THE BLADE

The 63rd Regional Support Command provides base operations and mission administrative and logistical support to enable Commanders and units to maximize resources and focus on readiness, training, mobilizing, and deploying. The 63rd Regional Support Command also provides Mission Command over assigned units ensuring Soldiers and units are trained and fully mission capable.

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Black History Month

Ron Spriggs, of the Tuskegee Airmen Exhibit and featured guest speaker of the 63rd RSC's Black History Month celebration, delivered a powerful speech on the importance of remembering American history.

Page 3

Yellow Ribbon 2016

The 63rd RSC Yellow Ribbon team provides relevant resources to attendees before, during and after deployments.

Page 4



USARC CXO Visit



James Balocki, USARC CXO, tours a 63rd RSC facility in Yermo, Calif., and praises efforts Page 5

Combined CR2

The 63rd RSC hosted the four RSC's at Camp Parks in Dublin, Calif. for the command readiness review. MG Pete Lennon received information concerning the manpower and operations of the entire Army Reserve.

Page 6

SPRING 2016

ARA Training Forum

The Army Reserve National Ambassador's Training Forum, was attended by senior leaders and ambassadors throughout the U.S. Army Reserve.

Page 7

President Obama visits the Bay Area

Soldiers from the 63rd Regional Support Command greeted President Barack Obama prior to his departure on Feb. 11, 2016 at Moffett Field, Mountain View, Calif. Obama visted the Bay Area overnight to raise money for the Democratic National Committee. During his first visit of the year to Silicon Valley, he attended two private fundraising events before heading to Los Angeles to film an appearance on the Ellen Show. Obama visted the Bay Area three times last year, including an October fundraising event with rapper, Kanye West.



Capt. Gaetano Simeti, directorate of planning and training plans officer of the 63rd Regional Support Command, shakes hands with President Barack Obama on Feb. 11 at Moffett Field, Mountain View, Calif. Obama visited the Bay Area for fundraising events and later flew down to Los Angeles.



Greetings!

Our vision here at the 63d is to be "An indispensable, adaptive partner enabling Commanders and units to prepare America's Soldiers to fight, survive, and win our Nation's wars."

Each of you play a critical role in ensuring our units and Soldiers get the best support the 63d RSC can provide. We exist to support our customers so that our units and Soldiers can focus on mission readiness in all aspects.

Let us know what we are doing right and where we can improve. Let us know what we can do to help you and your fellow Army Reserve Soldiers to have the best resources we can offer them.

Thank you all for your hard work in making our vision a reality.

"Blood and Fire!"

We Support!

Upcoming Events

March 11-13 - Yellow Ribbon Event Dallas, TX March 12 - RSO Event Grand Prairie, TX March 13 - Daylight Savings Time March 17 - St. Patrick's Day March 18-20 - Strong Bonds Event San Antonio, TX March 22-24 - ASIST Workshop Camp Parks, CA March 27 - Easter Day April 5 - Gold Star Wives Day April 9 - 63rd RSC Dining Out San Jose, CA April 9 - RSO Event TBD April 12-14 - ASIST Workshop Alburquerque, NM April 15-17 - Strong Bonds Event Redondo Beach, CA April 18 - Tax Day April 22 - Earth Day Grand Prairie, TX 63rd RSC, AFRC April 22-24 - Yellow Ribbon Event Anaheim, CA May 7 - RSO Event Phoenix, AZ May 8 - Mother's Day May 13-15 - Strong Bonds Event Anaheim, CA May 17-19 - ASIST Workshop Camp Pendleton, CA May 20-22 - Yellow Ribbon Event Los Angeles, CA May 30 - Memorial Day June 10-12 - Strong Bonds Event Dallas, TX June 14 - Army Birthday

June 17-19 - Yellow Ribbon Event Dallas, TX June 19 - Father's Day June 21-23 - ASIST Workshop Mesa, AZ June 25 - MG Tooliatos' Change of **Command Ceremony** 63rd RSC, AFRC June 25 - RSO Event Little Rock, AR July 4 - Independence Day July 15-17 - Strong Bonds Event San Antonio, TX July 15-17 - Yellow Ribbon Event Los Angeles, CA July 26-28 - ASIST Workshop Garden Grove, CA July 30 - RSO Event Lubbock, TX August 6 - RSO Event San Diego, CA August 19-21 - Strong Bonds Event Anaheim, CA August 23-25 - ASIST Workshop Mountain View, CA August 26 - Women's Equality Day August 26-28 - Yellow Ribbon Event Dallas, TX Sept. 2-4 - Strong Bonds Event San Diego, CA Sept. 9-11 - Yellow Ribbon Event Anaheim, CA Sept. 17 - RSO Event Las Vegas, NV Sept. 20-22 - ASIST Workshop San Antonio, TX Sept. 24 - Gold Star Families Day

Legacy of Tuskegee Airmen honored during Black History Month event

he Tuskegee Airmen have long been renowned for being the first black pilots in U.S. military history and are a focal point of Black History Month, held yearly every February.

The legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen during World War II has been told through countless books and movies, cementing their place in black history, something 'Uncle' Ron Spriggs has dedicated a significant portion of his life to help preserve.

Spriggs was guest speaker at the 63rd Regional Support Command's Black History Month Celebration, Feb. 10, at the headquarters auditorium, here, where he discussed the history of the airmen and his own role in ensuring their story is passed down to future generations.

Spriggs, an Air Force veteran and founder of the Ron Spriggs Exhibit of Tuskegee Airmen (RSETA), said there have been a lot of stories told about the airmen, but one that is often misunderstood.

"You may have heard stories about the Tuskegee Airmen never losing a bomber under escort missions ... it's not true," Spriggs said. "It was proven six or seven years ago that there were some losses, albeit very few, of bombers under the escort of the Tuskegee crews."

Spriggs said this has been proven by the Tuskegee Airmen National Organization and verified by Air Force archives in Montgomery, Ala., but despite this they were still one of the most productive and proficient airsupport units during WWII.

"Benjamin Davis Jr. was the commander of the operation and he literally put out orders that said they would not go as pilots and chase a single plane



to defeat that plane in aerial combat," continued Spriggs.

"The Tuskegee Airmen were in the same vicinity as the fighters they were escorting and when they left, it left a hole in the fabric of aerial coverage. If you shoot down one enemy plane that's just one enemy pilot, but if another pilot sneaks in and shoots down a bomber, that's ten lives."

"Their job was to bring those airmen home to their family and friends."

Spriggs said the airmen were highly decorated and received 744 air medals and should be recognized not primarily as black history, but American history.

"I travel all over the country, doing lectures or workshops, and the majority of my audience are young, white students," Spriggs explained. "Quite frankly our students need to hear this stuff. The education system failed me way back 50 years ago and it's still doing the same thing now because the Tuskegee Airmen are not considered a core product."

"If not me then who will teach it? It will fall on your shoulders," he said to the audience.

Having met over 200 verified Tuskegee Airmen, Spriggs said he's heard a lot of stories, but one of his best memories was attending the Congressional Gold Medal ceremony for the airmen in 2007. "I got a call from (Sen.) Mitch McConnell's office in Kentucky who asked me if I wanted to attend. I was scheduled for surgery that week, so I called my doctor and said 'pause," Spriggs said with a grin. "I was allowed the opportunity to observe, and I was as close to President George (W.) Bush and all those honored dignitaries as far as the second row."

"I snuck in - I was supposed to be in the back somewhere. But they needed wheelchair pushers, so I grabbed one of those chairs belonging to one of the airmen and watched as the nation paid tribute to these great men. That single gold medal is now in the Smithsonian."

It was a proud moment, especially following the treatment the Tuskegee Airmen received following their return home after WWII.

"One of the airmen (Lt. Col. Alexander Jefferson) once told me he was treated better by the Germans when he was taken as a prisoner of war than by his own folks at home," Spriggs said. "When they realized he was an officer they treated him with all amount of respect."

"When he was liberated and came home and got off the boat, there was a (white sergeant) holding two signs. One said 'whites to the right and 'colored to the left."

"That was his homecoming. No bands, or kissing girls in the streets," he said.



Story and photographs by Alun Thomas

63rd RSC hosts first Yellow Ribbon experience of 2016

he 63rd Regional Support Command Yellow Ribbon Program hosted their first event of the year at the Hilton Anatole, Dallas, Jan. 15-17, for both pre and post deployment events.

The purpose of the event and the entire Yellow Ribbon Program is to provide soldiers and their families with information, services, referrals and outreach opportunities throughout the entire deployment cycle, said Daria Y. Mediano, the 63rd RSC chief of programs and services.

"We connect attendees to local resources through informational briefings and community partners at our events," Mediano said.

Attendees checked in on Jan. 15 to receive agendas and information for the weekend, and later dined together at the mandatory reception in the evening. In addition to serving as an icebreaker, the YRP team briefed the attendees with an overview of the weekend.

W. K. Jones, chief of the 63rd RSC's wellbeing division, emceed the reception and general sessions during the weekend and said the sessions are important events for attendees.

"It is the nucleus for all operations within Yellow Ribbon as far as the attendees' experience is concerned," Jones said. "The general sessions help attendees direct their attention on getting the most out of the event."





The 63rd RSC focuses on post-deployments in their events and strives to provide relevant and engaging classes for their attendees, said Emily Conely, the instructor manager of the event.

As such, attendees have the option to choose classes during the event, such as savings and investing or behavioral health improvement, retirement services or how to manage one's military career and Covey's 7 Habits or increasing mental resiliency.

Additionally, the 335th Sustainment

"At the 63rd RSC, we don't just have events, our goal is to make an experience for our soldiers and their families to take back home,"

Command (Theater) hosted a joint event in conjunction with the 63rd RSC for their pre-deployment attendees. Topics included in their curriculum covered Military OneSource, communication plans, safety and resilience, suicide prevention and behavioral health briefs.

All events provide ample time for attendees to interact with community partners during the weekend, said Rena Olsen, a volunteer serving as the community partner manager during the weekend's event.

Attendees were able to ask questions and gain contact information from a variety of resources such as Red Cross, Troops to Teachers, Navy Federal Credit Union, and American Military University among others.

"Community partners are a vital part of any [YRP] event and provide a variety of services, such as financial planning, behavioral counseling, legal assistance, job referral programs and education benefits," Olsen explained.

Providing soldiers with information they will retain and use in the longterm future is critical, Mediano said.

"At the 63rd RSC, we don't just have events, our goal is to make an experience for our soldiers and their families to take back home," she said.

Story and photographs by Grace Pak



Find Yellow Ribbon events at www.yellowribbonevents.org or contact the 63rd RSC Yellow Ribbon team at usarmy.usarc.63-rsc.mbx. yellow-ribbon@mail.mil.



Army Reserve leadership tours 63rd RSC facilities



YERMO, Calif. - The 63rd Regional Support Command provides class services and base operations support to more than 45,000 Soldiers, family members and DoD civilians across seven states in the Western U.S. from California to Arkansas.

Battlefield circulations are a key way for leaders to improve communication and enhance their situational awareness within a tactical environment. The same principle holds true for leadership of the U.S. Army Reserve who aim to better understand and serve personnel under their command.

James Balocki, command executive officer, Office of the Chief of Army Reserve, conducted such a visit when he toured multiple 63rd RSC facilities dispersed across four states, Jan 22-26.

The tour was comprised of visiting Area Maintenance Support Activity, Equipment Concentration Sites and Reserve Personnel Action Centers in Texas, New Mexico, Nevada and California, as Balocki met 63rd RSC personnel to find out what needs and improvements can be made to enhance their workplaces.

"The overall purpose of the trip was to meet with and learn from our military technicians in the 63rd RSC and find out the things we're doing right and the things we could do better," Balocki said. "Secondarily I wanted to see the facilities we're operating in and how we can make the quality of life better for those working in them."

Balocki said he was impressed with the facilities he visited, with many ranging from brand new buildings to far older ones.

"Some of the older ones are renovated and what I saw tells me there's things we can do, but we've made good investments and they're paying off for us," he said.

One of Balocki's numerous visits was to ECS 171 in the remote location of Yermo, which although austere, doesn't negate readiness, Balocki said.

"We've got good leadership here, a good workforce ... quite frankly it's exciting to see what they're doing out here," Balocki continued. "My other reason for coming to Yermo was because we're trying to defend it as part of our military construction budget."

"How successful I am in trying to do that on Capitol Hill or in The Pentagon really depends on me having a firsthand view of the situation and conditions on the ground," he added.

Balocki praised the 63rd RSC for their continuing efforts and the leadership, which helps their facilities, run successfully.

"This is a first-rate outfit that's doing incredible work ... every one of our RSC's is a little different and the 63rd RSC has the tyranny of distance to cover everywhere from California to Texas," Balocki said. "I've had the chance to see that up close and personal over the last few days and the command is doing incredible things."

"I'm really impressed with the talent, professionalism and skill I see and the dedication shown every day," Balocki said.

Story and photograph by Alun Thomas

Regional Support Commands gather for readiness review



eadership from the Army Reserve gathered at Camp Parks, Dublin, Calif., Dec. 8-9, for the Combined Regional Support Command Readiness Review (CR2).

The 63rd, 81st, 88th and 99th RSC's commanding generals briefed Maj. Gen. Peter Lennon, deputy commanding general (support), U.S. Army Reserve Command, about the current state of readiness of their respective RSC and where each sits in critical areas of performance.

Among the relevant topics briefed to Lennon were medical readiness, logistical concerns and data, Army bands and the status of Reserve Personnel Actions Centers across the RSC's.

Lennon said he wanted to concentrate on issues each command is having which is keeping them from getting better.

"Do you see a positive trend we can share throughout the commands or is there something that's holding the command up?" Lennon asked. "That's what I'm looking for here - collaboration and cooperation." "Part of the reason we're doing all four RSC's together is to take the step towards standardization, so the OFNT (Operational and Functional) commands that depend on us so much understand they're going to have one way of doing things."

Having four separate procedures is not beneficial long-term, Lennon continued.

"We're going to try and get processes and procedures that are standard across the board," he said. "There are going to be nuances- we all understand that. But wherever we can, we're going to work towards a common baseline."

Lennon asked each RSC to think about progressive readiness, which is to plan, prepare and provide.

"Plan to be part of the total force, for an operation or exercise."

"Prepare for the exercises: the RSC piece of the prepare is to make sure your Soldiers are ready to do what they have to do and are medically and administratively cleared."

"Provide those forces to the combatant commanders and turn a reserve Soldier into a mobilized active duty Soldier that is ready to roll."

Lennon said he wanted to come away from the CR2 with ideas and concepts that will take the RSC's to the next level.

"I have to make sure what we're thinking about as far as moving forward, provides us with something we can execute," he added.

"I'll be your advocate along with the RSC commanders for any issues," Lennon said.



63rd RSC hosts nationwide Army Reserve ambassador conference



he 63rd Regional Support Command hosted the Army Reserve National Ambassador's Training Forum, Dec. 7 in Camp Parks, Dublin, California, which was attended by senior leaders and ambassadors throughout the U.S. Army Reserve.

The event was held to update ambassadors on current events within the Army Reserve and train them on matters pertinent to their positions as the Army continues to evolve.

Presiding over the forum was Lt. Gen. Jeffrey Talley, commanding general, U.S. Army Reserve Command, who praised the role of ambassadors, which is to represent the chief of the Army Reserve without salary, wages or benefits, while developing awareness with community leaders and building bridges to communities across the nation.

"Why do we need Army Reserve Ambassadors (ARA)? We recognize we need it like the CASA (Civilian Aides to the Secretary of the Army) program," said Talley. "We benefit from having this program, where distinguished civilian leaders from across all our states and territories use their experiences and passion to help Soldiers and families in the Army Reserve."

"While the (ARA) program is far from

where we want it to be, it's a lot better than when it was first initiated and I thank all of you for agreeing to be ambassadors," Talley said to the group.

Talley's next question was simply, what makes a great ambassador?

There's a perception a great ambassador is someone who's a retired general officer or command sergeant major, Talley said, to which he disagrees.

"They certainly have significant experience in the military, regardless of their component, but what makes a great ambassador is first and foremost their love for the United States of America, their patriotism, and they want to help Soldiers and their families," he continued.

Appointing ambassadors with no military experience has been a priority for Talley, who said he has consciously tried to get away from hiring strictly those who served in the Army Reserve.

"We need to have a diverse group within the (ARA) program. We've gained a few women ambassadors, but we need to do better. We need to get more people of color and minority backgrounds too - we need to embrace diversity," he added. "Diversity is the strength of the nation and the strength of the armed forces. We need to make sure the ambassador program is not just people who look like us, sound like us, talk like us and have the same backgrounds. That's not going to give the experiences we want to have within the program."

"There is no perfect blueprint for being an Army Reserve Ambassador," Talley stated.

Talley asked the ambassadors what their legacy would be at the end of their tenures and challenged them to make sustainable goals.

"Ask yourselves, what is it I want to have done? You have to really target it. Some of you have tremendous connections with local officials. That's important and we need that. As long as you're helping Soldiers and their families you're good, but have a plan."

Talley said from personal knowledge the most meaningful experiences ambassadors have had is with the interaction with Soldiers and dealing directly with their families.

"Sometimes they could be the most difficult moments too, because of the sticky problems the families sometimes find themselves in," he continued. "People have to remember you're all unpaid volunteers who go through a lot of paperwork and processes, but you do it anyway.

"It's a sacrifice and I thank all of you for everything you do."

Story and photographs by Alun Thomas

63rd RSC Recognition Section



Pictured left to right: Michael Stocks, Joni Tooliatos, Bruce Humphrey, Maj. Gen. Nickolas Tooliatos, Deborah Swanson

Bruce Humphrey

Ambassador Strategic Outreach Coordinator

Award: Chamber of Commerce Mountain View Ambassador of the Year

The Chamber of Commerce Mountain View recognized Bruce Humphrey, ambassador strategic outreach coordinator for the 63rd Regional Support Command, during the organization's 21st Annual Celebration of Leaders Awards on Feb. 12 in Palo Alto, Calif.

The chamber hosted the event at the Four Seasons Hotel Silicon Valley at East Palo Alto in conjunction with other local non-profit organizations to recognize leaders for exceptional contributions and service to the city of Mountain View and community.



Humphrey, a 23-year Air Force veteran, was recognized as the Ambassador of the Year for his communications, operations and leadership expertise as a chamber ambassador. The chamber nominated Humphrey due to his dedication in increasing member engagement and community awareness for both the 63rd RSC and the Mountain View community.

Maj. Gen. Nickolas Tooliatos, commanding general of the 63rd RSC, his wife Joni, Mr. Michael Stocks, chief of staff of the 63rd RSC, and Deborah Swanson of the 63rd RSC were in attendance at the event.

Story and photographs by Grace Pak



63rd Regional Support Command Public Affairs Office 230 RT Jones Road Mountain View, CA 94043 Chief - Mr. Alun Thomas (O) 650-526-9822 alun.h.thomas.civ@mail.mil PAO Specialist - SGT Grace Pak eun.h.pak4.mil@mail.mil

THE BLADE