

Fort Irwin/SVUSD celebrates new school year with back-to-school Block Party



Photo by Abraam Dawoud

Army Community Service staff and volunteers hand out gifts to children July 30, at Fort Irwin, Calif., while talking to parents about the services and programs ACS provides.

Story by Abraam Dawoud

National Training Center and Fort Irwin

FORT IRWIN, Calif. — To help prepare service members and their families for the start of the new academic year, Fort Irwin held two back to school events July 29 and 30, here.

On July 29, Fort Irwin and the Silver Valley Unified School District hosted the first Back to School Town Hall at the Sandy Basin Community Center, where members of the community could interact with school administrators and teachers.

The following day, the Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation hosted its annual Block Party.

The event, which drew hundreds of attendees, gave Fort Irwin residents and newcomers the opportunity to connect with

teachers and administrators from SVUSD and multiple programs that Fort Irwin's Army Community Service office offers.

Jesse Najera, superintendent of SVUSD, hosted the town hall on behalf of the school district.

"It's always an honor to serve this great community," Najera said. "The Block Party was a great event and gave the SVUSD team an awesome opportunity to interact with families and students."

In addition to meeting with school staff and personnel from the ACS office, students received free backpacks and other school necessities from numerous organizations such as the National Training Center- High Desert Chapter of AUSA, Operation Homefront, and the Villages at Fort Irwin.

According to Kimberly Johnson, Fort Irwin's Operation Homefront chapter president, members of the chapter handed out 200 backpacks filled with school supplies to the students and their families.

"We have been providing school supplies to students here at Fort Irwin for several years," Johnson said. "We're very excited to see the kids go back to school, and we're happy to assist military families wherever we can."

Operation Homefront is a national nonprofit organization that provides financial assistance, transitional housing programs and other services to military families.

Sarah Davis, who attended the Block Party with her son, Tristan, said she was appreciative of all the SVUSD staff, the volunteers, and vendors.

"Honestly, it's an awesome event," said Davis. "We got to meet with school staff, Tristan was able to get his school supplies, and I got to shop from some of the home-based businesses here."

11th Armored Cavalry shares living history



Photo by Staff Sgt. Elizabeth Bryson

Troopers from the 11th Armored Cavalry Horse Detachment show precision through synchronized jumping during a demonstration for friends and family June 21, 2022, at the Detachment Barn, Fort Irwin, Calif. The horse detachment carefully selects just the right men and women for the job from within the 11th ACR "Blackhorse" Troopers ranks, and while equestrian experience is not required, character, willingness to learn and the commitment to hard work are essential.

Story by Staff Sgt. Elizabeth Bryson

300th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

FORT IRWIN, Calif. — U.S. Soldiers from the 11th Armored Cavalry Horse Detachment hosted a stable tour and cavalry demonstration for friends and family June 21, 2022, at the Detachment Barn, Fort Irwin, California. The detachment, one of six mounted U.S. Army cavalry units, provides ceremonial support for 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, representing the rich history of the original 11th Cavalry in equine competitions and shows across the country.

"Fort Irwin is a small, isolated community and so giving back, not only to the regiment, but also to the larger community is what the horse detachment is here for," said Capt. Michael Gates, 11th ACR Horse Detachment commander.

Gates explained that as a special ceremonial unit, community outreach is an important part of the detachment's mission. In order to fulfill that goal, the horse detachment carefully selects just the right men and women for the job from within the 11th ACR "Blackhorse" Troopers ranks. While equestrian experience is not required, character, willingness to learn and the commitment to hard work are essential.

"All of our troopers have less than 12 to 18 months of horsemanship experience...so we care very much about the professionalism we represent... for the regiment, for the broader community here and the Army as a whole," said Gates, whose own military occupation is engineer. "It's very fulfilling to be able to actually be the boots on the ground for the extended community."

Blackhorse Troops forge fighters

Story by Staff Sgt. Elizabeth Bryson

300th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

FORT IRWIN, Calif. — U.S. Army Soldiers from 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment (Blackhorse) conducted a fierce counterattack against the 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 28th Infantry Division, Pennsylvania National Guard, during a large-scale combat operations training event July 3, 2022, at the National Training Center (NTC), Fort Irwin, California. Blackhorse Troopers tested the Rotational Training Unit's (RTU) defensive ability by forcing them to fight to hold key terrain against a barrage of challenges from a near-peer opponent includ-

ing indirect fire, close-combat and chemical weapons attack, electronic signal jamming and hidden enemy forces.

Earlier in the week, elements of 11th ACR, acting as both the fictional Donovan 803rd Brigade Tactical Group and Bilasuvar Freedom Brigade (BFB) "guerrilla" fighters, defended the city of Razish, NTC, from the RTU in a grueling all-day battle. Razish, the largest simulated urban settlement in the training area, presents visiting brigades with ample opportunity to test their skills and adapt against a wide range of weaponry and attacks from a uniformed army as well irregular forces as they fight to seize dense, urban terrain.

"You really have to put your thinking cap on out here," said



Photo by Staff Sgt. Elizabeth Bryson

U.S. Army Soldier, assigned to the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment and acting as an element of the Donovan Army, uses binoculars to search for an enemy target from the turret of an Opposing Force Surrogate Vehicle during a battle with a defending Rotational Training Unit July 3, 2022, at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, Calif. During the training exercise, Blackhorse Troopers tested the Rotational Training Unit's defense and ability to hold key terrain by forcing them to respond to a wide variety of challenges, including indirect fire, close combat attack, hidden enemies and electronic signal jamming.

See **BLACKHORSE**, Page 2

See **CAVALRY**, Page 3

News

First female Sapper Leader Course instructor paves the way for others

Story by Amanda Sullivan

Fort Leonard Wood Public Affairs Office

FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo. — Sapper Leader Course instructor Staff Sgt. Ariana Sanchez never set out to make history or be the example she is today.

Originally from Ecuador, she moved to New Jersey when she was 17. As high school ended, Sanchez was interested in the Army but was unsure of her future. After speaking with Army recruiters, she joined the New Jersey National Guard, setting her off on an unexpected path.

She completed Basic Combat Training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Lee, Virginia, in 2014, to become a Water Purification Specialist. During Initial Entry Training, Sanchez realized she not only loved the Army life — she was good at it.

Her two-year transition from the Army National Guard to active-duty status began after arriving at her first unit at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. To become a full-time Soldier, she was required to reclass to a different military occupational specialty, she said.

Having spent most of her short career on the quartermaster side of the Army, she couldn't picture herself sitting in an office.

"They asked me what I wanted to be, and I told them I wanted to be in a combat MOS," she said.

She had various jobs to choose from, including the combat engineer MOS, 12B, which had opened to females in 2015.

"I had a combat engineer friend, but I didn't know what it was," she said. "They showed me a video, and I thought it looked interesting, so I wanted to try it to see what it was about."

Her new MOS took her to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, where she completed Army Engineer One Station Unit Training in June 2016.

Despite a fear of heights, Sanchez volunteered for Airborne School during her training here and earned the Air Assault Badge in February 2017, at Fort Bragg.

Sanchez said she does not regret her decision to enter the male-dominated career field.

"I like it a lot," she said. "It's an interesting life because we aren't solely focused on combat — we are a combination of many dif-



ferent MOSs. You can learn so much from talking to combat engineers. They can build anything or solve any problem."

For her, Sanchez said being a female has no bearing on her skills as a Soldier in any capacity. Still, for some throughout her career, her gender cast doubt upon her abilities to achieve her goals. She found motivation in their skepticism.

"Some said I wouldn't make it or accomplish what I was setting out to do," she said. "That's what motivated me the most."

Many were supportive, however, including her squad at Fort

Bragg; she said they offered support and positive drive while she prepared for the Sapper Leader Course, or SLC.

"They gave me all the push I needed," she said. "They were there for me, and they trained with me. If I wanted to go on a 10-mile ruck, my squad was going with me."

The training and support paid off. Sanchez completed the course in February 2019 — only three months after the Sapper Training Company graduated their first female enlisted Soldier.

See **SAPPER**, Page 5

From **BLACKHORSE**, Page 1

Staff Sgt. Darren Lawson, 2nd Squadron, 11th ACR, acting platoon sergeant, who led the irregular forces in the simulated field. "You should be able to see the fight from both sides, whether BFB or RTU — especially during the planning phase. Whether it is hiking up these mountains, traveling in a convoy of 20-plus vehicles in your platoon, or fighting in a company size element, you need to be able to think ahead and know what each force is doing."

The 11th ACR Soldiers regularly put the RTU through the strenuous training at NTC, where summer temperatures near triple-digits and difficult to maneuver desert terrain can be nearly as dangerous as the enemy. Despite the elements, Lawson says Blackhorse Troopers fight relentlessly, forging resilience in their ranks as well as that of training opponents as they provide the ready counterforce for a constant influx of rotational units.

"During the day it's really tough out here, wearing full kit, throwing that ammo

across your back, carrying your buddy out of the fight," said Lawson, who stressed that the esprit de corps among troopers, especially during a mission, is high. "But, it's a huge morale booster being able to get out here with your dudes, right? With your soldiers that you have been able to train up and preparing them for whatever may come — it's really important."

Despite the frequent rotations, blistering heat, unforgiving terrain, and a constant influx of rotational units, the regimental motto boasts of an incorruptible spirit among 11th ACR ranks, "We are fast, lethal and unbreakable."

Lawson said he takes pride in their reputation and in challenging his own soldiers — as well as the RTU.

"You get to think like the enemy and force your brothers and sisters on the other side to push through and overcome," he said. "We are bringing real life aspects for RTU so they can experience here what they might see when they go overseas."

According to Lawson, every rotation 11th ACR learns, gains proficiency, becomes faster and tougher — and is able to implement new challenges for the RTU, and 1st Lt. Dylan Cole, Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 11th ACR officer-in-charge, who served as Battle Captain for Opposing Forces agrees with him.

"Practice makes perfect," Cole said. "You train how you fight and out here we get the opportunity to do just that — we get tested constantly."

Cole said troops had a great opportunity to learn at NTC and to expand their understanding of what they can accomplish despite any hardship.

"Nothing is technically impossible," Cole said. "You need to always find a way to win. I have always been told that throughout my military career — no matter what is thrown at you, find a way to win... because that's what America expects from us. We have to win."

WHO WE ARE

Brig. Gen. Curtis Taylor
Commanding General

Command Sgt. Maj. Brian D. Haydt
Post CSM

Col. Jason A. Clarke
Garrison Commander

Command Sgt. Maj. Justin Larson
Garrison CSM

Renita Wickes
Public Affairs Director

High Desert Warrior Staff

Abraam Dawoud, Editor

760-380-3303

Kimberly Hackbarth, Contributor

David Dupree, Staff Writer/Photographer

(760) 380-8917

Casey Slusser, Staff Writer/Photographer

(760) 380-3076

Aerotech News

Emma Uribe, Graphic Designer

HIGH DESERT WARRIOR

High Desert Warrior, a civilian enterprise newspaper, is an authorized publication for members of the United States Army and Fort Irwin community. Contents of this newspaper are not necessarily official view of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army or Fort Irwin and the National Training Center. *High Desert Warrior* is prepared weekly by the Public Affairs Office, National Training Center and Fort Irwin, P.O. Box 105067, Fort Irwin, CA, 92310-5067. Telephone: 380-4511 or DSN 470-4511. FAX: 380-3075.

High Desert Warrior is a digital publication, distributed monthly on Facebook, www.facebook.com/HighDesertWarrior/ as well as emailed to base personnel. It is produced at Aerotech News and Review, (661) 945-5634.

Aerotech News and Review is a private firm in no way connected with the Department of the Army and is responsible for the commercial advertising found in this publication. Everything advertised in this publication will be made available for purchase, use or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national orientation, age, marital status, physical handicap or political affiliation of the purchaser, user or patron. A confirmed violation of this policy of equal opportunity by an advertiser will result in refusal to print advertising from that source. The appearance of advertisements in this publication does not constitute an endorsement by the Department of the Army of the products or services advertised.

Printed by Aerotech News and Review, Inc. (877) 247-9288, www.aerotechnews.com.

NEWSPAPER AWARDS

2nd Place, 2017 U.S. Army IMCOM

Newspaper Competition — Feature Photograph

Honorable Mention, 2009 U.S. Army IMCOM-West

Newspaper Competition — Tabloid category

3rd Place, 2008 Dept. of the Army

Maj. Gen. Keith L. Ware

Newspaper Competition — Tabloid Category

SEND US FEEDBACK

Send your questions, suggestions, or problems to:

1. Your chain of command
2. ICE (Interactive Customer Evaluation)
3. CG's Hotline: 380-5463

SOCIAL MEDIA

Instagram: @ntcfortirwin

Facebook (NTC/Ft Irwin): @ntcFortIrwin

Facebook (Public Affairs): @FtIrwin

Twitter: @NTC_Update



Army Leaders more empowered to locate missing Soldiers

Story By Staff Sgt. Michael Reinsch

Army News Service

WASHINGTON — Since the publication of Army Directive 2020-16, Determination and Reporting of Missing, Absent-Unknown, Absent Without Leave, and Duty Status-Whereabouts Unknown Soldiers, the urgency and timeliness of locating Soldiers who are missing from formation has been improved across the force at all levels.

“On a recent trip to Fort Hood, [Texas], I was privileged to visit the First Cavalry Division’s Pegasus Troop where Soldier in-processing is taken to a whole new level,” said Hon. Carrie F. Ricci, the Army General Counsel, also a member of the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee. “They have made it their priority to know the Soldier personally as well as their family support system. I inquired about implementation of the missing Soldier protocols, and I was impressed. They are on it — from their families to their battle buddies, Soldiers are embraced by their new Army family.”

The Army Directive, released in December 2020 alongside the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee report recommendations, clarifies expectations during the first 48 hours after a Soldier fails to report for duty.

“We’ve empowered leaders at every level to use all the resources available to them to go find Soldiers,” said Maj. Gen. Duane Miller, Provost Marshal General and commanding general of Army Corrections Command. “You don’t have to rely on law enforcement to go find your Soldiers, but I can now send platoons out into the local community. It’s empowered them to get the whole community to look for



one Soldier or two Soldiers.”

“What we’re seeing in a lot of instances is early return of the Soldier to the formations, because we’re employing everything we’ve got available to us to go find the Soldier,” he said. “We’re getting an opportunity early on to wrap our arms around the Soldier, because everybody’s involved in bringing them back to our team.”

The directive has been a step in the right direction to enable Army leaders to maximize their efforts in finding missing Soldiers. Instead of labeling Soldiers as absent without leave — or AWOL — they will get the proper help they need, which could be detrimental to their safety or career.

“What really bothered me and challenged me, anytime we had a Soldier depart our for-

mation, we had this moniker that was placed on them, called AWOL,” Miller said. “When people went AWOL, it typically connotated a negative moniker.”

Perceptions of the public as well as in the minds of many Soldiers, having the AWOL status could cause repercussions because of the negative view of the status, Miller said. People would see a Soldier with the AWOL status without really knowing why the Soldier departed the formation and make, often negative, assumptions about the reason.

It would often make the public and Soldiers think they were in trouble and might not receive the help they need, he continued.

Sometimes, Soldiers were flagged in criminal databases just because of an honest mistake, like thinking they were on leave when they

really weren’t. And other times, Soldiers may need mental health services but are apprehensive of coming back because of the repercussions of being AWOL.

“If a Soldier goes missing, these close connections and the Soldier’s family are immediately tapped through the missing soldier protocol process,” Ricci said. “Before the directive made this process mandatory, reaction time and procedures could vary from unit to unit. Now every chain of command across the Army must follow this effective and efficient process.”

Under the new directive, the duty status code absent-unknown was created to make a temporary duty status while commanders search for an absent Soldier.

“The Army looked at the entire process, we looked at what we’ve learned in [the] combat environment: we don’t always label Soldiers AWOL in a combat environment,” Miller said. “We saw units put, really, a whole lot of effort into trying to retrieve our Soldiers once they came up missing. In conversations with senior leaders [we decided] to get away from this AWOL term because we don’t know enough about the Soldier.”

Now, the directive lays out that when a Soldier goes missing and until a Soldier’s status is confirmed, they have the absent-unknown status attached to them. Once there is evidence about their absence, they will transition to another duty status. For example, if it is found that a Soldier went missing involuntarily, the Soldier’s duty status becomes duty status-whereabouts unknown, or DUSTWUN.

“Just like our Soldiers protect our nation from our adversaries, we must in turn protect

See **ARMY**, Page 7

From **CAVALRY**, Page 1

Sgt. 1st Class Chris Stemple, acting first sergeant for the detachment, also an engineer by trade, said working with inexperienced Soldiers and developing them into proficient riders with actual old-school cavalry skills and tactical ability is a daunting, yet rewarding, challenge. Troopers in the detachment are required to master the equivalent of three years of training in a 12-month period, relying on the aid of skilled contractors and trainers in addition to the veteran horse detachment troopers.

“Probably the coolest part about this job is that it is incredibly tangible,” said Stemple. “Unlike other jobs in the army where it is sometimes difficult to see that achievement on a daily basis. Everything here is a progression. Everything here... from caring for to riding the horses... is a learning experience. It’s neat to see those ‘light bulb’ days as the Soldier comes in and learns a completely foreign thing and develops a degree of mastery in a very short period of time.”

During the tour, guests saw the stables, which hold a treasure-trove of awards, period weapons, uniforms and saddlery. The 11th Cavalry is steeped in rich military tradition and can trace its roots 121 years back to the specific founding regiment. They still train on the same tactics and skills as the age-old cavalry, remaining era-accurate in their equipment by using replications of the original tack, pistols and sabers.

“I would argue we have a time period, combat-effective unit,” said Stemple. “That is probably the coolest, most surprising

thing that people find out about us. We actually do it the way it was done... it’s not just for show.”

According to Stemple, the horses are the draw for most spectators. Unlike modern day equine competitors, Military Working Equines with the 11th ACR are not just “one-trick ponies.”

“The horses all put in the same effort we do... and we have good quality, talented horses,” said Stemple. “Another interesting thing about the cavalry and the history of the war horse is the comparison between the modern day equine sports. It’s amazing to see what they can do.”

After the tour, the Horse Detachment took to the ring to demonstrate an array of traditional cavalry horsemanship techniques and maneuvers for cheering onlookers, including the use of sabers and revolvers while mounted, and synchronized jumping.

“We are the living embodiment of the cavalry,” added Gates. “It’s not modern, it’s not what the cavalry would be today — it’s the cavalry just as it was... being able to be a part of that living history of the regiment is unbelievable.”

Troopers ended the dynamic display by treating the audience to a re-enactment of the last charge, a crowd favorite, which commemorates the charge that took place May 5, 1916, as the valiant pistol-wielding horsemen of the 11th Cavalry rode against the stronghold of Pancho Villa, the famed Mexican revolutionary.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Elizabeth Bryson

Trooper from the 11th Armored Cavalry Horse Detachment jumps his steed during a cavalry demonstration for friends and family June 21, 2022, at the Detachment Barn, Fort Irwin, Calif. The detachment, one of six mounted U.S. Army cavalry units, provides ceremonial support for the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment and participates in equine events across the country.

Civil Affairs BN builds foundations at NTC

Story By Staff Sgt. Elizabeth O. Bryson

FORT IRWIN, Calif. — U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers from the 426th Civil Affairs (CA) (Airborne), 351st Civil Affairs Command, United States Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (USACAPOC), based out of Upland, California, honed their warrior tasks and skills during a field training event Aug. 27, 2022, in Junction City, National Training Center (NTC), Fort Irwin, Calif. Regular training in basic skills develops competent Soldiers, leaders, and formations that support the Army’s number one priority — readiness; it results in the muscle memory needed in combat to defeat our nation’s foes.

“Today we are doing mock SALUT reports,” said Sgt. Jose Chavez, Alpha Company, 426th CA Bn., 351st CA Command, USACAPOC, signal support systems specialist, as he placed green plastic soldiers in the dirt to make a makeshift sand table to be used in the training scenario.

SALUT reports are relayed over the radio during a patrol or mission in order to inform the chain of command of an encountered enemy’s size, activity, location and unit, as well as the the time of the incident.

“We have the Soldiers identify what they are seeing on the ground standing a little bit away from the table and then send up a report on a live radio,” Chavez said. “It may not be that easy for them to see what is going on from a distance, but that can happen in real life. You may not be able to get up close — for safety or other extenuating reasons. We just want them to be as accurate and detailed as possible about what they are seeing and to be able to relay that up the chain quickly.”

“It also gives them a chance to work on their radio etiquette,” Chavez added. “You never know who might be asked to call up a report, whether it be in a training scenario or during a real event. Everyone should be able to do it.”

Chavez, who is originally from San Bernardino, said he enjoys training at NTC because it gets his soldiers out of their comfort zone.



U.S. Army photos by Operations Group, National Training Center
U.S. Army Soldiers assigned 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment, 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division engage enemy targets during Decisive Action Rotation 22-09 at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, Calif., Aug. 17, 2022.

“It has that deployment feel, you know,” said Chavez. “The buildings... the desert heat, it has that realism. You have to be more aware and mentally prepared. It also gets us out here away from the city where we can be isolated and train without any distractions.”

The premier National Training Center at Fort Irwin hosts thousands of U.S. military service members, as well as other government agencies and foreign military from around the world each year in its 12 mock-up villages that provide visiting training units with a unique immersive experience in which to hone their skills and develop their leadership abilities.

“Here, you’re in the environment... You know, train as you fight,” said Master Sgt. Jordan Logan, 426th CA Bn., 351st CA Command, USACAPOC, acting 1st sgt. “When you are in a classroom environment there is no space...no movement. There’s no place to go where you are immersed. Coming here—the convoy, the heat, the long hours.. being set into a unique



environment... you cannot duplicate that back in the rear.”

Logan, who served in both the Marines Corps and Army as an infantryman and trainer for several years before becoming a member of the civil affairs community, says practicing basic soldiering skills, like how to relay a radio report, is crucial.

“Growing up as an infantryman, having had that background, I like to see my soldiers training and taking initiative,” Logan said. “Communication training is important. You know— shoot, move and communicate... so we can survive to do our jobs.”

Logan explained foundational skills are what come before, during and after everything else. Mastering those basics and developing muscle memory to perform them under stress allows troops to expand their knowledge and adapt to new problem sets while still being able to function as a soldier.

Soldiers from the 426th CA trained at the premier NTC throughout the weekend, starting with a skills refresher for Alpha Company, who set up in the field as the rest of their contingency completed airborne operations in Van Nuys, Calif. They then participated in a comprehensive situational training exercise that challenged their ability to assess situations, move tactically through a village, communicate with various local leaders and solve problems on the ground — and then to report that information back to their higher command.



Photos Continue on Page 5

From Page 4



From SAPPER, Page 2

Of the almost 200 female Soldiers who have completed the notoriously difficult 28-day SLC since it opened its doors to females in 1999, only nine have been in the enlisted ranks.

Of those nine, Sanchez is the only one who has led future Sappers as an instructor.

Becoming the first

The Army Engineer Regiment began its search for the first female SLC instructor — a position reserved for staff sergeants and sergeants first class who have completed the SLC — in 2021. According to Engineer Regimental Command Sgt. Maj. John Brennan, the hope was to find a Soldier to serve as a relatable example to encourage enlisted females to come to the course.

“The 12 series MOS was one of the first combat MOSs to open to women,” he said. “We were trying to figure out how to reach that portion of the population in the Army Engineer community.”

The selection pool was small, with only four enlisted females Army-wide qualified for the position. Based on location and availability, they could only target a couple of those individuals, Brennan said.

One of them was Sanchez.

She had just received orders for Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, the day before — a move she was looking forward to making because of the unique training opportunities offered there — when the Sapper Training Company first sergeant called. He asked her if she was interested in becoming the first female SLC instructor. The first sergeant gave her the weekend to consider the offer.

“They all saw me at the Sapper Leader Course more than I saw myself at it,” she said. “They knew what I would be for the regiment more than I did.”

The initial call was followed by one from Brennan a few days later.

“We asked her quite a few questions, but the big questions were if she wanted to do it and why,” Brennan said.

Her skills and achievements on paper were impressive, but it was her overall demeanor toward, and understanding of, the importance of the role that led Brennan to select her, he said.

“She was mature for her years of experience and had a positive attitude and outlook,” he said. “She understood the significance of what we were asking her to do and that, in being

the first, she would be a model for others.”

Her heart was set on Hawaii, but Sanchez decided to accept the opportunity. After that, things moved quickly, she said. She had orders to Fort Leonard Wood within the week and was on her way to make Army history, something that had never crossed her mind.

“I joined the Army for stability and to push myself,” she said. “I didn’t expect or set out to do this.”

Success

Since arriving at the Sapper Training Company in 2021, Sanchez has risen to the position’s challenges. Her presence as an instructor has inspired others and dispelled pre-conceived notions about females in combat roles, not only among the students, but her peers.

“Some haven’t trained or worked with a lot of females because they joined before females were allowed to be combat engineers,” said Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Medders, another instructor for the course. “Seeing her, and how she upholds the standards, both with herself and the female students, invalidates the idea that females cannot meet the same standards as their male counterparts.”

Sometimes students are surprised to see a female instructor when they arrive, but it’s always a positive reaction, Sanchez said.

“It makes them realize that, although we are different, we are also the same,” she said. “Then they go back to their unit and encourage their female Soldiers to come here by telling them, ‘If she can do it, you can do it.’”

That was precisely the impact Brennan hoped her presence at the course would have.

“That’s why it was important for her to come here,” he said.

“If other enlisted female Soldiers see her having success, the idea that they can have the same type of success and accomplishments becomes very real to them.”

Sanchez does more than inspire other females to come to the course, though, said 1st Lt. Cam Kirvan, Sapper Training Company commander.

“She also takes a mentorship role toward the female support Soldiers we have here,” he said. “She continuously supports their development and encourages them in their personal and professional lives.”

His support of Sanchez’s goals has nothing to do with her gender and everything to do with her willingness to volunteer

for new experiences, Kirvan said.

“We put the opportunities out to all of the instructors, and she’s normally one of the first to bite,” he said. “That ambition alone is enough for me to support any NCO or Soldier who wants to better their career and improve how they train Soldiers.”

Brennan said Sanchez has continued to seek new opportunities since becoming an instructor. She was recently inducted into the Sgt. Audie Murphy Association and earned her Expert Soldier Badge.

“She strives for excellence,” he said. “When I see her, I think of the many others who could be great examples for others because they are the epitome of what a junior noncommissioned officer should be.”

The future

She may have been first, but Brennan said he has no intention of her being the last. There is a desire to continue to have at least one female instructor in the course moving forward, he said.

A replacement for Sanchez — she is slotted in her position until 2024 — has not been found. Both the company and regiment encourage anyone interested in following in her footsteps — regardless of gender — to attend the SLC.

“I think there are plenty of female Soldiers who could go out there and be just as successful as any male Soldier in the course,” Brennan said. “I would encourage Soldiers to challenge their leadership to allow them to come out here, and the leadership to support those Soldiers in what they want to do.”

Sanchez plans to stay in the Army as long as she is physically able. She is scheduled to attend the Fast Rope Insertion and Extractions and Special Insertion and Extraction System Master Course at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, later this year. She has her sights set on attending Pathfinder School, also at Fort Campbell, and Ranger School at Fort Benning, Georgia, in 2023.

When her time at Fort Leonard Wood is complete, she would like to go to the 173rd Airborne Brigade in Vicenza, Italy, or maybe back to where it all started.

“I would love to try for Hawaii again,” she said.

Community

The home of the Mojave Desert Tortoise



Did you know that the National Training Center/Fort Irwin is the home of the Mojave Desert Tortoise?

The desert tortoises live in desert valleys between about 1,000 and 4,000 feet in elevation. Typically they are found in creosote bush, where scattered shrubs provide abundant space for growth of grasses and wildflowers, the favored foods of the tortoise. They spend about 95% of their lives in burrows, emerging to feed and mate during late winter and remaining active through the spring.

Getting this up close and personal to a tortoise is not advised unless your visiting one in captivity.

You can visit our tortoises, scorpions, tarantulas, millipedes and other insects at our 'mini zoo' by appointment. For appointments please call our DPW wildlife biologist at 760-380-6435 for a brief visit with some of our desert denizens.



Scan My Code...



To get all your VA Home Loan or Homeownership questions answered!

Claudia M. Rothwell

760-662-9388 | Hablo Español

Realtor DRE# 01747984 | VA Home Loan Advocate



hunters: another word for conservationist



Hunters do more to conserve habitat than any other group. And they have achieved great things for wildlife and wild places by supporting conservation organizations like Ducks Unlimited. Because of their support, Ducks Unlimited has conserved more than 12 million acres of habitat across the continent. Come share our vision of skies filled with waterfowl today, tomorrow, and forever.

To find out more go to www.ducks.org



U.S. Army Forces Command Best Squad Competition 2022!

Representing the National Training Center/Fort Irwin:

- Staff Sgt. Joshua Minchew
- Sgt. Daniel Ochoa
- Spc. Alfredo De La Rosa Garcia
- Spc. Bryan Propst
- Pfc. Carlos Dominguez



From **ARMY**, Page 3

and safeguard our Soldiers," said Ricci. "The Army Directive that covers missing Soldier protocols published in the wake of the Fort Hood Independent Review details a precise and methodical process with strict timeframes designed to identify and locate missing Soldiers as quickly as possible. These protocols engage the entire military and law enforcement community as well as the missing Soldier's family, with a greater sense of urgency instilled in this mandatory process."

Inspired by the battle drills of DUSTWUN while deployed in a combat zone, the directive provides units and Army leaders the ability to maximize their efforts in finding missing Soldiers in conjunction with bolstered unit and law enforcement action to assist in the search. Commanders are required to report the Soldier's absence to local Army law enforcement within three hours.

"There are capabilities on the law enforcement side that we have. We can put in requests to identify [missing Soldiers] through the use of the cell phones," Miller said. "We can make sure the Soldier didn't just leave the formation for a day to check into the hospital. We got to get everybody involved."

The directive also places a responsibility to notify and partner with the missing Soldier's family, with a notification of the Soldier's absence within eight hours. Also, if the Soldier is considered a DUSTWUN, the family will be assigned a liaison officer during the search.

In the directive, there are also additional actions to be carried out by commanders, military police, first responders, provost marshal's office, directorate of emergency services, Army criminal investigation division, and public affairs teams. Their additional actions further assist search efforts by fostering consistent communication.

"We're getting Soldiers back in our formation sooner, and if they need help, getting them help sooner, rather than let them try to deal with whatever it is they're challenged with, by themselves," Miller said.

Also built into the directive and battle drills is the function to tend to a Soldier's mental health needs if it is needed.

Sometimes Soldiers have bad days and leave even though they know it is wrong, but they might need some mental health help, and it is important to get to know their needs, Miller said.

"Soldiers are more at risk when he or she is out there alone thinking they're in a lot of trouble, when in fact they're not. We really just want to get you back to see what we can do to help you and understand why you made the decision you made," Miller said. "I think every leader would rather have that as an outcome as opposed to something else where a Soldier is challenged with multiple issues or doesn't have anyone to talk to."

Community

11th ACR hosts local Cub Scouts

Army photographs

The Regimental Support Squadron — Packhorse, 11th ACR supported Cub Scout Pack 67 during Desert Adventure Day by displaying the Squadron's unique transportation assets. Allons!

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC LIEN SALES**

Business & Professional Code Section 21700-21707

Notice is hereby given by the undersigned that a public lien sale of the following described personal property will be held at the hours of **12 noon on the 14th day of September 2022** or thereafter. The auction is being held at **www.selfstorageauction.com** by competitive bid. The property is stored by Nova Storage located **16488 Adelanto Rd. Adelanto, CA 92301**.

The items to be sold are generally described as follows: Furniture, clothing, tools and or other household items stored by the following persons.

F37	Shepard, Melissa
B17	Walthall, Ernesto
C36	Edwards, Nicole
G71	Soto, Ivette
F78	Phillips, Crystal
H01	Jackman, John
D13	Alvarez, Dominic
K15	Hudmon, Garrett
C18	Broughton Adams, Inger
F72	Walthall, Ernesto
F4	Wyant, Carl
I04	Mejia, Helber

Date: August 29th, 2022 Signed NOVA STORAGE This notice is given in accordance with the provisions of section 21700 et seq. of Business & Professional Code of the State of California. The owner reserves the right to bid at the sale. All purchased goods are sold "As Is" and must be paid for and removed at the time of sale. Sales subject to prior cancellation in the event of settlement between owner & obligated party. Auctioneer: Nova Storage



The Best DVD Collection of Old Historic Films on the Net!

Over 250 great historical DVD titles to choose from

Give us a try! Use Aerotech1 for 10% off

Saving film history for future generations
campbellfilms.com | (909) 322-4051

Finding cures. Saving children.®



St. Jude patient Isabelle with her mom, Abigail, U.S. Army National Guard


**St. Jude Children's
Research Hospital**

800-822-6344
stjude.org/cfc

A CFC Participant.
Provided as a public service.

REACH THE BEST MARKET



Military - Aerospace - Veterans In Print and Digital



AEROTECHNEWS.COM

Your one-stop source of news and information for military, defense industry and aerospace professionals as well as aerospace enthusiasts, and military veterans.

We offer our advertisers access to a great market of employed, educated professionals with stable incomes.

Phone: 661-945-5634 • Toll free: 877-247-9288

www.aerotechnews.com • www.thinkmilitaryads.com

www.facebook.com/AerotechNewsandReview

ALWAYS FREE ACCESS!

Frequent Updates — Breaking News — Local • Regional • National

A COMMUNITIES FOR CHRIST EVENT

2022 GRACEFEST



Presented By
CITY OF PALMDALE & CITY OF LANCASTER



PALMDALE AMPHITHEATER

PHIL WICKHAM



DANNY GOKEY



BLESSING OFFOR



CHARITY GAYLE



CENTRAL LIVE



SEPTEMBER 10

DOORS 3PM | SHOW 4PM

TICKETS ON SALE NOW

WWW.GRACEFESTAV.COM



transparent
productions

 **Compassion**
Releasing children from poverty
in Jesus' name



DESTINATION
LANCASTER CA

2022 AEROSPACE VALLEY

OPEN HOUSE, AIR SHOW, AND STEM EXPO

EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE

OCTOBER 15-16, 2022



BREAKING TOMORROW'S BARRIERS TODAY

The Aerospace Valley Air Show is an entirely new event dedicated to showcasing the best of STEM and aviation. Organized by the 412th Test Wing, Edwards Air Force Base, this event will be the first open house for the base in 13 years.

It also marks the 75th anniversary of the U.S. Air Force AND the 75th anniversary of the breaking the sound barrier by Capt. Charles (Chuck) Yeager. Headlining this year's show will be the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds.

Don't miss your company's chance to be a part of history! Aerotech News will be publishing the free Air Show Program to be distributed at the Air Show.



B1B Lancer



B-52H Stratofortress



F-22 Raptor

Published: October 14, 2022

Advertising Deadline: October 3, 2022

Call 661-945-5634 to place your company's ad in this very special edition.

 **AEROTECHNEWS.COM**