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Japanese GSDF completes Hawk, Chu Sam ASP

Fort Bliss bids farewell to 534 Japanese troops

SGT. VALERIE LOPEZ
Headquarters, Fort Bliss

Team Bliss said farewell to 534 Japanese Ground Self-Defense Force troops during the Hawk and Chu-SAM Annual Service Practice farewell party at the Centennial Banquet and Conference Center Nov. 30.

The Hawk and Chu-SAM are medium-range surface-to-air missile systems used to provide air defense coverage over military operations.

Fort Bliss is proud of the annual missile fire exercises and training events the Japanese Forces conduct here, said Maj. Gen. Dana J. H. Pittard, 1st Armored Division and Fort Bliss commander.

Pittard extended congratulations to those who have completed the training and are moving forward.

The Hawk and Chu-SAM ASP is from September to December and will be back next year, according to Lt. Col. Naoki Uchimura, JGSDF Fort Bliss liaison.

This year's JGSDF troops successfully completed another ASP mission.

"It's a great honor to be here as the



PHOTOS BY SGT. VALERIE LOPEZ / Headquarters, Fort Bliss

Lt. Col. Noriaki Tsutsui, right, Hawk and Chu-SAM Evaluation and Support chief of planning, leads attendees in a toast during the Hawk and Chu-SAM Annual Service Practice farewell party at the Centennial Banquet and Conference Center Nov. 30.

commander of the ASP," said Col. Koji Taguchi, commander, Hawk and Chu-SAM Evaluation and Support. "Our ASP has been training on Fort Bliss since 1965."

Taguchi first came to Fort Bliss 15 years ago.

"Fort Bliss has supported our live-fire training almost 47 years," said Taguchi "We appreciate the warm wel-

come that Team Bliss presented to us. On behalf of all members of JGSDF, I thank Fort Bliss and local community members for supporting us and understanding our mission."

As a child growing up in El Paso, Pittard recalls the arrival of the first group of JGSDF troops.

"I remember when the JGSDF first came here in 1965," said Pittard. "That



Maj. Gen. Dana J. H. Pittard, 1st Armored Division and Fort Bliss commander, bids farewell to Japanese Ground Self-Defense Force troops during the Hawk and Chu-SAM Annual Service Practice farewell party at the Centennial Banquet and Conference Center Nov. 30.

meant a lot to Fort Bliss, El Paso and my family. We feel strongly that the JGSDF is an integral part of Team Bliss and hope that this partnership continues for another 46 years."



Col. Koki Taguchi, Hawk and Chu-SAM Evaluation and Support commander, bids farewell to Fort Bliss and El Paso during the Hawk and Chu-SAM Annual Service Practice farewell party at the Centennial Banquet and Conference Center Nov. 30.



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Fort Bliss joins community for El Paso Celebration of Lights



Story and photos by
Sgt. Valerie Lopez,
Headquarters, 1st AD

Fort Bliss and El Paso gathered to share the holiday spirit during the El Paso Celebration of Lights and 76th Annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony, Dec 3. With entertainment from 1st Armored Division Band, the Franciscanos Choir of St. Anthony's Seminary and Ms. Deniese Baisley, attendees joined in Christmas singing and a parade following the lighting of the tree.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY NATALIE M. HINOJOS

(Above) A Christmas tree lights up downtown El Paso Saturday during the Celebration of Lights.

1. The Franciscanos Choir sings holiday songs during the Celebration of Lights in downtown El Paso Saturday.
2. Maj. Gen. Dana J. H. Pittard, 1st Armored Division and Fort Bliss commanding general, speaks with Channel 7 News Anchors Karla Huelga and Paul Cicala during the Celebration of Lights in downtown El Paso Saturday.
3. Jeanne Osborne with Candlelighters of El Paso leads the pledge of allegiance during the Celebration of Lights in downtown El Paso Saturday.

4. Crowds gather together at the edge of the streets in downtown El Paso Saturday to watch a parade of floats.

5. El Paso Mayor John Cook and Jeanne Osborne and Daniel Fierro of Candlelighters of El Paso flip the switch to light the tree during the Celebration of Lights in downtown El Paso Saturday.
6. The 1st Armored Division Band plays holiday music during the Celebration of Lights in downtown El Paso Saturday.
7. El Paso Mayor John Cook sings during the Celebration of Lights in downtown El Paso Saturday.



PHOTOS BY PFC. MELISSA C. PARRISH / Headquarters, Fort Bliss

Twin brothers Jamaal and Jamile Wilson, Headquarters Support Company, 1st Armored Division, re-enlist with more than 150 other Soldiers and new recruits at the University of Texas at El Paso's Sun Bowl Stadium on Veterans Day.



Twin brothers Jamaal and Jamile Wilson, light wheel mechanics with Headquarters Support Company, 1st Armored Division, work together in the motor pool on a daily basis.

1st Armored Division twins re-enlist

PFC. MELISSA C. PARRISH
Headquarters, Fort Bliss

On Sept. 17, 2008, twin brothers from Atlanta, Jamaal and Jamile Wilson, made a decision to join the Army as light wheel mechanics. They were not strangers to the Army; both their mother and father are veterans and they grew up as "Army brats."

They attended basic and advanced individual training together and hoped to continue to stay together, but knew the Army could assign them to separate duty stations. However, after three years, two duty stations and a deployment all spent together, the brothers recently re-enlisted for six more years in the Army and they are still

serving in the same company.

"God is looking after us," said Jamile. "We keep getting the opportunity to stay together."

"Having my twin brother with me is like having the ultimate battle buddy," said Jamaal. "I know what he is capable of and he knows what I am capable of."

Both twins got stationed in Wiesbaden, Germany, with Headquarters, 1st Armored Division, and deployed to Baghdad in 2009 shortly after they joined. Jamile deployed two weeks before his brother.

"Deploying was definitely an experience I will never forget," said Jamile. "I left first so I got to let him know what to expect."

"I was anxious to get over there and do my part but I was also ready to see my brother," said Jamaal. "I was worried about him."

"Our deployment was probably better than other peoples," said Jamaal. "We had each other. I had my brother. We kept each other motivated. We were our support system, and a lot of people didn't have that."

After the twins returned from deployment they got word that the division would be moving to Fort Bliss. The unit move guaranteed them to be at the same duty station once again.

Since making the move to Fort Bliss they both decided to re-enlist together.

Their re-enlistment ceremony was held

at the University of Texas at El Paso on Veterans Day Nov. 11. They re-enlisted with more than 150 other Soldiers and new recruits.

"Sometimes it seems like the nation is divided, but not on that day," said Jamaal. "On Veterans Day everyone came together to show respect for Soldiers. It was great to see everyone honor the Soldiers that serve this country. For the first time I felt no racism, no sexism. The only color that day was green."

"It was just very humbling," said Jamaal. "When we go back home, we aren't from a military town so we really

See Page 17A, TWINS

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Twin brothers Jamaal and Jamile Wilson with Headquarters Support Company, 1st Armored Division have been in the same unit since they joined the Army.



PHOTOS BY PFC. MELISSA C. PARRISH / Headquarters, Fort Bliss

Twin brothers Jamaal and Jamile Wilson, light wheel mechanics with Headquarters Support Company, 1st Armored Division, work together in the motor pool on a daily basis at Fort Bliss.

TWINS *Continued from Page 16A*

don't get recognition, so to get a standing ovation was pretty incredible.

"Seeing people that served before us was nice too," he added. "I met a guy who was 106 years old and he was a war vet. I got to thank him for paving the way for young Soldiers like us."

"The re-enlistment ceremony was amazing," said Jamile. "It was an honor to not only re-enlist with other Soldiers but to also be a part of a recruit's first-time enlistment."

The twins signed up for six more years and opted for one-year stability as part of their re-enlistment. This ensures they will be together at least one more year. They are hoping to deploy together again but both realize this may be their last duty station together.

"The needs of the Army will determine our future," said Jamaal. "Maybe we need to be apart. Maybe we will grow more that way. I'm just glad that for one more year we will be here and together."

Both brothers would like to become drill sergeants one day.

"I want to train Soldiers and be a part of that," said Jamile. "I want to be that person from day one to help Soldiers with their careers. I want to inspire young Soldiers like I was inspired. I never want to be pent up in an office."

After their drill sergeant hopes, their plans differ. Jamile aspires to be a warrant officer while Jamaal hopes to attain the highest enlisted rank in the Army.

They both credit their children for the drive they have in the Army.

Jamile and his wife Dutchess have a 4-year-old son, Jamile Jr., and a 2-year-old

daughter, Daijah Wilson.

Jamaal also has two children, 6-year-old daughter Janyah Wilson and 4-year-old son Jamaal Jr.

"The Army allows us to take care of our families," said Jamile. "I am grateful for that."

"The great thing about the Army is that the harder you work at it, the more successful you will be and your career reflects that," said Jamaal. "I'm thankful every day that I get to be a part of the 1 percent and that I get to serve alongside my twin brother in the 1st Armored Division."

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Purple Heart recipients share stories, honored downtown

MARCIE C. WRIGHT
Monitor Staff

"For me, earning the Purple Heart means it was a day when I wasn't at my best, and they got me," said Staff Sgt. Everette Adam Palmer, artilleryman with B Battery, 2nd Battalion, 29th Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division.

Palmer and nine others were recognized for their service and valor, the deeds that earned them the Purple Heart, at the Double Tree El Paso Downtown/City Center hotel, at a banquet given by the Rotary Club of El Paso Dec. 1.

The Purple Heart is awarded to members of the armed forces of the U.S. who are wounded by an instrument of war in the hands of the enemy and posthumously to the next of kin in the name of those who are killed in action or die of wounds received in action.

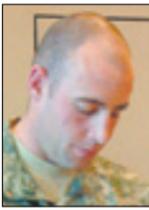
"Only 1 percent of this nation wears the uniform," said Brig. Gen. Stephen Twitty, 1st AD deputy commanding general for operations and guest speaker at the event. "Out of that 1 percent, most of the Soldiers came in after 9/11. They knew the risks involved and they raised their hand to serve this country and go fight."

"Not only do they have to carry the scars in their bodies, but they also have to carry the scars in their minds and in their hearts," said Twitty.

Palmer bears many scars and was privileged to keep his life and his limbs, after an attack July 14, 2009, that earned him the Purple Heart.

"I thought I was going to die," said Palmer, who was two months into his unit's deployment when his convoy was attacked. "We left our FOB (Forward Operating Base Hunter) en route to FOB Gary Owen. My vehicle got hit on my side with an EFP (explosively formed projectile).

"It knocked my door off and the dash [board] fell on my legs and it broke my right femur, my left tibia, and I had shrapnel that broke both bones in my right forearm," he said. "Then I had shrapnel hit me in my left knee - hit my femoral artery."



Staff Sgt. Everette Adam Palmer



Staff Sgt. Kevin Fitzpatrick



Spc. Kevin Price

Palmer and the assigned medic placed tourniquets on his right arm and left leg. His platoon sergeant and a few others pulled him from under the vehicle, which was on top of his fuel-drenched body. Their request for an air medical evacuation was denied for cause of a dust storm.

"Since I was bleeding pretty badly my platoon sergeant made the call that we could take one vehicle to Gary Owen," he said. Conscious the entire time, the hospital at Gary Owen placed Palmer into a medically induced coma and performed emergency surgery. He awoke 27 hours later in Baghdad en route to Germany. "The first thing I thought of was my family."

His next stop was Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, and finally, he was transported to the Warrior Transition Battalion here to witness his Soldiers come home. This was Palmer's third and final deployment.

Staff Sgt. Kevin Fitzpatrick of 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st AD, was also among those honored. While serving with 2nd Bn., 3rd FA Regt., 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st AD, as a field artillery tactical data systems specialist, he earned his Purple Heart.

"We had been in Tal-Afar, Iraq, for 12 hours," he said. "We were doing a routine [presence] patrol and ... we got hit with an IED."

The blast was on the passenger side of the up-armored Humvee, where Fitzpatrick was sitting. He suffered wounds from shrapnel to his elbow and upper thigh. Pushing forward, the convoy returned to their forward

operating base where the truck broke down. After treatment and in spite of his wounds, he continued to serve with his unit for the duration of his second deployment.

Fitzpatrick was later diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury and myoclonic muscle jerks.

Spc. James Price was the 10th to be honored at the day's banquet. He served with the 29th Engineers, 1st BCT, 1AD, when he earned his Purple Heart. At 20 years old, he was on a convoy conducting a route-clearance patrol in Iraq in September 2010.

"We just kept getting hit on the left," said Price. "I was the lead vehicle gunner, and an angled improvised explosive device hit my gunner's turret. I was knocked unconscious, bleeding out of my ears, nose and eyes.

"I really couldn't feel anything," he added. "My eyes were just rolling, but like, nothing was going on. My eyes were open but nothing was there."

Price was sent to Germany for stabilization and is now part of the Warrior Transition Battalion here waiting to complete his medical board. He was 10 months into a 12-month deployment when he suffered this brutal concussion. His ailments include PTSD, severe TBI, retrograde and anterograde amnesia, chronic anxiety and bilateral vestibulopathy (imbalance and vision loss).

Although his experience birthed his current diagnoses, Price said he does not begrudge his deployment, but rather learned to appreciate what he has.

"A lot of people take the military for granted; [they] take the [United] States for granted and don't know what they got," he said. "I admit I took the States for granted, but once I went to Iraq, I realized what I had."

Price and the others said it was good to be honored and were grateful to the Rotary Club of El Paso.

"Being [recognized] by an organization of that ability is a tremendous honor," said Fitzpatrick.

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PHOTOS BY SGT. TODD ROBINSON / 11th ADA Bde. Public Affairs

Spc. Joewana Beverly, food service specialist, and Sgt. Joshua Dow, food service first cook, prepare the centerpiece of a gingerbread house at the Sgt. 1st Class Charles M. Bamford Consolidated Dining Facility here Nov. 23. This was one of the displays at the Thanksgiving meal served at the DFAC Nov. 24.

Bamford DFAC dishes out Thanksgiving feast

SGT. TODD ROBINSON
11th ADA Bde. Public Affairs

More than 600 servicemembers, retirees and family members affiliated with Team Bliss were served a Thanksgiving meal at the Sgt. 1st Class Charles M. Bamford Consolidated Dining Facility here Nov. 24.

Most of those in attendance were from 11th Air Defense Artillery Brigade; 32nd Army Air and Missile Defense Command; Mobilization and Deployment Brigade; 93rd Military Police Battalion; and 31st Combat Support Hospital.

The feast, a yearly event, followed an awards ceremony recognizing a few of the many food service personnel who worked hard on the preparation of the

food and decorations for the facility. Some of these culinary specialists sacrificed time away from their loved ones to ensure the event was special for those in attendance.

"This event was a great success," said Chief Warrant Officer Kareem Swaringer, command food service adviser for 11th ADA Brigade. "And [it was] one of Bamford Dining Facility's recent significant highlights since [our brigade] took operational control of the building back in July. Hats off to the [junior]-enlisted cooks for a great job."

The meal consisted of many traditional entrees including roast turkey, baked ham, honey-glazed Cornish hen, fried rabbit, pork chitterlings and steamship round; they were accompanied by a wide assortment of side items and desserts.

Key leaders from each of the units involved also got in the spirit of giving thanks by donating their time to help serve meals.

The DFAC was full of festive and creative decorations on the tables, walls and even hanging from the ceiling. These decorations – which included ice sculptures, gingerbread houses, decorated cakes – were made and set up by the DFAC's food service personnel with the support of the Fort Bliss Culinary Arts Team.

"We received numerous compliments on how outstanding the food and decorations were," said Sgt. 1st Class Edward Cruz, assistant dining facility manager. "Our Soldiers, and also civilian contractors, worked numerous hours in preparation for a successful Thanksgiving feast at [this DFAC]."



Spc. Jerome Zacher, food service specialist with 11th Air Defense Artillery Brigade, carves a turkey for Thanksgiving dinner at the Sgt. 1st Class Charles M. Bamford Consolidated Dining Facility here Nov. 24.

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