

DESERT VOICE



**Quenching
Heat!**

DESERT VOICE
INSPIRATION

"Destiny is no matter of chance. It is a matter of choice. It is not a thing to be waited for, it is a thing to be achieved."

**William
Jenning Bryan**



An unidentified American Soldier wades through the surf while making his way ashore during the D-Day invasion at Normandy, France, June 6, 1944. This week marks the 60th anniversary of Operation Overlord, which was the springboard for Allied victory during World War II.

Photo by Robert Capa

The Desert Voice

CFLCC commanding general
Lt. Gen. David D. McKiernan

CFLCC command sergeant major
Command Sgt. Maj. John D. Sparks

CFLCC public affairs officer
Col. Michael Phillips

Commander 13th PAD/CI chief
Maj. John Clearwater
john.clearwater@arifjan.arcent.army.mil

NCOIC 13th PAD managing editor
Staff Sgt. Eric Brown
eric.brown@arifjan.arcent.army.mil

Editor
Spc. Marc Loi, journalist
marc.loi@arifjan.arcent.army.mil

Spc. Scott Akanewich, journalist
scott.akanewich@arifjan.arcent.army.mil

Spc. Karima L. Mares, journalist
karima.mares@arifjan.arcent.army.mil

Sgt. Blake Deimund, broadcaster
blake.deimund@arifjan.arcent.army.mil

Spc. Aubrey Pomares, broadcaster
aubrey.pomares@arifjan.arcent.army.mil

Did you know?

The Normandy invasion consisted of 5,000 vessels transporting 150,000 men across the English Channel. A total of 13,000 paratroopers were dropped from 800 aircraft. Also, 13,000 bombs were dropped from an additional 300 planes in advance of the invasion.

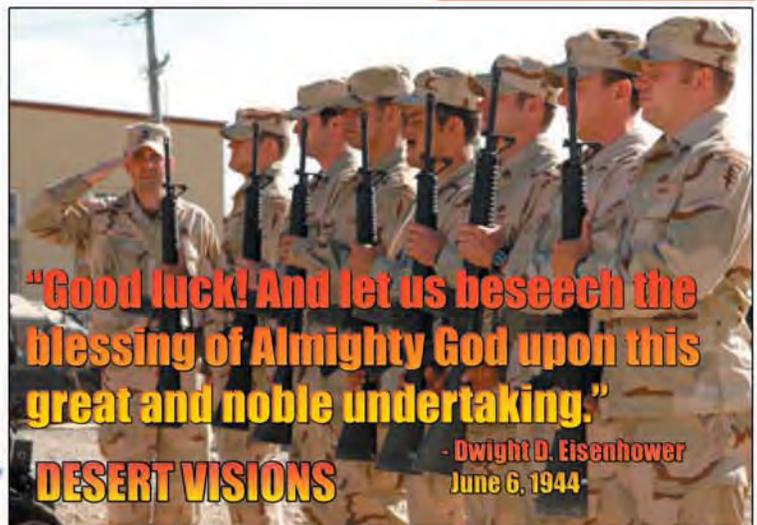
We're in the desert, so drink plenty of water, then drink some more!

**Desert
QUIZ**

Ques: How much water should a person drink daily?

100 oz. every day
200 lbs. should drink
someone weighing
water, for example,
weight in ounces of
half of your body

Answer: You should drink approximately



"Good luck! And let us beseech the blessing of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking."

**- Dwight D. Eisenhower
June 6, 1944**

DESERT VISIONS

The Desert Voice staff welcomes your story suggestions and photos. E-mail them to us, or call us at DSN 430-0334 or 430-6128.



Though they're now civilians, the DoD contracted firefighters in Kuwait are still doing their part for Operation Iraqi Freedom. (Photo by Spc. Karima Mares)

Volume 25, Number 31

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 Global Trends Co. W.L.L., 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, Camp Arifjan, APO AE 09366.

Quenching the Fire

Camp Arifjan's fire, medical safety depend on civilian firefighters

Spc. Marc Loi, 13th Public Affairs Detachment

Much like the image of Marines raising an American flag on Iwo Jima, the image of New York City firefighters raising the flag at Ground Zero shortly after Sept. 11 is etched in the memories of Americans.

And like their military counterparts, firefighters have always been and continue to be a lasting symbol of service to country.

This is especially true for members of the firefighters on Camp Arifjan – all of whom are Department of Defense contractors who were, at one time, firefighters in the military.

"Most of us are ex-military," said Desi Wade, battalion fire chief. "We've got DoD-level certification and are mostly related to DoD."

The relationship here is that instead of working for the city, these firefighters are DoD contractors. They chose the military firefighting positions over its civilian counterpart, said one firefighter, because even though they're no longer in the military, it's still something they hold on to.

Wade, for example, spent nine years in the military as a firefighter. The former staff sergeant also taught at the U.S. Military Firefighting School.

In fact, one of Wade's former students, Luis Escovar, works with him along with a host of other firefighters.

Though each military camp here has its own firefighting resources, Wade said the two bases with the most firefighters are the Seaport of Debarkation and Camp Arifjan.

Should the need arise for firefighters from each respective camp to provide services to other camps, all they need to do is ask.

In fact, the SPOD had a fire aboard one of its ships about two months ago. After SPOD fire personnel exhausted their resources, firefighters from Camp Arifjan moved in to help fight the flames.

For Wade, this isn't done as a favor but rather, as standard operating procedure – and because, much like the military, firefighting is also a community of brotherhood.

"Firefighting is a brotherhood – it doesn't matter if you're wearing blue or

brown, we're going to help each other," said Wade. "We're fascinated with fires, when we see one, we're going to jump in and offer our help."

But therein lies a misconception – firefighters only fight fires. Their jobs, however extend to more than just that.

Firefighters also do safety inspections, assist Emergency Medical Technicians at accident scenes, and most importantly, they also train.

This is perhaps the most crucial part of the job – because firefighters who aren't proficient at what they do cannot do the job well, and lives and equipment may be lost because of it.

Escovar, an assistant fire chief, said firefighters also save the Department of Defense money.

Military buildings need to adhere to certain safety codes – and it is Escovar's job to ensure they do. Do it right the first time, and there will be no money spent on rebuilding something that doesn't meet the standard.

As the summer months approach and the temperature rise, the challenges, too, will rise for firefighters here.

However, the challenge doesn't have to do with potential fires – but rather the fatigue levels of firefighters.

Because of the safety equipment they wear, the temperature may be 30 to 40 degrees higher for firefighters than what it would be for someone else, Wade said.

The increase in temperatures, as well as other dangerous factors, may sometimes cost a firefighter his life. Much like a fallen servicemember – the loss of a firefighter often impacts others in the same line of work, Wade said.

"It's all the same," Wade said. "When you see a firefighter go down, you know he's paid the ultimate price for trying to help someone else."



Unlike the servicemember, who was named *Time's* Person of the Year, firefighters often go without recognition. Very seldom do they get thanks for what they do.

"Until someone sees (us) providing the service they don't realize that 'these are the guys helping us,'" Wade said. "A lot of times, we're the first on the scene." And they'll continue to be the first on the scene, and provide service to country.

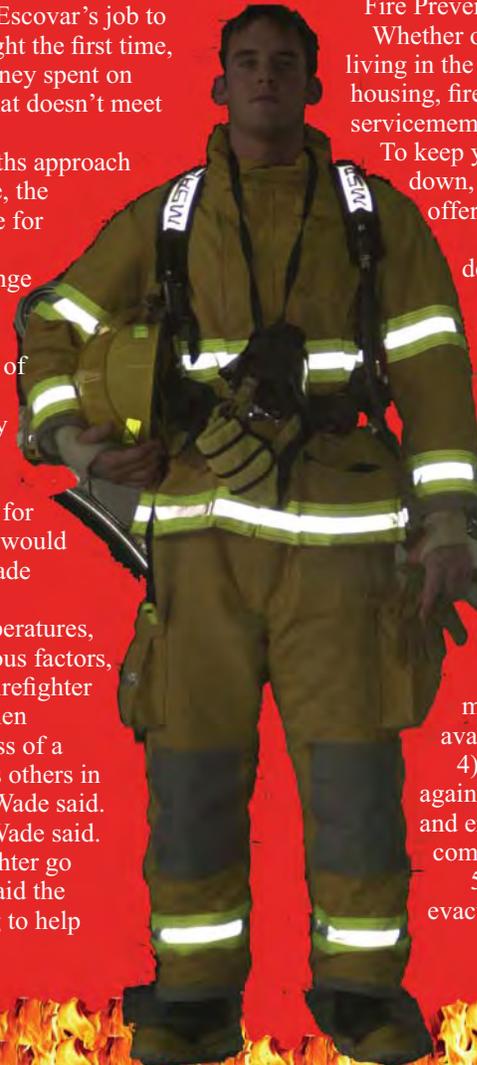
Just like the servicemember, the firefighter, too, is a warfighter – even if the war is against raging flames.

Fire Prevention Tips:

Whether on a deployment or living in the cozy comfort of military housing, fire safety is a concern for all servicemembers and family members.

To keep your hooch from burning down, the American Red Cross offers the following tips:

- 1) Ensure that smoke detectors are working properly and that new batteries are installed.
- 2) Do not overload your electrical outlets. Be careful of extension cords that present hazardous walkways. This especially is especially for living in tents
- 3) Get training from the fire department on how to use fire extinguishers and keep more than one always available in case of fire.
- 4) Do not smoke indoors (it's against Army policy anyway) and ensure cigarettes are out completely.
- 5) Ensure Soldiers have an evacuation point to meet in case of fire.



Three decade divide

Two servicemembers meet again after a nearly 30-year hiatus

By Staff Sgt. Eric Brown
13th Public Affairs Detachment

CAMP BUEHRING, Kuwait— Nearly three decades have passed, thousands of miles have since been traveled, college degrees have been earned, families have been raised and two military buddies, who served together in the Philippine jungles during the Vietnam era, have been reunited at this camp's medical facility.

Back in 1974, Marine lance corporal, now Army Reserve Staff Sgt. Dennis Piatt, who was assigned to a Marine Combat Division, and Navy HN Robert 'Doc' Sorenson, now a Navy captain, was then the squad's combat medic. The two were pretty good buddies, like many servicemembers in a close-knit squad-sized element. The 3rd Marine Division was training in the Philippines just in case the neighboring situation in Vietnam became more volatile, requiring additional support.

"At that time there was martial law in the Philippines and we had Philippine security to protect us while we were training, because we didn't have real ammunition or anything—we were just training," said Sorenson.

Piatt, conducting practice night patrols on the island with Gulf Company, nearly sliced off his ear on a bamboo sliver, requiring thirty-four stitches and was initially cared for by Sorenson, who was a Navy corpsman at the time.

"We knew each other and became friends even before he was a 'medical evacuation' to get his ear sewed up."

The days of youthful excitement in Southwest Asia passed, the members of the squad disjoined in spring of 1975 and the two veterans went their separate ways. Sorenson, a Williston, N.D. native, journeyed back to Camp Pendleton, Calif., where he was discharged out of the Navy and returned home to study medicine at the University of North Dakota, using his newly acquired GI Bill.

During his studies, Sorenson became actively involved in the Vietnam Veterans Association, mostly because all the members had something in common and GIs during that time didn't have many friends on campus besides their own.

"Back during the [Vietnam War] military members really weren't getting much respect—that's why all of the vets coming home joined the club. The club helped me into the Reserves where I found out about the Medical Reserve Program scholarship. I pretty much received a full-ride health professions scholarship and rejoined with the active Navy in 1985," said Sorenson. "Back then Piatt never would have thought I would have gotten back into the military."

All the while, Piatt finally left the Philippines and was reassigned between

Okinawa, Japan and Camp Pendleton several times before ultimately calling it quits. "I spent about six months in California and went back and forth between Okinawa and Camp Pendleton a few times and finally got out of the Marines in 1979," said Piatt.



"I thought, there is no way... it couldn't be 'Doc.'"

More than a decade blew past and Piatt became restless, yearning for his past adventures, and eventually decided to join the Army Reserve in 1991. He has been serving in the 'part-time' role ever since. "I was out for 13 years and wanted to get back in. I really missed it," said Piatt, now a section manager for Raytheon Company in Wichita, Kan.

The ingredients were there; the only step left was for the two to be mixed in the hot Kuwait desert with one another. Both were now serving their country and deployed overseas in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Call it coincidence or maybe destiny, but it only took time before the two eventually ran into each other at this small Army camp in the middle of the desert.

"I was talking to a corpsman from the medical station and telling him how much respect I have for HNs (Hospital Corpsman) because this guy, 'Doc' Sorenson sewed me up once, said Piatt. "And he said, 'That's Capt. Sorenson.' I just thought, there is no way, it has been too long. It couldn't be 'Doc' Sorenson."

"He actually made the connection," said Sorenson, formerly known to Piatt as "Doc", now serving as Camp Buehring's medical facility commander. "He noticed me at the camp mayor's meeting. I guess I looked about the right age."

Both have traveled completely different paths, but ironically the two were deployed to the same country, the same camp and ultimately meeting in the same tent 29 years later.

"We're going to stay in touch now, like the rest of my buddies from that time," said Piatt. "Although he was in the Navy, he was a damned good Marine." 

1, 2, 3, 4 Who are we running for ...

Majors Sydney Sons and Marc Hoffmeister, with CFLCC C-35, participate in the 24-hour Run for the Troops on Camp Arifjan May 29. The event, which was coordinated on Camp Arifjan by the two, supports troops and veterans by raising funds and awareness to maintain the many programs of the Veterans of the Vietnam War (Photo by Staff Sgt. Eric A. Brown, 13th PAD)



Drill and Thrill

Mass Casualty exercise prepares Soldiers to fight terrorism

Capt. Anthony Carlisle, special to the *Desert Voice*

CAMP VICTORY, Kuwait --

Camp Victory disturbed its calm Sunday afternoon with a staged mass casualty drill. The event was used to assess how well the camp could respond to an incident involving casualties and possible a terrorist attack.

Victory's Troop Medical Clinic organized the drill, which lasted more than an hour. Navy Lt. j.g. Lawrence Zoback, a nurse with the TMC, said mass casualty drills are mandated and the results are used to evaluate operations and deficiencies in the camp's emergency operations.

"It's especially good to see a group coming together that has never worked together. It helps to identify the different components," Zoback said.

The 342nd Battalion commander and Camp Victory's mayor, Lt. Col. Michael Bishop, said the mayor cell acted as a hub for the entire operation. It ensured units had litter bearers, those who carried the injured, that the force protection Soldiers were ready to go and information was being disseminated. The exercise was a good practice for the different

organizations, which would have to coordinate with one another to succeed.

"This is just like anything else in the military," Bishop said.

Zoback said a mass casualty incident is one that taxes the resources of a medical unit almost to the point of being overwhelmed and the recent drill was to see how

well elements on post would react to such an event.

"Overall, it ran smoothly. There were a lot of little things, but nothing major went wrong, except the giant voice didn't work," Zoback said.

The giant voice, a loud speaker



The giant voice didn't work properly during the drill. It was so low that some began calling it "The Tiny Voice."

designed to alert the camp of an emergency, didn't work properly during the drill. In fact, it was so low that some began calling it "the tiny voice."

But its case of laryngitis didn't impact the Quick Reaction Force teams from arriving at the scene in a matter of minutes and securing the dining facility where a mock explosion occurred. Staff Sgt. Paul Overbeck, sergeant of the guard, and member of the 1004th QM Co., said the unit's QRF made it to site before he did, and that they had already started a defensive perimeter around the dining facility.

Not only did the QRF provide security around the scene of the incident, the teams had a presence at

the TMC as well as at the helipad, said the 1004th commander, Capt. James Miller, the officer in charge of force protection on Camp Victory. Miller sees the mass casualty drill as a good picture of where the camp is as a whole.

"It's a good snapshot of where we are as a camp dealing with other units," Miller said. "The 1004th is already in a force protection posture because of what we do. But are the other units ready, and understand the full scope of a mass casualty and what to do in case of a full attack? What if someone mortared us or came across the berm with a suicide bomb? How do we all react? Are we prepared to react? Force protection is ready. We need to practice mass casualty as a camp, involving permanent party units."

The mayor cell promises more mass casualty drills in the future, with only a select few knowing the scenario to create a greater sense of realism. Capt. Kirk Venable, mayor cell battle captain, said it's easy to become complacent, but drills prevent Soldiers from losing their edge.

"There is a potential for anything," Venable said.



The Menacing Sun

during hot weather, you'll need to drink more water than your thirst indicates. Drinking plenty of liquids during exercise is especially important. However, avoid very cold water as it may cause stomach cramps.

Backbone of the Army

Promotions to E-5 and E-6 made easier for Army Reserve
Sgt. 1st Class Deborah Robichaux, CFLCC PAO

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM -- Most NCOs and commanders answer questions about enlisted promotions at some time or another. With multiple guidances and references, the answers are not always easy to find. The recent development of a centralized promotion board should make that task easier.



Theater Adjutant General Command Sgt. Maj. Steve Longwill's goal of a centralized Enlisted Promotion Directorate (EPD) for deployed Army Reserve (AR) Soldiers has potential to be the most efficient and effective means of promoting AR Soldiers in theater.

"Soldiers who have been deployed into a theater of war are among the best qualified to be our future leaders," Longwill said. "A centralized directorate is a consolidated effort to look out for the welfare and morale of Soldiers, as well as an opportunity to enhance the readiness posture of the Army Reserve."

The EPD specifically targets promotable AR specialists and sergeants in the Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) theater of operations. Qualification

requirements for promotion have not changed, but with the advent of the new directorate, the "how to" mechanism has gotten considerably easier.

Longwill said his vision of a centralized promotion directorate was developed after field studies and interviews determined deployed AR Soldiers were not being afforded the opportunity for promotion.

Before the EPD was a reality, promotions were often lost in the shuffle of multiple guidances that differed according to individual unit or Regional Readiness Command (RRC) policy.

Some promotion boards were held in theater and some at the RRC level, while other promotions were overlooked altogether. Longwill said not all deployed Soldiers have had a fair opportunity to be considered for promotion.

Compounding the issue is the lack of qualified administrative personnel in Combat Arms and Combat Support units, lack of readily available support personnel outside of these units and the fact that field commanders often overlook these issues due to demanding mission requirements.

With a centralized directorate, supervised by the Theater AG Command Sergeant Major, all records to be considered for promotion

will be submitted to the EPD. The directorate will receive and review packets, correct or return deficient packets, board packets and update the promotion list as appropriate.

Sgt. 1st Class Carol Medina, NCOIC of the EPD, said the aim is to make a "one-stop shop" for promotions of effected Soldiers in theater.

"We want to make promotions as easy as possible for deployed Soldiers - without compromising standards," Medina explained. "A centralized directorate allows for quality control."

Medina, a human resources and administrative specialist for the past 12 years, said the main goal of the EPD is to evaluate packets for completeness, fix whatever can be fixed by requesting documents from the supporting unit and board packets in a timely fashion.

"Deficient promotion packets will be held for one board past the original submission date," Medina said. "If we can't fix the problem during that time, the packet will be returned to the supporting unit."

With over 37,000 reservists in theater, more than in any one RRC in the United States, the impact of this board is far-reaching.

A consolidated board in theater means deployed Soldiers and senior leaders have a nearby reference for promotion guidance. Prior to the board's inception, Soldiers often had to reach back to their home station in the United

See, "Promotion," page 7

FACES of Freedom



Spc. Tynesha Wright
New Orleans



Pfc. Mari-Ann Lopez
Los Angeles



Master Sgt. Willie Smith
Baton Rouge, La.



Spc. Bill Warren
Bremerton, Wash.



Spc. Patricia Harris
San Marcos, Texas



Pfc. Shanita Smith
San Diego

Paying due respect

Fallen civilians honored by KBR, CFLCC in ceremony

Stephanie Price, special to the *Desert Voice*

CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait -- About 600 members of the KBR family, distinguished guests and friends gathered at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, May 21 to remember fallen and missing employees.

A slide show of photos from the company's projects graced the screens before the ceremony started. The Middle East Region Chief Operating Officer, Tom Crum, his deputy, Mike Amrine, and U.S. Army representatives Maj. Gen. Stephen Speakes; Brig. Gen. Robert Radin and Chaplain (Col.) Richard Schweinsburg, each presented part of the ceremony that was scheduled to coincide with Memorial Day.

"On the eve of Memorial Day weekend, I believe it is appropriate to commemorate not only Soldiers who lost their lives, but also civilians who have made the ultimate sacrifice," Crum said.

The ceremony opened with prayer. Schweinsburg set the tone for the memorial by calling everyone to take comfort and hope in God as they continue to grieve the losses of colleagues and remember those still missing.

Amrine, serving as master of ceremony, introduced a video message from Halliburton chairman, president and CEO, Dave Lesar, together with KBR employee Tommy Hamill — who, despite his recent heroic escape from Iraqi insurgents, offered selfless words of support and encouragement

to those still serving and working in the Middle East.

The video concluded with a message from KBR president and CEO, Randy Harl.

Both Speakes and Radin then addressed the audience with words of gratitude for the service KBR provides the military. The resounding messages from both generals were that the military and KBR are in harm's way together, and the U.S. Army could not be in Iraq without KBR's support.

Imploring those in attendance to continue the legacy of KBR employees no longer with them, and as a reminder that many people back home in America and elsewhere in the world support, respect and appreciate them, Crum shared a few of the hundreds of letters posted to the company's "Front



Maj. Gen. Stephen Speakes, CFLCC deputy commander, was one of the Army's representatives at the ceremony.

Lines."

A letter from a Soldier, who served in Kuwait for eight months, read:

"Everything you do is greatly appreciated by all of us that wear the military uniform.

When you come home to your families, just remember to tell them you made a difference in the Soldiers' lives because you were serving and supporting right beside us."

Jim Morgan, Craig Peterson, Tommy Woods and Keith Richard each read a portion of the 16 employees who have passed and the two who remain missing.

Flags from each employee's state flanked the stage.

The ceremony concluded with a moment of silence and the solemn melody, "Taps," played seamlessly by a U.S. Army bugler. 🐜

From 'Promotions,' Page. 6

States for assistance with many administrative issues. In a combat environment, that is not always easy. This board eases that burden for Soldiers.

With the EPD tasked to evaluate, correct and board packets, field commanders are relieved of the administrative paperwork associated with promotions and are therefore free to concentrate on demanding mission requirements.

Senior leaders and administrative specialists will still be responsible for verifying eligibility and helping Soldiers put promotion packets together, but the burden of check and re-check will now be absorbed by the EPD.

An additional benefit of the EPD for both Soldiers and commanders is that promotion leads to career satisfaction, as well as increased confidence and motivation.

Longwill's goal of easing promotion woes for Soldiers and commanders, thereby "increasing career satisfaction and ensuring retention of highly qualified future leaders," is now a reality. 🐜



Comrade-in-Arms

Moscow native proudly serving America

Spc. Scott Akanewich, 13th Public Affairs Detachment

CAMPARIFJAN, Kuwait -- When Evgueni Erchov was growing up in Dubna, a small Russian town of about 60,000 people approximately a hundred miles north of Moscow, he never thought he'd be a Soldier.

He and his childhood friends, like many young boys, would fight pretend wars on make-believe battlefields, but that's all it was -- pretend.



Yet here he is, in the middle of the Operation Iraqi Freedom theater, not only serving in the military, but with an American flag emblazoned on the right shoulder of his uniform as if he were from California, Texas or New York.

There aren't too many Russian-born American Soldiers, but Erchov, a finance specialist with the 398th Finance Group, who moved to America from his homeland at the age of 21, is one.

Erchov's family moved to the States when he was 17, however, he stayed behind to finish his college education at Moscow Technical University, where he received a degree in computer science with minors in physics and microelectronics.

Upon joining his family in America, he began work with a computer company and was enjoying his new life in his new, adopted homeland.

But he wanted more. He wanted adventure.

Joining the military always intrigued him. However, back home in Russia, it was full-time or nothing.

"I didn't want to join the Russian army," he said.

Being an Army reservist gives him the opportunity to find a perfect blend of military adventure while still having the opportunity to pursue career goals, he said.

"I like the Reserve because you can still maintain a civilian life," said Erchov, 24, who is slated to gain U.S. citizenship in October and plans on seeking a Master's Degree in business administration.

Another benefit of being in a reserve unit is the diversity it provides, he said.

"In the same unit, you can have a mixture of all different professions, so a commander has more resources to draw from," said Erchov.

Erchov's job with the 398th is to help Soldiers with various pay problems. He even designed a special website for that very purpose at WWW.OIFfinance.US.

The website is just another example of how Erchov goes above and beyond the call of duty on a daily basis, said his supervisor, Staff Sgt. Mary Claiborne, 398th Finance Group military pay, noncommissioned officer-in-charge.



Photos by Spc. Scott Akanewich

Spc. Evgueni Erchov explains the intricacies of an Leaves and Earnings Statement to a customer at the Camp Arifjan finance office.

"I wish I had more Soldiers like him," said Claiborne. "Anything he does, he goes beyond what's required."

According to Claiborne, Erchov's dedication as a Soldier is unparalleled amongst his peers.

"His dedication as a junior enlisted Soldier goes far beyond that even of some senior Soldiers," she said. "When it comes

to job performance, you don't always see that kind of work ethic."

But there's more to Erchov than just the friendly Soldier who handles your finance issues, something that, according to him, is deep within every Soldier.

"I believe that inside every person lies an ancient warrior spirit," he said.

"In the civilian world, you can sometimes lose it."

Much like his ancestors, whose warrior spirits were tested during World War II in places like Stalingrad where they defended their country against Nazi tyranny, Evgueni Erchov now helps defend freedom in a far-off desert land.

This is a Soldier two different countries can be proud to call their own. 

"I believe that inside every person lies an ancient warrior spirit."

Camp Arifjan Happenings

Wednesday	7:30 p.m.	Musician Jam Session	MWR Courtyard
Thursday	7:30 p.m.	Persian Carpet Seminar	MWR Stage
Friday	7:30 p.m.	Open Mic Night	MWR Stage
Saturday	7:30 p.m.	Salsa Night	Courtyard
Sunday	10 a.m.	Bazaar	MWR Courtyard
Monday	7:30 p.m.	Country Night	MWR Courtyard
Tuesday	10 a.m.	Spa Day	Fitness Center
	7:30 p.m.	R&B Night	MWR Courtyard

The Camp Arifjan Pool is now open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Come catch the sun and fun in ZONE I.

Camp Doha Happenings

Wednesday	7 p.m.	Bingo Night	Uncle Frosty's
Thursday	7 p.m.	Basketball tourney cutoff	Gym
Friday	2 p.m.	Movies and Sports	Uncle Frosty's
Saturday	7 p.m.	Salsa Night	Uncle Frosty's
Sunday	11 a.m.	Spa Day	Marble Palace
Monday	2 p.m.	Video games and pool	Uncle Frosty's
Tuesday	TBD	Single Tennis Tourney	Marble Palce

Check out your favorite movies at the Camp Doha video check-out, located inside Uncle Frosty's.

Titles are available in both DVDs and videos.

An American Obligation

Absentee Ballots to help Soldiers' determine America's future



AMERICA-VOTES2004

Spc. Blanka Stratford, CFLCC Public Affairs Office

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

-- As voting season slides closer and the future of America awaits a response, Soldiers deployed to Southwest Asia should have the same opportunity to vote as do all other citizens of the United States.

And they do.

Providing Soldiers with the ability to vote is a matter that Lewis Ingol, voting assistance officer (VAO) for the Coalition Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC), and hundreds of other unit VAOs dispersed throughout the U.S. Central Command's area of operations are working diligently to complete.

"To this date, we've already distributed 50,000 (Federal Post Card Application) forms all over the AOR," said Ingol.

An additional 150,000 forms have been requested and will be shipped to the AOR within the week, he said. Countries included in the circulation are Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi

Arabia.

To start the absentee voting process a Soldier completes the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA), which is commonly referred to as the SF-76, said Ingol. This form is the application for registration and the application for an absentee ballot. There is also an online version of this form (OFPCA) obtainable at the Federal Voting Assistance Program's (FVAP) Web Site, www.fvap.gov. All U.S. states and territories accept the FPCA and OFPCA, with the exception of American Samoa and Guam, which only accept the FPCA.

Either method of completing the form is acceptable. After filling out the form, signing and dating it, the Soldier mails it to the Local Election Official based on where he is registering to vote. To meet the mailing deadlines, Ingol said it is advisable for Soldiers to mail their FPCA not later than Aug. 15.

Under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA), Soldiers who are away from their local polling districts on

Election Day are permitted to vote through the mail or an alternative method. Most states and territories begin mailing ballots to those Soldiers who submitted the FPCA 30-45 days before an election. Upon receipt, Soldiers should complete the ballot and return it as soon as possible. Mail takes longer from overseas, so mail early. "The key is to get the absentee ballots back to the United States in time for election," Ingol said. "If a Soldier does not receive his (or her) absentee ballot three weeks before the election, he or she should contact the unit VAO to obtain a Federal Write in Absentee Ballot. This ballot can only be used if a Soldier is registered to vote however."

Ingol said more information about voting will continue to be sent out by VAOs until election day to Soldiers both in the continental U.S. and overseas. However, voting is an issue that Soldiers themselves should take initiative to learn about as well.

"Soldiers need to know that every vote counts," said Ingol. "Every vote is a vote that affects their future." 

Camp Comedy

OIF servicemembers laugh it up with professional comics

CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait -- A shared laughter, an inside joke, being a part of something happy -- all these things seem lacking for some servicemembers supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom.

May 24, however, there were laughter again, there were inside jokes and all servicemembers attending the primetime show presented by members of Comics on Duty felt like they belonged to a happy organization again.

"It seems like there was a lot more laughter tonight than there have been in the past weeks," said Leann Spidell, program supervisor for the MWR program here. "These were all headlines -- they gave up big-time shows to be here."

In a show that lasted more than two hours, the professional comics poked fun of everything -- from United States Marines' supposed lack of intelligence, to the comfort-loving Air Force, who, one comic said, "defends your country -- but defends

your country in comfort."

Though the visitors were definitely a hit on Camp Arifjan, one comic admits the beginning of the tour yielded less encouraging results.

"To be totally honest, I bombed the first two shows," said Bob Purkell, a comedian who frequents Los Angeles comedy clubs.

"I was mad, so I sat down and wrote a new act for the military.

"It's been insane, but it's well worth it," he continued. "We're having a blast -- from (privates first class) to colonels, we're giving back to them."

For what it's worth, the servicemembers, too, appreciated their visitors.

Spc. Ronald Vanhoorn Jr., 740th Trans Co., said such visits and performances are a boost to morale, especially for units like his, which has been here for nearly 13 months.

And they're committed to serving Soldiers.

"Some of these guys have been here three, four times -- it's a big commitment," Spidell said. 



Jokes courtesy of Comics on Duty:

"I drank some of the non-alcoholic beer and got into a fake fight."

"I love what you've done with the base-- 'let's go with beige!'"

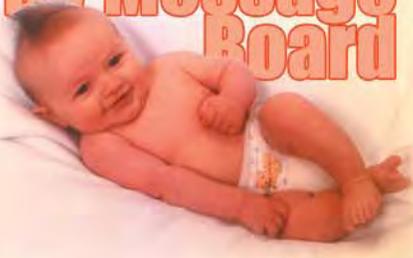
"I've been in country for a month and haven't seen a 99-Cent store. I've seen a lot of stuff worth about 99 cents."

"I am dating a girl who's a psycho-analyst. Turns out she's not an analyst."

"Joining the Air Force is like joining a country club -- 'let's go to war!' 'No, it's a bad time for us.'"

(Story and photo by Spc. Marc Loi)

DV Message Board



SGT Quintana –

From all the Soldiers and leadership at the 720th Trans. Co., congratulations on your promotion to E-5. Great Job. SSG Rivera

MAJ Randy Takehosi –

Greetings from Kuwait and Shelly! Best of luck at the War College. John Emmering

Navy LT Wills –

From the port group at Camp Spearhead, stay safe and hurry back!

2LT Kenny Anthony –

Congratulations from the desert on yet another of your many successes! Always proud of you. Sophie

Congrats to the 1487th on a continued good job. Keep up the good work and have fun on leave! “Iron Camels Lead the Way!”

MAJ Crowl –

Welcome to the team! Any addition to our team is good – but it’s especially good when the addition is a Hoosier! Remember -- being a pilot, you’re our ticket out of here!

SGT B and SPC P–

Our two favorites! Welcome back from Iraq! We were worried sick! The office just wasn’t the same without the two of you.

Send your Message Board submissions (40 words or less) to karima.mares@kuwait.army.mil

Cold, hard cash

How a college degree may help you earn more in the end
Spc. Marc Loi, 13th Public Affairs Detachment



CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait -- According to a study by Day and Newburger, the average earnings of a person with just a high school diploma, over a lifetime, is \$1.2 million, whereas a person with an associate’s degree earns \$1.6 million, compared to \$2.1 million a person holding a bachelor’s degree can earn.

There are more benefits to getting an education than money. Other benefits include a higher chance of success, and increased personal as well as professional mobility.

According to the report, college-educated people tend to raise happier children, have more interesting hobbies and have a tendency to make more rational decisions – as they are more thoughtful, aware and cultured.

Don’t think you have time to pursue an education for such a beneficial life? The Education Centers located at camps Arifjan and Doha offer ways to do so through traditional in-the-classroom classes as well as online classes.

John Emmering, counselor aide for both camps, said classes consist of both traditional and vocational subjects through the University of Maryland and Central Texas College.

Aside from the intellectual benefits, college students will also receive one-on-one interaction with some of the most accomplished professors in the business – including a retired Air Force colonel who was a teacher in the Air Force.

Though there are currently no education counselors present at other forward deployment camps, Emmering said servicemembers can always call the centers to schedule tests – which are mainly administered at Camp Doha.

Along with class testing, the Center offers other tests to benefit servicemembers who may already know enough to earn credits, but not have the time to take classes.

DANTE and CLEP tests are available in a variety of subjects – from traditional freshman composition to obscure subjects like “The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union” for majors in political science or international studies.

“We’ve had good traffic, very good

participation,” said Emmering, who recently arrived here from Germany.

“There’s more participation here than in Germany because (servicemembers here) want to accomplish something when they’re gone on a deployment.”

Though DANTE and CLEP tests are available and often time-efficient, it is advised students sign out subject books prior to taking the tests.

“(Earning credits) may be quicker but not necessarily easier,” said Sophie Grantmont, also a counselor aide.

For some, however, things are a lot easier.

Spc. Jennifer Wagner, CFLCC C-2, said because there aren’t many things to do here in Kuwait, she decided to take up classes.

Wagner is taking classes in international relations that will hopefully help her later on in her quest to work for the United Nations, she said.

“I’ve wanted to go to school for a long time, and they make it pretty easy here.”

Whether Wagner gets a UN job remains to be seen – but she also realizes one other thing – having a college degree helps with getting a job.

“It’s about background and experience,” she said.

“I would love to go to school fulltime, but I am at work all day”

Other Soldiers, like Wagner, can also pursue an education, and most of the time, college is fully paid for.

Currently, the Army pays up to \$250 for every credit hour or \$4,500 annually.

Those interested in enhancing their knowledge, career and life are encouraged to contact a counselor. 

Chaplain's Corner

Gospel Bible Studies

Sunday 9 p.m. Zone 2 DFAC – Battlefield of the Mind
Monday 7 p.m. Zone 1 Chapel – RM 13 – Discipleship
7 p.m. Arlington Chapel – Christianity 101
Wednesday 7 p.m. Zone 1 Chapel – RM 13 –
Man in the image of God
7 p.m. Zone 2 Chapel – Women of the Bible
7 p.m. Arlington Chapel – Purpose Driven Life
8 p.m. Camden DFAC

Thursday 7 p.m. Zone 1 Chapel –
RM 13 – Experiencing God
Saturday 6 p.m. Zone 1 Chapel – RM 13
– Open Forum Bible Study

Gospel Prayer Meetings

Sunday 1 p.m. Zone 1 Chapel – RM 13
Sunday 1:55 p.m. Zone 1 Theater Stage
Monday 11:30 a.m. Kohima RM1 Tent
Thursday 6:30 a.m. Trucksville

THE CLEARING BARREL

Sgt. Maj. Nelson Ildefonso
8th Medical Brigade
Bethpage, N.Y.

Loyalty: It's the reason most of us are here. Very few people are here because we have to be here – it's not for the college loans or money. It's a payback for the country. This is the way we've chosen to serve.



Leadership: I believe in leading by example. If I can't set the example, I can't expect other Soldiers to follow it. Also, emulate the good qualities of leadership.

Discipline: Discipline is a big part of the military. It's the uniform, the haircut, the salute and the way you carry yourself. If discipline breaks down ... someone will get hurt.

Best way to improve: Look for a mentor – someone you look up to. See what makes them special and emulate that.

Are you tough enough?

Your attitude determines the successes of your deployment
Chaplain (Col.) Matthew B. Horn, 377th TSC

The desert environment, the combat danger, the 365 Boots on the Ground, the unit's mission and what the Army asks us to do are tests of character for us all. It is true that we do not all face the same challenges and hardships – maybe that is another test of character, too. Whether you are behind a .50 cal in the turret of a gun truck, taking shifts at an ECP, turning wrenches in a motorpool or wrestling all day with a computer screen or telephone, your tour here will ask you at a deeply personal level, "Can you go the distance? Do you have what it takes?"

Just like our situations may vary, our resources for answering this character test vary, too. Some give in to their fears and shut down. Others find the separation from home and family the most unbearable part. The heat zaps us all. Some wall themselves off and become tough or distant. Sadnesses and stresses get magnified, healthy habits get laid aside, and many folks choose merely to exist instead of making the most of their time.

Yet you'll see people more open to others and to their environment than they have ever been in their lives. Some succeed in finding joy in their day and a sense of accomplishment in their work – no matter what the task is. Some have energy and interest to help others while they are taking care of business. They seem to get stronger as the weeks go by and may report that the

time is flying by for them. How do they do it?

I think, at some level, this latter group shares some common characteristics. They take themSELVES seriously (but not *too* seriously!), they take their JOBS seriously, and recognize the importance of their PERSONAL CONTRIBUTION to the overall mission, without losing sight of their own humanity and that of their coworkers. This lets out the people who are merely workaholics or mission freaks. The other common characteristic of these folks is that they find healthy ways to recharge their batteries and realize that recharging must be part of their routine.



Chap. Matthew Horn

There is much about our living and working conditions we cannot change during a deployment. What can YOU do to join the success group so that, when the tour is over, you can know that indeed you can go the distance, and yes, you have what it takes? The ingredients for success are within you, no matter what kind of environment we are in. 🐛

SPEED KILLS

Whether a servicemember or civilian contractor, your safety is important to us and your family. Slow down, put on a seatbelt and drive defensively.

Only YOU
can prevent
needless loss of lives



Morale, Welfare and Recreation
Now offers

Tours of Kuwait
Call 430-7153 for
more information
Call now to
experience the sight,
sound and culture
of the Middle East



Glad You Asked

Q: **What are Soldiers**
supposed to do with
used oil or
contaminated fuel?

A: **Each camp has a**
collection point for
used oil and contami-
nated fuel -- do not
store used oil, fuel or
other unwanted
hazardous materials in
your motorpool, near
living areas, and do not
bury them. Contact
your mayor's cell for
more info.

Operation Iraqi Freedom



Photo by Spc. Scott Akanewich
Spc. James Etter keeps a wary eye while patrolling the perimeter of Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. Etter is assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 146th Field Artillery Regiment, deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



Photo by Department of Defense
A sniper peers through the scope of his rifle during a mission in Mosul, Iraq. The Soldier is assigned to the 2nd Infantry Division's Company C, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, Stryker Brigade Combat Team. The Stryker brigade is deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



Photo by Sgt. Jeremiah Johnson
A Soldier provides security with a 50 caliber machine gun in Mosul, Iraq. He is assigned to the 2nd Infantry Division's Company C, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, Stryker Brigade Combat Team.



Photo by Department of Defense
Sgt. James Heaney conducts a patrol near Balad, Iraq. Heaney is an infantryman assigned to the 81st Brigade Combat Team, Washington Army National Guard, operating from Logistical Supply Area Anaconda in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



Photo by Department of Defense
Spc. Seth Gerkin, in the foreground, and Pfc. Brian Cruz fire a mortar from Logistical Supply Area Anaconda, near Balad, Iraq. The mortar men are assigned to the 303rd Armored Regiment, attached to the 81st Armored Brigade, deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.