

New trainer hones Paladin crews

By Ignacio "Iggy" Rubalcava
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It's been in the works for more than seven years but it's finally here. It has a hefty price tag of approximately \$1.2 million but the savings it will garner make it well worth the cost. It's called the Fire Support Combined Arms Tactical Trainer and it provides Howitzer crews an opportunity to hone their tanker skills literally any time of the day or night.

Located at Baumholder's highest point inside the "Giant Golf Ball" building, the FSCATT simulator offers soldiers an opportunity to train up for their table qualifications. In fact, the simulator is already being integrated into the Division Artillery program and will become an integral part of table qualification for soldiers.

"We're already starting to develop standard operating procedures that will integrate this training device into our training system," said Sgt. 1st Class Steven M. Colman, Division Artillery master gunner.

"We use what we call Paladin tables, or artillery tables in the artillery community. They are different tables or gates that we have to go through before we can progress to the next level of training. This particular device here will be utilized extensively in what we call table six and table seven, which are non-firing tables to prepare the crews for table eight, which is the actual live fire," he said.

The simulator offers three different modes of operation that enables crews to train independently or with different components of the fire process chain.

"There are three different modes that we operate in," said Colman. There's the stand alone mode. That's where you've just got the actual howitzer crew itself, training, using the operator control station with the computers.

"We can do an interactive mode, which is when we involve fire direction control, the guys that tell us where to shoot the bullets.

"The third one, which is really great, is the closed loop mode. That's when you're involving the entire fire process chain from the forward observer calling for the fire, going through the fire direction center control guys, and then down to the gun line. So we get the entire sensor to shooter triad going all at one time. That's a huge benefit for us. We all get to train together without actually going to the field and shooting live rounds," he said.

There are obvious savings involved with integrating this new piece of equipment in to the training system. The people who pay the bills will be quite pleased because the biggest advantage and savings associated with the FSCATT will be the savings in training ammunition.

The advantage for the crews and commanders will be that they will be able to use the simulator anytime they wish.

"It's very labor intensive and also very expensive to take howitzers out into the field and do live fire missions. There are all kinds of expenses involved with that such as fuel, ammunition, logistics and more," said Colman.

"With this equipment the soldiers can



Cpl. Michael Gittens, C Battery, 4-27th Field Artillery, relays data to crew members inside the Paladin trainer. Photos by Ignacio "Iggy" Rubalcava

train, if they wanted to, literally 24-hours a day, seven days a week, which obviously we wouldn't, but it's a lot easier to get access to this thing and train with actual ammunition that we'd be using out in the field," said Colman.

The simulator comes very close to replicating the actual interior of a Paladin Howitzer. Old A3 or A5 turrets make up the body of the simulator. "They (the contractors) took existing components from old coded out howitzers and refurbished them, cleaned them up, and that's what they've installed in this thing right here. It's got literally everything that you would find inside an actual paladin turret," said Colman.

"It's almost identical inside and it's a lot closer than some of the other simulators that I've seen in the Army system," he said.

"What we'll do is set this up so that one of the requirements to proceed to table eight will be to go through table seven and be certified on this weapon system here, on this trainer," said Colman.

The simulator will also be integrated directly into the DIVARTY safety certification program. "We can do safety certification to ensure the crews can operate safely," said Colman.

The trainer is so realistic that it virtually



Training ammunition stands ready.

has no drawbacks or disadvantages, except perhaps that there are not enough of them. "I guess the biggest drawback is that because they're so darn expensive there's not that many of them," said Colman. "It'd be great if we had six of them to simulate an entire actual firing battery, but obviously that's cost prohibitive. We do consider ourselves lucky because there are only four of them in Europe. Each division that's over here has two of them, which is unique because the divisions stateside don't have their own, unless they're



At the base of the trainer, to the left and right of the tube, are the collection shoots where the training ammunition is expelled for reuse.

in the National Guard," said Colman.

"The main selling point is that this is going to be a great training tool, or I should say, a combat multiplier because of the fact that we can get some great training from it. It's going to make our crews that much better when they're out there actually having to do this for real," said Colman.



Photos by Ignacio "Iggy" Rubalcava

Melinda Ramirez assists Jammie Stegman prepare her annual tax return. Ramirez is one of five civilian and two special duty soldiers now providing free tax service to Baumholder residents.

Tax center now open for business

The Baumholder Tax Center is open for business and five civilian and two special duty soldiers are ready to assist customers with tax preparation. Located in the 8th Finance building, hours of operation are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Fridays. Simple tax returns and 1040EZs can be prepared on a walk-in basis. More complex returns usually require an appointment.

The center itself has a new look. Employees from the 222nd Base Support Battalion Directorate of Public Works totally redid the bathrooms, the floors, the plumbing and the walls. They also added blinds, painted the sealing and the walls and re-carpeted the floor.

"I'd just like to emphasize that it is a free

service so there is no reason to go down and use one of the paid professionals in town. They can come in and get their federal and state income tax done. We "E" file (electronic filing) so that speeds up the process of getting refunds," said Capt. John Tracy, tax center officer.

To file taxes promptly, customers need the proper documentation. The documents most necessary in filing a tax return are the W-2 and 1099 forms. Tax payers should already have received these forms in the mail. It is important that tax payers have their W-2 and 1099 forms at the time they have their taxes prepared. For military personnel, they should come attached to the January LES and will be available on-line at "My Pay." Getting this documentation is the tax payer's responsibility

and the failure of employers or a financial institutions to send these documents will not be a defense to a late tax filing.

If tax payers have not received their W-2 forms by now they should contact their employer, for soldiers this means the local finance office. If the W-2s do not arrive by Feb. 15, contact the IRS at 1-800-829-1040.

The instructions for forms 1040, 1040A, and 1040EZ also list this information. The IRS will require the tax payer's employer's name, address, telephone number, and if known, the employer's federal identification number. The tax filer's address, telephone number, dates of employment and an estimate of total wages and withheld federal income taxes are also required.

The second type of documentation need

is the 1099 form. This form reports income from sources other than wages, salary, or tips.

Various 1099 forms include the 1099R, which report distributions from pensions, annuities, retirement, or profit sharing plans. Another example is the 1099INT, which reports interest. Most 1099 forms are not submitted with the tax return. The tax center can tell customers which 1099 forms must be filed with individual tax returns. Persons who receive a 1099 form after filing their taxes by reporting the income and take the credit for any income tax withheld by filing a 1040X amended tax return.

For more information about tax center operations, call the Legal Assistance Office at mil 485-6506 or the tax center at 485-8644.

Assault, battery, AWOL charges leveled at soldiers

Results of trial

Pvt. 2 Kenon T. Isabel, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-35 Armor, was found guilty by a General Court-Martial at Baumholder Jan. 13 on one count of assault consummated by a battery and one count of disobeying a lawful regulation. Isabel received a sentence of forfeiture of \$500 a month for five months, reduction to private

and confinement for five months. Isabel is serving his sentence at the Mannheim Confinement Facility.

Pvt. 2 Jermay Ashton, C Company, 40th Engineers, was found guilty by a Summary Court-Martial at Baumholder Jan. 14 on one count of absent without leave and one count of missing movement. Ashton received a sentence of forfeiture of \$767, reduction to

private and confinement for 30 days. Ashton is serving his sentence at the Mannheim Confinement Facility.

Pvt. 1st Class Steven A. Jones, B Company, 40th Engineers, was found guilty by a Summary Court-Martial at Baumholder Jan. 14 on 1 count of absent without leave. Jones received a sentence of forfeiture of \$767, reduction to private and confinement for 30

days. Jones is serving his sentence at the Mannheim Confinement Facility.

Specialist Kyle W. Ball, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2-6 Infantry, was found guilty on one count of driving under the influence by a Summary Court-Martial at Baumholder Jan. 15. Ball received a sentence of forfeiture of \$961 and reduction to private first class.

Soldier nets 9 grand plus in five minutes

By Ignacio “Iggy” Rubalcava
222nd Base Support Battalion Public Affairs office

It took only five minutes for Spec. Justin Brown to relieve the commissary of \$9,381.97 and get away with it. That’s the value of all the merchandise Brown and his fiancée Rebea Wodniczak were able to pack into 30 shopping carts during a shopping spree sponsored by the American Logistics Association, a consumer awareness group, who, on behalf of DECA ensures shoppers are fully informed of all the benefits the commissary has to offer.

The American Logistics Association awarded Brown with a five minute shopping spree at the commissary for being selected as the Army’s Soldier of the Year.

After a team of cashiers rang up Brown’s shopping spree results on two registers and the “damage” was totaled, John Bendetson, a member of the American Logistics Association, broke out his checkbook so that Brown could write the checks and pay for the merchandise.

Brown, a test measurement and diagnostic equipment maintenance and support specialist assigned to Baumholder’s 95th Maintenance Company, outdid the Noncommissioned Officer of the Year who only managed to rake in about \$7,000 during his shopping spree.

“The intention was to get all high dollar items that we could,” said Brown. Non perishables were also on Brown’s shopping list. “Razor blades for example, they’re about \$13 for a pack of eight so now I’ve got enough that I don’t have to go out and buy them for \$13 a pop,” he said.

When it was all over, Brown surveyed the 30 shopping carts brimming with merchandise and in between heavy breaths he jokingly said, “I think it was very productive and destructive I guess, depending on your point of view. Five minutes was gone in a hurry but I guess this is where the hard work pays off. Your five minutes of fame.”

Since Brown is a single soldier who lives in the barracks, the commissary is going to help him with the storage problem he incurred after his five minute dash through the commissary.

“Actually the commissary will keep it here for me, you

know, the frozen foods and everything. So when I do my shopping I don’t need to bring any cash,” he said.

Board experience

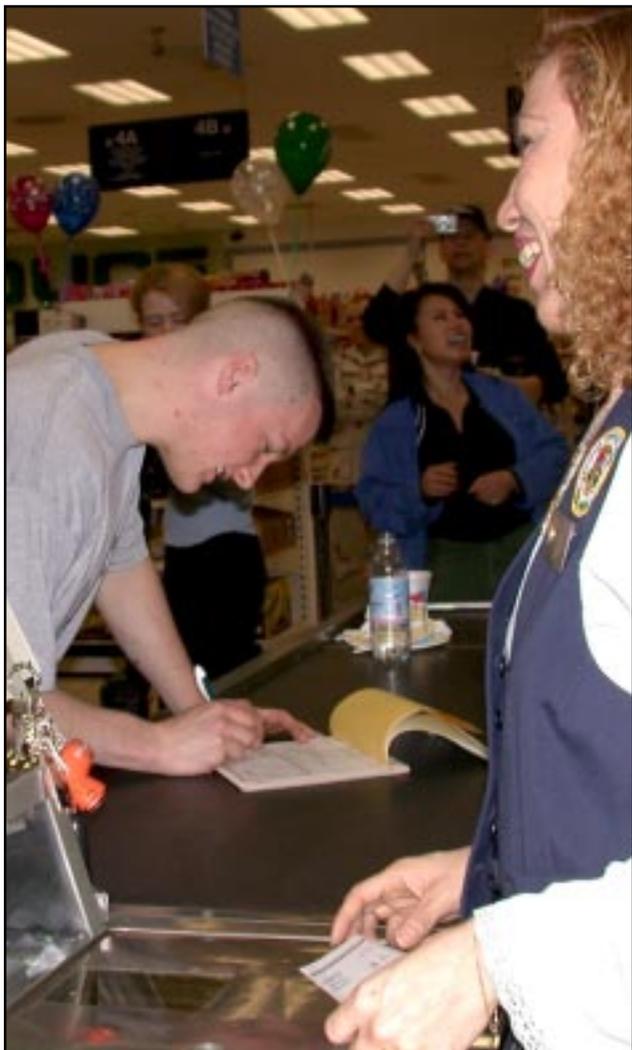
Like many, the 21-year-old Mundelein, Ill. native joined the Army about two and a half years ago for the college and education benefits. Brown is still looking forward to getting his education with just a slight change in plans.

“As I . . . progressed, started doing some of the Soldier of the Year stuff, started seeing what the Army was about, I decided I’m probably going to make this my career. I’ll get my degree through the military and we’ll see what happens. My enlistment is for another two and a half years. I’m going to research what I can do in and out of the Army and go from there,” said Brown.

Becoming the Army’s Soldier of the Year almost didn’t happen for Brown. His supervisor recommended that Brown participate in a board just to get the experience because eventually he would have to go before a board when it came time for a promotion to sergeant.

“The initial plan was just to get formal board experience but nobody else showed up to compete during the first board so I went to the next level just to get experience. Everyone kept telling me, ‘oh, the next level it’s going to be really rough.’ So I started really studying and ended up going higher and higher,” he said.

The Army has had Soldier of the Year competitions at the battalion, brigade, division and major command level but this was the first Army wide competition and Brown is the first to wear the title of Soldier of the Year.



Photos by Ignacio “Iggy” Rubalcava

Above, Spec. Jason Brown and his fiancée Rebea Wodniczak stock up on pizzas during his five minute shopping spree at the commissary. At left, Brown writes a check to cover the cost of his five minute shopping binge. The American Logistics Association actually paid for the \$9,381.97 that Brown hauled away.

Force protection

The Baumholder military community will exercise its force protection capabilities Feb. 12 from 4 a.m. to 4 p.m. Persons may experience delays when entering the installation as a result of measures consistent with force protection levels Charlie and Delta. This is only an exercise and residents are asked to be patient and cooperative while Baumholder exercises its force protection procedures.

Deadline nears

The deadline for turning in volunteer forms to the Installation Volunteer Coordination Office is Feb. 28. All registration forms and volunteer hour sheets are needed to prepare for National Volunteer Week April 27 through May 3. For more information contact Army Community Services at mil 485-8188.

Automotive exams

The Automotive Service Exams will be given at Baumholder during May. Applicants for the exams must register at the education center before March 15 so that the tests may be ordered from the United States. Call Bill Badger at mil 485-8891 for more information.

Scholarships available

The Maj. Gen. James Ursano Scholarship Fund for Dependent Children of Soldiers is available for the upcoming college year. An application may be downloaded from

Post notes

www.aerhq.org through March 3. Call Bill Badger at mil 485-8491 for more information.

University rep visits

The University of Oklahoma field representative from Ramstein Air Base will visit the Baumholder Army Education Center on Feb. 5 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. The representative may be reached daily at mil 480-6807.

ACS

Building 8746, mil 485-8188/6965

Attention newcomers

The Baumholder Army Community Services Newcomers' Orientation and Welcome will be held Feb. 17 – 19. This three-day course introduces newcomers to the Baumholder military community as well as Germany. Course time is 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. daily. Child care is available. Call ACS to sign up.

Volunteer training

Explore how volunteers are motivated to commit countless hours to a single project and what it takes to keep them. Learn the what, when, why, of recognizing volunteers for any organization. Call ACS to sign up for

volunteer training scheduled for Feb. 19 from 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Rod and Gun Club

Building 8167, mil 485-6345

Valentines Day

Come out to the Rod and Gun Club Feb. 14 and celebrate Valentines Day in style. "Duo Project" will perform. Specials, contests, prizes and more will be offered. Call the Rod and Gun Club for more information.

Sports and Fitness

Building 8743, mil 485-7003/7176

Cheer your unit

Come cheer for your unit to victory during the 222nd Base Support Battalion unit level basketball championships at the Hall of Champions Feb 10 – 13. Only the best unit will survive.

Sports shorts

Baumholder's Sports Office is looking for persons interested in boxing. Training is Mondays through Thursdays from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. at the Hall of Champions.

The Sports Office is also looking for coaches for community level soccer and volleyball action.

Be ready to shop

Baumholder American High School will host an Antiques and More Show on Feb. 8 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Bring your ID and come ready to shop.

Outdoor Recreation

Building 8895, mil 485-7182

Let's go skiing

Baumholder Outdoor Recreation has several upcoming ski trips that are sure to fit your schedule. On Feb. 8 the center goes to Garmisch to ski the Zugspitz and Feb. 14–17, President's Day weekend, they head to Austria. Ski trips are open to all ski levels including non-skiers. Call Outdoor Recreation for more information.

Tune your board

Ski and snowboard services are available at Baumholder Outdoor Recreation. Same day service, in by 2 p.m. out by 6 p.m., is also available.

Learn to dive

Outdoor Recreation now offers introduction to scuba diving, scuba diving refresher courses, and SSI open water scuba diving courses. Call for course dates, times and fees.