4
Airborne Basic Training	Fort Benning, Georgia	Late Jun 1997	5
Active Duty - Airborne and Special Operations	Fort Bragg, North Carolina	Jul-97	6
Air Assault Training	Fort Bragg, North Carolina	Jan-98	6
Special Forces Assessment and Selection	Fort Bragg, North Carolina	Spring/Summer 1998	9
Assigned as "18D" (Medic) - Waiting List for Formal Training	Fort Bragg, North Carolina		12
Resigned from Active Duty	Fort Bragg, North Carolina	11-Mar-00	12
"9-11"	North Carolina	11-Sep-01	12
Joined North Carolina National Guard	North Carolina	2002	12
Officer Candidate School	Fort Benning, Georgia	Mar-04	12
Commissioned 2nd Lt.	Fort Benning, Georgia	20-Aug-05	13
Long Range Surveillance Airborne Infantry (425th Infantry)	Michigan	20-Aug-05	13
Jumpmaster School	Michigan	2008	15
Pathfinder School	Michigan	2007	17
Sniper Leader's Course	Michigan	2008	18
Reconnaissance and Surveillance Leader's Course	Michigan	2008	19
Combat Lifesaver Course		2009	20
Unit Movement Officer Course	North Carolina	2009	21
Promoted to 1st Lt.		2009	22
<b>DEPLOYMENT TO IRAQ</b>			
Mobilization Training	Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Tacoma, Washington	6 weeks	23
Deployment to Iraq for Operation Iraqi Freedom (504th Battle Surveillance Brigade)	Tal Afar, Iraq (Near Mosul)	2009	23
First Mission	Tal Afar, Iraq (Near Mosul)	31-Jul-09	26
Containerized Housing Units (CHU)	Tal Afar, Iraq (Near Mosul)	2009	27
Christmas in Iraq	Tal Afar, Iraq (Near Mosul)	25-Dec-09	31
Returned to the United States	North Carolina	Apr-10	32
Awarded the Bronze Star	Tal Afar, Iraq (Near Mosul)	28-Feb-10	33
<b>STATESIDE BETWEEN DEPLOYMENTS</b>			
National Guard Joint Staff Training Course (JSTC)	North Carolina	2011	35
Defense Support of Civil Authorities Course (DSCA)	North Carolina	2011	36
Mid-Career Summary of Achievements			37
Joint Force Headquarters-State Military Intelligence	North Carolina	1-Jan-11	39
Promoted to Captain		2014	41
Military Intelligence Captain's Career Course	North Carolina	2014	41
Promoted to Major	North Carolina	1-Dec-14	42
<b>DEPLOYMENT TO KOSOVO</b>			
Call To Duty - Second Deployment	North Carolina		43
Deployment Orders			45
Bon Voyage Dinner	Lubrano's, Cary, North Carolina	4 Apr 2015	47
On To Kosovo	Raleigh, North Carolina	9-Apr-15	48
30th Armored Brigade Combat Team	Raleigh, North Carolina		49
Pre-deployment Training	Fort Pickett, Virginia	23-Apr-15	51
Mobilization Training	Fort Bliss, Texas	May-15	54
Operations, Field Exercises and Testing	Camp Gregggor Range Training Complex, New Mexico	Jun-15	55
R&R	El Paso, Texas	Jun-15	59
Joint Multination Readiness Training	Hohenfels, Germany	9-Jun-15	62
Joint Multination Readiness Training	Wiesbaden, Germany		65
Joint Multination Readiness Training	Grafenwohr, Germany		66
Joint Multination Readiness Training	US Army Training Center, Hohenfels, Germany		67
Joint Multination Readiness Training	Stalag 384		68
North Carolina National Guard and Maldovian Forces Joint Mobilization Readiness Exercise	Hohenfels, Germany	25-Jun-15	69
Fire Phobia Training	Hohenfels, Germany		76

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## Major Neil E. Edgar – United States Army Airborne Infantry - ARNGUS

On 11 March 1997 Neil boarded a bus for Ft. Benning, GA the Home of the Infantry. Basic Combat Training and Advanced Infantry Training took place back to back over 15 weeks. They had the same bristly Drill Sergeants who dusted them off morning, day and night. Alpha Company 2/58 Infantry was coined the "House of Pain" for good reason. Mental toughness, physical fitness and discipline were paramount. There was a former football lineman in his platoon who lost almost 70 lbs. At graduation he walked right past his wife and she didn't even notice him.



Neil finished the top recruit in his company true to his values and extraordinary level of commitment - not the last time that would happen. It was quite an honor.







After Basic and Advanced Infantry Training he moved to the other side of Ft. Benning to report for Basic Airborne training. In three short weeks he was jumping from perfectly good airplanes day and night.

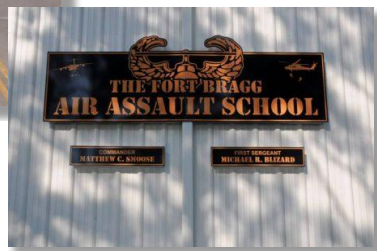


With 'silver wings upon his chest' Neil reported to his first and only active duty station, Ft. Bragg, NC the Home of the Airborne and Special Operations. His unit was the 511th Parachute Infantry Regiment. The 511th was a WWII Regiment that was re-activated in 1997 to test a non-line of sight anti-tank infantry weapon system. They were also attached to the 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment of the 82nd Airborne Division.





Ft. Bragg was the pride of the Army. Everywhere you looked there were fit, sharp-looking Soldiers with Maroon and Green Berets. Neil was proud just to be there serving with such fine men. Every morning 0530 brought physical training or 'PT', rain or shine. Hundreds of men filled the streets running in cadence and carrying their guidons high. Their cadence echoed through the streets like thunder. They were the tip of the spear, America's contingency force who could be anywhere in the world to fight in 18 hours.



While Neil was well prepared, he was never deployed while at Bragg. Military life was different in the pre 9-11 world. It was very much a garrison Army but standards were still very high. Their budgets were lower and military school opportunities were harder to come by.

Six months or so after Neil arrived at Ft. Bragg he volunteered for Air Assault training. The course was only 11 days but they called it the "Toughest 11 days in the Army". The purpose of the school is to train students in air assault operations, sling-load operations and rappelling.

Upon graduation of the course, each graduate would be able to perform skills required to make maximum use of helicopter assets in training and in combat to support their unit operations.

Before being able to attend the course as a student, potential candidates would have to successfully complete Day Zero, notoriously known as the most physically demanding day before the actual school and for causing the majority of students to drop out.

Day Zero consists of physical training, distance running in Army Combat Uniforms, an air assault obstacle course, and a six-mile foot march followed by a strict inspection. Day Zero shows if the candidates are not only physically and mentally ready, but if the Soldier's heart is in the course. That had never been an issue for Neil.



Candidates that survive Day Zero begin the three phases of the course.

In phase one, three-day combat assault training, candidates were taught air assault operations, aircraft orientation, aircraft safety, aero medical evacuation, pathfinder operations, hand-and-arm signals and close-combat operations. They were given a written and "hands-on" exam in order to move on to the next phase.

By the end of phase one, 20% students had dropped out.

In phase two, students were introduced into sling load operations, which involved hands-on training on preparation, inspection and rigging. During this second three-day phase of Air Assault, candidates learned how to rig equipment onto rotary aircraft with a sling, an operation that generally requires the loading Soldier to hook a tether to the underbelly of a helicopter hovering just a few feet above the ground. Typical loads can range anywhere from 1,000 to 8,000 pounds. This operation is extremely precise, and requires intense preparation and concentration from all Air Assault team members. Trainees must use their skills to sling-load a trailer onto a hovering helicopter in under two minutes and pass a written and hands-on tests before moving to the next phase.

Statistically, phase two results in the biggest drop out of the course. Discipline and a tremendous amount of attention to detail are required and emphasized during training. Assault teams cannot afford mistakes or a lack of concentration.

By the end of phase two, only 60% of the students continued on.

In phase three, rappelling phase, students were taught the tying of the hip-rappel seat (Swiss seat), hook-up techniques, lock-in procedures, belay procedures and fast rope familiarization. Students then practiced rappelling from the wall side and open side of a 34-foot tower with and without combat equipment. Eventually students were required to use their new technical skills to do two fully equipped repels from a 34-foot tower and two repels from a UH-60 Blackhawk, hovering at 70-90 feet.



As Neil recalled, “jumping from a plane was one thing but rappelling from a helicopter is another; both are harrowing in their own right.”



Graduation Day – It’s not over yet! Soldiers must complete a 12-mile foot march in full gear plus a rucksack in less than three hours. For their efforts graduates are awarded the Air Assault Badge and the 2B ASI (Additional Skill Identifier).



The total attrition rate in the Air Assault Training course was high, about 50 percent. It was every bit as academic as it was physical with attention to detail being a critical factor. One of the graduates who would not quit expressed the attitude of the survivors best, “Pain and frustration are temporary...it may last a minute, hour, day, a year, but failure is forever.”

Graduation for Neil was another proud moment given half of the volunteers dropped out.



For Neil Air Assault Training was just the beginning. In the spring/summer of 1998 he decided to put himself to the ultimate test ... Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS) or simply 'Selection' as it was called. It was a grueling three week test of every Soldier's strength and stamina. Organized torture is a good descriptor. To prepare he took on ten weeks of intense training on top of his daily physical training regimen. Neil was running and doing calisthenics in the morning, lifting weights at midday, and ruck marching in the evenings. His rucksack varied in weight from 35 lbs to 80 pounds and his distances varied from 4 miles to 20 miles. He was in the best shape of his life and most importantly his feet were hard and calloused and could endure anything.

Every where a trainee went in SFAS they carried 70 lbs. They were assessed on their individual soldiering skills and how well they conducted themselves as a member of a team, under stress and with minimal sleep.



Team week in particular was brutal. This is his recollection of the training schedule for one day that he remembers:

0400 Wake up

0415 Formation

0420 4 mile forced march\*

0530 Chow

0540 6 mile Jeep push (no air in two of the tires) over rough terrain\*

1200 Chow



1230 6 mile downed pilot litter carry over rough terrain (downed pilots were represented by 2 full-sized duffel bags filled with sand and rocks. Estimated weight of each = 250 lbs)\*

1600 2 mile forced march\*

1700 Chow

1800 Area beautification detail (yard work)

2000 - 2400 Psychological testing



*\*all events took place while carrying 70lbs of personal gear. Forced marches were conducted at a 12-minute mile pace. If at any time you fell back further than one arm's length from the soldier in front of you a negative spot report was issued. If you received three negative spot reports you were pulled from the course and sent back to your unit.*

The course was unrelenting and the attrition rate was again very high. For the duration of the course he estimated they covered 200 miles on their feet while carrying heavy weight. Neil personally lost 22 lbs in 21 days and conducted the final event, a 23 mile battle march, with a stress fracture in his right foot. 356 soldiers started the course, 127 finished – a staggering attrition of 65%. Of those who finished The Special Forces Cadre selected 78 who they felt earned the right to move on with Special Forces Training – just 20% of those who started. Neil was a selectee; another very proud moment – once again reflecting on his intense level of commitment.

Selection outcomes:

- Those who quit are Voluntarily Withdrawn (VW) by the course cadre are generally designated NTR or Not-to-Return. This generally ends any opportunity a candidate may have to become a Special Forces soldier. Active Duty military candidates will be returned to their previous units.
- Candidates who are "medically dropped," and who are not then medically discharged from the military due to serious injury, are often permitted to "recycle," and to attempt the course again as soon as they are physically able to do so.
- Candidates who successfully complete the course but who are "Boarded" and not selected ("Non-Select") are generally given the opportunity to attend selection again in 12 or 24 months.

Upon selection at SFAS, all Active Duty enlisted candidates will be briefed on:

- The five Special Forces Active Duty Groups
- The four Special Forces Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) initially open to them
- The languages spoken in each Special Forces Group

Candidates will then complete what is often referred to as a "wish list." Enlisted candidates rank the available MOS (18B, 18C, 18D, 18E) in order of preference. Both enlisted and officer candidates will list in order of preference the SF Groups in which they prefer to serve (1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th, 10th) and the languages in which they prefer to be trained. Language selection is dependent on the Defense Language

Aptitude Battery (DLAB) test scores of the candidate, as well as the SF Group to which they are assigned. Different SF Groups focus on different areas of responsibility (AOR), which require different languages. A board assigns each enlisted and officer candidate his MOS, Group placement, and language. The MOS, Group, that a selected candidate is assigned is not guaranteed, and is contingent upon the needs of the Special Forces community. Generally 80% of selected candidates are awarded their primary choices.

Successful Active Duty candidates usually return to their previous units to await a slot in the Special Forces Qualification Course.

Because of Neil's healthcare training and background, he was selected to fill an 18D role on a Special Forces team. 18Ds are medics. In 1998, there was a delay in getting school dates for the 18D selectees and almost a year went by. Neil was now facing the end of his three year original obligation.

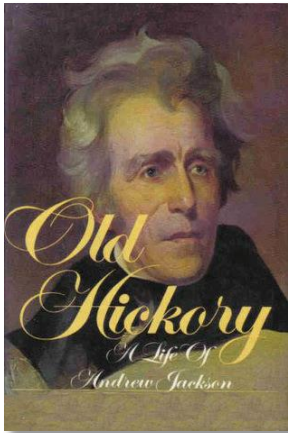
He had accomplished much in the previous three years. His student loan was paid off and he was an E-4 in the Army with Special Forces eligibility. If he elected to renew his contract for the requisite 6 years to train and serve in Special Forces, he would have promoted quickly to E-6 upon completion of the Special Forces Qualification Course. However, he was 30 years old and being a Staff Sergeant at 30 just didn't seem to be the right fit. Honored and proud of his accomplishments Neil elected to leave the Army and get back into the civilian world. It was 11 March 2000.

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At the time of his discharge no one expected the events of 11 September 2001 – but after that life as we all knew it changed. Neil started thinking about going back into government service at some capacity and interviewed first with the FBI. It was not the best of his interviews but shortly thereafter, he had a strong interview with the Secret Service. They wanted Neil and it felt like a much better fit than opportunities at the FBI but his age was working against him. He was rapidly approaching the 36 year age cut off for the Secret Service so before they could make an offer he joined the North Carolina Army National Guard and subsequently enrolled in Officer Candidate School (OCS). It was after all, war time and the age limits for OCS were increasing to stimulate recruitment numbers. Two days after he swore back into the military and three days before the age cut off, Neil heard back from the Secret Service with a class date. Too late! His mind was made up and he was committed to return to military service and become an officer in the Army. He had missed the Army very much and loved being a Soldier.

In December of 2003 he started his journey into the Army Officer Corps. The Officer Candidate School of the United States Army is a 12 week long program held at Fort Benning, Georgia for both prior service and non-prior service candidates. There are also National Guard Officer Candidate Schools that allow a National Guard soldier to train without deviating from the "one weekend a month, two weeks a year" training program; this is called 'Traditional', as it is the original method for the National Guard, and takes 18 months to complete. In addition, National Guard soldiers do have the option to attend the Federal course (if offered), or to attend an accelerated eight-week program which happens in conjunction with other states. Both Federal and state programs are accredited by the U.S. Army Infantry School. Upon completion of either OCS programs, graduates are commissioned as Second Lieutenants (2LT) and then attend the rest of their Basic Officer Leadership courses.

As a soldier in the National Guard Neil followed the traditional 18 month program and branched into intelligence, spending a brief time with the A Co, 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team as a



platoon leader for a Military Intelligence Company. The 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team ("Old Hickory") is a modular heavy brigade of the United States Army National Guard. The unit is composed of units from North Carolina and West Virginia. It was formed from the remains of the downsized 30th Infantry Division of World War II fame. It was nicknamed the "Old Hickory" brigade, in honor of Andrew Jackson, due to the original division being composed of National Guard units from areas where he lived.



OCS was a thorough beat down with lots of hazing and again a 60% attrition rate. True to form however, 2ndLt Neil Edgar graduated 1st in his class in leadership and 2nd in academics. He was good at this Army thing which is often the case when it is something you truly love. Given his former service he had a good sense of what he was capable of and was never afraid to take on a challenge. He thought he could be a good officer because he knew what it was like to be an enlisted soldier. Instantly, Neil was able to grab the respect of his men as a result.

After commissioning on 20 August 2005, Neil was ready for another challenge. He considered going back into Special Forces Training as an officer but at 38 he knew their operational tempo would be too high resulting in many back to back deployments. It was a fact he would deploy sooner or later anyway, but he wanted better balance with his civilian life/career. So, he volunteered for a highly specialized Long Range Surveillance Airborne Infantry Unit.

Long Range Surveillance (LRS) (pronounced "lurse") are elite, specially-trained surveillance units of the United States Army employed for clandestine military operations by the Military Intelligence for gathering direct human intelligence information deep within enemy territory. Classic LRS employment is to infiltrate deep into enemy territory, construct, hide and surveillance sites, and provide continuous surveillance/special reconnaissance of an intelligence target of key interest. LRS teams allow 24-hour surveillance and analysis coverage unlike Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), manned aircraft, and most satellites. Assuming there is no mission compromise, these teams typically remain in position for up to 30 days, as determined by the availability of food and water.

Both Officers and Enlisted had to pass a screening test to be selected for the LRS unit. It was no surprise that Neil passed.





The name of the unit was F Company 425th Infantry (Airborne) (Long Range Surveillance) and they were based in Michigan. Neil had to travel to Michigan once a month to drill and train with the unit but he also had civilian work there at the time and it worked to his advantage.



This unit came into being in the mid-1960s when the 1st Battalion (Airborne), 225th Infantry was reflagged as Companies E and F (Ranger), 425th Infantry and organized as ranger companies. During this period such companies were assigned to division and higher level commands to perform long range reconnaissance patrol missions, as opposed to the ranger companies of today which comprise the battalions of the 75th Ranger Regiment. According to the United States Army Center of Military History, it was reorganized and redesignated as the 425th Infantry Detachment (LRS) effective 1 September 2008.

Insignia - Company F (LRS), 425th Infantry wore the distinctive airborne tab above the griffin patch of the Michigan Army National Guard, distinguishing it as an airborne unit. Previously the unit had worn the airborne tab above the shoulder patch of the 201st Military Intelligence Brigade. Before being reflagged as a long range surveillance company, members of Company F wore a scroll with "RANGER AIRBORNE" in lieu of an airborne tab above the griffin patch and the black beret with distinctive flash which formerly identified them as Rangers. As members of an LRS unit, soldiers of Company F wore the maroon beret, the distinguishing feature of members of an airborne unit.





Modern LRS units are part of the Ranger lineage and are derived from the Long Range Reconnaissance Patrols (LRRPs - pronounced "Lurps") of Vietnam. Their job is dangerous... heavily armed 6 man teams going where they are not supposed to be, deep in enemy territory to gather intelligence. They must rely on stealth, their survival skills and each other. A LRS company is a Corps level intelligence gathering asset and they have similar insertion/extraction capabilities as Special Operations Forces. Their level of training is much higher than that of line infantry units.

Neil had the option to go to **Jumpmaster School** (3 weeks), **Pathfinder School** (3 weeks), **Sniper Leader's Course** (1 week), and the **Reconnaissance and Surveillance Leader's Course** (5 weeks) taught by the 4th Ranger Training Brigade. Seats in these schools were always hard to come by because Airborne and Special Mission units had priority. The schools and courses were extremely stressful, some mentally, some physically, some both. Attrition rates were high, again typically 50-70%. Nonetheless, he pursued, entered and graduated from all four.

**Jumpmaster:** The United States Army Jumpmaster School trains personnel in the skills necessary to

- jumpmaster a combat-equipped jump and the proper attaching, jumping, and releasing of combat and individual equipment while participating in an actual jump that is proficient in the duties and responsibilities of the Jumpmaster and Safety
- master procedures for rigging individual equipment containers and door bundles
- identify personnel parachute components by their specific nomenclature and characteristics
- execute procedures and standards required to conduct a Jumpmaster personnel inspection (JMPI)
- fulfill the duties and responsibilities of the Drop Zone Safety Officer
- deliver the presentation of the Jumpmaster briefing and sustained airborne training (SAT)
- execute the duties of a Jumpmaster and Safety from a USAF aircraft during a day/night combat equipment jump.



In order to obtain the coveted Jumpmaster rating, an individual must complete a series of requirements. Since 1950, only those in the ranks of Sergeant and above may perform any Jumpmaster duties. The individual must be a graduate of The United States Army Advanced Airborne School at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, The United States Army Jumpmaster School at Fort Benning, Georgia or the USASOC Mobile Training Teams Jumpmaster School. In order to enter these elite military schools, the individual must meet the following standards:

1. Active Army and Reserve Component Officer and Enlisted Personnel (E-5 or above).
2. Must be qualified as a parachutist and have a minimum of 12 static line parachute jumps from a high-performance aircraft (C-130, C-141, C-17 or C-5 only).
3. Must have been on jump status for a minimum of 12 months. These months do not have to be consecutive.
4. An Airborne physical current within 5 years.
5. Must be recommended by Battalion Commander or officer in the grade of Lieutenant colonel.
6. Must have a static line jump within the past 180 days.





**Pathfinder:** The mission of the United States Army Pathfinder School is to train personnel in the U.S. Army and its sister services in a three week course, during which the candidate pathfinder learns how to navigate dismounted, establish and operate a day / night helicopter landing zone, establish and operate day / night parachute drop zones (DZs), including computed air release system (CARP) DZs, ground marked release system (GMRS) DZs and Army verbally initiated release system (VIRS) DZs, conduct sling load operations, provide air traffic control (ATC) and navigational assistance to rotary wing (RW) and fixed wing (FW) airborne operations.

**WEEK 1:**

- in-processed and receive pathfinder orientation
- fundamentals of air traffic control (ATC), including ground to air map marking
- proper MEDEVAC procedures and be capable of calling in a 9-line MEDEVAC request
- proper application of close air support (CAS) and learn how to implement it in the ground unit commander's tactical plan
- fundamentals of sling load operations and be certified to rig and inspect sling loads
- how to plan and establish helicopter landing zones (HLZ) for day and nighttime operations

**WEEK 2:**

- how to establish and operate HLZ/PZs
- how to establish day/night DZs (CARP, GMRP, and VIRS) for the insertion of personnel and equipment
- understand the 8 selection factors for selecting a drop zone and the duties and responsibilities of the drop zone support team leader (DZSTL)
- complete the Basic Airborne Refresher
- how to perform the duties of the GTA during a VIRS drop

**WEEK 3:**

- gain technical competence on the static load/unload procedures for a UH-60 helicopter
- perform the duties in every position of the sling load hook-up team.
- demonstrate the knowledge they have been taught during the course during the field training exercises, during which they are evaluated as a team leader/assistant team leader and ground to air/internal net recorder.
- demonstrate proficiency in all areas of pathfinder operations and meet all graduation requirements.

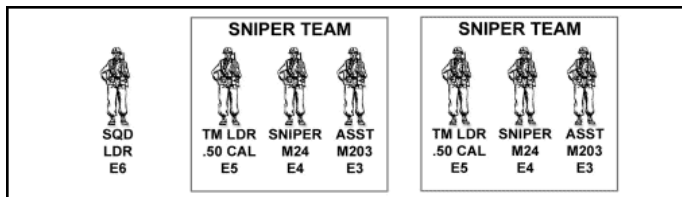


U.S. Graduation: Graduates from the US Army Pathfinder School are awarded the Pathfinder Badge. It is important to note that in addition to all the requirements for completing the course, there is an additional requirement to be awarded the Pathfinder Badge: the candidate Pathfinder must view “a suspended object falling from the sky” (i.e. a door bundle, jumper, heavy equipment, etc.).



## Sniper Employment Leaders Course:

**SNIPER TEAMS** - The battalion sniper squad is a modular organization consisting of a squad leader and two similarly equipped three-man sniper teams. Each team, consisting of the team leader, one sniper, and one observer, is capable of providing the battalion with a full range of sniper support. The team is equipped with both the M24 7.62-mm sniper rifle (providing antipersonnel fires out to 800 meters) and the .50-caliber XM107 sniper rifle (providing antipersonnel and anti-equipment fires beyond 800 meters). The third member of the sniper team is equipped with an M203 rifle system to provide protection and security for the sniper and his spotter as well as a means to break contact if the team is compromised. Sniper teams avoid contact until they have identified their targets. Involvement in sustained close combat is not the optimal employment of sniper teams.



The commander or designated sniper employment officer controls sniper teams from a central location. Once deployed, snipers generally operate independently. They must understand the commander's intent, his concept of the operation, and the purpose for their assigned tasks which might include specific targets like enemy leaders, command and control operators, ATGM gunners, armored vehicle commanders, weapons crews and enemy snipers or to simply slow defensive preparations of the enemy by selecting targets at their discretion. This understanding allows the teams to exercise initiative within the framework of the commander's intent and to support the commander's concept and accomplishment of the unit's mission. Snipers are effective only in areas that offer good fields of fire and observation. They must have the freedom of action to choose their own positions once on the ground. The number of sniper teams participating in an operation depends on their availability, the expected duration of the mission, and the enemy's strength.

The sniper's primary mission is to support combat operations by delivering precise rifle fire from concealed positions. The mission assigned to a sniper team for a particular operation consists of the task(s) the commander wants the sniper team to accomplish and the reason (purpose) for it. The commander must decide how he wants his sniper team to affect the battlefield. Then he must assign missions to achieve this effect.

Snipers are generally positioned to observe or control one or more avenues of approach into the defensive position. Due to the types of weapons systems available, snipers may be used against secondary avenues of approach. Sniper employment can increase all-round security and allow the commander to concentrate his combat power against the most likely enemy avenue of approach. Snipers may support the SBCT infantry battalion by providing extra optics for target acquisition and precise long-range fires to complement those of the M249, M240B, and M2 machine guns. This arrangement seeks to maximize the effectiveness of all the unit's weapons systems. Snipers in an economy-of-force role may cover dismounted enemy avenues of approach into defensive positions.

**Reconnaissance and Surveillance Leader's Course:** The Reconnaissance and Surveillance Leaders Course is a 33-day course conducted by Delta Company, 4th Ranger Training Battalion at Fort Benning, GA. The purpose of the course is to teach reconnaissance, surveillance, and target acquisition fundamentals to Soldiers, NCOs, and officers who are currently or may one day find themselves serving in reconnaissance units. What sets RSLC apart from other reconnaissance courses is the focus on those who actually execute reconnaissance and surveillance tasks. RSLC teaches the skill or the “science” of gathering and reporting intelligence. In recent years, RSLC has not only trained conventional and special operations Army units, but has also trained Marine Corps, Navy, and Air Force service members. As word has spread about the RSLC, inter-agency partners in law enforcement have sought instruction on the technical aspects of collection reporting and communications.

WEEK 1: RSLC is a physically and mentally demanding course where one block of instruction builds upon the next, resulting in a multi-day, graded, field training exercise where students will execute skills learned in both urban and wooded environments. They will:

- execute a seven hour land navigation course in which they will move cross-country during day and limited visibility covering approximately 15 kilometers.
- receive instruction on the fundamentals of reconnaissance and surveillance and are taught how to use equipment in the Army inventory such as thermals, range finders and commercial-off-the-shelf (COT) equipment such as single-lens reflex (SLR) cameras to capture intelligence.
- camouflage themselves and equipment, stalking, and selection, occupation, and concealment of surveillance sites

The first week culminates in an airborne operation, exposing airborne qualified Soldiers to the considerations needed for a static line parachute insertion. Another factor that makes RSLC unique is that the course is designed to accommodate Military Freefall (MFF) teams that attend. Select cadre members are MFF and MFF Jumpmaster qualified, allowing those teams the opportunity to learn planning considerations of MFF operations as they pertain to reconnaissance and surveillance missions.



WEEK 2: This week begins with a two-day communications class. During this block of instruction, students learn how to:

- send messages across the frequency spectrum, using high frequency (HF), very high frequency (VHF), and ultra high frequency (UHF) radios
  - to send messages using High Performance Waveform (HPW) which allows reconnaissance Soldiers to send written reports and pictures on Microsoft Outlook using the PRC-150 and PRC-117F radios. This skill gives commanders the ability to receive timely, accurate intelligence.
- Building on the ability to send intelligence via radio, students conduct area and zone reconnaissance as well as static and active surveillance throughout the week in both urban and wooded terrain, perfecting their reporting formats and field craft.

Students continue their exposure to insertion and extraction techniques by conducting fast rope insertion/extraction system (FRIES) and special patrol insertion/extraction system (SPIES) training.



WEEK 3 & 4: The final week and a half are spent with students learning how to plan an operation using the troop leading procedures (TLPs) and incorporating air movement, fires, and evasion and recovery planning. Following the orders process students conduct a 48-hour non-graded situational training exercise (STX) where they will execute the mission they just planned under the watchful eye of RSLC instructors, allowing the students to ask questions and receive assistance along the way. Once this mission is complete and after-action reviews (AARs) are conducted, the students go into isolation planning for their graded culminating field training exercises (FTX). Throughout the FTX, students will execute and be graded on all the skills they learned from planning, reconnaissance and surveillance operations, intelligence reporting techniques, communications, fires, evasion and recovery, and small unit tactics to name a few. The end result is a graduate with the skill to plan and conduct a myriad of reconnaissance and surveillance operations, enhancing the ability of any brigade combat team.



### Combat Lifesaver Training:

A Combat Lifesaver (CLS) is non-medic soldier with moderate emergency medical training to provide care at the point of wounding. Combat Lifesaver skills are intended for use in combat; however, the skills may be applied to soldiers in non-combat situations. The Combat Lifesaver is instructed in various techniques to treat and stabilize injuries related to combat. To include, but not limited to, blast injury, amputation, severe bleeding, penetrating chest injuries, simple airway management, and evacuation techniques. The Combat Lifesaver doctrine was developed as an effort to increase survivability in combat environments where the combat medic may not be readily available.



The Combat Lifesaver is a bridge between self aid or buddy aid, and the Combat Medic (68W). The Combat Lifesaver can augment the Combat Medic, as needed. The 68W trains the Combat Lifesaver. It is a requirement that all IET (Initial Entry Training) soldiers complete the CLS (Combat Lifesaver) course, and pass the CLS exam during BCT (Basic Combat Training). Those IET Soldiers who fail to complete the course, or pass the exam are recycled to another Troop that is beginning the CLS Course.

## Unit Movement Officer Course (UMO):

Unit Movement Responsibilities - A unit movement operation is the movement of unit equipment, personnel, and accompanying supplies from one location to another. Unit movement operations are conducted during training exercises, mobilization, and deployment. Unit movement operations are planned, coordinated, and executed by four principal modes: rail, motor, air, and sea. The mode of movement determines tactics, techniques and procedures for preparation, planning, coordination and execution of unit movements.



Every movement is unique. These operations seldom begin with a clear idea of the entire package or purpose. Often, they develop by bits and pieces, with a few false starts and subsequent large adjustments. They follow a general sequence, although the stages often overlap in space and time, and can happen simultaneously.

The process is flexible and can be abbreviated and adjusted as required. However, the fundamental processes of moving units do not change to support a deployment. They become more complex because of the need to coordinate on a broad scale with other Services and organizations (outside the US Army).

The selection and training of UMOs is one of the most critical factors affecting a unit's deployment process. However, traditionally the additional duty of UMO most often is assigned to the lieutenant with the most time left to serve in the company; that usually means the one with the least amount of experience. This is a recipe for disaster because of the lieutenant's lack of knowledge and background.

Another problem with giving the UMO job to the new lieutenant is that he probably will leave the company after a year. A better alternative would be to select a smart staff sergeant or sergeant first class to be the UMO. That noncommissioned officer (NCO) will have the knowledge and experience to understand the deployment process and will be in the company for 2 or 3 years, which means that the commander will not be fighting constantly to keep a trained person in the UMO position.

Whoever is chosen to be the UMO must be detail-oriented and willing to dedicate the time needed to do the job right. The person selected to be the Transportation Coordinators' Automated Information for Movement System (TC-AIMS) operator needs to be computer literate and, like the UMO, detail oriented. It is possible for the UMO to also serve as the TC-AIMS operator, but it is not recommended because the UMO will be busy enough coordinating transportation, performing crisis management, and executing many other tasks. Adding the chore of updating TC-AIMS data could be too much for a UMO.

Possibly the biggest challenge encountered is a lack of operators with experience in using TC-AIMS. Most of our operators had been to TC-AIMS training, but their skills were perishable because they lacked post-training experience.

One way of resolving this is by incorporating UMO and TC-AIMS tasks into training courses.

With multiple levels of sophisticated training and development behind him, Neil was now a finely honed sword and as a leader had the rapport and total respect of his men.





In 2009 duty called with Operation Iraqi Freedom. His unit was attached to the 504th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade. The 504th had a distinguished history supporting not only III Corps exercises and operations, but contingency operations worldwide. The Brigade deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in Iraq on two occasions and more recently on multiple occasions provided Soldiers in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. The Brigade continues to be at the forefront of Army Transformation and has some of the most state-of-the-art collection equipment making them one of the premier intelligence collection units in the United States Army.

This would be the first of several deployments for Neil and as his father, 82 year old Seaman Second Class Howard Donald Edgar, Jr., WWII US Navy Gunboat Veteran, hugged him goodbye he gave this advice, "***Be where you are with all of your mind***", advice that would be repeated again years later.



1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Neil Edgar's unit, Company F, 425<sup>th</sup> Infantry Airborne Long Range Surveillance, assembled at Ft. Lewis, WA where they spent six weeks mobilizing in anticipation of deployment to Iraq to relieve another Long Range Reconnaissance company from Ft. Hood, Texas. Fort Lewis is a United States military facility located 9.1 miles (14.6 km) south-southwest of Tacoma, Washington under the jurisdiction of the United States Army Joint Base Garrison, Joint Base Lewis–McChord. It was merged with the United States Air Force's McChord Air Force Base on 1 February 2010 into a Joint Base as a result of Base Realignment and Closure Commission recommendations of 2005.



Joint Base Lewis-McChord is a training and mobilization center for all services and is the only Army power-projection base west of the Rocky Mountains. Its geographic location provides rapid access to the deep water ports of Tacoma, Olympia and Seattle for deploying equipment. Units can be deployed from McChord Field, and individuals and small groups can also use nearby Sea-Tac Airport. The strategic location of the base provides Air Force units with the ability to conduct combat and humanitarian airlift with the C-17 Globemaster III.



From Ft. Lewis Edgar's unit was moved to Kuwait for theatre specific training, briefings, and to get accustomed to operating in 125 degree heat and sandstorms.



On arrival at Contingency Operating Site Sykes (COS Sykes) in Tal Afar, Iraq, Edgar spent a week in meetings with the Ft. Hood company Executive Officer learning of his successes and frustrations in order to make smooth transition. U.S. forces manned the base, roughly 37 miles east of Mosul, since the initial stages of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003. Operation Iraqi Freedom transitioned to Operation New Dawn on 1 September 2010 when U.S. Soldiers assumed an advisory and training role to help prepare Iraqi Security Forces to independently secure Iraq from threats.







It was a long year away from home and Iraq was austere to say the least. They had three main missions there; Time-Sensitive Targeting, Border Interdiction along the Syrian Border, and Security/Stability Operations. They also had a few intelligence gathering missions that were classified in nature. Neil remained very busy. Since he was the company Executive Officer he could pick and choose most of the missions he went on, doing a little bit of everything including leading the company in the Commander's absence and leading the Operations Section as well – completing much administrative work.





During his first mission on 31 July 2009 much ground was covered and Edgar became familiar with the area in which he would be operating meeting a few of his Iraqi counterparts. Edgar spoke with an

Iraqi Army General through an interpreter and while he seemed genuinely concerned about his particular mission and the overall security of his country, US Forces must remain cautious as some of the Iraqi soldiers are corrupt.



The 504th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade would conduct some of its intelligence and reconnaissance missions alone (without Iraqi counterparts) but all missions needed to be approved by the Iraqis due to recent security agreement. They also did a lot of work with an Iraqi Commando Platoon. There were many successes as Edgar reported in a letter home, "... our silent, sneaky efforts are resulting in the capture of quite a few bad guys."



On a mission at the Syrian border.

When not on missions 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Edgar lived in a Containerized Housing Unit. **Containerized Housing Unit**, usually abbreviated as **CHU** (and sometimes called **Containerized Living Unit** or **CLU**) is the name given to an ISO shipping container pre-fabricated into a living quarters. Such containers can be transported by container ships, railroad cars, planes, and trucks that are capable of transporting intermodal freight



transport cargo. His CHU was 7 ft. wide by 13 ft. long and as an officer he bunked alone. 7 X 13 seems small but since it is air-conditioned his CHU was his castle. There was no indoor plumbing anywhere on COS Sykes. Thus, his CHU was called a dry-CHU. Showers, sinks, and toilets were also in air-conditioned trailers that all shared.



Home Sweet Home .....

The water in Iraq was not potable so there were pallets of water virtually everywhere on the COS. He found the chow hall shockingly good always with a large variety to choose from and a small ice cream parlor to boot. After one mission he found himself on the midnight chow line for a cool refreshing strawberry shake!! In addition there was a movie theatre, a nice gym, a free internet cafe, basketball courts, ping-pong, billiards, and even a softball field - lots to do during downtime.



Iraq was exactly how he expected it to be and definitely not a place he would return for a vacation. He found it interesting, however, to see how the Iraqi people there live and interact.



One of his least fondest memories, however, was the infamous camel spider! They were truly creepy! Rumor had it they were not true arachnids but more like the arthropods and that indeed is the case. They are very large (much larger than the largest US spiders) they can run very quickly (but not as fast as Edgar) and if you are a slow runner you may even hear them hiss.



As far as the other flora and fauna he saw goats, camels, donkeys, some birds, and sand fleas. They were like piranhas and liked to gnaw on any exposed flesh, especially faces while you on line at the chow hall.

This was an historical time for the Iraqis as they struggled to take the reins of control and secure their future. The general populace seemed indifferent toward Neil and his men. The children waved and ran to their vehicles because often times soldiers gave them snacks. You find yourself pulling for the Iraqis after watching their youth play soccer in a field of trash. Time will tell if the Iraqis can ever live in peace.









The little guy to 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Edgar's right is Adin. He was 10 years old and quite a conversationalist. He spoke better English than Edgar spoke his language and was a proud student at one of the two schools in his city. Farming is the career he wishes to pursue when he grows up. He was quite a negotiator so Edgar suggested he should be a car salesman instead. Edgar could not spell or pronounce the boy's name to his left. He spoke very little English so usually they just smile at each other and thumb-wrestled.

The building behind them is an Iraqi Police Station. Just to the left of Adin's head you will see the remnants of a car bomb that detonated just a few days before. Several Iraqis were killed or wounded as a result.

In another letter home Edgar wrote, "Hopefully someday conditions in Iraq will be such that Adin can raise a healthy crop and thumb-wrestling will be a national past-time."

1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Neil Edgar was remained upbeat in his twelve month assignment. In a letter home he said, "Life here is good, our morale is high, and we are eager to make a difference. For me this is my first deployment and I feel good about being here. It would be much like a boxer who spent all of his life training, and never getting a chance to step in the ring."



With that spirit in mind Neil he would experience something many before him had done – he would be serving his nation far away from home, from family and from friends, at Christmas. No one has captured the essence of that as well as Michael Marks in a poem he dedicated to those who had served and were currently or would be serving:



A SOLDIER'S CHRISTMAS

The embers glowed softly, and in their dim light,  
I gazed round the room and I cherished the sight.  
My wife was asleep, her head on my chest,  
my daughter beside me, angelic in rest.

Outside the snow fell, a blanket of white,  
Transforming the yard to a winter delight.  
The sparkling lights in the tree, I believe,  
Completed the magic that was Christmas Eve.

My eyelids were heavy, my breathing was deep,  
Secure and surrounded by love I would sleep  
in perfect contentment, or so it would seem.  
So I slumbered, perhaps I started to dream.

The sound wasn't loud, and it wasn't too near,  
But I opened my eye when it tickled my ear.  
Perhaps just a cough, I didn't quite know,  
Then the sure sound of footsteps outside in the snow.

My soul gave a tremble, I struggled to hear,  
and I crept to the door just to see who was near.  
Standing out in the cold and the dark of the night,  
A lone figure stood, his face weary and tight.

A soldier, I puzzled, some twenty years old  
Perhaps a Marine, huddled here in the cold.  
Alone in the dark, he looked up and smiled,  
Standing watch over me, and my wife and my child.

Perhaps a Marine, huddled here in the cold.  
Alone in the dark, he looked up and smiled,  
Standing watch over me, and my wife and my child.

"What are you doing?" I asked without fear  
"Come in this moment, it's freezing out here!  
Put down your pack, brush the snow from your sleeve,  
You should be at home on a cold Christmas Eve!"

For barely a moment I saw his eyes shift,  
away from the cold and the snow blown in drifts,  
to the window that danced with a warm fire's light  
then he sighed and he said "Its really all right,  
I'm out here by choice. I'm here every night"

"Its my duty to stand at the front of the line,  
that separates you from the darkest of times.  
No one had to ask or beg or implore me,  
I'm proud to stand here like my fathers before me.

My Gramps died at 'Pearl on a day in December,"  
then he sighed, "That's a Christmas 'Gram always remembers."  
My dad stood his watch in the jungles of 'Nam  
And now it is my turn and so, here I am.

I've not seen my own son in more than a while,  
But my wife sends me pictures, he's sure got her smile.  
Then he bent and he carefully pulled from his bag,  
The red white and blue... an American flag.

"I can live through the cold and the being alone,  
Away from my family, my house and my home,  
I can stand at my post through the rain and the sleet,  
I can sleep in a foxhole with little to eat,  
I can carry the weight of killing another  
or lay down my life with my sisters and brothers  
who stand at the front against any and all,  
to insure for all time that this flag will not fall."

"So go back inside," he said, "harbor no fright  
Your family is waiting and I'll be all right."  
"But isn't there something I can do, at the least,  
"Give you money," I asked, "or prepare you a feast?  
It seems all too little for all that you've done,  
For being away from your wife and your son."

Then his eye welled a tear that held no regret,  
"Just tell us you love us, and never forget  
To fight for our rights back at home while we're gone.  
To stand your own watch, no matter how long.

For when we come home, either standing or dead,  
to know you remember we fought and we bled  
is payment enough, and with that we will trust.  
That we mattered to you as you mattered to us.



While the commitment and training to get this far was beyond intense, and there was always pressure to remain alert in an area of hostility filled with constant risk and uncertainty, by far the heaviest burden considering the entire deployment, the most pressure for Neil was being responsible for the movement of Company F 425<sup>th</sup> Infantry ABN LRS 4 men and equipment in and out of theater; a task as daunting as war itself. For his overall effort during the deployment he received a Bronze Star of which he is the most proud. But far beyond all his accomplishment and citations, what he is most proud of is bringing 150 men to Iraq and 150 back home safely. As a leader in the Army, you can't ask for more than that. His fondest memory by far will always be when he saw his wife, Cindy, and all of the families and his men reuniting at their homecoming. That is a moment in time he will never forget!





## THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO ALL WHO SHALL SEE THESE PRESENTS, GREETING: THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AUTHORIZED BY EXECUTIVE ORDER, 24 AUGUST 1962 HAS AWARDED

### THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL

TO  
FIRST LIEUTENANT NEIL EDGAR, UNITED STATES ARMY  
FOX COMPANY, 425TH INFANTRY REGIMENT (ABN) (LRS), 2-3 HEAVY BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM

FOR EXCEPTIONAL AND MERITORIOUS SERVICE WHILE ASSIGNED AS A COMPANY EXECUTIVE OFFICER DURING OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM. YOUR SUPERB LEADERSHIP, TECHNICAL AND TACTICAL EXPERTISE, AND COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE DURING COMBAT OPERATIONS CONTRIBUTED TO THE OVERWHELMING SUCCESS OF THE COMMAND'S MISSION. YOUR SELFLESS SERVICE AND DEDICATION TO DUTY ARE IN KEEPING WITH THE HIGHEST TRADITIONS OF MILITARY SERVICE AND REFLECT DISTINCT CREDIT UPON YOURSELF, THE UNITED STATES DIVISION - NORTH, AND THE UNITED STATES ARMY.

FROM 9 MAY 2009 TO 8 MAY 2010  
GIVEN UNDER MY HAND IN THE CITY OF WASHINGTON

THIS 28TH DAY OF FEBRUARY 2010

ANTHONY A. CUCOLO III  
Major General, U.S. Army  
Commander, Task Force Marne  
PO #059-007, 28 FEBRUARY 2010



SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

DA FORM 4980-5-WT, JAN 2000. Previous edition is obsolete.

#### Narrative Page

#### NARRATIVE TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF

#### THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL

TO  
FIRST LIEUTENANT NEIL E. EDGAR

First Lieutenant Neil E. Edgar, United States Army, distinguished himself through exceptionally meritorious service to the United States Army as the Executive Officer for Foxtrot Company, 425<sup>th</sup> Infantry, (ABN) (LRS), FOB Sykes, Iraq, from 09 May 2009 to 08 May 2010 during OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM 09-10. First Lieutenant Edgar served as the Executive Officer for F Company throughout the entire deployment and consistently displayed competence and a strong commitment to mission accomplishment. The first critical task that First Lieutenant Edgar accomplished was the successful organization and execution of the company's transfer of property from Bravo Troop, 38<sup>th</sup> CAV (LRS). He ensured that the transfer of information and lessons learned occurred parallel to the property transfer, which provided critical continuity in logistics support. The solid logistical foundation that First Lieutenant Edgar established during the first weeks of the deployment was immediately tested when F Company assumed the role of a battle space-owning unit responsible for a 1628 square kilometer sector along the Syrian border. He quickly applied his effective problem solving skills to an increasingly complex problem set and fostered a solution-oriented culture within his section. At every point during this deployment, First Lieutenant Edgar remained resolute in his drive to align the company's logistical support capabilities with a demanding operational tempo. He routinely empowered his subordinates to analyze a myriad of maintenance, supply and life support challenges and reinforced the value of that decentralized approach by supporting his subordinates' proposed solutions. This method of leveraging every available perspective to attack logistical challenges proved to be invaluable as F Company transitioned through numerous higher headquarters and mission sets. First Lieutenant Edgar's management and organizational skills gave F Company the ability to sustain both forward operating base operations and combat operations, which is directly linked to the decrease in enemy activity in area of operations Thunder. Persistence and innovation were the key components of his success in managing the maintenance of a fleet of 34 up-armored vehicles employed in difficult, mountainous terrain in the Western Ninewah province of Iraq. His unyielding commitment to operational readiness resulted in F Company's ability exert continuous pressure against foreign terrorist and fighter networks along the Syrian border. When equipment needed to be repaired, First Lieutenant Edgar always found a way to get the job done. When missions required additional equipment to integrate LRS maneuver elements with Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance assets, First Lieutenant Edgar leveraged all available channels to acquire that equipment in order to enhance F Company's capabilities. This enabled LRS elements to maintain a "persistent stare" along the border, which resulted in the company's detention of 112 individuals crossing from Syria into Iraq over the course of 120 combat patrols and 55 Time Sensitive Targeting missions. First Lieutenant Neil E. Edgar's actions are in keeping with the finest traditions of military service and reflect distinct credit upon himself, Task Force Marne, United States Division-North, and the United States Army.

RECOMMENDATION FOR AWARD		
For use of this form, see AR 600-8-22, 9th proponent agency is DCS, G-1.		
For valor/heroism/wartime and all awards higher than MSM, refer to special instructions in Chapter 3, AR 600-8-22.		
1. TO COMMANDER, TASK FORCE MARNE, USD-N COB SPEICHER, APO AE 09393	2. FROM COMMANDER, F COMPANY, 425 IN LRS FOB SYKES, IRAQ APO AE 09351	3. DATE (YYYYMMDD) 20100131
<b>PART I - SOLDIER DATA</b>		
4. NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial) EDGAR, NEIL E	5. RANK 1LT	6. SSN
7. ORGANIZATION F COMPANY, 425th IN (ABN) (LRS) FOB SYKES, IRAQ APO AE 09351	8. PREVIOUS AWARDS AAM-1	
9. BRANCH OF SERVICE	10. RECOMMENDED AWARD BSM	11. PERIOD OF AWARD a. FROM 20090509 b. TO 20100508
12. REASON FOR AWARD		
12a. INDICATE REASON SVC	12b. INTERIM AWARD YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	12c. POSTHUMOUS YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
13. PROPOSED PRESENTATION DATE (YYYYMMDD) 20100415		
<b>PART II - RECOMMENDER DATA</b>		
14. NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial) JENZ, BRIAN E.	15. ADDRESS F COMPANY, 425th IN (ABN) (LRS) FOB SYKES, IRAQ APO AE 09351	
16. TITLE/POSITION COMPANY COMMANDER	17. RANK CPT	18. SIGNATURE GENZ, BRIAN, ERICH.1090248959
18. RELATIONSHIP TO AWARDEE COMMANDER		
<b>PART III - JUSTIFICATION AND CITATION DATA</b> (Use specific bullet examples of meritorious acts or service)		
19. ACHIEVEMENTS ACHIEVEMENT #1 SEE ATTACHED NARRATIVE		
ACHIEVEMENT #2		
ACHIEVEMENT #3		
ACHIEVEMENT #4		
20. PROPOSED CITATION		
SEE PROPOSED CITATION		

DA FORM 638, APR 2006

REPLACES DA FORM 638-1  
PREVIOUS EDITIONS OF DA FORM 638 ARE OBSOLETE.

Page 1 of 3  
APO PE 43 0065

NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial) EDGAR, NEIL E		SSN
<b>PART IV - RECOMMENDATIONS/APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL</b>		
21. I certify that this individual is eligible for an award in accordance with AR 600-8-22, and that the information contained in Part I is correct.		22a. SIGNATURE GENZ, BRIAN, ERICH.1090248959
22b. DATE (YYYYMMDD) 20100131		22c. DATE (YYYYMMDD) 20100131
23. INTERMEDIATE AUTHORITY		
a. TO COMMANDER, 3-73 CAV FOB SYKES, IRAQ APO AE 09351	b. FROM COMMANDER, F CO, 425 IN FOB SYKES, IRAQ APO AE 09351	c. DATE (YYYYMMDD) 20100131
24. RECOMMENDATION: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> APPROVAL <input type="checkbox"/> DISAPPROVAL <input type="checkbox"/> UPGRADE TO: <input type="checkbox"/> DOWNGRADE TO:		
25. NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial) JENZ, BRIAN E.		
26. TITLE/POSITION COMPANY COMMANDER		
27. SIGNATURE GENZ, BRIAN, ERICH.1090248959		
28. COMMENTS		
29. INTERMEDIATE AUTHORITY		
a. TO CDR, 2BCT, TF MARNE FOB MAREZ, APO AE 09334	b. FROM COMMANDER, 3-73 CAV FOB SYKES, IRAQ APO AE 09351	c. DATE (YYYYMMDD) 20100205
30. RECOMMENDATION: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> APPROVAL <input type="checkbox"/> DISAPPROVAL <input type="checkbox"/> UPGRADE TO: <input type="checkbox"/> DOWNGRADE TO:		
31. NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial) HOOPER, SCOTT G.		
32. TITLE/POSITION SQUADRON COMMANDER		
33. SIGNATURE HOOPER, SCOTT, GORDON.11647879		
34. COMMENTS Vell done.		
35. INTERMEDIATE AUTHORITY		
a. TO CDR, TF MARNE, USD-N COB SPEICHER, APO AE 09393	b. FROM CDR, 2BCT, TF MARNE FOB MAREZ, APO AE 09334	c. DATE (YYYYMMDD) 20100216
36. RECOMMENDATION: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> APPROVAL <input type="checkbox"/> DISAPPROVAL <input type="checkbox"/> UPGRADE TO: <input type="checkbox"/> DOWNGRADE TO:		
37. NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial) SEXTON, CHARLES E.A.		
38. TITLE/POSITION BRIGADE COMMANDER		
39. SIGNATURE SEXTON, CHARLES, EDGAR.10726383		
40. COMMENTS This Officer has earned this recognition through his actions. He has proven his worth in battle as a professional.		
41. APPROVAL AUTHORITY		
a. TO ORDERS ISSUING AUTHORITY	b. FROM CDR, TF MARNE, USD-N COB SPEICHER, APO AE 09393	c. DATE (YYYYMMDD) MAR 09 2010
42. RECOMMENDATION: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> APPROVED <input type="checkbox"/> DISAPPROVED <input type="checkbox"/> RECOMMEND UPGRADE TO: <input type="checkbox"/> DOWNGRADE TO:		
43. NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial) LUCOLO, ANTHONY A. III		
44. TITLE/POSITION COMMANDING GENERAL		
45. SIGNATURE		
<b>PART V - ORDERS DATA</b>		
46. ORDERS ISSUING TO CDR, TASK FORCE MARNE, USD-N APO AE 09393	47. PERMANENT ORDER NO. 059-007	48. DISTRIBUTION 1-File 1-OMPP 3-Individual
49. NAME OF ORDERS BROWN, JONI	50. RANK CPT	
51. TITLE/POSITION JSD-N G1 AWARDS OIC	52. APPROVED AWARD BSM	
53. SIGNATURE JONI BROWN	54. DATE (YYYYMMDD) 20100228	

DA FORM 638, APR 2006

Page 2 of 3  
APO PE 43 0065

Citation Page

CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF

THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL

TO

FIRST LIEUTENANT NEIL E. EDGAR

FIRST LIEUTENANT NEIL E. EDGAR, UNITED STATES ARMY, DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF THROUGH EXCEPTIONALLY MERITORIOUS SERVICE TO THE UNITED STATES AS THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER FOR FOXTROT COMPANY 425 INFANTRY (ABN) (LRS), 2D "SPARTANS" BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM, TASK FORCE MARNE, UNITED STATES DIVISION-NORTH, MOSUL, IRAQ FROM 9 MAY 2009 TO 8 MAY 2010 DURING OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM. FIRST LIEUTENANT EDGAR'S ACTIONS ARE IN KEEPING WITH THE FINEST TRADITIONS OF MILITARY SERVICE AND REFLECT DISTINCT CREDIT UPON HIMSELF, THE SPARTAN BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM, TASK FORCE MARNE, UNITED STATES DIVISION-NORTH, AND THE UNITED STATES ARMY.



With their mission completed Company F 425<sup>th</sup> Infantry ABN LRS returned stateside April 2010. One year later on 14 June 2011 U.S. forces officially transferred responsibility of Contingency Operating Site Sykes to Iraqi Security Forces. U.S. forces had manned the base since the initial stages of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003. Once Operation Iraqi Freedom transitioned to Operation New Dawn, U.S. Soldiers assumed an advisory and training role to help prepare ISF to independently secure Iraq from threats.



U.S. forces reallocated the equipment through the Foreign Excess Personnel Property program, which is designed to identify and distribute eligible property items to the Iraqi government. They left all the maintenance bays and some other equipment necessary to run their day-to-day operations such as generators. In addition they left all of the living quarters, including Neil's former residence – the CHU.

At the time this was the largest base that was transitioned since arriving in country.

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Back in the States, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Neil Edgar's insatiable appetite for training continued.

#### **National Guard Joint Staff Training Course (JSTC):**

Members of the National Guard are often called upon to work with local emergency responders, state and federal agencies, and federal military forces during major events occurring in their state, such as natural disasters or large-scale social events. This course provides comprehensive training and education for joint staff to support Joint Force Headquarters (JFHQ) and Joint Task Force (JTF) missions in state or federal situations.

The weeklong training courses consisted of a review of basic National Incident Management System principles, a series of compounding practical exercises and classroom instruction led by subject matter experts. During the training, instructors prepare multiple tabletop exercises based on all-hazards emergency preparedness contingencies and crisis action planning which are designed to prepare National Guard leaders and members of the Joint Staff to coordinate and integrate military and federal agencies during a disaster. The JSTC scenarios are tailored to the specific regions for National Guard Units by incorporating historical examples of local weather and other emergencies into the practical exercises.

## Defense Support of Civil Authorities Course (DSCA):

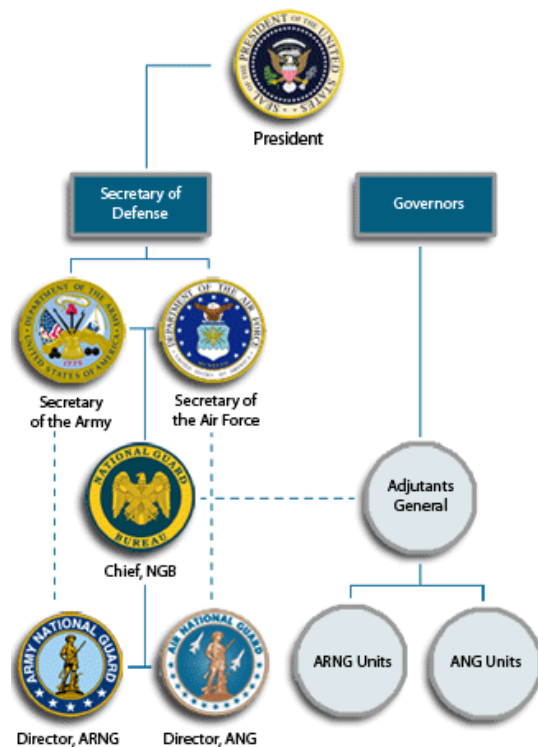
The organization of the National Guard from a federal perspective - National Guard Bureau (NGB). The National Guard Bureau was created as a joint activity of the Defense Department and consists of the Army and Air National Guards. Federally, the chief of the National Guard Bureau serves as a military advisor to the president, the secretary of defense, and the National Security Council. He is a member of the joint chiefs of staff and is the Department of Defense's official channel of communication to the governors and state adjutants general on all matters pertaining to the National Guard.

The chief is the channel of communications between the services and the 50 states, three territories (Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands and Guam) and the District of Columbia. Additionally, the chief of the National Guard Bureau reports directly to the secretary of defense on readiness and equipment levels to prepare an annual plan for response to natural disasters and terrorist events. The chief is also a principal advisor to the secretary of defense on matters involving non-federalized National Guard forces on matters discussed in this lesson and by other matters determined by the secretary of defense.

The organization of the National Guard from the state point of view. The chief of the National Guard Bureau is the channel of communication between the services and the 54 states and territories. Each state and territory has an adjutant general. Through the adjutants general, the chief communicates with the governors (United States code Title 32, sec. 314). The adjutant general is the military representative to and works for the governor.

In many cases, the adjutants general have both an air and army assistant adjutant general that reports to them. In many cases, the adjutant general is also in charge of the state's emergency management agency. The states' adjutants general do not directly report to the chief of the National Guard Bureau, but work and coordinate with him. The term state includes the fifty States, the U. S. Virgin Islands, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia.

The term governor includes the governors of the several states, the Virgin Islands, Guam, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and, in the case of the District of Columbia National Guard, the president or his designee.



Each state has a joint force headquarters. The headquarters, referred to as the JFHQ-State, provides command and control of all National Guard forces in the state or territory for the governor, or, in the case of the District of Columbia, the Secretary of the Army. It acts as a joint headquarters for national-level response efforts during contingency operations.

When operating across both state and federal responses the 2012 National Defense Authorization Act designated a dual-status commander. The intended benefit is to facilitate unity of effort between state National Guard forces and federal military forces in achieving common objectives in a disaster response or other national event. Since the National Guard is a dual state/federal force, its missions include homeland defense, homeland security, state missions and domestic missions.

DSCA Training: The Department of Defense (DOD) Support of Civil Authorities Course trains military forces, DOD civilians, contract personnel, and partner federal agency members, to successfully plan, coordinate, execute and support DSCA operations. The target audience is senior military and civilian leaders and staff members with DSCA responsibilities. The course is chartered by the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Homeland Defense and Americas' Security Affairs).

The course consists of three phases of instruction. Phase I, eight hours of on-line learning focused on the National Response Framework and how DOD supports Phase II, 30 hours resident instruction and practical exercises designed to put the operational principles into action Phase III, continuing education through course alumni updates.

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Much had transpired in his military career so far :

**Present Assignment:** JFHQ – J2, Security Officer (Joint Forces Headquarters)

**Source and Date of Commission:** OCS, North Carolina MA, 20 AUG 2005

**Years of Active Commissioned Service:** 1 Year

**Total Years of Service:** 14 Years

<b>Military Schools Completed:</b>	<b>Year Completed</b>
Infantry School	1997
Airborne School	1997
Air Assault School	1997
Officers Candidate School	2005
Military Intelligence Officers Basic Course	2006
Pathfinder School	2007
Sniper Employment Leaders Course	2008
Jumpmaster School	2008
Reconnaissance and Surveillance Leaders Course	2008
Combat Lifesaver Course	2009
Unit Movement Officer Course	2009
National Guard Joint Staff Training Course	2011
Defense Support of Civil Authorities Course	2011
Military Intelligence Captain's Career Course	2014



**Civilian Affiliations:**

- NRA Certified Pistol Instructor and Range Safety Officer
- Gracie Combatives Certification
- Coast Guard Auxiliary Member
- PADI Rescue Scuba Diver

**Civilian Education:**

School	Degree Received
State University of New York at Oneonta	
Logan College of Chiropractic	BS DC

**US Decorations/Medals/Badges:**

- Bronze Star Medal
- Army Commendation Medal
- Army Achievement Medal
- Good Conduct Medal
- Reserve Component Achievement Medal with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters
- National Defense Service Medal
- Iraq Campaign Medal
- Global War on Terrorism Service Medal
- Armed Forces Reserve Medal with M device and Bronze Hourglass
- Army Service Ribbon
- Overseas Service Ribbon
- Michigan State Broadsword
- Michigan State War on Terrorism Ribbon
- Michigan State OCONUS Ribbon
- NCNG Service Award Ribbon
- Senior Parachutist Badge
- Air Assault Badge
- Pathfinder Badge
- Expert Rifleman Badge
- Expert Pistol Badge
- German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge (Gold)
- Turkish Parachutist Badge
- Physical Fitness Badge

**Chronological List of Appointments:**

- Second Lieutenant      ARNGUS
- First Lieutenant        ARNGUS
- Captain                    ARNGUS
- Major                      ARNGUS

**Chronological Record of Duty Assignments:**

**ACTIVE DUTY**

**From      To**

Infantry OSUT Trainee	A Co 2/58 Infantry	03/97	06/97
Airborne Trainee	B Co 1/507 <sup>th</sup> PIR	06/97	07/97
Heavy Anti-Armor Weapons Crewman	511th PIR	07/97	03/00
OIF Deployment	F Co 425 IN (ABN) (LRS)	05/09	04/10

**ARMY NATIONAL GUARD**

Officer Candidate	HQ 139 <sup>TH</sup> REGT CA	03/04	08/05
Liaison Officer	139 <sup>th</sup> ROC	09/05	01/06
MIOBC Student	C Co 306 <sup>th</sup> MI BN	02/06	06/06
TUAV Platoon Leader	A Co 30 <sup>th</sup> STB	07/06	06/07
IN Platoon Leader	F Co 425 <sup>th</sup> IN (ABN) (LRS)	06/07	04/08
Executive Officer	F Co 425 <sup>th</sup> IN (ABN) (LRS)	05/08	12/10
Security Officer	JFHQ-J2	01/11	Present

So, at 44 years of age with knees getting a little fragile and slowing down a bit as eventually happens to all of us, it was time to perhaps move on to a less physically demanding job. Neil chose to branch into Military Intelligence. 2010-present Neil has been working at the Joint Forces HQ (JFHQ) in Raleigh, NC in the J2 (Intelligence section). 'Joint' means Army and Air National Guard.

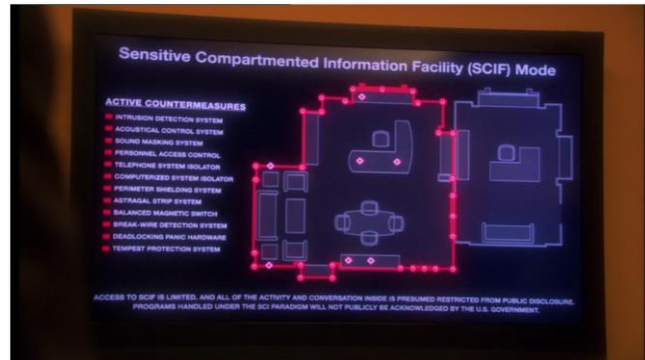


The Joint Force Headquarters-State (JFHQ-State) provides command and control of all National Guard forces in the state or territory for the governor, or in the case of the District of Columbia, the Secretary of the Army. One of the responsibilities of the JFHQ-State is to support JTF-State commanders and all of the deployed units within the state, as well as acting as an information channel to the National Guard Bureau and combatant commanders. The JFHQ-State coordinates any additional support required, such as mobilization of extra forces, or providing other logistical support. The JFHQ-State can also act as a joint headquarters for national-level response efforts during contingency operations.



The JFHQ-State assumes operational control of all assigned military units ordered to support contingency operations, and coordinates situational awareness and resource requirements with combatant commanders. It is also responsible for providing situational awareness and common operating picture information to national level headquarters before and during contingency operations. In addition, it is responsible for providing joint reception, staging, onward movement, and integration of all inbound forces. For small operations, task force functions are performed by The Adjutant General using existing Joint Forces Headquarters-State staff, without any augmentation, and with small troop elements such as transportation or aviation units, or Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Teams. This HQ group also supports civil authorities in the event of domestic incidents/emergencies.

Neil spends most of my time at JFHQ in a SCIF (sensitive, compartmented, information facility) doing intelligence collection, analysis and briefings. In United States military, security and intelligence parlance, a Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility (SCIF; pronounced "skiff") is an enclosed area within a building that is used to process Sensitive Compartmented Information (SCI) types of classified information. SCI is classified information concerning or derived from intelligence sources, methods, or analytical processes, which is required to be handled within formal access control systems established by the Director of National Intelligence (DNI). Some entire buildings are SCIFs where all but the front foyer is secure. Access to SCIFs is normally limited to those with clearance. Non-cleared personnel in SCIF must be under constant oversight to prevent unauthorized access to classified material; as part of this process, non-cleared personnel are typically required to surrender recording and other electronic devices. All of the activity and conversation inside is presumed restricted from public disclosure. A SCIF can also be located in an air, ground or maritime vehicle, or can be established on a temporary basis at a specific site.



Sensitive compartmented information (SCI) is a type of United States classified information concerning or derived from sensitive intelligence sources, methods, or analytical processes. All SCI must be handled within formal access control systems established by the Director of National Intelligence. Although some sources refer to SCI control systems as special access programs, the intelligence community itself considers SCI and SAPs distinct kinds of controlled access programs.

SCI is not a classification. SCI clearance has been called "above Top Secret,"<sup>[3]</sup> but information at any classification level may exist within an SCI control system. When "decompartmented," this information is treated the same as collateral information at the same classification level.



## Military Intelligence Captain's Career Course (MICCC):

Career Military Intelligence Army officers will at some point be required to attend the MICCC while either a First Lieutenant promotable (1LT P) or as a Junior Captain (CPT). Attendance at the MICCC is usually completed prior to Company Command, although occasionally officers will go to the school as a senior Captain. The Career Course functions much like the MIBOLC (MI Basic Officer Leader's Course). The MICCC like other Captain career courses, includes training specific to an officer's branch. MI officers are expected to perform tasks ranging from intelligence preparation of the battlespace (IPB) to war-gaming and implementing the Military Decision Making Process (MDMP).



Reserve Military Intelligence Captain's Career Course – RC-MICCC for National Guard and Reserve personnel falls under the direction and guidance of US Army Intelligence Center (USAIC). It is generally a temporary duty assignment lasting about a month long. The Army Intelligence Knowledge Network (IKN) Portal offers several distance learning courses as a pre-requisite for the MICCC. The RC-MICCC completion certificates do not offer any Army correspondence course credit for retirement points.

The RC-MICCC is broken down into four phases. Currently Phases I and III are long Distance Learning through the IKN portal, and Phases II and IV are resident courses requiring TDY travel which last 2 weeks each.



<b>Military Intelligence Captain's Career Course (MICCC)</b> <b>Active Duty component (3-30-C22)</b> <i>or</i> <b>ALL 4 Phases of Reserve Component (3-30-C23)</b>
INTL501 - Strategic Intelligence
INTL615 - History of the Central Intelligence Agency <i>or</i> INTL618 - Intelligence Leadership, Management, and Coordination
INTL620 - Terrain and Weather Intelligence
INTL640 - Intelligence and National Security <i>or</i> INTL636 - Regional Threat Analysis
INTL642 - Information Warfare <i>or</i> INTL643 - Information Operations
INTL501 - Strategic Intelligence
INTL507 - Intelligence Operations
INTL610 - Counterintelligence
INTL634 - Threat Analysis

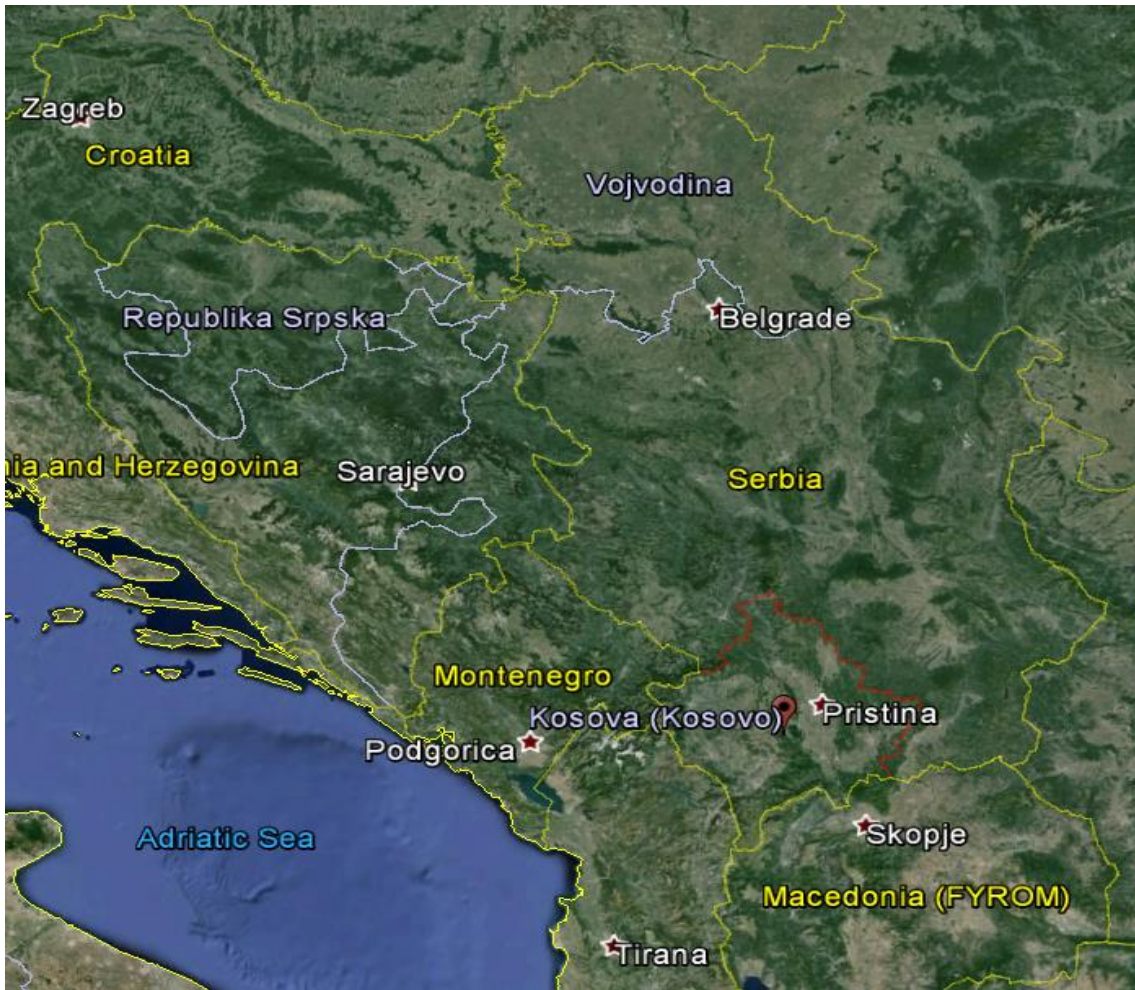


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Effective 01 Dec 2014 Neil was promoted to the rank of Major. Becoming a 'Field Grade' is the most significant promotion of his career and he is humbled to have made it this far. While his schooling in medicine, public practice and work in the field of clinical research is nothing to scoff at, the Army has brought out the best in Neil - and will continue to do so.



In the early spring of 2015 duty called once again. Major Neil E. Edgar was assigned to HQ, 30th Brigade Combat Team to serve as an intelligence planner in the S2 (intelligence section) deploying to Kosovo for 9 months as part of the ongoing United States peace-keeping mission there. Kosovo Force (KFOR) deployed into Kosovo on 12 June 1999, in the wake of a 78-day air campaign. This air campaign was launched by the Alliance in March 1999 to halt and reverse the humanitarian catastrophe that was then unfolding.



KFOR derives its mandate from United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1244 of 10 June 1999 and the Military-Technical Agreement between NATO and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Serbia. KFOR operates under Chapter VII of the UN Charter and, as such, is a peace enforcement operation. This would be the twentieth deployment – thus, the designation, KFOR 20.



Throughout Kosovo, KFOR is cooperating and coordinating with the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU) and other international actors to support the development of a stable, democratic, multi-ethnic and peaceful Kosovo. In April 2013, Belgrade and Pristina reached an Agreement on Normalization, which is helping to improve relations between both parties while giving new momentum to the Euro-Atlantic integration of the Western Balkans. NATO and KFOR stand ready to support the implementation of this agreement within its means and capabilities.




Today, KFOR continues to help maintain a safe and secure environment and freedom of movement for all people in Kosovo, according to its mandate, which is to:

- deter renewed hostility and threats against Kosovo by Yugoslav and Serb forces;
- establish a secure environment and ensure public safety and order;
- demilitarize the Kosovo Liberation Army;
- support the international humanitarian effort;
- and coordinate with, and support, the international civil presence.

In 2014 just under 5,000 troops from the NATO-led KFOR, provided by 31 countries continue to work towards maintaining a safe and secure environment and freedom of movement for all citizens and communities in Kosovo.

Over time, as the security situation has improved, NATO has been gradually adjusting KFOR's force posture towards a smaller and more flexible force with fewer static tasks. All adjustments to force posture are decided by the North Atlantic Council (NAC) as the security situation on the ground evolves.

	Albania	14		Lithuania	1
	Armenia	35		Luxembourg	23
	Austria	540		Moldova	42
	Bulgaria	10		Netherlands	5
	Canada	5		Norway	2
	Croatia	22		Poland	246
	Czech Republic	16		Portugal	191
	Denmark	35		Romania	69
	Estonia	2		Slovenia	309
	Finland	21		Sweden	6
	France	2		Switzerland	222
	Germany	787		Turkey	379
	Greece	111		United Kingdom	1
	Hungary	348		United States	674
	Ireland	12		Ukraine	40
	Italy	553		Total	4,723

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL  
4105 REEDY CREEK ROAD  
RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA 27607-6410

ORDERS: 29-086-0019

27 March 2015

EDGAR, NEIL ERIC  
303 KIRKEENAN CIRCLE  
MORRISVILLE, NC 27560

██████████-9012 CPT  
0030 AR HHC HQS HEAVY BRIGA (WVA5AA)  
CLINTON, NC 28328

You are ordered to active duty as a member of your Reserve Component Unit for the period indicated unless sooner released or unless extended. Proceed from your current location in sufficient time to report by the date specified. You enter active duty upon reporting to unit home station.

Report To Home Station: 0030 AR HHC HQS HEAVY BRIGA (WVA5AA), 101 ARMORY RD CLINTON, NC 28328

Report on: 28 April 2015

Report To Mobilization Station: 1733 PLEASANTON ROAD, B1002 FORT BLISS, TX 79916

Report on: 01 May 2015

Period of active duty: 365 days

Purpose: Activation in support of OPERATION JOINT GUARDIAN(KFOR)

Mobilization category code: G

**Additional instructions:**

- (a) Sure pay is mandatory. Soldier must bring the appropriate documentation to support the requirement to authorize sure pay to the bank.
- (b) Early reporting is not authorized.
- (c) Unaccompanied baggage shipment is not authorized.
- (d) Movement of household goods and dependents is not authorized.
- (e) Travel will be paid for one time travel from home duty station to mob station and back and includes travel and per diem from home station/mobilization station or duty location and return to home station as well as non-temporary storage. Individual Soldiers whose duty station is different from the mob station will receive funding for one time travel and return from mob station to the duty station. Govt. transportation will be provided from home of record to assigned MOB station and/or duty location. POV as transportation under JFTR, Para U3310 as not being more advantageous to the Govt. This means total payment of travel will not exceed the Govt cost had the Govt procured transportation been used between the ordered points. In and around mileage is not authorized.
- (f) Rental car is not authorized.
- (g) Special Storage of HHG/POV may be authorized IAW Para U4770
- (h) Excess accompanied baggage is not to exceed 120 pounds.
- (i) Bring with you complete military clothing bag and appropriate personal items.
- (j) Soldier will handcarry (if available) complete MPRJ, health and dental, training, and clothing records.
- (k) Dependents (Family Members) of Reserve Component (Army Reserve and National Guard) Soldiers ordered to active duty for more than 30-days are eligible for the same benefits (e.g., medical care, TRICARE, commissary/exchange benefits, legal assistance, use of morale, welfare and recreation facilities, etc;) as dependents of regular Army Soldiers (but excluding dental, which requires orders to active duty for over 180-days). It is a Soldier responsibility to ensure dependents are issued DD Form 1172, Active Duty dependent ID cards. To locate the nearest ID card facility near your home visit web site [www.dmdc.osd/rsl](http://www.dmdc.osd/rsl) (Rapids site locator by state, city, zip code). Dependents are also eligible to use Army One Source, which is a 24-hour resource service (from the US: 1-800-464-8107; En Espanola, llama al 1-888-375-5971 and collect calls (1-484-530-5889) available at no cost.
- (l) Bring copies of family care plan, wills, powers of attorney, and any other documentation affecting the soldiers pay or status.
- (m) Personnel requiring eye correction will bring two pairs of eyeglasses and eye inserts for a protective mask.
- (n) Government quarters and mess will be used if available.
- (o) Call 1-800-336-4590 (National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve) or check online at [www.esgr.org](http://www.esgr.org) if you have questions regarding your employment/reemployment rights.
- (p) National Guard and Army Reserve (RC) Soldiers on Title 10 12304b orders are not authorized use of Tricare Early Eligibility Benefit per 10 USC 1074(d)(2) and 10 USC(a)(13)(B).
- (q) In an effort to share information between soldiers, employers and the Department of

Page 1

• This is an official order generated in DAMPS-OCOTCS •



Defense on their rights, benefits and obligations, mobilized USAR soldiers are strongly encouraged to provide employer information at <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/udpdr1/owa/rc.home>.

- (r) If upon reporting for active duty you fail to meet deployment medical standards (whether because of a temporary or permanent medical condition), then you may be released from active duty, returned to your prior reserve status, and returned to your home address, subject to a subsequent order to active duty upon resolution of the disqualifying medical condition. If, upon reporting for active duty, you are found to satisfy medical deployment standards, then you will continue on active duty for a period not to exceed the period specified in this order, such period to include the period (not to exceed 25 days) required for mobilization processing.
- (s) You have been ordered to active duty in a TCS status. (subsequent orders, amendments and revocations may be downloaded from <https://mobcop.army.mil/ORDERS/UI/Security/Login.aspx>).
- (t) Soldier must check with the supporting installation housing office before securing temporary lodging at the duty location and obtain a 1351-5 authorizing the appropriate entitlements for lodging and M&IE. With a SNA, the Soldier is authorized per diem IAW the JTR.
- (u) Demobilization of unit(s) is/are prohibited without approval of HQDA. Individual members of the unit will demobilize with the unit unless provisions of AR 600-8-24 or AR 635-200 apply. UICs will demobilize where it mobilizes, unless diverted per First Army.

FOR ARMY USE

AUTHORITY: Title 10 USC, Section 12304b dated 18 May 2012, DA Order 04514 dated 111645ZSep14/DA Order Amendment 218715 dated 231334ZJan15/1A-15-023-031 (A1) date 28 January 2015

Accounting classification:

OFF PAY/ALW: 215/6 2010.0000 01-1100 P1A100 11\*\*/12\*\* PAMP 5570 01FFKF S12120  
TVL/PD: 021 202010D15 A2AAB 131034QMIS 21T0 5036463982 10024540 021001  
Funds are available upon the U.S. Congress Enacting FY15 Defense Appropriation. Funding is authorized only for the fiscal year indicated on this order. Amendments will be required for subsequent fiscal years. Soldiers and authorized Army officials must sign into <https://mobcop.army.mil/ORDERS> to retrieve copies of orders/amendments.

SDN: EDG9012T086019

Sex: M

MDC: PMOS

PMOS/AOC/ASI/LIC: 35D///

HOR: MORRISVILLE, NC 27560

DOR: 04 June 2010

PEBD: 11 March 1997

Security Clearance: TOP SECRET WITH SENSITIVE COMPARTMENTED INFORMATION, LOCAL FILES  
CHECK 27 September 2012

Comp: ARNG

Format: 165

FOR THE COMMANDER:

\*\*\*\*\*  
\* OFFICIAL \*  
\* \*  
\*\*\*\*\*

BERNARD E. WILLIFORD, JR.  
COL, GS, NCARNG  
G3

DISTRIBUTION: 1- Cdr, Ft Bliss  
1- Cdr, WVA5AA, 0030 AR HHC HQS HEAVY BRIGA, CLINTON



For Neil, it has been 14 years of service so far and his only regret is that he didn't do it sooner! He believes there is no feeling quite like serving our great country and continuing to carry his family legacy with him, every step of the way.



○ 4 April 2015



It was time for another goodbye as this was Neil's second overseas deployment. The advice his father gave him for his first deployment now graced a cake as a wish of good luck and God speed. Once again his father, now 88 year old Seaman Second Class Howard Donald Edgar, Jr., WWII US Navy Gunboat Veteran (at the upper left in the photo above), hugged him goodbye.



There was time for one last cookie from Dad's cookie jar – and he was gone.

## ON TO KOSOVO

The plan was to ship out on 06 April 2015. The KFOR 20 team would spend three weeks at Ft. Pickett, VA to conduct annual training; then move to Ft Bliss, TX for mobilization training for about a month; then to Hohenfels, Germany for a month to conduct a mobilization readiness exercise; then finally to Kosovo for 9 months starting in mid-summer. At the end of their KFOR rotation they would demobilize through Ft Bliss for a couple of weeks before returning home in April of 2016.

### ○ RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA – 9 April 2015

The service men and women's commitment to the task at hand was evident everywhere. More than 1,000 family members, friends and military vets attended the sendoff ceremony at Providence Baptist Church in Raleigh for about 320 soldiers of the 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team, Headquarters Company, 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 252nd Armored Regiment and Alpha Company, 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 252nd Armored Regiment. Major Neil E. Edgar was a part of that group.

Their stories were all different but their purpose and commitment were the same. One of the parents held his 3-year-old grandson in check Thursday as they watched the boy's dad march with the 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team, readying to deploy to Kosovo.



Family, friends and loved ones wait to bid their goodbyes to departing troops as they listen during a mobilization ceremony that was held for over 300 North Carolina Army National Guard service members at Providence Baptist Church in Raleigh on Thursday

This will be his son's fourth deployment overseas. His proud father said his son loves it and probably will not retire until he is forced. The deploying soldier said he's equally proud of his parents who help watch his three children while he's away, the second of which was born during his deployment to Iraq.







The 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team is comprised of units from North Carolina and West Virginia and nicknamed the “Old Hickory,” in honor of President Andrew Jackson.



Left: Soldiers listen to speakers at the Raleigh mobilization ceremony.

Below: Soldiers march out to rousing applause at the conclusion of the ceremony.



Left: Colonel Vernon Simpson, Commander of the 30<sup>th</sup> Armored Brigade Combat Team.



The unit's commander, Col. Vernon Simpson Jr., told the audience about the importance of the mission in Kosovo and the unique nature of the team assembled for the task.

"Our mission is to provide a safe and secure environment to protect the United States' vital interests in the Balkans," Simpson said. "That's primarily the prevention of foreign influence and violent extremism in a somewhat lawless region, which in turn will push public sentiment toward things that threaten our security and stability in the Balkans and can quickly spill over into other areas."

Another element of the mission is to prevent more human suffering caused by years of genocide. The unit is deploying as part of a North Atlantic Treaty Organization-led mission of international peacekeepers that have been in the Balkans since Serbia's campaign of ethnic cleansing in the late 1990s.

"The security environment in Kosovo is complex, with numerous actors all with competing interests on the future of an independent Kosovo," Simpson said.

The colonel noted that the unit's members have special skills from their civilian lives as engineers, lawyers, police officers and other professions to work with various levels of local government in Kosovo.

Army Brigadier General James Ernst, N.C. National Guard assistant adjutant general-maneuver, offered words of encouragement to the soldiers and their families.

"The strength of our nation is our Army. The strength of our Army is our soldier. The strength of the soldier is the family," Ernst said. "We are one team and interdependent."

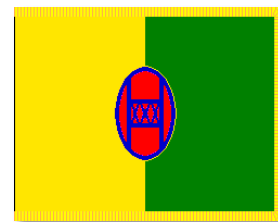
Often, families left at home have a more difficult time than the soldiers deployed, Ernst said. He urged them to seek any form of help from North Carolina's National Guard State Family Programs.

N.C. Secretary of Public Safety Frank Perry told the soldiers they have answered a higher calling to protect the human rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

"The pursuit of happiness is not the pursuit of pleasure, but it's the pursuit of moral excellence," Perry said. "That is your calling, and that is why we honor you."

- 30th ARMORED (HEAVY) BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM, NORTH CAROLINA ARNG

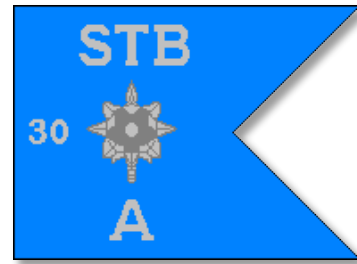
The 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team ("Old Hickory") has an organizational flag and guidon of the standard pattern for separate armored brigades: vertical stripes of yellow and green, the Armor branch colors, with the brigade shoulder sleeve insignia (SSI) centered.



*The insignia contains the letters "O" and "H" for Old Hickory and the Roman Numeral 30 on a field of red.*

Heavy brigade combat teams (HBCTs) of the Army National Guard were organizationally identical to their Regular Army counterparts and were subordinate to division headquarters, but many of them retained their identity as separate brigades so as to preserve the lineage and honors of previous organizations. The 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, for example, descended from the former 30th Infantry Division and used the old divisional shoulder sleeve insignia (SSI). The brigade's peacetime higher headquarters was the 29th Infantry Division (Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina and Florida).

As originally conceived, the US Army's heavy brigade combat team (HBCT) was built around two combined arms battalions, each with a headquarters company, two mechanized infantry companies (A and B) and two armor companies (C and D). Guidons for these companies were of the standard, traditional pattern for the Infantry, Cavalry and Armor branches. HQ companies of combined arms battalions belonging to infantry or armor regiments had either an Infantry or Armor guidon. The mechanized infantry companies had Infantry guidons and the armor companies had Armor guidons. For combined arms battalions belonging to cavalry regiments, all companies had Cavalry guidons. Military intelligence, signal and combat engineer companies were grouped under a brigade special troops battalion (BSTB).



o FORT PICKETT, VIRGINIA



Army National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team completed three weeks of pre-deployment training at Fort Pickett<sup>1</sup>, Virginia, on 23 April 2015, where they completed a variety of physical and mental training requirements in preparation for their mobilization later this month.



After working long hours on Army training milestones including tactical patrol scenarios, land navigation, combatives and a staff planning exercises, the 30th ABCT Soldiers would be one step closer to their mid-summer deployment to Kosovo in support of the NATO peacekeeping mission in the region, known as Kosovo Force or KFOR.

"The goal for this Annual Training was to complete all the pre-deployment tasks, both Army Warrior



Tasks and Battle Drills and theater-specific training tasks, required to validate to go into the area of operations," said Col. Vernon Simpson, the 30th ABCT commander.

Simpson, a 27-year U.S. Army veteran, has spent his military career as an Army National

Guard Soldier assigned to the 30th ABCT, to include nine years as an enlisted cannon crew member and forward observer. After joining the officer ranks, he completed a combat deployment to Iraq in 2004,

<sup>1</sup> Fort Pickett, is a Virginia Army National Guard installation, located near the town of Blackstone, Virginia. Home of the Army National Guard Maneuver Training Center, Fort Pickett is named for the United States Army officer and Confederate General George Pickett.

and later spent time as a battalion commander and brigade deputy commander before assuming command of the 30th in 2013.

"Everything about this training exceeded my expectations. This team was brought together late in the game as we formed the staff from across the North Carolina National Guard, and then conducted a Command Post Exercise (CPX) based on the mission in Kosovo," Simpson said. "None of us really knew what to expect, and the staff performed just especially well. ... I think we're ready for the mission."



Major Neil E. Edgar



Col. Vernon Simpson (right), the 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team commander, addresses his staff and subordinate unit leaders during a Command Post Exercise rehearsal April 14, 2015, at Fort Pickett, Va. The 30th ABCT, part of the North Carolina National Guard, is preparing to deploy to Kosovo in support of the NATO peacekeeping mission in the region. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. David McLean, 30th ABCT)

Operations, intelligence, sustainment and other special staff leaders showed their mental agility during the four-day Command Post Exercise, or CPX, which replicated scenarios based on the operating environment in Kosovo. Using the 30th ABCT's tactical field tents as a command center, staff officers and NCOs combined their subject-matter expertise to react to crisis scenarios and recommend courses of action to the commander.

While Simpson's goal for the CPX was to familiarize the staff with KFOR terminology, task organization and reporting chains, he said the staff quickly caught on to the structure, which allowed them to hone in on the exercise's scenarios.

"I didn't intend to get into more complex issues like the Administrative Boundary Line, or complex riot control situations, but we were able to get through the basics so quickly that we were able to take it to the next level, and really understand our role in the environment," Simpson said. "The CPX exceeded my expectations."

While the CPX kept most headquarters staff members surrounded by the command post's lights, generators and radios, the event was followed by a week of sun, mud and pollen on Fort Pickett's training ranges. There, each Soldier regardless of rank or specialty revisited the basic warrior skills necessary to anyone



wearing a U.S. Army uniform. These lessons included rendering combat medical aid, assaulting as a unit through an objective, planning and executing convoy operations, and identifying and marking dangerous ordnance.

On the final day of training, the brigade's NCOs and junior officers led their teams through a tactical culmination exercise, where the Soldiers were collectively tested in shooting, moving and communicating as a team under pressure. On foot and as a vehicle convoy, the groups were required to identify unexploded ordnance, establish traffic control points and interact with role-players.



**Photo Credit: Staff Sgt. David McLean**  
 First Lt. Casey McKinley (right) and Capt. Neil Edgar (left), both members of the 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team headquarters, address staff and subordinate unit leaders during a Command Post Exercise rehearsal April 14, 2015, at Fort Pickett, Va. The 30th ABCT, part of the North Carolina National Guard, is preparing to deploy to Kosovo in support of the NATO peacekeeping mission in the region. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. David McLean, 30th ABCT)



**Photo Credit: Capt. David Chace**  
 North Carolina Army National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team Headquarters pull security outside their vehicle during a tactical training exercise April 21, 2015, at Fort Pickett, Va. Leaders and staff from the 30th ABCT headquarters are preparing to deploy to Kosovo this summer, where they'll work with multinational allies to support the NATO peacekeeping mission in the region. (U.S. Army photo courtesy of 2nd Platoon, A Company, 1st Battalion, 252nd Armor Regiment)



**Photo Credit: Capt. David Chace**  
 North Carolina Army National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team Headquarters drive a convoy into a Fort Pickett, Va., training area during an April 21, 2015, tactical training exercise. The 30th ABCT headquarters leaders and staff conducted the exercise to validate their ability to move and communicate in a tactical environment, in preparation for the unit's upcoming deployment in support of the NATO peacekeeping mission in Kosovo. (U.S. Army photo courtesy of 2nd Platoon, A Company, 1st Battalion, 252nd Armor Regiment)

Lane training is a systematic, battle-focused, performance-oriented training process used to plan, execute, and assess unit training to achieve maximum training results with limited time and resources. The rigor of the lane training process enables units to quickly and efficiently attain proficiency in tactical and technical tasks while training in a simulated military operation's environment (e.g., war, peace operations, humanitarian assistance, and operations in aid of civil authorities). It enables training to be effectively structured, administered, supported, and assessed by limiting the number of tasks, time, terrain, facilities, or other resources involved. Lane training provides a path to mission proficiency.

"The thing that got us through the collective training lanes was really the overall cooperation and motivation from our junior enlisted leaders and noncommissioned officers," Simpson said. "Through more than 10 years of war, these Soldiers really understand what it means to take charge of a combat patrol and move a force onto an objective." "We've proven ourselves in two combat deployments [in 2004 and 2009], and right now we're globally engaged," he said.



Photo Credit: Capt. David Chace  
 Army National Guard Soldiers assigned to 1st Battalion, 252nd Armor Regiment and 1st Battalion, 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, relax in "Beasley Village," a training village at Fort Pickett, Va., where they served as role-players for a 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team training event April 21, 2015. Together, the units will deploy to Kosovo this summer, where they'll work with multinational allies to support the NATO peacekeeping mission in the region. (U.S. Army photo courtesy of 2nd Platoon, A Company, 1st Battalion, 252nd Armor Regiment)



Photo Credit: Capt. David Chace  
 North Carolina Army National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team Headquarters, based out of Clinton, N.C., speak with role players while participating in a tactical training exercise April 21, 2015, at Fort Pickett, Va. Leaders and staff from the 30th ABCT headquarters are preparing to deploy to Kosovo this summer, where they'll work with multinational allies to support the NATO peacekeeping mission in the region. (U.S. Army photo courtesy of 2nd Platoon, A Company, 1st Battalion, 252nd Armor Regiment)

Following its mobilization ceremony on April 30 at Fort Pickett, the NCNG Soldiers deploying with the 30th ABCT headquarters and 1-252 Armor Regiment traveled to Fort Bliss, Texas, to continue their mobilization training.

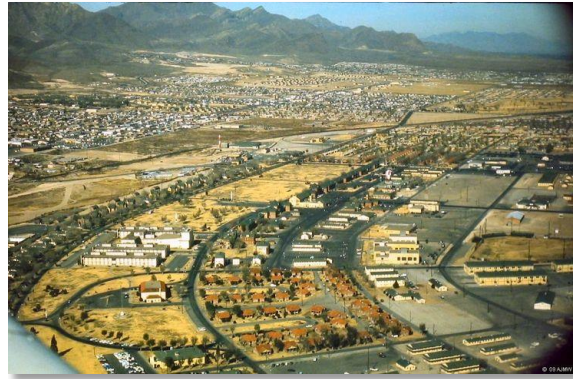
o FORT BLISS, TEXAS

After the first three weeks of activities in spring weather in the foothills of Virginia, Major Neil Edgar moved to the desert of Ft. Bliss, TX and continued mobilization training. They spent approximately five weeks in Texas and their focus was to complete warrior task validation, achieve administrative readiness, and medical/dental readiness. The climate was distinctly different and they also needed to adjust to the altitude at Ft. Bliss. The Staff also conducted another Mission Analysis exercise and again reacted to simulated events that may occur during the upcoming peace-keeping mission in Kosovo.





Fort Bliss is a United States Army post in the U.S. states of New Mexico and Texas, with its headquarters located in El Paso, Texas. With an area of about 1,700 square miles, it is the Army's second-largest installation, behind the adjacent White Sands Missile Range. It is FORSCOM's (United States Army Forces Command) largest installation, and has the Army's largest Maneuver Area (992,000 acres) ahead of the National Training Center, (642,000 acres). Fort Bliss provides the largest contiguous tract (1,500 sq mi) of restricted airspace in the Continental United States. The airspace is used for missile and artillery training and testing.



The fort is named for Mexican-American War soldier William Wallace Smith Bliss.



Training missions are supported by the McGregor Range Complex, located some 25 miles (40 km) to the northeast of the main post, in New Mexico. Most of Fort Bliss lies in the state of New Mexico, stretching northeastward along U.S. Route 54 from El Paso County, Texas to the southern boundary of the Lincoln National Forest in Otero County, New Mexico; in addition, much of the northwestward side of Highway 54 is part of the Fort Bliss Military Reservation, ranging from the northern side of Chaparral, New Mexico to the southern boundary of White Sands Missile Range.

○ CAMP MCGREGOR RANGE TRAINING COMPLEX, NEW MEXICO







McGregor Range, New Mexico, is an integral part of the U.S. Army Air Defense Artillery Center and Fort Bliss (USAADACENFB).



McGregor Ranges include McGregor Range, Meyer Small Arms Range, SHORAD Range, and Orogrande Range. Each of the ranges has an appropriate complement of range support facilities. McGregor Range Base Camp is the home of the USA CAS Battalion. In addition to housing the battalion, organizational support facilities, and all range control functions, McGregor Range Base Camp can billet and mess over 700 personnel. Orogrande Base Camp has 2 dining facilities, a single maintenance facility, and the ability to billet 800 personnel.

McGregor Range Complex contains 26 air defense missile firing sites (both static and field) which support training, annual service practice (ASP) and tactical missile firings for U.S. and allied units. Within the McGregor Range complex, there is the capability to support the extended range firings of the Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS). In the northern area of McGregor Range is Wilde Benton air strip. Wilde Benton is a 7,800 foot hard-packed surfaced airstrip capable of handling aircraft up to and including C-130 and C-17. There are six Nap-Of-the-Earth (NOE) helicopter training courses that are used to train pilots on low-level tactical flying under varying tactical conditions. The Cane Cholla helicopter gunnery range provides helicopter pilots the capability to conduct realistic tactical gunnery and flight training.

Meyer Range Complex consists of 18 firing ranges for small arms familiarization and qualification. Two of the ranges are equipped with the Remote Electronic Target System (RETS). Meyer Range Complex also contains grenade ranges, an NBC chamber, a light anti-tank range, an individual tactical training (ITT) range, and a pistol qualification range. SHORAD Range has 16 firing points for forward area air defense and laser weapons systems. This range also supports combined arms operational testing.



The area encompassed by the current boundary of McGregor Range includes approximately 608,385 acres of withdrawn public lands and 71,083 acres of Army fee-owned lands within Otero County, New Mexico. McGregor Range also includes 18,004 acres of U.S. Forest Service (USFS) lands, which are used by the Army in accordance with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the USFS and the Department of the Army (DA) Fort Bliss. There are also Army fee-owned in-holdings within the

Lincoln National Forest. The USFS lands are not part of the withdrawal application. The range is surrounded by lands administered primarily by the BLM and USFS to the north and west, with pockets of privately owned lands to the east which are used for ranching. To the south and west, are withdrawn and Army fee-owned lands in El Paso County, Texas, and Otero and Doña Ana counties in New Mexico.

McGregor Range is located in Otero County, New Mexico. The exterior boundaries of the McGregor Range land withdrawal encompass 678,108.15 acres. On October 4, 1999, President Clinton signed the Defense Authorization Bill, which included the renewal of the McGregor Range Land Withdrawal from public use. This encompassed 608,384.87 net acres of public lands. The withdrawal of McGregor Range was deemed necessary for national security purposes. U.S. military strategy requires armed forces that are trained, equipped, and ready. The McGregor Range, an integral part of the Fort Bliss Range Complex, supports the training of Fort Bliss units. The withdrawn lands of McGregor Range are needed to provide sufficient space to conduct realistic and challenging military training for our nation's military forces; develop and test future concepts for fighting wars; and support allied military education and training programs.

Mission activities conducted on McGregor Range include training to maintain the operational readiness of active duty, reserve, and National Guard units through various training, operations and field exercises, and testing.



While some training land is located within the Main Cantonment Area to support unit and classroom training near the administrative and maintenance facilities, the majority of the FTXs associated with



readiness training is conducted on the Fort Bliss Training Complex. Field exercises include various combinations of training, field operations, communications, command and control, simulated enemy contact, camouflage, smoke generation, and weapons firings. With five air defense brigades assigned to Fort Bliss, use of McGregor Range training areas is paramount to maintaining combat readiness. This includes use for tactical deployment, air defense operations, and air defense firing sites for missile firings. Other typical use of the Fort Bliss Training Complex includes the Mobilization Army Training Center (MATC) for 5 to 10 weeks per year to support training of reserve and National Guard units. U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) Hawk training also is conducted on the range complex. Throughout the year, FTXs installations.





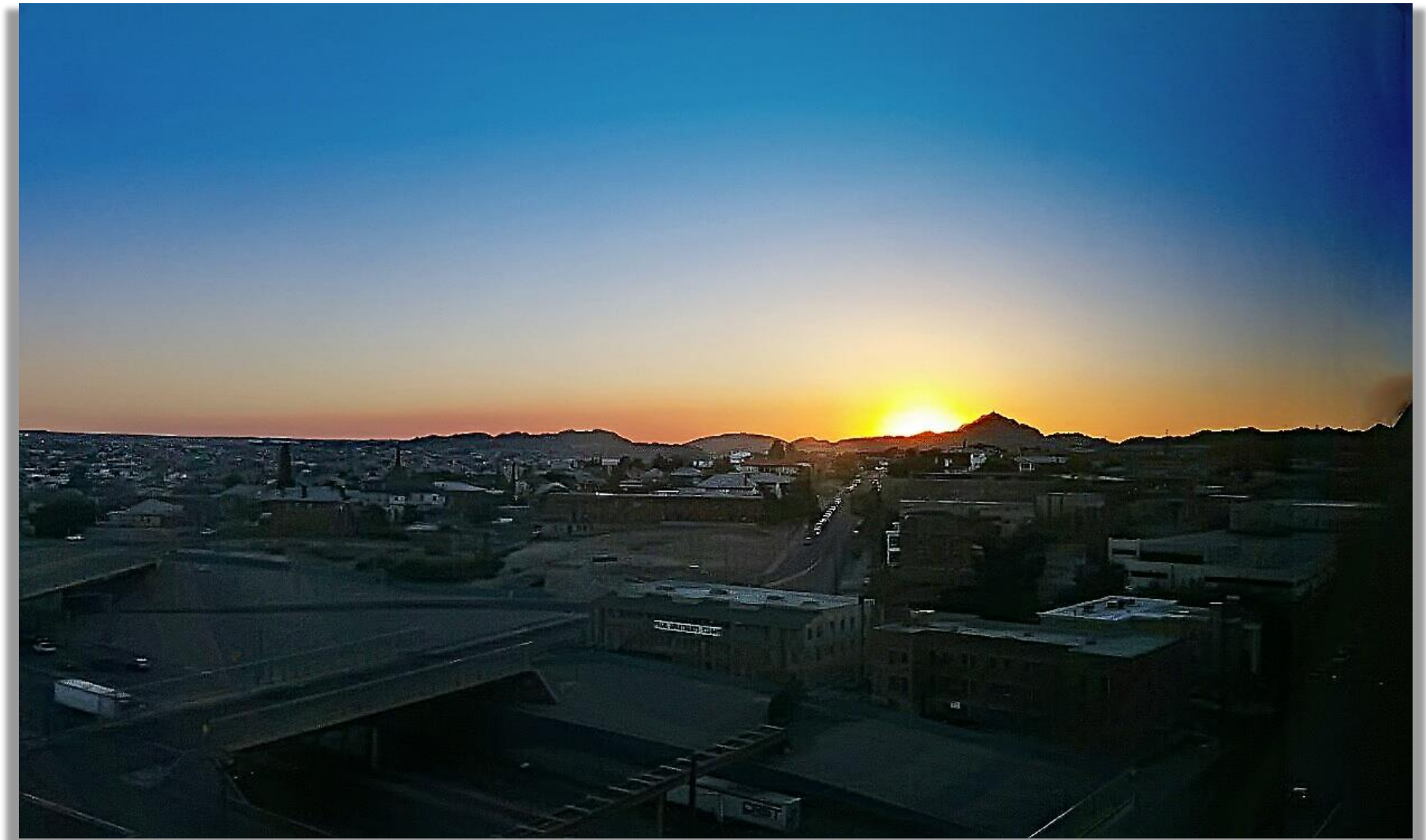


○ **4 Jun 2015** – El Paso, Texas

With embarkation a few days away there was time for a little last stateside R&R. The only game in town, in fact the only town around was El Paso – so El Paso it was.



WWI P-47D Fighter



Last sunset in America ....





The Stearman (Boeing) Model 75 is a biplane used as a military trainer aircraft, of which at least 10,626 were built in the United States during the 1930s and 1940s. It was a popular trainer used by WWII fighter pilots.



The Piper J-3 Cub was originally intended as a trainer. Due to its performance, it was well suited a variety of military uses such as reconnaissance, liaison and ground control, and was produced in large numbers during the WWII as the L-4 Grasshopper.

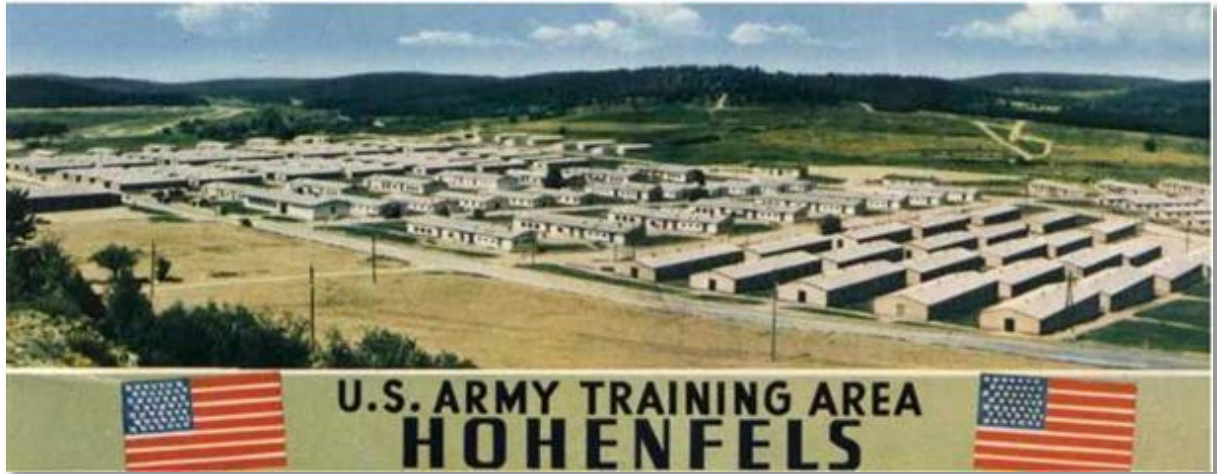


Stateside training and validation completed, the 30th Armor Brigade Combat Team, deployed to Kosovo by way of Hohenfels, Germany, 9 June 2015, and a series of more intense readiness exercises. In Germany, they got their first glimpse of the Multi-National training environment, training side-by-side for their NATO peacekeeping mission with Albanian, Croatian, and Romanian Soldiers.





○ HOHENFELS, GERMANY



Hohenfels is located in the heart of the Bavaria region in Germany. It was the most beautiful countryside Neil had ever seen. Hohenfels, literally *High rock*, is a municipality in the district of Neumarkt in the region of Upper Palatinate (German: *Oberpfalz*). The town is host to the United States Army Garrison Hohenfels, which operates the Joint Multinational Readiness Center for training NATO armed forces.











Segments of this Multi-National Training would also take place at installations in Wiesbaden and Grafenwoehr.

**Wiesbaden** is a city in central western Germany and the capital of the federal state of Hesse. It has about 273,000 inhabitants, plus approximately 19,000 United States citizens (mostly associated with the United States Army). The city, together with nearby Frankfurt am Main, Darmstadt and Mainz, is part of the Frankfurt Rhine Main Region, a metropolitan area with a combined population of about 5.8 million people.

Wiesbaden is one of the oldest spa towns in Europe. Its name translates to "meadow baths," making reference to the hot springs. It is internationally famous for its architecture, climate (also called the "Nice of the North"), and its hot springs. At one time, Wiesbaden boasted 26 hot springs. Fourteen of the springs are still flowing today.

Wiesbaden is situated on the right (northern) bank of the Rhine River, below the confluence of the Main, where the Rhine's main direction changes from north to west. The city is across the Rhine from Mainz, the capital of the federal state of Rhineland-Palatinate. Frankfurt am Main is located about 38 kilometres (23.6 mi) east. To the north of the city are the Taunus Mountains, which trend in a northeasterly direction.



**Grafenwöhr** is a town in the district Neustadt (Waldnaab), in the region of the Upper Palatinate (German: *Oberpfalz*) in eastern Bavaria, Germany. It is widely known for the United States Army military installation and training area, called Grafenwöhr Training Area (Tower Barracks), located directly south and west of the town.

The military installation is also home to one of the largest Army construction projects in Europe, called Efficient Basing-Grafenwöhr. The Grafenwöhr Training Area (Tower Barracks) houses the 7th Army Joint Multinational Training Command (JMTC). The 7th Army JMTC owns almost all of the U.S. Army training facilities and assets in Europe. The Grafenwöhr Training Area is one of its largest training areas and includes ranges that can accommodate nearly every weapons system currently used. Though operated by the U.S. Army, the area is the largest multinational training area in Europe. Grafenwöhr (Tower Barracks), also known as the East Camp, is the main post and is located on the north east edge of the training area. The Vilseck military community, also known as Rose Barracks, or the South Camp, is on the southern boundary.

The Grafenwöhr Army Airfield provides air flow to all air traffic requesting services including but not limited C-130's from the 37th Airlift Squadron at Ramstein AB, Germany. The airfield is manned 24 hours a day by advisory services and at a minimum from 08:00 to 17:00 by air traffic controllers both in a control tower and an approach control. Due to its length and relative proximity to the JMTC training area, it makes for a realistic simulation of short field operations encountered around the world. Bunker dropzone is also located within the Grafenwöhr Training Area. It is used to practice airdrop of troops, equipment, and supplies.





- US ARMY TRAINING CENTER AT HOHENFELS

The German Army originally founded a training area in Hohenfels in 1938. On April 24, 1945, Major General Stanley Eric Reinhart's 65th Infantry Division captured Hohenfels. Generalmajor Gustav Geiger, staff and guards surrendered. A POW camp, Stalag 383, with numerous British inmates was liberated.

In 1951, Hohenfels became a training area for the United States military and was used primarily by United States forces until 1956. In 1955, the German Bundeswehr was founded, and in 1956 the first German unit was stationed in Camp Poellnricht (i.e. Lager Pöllnricht) which had been formerly, a displaced persons camp, until their deactivation in 2001. From 1956 to 1988, the Hohenfels Training Area was used by NATO forces consisting primarily of American, German, Canadian, and occasionally British and French forces.



In 1988, Hohenfels became the home of the Combat Maneuver Training Center (CMTC), the mission of which was to provide realistic combined arms training for the United States Army, Europe, and Seventh Army's maneuver battalion task forces in force-on-force exercises.



Exercises revolve around the fictional nation of Danubia and its three provinces of friendly Sowenia, hostile Vilslakia, and neutral Jursland. The opposing force is the fictional army of Danubia. The 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment represented the "4th Guards Motorized Rifle Regiment". M113A2s are used to replicate Soviet BMP-2 IFVs and M60A3 tanks are used to replicate Soviet T-80 tanks.



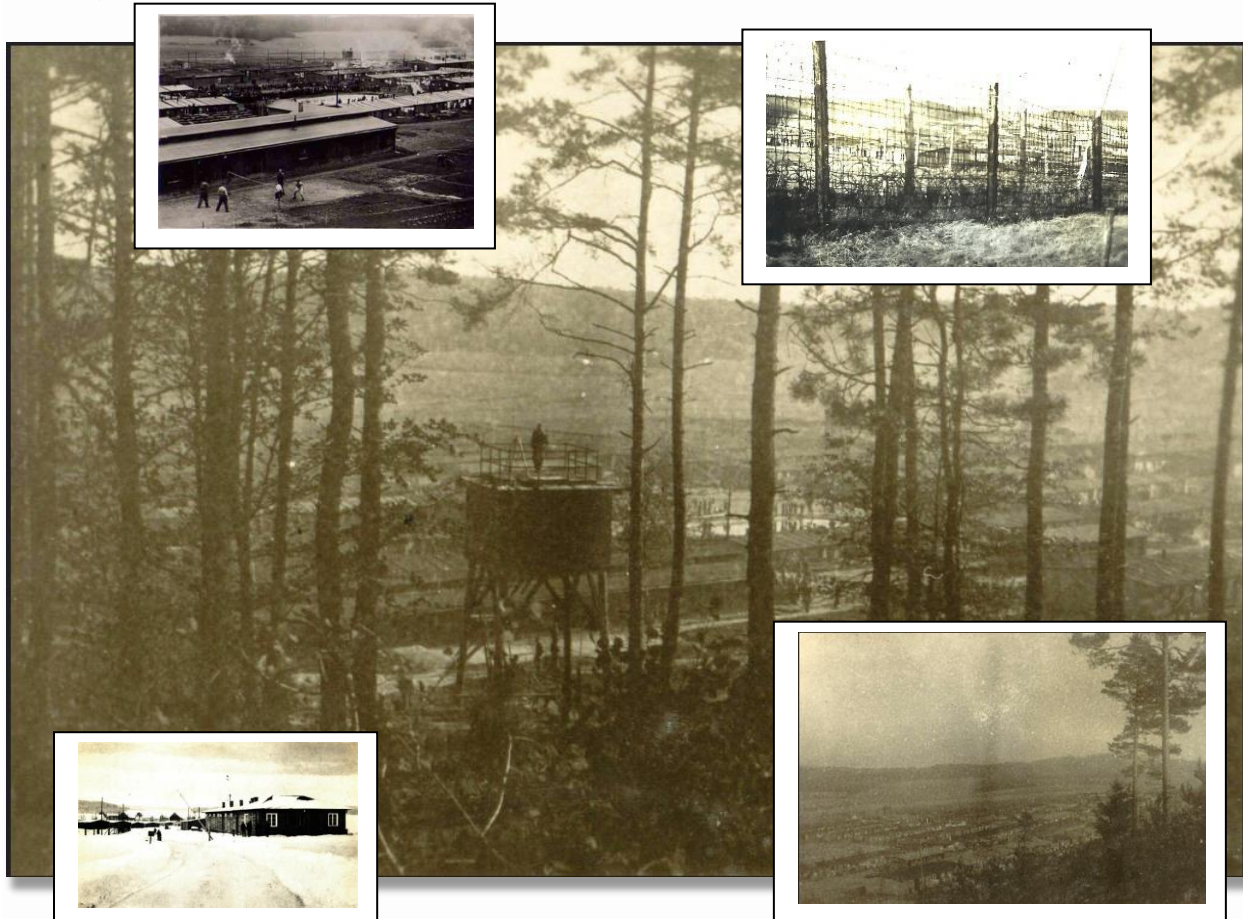
In December 2005 the CMTC was transformed and officially named the Joint Multinational Readiness Center (JMRC), part of the Joint Multinational Training Center (JMTC) which oversees training of all of United States Army Europe (USAREUR).





- STALAG 383

The training site at Hohenfels is on the same ground as a former World War II POW Camp, Stalag 383. Stalag 383 housed British and Australian prisoners and it looks like a POW Camp still ... bars, fences, razor wire and the cement foundations of the original camp remain. Today, there are newer huts built on those pads but to those living in the facilities it still feels like a POW camp. The bunk beds were possibly 50 or so years old and the food was absolutely horrible! Some say the ghosts of WWII still remain. This camp lies fifty miles due north of the infamous prison camp at Moosburg, the final prison camp from which 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. George A. Hofmann was liberated in May of 1945 (28 miles northeast of Munich).



The camp, formerly for officers, was built on a gentle slope in the middle of a piece of heavily wooded country, some miles from the nearest town. Instead of being crammed by the hundreds into unpartitioned barracks, the NCOs (non commissioned officers) found themselves allocated small dormitory huts holding fourteen or less, described by one of them as "snug billets". The camp had plenty of room for sports fields and walking space besides, and some larger barracks for theatrical shows and indoor recreation. When Red Cross food arrived to supplement the ordinary German prisoner-of-war ration, there was little to complain of at Hohenfels. Much effort went into constructing small stoves so that private food could be cooked when desired. POWs spoke of there being "more freedom and less interference" and of the camp being "far less depressing" than previous camps they had the pleasure of visiting. The winter proved to be cold, but there was sufficient coal and the men were allowed to collect wood from a nearby forest. For most of them it was indeed the best camp they had been in – relatively speaking, it was the best of the worst.

After various delaying tactics, Stalag 383 was finally evacuated on April 17th 1945. The POWs were forced to leave the camp and march 60 miles south via Regensburg to Frontenhausen where they were liberated by advancing American troops.

- NORTH CAROLINA NATIONAL GUARD AND MOLDOVAN FORCES TRAIN IN GERMANY

Major Neil Edgar's final test prior to movement to Kosovo was a 17-day Mobilization Readiness Exercise. It was a fast and furious training exercise and the soldiers were tested both mentally and physically. The exercise was created to simulate 6 months of events that have recently occurred in Kosovo in just 17 days. While the operational tempo is slow in Kosovo, when 6 months of events are compressed to 17 days it makes for a hectic two and a half weeks! In Germany the soldiers of the 30th were subjected to perhaps the most realistic Crowd Riot Control training imaginable. They conducted Fire Phobia training where they walked through walls of fire, and had to fend off and contain rioting role players with shields and 'soft' batons. The training was as intense and realistic as Neil had ever seen in his fourteen years of service. The exercises were recorded on the official home page of the United States Army.

*HOHENFELS, Germany - Armed with riot shields and batons, North Carolina National Guardsmen with Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 252nd Armored Regiment and a platoon of soldiers with the 22nd Peacekeeping Battalion, Moldovan Ground Forces trained in riot control tactics while at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center (JMRC) here June 25, 2015.*

*The Moldovan platoon was attached to Alpha Company during their JMRC rotation in preparation for a deployment to Kosovo in support of the Kosovo Force (KFOR) mission. U.S. Army Lt. Col. Bill Gray, the commander of the 1-252nd Armored Regiment, was pleased to be training with one of North Carolina National Guard's partners through the State Partnership Program.*

*"I am glad they are attached to us, they integrated quickly with Alpha Company and are very professional," said Gray.*

*During the JMRC rotation, the units were trained in riot control with the culminating event replicating a worst-case scenario called "Dynamic Manner." U.S. Army Capt. Sam Barrow, the commander of Alpha Company, explained that their mission was to deescalate a hostile crowd, remove obstacles and restore peace to an urban area.*

*"Dynamic Manner is a challenging event, the opposing force can move quickly and they turned up the intensity, our team had platoon integrity but during dynamic manner we showed that we have company integrity," said Barrow.*

*U.S. Army 1st Sgt. Billy Green, the first sergeant of Alpha Company stated, "This was difficult training but for our company it was a great team building exercise, we will be going to Kosovo fully confident in our ability to assist KFOR."*

*The Moldovan platoon acted as a quick reaction force for the scenario and was called in towards the end of the demonstration to repel the opposing force out of the village.*

*Moldovan Capt. Victor Trohin, a platoon leader for the 22nd Peacekeeping Battalion, was satisfied with how his platoon performed and worked with members of Alpha Company.*

*"We take every training opportunity seriously, it is useful for us to train with other nations. I am pleased with today's training," said Trohin.*

*When deployed to Kosovo later this year, the Moldovan platoon will be assigned to the Multinational Battle Group-West and Alpha Company will be with the 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team as the Multinational Battle Group-East headquarters element. The training at JMRC was a welcomed opportunity to train with a long-standing partner and also provided a chance to improve skills that will be used for domestic operations.*

*"We are fortunate to have the opportunity to learn these skills here and be tested like this. The next time Alpha Company is called up for the Rapid Reaction Force back in North Carolina, we will be more than ready," said Barrow.*

*The RRF mission is an annually assigned to a specific unit within the NC Army National Guard. A unit assigned this mission is always in the ready to assist local, state or federal authorities within a short notice. The involvement in the RRF mission continues to show the NCNG's ability to be ready, reliable and responsive.*



Soldiers assigned to the 1st Battalion, 252nd Armored Regiment, 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team, conduct riot operations during a training exercise in preparation for the unit's deployment to Kosovo at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center... (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Craig Norton, 382nd Public Affairs Detachment/Released)





Soldiers, right, of the 252nd Armored Regiment engage simulated rioters played by soldiers of the 4th Infantry Regiment while conducting crowd riot control training during a Kosovo Force (KFOR) mission rehearsal exercise in Hohenfels, Germany, on June 20.



Soldiers assigned to the 1st Battalion, 252nd Armored Regiment, 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team, conduct riot operations during a training exercise in preparation for the unit's deployment to Kosovo at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center, Hohenfels, Germany, June 25, 2015. This will be the 16th rotation a National Guard headquarters element has been deployed for the NATO Kosovo Force (KFOR) mission as the U.S. higher command. The KFOR mission has had a total of 27 rotations of either active duty or NG Soldiers supporting it since June 1999.





Soldiers assigned to the 1st Battalion, 252nd Armored Regiment, 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team, load a M1165 HIGH MMWV with equipment prior to beginning a riot training lane in preparation for their Kosovo mission at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center, Hohenfels, Germany, June 25, 2015.



Moldovan soldiers march out of the training area where they were conducting a riot training exercise with the 1st Battalion, 252nd Armored Regiment, 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team, at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center, Hohenfels, Germany, June 25, 2015. The 252nd was preparing for a deployment to Kosovo.





A soldier assigned to the 1st Battalion, 252nd Armored Regiment, 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team and Moldovan soldiers monitor the environment during a training exercise at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center, Hohenfels, Germany, June 25, 2015. The NCNG and Moldovan military have shared a unique bond since 1996 when they became aligned through the National Guard's State Partnership Program.



U.S. Army 1st Lt. Patrick Lake, assigned to Headquarters Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 252nd Armored Regiment, 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team, discuss operations with Moldovan Capt. Ruslan Varivanon during a training exercise at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center, Hohenfels, Germany, June 25, 2015.





Soldiers assigned to the 1st Battalion, 252nd Armored Regiment, 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team and a Moldovan soldier monitor the environment during a training exercise at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center, Hohenfels, Germany, June 25, 2015.



Soldiers assigned to the 1st Battalion, 252nd Armored Regiment, 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team, conduct riot operations during a training exercise in preparation for the unit's deployment to Kosovo at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center, Hohenfels, Germany, June 25, 2015.





Soldiers assigned to the 1st Battalion, 252nd Armored Regiment, 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team, conduct riot operations during a training exercise in preparation for the unit's deployment to Kosovo at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center, Hohenfels, Germany, June 25, 2015.



Major Neil E. Edgar



Medical Soldiers assigned to the 1st Battalion, 252nd Armored Regiment, 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team, evaluate a casualty during a training exercise in preparation for the unit's deployment to Kosovo at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center, Hohenfels, Germany, June 25, 2015. Although it was training, the events could easily be mistaken as the real thing. Role-players hurled foam rocks wrapped in duct tape, rolled smoking tires, and charged the line, throwing their bodies at full force against the shields testing the capabilities of the troops in training. During the culminating training event (a crowd riot) there were several injuries suffered on both sides. At times the military does assume risk during training to expose soldiers to what it might really be like when things go wrong on the 'battlefield'.

Although a riot hasn't happened in the region of Kosovo recently crowd riot control training is an important point at JMRC because it's a task U.S. Soldiers aren't familiar with and could be called on to perform while deployed.

- FIRE PHOBIA TRAINING

**"Get out of here!"**

Rioters yell as one hurls a Molotov cocktail at multinational Soldiers, bursting into a wave of fire that crashed against riot shields. Chanting and banging their batons on their shields in a rhythm, the wall of Soldiers pushed forward and the eased mob back.





That is just one training scenario U.S. and multinational forces encountered during their rotation at Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany, in June Of 2015 – and it is one they will never forget.

At the Hohenfels Training Area, riot control is a staple of NATO's Kosovo Force training but during KFOR 20, June 2015, the Portuguese Fire Phobia Team turned up the intensity with specialized training to familiarize forces with tactics and techniques for reacting to and mitigating the threat of improvised incendiary devices or weapons such as Molotov cocktails.

Albanian, American, Armenian, Romanian, and Slovenian soldiers participated in the training.

"Every time that you are working in CRC and there are rioters, one of the worst tasks you have to perform is reacting to a cocktail," said Portuguese Army First Sgt. Nuno Meves, fire phobia training lane instructor. "Usually the rioters lose to physical efforts, so they have to resort to something else, which in most cases is the Molotov cocktail and it can create *problems for us.*"

Standing side by side, Soldiers took turns having gasoline filled cocktails thrown at their feet and being set on fire. During cold training, the soldiers practiced with plastic bottles filled with water, so the troops could practice their reaction time, and the actual steps they have to go through to put out the fire with their riot gear, help dissipate the flames and move them through the fire. The techniques included going into a protective posture when they spotted a cocktail, stomping their feet while moving forward and waving their riot shields after the cocktail exploded near them. The platoon leaders in each platoon were assisting their soldiers, making sure they were using the proper techniques. The participants were very anxious about doing the live training.



"It takes a lot of training so that's why we have to start with cold training using water bottles," said Meves. "This is a very specific task you have to perform in a real situation so you have to be well prepared."

"It's very hard to train this situation because all the [Soldier's] senses tell them when they are on fire to run away. So we have to fight that and we have to keep them focused," said Meves.

Completing these tasks isn't the everyday norm for these Soldiers, Meves added. Having to deal with a rioting crowd throwing cocktails and other items is completely different from the usual combat tasks these Soldiers are used to.

Each situation brought unique challenges with them but U.S. and multinational forces took on the training at hand and effectively learned new skill sets. With the rotation behind them, the Soldiers can now turn their attention to KFOR and, hopefully, not have to employ any of the new skills they've learned.



The fear of getting burned, and catching on fire were personal concerns, said Sgt. Suren Mirozoyan of the Armenian Army. "Every time there is a crowd control mission you may have to deal with a situation like that," said Mirozoyan. "The training was well organized and the instructors briefed us very well. It made me more confident. A situation is less dangerous if you know how to react."

This was the second time the Fire Phobia training was integrated into the KFOR mission-rehearsal exercise. Despite working with fire, there were no injuries.



"They all worked as a team," said Grella. "I think it's something we need to incorporate more often, because as we draw down troops we might be sent other places, not just Kosovo, for peace-keeping missions."

*A U.S. Soldier of 1st Battalion, 252nd Armored Regiment moves through fire while conducting fire phobia training during a Kosovo Force (KFOR) mission rehearsal exercise (MRE) at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany, June 16, 2015. The KFOR MRE is based on the current operational environment and is designed to prepare the unit for peace support, stability, and contingency operations in Kosovo in support of civil authorities to maintain a safe and secure environment.*





