

Leadership changes, but direction remains forward looking

By Helen Elrod, Director of Public Affairs, Fort Hunter Liggett and the Combat Support Training Center

FORT HUNTER LIGGETT, Calif. - Colonel James Suriano assumed command of the Combat Support Training Center (CSTC) and Fort Hunter Liggett from Col. Kevin Riedler on July 15 here.

In his next assignment as the chief of the Homeland Division, Col. Riedler will serve as the Joint Staff officer responsible to the deputy director for Strategic Plans and Policy for the Western Hemisphere and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He will be developing, coordinating, and overseeing and assessing U.S. military global strategy for the Western Hemisphere and U.S. Homeland.

Colonel Riedler "came to Fort Hunter Liggett with a vision to further transform the installation into a vibrant organization prepared for the future," said J. Randall Robinson, director of the Installation Management Command West. Directed at Col. Riedler, Robinson stated that he could depart knowing the installation is better than when he arrived.

As Col. Riedler spoke of his command, he gave thanks to those who impacted the growth of the CSTC, Fort Hunter Liggett and Camp Parks– the Soldiers, the civilians and the community for their strong support.

Established in October 2005, the CSTC has a mission to provide world class training for Combat Support and Combat Service Support units and to become the premier training center in the Western United States for the U.S. Army Reserve.

"In support of training efforts, Kevin coordinated a nearly 50 percent growth in infrastructure, including expansion of the Equipment Concentration Center, maintenance facilities, firing ranges, tactical training bases," said Robinson. "The Combat Support Training Center is handling an increase in training throughput, with over 720,000 annual mandays of training at Fort Hunter Liggett and Camp Parks" up from approximately 300,000 two years ago."

"We bid farewell to one outstanding commander who is moving on to greater challenges," said Maj. Gen. Bruce Casella, the commanding general of the 63rd Regional Support Command and Fort Hunter Liggett's senior commander.

"The support provided by the Combat Support Training Center team is a vital part of our overall ARFORGEN [Army Force Generation] process," said Maj. Gen. Casella. Soldiers "once trained at one of the Combat Support Training Center installations will then go on to deploy in support of various ongoing contingency operations around the world."

As the installation continues to progress its training initiatives, Col. Suriano was selected to be commander because "he is experienced as a Soldier and leader having taught military science and serving active duty, Army Reserve and in the Active Guard and Reserve program," said Robinson. "He has deployed to Iraq twice and he understands the critical importance of Fort Hunter Liggett's support to the Soldier."

Coming from the 353rd Civil Affairs Command as the deputy commanding officer, Col. Suriano has extensive experience overseas. For two years he was the commander of the 418th Civil Affairs Battalion supporting the 4th Infantry Division in Iraq. For one year he was the chief of Strategic Engagements Division for the Headquarters Multi-National Forces also in Iraq.

"My goal is to expand and improve upon the already celebrated successes at Combat Support Training Center and Fort Hunter Liggett," said Col. Suriano. "We will continue to expand our capabilities to train Soldiers to better prepare them for deployment while striving to meet the Army Family Community Covenant initiatives. The backbone to CSTC's growth has been in the strength of its workforce and the key to our future achievements is to strengthen our bonds and partnerships with the community and stakeholders."

Fort Hunter Liggett provides base operations support at four installations enabling realistic and comprehensive training, while providing for the well-being and security of Soldiers, family members and civilians on post. Fort Hunter Liggett is the largest Army Reserve installation and the eighth largest in the Army. With more than 165,000 acres of unencroached mountains, valleys, rivers, plains and forests it provides ideal maneuver areas for today's training requirements.

Please visit our website for information on our organization, visit www.liggett.army.mil.



During the Change of Command ceremony, Col. James Suriano (left) accepts the flag to the Combat Support Training Center and Fort Hunter Liggett from J. Randall Robinson, the director of Installation Management Command West, on July 15 at Fort Hunter Liggett, Calif.



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