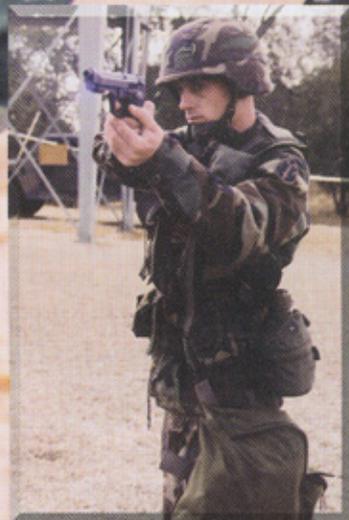




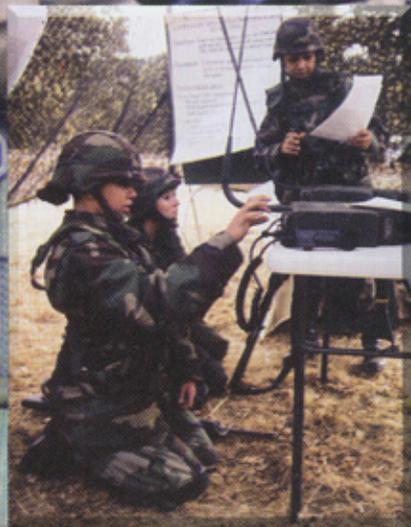
The Blade



63rd Regional Readiness Command, Los Alamitos, Calif., Winter 2003-2004



Super Drill For the Real Thing



Four-Star Publication

2003: Important year for our Soldiers

Last year began on an ominous note as we prepared for war in Iraq. Almost 4,000 of our Soldiers were ultimately mobilized during 2003 to support operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. We as an organization continued to support other operations and had Soldiers in nine countries around the globe.

Deployments were not easy for our Soldiers, who spent too much time at power projection platforms waiting to go overseas. The separation caused by Soldiers deploying made it very difficult for families as well. Those who participate in Family Readiness and have assisted deployed Soldiers' families have done a great job. If we miss the mark or let one of our 63rd Family down, I want to hear about it. Please forward your issues to cgcorner@usarc-emh2.army.mil. (Please include "CG Corner" in the subject line.)

When CSM Holland and I visited Soldiers in theater last August and September, I told them I could not be more proud of how they are supporting the Army and the War on Terrorism. Our warriors are doing a magnificent job. Our nation and the liberated Iraqi citizens owe them a tremendous debt of gratitude and respect for their sacrifices.

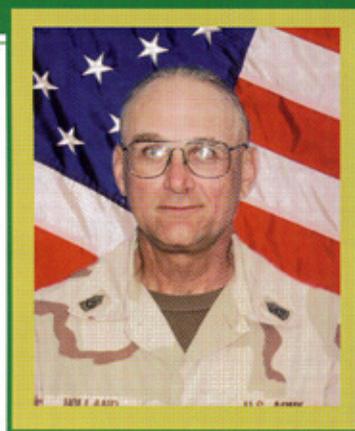
In July, the 63rd Regional Support Command was redesignated the 63rd Regional Readiness Command (RRC). This better reflects our mission of providing trained and ready Soldiers and units in time of war. Additionally, the 63rd RRC continued its success by exceeding 100 percent strength and in having the lowest attrition rate as compared with our peers. Our command's transition team led all RRCs in per capita production to bring Soldiers from the Individual Ready Reserve back into the Army.

But we remain at war. I ask all our readership to continue prayerful support for our Soldiers. Please include the families of SGT Paul T. Nakamura, SSG Cameron Sarno and SFC Kelly Bolor, 63rd Soldiers killed while serving in Iraq.

MG Robert B. Ostenberg
Commanding



Top Talk



Safety first for Soldiers!

Soldiers of the 63rd RRC:

The commanding general and I have just returned from a trip to visit our Soldiers who are deployed. They are doing a great job and we should all be proud. The living conditions are not real good in most places but some places, conditions are real nice.

The Soldiers are learning that the Common Task Training skills are very important to be successful, and to complete the Mission.

But the *Big* issue is Safety:

We all must stop talking about Safety and work to stop unsafe acts. When we get into a rush to do a task and maybe take a short cut we find ourselves doing something that is unsafe. We must slow down, stay FOCUSED and make sure we do a Risk Assessment for every mission. Back in the United States, the Army is los-

ing one Soldier every three days to a vehicle accident. This is a NO GO. Let's focus on the task and wear our seat belts, drive the speed limit, refrain from talking on the cell phone when driving, etc. Unless we get serious about these, another Soldier will get killed.

To our NCOs: Let's police up our own units and Soldiers. Every unit should place a couple of NCOs at the exit of their Reserve Center and check to make sure our Soldiers have their seat belts on when leaving a weekend drill. *Safety First/Soldiers and Families Always.*

CSM Lawrence Holland
Command Sergeant Major

(Editor's Note: Holland departed last fall for a new assignment with Department of Defense. CSM Mark Wilsdon will be the new command sergeant major.)

The Blade



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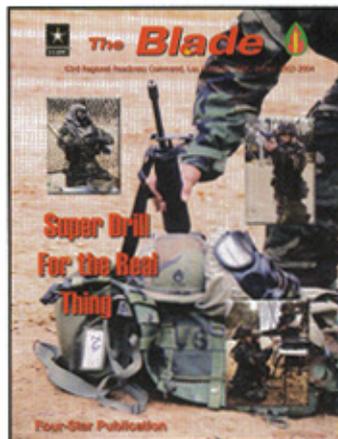
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Front Cover: Soldiers engage in a variety of training skills during a "Super Drill" at Fort Hunter Liggett, Calif.

Photographer: John D. Wagner.
The Blade was recently named a top-quality "Four-Star Publication" by the Army's Office of the Chief of Public Affairs.

Back Cover: The command honors three soldiers who lost their lives during duty in Operation Iraqi Freedom. From upper left, clockwise are: SGT Paul Nakamura, SFC Kelly Bolor and SSG Cameron Sarno.

SOUND OFF!

The War on Terrorism: What are Your Thoughts?



"The key to success in Afghanistan or Iraq, for example, is not to change the citizens' way of life, but rather to improve the value of their lives."

*Milt Houghton
63rd RRC Force Programs*

"I've always had a lot of hardcore friends. And I have friends in Iraq right now. Friendship and teamwork are carrying them through in the war against terrorism."



*PFC Brittany Linson
489th Maintenance Company*



"We have no other choice but to aggressively wage war against it (terrorism). To do otherwise would only support its systematic plan of destruction."

*MAJ Ronald Rallis
Currently in Kuwait*

"We brought down the body of the beast in Iraq, but it's harder to break its heart. If we continue the same level of force—even if it means years—we'll get the job done."



*PV2 Jeremy Carlson
341st M.P. Company*

At Ease

Army stops policy of conditionally promoting NCOs

Conditional promotions Army-wide from sergeant to sergeant first class were suspended after Jan. 1.

Soldiers already promoted under the old policy are not required to fulfill the conditional training.

The new policy states that soldiers must graduate from their respective noncommissioned-officer-education schools *before* being considered for promotion.

Sergeants must graduate from the Primary Leadership Development Course to be eligible for staff sergeant; staff sergeants must graduate from the Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course to be considered for sergeant first class; and sergeants first class must graduate from the Advanced Noncommissioned Officer course before promotion to master sergeant.

—From *Army News Service*

Tricare extended to Reserve Soldiers

Tricare has extended health-care benefits, previously exclusive to active-duty soldiers, to reserve members and their families. Enrollment is on a one-year trial basis.

Reservists ordered to active duty will receive no-cost medical and dental care. The coverage will help soldiers more easily meet deployment standards. Non-mobilized reservists and their dependents are eligible for enrollment on a cost-share basis.

Eligibility is extended as well to members who receive unemployment compensation, or who are not eligible for health care coverage under and employer sponsored plan. Reservists cannot receive the extended benefits if they are covered by any other health plan. For more information, check www.tricare.osd.mil/main/tollfree.cmf.

—From *Tricare homepage*

Reservists gain unlimited access to commissaries

Congress granted Army Reserve and National Guard members, along with their families, unlimited access to commissaries for the new fiscal year.

The Guard and Reservists were previously authorized only 24 commissary shopping days per year until the president signed the National Defense Appropriation Act in November. The bill contained provisions eliminating restrictions.

Under the new policy, Guard and Reserve members will no longer have to present a Commissary Privilege Card when they shop.

—From *Army News Service*

Mobed officer regs change for promotions

Mobilized Army Reserve officers can be more easily promoted, under a new policy.

Officers from captain through lieutenant colonel can be immediately promoted to a higher grade and vacant position while mobilized.

The officer must have been recommended for promotion to the next higher grade by a promotion board and be on an approved promotion list.

Previously, officers were tied to the positions in which they were called to active-duty and were potentially disadvantaged when seeking promotions. Under the new policy, officers can be promoted and serve in the higher grade while mobilized. But they are required to transfer within 180 days of demobilizing to another vacant position or to the Individual Ready Reserve.

The policy does not affect officers in the Staff Judge Advocate, Chaplain, Medical and Dental corps, who may be promoted without regard to higher-grade position during active duty.

—From *Army News Service*

'Opsec! Opsec! Opsec!' officer says

Last year, this command experienced a marked increase in suspicious reportable incidents, in which people sought information in a variety of ways.

"We have to think Opsec, Opsec, Opsec," emphasized LTC Randie O'Neal, the command G-2 officer, referring to operations security.

"Suspicious individuals have asked soldiers where they're deploying, when they are leaving and what the morale is."

Subversion and Espionage Directed Against the Army, commonly called SAEDA, is a serious threat to soldiers, civilian employees and family members. Those involved typically want to know about:

- unit organization, mission, equipment, facilities and deployment
- unit members and their individual vulnerabilities
- mobilization dates, times and locations.

The primary method for gathering information is known as human intelligence. It falls into five categories:

Observation and photography: An observer is placed near an activity or installation to observe and photo-

graph activities. *Watch for:* unfamiliar or unauthorized people on foot or in vehicle lingering near your areas.

'Dumpster Diving': Collectors will rifle through unit trash to find documents, correspondence or other information to find "pieces of the jigsaw puzzle" that could expose Soldier or unit vulnerabilities. *Watch for:* people with undue interest in your trash bins and bagged waste.

Elicitation: Collectors will make direct contact, exhibiting an undue interest in unit activities and even ask to photograph unit area. *Watch for:* people asking specific questions about unit missions, soldiers or deployments.

Solicitation: Involves direct offers of money for information of any kind. Collector often tries to set up target for blackmail after the initial contact. *Watch for:* undue, direct queries about your finances from strangers.

Coercion: Collector tries to use authority, moral or otherwise, to encourage the target to provide information. They may attempt to leverage foreign family members or other connections. *Watch for:* strangers who have undue knowledge of your family or connections.

See such suspicious actions? Call (562) 795-2272 or (800) CALL SPY.



Soldiers from the 316th Quartermaster Company, out of Oceanside, Calif., stand ready for action at Camp Anaconda, Iraq. The unit purifies and delivers 200,000 gallons of water a day. From left are Chaplain (MAJ) John Herrmann,

SGT Erick Resendiz, SPC Arian Lopez, SGT Hector Leal, SPC Matt Hannum and SPC Aaron Katone. (Photo by Chaplain (LTC) Stephen Cook)

FEDS-HEAL health program helps Soldiers

Medical and dental checkups for Reserve Soldiers have become easier to obtain, more relaxed and personal through a network of clinics.

It's through a system called the Federal Strategic Health Alliance, dubbed "FEDS-HEAL" which provides services during weekdays in areas convenient to the Soldier. The purpose is to greatly increase Soldier readiness.

"The old system involved trying to get as many people as possible into an Army hospital during a drill," observed Arnulfo J. Lopez, program manager for the alliance in 63rd RRC. "But now, they are treated personally like they are in a civilian clinic. That's what the soldiers like."

The new system has hundreds of facilities available within the 63rd RRC three-state area. These can be private clinics, or Veterans Affairs or Federal Occupational Health facilities for Soldiers to get a physical or dental exam, a panograph dental procedure or immunizations. They can also schedule an eye exam related to obtaining protective-mask inserts.

The key person to obtain an appointment is the Soldier's unit administrator, who will contact the alliance central office. The office then calls the Soldier, informs them they need the medical or dental treatment, gives a choice of date (within 30 days), and offers a facility near the Soldier's home or work location. If Soldiers want to request treatment, they should contact their unit administrator. Reserve Soldiers need a physical every five years and a dental exam every two years. A panograph is good as long as no major dental work is done.

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.

WARRIOR ETHOS
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.

Coin to Art



Chaplain (COL) John South of 63rd RRC gives a chaplain's coin to TV personality Art Linkletter during a visit on Memorial Day to the Forest Lawn cemetery in Burbank, Calif. Linkletter has a long history of touring with the USO to support soldiers. (Photo by Diane Pendergras)

New law protects deployed Soldiers

What happens if you are called to active duty, but still have matters to attend to back home? What if you're overseas and can't make your credit card or mortgage payments? What if you have issues outstanding in a civil court?

The recently enacted Servicemember's Civil Relief Act expands and improves the former Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act. The new act provides a wide range of protections for deployed Army Reservists. It is intended to postpone or suspend certain civil obligations to enable servicemembers to devote full attention to duty and relieve stress on family members left behind. Soldiers are protected against outstanding credit-credit card debt, mortgage payments, pending trials and terminations of lease. In addition, the new law:

- expands current law that protects Soldiers and their families from eviction from housing while on active duty due to nonpayment of rents that are \$1,200 per month or less. Under the new law, this protection would be significantly updated to meet today's higher cost of living – covering housing leases up to \$2,400 per month – and then be adjusted annually for inflation.
- clarifies and restates existing law that limits to 6 percent interest on credit obligations, including

credit card debt, for active duty Soldiers. The act states that no interest above 6 percent can accrue for credit obligations of soldiers on active duty, nor can that excess interest become due once the servicemember leaves active duty – instead that portion above 6 percent is permanently forgiven.

- updates life insurance protections provided to activated Reservists by increasing from \$10,000 to \$250,000 the maximum policy coverage that the federal government will protect from default for nonpayment while on active duty.
- prevents Soldiers from a form of double taxation that can occur when they have a spouse who works and is taxed in a state other than the state in which they have permanent legal residence. The act will prevent states from using the income earned by a Soldier in determining the spouse's tax rate when they do not maintain their permanent legal residence in that state.

The act covers all Reservists *while on active duty*. The protection begins on the date of entering active duty and generally terminates within 30 to 90 days after the date of discharge from active duty.

--From *Military.com*

Congresswoman soldiers with legal troops

By CPT Meera Maheswaran

78th Legal Support Organization

Taking a break from the legislative arena, a congresswoman donned a battle-dress uniform and learned how to soldier with 63rd RRC troops.

U.S. Rep. Loretta Sanchez, D-Garden Grove, hiked at a brisk pace with about 50 soldiers from the command's 78th Legal Support Organization. Keeping up with the best of them, she also took part in NBC



U.S. Rep. Sanchez

training that required quickly donning a protective mask in a mock-contaminated environment. She further practiced hand and arm signals that is part of training for a tactic environment.

The hike was about three miles in El Dorado Park in Long Beach, Calif. Sanchez and the soldiers all wore 30-pound rucksacks.

"The congresswoman is in amazing physical shape," said CPT Eric Strong. "She even insisted on running a

good part of it."

Sanchez is the ranking woman on the House Armed Services Committee. The event was just before U.S. armed forces took part in Operation Iraqi Freedom. She said it was important to talk to service members.

"It was so much fun," she said. "I got a chance to share what we in Congress were thinking about the war and what they were thinking. We had a good discussion and they told me what they were doing about helping families of soldiers that had already been shipped out. Getting called up can be very disruptive for soldiers and their families."

The 78th offers services including legal-readiness pre-mobilization briefings, assistance for wills and power of attorney and counsel in administrative-separation boards and courts-martial.

But common-task training is crucial as well, says COL Thomas Umberg, commander.

"We are soldiers first and must be ready to deploy anywhere, and provide competent legal support to other soldiers under a variety of conditions and in any environment," he said.



A Soldier gagging on CS gas exits NBC chamber during recent drill.

Story and photos by John D. Wagner

FORT HUNTER LIGGETT, Calif.— Choking for breathe and wiping his eyes, PVT Caleb Guyer, stumbled out of a rectangular shack with gas billowing out from the door behind him.

Catching his breath, he exclaimed, “Everything just burns. It’s like the worst sunburn you’ve ever had.”

Guyer and about a dozen Soldiers had donned their protective masks and entered the NBC chamber, containing concentrated CS gas. It was

like a return to basic training, in which they did the side-straddle hop, broke the mask seal and tried to reseal it.

SPC Matt Foster, noted: “My mask wouldn’t seal, so when I came out the door I was gone. But I adjusted it (the mask) later.”

It was part of an intensive four-day weekend dubbed *Super Drill*, which is now *mandatory* for 63rd RRC units. Some 175 Soldiers from 11 units under the 419th Quartermaster Battalion, journeyed to the hilly, oak-tree-dotted installation here in Northern

Look, out field! It’s

*Soldiers train at
prepping for dep
Several get called*

California. Their training in about 10 events included weapons firing, first aid, donning the protective mask, operating a tactical radio, and dealing with unexploded ordnance.

Soldiers repeatedly made references to Iraq during the drill, to emphasize the seriousness of training while at war. A dose of reality showed them just how serious. Several Soldiers were suddenly contacted and told: You will return home for mobilization.

“Who knows where we’re going to be tomorrow?” said SFC Al Caneda, common task training NCO in charge to dozens of Soldiers gathered. “Do your best. Give it 110 percent.”

Nearby, 1SG Cedric Akins waved a target and looking out at his troops lined up on a weapons range and belted out words for thought.

“This is what an Iraqi (insurgent) looks like,” he said. “If you don’t get him, he’s gonna get you.”

Soon after, *pop-pop-pop!* sounds echoed and brass cartridges bounced on the ground as the troops began firing for qualification.

SPC Vince Franco looked up afterward and said, “I think I did pretty well.”

In another training area, SGT Royce Fields of the 382nd Military Police Company, stood in a tent made of cammo netting. Surrounded by mock howitzer and tanks shells, he pointed to a circular disk on the ground, half covered with leaves.

“That’s an anti-personnel mine,” he said. “If you stepped on it, we’d all be

t in the Super Drill!

ort Hunter Liggett,
oyment;
back for mobilization

gone. It has a 50-meter kill radius.”

Royce was teaching a class in properly dealing with unexploded ordinance.

“There are four types you may encounter,” he told several Soldiers in the tent. “Dropped, such as bombs; projected, such as from mortars or hand-held rockets; thrown, such as grenades; and placed, such as mines.”

The training included junior enlisted soldiers giving classes. In a nearby tent, SPC Lenore Galluci, also assigned with the 382nd, flipped a page on a butcher board.

“Your standard is to decontaminate yourself and your equipment,” she said, peeling open a packet containing a “wipe” used to rub on body parts and equipment.

“The first thing is to decontaminate your hands, then break your (mask seal) and wipe off your hands, eyes, mouth and nose.”

As she spoke, SPC Adrian Rubio, wearing protective gear, demonstrated by rubbing the wipe on various parts of his body.

The Super Drill, took hundreds of hours to organize, said LTC Wendy McGuire.

“We were given the opportunity to be creative with training this year, and to accomplish what we felt was high priority,” McGuire said. “We not only had a high degree of Common Task Training, but went to qualify (with weapons) for the second time this year.

“I started out this exercise by telling each NCO to look their troops in the eye and tell them ‘If and when you go (for deployment), you’ll be ready.’”

She said she called a formation to honor the soldiers who were called back for mobilization.

“We saluted them and BG (Donna) Dacier (deputy commanding general) gave them coins and saluted them as they left.”

SPC Luis Sotelo of the 491st Military Police Company out of Mesa, Ariz., spoke positively of the drill.

“It was a good refresher,” he said. “It’s fun to get together with you battle buddies and train for upcoming missions.”



SPC Adrian Rubio demonstrates decontamination technique during training.



Soldiers prepare for battle while at range.



3 Soldiers make ultimate sacrifice

Soldiers fold American flag at funeral of SGT Paul Nakamura in Whittier, Calif.

Story and photo by John D. Wagner

They came from different backgrounds, locations and worlds. But these three Soldiers all had one thing in common: They gave their lives as Army Reservists during duty supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom.

SGT Paul T. Nakamura, 21, of the 437th Medical Company, was a medical soldier and ambulance driver who made more than 250 runs in Iraq and Kuwait to save peoples' lives. He was killed by a rocket-propelled grenade fired at his ambulance.

An avid swimmer and lifeguard, he had also belonged to his high school water polo team. The young man who had a fondness for high-horsepower "muscle" cars was fondly remembered at a funeral service in Whittier.

"Paul was a very dedicated person, to his family and to his nation," said the Rev. Pancho Juarez. "He was a Christian. He believed in God and in his family."

SFC Kelly Bolor of the 137th Quar-

termaster Company was killed when two Black Hawk helicopters crashed near Mosul. Army officials believed the event was caused by ground fire or a missile. Bolor's unit was assigned with the 101st Airborne Division and he was transporting supplies to the front lines. He was one of 17 soldiers killed in the crash, one of the largest single losses of life in the war. The Army listed Bolor's death as a hostile casualty. He had previously served in Desert Storm in 1991.

MG Robert B. Ostberg, commander of 63rd RRC, praised the 37-year-old noncommissioned officer as a great leader. Bolor took a poorly functioning platoon and transformed it into a unit that performed "in an outstanding manner," he said.

Family members remembered Bolor as a dedicated husband to his wife, also named Kelly, and father of his son, Kyle, 3. He and his wife had

just bought a house in Whittier, Calif. Bolor was buried in Maui Memorial Park, Hawaii.

Another 63rd RRC Soldier, was killed in a tragic accident. SSG Cameron Sarno of the 257th Transportation Company out of Las Vegas was assigned to Kuwait as a truck driver. He was changing a tire when another military vehicle crashed into him and crushed him. The incident was under investigation.

Sarno was a native Hawaiian who later moved to Las Vegas. He drove a concrete-mixer truck as a civilian and loved surfing. Friends and family members recalled that he had an upbeat personality, a selfless attitude and put his soldiers before himself.

Sarno had a son, Cameron Takeuchi, a Soldier assigned in Afghanistan, who attended the funeral. Sarno was buried in Hawaii.

(Editor's note: Pictures of all three soldiers are on the back cover.)

Mother of 6 serves as Operation Iraqi Freedom truck driver

Story and photo by SGM Larry Stevens
Coalition Forces Land Component Command PAO

CAMPARIFJAN, Kuwait — When Army Reserve SGT Julia Fadell finished high school, she had one burning ambition: “to do something different and not get caught in a routine job.” If she could get in some traveling, that would be a bonus, she added.

Now, 24 years later and thanks to the U.S. Army, she’s still doing something quite different from the routine most 41-year-old mothers of six do. As a bonus, she’s lived in Panama, Japan, Alaska, Kuwait and Iraq.

Fadell started her career in Army avionics navigational systems, and spent eight years on active duty. She joined the Army Reserve in 1988. Her husband, Jose, a career soldier, completed his last tour in Tucson, Ariz., where the couple settled after his retirement and where in 1996 she joined a newly formed Reserve unit, the 257th Transportation Company, and became a truck driver. She drives one of the Army’s huge heavy equipment transporters, or HETs.

“We were mobilized in January, got to Kuwait April 6, waited two weeks for our HETs to arrive, and have been driving ever since,” she said, adding with pride that her unit reached the 1-million-miles-driven milestone recently.

The 257th hauls equipment like M1A1 tanks, Bradley fighting vehicles and bulldozers, as well as containers filled with supplies. At 5 feet 5 inches tall and 118 pounds, Fadell may qualify as the lightest heavy equipment transporter driver supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. But she’s proven that her heart and ability are big enough for the job, as she’s driven her 40-ton rig fearlessly and proficiently throughout Iraq.

“I wouldn’t want to have missed out on this. Every day’s an adventure,” she said. “What I’m doing is important. I’m doing what I was trained to do so other soldiers can do their missions.”

Fadell has experienced her share of hardships on the road. She’s come under fire. She’s been separated at night from her convoy in Baghdad through no fault of her own. She became a heat casualty from the rigors of traveling nonstop during the extreme heat of August. Still, she’s undaunted.

“I work with great folks, and from the start, conditions have been better than I ever expected,” she said, rattling off such amenities as hot showers, tents with air conditioning, post exchanges, hot food and third-country nationals to handle dining-facility duties. “The Army didn’t have to do



SGT Julia Fadell prepares to move out in Kuwait.

all that, and the quality of life here at Camp Arifjan and at the bases where we make our deliveries has continued to get better and better.”

While remaining vigilant on the road, Fadell has not lost her fascination with the scenery and people she sees along the way. “The clothing, the buildings, the camels and donkeys, all seem like something from biblical times,” she noted. “And when I see the kids along the road, I think if what I’m doing can make a difference for them, it’s all worth it.”

While her contact with Iraqis has been limited, Fadell has enjoyed her interaction with the coalition partners when she’s hauled their equipment.

“The British, Italians, Polish, Hungarians and others have been really good to work with and fun to chat with,” she said. “It’s good to have other participants involved in this effort for the Iraqis, and I’m proud to support them.”

Battalion rides 'wave' of recruiting success

NCO reverses trend toward losses, gets unit to full strength

Story by Spc. Michael Connors
302nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

SANTA BARBARA, Calif.— With alternate physical training including morning beach runs, hikes on the San Ysidro Trail in the nearby foothills, or even surfing local waves, who could ever leave this place?

Yet people were exiting the 425th Civil Affairs Battalion in droves in 2002. Its strength plummeted to 56 percent assigned strength before SFC Jose Mendez of 63rd RRC helped reverse the trend.

Mendez worked with LTC Sean M. Kelly, who arrived from the Pentagon to become the new commander of the 351st Civil Affairs Command in early 2003. Eight months later, the unit went on alert. During that period, the unit climbed to 97 percent assigned strength with the addition of more than 60 soldiers. Kelly wished to demystify his success by stressing that he merely “paid attention and responded.”

The unit’s improvement, which Kelly credits to teamwork, is nothing short of phenomenal, according to others in the unit. For his part, Kelly humbly said it wasn’t anything that any other commander couldn’t do.

Mendez is one of the stars in the unit’s revival, said Kelly. Of the new soldiers, Mendez brought in 61 percent, about 40, via the Individual Ready Reserve. The remaining ones came to the unit via the outside recruiting process as initial-entry soldiers.

Retention and transition play a key role in strength management because they reduce the burden on outside recruiting, a costlier, more labor-intensive effort, said Kelly.

“The baby-boom is past us, so the



LTC Sean Kelly



SFC Jose Mendez

pool of prospective soldiers has shrunk,” said Kelly. “Therefore, there’s an added emphasis on retention, and SFC Mendez has done a tremendous job.”

Here are specific examples the 425th used:

- Open lines of communication: “I could call LTC Kelly 24-7, 365 days a year on important retention issues,” said Mendez.
- Kelly presented a detailed, slide-show program to the 63rd RRC retention and transition NCOs and to the Los Angeles Recruiting Battalion, respectively, explaining the 425th and its personnel needs.
- The 425th has used its assets, e.g. soldiers and humvees, to supplement recruiting and retention events.
- Request Vacancy System, the standard system used at military entrance processing stations to put recruits into open slots. “The 425th vigilantly maintains the RVS,” said Kelly. “The human element comes first—recruiters and retention NCOs. But outside of them, the RVS is probably the most important tool.” Sometimes units simply

don’t keep the RVS up to date, added Kelly.

The 425th’s transformation didn’t stop here. What good does it do to bring in soldiers if you don’t make the transition for them smooth, so they’ll want to stay?

Kelly introduced the “Green Team” concept to address this situation. This concept is commonly used in Special Operations units, according to Kelly.

The Green Team’s purpose is to address administrative, medical, and family issues for soldiers new to the unit. When Soldiers join the unit, they are automatically put on the Green Team for three months.

The team leaders are highly-skilled, experienced members of the unit. The idea is to take care of transition issues independent from time devoted to training, i.e. to minimize “training detractors.”

“The bottom line is that we make sure time is used, not wasted,” added Kelly.

CSM Jonathan M. Church, of the command, said of the Green Team: “We want new soldiers to know from the minute they walk in through the door, they’re part of the family.”

Plague 'attack' on Vegas

Med brigade runs field units in bio-terror exercise

Story and photo by Ted Bartimus

63rd RRC Public Affairs Office

LAS VEGAS—Overseeing 932 hospital beds assigned to victims struck down by terrorists is a tough job for a tough sergeant.

SGT Garry Nagrampa did just that here recently, where al Qaeda terrorists once again attacked America. This time, they released bio contaminants, i.e. the plague, on the Las Vegas Strip, causing widespread death and illness and prompting thousands to bolt from the city in road-clogged mayhem.

Of course, this scenario was staged. But the field problems posed for Nagrampa in this exercise provided real enough training in the imaginary chaos and swamped hospitals. The event was billed "Joint Exercise Determined Promise '03."

The exercise brought Nagrampa and more than 30 other Soldiers from the 2nd Medical Brigade to Las Vegas to participate in August. Nagrampa, a central figure in the organizing, later received a prestigious coin--given to him by an NCO, but from a four-star general on the scene.

"We'd get calls from hospitals to see if we had any beds available," said Nagrampa. "We would then send air or ground ambulances and bring the patients to whatever unit had the beds available. From there, some may die, others may need surgery, and some may have to be evacuate to another hospital."

In "War-of-the-Worlds" style, local, state and national authorities joined together for this "what-if"



SGT Garry Nagrampa keeps track of beds and casualties during the Determined Promise exercise last year in Las Vegas.

nightmare. Authorities wanted to test and carry out measures in response to a terrorist attack. The Department of Defense, U.S. Northern Command, Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and emergency agencies for the state of Nevada and Clark County took part.

The 2nd Medical Brigade operated as the headquarters for the exercise's medical task force, providing high-level coordination of several medical line units (present in the scenario but not in the exercise) that would supplement civilian hospitals.

"The hospitals were full," recalled LTC Regina Stewart-Budd. "There were a large number of people exposed and there was a quarantine as well. The casualties overwhelmed the local resources. So (federal officials) called in the Army."

She noted two big projects. One was having their units set up 2,700 beds at the Las Vegas Convention

Center. Some were part of the 932 that Nagrampa managed.

"We were on the phones constantly," Stewart-Budd said. "We were also having meetings and had liaison officers involved in the coordination. We worked a lot with the National Guard because we needed transportation units and the Air Force, who supplied the beds."

The brigade also coordinated to distribute medication at 12 "community sites"—typically schools. This presented challenges as well.

"Sometimes there were delays in arrival of equipment," Stewart-Budd said. "We had some contaminated supplies and some were out of date."

Nevertheless, Soldiers at the school sites passed out medication to about 10,000 people a day, she said.

"Our role in this scenario is not much different than in a war situation," said BG James F. Reynolds, commander of brigade. "This exercise enhances our ability to operate in a war-fighting environment."

The Army's Navy

Soldiers go 'Waterborne!' in Washington exercise

Story and photo by SGT James Blaine

302nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

INDIAN ISLAND, Wash.--Piloting their boats through the turgid sea, while hauling tanks and fighting vehicles to shore, citizen-soldiers came here to lend a hand to the Navy.

Their motto: "Waterborne!" The soldiers of the 481st Transportation Company, specializing in piloting 174-foot, open-air transport boats showed their stuff in the exercise dubbed Joint Logistics Over the Shore.

The Vallejo, Calif., unit collaborated with the Navy by transporting Stryker-Brigade fighting vehicles, tanks and other heavy equipment to the shore from the USS Altari, a Navy ship. Together they transported 891 pieces of equipment way ahead of schedule.

"We were given eight to 12 days but got it done in three," said CPT Paul Ung, unit commander. "We worked

around the clock. If we prove we can offload the vehicles fast to shore, we make the brigade look good."

Ung led the company from the *Missionary Ridge*-- a Landing Craft Utility, a 174-foot open-air vehicle with drop-ramp in front to load and unload heavy vehicles.

The Army's landing crafts assist in ferrying the equipment from ships to the shore en route to the battlefield. Army mariners date back to the 1940s. Today, the 481st is the largest of only three water transportation units in the Army, said Ung.

The unit has about 150 soldiers, and operates nearly 10 landing crafts. The 481st also has two Landing Craft Mechanized vessels, smaller than their cousins, the Landing Craft Utilities. All the vessels get their names from battles in the Revolutionary, Civil, or Spanish-American wars.

Other Army landing crafts have recently seen duty in Haiti and Operation Iraqi Freedom. During the Joint Logistics exercise, the 481st conducted what is called "roll-on, roll-off" and "load-on,load-off" operations for the Stryker Brigade from Fort Lewis, Wash., which was returning here from Joint Readiness Training Center in Fort Polk, La.

A Stryker is a state-of-the-art heavily armored eight-wheeled, combat vehicle that can surge up to 62 mph. The USS Altari, a Navy ship, brought the Stryker Brigade from the center at Louisiana to an area offshore Indian Island.

In the roll-off, Soldiers from another unit drove the vehicles down a metal ramp extending from the Altari to a Navy barge. Many were then driven on other ramps to the mechanized vessels, for the final trip to shore. Occurring simultaneously was the load-off from the Naval ship. Sailors operated enormous cranes with dangling chains hooked up to the Strykers and lifted the vehicles across the water to a waiting landing craft.

With both types of deliveries, the 481st soldiers stood and directed the Strkyer or humvee traffic coming onto the boats. From there, they transported the vehicles on the landing crafts through the surf to the shore, dropped the front ramp and drove the vehicles to a parking area for accountability.

CWO Anthony Moschella, vessel master of the Matamoros landing craft, said the exercise was a rewarding experience. "It feels great to be able to perform a real-world mission," he said. "It shows the rest of the Army what we're truly capable of."



Soldiers unload a truck from a Naval ship during Joint Logistics exercise.

Courage Under Fire: 'V' for valor

Soldiers receive Bronze Star medals, for bravery in Iraq

Story by John D. Wagner

Having faced rocket-propelled grenades, and a determined enemy, two deployed soldiers from 63rd RRC units were recently awarded Bronze Star Medals with a 'v' for valor in Iraq.

Both also received Purple Hearts.

SSG Carlos Vargas of the 418th Quartermaster Battalion already had a feather in his hat before getting involved in a firefight. He helped capture 21 insurgents in a chemical plant in Falluja. Soon after, in June, he was part of a convoy wielding machineguns and antitank weapons for another unit transporting troops and mail. Suddenly his humvee and another were hit by grenades fired at the convoy.

"The windshields blew up and I was ejected 20 feet across the street," Vargas recalled. "I was temporarily unconscious. The insurgents and Americans were in an intense gun battle. There were a couple of vehicles that came toward us, including a pick up. I fired my M-16 and disabled it. I killed the occupant. I had about three kills that day."

He said the firefight lasted about 35 minutes and that Command Sgt. Maj. Carlos Llanos of the 418th rescued him. Llanos, he recalled, looked like a movie hero firing his M-16 and pistol at the same time. Vargas survived with a head injury, shrapnel wounds and glass in his eyes. During a December interview, he was still recuperating in Arizona. He has been in about eight hospitals in Kuwait, Iraq and the United States.

"I am very proud and humbled to have served in Iraq," he said. "I was quite overwhelmed with the awards. The Reservists are doing a fantastic job, from the cooks to the doctors."



MG Robert B. Ostenberg, commander of 63rd RRC, prepares to salute SSG Carlos Vargas during recent awards ceremony.

SGT Cory Carranza of the 437th Medical Company had made at least 300 runs in his humvee ambulance last year before a fateful incident in June. He and SPC Paul Nakamura were driving, with an injured passenger, in blazing 120-degree heat about 30 miles southwest of Baghdad.

Carranza and Nakamura were best friends and had a shared interest in offroad vehicles and "muscle" cars.

Suddenly the vehicle was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade. Carranza was burned, but kept his composure.

"I knew exactly what was going on," he said. "I knew that I was still alive and I punched the gas to keep driving and get out of there. I also got into communication with the other vehicle that was with us. I drove about 10 miles (to a hospital)."

The attack on a medical vehicle with red crosses violated the rules of war, officials have said. Nakamura was killed (see story on Page 9) and

the soldier-passenger took some shrapnel and was burned.

"It's bitter sweet," Carranza said. "You do your job, but lose a friend. I am very grateful that I was able to help so many people out. I thank God everyday that I made it through."



Sgt. Cory Carranza

MPs teach human rights to Iraqi cops

Story and photo by SGT Mark Rickert

BAGHDAD, Iraq — When the 382nd Military Police Detachment entered the city, the Iraqi police force showed real enthusiasm. So much in fact, that the MPs grew quickly concerned. One day they visited the jail-house early in the morning and found two prisoners behind bars.

Later that evening, they came back and found jail cells practically bulging with prisoners.

This kind of pattern spawned the present-day training courses taught by soldiers of the San Diego-based detachment to the Iraqi police.

“If Sam here is my friend, and I raise the soles of my feet toward him, should you arrest me?” CPL James Martinez asks a classroom of about 25 Iraqi police. They are shoulder to shoulder in a cramped room, watching Martinez carefully. By the grumbles from the class, Martinez senses that the Iraqis aren’t sure.

“No?” Martinez asks. “Why not? I’m not hurting him. That’s my right to express myself,” he says, trying to help them learn the lesson.

The three-week course focuses primarily on human rights laws. Though freedom of expression seems natural to most Americans, it seems foreign and almost frightening to a people who have been oppressed for most of their lives.

According to Martinez, the Iraqis’ deep-rooted mindsets are hard to break. Martinez says that the Iraqi policemen are still heavily influenced by the former regime, riling up discrimination against age, sex and economic status.

“A lot of things determine the Ira-



CPL James Martinez lectures and works to inspire Iraqi police.

qis’ amount of respect,” said CPL Kenneth A. Johnson, also an instructor with the 382nd. “We have to teach them equal rights, for women and children. Discriminating is against human rights.”

In a move toward reshaping their ideas about women, the MPs scheduled SGT Emily L. Frasca to teach. “Every jaw hit the floor” when they learned that a female would lead a class, Frasca recalled.

“It’s important to show the Iraqi police officers that a female can do the job,” she said. “That we are strong, both mentally and physically.”

Frasca says that when she began, eyes wandered and the Iraqis seemed agitated, oftentimes requesting an al-

ternate perspective, or confirmation, from one of the male trainers. Now, the Iraqis are more receptive to her teachings. “It’s neat to be one of the first to broaden their horizons,” says Frasca. “I’m showing them that they can have females in the workplace and it’s OK.”

This class is a composite of Iraqi policemen, who have come back to work after the war. They learn quickly; they have a grasp of right and wrong. Before the war, the regime distorted the laws, and the Iraqis upheld orders, rather than human rights. “They wanted to get the bad guys. They wanted to help people,” one Soldier observed. “But they couldn’t before.”

63rd soldiers help protect President Bush during visit

by Spc. Michael Connors

302nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

LOS ALAMITOS, Calif. – Stepping down from the gleaming Air Force One, President Bush strode vigorously toward a waiting limo, ready to move out. And 63rd Regional Readiness Command soldiers were right there working with the Secret Service to protect the commander in chief.

About 10 troops from the 63rd, headquartered at the Joint Forces Training Base here, contributed to the overall security operation on post under the Secret Service and base security officials.

For SGT Phetdavanh Sisavath, who had been serving on base doing security patrols, it was not only a thrill but also a way of showing gratitude.

“It’s my way of saying ‘Thank you’ to my country,” said Sisavath, who served as NCO in charge of a detail that provided security at a designated viewing area for credentialed guests and media on post in front of Air Force One.

The troops came from the 63rd Provost Marshal’s office and the 314th Military Police Company from Irvine, Calif. The soldiers listened to briefings first from the base security office and then from a Secret Service agent.

“We were told what to look for,” Sisavath said. “The press needed to display badges and had to stay in a area with a tan platform designed for them. And we had to look at everyone’s hands. You don’t know if they may have something such as a weapon that could harm the president.”

Soldiers such as Sisavath were close up. Others were hundreds of feet away



President George W. Bush greets servicemembers at Joint Forces Training Base.

watching a broad area and even checking sewer manholes. Some soldiers were roving back and forth to see if anyone needed help and that all were well hydrated.

President Bush landed at the base, a California National Guard installation, in the evening of mid-August. From there, he zipped to Irvine, Calif., via black armored limousine for official business and campaign fundraising. Air Force One and Marine One and Two helicopters remained on the airfield until the president returned for takeoff the next day.

LTC Susan Walker, the command provost marshal, felt the Secret Service was pleased with security during the president’s visit.

“We know the security operation went well because the Secret Service made no major changes,” said Walker. “They can always make changes like restricting access of guests or media or even diverting Air Force One—but nothing like that happened.”

Walker added that 63rd soldiers on the security detail not only had the honor of supporting the president’s visit, but they also garnered invaluable job experience.

“The soldiers got to see and take part in security coordination at the highest level of government and the Department of Defense,” said Walker.

PFC John Agosta, with the 63rd HHC, was another soldier who got to work with the Secret Service. He recently volunteered for active duty for the opportunity to travel.

“When I first got to my post on the perimeter of the airfield along the golf course, I told a man dressed in a suit that he couldn’t be there,” said Agosta. “Turns out he was Secret Service! He just looked at me and said, ‘Yes I can.’”

After shrugging off in good nature, their shaky introduction, the agent gave Agosta expert guidance in keeping the area safe for the president.

Sisavath acknowledged the pressure involved.

“It trickles down to everyone, so you have to remain calm and cool,” she said. “But it’s natural because you want to do everything right.”

The soldiers, including Sisavath and Agosta, recently received a coin from 63rd’s then CSM Lawrence Holland in appreciation for their ongoing security work.

Veteran runner takes first place in Kuwait race

Moving in a rapid stride against a backdrop of wind and sand, 1LT Elizabeth Cross took first place among women in the Arifjan 10-Miler race at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

She was one of about 50 women among about 300 participants.

Cross wears multiple hats during her duty in Iraq. She is executive officer at her camp, as well as postal officer and preventive medicine officer.

She has been a competitive runner for 10 years.

"When I was active duty as an enlisted soldier, I started 5-Ks in Korea in 1993, then did two marathons in Berlin and Frankfurt, Germany, in 1994," she said. "I then moved

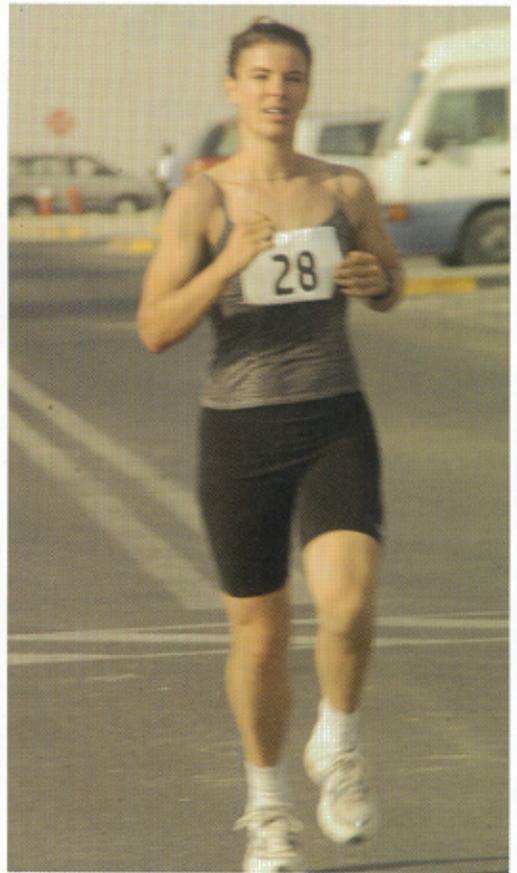
to California and have done a lot of 5-Ks, 10-Ks...I have also run the L.A. and San Diego marathons."

Why does she compete?

"It gives me a goal," Cross said. "I can train for a specific event and push myself. Ten miles is an awesome distance...but it's not so long that you can't push yourself the whole way through."

1LT Elizabeth Cross pumps out miles in Kuwait race.

(Photo by SPC Petersi Liu)



Chaplain's Column

Thoughts on Marching

by Chaplain (COL) John South

Why is marching important in the military? What does it mean to *march*? Well, let's just give a few examples from Webster himself. 1.) Walk with regular steps, meaning to walk together the same way (forward). 2.) Advance steadily (i.e. keep it moving forward—same direction). 3.) progress...i.e. getting somewhere... or going the distance as in a road march or marching into an area (Remember the old Gospel song "Marching into Zion.")... Well, you get the picture. Now let's see what the Lord teaches in the Bible about the term "MARCH".....

Let's look first in the Book of Joel 2:7-8:

"They run like mighty men; They climb the wall like soldiers; And they each March in line, Nor do they deviate from their paths, do not crowd each other; They march everyone in his path. When they burst through the defenses, They do not break ranks."

Thank God for men and women like this: those who stand firm and don't quit when things get touch. They march in line and stay in line--no matter what happens around them....a good soldier follows orders that focus on the mis-

sion. God will direct us "if" we listen to His word and His Holy Spirit. Those that don't follow Christ and His teachings will fall: i.e. Jeremiah 46:12 (just one example):

"The nations have heard of your shame, And the earth is full of your cry of distress; For one warrior has stumbled over another. And both of them have fallen down together."

Let's march on together as a team: I remember a quote by GEN Creighton Abrams: "There must be, within our Army, a sense of purpose. There must be a willingness to march a little farther, to carry a heavier load, to step out into the dark and the unknown for the safety and well-being of others."

Let's live out the example that Stonewall Jackson gave when asked about the effects and the fear of war: "Captain, my religious beliefs teach me to feel as safe in battle as in bed. God has fixed a time for my death. I do not concern myself about that, but to always be ready, no matter when it may overtake me."

And for those that know Jesus Christ as their savior, they will be with Him--when that time comes...

Soldiers earn bronze star

The Army recently awarded CSM Lawrence Holland and COL Jon Miller of the 164th Corps Support Group the Bronze Star Medal for meritorious service in organizing a supply base camp in Uzbekistan, just north of Afghanistan.

Eleven other soldiers also received the award for their duty there from May to December 2002. Holland was subsequently reassigned to the 63rd RRC.

The soldiers helped organize operations at Camp Stronghold Freedom. They and other members of the 164th built a small city of 220 tents and eight buildings for about 2,500 people.

Their mission was a crucial one in the war against terrorism—organizing the vast supply chain to troops in the Afghan theater. Supplies were brought in by rail and air and much was then transported out by other planes or trucks. The operations continued 24 hours a day. The other soldiers receiving the Bronze Star include:

- LTC Tey Wiseman
- LTC Maurice McEnaney
- MAJ John Blair
- CPT Douglas McKewan
- CPT David Stern
- CWO Cesar Manuel
- CWO Kim Early
- SGM Larry Martin
- 1SG Earnest Harris
- MSG Pete Rosales
- MSG Christopher Cargill

IG earns induction into OCS Hall of Fame

COL Terry Thrall, inspector general of 63rd Regional Readiness Command, was recently inducted, for career achievement, into the Officer Candidate School Hall of Fame.

Thrall was one of 60 inductees this year into the hall and attended a ceremony at Fort Benning, Ga. Some inductees were active duty, others retired. All had earned high rank or other honors in the years following their school graduation and subsequent commissioning. Inductees accompanying Thrall included two congressmen from Michigan and Connecticut and three general officers. COL Terry Morgan, formerly assigned with the 63rd, was also inducted with Thrall.



The school's Hall of Fame was established in 1958 and has inducted about 2,100 school alumni. It honors graduates who have been awarded the Medal of Honor, promoted to colonel while on active duty, been appointed or elected to state or national political office or who have been recognized by the Infantry School commandant for outstanding service. COL William Marshall, command surgeon, is a previous recipient.

For Thrall, it was the first time back at Fort Benning since his April 1977 graduation.

Head surgeon retires after 35 years service

COL William Marshall, who began his career as a junior-enlisted infantry Soldier and rose to the position of command surgeon for 63rd RRC, is retiring after 35 years of distinguished service.

Marshall served as head of the surgeon's section for eight years. He had previously commanded the 6252nd U.S. Army Hospital, including while it was deployed to Fort Dix, N.J., during Desert Shield and Desert Storm. The hospital became a trendsetter for all activated Reserve hospitals. Marshall's achievements include:

- Developed the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear Explosives course, planning medical response to a bioterrorist attack on 63rd RRC
- Reinstated the Battlefield Medicine Course at Camp Roberts and Fort Hunter Liggett that trained more than 1,000 medical soldiers in a field environment.
- Acquired \$1.6 million for expanding training in weap-



COL Marshall

ons-of-mass-destruction response and related activities within 63rd RRC.

- Oversaw medical mobilizations and reviewed records of more than 2,000 soldiers deploying as part of operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.
- Developed a creative program for early recognition of anthrax contamination to reduce the exposure of that agent.

Marshall began his active duty as an enlisted infantry Soldier, later becoming an infantry instructor at Fort Benning, Ga. He earned his bachelor's degree in biology from Chapman College and later graduated from Meharry Medical College. He completed internship and residency at Letterman Army Medical Center, Presidio of San Francisco.

Subsequent Army assignments included chief of obstetrics-gynecology in Vicenza, Italy; and a similar position at Weed Army Hospital at Fort Irwin, Calif.

As a civilian, he works as primary care physician at the Department of Veterans Affairs Hospital in West Los Angeles. "My Army experience has been absolutely wonderful," Marshall said. "If I had to do it again I would do it exactly the same."

In Honor and Memory



*SGT Paul Nakamura
437th Medical Company*



*SFC Kelly Bolor
137th Quartermaster
Company*



*SSG Cameron Sarno
257th Transportation
Company*