

Get ready, get set, GO ...

36th hosts Area III, IV Tech Olympics

Story and photos by Spc. Okada, Daniel
311th TSC

The 36th Signal Battalion held an information technology Olympics at Camp Henry for Areas III and IV April 10 to determine and recognize the best computer network technicians.

The competition consisted of a written test, based on IT knowledge such as networking essentials, desktop troubleshooting, and emerging technologies as well as a hands on evaluation that included physical tests such as network cable fabrication, network configuration and software installation. The 23 participants were amongst the best Area III and Area IV technicians selected from seven different units.

This was the third event initiated by the 169th Signal Company to recognize a segment of individuals who are relied on to keep units functioning, often putting in extra hours and resources above and beyond duty. The competition started at the company, then battalion and areawide levels.

Capt. Jong H. Chung, commander 169th Signal Co. said “One thing I noticed about a lot of the computer technicians is that when you go to a unit, they always have someone there who is really smart about computers that are the go-to guys as soon as there is a problem, but yet they just don’t get too much recognition because when everything works out, they’re out of the picture.”

Competition between computer technicians is typically an informal means of measuring current knowledge and trends in the IT field as well as physical computing skills, but the Tech Olympics gives them a means for an official competition.

Most of what the participants are tested on is not covered in their training, and it takes initiative to learn the advanced material necessary to compete, said 1st Lt. Lachandra Martinez, event coordinator.

Returning competitor, Spc. Jose Natali, 169th, made the decision to step up to the next level of competition because he likes the challenge.

As the winner of this and the last Tech Olympics, Sgt. Daniel Mayo, 293rd Signal Co., enjoyed the higher level of competition. “It was a better test, with a greater level of separation between most people and those who really know their information. It was one of the harder ones I’ve taken.”

Mayo placed first in the overall competition and also posted the fastest time for the network cable fabrication portion of the test. Natali took second place overall with Spc. Steven Lemke, 501st Sig. Co., rounding out the top three performers.



Sgt. Daniel Mayo, 293rd Sig. Co., receives a trophy from CSM Garry Tull for placing first in the Area III/IV Tech Olympics.



Cpl. Uh Min Suk, HHC 307th Sig. Bn., prepares a length of CAT 5 networking cable during the cable fabrication test segment.

Signal cooks excell at Area boards

Story and photos by Sgt. Jo, Jong Hye
1st Sig. Bde. PAO

First Signal Brigade excelled in 8th Army Chef of the Quarter competition for the second quarter held at Headquarters, 34th Support Group April 11, after outdoing both the 34th Support Group, Area II and 19th Theatre Support Command Chef of the Quarters Feb. 21 and March 7.

Every quarter, the most qualified soldiers in food service from 1st Sig. have the opportunity to compete with their peers and become the 8th Army, Chef of the Quarter.

Spc. Joseph Fowler, food service specialist, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 304th Signal Battalion and Spc. Jimmy Williams, food service specialist, HHC, 1st Sig. Bde. were the winner and the first runner-up of 34SG/Area II chef of the quarter board for both the first and the second quarter.

“The chef of the quarter board is basically the same as any other board,” said Fowler. “Senior NCOs ask questions and evaluate your performance to determine your ability and level as a food service specialist and as a soldier.”

“The questions are primarily in the field of food service, though the board members are free to ask any questions on basic soldiering,” he added.

The categories of questions are garrison operations, sanitation, field operations, administration and basic soldiering, said Williams. Examples of questions are what kind of diseases are carried by flies or what are the proper internal cooking temperatures for chicken, beef and pork?

Second quarter wasn't the first time that Williams and

Fowler competed together and took the first and second place. They have competed with other soldiers at the board in the first quarter. Fowler surpassed both times, allowing the first runner-up place to Williams.

As 19th TSC allowed both the winner and the first runner-up of 34th SG board to compete at their level, Williams and Fowler had another chance to race against each other.

Williams was eager to defeat his long-time competitor, Fowler, and finally did. He then went up to represent 1st Sig. Bde. and Area II at the 8th Army Chef of the Quarter Board for the second quarter and became the first runner-up.

I'm glad I had the opportunity to compete at the 8th Army level. I had no idea I would get this far, said Williams.

It was not a surprise for Master Sgt. Dante Sampson, brigade food service supervisor, 1st Sig. Bde. to hear the achievement Williams has made.

“Williams has impressed seniors and subordinates alike since his arrival to HHC, 1st Sig. Bde. He is very dedicated, hard working and loyal to his command and 8th PERSCOM dining facility, where he works,” Sampson said.

Fowler said he was very nervous even though the 19th TSC board was his fifth one and was mainly practicing for his promotion board.

He did not forget to appreciate Sgt. 1st Class Linzie Stovall, Camp Colbern dining facility manager, HHC, 304th, for motivating him and helping him for the board.

“Fowler is one of the most dedicated and motivated soldier I have,” said Stovall. “If there's anything to be learned, he wants to learn. He wants to know the whole operation, how to cook, how to order and receive rations, and he wants to run the overall operation.”

Williams said with a grin, “I love cooking, and I want to open up my own restaurant when I retire. So, I wanted to learn everything about cooking and food service operations, and that's why I wanted to win the board. I have the E-5 promotion board next month, and reporting to these boards was a great help.”



Spc. Joseph Fowler, food service specialist, 307th Sig. Bn.



Spc. Jimmy Williams, HHC, 1st Sig. Bde., prepares a meal at the 8th PERSCOM Dining Facility in Yongsan.

Bring It On!

Tactical company gears up for field

By 1st Lt. Cara Hamaguchi
Company A, 304th Sig. Bn.

The Warrior Storm exercise, Feb 24-28, proved to be a successful exercise for the 304th Signal Battalion. In addition to validating the new Tactical High Speed Data Network upgraded equipment, which basically facilitates the flow of information through the tactical data network, Warrior Storm afforded the battalion a chance to rehearse for the upcoming Reception, Staging, Onward Movement and Integration (RSO&I) exercise by “standing-up” the tactical network.

Before the first link came in, before any antennas were erected, or systems deployed, careful preparations were made during the Pre-Combat Inspection (PCI) week to ensure that the battalion would live up to its motto: “Ready, Always Ready.”

At Camp Humphreys, Company A, 304th, motor pool bustled with action, as the entire company worked diligently to prepare for the upcoming exercise. Armed with technical manuals, rags for checking fluid levels, and inspection sheets, soldiers strove to ensure that they were fully prepared.

Sgt. Kim, Chu Won, a relay radio van) team chief captured the prevailing attitude perfectly when he said, after the unit rolls out, it will be too late to find out about broken equipment.

The precombat inspections were truly a combined company effort; after each system underwent checks from the team chiefs, platoon sergeants and platoon leaders, it was given a final inspection by the maintenance section and the commander, Capt. Harold S. Montoya. No system was approved for deployment without receiving the final check.



Company A soldiers crowd around a sand table for a rock drill.

“Implementing one last quality control over each system prior to deployment probably prevented a lot of problems during the field,” said Company A mechanic, Spc. Mechael Cavezza. Mechanics corrected deficiencies immediately, and by the end of the week, the company was ready to roll. Equally important as the maintenance preparation for Warrior Storm, was the network preparation, that took the form of a company “rock drill”.

Amongst the planning and preparation for Warrior Storm, three company soldiers were also afforded the opportunity to do the same for their future. Staff Sgt. George Isla, Sgt. Andre Oliver and Sgt. Danny Medina all reenlisted Feb 21. The reenlistments were quite appropriate when viewed in the context of PCI week. “I believe that every soldier should have a plan,” Oliver asserted, “I reenlisted to continue to improve myself and utilize the military to make me better focus on my plan.”

All-in-all, PCI week proved to be truly productive for Company A. Although the PCIs, rock drill and reenlistments made for full working days, the diligence and preparation paid off. For the soldiers of the company, assiduous preparation meant peace of mind. “I’m proud of my team,” said Pvt. Robert Gibson. “we’re ready for the field — bring it on!”



1st Signal Bde. soldiers conduct PCIs on a support truck.

Transition to war tests strategic battalion's leadership skills

Story and photos by Sgt. Sarah Maxwell
1st Sig. Bde. PAO

As most soldiers in the Republic of Korea were cozy and warm in their beds at 4 a.m. Feb. 24, 1st Signal Brigade soldiers all across the peninsula were making mad dashes to dress, shower and shave. Jumping out of their racks to the Transition to War alert, within minutes the soldiers of the 41st Signal Battalion were in front of their barracks at Camp Coiner with equipment in hand ready to accomplish any mission their leaders gave them.

The 1st Sig. Brigade's "Warrior Storm" exercise activated all signal soldiers to man their communications battle stations Feb. 24 to 28.

For soldiers of the 41st Sig. Bat., one of the strategic, not tactical signal battalions, this gave them a rare opportunity to show off their technical and soldier skills in their "Knight's Crusade" exercise.

"This is the first time we've really had a full-up deployment with everyone in the battalion at the same time," said Maj. James Parks, 41st Sig Bat. operations officer. "It's definitely been a learning curve."

The battalion had soldiers deploy to about 10 different locations throughout North and Central Korea. This stretching of manpower from the Army's equivalent of AT&T gave the leaders and the soldiers many challenges to overcome since they're responsible for much of the communications systems service members, family members and civilians use everyday.

They still maintain their usual 24-7 mission, said Parks.

"The challenge is taking a strategic unit that lives and works out of a building and teaching them the skills required to survive during an armed conflict," said Capt. Joel Stein, 362nd Signal Company, 41st Sig. Bat.

"This exercise is specifically designed to stretch and challenge our junior leaders and require them to think outside the box, use mission analysis techniques and overcome the fog of war."

Most of the soldiers of the 362nd deployed to Camp Tango, about half an hour east of Seoul, to ensure secure communications are always available to the leaders of the Armed Forces in Korea.

Although this is new tactical training, the soldiers of the 41st gave the perception they were motivated, confident and



Soldiers trek their gear up to the live support area at CP Tango while deployed during the transition to war exercise.



Pfc. Antonio Frasier, 362nd, secures his platoon's perimeter during the TTW exercise.

up to the challenge while performing their tasks.

Pfc. Derrick Neal is a microwave systems operator/maintainer with the 362nd who deployed to CP Tango. He worked in technical control to ensure phone lines were up and running.

"My job doubles during the exercise," he said with no complaints.

Neal added that this is his first TTW exercise, and he was challenged with learning new equipment. But, that doesn't wane his motivation about his job when deployed.

He has a pool of knowledge from a close team of highly technical skilled soldiers he can always draw from.

"Everyone in tech. control knows what's going on," he said confidently.

"This is challenging because there's equipment I haven't been trained on, but I know I can always ask help from my peers. There's nothing we can't handle."

307th HHC makes way to Busan

Story and photo by 1st Lt. Eric Setzkorn
HHC, 307th Sig. Bn.

307th Signal Brigade Headquarters and Headquarters Company had the opportunity to participate in one of the largest and most comprehensive exercises of the year this March during RSO&I. In addition to normal procedures and operations, a large part of this exercise was focused on how to move to different parts of the peninsula. HHC was given the chance to move to the Busan area to conduct operations and training to test that training.

HHC normally is located at Camp Carroll and combined with the high number of new personnel in the unit made the deployment experience a real learning opportunity.

Excellent support was given by the HHC motor pool, which moved with the battalion's administrative and logistics operating center and had no vehicle problems on the way down. There was time during the field to give drivers more training and maintaining their vehicles. This was the first time in anyone's memory of a movement proceeding as smoothly over such a long distance with no mechanical problems.

Regardless of where the ALOC is deployed the same standards of reports and procedures are expected. All staff sections have to be constantly compiling reports and information from companies and

units and sending it to the proper locations to allow the chain of command to have all of the facts and make decisions on correct information. Everyone agreed it was a very valuable training event that gave them a better insight into training needs and the ability to move and function in a wartime environment.



1st Sig. Bde. Commander Col. Ronald M. Bouchard gets a brief from junior leaders during RSOI.

201st trains warriors for automation battle

Story and photo by 1st Lt. Abdul Smith
201st Sig. Co.

Another of 201st Signal Company's IMO class of newly certified soldiers and civilians received their diplomas Feb. 28. With about 12 courses taught per year by the 201st, this was a common event in the Area II Information Center.

The brief ceremony was kicked off by some encouraging words from Maj. Nora Marcos, 41st Signal Battalion executive officer. She emphasized the importance of their new responsibility as unit Information Management Officers. She stressed the fact that they are now the first line of defense.

"Your little part of the Army just got bigger," she said.

The one-week course covers a wide variety of topics ranging



Students enjoy themselves after graduating from the 201st IMO course.

from software management to information systems security. With the majority of the IMO's responsibility consisting of the tracking and fixing of automation equipment, most students found the system-troubleshooting segment of

the course most valuable. They also receive overviews of Defense Messaging System (DMS), TSAKS, and other email platforms.

With the fundamentals fresh in their minds the new IMOs will return to their units ready to accomplish their information management requirements and keep their units on the cutting edge.

They will "fight the automation battle" said Capt. Anthony Johnson, 201st commander in his closing remarks. He also encouraged the new IMOs.

"Go out and do great things. The 201st Signal Company has squared you away," he added.

Soldiers and civilians who have appointed orders and who are interested in becoming IMO certified can call the Area II Information Center's training section at 723-7559 for more information.