

The Blade

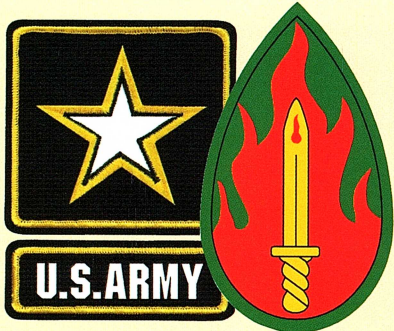
U.S. Army 63rd Regional Readiness Command

Spring 2007 Volume 42, Issue 1



Gearing up for Pacific Warrior

**355th Chemical Company Suits Up
Unit Seeking Space Soldiers**



ARMY STRONG.SM

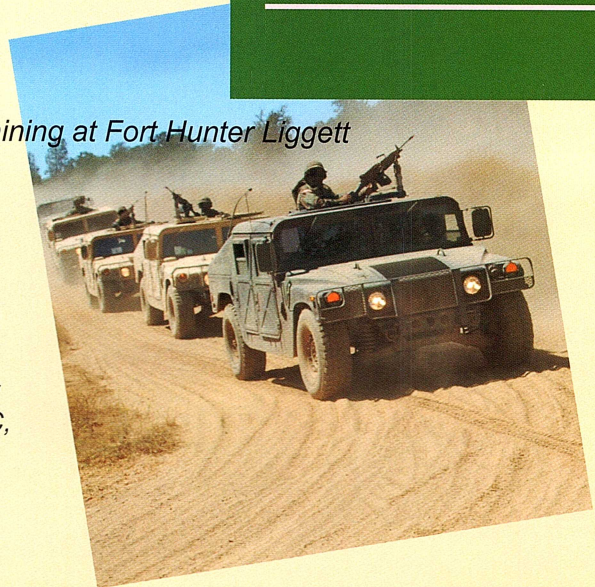
CO



Cover: Convoy Training at Fort Hunter Liggett

Brig. Gen. Ebner, deputy commander of 63rd RRC, and Command Sgt. Maj. Wilsdon visit Soldiers in Nevada.

photo: P Ryan PAO



Sgt. 1st Class Carlos Flores, convoy commander of 2nd Platoon, 250th Transportation Company at Camp Adder, Iraq, gives a briefing to his Soldiers prior to a convoy mission. See story about the 250th in this edition.



CONTENTS

Vol. 42 No. 1 Spring 2007

The Blade

Commander

Maj. Gen. Paul E. Mock

CSM

Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Wilsdon

Public Affairs Officer/

Editor

Patricia E. Ryan

Editor

John D. Wagner

Writer/Photographer

Kent A. Ambrose

The Blade is an unofficial publication under the provisions of AR 360-1 and distributed through Army Reserve Centers within the 63rd Regional Readiness Command. Views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army or of the U.S. Army Reserve. Average circulation is 5,000 three to four times annually. **Stories, photographs and suggestions are welcome.** Mailing address is:

63rd RRC PAO ATTN: Blade Editor 4235 Yorktown Ave. Los Alamitos, CA 90720-5170
(562) 795-2359/2356 fax: (562) 795-1370
email: john.d.wagner@usar.army.mil

Departments

CG's Corner	1
Top Talk.....	2
Safety	3
Cover Story, Pacific Warrior.....	5
Family Readiness	20
Ambassadors	22
Passing	23
Chaplain's Corner	26
Army Wide.....	28

Features

Olive Tree Ceremony.....	7
Soldier lost in Iraq.....	9
250th Transportation Company	11
Space Program	13
Purple Heart Ceremony.....	14
Chemical Unit.....	15
Soldier/NCO of the Year	17
CG on Command Future	19
Ambassador Conference	21
Letters From the Field.....	24
Black History Month.....	25
Kitchen on Wheels.....	27



ARMY STRONG.™

COMMANDERS



CORNER



'Superb duty' is what we expect

Command Sgt. Maj. Wilsdon and I went to Kuwait and Iraq in January. We visited more than a dozen units and hundreds of Soldiers. I was anxious to sense the mood and attitude of our Soldiers.

While there, the tour extensions of a number of units was announced as was the secretary of defense's mobilization policy. I was not surprised at the continued can-do attitude of our Soldiers.

This was similar to what I experienced the prior year. Despite hazardous conditions, being away from home, significant "distractions" (anticipations of extensions and new rules of mobilization), Soldiers do what Soldiers do best—Soldier on. I continue to be amazed. We are all volunteers and the focus in theater continues to be fighting, winning the war and bringing the team home—safe.

I received many laudatory comments from leaders in

Kuwait and Iraq about the performance of our Soldiers. Superb duty is what we expect. Especially noteworthy was the mention of our family support members. Donna Donahue, Talia Wesley and others are to be commended for their never-ending support to our Soldiers.

Sadly, we lost one of our own recently. Spc. Carla Stewart lost her life in a vehicle roll over. She was a member of the 250th Transportation Company, out of Tallil. At the memorial service, her family talked about her desire to join the Army and do something that counted. I was thanked by her family for the support the Army provided during the painful period of her loss. They were proud of her service to her country.

Maj. Gen. Paul E. Mock



Maj. Gen. Mock and Command Sgt. Maj. Wilsdon visit the 250th Transportation Company in Iraq.

TOP TALK



Safety, Safety, Safety!

As we all know, we fight like we train, and should train like we fight. It sounds like an oxymoron; to train safely for combat just doesn't sound right, but it is.

When we lose Soldiers to accidents as we did recently with Spc. Carla Stewart, it is telling the enemy they don't need to beat us, we will beat ourselves. Proper training is a combat multiplier.

Not losing Soldiers through senseless accidents increases our Combat Power that we will use against the enemy. All we are doing is aiding our enemy when we do not train in our battle drills and exercises realistically, yet safely.

Besides morally owing it to your fellow Soldiers to train safely, consider it waste, fraud and abuse to not use the resources we have. To squander our precious resources, most especially our Soldiers, is unthinkable, shameful, immoral and simply un-American!



I am asking each of you for your personal and individual ownership of this issue. Please train safely and realistically, if not for your sake, for the sake of your families, this Army and America herself! Let's not beat ourselves; train properly and safely, with an eye to making it realistic and rigorous but where it doesn't kill our own Soldiers.... We're supposed to kill the enemy!

The next time you think it's OK to cut corners and train unsafely, I'll introduce you to any one of the mothers, fathers, spouses and children that have lost loved ones to senseless training accidents. You explain to them, while they are weeping and sobbing, why it's OK to waste our resources and endanger their loved ones.

Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Wilsdon



Visiting 257th Transportation Company Soldiers in Las Vegas.

photo: P Ryan PAO

HOLD YOUR BATTLE BUDDY RESPONSIBLE

The motorcycle brake light flashed. The motorcycle started a skid, with the rear wheel sliding left. The rider's brake light went out; the bike straightened up, and made it past the vehicle in front of us, by tilting the bike to the right so that the left hand grip cleared the right rear-view mirror. The motorcyclist accelerated away, having chosen the road more traveled.

The rider was lucky this time. But it could have been otherwise. Soldiers have been involved in too many motorcycle mishaps. The Army had 147 motorcycle accidents in fiscal year 2006, and 48 were fatal. As with automobiles, speeding was the leading rider mistake associated with fatal accidents.

It is important to engage your Battle Buddy in safety. The statistics show that a teammate is a fallen comrade in far more situations than being wounded in combat. They encompass those

who are tired, intoxicated, medically impaired, sexually assaulted, depressed or who, for other reasons, are at a heightened risk.

Twenty-eight (58 percent) of Soldiers were killed while riding their motorcycles at night. The most deadly time period was between midnight and 1 a.m., during which seven Sol-

diers died. There was an age difference between Soldiers dying at night and those dying during the day. The average age of Soldiers dying in night-time motorcycle accidents was 28, five years younger than those who died during the day. Alcohol was cited as a contributing factor in five of the fatal night-time crashes

As a Battle Buddy, it's important to tie Soldier-safety actions to the Soldier's Creed (Warrior Ethos):

- "I will always place the mission first." Ask yourself: Am I placing my Soldier mission first if I recklessly endanger my and other people's lives?

- "I always maintain my arms, my equipment and myself." Ask yourself: Am I maintaining myself if I'm not wearing protective equipment—such as helmet, gloves, boots and protective jacket?

- "I am an expert and I am a professional." Ask yourself: If I deliberately ignore the law, greatly exceeding the speed limit, or riding while intoxicated or fatigued am I acting as a professional?

Engage your Battle Buddy in safety. Inculcate that safety is not just for the drill, job, task, or mission; it's for all the time every time.

Rule of Threes raises a red flag:

- New Unit
- New Soldier
- New Car

- Speed
- Alcohol
- No Seat Belts

Leadership questions:

- Who will have the next accident?
- What kind of accident will it be?
- What am I doing about it?

14. ARMY COMBAT READINESS CENTER
https://csrc.army.mil

Own the Edge
Be Wise. Stay Alive. Wear Your PPE!

Helmets
Certified by the manufacturer to meet or exceed DOT standards. Must be properly fastened under the chin.

Eye protection
Face shield or impact/shatter-resistant goggles. A full face helmet with proper shield provides the best protection.

Clothing
Long-sleeved shirt or jacket, long trousers, and full-fingered gloves or mittens designed for use on a motorcycle.

Sturdy foot wear
Leather boots or over-the-ankle shoes must be worn.

Personal Protective Equipment
A brightly colored upper garment during the day and retroreflective at night is required. Note: Black is the most common color for motorcycle clothing. Countermeasures should be applied to make riders more visible as pictured above. If the belt is worn, it should be worn diagonally across the shoulder to maximize visibility.

U.S. ARMY
14. ARMY COMBAT READINESS CENTER
https://csrc.army.mil
OWN the EDGE
Composite Risk Management

Got RISK?

<https://croc.army.mil>

LOSSES

▶ A Soldier was killed in a rollover accident Feb. 1 at approximately 2105 local in Iraq. The Soldier was the driver in a M2A3 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle that was driving along a canal when the side of the road gave way causing the vehicle to roll into a canal. The U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center is investigating the accident.

**COST: 1 Soldier Killed
1 Bradley Fighting Vehicle Damaged**

▶ Two Soldiers were killed in an M1114 HMMWV rollover accident Feb. 1 at 2130 local in Iraq. The two Soldiers were the driver and TC in a HMMWV traveling along a canal when the driver lost control of the HMMWV causing it to roll into the canal. The HMMWV was submerged upside down for 30 minutes before rescuers could pull them from the vehicle. Their unit had recently completed HEAT training in Kuwait. The U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center is investigating the accident.

**COST: 2 Soldiers Killed
1 M1114 HMMWV Damaged**

▶ A Soldier was killed in a vehicle accident Feb. 5 at approximately 0125 local near Billings, Mo. The Soldier was driving a 2006 Chevy Malibu when he passed a vehicle in front of him and then did not move back into the lane. His vehicle crashed head-on into an oncoming semi-tractor. Both vehicles were destroyed by a post-crash fire. The driver of the semi-tractor was uninjured. The Montana State Police is investigating the accident and toxicology results are pending.

COST: 1 Soldier Killed

▶ A Soldier was injured by a heater explosion fire Feb. 5 at approximately 0055 local in Iraq. The Soldier was standing guard when he attempted to light a heater that had recently gone out. The heater back-flashed resulting in burns to the Soldier's face and a small fire erupted. The Soldier attempted to stomp out the fire causing more burns to his right leg as his uniform caught fire.

COST: 1 Soldier Injured

▶ A Soldier was injured by a grenade throwing accident Feb. 6 in Afghanistan. The Soldier was located next to the grenade training range when a miss-thrown grenade landed within close proximity to him and exploded resulting in the amputation of his arm.

COST: 1 Soldier Killed

PLRs
**Preliminary
LOSS REPORTS**
for the week of 1-7 FEB 07

5

**U.S. SOLDIERS
DIED IN
ACCIDENTS**

- 1 Soldier Injured
- 1 Bradley Fighting Vehicle Damaged
- 1 M1114 HMMWV Damaged

OWN^{the} EDGE

Leading on the Edge



Soldiers participate in recent motorcycle safety training class



Pacific W

Premiere exercise to train thousands

photos: P. Ryan PAO

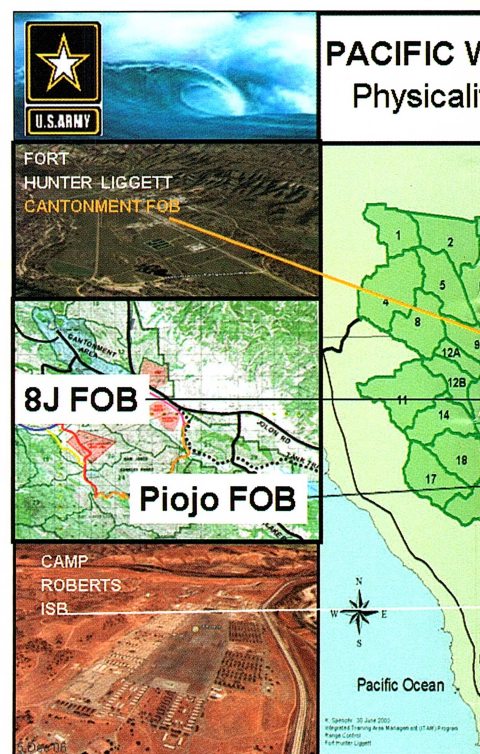
More than 4,000 Soldiers from the 63rd Regional Readiness Command and other units from across the nation will gather at three installations in California this June to train in basic Soldier tasks and engage the “enemy” in a simulated tactical wartime environment.

The event is Pacific Warrior 2007, a premiere exercise to prepare Soldiers for the rigors of deployment in the ongoing Global War on Terrorism. The 63rd will host the exercise at Camp Parks in Dublin Calif., and Camp Roberts and Fort Hunter Liggett in central Calif., with Army Reserve Soldiers participating from units throughout the country.

Pacific Warrior is one of a series of “Warrior” exercises held across the country. Soldiers will receive training in their own specialties including military police, medical, and logistical skills. They will also perform collective Warrior tasks such as base security, convoy operations and quick reaction drills during simulated enemy attacks.

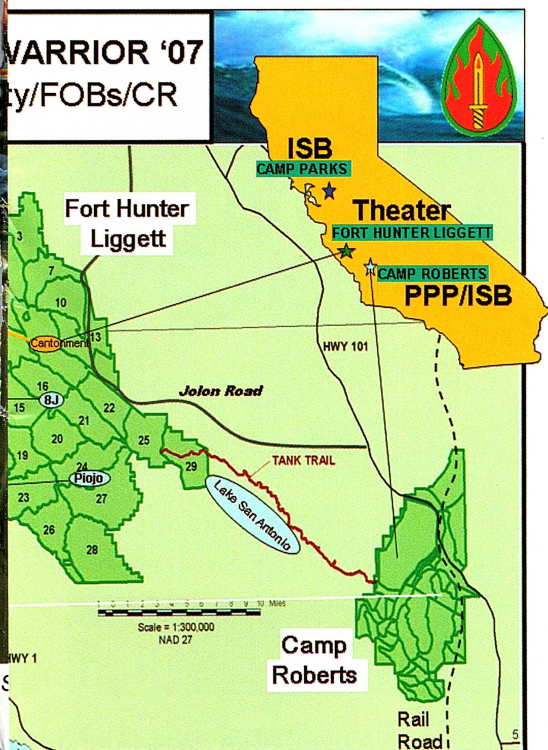
Pacific Warrior will differ from previous “Warrior” exercises by having two exercises within it. It will have what is called the “constructive” simulation involving logistics experts planning transportation of supplies and Soldiers to a tactical environment within a command post environment. It will also have a live exercise out in the field.

The “live” training replicates deploying and operating in a contemporary operational environment. Units will process “into theater” (theater in this context means



Warrior:

of Soldiers for wartime environment



foreign war zones such as Iraq and Afghanistan), at Camp Roberts which will simulate arrival in Iraq or a wartime location, then enter a 24/7 tactical environment at Fort Hunter Liggett for eight days of simulated real wartime scenarios.

Soldiers will operate in units out of forward operating bases or “FOBs,” conducting convoys and other battlefield missions, as well as security operations for the base. An “opposing force” and other kinds of obstacles, such as simulated roadside bombs and insurgent attacks found in a theater will challenge the Soldiers during their training.

The constructive exercise will be a simulation training event conducted at the Battle Projection Center at Camp Parks, in Dublin, Calif. The 311th Expeditionary Sustainment Command, 304th Sustainment Brigade, and the 420th Movement Control Battalion, all part of the 63rd, will be trained by the 5/75th Training Support Division. The simulated warfighter exercise will train the units in high-level logistical management to transport a variety of supplies to Soldiers involved in “sustainment” operations. The 63rd will be the first command to exercise sustainment units with the same reporting and tracking systems they use in theater. The 455th Chemical Brigade and the 377th Theater Sustainment Command will also support the exercise.

Extending the olive branch

Soldiers plant olive trees in Iraq as

By Spc. Alexandra Hemmerly-Brown
210th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

LOGISTICS SUPPORT AREA ANACONDA, Iraq—The olive tree. It has long held deep-seeded symbolism in several cultures; the crown of Olympic champions in ancient Greece, a sign of peace in Christian and Jewish faiths, and an icon of the Prophet Mohammed in Islam.

A few centuries of symbolism combined with three Iraqi citizens, two U.S. Army colonels, and one Army Reserve unit, and you are left with a lasting legacy of the partnership between U.S. forces and the people of Iraq.

Just before Christmas (Dec. 23), a ceremony was held by the 164th Corps Support Group, currently under the 13th Sustainment Command, to begin the planting of 164 olive trees saplings at Anaconda.

“The olive tree is a symbol of peace and this is the message we want to leave the citizens of Iraq,” said Master Sgt. Patricia A. Marsano, field ordering officer for the 164th. The Crestline, Ohio native said the olive tree project was a challenge from her command to leave her unit’s area on Anaconda better than how they found it.

“There are so many trees dying around here, so we researched what kind would survive best in this environment,” Marsano said. “Also, it’s the symbol of peace which we all hope for.”

She said the unit thought trees would be a fitting gesture for both their practical use in this country and their symbolism. Marsano, with the help of 1st Sgt. Roberto Galicia of Ontario, Calif., also of the 164th, contacted Bill Grimes of the California Rare Fruit Growers, Inc., in September, and submitted the request for a donation of olive trees to plant in Iraq.

Grimes passed on the request to Joe Sabol, a retired Cal Poly professor who accepted the challenge. He coordinated the procurement and delivery of the trees to the Soldiers and coordinated the movement by contacting Burchell Nursery in Oakdale, Calif., which offered the saplings at half price. An anonymous donor paid the fee.

In the end, 164 olive trees of five varieties were sent to Iraq on Dec. 7 via Federal Express, which footed the shipping bill. The trees arrived on Anaconda in time to be planted as an unconventional kind of Christmas tree.

“It holds extra meaning, especially this time of year ... it is the spirit of giving,” Marsano said.

At the ceremony, three trees were planted; two by U.S. Army colonels, and one by a group of three Iraqi citizens who work on the base. The remainder of the 164 trees would be planted along Anaconda’s main road, Pennsylvania Avenue, within the next few days.

Maithan Saeed, an Iraqi citizen and translator on the base, was one of the three Iraqis who took part in the ceremony.



Photo: Spc. Alexandra Hemmerly-Brown
Soldiers from 164th Corps Support Group prepare to plant olive trees during Iraq ceremony.

symbol of peace

“It’s a small contract for friends,” Saeed said of the trees. From the small town of Dujail near Balad, Saeed grew up in a farming area and knows the worth of this versatile tree.

Olives are a staple of the Iraqi diet. The fruit’s oil can be used for cooking, lamp oil, cosmetics, and medicine, and the tree bears strong timber. The versatility of the tree, and the fact that every part of it can be used, demonstrate how the plant is invaluable to the Iraqi people.

“We respect this tree because it came from heaven,” Saeed said of the tree’s significance in the Muslim faith.

Simultaneously on this day in a different time zone, the California Rare Fruit Growers orchestrated a planting in San Luis Obispo, Calif., to demonstrate the gift of peace from the American people, to their Iraqi counterparts.



Col. Megan Tatu, commander of the 164th Corps Support Group, plants an olive tree sapling during the December ceremony.



photo: P Ryan PAO

Community members lead by Joe Sabol (center), prepare to plant olive trees in San Luis Obispo, Calif., simultaneous with the ceremony in Iraq.

Trans company loses one of its own

By Spc. Dustin Perry
1/34th Brigade Combat Team PAO

Spc. Carla Stewart had wanted to join the Army for nearly 20 years. She got her chance in 2004, eagerly entered the ranks of Army truck drivers and deployed soon after with the 250th Transportation Company.

In Iraq, she took the initiative to be a driver or gunner on escort convoys southeast of Baghdad. Last May she received a Combat Action Badge after a fire fight with insurgents.

On Jan. 28, Stewart died when her vehicle rolled over during a convoy in Tallil. She is the ninth 63rd RRC Soldier to die in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Stewart, 37, from Sun Valley, Calif., commonly



Photo: Spc. Dustin Perry

operated an M240B machinegun on convoy-escort missions. Her 45 missions typically lasted three to four days, 500 to 600 miles round trip.

Stewart was awarded a Bronze Star posthumously. Her unit is assigned with the 7th Transportation Battalion at Camp Adder, near Tallil. At a memorial ceremony, her comrades expressed fond memories of her as an upbeat, dedicated Soldier.

“She put a smile on anyone’s face even if you didn’t feel like smiling,” said Spc. Summer Gonzales, a close friend. “When she got off a mission and she was weighed down by all the gear, she would stop and ask if you were okay.”

Sgt. Anthea Duarte, a former roommate, said Stewart was able to get along with everyone.

“She would always greet me with a smile and a happy word,” Duarte said. “And when she was upset, which wasn’t often—I could barely tell. Instead, she’d speak her mind, state her grievances and then she chan-



Photo: Spc. Dustin Perry

A Soldier kneels before a shrine set up to honor Spc. Carla Stewart during a memorial service in Iraq.

in Iraq

Spc. Stewart sits ready for duty in an uparmored humvee in Iraq.

Soldiers say she 'put a smile on everyone's face'



Spc. Stewart's mother Emmy Abrahamian welcomes home her daughter's fellow Soldiers.

neled her energy to a more positive resolve.”

The ceremony was concluded with a 21-gun salute and the playing of taps.

Capt. Dan Bowman, commander of the 250th , said the unit was coping well.

“This incident has hit us pretty hard as a unit,” he said. “But everyone is pushing on because Spc. Stewart would want it that way.”

Stewart's casket arrived in Los Angeles Feb. 6 and she received a Los Angeles Police Department escort to the funeral home. Stewart was buried at Forest Lawn-Hollywood Hills in Los Angeles.



Capt. William Bowman, right, and 1st Sgt. Alexander Salas, commander and first sergeant of 250th, console Spc. Summer Gonzalez, left, and Sgt. Anthea Duarte after memorial ceremony for Spc. Stewart.



250th Transportation Company

By John D. Wagner
63rd RRC PAO

CAMP ADDER, Iraq-- The 250th Transportation Company completed their mission with professional attitudes despite news of an extension and still performed their escort mission on dangerous roads, said their top NCO.

"Morale is not bad, it's pretty good," said 1st Sgt. Alexander Salas, of the unit out of El Monte, Calif. The unit had recently received orders that their deployment was being extended past the one-year time frame in theater and they were adjusting accordingly, Salas said. The great news is, now they're home.

The 250th Soldiers typically went out in uparmored humvees to provide armed escorts to civilian contractors hauling fuel, water or other important supplies from one base to another. The unit of about 90 Soldiers performed more than 650 such missions after arriving in March 2006.

Salas said the Soldiers typically traveled at night from 200 to 300 miles and a trip usually lasted two or three days but sometimes as long as six.

The "Nightriders," as they call themselves had plenty of activities available in their off-time at the base recreation center including "pool tables, video games, ping pong and dart boards," Salas said. "We had weekly tournaments in all of these events. There were (also) volleyball courts, a softball field, and a soccer field."

Salas and Capt. William Bowman, unit commander, did their part to help morale.

"We spoke to the crews before they went out," he said. "We tried to stay as positive as we could, and tried to keep them focused on the job at hand and told them not to worry about the politics (of the war)."

On March 30, the 250th arrived home to El Monte, Calif., and into the arms of anxious and grateful family, friends and loved ones. An award ceremony was held March 31, where Maj. Gen. Paul Mock joined local dignitaries, families and people from the community thanking the 250th for a job well done.



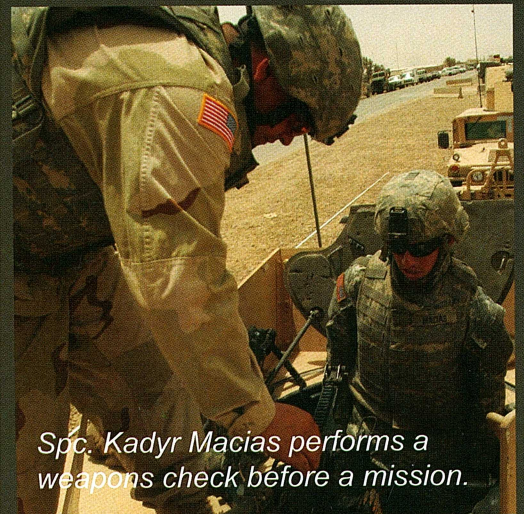
ny completes mission in Iraq



Top: Spc. Randy Tyndall aims his machine-gun during a mission.



Soldiers from the 250th during a pre-mission group prayer.



Spc. Kadyr Macias performs a weapons check before a mission.

Unit seeking 'space' Soldiers for satellite data-retrieval mission

Maj. James Hitt is looking for a few good Soldiers to stand at the edge of satellite-downloading technology.

"This is bigger than life," he said. "If you want to do something huge, this is the place to go."

Hitt is commander of the 3rd Space Company, an elite unit now being stood up. Soldiers will transport terminals out to the field, access satellite data about classified issues, weather or aerial surveillance in minutes. They would then feed the results to commanders up to the three-star level. Such instant information can make a huge difference in war.

The unit is recruiting Soldiers now. NCOs needed include staff sergeants, sergeants first class and a first sergeant. Those selected will attend a course for either the topographic analyst (21U), satellite communication system operator-maintainer (25S), or intelligence analyst (96B) specialties. Officers would attend either a two-week Space Operations Course or a longer 12-week version at Peterson Air Force Base, Colo.

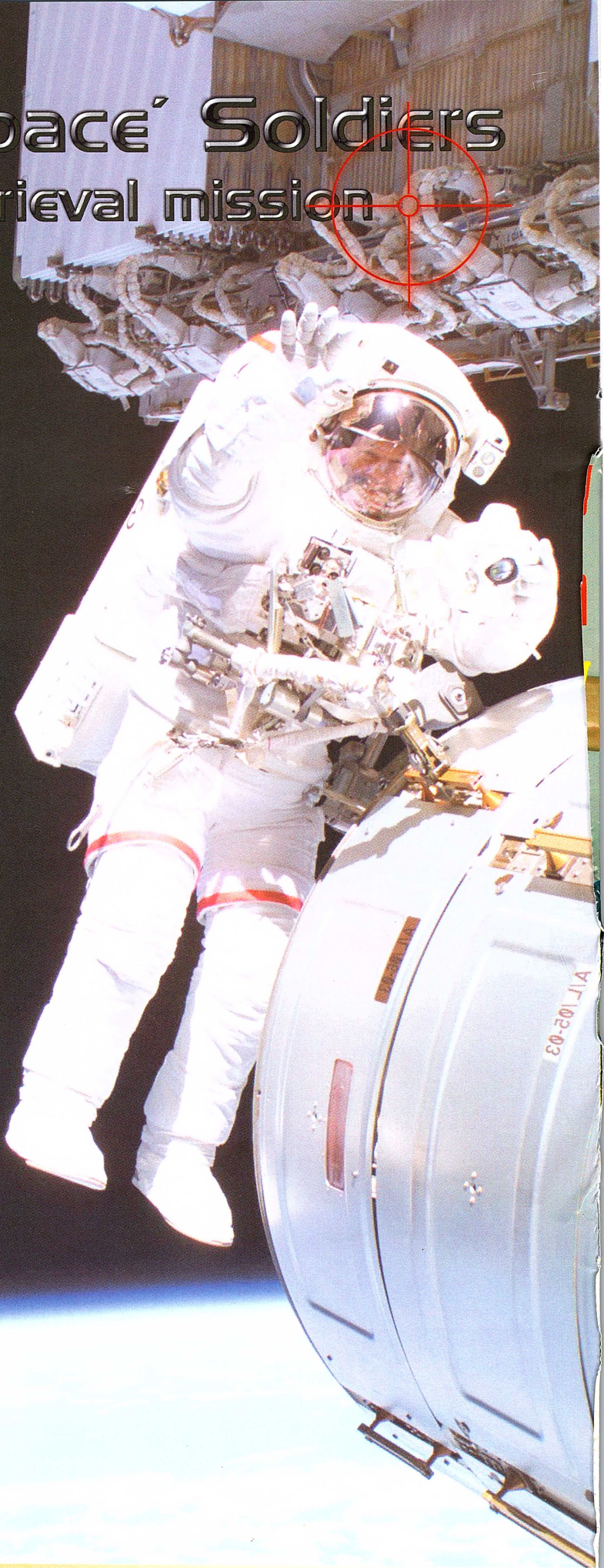
The unit would be one of only three space companies in the Army Reserve.

The company will be divided into five teams. Soldiers in the unit are highly mobile, travel to the field or a headquarters with their own terminal to access satellite data. They may obtain a photo of another part of the world, and either create a map or overlay a photo onto a map.

"And if we need a really detailed map of a small area in one town, such as a 1:5,000, really zoomed in, such as from Iraq, we can do that," said Lt. Col. W. Scott Phillips, outgoing commander. "In the past, you might get a map that was 30 years old. Now you can get a current one in minutes."

The unit also gains data on weather tracking for storms, including for meteor showers or solar flares that can affect satellite reception. Or they can process intelligence from Top-Secret level on down. They can also conduct video teleconferencing out in the field.

Applicants must be eligible for a Top Secret clearance. Those accepted will eventually be deployed, said Hitt. Those interested should call Hitt at (951) 852-0199.



Color Purple:

Soldiers receive medals for injuries in Iraq



By John D. Wagner

63rd RRC PAO

Applause rang out in a theater packed with people as four heroes were escorted into the room, waiting to be honored.

“These Soldiers are a part of the treasure of this country,” said Lt. Col. (Ret.) Thomas Lasser, spokesman for the event. All four had been wounded in duty supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom and were receiving Purple Heart medals.

The February event was held at the Department of Veterans Affairs Hospital in Long Beach, Calif. At least 240 people and a dozen television and newspaper reporters attended.

Among the honorees was Sgt. Maj. Jesse Acosta, of the 63rd RRC 376th Personnel Services Battalion. He was blinded in early 2006 at Logistics Support Area Anaconda by mortar shrapnel while leading a unit run.



photo: P Ryan PAO

Maj. Gen. Paul Mock pins Purple Heart on Sgt. Maj. Jesse Acosta.

“It was a complete honor to receive this,” Acosta said afterward. “It shows that people really do care for those that came back injured.”

Acosta had completed a VA training program for the blind. He has since been competing in running events. He typically holds onto a flexible cane held by Diana Borraro of the 63rd RRC Engineer section.

The tall, out-going and positive Acosta wants to set an example for others with his handicap.

“There’s nothing out there (competitive events) for the blind,” he said. “I was the only blind person out there (in the running events).”

He recently completed the Los Angeles Marathon March 4, a great accomplishment for anyone especially someone who has lost his sight.

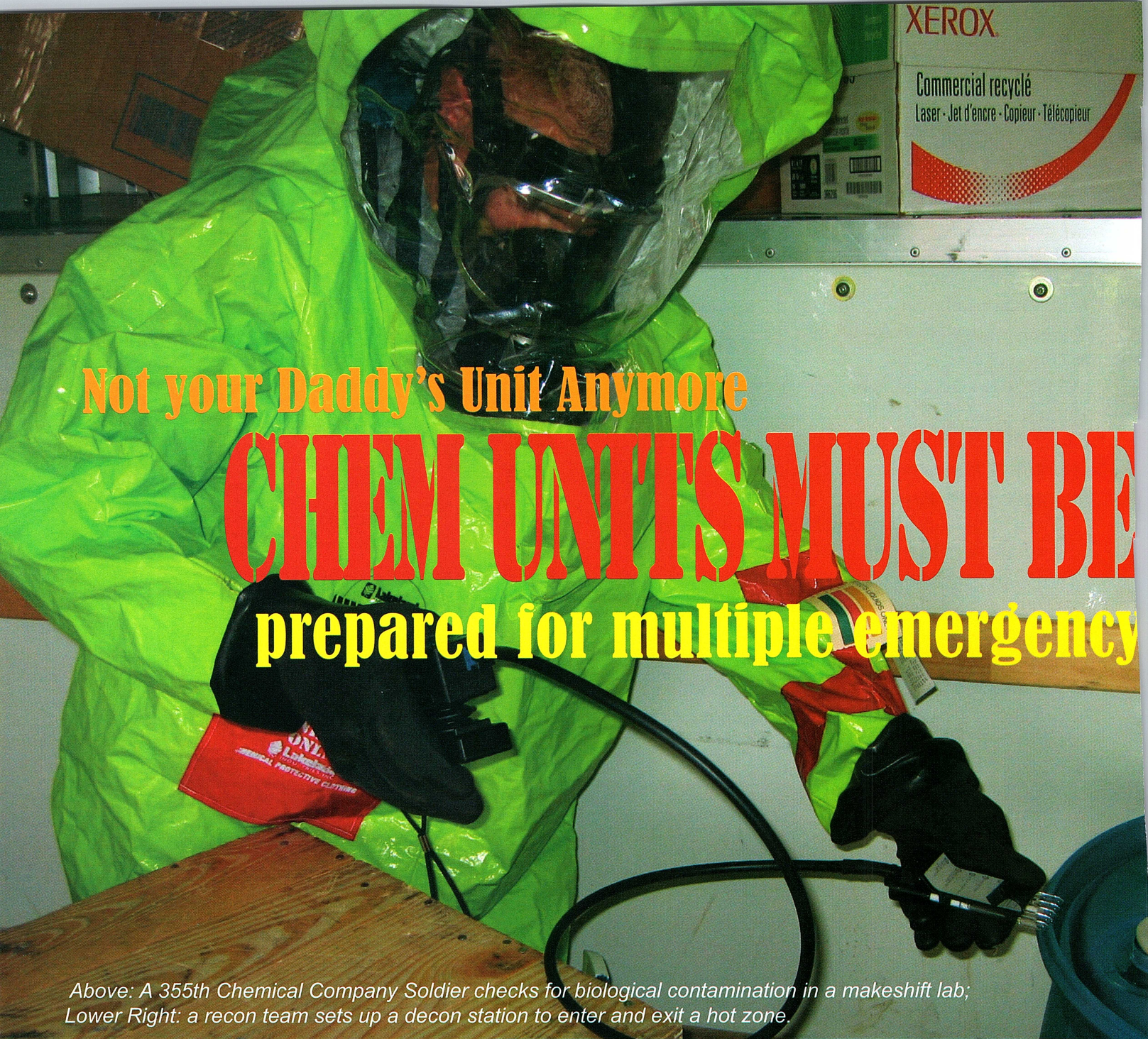
Maj. Gen. Paul E. Mock, commander of 63rd RRC, gave him the award. Acosta praised Mock who “has been there from the get go (supporting him) since I first met him at Walter Reed (Army Medical Center)” where Acosta received treatment after his injury.

Also receiving Purple Hearts were Cpl. Rudy Saavadra and Sgt. Felipe Adams, both formerly active duty; and Spc. Allroy Billiman, previously assigned with the Iowa National Guard. All now live in Southern California.



photo: P Ryan PAO

Brig. Gen. James Combs, commander of the 40th Infantry Division and Joint Forces Training Base, looks on as Acosta congratulates Spc. Billiman, who also received a Purple Heart.



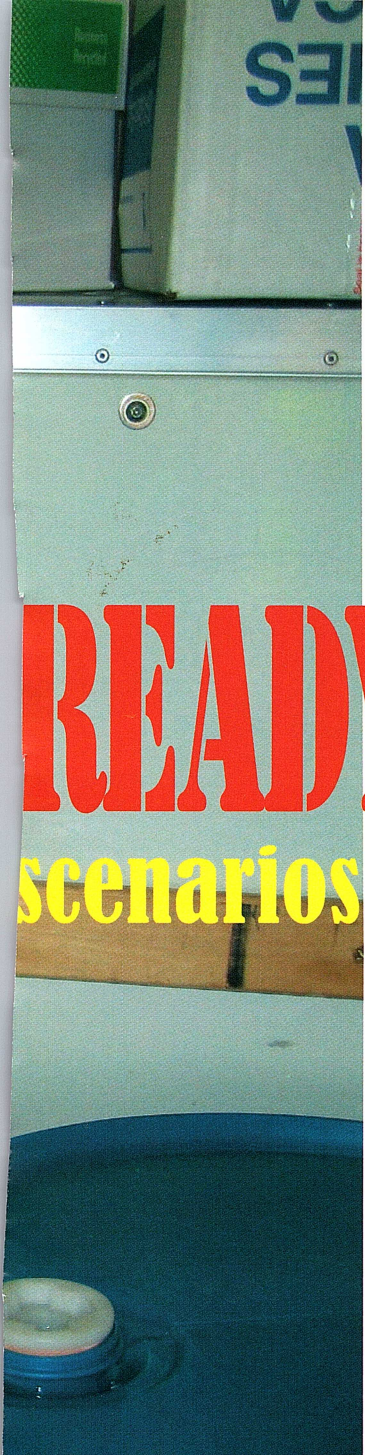
Not your Daddy's Unit Anymore

CHEM UNITS MUST BE prepared for multiple emergency

Above: A 355th Chemical Company Soldier checks for biological contamination in a makeshift lab; Lower Right: a recon team sets up a decon station to enter and exit a hot zone.



Brig. Gen. Charles Ebner tours mobile lab in Las Vegas.



READY TO GO

scenarios



By Maj. Phillip R. Oster
63RRC G3 Operations

Back when our fathers were in Vietnam the chemical units' mission was simple: detect known chemical agents, set up decon stations, and provide smoke for cover for maneuvering units. That was then, and this is now...

Chemical units of today still perform all those duties and can do a whole lot more. Units like the 355th Chemical Company in Las Vegas are now among the premiere elite Warriors of modern warfare.

Ever since 9-11, the mission of chemical units' role has expanded greatly. Units must be able to provide: decontamination missions, setting up decon stations anywhere in the world in 72 hours, and be able to provide service during operations 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

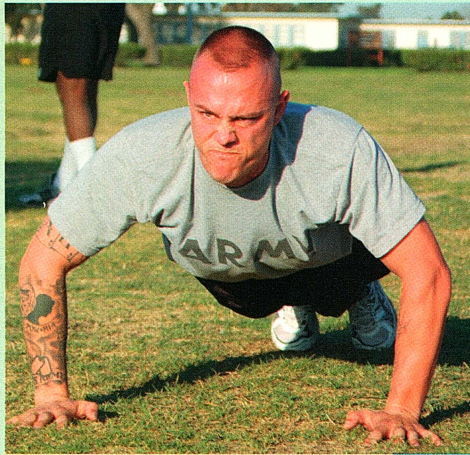
The unit's Recon Platoon must be able to recon areas for not only chemicals, but biological and radioactive agents. They also work with high explosive materials. This is all part of the new Chemical, Biological, Radioactive, Nuclear, and Explosives (CBRNE) perspective, which replaced the old Nuclear Biological Chemical (NBC) philosophy. There are several missions chemical companies must perform now. For Homeland Security, we have a unit on standby all the time to respond to any CBRNE attack on America. The reserve chem units will back up the active-duty missions.

They will assist the Federal Emergency Management Agency during disasters if called upon. In war zones like Iraq they look for Weapons of Mass Destruction. Chemical units today require much more training than their predecessors, the officers now require five phases in their Captains Career Course. NCOs have longer courses as well with more phases in their Basic NCO and Advanced NCO courses. The result: an elite Soldier willing to go where most may fear: a CBRNE environment.

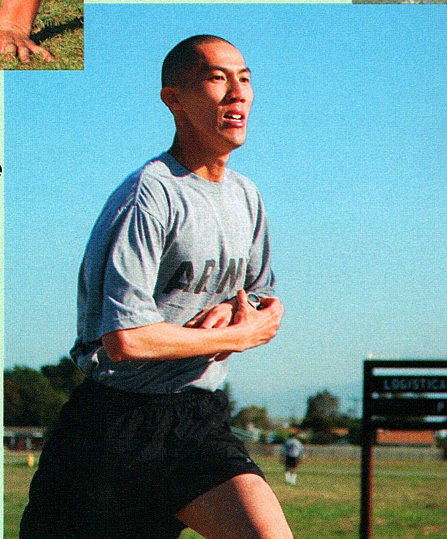


63rd RRC Soldier and NCO of the Year competition

Photos: Kent Ambrose



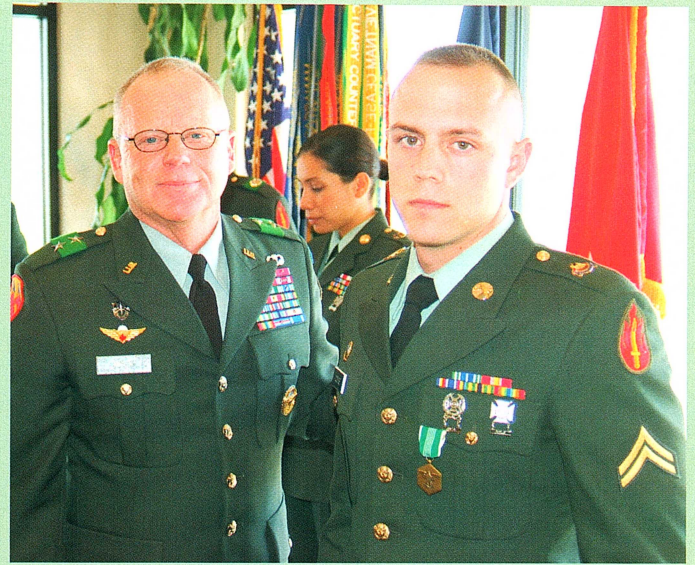
Cpl. Kristopher Coyne of the 56th Military Police Company knocks out pushups during the 2007 63rd RRC Soldier and NCO of the Year Best Warrior Competition. The first day began with an Army Physical Fitness Test. The competition lasted three days.



Sgt. Eugene Ma of the 319th Signal Battalion, runs to the finish during the Army Physical Fitness Test that kicked off the competition.

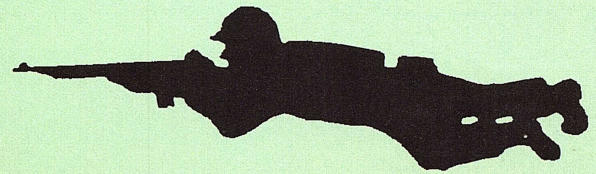


Sgt. Eugene Ma, 63rd RRC NCO of the Year for 2007 is congratulated by Maj. Gen. Paul E. Mock, commander of the 63rd, after Ma won the event. The Soldier was also awarded an Army Commendation Medal.



Cpl. Kristopher Coyne with Maj. Gen. Paul E. Mock after Coyne was named 63rd RRC Soldier of the Year for 2007 after an intensive three-day competition. Coyne was also awarded an Army Commendation Medal.

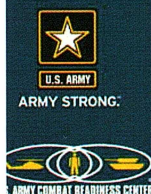
All Soldiers participating in the 63rd RRC Soldier and NCO of the Year Best Warrior Competition, held March 22-24, gather for a proud group photo.



Competition:



- T**reat every weapon as if it is loaded.
- H**andle every weapon with care.
- I**dentify the target before you fire.
- N**ever point the muzzle at anything you don't intend to shoot.
- K**eep the weapon on safe and your finger off the trigger until you intend to fire.



WEAPONS SAFETY!

CG gives update on command's future

By Maj. Gen. Paul E. Mock
63rd RRC Commander

As we prepare to transition units this year and redefine C2 relationships between the 63rd RRC and Operational and Functional (O&F) Commands, the status of units will be important.

It is anticipated that 95 percent of the units in the 63rd RRC will be realigned either to a new higher headquarters, or receive new downtrace units, or both, during this transition period in Fiscal Year 2007. First, most companies and detachments will be re-aligned simultaneously to new command and control battalion Headquarters early this year.

Some units will remain in place, but the majority will be realigned. Second, once "constructed," entire battalions will be realigned in sequence to new C2 headquarters. Lastly, one Major Subordinate Command within the 63rd RRC, the 311th Expeditionary Sustainment Command, will be realigned with all their downtrace to their new headquarters, the 377th Theater Sustainment Command, by the end of this fiscal year.

Once this transition period is completed, the 63rd RRC in both numbers of units and number of Soldiers will be about 80 percent smaller. It is important to note, with a very few exceptions, that no units are physically relocating or moving; these are command realignments. And throughout this realignment process, the principle is that we don't pass broken units from one C2 headquarters to the next.

As the RRC staff is working hard with subordinate staff to arrange for an orderly transition, the leadership must deal with the facts as they relate to unit management, leadership and hand-off. We are faced with many competing forces and demands that impact unit readiness and personnel management, logistics and training.

Start planning now on change-of-rater Officer Evaluation Reports and Non Commission Officer Evaluation Reports, property accountability, atten-



Photo: Kent Ambrose

Maj. Gen. Mock speaks to family members at a recent town hall meeting.

dance (unsats), weapons qualification, Army Physical Fitness Test, flagging actions, Duty Military Occupational Skill Qualification training, etc. These issues won't go away and they do not improve with age. Get started on them now.

The standards for the many programs and requirements are no secret. Don't get caught looking unintelligent when it comes time to explain your unit's status. Just as importantly, what is your game plan to fix shortfalls? This must be detailed, and, a plan that the new C2 headquarters is willing to accept.

Bottom line: Know what the standards are and be there or have a plan to get there.

Ambassadors

The 63rd RRC ambassadors are busy and traveling, greeting Soldiers and continuing to tell the Army story.

Richard Lundin, covering the San Francisco Bay area, attended "Welcome Home" ceremonies for the 481st Transportation Company and 445th Civil Affairs Battalion. He participated in Veterans Day activities such as flag raisings and barbecues. Lundin also visited England as a member of the Queens Club, which honors British disabled veterans. He presented an Army Reserve Ambassador coin to Prince Charles.

Russell Park, representing the San Diego area, represented the Chief of Army Reserve for the reactivation of the 416th Civil Affairs Battalion. He also greeted the Soldiers of the 96th Military Police Battalion, at Lindbergh Field, returning from deployment.

Park, was a featured speaker at the National City Veteran Day ceremony, spoke on Army Reserve issues at the San Diego chapter of the



Above: Ambassador Richard Lundin gives an Army Reserve Ambassador coin to Prince Charles of England.

Military Order of World Wars.

Ambassador at Large Anthony Reed met with a Nevada reporter to brief him on the latest about Army Reserve missions and restructuring. He also secured an agreement for continuing cooperation between the Army Reserve and Nevada National Guard.

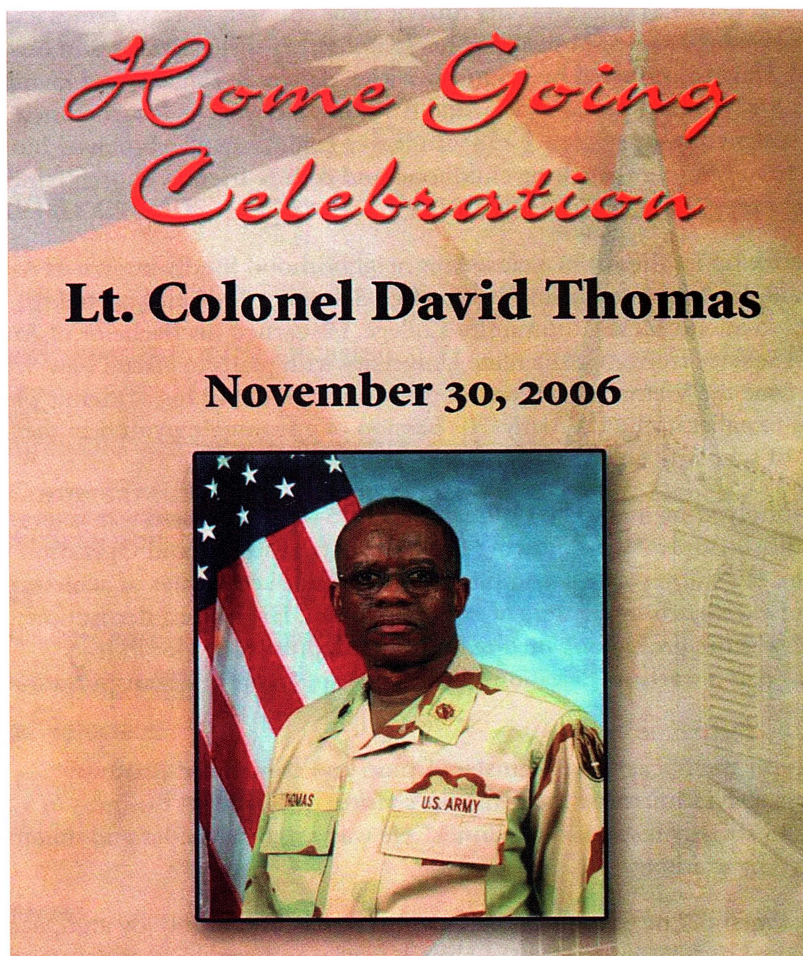
Ambassador Howard Schwartz, covering the Los Angeles area, spoke to 35 officers at the Reserve Officer Association Chapter 42 meeting in Pasadena., Calif. He discussed the Reserve mission and transformation issues.

Ambassador James McEachin and Lt. Col. Robert Redford at recent 63rd RRC Ambassador Conference.



Ambassador Howard Schwartz, raising a flag, applaud

Former battalion commander dies at 56



By Francis X. Segura

63rd RRC G-7

The 63rd Regional Readiness Command suffered the loss of one of its veteran battalion commanders when Lt. Col. David Thomas passed away recently after a brief struggle with cancer.

The 35-year decorated war veteran died at his home in Glendale, Ariz., on Nov. 20 at age 56. He was laid to rest Nov. 30 at Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Phoenix.

Thomas had returned in 2005 from deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom where he served as commander of the 484th Transportation Corps Battalion, 1st Corps Support Command, Camp Anaconda, Balad, Iraq. He also served in deployments supporting Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan) and, earlier, in Operation Desert Storm.

Thomas grew up in Arizona, attended school there and received his bachelor's degree from Arizona State University. He entered military service during the Vietnam War and continued his service with the Army Reserve in various positions of responsibility with the 164th Corps Support Group, Mesa, Ariz., before being selected for command of the 484th.

As a civilian, he was a steadfast and loyal employee of Roadway Freight Trucking Co., and a 25-year member of the Teamsters Union. He was an active member of the Greater Bethel African Methodist Episcopal church in Phoenix.

Thomas will be remembered in both his civilian and military occupations as a dedicated and devoted friend, a natural leader, and an outstanding mentor for subordinates and peers.

His military decorations included the Bronze Star, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, and the Army Achievement Medal.

Thomas is survived by his mother Rita, daughter Tamara and siblings Mary, Alex, Rosie, Patricia and Anthony.

Army announces new TB policy

The Army recently initiated a new AKO alert that notifies Soldiers who either just returned from deployment, or who returned from one more than 90 days ago, that a follow-up Tuberculin Skin Test is required unless the Soldier is exempted.

The current requirements for the test are to have it administered within one year prior to deployment; another administered upon return from deployment and a follow-up test performed 90 to 180 days after return.

It is this last thing that is addressed in the latest AKO alert. If a Soldier has a reason this test should not be administered, they should seek their Medical-Protection-System data-entry person to have an exception posted. Otherwise they should take appropriate action to have the follow-up test administered.

Army hosts day of support and counseling for Soldiers, family members in San Jose

From 6045 GSU

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Soldiers and family members gathered here recently to munch on juicy ribs, watch Santa award gifts and most importantly—to help Soldiers get a fresh start after returning from war.

The event was the annual family day held in December at the Richey Reserve Center here.

A local restaurant served the meals of ribs, garlic bread, pasta and salad. The event also was a “resource fair,” said Denelle Fedor, publicist for the event.

Soldiers came from units including the 6045th Garrison Support Unit, 469th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, the 341st Military Police Company and 381st Military Police Detachment.

Fedor noted that “there were hundreds of people there and lots of (information) tables. There was a plethora of information and a great day.”

Counselors were present from the local Department of Veterans Affairs and Veterans Services of Santa Clara County.

Others present at the booths included the county Department of Corrections who were doing job recruitment. And Blue Star Mothers, a group that sends care packages to their sons, was present to help people get involved. Army retention counselors and TriCare representatives were talking to Soldiers as well.

“Family Day is an event that military families look forward to every year,” said Col. Joel Mjolsness, commander of the 6045th, which hosted the event. “This day allows support organizations to be at one place at one time to serve our military families and provide much needed information as well as a day of fun.”



Soldiers and their family members from multiple 63rd RRC units gathered for fun, good food and help from information tables during the annual Family Day in San Jose.

Lt. Gen. Stultz at ambassador conference

Army Reserve chief says Soldier training should be 'pre-mob'; Reservists needed in emergency response roles

By John D. Wagner
63rd RRC PAO

Deploying Reservists have sent a message up the chain: "Don't waste our time at the mobilization stations."

Lt. Gen. Jack Stultz, chief of the Army Reserve, called the "CAR," hears them and wants things to change. Soldiers readying for deployment must already be prepared. They should do a quick rehearsal exercise at mobilization stations and then be ready to go, he said.

Stultz described his goals recently at the 63rd RRC Ambassador Conference in Irvine, Calif., held in December.

"We cannot afford all this post-mobilization and pre-deployment time," he said. "The training has to occur before mobilization. We should think about pre-mobilization, how we develop our training strategy, our training plan, resources we need, who will be accountable."

This is part of the "Train, Alert, Deploy," strategy that the Army Reserve is emphasizing for its

future.

Stultz also said there are proposals for the Reserve to assume more homeland defense or emergency-response roles. He noted that Reserve Soldiers were called up to assist victims of the Hurricane Katrina disaster.

Furthermore, he once again emphasized the proposed Army Force Generation concept, to have Reservists deploy once every five years.

"Twenty percent away is the goal for the Army Reserve Soldier," he said. "We need to instill predictability with the Soldier, the family and employers," he said.

And the Army Reserve must communicate its mission to the public.

"We are at war and we need to get the American people to understand and support (our mission)," he said. "We need to talk about the Warrior Citizens and their value."

Photos: Kent Ambrose



Lt. Gen. Jack Stultz, chief of the Army Reserve, addressed current Reserve issues at a conference in Anaheim, Calif. With him, from center are Maj. Gen. Paul Mock, commander of 63rd RRC and Brig. Gen. Charles Ebner, deputy commander of 63rd RRC.



Maj. Gen. Paul Mock, local dignitaries and Ambassadors participating at Veterans Day Parade.

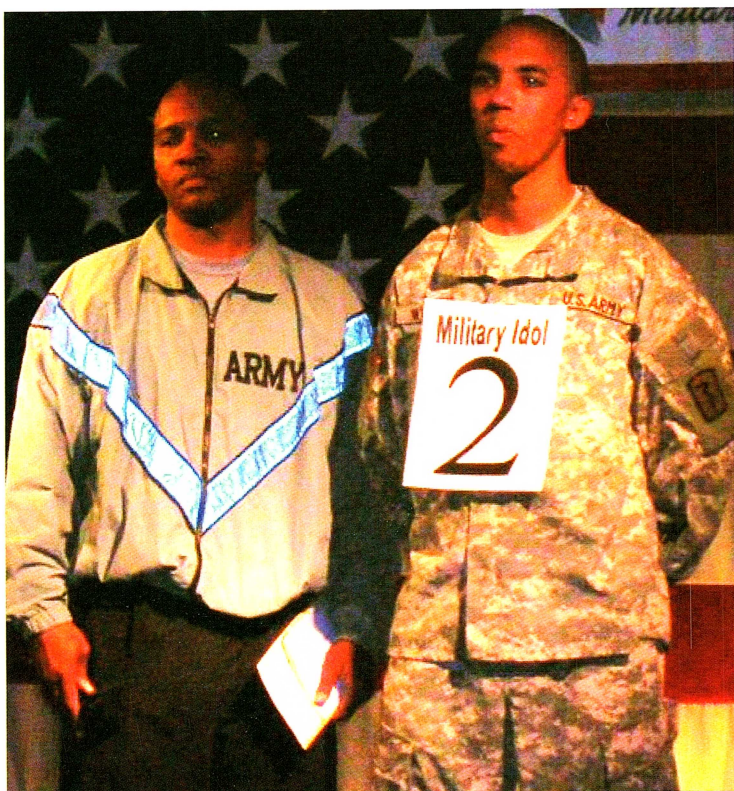
Letters from the field:

NCO writes about 'Military Idol,' producers workshop

Hi Mr. Wagner,

I'm SFC Joseph Wesley, the sub-infamous husband of Talia Wesley. I'm deployed with the 164th CSG out of Mesa, Ariz. We are at Camp Anaconda, Iraq and have been quite busy in the military community here. We started our first event as a unit in October when the 164th supported the Army10 Miler here.

Then I hosted the Military Idol contest for Camp Anaconda. Then I and my roommate participated in the Halloween talent show as guest artists representing the 164th. The 164th CSG had a tree planting ceremony of over 164 Olive trees to our host country that represents the peace we are willing to sacrifice our lives for. I soon afterward began teaching the Music Producers Workshop where all of the producers and future producers here on base can come out and learn about the music industry and learn how to produce and arrange music us-



Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Wesley, left, battle NCO for 164th Corps Support Group, presides over the Military Idol competition.

ing the latest software that most major recording studios use. We also had an audition to link producers with aspiring artist of all forms of music.

'For some it will be their chance to see if they have what it takes to be in the entertainment industry.'

Even if it's Country, Rock, R&B, and Hip-Hop, we have producers for all forms. Everyone is now in the studio recording their music projects, and once they are complete, we will have an unsigned artist showcase for the ones that want to let the base hear what they have been doing for the past five months. For some it will be a chance to see if they have what it takes to be in the entertainment industry. I'm also rehearsing for the Black History Month celebration next month, where our producers will do a part of history about entertainment in Music and Theater from 2000 to 2007.

And today I was asked to host the Black History Jeopardy. We are taking pictures and video clips for the singer Ray J's video shoot that will be filmed starting next week. And at the same time, I'm planning with the MWR and the Mayor's office the Summer Jamm 2007 at the stadium here on base, to be hosted by me with performances by the singer Brandy, her brother, singer Ray J, and a Native American Rapper named Redskin.

These are only the things that are being worked on right now and I'm sure I'm far from being done. If you need any pictures please contact me and I will get it to you. Thanks for your interest, and we'll be safe as we can. Take care.

Joseph Wesley
SFC, USA
Battle NCO, S/3

General urges Soldiers to break mental shackles, aim for excellence

By John D. Wagner
63rd RRC PAO

Soldiers of all colors need to break free from self-imposed restraints and shoot for the stars. That was the message Maj. Gen. Robert W. Smith III (Ret.) told a full house recently to celebrate Black History Month.

“How many of you are still enslaved mentally because you have not broken free of shackles such as ‘I can’t win,’ or ‘My name is not Oprah Winfrey or Bill Gates so (I’m worthless),’?” he asked. “You’ve got to break your own slavery and reach out for your full potential.”

Smith spoke Feb. 23 at the 311th Expeditionary Sustainment Command headquarters in West Los Angeles to an audience of more than 100 Soldiers, civilians and family members. The celebration theme was “From Slavery to Freedom: The Story of Africans in the Americas.”

Smith was the special guest amid a host of colorful displays of black history including the records of jazz stars, pictures of the 19th Century “Buffalo Soldiers” and even black, female-Soldier-Barbie dolls.

“I know I have future CEOs, command sergeant majors and (Maj.) Gen. (Paul E.) Mock’s replacement may be here,” Smith said.

Smith recalled historical figures who shattered negative myths about African Americans. One was Crispus Attucks, an American slave who defied the British in 1770 and was one of the first to die in the American Revolution. Another was the “Harlem Hellfighters” 369th Infantry Regiment that fought in World War II.

“They shattered the idea that ‘blacks cannot be the spearhead of an attack,” Smith said.

He also recalled the 9th and 10th Cavalry Regiment “Buffalo Soldiers,” African-Americans who fought in the Indian wars of the 19th Century.

“The (dominant) idea was ‘They will fail.’ ” Smith said. “But they didn’t. They rewrote history.”

The event also featured Soldiers and civilians modeling traditional African clothing and colorful American garb from throughout the 20th Century. Some showed off “flapper” garb from the 1920s and “zoot suits” from the 1930s and 1940s. Others modeled styles from the 1960s and beyond.

Some of the models were of races other than African American. Spc. Diana Choe, a Korean-American was an example, modeling a 60s style black evening dress and black gloves.

“It was nice to be able to take part in it,” she said. “And I got to learn more about their culture.”



Photo: Spc. Tracy Ellingsen

Members of the 311th Expeditionary Sustainment Command model African clothing styles during recent Black History Month event.

**FROM FLORA M. SHERMAN
AR Child and Youth Services REGIONAL
COORDINATOR
63RD RRC-FAMILY PROGRAMS**



As your AR CY S Regional Coordinator I am available to provide you with information and support services in the following areas:

- Support and access to Child Care information services
- Pilot Program on Battle Training Assembly Weekend Child Care Resources
- Youth Development and Leadership Opportunities

UPCOMING EVENTS AND YOUTH LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

- JULY 2007 OPERATION PURPLE CAMP- SANTA BARBARA, CALIF.

We are getting ready to host the Operation Purple Camp (OPC). It will be open to all branches of the U.S. Armed Services for children ages 8 to 14. The information will be posted on our AR CY S website with a link to the direct site for the application. The OPC registration began March 15, 2007. For more details go to www.arfp.org/cys

TELE: 951-653-7815 / E-mail Address: flora.sherman@usar.army.mil
14945 4TH STREET, RIVERSIDE, CA 92518

Chaplain's Column

Prepare your family now for deployment

by Chaplain (Maj.) John Hamilton

Mobilization is a very real possibility for many Army Reserve Soldiers. So now is the time to prepare for separation from family by getting personal, financial, and legal affairs in order.

Sit down with your family and work out these practical matters. Establish an understanding as to who will do what—from routine household chores to managing the check book, to using credit cards wisely, and knowing how to read your LES.

The most difficult thing that most deal with is the emotions that Soldiers and family members experience during separations. They vary from family to family, but the best way to deal with these feelings is to get them out in the open and discuss them.

Lastly, be sure your family is aware of the military benefits and support services available to them while you are away, such as unlimited commissary and exchange privileges-- and the key to those benefits is the I.D. Card.

For your protection and that of your family, I've listed some "Smart Ways to Minimize Deployment Hassles," (For more, see Operation Ready, <http://www.myarmylifetoo.com>).

- Keep your employer informed as far in advance as possible and when you'll return.
- Know who to call if your family needs help or has an emergency-- medical emergency; the Army Emergency Relief; the American Red Cross; and, for emergency food, contact the Army Community Services.
- The rear-detachment commander and the Family Readiness Group can assist with coordinating with off-post agencies to meet families' needs.
- Update your official family care plan at your unit to ensure guardianship and care of children and dependents.

Lastly, keep your attitude upbeat and positive and reinforce family togetherness.

Also, see: www.arfp.org and militaryonesource.com



Kitchen on wheels serves up meals

Photo: K. Christopher Witt

Spc. Raymond Menjiver, left, Spc. Joshua Fouch, and Sgt. Christopher Gimber, right, fill their plates with food cooked by Sgt. Miguel Lopez in the 304th Sustainment Brigade's mobile kitchen.

*by Spc. Tracy Ellingsen
and Spc. K. Christopher Witt*

311th Expeditionary Sustainment Command PAO

New Orleans has Emeril Lagasse, and Las Vegas brags about Wolfgang Puck. Both are famous cooks. But the Army has Sgt. Miguel Lopez.

Soldiers of the 304th Sustainment Brigade were treated to Lopez's cooking recently during the debut of the unit's Containerized Kitchen, a mobile trailer with all the equipment necessary for meal preparation.

"It's a hard job," said Lopez about being a cook in the Army. "But it's worth it if you like to cook."

The new way of serving up lunch means that Soldiers won't have to travel across their installation or to off-post restaurants for the mid-day meal. It also means not having to settle for a Meal Ready to Eat.

The Saturday meal served from the kitchen consisted of steak, baked potato, corn on the cob, salad and cake. The following day, the Soldiers ate chicken, mashed potatoes, collard greens, cornbread, salad, and strawberry shortcake. The cooks in the mess section also prepared a variety of beverages to quench the thirst of even the thirstiest Soldier.

The menus that are served to the 304th are chosen by the 63rd RRC. But Lopez was glad to serve steak as the first meal from the kitchen.

"Every time we do steaks we run out," he said.

All of the Soldiers in Lopez's section were motivated and in top form Saturday.

"Normally it takes four people 45 minutes to set it up," said Lopez, who has been a cook in the Army Reserve for five years. "Today, it took only half an hour."

"You know how people say you have to like your job? You have to love this job." Even though lunch didn't begin until 11:30 a.m., the kitchen staff was toiling away as early as 7 a.m. "I love the smell of diesel fuel the morning," quipped Spc. Justin Williams, one of the Soldiers in the mess section.

Army increases refer-a-friend bonus to \$2,000

The Army recently announced an increase in the refer-a-friend bonus from \$1,000 to \$2,000. Active-duty Soldiers, Reserve-component Soldiers, retired active, and Reserve Soldiers, and DA Civilians are all eligible to refer friends and relatives who may be interested in Army opportunities through the Sergeant Major of the Army Recruiting Team (SMART) referral bonus program.

Congress authorized the increase, which is in effect from Jan. 18, 2006 through Dec. 31, 2007. "The Army needs more than great equipment to win wars, we need great people," Lt. Col. Kurt Ko, commander of the Southern California Recruiting Battalion, said. "Who is better equipped to bring great people to the Army than the great people in the Army who know the benefits of serving, first-hand?"

In 2005, the Army's pilot program brought the Army Recruiting Command over 1,700 referrals, resulting in 1,300 enlistment contracts. Recruiting officials hope the increased bonus amount will encourage more Soldiers to share the benefits of serving with others.

--Army News Service

IRS offering tax help to Soldiers

The Internal Revenue Service is reminding troops and their families that free assistance is available to them through tax centers on military installations worldwide.

The IRS has provided the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program to servicemembers for more

than 25 years.

The program, overseen by the Armed Forces Tax Council, works to train military volunteers on installations through intensive training sessions to understand current laws and offer tax advice, preparation, return filing and other tax assistance.

The Defense Department also has certified locations for combat zone tax benefits for direct support of military operations in operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom. A listing of these locations can be found at www.irs.gov/newsroom by clicking on the "Armed Forces" tab.

--Armed Forces Press Service.

New form eases claims for combat injuries

A new claim form for Combat Related Special Compensation is now available and makes eligibility and required enrollment information easier to understand.

The new form has several improvements. Simple changes such as a larger font and text boxes make it easier to use. In addition, the new form takes claimants through a sequence of eligibility questions and prompts them for documentation every step of the way. The Army has created an enhanced website (www.crsc.army.mil) to answer questions. Once there, click on "Retired Veterans" to obtain information on eligibility criteria, the claim process, answers to frequently asked questions, claim resources, and download a claim form. In addition, veterans can call the CRSC Service Center at (866) 281-3254 or reach it via e-mail at crsc.info@us.army.mil.

--Army HRC PAO

Shorter call-ups set for mobbed Army Reservists

Defense officials recently announced new policies for deploying Reservists, including cutting back maximum call-up time.

The maximum mobilization time will be reduced to 12 months, down from the current 18 months.

In future deployments, the Reserve will be managed on a unit basis as opposed to the current management at the individual-Soldier level.

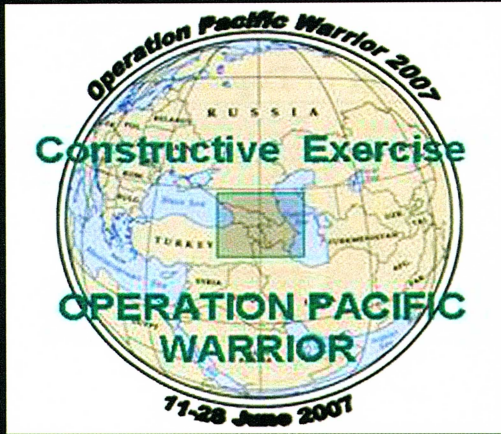
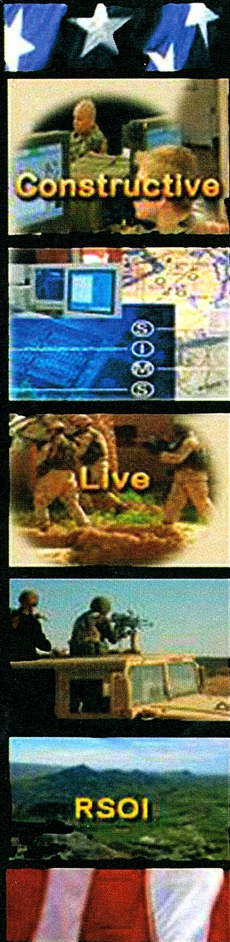
Also, the policy objective for Reserve and Guard units will be a one-year mobilization and five years demobilization. However, some units may have to be mobilized sooner to meet strategic needs.

The new policies also call for paying Soldiers extra who are called to mobilize sooner than the once-every-five-years goal. Additionally, commands are directed to review hardship-waiver programs to be sure they are taking into account exceptional circumstances facing families of deployed Soldiers.

--Army Reserve, Office of Deputy Commanding General



63rd Regional Readiness Command, Los Alamitos - CALIFORNIA



PACIFIC WARRIOR 2007

June 11-30



ARMY STRONG.

63rd Regional Readiness Command
Public Affairs Office
4235 Yorktown Ave.
Los Alamitos, Calif. 90720-5170