

THE GALLIVANTER

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"Orion, the Hunter!"

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27th Soldiers take to the field

New York Infantry Brigade arrives at Fort Drum for training

By SPC. IAN BOUDREAU
27th IBCT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Weather Forecast

Tuesday, July 27



High: 85°

Low: 65°

Chance of rain: 0%

Wednesday, July 28



High: 85°

Low: 62°

Chance of rain: 20%

A publication of New
York's 27th Infantry
Brigade Combat Team

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By Sunday evening, more than one thousand New York Soldiers were encamped on remote ranges on Fort Drum, ready to begin the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team's first brigade-level field exercise since the unit returned from Afghanistan in 2009.

Cooks had set up two containerized kitchens in the 27th Brigade Special Troops Battalion's mock Forward Operating Base at one end of the training area and had set to work making hot meals for the National Guardsmen, who were spread across 14 training sites in Fort Drum's range area.

In the brigade's nerve center, several miles down the road from the BSTB's FOB, staff officers and NCOs worked on filling briefing slides with up-to-the-minute data that would give the brigade commander, Col. Geoffrey Slack, the information he needed to direct a small town's worth of Soldiers.

"This is my first field exercise with the brigade," Slack said Monday morning, after a quick sit-down with his staff. "As a relatively new brigade commander, I'm having to get my bearings."

Slack explained that the field exercise, which spans three weeks (although individual units generally spend two weeks in the field each) will provide a kind of dual opportunity: on one level, he said, Soldiers need good squad- and platoon-level training to provide a foundation of basic Soldier skills and teamwork on which to build.

On a second level, it's a chance



Photo by SpC. Ian Boudreau

SpC. Steve Freiburger, a C Company, 2/108 rifleman from Stillwater, N.Y., fires his M-4 with attached M-203 on a Fort Drum range Sunday.

for Slack and his officers to get to know one another and learn how best to work together.

"I'm testing my staff to make sure they're taking the problems I identify and solving them," he said. "I'm getting to know my leaders. I want to spend quality time with my company commanders and battalion commanders and, to the degree possible, with the platoon leaders and platoon sergeants."

The 27th's Soldiers, most of whom arrived on Fort Drum Saturday, lost no time in getting their own training schedules up and running. 1st Sgt. Ronald Patterson of C Company, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment, was overseeing an M-4 qualification range for brigade Soldiers who hadn't gotten a chance to qualify with their weapons earlier in the year. He said his company of infantrymen will be building toward a team live-fire event later in the two-week training period.

"We've been training for the

last six to eight months doing movement-to-contact," said Patterson. "We did dry runs at Camp Edwards in Cape Cod, and we're doing three days of rehearsals here. I'm expecting a 100 percent success rate."

All the same, training exercises exist to iron out kinks before going into a combat zone.

"Any mistakes we're going to make, now is the time to make them," Slack said.

He said he had been impressed by what he'd seen from his Soldiers so far.

"They're so serious, and so professional," he said. "It makes me look forward to getting in my truck and heading to the next training site."

The annual exercise had only just begun, however, and Slack struck a note of caution for his troops.

"Safety has got to be paramount in everybody's mind," he said. "People have to give thought to everything they do out here, because everyone out here is precious." •

Cooking for a thousand Guardsmen



Photo by Spc. Ian Boudreau

Cooks from the 27th Brigade Special Troops Battalion prepare meals for pickup by units spread across 14 training sites Sunday on Fort Drum. The cooks prepare hot breakfasts and dinners for more than 1,000 New York Soldiers every day, often working more than 16 hours.

From the Brigade Sergeant Major...

By COMMAND SGT. MAJ. DAVID PIWOWARSKI
27th IBCT

Welcome to Annual Training all Soldiers! This is our first Annual Training as a Brigade since our redeployment from Afghanistan. All available training should be taken advantage of. We have a number of issues and kinks to work through, but I am confident that all of you will rise to the moment and give your best effort.

SAFETY MESSAGE:

Conduct Risk Assessments for appropriate training. Monitor hydration. The temperatures are high, and we have already experienced cases of heat exhaustion during the first two days of training. Vehicle accidents are the most common cause for Soldier injuries. Use ground guides, obey all speed limits. Soldiers must be in the proper uniform and seat belted. **THE NO-ALCOHOL POLICY IS IN EFFECT.**

UNIFORM GUIDANCE:

Cantonment area inside the FOB (the vicinity of the sleeping and mess areas that your unit is assigned to) uniform is complete ACU, weapon (cleared) and a patrol cap.

No other uniform or civilian clothing is authorized.

Outside of the FOB, uniform is ACU, helmet, weapon, body armor and molle gear complete with pouches and camel back or canteens. The arrangement of pouches may be set for the comfort and function of each Soldier as long as it presents a military appearance. Set pouches up, so you can move, shoot and load your weapon. If you carry an M4 you need pouches for 6 magazines and a 1st aid pouch minimal. Soldiers will wear body armor for all field tasks. Berets will be worn on main post, outside of the FOB including Nash Blvd and all PXs in accordance with Fort Drum policy. **VERY FEW** Soldiers should have the need to go on main post. Soldier movements between FOBs and to rear areas will be closely monitored by the chain of command.

In many of the areas, men and women are using common shower facilities. Show consideration of others. Times are posted for when the shower is available. The APFT uniform is not authorized for field wear. Trips to the shower should be made in full ACU with patrol cap and weapon.

Have a safe and productive Annual Training. I look forward to seeing all of you out there. •

Eat up

Annual Training requires Soldiers to be full of energy - the hours can be long and the work can be tough. That means it's key for Soldiers to get three square meals per day.

Don't skip meals - breakfast and dinner are prepared every day by the brigade's cooks, and MREs are available for lunch. Your vehicles need fuel, and so do you.

Safety First!

Every Soldier who's spent time in the field knows how handy a good field knife can be. However, Fort Drum's policy on knives prohibits Soldiers from carrying blades longer than 4 inches. In other words, Bowie knives and machetes are not welcome on AT.

Hydration

It's hot.

That means it's crucial for Soldiers to stay hydrated. Brigade medics reported several cases of heat exhaustion and dehydration as early as Sunday evening. Not only is this a preventable ailment that takes Soldiers out of the fight, it's a pretty miserable experience to go through. Stay cool and avoid getting an IV by *drinking water* — just like they told you to in Basic Training.

Orion, the Hunter!