

5th Signal Command



ECHO

Winter 2009

Dragon Warriors



44th ESB:

A Holiday Homecoming



ECHO



CONTENTS



44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion Command Sgt. Maj. Earl Allen surveys the Iraqi landscape during a site visit to signal units supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom.

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FROM THE CG



UNCLASSIFIED

Soldiers, Civilians, Contractors, and Family Members,

This past year we wrote another successful chapter in our long history as the communications arm of USAREUR / 7th Army. There was no better way to close out 2008 than to welcome home the "Outstanding" 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion from a 15-month deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. I must also extend a heart-felt thank you for the strength and support of Family Members and friends who supported their loved ones through the hardship. To all the heroes of the 44th, I cannot tell you how proud I am of the service and sacrifice you gave to our country and Families. Job well done!

2009 will be "a year of opportunity" for 5th Signal Command. Moving forward, my overall command vision is to become the single IT provider in Europe. I am confident that we will realize this through the vigilant hard work and talent of our Dragon Warrior Family. A major step in the process will be to further the implementation of the Network Service Center construct across the theater. Providing this single point of entry for the theater will allow us to afford our customers an efficiency of service never seen before in the signal world.

Also on the horizon is the move of our headquarters and base of operations to the Wiesbaden Army Airfield. This is a significant change, but more so, a key "opportunity" for us to pave the way for the future of 7th Army. I want to stress that the well-being of our Dragon Warriors and Families is my number one priority during this important transition.

This edition of the ECHO takes a look at the recent success stories of the 44th ESB during their time downrange and even while on leave. You will also find some articles of personal and unit accomplishments that have highlighted our command on a local and global level. Other stories focus on our host nation and NATO support and introduce programs and initiatives that will streamline our operations and processes to better serve our valued customers.

Training will be another large focus in 2009 as the 72nd ESB and other units prepare to deploy as our tactical contributions to the War on Terror. Bridging the tactical and strategic worlds, exercise Austere Challenge will validate the power of the NSC construct not only for USAREUR / 7th Army, but for the joint, multi-national community in general.

As always, take every opportunity in between missions to enjoy the amenities of our host nations and spend quality time with your Families and friends. I am so fortunate to lead the Army's premier signal command and am continuously humbled by all of your abilities and talents. As a Dragon Warrior Family and team, we will continue to set the standard in the Signal Corps for years to come.

DRAGON WARRIORS - ARMY STRONG!

Jeffrey G. Smith, Jr.
Brigadier General, USA
Commanding

United States Army Europe / 7th Army Commander Gen. Carter Ham spent the better part of a day in November 2008 visiting 5th Signal Command in Mannheim, Germany. He was given the “Dragon Warrior” perspective of signal operations in Europe by 5th Signal’s commanding general Brig. Gen. Jeffrey G. Smith, Jr., as well as command, brigade and battalion staff members.

Smith introduced the Network Service Center construct to Ham and explained the benefits of 5th Signal working towards becoming the single IT provider in Europe.

Ham was also given a tour of the 72nd Expeditionary Signal Battalion on Taylor Barracks where he was shown Joint Network Node equipment and heard Soldiers explain how it extends the network for warfighters.

“When you look at all the technological changes, you see a serious shift in culture. To take that in its whole is extremely complex. We can easily get captured by the technology and ignore the culture,” said Ham.

“We should always remember it is about the people and technology is the enabler.”

A FOUR STAR VISIT



Staff Sgt. Jonathon Gray

Gen. Carter Ham, commander, United States Army Europe / 7th Army is given a tour of Joint Network Node equipment by members of the 72nd Expeditionary Signal Battalion on Taylor Barracks in Mannheim, Germany.

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Front cover: 1st Lt. Will Huerth kisses his 9-month-old son, Lochlan, and Sgt. Francisco Cardoso is kissed by his wife, Sandra, on Christmas Day (2008) during a redeployment ceremony for the 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion at the Sullivan Gym in Mannheim, Germany. Photo by LeAnne MacAllister.

Back cover: Members of the 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion climb a signal tower on Joint Base Balad, Iraq to install communication equipment during their 15-month deployment. Photo by Spc. Evan D. Marcy. Graphic illustration by Sgt. Brandon Spragins.

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SPC EVAN D. MARCY

44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion

Soldiers who volunteer in the U.S. Army knowingly make a sacrifice for their country. Whether it is sacrificing time with their family, personal comforts, or even their life, the duty of a Soldier eventually requires sacrifice in some way or another. Although, certain Soldiers go beyond that call of duty and give more.

Spc. Timothy Roy from 5th Signal Command's C Company, 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion, has made it his personal endeavor to sacrifice his time and money to help those in need.

During his two-week rest and recuperation leave while serving a 15-month deployment in Iraq, Roy, a New Hampshire native, along with his parents, volunteered his time preparing and serving meals at a local soup kitchen/shelter for the homeless called New Horizons for New Hampshire, Inc. He also donated \$1000 to the soup kitchen and got a large corporation to match his contribution as well. "My parents always taught me to put others before myself," said Roy.

Roy also got involved with the Make-A-Wish Foundation by donating \$3000 to grant a wish that was tied to his own interests in computers. His donation was matched up with a 17-year-old girl with the life-threatening inflammatory disease Lupus. She used the money to buy much needed computer equipment that allows her to continue her education from home.

"What Spc. Roy did was really remarkable, and shows how much of a good guy he really is. Soldiers usually take deployment money and spend it on themselves. I was surprised by how much money came out of his pocket to donate since he's just an E-4," said 1st Sgt. John Willis, C Company, 44th ESB.

"I figured if people saw me giving back, it would encourage them to do the same," said Roy. "When they see a Soldier trying to give back, when they are already selflessly serving their country, they want to be a part of it as well."

"To know that you can make a profound difference in someone's life is a wonderful feeling. I got a letter of thanks from the first child and her mother that I sponsored (through Make-A-Wish) and she said she was moved to tears by my kindness. There's no feeling like that and



Courtesy photo

During his two-week rest and recuperation from his deployment with the 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion, and his volunteer work at a soup kitchen owned by New Horizons for New Hampshire, Spc. Marcy has made contributions such as the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

it's hard to put in words how that made me feel," said Roy.

While Roy was watching a Christmas special on the television show, *Orange County Choppers*, the crew made a bike for the Make-A-Wish foundation and had kids come on the show. "You could see the magic of it all light up their eyes. I knew then that was an organization I wanted to be involved in," said Roy.

This year, Roy is financially sponsoring another wish through the foundation and was able to get Macy's department store to also contribute. Together they are

providing a girl whose health requires her to receive weekly treatments at a hospital a place to relax. "We're giving her the room makeover of her dreams. She's always shared a bedroom and her older sister just moved out, so were making her a place she can call her own," said Roy.

Roy found another way to give back to the community through a classmate from high school who now teaches at an elementary school in Connecticut. During his deployment, Roy and the students have been writing letters back and forth. "It's an educational experience for them

etown Hero



From serving a 15-month deployment in Iraq, Spc. Timothy Roy, C Company, parents James and Lynn Roy prepare cutlery at their local soup kitchen/shelter, Inc. Roy gives much of his personal time volunteering and donating to chari-

because they are learning about Iraq and what the Soldiers are doing here to make things better. They ask the most innocent questions,” said Roy.

They had never met a Soldier before, and Roy was able to make the three-hour drive down to see them while still on R&R leave from Iraq. “I got to spend the day with them answering questions and playing at recesses. It was a great experience. It only takes a few minutes every couple of weeks to write a small letter to them to let them know how things are going. They looked at me with such

awe and I was really touched to be a part of their lives,” said Roy.

Roy’s first deployment was in 1999, while assigned to the 110th Military Intelligence Battalion. They went to Bosnia as part of a North Atlantic Treaty Organization peace-keeping force to help stabilize the country after a conflict with Serbia. At the time, the Soldiers were allowed to go off base.

“There were bullet holes everywhere and I saw a lot of burned-down houses. The kids would come up and ask for money. I talked a lot to our translator

about the country,” said Roy. “The multinational forces and everyone liked us being there, and it felt good. We were down there for a good cause. I’ve spoken to Bosnian forces serving with us here in Iraq and they said it’s gotten a lot better.” Roy said the experience of helping a third-world country was his best time in the Army.

While serving in Iraq, Roy, an IT specialist, was assigned to the Technical Control Facility help desk on Camp Echo, located near Diwaniyah. His main mission was to manage and troubleshoot internet, phones, switches and provide configuration changes throughout the camp. For the first half of his deployment, Roy was at the Regional Embassy Office in Al Hillah, Iraq. There he manned the operations desk booking flights, answering phone calls, monitoring radios, and providing internet support to state department personnel.

Having just reenlisted for five years in February 2008, Roy said he’s had the fortune to work in both the civilian world and the military world. After his first enlistment was over, Roy got married and worked as an Information Technology Technician for Time/Warner Cable and News 10 Now, a 24-hour news station owned by Time/Warner, in Syracuse, NY. After six years of marriage Roy got divorced and decided to leave Time/Warner and reenlist in the Army.

“I feel great about serving in the Army. It is a great place to find direction while meeting people and getting valuable skills. You get out of it what you put into it,” said Roy. “Coming back for me was a chance to meet new people, gain new skills and travel. The Army grew back on me and that’s why I reenlisted.”

“The Provincial Reconstruction Teams the military has in place in Iraq do a great job of helping poverty in Iraq. They go out, meet the people in person, and give back in a real way to these local communities. The PRT team at Camp Echo has a program here to rebuild schools, the local infrastructure, while also giving school children brand new laptops,” said Roy.

For the lives that Roy has touched, he is a one-man PRT going above and beyond the call of duty, making sacrifices and fulfilling his duties, not only to his country but also a deep, personal duty to help out the needy whenever he can.

A Badge of Friendship



Sgt. Mark McClanathan (right), 43rd Signal Battalion, slaps hands with German Airman 1st Class Hans Ettl-brueck, Polycone Air Defense Unit, during a 25-kilometer ruckmarch to earn the German Proficiency Badge. 12 Soldiers from the 43rd marched in the ruckmarch event and will compete in a myriad of other events to include a 200-meter swim, high jump and long jump in mid-February 2009.

**Story and Photos by
STAFF SGT Elizabeth Sheridan**
5th Signal Command, PAO

Leaves crunched underfoot as a group of German and American Soldiers took off with 25-pound rucksacks strapped to their back under an overcast German sky.

12 Soldiers from 5th Signal Command's 43rd Signal Battalion and members of the German air defense unit Polycone, stationed in Bann, marched together Nov. 6 toward receiving the German Proficiency Badge.

The ruckmarch is a portion of the proficiency badge and is split up by age groups and gender. Two Soldiers, based on their gender and age, marched for 25

kilometers with four hours to complete it. The 10 other Soldiers had five hours to complete a 30-kilometer ruckmarch. The proficiency badge is an annual requirement for German units and gave the Soldiers of the 43rd a chance to get out of the office and train in a way their jobs generally do not afford with the added benefit of getting to intermingle with German service members.

"There are many benefits in our company's attempt to qualify for this badge. First, it challenges the Soldiers physically, second, it breaks the monotony of their daily duties," said Capt. Hans Weber, 181st Signal Company commander. "Third, it enables them to set a goal and push themselves to reach that goal, and fourth, it builds unit cohesion."

"I have been here since 2001 and this is my first chance to work with the German military," said Sergeant 1st Class Justin J. Gussler, 43rd Signal Bn. "This was a good opportunity to get on the ground with another unit. It is great for the younger Soldiers to do this early in their careers so they can take it and be able to use it later on."

The team, split up between the 181st Signal Company and the 11th Signal Detachment, trained for a month and a half to ready them for the physical task of the march.

"The biggest challenge was the preparation. When we started doing the four-mile march, it was hard for me to keep up with the pace; by 14 miles, I was able to keep up," said Pvt. Ashley Slason,

43rd Signal Bn., the only female on the team. "It was a really good opportunity to do extra activities outside of the unit."

The preparation offered its own set of rewards.

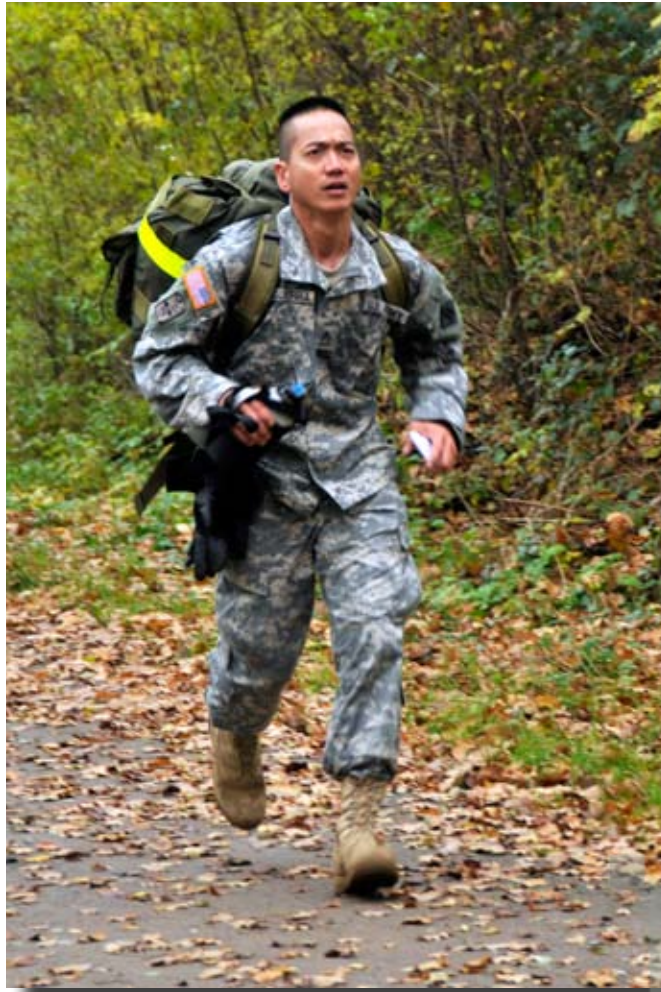
"It was great to look with the Soldiers at what seemed to be an impossible goal, but we followed a set training plan and on the day of the march, they were ready to go, knowing they could do it," said Gussler. "It just shows them you can achieve whatever you set your mind to."

The German service members took something away from the march as well.

"This was my first time hanging out with Americans, it was a good chance to see the different ways our armies work," said German Pvt. 2nd Class Dominic Weber. "It was fun to talk with them as we marched and to see a different side to things."

Besides the ruckmarch, the Soldiers will participate in a myriad of sporting events to include a 200-meter swim, and a high jump in mid-February. They also had the option to qualify on German weapons.

"This is a good opportunity to work in an international environment, to see different nations doing the same thing," said German Sgt. Maj. Johann Gayer.



Sgt. 1st Class Sgt. Emmanuel Esguerra, 43rd Signal Battalion, runs to the halfway point of a 25-kilometer ruckmarch to earn the German proficiency badge. 12 Soldiers from the 43rd Signal Bn. marched in the ruckmarch event split up by age and gender, and competed in a myriad of other events to include a 200-meter swim, high jump and long jump at the end of November 2008.



Members of the 43rd and 53rd Signal Battalions and the German air defense unit Polycone pose during a group photo after completing a 25-kilometer ruckmarch to earn the German Proficiency Badge.

5th Signal Soldier loses 73 pounds in a year



Courtesy photo

Spc. Kristi A. Adams, an administration clerk with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 5th Signal Command, after losing 73 pounds in nearly one year.

SGT MICHAEL J. TAYLOR

5th Signal Command, PAO

“I can recall my first day in the company. I was called to the front of formation to introduce myself and I was very uncomfortable because of the way I looked,” said Spc. Kristi A. Adams, administration clerk with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 5th Signal Command.

Soldiers must be in top condition to uphold their responsibilities and be ready to fight and win our nations battles at a moments notice.

It takes a lot of hard work and dedication to be able to get in shape, stay in good condition and maintain a good level of physical fitness. Spc. Adams showed that dedication as she lost more than 73 pounds in nearly one year.

In the beginning the then 253-pound Adams faced getting kicked out of the Army due to being overweight.

“My 1st Sgt. called me in his office and told me being overweight could put me out of the Army,” said Adams.

“I like my job, I like the Army and I’m proud to be in the Army,” she stated. “Therefore I felt it was my duty to lose weight and get in shape.”

Adams went on to lose eight pounds in that first week, grabbing the attention of her former 1st Sergeant and giving herself more time to get to where she needed to be. But this was only the beginning.

“After the first week she not only reached her goal but exceeded it and I could remember thinking that this was a good start,” said former HHC 1st Sgt. Robert L. Anthony.

To continue to move forward in her pursuit of happiness and good health, Adams realized she needed to do more. She realized she would have to change her entire lifestyle and find things that would help push her to do so.

For Adams, that push would come from

a couple different sources; her family and “a high-speed noncommissioned officer” named Staff Sgt. Karen Derrickson.

“I wanted to lose weight, I wanted to become better at PT, I wanted to excel in the Army and I wanted to live a healthier life for my children,” said the mother of 6-year-old daughter, Jaden, and 2-year-old daughter, Jessica. “But I knew I needed some help.”

“When Staff Sgt. Derrickson came to me and said she wanted to take Adams under her wing and help her lose weight I was kind of skeptical,” said Anthony. “I didn’t know if she would be able to help turn this Soldier around.”

Derrickson’s friendly and motivating approach was just what Adams needed to assist her in her journey.

“She would give me a lot of support, she pushed me and always let me know that I could do it,” Adams said. “When I would lose a significant amount of weight, she rewarded me with small gifts to boost my moral and confidence.”

With Derrickson by her side, Adams changed her life around. She worked out two times a day, totally changed her eating habits and became more active during her free time.

“Before I started my diet, I ate very big meals throughout the day, I barely went to PT in the mornings, I didn’t do any evening workouts and I wasn’t active at all during my free time,” said Adams.

“Now I changed a lot of what I eat, I eat smaller portions, I go to PT and give it my all everyday, I am in the gym in the evenings and I take my children out for walks during my free time,” she said happily. “I totally changed everything in my life.”

Out of all the changes Adams made in her life, the most drastic and difficult change was her eating habits. Going from eating fast food and a lot of junk food all the time to cooking healthy meals at home would reveal a challenge for the 28-year-old Adams.

“Before, Burger King was my best friend, stated Adams. “I liked eating out, eating fast food and a lot of junk food.”

“But then I thought about it and realized that my children were headed on the same track I was on,” she said. “Because they were still young, they basically ate the same things I ate.”

Adams then made the decision to change every thing about the way she ate.

“Now I use my George Foreman Grill

to cook most of my food, I eat a lot of salad and fruits and I don’t eat anything fried anymore,” she said. “Even if my baby wants something like chicken nuggets and French fries, I put them in the oven.”

Adams found another motivation within her to move forward with her quest; she was raised in a military family where standards were always set high.

“My dad was also in the military and my family wishes for me to do good and go farther than he did during his career, stated Adams.

Adams’ father retired from the military as a Sgt. 1st Class after dedicating 20 years of his life to his country.

According to the Center for Disease Control, 300,000 people per year, 25,000 per month, 5,769 per week, 821 per day or 34 per hour lose their lives due to obesity in the United States. Obesity leads to other diseases like cancer and diabetes.

Data from the U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine indicates that 58.4 percent of Soldiers, age 21 and over, are overweight by federal standards, and 36.5 percent of Soldiers in the 20 and under age group do not meet the Body Mass Index standard.

Obesity is considered a disease and it’s plaguing our country and our military. It

takes great dedication and discipline to stay in shape, said Anthony.

“I think that what Adams has accomplished enhances the morale of all the Soldiers in our unit and around her because she is an inspiration,” said the 1st Sgt. “It gives me goose bumps to see a Soldier so dedicated and so loyal to her country and to herself.”

“She’s going to be alright,” said Anthony. “I think she will get promoted and be a great NCO in the years to come.”

“If I could say anything to the Soldiers who are in the situation I was in it would be to never give up and find your own Staff Sgt. Derricksons out there because there are people who are willing to help you,” said Adams.



Spc. Kristi A. Adams when she weighed more than 200 pounds before going on her diet.



Courtesy photo

BRAVING

NEW

HEIGHTS

Story and Photos by
SPC EVAN D. MARCY

44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion

Soldiers are showing bravery in various ways supporting the Global War on Terrorism. While not all are in a direct fight with an enemy, Soldiers deployed with combat support units must also display courage setting up military infrastructures in Iraq.

44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion showed their support by installing satellites in three forward operating bases in order to provide Internet Protocol Radio relays. This effort is part of 44th's overall mission to provide world-class communications support to warfighters in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The set up provides the FOBs with a new way to enable connectivity between internet protocol connections, which are primarily used to communicate between FOBs, with radio frequency communications that are normally used off post. Once the satellites are in place "the radios work just as well as any regular Voice over Internet Protocol system; it just intertwines into the existing network," said Sgt. Joseph R. Chavis, 44th ESB.

The first part of the team's mission was setting up a four-foot parabolic dish on top of a 150-foot tower at Joint Base Balad. This required the Soldiers to climb the tower carrying equipment to the top.

"When you look at a tower it just looks like it is a ladder, but it will work you out, I was sore for the first couple of days the first time I climbed," said Spc. Adam Spoerle, 44th ESB. "You get blisters on your fingers and on your hands; it's pretty difficult."

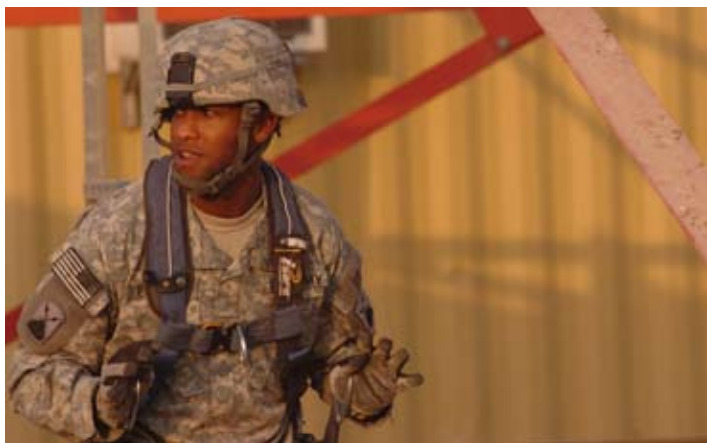
"The physical aspects are pretty tough, although the hardest part is getting the heavier equipment on the ground up to one or two hundred feet," said Chavis.

The climbing presented a set of dangers that took personal courage to overcome.

"There are different dangers climbing up and down those towers," said Spoerle. "You could get muscle failure and fall off, and while at the top, you have to watch out for helicopters and airplanes because the strong winds they produce can blow you off."

Prior to the mission, the team prepared physically and mentally for their task. They received classroom instruction and performed physical training.

"The Soldiers are extremely brave. Within their first day of training they climbed a 110 feet after learning the fundamentals in a classroom environment," said Master Sgt. Angelia Hunter,



Pvt. Justin Hill, A Co., 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion, adjusts his safety straps on a training tower on Camp Victory, Iraq, during a climb on August 23rd, 2008. The familiarization climb was designed to get the Soldiers comfortable with their equipment so they could work freely with their hands. Hill was on the Cable team installing Internet Protocol Radio satellites on top of towers to improve military communications in the Iraqi Theater of operations.

44th ESB.

“We did a lot of dry runs and went through phases of everyday climbing and training that made everybody’s body adjust to what needed to be done and how it was to be done,” said Chavis. “This ensured everyone had a strong working knowledge of what needed to happen once we got on site.”

Chavis and Spoerle made the ascent with a pulley and one end of a rope. “We get the pulley ready, and then we just hand feed the rope down to the ground crew,” said Spoerle. At the ground the Soldiers hook the rope which is tied to the satellite up to a mechanical pulley. “They have one person controlling a rope pulling the tower up, and the other person pulling a rope attached to the dish away from the tower, so that the dish doesn’t touch the tower,” said Spoerle.

“Once the satellite reaches the top we put the mounting brackets on and we mount it up, install the cable, then we adjust it to where the shot is perfect,” added Spoerle. The setup for the shot is considered a direct line of sight, which must be aimed

directly at the receiving satellite which is located on a nearby Forward Operating Base.

The low legacy shot is provided by a redline antennae in the dish on Balad and is being relayed from one FOB to another. “The parabolic antenna is a lot easier than previous systems, you don’t need any manpower,” said Hunter. “You put them in and they sit, you don’t have to take Soldiers from other missions in order to monitor this link.”

The Soldiers have taken more from this experience than physical training. “It is really intense being a climber, it’s a good work out, and it makes you appreciate things a lot more when you’re looking down,” said Spoerle.

“The best and greatest in technological advances are improving the communication infrastructure here in Iraq, but no improvements can be made until brave and courageous Soldiers safely climb a tower and install the radio system,” said Maj. John Harris, 44th ESB executive officer.



Spc. Adam Spoerle, 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion, B Co., looks down at a parabolic dish with a redline antennae as Sgt. Joseph Chavis, C Co., guides it up to him, on Joint Base Balad, September 6th, 2008. Spoerle and Chavis are installing the satellite to enable the inner connectivity between existing Internet Protocol connections with Radio frequency communications.

Left: Sgt. Joseph Chavis, 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion, C Co., tests his straps prior to climbing a tower on Joint Base Balad on September 6th, 2008. Equipment checks prior to the climb were crucial, the straps are the soldiers safety support system enabling them to work freely with their hands.

STRONG AS STEEL

Father and son share long family history of military service



SPC EVAN D. MARCY

44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion

Commitment is more than a part of a Soldier's life. It defines their dedication to honor, integrity, service, duty, and to each other.

Making the commitment to support and defend the Constitution of the United States is something that has been done generation after generation in the Steel family.

In 2008, while on his first deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Sgt. Dante Steel, 319th Military Intelligence Battalion from Fort Bragg,

North Carolina, reunited downrange with his father, 1st Sgt. Demetrius Steel, B Co. 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion, who is on his fifth deployment.

"He is a fourth generation Soldier, so that's what makes it all important," said Demetrius. The progression of being a Soldier in our family goes all the way back to the World Wars and he's just carrying on that torch of tradition within our family."

Dante's grandfather was an Army officer in Vietnam and six of his children have or are currently serving in the Armed Forces. Two of his siblings are Navy

Corpsman and one of Demetrius' brothers is getting ready to go to Afghanistan, and his sister just separated from the Army.

"We influenced each other to continue to do well and to serve our country. You think Steel, you think military, that's how it has always been and hopefully that's how it will always be," said Dante.

Although serving in many different areas, the Steel family has been able to reach out to one another for personal and professional guidance.

"It's like being able to go to a brother or sister, and then turn around and go to them as a noncommissioned officer or as

an officer; as Soldiers we share that bond because we're real tight within our family, and we use that to our advantage," said Dante. "It really helps me out, being able to communicate with my father like that, especially us being deployed together. He's just a phone call or an e-mail away, and then he can give guidance as a 1st sergeant to me as a buck sergeant. It impacts my Soldiers, my job and career progression," he added. "It comes from my father, my uncle, my grandfather and we all talk and it's great to share that bond with them."

Sgt. Steel works as a human resources specialist for his battalion. His duties include administrative work along with being on the battalion's convoy team which goes on logistics missions, delivering equipment and personnel to other out sites.

"I worry about it every time he goes outside the wire, and I make sure that as soon as he gets back in that I'm his first phone call. We still have that father-son relationship. Either way I still have trust in him, his NCOs and his leaders that he's going to be alright. Senior Soldiers take care of junior Soldiers, so I have faith in the system, faith in him, and it works out fine," said 1st Sgt. Steel.

The physical attributes shared between father and son are apparent to anyone who sees the two together. Aside from the similar glasses, similar posture, and similar looks, the two speak the same. They both come across straight forward, energetic, and friendly.

"You have to raise the spirits of the people around you. The ability to successfully motivate Soldiers is the definition of leadership," said 1st Sgt. Steel.

When asked about his own motivation, Sgt. Steel gave credit to his father and other sources. "A lot of it was inherited from him, and a lot of it was from other NCOs that I've had in my last units," said Sgt. Steel.

1st Sgt. Steel is known for his speed in the 44th. He credits being able to run fast by simply doing it every day it.

"He's a natural runner," said Dante. "I'll get him one day when he's retired, old and when his knees are about to buckle. Soon he'll be eating my dust," said Dante jokingly.

Some of the advice that his father has instilled in him is "being proactive not reactive; when your feet hit the ground,

you run and you move," said Sgt. Steel. His father has also taught him that, "Just because your mission might be small, in the big scheme of things, it affects a lot. You have to take everything seriously, just because you might think you're on the worst detail ever, it's for something, and that's the way the Army is set up. The things that they make you do all plays in, it's a bigger puzzle. And your one little piece has a big effect on if that puzzle's completed," said Dante.

Dante grew up in Fayetteville, North Carolina near Fort Bragg, where his father spent 16 years with the 82nd Airborne Division. The value of service was instilled at a young age for Dante, "he knows what it's like to hear a cannon go off in the morning," said Demetrius. When Dante was young, he would put on his child-size army uniform and go to work with his father. When he was around ten years old he would go out on mornings when he didn't have school, and do PT with the unit. "We used to run down 'long street' and anybody that's been on Bragg, is familiar with 'long street.' I've made that hilly run plenty of times," said Dante. "My dad bought me kid-sized PTs, and I'd just go out there and do PT with him just to run around."

Times like that had an effect on Dante's move toward joining the military.

"Every little thing like that has influenced me in joining the military, and it's made it all worthwhile," said Dante. "I don't look back on anything and say I wish I didn't do this; I love every part of it, it's awesome."

In 1985, 1st Sgt. Steel graduated from airborne school, and then earned Jumpmaster status in 1992. As a child, Dante would go out and watch his father jump. "The one jump that I distinctly remember took place when I couldn't have been more than seven years old. We were at Bragg and my mother was there with us as well," began Dante. "Dad said he was going to wave both his hands and kick his feet together, and that's how we would tell it's him. He jumped, and my mother and I were looking up, and we saw everybody leave the bird, and everyone was waving their hands and kicking their feet together, and we looked around saying 'which one is he?'"

"That's the one jump I'll remember. It was just mind boggling seeing that many people fall out of the sky and since then, I knew I wanted to go airborne," said Dante.

In March 2007 Dante Steel graduated airborne school and his father was able to pin his wings on him.

Dante originally joined the reserves, later switching to active duty once his unit was mobilized. He is currently working on his college degree in human resource management. On September 1, 2006, Dante was promoted to sergeant while stationed at Fort Bragg. His father was stationed in Mannheim, Germany. Once getting promoted he called his father immediately.

"I still remember that same day I called him, I had just finished the ceremony, and I woke him up. He thought something was wrong, because of the time difference, and we talked about an hour on the phone," said Dante.

"He's a good Soldier and a good NCO, he's going to go far, regardless of what he does with his career, I'm really proud of him," said 1st Sgt. Steel.

Dante has considered going to Officer Candidate School or Warrant Officer School.

"There's no better feeling than being an NCO though, especially being in the same Corps as my father, uncle, and my grandfather was also an NCO and then became a commissioned officer," said Dante.

"Being an NCO is great, I love it, I love every bit of it," said Dante. "I love working with Soldiers -- not necessarily being in charge of them, but getting my hands dirty with them, getting the mission done, is what it's all about."

Like most young Soldiers, Dante is not sure if he is going to make a career out of the military. "I would have no complaints about doing 20 years, it just all depends on what life has to offer me," he said. "He's doing all the right things to progress further," said 1st Sgt. Steel.

When asked if he had intended for his son to join the military he explained, "you want your kids to go to college, go out there and work in society with the freedoms we're supposed to protect," said 1st Sgt. Steel. "He elected to join and be a protector, which does make it better, for me, in a personal sense. I'm proud of him, very proud of him, especially for being a Soldier and accepting the challenge and doing what he's doing for this global war on terrorism."



Commander, 5th Signal Command (right), Maj. Gen. Susan S. Lawrence, NETCOM commanding general and former 5th Signal commander (center) and Brig. Gen. Jennifer Napper (left), discuss current and future signal endeavors during a week-long summit. Lawrence was a Brigadier General (P) during the time these photos were taken.

Network Enterprise Technology Command / 9th Signal Command, 5th Signal Command, and the 335th Signal Command (Theater) gather in 5th Signal's Murphy Barracks to discuss the current state of the Army's global military signal operations and future endeavors to build a global network enterprise that enables every warfighter.



Kristopher Joseph

KRISTOPHER JOSEPH

5th Signal Command, PAO

5th Signal Command, headquartered on Funari Barracks, hosted a week-long signal summit from Oct. 27 to Oct. 31 with two sister theater signal commands and the Network Enterprise Technology Command / 9th Signal Command (Army) to discuss the current state of the Army's global military signal operations and future endeavors to build a global network enterprise that enables every warfighter.

"This is a historic opportunity," said Maj. Gen. Susan S. Lawrence, NETCOM commanding general and former 5th Signal commander. "We can improve global services by synchronizing our support and replicating our most successful applications." NETCOM operates and defends the Army LandWarNet, which is the service's portion of the Global Information Grid.

Joining Lawrence was Brig. Gen. Jeffrey G. Smith, Jr., commander, 5th Signal Command, the 7th Signal Command (Theater) Commander Brig. Gen. Jennifer Napper with her brigade commanders, command sergeants major and operations officers, and the provisional commander of the 335th Signal Command (Theater) Brig. Gen. James T. Walton.

During the summit, each command gave a command briefing to the summit participants made up of the commands' staff and subordinate brigade leadership. The main points of discussion centered on ways of developing and expanding the Global Network Enterprise Construct and the Network Service Center construct.

The NSC represents the operational dimension of the Army enterprise network within the larger joint enterprise that will provide significant improvements in computer network defense and will consolidate and streamline data and communication bases in order to provide a continuity of services to the warfighter.

One key signal goal of the GNEC is to give warfighters the same data and network capabilities regardless if they are at home station or deployed in an austere environment.

"It is imperative that all theater signal commands work together to truly build a global network enterprise," said Smith.

STAFF SGT ELIZABETH SHERIDAN

5th Signal Command, PAO



Dishes clanked, silverware clinked and sumptuous smells wafted through the air while three judges kept a watchful eye on it all.

72nd Expeditionary Signal Battalion's Army Strong Cafe took first place in the U.S. Army Europe's phase of the Phillip A. Connelly Award competition. The results, announced on August 18, mean the Cafe will represent USAREUR in the small garrison category of the Department of the Army phase of the competition.

"Their discipline, dedication and desire, their will to be first, got them here," said Capt. Sergio Trejo, commander, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 72nd ESB. "Their desire to give our Soldiers, the warfighter, and our civilians the best meal that money can buy got them here. I am very happy for them and proud of this team"

During a breakfast and lunch preparation and service, three judges, two military and one civilian, rated the dining facility on food preparation, sanitation, presentation, and dining facility administration.

This is the second year in a row that the Army Strong Cafe has competed, winning runner up last year. The 44th and 72nd ESB's alternate years on entrance into the competition, with each supporting the other throughout the preparation and judging.

"We are all one team," said Sergeant 1st Class Richard Grays, dining facility manager. "The 44th sent cooks and equipment over to supplement us;



Courtesy photo

Staff Sgt. Derrick Barnes, 72nd Expeditionary Signal Battalion dining facility staff, monitors the line during the USAREUR/7th Army phase of the Phillip A. Connelly Awards competition



Sgt. Jason Sanders, 72nd Expeditionary Signal Battalion, prepares a meal during the USAREUR/7th Army phase of the competition held at the Army Strong Cafe on Taylor Barracks

Courtesy photo

72nd ESB's Dining CAFE HONORS

Battalion dining facility staff, prepares for the Phillip A. Connelly Awards competition outside the Army Strong Cafe Taylor Barracks.



Members of the 72nd Expeditionary Signal Battalion dining facility staff pose for a group shot during the USAREUR/7th Army Phillip A. Connelly Awards competition outside the Army Strong Cafe Taylor Barracks.

we really came together.”

A competition of this caliber requires extensive preparation.

“It took at least a month of preparation,” stated Grays. “From planning the menu, getting our timing down, and setting up the shifts, we really worked hard to get it right.”

According to the DFAC manager, the biggest challenge was working the concept of progressive cooking. “It is getting all of the pieces and parts to come together to get the food out piping hot to the customer, with as little waste as possible,” explained Grays. “It requires you to cook smaller batches, anticipate the need, basically to get another pan in so it is coming out when the last piece from the first batch is served.”

The team is made up of Soldiers and civilians who each have an integral part in the smooth running of the facility and subsequent win.

“It is hard to have so many different people from so many places, with so many different backgrounds come together in one place and gel together,” said Gerald Wharton, responsible for overall sanitation, supplies and rations in the facility. “It really works here though. I couldn’t be in a better place; I am very proud of our team and facility.”

Winning has rewards besides the opportunity to compete Army-wide. “This boosts morale, and the Soldiers want to do their job to the best of their ability,” said Grays. “That is the best reward for me, to watch the young Soldiers get inspired and strive for more. They see what they can do and they want to move to the next level.”

“We have a really good team here, I feel very special to be surrounded by so many proficient, professional cooks,” said Staff Sgt. Bonifacio Magdaleno, 72nd ESB. “It is inspiring and very motivating to come to work everyday.”

“It is the teamwork that got us here,” added Magdaleno.



GETTING TO KNOW IT - TBO

STAFF SGT JONATHON GRAY

5th Signal Command, PAO

An Information Technology need is warranted; approval is granted; a contract is drafted, finalized, and approved; and finally the contract money is awarded and the IT product is now owned by the unit.

All of this process takes place at the individual unit level, and is one way to bring IT assets in to fill a need, but the process can be costly and time-consuming. The U.S. Army Europe / 7th Army Operations Communication Information Systems Information Technology - Theater Business Office (IT-TBO) improves this process by managing the IT contracts throughout the European theater.

This 14-member team has already saved 13.3 million dollars in 2008 by cross-leveling IT resources, reducing duplication, and standardizing services and IT architectures. If a contract exists anywhere in the theater, or a need arises for a new contract, the IT-TBO office has the resources and knowledge to return the fulfilled contract quickly and to specification. They can also consolidate several contracts into one, saving even more money.

"IT Governance is the foundation that empowers the Network Service Center with the resources for delivering premier IT services to the warfighter," said Jacki Garner, deputy director, OP CIS IT-TBO. All of this reduces the annual cost of ownership and operation of the Army's Global Network Enterprise.

The IT-TBO also partners contracts together under one design. For instance, all the separate units that require computers have the contracts combined under the IT-TBO contract environment into one, thus also combining the costs and improving the time needed to complete. This joint acquisition can then be redistributed as needed to those units that require those computers. Assets can also be stored and distributed during "surge" or cross-level needs.

"The IT-TBO's access to a family of IT contracts will create a greater flexibility in meeting changing missions and reduce the risk of a 'one-size-fits-all' solution," said Garner.

Yet IT contract consolidation is only one piece of the design, as all of the IT Cadre will soon be managed under the IT-TBO. The cadre includes Information Management Officers and Information Assurance personnel.



Sgt. Brandon Spragins

Currently, all IT personnel work in every organization of every size. Because of the wide dissemination, it is difficult to maintain common training, goals, or oversight of all the personnel. Additionally, the IT Cadre report only to their current commanders, leaving out the command and control from USAREUR/7th Army OP-CIS.

In the future, under the IT-TBO realignment, all IT Cadre will be centrally managed by the IT-TBO to ensure the common training and goals are met and command and control is aligned under the NSC. This alignment will unify the entire IT cadre, and create a single flow of network operation orders from the



NSC to the cadre personnel in all organizations.

Through this new management, every customer will have the same level of superb support and service, regardless of what size unit or what military location they travel to in the European theater. The cadre will also have a clear reporting authority and responsive channel for all things IT through the IT-TBO and NSC.

Acting as a tie-in between all the different units in the European Theater, the IT-TBO will allow IT assets to be shared, monitored, and maintained. Through this centralized support, the IT-TBO will efficiently keep all the IT in theater in-sync and

ready to support the warfighter.

“The IT-TBO is already a huge success story. It processes improved principles to deliver solutions that synchronize services, increase interoperability, and save money,” said Brig. Gen. Jeffrey G. Smith, Jr., commander, 5th Signal Command and OP-CIS for USAREUR/7th Army. “We are working towards a more efficient collaboration environment in IT.”

REMEMBER THE GREAT

STAFF SGT ELIZABETH SHERIDAN

5th Signal Command, PAO

5th Signal Command participated in the 90th Anniversary of World War I in the Meuse-Argonne area of France for two successive weekends. From September 26 to 28, 2008, the 2nd Signal Brigade provided a color guard for commemorative ceremonies of remembrance. On October 3 and 4, 5th Signal's commanding general, Brig. Gen. Jeffrey G. Smith, Jr., took part in several memorial ceremonies to include one in honor of Medal of Honor winner and WWI hero Sgt. Alvin York.

"It is important for us as a command to participate in these commemorations for the simple reason that we have to remember our roots; to honor the men and woman who came before us," said Smith. "It is also an opportunity to strengthen our relationship with our French comrades by coming together to commemorate such a tragic time in our histories during which both of our countries paid the price for freedom."

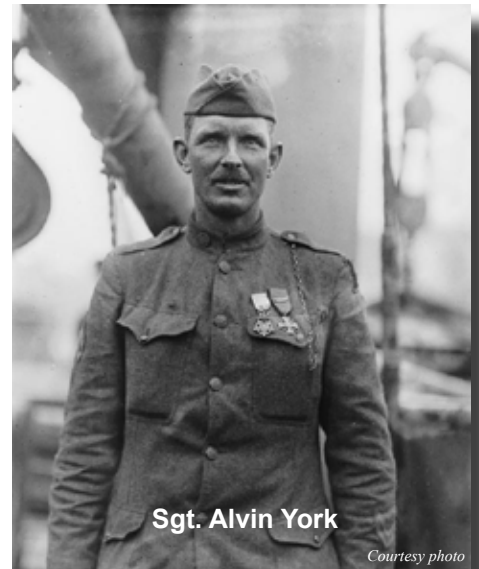
York was a Soldier in the then 82nd Infantry Division when he and 16 others broke through the German line in a hill above the town of Chatel Chehery. After a German machine gun killed or wounded nine of his fellow troops, York took the hill killing 28 German soldiers and eliminating their machine guns. He fought off a bayonet attack and captured a total of 132 German soldiers, effectively breaking the German line and facilitating the complete withdrawal of the Germans from the Argonne.

The ceremonies included the laying of wreaths at various military memorials and significant militaristic sites throughout the French countryside.

The event also included remarks from members of the French government.

"We are here to perpetuate the memory of the Soldiers especially the American ones that died in this land of France," said Sous Prefect Michael Richard. "We stand unified with shared solidarity and commitment to democracy and liberty."

Brig. Gen. Jeffery G. Smith, Jr. commanding general, 5th Signal Command, gives remarks at a ceremony commemorating Sgt. Alvin York, York is a Medal of Honor winner, and with his men, was responsible for breaking the German line above the town prompting the withdrawal of German troops from the Argonne.



Sgt. Alvin York

Courtesy photo



Staff Sgt. Elizabeth Sheridan

BERING AT WAR



Staff Sgt. Elizabet Sheridan

Brig. Gen. Jeffrey G. Smith, Jr. (far left), commanding general, 5th Signal Command, together with the Mayor of Fleville, Sgt. Maj. (Ret.) Ryan, a former member of the 16th Regiment, and members of the French government salute the 16th Regiment memorial located in the town center during a ceremony commemorating the actions of the American Soldiers who liberated the town during WWI.

World War I

Signal Corps Fast Facts

Signal Soldier provided all meteorological and weather forecasts for the Army.

The Signal Corps erected nearly 2,000 miles of telephone poles and laid 44,000 miles of lines.

The corps used approx. 600 pigeons in France to deliver messages.

Signal Soldiers supplied battlefield intel through hot air balloon companies.

The Signal Corps enlisted 700 women, 332 of whom served overseas as bilingual telephone operators.

The corps provided all military photo and video documentation of the war.

THE



DIMHRS REVOLUTION

KRISTOPHER JOSEPH

5th Signal Command, PAO

“**Y**ou say you want a revolution...” sang the Beatles back in the late 1960s. In the very near future, the way the U.S. Army and 5th Signal Command run their personnel and finance systems will be answering this tune with a resounding “yes.”

The upheaval will be done with a web-based tool called the Defense Integrated Military Human Resource System, also known as DIMHRS.

As a COTS or commercial off-the-shelf system, DIMHRS will effectively consolidate and/or eliminate 67 of about 100 personnel and finance systems that have shown to have too many redundancies, said Staff Sgt. Ralph Venisee from U.S. Army Europe / 7th Army G1.

Back in late 1995, a military personnel information management task force was created to find the best strategy for supporting military personnel and pay functions. The task force found that the Department of Defense had too many service-unique systems that caused functional shortcomings and high maintenance costs. It recommended that the DoD transition to

one all-service and all-component system that uses that same core software. DIMHRS was the answer.

“We have to transform the way we do personnel,” said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Lisa Henderson, 5th Signal’s deputy chief, military personnel division. Henderson speaks in part about the Army’s push to go “paperless” with DIMHRS, which will significantly reduce the crucial issue of time when it comes to completing personnel actions.

For example, currently Soldiers must submit a Department of the Army Form 4187 to request a personnel action such as applying for Officer Candidate School or to request a curtailment of their current tour. Once a 4187 is filled out with all the supporting documentation, it goes on a long journey from the personnel clerk’s inbox, the company commander’s desk, and often times it must then be driven to another unit miles away to get another round of signatures before the action is approved or denied, explained Henderson.

“Most Soldiers at one time or another have felt the frustration

of not knowing the status of their action or not knowing whose desk the action is sitting on,” said Henderson. “On DIMHRS, most actions will be all digital which gives Soldiers the ability to personally track the routing of their action as it goes from one person to another.”

Another new feature is that DIMHRS will allow Soldiers the “self-service” ability to make additions or changes to their personnel records through the online system where previously a Soldier would have to make an appointment with their personnel administration center and sit down with a clerk to update their records, said Henderson.

This is useful if a Soldier for example is preparing a packet to go to a promotion board and wants to enter the promotion points received from an award. They can simply log on to their DIMHRS profile, scan in their award, and their promotion points will be automatically updated.

DIMHRS will also support National Guard and Reserve Soldiers by creating one record per service member that follows them across components and branches, reducing payroll and in-processing errors.

DIMHRS will also usher in a terminology culture change. Since DIMHRS is based off of a civilian enterprise application software called Peoplesoft, terms such as Leave and Earning Statement will change to pay slips, “leave” will be “absence hours” and so on. Henderson said military folks who are used to dealing with the Defense Travel System will find “a little taste” of that in DIMHRS.

The Army was selected as the first service to test and implement DIMHRS, but it is also finding its way into the other services as well which Henderson reports is another initiative in the military personnel world to go joint or “purple.” Once fully implemented, DIMHRS will be the largest human resources information management system in the world, according to the DIMHRS Web site, www.dimhrs.mil.

“It’s simply going to make life better for Soldiers,” said Henderson.

All service members will receive a “DIMHRS 101” to learn about the system before full implementation. The briefing can also be found on the Army Human Resources Web site: <https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/ArmyDIMHRS/index.html>.

- **Faster Personnel Actions**
- **Streamlined Military Pay**
- **All Service and Component functionality**
- **Web-based paperless information management**
- **Self-service options for service members**

Source: www.dimhrs.mil



LEADING WITH *Style*

STAFF SGT ELIZABETH SHERIDAN

5th Signal Command, PAO

Representing the Hispanic community for the United States Army, Sgt. 1st Class Dolores Rivera of the 52nd Signal Battalion accepted the 2008 Latina Distinguished Service Award during the National Latina Symposium on Sept. 5 sponsored by Latina Style Magazine.

After the receipt of this award came an invitation to the White House to listen to Pres. George W. Bush's speech on Hispanic heritage. On Oct. 9, 2008, Rivera and her fellow awardees from the three other military services journeyed to Washington D.C. and listened to Bush speak about their comrades in ethnicity.

"I never in my wildest dreams thought this could happen to a girl from a small town in Texas near the Mexican border," said Rivera. "This experience was very memorable and rewarding and I will always treasure it."

The magazine and the principal director from the Office of Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity, Department of Defense, came together to give the award out to the representatives selected in each branch of the military at a ceremony. The award ceremony and symposium are in their fifth consecutive year, always landing in September.

"It was an honor just to be nominated and an even bigger honor to actually win," said Rivera. "I am still in shock, I feel like there are other Latinas out there that deserve this."

According to the magazine's website, the symposium is a one-day event specifically geared towards Latina empowerment. The goal is to ascertain, through round-table discussions, as well as in-depth surveys, the status of the Latina professional working woman in the United States.

Rivera attended with the event with her sister and her battalion commander, Lt. Col. James Pugh. "She inspires great leadership amongst all whom she works with. We are very fortunate to have such a talented and dedicated NCO in this unit," said Pugh.

Maj. Thomas Moran, executive officer, 52nd Signal, worked on Rivera's packet while she was on leave. The battalion received a tasker and "her name jumped to mind; it was a no-brainer," said Moran. "She is an outstanding NCO; she is skilled in her field,



Courtesy photo

and she doesn't hold onto the information; she shares it with those around her."

"She is in the ranks of one of the best NCOs I have ever worked with. It's her professionalism, her attitude, and her care for her subordinates and peers," said Moran.

Rivera is taking the win in stride.

"I am not the type of person to talk about the things that I do," said Rivera. "I do what I am told; I do what needs to be done to complete the mission."

The symposium did have an effect on her though.

"The trip was an eye-opener; I realized that I did something outstanding," Rivera said. "I am proud that I have accomplished so much."

Her win and mentorship has impacted her Soldiers.

"She was a great mentor, a great coach," said Staff Sgt. Carlos Flores, European Command, J-4. Flores worked with Rivera from almost three years. "She always led by example; she was fair across the board," he said. "She followed the NCO creed, treated her Soldiers with respect, and reinforced the Army values."

"I am surprised she didn't get it earlier. I am extremely proud of her," Flores added.

Her impact is also felt in her unit.

"I see her as a positive role model for both males and females, regardless of background," said Moran.

When asked what she tries to impart on her Soldiers and

daughter, it is “to have respect for yourself and others, be true to yourself, and be honest with yourself.”

Rivera currently works at 52nd Signal as NCO in charge of the personnel office in the battalion. She is from Weslaco, Texas and has served in the Army for 19 years. She is a single mother with a daughter Reyana, 13.

Rivera was born as the second child of four. She grew up in Texas and traveled in the summer to Georgia and Michigan to work by picking fruits and vegetables.

After high school, Rivera went to college. While sitting in her Introduction to Business class at Pan American University, now the University of Texas at Pan American, Rivera asked herself a few questions: Do I really want to do this for the next four years? What do I want out of life? Her answer was “I don’t know.”

Rivera knew she wanted an education, but did not know what field to study. She then received a call from an Army recruiter. She went down to the recruiting station and listened to what he had to say.

At 19 years old, Rivera joined the Army on August 18, 1989 as a military personnel management specialist. Her family was very surprised at her decision to join the military. “They wanted me to get an education, go to college and not struggle as much as they did,” Rivera explained. “I told them that I could get an education and serve in the Army at the same time.”

In her first 10 years in the Army, Rivera was stationed in Colorado, Korea, Texas, and Alaska. At her 10-year mark she realized she wanted to make a career out of it. “I came to really love what I did and enjoyed the Army day-to-day life. The pay was decent and by then I was a single parent with a four-year-old daughter, said Rivera. “The Army provided well for us and I decided then and there that I wanted to make a career out of the Army.”

Rivera cites the best part of her job as “taking care of Soldiers.” As a human resource specialist, she helps Soldiers with their personnel actions, awards, and promotions.

“Soldiers like being appreciated and awards and promotions play a big part in keeping them motivated,” said Rivera. “As long as you recognize their potential and give them the awards and promotions they deserve, they will enjoy coming to work everyday.”

There are many challenges and rewards to being in the military. For Rivera, her biggest challenges are related to family. “Some of the biggest challenges I have had to face are balancing my role as a single mother and my job and separation from my family,” said Rivera. “I have had to make compromises and many apologies to my daughter. Separation from her always has been and will be a challenge.”

Her biggest rewards from military life are two-fold.

One has to do with grooming Soldiers. “I love seeing Soldiers

succeed,” said Rivera. “I like to see them take heed in what I say; I encourage them to go to college and then later a Soldier is running down the hall after me telling me they enrolled in two college courses. It is rewarding to watch them progress.”

Rivera has her master’s degree in education with a 4.0 grade point average.

“She really motivated me to finish up my college so I could get my E-6,” said Flores. “I looked at her doing her master’s as a single parent. She was not just saying she was doing.”

Her second reward is more personal. “Self confidence is the most important life lesson that I learned from military life,” Rivera stated. “I feel I can do anything, I can accomplish anything and I can finish anything. 20 years ago, I was not that person.”

Her future is undecided right now. Rivera has put in her retirement packet and is waiting for a response. If it is approved, “I will be relocating to California and will seek employment in the education field,” said Rivera. “If not, it’s the needs of the Army for me and I will relocate where the Army needs me.”

Regardless, taking what she has learned both from her traditional family and Army family, Rivera will move forward.

“With the right attitude you can accomplish anything you put your mind to.”

Sgt. 1st Class Delores Rivera (second from left), 52nd Signal Battalion, stands in front of the White House Oct. 9 in Washington D.C. with other Latina females representing all military services who won the 2008 Latina Distinguished Service Award sponsored by Latina Style Magazine. The awardees attended a speech by President George W. Bush during Hispanic Heritage Month.



Courtesy photo

COMMO CHECK:

Joint Task Force - EAST

1ST LT TERRY MCCRAY

72nd Expeditionary Signal Battalion

Bravo Company, 72nd Expeditionary Signal Battalion, deployed on a different type of mission -- to provide communications support for the Joint Task Force - East, Bulgaria training exercise. JTF-E takes place simultaneously in Romania and Bulgaria and is designed to enhance the training and interoperability of Romanian, Bulgarian, and American troops.

Within JTF-E was another task force, Task Force Bandit, which was comprised of Bravo Company and elements from Charlie Company and Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 72nd ESB.

Bandit's mission was to provide an expeditionary communications network, extending connection to the global collaborative environment to JTF-E exercise participants in the Republic of Bulgaria. They provide non-secure and secure internet, video teleconferencing, and Defense Switched Network phones to units from Bulgaria, Romania, Germany, and the U.S. National Guard covering two separate sites and serving nearly 1,000 customers.

The services provided to six separate headquarters elements and tactical operation centers ensured fluid command and control for JTF-E leaders.

"Task Force Bandit was definitely the key to success of base operations and safety for JTF-E," said Maj. David Taylor, JTF-E J-6.

Bandit operated in a foreign country, met the fluid-nature of customer's needs on the fly, faced an austere area of operation, and worked with an unfamiliar foreign military unit during their day-to-day business.

"This training exercise has been a great tool and asset to the Soldiers' learning experience. The task force has learned

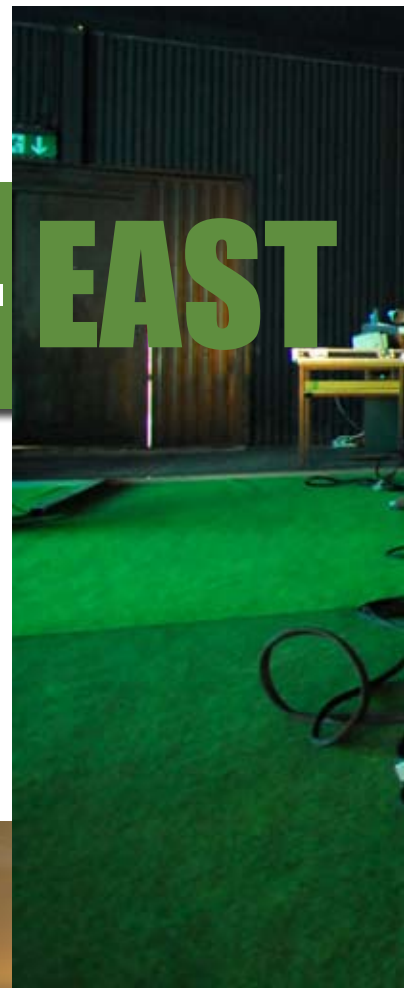
a great deal on training with other units, providing customers with communication capabilities and has a much better understanding and knowledge base on their pieces of equipment," said Sgt. William Berryman, 72nd ESB.

During the training exercise, JTF-E, Bulgaria conducted humanitarian missions in the local Bulgarian community. Some of these missions included such projects as cleaning up schools, painting homes, cleaning certain areas and just helping out the local Bulgarian community. Members from 72nd ESB volunteered much of their time to participate in these missions.

"I am very proud of all the great things you have done and will continue to do here in Bulgaria," said Brig. Gen. Jeffrey G. Smith, Jr., commander, 5th Signal Command, during his visit with the signal Soldiers in Bulgaria.

During JTF-E, Bandit participated in a variety of the training exercises with the various units training in Bulgaria. They were the first to test out the Engagement Skills Trainer and the HMMWV Egress Assistance Trainer. They also participated in a medical evacuation training exercise with 1-214 Aviation Regiment. Bandit also acted as the Combat Aid Station for two weeks during the exercise, including the rail load operations.

The task force also provided a Morale, Welfare and Recreation VTC suite to the Soldiers in JTF-E, which brought them a little closer to their families in Germany during the exercise.





Courtesy photo

Above: U.S. Soldiers train on the Engagement Skills Trainer 2000 as part of Joint Task Force - East. 72nd ESB Soldiers were the first troops to test the trainer in Bulgaria.



Staff Sgt. Jonathon Gray

Brig. Gen. Jeffrey G. Smith, Jr., commander, 5th Signal Command discusses signal operations with Bravo Company, 72nd ESB, at the Nova Selo Training Area, Bulgaria.



2nd Signal Brigade

SURGING THROUGH TIMES OF TRANSFORMATION

KRISTOPHER JOSEPH
5th Signal Command, PAO

In the past few years, the word that has been dominating conversation in United States Army Europe / 7th Army is “transformation.” For some units, this meant reorganizing assets and personnel or relocating back to the U.S. But for others, like the 5th Signal Command’s 2nd Signal Brigade, it translated to another word -- “inactivation.”

A unit in Europe casing their colors and riding off into the sunset is nothing new. USAREUR / 7th Army has been thinning out for some time. First, it shed itself of post-Cold War assets and units that were meant to defend against a then Soviet attack. More recently, it has been closing down and consolidating units, installations and communities in a modular effort to act as the command and control and training / support-based hub for brigade combat teams deploying out of Europe.

The unique story behind 2nd Signal’s impending doom is that through a course of events, the brigade not only managed to avoid inactivation but now plays an even larger, more critical role in 5th Signal’s vision to become the single IT provider in Europe enabling all warfighters across the theater.

“Europe is not shrinking as much as everyone thought,” said Karen Baecker, chief of the strategic and tactical branch of 5th Signal’s resource management division. Original plans had USAREUR / 7th Army going down from just over 200,000 to approximately 50,000 Soldiers and allotting only 1,200 of those for 5th Signal Command, said Baecker.

When it was decided that 2nd’s headquarters was going to be inactivated, plans were drawn up on how to effectively run strategic signal operations with limited personnel. Early plans showed that Headquarters 7th Signal Brigade, 2nd’s sister tactical brigade under 5th, would take command and control of 2nd’s mission and battalions and 5th headquarters would also inactivate, leaving 7th to run both strategic and tactical missions in Europe.

“That ‘stractical’ structure in my opinion would have been untenable,” said Lt. Col. Thomas Salo, 2nd Signal’s deputy commander and former 102nd Signal Battalion commander. “You would have had one O-6 colonel in charge of the ongoing tactical mission of deploying one of 7th’s two battalions virtually every year, and on top of that overseeing the strategic network operations of 2nd’s five signal battalions and the 6981st Civilian Support Group.”

2nd’s previous commander Col. Joseph Brendler and other key staff members made the case to keep 2nd Signal to former 5th Signal commander Maj. Gen. Susan S. Lawrence. She then took the case to former USAREUR / 7th Army Commander Gen. David McKiernan who then signed a memo that was sent to the Department of Army that explained the necessity of keeping 2nd Signal alive in Europe, said Baecker.

“The key was to get the Army to see 2nd as a valid requirement in USAREUR’s mission,” said Baecker.

Throughout most of the European theater, 2nd is the brigade that is in charge of controlling the computer network that is



delivered to every civilian and service member's desktop. Considered a "non-deployable" brigade, 2nd has also deployed Soldiers and civilians to Joint Task Force – East in Romania and Bulgaria as well as sending groups of Soldiers to Iraq. They also assign small specialized commo teams that directly support the Supreme Allied Commander Europe and the commanders of USAREUR and the U.S. African Command. 2nd also provides the bulk of signal support to theater-level exercises as well as manning the Landstuhl Regional Hub Node and Area Processing Centers that deliver and house the lion's share of digital data in Europe. Looking ahead, 2nd Signal will make up the nucleus of 5th Signal's Network Service Center construct that will be the future single-entry point of all signal operations in Europe.

In addition, 2nd recently took charge of the European – Theater Network Operations and Security Center that was formerly under the control of 5th's G3. The E-TNOSC has eight branches that operates, manages, administers and defends the Army portion of the European theater information grid.

"Putting the E-TNOSC under 2nd was a dramatic change," said Salo. "With all network operations under the brigade it puts the strategic mission under a unity of command with a single vision and much needed synergy."

In March 2008, the Army approved the retention the 2nd Signal Brigade and even made it a permanent fixture in USAREUR's footprint.

This good news for 2nd and 5th Signal also came with some difficulties. 2nd had already began the process of inactivating by letting go most of their local national employees and reshaping their manning documents, leaving 2nd with much less manpower than before. 5th Signal's resource management is in close communication with the brigade to identify critical positions that need to be filled to accomplish 2nd's ever-growing mission.

"I really think growth is in 2nd's future," said Baecker. "They are the operators and maintainers here and they will be needed if 5th does become the single IT provider in Europe."

"Some units have a very defined and predictable mission, but not 2nd Signal," said Salo. "Anyone wanting a challenging assignment should come to our brigade because no two days are alike when it comes to managing the network."

2nd Signal Brigade, a unit that has its roots in Europe dating back to World War II, was on their last breath. But through the eyes of those who saw its crucial mission now and in the future, it could not be allowed to hang up its gloves just quite yet. The Soldiers and civilians of 2nd Signal spend their time in the server rooms, operation centers and other unassuming places that make it easy to overlook them and their mission.

"Just like in the movie *The Wizard of Oz*, 2nd Signal Brigade is the man behind the curtain making it all work," said Salo. "Everyone in this theater is touched daily by this brigade. You become a part of our family anytime you log on to your computer, use the phone or swipe your ID card."



Staff Sgt. Jonathon Gray

Col. Gerald Miller, 2nd Signal Brigade commander, places a brigade patch on Master Sgt. William Bonck, senior NCO for the European-Theater Network Operations Security Center during a ceremony held at Schuh Theater on Sullivan Barracks. The ceremony signified the transition of the E-TNOSC from 5th Signal Command to 2nd Signal Brigade.



FAMILIES READY FOR DUTY

Story and Photos by
LEANNE MACALLISTER
5th Signal Command, STRATCOM



Gretchen Ludovice is one of the last few standing during a drill competition as Lt. Col. Jay Chapman, commander, 72nd Expeditionary Signal Battalion, looks on. The competition was part of the 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion Combat Spouse Badge and Wee Infantry Badge competition.

With nearly 10 months of a 15-month deployment behind them, this wasn't just another Saturday with a parent or spouse in Iraq.

In fact, from the looks of absolute glee on the faces of over 100 Family members and friends of Soldiers of the 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion participating in the Combat Spouse Badge and WeeIB (Infantry Badge) competition, one would never be able to tell that each person here had a loved one fighting in a war a continent away.

"But that's why we do it," explained

Cpt. Heather Gunther, rear-detachment commander, 44th ESB, "to support our Families, to appreciate each other -- both here and downrange, and to have a great time."

For the hard core crowd, the day kicked off with an optional physical fitness test at 6:30 a.m. By 9 a.m., Sullivan Field was buzzing with participants donning beige t-shirts with their designated CS or WeeIB number who covered their faces in camouflage and speculated on the events ahead.

"This is all just a lot of fun," said spouse Jackie Brown. "We appreciate

our husbands already, but this helps us understand the specifics."

In a round robin format, adult participants rotated through three stations – Drill and Ceremony, Nuclear Biological Chemical stations with Mission-Oriented Protective Posture 4 drill and single channel ground and airborne radio system man-pack training. The children gathered for a series of relay races, 'grenade' water balloon tossing, tug-of-war and other activities.

At the SINCGAR station, spouses received a tutorial on equipment and on the military phonetic alphabet before

transmitting radio messages to Soldiers 'on patrol' on the other side of the field. Using their CS number as their call sign, they were scored on their ability to make the call.

Moving on to the Nuclear Biological Chemical Station, spouses raced against the clock to get protective gear on. Helping one another get dressed, battle buddies worked together to ensure the entire group was covered and safe from a possible attack.

At the drill and ceremony station, spouses in formation executed commands in order to be the last one standing in a drill competition and then fell back in to learn cadences as they marched down the field in unison.

And, just as would one say it's true for their Soldiers downrange, the unity was evident both in formation and at ease.

With music in the background, and laughter in the air, a transformation took place throughout the morning, station by station. According to multiple spouses, the day gave them a clearer understanding of Soldier responsibilities, a stronger team spirit on the homefront, a deeper sense of pride in their Soldiers' mission and reaffirmations of why what they do is important.

"Plus, everyone is so busy, consumed with work or taking care of kids, so this time together is a great opportunity to see how everyone is doing, to spend time with neighbors and just have fun," said spouse Jessica Richardson.

"It's about fellowship, and a break for parents," added Brown.

For the kids, it was a chance to experience military life as they see it. "This gives us a chance to see what our parents do," said Catherine Harris, age 11.

"They wear make-up [though they may call it camo], get really dirty and do all this hard stuff," Natasha Munoz, age 8, explained, "but we can do it, too. The Army is a lot of work, but that's why I want to be in the Army one day."

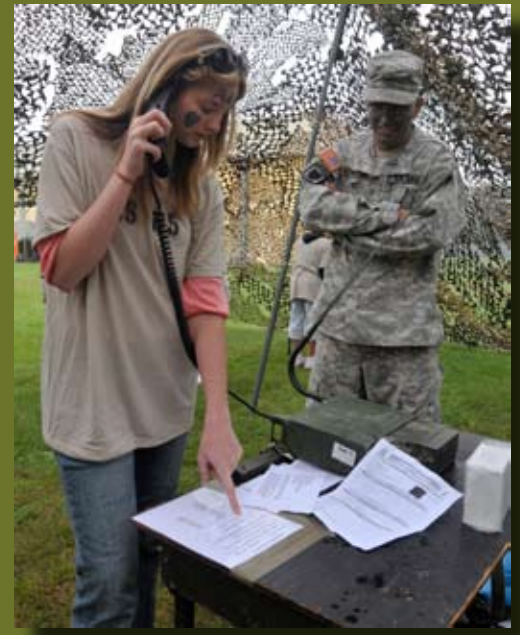
The day ended with lunch and an awards and badge presentation, though it was clear the kids wanted to continue their military training.

After thanking Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers supporters and other community volunteers, Gunther closed the event with an address to the Families. "Army Strong Families fight and win our nations wars on two fronts, with their Soldiers on the front lines in Iraq and

our daily battles on the homefront. The spirit, motivation, sense of humor and enthusiasm you demonstrated here today are the very strengths that keep our guys focused on their mission with the peace of mind that we "have their 6." You are truly combat spouses and kids."

Formality aside, donning a new sense of satisfaction in addition to their numbered t-shirts, festivities and fellowship continued into the afternoon.

Naomi Baez, age 11, added, "Our Dads do what they do to protect our country and us. We're proud of them. And today, I think our Dads are proud of us."



Jessica Richardson makes a call using the Single Channel Ground and Airborne Radio System during the 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion Combat Spouse Badge and competition.



Rebecca Ferguson and Natasha Munoz race to get dressed in Army Combat Uniforms as part of the 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion participating in the Wee Infantry Badge competition.



Staff Sgt. Jonathon Gray

Soldiers, Family Members, and civilians from the U.S. Army Garrison Mannheim community band together to form a giant ribbon in support of all Soldiers currently deployed at the start of the America Supports You Freedom Walk. According to the America Supports You Organization, the walk is a national tradition that calls on people to reflect on the lives lost on September 11, 2001.

DRAGON W SNAPS



Courtesy photo

Col. Catherine Cutler, chief of sustainment operations at the U.S. Army Europe logistics directorate, presents the Quincy Queen, a food service specialist with the 72nd Signal Battalion, with an Army Commendation Medal in recognition of Queen earning the title of 2008 Culinary Warfare NCO of the Year. The presentation was made during the Installation Management Command-Europe and U.S. Army Europe 41st annual Food Service Awards Ceremony at the Patrick Henry Village Pavilion in Heidelberg, Germany, Dec. 11.

WARRIOR HOTS



Staff Sgt. Jonathon Gray

Sgt. Uwe Mechler (bottom left) and Sgt. Marc Scheithauer (laying down), 282nd Fuehrungsunterstuetzungsbataillon, demonstrate how to load and operate the German MG-3 machine gun to a group of Soldiers from the 102nd Signal Battalion during the Schuetzenschnur range portion of a two-day partnership event.

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Sgt. Michael Taylor

Staff Sgt. Money Powell along with members of 5th Signal Command and Mannheim Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 9534, carry American flags to a burn barrel as they prepare to retire them during a ceremony. The U.S. Flag retirement ceremony was held on the Army's 233rd Birthday where more than 50 flags were retired with honors.

Spc. Gabriel Lucky, a member of the advance party from the 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion, holds his son, Gabriel, for the first time as his wife, Grace, looks on during a homecoming ceremony.



Staff Sgt. Elizabeth Sheridan

Brig. Gen. Jeffrey G. Smith, Jr., commanding general, 5th Signal Command, explains a portion of the story he is reading to a 3rd grade class at Mannheim Elementary on Funari Barracks during the school's celebration of Read Across America. The nationwide event celebrates Dr. Suess's birthday and promotes reading enjoyment. Volunteers from 5th Sig and across the local community read stories in classrooms throughout the day.



Staff Sgt. Elizabeth Sheridan

**DRAGON
SNAPS**



Staff Sgt. Dwight Porter, and (center) Sgt. Robert Gray, 5th Signal Command, inspected a protective mask worn by Gendarme Richard Vescovali, of the 22/7 Mobile Gendarmerie during an outreach visit April 23, 2008. The Gendarmerie is a French military and police organization that was created for maintaining public order throughout France.

Staff Sgt. Jonathon Gray

WARRIOR SHOTS



Command Sgt. Maj. Marvin L. Hill, command sergeant major of Multi-National Force-Iraq, inducts new noncommissioned officers from various units in the Iraqi theater in an early morning ceremony at the Al Faw Palace on Camp Victory in April 2008. The new NCOs cross the time-honored archway of swords to signify the transformation into leaders. The event was hosted by the 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion as part of Task Force Thunderbird.

Spc. John Martinez, Task Force Thunderbird

LandWarNet

Transforming to enable WARFIGHTERS

US ARMY NEWS RELEASE

WASHINGTON (October 7, 2008, Army News Service) - Army leadership discussed the importance of transforming LandWarNet to an enterprise structure in order to enable warfighter capabilities Monday, at the Association of the United States Army Annual Meeting and Exhibition.

Lt. Gen. Jeffrey A. Sorenson, chief information officer/G-6, led a panel discussion, "Transforming LandWarNet for the warfighter," to help explain how LandWarNet is evolving to deliver needed capabilities to the Soldier more effectively and efficiently.

Sorenson explained that while LandWarNet exists, it doesn't have the capabilities it needs today, such as a single identity for the Soldier and the ability to connect to the network anywhere in the world. The LandWarNet transformation to an enterprise structure will provide those capabilities and others the Soldier needs, he said.

An enterprise, Sorenson said, is a company, organization or business defined by its organization and governance structure.

As defined in the Army Posture Statement, LandWarNet is the Army's portion of the Global Information Grid, and it moves information through a seamless network, enabling the management and use of warfighting and business information.

Because the Army is moving to a modular, expeditionary force, LandWarNet must follow suit and become more streamlined through an enterprise structure. The Army plans to achieve that goal with the use of Network Service Centers, which federate networks and creates a seamless network where ever a Soldier is, reducing cost, Sorenson said.

The use of NSCs "can save at least 15 percent, that's one billion and a half," he said.

The Global Network Enterprise Construct, which will be supported by NSCs and function as the basis of the transformed LandWarNet, will optimize Soldier connectivity by providing the basics to get Soldiers connected.

"These capabilities are essentially what we are trying to build out for our Soldiers to improve their ability to communicate and function in terms of satisfying expeditionary needs," Sorenson said.

The Army's relevance is determined by how fast it can get into the fight, Brig. Gen. Brian Donahue, director of LandWarNet, G-3/5/7, said. LandWarNet will enable the preparation for war, the transition to war, and all phases of combat operations, Donahue explained, increasing the speed and efficiency of Soldiers and therefore, the Army.

Having connectivity at all phases of combat operations allows the Soldier to hit the ground running and immediately engage

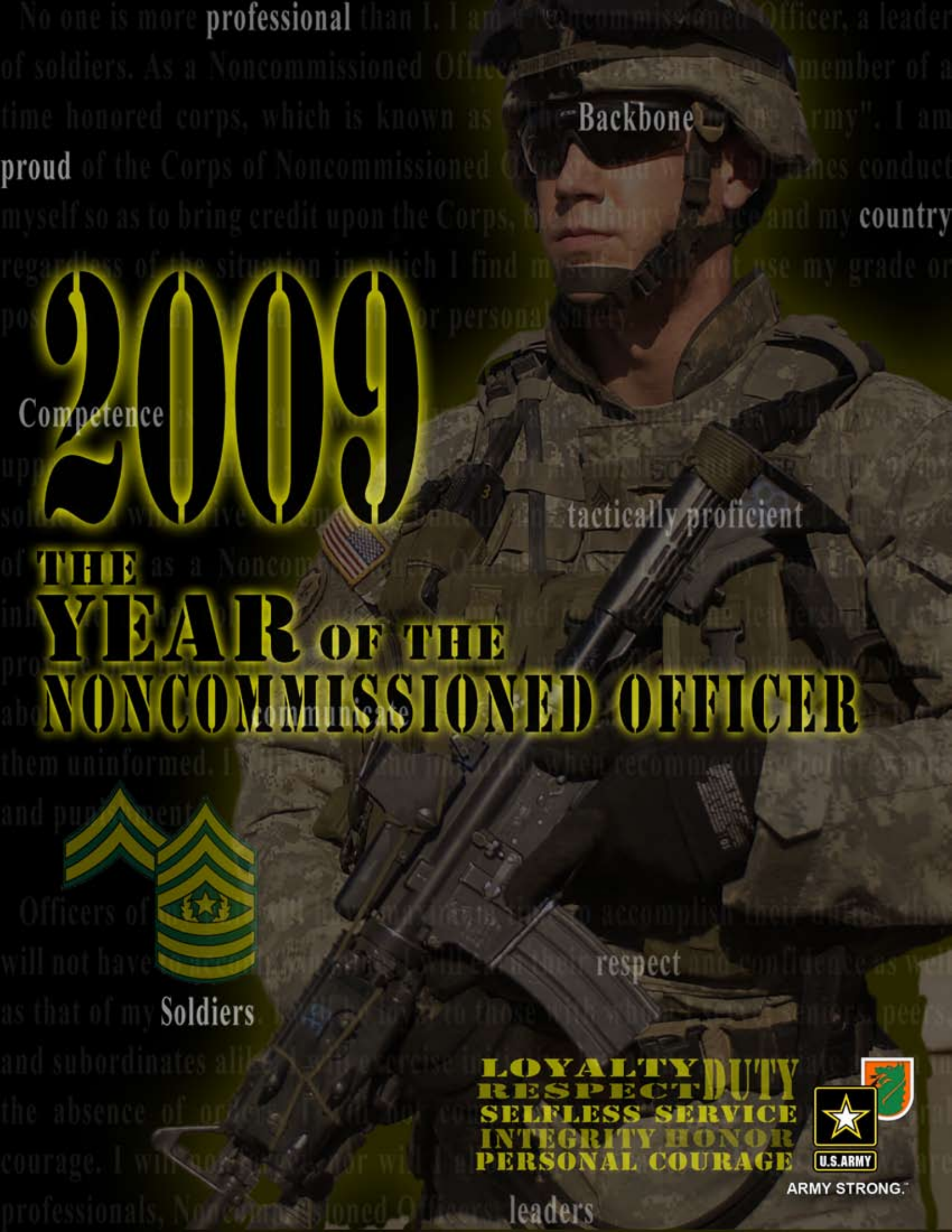
the enemy, he said, as well as giving Soldiers access to accurate information quickly, increasing their lethality.

"Every single Soldier must touch the network," Brig. Gen. Susan Lawrence, NETCOM commanding general, said. "And as you look at Future Combat Systems, and you look at what brings the precision engagement, the Soldiers, the unmanned sensors and the common platforms together, it is the network."

LandWarNet will be flexible, and will give Soldiers a single identity so they can access the network anywhere, Lawrence said. It will allow Soldiers to have connectivity from "the desktop to the foxhole," she said.



Lt. Gen. Jeffrey A. Sorenson, the Army's chief information officer/G-6, interacts with the audience during the panel discussion "Transforming LandWarNet for the Warfighter" at the Association of the United States Army conference, Oct. 6.



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