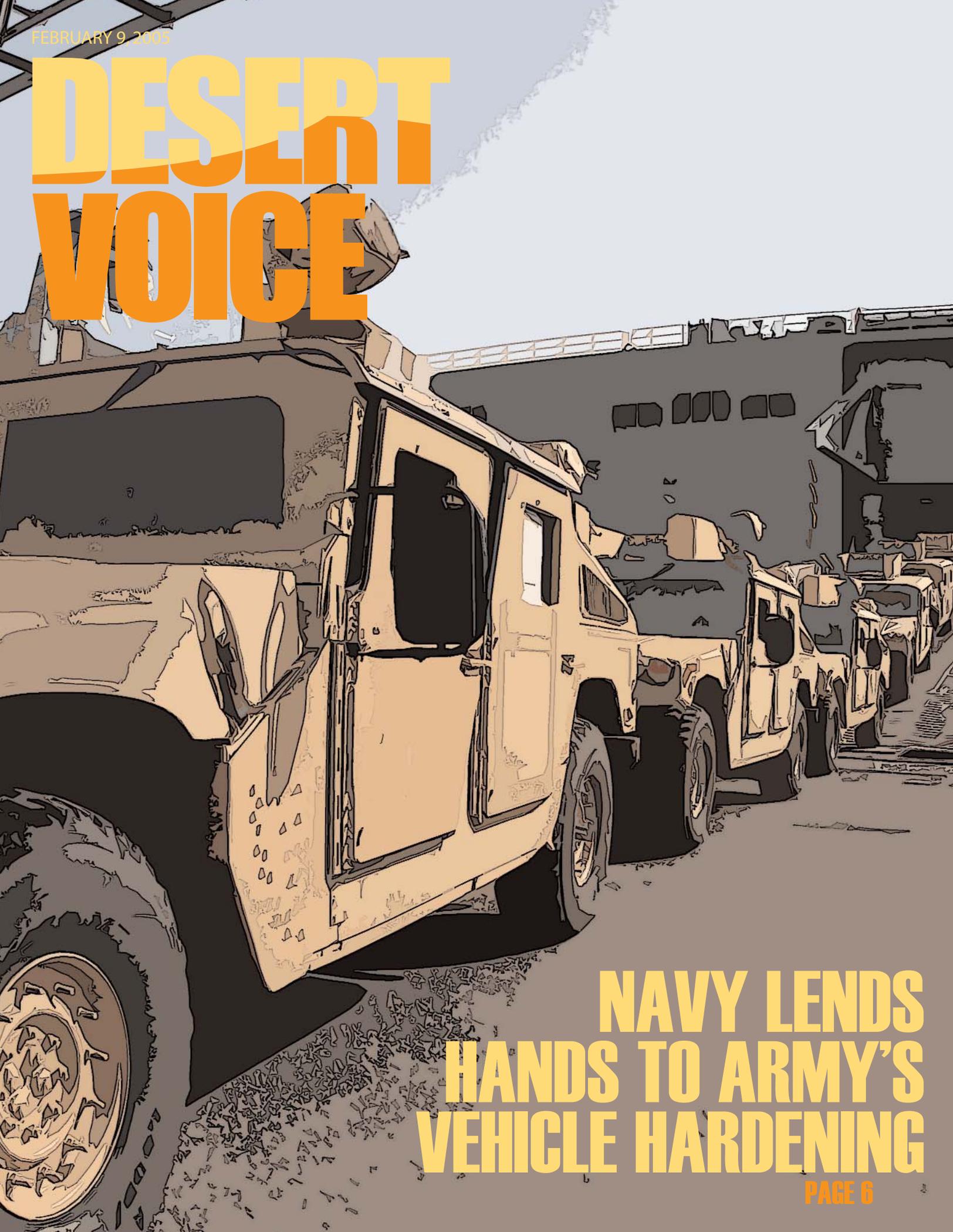


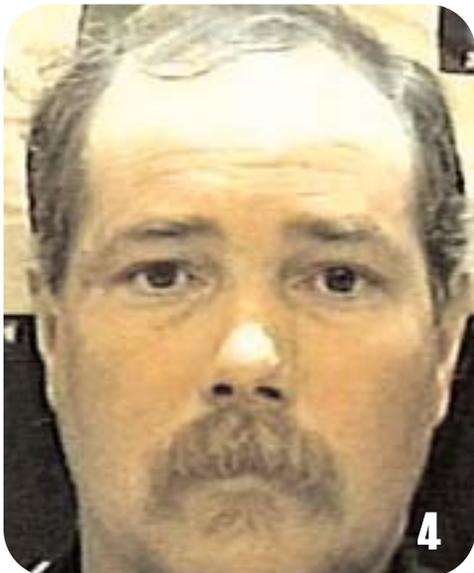
FEBRUARY 9, 2005

DESERT VOICE



NAVY LENDS HANDS TO ARMY'S VEHICLE HARDENING

PAGE 6



Page 3 Command messages

Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld offers his thoughts on the continued success of Operation Iraq Freedom following the Jan. 30 elections.

The Commander of the Coalition Forces Land Component Command Lt. Gen R. Steven Whitcomb is fed up with negligent discharges, and we should be too.

Page 4 Personnel recovery

What would you do if captured by terrorists or Soldiers from another country?

Page 5 I beg your pardon

Amnesty boxes offer troops in Kuwait one last chance to stay out of trouble

Pages 6&7 Vehicle hardening

Ahead of schedule, the 276th Maintenance Company, with the help of more than a dozen Navy welders, is helping to ensure that no vehicle rolls into Iraq without armor.

Page 8 Our new friends

Less than two decades ago, Bulgaria was on the other side of the Cold War, but now we find them fighting with us in Iraq.

Page 9 Washrack war stories

As they prepare to head home, many troops find themselves at the washrack, trading stories as they wash away a year's grime.

Page 10 Cheap stays for R&R

The military sponsors a number of options for its troops. Those going on rest and recuperation from Operation Iraq Freedom get even better deals than usual.

Page 11 Community

Tennis tournament signups, Black History Month 5K run, Valentine's Day 5K run, President's Day 5K run, Dance competition, Bravo Theater Company.

Back page Poems & Cartoons

Cartoons by Lt. Col. Michael Verrett and Capt. Paul Nichols. Poems by Maj. Yvette Rose and Sgt. 1st Class Phyllis M. Brown.



CFLCC Commanding General
Lt. Gen. R. Steven Whitcomb

CFLCC Command Sergeant Major
Command Sgt. Maj. Julian Kellman

CFLCC Public Affairs Officer
Col. Michael Phillips

Commander 14th PAD
Maj. Thomas E. Johnson

NCOIC 14th PAD
Staff Sgt. Sheryl Lawry

Editor
Sgt. Matt Millham

14th PAD Writers
Spc. Curt Cashour
Spc. Brian Trapp
Spc. Aimee Felix

Broadcasters
Sgt. Scott White
Spc. Chase Spears



On the Cover The flow of Level-1 up-armored vehicles into Kuwait has led to a sharp decrease in the need for fabricated Level-3 armor in Operation Iraq Freedom.

Photo by Spc. Curt Cashour
Photo Illustration by Sgt. Matt Millham

Iraq's success is your success

by Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld
from the American Forces Press Service

On Jan. 30 in Iraq, the world witnessed an important moment in the global struggle against tyranny, a moment that historians might one day call a major turning point. America's men and women in uniform, who were instrumental in the liberation of Iraq, were there to witness this moment as well.

During the struggle to bring freedom to Iraq, many of you have faced difficult times far from home. I suspect there have been moments along the way when some of you may have wondered whether or not the effort would be worth the cost, or whether, even, the people you were trying to help truly stood with you.

Last Sunday, the Iraqi people answered those understandable questions in a resounding way, just as voters had in Afghanistan last October. The world is experiencing a global struggle between freedom and fear, and you are on the side of freedom. That's the side to be on. And the people of Afghanistan, and

now the people of Iraq, have chosen to stand with you.

Consider the courage it took for the Iraqi people to go to the polls when they had been warned that the act of voting could cost them and their family members their lives. Think of the determination they must have possessed to risk becoming targets for bombings or beheadings.



photo by Marine Staff Sgt. Chad McMeen

Iraqi voters dance and clap at a polling location after casting their votes in the Jan. 30 elections in Iraq.

And yet the Iraqis voted — millions of them. Voters arrived on crutches and donkey carts, passing by graffiti warnings on the walls that said: "You vote, you die;" Iraqis came to a polling station to vote even after a rocket attack had killed three people several hours earlier. Children waved Iraqi flags as they witnessed the birth of their new, free system, elderly women with tears in their eyes held up their voting cards, and voters displayed their ink-stained fingers as badges of honor in the fight against extremism.

Iraq's security forces also deserve recognition for their bravery and their willingness, despite the threats, to wear their country's uniforms and to provide security on Sunday for both the millions of voters and the thousands of election

workers.

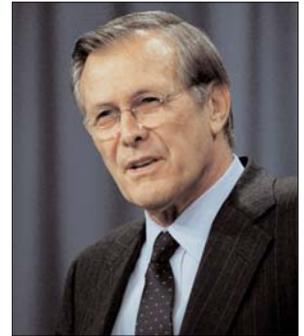
These are times of consequence. In the past few months, 50 million free people in Afghanistan and Iraq have begun to build new futures.

They have rejected the extremism that fuels attacks on civilized people. And you have made that possible. Have no doubt: the courage and sacrifices of U.S. forces have helped to create the environment in which Afghans and Iraqis are developing the ability to take hold of their countries.

Now these free people continue to seek your help in building free, democratic and peaceful nations in some of the world's most violent regions. No one treasures peace more than you who have endured the horrors of war.

So to all of you who are serving on freedom's front lines, and to your families, I offer my deepest appreciation and respect. To those who have lost friends or loved ones during this conflict or who have been injured in defense of our freedom, find comfort in knowing that your sacrifices have historic meaning. And know that one day, the people of Iraq and Afghanistan will find a way to thank you, as I do, from the bottom of my heart.

May God bless you and may God bless the United States.



Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld

The negligent discharges have to stop

by CFLCC and Third U.S. Army Commanding General, Lt. Gen. R. Steven Whitcomb

Though the environment in Kuwait is generally safer than the environment in Iraq, we are not immune to terrorist attacks as the recent aggressive actions by extremists here have demonstrated. While our safety is put in jeopardy at the hands of terrorists, it should not be jeopardized by our own lack of vigilance. Recently, some troops in Kuwait have been negligent in their duty by not adhering to the arming stance or weapons clearing procedures, and they have done so at the risk of injuring not just themselves but others as well.

There is no excuse for a negligent discharge anywhere or at any time. Negligent discharges are not accidents, they are failures in discipline and to enforce or follow

the standard. They are easily prevented by training and by following the clearing procedures posted at every clearing barrel at every camp across Kuwait. It all comes down to personal and unit discipline and standards.

What is truly disturbing to me is that the majority of negligent discharges happened prior to the recent terrorist activity in Kuwait. Now that the terrorist threat is coming into plain view, we have to be even more aware of the threat posed to American troops by the negligence of our own forces as we adjust to the current threat. Any change in our Force Protection posture is not an excuse or an expectation for an increase in negligent discharges — the standard remains the same — zero.

No leader wants to call the family of a servicemember who was killed by a negligent discharge and explain that their loved

one died because of another person's lack of discipline. Individual Soldiers have a personal responsibility to adhere to the standards. Negligent discharges are

not taken lightly. We will continue to formally investigate every incident, and commanders will take appropriate action when negligence is shown.

I have confidence in our troops, and our leaders and need your help getting to the STANDARD — ZERO NEGLIGENT DISCHARGES — "Patton's Own"



Lt. Gen. R. Steven Whitcomb

You caught me, now what?

story by Sgt. Matt Millham

When Iraq invaded Kuwait in the early hours of Aug. 2, 1990, Maj. Martin Stanton, assigned to the Office of the Program Manager – Saudi Arabian National Guard, was in Kuwait on a four-day pass. “This was not the smartest thing I ever did,” said Stanton, who is now a colonel and assigned to the Coalition Forces Land Component Command’s Coalition Liaison Cell.

After watching Iraqi tanks roll into Kuwait City from his window in the Kuwait Sheraton, the Iraqis arrested Stanton and more than a dozen other Western foreigners. He spent the next several months in captivity, moving from one strategic facility to another.

What Stanton hadn’t done before his capture is something that U.S. Army Forces Command and CFLCC now require of their troops and civilians: personnel recovery training.

Chief Warrant Officer Frank Bissette, deputy director of CFLCC’s Rescue Coordination Center, has spent the past few months briefing the command’s staff sections about personnel recovery training and taking digital photographs and fingerprints of the staff.

The photographs and fingerprints are required as part of an Isolated Personnel Report, known commonly as an ISOPREP, which also includes important information such as the height, weight, eye and hair color of military personnel and civilians who are at risk of capture by enemy forces or terrorists. People filling out the ISOPREP sheet also include random personal facts that would help rescuers pinpoint who it is they are rescuing, such as the year, make and model of a first car or a grade school nickname.

Stanton hadn’t provided the military any of this information about himself before Iraq invaded Kuwait, and he also hadn’t had Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape training, commonly known as SERE training. Still, by adhering to the code of conduct, he and his fellow captives were able to prevent the Iraqis from exploiting them as they tried to free themselves and provide western governments with information about their whereabouts.

“We took turns walking around bare-chested during the daytime, ostensibly to exercise,” said Stanton. “No Arab walks around bare-chested. It’s definitely a western thing.

“Any adult man with his shirt off looks out of place. Just another thing for someone to see and report.”

“They also tried to get us to make statements for Iraqi news, but to a man we refused. They wanted to take pictures of us and the ‘benign’ conditions of our captivity, but we refused to cooperate. Our most successful threat was to take all our clothes off,” he said. “Arab culture does not handle public nudity well. They took the cameras away. We suffered no reprisal.”

Chances are now, though, that anyone captured by terrorists wouldn’t be so lucky as to be left alone for staging such a show. After receiving a briefing from Bissette, personnel now have to go through about two hours of Level-B SERE training. The training deals “with how to avoid becoming a hostage and, if

“Hopefully we’ll never have to use it at all. We’ve been lucky in Kuwait and not lost any Soldiers to date, but if the activities get worse off post as we see more extremist activity, you know the likelihood of something happening increases.”

In the early days of Operation Iraqi Freedom, a number of American troops were captured by Iraqis. Seven of those troops came from the 507th Maintenance Company, which lost its way in An Nasiriyah and was ambushed by Iraqis. “One of those young Soldiers was asked to speak at a personnel recovery conference in Washington D.C. after the end of his rotation, and one of the comments he made in the conference was that he



Left to right: Pfc. Keith “Matt” Maupin was captured by insurgents in April 2004, and his whereabouts are unknown. Paul Marshall Johnson Jr. was abducted and killed by Islamic extremists in Saudi Arabia in June 2004. Thomas Hamill was captured by insurgents, but escaped on his own after his life was threatened.

captured, what to do to resist and escape hostage takers,” said Bissette.

The dozens of kidnappings in Iraq over the past 18 months are what drove CFLCC and U.S. Army Forces Command to mandate this training, he said.

The training is taught through a series of self-paced videos available on the Internet and through CFLCC’s Rescue Coordination Center, said Bissette. The deadline to finish the training in March 28 for all CFLCC and U.S. Army Forces Command personnel in Kuwait, he said.

In addition, personnel have to go back and review the online antiterrorism awareness program and the information pertaining to receiving a foreign country clearance to travel in and out of other countries, said Bissette.

So far, about 375 of some 700 personnel assigned to CFLCC headquarters have returned their ISOPREP forms, which is basically the first step in the process. There is no way to guarantee that everyone is going through the SERE video training, which is the next step, said Bissette. “What we’re asking Soldiers to do is to do it because it’s the right thing and because it’s valuable training for them as individuals and for leaders to enforce the standard.”

knew he was not an aviator or a special operations Soldier, [so] he didn’t think anyone was coming after him,” said Bissette.

“That’s the mindset that we’re trying to eliminate and get every Soldier from your basic E-2 private all the way up to understand; never give up, that’s what the code of conduct is all about, and somebody is looking for you.”

Still, while American forces will be looking for captives, captured Soldiers and civilians should do all they can to escape their captors.

“If you think you see an opening to escape, go,” said Stanton. “Don’t analyze it, don’t over think it.”

“My mistake was in thinking I had time. I thought to watch the guards for a few nights, get a little more information about the surrounding area by watching during the daytime.

“Idiot. I was moved the next day. The places they took me to were in the middle of the country where I really had to plan like ‘The Great Escape.’”

Fortunately, after 124 days in captivity, the Iraqis released Stanton.

For more information on personnel recovery training, contact CFLCC’s Rescue Coordination Center’s Capt. Susan Smeltzer or Chief Warrant Officer Frank Bissette at DSN 430-5042 or 430-5309

I beg your pardon

story and photos by Spc. Curt Cashour

Alcohol, pornography and exotic weapons. They're not just for bar bouncers or street thugs.

For a select group of Soldiers who maintain amnesty boxes at Kuwait's U.S. military camps, these items are all part of a day's work.

The amnesty boxes are meant to provide a safe, discreet way for servicemembers to get rid of forgotten ammunition and sensitive items as well as a number of contraband articles troops are either prohibited from possessing or transporting back to the United States, said 1st Sgt. Robert Carey, of the 80th Ordnance Battalion's Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment from Fort Lewis, Wash.

Carey is in charge of managing the 26 amnesty boxes spread amongst Camp Arifjan, Kuwaiti Naval Base, the Aerial Port of Debarkation and the PWC wash rack facility north of Arifjan. With the help of his Soldiers and Department of the Army civilian ammunition technicians from Arifjan's Ammunition Supply Point, Carey empties the amnesty boxes each week.

One of the most exciting parts of the job is the fact that the Soldiers never know what might be lurking behind those big, red amnesty box doors. As 80th member Spc. James Morris puts it, "It's like opening a gift at Christmas."

Common items that turn up in the boxes include different types of small arms ammunition, grenades and various illegal weapons, Carey said. But since the 80th took over the amnesty program last September, he and his Soldiers have found a little bit of everything, from Iraqi maps and documents to alcohol and assorted pornographic materials. In the last six weeks, Carey and his team have also found various rifles and handguns, he said.

Amnesty operations at Kuwait's other camps are generally run by camp command cells, Carey said. According to Sgt. 1st Class James Turner, who runs Camp Buehring's amnesty program, common items that turn up in Buehring's boxes include ammunition and training rounds. But Turner said he's seen his fair share of pornography and alcohol in the boxes as well.

Ammo that's recovered from amnesty boxes eventually winds up at the Ammunition Supply Point at Arifjan. There,



Above: A group of weapons collected by amnesty personnel at Camp Arifjan. Left: A hollow point 9 mm round collected from an amnesty box at Arifjan Jan. 29. Hollow point rounds are prohibited under the Geneva Conventions.

DA civilians and members of the 295th Ordnance Company, a Reserve unit from Hastings, Neb., that runs the ASP, destroy any damaged munitions and put the rest of the ammo into storage for eventual reuse, said Earnest Nickell, a quality assurance specialist for ammunition surveillance at the ASP Ammo Surveillance Workshop.

Illegal weapons, which are defined as those not issued by the U.S. government, are turned over to the 175th Maintenance Company, a Reserve unit headquartered at Fort Jackson, S.C., whose Soldiers dismantle and dispose of them, Carey said.

Both Carey and Turner get rid of pornographic materials by burning them, they said.

While Carey enjoys the unpredictable nature of the job, he said the wide variety of volatile items that turn up in the boxes creates a constant potential for danger.

"If somebody drops a frag grenade in there, if the pull pin and safety clip isn't there, and you grab the grenade and the spoon flies off, you have about three seconds to decide what you want to do," he said.

To minimize risks, Carey recommended Soldiers carefully place items in the amnesty boxes, keeping in mind the fact that a variety of explosives and sensitive munitions often turn up in the boxes.

Also, troops need to refrain from filling the boxes with trash and cigarette butts, both of which are fire hazards and could lead to explosions, he said.

While pulling amnesty duty often makes him wonder how troops were able to smuggle such crazy items into Kuwait, Carey said it's not his job to ask questions. He'd rather

see servicemembers get rid of things they're not supposed to have before they get caught and get into trouble. In his opinion, it's not worth it to ruin a year's worth of hard work over a prohibited item.

Turner, however, takes a more hard line approach. He said Soldiers shouldn't even have contraband in the first place. Nevertheless, he did recommend for troops to take any contraband or ammo they happen to find to the nearest amnesty box.

Are you reaching the end of a deployment and unsure about what you can bring home? Common prohibited items include firearms not issued by the U.S. government, live ammunition, shell casings of any kind and sand, dirt, shells and rocks inherent to the Middle East, according to officials with the 886th Expeditionary Security Forces Group, an Air Force unit that conducts customs inspections in Kuwait and Iraq. The group's list of prohibited and restricted materials includes more than 50 items. Highlights include:

- Fresh, dried or canned meat, fruit or vegetable products from a foreign country
- Human and animal bones, teeth and body parts
- Live insects, slugs and snails
- Green sugarcane
- Elephant hair and ivory
- Products originating from turtles
- Camel saddles
- Skins from spotted cats, including Leopards, Ocelots, Jaguars and Lynx
- Lizard hide
- Milk and cream

For a complete list of items, contact the group



photos by Spc. Curt Cashour
Spc. Blake Boudreaux, a 23-year-old welder with the 276th Maintenance Company, welds a Level-3 armor side panel for a Light Medium Tactical vehicle Feb. 4.

Let's make things harder

**By Master Sgt. Hak Hasklins
377th Theater Support Command Public Affairs**

On Feb. 4, the goal of the 276th Maintenance Company was to toughen up 300 vehicles before the close of business.

That single-day total wasn't going to set the benchmark for production; it was just a day's work.

But had it not been for an increase in the production of armored Humvees back in the United States, the 276th might have been pushing 400 freshly hardened vehicles through the door ... and the unit did that on more than one day in January.

Increased production of armored vehicles rolling off American assembly plant floors, and a hike in the creation of add-on-armor kits that can be installed in the field, are two

of the reasons that the need for the 276th's specialty – vehicles hardened with fabricated steel plating – have fallen by about 2,000 in February alone.

In January, before the supply of armored vehicles began meeting the demand, the 276th and its companion company added steel plating to 6,600 vehicles in a production system that Chief Warrant Randal Joeckel called "an Army factory."

In less than three months the three maintenance companies in Kuwait involved in the hardening work – the 175th, the 276th and 699th Maintenance Companies – used 12 tons of welding rods and 124,000 hardened bolts to fashion \$27 million worth of ballistic steel sheets into doors and panels to help keep Soldiers safer while on convoy missions.

Joeckel, the officer in charge of the 276th's maintenance shop, said his 10-Soldier allied trades shop grew to 20 Soldiers almost immediately and as many as 86 Soldiers were working the mission at its height last month.

The 276th – an Army Reserve from Puerto Rico, cross-leveled with Soldiers from across the United States – took over its mission from the 699th in mid-January. The unit was employing more than half its personnel strength as machinists, welders and inventory-yard workers.

"We canvassed the unit for machinists, for wrecker operators and we trained them all to be metal workers in a couple of weeks," Joeckel said. "Then came the big push" to get all vehicles hardened. "We have never denied a vehicle yet that is headed north. I can't say enough about my Soldiers."

Keeping a factory mindset, the unit adhered to a strict production schedule and conducted a daily inventory of pre-cut parts. It also improved the design of some pieces – for example, stronger hinges – and some of those changes have allowed the gaining units to install some panels with bolts, not a welding torch.

"We have too many units coming here,"

said Staff Sgt. Robert E. Cruz, noncommissioned officer in charge of the 276th's maintenance shop. "I don't have time to weld (all the parts) so we came out with a new model."

Even with Army machinists and welders working around the clock they couldn't keep up with the demand. Five Kuwaiti machine shops were contracted to help out.

Then came the Navy. A volunteer crew of 15 hull technicians arrived in late January and they were put to work immediately after under-going Joekel's cross training program.

Helping hands

Seaman Apprentice Brett Jones had seen enough of the water and was ready for a change.

But the Sailor had no idea rain would fall in the desert, or the temperature would drop with the sun.

He doesn't care.

Jones is one of those who came to Kuwait from the USS Emory S. Land, a sub tender stationed in Italy, to assist the Army in hardening vehicles.

"We've got a lot of work to do out here, more than we thought," Jones said. "We've been working our butts off out here, and we're enjoying it."

When the Navy was asked to provide a crew to help its Army counterparts it wasn't short on volunteers, said Lt. j.g. Chris O'Leary, the crew's officer in charge. The 15 slots were quickly filled.



Spc. Christian Mena, a 24-year-old mechanic with the 276th Maintenance Company, uses a plasma cutter to smooth the edges of a Level-3 armor plate Feb. 4.

"We thought this was a great opportunity and we took it. And, we would take another one," said O'Leary, who spent 11 years as an enlisted machinist's mate before earning his commission.

The crew members are hull technicians and have the same kind of training and skills that Army machinists and welders possess.

"We don't have any Humvees, but we do structural work and the welding is not much different than on ships," O'Leary said. "The 276th has a process, and they showed us. We picked it up fast."

The Navy's impact was felt immediately when its senior chief petty officer made a suggestion for modifying one of the steel panels used for larger trucks. It was a design change that found its way into the template and has been used since.

The Navy hull technicians also came with an advantage, said Murillo.

"We're treating them like a brigade welding team even though they will only be here 45 to 60 days," Murillo said. "But there is a little better teamwork because [the Sailors] have no other interest. They are here purely doing machine work."

O'Leary's crew has been split into two functional areas: Installing hinges, doors and panels, and producing corner pieces for 5-ton trucks. It runs a 24-hour operation side-by-side with the Soldiers.

The Sailors are too new in the 276th's maintenance shop to have developed much in the way of social relationships, though one Sailor said he and some Soldiers "throw the [football] around" when they take breaks.

But Petty Officer 2nd Class Roddey Zinda, another hull technician with four years of Naval service behind him, said he volunteered for one reason: "It's a respectable job, and it's my trade, and I know I am good at it. And if I can help ... it just made sense."

All hands on the crew work on the 24-hour shift, including O'Leary, whose face was streaked with sweat and the soot of spent welding rods.

"When you see the officer and the senior chief working with the crew it boosts morale," Zinda said, "and shows us how important this is."

That sentiment was echoed through



Petty Officer 3rd Class Jessica Curtis welds together pieces of side-panel armor for a 5-ton truck Feb.4. Curtis normally serves on the USS Emory S. Land, a Navy maintenance ship, but she and 14 shipmates volunteered to help with the hardening mission at Camp Buehring.

the ranks.

Petty Officer 3rd Class Jessica Curtis said the result of her work on Naval vessels was important and may help save a life. But in Kuwait "you get to see a lot of your work and where it is going. This may help save many lives, and it has a much greater sense of importance."

The crew landed in Kuwait near the end of January during a rain storm that turned much of the desert into a temporary flood plain. Making that entrance even more

"I don't know how they do it. It makes us appreciate how good we have it and the sacrifices these people make." —Lt. j.g. Chris O'Leary

memorable was a communication gaffe that sent their personal luggage back to Italy, then Germany, before it found its way to Buehring, which is a few miles south of the Iraqi border.

Soldiers helped out by providing a few creature comforts and the essentials from toothpaste to razor blades.

The Sailors noticed.

"This is a lot of hard work and under arduous conditions all the time," O'Leary said. "We're here for 45 to 60 days but a lot of the [Soldiers] are here for a year. I don't know how they do it. It makes us appreciate how good we have it and the sacrifices these people make."

Former foe, fast friends

story by Spc. Aimee Felix

In its 126-year history, Bulgaria's army has been more likely to fight the United States than insurgents in Iraq. Now, 15 years after breaking free of the Iron Curtain, the former Soviet republic has joined with the United States in bringing freedom and democracy to Iraq.

As a freshman member of NATO, Bulgaria has become one of the most pro-American countries in Eastern Europe. They've demonstrated their support by contributing troops to the War on Terror, offering Bulgarian bases for the United States to use, and working on a rest and recuperation program for use by U.S. Soldiers, said Col. Stoyan Milushev, the Bulgarian defense attaché in Kuwait.

Bulgaria's contribution to the War on Terror has come in the form of almost 2,000 troops since August 2003. Now on their fourth rotation, Bulgaria's deployed troops work under Polish command in Divanyah, Iraq. While mostly supporting the coalition with infantrymen, Bulgaria has also contributed military policemen and nine doctors to work under Multi National Division-Central South.

Although Bulgaria has a conscripted military, the six-month deployments to Iraq are volunteer assignments. And even though Bulgaria has lost seven troops in Iraq while carrying out peace-keeping and restoration missions, the Bulgarian military hasn't faced any problems recruiting soldiers for these deployments, Milushev said.

Some of the troops on the present Bulgarian rotation are deployed for the second time in support of OIF, said Col. Nedialko Anguelov, the Bulgarian deputy defense attaché in Kuwait.

Bulgarian military support doesn't only benefit the coalition, it also helps the continuing improvement of Bulgaria's military, said Milushev. Bulgarian military leaders hope to be able to develop new and improved training manuals and strategic exercises based on their experiences in Iraq. They are also looking to improve logistical functions within the Bulgarian military, said Milushev.

In 18 months of support, there have already been improvements, not only in the Bulgarian military, but also in relations between the United States and Bulgaria. Milushev and Anguelov first arrived to the Bulgarian Embassy in Kuwait right before the first contingent of Bulgarian troops arrived in theater. They became the liaisons between the U.S. and the Bulgarian military sort of by default, said Anguelov. Anguelov arrived first, and without a clue of where he needed to go to get his troops' equipment or

through which means to coordinate a convoy, he finally made his way to Task Force Gator. With the help of the task force's country officers, the adventure eventually dwindled down to a sound routine.

Anguelov, who greeted the country officer assigned to Bulgaria with a heartfelt hug when they met last week, said the initial struggle was worth it considering the long-standing relationships that came of it.

Bulgarian leaders continue reinforcing ties with the United States through other means as well, such as allowing the U.S. military to use Bulgarian bases to maintain and provide logistical support for pre-positioned equipment, said Milushev. In this post-Cold War era, America's priorities have changed, and Bulgaria is closer to possible trouble-spots in the Middle East than Germany is. For this reason, Marine Gen. James Jones, commander of the U.S. European Command, has been looking at a few of Bulgaria's military bases for future U.S. military use.

Milushev and Anguelov also continue doing their part in U.S.-Bulgaria relations by trying to expose troops to what Milushev refers to as the beauty of Bulgaria. He and his deputy are working on getting approval for a four-day R&R program in Bulgaria, similar to one the U.S. military has in place in Qatar. There is no word yet on whether the program will be approved, said Milushev.

"The United States needs friends," said Milushev, adding that he's glad his country is one of those friends. He said future Bulgarian support in the coalition will be decided by the Bulgarian parliament, which will make that decision based on what the framework of the coalition is like in the future. But during a recent press conference Bulgarian President Georgi Parvanov said Bulgaria's support in the coalition will remain for now.

Temporary JAG serves Buehring

by Spc. Curt Cashour

If you're rotating through Camp Buehring and in need of some last minute legal assistance, you're in luck. Soldiers from the 3rd Infantry Division's Judge Advocate General's section have set up a temporary legal assistance office located in room 106 of Buehring's morale welfare and recreation building.

Legal assistance staff will be on hand seven days a week from 2 to 4 p.m. and 7 to 9 p.m. Troops heading north can visit the office to get last-minute help with power of attorney, wills and other legal issues, said Maj. James



Bulgaria Facts

Bulgaria is slightly larger than Tennessee with a population of 7,517,973.

Sofia is the capital of Bulgaria.

Bulgaria held its first multiparty election since World War II in 1990.

Bulgaria was the only Balkan country that made the transfer to democracy with no human victims.

Bulgaria has the highest point in the Balkans. It's Moussala, the peak of the Rila Mountains, which rises to an altitude of 9,556 feet.

Bulgaria has a temperate climate with cold, damp winters and hot, dry summers.

The natural disasters in Bulgaria are earthquakes and landslides.

"Nazdrave," the common greeting in Bulgaria, means cheers. When said to a Bulgarian you should make eye contact. To not do so is taken for disrespect.

Bulgarians nod their head for no, and shake it for yes.

Bulgaria is the tenth largest producer of wine.

Washrack war stories

story and photo by Spc. Curt Cashour

With thousands of servicemembers heading home from Iraq, Kuwait's washracks are full of activity.

Every day, troops visit the washracks to give their vehicles and equipment a final cleaning before the long trip back to the United States.

And while Soldiers may manage to wash away the dirt and grime of a year's worth of duty in Iraq, the memories of their tour will be with them forever.

Staff Sgt. Jeremy Kucera, 27, of Winner, S.D., was at Arifjan's washrack Feb. 2 supervising Soldiers washing trucks belonging to his unit, the 153rd Engineer Battalion, a Reserve unit headquartered in Huron, S.D.

A squad leader with A Company, 2nd Platoon, Kucera and his Soldiers conducted early morning "pathfinder" missions along military convoy routes in Iraq, checking for improvised explosive devices and other hazards, he said.

"It was a little nerve wracking. Some days you wouldn't find anything; some days all hell would break loose," Kucera said.

About a month into their tour, Kucera and the rest of A Company encountered an IED attack near Forward Operating Base Chosin, located south of Baghdad.

"We heard a tremendous boom, dust came up and everything was dark for two to three seconds," said 2nd Platoon Squad Automatic Weapon Gunner Spc. Nick Kruse, a 20-year-old from Pierre, S.D.

It was one of many IED blasts the platoon would face during its time in Iraq, but the only one that resulted in a fatality. When the dust cleared, Sgt. Dennis Morgan was dead. The platoon had but a few hours to grieve until they received orders for their next mission.

"Everybody just kept on going. We had our time of sorrow, but we had missions to do," Kucera said.

For Kucera, the most exciting part of the tour was when he and his squad provided engineer support to the 1st Cavalry Division during its assault on Najaf, Iraq, last August. Against a backdrop of small arms fire, mortar and rocket propelled grenade blasts, 2nd Platoon's first and second squads built traffic control points, helped maintain security at a casualty collection point and even participated in house raids.

With a year's worth of successes behind them, Kucera said he and his Soldiers are

"We heard a tremendous boom, dust came up and everything was dark for two to three seconds"

—Spc. Nick Kruse



Spc. Brian Westerhuis, a 26-year-old combat engineer with the 153rd Engineer Battalion, uses a pressure washer to clean the bottom of a water trailer at Camp Arifjan Feb. 2.

ready to go home.

"We've accomplished a lot. It's time to get everybody home and let them unwind a bit," he said.

A few stations up from Kucera, Sgt. Robert Kraehler was hard at work rinsing off a flatbed trailer. In two days, Kraehler was scheduled to redeploy with his National Guard unit, the 141st Engineer Battalion from Jamestown, N.D., which was attached to the 1st Infantry Division.

The 57-year-old Vietnam veteran got his second taste of combat during his 10 month stint at Iraq's Camp Speicher, which is near Tikrit, Iraq. An equipment operator for the

Guard, Kraehler spoke proudly of how he and his unit helped enhance Speicher by building new roads and barriers.

During his deployment, Kraehler worked with and befriended

several Iraqis the military had hired to help refurbish some of Speicher's buildings. Over the past year, Iraqis have improved their outlook on life and begun to open up to U.S. troops, he said.

"The GIs are finally starting to get the people to trust them," he said.

Kraehler made enough money during his deployment to retire – at least from his day job stocking shelves at a grocery store. He still has two more years left in the Guard, however, and plans to stick it out, he said.

Soon after he gets home, Kraehler will enter his reenlistment window and is making plans to take the oath one last time.

Across the way from Kraehler, was relative newcomer Spc. Ashley Van Syckle, 22. With her face covered in splotches of dirt, she took a break to discuss what she hopes will be her first and last deployment.

Van Syckle and her National Guard unit, the 216th Engineer Battalion from Hamilton, Ohio, spent a year at Camp Speicher attached to the 1st Infantry Division.

On her first day in Iraq, the native of Columbus, Ohio, discovered that her 25-year-old sister had cancer.

"I just tried to block it out," she said. "It was a lot better once I got to go home on leave and see her."

Half way through her deployment, Van Syckle got bored with her office job as a supply clerk and volunteered for convoy security duty as a .50 cal gunner. IEDs and small-arms attacks were common during her patrols, but Van Syckle said fear wasn't an option.

"There was no room to be scared. You could get hurt or hurt someone else," she said.

And while she's ready to go home for a month of time off, shopping and drinking, Van Syckle said her time in Iraq is one of those unique experiences she doesn't want to forget or repeat.

"I enjoyed being in Iraq. It kind of made you feel like you did something worthwhile," she said.

Cheap, easy retreat

story by Spc. Aimee Felix

If you're a troop or Department of Defense civilian looking for an economical, easy and relaxing way to spend your vacation here's a deal for you.

Three of four Armed Forces Recreation Center resorts are offering special deals for troops and Department of Defense personnel going on rest and recuperation leave from deployments in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom or going on block leave before or after their tours.

AFRC resorts are joint service facilities operated by the U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center. They are located at ideal vacation spots and are available for use by all servicemembers, Department of Defense personnel, retired military personnel and their families.

Hale Koa Hotel on the beach at Waikiki, Hawaii is one of the resorts. Room rates, which are based on rank, pay grade, duty status, and room size and/or location, are now an extra 30 percent off for deployed, deploying and redeploying servicemembers and DoD civilians. That it's located approximately 10 miles from the Honolulu International Airport is only part of Hale Koa's many conveniences. "It was easy; everything I needed to plan my vacation was there," said Lt. Col. John Schrader, deputy commander of the 160th Signal Brigade. Schrader stayed at the Hale Koa Hotel during his R&R leave with his wife after having been deployed for 18 months in Kuwait. Schrader was able to plan his entire vacation from the comforts of Hale Koa Hotel's tourist and travel center and he was able to rent a car from their car rental facility.

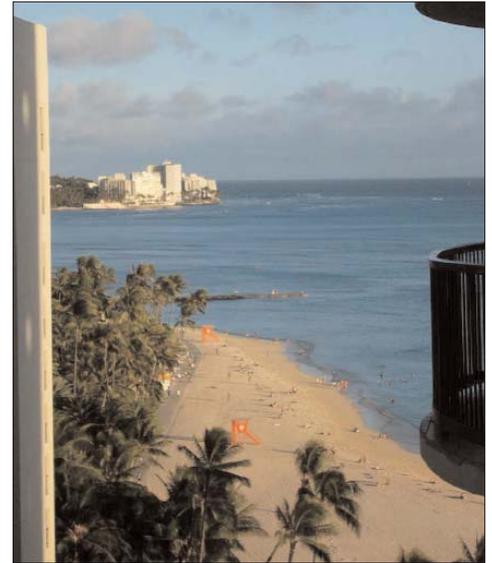
Aside from the scuba diving and the fan-

tastic luaus and dinner shows Hale Koa has to offer, Schrader's favorite part of his stay was the daily delivery of breakfast to his room, a convenience that is included in the room rate. While Hale Koa is great on its own, its surroundings enhance its appeal. It's located on Waikiki's beachfront where more entertainment can be found at Hale Koa's Barefoot Bar, the self-proclaimed home of "Hawaii's Best Mai Tai."

If oceanfront is not your style, there's the Edelweiss Lodge and Resort in Garmisch, Germany. Located at the foot of the Alps where southern Germany meets Austria and Switzerland, its location is perfect for skiers.

But if you don't make the ski season, have no fear because the resort has more to offer in the form of hiking in its beautiful surroundings. "The view of the Alps from the room was amazing," said Staff Sgt. Paul Stephen Laue, a Soldier with A Company, 319th Signal Battalion, a Reserve unit out of Sacramento, Calif. Laue visited Edelweiss in time for Oktoberfest, after having spent a week traveling through other European countries. He and his girlfriend had originally decided to only stay in Edelweiss for three days, but they ended up staying for eight because "you get more bang for your buck with this place," said Laue, comparing the resort's rates to rates in other local hotels in Germany. Laue's stay in Edelweiss cost only \$60 a night, which included breakfast and dinner. The resort offers a variety of tours including hiking trips and country tours of neighboring countries including Italy.

For those wanting to stay stateside, there's Orlando's very own military haven, Shades of Green at the Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando, Fla. With other resorts in the area ranging anywhere from \$100 to \$500 a night,



A view from Hale Koa Hotel at Waikiki, Hawaii.

the rates for R&R troops staying at Shades of Green are definite deals. A single servicemember package including breakfast and dinner for four nights and five days costs \$262 to \$366, according to rank. A double occupancy package ranges from \$319 to \$424 for the same amount of time.

All of its 586 rooms have a private patio or balcony, and its location is central to all of Orlando's tourist attractions. Guests at the resort get complimentary transportation to all the Walt Disney Resort attractions. The resort also has its own ticket sales office, which offers discount tickets to all Disney shows and studios and to all other popular attractions in central Florida.

All three resorts offer plenty of activities for children as well. For more information on this and to plan your vacation, visit the AFRC resort travel page at www.armymwr.com/portal/travel/recreationcenters. The resorts can be reached at the following phone numbers: Edelweiss Lodge and Resort, DSN 430-2575; Hale Koa Hotel, DSN 438-6739; Shades of Green, 888-593-2242.

Free admission for troops home or abroad

Get ready for some free fun.

Anheuser-Busch Cos., the parent company of Sea World and Busch Gardens, is offering free admission to servicemembers and up to three dependents for the rest of 2005.

During the Super Bowl Jan. 6, Anheuser-Busch began a 60-second television advertising campaign that salutes the service of America's military men and women, and announces that from Feb. 7 through Dec. 31, any active duty, active reserve, ready reserve servicemember or National Guardsman is entitled to free admission under the Here's to the Heroes program. Servicemembers only need to register, either at the website www.herosalute.com or

in the entrance plaza of participating parks, and show a valid Department of Defense identification card. As many as three dependents of military personnel also are entitled to free admission.

August A. Busch IV, president of Anheuser-Busch, said the company is giving back to "the brave men and women and their families, who make sacrifices every day for our country," by offering "a message of thanks and an invitation."

The company runs a number of adventure parks across the United States, including Sea World, Discovery Cove, Busch Gardens, Adventure Island, Water Country USA and Sesame Place. According to a company website, Busch Gardens

Williamsburg, Sesame Place and SeaWorld San Antonio are seasonal operations that will remain closed until spring 2005. Military personnel interested in visiting those parks should check operating schedules. The remaining parks, SeaWorld Orlando, Busch Gardens Tampa Bay and SeaWorld San Diego are open year-round, according to the site.

Dependents may still take advantage of the offer without the presence of their servicemember, but minor dependents must be accompanied by an adult.

This story was compiled from information on the website www.herosalute.com and a report in the Orlando Sentinel by Jerry W. Jackson on Feb. 4.

Community

happenings for Feb. 9 through Feb. 16

Arifjan

Wednesday

Tennis Tournament signups, Fitness Center
8-Ball Tournament, 7 p.m., Community Center
Country Western Night, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 MWR tent
Ash Wednesday Service, Mass at noon and Ecumenical service at 7 p.m., Zone 1 Chapel
Country Western Night, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6
Combat Kick Boxing 5:30 a.m., Power Stretching 8 a.m., Bench/Step Workout 10 a.m., Body Pump Workout 1 p.m., Zone 1 gym tent
Aerobics, 6 p.m., Zone 6 gym tent
Aerobics, 7 p.m., Zone 2 gym tent

Thursday

Persian Carpet Seminar, 10 a.m. - 7 p.m., Community Center
Country Music Night, 7 p.m., Community Center
Horseshoe Tournament, 6 p.m., Zone 6 MWR Area
Spinning Class, 5:30 p.m., Zone 2 gym tent
Open Mic Night, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 MWR area
Karate Class, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 MWR area
Basketball signups begin, Zone 1 gym

Friday

Persian Carpet Seminar, 10 a.m. - 7 p.m., Community Center
Spa Day, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Zone 6 MWR tent
Salsa Night, 7 p.m., Community Center
Indoor theatre, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6
Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool
Aerobics, 6 p.m., Zone 6 MWR tent
Aerobics, 7 p.m., Zone 2 gym tent

Saturday

Bravo Army Theatre Company, 4:30 p.m., Community Center theatre
Remember the 70s Night, 7 p.m., Community Center
Black History Month 5K Run, 7 a.m., Zone 1 gym
Bench Press Competition, 7 p.m., Fitness Center
Combat Kick Boxing 5:30 a.m., Power Stretching 8 a.m., Bench/Step Workout 10 a.m., Body Pump Workout 1 p.m., Combat Kick Boxing 3 p.m., Zone 1 gym tent
Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool

Sunday

Salsa Night, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 MWR tent
Bravo Army Theatre Company, 6 p.m., Community Center theatre
Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool
Bench/Step Workout 5:30 a.m., Super Abs 8 a.m., Power Stretching 10 a.m., Body Pump Workout 1 p.m., Bench/Step Workout 3 p.m., Zone 1 gym tent

Monday

Valentine's Day Dance, 7 p.m., Community Center
Spa Day, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Zone 6
Country Western Night, 7:30 p.m., Zone 2 stage
Poker Tournament, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 MWR tent
Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool
Combat Kick Boxing 5:30 a.m., Power Stretching 8 a.m., Bench/Step Workout 10 a.m., Body Pump Workout 1 p.m., Combat Kick Boxing 3 p.m., Zone 1 gym tent
Aerobics, 6 p.m., Zone 6 gym tent

Tuesday

Top 40 Night, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 MWR tent
Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool
Bench/Step Workout 5:30 a.m., Super Abs 8

a.m., Power Stretching 10 a.m., Body Pump Workout 1 p.m., Bench/Step Workout 3 p.m., Zone 1 gym tent

Wednesday

Black History Jeopardy, 7 p.m., Community Center
Country Western Night, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 MWR tent
Combat Kick Boxing 5:30 a.m., Power Stretching 8 a.m., Bench/Step Workout 10 a.m., Body Pump Workout 1 p.m., Zone 1 gym tent

For more information call 430-1202

Buehring

Thursday

Pushup/Situp Competition 7 p.m., gym

Friday

Hip Hop Night, 9 p.m. - 1 a.m., Tent 1

Saturday

Dance Competition, 9 p.m., Tent 1
Spa Day, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Tent 1

Sunday

Spa Day, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Tent 1

Monday

Bravo Army Theatre Company, 7 p.m., MWR area
For more information call 828-1340

Doha

Wednesday

Open Mic Night "Battle of the Rapper", 7 p.m., Frosty's

Thursday

Basketball League Signups begin, gym

Saturday

Valentine's Day Bingo, 7 p.m., Frosty's

Monday

Valentine's Day Dance, 7 p.m., Frosty's
President's Day 5K, 6 a.m., flagpoles

Tuesday

Chess Tournament, 7 p.m., Frosty's

Wednesday

Black Light Billiards Tournament, 7 p.m., Frosty's
For more information call 438-5637

Kuwaiti Naval Base

Wednesday

Kuwait v. U.S. Sports Day, Soccer, 9 a.m., Squash, 9:30 a.m., Basketball, 10 a.m., Waterpolo, 11 a.m., Awards Ceremony, 12:30 p.m., all at Kuwaiti Gym
Valentine's Day 5K, 6:30 a.m., CDR Parking lot
Self Defense 1, 6 p.m., aerobics room
Foosball Tournament, 7 p.m., new gym

Thursday

Texas Hold'em Poker, 7 p.m., new gym
Techno Dance, 7:30 p.m., old temp. gym tent

Friday

Bowling, 4 p.m., bowling alley
Latin Dance, 7 p.m., old temp. gym tent
Basketball Tournament, 8 p.m., Kuwaiti gym

Saturday

Tennis Tournament, 4 p.m., side of Kuwaiti gym
Ping Pong Tournament, 6 p.m., new gym
Softball, 6 p.m., next to soccer field
R&B Dance, 7 p.m., old temp. gym tent

Sunday

Ultimate Football, noon, Kuwaiti soccer field
Flag Football, 2 p.m., Field next to gym
Aerobics, 6 p.m., Kuwaiti Gym
Self Defense 2, 7:30 p.m., Aerobics Room

Monday

Marine Corps Martial Arts, 1 p.m., TMC

Darts Tournament, 6 p.m., gym
Chess/Spades/Checkers/Dominoes, 6 p.m., gym
Bowling, 7 p.m., bowling alley

Tuesday

PS2, 5 p.m., new gym
Self Defense 1, 6 p.m., aerobics room
Chess/Spades/Checkers/Dominoes, 6 p.m., new gym
Self Defense 2, 7:30 p.m., aerobics room

Wednesday

Self Defense 1, 6 p.m., aerobics room
Foosball Tournament, 7 p.m., new gym

For more information call 839-1009

Navistar

Wednesday

Female Self-Defense Class, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., MWR tents

Thursday

Karate Class, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., MWR tents

Friday

Bravo Army Theatre Company, 7 - 9:30 p.m., MWR area

Saturday

Horseshoe Tournament, 8 a.m. - 6 p.m., MWR tents

Sunday

Horseshoe Tournament, 8 a.m. - 6 p.m., MWR tents

Monday

Female Self-Defense Class, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., MWR tents

Tuesday

Karate Class, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., MWR tents

Wednesday

Female Self-Defense Class, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., MWR tents

For more information call 844-1138

Spearhead/SPOD

Friday

Valentine's Dance and BBQ, 7 p.m., MWR area

For more information call 825-1302

Victory

Friday

Bazaar, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., MWR area

Monday

Valentine's Day Mixer, 8 p.m., MWR tent
Spa Day, 10 a.m., MWR area

Tuesday

Bravo Army Theatre Company, 7 p.m., MWR area
For more information call 823-1033

Virginia

Wednesday

Trivia contest, 6 p.m., MWR tent

Thursday

Ping Pong Tournament, 6 p.m., MWR tent

Friday

Dominoes Tournament, 6 p.m., MWR tent

Saturday

Unit Feud Night, 6 p.m., MWR tent

Sunday

Checkers Tournament, 3 p.m., MWR tent

Monday

Run for you Sweetheart 5K run, 3 p.m., gym

Tuesday

Jeopardy, 6 p.m., Dusty Room

Wednesday

Hearts Tournament, 6 p.m., Dusty Room

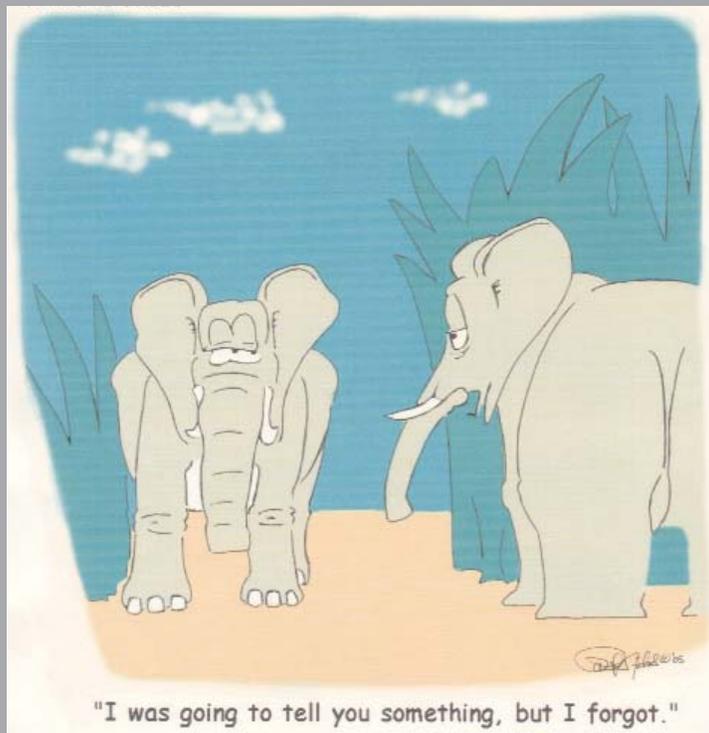
For more information call 832-1045

Time Waits For No One

by Sgt. 1st Class Phyllis M. Brown
390th Personnel Services Group

When I was at home my time was limited
Now that I am in the desert it seems endless
Time waits for no one
I know this is temporary
Some Soldiers' work is exemplary
Time waits for no one
Time will rise with the sun and go down with the moon
That day of time will be gone soon
Time waits for no one
Don't put off for tomorrow what you can do today
Say thank you and remember to pray
Time waits for no one
Seasons will come and seasons will go
Tell me what season you like the most
Time waits for no one
Appreciate your family, friends and loved ones
Appreciate your daughters and sons
Time waits for no one
Say I love you as often as you can
Time waits for no woman or man
Lord gives me the will to be strong
Lord gives me the strength to hold on
Time watis for no one

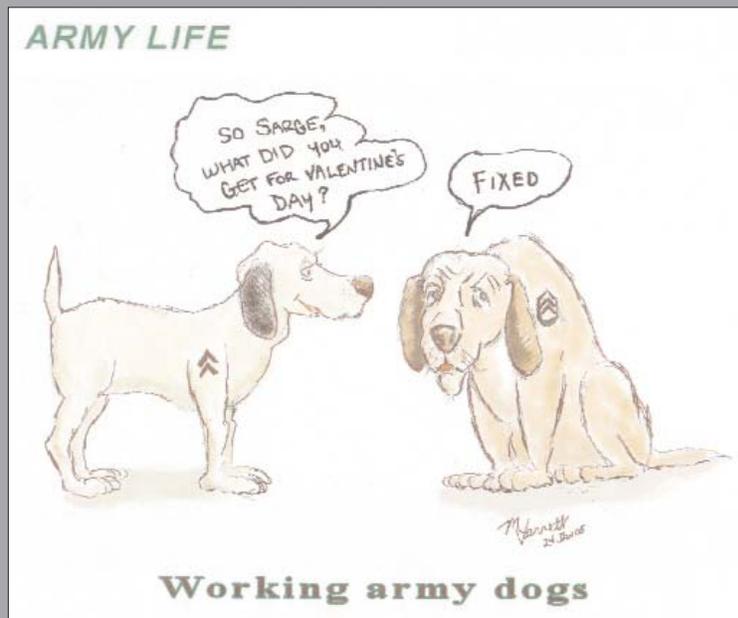
by Capt. Paul Nichols, 377th Theater Support Command



DESERT VOICE

Editor
CFLCC PAO/Desert Voice
Camp Arifjan
APO AE 09306
matthew.millham@arifjan.arcent.army.mil

by Lt. Col. Michael Verrett, CFLCC C4



Time we have

by Maj. Yvette Rose

We're given one month to remember our history and 11 months to show our world what we've accomplished to move from where we were to prove that we too can be an entrepreneur.

In those 11 months we attend schools, make inventions, establish policy to prepare us for our one month to prove to the world that we're still free to be the company CEO, the school principal, the hospital doctor holding the degree that's only a fraction of our 28 days of Black History.

I know it's one month but it's enough time for us to tell the world how we built something similar to a heaven and destroyed the manmade hell.

28 days? I know it's short but we only need a minute to say that yes one month is set aside to honor us but we have decades of life to go.

So join us or get out of our way.

We're going places.

