

# The Blade

U.S. Army 63rd Regional Readiness Command

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COMMEMORATIVE EDITION

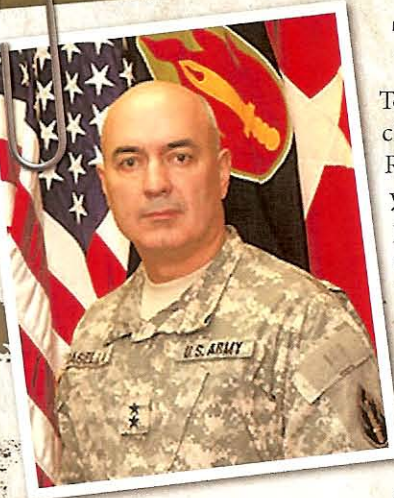


## 63rd RRC:

Honoring the Past,  
Changing for the Future

REVISED  
EDITION

## The close of a chapter marks a new beginning



To the Soldiers, families, and civilians of the 63rd Regional Readiness Command – thank you for your hard work and positive outlook during this significant time of change. The last few months have been challenging for us all as we work through the transition of the Army Reserve, which has affected our region greatly.

It has been my pleasure to serve as the commander of the 63rd RRC as it divests its functions to the 63rd Regional Support Command, at Moffett Field, Calif., the 311th Expeditionary Sustainment Command in West Los Angeles and the 11th Military Police Brigade at Los Alamitos.

As you may already be aware, the RRC presence at the Joint Forces Training Base will end, but the Army Reserve presence

will grow. The 11th MP Brigade has begun to take shape. We are awaiting final approval to stand up a new sustainment support command, that has yet to be named.

We need to continue to work as a team to overcome the challenges and tasks we face each day, just as we've done in the past.

I want to thank every member of the 63rd RRC for everything you've done, and wish you all the best of luck on your new endeavors. I am honored to have been a part of the legacy of this outstanding organization.


For those of you, who have chosen to transfer to the 63rd RSC, welcome to the team. I look forward to working with you.

Once again, thank you for your unwavering focus on the mission over the past months. I thank your families for their commitment to you and the Army Reserve. The end of the 63rd RRC's chapter marks the start of a new beginning for us all.

~ Maj. Gen. Bruce A. Casella

## Top Talk

## To 63rd RRC Soldiers: Thanks for a Great Job!



A lot to share with you as we complete our transition and close our doors here at Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos, Calif. But before I do, please allow me to extend our best wishes and prayers to the families of both our Fallen Warriors and our Wounded Warriors. Know that though we close our doors here, you will always be in our prayers and thoughts.

To our deployed Warriors still in the fight, know too that each of you and your families are also in our daily prayers and thoughts. Though you'll come home to a different organization, the Soldiers around you will be your brethren from our ranks. So thank you and continue to stay focused on your mission at hand.

The past 16 months have been a dynamic time for all of us, as we have talked, planned and executed our transition from our legacy 63rd Regional Readiness Command to the new 63rd Regional Support Command. We experienced downsizing and growth, frustration and joy, and at times we thought tomorrow would never come.

As we depart, we say good-bye not just to the hundreds of thousands of Soldiers, military technicians, civilians and contractors who've walked our halls and contributed to our success. But also to the civilian organizations, community members, our sister services on post and our National Guard 40th Infantry Division brethren... Hooah! Our biggest debt of gratitude goes out to all family members who've no doubt been our silent partners, the backbone of our success... Thank you!

Our organization can look back at its history with pride. We've overcome hardships and obstacles not uncommon to organizations with as large a diversity of men and women. We've gone from stubby penciled, triple-carbon-copy, hand-written requisitions, to punching keys on a computer or BlackBerry, and like magic, "stuff happens." We've changed our uniforms, our headgear, how we train for war, and we've deployed our Soldiers to war and operations other than war... ALL this as Citizen Soldiers. Be proud Soldiers, you've done well!

To our leaders past and present, thank you for your mentorship, counsel, vision and friendship. To our future Leaders... don't forget our history. To all, it's been an honor and privilege for my family and me to serve alongside each and every one of you. Know you will never be forgotten. Stay safe and stay focused.

~ Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Roberson and Family  
PMA!

# The Blade

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## Disclaimer

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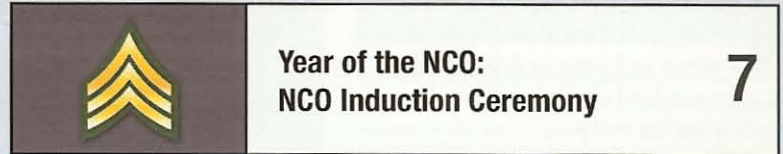
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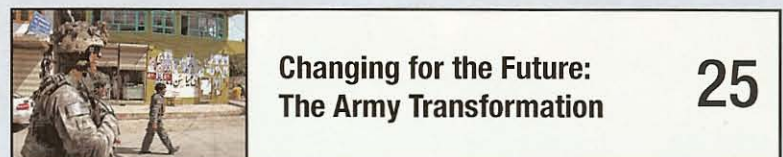
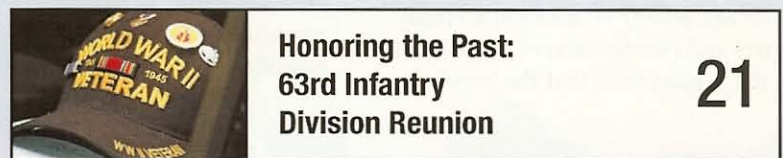
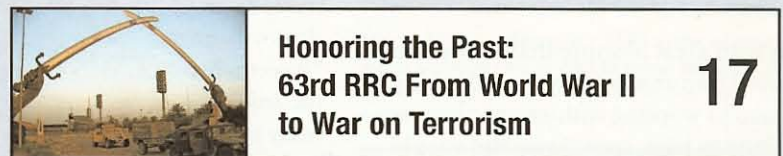
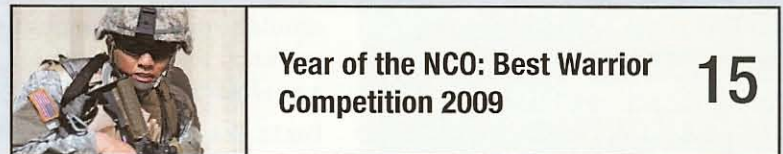
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## Corrections:

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# Soldiers organize supply lines to bases in Iraq, earn coveted combat patch

» Submitted by 3rd Expeditionary Sustainment Brigade PAO

Nearly 100 logistics Soldiers from the 304th Sustainment Brigade received a warm welcome in Balad, Iraq and soon after received combat patches in a ceremony earlier this year.

The Soldiers from the brigade, out of Riverside, Calif., have taken over the mission of organizing distribution of supplies – totaling 34 million gallons of water, 140,000 cases of packaged meals and 9,000 tons of ice – to bases throughout Iraq.

The unit has oversight of food service for up to 15,000 Soldiers a day and tracks more than \$5 million in purchases for Soldier and unit support. The three battalions have about 3,500 Soldiers assigned, representing 30 states.

Leaders of the 3rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command, out of Fort Knox, Ky., anxiously awaited the arrival of their 304th replacements at the air terminal.

“It is with great pleasure that we welcome our new teammates... and I am looking forward to working with everyone as we continue to plan, coordinate and supply the logistics to this theater of operations,” said 1st Sgt. Jeffery W. Bosworth, Headquarters and Headquarters Company. “I have the utmost faith that the transition...

will be seamless and logistics will continue to flow to the war fighter without a hitch.”

Spc. Marcus Hanni, a cross-leveled human resource information system specialist from Portland, Ore., expressed enthusiasm about his new mission. “Overall, I’m just happy to be here and I’m looking forward to this being a very good experience for me. From what I’ve seen thus far, I like it here.”

After one month in theater, they received their 3rd ESC combat patches from the ESC commander, Brig. Gen. Michael J. Lally. “Life and service in Iraq is inherently dangerous,” said Lally to the Soldiers. “You should be proud of your contributions and know that you are always going to be a good veteran of 3rd ESC.”

For Lt. Col. William R. Hruska, plans officer, it was his third deployment. “It seems like the 3rd ESC really took us under their wing and made us feel like one of the team.”

Spc. Sean M. Campbell, a help desk technician from Eugene, Ore., listened to the “Star Spangled Banner” while helicopters flew overhead and his eyes welled up with tears. “This ceremony signifies that you have gone overseas, you’ve done your duty, and you’ve done what you signed up for.”

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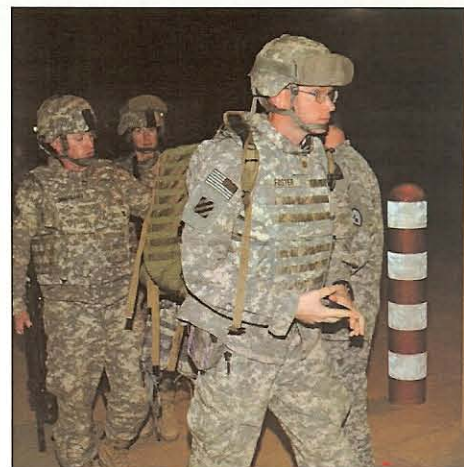
Soldiers from the 304th Sustainment Brigade salute during playing of the National Anthem during the combat patch ceremony. (Photo by Spc. Amanda D. Tucker)



Soldiers from the 304th Sustainment Brigade participate in combat patch ceremony at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.  
(Photo by Spc. Micheal Behlin)



First Lt. Denise Echols and her fellow unit members arrive at Joint Base Balad as they prepare to get their mission underway.  
(Photo by Spc. Micheal Behlin)



Ninety-eight members of the 304th arrive as replacements for the departing 70th Regional Readiness Command Soldiers, based out of Fort Lawton, Wash. (Photo by Spc. Micheal Behlin)



# 311th ESC Warriors return home to Heroes' Welcome

» By Pvt. Christian Young  
222nd Broadcast Operations Detachment

WEST LOS ANGELES – The Army band sat in a nook just a stone's throw away from the front of the raised main stage, on which the official party waited. Families nearby gazed proudly and affectionately upon the Soldiers standing tall in the formation before them.

The band broke out in song again as a strong gust of wind lifted an enormous American flag draped from the ladder of a fire department truck to pay tribute to the returning heroes.

More than 170 Soldiers from the 311th Expeditionary Sustainment Command, who specialize in the vast distribution of supplies to front line war fighters, were home from a yearlong deployment to Kuwait.

"It's a great day to be alive, and a great day to be in the Army," said Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Milton Herring, command chaplain for the 311th.

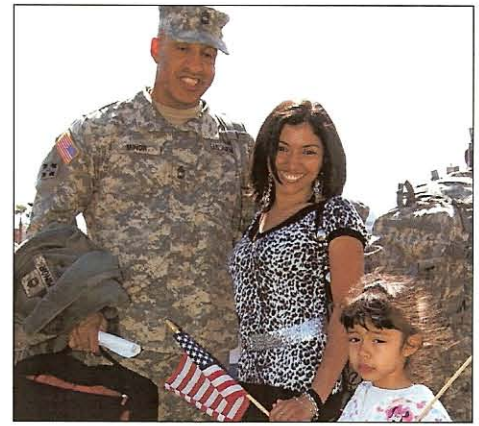
All eyes turned upward in anticipation of the four-plane honorary World War II aircraft flyover. Cheers and applause erupted from the onlookers; cameras flashed, cell phones recorded, and children squealed in delight as the planes passed overhead, and then circled around for a

second pass. A few minutes later, the Los Angeles Fire Department rescue helicopters swooped by in a second salute to the 311th's "Log Warriors" and more cheers resounded.

The 311th was deployed for nearly a year at Camp Arifjan. It was the first such command in the Kuwait-Iraq theater of operations. The logistics Soldiers managed the distribution of 250 million gallons of aircraft fuel, 17,500 trucks with perishable food, more than 4,000 armored Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles and much more throughout their tour.

They also directed more than 4,500 convoys and deployed or redeployed more than 25 brigade combat teams averaging 2,500 Soldiers each.

Families and friends overwhelmed the Soldiers as they stepped off the buses from the airport that brought the Soldiers to their loved ones. Through the hugs and cheers, the Soldiers had difficulty recovering their bags as their families and loved ones clung to them. None could contain their joy upon reuniting that day – the day the Log Warriors had come home safe into waiting arms.



Master Sgt. William G. Minor greets family after returning from deployment to Kuwait. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Amy M. Ou)



(Photo by Kent Ambrose)



Anxious children await the return of their mother, who deployed with the 311th Expeditionary Sustainment Command from West Los Angeles. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Amy M. Ou)



Soldiers and families gather to greet the 311th Expeditionary Sustainment Command soldiers returning from a yearlong deployment to Kuwait, where they provided essential supplies to units working throughout Kuwait and Iraq. (Photo on left by Kent Ambrose, Photo on right by Staff Sgt. Amy M. Ou)

# Soldiers march in Utah parade, connect with citizens, honor state history

» Story and Photos by Pvt. Kayla F. Benson, 358th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

SALT LAKE CITY – On a day with temperatures soaring to 104 degrees and countless spectators cheering, more than 100 Soldiers marched in clipped precision in a historical annual parade here – interacting with the community and honoring Utah’s history.

The Soldiers from the 191st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, took the initiative at the annual Days of ’47 Parade, commemorating early pioneers who arrived in state more than a century ago.

They marched in four columns, with color guards up front hoisting fluttering U.S. and Army flags, followed by “trail” vehicles with family members and water for the hot day. Thousands of people packed the curbs to watch the Soldiers, and many other entries including Mormon-themed floats pass by.

About 90 percent of the Soldiers have been deployed one or more times in what are now called Overseas Contingency Operations to Iraq and other locations.

“I think it’s great for people to see Soldiers give back to the community,” said Staff Sgt. Preston Prieto, a participant.

The Days of ’47 Parade is the culmination of a two week long celebration in honor of Mormon pioneers arriving in the Utah Valley July 24, 1847. The celebration involves activities such as rodeos, fireworks, concerts, and parades throughout July.



Soldiers of the 191st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion march proudly down a boulevard during the recent parade in Salt Lake City.

The scale of the celebration is comparable to that of the Fourth of July.

“Throughout the parade route, wherever they marched by, people stood up and applauded,” said Master Sgt. Kerry B. Miller, acting sergeant major for the battalion. “It’s important for Soldiers to get the recognition for their efforts and a parade like this can be the best way to do it. It gets my Soldiers acknowledgement from the community.”

The unit also organized a family day back at Camp Douglas.

“There were about 600 people who participated,” said Miller. “We had inflatable mazes and slides and cotton candy for the kids.”

The 191st was activated in August 2007, and had been rolled over from the 307th

Quartermaster Battalion. Soon after, they were deployed to Iraq, serving as the garrison command at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, near Tikrit.

The unit ran the installation to provide power, electricity, sewer pickup, billeting, and lodging of guest personnel, according to Miller.

Meanwhile, the 191st Soldiers reflected on the parade.

“It hits you right in the chest that there’s still people out there who don’t know who you are or your name, but stand and clap for you,” said Prieto.

“A ‘thank you’ goes a lot farther than a pay check ever will,” said Miller. “We need to have our face out in the public.”



Soldiers from the 191st get ready to march in the historic Days of ’47 Parade in Salt Lake City.



Salt Lake City community members give a standing ovation as 191st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion Soldiers pass by during the parade, honoring Utah pioneers.



*'No one is more professional'*

## New NCOs honored at induction ceremony

» By Sgt. Scott Akanewich  
63rd RRC Public Affairs

**T**hey rose from their seats in unison and recited the time-honored Non-commissioned Officer Creed that so many of their stripes-wearing brothers and sisters had done before them. “No one is more professional than I,” they said in unity, before continuing on reciting the mantra of the noncommissioned officer.

Nearly 70 newly-promoted sergeants were inducted into the NCO Corps at the Liberty Theater on August 9 during a touching and often poignant ceremony. Soldiers from all over the U.S. were recognized, including Soldiers from states as far away as Pennsylvania.

One of those in attendance was Sgt. Krista Spegel of the 909th Human Resources Command in Portland, Ore. “This ceremony represents a tradition to me,”

said Spegel. “I’ve had some good NCOs and I hope to live up to their standards.”

Spegel said a good sergeant needs to be reliable when it comes to the Soldiers under their charge. “This is so your superiors and subordinates can count on you to get the job done,” she said.

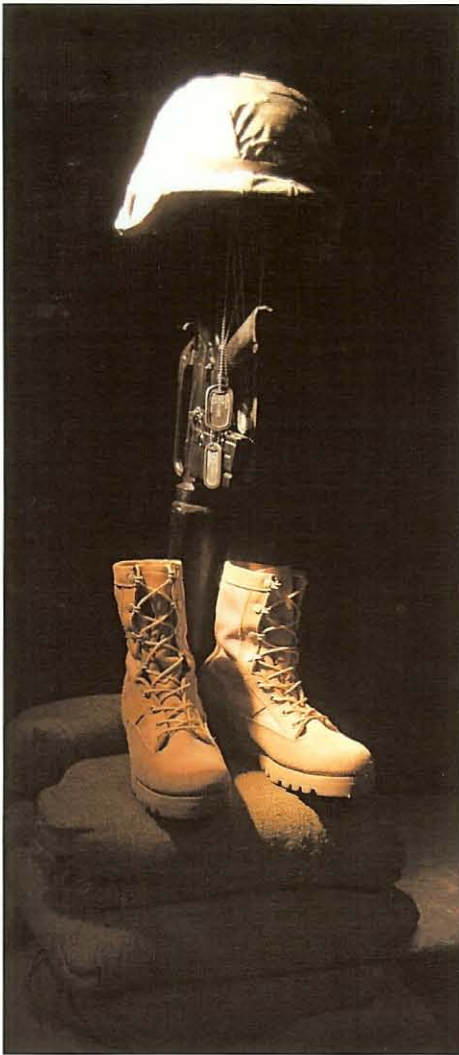
Before the inductees were recognized, 63rd RRC’s Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Roberson posthumously inducted seven NCOs who died during predeployment, deployment and postdeployment. A tribute video highlighting the lives of the fallen played before the emotional Roberson read through the list of fallen comrades.

The guest speaker was Sgt. Maj. Jesse Acosta, who lost his eyesight in a mortar attack while deployed in Iraq in 2006.

His words washed over the audience with a wave of inspiration as the soft-spoken man with a powerful message delivered it with conviction. He spoke of his journey through the ranks, his taste of leadership as a brand-new corporal, and his final achievement of pinning on sergeant major rank, just days before his injury occurred.

“It’s going to take more than a bomb to stop me,” he said, followed by a roar of approval from the audience.

One by one, the NCOs marched up the steps, past the fallen Soldier memorial and across the stage between two rows of larger-than-life leaders. They received plaques and congratulations from Roberson and Acosta before humbly returning to their seats.



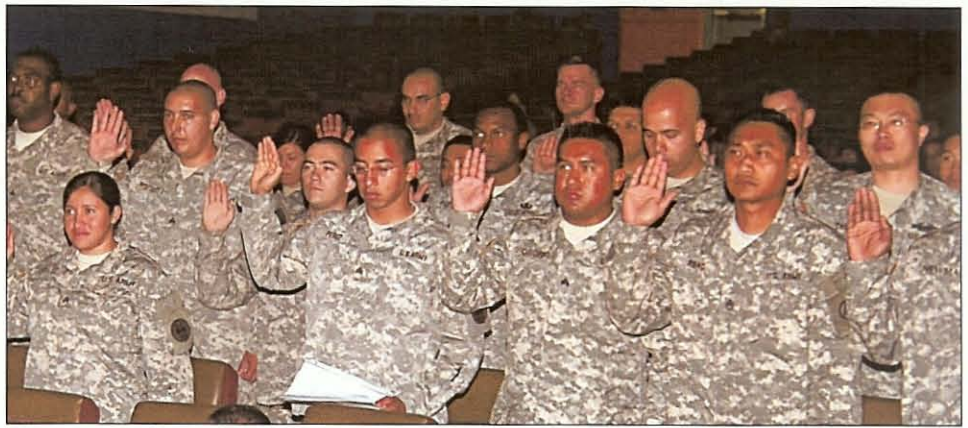
Helmet, rifle, boots and dog tags during the ceremony signify the loss of a Soldier. Seven fallen Soldiers of the 63rd Regional Readiness Command were posthumously inducted during the ceremony. (Photo by Sgt. Scott Akanewich)

The crossing of the stage represented the final rite of passage for these Soldiers as they embrace their newly-bestowed leadership responsibility.

For Sgt. Kevin Rouse of the 645th Transportation Company in Las Vegas, it was his chance to finally show he has what it takes to be a leader.

“This ceremony means you’ve become an NCO and it’s great,” said Rouse. “People know you’re ready to train Soldiers.”

Gathered under camouflage netting and palm trees, Sgt. David Tucker, a chaplain’s assistant with the 63rd said he was impressed with the event and how it made him feel. Tucker had been promoted while on active duty, but was never formally inducted.



Attendees at the Noncommissioned Officer Induction Ceremony came from all over the U.S. to take part in the last ceremony of this kind for the 63rd Regional Readiness Command. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Amy M. Ou)



Sgt. 1st Class Elissa A. Habenicht, of the 63rd Regional Readiness Command’s Inspector General’s office, lights a candle during the Noncommissioned Officer Induction Ceremony. The event recognized 70 newly-promoted NCOs from across the U.S. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Amy M. Ou)

“It’s something special,” said Tucker, who completed tours at Fort Campbell and Fort Irwin before moving to the Reserve upon his exit from active duty. “You’re formally and properly recognized in front of your peers — it’s truly an honor.”

Roberson cited the ceremony as a chance to reinforce the responsibilities these young men and women now have. “It helps our young NCOs recognize and reaffirm their commitment to Soldiers.

“It’s not easy being an NCO, especially in a time of war with the operations tempo we’re currently working at,” said Roberson.

“This is an opportunity for all Soldiers, NCOs and officers to take away the positive and carry on the tradition.”



Staff Sgt. Amy M. Ou, computer systems analyst, of the 63rd Regional Readiness Command, stands in formation after being inducted into the NCO Corps. (Photo by Sgt. Scott Akanewich)

# Intel Soldier finds fulfillment in uniform

» By Sgt. Scott Akanewich  
63rd RRC Public Affairs



**S**gt. 1st Class Carlean Wood always wanted to join the Army – right out of high school, as a matter of fact – but a funny thing happened.

Life got in the way.

“The Army had what I was looking for in life,” said Wood, who currently serves as security manager for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 63rd Regional Readiness Command. “It offered structure, discipline, education, travel and a distinct mission.”

Finally, in 1991 at age 27, she got her chance. Now, after nearly two decades of service to her country, the Perry Township, Ohio native looks back with a sense of pride and accomplishment.

She said she sees a distinct improvement in today’s modern-day Army compared to the fighting force she became a part of 20 years ago.

“The Army is much more Soldier-oriented now,” said Wood. “They’re catching up with the individual Soldier’s needs. The importance of family is also being recognized as far as how Army life impacts (Soldiers) as a whole, which is crucial.”

Being an NCO is something Wood said has given her great satisfaction. “An NCO is the epitome of what a Soldier should be,” she said. “It encompasses knowledge, discipline, uniformity, mentoring and leading by example.”

Wood has continually strived to advance her career through many different training programs offered to her by the Army. She has the ability to quickly learn different skills.

Today she is qualified in four military occupational specialties – including psychological operations (37F), combat medic (91B), retention and transition NCO (79V) and human resources specialist (42A).

“I love change, challenges and learning,” she said. “There’s so much to do and see out there.”

According to Wood, her most enjoyable years were during the decade she worked in psychological operations with the Special Forces.

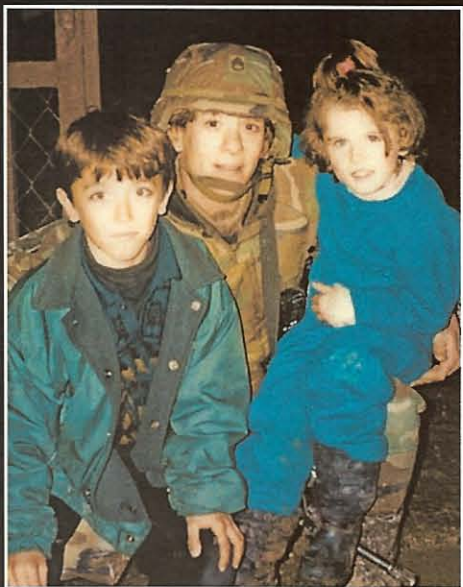
“It’s my favorite because we were rarely in garrison,” she said. “We were always out training, and learning a broad spectrum of Soldier-unit skills. There was always something new – it was the best.”

She said that being an NCO is her proudest accomplishment.

“For almost 20 years, I think I’ve helped a lot of Soldiers,” she said. “Many of them have gone on to become fine NCOs and officers.”

For Wood, this is what the Army truly means to her. “It’s not about medals, ribbons or coins,” she said. “It’s about doing your job as a Soldier with pride and honor.”

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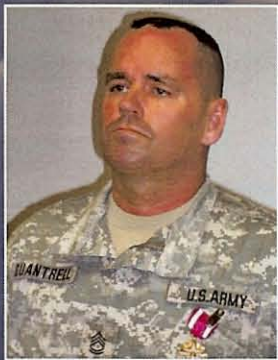


# Chaplain NCO Going Airborne

» By Sgt. Scott Akanewich  
63rd RRC Public Affairs



Sgt. 1st Class Edward Quantrell began his Army career as a combat Soldier – first joining the National Guard in 1986, then serving on active duty for six years, but there's one thing he never got to do – jump out of the proverbial perfectly-good airplane.



Now, after all these years, Quantrell, 47, until recently the 63rd RRC Chaplains' Office NCOIC, is finally getting his chance. He starts Oct. 19.

"I'm excited," said Quantrell. "I was trying to go airborne my whole career, but I never got the chance because the units I was in weren't airborne and slots were hard to come by. So, after a while, I gave up on it. Now, the Army is finally giving me the chance."

Quantrell knows what's ahead of him from a physical standpoint and is preparing himself accordingly.

"Now, I have to work out harder," he said. "I've always been in shape, but I have to step it up a little more."

This won't be the first school for Quantrell, who believes NCOs should all be properly trained for the responsibilities they are faced with.

"I'm old-school," he said. "I believe you should attend school, then get promoted. You had to be nominated and earn your

promotion when I was in the Regular Army. The young Soldier needs to gain confidence before taking on a position of higher authority. If a Soldier doesn't have confidence and is uncomfortable with more rank, they should prepare themselves."

This is the blueprint he has followed throughout his career.

"Whenever I had the opportunity to go to a school, I went – PLDC, BNCOC, ANCOG," he said. "My biggest pet peeve is a Soldier wanting the stripes and the (higher) pay but not wanting to do what it takes to merit them."

The 9/11 attacks brought Quantrell back after seven years of civilian life.

"I had to be part of the Army, to be part of the War on Terrorism," he said. "We still don't have enough patriotic folks, in my opinion. I came back as an E-4, made my E-6 in a year-and-a-half. I had NCOs asking me for advice – they knew I was an experienced combat-arms NCO. Even though I had two breaks in service, the Army has always been in my blood."

According to Quantrell, this is a perfect time for NCOs to evaluate themselves.

"Hopefully, by designating 2009 the Year of the NCO, NCOs will stop and take account of the importance of their position in the Army. They should challenge themselves and keep in mind we are the 'Backbone' of the Army," he said. "All the NCO has to do is look at the NCO Creed and he or she will have an answer to many of the problems and challenges they may encounter. Just do what's right."



# Army Reserve boat Soldiers transport airplane fuselage from Hawaii to Virginia

*Soldier from 63rd RRC unit embeds with ship, dispatches blogs for first time*

» Story and photos by Sgt. Luis Delgadillo  
302nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Army Reserve boat Soldiers braved more than 8,000 miles of ocean turbulence for 38 days, plowing through the water from Hawaii to California, through the Panama Canal and ultimately to Virginia.

And all to deliver a product normally found high in the air—a C-17 airplane fuselage. The mission saved the taxpayers about \$1 million by using a military as opposed to civilian vessel.

It was an incredible mission for me to cover as a public affairs Soldier.

Before the fuselage was ever donated, the Soldiers had plans to make the long journey to take care of routine maintenance and get any upgrades their vessel needed. Then the Army Reserve decided to deliver the fuselage, via the LSV-7 SSGT Robert T. Kuroda, piloted by the 548th Transportation Detachment, out of Hawaii.

“We found out in May that we would have to go to a shipyard on the East Coast and we would probably have to leave in July to make that happen,” said Lt. Col. Andrew Troske, commander of the 302nd Transportation Terminal Battalion. “Three weeks into that planning ... we found out there was a fuselage that needed to be picked up.”

The journey from Bishop Point, Hawaii, the 548th’s home station, brought their football-field-size vessel across the Pacific to Seal Beach, Calif., where they picked up the C-17 fuselage and traveled through the Panama Canal to reach their destination.

Along with their day-to-day activities, the engineers, deckhands, and leadership also completed other training tasks like certifying Combat Lifesavers and conducting fire drills, as well as man-over-board and abandon-ship drills.

“They’re definitely better now than they were when we left. We strive to get manned-and-ready reports for fire drills



*As viewed from the bridge of their vessel, Soldiers of the LSV-7 SSGT Robert T. Kuroda, 548th Transportation Detachment of Bishop Point, Hawaii pound through waves as they sail the Atlantic en route to Fort Eustis, Va.*

below four minutes,” said Chief Warrant Officer Michael A. Hanten. “When we first started off we were in the five- to six-minute timeframe and in the last (drill) they were manned and ready in less than three minutes.”

The trip, which was only possible through the collaboration between all of the units involved, went smoothly but it was not without some hang-ups.

Rough seas and a debilitating flu-like virus began to wear out the crew pre-

maturely. With fevers up to 104 degrees manifesting in some of the crew, the already demanding 24-hour operations were even more taxing.

With treatment from 1st. Lt. Jonathan Roberts, an Army nurse from the 1984th Army Hospital and some self-aid, the Soldiers made it through their ordeal. Roberts, who was the trainer for the CLS courses, said he treated the ones who were severely ill and advised the others to drink some water.

From California, the Soldiers of the Kuroda passed through the Panama Canal and into rough seas. Tensions were running high among the junior enlisted aboard the ship but the crew's collective sense of duty kept the blades of the propellers turning.

The transit through the Caribbean proved uneventful, but the monotony and the 25 days of being underway made the Soldiers eager for the end of the sail. The arrival to Fort Eustis signaled the end of their mission.

Troske spoke with the Soldiers after they arrived and told them how impressed he was of the work they had done, and the work the planners had done.

On Aug. 19, while Soldiers continued to prep the vessel for the shipyard, the burden of the C-17 fuselage was lifted from the main deck of the Kuroda and Soldiers of the 7th Sustainment Brigade took responsibility for it.

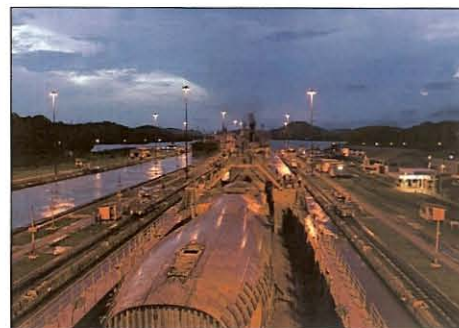
Sailing with the 548th were Soldiers from six other units, including an active component Soldier from the 544th Transportation Detachment. The Reserve Soldiers supporting the mission were from the 203rd Transportation Detachment out of Curtis Bay, Md., the 805th Transportation Detachment (part of 63rd RRC) of Tacoma, Wash., the 310th Expeditionary Sustainment Command from Indianapolis, the 302nd Transportation Terminal Battalion from Fort Shafer, Hawaii, and the 1984th Army Hospital.

The donated Boeing C-17 fuselage went to the future Center for Sustainment Excellence in Fort Lee, Va. which will be a training site for active component Soldiers. The center is part of the plan for the future of Army Logistics. In the plan, the site at Fort Eustis will house the Army Logistics University, Sustainment Center of Excellence, and the Logistics Corps.

For now, the Kuroda will sit idle and undergo its scheduled maintenance and upgrades. The Soldiers who came together to get it to dry dock will continue on; some are returning to their civilian professions, while others go back to their routine Army Reserve activities and the last group will oversee the rejuvenation of the 548th sleeping giant.



Soldiers of the 548th Transportation Detachment, aboard the LSV-7 SSGT Robert T. Kuroda cool the outer hatch of a compartment that is suspected of being on fire during a staged fire drill aboard the ship.



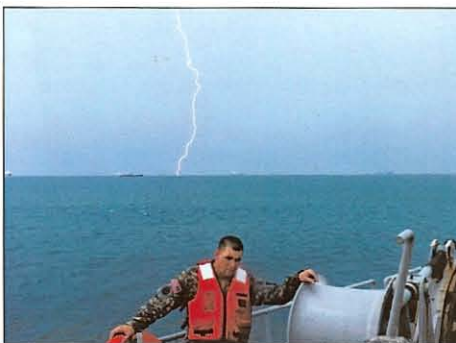
Soldiers of the Kuroda pass through a set of locks in the Panama Canal and enter Lake Gatun traveling west to east.



Warrant Officer Kate Jackson, of the 203rd Transportation Detachment, and the third mate aboard the Kuroda, prepare to administer intravenous fluids to Combat Lifesaver Instructor 1st Lt. Jonathan Roberts, a nurse with the 1984th Army Hospital.



Chief Warrant Officer Vicky Lipps, the first engineer (bottom right), and the Chief Engineer John T. Owens II both with the 548th Transportation Detachment struggle to fix a power glitch in the Kuroda's hydraulic wench anchor system in the bow thruster room of the ship. (Top) Owens changes filters that were melted by hydraulic fluid.



Sgt. John Otis, currently assigned to the Kuroda, 548th Transportation Detachment, from his active-duty unit, the 544th Transportation Detachment, awaits orders from the bridge to drop anchor during a lightning storm.



Sailing with the 548th Transportation Detachment were Soldiers from six other units, including an active component Soldier from the 544th Transportation Detachment.



# Training Tradition

## *63rd hosts final leadership course*

» Story and photos by  
Sgt. Scott Akanewich  
63rd RRC Public Affairs

Lt. Col. Hal Moore's men nervously glanced skyward upon hearing the incoming radio transmissions crackle across the wavelengths from the Central Highlands of Vietnam during a training exercise in the Georgia foothills.

The officers and enlisted Soldiers of 4th Battalion, 7th Cavalry would soon find themselves in the midst of the chaos of gunfire and screams they were hearing from thousands of miles away – and they were scared. Moore could see this in the eyes of his men. So, to calm their fears, he related a story about how Crazy Horse and the Sioux tribe fought as a family and how by doing so forged a stronger allegiance with one another, thus increasing their survivability in battle.

“Take care of your men,” Moore advised his troopers. “Teach them to take care of each other – because when this starts, each other is all we’re going to have.”

This clip from the movie “We Were Soldiers” was just one of many leadership examples illustrated by the instructors at the 63rd Regional Readiness Command’s annual Company Team Leader Development Course at B.T. Collins Army Reserve Center in Sacramento July 22-26.

The course was the first one of its kind that recognizes the unique challenges and leadership dynamics of Army Reserve units. It was pioneered nearly a decade ago by the 63rd RRC and has proven to be a trailblazer when it comes to bringing together the “triad of leadership” most Reserve units have in place, consisting of its commander, first sergeant and unit administrator.

Due to the uniqueness of the command structure of Army Reserve units, it’s not always the commander who calls the shots all the time, said Col. Gopal Khalsa, course director, who was presiding over this, the last course before the reorganization of the 63rd.

“In a lot of units, the unit administrator is the person in charge during the week and it could even be a civilian in some cases who are military technicians,” he said. “This is the only course in the Army to train commanders, first sergeants and unit administrators to work as a team.”

According to Khalsa, there is a distinct objective for this type of synergy to be achieved within a unit, he said.

“If nobody understands what’s going on, it won’t work,” said Khalsa. “Everyone has to be on the same page for the command to have a clear vision. This course gives them a sanctuary for developing as a team.”

The course is broken down into three phases, which are smoothly integrated over the five-day period.

The most extensive is the classroom portion, which includes certified instructors in subjects such as conflict management, building and maintaining cohesiveness and others like safety, Family Readiness Group and fund-raising.

“This gives them a base knowledge of what’s important,” said Khalsa.

The second phase is the team-building activities the attendees participate in amongst themselves, then share ideas with the others units. The classroom is set up in a configuration of several tables facing different directions, so the units can easily converse and collaborate. After all, this is a learning experience for these Soldiers, not a competition. It’s during this type of interaction strengths and personalities are discovered and employed to build successful battle plans.

The third phase of the course – taught by drill sergeants -- involves basic soldiering skills such as physical training and drill and ceremony.

“This is stuff they don’t do every day at their units,” said Khalsa. “It’s something they can take back with them and create more structure within their units.”

Staff Sgt. Yu Chen of the 555th Transportation Company Detachment could feel the cohesive vibes as the groups worked individually, as well as collectively, to solve problems and find better, more efficient methods of getting things done, she said. “Ours is a very unique unit because of its small size,” Chen said of the “triple-nickel,” as it’s known. “This encourages us to work closer together.”

Master Sgt. Christina Steiner, chief instructor for 84th Training Command was one of those on hand to provide guidance to those in attendance. The 84th, out of Fort McCoy, Wis., teaches a nationwide leadership course and were invited by the 63rd as guest instructors.

“There’s a definite need for this,” said Steiner. “We consistently get positive feedback.”

Steiner also pointed out although her and her crack staff are very good at what they do, they always strive to be even better.

“We’re constantly going to schools to improve ourselves,” she said.

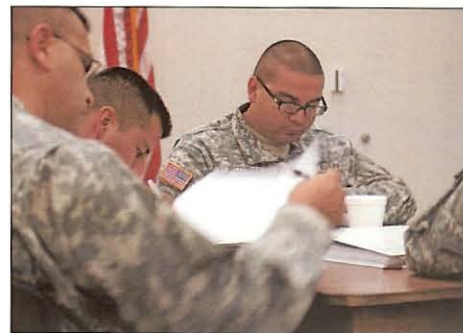
After five days of nearly non-stop mental and physical instruction, Capt. Matthew Larrison, 491st MP Company commander had absorbed quite a bit of useful knowledge, he said.

“We learned not only how to revise and support the command vision to set the next commander up for success, but also how to prioritize, so we can get the most out of our Soldiers and NCOs,” said Larrison.

He highlighted the portion of the course dealing in learning and handling different personalities as being especially helpful.



Director of the Company Team Leadership Development Course, Col. Gopal Khalsa, speaks with an attendee from the 11th Military Police Brigade of Los Alamitos, Calif. Khalsa said he enjoys the five-day course because it fosters unit cohesion.



Pablo E. Albizuores, of the 639rd Quartermaster Company, 311th Expeditionary Sustainment Command, takes part in the course at the B.T. Collins Army Reserve Center in Sacramento, Calif.

“Knowing and understanding Soldiers’ personalities is important because how you treat them affects their work,” said Larrison. “You have to know which buttons to push.”

Khalsa summed up the effectiveness of the course by citing the fact officers, enlisted and civilians are brought together.

“There’s no other school where you’re going to bring the command team together like this,” he said. “We get a lot done in a short amount of time.”



Soldiers attending the five-day Company Team Leadership Development Course work on unit cohesion, conduct group physical fitness training and learn how to streamline their leadership skills during the intensive course.

# Best Warrior Competition Heats Up Fort Hunter-Liggett

» Story and photos by Kalen Arreola  
63rd RRC Public Affairs



Sgt. Martin Arcilla, 380th CONUS Replacement Center Battalion located in Bothell, Wash. was selected as Noncommissioned Officer of the Year.

**O**n a scorching hot day, 19 Soldiers ran, walked and mentally pushed through a 6-mile road march as temperatures soared into triple digits.

The 2009 63rd RRC Best Warrior Competition at Fort Hunter-Liggett, Calif., kicked off with an Army Physical Fitness Test and the events kept moving at a dizzying pace.

“When the competitors leave here, we are hoping that they go back to their units and share their experience and knowledge with their units to prepare other competitors for next year,” said Sgt. Matthew Vidmar, Soldier of the Year for 2008.

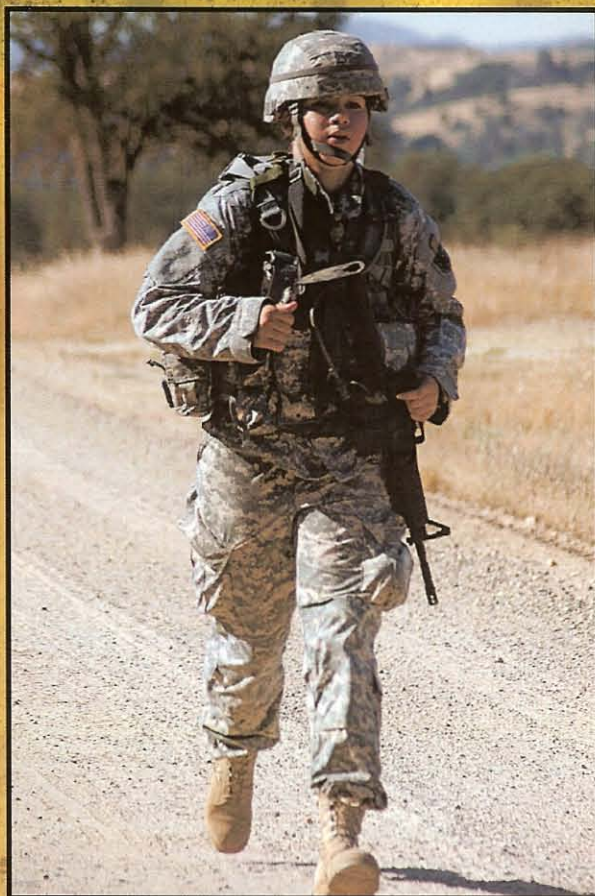
Each day of the four-day competition began early and ended late, but the action never ceased. Among the activities the Soldiers were required to complete were a Class A uniform inspection, urban

orienteeing, land navigation, Warrior Training Tasks and Combat Lifesaver skills.

The selected winners were NCO of the Year Sgt. Martin Arcilla and Soldier of the Year Spc. Joshua Belcher. Arcilla went on to compete in the U.S Army Reserve national competition in July. Winners there take on the top Soldiers from the Reserve, National Guard and the active Army.

Many of the Soldiers trained with a sponsor for weeks to be ready to compete. Each year, the top NCO and the top Soldier are named, based on their overall scores in every event.

“I worked out every day, alternating between different workouts. I did push ups and sit ups every day, and I ran with weights,” said Arcilla. “I was shocked when they called my name, because we weren’t given scores, no hints at whether we won or not – nothing.”



*Pfc. Delaney Hall, 11th Aviation Command (Theater), takes third place in the road march during the 2009 63rd Regional Readiness Command's Best Warrior Competition at Fort Hunter-Liggett, Calif.*



The 32-year-old human resources NCO belongs to the 380th OCONUS (Outside the Continental United States) Replacement Center Battalion, in Bothell, Wash., part of 311th Expeditionary Sustainment Command.

He grew up in the Philippines where he saw Soldiers save his village from militant groups. After that, he said he knew he wanted to join the Army, but he just never knew it would be the United States Army.

"I can't believe I am serving in the best Army in the world," he said.

Spc. Joshua Belcher is an information technology specialist in the 395th Financial Management Company in Salt Lake City.

"I had no expectation to win because I thought I did poorly on the fitness test and the board, but I kept a positive

attitude and tried to do well on the events I knew I was stronger in," said Belcher. "I had experience with the M-249 rifle and M-9 pistol so I was happy I remembered how to take them apart."

Belcher said he joined the Army Reserve because of his older brother in the active Army, but he wanted to make sure he had time to do mission work in other countries. After finishing his required schools in the Army Reserve, Belcher was able to work at a mission in Costa Rica for two years while his unit was deployed.

"I changed a little after high school, and started to really love my country; I also needed money to go to college," he said.



*Maj. Gen. Bruce Casella shakes the hands of the Best Warrior Competition competitors during their awards ceremony at Fort Hunter-Liggett, Calif.*

# World War II, Desert Storm, Iraqi Freedom: 63rd RRC looks back at colorful history

Compiled from 63rd RRC Historical Records

**B**lood and Fire. That dramatic slogan and logo of the 63rd Infantry Division originated at an intense international conference in Casablanca, Morocco.

The time was 1943 and the world was engulfed in war against Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan. Winston Churchill, prime minister of England declared, "The enemy shall bleed and burn in expiation for their crimes against humanity."

A crack unit was needed to help stop the Nazi juggernaut in Europe. Brig. Gen. Louis Hibbs became the commander of the 63rd. Taking a cue from Churchill, designed the logo – a blood-spattered dagger over a crimson flame. The 63rd Infantry Division was activated at Camp Blanding, Fla., and then moved to Camp Van Dorn, Miss.

Hibbs ordered the most effective training possible. The mess halls were closed and Soldiers ate all their chow in the field out of their mess kits. The troops fought battles in mock German villages. The Soldiers often used live ammunition and

detonated explosives during the training as well.

They proclaimed to people, "I am a combat Soldier! What do you have to be proud of?" Officer and enlisted alike gave a greeting and smile with every salute to help forge comradeship in preparation for war. Training for the European theater lasted a year-and-a-half.

The infantry Soldiers packed into four ships including a converted Italian luxury liner and landed in Marseille, France, in December 1944. They soon headed north to join 7th Army near the German border and were then broken into regimental teams. Victories started right away. Soon after, the division's 254th Infantry Regiment captured Hill 216, eliminating it as an enemy position.

Division Soldiers then invaded the "Colmar pocket," a German stronghold in the Volgues Mountains. They broke through after eight days of fierce battles in icy, winter weather.

The "Blood and Fire" Warriors then faced their biggest challenge—the Siegfried line, girded with bunkers, mine field and tank traps. Hitler bragged the Allies would never penetrate it. He was wrong.

"Beyond the Siegfried line lies crumbling Germany, the Rhine and victory," declared Hibbs. "Your immediate task is to open the gate for the armored divisions. Yours is the honor and glory... Take it away! Strike fast and viciously."

Army engineers built a pontoon bridge enabling troops and vehicles to cross the Rhine River. The 63rd broke through the Siegfried line through the towns of St. Ingbert and Hassel after seven days of bloody battle in March 1945.

The division's fighting record continued. In April, after savage combat in the Hardhauser Woods, the 63rd Soldiers defeated the elite 17th SS unit (also known as Schutzstaffel, which translated means Protective Squad). After many more front-line battles, the Germans surrendered to the allies in May 1945.

## Timeline Milestones

1943 – 63rd Infantry Division idea originates in Casablanca, Morocco under Commander Brig. Gen. Louis Hibbs to fight in World War II.



Dec. 1944 – Soldiers land in Marseille, France.

June 1945 – 63rd suffered losses of more than 1,000 Soldiers killed, 5,000 wounded, 1,000 missing in action, 63 captured by the enemy and 4,000 non-battle casualties. The division captured more than 21,000 Soldiers.



1940

1945

1950

1955



March 1945 – Soldiers break the Siegfried Line in Germany.  
May 1945 – Soldiers defeat the elite 17th SS unit.



Sept. 1945 – 63rd Inf. Div. is deactivated and Soldiers moved to the 19th Armored Division and 13th Armored Division.



March 1952 – 63rd Inf. Div. reactivated during the Korean War, replacing the 13th Armored Division and absorbing its assets.

By the end of World War II, the Soldiers of the 63rd Infantry Division had represented their unit with distinction. The 63rd regiments had engaged in three battle campaigns and were awarded seven Distinguished Unit Awards (now called Presidential Unit Citations).

Two Soldiers were awarded the Medal of Honor for exceptional valor during the campaigns: Sgt. John R. Crews and (posthumously) 1st Lt. James E. Robinson Jr., for whom the 63 RRC headquarters building is named.

From December 1944 to May 1945, the division suffered more than 1,000 Soldiers killed, 5,000 wounded, 1,000 missing in action, 63 captured by the enemy and 4,000 non-battle casualties. The division captured more than 21,000 Soldiers.

The 63rd Infantry Division returned home in the fall and was disestablished Sept. 27, 1945, though many of its personnel continued as a unit under the names of the 19th Armored Division and 13th Armored Division.

Then came the Korean War. The 63rd Infantry Division colors flew again in 1952, when the unit was reactivated and assigned to the U.S. Army Reserve. The division was reactivated in Los Angeles on March 1, 1952, with Maj. Gen. Henry Kellogg as commander.

For the first time since World War II, the division engaged in infantry training, this time at Hunter-Liggett Military Reservation in 1952. The 63rd reestab-

lished at Camp Roberts, the famed West Coast Infantry Center during World War II and the Korean War, as the official headquarters for annual training.

Although headquartered at Camp Roberts, units and personnel in the 63rd trained in places like Fort Irwin, Calif., near the desert town of Barstow, and at further locations like Fort Lewis, Wash. On Nov. 1, 1961, Maj. Gen. William J. Hixson assumed command of the 63rd Infantry Division from Maj. Gen. Kellogg.

The 1960s developed into a time of turmoil and unrest within the military. Transitioning from the Korean War to the Vietnam War resulted in the massive restructuring of the United States' combat forces. In 1965, 13 Army Reserve divisions deactivated in a branch-wide restructuring. The 63rd folded its flag during this period as well.

As the active Army and the Reserve forces adjusted to new commands and structures, the notion of the Army Reserve Commands, or ARCOMs, started to take shape. These senior Army commands became the structure for the next 30 years. In November 1967, the Army ordered Brig. Gen. Louis Kaufman, commander of the 311th Logistical Command, to form a new Army Reserve Command, redesignated as the 63rd ARCOM, starting out at Patton Barracks in Bell, Calif.

The 63rd Infantry Division colors flew proudly once again under a new name.

In the beginning, the ARCOM struggled to equip and train the units with little or no money, recalled Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Theodore Paulson, former 63rd commander. The total Army concept had yet to fully take shape and the Reserve elements suffered from a significant lack of funding and support. As the years went on, the situation gradually improved.

As schools and equipment became available, the ARCOM steadily improved both its readiness and retention. In fact, even during the height of the Vietnam War the ARCOM's strength jumped almost 30 percent. Eventually, the 311th Support Brigade (previously 311th Logistical Command) came under the command of the ARCOM, which further increased its overall strength and readiness.

The 63rd ARCOM continued in the mission of being trained and ready for combat and combat support during the tensions of the Cold War.

The command had a major test in 1990-1991 during a crisis triggered by Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein. Then called the 63rd Regional Support Command, the unit proved its mettle after decades of peacetime training.

Hussein's military invaded Kuwait in 1990, claiming the small nation as part of his own territory. He rejected months of United Nations' demands for withdrawal. The UN and the Western world then took action.



Nov. 1961 – Maj. Gen. William J. Hixson assumed command of the 63rd Infantry Division from Maj. Gen. Kellogg.



Nov. 1967 – Brig. Gen. Louis Kaufman is ordered to form a new Army Reserve Command, re-designated as the 63rd Army Reserve Command (ARCOM)

1960

1965

1970

1975



1965 – The Army transitions from the Korean War to the Vietnam War and 13 Army Reserve divisions deactivated in a branch-wide restructuring, including the 63rd Inf. Div.

1967 - 1989 – The 63rd ARCOM takes command of the 311th Support Brigade and continued its training during the Cold War. The 63rd also changed from an ARCOM to a Regional Support Command.



## Colorful History continued...

Amid the massive international mobilizations were 22 units called up from the 63rd. They deployed both in the United States and the Middle East in support of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

The 348th Transportation Company from Phoenix, with 68 Soldiers, mobilized to Fort Huachuca, Ariz., and then to Saudi Arabia. The unit's truck drivers logged 400,000 miles, delivering 6 million gallons of fuel, 475,000 gallons of water, and 95,000 pounds of mail along with other cargo.

The 6632nd Port Security Detachment from Irvine, Calif., was sent to Presidio of San Francisco. Its Soldiers were then assigned to port security duties in Oakland, Calif.; Houston and Beaumont, Texas; and Sunnyside, N.C.

The 129th Evacuation Hospital from San Diego deployed to the United Arab Emirates to operate a medical facility with 50 beds. Though encountering no battle casualties, the unit treated nearly 400 patients from NATO and the U.S. Navy and Air Force.

Numerous 63rd Soldiers received the Bronze Star Medal for outstanding duty. Among them was Staff Sgt. Chris Cargill of the 348th. Cargill was on a supply mission near Dhahran, when an Iraqi Scud missile exploded about 300 meters away, destroying a military barracks and killing 28 Americans. Cargill and another Soldier jumped into action.

"We got up, threw on our protective masks and ran for it," Cargill said, "We pulled out the wounded first and set up a triage."

When the troops returned home, they encountered a hero's welcome—featuring fluttering flags, cheering crowds and happy families.

But unrest in the Balkans soon created new missions for Soldiers throughout the RSC. In December 1995, President Clinton authorized a call-up of Army Reserve Soldiers for peacekeeping duties in Bosnia and surrounding areas. The 63rd began mobilizing units soon after. The 1st Military Intelligence Center in Phoenix received the first call and sent the 272nd Military Intelligence Company to the Balkans in March 1996. Soldiers from other units, including the 222nd Broadcast Operations Detachment, the 311th Corps Support Command and a variety of medical units deployed to the Balkans for about six months each. Deployments of 63rd medical, intelligence, public affairs and military police units continued to 2004.

Then came Sept. 11, 2001, a date that would change our nation forever. It would also change the defenders of our nation, including the 63rd RSC.

The 63rd RSC began immediately mobilizing Soldiers in October for deployment.

Quickly they began sending out units including the 314th Military Police Company and 250th Transportation Company.

The 314th was sent to Fort Bliss, Texas as part of Operation Noble Eagle—deployments within the United States, to help beef up security there. They worked with the post's 978th MP Company, and assumed patrol duties, conducted car searches and made arrests involving drug and alcohol violations.

During the early deployments, Maj. Gen. John L. Scott handed off command to Brig. Gen. Robert B. Ostberg (soon after promoted to major general rank).

Other units soon followed. The 1980th Forward Surgical Team deployed in early 2002 to Khandahar, Afghanistan and performed about 70 surgeries during their deployment there. They treated burns, blast wounds and high velocity gun shot wounds. They took care of civilians, children, Afghan National Army regulars, coalition Soldiers and detainees, in addition to U.S. forces.

Seventy Soldiers from the 164th Corps Support Group left in late 2002 for a six-month deployment to Uzbekistan, on the border of Afghanistan. They had the mission of organizing the vast supply chain to troops in the Afghan theater.

Whether food, water, ammunition, clothing, fuel or other supplies, the logistics barons of the 164th provided high level coordination. Planes and trains brought in supplies constantly. Soldiers stored food in hundreds of metal shipping containers or transported it out on other plans or in trucks driven by Uzbek nationals 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



1975



1980



1985

1990 – Saddam Hussein refuses to withdraw from Kuwait and the 63rd RSC mobilizes 22 units in support of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

1996 – 63rd RSC begins deploying units to the Balkans including Bosnia, Kosovo and Hungary in support of operations Joint Guard, Joint Endeavor and Joint Forge. Deployments continue for several years.

1990



Sept. 2001 – 63rd Soldiers begin preparing for October deployments. Within 30 days, units began deploying overseas and in the U.S. as part of Operation Noble Eagle and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

In March 2003, President Bush ordered military forces into Iraq to overthrow President Saddam Hussein and to seize arsenals of Weapons of Mass Destruction thought to be present in the country.

By the end of 2003, more than 70 units had been mobilized for operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom or Iraqi Freedom.

The deployments and rotations continue to this day with units in specialties including military police, quartermaster, public affairs, military history, medical, transportation and others. And several thousand 63rd Soldiers have been mobilized for active duty service, particularly in Iraq. Examples of the many units that have served include:

- The 257th Transportation Company which deployed in 2003-2004 and 2008-2009. In the first rotation, they drove trucks hauling tanks, bulldozers and supplies and logged more than 2 million miles. The unit then had more than 30 encounters with hostile fire and one Soldier, Sgt. 1st Class Cameron Sarno, was killed.
- The 1394th Deployment Support Brigade, which deployed in both 2003 and 2006. In the second deployment it was assigned at Kuwait Naval Base and enabled the shipment of a huge amount of equipment home. This included nearly 70,000 pieces of cargo belonging to more than 2,000 units.
- The 950th Combat Support Company,

which deployed about 200 Soldiers from 2006 to 2007 to Iraq. The unit was involved in dangerous convoy escorts for civilian contractors. They logged 7,130 missions and 1,360 recovery missions for disabled vehicles.

In 2003, in the middle of the Global War on Terrorism, the 63rd Regional Support Command was once again renamed in the face of a new mission. It became the 63rd Regional Readiness Command (RRC). The new title signified the new role of the Army Reserve as an operational force with the mission of readiness for deployments in the long war against Islamic extremism.

In October 2005, Maj. Gen. Ostenberg handed off command of the 63rd RRC to Maj. Gen. Paul E. Mock, who had formerly commanded the 311th Corps Support Command (now Expeditionary Sustainment Command).

The rotations of hundreds of Soldiers and dozens of units per year continued, as did 63rd RRC training. In summer 2006, the command was involved in a huge exercise called Pacific Survivor at Fort Hunter Liggett, Calif. About 1,000 Soldiers from a number of commands participated. The 6045th Garrison Support Unit assumed command and control of the training.

In June 2007, the command sponsored the much larger Pacific Warrior Exercise, at Camp Parks, Camp Roberts and Hunter Liggett. About 4,000 Soldiers journeyed to Hunter Liggett from around the nation for the exercise to train in heat, dust and mock attacks to prepare for the real thing overseas.

The exercise was a premiere training event for Army Reserve Soldiers to rumble down dusty roads, dodge insurgent attacks and detain suspected enemies in an internment camp ringed with concertina wire.

In summer 2008, Maj. Gen. Mock announced he would retire in December. Maj. Gen. Bruce Casella replaced him in an informal ceremony held Dec. 6, 2008 at the 63rd RRC headquarters. The command then continued to prepare for disestablishment, set for Dec. 15, 2009.

With the advent of the 63rd Regional Support Command in Moffett Field, Calif., the 63rd name will live on for future generations. The 63rd RSC's mission is to provide facility and personnel support to Soldiers covering a seven-state area.



2003 – More than 70 units mobilized for ONE, OEF and Operation Iraqi Freedom. The 63rd RSC changes its name in the face of a new mission to the 63rd Regional Readiness Command.



June 2006 – Pacific Warrior Exercise launches as a major training event hosting 4,000 Soldiers during its second year.

Dec. 2008 – Maj. Gen. Bruce Casella takes command of both the 63rd RRC and 63rd RSC until the transfer of functions can be complete.

2009 – 63rd RRC is disestablished and will no longer be housed at the Joint Forces Training Base in Los Alamitos, Calif. The 11th MP Brigade made its home in place of the 63rd RRC and will eventually be joined by a Sustainment Support Command sometime in the future.

1995

2000

2005

2010



March 2003 – President Bush orders military forces into Iraq to overthrow President Saddam Hussein.

Oct. 2005 – Maj. Gen. Ostenberg hands off command to Maj. Gen. Paul E. Mock.

Sept. 2008 – The 63rd Regional Support Command is activated in Moffett Field, Calif. and will support 40,000 Soldiers across the western region of the U.S.

# 'Blood and Fire' reunited: 63rd Infantry vets tell war stories, host annual celebration

» Story and Photos by Sgt. Scott Akanewich  
63rd RRC Public Affairs

They came from all over America – California, New York, Texas, Ohio, Minnesota and Florida, to name a few – to gather in Boston for the 63rd Infantry Division Association's annual reunion.

It was fitting this 61st reunion, originating in 1948, took place in New England, the cradle of the American Revolution. These men courageously carried on the legacy of their forefathers, who had fought so valiantly against the British by carrying the fight for freedom to the fields of Europe during World War II.

One of them at the August event was E. Vincent Stratton, who has attended about 30 of these reunions. Stratton, has since become an ordained minister and was an Army chaplain before he retired. He was a platoon leader with H Company, 254th Infantry Regiment of the 63rd during his combat time in Europe.

Stratton, 85, realized the significance of the event as he looked around the room at his brothers-in-arms who had braved the gauntlet of the vaunted Siegfried Line before crossing into Germany, in essence, sealing the Nazis' fate as they retreated into the fatherland.

"I think this is an amazing thing – a connection between combat men," said Stratton, who was decked out in his dress green uniform. "They come with canes and wheelchairs, but these are relationships they won't give up."

Even family members of those who have already passed away attend the annual event to carry on the tradition of those gone, but not forgotten.

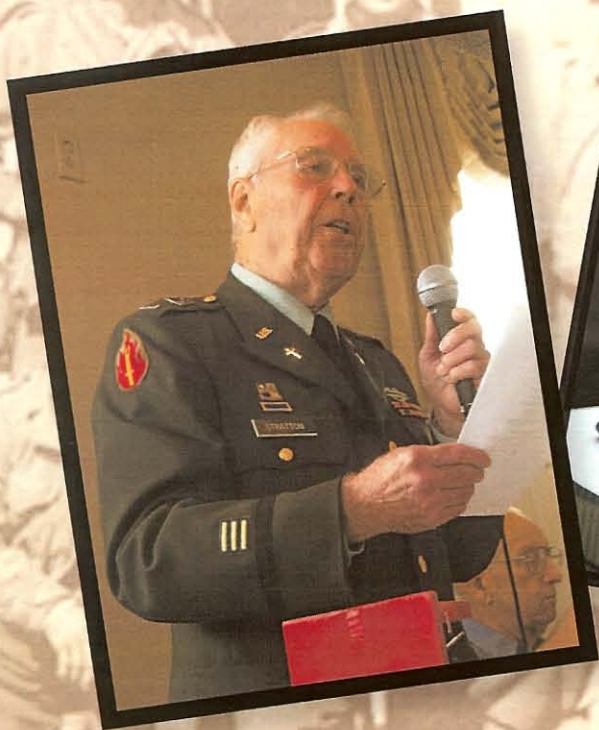
"They care about each other's families, know each other's names," said Stratton. "They never forget."

For Stratton, the Army was a natural progression for him as he came of age growing up in Stillwater, Okla. "I grew up as a warrior," he said. "Growing up in the Dust Bowl made us tough."

The countless hours of imaginary combat with his childhood buddies and his achievements on national-champion rifle teams as a youth prepared him for being a Soldier, he said.

"We'd make rubber-band guns," said Stratton, with a laugh. "My brother actually came up with a rubber-band machine gun. It was neighborhood combat."

However, nothing could prepare him for what he would encounter in the fields of Europe after arriving overseas. Stratton earned a Combat Infantryman Badge, as well as a Bronze Star with a "V" device for valor for his actions during his 18 months of combat.





## 'Blood and Fire' continued...

According to Stratton, the French Underground resistance was of tremendous help to Allied troops. "They did a fine job," he said. "When we got in there, they fought alongside us."

The taking of hills and clearing of French towns and villages were daily occurrences for Stratton and his men as they pushed the Germans back across the Rhine River. In fact, the men of the 63rd fought with such ferocity, they surprised some of their brethren from the 3rd Infantry Division, who they were attached to, he said.

"I think we surprised some people that fresh troops could fight so well," said Stratton. "But we were well-trained and ready to go."

After 18 months of combat, it was over. "The Russians had done their job from the east and we had done ours from the west," said Stratton.

During the memorial ceremony in the morning, Stratton sat at the front of the room and rang a ceremonial bell as the

names of each man who had passed away over the past year since the 2008 reunion in Indianapolis were read.

There were approximately 130 members in attendance this year.

While this was more somber, the evening brought the formal dinner and along with it, handshakes, hugs, backslaps and plenty of laughter as the men of the 63rd congregated with each other and their respective families as music from a live band filled the air with a festive atmosphere.

For Al Klingler, a private first class and Browning Automatic Rifleman with B Company of the 254th, his most vivid memories from the battlefields of Europe were his first and last days of combat, he said.

"We had to take a hill that was heavily fortified by the Germans," said Klingler. "They told us to dig foxholes and stay in them while the shelling went on." If this was the Cleveland native's introduction to war, his final battle was just as memorable, he said.

"As we were crossing the Danube River, the bridge blew," said Klingler. Apparently, not all the enemy forces were quite ready to wave the white flag.

"The 17th Panzers weren't going to surrender," he said. "But they didn't do a good enough job blowing the bridge, so we got across anyway." After some fierce fighting, the remaining Nazis were routed.

This was the first time the event had been held in Boston since 1955 and for Bob Capasso, director of this year's reunion, it was a long time coming for his hometown to again serve as host.

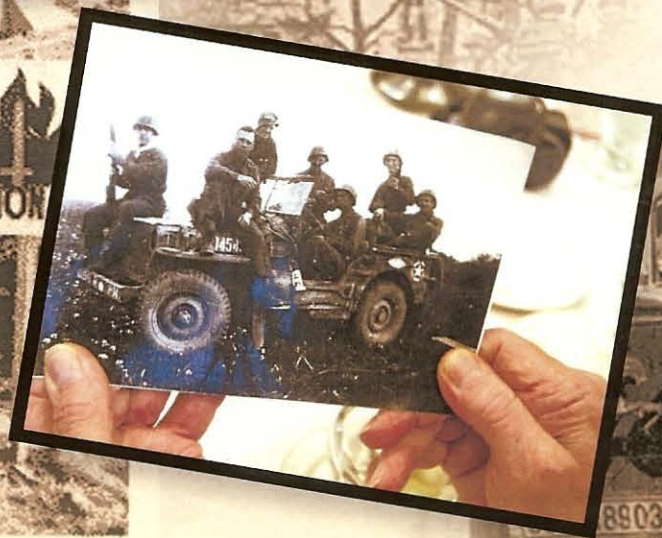
Capasso was a corporal with the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Company of the 254th. He earned a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart during the war.

"A close affinity has developed between all of us because of these reunions," said Capasso. "It revives the war years by getting us all together."

After breaching the Siegfried Line, it was Capasso's unit who was tasked with going out and scouting ahead of the main body of troops, he said.

"After we broke through into Germany, we'd just go forward until we got shot at," he said. "A patrol of us would go out in a jeep until we made contact with the enemy. Then, we'd report back with their location."

At times, said Capasso, considering what sparse remaining German resistance there was along the way, it was like a peaceful ride through the countryside.



Despite the fact about 1,000 men of the 63rd were killed during their time in combat, the “Blood and Fire” Soldiers accomplished their mission. “We were the first division to cross the Siegfried Line,” said Capasso.

A job well done, indeed.

As dinner was served, the music continued, along with the war stories.

James Kontoules, of nearby Lynn, Mass., was assigned to Headquarters Company of 1st Battalion, 255th Infantry, was ecstatic to be in attendance.

“I enjoy this,” said Kontoules. “It’s great just to meet these people.”

Of course, along with the camaraderie also come memories that would just as soon be forgotten – images that are burned into a man’s mind for the rest of his days.

Kontoules told the story of himself having a conversation with another Soldier a few foxholes down on the Siegfried Line. An artillery barrage rained in on them and they took cover in their respective fighting positions. Once the shells had impacted and done their damage, Kontoules emerged only to see smoke emanating from the foxhole of his fellow Soldier. He picked up his rifle and ran over to check on his comrade.

What he saw, he’ll never forget.

“He was 15 feet away and had been (killed) by the explosion,” said Kontoules. “I remember thinking ‘I just hope I make it.’”

Perhaps nobody in the entire room had a story to tell like Otto Metzger, a Medusa, N.Y., native and corporal with C Company of the 254th.

During combat at the Siegfried Line, Metzger was knocked unconscious by an incoming shell. Despite the fact he had no visible wounds, medics quickly began loading him into a body bag thinking he was dead when he suddenly regained consciousness, he said.

“A sergeant came to get my dog tags when I finally came to,” said Metzger. “I said to myself, ‘What the hell am I doing here?’”

The craziness didn’t end there, however.

“They put me on a jeep and sent me back to the line,” said Metzger. “When I got back, my first sergeant said to me, ‘What are doing here? You’re already dead!’”

Easy to laugh about now, but even the person closest to him never knew about what had taken place that day. “My wife didn’t even know for 50 years,” he said, with a laugh. “She only found out about it when someone brought it up at one of these reunions.”

Mike Jugen, 84, from Kimberton, Penn., a combat medic with I Company of the

253rd Infantry was at the Battle of the Bulge when he was shot through the jaw while tending to a wounded Soldier. He was also hit in the side and suffered from trenchfoot.

“I laid there, looked up and said, ‘Lord, you’re not going to let me die out here,’” said Jugen. “I saw a bright light and to this day, don’t know if it was artillery or God trying to tell me something.”

His collection of wounds would keep him hospitalized for three years. But that was after the war.

During this particular battle, Jugen was captured by the Nazis and was bandaged up, ironically, by a German medic. Then, he was asked to help save a German commander who had been wounded seriously.

“I was on top of a tank when I saw the planes coming in once the clouds lifted and said to myself, ‘I got to get the hell out of here,’” he said. “It’s a good thing I did because the Army Air Corps pounded the hell out of them.”

There is no telling how many more of these reunions will take place, due to the age of the participants, but next year’s is already in the works for Ohio.

On one muggy summer evening in Boston, each and every man in the room had a story to tell – these are just a few – until next year.



# Making our Armed Forces more agile

*Worldwide humanitarian aid missions and conflict in the Middle East require more mobile, mission-ready forces*

» By Sgt. Scott Akanewich  
63rd RRC Public Affairs



Soldiers from the 314th Military Police Company assemble for training at Fort Hunter, Liggett, Calif., during the Pacific Warrior exercise. The 2007 event provided training for deployment and for the asymmetrical battlefield.



Sgt. 1st Class Mark Van Leer of the 302nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment escorts local news reporters during a "media day" at Kapos Airfield, Taszar, Hungary. The unit deployed in 1999 support of NATO peacekeeping operations in the Balkans, which began in 1996.



In the years since the Sept. 11 attacks, the Army has undergone numerous operational changes to become a more mobile, ready force.

The Army Reserve is no different. The active component, Reserve and National Guard forces are transforming to meet the needs of an asymmetric battlefield against terrorism.

"After 9/11, it became clear this war would not be a strategic conflict, but an operational one," said Col. (Ret.) Steve Mogan, deputy chief-of-staff for operations, 63rd Regional Readiness Command. "We looked at all of our available assets and realized we had too many units that were not deployable."

The first step was to design a plan that would accomplish this objective of a more deployable force.

"We had to identify how we were going to transform," said Mogan. "Units would need to be ready to deploy in less time and more often."

Another critical factor was to create a Reserve force that was functional, as opposed to geographical, said Mogan. "This way, we've got all military police or engineer units together as opposed to having them spread out geographically. Now they can support each other better."

As part of this process, the Reserve is transforming from 10 Regional Readiness Commands across the country to four

Regional Support Commands. Whereas before the 63rd RRC covered units in California, Arizona and Nevada, will combine with the 90th RRC to also include New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas.

In addition to the 63rd RSC at Moffett Field, Calif., the 88th RSC is based out of Fort McCoy, Wisc., the 99th RSC calls Fort Dix, N.J. home and the 81st RSC will be housed at Fort Jackson, S.C.

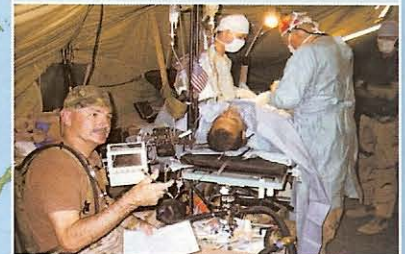
The 63rd RRC became the only remaining RRC and was tasked with maintaining continuity of base operations, command and control to establish the RSCs, which will function as bases of support.



Soldiers from the 250th Transportation Company say a group prayer at Camp Adder, Iraq, before embarking on a convoy mission. The unit provided armed escorts to civilian contractors hauling food, water, fuel and other items between bases.



Col. Tom Broach examines records while doctors from the 1980th Forward Surgical Team operate in a field hospital in Afghanistan. The unit deployed in early 2003 after the 9-11 attacks.



As a result, the 63rd grew larger than it has ever been with a strength of about 12,000 Soldiers.

Lt. Col. (Ret.) Milt Houghton's official job title with the 63rd RRC is "supervisory management analyst." However, as a force programmer or "crystal ball boy," as Mogan refers to him and his comrades, Houghton has played a vital role in the reorganization of the 63rd from an RRC to an RSC.

According to Houghton, it's his directorate's responsibility to constantly monitor the needs of the Army and how it relates to the Reserve, in particular.

"I stay abreast of where the Army is going," he said. "We do what's called a total Army analysis in which we look out over a five-year span and process its changes."

For example, at one point in time, the 63rd was heavy in medical and transportation units. This didn't make sense, said Houghton. "We needed to achieve structural balance," he said. "We determined the geographic location was better suited to handling administrative duties."

Houghton said these painstaking processes are all in an effort to put units where they will most benefit the Army. His work is reviewed by the U.S. Army Reserve Command (USARC) where the final decisions are made to move forward.

He used the 96th Military Police Battalion in San Diego as an example. "We sold the concept to USARC that we could stand up a battle-ready unit there and 11 months later, they deployed," said Houghton.

"We've been reasonably successful at managing growth this way."

From the beginning of the transformation process to the present, the 63rd has remained steadfast, said Houghton. "Our focus has been on establishing effective processes for what we've had to do," he said. "USARC has seen us working and has confidence in what we're doing."

A balance of structure is the ultimate goal, said Houghton. "We want units who are mutually supporting each other," he said. "So, we're putting the pieces in place to make everything work."



# Fallen Heroes Tribute



## Sgt. Paul Nakamura

437th Medical Company  
*Killed in Action: June 19, 2003*

Sgt. Paul Nakamura, 21, a Soldier with the 437th Medical Company was killed in Iskandariyah, Iraq, when a rocket propelled grenade struck his ambulance. As an ambulance driver he made more than 250 "runs" in Iraq and Kuwait to save Soldiers' lives. Nakamura was from Santa Fe Springs, Calif., was trained as a lifeguard, taught water polo and had a fondness for high-powered "muscle" cars.



## Staff Sgt. Cameron Sarno

257th Transportation Company  
*Killed in Action: Sept. 1, 2003*

Staff Sgt. Cameron Sarno, 43, assigned with the 257th Transportation Company out of Las Vegas, was killed in Kuwait involving a roadside vehicle accident while performing his mission in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Sarno was a native Hawaiian, drove a concrete-mixer truck as a civilian and loved surfing. Friends and family members recalled that he had an upbeat, selfless attitude and put his Soldiers before himself. He had a son, Cameron Takeuchi, a Soldier who has served in Afghanistan.



## Master Sgt. Kelly Bolor

137th Quartermaster Company  
*Killed in Action: Nov. 15, 2003*

Master Sgt. Kelly Bolor, 37, assigned with the 137th Quartermaster Company out of South El Monte, Calif., died in a Black Hawk helicopter collision thought to have been caused by hostile fire near Mosul, Iraq. His unit was assigned to support the 101st Airborne Division and he was transporting supplies to the frontline. Bolor previously served in Operation Desert Storm in 1991. He left a wife, also name Kelly, and a son, Kyle, 3. He was buried in Maui Memorial Park, Hawaii.



### **Capt. Sigfredo Pilipina**

483rd Transportation Battalion  
*Died: Sept. 14, 2004*

Capt. Sigfredo Pilipina, 34, assigned as the 483rd Transportation Battalion ammunition officer died while called to active service at Fort Lewis, Wash., in support of the Global War on Terror. The 483rd was in garrison and preparing to move to a convoy defense training site. His unit would go on to deploy overseas in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He is survived by his wife Marilyn, his daughter Thea and son Christian.



### **Maj. Charles Soltes**

7214th Installation Medical Support Unit  
*Killed in Action: Oct. 13, 2004*

Maj. Charles Soltes, 36, voluntarily transferred to the 426th Civil Affairs Battalion out of Upland, Calif. from the 7214th IMSU in Garden Grove, was killed in Mosul, Iraq, when his convoy was ambushed by insurgents. He was one of two Soldiers killed and five injured. Soltes and his wife Sally shared an optometry practice in Irvine. He also left behind two sons, Ryan, 7, and Brandon, 9, and his parents, Charles and Nancy Soltes.



### **Sgt. Tina Time**

208th Transportation Company  
*Killed in Action: Dec. 13, 2004*

Sgt. Tina Time, 22, out of Tucson, Ariz., was killed in a vehicle accident during a sandstorm near Camp Cedar, Iraq. She had served as a wheeled vehicle mechanic and convoy gunner. Friends described her as a hard-working, driven young woman who always did more than was requested of her. She was proud of the fact that she had completed more than 60 convoys through Iraq and Kuwait.

# Fallen Heroes Tribute



## Sgt. Joseph Nurre

801st Engineer Company

*Killed in Action: Aug. 21, 2005*

Sgt. Joseph Nurre, 22, out of Vallejo, Calif., was cross-leveled to another Army Reserve unit, the 463rd Engineer Battalion, out of Weirton, W. Va., died during convoy operations in Samarra, Iraq. He was killed when an improvised explosive device detonated near his M916 tractor. Sgt. Nurre was remembered by his family, fellow Soldiers and his many friends as a compassionate, affable young man with a contagious smile. He attended California State University, Sacramento, and loved football. He is survived by his parents Charlie and Leigh Nurre of Wilton, Calif.



## Sgt. James Witkowski

729th Transportation Company

*Killed in Action: Oct. 26, 2005*

Sgt. James Witkowski, assigned to the 257th Transportation Detachment, volunteered for duty in Iraq and was transferred to the 729th Transportation Company in Fresno, Calif., which mobilized in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in September 2004. While conducting a combat logistics patrol near Ashraf, Iraq, Witkowski was mortally wounded. Without regard for his own life, he provided suppressive fire at the enemy and absorbed the full shock of a hand grenade thrown at his vehicle. Affectionately known as "Uncle Jimmy" to friends and family, and "Ski" to fellow Soldiers, he leaves behind his parents, James and Barbara Witkowski of Surprise, Ariz., and two sisters, Tracy and Randi.

On April 9, 2006, Witkowski was posthumously awarded the Silver Star by Maj. Gen. Paul E. Mock, 63rd Regional Readiness Command, commanding general, at the Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos, Calif. His parents were presented the award on their son's behalf.



## Spc. Carla Stewart

250th Transportation Company

*Killed in Action: Jan. 27, 2007*

Spc. Carla Stewart, 37, died while serving in Iraq. She was a gunner in a humvee during a convoy when a rollover occurred. She is survived by a husband, Brendan Stewart and parents, Ed Babayan and Emmy Aprahamian of Glendale, Calif.

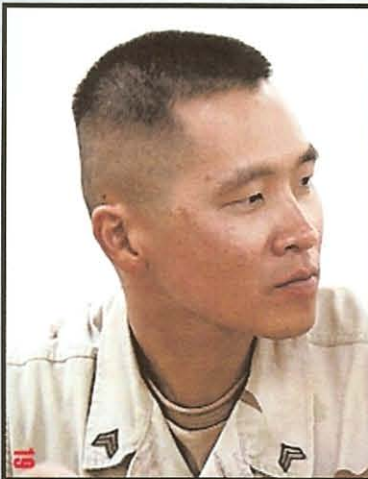


### **Capt. Peter Sinclair**

163rd Ordnance Company

*Died:* June 12, 2008

Capt. Peter Sinclair, 40, died from complications due to combat injuries sustained while called to active service. Sinclair is survived by his parents, John and Barbara Sinclair; his sisters Christine Sinclair Limon, Dana Sinclair, and Jennifer Sinclair; and his brothers Steven and John.



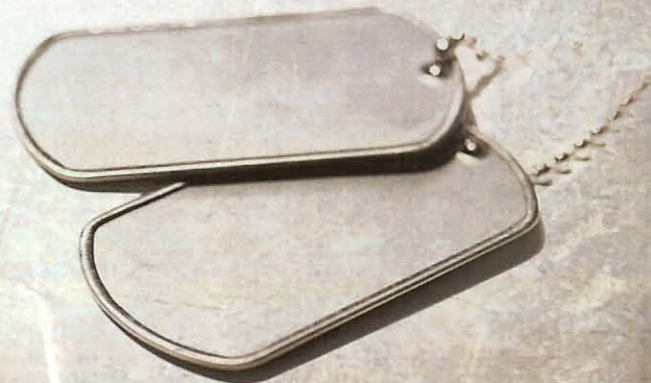
### **Sgt. Chun Ning Ng**

314th Military Police Company

*Died:* June 19, 2008

Sgt. Chun Ning Ng, 37, died from complications due to a medical condition sustained while called to active service. Ng is survived by his mother, Lau Sheung Ng and father, Sun Chan Ng; his brothers, Chun Wa Ng, Chun Ming Ng, and Dr. Chun Leung Ng; and his sister, Winnie W. Ng.

WE MUST NEVER FORGET  
THOSE WHO GAVE ALL  
SO OTHERS CAN  
SHARE IN OUR FREEDOMS





CSM Robert Roberson  
April 2008 to Dec. 2009



CSM Mark Wilsdon  
March 2004 to March 2008



CSM Lawrence Holland  
Oct. 2002 to Oct. 2003



CSM Donald Aday  
March 1998 to Oct. 2002



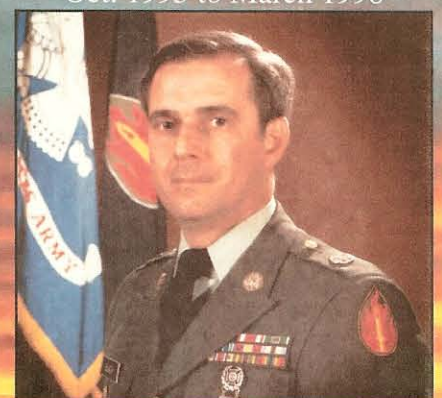
CSM Frank Spangler  
Oct. 1995 to March 1998



CSM William Hayes  
Sept. 1991 to Sept. 1995



CSM Jerome Haag  
Aug. 1987 to Aug. 1991



CSM Daniel Black  
Oct. 1984 to March 1987



CSM Bill Sanders  
June 1980 to Sept. 1984



CSM Robert Barber  
May 1972 to May 1980



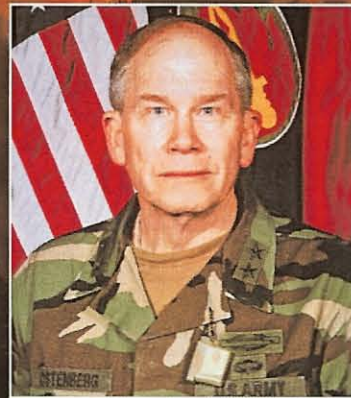
CSM Andy Grey  
April 1964 to April 1972



2008-present  
Maj. Gen. Bruce A. Casella



2005-2008  
Maj. Gen. Paul E. Mock



2001-2005  
Maj. Gen. Robert B. Ostenberg



1998-2001  
Maj. Gen. John L. Scott



1995-1998  
Maj. Gen. Robert A. Lame



1991-1995  
Maj. Gen. Stephen C. Bisset



1987-1991  
Maj. Gen. Theodore W. Paulson



1983-1987  
Maj. Gen. Daniel C. Helix



1979-1983  
Maj. Gen. Berwyn Fragner



1975-1979  
Maj. Gen. William Ecker



1968-1974  
Maj. Gen. Louis F. Kaufman



1961-1965  
Maj. Gen. William J. Hixson