

646th Regional Support Group

COMMITMENT TO SERVICE

The Long Road Ahead
646 Best Warrior 2012



Spring 2013

Volume I Issue I



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Best Warrior competitors prepare their ruck sacks for a road march.



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Slingloading at McCoy

Chief Warrant Officer 2 David Laack of the 826th Ordnance Co. waits for the approach of a UH-60, Black Hawk helicopter from the 1/147th Aviation Battalion of the Wisconsin National Guard during a slingloading exercise, Aug. 11, 2012. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Alexander Kartanos)



Specialist Gary Christensen of the 826th Ordnance Co. tapes up a Humvee windshield to prevent cracking during flight. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Alexander Kartanos)



Two soldiers from the 826th Ordnance Company from Milwaukee, Wis. prepare to slingload a Humvee to a UH-60, Black Hawk helicopter from the 1/147th Aviation Battalion of the Wisconsin National Guard, Aug. 11, 2012. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Alexander Kartanos)



Soldiers hook up inert missile tubes to a UH-60, Black Hawk helicopter during a slingload training mission at Fort McCoy, Wis., Aug. 11, 2012. The tubes are filled with concrete to simulate the weight of real ordnance. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Alexander Kartanos)

Around the Group

646th FTX Fall 2011

Photos by Staff Sgt. Alexander Kartanos

Spc. Nance conducts a security check of a truck convoy from the 377th Support Maintenance Company passing through COL Liberty's security gate. Units under the 646th Regional Support Group conduct their September FTX, which includes weapons qualification and a medical SRP.



Platoon sergeants from the 377th Support Maintenance Company stand ready in front of their soldiers to receive information after arriving to Contingency Operating Location Liberty, Sept. 9, 2011. The 377th is participating in the September Field Training Exercise with the 646th Regional Support Group at Contingency Operating Location Liberty.



Soldiers from the 377th Support Maintenance Company work together to lift a maintenance tent into location here, Sept. 9, 2011. The 377th is participating in the September Field Training Exercise with the 646th Regional Support Group at Contingency Operating Location Liberty.



Soldiers in a convoy from the 941st Transportation Company Detachment prepare to disembark after arriving at Contingency Operating Location Liberty, Sept. 9, 2011. The 941st TC Det., is participating in the September Field Training Exercise with the 646th Regional Support Group.

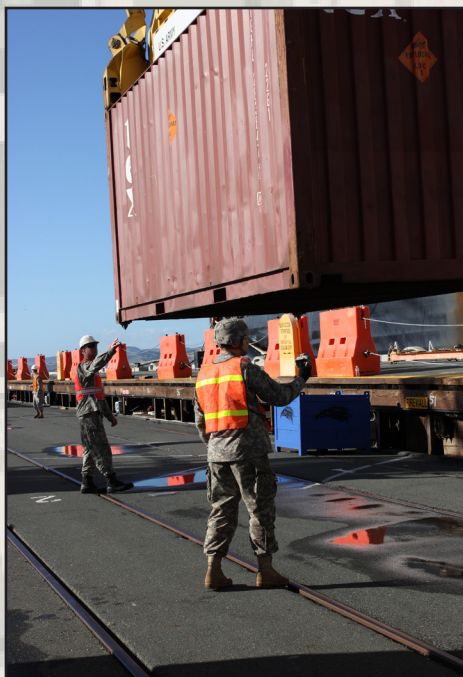
Around the Group

687th Combat Sustainment Support Dining Out

Photos by the 687th CSSB



Short Notice Success



Pfc. Jonathan Wolworth of Crystal Lake, Ill., removes packing materials from the bottom of a container before it is placed on a truck. *Photo by U.S. Army Capt. Dan Marchik*

Army Reserve unit completes real life cargo mission

Story By U.S. Army Capt. Dan Marchik

CONCORD, Calif. When the Black Eagle cargo ship came into port in San Francisco, they had a problem. There was no one to unload their ship because the longshoremen who normally perform that job were not around because of contract issues. The Army Reserve was called up and with only ten days notification the 826th Ordnance Company, out of Madison Wis., was on site ready to perform that job.

The 826th normally issues and inspects ammunition, but this was a mission of a much larger scale; a scale that consisted of 1250 containers of ammunition. The soldiers were tasked with unloading the 20 foot long steel containers from the ship, organizing it on trucks and getting it ready to move to its final destination on trains and trucks with assistance from another Reserve unit. The 826th had to do this on the same timeline as the experienced civilians normally who performed

the job because of the ship's schedule. Once the ship is unloaded, it had to be inspected before it can be loaded again, which added additional pressure to get the job done quickly.

"It's a real good opportunity to come out here and not only show them we can do this job, but that we can do it quickly," said Staff Sergeant Scott Shearer.

The soldiers, whose civilian jobs range from ballroom dance instructors to computer network technicians, dropped everything in the civilian world to complete the mission of unloading the containers from the ship. This was far different from previous missions the 826th has done in the past. Most of the soldiers have never been on a cargo ship, much less unloaded one.

"Working the ship is a whole new experience for all of us," said Staff Sgt. James Lisk.

It should come as no surprise that the 826th hit the ground running as soon as they arrived. Many of the soldiers brought their civilian skills to work with them, like those with heavy machinery experience and hazmat knowledge. The ability to incorporate civilian skills into a military mission is essential for Army Reserve soldiers as they support the active duty component of the Army.

"The Army Reserve provides flexibility and can deliver an on call capability to the total army mission. Our soldiers responded to this mission within a very short time frame and had great support from their employers and family members," said Colonel Robert Carlson, commander of the 646th Regional Support Group in Madison Wisconsin, the 826th's higher command.

The soldiers all agreed that this is a good experience and one that helped them get a bigger picture of the entire ammunition handling process. Spc. Anthony Harmon said the soldiers got experience with equipment they don't normally use. Working with the other units and civilian contractors made it more interesting and helped build a more educated, capable unit. This makes the Army Reserve an even greater asset to the Army.

"Being out here and just seeing a different aspect of what happens with ammunition outside what we normally do with it is still a

good experience. It definitely helps us understand the process of what goes on. Normally we only focus on [what happens] inside the ammunition supply point," said Harmon.

The 826th worked with the civilians on the ship as well as the 711th Transportation Company, Seaport Operations, of Valeo Calif. The 711th's mission started where the 826th's mission ended. Once the containers were offloaded from the ships and placed on trucks, the 711th moved the containers to train cars for transportation to their final destination. Not only did the two units work together but they got a better understanding of each others' jobs.

"It's very good to get the two different types of units in here and just be able to share knowledge with each other on what their missions are and what our missions are," said Shearer.

"We've been able to integrate pretty much seamlessly. I think we work really well together," said First Lieutenant Douglas Miller, company commander of the 711th.

Despite the excitement of a mission such as this, there remains a real danger that comes with handling ammunition. In 1944, this same location experienced one of history's most powerful man-made, non-nuclear explosions when a ship loaded with munitions exploded. The explosion killed 320 men, destroyed two ships and damaged buildings in 12 nearby towns. Maintaining the safety of everyone involved is top priority and where civilian experience again comes into play. The hazmat training Soldiers receive in the civilian world can be passed on to other soldiers to build upon training received in the Army.

The 826th overcame not only a somewhat unfamiliar mission, but also some of the worst weather this part of California has seen. They were able to take advantage of the time when the terminal was shut down due to weather by conducting other training.

"Everyone stayed really motivated during the mission", said officer in charge Chief Warrant Officer David Laack.

The 826th completed the mission successfully and returned to their civilian lives with more experience and knowledge to use the next time they're called upon.

The Best Warrior: Francis Buor



Sgt. Francis Buor participates in the ruck march portion of the 2012 646th Best Warrior competition at Fort McCoy, Wis. in Sept. Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Rachel S. Krogstad



Sgt. Francis Buor writes down vehicles names during a scavenger hunt of Army historical vehicles in the Fort McCoy Commeri-tive Area in Sept. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Alexander Kartanos.



Soldiers prepare for the ruck march portion of the 2012 646th Best Warrior Competition at Fort McCoy, Wis. in Sept. Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Rachel S. Krogstad.

Army-Wide News

Army not changing physical fitness test - for now.

Story by Brock Verkakis

NORFOLK, Va. — The Army will stick to its tried-and-true physical fitness test for now while it orders more reviews of a new assessment meant to more accurately gauge combat readiness.

Commanders in charge of Army-wide training announced last year they wanted to replace the three-event exam given twice a year that requires a soldier to run 2 miles and do sit-ups and push-ups within times that vary by age and gender. Instead, they started in 2011 testing a routine with five parts: a 60-yard shuttle run, a standing long jump, push-ups, a 1.5-mile run and a rower, an exercise similar to a sit-up.

But before it makes any changes, the Army's Training and Doctrine Command at Joint Base Langley-Eustis in Virginia said this week it would need to conduct further study.

"Emerging factors and changing combat environments demand a thorough understanding before changes are implemented, and thus the decision to retain the current test," TRADOC Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel A. Dailey said in a statement. "Whatever the new test looks like, it must accurately evaluate fitness levels for all soldiers to decisively win in combat."

That decision was based on a recommendation from fitness experts from the Department of Physical Education at U.S. Military Academy, the U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command, and California State University-Fullerton. Those experts also said the Army should consider other events that could better predict a soldier's physical readiness.

The three-event Army Physical Fitness Test dates back to 1980 and commanders in recent years have criticized it, saying it doesn't adequately measure components of strength, endurance, or mobility.



Competitors for the 2010 Army Reserve Best Warrior Competition wait in line to do push-ups during the Army Physical Fitness Test at Fort McCoy, Wis., July 26, 2010. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell.

It could still change, but the Army isn't in a rush to do so, said Training and Doctrine Command spokeswoman Stephanie Slater.

"This study that we're going to do, it may or may not result in a recommendation to change the current APFT," said Training and Doctrine Command spokeswoman Stephanie Slater. "What we are trying to do right now is to get the Army to follow the principles of physical readiness so that our soldiers are getting in better shape, they're doing it with less injuries and we're doing that by reinforcing the tenets that are in our doctrine."

The new study is expected to begin in October.

The Army decided in 2011 to implement a new training philosophy that said soldiers would be better prepared for combat if they trained in a way that replicates how they fight. That resulted in the development of a combat readiness test as well as the reconfigured, five-event physical readiness test.

More than 10,000 soldiers around the world participated in a pilot program with the new test. The Army said that the new

tests appears to accomplish what it is intended to, but that it would be premature to implement it Army-wide without additional study.

As part of efforts to keep soldiers fit, the Army has also started a pilot program for a master fitness training course at Fort Jackson, S.C., just outside of Columbia.

Slater said the intent of the program is to train soldiers who will be dispersed to other commands to aid them in their efforts to keep the troops soldiers in shape in order to meet their unit's goals. Among other things, students in the course study kinesiology, performance nutrition and endurance training.

"Each day, they're undergoing physical exercises and routines. The second part of the day is classroom delivered and it's very, very, very robust," she said. "It's no joke. They're studying subjects like physiology and anatomy."

The first students will complete the class by the end of September. Slater said there is no specific target date for determining when a decision on whether to implement the five-event fitness test will be made.

International Training

Army Reserve unit participates in training exercise with Japanese forces

Story by U.S. Army Capt. Dan Marchik

JOINT BASE LEWIS-MCCHORD, Wash. - A fictitious attack on Japan formed the basis for Yama Sakura 63, an annual bi-lateral training event with the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force and the U. S. Army Pacific. This year's exercise included the Army Reserve's 687th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion from Wausau, Wis.

The 687th, which falls under the 646th Regional Support Group, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), was tasked to simulate the role of an Expeditionary Sustainment Command and provide corps level logistics, support operations and mission command of numerous combat service support units.

The 687th ensured that soldiers received the ammunition, food and all other needed materials for the simulated fight.

The 687th ran the operation from Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., and used a new computer simulation system, called WARSIM, to deliver supplies to units on the ground in Japan.

The computer system operates real time and interacts with the Battle Support and Sustainment System (BCS3), which adds to the reality of the exercise.

"You can't just answer a call for ammunition and say 'you now have ammunition' like before," said Capt. James Bundrick.

Supply requests are submitted through the computer system, get routed to the responsible supply unit, and then arrive at the requesting unit.

This exercise not only provides training in the soldiers' military jobs, but also helps build the partnership between the U.S. and Japan by assisting the Japanese forces without infringing on their sovereignty.

The computer systems used in the exercise are complex, so soldiers received training in advance of the mission. The WARSIM replicates battlefield events and is based on a Windows platform, so younger soldiers' familiarity with technology helped them adapt rapidly to the system.

The soldiers quickly learned how to successfully integrate the system into the exercise.

The 687th received compliments from the officer in charge of the exercise facility for their ability to jump right in and adapt to the addition of the new computer system. "Most units would say, 'Aw, we're not trained on this,' but they jumped in and made it happen," said Lt. Col. Tim Sheridan, commander of the 687th.

The exercise is also helping the 687th work on their staff skills

because they are playing the role of a command two levels higher, by acting as an expeditionary sustainment command.

"This gives them a broader picture of the operations they normally perform and helps them do their job better," said Staff Sgt. Aaron Caveny.

"We're a young battalion staff and it's the perfect starting point to where, if we were to do this again, we could really grow and develop our staff and get ready for our next deployment," said Maj. Michael Anderson, executive officer of the 687th.

"We're revising our battle drills and this is the perfect format for us to implement our changes and rehearse the battle drills," said Anderson.

This type of realistic training in a joint and coalition environment was a great way for the Army Reserve to prepare for supporting Combatant Commanders across the range of military operations. The 687th was the only Army Reserve unit to participate in the exercise and it was able to work closely with the United States Pacific Command and Japanese counterparts.

The exercise also included four Army Reserve officers: Lt. Col. Chris Walls, Lt. Col. Josef Sujet, Lt. Col. Robert Hovey, and Lt. Col. Travis Smith, all from the 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), who served as Liaison Officers on the ground in Japan.

They acted as the main point of contact between the soldiers at Joint Base Lewis-McChord and Japan and helped coordinate logistics planning and operations.

The Yama Sakura exercise began in 1982 with the goal of integrating U.S. and Japanese forces in planning and training as well as facilitate interoperability between the forces.

Yama Sakura translated means "mountain cherry blossom," but the name also has roots in Japanese military history dating back to the early 20th century when a secret society of Japanese military officers called themselves the Cherry Blossom Society. The cherry blossom has also been used by the Japanese to inspire nationalism.

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- Able to get a 107 GT score
- Meet height, weight and physical fitness requirements