



# Army Sustainment Command

## News Release

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## Soldier's talent brings notoriety in Quad Cities

**ROCK ISLAND, Ill.**— One Soldier's passion and talent for music has not only grown since joining the Army, but has brought him recognition throughout the Quad Cities.

Spc. Luis Ochoa, a human resource specialist assigned to the Army Sustainment Command headquarters at Rock Island Arsenal, Ill., became inspired as a little boy after watching the movie "La Bamba."

At 14, Ochoa's family moved from California to Laredo, Texas. He began to sing in local heavy-metal, punk rock, and alternative bands with friends.

"The main reason I started doing it was to 'rebel.' I was mad at my parents for making us move, so I decided to do the complete opposite of what they wanted me to do — sports," Ochoa said. "It was also something I had kept in the back of my mind for a long time after seeing 'La Bamba.'"

By the time Ochoa was 18, he was playing the acoustic guitar and performing solo.

"Playing the guitar and singing became an addiction," Ochoa said. "Kind of like a therapeutic release."

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After high school, Ochoa drifted around Austin's and San Antonio's music scene. He first began playing shows in restaurants and pubs, covering a plethora of music including The Beatles and Bob Dylan.

"They were amazing musicians and very innovative," said Ochoa. "In today's music, you can still hear things that are based on them."

After a few years of bouncing around in Texas, Ochoa decided to join the Army four years ago, but never put down the guitar.

While serving in Iraq, he participated in the Christmas talent show, a Hispanic heritage show in which he sang a few songs in Spanish, and performed in open mic nights.

"It was definitely very fulfilling, knowing I created some form of entertainment for my fellow troops by giving them some sort of temporary distraction amidst the madness that was in Iraq," said Ochoa.

Ochoa arrived at RIA in April 2009 and quickly became involved in the local music scene.

"The Quad Cities has an amazing music scene," Ochoa said. "There is definitely a decent amount of friendly competition, which in my opinion pushes us to be better musicians."

To date, he has played at restaurants and bars throughout the Quad Cities playing covers of classic rock songs, Dave Matthews, Incubus, John Mayer, his renditions of hip-hop songs and performing a few self-written songs.

Even with his full-time duties as a Soldier, Ochoa practices almost daily, even finding the time to write and rehearse his own songs.

Ochoa usually can be found Tuesday nights at CoolBeanz coffee house in Rock Island, Ill., and Bier Stube's open mic in the Village of East Davenport, Iowa. On Thursdays, he performs at Dam View Inn's open mic night in Davenport.

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Although Ochoa has duty the following morning, he said the late hours are definitely worth the amazing feeling he gets when on stage and seeing people singing along to his music.

Ochoa has teamed up with another local musician and created a band called “Vagabond Cove” that has been getting gigs at Dam View Inn, Christopher D’s in Moline, Ill., and other various bars and restaurants throughout the Quad Cities.

“It is something I love to do and would love to make it a career,” said Ochoa. “Playing keeps me grounded.”

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