

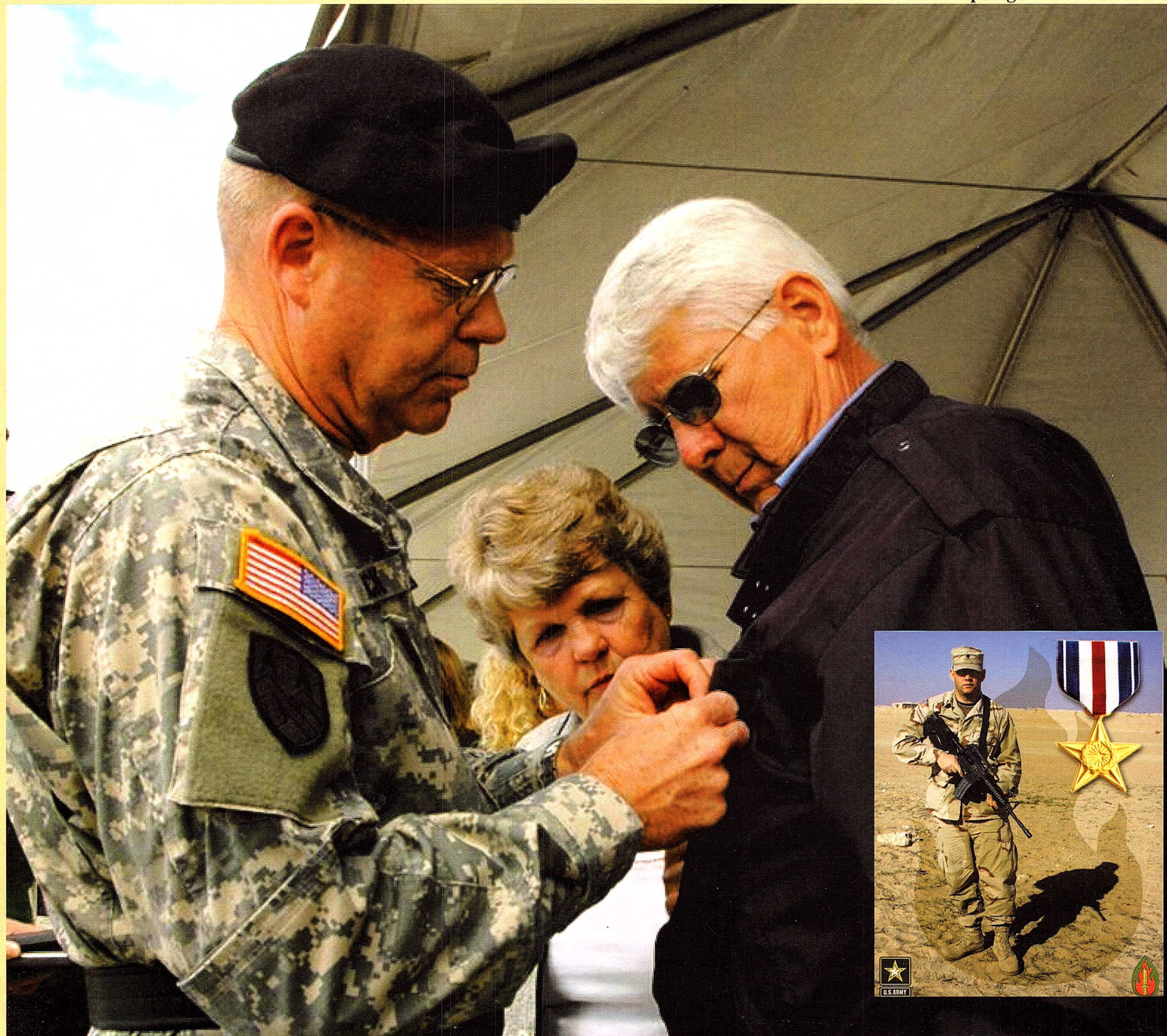


# THE BLADE

63RD REGIONAL READINESS COMMAND

Volume 40, Issue Number 1

Spring 2006



## *Inside this issue.....*

*Silver Star Award Ceremony (above)  
Change of Command  
Welcome home Citizen Warriors*

*Soldier, NCO of the Year  
Kicks for Kids  
1SG survives mortar attack*





# THE BLADE

63RD REGIONAL READINESS COMMAND

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**We need your stories, photographs and suggestions. We also welcome letters. Mailing address is:**

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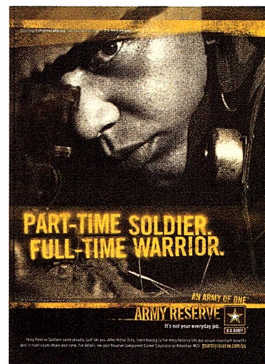
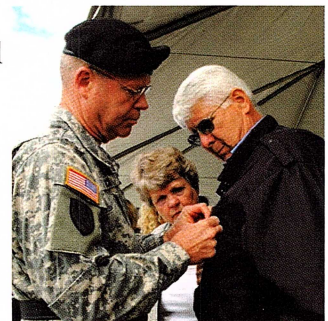
## Feature

### 7 Rules of Deployment

*By Kathy Mitchell*

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**Front Cover:** MG Paul E. Mock pins a Silver Star Medal on Mr. Jim Witkowski that his son SGT Jim Witkowski, Jr. was awarded posthumously for bravery as his wife Barbara looks on.



## Inside Back Cover:

Courtesy of United States Army Accessions Command.





(302nd MPAD photo)

*LTG James R. Helmly, left, commander of the Army Reserve, transfers the responsibility of the 63rd RRC to MG Paul E. Mock as he accepts the 63rd RRC's Colors.*

## *MG Mock assumes Command*

By Ted Bartimus

**JFTB LOS ALAMITOS, Calif.--***The 63<sup>rd</sup> Regional Readiness Command's two-star change of command brought hundreds of Soldiers, including LTG James R. Helmly, commander of the Army Reserve forces and state, national and local government officials to the Joint Forces Training Base in October 2005.*

MG Paul E. Mock assumed command of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Regional Readiness Command from outgoing commander MG Robert B. Ostenberg.

In what was a rare display of military regalia, MG Mock initially relinquished his two-star command of the 311th Corps Support Command to MG Bruce A. Cassella in the first of two ceremonies that day.

LTG Helmly presided over the 63<sup>rd</sup>'s change of command, which included a 15-gun salute by the 40<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Artillery, ceremonial music by the 300<sup>th</sup> Army Band and the time-honored ritual in which several hundred Soldiers marched past the re-

viewing stand for the "pass and review."

MG Mock, during a short speech to the Soldiers, welcomed the challenges of the job ahead of him. Afterward, he talked to reporters and joined guests for the reception.

"My primary responsibility is to set a direction and a path for the leadership of the 63<sup>rd</sup> that they can understand and that they can follow and pass down to their units and Soldiers so at the end of the day our readiness is maintained or improved," said Mock.



# Boss talk



Soldiering is an affair of the heart. I personally have heard former Chief of Staff of the Army, General Eric Shinseki make that statement many times. It captures the essence of, "why we do what we do and why so many of us who wear the Army

uniform want to do it." In this period of world turbulence you have to ask yourself, "Why do I do this?" Quite frankly, we do it because it is an affair of the heart and we love it. We serve the Nation in a time of crisis when many of our friends and neighbors just won't or can't. It is easy to sit at home on the couch and say how supportive we are of the American Soldier. But, you are doing it, you are the American Soldier.

Recently, I was addressing a local civic group and reminded them over and over again that the Soldiers serving in Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwait are their neighbors. They are the kids that just a few years ago populated the local Junior High School down the street. They are members of the local National Guard unit or the neighborhood Army Reserve Center. They come from every walk of life. They are artists, athletes, bakers, cops, firemen, and teachers. They are friends, neighbors, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, sons and daughters, and grandparents and grandkids. And, collectively they are engaged in a struggle to preserve the freedoms we enjoy in this Nation.

Several of us, were honored and privileged to visit 1SG Jesse Acosta, a member of the 376<sup>th</sup> Personnel Support Battalion, at the Fisher House, Walter Reed Hospital, Washington, DC in February. He and his family are still assessing the impacts of this brave First Sergeant's wounds he incurred while serving in Iraq. Despite his obvious pain and suffering, he expressed only pride at being a member of the Army Reserve. He did not make one complaint.

On April 9, 2006, the Silver Star was posthumously awarded to the family of Sergeant James

Witkowski, a noble Soldier of this command, who gave his all while answering the call to duty near Ashraf, Iraq on October 26, 2005. SGT Witkowski was proud to be a Soldier. He volunteered for duty. Does the fact that he volunteered make his loss any easier for his family and friends to accept? Probably not. However, they find consolation in knowing that SGT Witkowski comes from a military family who was proud of this Nation and the Army of which he was a member. The Witkowskis are people we are just blessed to know and love.



I continue to be amazed at the civilians and civilian organizations that support our Soldiers. On Saturday, June 3, 2006, AUSA will sponsor Soldier Appreciation Day at Los Alamitos JFTB. It is a day set aside to honor you, our Soldiers and Families. A full menu of events is planned so please come and show your support and take advantage of the program. The agenda includes several informative presentations to include SMA (Sergeant Major of the Army) Preston, a job fair, plenty of food, the 82d Airborne Chorus, a parade honoring our Soldiers, bands, family support activities and industry exhibits. In short, something for everyone.

As we continue into year four of this Long War, expect no relief. We are now just beginning to earn our pay. Never in recent history have we had such a ratio of combat veterans verses non-combat veterans. It is important to remember that whether you have deployed or not, you are a part of what absolutely has to be a winning team. There is no second place in this conflict. I am frequently asked, as I know many of you are, "Why Iraq? Why are we there? There are no weapons of mass destruction there." Iraq is strategically important because we must defeat the enemies of freedom not only there, but wherever they confront us. We must show the world that the US, along with our Coalition Partners, is stronger than the ideological thugs that challenge the freedoms we enjoy. This is a World War and Iraq and Afghanistan are just the current venues. This is a Global War on Terror. This Nation needs you. You are tremendously important in the Campaign.

Our Senior Army Leadership is actively working plans to create more predictability for a



strained active and reserve force structure. Our Army is not broken. We see this as “ARFORGEN, AREP and AREF.” In the mid and long term, it is a solid plan. In the short term, we must continue to focus on the immediate needs of our Soldiers and Families. Many of you feel as if you are in an endurance contest and that you can count on more than one deployment. Your assessment is probably true. You can count on more and more demands. You must grow with the organization; our Soldiers need you to grow into tomorrow’s leaders. So prepare yourselves and your families; prepare your careers. You must learn to balance Soldiering, Family and Civilian career. It is hard but thousands like you are doing it everyday. Again, we need each and every one of you. And, more impor-

tantly, the Nation needs your service.

In the words of Alan Jackson, “There are so many people who would give anything to do what I do....” I say, there are a lot of people out there who would give anything to do what we do. There is no position I would rather hold than to be the Commander of the 63d RRC, right now. I am always humbled to be in the company of so many who offer so much.

*Paul E. Mock*

Major General  
Commanding

## **CSM Notes** *Lead from the Front!*

It’s been 4 ½ years since 9/11 and much has transpired since. While we fight the Global War on Terrorism, and operate under a seemingly continuous mobilization, we are undergoing structural transformation, relocation and BRAC actions, retraining and resources challenges the likes of which we have not seen in decades. One mandate however cannot be jeopardized, we must still fight and win our Nation’s Wars without hesitation, and without excuse.....this War, this one is for our way of life.



The ONLY way we will continue to win in spite of all these obstacles, is to Lead from the FRONT. We must take charge and take ownership of who and what we are, our own personal readiness and our own unit’s readiness. History shows us that there is nothing new going on here. All the Great Wars through out History have started with very limited resources and continue to stay that way. Therefore, it is up to us to lead from the front. To tell Soldiers that shortages don’t matter, in fact, the challenges posed by the shortage of resources is an extension of the battle. This battle is fought on more than one front. The enemy needs to know, we’ll go hand-to-hand, we’ll fix bayonets if we have too, regardless of ammo!

We must lead in spite of these obstacles. We must be tenacious, we must keep our Soldier’s Morale up and show them we are willing to fight this War with what we have. That this condition is part of the War, we are not victims in some political in-fight. However, lack of resources is no excuse to abuse our Soldiers. We need to communicate with them and their families. We should give our Soldiers the best we have to offer, to provide the best service within the most efficient means possible. We need to reach out to the Soldiers, not arrogantly sit back and wait for them to call us

This is leading from the front, not in just in PT or battle, but in the more subtle ways of caring for the Soldiers pay, record administration, and both employer and family concerns.

Take care of our Soldiers and their families. Then they will fight for us, and take care of our Country and the *American* way of life....  
*Lead from the Front!*

*Mark Wilsdon*

Command Sergeant Major



# YOUR CHAPLAIN TEAM IS HERE TO SERVE YOU

By CH(COL) John South  
Command Chaplain

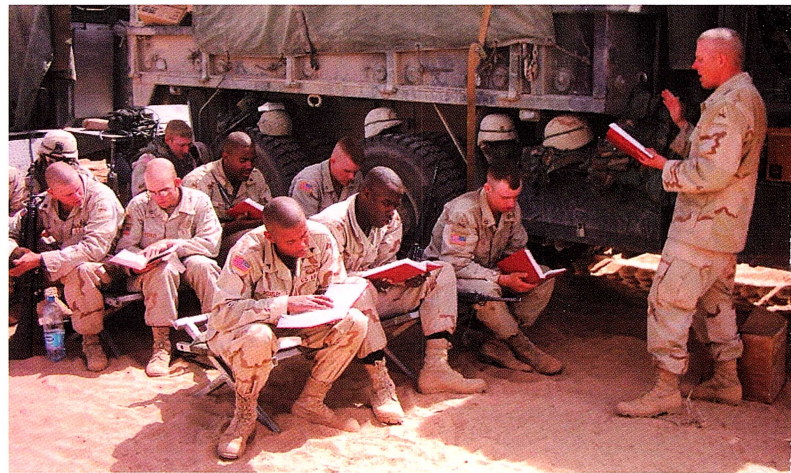
When you go out to battle against your enemies and see horses and chariots and people more numerous than you, do not be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt is with you. Now it shall come about that when you are approaching the battle; the priest (chaplain) shall come near and speak to the people, and he shall say to them, Hear, oh Israel, you are approaching the battle against your enemies today. Do not be faint-hearted. Do not be afraid, or panic, or tremble before them for the Lord your God is the One who goes with you to the fight. Deuteronomy 20:1-4

As we march on together as one Army, one team and for the mission of protecting and developing freedom around the world take note from William J. Bennett when he said; "Honor never grows old, and honor rejoices the heart of age. It does so because honor is finally, about defending those noble and worthy things that deserve defending, even if it comes at a high cost. In our time, that may mean social disapproval, public scorn, hardship, persecution, or as always, even death itself. The question remains; what is worth defending? What is worth dying for? What is worth living for? Lecture given November 24, 1997 at the U.S. Naval Academy.

As crisis unfolds in our land today and we look and pray for those who have lost so much and still have more to lose...Let us stand and pray together like never before: As General Douglas Mac Arthur, wrote at the end of WWII to all peoples:

*"It is my earnest hope, and indeed the hope of all mankind, that from this solemn occasion a better world shall emerge out of the blood and carnage of the past. A world founded upon faith and understanding, a world dedicated to the dignity of man and the fulfillment of his most cherished wish for freedom, tolerance and justice...Let us pray that peace be now restored to the world and that God will preserve it always."*

In closing, let's take a moment of silence in remembrance of those men and women in the 63d RRC who gave their lives in the war against terror and the principles of freedom. I know it is difficult to find the words to share with family and friends who have lost a loved one but heartfelt words can make a difference. As Abraham Lincoln said when faced with the same struggle finding the right words:



*"Dear Madam,*

*I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any word of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the republic they died to save. I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have paid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.*

*Yours very sincerely and respectfully.  
Lincoln Nov. 21, 1864*

Help me to be always mindful of Your presence. Fill me with your peace, grant me your mercy and lead me in Your ways.

Amen



# Safety matters

By Jeff Harris

Our Soldiers are dying in POV accidents. That is not exactly news to anybody, is it? They are your Warriors, your Soldiers; they are your drivers, mechanics, medics, clerks and crewmembers. When there is a hole in the formation where a missing Soldier is supposed to be standing, the hole is right next to you. I don't need a degree in psychology to know that these losses affect you in many ways and you don't like any of them.

So, what can we do about it? What can we (the Army) do to help you keep these Soldiers from killing themselves? Is there a magic formula

that will give you special super powers to use in order to protect your Soldiers? Nope! Can't do it! If such a thing were possible, I would have done it already and not be taking up your valuable time right now. We just have to work with what we've got.

The CRC <https://crc.army.mil> has numerous tools and initiatives for leaders to put in their kit bag as they continue to manage risk and get the job done.

- **ASMIS 2** is now up and running. Using feedback from the field, new features include an integral mapping program, auto-filled DA31 link and OCONUS usability.
- **Mobile Training Teams for Army Safe Driver Training (ASDT)**. These teams provide instruction in seven evasive maneuvers, which can be conducted in GSA vehicles or in HMMWVs and are applicable to both POV driving and operations in theater.
- **Motorcycle Mentorship Program**. This program enables leaders to mentor our Soldier riders, rather than leave them to join motorcycle gangs that encourage negative behavior. Using this concept, the Air Force reduced motorcycle fatalities by 50% on installations where this program was implemented.
- **Accident Avoidance Course** for all Soldiers. This is a standardized course which addresses driving behavior and risk mitigation and is available on the AKO Learning Management Server.
- **The Privately Owned Vehicle (POV) Risk Management Toolbox** is designed as a tool for Commanders, Leaders, Supervisors and Subordinates. The toolbox contains best practices and lessons learned that can be used as accident prevention measures when developing a unit POV safety program.

PFC FRASHER SPC MARCKS  
PFC STERNBERG SFC FRYE  
PFC SMITH SPC HEGNER  
SFC CHASE LTC KAYANAN  
CPT POGUE SGT RANGEL  
SSG ALLEN SPC CASSEL  
PFC KERSHNER PFC FOLK  
SSG MCCORDY PV2 OGHS  
SPC KOMAR PV2 BROWN  
CADET HANSON PV2 FIFE  
PV2 THOMAS SFC DORTY  
PFC WILHOITE SGT IRWIN  
SSG GONZALEZ SPC SMITH  
SSG FLEMMING PVT BAASE  
SPC SPOERL PVT MCBRIDE  
SPC BAUMGART 1LT HORTON  
PFC PAQUETTE SGT WILLIAMS  
SPC MARSHALL SGT HERRERA  
PFC MALDONADO PFC MURPHY  
PFC VANDERPOOL SPC HARE  
SPC DEJONG PV2 STEPHENSON  
SSG POWELL SGT PENN  
PVT ORTELLANAZETINO  
PVT SPIKES SPC LADD  
PV2 DIXON SPC ELBOD  
PV2 COMBS PVT BAKER  
PV2 SMITH SPC MCCOY  
SPC HORN SGT HINES  
PFC GRAY PV2 RUIZ  
SFC ANDERSON  
PVT BREWSTER CADET BROWN  
PFC STRADER SPC BERRIOS  
PFC BATTLE SPC MURPHY  
SFC WILSON SSG DUNBAR  
SFC HYDER SPC HORSEY  
SSG MANESS SFC ADAMS  
PV2 JONES PVT REYNOLDS  
SGT BROWN SPC JACKSON  
PFC AADLAND SPC BAKER  
PVT BRAZEL SPC SWART  
2LT AGBAYANI SGT SLUSHER  
SPC MCDOWNEY SPC DAVIS  
SPC MCFARLAND PVT FINK  
SGM HIDALGO SPC SHIELDS  
SPC LUTHART PFC JACKSON  
PFC BECMEL PFC BRATVOLD  
SGT NEWKIRK SPC STEWART  
CW3 KNIGHT PV2 BOHLING  
SSG SCHIRMER PFC CLOUD  
SPC TURNER SSG ENDERSON  
PFC ESCOBEDO SSG HUGHES  
SGT DEPRIEST SGT WEAVER  
PV2 WOJCIK SGT HOLCOMB  
SPC JORDAN SPC WHITE  
PFC ARRINGTON PFC ROCK  
SPC MCINTYRE PV2 CLARK  
SGT GOLDEN SPC DEVIN  
PFC PAYNE SPC HEATH  
PVT BERRY PFC DUBELL  
SPC DIAZ-OQUENDO

**"ONE BATTLE WE ARE NOT WINNING"**  
**POV SAFETY IS A MATTER OF LIFE & DEATH**

For answers to your safety questions contact Jeff Harris, (562) 795-2251.



# *Soldier, NCO of the Year selected*

**JFTB LOS ALAMITOS, Calif.**--An intense two-day competition between a handful of Soldiers of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Regional Readiness Command (RRC) in March decided the 63<sup>rd</sup> RRC Soldier and Non-commissioned Officer of the Year for 2006.

Eight Soldiers vied for either the non-commissioned officer seed or the junior enlisted crown, as they competed in four basic areas here. After starting the first day of competition with an APFT, then a written examination testing basic Soldiers skills and knowledge followed the next day by a block of basic rifle marksmanship, the contestants were ready to call it a weekend. But before it was all over each Soldier had to appear before a board of command sergeants major of several 63<sup>rd</sup> major subordinate commands to complete a battery of questions, including subjects such as drill and ceremony to congressional knowledge.

SGT Isaac Pardonvarde, from the 355<sup>th</sup> Chemical Company, last years Soldier of the Year, also stepped up to compete in this years NCO category and came out on top again after a very close competition.

SPC Ernest Ragadio, of the A Co., 319th Signal Battalion took away the honor for the Soldier of the Year. The NCO and Soldier of the year were offered either a slot in Air Assault School or Airborne School as part of their award. Each runner up



***SPC Ernest Ragadio  
Soldier of the Year***



also received special gifts from clothing sales and all received a coin from 63<sup>rd</sup> Commanding General, MG Pau Mock, and 63<sup>rd</sup> Command Sergeant Major, Mark Wilsdon.

***SGT Issac Pardonvarde  
NCO of the Year***



***MSG Cecil Edwards, 63<sup>rd</sup> RRC  
Senior Chaplain Assistant, sings  
the National Anthem at a San  
Diego Padre's game in honor of  
the Army's 230<sup>th</sup> Birthday at  
PETCO Park. Edwards has  
also performed for the Angels'  
baseball team at Edison Field in  
Anaheim.***

(photo by SSG Kent Ambrose)





# Welcome home CITIZEN WARRIORS

Since December 2004, when The Chief of Army Reserve, LTG James R. Helmly, established the Welcome Home Warrior Citizen Award; nearly 7,000 Soldiers of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Regional Readiness Command Soldiers, who have been mobilized and deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), have received the formal acknowledgement.

The “Warrior Citizen” Award, which was enacted by the United States Congress signed into law by President Bush, is more than a token ‘thank you’ but is a concrete recognition of Army Reserve Soldiers who have excelled in the performance of their duty. “This program honors in a small measure our Soldiers who willingly answered their nation’s call to war,” said Helmly. “It is a gesture of gratitude from a nation who wants to recognize them for their dedication, service and sacrifice.”

During a ceremony, the Soldiers’ family, friends and employers are typically invited to share in the event as senior leadership and sometimes civic and government official present each Soldier and encased American flag, a specially designed commemorative coin, a lapel pin set for the Soldier and spouse, and a Welcome Home Warrior-Citizen flag.







# Welcome home CITIZEN WARRIORS









# **MAJ. GEN. PAUL E. MOCK, NEW CG OF THE 63RD RRC, SEES ARMY CHANGES AS INEVITABLE AND**

Story by WO1 (CA) Marc Yablonka  
California State Military Reserve

JOINT FORCES TRAINING BASE, LOS ALAMITOS, CALIF.--  
"If you hate change, the Army is a miserable place to be," joked Maj. Gen. Paul E. Mock, new commanding general of the 63rd Regional Readiness Command headquartered at the Joint Forces Training Base here recently.

It's obvious that the new CG doesn't hate change at all, however, and that the Army is the former LAPD Lieutenant's life.

After graduation from what is now the University of LaVerne in 1972, the CG's postings included the California National Guard, 12th Special Forces Group, Los Alamitos, for which he served as Co. S2, S3, Detachment and Co. Commander, Commander of the 306th Psychological Operations Battalion, Assistant Inspector General 63rd Army Reserve Command, Assistant Chief of Staff for Personnel, Deputy Chief of Staff Support Operations and Assistant G3 Logistics for the 311th Support Command (Corps).

In 1996, Maj. Gen. Mock was mobilized for Operation Joint Endeavor and served with 3rd COSCOM, Germany, and Chief, Management Excess Team, Slavovski Brod, Croatia. When he returned home, he was assigned Chief of Staff, 311th COSCOM.

The "changes" just go on and on in the Maj. Gen.'s Army career and include being mobilized for Operation Iraqi Freedom, where he served as CG, 377th TSC (FWD) CAMP Arifjan, Kuwait.

Speaking of changes, there also appear to be some imminent ones in store for the 63<sup>rd</sup> RRC. By fiscal year 2008, the command is expected to "de-establish" itself, stand down, and become the 63rd Regional Readiness Sustainment Command.

By 2009, the unit's headquarters will be moved to Moffett Field in northern California, according to the General.

Amidst the restructuring to occur to the unit, which now encompasses California, Arizona and Nevada, it will enlarge to the entire Southwest, including Texas up until that state's border with Louisiana.

Along with the enlargement of the Command will come a major shift in its mission, according to Gen. Mock.

As it stands now, the RRC's mission is to prepare soldiers to go to war, support and implement the Army's transformation plan, Mock said.

"The mission will change from providing trained soldiers, units and combatant commanders to an area support mission," he said.

He defined area support mission as inclusive of logistics, maintenance, personnel support at base operations, facilities and buildings, as well as the computer infrastructure.

These changes are necessary, said the General, to improve readiness in the U.S. Army Reserve.

"There's a need to decrease the non-deployed RRC's to a minimal level," Gen. Mock said.

To accomplish that, the ten existing RRCs will be reduced to four RRSCs, making what he termed a "more lethal fighting force."

This is a change that, while it may cause some what he called "culture shock" because of the speed at which it will happen, the General is completely in favor of.

He does admit that while the four RRSCs are a change compared to the current Command Control, it is needed to be contemporary.

Under the current system, there are major problems, the General feels. Among them the fact that Soldiers can never predict when they will be called up, mobilized and deployed; and after they are demobed, when they will be called again.

Under the RRSCs, a five year cycle will be implemented during which a reservist can expect to be available to be deployed during the fifth year of that cycle.

"It may not happen but the Soldier can expect that it might occur," Gen. Mock said.

"It's about time. All U.S. Army Reservists need to be prepared and ready to be deployed at short notice," he added.

In addition, the General said that the new program will add predictability for the Soldier, his family and employer.

Though it is three years away, the move to northern California comes with a degree of predictability itself.

Gen. Mock will lead the move with mixed emotions, both for himself, the 63<sup>rd</sup> RRC and the city of Los Alamitos at the same time, however.

"This is an extremely supportive city which doesn't want us to go," said Gen. Mock. "Our going will leave a void in the local community."

At the same time, the General realizes full well that the move to Moffett Field will improve the readiness of the Command.

"We follow orders. If we are directed to move, we will proceed as we must to accomplish our mission."

Part of his busy mission that day was to console Surprise, Ariz. residents Jim and Barbara Witkowski, whose son James had been killed in Iraq while serving in a unit connected with the 63<sup>rd</sup> RRC in a posthumous awarding of the Silver Star.

Sgt. Witkowski, 32, only the second U.S. Army Reservist to receive the Silver Star since Operation Iraqi Freedom was launched in 2003, was killed during a Combat Logistics Patrol near Ashraf, Iraq.

Witkowski's unit, the 729<sup>th</sup> Transportation Company, came under attack while conducting a 24-vehicle convoy to deliver building materials to another unit.

"He answered the call to duty and his performance as one of America's finest proved to be awe-inspiring," Maj. Gen. Mock told around two hundred attendees, comprised of his fellow Soldiers, family members, the media and local dignitaries, including Silver Star recipient and veteran Hollywood actor James McEachin, U.S. Army Reserve Ambassador.

"On a gun convoy mission he responded as he was trained. He responded without hesitation to an IED attack by immediately laying down suppressive fire to protect the Soldiers under his charge. When a grenade was lobbed in close proximity near his position, Sgt. Witkowski continued to lay down fire, absorbing the full brunt of the explosion. He performed heroically as both a leader and a Soldier," Gen. Mock told the reverent crowd.

No doubt Gen. Mock knows that "Ski", as his fellow Soldiers called him, both in life and in death, serves as a role model for every Soldier in the 63<sup>rd</sup> RRC.



## Shoe donations touch Iraqis

# "Souls through soles" with Kicks for Kids Program

By Paul Adams  
Army Reserve Public Affairs

If you ask SGT Addie Collins about the war in Iraq, she could talk about military life in a combat zone, having to carry her M-16 rifle wherever she went and being on the lookout for suicide bombers and the physical and emotional carnage an improvised explosive device leaves behind.

Or she could tell you the 15,000 smiles on the faces of Iraqi children and people that she has brought joy to.

Through a program she started in 2004 while serving overseas supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom, called '*Kicks for Kids*,' the broadcast journalist with the 222nd Broadcast Operations Detachment, Bell, Calif., was looking for a way to give back individually in Iraq because she felt like the situation was spiraling out of control. "I needed to do something I could control," Collins said. "One day I was throwing out a pair of sneakers that I felt were too run down for me. The next day I saw an Iraqi who cleaned our living area wearing the shoes I threw out. It (the idea) it



SGT Addie Collins and three Iraqi children who received shoes through *Kicks for Kids*.

click right there."

Collins thought that she could give the Iraqis, mainly the children, shoes donated by Americans looking to contribute to the war effort. She immediately e-mailed her friends and family telling them about the '*Kicks for Kids*' program she was starting and asked them to send her shoes instead of care packages.



"Word of mouth spread and after four months, I had roughly 15,000 pairs of shoes donated from Americans all over the world," she said proudly. "This program helped to heal a part of me, because I couldn't make peace with the war that surrounded me!"

Collins said that she felt validated because she saw a need and did what she could to help.

"Americans also felt good because it was a chance for them to help in a tangible way—much more than a care package, a pat on the back or an e-mail. We touched the souls through soles with *Kicks for Kids*," she said.

According to Collins there were all types of shoes that came in. Old shoes, new shoes, sandals, sneakers, hi-heels, cowboy boots, clogs and even show shoes were sent. Old shoes to Americans are new shoes to Iraqis who have none. "It was fantastic to see such a diversity and the amazing thing is there was a pair of feet for every single pair which was so generously donated," she said.

The program is still in existence. "My goal is to establish *Kicks for Kids* as a non-profit organization that spreads throughout Afghanistan, Kosovo and Asia. For now, however, the shoes are being sent only to Iraq." [www.kicks4kidz.org](http://www.kicks4kidz.org)



## **“Incoming! Incoming! Take cover!”**

# **1SG blinded by mortar round drives on in battle for new life**

By SFC John D. Wagner  
35<sup>th</sup> Military History Detachment (Iraq)

**LOGISTICS SUPPORT AREA ANACONDA, Iraq**—For the soldiers loping along on an early morning run, it seemed like just another day of duty. Then they heard an order blaring over a loudspeaker.

“Incoming! Incoming! Take cover!” Mortar rounds were hurdling through the air and they would change the life of 1SG Jesse Acosta forever.

A round landed about 50 feet away, next to the base theater. Shrapnel and shock waves flew through the air. SPC Jimmy Caceras, running with Acosta, was knocked down by the impact and stunned.

Acosta, of the 376<sup>th</sup> Personnel Services Battalion Detachment out of Long Beach, CA, was hit by shrapnel that cut through his face in the January attack. He was taken to a hospital in Landstuhl, Germany, and then was on his way home.

He is now blind. But there’s no moaning and groaning from the 48-year-old NCO with the toothy smile and brush haircut who held his troops together like glue.

“I accept this as a whole new chapter in my life,” said Acosta in a phone interview from his home in Santa Fe Springs, CA. “I haven’t even had time to say ‘Why did this happen to me?’” Acosta has hit the ground running with a quest to overcome defeat and continue his life with a warrior’s attitude.

“I’m grateful that I’m still alive,” he said. “I’ve given thanks to God. I can still walk and hug my wife and children.”

Acosta has been in training at the Palo Alto, Calif. Department of Veterans Affairs School for the Blind. “They’re teaching me all the techniques to survive,” he said. “My hands are my new eyes.” He is learning to walk into a room and, using his hands, get oriented touching the chairs and walls and get a mental picture of front, back, right and left.

He also said he is learning about new technology in which someone can scan a sheet of paper and it

reads the letters to the person.

“It could be a bank statement, a 401-k or something else important,” Acosta said.

The top sergeant has received great support from his soldiers who have called him at home. The HHD Commander 1LT Lisa Christenson, escorted him for two weeks to Germany and then to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington D.C.

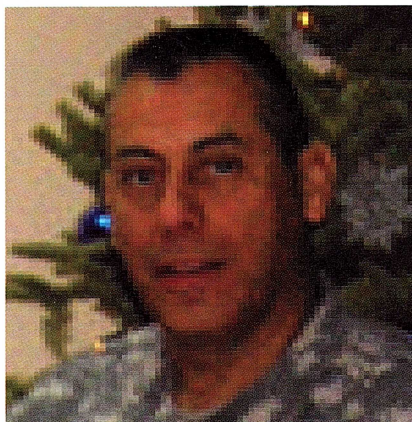
“Even though he learned there was little chance of regaining his sight, he was still upbeat and helpful and wanted to know if the soldiers were all right,” she said. “He is one of the most selfless people I’ve ever known. Everything he did was about taking care of the soldiers.”

Multiple high-level soldiers visited him. They included Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth Preston; MG Paul Mock, commander of the Army Reserve 63<sup>rd</sup> Regional Readiness Command, higher headquarters for the 376th; BG Charles Ebner, deputy commander of the 63<sup>rd</sup>; and MG Robert B. Ostenberg, former 63<sup>rd</sup> commander.

SPC Helen Lee, 376<sup>th</sup> administrative clerk, was on tower-guard duty the morning of the attack. “I heard the mortars coming in,” she said. “I thought, ‘Oh, gosh. That’s where we go running.’”

She recalled that Acosta did a superb job guiding the detachment through its mobilization training at Dona Ana Base Camp, NM, a sub-post of Fort Bliss, TX. The detachment had been formed up quickly from many units and most were strangers.

“Nobody knew each other,” she said. But Acosta had them running early-morning PT, rumbling along in humvees and practicing combat skills in the desert environment. “He took our group and guided us in the right direction. I’ve never had that kind of leadership in my four years in the Reserves He took his time even with the shy individuals.”





SSG Sarah Gotbeter praised him as well. "He held everybody together," she said. "At Dona Ana, he made sure we were all on time, in correct uniform and he kept everybody in line. He was like a father figure."

***At Anaconda, his tight leadership continued.***

"He showed us a lot of tough love," said SPC Efrain Arteaga, S-1 clerk. "He had a lot of rules, but it was because he cared for us and wanted to keep us out of trouble."

"He wanted to do more than his job description required. He looked at force protection. He looked at safety. One soldier never had a driver's license. He gave her training so she could drive a military vehicle. But he also wanted the soldiers to enjoy some things. He wanted them to be aware of things such as flag football, available movies and entertainers coming through," commented CSM Albert Montano.

MSG Michael Moland, recalled Acosta's generosity. "He paid for a Christmas party, for pizza and drinks," Moland said. "He was very energetic and

would bend over backwards to help people."

Acosta's wife, Connie, praised her husband and voiced her support. She said she lays items out in the bathroom and kitchen so her husband can mentally grasp where they are.

"If he's in the shower, he knows where the soap is and where the shampoo is," she said. "At dinner, he knows where the food and drinks are at the table, potatoes at 12 o'clock, vegetables at 3 o'clock."

"He knows I'm here for him," she said. "He's adjusting very well. He's amazing. He's trying very well to be independent."

Meanwhile, Montano spoke of the future reunion between Acosta and his soldiers, when they have "Welcome Home" ceremony.

"We'll get the soldiers off the bus and he'll be there," Montano said. "He'll feel their hands and hear the tone of their voices. I'm really looking forward to that day."

## **Soldier's Creed**

**I am an American Soldier.**

**I am a Warrior and a member of a team. I serve the people of the United States and live the Army Values.**



***I will always place the mission first.***

***I will never accept defeat.***

***I will never quit.***

***I will never leave a fallen comrade.***



**I am disciplined, physically and mentally tough, trained and proficient in my warrior tasks and drills. I always maintain my arms, my equipment and myself.**

**I am an expert and I am a professional.**

**I stand ready to deploy, engage, and destroy the enemies of the United States of America in close combat.**

**I am a guardian of freedom and the American way of life.**

**I am an American Soldier.**



# 63<sup>d</sup> Regional Readiness Command

## Soldier receives posthumous Silver Star

Story by PFC Jennifer L Sierra  
302<sup>nd</sup> Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

**JFTB LOS ALAMITOS, Calif.** – Amidst a formal gathering of family, friends, Army Soldiers and civic officials, the Commanding General of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Regional Readiness Command (RRC), MG Paul E. Mock, presented a posthumous Silver Star medal to Jim and Barbara Witkowski, the parents of SGT James Witkowski, Jr. in a rare Silver Star ceremony April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2006

SGT Witkowski, was 32, when he was killed in action October 26, 2005, during a combat logistics patrol near Ashraf, Iraq. Witkowski's unit, the 729<sup>th</sup> Transportation Company, an Army Reserve unit of the 63<sup>rd</sup> RRC, came under vicious attack while conducting a 23-vehicle convoy to deliver building materials to another unit.

Addressing the gathering, MAJ Sean J. Cannon, the 729<sup>th</sup> company commander at the time, depicted the attack as being very complex, unfolding in three stages: improvised explosive devices (IED), small arms fire, and a combination of hand and rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs). Cannon described Witkowski's actions as heroic.

Entering a kill zone of approximately one mile, the convoy started to receive small arms fire. As

IEDs were beginning to explode on both sides of the highway, insurgents began rushing the convoy shooting RPGs and lobbing hand-grenades. Meanwhile, Witkowski, manning the turret of the 50-caliber weapon atop his gun-truck, held insurgents down with suppressive fire. One grenade landed in his turret. Rather than ducking back inside to avoid the grenade's direct blast, Witkowski continued to engage the enemy amidst the incoming fire. Doing so, he absorbed the full brunt of the explosion saving the lives of three other Soldiers in the vehicle.

If SGT Witkowski had not taken that action, "all four of them would have died without a doubt," said MSG John Souza. Souza, who spoke at the ceremony and who was also traveling in the ambushed convoy.

Witkowski's father, a Vietnam veteran from the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division, swelled with emotion when describing his feelings as MG Mock pinned the prestigious Silver Star Medal on his chest in his son's behalf. "This shows that he was a much better person than I was. I'm just so very proud of him," said the senior Witkowski.

His mother described their son as courageous and full of life. "Whatever came his way we he would take, stand up and take it like the man he was. He would never cut and run, for sure," she said. "For those of you who first met him and didn't like him--and there were some people who felt that way--just know that if you didn't get a second opportunity to know him and learn to love him, you missed a lot."

Many of his fellow Soldiers described him as ever-optimistic and likable. MSG Souza said Witkowski's self-less act was instilled in him from the beginning. "You hear Soldiers say, 'train as you fight,' well, how are you going to train somebody to do something like that?—you can't do it—in a fraction of a second you have to make a decision."

Souza went on to describe Witkowski as having a unique aura about him. "He loved life, he lived the day as it came. There was never a dull moment with him. He saw the light side in anything."



*MG Mock comforts Jim and Barbara Witkowski after presenting them their son Jim's Silver Star. (Photos by SSG Kent Ambrose)*



Affectionately known as “Uncle Jimmy” at home and as “Ski” amongst his fellow Soldiers, he was remembered as being fun-loving, unconventional, loyal, witty and honest.

SGT Chad Fisher, a member of the 394<sup>th</sup> Adjutant General Company, (a 63<sup>rd</sup> subordinate unit) and Witkowski’s childhood friend, heard about Witkowski’s death while deployed in Kuwait, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). Through the wishes of the Witkowski family, Fisher was the official escort, accompanying SGT. Witkowski’s body back to Arizona. “I felt honored to have been chosen to escort him home,” Fisher said.

Family members also reminisced about their brother and uncle. Daniel Ankrom, 23, Sgt. Witkowski’s nephew, said his uncle was more like a big brother to him, always taking him out to go places and do things together. When asked



*ISG David Heuer of the 729<sup>th</sup> Transportation Company embraces SGT Witkowski’s mother Barbara Witkowski after the ceremony.*



*SGT James Witkowski*

about his uncle’s service, Ankrom stressed, “He did what he wanted to do.”

Hollywood actor James McEachin, United States Army Reserve Ambassador, paid special tribute to the Witkowski family during the ceremony reciting special prose he wrote about the American veteran. McEachin, also a combat veteran, was awarded the Silver Star in August 2005 for his actions during the Korean War. “My personal belief is that there is no nobler calling than to serve this country,” said McEachin.

Not surprisingly, family, friends and OIF Soldiers all agreed that SGT Witkowski, always the protector, would have done what he did all over again if he had lived.

Amidst hugs, gratitude and tears, the dignified ceremony ended as relatives, friends and Soldiers departed for a reception where special plaques and commemorative items, including the Silver Star certificate, were presented to Witkowski’s parents.

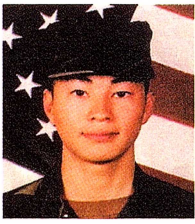
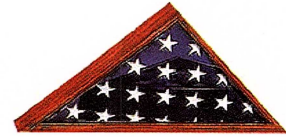
MG Mock, honored to have had the opportunity to bestow such a distinguished medal to the family of a Soldier under his command, alluded to the Army’s Warrior Ethos and SGT. Witkowski’s courage under fire.

The Silver Star medal recognizes gallantry in action and is the military’s third highest medal for bravery and courage. SGT Witkowski is only the second Army Reserve Soldier serving in OIF to receive it, according to Army officials.

“This honorable and selfless act exemplifies the dedication that this brave soldier had toward his country,” Mock. said.



# Honoring Our Fallen Heroes



**SGT Paul T. Nakamura**, 21, 437<sup>th</sup> Medical Company was killed June 19, 2003, in Iskandariyah, Iraq when a rocket propelled grenade struck his ambulance. As an ambulance driver he made more than 250 “runs” in Iraq and Kuwait to save Soldiers’ lives.

Nakamura was from Santa Fe Springs, Calif., was trained as a lifeguard, taught water polo and had a fondness for high-powered “muscle” cars.



**SSG Cameron Sarno**, 43, 257<sup>th</sup> Transportation Company out of Las Vegas, was killed Sept. 1, 2003 in Kuwait in a tragic accident when another truck crashed into him as he was changing a tire. SSG Sarno was a native Hawaiian, drove a concrete-mixer truck as a civilian and loved surfing. Friends and family members recalled that he had an

upbeat, selfless attitude and put his Soldiers before himself. He had a son, Cameron Takeuchi, a Soldier who has served in Afghanistan.



**SFC Kelly Bolor**, 37, 137<sup>th</sup> Quartermaster Company out of South El Monte, Calif., died Nov. 15, 2003 in a Black Hawk helicopter collision thought to have been caused by hostile fire near Mosul, Iraq. His unit was assigned to support the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division and he was transporting supplies to the frontline. SFC

Bolor previously served in Operation Desert Storm in 1991. He left a wife, also name Kelly, and a son, Kyle, 3. He was buried in Maui Memorial Park, Hawaii.



**CPT SIGFREDO M. PILIPINA**,

34, 483<sup>rd</sup> Transportation Battalion Ammunition Officer died Sept. 14, 2004, while called to Active Service at Fort Lewis, WA., in support of the Global War on Terror. The 483<sup>rd</sup> was in garrison and preparing to move to a convoy de-

fense training site. His unit would go on to deploy overseas in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He is survived by his wife Marilyn Valencia Pilipina, his daughter Thea Cameron Valencia Pilipina and son Christian Kyle Pilipina.



**MAJ Charles Soltes, Jr.**, 36, 426<sup>th</sup> Civil Affairs Battalion, Upland, Calif., was killed on Oct. 13, 2004 in Mosul, Iraq when his convoy was ambushed by insurgents. He was one of two Soldiers killed and five injured. MAJ Soltes and his wife Sally shared an optometry practice in Irvine. He also survived by their two sons,

Ryan and Brandon and his parents, Charles and Nancy Soltes.



**SGT Tina Time**, 22, 208<sup>th</sup> Transportation Company, out of Tucson, Ariz., was killed Dec. 13, 2004 in a tragic head-on crash involving her truck and another vehicle during a blinding sandstorm near Cedar, Iraq. She had served as a wheeled vehicle mechanic and convoy gunner.

Friends described her as a hard-working, driven young woman who always did more than was requested of her. She was proud of the fact that she had completed more than 60 convoys through Iraq and Kuwait.



**SGT Joseph Nurre**, 22, 801<sup>st</sup> Engineer Company out of Vallejo, Calif., and cross-leveled to another Army Reserve unit, the 463<sup>rd</sup> Engineer Battalion, out of Weirton, W. Va., died Aug. 21, 2005, during convoy operations in Samarra, Iraq. He was killed when an improvised explosive device detonated

near his M916 tractor. SGT Nurre was remembered by his family, fellow Soldiers and his many friends as a compassionate, affable young man with a contagious smile. He attended California State University, Sacramento, and loved football. He is survived by his parents Charlie and Leigh Nurre of Wilton, Calif.



**SGT James Witkowski**, 32, of Surprise, Arizona, 729<sup>th</sup> Transportation Company, Fresno, California, died on October 26, 2005 during convoy operations near Ashraf, Iraq. He was killed when an improvised explosive device detonated near his HMMWV. Remembered for his wit and fun loving antics,

James, also affectionately known as “Uncle Jimmy”, left an indelible impression on those who knew him. He is survived by his parents James and Barbara Witkowski, and his two sisters, Tracey Ankrom of Phoenix AZ and Randi Ledingham of Florida.



# *Regional roundup.....*

## Gulf War Veteran returns to the Middle East

WO Marc Yablonka

**JFTB LOS ALAMITOS, Calif.**--MAJ George Milton, U.S. Army Reserve, will be saddling up for the Middle East again for the first time since Operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield in the early 1990's-- but this time 255 Soldiers from several Regional Readiness Commands will have his back.

Joining him on the deployment to the Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) Theatre will be troops not only from his 63rd RRC, but the 77th, 81st, 88th, 89th, 90th, 91st, 99th and 100th RRCs will also be there in force.

The major and those under his command will be attached to the 950th Direct Support Maintenance Co., a subordinate to the 387th Maintenance Battalion, which reports to the 653rd MB, which, in turn, reports to the 63rd, according to MAJ Jorge Swank, 63rd RRC Public Affairs.

"The primary mission of the 950th is always maintenance," Milton said.

His unit will be responsible for providing support for wheeled and tracked vehicles, weapons systems and communication equipment and posted somewhere north of Baghdad.

"However, we will not have all the information until we get on the ground," he cautioned.

Normally troops from the 950th perform various maintenance tasks at the Battalion level, he said.

Whatever the tasks at hand, Milton and the other 255 Soldiers are more than ready to perform them.

"I served as a Platoon Leader in Operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield and everything I've done since then has prepared me for this next assignment," he said.

Milton will not be the only one with combat experience along on the mission.

"Which will be a big help," he stressed.

Among the troops about to be deployed to Iraq under the Milton's command, some have already served in both OIF and Operation Enduring Freedom.

"Several Soldiers have submitted Contingency Temporary Tour of Active Duty packets to travel with us. I continue to receive phone calls and e-mails from

Soldiers who have heard about the 950th who also want to go with our unit," he said.

"Troop strength is significant. This unit will be the largest 63rd RRC unit deployed since the 319th Signal Battalion, which had over 400 Soldiers in Theatre," Swank said. "It is among the largest units to deploy from the Joint Forces Training Base in Los Alamitos."

Milton feels very proud to have been selected to command the 950th and he is full of praise for those who will accompany him.

"The Soldiers in the unit are very motivated and upbeat. What an honor to be their commander," he stressed.



**GETTING READY TO GO.....**  
*MAJ George Milton call his unit to attention during a recent formation.*

The major is also thankful for those in the unit he termed the "Stay Behind Soldiers", and the families of those who are headed to Iraq.

"They will have the very important mission of taking care of the home front. We will all have family members who will need the support of the Rear Detachment."

The unit will have a Family Readiness Group fully capable of assisting family members and Soldiers in the rear.

"As a Soldier, I know that if our families are taken care of, then our Soldiers in the field will better be able to perform the missions their country is requiring of them," Milton emphasized.

The unit will be replacing the 872nd Direct Support Maintenance Co.

"Again, I am so humbled to lead these fine Soldiers," Milton said.



# Army Reserve to "Streamline"

WASHINGTON-- The U.S. Army Reserve must modernize how it "manages manpower" to prepare for future missions and challenges, head of the Army Reserve Command, said here yesterday.

"We are streamlining the command and control structure of the Army Reserve," Army LTG James R. Helmly said at the Reserve Officers Association's winter convention. "We need to move the reserve to the future as opposed to being comfortably ensconced in the past."

He said he believes the future holds more non-traditional assignments. And in order to keep up with these changes, the Army Reserve must increase its numbers and shift missions within the reserve to make its command and control more "efficient and effective." A well-run and efficient organization boosts morale and helps with retention, the general said.

Force regeneration is a "challenge that has to be faced by the entire Army, not just the Army Reserve," he said. "We're facing it head on, but it's a difficult challenge. Army Reserve numbers should be based on fully trained and deployable soldiers. Soldiers who are still being trained should not be counted as available strength."

The Army Reserve had been structured for 220,000 members, "but we were only authorized 205,000 end-strength, and out of the 205 (thousand) we really didn't have 205,000 available strength," he said. The Army Reserve currently has only 188,000 soldiers on its rolls.

He talked about soldiers who couldn't be counted as available because of issues such as pregnancy or board actions and those in the training base

or even delayed in getting to it.

The Army Force Generation model - the strategy for providing combat support to combatant commanders worldwide - is a time-based and an event-driven model, Helmly said. "Time based, meaning that we modeled it over a five-year period. Event driven means that you move through three phases based on your state of training readiness, not based on a time," he said. For instance, a small civil affairs team might



*LTG James R. Helmly presents a Welcome Home Citizen Warrior gift to CSM Peter Tirapelle, 6/52 Aviation during recent ceremony. (See Page 8 .)*

move from training to the "ready force pool" in a year, while a combat heavy engineering battalion might take a couple of years because of their size and complexity, he said.

"The intent here is to move into an available force pool not less than once every five years, and during that time either be deployed or be available for deployment within 96 hours of notification," Helmly said. The general explained that this does not mean that every reserve soldier will only be mobilized every five years. "It's[a]force management model, that will hopefully provide us some degree

of measured stability and predictably for our soldiers, families and our employers in the future," he said.

Helmly said the Army Reserve will go from 10 regional readiness commands to four regional readiness sustainment commands.

"It's a total abolishment of the RRCs and standing up of RRSCs, which are not intended to command forces, but rather to provide a stable platform for operations, maintenance and resourcing," he said.

The general also said training support divisions will be restructured and other "stuff" will "move around."

"The intent there is not to harvest combat power, but to harvest headquarters space ... to invest more of our resources in the operating formations where our soldiers really do the work out there," he said.

"We are today, I think Army wide, in a larger period of change than any time since the World War II era," Helmly concluded.



## *TRICARE Changes*

## TRICARE Retiree Dental Plan - Twelve-month waiting period waived

**WASHINGTON**—National Guard and Reserve personnel who elect to enroll in the TRICARE Retiree Dental Program (TRDP) within 120 days after retirement are now eligible to skip the 12-month waiting period normally required for certain TRDP benefits, according to Delta Dental, the program's administrator.

TMA has authorized a waiver from requiring retired National Guard/Reserve men and women who meet the criteria to be enrolled in the TRDP for 12 months prior to gaining the maximum allowed benefits for cast crowns, cast restorations, bridges, dentures and orthodontics for both adults and children.

Additionally, this new waiver will be applied retroactively to February 1, 2004 for any Guard and Reserve enrollees who can document their enrollment in the TRDP within 120 days after their retirement effective date. Delta Dental will process any claim adjustments resulting from this retroactive waiver, upon notification from the enrollee and submission of the appropriate documentation.

All new enrollees seeking to obtain the waiver should submit a copy of their retirement orders together with their application.

The nation's largest voluntary, all-enrollee-paid dental program continues to offer coverage for diagnostic and preventive services, basic restorative services, periodontics, endodontics, oral surgery, dental emergencies and a separate dental accident benefit with no waiting period.

"We are working in partnership with TMA to offer a comprehensive dental program with the fewest possible restrictions in the first year of enrollment," said Lowell Daun, DDS, senior vice president for Delta's Dental Federal Services division. "We are also working to keep premiums affordable for members of the National Guard/Reserve."

Eligibility for the TRICARE Retiree Dental Program extends to all retirees of the Reserve and Guard and their family members, including "gray

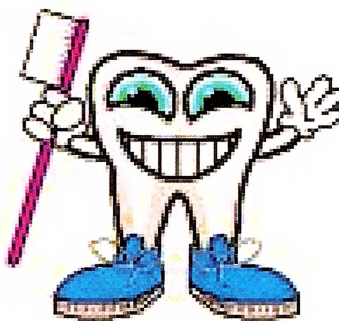
area" retired Reservists who are entitled to retired pay but will not begin receiving it until age 60. Although eligibility for this group has been in effect since the TRDP first began in 1998, many retired Reserve and Guard members, and even more "gray area" retirees, still do not realize they are eligible. It is important to note that as with all new retirees, the 120-day period during which a "gray area" retired Reservist can enroll in the TRDP to qualify for the 12-month waiting period waiver begins with his/her retirement effective date, not the date he/she reaches age 60.

The TRDP is a nationwide, combined fee-for-service/ preferred provider program that offers enrollees access to any licensed dentist in all 50 states, plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Canada.

Enrollees may seek care from any licensed dentist, with optimal benefits available when choosing a participating "Delta Dental PPO" dentist in over 80,000 locations nationwide.

The TRDP carries a \$50 per person annual deductible. The program also includes a family deductible cap of \$150 and an annual maximum amount of \$1,200, preventive and diagnostic services are not counted. In addition to the annual maximum, the TRDP also has a separate dental accident annual maximum of \$1,000 and a lifetime orthodontic maximum of \$1,200.

Eligible retirees and their family members can find answers to their questions about the program as well as enroll using Delta's dedicated TRDP web site at [www.trdp.org](http://www.trdp.org) or by calling the toll-free number at 1-866-567-1658.





## Our Proud Ambassadors



**Ambassador Richard A. Lundin (CA)** is a senior officer in the Napa and Solano counties Area Agency on Aging. He holds a BA and MBA in Business Administration and a PhD in Education. Active in his community, he is a member of the California Military Museum and a member of the Drug-Demand Reduction Program in the Vallejo School District.



**Ambassador Ronald H. Markarian (CA)** is the California State Director of the U.S. Selective Service System. He holds a BA from California State University at Fresno and a MS from George Washington University in Washington, DC. Ambassador Markarian has served in numerous volunteer assignments with local service agencies such as the Fresno Chamber of Commerce, California Veterans Board and the California State Veterans Commanders Council.



**Ambassador Russell Everett Park (CA)** is a retired Public Affairs Officer and Attorney. He holds a BA from the University of Southern California and a JD from LaSalle University. Ambassador Park has served in numerous volunteer assignments with local service agencies such as a team leader in the Greater San Diego County U.S.

Army Retiree Council; U.S. Navy Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Special Events Committee and a Coordinator with the San Diego and Coronado Police Departments' on various beach area projects.

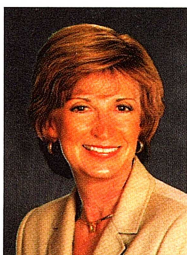


**Ambassador James McEachin (CA)** received a Silver Star for his courage under fire and bravery as an infantryman during the Korean War. Mr. McEachin is a distinguished actor with hundred of credits in the film industry. His commitment to Soldiers and veterans has resulted in a CD titled 'A Tribute to Veterans' that is an uplifting salute to all veterans. He currently resides in Encino, California.

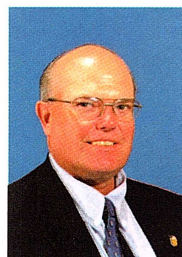
**Ambassador Anthony T. Reed (NV)** is Founder of the Renaissance Group of Vienna, Virginia and Co-founder of GoodWood Partners, LLC, of Las Vegas. He holds a BA degree from National Louis University (honors) and a MS degree in Administration from Central Michigan University (honors). The Ambassador additionally pursued graduate management studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Ambassador Reed continues to serve his community in numerous volunteer assignments such as Vice President Kiwanis International, Campaign Manager the American Cancer Society and Nevada Christmas in April.



**Ambassador Howard Schwartz (CA)** is the owner of Howard Schwartz & Associates, a management consulting firm in Encino, California. He holds a BA, MA and PhD as well as a certification as a Senior Professional in Human Resources. Ambassador Schwartz is a volunteer Ombudsman with the California Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve program and a supporter of various veterans' activities.



**Ambassador Sharon Powers (NV)** is a vice-president for the North Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce. She has devoted many hours helping Soldier families and is a catalyst for bringing business together to support Welcome Home ceremonies in the State of Nevada.

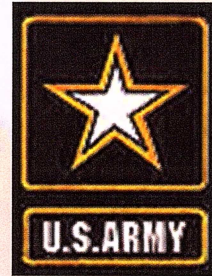


**Ambassador Jack J. Isler (CA)** is a retired Army officer and is the President of the Association of the United States Army's 7th Region where he has oversight for chapters throughout the Southwest. His service is a testament to his dedication to the nation. His military intelligence expertise continues to be an asset to the Ft. Huachuca military community. He resides with his wife in Sierra Vista, California.





## **63d Regional Readiness Command No Slack 10**



- 1. Always be deployable; physically, medically, mentally. Be DMOSQ, or if an officer, Branch/Functionally qualified. Be tactically, technically proficient.**
- 2. Pass the APFT. 270 or above is the goal, not the minimum.**
- 3. Meet Height/Weight, without taping.**
- 4. Wear the Army uniform, properly and proudly.**
- 5. Train your replacement. It is one of your most important jobs.**
- 6. Safety, Safety, Safety. Risk analysis; identification and mitigation of risk are a part of everything we do, in our personal and family life as well as the Army.**
- 7. Treat others with respect and dignity. The Army has no room for harassment of any kind, racism or disrespect.**
- 8. Family Readiness is a priority. Leaders demonstrate commitment to the care and readiness of families.**
- 9. Not just know; live the Army Values and the Warrior Ethos.**
- 10. Leaders are accountable. Period. Lead by example and have the courage to speak your mind and do what is right.**





# The Seven Rules Of Deployment

By Kathryn M. Mitchell

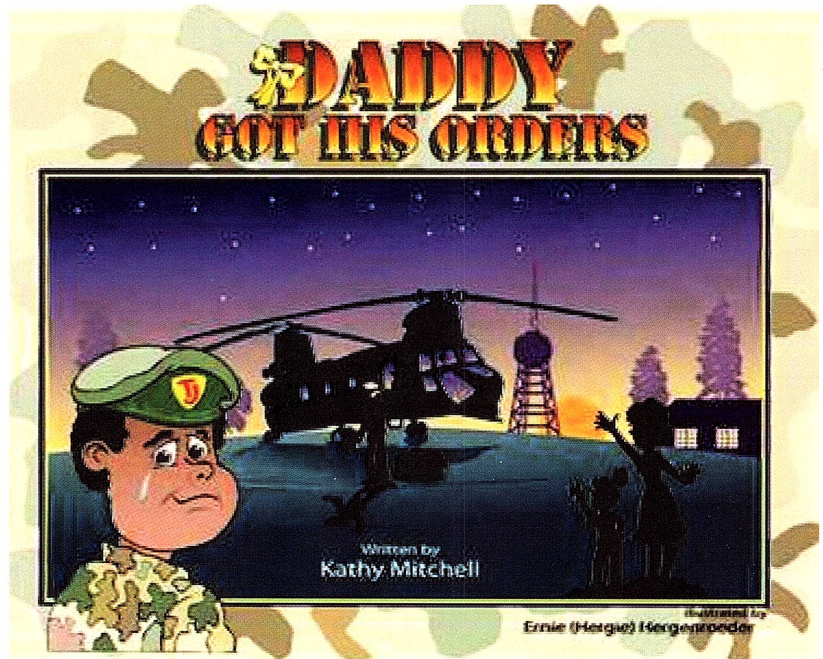
*As a teacher, I'd like to find a lesson to every life event. When my husband, SFC James R. Mitchell, was deployed to Iraq last October with the 729<sup>th</sup> Transportation Company, I quickly learned the lessons of an activated family member.*

*Perhaps, the first lesson to be learned was that when my husband was activated, we were all activated – my 2 children, T.J. 6, Kamila 8, and myself. Although James volunteered to enter the Army Reserves, we were essentially drafted into the program. We each had different ways of coping with the deployment including my husband.*

His method was denial. He insisted that he was not going anywhere and never would go anywhere because he was “AGR!” He assured me that for him to go anywhere the unit would have to be activated and that would not happen because most of their soldiers were already attached to other units. Then I remember, it seemed that everyday new soldiers and trucks were arriving. He still denied he was going: “I will only believe it when I am on that plane heading to Iraq.” Now that he just came home we cannot believe that he ever went. But he was gone for 15 months. During that time, I consulted many of the spouses and have come up with what I call the 7 rules of deployment:

**Rule #1:** The 1<sup>st</sup> time you go to a park with your kids, it will seem like dad's day at the park. Every child will be playing with his father but yours. During these times you may have to borrow someone's dad to play with your child. If you are T.J., you go up to a dad and announce: “My daddy is in Iraq and I need you to play with me.” That strategy does seem to work.

**Rule #2:** While your spouse is adjusting to the demanding training schedule, in our case at Ft. Lewis, you will find out that not every night was as terrible as he portrayed. Universally, every wife will find that mystery charge to Hooters once she receives the credit card statement for the



month. We just wonder which night they went out since the nightly phone calls never seem to reflect an evening of fun.

**Rule #3:** When your spouse is gone everything will break down. The roof will leak – ours was even new! The hot water heater will stop working. The washing machine will leak. The cable company will become your best friend. Your car will break down at least twice – even if your husband is a mechanic. A corollary to this rule: His car battery will die and the car will collect dust even if you continue to drive it.



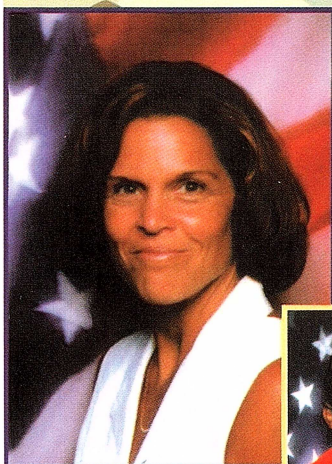
**Rule #4:** You may think you can save a lot of money due to the extra pay. No matter how much extra pay he gets, it will not be enough. You have phone calls to pay for. Yes, we get phone cards, but do they work on that phone system? We send packages. Flat rate boxes came into effect shortly after the deployment, thank goodness! We have child care expenses that we never had before. Then when you think it is all over and they are coming home, you have to spend money to send home his personal belongings! That trunk is pretty heavy.

**Rule #5:** Do not expect everyone to recognize a military power of attorney. DEERS may even refuse to talk to you insisting they need to talk to the soldier. You then have to explain that he is in Iraq on convoy missions and they respond by saying "they do have phones over there." You might also argue with a financial institution that wants a specific power of attorney that a general military power of attorney is more inclusive and should suffice. Eventually, they may get it!

**Rule #6:** Whatever date they say they are coming home will be changed several times. Do not plan a homecoming party on the 1<sup>st</sup> date given for their arrival or you may be partying alone.

I have certainly learned many things while my husband was gone. I am proud of myself for several accomplishments. I never once missed his phone call. I did not want him wasting time walking or taking a bus, standing in line and then calling only to get my recording. I actually learned some practical things – like how to use a screwdriver, set the timers on the sprinklers, put air in my tires and how to navigate through DEERS and TriWest. Most important, I learned how much I missed my husband, a fact that leads to the last rule of deployment.

**Rule #7:** A deployment can either strengthen or weaken a marriage. For us, we have grown stronger as a couple and a family learning to appreciate what truly matters most in life – each other. My 6 year old son said it best at the dentist office. The dentist told us that T.J. was grinding his teeth. I asked him why. He responded, "Dad I'm angry." I then told the dentist that next year we shouldn't have this problem when his dad is back. T.J. then replied "I will still grind my teeth, because I will never get this year out of my head." I, too, will never forget the year but feel stronger because of it and blessed to have him home. I have a greater appreciation for all those who have served their country and am grateful to the soldiers and their families who I now know sacrifice so much at home.



Kathryn Mitchell and Thomas James (T.J.), Mitchell

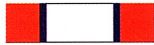


**K**athryn Mitchell grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area. She attended the University of California, Davis, where she majored in psychology. She was involved in promoting athletics and interned in public relations for the Sacramento Kings Professional Basketball Team. After graduating Phi Beta Kappa from U.C. Davis, she moved overseas to teach students from different cultural backgrounds. She returned to the United States with a greater appreciation of this country and the freedoms that we enjoy. With a desire to continue teaching, she received a masters degree in education from the University of California, Los Angeles. She met her husband, James, while teaching in Los Angeles where he was an Army recruiter. Today, they have two beautiful children, Thomas James (T.J.), 5 and Kamila, 7. They reside in Fresno, California, where James is the motor sergeant for the 729th Transportation Company. After twelve years of teaching, Kathy continues to be an advocate for kids. Now her mission is to both heighten public awareness of what military children experience and to help them through the difficult time of a parent's deployment.



# Awards

## Distinguished Service Medal



MG                      Ostenberg, Robert                      63D RRC                      DSM

## Legion of Merit



LTC	Allard, David J.	381 <sup>st</sup> MP	LOM
COL	Black, William C.	63D RRC	LOM, MSM
COL	Burnette III, Walter N.	6325 <sup>th</sup>	LOM
1SG	Cargill, Christopher D.	164 <sup>th</sup> CSG	LOM
MSG	Delgado, Felix	63D RRC	LOM
CSM	Fisher, George J.	176 <sup>th</sup> MED GP	LOM
COL	Gericke, James R.	176 <sup>th</sup> MED GP	LOM
MSG	Hogan, Gary L.	1397 <sup>th</sup> TTB	LOM
COL	Impellizzeri, Robert D.	63D RRC	LOM
LTC	Karbel, Robert E.	63D RRC	LOM
LTC	McCall, Robin D.	63D RRC	LOM
COL	Moscariello, Joseph	63D RRC	LOM
CW5	Owens, Jerry L.	63D RRC	LOM
CW5	Parker, Thomas B.	368 <sup>th</sup> MI BN	LOM
LTC	Robinson, Ken K.	63D RRC	LOM
LTC	South, Nita G.	63D RRC	LOM
COL	Stephany, Michael E.	63D RRC	LOM
MSG	Valles, Arturo	63D RRC	LOM
COL	Wisembaker, James D.	63D RRC	LOM

## Meritorious Service Medal



SFC	Adcox, David K.	63D RRC	MSMw/1OLC
SFC	Allen, Deborah D.	63D RRC	MSMw/2OLC
MAJ	Allen, Stephen D.	368 <sup>th</sup> MI BN	MSM
CW3	Anchetta, Ismael M.	368 <sup>th</sup> MI BN	MSM
MAJ	Atlas Sr., Anthony	63D RRC	MSMw/1OLC
LTC	Augeri, Richard M.	63D RRC	MSMw/4OLC
SFC	Austin, Michael J.	63D RRC	MSMw/2OLC
CW2	Baribault, John J.	326 <sup>th</sup> FI GP	MSMw/1OLC
MSG	Bartimus, Maneasseaha	63D RRC	MSM
SFC	Batty, John W.	63D RRC	MSM
SSG	Beauchamp-Hernandez, Tomas	63D RRC	MSM
SFC	Blair, David L.	63D RRC	MSM
SSG	Bowyer, Lisa M.	6252D USAH	MSM
SFC	Bunn, James C.	806 <sup>th</sup> AG CO	MSMw/1OLC
SSG	Calvin, Opal L.	691 <sup>st</sup> QM CO	MSM
MSG	Caneda, Al P.	968 <sup>th</sup> QM CO	MSM
MSG	Carlson, Sagrario A.	63D RRC	MSM
MAJ	Carrasco, Kori L.	63D RRC	MSMw/1OLC
MAJ	Carter, Thomas R.	63D RRC	MSMw/2OLC
MSG	Castillo, Estrella P.	63D RRC	MSM
COL	Chesney, Michael	1394 <sup>th</sup> DSB	MSMw/2OLC
LTC	Collins, Timothy R.	1394 <sup>th</sup> DSB	MSMw/4OLC
MSG	Coltharp, David M.	63D RRC	MSM
CPT	Cox, Jonathan C.	257 <sup>th</sup> TC CO	MSMw/1OLC
MAJ	Crawford, Bennetta C.	4211 <sup>th</sup> USAH	MSMw/3OLC
SFC	Croom, Alice G.	63D RRC	MSM
COL	Crotty, Richard C.	653D ASG	MSMw/4OLC
MSG	Cruz, John	387 <sup>th</sup> MAINT BN	MSMw/4OLC
SFC	Dagulo, Mario R.	326 <sup>th</sup> FI GP	MSM
SFC	Dahlig, David D.	63D RRC	MSM
MSG	Debose, Gregory J.	2D MED BDE	MSM
MSG	Deshong, James	63D RRC	MSMw/1OLC
MAJ	Dominic, Kirk J.	63D RRC	MSM
LTC	Dudkiewicz, Samuel W.	368 <sup>th</sup> MI BN	MSMw/3OLC

SGM	Friedrichsen, Raymond C.	63D RRC	MSMw/2OLC
SFC	Gaines, Trenece	63D RRC	MSM
SGM	Geis, Alan D.	164 <sup>th</sup> CSG	MSM
SFC	Gilbert, Dale L.	63D RRC	MSM
SFC	Gonzalez, Maria D.	63D RRC	MSM
CW2	Groneberg, Steven H.	326 <sup>th</sup> FI GP	MSM
MAJ	Hericks, Kristan L.K.	419 <sup>th</sup> QM BN	MSM, AAMw/2OLC
MAJ	Hope, Tedford A.	63D RRC	MSMw/1OLC
MAJ	Jackson, Robert A.	164 <sup>th</sup> CSG	MSMw/1OLC
CPT	Jones, Michael S.	63D RRC	MSMw/3OLC
SFC	Kallio, Scott W.	341 <sup>st</sup> MP CO	MSM
COL	Khalsa, Gopal	63D RRC	MSMw/3OLC
COL	Kim, Thomas H.	349 <sup>th</sup> CSH	MSM
SSG	Klee, Daniel J.	751 <sup>st</sup> QM CO	MSMw/1OLC
SFC	Latshaw, Linda	164 <sup>th</sup> CSG	MSM
MAJ	Lauinger, Neil J.	155 <sup>th</sup> CSB	MSM
SFC	Ludwig, Jeffrey C.	63D RRC	MSM
SFC	Magsadia, Michael M.	63D RRC	MSM
SFC	Marvin, Scott C.	63D RRC	MSM
LTC	McGuire, Wendy A.	419 <sup>th</sup> QM BN	MSMw/2OLC
CPT	McMichael, Brian D.	63D RRC	MSM
COL	Miller, Jerry C.	349 <sup>th</sup> CSH	MSM
SFC	Moore, Gary L.	63D RRC	MSMw/1OLC
SFC	Mozeleski, Theodore S.	368 <sup>th</sup> MI BN	MSMw/1OLC
SFC	Mungaray, Claudio A.	78 <sup>th</sup> LSO	MSM
LTC	Noh, Thomas	63D RRC	MSM
CPT	Ord, Isabelle, L.	653D ASG	MSM
LTC	Overton, Troy B.	6045 <sup>th</sup> GSU	MSM
SFC	Padilla, Oscar	371 <sup>st</sup> QM BN	MSM
SFC	Paige, Kimberly D.	1394 <sup>th</sup> DSB	MSM
MAJ	Pak, Kyung I.	63D RRC	MSM
COL	Pearl, Harry B.	63D RRC	MSMw/3OLC
SFC	Pembroke, Phillip G.	63D RRC	MSM
ILT	Penn Mathis, Elline M.	63D RRC	MSM
LTC	Peralta, Larry M.	63D RRC	MSMw/1OLC
SSG	Peraza, Gabriel	316 <sup>th</sup> MP DET	MSM
MSG	Pericich, Gregg A.	63D RRC	MSM
MAJ	Perry, Phillip L.	63D RRC	MSM
CPT	Pinz, Michael J.	489 <sup>th</sup> MAINT GP	MSMw/1OLC
MAJ	Pollock, Allan	326 <sup>th</sup> FI GP	MSM
MSG	Powers, Mark B.	368 <sup>th</sup> MI BN	MSM
CW4	Rasmussen, Dale L.	316 <sup>th</sup> MP DET	MSM
CPT	Robb, Natalie J.	205 <sup>th</sup> MI BN	MSM
CSM	Roberson Jr., Robert N.	653D ASG	MSMw/1OLC
SSG	Robertson, Kimberly J.	63D RRC	MSM
COL	Roman, Jaime R.	75 <sup>th</sup> LSO	MSMw/2OLC
MSG	Rosado, Gilberto	63D RRC	MSMw/2OLC
LTC	Saelens, Daniel J.	164 <sup>th</sup> CSG	MSMw/5OLC
SFC	Sampaga, Renato E.	63D RRC	MSMw/1OLC
CPT	Schaefer, Chris G.	368 <sup>th</sup> MI BN	MSM
LTC	Schauerer, Marian	63D RRC	MSM
SFC	Schneeberger, Sandra L.	63D RRC	MSM
SFC	Scott, Marvin C.	222 <sup>nd</sup> BOD	MSM
CPT	Shaw, Clarence R.	326 <sup>th</sup> FI GP	MSM
MSG	Smith, Gary H.	653D ASG	MSM
SFC	Sossa, Sergio D.	63D RRC	MSM
COL	South, John J.	63D RRC	MSM
LTC	Stein, William	63D RRC	MSM
LTC	Stewart, Frank A.	326 <sup>th</sup> FI GP	MSMw/1OLC
MAJ	Strem, Steven J.	63D RRC	MSM
LTC	Strong, David R.	6045 <sup>th</sup> GSU	MSM
1SG	Swanson, Paul C.	314 <sup>th</sup> MP CO	MSM
SFC	Szopinski, Robert A.	751 <sup>st</sup> QM CO	MSM
COL	Tatu, Megan	63D RRC	MSMw/4OLC
SSG	Taun, Charles K.	63D RRC	MSM
MSG	Thomie, Michael D.	257 <sup>th</sup> TC CO	MSM
MAJ	Torry, Mary A.	63D RRC	MSM
COL	Umberg, Robin B.	4211 <sup>th</sup> USAH	MSMw/3OLC
SFC	Valdiri, Edgard	63D RRC	MSM
CSM	Vanligten, Robert D.	6045 <sup>th</sup> GSU	MSMw/2OLC
SFC	Villanueva, Derwin J.	349 <sup>th</sup> CSH	MSM



Specialist LaAndrea LaMarque. 54B Chemical Specialist. U.S. Army Reserve

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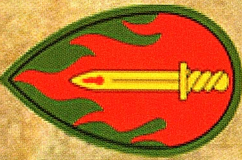
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