



# Headquarters Company Dedicated to Developing Troops, Tactically and Technically

*Staff Sgt. Gaelen Lowers*

If there's an old, green Battle Dress Uniform with your name tape on it stored away somewhere, odds are you remember a time when the Army-wide Thursday morning routine was as reliable as reveille on posts throughout the world.

For that one morning each week, regardless of what shop, section, or office you performed your technical mission in, you belonged to your first sergeant and noncommissioned officers. For that day, you would focus on soldiering and tactical proficiency.

One Pacific-based first sergeant believes that though the last decade-worth of Thursdays may have looked a little different, the Army has never truly lost that focus.

"Because we were so heavily involved in war, we just turned our focus elsewhere," said 1st Sgt. Katrina Richardson of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 8th Special Troops Battalion at Fort Shafter, Hawaii.

"I've always believed that you need to keep a balance," she said. "As an old drill sergeant,



Sgt. Shetara Hailey, a human resources NCO with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 8th Special Troops Battalion, uses her night vision goggles to navigate her humvee through a night convoy sergeants time training, at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. (Photo by Spc. David Innes, 8th Theater Sustainment Command Public Affairs)



Several Soldiers with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 8th Special Troops Battalion, practice their combat lifesaving techniques during a sergeants time training at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. (U.S. Army photo courtesy of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 8th Special Troops Battalion)

you teach tactical and technical. Having that balance has always been there and been a priority. It was never lost, it just needs refocusing.”

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III agrees that bridging the basics is a change of mindset, and, more importantly, a change that hinges on leadership.

“We just can’t expect, by osmosis, that when someone puts on the rank of sergeant that they are the best leader in the organization or in the entire Army,” Chandler said. “You’ve got a responsibility — we all do — to one another, to continue to develop our junior leaders to replace

us. That means you’ve got to share your knowledge, your skills, and your experiences with them so they can grow.”

With this renewed focus, in just five months, Richardson’s troops have drastically increased their warrior tasks and drills completion, weapons qualifications, and now boast a 98 percent pass rate in the Army Physical Fitness Test.

“The training is tough,” said Staff Sgt. Janet Chavez, an HHC platoon sergeant. “We don’t just sit around watching videos or PowerPoint. Every Thursday, first sergeant has us out there doing something that we don’t necessarily like at that moment, but that helps us grow as Soldiers and leaders. A higher quality of Soldier, NCO, and leader has emerged within the past few months across our formation due to the rigorous training held every Thursday.”

The increase in the training numbers is even more encouraging coming from an STB’s HHC at a two-star command.

A typical Army company usually consists of no more than 225 troops, with zero sergeants major, as few as four officers, and limited senior NCOs.

As the headquarters company of the Pacific’s senior Army logistics command, Richardson’s unit has 456 assigned troops, and nearly 40 percent of them are sergeants major and officers who outrank her and the junior NCOs who put together the weekly training to meet Army requirements.

“I noticed we were very mission-focused, which is common for a senior level logistics command and creates a lot of competing priorities,” she said. “But, we also have a lot of junior troops, too, many coming directly from initial entry training. We noticed that we were lacking basic Army standards, which come with that dedicated Thursday training time. Ultimately, we want to reinforce warrior tasks and battle drills and get back to the basics ... the fun stuff!”

Despite the challenges, every Thursday her Soldiers are training on the ranges and fields of Schofield Barracks and Fort Shafter Flats, where old-school butcher-block paper provides a wide range of tasks, conditions, and standards.

“We switch it up every week, and are always building upon what was taught the week prior,” Chavez said. “You can see the progress each week; you can see the difference it makes.” ■

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