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Maj. Gen. (P) Russel L. Honoré Assumes Command of First U.S. Army



Gen. Dan K. McNeill (center) passes the First Army colors to the new commander, Lt. Gen. Russel L. Honoré (left), as the outgoing commander, Lt. Gen. Joseph R. Inge (right) looks on.
(Picture by Phil Manson)

Lieutenant General Honoré is a native of Lakeland, Louisiana. He was commissioned a Second Lieutenant of Infantry and awarded a Bachelor of Science degree in Vocational Agriculture upon graduation from Southern University and A&M College in 1971. He holds a Master of Arts in Human Resources from Troy State University as well as an Honorary Doctorate in Public Administration from Southern University and A&M College.

During his career, General Honoré has served in a variety of command and staff positions. His overseas assignments include tours in Korea and Germany. General Honoré was the Commanding General, 2d Infantry Division, Korea; Vice Director for Operations, J-3, The Joint Staff, Washington, D.C.; Deputy Commanding General/Assistant Commandant, United States Army Infantry Center and School, Fort Benning, Georgia; and the Assistant Division Commander, Maneuver/Support, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas. He has also served as the Brigade Commander, 1st Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, Georgia; Senior Mechanized Observer/Controller, "Scorpion 07", National Training Center (25 Rotations); and Commander, 4th Battalion, 16th Infantry Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, Germany. Most recently General Honoré served as Commander, Standing Joint Force Headquarters-Homeland Security, U.S. Northern Command until 1 June 2004. General Honoré's awards and decorations include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, the Distinguished Service Medal, the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit (four Oak Leaf Clusters), the Bronze Star Medal, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal (three Oak Leaf Clusters), the Army Commendation Medal (three Oak Leaf Clusters), the Army Achievement Medal, the National Defense Service Medal (two Bronze Service Stars), Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Southwest Asia Service Medal (one Bronze Service Star) the Global War on Terror Service Medal, the Korean Defense Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon (4), Kuwait Liberation Medal (Saudi), the Kuwait Liberation Medal (Kuwait) and the Joint Meritorious Unit Award. Qualification badges include the Expert Infantry Badge, the Parachutist Badge, and the Joint Staff Identification Badge.

Commander's Corner

Lt. Gen. Inge says good-bye to First U. S. Army

A Farewell to Soldiers, Civilians, Family Members and Friends...

Each Soldier faces the day when he must move on to a new assignment. My time is now. I arrived at First Army thirty-four months ago, only weeks after the 9/11 attacks. This horrendous assault on America galvanized the national will of this great Nation. We were one in thought and deed.

We have shared in extraordinary times in our nation's history. I feel privileged to have worked with the finest Americans, our National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers, Soldiers and civilians in First Army, the headquarters, the 78th, 85th, 87th Divisions (Training Support), the phenomenal training support brigades, the 24th Infantry Division and the mobilization stations. What a great team! We have mobilized, trained, deployed and demobilized over 260,000 Soldiers, the largest such endeavor since World War II.

We have commanded and controlled 10,000 Soldiers who were mobilized for force protection missions at Department of Defense sites throughout the United States. First Army still mobilizes and trains troops for Bosnia, Kosovo and Multi-National Force missions even as we prepare thousands of troops for deployment to the theaters of war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We are preparing the 42d Infantry Division for Operation Iraqi Freedom, the first National Guard infantry division mobilized and to be deployed since the Second World War. We train and prepare hundreds of First Army Soldiers, civilians and emergency preparedness liaison officers from all services for our Defense Support to Civil Authorities mission under homeland defense. And above all, we never forget the... Soldier...the centerpiece of all we do at First Army.

As Lt. Gen. Honoré takes the reins of First Army, I know there will be no falter in missions, for that is the way the Army works, you will see to that.

Linda and I wish all of you our heartfelt best wishes and thanks for your support. It has truly been our privilege to serve with you during this momentous time. You are all splendid Americans and we will never forget you. God Bless America.

Lt. Gen. Joseph R. Inge

Honoré pinned with third star by FORSCOM commander

By Karen Bradshaw, First Army Public Affairs Office



Gen. Dan K. McNeill, left, FORSCOM Commander, pins First U.S. Army Commanding General, Lt. Gen. Russel L. Honoré. Photo by Cpt. Vincent Mitchell

Lt. Gen. Russel L. Honoré, Commanding General First U.S. Army, was pinned with his third star by FORSCOM Commander, Gen. Dan K. McNeill at First Army headquarters on July 26.

Honoré, who took command of First Army on July 15, 2004, is a “warrior who understands the... fight, and is the right person at the right time for First U.S. Army,” said McNeill, FORSCOM’s top general. McNeill went on to say, “...we are changing the paradigm from active component to reserve component in our missions and Russ Honoré brings great leadership, coaching and mentoring to this fast-paced command.” Honoré acknowledged and thanked his wife for the many military moves she has made with him over the years in supporting his service to the nation. He praised the great work done by First Army Soldiers and declared his great pride in leading the First U.S. Army during these critical times. Pledging to get Soldiers and units as ready as possible, Honoré said, “we will do whatever the nation requires.”

Command Sergeant Major's Message



Command Sgt. Maj. Jeffrey J. Mellinger

Mellinger leaves First U.S. Army

Command Sergeant Major Jeffrey Mellinger, Former First Army Command Sergeant Major, is currently serving as the command sergeant major for Multi-National Forces, Iraq.

Sergeant Major James Bridier is acting command sergeant major for First U.S. Army.

Chinooks returning from war being rebuilt at Knox by AFS

By Kathie Bullard Harris
Army Flier Living Editor

Maintenance workers at Knox Army Heliport are nearly finished with the first of two CH-47 Chinooks that arrived last month as the first aircraft to go through the RESET program at Fort Rucker.

The RESET program is the Army's latest rebuilding effort, repairing old and war-damaged aircraft so they can return to the war effort. The aircraft will be cleaned, torn down, inspected, repaired and rebuilt before returning to service.

"It's a new wave of maintenance for the future," said Teck Matthews, support supervisor for Army Fleet Support.

Currently, Knox has two Chinooks in the RESET program with thirteen more on the way. Maintenance crews at Fort Campbell, Ky.; Fort Bragg, N.C.; and Fort Stewart, Ga., are also repairing aircraft.

Once the Fort Rucker aircraft are completed, they will be used in the training of flight school students. The other installations will send their aircraft back to the unit they came from.

The first two aircraft arrived at the beginning of June from B Company, 159th Aviation Regiment out of Savannah, Ga. They had served 18 months in the Middle East. They had been exposed to enemy fire as

well as extreme heat and sand during this time. Because Chinooks can fly at high altitudes, they also experienced extreme temperature changes.

Pat Thomas, Knox field manager for AFS, said the aircraft were obviously flown in hazardous conditions. "Our mechanics can look at an aircraft and tell it has been stressed in a combat area for a long period of time," said Thomas.

Machine gun round links were found under the panels in the heating compartment of one of the aircraft during dismantling and cleaning.

"To all of us, it's made what's going on over in the Middle East very real," said Matthews. "(Right in front of you) is the sand and the bullet holes they've found while doing sheet metal inspections."

Because of Army transformation, Fort Rucker will soon become the installation with the most Chinook helicopters in the world, a title previously carried by the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) at Fort Campbell. Fort Rucker's Knox Field currently has 37 Chinooks.

The Chinook, made by Boeing, first came off the assembly line in 1956. There have been four more models created since then, the most recent being the CH-47D. The Chinook's primary mission is moving people, ammunition and supplies, but it can do much more, according to the Fort Rucker web site at www-rucker.army.mil/helicopters/chinook. At more than 30 meters long and more than 5 meters high, the Chinook is considered the Army's heaviest helicopter, weighing in at 10,475 kilograms empty. It's maximum speed is 291 kilometers an hour, with a rotor span of 18.29 meters.





Schoomaker Says Army Transformation on Track

*By Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service*

Lessons learned during the war on terror are helping guide the Army's transformation into a force that's agile and flexible enough to confront the threats facing the United States, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Schoomaker told Congress today.

Schoomaker testified before the House Armed Services Committee that the Army's efforts to reorganize and re-equip itself to deal with terrorism and other current threats while modernizing for the future are on track and advancing on schedule.

"The Army has to be relevant to our nation's needs," Schoomaker said. "We have to have the capability to deal with the threats that face this nation."

Unlike during the Cold War, when the Schoomaker said the Army "was focused on an enemy we knew a great deal about," today it faces "a cloud of ambiguity." This range of threats isn't new, he said, showing its first signs as early as the 1972 Munich Olympics, "and it is not going way" anytime soon.

The Army's transformation — which includes sweeping changes in the way the Army trains and fights to confront this threat and others in the future — is progressing in "a deliberate, controlled fashion" that ensures no capabilities are lost as new ones are introduced, he said.

Schoomaker stressed that this transformation isn't simply about new equipment, vehicles, doctrine, tactics or training. Rather, it represents a total overhaul in the way the Army trains and fights — an effort he said "will go on to infinity" as the service adapts to changing circumstances and threats.

To channel its current efforts, Schoomaker said the Army is concentrating on 17 "focus areas" to ensure it can respond to "this different world we have today."

These focus areas include developing soldiers with "a warrior ethos" and creating modular brigade-level units capable of responding "within hours, days and weeks," he said. They also includes rebalancing the force to maximize the mix between the active and reserve

components, stabilizing units so they're more cohesive and ensuring that they have the best combat systems possible for whatever missions they're called to fulfill.

"We need to train and equip our soldiers and grow leaders for the military and the nation," Schoomaker said, while providing "relevant, ready land combat power."

Schoomaker said these initiatives and other aspects of the Army's transformation will give soldiers the edge as they wage the war on terror and face whatever uncertainties may confront them in the future.

"We never want a soldier to go into an even fight," Schoomaker said. "We always want it to be to their advantage."



Army Reserve Concerned About Prior-Service Recruiting

*By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service*

Army Reserve officials are concerned by a downward trend in recruiting, and said they are studying the reasons so they can put remedies in place.

The Army Reserve will still make its strength goals for fiscal 2004, but recruiting prior-service personnel for the component is down.

In fiscal 2002, the Army Reserve exceeded both its recruiting mission for prior-service individuals and those with no prior service. The final numbers were 109 percent for those with no prior service and 105.8 percent for those with prior service. In fiscal 2003, the no-previous-service quota remained strong, but prior-service recruiting came up a little short, at 97.8 percent. "Currently, we're still on line to make our nonprior-service mission," said Maj. Gen. Charles E. Wilson, deputy chief of the Army Reserve Command at Fort McPherson, Ga. "But for prior-service recruiting the numbers are down."

See Army Reserve, p. 7

CSA unveils Professional Reading List

Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Schoomaker released a new Professional Reading List 23 July.

The list, which can be found online at the Center of Military History Web page, www.army.mil/cmh, is broken down into four sub groups based on a leader's responsibilities, whether enlisted or commissioned.

"The Professional Reading List is a way for leaders at all levels to increase their depth of understanding of our Army's history, the global strategic context, and the enduring lessons of war," said Schoomaker.

"The topics and time periods included in the books on this list are expansive, and are intended to broaden each leader's knowledge and confidence. I challenge all leaders to make a focused, personal commitment to read, reflect, and learn about our profession, and our world," Schoomaker said. "Through the exercise of our minds, our Army will grow stronger."

Books range in timeframe from the Peloponnesian War to the hunt for al Qaeda and in context from personal memoirs of command to commentaries on the impact of centuries of armed conflict. Among the books included are John Keegan's *The Face of Battle*, the *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant*, Stephen E. Ambrose's *Band of Brothers*, Lt. Gen. Hal Moore's *We Were Soldiers Once ... and Young*, *Inside al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*, and Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*.

AAFES Military Clothing Sales Stores and a few Main Exchanges will have the publications on hand for purchase. Additionally, Army installation libraries will make the volumes available to interested personnel.

The complete list of books in the first sub-group, for cadets, Soldiers, and junior NCOs, includes:

The Constitution of the United States, available online at <http://www.house.gov/Constitution/Constitution.html>

Centuries of Service: the U.S. Army 1775-2004 by David W. Hogan Jr., an easy-to-read pamphlet that describes the many missions of the U.S. Army over the course of its history.

The Face of Battle by John Keegan brings to life three major battles: Agincourt (1415), Waterloo (1815), and the First Battle of the Somme (1916).

For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States of America by Allan R. Millett and Peter Maslowski, a single-volume study that covers the American military experience in peace and war from 1607 to 1975.

Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne from Normandy to Hitler's Eagle's Nest by Stephen E. Ambrose, based on journals, letters, and interviews with 101st Soldiers.

We Were Soldiers Once ... and Young: Ia Drang – The Battle That Changed the War in Vietnam by retired Lt. Gen. Harold G. Moore and Joseph L. Galloway, is a firsthand account of the November 1965 Battle of the Ia Drang by the commander of 1/7 Cavalry.

If You Survive: From Normandy to the Battle of the Bulge to the End of World War II, One American Officer's Riveting True Story by George Wilson, is a young officer's account of the costly fighting from Normandy to the German frontier in 1944.

Touched with Fire: The Land War in the South Pacific by Eric M. Bergerud covers the land battles of the South Pacific fought between July 1942 and early 1944 on the Solomon Islands and New Guinea.

Closing with the Enemy: How GIs Fought the War in Europe, 1944-1945 by Michael D. Doubler describes how the U.S. Army had to overcome many tactical problems, from the thick hedgerows of Normandy to the streets of German cities.

Patton: A Genius for War by Carlo D'Este provides new information from family archives and other sources to explain why the general is regarded as one of the great modern military leaders.

In the Company of Heroes by Michael J. Durant is a first-hand account of how this Black Hawk pilot was shot down and taken prisoner during military operations in Somalia in 1993.



CSA: Army on target with force growth, transformation

By Sgt. Lorie Jewell

The Army is on track in its efforts to temporarily grow the active force by 30,000 Soldiers as it restructures into modular brigade combat team units of action, or BCT (UA)s, Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Schoomaker said.

Schoomaker discussed troop strength and transformation in a Department of Defense press briefing July 26, pointing out that some news stories have been inaccurate or misleading. He emphasized there is a difference between growing the Army – a temporary measure granted under the Global War on Terror authorities and paid for with supplemental dollars – and increasing end strength, a permanent move that becomes part of the Army’s core budget. Adding 30,000 Soldiers to end strength could cost as much as \$3.6 billion a year, which would take away dollars needed for current and future programs, Schoomaker said.

“With our efforts to grow the active component of the Army by 30,000 Soldiers over the next three years, using supplemental dollars, we can do what we need to do,” Schoomaker said. “We are changing and we are making great progress in this regard.” Recruiting and retention are key tools in growing the force, the chief said. The most recent reports on how well goals are being met in these two areas are encouraging, despite concerns about current operations straining the force, Schoomaker and other senior leaders said.

In the active Army, the recruiting goal for the current fiscal year is projected to reach 101 percent based on recent figures; the Army Reserve is on track to hit 102 percent and the National Guard, 88 percent. Lt. Gen. Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard, said the Guard goal was set high because officials did not expect the high numbers of re-enlistments they are seeing. The Guard’s retention rate is currently projected to reach 100.7 percent of its goal, with the active Army at 101 percent and the Reserve, 99 percent. With three months left in the fiscal year, officials are still optimistic that the Guard’s recruiting goal can be met, Blum said. “Counter intuitively to us, we are re-enlisting Soldiers, or they’re staying with us, at an unprecedented rate,” Blum said. “We didn’t calculate for that. And we didn’t adjust our recruiting goal, and we won’t, because I really want to see what this volunteer force will be able to sustain within the artificiality of raising or lowering goals and numbers.”

Lt. Gen. James Helmly, chief of Army Reserve, said he believes Soldiers are staying in because they believe in what they’re doing and they are motivated by the transformational changes, which should lead to more predictability about deployments and improved training.

“First of all, there’s an element of the service ethic there,” Helmly said. “Second, they really get it. They don’t question our motives and the need for their being there, and they’re proud of what they’re doing. So I think the internal emotional part carries a lot.”

Blum agreed, adding that he sees people volunteering to be Soldiers because they see their country under attack and want to defend it.

“The quality has never been higher than it is right now and they’re stepping forward at a most difficult time ever seen in the 31-year history of the volunteer Army,” Blum said. “They understand that it is about us, it’s about our country, our way of life, and that it’s at risk and that they’re willing to step forward and be counted and answer the call to colors.”

Blum noted that he has twice met with state governors in recent months to address their concerns about not having enough National Guard forces to handle state emergencies. Blum said he assured them that they would have up to two-thirds of their Air and Army Guard capabilities at hand. For Vermont, New Hampshire, Idaho and Montana, Blum said those states have the two-third capabilities when assets from the Air Guard and assistance from neighboring states are factored in.

The retention figures are not affected by stop loss, Schoomaker noted. And efforts to grow the active force by 30,000 Soldiers do not include plans to alert and mobilize up to 5,700 Soldiers in the Individual Ready Reserve, Schoomaker said. The IRR Soldiers will be used to fill vacant positions in the reserve components, which is not unusual in time of war, the chief noted. During Desert Storm and Desert Shield, more than 20,000 IRR Soldiers were called up, he said. Of the 5,700 IRR Soldiers who have or will be alerted, Schoomaker said the Army is looking for volunteers before starting involuntary mobilizations.

Schoomaker said a decision on how long the Army will need the additional 30,000 Soldiers would be made in 2006, when 10 additional BCT (UA)s are expected to be in place. Plans are to create three this year, three in fiscal 2005, and four in fiscal 2006. At that time, officials will decide if the Army needs five additional BCT (UA)s, he said.

Students participate in summer-hire program at First Army

By Jarryn Sparrow

Eleven teens from local high schools participated in a two-session summer hire program at First U.S. Army. The students worked in various directorates throughout the headquarters. They were excited to have an opportunity to “see what Soldiers do.”



Jarryn K. Sparrow, 16, prepares an article for publication as part of his duties working in the First U.S. Army Public Affairs Office during the Student Summer Hire Program 2004. Jarryn is an 11th grader at Stockbridge High School in Henry County.
Photo by Cpt. Vincent Mitchell

he said, “Yes, because I feel I would learn more and more each time I come.”

Brandon Staples, a 17-year-old Douglas County High School 12th grade student worked for the office of the Secretary of the General Staff (SGS). He thought the program was educational and fun. “It’s keeping me on track for the future, it’s very educational, and gives me a chance to see and experience what the Army is about”, said Staples.

Lige Richardson, 20, a student at Clayton State “appreciated the opportunity to interact with Soldiers in a real work environment.” Richardson worked in the Staff Medical Advisor’s Office.

Mrs. Diane Rodriguez-Burton, chief of the Civilian Personnel Advisory Division, served as the First Army point-of-contact and advisor for administering and implementing the student summer hire program for First Army.

First In Deed

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The summer hire program provides training and development opportunities for youth associated with Forts McPherson and Gillem said Rodriguez-Burton.

“The summer hire program was a total success. I gauge this on what I personally observed,” said Rodriguez-Burton. Hopefully next year we will be able to increase the number and allow more students of department of the Army civilians to participate.”

Tiffany Roman, 18, who will attend college at Kennesaw State this fall said, “This has been an enjoyable experience. I would love to come back next year and work at the headquarters building once more.”

Lt. Col. Frank Styles, Chief, Information Management (G-6), summed up the program from a supervisory point of view. “The students were punctual, had positive attitudes and a zest for learning and working. It was a great experience. They worked hard and helped accomplish our total mission”.

Army Reserve (Con’t)

Overall, the Army Reserve prior-service recruiting mission is down 9 percent from last year’s numbers. In June, the component hit about 86.5 percent of its prior-service recruiting goal.

The Stop-Loss program is responsible for some of the shortfall, Wilson said. That program stops people in deploying units or those with critical military occupational specialties from getting out of the service or from moving. “Stop-Loss hurts, because it means soldiers who would be candidates for the Army Reserve are not being released from active duty, so that limits our pool,” Wilson said.

Other Army Reserve officials said uncertainty about mobilizations and deployments also is working against the service.

Attracting and retaining prior-service personnel is key to the success of the Army Reserve. “We don’t want that slippage for a number of reasons,” Wilson said.

One reason is to mitigate the experience drain. Active-duty soldiers bring a wealth of experience to reserve units, he said. They also come to the units fully

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Army announces FY05 and FY06 Modular Brigade Force Structure Decisions

The Department of the Army announced force structure basing decisions for the new brigade combat team (units of action) BCT(UA)s in fiscal years (FY) 2005 and 2006. The temporary stationing of modular BCT(UA)s is critical to ensure the Army is properly postured to fully support its strategic commitments, including ongoing operations in support of the global war on terror. Additionally this allows the Army to continue its transformation to a campaign-quality force with joint and expeditionary capabilities that meet the future demands of the Combatant Commanders. In FY 05, the Army will stand up and temporarily station new modular BCT(UA)s at Fort Polk, Louisiana; Fort Richardson, Alaska, and Ft Hood, Texas. As part of the decision, the 2nd Cavalry Regiment, currently at Ft Polk, Louisiana, will move to Ft Lewis and convert to a Stryker Brigade Combat Team. In FY 06, pending permanent stationing consistent with Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) analysis in 2005, the Army will form and temporarily station BCT(UA)s at Fort Benning, Georgia; Fort Bliss, Texas; Fort Bragg, North Carolina; and Fort Riley, Kansas.

The locations were selected based on existing capacities, available training space, and current locations of similar units. The Army will revisit the locations of these units during the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure process.

The new modular forces will be capable of operating across the entire range of military operations. As part of Army transformation, capabilities previously found within the divisions and corps will be shifted to the BCT (UA). These new brigades are the first conversions in army transformation and are designed to deploy/employ as independent units in support of the joint force.

On January 30, 2004, the Office of the Secretary of Defense approved increasing the number of active modular Brigade Combat Team Units of Action (BCT(UA)) from 33 to 43 between FY 04-06. In accordance with the Army Campaign Plan, the Army began converting to modular designs in FY 04 with three BCT(UA)s temporarily stationed at Fort Stewart, Georgia; Fort Campbell, Kentucky; and Fort Drum, New York. The FY 05-06 actions are a continuation of that effort. For more information contact: Lt. Col. Christopher Rodney at 703-697-3491, christopher.rodney@hqda.army.mil.

Army Reserve (Con't)

trained. "There is no learning curve for these soldiers," Wilson said. "The skill sets have already been developed on active duty." It is also less expensive to recruit prior-service personnel. "Do the math," Wilson said. "It costs us \$60,000 to \$100,000 to bring a citizen in off the street and put them through training, and everything associated with making them soldiers -- uniforms, food, health care and so on."

It makes more sense for the Army Reserve to capitalize on the prior-service pool of manpower. Officials said the service will look at all aspects of the selective retention bonus and adjust it accordingly. Part of the problem is that there is a time lag in the process. "There's a four- to seven-month delay before we really understand what the impact of current operations are" on recruiting and retention, Wilson said. Wilson said officials constantly gather data to stay ahead of the trends. He noted the Army Reserve has done this for years. But, he added, "recent operational requirements have driven it more to the forefront." He said the whole concept of a reserve soldier is changing with the new threats confronting America. The service is aiming at a "1-in-6 ratio" for reserve service. In other words, Wilson explained, a reservist may be mobilized one in every six years. This idea -- built around the Army Reserve Expeditionary Force -- would build stability and predictability into the force, he said.

Not mobilizing or deploying the Army Reserve may work against retention also. "We're finding soldiers who have been used in the (continental United States) and (overseas) are staying with us at a higher rate than those soldiers who haven't been used," Wilson said. "These soldiers have volunteered to serve their country, and when we ask them to do it in an effective way ... they stay with us." The idea of rebalancing the active and reserve forces -- making sure each component has the right mix of specialties -- hasn't had a significant effect on recruiting or retention yet, Wilson said. But, he added, "It has raised the level of apprehension and confusion on the part of what does that mean to a soldier." Soldiers want to know if they will have jobs in the Army Reserve or if they will be able to make a career in the component. "As long as (the idea of rebalancing) is hanging with no execution, it creates a specter of confusion and unpredictability," Wilson said. He said the Army Reserve will continue to monitor recruiting and retention trends closely.

Virginia hosts major homeland defense exercise

By Maj. Cotton Puryear,
Army Guard Public Affairs Officer

The Virginia National Guard will joined 17 state agencies, 15 local governments and several federal agencies in "Determined Promise 04", a major homeland defense exercise announced by Virginia Governor Mark R. Warner on Aug. 2. Virginia hosted the exercise to test coordination, communication and response to simulated incidents from Aug. 4-10.

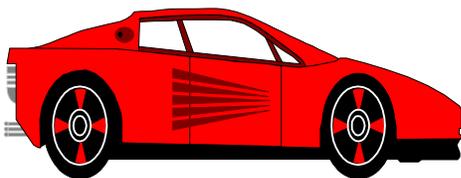
The exercise had been planned for over 18 months and was one of a series of regular exercises being conducted by the Department of Defense's Northern Command (NORTHCOM), and involved agencies from Virginia as well as California. There were seven different fictitious scenarios. Local and state agencies drilled on crisis response actions. Several of the scenarios were simulated "tabletop" exercises, but there were "boots on the ground" field training exercises as well.

During the press conference, Warner stressed that the scenarios in the exercise were in no way related to any real-world intelligence about potential terrorism threats. "Citizens should be aware that any news they hear of the Determined Promise exercise incidents around Virginia had been in the planning for months, and is no way related to the current elevated terrorism threat at the national level," Warner said. "This wide-ranging exercise is exactly what government should be doing now to prepare for any terrorist incident." The exercise had two main goals. First, allow NORTHCOM to test the capabilities of the Department of Defense to work with civilian agencies to guard and defend the United States against a terrorist attack. The second goal was to provide the opportunity to rehearse plans for the military, as well as local, state and federal agencies, to coordinate their crisis response and recovery operations.

Warner said that Virginia's ability to respond to emergencies has been sharpened by recent events like the 9/11 attacks on the Pentagon, the sniper incidents in the Northern Virginia area and recovery after Hurricane Isabel. "But we know that at some point in the future Virginia will experience another emergency or disaster, whether it's terrorism or Mother Nature," he said. "We need to be ready. That is why we did this exercise."



Virginia Governor Mark R. Warner addresses the media during a press conference to announce Virginia's hosting of "Determine Promise 04", a major counter-terrorism exercise. (Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Office)



Driving in the rain

Driving in the rain, and on wet roads is certainly a challenge. Losing control of your car on wet pavement is a frightening experience. Unfortunately, it can happen unless you take preventive measures.

In all sorts of rain, you can prevent skids by driving slowly and carefully, especially on curves. Steer and brake with a light touch. When you need to stop or slow down, do not brake hard or lock the wheels and risk a skid. Maintain mild pressure on the brake pedal. If you do find yourself in a skid, remain calm, ease your foot off the gas, and carefully steer in the direction you want the front of the car to go. Avoid using your brakes. This procedure, known as "steering into the skid," will bring the back end of your car in line with the front.

-First U. S. Army Safety Office-

First U.S. Army selects top NCO and Soldier for 2004

By Karen Bradshaw, First Army Public Affairs Office

“You are all winners,” declared Command Sergeant Major Gilbert Canuela, 24th Infantry Division CSM, as he welcomed the thirteen candidates to the First U.S. Army NCO and Soldier of the Year competition held at Ft. Stewart, Ga., this year. Canuela himself holds the distinction of previously snagging the top Drill Sergeant of the Year title at Fort Sill.

“You have won top honors at your own commands and maxed out other boards before coming here. You will be competing against yourself as well as the other Soldiers. Be proud of your accomplishments for all of you are fine representatives of your commands,” Canuela told the Soldiers that first night.

Canuela stepped in for Command Sgt. Maj. Jeffrey Mellinger, the First Army command sergeant major who was on his way to Bagdad and his new assignment as the command sergeant major for Multi-National Forces Iraq.

Under Mellinger’s leadership the First Army NCO/Soldier of the Year competition became tougher each year. One of Mellinger’s enduring legacies at First Army was his continual challenge to all Soldiers to raise the mark on the wall for themselves in everything they do. As Canuela told the contenders, “this year’s competition will be dedicated to Command Sergeant Major Mellinger.”

The two-day event was jam-packed with tests of physical agility, marksmanship, knowledge of common tasks, day and night land navigation tests and above all it tested the Soldiers’ ability to apply their textbook knowledge in a realistic environment. On the final day, the Soldiers, dressed in their class-A uniforms, went before the board of seasoned command sergeants major to respond to probing questions on their knowledge of the Army after which they took a written test.

First Army’s unit at Ft. Stewart, the 4th Brigade/87th Division (Training Support) was the host unit led by Command Sgt. Maj. Jonathan Garrett. Under Garrett, Sgt. Maj. John Dean was the operation NCOIC coordinating the 4th Brigade operations for the outdoor events.

4th Brigade Soldiers were the observer/controllers and administered the outdoor tests to the competitors. They ran the physical fitness tests, marksmanship range, manned the CTT stations and ran the day-night land navigation course in the Ft. Stewart woods. Their precision ensured that all Army standards were met.

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Normally the 4/87th Div. (TS) has the job of mobilizing and training Army National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers on a regular basis and it is their number one business to ensure that Soldiers meet Army standards in whatever they do.

The Soldiers began their first day of tests with a 5 a.m. Army Physical Fitness test. Before they started, Garrett reminded the troops, “The AFPT will measure your muscular strength and cardio-vascular endurance.”

That was an understatement. Endurance was indeed tested; that first day ended at midnight, nearly 19 hours after that 5 a.m. physical fitness test.

There was barely a pause as Soldiers moved from the PT field to the rifle range for live fire of 50 rounds with the M-16, to Common Task Training (CTT) stations scattered in the woods across the road, to the land navigation course another 7 miles away. Lunch consisted of an MRE (meals ready to eat) grabbed on the run.

The weather was hot with the sun in full force, but the rains the night before helped cool the woods off under the trees. It became evident that the contenders from the northern states might argue that nothing felt cooler as they dealt with the humid Georgia heat.

To add the spark of realism to one of the CTT events, the Soldiers had to evaluate and treat a heat stroke victim, a training dummy dressed in a uniform and found on the forest floor. After hours of thirteen treatments from Soldiers passing through this station, this “victim” was the cleanest one in the woods that day, since one of the treatments for heat strokes is to douse the stricken patient with water. Several canteens of water filled the bill.

Emerging from the dark woods at midnight after the night land navigation test, the tired Soldiers grabbed some sleep. At 7 a.m., they were dressed and ready to meet the daunting board of senior NCOs who would test them on their military knowledge. No one knew beforehand what to do study, so everything was fair game.

After meeting the board, Soldiers were visibly relieved. Their demeanor softened as they began to laugh and joke. They would find out the next morning at the awards breakfast who won the top spots and who were named runners-up. They relaxed.

See the winners, p. 11

FIRST U.S. ARMY SOLDIER OF THE YEAR 2004

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Sgt. Darren Habermihle
B Battery, 1/126th FA
MOS 13B (Field Artillery)
Wisconsin National Guard

*“I thought the competition was tough and challenging.
Why am I in the Army? It’s my duty as a citizen.” ... Sgt. Darren Habermihle*



FIRST U.S. ARMY NCO OF THE YEAR 2004

Staff Sgt. Bryan Jakubiak
HHC 134th Sig. Bn., 34th Inf Division
MOS 74C (COMSEC CUSTODIAN)
Minnesota National Guard (the Red Bull Division)

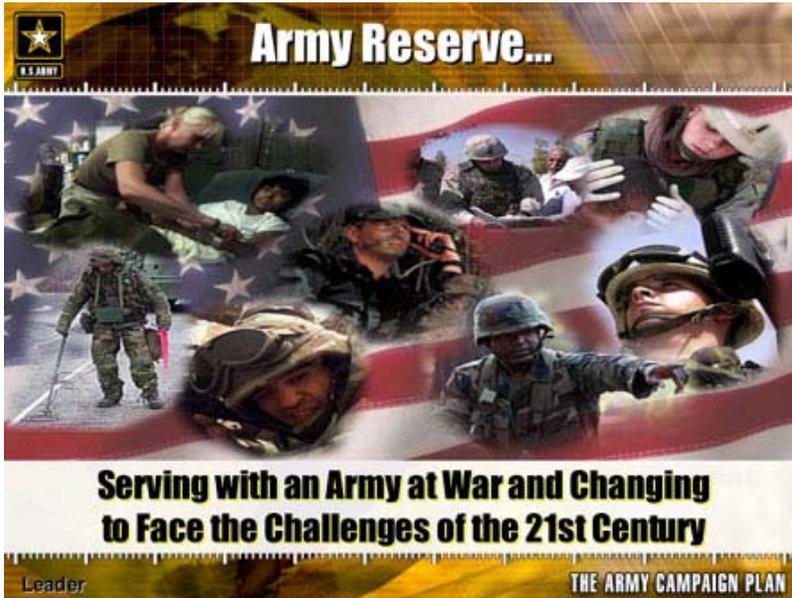
“in studying for this, you learn a lot. I have enjoyed spending time with the other Soldiers, the camaraderie testing with them and learning from them. I enjoyed the land navigation and weapons competition the most. I like that fact that there is a different twist to each event, nothing was routine. Why am I in the Guard? I’ve been in the military for 20 years....I guess it’s the retirement benefits and a sense of responsibility and commitment to country. I find myself stopping in at the unit, sometimes three-times a week. I think service is a good idea for everyone.” Staff Sgt. Bryan Jakubiak





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