

COMMAND IN BRIEF

1st Satellite Control Battalion welcomes new commander

By CPT Ethan Allen

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. — The 1st Satellite Control Battalion said farewell to outgoing battalion commander, LTC Mearen Bethea, and welcomed a new commander, LTC Hae-Sue Park June 30.

“During her tour the battalion flawlessly executed thousands of tactical and strategic Defense Satellite Communications System missions,” said COL David Shaffer, 1st Space Brigade commander. He praised Bethea for taking care of her Soldiers as he described her distinguished achievements during her tour of duty as battalion commander.

“The battalion had a problem getting its Soldiers into NCOES schools. LTC Bethea got 100 percent of her NCOs into the schools and saw 100 percent graduate with over 55 percent graduating with honors. This is a statistic I do not think anyone else in the Army can match,” Shaffer said.

Shaffer welcoming incoming commander, Park, described her as having a “wealth of signal experience,” and addressing her said, “your task is to continue to keep the battalion ready to support the warfighter.”

Park commented that she was proud to have been chosen to lead such fine Soldiers and that she knows from experience that, “because of its reputation the 1st SATCON Battalion is the most requested assignment by young, up-and-coming officers.” She added, “I am honored by the opportunity to continue the leadership of these incredible Soldiers.”

On assuming command of the Army’s only unit to control Space-based communications assets, Park now leads a battalion engaged in operations supporting OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM, the global war on terrorism and OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM.

Park’s military service began in 1982 when she enlisted in the U.S. Army as a multi-channel communications equipment operator. Upon graduation from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., she began her commissioned service on May 27, 1987.

Formerly a professor at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, Park holds a bachelor’s degree from the U.S. Military Academy, and a master’s degree in business administration from Harvard University. Her most recent assignment was as the U.S. Army Signal Branch Majors, Lieutenant Colonels and Colonels Assignment Officer, U.S. Army Human Resource Command, Alexandria, Va.



Members of the 1st Satellite Control Battalion stand in formation during the Battalion Change of Command ceremony. *Photo by Dennis Plummer*

Battalion becomes part of SMDC 20 years after formulation

The U.S. Army has played a critical role in the development of the command and control, management, and planning techniques for the Defense Satellite Communications System.

The 1st Satellite Control Battalion became a part of Army Space Command (ARSPACE) in October 1990, after more than 20 years of direct responsibility to the Department of Defense as a primary satellite communications activity.

In October 1990, the four DSCS Operations Centers in existence at the time were transferred to ARSPACE, now known as the U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command/U.S. Army Forces Strategic Command, and in August 1994 a provisional battalion was designated within ARSPACE to provide non-technical direction to the DSCSOCs.

In November 1995 the 1st Satellite Control Battalion was activated as the Army’s first battalion dedicated to providing quality Space support to all of DoD.



Wooden “monkey bars” with widely spaced poles present a challenge to Alpha SATCON Soldiers. *Alpha Co., 1st SATCON photo*

Field training tests SATCON Soldiers

By SSG Daniel Sanker

FORT DETRICK, Md. — Armed with M-16s and wearing “full battle rattle,” Alpha Company, 1st Satellite Control Battalion, Soldiers loaded their vehicles April 27 and convoyed to Fort A.P. Hill, Va., for the unit’s first-ever field training exercise.

For the next two weeks, the Soldiers performed tasks needed for combat, gained leadership experience in the field environment and developed team cohesion and esprit de corps.

The 50 Soldiers arrived before the morning mist had left the weapon ranges of Fort A.P. Hill.

“GAS, GAS, GAS!” signaled the Soldiers to don protective masks. It was the first time for many Soldiers to fire while masked since basic combat training. As darkness fell, the Soldiers sent a fury of ball and tracer rounds down range. Not one target was left standing by the time the last round left the last M-16.

Map, compass and protractor in hand, the Soldiers set out the next morning to find eight objectives. Four hours through swamps, hills, thick brush and wildlife, and an unknown number of miles under their boots and more water and muck than a set of battle dress uniforms can hold, the Soldiers completed the course. Even though not all the objectives were found, lessons were learned by one and all.

As if the land navigation course hadn’t provided enough of a challenge during the day, the cadre decided to “up it” a notch. As the day’s light faded, the Soldiers headed back out to tackle the same course at night. Heading out in teams of three or four, the Soldiers realized the importance of relying on those in the team to accomplish the mission. Two hours and four points later, all the Soldiers returned to the rally points and headed back to base camp.

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Day Three offered a 4.5-mile tactical road march, followed by an obstacle course. The first go-around of the course of 16 obstacles was run in squad-sized elements, followed by an individual run. 2nd Squad took the honors for the best run, graded on time, teamwork and motivation. SGT Charles Clapp completed the individual course in an astounding five hours, 12 minutes, followed by Staff Sgt. Michael Hughes with five hours, 24 minutes.

The morning of the last day in the field brought with it a set of challenges rarely seen in a SATCON Soldier's daily operations.

The Leadership Reactionary Course provided situational challenges in a stressed environment. The water obstacles tended to be more of a challenge — as the teams got wet it took more effort to get anything accomplished. As the teams of four or five moved through the obstacles, the role of the leader would change. This offered some junior enlisted Soldiers more of an opportunity to take control.

The more-than-full day rounded off with a visit to the ever-popular CS chamber, followed by the opportunity to switch to “fresh” uniforms before heading for home.

When Alpha Co. returned to home base, it was easy to see that this was not the same unit that had left. Two weeks of work in hardcore Soldier skills, added to the sophisticated Satellite Controller skills they were already expert at, added a hard edge and sheen to the Satellite Control Soldiers.

Opposing forces liven up field training exercise

By 1SG Joey Thornburg

FORT A.P. HILL, Va. — It wasn't just your average field training exercise — at least, not when the opposing forces were hardcore military police out to best the soldiers of Bravo Company, 1st Satellite Control Battalion during their annual field training exercise.

Knowing ahead of time that the locally stationed 241st Military Police Company was the adversary, Bravo Soldiers from Fort Meade, Md., started training months before the exercise actually kicked off. They conducted road

marches, movement techniques, ambushes and reacting to direct and indirect fire — all to ensure their victory over the MPs.

This exercise focused on teaching the Black Dragons the basics in Military Operations on Urbanized Terrain (MOUT), testing their individual physical abilities on the obstacle course, building confidence in their mask in the nuclear, biological, chemical chamber and developing their leadership skills during the Leadership Reaction Course. As a squad, the Soldiers tested their physical endurance and Soldiering skills by conducting a 5-mile road march in conjunction with reacting to a deliberate ambush against opposing forces using MILES (Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System) gear.

The FTX was divided into two rotations. Headquarters stayed in the field for the full week and the rest of the company came out in two-day rotations



SPC Joshua Rodriguez braces SGT Christopher Foster on his shoulders as 1st Squad, Bravo Co., 1st Satellite Control Battalion figures out a way to complete a task in the Leadership Reaction Course during a field training exercise. *Bravo Co., 1st SATCON photo*



CPL Chad Duncan (left) and SGT Eric Erisman (center) surge to the front as their squad negotiates a “toothed” obstacle. *Bravo Co., 1st SATCON photo*

to allow Bravo Co. to continue performing its wartime mission and train at the FTX at the same time.

When B Company arrived at the MOUT site, it was raining. “Perfect weather for training,” according to unit leadership.

But that did not dampen the Soldiers’ motivation — they hit the ground running. When the MPs who were scheduled to conduct MOUT training did not show up, the instructors who’d wisely prepared options stepped up to the plate and conducted training.

SSG Matthew Smith explained and illustrated how to assault a building. Each squad then practiced on its own and perfected the routine.

Loaded with ammunition, grenades and smoke, each squad demonstrated the knowledge they had gained and methodically cleared the Combat Village of unknown OPFOR who would do their worst.

Smoke grenades, artillery and grenade simulators gave the training a realistic effect. The Soldiers assaulted buildings by throwing a grenade inside and busting through doors. As they met and eliminated the OPFOR, each squad accomplished its mission.

MOUT training completed, each squad was given a fragmentary order. 4th squad was to do a mounted road march, secure a base

camp and set up an ambush for any enemy forces; 3rd squad was to accomplish an unmounted road march to squash enemies along the way — 3rd Squad road marched for approximately 5 miles before encountering the bad guys, whom they then summarily “squashed.”

The second day began with stand-to in the pre-dawn hours. While the Soldiers pulled security, the leadership in the Tactical Operations Center was busy making last minute adjustments to the missions that would be carried out that day. The Soldiers were split into squads and sent to a Listening Post/Observation Post. They were ambushed en route, but successfully cleared the LP/OP, and advanced to a more built-up enemy position, rejoining their sister squad.

The squads conducted a successful platoon movement to

contact and took time off for lunch and classes presented by SSG Raul Sheran about Individual Movement Techniques and reacting to conventional and NBC artillery. The squads then moved to assault an enemy position that contained a .50 caliber machine gun.

Black Dragons put their classes to use as artillery simulators, smoke grenades simulating NBC attacks and multiple hand grenades with small explosive fuses were employed during the assault. The Soldiers were then driven back to the assembly area, given hot chow and sent home. The cadre began preparation for the next rotation.

The second rotation arrived early Thursday morning and began to cycle through the FTX tasks in a different order due to the weather. Heat Category Five temperatures forced the second rotation to road march to the obstacle course first since the morning was the coolest time of day.

This turn of events left the second group so tired that no one would take on visiting West Point Cadet Andrew Maxa in a race through the obstacle course. The Soldiers then ate lunch and did NBC training at the gas chamber.

Company Commander CPT Timothy Root, in traditional company commander style, offered a challenge to all Soldiers, betting he could stay in the dreaded chamber longer than any-

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one else. At first, no one responded, but then SGT Joshua Lowell took up the gauntlet. Root toughed it out for more than 10 minutes, but Lowell triumphed with 11 minutes in a chamber that was much stronger than the previous rotation's.

Soaring temperatures forced a break in training and the group returned to the assembly area for a break. After the temperature had come back down to a reasonable level, the squads were sent out on patrol. Fighting mock battles until well past dusk, the squads were sent back to the AA to get some rest for the night. Unfortunately, the OPFOR had other plans ...

Positions were probed well into the night. At around 3:30 a.m., the OPFOR ran out of ammo/simulated NBC grenades and thankfully called it a night. Stand-to came bright and early at 5 a.m., after which the AA was torn down and the Soldiers headed back to home station.

A more junior member of the unit agreed.

"I knew Bravo was the best company in the battalion, but I never thought I would have the opportunity to do this kind of HOOAH training," said PFC William Langford.

"The purpose of the FTX was the practical application of command task skills and overall unit readiness for possible tactical unit deployment. We definitely met

our objective and then some," said SGT Amanzio Brady, the FTX NCO in charge.

Ground-based Missile Defense operators graduate in Colorado Springs ceremony

By Ed White

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. — "You are a remarkable class," said Thomas Devanney, deputy program director for Ground-based Missile Defense (GMD) to the assembled graduates of the Ground-based Midcourse Operations Advanced Course, class 2-04. "You are on the front line of defending our homeland."

Graduates are members of the 100th Missile Defense Brigade (GMD) headquartered here. Many of the graduates will serve as operators at the Alaska-based 49th Missile Defense Battalion — an operative arm of the 100th. The GMD system is scheduled for activation this fall, and will provide the first part of the integrated Ballistic Missile Defense System, which, in concert with sister services, is designed to protect the nation from accidental or intentional limited ballistic missile attacks.



Graduates of the Ground-based Midcourse Operations Advanced Course, class 2-04. *SMDC-CS photo*

The seven-week advanced course followed an intensive five-week basic course, which introduced the students to the fundamentals of the GMD system and computer screen navigation.

The advanced course qualified graduates on the fire control system, taking them through day-to-day crises and combat and recovery operations.

Devanney said the ceremony marked “another important event on the way to having a defense of our nation against ballistic missiles for the first time in the 50 years that we have been facing the threat.”

Distinguished honor graduates were MAJ Elizabeth Yarborough and CPT Stephen Sexton, both with 100 percent

average scores.

National missile defense is not a new concept, but one that has received recent emphasis from President George W. Bush.

Modern ballistic missiles have been around since World War II when Germany rained the V2 rocket down on England. The United States fielded a national missile defense program, Safeguard, in the mid 1970s, but Congress deactivated it shortly after it was fielded.

President Reagan created the Strategic Defense Initiative to re-address the need for national missile defense program. The current program is split into three phases: boost, midcourse and terminal.

Warrants “branch” out Army warrant officers change to branch insignia

By Sharon L. Hartman



PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. — On July 9, warrant officers Army-wide made the change from the “Rising Eagle” insignia to branch insignia. Regular commissioned officers in the Army have always worn their branch insignia on their left collar. The uniform change for warrant officers is an enormous step toward their full integration into the branch-based systems of the officer corps. To honor the exceptional warrant officers of SMDC/ARSTRAT, a special ceremony hosted by SMDC/ARSTRAT Deputy Commander for Operations COL Jeffrey Horne was held in Colorado Springs on July 9. This event marked an historic moment for these technical experts of the Army.