U.S. Army South

Defense & Fraternity

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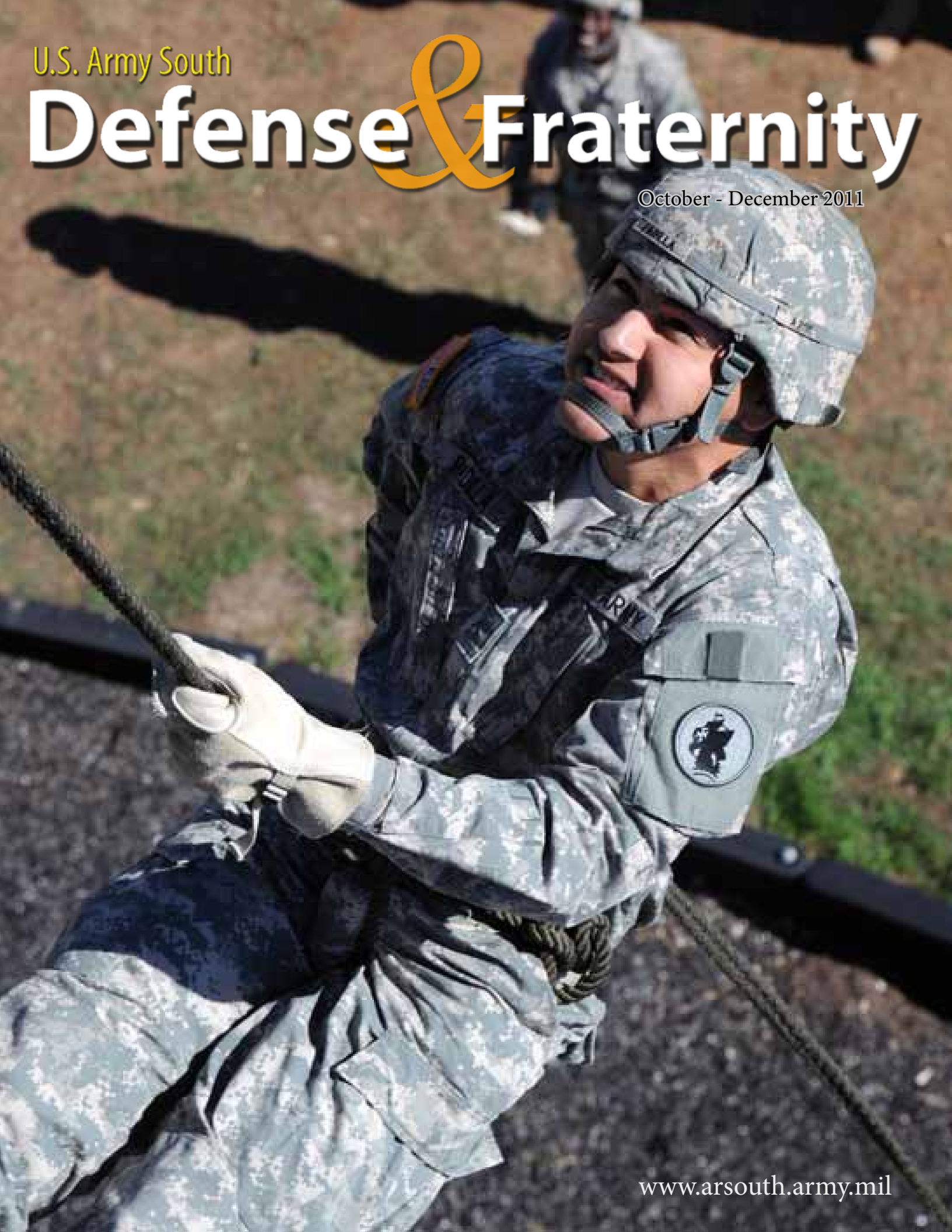

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U.S. Army South

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Front cover: *Pvt. Francisco Padilla, 512th Engineer Det., rappels down the tower during the U.S. Army South Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion field training exercise Nov. 18 at Camp Bullis, Texas. (U.S. Army photo by Robert R. Ramon, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)*

Back cover: *Sgt. Robert A. Pontious, Army South food service specialist, provides patrol security during the Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion field training exercise Nov. 18 at Camp Bullis, Texas. (U.S. Army photo by Robert R. Ramon, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)*

Command Corner

Brig. Gen. Manuel Ortiz
Deputy Commanding General

Army South continues to maximize engagement efforts with partner nations in our area of responsibility. It is through these engagements that we sharpen our skills and build, maintain and strengthen the relationships with our AOR partners. In the last few months, we successfully hosted the land component portion of the Fuerzas Aliadas PANAMAX exercise with forces from 17 partner nations and conducted Staff Talks with Chile on behalf of the Chief of Staff of the Army.

In October the commanding general represented the Chief of Staff of the Army at the Conference of American Armies' commanders' conference in Chile and participated in an Institute of Land Warfare panel at the Association of the United States Army annual meeting in our nation's capital.

The ILW panel was comprised of U.S. Army component commanders. During the panel discussion the CG emphasized the importance of Army South and spoke about the success we've had in building strong partner relationships with army leaders and countries within our AOR.

Brig. Gen. Manuel Ortiz, Army South deputy commanding general, speaks to Army South members during the opening ceremony for the command's celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month Sept. 20 at the Army South headquarters. (U.S. Army photo by Eric R. Lucero, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

As the CG told the panel when the time comes to execute a contingency operation (such as Operation Unified Response in Haiti), we will not have the luxury to figure out how other nations in our AOR (Central and South America and the Caribbean) conduct business. Therefore, having these experiences of training with our partners and conducting military exchanges prepares us ahead of time for a deployment.

Our successful deployment to Haiti two years ago to support the multinational effort following the major earthquake that struck that country, demonstrates the importance of having relationships already in place in the region. We were able to easily work with military leaders in other countries, because of our previously established relationships.

Our efforts resulted in Army South being awarded the Superior Unit Award for its support of Operation Unified Response. This award recognizes the importance of our AOR and what we have been doing for more than 100 years in the region: building and sustaining partners and nation capacity.

The command is currently planning for a busy 2012, which in the first six months will include Staff Talks with Brazil and Colombia, the start of Beyond the Horizon exercises in Guatemala and Honduras, a Peace Keeping Operations Americas exercise in Chile and Fuerzas Aliadas Humanitarias, a disaster response multinational exercise.

These exercises and Staff Talks, which include our reserve component forces and armies from throughout the AOR, are vital to our core mission of enhancing hemispheric security and stability. It also demonstrates we are trained and ready to execute any directive from U.S. Southern Command and our Army leadership. In addition, these opportunities allow us to strengthen partner relationships, conduct real-world training and practice our Soldier and civilian skills.

As an Army service component command, we must continue to build upon our successes, so we remain ready to conduct contingency, humanitarian, disaster response and security operations at a moment's notice.

To all of our wonderful Soldiers, civilians, contractors and their families, I hope your holidays were a joyous time. As we start 2012 and begin executing our busy exercise and engagement schedule, I wish each and every one of you a happy, safe and healthy new year.

Defense and Fraternity

Brig. Gen. Manuel Ortiz
Deputy Commanding General
U.S. Army South

2010

Army South receives award for deployment, celebrates 100-year historical milestone

Story by
Lt. Col. Antwan C. Williams
U.S. Army South Public Affairs

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas -- U.S. Army South received the Army Superior Unit Award on Oct. 4 for its performance during Operation Unified Response, exactly 100 years to the day original elements of the command (10th U.S. Army Infantry Regiment) arrived in Panama in 1911 to provide additional security during the construction of the canal.

The command, with a long history of supporting the region, deployed to Haiti in 2010 to provide security, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief following the devastating 7.0 magnitude earthquake that struck that country on January 12.

The major earthquake was considered Haiti's most severe disaster in more than 200 years. According to Haitian government officials, the epicenter of the earthquake was just outside the Haitian capital Port-au-Prince and left up to 316,000 people dead and 1.6 million homeless.

The deployment to Haiti represents Army South's historical commitment and long standing support to partner nations in the region. Former U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt, in 1904, sent Army officers to Panama to help govern the Canal Zone. Later in October 1911, the 10th U.S. Army Infantry Regiment was sent to the Panama Canal to form defensive fortifications and support the Isthmian Canal Commission.

In January 2010, at the request of the Haitian government and on order from U.S. President Barack Obama, thousands of U.S. troops, including Army South, formed Joint Task Force-Haiti and provided humanitarian assistance and support with rescue operations and security for the country.

"I am extremely proud of this command, the Soldiers, civilians and leaders who made our deployment to Haiti a success," said Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, commander of Army South who also led the unit's deployment and succeeded Lt. Gen. K. P. "Ken" Keen, the first commander of Joint Task Force-Haiti and former U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) military deputy commander. "Receiving the Army Superior Unit Award symbolizes that our senior leadership recognizes the important work we do every day with our partner nations to be prepared for any contingency."

Working with partner nations and other U.S. Department of Defense forces,

Command Sgt. Maj. Gabriel Cervantes, Army South command sergeant major, attaches the Army Superior Unit Award streamer to the command's colors Oct. 4 during a ceremony on Fort Sam Houston, Texas. (U.S. Army photo by Eric R. Lucero, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

Army South provided logistical, engineer, intelligence, topographic, administrative, security and humanitarian support to the government and people of Haiti.

Army South, as the Army component command for SOUTHCOM, deployed its headquarters element and its Special Troops Battalion (now known as Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion).

Army South received the Army Superior Unit Award not only for the personnel and elements that deployed, but for the members of the command who remained behind and continued to manage the day-to-day operations and rigorous training schedule.

The Army Superior Unit Award was created in 1985 and is awarded by the Secretary of the Army to units which display outstanding meritorious performance in a difficult and challenging mission during a peacetime operation.

In accordance with Army Regulation 600-8-22, Military Awards, the Army Superior Unit Award authorizes Soldiers assigned to Army South to wear the distinctive unit award insignia on their Army Service Uniform and civilians assigned to the command to wear the equivalent lapel pin.

In addition to Army South receiving the Army Superior Unit Award, Joint Task Force-Haiti received the Joint Meritorious Unit Award from the Secretary of Defense in January 2011 for its exceptional performance in support of the joint deployment operation in 2010. The Joint Meritorious Unit Award recognized Army South Soldiers and civilians who were assigned to JTF-Haiti.

When Gen. Douglas Fraser, commander of SOUTHCOM, presented the Joint Meritorious Unit Award on January 20, he stated, “This award recognizes the high level of professionalism and dedication displayed by the Soldiers and civilians within U.S. Army South.”

Army South received its first Army Superior Unit Award and streamer in 1994 for Operation Uphold Democracy. The award was for supporting military troops who were sent by U.S. President Bill Clinton, under United Nations Security Council Resolution 940, to remove the military regime installed by the 1991 Haitian coup d’état.

In addition to the two Army Superior Unit Awards, which include an emblem, certificate and streamer, and the Joint Meritorious Unit Award, Army South has previously received seven streamers and two unit awards. Army South has awards and streamers for engagements such as Operation Just Cause, the 1989 offensive, authorized by U.S. President George H. W. Bush, to bring Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega to justice, and the Philippine Presidential Unit Citation for operations during World War II.

Operation Unified Response marked the first official deployment of Army South’s headquarters since its designation as the Army component command to SOUTHCOM and its relocation to Fort

“Receiving the Army Superior Unit Award symbolizes that our senior leadership recognizes the training and important work we do every day with our partner nations to be prepared for any contingency.”

-Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, U.S. Army South commanding general

Sam Houston, Texas, in 2003.

The command relocated its headquarters from Panama in 1999, where it had been for almost a hundred years providing security and assistance, to Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico. By 2003 the command had moved again to its current location.

In 2008 the Army expanded the command's size and capabilities to include an Operation Command Post and integrated Sixth U.S. Army making it capable of forming a joint task force, which it successfully executed for the deployment to Haiti in 2010.

Army South's mission and responsibilities have expanded exponentially since its humble beginning in 1904. Each year the command plans and supports dozens of training exercises and engagements and works closely with partner nations such as Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama and Peru.

Working with the armies of these countries and other nations, Army South has been extremely successful in building partner nation capacity and supporting security operations that counter the growing 21st Century threat to peace and security from transnational criminal organizations in the Western Hemisphere.

"Army South has a mission to conduct Theater Security Cooperation and to be prepared for contingency operations," said Trombitas. "We've proven, with this deployment and with the strong allies and partners, whom we train with every year, we can conduct contingency operations and that we are prepared to respond to natural disasters, conduct humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations, support peacekeeping operations and counter illicit trafficking in our area of responsibility."

Previous Page: (Left photo) U.S. Coast Guard Lt. Noah Maignan (center in blue), U.S. Southern Command liaison officer, walks with Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas (center right), commanding general, Joint Task Force-Haiti, during a visit to the Ancien Aeroporte Militaire internally displaced persons camp in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, on April 24, 2010.
(Right photo) Two crew members from the 1-228th Aviaition Regiment, Soto Cano Airbase, Honduras, walk toward their awaiting passengers to brief them prior to a flight in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, on April 29, 2010.

Current Page: (Top photo) Spc. David Dietrich, a cook from U.S. Army South Headquarters Support Company, stacks Meals Ready-to-Eat (MRE) cases at the Joint Task Force-Haiti compound in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, during Operation Unified Response May 3, 2010.
(Middle photo) Spc. Jere Cerdenio (left), and Spc. Bradley Blodgett, fuelers from the 539th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, Fort Lee, Va., prepare to add fuel to a generator at the Joint Task Force-Haiti compound in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, during Operation Unified Response May 2, 2010.
(Bottom photo) Command Sgt. Maj. Gabriel Cervantes (right), command sergeant major, Joint Task Force-Haiti, talks to several Haitian kids during his visit to the Ancien Aeroporte Militaire individually displaced persons camp in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, on April 24, 2010. The camp provided temporary homes to 40,000 displaced Haitians following the Jan. 12, 2010 earthquake.
(All photos by Kaye Richey, U.S. Army South Visual Information)

Chilean Maj. Gen. Alejandro Arancibia Ramirez (left), director of international relations and the head of the Chilean delegation, listens as Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, U.S. Army South commander, speaks during the U.S./Chilean army-to-army bilateral Staff Talks Nov. 1 at the Army South headquarters.

U.S. Army South, Chile wrap up Staff Talks

Story and photos by
Eric R. Lucero
U.S. Army South Public Affairs

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas — Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, U.S. Army South commander, and Maj. Gen. Alejandro Arancibia Ramirez, director of international relations and head of the Chilean delegation, signed a formal agreement that marked the end of the annual army-to-army bilateral Staff Talks between their countries' armies during a ceremony Nov. 2 at Army South headquarters here.

Army South, on behalf of the chief of staff of the Army, hosted the Staff Talks to develop and exercise a bilateral senior-level meeting framework between the two armies.

This served to set conditions for the accomplishment of the objectives and end states of Army South and U.S. Southern Command. The signed agreement will help to guide U.S. and Chilean interactions during 2012.

"The Staff Talks with Chile are of great importance to us because Chile is one of our strongest allies in all of the Americas," said Trombitas. "These talks allow us to form a plan of interaction for the next year and manage the ways in which we operate together. Strong alliances and good allies are a key to anything we do, not only in this hemisphere, but globally."

This year's Staff Talks focused on two strategic themes governing the Army's role in humanitarian assistance and disaster response, as well as doctrine and operational capabilities development.

The Staff Talks are part of an on-going planning process that occurs throughout the year, and this week's event is the culmination of planning for

2012, according to Lt. Col. Christopher W. Muller, the Army section chief assigned to Chile. The planning process ensures that the Army's efforts are integrated with SOUTHCOM's theater campaign plan and linked to the mission strategic resource plan for the U.S. embassy in Chile.

One of the benefits to the Staff Talks process is the ability to share opinions and experiences in open dialogue.

"The Staff Talks provide an excellent opportunity to share experiences," said Arancibia. "This increases the capabilities of our armies."

"The Staff Talks are very important because they allow us to speak frankly about how we can improve our relationship," said Chilean Col. Luis Chamorro, foreign liaison officer to Army South.

Chilean Col. Luis Chamorro, foreign liaison officer to Army South, gives a presentation during the Staff Talks Nov. 1 at the Army South headquarters.

Chile and the U.S. share many interests and security concerns. The Staff Talks provide a key forum for both armies to develop strategic objectives in order to maintain and advance the relationship between the partner nations.

Through Staff Talks, each nation benefits from the professional exchanges leading to collaborative solutions for issues in the region.

This year's Staff Talks also focused on developing knowledge, capabilities and support for current and future peacekeeping operations within the region. Currently, Chile has 287 soldiers deployed to Haiti in support of peacekeeping operations.

In March 2010, Army South deployed to Haiti in support of Operation Unified Response, where the command had a chance to work side-by-side with the Chilean army and other partner nations providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

"As we found out in Haiti, when we face any mission that we are charged with, we need strong allies, and Chile is a strong ally," said Trombitas. "These Staff Talks help to strengthen our partnership."

The U.S. and Chile Staff Talks concluded with 10 Agreed to Actions for the upcoming year and beyond. Some of these ATAs include the development of a bilateral simulation exercise, a platoon exchange between Chile and the Texas Military Forces, efforts to optimize the capacities of the Chilean army's engineers, and several subject matter expert exchanges. The Chilean army will also participate with Army South and partner nations in humanitarian and disaster relief exercises, as well as security and stability exercises. In addition, Chile will host the Peacekeeping Operations - Americas 2012 exercise.

The U.S. Army has engaged in annual bilateral staff talks with the Chilean army for the past six years. The Staff Talks have been instrumental in enhancing the interoperability and cooperation between the two armies, which have contributed to increased stability in the region.

"The highlight of the Staff Talks is the ability of our Soldiers to interact with our allies throughout the region," said Trombitas. "We've conducted Staff Talks with Chile since 2006 and as such, we've formed a good relationship. It's always good to personally interact with our friends and allies to form stronger relationships."

In addition to Chile, Army South, on behalf of the chief of staff of the Army, also conducts army-to-army Staff Talks with Brazil, Colombia and El Salvador.

Watch the video

To view the video on the U.S./Chilean army-to-army bilateral Staff Talks, visit www.youtube.com/USArmySouth and search "U.S. Army South, Chile wrap up Staff Talks," or scan this QR code to go directly to the video.

Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas (left), U.S. Army South commander, speaks with Gen. Luis Howell Ballena, commander of the Peruvian Joint Command, Oct. 24 at the Conference of American Armies in Lima, Peru. (U.S. Army photo by Jose Saez, U.S. Army South Visual Information)

COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS

Conference of American Armies identifies transnational criminal organizations as major concern

Story by
Arwen Consaul
U.S. Army South Public Affairs

LIMA, Peru – Transnational criminal organizations are on the rise in the Western Hemisphere, and their power, range, influence and weaponry have become more than law enforcement can handle in many parts of the region.

Acknowledging this phenomenon, the senior leaders in attendance at the recent Conference of American Armies discussed possible solutions to a widespread problem affecting everyone in the Americas.

"This conference shows all of us that the problems we face are not restricted to just our country," said Maj. Gen. Oscar Salvador Balladares, Nicaraguan army chief of staff. "All countries in the Western Hemisphere are affected by having to counter illicit trafficking, narco-terrorism and organized crime. That is why it is important to our public that we come together to discuss solutions."

The desired objective of the Conference of American Armies is for regional army commanders to strengthen integration and cooperation, study problems of mutual interest, and contribute to hemispheric security.

This year, member armies agreed that combating transnational criminal organizations was an essential topic and agreed to create an accord to conduct a separate "Emerging Threats and Risk Situations" conference. Colombia is currently scheduled to host the separate conference in October 2012.

"There needs to be a harmony of work," said Gen. Luis Patricio Cárdenas Proaño, commander of the Ecuadorian army, at the beginning of the conference. "At this conference, I will propose to touch on the theme of how to manage organized crime. Much of the organized crime occurs at our borders. The ports and borders are the center of gravity for narcotrafficking, money laundering and other illicit criminal activities. The governments need to work together toward an end state of disrupting these activities and looking for socio-economic solutions."

Since transnational criminal organizations

Gen. Victor Manual Ripalda Ganoza (center right), the army commander of the Peruvian army and president of the Permanent Executive Secretariat of the Conference of American Armies, greets Gen. Juan Miguel Fuente-Alba Poblete (center left), the army commander of the Chilean army, at the opening ceremony of the Conference of American Armies. This annual conference provides the U.S. Army with continual direct engagement with senior South and Latin American military leadership to ensure a current understanding of partner nations views and the issues facing land force commanders. (U.S. Army photo by Jose Saez, U.S. Army South Visual Information)

essentially affect all countries in the Western Hemisphere, a coordinated regional response is required, which not only involves state and political parties, but law enforcement and military leaders as well.

Transnational criminal organizations, whose activities include narcotics trafficking, financial crimes, cybercrimes, corruption, extortion, counterfeiting, and trafficking humans and arms, have a global reach that surpasses the interdiction ability and resources of many law enforcement agencies.

An illicit crime that starts in one country can pass on to a second and be on its way to a third before it is even detected.

Transnational criminal organizations adapt and evolve quickly; therefore countries cannot solve this problem alone or in a vacuum.

"This is not just an issue in the United States," said Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, commander of U.S. Army South. "Transnational criminal organizations have cut a path throughout the political, social and economic landscape of the Western Hemisphere affecting everyone in the region. These threats, which were previously reconciled in the world of law enforcement, have morphed into national security threats."

According to the White House Strategy to Combat Transnational Crimes, released in July 2011, it is imperative that political, military and law enforcement on the national and international levels come together to foster collaboration and share strategies that have proven to be successful.

The strategy calls for the building of international capacity, cooperation, and partnerships, critical objectives in the fight against transnational criminal activities.

According to Gen. Douglas Fraser, commander of U.S. Southern Command, transnational organized crime is a key security challenge and "U.S. Southern Command contributes to U.S. government efforts by building partner nations' military capacity, gathering and sharing information with domestic and foreign law enforcement agencies, and conducting detection and monitoring of illicit trafficking in the air and at sea in support of law enforcement efforts."

The Conference of American Armies, an annual conference held this year from Oct. 24-28 in Lima, Peru, provided a venue for the U.S. Army to actively engage regional armies on key initiatives and discuss problems of mutual interest.

It was also an opportunity for its members to enhance cooperation and integration regarding common interests in the region such as transnational crime.

"This conference offers an opportunity to interact with our partners and allies in this hemisphere," said Trombitas. "We can discuss common objectives and threats and work together to face any adversity."

Members of the Peruvian army participate in the opening ceremony for the Conference of the American Armies, held in Lima, Peru. (U.S. Army photo by Arwen Consaul, U.S. Army Public Affairs)

A solution to transnational crime will not be reached overnight, but the U.S. is actively working with partner governments to create an environment where ordinary citizens feel safe and secure.

"This is not just an issue in the United States. Transnational criminal organizations have cut a path throughout the political, social and economic landscape of the Western Hemisphere affecting everyone in the region."

-Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, U.S. Army South commander

In August 2010, the United States launched the Central America Regional Security Initiative to create safe streets in the region; disrupt the movement of criminals and contraband; support development of strong and accountable governments; re-establish state presence in communities at risk; and foster increased cooperation among nations in the region.

In unveiling this initiative, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton stated, "The U.S. is committed to citizen safety in Central America. We are doing everything we can in the fight against corruption and impunity, in providing the equipment and the support that law enforcement and the military require, and helping

Members of the Peruvian army participate in the opening ceremony for the Conference of the American Armies, held in Lima, Peru. (U.S. Army photo by Arwen Consaul, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

to build civil society to stand against the scourge of drug trafficking."

The Conference of American Armies is one example of an existing proactive information sharing mechanism that supports the goals of this initiative.

"It is important to have a realized vision of current problems," said Balladares. "We need to continue to come together to discuss elements that are of great value to all of us."

Through such engagements as the Conference of American Armies, the U.S. Army, through its executive agent U.S. Army South, actively engages with partners in the Western Hemisphere, building partner nation capacity, addressing areas of concern, enhancing interpersonal relationships and protecting against all threats to regional security and stability.

Watch the video

To watch the video on the Conference of the American Armies, visit www.youtube.com/USArmySouth and search "American Armies" or scan this QR code to go directly to the video.

Report
Suspicious Activity

Army Strong℠

Indicators:

- People drawing or measuring important buildings.
- Strangers asking questions about security or building security procedures.
- Briefcase, suitcase, backpack, or package left behind.
- Cars or trucks left in No Parking zones in front of important buildings.
- Intruders in secure areas where they are not supposed to be.
- A person wearing clothes that are too big and too hot for the weather.
- Chemical smells or fumes that worry you.
- People asking questions about sensitive information such as building blueprints, security plans, or VIP travel schedules without a right or need to know.
- Purchasing supplies or equipment that can be used to make bombs or weapons or purchasing uniforms without having the proper credentials

Also Report Situations Where:

- Individuals have isolated themselves or are emotionally withdrawn from friends/community
- Individuals are absent from the workplace for seemingly no reason
- Individuals with apparent grievances

Primary Reporting Methods

- Law enforcement official or agency
- Security force or guard members

Alternative Reporting Methods

- DA Civilians/Soldiers: your chain of command
- Spouses: your military member/FRG Leader
- Children: your parents or teachers
- Contractors: contract agency or COTR

What to Report

- When did suspicious activity occur
- Where did activity occur
- How many people involved
- How many vehicles involved
- What type of activity
- Describe what you saw
- Provide pictures if you took any

Organized team or lone wolf, foreign or home-grown, targeting many places or just one, using available technology or weapons made with their own hands—the fluid, obscure nature of the terrorist threat demands that we know what to look for and where to look. Familiarize yourself with indicators of suspicious activity and be ready to report such activity to proper authorities.

Always Ready, Always Alert

Because someone is depending on you

A Soldier free falls before demonstrating a brake technique during rappel training Nov. 18. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Tamika Exom, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

Sgt. 1st Class Rholynda Bronson (left), U.S. Army South medical logistics, listens to instructions from a rappel instructor during a field training exercise Nov. 18. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Tamika Exom, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

Army South Soldiers tackle tower training

U.S. Army South Soldiers from Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion took to the field Nov. 15 - 18 at Camp Bullis, Texas. The training was designed to facilitate and improve individual Soldier readiness and to conduct and evaluate warrior tasks, battle drills and lane training.

"We train on warrior tasks and battle drills because they are the building blocks for everything we do. They are perishable skills that need refinement and practice," said Command Sgt. Maj. Luis Gonzalez, Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion command sergeant major. "The intent of the rappel tower training is to instill confidence and trust in our Soldiers."

Watch the video

To view the video on the Army South Field Training Exercise, visit www.youtube.com/USArmySouth and search "FTX" or scan this QR code to go directly to the video.

An Army South Soldier rappels down the tower during a field training exercise Nov. 15 - 18 at Camp Bullis, Texas. (U.S. Army photo by Robert R. Ramon, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

Sgt. 1st Class Amie Robins, U.S. Army South reserve affairs, listens to last-minute instructions before preparing to rappel Nov. 18 at Camp Bullis, Texas. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Tamika Exom, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

BINS
U.S. ARMY

JTF-Bravo surgical team partners with Honduran doctors to conduct training, perform vital surgeries

Story and photo by
Tech Sgt. Matthew McGovern
Joint Task Force-Bravo Public Affairs

COMAYAGUA, Honduras -- A Joint Task Force-Bravo six-person Mobile Surgical Team worked with a Honduran surgeon to complete two surgeries on Honduran nationals Oct. 13, at a local hospital seven miles away from Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras.

The surgeons removed a gallbladder for a woman and performed a colonoscopy closure for a man.

"Both surgeries were successful," said Army Capt. James Elder, a general surgeon assigned to JTF-Bravo's Medical Element. "The woman who received the gallbladder removal will be back to normal and should leave the hospital in about two days and the man should be on his feet tomorrow and leave the hospital in five days."

The American team brought along items including surgical instruments, antibiotics, pain medications and various bandages, sutures and other materials used during surgery.

"Sometimes (the Honduran hospital staff) has to turn people away because they don't have the resources," said Air Force Capt. Emily Trimble, an operating room nurse assigned to the Medical Element. "We can provide these resources and perform highly needed surgeries while sharing our knowledge with the Honduran medical staff."

The Honduran doctors appreciated the assistance while working side-by-side with the American team three times a week; averaging between two to five surgeries a day.

"On behalf of the people of Comayagua, we are incredibly thankful for the constant invaluable support the Americans provide to the needy people of Comayagua," said Dr. Ives Rios, Honduran general surgeon. "We have cultivated a very nice friendship through the years and the tradition is, when a surgeon (from JTF-Bravo) is leaving, we have dinner together."

Dr. Wilmer Amador, the medical liaison officer assigned to JTF-Bravo, can also attest to the long standing relationship.

"We've been doing this for 18 years and I've been on hundreds of these trips," Amador said. "It's a win, win for everybody; the OR team can keep their proficiency level up while providing a wonderful opportunity for the hospital. For example, when the sterilizer breaks down, the hospital staff can't operate but since the American OR team provides all the sterile equipment, they can keep operating on the patients."

The surgical team, made up of a general surgeon, a nurse anesthetist, two operating room nurses and two OR technicians, sometimes responds to unplanned critical surgeries.

"We took out an appendix last week where the patient would have died if it stayed in any longer," Trimble said. "It had been three days since he needed the surgery and his appendix ruptured and had abscess. We had to irrigate his entire abdomen."

The gratitude is often evident to the surgical team and makes for a positive working environment according to Tech. Sgt. Priscilla Covarrubias, OR technician.

"My favorite part is the feeling of appreciation we get from the doctors and the patients," said Covarrubias. "When we enter the hospital we are greeted with smiles."

Besides the weekly visits to local hospitals, the mobile surgical team is also tasked with providing the same life-saving surgical capability at Soto Cano Air Base as well as supporting military missions and humanitarian assistance.

Dr. Ives Rios (left), Honduran general surgeon, and Capt. James Elder, general surgeon from JTF-Bravo medical element, perform a gallbladder removal Oct. 13 at a hospital near Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras.

Sgt. John Putman (right), a geospatial engineer with the 512th Engineer Det. (GPC), gives a briefing to an exhibitor at the Geospatial Intelligence 2011 symposium at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center in San Antonio Oct. 18.

Geospatial Planning Cell

512th Engineer Detachment showcases capabilities

Story and photo by
Sgt. Tamika Exom
U.S. Army South Public Affairs

SAN ANTONIO — A U.S. Army South subordinate unit was one of nearly 250 organizations to showcase its products and capabilities at the Geospatial Intelligence 2011 Symposium held here at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center Oct. 17 – 19.

The 512th Engineer Detachment (Geospatial Planning Cell, or GPC) comprised of 34 Soldiers, took part in the annual symposium, which is the largest intelligence conference in the nation. Geospatial, simply put, is geographically based data, collected in real time.

This year's theme for the symposium was forging integrated intelligence. The detachment has evolved from the topographic engineer field in the 1960s, in which all terrain analysis was done manually, to today, a completely automated process of collecting, analyzing, managing and distributing geospatial data and coordinating geospatial support activities. The detachment is one of only four GPC's in the Army and is a direct reporting unit to the commanding general of U.S. Army South, Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas.

"The men and women of the 512th use their skill set and all the tools available to create products that depict and help visualize terrain," said Sgt. John L. Putman, a geospatial engineer with the 512th Engineer Detachment. "This enables maneuver forces to execute military operations accurately and effectively."

One key task the detachment is responsible for includes populating the Theater Geospatial Database (TGD). This database provides commanders with the best terrain visualization products to execute missions. Some of these products include determining lines of communication, flood and landslide analysis of terrain and locating helicopter landing, and drop zones.

The detachment uses specialized equipment to accomplish their mission. "Our unit is equipped with an Automated Route Reconnaissance Kit," said Putman. "It is used to simplify and expedite mounted route reconnaissance missions. It collects route condition data and other physical infrastructure and terrain data, both by ground and air."

In 2010, the 512th Engineer Detachment deployed to Haiti as part of Operation Unified Response to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. The detachment was able to produce route reconnaissance data, flood analysis and mudslide analysis during the deployment. This data was provided to the Joint Task Force – Haiti commander who used the detachment's data to successfully complete the mission.

The detachment was also able to provide valuable infrastructure products, helicopter landing zones and possible points of entry as well as analyzing possible main and alternate supply routes to and from sea ports to various agencies such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Army Corps of Engineers and the American Red Cross, while deployed to Haiti.

The detachment proved their worth in Haiti and shared their lessons with other professionals in their field. "We wanted to let the geospatial community know what types of [geospatial] capabilities we have and what we have available to the warfighter," said Sgt. 1st Class Percy L. Carr, senior topographic sergeant, 512th Engineer Detachment (GPC) "I believe we accomplished that."

U.S. Naval Forces Southern commander visits Army South

Story and photo by
Eric R. Lucero
U.S. Army South Public Affairs

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas —Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, commander U.S. Army South, hosted Rear Adm. Kurt W. Tidd, commander U.S. Naval Forces Southern and U.S. 4th Fleet (COMUSNAVSO/C4F), during a visit to Army South headquarters here Nov. 8.

The visit was a chance for Trombitas and Tidd to brief each other on their respective commands' missions and operations.

The visit was also an opportunity for the two commanders to interact and discuss ways their staff sections can better support the overall U.S. Southern Command's mission and area of responsibility.

SOUTHCOM's mission is to conduct joint and combined full-spectrum military operations and support whole-of-government efforts to enhance regional security and cooperation in Central and South America and the Caribbean region.

"It's a great opportunity to have Admiral Tidd here to give him an idea of our capabilities, how we operate and to discuss how we can better work together to support the SOUTHCOM mission," said Trombitas.

In August, the two commands worked together during Fuerzas Aliadas PANAMAX, an annual U.S. Southern Command-sponsored multinational exercise series that focuses on ensuring the defense of the Panama Canal.

About 3,500 personnel, 22 ships and 16 nations, including the United States, participated in live and simulated training scenarios in the vicinity of Panama and from various U.S. locations during this year's exercise.

Exercises such as PANAMAX allow the Army and the Navy to work in conjunction with partner nation forces to gain valuable skills and training while forging personal working relationships.

These relationships help to build trust between the participating nations and assist in a concentrated, multinational effort to address the region's challenges.

"Our maritime partners in the region are strong and highly capable," said Tidd. "We continue to explore innovative ways to increase interoperability between our partner nation navies."

Other points of discussion during the visit were maximizing the working relationship and sharing of information between the two component commands. By collaborating on common objectives, the commands will be able to maximize efforts in countering illicit trafficking and transnational criminal organizations on land and at sea.

"We're looking more closely at working with Army South to focus on the land aspect," said Navy Capt. Francis Molinari, executive officer COMUSNAVSO/C4F. "That's one area in particular we can partner and capture efficiencies with a collective approach."

"Working side-by-side with partner nation army and naval forces has proven to be an effective way to enhance security and stability within the Central and South American and Caribbean region."

-Dan Meyer,
Army South deputy chief of staff

Rear Adm. Kurt W. Tidd (center), commander U.S. Naval Forces Southern and U.S. 4th Fleet, speaks to Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, U.S. Army South commander, about the missions and objectives of his command during a visit to Army South's headquarters Nov. 8.

Both commanders agreed that partnering and combining efforts was key to effectively conducting their theater security cooperation mission.

"Working side-by-side with partner nation army and naval forces has proven to be an effective way to enhance security and stability within the Central and South American and Caribbean region," said Dan Meyer, deputy chief of staff, Army South.

Army South and COMUSNAVSO/C4F are two of the five component commands that comprise SOUTHCOM.

Other component commands include U.S. Marine Corps Forces South, 12th Air Force (Air Forces Southern), and Special Operations Command South.

For more news and information on U.S. Naval Forces Southern and U.S. 4th Fleet, visit www.public.navy.mil/comusnavso-c4f.

Watch the video

To view the video on Rear Adm. Kurt W. Tidd's visit to U.S. Army South, visit www.youtube.com/USArmySouth and search "Naval Forces Southern" or Scan this QR code and go directly to the video.

Matthew T. Harrington (left), U.S. Army South's POLAD, speaks with Col. Steven Woods, Army South deputy chief of staff for support, in the command's conference room. (U.S Army photo by Kaye Richey, U.S. Army South Visual Information)

POLADs bring unique benefits to U.S. Army South, SOUTHCOM

Story by
Robert R. Ramon
U.S. Army South Public Affairs

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas -- During the last 50 years, Foreign Policy Advisors (POLADs) have played a key role between the Department of State and the Department of Defense when it comes to interagency communications and collaboration.

U.S. Army South and its higher headquarters, U.S. Southern Command, know well the benefits of having POLADs as members of their respective teams.

"I have the distinct privilege of being able to provide advice, not just to the commander, but to a variety of agencies that are represented," said Ambassador Carmen Martinez, foreign policy advisor and civilian deputy commander for U.S. Southern Command. "My job is to work as a conduit between what we're thinking about on the DOD side and what the State Department is thinking about," said Martinez, the former U.S.

ambassador to Zambia (2005-2008) and Burma (2002-2005).

While working in support of United States strategic objectives, the Department of Defense and Department of State are two distinct entities that culturally operate in different ways. This is where the expertise of POLADs is crucial.

"I'm making sure that at the end of the day it's the U.S. government's objectives that are being advanced and also what's the best use for scarce resources and how we're using the taxpayers' money," said Martinez.

Commanders also benefit from POLADs when it comes to overseeing the development and ongoing refinement of regional strategy as well as the command's strategic communications and public affairs activities.

"I advise the commander and other staff principals on U.S. foreign policy issues that are linked to U.S. Army South's area of responsibility," said Matthew T. Harrington, Army South's POLAD. "I'm able to provide the commander accurate information on how foreign policies are developed and the implications of political and diplomatic issues on decisions the commander must make."

This is especially important in today's 24-hour news cycle environment and the simultaneous transfer of information, said Harrington.

"It is imperative the commander receives quick and accurate information and that he or she be able to link in to the State Department and receive accurate foreign policy decisions and advice that may affect the success of DoD operations," said Harrington, who has served as Army South's POLAD since August 2010.

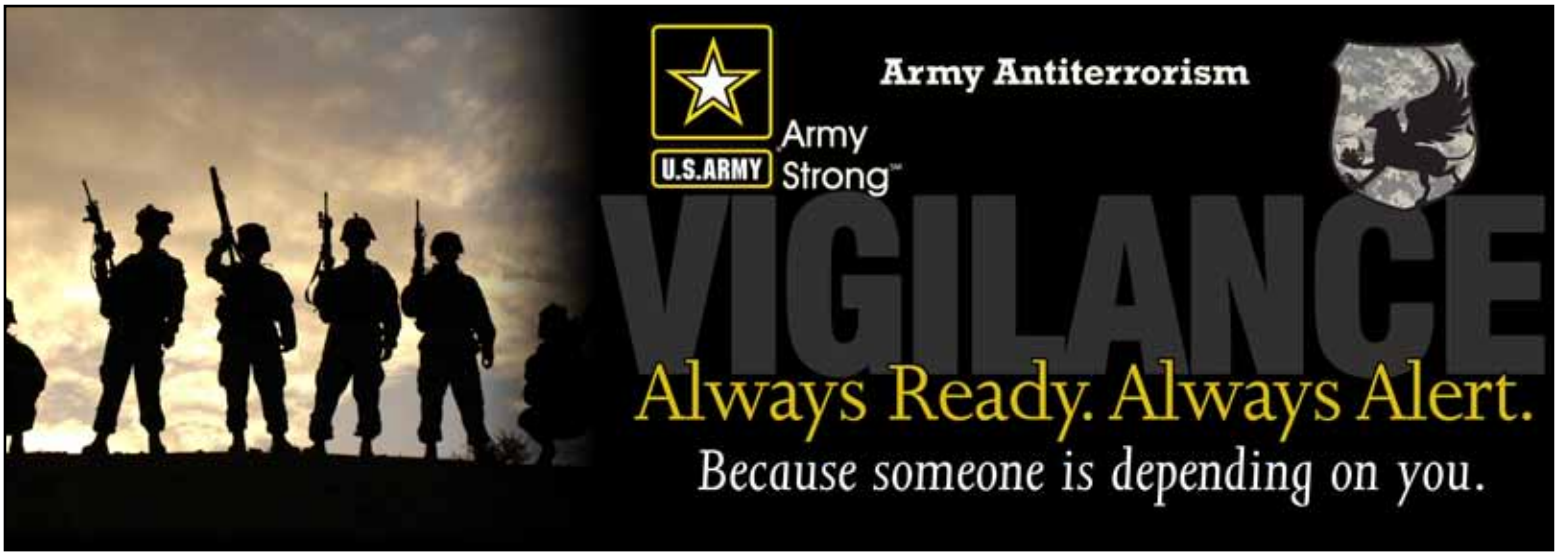
Since the inception of POLADs half a century ago, their growing ranks are testament to their value.

The numbers have grown from just a few POLADs to more than 100 positions today, said Martinez. POLADs are posted everywhere from within component commands and major headquarters to embeds in military units throughout the world.

"It's two different cultures (Department of Defense versus Department of State) so if I can help meld those cultures and make sure that our mutual objectives are supported then I think I've been successful at my job," said Martinez.

Watch the video

To view the video on Ambassador Carmen Martinez and her visit to U.S. Army South, visit www.youtube.com/USArmy-South and search "Ambassador," or scan the QR code above to go directly to the video.



Army South commanding general briefs senior leaders at AUSA annual meeting

Story by
Eric R. Lucero
U.S. Army South Public Affairs

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, U.S. Army South commander, was one of six panelists on hand to participate in the Institute of Land Warfare discussion on The Future of Engagement Opportunities and Shaping Operations Around the Globe at the Association of the United States Army annual meeting in Washington, D.C., Oct. 11.

The Institute of Land Warfare extends the influence of AUSA by informing and educating its members; local, regional and national leaders; and the American public on the critical nature of land forces and the importance of the United States Army.

For Trombitas, this forum offered a chance to brief senior military and civilian leaders on the mission and future of U.S. Army South. Specifically, the panel discussion was a valuable opportunity to stress the importance of theater security cooperation.

"We concentrate on theater security cooperation and those things that we can do to build the capacity and capability of our partners to the south so they can help us defend our southern flank," said Trombitas.

Using the 2010 deployment to Haiti in support of Operation Unified Response, Trombitas gave the audience an example of Army South's ability to deploy rapidly and work in a multinational, multi-organizational environment. Through this deployment, Army South Soldiers received critical real-world training and built crucial working relationships with partner nation armies while conducting humanitarian aid and disaster relief

The ability to work side-by-side with other nations in Haiti has paid immediate dividends during Army South's other major engagements, as the Soldiers were able to capitalize on the friendships forged in Haiti. During exercises such as Peacekeeping Operations – Americas 2011, Fuerzas Aliadas Humanitarias 2011, PANAMAX 2011, Beyond the Horizon 2011 and New Horizons 2011, Army South personnel had the chance to re-acquaint themselves with familiar faces from partner nation armies.

"Colombia's a regional partner and they want to be a player in countering illicit trafficking and sharing its lessons learned with the other countries."

-Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, U.S. Army South commander

Trombitas stressed that these personal working relationships pave the way to a fluid exchange of information that is beneficial to both the United States and its southern allies. These relationships also lead to a level of trust between nations that allows for two-way support in the event that either is in need of assistance or support.

He pointed to the countries of Honduras,

Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas (left), U.S. Army South commander, and Lt. Gen. Mark P. Hertling, U.S. Army Europe commander, field questions following the Institute of Land Warfare panel discussion Oct. 11 at the Association of the United States Army annual meeting in Washington, D.C. (U.S. Army photo by Lt. Col. Antwan C. Williams, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

Nicaragua, Dominican Republic and El Salvador as regional partners who have assisted the U.S. during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"After 10 years of war, our partners are very curious about the lessons we've learned," said Trombitas.

In addition, he mentioned Colombia as a combat tested army that has had more than 50 years of fighting experience in their struggle with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC. Colombia's tactics and doctrine are based on the U.S. doctrine after supporting the United Nations effort in Korea and subsequently, molding their army after the United States model.

Through the U.S. Army's experience in Iraq and Afghanistan, and Colombia's experience battling the FARC, both countries realize the valuable resource available to them in the form of sharing lessons learned. The information exchanged between the armies helps to strengthen the bonds between the countries; something Trombitas feels can help to influence other regional partners.

"Colombia's a regional partner and they want to be a player in countering illicit trafficking and sharing its lessons learned with the other countries," said Trombitas.

Other commanders shared a similar sentiment in regard to utilizing partner nations to help build regional stability through professional exchanges.

"Engagement makes a difference in every region of the world," said Lt. Gen. Vincent K. Brooks, U.S. Army Central commander. "I call it exporting professionalism. Through close contact with professionals from other countries, those countries become stable and reliable partners."

Through branching out and sharing information, the network of willing and able partners extends throughout Army South's area of responsibility and in the process strengthens the command's mission of theater security cooperation.

Runners from U.S. Army South pose for a group photo after finishing the 27th U.S. Army Ten-Miler Oct. 9 in Washington, D.C. (U.S. Army photos by Eric R. Lucero, U.S. Army South Public Affairs)

Army South runs Ten-Miler

Story by
Robert R. Ramon
U.S. Army South Public Affairs

WASHINGTON, D.C. – More than 40 U.S. Army South Soldiers joined approximately 30,000 other runners from around the world here Oct. 9 to compete in the U.S. Army's premiere running event, the 27th Annual Army Ten-Miler.

Beginning and ending at the Pentagon, the Army South Soldiers ran their way through our nation's capitol in the crisp morning air. They comprised a total of five different teams from throughout Army South's area of responsibility that includes South and Central America and the Caribbean.

"It is a world-class race," said Capt. Eric Corbett with the U.S. Army South Command Surgeon Office at the Army South headquarters in Fort Sam Houston, Texas. "This is the second largest ten-miler in the world and the teams get really competitive."

Having participated in the run several times with

Sgt. 1st Class Carla Hill keeps pace with other runners near the seventh mile of the 27th U.S. Army Ten-Miler.

Runners begin the 27th U.S. Army Ten-Miler.

various commands since 1995, Corbett knows well the satisfaction that goes along with participating.

"It's really worth it; I try my hardest to get on the team every year," said Corbett. "There's a selection process so you're competing in order to say you were one of the best Army South had to offer."

A key tenet of the Army Ten-Miler's mission is to build esprit de corps. The Army South Soldiers took advantage of the opportunity to do just that.

"To me the best part is the overall camaraderie and seeing people that you've served with throughout your career all coming together for one occasion," said Lt. Col. Claudia Carrizales, Army South's Security Cooperation Division chief of international military affairs. "The majority of the people running here are military and it's a tight group compared to other races."

Although none of the Army South teams took the overall top spot against the nearly 700 other teams participating in the event, the Soldiers left with a sense of pride and satisfaction.

"It's about getting together with others in our community and enjoying the camaraderie," said Sgt. 1st Class Dori Pelley from the Defense Attaché Office at the U.S. Embassy in Managua, Nicaragua. "I participate here because it's an amazing event. Even though I know I'll probably never get a medal, it's a very rewarding experience."

Support by Intelligence

14th Military Intelligence Battalion cases its colors, prepares for deployment to Afghanistan

Story and photo by
Spc. Natalie Sampson
470th Military Intelligence Brigade Public Affairs

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas - The 14th Military Intelligence Battalion cased its colors Oct. 19 as it prepared to deploy to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The casing of the colors represents the movement of the unit's mission to a new theater of operations. The ceremony took place at the Fort Sam Houston Youth Activity Center.

Guest of honor for this event was Maj. Gen. Mary Legere, commander of the U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command. Also in attendance were other distinguished guests along with family, friends and fellow Soldiers.

In his address, Col. Pierre Gervais, 470th Military Intelligence Brigade commander, thanked the family members for "assembling to acknowledge the professionalism, commitment, and selfless service" of the approximately 130 deploying Soldiers and to formally recognize their impending deployment.

Gervais also emphasized the Soldiers' willingness to serve by continuing to enlist and reenlist and deploy when called.

The 14th's deployment history includes missions in support of various units around the world. Over the years it has conducted imagery interpretation, provided technical intelligence, document translation, ground-based signals intelligence, and electronic warfare support.

In July 2009, the battalion deployed to Iraq to conduct interrogation and debriefing operations in support of multi-national forces there. For the upcoming deployment, the battalion will conduct a similar mission in support of U.S. Forces Afghanistan and the International Security Assistance Force.

Lt. Col. Kris Arnold, battalion commander, pinpointed three watchwords key to preparedness in his speech to the "Vipers": trust, discipline and fitness.

"Over the last year, one of the critical lessons I've learned as a battalion commander is that when Soldiers trust their leaders, they worry less about themselves and focus on the mission," he said. "The 14th is a truly disciplined unit … extensive and multifaceted training has resulted in an extremely competent and disciplined unit…. The 14th takes fitness seriously, especially physical fitness….

"So the 14th is ready to deploy, as the trust, discipline and fitness levels have truly reached a high water mark over the last year as we have ramped up for deployment," Arnold continued. "These levels will continue to grow during the deployment as we will establish a very formalized and methodical process for continuing to train and learn in a live-environment setting where the context is as rich as it can be."

Arnold and battalion Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Fanelli shared the honor of furling and casing the colors.

Note: The 14th Military Intelligence Battalion is a subordinate unit of the 470th Military Intelligence Brigade and aligned with U.S. Army South. The 470th provides multi-disciplined intelligence support to U.S. Army South and U.S. Southern Command. The brigade also supports intelligence operations in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility.

Lt. Col. Kris Arnold (left), 14th Military Intelligence Battalion commander, and battalion Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Fanelli, furl the battalion colors prior to casing them in a ceremony Oct. 19 on Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

Loyalty
Duty
Respect
Selfless
Service
Honor
Integrity
Personal
Courage

Honoring the past ... remembering the seven Army values

Army South CG honors Buffalo Soldiers, Veterans

Story and photo by
Lt. Col. Antwan C. Williams
U.S. Army South Public Affairs

SAN ANTONIO – Honoring all veterans, Army South's commanding general spoke at the annual Bexar County Buffalo Soldiers Association Veterans Day Commemorative Ceremony on Nov. 11 at the San Antonio National Cemetery.

Each year the local multi-cultural organization honors the memory and legacy of black and Native American Buffalo Soldiers and scouts and their contributions in settling and securing the western part of the United States following the Civil War.

Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, Army South's commander, used the analogy of the enduring seven Army values in providing examples of how the Buffalo Soldiers earned their reputation and became legendary for their fierceness, tenacity and heroic abilities.

"If you study the history of the Buffalo Soldiers and their sacrifices and unselfish commitment, it is exactly what our Army and country asks from all its Soldiers today," said Trombitas. "The origin of today's seven Army values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage can be directly linked to the accomplishments of the Buffalo Soldiers."

Some of the examples used by Trombitas provided the audience with graphic details of how the Buffalo Soldiers, made up of freed black men, slaves, former slaves and Native Americans, were instrumental in securing San Antonio, the Rio Grande along the Mexican border and western U.S. territories and states.

One example Trombitas used was of Pvt. John Randall, Troop G, 10th Cavalry Regiment who in September 1867 was assigned to escort two civilians through the western territories. Randall and his group came under attack from more than 70 Cheyenne tribe Native American warriors.

"It is reported that the two civilians fell in the initial attack, but Randall, suffering from a gunshot wound to his shoulder and almost a dozen other wounds, fought back, resulting in the death of 13 members of the Cheyenne tribe," said Trombitas. "The tribe retreated and word spread that Randall fought like a 'cornered buffalo' and displayed unyielding duty and courage."

According to Army South's command historian, Dr. Isaac Hampton II, Buffalo Soldiers participated in the Indian campaigns in the West. During the Spanish American War the all black 9th and 10th Cavalries with the 24th and 25th Infantry Regiments fought alongside Teddy Roosevelt's First Volunteer

Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas (center), spoke at the annual Bexar County Buffalo Soldiers Association Veterans Day Commemorative Ceremony Nov. 11 at the San Antonio National Cemetery.

Cavalry, better known as the "Rough Riders."

"The Buffalo Soldiers enforced the neutrality laws along the Mexican border, saw four tours of duty in the Philippine Islands and battled Pancho Villa under the leadership of U.S. General John J. Pershing," said Hampton.

According to Trombitas, the Buffalo Soldiers were stationed throughout the South and Western territories including the San Antonio area. In addition to participating in the Spanish-American War, the Philippine insurrection, the Mexican Expedition, the French Campaign of World War I and the Indian Wars, many of their daily missions included safeguarding mail routes, stage coach lines and providing security to small towns and railroads.

The Buffalo Soldiers trace some of their origins to black Soldiers who served in the American Revolutionary War in 1775, the War of 1812, the Mexican-American War from 1846 to 1848 and in the Civil War from 1861 to 1865 with units such as the famed 54th Regiment Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry (depicted in the 1989 major motion picture, "Glory").

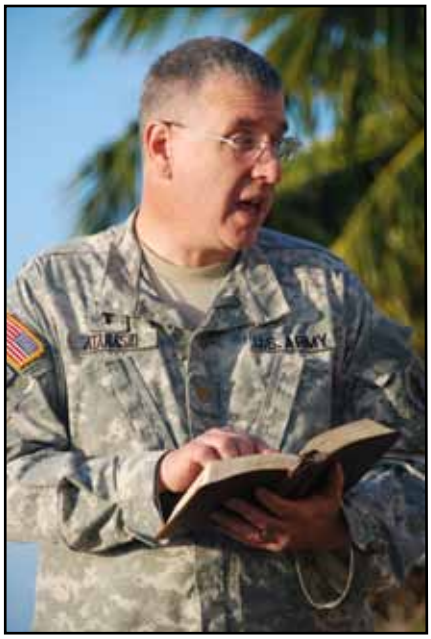
The first three black graduates from the U.S. Military Academy, Henry O. Flipper, John Alexander and Charles Young, were Buffalo Soldiers. According to Hampton, segregated black units in World I and II, like the 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion (nicknamed the triple nickels), Tuskegee Airmen (332d Fighter Group), 93rd Infantry Division (nicknamed the Blue Helmets), 92nd Infantry Division, 2nd Cavalry Division and the 761st Tank Battalion can all trace their roots and origin to the Buffalo Soldiers.

Buffalo Soldiers, according to Trombitas, had the lowest desertion rate of any unit in the U.S. Army and its members were awarded 23 Medals of Honor, the nation's highest decoration, between the Civil War and World War I.

Trombitas said the United States, today, needs men and women like the Buffalo Soldiers who are willing to step forward, serve and dedicate themselves to a greater cause, "the cause of protecting democracy."

"For more than two centuries, the veterans of our nation have been willing to serve and to sacrifice for a country and cause they love more than their own lives," said Trombitas. "The Buffalo Soldiers were no different, in fact they showed even more selfless service, because many were denied the rights of full citizenship and equal opportunities."

Army South plans to honor all black Soldiers and Veterans, including the Buffalo Soldiers, at its headquarters in February for Black History Month.



Hang On ...

Using faith to cope with holiday stress

Story by
Chaplain (Maj.) Charles J. Atanasio
U.S. Army South, Operations Chaplain

The holidays and starting a new year can be such a joyous time for a lot of people. It is a time to create great memories. It is an opportunity to reflect upon the divine and the eternal of what matters most and lasts longest.

It is an occasion to spend quality time with those people we love and cherish. But, for other people, the holidays are not moments of celebration.

The holidays can be incredibly stressful for them for many different reasons. Some individuals may recall the painful memories of Christmas past. They experience loneliness, worthlessness, hopelessness, helplessness and guilt.

I would like to share Lloyd Newell's inspiring narration, "Hang On," about the power of looking outward into the lives of others and upward into the face of God. We never know what other people are going through until we reach out and listen. It may even save their life.

"Sitting at her window on a rather cold and dark winter day, a young woman began to feel very alone and discouraged. It seemed no matter how hard she tried, she just couldn't keep up with the demands of life.

The children always needed more of her attention, finances were tight, she felt like she had lost touch with who she used to be, and there seemed to be no end in sight. As the tears began to well up in her eyes, the telephone rang, and she composed herself to answer it.

A friend was calling just to see how she was doing and to offer some words of encouragement. By the time they finished talking, things were better. The lingering winter yielded to a hope for eventual spring.

She began to see the opportunities in her life rather than just the burdens. Her problems didn't disappear, but somehow just knowing that she was not alone, that someone cared for her, made them suddenly seem bearable.

All of us feel, at times, that we're alone, that we've been abandoned and left to fend for ourselves. The everyday challenges of life seem to hold us back and weigh us down until we don't know how we can keep going.

Then something happens. We hear a child laugh, we're inspired by sacred words or music, someone expresses appreciation for our hard work, or maybe a good friend calls to cheer us up. Our hope is renewed that somehow we'll get through—if we just hold on, in some way we'll manage. And we always do.

God is in His heaven watching over us. Spring flowers are just waiting for a chance to bloom. Dawn comes surely after even the darkest night. Every time someone reaches out to us—and every time we reach out to someone else—hope is reborn, and we realize that we're never really alone."

If you feel like you are having problems coping and that life feels unbearable and that you can't hang on, let someone know. You can always speak to a chaplain or contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255). Other resources: Veterans Crisis Line - 1-800-273-TALK (8255) - Veterans Press 1 or Military One Source - 1-800-342-9647 or Wounded Soldier and Family Hotline - 1-800-984-8523/ CONUS DSN: 421-3700/ OCONUS DSN: 312-421-3700. At Fort Sam Houston you can also contact the Behavioral Medicine Clinic at 210-539-9589/9567/9580 or contact the Army South Chaplain's office at 210-295-5941 or 210-295-6507.

Websites: www.militaryonesource.mil and http://www.armyg1.army.mil/hr/suicide/media3.asp

NEVER LEAVE A FALLEN COMRADE

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Not all Wounds are Visible

USACHPPM

Be willing to listen.

It is your responsibility to get help for a fellow Soldier

Talk to your Chaplain or a Behavioral Health Professional or Call Military OneSource **1-800-342-9647**

www.militaryonesource.com

TA-063-0107

Army South year in review

2011 was another productive and successful year for U.S. Army South.

The Soldiers and civilians of Army South worked together in support of the mission to conduct Theater Security Cooperation in order to enhance hemispheric security and stability and, on order, conduct contingency operations as directed by U.S. Southern Command.

There are many examples of results gained from regional cooperation and support fostered by Army South's Theater Security Cooperation activities, said Maj. Gen. Simeon G. Trombitas, U.S. Army South commanding general. These activities include Salvadoran soldiers patrolling the streets of Iraq with U.S. counterparts, Guatemalan disaster response units digging out mudslide victims in Honduras and Chilean medics treating earthquake victims in Haiti.

"One of my primary goals for this past year has been to enhance U.S. and regional security by building and sustaining the capacities of key partner armies in the region, increasing interoperability among our armies, and maintaining strong, effective working relationships with key leaders," said Trombitas. "We have done this through a variety of methods to include staff planning visits, military exchange programs, military training exercises and key leader engagements."

During the past year, Army South partnered with 31 nations and 10 governmental, non-governmental and international organizations during the Fuerzas Aliadas Humanitarias (FAHUM) 2011 exercise.

This exercise, hosted by the Caribbean nation of Trinidad and Tobago, tested national and regional disaster-response plans, and improved the capabilities and interoperability of the various governmental and non-governmental organizations that typically support rescue and recovery efforts within the region.

Another activity that provided an opportunity for Army South to enhance regional security and support was peacekeeping operations training. Peace Keeping Operations-Americas (PKO-A) is the Army's primary peacekeeping training event in the Central and South American region.

PKO–A 2011 provided a forum for militaries of the region, civilian agencies, non-governmental organizations and inter-governmental organizations to build valuable professional relationships, promote alliances and regional relations, and reinforce security cooperation through professional development engagements, junior and senior leadership seminars, a battalion staff exercise and a capstone command post exercise.

In addition to the FAHUM and PKO-A exercises, Allied Forces PANAMAX is the largest multinational exercise held in theater.

PANAMAX 2011 brought several nations together from the Western Hemisphere to train for the defense of the Panama Canal.

U.S. and partner nations' service members participated from locations throughout the United States, Canada, South and Central America, and the Caribbean.

The exercise facilitated interoperability, built capabilities, and provided a venue to share best practices among the military and security forces in the region.

It also provided Army South the opportunity to train to operate as a multi-national force headquarters.

The Beyond the Horizon (BTH) series of exercises is another program critical to developing partner nation capacity, while also providing Army South with the opportunity to conduct real-world training. This year Army South conducted BTH exercises in El Salvador and the Dominican Republic.

"During the BTHs, our forces conducted four medical readiness training exercises and three dental readiness exercises, resulting in the treatment of more than 50,000 patients," said Trombitas. "Our forces also built or renovated five schools, four health clinics, and two sanitation facilities in rural communities in the Dominican Republic and El Salvador."

On behalf of the chief of staff of the Army, Army South conducted army-to-army staff talks with Brazil, Chile, Colombia and El Salvador, "resulting in strong partnerships with these countries and improving communication ties," said Trombitas.

"While we continue to enhance and mature our partner nations' capabilities, we also ensure our readiness is tested so that we can meet our mission to deploy for contingencies," said Trombitas. "We took lessons we learned from our Operation Unified Response deployment to Haiti in 2010 and applied them during contingency operations exercises such as Integrated Advance 2011 in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba."

IA 2011 was a U.S. Southern Command sponsored, operational exercise aimed at exercising and validating key aspects of SOUTHCOM plans that focused on humanitarian assistance, foreign disaster response and mass migration in the Caribbean while working with various U.S. interagency partners.

"We have also updated our plans and procedures based on lessons learned and have refined our ability to provide a more rapid and robust response when called upon to lead joint, multinational and interagency operations in the future," said Trombitas.

Army South ended the year by receiving the Army Superior Unit Award for its performance and deployment during Operation Unified Response in Haiti following the devastating 7.0 earthquake that struck that country on Jan. 12, 2010.

"Army South's design and capabilities reflect the future of our Army, and we are prepared to perform all missions expected of the Soldier - today and tomorrow," said Trombitas.

Information for this article was compiled from previous news stories produced by the Army South Public Affairs and the Army South commander's article in the magazine of The Association of the United States Army, 2011-12 Green Book, publication date October 2011.

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