Commander’s Corner

I hope you enjoy the second edition of ‘The Pride’ Newsletter. This publication is one of the many ways that we as an organization tell the 9th Mission Support Command’s story. Since taking command in January, I have had the opportunity to travel all around the region to meet many of you, from Guam to Japan, the Republic of Korea, American Samoa, Alaska, and many points in between.

What I have learned is that we are a very unique Army Reserve organization. We are an ethnically and professionally diverse force. We proudly represent the many communities of the Pacific region. However, the most important thing about the 9th Mission Support Command is we are in the right place at the right time. With the rebalance of forces to the Pacific, we as an organization have many opportunities and many new challenges. Added emphasis means added responsibilities. Each of us needs to work to ensure we are individually ready. This means medically, physically, and DMOSQ.

During my travels, I always take time for ‘strategic community engagements’ to inform political leaders and business professionals about our mission and capabilities. Back in March, I met with Hawaii Governor Neil Abercrombie, and in August I met with American Samoa Governor Lolo Matalasi Moliga. In both meetings, I had the opportunity to share 9th MSC’s structure and capabilities and how the 9th MSC contributes to the bigger picture in the Pacific.

In July, I had the tremendous opportunity to prepare meals for low income individuals with Republic of Korea-based 9th MSC Soldiers from USARPAC-SU and the 658th Regional Support Group. This experience was very rewarding not only for me, but for the other Soldiers involved. Not only do we need to be good Soldiers, but also good citizens. I want to encourage each and every one of you to get out into your local community and take part in making a difference in the lives of those who live around you. As members of your respective communities—from Alaska to Guam and all points in between—you can make an impact.

As you read through the newsletter, take a look at the different events you are involved in around the Pacific. Do you have a story to tell? If so, we want to know about it. Your story could inspire those around you to get involved as well. Who knows, you could be in the next edition of ‘The Pride.’

Pride of the Pacific!
A simulated blast and a few moments of chaos kicked off a realistic Anti-terrorism exercise (ATEX) here, Aug. 20.

The 9th Mission Support Command’s U.S. Army Reserve Theater Support Group – Pacific was the executive agent for the one-day, multi-agency exercise. Oahu-based participating units and multi-agency partners included the 9th MSC, USAR TSG – Pacific, the 303d Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, the 1984th United States Army Hospital, the 706th Ordnance Company (EOD), the Federal Fire Department and the Honolulu Police Department.

The participants had a ‘blast’ starting around 9:30 a.m. After the blast, the coordination began. Less than 10 minutes after the explosion, the fire department and the EOD team arrived on the scene. EOD moved in and quickly removed two casualties to a secure staging area.

The fire department then assessed the patients, conducted triage and on-scene treatment and evacuated each casualty by ambulance. Once the victims were removed, the EOD team went in to check the area for additional explosive devices following their tactics, techniques and procedures.

The event coincided with Anti-terrorism Awareness month and was the culmination of approximately 10 months of planning. In addition to the Oahu event, the USAR TSG – Pacific also held exercises on Maui, the Big Island, Alaska, Guam, Saipan and American Samoa.

In American Samoa, USAR TSG- Pacific personnel partnered with the Veterans Administration, the territory’s Homeland Security Department and local law enforcement.

This was the first full-scale exercise conducted by the USAR TSG – Pacific. The TSG conducted a ‘tabletop’ exercise in Nov. 2011 and participated in another tabletop with U.S. Army Garrison - Hawaii in July 2013.

Anti-terrorism exercises are one way to validate that an organization has the correct resources and trained personnel to defend against terrorist incidents.

Col. Eddie Rosado, USAR TSG – Pacific commander, was at the Oahu event to observe.

“(The Anti-terrorism Exercise) gives us an opportunity to practice our anti-terrorism plans,” Rosado said. “The ATEX is a collective, proactive effort focused on the prevention and detection of terrorist acts.”

To make the exercise more realistic, the 1984th USAH ‘moulaged’ victims with realistic looking injuries that included broken bones and the appearance of severe bleeding.

At the end of the exercise Rosado was pleased with the outcome. “The exercise has been a valuable event for all organizations involved,” said Rosado. “Next year we are looking to add more agencies (to the ATEX) and use more simulation and technology.”

The USAR TSG – Pacific provides base support and services to Pacific Army Reserve Soldiers throughout the 9th MSC’s area of responsibility.
On June 22, 2013, the 658th Regional Support Group (RSG) deployed to the Mission Command Training Center (MCTC) at Sagami Army Depot in Japan for the Pacific Pride exercise.

The purpose of the exercise was to train the staff of the 658th RSG on command post operations and mission command systems. With the help of both United States Force Japan and MCTC personnel at Sagami Army Depot, a challenging and realistic scenario was developed to train the 658th RSG staff.

The 658th RSG is a U.S. Army Reserve unit stationed in South Korea with the mission of supporting Eighth U.S. Army.

Charged with the mission of running a forward operating base in the country of Georgia, the 658th RSG was subjected to a wide array of challenging scenarios designed to test the entire staff. From indirect fire and sniper attacks to the loss of water services and suicide ideations, the 658th RSG staff was subjected to a number of realistic scenarios that they very well could encounter should they deploy.

One such scenario had a U.S. senator visit the tactical operations center while another had the 658th RSG commander, and FOB mayor, Col. Stacey Yamada, interviewed by a local media outlet. Both presented unique challenges to the entire staff that would be hard to replicate anywhere else.

Although the 658th RSG has assisted Eighth U.S. Army in the past with exercises such as Ulchi Freedom Guardian and Key Resolve, this was the first chance for the 658th RSG to go through an exercise on its own with its entire staff.

“This really is a first for us since we were activated back in October of 2011,” said Yamada. “As we refine our mission to support Eighth United States Army in South Korea, it is important that we train on these tasks so that our staff is ready to ‘fight tonight.’”
303d MEB Achieves Firsts and Milestones

Story and Photos by: Sgt. David Harthcock, 305th MPAD

The 303rd Maneuver Enhancement Brigade (MEB), 9th Mission Support Command, traveled from the middle of the Pacific Ocean to the top of the Mississippi River for their annual training event, Operation Compass Shield. 2013 held Jul. 12–Aug. 2 at Fort McCoy, Wis.

The Warrior Exercise or WAREX provided realistic battle-scenario training, included key leader engagements, convoy operations, improvised explosive device response, detainee operations, real-world engineering projects, and running a Tactical Operations Center (TOC).

871st Engineer Company Soldiers from Hilo and Maui, 63rd Brigade Support Battalion Soldiers from Las Vegas, Nev., the Oahu-based 829th Signal Company and the 302nd Quartermaster Company from Guam and Saipan also participated in the exercise.

At the conclusion of the WAREX the 303rd MEB achieved its primary goal initial operating capability (IOC).

Col. Colbert Low, commander of the 303rd MEB said that meeting initial operating capability means that the brigade would then be able have command and control of other battalions on the battlefield, such as military police, engineering, and chemical battalions.

“This is the first time that this headquarters (of the 303rd MEB) has been able to command and control all of those elements on the ground,” said Low. “It is a great experience for our soldiers because we are learning something every day.”

This annual training was the first consolidated annual training for the 303rd. There were other ‘first’ and milestones, but IOC is what made the leadership proud.

The new deputy commander, Lt. Col. Frank Hopkins, shared his perspective as a newcomer to the organization.

“The brigade was created roughly two years ago and is beginning to stand on its feet, so there was a process of getting the equipment, getting the soldiers, and then getting them trained,” said Hopkins. “This (WAREX) was our first shake-down that got us out and moving, and we are looking real good—I would say that we have surpassed initial operating capability.”

Hopkins said that this WAREX has instilled a level of confidence in the brigade soldiers that would allow them to go on to any battlefield and accomplish all that is required of a maneuver enhancement brigade.

Maj. Robert Vandertuin, civil affairs officer for the 303rd MEB, said, “from a civil affairs perspective, this WAREX has taught our soldiers how important the host-nation relationship can be to the overall mission in gaining the trust (of the local people)—and how things can turn around quickly if we are not engaging them properly.”

After a successful annual training mission, the 303rd MEB is already looking forward to next year and the goal of full operational capability.
Top Soldiers Compete for Pacific Army Reserve Best Warrior Titles

Story By: Sgt. David Harthcock, 305th MPAD
Photos By: 305th MPAD

The 9th Mission Support Command announced the winners of this year’s Pacific Army Reserve Best Warrior Competition during a ceremony May 23. Sgt. Jeremiah M. Bruce, an infantryman with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 100th Battalion, 442nd Infantry Regiment, emerged as the top Non-commissioned Officer of the year, while Spc. Justin N. Trusso, carpentry and masonry specialist with 797th Engineer Company, 411th Engineer Battalion, 9th MSC, won the battle for Soldier of the Year.

“It feels good, really good,” Bruce said. “It (the competition) brought out a lot of great warriors and a lot of great Soldiers and NCOs who I have a lot of great respect for… it was a great competition.”

Trusso explained that even with all his preparation, he was nervous he wouldn’t measure up against the other Soldiers.

“When I first got here I wasn’t sure what to expect,” said Trusso. “Everyone looked equally prepared. At one point, I was ready to give it up. But, I didn’t want to do that so I just pushed through and seized the moment.”

Command Sgt. Maj. David Yamamoto, command sergeant major for the 9th MSC, lauded all the Soldiers for their tremendous efforts.
“I told these Soldiers to step out of their comfort zone, step up to the plate, and take on new challenges, and they did,” said Yamamoto. “I have seen their faces and know who the best of the best are. They are our future. I couldn’t be any prouder.”

Bruce and Trusso are not only happy they have come out on top, but are both pleased to have represented their units well.

“It (winning the BWC) definitely brings some pride to my unit,” said Bruce, an honored member of the Purple Heart Battalion. “It’s not really so much about me as a person as it is just showing what the 100th Battalion can do.”

Trusso, a native of Yona, Guam, said, “this (win) is just another way of putting Guam on the map. My unit, the 797th Engineer Company, we’re out there, and we’re coming strong.”

Both Bruce and Trusso realize that their journey is far from over, as they will continue to prepare for the national competition.

“I am anticipating for the next level of competition (at Fort McCoy) to be a lot more intense,” said Trusso. “I know that it is a really high bar, so Sgt. Bruce and I have got a lot more training to do in order to be ready.”

For their distinguished accomplishments, the two Reservists were awarded an Army Commendation Medal and will go on to represent the 9th MSC in the U.S. Army Reserve Command Best Warrior Competition at Fort McCoy, Wis., scheduled for June 23-28.
A 9th Mission Support Command Soldier is one of seven in the entire Army Reserve honored at the 26th annual Gen. Douglas MacArthur award ceremony at the Pentagon, May 31.

1st Lt. Joseph Ruhnke was selected for the prestigious award for his exemplary leadership abilities and the immense level of commitment he demonstrated as the executive officer and commander of the 871st Engineer Company, 411th Engineer Battalion, 9th MSC.

“It’s an incredible honor to be recognized for your work,” said Ruhnke, humbly. “I come to work every day and do the best job I can, but I never expected anything in return.”

The purpose of the General Douglas MacArthur Award is to recognize officers who demonstrate the ideals of duty, honor and country. The award, along with a 15-pound, engraved bronze bust of MacArthur and an engraved, commemorative watch, was personally presented by Chief of Staff of the Army, Gen. Raymond Odierno.

Capt. Justin Montgomery, commander for the 871st En. Co., nominated Ruhnke for the award and said that it is Ruhnke’s work ethic and commitment to the unit that places him well above other Soldiers at his level.

“1st Lt. Ruhnke is an outstanding leader and the finest company grade officer I have ever served with,” said Montgomery. “He is way ahead of his peers and many senior officers, and is by far the best junior officer in the battalion, and even the entire command.”

Ruhnke spent the first quarter of 2012 serving as acting company commander for the 871st En. Co., an organization with 190 personnel that spans across three islands – Oahu, Maui and the Big Island. Once the commanding position was filled permanently by Montgomery, Ruhnke was made the company’s executive officer - a position which he still holds today.

Montgomery said that once he took over as commander, he heavily relied on Ruhnke and the relationships he had established to motivate Soldiers, staff, and senior leaders to support and accomplish the unit’s missions.

“Many leaders and staff speak of his wonderful personality, rapid and effective communication, and contend that he is a man of action,” added Montgomery.

For Ruhnke, the Soldiers are his driving force.

“There’s a certain fulfillment in leading Soldiers,” said Ruhnke. “It’s like being a teacher and being able to see them come up and make the most of themselves.”

Ruhnke also explained that he just tries to do what’s right and live the Army Values.

“I don’t have a magical to-do list to be nominated for this award,” said Ruhnke. “I believe that if you take care of your Soldiers, they will take care of you, and that you shouldn’t ask something of someone that you wouldn’t do yourself… the respect will follow.”

The 871st En. Co. is tasked to mobilize and deploy to theater operations to construct base camps, internment facilities, and other vertical infrastructure. Their mission also includes humanitarian civic action projects throughout the world, including places like Indonesia for the 9th MSC’s annual Garuda Shield exercise.
Soldiers of the 658th Regional Support Group, 9th Mission Support Command, and U.S. Army Pacific - Support Unit, along with Korean volunteers, helped in the effort to foster good relations with the local South Korean community by serving food to the homeless as part of the 8th Army’s Good Neighbor Program, July 20.

“The Good Neighbor Program is important because it allows the U.S. forces an opportunity to return the same goodwill and hospitality that we received from the Korean community,” said Col. Stacey Yamada, commander for the 658th RSG. “It also shows to the local community that we care and want to give back in a positive way.”
September is Army Suicide Prevention Month

Every single suicide is a tragic loss to the Army Family. But with your help, it can be prevented! Here’s how:

Still have questions?

Attend the 9th MSC’s Suicide Prevention Stand-Down training in the Assembly Hall (Bldg 1554) on Sept. 8 from 1-2:30 p.m. to hear from Hawaii’s legendary ukulele instructor on how we can prevent the tragedy that continues to deeply trouble our force.

Standing ‘Shoulder to Shoulder’ with the 9th Mission Support Command for Suicide Prevention!
Congratulations to the following Soldiers for being selected to represent the 9th MSC at the 2013 Army Ten-Miler on Oct. 20, in Washington, D.C.!

CPT Christopher Tung  
1LT Kevin Sciba  
1LT Kevin Tran  
SPC Mahmood Mokhayesh  
SGT Matthew Segault  
1SG Miguel Baez  
2LT Jonathan Tsujimura  
SFC Richard Ah Nee  
LTC Mark Woommavovah  
LTC Paul Viator  
COL Coswin Saito  
SSG Wayne Darmand  
1LT Laurel Sullivan  
SSG Michael Camacho  
1LT John McGowan  
SGT Jemel Santiago  
SGT Janelle Drennan  
SPC Daisy Lee  
SSG Caren Evangelista  
CPT Angela Reddick  
SSG Maria Two Crow  
2LT Kara Dreflak  
1LT Christina Sewell  
SPC Analisa Almazan  
MSG Eugene Fontanilla  
SGT Michael Ordenez  
SPC Jomar Matias  
SGT Ed Martinez  
SGT Mario Quintero  
SPC Sunho Pak  
SGT Michael Fleming  
1LT Harold Herradura  
SPC Jonathan Schurz (Alt.)  
SPC Weston Yamada (Alt.)  
SPC Vivian Patague (Alt.)  
SPC James Duff (Alt.)  
SSG William McLin (Alt.)  
CPT Liana Kim (Alt.)  
LTC Kevin Koch (Alt.)  

Good Luck!

**2012 9th MSC Army 10-miler team pictured here**
Shortly after assuming his post as Sergeant Major of the Army, Raymond Chandler challenged the Noncommissioned Officer Corps to get “back to basics.”

Since issuing that challenge, volumes have been written by legions of senior NCOs about what back to basics means and how to get back to a point where basics are routine.

There is a saying that has become so colloquial that it defies attribution: “Do routine things routinely.” My point here is that if we do not enforce and execute simple basic standards, then as leaders, we are failing our Army, our Soldiers and ourselves.

What excuse can we possibly make for not enforcing the standards? During a visit to the Army’s Sergeants Major Academy, Chandler proffered to stop blaming the war for discipline problems in the ranks. Truly, the greater part of an Army generation has grown up in a time of persistent conflict. However, this fact is not an excuse for a decline in discipline.

The ground truth is persistent conflict has taken a toll on standards and discipline. This fact is inexcusable. In times of conflict, discipline is all the more paramount. It is directly tied to mission accomplishment and survivability on the battlefield. Our conventional force can ill afford to allow standards to slip. I emphasize conventional force because unconventional forces, i.e., special operations, are generally comprised of more senior and seasoned Soldiers who operate under a different set of environmental circumstances.

Our conventional force, which experiences the constant flow of new, young Soldiers, must maintain itself by the virtues and attributes attained only through the intelligent and savvy upholding of standards by all leaders.

Upholding standards is a two-way responsibility. The obligation of leaders to regularly counsel their Soldiers is non-negotiable. The responsibility of junior Soldiers to energetically and proudly adhere to standards is not only required, but should be expected.

A disturbing trend I’ve noticed over the last few years is for some Soldiers to take offense to an on-the-spot correction, no matter how gently or gingerly it is done. At times, leaders of these Soldiers will run to their side to defend their feelings when they ought to be reinforcing the standard.

Leaders must not back down in the face of this type of friction. Many are simply overwrought and would rather avoid the potential conflict. The right answer is to remain professional, and when met with a less than professional response, indicate to the offender that the situation is about to turn into “something else.” What lies at the crux of this matter is when our youngest warriors are allowed to pick and choose their own standards. Given the choice, they will invariably choose the wrong standard at the wrong time.

We must always remember that we are being most closely watched by our subordinates. What is important to us will be what becomes important to them. We must maintain ourselves, as leaders, accordingly.

With the war in Iraq virtually a memory and the war in Afghanistan winding down, we are on the cusp of a whole new military generation. Great pains must be taken to ensure that we raise them up right.

Raising this new generation will not be easy. History has shown that in a short period of time our combat veterans will become a small percentage of the ranks. Those who came after us will soon be us.

Today’s privates are tomorrow’s leaders. We must ensure that they are well equipped and prepared to lead into the next conflict.
From the JAG Office

In July, the 9th Mission Support Command conducted three separation boards in Guam. These were the first non-judicial boards conducted by the Army Reserve in Guam in recent memory. All three of the boards were triggered because the service members had tested positive for use of THC, the active narcotic ingredient in marijuana. All of the boards resulted in a separation of the service member from the Army. In the past, Soldiers in Guam or Saipan who tested positive for use of an illegal drug were flown to Hawaii for their separation board. This practice may have led some service members to mistakenly believe that the Army Reserve does not take drug abuse in Guam and Saipan seriously. This policy also unfortunately lead to Reserve officers in Guam and Saipan not being given the opportunity to serve on an administrative separation board. The boards conducted in Guam proved to be a good training experience for the board members, the officer corps in Guam and helped reinforce the Army’s existing policy that drug abuse will always be taken seriously, no matter where such abuse occurs.

Upcoming Events

Oahu**
- iRun 25K in Kailua - Oct. 6
- HMSA 30K @ Kapiolani Park - Oct. 27
- Color Vibe 5K @ Aloha Stadium - Nov. 11
- Val Nolasco Half Marathon @ Kapiolani Park - Nov. 17
- Honolulu Marathon @ Kapiolani Park - Dec. 8

** Contact Veronica Roberts at 438-1600 ext 3119 or veronica.d.roberts.mil@mail.mil to participate.

Congratulations to the following Soldiers:

**Promotions:**
- SSG Jaylene Hamilton
- SGT Nalu Emperado
- SSG John Tufa
- SSG Christopherrobi Domingo
- SSG Jameskennedy Benjamin
- SSG Douglas Miyasato
- SGT Joseph Atuatasi
- SGT Faamanuliaga Areta
- SSG Laauli Tima
- SGT Soai Asaeli
- SSG Diana Maea
- SGT Derek Zacharias
- SSG Walter Ganal
- SSG Matthew Tolbe
- SGT Reid Hicks
- SGT Sean Barnes
- SSG Ronald Bristo
- SGT Ryan Lothspeich
- SSG Melvin Nguyen
- SSG Kiana Kahea
- Mr. Magno M. Manzano Jr.
- Mr. Seth T. Stoddard

**Promotions (cont.):**
- SSG Nadine Concepcion-Reyes
- SGT David Harthcock
- SSG Jose Munizrobles
- SGT Jonathan Laupapa
- SGT Luz Paguada
- SSG Jordan Martin
- SGT Princips Fong
- SGT Jomar Matias
- SSG Lance Skewis
- Mr. Manuel s. Ramalho Jr.
- Mr. Christopher A. Nelson

**Awards:**
- SFC Mike Amilale, MSM
- SFC Charlyn Cintron, MSM
- SGT Nadine Concepcion-Reyes, MSM
- SGT Jeramy Fortuna, ARCOM
- COL Randy Hart, MSM
- MSG Reginald Jefferson, MSM
- CPT Robert Kepa, MSM
- MSG Jason Peeples, MSM
- MSG Andres Sepulveda, MSM
- CPT Christopher Tison, MSM

In July, the 9th Mission Support Command conducted three separation boards in Guam. These were the first non-judicial boards conducted by the Army Reserve in Guam in recent memory. All three of the boards were triggered because the service members had tested positive for use of THC, the active narcotic ingredient in marijuana. All of the boards resulted in a separation of the service member from the Army. In the past, Soldiers in Guam or Saipan who tested positive for use of an illegal drug were flown to Hawaii for their separation board. This practice may have led some service members to mistakenly believe that the Army Reserve does not take drug abuse in Guam and Saipan seriously. This policy also unfortunately lead to Reserve officers in Guam and Saipan not being given the opportunity to serve on an administrative separation board. The boards conducted in Guam proved to be a good training experience for the board members, the officer corps in Guam and helped reinforce the Army’s existing policy that drug abuse will always be taken seriously, no matter where such abuse occurs.
Top Photos of the Quarter

3rd Place Winner
Submitted by: Capt. Donna Naupoto
302nd TTB
8th Theater Sustainment Command performs NCODP on the 548th's LSV-7.

2nd Place Winner
Submitted by: Col. Thomas C. McClurkin, Jr.
9th MSC
9th MSC Soldiers walk the beaches of beautiful American Samoa.

Congratulations, Sgt. 1st Class Brian Breaker, 1st Place Winner!

Master Sgt. Evelyn Mills from the 658th RSG delivers food to a community member in South Korea as part of the unit's Good Neighbor Program.

Thank you to Everyone Who Submitted!