

1st Armored Division

IRONSIDE

America's Tank Division

Iron Soldiers at PLDC

Warfighter 2001

Farewell Command Sgt. Maj. Preston

May 2001



1AD bids a fond farewell to Command Sgt. Maj. Preston



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What a mess!
Capt. Kevin W. Breedlove, Headquarters and Headquarters Company commander, receives a face full of whipped cream during a fund raiser for the 1st Armored Division Monument, at the Kite Fest at the Kuhberg Recreation Center in Bad Kreuznach, Germany, April 21. Co-workers and family members of all ages bid for the opportunity to put a pie in the face of one of the selected commanders and staff officers.

Photo by Spc. Roderick A. Berry

Cover: Iron Soldiers from all over 1st Armored Division attend the 7th Army NCO Academy in Grafenwoehr, Germany. Pictured: Sgt. Christopher M. Miller, 1st Brigade Recon Team, 1st Armored Division; Spc. Grisel Ruiz, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Armored Division; Sgt. Andres Guarnizo, Company B, 141st Signal Battalion and Spc. Chester E. Greathouse, Battery B, 1-94 Field Artillery Battalion (MLRS).

1AD says good-bye to Command Sgt. Maj. Preston



Iron Soldiers!

Great job at the BCTP Warfighter! You've helped ensure we stay ready to conduct combat operations and we remain a fit, disciplined, cohesive team led by skilled and versatile leaders, focused on excellence and capable of rapid deployment and decisive victory. We finished the defense with two of three brigades attacking a defeated Tank Army. It doesn't get much better than that! Well done.

We will focus on four major tasks over the next 75 days, and we need each and every one of you to stay focused on your particular mission if we're going to accomplish them to the

high standards you've become accustomed to. First, we'll bring the 2nd Brigade Combat Team home from Kosovo and pass that mission over to the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) in good order. The soldiers on duty in Kosovo will remain our top priority until the last Iron Soldier is back home in Germany.

Second, we will complete the impending moves for the Division Headquarters, DISCOM, 141 Signal Bn., and 501st MP Company to Wiesbaden. DIVENG moves to Giessen and the 123rd MSB will consolidate in Dexheim with the 501st MI Bn. move to Wackernheim. We'll complete these moves smoothly and

re-post the Division's colors at Wiesbaden Army Airfield as we honorably end the Army's 50-year association with Bad Kreuznach, a community that has welcomed U.S. soldiers and families and played gracious host to us for these past 50 years. Our departure represents the end of an era in Bad Kreuznach. We've seen the U.S. 2nd Armored Division, the U.S. 8th Infantry Division, and our division headquartered at Rose Barracks. We will say "Auf Wiedersehen" with dignity and respect.

Third, we will carry on with the return of the Division to full warfighting proficiency—building on the small unit leadership spirit that served us so well in Kosovo.

And, finally, we will prepare and execute the summer transition, recognizing the great Iron Soldiers and families who have served the Division so well and welcoming the new arrivals to our great Iron Team.

We also bid a fond farewell to our division command sergeant major, Command Sgt. Maj. Preston and his wife, Karen. He's done a great job in America's Tank Division and leaves the Iron Team to be the new V Corps command sergeant major. We wish him and Karen all the best and look forward to seeing him excel in his new position. V Corps soldiers will benefit from his wisdom and leadership.

Iron Soldiers! Dignity and Respect!



Spc. Chester E. Greathouse
Field Artillery Radar
Fire Finder
Battery D,
1-94 Field Artillery
Strassburg, Germany



“The practical application of training is the best part of PLDC. The effect of weather conditions on morale is the worst part of PLDC.”



Sgt. Andres Guarnizo
Senior Remote Access Unit
Operator
Company B,
141st Signal Battalion
Bad Kreuznach, Germany



“The best part of PLDC is learning from the SGLs. They taught us a lot. The worst part was the cold weather and the cold-weather injuries.”



Spc. Donald K. Carrigan
Finance Clerk
Headquarters and
Headquarters Company,
1-6 Infantry Battalion
Baumholder, Germany

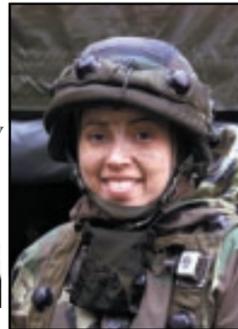


“FTX is the best experience. I like being in the woods and in the field. I haven’t had any bad experiences. The SGLs have helped a lot.”

Man on the street What was your best and worst experience at PLDC ?

IRONSIDE

Spc. Grisel Ruiz
Court Reporter
Headquarters and
Headquarters Company,
1st Armored Division
Bad Kreuznach, Germany



“The SGLs are caring and made it wonderful. The FTX is the worst part.”

Spc. Karie K. Branum
Division Surgeon
Treatment Team NCOIC
Headquarters Company,
1st Armored Division
Bad Kreuznach, Germany



“Meeting different people from different MOSs was the best part of PLDC. The classroom time is boring but the SGLs spice it up.”

Sgt. Christopher M. Miller
Truck Commander
1st Brigade Recon Team
Friedberg, Germany

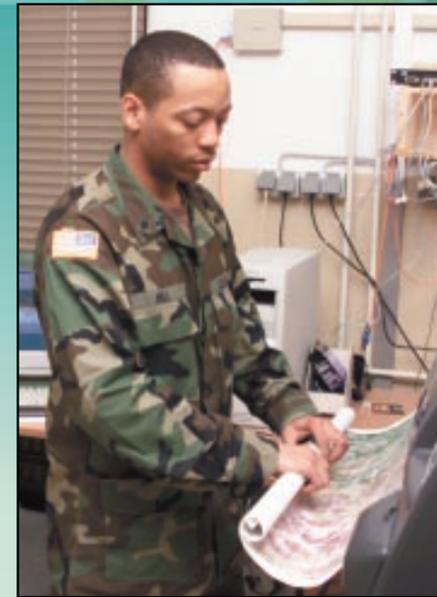


“I met some really good people. Working with females opened my eyes. The worst part of PLDC is the weather. It is so unpredictable.”

Terrain team kicks Azimuth

Story by Pvt. Benjamin Z. Etzioni
Photo by Spc. Roderick A. Berry
1st Armored Division PAO

The team presents the information in the form of maps, written analyses and reports, as well as digital images.



Spc. Ronald W. Hill, a topographic analyst from the 1st Armored Division Terrain Team, prints out a map to give the division's commander and planners a clear picture of the battlefield.

BAD KREUZNACH, Germany — With every trail a 1st Armored Division soldier patrols down, with every hill a 1AD tank rolls over, with every air space a 1AD helicopter flies through, the 1AD Terrain Team plays a vital role in those missions.

The team provides information for the 1AD soldiers' mobility on the battlefield, keeping them informed about where they can go to gain the greatest advantage.

“The Terrain Team's mission is to provide commanders and support units a crystal-clear picture of the battle space,” said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Guy Snodgrass, the team's chief. “By providing this analysis we help commanders and planners to be able to make informed decisions.”

In combat, it is essential to know the conditions of the battlefield, the lay of the land and tactical points of interest. Getting that information is the key responsibility for the Terrain Team, according to Snodgrass.

“We assemble vital information from various sources and provide it to tactical commanders for battlefield analysis,” said Spc. Marvin W. Mash, II, a team member. “We process military geographic information from satellite imagery, both digital and by hard copy, and we interpret satellite and intelligence data to determine the effects of terrain and weather on vehicle and troop movements and assess other tactical data.”

The team's mission is the same whether the division is at war, conducting peacekeeping operations or training, according to Sgt. 1st Class Brad J. Rogers, the team noncommissioned officer in charge.

“Our mission never changes,” said Rogers. “Whether we are at war, training or in Kosovo, we still do the same things. We provide the commander with the information on what the terrain will look like and how that terrain can best be dealt with and used for the mission.”

Terrain analysts gather information that helps determine which avenue of approach the enemy could take and what would be the best route of travel for the unit. They look at elevation, water obstacles, bridge weight-bearing capability and width, railroads, airfields

Decisive Victory
cohesive team
Disciplined

and road systems. They know the capabilities of the enemy's equipment, as well as that of their own units because that information is an essential part of the reports they make, according to Mash.

“Things the Terrain Team look at help the commanding general visualize the battle space before he gets there, which helps him make an informed decision,” said Maj. John McCarthy, Executive Officer, 501st MI Bn.

The technology involved in terrain analysis has come a very long way. During the Civil War, both armies used hot air balloons for aerial reconnaissance. The team now has the capability, using a Global Positioning System, to do advanced reconnaissance and locate bridges, tunnels, other man-made features and vegetation. They can also determine whether or not those elements can be used for concealment and by what size and types of units.

The team currently has members working at Camp Bondsteel in Kosovo. They communicate regularly with the rest of the team by phone and e-mail to disseminate information to the division and for assistance with further analysis.

While the products made by the team are usually only seen by commanders and senior NCOs, they affect the entire division by providing the information necessary to make informed decisions, give them a tactical advantage and save lives in combat.

WAR



Air Force airmen attached to the 1st Armored Division help set up satellite and communication equipment outside of the division operations center.

Story by Pvt. Benjamin Z. Etzioni
Photos by Spc. Roderick A. Berry
1st Armored Division PAO

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — Soldiers from 1st Armored Division teamed up with other V Corps units, and Reserve and National Guard augmentees to wage war against enemy forces from Northland.

No live ammunition was fired, but the battles were just as real for the soldiers as they fought through multiple simulations and scenarios against the computer-simulated Northland forces as part of the Warfighter Exercise, March 30 – April 4.

“Warfighter provided us with the opportunity to train commanders and soldiers on moving units around on the battlefield to win a war,” said Sgt. Maj. Raymond P. Houston of G-3 Training. “It also pro-

vided the soldiers with the opportunity to work together and execute battle tasks to help the commanding general make decisions.”

The exercise scenario was based on the United States and the fictional Blueland joining forces to restore the international boundary of Blueland, after diplomatic efforts had failed with the invading Northland. The coalition forces, using all of their resources, engaged the Northland units in a variety of battle scenarios from both offensive and defensive postures all over the Blueland territory.

Soldiers from 1AD participated in a variety of exercises and training events in the months leading up to Warfighter to better prepare themselves for war. Soldiers from 1AD joined representatives from 17 of the 19 NATO nations to participate in

ARRCADE Fusion last October. The exercise scenario was based on a large-scale regional crisis caused by aggression against a Partnership-for-Peace nation that threatened Europe’s long-term peace, security and stability. Twenty-one units – including 309 soldiers from 1AD – participated in the exercise, interacting with counterparts from throughout Europe.

“Participating in ARRCADE Fusion was very helpful because it was a bigger and larger-scaled exercise than Warfighter,” said Spc. Jeffrey M. Woods, a G-2 intelligence analyst who was responsible for tracking the Northland forces and updating the battle staff during the exercise. “That experience was invaluable during this exercise. Warfighter was also a good experience because it was the first time I had the chance to work with National Guard and Reserve components.”

“ARRCADE Fusion prepared me well for Warfighter because I got the chance to learn how a field exercise really works before coming down for this one,” said Pfc. Juan A.V. Pardo, a G-1 officer management clerk, who tracked 1AD casualties and submitted readiness reports to the battle staff. “I think it went well. I learned a lot from working with and watching the officers and the roles they played.”

Some soldiers took the opportunity to display some of the skills they had acquired while deployed in Kosovo.

“The experience that I gained while being deployed in Kosovo, as well as from previous mission rehearsal exercises

1st Armored Division rolls across the cyber battlefield



Chief Warrant Officer 2 Guy Snodgrass, chief of the 1st Armored Division Terrain Team, discusses the various elements of the battlefield and what effect they might have on the rest of the battle.

and the TOCEX [Tactical Operations Center Exercise] in January really had me prepared to do my job during Warfighter,” said Spc. Marvin W. Mash II a G-2 terrain analyst, who provided maps and other tactical data to the battle planners. “The things I did during Warfighter were nothing that I had not done or trained to do before.”

“At first it was a little frustrating being there for two weeks before the exercise actually got started,” Woods said. “But once it got started, things went pretty smoothly. The communication between all the different sections and cells was excellent. Those two weeks actually helped out a lot with that.”

Overall, the soldiers faced many challenges during the exercise that will better prepare them for whatever future missions they execute.

“Warfighter was more difficult this year because a lot of the soldiers had never been involved in an exercise like this before,” said Sgt. Darryl P. Sapoff, noncommissioned officer in charge for the G-1 Personnel Operations and Actions Division. Sapoff oversaw casualty reporting and requests for personnel reconstitution.

“Even with the three months of training that we went through before the exercise, it was still a challenge at first,” Sapoff said. “But by the end of the exercise the environment was completely different. It seemed that everybody had a much better grasp of their job and what they needed to do.”

Forging Iron Leaders at PLDC

Story and Photos by
Sgt. Gregory F. Withrow
1st Armored Division PAO

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany—Freezing rain stings exposed flesh, drenching battle dress uniforms and rucksacks, soaking soldiers to the bone. Muddy boots slog through blankets of decaying leaves and needles of an alpine forest.

Moving as cautiously as their weary legs can carry them, Primary Leadership Development Course students advance stealthily in wedge formation on the way to their objective.

Anticipating an ambush at any moment, soldiers glance back, making sure the enemy hasn't infiltrated the formation.

Ahead, bloodshot eyes peer from the fresh-spring undergrowth as trigger fingers await the order to open fire. Machine gun fire erupts from the barrel of an M60. Soldiers dash for cover, crashing through bushes, diving into muddy ditches.

Soldiers quickly don protective masks as canisters of smoke billow colored clouds, fanning the flames of the chaos of battle. Bursts of M16 fire chime in on a symphony of simulated death and destruction.

"You're dead, squad leader! Take off your Kevlar and twitch like a dying cockroach!" yells Staff Sgt. Milton H. Brooks, Small Group Leader, Company C, 7th Army NCO Academy during the PLDC Field Training Exercise. "Alpha team leader, you're in charge!"

Responding to Brooks' instructions, Spc. Grisel Ruiz, a court



Locked, cocked and ready to rock, PLDC students fan out into a wedge formation while on patrol during the leadership evaluation of their field training exercise. Students are masked and prepared for possible chemical attack.

reporter with HHC, 1st Armored Division, takes the reigns of command and begins her leadership evaluation. Under pressure from gunfire, disorienting smoke and fatigue, she makes her way through the squad seeking accountability and status of her soldiers.

Soldier after soldier from Grisel's squad roll over and remove their Kevlar helmets as she desperately radios her situation to higher. Finally, succumbing to overwhelming odds, Grisel smiles and removes her helmet.

"ENDEX!" yells Brooks. PLDC students echo the command of ENDEX, letting everyone know the skirmish is over.

This was a scene played out during the March 2001 Primary Leadership Development Course.

"Here is where we move the classroom to the field," explained

Brooks. "We thrive on basic skills here. It's all about leadership—leaders leading leaders—leaders teaching leaders."

The FTX is the culmination of PLDC training. Common task skills, leadership skills and stamina are all tested during the FTX.

"Soldiers need to come to PLDC prepared. They need to know common task skills. Our job is to refine those skills," explained Staff Sgt. Manuel E. Rosas, SGL, Co. C, 7th Army NCOA and instructing partner to Brooks. "We get a lot of soldiers who don't know common task skills. It's the soldiers' units and supervisors who are responsible for preparing soldiers for PLDC—preparing responsible soldiers."

"Land navigation is a Skill Level 1 task in which all soldiers are supposed to be proficient," ex-

plained Command Sgt. Maj. Robert R. McCord, Commandant, 7th Army NCOA. "Yet, land navigation remains one of the top reasons for failing PLDC."

"Supervisors need to take the time to counsel and teach soldiers," agreed Brooks, an instructor who has never lost a student for academics. "Soldiers should be responsible before they come to PLDC. Checking on soldiers' responsible alcohol consumption, or other things a future NCO should have in check, should not be our priority as instructors—training NCOs is."

"There are many soldiers like me who don't get to do this stuff in their everyday jobs," said Spc. Grisel. "I had a lot of fun during PLDC, but I recommend brushing up on common task skills and road marching before attending. This really takes dedication."

Fighting the morale-dampening conditions of freezing rain and suffering from sleep deprivation, Spc. Chester E. Greathouse, field artillery radar fire finder, Battery B, 1-94 Field Artillery (MLRS), keeps his spirits up and his smile hidden as he plods along anticipating an ambush from rival PLDC forces.

Dedication is a quality Brooks and Rosas both cite as being important qualities for noncommissioned officers.

“The NCO Corps is a whole, not an individual,” said Brooks. “You have to be dedicated to yourself and to other soldiers to be a good NCO.”

“Show dedication through counseling. Counseling is very

“If you aren’t motivating your soldiers, you aren’t doing your job.”

Staff Sgt. Milton H. Brooks

important. Without it, soldiers are going to the board—ready or not,” said Rosas. “Taking the time to counsel soldiers improves performance and prevents us from weeding them out here.”

Dedication to the soldiers is a quality that both Brooks and Rosas live by.

“If it means staying late or coming in early, we give that extra bit to the soldier,” said Rosas.

“The SGLs were there at 5 a.m. when they didn’t have to be there until 9 a.m.,” said Spc. Karie K. Branum, Division Treatment Team NCOIC, HHC, 1st Armored Division.

“They treat people the way they want to be treated and that’s the way you get respect.”

Respect is another quality that Brooks and Rosas instill in PLDC students.

“Working with females and different MOSs (military occupational skills) really opened my eyes. We had to work through personality conflicts. Skills from other jobs really came into play and we came together out here in the field,” explained Sgt. Christopher M. Miller, truck commander, 1st Brigade Recon Team, 1AD.

“Working with guys—well, they are so uptight at first, but they loosen up when they see how respect works both ways,” said Branum with a smile.

“When you are working with women a lot of things are different than in the Infantry, explained Spc. Donald K. Carrigan, finance clerk, 1-6 Infantry Battalion. “Working with women and other MOSs have taught me to be more considerate. We have also picked up technical things from each others’ jobs.”

“Women? We are all soldiers here,” explained Spc. Jose A.



Top left: Staff Sgt. Manuel E. Rosas leads PLDC students in an after action review. Middle left: Staff Sgt. Milton H. Brooks prepares to ignite a smoke grenade amidst PLDC students as they trudge toward an ambush set up by other PLDC students. Bottom left: Sgt. Andres Guarnizo leads his team on an assault through the forests of GTA. Top right: During a short halt, Spc. Jose A. Romero searches the woodline intently for signs of enemy PLDC students. Bottom right: Sgt. Andres Guarnizo sends a status report and requests further instructions during a movement-to-contact simulation.

Ambushing from the spring shadows of the alpine forests of Germany's Grafenwoehr Training Area, Spc. Karie K. Branum, Division Surgeon Treatment Team NCOIC, 1st Armored Division, showers simulated hot lead over approaching enemy forces during leadership evaluation at PLDC.

Romero, team leader, Company B, 16th Engineer Battalion. "We can all learn from each other no matter what sex or color."

Motivation, cooperation, understanding and respect go a long way with Brooks and Rosas.

"One of our Army Values is Selfless Service. Sergeants Brooks and Rosas are great examples of that value. If someone spends time working with me then I will do my best to shine," said Spc. Chester E. Greathouse, field artillery radar fire finder, Battery B, 1-94 Field Artillery Battalion (MLRS).

"When you come to PLDC, come to do your best. Stay motivated. Come to exceed the standards," said Carrigan.

Motivation such as that displayed by Greathouse, Miller, Branum, Carrigan, Romero, Ruiz

and other Iron Soldiers is what Brooks and Rosas like to see.

"What we like to see is motivation and maturity. Come to PLDC with a positive attitude and we will give you our best," said Rosas. Sending soldiers to PLDC unprepared is an injustice to the NCO Corps, explained Rosas. "Weeding out soldiers here is not our job."

"We are here to train leaders for the greatest army in the world," said Brooks with a smile, agreeing with Rosas. "If you aren't motivating your soldiers, you aren't doing your job."

Editor's note: The 7th Army Noncommissioned Officer Academy is the Army's oldest NCO academy. Soldiers from all over U.S. Army Europe attend the school in preparation for promotion to the rank of sergeant.

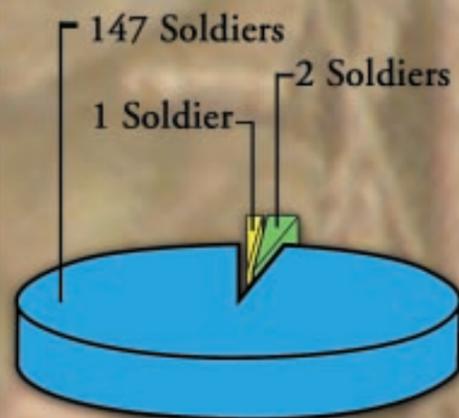
What do I need to do to prepare for PLDC?



Focus on physical training: PLDC enforces strict adherence to FM 21-20 standards.

Check out the PLDC website: www.grafenwoehr.army.mil provides a link to packing lists, academy history and other helpful information.

Sharpen common task skills: PLDC is meant to refine skills such as map reading and land navigation. The majority of PLDC failures occur during the land navigation exam.



- 147 soldiers pass PLDC
- 2 soldiers fail land navigation
- 1 soldier dismissed for other reasons



Inching forward to get a better shot, Sgt. Christopher M. Miller, truck commander, 1st Brigade Recon Team, 1st Armored Division, defends against hostile fire during the PLDC FTX.

Division Command Sgt. Maj. Preston

leaves behind blueprint for building Iron Soldiers



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our noncommissioned officers and soldiers," Casey said. "I've made a lot of decisions in almost two years of command, but none better than the one that brought Ken and [his wife] Karen Preston to Old Ironsides."

Preston was assigned to the 1st Armored Division in December 1999 after serving four years at Fort Hood, Texas. "At Fort Hood, we stayed very, very busy. Over here, the pace is just faster than I could have imagined," Preston said.

The division's top NCO arrived just as the division was beginning its train-up for 1st Brigade's deployment to Kosovo, the KFOR 2A rotation. Preston took a back-to-basics approach, reviewing all of the division's policies and standard operating procedures.

"I wanted us to identify what the standards were for every aspect of the operation that we were going to do. By taking it back to basics and establishing the standards, what you do is empower the most junior leader," Preston explained. "You empower them and hold them accountable for enforcing the standards."

In the spring of 2000, with 1AD soldiers preparing to deploy, Preston ensured that the soldiers were trained to standard both during their Individual Readiness Training and during the Mission Rehearsal Exercise. For the soldiers, it was a time of uncertainty. Kosovo was and still is a volatile region. With a six-month deployment on the horizon, many soldiers went into the training not knowing what to expect and uncertain of the mission.

But Preston worked hand-in-hand with the 1st Brigade's NCOs to ensure that 1AD's soldiers did not "rush to failure," as he's known to say.

"As with any [command sergeant major], you get the guidance from the commanding general. That's the direction that [Maj. Gen. George W. Casey, Jr.] wanted to take the division, particularly for the units that were deploying. His focus was standards and discipline," said Preston.

During Preston's farewell ceremony April 24, Casey described Preston as "just the right [command sergeant major] for the only active tank division in the best Army in the world."

"He's a tough, disciplined, compassionate leader, who is a skilled armored warrior ... a great trainer and team builder, who understands soldiers, who lives by the Iron Standards and the NCO Creed and who is an ideal role model for

Story by Master Sgt. Lisa Hunter
Photos by Pvt. Benjamin Z. Etzioni
and Spc. Roderick A. Berry
1st Armored Division PAO

BAD KREUZNACH, Germany — If Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth O. Preston ever had to write a brief job description for his duties as the 1st Armored Division's command sergeant major, it would simply state "Builder of Iron Soldiers."

During the past 17 months, building Iron Soldiers has been Preston's mission, goal and driving force. It's also the legacy he leaves with the division as he makes his transition to his new job as the V Corps command sergeant major.



“There have been a lot of memorable experiences, but one of the most memorable was when KFOR 2A took over the reigns from 1B,” said the 26-year veteran, reflecting on his tour of duty with the division. “That was a very proud moment for me. A lot of work and effort went into the training and preparation for a lot of soldiers for that event. It was a very seamless transition. The beauty of it was, even after the transition, within the first 30 days, you could look at the soldiers downrange; you could look them in the eyes and see the confidence. They had it. They knew the environment. They knew the focus and direction the mission was going. It really set them up to set goals for the next five months.”

“Look at the success of the mission in Kosovo and the performance of the soldiers who are down there. The division is recognized Army-wide for the confidence and professionalism in which the Kosovo mission is being reported.”

While Preston has been intimately involved with KFOR, traveling to visit the soldiers sometimes two and three times a month, he has also worked to build the division’s NCOs into better

leaders through other avenues, as well. One project that he has taken to heart has been increasing the division’s membership in the Sgt. Morales Club, the elite club of noncommissioned officers who exemplify leadership by personal concern for the needs, training, development and welfare of their soldiers and their soldiers’ families. In the past 14 months, the division has inducted 14 new members.

“For me, personally, that was a highlight that I wanted to continue to promote if I was to stay here within the division. Even now, moving onto [V] Corps, I want to keep the emphasis on the Morales Club,” said Preston, who jokes about being the oldest Sgt. Morales Club member on active duty. He was inducted in 1981. “I challenge battalion-level leaders to push one noncommissioned officer per quarter, as a goal, toward getting inducted into the Morales Club. If we try to use that as a yardstick to try to push for one a quarter, it will really help them in growing the level of confidence in the leaders that we want down at the junior ranks.”

According to Preston, competitions such as the Sgt. Morales Club, the NCO

and the soldier of the month boards are some of the best platforms for “growing” better enlisted leaders.

“It starts at the company-level. First sergeants really have to do NCO and soldier of the month boards every month. The board process promotes self-study. That’s how we grow and mentor young soldiers and noncommissioned officers,” the Mount Savage, Md., native stated.

“If you look at our recently selected noncommissioned officer and soldier of the year, imagine having a company filled with noncommissioned officers and soldiers at that level of proficiency,” he said. “An organization filled with soldiers like that would be unbeatable in anything they ever attempted whether it’s a gunnery, a [Combat Arms Maneuver Training Center] rotation or a Kosovo rotation. They could set a higher mark on the wall for goals because they’d have that level of expertise.”

Preston has also placed a great emphasis on effective Sergeants Time Training. On any given Thursday, Preston was on the road somewhere

within the division’s footprint, inspecting and observing the NCO-led training.

“Sergeants Time Training is the vehicle with which we sustain the leaders that we’ve grown downrange. And at the same time, for the up-and-coming young superstars — who are the leaders of tomorrow — it’s the vehicle with which we grow these new leaders. It’s an opportunity for that first-line leader to take the three or four soldiers that he’s responsible for and train them on tasks.”

But as Preston calculates his Iron Soldiers’ successes, he doesn’t just look at gunneries or exercise after action reviews, he looks at the soldiers to measure success.

“Soldiers from the most junior private up to [Maj.] Gen. Casey like the division,” Preston said. “We have some of the oldest facilities and oldest motorpools, of any unit, not just in Germany, but across the Army. It’s the command climate and the atmosphere in which soldiers live, work and play that keeps soldiers reenlisting and wanting to stay.”

“We’ve had the highest retention rate of any division for the last fiscal year; currently for the first two quarters of the fiscal year, we’re the highest. This last quarter was phenomenal. We had 160 percent [of our goal] for initial-term soldier reenlistments and 143 percent for mid-term soldiers.”

“Even with the four-month train-up to go to KFOR, coupled with the six-month deployment downrange and then several months of reintegration training once they return, morale is very high. Soldiers really see the difference that their roles make, not only in the unit mission, but in the Army and in the United States’ mission.”

Even now as he transitions to his new position in Heidelberg,

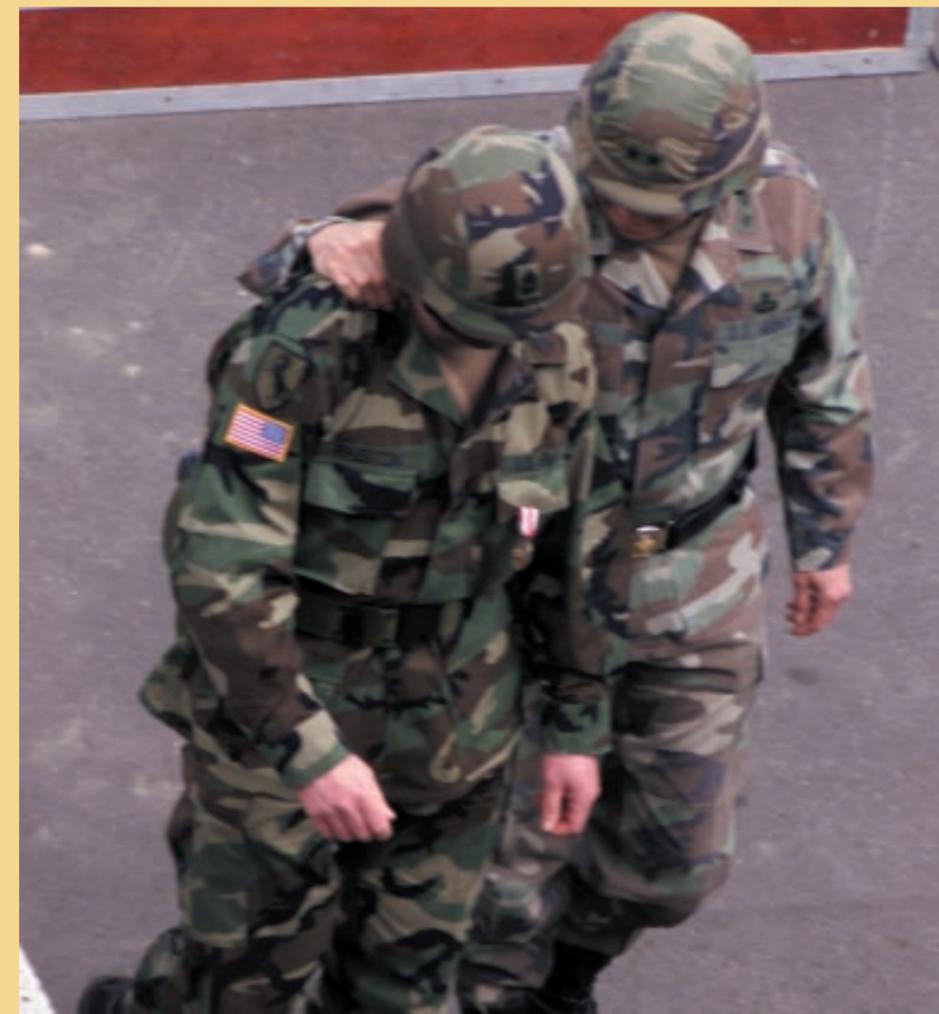
“Once an Iron Soldier, always an Iron Soldier.”

Maj. Gen. George W. Casey, Jr.
Commander, 1st Armored Division

Preston is still thinking of building Iron Soldiers.

“I don’t look at myself as being over the divisions. I see my role as a force provider,” he explained. “At V Corps, there’s a lot of issues, such as personnel and assignments that need to be worked. There are a lot of things the lower headquarters go to the higher headquarters for, to take that burden off of the lower headquarters.”

While Preston may leave the division, his legacy — his back-to-basics philosophy and emphasis on setting the standard — will continue on. As Casey reminded Preston during his farewell ceremony, “Once an Iron Soldier, always an Iron Soldier.”



Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth O. Preston and Maj. Gen. George W. Casey, Jr. have worked side by side ever since Preston assumed the position of division command sergeant major, January 2, 2000.

1st Armored Division
in action series

Photo by Pvt. Benjamin Z. Erzioni, 1st Armored Division PAO



1-1 GAV

...here comes the Cavalry!

Soldiers from 1st Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry Regiment, scan the area for the enemy during a rotation at the Combat Maneuver Training Center in Hohenfels, Germany, September 2000.