

Land Warrior system exceeds expectations

Army News Service

FORT BELVOIR, Va. — Soldiers from Fort Lewis, Wash., who have been using the Land Warrior and Mounted Warrior systems in Iraq for the last 45 days, report that these “great tools” have surpassed their expectations.

Soldiers of the 4th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division’s 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, are the first to take Land Warrior and Mounted Warrior into combat.

Land Warrior is a state-of-the-art modular fighting system that combines computers, lasers, geolocation, and radios with Soldiers’ mission equipment to substantially improve situational awareness, mobility, sustainability, survivability

and lethality.

It is designed to eliminate the fog of war.

In a user assessment at Fort Lewis, Land Warrior was proven to close 13 of 19 identified capability gaps, and Soldiers with 4-9 Inf., who were interviewed from Iraq recently, said that Land Warrior is working even better in actual combat situations than it did in testing at Fort Lewis.

“It provides a sense of comfort in reducing the fratricide potential... Everyone knows where everyone else is on the battlefield, and everyone knows where everyone else’s direct fire is,” said Capt. Mike Williams, A Company, 4-9 Inf. commander.

Sgt. Daniel Garza, RECON Platoon Squad Leader who was also interviewed from the field, was a skeptic when training with Land Warrior last summer. But after six weeks in combat with Land Warrior, he said, “If given the choice, I would not go outside the wire without it.”

Land Warrior addresses issues of confusion in close combat situations and allows team leaders to see the locations of other dismounted Soldiers and leaders as well as the enemy. It improves combat effectiveness and lethality for dismounted and mounted Soldiers, and provides increased unit situational awareness through interoperability with the vehicle crewman’s Mounted Warrior

system.

The MW ensemble provides the crewman connectivity while on the platform with communications to dismounted Soldiers equipped with Land Warrior, the ability to see the FBCB2 Common Operational Picture and location of dismounted LW-equipped Soldiers on a helmet-mounted display. MW also increases the crewman’s survivability with enhanced fire protection.

Garza talked about using the Land Warrior system during a recent raid: “I was able to see where both my squads were, and we were able to see where the target vehicles were.”

He said one of his complaints during initial testing was about the weight of

the system, about 10 pounds in a typical configuration. He said that he has “done a 180 in terms of how I feel about the system.” Enhanced situational awareness is a payoff that more than offsets the increased load. About the weight, he said, “After awhile, you don’t even notice it.”

Capt. Williams said the system has proven “extremely reliable” in combat situations, adding that it has held up in Iraq’s extreme heat and desert terrain.

For additional information on Land Warrior or on Program Executive Office Soldier, which oversees Land Warrior and almost all other individual Soldier equipment, visit www.peosoldier.army.mil.

Security team from McChord supports presidential detail

By Capt. Teresa Sullivan

379th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

TARIN KOWT, Afghanistan — A Phoenix Raven security team with the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing provided security for a C-17 Globemaster III and its crew July 11, during an Afghan presidential support mission at a remote airstrip in Tarin Kowt, Afghanistan.

Staff Sgt. Mike Kincaid, 62nd Security Forces Squadron, Phoenix Raven team leader, from McChord Air Force Base, and Airman 1st Class Joseph Celata, with the 305th Security Forces Squadron, Phoenix Raven, from McGuire AFB, N.J., comprised a team responsible for providing security for aircraft and crew in areas with high terrorist and criminal threats.

They began their day at 4 a.m. getting ready for a flight that would take them from the 379th AEW to Kabul, to pick up the Afghanistan presidential entourage, then on to Tarin Kowt, where they would stand watch as the passengers were unloaded.

To prepare, they organized their protective equipment, conducted a quick inspection, then sat in on a pre-flight intelligence briefing — mentally preparing for what was in store.

“I always go in knowing that anything can happen — security of the aircraft is our number one priority,” said Celata, a 21-year-old from Boston, Mass.

“I’m always just a little nervous before missions because you never know if today’s going to be the day something happens in the combat zone,” Celata said. “I always think about things that could happen, so if it does, I have a plan.”

Ravens travel in teams of two on aircraft to provide security when there isn’t adequate security available.

When deployed they fly five to seven times per week. In this case, they stood watch at an isolated dirt strip in the Oruzgan province in southern Afghanistan.

Ravens are trained on multiple weapons, aircraft security, cultural awareness, defense fighting tactics and “verbal judo” to get their job done.

“We try to use verbal judo, or words, to alleviate tense or awkward situations,” said Kincaid of the diplomatic method Ravens use if approached while guarding aircraft. “We always want to listen, empathize, ask and paraphrase when talking with people, espe-

“We try to use verbal judo, or words, to alleviate tense or awkward situations.”

Staff Sgt. Mike Kincaid

cially from foreign countries.”

They strive to listen and understand during tense situations, but are trained to use force, if necessary. The Ravens fly with their weapon of choice, but carry other weapons for use as necessary.

“I think our best technique for deterrence is our presence,” said Kincaid, a 31-year-old, Spokane, Wash., native and 10-time deployer.

“One of the main reasons we’re on this mission is to provide a show-of-force,” he said. “The enemy will have second thoughts when they see two or four Ravens outside an aircraft providing security.”

Upon landing at the airstrip, the team of two exited the aircraft first, weapons in hand, ready to maintain security while the presidential support team safely departed the area. One kept watch over the front of the aircraft and one to the back — keeping an eye out in the distance for anything suspicious.

“That shack out in the distance is an Afghan army station. There are a few guys in that building and I also see a few people over there,” said Sergeant Kincaid as he scanned the horizon, focused at all times and fully aware of his surroundings.

Meanwhile, as load masters, aircrew, and maintainers hustled to finish getting the aircraft ready for departure, the Ravens made one last scan of the area and boarded the plane last — meeting their objective without incident or delay.

As the C-17 departed the dirt strip of land they felt good knowing they met their goal. However, for these Ravens, the 13-hour mission didn’t stop at security — they pitched in to assist the aircrew.

“These guys may be Ravens, but they are also dragging bags and helping the load masters configure the cargo area,” said Capt. Jeremy Farlino, 816th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron C-17 aircraft commander.

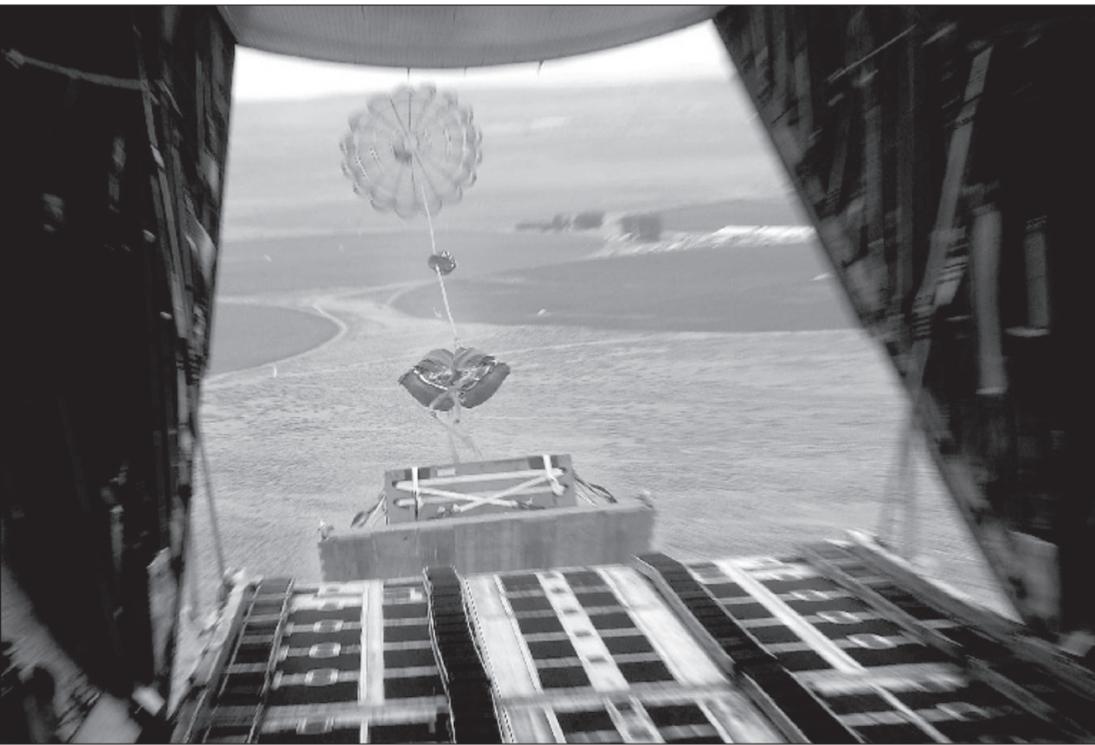
“They’re force multipliers for us. At the end of the day these guys work extremely hard and we know we’re safe with Ravens on board.”



Capt. Teresa Sullivan

Staff Sgt. Mike Kincaid, Security Forces Raven number 652, and Airman 1st Class Joseph Celata, Security Forces Raven number 1513, organize their gear prior to the flight from the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing to Tarin Kowt, Afghanistan.

International air mobility competition gets under way Saturday



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Jerry Morrison

Airdrop competitions for various aircraft and crews test the Airmen’s ability to put cargo on target, on time. The drop zones used for the competition are at Moses Lake, Wash.



McChord AFB Release

Aerial refueling competitions test the skills of aerial tanker aircrews and their airlift counterparts. A C-17 refuels mid-flight during Air Mobility Command’s Rodeo 2005.

MCCHORD AIR FORCE BASE, Wash. — Military aircraft from the U.S. Air Force and nine other nations are soaring over the Pacific Northwest beginning preparations for Rodeo 2007, Air Mobility Command’s premier international air mobility competition being held here Saturday through July 27.

The foreign military aircraft and teams will come from Brazil, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates. Germany is flying the C-160, a twin-turboprop cargo aircraft. All other international competitors are flying the C-130 Hercules, a four-engine turboprop cargo aircraft. The international teams arrived a week early due to lengthy travel times and to allow them an opportunity

to fly in the local area before the competition begins.

The competition will feature approximately 70 aircraft from U.S. and foreign air forces. Aircraft the U.S. Air Force teams will fly include the C-21 (military version of a Lear Jet), T-1 Jayhawk, C-17 Globemaster III, the C-5 Galaxy, the C-130 Hercules, the KC-10 Extender and the KC-135 Stratotanker.

The majority of the Rodeo flights will take place between July 23 and 26, the primary day of competition. The flight paths will be on and around McChord, and between the base and Moses Lake.

The rodeo is an air mobility competition being held at McChord that focuses on readiness and features airdrops, air refueling and other events showcasing security forces, aerial port, maintenance and aeromedical evacuation personnel.