



Fir Tree



March, 2012

91st Training Division e-publication



POWDER RIVER! LET 'ER BUCK!

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Cover Photo by Staff Sgt. Robert Van Tuinen, Chief Warrant Officer 5 Harris of the 91st Training division pilots a Huey at Fort Irwin.

Brig. Gen. Cook's photo, on the next page, by Capt. Geoffrey Talkington and was taken at Camp Bullis firing range.
Sgt. Maj. Espinosa's photo by Staff Sgt. Robert Van Tuinen and



Fir Tree

91st Training Division Newsletter



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Welcome to the March, 2012 Edition of the Fir Tree. This is an unofficial publication authorized under the provisions of AR 360-81. Opinions and views expressed in this publication are not necessarily the opinions or views of the Department of the Army or the 91st Training Division.

The Fir Tree serves the current and former soldiers of the 91st Division, their families, and their employers.

The Division Public Affairs Office encourages all members of the Division to submit articles, comments and inquiries. Please send them to:

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From the Commanding General



The 91st Training Division is in full-stride as we ramp up preparations for our summer exercises. The CSM and I plan to visit as many of you as possible over the next few months before the exercises start. A few weeks ago, we had a chance to experience award winning marksmanship training first-hand while visiting one of the 91st's Small Arms Readiness Detachments during their Annual Training. Our division is full of talent, so stay-tuned as they compete in the All-Army Marksmanship Competition. Additionally, we continue to strive for joint certification. We met with the Commodore of the Navy's 31st Seabees, Capt. John Korka, and his team to continue our mutual support of their training exercises and integration into our the CSTX and Warrior Exercises.

Please thank your families for their support as you are away from home more and more through the spring at many workshops and extended meetings. Keep up the great work and stay focused on our goal of providing world class training to the Reserve Forces.

Powder River!

From the Sergeant Major

I wanted to take a moment to let you know that I am leaving my position as the Acting Division Command Sergeant Major. I am starting a new position as the Command Sergeant Major for 2/104 at BT Collins, Sacramento mid-April. It is my time to say farewell to the 91st Division Family.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my tenure here and I greatly appreciate having had the opportunity to work with all of you. Thank you for the support, guidance, and encouragement during my time with the 91st. Although I will miss the Soldiers of the 91st, I am looking forward to this new challenge and to starting a new phase of my career. Please welcome CSM Gregory Chatman as the 91st Command Sergeant Major effective 1 March.

Please keep in touch, and don't hesitate to ask if there is ever anything I can do for you. You can reach me at:

rupertson.espinosa@us.army.mil

Powder River!

The 91st Division
Dining Out
will be held at the
Naval Postgraduate School
April 21, 2012



91st Division soldier speaks at Ft. Irwin Huey retirement



Photo by Staff Sgt. Robert Van Tuinen
Chief Warrant Officer 5 John M. Harris talks about his experiences in a Huey to the guests assembled at the Huey retirement ceremony at Fort Irwin, CA.

Story by Staff Sgt. Robert Van Tuinen

Chief Warrant Officer 5 John M. Harris, Senior Aviation Observer/Controller for the 91st Training Division and an Instructor Pilot for the NTC, was the guest speaker for the National Training Center UH-1 retirement ceremony.

The last three UH-1 Iroquois “Huey” aircraft that were part of the National Training Center inventory at Fort Irwin, ceased operations Dec. 15, 2011, by Department of the Army Directive. Within a year there will not be any Hueys operated by the U. S. Army.

The ceremony was hosted by Bravo Company, 2916th Aviation Battalion at the NTC Aviation Company’s Hanger, Barstow-Daggett Airport, about 12 miles east of Barstow, Ca. Harris was asked to speak at this event by Col. Brown, NTC Chief of Staff and also the senior Army Aviator assigned to the NTC. Harris opened his speech by saying, “It is an honor for me, as allegedly the last Vietnam Huey Aircraft Commander who is still in uniform on Army flight status and still flying Hueys, to be here today and to share with you my thoughts on this occasion.” Harris has served over 42 years in the U. S. Army including time in Vietnam, Korea and Jamaica. He has received many decorations to include the Legion of Merit and the Bronze Star.

Many other veteran Huey pilots and mechanics were able to attend the event. Current pilots and support staff for the UH-1 Iroquois received awards for their service.

Ft. Irwin Post Commander Brig. Gen. Terry Ferrell and Post Command Sgt. Maj. Nathan E. Buckner attended as well.

Harris concluded his speech with the words: “I will paraphrase retired General of the Army Douglas MacArthur by saying, ‘Old Hueys never die; they just fade away,’ and each and every one of us can warmly recall our powerful memories of her as she gracefully, just fades away.” Following the ceremony the last three Hueys performed a flyover; the lead Huey piloted by Harris. The guests then watched them gracefully fade away, symbolizing the end of their service at Fort Irwin.

Photo by Sgt. Maj. Espinosa

Staff Sgt. Van Tuinen stands next to one of the UH-1’s being retired from Fort Irwin.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Robert Van Tuinen

Sgt. Major Rupertson Espinosa, Chief Warrant Officer 5 John M. Harris and 1st Sgt. Jon Sevilla stand in front of the UH-1 “Huey” that Harris would later fly to lead the team of three Hueys in a flyover before all three faded away into the distance symbolizing the end of their service at Ft. Irwin.

Valero recognized for their patriotism by their employee: 91st Division soldier



Photo by Staff Sgt. Robert Van Tuinen

Mark Phair D. Phair, Vice President and General Manager of Valero Wilmington Refinery, holds the Seven Seals Award that was presented to him by Tatyana Alvarez, CTR, Program Support Manager for the ESGR as Staff Sgt, Wick holds the Patriotic Employer Award that he presented his boss.

Story by Staff Sgt. Robert Van Tuinen

November 9, 2011 the Valero Wilmington Refinery, Wilmington, Calif., hosted a luncheon to honor their employees who are military veterans. The refinery does this every year, but what made this year special was that Staff Sgt. Allen Wick had nominated his company to the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve to receive an award for their support of U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers.

Staff Sgt. Wick, a member of the 91st Division, deployed to Balad, Iraq with the Headquarters Company 304th Sustainment Brigade, from Nov. 2008 to Sep. 2009. The 304th is located at March Air Force Base, Ca. While deployed he served as the operations non-commissioned officer for the headquarters company. Valero made sure he did not need to worry about his job. Valero’s policy for reserve soldiers who deploy is to make up any difference in pay between what the employee makes as a soldier and what their Valero salary is, maintain all health benefits and to guarantee that they will return to their same position after deployment, said Suzy Elliot, Human Resource Director for the Valero Wilmington Refinery. She added that they will assist the soldier’s family with most anything they need and send care packages to the deployed soldier.

Wick really appreciated what Valero did for him and his family so he contacted the ESGR to see if there was anything they could do to recognize Valero for their support of reserve soldiers. The ESGR awarded Mark Phair, Vice President and General Manager of the Wilmington

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More about our new digs and more



Story by Staff Sgt. Robert Van Tuinen

The land that comprises Fort Hunter Liggett was acquired by the US Government in 1940 at the same time it acquired the property that now makes up Camp Roberts. In fact, Fort Hunter Liggett administration was under Camp Roberts authority until 1952.

The federal government started looking for sites suitable for new military installations in 1902. This area was described by the US Army Corps of Engineers as “healthy as any in the State of California, in addition to its mundane qualities and excellent range and training ground.” The cost at that time would have been only \$5.76 per acre. The government would have moved ahead to acquire the land at that time but a Salinas Physician, Dr. Roberts, wrote to President Roosevelt describing this area as very inhospitable. He spoke of alkaline water, wind storms, epidemics and desert heat and thought it wrong to subject our Soldiers to such “inhumane conditions.” This battle went on for some time and the Army met its training needs at other installations without the benefit of, what would become, Camp Roberts.

In 1940 another world war was on the horizon. On July 26, 1940 L. J. Burrud, Vice President in charge of Real Estate & Sales for the Hearst Sunical Land & Packing Company, wrote a letter to Lt. Gen. John L. Dewitt, Commanding General of the Ninth Corp area, Presidio of San Francisco, offering approximately 154,400 acres of their holdings in Monterey County to the federal government for the price of \$2,000,000.00, or approximately \$12.50 per acre. He also said that this was at about a \$2,000,000.00 loss from what they had paid for the properties. At this time Congress authorized the funds necessary to acquire the land that comprises Camp Roberts and the area we now call Fort Hunter Liggett.

In March of 1941 the area was used as a Soldier training center preparing Soldiers for service in WWII. The topography of the then Hunter Liggett Military Reservation was considered to be a “European-like setting” and prepared thousands of Soldiers for WWII combat in a realistic environment.

From 1952 until 1993 the reservation became a sub-installation of Fort Ord and in 1975 was re-designated the Fort Hunter Liggett Military Reservation. During this period it served two purposes. It served as a training area for the 7th Light Infantry Division which was based at Fort Ord during that time period. It was also the home to the United States Army Combat Developments Experimentation Command. This command evaluates new Army and Marine Corps weapons systems.

In 1993 Fort Hunter Liggett came under the control of the United States Army Reserve Command. In 2005 BRAC recommended moving the 91st Division from Camp Parks to Fort Hunter Liggett to become part of the transformation of Fort Hunter Liggett to a world class training center for Combat Support and Combat Service Support units, preparing reserve units for service in combat situations around the world.



Photo by Capt. Geoffrey Talkington

The “Tin Barn” serving as the Fort Hunter Liggett Fire Department.

Of other interest. How many of you know there is an interesting history to the Fire Department Building here on Fort Hunter Liggett? The “Tin Barn” was originally constructed in 1915 for the Pan Pacific Exposition in San Francisco, CA. This exposition was held to celebrate the opening of the Panama Canal. It was later dismantled and brought to King City by rail. It was then bought to its present location by then ranch owner Brown by horse and wagon. Brown owned this property before Hearst bought it. The “Tin Barn” originally served as a horse barn but has also been used by the army to store engineering equipment, as a Post Exchange including a snack bar, clothing store, barber shop, laundry and library, as the post theater, a gymnasium and, finally, as the post fire department.

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Army Resilience Training

By Maj. Gregg Moore

Army leadership is working to increase resilience within the Army community. Resilience can be defined as mental and emotional flexibility in the face of stress and adversity. Army Resilience Training is designed to give soldiers, Department of the Army Civilians, and Army families the skills to cope with the stresses and hardships faced in the military. The training is approached through exercises, discussions, team-building activities, and problem analysis skills.

The United States Army Medical Department designed the series of resilience training modules as tools for leaders at all levels to implement into their resilience training plans. This was formerly called Battlemind Training.

There are separate modules for all levels of Army institutional training, starting with Basic Combat Training, through the Warrior Leader Course, and so on to the Sergeant Majors Academy and also in all the branch qualifying courses at the officer level (including Warrants). Soldiers should expect to have a minimum of two-hours (and sometimes more) resilience training when they attend a professional development school. Modules are designed to address the specific needs for soldiers at the level of the school they are attending.

Modules are also designed to support operational requirements by focusing on the various phases in the deployment cycle. There are three forms of pre-deployment training, one for enlisted soldiers, one for officers, and a module for families. The Army Medical Department also designed modules for the integration phase of deployment and three phased modules designed for families and soldiers when they return home.

The goal of the Department of the Army is that every unit, battalion size and above will have a Master Resilience Trainer and several qualified assistants, depending on the size of the unit. The MRT will ensure all members of the unit and their families receive the required training through the deployment cycle. The Master Resilience Trainer course is two weeks long (80 hours). It is taught for the reserves nearly every month at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin. The Resilience Trainer Assistant course is three days (24 hours) long and is taught in nearly every state by various National Guard and Reserve units. Check ATRRS for dates and locations. The only prerequisites are rank based: E6 – E8, W1 – CW4, and O1 – O4.

A resilient person has the inner strength to face the realities of the Army with courage and confidence. It is not about suppressing emotions, it is about dealing with them in a realistic and functional way.

For more information go to: www.resilience.army.mil

What do engineers do to train during Warrior and CSTX?

Story by Staff Sgt. Robert L. Van Tuinen

So what does attending an exercise at Fort Hunter Liggett entail for engineering units? Well, some of it is the same as the rest of the soldiers. They in process through the Reception, Staging, Onward movement & Integration and participate in tactical movement and lanes training. After that they go do what Engineers do and build things. They will be busy improving the Forward Operating Bases that we use during the exercises.

During WARRIOR 91-12-01 and CSTX 91-12-01 they will be involved in many projects. They will be pouring concrete slabs as large as 30 feet by 100 feet that will be used for various purposes to include parking pads for equipment and a large firefighter training area. At FOB Ward they will also construct a 310 ft by 350 ft Combat Army Support Hospital gravel pad. At FOB Schoonover there is a need for improving a two-mile stretch of road to include using a system of cable-concrete and geo-textile to create low water crossings. This is a method of using concrete blocks, cabled together and laid on a geo-textile matting to construct a low water crossing rather than bridging the water or using culverts, which tends to do more damage to the environment through erosion.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Van Tuinen

One of the SWA HUTs located at FOB Ward.

The Engineers will be involved in vertical construction projects as well. There is a need on all FOBs for the construction of 18 new long-narrow wood buildings with no windows and a door at each end. These are Southwest Asian (SWA) huts. These are used both for offices and sleeping quarters. The engineers will be constructing 18 guard towers at all the FOBs as well. FOB 8J is receiving a new 8-sink wash basin fed by a water bladder and draining into another water bladder. This is designed to be able to be built one place and used in another location.

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Tough, realistic training

What really goes on at RTC-West?

Story by Capt. Geoffrey Talkington and Maj. Gregg Moore

Regional Training Center West located at Fort Hunter Liggett, California, prepares US Army Reserve Soldiers for their missions prior to starting one-year mobilizations for overseas deployment. This unit, which falls under the command of the 91st Training Division, formed exclusively to support this specific Army Reserve training mission consists of 119 non-commissioned and commissioned officers.

Lt. Col. Michael Musard, RTC-W Commander, said, “The Citizen-Soldiers of RTC-West who have volunteered over the past five years are world class. For the most part they have left home to serve at a remote post in order to train fellow Army Reserve Soldiers to fight and win. Their job is extremely important, because unlike combat arms units who continually train on war-craft, [combat-support] and [combat-service-support] units rarely do.”

Approximately 5,000 Army Reserve Soldiers are trained annually by RTC-W. Musard said the Soldiers are trained in “15 Army Warrior Tasks and four Battle Drills designed to hone [deploying] Soldiers war craft skills. They are taught to shoot, move, communicate, and survive on the battlefield.” The training lasts up to three weeks for most units.



Photo by Capt. Geoffrey Talkington

Lt. Col. Michael Musard gestures towards the 21-day rotation breakdown as he is being interviewed by Capt. Geoffrey Talkington.

Soldiers are trained by some of the Army’s premier marksmen from the Small Arms Readiness Battalion, headquartered at Camp Bullis, Texas, which is also a 91st Training Division unit. These marksmen are temporarily assigned to RTC-W because of their demonstrated expertise and provide advanced technique training to the Soldiers preparing for their deployment. RTC-W also employs experts in communications equipment, small unit tactics, hand-to-hand combat, and first aid to ensure the training is tough and as realistic as possible.

“As the Battalion Commander, I am proud and humbled to serve with the best the Army Reserve has to offer on a mission that makes a difference every day,” said Musard.

Prior to the establishment of the Region Training Centers in 2007, Army Reserve units would start their mobilization with up to three months training by the First Army at various locations throughout the continental United States. The training was followed by one-year (and sometimes longer) deployments to Iraq, Afghanistan, and other overseas operations. Soldiers would be away from their home, families, and civilian employment for fifteen months or longer. The mandate to reduce the maximum mobilized time away from home to twelve months for most units created the need to establish a training system prior to mobilization. Three Regional Training Centers were stood-up to conduct this highly important training prior to mobilization. The two other RTCs are at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin and Fort Dix, New Jersey.

The Regional Training Centers conduct robust reviews following the training with each unit that rotates through to ensure they are able to improve the training for the next unit. Additionally, they work continuously with the Center for Army Lessons Learned to ensure training plans consist of the latest tactics, techniques, and procedures being used by Soldiers in the various theaters of operation.

This year, Army deployments to Afghanistan have been reduced to nine months. With this change, the Regional Training Centers will be disbanded by July. Deploying units will, once again, have the time they need to train and meet the twelve-month mandate. First Army will pick up the RTC’s training mission to instruct deploying units at various posts throughout the continental United States.

There will be a
German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge
Competition June 2-3, 2012
hosted by the 91st Training Division.
Deadline for applications is May 1, 2012.
POC for this event is Mr. Tom Wilson
831.386.3375
thomas.elmer.wilson@usar.army.mil

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The 396th Augmentation Company will be here for the exercise as well. These engineers work with explosives. They will be detonating cratering charges to create obstacles to counter mobility, C4 for general demolition training, and MICLICs (mine clearing line charge) which are explosive devices used to clear a path through a minefield.

Capt. Joseph Rohman, 91st Division Engineer said “In contrast to previous Warrior and CSTX exercises, the focus for Engineer project planning has been on scenario integration. In the past we would build SWA-HUTS and execute road improvements simply for MOS skill improvement. This year if a SWA-HUT is built or a road improved it is in support of a Turkish village or the result of a SWEAT-MSO assessment [sewer, water, electricity, academics, trash – medical, safety other considerations]. We’re trying to test Engineer Leaders not just take advantage of free labor.”



Photo by Sgt. Joshua Risner, 372nd MPAD

A MICLIC is fired off during the 2011 CSTX exercise here at Ft. Hunter Liggett.

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More Hunter Liggett bits of interest. Some time ago Master Sgt. Sorci, 91st Division Chaplain’s Assistant, asked me if I knew that there had been a ship known as the USS Hunter Liggett. Well, I hadn’t, but I researched it and, yes, he was correct. In 1922 the SS Pan America was built by the Bethlehem Shipbuilding Corp., Sparrows Point, Maryland as a passenger ship. In February 1939 the ship was transferred to the Army and renamed Hunter Liggett. As an Army vessel it sailed from New York to San Francisco and from there to Hawaii until May of 1941 when the ship was turned over to the Navy. She was converted at the Brooklyn Navy Yard and was commissioned on June 9, 1941 under the command of Captain L. W. Perkins, USCG. She served many missions in the Pacific during WWII for which she received four battle stars. She sailed to Olympia, Washington to be returned the Army on March 9, 1946 and was decommissioned on the 18th of March. She was sold to Boston Metals Company on January 30, 1948 and scrapped.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Robert Van Tuinen

The ESGR Seven Seals Award presented by ESGR Program Support Manager Alvarez to MArk Phair.

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Refinery the Seven Seals Award “for meritorious leadership and initiative in support of the men and women who serve America in the National Guard and Reserve” and also recognized him as a Patriotic Employer. Tatyana Alvarez, Program Support Manager for the ESGR in California, said the Seven Seals Award was one of the ESGR’s most prestigious awards and commended Phair on Valero’s support of the men and women who serve our country.

Brig. Gen. James T. Cook, 91st Division Commander, accompanied by Sgt. Maj. Rupertson Espinosa and 1st Sgt. Genaro Sevilla, presented Phair with a certificate of appreciation for Valero’s ongoing support of citizen-soldiers. Phair thanked Cook for his comments about leadership and thanked all the veterans in attendance for their service.

Wick has since been promoted, effective Jan. 1, 2012, to Sgt. 1st Class and transferred to the 968th Quartermaster Company in Tustin, Calif. Feb. 1, 2012.



Photo # 85-G-266193 U.S. Army Transport Hunter Liggett during landing exercises, ca. Feb. 1941

A star shines in Texas

Story by Capt. Geoffrey Talkington

The 91st Training Division Command Team, Brig. Gen. James T. Cook, and Sgt. Maj. Rupertson Espinosa, visited the Small Arms Readiness Battalion at Camp Bullis, Texas, one of our down-trace units, Feb. 17 and 18, 2012. The battalion was conducting annual training and performing live fire exercises on the range. While attending annual training, the battalion was honing their skills as small arms marksmanship instructors and coaches by launching thousands of rounds of live ammo down range and on target.

We all remember the Alamo here in San Antonio Texas, but there is another unforgettable piece of US Army history here. One of the members of the battalion since 2006 has earned the Top Shot award at the Army Marksmanship Unit's "All Army" competition for three years running. Master Sgt. Russell Moore plans on returning to Fort Benning, Ga., this March to defend his title. He will not only be competing for the AMU's "All Army" individually, but also advising and supporting the team competitions as well. Two local Civil Affairs Soldiers were attached to the unit for annual training because they will be representing their unit's team at the upcoming match. The battalion's capabilities are demonstrated by consistently placing 1st, 2nd or 3rd place in State, National and International shooting competitions with more top winners than any other unit in the Army, period.

The best of the best in Small Arms Readiness!



Photo by Capt. Geoffrey Talkington

Brig. Gen. Cook shakes Master Sgt. Russell Moore's hand, thanking him for his service and his training.

Editors note: Master Sgt. Moore did participate in the 2012 U.S. Army Small Arms Championship in early March and finished first place.

Taps

Col. (ret) Kathleen Moorhead
91st U.S. Army Maneuver Training Command

Col. (ret) Stephen T. Mashek
91st U.S. Army Maneuver Training Command

Lt. Col. (ret) James McLaughlin
91st U.S. Army Maneuver Training Command

Sgt. Maj. (ret) Charles "Bruce" Keim
91st U.S. Army Maneuver Training Command

Evan "Swede" Hallstrom
91st Division Band

James B. Armstrong
361st Infantry Regiment Combat Team

Sam B. Aubrey
361st Infantry Regiment Combat Team

Robert Max Frye
361st Infantry Regiment Combat Team

James O. Hammonds
361st Infantry Regiment Combat Team

William Ray Horne
361st Infantry Regiment Combat Team

Jesse Lascano
361st Infantry Regiment Combat Team

Ollie Patterson
361st Infantry Regiment Combat Team

Daniel Ricardo
361st Infantry Regiment Combat Team

James L. Steele
361st Infantry Regiment Combat Team

Raymond E. Tucker
361st Infantry Regiment Combat Team