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### WORTH REPEATING

“I wasn't going to let myself stay down. It's tough; it's a long road to recovery, but you can never give up on yourself, never give up on hope, and continue to have faith.”

~ Sgt. 1st Class Jason Manella of Fremont, Calif., currently with the Army Reserve Command, suffered a traumatic brain injury in 2012 from improvised explosive device blasts in Afghanistan. He said he had cognitive issues, problems with his balance and other issues, but made a full recovery through rehabilitative work. He recently won the title of Noncommissioned Officer of the Year during the Best Warrior Competition.

He said he decided to study for and compete in Best Warrior as part of the recovery process.

## Dr. Jim Blake Honored With Lifetime Achievement Award At Annual Tradeshow

By Rick Gregory, APEO Business Operations Support Staff

Dr. Jim Blake, PEO STRI's Program Executive Officer, was honored with the National Training and Simulation Association's (NTSA) 2013 Governor's Award for Lifetime Achievement in Training and Simulation during an awards ceremony at the recently completed Interservice/Industry Training, Simulation and Education Conference.

The announcement of the award was published in the tradeshow's daily newsletter and read:

“Dr. Blake, a distinguished soldier, leader, technologist and mentor, is recognized for a lifetime of sustained exemplary service to our nation, military services, academia and especially the modeling and simulation



industry, and for a remarkable career spanning more than 40 years.

In 1968, Dr. Blake enlisted as a U.S. Army infantry private, became an officer and pilot, and had a distinguished career culminating in 1995 as the Army's Senior Uniformed Scientist.

He then held several technical and executive positions in industry before joining academia as a Senior Research Scientist at Texas A&M University. Following that, he became the first Program Manager for the Institute of Creative Technologies.

In his current role as the Army's PEO STRI, which he has held since 2005, he provides leadership for a multi-billion dollar enterprise with more than 1,200 personnel, sustaining over 335,000 training systems at over 600 locations worldwide.”

The award was presented by NTSA's president, Rear Adm. James Robb, United States Navy (retired), during IITSEC's annual executive dinner held at the Hyatt Regency Orlando on December 3.

## PEO STRI Wins Gold In Workforce Development Award

By Rick Gregory, APEO Business Operations Support Staff

PEO STRI was recognized recently with the top award (Gold) in the large organization (more than 500 employees) category in the annual 2013 Defense Acquisition Workforce Development Award Program.

The Department of Defense-wide competition was started in 2004, with the entries being judged by senior government and private sector leaders in workforce training, development

and talent management. PEO STRI's workforce development initiatives have previously been acknowledged with the Bronze Award.

The award, according to the announcement calling for entries, “recognizes organizations that have displayed outstanding commitment, innovation and results to develop and support the success of their acquisition professionals.”

Frank Kendall, the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, wrote in a memorandum to the workforce leadership about the importance of professionalism in the acquisition workforce.

“In the end, it is the quality of our people that matters the most, more so than any policy or regulation anyone can put in place,” he wrote. “As such, we will focus on further improving

*continued on page 11*



## **A Holiday Message from the Program Executive Officer**

To My PEO STRI Family,

Since 2005, I have been honored to be the program executive officer and share the holidays with my extended family – all of you wonderful, talented and dedicated professionals at PEO STRI.

At the end of each year, I look back and marvel at the absolutely amazing accomplishments that were realized due to your passionate desire to support our Soldiers in their training requirements. Though obstacles and seemingly impossible challenges were put in your way, you have always persevered and excelled in every endeavor.

If this past year has been an exception, it is only because budgetary constraints and decisions beyond our control posed the most significant tests to date of your professional resolve to stay focused on the mission at hand. In complete candor, I can tell you that you did not surprise me in how well you performed under some personal and professionally challenging circumstances. Thanks to your superb ability to push distractions aside, our number one customer – our Soldiers – continued to receive our 100 percent support. It is truly an honor to serve with each and every one of you on the PEO STRI team.

With the end of the year at hand, the holiday season is a perfect time to spend some memorable, relaxing time with your loved ones. It is also the perfect opportunity for me to say "Thank You" and to wish you a Happy Holiday Season and a New Year of health, happiness and prosperity.

Dr. Jim Blake  
Program Executive Officer



# NEW SENIOR ENLISTED ADVISOR HITTING THE ROAD TO SPREAD PEO STRI'S MESSAGE

By Rick Gregory, APEO Business Operations Support Staff

Sgt. Maj. Alan Higgs, PEO STRI's new senior enlisted advisor to the PEO, has wasted no time since his arrival in September in setting out the goals for his new assignment. He said he wants to use his 28 years of Army experience to carry on with the successes of his predecessors and sees specific areas he intends to focus on.

"First and foremost, I work at the guidance of Dr. Blake. What he deems important for me to work on or look at, that's what I do," he said emphatically. "Secondly, I look at my role as being STRI's representative to take our message to the operating force. I will use my experience to provide input to people working on these training devices to ensure it will be well received when it gets to the field. It has to make sense to our Soldiers so they see it as a valuable training tool."

Wasting no time in committing to his secondary role, Higgs has already lined up presentation opportunities at the Sergeants Major Academy at Ft. Bliss, Texas and the Maneuver Senior Leader Course at Ft. Benning, Ga.

"This will put me in front of the senior enlisted leaders in the Army's infantry and armor branches so I can let them know what training devices are available from PEO STRI and how it enhances their training," he said. "Next, I will reach out to other senior leader courses in specialties like artillery, transportation, military intelligence and others. I will start at the noncommissioned officer level and move up to the Infantry Basic Officer Leadership Course and others so I can reach the lieutenants and captains."

Besides giving presentations to groups of senior leaders, the sergeant major also plans on meeting with Soldiers at the lower enlisted level where "the rubber meets the road." These are the men and women, he said, who are using most of the devices; the very people who, if they don't know what training devices are available for their units, won't include them in their training activities.

"When we meet with Soldiers one-on-one, we get better feedback and when we get that, we can enhance the products we are providing," he explained. "They need to know that, while our training devices can't do everything, they can do an awful lot in the training environment. Live training is the ultimate, but training devices make live training better through rehearsal and



U.S. Army Photo

learning on the device before going to live training. They then just adapt to the live training environment."

Another area that will be keeping the new senior enlisted advisor busy is working on a program that was started by his predecessor, Sgt. Maj. Patrick Ogden, who retires from the Army in January. He said it's an Army Study Program called the Squad Overmatch Study that is determining the viability of using training devices to build resiliency in Soldiers before they actually go into combat.

The study, now in its second year, aims to expose Soldiers to the stressors they would face in combat so they can more easily and quickly recover from the realities they experience on the battlefield. Through resiliency training, it is hoped that it would result in a reduced number of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) cases or even suicides.

Higgs said the aim is to integrate more extreme stressors into existing live, virtual, constructive and gaming training environments during squad-level collective training. The training would focus on warrior skills, resilience skills and situational awareness skills in a crawl, walk, run training continuum beginning in basic training all the way to pre-deployment.

"We know we can't completely replicate a battlefield environment, but we do believe we can add different aspects to our current training devices that will expose Soldiers to

realistic, stressful scenarios and then do an after-action review with them to work through their reactions to the stress," Higgs explained. "We already know that Soldiers who trained in the Medical Simulation Training Centers showed a higher resilience level during combat than those who did not receive that training."

He said a major focus when not on the road will be working closely with the program managers in their specific areas where his previous military expertise can provide input as needed. As well, he said, being the senior enlisted leader at PEO STRI brings an inherent responsibility to provide assistance in ensuring STRI's military personnel continue to maintain their Army standards.

"Other than some local Army recruiters and UCF ROTC, we are the only Active Army representatives in our community," he said. "Therefore, it's up to us to present a favorable image of the U.S. Army in the community because that may be the only time they interact with a Soldier. I think we are doing a great job with that, but with PEO STRI not being located on an Army base it's important that we assist each other in that regard and make on-the-spot corrections to ensure we are properly representing the U.S. Army."

He added that he has been very impressed with his experience at PEO STRI.

"What has impressed me the most is that the entire workforce is so highly dedicated to what they do," he explained. "Everyone I have met at PEO STRI has shown me a high level of professionalism. They are extremely knowledgeable and very passionate about what they do. It makes me wonder what I can bring to the organization because they seem to have it down. It's a very well-run organization."

Higgs said he has always been passionate about ensuring Soldiers have the best training possible before stepping foot on the battlefield, but it is also a personal matter. He and his wife of 26 years are the proud parents of two sons who have followed in their dad's military footsteps. Their first-born lives in Connecticut and is an infantry first lieutenant in the National Guard. Their second son is currently stationed at Fort Bragg, N.C. where he holds the rank of specialist in the infantry. He is married and they have a daughter and are expecting their second child, a son, in February.

# Warfighters Praise Call For Fire Trainer, Offer Their Experience Using Simulators To Prepare For Battle

By Rick Gregory, APEO Business Operations Support Staff

With a total of seven combat deployments under their belts, three Soldiers were the obvious experts to share with audiences at the Interservice/Industry Training, Simulation and Education Conference (I/ITSEC) their experiences in using simulators to prepare their troops for combat.

Capt. Joshua Dabashinsky, who served in Afghanistan from 2009 to 2010, stressed the importance of using training simulators when preparing for deployment from other countries such as Germany and Italy.

“I was stationed in Italy prior to deployment to Afghanistan,” Dabashinsky said. “Because of the European restrictions on shooting live rounds, it made it extremely hard to train our Soldiers. If we wanted to shoot live, we had to travel to the Joint Multinational Ready Center which was located two hours away. Then, once you got there, you had only one time to do it. As a mortar platoon leader, we did only one

live exercise before deploying. That certainly isn’t the optimal training scenario.”

He pointed out that the enemy has more than 12 years of battle experience while his Soldiers had about 12 months of training prior to engaging them in battle and it was critical that they optimized their training time during that period.

That, he said, is where the Call For Fire Trainer (CFFT) paid dividends in preparing his troops for battle. As the Fire Support Officer, it was especially important to him that his Soldiers used the CFFT to train on prior to and during their deployment.

“Everyone on the team needs to know how to execute a call for fire mission and apply all the assets you have to defeat the enemy,” he said. “Our guys were able to use the CFFT and have sufficient repetitions on it so they could make the best use of their live fire training. By practicing on the CFFT, we made sure

we didn’t waste our range time learning the basics. As well, it helped us be as proficient as possible without learning the hard way on the battlefield.”

One area Dabashinsky would like to see a continued effort put in the simulations training arena is in artificial intelligence so Soldiers have a more realistic opposing force when training on simulators.

“We need to make a smarter enemy,” he explained. “We need to get to where the simulated enemy automatically reacts to the environment and activities so we don’t waste precious time on the simulators worrying about putting in those new parameters during the actual training.”

Another fan of the CFFT is Staff Sgt. Gary Frey. During his three deployments to Iraq he said he learned to really appreciate the training his Soldiers had on the system.

“The CFFT was amazing,” Frey said. “From practicing on the CFFT, my radio-telephone operator knew exactly what he was doing when calling in a fire mission. That allowed me time to maneuver my elements on the battlefield without getting distracted by having to call in the fire mission myself.”

Frey said the Reconfigurable Vehicle Tactical Trainer (RVTT) was also a major part of his Soldiers’ training prior to deployment.

“The RVTT was incredible, especially for those young Soldiers who needed to learn how to maintain the proper intervals when conducting convoy and security over-watch operations,” he explained. “It was really good at building muscle memory so they knew exactly what to do if they came under fire. Thanks to that training, they instinctively knew exactly where to position their vehicles to support their fellow Soldiers in suppressing the enemy attack.”

While he is a big fan of using simulators to augment live training, he said there is one thing missing when training on the simulators – the fear factor.

“Soldiers can go out and shoot all day long at a range and not have anything come



U.S. Army photo

Staff Sgt. Scott Harrison kneels behind a wall while leading his squad on a mission in Iraq.

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# Fort Bliss Unit Big Fan of Dismounted Soldier Training System

By Jonathan (Jay) Koester, NCO Journal

Until recently, if NCOs wanted to lead their Soldiers through realistic virtual training, the only options available were training on things that could be driven or flown. If you weren't a driver or a pilot, you were out of luck.

Into that gap steps the Dismounted Soldier Training System, or DSTS, the first system dedicated to training the dismounted Soldier.

"The Army has never had a simulator for the individual Soldier on the ground," said Daniel Miller, military analyst at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., and project leader for the DSTS. "We've had simulators for things that fly and things that are driven for decades and decades, but we've had nothing for the Soldier. This is the first simulation of its kind where we have a simulator for the Soldier himself or herself."

The system is much more than the simple shooting simulations of the past, including having weapons that are realistic and untethered, Miller said.

"In past shooting simulations, you have this weapon, but you can't really move around the weapon because it has that cord," Miller said. "In DSTS, we wanted the Soldier to be free, like he is on the battlefield. So he has his weapon, and he can shoulder it or whatever."

Any movement a Soldier makes, whether it's raising his weapon, kneeling, or going into a low crawl, is shown in the simulation. It makes for a realistic way to train small units in a number of missions.

Recently, NCOs and Soldiers of A Company, 72nd Brigade Support Battalion, 212th Fires



Photo by Jonathan (Jay) Koester, NCO Journal  
Spc. Eric Angelo Depaula of A Company, 72nd Brigade Support Battalion, 212th Fires Brigade, trained with his unit in September on the Dismounted Soldier Training System at the Simulation Center at Fort Bliss, Texas. The unit worked on room clearing during the training.



Photo by Jonathan (Jay) Koester, NCO Journal

Sgt. David Harrison, left, and Spc. Eric Smit of A Company, 72nd Brigade Support Battalion, 212th Fires Brigade, instruct members of their company how to set up and use the Dismounted Soldier Training System during a training exercise at Fort Bliss, Texas.

Brigade, trained on room clearance by using the DSTS at the Simulation Center at the Fort Bliss, Texas, Iron Warrior Training Complex. First Sgt. Louis Aguilar, first sergeant for A Company, said the DSTS allowed his Soldiers to train cheaply and quickly, without having to take the time and expense to get a squad to the field.

"We try to go through the crawl, walk, run system," Aguilar said. "And so [DSTS] gives you a good crawl phase. One, you have the resources right there. You don't have to drive out to the field to find the proper buildings and such. The Soldiers are able to understand the concept. We had the classroom portion, but being able to put them in the simulation and still be in that crawl phase before they actually go out to a field site and do the walk and run phase is really helpful."

Spc. Eric Angelo Depaula of A Company took part in the training. In the past, he had participated in room clearing with a unit in combat, as well as been part of shoot house training with live ammunition. Despite all that experience, Depaula was impressed by

what he experienced in DSTS.

"The reality of it all was impressive," Depaula said. "The way the mechanism moves. I've done glass houses and I've done shoot houses where the movements have to be in-person, but this is almost similar to it because it's so realistic. And the interaction with the computer, where you actually have to come into a room and shoot the target, versus going into an empty room and doing a "bang-bang" simulation ... This is a step up. The weapon is the same weight. Even the body armor simulation is good. This is maybe about 10 pounds less than what we would normally use to go into a room [in combat]."

As the Soldiers trained on the system, the NCOs and officers leading the training immediately noticed a big problem in communication. The sergeant leading the virtual mission wasn't telling his Soldiers what needed to be done. Confusion reigned, and the training was becoming a mess.

But that led to another benefit of DSTS. The company leaders simply paused the mission and moved to the classroom for some

Continued on page 11

PEO STRI ENJOYS A

*fall*

# PICNIC IN THE PARK





**FRI 15<sup>th</sup>**  
**NOV**  
**WARFIGHTER PARK**



# FOREIGN LIAISON OFFICERS GET AN UP-CLOSE LOOK AT THE MEDICAL SIMULATION TRAINING CENTER

By Rick Gregory, APEO Business Operations Support Staff

When the office of the Joint Staff, J7 Multinational Division in Suffolk, Va. contacted Chuck Otterstedt and Jeff Yeaw, two of PEO STRI's field service representatives, about arranging a visit of three foreign liaison officers (FLO) to Ft. Bragg, N.C., they wasted no time in making it a memorable, productive experience.

The idea of the trip came about when one of the FLOs, Jordanian Army Col. Talal Algbean, mentioned an interest in learning more about the Medical Simulation Training Center (MSTC) after he had received a short briefing in Suffolk on the U.S. Army's medical training.

As plans were being made for Algbean to visit the MSTC at Ft. Bragg, two other FLOs, Navy Capt. Jens Petersen, from Denmark, and Army Lt. Col. Pavel Rys, from the Czech Republic, also became interested in the trip.

According to John Taylor, deputy chief of the J7 Multinational Division, the trip presented an excellent opportunity for the three officers to observe U.S. Army training first hand; the type of opportunity that Taylor said he wants to continue to pursue in the future.

"Our role in the J7 is to support the liaison officers and to ensure they can serve as an effective liaison back in their nation," Taylor explained. "This trip to Ft. Bragg, to the MSTC, is in line with that. The training is a capability we could explore between our nations to increase our interoperability and to better train our forces to work together."

The three officers, along with Taylor, Yeaw and a representative from the the Joint Staff's public affairs office, Ms. Becky Coleman, traveled to Ft. Bragg on Oct. 30 and began their visit with a luncheon with the XVIII Airborne Corps' Surgeon, Col. David Ristedt.

From there, the group had the opportunity to observe Soldiers undergoing training at the MSTC as part of their qualification for the Expert Field Medical Badge, an award coveted by the Army's medical personnel.

All three of the foreign officers said it was a very worthwhile experience for them.

"I was very impressed with the realism of the training and the professionalism of the instructors," said Denmark's FLO, Peterson. "Everything was focused on the 10 minute timeframe and the amount of things the Soldiers could do to help

their fellow Soldiers under some very realistic pressure."

Algbean, the Jordanian FLO, said he was "surprised and pleased with what I saw. This was the first time I've had the opportunity to see a particular capability of the U.S. Army first hand. These are basic things we should know about."

Taylor said the real benefit of the

trip was in uncovering another way the multinational partners could work together.

"This is another way we can potentially combine our training through the use of these simulations and ensure our forces are able to have the same knowledge-based skill sets for when they operate together," he explained.



THE JOINT STAFF  
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5 November 2013

Dr. James T. Blake  
Program Executive Office for  
Simulation, Training and Instrumentation (PEO STRI)  
12350 Research Parkway  
Orlando, FL 32826-3276

Dear Dr. Blake,

I wish to convey my deepest appreciation to PEO STRI for recently hosting the visit of the Foreign Liaison Officers assigned to the Joint Staff J7 to the Medical Simulation Training Center at Fort Bragg. Thank you for your continued commitment to furthering key partnerships, as well as for your personal involvement in this visit. Having the opportunity to observe simulation-enhanced training on both the Combat Lifesaver program and the Expert Field Medical Badge had a profound effect on the officers that attended.

I would especially like to recognize the efforts of Mr. Jeff Yeaw, PEO STRI's Field Service Representative to Joint Staff J7. Mr. Yeaw served as lead coordinator for this opportunity, which was a follow up to the demonstrations that PEO STRI hosted in Suffolk in February 2013. Mr. Yeaw's personal attention ensured that the visit met all objectives, and reflected the professionalism of PEO STRI. This trip was yet another indication of Mr. Yeaw's consummate professionalism and dedication to furthering close ties between our two organizations. Please relay my deepest appreciation for his consistently outstanding efforts.

Once again, I truly value PEO STRI's accommodating our Foreign Liaison Officers. Your forward leaning approach to training simulations serves as an example to our national partners, as well as provides valuable opportunities. Increasing understanding of U.S. capabilities amongst these partners will ultimately improve interoperability at all levels.

Very Respectfully,

SIR,  
THANKS FOR THE  
GREAT PARTNERSHIP.  
JTB

BRYAN G. WATSON  
Major General, USA  
Vice Director J7, Joint Staff  
Joint Force Development





*U.S. Army photo*

**Capt. Joshua Dabashinsky stands atop an outpost during his deployment in Afghanistan.**

back at them. They have no fear of possibly losing their lives or those of their buddies on the left and right of them,” Frey said. “It isn’t until you are truly under fire for the first few times and see live tracer bullets zinging past your head that you can address how you responded and do it differently.”

“If we could provide some training that would allow Soldiers to be scared that they are going to suffer pain as a consequence for any mistakes he or she makes during training, that would be great. We need to take it to that next level to make it more realistic.”

When Staff Sgt. Scott Harrison

took to the stage on the last day of I/ITSEC, he was quick to also praise the CFFT and the importance of getting trained on calling in fire missions prior to deploying.

“I found the CFFT to be a really good system,” he said. “We used it quite often. Those are skills you really can’t get just using a plotting board. It was great to go in there and see it visually represented and how guys have to use a protractor and compass to make it work.”

He said while he is a fan of using simulators in the training cycles, during his three deployments in Iraq it was difficult finding time to use them.



*U.S. Army photo*

**Staff Sgt. Gary Frey patrols the streets of Baghdad with another Soldier during his deployment in Iraq.**

“Our operation tempo was just too high for us to go back to a major operating base to train on them,” he explained. “Also, as a squad leader I had the ammunition and the land available to conduct live fire training so why use simulation when you can send real rounds down range with your assigned weapon.”

Harrison also had some input on the capability gaps he saw when training on simulators or simulation systems, causing the narrator of Warfighters’ Corner to remind the audience at the end of the presentation that honest feedback is important for the industry to hear.

“The biggest issue I saw is what

I call ‘button-ology’,” Harrison said. “Button-ology is learning the new systems and their controls which can be rather complex. We were using 12 hours of training time just teaching the Soldiers how to use the controls. For example, when first using Virtual Battlespace 2, the first day was learning how to operate it. It’s a great, useful system, but if we could figure out a way to make it more user-friendly so learning how to use it doesn’t cut into valuable training time, that would be really helpful.”

Harrison also takes issue with terminology and suggested that the Army and industry do away with the term “gaming.”

“We currently refer to many of our training systems as gaming,” he said. “When I think of gaming I think of Call of Duty and Monopoly; I think of a game. This is simulation. This is training for war. Maybe we should think about changing the terminology to get people to be a little more serious about what we are doing because when you go in to do training and it turns into gaming, people just think they are playing games.”

All three Soldiers are currently assigned with the Maneuver Center of Excellence at Ft. Benning, Ga.

**The Army is the lead service for next year's Interservice/Industry Training, Simulation and Education Conference (I/ITSEC). Below is the logo and theme for the 2014 conference.**



# CITIZEN STRI

"What is your favorite part about the holiday season?"



"No matter what quarrels or family feuds that are going on throughout the year, people always find a way to put their differences aside and come together during the holidays. It's truly beautiful."

- **Angela Garcia**, Acquisition Center



"The best part of the holidays is time with friends and family - especially as a Soldier."

- **MAJ Dave Kimzey**, Acquisition Center



"The best part of the holiday season is the coming together of families and friends as well as watching the Hockey Winter Classic!"

- **Jason Malak**, Acquisition Center

Want your opinion heard? Answer January's question! The question is open to the entire workforce. What is your New Year resolution? Send your response to Rick.Gregory2@us.army.mil and put Citizen STRI in the subject line.

## HOLIDAYS & Events

**JANUARY 1**  
New Year's Day

**JANUARY 10**  
Combined Professional Association Group (CPAG) Defense Forum Breakfast

**JANUARY 20**  
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

**FEBRUARY 14**  
Valentine's Day

**FEBRUARY 17**  
President's Day

## INSIDE <sup>PEO</sup> STRI

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# BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM TURNS TO SIMULATORS TO HONE THEIR SOLDIERS' SKILLS

By Sgt. Robert Larson, 4th BCT, 1st AD Public Affairs

Soldiers need to train. Going to the range to prepare for missions used to be an everyday activity for most units. However, with shrinking budgets and a government shutdown, many units at Fort Bliss, Texas had to cancel training events due to funding.

With training requirements piling up, 4th Brigade Combat Team turned to the one resource they could use for free, the Fort Bliss Simulation Center.

Fort Bliss has some of the best state-of-the-art equipment found in the Army. The Engagement Skills Trainer, or EST 2000, helps Soldiers prepare for a variety of small arms and crew served weapons scenarios, to include weapons qualification practice.

Vehicle crews can also get valuable training

in simulators. The Bradley Advanced Training simulator helps crews learn skills and hone teamwork without having to take vehicles to the field. The same goes for Close Combat Tactical Trainer, Mission Training Center and other training simulators at the Fort Bliss Simulation Center.

"The simulations are important because it gives the Soldiers the familiarity with the controls and allows them to gain that experience without the potential of harming someone, losing training value or wasting resources," said 2nd Lt. Stephen Lask, platoon leader of "Attack Troop," 2nd Squadron, 13th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division.

This simulator time is preparing Soldiers

for gunnery ranges, and eventually, March 2014 gunnery qualification ranges.

For Soldiers out of basic training and advanced individual training, this was their first time training to develop skills necessary for success downrange. Getting hands-on experience with simulators is the first step to integrating them into the teams when they deploy.

"It is better for us to come here, before wasting ammo downrange. We can come here, qualify here, then going down range is easy," said Pfc. Jordon Bentivenga, an M2 Bradley fighting vehicle gunner from 2nd Sqdn., 13th Cav. Regt., 4th BCT, 1st AD.

"If we could hit this up once a week that would be awesome."

## FORT BLISS UNIT BIG FAN OF DISMOUNTED SOLDIER TRAINING SYSTEM *continued from page 5*

quick instruction on the proper way to clear rooms. The training led to important lessons being learned quickly, Aguilar said.

"You can do on-the-spot correction if the Soldiers are being too quiet," Aguilar said. "In room clearing, silence is important when you first initially go into a door. But once you get through that door, communication is very important and vital. So if the Soldiers are not communicating with each other, you can stop them right there on the spot and say, 'Hey, look. You all need to communicate with each other. Let's start over.'"

Although some posts like Fort Bliss have dedicated training locations for DSTS, the system is designed to be completely portable,

and can be used anywhere an NCO can find electricity and about 1,600 square feet of space.

"Literally, you could have the truck roll up to a company day room or a battalion or brigade classroom and set it up in there, as long as it has the electrical requirements and space," Miller said. "We built the system to train the individual Soldier and the small unit, fire teams and squads. It's really built for a nine-person squad. But we have a bank of five computers, and with those computers we can conduct company-level exercises."

In addition to the cost savings, and the time saved from not having to drive out to the field, the DSTS can allow NCOs and Soldiers to train on missions that they couldn't train on

any other way, Miller said.

"There are some things that are just too dangerous to do in live training. You can do them here; no one is going to get shot," Miller said.

In addition, a myriad of virtual situations can be created.

"I can't make you cold, and I can't simulate the ruggedness of the mountains of Afghanistan in terms of what it's going to do to your shortness of breath, getting you physically tired," Miller said. "But I'll put you on the ground in Afghanistan. Or I can put you in the jungle ... whatever you want. I can put you any place on the big blue marble, and you can train."

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AWARD *continued from cover*

the capability of our workforce and provide them with the best tools and skill sets they need to do their job of obtaining the best possible value for the government."

Criteria for being considered for the award included evidence of the organization's

contribution to improve the qualifications and professionalism of the workforce through talent management, developing leaders, knowledge transfer, support and alignment of development investments to mission and organization priorities, partnering and sharing

of best practices.

PEO STRI's Workforce Development Office, which is a member of the Project Support Group, is headed by Ms. Jean H. Burmester who serves as both chief of the office and the dean of the Acquisition Academy.

# TEAM ORLANDO



*U.S. Army Photo*  
**Orange County Mayor Teresa Jacobs speaks to members of Team Orlando during her visit on September 28 .**



*U.S. Army Photo*  
**Col. Pat Connors presents the Meritorious Service Medal to Sgt. 1st Class Manuel Colon during his retirement ceremony on October 4.**



*U.S. Army Photo*  
**Graduates of the most recent Acquisition Academy pose for a photo after their graduation ceremony on October 16. With them are Mr. Rob Reyenga (far left), Deputy Program Executive Officer; Ms. Jean Burmester, Acquisition Academy Dean (far right), and Mr. Scott Pulford, APEO, Customer Support Group (second from right).**



*U.S. Army Photo*  
**Dr. Jim Blake presents the Commander's Award for Civilian Service to Ms. Tommie Garcia during her retirement ceremony on October 28.**



*U.S. Army Photo*  
**Members of PEO STRI's Personnel Resources Team pose for their official photo as the Team of the Quarter for the third quarter.**



*U.S. Army Photo*  
**Members of the Army volleyball team pose for a photo before defeating the Navy in the annual SHAPE Volleyball Tournament on November 5.**

# IN PHOTOS