

FEBRUARY 23, 2005

DESERT VOICE



DESERT MEDICINE

PAGE 6

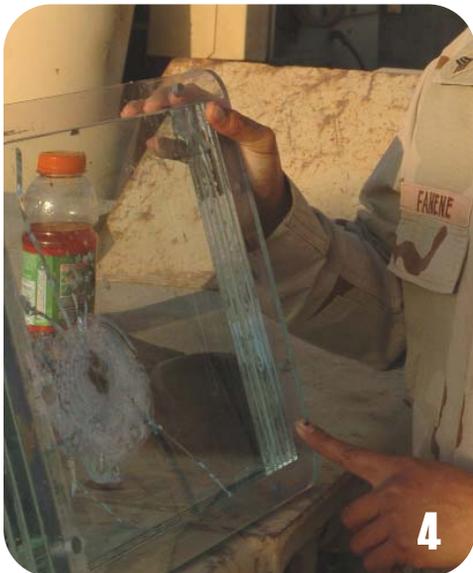
CONTENTS

DESERT VOICE

Volume 26, Issue 28

The Desert Voice is an authorized publication for members of the Department of Defense. Contents of the Desert Voice are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government or Department of the Army. The editorial content of this publication is the responsibility of the Coalition Forces Land Component Command Public Affairs Office. This newspaper is published by Al-Qabandi United, a private firm, which is not affiliated with CFLCC. All copy will be edited. The Desert Voice is produced weekly by the Public Affairs Office.

28



Page 3 Kuwait Liberation Day

This year marks the 14th Anniversary of the liberation of Kuwait by coalition forces in the 1991 Gulf War.

We all know the people hauling equipment and supplies around theater are doing a great job, but here's some recognition.

Page 4 Secrets to our success

The number of troops lost in Operation Iraqi Freedom is low, compared to many long-term conflicts in which the U.S. has been involved, for some common sense reasons.

Page 5 Lessons in Black History

The Niagara Movement, almost forgotten by history, was the precursor to the modern civil rights movement.

Pages 6&7 Desert docs

The U.S. military hospital at Camp Arifjan serves troops deployed to Iraq as well as those serving in Kuwait.

Page 8 Language barrier

The language barrier has done nothing to stop Mongolia from supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Page 9 One last thing

Troops redeploying through Kuwait find it a place to decompress and shed themselves of dollars that went largely unspent in Iraq.

Page 10 I got it at the PX

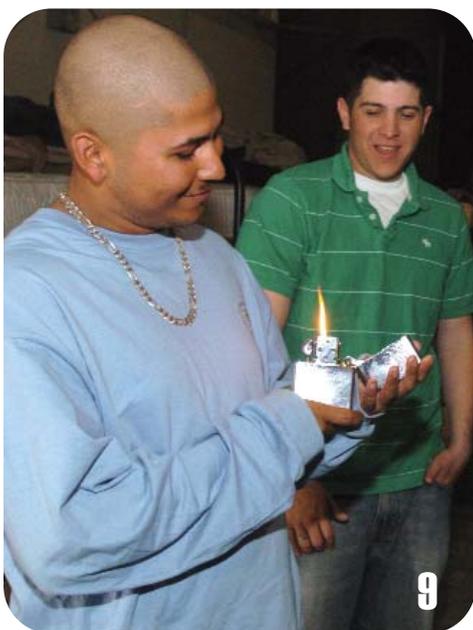
Featuring Success Rice, Fein Zucker, AAFES Supreme Diapers and a Roadmap of Syria. Also in this issue: Behooverly.

Page 11 Community

Bid Whist tournament, Persian carpet seminar, Women's conference, Kuwait Liberation Day, Spa Day, Bowling, Darts Tournament, Iron Man competition, Karate class.

Back page Soldier submissions

Comics from Lt. Col. Michael Verrett and Capt. Paul Nichols. Story by Maj. Scott Joslin.



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

CFLCC PAO Writer
Spc. Jonathan Montgomery



On the Cover Finding medical care in the Kuwaiti desert isn't nearly as difficult as one might think.

Photo by Spc. Brian Trapp

Celebrating liberty with our Kuwaiti hosts

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

At 9 a.m. Feb. 27, 1991 the flags of FREE KUWAIT were raised in a celebration in the capital and across Kuwait. Overjoyed groups of people gathered in suburbs and cities ecstatically congratulating each other with tears of happiness and relief. Portraits of Saddam Hussein were torn; the flags of Saddam's regime were ripped down from public buildings and replaced with Kuwaiti ones. By the next day, the celebrations had reached a fever pitch. The delighted residents poured into the streets, cheering, clapping, blowing car horns, waving flags and carrying large posters of the Emir and Crown Prince, which they had preserved

under threat of death.

Fourteen years later, we continue to pay tribute to the friendship and partnership that exists between the Kuwaiti and American people – and since the toppling of Saddam's brutal dictatorship in 2003 by a coalition of 21 nations, the beginning of friendship between the Kuwaitis and their newly-freed Iraqi neighbors.

A sad note to the 1991 war is the unknown status of more than 300 Kuwaiti soldiers, sailors and airmen who were declared missing in action after being seized by Saddam's forces during the invasion and occupation. The discovery of mass graves by coalition forces in the aftermath of Iraq's liberation two years ago answered some questions, but for the

grieving families of the missing, the answers fall short. On Liberation Day, we solemnly remember also the service of those valiant Kuwaitis who remain unaccounted for.



Lt. Gen. R. Steven Whitcomb

America and Kuwait have a relationship that binds our two nations in the fight against terrorism. We stand together against a new threat as we did during the dark days of Saddam's occupation. Today, Kuwait's partnership with the newly-free nation of Iraq will assist that nation to become a democratic and responsible member of the civilized world.

As we reflect on today's operations, take a moment to reflect on what we Americans enjoy and share with the world – we share the opportunity to be free, not to conquer or occupy. In countries around the world, America's only permanent presence has been the graves of our fallen, who have made the ultimate sacrifice fighting for freedom. Thank you for your service today.



Photo by Spc. Brian Trapp

A display of lights near Shuaybah Port Feb. 18 heralds the upcoming Kuwait Liberation Day.

10 million miles later, congratulations

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

A year ago, Spc. Hope Decosta was studying at the University of Nebraska to become a kindergarten teacher.

For the past year she's been studying for a different classroom environment.

She passed.

On Feb. 7 she and three other Soldiers accepted a safety award from the American Association of Safety Councils.

Drivers in units assigned to the 7th Transportation Group logged 10 million miles from Sept. 26 until Dec. 31 last year with only 16 accidents, no fatalities and one serious injury; that Soldier is in full recovery.

By the way, most of those miles were driven in Iraq.

The AASC, a national organization, noticed the feat when the group gathered last month for its annual meeting and awarded the Soldiers an Excellence in Fleet Safety award.

Decosta, a Reserve Soldier and member of the 308th Transportation Company, was joined by Spc. Erica Prieto of the Texas

National Guard's 1836th Transportation Company, Spc. Mauricio Chi, an active duty Soldier with the 233rd Transportation Company stationed at Fort Knox, Ky., and Spc. Joseph Weber of the Nevada National Guard's 1864th Transportation Company.

Brig. Gen. William Johnson made the actual presentation to the Soldiers during a brief ceremony following a command briefing at Camp Arifjan.

In 11 1/2 months, Decosta has made 26 trips into Iraq and logged a bit more than 26,500 miles. Prieto, with 11 months in country, made more than 25 trips and logged about 15,000 miles.

Chi is his unit's armorer and is charged with making sure his unit's weapons are always ready. Weber arrived in theater about three months ago and has driven on six missions so far.

Decosta tried to avoid the pressures of convoy work in a combat zone by approaching her driving like any other job, she said.

"You know you have to get the mission done. That's all there is to it. You take it as it comes. I had plenty of friends in the unit ... plenty of good people that I talk to. We're

pretty close knit. We don't talk [much] about things on the road. We talk about family and friends and things back home."

For Prieto, the element of danger while on convoy duty was part of the job.

"You basically go expecting the worse. You never know what you're going to get," she said.

Ten million miles and 16 accidents equates to 642,000 miles between mishaps. How did the units in the 7th Transportation Group accomplish that?

Experienced drivers were a key ingredient, Johnson said. "The 7th Group picked up a lot of units that had been here for a while, and we have an extensive system" to keep drivers trained.

Sgt. 1st Class Colin Lee, the assistant truckmaster for the 308th, Decosta's company, hailed the achievement.

"I work for a civilian trucking company [in Nebraska] and we don't do that. It's accomplishing the impossible. But you start by treating [Soldiers] as family. You coach them ... keep their mood up and let them know what's going on. The rest of the time it's on the road. And this is unbelievable."

The secrets to our success

Story and photo by Spc. Curt Cashour

Securing freedom for millions of Iraqis is a tough job. But American troops in Iraq have it easy compared to servicemembers from past conflicts.

As of Feb. 16, nearly two years into Operation Iraqi Freedom, the U.S. death toll for the operation stood at 1,464, according to the Department of Defense. While each death was undoubtedly a tragedy for the families and friends of those killed, the number is dwarfed by the deaths resulting from previous U.S. conflicts.

In Vietnam, for example, the U.S. lost an average of 18 troops per day, according to military historian Albert Nofi, who was cited in an April 20, 2003, article in USA Today. Although the Vietnam rate was a dramatic improvement from the 221 combat losses per day on average in World War II, it was still nearly nine times the daily death rate for U.S. troops in OIF.

The reason for the decrease in casualties: the U.S. military has made strides in several key areas crucial to success on the battlefield, including medical support, communications and safety equipment and procedures.

With each successive conflict, it's become increasingly clear that the quickest way to breed replacements for troops wounded or killed in action is to nurse injured servicemembers back to health so they may rejoin their units in the field, said Col. Eldon Bell, a physician and surgeon with the Coalition Forces Land Component Command Surgeons Office at Camp Arifjan.

In the Korean War, medical officials learned that the quick transport of wounded troops from the front lines to medical care facilities improved the survival rates of those hurt in action. This led the military to assign quick-transport assets such as helicopters to medical units, Bell said. The approach was honed during the Vietnam War and continues today.

By integrating improvements in medical technology, rapid transport techniques and modern communication, the military continues to increase its ability to save lives on the battlefield.

"Now, even a small operation that takes place in Afghanistan or in Iraq has an immediate medical asset usually within 20 to 30 minutes from the time someone is injured," Bell said.

The use of body armor is another way the military keeps its troops safe. While various forms of body armor have been around for centuries, the U.S. military didn't develop a

practical armor system until World War II, when flight crews and ground troops wore vests designed to lessen the impact of projectiles and shrapnel.

The technology has evolved over the years and now comes in the form of Interceptor Body Armor, which guards against shrapnel and 9 mm pistol rounds on its own, and 7.62 mm rifle ammunition when outfitted with Small Arms Protective Inserts. The body armor is just one component in a collection of equipment helping protect today's servicemembers, Bell said.

"We're seeing less injuries because of the armored trucks, and because of the protective goggles and the bulletproof glass," he added.

Sgt. Sefo Fanene has firsthand knowledge of how armor can help save lives. During a convoy in Iraq with his National Guard unit, the 1836th Transportation Company from Fort Bliss, Texas, the 27-year-old's Level 3 armor-equipped Heavy Equipment Transporter was caught in the blast of an improvised explosive device. The explosion put the HET out of commission, but Fanene received only a mild concussion, he said.

Fanene didn't even realize how powerful the blast was until he inspected the truck's



Sgt. Sefo Fanene, a 27-year-old truck driver from American Samoa, shows off a ballistic Humvee window that helped stop shrapnel from an improvised explosive device in Iraq Sept. 6.

ing to the Army Combat Readiness Center.

Officials with the CFLCC Safety Office at Camp Arifjan attribute the decrease in accidental deaths to an increased emphasis on safety within the military.

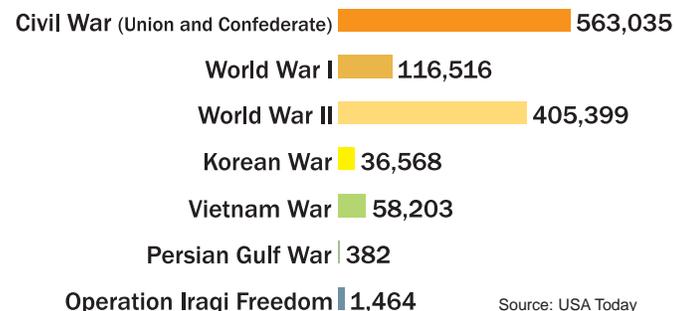
Originally, military safety policies and procedures were mainly for aviation career fields. Now safety practices permeate the military in both garrison and field environments, said Chief Warrant Officer Brian Hakanson, an aviation safety officer for the safety office.

"Every unit from company [level] up has a person serving in a safety role, and nearly every battalion-level function has a full-time safety officer," said Lt. Col. Louis Sulem, director of safety for the office.

Perhaps the most important factor affecting casualties on both sides is the nature of the enemy the U.S. faces in Iraq. Insurgents there tend to favor remote-detonated improvised explosive devices and suicide bombings over direct assaults on U.S. forces. The tactics make it hard for troops in Iraq to identify the enemy, according to members of the 227th Transportation Company, a Reserve unit from Albemarle, N.C., deployed to Camp Navistar on the Kuwait-Iraq border. The unit has been attacked in some fashion on roughly 40 of its 140 trips into Iraq, said Capt. Jeff Schneider, 227th commander.

"It's a good feeling when they stand up and fight us. If 10 of them are gonna decide to stand up and fight us, I can tell you 10 of them are gonna die," Schneider said.

American deaths from various conflicts



Source: USA Today

exterior. "Man, I lived through that," he said to himself.

In many of history's conflicts, protecting troops from enemy attacks was only half the battle. In World War II, for example, more than 50 percent of combat losses resulted from accidents, and the same holds true for Vietnam. In OIF, less than 30 percent of combat losses are attributed to accidents, accord-

Lessons in black history

Story by Spc. Brian Trapp

Sometimes it only takes one man to set events in motion and change history. Sometimes what would seem like an unforgettable event is completely glazed over, depending on who that man was or what he was. Sometimes it only takes one man to help a nation remember.

This February marks the 79th anniversary of Negro History Week, which evolved into the modern Black History Month, to recognize the contributions of black people in the United States. In 1972, Negro History Week evolved into Black History Week, then in 1976 to a month-long recognition of black heritage.

The man credited with bringing black history into the public mainstream is Harvard scholar Carter G. Woodson. He chose February because it coincided with the birthdays of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln.

Woodson thought black contributions to American society were not being recognized. The problem still exists today, said Sgt. 1st Class Kenneth Bailey, Area Support Group-Kuwait equal opportunity advisor. "The education curriculum in general didn't and still doesn't properly acknowledge contributions by African-Americans to America and society."

In an effort to bring recognition of contributions by black Americans to better light, the ASG-Kuwait Equal Opportunity Office and Morale Welfare and Recreation are sponsoring a number of events throughout the month to help build awareness.

Every year a theme for Black History Month is chosen to bring a certain aspect of black history into focus.

"The theme isn't always specifically about the event itself, but all the events that it affected," Bailey said. This year's theme is *The Niagara Movement, Black Protest Reborn*.

The Niagara Movement, a collection of militant black intellectuals and professionals, was founded 100 years ago by W.E.B. DuBois at Niagara Falls, N.Y. The organization's impact culminated with a public address to the nation at Harpers Ferry, W. Va., demanding equal treatment for all men of all races. The short-lived organization was the precursor to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

The Niagara Movement was one of the turning points in black society and one of the first public protests and rumblings of the modern civil rights movement. However, the

movement was largely overlooked because of Booker T. Washington's opposition to it and his influence in diminishing press coverage of the Harper's Ferry event, according to the National Park Service's Harpers Ferry website.

The Niagara Movement hasn't been strongly acknowledged in the past, which is why Black History Month is still needed, Bailey said.

The members of Niagara disagreed strongly with Booker T. Washington's beliefs that black Americans should focus on agriculture and industrial education, stay out of politics and not mix socially with whites. They felt that Washington's policies of working within the limits put on black people undermined the struggle for equality. The Niagara Movement demanded equal enforcement of the law for all races and active political involvement at all levels of society.

The Niagara Movement's push for all races and all people to be actively involved is part of what Black History Month represents, said Sgt. 1st Class Penny Walls, incoming ASG-Kuwait equal opportunity adviser.

"[Black History Month] is for everybody," Walls said. "That's one of the biggest misconceptions about it: that this is just for African Americans. It's put on for everyone to attend and learn more about the culture.

It's there to recognize there is a history and there are resources to learn what happened; and they may not be in the textbooks, but the resources are out there."

People may see Black History Month events as just celebrations, but they are more than that, Walls said. "They're for education." Over the last two decades, Walls has seen an increase in the information available and understanding about black culture. "There is more interest and participation [than in the past]. We have more people coming from the culture itself and other cultures to learn."

In Kuwait, the equal opportunity office and MWR have already hosted a number of events for Black History Month including a prayer breakfast, five kilometer run and Black History Jeopardy. Ceremonies Feb. 26 at Camp Doha and Feb. 27 at Camp Arifjan will finish the month's celebrations and will also feature a fashion show, the reading of the winners of the Black History Month essay and poetry contests, biographies of prominent black historical figures and a guest speaker yet to be announced.

"I would like to think we wouldn't always need Black History Month," Bailey said. "I wouldn't put a timetable on it. I see a possibility that all [ethnic] groups are recognized, year round. Eventually we wouldn't have to have days, weeks or months [set aside] for recognition."

Illinois National Guard Soldier remembered



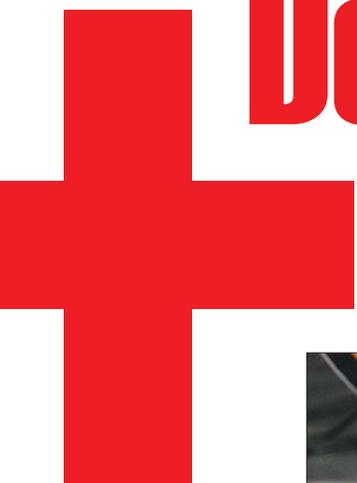
Photo by Spc. Brian Trapp

A Soldier renders honors during the memorial service for Sgt. Jessica M. Housby Feb. 16 at Camp Arifjan's Zone 1 gym. Housby, a member of the 1644th Transportation Company with the Illinois National Guard, died in Iraq from an improvised explosive device attack during a convoy Feb. 9. Housby, from Rock Island, Ill., is the 11th Soldier and third female casualty from the Illinois National Guard since the start of the global war on terror.



Sgt. Travis Patton recovers from a surgery that removed a portion of his intestines.

Desert Does



Story and photos by Spc. Brian Trapp

The U.S. Military Hospital Kuwait doesn't look like much from the outside. It's just a tent complex with a few containers tucked into a corner of Camp Arifjan. But inside the complex, a 44-bed hospital bustles with activity.

Kuwait's only military hospital recently changed hands to a new team, Expeditionary Medical Facility–Dallas. The unit, pieced together from Naval reservists from across the United States, runs a facility that is a bit more humble than the hospitals and universities some of the staff are used to.

What really sets this hospital apart from the local troop medical clinic is that the hospital has two operating rooms, a medical lab, an emergency room, an intensive care unit and the only Computerized Axial Tomography scanner, more commonly known as CAT scan, in theater.

The hospital is here to serve all the troops in Kuwait. They also treat some troops from Iraq. Troops can receive medical care in theater to help them return to their units quicker. The alternative, if the hospital wasn't in Kuwait, would be flying troops all the way back to U.S. Army's Landstuhl Regional Medical Hospital in Germany. For servicemembers who need extended medical care and are on their way to Germany, Kuwait's hospital serves as a stopover on the way out of theater.



The hospital treats more than U.S. servicemembers though. The facility also gives medical care to coalition troops, and third-country nationals injured on the job have also received emergency treatment here. The hospital also coordinates with civilian hospitals in Kuwait for the long-term care of injured TCNs.

The hospital is hitting some of its highest admittance records in recent history, but the staff is taking on the flood of patients in full stride.

Despite being in a tent, "the hospital is actually very well equipped," said Navy Cmdr. Joe Costabile, head of the surgery department and a general and vascular surgeon. "The operating room is very well equipped too. It's a good facility."

The surgery department generally has an operation every day, and when the pace is slow, they perform just one at a time. They have the capability to do up to four operations at once. Most of the operations performed are elective surgeries for common ailments such as hernias, Costabile said.

Costabile left behind a private practice in New Jersey, volunteering to come overseas and "serve the troops."

In fact, the majority of EMFD Sailors volunteered for this mission, some of them even waiving stabilization time following other deployments, said Navy Capt. Jack E. Riggs, commander of the EMFD, who hand-picked a number of the staff members of



Above left, Petty Officer 1st Class Cedric Franklin, leading petty officer of the radiology department, demonstrates the use of Computerized Axial Tomography scanner, also known as a CAT scan, on Petty Officer 3rd Class Keith Laird. U.S. Military Hospital Kuwait has the only CAT scanner in theater. The desert conditions pose problems during the summer with the machine, which shuts down if it gets too hot. Above, Petty Officer 3rd Class Serena Owen, with the hospital's lab, prepares a blood sample for testing in one of the lab's analyzing machines. Left, Cmdr. Roxanne Tweedy, with the hospital's surgery department, parts the curtain from inside the sterilization room to show the view inside one of the hospital's operating rooms before a surgery.

this unit.

"Skill-wise, we have a very good small community hospital sitting right here in the desert," Riggs said. One of the advantages the hospital staff brings to the table is that many of the Sailors work in the medical field every day in their civilian jobs. Riggs himself is a professor of Neurology at West Virginia University School of Medicine.

"We bring over our civilian training of competing for patients. If you're not nice, they won't come back to your hospital. We are trying to make sure everyone is treated well," Riggs said. The EMFD is working to take away the stigma that sick call facilities just impersonally herd patients through.

The treatment of the patients who come in and out of the hospital appears to be in the front of the Sailors' minds. The Sailors try to make sure the patients have a way to pass the time. There are televisions inside the wards, and staff members try to give the patients as much privacy as they can with

makeshift curtains.

Even though a tent isn't the type of environment one would typically associate with a hospital, the tent is laid out relatively similar to most regular hospitals.

The emergency room sees an average of three or four cases a day, and many of those are non-battle injuries from the washrack and vehicle accidents. Through a divider flap in the back of the emergency room is the door to radiology.

Other than the only CAT scanner, the hospital is also equipped with a portable X-ray machine and an ultrasound.

"The equipment they have here is pretty comparable to the equipment I used when I went to school in the civilian world," said Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Cedric Franklin, leading petty officer of the radiology department, similar to the Army's non-commissioned officer in charge. "When we were coming here, I didn't know what I was stepping into, but it's a lot better than what I

thought it would be."

Since picking up the mission at the hospital, Franklin has seen all kinds of injuries come through for X-rays. One of the most gruesome injuries was sustained by a TCN who was injured in an accident at work when a metal bar hit him in the face, crushing bones and severely injuring an eye. Even sights like this are taken as part of the field of medicine.

"Unfortunately, this, like other hospitals, is filled with sad stories," Riggs said.

"Seeing injured people, you get used to it," Franklin said. "Working in a hospital you see it all the time."

Despite the gloomy stories, there will always be ones of triumph and of troops overcoming the odds to recover.

When the deployment is over, no reward will be able to replace the pride and purpose the Sailors feel working here, Riggs said. "That's the only thing that makes it worth it."

Fighting past the language barrier

Story by Spc. Almee Felix

Without the United States ever asking, the government of Mongolia decided on April 17, 2003, to contribute troops in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Almost two years later, Mongolia is sending in its fourth rotation of troops as those from the third rotation make their way home via Kuwait.

After six months in Al-Hillah, Iraq, the third rotation of Mongolia's 150th Elite Peacekeeping Battalion waited for their replacements at Camp Virginia, Kuwait. While they waited, Staff Sgt. Tsanjid Zoljargal, who has little more to do than miss his wife while at Camp Virginia, recounted his experiences in Iraq in the best English he could.

In an attempt to answer the question of what kept him motivated during his deployment in Iraq, Zoljargal offered the assistance of a Mongolian/English dictionary he retrieved from inside his tent. After showing him the words 'motivate' and 'encourage' in the dictionary, it clicked. He understood the question, pointed his finger to the air, and said, "Ah, yes," which was followed by silence.

Trying to piece together the words in his head and after flipping through his dictionary a few times, he finally said "I keep my soldiers focused that the mission was only six months – not a long time, not like the Americans." He added that the support from the American troops they served with and the support from Multinational Division Central-South – the command they were under in Al-Hillah – made things easier for him and his troops.

As he pointed to several cots stacked high with flak vests waiting for the fourth rotation to pick up, Zoljargal said the United States also supported them with a supply of body armor.

Zoljargal and a couple of his soldiers agreed that another thing the Mongolian military was grateful to the United States for was the training a group of U.S. Marines provided the Mongolian military from September 2001 to September 2003. Zoljargal explained that the training, which most of the soldiers in the 150th underwent, gave the Mongolian soldiers the confidence they needed to play a role in OIF.

The training included lessons in patrolling, weapons and explosives, live-fire exercises, tactical procedures for small groups and a practical exercise on how to build engineering facilities during a peacekeeping operation like the one the Mongolian soldiers would have in Iraq.

The training was used by all the soldiers regardless of their military specialty, which in the case of most of Mongolia's deployed troops is infantry. The first rotation of Mongolian troops had an infantry company and a construction platoon, but the second and third rotations have only been infantry, as will the fourth.

Sgt. Erdenetogs Tumenbajar, a driver in the third rotation of Mongolian troops, said he benefited from the confidence the Marine training built in him because it gave him the bravery to face the explosives he'd likely encounter on the road during one of his convoys. While the Mongolians have not lost any troops, the third rotation faced a few potentially deadly situations. During the third rotation's time there, the camp at Al-Hillah was mortared, and while pulling security one day around the camp, Zoljargal had to stop an insurgent who was trying to get into the camp with a bomb jacket.

For Zoljargal, this deployment was a first. And although he thinks he's been well trained throughout his eight-year military career, including some training he went through in England, now he feels like a real

soldier, he said.

Tumenbajar has been in the Mongolian Army for 17 years, and this is also his first deployment. While only about half of Mongolian citizens are in support of the war, he hopes his wife and three children are proud of the work he did in support of what he thinks is a good cause.

Mongolian facts

The capital of Mongolia is Ulaanbaatar. Mongolia has a parliamentary government with a president who is second in command to the Great Hural, the Mongolian parliament.

Mongolia gained its independence from China in 1921, and in 1990 it underwent democratic reform, shifting from its dependence on the former Soviet Union. Mongolia is the largest landlocked country in the world.

The natural hazards in Mongolia are dust storms, grassland and forest fires, drought, and 'zud,' harsh winter conditions.

Electric poles in Mongolia have a concrete base to which the wooden poles are attached. Otherwise, the wooden pole would snap from the pressure of the freezing ground.

Mongolia is mountainous, with an average altitude of 5,183 feet. The lowest point, Huh Lake, measures 1,837 feet, and the highest point, Huiten Mountain in the Mongolian Altai mountain range, measures 14,350 feet.

Mongolia is twice the size of Texas, but its population of about 2.75 million is almost an eighth that of Texas.

Archaeological digs in the Gobi Desert and other places in Mongolia have uncovered human remains dating back 500,000 years.

Mongolians traditionally lead a pastoral, nomadic lifestyle.

The Mongolian ger is a compact tent house commonly used by herdsman in Mongolia. It can be easily removed and rebuilt, perfect for their nomadic lifestyle. The local alcoholic drink in Mongolia is airag, fermented mare's milk.

Mongolia has 136 mammal species, almost 400 different types of birds and 76 species of fish.

The currency in Mongolia is tugrug. 10,000 tugrugs equals \$9.

U.S. dollars dated before 1988 are not accepted in Mongolia.

Mongolia is known as the land of blue skies.



One last thing before leaving

For some OIF troops, Kuwait is a bittersweet chapter in the deployment scrapbook

Story and photo by Spc. Curt Cashour

Although he hasn't seen home in almost a year, Spc. Obadiah Ragins is happy.

He's chomping away on a glazed donut — the first decent one he's had in a long time, he says. While the dining facility at Camp Cooke, Iraq, where Ragins spent the last year, had donuts, they were often too stale for his taste. He finally found what he was looking for at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

Each year, more than 100,000 service-members rotate through Kuwait on their way back from Iraq. It's a bittersweet stay for some. The safer, more laid back atmosphere in Kuwait is a welcome change from the danger and hectic work schedules in Iraq. Despite the improved surroundings, however, Kuwait is still more than 6,000 miles from where troops want to be.

Ragins and his unit, the 1st Cavalry Division's 27th Main Support Battalion Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment from Fort Hood, Texas, spent nearly a year at Camp Cooke, before arriving at Camp Victory, Kuwait, Feb. 13. As one of 1st Cav's advance party elements, they've been driving the unit's vehicles from Arifjan to Victory, getting them ready for a trip to the washrack.

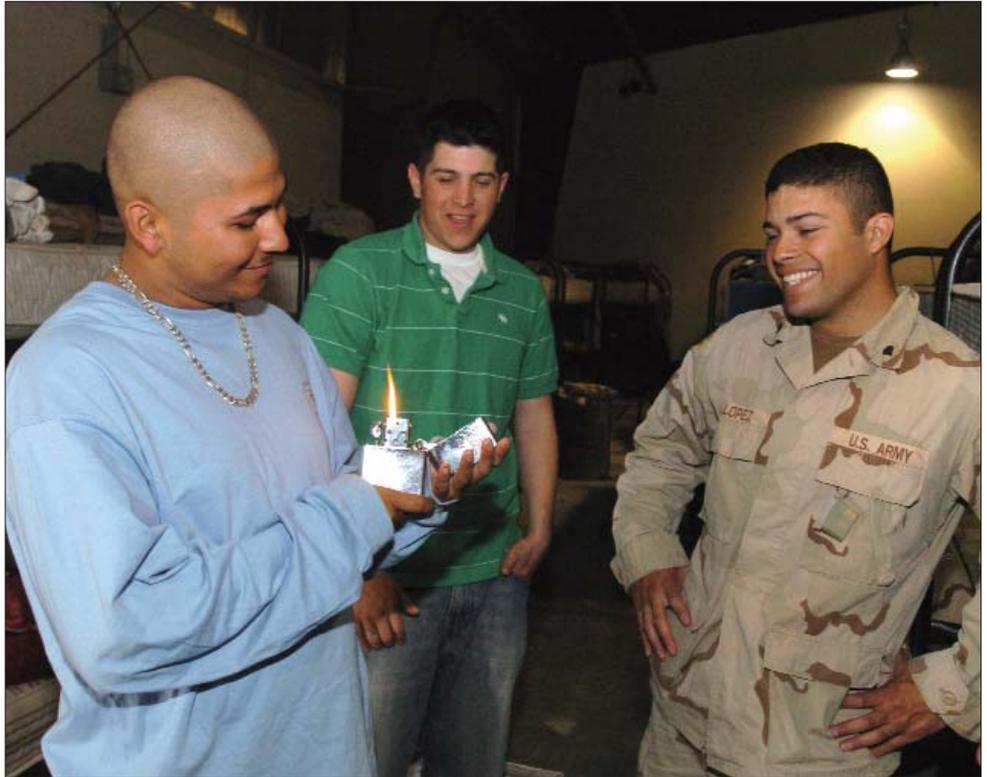
When the rest of 1st Cav leaves Iraq in the coming weeks, HHD members will serve as their redeployment guides, helping Soldiers get rid of excess ammo and supplies as they prepare to head back to the United States.

At Camp Cooke, civilian clothes were not permitted, Soldiers had to carry their weapons almost all the time and mortar attacks were a common occurrence. So HHD members were caught a little off guard when they showed up in Kuwait to find people unarmed and clad in shorts and T-shirts, said Sgt. Scott Kitchen, a 23-year-old signal systems support specialist.

"We always joke and say, 'let's see how the other half lives,'" he said.

The best part about Kuwait for HHD member Pfc. Kent Downs is the absence of what he refers to as "bugle calls." Each time Camp Cooke was attacked by mortars, Soldiers would have to drop whatever they were doing and seek shelter in a bunker. The mortar attacks and subsequent "bugle calls" often interrupted Downs' sleep habits, he said.

Sleep is something members of the 277th Engineer Company have been getting plenty of lately. While most of the



Spc. Jose Guerrero shows off an oversized lighter he bought at the Camp Arifjan PX to Spc. Marcos Delgado, right, and Spc. Harold Lopez. All are members of the 277th Engineer Company, which is awaiting its redeployment to San Antonio.

Reserve unit from San Antonio is already back in the states, a 34-man team is staying behind at Arifjan to ensure the unit's vehicles and equipment get shipped off from the Sea Port of Debarkation, said Sgt. Robert Snow, a quarry specialist with the 277th.

The team washed and prepared nearly 50 vehicles and pieces of equipment shortly after they arrived in Kuwait Feb. 8. Now they're just waiting for space to open up at the SPOD's sterile yard, Snow said.

The free time 277th members have enjoyed in Kuwait is a welcome break from the time they spent at Logistics Support Area Anaconda, Iraq, where they helped crush rocks for concrete and pave roads, including a 70-mile stretch of Main Supply Route Tampa between the Euphrates River and Convoy Support Center Scania, near Diwaniyah, Iraq, they said.

While he and his fellow Soldiers wait for the call from SPOD officials, Spc. Jose Guerrero, 19, has gotten to know Arifjan, shopping in the post exchanges and at the various vendor stands. He proudly displayed an oversized cigarette lighter he bought as a souvenir. Guerrero admitted

he purchased the lighter out of boredom, but said he hasn't spent nearly as much as other Soldiers in his unit.

"Here you have more time on your hands, so it's easy to spend money," he said.

Although their stay in Kuwait is made a bit easier by decreased security concerns and a better quality of life, Soldiers from both the 27th and 277th say their time here tends to feel like an eternity due to the fact that they know it's the last step before they go home.

"It's not much different here. I feel a little bit further away from the combat zone, but I'm still thousands of miles away from where I want to be," Kitchen said. Downs added that he won't actually breathe a sigh of relief until he's on the plane home.

Guerrero is anxious to get home too, but said being in Kuwait will allow him to gradually adjust to his civilian life back in the states, where the thing he most looks forward to is driving a car without performing a preventive maintenance checks and services inspection.

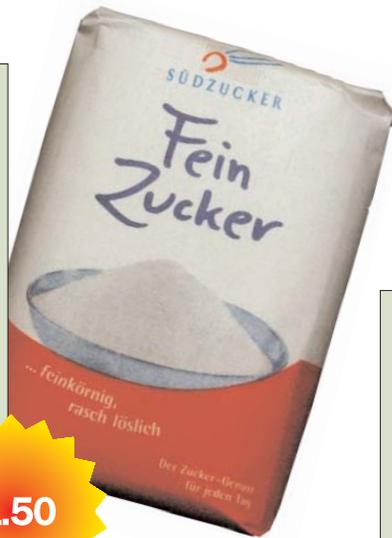
"As long as I'm home before spring break, I'm all right," he said.

I got it at the PX

In case you were wondering

Fein Zucker, 1 Kilogram

When the Allies won World War II and we started throwing around statements like “If it weren’t for us, you’d all be speaking German,” we never thought that actually being able to speak German would be advantageous. But that was before it became necessary to understand what “feinkörnig, rasch löslich” meant in order to prevent service-members from confusing sugar for other powdery white substances found in the PX. On the heels of this realization, we’re forced to ponder: what does it really mean to win anyway?



\$8.99

Geo Projects Syria Map

Not sure about where to go on R&R? How about good 'ol Syria! With city maps of Damascus, Aleppo and Palmyra, this document will help you navigate your way through the country's most popular locations. Sure, Syria's on the U.S. Department of State's List of State Sponsors of Terrorism, but where's your sense of adventure?



\$1.50



\$6.49

Exchange Select Supreme Diapers

Being deployed in support of the global war on terrorism can be tough, especially if you brought along your infant child who has diaper rash. That's why these absorbent undies contain ingredients from popular rash ointments like vitamin E, aloe and zinc oxide. The one drawback: the diapers' extra-large size could make your child's flak vest a little tight.



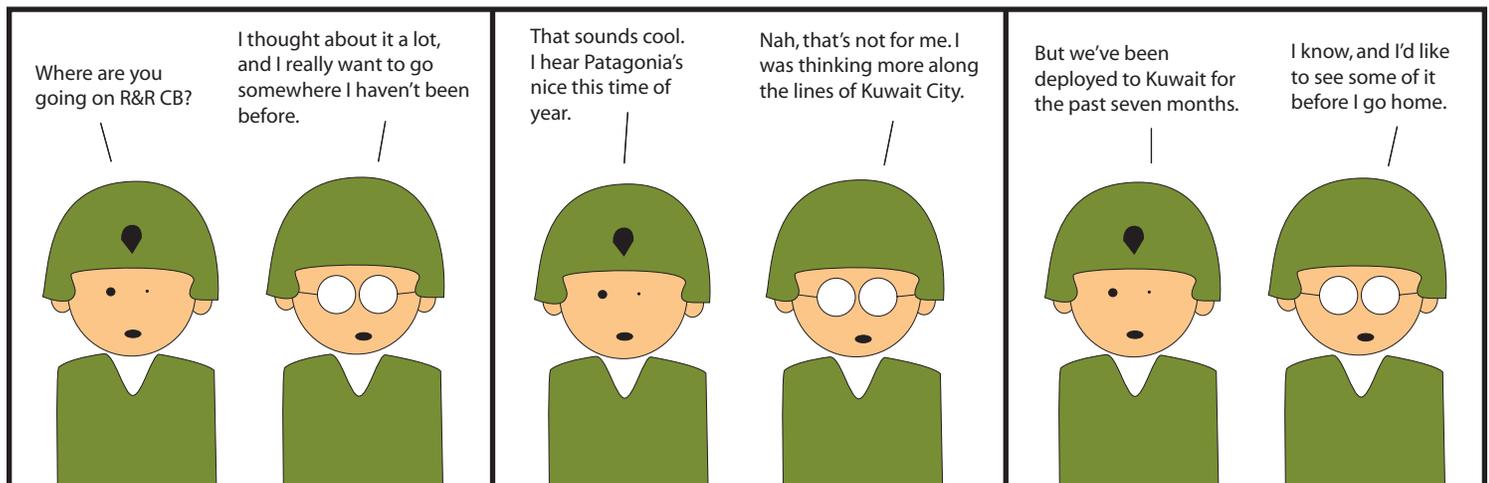
\$0.99

Success Rice, 7 ounces

A military as successful as ours deserves equally successful rice, and this one is impressive. The carbohydrate overcame humble beginnings in one of Vietnam's poorest paddies and spawned a multi-thousand dollar rice empire. If Wheaties is the breakfast of champions, this is what they have for lunch.

behooverly

By Sgt. Matt Millham



Community

happenings for Feb. 23 through March 2

Arifjan

Wednesday

Bid Whist Tournament, 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

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

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

Women's Conference, 6 a.m. - 9:45 a.m., 3 p.m. - 9 p.m., Community Center

Kuwait Liberation Day Display, all day, MWR library

Persian Carpet Seminar, 10 a.m. - 7 p.m., Community Center

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 Conference, 8 a.m. - 1 p.m., 3 p.m. - 9 p.m., Community Center

Kuwait Liberation Day Display, all day, MWR library

Hip Hop Night, 7 p.m., Community 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

Arifjan Black History Presentation, 7 p.m., Community Center

Salsa 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

Self Defense 2, 7:30 p.m., Zone 1 gym tent

Monday

Spa Day, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Zone 6 MWR tent

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

Table Tennis, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 MWR

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

Self Defense 2, 7:30 p.m., Zone 1 gym tent

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

Self Defense 2, 7:30 p.m., Zone 1 gym tent

Self Defense 2, 7:30 p.m., Zone 1 gym tent

Self Defense 2, 7:30 p.m., Zone 1 gym tent

Self Defense 2, 7:30 p.m., Zone 1 gym tent

Self Defense 2, 7:30 p.m., Zone 1 gym tent

Self Defense 2, 7:30 p.m., Zone 1 gym tent

Self Defense 2, 7:30 p.m., Zone 1 gym tent

Self Defense 2, 7:30 p.m., Zone 1 gym tent

Self Defense 2, 7:30 p.m., Zone 1 gym tent

Self Defense 2, 7:30 p.m., Zone 1 gym tent

Self Defense 2, 7:30 p.m., Zone 1 gym tent

Self Defense 2, 7:30 p.m., Zone 1 gym tent

Self Defense 2, 7:30 p.m., Zone 1 gym tent

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

Thursday

Bingo Night, 9 p.m., Tent 1

For more information call 828-1340

Doha

Wednesday

Mardi Gras celebration, 7 p.m., Frosty's

Thursday

Winter Basketball signups cutoff, Fitness Center

Friday

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

Monday

Boxing Signup, Fitness Center

For more information call 438-5637

Kuwaiti Naval Base

Wednesday

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

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

Saturday

Pool Tournament, 8 a.m. - 10 p.m., MWR tents

Sunday

Pool Tournament, 8 a.m. - 10 p.m., MWR tents

Monday

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

Tuesday

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

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

Saturday

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

For more information call 825-1302

Victory

Friday

Iron Man Competition, 3 p.m., gym

Monday

Spa Day, 10 a.m., MWR area

For more information call 823-1033

Virginia

Wednesday

Billiards-Singles Tournament, 6 p.m., MWR tent

Thursday

Spades Tournament, 6 p.m., Dusty Room

Friday

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

Saturday

Trivia Contest, 6 p.m., MWR tent

Sunday

Checkers Tournament, 3 p.m., MWR tent

Monday

Foosball Tournament, 6 p.m., MWR tent

Tuesday

Arm Wrestling Contest, 5 p.m., MWR tent

Wednesday

Bazaar, 10 a.m. - 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

Doha/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		

Couple receive Purple Hearts

Story by Maj. Scott Joslin,
1/178th Field Artillery

For Sgt. Scott A. Montgomery and Sgt. Stephanie C. Montgomery, Valentine's Day will forever hold a special place in each of their hearts as each Soldier was presented a Purple Heart in recognition of wounds received as a result of hostile action in the performance of their duties. The North Myrtle Beach, S.C., couple, members of South Carolina Army National Guard units, deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, pinned each other's awards during a ceremony on Valentine's Day in northern Kuwait.

Sgt. Scott Montgomery is a member of Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, 178th Field Artillery of Andrews, SC. Before deploying with his unit, Scott was busy with the motorcycle unit of the traffic division of the North Myrtle Beach Police Department, where he has worked for more than three years. He is also a certified firefighter, and prior to his Guard service spent four years in the Navy.

By Lt. Col. Michael Verrett,
CFLCC C4

Scott was wounded Oct. 14, 2004, during his first mission into Iraq. While serving as a gunner on a convoy escort team headed to a logistics base in Iraq, Scott was wounded when his vehicle was attacked with an improvised explosive device. After he was transported to a U.S. military medical treatment facility in Iraq, Stephanie Montgomery, who is also serving in Iraq, was notified of her husband's injury and was sent to be with him during his recovery.

After reuniting with Stephanie, Scott revealed to his chain of command that his wife, a member of the 111th Signal Battalion's Charlie Company from Myrtle Beach, S.C., had also been wounded by hostile action earlier in the year.

Originally from Charleston, S.C., Stephanie was studying to be a nurse when she was called to deploy with her unit. She had enlisted in the South Carolina Army National Guard in October 2001 in response to the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Before the attacks, she had contemplated serving on active duty in the U.S. Navy, but after careful consideration and with her husband's support, she opted to enlist in the South Carolina Army National Guard as a communications specialist. She was wounded June 21, 2004, when her camp came under rocket attack.

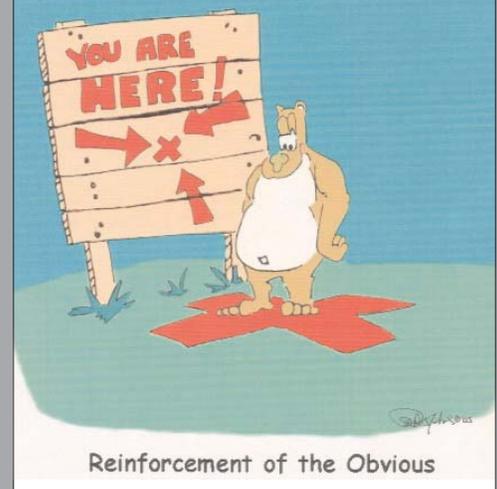
As Scott recovered from his wounds, he told his chain of command that he wanted his wife to pin on his purple heart. Maj. Steve Anthony, executive officer for the 1st Battalion, 178th Field Artillery, suggested that the Montgomerys be recognized in a ceremony in which each could pin the other's medal. As their

units are located in different countries and separated by several hundred miles, coordination was necessary between Stephanie's unit and the 1-178 to finalize the details for the Valentine's Day Purple Heart award ceremony.

With all arrangements coordinated and everyone in place, the ceremony kicked off at 9 a.m. Feb. 14 as members of the 1-178 looked on in formation. After Lieutenant Colonel R. Van McCarty, 1-178 commander, presented the awards, the Montgomerys turned to face the other and pinned the medals on each other.

By Capt. Paul Nichols,
377th Theater Support Command

NATURE CALLS



Reinforcement of the Obvious

ARMY LIFE



DESERT VOICE

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

Safety Corner

Sports safety

From the 377th Theater Support Command
Safety Office

Recreational sports are a great way to stay in shape, relieve stress and help pass time while in Kuwait. For safety, troops should follow these safe practices:

- 1 Warm up for 10 to 15 minutes a stretch before a game
- 2 Wear proper shoes, such as high top court shoes for basketball, to provide proper support
- 3 Tactics such as pushing and tripping should be avoided. Playing too aggressively can lead to unnecessary injury.

In case of a suspected sprain, remember **R.I.C.E.**

- REST the sprain
- ICE the injured area
- COMPRESS the injury by wrapping something around it
- ELEVATE the injured part of the body

Seek medical attention if any of the following symptoms are experienced: inability to move limb, locked joint, persistent swelling or grinding feeling. Additionally, look around the playing area for hazards such as holes, glass and rocks prior to starting a game.

For questions or comments on this information or to register for upcoming safety classes contact the 377th safety office's Maj. Phelps at DSN 430-6113 or 1st Lt. Surgi at 430-5414.