

Mahon

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Mahon pledged his commitment to answer the challenges of the nation the 32nd faces during his tenure.

"It's a great honor to be part of something greater than oneself – to again stand in front of Soldiers," Mahon said. "Rick, I've got the azimuth you've set, and to our great Soldiers, I look forward to facing and overcoming the challenges of the future."

Mahon has commanded Fort Bliss units on two previous occasions. He served as the commander of 3rd Bn., 43rd ADA, from May 1995 through July 1997 and commanded the 11th ADA Bde. from July 2000 through July 2002. He also served Fort Bliss as the chief of the intelligence branch at the Directorate for Combat Developments from April 1988 through June 1990.

Mahon received his commission in 1979 through the University of Delaware's ROTC program, earning a Bachelor's degree in accounting and auditing. He also holds a Master's degree from the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, Calif., where he studied communication and control.

Mahon's first six years of service were split with tours in the 4th Infantry Division at Fort Carson, Colo., and the 2nd Infantry Division in Korea. He went on to serve two tours in Germany as an operations officer, first in Bitburg with the 5th Battalion, 7th Air Defense Artillery, and later with the 94th ADA Bde. in Kaiserslautern.

Mahon's senior level staff experience includes a joint assignment as a missile defense planner with the Force Structure, Resources and Assessment directorate on the joint staff in Washington, D.C.

Mahon is a graduate of the Army War College, the Army Command & General Staff College, the Combined Arms Services Staff School, the Armor Advanced Course and the ADA Basic Course. His decorations include the Legion of Merit with two oak leaf clusters, the Meritorious Service Medal with three oak leaf clusters, the Army Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters and the Joint Staff Achievement Medal.

Mahon is married to the former Elizabeth McGowan, and the two have four children: Elizabeth, Kathleen, Mary and Francis.

31st CSH changes hands

1ST LT. SABRINA M. SMITH

31st ADA Bde. Public Affairs

After nearly two years in command of the 31st Combat Support Hospital, Col. Richard T. Beitz Jr. relinquished command to Col. Roberto N. Nang during a change of command ceremony held July 15 at Noel Field. Nang's most recent assignment was at Fort Hood, Texas, where he held the position of division surgeon for the First Cavalry Division. During his speech, Nang first thanked his family for their support during his military career, and then spoke of his pride in taking command of such a highly trained unit as the 31st CSH.

"Today is a beautiful day, and a humbling day. It is a great day to be a Soldier, and a humbling day to be taking command of this great unit. The 31st CSH has a great tradition of service and sacrifice. As the previous division surgeon of First Cav, I personally witnessed the work of the great Soldiers of the 31st CSH in action during combat in Baghdad, saving the lives of U.S. Soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and Iraqi and coalition Soldiers, and civilians," said Nang. "Your support and clinical care were instrumental to the successful completion of a free and democratic election in Iraq. Rest assured, we will carry on the great tradition of service and sacrifice in the 31st CSH."

Nang is a 1982 graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point where he received a bachelor of science in structural aerospace engineering and biological sciences. He attended medical school at the University of Utah from 1983 to 1987. His military education includes a transitional internship at the Dwight D. Eisenhower Army Medical Center in Fort Gordon and the Army Command and General Staff College.

His awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters, the Army Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters, the Joint Meritorious



MASTER SGT. GERALDINE RONAN

Col. Roberto N. Nang accepts the unit colors from Col. Jeffrey R. Oeser during the 31st Combat Support Hospital Change of Command ceremony at Noel Field.

Unit Award with one bronze star, the National Defense Service Medal with one bronze star, the Iraqi Campaign Medal, the Humanitarian Service Medal with one bronze star, and the United Nations Medal. He is joined by his wife Joy and their daughter Isabella.

Beitz's next assignment will be in Fort Monroe, Va., at the USA Health Clinic, where he will serve as the clinic commander. During his speech, Beitz spoke movingly of his pride in the accomplishments 31st CSH had achieved over the past two years of his command.

"The 31st CSH survived nearly a hundred indirect fire attacks, suicide bombers, [improvised explosive devices], [chemical, biological improvised explosive devices], and, oh by the way, posted the best battle casualty survival statistic in the history of the military during combat since Vietnam," said Beitz. "Their extraordinary ability and heroism and bravery accomplished the mission far above expectations. They put their lives on the line to provide first class medical care to Soldiers, both national and foreign, civilians, and yes, enemy combatants. These Soldiers have made history."

Beitz also spoke of his pride in the

Soldiers' appearance and praised them for their efforts during his time in command. He assured Nang that he would be taking command of one of the best Combat Support Hospitals in the history of the military, and lastly thanked his wife for her support and love during his time in the military.

Col. Jeffrey R. Oeser, commander of the 31st Air Defense Artillery Brigade, also praised the efforts of the Soldiers of the 31st CSH and the leadership of their commanders. He pointed out the incredible statistics posted by the 31st CSH during their deployment to Iraq and mentioned the awards received by many of the Soldiers in the unit.

"Thanks to the efforts of the 31st CSH, over 25,000 patients were seen and treated by the stalwart medics and nurses that comprise the 31st CSH. Nearly 90 percent of the patients seen survived, which is the best survival rate posted by a combat support hospital in the history of the military. In addition to this excellent record, many of the Soldiers distinguished themselves in combat, earning numerous awards, to include six Purple Hearts," said Oeser. "The 31st CSH has truly made its mark in the annals of history."

Huddleston

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night land navigation course, a road march, Warrior Tasks and a weapons-qualification range.

The warrior tasks included evaluating a casualty, providing immediate first aid, responding to a chemical or biological hazard or attack, reacting to unexploded ordnance and loading and unloading the M-249 squad assault weapon. The NCOs had to perform all Soldier tasks and demonstrate their ability to correctly call for a medical evacuation and teach room-clearing procedures in a combat environment.

After being named the Fort Bliss NCOY, Huddleston immediately began preparing for the TRADOC competition.

"I went to the M16 range at least once a week ... just to prepare and

get better at my marksmanship skills. Up to that point, I had been using study guides mostly, but I started looking closer into the regulations and studied those a little bit better," he said. "[The] Fort Bliss [competition], all it was, basically, was a board and a PT test. The TRADOC board was way tougher."

After winning the TRADOC competition, Huddleston said he was surprised but felt good nonetheless.

"I was surprised really because there was one guy who I felt was the top on every event, and I didn't think I was that guy. But it felt good [to win.]," he said. "It felt good to me because I'm representing all the NCOs who helped me."

Huddleston said in preparing for the TRADOC competition, he received help from "everybody on Fort Bliss." He sought assistance from units like the 108th and 11th

ADA Bdes. and organizations like the Rod & Gun Club.

"All I had to do was tell them what I was working toward and everybody was willing to help out. I felt like I was representing all of Fort Bliss there, more than just the NCO Academy," he said. "I was proud they didn't waste their time."

The next step for Huddleston in the Army NCOY competition, which will be held in September. He plans to continue working on his physical fitness, going to the rifle range and studying Army regulations even deeper than he had before.

"I'm planning on winning," he said. "If I do everything right – if I continuously keep my PT up, if I practice on my weapons [qualification], if I do all the stuff I just said, there isn't anyone who can beat me."



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