11th ACR Blackhorse Newsletter

Rotation 20-02

November 2019

Special Points of Interest:

- Defense of Broncos Foxtrot

- A Day in the Life of a Killer Trooper in the Disruption Zone

- Smoke Platoon

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Blackhorse 6

Greetings to the Best Damn Regiment!

This past rotation 3rd Cavalry Regiment has the privilege of engaging another Cavalry Regiment in battle. The Troopers of 3CR provided the Blackhorse Regiment a tough fight, but we were able to emerge victorious yet again. We made the Brave Rifles force prepared for combat because you remain disciplined masters of the fundamentals who know how to work as a team.

During this rotation we continued to hone and refine a new capability of the Regiment, being able to maneuver and fight at night. We conducted a successful night counterattack on the city of Razish using our newly installed thermal sight upgrades on our main battle tanks (MBTs) in order to insert Infantry from B Troop into Razish. Their attack, coordinated with the BFB still in the city caught the enemy off guard and was a resounding success. The BFB was even able to destroy one of their squadron command post.

After we recover our equipment and take a short break, we will have the chance to join 3CR in an important Cavalry tradition, the Lucky 16. For those who have the opportunity to attend this will be a great opportunity to build comradery with fellow Cavalry Troopers, experience tradition, and add to the storied legacy of the Regiment.

The Regiment has suffered several tragedies in recent weeks and all of these incidents are just heart breaking. I ask all of you to be leaders and take care of each other. This includes enforcing Regimental standards on and off duty. If you see a battle buddy about to do something unsafe, stop them. If you see a battle buddy struggling with the stresses of life, be a friend and get them help. You are all valuable members of the team, every one of you matter and you are all surrounded by people who care about YOU!

The Command Sergeant Major and I continue to be proud to ride with each and every one of you.

ALLONS!

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1/11 "Ironhorse"

Defense of Broncos Foxtrot

By: 1LT Daniel Saladin, HHT Mortars

Hill 824 is one of the few places in the Box where you have close to 360 degrees of visiblility with almost zero dead space. On top of the hill, the view stretches west past Razish, past Ujen, and to the entrance into Debnam Pass. For a BTG Recon element, it's the perfect spot to set up a deliberate defense. On November 1st, Hammer Platoon of the Hunter Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment was tasked to Guard the area between 760 and the Broncos ridgeline in order to provide time and space for Gurkha Mechanized Infantry Battalion (MIBN) located around 781E to defend itself.

Dug in the night before, Hammer Platoon enhanced battle positions by building observation posts with rock walls large enough for their Javelin Weapon Systems to scan and fire from, while providing cover and concealment for the dismounted Soldiers. Paired with an AN/PED-1 Lightweight Laser Designator Rangefinder (LLDR), the team is able to provide timely target acquisition and alert the Javelin teams to engage within their maximum engagement line (MEL). Throughout the day, enemy forces slowly tried to penetrate the defense in an attempt to find a seam to exploit. When the sun went down, temperatures fell below 32°, and the wind had picked up remarkably.

At approximately 2130, the first 10 Strykers began movement from Razish following Route Queens. At the time, Hammer Platoon Soldiers were conducting priorities of work cleaning weapons and ensuring gear was prepped and ready for the enemy nightly attacks. Sergeant First Class Delgado, Hammer's Platoon Sergeant, and I were manning the Javelin and LLDR when the first wave of Strykers came within our MEL. Spotting with the LLDR, SFC Delgado provided accurate direction and spotting as I engaged each Stryker. After destroying the enemy and expending all Javelin rounds, I then radioed to our Light Medium Tactical Vehicle (LMTV) to conduct an ammo cache resupply of 30 rounds to our position.

During the lull in engagement, after a successful resupply mission, a second wave of 15 Strykers pushed hard along the same route. SFC Delgado quickly queued me onto the lead element, now closing to within a kilometer from our position. After engaging the lead element, the convoy of Strykers came to an abrupt halt, allowing a violent and brutal destruction of the convoy in quick succession with the Javelin. 30 minutes go by while SFC Delgado prepped the dismounted teams and I continued to scan with PFC Myers using an AN/PAS-13 Thermal Weapon Sight (TWS). Through diligent scanning, PFC Myers calmly whispered to me that he positively identified enemy dismounts to our west sky-lining themselves. I told PFC Myers to alert SFC Delgado and the rest of the dismounts and prepare for the dismounted fight. Setting the Javelin down, I returned to my vehicle when the fight began. SFC Delgado led two teams on either side of the enemy while I called danger close fire missions. After successfully destroying a platoon of dismounted soldiers and clearing the immediate terrain surrounding our position, time had elapsed nearly five hours, bringing us to 0200 of November 2nd. Following the first engagement, Hammer Platoon conducted a quick consolidation of forces, distribution and cross-loading of ammunition, and preparation for the next inevitable wave of dismounts coming from the Western ridgeline of Broncos.

At 0430, a second platoon of dismounts attempted to set an ambush on our location, however we had already prepared for such an event and countered with our mounted M2 .50cal machine guns before the enemy had time to engage. With both gun trucks providing cover fire, SFC Delgado and SGT Banducci led an assault, ultimately destroying the platoon of dismounts. Upon consolidation of our forces, it was found that the enemy had called a fire mission of 120mm White Phosphorus and High Explosive on our position. The combined effect of reigning chemical white phosphorus, igniting with the high explosive killed every last Hammer Platoon dismount, all at the cost of a total of 28 Strykers, three Medical Evacuation Vehicles, and 35 dismounted Soldiers. For Donovia!

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1LT Daniel Saladin
Hammer 6

2/11 "Eaglehorse"

A Day in the Life of a Killer Trooper in the Disruption Zone

By: 1Lt Matthew Watson K Trp, 2/11, Platoon Leader

I am a Killer Trooper, the finest killer in the land. I train Brigade Combat Teams (BCT) 10 times a year. I operate one of the Army's most lethal weapon systems, the Improved Target Acquisition System (ITAS). My days are long and my nights are even longer. My teammates and I are often out in front of the Brigade Tactical Group (BTG) and are counted upon for our ability to shape the fight by destroying armor vehicles, maintaining observation, and calling for fire on the enemy. Our Vehicles become our homes away from home as we fight for Donovia.

Each morning I wake before the sun rises over our great desert. I take stock, then say there is no finer profession then being a Killer Trooper. I eat a breakfast made for champions, the Meal Ready to Eat (MRE). Before I know it, it is time for my shift on the ITAS. This weapon rocks! The system is designed to shoot Tube Launched, Optically Tracked, Wire Guided (TOW) missiles which destroy an enemy tank in one shot. The ITAS can also observe out to 10km. With its long observation I am able to track enemy movements to provide target hand off or identify the enemy course of actions. The job is around the clock, 24 hours a day for 9 straight days of rotation. We find the enemy and we destroy them.

Throughout the day we swap shifts on the ITAS to do other tasks. Our vehicle sensors, weapons, and vehicles also require constant maintenance due to the austere environment. The Tactical Engagement Simulation System (TESS) system sometimes fights us more than the enemy does. This TESS system is designed to shoot a laser at sensors on the other vehicles. It requires us to do regular bore sighting and zeroing. If we do not stay up on the system, the process of slaying the enemy becomes almost impossible.

As the night approaches, and our sun kissed skin adjusts to the complete and utter darkness of the high desert, the challenge of staying awake becomes most difficult. We rely heavily on each other to pull our weight and shoulder the burden of being ever vigilant. Energy drinks, alarms, and chewing tobacco will only take one so far. The key is the true grit of the man behind the ITAS. The ITAS allows us to see like an owl at night. No one is safe from us Killer Troopers, even at night.

At the end of each rotation we are weary yet still proud of what we have accomplished. The Troopers are all exhausted and more than ready to go home to their families. Showers are always a must before hugs. However, there are still a few more tasks before we can have a shower or see our families. Operations recovery is a must in order to maintain our fleet and our equipment. This is the key to always be ready to fight at a moment's notice. We wash our vehicles, clean our weapons, fill out the paperwork for broken equipment and conduct inventories while we stuff our faces and tell stories of our time in this magnificent place we call the National Training Center. Allons!

RSS "Packhorse"

Smoke Platoon

By 1LT Kevin Lenahan

The 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment's (ACR) attacks in the defense of Donovia are legendary; an armored fist that has long been the bane of Rotational Training Units (RTU). Critical to its constant success has been the ability to provide an obscuring blanket of smoke over the Mechanized Infantry Battalions (MIBN) as they crush all opposition. This powerful tool of concealment is the Regiment's most unique asset, the Smoke Platoon of the Regimental Headquarters and Headquarters Troop (RHHT).

Smoke Platoon, led by 1LT John Ewald, is truly exceptional as it is the only active Smoke Platoon in the Army. This relatively small platoon built around its 18 Soldiers and six M1113 smoke-generator equipped HMMVW, has the on-call responsibility to provide concealment for the Brigade Tactical Group (BTG) during rotational operations. Habitually attached to the BTG Tactical Operations Center (TOC), Smoke Platoon is regularly called-on to give input into the planning of tactical operations, while its Platoon operating in two vehicle teams crisscross the battlefield giving MIBN commanders an edge in their operations.

During Rotation 20-02 Smoke Platoon carried out six separate securement missions, providing concealment for the BTG during limited objective spoiling attacks and disengagements as well as participating in the large counterattacks on Training Days three and nine. Their role in the Training Day three counterattack proved especially decisive.

For Smoke Platoon, that day began at 0300 hours with a brief at the BTG TOC, where they learned of their upcoming mission. The planned counterattack called for three MIBNS to make a 10KM push at dawn before breaching the RTU lines at three separate points in the Pass Complex. The long open approach, followed by a fight through several chokepoints, made Smoke Platoon's active concealment of even greater importance. To ensure success the entire platoon was put on line, with two M1113s attached to each MIBN.

At first light the advance began with Smoke Platoon in the lead, a pair of M1113's moving ahead and to the sides of the advance laying their smoke in the lead of the MIBNS as they closed on the Pass Complex. As the MIBNs began to engage RTU defenses at the mouth of the passes, Smoke Platoon pushed on through the pass and onto the other side, totally obscuring the path of advance. With the RTU unable to effectively target the MIBNs, a breakthrough was rapidly achieved with BTG moving freely through the RTU's rear areas. Smoke Platoon, at the cost of two M1113s, decisively enabled the BTG to crack the RTU's defense.

U.S. Army Photo by: 1LT John Ewald, Smoke Platoon, RHHT, RSS, 11th ACR.

Chaplain's Corner

Our Heroes Deserve Year-Round Recognition and Help

CH (LTC) James D. Key
11th Armored Cavalry Regimental Chaplain, Fort Irwin, CA

Several years ago, a generous couple reminded me that there are still a few people left in our society who haven't forgotten how to say "thank you."

I was sitting in a restaurant enjoying my lunch when the waitress returned to my table to inform me that a couple in another booth, who asked to remain anonymous, told her to put my bill on their credit card. She told me that they saw me in my uniform eating alone and wanted to show their appreciation by paying for my meal. She said, "It's no big deal. It's just their way of thanking you for serving our nation."

While this gesture of kindness might have been no big deal to the waitress, it was certainly a big deal to me. It restored my hope and assured me that no matter how people felt about the war – good, bad or indifferent – they appreciated the sacrifice and selfless service of our young men and women in uniform. And, based on the comments of other Soldiers I know, such generosity is quit a common occurrence.

As we prepare to enjoy the days of the holiday season, let us remember that Thanksgiving is more than a four-day weekend off from work, but a time for families and friends to gather for a day of thanks. Unfortunately, sometimes we become overwhelmed by the daily events of life and forget to count our blessings or say "thank you" to those who have been a blessing to us. This is an age-old lesson.

More than 2,000 years ago, according to Luke 17:11-19, Jesus was on the border between Galilee and Samaria and was met by a group of 10 men who suffered from leprosy, a disease that disfigures the skin and at the time made the victim a social outcast.

When the 10 men saw Jesus they stood at a distance and called out in loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!" Jesus responded, "Go show yourselves to the priest," And as they went they were cleansed. But one to them, when he saw that he was healed, came back praising God. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. Jesus asked, "Were not all 10 cleansed? Where are the other nine?

Did the other nine not appreciate what Jesus did for them? Or were they so overwhelmed by joy that they simply forgot to say "thank you?"

The Thanksgiving season is a good time to stop to count the blessings, large and small, that fill our lives.

The couple who paid for my meal did more than simply provide my nourishment. They reaffirmed to me that we still live in a society that has not forgotten how to say "thank you" – including to our troops, many of whom will be working this holiday or celebrating it half a world away from their families so that the rest of us can have more reasons to be thankful.

History of the 11th CAV Regiment

"ALLONS!"
November 1951

The 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment's Distinctive Unit Insignia was redesigned in November 1951 to the current form!

The horse head symbolizes the predominance of black horses in the Regiment in Mexico.

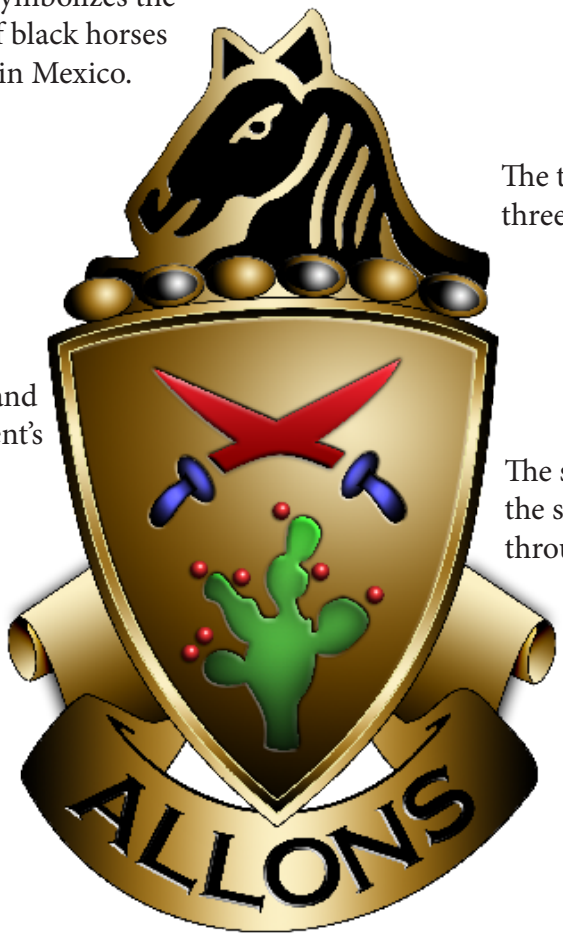
The three black dots symbolize the three Squadrons in the Regiment.

The cross bolos with red blades and blue hilts symbolizes the Regiment's service in the Phillipines.

The seven dots symbolize the seven major campaigns through 1945.

The cactus symbolizes the Regiment's operations in Mexico.

The Regimental motto "ALLONS" means "Let's Go" in French.



Blackhorse Association

Troopers of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment
Fort Irwin, California

Blackhorse Troopers:

I am writing this letter to urge you to consider joining the Blackhorse Association. As a currently serving Blackhorse Trooper, your membership is free on an annual basis until you depart the 11th ACR.

The Blackhorse Association was born of a promise made by (then) COL George S. Patton to a dying L Troop soldier on 2 March 1969 on a battlefield in Vietnam. The vow was to "not let people forget us" and "take care of our kids." This was the inspiration to form the Blackhorse Association. Over the years, our members have donated more than $800,000 to help educate the children of Blackhorse Troopers killed in action or incapacitated by wounds; and now, any child of a member or former member of the Regiment.

Since the inception of our Association, the primary purpose has been to honor our members who gave their lives in service to our Country and our Regiment, to strengthen the bonds formed in the Regiment, to proclaim the achievements and traditions of our Regiment, to support the troopers actively serving the Regiment, and to establish and maintain an educational scholarship program for children of the Regiment.

The Association has been granted IRS Code 501(c)(3) status as a non-profit, charitable organization. As such, we are apolitical and do not support political candidates of any party nor do we advance political persuasions of any type.

We publish two Blackhorse Newsletters each year for our 13,000 members and a monthly Blackhorse E-News for BHA members that want more frequent news. The Association meets at the annual Blackhorse Family Reunion across the country which permits old friends to join together and reconnect. Check for details on this website under the "Reunions" link. We hope to see you there.

We truly hope you will consider joining the Association and remaining with the Blackhorse Family during and after your time with the Regiment. Contact your Troop Command Team if you'd like to join the Blackhorse Association during your 11th ACR service.

Sincerely yours,

Pete Bayer

President, Blackhorse Association

Upcoming Events on Post

Cosmic Bowling Night

Date: Nov 16 2019, 8 p.m. - 11 p.m.
Desert Winds Bowling Center (https://irwin.armymwr.com/programs/bowling-center) -
Langford Lake Rd., Bldg. 905 Fort Irwin Google Map
This includes:
-Unlimited Cosmic Bowling & Shoe Rental
-Challenges, games and other chances for coupons
-Jukebox available with Touch Tunes mobile app or cash
-Snack Bar open until 10:30 pm
Cost
Cosmic Bowling Rates: $20 / Adult | $10 / Child

Crazy Karaoke Thursday

Date: Nov 21 2019, 7 p.m. - 11 p.m.
Samuel Adams Brewhouse (https://irwin.armymwr.com/programs/samuel-adams-grille) -
Goldstone Rd., Bldg. 37 Google Map
Sing the night away with good food and great tunes Located in the Bar Side of Samuel Adams Brewhouse.

Family Fundays at Desert Winds Bowling

Date: Nov 17 2019, 11 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Desert Winds Bowling Center (https://irwin.armymwr.com/programs/bowling-center) -
Langford Lake Rd., Bldg. 905 Fort Irwin Google Map
Earn free game tickets for strikes with a colored head pin (limit 1 person/game).
Specials: $20 per lane/hour (includes up to 4 shoe rentals).
Additional lanes $10 per lane/per hour.
Fountain drinks $1.

MST Fall Camp

Date: Nov 25 2019, 9 a.m. - Nov 29 2019, 1 p.m.
Middle School Teen Center (https://irwin.armymwr.com/programs/middle-school-teen-center)
- Bldg. 1315 Meuse Argonne Google Map
- The Fort Irwin Middle School and Teen Program will be offering the Fall Camp!
- MST Fall Camp 2019 activities are 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
- MST offers Before Camp Care 6 a.m. – 9 a.m. at SAC Bldg. 1322 at no charge for youth enrolled in the Fall Camp.
- MST offers an Occasional User Fee for teens (6th -12th grade) who want to participate in a single event.
- Open Recreation will be held daily from 1 p.m. – 6 p.m.