

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER



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Evaluation tests Sappers' 'METL'

Story by Sgt. Brian Johnson
196th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CAMP ATTERBURY, Ind. — For an Army unit to be considered combat-ready, there is not only a myriad of training that must occur, but the unit's readiness also has to be evaluated.

The results of that evaluation are what tell the Army if a unit is ready for combat operations, or if additional training may be needed to make the unit ready to meet the needs of the Army.

During their two-week annual training period this summer, more than 80 members of the Ohio Army National Guard's Amanda, Ohio-based 811th Engineer Company (Sapper) were evaluated on their unit readiness by First Army.

A Sapper is the name for the Army combat engineers who conduct mobility and counter-mobility operations on the battlefield, including bridge-building, laying or clearing minefields and demolitions.

Capt. Thomas Race, commander of the 811th, explained that the unit has to show proficiency in their Mission Essential Task List, or METL, tasks.

"We are currently running operations to show mobility, counter-mobility, engineer combat operations and command and control." Race said.

Staff Sgt. Joshua Bruce, a construction operations sergeant from Lancaster, Ohio, explained how the training works.

"To get Soldiers to adapt to the training environment, we have them go through multiple, different lanes," Bruce said. "Each time we have made the mission a little bit harder. Each day we have progressively added more obstacles into it."

Bruce said that there are three platoons in the 811th that are all set up identically.

"They (the platoons) all go through the same lanes," Bruce said. "We change them every day so that when the young Soldiers talk to each other, they can't give real clues and tips to what is happening."

At this point in their training, Race said the unit had been running an eight-phase operation almost nonstop for nearly 72 hours.

"Last night we did a night recon of a bridge," Race said. "Today we set up a traffic control point while another platoon blew up a bridge."

The next mission involved disrupting a potential helicopter landing zone. With so many various, detailed scenarios, Race said that the planning that went into this annual training took most of the past year.

Bruce said that the feedback about the training earlier this year has been nothing but positive.

"The E-5s and below love this. A lot of them have been saying for the last four or five years that we never do this awesome (kind) of training," Bruce said. "The esprit-de-corps is through the roof."

When the unit's two-week annual training period and evaluation were completed, they returned home to stand at the ready in case the Army needs a Sapper unit like the 811th. If it does, the 811th could potentially meet that need and be ready to go.

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A Soldier with the Ohio Army National Guard's 811th Engineer Company (Sapper) works to move one of his comrades with a simulated injury to safety, July 24, 2014, at Camp Atterbury, Ind. As part of their two-week annual training, the Soldiers of the 811th were evaluated on tasks comprising their METL (Mission Essential Task List), an assessment that helps determine the unit's readiness and availability for any missions that the Army may call upon them for in the future. (Ohio National Guard photo by Sgt. Brian Johnson)

VA develops mobile application “Concussion Coach” to help support treatment for Veterans who suffer from concussions

To better meet the needs of Veterans and others who have suffered mild to moderate concussions associated with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has developed "Concussion Coach," a mobile application (“app”) that provides portable tools to recognize symptoms and to identify and make use of coping strategies.

The Concussion Coach app is designed to educate users about concussions, related symptoms, treatments and to enable users to recognize and assess symptoms. The app identifies resources for managing symptoms and planning tools to build resilience. It also provides access to crisis resources, including personal support contacts and ways in which the user can obtain professional health care.

“In developing the Concussion Coach, we applied the science and the clinical recommendations that have emerged from the recent efforts of researchers and practitioners across many agencies, organizations and institutions to better understand the nature and consequences of injury to the brain,” said Dr. Micaela Cornis-Pop, Speech Pathologist and lead subject matter expert for the application. “We are looking forward to the Concussion Coach becoming a trusted resource among self-help tools for Veterans and others to manage the troubling symptoms of concussion.”

The application will be helpful to everyone who suffers from mild to moderate concussions. Its development came about as a result of knowledge gained by VA medical staff in treatment of TBI. While combat injuries to Servicemembers and injuries to professional athletes gain media attention, TBI is most often caused by falls, vehicle accidents and violence. TBI is a major cause of death and disability worldwide, especially in children and young adults.

“The development of the Concussion Coach application shows how work conducted by VA also helps the general public,” said Dr. Carolyn M. Clancy, VA’s Interim Undersecretary for Health. “VA is taking innovative approaches and making use of technology to provide personalized health care for the nation’s Veterans, and this app is an example of that.”

The application is a useful tool, and is not intended to replace professional diagnosis, medical treatment or rehabilitation therapies for those who need them.

“We believe that Concussion Coach will support treatment with a health care professional by providing portable, convenient tools for the user to recognize symptoms and cope with concussion-related problems,” added Dr. Cornis-Pop.

Concussion Coach was collaboratively developed by the VA’s Rehabilitation and Prosthetic Services and the National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, and the Department of Defense National Center for Telehealth and Technology.

Concussion Coach is available for mobile Apple devices (iPhone, iPad, and iPod Touch) from the App Store and will be available to Google Play for Android devices later in 2014.



Source: <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2630>



DID YOU KNOW?**The cost of living 50 years ago...**

Avg. yearly income: \$5,880
 Gallon of gas: \$.25
 Gallon of milk: \$1.06
 Loaf of bread: \$.21
 1st class stamp: \$.05
 Pay phone (local call): \$.10

Would you like to see an increase of 1.69% in your retirement annuity in January 2015? That may happen or, perhaps, the final figure could even be higher.

The 1.69% is based on the latest figures from the Consumer Price Index (CPI-W) which is the most relevant inflation index for most federal retirees. If you collect Social Security, an annuity under the federal government CSRS or FERS retirement systems, CPI-W is how the cost of living adjustment (COLA) will be determined for your retirement check in January 2015.

Source: <http://www.fedsmith.com/2014/06/18/calculating-the-2015-cost-of-living-adjustment-cola/>

OCTOBER 4**Change of Command**

811th Engineer Company

(Sapper) (Rescheduled)

11495 Chillicothe-Lancaster Road, Amanda
 1100 hrs.

Outgoing: Capt. Thomas Race
 Incoming: Capt. Tyler Hoffman

OCTOBER 19**Change of Command**

Company C, 1st Battalion, 148th Infantry Regiment

500 Riverside Drive, Tiffin
 1500 hrs.

Outgoing: Capt. Heath Silva
 Incoming: 1st Lt. James Field

NOVEMBER 1**Recruiting & Retention Battalion Dining Out**

The Hilton Columbus/Polaris
 8700 Lyra Drive
 Social Hour - 1730 hrs.
 Dinner - 1900 hrs.

NOVEMBER 8**37th IBCT Brigade Ball**

Embassy Suites Columbus/
 Dublin
 5100 Upper Metro Pl.
 Social Hour - 1700 hrs.
 Dinner - 1830 hrs.

Side effects from Mefloquine could qualify Veterans for disability benefits

U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs
 Public Health

Mefloquine (brand name: Lariam®) is a drug that has been given to military personnel, including those serving in Somalia, Iraq and Afghanistan, for protection against malaria. Malaria is an infectious disease transmitted by mosquitoes.

Mefloquine, a round, white tablet taken once a week, is also used for travelers visiting areas where malaria is found, based on recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Mefloquine was approved by the FDA in May 1989.

If you are concerned about mefloquine use or long-term side effects from taking mefloquine, talk to your health care provider or local VA Environmental Health Coordinator.

Most people who take mefloquine do not experience side effects. For those who do, the most common reported side effects include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, dizziness, difficulty sleeping and bad dreams. These symptoms are usually mild and do not cause people to stop taking the medicine. People with liver problems, or those who drink alcohol or take medicines that affect the liver, may take longer to eliminate mefloquine from the body.

Occasionally, mefloquine may cause more serious side effects. Examples include psychiatric symptoms such as anxiety, paranoia, depression, mood changes, hallucinations, agitation and unusual behavior. Other uncommon side effects may include muscle weakness, irregular heartbeat and lung problems such as pneumonitis (inflammation of lung tissue). Rare cases of suicidal thoughts have been reported.

HEALTH CONCERNS?

If you are concerned about mefloquine use or long-term side effects from taking mefloquine, talk to your health care provider or local VA Environmental Health Coordinator (shown below).

Chalmers P. Wylie VA Ambulatory Care Center

420 N. James Rd
 Columbus, OH 43219

Shelley Leister
 (614) 257-5626
Shelley.Leister@va.gov

Chillicothe VA Medical Center

17273 State Route 104
 Chillicothe, OH 45601

Kathy Keeney
 (740) 773-1141 x6449
Kathy.Keeney@va.gov

Cincinnati VA Medical Center

3200 Vine Street
 Cincinnati, OH 45220

Janie Thompson
 (513) 475-6973
Janie.Thompson3@va.gov

Dayton VA Medical Center

4100 W. Third Street
 Dayton, OH 45428

Sheryl Yarbrough
 (937) 268-6511 x1073
Sheryl.Yarbrough@va.gov

Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center

8787 Brookpark Road
 Parma, OH 44129

Nadine Sanders
 (216) 739-7000 x838 2504
Nadine.Sanders@va.gov

Note: Emails sent to these addresses are not secure. Please do not include personal data. To send a secure email, use VA's Ask a Question - IRIS located at <https://iris.custhelp.com/> (a secure website contracted to VA).

COMPENSATION BENEFITS FOR HEALTH PROBLEMS

Veterans may file a claim for disability compensation for health problems they believe are related to mefloquine use during military service. The VA decides these claims on a case-by-case basis.

Source: <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/mefloquine-lariam.asp>



STANDING TOGETHER: OHIO VETERANS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The Ohio Humanities Council (OHC), in partnership with the Ohio National Guard (ONG), has launched a campaign to capture and preserve the contributions of Ohio Service members who have served during the War on Terrorism (WOT). The OHC has received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to record these histories which will ultimately be preserved in the state archives at the Ohio History Connection. Soldiers and Airmen who have deployed in support of the WOT, with the ONG or while a member of another branch or component of the Armed Forces, are sought for this project.

Oral history activities focus on persons, events, and topics of historical interest to the military. They are conducted to obtain historical information that may not otherwise be recorded. In the modern era of email, texting, and other web based technology, many of the important stories previously captured in handwritten letters and journals are lost. Oral history interviews serve as a way to capture those important pieces of Ohio history for future generations.

Participation is voluntary and interviews will be conducted across the state between 1 December 2014 and 1 April 2015. Historians from the OHC will work with each participant to schedule a suitable time and location. Interviews take approximately 60 to 90 minutes to complete. Help us preserve our story for future generations by completing the form below and returning by email or mail to the below.

Name: _____

Current Unit: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Current City: _____

Please return to: State of Ohio, Adjutant General's Department, ATTN: NGOH-HIS (SFC Mann), 2825 West Dublin Granville Road, Columbus, Ohio 43235-2789. Or email it to joshua.d.mann.mil@mail.mil.

2014 Regional Inter-Service Family Assistance Committee Meetings:

Region 1 - 23 Oct

Region 2 - 15 Oct

Region 3 - 21 Oct

Region 4 - 28 Oct

Region 5 - 7 Oct

Region 6 - 8 Oct

For questions regarding the time or place of RISFAC meetings, contact Staff Sgt. Ikia Perry at (614) 336-4135.

Retirement Packets

Retirement packets are mailed to your last known mailing address. If you change your address before your 59th birthday, make sure you contact the office below so they will know where to send your packet.

You will need to send the packet back to receive your retirement pay. Make sure to include the following: NGB Form 22, DD Form 214(s), NGB Form 23, 20-year letter and SBP election. If you are missing any documents, contact Ms. Jeanette Coughenour at 614-336-7038 (ONG HQs).

**U.S. Army Human Resources
Center of Excellence - Fort Knox
ATTN: AHRC-PDR-RCR
1600 Spearhead Division Ave.
Dept. 420
Fort Knox, KY 40122-56402
1-800-318-5298 or 502-613-8950**

If you are an Army Guard/Reserve or an Air Force Guard/Reserve retiree, and need help completing your retirement pay packet, contact Sgt. 1st Class Richard Wright at 614-336-7277.

1-145th Armored Regiment hosts inaugural Minuteman Ironman competition

Story and Photos by Capt. Phillip Patti
1st Battalion, 145th Armored Regiment



Ohio Army National Guard Spc. Matthew Richardson (left), completes the M2A1 clear-disassemble-functions check station before moving out to the six-mile ruck march.



Lt. Col. Perry Carper (center), commander of 1st Battalion, 145th Armored Regiment, Ohio Army National Guard, stands with Pvt. Joseph Dokes (from left), Spc. Warren Conover, 1st Lt. Michael Crow and Sgt. Rashun Lawrence, members of the winning team at the 2014 Minuteman Ironman competition.

STOW, Ohio — Members of the Ohio Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 145th Armored Regiment, known as the "Panther Battalion," hosted the first Minuteman Ironman competition Aug. 10, 2014.

The competition consisted of four-man teams and individual participants in multiple events — 500-yard swim, three-mile run, various calisthenics, several weapons tasks and ended in a six-mile road march with participants carrying packs weighing 50 pounds.

The Stow Police Department provided logistical support while friends and Families of the Panther Battalion cheered on participants.

Four companies from the 1st Battalion, 145th Armored Regiment participated in the competition. Tank Companies C and D, Headquarters and Headquarters Company and the 737th Support Company (Forward) all fielded teams.

The team heat was a closely contested event with the lead changing four times during the course of the more than two-hour race. Company D, known as "Destroyer Company," was able to overcome finishing last in the swim event to win the overall team competition.

Five Soldiers competed in the individual heat, and it was Sgt. Daniel J. Brautigam who finished with the fastest time of 2 hours, 10 minutes becoming the individual 2014 Minuteman Ironman.

Each of the competitors reached deep inside themselves — exhibiting stamina and courage that invoked the Army's Warrior Ethos — to complete the physically challenging course. These Soldiers represented the Panther Battalion and of the Ohio Army National Guard well.