

June 8, 2005

# DESERT VOICE



## Missile mission

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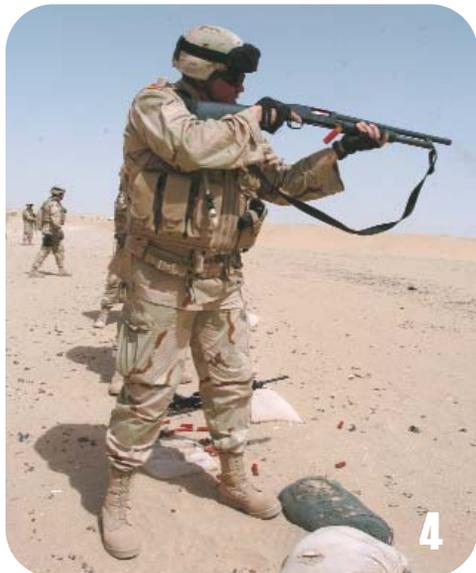
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# DESERT VOICE

Volume 26, Issue 43

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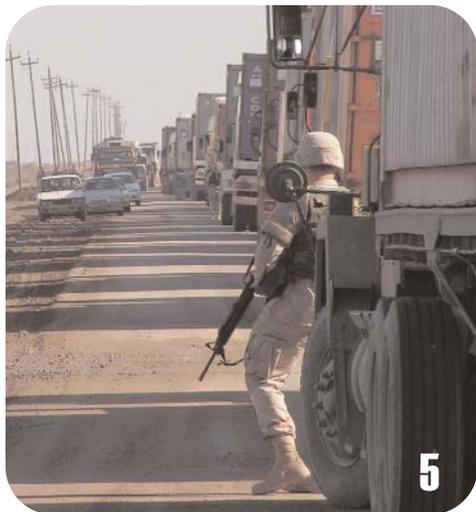
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### On the Cover

Three Kuwaiti warships, underway in the Arabian Gulf, maneuver in preparation for a live-fire missile exercise June 1.

Photo by Sgt. Matt Millham

# Happy birthday, Army

By Lt. Gen. R. Steven Whitcomb

If it is true that “all good men are known by their deeds,” then surely the Army’s reputation as being an institution of duty, honor, loyalty and respect is worthy of that distinction as well. As we commemorate the Army’s 230th Birthday, we also celebrate its future. A future of challenges and changes that will redefine our Army in the 21st Century. But with change we must never stray far from the values, which define the greatest and oldest institution in our nation’s glorious history.

On June 14, 1775, the Army began a rich tradition of fighting for freedom and democracy and for 230 years American men and women have answered the nation’s call to duty in defense of freedom. That call continues in the form of a multinational force, which spans the globe uniting different races, creeds, nationalities and religions. A call to duty, which includes not only Soldiers, but also Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen and civilian-Soldiers in slacks. As we combine our forces to defend against tyranny and oppression and chart the course to democracy for many nations, we must pay tribute to our Army and those who have fallen.

The men and women of Third Army, Coalition Forces Land Component Command, and their families continue the Army’s promise of service and sacrifice; a promise which says we will be ready when duty calls, a promise that has been answered by more than 300,000 active, Guard, and Reserve Soldiers deployed in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom and in other countries around the world.

Today our troops are engaged in fierce fire fights and numerous suicide attacks on convoys and through our daily missions of rebuilding Iraq. These missions span the entire spectrum of war, from containing the enemy’s inhumane tactics to also providing aid to the same enemy who has no regard for human life or the future of a free, stable and self governing society. Regardless of the threat and where it may come the Army continues to meet the country’s demand for safety and security wherever tyranny and the threat of terrorism and the ruthless regimes of brutal dictators exist.

As American Soldiers you are guided by the Army values. Your courage and sacrifice is the heart and soul of America’s Army. Your commitment to and performance of duty, as you go about your daily missions, speak volumes of the character

and spirit of service you have demonstrated. You continue to exemplify what all countrymen who so honorably served before you have done. You represent the awesome spirit of our Army as an institution. As you conduct operations in every province, town and village in Iraq and Afghanistan know that Americans and the world are watching you; your actions must reaffirm the trust, faith and confidence placed in you. In every convoy, firefight, raid or defensive stance, the presence of the United States is the face of an American Soldier. The American Soldier is the cornerstone of our Army and is entrusted with the spirit of courage and the belief of freedom. The Army and our nation remain proud of you and the service you have given. I am confident in your ability to continue the tradition of selfless service, sacrifice and loyalty to our nation.

“Patton’s Own”.



## Army birthday message from ASG-Kuwait commander

By Col. Brick T. Miller

Birthdays are always special. But when an institution like the U.S. Army has one, it seems all the more important. June 14th marks the 230th year of our Army, an organization that many of us are a part of, most of us are associated with and all of us should be thankful for.

Predating even the Declaration of Independence, the Continental Army was formed in 1775. Populated by men who risked everything for the prospect of freedom, the group led the fight for independence from British rule. Without the service and the brave Soldiers who filled its ranks, The United States simply would not exist.

To say that the Army has played an important role in the further development of our nation would be an understatement. A more accurate assessment would be that the Army, along with the other military services, has given the American people the security to make our nation what it is

today.

From the Battle of Bunker Hill to the fall of Baghdad, American Soldiers have always been there to defend and protect both our homeland and our way of life. And it is under this wall of protection that American industry, ideas and values have prospered.

While the challenges and goals of our Army have evolved over the years, the common thread remains the strength and resilience of the American Soldier. When I look around at the Soldiers serving in Kuwait, I see the same hard work and dedication to mission accomplishment that has gotten us through past humanitarian missions, peacekeeping operations and conflicts. And although most of us in Kuwait aren’t conducting raids on insurgent strongholds or traversing the dangerous streets of Iraq, our support mission here is vitally important to the efforts up north.

We are not the first generation of American Soldiers to encounter deployments, and we certainly won’t be the last.

We are, however, honorably carrying on a time-honored tradition that is the product of 230 years worth of service and sacrifice.

Each of our camps in Kuwait will commemorate this service with its own celebration June 14. As you join in the festivities, I invite you to think about all the Soldiers who came before us to help pave the way for the current successes of our Army. Doing so will help provide you with strength for the future and enable you to put our current efforts in perspective.

On behalf of myself and the rest of the Area Support Group-Kuwait team, thanks for doing your part to make our Army what it is today. Your leaders, members of the other services and the American people are surely appreciative.



# Puerto Ricans on patrol

Story and photo by Spc. Almee Felix

Spc. Jose Gandia sat at a table with the most important people in his life: his mother, his father, his mother-in-law, his wife and his son. It was family day for the National Guardsman, and this was the last formality before saying goodbye for a year.

A year is too long to deal with the fact that he wasn't honest with the people he loves most, so Gandia decided to clear his conscience. "I want to say that I love you all very much, and I wasn't activated. I actually volunteered for this mission."

"The look on my wife's face – oh my God," said Gandia as he waited to test fire a shot gun at Udairi Range May 30.

Gandia and the rest of his unit, A Battery, 1st Battalion, 162nd Field Artillery, a National Guard unit from Puerto Rico, are in Kuwait acclimating and fine-tuning their skills before deploying to Iraq in early June. It's a move the confident Soldiers are anxious to make.

"They're like 'enough training; let's do this,'" said commander Capt. Hector Castaneda.

In Iraq, A Battery Soldiers, most of whom volunteered for this mission, will provide convoy security and serve as security forces around the camp they will call home for a year. They'll also spend time guarding enemy detainees.

Gandia said he considers himself lucky to have a home after the stunt he pulled on his family. But they understand he volunteered in order to uphold a family tradition of military service, he said. One of his uncles fought in Vietnam and another died fighting in World War II. "It's every man's dream to go to war, and see how he'll react," said Gandia.

Born and raised in New York, Gandia said the city streets provided him with a life's worth of urban warfare training. Now he's confident he'll be able to handle every challenge he encounters north of the Kuwaiti border.

Others in Gandia's unit have more conventional ways of maintaining their confidence. Master Sgt. Rafael Villamil and Sgt. William Alvarez are veterans of Vietnam as

**"I want to say that I love you all very much, and I wasn't activated. I actually volunteered for this mission**

**- Spc. Jose Gandia**



**Spc. Rosalina Alvarez loads a shotgun at Udairi Range May 30 during a test fire. Alvarez and the rest of her unit, A Battery, 1st Battalion, 162nd Field Artillery were on a three-day bivouac, one of a few training events the battery will undergo before moving to Iraq in early June.**

well as other conflicts. Together they have a combined 44 years of military service behind them.

"The Soldiers in this war are better trained," said Alvarez, who spoke wonders of the training the 162nd underwent during the three months it was mobilized at Fort Dix, N.J.

Villamil's six-month experience at the Guantanamo Bay detention center in Cuba in 2003 prepared him for the detainee operations he'll carry out in Iraq, he said.

"If nothing else, I learned that you can never let your guard down." It's a lesson Villamil tries to impress upon his Soldiers. Villamil is the 162nd's operations noncommissioned officer. "I run this unit," he further explained as a smiling Castaneda listened intently.

Villamil also served in Desert Storm. He said that conflict was different. "We went in. We did what he had to do, and we came out," he said.

Vietnam was also different, Alvarez said. It's easier for him to stay motivated in this unit than it was for him in Vietnam when a draft, jungle warfare and six-month monsoons could keep even the most

ferent Soldier down. "I'll take the desert heat over those monsoons any day," said Alvarez.

Alvarez not only volunteered for this mission, but he joined the Army just before the Vietnam draft. "Both times I figured I was going to get called up anyway. May as well do it on my own terms," said Alvarez, who left behind three sons and a daughter, all of whom felt they had the best advice to offer their dad. "Stay safe. Take care of yourself. Come back in one piece," he said, rattling off his children's statements in a paternal tone.

While most of the 162nd Soldiers volunteered, a few were called. One of twelve females in the 178-Soldier battery, Spc. Rosalina Alvarez from Arecibo, Puerto Rico, said she didn't necessarily want to deploy. Nevertheless, Alvarez is confident she's well-trained for her mission. "Unfortunately, we automatically think we'll learn all this stuff from the guys, but we've learned from each other equally."

Spc. Alvarez's main job in Iraq will be as a convoy escort gunner, the same duty Gandia will pull. Escort gunners serve as the eyes and ears of the convoy. The significance of the job is not lost on Gandia.

All the pressure that accompanies such an important position is worth it, Gandia said. "I'll walk away from this proud of doing my little piece for this war."

# Not your typical escort service

Story by Spc. Brian Trapp

The mission in Operation Iraqi Freedom is continuously evolving. To stay abreast of the changes, the Army is constantly reevaluating the way it does business. A unit in Kuwait is looking into meeting those changes with a test that could affect Army doctrine and make history.

The Camp Arifjan-based 1864th Transportation Company is testing the best way to use convoy escort platforms, formerly known as gun trucks. The test is designed to identify how a CEP platoon operates with the support of a company and how the platoon fits in with a battalion.

The platoon went on its first mission May 17 and has been running daily convoy escorts for the Iraqi Express since. The company and the 106th Transportation Battalion, which the 1864th falls under, are tracking data on the platoon. They're recording everything from how much time their mechanics need to recover vehicles and what weapons they need, to the impact the platoon has on company administrative assets. All this information will be compiled to help find the best way to use and equip CEPs.

The findings from this test could affect transportation corps doctrine as well as personnel and equipment requirements for transportation companies.

"We're excited to be a part of it," said Maj. James Brady, executive officer and acting commander of the 106th Transportation Battalion. "We're at the tip of the spear, helping establish doctrine for the transportation corps."

If the concept is developed, convoy protection would be integrated into transportation corps doctrine, Brady said. Convoy protection was a duty that in the past rested solely on the shoulders of military police, Brady said.

This test configuration is designed to see if a platoon-sized CEP element can meet the convoy escort needs of a battalion.

Throughout the life of the test platoon, officials will track nearly every aspect of the unit's operations, including the time mechanics spend repairing Humvees, what weapons troops need for missions and the administrative needs of the Soldiers.

"They're not testing CEP tactics," Grady said. "[They're testing] the best way to employ them, whether it's a platoon or a couple of trucks at a company level," Grady said.

The testing stemmed from after action reviews submitted to Combined Arms Support Command from units that saw a



Photo by Spc. Barbara Higgins

**A convoy escort Soldier stands vigilant during a convoy stop on Iraq's route Bismarck. Soldiers from the 518th Convoy Escort Platform and the 1864th Transportation Company have joined together to form the test Convoy Escort Platform Platoon, stood up in May.**

need for a different approach to convoy security from experience in previous OIF rotations, Brady said.

Things are already different for units now. Before OIF, transportation units weren't normally outfitted with the number of crew-served weapons the CEPs now use.

The Nevada National Guard's 1864th was chosen because it is a good company, and it was short on drivers, so it could absorb additional Soldiers, Brady said. The 1864th's fourth platoon, the test platoon, was formed from Soldiers with the 1864th, and the now-retired 518th Gun Truck Company.

"The 518th was very good at what they did, but they didn't have the support structure an established company can provide," said 2nd Lt. Chuck Grady, fourth platoon leader with the 1864th. Companies the 518th supported gave the unit vehicles, maintenance support and personnel, but the unit still lacked strong administrative and logistical support.

"If they're put in with a company structure, all of those things are there," Grady said. In an existing company those things are already up and running, and the personnel are trained, "no one had to reinvent the wheel to do this."

Despite the unit's experimental status, the Soldiers in the platoon seem to be more

focused on the mission and protecting their own, rather than the testing.

"The role of the person on the CEP has not changed," said Spc. Barbara Higgins, a gunner with the fourth platoon. "We're still doing the same mission, still doing the Iraqi Express."

"It's a job for us," said Sgt. 1st Class Sef Romero, squad leader with the test platoon. "It's a duty; we take it with a grain and do the best we can."

Even though the Soldiers downplayed the significance of the testing, they agreed that the mission they are doing is an essential one. They seemed to view the role CEPs play in keeping the supply lines moving as a responsibility within the transportation corps to protect their people.

Without enough MPs and transportation personnel to provide convoy escorts for the whole theater, it's important to have designated CEP personnel, said Sgt. 1st Class Larry Perkins, 4th platoon sergeant. Considering the prospect of changing what is taught to Soldiers in the motor transport operator field, Perkins added, "I think the next challenge is training for CEPs."

Grady said he sees the CEP mission being a lasting requirement for transportation Soldiers, but the length of the testing is yet to be determined for the unit, which is slated to redeploy in September.

# 'Thar she blows!



**Kuwaiti sailors aboard the Al Fahaheel, an Um Al Maradim Class Fast Attack Craft, prepare British-made Sea Skua missiles during a live fire exercise in the Arabian Gulf June 1. Al Fahaheel was one of four ships participating in the exercise.**

## Story and photos by Sgt. Matt Millham

Those who joined the military to watch things go boom can't help but be disappointed with operations in Kuwait, where gunplay is all but absent.

So June 1 was like an oasis for explosion freaks in a desert of quietude when the Kuwait Naval Force flexed its muscles by testing out its ships, missiles and guns.

The exercise began just off of Falaika Island, which is in the Arabian Gulf about 12 nautical miles from mainland Kuwait. In 2002, the island was the site of the first terrorist strike against American forces in Kuwait since 9/11. Two gunmen made their way to the island from Kuwait City and opened fire on some Marines who were training on Falaika's deserted streets. One Marine was killed before the gunmen were gunned down.

But today, the island is serene. The four Um Al Maradim Class Fast Attack Craft, which roil the sea at their sterns as they wait impatiently to be released for the attack, are a menacing contrast

to the northeast of Falaika. Each is armed with four British-made Sea Skua missiles, one 40 mm Oto Malara main gun, a Giat-type 20 mm machine gun and two .50-caliber machine guns. The show of firepower is impressive, especially considering the prey.

Just within range of the missiles, two beaten tug boats bob aimlessly in the Arabian Gulf. Both are anchored in place about eight nautical miles from where the ships will launch an attack designed to hit but not sink the helpless vessels. The tugs aren't good for much else other than target practice. Most days, they just take up space at Kuwaiti Naval Base, occasionally sinking to the sea floor only to be resurrected for these brief and humiliating stunts as clay pigeons.

Before the fun begins, the four ships perform a coordinated set of maneuvers in the open sea. Watching from Al Fahaheel, the last ship in the line now underway at some 30 knots, the movements are precise and graceful. They are ballet.

After a few miles, the formation turns in the opposite direction. Before long, the ships arrive at their destination, a few miles

to the northeast of Falaika. There is a thick haze, but it's not thick enough to obscure the island. Even though the island barely rises above sea level, it's still possible to make out its faint outline, its trees and its radio towers. On a clearer day, it might be possible to make out the island's Greek ruins, which are among the earliest evidence of human civilization in Kuwait.

All those aboard the ships struggle to make out the targets. Though it isn't the last insult the former tugs will have to bear, the boats Muwafi and Mutla are now dubbed Target One and Target Two.

After the real ships have fanned out, their lower decks come alive as Kuwaiti sailors rush to ready the missiles and the 40 and 20 mm guns. Each ship fires five test rounds from the 20 mm guns, which face off the stern of each identical death yacht. To test the accuracy of the gun on Al Fahaheel, a sailor throws an empty water bottle off the back of the ship. When Al Fahaheel's 20 mm gun fires, the sound is absurd. Everyone on the lower deck is wearing hearing protection, but after the first round is fired, they all put their hands over their ears as an additional safeguard against the deafening crack.

When the guns are set, the sailors retreat inside. Nobody is allowed on the outer

**"...Kuwaiti sailors rush to ready the missiles and the 40 and 20 mm guns."**



**Top: On the bridge of Al Fahaheel, Kuwait sailors watch as another ship readies to fire a missile at an old tug boat.**

**Middle: Before the firing began, the ships performed a series of maneuvers to prepare for the surface to surface attack. This gyroscopic compass was not used in the maneuvers, but an almost identical one inside the ship was.**

**Bottom: Al Ahmadi, one of Kuwait's Um Al Maradim Class Fast Attack Craft, launches a Sea Skua missile at the tugboat formerly known as Mutla. For the exercise, the boat is known as Target One.**

**Right: Kuwait Fire Services boats rushed to the wrecked tug boats to extinguish the fires that resulted from the explosions.**

decks for the missile firing, which is the first volley in the attack.

All of the commands come over the radio in English. Instructions tell the first ship to move into attack position, and it moves ahead of the others by 200 meters. The next call is a command telling the ship, the one that is farthest to everyone else's left, or port, to launch a missile at Target One.

Within a minute, a five-second countdown to launch begins. Everyone on the bridge of Al Fahaheel is focused on the launch. When the missile fires, it is gone in an instant, skimming the waters of the gulf at 700 miles per hour.

Nobody can see either the missile or the target, and the 40 seconds it takes for the missile to reach Target One tick by in what seem like minutes. When the missile hits, there is a brief fireball followed by cheers. A ring and a column of sooty smoke indicate the tug once known as Muwafi has been hit.

As the first ship circles around and back into the formation, the next ship in line follows identical instructions to advance and fire. The second fireball indicates another hit, provoking more cheers.

Al Fahaheel is the first to strike at Target Two, which is still invisible on the horizon. Those on the bridge sweep the horizon with binoculars. Those in the control room have already locked on with the targeting system, and the countdown begins.

There is nothing to compare to being within close proximity to a missile launch. It's loud and fast and, despite the countdown, almost a complete surprise

when the missile speeds past the window like an express train with a rocket in its caboose.

The wait for impact this time seems longer. Everyone looks in the direction the missile went, anticipating the strike. There is a vague sense of disappointment, then an explosion. Target Two has been hit. Within five minutes, the former Mutla will suffer another missile strike before the ships move closer to engage the targets with their 40 mm main guns.

The rounds fired by the main gun are like foot-and-a-half-long bullets. The gun extracts the 40 mm shell casings and tosses them on the deck as if they were the brass of 5.56 mm rounds. This round of the attack lasts only a couple minutes before another order to advance comes over the radio.

This order brings the crews out to the aft decks to man the .50-caliber and 20 mm machine guns. Soon, the sailors light up the smoldering tug boats, riddling them with bullets before moving in to survey the damage.

Both tugs have been torn to pieces. While their hulls remain somewhat intact, the cabins and pilot boxes are gutted. Boats from Kuwait Fire Services rush ahead of the attack craft to douse the flaming wrecks. Mutla is out in no time, but Muwafi continues to burn hours after the assault has ended. When the fire is out, a working tug will drag the lifeless heap back to KNB, where it will rest until the next round of target practice.



# A new fight for old hands

Story and photo by Spc. Aimee Felix

Cpl. Josip Kutlesa was 18 years old and a conscript in the Yugoslavian army when the country now known as Serbia and Montenegro was impeding Croatia's bid for independence. Kutlesa, a Croat, decided to escape Yugoslavia. After his parents sneaked civilian clothes to him, he ran away on a route that took him across a land-mine infested countryside to the sovereign nation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Kutlesa, now a member of the Bosnian Army, is on his way to Iraq this week to help the country's populace by getting rid of the same kinds of explosives and land mines that almost kept him from freedom.

Kutlesa was one of six troops from a Bosnian explosive ordnance disposal unit to receive a 5-ton driver's license June 3 in Kuwait. The license was one of the finishing touches Kutlesa put on his training for his six-month deployment.

"They already trained in Bosnia on everything we're teaching them," said 43rd Area Support Group Master Sgt. Richard Fenner, one of the driving instructors who trained the Bosnian unit in Camp Virginia.

"The funny thing is they sat through a two-hour slide show before they said anything [about their previous training]," said 43rd ASG motor sergeant Staff Sgt. Aaron Campanella, explaining the politeness of the Bosnians. Campanella gave vehicle instruction to the Bosnians as well.

Campanella also praised the Bosnian troops' professionalism, adding that even though Kutlesa is a professional truck driver in the Bosnian army, he remained attentive throughout the qualification process at Camp Virginia.

The rest of the training the Bosnian troops underwent in Kuwait included cultural awareness training, convoy live-fire training, close quarters marksmanship and all the other standard training received by American troops deploying to Iraq.

The only real difference between the training in Kuwait and the training in Bosnia is that in Bosnia the troops trained in sub-zero temperatures trudging through three feet of snow, said platoon commander Maj. Musa Stjepan.

In Bosnia, a team of U.S. Soldiers and a U.S.-contracted mobile training team, trained the Bosnians for this mission. The Bosnians' chief instructor had been a U.S. military EOD team leader for 16 years, and his experience was evident, said Stjepan.

The training the Bosnians received at Camp Virginia will augment the experiences



**Cpl. Josip Kutlesa qualifies for his 5-ton driver's license at Camp Virginia June 3. Kutlesa is one of an almost 40-man explosive ordnance disposal unit from the Bosnia and Herzegovinan army that will move up north from Kuwait this week for a six-month deployment.**

most, if not all of the troops have gained from years of battle in their own country, according to some Bosnian troops.

"All these soldiers have been at war and most have injuries from past conflicts. This is nothing new, but they get to do it again, doing something useful for the coalition," said Bosnian liaison officer Capt. Almir Kudz.

"Whether good or bad, all experiences are valuable," Capt. Sasa Golubovic, the deputy platoon commander, said of the civil strife Bosnian troops have dealt with.

Golubovic's job in the Bosnian army at home is to inspect land to determine whether it's free of explosives and mines. Golubovic said his children, ages 9 and 6, are used to his absence, something several other Bosnian soldiers said of their children as well. This is because everyone in the unit is a full-time soldier and their profession takes them away from home on a regular basis.

While they have all deployed individually, this is the first time Bosnian armed forces have deployed outside the country. The all-volunteer unit is made up of soldiers from Bosnia and Herzegovina's two separate armies, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska.

The unit will serve as an asset to the

Marines' 8th Engineer Support Battalion, 2nd Force Support Group, stationed west of Baghdad.

The unit's experience became apparent to the Marines when they met the six-man Bosnian advance party last month. The Marines were expecting inexperienced conscripts, said Kudz, but after meeting them, Marine 1st Lt. Donnie Fricks, the liaison officer facilitating the Bosnian's integration to the 8th ESB, said "these guys look pretty salty," which in Marine speak means the troops are experienced.

While they will generally be supported by the Marines, the unit deployed with its own medic, Sgt. 1st Class Radmila Susnjevic. She is the only female in the unit. Judging from the way she shrugs off questions about her being the lone female among a unit of more than 30 males, Susnjevic clearly thinks her gender is not an issue.

Stjepan's only worry is whether or not his troops will adapt well to the extreme temperatures. Otherwise, he and the rest of his troops are confident their experience will see them through.

The only challenge will be identifying any new ordnance they've never encountered before, and of course, missing their families, said Golubovic. "But you learn from your challenges," he added.

# High-tech troops: Keeping “cool” in Kuwait can cost you

Story and photo by Sgt. Matt Millham

If sales of Apple iPods at AAFES stores worldwide are an accurate indicator of the tastes of American troops, then service-members in Kuwait are way ahead of their stateside counterparts in embracing some of the hottest technology trends.

Troops here are snatching up gadgets like Sony's Playstation Portable, or PSP, and Apple's iPod so quickly that post exchanges in Kuwait can't keep the shelves stocked, said Dennis Patton, AAFES acting general manager for Kuwait and team leader for Camp Arifjan's Zone 1 PX.

When the Zone 1 exchange got its shipment of 40 Sony PSPs, the exchange sold out in just one day. At \$249 a piece, not including the games or movies that play on the system (the Zone 1 store carries all the games, and movies are on their way), the PSP is just the latest indicator that troops in Kuwait are eager to shell out relatively large sums of money on the latest widgets.

The trend encompasses everything from game consoles and plasma screen televisions to MP3 players and digital cameras. The only problem, according to Patton, is that the manufacturers of some of the most popular items are having a hard time keeping up.

There is no word on whether Sony will ship more PSP systems to AAFES in the United States or Kuwait because the company is struggling to meet demand. Since the system's launch, Sony has been rationing the few PSPs it has to markets worldwide.

AAFES has been unable to meet the ravenous, worldwide demand for Apple's popular iPod, which has practically cornered the market on portable MP3 players.

Just how popular is the iPod here? Arifjan's Zone 1 exchange went through its shipment of 75 40-gigabyte iPods in just one week. Since April 9, Arifjan's Zone 1 and Zone 6 exchanges have sold a combined total of more than 300 iPods, including the 4-gig iPod Mini, 20-gig iPod and 40-gig iPod Photo models. Apple recently discontinued its 40-gig photo model and instead sells 30 and 60-gig photo models.

Ranging in price from \$195 to \$449, the players aren't cheap, but Kuwait's exchanges can't keep them on the shelves. By the time this story goes to print, Patton said he expects all of the iPods in Kuwait to be nearly sold out. Unfortunately, for troops who are waiting to jump on the iPod band-



**Spc. Jose Rojas, who works at the post office at Camp Arifjan, works out with his Rio Carbon MP3 player in the Zone 1 gym at Camp Arifjan June 4.**

wagon, exchanges here may not get a new shipment of iPods for weeks, and that will contain only a limited number of 30-gig iPod Photos, said Patton.

Though it's troops in Kuwait and Iraq who are buying most of the players, the problem has affected AAFES stores worldwide. The AAFES warehouse in California, where most of Kuwait's merchandise comes from, is out of everything but the 30-gig model, which has supposedly already shipped for Kuwait, said Patton.

But having the merchandise ship doesn't necessarily mean it will be here anytime soon. In the five months Patton has been in theater, the record time for an order to make it here by cargo ship from California is 49 days, he said.

"It's a challenging business trying to predict what will get people's interest when things like this don't happen in the states," said Patton. At his home exchange, 10 iPods will last his store a few weeks to a month he said.

Less popular than the iPod is the 5-gig Rio Carbon, which costs about \$199. Patton owns both the Rio and an iPod, and said he prefers the Rio for workouts because the iPod tends to skip while the Rio does not. He uses his 30 gig iPod for everything else.

Spc. Jose Rojas, who works at Camp Arifjan's post office, bought a Rio about a month ago. "I saw a few people in here

working out, and I thought it would be nice to have one," said Rojas, who was in the middle of a workout at the Zone 1 gym June 4.

Other MP3 players are offered at the PX as well, but many of these hold less than a gig of music. For the most part, troops won't touch these smaller players. "They're looking for gigabytes, not megabytes," said Patton.

Digital cameras are another big seller. Even the higher-end cameras that cost around \$900 go at a rate of about 10 per week.

One of the strangest trends that appears to have been adopted only by deployed troops is a line of high-powered flashlights from Surefire, ranging in price from \$29 to \$194. On a lark, Patton ordered four of the \$194 Surefire flashlights. They were gone in five days, he said.

One item that initially was a booming success is Nintendo's DS. When it was first introduced in PXs across Kuwait, AAFES sold up to 50 a day said Patton. After the Sony PSP came out, sales of the DS dropped to about three a day.

This massive attention shift points to the reason Patton thinks so many troops are buying the same gadgets. "When you see the gadgets and what they can do and how cool they are, you have to have one for yourself."

# Sailors help solidify Salem

Story and photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Gino A. Flores

Located in Southern Kuwait near a remote corner of Ali Al Salem Airbase, where only mice, spiders, lizards and snakes once roamed, exists a home for a new species, the Seabees.

Sailors from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Five stationed at Camp Moreell, which is populated by Sailors and Marines and located at Ali Al Salem, have been busy building, upgrading and expanding facilities on camp. Since arriving in April of this year, they've been preparing for the transition of troops scheduled to move from Camp Doha as it closes and is returned to Kuwait.

As part of the closure, the Aerial Point of Debarkation will move to Ali Al Salem, said Senior Chief Petty Officer Ronald Angeles, transportation equipment manager for the Naval Expeditionary Support Force Forward Oscar Battalion, a Navy Reserve unit with members from 48 states.

At Camp Moreell, wooden buildings called Southwest Asia huts will replace aging tents commonly used to house troops throughout Kuwait. Arid desert conditions and continuous rotations of personnel have taken a toll on the tents.



**Sailors at Camp Moreell, located at Ali Al Salem Air Base, are building Southwest Asia Huts like the one pictured at left to house the influx of troops from the eventual closure of Camp Doha.**

The SWA huts will be a more durable alternative to the tents in the face of the scorching heat, high winds and sand storms common in Kuwait. The SWA huts will also help keep out uninvited visitors like rodents and insects.

The construction of SWA huts will continue until October, when an estimated 50 to 60 huts will be completed.

Camp Moreell, now capable of handling up to 550 personnel, will be able to house upwards of 3,000 Sailors and Marines when the SWA huts are finished, said Chief Petty Officer Daniel Parkhurst, project manager for NMCB-5, a unit staffed by both active

and Reserve Sailors who hail primarily from California and New Jersey.

The living conditions aren't the only aspect of camp life that will improve. Moreell will also get an upgraded dining facility and a new troop medical clinic. All the activity at Moreell has given 11 sailors with Forward Oscar the ability to enhance their skill sets by working alongside NMCB-5 Seabees.

"We have taken these Sailors under our wing, getting them some sticks time," said Parkhurst, who added that Forward Oscar Sailors helping out at Moreell have had the chance to operate bull dozers, forklifts and cranes.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Mike Swisher, who usually works with the Forward Oscar customs inspection team at Camp Doha, turned a slow period for customs inspections into an opportunity to gain some construction skills.

"I was missing the Seabees brotherhood, so I snatched up the training opportunity to help build work benches and desks used in the new air conditioning and refrigeration shop," said Swisher.

Some of the troops moving from Doha will also be transferred to Camp Arifjan, where contractors have been working on construction projects throughout 2005.

## We want your Army birthday photos

What are you doing to celebrate the Army's 230th birthday? Send us crisp, digital photos of how you and your friends mark the occasion. If they make the grade, your pics could be featured in the the June 22 issue of the Desert Voice.

Email to:

matthew.millham@arifjan.arcent.army.mil  
Subject line: Army birthday photo

## A tribute to those who came before us

Sgt. Jon Arrambidez of the 385th Signal Company, an active duty unit based at Camp Doha, takes part in the Area Support Group-Kuwait Memorial Day ceremony at Camp Arifjan May 30. More than 100 Soldiers and Sailors attended the event.

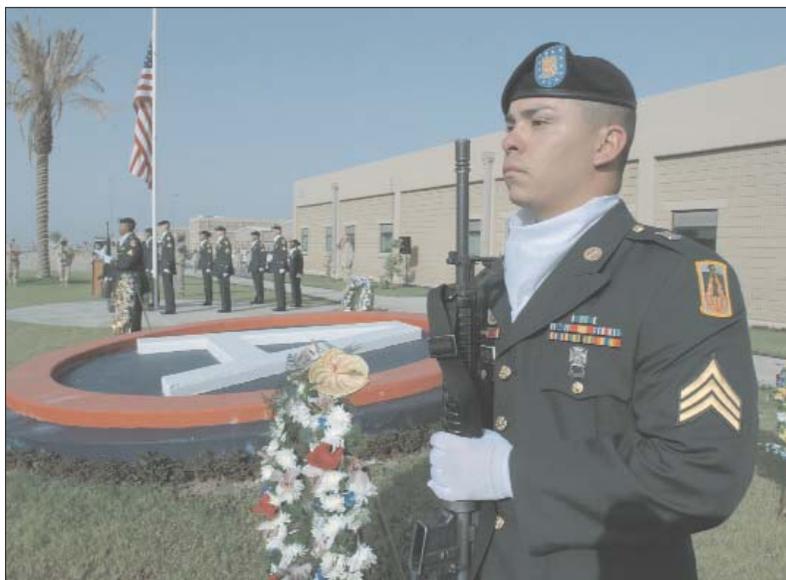


Photo by Spc. Curt Cashour

# Community

## happenings for June 8 through June 15

### Arifjan

#### Wednesday

Bingo Night, 7 p.m., Zone 1 Community Center  
Country Night, 7 p.m., Zone 6 stage  
Legs, butts and guts, 5:30 a.m., Stretch and flex 8 a.m., Step Aerobics, 1 p.m., Circuit weight training, 3 p.m., Zone 1 gym  
Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool

#### Thursday

Country Western Night, 7 p.m., Zone 1 Community Center  
Cardio kickboxing, 5:30 a.m., Stretch and Flex, 8 a.m. Circuit Weight Training 3 p.m., Zone 2 gym  
Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool

#### Friday

Arifjan Boxing Team, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 gym  
Salsa Night, 7 p.m., Zone 1 Community Center  
Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool  
Interval training, 5:30 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. Zone 1 gym

#### Saturday

Charles Barkley meet and greet, 6 p.m., Zone 1 Fitness Center  
Rock and Roll Night, 7 p.m., Zone 1 Community Center  
Audie Murphy Club study sessions, 3 p.m., Building 508 Room 25B  
Country Western Night, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 MWR stage  
Circuit weight training, 5:30 a.m., 8 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m., Zone 1 gym  
Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool

#### Sunday

Off The Wall concert, 7 p.m., Zone 6 stage  
8-Ball Tournament, 6 p.m., Zone 1 Community Center  
Salsa Night, 7 p.m., Zone 6 stage  
Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool  
Cardio kickboxing, 5:30 a.m., Stretch and Flex, 8 a.m., Circuit Weight Training, 1 p.m., Step Aerobics, 3 p.m., Zone 1 gym

#### Monday

Arifjan Boxing Team, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 gym  
Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool  
Legs, butts and guts, 5:30 a.m., Stretch and flex 8 a.m., Step Aerobics, 1 p.m., Circuit weight training, 3 p.m., Zone 1 gym

#### Tuesday

Army Birthday cake competition and bingo, 7 p.m., Zone 1 Community Center  
Army Birthday Hooah run, 6 a.m., Zone 6  
Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool  
Cardio kickboxing, 5:30 a.m., Stretch and Flex, 8 a.m., Circuit Weight Training, 1 p.m., Step Aerobics, 3 p.m., Zone 1 gym

#### Wednesday

Arizona Cardinal Cheerleaders, 7 p.m., Zone 6 stage  
Country Western Night, 7 p.m., Zone 6 stage  
Legs, butts and guts, 5:30 a.m., Stretch and flex 8 a.m., Step Aerobics, 1 p.m., Circuit weight training, 3 p.m., Zone 1 gym  
Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool

For more information call 430-1202

### Buehring

#### Wednesday

Walking Club (5 miles), 5:30 a.m., command cell

flagpole  
Aerobics, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m., MWR Tent 4

#### Thursday

Walking Club (5 miles), 5:30 a.m., command cell  
flagpole  
Tae-Kwon-Do Class, 7 p.m., MWR Tent 1

#### Friday

Walking Club (5 miles), 5:30 a.m., command cell  
flagpole

#### Saturday

Bazaar, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Tent 1  
Tae-Kwon-Do Class, 7 p.m., MWR Tent 1

#### Sunday

Bazaar, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Tent 1  
Walking Club (10 miles), 5:30 a.m., command cell  
flagpole

#### Monday

Massage Therapy, 9:30 a.m., MWR Tent  
Walking Club (5 miles), 5:30 a.m., command cell  
flagpole  
Aerobics, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m., MWR Tent 4

#### Tuesday

Flag Day ceremony, 8 a.m., command cell  
Walking Club (5 miles), 5:30 a.m., command cell  
flagpole  
Tae-Kwon-Do Class, 7 p.m., MWR Tent 1

#### Wednesday

Chess Tournament, 7 p.m., MWR Bunker  
Walking Club (5 miles), 5:30 a.m., command cell  
flagpole  
Aerobics, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m., MWR Tent 4

For more information call 828-1340

### Kuwaiti Naval Base

#### Friday

Off the Wall concert (Call for info)

For more information call 839-1063

### Navistar

#### Wednesday

Foosball Tournament Practice, 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.  
Self Defense Class, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., basketball court  
Aerobics Class, 6 p.m., Game tent

#### Thursday

Foosball Tournament Practice, 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.  
Karate Class, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., basketball court

#### Friday

Foosball Tournament Practice, 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.  
Charles Barkley meet and greet, 8:30 - 10:30, DFAC  
MWR representative meeting, 1 p.m., MWR office

Aerobics Class, 6 p.m., MWR game tent

#### Saturday

Foosball Tournament, 5 - 8 p.m., horseshoe pits

#### Sunday

Foosball Tournament, 5 - 8 p.m., horseshoe pits

#### Monday

Computer Pinball Tournament practice, 8 a.m. - 10 p.m., MWR game tent  
Aerobics Class, 6 p.m., MWR game tent  
Self Defense Class, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., basketball court

#### Tuesday

AAFES Bazaar, 9:30 a.m. - 5 p.m., basketball court  
Computer Pinball Tournament practice, 8 a.m. - 10 p.m., MWR game tent  
Karate Class, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., basketball court

Smoking Cessation Classes, 10 a.m., Rec. tent  
Education/Awareness/Prevention, 1 p.m., Rec. tent

#### Wednesday

Computer Pinball Tournament practice, 8 a.m. - 10 p.m., MWR game tent  
Self Defense Class, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., basketball court

Aerobics Class, 6 p.m., MWR game tent

For more information call 844-1137

### Spearhead/SPOD

For more information call 825-1302

### Victory

#### Saturday

Kempo, 4 p.m. (Call for info)  
5K run, 7 p.m. (Call for info)  
Pig Roast, 8 p.m. (Call for info)

#### Monday

Dominoes Tournament, 8 p.m. (Call for info)

#### Tuesday

Spa Day (Call for info)

For more information call 823-1033

### Virginia

#### Wednesday

Country Western Night, 7 p.m., Dusty Room  
Bench and Pull-up Competition, 4 p.m., gym

#### Thursday

Horseshoes tournament, 4 p.m., Dusty Room  
Karaoke Night, 7 p.m., Dusty Room

#### Friday

Salsa Night, 7 p.m., Dusty Room  
Foosball Tournament, 3 p.m., MWR tent

#### Saturday

Hip Hop/R&B Night, 8 p.m., Dusty Room

#### Sunday

Old School Jams, 7 p.m., Dusty Room  
Billiards Tournament, 6 p.m., MWR tent

#### Monday

Move Night, 7 p.m., Dusty Room  
Spades Tournament, 6 p.m., Dusty Room

#### Tuesday

Unit Feud, 7 p.m., Dusty Room

#### Wednesday

Country Western Night, 8 p.m., Dusty Room

For more information call 832-1045

## Doha/Arifjan Shuttle Schedule

Departs Doha Stop 1*	Arrives Doha Stop 2*	Departs Doha Stop 2*	Arrives Arifjan	Departs Arifjan	Arrives Doha
				0545	
	0700	0715	0830	0845	1000
1015	1025	1040	1200	1300	1430
1445	1450	1505	1615	1630	1745
1900	1910	1925	2045		

\* Stop 1 is behind the Building 6 PAX Tent

Stop 2 is between Buildings 28 and 31

Are you holding an event you'd

like to see listed in the DV?

Send your event listings to the Desert Voice editor at the e-mail address listed on the back page of this issue.

# ASG-KU celebrates organization day

Story by 1st Lt. Mathew Rodeck

Area Support Group-Kuwait's Headquarters and Headquarters Company held its Organization Day May 25 to recognize the unit's nearly-completed move from Camp Doha to Camp Arifjan.

HHC troops from Bahrain and across Kuwait participated in the event.

The purpose of an Organizational Day is – through fun and camaraderie – to commemorate a unit's history while celebrating present day achievements. This is done through ceremony and activities.

The day's events started in earnest during the opening ceremony when HHC Commander Capt. Alfloyd Williams held a moment of silence for Soldiers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The day saw HHC Soldiers compete in 13 various team-building events, many of which occurred at the same time. HHC Soldiers are accustomed to being multi-skilled, as they run many operations at many different locations, such as Arifjan, Buehring, Navistar, Doha and Bahrain.

Spc. Eileen Head, 2nd Lt. Amanda Gyves, Maj. Ryan Saw and Sgt. Lux Beltran took first place in the first event of the day, a one-mile relay race. The victories set the Orange Team off to a good start.

Due to the heat, most of the outdoor events were held in the morning. The premier afternoon event was the dodge ball contest. Competition was heated, and spectators had to pay attention, or they risked becoming a "casualty" of the game.

Williams and 1st Sgt. Keithly Warner took first in the dominoes tournament.

"Without question, the first sergeant and I are undoubtedly the best Dominoes players stationed on Camp Arifjan," Williams said.



Photo by Staff Sgt. P. Young

## Red Team Manager Sgt. Rebecca Jackson leads her team in a tug-of-war match during a HHC ASG-Kuwait organization day at Camp Arifjan May 25.

The final event was a tug of war competition. This event was worth the most points, and with three platoons still in the hunt for the coveted First Place Platoon Trophy, excitement ran high.

The Yellow Team racked up a victory in this event and won the First Place Platoon Trophy. Tug of war victors included Sergeants 1st Class "Big Daddy" Watts, Alicia Glenn, Gerald Garvey, Linwood Nelson, James L. Reeder, Sgt. Derrick Wade, Sgt. Terrance Blackwell, Sgt. Patricia McMurphy, Staff Sgt. Niya Harris, and Staff Sgt. Joshua Steinlicht.

Yellow Team Manager Sgt. 1st Class John Tackett also received the First Place Platoon Trophy. Blue Team, managed by

Staff Sgt. Ismael Ortega, took home the The Second Place Platoon Trophy.

Following the trophy presentations, HHC held a birthday observance, where Williams recognized everyone who had celebrated a birthday within the last month. HHC members ate cake and sang "Happy Birthday."

Warner said the organization day had more of a family reunion atmosphere than anything else, and that the team building will go along way in preparing HHC for the next surge.

Williams said he was very pleased to have members from multiple camps participate and that everyone had such a great time.

Send your  
submissions to:

**DESERT  
VOICE**

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