

THE

# BRIDGE

Volume 2, Issue 1 Produced for the 416th Theater Engineer Command Winter 2009



**SPC DAVID OBRAV -  
SOLDIER OF THE YEAR**

# Retention & Recruiting

By Sgt. 1st Class Steve Lee, Command Career Counselor

## Climate Change: From “Have to” to “Get to!”

**Q:** When it's time for duty, do you tell people, “I have to go.” Or do you tell them, “I GET to go!” ?

Whether a Battle Training Assembly, an Annual Training event, or extended orders, something should well up in every Soldier that says, “I GET TO DO THIS!” Leaders at every level carry the gritty responsibility to make Army Reserve activity meaningful and engaging – always looking to enhance training and mission with a “cool quotient.” When Soldiers get to do what they're trained to do and when leaders provide the purpose, direction, and motivation to guide these skilled Soldiers; teamwork, pride, and esprit de corps flows. This chemistry arises from leaders who live the Army Values and place their role as a Warrior and Member of a Team in the forefront. Increasing “get to” in a unit enhances both retention and recruiting: Loving what you do, and inviting others to join the fight!

Systemically, this “get to” climate remains the exception and not the rule. Often a Soldier will complete a Battle Training Assembly neither meaningfully engaged nor effectively led (let alone inspired). As an example, I recall when I first became part of a Reserve unit as a newly-trained Pharmacy Specialist in San Diego. The normal action of our section was to find a place to hang out and do “hip-pocket training” in case someone found us.

Frankly, my early experience with the Army Reserve was BORING! So as the most junior member of my section, I took matters into my own hands and coordinated monthly training with Balboa Naval Hospital where our entire section augmented the pharmacy staff filling prescriptions, tracking stock levels, filling sterile-product orders, and assisting in inpatient and outpatient pharmacy operations. In short, we went from a mindset of “having to go” to “getting to go!” – from zeroes to heroes!

Ask yourself some tough questions:

- 1) Is my Reserve unit engaging Soldiers in meaningful and productive activity?
- 2) Do Soldiers in my unit feel like they get to train?
- 3) Have you done anything about it?

### **Be/Know/Do:**

Be creative.  
Know your Soldiers and your unit.  
Do something about it.

This article stands as a challenge to promote climate change: from “have to” to “get to!” I especially challenge the leadership to take action to make the difference. It starts with YOU, the leader. Retention and recruiting is owned by those who lead. Take action!

THE

## BRIDGE

Produced for the 416th Theater Engineer Command

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# Contents

BRIDGE MAGAZINE - VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1  
WINTER 2009



*This page features photos of the Tri-state Fire Protection District annual open house held in Willowbrook, Ill. Oct. 18. (Photos by Spc. Jeremiah Richardson.)*

**Retention & Recruiting p. 2**

**First Up: 416th Gears up for Iraq p. 4**

**Command Notes p. 5**

**Well-Being: The Dwelling Place of God p. 6**

**Well-Being: Bridging Spinal care for Soldiers on the Move p. 7**

**So Ya Wanna be Soldier of the Year? p. 8**

**Around the Command p. 10**

**Conelley Competition Challenges Cooks p. 12**

**416th ENCOM Association Person of the Year p. 13**

**Wasington Ceremony Honors Veterans p. 14**

**Raw Stakes - Army Reserve Engineers Compete p. 15**

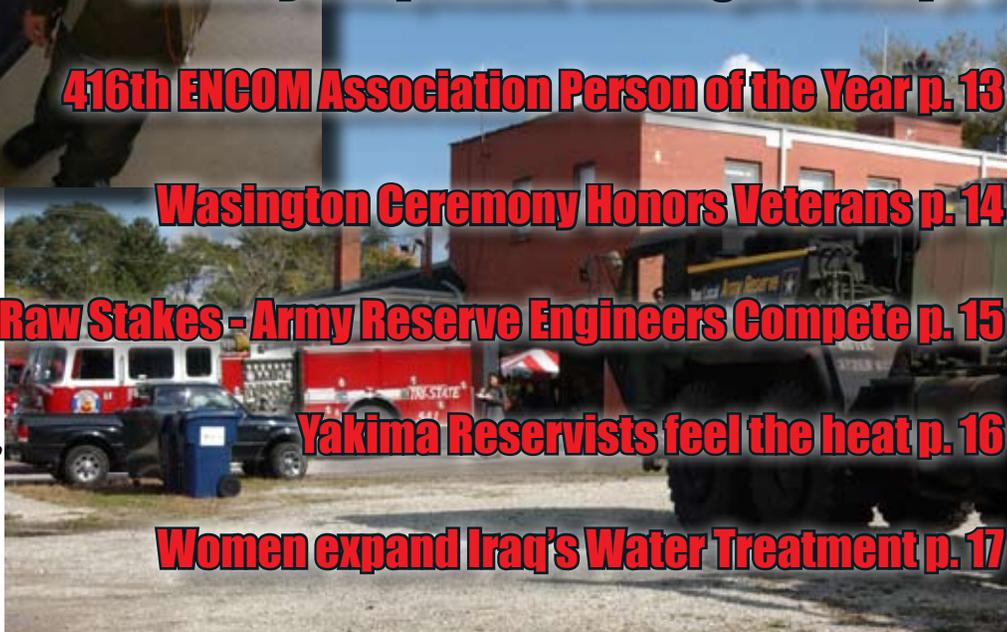
**Yakima Reservists feel the heat p. 16**

**Women expand Iraq's Water Treatment p. 17**

**Employer Partnership Initiative signs 100th member p.18**



*Cover shot: Vice Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Peter Chiarelli; Spc. David R. Obray, U.S. Army Reserve Command; and Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston were on stage Oct. 6 during a lunch at the 2008 Association of the United States Army Annual Meeting and Exposition to announce the winners of the 2008 Army Best Warrior Competition. Obray was named the Army's Soldier of the Year for 2008. (Courtesy photo by C. Todd Lopez)*



# First Up: 416th gears up for Iraq

By Lt. Col. Edgar Montalvo

On November 6th, 2008, the 416th Theater Engineer Command - Iraq was mobilized and the concept of the Deployable Command Post (DCP) became a reality. Seventy-four personnel strong and several weeks of intense training already in hand, the 416th was ready to conduct their unique operation within Iraq. But before we report on the operation in Iraq, this story shall focus primarily upon the preparation of the 416th personnel during their three-week mobilization at Ft. McCoy, WI.

The pace of this three-week training period was much different than what was experienced at the Regional Training Center (RTC) in September as we began to place the finishing touches on our preparation before deploying to Iraq.

At the mobilization site we continued to receive more clothing and equipment for our journey overseas. We again went through all of our records to ensure all required documents were in place. It was sort of a triple and quadruple check at this point. We also all relished getting more immunizations, including smallpox for some of us lucky ones! This is one of those high maintenance types of immunization. We then went back for more issued items, including our custom-fitted body armor. While this piece of equipment is heavy, bulky, and cumbersome, it most assuredly could save your bacon and was perhaps the most important piece of gear that we possessed.

We next turned our attention to a staff exercise to allow our unit personnel to operate together in a controlled scenario. Our staff has not operated in this respect since we were first notified of our impending deployment last March. And even though once in country we will not be together to operate in such a capacity, our personnel performed remarkably well and learned a great deal during this military decision making process (MDMP).

Then the fun really began as we got to play outside in the cold Wisconsin environment. So much for acclimation to the desert environment! One such day we were to defend a base camp. This is something you learn early in your military ca-

reer. But one afternoon we had several Lieutenant Colonels and Master Sergeants manning fighting positions and freezing in place! I am uncertain if anyone informed our trainers that this is something you really did not need to practice much.

In fact, I told my fighting position partner that if the time came when a Lieutenant Colonel and Master Sergeant were manning fighting positions then the war was not going too well!

We finished up our training at Ft. McCoy with a few real life scenarios. The first was a live fire range that was interesting because we were to engage pop up targets at close range, which is the type of combat currently occurring in Iraq and Afghanistan. This particular range however had several targets that would popup, all of which were different. You, the shooter, had to positively identify your target before taking your weapon off of safe and subsequently firing. There were friendly targets or non-combatants, and then the bad guys. Positive identification was the key here. Safety was also stressed over and over because you were moving with a loaded weapon and had to turn to face your targets, so it was imperative that everyone was alert and knew exactly where their weapon muzzle was at all times. Most of our unit was also using the newer M4 rifles, the smaller and lighter cousin of the M16. I had my trusty M9 pistol to fire this day. This was excellent training and our cadre on the range were exceptional. We also went back through some training we had received at RTC. Room clearing procedures are being stressed at mob sites because this is the type of war that was being waged in Iraq, and while we would



A Soldier from the 416th TEC finishes mobilization training. (U.S. Army courtesy photo.)

never master these skills in such a short time, at least we had a good clue if ever faced with this type of situation.

The last of our training was revisiting convoy operations. The key here was staying alert so you would stay alive. About 65% of the casualties in Iraq are a direct result of IEDs (Improvised Explosive Devices). It has become a real life chess match where the insurgents detonate IEDs using certain tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) and then we counter these techniques, which in turn forces them to change procedures, and so on.

Then we had our four-day pass for the Thanksgiving holiday. Of course, it was far too short and that Sunday was incredibly difficult for all unit members. Saying good-bye for three weeks is one thing, but now it was time to bid farewell for the better part of a year.

We finished our mobilization experience with a farewell from a few of our unit leaders, including COL John Lendrum our Chief of Staff and COL (P) Chesnut our new Deputy Commander, who wished us well and knew the mission we were about to embark was a big one for the unit, the Army Reserve, and the United States of America. Mission failure is never an option especially with so many eyes on us. The 416th is always prepared for the challenges that we face. We will not fail.

The next in this series will come from Iraq. ❖

# Command Notes

## 2008: A LOOK BACK AND A LOOK AHEAD...

*Brigadier General Jimmy Fowler, Commanding General*

Looking back, there is little doubt that 2008 has been a banner year for the 416th. We have now completed one full year as a Theater Engineer Command, and have successfully transitioned from having one subordinate unit with about 600 Soldiers to supporting more than 100 units and close to 12,000 Soldiers, Civilians and Families throughout the western United States.

The past year has also been marked by numerous significant accomplishments within the TEC. First, the 420th Engineer Brigade Headquarters successfully deployed and is still on the ground accomplishing great things in Afghanistan. They are successfully supporting Operation Enduring Freedom and the people of Afghanistan. In addition, the 301st Maneuver Enhancement Brigade (MEB) emerged successfully from its carrier status, and completed all the command control functions for Operation Sand Castle. In addition, the 416th just this month saw its very first TEC Deployable Command Post (DCP) prepare for and deploy to Iraq. As I write this, 70 plus Soldiers have safely arrived in Kuwait, and will soon be moving to Iraq to support the Gulf Region District (GRD), and the three Corps of Engineer Divisions throughout Iraq. They will be led by our former commander, MG Michael Eyre, who is currently serving as the GRD Commander. MG Eyre is the first Army Reserve General Officer to command the GRD. I urge one and all to take time to wish and pray for the safety of the DCP, and all our other deployed Soldiers as well as their Families, while they are in harms way. In 2008, the 372nd also stood up its flag and has made great strides, most recently by conducting the command and control of very successful Patriot Warrior Exercise at Fort McCoy.

The TEC was also honored in 2008 to have the US Army Soldier of the Year come from our ranks. SPC David Obray, from the 372nd EN BDE, was the very first Army Reserve Soldier to earn the title. He has already been honored at a number of US Army and civilian events, and the TEC will honor him at the first TEC Noncommissioned Officer Summit in Dallas in January.

The NCO Summit is just one of the things we can all look forward to in 2009. We can also look forward to a new Administration when President-Elect Barak Obama takes office, as well as a new Congress. The TEC will also get



a new Commanding General when, in April, at our TEC Senior Leaders Conference, I will pass the 416th colors to BG(P) Paul Crandall, the current 420th EN BDE Commanding General. I know that you will give General Crandall the same level of support and dedication that you have provided me and MG Eyre during the past four years.

Also in 2009, the 301st MEB will face a huge test in commanding and controlling the Operation Essayons mission exercise at Fort Hunter Liggett. There, they will focus on improving the infrastructure of the post and on building Forward Operating Bases and live fire convoy lanes. Also, the TEC Headquarters and numerous downtrace units will continue to support the engineering aspects of the Beyond the Horizons (BTH) mission. This year El Salvador is the place to be from January to April where TEC Soldiers and units will assist with BTH Humanitarian and Civic Assistance projects which are designed to give training to our Soldiers, as well as support the USSOUTHCOM Commander's Theater Security Cooperation Plan. Although not in a current theater of war, the BTH missions are very important to our countries' safety and security as our relationships with Central and South American countries and their military forces are key to our US National Security Strategy. Also looking forward in 2009, the 372nd EN BDE and its units will continue to support numerous mission readiness exercises, all in an effort to better prepare Soldiers, Families and units to support the Global War on Terror.

Finally, we cannot forget safety in everything that we do. Whether on duty or off, all Soldiers should remain vigilant in enforcing safe practices. Remember, safety never takes a holiday.

# Well-Being



## The Dwelling Place of God

by CH (Col.)

Timothy M. Samorajski

Have you ever wondered where God is? The Bible indicates that God is big enough to fill his entire creation but small enough to live in our hearts. Yes, God earnestly desires to live in our hearts! Consider 1Corinthians 3:16: “*Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s spirit lives in you?*” What an awesome thought to ponder that the God of all creation wants to have a direct and personal relationship with each of His creation. What are some of the practical applications of this truth?

**God loves each of us.** When the Bible states that God so loved the *world* that he gave his only begotten son to die on the cross for our sins, it’s helpful to substitute our individual names in place of the word *world*. We are, after all, a part of

God’s world! What a comfort to know that in a world that’s constantly changing, the love of the Lord remains strong and unfailing. The Psalms declare, “*The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, His mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning, great is His faithfulness.*” Are the challenges of life new every morning? Take heart then and know that the love and mercy of God are also new each morning.

**God wants a relationship based on intimacy.** In Revelations 3: 20 we read, “*Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.*” God’s love is not some vague or abstract thing. It’s very personal and intimate. God never equipped us or intended that we should navigate life’s troubled waters alone. He made us to be lacking and incomplete apart from Him. Notice from the passage that God’s wants to come into our hearts and have intimate fellowship. Notice also that God does not force His way in. He knocks and we must decide whether or not to open the door of our hearts and to let Him in.

**God is doing a purifying work in us.** In John chapter two, we read where Jesus drives out the merchants and money changers from the physical temple in Jerusalem. He declares that the purpose of the temple was that it be a house of prayer. I often ask God what needs to be driven out of my life. What sins prevent me from fulfilling the purpose God has for me? The Bible states that God disciplines those He loves just as a Father disciplines his children in whom he delights. It states that no disciplines is ever pleasant at the moment but eventually leads to a good result. When we are being disciplined by the Lord, let us remember that it’s a further evidence of His love for us and respond by confessing our sins and work with our creator to remove them from our lives.

So where is God right now? We don’t need to look farther than the next breath we take or the next beat of our hearts!

# Bridging Spinal Care for Soldiers on the Move

By Lt. Col.

Michael Douglas Girone

A healthy lifestyle correlates with a healthy body and mind. As a civilian, I am a practicing chiropractic physician. As a deploying member of the 416th Theater Engineer Command Deployable Command Post (my second mobilization in two years) I acknowledge the difficulty in maintaining strong bodies and minds. One way to keep the body strong is to take care of our spines, just as we brush or floss our teeth. Spinal care monitors nerve conduction to all body regions and keeps it free of motion limiting joint dysfunction. Nerves control all vital organs, skin, and metabolic functions via the central and peripheral nervous systems following the electric pathways of each spinal nerve. The brain is equivalent to a Random Access Memory (RAM) in a computer and the spinal nerves are the telecommunication fiber optics that reaches out to all parts of the body and provides the current to power the organs, skin, and cells of the body. By maintaining the strong nerve conduction after it leaves the brain and allowing an equally strong impulse to return, our body reaches a state of balance, also known as homeostasis.

Good nutrition feeds the furnace by supplying an adequate amount of protein, carbohydrates, and fats.

Proper sleep and rest are important to maintain and regenerate the cells in our body regardless of the rigors that deployment or our civilian stresses put on it daily. Basically, our body heals itself as we sleep. Chiropractic corrects the improper function of joints (subluxation) allowing the nerves optimum impulse conduction pathways and maximizes the communication with the brain allowing the body to heal itself.

Many things directly affect joints, causing

dysfunction. Both physical and mental stress; heavy work loads on the spine and muscular system; arthritis of the bones due to aging & traumas to the body (including accidents, injuries, and poor ergonomics); lack of rest; and poor nutrition are all factors contributing to the less-than-peak performance of a body.

Twenty-four vertebrae serve as building blocks creating the spine. Without a strong, level, and stable pelvic foundation, structural support suffers. To maintain good structural integrity of the spine and pelvis, one must strengthen the ligaments (these hold bones together creating joints) and tendons (attach muscles to bones). This is done by performing daily flexibility exercises, weight lifting, and core exercise training.

Relieving dysfunction of a vertebral joint through spinal adjusting creates a functional change in the nerve's electrical flow. Reduction of tight muscles, trigger points, joint swelling, and stiffness, along with improved range of motion and joint flexibility are changes often seen after an chiropractic adjust and are interpreted as signs of relief. In the area of soft tissue injury and trauma, conscientiousness chiropractic assessment and treatments



serve as an alternative to taking medicine. A good chiropractic physician refers to medical physicians when medical intervention is called for. Be sure to “shop around” and interview potential chiropractic physicians, the same as you would for your primary physician.

The need for chiropractic care in everyday life continues to grow. Chiropractic physicians have made great strides in providing proven and accepted treatments for musculoskeletal issues. Millions of Americans use chiropractic care and the military is slowly adapting to this trend. Someday chiropractic treatments will become common place in the military hospitals both CONUS and OCONUS.

Get a chiropractic assessment to see if you can benefit from care. It is health for your spine, reducing your pain, and increasing its function so as to reach optimum health. ❖

# So, ya wanna be Soldier of the Year?

By John Freese

364th Public Affairs Operations Center

David Obray is five credits away from a degree in Law and Society at Winona State University. He is also Student Body President, and a board member of the Minnesota State Universities Student Association. He's also been offered chances at Senatorial Internships for next semester. Further still, Obray is an Army Reserve Soldier, with the 492<sup>nd</sup> Engineering Company, in Mankato, Minn., holding the rank of Specialist in the Motor Maintenance Section. Oh, and just one more thing--he happens to be the Soldier of the Year for 2008.

Obray's new title doesn't just apply to his company and battalion. That title is not even limited to the U.S. Army Reserve as a whole. In fact, "Soldier of the Year" applies to the entire U.S. Army; to include the Active Army, the Reserves, and the National Guard.

Soldier of the Year is the title awarded to that Soldier below the rank of NCO who conquers the Best Warrior Competitions



Soldier of the Year for 2008, Spc. Dave Obray, focuses on his pushups during the APFT phase of the Dept. of the Army's Best Warrior Competition, at Fort Lee, Va. (Photo by Timothy Hale, Army Reserve Public Affairs)

(NCOs compete for NCO of the Year). These are highly demanding contests that measure participants' Army Knowledge,

Soldiering skills, and physical fitness. The competitions also test the less tangible attributes of being a Soldier—discipline, bearing, and adaptability. Among the many aspects of the competition are Army Warrior Tasks (AWT), Weapons Qualification, Hand to Hand Combat, as well as knowledge of Army regulations, doctrine, structure and history.

Competitors do everything from pounding out pushups and trekking land navigation courses with a topo-map and compass, to disassembling weapons, and presenting themselves to highly formalized oral boards of the most senior NCOs. Just about every aspect of basic Soldiering is studied, trained, and finally performed for evaluation. In all, Obray had to win Best Warrior competitions at seven different levels to earn Soldier of the Year, culminating finally in the Department of the Army competition at Fort Lee, Va. in late September. (See recent issues of *The Bridge* for previous Best Warrior Stories.)

Preparing for Best Warrior events can be a daunting, time-gobbling process. So, achieving Soldier of the Year for any Soldier is no small deal. Achieving Soldier of the year as a part time Soldier (Guard or Reserve) seems pretty amazing.



Spc. Dave Obray grapples with a fellow competitor during the Army Combatives phase of the 2008 Department of the Army Best Warrior Competition at Fort Lee, Va. (Photo by Timothy Hale, Army Reserve Public Affairs)



Spc. David Obray, Army Soldier of the Year, spent Veteran's Day at Martin Luther King High School in Philadelphia for "Mentoring Awareness Day" as a guest of Sen. Arlen Specter. (Photo and cutline by Timothy Hale, Army Reserve Public Affairs)

In some ways, however, it's to be expected.

"In my opinion Reserve Soldiers are a step above [those from] the Active Army, said SFC Wade Hutcheson, Obray's NCOIC at the 492<sup>nd</sup>. "They are superior. They have to be. They maintain both civilian *and* military life—they have to balance the demands of each. In fact, *balancing act* puts it too lightly. It's more like a pile driver that rips you in two directions." Perhaps that sounds arrogant. But indeed, U.S. Army Reservists are routinely challenged by the demands of maintaining both viable civilian and military careers, as well as stable family lives. They leave jobs for Annual Trainings, various schools, and of course there are the monthly battle assemblies. Add the U.S. Army Reserve's current war posture and its specter of lengthy deployments, and the challenges just get bigger. Now, on top of that, picture someone deciding to take on the additional task of dedicating countless hours in preparation for highly intense Best Warrior contests. Suddenly Hutcheson's claim of Reserve Soldier superiority seems plausible.

Obray admits that the size of the Best Warrior undertaking surprised him. "I had no idea of the scope of this thing," said Obray. "When I was first asked to compete, I thought it was just a company-level event. Next thing I know I'm

heading to compete at the battalion, and then the brigade, and so on, all the way up to Department of the Army."

So, you might wonder, why did he do it? "To be honest, at first, I did it just because I wanted to go to Airborne School, and was told this was how I'd get that," Obray chuckled.

"That's about right. If you're not Regular Army it's tough to get those more elite schools," said Hutcheson. "They give out very few seats to Reserve Soldiers, so you have to make a name for yourself first. The best bet for a Reserve Soldier who wants [to attend] those schools is to participate in the Best Warrior Competition," Hutcheson added.

Despite all of his Army Reserve activities, and his leadership roles in college, Obray has managed to maintain a near perfect grade point average at Winona State, in a pre-law program that can be quite rigorous. When you meet him, and talk with him, you get a strong sense that he's driven by desire and sense of responsibility, has a keen work ethic, and that he knows precisely what he wants to do.

"Well, actually, I'm not quite sure yet," says Obray, regarding that last point. His options leave him with a large decision: whether to dedicate himself to civilian public service or to further his military service. Eventually he may take one of his internship offers and then attend law school. But since being crowned Soldier of the Year, he's been quite busy

performing Public Affairs duties such as supporting and thanking our Veterans, and speaking to young students about the Army Reserve and of his achievements within it. Recently, he travelled to Philadelphia where he, Sen. Arlen Specter, and a few local athletes and other Soldiers spent the day at a neighborhood school mentoring a group of students victimized by gang violence. So, right now, he's spending a lot of his time promoting the U.S. Army Reserve and its role in our

"It shows you have to work at it, no matter what your talents are. That's what it takes."

- Sgt 1st Class Wade Hutcheson

society. Also, he's determined, short term, to attend Airborne and Sapper schools.

All of this might seem to assign a superhuman status to Obray, and make you think Soldier of the Year is unattainable for just anybody. That's not the case at all, assures Obray's supervisor, Hutcheson.

"It's all about the time and effort you're willing to put in, and if your unit leadership promotes your success. Here [Obray] is, Soldier of the Year, and he got through at the company level by the skin of his teeth," Hutcheson chuckled. "It shows that you have to work at it, no matter what your talents are. That's what

See SOLDIER, page 19



Spc. Dave Obray conducts room clearing ops during the 2008 Department of the Army Best Warrior Competition at Fort Lee, Va. (Photo by Timothy Hale, Army Reserve Public Affairs)

# Around the Command



ABOVE - Soldiers of the 489th Engineer Battalion, U.S. Army Reserve of Little Rock, AR., read their mission packet and prepare to plot the route to their first event point during the 3rd Annual Sapper Stakes competition in Little Rock, on 5-7 September 2008. The three-day, six-event competition is designed to train, improve and enhance the skills that Engineer Soldiers would need during a deployment. (U.S. Army Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Joel Quebec, 211th MPAD, Bryan, TX)

RIGHT - Chief of the Army Reserve, Lt. Gen. Jack C. Stultz presents Jolene Jefferies from the Direct Employers Association with the Freedom Team Salute Certificate of Appreciation. The Direct Employers Association is a non-profit group of leading U.S. employers. (U.S. Army Photo by Spc. Carolyn Kettelhut, 318th Public Affairs Operations Center)



Enjoy taking pictures? The 416th TEC Public Affairs Office is always looking for Unit Public Affairs Representatives (UPAR) to submit photos for future editions of Around the Command. Please forward all submissions to Staff Sgt. Danny McCormick, Assignment Editor, at [danny.e.mccormick@us.army.mil](mailto:danny.e.mccormick@us.army.mil), with "Around the Command" in the subject line.



ABOVE - Secretary of the Army Pete Geren visits with wounded Soldiers that were present for the Texas A&M University Military Appreciation Day and Army v. Aggie football game September 27, 2008. (U.S. Army Photo by Sgt. William M. Zoeller, 211th MPAD Bryan, Texas)

RIGHT - Sgt. First Class James A. Alston straps a child to a harness preparing him for climbing the rock wall that was part of the Army exhibit for Texas A&M University's Military Appreciation Day on September 27, 2008. (U.S. Army Photo by Sgt. William M. Zoeller, 211th MPAD Bryan, Texas)

BELOW - Lt. Gen. Jack C. Stultz presents public affairs specialists in the 318th Public Affairs Operations Center with coins at the Employer Partnership Initiative meeting at the Union League Club. (U.S. Army photo by 2LT Olivia Cobiskey, 318th Public Affairs Operations Center)



# Connelly competition challenges cooks

By Spc. Chris Oposnow  
318th Public Affairs Operations  
Center

ST. CHARLES, Mo. - Five Soldiers from the 739th Engineering Company participated in the 2008 Connelly Awards Competition. This competition evaluates cooks on their field and garrison performance and recognize excellence in food service.

Cooking for the military presents problems that do not come up for civilians who cook at home or in a restaurant. An Army cook has to be able to quickly provide a quality meal for Soldiers wherever they are needed.

"The challenge is there is no water or electricity. They have to bring everything they need and test those things. They need to set up the Mobile Kitchen Trailer and make sure the generator is running," said Chief Warrant Officer Paul Gilmore, senior evaluator and a food service officer

**"At first it's overwhelming. Once you find your groove, it's a lot easier."**

*- Spc. Haley Wagner*

for the Louisiana National Guard.

Five cooks from the 739th Engineering Company prepared dinner while the rest of the unit conducted lanes training. These cooks spent six hours preparing this meal for the 110 Soldiers in their unit while three evaluators judged them along the way.

"At first it's overwhelming. Once you find your groove it's a lot easier," said Spc. Haley Wagner, one of the cooks. "It's too easy."

A lot of work goes into preparing a meal for over a hundred Soldiers. There was a steady stream of traffic in the small Mobile Kitchen Trailer. Other Soldiers brought in supplies to the cooks because they were not supposed to leave the Mobile Kitchen Trailer. They brought dishes, water and anything else the cooks needed.

It is a sanitization issue, said Spc. Christiana Buckner, another cook.

While the cooks were preparing the food,



Spc. Al Paster and Spc. Haley Wagner put in many hours preparing a meal for the 110 Soldiers in the 739th Engineering Company. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Christopher Oposnow)

the evaluators checked on them to make sure they were meeting the standards for cleanliness and sanitation. When the meal was finished, they made sure that every Soldier would get the proper serving size.

"I like it. I like the people and their personalities," said Gilmore.

"The fun part is teaching the young troops tips and techniques," said Gilmore. After the day was finished, the evaluators told the cooks what they can do to improve.

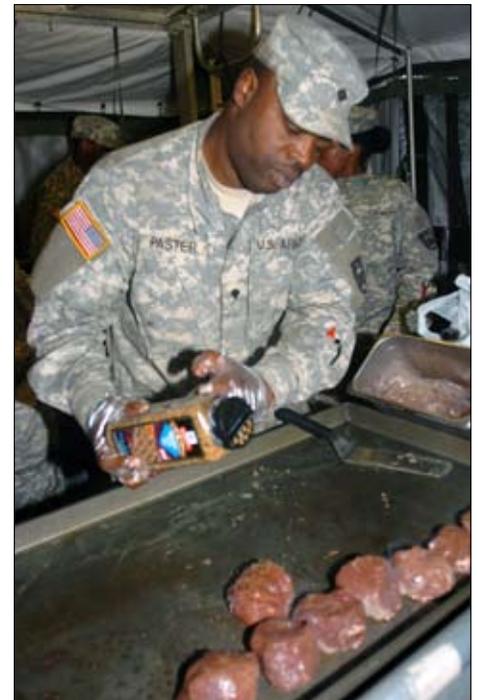
As the last dozen Soldiers were coming, the cooks asked how many people were left. They needed to know so they could ration out the food appropriately. No one had an empty plate. When the last Soldier came through the line, they served him the last piece of steak.



Spc. Bret Smeltzer serves a Soldier who just returned from lanes training. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Christopher Oposnow)

After the competition was over, the evaluators pointed out the mistakes that the cooks made and ways to improve efficiency of their cooking.

"This was a photo finish," said Master Sgt. Franklin Booker, an evaluator from the Army Center of Excellence at Ft. Lee, VA. ❖



Spc. Al Paster seasons the main course for the meal. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Christopher Oposnow)

# 416th ENCOM Association Person of the Year – Ms. Joanne Sova

*By Lt. Col. Donald Gardiner*

DARIEN, Ill. - The 416th ENCOM Association has chosen Ms. Joanne Sova as its Person of the Year for 2008. The 416th ENCOM Association is a group of current and retired Soldiers and Civilians of the legacy 416th Engineer Command and the current 416th Theater Engineer Command. The Association contains in its ranks numerous former Commander Generals, Deputy Commanding Generals and Command Sergeants Major. The Association is dedicated to supporting the Soldiers and the missions of the TEC. They also help increasing the level of awareness of the Engineer Regiment and support our Soldiers and their family Members.

Ms. Sova is currently serving as the civilian Secretary in the Command Group at the 416th TEC Headquarters in Darien, IL. Joanne manages the civilian payroll for all the civilian employees within the TEC, manages and produces all of the official correspondences for the Command Group, and produces all of the required travel documents for the members of the Command

Headquarters Staff. She is also a dedicated, highly recognized and long serving volunteer in the Family Readiness Group for the 416th TEC Headquarters Company (HHC). She has been employed at the Parkhurst USAR Center in Darien since 1987. Joanne has assisted with numerous Soldier deployments and mission support, Family Day Picnics, and Family Holiday Parties. Joanne even has assisted with deployments of the Darien based Facility Engineer Group and the 863rd Engineer Battalion. The 416th ENCOM Association called Ms. Sova a great asset to the Soldiers, Civilians and Families of the 416th TEC who continues to touch each person she interacts with.

For those interested in the 416th ENCOM Association, there are two methods that can be utilized to join. First is to go to the Association's web site, [www.encomassociation.info](http://www.encomassociation.info) and under the Members tab there is an application form to complete and forward. The second method is to contact LTC(R)Tom Ryterske at [thomas.ryterske@il.usda.gov](mailto:thomas.ryterske@il.usda.gov) or 630-365-6550 for an application form. ❖



*Sue Preetorius (left) poses with Joanne Sova at the 2008 416th Theater Engineer Command Family Day.*



Members of Vietnam Veterans of America march in a parade through downtown Auburn, Wash., as part of the 43rd annual Veterans Day Observance on Nov. 8. The National Veterans Day Committee and the U.S. Department of Defense recognize Auburn's Veterans Day Observance as one of the few regional sites for the celebration of Veterans Day 2008. It is also one of the largest Veterans Day Parades west of the Mississippi River. (Photo by Spc. Andrew Reagan)

# Washington Ceremony Honors Veterans

By Spc. Andrew Reagan  
304th Public Affairs Detachment

AUBURN, Wash.—The 43rd annual Veteran's Day Observance in Auburn, Wash., on Saturday, Nov. 8, began with a remembrance ceremony to honor those who sacrificed their lives for their country.

"We don't gather here to glorify war. We gather here to glorify those who served in war and were killed in action," said Sonny Bargala, a Vietnam War veteran who spoke at the ceremony.

Bargala also read the names of service members from Auburn who died in wars from World War I to Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

"I've been in so many of these and they always get to me. It's always a big deal when they read the names," said August B. Becerra, a member of American Legion post 37 in Lynnwood, Wash., who performed in the color guard for the ceremony.

Becerra served in the Army as an ammunition specialist. He deployed with the 63rd Ordinance Detachment from Fort Lewis, Wash., to Somalia in 1993.

Becerra is also a member of the Legion Riders, a program of the American Legion. Becerra and his fellow riders took to the streets of Auburn with their motorcycles as part of the mile-long parade that followed the ceremony. The parade featured more than 200 entries, including drill teams, honor guards, over 25 marching bands, veterans' entries, floats, antique cars, military vehicles and community groups.

The National Veterans Day Committee and the U.S. Department of Defense recognize Auburn's Veterans Day Observance as one of the few regional sites for the celebration of Veterans Day 2008. It is also one of the largest Veterans Day Parades west of the Mississippi River.

One of the units representing the 416th

Theater Engineer Command in the parade was the 349th Chemical Company from Fort Lawton in Seattle. The Soldiers who marched in the parade were proud they participated in the event.

"It was my first time marching in a Veterans Day parade. The atmosphere was great with all the positive support," said Sgt. Anthony Apsay, a chemical operations specialist with the 349th. Becerra also expressed his appreciation for the crowd at the parade, noting that those in attendance put forth "a new wave of enthusiasm for everyone who came by."

Becerra said he is slated to be in the color guard for another remembrance ceremony in the near future. He said his military experience helped him overcome his apprehension over possibly leading the ceremony. He noted that in the Army there is no question whether one will perform a task appointed to him.

"You just step up," he said. ❖

# Raw Stakes - Army Reserve Engineers Compete

By SFC Joel Quebec  
211<sup>th</sup> MPAD

NORTH LITTLE ROCK, Ark. - Engineer Soldiers of five Army Reserve companies from the 489<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion gathered at Camp Robinson, AR over the first weekend of September to participate in the third annual Sapper Stakes competition. Each company was represented by one or more six-member team.

The competition is designed to train, improve and enhance the skills that Engineer Soldiers would need during a deployment. "Not only do the engineer squads get training," said 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. William Ake, one of the key event planners, "this event also trains the headquarters staff in Battle Staff Operations and tracking. The competition is used to bring the [489<sup>th</sup>] Battalion together, train engineer squads, and promote esprit de corps among the troops and units."

The competition was set up with a central

Tactical Operations Center and each team drew a number to determine which of the five stations would be their first event. The stations were located at points surrounding the TOC and teams had to find the points on a map and road march to each station either on an actual road or by shortcut through the woods.

The stations consisted of a dismounted route clearance, timber cutting charge calculations, vehicle search for contraband and Improvised Explosive Devices, building a 50-foot triple strand concertina and barbed wire obstacle, disassembling and reassembling their own M-16A2 rifles and an M-249 Squad Automatic Weapon, clearing a mine field and wire obstacle, setting up a field radio antenna including calling in a 9-line Medical Evacuation request and a physical fitness station that included a team relay effort of five minutes of push-ups, five minutes of sit-ups and throwing a grappling hook, low crawling to its landing point and

continuing the process until the Soldier reached 100 meters and then sprinting back to the starting point until the entire team had completed the task. This event was concluded with a half-mile team run. All the stations were timed events and the best overall time won the competition. The antenna station purposely had one piece of equipment missing in order to make the Soldiers adapt and overcome the deficiency as they may have to in actual operations. "The tasks were chosen to test the Soldiers mentally and physically" said Ake.

The Soldiers were not given the specific tasks prior to the competition, but instead received an operations order at the site. "One thing we do the month before," explained 489<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion commander Lt. Col. David Ragusa, "we give them a verbal op-order that will somewhat hint, it gives them an idea of

See STAKES, page 19



Soldiers of the 489<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion, U.S. Army Reserve of Little Rock, AR., read their mission packet and prepare to plot the route to their first event point during the 3rd Annual Sapper Stakes competition in Little Rock, on 5-7 September 2008. The three-day, six-event competition is designed to train, improve and enhance the skills that Engineer Soldiers would need during a deployment.

# Yakima Reservists feel the heat

by  
Cpt. John Prettyman  
304th Public Affairs  
Detachment

NORTH BEND, WA.  
- Packed in small teams, clothed from head to toe in helmets, masks, air tanks and bunker gear (insulated suits), Army Reserve firefighters inch their way toward a temperamental inferno of fuel, metal and flames. A helicopter has crashed and its pilot is trapped. Precisely guiding powerful blasts of water from each hose until the fire is suppressed, they safely rescue the downed pilot. This is just one of the scenarios involving firefighting and rescue operations that are part of an academy designed to keep Army Reserve firefighters from Yakima, Wash. trained and ready.

Four times a year, Soldiers from the 907th, 306th, 614th and 702nd Engineer Detachments travel to the Washington State Fire Training Academy (WSFTA) in North Bend, Wash. Surrounded by forest and mountains, the Reserve firefighters hone their skills day and night for three days.

Staff Sgt. Lewis Stoliker, Deputy Chief of Operations with the 907th Eng. Det has been fighting fires for 8 years with the Army Reserves. He said this academy helps provide realistic training for him and his Soldiers. "It's an area where we go over fire behavior and characteristics in emergency situations. What you can expect is high heat and lots of smoke," said Stoliker.

The firefighters spend most of their first day preparing the gear and equipment that will keep them alive as they battle fires and extreme heat. As the daylight quickly fades against a backdrop of snow covered mountains, the firefighters enjoy a hearty meal of ribs, corn, potatoes, gravy, salad and bread, generously prepared by the academy's food services personnel. They will need all the energy they can get as they face their first challenge that night - a multi-story warehouse with multiple rooms engulfed in flames. "The walls are blackened and they close all the doors and once you go in, there's zero visibility and you just look for either the seat of the fire or any victims that are trapped or might be hurt. It's pretty realistic for the most part," explained Spc. Jamel Linzey, a firefighter with the 306th Eng. Det."

The training scenarios continue well into the late hours of the night and will start up again early the next morning.

"I'm a bit tired," said Sgt. Steven Cooper, assistant chief of operations with the 907th Eng. Det. "We're about to hit one more



Firefighters with the 907th Eng. Det from Yakima, Wash. rescue a pilot from a simulated helicopter fire at the fire training academy in North Bend, Wash. (U.S. Army Reserve photo by Cpt. John Prettyman)

evolution before we call it a night and then tomorrow we're going to hit the flam (flammable) pads which has a helicopter prop." The helicopter prop is a fabricated structure intended to simulate a downed helicopter. Several teams of firefighters work together to put out the raging fire and save the trapped pilot. They not only battle smoke and heat along the way, but wind and freezing rain. "It's been cold; it's been raining; it's been wet. It's been pretty much miserable. But a great time once we get the gear on and actually fight some fires," said Spc. Ben Siekawitch, a firefighter with the 702nd Eng. Det. "Growing up, I always wanted to be a firefighter. You get that call, your heart skips a couple beats, you get out there. It's the adrenaline rush and you get to help people," he said. ❖



Firefighters with the 907th Eng. Det from Yakima, Wash. prepare to battle fire and heat at a quarterly training exercise at the fire training academy in North Bend, Wash. (U.S. Army Reserve photo by Cpt. John Prettyman)

# Women expand Iraq's water treatment

By Norris Jones  
Gulf Region South district

Thi Qar Province, Iraq—Residents in a southern Iraqi city will soon receive more drinking water thanks to the efforts of three women with remarkable stories.

In Fadiliya, the community of 10,000 people currently receives only 60 percent of its water needs from existing infrastructure. A new 200-cubic-meter-per-hour treatment facility is under construction and expected to be complete by the end of the year.

Project Engineer Colleen Hickey and Construction Representative Toni Graves with the Gulf Region Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are overseeing the construction of the \$748,000 facility located adjacent to the existing water treatment plant there. Engineer Montaha, the Iraqi contractor's senior representative, is in charge of the crew doing the work. She grew up in nearby Muthanna Province and attended Basrah University, majoring in civil engineering.

According to Hickey, this is the largest facility of the 15 water treatment plants she is managing. She has high praise for Engineer Montaha and the quality of construction her workforce is doing.

"As an engineer, you always look at the angles and lines, and everything there is as it should be," said Hickey. "It's a well-maintained, clean site, and unique in many aspects. For instance, in the landscaping plan, they're putting in a garden area. The storage room for chemicals is tiled in blue ceramic. It's a showpiece site and everything is done well."

Hickey enjoys her job. "I love it. I enjoy going out in the community and seeing what's really going on, how families live, talking with residents. They appreciate our efforts. They see things are getting better."

Working with USACE for 5 1/2 years in both environmental engineering and construction operations, Hickey started in the Chicago District, then Los Angeles, and most recently San Francisco



USACE Construction Representative Toni Graves, Iraqi Engineer Montaha, and USACE Project Engineer Colleen Hickey are working to ensure the new facility expanding Fadiliya's water treatment capacity meets expectations. (Photo by Norris Jones)



USACE Project Engineer Colleen Hickey (left) and Construction Representative Toni Graves view construction progress at the new 200-cubic-meter-per-hour facility providing additional water treatment capacity for the community. (Photo by Norris Jones)

District. She grew up in Chicago and graduated in 2003 from Marquette University where she says about a third of the College of Engineering was made up of women.

Arriving in Iraq this past July, Hickey plans to serve a nine-month tour. She says her family and friends are very supportive. "They may have thought I was a little crazy, but they enjoy hearing what we're doing here and the impact we're making."

Graves, a construction representative with 34 years of government service, deployed to Iraq in December from USACE's Louisville district, Fort Knox Area office. Dur-

ing her 12 years there, she was involved with civil works projects such as flood control, detention basins, state parks, locks and dams.

Regarding her Iraq duty, Graves says, "I think it's wonderful we're able to help some very needy families get access to fundamental necessities. They're always kind and friendly, delighted to see these projects take shape, and grateful for what we're doing."

USACE has helped complete 820 water projects in Iraq, and 85 more are ongoing. ❖

# Employer Partnership Initiative signs 100th Member

By Spc. Carolyn M. Kettelhut  
318th Public Affairs Operations Center

You attend the monthly weekend battle assemblies.

You attend the annual training.

You have bills to pay and a family to feed. Is it enough to make ends meet?

It could be if you have a good civilian career to rely on along with your military career.

U.S. Cellular became the 100th company to sign the Employer Partnership Initiative Friday at the Union League Club in Chicago.

Lt. Gen Jack C. Stultz, Chief of the U.S. Army Reserves, launched the ongoing Employer Partnership Initiative in April 2008 so the Army Reserve and civilian employers could work together and keep qualified employees.

Stultz has experience working dual careers and is familiar with the challenges it brings. Stultz worked off and on for the Proctor and Gamble corporation for 28 years as an operations manager.



Karen L. Kaufman, senior manager of the talent acquisition program at U.S. Cellular signs the Employer Partnership Initiative. U.S. Cellular is the 100th company to sign up for this ongoing program in support of the Reserves. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Carolyn M. Kettelhut, 318th Public Affairs Operations Center)

“I’ve been called up a number of times,” said Stultz. “The most recent time was Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, so I understood what gyrations that put the company through.”

Stultz said the Army Reserves and civilian employers have the same challenges finding qualified employees. In a target population of 17-24 year old males in America, only three out of ten qualify to join the Army.

“We should be working together rather than competing with each other,” said Stultz when speaking about businesses.

Stultz said the EPI started out by both the military and businesses looking at skill sets that match each other the best.

Karen L. Kaufman, senior manager of talent acquisition programs at U.S. Cellular, signed the initiative as the 100th company to partner with the U.S. Army Reserves in this program.

“We should be working together rather than competing with each other.”

- Lt. Gen Jack C. Stultz



Lt. Gen. Jack C. Stultz presents Karen L. Kaufman with the Freedom Team Salute Commendation in gratitude of U.S. Cellular’s support of servicemembers. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Carolyn M. Kettelhut, 318th Public Affairs Operations Center)

“This is a big win for us. What we hope is it will be a big win for you,” Stultz said to Kaufman.

“We believe our strong values, and what our organization is made up of, strongly aligns with the Armed Services,” said Kaufman. “We are very committed to wanting to grow our initiative, to ensure that people who do serve our country have an opportunity to come back, work for us and be a part of the great organization we have as well. We think that it’s a good partnership for us too.”

“If we have a soldier who has a good job,” said Stultz, “we’re going to have a satisfied soldier who feels good and that soldier is going to stay in uniform.” ❖

## SOY, from page 9

it takes.”

And work they have. Obray has in put in countless hours in his preparation and it obviously paid dividends. In fact, every Best Warrior participant from the 492<sup>nd</sup> has made it to at least the USARC level. That’s a loose statistic that reflects not only upon the participants themselves, but perhaps more significantly, upon the leadership within the unit that supports their preparation. What’s more, the motor section to which Obray and his NCOIC, Hutcheson, belong has just been nominated by USARC for the Army Maintenance Excellence Award. That’s huge.

So, to summarize, the same unit that spawned this year’s Soldier of the Year has had its Soldier participants reach at least the USARC level of Best Warrior four of the seven years the event has been held. The unit has been recently heralded by the Army Reserve for the excellence of its motor maintenance section. Still further, just last summer, the 492<sup>nd</sup> Engineers constructed a beautiful covered bridge (the longest of its type in the state) for the town of Holdingford, Minn., as part of an Innovative Readiness Training (IRT) community outreach project. With these

achievements, one begins to wonder what’s in the water down there at the 492<sup>nd</sup>. Could it be Leadership Koolaid? Hutcheson offered some perspectives on the leadership challenges that our Reserve Soldiers face.

“In the active component you have more recourse to get Soldiers to do what you need them to. In the Reserves, it’s a bit different. You have to get them to want to do what you need them to. There’s a difference. Our NCOs lead with that in mind, and they do it well,” says Hutcheson. “For one thing, when you train a Soldier you need to let them experience failure. We do that, and then, we do a thorough After Action Review (AAR) and guide their self learning. That’s the way we lead.”

In witnessing the competitions, and speaking with people like Obray and Hutcheson, it seems that method works. In seeing the 492<sup>nd</sup> Engineering Company at work, it also becomes apparent that Best Warrior—that Soldier of the Year—are more than just titles awarded to individual Soldiers. They are beacons for all U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers who care to travel what is really a never ending road to excellence, regardless of what duty they have, no



Spc. Dave Obray makes a nine-line MEDEVAC call, as part of the AWT phase of the Dept. of the Army’s Best Warrior Competition, at Fort Lee, Va. (Photo by Timothy Hale, Army Reserve Public Affairs)

matter to what unit they belong.

Soldier of the Year symbolizes guided and disciplined training, attention to detail, adaptive learning, leadership by example, and an underlying culture of success. In short, it describes the best means of doing the business we do. ❖

## STAKES, from page 15

some things they can be looking for.” The Soldiers had already been training for about six months on general engineering tasks that they expected to be included in the competition. “One of the keys,” Ragusa said, “is PT. It’s also a way I encourage PT because the guys who can do the PT have an advantage and it’s designed that way. If you’re going to hump 15 miles, you need to be in shape.”

Planning for the event began about six months prior to the event itself, and although it went off, it was not executed quite as planned. The weather played an important part in the allocation of assets such as helicopter support that had to be diverted to Louisiana for Hurricane Gustav relief support. Also, the obstacle course was deemed unusable due to the amount of rain received during the week.

The competition, which began on Friday morning, culminated at the Engineer Ball on Saturday evening where the winner was announced and various awards were



Soldiers of the 489th Engineer Battalion, U.S. Army Reserve of Little Rock, AR., assemble a field antenna during the 3rd Annual Sapper Stakes competition in Little Rock, AR on 5-7 September 2008. The three-day, six-event competition is designed to train, improve and enhance the skills that Engineer Soldiers would need during a deployment. The antenna station purposely had one piece of equipment missing in order to make the Soldiers adapt and overcome the deficiency as they may have to in actual operations. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Joel Quebec, 211th MPAD, Bryan, TX)

given. Ragusa said he felt that the dining out was extremely important. “I really believe in the Army traditions.” He said. “We get away from those kinds of things because we just don’t have time. We need to make time. I’ve got the units here together training and then . . . it culminates

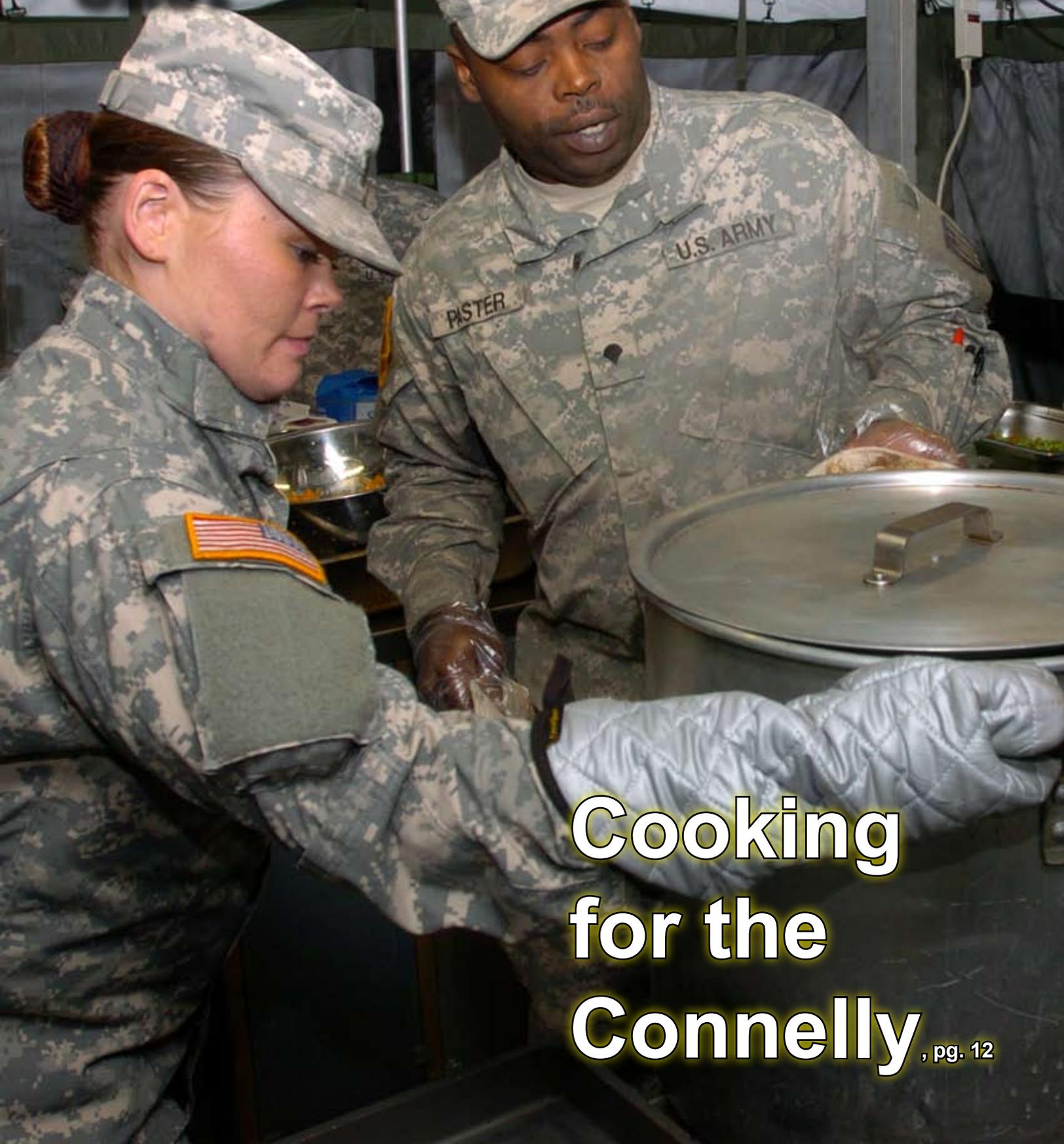
in the Ball and that’s where we present the winner. Up until the Ball they do not know who won.”

The winner of the 2008 Sapper Stakes was the 704<sup>th</sup> Route Clearance Company of Hot Springs, AR, whose team consisted of Staff Sgt. Joshua Klober, Staff Sgt. Matthew O’Neal, Cdt. Rory Garcia, Spc. John Oxford, Pfc. Barry Jewell and Pfc. Garrett Base. Besides the perpetual trophy, all of them received Army Achievement Medals for their victory.

Other participants were the 383<sup>rd</sup> Mobility Augmentation Company of Jonesboro, AR, who provided two teams; the 806<sup>th</sup> Route Clearance Company of Conway, AR, also with two teams and a combined team with Soldiers from the Headquarters and Forward Support Companies, 489<sup>th</sup> Battalion from North Little Rock, AR.

Lt. Col. Ragusa hopes that after his tenure at the 489<sup>th</sup> concludes in February, the tradition of the competition will continue. “Soldiers don’t like hanging around a Reserve Center,” he said. ❖

# Parting Shot



Cooking  
for the  
Connelly , pg. 12