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## WORTH REPEATING

“There’s no catalyst for change like a war. We will have done in seven years what normally would take us 20 years to do. We are a fundamentally different force, and a more versatile and experienced force than we were seven years ago. I’m very pleased with the way that turned out.”

— **Army Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey Jr.**, during an interview in his Pentagon office, speaking about the changes that have happened in the Army since he became the service’s highest-ranking officer in 2007. Gen. Martin E. Dempsey will relieve Casey as Army chief of staff next month, when Casey ends four decades of service.



U.S. Army Photo

Special Forces Qualification Course students communicate with team members during the Robin Sage training exercise Aug. 9, 2010. Robin Sage, which takes place throughout North Carolina, culminates more than a year of training for Soldiers looking to earn their Green Berets. PEO STRI’s PM Field OPS supports special operations training of this kind under the Warfighter FOCUS contract.

# FIELD OPS SUPPORTS SPECIAL OPERATIONS

By Megan Jeffers, PEO STRI External Affairs Specialist

Pregnant women run screaming as gunshots fill the air. A man in need of medical attention lies helplessly on the ground. Soldiers rush to aid those injured in the attack while ensuring imminent danger is, momentarily, no longer a threat. After hours of reliance on past training, gut instinct and adrenaline, the training rehearsal is complete. The women go home, the gunshots cease and the injured man stands up to call it a day. The Soldiers, on the other hand, have just experienced a training exercise as lifelike as they come.

Though rehearsals for special operations missions are common,

most of the world is never even aware when they occur. Generally covert assignments, these missions often fly under the radar of the general population.

So who’s behind setting up these dry runs before the real threat strikes? In large part, it’s the men and women who work right here at PEO STRI. The Program Executive Office for Simulation, Training and Instrumentation provides an array of real-life training tools and tactics for our Soldiers, and the individuals at the Program Manager for Field Operations (PM Field OPS) manage the necessary contracts that allow for the occurrence

of several special ops training missions worldwide.

“We [PM Field OPS] provide sustainment, maintenance and operations for the PEO’s products as well as various training services for all branches of the defense department,” Russ McBride, program manager for PM Field OPS, said. “Those training services can range from podium instruction at an Army institution, like Fort Huachuca, Ariz., all the way to on-the-ground training in Southwest Asia for the Afghan National Security Forces.”

A result of the Warfighter FO-

*Continued on page 8*



# Letter from the Secretary & Chief of Staff of the Army

By Gen. George W. Casey, U.S. Army Chief of Staff, and John M. McHugh, Secretary of the Army

Our nation has been at war for almost a decade, the longest period of continuous combat ever for our all-volunteer force. During that time our Army—active, guard, reserve and civilians—has met every challenge. We have successfully ended combat operations in Iraq, while simultaneously conducting one of the largest retrogrades in our nation's history. We have surged Soldiers into Afghanistan to support a strategy to address an adaptive enemy. We have also nearly completed the transformation of our operational force and are now addressing the Army's generating force. Additionally, the Army has provided lifesaving humanitarian assistance to those affected by natural disasters in Pakistan and Haiti and supported homeland defense and civil authorities in border screening and the Gulf of Mexico oil clean up.

In almost a decade of sustained combat, more than 1.1 million Soldiers have deployed to combat, impacting not only the Soldiers, but their families as well. Additionally, 30,000 civilians have deployed into harm's way. More than 4,000 Soldiers have sacrificed their lives leaving 25,000 surviving family members. More than 28,000 have been wounded, 7,500 of whom require long-term care. Despite this sacrifice, the Army remains strong because of the courage, commitment and resilience of our people and the bond of trust that exists between its members.

In 2007, we described the Army as "out of balance" and put in place a four year plan to restore balance to a point where we could meet the demands on our force at a tempo that was predictable and sustainable for this all-volunteer Army. We are in the final year of

this effort, and we are beginning to see the positive effects of the progress we have made. The Army is in a much better position today than we were in 2007, and with the FY 2012 budget request, we are poised to meet our goals. This would not have happened without the support of Congress.

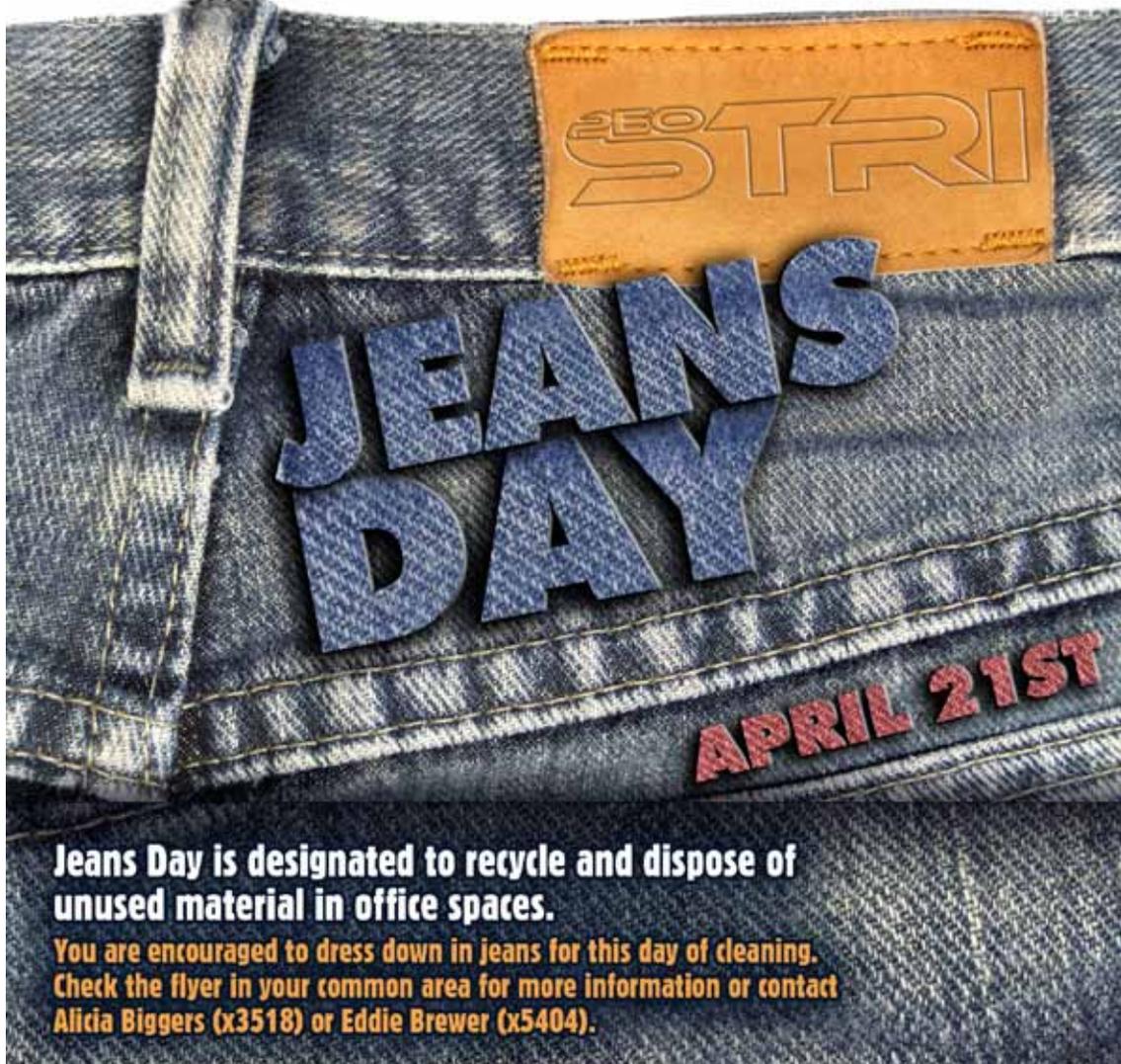
The war is not over yet; we still face a ruthless foe. We remain in an era of persistent conflict. In order to prepare for an uncertain future and an increasingly complex strategic environment, we must maintain the combat edge gained

during the last decade of war, reconstitute the force and continue to build resilience into our formations and people. These efforts will ensure that we continue to prevail in the fights we are in today and are prepared for new challenges in the future.

Our nation and our Army are at a strategic crossroads. We are faced with a challenging strategic environment abroad and difficult economic conditions at home. The Army will approach this with determined leadership and thoughtful execution. We are determined

to preserve those initiatives that sustain the quality of life of our force, while simultaneously developing new solutions to our business practices and to the way we manage our personnel and acquire our equipment.

With the continued support of the president, Congress, our departmental leadership and the American people, this budget will allow us to not only fight and win our current conflicts, but it will also enable us to maintain our combat edge into the coming decade.



**Jeans Day is designated to recycle and dispose of unused material in office spaces.**

**You are encouraged to dress down in jeans for this day of cleaning. Check the flyer in your common area for more information or contact Alicia Biggers (x3518) or Eddie Brewer (x5404).**

**\$5.00**

**TICKETS ON  
SALE NOW!**

GIL RAMOS, CATT  
CINDY LANGFELDT, CONSIM  
AMY KOERNER, TRADE  
MOLLY O'KENNEDY, ACQ CTR  
CINDY BRANDL, ITTS  
LINDSEY JONES, OPS  
"EDDIE" BREWER, APEO BO  
LUCIA MEZZANCELLO, APEO CS  
CATHY BEAUVAIS, APEO PS  
TROY RYAN, CIO

## TEAM- BUILDING *Events*

- ▶ Culinary Arts Bake-off
- ▶ Basketball
- ▶ Bingo
- ▶ Dominos
- ▶ Egg Toss
- ▶ Extreme Engineering

- ▶ Golf Chip
- ▶ Horseshoes
- ▶ Professional Relay
- ▶ Softball
- ▶ STRI-IDOL
- ▶ Texas Hold 'Em

## *Menu*

HAMBURGERS  
HOT DOGS  
BBQ PORK  
SALMON *and* MORE!

- ▶ Tug of War
- ▶ Volleyball
- ▶ Water Relay



# PEO STRI NINTH *Annual Org. Day*

**APRIL 8, 2011**

**8:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.  
RED BUG LAKE PARK**

**NO CHILDREN • NO PETS • EMPLOYEES ONLY**

Attendance is required for all PEO STRI military, civilian and in-house support contractor employees.

# Saunders Set to Make Boot Prints in Afghanistan

By Kristen A. McCullough, PEO STRI Public Affairs Officer

In a few short days, PEO STRI's first and only female colonel won't be giving any more thumbs-up, sitting crossed-legged nor doing much of anything with her left hand. That's because April 8 she departs the U.S. for a one-year deployment to the hub of our military's focus: Afghanistan, where all those cultural gestures are definite faux pas.

Leaving behind a husband who's a recently retired command sergeant major and two daughters who are only in second and third grade, Col. Karen Saunders has a lot to miss back home. As hard as it's going to be, she leaves knowing that she has the full support of her family.

"My husband supports me 100 percent in this opportunity to represent our nation," Saunders, whose husband walked in the same boots not too long ago, expressed. "My kids recognize the importance of serving the country and are proud of me as a Soldier."

But day-to-day realities don't let the fear of separation sink in too deep. "Right now, my third grader's more worried about passing the FCAT so she can move up to fourth grade," Saunders said half-joking, and half-relieved that her profession has not affected her children's focus on their schoolwork.

With modern-day technology, Saunders said she's no further than a phone call or Skype away. "Even now when I go on travel, my husband scans in and sends me the girls' homework so I can see their assignment on my computer, and we do their homework over the phone," she pointed out.

Once Saunders deploys, her second-grade daughter's teacher said she will set up some Skype sessions for the entire class and make it a learning exercise on life in the military and serving overseas. It might also help Saunders' daughter miss her a little less.

Although two oceans and two continents separate her from her family, Saunders said she will make it by each day in Afghanistan knowing she has a mission to accomplish. Serving as the chief of the Security Cooperation Division for the Security Assistance Office, Saunders will provide oversight to the Afghan military.

"This assignment is something I've never done before as my career has been fairly technologically focused; this is a huge shift," Saunders acknowledged about her first in-theater deployment.

"In this position, I'll be directly interfacing with the Afghan National Security Forces," Saunders continued, which is quite a jump from her historically acquisition-based background.

"Not to say there aren't other senior-level female officers in theater, but I think it was a very calculated decision for the Army to send me, a female officer, to directly interface with the Afghan military," Saunders noted. "It's probably a pretty good indication of the progress Gen. [David]

Petraeus thinks we are making in building Afghanistan as a self-sustaining nation."

Like other societies around the globe, the Afghan culture perceives males and females very differently, especially when it comes to business dealings. "By this point though, I think Afghans are conditioned enough to know that this," said Saunders pointing to the eagle insignia on her uniform, "means more to them than gender when it comes to the U.S. military."

"The blonde hair is a whole different story," she joked.

Many across PEO STRI will miss her light hearted, yet down-to-business demeanor. She said she will miss the workforce too. "The caliber, dedication and focus of this workforce are the best I've ever had the honor to serve with in my entire career," Saunders described.

Since taking on the lead role in the Project Manager for Constructive Simulation in September 2008, Saunders placed a strong emphasis on building a strong

working relationship with the Training and Doctrine Command, from where the requirements come, and the Department of the Army Management Office - Training Simulations, from where the funding comes.

"Solidifying this relationship was important to ensure we were all focused on one end state, a common goal," she emphasized.

Treating this relationship with kid gloves allowed Saunders to accomplish three monumental tasks: standing up an Integrated Training Environment for PEO STRI, transitioning the Synthetic Environment Core program to the PM ConSim portfolio and creating a unified constructive architecture.

Saunders will take these accomplishments, and her many years of battle command and acquisition experience, to help her carry out her mission in Afghanistan. "It's an absolute honor to represent the Acquisition Corps, Army and nation in Afghanistan; I'm really looking forward to the opportunity," Saunders expressed.



U.S. Army Photo/Doug Schaub

**Col. Karen Saunders briefed former House Representative Susan Kosmas and current member of Congress Randy Forbes during the 2009 Interservice/Industry Training, Simulation and Education Conference in Orlando, Fla. Saunders will take the lessons from experiences like this to help her perform her mission in Afghanistan.**



PEO STRI'S Annual

# TAKE OUR SONS & DAUGHTERS TO WORK DAY

April 28, 2011

Hands-on Demos

9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Partnership III, Room 321



Look out for an area wide message on this topic to register your child.  
Send other questions or comments to [Kristen.McCullough@us.army.mil](mailto:Kristen.McCullough@us.army.mil).

# Casualty Assistance: STRI Soldiers Describe the Emotional Journey

By Rick Gregory, APEO Business Operations Support Staff

On an otherwise uneventful Sunday evening, Master Sgt. Angella Beckford answered a phone call that would send her on one of the most emotional journeys of her life.

The voice on the other end of the line was from the Casualty Assistance Center (CAC). She was told that a young Army specialist serving in Afghanistan was killed when his vehicle drove over a roadside bomb. She was assigned as the Casualty Notification Officer.

Beckford, who works as a contract specialist in PEO STRI's Acquisition Center, said the emotions that followed gave her the worst feelings she has ever experienced. Scared, nervous and not knowing what to expect, she began her journey certain of knowing only one thing – she had to be strong for the family.

"It was around 7 p.m. when I got the call and then drove an hour and a half to the home of the Soldier's family," she recalled. "When I got there, I met up with an Army major who would serve in the role as the Army chaplain. We knocked on the door and went inside to inform the family of their son's death. It was the worst feeling I have ever had."

With the emotionally charged family notification complete, Beckford soon learned that it was only the beginning of what would become a tug-at-the-heart episode of events. The phone rang again.

"Around 1 a.m. on Monday, I received a second call from the CAC stating that they needed me to now serve as the casualty assistance officer," she explained. "They said I would need to es-

cort the family later that day to Dover Air Force Base, Del., for the dignified transfer of the Soldier whose remains were arriving from Afghanistan. From that point on, I was with the family around the clock until after the funeral."

After meeting the deceased Soldier at the airport, Beckford's emotions were stretched to the limits as her duties necessitated that she maintain her composure and professional military bearing. She said it wasn't easy.

"At first, I was told the Soldier should probably not be viewed by the family due to the type of injuries an IED causes, but that I needed to view him to ensure his uniform and medals were in order," she said. "The mother was aware that I would be doing this and said if I thought her son was viewable, she wanted to see him.

"After viewing him, I told her I thought it would be okay. She visited with her son first and agreed with my judgment. She then allowed all of the immediate family to have an opportunity to say a proper, personal goodbye to their loved one. She later thanked me for making that decision."

While she said viewing the Soldier was the biggest hurdle she faced, she also had received his personal belongings and had to take them to his mom to do a line-by-line inventory with her. She said that was a heart-wrenching task to complete.

Beckford said once the chaplain who had assisted her with the casualty notification had left, she was the only personal link the Soldier's family had to the Army.

"Basically, I was their lifeline. They held on to me and did not want to let go," she said. "They wanted me to be part of every decision they made to include the funeral and church arrangements and escorting them to the Veterans Administration offices."

Two special requests were made by the family. Through working with the CAC, she was able to accommodate one of them.

"I was told that one of the brothers wanted to escort his brother's remains from Dover Air Force Base to Florida and I was given permission to grant that request. Also, the mother wanted me to accompany her to Germany for a memorial service at the Soldier's unit of assignment, but since it was outside my duty I could not go. The mother decided to not go."

Beckford has some heartfelt advice for any Soldier honored to be a casualty assistance officer.

"Be aware that this is a very emotional mission. It's okay to show your emotions sometimes because this shows the family that you care," she advised. "Make prior arrangements with your own family because the family you are assisting takes precedence over everything else. Above all, always conduct yourself in a graceful manner because you represent the Secretary of the Army. I always kept this thought in mind, 'If this was me, I would want someone to take the best care of my family and give them all the support they need.'"

Because of that special care she gave, a lifelong bond has

*Continued on page 11*



Master Sergeant  
**ANGELLA BECKFORD**



Major  
**RALPH WARE**



Lieutenant Colonel  
**JAY SMITH**



# Assignment Iraq: PEO STRI Civilian Employees SHARE THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

By Rick Gregory, APEO Business Operations Support Staff

Terri Cuniff misses indoor plumbing. She also misses her recliner.

Those previously unacknowledged luxuries went down the drain when she answered a personal calling to volunteer for an assignment in Iraq to support our Soldiers and their mission. While working as a budget analyst with PM Future Force Simulation, she applied for the mission through the Civilian Expeditionary Workforce program. Before she could even make her way home to that favorite recliner, she got the answer to her application.

"I heard the program was desperate for contract specialists and budget analysts," she said. "I think I established a world record, though. I was accepted in two-and-a-half hours." Then before she knew it, on Oct. 31 her plane was touching down in Iraq for a year-long experience that has brought surprises, challenges and rewards.

Though it wasn't specially planned for her Halloween night arrival, her initial induction was spending the night with the lights on in a rat-infested tent. After that, the living conditions improved — somewhat. She said it has been like one big camping trip.

"We use port-a-potties, port-showers and share sleeping quarters with a roommate in one-half of a FEMA trailer called a CHU. Everything everywhere has a film of fine desert dirt on it," she explained. Looking on the bright side, though, she said it could be worse.

"I could be sleeping in a tent with 10 other women on a small Forward Operating Base. I chalk it all up to the experience. If the troops can live this way, it's good enough for me. It's a small price to pay for being part of history."

During her 12 hours a day, seven day work week, she occupies

a cubicle in one of Saddam Hussein's former palaces and family resort buildings located in an oasis outside of Baghdad. She said the building she works in, which was used by Hussein's daughters as a vacation spot, is called the "Juicer" because the dome looks like a manual fruit processor. Inside the "Juicer" she serves as a budget officer, ensuring fiscal laws and ethical regulations are followed.

Outside the compound, though, the insurgents aren't following any type of laws. That's where the challenge of serving as a government civilian in Iraq comes into play.

"The bombings are the most challenging aspect of living and working here," Cuniff said. "We have missile detection devices around the bases that are heat sensitive to detect incoming missiles." The detection devices are not 100 percent accurate however, Cuniff noted.

If incoming missiles aren't enough to rattle her consciousness about the dangers of serving in Iraq, other threats also offer wake-up calls should she get too relaxed about security.

"There are attempted kidnappings, even in broad daylight," she explained. "As well, there is the threat of insurgent sympathizers, with concealed pistols with silencers, on base looking to take out any American."

Dangers aside, she finds the assignment very rewarding because of the people she gets to meet.

"I have met so many people from all of the other military branches and different countries. I work directly with military troops from the Air Force, Navy, Marines and National Guard," she said. "The bus drivers and dining facility workers are from Nepal, Sri Lanka and India. My building and the dining facility are protected by guards from Uganda. All of them

are really very nice."

Her "CHU" (trailer) is her home away from home where she relaxes in the little downtime she does have. When not watching a TV show or a DVD movie, she said she spends her time reading. So far, she has finished 11 books in the four-plus months since being there.

Cuniff is scheduled to return to Orlando and her much-missed recliner in mid-November, but said the experience is one she will never forget.

"This experience has given me a whole new insight as to what our American men and women are dealing with. This makes you appreciate the things we take for granted at home," she said. "Americans are all survivors! We come, do our duty and hope to get home in one piece; all in the name of freedom."

Another PEO STRI employee, Steve Bushway, is also serving a one-year assignment in Iraq. He didn't lament about missing a comfortable chair. He smartly said he misses

his wife, Jackie, who works in PM ITTS. With those sentiments, she's likely to continue to send him some of his favorite reminders of home like pictures, the local newspaper, holiday items, cookies and favorite snacks.

Bushway was a project director for the Joint Deployment Logistics Model for PM ConSim prior to his deployment to Iraq last October. Having served in Iraq and Afghanistan in 2007, he volunteered for the assignment as a way to serve his country again.

"I found that only about one percent of the government civilian workforce applies for these assignments. Then, only about half of

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*Photo courtesy of Terri Cuniff*

**Terri Cuniff poses for a picture with country singer Aaron Tippin during the early days of her tour in Iraq.**



*Photo courtesy of Steve Bushway*

**Steve Bushway (second from left) prepares to leave with his security detail to check on a contractor's work outside Forward Operating Base Hussaniyah.**





U.S. Army Photo/ Spc. Derek L. Kuhn

**Students of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School extract prisoners from an enemy's camp during the Robin Sage training exercise near Camp Mackall, N.C. Robin Sage is the last exercise Special Operations Forces students participate in before they earn the right to wear the Green Beret. The Warfighter Focus contract supports this kind of training.**

CUS contract, PM Field OPS is able to generate training services that support special operations customers in the U.S. and overseas. Providing immersive, highly specialized training exercises, the contract—referred to as WFF—is an acronym for Warfighter Field Operations Customer Support, and without this crucial contract vehicle, several practice exercises would not be possible.

“Regardless of which branch of the military, whether it’s the Army Rangers, the Delta Force, the Navy Seals or the AFSOC [Air Force Special Operations Command] combat controllers, they’re all typically small numbers of people who are able to go in and launch attacks on conventional targets or surveillance for heavier units in advance of the heavy unit attack,” McBride said. “What we offer specifically to meet the mission of special ops are highly specialized training services under the WFF contract. These exercises require a very specific skill set on the part of our contractor base to provide.”

This specialized training is crucial to the success of the often clandestine assignments. Supporting training for special ops units across the Department of Defense, PM Field OPS is responsible for providing several of the pre-de-

ployment training courses at various military installations such as Fort Bragg, N.C. and Fort Carson, Colo.

Providing live, virtual and constructive training services for all branches of the Department of Defense, as well as other government agencies, the WFF program is operated by PM Field OPS’ Support Mission office. It helps provide the necessary components of suc-

cessful live training. The courses, which cover various situations such as cultural awareness, tactical combat casualty care and advanced weapons handling, to name a few, offer the chance for special ops units to receive a higher degree of specialized training than they would in basic preparation courses.

“We assist in the training of all the skills [Soldiers] will need to put an operation together,” said Dave Christensen, assistant program manager for the Support Mission office. “When they need somebody to [teach them what to do when they] drive the armored vehicle off-road, we have training courses for that. We teach them how to drive, we teach them how to parachute, we teach them how to shoot. We provide role players when they’re doing exercises to simulate what they’re going to do in theater.

“We support training efforts operationally,” Christensen continued. “For what we do, whether it’s the Army, the Marines, the Navy, etc., they’ll come to us and say, ‘We’re conducting this training exercise. Can you provide us with the following [training]...?’”

We then go and find the requested instructors and role players, he said.

These role players are found

through contractors who receive a request for proposal detailing the requirements of a training operation. Drawing from a database of subcontractors able to meet the needs of the proposal, the role players are contracted to take part in the execution of a specific pre-deployment exercise.

“They help make it realistic,” he said, adding that PM Field OPS Support Mission office may choose role players based on language specificities, ethnicities or physical characteristics special ops units may encounter while on assignment.

Selection of believable actors, however, is not the only task when arranging for pre-deployment training. Often the most difficult part of supporting special operations is the need to tailor courses to meet a specific training requirement.

“The Army has different Special Forces groups around the country, and all of them have their own training plans and timelines and semi-unique requirements,” Christensen said. “A lot of schedules and missions are short notice, so training needs to be put together and supported on a short-notice effort. That’s one of the benefits of WFF; we can turn things in a relatively short amount of time. They have a training requirement, we can typically meet it in weeks, not months.”

In fact, McBride said, responding fast enough to meet the needs of the special ops community while at the same time ensuring contract modifications are in complete compliance with all regulations and policies is often the biggest challenge.

Though the majority of PM Field OPS’ customers are Army-centered, Christensen noted that the Navy is their second most regular customer, and said the U.S. Special Operations Command, headquartered in Tampa, Fla., is third in size of effort.

“We do more now during this time in our history than we would

typically do if there weren’t efforts going on in Iraq and Afghanistan,” Christensen said. “With the deployment tempo of the active-duty Soldiers, they’re relying on us to help provide instructors and support for their training exercises.

“We’re pretty significantly involved in the Green Beret Soldiers based on the training we provide at Fort Bragg, N.C.,” he continued. “There is a rigorous program of instruction to become a special ops Soldier, and before the Soldiers are given their Green Berets, there’s a lot of high-demand training and a lot of expertise required.”

The final phase of training before Soldiers become Green Berets, called Robin Sage, is a rigorous course that tests all of a Soldier’s previous training and is designed to teach unconventional warfare tactics and techniques.

“It’s the cornerstone, or flagship, of exercises,” McBride said.

And it, too, falls under the WFF contract. A large part of the success of WFF has been based on word-of-mouth, Christensen continued. We’re very adept at providing services for each of the branches, and we can configure the courses to meet whatever the current training requirements are.

“Special operations is something that’s out of the ordinary or not the normal combat arms-type training that the military does. Each department has its own special ops branch and all of them vary,” Christensen said.

“The units are typically light—what’s considered light—infantry-type units, like the Army Rangers,” McBride added. “[They’re] very mobile and able to launch attacks with the minimum number of people on conventional targets.”

The key, he said, is that they must train like they fight, and these courses help them prepare for that mission.

“The workforce should be very proud of what PEO STRI is doing using the WFF contract to train the special ops units,” McBride said. “It’s considerable.”

# A Band of Army Green Among a Sea of Navy Blue NAWCTSD Leaders Talk Rivalry, Partnership with PEO STRI

By Megan Jeffers, PEO STRI External Affairs Specialist

We share a parking lot and security guards. We both eat lunch at Nature's Table and attend a CMWRA event every once in a while. Every now and then, one or two of them will burst into a Town Hall Meeting. Who are those people in, dare we say, "Navy" blue singing along to "Anchors Aweigh" every chance they get? You guessed it, it's our Navy comrades!

Working just next door at the de Florez building, the Naval Support Activity (NSA) Orlando manages the ground we, the Program Executive Office for Simulation, Training and Instrumentation (PEO STRI), reside on. The Annex, for example, is cared for by our generous Navy landlords.

Commanding Officer, Capt. Bill "Roto" Reuter IV, is the head of both NSA Orlando and the Naval Air Warfare Center Training Systems Division (NAWCTSD). Assigned to the position in June 2010, Reuter will hold the title of commanding officer for two years until summer 2012, when the current executive officer, Capt. Steven "sNak" Nakagawa, will take on the commanding role.

When asked about his job as commanding officer Reuter exclaimed, "It excites me. It's such a tremendous opportunity."

"For Sailors, we're providing technologically immersive environments and simulators," said Reuter, who has logged more than 3,000 hours of flight time. Nakagawa, also a naval aviator, has flown 23 different types of aircraft.

While Reuter and Nakagawa oversee the day-to-day functions

of NAWCTSD and the innovation of its products and services, Walt Augustin, the technical director of NAWCTSD and director of the Human Systems Department for NSA Orlando, serves as the senior engineer and technical authority for Naval training systems.

With more than 60 years of interservice partnership between PEO STRI and NAWCTSD, the

needs. We get a better product at a cheaper cost," he added.

"You can't mandate collaboration," said Rob Matthews, the deputy technical director and director of Acquisitions and Operations for NAWCTSD. "It's the fact that [military, academia and industry] are in the same arena; co-location is the beauty of it."

"The components of different products is where collaboration

communicate to other pilots while in flight.

"It's not something you pick," Nakagawa, or "sNak," said. "It's something you're given or have earned."

While call signs seem pretty permanent once a pilot's been christened, they can actually change throughout one's career, Reuter, or "Roto," pointed out. "It depends on if you do something more humorous or infamous [than what earned you the original name]."

When asked about the inherent rivalry between the Army and Navy, Nakagawa teasingly chimed in, "Oh, it's on!"

"We do it because it's tradition, but more than that it builds the esprit de corps," Reuter said, noting the friendly rivalry that takes place at even the most senior levels of both organizations, like for instance when Ken Wheeler, the assistant program executive officer for business operations', office was covered in hundreds of tiny Dixie Cups.

Despite the good-natured banter, not all Army-Navy interaction is in jest.

"We're grateful for what the Army's done to lead the way," Reuter said, citing the format of PEO STRI's quarterly Town Hall meetings as one effort they've recently adopted. "I take a tremendous amount of pride in the good Army-Navy relationship that we have here."

"One team, one fight," Augustin added.

"We're proud of our long and enduring relationship, and we value our partnership," Augustin noted. "We look forward to another 60 years."



Capt. Bill "Roto" Reuter IV,  
Commanding Officer



Capt. Steven "sNak" Nakagawa,  
Executive Officer

future of joint Warfighter products looks bright. In addition to a partnership with the Army, Augustin, who was appointed to the Senior Executive Service in 2007, often works closely with Team Orlando to partner and share Warfighter tactics and training ideas for future joint-service endeavors.

"I think it's important that all the services are co-located," Augustin said. "Collaboration means better ways to meet Warfighter

has really occurred," Matthews, also head of program management at NAWCTSD, said. For example, there's been a lot of teamwork with the Virtual Combat Convoy Trainer.

And just what about those "nicknames" we hear the Navy patriots so fondly call each other by?

Referred to as call signs, the names are an aviation tradition, and almost everyone in tactical aviation has one as a way to com-



# CITIZEN STRI

*“March 17 was St. Patrick’s Day; a time when we wore green, ate corned beef and thought about the luck o’ the Irish. In keeping with that sentiment, what’s been the luckiest moment in your life?”*



“I can honestly say that the proverbial ‘luck of the Irish’ does not pertain to me. As cheesy as this sounds, I consider myself lucky everyday that I get to spend another day enjoying life and being with family and friends. I am also lucky that I learned the importance of appreciating the simple things in life while I am young enough to enjoy them.”

- Molly O’Kennedy, Acq. Center



“Well, the luckiest I have ever gotten was this job, but it could also mean luck is when opportunity meets preparedness. I did prepare myself in the best possible way to receive this blessing of my job with PM ConSim.”

- Peter Porras, PM ConSim



“I was lucky enough to marry a woman that loves me for who I am; she’s supportive of what I do and passionate about her own beliefs.”

- Zack Turnbow, CIO



“The luckiest I’ve ever gotten was when I was blessed with the birth of my son. I was told I could not bear children. Five years later, I gave birth to my son.”

- Gale Watzel, APEO PS

Want your opinion heard? Answer April’s Question! The question is open to the entire workforce. *“What was your favorite part of PEO STRI’s ninth annual Org Day?”* Send your response to [Kristen.McCullough@us.army.mil](mailto:Kristen.McCullough@us.army.mil) and put Citizen STRI in the subject line.

## Protocol TIP OF THE MONTH

By Marge Hadbavny, Protocol Officer

### A TOAST TO ETIQUETTE

*As the Irish saying goes,  
“May you get all your wishes but  
one so that you will always have  
something to strive for.”*

## HOLIDAYS Events

April Fools’ Day.....	April 1
Org Day.....	April 8
AAAA Forum.....	April 17-20
Diversity Day.....	April 26
Admin. Professionals Day .....	April 27
Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day .....	April 28

## INSIDE PEO STRI

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#### Editor:

Kristen Dooley McCullough  
Editor-in-Chief  
[Kristen.McCullough@us.army.mil](mailto:Kristen.McCullough@us.army.mil)

#### Design:

Dwain Fletcher Co.  
[CGraphics@us.army.mil](mailto:CGraphics@us.army.mil)



developed between Beckford and the Soldier's mother. She said the mother calls her about twice a month. "I will always be here for her," Beckford said.

Maj. Ralph Ware, a contract specialist with the Acquisition Center, also made unexpected lifelong friends through serving in an emotional role as both a casualty notification officer and casualty assistance officer.

Unlike Beckford's situation, whose Soldier died in Afghanistan, Ware was assigned to assist the family of a Soldier who died in an auto accident shortly after returning from his first deployment in Iraq. Ware was told his duty was to notify the Soldier's mother after the deceased Soldier's wife had been notified.

"I got the call around 5:30 p.m. on Father's Day," Ware recalls. "My first thought was that I was going to forever be known as the guy who told parents that they will never see their son alive again. I kept thinking that should something ever happen to me, I've got to mirror what I'd expect someone to be when they knocked on my mother's door. God help that guy!"

About two hours after getting the call, Ware linked up with another major who would assist him with the notification. If relief can be found in carrying out such a somber task, he found it when he discovered the other major had performed the notification duty before and knew what to expect.

He said on the two-hour drive to Tampa for the notification, he had one thought in mind. He had to get the notification procedure down correctly.

"On the drive down, I was feverishly memorizing the paragraph that you have to say to the parents, 'The Secretary of the Army regrets to inform you...,'" Ware said.

His anxiety about the notification lasted longer than expected. When they arrived in

Tampa around 10 p.m., they had not received confirmation that the Soldier's wife had been notified; a requirement before they could notify the mother. Because of the late hour, Ware had until the next morning to remember those words that every parent dreads to hear.

Following the personal notification to the Soldier's mother, his duties as a casualty assistance officer now kicked into gear.

"I sat with the mother and walked her through all of the paperwork involved," Ware explained. "I escorted her to all of her appointments to places like the VA, finance, counseling, etc. My biggest role was to take care of anything that came up to allow her to focus on grieving and making decisions that only she could make. I also escorted her to Texas for the funeral and assisted her in planning the interment here in Florida."

Ware had experience as a casualty assistance officer when he performed the honor for a Soldier his unit lost when he was stationed in Germany. Regardless of the experience, he said individual circumstances dictate the complexity of the duty.

"There was a pretty complicated family dynamic between the Soldier's mother and wife," he said. "Because of that, one of my unofficial tasks was to work with the wife's casualty assistance officer and help everyone stay focused on the task at hand."

Besides working around the family conflict, Ware said constantly thinking "what would happen if I was killed in the line of duty" and how would his mother's grief differ from this Soldier's mother presented a challenge throughout the performance of his duty.

Some challenges he faced though, gave him a renewed faith in his fellow man.

"I helped them with every-

thing from getting an extra set of dog tags to locating the point of contact for an honor guard," he said. "One thing that I found out while performing this duty is that there are few people who will not do what they can to help the family of a deceased Soldier. I was always able to locate whatever resources the family needed thanks to the support of all the different agencies set up to help."

Ware said serving as a casualty assistance officer is one of the most rewarding things he has done since being in the Army and, though it was challenging, he can't think of a better way to serve a fellow Soldier.

Lt. Col. Jay Smith, assistant project manager for Reserve Component Training Systems, PM CATT, agrees with those sentiments and encourages anyone who is called to casualty assistance duty to remember that the military families deserve their best effort.

"It's never going to be a pleasant task and it rarely comes at a convenient time, but casualty assistance duty is something you do to honor not only the fallen Soldier, but also provide his or her family with a level of respect, comfort and dignity that they have also earned," he said.

Recently called upon to be a casualty assistance officer for a Soldier killed in a traffic accident in Florida, Smith's role was assisting the Soldier's out-of-state extended family as well as keeping in close contact with the casualty assistance officer who was aiding the Soldier's wife and children.

Though Smith was the officer-in-charge of an honors detail at a national cemetery several years ago and was familiar with most of the procedures, he said it was a "deep breath" moment when he got the phone call.

"After that initial reaction, I kind of fell back on my military training and started a backwards

planning process to identify my key milestones and the events I was responsible for," he said. Then he spent as much time as he could reviewing the casualty assistance handbook and on-line instructional material to be ready when he made the initial contact.

"I met the family at the Orlando International Airport, expecting an emotional reaction," he recalled. "I had to adopt both a supportive and compassionate demeanor while also applying a professional approach."

While escorting the family to Brandon, Fla., that evening, Smith ensured their lodging and transportation needs were met and he thoroughly briefed them on the honors ceremony aspects of the funeral that would take place the next day. He said when they arrived at the home of the Soldier he experienced his second "deep breath" moment and had to brace himself before entering.

The next morning, Smith again reviewed the honor ceremony with the family as he escorted them to the funeral home for the visitation and the service.

Though the family decided to stay in the area a few days after the funeral, Smith arranged to meet them at the airport for their outbound flight and ensured they had an expedited escort through the security checkpoints.

"Before they boarded, they expressed their gratitude to me and we had a very nice parting," Smith recalled. It was his last "deep breath" moment for this emotional assignment.

Beckford, Ware and Smith are just three Soldiers who have recently provided honors for the fallen, and compassion and assistance for their survivors, but their experiences are being repeated every day around the country. A lot of "deep breaths" are being taken.



them accept the position once it's offered, and an even lower percentage pass their physical [examinations] and actually deploy," he said. "I feel lucky to be in a position to support my country in this way." He added that the monetary benefits, such as hazard pay and overtime opportunities, are enticing as well. Working 12 to 14 hours a day, seven days a week, there is no shortage of overtime opportunities.

During those long work days since arriving in country, Bushway's talents have been used in a variety of assignments facilitating the drawdown of troops in Iraq.

"I started out as a deputy garrison commander at Forward Operating Base Hussaniyah where I was responsible for closing down the base," he explained. "Due to personnel shortages, I was asked to

take over the Container Advise and Assist Team as the country container authority for Iraq to ensure we meet the challenge of having enough seaworthy containers in theater as our troops depart."

Currently, he is serving as the deputy program manager for Base Operations Support – Integration whose mission is to augment the various forward operating bases with subject matter expert civilians to assist in the closure or transfer of the remaining bases to the government of Iraq.

Having job titles that may sound like cushy assignments belies the challenges Bushway has faced since arriving in country, not the least of which is being out of his comfort zone.

"Not only are we doing challenging jobs that do not fall directly in line with our career paths, but

we do this in an expeditionary environment," he said. "As these bases close down, we find ourselves sleeping in tents and showering from water bottles or using sanitation wipes to maintain hygiene standards. For prior service folks this isn't new, but for others this adds to the difficulty of the job."

Regardless of those difficulties, Bushway said he appreciates having the opportunity to work with a diverse group of people who have unique backgrounds and skills to bring to the table. Plus, he said, being part of the drawdown of the U.S. involvement in Iraq is history in the making.

"Not since the Vietnam War have we withdrawn so many troops in this manner. We are striving to put the Iraqis in the best position possible for democracy and success to survive. There is a very

satisfying feeling in being part of that endeavor."

While the majority of news media attention is now on the ongoing activity in Afghanistan, Bushway wants people to remember one thing:

"We are still here. Soldiers are still here. Even though the attention has moved to Afghanistan and other areas of the Middle East, the mission has not ended here. It has only changed," he said. "I believe the Soldiers appreciate your support, and so do I."

Though he is constantly asked to extend his tour, he will return to Orlando in October.

Before these deployed civilians know it, Bushway will be with his wife, Cuniff will be reclining in her favorite chair, and PEO STRI will have two dedicated workers back on U.S. ground at their home base.

**TEAM ORLANDO IN PHOTOS**



*U.S. Army Photo/Doug Schaub*

Col. Perry Smith, the former project manager for Future Force Simulation, retired from the Army Feb. 22 in a ceremony presided over by Dr. Jim Blake, where he presented Smith with the Legion of Merit medal.



*U.S. Army Photo/Doug Schaub*

Maj. Gen. John Bartley, the program executive officer for PEO Integration, presented the PM FFS team members with awards for their support of the Army's modernization efforts Feb. 22.



*U.S. Army Photo/Doug Schaub*

George Herrington (left), a military analyst in PM TRADE, briefed the under secretary of the U.S. Army, Dr. Joseph Westphal (center), on the Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System product line while Dr. Jim Blake and Mr. Rob Reyenga accompanied the Army senior leader on his Feb. 25 visit to PEO STRI.



*U.S. Army Photo/Doug Schaub*

The U.S. Army's chief scientist Dr. Scott Fish (right) received an overview of many PEO STRI training enablers, including a briefing from Lt. Col. Gordon Graham (left) during his March 22 visit. PEO STRI's senior enlisted advisor, Sgt. Maj. Pat Ogden (center), guided Fish through his visit.