

5th Signal Command



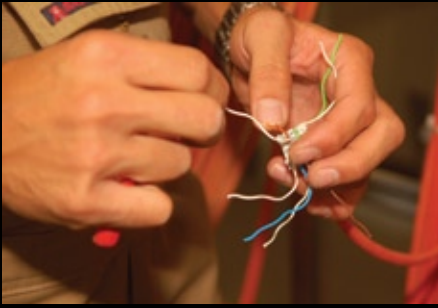
ECHO

Winter 2008

Dragon Warriors

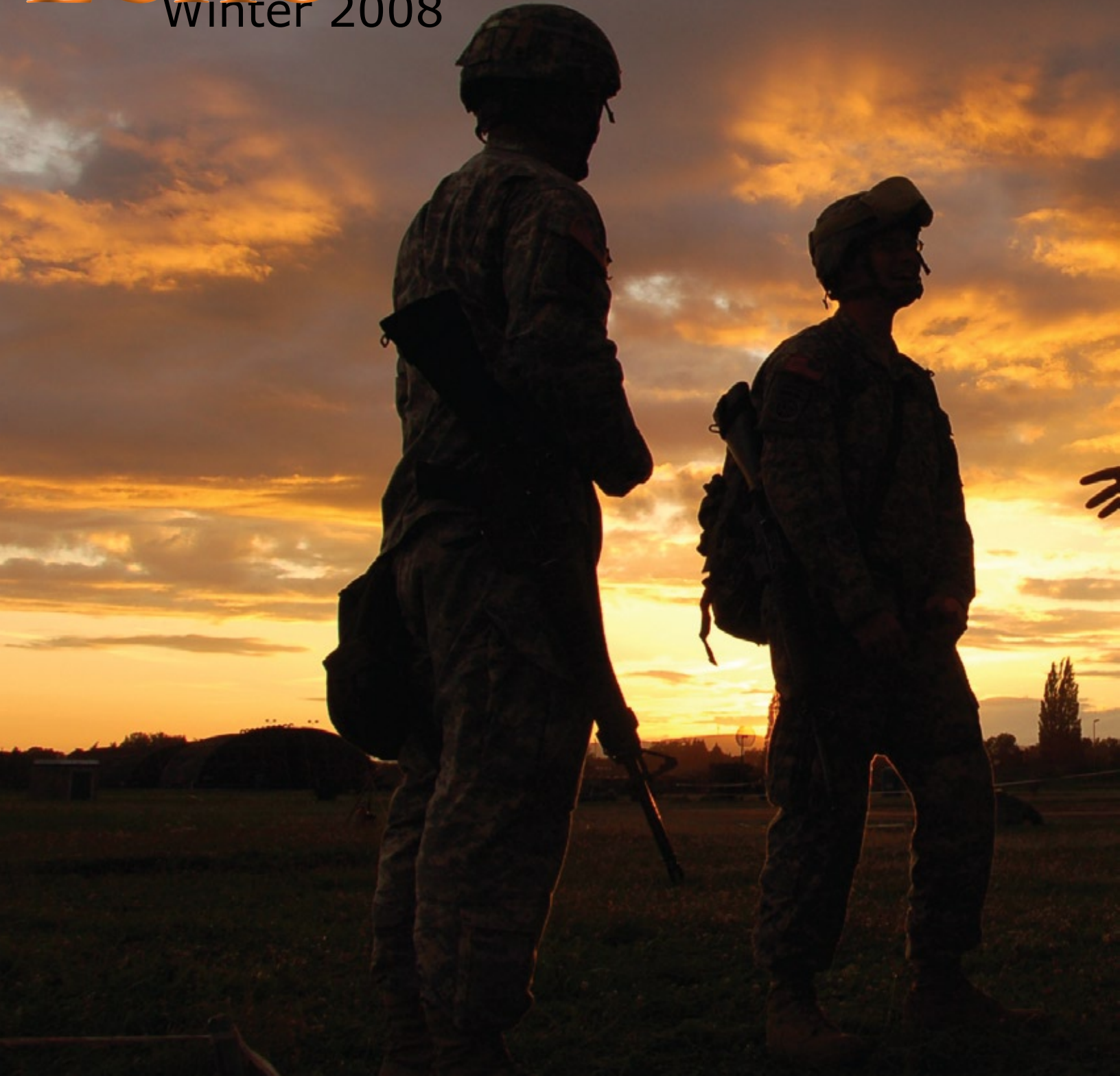


DEFENDING THE FIRST DIGITAL MILE



ECHO

Winter 2008



CONTENTS

Page 18



Features

Commo Check: JTF-East	6
44th ESB: The Road to War	8
Commo Team to the Stars	12
6981st CSG: 50 years of Service	14
Camaraderie Takes Aim	16
Network Trailblazers	18
5th Signal Change of Command	20
2nd Signal Brigade lends a helping foot	22
Defending the Digital Battlefield	24
Strengthening the International Military Backbone	26
2007 NETCOM NCO of the Year	28
Chef from Ghana Finds Home in Army Kitchens	30
Connecting Memories	32
2nd Signal Brigade Heads Back to School	33
Honoring a Hero	34

In Every Issue

From the CG	4
Snapshots	36
News Brief	38
From the CSM	39

From Your Commanding General

There is no greater honor than the privilege of command. As your commanding general, I am thrilled to re-join the ranks of the storied 5th Signal Command Dragon Warriors. I pledge you my unwavering commitment -- to our mission and our Soldiers, Civilians and Families.

As we enter a new year, I could not be more proud of the signal and network support you provide to warfighters. Over the past six months, I have witnessed your tireless efforts to achieve our goals and objectives from Babadag Training Area, Romania, Operation Iraqi Freedom to the 24/7 network support on the home front. Thank you for your tremendous professionalism, service, sacrifice, and commitment to 5th Signal Command, U.S. Army, Europe, our Army, and our nation. It was through your extraordinary efforts that we collectively achieved success during a very challenging year for the command. Well done!

I reviewed and updated our mission to better align it with the tremendous responsibility our command and USAREUR G6 fulfills: 'providing and defending integrated Theater, Joint and Combined global network operations, enabling battle command for Europe's Warfighters.'

5th Signal Command will continue on its dynamic path of transformation throughout 2008 with the launch of the Landstuhl Regional Hub Node, completion of JNN fielding in 7th Signal Brigade, and ongoing collaboration between 2nd Signal Brigade and IMCOM-Europe as more data and services migrate into 5th Signal's enterprise services support.

In accomplishing these tasks, I established five strategic goals that I count on you to accomplish: provide first-class communications support to USAREUR warfighters, protect and defend USAREUR's networks within the LandWarNet, create an elite team (be an elite team member), transform the force, and integrate Army Knowledge Management goals while developing a joint culture.

Articles in this edition of the ECHO highlight the realization of these goals -- from developing the Cyber Threat Intelligence Cell, deploying the 44th ESB, building coalition partnerships and strengthening the Commo Teams to the Stars.

We must continue to advance technically and professionally in this theater. Look to our future. Focus on making our vision a reality; 'As the Premier Signal Command, we fight and defend strategic and expeditionary Communications and Information Systems (CIS), enabling transparent, globally-integrated information dominance to all Warfighters.' Remember, as USAREUR evolves and transforms, we lay the lines.

In closing, I am so impressed by every Dragon Warrior. My husband, Neil, and I are equally impressed and delighted with the wonderful Families and supportive communities. Keep up the great work!



Dragon Warriors - Army Strong!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Susan S. Lawrence'.

Susan S. Lawrence
Brigadier General, USA
Commanding



72nd Signal Battalion

Sgt. Jonathon Gray

5th Signal Command, PAO

72nd Signal Battalion officially completed three months of focused classroom and hands-on training in November on the new expeditionary signal equipment delivered to them earlier this year. The Joint Network Node was the main focus, though also included the Single Shelter Switch, the Command Post Node, and the High Capacity Line of Sight radios and Line of Sight shelters.

“This is critical training, as many of the Soldiers in the battalion have never seen any of this equipment before,” said Lt. Col. Jay K. Chapman, 72nd commander.

With the training completed, the unit will now focus on testing the

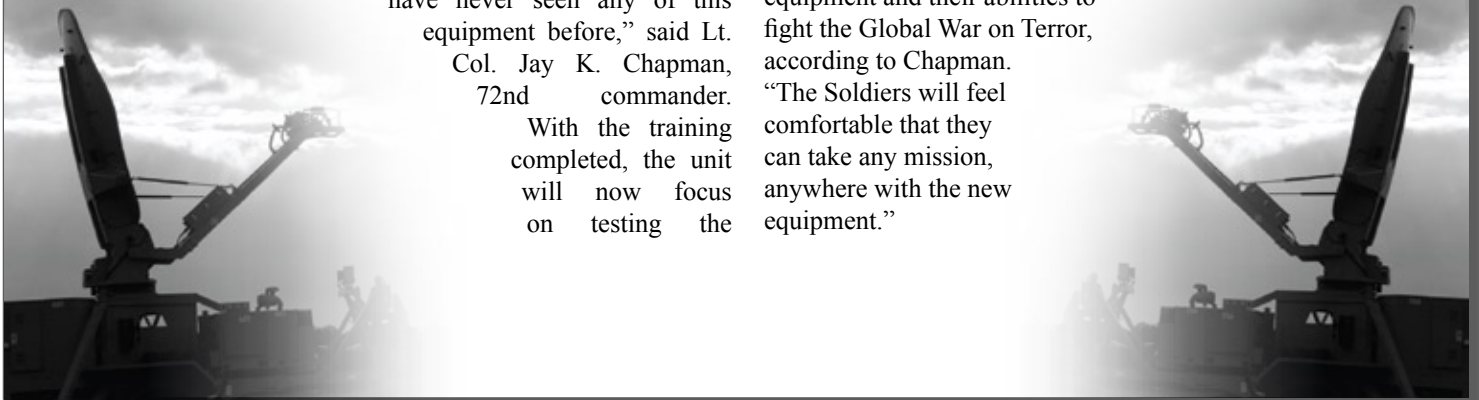


Expeditionary Update

equipment in an all-encompassing signal network - in a controlled environment - and will move to Grafenwoehr for a full field test in January 2008.

A main characteristic of the ESB is that it can easily split into smaller components across the globe to provide communication support wherever needed, creating a unique modular battalion, that can deploy as a whole or in individual pieces.

After the Grafenwoehr field exercise, the ‘Always Fit to Fight’ 72nd will have full confidence in their signal equipment and their abilities to fight the Global War on Terror, according to Chapman. “The Soldiers will feel comfortable that they can take any mission, anywhere with the new equipment.”



Commander/Publisher

Brig. Gen. Susan S. Lawrence

Chief of Public Affairs

LeAnne MacAllister

**Public Affairs Specialist/
Editor**

Kristopher Joseph

Public Affairs Assistants

Sgt. Jonathon Gray
Sgt. Elizabeth Sheridan
Sgt. Michael Taylor
Spc. Evan Marcy



The **ECHO** is a semiannual authorized Army publication of the 5th Signal Command, produced by the Public Affairs Office, Funari Barracks, Mannheim, Germany. Views and opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army.

The **ECHO** mailing address is: HQ 5th Signal Command, ATTN: NETC-SEC-PA, APO AE 09056. Telephone: DSN 380-5167; E-mail: netc-sec-pa@eur.army.mil.

The **ECHO** office is located in Rm. 114, Bldg. 819.

Cover design created by Sgt. Brandon Spragins and Sgt. Jonathon Gray. Back cover photo featuring Soldiers of the 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion by Spc. Evan Marcy. Graphic designs on pages 4,5,18,20,24, 38, 39 created by Sgt. Brandon Spragins.

Commo Check:

Joint Task Force - East

Sgt. Jonathon Gray

5th Signal Command, PAO

5th Signal Command Soldiers and civilian employees deployed on a different type of mission recently, one that helped establish closer ties to the countries of Romania and Bulgaria while preparing an operating site for further training in the two countries.

Known as Joint Task Force-East, the exercise ran from August 22 through October 22 and was designed to build interoperability and strengthen relationships between the three countries while testing command and control capabilities for future joint operations in Romania and Bulgaria. In short, the exercise tested and further developed capabilities of the facilities for future, larger rotations in and out of Romania and Bulgaria.

Characteristically of the Signal Corps, Dragon Warriors were many of the first 'boots on the ground,' ensuring communication support from start to finish. Before the exercise could begin, the 6981st Civilian Support Group from 5th's 2nd Signal Brigade, arrived in July 2007 to install communication lines during the initialization phase of the Forward Operating Site at Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base, Romania. The cable they installed, both inside and outside buildings, allowed for easier access to network services during the "Proof of Principle" exercise.

"This is proof that we can enable USAREUR warfighters with communication capabilities anywhere in the world," said Col. Joseph Brendler, commander, 2nd Signal Brigade.

FOS MKAB and Babadag Training Area, Romania, was home to roughly 1,000 personnel, including U.S. Army Soldiers and civilian employees. Signal Soldiers from U.S. Army,

Europe's G6 and 5th Signal Command, to include 5th Signal Soldiers attached to the Southern European Task Force in Italy, provided communication capabilities in conjunction with their





Photo by Sgt. Jonathon Gray

Sgt. Rodney King (left), a computer analyst with the 509th Signal Battalion, checks the satellite settings on a terminal while Sgt. Eric Jackson, a radio operator, simultaneously checks the router configurations on an Early Entry Package being used for the JTF-East “Lion Strike” exercise in Bulgaria. The EEP provides internet access and commercial phone lines to units deploying to austere locations.

Left: A United States Army, Europe Soldier teams up with a Romanian Soldier at a weapons qualification range at the Babadag Training Area in Romania. (Photo by Pfc. Michael Syner, USAREUR Public Affairs Office.)

Romanian signal peers. “We have an excellent working relationship with the Romanians,” said Joseph Barnhardt, USAREUR G6.

Telephones, secure and non-secure internet lines, and video teleconferencing capabilities were among the signal services provided to the command and control Joint Operations Center during the PoP exercise.

With the help of 509th Signal

Battalion’s new Early Entry Packages, voice and data capabilities were added to the Babadag Training area, Romania and Novoselo Training Area, Bulgaria.

“This system has been configured to provide Joint Task Force-East’s ‘Lion Strike’ service members with commercial phones, military e-mail access, and unclassified internet services,” said 509th’s Sgt. Rodney King. “We

also have a satellite radio that provides extra communication for us in case of emergencies.”

Even though the PoP is over, Soldiers and civilians continue to work on the FOS. Babadag Training Area was converted to a minimal-manning operation or “warm-base.” It’s during this time that constant improvements are made in preparation for the upcoming larger-scale multi-national training exercises that could take place as soon as July 2008, paving the way for a potentially bigger military footprint in Romania.



44TH EXPEDITIONARY

THE ROAD

Story and Photos by
Spc. Evan Marcy
5th Signal Command, PAO

How do you say goodbye? This past October, Soldiers of the 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion spent their last few hours surrounded by friends and Family in Mannheim's Sullivan Gym before their deployment. Some passed the time by feeding their newborn children, others continued their consoling conversations with their significant others while holding hands. After one last kiss, one last hug, or one last handshake, the 44th Soldiers stepped onto their busses and headed on their 15-month mission.

The day they had spent the last year preparing for was upon them...

The U.S. Army is often viewed as a living organism of moving parts. While combat arms act as the muscle fibers, the Signal Corps is the nervous system that our forces rely on to deliver instantaneous communication, messages and alerts to every military organ. In times of heightened activity, this nervous system rapidly "deploys" its best cells and synapses to keep the Army working at its greatest potential.

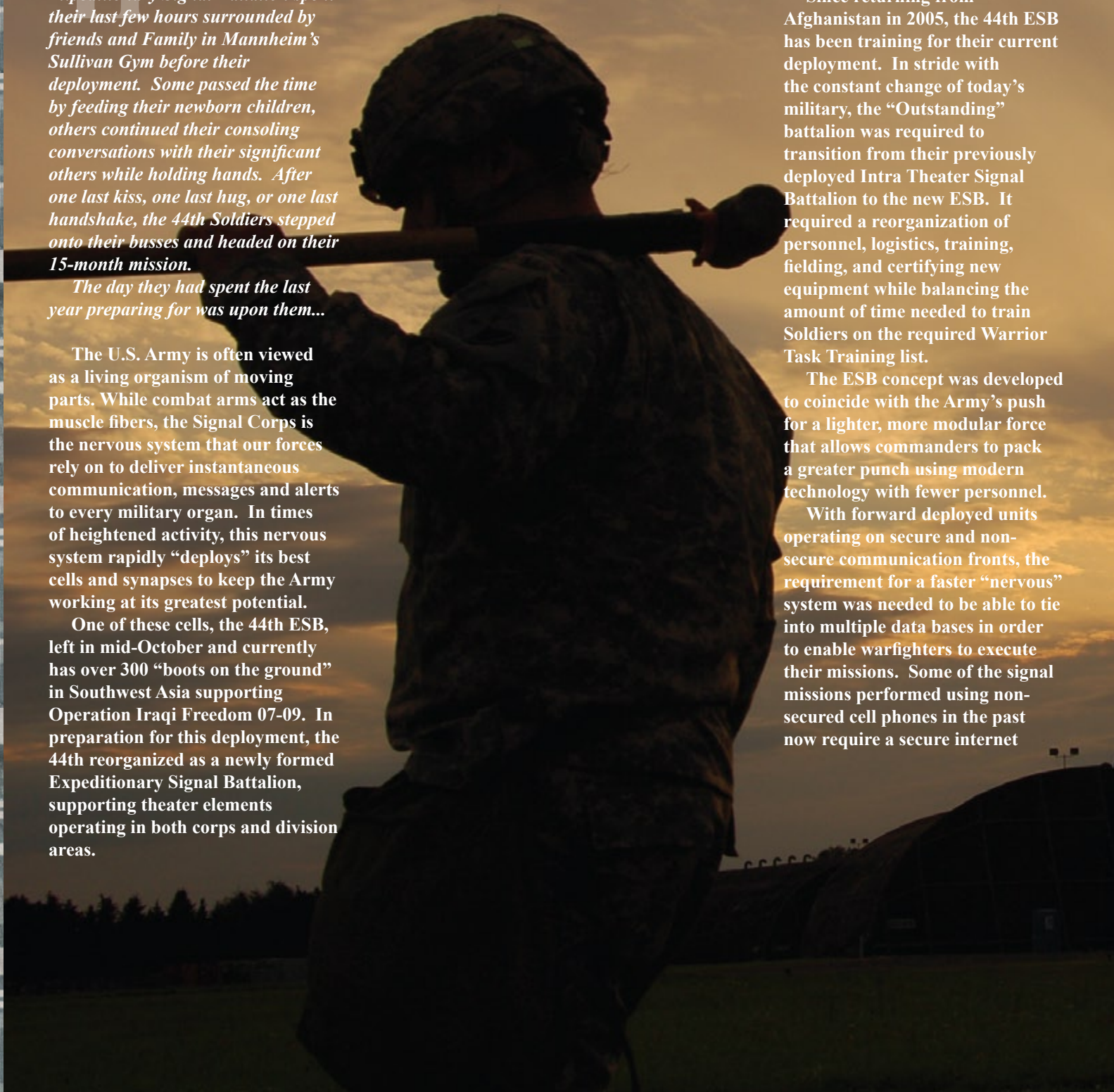
One of these cells, the 44th ESB, left in mid-October and currently has over 300 "boots on the ground" in Southwest Asia supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom 07-09. In preparation for this deployment, the 44th reorganized as a newly formed Expeditionary Signal Battalion, supporting theater elements operating in both corps and division areas.

THE TRANSFORMATION

Since returning from Afghanistan in 2005, the 44th ESB has been training for their current deployment. In stride with the constant change of today's military, the "Outstanding" battalion was required to transition from their previously deployed Intra Theater Signal Battalion to the new ESB. It required a reorganization of personnel, logistics, training, fielding, and certifying new equipment while balancing the amount of time needed to train Soldiers on the required Warrior Task Training list.

The ESB concept was developed to coincide with the Army's push for a lighter, more modular force that allows commanders to pack a greater punch using modern technology with fewer personnel.

With forward deployed units operating on secure and non-secure communication fronts, the requirement for a faster "nervous" system was needed to be able to tie into multiple data bases in order to enable warfighters to execute their missions. Some of the signal missions performed using non-secured cell phones in the past now require a secure internet



Y SIGNAL BATTALION

TO WAR

phone. "We must constantly field new technologies to keep ourselves secure and to keep ourselves one step ahead of the enemy," said Col. Randall Bland, commander, 7th Signal Brigade.

The 44th employed the new Joint Network Node equipment that, in addition to providing more communications support to more warfighters with less signal Soldiers, also provides the warfighter with greater bandwidth. This ultimately enables faster internet service and allows for more effective use of non-secure and secure internet phones. It also provides more communication capabilities and services in a smaller package to smaller, remote outposts as compared to what was possible in the past.

"We can provide a smaller Command Post Node package out to an area that's been moved out of the forward operating base to provide all communication services down to company and platoon level as necessary depending on mission requirements," said Lt. Col. Kris Kramarich, 44th ESB commander.

Kramarich added that because the JNN is satellite based they are not limited to a specific geographic distance as they were in the past.

"I am really looking forward to the Soldiers proving what they can do with this new equipment and the combat

units that we support benefiting from the advanced technology that's come out since I deployed in OIF I. At that time the communications we provided were primarily at the brigade level and now we will go down to team level in some cases depending on the mission," said Kramarich.


Success, according to Kramarich will depend on two things-- employed communications, measured by the quality of service provided with new equipment, and network tools at each command post. Secondly, 44th will have to pass this information on to the JNN units that are going to be deployed in the future because the Mannheim-based unit is the first pure JNN unit going into the theater. Documenting the lessons learned will provide "a good jump-out point for our follow on units to come downrange with a good, technical Standard Operating Procedure," added

Kramarich.

"The whole world has moved into the information age. We are translating what we do back in the states in a static environment with internet access at home and we need to continue to transfer that to the tactical side. I'm very excited that we've made a very big step in that direction. More so, I am also excited for the Soldiers to showcase what they can do and how they can support the warfighters," said Kramarich.

As technology becomes greater with time, more knowledge and experience is required to keep up with the changes. This was evident by the skills required to be a signal Soldier in the 44th. 44th's Command Sgt. Maj. Earl Allen describes his Soldiers as the "Universal Signal Soldier." Soldiers are typically trained in one Military Occupation Specialty, and are frequently required to "cross-train," picking up other skills where the military needs them.

The role of a signal Soldier is quickly becoming one of proficiency in every signal series MOS. Their individual skills are crucial considering the new small-team mission approach. Through



A 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion Soldier works at dusk during a pre-deployment exercise in Wiesbaden, Germany.

their training and exercises, Allen noticed that the Soldiers are relishing the opportunity and taking advantage of it by learning the professions of their peers.

WARRIOR TRAINING AND DEPLOYMENT PREPARATION

The 44th not only trained up to become multi-technical signal Soldiers, they also prepared themselves as warriors going to the battlefield. Completing Improvised Explosive Device lanes training, multiple ranges to qualify on various weapons systems, and training on convoy live-fire lanes “has provided us with the same skills that infantry Soldiers have,” said Allen. “These Soldiers cannot just be considered signal Soldiers because they possess the total skill package that embodies the total-Soldier concept.”

“Success is going to be measured in every phase along the way,” said Allen, emphasizing the importance of teamwork regardless of the nature of the task.

Prior to leaving, the 44th ensured that their equipment was properly packed and shipped. “Getting the equipment shipped out was extremely successful and an example of the great work these Soldiers accomplish as a team,” explained Allen. The task of bringing all the 44th’s equipment to the barges was a scheduled 5-day event through the weekend. The organization and diligence of the Soldiers along with the help of German workers at the barges allowed us to complete the load in a day and a half, allowing the Soldiers to keep their 4-day weekend.

An indispensable aspect in today’s Army is to work with Soldiers who have been “downrange” before. The noncommissioned officers in the 44th who had previous combat experience shared it with those who had not deployed. “The younger Soldiers are a lot more comfortable seeing someone who has that combat patch on their right arm, so they know that their NCOs have seen

the battlefield, and they feel safe in those Soldiers’ hands,” said Sgt. James Gilley.

This deployment will be Gilley’s third time going to war with the 44th during his four years with them. He deployed to OIF I in 2003, and 2005 to Afghanistan. “I went downrange with the 44th as a private and then as a specialist, so now I’m experienced and ready to go as an NCO leading Soldiers,” he said. Gilley is the NCO in charge of 44th’s B Company Electronic Maintenance Systems team which provides unit level maintenance support and repairs.

In the few months before they left, it was obvious to anyone living or working in Mannheim, Germany’s Benjamin Franklin Village that the 44th Soldiers were serious about their transition to life downrange. They formed up in the dusk when they weren’t in the field, and on certain occasions they were seen working late into the summer evenings. Even as the Soldiers were putting in the extra effort and time, their camaraderie never wavered. Maybe it was the long hours themselves, or the knowledge of sharing a similar plight, “The Soldiers of the 44th see themselves as a family,” said Allen.

FAMILY READINESS

Originally, the battalion was tasked to deploy in August 2007 but then received a three month “shift to the right.” When the news came, most of the battalion was on block leave and already in the mindset to deploy at a certain time. Kramarich took notice of how hard and efficient her Soldiers were working that she allowed additional time before deployment for Soldiers to be with their Families and take additional days off during liberal leave times.

Allen felt this was a great morale booster to the troops and their Families to have more quality time before departing. “When the time came, we were ready and we maintained that readiness,” said Allen.

In today’s military, a Soldier expects daily challenges. The Soldier’s Family can also endure additional challenges while their Soldier is deployed. Staff Sgt. Donovan Martin, having three deployments under his belt, coordinated with his wife to come up with a Spouse’s Battle Book. She kept track of everything that she ended up having to ask him for over the course of his deployments and turned those items into a book. Having felt this knowledge would be very useful to other Soldier’s Families, they provided their template to the 44th’s Family Readiness Group.

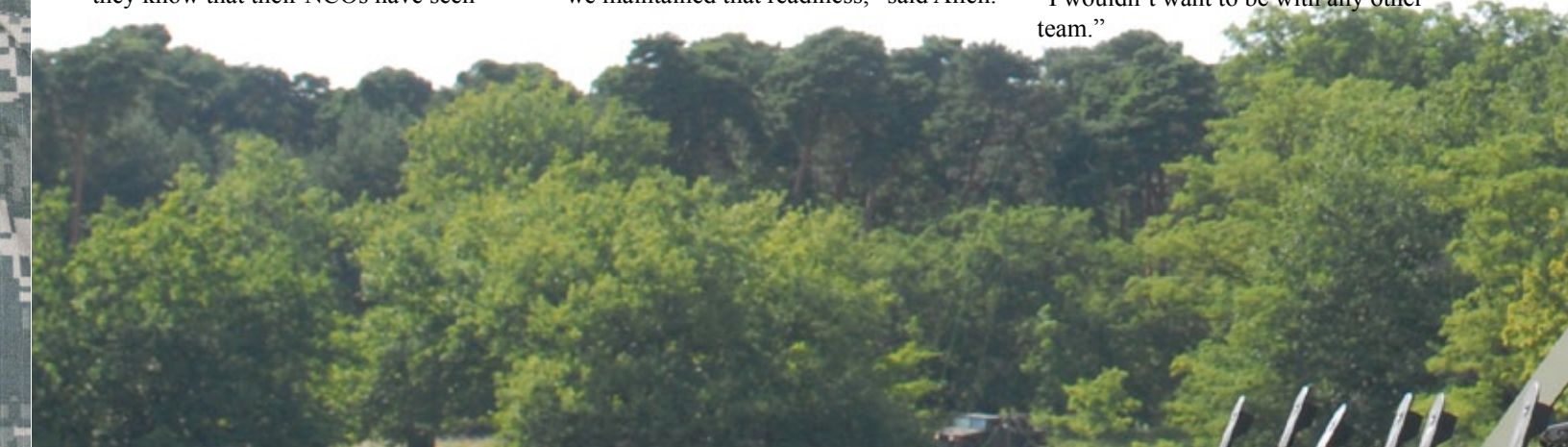
Each company in the battalion is coming up with their own versions mirrored off of the Martin’s original. They have placeholders in it for powers of attorney, current Leave and Earnings Statements and plenty of other information a spouse would have a hard time locating without asking the Soldier. It has phone numbers to contact the unit and other important numbers.

“Every husband, wife, son and daughter plays a critical role in ensuring we as one team meet mission success,” said Brig. Gen. Susan S. Lawrence, commander, 5th Signal Command, during the 44th’s colors-casing ceremony on October 3, 2007.

Leadership at the company level agreed. B Company 1st Sgt. Demetrius Steel added, “Soldiers and Families have confidence in themselves, their teams and their equipment, and this is what will make this mission successful.”

As the 44th ESB approaches 2008 with three months on the ground in Iraq and twelve to go, Kramarich believes that the leadership, knowledge, and morale – both in signal and warrior tasks - will continue to ensure mission success.

“I’m proud of my Soldiers’ accomplishments everyday,” said Allen. “I wouldn’t want to be with any other team.”





44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion Soldiers prepare an ANTSC-156 Phoenix Satellite during their pre-deployment Mission Rehearsal Exercise in Wiesbaden, Germany.

Commo Team to the Stars

Sgt. Jonathon Gray
5th Signal Command, PAO

For many workers who are constantly on the go, carrying a laptop or a mobile phone is enough to get the job done while away from the desk. There are some though that require digital firepower that can't fit in a pocket or be slung over a shoulder.

Many senior commanders in the military require a personal team to give them efficient and versatile communications wherever they are in the world at break-neck speed. 5th Signal Command's 52nd Signal Battalion is one of multiple 5th Signal units in United States Army, Europe that breeds what is known as a "Commo Team to the Stars."

The 52nd's "star" in this case is Gen. William E. Ward, who heads the newly formed U.S. African Command, headquartered in Stuttgart, Germany. Ward previously served as the U.S. European Command's Deputy Commander.

The team "provides the commander and staff the ability to contact, email, and conduct business anywhere in the world," said Sgt. 1st Class Steve Ornelles, commo team noncommissioned officer-in-charge. The team serves up telephone, secure and non-secure internet communications, video teleconference and email capabilities to the commander using a multitude of equipment that ensures any of these communication packages are

available anytime, anywhere.

The team is currently comprised of eight Soldiers, but the numbers are expected to double with the recent establishment of AFRICOM. The Soldiers, each from several different occupational specialties, had to prove themselves through testing and interviewing before being elected to the team.

"It's not necessarily what job you possess, but one has to meet the requirements to accomplish the mission such as ingenuity, creativity, and problem-solving skills," said Chief Warrant Officer Alexander Taylor, the commo team officer-in-charge.

The application process to become a team member is open to any member of the U.S. Armed Forces with a top secret clearance, according to Taylor. After the interviews and selection to the team, a new member is fully trained on the equipment

then prepares the twenty or more signal and computer cases for the mission. These "star" teams are different from other commo teams, because they must adjust to any transportation that is acquired, instead of relying on what they already own. "We don't have our own plane, so we tailor each mission to the equipment at hand. Sometimes we only have minutes to adjust," said Taylor.

Each communications team is put together in a continuous, rotating fashion so everyone has a chance to work together. "Everybody knows what everybody else does, so they can fill in for one another easily. They also constantly work on their own weaknesses and minimize faults," said Ornelles.

During missions, the team has to creatively overcome obstacles such as climbing various rooftops to set up equipment or even fabricating a power scheme inside a vehicle to start a VTC. Robles recounted one such event.

"In one country, we weren't allowed to have our equipment touch the



Photo courtesy of the 52nd Signal Battalion

and the mission. Once they have a grasp of the equipment, they are taken to a remote location such as a hotel room or the top of a hill, and are then told get everything set up and bring up email and VTC, according to team member Staff Sgt. Edwin Robles. This real-world test is the final step to get someone trained and operational on the team.

Of the eight team members, only teams of two go out on each mission. Before leaving on a mission, each 2-man team prepares laptops with the latest emails for the commander and staff, and

Sgt. Chris Scheurmier, 52nd Signal Battalion, shields his face from the heat from the plane as he sets up field communications equipment on a flightline in Naples, Italy.



ground of the airport while we waited on the airport runway, or it would've been confiscated. Gen. Ward needed communications, so we set up a (communications) package on the wing of the aircraft."

With the hard work and stress of the job, the team finds time to relax and share stories upon their return to home station. There are also a few perks to being on the team. "The civilian

clothing allowance is nice and there's also a lot of room service while we're on the road. One of our goals is to order the club sandwiches of the world," said Robles.

After each mission, the team is often personally thanked on a job well done by the senior staff or general officer they supported. "This is an incredibly rewarding job," said Ornelles.



Photo courtesy of the 52nd Signal Battalion

Above: The "Star" Commo Team travels to a variety of locations throughout the world. Seen here is a New York City location on the top of a building where the team set up.

Left: Staff Sgt. Edwin Robles, 52nd Signal Battalion, prepares a travel communications kit that will follow "the boss" at a moments notice to provide phone, email and other communication needs anywhere in the world at any-time.



Photo by Sgt. Jonathon Gray

6981st Civilian

55 years of service and counting



Col. Joseph A. Brendler, 2nd Signal Brigade commander, presents a plaque to Gerd Drechsler, 6981st Civilian Support Group commander, in recognition of the unit's 55 years of service to United States Army, Europe, during a ceremony held at Coleman Barracks in Mannheim, Germany, May 24.



**Story and Photo by
Kristopher Joseph**
5th Signal Command, PAO

2nd Signal Brigade's 6981st Civilian Support Group, headquartered on Coleman Barracks, held a ceremony in celebration of 55 years of service to United States Army, Europe May 24.

The 87-member group, made up entirely of German nationals, is a direct descendant of the first German Labor Service units activated in August 1948 during the Berlin blockade with the original mission that included installation of high-frequency antennas and maintenance and operation of microwave radio equipment and power generators.

The ceremony included recognizing members who have served in the unit for 20 and 40 years, and a presentation to the unit by 2nd Signal Brigade Commander Col. Joseph A. Brendler.

The history of the 6981st began on May 1, 1952 with the activation of the 6981st LS Signal Construction Battalion at Neureut near Karlsruhe, Germany. The unit then consisted of 712 workers organized into a headquarters company and three signal construction companies. Their current structure consists of the headquarters in Mannheim with one signal support detachment in Grafenwoehr.

The unit's current responsibilities include installing network infrastructure, internal and external cable fitting and providing

24-hour emergency signal maintenance to USAREUR military communities, according to 6981st supervisor Gerd Drechsler.

"We are always taking classes and training to stay on top of all the new technologies," said Drechsler. "We also lend our services by training U.S. Soldiers as well." The 6981st recently held a 3-week training session for 7th Signal Brigade's 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion, who deployed in October 2007. The training consisted of fiber optics, copper splicing, and operating heavy equipment vehicles.

"I am proud to say I am in 'their' organization," said Brendler during the ceremony. "I am amazed at the strength and abilities of this unit and I am honored to claim association with them."

Lt. Col. Thomas Salo, 102nd Signal Battalion commander, said that much of the praise that his battalion receives is due to the contributions of the 6981st.

"The members of the 6981st have always been motivated and hardworking," said Drechsler. "We hope to continue our wonderful relationship and friendship with the 2nd Signal Brigade and the U.S. Army."

Support Group

Cables help wounded warriors heal

Story and Photo by
Sgt. Elizabeth Sheridan
5th Signal Command, PAO

When thinking of helping the wounded, most would probably envision changing bandages or administering medications. 2nd Signal Brigade's 6981st Civilian Support Group is doing their part, not by picking up a scalpel or sewing stitches, but by installing more than 100 meters of copper cable and more than 150 meters of fiber optic cable at the new Warrior Transition Unit near the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center.

The efforts of the all-German 6981st will enable wounded Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Department of Defense civilians to stay connected with friends and family by providing up to 100 pairs each of phone and internet connections.

The work they are doing is part of a construction project that will provide two buildings with 330 beds for wounded servicemembers, as well as DoD civilians. The rooms are for those that are ready to leave the hospital but not quite ready to either go home or return to duty.

The attending medical staff will provide overall 24-hour healthcare, billeting and quality of life, explained Capt. Katrina Gawlick, the Landstuhl WTU commander.

The WTUs are one of several improvements under the Army Medical Action Plan announced by the DoD in June 2007. There are new WTUs being constructed at various U.S. military medical facilities around the world.

"The service that the 6981st is providing is very worthwhile, because a big thing that we have to provide here is morale and welfare," said Gawlick. "The phones and computers are the biggest morale booster because they can stay in contact with their Families, by chatting online, calling them or emailing."

The range of care provided depends on the end result. Unlike typical barracks, the servicemembers live there and need

continuous care. Typically, there is a 10 to 14-day average stay where shorter stays are those Soldiers returning stateside, and longer stays are those who are returning to duty, said Gawlick.

The 6981st Commander Gerd Drechsler said their work in the WTUs will offer an alternative atmosphere to a hospital room so the patients feel less isolated and more connected to the outside world.



Markus Wuerges, (left), and Matthias Menge (right), both from 2nd Signal Brigade's 6981st Civilian Support Group, splice connectors onto cable that will be used for phone and internet in the new Warrior Transition Unit near the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center.

Camaraderie

Throughout 2007, 5th Signal Command units trained and exchanged



Photo by Sgt. Jonathon Gray

Soldiers from the 102nd Signal Battalion navigate a water obstacle during the 2007 Schindermannes competition in Emmerzhausen, hosted by the German 28th Signal Regiment.



Photo by Sgt. Elizabeth Sheridan

102nd Signal Battalion Soldiers give pointers to German Soldiers of the 282nd Signal Battalion during a qualification range in Wackernheim hosted by the 102nd.



Photo by Spc. Evan Marcy

44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion and U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers participate in a partnership qualification range in Hardheim, Germany.

21 18 15 12 9 6 3 0 3 6 9 12 15 18 21

...e takes aim

ed fellowship with European units in various partnership events.



Photo by Spc. Evan Marcy

Pvt. Rodondo Parks, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 5th Signal Command, takes aim with a German G-36 rifle at a German qualification range in Eschbach, Germany.



Photo by Spc. Evan Marcy

72nd Signal Battalion Soldiers help Eurocorps Soldiers from Strasbourg qualify on the M16A2 rifle at the Coleman Barracks Local Training Area in Mannheim.



Photo by Sgt. Jonathon Gray

Soldiers from the 102nd Signal Battalion navigate a tire obstacle during the 2007 Schindermannes competition in Emmerzhausen.

21 18 15 12 9 6 3 0 3 6 9 12 15 18 21

Network

TRAILBLAZERS

5th Signal Command improves Europe's information highways with introduction of the Landstuhl Regional Hub Node.

LeAnne MacAllister
PAO, 5th Signal Command

Nestled in the tranquil German hills of Rheinland-Pfalz amidst valleys of half-timbered homes and cattle grounds, one of the U.S. military's global satellite gateway facilities provides digital firepower for more than 40,000 warfighters.

This December, its firepower just got more lethal.

5th Signal Command's Landstuhl Media Gateway Facility recently introduced one of the Army's first two Regional Hub Nodes -- a high-tech tactical entry point that enables constant access to information and network grid for deployed units -- thus marking another significant milestone in the Army Chief Information Officer/G6's Network Service Center transformation. The RHN facility is under the operational control of 2nd Signal Brigade's 43rd Signal Battalion.

In accordance with the new centralization strategy, 5th Sig's 2nd Signal Brigade completed the establishment of four Area Processing Centers in March of 2007 and its 7th Signal Brigade transformed two tactical battalions into Expeditionary Signal Battalions equipped with Joint Network Node systems over the past year.

Europe's Area Processing Centers replaced 21 Network Service Centers, consolidating network management

and administration functions through the use of a newly constructed 'fiber-optic backbone' in theater. First, the Installation Information Infrastructure Modernization Plan -- known as I3MP -- upgraded the theater infrastructure and ensures that information was capable of traversing networks to reach centralized systems without affecting security and speed capabilities. Second, the migration of users and consolidation of network services into APCs provides increases to overall storage space, network security, reliability, and efficiency of services. It also allows for information sharing, collaboration in a protected environment, and disaster recovery.

Described as "the next generation of battlefield communications," JNN is a remote, satellite-based communications system that has replaced major elements of Mobile Subscriber Equipment. According to Army doctrine, it acts as the 'brain' of a forward-based unit and serves as a field access point for users to connect to phone and network lines. Utilizing new commercial technology, JNN-fielding and the establishment of ESBs have been accomplished in accordance with the Army's push for a lighter, more modular force. Their new capabilities allow commanders 'to pack a greater punch' and provide signal units with the ability to serve more units with less people and equipment.

The initial operational capability of 5th Sig's RHN offers tactical units the ability to pull basic network services stored at APCs through the use of JNN technology, seamlessly connecting them to their information sanctuary within the enterprise.

"Because of this facility, U.S. Army, Europe's warfighters can access the network from any fox hole or desktop located anywhere in the world," explained Brig. Gen. Susan Lawrence, commanding general, 5th Signal Command.

Services offered via the RHN include non-secure internet protocol routing network (NIPR), secure internet protocol routing network (SIPR), defense switch network (DSN), defense red switch network (DRSN), video-teleconferencing (VTC) and other collaboration tools. U.S. service members now are able to pull these capabilities from their home theater

rather than taking servers with them or establishing new, temporary networks for use during deployments.

“Commercialization is the freeing up of tactical military equipment to make way for off-the-shelf, commercial equipment at a specific location, thereby creating a “campus-like” environment where everyone on a given location has common, equal access and connectivity,” explained Col. Randall Bland, 7th Signal Brigade commander.

Planning for the RHN began in October of 2006. 5th Sig’s G3 team worked with USAREUR and U.S. Network Enterprise Technology Command to establish resources, plans and policies. “We began by laying the program into phases and ensuring that our Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures were established prior to launching the initial operating capability,” explained Butch Carlo, RHN project leader, 5th Signal Command G3.

Once the acquisition process,

conducted in coordination with the Program Manager – Defense Communications and Army Transmission Systems (PM-DCATS), was complete, network engineers, construction engineers and program managers from USAREUR G6, 5th Signal Command and 2nd Signal Brigade collaborated on the master schedule to ensure construction of the facility was in compliance with the Army CIO/G6’s intent and installation dates.

“We continue to modify the TTPs as we go,” said Lt. Col. Dana Tankins, G3, 5th Signal Command. Tankins compared the 16-month documentation process to writing a manual for a new car simultaneously while the car was built. “We constantly check our processes to make sure that we’ve got it right,” he added, “and we’re not done yet, we’re still learning and developing operating procedures to fully utilize the capabilities of this technology.”

In addition to hosting the RHN, the Landstuhl Media Gateway Facility is

home to the Defense Information Systems Agency’s Teleport facility. 5th Signal Command and DISA provide services to warfighters in all branches of the Armed Forces who work in a joint capacity through this facility.

“The Army is leading the military in fielding joint technologies, and we’re leading the Army here in Europe. This regional hub node is the model for future sites in the continental United States and the Pacific,” said Lawrence.

Landstuhl RHN expects to have full operational capabilities by February 2008, and will ultimately provide network service center support to all JNN-enabled organizations, to include U.S. Central Command and U.S. African Command.

The Landstuhl Regional Hub Node in Landstuhl, Germany.



Change of COMMAND

Kristopher Joseph
5th Signal Command, PAO

The reins of United States Army, Europe's 5th Signal Command were entrusted to a new leader at a change of command ceremony held at the Taylor Barracks Parade Field June 14.

The Dragon Warriors of 5th Signal along with over 500 guests welcomed incoming commander Brig. Gen. Susan S. Lawrence who accepted the colors from reviewing officer and USAREUR Commander Gen. David D. McKiernan. Lawrence also assumes duties as the Senior Mission Commander for the Mannheim, Heidelberg, Darmstadt and Stuttgart military communities as well as USAREUR's Chief Information Officer and Assistant Chief of Staff, G6.

Outgoing commander Brig. Gen. (P) Dennis L. Via served 22 months as 5th Signal's commander and now serves as the commander of the U.S. Communications-Electronic Life Cycle Management Command at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey. He departed with his wife Linda and their two sons, Brian, 15, and Bradley, 10.

"There are no words to adequately express what an honor and privilege it has been to lead and serve in this command," said Via during his outgoing remarks. "I watched in awe as you made excellence routine, the difficult easy, and the complex simple. You are truly unsung heroes, and undoubtedly among the finest communicators in the world."

Lawrence, a native of Ida Grove, Iowa, returns to 5th Signal after serving as the Director, Command and Control, Communications and Computer Systems, J6, of U.S. Central Command. She had previously served in 5th Signal as commander of the 7th Signal Brigade from November 2000 to February 2003.

"I look forward to working with this command to ensure we are ready, trained and equipped to execute any mission, across the full spectrum of operation," she said during her incoming remarks. "Together we will continue to reach new standards and heights founded in our values and warrior ethos. I'm honored by the selection to command this outstanding unit and am extremely honored to serve with you."

McKiernan also thanked Via and Lawrence during his speech for their service in the signal community and



added a few words about the command that Lawrence was charged with leading.

"It's a great day to be a Soldier in United States Army, Europe and one significant reason for that can be credited to the technical and warfighting efforts of this command. In the last two years, the 5th Signal Command has been fully engaged in transformation while fighting the Global War on Terrorism and never allowing a break in communications."

Above: Brig. Gen. Susan S. Lawrence accepts the colors and command of the 5th Signal Command from United States Army, Europe Commander Gen. David D. McKiernan with outgoing commander Brig. Gen. (P) Dennis L. Via looking on.

Right: Units of the 5th Signal Command stand in formations on the Taylor Barracks Parade Field during the change of command ceremony.



Photo by Spc. Evan Marcy



Photo by Sgt. Jonathon Gray

2nd Signal Brigade

Sgt. Elizabeth Sheridan *5th Signal Command, PAO*

With 61 hours of running, walking, legs pumping, hearts racing, with sweat and laughter flowing, three of 2nd Signal Brigade's six battalions, the 102nd Signal Battalion in Wiesbaden, the 52nd Signal Battalion in Stuttgart, and 43rd Signal Battalion in Heidelberg, participated in community-sponsored runs in the month of September.

Each run supported different causes. In Stuttgart, the proceeds went to youth groups, in Wiesbaden the run benefited local German athletes, and in Heidelberg, the Soldiers and civilians walked for cancer awareness.

52nd Signal Battalion

The 52nd Signal Battalion's Soldiers, civilians and Family members joined

together as a team to walk or run for 24-straight hours September 7-8. The 18th annual 24-hour marathon took place on Husky Field on Patch Barracks. The team placed first in the large group category with 3,501 laps logged, surpassing last year's total by 101 laps.

Money was raised by selling race t-shirts. The participants bought a t-shirt as their registration fee and then wore them during the run. The proceeds went to youth groups of the community such as school sports teams and gyms and the Girl and Boy Scouts of America.

"This money will benefit our local community youth organizations," said Melissa Jones, Family Readiness Group support assistant in Stuttgart. "This run builds up our community and is for a great cause."

The battalion is split into the Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, the 587th Signal Company,

and a satellite team in Garmisch. The 587th made up the bulk of the runners with groups of Soldiers assigned to run in different time slots for the entire 24 hours.

"This run is very beneficial for both our unit and the community," said Maj. Thomas Moran, executive officer, 52nd Signal Bn. "It promotes esprit de corps, and is good exercise."

102nd Signal Battalion

For 25 straight hours, a team of 36 Soldiers and civilians from the 102nd covered 171 total miles in the third-ever Wiesbaden Sportfoerderung on Sept. 15-16. The run was sponsored by the Wiesbaden Sports Office and raised money to fund training for Olympic hopefuls. Local German banks sponsored the teams, donating a fixed amount per lap finished.

The battalion split the 25 hours into 30-



Photo courtesy of the 43rd Signal Battalion

Members of the 43rd Signal Battalion run and walk for cancer awareness in Heidelberg, Germany.



Photo by Cassandra Kardeke, USAG Wiesbaden Public Affairs Office

Soldiers of the 102nd Signal Battalion and their Family members grill food for runners and supporters during a 25-hour marathon sponsored by the Wiesbaden Fitness Club for charity. The money raised by the event supports training for Olympic hopefuls.

lends a helping foot

minute increments and assigned personnel slots. The run took place in Wiesbaden's Kurpark. Although most Soldiers conduct physical training five days a week, the run was nevertheless challenging.

"You would think 30 minutes is not really that long," said Sgt. 1st Class Eldon Brown, HHD, 102nd. "But there is an incline, and if you are not used to running up hills, the 30 minutes seems like an hour."

The 102nd had 70 total participants that either ran, grilled, or provided general support, explained Capt. Samar Parikh, administration officer, 102nd Signal.

"The atmosphere reminded me of a big Family reunion," said Sgt. 1st Class Jessie Davis of the 102nd. "Tents, grills, music. I'd come back next year."

There were personal benefits for the Soldiers other than the international interaction. "I personally gained satisfaction from knowing that just by

running, I can help out a charity," said Brown.

"It was also a great opportunity for teambuilding; we had people that stayed at the run site for the full 25 hours," said Brown. "It was a good chance for the two detachments in the battalion to come together for something other than training."

43rd Signal Battalion

The 43rd Signal Battalion in Heidelberg walked and ran to raise cancer awareness. Answer the C.A.L.L. (Cancer Awareness Laps for Life) was designed to let people show support and learn about resources available to fight cancer. The 25 Soldiers and civilians in the run brought the battalion's motto, "Teamwork, Strength and Speed," to life finishing 443 laps and a total of 111 miles starting at 6 p.m. on September 13 and finishing at

6:30 p.m. the next day.

Having one team member on the track at all times signifies taking one day out of your life to remember those who have died and support those who have the disease, explained a group of 43rd Signal Soldiers.

A 43rd team member, Sgt. Carlos Eggins, walked for over six consecutive hours. "The walk for cancer was my way of showing support and letting all individuals with cancer know that I am there for them," said Eggins. "I walked in honor of my grandfather, Cleveland Eggins, who is diagnosed with cancer."

The 43rd FRG also joined in the event, providing food and face-painting activities.

Camaraderie, community ties and muscles were strengthened during these runs as the overall participants from the battalions ran or walked for more than 4000 laps combined.



Photo by Sgt. Elizabeth Sheridan

52nd Signal Battalion's 587th Signal Company runs at Patch Barracks in Stuttgart, Germany to help fund their local community organizations.



Photo courtesy of the 43rd Signal Battalion

Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Wallace, right, 43rd Signal Battalion, runs with his Soldier, Spc. Katrell Platt during Answer the C.A.L.L., a 12 hour, 443 lap community run to raise cancer awareness.

Defending THE

DIGITAL BATTLEFIELD

Kristopher Joseph
5th Signal Command, PAO

In 1983, with the Cold War still going strong, a movie called "War Games" depicted an eccentric computer hacker named David Lightman, played by Matthew Broderick. With dogged determination to play the military-generated game, Global Thermo-Nuclear War, David managed to hack into the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) computer system and almost caused an actual nuclear war with the then Soviet Union.

"War Games" perfectly represented the tensions and anxieties of the ever-looming nuclear threat during the Cold War nuclear arms race. The Global War on Terrorism has replaced many threats of the Cold War. Many believe that in today's "information age" there are real David Lightmans who pose a cyber threat to military networks that could cause the loss of innocent lives unless something is done about them.

"We are taking a pro-active approach to stop these 'hacktivists' from attacking our systems," said Robert Hembrook, deputy chief of intelligence

for United States Army, Europe's 5th Signal Command in Mannheim, Germany. For the first time in the European military theater, a cyber-threat intelligence cell has been created for the specific purpose of detecting, monitoring and combating malicious digital infiltrations on military computer networks, according to Hembrook.

Cyber defense is implemented at the Department of Defense level and was already underway in the halls of the U.S. European Command in Stuttgart, Germany, but a fully developed and funded European theater component-level cyber cell came to full fruition within 5th Signal Command, said Hembrook.

The cell consists of three experienced intelligence and computer experts who's jobs are to observe potentially harmful data passing from the internet into friendly networks, identify patterns of attacks, analyze data, and advise the operators of the network so that they can take preventative action to ensure the safety and security of all systems in the European footprint.

"The fact is that there are people currently trying to break into our systems in an effort to obtain data or plant viruses that put servicemembers and their missions at risk," said one of the cyber cell members. "We simply cannot be vulnerable in this area."

The military, along with most other organizations, rely more and more on the speed and capabilities of computer-based technology to give them an edge on the battlefield. This reliance also allows an extra avenue of attack for the enemy. "This cyber cell marks a change of approach in the intel world," a team member said. "We are already experts on predicting physical attacks from the enemy, but we never had a dedicated staff to predict and



prevent virtual attacks at a theater level.”

Besides combating threats from the outside, the cell is also involved with helping its military users prevent “digital fratricide” from the inside. For work and morale purposes, DoD policy allow users filtered, monitored access to the World Wide Web on government computers. According to a cell member, this is to obtain business-related information and to visit non-work related sites along as long as casual browsing does not affect getting missions accomplished.

“It’s a delicate relationship of balancing functionality and security,” said a cell member. “We know that many users can’t do their job without computers and the internet, so we look for ways to help protect them.”

“Users need to know that internet access is a privilege and not a right,” said one cyber cell member.

The cell has taken another proactive step by leaving their offices and actively engaging and informing commanders and military communities of their findings as well as stressing the importance and relevance of the cyber battlefield. Another cell member said that their audience is the leadership in theater because they are the ones who can affect changes in how members of the DoD deal with and fight these cyber threats.

“We have had nothing but positive feedback from commanders,” said one cell member. “They are taking our reports seriously and more and more they are seeing that if our data or systems get compromised or abused, threats to our systems can affect not only those sitting behind a desk, but also those on the front lines.”

Since the 5th Signal Cyber Cell has shared its results to the intelligence

community, other military organizations are asking how they too can have a cyber cell to find their own digital landmines, said the cyber team.

“This (cyber cell) is unprecedented at this level,” said a cell member. “I saw the need for this when I worked at the DoD level. Members of the cell believe that network defensive measures should be implemented at all levels in the military because a computer’s role is becoming just as vital as an M-16 rifle in terms of winning today’s wars.

“As much as the military trains it’s own on weapon safety, so we should be training them on computer and network safety,” said a cell member. “That is where informing the leadership and giving them briefings becomes so vital.”

In a 2006 interview for Defense Systems Magazine, Tom Reardon, chief of the Intelligence Division for Network Enterprise Technology Command (NETCOM) at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, had this to say about the level of importance computer networks play in military operations:

“Network-centric operations are how we prosecute war and sustain the warfighter. If an enemy can degrade or destroy that capability, the tide of the battle could easily be turned in their favor. Worse yet, if the enemy succeeds in denying our network-centric capability, our forces may not be able to deploy – we couldn’t show up to seize or defend terrain or support an ally.”

Today, the 5th Signal Cyber Threat Intelligence Cell team members are the USAREUR warfighters in the virtual trenches making sure the digital frontlines are defended.

“From an intel point of view, we’ve gone from ‘patch the leaks’ to ‘build a better boat,’” Hembrook said.

What can you do to prevent cyber attacks?

Check out: <https://iassure.usareur.army.mil> from a government computer.



Strengthening the international

military backbone

Photo courtesy of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Kristopher Joseph

5th Signal Command, PAO

“Communication is the key” served as the main theme for the 2007 NATO/ Partnership for Peace International NCO leadership course at the Swiss Armed Forces junior training center in Sion, Switzerland. Two “communicators” from United States Army, Europe’s 5th Signal Command were handpicked as guest speakers to give their expertise to noncommissioned officers representing 19 different nations.

The 128th Signal Company command team of Capt. Ken Donnolly and 1st Sgt. Samuel Taylor and from 5th’s 2nd Signal Brigade, 39th Signal Battalion in Belgium were chosen by North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s top enlisted Soldier, Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Bartelle, to teach “Officer and NCO relations at the company level” on the last day of the 2-week course held in early October.

“It’s a great honor that we were picked,” said Taylor, who is no stranger to working with other militaries at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE).

The signal duo described the U.S. Army company-level officer/NCO relationship as a quasi-marriage where the two often spend more time together than their actual spouses. The two drew rousing laughter from the class when they debated over who is the husband and wife in their “marriage.”

The team received raised eyebrows when Taylor revealed that U.S. NCOs train not only the junior enlisted Soldiers but the officers as well in courses such as Airborne and Ranger schools.

“Young officers are bred, trained and guided by senior NCOs at a company level, and the experience and knowledge they gain from those NCOs shape them into becoming good senior officers and commanders,” said Taylor to the class.

Donnelly, who was also an NCO before becoming a commissioned officer, said that no commander can succeed

without strong NCOs leading the way to accomplish the mission at hand.

“A key strength of any good officer is his or her ability to delegate responsibility to their NCOs,” said Donnolly.

The two were followed by NCOs from Norway, Spain and Great Britain who shared their military’s NCO structure and how they relate with officers. This time the eyebrows of Taylor and Donnolly were raised when the Norwegian NCO said he was on a first-name basis with every officer when he was assigned to an air base.

In stark contrast, the Spanish NCO said that their officers and NCOs work and live in strict, segregated worlds where most mission responsibility is given to officers. The British NCO said that their officers sometime speak a different language that the enlisted don’t understand, but that NCOs are slowly given more responsibility in their units.

The class was by and large in unison agreement that NCOs in any military need to be “the backbone” of a unit. “The officers are the managers, but the NCOs make it happen,” added Taylor.

Another topic was the NCO rank structure of the different nations. Attendees said many countries have less than four NCO ranks due in large part to them having conscript enlisted forces where their citizens are required to serve a minimum amount of time. The individuals who exceed their peers as an enlisted conscript are often offered an officer position to join the professional, career force, which renders the NCO ranks scarce.

Taylor was introduced to a 22-year-old Swiss Army 1st Sgt. who had only served 2 years before making her rank as opposed to his own record of 15 years of service. Taylor took this a glowing example of how many militaries need to increase the size of their NCOs corps and place more emphasis on the roles and responsibilities of NCOs in the chain of command.

Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Blanc, chief of NCO development for the Swiss Armed Forces and co-developer of the

international NCO leadership course, said one of main reasons this course was created was because there is such a strong need for NCO development in most Partnership for Peace militaries today.

The 2-week training provides three opportunities to attend with a preliminary, intermediate and advanced NCO course that dates back to 2005. Each course has two NCOs per country that accept an invitation from NATO to attend. The course modules are taught by senior NCOs and experts from various partner countries on a rotating basis. Up to now each course has received nothing but high ratings and positive feedback from attendees, said Blanc.

“We want to spread the virus of international relations through these courses,” said Blanc, who is currently trying to hold these courses more often as well as create more development courses

that bring nations together.

“We designed the course to include group tasks where NCOs from different nations are teamed together to solve problems and work thru scenarios,” said Blanc. The attendees were not only confined to a classroom as they also negotiated repelling and rope climbing drills to build team cohesion.

“This experience was awesome,” said Master Cpl. Don Caron from the Canadian Air Force. “This course really showed me a lot about myself as a leader and as a person in general.” Caron said he was excited to take the lessons learned from this course and apply it to his current unit.

“I hope the attendees learn that no military can work without strong NCOs,” said Donnolly. “I hope they take from this course that communication is the key to success,” said Taylor. “Good officers trust their NCOs to get the job done and good NCOs listen and get know their Soldiers,” he said.

“The concept and success of this course is a dream come true,” said Blanc. “The international collaboration that happens here is something the whole world can benefit from.”



Left: The Notre Dame de Valere overlooks the city of Sion in the Valais region of Switzerland.

Below: The 128th Signal Company command team of 1st Sgt. Samuel Taylor (left) and Capt. Ken Donnolly (right) teach officer and NCO relations during the final day of the 2007 NATO/ Partnership For Peace International NCO leadership course at the Swiss Army junior training center in Sion, Switzerland Oct. 19.



UNSLAYABLE DRAGON

5th Signal warrior outduels peers at 2007
NETCOM NCO of the Year competition



Spc. Evan Marcy

5th Signal Command, PAO

“Maintaining what I do every day helped prepare me for the competition,” said Staff Sgt. Justin J. Gussler from the 43rd Signal Battalion in Heidelberg, Germany and winner of the 2007 U.S. Army Network Enterprise Technology Command / 9th Signal Command Noncommissioned Officer of the Year on June 15.

The week-long competition was held at NETCOM headquarters in Fort Huachuca, Arizona and involved a myriad of warrior tasks each competitor was graded on to determine the overall winner.

Aside from the tasks themselves, Gussler had to quickly adjust to the different time zone and temperature traveling from Germany to Arizona. “It’s a lot different than competing at company level, you’re seeing the best of what the command has to offer,” said Gussler.

Gussler was joined in Arizona by 5th Signal’s 2007 Soldier of the Year, Spc. Jared W. Nelson, a cable systems installer from the 72nd Signal Battalion, who also fought his way through battalion, brigade and 5th Signal Command competitions to make it to the NETCOM level. “I think all the Soldiers that made it this far made it a fun environment more than a competitive one,” said Nelson.

“This was my first time ever competing in something like this,” said Gussler, a network switching systems operator/maintainer, who made his way to the NETCOM competition after taking top NCO honors in 2nd Signal Brigade’s and 5th Signal Command’s respective competitions in Mannheim, Germany. “Each competition was a great chance to meet, interact and get to know NCOs from different units,” said Gussler. “I also made a lot of contacts throughout the competitions that will help me later down the road. Now that I know high-speed Soldiers in different duty locations, I’ll have the knowledge that my Soldiers going to other units will be taken care of.”

In an atmosphere where everyone was competing for top honors, Gussler noticed every competitor was living the part of the NCO Creed which

says: “...I know my Soldiers and will always place their needs above my own...”

“If an event arose where someone didn’t know how to do it, another NCO or Soldier was there to lend a hand,” Gussler said. “There wasn’t any individualism going on and we would have been happy for whoever won,” he added.

Winning the competition will also help Gussler with his career. “I’ve been picked up for Sgt. First Class, and I know having this on my record will help when I go for Master Sergeant and Sergeant Major.”

The benefits of the competition are not just for the Soldier but for the Army as well since certain jobs in the Army require Soldiers to focus on certain daily tasks for their unit. “Some Soldiers don’t get to use all their skills, and this gives them an opportunity to show their leadership and everything they have to offer,” said Gussler.

While Gussler doesn’t plan on participating in future competitions, he is very interested in sharing his knowledge and experiences with other troops. “I want to pass the torch on to other Soldiers,” said Gussler.

Gussler and his wife Kathrin have a daughter, Kaylie, 2, and welcomed a new child in October. “I think my Family was more excited that I won than I was,” said Gussler, referring to his win.

The Army Commendation Medal was just one of the awards and accolades Gussler received for his win at NETCOM, which numbers 17,000 Soldiers and civilians worldwide.

(Left) Staff Sgt. Justin J. Gussler running to victory and land navigating (below) during the 2007 NETCOM NCO of the Year competition. Photos courtesy of NETCOM Public Affairs Office.



Chef from Ghana finds home in Army kitchens

Sgt. Michael Taylor
5th Signal Command, PAO

The road of life often leads us on many intricate paths, forcing us to make critical decisions that ultimately determine who we are and where we end up in this world.

Making the decision to reenlist indefinitely, to serve a country that wasn't his and journey down a new path, was not hard to make for one Soldier from Ghana, Africa.

On Aug. 3, 2007 Staff Sgt. Ulysses Acheampong, a member of the Ashanti tribe and 5th Signal Command's 7th Signal Brigade, decided to reenlist for his third and final time during a ceremony in Mannheim, Germany.

"I remember the road that led me to this point in my life," said Acheampong. "It was long and often challenging but very fulfilling."

Ten years ago, things were a lot different for Acheampong. He was a chef and the owner of a restaurant called Leena's Pot in Accra, the capital of Ghana. He had 10 employees and the business that took him and his cousin seven years to build was finally booming.

"I had everything I needed, but there was still something missing," said Acheampong. "And that's when I decided to join my father in the United States."

His father had retired from the Ghanaian Army and decided to settle down in the U.S. several years prior.

Thus, in 1997, the then 29-year-old chef said his goodbyes and left Ghana with his two brothers.

"After arriving in the U.S., my father laid it to my brothers and me straight," Acheampong said, with a serious face. "He told us that our options were wide open and we had to figure out what we wanted to do in order to make a good life for ourselves."

"Growing up in a military household, I knew exactly what I wanted to do," he said. "I wanted to join the Army."

The very next day Acheampong's father took him and his brothers to the Military Entrance Processing Station where they all made the decision to join the U.S. Army.

After entry into the Army, Acheampong and his brothers each went their separate ways. Acheampong, the oldest of the three, ironically became a cook. The middle brother joined as an infantryman and the youngest became a human resources specialist.

"And that is how I ended up at this very point that I am at now," Acheampong proclaimed.

"The military has been very good for my family and I," he said. "Many people don't like the Army for whatever reasons, but I love it."

Through out his career, Acheampong has served with the 21st Cavalry Replacement Center in Fort Hood, Texas, the 3rd Squadron 4th Cavalry in Hawaii, the 10th Transportation Battery in Fort Eustis, Va., and now with the 44th Signal Battalion in Mannheim.

While serving with 10th Transportation, Acheampong got the opportunity to do something that not many of his peers can say they have done. He deployed to Kuwait and served as the Senior Food Operation Sergeant aboard the TSV-1X, LSV-6 and LSV-4 Army Vessels all based in Fort Eustis, Va.

While at sea, his job was to make sure all the members of the crew were well fed and there was enough food maintained on the vessel to sustain the crew just in case something happened.

"I will never forget that experience," said the cook. "Serving aboard a vessel was definitely one of the highlights of my career."

Some other highlights for Acheampong include, attending culinary arts school, advanced culinary arts school and the Culinary Institute of America.

While serving with the 44th, his team also won the Philip A.

Connelly Runner-up Department of the Army Level Small Category

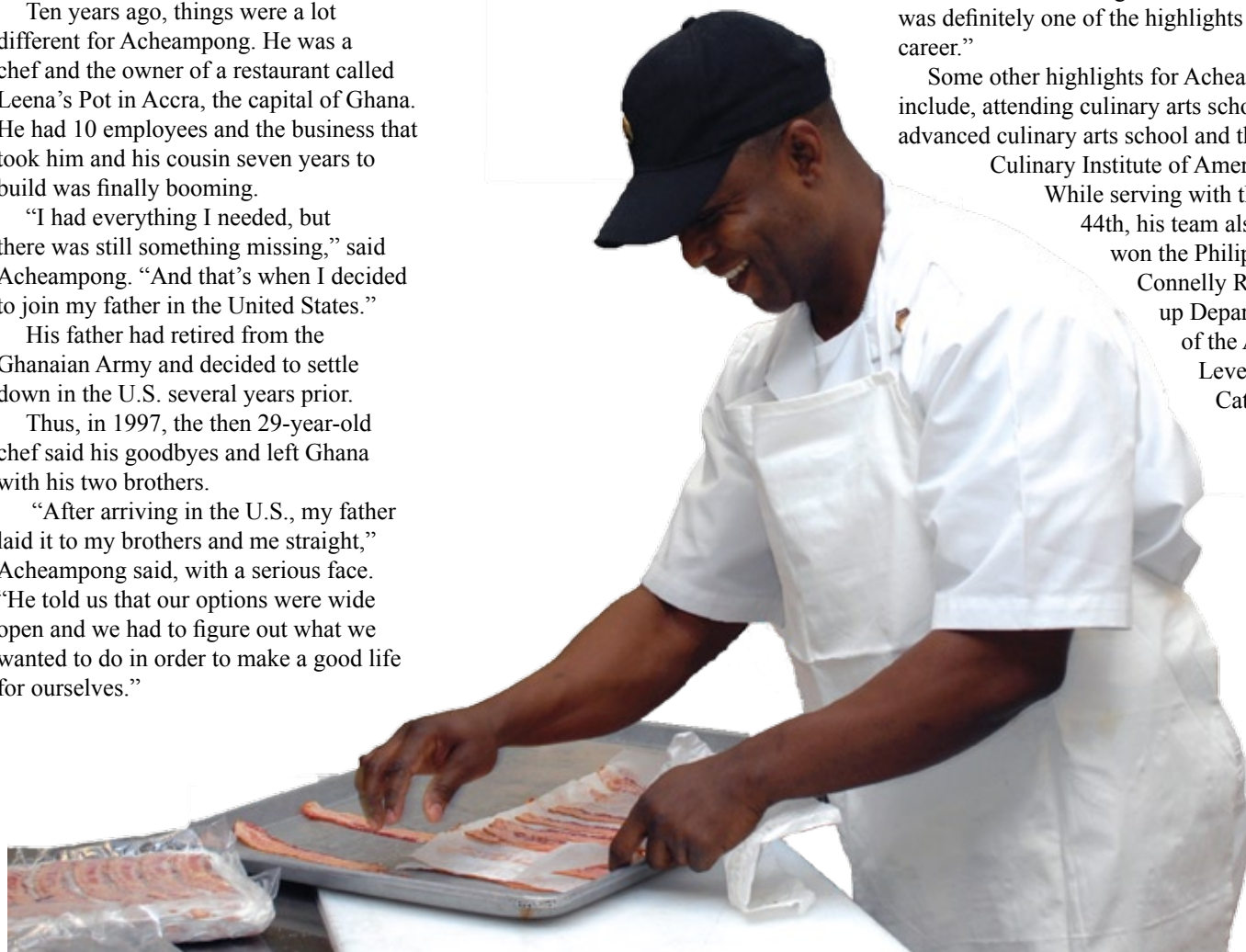


Photo by Spc. Evan Marcy

Staff Sgt. Ulysses Acheampong at work in the 44th Signal Battalion dining facility.



Photo by Kristopher Joseph

Staff Sgt. Ulysses Acheampong, 44th Signal Battalion, is reenlisted by 7th Signal Brigade Commander Col. Randall W. Bland on Benjamin Franklin Village in Mannheim, Germany Aug. 3. He is joined by his wife Joyce and children Denzel (6) and Alexis (4).

“I had everything I needed, but there was still something missing.”

“Acheampong and I often share our experiences of being deployed, we both have a lot in common with the way we think,” said Hulen. “If I had a choice, let there be no doubt about it, I would definitely chose to deploy with him.”

“I believe that it really says a lot about a person when someone can say I want a guy like this to have my back when we’re in a tough situation. And that’s how I feel about him,” said Thomas.

Acheampong is married to Joyce Amoah also from Ghana, West Africa. He has three children, Stacy, 10, Denzel, 6, and Alexis, 4.

“I believe that anything worth having is worth working hard for, therefore I will continue to work hard so that my children can have all the things in their life I that never had,” said Acheampong.

2006 award for food service.

“Acheampong is dedicated to the dining facility,” said Staff Sgt. Thomas I. Hulen, assistant dining facility manager for the 44th. “He knows his job and is very competent.”

“When I first got here in March Acheampong was the DFAC manager,”

said Hulen. “I was surprised at how well he filled that higher position and handled all those civilians and children that we serve day in and day out.”

While serving as the DFAC manager for seven months, Acheampong and his crew successfully fed more than 70,000 hungry Servicemembers, Family Members and civilians.

Connecting Memories



Photo courtesy of USAG Mannheim PAO

Jasmine Oliver sings the national anthem at the Mannheim High School 2007 graduation ceremony.

Kristopher Joseph
5th Signal Command, PAO

One of the proudest moments of any parent's life is watching their child graduate from high school. But being a deployed United States military parent seemingly makes it a bit challenging to watch sons or daughters walk across the stage with their diplomas.

The 5th Signal Command, headquartered in Mannheim, Germany, along with help from United States Army, Europe and Department of Defense Dependents Schools in Europe, is leading the charge in allowing Soldiers and civilians to stay "connected" to their children during important occasions.

It all started back in the summer of 2003 during Operation Iraqi Freedom I when General Dynamics broadcasted a graduation ceremony from a high school in Wiesbaden, Germany to military parents deployed with the 1st Armored Division through video-teleconferencing. The next year, 5th Signal Command, USAREUR's communication arm, took over and assumed an ever-growing task.

"It was a logistical nightmare," remarked Angela Fobbs, 5th Signal's enterprise and data networks branch chief, in regards to the command's first attempt at broadcasting the DoDDS graduations in 2004. A hurdle was having to piece together "in-house" and "off-the-shelf" equipment and then making sure the equipment was set up properly in the high schools and in sometimes remote and dangerous locations downrange.

DoDDS provided representatives from each school to work hand-in-hand with 5th Signal to ensure the graduations were properly captured.

The next challenge was making sure that the deployed parents would be able to break away from their missions and get to the sites where the video streams were being held. "A huge amount of coordination with DoDDS and unit support downrange was needed to pull this off," said Fobbs. "In the end it all worked out because everyone at all levels felt it was a worthy cause."

In 2004, 5th Signal had covered mostly DoDDS graduations

in Germany for the 1st Infantry Division, but when 2005 rolled around, the command upped the ante again. "The feedback from the previous two years was so positive that we had to broaden the scope," said Fobbs. The program in 2005 was truly a multi-national, joint effort, allowing parents deployed or on temporary duty in 15 countries around the world from all services stationed in and around the USAREUR footprint to watch their children graduate. 5th Signal, paired with USAREUR G6, contracted a video-streaming broadcast company to help achieve this immense effort.

The advent of employing a contracted company proved to be a leap forward in allowing a greater visibility for the graduations, said Fobbs. Instead of gathering the parents to only a few designated locations downrange, parents today are able to use just about any internet-connected computer in their area to tap into a special video-streaming website just for viewing the graduations.

Throughout 2006 and 2007, the success continues as even more capabilities have been added to give deployed parents a memorable experience. 5th Signal, through a new contract, has upgraded to a website that allows each high school to record video shout-outs which give thanks to all servicemembers serving in austere environments. "It's a nice 'pre-game' show that parents can watch as they are waiting for the graduations to begin," said Fobbs. Another recently added feature is that servicemembers can download the graduation as a podcast or as a recorded video stream and watch the graduations on their personal media devices if they are not able to see them live.

As technology moves forward, 5th Signal Command, USAREUR and DoDDS, are using the latest resources to not only help win our nation's wars, but to also provide a morale booster to military parents and children who find themselves separated by deployments.



Photo courtesy of 332nd Expeditionary Services Squadron

Air Force Lt. Col. Benjamin F. Ward, Commander of the 332d Expeditionary Services Squadron, watches his child's high school graduation in Ramstein, Germany from Balad Air Base, Iraq.



Staff Sgt. Dwight Porter, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Signal Brigade, hands out schedules for waiting students on the first day of school at Mannheim High School.

2nd Signal Brigade heads back to school

**Story and Photo by
Sgt. Elizabeth Sheridan**

5th Signal Command, PAO

Armed with stacks of schedules, maps, and computer-user agreements, Soldiers from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Signal Brigade invaded the world of teenagers at the Mannheim High School located in Benjamin Franklin Village.

Set up at four tables, one for each grade, the Soldiers passed out schedules and computer-user agreements to incoming students. They also distributed maps for those new to the school or a particular section of the building.

“We’re here to demonstrate support to the school,” said Capt. Kevin Methany, 2nd Signal’s HHC commander. “We want to show them (students) that the military is here, not just to do our jobs but to help the community out as well.”

The HHC sponsors this particular high school, filling in any gaps and providing as much help as they can whenever the unit commander gets a call for Soldier support.

In October, 2nd also hosted a college fair with over 400 colleges and universities represented. Seminars and workshops were held that helped prepare students for college curriculums

and how to apply for scholarships and financial aid. Computers with internet were also made available to allow students and parents to visit college and university web sites.

“Anything that the high school needs, we help them with,” said Staff Sgt. Dwight Porter, HHC, 2nd Signal. “We do the best we can to assist with whatever requirements they have.”

The high school staff of approximately 40 personnel appreciates the help that 2nd provides. On the first day of school, the 12 Soldiers from the brigade filled a spot that 12 of the faculty otherwise would have filled, explained Valerie Lysaught, educational technician at the high school.

“This really helps the teachers out,” said Lysaught. “It allows the kids to have staff greet them at the door or help them navigate the hallways; we really appreciate and value the Soldiers being here.”

The kids at the high school recognize the Soldiers helping out as well.

“It’s really nice that they volunteer their time at our school,” said Jennifer Amos, a senior at MHS. “They are giving back to the community.”

Honoring



Photo by Sgt. Jonathon Gray

Eula Pitts, widow of Capt. Riley Pitts, revealed the new “CPT Riley Pitts Way” street on Funari Barracks during its dedication ceremony May 24. Pitts was assisted by Brig. Gen. Dennis L. Via, former commander, 5th Signal Command, and Lt. Col. Jeffrey Fletcher, U.S. Army Garrison Mannheim commander, while her two children Stacie and Mark looked on.

Spc. Evan Marcy *5th Signal Command, PAO*

A street on Funari Barracks in Mannheim, Germany was named Capt Riley Pitts Way on May 24, in honor of the first African-American officer to receive the Medal of Honor in the Vietnam War. The dedication ceremony, conducted by Brig. Gen. (P) Dennis L. Via, former commanding general, 5th Signal Command, was attended by Pitts’ widow Eula, daughter Stacie and son Mark.

Pitts was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously for exceptional heroism

while serving as a company commander of 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry, during an airmobile assault in 1967. He was initially assigned as a public information officer, but upon request was put in command of a combat unit. On Oct. 31, Pitts’ unit arrived on the ground and encountered overwhelming enemy fire from three directions. Without hesitation Pitts maneuvered his unit to place effective suppressing fire and allow friendly artillery to engage the enemy positions.

Under extreme fire his unit assaulted enemy bunkers while Pitts personally killed Viet Cong in the charge until he was mortally wounded.

Pitts was scheduled to redeploy back to the U.S six weeks before his death. The medal was presented to his family a year after his death by President Lyndon B. Johnson.

“I don’t have words to express how proud I am today,” said Stacie (Pitts) McGill during the ceremony.

A Hero

Right: Eula Pitts (right) and her children Stacie and Mark stand before the Medal of Honor May 24 in the 5th Signal Command historical room earned by their late husband and father Capt. Riley Pitts during the Vietnam War.



Photo by Sgt. Jonathon Gray

Left: President Lyndon B. Johnson presented the Medal of Honor to Mrs. Eula Pitts who accepted it on behalf of her posthumous husband, Capt. Riley Pitts, on December 10th, 1968



U.S. National Archives photo

When 5th Signal Command relocated to Mannheim, Germany in 1996, the headquarters building was named Pitts Hall also in honor of Capt. Pitts. Via had wanted to rekindle the legacy and the history of Pitts within the Mannheim community.

“Freedom has always been a very expensive thing,” Via said while reciting a quote from Martin Luther King, Jr. “How true this quote rings for me each day as I

pass Captain Pitts’ portrait and the photo of his family.”

The Pitts family was escorted by personnel from 5th Signal and U.S. Army Garrison Mannheim through Pitts Hall and into 5th Signal’s historical room to view Pitts’ Medal of Honor and to attend a panel discussion with Mannheim community members to discuss the Family’s trials and tribulations in overcoming Pitts’ death and keeping his memory alive.

“I don’t know how many similar situations or other heroic acts have been left buried in the memories of those he led, how many grenades he stopped, how many lives he saved, but I do know this: Captain Riley Pitts truly embodied all that is great about a United States Soldier. Soldiers we are privileged to lead and serve with in today’s Army,” said Via.

Dragon Warrior



1



2



3



4



5

1. Soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Signal Brigade, perform during a ceremony recognizing the 2007 5th Signal Command NCO and Soldier of the Year. 2. Brig. Gen. Susan Lawrence, commander, 5th Signal Command, places the Signal Regimental Association's Brevet Colonel Award on Mannheim Police President Knut Feldmann at a Mannheim police station. The award was given to him to recognize his contributions to the 5th Signal Command and the Mannheim military community. 3. Two children place bean bags through a wooden cut-out of a ghost during a Halloween Fun Fest held on Funari Barracks at Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 5th Signal Command. The fest was sponsored by HHC's Family Readiness Group and boasted a variety of games, a haunted house and boo-licious treats. 4. Col. David A. Atcher, G-4, 5th Signal Command, presents Chief Warrant Officer James A. Jackson, right, with a framed version of "The Volunteer" to honor Jackson's 43-year commitment to the Army during a farewell dinner for Jackson held at the Village Pavilion on Patrick Henry Village.

Snapshots



6



7



8



9



5. Col. Joseph Brendler, commander, 2nd Signal Brigade, and Edward Wilson, U.S. Army Garrison Mannheim, talk to Mannheim High School students about Cornell University at the 4th Annual College Night held at MHS on Benjamin Franklin Village. 6. Lt. Col. Kris Kramarich, commander, 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion, and Command Sgt. Maj. Earl Allen, 44th ESB, uncash the colors during a Transfer of Authority ceremony held on Victory Base in Baghdad, Iraq. 7. Brig. Gen. Susan S. Lawrence, commanding general, 5th Signal Command (2nd from left), together with the Mayor of Wissembourg, a local government official, and members of the French National Police, render salutes on Armistice Day (Veterans Day) to honor fallen Soldiers during a wreath laying ceremony at the city's war memorial. 8. Brig. Gen. Susan Lawrence, commander, 5th Signal Command, reenlists Spc. Maureen Walz from the 72nd Signal Battalion at the Wiesbaden Army Airfield. 9. Command Sgt. Maj. Ronald J. Desjardins, Army CIO/G-6, briefs Soldiers of the 39th Signal Battalion during a visit to the battalion's area of operation in Belgium.

Army vows to bolster support for Families

FORT KNOX, Ky. (Army News Service, Oct. 17, 2007) - Senior leaders signed the Army Family Covenant today and pledged to support Soldiers' Families while they defend the nation.

Secretary of the Army Pete Geren, Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. George W. Casey Jr. and Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston signed the covenant in a ceremony at the Fort Knox Community Center.

Casey said similar signings will occur at each Army installation, recognizing that while Soldiers may be the strength of the nation, their strength is in their Families.

"The health of our all-volunteer force, our Soldier-volunteers, our Family-volunteers, depends on the health of the Family. The readiness of our all-volunteer force depends on the health of the Families," said Mr. Geren. "I can assure you that your Army leadership understands the important contribution each and every one of you makes. We need to make sure we step up and provide the support Families need so the Army Family stays healthy and ready."

Mr. Geren noted that the Army, entering its seventh year of conflict in Afghanistan, is in its third longest war, and longest with an all-volunteer force, after the Revolution. This brings unique and unexpected stressors, he said.

Gen. Casey said the Army wants to provide Soldiers and their Families with a level of support commensurate with their level of

service, and the covenant is in direct response to concerns from Army Families. They are concerned about funding and support for Family programs, physical and mental healthcare, housing, education and childcare and employment opportunities for spouses.

The covenant represents a \$1.4 billion commitment in 2008 to improve quality of life for Army Families. He said Army leadership is working to include a similar level in the budget for the next five years.



Brig. Gen. Susan Lawrence, commander, 5th Signal Command, and 5th's Command Sgt. Major Roderick Johnson, sign an Army Family Covenant in front of Mannheim military community members Nov. 2 that represents the Army's new commitment to provide greater overall support to Army Families worldwide.

In honor of the 50th Anniversary of Signal in Europe, 5th Signal Command will proudly host the following events in March 2008 to commemorate this historic occasion:



March 15

- 2008 Signal Regimental Ball

March 17

- All Hands VTC: State of the Command
- Junior Leader Forum

March 18

- Command-Wide Organization Day

March 19

Golf Tournament

March 20

- Historic Tableau and Joint Coalition Signal Day

For more information contact the 5th Signal Public Affairs Office at DSN (314)-380-5024, CIV (0)621-730-5024 or email NETC-SEC-PA@eur.army.mil.

From Your CSM

Dear Soldiers and civilians of 5th Signal Command,

I want to first thank all of you for such a smooth transition as we welcomed our new commander, Brig. Gen. Susan S. Lawrence to the 5th Signal Command team. A new commander introduces fresh ideas and innovations. We as Soldiers and civilian employees cannot allow ourselves to become complacent or side tracked as we apply changes. We must continue to perform and execute all of our missions and tasks to the Dragon Warrior standard.

Brig. Gen. Lawrence has asked us to focus on "The First Digital Mile" and warrior tasks and drills. The meaning reaches as far as data can be transmitted. It is the idea that anywhere the Army goes, communications are indispensable and Signal Soldiers are essential. Any element, from a division to the smallest operational unit has to be able to communicate. The signal regiment, led by Dragon Warriors in Europe, answers the call, enabling warfighters to fight wars efficiently and safely.

In achieving success at the "First Digital Mile", we must continue to concentrate on basic soldiering skills. Leaders, emphasize warrior tasks, battle drills and lead by example by ensuring your own proficiency. Soldiers, take these tasks seriously and master them.

In terms of retention, I have two points. One, congratulations for the great job on retention in FY07. We met or exceeded all of our retention goals. I want to thank the Soldiers who stayed on our Army team and the leaders who inspired them. Second, junior and senior NCOs, I need your help. Please assist me by being a strong example for our younger Soldiers. Show them everything the Army has to offer and continue to find new ways to challenge them and keep them interested.

As we embark upon another winter we must remember winter safety. Leaders, continue to train and counsel your Soldiers on the importance of winter safety as you have done in years prior. Soldiers, it is ultimately your responsibility to take care of yourself, your Family and your brothers and sisters in arms. Look out for one another and don't become a casualty of the cold throughout the holiday season.

Remember to engage in "Oak Tree counseling." Superiors, talk to your subordinates. Know what they are doing in their free time. Know their families and their situations. Don't just be in-office leaders. Remember Soldiers are Soldiers 24-7; therefore leaders are leaders 24-7.

Finally, Soldiers of 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion have gone out the door and landed with boots on the ground in Iraq. Keep these Soldiers and their Families in your thoughts and prayers, not only for the holidays, but until they return.

Have a happy and safe holiday season. I'm honored to be on your team.

Dragon Warriors - Army Strong!



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roderick D. Johnson".

Roderick D. Johnson
Command Sergeant Major, USA
5th Signal Command





Army Strong

