

5th Signal Command

2005

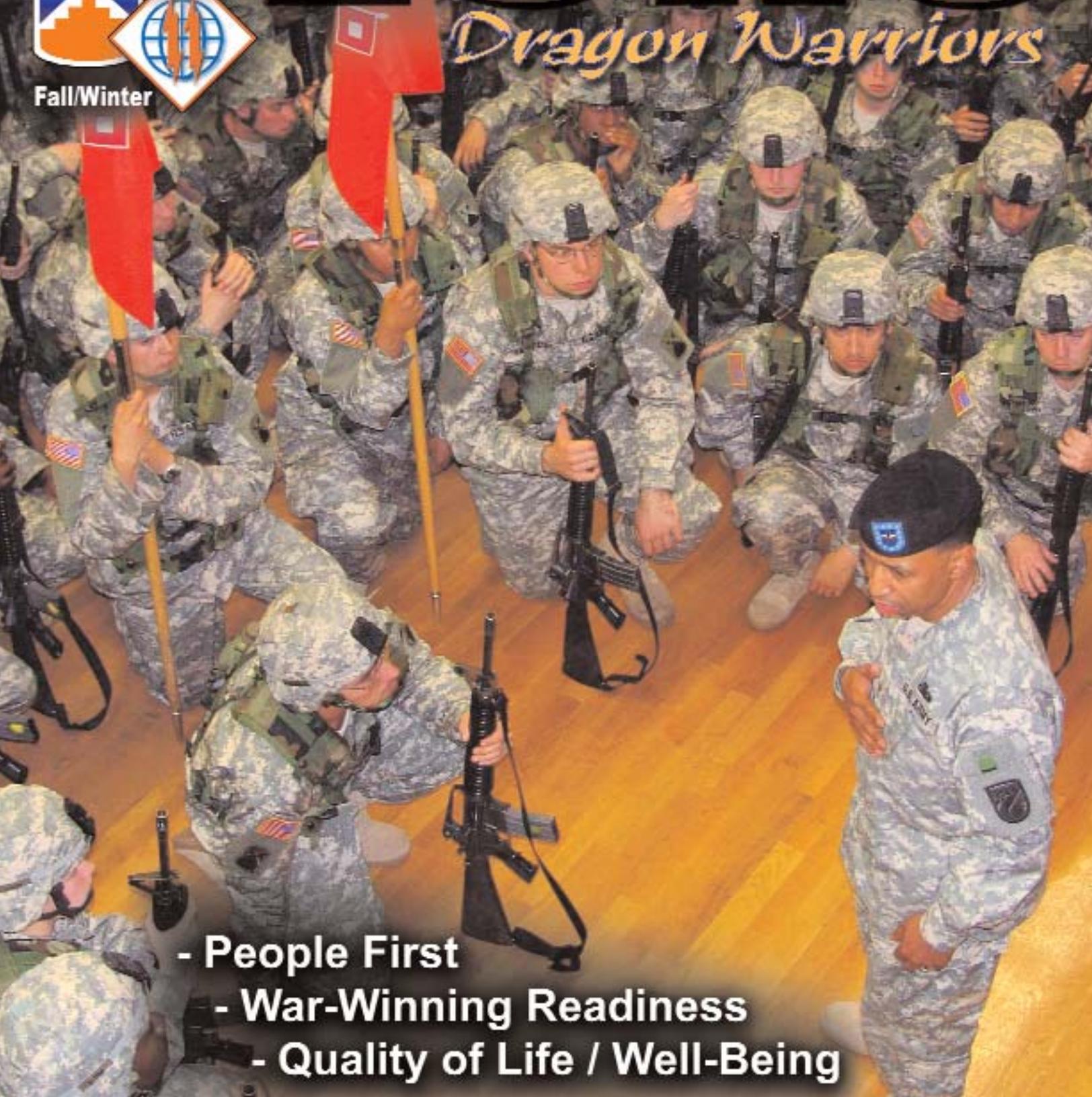


ECHO

Dragon Warriors



Fall/Winter



- People First
- War-Winning Readiness
- Quality of Life / Well-Being

From the Commanding General

The greatest honor bestowed upon an officer serving in our great Army today is the privilege of command. Inherent with this privilege, is the trust and sacred responsibility given to the commander for leading and caring for America's most precious resource - its sons and daughters. As your Commanding General, I am very proud, humbled, and deeply honored to be presented this distinct privilege by your Army, and to join the ranks of the magnificent Soldiers, civilians, and family members of the 5th Signal Command and United States Army, Europe, CIO/G6.

As I stated at the change-of-command ceremony, I commit to you, the 5th Signal Command team, to do my very best everyday to provide you steadfast leadership, to demonstrate genuine concern for you and your families, and to always ensure we are trained and ready to safely deploy and accomplish our mission anytime and anyplace in the world. This is my personal mission.

I shared my command priorities for the command and USAREUR G6 during a series of All-Hands sessions held in August. These priorities are: **PEOPLE FIRST; WAR-WINNING READINESS; AND QUALITY OF LIFE / WELL-BEING**. They form the foundation of my command and leadership philosophy.

In all that we do, everyday, we must take care of our **People**, who in turn, enable us to accomplish our mission. As General B. B. Bell stated, "Our business is People... everything else is mildly interesting." We must invest everyday in our Soldiers to ensure they are trained, confident, combat focused, and ready to safely deploy to the next battlefield, execute their mission and return home to their families. This is **War-Winning Readiness**. Our families are combat multipliers, and are a critical component of unit readiness. As leaders, we owe them a safe and wholesome **Quality of Life / Well-being** commensurate to the selfless sacrifice they demonstrate daily in support of their Soldier, our Army, and our Nation. An essential aspect of all three of these priorities is a positive, caring, and supportive command climate where every member of the command is treated with dignity and respect. I am committed to establishing this command climate and work environment for all members of this command.

Our Army remains at war while transforming. This is not new to any of you, for while serving here in USAREUR, you live this everyday - whether as a Soldier or civilian currently deployed, preparing to deploy, or redeploying in support of Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom, as a signal team fielding a new Phoenix satellite terminal, or a civilian or local national employee installing



fiber optic cables on a future installation, or serving on the night shift in the Theater Network Operations Center.

Whatever scenario you find yourself, I want to personally thank you for your enduring commitment, your absolute selfless service, and your personal sacrifice. You represent what is best about our Army and 5th Signal Command, and you have earned the respect and admiration of the American people. Thanks for staying the course.

This edition of the ECHO showcases our **People** - our magnificent Soldiers, civilians, and family members; our **War-Winning Readiness** in the Global War on Terrorism; and our efforts to provide them a premier **Quality of Life / Well-Being**. We also celebrate our Army's time-honored tradition of change-of-command ceremonies. I hope that you will enjoy reading about our missions and contributions.

In closing, I am excited and very proud to be a Soldier and a member of the Dragon Warrior Team. My wife, Linda, and I are impressed with our leaders, Soldiers, civilians, and are equally impressed with the wonderful families we've met. We face significant challenges ahead; however, we are working hard to set the conditions to ensure our success. It is absolutely vital that we lead and serve from a foundation of trust and integrity; build on our successes; and sustain our forward momentum to realize the vision of USAREUR and 7th Army. I look forward to working to achieve our goals together as a **TEAM!**

“Dragon Warriors, Any Mission, Anywhere!”

DENNIS L. VIA
Brigadier General, USA
Commanding

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Photo by Sieg Heppner, U.S. Army Garrison, Mannheim

Cover Photo -- Brig. Gen. Dennis L. Via, commander, 5th Signal Command, addresses 72nd Signal Battalion Soldiers at the battalion's colors casing ceremony Nov. 9. Via assured the troops that their families will be cared for while they are deployed. He said, "Your families are my responsibility. They are my mission. I will make sure they are cared for so you can accomplish your mission."

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Signal Soldier Saves Lives After Rocket Attack

Staff Sgt. Nicole Blakeslee
Acting Editor, ECHO

In the war against terrorism, it has become increasingly more common for combat service and combat service support Soldiers to see action and put their core combat skills to the test.

So when Staff Sgt. Peter Stodgel's team began receiving rocket fire, he knew just how to react. On the morning of June 8, his team was waiting to unload supplies from a CH-47 Chinook helicopter at the Shkin, Afghanistan, Forward Operating Base.

Just as the helicopter landed, the area began receiving 107mm rocket fire from the Pakistani border region. The first rocket hit only feet away from Stodgel's position.

"We really didn't know what happened at first," he said.

At the time of the first rocket attack, he was situated in a Bobcat forklift near the helicopter. The Chinook received extensive damage to the engine and body.

"I thought maybe someone dropped a grenade while getting out of the helicopter. After the dust settled, I realized what happened," said Stodgel. "The helicopter was falling apart, and my Soldiers were lying on the ground face down."

Several of his Soldiers were seriously injured, so he reacted quickly. Despite his own injuries, he rushed to their aid.

"I noticed Spc. (Michael) Kelly was lying on the ground on his belly. I ran over to check his injuries, and he was hurt very badly. His clothes were saturated with blood on both his back and side. I quickly administered first aid. I also noticed Pfc. (Emanuel) Hernandez needed immediate medical attention, so I rushed over to check out how he was doing. His leg was severed and his head was injured," Stodgel remembered. "It was so hard to give first aid because more rockets were exploding."

More than six rockets ended up impacting the Provincial Reconstruction Team site where they were located.

"The situation was becoming increasingly more dangerous and everyone was thinking about running, but you have to stay strong for the Soldiers. I went and got a nearby vehicle to transport the injured Soldiers to the aid station," Stodgel said. "All I was thinking was, 'I need to get them fixed and out of here.'"

After the attack ceased, he refused medical attention for himself and continued to provide aid to his comrades.

"I had to help the others. I'm a noncommissioned officer and that's what we do," he said.

When the medical evacuation aircraft arrived to take the wounded Soldiers to FOB Salerno for further treatment, Stodgel was right there to assist in every way.

"I did my best, and it all went real well, thanks to my military training," he said. "As a drill sergeant, I was constantly reinforcing first aid skills with my Soldiers."



Photo Courtesy of the 44th Signal Battalion

Staff Sgt. Peter Stodgel gives a speech after receiving the Army Commendation Medal with "V" device and the Purple Heart for his heroic actions and injuries after a rocket attack June 8.

In all, more than 15 Soldiers were injured during the attack. After the last of them were transported to the hospital, Stodgel finally had his wounds examined.

His injuries were serious. Six inches of shrapnel had pierced his left side, just above the hip, and cut his kidney. When the PRT emergency doctor realized the extent of his injuries, he immediately called for an aircraft to take Stodgel to FOB Salerno Hospital.

Lt. Col. David Barber, a doctor at the hospital, credited Stodgel with helping to save the lives of his Soldiers due to his quick reactions and unwillingness to quit in the face of danger.

"I can't stress enough the importance of teaching Soldiers these valuable combat skills because they save lives – they did that day," Stodgel said.

On Sept. 20, he was awarded an Army Commendation Medal with "V" device for valor for his actions that day. He also received a Purple Heart for his wounds received during the attack.

"I'm no hero because I was just doing my job," said Stodgel, being modest. "In the Soldier's Creed it states, 'I will never leave a fallen comrade' and as a NCO, I wasn't about to."

Stodgel has served 11 years on active duty and 10 years in the Army Reserve. During his award ceremony, he took the opportunity to set the example for his Soldiers by reenlisting.

"You have to like what you're doing in order to stay," he said. "I wanted to show the Soldiers, all Soldiers, you can't quit. We are making a difference in Afghanistan and in this war on terrorism."

Editor's Note: Staff Sgt. Peter Stodgel is a member of Company A, 44th Signal Battalion, 7th Signal Brigade. He is currently deployed to Afghanistan and serves as the NCO in Charge for the Shkin, Afghanistan, Provincial Reconstruction Team Traffic Terminal.

TFL Soldier becomes an AMERICAN CITIZEN

Staff Sgt. Nicole Blakeslee
Acting Editor, ECHO

On June 6, a 44th Signal Battalion Soldier received her Certificate of Naturalization, a task not easily realized.

Spc. Gloria Velazquez, a prescribed load list clerk who is currently deployed to Afghanistan with Company B, 44th Sig. Bn., Task Force Lightning, was eagerly waiting to become an American citizen all her life.

She was born in Guatemala City, Guatemala, and came to America when she was only six years old to live with her mother.

"I waited years to come to the states to live with my mother, and when I finally did, our new life had begun," said Velazquez.

However, it was not easy for her or her family.

"When I was younger, I never realized how important it was to be an American citizen. Because I wasn't, I had problems in high school, and I couldn't attend college or really get a job," she said. "At Weehawken High School (in New Jersey), I met great people who helped me take my first steps to get where I am now. These people were my principal, teachers and friends who hired a lawyer and who gave me a scholarship to attend college."

A part of her journey in America was to become an American Soldier. She enlisted in the Army on Oct. 21, 2003.

"I always wanted to join the armed forces. I always felt our military has a very important role in the shaping of America," she said. "I wanted to be a part of something that great."

Velazquez applied for her citizenship and received notice to appear at the Immigration and Naturalization Service just before her unit deployed to Afghanistan last February.

"I was very concerned that I would miss my appointment back in New Jersey because I was downrange," she said, "but thanks to my command and their support,

I was able to get home for the interview."

A lot of effort and coordination, at all levels of the chain of command, went into ensuring she was able complete her citizenship process. During the interview, she had to demonstrate her English, reading and writing skills and her overall knowledge of American history and government.

"I think one of the most nerve-racking moments in my life was when I was taken into one of the back rooms and the questions began," said Velazquez.

"After I heard those sweet words that I passed the interview, a big load was taken off my back. I was so excited when they finally swore me in."

Her commander is as equally proud that she completed the process.

"I am very proud to have Spc. Velazquez in my company. She is a very

motivated Soldier with a great attitude," said Capt. Stephen Wellein, commander, B. Co., 44th Sig. Bn. "She joined another nation's Army and deployed in support of the war. It's impressive. She became an American Soldier the day she put the uniform on, and now, she's an American citizen."

Now with her new citizenship, Velazquez plans to reenlist and continue serving her country.

"When my window opens, I will reenlist. I have sworn to protect my country, so I will continue to do so," she said. "For all the others who are waiting to become a citizen also, I say, 'don't give up! At times it may seem like it will never happen, but like they say, good things happen to those who wait.'"

"When my window opens, I will reenlist. I have sworn to protect my country, so I will continue to do so."

-- Spc. Gloria Velazquez
44th Signal Battalion

Editor's Note: Some information in this article was provided by Sgt. 1st Class Reggero Pezoli, 44th Signal Battalion, Task Force Lightning.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Reggero Pezoli, 44th Signal Battalion

Spc. Gloria Velazquez, a prescribed load list clerk for 44th Signal Battalion's Task Force Lightning, is currently deployed to Afghanistan. On June 6, she became an American citizen and will continue to serve her country by reenlisting.

Hurricane Aftermath

Katrina, Rita hit home for members of the 5th Signal Command family

**5th Signal Command PAO
Staff Report**

As an unforgiving hurricane season has passed, the remains of the record-breaking storm season will linger a bit longer as clean-up efforts continue and as people piece their lives back together.

This year's hurricane season wreaked havoc across the United States, especially in the Gulf Coast region. Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma lashed the coasts from Florida to Texas and many areas more than once.

In the wake of these violent storms, 5th Signal Command Soldiers, civilians and family members, although far from home, felt the impact. Below are two stories of how these hurricanes hit home.

Feeling the wrath thousands of miles away

Dennis LeBlanc, 5th Sig. Cmd., G4, looks at the pictures in disbelief and frustration.

What he once called home is now just one of the thousands of homes in what appears to be a war zone in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. LeBlanc's home is in New Orleans, just blocks from where the 17th Street levee ruptured and spilled the waters of Lake Ponchartrain into the city.

He bought the house in 1986 and lived there with his wife and family until 1994 when he moved to Germany. It served as both home and investment nest egg for him. The tenants who were renting his house evacuated New Orleans for Dallas before the storms hit. As he scrolls through over 400 pictures of his home, his neighborhood and New Orleans that his son posted to a photo share Web site, he tries to plan how he will be able to get his home rebuilt; a job made all the more difficult by the fact that he is one ocean and seven time zones away from the problem.

Yet, he realizes some good fortune among the gloom. His family in the area all survived the storm and except for the major appliances, his personal possessions were not stored in the house. Still, the jobs of cleaning and repairing or rebuilding the home are daunting and expensive.

LeBlanc said, "The contractor that my mother is using for her home, is (recommended) through a friend of the family and is charging \$7,000 just to tear and drag everything out."

His son and other relatives help as they can, but they also have their families and properties to repair.

In 1986, Dennis LeBlanc, 5th Signal Command, G4, bought this house in New Orleans. It is located only blocks from where the 17th Street levee broke and flooded the city during Hurricane Katrina's destruction in September. LeBlanc, who now lives in Germany, was renting the property. The house was saturated with water from the flood, and mildew covered everything. Left, LeBlanc surveys the damage to his property.



Photo by Andrew LeBlanc

"I go home and spend two plus hours on the phone every night," says LeBlanc, "calling people, seeing what's wrong, who can do this ..."

He took leave in October to go to New Orleans and get his situation under control, but his efforts were hampered by a curfew and the fact that there was still no power or water in the neighborhood.

"At night it is pitch black, a ghost town. The curfew for our area is 6 o'clock at night. You have to be out (of the neighborhood)," LeBlanc said.

Soldier uses leave to volunteer at hurricane shelter

"Volunteers are still needed at the Hirsch. Time donations ranging from a few hours to a few weeks are needed. There is a real need for volunteers with computer skills that can commit to up to two full weeks of shift work in computer services and other areas at the Hirsch. Computer help with the following services is needed: Missing Person Research, Housing Assistance, Employment Assistance, Registration, Data Entry, and Network Troubleshooting." - From the Red Cross Web site for the Hirsch Coliseum Red Cross Shelter, Shreveport, LA.

Sgt. 1st Class Mercedes Benson was attending the Advanced Noncommissioned Officers Course at Ft Gordon, Ga. when Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast. After completing ANCOC, the U.S. Army Europe Theater Communications Security Manager was scheduled for some much-needed leave. Her destination was Shreveport, LA.

Shreveport was also one of the destinations for many people evacuating the Gulf Coast to escape Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Benson did not find much rest and relaxation there. When she heard of the need for volunteer services, she went to the Red Cross and was put right to work. There were about 350 people in the shelter following Katrina, but when Rita struck, the number grew to almost 700, many from the Houston area.

When she first started working at the shelter, she answered telephones; after that, she helped with registration and worked the floor. This entailed orienting families with the services such as healthcare and showers within the coliseum and setting up beds for evacuees. The registration process was critical.

Her efforts, combined with those of the other local and national volunteers, "reunited hundreds of missing children, grandparents, fathers, mothers, nursing home and hospital patients on behalf of guests at the Hirsch," according to the Red Cross Web site.



Photo Courtesy of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Hurricanes devastated the United States this year. Above, an aerial photograph of a hurricane. For more photographs and information about hurricanes, log on to www.noaa.org. Below, each room in Dennis LeBlanc's New Orleans home reveals the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. From peeling wallpaper to toxic waste, clean-up efforts after this storm season will continue for a long time.

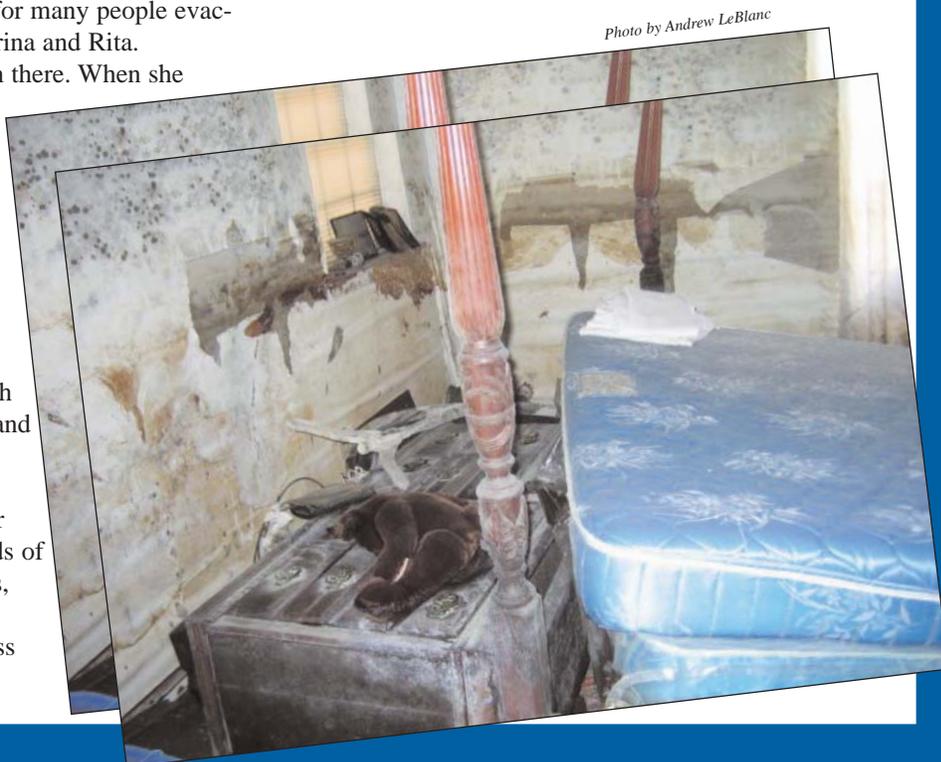


Photo by Andrew LeBlanc

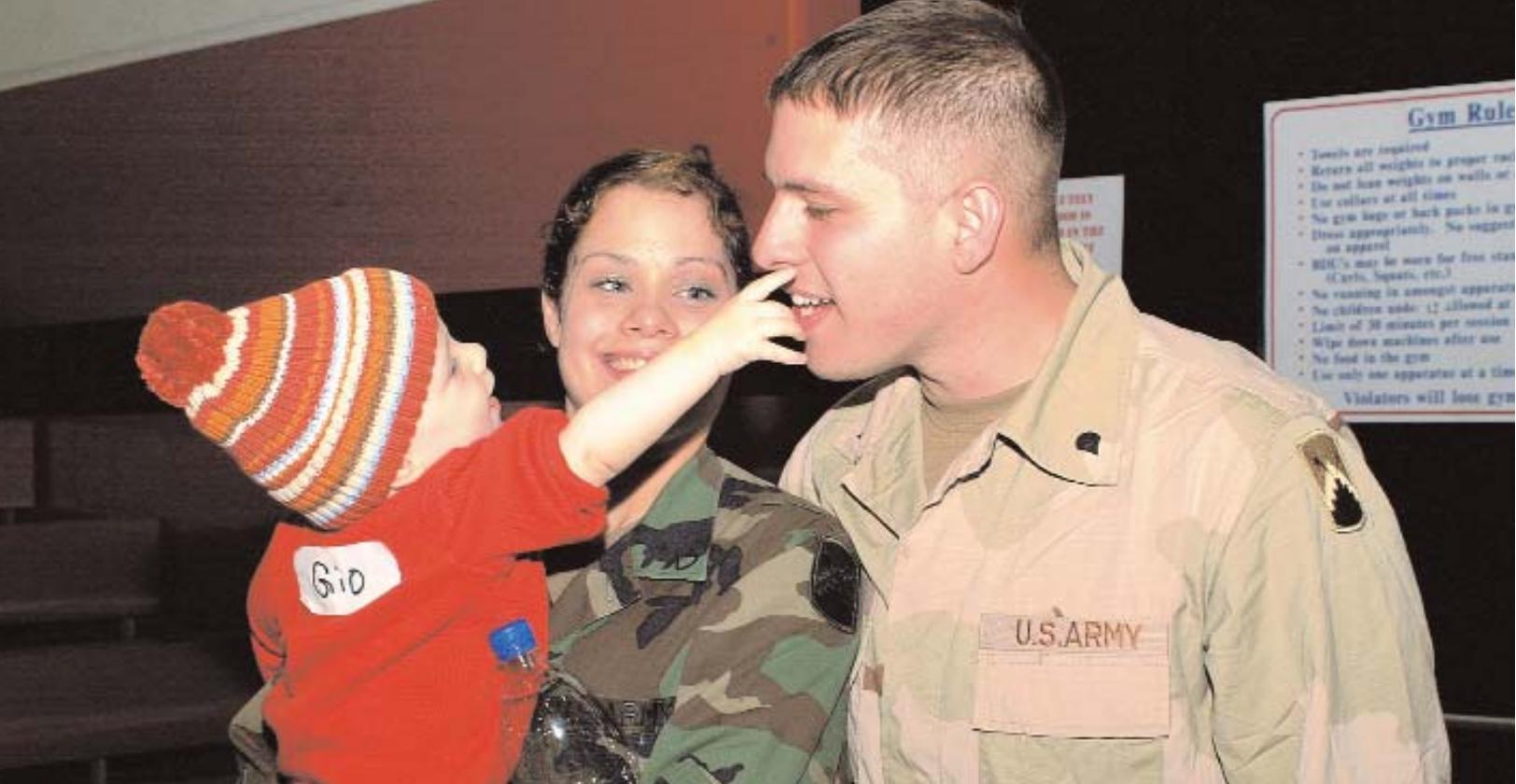


Photo by Sgt. Anissa Soto-feliciano, 5th Signal Command, PAO

At a 44th Signal Battalion welcome home ceremony in October, Spc. Mario Urias met his son, Gio, for the first time. His wife, Sara, also a 44th Sig. Bn. Soldier, smiles through tear-filled eyes as they discover each other.

Welcome Home Daddy

Spc. A. M. Sword
44th Signal Battalion

Since 44th Signal Battalion's year-long mission in Afghanistan began, Spc. Mario Urias, Company A, never had the opportunity to meet his son, Gio, who was born just a week after he deployed.

Yet, meeting the mental challenge of being apart eased through Warrior Ethos, he recalled. And, he added, warrior spirit inspired teamwork for the battalion's mission although they were separated from family and friends.

"Good teamwork kept me focused," said Urias, multi-system communications operator. "We figured we'd be out here a year, so we made the best of it."

While more than 200 Task Force Lightning Soldiers teamed to provide reliable communications support for our allies, family stories were exchanged and photos were sent for moral support.

"My wife would send me pictures of Gio each month to help me see him through her eyes," explained Urias. "For the same reason, she would place pictures of me around the baby's crib."

Now back home, those pictures bond a face with a voice, which has made their reunion much easier, according to Pfc. Sara Urias, a multi-system communications operator, Headquarters and Headquarters Company.

"Gio has really warmed up to my husband, quickly. That, by itself, warms my heart," said Sara.

But between separation and reunion, Sara and her husband feared their unity. In fact, it was the biggest emotional demand shared during his deployment.

"We were so afraid of Gio being scared of me," said Mario.

"It was both scary and exciting the first time we saw one another at the welcome home ceremony because I was unsure of how he would react to me. But now after being home awhile, I always find ways to make him laugh. We play peak-a-boo and he pats me on the back while we watch television. It's his way of giving me a hug."

Throughout his 8-month deployment, their being in the same unit, with the same friends and job, knit Mario and Sara's steadfast bond. Unit support from the battalion Family Readiness Group, also helped to raise her morale.

"The Soldiers helped each other out with moral support. It was comforting to know that I was not the only one in the 44th going through stressful times," said Sara. "It was also good to know that I was not the only one who cared about the Soldiers, like my husband, who were in remote areas. The FRG kept me updated on how my husband was doing."

Similarly, the Family Advocacy Program taught her helpful tips to give herself a break, how to keep a positive outlook and an open mind during the stressful times while her husband was deployed. Together, command and community support gave her the spare energy to play with Gio and to enjoy life more.

"Now that we're finally together, we're happy and complete," said Mario. "We both have a lot of pride in being part of what our nation's military stands for, especially since our families were part of the fight in World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War."

And now, Mario and Sara are continuing that same tradition.

Husband, Wife Team Tackles the Links

Capt. Ian MacLeod
255th Signal Detachment
Keith Fenske
102nd Signal Battalion

His last nine holes of the tournament were a testament of why he is a champion. With two birdies on the last nine, including a clincher on the 18th, Jeffery finished his final nine of the tournament on-par with a 36.

His success comes from great skill and relentless hours of practice, but it is greatly enhanced by the support of his loving wife Sally. "She is just great," exclaimed Jeffery, "I could not have done it without her."

Golf is generally not considered a team sport. However, a Darmstadt-based signal Soldier and his wife demonstrated how teaming up on the course has its rewards.

Staff Sgt. Jeffery Hallauer, 255th Signal Detachment, 102nd Signal Battalion, won his second consecutive and third overall Army Europe Golf Championship title in Stuttgart July 21. Victory was realized though the help of his teammate and soul mate, Sally Hallauer.

This team, which began nearly 16 years ago when they married, encountered a rocky road to victory for the last 27 holes of the contest. Sally, who was her husband's caddy, inspired him to catch fire on the links and finish with a two-stroke lead over the runner up.

Sally has caddied for Jeffery on numerous occasions. In fact, two of the three Army Europe Golf Championship titles he has won have been with her at his side.

Sally, now working in the local Darmstadt area, accompanies her husband to as many tournaments as possible. "Her goal is to be a full-time housewife," said Jeffery, "but I told her in that case she would also become my fulltime caddy."

"I could not have done it without her."

-- Staff Sgt. Jeffery Hallauer
255th Signal Detachment

After the first day's 18 holes, Jeffery finished with a less than stellar 10 over par. Knowing that continued performances like that would not get him on the leader's board, he was disheartened. Even when things looked hopeless, Sally kept him in the match and lifted his spirit to begin his second day.

Her unwavering support for her husband paid great dividends. Jeffery improved his game by 10 strokes, finishing on-par for day two, an impressive gain at any level. The 10-stroke improvement from the previous day left him within only one stroke of the lead.

With Sally at his side, they began day three of the tournament with a new sense of hope and optimism.



Staff Sgt. Jeffery Hallauer and his wife, Sally Hallauer, embrace after a birdie on the 18th hole winning the 2005 United States Army, Europe, Golf Tournament.

Photo by Hugh McBride, U.S. Army Garrison, Stuttgart

TFL Soldiers win hearts, minds in Afghanistan

Spc. Timothy Beckwith and Spc. Elizabeth Navarro
44th Signal Battalion, Task Force Lightning

A convoy of 12 vehicles rolls out of the relative safety of Bagram Airfield to brave the Afghanistan countryside. The views are stunning as many Soldiers of the convoy probably have pictured Afghanistan as all desert with images of "Lawrence of Arabia" standing out in their minds.

The small towns are lively, with bustling locals working hard to build up their homes and businesses, merchants selling their goods, and children of all ages playing in the fields. These sites are an invited change from the days past when the Taliban's oppression and tyrant rule were rampant throughout the country.

The convoy is primarily made up of the Parwan Provincial Reconstruction Team responsible for many humanitarian missions surrounding Bagram and throughout the Parwan province. However, this time they are joined by members of 44th Signal Battalion Task Force Lightning's (TFL) Hawks.

The team is made up of many MOSs responsible for the installation, maintenance, operation, and support of tactical communication packages throughout the area.

"Although communication support is our primary responsibility, the Hawks have joined the Parwan PRT in order to assist in humanitarian assistance and help the coalition forces win the hearts and minds of the Afghan people," said Capt. Jason KinKaid, commander, HHC, TFL. "With our systems up



and running smoothly, sustaining them is our primary focus, but (these humanitarian missions) leave the Soldiers with a sense of having a direct impact on the success of Operation Enduring Freedom."

The convoy soon arrives at the

"I believe that it will be the children, most of all, who will remember our support during these hard times."

-- Sgt. Aaron Jenks
44th Signal Battalion, TFL



Photos by Cpl. Serge Baryshin, 44th Signal Battalion

Spc. Timothy Beckwith, 44th Signal Battalion, gives out backpacks during a humanitarian mission at an all-girls school in Afghanistan. Below, two Afghan boys receive backpacks with school supplies during a Task Force Lightning humanitarian mission in Afghanistan during July.

first stop of the day, Nasaji, at an all girls' school. Backpacks and small toys are handed out to the students by the Hawks while contractors conduct an inspection of the newly built school house. The students are excited to receive the gifts and the teachers are appreciative of the support.

"Although some members of the team have to stay back and maintain security of the vehicles, everyone has the opportunity to interact with the local nationals. Although the language difference is a barrier, everyone soon finds ways to overcome this problem and they are able to leave a lasting impression on the children of the school house," said Spc. Elizabeth Navarro, TFL.

Their next stop was lunch served at a local contractor's home. A feast grand enough for royalty is provided to everyone in the convoy, but even the lunch could not top the discussion the team was involved in about each other's cultures, the war, and the future of Afghanistan.

After lunch, the convoy moved on to an orphanage in the next village. Hundreds of boxes of supplies, food, and toys are off-loaded with the energetic support of the children. As the time slips away, the team realizes it must head back to Bagram.

The Hawks, tired from the long, hot day, reminisce about interactions made with the locals and the happy looks on the faces of the children of the villages.

"Like the children who met the U.S. Soldiers of World War II, who received chocolates, candy, and souvenirs, I believe that it will be the children, most of all, who will remember our support during these hard times," said Sgt. Aaron Jenks, TFL. "It would be interesting to come back here in a few decades and listen to their stories of the young American Soldiers who came to their village, spent time getting to know them and gave support during their time of need."

And, the Hawks will remember too.

"Although, our support is only a small piece of the overall humanitarian assistance pie, we are honored to know that we are a part of it," said KinKaid.



Spc. Mark Kumi, Company C, 72nd Signal Battalion, helps secure a perimeter at a halt during a convoy live-fire exercise at the Grafenwohr Training Area. The battalion trained at the GTA in September for their deployment to Iraq.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Nicole Blakeslee, Acting Editor, ECHO

The 72nd Signal Battalion

Prepares for War

5th Signal Command PAO

Staff Report

As the first Integrated Theater Signal Battalion, the technical capabilities of the 72nd Signal Battalion are unquestionably among the best in the U.S. Army. In preparation for its deployment to Southwest Asia, the battalion had the opportunity to prove that its soldiering skills are just as good.

To prepare for its world-wide deployment commitment, the battalion and Headquarters Company, 7th Signal Brigade deployed in September to Grafenwoehr, Germany to certify its satellite and communications packages and conduct Annex T special skills training needed for contingencies in Southwest Asia.

While in Grafenwoehr, the battalion qualified



Photo

Capt. Nicholas Prisco, commander, Headquarters Company, 72nd Signal Battalion, prepares to fire live rounds at targets during simulation. During this phase of the training, the vehicles are static and the Soldiers practice loading and unloading the vehicles with loaded weapons.

100 percent of their people on their individual weapons. In addition, they conducted a convoy live-fire exercise where the battalion more than 300 Soldiers through day and night live-fire training over a five-day time period. It was world-class live-fire range that exercised, aided and assisted the entire "Always Fit to Fight" battalion in gaining the required confidence and weapons discipline to complete their missions during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

2nd Lt. Easton Branam, 2nd platoon leader for Company C said, "The highlight of our capstone exercise was the convoy training, because it incorporates firing live rounds in a way that we don't often do. We don't normally handle our weapons close-up next to each other. We go to ranges and fire at targets, we fire at pop-ups. For us to have a chance and get out and work with our weapons that were loaded was a really big step and an important one, because we are going down-range where you carry your weapon and a magazine with you at all times."

She continued, "The difficult part was that we have Soldiers packed tightly in moving vehicles with loaded weapons. They all need to get out of the vehicle and get into a position where they will start firing, shoulder-to-shoulder. Something as simple as how do you get out of a deuce-and-a-half which is about five feet off the ground with a loaded weapon, you jump off. It made me go through the steps and realize what it would take and all the responsibilities and all the little acts you have to think of like, do you drive with the tail gate up or down? How fast can they get out of the vehicle? Which way do you want their weapons pointed? All of the little details that I had not thought of before."

The training included three circuits through the convoy live-fire course. The first circuit was conducted in daylight hours with weapons unloaded. The second circuit was also conducted in daylight with weapons loaded and included live firing at targets. The third circuit was conducted at night with weapons loaded and firing

tracer rounds at targets.

Speaking about the convoy training, Maj. Michael Wise, 72nd Sig Bn executive officer said, "It's not something that we normally train for. It made a lot of people feel more comfortable with having all your gear on and being all in a bundle and trying to maneuver inside a vehicle. Soldiers came away from the exercise with a good sense of confidence in their weapons, being able to fire back if assaulted."

He said the signal battalion Soldiers drew the attention of others, "We had some infantry men come by our convoy live-fire exercise. They thought we were an infantry unit, the way we were operating. When they found out we were signal, they thought that it was pretty neat, very tactical, very precise, the Soldiers moved with a sense of urgency. We impressed the heck out of them."

Lt. Col. Anthony Dattilo, 72nd Sig. Bn. commander, said, "Being the first ITSB in the Army places this battalion in the unique position to vali-



by Staff Sgt. Nicole Blakeslee, Acting Editor, ECHO

ated convoy live-fire training.
ons.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Nicole Blakeslee, Acting Editor, ECHO

Pvt. Christopher Jenkins, Spc. Michael Giarusso and Pfc. Trey Gause lift a wounded comrade and load him into their vehicle during a dry run for their convoy live-fire exercise. The Soldiers practiced mounted and dismounted vehicle techniques. Below, Ron Rose, lead instructor from L3 Communications shows Staff Sgt. Robert Smedley, Pfc. Christopher Conway and Sgt. Thomas Neumann from 72nd Signal Battalion about the set-up of the Phoenix Tri-band Satellite System in the switch park outside the brigade headquarters. The 72nd Sig. Bn. is the Army's first Integrated Theatre Signal Battalion. The Phoenix equipment is involved in the transition to the ITSB.



Photo by Sgt. Amos Soto-Feliciano, 5th Signal Command (PAC)

date the concept and to recommend any modifications that may be required. We are now a world-wide deployable, expeditionary battalion without the theater boundary constraints of the past. We are standardized across the board and we are light and agile enough to rapidly respond to situations around the globe. With all of this said, it's important to point out that concentrating on technical skills alone is not enough, you also need Soldier skills to survive and win on the battlefield. I'm very proud of the way the 72nd Soldiers performed during their training at Grafenwoehr."

Deploying Soldiers train with ...

Fiber Optics

Master Sgt. Roger Stegall
5th Signal Command, G3

Coordinating a training effort in today's fluid timelines and competing schedules can sometimes be a daunting task.

But the professional Soldiers and civilians at 5th Signal Command's G3, Plans and Engineering Division, lead technicians from the 6981st Civilian Support Group (CSG), and their commercial partners were ready to face the challenge of training deploying Soldiers on fiber optics.

A requirement for the training arose from 72nd Signal Battalion's critical need for updated fiber optic instruction, which was identified as a result of last year's post deployment after-action review.

After identifying these requirements, a cost effective solution and search was launched for an organization that could provide such training.

Before long, all signs pointed to the installers at 5th Signal Command, and their basic installation course qualified Soldiers. These are highly specialized and trained Soldiers and technicians who continually install, maintain, and troubleshoot data networks throughout Europe that use fiber optics as the primary transmission medium.

After the team received the task to train 20 of the deploying Soldiers on all aspects of fiber termination, fusion splicing, testing, troubleshooting, and the appropriate use of fiber optic test equipment, it was ready to complete the mission.

According to Staff Sgt. Earnest Hess, 5th Sig. Cmd., "this training provided the Soldiers with a good foundation of fiber optic installation with the latest standards and techniques used today. The training resulted with all the Soldiers gaining the knowledge and ability to install and maintain a robust fiber optic network while deployed."

Day one of the 3-day training course began with representatives from 3M Germany sharing their expert knowledge on 3M Hot Melt termination connectors and providing a thorough background on fiber theory and its evolution over time spawned by the ever increasing demand for more bandwidth.

This training resulted in the highly coveted and desirable 3M certification that all Soldiers received after they demonstrated



Photo by Master Sgt. Roger Stegall, 5th Signal Command, G3

Pvt. Rosa Izurieta, 72nd Signal Battalion, prepares two ends of a fiber optic cable for fusion. The fiber optic fusion splice equipment she is using melts the prepared glass strands and creates a near zero loss rate.

the fiber optic termination techniques, which they practiced the first day.

Day two was in a classroom environment with the 6981st CSG from Coleman Barracks providing fiber optic splicing instructions both for fusion and mechanical repairs and maintenance. This training is the cutting edge of technology and is considered the industry standard concerning the repair of damaged fiber optic strands.

The 72nd Sig. Bn. Soldiers have now added several additional skill sets to their knowledge base enabling them to repair or terminate any damaged, broken or non-operating fiber cable.

Finally, on the third day of training, the BIC team provided actual fiber optic installation scenarios that enabled each Soldier to terminate an individual strand of fiber in a 24-pair cable. The day concluded with a walk-through of a server communications room on Funari Barracks, a written examination, and a brief graduation ceremony that recognized all students and instructors for a successful and productive training event.

"This course has definitely prepared us to perform essential installation and maintenance procedures with fiber optic cable for our upcoming deployment," said Pfc. Alisha Graves, Company C, 72nd Sig. Bn.



Photos by Jayme Loppnow, U.S. Army Garrison, Darmstadt

Above, Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Clark, left, and Col. Fred Cross, 22nd Signal Brigade, furl the unit's colors at a casing ceremony Sept. 30 at Kelley Barracks in Darmstadt. Right, Spc. Antonio Munguia gets a good look at his 20-month-old daughter, Madison, Oct. 4 in Darmstadt, before he and his fellow troops of the 22nd Sig. Bde. departed for a year-long deployment in Iraq.



Darmstadt Signal Soldiers head for Iraq

Jayme Loppnow
Darmstadt Public Affairs

It was a long goodbye for troops in Darmstadt's 22nd Signal Brigade; a goodbye that was spread out from Oct. 3-8. Buses filled with Soldiers dressed in the new Army Combat Uniform departed from Cambrai-Fritsch Kaserne and Kelley Barracks, leaving behind family members and loved ones with tear-stained cheeks.

Prior to the troops' departure, the 22nd Signal Brigade held a ceremony Sept. 30 at Kelley Barracks, where it cased the unit's colors for a second time, symbolizing its second deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The brigade's subordinate units, the 32nd Signal Battalion and 440th Signal Battalion, also furled their colors, tucking them safely away until they reach their new destinations in Iraq.

Once settled in its new home, the brigade will form Task Force Adler alongside Soldiers of the already deployed 17th Signal Battalion and the 578th Signal Company, and several signal units from the United States, to provide and ensure reliable communication for the Multinational Corps in Iraq.

During the ceremony, Col. Fred Cross, 22nd Signal Brigade commander, addressed the troops and gave them some pointers for

their year-long endeavor.

"First, think teamwork and discipline," said Cross. "Teamwork is the glue that keeps units together and discipline will keep us on the right track. Secondly, maintain mission focus. Whatever your mission may be, however important or trivial you may think it is, remember the mission comes first. And thirdly, hold on to your source of strength, wherever you derive your greatest strength, whether it's through prayer or meditation, or simply remembering family or friends, hold tight to that which inspires and comforts you. Finally, may God bless you and strengthen you. Whatever guides you through that rough terrain, whatever brings you the confidence to drive on, may that be with you, and may you hold it in your heart."

Herr Roland Dotzert, who represented the Lord Mayor of Darmstadt, offered the troops best wishes in their everyday missions and a safe return to Darmstadt.

"Especially in Iraq, we see that it is often more difficult to maintain peace than it is to win a war or battle," said Dotzert. "In my estimation, you will encounter situations there that many of you have had little or no experience with in your lives so far. Therefore I wish you all much skill, a lucky hand and also much luck for this difficult peace-preserving mission."

5th Signal Changes Co



Photo by Sgt. Anissa Soto-feliciano, 5th Signal Command, PAO

The 5th Signal Command color guard takes position during the change-of-command ceremony Aug. 17.



Photo by Sgt. Anissa Soto-feliciano, 5th Signal Command, PAO

New Dragon Warriors' Commander Brig. Gen. Dennis L. Via and his staff render salute as they pass the the reviewing stand during his change of command on Taylor Barracks Parade Field.



5th Signal Command PAO Staff Report

The change-of-command ceremony is a military tradition that is rich with symbolism and heritage dating back to medieval times. Soldiers often carried staffs or standards into battle that identified them as a unit. Throughout military history, unit colors have marked the position of the commander on the battlefield and served as a rallying point.

In more recent times, the colors represent not only the heritage and history of the unit, but also the unity and loyalty of its Soldiers. The colors are the commander's symbol of authority, representing his

responsibilities to the organization. Wherever the commander is, there also are the colors. The passing of the unit colors represents the transfer of authority and responsibility for the unit from one commander to another.

5th Signal Command welcomed its' 22nd Commander, Brig. Gen. Dennis L. Via, at a change of command ceremony held at the Taylor Barracks Parade Field on Aug. 17. United States Army, Europe, Commander Gen. B. B. Bell was the reviewing officer. The ceremony was attended by nearly 600 guests, including almost a dozen active and retired general officers, the USAREUR Command Sergeant Major, the Consul General of the Frankfurt American Consulate, the Mannheim 1st Mayor, and the Worms Lord Mayor.

Command Commanders



Photo by William Triplett, 5th Signal Command, PAO

Via began by thanking Bell for the great honor of commanding and leading USAREUR's signal command and wished one of his son's a happy birthday. He also thanked Brig. Gen. Carol F. Pollett for a smooth transition, and for turning over to a well-led and trained unit and wished him and his family God's speed as he headed to Fort Huachuca.

Via said, "Today is a very proud day for the Via family, and I am deeply humbled and honored to assume command of undoubtedly some of the finest signal Soldiers in the world."

Addressing our German friends and allies, he said, "My family and I are looking forward to working with you, and getting to know you personally, and strengthening our friendship that is so important



Photo by Sgt. Anissa Soto-feliciano, 5th Signal Command, PAO

Lt. Col. Keith Nicoletti, commander, 44th Signal Battalion and his staff salute as they pass the reviewing stand during the 5th Signal Command change-of-command ceremony. The Colors are cased due to the unit being deployed to Afghanistan.



Photo by Keith Wright, 7ATC - TSC Mannheim

5th Signal Command Soldiers march in a parade during the change-of-command ceremony Aug.17. Left, Brig. Gen. Dennis L. Via receives the 5th Signal Command colors from the United States Army, Europe and 7th Army Commander Gen. B. B. Bell.

to both of our nations."

Via completed his remarks by addressing the Soldiers and civilians of the 5thSig. Cmd., "I want to thank you and your families in advance for your selfless service, your tremendous sacrifices, and for your personal commitment in serving our nation and our Army. I am very proud to join your ranks as your commander, and I commit to you to do my very best - everyday - to provide you steadfast leadership, to demonstrate genuine and sincere care and concern for you and your families, and to always ensure we remain trained and ready to safely deploy and execute our mission - anytime and anyplace in the world."

Destination

5th Signal Command PAO Staff Report

For almost a year now, Soldiers of Task Force Lightning, which comprises elements of the 44th and 509th Signal Battalions, have been deployed to Afghanistan. They have accomplished missions from providing radio support for the Afghanistan elections to humanitarian missions and security.

These Soldiers have come to know Afghanistan, both the people and the land. They have convoyed to villages, watched colorful sunsets and braved some unforgiving heat and humidity.

This photo gallery depicts only a small portion of the “Destination Afghanistan.”



Spc. Sabrin
during a hu



Above, Sp
Satellite S
Jenks, 44th
sion in Afg

Photos by Cpl. Serge Boryshkin, 44th Signal Battalion, Task Force Lightning



Afghanistan



na Stem, 44th Signal Battalion, Task Force Lightning, speaks with children during a humanitarian mission.



Capt. Jason KinKaid, commander, Headquarters Company, 44th Signal Battalion, gives out supplies to Afghan children during a humanitarian mission in Afghanistan. Below, Lt. Col. Mark Churchwell, former commander of Task Force Lightning, leads his troops during a run on Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan.



c. Damian Fugate and Spc. Matthew Evans adjust a Phoenix system dish on Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. Left, Sgt. Aaron Churchwell, 4th Sig. Bn., TFL, conducts area security for a humanitarian mission in Afghanistan.



GIG Bandwidth Expansion Comes to Europe



Photo by Lt. Col. David McCarthy, Defense Information Systems Agency - Europe

Lt. Col. David McCarthy
Defense Information Systems Agency - Europe

Global Information Grid - Bandwidth Expansion (GIG-BE) is a major DoD communications initiative supporting transformation by providing the network backbone to enable global network-centric operations.

It is replacing the current Defense Information System Network (DISN) commercially leased core with government-owned fiber optic cable.

GIG-BE will bring multiple OC-192 or 10 Gigabit per second trunks to 92 key DoD locations. This vastly improved connectivity will not only allow users to move huge amounts of data between GIG locations, but will also enhance intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR), and command and control (C2) information sharing. That means one GIG-BE link with multiple OC-192s provides more bandwidth than the current DISN core in Europe.

The Defense Information Systems Agency - Europe (DISA-EUR) has completed GIG-BE delivery nodes to six of the planned nine locations in theater, with the remaining three projected to be online by December.

The GIG-BE architecture gives the DISA-EUR Theater Network Operations Center end-to-end visibility of circuits for NETOPS, and immediate response to outages. GIG-BE bandwidth is fully redundant, physically diverse, and protected to ensure data integrity and delivery. Provisioning to meet surge requirements is greatly simplified by eliminating the long lead times inherent in the commercial process. Replacing the commercial leases with government fiber is projected to save DoD \$13 million annually in Europe alone.

Maj. Greg Doubek, the DISA-EUR GIG-BE project officer, said, "The GIG-BE is a visionary program that will provide tangible benefits to transformational users and strategic C2 locations that will continue to be realized years from now."

Service components and support agencies in the European theater can immediately take advantage of the GIG-BE. Planners can initiate new projects such as server consolidation to save on personnel costs, linking computing centers for simulations, extending networks among bases in theater, or installing community of interest networks.

Using GIG-BE, commanders benefit from reduced costs of commercial leases, increased availability and reliability, shortened provisioning times, and increased network visibility for NETOPS.

Col. Michael Curry, the DISA-EUR commander, sums up with "GIG-BE is here, relevant, and ready for use."

Michael Singley, Defense Information Systems Agency - Europe, works on Global Information Grid Bandwidth Expansion equipment.

Support from across the GIG

USAREUR's New Collaborative Tools

Michael Taylor and Will Cladd
United States Army, Europe, G6

One of the Army's transformation goals is to create a net-centric environment that allows for collaboration between warfighters and their staffs across what is known as the Global Information Grid (GIG).

One enabler for achieving this goal is Ezenia's InfoWorkSpace (IWS), a software suite of collaborative tools that facilitates enterprise communication, data access, and knowledge management. Long proven as a preferred tool in the Department of Defense's intelligence community and many combatant commands for secure collaboration, IWS has recently been implemented across the United States Army, Europe.

IWS is accessed using a standard Web browser and comes with a number of features including instant messaging, chat, audio, video, desktop conferencing, whiteboard, slide sharing and attendance at virtual meetings.

One of the more powerful tools is application casting via the ShareView feature, in which users can share a picture of any application or a Common Operational Picture (COP) between units in near real-time. The shared situational awareness and information across vertical and horizontal levels of command is critical to warfighters, and a benefit gained from IWS.

USAREUR has been successfully using IWS for exercises since 2004, and has allowed for participation from distant locations such as Fort Hood, Texas, and locations throughout Europe.

Maj. Todd Crosbie, the exercise branch chief for USAREUR G6, commented, "During the Unified

Maj. Deryck Julien, United States Army, Europe, G6, prepares for a Crisis Action Team briefing using InfoWorkSpace.

Endeavor 05 and Urgent Victory 05 mission rehearsal exercises, IWS proved to be an extremely powerful collaboration tool. It allowed units on the ground and in the joint operations centers to give and receive timely synchronous situational updates using both text and voice reports. These reports increased the overall situational awareness across the board and fully enhanced the commander's ability to exercise battle command."

Although IWS has mainly been used for training exercises and tactical operations, it's starting to be used by the USAREUR staff, especially during the weekly Crisis Action Team briefings. USAREUR plans to integrate the IWS collaborative capability into more of its daily operations as the staff and commanders become more experienced with the added capabilities provided by IWS.



Photo by Michael Taylor, U.S. Army Europe, G6

CHAPLAIN PROGRAMS

Enhance Readiness

Chaplain (LTC) Pearlean Scott
2nd Signal Brigade, Chaplain

In today's Army, individuals and families experience much stress as a result of the increased operating tempo. Now, during the fourth year of the Global War on Terrorism, the added stress has taken its toll on many marriages, with many ending in divorce.

5th Signal Command Chaplain Telephone Numbers

Chaplain (COL) Jerry Robinson
5th Signal Command
380-5587/0621-730-5587

Chaplain (LTC) Pearlean Scott
2nd Signal Brigade
381-8668/0621-730-8668

Chaplain (LTC) Paul Looper
7th Signal Brigade
385-3910/0621-730-3910

Chaplain (MAJ) Clark Rabe
44th Signal Battalion
385-3018/0621-730-3018

Chaplain (1LT) Marshall Coen
72nd Signal Battalion
381-7374/0621-730-7340

Divorces among officers alone have tripled in the last few years, and enlisted divorces continue to rise, according to Army News Service.

However, the Army understands the value of families and their well-being when it comes to increasing combat effectiveness in our Soldiers, so strengthening Army families is now a top priority.

Chaplain programs are one of the ways of addressing marital distress, and they can enhance the well-being of all personnel. Through programs such as Building Strong and Ready Families (BSRF), Prevention Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP) and Premarital Interpersonal Choices and Knowledge (PICK), the Army has taken a big leap into fostering stronger families and focusing on their well-being.

To support the Army's vision of well-being, chaplains within the 5th Signal Command conducted personal, family, and spiritual readiness training during couples and singles retreats this year.

Participants who attended the couples retreat had an opportunity to get trained on one of the best marital educational training programs in the world. It is called PREP.

This is a research-based approach to teaching couples how to communicate effectively, work as a team to solve problems, identify their expectations, find hidden issues, and manage conflicts. The PREP approach is based on 25 years of research in the field of marital health and success. The training is educational, preventative and interactive. It is a skills-based program that helps couples to identify the risk factors for marital distress and failure. It covers key concepts vital to marital enrichment.

Attending couples learned how to identify the danger signs such as escalation, invalidation, negative interpretation, and avoidance and withdrawal. These danger signs can lead to divorce if couples do not change their approach.

The couples also explored their goals and expectations. They

learned how unrealistic, unreasonable and unspoken expectations can have an adverse impact on their relationships if they are not aware of them. They discovered how communication thrives in a safe and structured environment that is conducive to sharing deeply, and they practiced the speaker-listener technique.

One spouse at the retreat said, "Using the speaker-listener technique helped (me and my husband) to really listen to each other instead of trying to come up with a counterattack. We plan to use it when we feel that we are getting ready to escalate into an argument."

Listening is an important aspect of communication. People often do not listen very well because of filters that exist between the speaker and the listener. The technique requires the listener to paraphrase what he or she heard.

This structured way of communicating slows down the communication process and helps the husband and wife to really listen and understand each other. This technique is used when it is difficult to communicate. It helps minimize and even eliminate arguments if used accurately. Identifying the filters is vital because the intent of the message by the speaker is often different than the message received by the listener.

Attendees also received information on an array of other topics. The overall personal impact is increased awareness and the ability to solve problems before they get beyond the danger point.

Another couple at the retreat said, "This program gave us a lot of insight into our relationship. We have never had any training on how to communicate with each other, so this training has given us a lot to think about and work on."

Single Soldiers are also a vital part of the command. The chaplain programs offer a special time of reflection to enhance their morale and personal well-being.

Participants are often Soldiers who have experienced a divorce and who have expectations for future marriage relationships.

During the singles retreat, the participants had an opportunity to learn about the PICK program, which helps single Soldiers make wise decisions when choosing their mates. They also had a chance to talk and think about four areas: self-awareness, discovering their life purpose, learning the lessons of life and discerning their life partners for friendship and marriage.

One single Soldier at the retreat said, "I was not aware of how much I don't know about myself. This information was extremely helpful."

The last session for the single Soldiers was based on an educational program called How to Avoid Marrying a Jerk or Jerkette. This is part of the PICK program, which is based on years of research on the things that cause relationships to fail.

Another single at the retreat said, "I wished that I would have had this kind of information years ago. It would have made a difference in my life."

Readiness programs for couples and singles will be offered again in 2006. Anyone interested may contact any chaplain within the 5th Sig. Cmd.

Chaplain (LTC) Pearlean Scott, 2nd Signal Brigade, left, guides attendees of the singles' retreat through a familiarization game at an icebreaker on the first day. They had to discover five things they all had in common, besides work and being in the military.

Photo Courtesy of 2nd Signal Brigade



RESOURCES FOR BUILDING STRONG MILITARY FAMILIES

Army Community Services Main Office

385-2315/ 0621-730-2315

Family Services Coordinator

385-3388/0621-730-3388

Soldier and Family Life Consultants

0176-2998-7720/0176-299-30367

Family Advocacy Program

385-2071 or 2574

0621-730-2071 or 2574

Social Services

385-3766/0621-730-3766

Army OneSource

www.armyonesource.com

Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Program

385-2377/0621-730-2377

College Night

MAHS, 2nd Signal Brigade host fair to educate students about their college options



Photo by Sgt. Anissa Soto-feliciano, 5th Signal Command, PAO

Col. Robert Ferrell, commander, 2nd Signal Brigade, gives information about his alma mater college to freshman Chelsey Boebeck. More than 180 colleges and universities were represented at the 2005 Mannheim American High School College Fair Oct. 14.

Capt. Michael Gossett

Headquarters Company, 2nd Signal Brigade

The Army places well-being at the top of its priority list, and one facet of the well-being concept is to grow. Each member of our total Army family should be able to grow through personal and professional education.

To support this objective, Mannheim American High School and 2nd Signal Brigade hosted the 2005 College Fair Oct. 14. The college fair was designed for students and parents who wanted to learn more about preparing for and applying to college.

More than 180 colleges and universities were represented and 42 members of the community attended and spoke on behalf of their schools. Experts gave presentations and held discussions throughout the evening to educate participants about college admissions procedures, essay preparation and financial aid. Other events included career professional speakers from the engineering (civil, mechanical and environmental), graphic design, media, medical (doctors, dentists and nurses), retail sales, accounting, law, law enforcement and information technology fields, as well as the armed services.

"When I heard a group of students in the hallway talking about how informative the college representatives were and how much they learned from the financial aid briefing, it made all the work we put into this event well worth the effort," said Charlotte Meckel, a volunteer who helped in the planning for the fair.

With nearly 300 students, parents and guests present, the multi-purpose room was bursting with activity. The students and parents were not limited to obtaining information from the colleges and universities represented in the multi-purpose room or from the college representatives. In addition, 25 computers with Internet connections were available in the computer lab, providing access to university Web sites for the students and parents.

Throughout the night students and parents took advantage of this resource and collected more in-depth information on the schools they were considering for higher education.

Brig. Gen. Dennis L. Via, commander, 5th Signal Command, said, "During this high operating tempo time with many parents deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, it is wonderful to see the community come together and offer the students and parents an event that will aid them with making the hard educational decisions that lie ahead."



SAFETY: A PERSONAL DECISION; A LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

Photo Courtesy United States Army, Europe

5th Signal Command PAO
Staff Report

The trends are not encouraging. Armywide, military accidental fatalities have increased over the past 3 years. In many instances, Soldiers are taking unnecessary risks and paying the ultimate price. We all know the consequences of such accidents: loss of a dear friend, relative, spouse, father or mother. Beyond the personal loss to the Soldiers in the unit, the Army loses a trained Warfighter who must be replaced. This impacts unit readiness and combat power.

The 5th Signal Command leadership takes the approach that leaders throughout the chain of command must use their experience and training to influence the way their Soldiers accomplish their mission, whether that mission is operating in a combat zone or driving to Garmisch for a 3-day ski weekend.

Just as these leaders are involved in risk assessment for missions while on deployment, the command leadership wants leaders to help Soldiers assess the risks in the "missions" of their personal lives, and if necessary, make adjustments to accomplish them safely.

"Our whole focus is we're trying to change the culture, get people to think of safety as an important part of the way we do business, whether you are on deployment or back here in garrison, both on and off duty," said Joe Michalkiewicz, the 5th Signal Command's chief of safety.

While all safety agencies such as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Department of the Army track accident statistics, what Michalkiewicz calls "lagging indi-

cators," United States Army, Europe and 5th Sig. Cmd. are putting more emphasis on "leading indicators."

These leading indicators are the tools and training officers, noncommissioned officers, Soldiers, and civilians need to recognize and evaluate risk factors.

"While the traditional measure of safety effectiveness is the number of accidents, we are asking other questions, such as: What are we doing to try to prevent these things from happening? What are we doing to try to set the conditions for success in the first place?" said Michalkiewicz.

In order to set the conditions for success, we emphasize training. 5th Sig. Cmd. requires all officers, all senior NCOs, and all civilian supervisors to complete specific leader safety training. In addition, the command requires Soldiers and civilians to complete training in those risk-management areas that are traditionally associated with USAREUR's Winter or Summer Safety

Campaigns.

For example, some of the programs that are tracked as leading indicators in USAREUR's Winter Safety Campaign include Cold Weather Injury Prevention, Under the Oak Tree meetings, Driving Under the Influence Prevention and Ride Home Plans, Carbon Monoxide Hazards, Risk Management Annual Refresher Training, and Motorcycle Safety Training, to name a few.

The preliminary data is encouraging. NCOs are responding positively to these initiatives. Using some of the tools, sergeants reported finding out about potential problems from their Soldiers ahead of time. They are empowered to make the Soldier alter his or her plans ahead of time to minimize potential risks.

For more information on the programs mentioned above and other risk-management tools available to Soldiers and leaders at all levels, log onto the 5th Sig. Cmd. Web portal and click on "safety."

"What are we doing to try to prevent these things from happening?"

-- Joe Michalkiewicz

5th Signal Command, chief of safety

Sponsorship Programs:

Paving the way to positive first impressions

Maj. Olivia Bierman
5th Signal Command, G1

We are devoted to meeting the needs of our Soldiers, civilian employees, and their family members before, during, and after their service to this command.

As General B. B. Bell stated in his Bell Sends #17-05, "Newly assigned personnel and their families develop their first - and perhaps most critical - impression of the unit and installation based on how well they are received. These impressions will significantly affect a new arrival's attitude toward his or her assignment, which in turn affects unit cohesion, retention, morale, and discipline. For this reason, sponsorship is a vital command responsibility." Indeed, an effective sponsorship program is a reflection of direct command involvement.

First and foremost, commanders must establish a positive command climate because, as Spc. Whemohguy Jones stated during the Headquarters Company, 5th Signal Command, sponsorship training, "Overall unit morale will help a lot with sponsorship. It is the first impression that the incoming Soldier gets before meeting or seeing others in the unit."

Second, commanders must invest in

sponsors who are of high caliber and who are positive representatives of the unit.

Despite high operating tempo, commanders must provide sponsors the time and resources to take care of the incoming Soldiers and civilian employees because they deserve nothing less.

As Col. Donna Kapinus, deputy chief of staff, G1, emphasized, "Selecting a knowledgeable and sincere sponsor is the key to success ... an effective sponsorship program continues even after the Soldier, civilian employee, and family members arrive in the command. The best advice to a sponsor is to take care of the incoming Soldier, civilian, and family members like you would expect your family members and yourself to be taken care of."

Sponsorship of incoming Soldiers begins with the Sponsorship Gateway to Europe (S-GATE). When incoming Soldiers log onto S-GATE at www.sgate.hqsareur.army.mil, it will provide them with information about their sponsor, commander, and first sergeant.

This is an opportunity for both the sponsors and the incoming Soldiers to initiate communication and coordination. Based on different hiring procedures for civilian employees, civilian sponsors initiate telephonic or e-mail contact using the information provided by the incoming employee.

Sponsors will mail a welcome letter and a welcome packet that highlights community and unit information to the incoming Soldier or employee and his or her family.

Incoming Soldiers and employees are encouraged to ask for specific information and resources related to their needs. Many potential issues are avoided when coordination occurs prior to the arrival of the new Soldier or employee. Commanders also appoint reactionary sponsors for Soldiers and civilian employees arriving at an installation without an assigned sponsor.

Additionally, there is a 5th Sig. Cmd. liaison at the 64th Replacement Detachment who can provide information about the command to inbound Soldiers and families. The 5th Sig. Cmd. G1, in coordination with subordinate units, personnel services battalions, 1st Personnel Command, and U.S. Army garrisons, also provides support related to family travel, initial queries, and special requests.

The leaders of 5th Sig. Cmd. are truly committed to providing a positive and fruitful experience for all our Soldiers, civilian employees, and family members throughout their tour here.

Program success greatly depends on the involvement of leaders and the commitment of highly motivated and well-trained sponsors, all working toward a common goal - taking care of people.

With the increase in operations and missions and the limited number of available people within our Army, our Soldiers, civilian employees, and family members are a precious resource we cannot live without. We must ensure that they know how valuable and important they are to us. Good sponsorship is a command strategy that increases personal performance and enhances mission accomplishment.

Sgt. 1st Class Aaron Palmer, HHC, 5th Sig. Cmd., summed it up best when he said, "I knew that my sponsor was busy and had to do other things. But, he never made me feel that I was taking him from his mission. In fact, I was his mission."

Gaby Schleicher and Petra Yueruer, 5th Signal Command, G1, prepare newcomers orientation packets. A welcome to the command is a vital step in the sponsorship process.



Photo by Sgt. Anissa Sozo-Feliciano, 5th Signal Command, PAO

A "Dragon Warrior" Salute to 5th Signal Command's NETCOM/9th ASC Heroes



Col. David DeVries
HQ, USAREUR



Robert Kramer
2nd Sig. Bde., VISE



Bruce Lewis
5th Sig. Cmd., G3



Gary Miller
USAREUR, CIO/G6



William Staley
5th Sig. Cmd., G8



Col. Stephen Walker
HQ, 5th Sig. Cmd.

5th Signal Command Staff Report

Six 5th Signal Command "Dragon Warriors" were selected as U.S. Army Enterprise Technology Command/9th Army Signal Command Heroes in September.

This recognition is for Soldiers and civilians assigned to units whose contributions are well beyond what would be expected from those in a similar position.

These six individuals, Col. David DeVries, Robert Kramer, Bruce Lewis, Gary Miller, William Staley and Col. Stephen Walker, made efforts leading to changes that impact far beyond the 5th Sig. Cmd. and are felt throughout NETCOM and the Army.

Only 74 selections were made from more than 15,000 of NETCOM/9th ASC's Soldiers and civilians.

These "Heroes" are simply the best on a day-to-day basis, according to Maj. Gen. James Hylton, former commander, NETCOM/9th ASC.

German Military Partnership Program Fosters Cohesion

Maj. Mary Campbell
52nd Signal Battalion

Soldiers of the 587th Signal Company out of Stuttgart, Germany, conducted joint training with German Army Reserve Soldiers from Ulm, Germany.

In cooperation with its parent unit, the 52nd Signal Battalion, the 587th Sig. Co. Soldiers and their German partnership unit, the Kriesgruppe Donau-Iller, went to Grafenwohr Training Area (GTA) to practice marksmanship training on an M16A2 pop-up target range.

Sgt. Jason Sanders, a 52nd Sig. Bn. German partnership liaison, stated "it's always great to invite our German friends along because it gives us a chance to exchange thoughts while we train." He also mentioned that German partnership events help foster cohesion now, before Soldiers are in a joint combat environment with multi-national partners, which helps the Army in the long run.

The German Army Reserve unit sent five Soldiers to take part in the training. Their Soldiers received Pre-Marksmanship Instruction, which trained them on the basic use and functions of the M16A2 rifle, followed by qualification on a pop-up target range. The German Soldiers were happy to have the chance to fire an M16A2, practice their English, and even eat meals, ready to eat.

In all, the joint training, made possible by the U.S. Army Europe German Partnership Program, was a success for all Soldiers who participated.

Capt. Kevin T. Reeves, the 587th Sig. Co. commander, was quick to point out that his company doesn't get to come to GTA for weapons training often and getting his Soldiers along with the German Partnership Soldiers there was a terrific opportunity for his company on many levels.

As Staff Sgt. James Wagner, range NCO in charge, stated, "It's always fun to get together and share what it means to be a Soldier."



Photo by Maj. Mary Campbell, 52nd Signal Battalion

Range Safeties Pfc. Mathias Mitchell, left, and Sgt. 1st Class Leroy White talk to a German Partnership Soldier about zeroing the M16A2 rifle. After zeroing, the Soldiers were ready to qualify on pop-up targets.

New Web site keeps families connected

Sgt. Maj. Michelle Richardson
5th Signal Command, G1

As a means to better support its geographically dispersed Soldiers, civilians and families, the 5th Signal Command in collaboration with U.S. Army Europe has activated a Virtual Family Readiness Group (vFRG) Web site.

This concept the Department of the Army developed incorporates all the major components of the family readiness group (FRG) in a virtual context.

The vFRG enables FRGs to --

-- Provide accurate and current communication for the unit and families.

-- Plan opportunities for education on the Army life, this command and assigned unit's mission and vision.

-- Promote self-reliance in preparation for separation from our Soldiers, whether for a field training exercise or operational deployment.

-- Assist with the transition process of redeploying Soldiers and reestablishing the family bond.

-- Establish a support network for family members during the absence of their Soldiers.

-- Ensure that family members understand how to obtain assistance and services from local agencies.

The Web site supports

the creation of online FRGs at the brigade, battalion, and company levels. Soldiers, civilians or family members must be registered through their FRG leader to gain access to the Web site.

Once registered, individuals can go to the Army FRG homepage at www.armyfrg.org, scroll down to the *5th Signal Command* or *7th Signal Brigade*, then click on the link to access the homepage for the corresponding site.

Once there, you will have access to view the commanding general and command sergeant major pages, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), news articles, photos and other Army links that are useful to Soldiers, spouses and children.

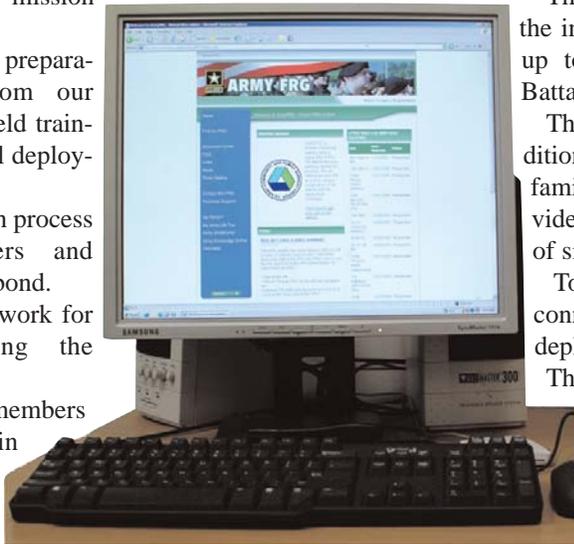
Registering for the vFRG system provides the opportunity for Soldiers, civilians and family members to become part of a larger community.

The 7th Signal Brigade is the first subordinate unit to test the initiative's benefit. Its vFRG Web site was rapidly set up to support 44th Signal Battalion and 72nd Signal Battalion during their deployments.

Their Web site corresponds logically to an existing, traditional FRG, but provides support not only to the spouses, families, and parents of married Soldiers, but also provides support for parents, families and significant others of single Soldiers who have deployed.

To date the 7th Sig. Bde. vFRG has been a vital tool in connecting the Soldiers and family members of these two deployed battalions.

The 5th Sig. Cmd. leadership strongly supports the implementation of the vFRG Web site and expects it to be a useful and viable tool in keeping families connected to their Soldiers, units and the command.



Dragon Warriors continue decades of tradition

WORMS, Germany -- Brig. Gen. Dennis L. Via, commander, 5th Signal Command, standing left of wreath, joins host nation officials at the German National Mourning Day commemoration at the Worms Main Cemetery Nov. 13.

The event recognizes military and civilian deaths from all wars and nations. 5th Sig. Cmd. has represented the U.S. Army for more than 30 years at the annual commemoration in Worms, the former location of its headquarters.



U.S. Army Photo

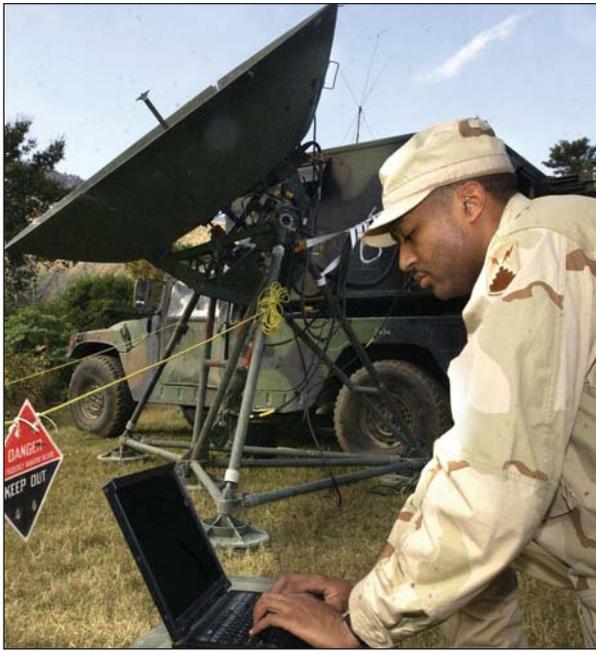


Photo by Staff Sgt. Quinton Russ

Sgt. Eugene Breckenridge, 44th Signal Battalion, performs a diagnostics check on a satellite dish at the 212th Mobile Army Surgical Hospital at Muzaffarabad, Pakistan. A platoon from Company C, 44th Sig. Bn. responded to the need for a reliable communications package to support the 212th MASH following the October earthquake that rocked Southwest Asia. A twelve Soldier team was called to action and replied expediently.

Sign, secure, then deliver

The enemy is a pro at exploiting operations security vulnerabilities. Don't get careless in your routine business activity. In fact, take on an aggressive attitude toward protecting friendly information to ensure mission success. Some examples of when to use your digital signature and digital encryption when e-mailing official information follow and are listed in Army in Europe Regulation 25-1-5:

Digital signature required:

- Budget and fiscal data
- Command directives initiated in Defense Message System and transferred to e-mail
- Command policy memorandums
- Contract data
- Unclassified regular administrative and logistical reports

Digital signature and encryption required:

- Sensitive operational information, including unclassified tactical, administrative, and logistical information that supports the warfighter according to the USAREUR Critical Information List*
 - Information marked For Official Use Only
 - Medical care, personnel management, and Privacy act data (including social security numbers)
- * Personnel should send this information through an unclassified e-mail account only if they do not have a classified e-mail account.

-- 5th Signal Command PAO, Staff Report

Army offers free foreign-language training

The U.S. Army will make foreign-language training available at no cost to all active Army, National Guard, Reservists and Department of Army civilian personnel worldwide through its Distributed Learning System's Army e-Learning, under the Program Executive Office Enterprise Information Systems.

In the past, the high operating tempo, limited resident school capacity and the scarcity of contracted language training opportunities have worked against the Army's goal of fielding a force capable of engaging in basic communications with the local population in deployed areas. Now, with the help of Fairfield Language Technologies, creator of the computer-based language immersion program Rosetta Stone®, the Army anticipates it will be able to significantly increase the basic foreign language skill level across the force.

"Critical foreign language capability and skills are increasingly important to our

Army. Rosetta Stone provides the Army with an immediate, interactive language training tool to train our Soldiers, leaders and civilians for operational deployments and professional development," says Brigadier General James M. Milano, Director of Training, Army G-3/5/7.

Army e-Learning, the U.S. Army CIO/G6's answer to meet IT training requirements, provides access to commercial, information technology, business and self-development education and training courses. It will now also serve as the Web-based language training platform the Army has determined it urgently needs to strengthen its language capabilities. Courses offered through Army e-Learning are available through the Web 24 hours a day from any place in the world - at no cost to Army organizations.

"To provide U.S. Army personnel around the world with the language instruction they need, the Army sought a proven Web-based foreign language training tool

that could teach speaking, listening, reading and writing for a variety of target languages utilizing an immersion methodology," says Tom Adams, chief executive officer of Fairfield Language Technologies. "We're pleased that Rosetta Stone's philosophy, design and effectiveness are providing the solution they were seeking."

Rosetta Stone provides 29 state-of-the-art language courses through Army e-Learning, including Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), Danish, Dutch, French, Farsi (Persian), German, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Pashto, Polish, Portuguese (Brazil), Russian, Spanish (Latin America), Spanish (Spain), Swahili, Swedish, Thai, Turkish, Vietnamese and Welsh.

These Web-based foreign language training courses teach reading, writing, speaking, and listening with immersion, completely without translation.

-- Army News Service

Providing comms for 'the biggest, best show ever'

Frank Wiatt

Network Service Center, Heidelberg

Billed as the premier military professional development event in the European theater, United States Army, Europe, Land Combat Expo 2005 gave its daily audiences of 20,000 visitors the biggest and best show in the event's history Sept. 21-23 at the Patrick Henry Village Pavilion.

2nd Signal Brigade subordinate units provided the communications and audiovisual support for the high visibility event that showcased international guest speakers and displays from nearly a dozen countries.

USAREUR commander Gen B.B. Bell said that he intended this event to help participants understand how USAREUR is fighting the global war on terror, transforming the force, partnering with the National Atlantic Treaty Organization and pursuing security cooperation initiatives on behalf of United States European Command, taking care of our people, and training Soldiers while developing leaders.

A highly organized communications support system was required to help Bell meet his intent. 43rd Signal Battalion assumed the challenge and called on network technician

Jesse Sanchez of the Heidelberg Network Service Center to serve as the project manager.

Among his many responsibilities, Sanchez developed the communications design layout, oversaw the installation, and ensured secure communications and help services were provided for attending senior leaders.

Sanchez said that a number of records were set in the process to stage the biggest and best show in the event's history, including 63 defense switched network telephone connections, 150 network connections and 12 integrated services digital network connections throughout three tent structures, supporting U.S. government agencies from around the world. Additionally, The 6981st Civilian Support Group installed 10 miles of cabling with connectors.

Visual Information Services Europe wired the Village Pavilion for sight and sound. They provided the lighting, video



Photo by Sgt. Anissa Soto-feliciano

2-year-old Michael Wilson climbs atop an M1A1 Abrams tank with help from his father Capt. Robert Wilson, officer personnel management branch, G1, 5th Signal Command. The tank was on display during the 2005 United States Army, Europe, Land Combat Expo.

recording and sound support for all the guest speakers, and created signage for various display booths.

5th Signal Command and both its brigades set up booths and equipment demonstrations to help expo attendants understand the command's role and its support to combatant commanders and Army communications.

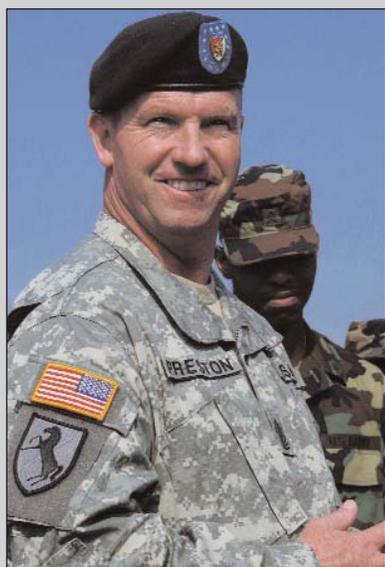


Photo by Staff Sgt. Nicole Blakeslee, Acting Editor, ECHO

Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth O. Preston visited with troops in Mannheim during September. At the end of his trip, he visited with deploying 72nd Signal Battalion Soldiers in their motor pool.

Army's top NCO visits Mannheim

5th Signal Command PAO
Staff Report

The Army's senior non-commissioned officer scheduled some time with 5th Signal Command Soldiers in September to talk about transformation and quality of life issues.

As the former V Corps command sergeant major who first led troops into Baghdad at the onset of the global war on terror, Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth O. Preston assured a theater-size audience filled with signal, transportation, military police and other units experiencing high deployment levels that the Army is working initiatives to alleviate the strain being caused by the war.

Preston outlined for Soldiers three primary initiatives that will ultimately add predictability and stability to the lives of Soldiers and their families.

The first transformation initiative calls for the restructuring of divisions by adding brigade combat teams. Preston said the goal is

to have 43 by the end of 2006. There were 33 at the start of 2004.

The second initiative rebalances the force to reduce the number of deploying Soldiers in high demand units over the next 2 to 3 years.

The third initiative increases the active duty force by 30,000 Soldiers, Preston said. He added the Army is counting on recruiting and retention efforts to reach that goal as quickly as possible.

In closing, Preston said improving quality of life while getting the mission done is what transformation is all about. He previewed the Army's new life-cycle management system that will keep basic combat training Soldiers and their families together for at least 3 years and encourage them to stay in the same place for another cycle.

Preston said the program is designed to lessen deployment rates, help spouses obtain careers rather than jobs, and improve opportunities for military children to obtain college scholarships.

From the CSM:

These are my final comments for the ECHO. The last three years have passed quickly and I have enjoyed serving in this great unit with each and every one of you. I will carry with me many fond memories and will always keep 5th Signal Command close to my heart.

As I traveled throughout the theater, I have had the opportunity to witness the dedication and commitment of our people, observe the work and training, and also, been able to evaluate our quality of life and the programs that support our well-being.

I recently visited the National Security Council in Kosovo. It was a wonderful visit, and I got to meet a great team of dedicated professionals providing communications throughout the Kosovo Force area of responsibility. All of the individuals were civilians, doing their part in the Kosovo mission. They, apart from their families and loved ones, are dedicated and committed to providing the best communication support possible.

My trip to Afghanistan truly highlighted the willingness and patriotism of American Soldiers and civilians. From the youngest Soldier speaking out about her desire to participate in humanitarian missions, to the contractor training the young Soldiers to operate and maintain communication equipment, they were working as a team, getting the mission accomplished, and all of this exemplifies our number one priority -- people.

Our Soldiers continually train on their warrior tasks and drills. I observed a group of Soldiers during Sergeants Time Training working on their close quarters marksmanship training. In discussions with them, they are more comfortable with their weapons and are better marksmen.

We have incorporated Warrior Tasks and Drills into our STT. We are ensuring our Soldiers are warriors first.

I have observed numerous STT and live fire ranges where the noncommissioned officers are competent and effective trainers and leaders. We do not want to send soldiers into a combat zone untrained.

Primary Leadership Development Course changed its name to the Warrior Leader Course. Recent graduates are pleased with the changes which implement Warrior Tasks and Drills and a field training exercise to hone those

"It is not enough to fight. It is the spirit which we bring to the fight that decides the issue. It is morale that wins the victory."

-- Gen. George Marshall



skills. Two of our command sergeants major recently participated in a work group at Fort Gordon to map out our curriculum for Advanced Noncommissioned Officers Course. It will focus on Warrior Tasks and Drills along with our signal tasks.

The Sergeant Major of the Army recently visited the 5th Sig. Cmd. As we hosted the senior enlisted advisor for the Army at the community enlisted call, he focused on the Army's vision and transformation. The whole premise behind transformation is to cut down on deployments and give families more predictability and stabilization, enhancing quality of life and well-being. He also spent a large portion of his time with the Soldiers from the 72nd Signal Battalion as they prepped for their deployment.

As we approach the holiday season, keep in mind our deployed Soldiers and civilians and their families at home.

As always, being a Dragon Warrior is an honor.

DONNA K. HARBOLT
Command Sergeant Major, USA
5th Signal Command



<http://www.5sigcmd.army.mil>