

MARCH 9, 2005

DESERT VOICE



PROTECTED WATERS

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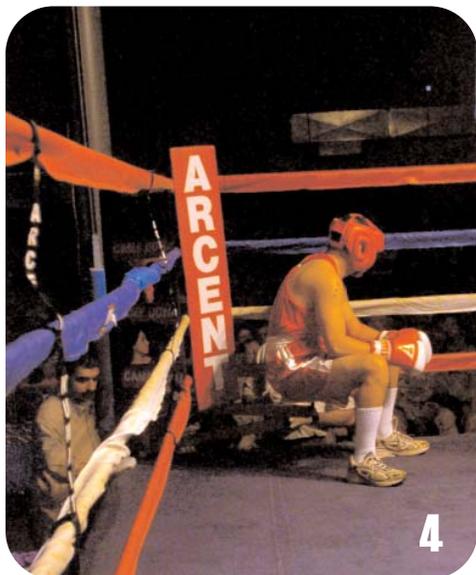
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On the Cover Navy patrol boats, acting to avoid another tragedy like the 2000 bombing of the USS Cole, are a stifling presence at the seaport of debarkation.

Photo by Spc. Aimee Felix

Out of Iraq, 31st MEU ships home

Story and photos by Spc. Jonathan Montgomery

During the 30-minute boat ride from a cement pier of Kuwaiti Naval Base to the USS Essex, which floated miles offshore, the Marines of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit relaxed in the cool, calm breeze as they glided over the deep sea-green water of the Arabian Gulf.

One Marine broke out his guitar and a pack of cigarettes; another cracked open a Diet Pepsi and turned up the volume on his CD player. The scene stood in stark contrast to the MEU's previous five months, which were spent in Iraq dealing with insurgents, securing borders and securing the country for its first democratic elections since the overthrow of Sadaam Hussein.

The 31st MEU, a Marine Air Ground Amphibious Assault Task Force, was responsible for a 33,000 square-mile area of Iraq's western Al Anbar province. After five months of fighting in some of the war's most pitched battles, like the fight for Fallujah in November, the Marines and Sailors of the 2,200-member MEU boarded three ships of the U.S. Navy's Essex Amphibious Ready Group Feb. 28 for a four-week voyage home to Okinawa, Japan.

The 31st MEU arrived in the Arabian Gulf Sept. 9 to support Operation Iraqi Freedom. Initially, members of MEU believed they were going to Kuwait for a month-long training event. The 31st MEU, assigned to the 1st Marine Division, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, found itself engaged in security and stabilization operations in Iraq from late September 2004 to early February 2005.

"Five months ago, we put 31st MEU ashore for what was supposed to be 30 days of training and operations," said Amphibious Squadron 11 Commander Capt. Mark Donahue. "Now five months later, we are welcoming them back from extended combat operations."

While many of the missions carried out by the MEU were important, engaging the enemy in Fallujah was an episode that tested the Marine's mettle and will likely be remembered as the unit's single biggest contribution to OIF.

"I was scared and excited at the same time," said Jose Cervantes, an infantryman



Left: Marines and corpsmen of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit carry their gear onto Landing Craft Utility 1627, a small vessel used to ferry troops and equipment from ship to shore and back. Above: Marines and corpsmen aboard LCU 1627 head back to USS Essex, which waits for them in the Arabian Gulf.

who fought in Fallujah. "We'd throw a fragmentation grenade into the courtyard, go into the

house, and not know if anybody was in there wanting to shoot at us. It was a rush, but I still have nightmares."

Gunnery Sgt. James Sanders, who also fought in Fallujah, recalled the same intensity of the battle. "There was constant gunfire and explosions ... It was tough telling where anything was coming from," he said.

While the battle for Fallujah was the high-point in terms of action for the MEU, the 31st was responsible for a wide range of missions geared toward the long-term stability of Iraq and toward stabilizing the country for its landmark Jan. 30 elections.

"The umbrella of our operations has included such things as building hospitals, improving water sanitation efforts, providing medical care, helping Iraqis get jobs, assisting Iraqis in voter education and registration, and building more than fifty border forts to quell the smuggling of weapons, drugs and people trying to enter Iraq from Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia," said Capt. Burrell Parmer, MEU spokesman.

The 31st MEU lost 48 Marines and two Navy corpsmen during its time in Iraq, and 221 were wounded. The unit's single biggest loss came Jan. 26 when a Super

Stallion helicopter crashed in western Iraq killing 30 Marines and a sailor.

Members of the 31st paid their respects to their fallen during a memorial service Feb. 20 at Camp Virginia.

"We fought all types of foreign fighters, and we fought courageously," said Sanders. "We will always remember the Marines and Sailors we lost."

"The 31st MEU is looking forward to returning to Okinawa," said Parmer. "We are proud to have had the opportunity to demonstrate our expeditionary capabilities."

"Although we are preparing to head home for a much deserved rest and to share time missed with our loved ones, we must continue to be ready to serve as America's 9/11 force in the western Pacific," he said.

The Essex ARG, home-ported in Sasebo, Japan, is comprised of USS Essex, USS Juneau, and USS Harpers Ferry. Before arriving to pick up the 31st, the USS Essex provided support and aid to the victims of the Dec. 26 tsunami in Indonesia as part of Operation Unified Assistance.

"The 31st MEU and the Essex ARG started together, stayed in the U.S. Central Command's area of responsibility, and will finish together," said Parmer.

Editor's note: This story contains information from a story by Navy Chief Journalist Christina Johnson, USS Essex Public Affairs.

Blood, sweat and victory

Story and photos by Spc. Brian Trapp

Thirty-three troops stepped into the ring. Seventeen stepped out gods for the night.

As the house lights flickered off and the lights over the ring came up, the crowd erupted in cheers and applause to kick off the Camp Doha Morale Welfare and Recreation Boxing Competition March 2 at Camp Doha.

The boxing event featured 17 bouts ranging from lightweight, starting at 138 pounds, to super heavy weight, topping out at 271 pounds, and one surprise women's match-up. The night played out in front of a crowd of more than a thousand troops who cheered every match as if it were a title-fight.

"When they raise your hand, it's the best feeling in the world . . . It's like static electricity running through your body," said 184-pound Nathaniel Reeves, 37, who was victorious after his three one-minute rounds in one of the light heavyweight fights. Like many of the night's boxers, Reeves had been in only a handful of matches before



Above: Bryan Stephen, in blue, is held back from Curtis Quillin by the referee. Quillin won the fight, which was one of the most furious of the night. Afr left: Francisco Gonzalez gets advice between rounds. Near left: Carlos Rodríguez, in blue, puts Timothy Walker into the ropes on his way to victory March 2 at the Camp Doha gymnasium.



his fight night match-up.

Preparations for the event started weeks ago when Morale Welfare and Recreation sent out an invitation for amateur boxers. About 70 troops from across Kuwait signed up.

"Getting people together was easy," said Joe Lyon, event coordinator with MWR. "Whether they're going up north or going home, they wanted to get in and fight."

After going through a physical and matching up troops for the fight, 34 competitors made the final cut for their time in the ring.

There are a lot of guys into boxing, Lyon said, and there are a lot of boxing coaches in the Army. One of those coaches was Darrell Govan, coach for the Camp Arifjan boxing team.

Six people from Govan's team fought; five won. The sixth boxer lost in a split decision, he added quickly. Govan attributed his boxer's wins to their conditioning, and "we wanted it more," he said. "This was the first time they got to fight in the ring. They were crazy about it, they loved it."

Even though boxing is rarely thought of as a team sport, it was on this night. Units came out to support their buddies in the ring.

"My whole regiment came," said Reeves, who had the crowd chanting his name in the last round of his fight. "It's very exciting to have your name being chanted, even people who don't know you chanting your name. It gives you a great feeling."

"The crowd was really into the fight," Govan said. "I thought they were outstanding."

Lt. Col. Stan Fugate, Camp Doha commander, gave the opening remarks before the first fight kicked off. Later in the night he said Doha hosted the event for the morale and esprit de corps building aspects of boxing. Fugate summed up his feelings about the sport when he said "Boxing is kinda like combat. That's what I like about it."

Fugate also stressed that the boxers were using full protective equipment and had the Area Support Group-Kuwait oral surgeon and doctor on hand in case of any injuries. The medical staff did have to take care of some bloody faces and check a hurt shoulder, but nothing too serious.

Limiting the bouts to three one-minute

rounds helped reduce injuries as well, said Dwayne Coleman, a boxing judge for the event.

"I'm looking for scoring good, hard, clean punches," Coleman said. "Not glancing blows or the guys that swing a lot and look busy but don't make any good contact. That's why sometimes the crowd disagrees with the judges."

Even when the shouts were questioning the judges' calls on the winner of the fight, the crowd still seemed to enjoy the event, where every seat was a ring-side seat.

This event marked the last fight night at Camp Doha. The ring is scheduled to be dismantled and moved to Camp Arifjan later this year.



Jaun Lands, blue, exchanges blows with Jose Rivera, red, during their welterweight match. Lands walked out of the ring victorious.

Black History Month closes with a stomp

Story and photo by Sgt. Matt Millham

During a month set aside to honor the contributions of blacks to American society, a number of speeches and statements by Americans of all colors echoed one particular hope – that a day would come when months such as Black History Month would no longer be necessary.

Still, the energy of celebrations during Black History Month are overwhelmingly positive, and the month-long recognition brings to light important actions, movements and people who may never before have enjoyed the limelight.

Celebrations at Camp Doha Feb. 26 and Camp Arifjan Feb. 27 capped off a month of activities across Kuwait in honor of Black History Month. At Arifjan, the Zone 1 Theater exceeded capacity for nearly two hours of speeches, runway modeling, dancing and singing on the stage and in the aisles.

The keynote speaker at the Arifjan event, Col. Larry C. Boyd, commander of 3rd Personnel Command (Provisional) based at Arifjan, weaved together a short history of his life as dozens of people, unable to find seats in the crowded theater, listened from outside the theater's open doors. "I was born in the sticks, in the country," said Boyd. "My parents only had an eighth-grade education."

He described the house he lived in until he was seven as a shack without running water. To get water, his family had to go to an outdoor well. The family's bathroom was an outhouse.

It was a long way to go from his meager upbringing to his graduation with honors from South Carolina State University, Orangeburg, where he earned a bachelor's in political science and public administration. On graduating, he also received his Army commission and was designated an ROTC distinguished military graduate.

Though he undeniably had the talent to be an officer in the U.S. Army, his accomplishments may not have been possible

"I'm thankful for those who paved the way for people like me." – Col. Larry C. Boyd

without the efforts of those who were the focus of this year's Black History Month: The Niagara Movement. In talking about the movement, Boyd referred to a quote that formed the center of the philosophy of its founder, W.E.B. DuBois: "We want manhood suffrage, and we want it now."

Nowhere is the evidence of black equality more prevalent than in the military, Boyd suggested as he mentioned statistics about the makeup of the American armed forces. Although blacks make up about 13 percent of the population, about 21 percent of the



Members of the fraternity Omega Psi Phi closed out the year's Black History Month recognition with an energetic step show, which was part of a larger event at Camp Arifjan Feb. 27

U.S. military is black, and blacks occupy more management positions in the military than in any other sector in the United States, said Boyd.

After listing off the accomplishments of the American military's first black generals and admirals and speaking of the pride he felt in coming into the Army and meeting black sergeant majors and field-grade officers, Boyd said, "These accomplishments make me proud as an American, but they also make me proud as an African American."

"I'm thankful for those who paved the way for people like me," said Boyd.

Some of the night's biggest highlights came after the keynote address. Models dressed in casual clothes strutted the theater and posed for cameras at the foot of the stage as the audience jumped to take pictures. Later on, a different group of models hit the stage dressed in replica baseball jerseys from the Negro leagues while the audience listened to a brief history of segregated baseball. Though the Negro leagues ended only about halfway through the last century and were, at their peak, among the biggest spectator events in America, there isn't a complete list of the teams from the leagues' 70-year history, the audience learned.

But while the crowd got riled up by the jersey display, it was a step routine put on by brothers of the Omega Psi Phi fraternity, known as the "Ques," that got them screaming. Chanting and stomping in synchronized steps, five Ques filed onto the stage in pur-

ple shirts without the aid of background music.

Stepping, originally developed in the United States by black fraternities and sororities, involves performances that unite folk traditions with modern culture through thumping body movements, singing, chanting, speaking and drama. Even within the fraternity, there are variations in step styles from region to region, said Capt. John Sensley, who led the Ques' routine.

Much like the military itself, "most of the brothers are from all over the place," said Sensley. The group's routine "was actually a combination from the East Coast and the South."

Mixing all the different styles took a lot of time and practice. Sensley and the rest of the Que steppers began preparing for this part of the show in December, said Sensley.

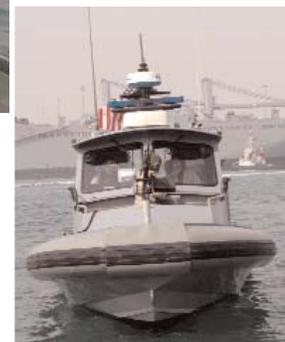
The performance drew a loud response from the crowd, especially from other Ques, who chanted along and hollered to their onstage brothers.

"We're kind of intense," said Maj. Eugene Jones, a former Que who spent most of the performance seated on the floor in front of the stage cheering on his brothers.

The high intensity and turnout may, in part, have been due to the fact that this year's event involved more servicemembers than in previous years. Rohda Caige, a CSA contractor who has attended Kuwait's Black History Month celebrations for years, said usually there are more contractors involved in the show. "This one was more 100 percent of the Soldiers," said Caige. "It shows, even with all they're going through, they can still come out for black history."



Inshore Boat Unit 22 Sailor Petty Officer 2nd Class Sean Cox is one of two gunners on his patrol crew. Cox, whose Navy job title is master in arms, is a Reebok footwear engineer at home.



Protected waters

story and photos by Spc. Almee Felix

Oct. 12, 2000, the USS Cole was on its way to the Arabian Gulf when it stopped for fuel in Yemen. A small inflatable boat carrying two suicide bombers and enough explosives to rip a hole through the destroyer pulled up beside the ship and detonated. What would have been just a short fuel stop cost the lives of 17 Sailors while nearly 40 others were seriously injured.

The Navy reacted quickly to the attack on its troops by deploying its Inshore Boat Units, rapidly deployable units that usually have six

armed patrol boats manned by four Sailors each. The units were created in 1996, but weren't deployed until after the Cole disaster, said Cmdr. Calvin Tanck, commanding officer of IBU 24, one of two

such units stationed in Kuwait. Here, their main responsibility is to prevent another devastating terrorist attack by protecting and escorting military ships moving through theater.

While the Sailors of IBU 22 and 24 – who are in charge of guarding U.S. and coalition

ships coming through Kuwait's main seaport of debarkation – generally deal with little more than fishermen and jet skiers, these Naval Reservists remain vigilant and ready to stop the enemy.

"No ship comes in or out of here without being shadowed by one of our patrol teams," said Tanck.

During the surge, the SPOD receives up to three military ships a day carrying an average total of 6,000 pieces of military equipment, said Maj. Alfonso Holt, port plans officer with the 143rd Transportation Command. And IBU 22 and 24 are in charge of protecting it all for at least two miles until the ships arrive in international waters, said Tanck.

Between the two, IBU 22 and IBU 24 have a total 12 patrol boats and more than 150 Sailors who work 12 hours on and 12 hours off – up from 11 hours on and 22 hours off in the lull between surges. During their shifts, Sailors are restricted to their patrol boats at sea for eight hours, requiring them to use the onboard bathroom and even get their food delivered to them by Sailors who aren't on patrol, said Tanck.

Each patrol boat has a four-man crew consisting of a boat captain, an engineer and two crewmen, i.e., gunners. Aside from their responsibilities while on patrol, IBU Sailors

What would have been just a short fuel stop cost the lives of 17 Sailors while nearly 40 others were seriously injured.

have other duties like giving or getting professional development training, cleaning weapons or conducting maintenance on their boats. These responsibilities are carried out during their 12 hours off.

While the hours are demanding, IBU 22 boat captain Petty Officer 2nd Class Edward Douglas said the variety in this job is a refreshing change of pace from what he does as a civilian – he’s an accountant. “I don’t have to think about profit/loss shares here,” he said.

Douglas’ next Sailor in command, IBU 22 engineer Petty Officer 1st Class Joe Hann, is responsible for making sure the boat is running well, which is fitting since back home in Rock Island, Ill., he runs a diesel shop that works on boats, and he owns a boat himself. When he’s not on his 12-hour patrol shift, he’ll likely be fixing one of the IBU 22 patrol boats.

The Sailors on Douglas’ crew all get along so well that when asked what their

know we’re here for a reason,” said Petty Officer 2nd Class Al Ablog, the other gunner on Douglas’ crew.

One of Douglas’ least favorite parts of the job is radioing in a trespassing boat to his higher headquarters because “the folks up in the tower ask a lot of questions all at once, and they want answers immediately.” Douglas has to answer these questions while at the same time ensuring his crew members are handling the situation, he said.

“If it takes too long to get rid of it, everyone gets all [nervous]. That’s kind of stressful,” said Douglas.

If a boat comes in sight, and it isn’t part of the Kuwaiti port authority or any other authorized port dweller, it’s ruled a trespasser, and the patrol team is responsible for getting rid

If a boat comes in sight, and it isn’t part of the Kuwaiti port authority or any other authorized port dweller, it’s ruled a trespasser, and the patrol team is responsible for getting rid of it.



From top left: A patrol boat coasts in to the dock at the seaport of debarkation. A speeding patrol boat heads out on patrol in the Arabian Gulf. A patrol boat sits in the waters of the port to intimidate would-be attackers. Heading back to shore for some down time, an Inshore Boat Unit 24 patrol boat cuts a hard turn. Petty Officer 2nd Class Al Ablog, one of the gunners on his IBU 22 patrol crew, scouts the port.

favorite part of the job was, all their answers had one thing in common: each other.

“These guys are all great people to work with,” said Petty Officer 2nd Class Sean Cox, one of the gunners in Douglas’ crew. He added that they make up a bit for his least favorite part of the job, which is being homesick. This is Cox’s first deployment, and it happened just when the IBU deployments were extended from about six months to about eight months.

“Being away from family sucks, but they

of it. Although they have gone as far as firing warning shots to get rid of unauthorized boats, it rarely goes that far, said Tanck.

Ablog said that while he misses home, he’s happy to be playing a role in making the world safer.

Protecting the U.S. and coalition ships traveling through the 20th largest port in the world, IBU 22 has been in Kuwait since November 2004 and IBU 24, which is now on its fourth deployment since its creation, has been here since August 2004.

Koreans reconfirm their OIF role

Story and photos by Spc. Almee Felix

Korea's presence in Iraq is the third largest in the coalition, after the United States and Great Britain. Their contributions to the reconstruction of Iraq have come in the form of a mobile clinic and base hospital for locals in northern Iraq, an advanced training program for Kurdish doctors and nurses, and a vocational school that offers classes in computers, electronics and auto repair.

Now on its fourth rotation, Korea's 3,800-soldier contribution in Iraq is supported by a much smaller group of Korean soldiers in Kuwait, and with the help of their American friends, the support group is setting trends for other coalition forces to follow while they brighten the days of the U.S. troops they work with at Camp Virginia.

"These guys are great to work with," said Capt. Scott Cranford, Virginia's officer in charge of coalition operations, sharing what seems to be a common sentiment among the American troops who have worked or interacted with the Koreans.

The Korean support group, roughly 20 soldiers who run the show for Korean soldiers traveling to and from Iraq, has taken a step toward independently supporting its own troops with a new seven-trailer compound from which to conduct logistics and deployment/redeployment operations. The Korean Air Force has a similar support operations setup in Ali Al Salem Air Base.

The Korean support group commander, Lt. Col. Yong Kim, came up with the idea and put in a request for the compound in December 2004, seeking approval from Area Support Group-Kuwait to have the trailers in Camp Virginia. Two weeks later, the Korean support group got their approval, and the last of the trailers, all built in Korea, was brought over Feb. 12. A ribbon cutting ceremony officially marked the opening of the compound Feb. 26.

Other coalition countries are on board to do the same. Japan will have theirs in July and other countries like Poland are expected to follow, said Cranford.

Since they are one of the larger contributors to operations in Iraq, the bigger work space in the new compound will make things easier for the Koreans than they were when they worked out of tents, said Kim. Five of the trailers are for office space,



Left: A Korean Buddhist priest chants a prayer during the dedication ceremony for the Korean support group compound Feb. 26. Above: The seven-trailer compound at Camp Virginia will serve as the support operations center for the Korean Army's troops serving to bring democracy and stability to Iraq.



and the other two are living quarters available to any distinguished visitor traveling in theater, including the distinguished visitors of other coalition partners. Those same living quarters will also be available for Korean troops to relax in on their four-day rest and recuperation pass from Iraq, which is taken at Camp Virginia.

The command staff at Virginia helped get the trailers up and running, setting up DSN lines and generators as soon as they arrived, said Navy Lt. Commander Hyungkuk Lee about his friends in the camp's command cell. "We have a good relationship with the Americans. They've been great friends and a great help," added Lee, officer in charge of sea operations in the Korean support group.

For Cranford, the feeling is mutual. He highlighted the Korean's hospitality, a characteristic that was in full effect during the ribbon cutting ceremony for the compound. Kim and Lee invited leaders from the U.S. and other coalition troops in theater. They briefed their guests on the purpose and function of the compound, offered a glimpse of Korean culture with a prayer chanted by one of their Buddhist priests and invited their guests to participate in the actual ribbon cutting. Following the ceremony, the Koreans offered rice cakes and other Korean treats in a small reception that fol-

lowed a tour of the compound.

"That's the usual," said Cranford explaining that while the Koreans have one of the most professional armies he's seen, they still know how to have a good time. "They're pranksters too," said Cranford who has been a victim of a few of their jokes.

Soldiers from the Korean support group invited Cranford to a ceremonious dinner that is held once a year. At this dinner, the Koreans drink a foul-tasting soup. Knowing how gross the soup is, the Koreans only take a spoonful of it and throw the rest away. However, they "failed" to mention this to Cranford.

Being the diplomatic American he was taught to be in all those pre-deployment briefings, Cranford took several gulps of the ghastly soup as he held back from gagging. The Koreans couldn't hold back, and they busted out laughing, said Cranford who couldn't hold back from laughing himself.

The Korean troops at Camp Virginia make an effort to integrate with the rest of the troops there by participating in all of Virginia's Morale, Welfare and Recreation events, and they often play sports with other coalition troops, said Cranford.

While their ground-breaking step toward a more stable support group is a step toward self-sufficiency for their army, the U.S. liaison officers involved in helping the Koreans carry out their support operations enjoy helping these good-spirited soldiers.

Veteran of (many) foreign wars

Story by Spc. Brian Trapp

At birth, he weighed in at a mere two pounds. It wasn't an auspicious beginning.

Now, more than five decades later, Chief Petty Officer Larry Tentinger stands 5 feet 6 inches, weighs 180 pounds and can bench more than twice as much. While this is remarkable in its own right, it's only a small part of what makes up the life story of this veteran of Vietnam and Desert Storm who has volunteered to return to the desert for a second tour in Operation Iraq Freedom.

"When I was in school my nickname was 'Little Larry,'" said Tentinger, chief of transportation and facilities with Expeditionary Medical Facility-Dallas. "They don't call me that anymore."

Now people call him professor, 2004 Reserve Force Sailor of the Year and a man with invaluable experience.

"[Tentinger's combat experience] gives us all confidence," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Cesar Rodriguez, who works with Tentinger at EMF-Dallas. "We look to him for guidance because of his experience. Hopefully we can grow from that and be a better unit for it."

EMF-Dallas isn't the only place his experience has helped a unit. During the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Tentinger served as a combat medic with the 2nd Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment in the push toward Baghdad, where his experience was a factor separating life from death.

Tentinger knew the Marines needed someone who had been in battle before, someone with combat experience. He has that to offer to the younger troops, he said, and so he did.

When he was drafted into the Army in 1969 to serve as a medic for the 1st Cavalry Division in Vietnam, Tentinger had an old first sergeant who had seen combat during the Korean War. "He was there, and helped us move forward under fire. I was there for the Marines, and I helped them move forward like he did for me."

Tentinger left the Army after Vietnam and didn't join the Naval Reserve until 1989. He was mobilized Aug. 25, 1990, and found himself on an airplane two days later on his way to Operation Desert Storm where he served as a medic at a field hospital in Saudi Arabia. After Desert Storm, Tentinger decided to make a change in both of his careers. He started his climb into higher academia and became an assistant professor at the University of South Dakota School of Education.

He also switched to the Fleet Marine Force, where Navy medics attach to Marine

units as their combat medics, known as corpsman. His choice to serve with the Marines in the FMF was influenced by his father's service in the Marines during World War II, said Tentinger, whose age only shows through in laugh lines and light hair. His path to the FMF also led him into Iraq and back into the fray.

In the beginning of OIF, he was with the Marines of the 2/23rd as they pushed toward Baghdad on the way to toppling Saddam Hussein. He took care of men he "would deploy with again in a heartbeat." But to Tentinger, being a corpsman meant more than just keeping Marines healthy. He needed to keep their spirits up. He did so in a way that seems to fit in with his intense energy, which you feel beaming from his hard, piercing eyes.

When he would notice Marines' morale wavering during the wait to invade Iraq, he would walk up and tell them to hold out their hand. Then he would touch his father's ring to theirs, and tell them, "This is my father's ring that he wore into combat in World War II, and that power is now with you now," he said. "After I would do that, they would stand a little bit taller. They were going into battle with the heritage of the leathernecks of World War II."

Even with an experience in combat and an intimidating build that recently helped him earn third place in a Camp Arifjan bench-press competition, he is a friendly, positive man who radiates energy.

"He's firm, fair and friendly," said Elizabeth Simmons, one of Tentinger's graduate students at USD. "He is a man of great conscience, but also a man with a great sense of responsibility. To me, he is a model of what it means to be an American, Sailor or Soldier."

The decision to come back to OIF was easy for Tentinger, he said.

"I felt it was unfinished business. After the initial push, going up Highway 7, I saw the Iraqi people dancing in the streets with tears in their eyes. After Saddam was taken from power and the statue came down, I saw a ray of hope in those people's eyes. Then the insurgents came in . . . We need to stay the course."

Both times Tentinger has deployed to OIF he's put his career at USD on hold. When he mobilized to deploy to Kuwait with EMF-Dallas, he was in the process of submitting



Chief Petty Officer Larry Tentinger poses in Vietnam, left, and in Iraq in the first rotation of Operation Iraqi Freedom, above.



his tenure packet to the university.

"I volunteered to come here, even after I just got back," he said. "To me, service for my country outweighs dealing with the policies of where I work. It's a higher calling. I know in my heart it was the right thing to do. That's why I'm not going to sweat promotion and tenure."

Tentinger isn't the only one who sees his situation between his university and his country that way either.

"I think his true career is the military," said Dr. James Hesson, physical education professor, fellow Vietnam veteran and former colleague of Tentinger's. "University teaching is what he has to do between conflicts. His heart belongs to the military and to the United States of America. He is an excellent teacher, and he is a patriot. I was a Ranger in Vietnam, and I would have deployed with him in a minute."

The night before he left for OIF, the 10 o'clock news showed a protest an anti-war protest at the USD campus, his campus.

"It made me so mad, my wife had to physically stop me from getting in the car and going down there," said Tentinger, whose "peace through strength" views aren't necessarily the most popular on campus. "Because of my upbringing, when I'm defending our country, I feel like this is where I belong," he said. "In the world of higher education, I feel like I'm in an ivory tower. It's OK, because I'm their diversity factor in higher education."

Arifjan flies 48-star flag of fallen Marine

Story and photo by Sgt. Matt Millham

By Feb. 27, 1945, tens of thousands of U.S. Marines had already been pounding the beaches and sparse, volcanic terrain of Iwo Jima for days in an amphibious assault that is widely considered the archetype of amphibious assaults. For every football-field size piece of the island, one Marine was killed and five were wounded.

One of those killed that day was Pfc. Joseph J. A'Hearn of Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 25th Regiment of the 4th Marine Division.

Like thousands of his comrades who died during the 36-day battle for Iwo Jima, A'Hearn was buried on the island. Years later, his remains were unearthed and returned to the United States.

With those remains came a 48-star American flag, representing the 48 states in the union at the time. Delivered to A'Hearn's widow, the flag was flown once within a year of its arrival then boxed up and left almost forgotten until December 2003. That's when Maj. Christopher Moretti, A'Hearn's grandson, came across the flag while on leave.

Untouched for nearly six decades, the flag was in perfect condition. Moretti, wanting to memorialize his grandfather's death, got permission to fly the flag at Fort Leavenworth, Ka., on Feb. 27, 2004. After arriving in Kuwait, he decided he wanted to do something similar at Camp Arifjan, but he'd left the flag at home. Fortunately, he has friends.

While on temporary duty in South Carolina, Maj. Erica Nelson, a friend of

Moretti, drove to Moretti's home in North Carolina to pick up the flag.

After reuniting with the relic of World War II, Moretti got permission from the commander of Area Support Group-Kuwait, Col. Brick T. Miller, to fly the flag at Camp Arifjan.

Sixty years to the day after his death, A'Hearn's flag flew on a flagpole in Kuwait, thousands of miles from both Japan and the United States, decades removed from the second "war to end all wars," at a camp that is a base of operations for an entirely different kind of war.



The 48-star flag of Pfc. Joseph J A'Hearn, killed in combat at Iwo Jima in 1945, is lowered at Camp Arifjan Feb. 27.

The flag symbolizes more than just the Marines' sacrifices at Iwo Jima, Moretti insisted. "It's a symbol really of the ultimate sacrifice," he said, mentioning the 1,500 American troops who have died in Operation Iraqi Freedom made the same sacrifice that was made at Iwo Jima.

As Moretti watched, the flag was taken down the evening of Feb. 27 by some of his best friends in Kuwait, including Nelson, Maj. Joel Harbaugh, Capt. Rene Ybarra, Maj. Robert Brogan and Maj. J.J. Thomas.

The flag's flight over Kuwait is rife with symbolism and reminiscent of the historic image of Marines hoisting an American flag over Iwo Jima just four days into the battle for the island. A photograph of that event remains one of the most gripping images of World War II, and was a rallying point for the United States in its war against Japan.

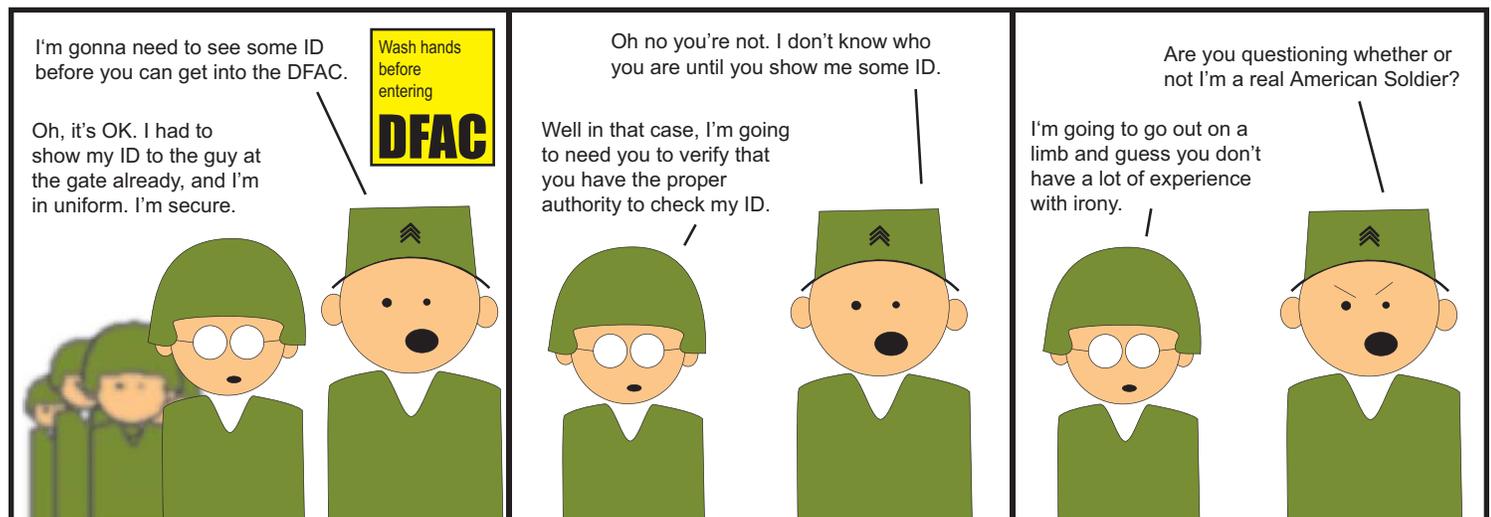
Moretti says he intends to see his grandfather's flag flown every Feb. 27 as long as it's in his possession. While the flag is in the Central Command Theater of Operations, Moretti is working to have it flown in Iraq and Afghanistan as well, he said.

FREE STUFF!

MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTION

FirstSwing and The Sporting News have teamed up to provide fully-paid, one-year subscriptions of The Sporting News to the first 50,000 servicemembers who register. To register, you need only send your name and full home address information to firstswing36@hotmail.com. The magazine will begin coming to you in about six to eight weeks. Commanders may submit the name of their organization, in place of an individual's name, so that their unit may receive the magazine.

behoovery



Community

happenings for March 9 through 16

Arifjan

Wednesday

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
 Aerobics, 6 p.m., Zone 6 gym tent
 Aerobics, 7 p.m., Zone 2 gym tent

Thursday

Country Music Night, 7 p.m., Community Center
 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

Salsa Night, 7 p.m., Community Center
 Indoor theater, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 MWR area
 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

Women's History 5K run, 6 a.m., Fitness Center
 Jazz Night, 7 p.m., Community Center
 R&B 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., Combat Kick Boxing 3 p.m., Zone 1 gym tent
 Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool

Sunday

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

Country Western Night, 7:30 p.m., Zone 2 stage
 Bingo Night, 7 p.m., Community Center
 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

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

Table Tennis Tournament, 7 p.m., Community Center
 Country Western Night, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 MWR
 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

Wednesday

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

Thursday

Karaoke, 9 p.m., Bunker
 Tae-Kwon-Do Class, 7 p.m., MWR tent

Saturday

Bazaar, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., behind PX area

Tae-Kwon-Do Class, 7 p.m., MWR tent

Sunday

Bazaar, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., behind PX area

Monday

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

Tuesday

Tae-Kwon-Do Class, 7 p.m., MWR tent 1

Wednesday

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

For more information call 828-1340

Doha

Wednesday

Country Music Night, 7 p.m., Frosty's

Friday

Karaoke Night, 7 p.m., Frosty's

Tuesday

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

Wednesday

St. Patrick's Bongo and Game Night, 7 p.m., Frosty's

For more information call 438-5637

Kuwaiti Naval Base

For more information call 839-1063

Navistar

Wednesday

Softball Tournament signup, NLT 1 p.m., with MWR rep
 Cribbage Tournament Practice, 8 a.m., Rec tent
 Basketball Tournament, 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., basketball court
 Female Self Defense class, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., basketball court
 Aerobics Class, 6 p.m., Game tent

Thursday

Softball Tournament signup, NLT 1 p.m., with MWR rep
 Cribbage Tournament Practice, 8 a.m., Rec tent
 Basketball Tournament, 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., basketball court
 Karate Class, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., basketball court

Friday

Bazaar, 9:30 a.m. - 5 p.m., MWR basketball court
 Softball Tournament signup, NLT 1 p.m., with MWR rep
 Cribbage Tournament Practice, 8 a.m., Rec tent
 Basketball Tournament, 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., basketball court
 Aerobics Class, 6 p.m., Game tent

Saturday

Cribbage Tournament, 8 - 10 a.m. and 6 - 10 p.m., MWR Rec tent
 Basketball Tournament, 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., basketball court

Sunday

Cribbage Tournament, 8 - 10 a.m. and 6 - 10 p.m., MWR Rec tent
 Basketball Tournament, 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., basketball court

Monday

Poker Tournament Practice, 8 a.m.- 10 p.m., MWR Rec tent
 Checkers Tournament signup with MWR rep, NLT 1 p.m. Feb. 18
 Female Self Defense class, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., basketball court
 Aerobics Class, 6 p.m., Game tent
Tuesday
 Poker Tournament Practice, 8 a.m.- 10 p.m.,

MWR Rec tent

Checkers Tournament signup with MWR rep, NLT 1 p.m. Feb. 18

Karate Class, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., basketball court

Wednesday

Poker Tournament Practice, 8 a.m.- 10 p.m., MWR Rec tent
 Checkers Tournament signup with MWR rep, NLT 1 p.m. Feb. 18
 Female Self Defense class, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., basketball court
 Aerobics Class, 6 p.m., Game tent
 For more information call 844-1137

Spearhead/SPOD

For more information call 825-1302

Victory

Monday

Movie Night, 5 - 8 p.m., MWR tent

Tuesday

Bingo Night, 8 p.m., MWR tent

Wednesday

Bazaar, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., behind PX

Hip Hop Night, 8 p.m., MWR tent

For more information call 823-1033

Virginia

Wednesday

Ping Pong Tournament, 6 p.m., MWR tent
 Country Western Night, 7 p.m., Dusty Room

Thursday

Horseshoe Tournament, 3 p.m., Dusty Room
 Karaoke Night, 7 p.m., Dusty Room

Friday

Spa Day, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., MWR tent
 Salsa Night, 7 p.m., Dusty Room

Saturday

Billiards-Singles Tournament, 5 p.m. MWR tent
 Hip Hop and R&B Night, 7 p.m., Dusty Room

Sunday

Billiards 2-on-2 Tournament, 6 p.m., MWR tent
 Old School Jams, 7 p.m., Dusty Room

Monday

Unit Fued, 6 p.m., MWR tent
 Movie Night, 7 p.m., Dusty Room

Tuesday

Bazaar, 10 a.m. - 8 p.m., Dusty Room
 Bingo Night, 7 p.m., Old Chapel

Wednesday

Chess Tournament, 3 p.m., MWR tent
 Country Western Night, 7 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

Send your community events to the Desert Voice editor at matthew.millham@arifjan.arcent.army.mil

A mother's letter

By Staff Sgt. Stephanie Johnson
1158th Transportation Company

What will come in the next few weeks?
What will come in the next few years?
I wish I knew so I could tell you
So we could prepare
So we could plan
But I can't tell you because I don't know
I can only go day to day
Watching and waiting
Thinking of how I will say goodbye
If I have too
Just know that every day I am away from you
I am with you
We will be under the same sky, and you will be in my heart,
soul, and mind
Every moment I am away
I will close my eyes and hug you and pray for you
Until I can hold you and pray with you again

By Lt. Col. Michael Verrett,
CFLCC C4

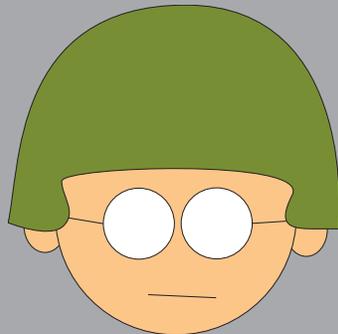
ARMY LIFE

When the 1st Sgt Monday began to fade
His soldiers got together & bought him a memory
stick for his birthday - AND A CARD showing him
WHERE TO PUT it



DESERT VOICE

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Bo knows Kuwait



Photo by Spc. Aimee Felix

Sgt. Charlene Haux, a member of the 1106th Aviation Classification Repair Activity Depot, gets an autograph from former National Football League and Major League Baseball star Bo Jackson March 1. "You guys are doing a great thing. This is the least I can do to give back," said Jackson, who was in Kuwait on his second Southwest Asia tour.

By Capt. Paul Nichols,
377th Theater Support Command

NATURE CALLS

