

APRIL 13, 2005

DESERT VOICE

TERROR TRAINING

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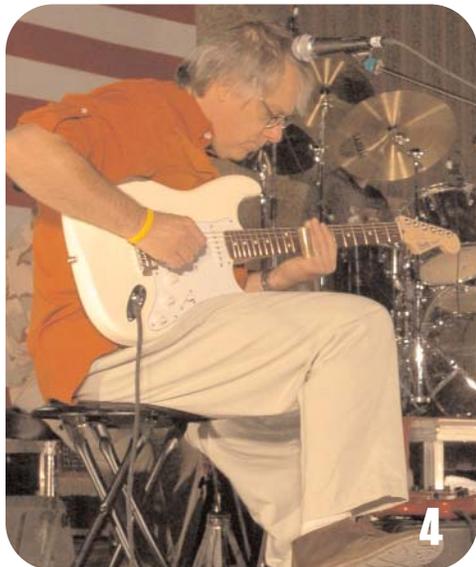
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On the Cover A can of unexploded white smoke sits on the ground of the U.S. Embassy courtyard during a mass casualty training exercise there.
Photo by Spc. Aimee Felix

1st Medal of Honor given in GWOT

From American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, April 4, 2005 – Two years to the day after his father died saving more than 100 fellow Soldiers in the battle for Baghdad's airport, the young son of an Army noncommissioned officer accepted his father's Medal of Honor from President George W. Bush at a White House ceremony today.

The president presented the nation's highest award for combat gallantry to 11-year-old David Anthony Smith, son of Army Sgt. 1st Class Paul R. Smith. Alongside the president and the boy were Smith's widow, Birgit, and the couple's 18-year-old daughter, Jessica.

This is the first time the Medal of Honor has been awarded for action in Operation Iraqi Freedom and the global war on terror.

Smith was part of the 3rd Infantry Division and among the first wave of Soldiers that crossed the Kuwait border into Iraq on March 19, 2003, the first day of the war. He died saving the lives of at least 100 Soldiers who were outnumbered by enemy forces.

Bush described Smith as "a Soldier whose service illustrates the highest ideals of leadership and love of our country."

Smith's mission, as the 3rd Infantry Division moved in to seize what is now known as Baghdad International Airport, was to build a holding area for enemy prisoners of war. "Sergeant Smith was leading about three dozen men," Bush said, "when they were surprised by about 100 of Saddam Hussein's Republican Guard.

"With complete disregard for his own life, and under constant enemy fire, Sergeant Smith rallied his men and led a counterattack. Seeing that his wounded men were in danger of being overrun, ... Sergeant Smith manned a .50-caliber machine gun atop a damaged armored vehicle.

"From a completely exposed position, he killed as many as 50 enemy soldiers as he protected his men." Bush said. "Sergeant Smith's leadership saved the men in the courtyard, and he prevented an enemy attack on the aid station just up the road."

Bush said Smith continued to fire until he "took a fatal round to the head. His actions in that courtyard saved the lives of more than 100 American Soldiers." Soldiers who served with Smith described him as a stern disciplinarian who demanded much of the men under his command, Bush said. Yet Smith also demonstrated incredible concern, going out of his way to make life easier for his Soldiers and their families, he added.

In a letter he wrote to his parents from Iraq, but never mailed, Bush said, the sergeant called it a "privilege to be given 25 of the finest Americans we call Soldiers to lead into war." Smith said he was prepared to give "all that I am to ensure that my boys make it home."

In addition to being the global war on terror's first Medal of Honor recipient, Smith is the first to earn a Medal of Honor flag, authorized by Congress in 2002.

"We count ourselves blessed to have Soldiers like Sergeant Smith, who put their lives on the line to advance the cause of



President George W. Bush at a White House ceremony April 4 with the family of Army Sgt. 1st Class Paul R. Smith, the first person to receive a Medal of Honor during the global war on terror. The president had just presented the medal to Smith's son, 11-year-old David Anthony. Alongside the president are Smith's widow, Birgit, and the couple's 18-year-old daughter, Jessica.

freedom and protect the American people," the president said.

"We thank his family for the father, husband and son and brother who can never be replaced," Bush continued. "We recall with appreciation the fellow Soldiers whose lives he saved and the many more he inspired. And we express our gratitude for a new generation of Americans every bit as selfless and dedicated to liberty as any that has gone on before, a dedication exemplified by the sacrifice and valor of Sergeant 1st Class Paul Ray Smith."

Vietnam Medal of Honor recipients visit troops



Photo by Spc. Brian Trapp

Medal of Honor recipient retired Command Sgt. Maj. Gary Littrell talks with Soldiers in the coalition operations and intelligence center floor Sunday afternoon.

Littrell and four other Medal of Honor recipients from the Vietnam War went on an 11-day tour through Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan as part of an Armed Forces Entertainment inspirational speaker tour.

The Medal of Honor recipients made stops at camps and forward operating bases, talking with Soldiers and posing for photos.

Littrell brought the message that back home he hasn't heard anyone say anything derogatory about servicemembers.

Retired Col. Jack Jacobs, retired Air Force Col. Leo Thorsness and former Navy SEAL and retired FBI agent Thomas Norris. were the other three recipients who visited the COIC.

The night country was king

Charlie Daniels and company bring a message of support to Camp Arifjan troops

Story by Spc. Curt Cashour

The Charlie Daniels Band stopped by Camp Arifjan's Zone 6 April 9, blazing through a more than hour-and-a-half set full of down-home country, southern rock and gospel tunes.

About 3,000 people squeezed into the gravel-filled pavilion outside the new Zone 6 Gym as the six-piece band weaved together hits from the its lengthy catalogue with eclectic instrumental passages that owed much to Latin and jazz styles, but came out sounding undeniably like southern rock.

"I make it my business to be as politically incorrect as I can," Daniels said before launching into "Simple Man," a song that evoked massive cheers from the crowd with its tales about bringing criminals to justice.

Daniels then slowed things down with a barroom-blues tribute to those serving in Iraq. "When I get back from Iraq, I'm gonna walk through the front door, find my baby, and love her 'till she can't stand no more," he sang as the crowd erupted in screams.

But nothing got the people going like the band's cover of "Rocky Top." The up-tempo classic popularized by Patsy Cline brought nearly everyone in attendance to their feet. A few songs later during a brief moment of silence, someone from the crowd yelled, "Rocky Top." Within seconds, Daniels led



Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class James E. Finnigan

Charlie Daniels: In clear violation of Army Regulation 670-1, but no one seemed to care.

the band in another rendition of the song.

"Rocky Top," one of Tennessee's five official state songs, couldn't have been more appropriate. The band's two-week tour of the Middle East, which also included stops in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Iraq, was arranged in part

by officials from the Tennessee National Guard, said Sgt. 1st Class Randy Harris, director of the state's National Guard joint public affairs office. The crowd was stacked heavily with members from Tennessee National Guard and Reserve units, and Maj. Gen. Gus L. Hargett, the Adjutant General of the Tennessee National Guard was also in attendance. Members of 2nd Platoon, A Company, from the 844th Engineer Battalion, a Reserve unit from Johnson City, Tenn., even built the stage for the event.

Throughout his career, Daniels has written and recorded several patriotic songs, and the concert had its share of patriotic moments. At one point, Daniels recited "The Star Spangled Banner," following it with "In America," his rocking homage to the diversity of the United States.

Although the band bears his name, Daniels didn't hog the spotlight. He traded call-and-response licks with each of the band members, including drummer Pat

McDonald, who dueled with Daniels' percussive runs on the fiddle.

Daniels even took a few breaks throughout the night to let the other members lead the show. Guitarist Bruce Brown and keyboard player Taz Di Gregorio led the band in a song a piece. But it was guitarist Chris Wormer's acoustic version of "The William Tell Overture," otherwise known as the theme to "The Lone Ranger," that nearly stole the show.

The concert was full of heroics, but the performance was only part of the band's day. The group spent the hours leading up to the show visiting and posing for pictures with troops at the Coalition Operations and Intelligence Center and the U.S. Military Hospital Kuwait.

The 68-year-old Daniels and his band travel more than 100,000 miles per year playing shows across the United States. In his travels, Daniels said he's witnessed broad support for servicemembers in the form of sustained ovations each time he asks a crowd what it thinks of the troops.

"The media's got their heads up their posteriors half the time," he said. The people of America – the people that get up every morning and go to work and make this country work – they care."

"I make it my business to be as politically incorrect as I can." - Charlie Daniels

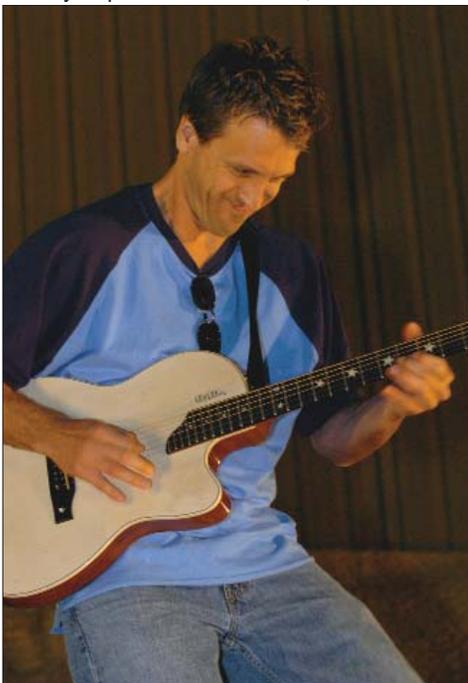


Photo by Curt Cashour

Guitarist Chris Wormer picks an acoustic version of "The William Tell Overture."

Audie Murphy comes to Kuwait

Story by Spc. Jonathan Montgomery

There are no qualms about it. The six noncommissioned officers had earned their induction April 7 into the Area Support Group-Kuwait Chapter of the venerable Sergeant Audie Murphy Club.

After months of rigorous preparation, the frontloading recipients graced Camp Arifjan's theater stage amid a proud crowd. The honorees included Sgt. 1st Class Irene Oliver of the 43rd ASG, Staff Sgt. Gary LaMonda and Staff Sgt. Travis Bowen of the 233rd Transportation Company, Staff Sgt. Leroy Burton of the 80th Ordnance Battalion, Sgt. Jermaine Nelson of the 483rd Transportation Battalion, and Sgt. Darnell Williams of Third U.S. Army/Coalition Forces Land Component Command.

In order to become part of the SAMC, inductees endured a selection process involving everything from learning the fronts and backs of Army regulations to facing challenges that pushed them to experience muscle failure. "All of this is extra ... nights, Sundays ... for the Soldiers who hung in there, it's a great feeling of inspiration," said 1st Sgt. Adrienne Berkley, ASG-Kuwait SAMC president.

Lt. Gen. R.

Steven Whitcomb, Third U.S. Army/CFLCC commanding general, presented the inductees with Army Commendation Medals after Command Sgt. Maj. Julian Kellman, Third U.S. Army/CFLCC command sergeant major, placed around their necks a medallion approximately two inches in diameter and suspended by a broad, powder-blue ribbon representing the traditional color of the infantry. The inductees were also presented with Forces Command certificates of achievement, SAMC membership cards, crystal trophies, cash and coins.

"It's an honor and a privilege to be in such a prestigious club," said LaMonda about the first SAMC induction ceremony held by the newly-formed Kuwait Chapter, which also will play host to Soldiers serving in Iraq, Afghanistan and Qatar.

The club, which spread Army-wide to all NCOs in 1994, helps to raise community awareness about the military through fundraisers and other charitable acts. In addition to aiding the community, SAMC members, like all NCOs, must continue the mission of training Soldiers to become

future leaders. "The [SAMC] means I can further help subordinate Soldiers to accomplish what they want to accomplish," said Burton.

Prior to being formally inducted, the honorees were each introduced to the audience by their private first class, specialist and sergeant sponsors. These enlisted Soldiers explained how their NCO counterparts acted as mentors to them early on in their military careers. Under such tutelage, the sponsors said they learned lessons that exemplified the standards of leadership and excellence, lessons like never giving less than your all, being all you can be, being challenged from the start, and leading from the front.

Following the induction and awards presentation, Whitcomb gave his remarks on the importance of becoming part of the SAMC. "When I was up in Baghdad, I saw a lot of Sergeant Audie Murphys. Down in Kuwait, I see a lot of Audie Murphys," he said. "Every single one of you can rise to the occasion

and can be a Sergeant Audie Murphy if you want to."

As the individual Soldier rises to the occasion, so does the Army serving a nation at war, said Whitcomb. The training of

chevrons and rockers has garnered international attention and acclaim. "Other countries ask, 'how do we build an NCO corps like the United States does?'" he said.

The key to establishing and sustaining a cohesive NCO support channel comes from taking care of Soldiers, said Whitcomb. "NCOs know the boot size of their Soldier, their physical training score, their financial problems, their children's names, and how they work in the dark," he said. "They take Soldiers under their wing; take them from the dark side to the light side."

Whitcomb spoke about Sgt. 1st Class Paul R. Smith, who is the first Medal of Honor recipient in the global war on terrorism. "I don't know if Sgt. 1st Class Paul Smith was a Sergeant Audie Murphy club member, but he is a Sergeant Audie Murphy," he said.

The commanding general then introduced Kellman, an SAMC member, who plans to hang up his desert troyers after 30 years of military service. "He's my Sergeant Audie Murphy," said Whitcomb.

"Sir, thanks for the words," said Kellman,



Photo by Spc. Alex Licea

The Audie Murphy Medal given to inductees.

who took to the floor saying "it's a great day to be a Soldier."

SAMC, he said, wasn't about exclusivity, glamour and preludes to promotion. "There's more to being an Audie Murphy than just wearing a medallion or having another bullet on the NCO evaluation record," said Kellman. "It benefits our youngsters in training our next generation of leaders."

"If you're an NCO, look down and be a mentor," he said.

The history of the club's namesake, Sergeant Audie Murphy, reads more like a book of fiction than fact, but it is heroically true nonetheless. As a boy, he chopped cotton for one dollar a day and was noted for his daring feats and his accuracy with a gun. He had only five years of schooling and was orphaned at age 16.

After being refused enlistment during World War II in both the Marine Corps and Paratroopers for being too small – 5 ft., 5 in. – and underweight – 110 lbs. – he enlisted in the Army a few days after his 18th birthday. After basic and advanced training, Murphy was sent overseas and assigned to the 15th Infantry Regiment of the 3rd Infantry Division. He fought in North Africa, Sicily, Italy, France and Germany.

Murphy earned a battlefield commission for his courage and leadership ability, as well as citations and decorations including every medal for valor that America gives.

He was also awarded three French and one Belgian medal. Lt. Murphy is the highest decorated Soldier in American history.



Photo by Spc. Aimee Felix

A Kuwaiti firefighter hoses down the flames caused by a vehicle-borne explosive at the front courtyard of the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait April 4, during a mass casualty training exercise.

“Terror” at the embassy

Story by Spc. Aimee Felix

Smoke billowed above the few trees in Kuwait after three car bombs detonated, one after the other, on the inner courtyard of the U.S. Embassy.

The hysterical cries of 58 casualties mingled with the acrid smoke, including the cries of a female who screamed for – even begged for the aid of a friend.

Hers was one of many Oscar-worthy performances turned in by mock casualties in a U.S. Embassy mass casualty exercise April 4 that happened when terrorists supposedly attacked the embassy with vehicle-borne explosives.

The purpose of the exercise was to test the response of emergency services to an attack on the embassy, and to test the embassy's response to a mass casualty incident and its lines of communication with Kuwait and U.S. military and medical services, said Greg Levin, regional security officer for the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait.

The mock attack began under the pretense that the embassy was holding a social event to which guests had been invited. During the social, the scenario called for three car bombs to detonate outside the

front gate of the embassy, an attack that was immediately followed by a dismounted mortar attack.

Presumably, this is how an attack would go down, said Levin. The terrorists would launch an assault outside the compound and use that as a distraction to get inside where they would launch an even bigger attack. And, it would likely happen during a social event because that would maximize the potential number of victims, said Levin.

It was a realistic exercise based on realistic possibilities.

In the last 25 years, terrorist attacks on eight U.S. Embassies and consulates throughout the Middle East and Africa have cost the lives of more than 300 people. These attacks and the lack of readiness embassy personnel have demonstrated during these attacks are what have prompted mass casualty exercises, Levin said.

Also, in January, the government of Kuwait discovered there was a terrorist cell planning to attack U.S. assets in Kuwait.

“An attack here is very possible,” said Levin.

Participants gave the April 4 exercise its merited seriousness and realism.

Before the exercise began, servicemembers from the U.S. Army's 62nd Medical Brigade and members of Kuwait's

Emergency Medical Services began applying make-up for the almost 60 mock casualties. The casualties included members of

the 62nd Medical Brigade and embassy workers.

Some onlookers, and even participants, couldn't keep from chuckling at the realistic injuries and theatrics of the victims. For some, though, the realism of the exercise hit too close to home.

Nurse Carol Henderson, one of several evaluating the exercise, said that when she started hearing all the cries for help, it was too vivid a reminder of a time when the lives of more than a dozen people were in her hands, and they didn't all survive. It was Dec. 6, 2004 when terrorists stormed into

“Not every exercise is perfect, but this one went surprisingly well.” – Col. William Kirk



Clockwise from top left: A Kuwait Emergency Medical Services worker braces the neck of Petty Officer 2nd Class Cheryl Grenas, a Sailor with the 62nd Medical Brigade's Expeditionary Medical Facility Dallas. Grenas was one of several servicemembers who acted as a mock casualty for the mass casualty exercise. Embassy workers acting as severely injured victims lay amidst chaos after a supposed dismounted attack was launched inside the embassy compound. A nurse tries to calm a "casualty," who is in hysterics begging for the aid of a friend. A troop with the 236th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) brings a stretcher to waiting victims as the second 236th helicopter arrives.

her workplace, the U.S. Consulate at Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and injured ten people and killed five others.

This year's exercise was a vast improvement from last year's, said Janet Turzak, a registered nurse with the health unit at the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait.

Last year, tempers flared in an exercise that took much longer than it should have, she said. This year, as soon as the attack was launched, embassy employees gathered, and team leaders got a head count and dispatched those among the employees who had been designated as first respon-

ders.

First responders initiated the basic lifesaver skills they were taught by the 62nd Medical Brigade, and after assessing the victims, they made the call for medical evacuation. Four helicopters came to the rescue, two Kuwaiti EMS helicopters and two U.S. Army helicopters from the 236th Medical Company (Air Ambulance). The helicopters, along with Kuwait EMS ambulances, took the victims to three local hospitals.

Everything ran smoothly, said Col. William Kirk, chief nurse of the 62nd

Medical Brigade and one of the exercise observers. He added that he was really impressed with the performance of Kuwait's medical services.

"No exercise is perfect, but this exercise went surprisingly well," said Kirk. Embassy workers did so well that during the exercise's after action review, one of the observers, the regional medical director of the U.S. Embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, said the program Levin and his peers had established was light years ahead. And, she requested that they standardize it to be taught at other embassies and consulates..

Marathon man

When it comes to races in Kuwait, Staff Sgt. Robert Schnell runs circles around the competition.

Story and photo by Spc. Curt Cashour

When Staff Sgt. Robert Schnell joined the Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment of the 158th Corps Support Battalion in 2003, his presence caused a little turbulence among some Soldiers in the unit.

It wasn't that the 32-year-old Active Guard Reserve Soldier did a bad job or didn't get along with his co-workers. His fellow troops were just playfully upset because Schnell's presence meant they could no longer dominate unit races and physical training tests.

"We have some good runners in the unit. They used to come in first all the time. Well, they have no chance any more," said Sgt. 1st Class David Lawrence, a supply sergeant with HHD, a National Guard unit based in Tuscon, Ariz.

Schnell said he's been running for 20 years. Deployed to Camp Arifjan for the past five months, he's spent his time in Kuwait balancing his mission requirements with the sport he loves.

Schnell arrived in Kuwait Oct. 21, after a 38-day trip accompanying his unit's equipment on a cargo ship. But he didn't just sit on the boat the whole time. The vessel was equipped with treadmills that provided Schnell with a unique benefit.

"Running on a boat is like running up and down hills. The waves make the treadmill go up and down," he said.

Three days after arriving in Kuwait, he won the country's version of the Army Ten Miler at Camp Buehring.

Since then, Schnell has placed first in six runs at camps around Kuwait, including a full 26-mile marathon at Camp Virginia in December. Schnell finished the course, which circled the perimeter of the camp five times, in 2 hours, 58 minutes — a time that even the relay teams participating in the run didn't beat.

Of course, Schnell's performances are almost to be expected. For the last six years he's been a member of the men's Army National Guard All-Guard Marathon Team. The 30-man team gets together about five times a year at some of America's biggest marathons to compete, and to help recruit potential National Guard members.

While membership on the team has taken him to exotic locations such as

Finland and Puerto Rico, Schnell said his spot on the squad provides him with something more valuable than just travel privileges.

"It's an opportunity to be part of a program that helps the sport of running and also [National Guard] retention," he said.

Success in running depends on a combination of 20 percent talent and 80 percent hard work, Schnell said. So, when it comes to training, he relies on a rigorous routine to maintain his winning ways.

Each day, he runs at least five miles, and on Sundays, he barrels through 15 miles. In all, Schnell said he spends about 14 hours a week working out in some fashion.

The hard work has paid off. It takes Schnell just 10 minutes to complete the running portion of his Army Physical Fitness Test, and in addition to his victories in Kuwait, he has finished third in the U.S. Air Force Marathon and fifth in the Navy's "Blue Angel Marathon," he said.

Schnell first started running when he was in middle school, competing for his school's track team and later running cross country and track in high school. The native of Menominee, Mich., parlayed his successes on the field and in the classroom into a joint academic/running scholarship to Northern Michigan University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in computer systems in 1994, he said.

Schnell joined the Army in 1995. At basic training, his running caught the attention of his drill sergeants, he said.

"I was approached a couple of times to go to [Special Forces] and Ranger School, but I turned them all down," he said.

Schnell serves as the HHD's motor sergeant, maintaining the unit's fleet of Humvees, trucks and other equipment. According to Capt. Jeremy Magruder, HHD commander, Schnell approaches his job in



Staff Sgt. Robert Schnell jogs at Camp Arifjan April 4. While in Kuwait, Schnell placed first in seven running competitions.

much the same way as he does running marathons.

"He's not super quick, but he does [his job] right and you don't have to check in on him," Magruder said.

And Schnell even manages to integrate running into his family life when he's not deployed. He often participates in family runs with his wife and two daughters where they live in Tucson.

His daughters, ages six and eight, are already starting to follow in their father's fast footsteps. The girls can each run 5 kilometers — just over 3 miles — in about 28 minutes, Schnell said.

After this deployment, Schnell said he is looking forward to competing in large-scale marathons. In the meantime, he just finished designing the course for a 5-kilometer run scheduled for April 13 at Camp Arifjan. The course traces the perimeter of the camp's dusty Zone 6.

While Schell thinks running in the dust will be somewhat of a challenge, he's still optimistic about his hopes for the race. How long will it take him?

"Since it's only three miles, 15 [minutes and] 30 [seconds]," he said.

Troops, check your pockets

Story Spc. Alex Licea

With rubber gloves donned and a watchful eye, agents search for any items that may be a danger to the flight and its passengers.

In the last six weeks, U.S. customs agents have inspected more than 97,000 Department of Defense passengers, 17,000 vehicles, 2,000 containers express and 362,000 bags across Kuwait and Iraq.

For Sailors assigned to the Navel Expeditionary Logistics Support Force, or NAVELSF-Oscar Forward Battalion, headquartered in Williamsburg, Va., the tempo of the deployment has been very high since assuming responsibility of U.S. agricultural and military customs operations across the region.

"This is only the start of what looks to be a very busy deployment for us," said Lt. Cmdr. Dan O'dea, executive officer for NAVELSF-Oscar Forward. "We have our Sailors operating in every camp in Kuwait, and we also have a detachment in Balad, Iraq."

The Navy reserve battalion, specifically picked for this mission last November, operates out of Camp Arifjan. The battalion will be in the region for six months as the first of a two-battalion rotation that will perform customs duties across the theater over the next year. Though the battalions are dedicated to carry out the customs mission, the task is unfamiliar territory for the Navy.

"The Navy does not have enlisted classifications or military occupational specialties that deal with customs," said Master Chief Petty Officer Bill Haddle, command master chief of NAVELSF-Oscar Forward.

Prior to the battalion's deployment, the Sailors trained for two months in Williamsburg with Third U.S. Army Soldiers and members of the Departments of Agriculture, Transportation and Customs. The training gave the Sailors an idea of what to expect in Kuwait and Iraq.

Along with the training, the reserve Sailors also brushed up on basic military skills and qualified on their weapons.

"Most of the Sailors were mobilized in December," said O'dea. "They received hands-on training and got a good vision on what to expect once we arrived in Kuwait." As thousands of duffel bags, backpacks and laptops leave the area, the Sailors keep a watchful eye for war trophies, pornographic material, switch blades, maps and other prohibited items.

Agricultural items such as scorpions, insects, rocks, sand and dirt are also not allowed.

If a servicemember is caught with contraband, customs agents take the necessary action, and the troop could be in serious trouble.

"Servicemembers are briefed a number of times before going through the inspections, and we do have an amnesty area if a servicemember has any prohibited items to give up," said Haddle. "However, if we find one of these items during the inspection, they don't receive another opportunity, and we get that person's leadership involved. If it is a serious offense, we get the military police involved."

Servicemembers can expect customs briefings at checkpoints at military camps known as Rear Area Assembly Points. Troops also get the briefing at the Aerial Port of Debarkation where the battalion inspects people going home on R&R, deploying or redeploying.

The Sailors also inspect all vehicles going to the United States or other military installations overseas for insects, dirt, seed and other contaminants to protect American agriculture and other countries from disease or infestation.

Recently, NAVELSF personnel took on the challenge of carrying out thousands of inspections during the rotation of forces known as the surge. At Camp New York, a team of five to seven Sailors lived at the camp for a week at a time conducting hundreds of inspections before another team would relieve them. "It was a very pressure-



Photo by Chief Petty Officer Kevin Elliott

Petty Officer 1st Class Raymond Echols, right, and Spc. Harvey Bates inspect bags belonging to injured troops who've already returned home at Camp Navistar, March 8.

filled period for us," said O'dea.

Although the job can be demanding, the Sailors credit their success to their job experience and training throughout the years. "We are an older, more experienced group of Sailors ... and I feel it has paid off during this mission," said Haddle.

Going home



Photo by Spc. Curt Cashour

Marines from the 1st Marine Division's 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment huddle up April 8 at Camp Victory for one last briefing before boarding buses that will take them to the Aerial Port of Debarkation. The Marines were on their way back to Camp Pendleton, Calif., after a seven-month tour in Fallujah, Iraq.

The burden of tobacco

Story and photo by Spc. Curt Cashour

Staff Sgt. Keith McLaren takes a drag off a cigarette and expels a thick cloud of smoke.

When the 38-year-old isn't deployed he says he only smokes about three cigarettes a day. Now winding down a yearlong tour with the 1st Cavalry Division, he burns through nearly a pack a day.

"I think a lot of it has to



do with boredom, or the lack of things to do," he said.

McLaren's increased tobacco use underscores the fact that tobacco usage tends to increase during deployments. According to a survey done by the Coalition Forces Land Component Command Surgeon's Office, 33 percent of troops deployed to the Central Command Theater are smokers. That's nearly 10 percent more than the smoking rate for servicemembers in the continental United States, said Col. Eldon Bell, a physician and surgeon with the office.

While many troops say they turn to tobacco on deployments out of stress or boredom,

Bell said one of the most important factors causing increased usage is the cheaper price of tobacco products in theater.

Cigarettes in base and post exchanges average about \$3.25 per pack, Bell said. The average cost of a pack in the United States is about \$4.12, according to the National Center for Tobacco-Free Kids.

Despite their lower price, sales figures of tobacco products in theater total more than \$6 million per month and nearly \$80 million per year. A pack-a-day smoker contributes about \$97 per month and \$1,171 per year to that amount, while a can-a-day smokeless tobacco user chips in around \$108 per month and \$1,296 per year, Bell said.

In addition to the financial burden tobacco can place on its users, a number of health risks are associated with the product. More than 430,000 U.S. citizens die from tobacco-related illnesses each year, and one-third of all cancer cases are linked to tobacco use, Bell said.

But tobacco use causes a number of other health problems including decreased sex drive, premature aging and one of particular interest to servicemembers: decreased night vision.

Tobacco decreases a user's ability to see at night by 33 percent, according to Navy Lt. Allison Travis, a clinical nurse specialist at Camp Arifjan's Troop Medical Center.

Whether deployed troops turn to tobacco for a low-cost form of entertainment or out of boredom or stress, there are ways to get help kicking the habit while serving in Kuwait.

Travis and other TMC staff host free smoking cessation sessions Monday nights at 6:30 p.m. Visitors to the sessions can enroll in a free 13-week program designed

to help them kick their tobacco habits.

At the meetings, tobacco users can consult with physicians and nurses, receive prescriptions for free smoking cessation medications, hear lectures on the effects of tobacco use and participate in support group-style discussions with others trying to kick the tobacco habit.

The cornerstone of the program comes in the form of two medications: Zyban and Nicotine Replacement Therapy patches. Zyban is a pill that works to curb nicotine cravings while the patches distribute a steady stream of nicotine into the system.

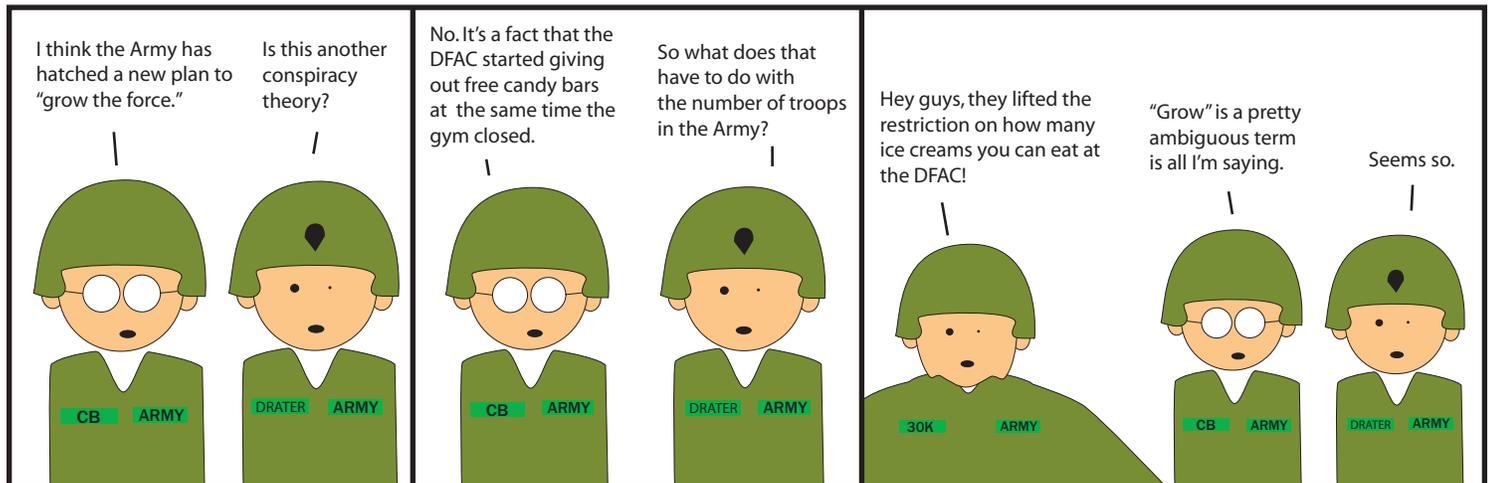
Zyban is actually a smaller dosage of the anti-depressant Wellbutrin. One of the reasons the drug is so effective is because as it works to curb nicotine cravings, it also helps people cope with the daily stressors that sometimes lead to tobacco use, Travis said.

The patches and pills are not addictive, and the program is designed to allow participants to be totally nicotine free without the aid of medication upon completion, Travis said.

Although statistics regarding the program's success are not yet available, Travis said she knows of only two instances of failure. In those cases, the servicemembers relapsed after running out of medication while on long transportation missions. To prevent the same thing from happening again, TMC staff now offer larger amounts of medication to those who are unable to attend the meetings.

The smoking cessation program is not just for servicemembers deployed to Arifjan. The program is offered theater wide and can be accessed through normal sick-call procedures. For more information, contact your local TMC or the Arifjan TMC at DSN 430-1809.

behooverly



Community

happenings for April 13 through April 20

Arifjan

Wednesday

Arifjan Boxing Team, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 gym
 "We run where you run" 5K AAFES run, 6 a.m., Zone 6 gym parking lot
 Grand Opening, all day, Zone 6 town square
 9 Ball Tournament, 7 p.m., Zone 1 Community Center
 Country Western Night, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 MWR facility
 Legs, butts and guts, 5:30 a.m., Stretch and flex 8 a.m., Step Aerobics, 1 p.m., Circuit weight training, 3 p.m., Zone 1 gym

Thursday

Country Music Night, 7 p.m., Zone 1 Community Center
 Open Mic Night, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 MWR facility
 Karate Class, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 MWR facility
 Basketball signups begin, Zone 1 gym
 Cardio kickboxing, 5:30 a.m., Stretch and Flex, 8 a.m. Circuit Weight Training, Zone 2 gym

Friday

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

Saturday

R&B Night, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 MWR facility
 Battle of the Rappers, 7 p.m., Zone 1 Community Center
 Circuit weight training, 5:30 a.m., 8 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m., Zone 1 gym
 Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool

Sunday

X-Box Halo 2 Tournament, 7 p.m., Zone 1 Community Center
 Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool
 Cardio kickboxing, 5:30 a.m., Stretch and Flex, 8 a.m., Circuit Weight Training, 1 p.m., Step Aerobics, 3 p.m., Zone 1 gym

Monday

Arifjan Boxing Team, 7:30 p.m., Zone 1 gym tent
 Country Western Night, 7:30 p.m., Zone 2 stage
 Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool
 Legs, butts and guts, 5:30 a.m., Stretch and flex 8 a.m., Step Aerobics, 1 p.m., Circuit weight training, 3 p.m., Zone 1 gym

Tuesday

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

Wednesday

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

For more information call 430-1202

Buehring

Wednesday

Walking Club, 5:30 a.m., command cell flagpole
 Aerobics, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m., Tent 4

Thursday

Karaoke, 9 p.m., MWR bunker
 Tae-Kwon-Do Class, 7 p.m., MWR Tent #1

Friday

Walking Club, 5:30 a.m., command cell flagpole
 Massage Therapy, 9 a.m., MWR tent #4

Saturday

Spa Day, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Tent 1
 Tae-Kwon-Do Class, 7 p.m., MWR tent #1

Sunday

Spa Day, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Tent 1
 Walking Club, 7:30 a.m., command cell flagpole

Monday

Walking Club, 5:30 a.m., command cell flagpole
 Aerobics, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m., MWR tent 4

Tuesday

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

Wednesday

Walking Club, 5:30 a.m., command cell flagpole
 Aerobics, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m., Tent 4

For more information call 828-1340

Doha

Wednesday

Spring Fling Dance Night, 7 p.m., Frosty's

Friday

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

For more information call 438-5637

Kuwaiti Naval Base

For more information call 839-1063

Navistar

For more information call 844-1137

Spearhead/SPOD

Thursday

Bingo Night, 7 p.m., Tent T-32

Friday

Movie Night, 8 p.m., Outdoor Movie Theater

Saturday

Movie Night, 8 p.m., Outdoor Movie Theater

For more information call 825-1302

Victory

Wednesday

Basketball practice, 6 p.m. (Call for info)

Friday

Basketball practice, 6 p.m. (Call for info)

Monday

Basketball practice, 6 p.m. (Call for info)

Tuesday

Bingo Night, 8 p.m. (Call for info)

Wednesday

Basketball practice, 6 p.m. (Call for info)

For more information call 823-1033

Virginia

Wednesday

Billiards Doubles Tournament, 4 p.m., MWR tent
 Country Western Night, 7 p.m., Dusty Room

Thursday

Karaoke Night Contest, 7 p.m., Dusty Room
 Karaoke Night, 7 p.m., Dusty Room

Friday

Salsa Night, 7 p.m., Dusty Room

Saturday

Spa Day, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., MWR tent
 Hip Hop and R&B Night, 7 p.m., Dusty Room

Sunday

Old School Jams Contest, 7 p.m., Dusty Room

Monday

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

Tuesday

Bingo Night, 7 p.m., Dusty Room

Wednesday

Country Western Night Contest, 7 p.m., Dusty Room

For more information call 832-1045

Sgt. Audie Murphy Club

Study Sessions

Saturdays at 3 p.m.

Bldg. 508 Rm. 25B

For more information call
 1st Sgt. Adrienne Berkley at

DSN 430-1556, cell 983-1594.

Doha/Arifjan Shuttle Schedule

Departs Doha Stop 1*	Arrives Doha Stop 2*	Departs Doha Stop 2*	Arrives Arifjan	Departs Arifjan	Arrives Doha
			0545		
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

Doha/Al Al Salem Bus Schedule

Departs AAS	Arrives Doha	Departs Doha	Arrives AAS
		0615	0745
		0815	0945
0800	0930	0945	1115
1000	1130	1245	1415
1130	1300	1415	1545
1430	1600	1615	1745
1600	1730	1745	1915
1800	1930	1945	2115
1930	2100	2115	2245
2130	2300	0015	0145
2300	0030	0145	0315
0200	0330	0445	0615
0330	0500		
0630	0800		

Are you holding an event you'd like to see listed in the Desert Voice?

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

Kuwait Air Force, 3rd ACR meet and greet

Story and photo by Maj. Justin Hall
Rotary Wing Advisor to the Kuwaiti Air Force

On March 21, five maintenance officers and nine pilots from the Kuwait Air Force visited Camp Buehring's Udairi Army Airfield for a static display of AH-64D Apache Attack Helicopters. Although preparing to deploy to Iraq, Renegade Troop from the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment's 4th Squadron made three of their eight AH-64Ds available to show the Kuwaiti officers.

To thank the Soldiers, Col. Khamis Al-Ferhan, Ali Al-Salem Air Base deputy commander, hosted a March 28 lunch at the base for Renegade Troop's 39 members.

Lt. Col. Douglas Pavek, 4th Squadron commander, not only agreed to let the troops leave Camp Buehring, but piloted one of three Apaches that made the trip from Buehring for the event.

As Renegade troopers and KAF members looked on, Pavek simulated diving fire and made hard banking maneuvers to demonstrate the aircraft's capabilities. Once on the ground, the troops rallied quickly to push the aircraft under a sun shade so KAF members could take a closer look.

Kuwaiti airmen treated troop members to a display of four aircraft used by the KAF:



Members of the Kuwaiti Air Force and the 3rd ACR's 4th Squadron, Renegade Troop, eat brunch March 28 at Ali Al-Salem Air Base's Liberation Hall.

the Gazelle and Puma helicopters and the Tucano and Hawk planes. KAF, British and French personnel were also on hand to answer questions.

The troops and airmen then ate brunch, watched a movie on KAF history and attended two briefings: one about AASAB and another focusing on the KAF Apache program.

After the presentations, Pavek, Renegade Troop Commander Capt. Butch Whiting, and Maj. Justin Hall, the Army's rotary-wing advisor to the KAF, met with Base Commander Brig.

Gen. Ali Al-Khader. The Americans shared training and operational insights with Ali and his officers, and Ali spoke of the friendship between Kuwait and the United States. Pavek then presented Ali with a 3rd ACR coin, while Whiting gave Ali a renegade Troop poster.

Many Americans were heard throughout the day saying, "we should do this more often," and several Kuwaitis said, "come back after Iraq." God bless Renegade Troop and the KAF!

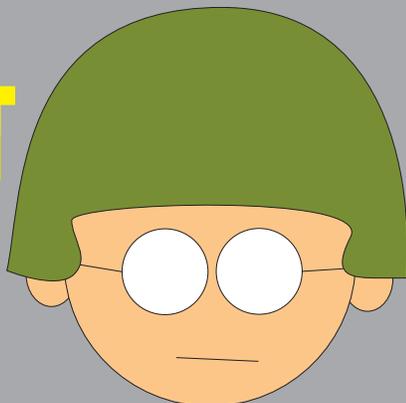
The Desert (deployment to)

by Col. Gregoria Marrero

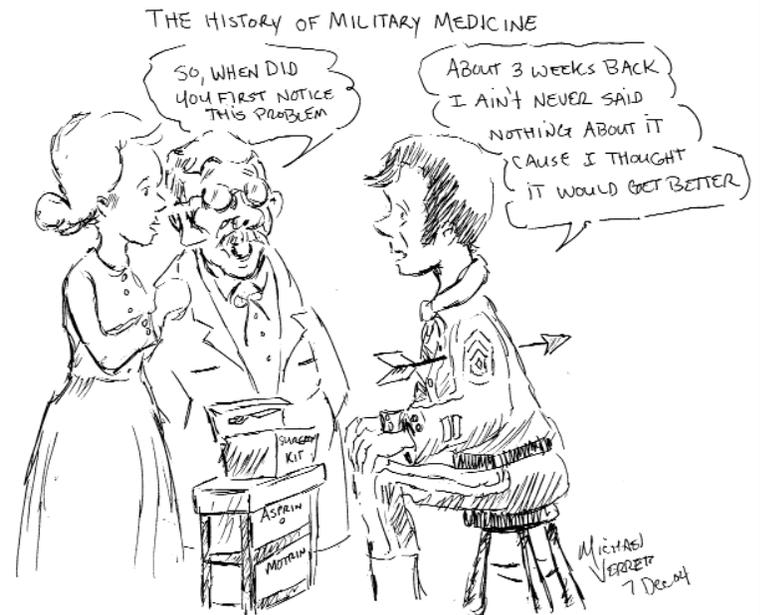
An open invitation to solitude,
solace and stillness under a shimmering full moon
A quiet place to rest, to look back
and to reconsider the journey traveled so far
A silent call to embrace the pain, to wipe the tears
and to let go of unfulfilled dreams....
A never ending opportunity to hold on in gratitude
to the blessings received;
resting assured
Do not anticipate tomorrow
let the sand and blue skies color your fears...

DESERT VOICE

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ARMY LIFE



By Lt. Col. Michael Verrett, CFLCC C4

Correction

In addition to those credited as having contributed to the April 6 submission titled "Here and gone, a border oasis remembered," Maj. Michele Thompson-Shoats, Lt. Natasha Wayne, and Cpt Anthony Leach of 43rd Area Support Group