



THE PACIFIC PRESS

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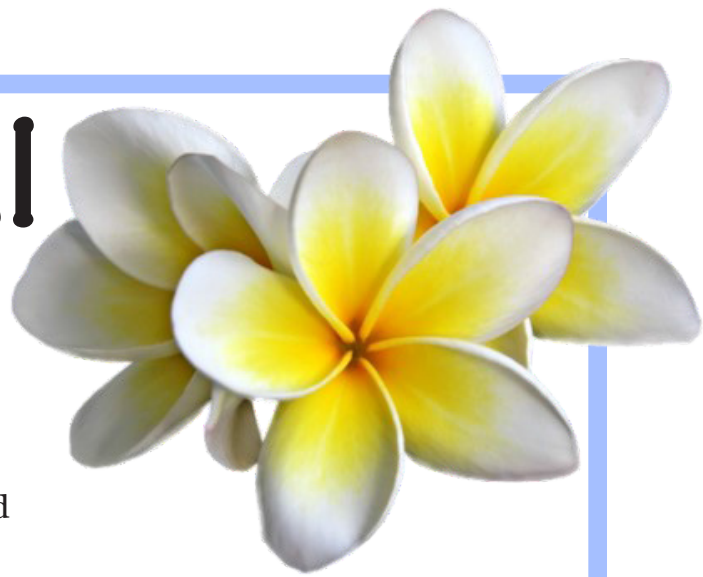
Official Magazine
USARPAC Support Unit
Pride of the Pacific

Volume 3 Issue 1

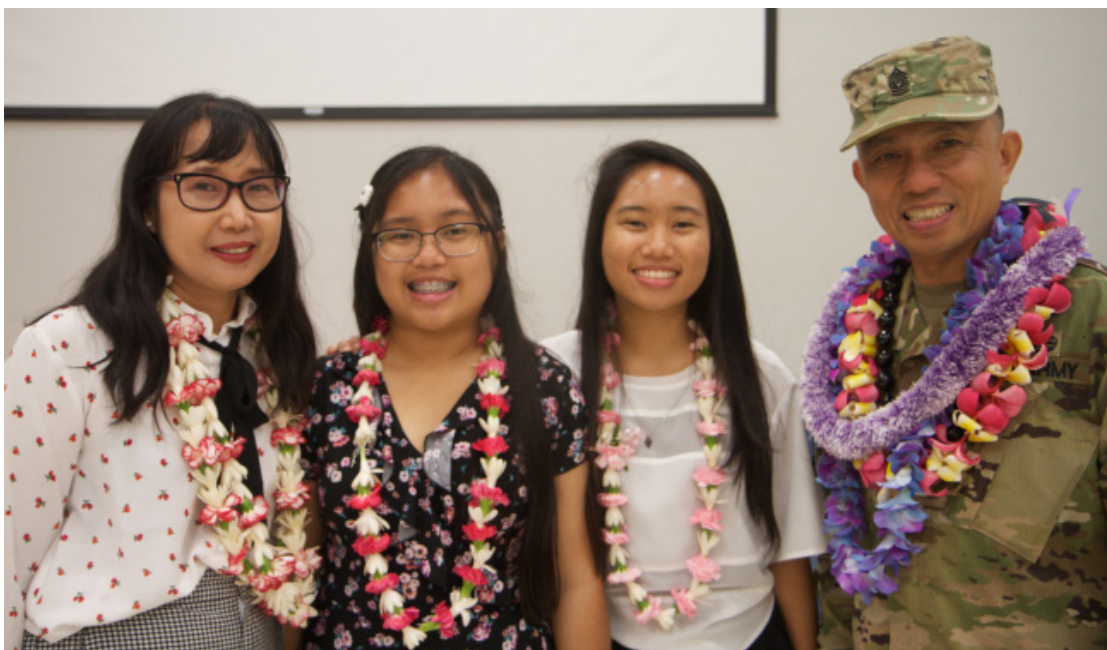
June 15, 2019

E KOMO MAI

WELCOME



the new USARPAC-SU Commander -
Col. Voris W. McBurnette with wife Nikki
&
incoming USARPAC-SU CSM -
Command Sgt. Maj. Marcial Tumacder and
wife Janet and two daughters.





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SEXUAL HARASSMENT.
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Commander's Farewell Message

As your Commander I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you for your commitment to excellence and your dedication to USARPAC-SU. I am extremely proud to be your Commander. Over the past three years we have gone through some changes and advancements that will be forever part of the history of USARPAC-SU. I say, "We" because it is because of you and your families that we were able to support Indo Pacific Command priorities and our ability to respond rapidly to diverse needs within the Indo Pacific Area of Operations.

It is my honor to present an executive summary on how USARPAC -SU has served as a ready and responsive Battle Staff Capability to Headquarters USARPAC in several operations, exercises, DSCA, and messaging across

the US INDOPACOM Area of Operations. USARPAC-SU is proud to play a vital strategic role of ensuring a Free and Open Indo-Pacific. Over the past three years our brigade has progressively increased its capability to rapidly mobilize, deploy and conduct decisive action and support of INDOPACOM priorities.

USARPAC-SU has made Readiness its #1 priority by: Ensuring a Combat Credible Force

- Achieved and sustained overall readiness metrics that exceed USARC standards
- Combat power consistently above 100% personnel assigned vs authorized strength
- Managed and influenced retention and recruiting efforts that resulted in an attrition rate of less than 1%
- High individual readiness metrics and an effective leader development program resulted in over 70 officer and NCO promotions across our formations
- Provided professional military education, CGSOC/ ILE adjunct certified instructor capability ISO 4960th MFTB, USAR TASS school mission

Enhanced Design and Posture: Dynamic Forward Posture

- Developed, designed, and submitted a concept plan IOT reorganize USARPAC SU force structure to optimally meet the battle staff capability and force employment demands of HQ USARPAC, and forward stationed commands: 8th Army and USARJ
- Increased forward postured combat power from 55 to 88 personnel in DET-Korea (45) and DET-Japan (43)
- Oversaw forward restationing of our USARPAC SU DET Korea base relocation from Camp Yongsan to Camp Humphreys, South Korea

Being Agile and Responsive Command

- Developed, planned, and executed Deployment Readiness Exercises (DRE) to train on rapid Mobilization and Deployment
- Engaged in DSCA real world disaster response mission in Saipan and Guam; USARPAC SU individual Soldiers mobilized and deployed under 12304a ISO JRM Task Force West and Task Force Saipan

USARPAC-SU

USARPAC-SU Commander - Patricia R. Wallace
Colonel

USARPAC-SU - Oscar Diaz
Command Sergeant Major

USARPAC-SU Directory

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Staff Sgt. Sara Veilleux, *Det J*
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Subordinate Units

- 30th Military History Detachment
- 305th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

- Provided Japanese and Korean speaking Linguist to support exercises and NTC
- Responded with battle staff capabilities ISO multiple external missions and mobilizations

Strengthening and Building Alliances and Partnerships

- Collaborated and participated in the planning and execution of major joint exercises such as PS, YS, KR, CG et al within the INDOPACOM AOR
- Conducted staff integration with USARPAC, 8A, and USARJ that strengthened lines of operation and communication
- Strengthened DOD service relationships and built Non-DOD agency partnerships (e.g. FEMA, NGOs, Local Gov't) during DSCA Typhoon Yutu disaster response mission in Guam and Saipan
- Initiated engagement with ROK Army IOT foster and strengthen alliances through combined reserve forces training
- Provided leadership, expertise, and input to the development of Theater Operational Plans

As I move on to my next assignment I will use USU as an example of “what right looks like”. Always remember that feedback is a gift, take it and use it wisely. Keep striving for excellence and improving yourselves and the Command. Again thank you to you and your families for your support and



commitment.

Johnathan and I will always consider ourselves as part of the USARPAC-SU Ohana.

Thank you for your optimal partnership and support.

“Pride of the Pacific & One Team!”

Colonel Patricia “Trish” Wallace
& CSM Oscar Diaz
USARPAC SU Command Team
July 2016 - June 2019

USARPAC SU is ready, responsive, and postured to support INDOPACOM, USARPAC, and 9th MSC's missions.

CSM's Farewell Message

My U.S. Army career began Nov 19, 1976. And just like that, it was over. Ask me today if I had to do it again, I wouldn't even blink or think twice about it. And honestly, never in my wildest dreams did I ever imagine service to this Great Nation lasting so long.

At the age of 17, I was heading in the wrong direction, and was blessed when the U.S. Army accepted me into its ranks. I was looking for a positive change in my life, and the Army certainly took care of me. The Army immediately embraced me as one of its own, and groomed and shaped me into the man I am today. I went into service thinking more of my own personal needs, as opposed to the needs of others. I had heard of President Kennedy's famous words, "And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country." Those were just words to me at the time. Little did I know, how the Army Life and Army Values would change my mind and heart so, that I was willing to die for this Great Country and my fellow Americans. The Bible says, John 15:13, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. I have served with many Men and Women willing to sacrifice their own lives, and a few who unfortunately did.

The Camaraderie, Friendships, and Relationships built throughout the years are countless. The Memories will last forever and beyond. I could only hope that everyone could get just a taste of what those experiences were like. Spending time with Soldiers in garrison, the Field, on exercises, mobilizations, deployments, and most importantly surrounded by them and their families. To the civilian who never experiences time spent Serving this Great Nation in Uniform, they will never appreciate what a Band of Brothers/Sisters, not related by blood, but by kinship, would truly sacrifice for each other. It's a connection that at the end of the day, at the end of a tour, will never be divided.

I can tell you with the heartfelt of hearts that I have Served this Great Nation with Pride as an American. Still today, willing to lay it all down for America and my fellow Americans. My Spirit and Soul at times ponders, if I only could have done more. My time has come and I will gracefully bow out and let those appointed by the Army to take my place. There are no big boots to fill here. I just ask all of you to truly put others before you. Mahatma Gandhi once said, "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." I Hope I have served all of you and your families



well. You were always utmost in my mind, spirit, and soul, and I will continue to keep this Great Nation, you and your families in my prayers.

Thank You Army Family for allowing me to find myself, but more importantly to serve alongside of you. Now to see what else the Lord has for me, Change of Mission, before I hope to hear these words from Him.

Matthew 25:23 His master replied, Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!



SAFETY MESSAGE

The summer months are a time to be with Family and friends, taking the opportunity to relax, travel, and enjoy water activities and barbecues. It is a chance to enjoy a much needed break, and recharge for the challenges and opportunities ahead.

The Memorial Day weekend traditionally marks the beginning of summer plans for family vacations and increased outdoor activities. The Army historically experiences an increase in serious accidents and fatalities during the summer period. Increased unit training, motorcycle riding, passenger vehicle travel, and water-related sports put our Soldiers and Families at greater risk for serious accidents.

Leaders at all levels must ensure that all personnel are aware of the hazards they are likely to face during the holiday weekend and throughout the summer. First line leaders must engage their personnel with a safety chat before they depart for the weekend. As a minimum, they should address adverse consequences of alcohol abuse, unique hazards associated with each geographical location, and using caution in sports and recreational activities. Remind everyone to use the “buddy system” and stay vigilant.

Our Soldiers are our greatest asset and we must encourage them to treat safety as an imperative and manage properly or eliminate circumstances where they or others are put at risk. As we begin the summer, I extend a sincere gratitude for our outstanding accomplishments we have achieved throughout this year and extend my warm wishes to all and our Families. Have fun and have a safe summer.

MARCIAL M. TUMACDER
Command Sergeant Major

9TH MISSION SUPPORT COMMAND

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SFC Jostene Philostin, *NCOIC, ext. 3378*



ASAP TEAM

SFC Mary Jean Acoba, *ext. 3148*
Mr. Marvin Castagna

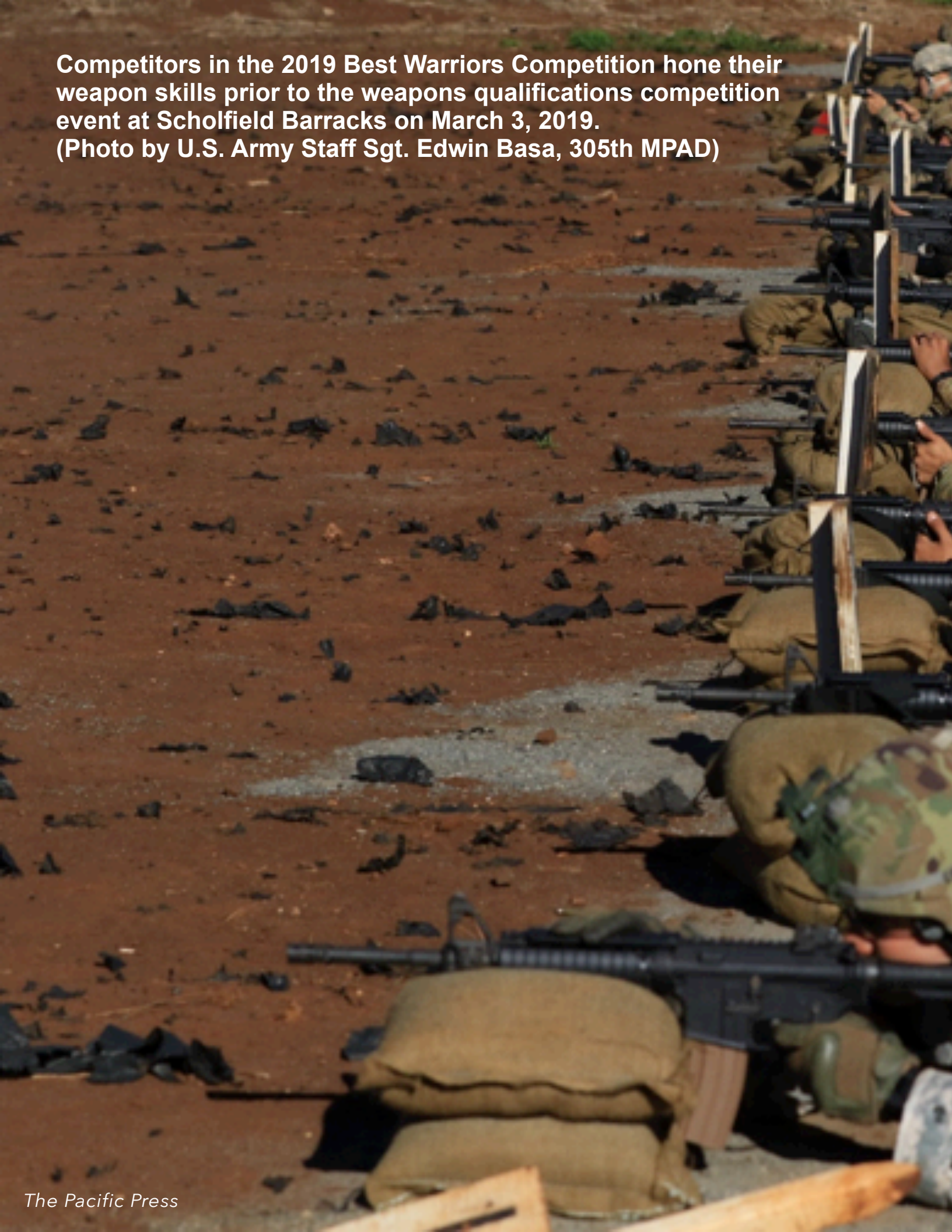


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The Pacific Press is an authorized Army publication and is produced bi-annually by the 305th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment. It is intended to keep USARPAC-SU Soldiers informed of current and emerging developments in their units and the greater US Army. The opinions expressed in *The Pacific Press* are of the authors and not the Department of Defense or its elements.

Competitors in the 2019 Best Warriors Competition hone their weapon skills prior to the weapons qualifications competition event at Scholfield Barracks on March 3, 2019.
(Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Edwin Basa, 305th MPAD)





June 15, 2019

Reserve and Guard Compete for Best Warrior Title

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Edwin Basa

Seventeen elite Soldiers from the 9th Mission Support Command, U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) and Hawaii Army National Guard (HIARNG) competed to be named best of the best at the 2019 Best Warrior Competition, March 1-3. The Best Warrior Competition is jointly operated between the Army Reserve and the HIARNG. The 9th MSC was the lead planning element for this year's event.

"It allows Soldiers to test their skills that they've learned and builds confidence within them that they can do these tasks and skills in a challenging environment, so that they know, should we have to go to war, that they're trained and ready to go," said Stewart Coupe, Operations Sgt. Maj., and competition planner.

"It's a good training event. Soldiers came from various units from Korea, Guam, Saipan, and Samoa. It gives them a chance to meet other competitors from other units that they normally wouldn't see," said Sgt. 1st Class Dale Kearney, the main organizer of BWC.

The Army Reserve winners were Noncommissioned Officer of the Year Sgt. Christopher Hadley, Bravo Co., 100th Battalion, 442nd Infantry Regiment and Soldier of the Year Spc. John Aquino, Echo Co., 100th Battalion, 442nd Infantry Regiment.

Hadley was ecstatic about being selected as the NCO of the Year. "It definitely feels good just to show my leadership. I'm a product

of the training and leadership," he said. "It was both physically and mentally challenging, but more so mentally, because physically, you can just push through."

Aquino was equally excited. "I feel great," he said. "The three days (of the competition), that's what we do as infantry."

However, he did have to overcome some challenges. "I never shot a 9 mil...the other challenge was hand signals," he noted.

They and their fellow Soldiers competed in various events. The competition included a physical fitness test, written and appearance board, road march, Army warrior tasks, land navigation, and weapons qualifications.

To one Soldier, Staff Sergeant Paulo Napoles from the Hawaii National Guard Recruiting Retention Battalion, having competitions such as BWC is important. "You get to test yourself among the Soldiers and other NCOs. It gives you an insight on where you stack up," he said. "If you want to be the



Competitors in the 2019 Best Warriors Competition participate in a twelve-mile road march at Scholfield Barracks on March 1, 2019. This was one of several events to test warrior skills and help determine the best warrior of this year's competition. (Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Edwin Basa, 305th MPAD)

best warrior, you've got to put in the work to become one."

"Feeling uncomfortable brings out the best in you," he added. The Army Reserve winners will advance to compete in the US Army Reserve Command BWC at Fort



2019 Best Warrior Competition NCO winner Sgt. Christopher Hadley, Bravo Co., 100th Battalion, 442nd Infantry Regiment and Soldier of the Year Spc. John Aquino, Echo Co., 100th Battalion, 442nd Infantry Regiment flank Brigadier General Douglas Anderson, Commander of 9th MSC, at Fort Shafter Flats on March 3, 2019. (Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Edwin Basa, 305th MPAD)

Bragg, North Carolina, June 23-29. Subsequently, the two winners from that competition will compete against winners from the major Army commands in October at Fort A.P. Hill, Va.



Health & Fitness Center

GROUP AEROBICS

	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
8:30 to 9:30 a.m.	Bootcamp Janelle	Cycle Heather	Muscle Pump Janelle	Cycle Heidi	Tabata Janelle	Pilates Janelle 7:30am
9:45 to 10:45 a.m.	Pilates Janelle	Pilates Heather	Pilates Janelle	Pilates Janelle		Zumba Liliana 8:30am FREE
4:30 to 5:15 p.m.		Gentle Yoga Janelle	Pilates Janelle			Insanity Liliana 9:45am
5:30 to 6:20 p.m.	Cycle Heather	Tabata Janelle		Zumba Paula		
6:30 to 7:20 p.m.		Yoga Sweat Eryn		Yoga Sweat Eryn		

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U.S. ARMY

ARMY COMBAT FITNESS TEST

Field Test Period (Oct 2018 to Oct 2019)

EVENT 1 : 3 Repetition Maximum Deadlift



- **Deadlift the maximum weight possible three times**
- **Fitness Components:** muscular strength, balance, and flexibility
- **Application to Common Soldier Tasks:** lifting heavy loads from the ground; extracting a casualty
- **Top three PRT activities:** Sumo Squat, Alternate Staggered Squat Jump, Forward Lunge
- **Field Test 60 and 100 point scores:** 140lbs and 340lbs

EVENT 2 : Standing Power Throw

Throw a 10lb medicine ball backward and overhead for distance

- **Fitness Component:** explosive power, balance, and flexibility
- **Application to Common Soldier Tasks:** lifting Soldiers up; jumping across and over obstacles
- **Top three PRT activities:** Power Jump, Overhead Push Press, Tuck Jump
- **Field Test 60 and 100 point scores:** 4 and 13 meters



EVENT 3 : Hand-Release Push-Up



Complete as many Hand-Release Push-ups as possible in two minutes

- **Fitness Component:** muscular endurance
- **Application to Common Soldier Tasks:** moving obstacles; hand-to-hand combat; pushing loads and vehicles; getting to and from the ground
- **Top three PRT activities:** Supine Chest Press, Incline Bench Press, 8-Count Push-up
- **Field Test 60 and 100 point scores:** 10 and 70 reps

EVENT 4 : Sprint-Drag-Carry

Conduct 5 x 50 meter shuttles for time - sprint, drag, lateral, carry and sprint

- **Fitness Component;** agility, anaerobic endurance, muscular endurance and muscular strength
- **Application to Common Soldier Tasks:** moving quickly under load, extracting a casualty, moving supplies
- **Top three PRT activities:** Straight-Leg Deadlift, Bent Over Row, 300M Shuttle Run
- **Field Test 60 and 100 point scores:** 3:35 and 1:40 minutes



EVENT 5 : Leg Tuck



Complete as many leg tucks as possible in two minutes

- **Fitness Component:** muscular endurance
- **Application to Common Soldier Tasks:** surmounting obstacles and walls; rope traverse and rope climb
- **Top three PRT activities:** Bent Leg Raise, Leg Tuck and Twist, Alternating Grip Pull-up
- **Field Test 60 and 100 point scores:** 1 and 20 reps

EVENT 6 : 2 Mile Run

Run two miles for time on a measured, generally flat outdoor course

- **Fitness Component:** aerobic endurance
- **Application to Common Soldier Tasks:** dismounted movement; ruck march; infiltration
- **Top three PRT activities:** Sprint Intervals (30:60s, 60:120s), Release Run, Hill Repeats
- **Field test 60 and 100 point scores:** 21:00 and 12:45 minutes



For Top Three PRT Activities see:

Field Manual 7-22, Army Physical Readiness Training, OCT 2012

Army Physical Readiness Training application available for iOS and Android devices

ACFT Training Guide, DA EXORD 219-18, ANNEX C

The Colonel Young-Oak Kim Armed Forces Reserve Center Opens for Business

Story by Maj. Christina Rudolph 30th Military History Department

Often military installations and buildings are named for Service Members who have proved themselves by performing valiantly on the battlefield and in their lives beyond the military. For example, USARPAC-SU HHD, 305th MPAD, and 30th MHD attend battle assembly in Farrant L. Turner Hall at the U.S. Army Reserve Daniel K. Inouye Complex in Honolulu. And in 2018, Soldiers of USARPAC-SU Detachment Korea began meeting at the COL Young-Oak Kim Armed Forces Reserve Center for battle assembly.

Situated at Camp Humphreys in Pyeongtaek, which lies in southwestern corner of South Korea's Gyeonggi Province, the COL Young-Oak Kim Armed Forces Reserve Center was dedicated on 14 July, 2018. USARPAC-SU commander Colonel Patricia R. Wallace joined 9th MSC commanding general Brigadier General Douglas F. Anderson, various U.S. Army Reserve representatives, and a retired Lieutenant General from the Republic of Korea in a ribbon cutting ceremony to officially open the Reserve Center. COL Kim's niece also took part in the ceremony.

Second Lieutenant Kim, who recently completed OCS training, reported for duty in at Camp Shelby, MS in February of 1943. Interestingly, he reported to LTC Farrant L. Turner, commander of the 100th Battalion (Separate), and quickly found himself in command of a platoon. LTC Turner, fearing tension between a Korean American commanding a Japanese American troops, suggested the young lieutenant immediately seek a transfer. "They're Americans, I'm American, and we're going to fight for America," Lieutenant Kim replied.

After a rocky start, Lieutenant Kim employed creative tactics to draw out his platoon's individual strengths. All his Soldiers were assigned positions of authority on a rotating basis, which led to greater cohesion and helped develop individual leadership qualities. This proved a highly successful tactic, and with a deployment

to Italy, Lieutenant Kim soon found himself the first Korean American to command American troops on the battlefield. Thanks to his innovative leadership, his platoon developed a great loyalty to him.

Throughout his 30 year career, Young-Oak Kim rose to the rank of Colonel, serving in Italy and France during WWII. He then reenlisted in 1951, and served as an infantry battalion commander during the Korean War. His awards include the Distinguished Service Cross, two Silver Stars, two Legion of Merit awards, two Bronze Stars, three Purple Hearts, Bronze Medal of Military Valor (the highest medal awarded by Italian military), Legion d'honneur (France's highest honor), and an additional French award the Croix de guerre. While serving in Korea, Col. Kim's battalion supported 500 children in a local orphanage. In 2003 Col. Kim was awarded the Taeguk Cordon of the Order of Military Merit, South Korea's highest honor, for his social service.

Col. Kim retired in 1972 as the most decorated Asian American in U.S. military. His service to others continued, as he remained active in cultural and community affairs. He was instrumental in the founding of the Go For Broke Monument, Japanese American National Museum, Go For Broke Educational Foundation, and the Korean Youth and Cultural Center, among others. Col. Kim died in Los Angeles on December 29, 2005.

In addition to the Reserve Center at Camp Humphreys, a public middle school in the Los Angeles was named for him in 2009, and in 2010 the Young-Oak Kim Center for Korean American Studies was dedicated at the University of California Riverside.

For more information on Col. Kim visit <http://www.100thbattalion.org/history/veterans/officers/young-oak-kim/2/>



Why We Serve: Army Reserve brothers serving together in American Samoa

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. David Overson
305th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

More than 200,000 Soldiers are currently serving in the U.S. Army Reserve. Out of those 200,000, there's bound to be a few siblings serving together. However, when two brothers serve in the same Army Reserve infantry company on the small Pacific Island of American Samoa, it's bound to turn a few heads.

Brothers Clayton (Kona) Mahuka and Pemerika Mahuka, are both proudly serving in Charlie Company, 100th Infantry Battalion, 442nd Infantry Regiment, 9th Mission Support Command, U.S. Army Reserve. The brothers say serving together makes the tough tasks a little easier to swallow knowing each other is there and they have each other's back. Clayton, an infantry sergeant, said he was looking for more security in life.

"My wife was already in the Army Reserve, so I thought, why not," said Clayton, who works for the Transportation Security Administration when he's not wearing an Army uniform. "I wanted the security it offered, and I've loved it ever since."

Pemerika, Clayton's younger brother, an infantry specialist, joined the Army Reserve in 2014 after seeing what it did for his older brother.

"I don't like to think of it as following in his footsteps," said Pemerika. "However, it looks like that's the way things are progressing. I met my wife at my brother's wedding, so following in his footsteps just might be something I can't seem to avoid." Pemerika, a PE teacher in his civilian role, joined the Army Reserve for the

educational benefits, but said he's gotten so much more than that out of it.

"I'm just so proud to wear this uniform," he added. "I think I was born to wear it. I look forward to gaining more rank and seeing how far the Army Reserve will take me."

Though the brothers have some distant relatives who served in the Navy, they seem to be starting a new Army era and are both looking forward to a potential deployment one day. Both iterating how a deployment would test their readiness and complete the Citizen Soldier circle.

"If I do ever deploy, knowing my brother is there with me will make it much better," said Clayton. "He's really squared away, and I trust him. That's one of the things I really admire about my brother. For a younger Soldier he is really good. Always on time, always tight, always ready to lend a hand and set an example for others around him."

That praise doesn't just come from each other, the acting first sergeant of Charlie Company, Sgt. 1st Class Kelvin Tuamasaga, also has high praise for the duo.



"I wish I had a lot more just like these two," said Tuamasaga. "They really set the example for all the other Soldiers in the company. They're in different platoons, but they're still always working hard together and with everyone else. I just can't say enough good things about them."



Both brothers being avid fishermen, and enthusiasts of everything sea related, seem to be suited to the 77 square mile island, where they say giving back to the community is a way of life to them.

"American Samoa isn't exactly a wealthy island," pointed out Clayton. "So whenever we have a chance to give back to the community, that's what we do. The Army Reserve has allowed us to do that in more ways than one."

U.S. Army Reserve brothers Spc. Pemerika Mahuka (left), and Sgt. Clayton (Kona) Mahuka, who both serve with Charlie Company, 100th Infantry Battalion, 442nd Infantry Regiment, 9th Mission Support Command, pose following a day of weapons familiarization and qualification at the U.S. Army Reserve's very first Modular Small Arms Range in Pago Pago, American Samoa, April 27, 2019. The MSAR is an indoor weapons range that is environmentally safe preventing fumes or residue from escaping while simultaneously filtering the interior air providing a safe environment for the Soldiers inside. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. David Overson)

No Place for Sexual Assault in a Civil Society

Story by Staff Sgt. David Overson

305th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment



April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) – a time to bring the ugly side of America’s past to light and help prevent future atrocities from happening. As uncomfortable as this topic may be, it is important to acknowledge how brutal an act of sexual assault is and the devastating impact it leaves on its victims.

During their lifetime, an estimated 19 percent of women and 2 percent of men will have been raped, while 44 percent of women and 23 percent of men will experience some other form of sexual assault, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics. Most victims know the perpetrator in some capacity, either as a friend, acquaintance, family member, or intimate partner.

Exact figures of sexual assault are difficult to calculate due to an average of only 33 percent of sexual assault victims reporting the crime to police. For several reasons, including the stigma and insensitive treatment often associated with these crimes, sexual violence remains highly underreported.

Rebecca Medrano, a licensed clinical social worker with the New Mexico VA Health Care System, runs the Military Sexual Trauma Program at the Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Center in Albuquerque, N.M.

“It means a lot to me to be able to get help to people who have suffered from an experience that they previously haven’t felt they could talk about,” said Medrano. “I’m here to help.”

During screenings with Veterans, clinical staff with the NMVAHCS asks specific questions to identify those who may have experienced some type of Military Sexual Trauma. Approximately 2,300 Veterans in 2018 self-identified to have experienced some type of MST. Out of those 2,300 Veterans, 54 percent were referred for some type of MST treatment.

To reiterate the lasting impact a sexual assault may have on a person, Medrano points out that Veterans who seek help through the MST program will state their assault took place anywhere from two to 40 years ago, and they’re still suffering from the aftermath.

The U.S. Army is tackling sexual assault with their SHARP program; Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention. Its core message is to recognize signs of sexual harassment that may escalate to assault, and not to be a silent observer. If you see someone who may be vulnerable to sexual assault, or witness sexual harassment, speak up and stop it in its tracks.

The U.S. Air Force has a program referred to as USAFE SAPR; United States Air Force Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program. With similar objectives their website states, “Incidents of sexual assault corrode the very fabric of our wingman culture; therefore, we must strive for an environment where this type of behavior is not tolerated and where all Airmen are respected.”

Respectively, the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps also have a sexual assault prevention program referred to as SAPR; Sexual Assault Prevention and Response. Sadly, sexual assault cannot be wiped out with catchy slogans or glossy brochures. It continues today in both the military and civilian world.

Sen. Martha McSally, R-Ariz., testified before a Senate Armed Services subcommittee hearing on sexual assault in the military Wednesday, March 6, that she had been raped by a superior officer when she was in the Air Force.

She testified that she blamed herself, adding, “I was ashamed and confused.” She said she did not report her assault, saying, “I didn’t trust the system at the time.”

McSally served 26 years in the Air Force, becoming the first female fighter pilot to fly in combat. Heart-wrenching stories like hers are sadly too common today, but thankfully, have spurred the #MeToo movement that is sweeping the nation, calling perpetrators to the proverbial carpet.

The NMVAHCS has policies in place to prevent harassment of all kinds, to include sexual harassment. In fact, if an employee files a sexual harassment complaint the Anti-Harassment Unit has two days to report the incident to D.C. and immediately work with Human Resources to relocate the alleged offender. However, a policy doesn’t necessarily prevent harassment or an assault, it just establishes that it’s not tolerated

and presents the ramifications if an employee violates the policy.

As previously stated, most victims know the perpetrator in some capacity. Therefore, recognizing and preventing sexual harassment before it escalates to sexual assault is a key component to prevention. Through proper education and awareness, humanity can minimize sexual assault.

Be an advocate for a harassment-free environment.

Do not ignore sexual harassment problems.

Be sure you exhibit appropriate behavior.

If you see something, say something.

It’s on all of us.

Intervene as a bystander to stop inappropriate sexual behavior. Enlist others to help you intervene. Strength in numbers.

Refer to authorities, e.g., security guards.

Don’t hesitate to call 911 if you are concerned for someone else’s safety.

The VA provides free, confidential counseling and treatment to male and female Veterans for mental and physical health conditions related to experiences of MST. The Veteran does not need to have a service-connected disability to receive this benefit even if they are not eligible for other VA care. In fact, even if the Veteran never reported the incident when it happened, they are still eligible to receive treatment.

Medrano said that in the future she hopes the NMVAHCS’ MST Program will expand with fulltime staff, expand the committee, raise more awareness through outreach and establish champions at all of the Community Based Outpatient Clinics.

“Come in the door and we can help you talk about it with no judgment,” added Medrano. “It’s not up to us to determine what has happened to you. We’re just here to help you with the affects of what has happened to you.”