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For Immediate Release

Two Utah Army National Guard Senior Enlistedmen Retire

DRAPER, Utah – Recently, in separate ceremonies, two Utah Army National Guard senior enlistedmen retired.

Command Sgt. Maj. Joseph R. Spencer, of Draper, was honored at Camp Williams July 9 during a retirement ceremony for his 25 years of service in the Utah National Guard.

For the past five years, Spencer has served as command sergeant major of the 640th Regiment Regional Training Institute at Camp Williams. The 640th is responsible for training active-duty and reserve-component Soldiers in basic leadership and in Field Artillery and Military Intelligence specialties.

Spencer deployed overseas with the Utah Guard's I Corps Artillery (Forward) in 2006-2007 as a trainer of Afghan National Army soldiers. During his career he has also served as an operations sergeant major, section chief, team chief, fire-control sergeant and administrative clerk. He spent the majority of his career with I Corps Artillery and the 2-222nd Field Artillery.

"Joe is a high-speed, squared-away guy," said Col. Larry Schmidt, Utah National Guard chief of staff and longtime friend of Spencer. "He is a natural leader, and those whom he closely mentored have all become successful."

According to Schmidt, Spencer was very instrumental a few years ago in securing a Regional Training Institute for Utah, one of six in the nation.

"He goes out and gets things for his organization," added Schmidt. "His leadership style was not all talk; he walked it as well. [Because of Joe Spencer], the RTI will continue to be strong and a major player in the training world."

First Sgt. Charus "Chuck" Rackham, a Magna resident, was also honored for his distinguished 30-year career in the Utah National Guard at a ceremony at Draper headquarters June 4.

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Rackham enlisted in the 19th Special Forces Group as a paratrooper and radio-repair specialist. He moved up quickly in the ranks and became a full-time recruiter, serving with various units. Later he voluntarily took a reduction in rank in order to become a trainer and work with Soldiers at the unit level.

From 1998-2007 Rackham served as operations noncommissioned officer (NCO) and chief medial NCO at the Utah Guard's Medical Command. His final assignment was as first sergeant of the 197th Special Troops Company in Ogden.

At the ceremony, Maj. Gen. Brian Tarbet, adjutant general of the Utah National Guard, jokingly described Rackham during his MEDCOM days as an "evil genius" for his uncanny efficiency at tracking down Tarbet before each of his overseas trips to make sure that the general had all his required immunizations.

"He blessed lives all around the world," added Tarbet on a more serious note. "Chuck Rackham was surrounded by people, kids, and Soldiers, taking care of them every step of the way. He's helped a lot of people, and I'm very proud of the work he has done."

For questions, please Lt. Col. Hank McIntire at (801) 420-4778.