

# Shielding the Orient

*2nd Bn., 162nd Inf. trains with the Japanese Army in Japan*

by Staff Sgt. Russell Bassett  
115th MPAD

As the world watches North Korea, which tested a nuclear weapon Oct. 9, members of the Oregon National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry are demonstrating the strong partnership between the United States and Japan.

Orient Shield 2007, an annual training exercise between the U.S. and Japanese armies began Monday with an opening ceremony at the Sekiyama Maneuver Area in Honshu, Japan.

"This exercise will be an opportunity to enhance Japanese Ground Self Defense — See **Shield**, Page 3



Oregon National Guard and Japan Ground Self Defense Force troops salute the U.S. and Japanese flags during the Orient Shield opening ceremony Monday.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Russell Bassett

Oregon National Guard Spc. Jose Ramirez (center) of Hillsboro and Japanese Ground Self Defense Force Leading Pvt. Takumi Sugiivara (foreground) use the "high/low" technique during close-quarters-combat training at Sekiyama Maneuver Area, Japan, Wednesday. About 240 members of the Oregon Guard's 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry are currently in Japan supporting Orient Shield 2007, a bilateral exercise conducted annually with the Japanese army.

## Japanese sniper school 2-162 helps stand-up sniper section in Japan

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"First we have to establish the difference between cover and concealment," said Sgt. Aaron McNelly, a sniper with the Oregon National Guard's Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 162nd

Infantry, to the Japanese infantryman assembled around him Wednesday.

The Newburg resident put his hand on the thick tree trunk next to him. "Cover provides protection from enemy fire," he continued, reaching down to put his hand on a shrub, "and concealment is protection

— See **Sniper**, Page 2



Photos by Staff Sgt. Russell Bassett

Alsea resident Staff Sgt. Shane Ward spots for Japanese snipers during Orient Shield sniper training Thursday.

## Snipers, from page 1 from enemy observation.”

The lesson was one of many learned at sniper training during Orient Shield 2007, an annual, bilateral training exercise with the Japanese Army, held this year at Sekiyama Training Area, Japan.

Seven soldiers from 2-162 are teaching the class, training

Japanese soldiers from the Japan Ground Self Defense Forces' 2nd Infantry Battalion, 1st Airborne Brigade.

The 2-162 Soldiers are helping to stand-up a sniper section in the Japanese unit. The Guard troops are teaching their foreign counterparts how to accomplish the sniper missions of providing highly effective fires from a long

distance, along with gathering and reporting intelligence information.

“I feel very honored to be over here training the first snipers this Japanese Airborne Brigade has had since World War II,” Waldport resident Sgt. Nathan Gushwa said. “That to me is a real honor.”

The troops spent the first two days of training in the classroom, learning sniper roles and responsibilities, fundamentals of marksmanship, range estimation, sniper tasks, camouflage, observation, rapid-target engagement and movement techniques, among others.

The Japanese soldiers “have been very attentive,” said Spc. Ryan Welch, another 2-162 sniper who lives in Eugene. “They are asking very smart questions, especially with the language barrier. They are eager and disciplined. Really, they’ve been the ideal students thus far.”

On Thursday, both the American and Japanese soldiers went to the field to fire their weapons down range.

The Japanese troops are training for the first time on the M-24 sniper rifle, an American-made weapon also used by the Oregon Soldiers. The weapon fires 7.62 mm ammunition and has a maximum effective range of 800 meters.

While the Japanese have not had snipers in some time, most every infantry unit in the United States Army has snipers. The Oregon sharpshooters say being a sniper is the pinnacle of infantry soldiering.

“Amongst ranks in the infantry, to be sent to sniper school means you are above the rest, and once you get back to your unit, you know you are working with the best,” said Staff Sgt. Shane Ward, a sniper from Alsea.

Sgt. Aaron McNelly, an Oregon Guard soldier from Newburg, said he became a sniper for the freedom.

“You are given a lot more freedom to complete the mission then you do in a regular line unit,” he said. “You are told what they want done, but then you are given the autonomy to go out and accomplish that mission.”

McNelly, who is half Japanese, translated the sniper curriculum with the help of his mother, who still lives in Japan.

“It’s interesting to come back to Japan because my grandfather actually fought in World War II with the Japanese,” he said. “I’ve also got a cousin who is currently in the Japanese army.”

Gushwa, who is the only 2-162 sharpshooter who saw combat in Iraq as a sniper, said snipers must have learned patience.

“In Iraq, it was months and months of waiting for something to happen, and once it did, it was absolutely insane,” he said. “The hardest thing was to not get complacent, to maintain readiness. ... You never see a fire fight coming, but when you do, it is intense.”

The snipers continue their training next week with cordon and search exercise.



Springfield resident Spc. Ryan Welch demonstrates a sniper walking technique during sniper school Wednesday.

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# What do you think?

*What are the main differences/similarities between how the JGSDF and the U.S. Army operate?*



*"The Japanese are more meticulous. We have to be more adaptable. ... I was really impressed with their tactics, communication and motivation."*

--Spc Ryan Preston, C Co. grenadier, Portland



*"Two things: Difference in levels of flexibilities ... (and) how we use our NCOs. We empower our NCOs to train while their officers execute training."*

--Maj. Eric Riley, 2-162 Bn S-3, Roseburg.



*"In the U.S. Army NCOs are instructors, but officers in the JGSDF are the planners and instructors. The way we fight doesn't seem to be that different."*

--Lt. Col. Shizuo Sekine, JGSDF 2nd Bn, 1st AB CO



*"There really is not a whole lot of difference. Japan's lack of deployment is one. Most of our guys have actually done this in combat."*

--Sgt. 1st Class David Bailiff, C Co. readiness NCO

## Shield, from page 1

Force/U.S. Army combat readiness and demonstrate to Asia the alliance between our countries," 2nd Bn., 162nd Inf. Commander Lt. Col. Edward Tanguy said during the ceremony. "By the end of the exercise, we all will achieve enduring bilateral relationships, good will and mutual understanding ... through tough training and cultural exchange."

Tanguy's counterpart for the exercise, Japan's 2nd Infantry Battalion, 1st Airborne Brigade commander Lt. Col. Shizuo Sekine also focused on strengthening the relationship between the two countries in his speech to the approximately 240 Oregon and 350 Japanese soldiers assembled for the opening ceremony.

"At this time, we establish the occasion for both Japan and the U.S. to make groups and conduct the training with close cooperation," Sekine said.

Monday evening, the soldiers from both units worked on achieving mutual understanding at a party held in nearby Joetsu. The language difference was no barrier, as the soldiers enjoyed traditional Japanese food and drink together.

"There's a feeling of unity between the two organizations, and that was seen at last night's opening party," Eugene resident and 2-162's operations noncommissioned officer Sgt. 1st Class Jerry Glesmann said. "There is a respect there. They are definitely very disciplined and extremely organized"

The training began in earnest the next morning with helicopter and traffic control

point operations, followed by close quarters combat, short range marksmanship, mortar, sniper and other weapon ranges, among others. Up next week for the Soldiers is cordon and search training.

The Oregon citizen Soldiers have much experience, as the operations were a regular part of the routine in 2004 when the unit was in Baghdad for Operation Iraqi Freedom II.

Several of the Japanese soldiers also bring experience from tours in Iraq. Japan deployed about 600 soldiers to Iraq in early 2004. The deployment marked a significant turning point in Japan's history, as it was the first time since the end of World War II that Japan sent troops abroad except for a few minor UN peacekeeping missions.

Japan pulled its troops out of Iraq this summer.

"The ops we learned in Iraq, we're teaching to the Japanese," Glesmann said. "They have a way of doing it as well, but we are showing them the ways that we did it in Iraq."

"You can train and train and train, but there is a perspective you learn in combat that you just can't get if you don't deploy," Tanguy added.

In Iraq, 2-162 was responsible for maintaining an area of operations in Baghdad, and was involved in fighting in Fallujah and Najaf. Members of the unit were also responsible for training the Iraqi army. The unit captured more than 100 insurgents and 300 weapons caches while in Iraq.

After the first five days of training in Japan, Tanguy was pleased with what he saw.



Pfc. Adam Comella (right), of Gresham shares a laugh with privates Akihiro Saito and Koji Hakado during the welcome party Monday evening. Many of Oregon National Guard Soldiers exchanged gifts with the Japanese soldiers during the party.

"It's been great," the commander said. "All the Soldiers are really engaged with their Japanese counterparts, more so than I thought at this point in the exercise."

Sekine was also pleased.

"From the day we met, we have worked together and became friends, and I believe it will be this way until the end," of the exercise, he said.

During Saturday's short break in the training, the Oregon citizen Soldiers will get to experience Japanese culture through cultural tours and home visits with Japanese families.

"They'll get a greater understanding of another culture and a greater appreciation of the diverse world we live in, which will have an impact, I think, on their home communities," Tanguy concluded. "The people back home should know that their Guard Soldiers are representing Oregon and the U.S. very well. They can be proud of them."

# Rockin' the Orient, Volunteer style



Soldiers fire at the short range marksmanship range Thursday.



Members of C Company disembark from a helicopter during Orient Shield's first day of training Tuesday.

Sgt. Avery Kerr of Cornelius watches as members of the JGSDF practice close quarters combat techniques.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Russell Bassett

From foreground on left: Sgt. Eric Boardman, Capt. Demian San Miguel and Sgt. 1st Class Jerry Glesmann, among others, enjoy a toast with members of JGSDF at the welcome party Monday.



Sgt. Steven Tessitore, 2-162 mortar Soldier and resident of Corvallis, shows members of Japan's 2nd Infantry Battalion, 1st Airborne Brigade how the United States Army sights in its mortars Thursday at the mortar range.

## Did you know?

Taken from CIA World Factbook and globalsecurity.org

**Total area of Japan:** 377,835 sq km  
**Comparative area:** Slightly smaller than California  
**Terrain:** Mostly rugged and mountainous  
**Highest elevation point:** Mount Fuji 3,776 m  
**Population:** 127,463,611 (July 2006 est.)  
**Median age:** 42.9 years  
**Life expectancy at birth:** 81.25 years  
**Literacy rate:** 99 percent  
**Religions:** Observe both Shinto and Buddhist 84%. Christianity .7 percent

**Government:** Constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary government  
**GDP:** \$4.018 trillion (2005 est.)  
**GDP per capita:** \$31,500 (2005 est.)  
**Unemployment rate:** 4.4% (2005 est.)  
**Industries:** Among world's largest and technologically advanced producers of motor vehicles electronic equipment, machine tools, steel and nonferrous metals, ships, chemicals, textiles, processed foods  
**Inflation rate:** -0.3 percent (2005 est.)  
**Export partners:** U.S. 22.9 percent, China 13.4 percent, South Korea 7.8

percent (2005)  
**Import partners:** China 21 percent, U.S. 12.7 percent, Saudi Arabia 5.5 percent (2005)  
**JGSDF personnel:** 180,000  
 Japan's national defense policy has been based on maintaining the 1960 Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security with the United States, under which Japan assumed unilateral responsibility for its own internal security and the United States agreed to join in Japan's defense in the event that Japan or its territories were attacked.