

MARCH 30, 2005

# DESERT VOICE

## DEMANDING IRAQ TOUR ENDS

PAGE 6

# CONTENTS

# DESERT VOICE

Volume 26, Issue 33

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.

# 33



## Page 3 Purple Hearts

On March 19, CFLCC Commanding General Lt. Gen. R. Steven Whitcomb presented Purple Hearts to transportation troops wounded in Iraq.

## Page 4 Women's History Month

March is Women's History Month, and troops and civilians at Camp Arifjan held a workshop to reflect on the accomplishments of women and to discuss their future.

## Page 5 Retirement cash

The Thrift Savings Plan, a retirement account open to U.S. government employees – including servicemembers – will have an open season beginning in April.

## Pages 6&7 A year on patrol

After a noisy year in southern Baghdad, where they often found themselves mired in mud and sewage, Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 161st Infantry Regiment are ready to head home for some peace and quiet.

## Page 8 Apaches for Kuwait

The 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment helped familiarize members of the Kuwait military with the Apache helicopter after Kuwait ordered more than a dozen.

## Page 9 Zone 2 closure

If you've been here more than a couple months, you already knew it was coming, but now, the closure of Zone 2's amenities is right around the corner.

## Page 10 Bracelets banned?

You've probably seen them all over, but the rubber bracelets touting causes like cancer awareness are off limits in uniform.

## Page 11 Community

Walking Club, Horseshoes and Pokemo tournaments, Spa Day, Bazaars, Open Mic.

## Back page Soldier submissions

Comics by Lt. Col. Michael Verrett and Capt. Paul Nichols. Story and photo by Spc. Tony Miltenberger.



**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

**Desert Voice Editor**  
Sgt. Matt Millham

**Desert Voice Staff Writers**  
Spc. Curt Cashour  
Spc. Brian Trapp  
Spc. Aimee Felix

**CFLCC PAD Writers**  
Spc. Jonathan Montgomery  
Spc. Alex Licea

**14th PAD Broadcasters**  
Sgt. Scott White  
Spc. Charles Spears



**On the Cover** A mosque sits peacefully among the tumult of southern Baghdad.  
Photo courtesy of the 1/116th Infantry

# Purple Hearts from the CG

Story and photos by Spc. Curt Cashour

When a piece of shrapnel ripped through the front of Staff Sgt. Van MCclary's Humvee, striking him in the stomach, he didn't have time to assess his wounds.

Instead, the 37-year-old truck driver, who, at the time, was commanding a convoy through Baghdad, Iraq, ignored his injury and led nearly 40 vehicles to the relative safety of Convoy Support Center Scania a few miles up the road.

In an awards ceremony March 19 at Camp Navistar, Coalition Forces Land Component Command Commanding General Lt. Gen. R. Steven Whitcomb recognized MCclary's sacrifices with a Purple Heart and thanked the Soldiers of four Camp Navistar-based units attached to the 106th Transportation Battalion.

While Soldiers and commanders were gratified by Whitcomb's visit, the high-profile recognition only affirmed the obvious: the important and dangerous mission today's transportation Soldiers are tasked with.

Three units that attended the ceremony, the 172nd, 227th and 1450th Transportation Companies, convoyed hundreds of thousands of miles throughout the course of their deployments and are scheduled to redeploy within days. The fourth unit in attendance, the 518th Gun Truck Company, provided security on many of the convoys.

Lt. Col. James Sagen, 106th commander, said the visit was well deserved in light of the units' accomplishments over the past year.

In his remarks to the troops after the ceremony, Whitcomb issued a similar sentiment.

"We've got guys knocking down doors in Mosul and Baghdad. They couldn't do that without you," Whitcomb told the group, which huddled around him standing at parade rest.

While Air Force planes tend to get a lot of the publicity involved with movements into Iraq, Whitcomb said the support of ground-based transportation units was absolutely instrumental in helping CFLCC move the more than 226,000 troops who have rotated in and out of Iraq since December 2004.

Since the first 106th Soldiers arrived in Kuwait in February 2004, unit members



**Left, Staff Sgt. Van MCclary displays shrapnel from an Improvised Explosive Device that struck him in the stomach, severely bruising him Jan. 1. For his injuries, MCclary received a Purple Heart. Above, CFLCC Commanding General Lt. Gen. R. Steven Whitcomb addressed Soldiers from the 106th Transportation Battalion following an awards ceremony at Camp Navistar March 19.**

from the battalion's 10 units have logged nearly 31 million miles hauling vital supplies from Kuwait to troops stationed throughout Iraq, according to 1st Sgt. Alan Gerard, acting sergeant major of the 106th.

During the ceremony, Whitcomb presented Purple Hearts to MCclary and Sgt. Jimmy Hineman, both of the 227th.

MCclary was injured Jan. 1 when a piece of shrapnel from an improvised explosive device wedge slammed into an opening in his Interceptor Body Armor vest. The impact severely bruised the left side of his stomach.

Hineman earned his Purple Heart in November 2004 near Baghdad. An IED blast near the driver's side of his M-915 truck threw the 39-year-old Hineman across the cab into the passenger seat. Shards of glass from the truck's shattered windshield riddled the side of his face and neck. Despite the forceful explosion, Hineman came away with only cuts and a temporary loss of hearing.

But brushes with the weapon of choice for insurgents in Iraq didn't keep MCclary or Hineman from accomplishing their mission. They each had their own methods for regaining the courage to get back on the road. Hineman, tried to block out the inci-

dent from his memory.

"As long as I was out there on the road, the lower enlisted didn't have to [be]. It's just part of being an NCO – put yourself out there before the lower enlisted," he said.

MCclary, however, kept his incident and the fear of another one like it foremost in his mind.

"If there's something that you fear, the best thing to do is face up to it," he said.

After a year's worth of convoys between Kuwait and Iraq, practically all of the Soldiers who attended the ceremony have clashed with insurgents in some fashion, Sagen said.

And despite a rash of attacks in April and May of 2004, safety conditions in Iraq are better than they were a year ago, according to 1st Sgt. Casey Karriker, of the 1450th.

"It's just a feeling you get when you go through these towns. Last year, you could feel the hate," he said.

With all his missions complete, the soon-to-be home Hineman doesn't have to worry about hate-filled towns or IEDs anymore. He walks and talks with a swagger, kidding around with fellow Soldiers who seem just as happy about the impending trip home.

"You've got issues," one Soldier jokingly told Hineman.

"I do," Hineman said. "But in seven days I'll be home and all my issues will be good."

# Kuwait wraps up Women's History Month

Story and photos by Spc. Alex Licea

From the bloodiest battlefields of the Revolutionary War, the struggles of two World Wars, the challenging terrain of the Asian Pacific and the global war on terrorism, America's servicewomen have stood side by side with their male counterparts in the nation's fight for freedom and liberty. Each generation of women has had a vital role in American warfare, and in many cases they have given their lives in defense or support of America.

Representatives from the equal opportunity office at Camp Arifjan discussed the changing roles of women in the military during a women's workshop at the community center March 23. The workshop was one of many events that took place in March, which is nationally recognized as Women's History Month.

The monthlong event pays homage to women, past and present, who have blazed the path for the women of today and beyond. During the month, women's organizations seek to spread consciousness and knowledge of women's history to a wider audience. The month also takes a broad look at the progress of women in society.

Women and men of different backgrounds attended the four-hour session to discuss the past, present and future of women's history.

"We are trying to raise awareness in both the sacrifices and achievements women have had in the military," said Sgt. 1st Class Penny Walls, equal opportunity adviser for Camp Arifjan's Area Support Group-Kuwait. "It's not just women in the military but women in our society in general who are changing the world."

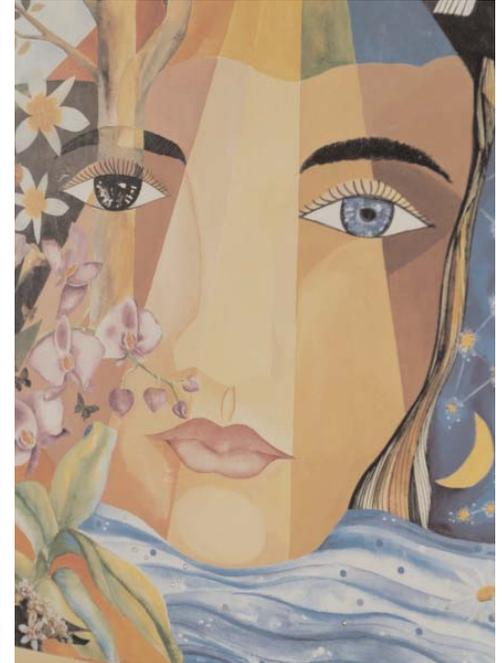
The workshop touched on a wide range of topics, from African-American women to human rights, women's health and women's military history.

One of this year's Women's History Month themes, "Women Change America," addressed the role of women in changing the United States.

"Women are truly changing America," Walls said. "Women continue to grow in a large number of high-profile occupations such as law, medicine, politics and business."

Spc. Kim Gresham, assigned to the 390th Personnel Group at Arifjan, left the workshop with a rejuvenated sense of pride and respect for her heritage as a woman and female Soldier.

"It is very interesting to see how far women have come in the military," she said. "Women have been given the chance to excel in the military and in other industries



Posters at the Women's History Month workshop at Camp Arifjan March 23 paid tribute to American women in the military, left, and one of this year's Women's history themes, "Women of Vision, Courage and Determination," right.

as well, and we have definitely been stepping up to the plate."

"It will be wonderful to share this knowledge with others," she added.

The workshop also paid respect to the women who lost their lives in campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan. Photographs of these women, coupled with stories of their service, brought a silence to the crowd.

"The video memorial of each Soldier was very touching," said Gresham. "It is a reminder for all of us that both men and women are giving their lives for our country."

Although the workshop's focus was on the history of women, men who attended were also touched by the event.

For servicemembers, like Sgt. 1st Class John Tackett, who works for ASG-Kuwait's Directorate of Logistics at Arifjan, the workshop had an instant impact.

"I have a better understanding about the history of women in the military and about some of their health issues," said Tackett.

Tackett said the workshop will help him as a leader with regard to his female Soldiers.

"I have led female troops as a noncommissioned officer my entire military career," he said. "Knowing about the nutrients they need, especially in a field environment, is very important due to the differences in body composition between men and women."

Walls concluded that the event was intended for both sexes despite its focus on Women's history.

"The fact is that both genders learned from it," he said

Women's history, originally recognized with a weeklong commemoration observed in the month of March, expanded to a monthlong celebration in 1987.

For more information on the history of women in America's Armed Forces or to become a member of the Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation, log on to [www.womensmemorial.org/](http://www.womensmemorial.org/). Only women are eligible to become members.

## Women's military history at a glance

- In 1782, Deborah Sampson put on male clothing, adopted the name Robert Shurtliff, and enlisted in the 4th Massachusetts Regiment She is the first woman known to enlist as a soldier in the American Army.
- World War I was the first time women were authorized to participate in fields other than nursing.
- 40,000 women served during "Operation Desert Shield/Storm."
- 88 women were prisoners of war during World War II.
- On Nov 8, 1967, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed Public Law 90-103 removing promotion restrictions on women that kept them from the rank of general. Three years later, the Army promoted its first woman to the rank of brigadier general.

# Stash some cash for retirement

Story by Spc. Jonathan Montgomery

Don't want to be old and broke? Then Uncle Sam has an offer for you.

The Thrift Savings Plan, a federal retirement savings and investment plan aimed at putting more greenbacks in the retirement accounts of U.S. government employees, will hold an open season April 15 through June 30.

During the open season, government employees can enroll in the program or change their contribution amounts. The year's second open season runs from Oct. 15 through Dec. 31.

Government employees, including servicemembers, can start their TSP account online at [www.mypay.dfas.mil](http://www.mypay.dfas.mil), said Sgt. Evgueni Erchov, who is with the 374th Finance Battalion at Camp Arifjan. Contributions can be stopped at any time. "There's no need to wait for an open season for that," he said.

The voluntary plan gives federal employees the same type of savings and tax benefits that many private corporations offer their employees under 401(k) plans. "You can contribute as little as one percent of your base pay," said Erchov. "Even small savings add up over time."

The TSP offers U.S. troops and other federal workers a variety of investment funds to select from:

\* G-fund – U.S. Government securities: very conservative and dependable choice (low risk)

\* F-fund – diversified fixed-income portfolio: gives opportunity to participate in overall U.S. bond market (moderate risk)

\* C-fund – large-company domestic stock fund: tracks performance of all companies in S&P 500 (moderate risk)

\* S-fund – Small Capitalization Stock Index investment: tracks the returns of Wilshire 4500 stock index, which includes those stocks that are not included in S&P 500 (moderate to high risk)

\* I-fund – international stock index fund: tracks performance of major companies in the European, Australian and Asian stock markets (moderate to high risk)

All TSP contributions are initially invested into the G-fund until the account holder makes a contribution allocation, which specifies the way contributions will be invested among the five TSP funds. By doing so, TSP holders are able to diversify their portfolios by investing into more than one stock fund, thus lowering the risk of losing money.

Investment allocations and inter-fund transfers can be done online at the Web site, [www.tsp.gov](http://www.tsp.gov).

The TSP contribution limit for 2005 lets servicemembers put in up to 10 percent of their Base Pay, up to 100 percent of special pays - including in-theater entitlements like hazardous and hardship duty pay - and up to 100 percent of bonuses geared toward enlistments and re-enlistments, according to the TSP Web site.

The TSP limit, which has risen two percent since 2003, is scheduled to be eliminated altogether starting in 2006 for all program participants.

But in an effort to curb investors' contributions, the Internal Revenue Service has capped the TSP limit for 2005 at \$14,000, up \$2,000 from 2003. Starting in 2006, the IRS limit will increase to \$15,000.

The IRS limit for 2005 does not include the option for older participants to deposit an additional \$4,000 "catch-up contribution," or a supplemental contribution in addition to regular contributions. The tax-deferred

federal service. Withdrawals are also available for reasons of financial hardship. But because withdrawals are restricted by law, the funds are taxable.

The retirement income received from the TSP account is contingent on how much the individual investor contributes to the account during his working years and the earnings on those contributions.

"The TSP is a long-term investment for your future, which allows you to live happily on your retirement income," said Erchov, a three-year TSP investor. "The sooner you start to invest, the better off you'll be in the end."

Participating servicemembers receive a TSP account statement every quarter. The statement shows exactly how much was earned and the total balance of the account.

"The longer you stay with the program the better because of the power of compound tax-exempt interest," said Erchov.

## The power of compound interest

Annual Amount Invested	\$1,000	\$5,000	\$10,000
Time			
10 years	\$13,972	\$69,858	\$139,716
20 years	\$38,993	\$194,964	\$389,927
30 years	\$83,802	\$419,008	\$838,017
40 years	\$164,048	\$820,238	\$1,640,477

(Assumes a 6% annual compound return)

increase is available to TSP participants age 50 and older who are already contributing the maximum percentage allowed, according to the TSP Web site.

Although the purpose of the TSP is to provide government employees with a source of retirement income, it is not a savings account that can be accessed at any time. "If you think you may need your money in the near future, or if you do not have other funds saved for emergencies, you will want to consider your other needs carefully before deciding how much to contribute to the TSP," according to the Web site.

Servicemembers, though, have the opportunity to borrow money through the TSP loan program, which allows access to the money contributed to one's account. Additionally, participants who are 59 ½ or older are able to make a one-time withdrawal from their TSP account while they are in

"TSP allows your investments to grow tax-free, which is a great advantage" compared to regular investment accounts where you have to pay taxes for capital gains every year.

Account holders are eligible to withdraw their accounts once they separate from federal service. After separation from the military, servicemembers will have the option to roll-over their TSP balance to eligible 401(k) or Individual Retirement Accounts. They can also leave all or a portion of the account in the TSP and withdraw it later.

However, there are limits on how long they can leave the money in the TSP. Account holders must withdraw the entire balance or begin receiving monthly payments from the TSP by April 1 of the year following the year they turn 70½.

The TSP was established by Congress in the Federal Employees' Retirement System Act of 1986.



# A year on patrol

Photos courtesy of A Company, 1st Battalion, 161st Infantry Regiment, 81st Brigade Combat Team

## Story by Spc. Jonathan Montgomery

During his year patrolling the rugged streets of southern Baghdad, Iraq, Staff Sgt. Shawn Bentley never had the chance to peacefully enjoy the natural human pastime of going to the bathroom.

"Most of the time the bombs went off, I was on the [toilet]," the infantryman said. "It seemed like my bowels and the bombers were always in sync. You could set your clock by it."

Bentley and the rest of A Company, 1st Battalion, 161st Infantry Regiment, 81st Brigade Combat Team, spent the past year in Iraq pulling road and bridge security, conducting raids and stopping improvised explosive devices, or IEDs.

The demanding tour in one of the world's harshest environments netted scores of weapon stockpiles and frustrated detainees, he said as he and his fellow National Guardsmen journey back to Fort Lewis, Wash., with memories like no other.

"Sometimes things would heat up, and a one-house raid would turn into a five-house raid," said Sgt. Jesse Picard of the 161st.

"Raids were my favorite thing."

"Yeah, that's because you were easy to throw over the wall," said Bentley.

One raid netted the company 114 blocks of TNT, a pre-made IED wrapped in concrete, 50 full magazines, 20 rocket propelled grenade launchers, a mortar plotting board and countless blasting caps, land mines, hand grenades, artillery rounds and other materials used in making IEDs – "all in remarkably good condition," said Picard.

Despite uncovering large weapons caches, A Company's area of operations stayed relatively quiet compared to more hostile surrounding districts such as Sadr City, which was just 10 miles away, said Bentley.

"There wasn't a lot of super heavy insurgent activity where we were," he said. "But, there was heavy fighting going on all

around us."

Bentley said this was due to the belief that the area was a transit sector responsible for financing the insurgency. The purchase of weapons and the recruitment of people were the area's main activity, he said.

"We thought our sector was about money laundering and propagandists for the insurgency," said Bentley. "Because of the trading and the recruiting going on, they kept things quiet so we wouldn't interrupt their little operation."

Christmas Eve, however, was anything but a lull, said

Picard. His company was enjoying time around the campfire, listening to holiday songs and smoking cigars when a butane truck bomb exploded near the Jordanian embassy, he said.

"The sky lit up like day time," said the

**"At first I thought it was a nuke because of the perfect mushroom cloud. It sent pieces of little toasted bits of metal everywhere." – Sgt. Jesse Picard**



**Clockwise from top left: An Iraqi cheers the destruction of an American Humvee in southern Baghdad. Sgt. Jesse Picard searches a room in a suspected insurgent hideout. After an improvised explosive device attack, Soldiers of A Company, 1st Battalion, 161st Infantry**

**Regiment, 81st Brigade Combat Team closed down some roads to hunt for insurgents. Spc. Levi Dalton, an A Company Soldier, stands chest-deep in an open sewer while working to recover a Bradley Fighting Vehicle that accidentally drove into the muck.**

former Marine. "At first I thought it was a nuke because of the perfect mushroom cloud. It sent pieces of little toasted bits of metal everywhere."

Vehicle bombs and captured insurgents, though, were only a fraction of their day-to-day battles. Working in trash-strewn streets was another element, said Bentley. "We'd be boot-deep in sewage" recovering Bradley Fighting Vehicles that had gotten stuck in open sewers, he said.

For Spc. Levi Dalton of the 161st, inadvertently dipping tactical vehicles in 40 degree Fahrenheit mud holes wasn't that uncommon. On more than one occasion, Bradleys would get parked along the edge of a road, and the sidewalk would cave in and tip the whole side of the vehicle into a mud pit. Dalton said he would then have to lower himself into the cold sewage and hook up tow cables to recover the vehicle.

And, where there was sewage, there was

stench, said Picard. "Don't go by the river at dusk, not unless you want to lose your appetite."

Ceremonial gunfire also posed a problem for most infantry Soldiers who were already on patrol alert for ambush attacks, especially during the landmark Jan. 30 elections. "There was a lot of [celebratory] gunfire, but a lot of times not directed at us," said Bentley.

Sometimes, though, it was. The company once found itself engaged in a six-hour firefight, said Dalton. "You want to talk about dying," he said.

The engagement began when an insurgent fired an RPG at Dalton, Bentley and their fellow infantrymen near an Iraqi police station in Baghdad. Bentley responded by unloading more than 100 rounds of ammunition toward the RPG's origin.

"We tried to hold everything as much as we could," said Dalton. "We couldn't identify

anyone. It felt like as many as 40 guys but could have been as little as five."

Going into battle and not knowing when, where, or what the outcome would be made infantrymen like Dalton rely on keepsake items to get through their hazardous ordeals. "I carried a little, 20-picture photo album of my family and friends with me so that I would be able to pull it out and look at it before I was to die, if I was to die," he said.

While the company regularly heard or read reports of U.S. casualties, the realities of war hit home even harder when the loss was from his own unit, said Dalton. "I wanted to see the medic one day and was told that he was blown apart yesterday," he said. "It's wrenching to hear that."

"The time in Iraq was very life changing and a very good learning experience," said Dalton. "I think I've grown up a lot since I've been here."

# Kuwaitis train for Apache

Story and photo by Spc. Curt Cashour

Members of the Kuwaiti air force visited Camp Buehring's Udairi Army Airfield March 21 to familiarize themselves with AH-64D Apache Longbow helicopters.

A group of nine pilots and five maintenance officers from the Kuwaiti air force's 34th squadron met with members of the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment's 4th squadron, otherwise known as the Renegade Troop.

Throughout the roughly hour-and-a-half orientation, members of the Kuwaiti contingent quizzed 3rd ACR troops on the controls, functions and capabilities of the AH-64D. The Kuwaiti air force has already ordered 16 of the attack helicopters and is due to receive them at the end of 2006, according to Maj. Justin Hall, the U.S. Army's aviation liaison officer to the Kuwaiti air force.

Members of the 3rd ACR said they were impressed with the knowledge and professionalism of their Kuwaiti counterparts, who seemed eager to learn about the Apache.

"They're extremely well-versed and educated. They appear to be very well-trained pilots," said Capt. Butch Whiting, Renegade Troop commander.

Many of the Kuwaiti pilots normally fly the Gazelle, a British helicopter designed primarily for observation and reconnaissance.

The orientation was one of the first steps in a training process that will groom Kuwaiti servicemembers for the transition to the Apache.

Between now and 2007, more than 200 Kuwaiti servicemembers will shuffle through various training programs at Army posts in the United States. The training will involve Kuwaiti soldiers as well as Air Force maintenance officers and pilots and include instruction in English and programs focusing on maintaining and flying the Apaches, Hall



**Renegade Troop Commander Capt. Butch Whiting shows a Kuwaiti air force pilot the controls of an AH-64D Apache Longbow helicopter during a March 21 Apache orientation session between members of the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment and the Kuwaiti air force.**

said.

Kuwaiti soldiers will undergo 36 weeks of English instruction at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, before moving on to different U.S. Army posts to learn one of nine helicopter-related military occupational specialties.

Kuwaiti maintenance officers will undergo the same English training and then learn American techniques for managing helicopter-maintenance soldiers.

Kuwaiti helicopter pilots will participate in an extensive, four-part block of instruction that includes training in English, a preparatory helicopter course and Apache qualification at Fort Rucker, Ala., followed by a collective training exercise with their own

Apaches at Fort Hood, Texas, Hall said.

Kuwaiti servicemembers will rotate into the United States in small groups and spend an average of 19 months training. The first servicemembers are scheduled to leave this summer.

The Kuwaitis are acquiring the Apaches to counter future threats to the security and stability of the country, Hall said.

Most Kuwaiti airmen at the orientation declined to comment on the acquisition of the Apaches. One senior-ranking Kuwaiti air force official, however, did say on the condition of anonymity that 34th members were impressed by the advanced technology of the Apaches and are looking forward to beginning their training.

## Army Reserve and Guard raise enlistment age limit

Story by Jim Garamone

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, March 22, 2005 – The Army Reserve and the Army National Guard have raised the age limit for recruits from 34 to 39, Defense Department officials said.

The move will add 22.6 million people to those who could potentially enlist in the reserve components, said Pentagon spokeswoman Air Force Lt. Col. Ellen Krenke.

No other reserve component is contem-

plating such a move, officials said, and raising the age limit on active duty soldiers would require a change in law.

The idea came from the Army Reserve's translator aide program. That program admits Arab linguists to the service up to age 41.

The new program will run for three years, Krenke said.

The Army National Guard and Army Reserve need people. The Army Reserve has recruited 6,230 soldiers through the end of February. This is 89.7 percent of the

year-to-date mission. The Army Guard is at 76 percent of their year-to-date mission, having recruited 16,835 soldiers. The Guard started the year with a 5,000-soldier deficit.

The limit to age 34 goes back to at least 1968, but older citizens have been allowed to enlist in the past. Dashiell Hammett, born in 1894, served nearly a half century later during World War II as an Army private in the Aleutian Islands.

Doctors, lawyers and chaplains also are allowed to join the officer ranks beyond age 34.

# Zone 2 shutdown begins April 2

Story and photo by Spc. Alex Licea

The ropes will be loosened, the poles will be lowered, and the stakes will be dug up as the first of many tents begin to close in Camp Arifjan's Zone 2 April 2.

Directorate of Logistics officials at Arifjan announced the closing of the Zone 2 Fitness and Recreation Center as part of the opening phase of a transition that will shift most of Zone 2 amenities to the camp's Zone 6 area.

However, in the words of television personality Robin Leach, its "new and fabulous" replacement will open its doors just 11 days after the closing of its predecessor.

The changes to Zone 2 are in large part due to the scheduled closure of Camp Doha and the continued expansion of Arifjan.

"Zone 2 will now be used for short-term or redeployment Soldiers coming in and out of Arifjan," said Master Sgt. Morris Redmond, noncommissioned officer in charge of Area Support Group-Kuwait's DOL. He added Zone 2's warehouses will be used for storage as Arifjan takes on functions from Doha.

Zone 2's Building 507 will continue to house permanent troops.

Other Zone 2 facilities, such as the post exchange and dining facility, will also close in the coming weeks.

"The zone's PX will be closing on April 9, and we are still in discussions on when the DFAC will be shut down, but no dates have been set," Redmond said.

The move follows on the heels of the completion of new living quarters in Zone 6.

"We want our permanent change-of-station servicemembers to be living in hard building structures such as brick pre-cast billets," said 1st Sgt. Randall Maffett, non-commissioned officer in charge of Zone 6. "Each billet can hold 58 people, and we are currently installing a large number of outdoor individual latrine units to accommodate as many people as possible."

Servicemembers can expect to see these living improvements in the next couple of weeks.

"We have finished the transition from tents to pre-cast billets and will start moving those troops who are permanently based at Arifjan," Maffett said. "The tents will continue to be used, but those are for troops who are redeploying back to the United States or are only at the camp for a short period of time."

Maffett added that a total of 135 billets will be constructed. By the beginning of August, Zone 6 should be able to hold an estimated 13,000 servicemembers.

DOL officials at the camp believe the



**The Zone 2 fitness tent, shown here in the early stages of deconstruction March 26, will officially close April 2. A new gym in Zone 6 opens April 13.**

move will vastly improve the quality of life for servicemembers across the Arifjan community.

"Residents living in Zone 6 will no longer have to travel to Zone 1 or 2 in order to go to the PX," said Redmond. "The improvements within the camp will make it better for all servicemembers, especially people living in Zone 6."

Talks are pending on the movement of other services at Arifjan such as the Zone 2 AAFES vendors, which are located in the zone's community area.

However, many servicemembers, especially residents of Zone 2, have some concerns about the distance to facilities in Zone 1 and 6.

"We are discussing how we can improve the shuttle system," said Redmond. "We will continue to address the matter, especially as supply meets demand."

Maffett added that some transportation issues have already been improved for Arifjan-based servicemembers.

"We have added two new shuttle stops, and we are currently evaluating the situation so we can provide accommodations for all servicemembers," said Maffett.

Other improvements, such as the construction of a new dining facility in Zone 6 and the installation of latrine units will continue during the month of April.

Many facilities across Zone 6, such as the community center, post exchange and fitness gym, will open April 13.

"The community center is really nice and spacious," said Sheryl Vanlandingham, Morale, Welfare and Recreation manager at Arifjan. "The center has a large game room, social rooms, movie theater, reading room

and an Internet cafe with 25 computers."

Despite the new improvements, Vanlandingham admits the new gym won't be able to have all the events and athletic classes, such as aerobics and salsa classes, currently being given in Zones 1 and 2 during the opening days of the transition.

The Zone 6 gym may not have the space necessary for things like the spinner and aerobics classes, she said.

"However we are looking for ways to accommodate as many classes for all of our servicemembers."

Zone 6 will also be friendly to those gym rats who are looking to get a quick workout during lunch.

"The gym will have a limited selection of locker rooms, and the shower trailers will be at a close proximity from the fitness center to give servicemembers a opportunity to change," she said. "The zone will also have latrine units nearby, which will give people a space to change in after their workouts."

Zone 2 will also have two full-court outdoor basketball, volleyball and tennis courts.

Zone 6 officials say adjustments with the transition will be a steady, continuous process in the coming weeks but urge servicemembers to be patient.

"Slowly but surely we will get there," said Maffett. "We will just have to go through some growing pains."

The Zone 6 community center hours will be from 10 a.m. until 10 p.m. daily, and its fitness center will operate from 5 a.m. until 10 p.m. daily.

To reserve a room for a social gathering at the center please contact Sgt. 1st Class Dwayne Williams at DSN 318-430-2433.

# Not in uniform you won't

Story by Spc. Alex Licea

You can find them on athletes, movie stars and everyday people everywhere these days it seems. They come in an assortment of colors conveying different messages of hope, support or awareness. But no matter the cause, these socially conscious bracelets are not permitted under military uniform regulations.

The yellow "LIVESTRONG" bracelet, which is not much more than a simple rubber band, has become a symbol of hope for people around the world who are living with cancer. Proceeds from the sale of each bracelet benefit the Lance Armstrong Foundation, an organization that provides information and funding for cancer advocacy, education and research.

The "LIVESTRONG" bracelets started a trend that has made social awareness fashionable. The bracelets support a slew of different causes ranging from breast cancer awareness to support for American troops.

The trend has not been lost on the military community as Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines support their causes. However, if servicemembers wear the bracelets while in uniform in Kuwait, they are violating the uniform policy unless their local command

has given approval.

According to Army regulation 670-1, which governs the wear and appearance of the Army uniform, Soldiers are only authorized to wear a watch or identification bracelet on their wrist.

The regulation, which was revised in February 2005, states Soldiers are limited to wearing personal identification bracelets and metallic missing in action/prisoner-of-war bracelets. Only one bracelet can be worn on each wrist.

Recently, the Air Force Personnel Center announced that Airmen are not allowed to wear the "LIVESTRONG" bracelet because the color does not conform to the conservative criteria for bracelet wear under Air Force regulation AFI 36-2903.

The Marine regulation MCO P1020.34G also does not allow the wear of bracelets because they represent a "faddish" style of jewelry no matter what color or meaning. Sailors are also barred from wearing the bracelets under a rule that bans faddish jewelry.



**The popularity of Lance Armstrong's "Live Strong" bracelet has prompted a slew of copycats, but none can be worn in uniform.**

Recently, some units have passed out the desert camouflage colored "Defending Freedom" bracelet, but those units have addressed the matter by telling their members to only wear them while in civilian attire.

Commands can amend a regulation locally to authorize the wear of these bracelets. Servicemembers who want to wear the bracelets should check with their local chain-of-command to find out their unit's rules regarding the bracelets.

## New health care benefit for Guard and Reserve

Story by Terri Lukach

American Forces Press Service

A new health care plan, with coverage comparable to that enjoyed by federal employees under the Blue Cross and Blue Shield health insurance plan, will be available to eligible members of the National Guard and Reserve and their families April 25, Defense Department officials announced March 24 at the Pentagon.

The new plan, called Tricare Reserve Select, will serve as a bridge for reserve component members entering or leaving active duty who are not covered by civilian employers or other health insurance plans. It applies to all reserve component personnel who have been activated since Sept. 11, 2001, and who agree to continued service in the Selected Reserve. The coverage will be applied retroactively, officials said.

Principal Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Charles Abell, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs Thomas Hall, and Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs Dr. William Winkenwerder

announced the plan at a Pentagon news conference.

"We are committed," Abell said, "to providing the proper combination of compensation and benefits that will allow us to attract and retain the world's best fighting force."

Abell said that while large numbers of National Guard and Reserve members have health insurance through their employers, the department "recognizes the importance of maintaining a continuity of care as they transition from their employers to serve with us and then back, as well as the need for some of them who may be self-employed or who work for small businesses to have health coverage."

TRS is a nationwide, premium-based plan that closely resembles the Tricare Standard coverage of the active duty force. Its rates are based on the premiums for the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Standard Service Benefit Plan for federal government employees. Premiums will be adjusted annually.

Reserve component personnel and their family members now are also eligible for benefits 90 days prior to activation, and for up to

six months after demobilization, Hall said.

"For every 90 days of active duty service, Guard and Reserve personnel are eligible for one year of Tricare coverage for a modest fee," Hall told reporters. "That means, for example, that personnel who have served two years of active duty are eligible for eight years of healthcare coverage."

Winkenwerder praised the members of the National Guard and Reserve. "They have shouldered a tremendous share of the global war on terror in which we are deeply engaged," he said, "and they have performed exceptionally well."

"They mobilized and deployed side by side with active duty forces, many serving in Iraq and Afghanistan," Winkenwerder continued. "They served with pride and loyalty. And while we have, in the past, offered full healthcare benefits for these servicemembers, and for their families, this change will shortly offer a more comprehensive benefit for transition back to private life, and, importantly, the opportunity for those who have served in contingency operations, the option for obtaining Tricare coverage on a longer term at very attractive rates."

# Community

## happenings for March 30 through April 6

### Arifjan

#### Wednesday

Arifjan Boxing Team, 7:30 p.m., Zone 1 gym tent  
301 Darts, 7 p.m., Community Center  
Country Western Night, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 MWR  
Combat Kick Boxing, 5:30 a.m., Power  
Stretching, 8 a.m., Bench/Step Workout, 10 a.m.,  
Body Pump Workout, 1 p.m., Zone 1 gym tent  
Aerobics, 6 p.m., Zone 6 gym tent  
Aerobics, 7 p.m., Zone 2 gym tent

#### Thursday

Country Music Night, 7 p.m., Community Center  
Spinning Class, 5:30 p.m., Zone 2 gym tent  
Open Mic Night, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 MWR area  
Karate Class, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 MWR area  
Basketball signups begin, Zone 1 gym

#### Friday

Arifjan Boxing Team, 7:30 p.m., Zone 1 gym tent  
Salsa Night, 7 p.m., Community Center  
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

R&B 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., Combat Kick Boxing 3 p.m.,  
Zone 1 gym tent  
Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool

#### Sunday

Hearts Tournament, 7 p.m., Community Center  
Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool  
Bench/Step Workout 5:30 a.m., Super Abs 8 a.m.,  
Power Stretching 10 a.m., Body Pump Workout 1  
p.m., Bench/Step Workout 3 p.m., Zone 1 gym  
tent

#### Monday

Arifjan Boxing Team, 7:30 p.m., Zone 1 gym tent  
Country Western Night, 7:30 p.m., Zone 2 stage  
Bingo Night, 7 p.m., Community Center  
Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool  
Combat Kick Boxing 5:30 a.m., Power Stretching  
8 a.m., Bench/Step Workout 10 a.m., Body Pump  
Workout 1 p.m., Combat Kick Boxing 3 p.m.,  
Zone 1 gym tent  
Aerobics, 6 p.m., Zone 6 gym tent

#### Tuesday

Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool  
Bench/Step Workout 5:30 a.m., Super Abs 8  
a.m., Power Stretching 10 a.m., Body Pump  
Workout 1 p.m., Bench/Step Workout 3 p.m.,  
Zone 1 gym tent

#### Wednesday

Combat Kick Boxing 5:30 a.m., Power Stretching  
8 a.m., Bench/Step Workout 10 a.m., Body Pump  
Workout 1 p.m., Zone 1 gym tent

For more information call 430-1202

### Buehring

#### Wednesday

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

#### Thursday

Spades Tournament (Call for info)  
Tae-Kwon-Do Class, 7 p.m., MWR Tent #1

#### Friday

ADEMA, 7 p.m., MWR stage  
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

### Doha

#### Wednesday

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

#### Friday

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

#### Saturday

R&B Motown Music Night, 7 p.m., Frosty's

#### Monday

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

#### Wednesday

Apollo Style Open Mic Night, 7 p.m., Frosty's

For more information call 438-5637

### Kuwaiti Naval Base

For more information call 839-1063

### Navistar

#### Wednesday

Checkers Tournament practice, 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.,  
MWR center

#### Thursday

Checkers Tournament practice, 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.,  
MWR center

#### Friday

Checkers Tournament practice, 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.,  
MWR center

For more information call 844-1137

### Spearhead/SPOD

#### Wednesday

Bazaar, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., outside PX area

For more information call 825-1302

### Victory

#### Wednesday

Spa Day, 10 a.m. (Call for info)

#### Friday

Final Four BBQ (Call for info)

#### Saturday

Final Four BBQ (Call for info)

NCO induction ceremony, 9 - 10 a.m. (Call for  
info)

#### Monday

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

#### Tuesday

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

#### Wednesday

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

For more information call 823-1033

### Virginia

#### Wednesday

Country Western Night, 7 p.m., Dusty Room  
Billiards 2-on-2 Tournament, 6 p.m. MWR tent

#### Thursday

Spades Tournament, 6 p.m., Dusty Room  
Karaoke Night, 7 p.m., Dusty Room

#### Friday

Foosball Tournament, 6 p.m., MWR tent  
Salsa Night, 7 p.m., Dusty Room

#### Saturday

Dominoes Tournament, 6 p.m., MWR tent  
Hip Hop and R&B Night, 7 p.m., Dusty Room

#### Sunday

Spa Day, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., MWR Tent  
Old School Jams, 7 p.m., Dusty Room

#### Monday

Horseshoes Tournament, 3 p.m., MWR tent  
Movie Night, 7 p.m., Dusty Room

#### Tuesday

Bingo Night, 7 p.m., Dusty Room

#### Wednesday

Bazaar, 10 a.m. - 8 p.m., Dusty Room  
Country Western Night, 7 p.m., Dusty Room

For more information call 832-1045

### Doha/Arifjan Shuttle Schedule

Departs Doha Stop 1*	Arrives Doha Stop 2*	Departs Doha Stop 2*	Arrives Arifjan	Departs Arifjan	Arrives Doha
	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 Al Salem Bus Schedule

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

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

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

# Faith affirmed in sunrise baptism

Story and photo by Spc. Tony Miltenberger

It was a brisk morning at the Camp Doha Chapel as servicemembers gathered to celebrate the Easter Sunrise Service. Spiritual Fitness is an important part of many servicemember's lives, and on this morning, some Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and civilian contractors made a commitment to their faith. In many Christian traditions, the Easter Sunrise Service is the traditional service for baptism. Although these troops were far away from their home churches, they decided to be baptized in accordance with their beliefs. Assisting them in that commitment were Camp Doha chaplains Col. Coyse McLemore, Lt. Col. Ken Schmidt, Maj. Milton Herring, and Capt. Terri Jones. These chaplains gathered together in a joint effort to celebrate and reaffirm this largely practiced Christian tradition.

The idea behind the baptism started with one soldier inquiring about the process. From there interest grew, and the question became "where will we baptize these Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen?" Stepping up to the challenge was chaplain's assistant Spc. Leddy Brown



Capt. Lakicia Cooke gets baptized by chaplains Maj. Milton Herring, left, and Lt. Col. Ken Schmidt.

from the 112th Chaplain's Detachment from the 90th Regional Readiness Command. Brown used the resources available at the self-help shop at Camp Doha to construct a wooden baptismal big enough to handle a full-immersion baptism.

Although the process of getting the troops baptized was not easy, over 175 gathered to

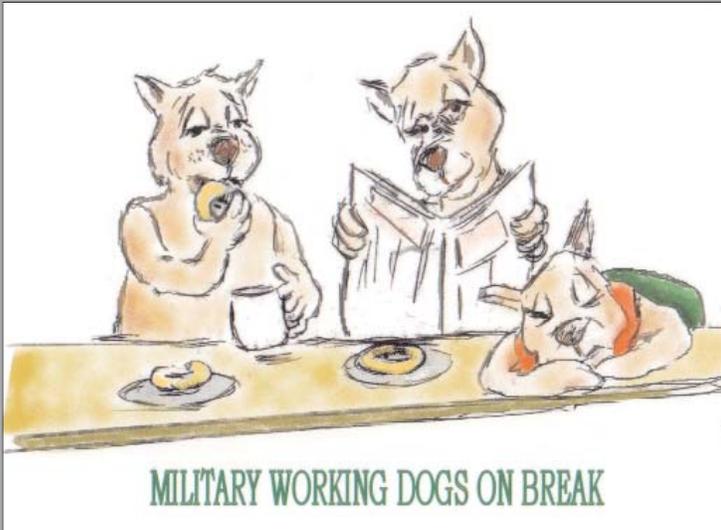
share in the ceremony.

"It was a great success, and a great opportunity for these servicemen and women to express their faith in a Risen Savior" said Herring, who presided over the baptism.

The mood on this Resurrection Sunday morning was one of happiness, and although many servicemembers missed the comforts of home, they were glad to be able to practice their faith in such a memorable way. Although this will likely be the last baptism held at Camp Doha, which is scheduled to close this summer, it will not be the last baptism for the newly-constructed baptismal, as plans are in the works for the baptismal to be moved to Ali Al Salem Air Base when Camp Doha shuts down.

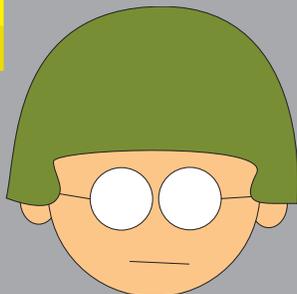
## ARMY LIFE

By Lt. Col. Michael Verrett, CFLCC C4



## DESERT VOICE

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



## NATURE CALLS

By Capt. Paul Nichols, 377th Theater Support Command

