

# Watada trial set to restart again on Oct. 9

By Don Kramer  
Northwest Guardian

With government and defense attorneys requesting a change in trial dates, the court-martial for 1st Lt. Ehren Watada has been reset to Oct. 9, according to Army spokesman Joe Piek. Watada faces two charges, missing movement to Iraq with 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment in June 2006 and four specifications of conduct

unbecoming an officer for antiwar comments he made in speeches leading up to the deployment of his 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division unit. Military judge, Lt. Col. John Head, presided over pretrial motions July 9. During that session, Head ruled that jeopardy arising from the January trial had not attached, that double jeopardy did not bar a re-trial. Head declared a mistrial in that proceeding.

Watada's attorneys immediately filed their appeal to the ruling during the pretrial session, which will travel to the U.S. Army Court of Criminal Appeals. That appeal will continue simultaneously with the trial. Once ACCA rules, the losing party will likely appeal to the Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces. Deputy Staff Judge Advocate Lt. Col. Robert Resnick summarized Head's reasoning for mistrial: "The

mistrial was due to the fact that a judge may not allow an accused to plead guilty or admit facts that he does not believe to be true. Watada had signed a stipulation of fact that by itself would have allowed the panel to convict him of missing movement. However, Watada did not intend to confess or plead to that offense. Therefore, in legal terms, he was not 'competent' to continue with that stipulation as a matter of law. By

insisting that he did not have a duty to board the plane, he raised an issue that was legally and factually inconsistent with the stipulation. The judge is required as a matter of law to reconcile such a conflict or to reject the document. Watada clung to his belief, forcing the judge to throw out the stipulation." Don Kramer: don.kramer1@us.army.mil

# ROTC cadets reach major milestone at Warrior Forge

By Capt. Leslie Roberson  
191st Infantry Brigade

Cadets are everywhere, conducting familiarization training that includes: throwing grenade prototypes, running through assault courses, and low crawling under barbed wire. Warrior Forge training puts cadets' military skills to the test. ROTC college cadets come from all over the United States to train hard. The goal for these cadets is graduation, which represents a major milestone in their military careers. It is so close, yet so far away. For many cadets, it will be the longest, toughest six weeks of their lives. Soldiers from the 191st Infantry Brigade, First Army Division West, are used to training military personnel preparing for war or other challenging missions around the world. However, from early May through late August, the brigade is logistically supporting Operation Warrior Forge, the ROTC cadet training mission. Staff Sgt. Charlie Tavae, an active-



Courtesy photo

A cadet wriggles under barbed wire during Warrior Forge training, supported by 191st Inf. Bde. duty Soldier from 2nd Battalion, 357th 191st Infantry Brigade, has been a part of the planning phase for ROTC.

*This has been a good experience supporting ROTC cadets, getting to see what they go through before they get commissioned as officers.*

Staff Sgt Tavae

"This has been a good experience supporting ROTC cadets, getting to see what they go through before they get commissioned as officers," said Tavae. Sgt. Fernando Villegas, a Reservist serving a one-year tour on duty with 2nd Battalion, 357th Regiment, is supporting the ROTC mission operating an ammunition supply point. His station gives out approximately 2,500 practice grenades per cycle on the course. Cadets enter a mock bay area near Villegas' ammunition point.

"They experience throwing two canister simulators," Villegas explained. "The cadre go through this familiarization training with the cadets before they get to throw a real grenade," he said. Every precaution is taken, he said. "For many cadets, this is their first time doing military training," said Villegas. "Safety is a big portion of the training." Risk assessments are done prior to each training event. A lot of planning and training goes into conducting any military mission. Operation Warrior Forge training for cadets involves putting the right people in the right job. Soldiers from the 191st Inf. Bde. support the mission by providing water, fuel, medics, land navigation, and ammunition handlers. Each job is critical to sustaining the mission. Every Soldier is imbued with our Army values and Warrior Ethos while undergoing the most demanding training available.

# First-hand accounts indicate Soldiers pleased with their body armor

By Debi Dawson  
Army News Service

FORT BELVOIR, Va. — Soldiers are volunteering dramatic personal accounts of lives saved and injuries avoided thanks to the Army's body armor. Their first-hand accounts of what happens demonstrate confidence in what the Army is doing to protect them. Interceptor Body Armor is a modular system that features an outer tactical vest with hard protective plates. Spc. Gregory T. Miller, 101st Airborne Division, told Congress at a hearing last month that this body armor saved his life while he was on patrol in Kirkuk in preparation for Iraqi elections in December 2005. He was hit in the back by a sniper with what was supposed to be an armor-piercing round. Miller, who wound up with a bruised back, said he didn't even realize he'd been hit at first. It all seemed to happen in slow motion, he said. The water bottle he was holding flew out of his hand; he

thought his team leader had hit him on the back — hard. When he realized he'd been hit, he checked himself and then turned to return fire. When the round was pulled from his armor back plate, ballistics tests identified it as a 7.62-mm armor-piercing round. "I trust my gear," he told the congressional panel. When asked why, he replied matter-of-factly: "It saved my life." Staff Sgt. Jeremie Oliver of Fort Hood, Texas, has been in Iraq since October 2006, wearing his body armor every, single day. "It works very well," he has reported. The husband and father of four children was shot on Father's Day this year. "We were on patrol securing a site ... A shot rang out and I got hit in the chest. I was in a Bradley, standing up in the hatch, plotting a grid on my GPS. At first, I didn't know what had really happened, but then I felt the pain. I sat down, realized what happened, and opened my vest. The bullet had not pen-

etrated the vest, so we continued the mission and went after the enemy." Sgt. 1st Class Jody Penrod described his combat experience with IBA: "I took a couple of IEDs and some shrapnel, and I had a fire bomb and it didn't light on fire. So I was pretty pleased." Because the IBA vest protected his entire chest area, Penrod didn't have so much as a scratch from the shrapnel in the blast. He recounted how insurgents had made Napalm-type bombs with soap so that it would stick to Soldiers while on fire. "I got some on my vest, but it just went right out. So I was kind of happy that the vest didn't go up in flames." Spc. Jason C. Ashline, an infantryman with Fort Drum, N.Y.'s 10th Mountain Division, survived a round from an AK-47 in Afghanistan in 2002 thanks to his body armor. He stated at the recent dedication of MIT's Institute for Nanotechnologies: "If it weren't for technology I wouldn't be standing here today." Ashline was hit twice in the chest during a 12-hour firefight with al-Qaida

insurgents in 2002. The slugs lodged in his body armor. He was stunned but unhurt, and was pulled to safety by his buddies. Documenting personal accounts of positive body armor experiences is difficult because the Army doesn't keep count of Soldiers not killed or injured. Still, there are more stories like these, and Army leaders at all levels recount apocryphal tales by the dozens. Capt. David Beard, now stationed at Fort Myer, Va., previously served in Iraq. "I remember a guy in Najaf got shot with an AK right in the chest," Beard said, "and his IBA plate saved him!" Capt. Daniel Leard, also at Fort Myer, called his body armor "a great protective asset." He said it routinely stops rounds. "In our own unit we had, on several occasions, Soldiers pulling bullets out of their body armor or helmet," he said. "It clearly saved their lives." Brig. Gen. R. Mark Brown, Program Executive Officer, has asserted that the

Army is providing Soldiers with the best body armor — bar none. He particularly resented that Soldiers' families have been misled by reports that left them concerned that the Army might not be doing all it can to protect Soldiers. "Force protection is the number-one priority of the Army. We value our Soldiers very highly, and we do everything we can do to ensure they have the finest in force protection as they go into the battle," Brown said. "I want to assure the American public, the Soldiers and their families that they have the best equipment when and where they need it." PEO Soldier designs, produces and fields virtually everything the American Soldier wears or carries. The organization's Soldier-as-a-System approach ensures that equipment works in an integrated manner, thus preparing troops for peak performance. For more information on Interceptor Body Armor and PEO Soldier, visit [www.peosoldier.army.mil](http://www.peosoldier.army.mil) or contact Debi Dawson at (703) 704-2802.