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DESERT VOICE



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On the Cover Sgt. Robert Schaubsluger's Team Losi radio controlled truck jumps a hill at Camp Arifjan's Camden Yards. The truck has been clocked at 38 miles per hour.

Photo by Spc. Curt Cashour

On deck for straight talk

Story by Spc. Brian Trapp

The Navy's top enlisted Sailor visited Kuwait and told his Sailors the Navy has some things to work on.

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Terry Scott came from a visit at the USS Carl Vinson and took time to visit patients at U.S. Military Hospital Kuwait, eat lunch with some Sailors, and then he addressed a crowded community center theater in a town hall-type meeting April 21 at Camp Arifjan.

Scott covered three main topics at the all-hands call: revising the Navy advancement system, putting stricter consequences on physical fitness test failures, and he brought a message of support from Capitol Hill.

"I'd love to be able to stand up here and say one day that everything is perfect, but it's not. We have some things to improve," Scott said.

One of the first subjects Scott addressed was the Navy's advancement exams, and the need to improve the exams to put Sailors with better leadership abilities into leadership positions, rather than those who are just good at taking tests.

The current Navy Enlisted Advancement System relies on point ratings. Points are awarded for time in service, awards, a commander's performance assessment and scores from the Navy advancement exam, a written test that covers general Navy knowledge and job-specific knowledge.

"I think the current system could be improved dramatically," Scott said. For the Sailors who shouldn't be put into higher positions, "I hold leadership responsible." Sailors are being recommended for promotion by their command on their performance reviews when they shouldn't be, he said.

The current exam has been described as a Jeopardy quiz. The Navy is reviewing two new advancement exams that focus more on testing leadership skills and job-specific topics than the current exam does. This is to meet the goal of promoting more competent leaders.

One exam is the five-vector model, which is already in use by the Navy but still evolving. The model is a method of assessment that breaks down in five categories what Sailors need to do to advance. The categories are professional development, personal development, military education and leadership, certifications and qualifications, and performance. This method shows the actual skills of the Sailor taking the test, so

Sailors get promoted based on their level of competence.

The other option being reviewed is a revised assessment test that focuses more heavily on Sailors' knowledge of their own job field and on their leadership abilities. Both the new advancement systems are being reviewed for accuracy and effectiveness.

Not only is the Navy reassessing the advancement system, but Scott also talked at length about the Navy's need to reinforce the importance of physical fitness for all Sailors. To drive home the importance of physical fitness, a reinstated policy of three physical readiness test failures in a four-year period will now result in a separation from the Navy.

"Since the year 2000, we've done nothing but get progressively worse," Scott said. "It's getting worse, not better and our commands aren't reporting it."

The number of Sailors failing three or more PRTs is estimated between 9,000 and 11,000 Sailors. Exact numbers are not known because some commands aren't reporting failures, Scott said. Included in the PRT problem is the fact that too many Sailors are overweight and, for the first time in 20 years, the percentage of Sailors smoking went up.

In response to the news of the crack-down on PRT failures, Petty Officer 2nd Class Jose Soto, an engineering aide with Naval Mobilization Construction Battalion 5, said he was going to take the news back to his Sailors.

"We have to promote PRT, watch the smoking and what we eat, and prepare ourselves to be more motivated to be concerned about our health," Soto said.

The policy for separating Sailors will not come out tomorrow, Scott said. Sailors will have time to get ready to meet the standard, but the policy phase-in will be quick. "The time to start, if you haven't already, is now," he said.

Scott has talked about the importance of physical readiness for the Navy on several occasions, citing the need for healthy and stronger Sailors at all times, not just when getting in shape for deployments. Scott has traveled to talk with Sailors all over the world, gathering the concerns of the forward troops.

"These are significant issues that face all services," said Chief Petty Officer Myland Lewis, a day shift supervisor with Navy customs. "[The meeting] allows us to feed him the information from the front lines

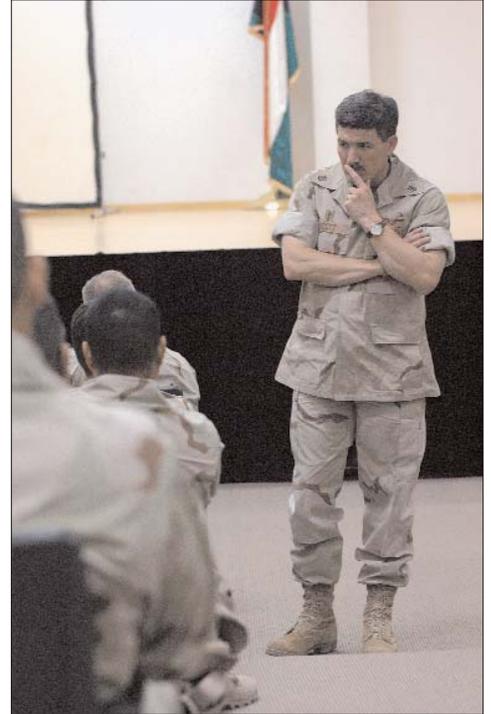


Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class James E. Finnigan

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Terry Scott addresses Sailors at an all-hands call April 21.

and to have the opportunity to listen to him in person, rather than seeing him on AFN. [It's] kind of neat."

Scott brought more than just news of future plans for the Navy, he also brought a message of strong support from the United States.

"I was on Capitol Hill last week and [the politicians], they practically grab me by the arm and say 'make sure they know their interests and our commitment to them is unwavering,'" Scott said. The support comes from all over, like when he has the chance to walk through the airport in his uniform. "Some people have no idea what my rank is; they come up to me just because my uniform says U.S. Navy, and they say 'thank you for your service.'"

The visit from Scott was the first time many of the Sailors had an opportunity to see the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, and his interest in their concerns validated the effort some troops made to get there.

"I like that he showed up here," said Soto, who drove about an hour from Ali Al Salem Air Base just to listen to him. "It was very interesting and worth the drive. He's our senior enlisted; he has a hell of a job on his shoulders," Lewis said.



Ravens, rainbows and dragons; oh my!

Story by Spc. Jonathan Montgomery

Before reading this little piece of anecdotal history, look at what's sewn on your left shoulder.

A mistake in identification by a general, early in the Civil War, started the system of shoulder patches now used by the U.S. Army.

The use of distinctive unit emblems to identify Soldiers as members of organizations began in the summer of 1862 when Union Gen. Philip Kearny mistook some officers for stragglers from his own command.

"The officers listened in silence, respectfully standing in the position of a Soldier until [Kearny] had finished, when one of them, raising his hand to his cap, quietly suggested that the general had possibly made a mistake, as none of them belonged to his command," said Col. Ralph Burr, author of *The beginnings of heraldry in the Civil War – Symbols Rally the Spirit*.

"With his usual courtesy, Kearny exclaimed, 'Pardon me, I will take steps to know how to recognize my own men hereafter.'" The result was an order that officers of his command should thereafter wear on the front of their caps a round piece of red cloth to designate them. Enlisted men of his command also adopted the red patch, which became known as the famed "Kearny Patch."

The idea of shoulder patches soon spread to other divisions and corps. By March 1863, Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker had provided the first systematic plan for the entire Army of the Potomac, ordering that the First Corps should wear a sphere, the Second Corps a trefoil, Third Corps a crescent and Twelfth Corps a star.

A general rule was that within each corps, the first division patch would be red, the second white, and the third blue. When a corps had a fourth division, another color would be designated. In the Ninth Corps, it was green; in the Fifteenth, it was yellow.

"To a considerable extent, the adoption of these corps badges was a morale building factor, and often enlisted ranks contributed materially to the design," said Burr.

The shoulder patch as it is worn today was officially introduced into the U.S. Army in 1918. That summer, Soldiers from the 81st Infantry Division wore a hand-embroidered wild cat badge on the

upper left arm. When they arrived in France, other U.S. Army units adopted the idea. By 1924, the Heraldic Section of the Office of the Quartermaster General was responsible for the research, design and development of distinctive unit insignia and shoulder sleeve patches.

The Department of the Army has since continued the time-honored tradition of shoulder sleeve insignia. The head of a fierce blue dragon, for instance, distinguishes troops assigned to the 18th Airborne Corps, from Fort Bragg, N.C. "The patches make us feel like part of a team," said Capt. Brad Fellers of the 18th Airborne Soldier Support Group currently deployed to Camp Arifjan. "Instead of being individuals, we're assigned to a larger, greater entity."

In lieu of dragons, members of the Washington state-based 81st Brigade Combat Team opted for another legendary clawed creature: a raven. Part of the family crest of George Washington – a raven on a gold coronet – the glossy black corvine bird is used to form the crest of the unit's insignia. The design also symbolizes a combination of three Northwest Indian tribes: the head portion is from the Haida tribe; the lower portion is from the Kwakiutl; and the beak, eyes and mouth are from the Nootka.

Third Army, however, has chosen to work with letters not animals. The unit's insignia, made popular by Gen. George Patton in World War II, contains a white letter "A" within a red circle and shielded on a blue disc. The disc with two borders alludes to the designation of the unit. The white letter "A" stands for "army," whereas the "A" inside the "O" stands for an "army of occupation" in reference to World War I.

It was also during World War I when the 42nd Infantry Division received the name "Rainbow Division." During a 1917 organization meeting at Camp Mills, Long Island, N.Y. Col. Douglas MacArthur, then the division's chief of staff, was discussing the organization of the division and reviewing the National Guard units from 26 states it would include. MacArthur commented that "the 42nd Division stretches like a Rainbow from one end of America to the other." The comment caught the interest of those present and they decided to call it the Rainbow Division.

Just like the many colors of a rainbow, there are many patches of the Army, each containing its own rich tapestry of spirit and symbolism. What's yours?

They were born in the Civil War in the form of a round piece of red cloth. Now, in many more colors and designs, patches not only identify us, they inspire the kind of esprit de corps that reminds some of us why we joined.

How do I get that job?

For some Soldiers stationed in Kuwait, deployment orders come with an added bonus: a promotion.

Story and photo by Spc. Curt Cashour

It sounds like the ideal occupation. Show up to work everyday and watch other people do your job. For some troops in Kuwait, it's a reality.

In U.S. military dining facilities across the country, junior enlisted Soldiers, who normally serve up food or labor over the grill in their garrison jobs, supervise the third country nationals who perform most of the food preparation, serving and sanitation duties.

According to military food service officials, the change in roles for the Soldier is necessary to ensure quality, uniformity and safety in all of Kuwait's DFACs, and the supervisory experience grooms the Soldiers for leadership roles they will eventually fill when they move into the noncommissioned officer ranks.

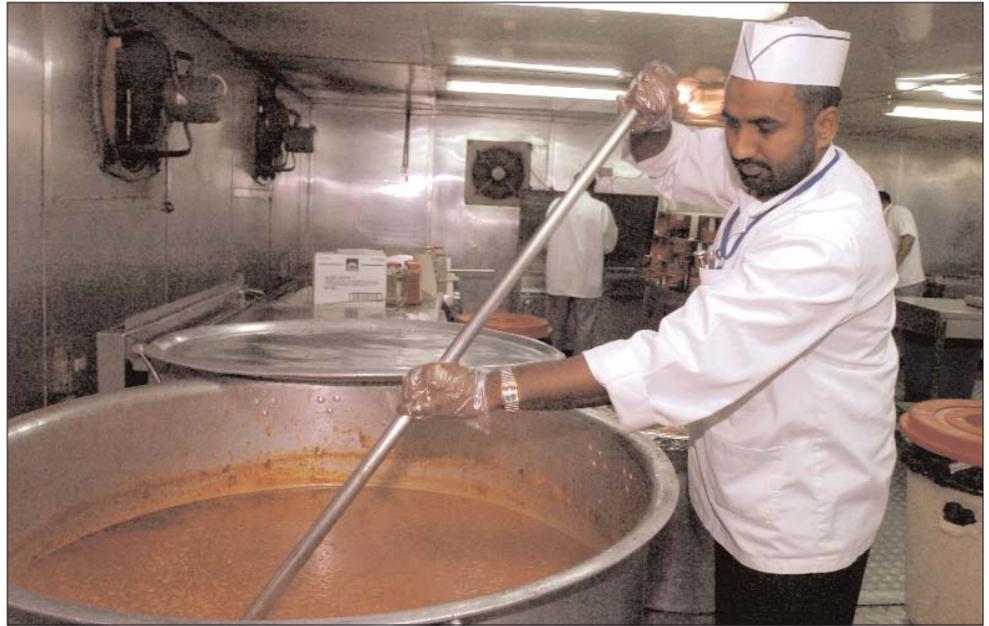
Contracted foreign workers from the Tamimi Global Company perform about 95 percent of the food service operations in Kuwait, said Master Sgt. Roaul Smith, the food service liaison for 10 of the country's U.S. military DFACs.

Soldiers are present to make sure the job is done according to military food service specifications and to ensure only the proper personnel enter the DFAC.

DFAC operations are much different in the United States. Facilities there typically have some support from civilian workers, but Soldiers often take on most of the preparation and serving duties, said Sgt. 1st Class Jeffrey Jackson, noncommissioned officer in charge of Camp Arifjan's Zone 6 DFAC.

Using contractors for the bulk of DFAC work saves the Army money due to the variances in the skill sets and backgrounds of food service Soldiers.

Many cooks in theater belong to National Guard and Reserve units. When not



All Ahmed, chief cook at the Camp Arifjan Zone 2 DFAC stirs 250 gallons of spaghetti sauce. For the last 15 years Ahmed has worked alongside Soldiers in U.S. military dining facilities in Kuwait. Ahmed says he's used the experience to perfect his English speaking skills.

deployed, these troops prepare and serve meals, but on a much smaller scale than the DFACs in Kuwait. It's more cost effective for the Army to put these Soldiers in supervisory roles, where they can focus on the skills they already possess, rather than train them in the art of large DFAC operations, Smith said.

From the serving line to the supply room, Soldiers supervise TCNs and offer tips on how to properly prepare food, serve it and clean up when the job is done. It's not that the TCNs don't know how to do these tasks. In fact, many of them have backgrounds in the food service industry, according to Ameen Noon, a Tamimi project manager for Arifjan's Zone 6 and Zone 2 DFACs.

But, the advice Soldiers provide the TCN's, who hail from countries such as India, Nepal and Pakistan, helps to bridge the culture gap between the foreign workers and American troops, said Sgt. 1st Class Delma Carrasquillo, NCOIC of the Camp Buehring DFAC.

"The TCNs have their own way of cooking. Most of the time, they use spice like there's no tomorrow," she said. Soldiers help the TCNs prepare meals that are more suitable for American taste buds.

But the cultural differences offer benefits as well. Because they come from a wide range of countries, TCNs possess a broad knowledge of food preparation techniques and can offer recipes that go beyond typical American fare, Noon said.

Contrary to what some may think, watching the TCNs work and providing an occasional correction isn't a sham job. The supervisory tasks junior enlisted DFAC Soldiers perform in Kuwait are the same duties that an E-5 or E-6 food service

Soldier would perform back in the United States, Jackson said.

According to Carrasquillo, watching the TCNs as they work can also help Soldiers brush up on their own job skills.

A cook with the 295th Ordnance Company, a Reserve unit from Hastings, Neb., Spc. Marie Green prepares meals in both field and kitchen environments when stateside. At Arifjan's Zone 2 DFAC, she watches over TCNs to make sure they perform their jobs up to military standards. When she gets back to the United States, Green said she plans on putting her new knowledge to use in her unit and her civilian job at Wendy's.

Another Zone 2 worker, Spc. Theotis Strawter, said he sometimes gets bored with supervising and wants to do the cooking himself.

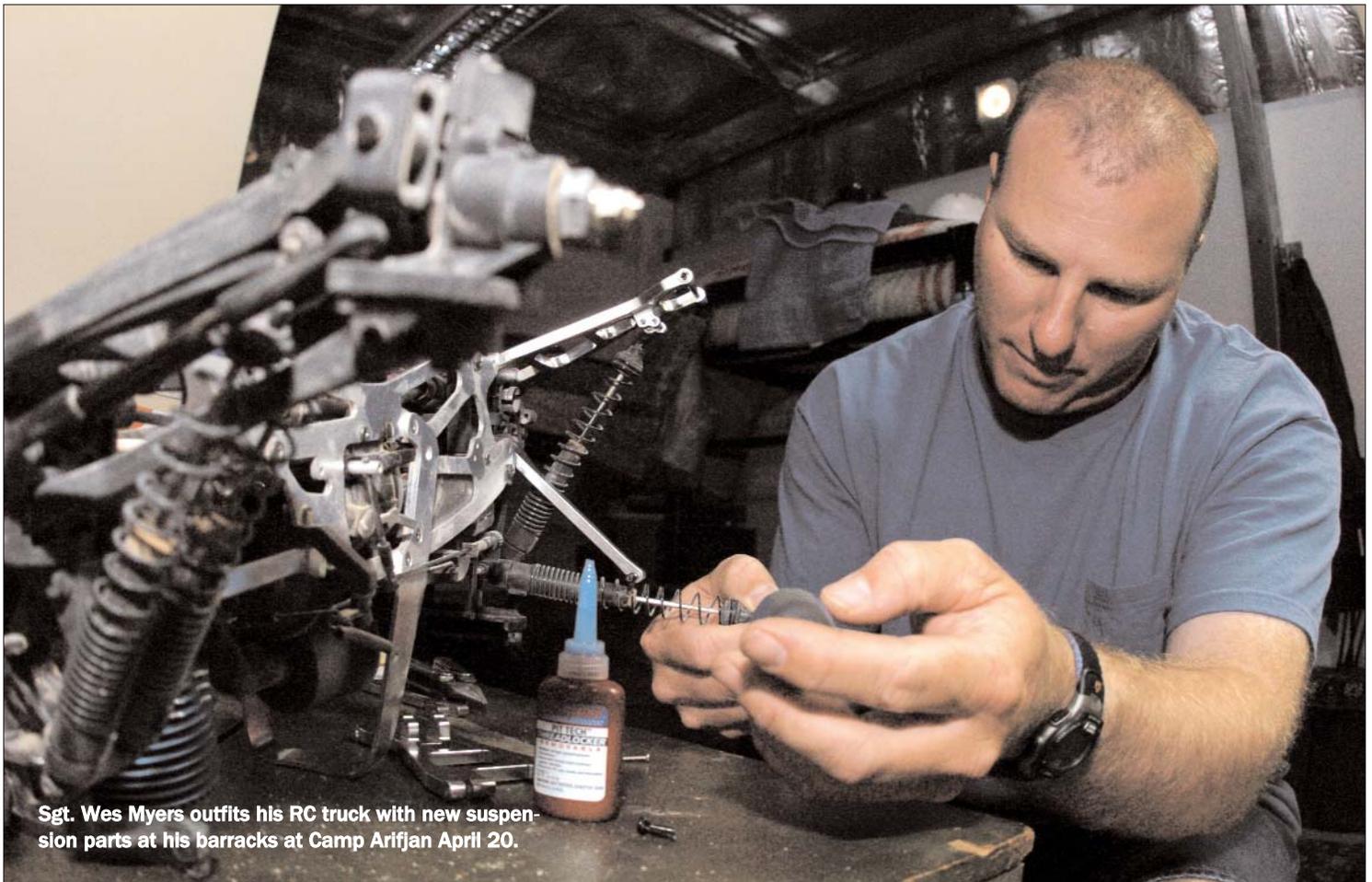
"It's all right, but I'm not doing my [military occupational specialty]," he said.

Nevertheless, the skills he's gained watching over TCNs in Kuwait will soon come in handy. The reservist with the South Carolina-based 942nd Transportation Company is awaiting the results of an E-5 promotion packet he submitted April 20, he said.

Aside from gaining valuable job skills, deployed food-service Soldiers also have the opportunity to share experiences and swap stories with TCNs from exotic locations.

Strawter said that TCNs and Soldiers get along great and often joke with one another like coworkers in any other workplace. And after working side by side with servicemembers, the TCNs begin to take pride in the U.S. military and the job it's doing.

"We're all like one big family," he said.



Sgt. Wes Myers outfits his RC truck with new suspension parts at his barracks at Camp Arifjan April 20.

Photo by Spc. Curt Cashour

Start your engines

Radio controlled fun in Kuwait

Story by Spc. Curt Cashour

Sgt. Wes Myers is proud of his truck, and he should be. He's spent countless hours outfitting it with a new engine, tweaking the gear ratio and replacing worn parts with



Photo by Spc. Curt Cashour

new ones.

But Myers doesn't have to put in long days in a sweaty garage to perform the modifications. He's got a much more convenient place to work: his barracks at Camp Arifjan.

Myers' truck is 1/8th the size of a normal pickup. But it's not an ordinary toy. It has a nitro-fuel powered engine and can reach a top speed of nearly 40 miles per hour.

An aircraft electrician with the 1106th Aviation Classification Repair Activity Depot, a National Guard unit from Fresno Calif., Myers, 38, is part of a growing community of servicemembers and contractors in Kuwait who have made a hobby out of racing and modifying radio controlled vehicles. Racers in Kuwait say the cars are a great deployment pastime and a source of friendly

competition and camaraderie.

A fraction of the size of their real-life counterparts, RC vehicles are small enough to fit inside a wall locker and light enough to carry around by hand. Despite their small stature, some cars can reach speeds of up to 70 mph.

While RC racing has been around for years, the current trend among Kuwait's U.S. military camps dates back to August 2004. That's when a group of contractors completed work on Camden Speedway, an RC track at Camp Arifjan's Zone 6.

"We saw people with the [RC] trucks so we decided, 'let's build a track so we can all get together and race,'" said KBR's Brian Holcombe, a 37-year-old water purification and distribution worker who helped build the track.

As word spread, the popularity of the track grew, but months of racing and Kuwaiti weather took a toll on the course. In March 2005 Chris Theriot, a 31-year-old KBR carpenter superintendent based at Arifjan, led an effort to modify and refurbish the track.

Larger than its predecessor, with longer straight-aways and softer sand, the track sits in the eastern corner of Arifjan's Zone 6. The course is open throughout the week to anyone who wants to race, but the real action takes place Saturday nights. That's when Arifjan's RC enthusiasts meet to test their skills.

Though the number of racers varies from week to week, a typical night sees 15 to 20 competitors. Crowds of up to 100 people have even shown up just to watch the action, Holcombe said.

According to Moore, the mood at the races is more carefree than competitive. "We don't go out for the competition, we go out to have a blast with it," he said.

The competition is a bit thicker at Camp Buehring, which also has its own track. Dubbed Udairi Speedway, the course plays host to races every Sunday night. Based loosely on the NASCAR racing circuit, drivers at Udairi compete for points in a series of seven races, with each event taking on the name of a NASCAR competition.

The track even has its own marshal, contractor Pete Murphy, who schedules races and makes sure the racers' radio frequencies don't interfere with one another.

In the past, local hobby shop Hobby Time has donated trophies, but most of the time winners compete for friendly bragging



Photo by Chief Petty Officer James vanderDonck

Capt. Stuart Wolfer's RC truck catches some air at Camp Buehring's Udairi Speedway April 17. The track was built in February 2005 by a group of civilians and servicemembers.

rights, said Chief Warrant Officer Scott Davis, Buehring's assistant contract officer and an RC racer for the last 20 years.

Despite the competitive atmosphere, Davis said the races have served as a team builder for the 30-or-so RC buffs at Buehring. For instance, if a racer needs a certain piece of equipment to compete, other folks will offer up their own spare parts for a quick fix.

Davis led a team of about 15 contractors and servicemembers in the construction of the speedway in February 2005. Since its completion, the popularity of the races has grown steadily, and Davis and the other rac-

ers have found themselves fielding the questions of curious crowd members.

"People come up, they want to know how they get the trucks, where they get the fuel," Davis said. It's nearly the same position Davis was in when he got to Buehring.

Davis arrived in Kuwait Oct. 12 – without his 40-mph Trinity Spider truck he usually races with. It's not that Davis wanted to leave his car at home, he just thought the special nitro fuel needed to keep his truck running would be hard to find in Kuwait, he said.

Soon after his arrival, however, Davis met a group of contractors who agreed to purchase fuel for him on the local economy, he said. Racers at Arifjan have a similar arrangement with contractors working at that camp. "We get them gas, batteries, parts – whatever they need. If the hobby store has it, we'll pick it up," Holcombe said.

With the help of contractors and the Internet, it's entirely possible to start an RC hobby in Kuwait. But to compete with the racers at Arifjan and Buehring it will cost at least \$400 to \$500, Davis said.

That much will buy a nitro-powered truck, controller and a basic kit of tools and extra parts. The extra parts are a necessity for beginners, Davis said.

"Initially you break stuff because you crash. After the learning curve is over, a lot of these guys go week in and week out without breaking stuff," he said.

While the \$500 may seem like a lot to some, the amount pales in comparison to the \$1200 many racers have tied up in modifications and improvements for their vehicles.

"It's a lot like real racing. There's always that other part that will make you go faster. But it still comes down to the driver," Davis said.



Photo by Chief Petty Officer James vanderDonck

Lt. Col. Phillip R. Lamborn, commander of Camp Buehring, power slides his RC truck around a corner at Camp Buehring's Udairi Speedway April 17.

Aussies hit top five in coalition

Story and photo by Spc. Brian Trapp

In their steadfastness to see a free-standing Iraqi government, Australian soldiers are filling the void left by countries pulling their troops out of Iraq, and their numbers will put them in the top five troop contributors in the coalition.

The Aussies are committing 450 more troops. Their 43-member forward party landed in Kuwait April 17. They off loaded vehicles and equipment, then made their way to Camp Virginia where the Australians will prepare for the rest of the party to arrive.

Once they are all there, the Australians will move forward to Iraq to fulfill their new mission at Al Muthanna and Camp Smitty.

"We've had a long flight; we're very tired and ready to get to Camp Virginia, get our feet on the ground and get rested," said Australian Maj. Gary Stone, executive officer for the Al Muthanna Task Group, in a short statement he made to the press when he arrived at Kuwait.

The Al Muthanna mission the Australians are taking on was previously manned by approximately 1,400 Dutch troops. Now after two years on the mission, the Dutch government chose to pull out of the coal-



The Australian lead party unloaded light equipment then moved to Camp Victory to prepare for the rest of the task group. The Australian contingent is later slated to move into Iraq.

tion.

A mixture of the incoming Australian troops and British troops are taking the reins for the mission. The Al Muthanna region of Iraq is considered relatively quiet, but during the two-year period the Dutch were in the area, two were killed.

The mission is not only to protect the region but to protect Japanese engineers working in the area to rebuild utilities and infrastructure for the province. The Aussies will also be training Iraqi police forces in the area. Some of the more broad patrolling and force protection aspects of the mission are slated to be taken over by the Brits.

As the Dutch left Al Muthanna in March, British forces came in to protect the Japanese engineers on a humanitarian mission in the area. The Japanese constitution bars the military from using force in international conflicts and allows them to operate only in non-combat zones. Japan has been involved in humanitarian and reconstruction activities in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom since January 2004 and without the protection of other forces may have had to leave the coalition.

The Aussie task group's role in training the Iraqi police is vital for achieving the ultimate goal of withdrawing all foreign forces from Iraq, according to a transcript of Australian Prime Minister John Howard at a press conference when he announced the commitment of more troops Feb. 22.

The Australians are there to support the Iraqis and help them build their country up,

said Lt. Col. Mark Elliott, deputy director general of public affairs for the Australian Defense Force. The Iraqis need to be able to defend themselves and they need this support, so "we are glad to contribute anyway that we can."

These additional soldiers will raise the number of Australian troops deployed for Operation Iraqi Freedom – known as Operation Catalyst to the Australians – from about 900 troops to almost 1,400 once the Al Muthanna Task Group deploys to Iraq. The number is down from the nearly 2,000 Australian soldiers who were with the coalition during the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

This is the second deployment to Iraq for a few of the troops in the task group and Elliott said that experience pays off, experience that plays into the smaller, more detailed aspects. Like the troops understand the rank structure of their coalition allies and know they need to go to the top enlisted troops to get things done, he said.

The Australian public doesn't entirely support the decision to send the additional soldiers for the Al Muthanna Task Group, said Elliott. But, the public's support is only divided as far as the government's decision to deploy more soldiers, not as far as supporting the soldiers.

"They know they have very well-trained personnel," he said. "There's a huge amount of pride with Australians. We think we can match up with the best in the world, and that's what we've shown in Afghanistan and Iraq."

Australian facts

A species of earthworm in Australia grows up to 10 feet in length.

The sting of the sea-wasp jelly-fish found off the coasts of Australia causes death within minutes. About 60 people have died from it in the past 25 years.

The most poisonous sea and land snakes come from Australia.

The Little River Band, The Bee Gees, Nick Cave, INXS, AC/DC, Midnight Oil, Silverchair, and, Kylie Minogue all have Australian origins.

In Australia, fanny is slang for vagina.

The feral camel population in Australia is estimated at around 400,000 to 500,000 and growing by nearly 10 percent a year. If those numbers continue, the population may double in about 8 years.

Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world.

In World War II Japan bombed the Australian towns of Darwin – headquarters of the unit where many of the task group's soldiers are from – Broome, and the New Guinean town of Port Moresby. The United States and Australia joined forces to fight back the Japanese threat in the Pacific.



From left to right: Hundreds of obsolete rounds, wait to be destroyed. Using a heavy equipment machine, Soldiers of the 295th Ordnance Company lift a pallet of ammunition they are about to store in one of more than 650 ammo containers scheduled to head back to the United States in May. Spc. Shawn Gray, 295th, inspects a chain of rifle rounds, looking for dents, cracks and scratches. Gray and his fellow Soldiers look through hundreds of rounds looking for any damage that may hinder the ammo's performance.

Pack it up or blow it up

Story and photos by Spc. Alex Licea

When 2nd Lt. Terry Zastrow looks to his right and left while driving around the Theater Storage Area, located three miles outside of Camp Arifjan's limits, a thought comes to mind. There are so many ammo containers it looks like a garden full of flowers, said the 35-year-old Army reservist from Lincoln, Neb. Only these flowers are not beautiful and their contents cause bodily harm.

Since November, Soldiers of the 80th Ordnance Battalion, 295th Ordnance Company have inspected, distributed and packed thousands of ammunitions across the TSA's blistering heat and sanding conditions.

The TSA serves as the site where all ammunition is kept while in theater. After each piece is inspected for serviceability, the ammo is taken to Arifjan's ammunition supply point where units pick up their "fire power."

"We issue and take in ammo from units coming in from [Iraq]," said Zastrow, who serves as a 295th platoon leader. "We clean the ammo and start the serviceability process to make sure it works."

The Nebraska-reserve company has inspected a total of 14 different types of ammunition which range in size from a 10-foot construction beam to an index finger. Some pieces of unused ammo, such as artillery rounds, are prepped for shipment back to various locations across the United States.

These troops [295th] look for dents, scratches, cracks and other imperfections that may hinder the item's performance, said Zastrow. "We have to make sure each piece of equipment is serviceable for our troops on the ground."

However, if the ammo is unserviceable, it is destroyed, Zastrow said. Recently Soldiers of the 295th, along with members of the 319th Ordnance Company, got together at Udairi Range and destroyed about 100,000 net-weight pounds of explosives. The deficient ammo is destroyed with C-4 explosives and is taken to a self-containing area, like Udairi, in order to prevent injuries to the country's wildlife and local citizens, said Chief Warrant Officer Jan Coons, ammunition technician for the 295th.

Since the conclusion of the recent rotation of forces, members of the 295th have been busy loading many unused munitions to be shipped back to the United States.

Despite operations in Iraq, the use of artillery and tank rounds have not met the traditional demands of previous wars. This is mostly due to the urban battlefield environment of the Iraqi conflict, said Zastrow.

The use of these rounds does not fit the current operations in places such as Baghdad, said Zastrow. It is not that kind of force-on-force war.

"Everything from [Iraq] that is not used will come back to us so we can inspect it, pack it and ship it out."

Soldiers of the 295th, along with the 24th Ordnance Company and KBR, have packed

up more than 650 containers express full of ammunition over the past two months. The ammo containers, which are scheduled to be shipped in May, are either reused for training or distributed to deploying units.

There were so many moving cranes and vehicles all around the TSA during the last few weeks it was unbelievable to see, said Zastrow.

In the last month alone, the battalion has been able to finish more than 120 containers, said Chief Warrant Officer Aaron Donat, 295th ordnance ammunition technician. "It all depends on what our mission dictates," he said. Some ammo, such as rifle rounds, is kept at the ammunition supply point and distributed to units that are coming through Arifjan on the way to Iraq.

"After we service each piece of ammo, we place the ammo back in the container or in the magazines," said Zastrow. "We try to reuse our resources as best we can, plus it saves the Army some money."

Troops like 295th member Spc. Shawn Gray inspect hundreds of 5.56 millimeter rounds on a daily basis. For him, the job is just as important as if he were an infantryman catching a group of insurgents.

"My job is to make sure each piece of ammo is ready for combat," said Gray, as he picked up a set of rifle rounds from a table full of linked, unused bullets. "We have to make sure they work."

"These [Soldiers] work many hours to make sure the job gets done right," Zastrow said. "Once those containers are on the ship, we know we did our job."

Leave Kuwait faster. Kuwait will now just be a quick stop along the way

Story by Spc. Jonathan Montgomery

Don't want to wait in Kuwait or any other staging area that's not your final destination? Then Uncle Sam has your ticket out of there, faster.

The Single Ticket Program, a transportation initiative adopted by the Army January 2005 and pushed by the U.S. Central Command Deployment and Distribution Operations Center, looks to speed up the movement of troops traveling in and out of theater.

"The program reduces the average wait time from four days to 24 hours," said Capt. Victor Pickett, DDOC requirement cell planner.

Before the STP, troops depended on pre-determined routes run by the Air Force. Units would have to wait for a flight going to their destination, which could take up to a week. These pre-determined routes also made it difficult to find available seating for more than 300 troops at a time, especially since one C-130 holds roughly 60 troops, Pickett said.

With DDOC in control, officials know when troops are expected in theater, and they can then work on getting troops the necessary transportation to get troops to their end destination. "The Single Ticket program was just a simple notion. It says for every single person we're deploying, we'll give them a single ticket all the way to their end-destination in Afghanistan or Iraq,"

said Air Force Gen. John W. Handy, U.S. Transportation Command commander, in an interview with American Forces Press Service.

The STP lets DDOC identify in advance who needs to move where for each mission through the Joint Operation Planning and Execution System, or JOPEs, which helps coordinate small- and large-scale troop movements. "Each rotating unit is assigned a line number, which is then input into JOPEs," said Pickett. "From there, DDOC can tell a particular unit or brigade to move on a particular day while not causing huge bottlenecks."

The STP has proven to be an effective cost-saving mechanism for the military, Pickett said. "The biggest savings come from preventing loss of seats since redeployment flights are already paid for," he said. The STP also saves the military money by having troops stay less time in staging areas like Kuwait before heading to Iraq, thus reducing the fight over in-theater assets like wash racks and billeting. "The program is a way to reduce the cramping," he said.

The DDOC requirement cell monitors JOPEs continuously while sending messages to Aoudeid Air Base in Qatar regarding who needs to fly from where to where. "DDOC covers the whole theater ... to and from the Horn of Africa, to and from Iraq, to and from Afghanistan," Pickett said. "The STP moved more than 190,000 troops in

2004."

By then the Marine Corps had already adopted the STP. It was the first branch of service to do so. The Marine Corps in Kuwait sends deployed Marines on commercial aircraft to fly into Kuwait City International Airport. Marines are then bussed to Camp Victory, Kuwait, for processing (Army troops are bussed to Camp Doha, Kuwait, for processing) and then bussed to Ali Al Salem Air Base for airlift into Iraq. "The dwell time goal for the troops in Kuwait is less than 36 hours. Redeployment from Iraq works in reverse with a dwell time goal for redeploying troops in Kuwait less than 48 hours," said Lt. Col. John Germain of the II Marine Expeditionary Force.

The means to the STP has been the liaisons, Pickett said. "The key has been the LNOs to keep us updated, tell us whether troop numbers have fluctuated or not," he said. "We don't have direct contact with the units ... LNOs bridge the gap of troop movement."

Aside from the Marine Corps and the Army, other services are joining up as well in an effort to make the program a joint obligation, Pickett said. "Army leaders spun it up for the Army last year, and the Air Force is also on board for it," he said.

The program has proven successful, Pickett said. "The LNOs have done a good job of relaying personnel counts and other flight information," he said.

Saying goodbye

Sgt. Maj. Bennet Estephanepowell, Army Materiel Command logistics support element south west Asia sergeant major, places identification tags on the cross at Chaplain (Maj.) Steven W. Thornton's, AMC chaplain, memorial service April 23 at Camp Arifjan's Zone 1 community center theater. Thornton was serving his second tour in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom when he died April 18 at the age of 46. Thornton is survived by his wife of 23 years, Brenda, three children and five grandchildren. He has two sons in the Air Force and one daughter that lives in Steilacoom, Wash.



Photo by Spc. Brian Trapp

Community

happenings for April 27 through May 4

Arifjan

Wednesday

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

Thursday

Country Music Night, 7 p.m., Zone 1 Community Center

Open Mic Night, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 MWR

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

Audie Murphy Club study sessions, 3 p.m., Bldg. 508 Rm. 25B

Country Night, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 stage

Karaoke Night, 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

Bingo Night, 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

Black Jack Night, 7 p.m., Community Center

Country Western Night, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 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

and 3 p.m., Zone 1 gym

Tuesday

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

Country Western Night, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 MWR

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

and 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

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

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

Sunday

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

Kuwaiti Naval Base

Wednesday

Volleyball, 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., Kuwaiti Gym

Thursday

Volleyball, 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., Kuwaiti Gym

Friday

NCW Farewell Party, noon - 5 a.m. (Call for info.)

Saturday

Swimming, 2 p.m., Barbecue (Call for info.)

For more information call 839-1063

Navistar

Wednesday

Pool Tournament practice, 8 a.m. - 10 p.m., MWR game tent

Self Defense class, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., basketball court

Aerobics Class, 6 p.m., Game tent

Thursday

Pool Tournament practice, 8 a.m. - 10 p.m., MWR game tent

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

Softball Tournament practice, 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.,

Softball field

Friday

Pool Tournament practice, 8 a.m. - 10 p.m., MWR game tent

Aerobics Class, 6 p.m., Game tent

Saturday

Pool Tournament, 8 a.m. - 10 a.m. &

6 p.m. - 10 p.m., MWR game tent

Sunday

Pool Tournament, 8 a.m. - 10 a.m. &

6 p.m. - 10 p.m., MWR game tent

Monday

Chess and Backgammon practice, 8 a.m. - 10

p.m., MWR game tent

Aerobics Class, 6 p.m., Game tent

Self Defense class, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., basketball court

Tuesday

Chess and Backgammon practice, 8 a.m. - 10

p.m., MWR game tent

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

Smoking cessation classes, 10 a.m., Rec. tent

Education/Awareness/Prevention, 1 p.m., Rec. tent

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

Wednesday

Chess and Backgammon practice, 8 a.m. - 10

p.m., MWR game tent

Self Defense class, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., basketball court

Aerobics Class, 6 p.m., Game tent

For more information call 844-1137

Spearhead/SPOD

Thursday

Camp Spring 3K, 7 a.m., North DFAC

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

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

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

Softball league, 5 p.m., Steel Park

Thursday

Self Defense, 8 p.m. (Call for info)

Softball league, 5 p.m., Steel Park

Friday

Movies, 8 p.m. (Call for info)

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

Softball league, 5 p.m., Steel Park

Monday

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

Softball league, 5 p.m., Steel Park

Tuesday

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

Softball league, 5 p.m., Steel Park

Wednesday

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

Softball league, 5 p.m., Steel Park

For more information call 823-1033

Virginia

Wednesday

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

Thursday

Spades Tournament, 7 p.m., Dusty Room

Karaoke Night, 7 p.m., Dusty Room

Friday

Earth Day 5K run, 3 p.m., Dusty Room

Salsa Night, 7 p.m., Dusty Room

Saturday

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

Hip Hop and R&B Night Contest, 7 p.m., Dusty Room

Sunday

Foosball Tournament, 6 p.m., MWR tent

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

Room

For more information call 832-1045

Doha will no longer have MWR events.

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.

Safety Corner

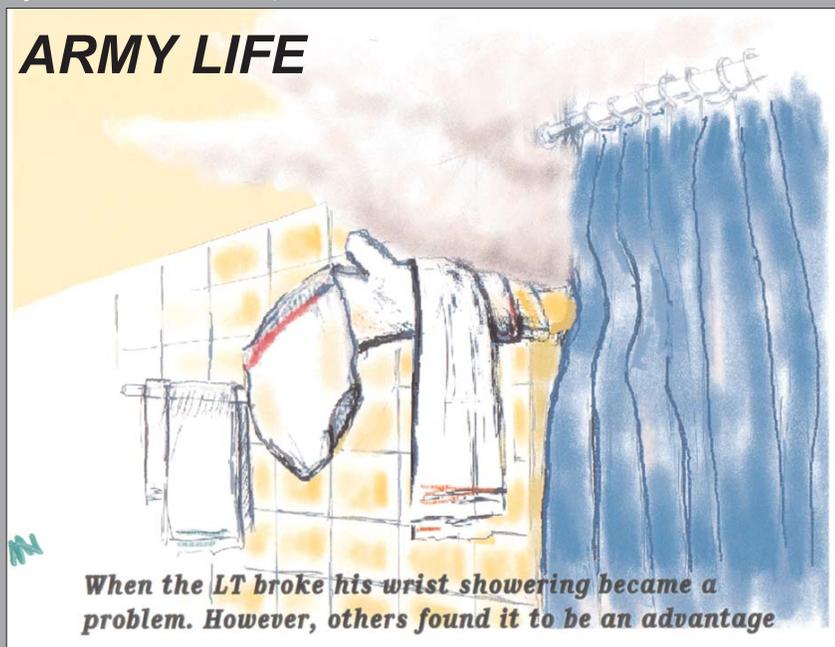
Hydration

From the 377th Theater Support Command
Safety Office

With warmer weather approaching, it is important to start practicing proper hydration. Although tables vary slightly, as a general rule, you should be drink between a half quart and one quart of water per hour. You should not exceed one and a half quarts per hour and 12 quarts per day. Drinking too much water is just as harmful as not drinking enough water. It is also important to utilize work/rest cycles when possible.

To register for upcoming safety classes or for questions or comments on this segment, please refer to the 377th safety office's Maj. Nathan Phelps or 1st Lt. Rene Surgi.

ARMY LIFE



When the LT broke his wrist showering became a problem. However, others found it to be an advantage

By Capt. Paul Nichols, 377th Theater Support Command

NATURE CALLS



"It even picks up the Fashion Channel"

Person in the mirror

By Sgt. 1st Class Phyllis M. Brown
Theater Personnel Command

I am looking at the person in the mirror,
and the person is looking back at me.
I ask myself, "do you like what you see?"
I answer, yes I do.
Then I say I have two questions for you:
Do you like what you see?
Are you being all that you can be?
You answer no, I don't like what I see,
and I am not being all I can be.
I want to change my ways, so please help me.
I am miserable, and I am settling.
I am sick, and I am tired of folks' meddling.
You say the desert will make you look within.
I know I am not perfect, and I know I sin.
I don't see my reflection,
and I can't make a connection.
I am trying to create a personal relationship with my Father.
Sometimes I ask myself, "why bother?"
I need to let go of some baggage.
I need to lay down some burdens.
I have this unquenchable thirst.
You say put him first.
I feel like this is a test, and I am on probation.
You say you are going through a spiritual transformation.
I tell you to look in the mirror again.
You say I can see my reflection,
and I can feel the connection.
I am happy, and I know now who I was born to be.
I am born again, and I am free.

Dedicated to my HHC Cdr & 1SG
390th PSG

DESERT VOICE

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