



Master Swordsman Mitsuo Onazaki, Camp Zama Japanese Head Start instructor, prepares to give a demonstration on use of the samurai sword during a conference break.

500th Military Intelligence Group holds conference

by Spc. LeeAnn Lloyd
500th MI Group

Three soldiers walk into a room, one an active-duty counterintelligence agent, one a reserve component linguist, and one a National Guard interrogator.

Sounds like a good foundation for a very bad joke, right?

Actually, it was a strong setting for the 500th Military Intelligence Group's Reserve Component Integration Conference that took place at the group's headquarters Jan. 5-9. This was accomplished after days of briefings with key individuals from the 500th staff and commanders, the Army Reserve

and National Guard components. Col. Mark Perrin, commander, 500th MI Group, started the conference with a welcome and a review of the 500th MI Group organization and future plans.

"The conference brought war traced 'aligned and multi-compo' Reserve units to the 500th MI Group so they could see how we are operating and how they will fit in with the 500th organization if called to go to war with us," said Lt. Col. Wayne McArthur, reserve integration officer, 500th MI Group.

About 20 Soldiers and civilians came from throughout the United States to let the 500th MI Group know their counterintelligence agents, linguists and interrogators are prepared for whatever situations the 500th MI Group may need assistance with.

"We brought in all of the 500th MI Group's commanders and those in staff positions to brief what they do and how we might be able to use those reserve components to assist in Japan. We were briefed on various issues like Overseas Development Training and the Time Phase Forces Deployment Data," McArthur said.

The end result left him impressed with how all components, active, reserve, and National Guard work together. All attendees agreed the level of participation and interaction was appreciated, McArthur said.

"It was simply amazing. We sometimes think that as active-duty Soldiers we are the only ones in this war. During this conference, I saw charts of the deployed reservists, and we are talking about battalions of 320 left with only 20 qualified Soldiers in the rear. They are deployed and providing support all over the world. Somehow, with the minimal amount of support in the rear these units manage to stay functional," McArthur noted.

"This conference helped give me a better understanding of how the active-duty component works with the reserves, otherwise you never really see how the active

components interact with the reserves or how the reserves impact active-duty Soldiers. We [reserves] play a huge function in this war. Conferences like this help keep the Army reserves knowledgeable of actions while giving the active-duty Soldiers a chance to see that we are ready to perform," said Michael Stewart, recruiter for the Military Intelligence Augmentation Detachment out of Fort McPherson, Ga.,

One main focus of the conference was the building up and manning of the 301st MI Battalion, Phoenix, Az., which is currently in a two-year carrier status. The 301st MI Battalion will merge and become a part of the 500th MI Group. The group was able to focus on key points that will assist with the stand up, such as the building up of facilities like an Intelligence Dominance Center extension, recruiting efforts, and where additional funding to support the battalion will come from, McArthur said.

After three days of briefs, the group used the final day and a half of the conference to get out and see the sites of Japan. Locally, they were able to enjoy a samurai warrior demonstration performed by Master Swordsman Mitsuo Onazaki, Camp Zama Japanese Head Start instructor, and were given a brief historical lesson of Camp Zama by Tadasu Takahashi, also a Head Start instructor.

Then it was out on the town. The conference attendees loaded onto a bus and headed toward Tokyo on the Tomei Expressway. Downtown they toured the perimeter of the Diet Building, the Japanese equivalent of the U.S. Capitol building in Washington, D.C. They also viewed the General Kusunoki Samurai Warrior Statue before they headed to the New Sanno Hotel for a bite to eat.

The group toured the Japan Defense Agency and the Ichigaya Memorial Hall. There they saw the original courtroom where World War II war criminals were tried and prosecuted.

"A lot of MI Reservists are concerned about deployments to Japan, Korea and most places in the Far East. They feel more comfortable in places like Mexico, South America and Europe, mainly because of the similarities in their cultures. It's important that we show them Japan is a modern, progressive country, and that raw fish isn't that bad," McArthur said with a laugh.

"Mainly, it's just a long way from home, and that's difficult for any one to deal with. I still say you haven't really traveled until you've crossed the International Date line," McArthur said.