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**Reservists support military medicine in Europe**

By Staff Sgt. Kelly Bridgwater

Europe Regional Medical Command Public Affairs Office

Heidelberg, Germany -- US Army Reserve troops prove to be just as mission essential for the Europe Regional Medical Command (ERMC) and its outlying clinics as their active component brothers and sisters.

"The Reserve Component (RC) is really no longer considered the support of the active component," said Lt. Col. Jack Magrane, Chief of Reserve Affairs, ERMC and United States Army Europe (USAREUR) Office of the Command Surgeon (OSURG). "We are equal partners," he said. "They (active component) can't do it without us."

In the past the cliché was US Army Reserve Soldiers were nothing more than "weekend warriors". However, that image is fading fast due to the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) and the high operational tempo of Operation's Enduring and Iraqi Freedom (OIF and OEF). And that tempo doesn't appear to be slowing down anytime soon.

Magrane explained the ERMC mission for the RC. RC Soldiers support the USAREUR Command Surgeon and the ERMC Commander by providing RC manpower, advice and services to maintain a forward deployed medical force, trained and ready to support the full spectrum of joint and multinational medical operations, any mission, anywhere.

Further adding that RC troops often times bring on board an additional set of problem solving skills to their active duty status jobs by incorporating (job) practices where they work as civilians. The Soldiers bring those additional skills to the unit they're assigned thus increasing productivity and sometimes showing active component Soldiers a new or better way of doing something.

One RC Soldier who has been working at the Reserve Affairs office at Wuerzburg Medical Activity (WMEDDAC) is Master Sgt. Vanita R. Downey. A medical specialist, also called a 91 whiskey, the 46 year old Troy, New York native has been working at Wuerzburg since February of this year. She was mobilized with other members of her home unit, the 348<sup>th</sup> General Hospital based in Albany, New York, to replace those members of the 67<sup>th</sup> Combat Support Hospital based at Wuerzburg, who were recently deployed.

In the civilian world she is an executive administrative assistant for GE Energy legal operation where she supports the Counsel, Labor & Employment and the Coordinator, Global Export Control Compliance.

“I conduct the due diligence on the applications submitted to become a GE Energy international sales representative, distributor, or value added reseller of our products and prepare the agreements for execution,” said Downey when describing what she does. “I also support the GE commercial legal team in preparing powers of attorney to support bid submittals and contract execution documents which involves interfacing with our global offices in locations such as Mexico, Canada, France, Italy, Norway, England, China, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates.”

When asked to describe how her civilian job skills apply or enhance her Army job, She said that “At GE we are all about customer service. At WMEDDAC, our motto is to say yes and say thank you. The goal is the same, to please the customer whether it is in providing power generating equipment, or providing world class health care. At GE you please the customer. It’s the number one goal. In the Army it is mission first. I have found that my civilian job skills – organization, planning, coordination, datasheet preparation, interfacing with many different levels of the GE organization – are the same skills that I use in my military job.”

When asked about the role of the reserve Soldier in today’s transforming Army, Downey said “Reservists are the strengthening force behind our active component counterparts. That is what they are, our counterparts. Current events around the globe and our GWOT indicate to me that the Soldiers currently serving on reserve duty will be requested to serve as an AC Soldier. I think that the reserve Soldier strengthens our Army and that we bring unique talents that enhance our Army’s effectiveness.”

Supporting that statement is Lt. Col. Judith Robinson, ERMC operations officer, and the Chief of Plans and Operations for the USAREUR Command Surgeon. She has four reserve Soldiers working directly for her.

“We could not do our job without the reserves,” said Robinson. “As I was looking at my own shop I realized I couldn’t run my day to day business without them here. And that to me is a snap shot of the bigger picture of the Army Medical Department (AMEDD) and the Army, and how integrated the different types of reserve Soldiers are.”

Magrane couldn’t stress enough the positive attitude that RC Soldiers have received from the ERMC command and staff.

“We do have a strong command support for RC troops here. Brig. Gen. Elder Granger, (Commander ERMC) has been a strong supporter of this, and I feel good about that,” he said.

Units that fall under ERMC include: Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Wuerzburg, Medical Activity, Heidelberg Medical Activity, as well as Task Force Medical Falcon, in Kosovo and Task Force Medical Eagle, in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The support provided to these units adds up to approximately 783 RC AMEDD Soldiers currently deployed within theater or 25 percent of the ERMC uniformed work force.

Those primary duties include support of OEF and OIF by providing backfill and bed expansion within ERMC, support of Operation Joint Guardian in Kosovo, and Operation Joint Forge in Bosnia. USAREUR also receives RC manpower through Individual Mobilization Augmentation; Overseas Deployment Training (which includes 7<sup>th</sup> Army Training Command, SETAF and ERMC); military exercise participation and Contingency Operations Temporary Tours of Active Duty and Operational Temporary Tours of Active Duty.

When looking into the future of the reserve Soldier, Downey described her more than 20 years of service and the number of incentives that serving in the reserves can bring, such as the GI Bill, bonuses and training. And how better incentives can always be offered. But to her the RC future is based upon one thing that holds it all together -- that is duty.

“There are all kinds of incentives,” she said, “But I think it comes down patriotism and individuals wanting to serve their country.”

At ERMC that patriotism shines through as the RC Soldiers continue to support ‘any mission, anywhere.’