



Staff Sgt. Tim Burton, U.S. Army Reserves, Hawaii, explains map information to the civil affairs section during Exercise Tiger Balm held July 11, 2012, at Hawaii Army National Guard Regional Training Institute, Waimanalo, Hawaii. The exercise is used to promote and share military and cultural information and build teams and relationships. (Photo by Sgt. Anita VanderMolen)

## Guard, Reserve NCOs Keep the Pacific Running Smoothly

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**A**s the rebalance to the Pacific brings U.S. Army Soldiers and NCOs back to the region to stay, it's worth remembering who continues to make U.S. Army Pacific missions successful while they were gone. As USARPAC deployed more than 120,000 Soldiers to military operations overseas since Sept. 11, 2001, it was National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers who kept training going, partnerships flourishing and exercises maintained.

The Army Force Generation cycle forced those National Guard and Reserve Soldiers into important

duties, said Lt. Gen Francis J. Wiercinski, commanding general of U.S. Army Pacific.

"Let's face it, for the past 12 years our active component has really not been around," Wiercinski said at the Land Power in the Pacific Symposium and Exposition in April in Honolulu. "We have either been preparing for combat operations, in combat operations, or reset and refit. ... The Reserves have stepped up to the plate here in the Asia-Pacific and taken on a huge role of maintaining our exercises, our engage-

ment, our personal exchanges.”

Using National Guard and Reserve Soldiers in important roles brings continuity to missions and relationships that would be missing otherwise, said Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Leota, command sergeant major of USARPAC.

“We incorporate our noncommissioned officers from the Reserve and the Guard, and that has paid huge dividends,” Leota said. “Those NCOs live out here. They live in American Samoa, in Guam, in Hawaii, in Alaska. So they continue to return to these

exercises, and they’ve built relationships that help us.”

Now the Army needs to make sure those efforts are not forgotten or ignored as the active component returns to the Pacific in large numbers, Wiercinski said.

“We could not have done what we did the past 12 years without our Guard and Reserve,” Wiercinski said. “The challenge now is to make sure we don’t say, ‘OK, thanks for your help; we’ve got it now.’ We will not do that. We’re going to continue to engage with our National Guard and Reserves because our partners enjoy that relationship.” ■

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